GUIDE TO THE ER6 RURAL IRISH FILE

[This file focuses on the Rural Irish population located mainly in the poorer and more mountainous areas of western Ireland, including a number of small, off-shore islands. The principal administrative divisions, i.e. counties, of this region consist of the following, listed from north to south: Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Clare, and Kerry.

Rather than attempting to outline the main features of Rural Irish culture, several outstanding aspects of this culture will be noted so that the researcher may obtain some idea of the distinctive and interesting data in this file.

First, it has been said that "Ireland has preserved to a remarkable degree the customs and social habits of the pre-industrial phase of western civilization" (9: Evans, p. 6). This pattern especially characterizes the mountainous western region. For instance, this is the region where the highest predominance of Gaelic, the indigenous language of the Irish, has been retained (4: Hooton, pp. 245-46). Elsewhere, Gaelic has evidently been largely displaced by English.

Second, in much of rural Ireland, the traditional primary unit of land division, the "townland," has survived, and as a consequence so has the townland community. "The townlands in turn group themselves into baronies corresponding to the petty kingdoms of old" (9: Evans, p. 12). The next higher level of organization is the modern county unit.

Lastly, Rural Ireland also manifests distinctive demographic patterns and trends. For example, Ireland's population is concentrated in the poorer and more mountainous western part of the country. Also, there has

been a continuous population decline, particularly in the rural areas, since the great famine of 1845, although this trend has tended to level off since 1911. But perhaps the most striking pattern is that Ireland has the highest percentage of unmarried adult men and women of any country in the world (cf. 1: Arensberg and Kimball, pp. 4, 10, 14, 98-99, 229-30).

Fifteen sources, all in English, have been processed for the ER6 Rural Irish File. The major sources are 1: Arensberg and Kimball, 8: Arensberg, 9: Evans, and 13: Evans. Sources 1 and 8 are based on data from County Clare, as is source 14, making this the best described county in the file.

Arensberg and Kimball were members of the anthropological survey of Ireland project sponsored by the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University under the direction of Hooton. This project, begun in 1931, covered physical anthropology and archeology as well as social anthropology. County Clare was chosen as the field locale on the basis of an extensive survey, because its culture represented so well a blending of the older Gaelic and modern British influences (1: Arensberg and Kimball, p. ix; 4: Hooton, p. 229).

1: Arensberg and Kimball, based on field work in 1932-34, is a study of community life and kinship among the small farmers of County Clare. One of the communities studied most intensively by Arensberg is Luogh, located on the coast about three miles from the Aran Islands (8: Arensberg, p. 20). Another field locale seems to have been the community of Rynamona in northern Clare (1: p. 181). 8: Arensberg presents six essays on different aspects of rural life, but there is much overlap with the data in source 1. 14: Westropp is a compilation of folklore derived from the oral traditions of County Clare, probably mostly gathered by the author during the early 1900s.

Evans is a geographer who did field work around 1940 mainly in Northern Ireland. 9: Evans is a general, well-illustrated work on Irish peasant culture, emphasizing material culture, and focusing primarily on Northern

Ireland, while 13: Evans is essentially an expansion of 9: Evans, with much additional information.

2: and 3: Campbell present descriptions of peasant house types as observed in 1934-35, whereas 5: Ó Danachair describes types of farmyards and practices for sheltering animals. 7: Johnson is a secondary source discussing problems and theories concerning rural settlement types.

10: and 11: Browne are the two earliest sources in the file, being based on field observations by a physician in 1893-94. Browne covers a variety of anthropological topics, with the locale of source 10 being the Islands of Inishbofin and Inishshark in western Galway, while the locale of source 11 is the western sector of the barony of Erris in County Mayo. 12: Freeman is a modern study (field date, 1954) of economic geography on the Island of Inishbofin.

The remaining sources consist of 4: Hooton, 6: Ó Súilleabháin, and 15: Fox. Hooton presents a preliminary study of some aspects of physical anthropology based on data gathered by Dupertuis and Dawson in the 1930s; Ó Súilleabháin's article is on death customs in southern Kerry; and finally, Fox discusses personal name usages on Tory Island, County Donegal.

This is a fairly well-rounded file, with data available on most facets of culture. It is weakest in the areas of language, psychology, and the fine arts, and is strong on settlement patterns, material culture, and the analysis of family and kin relations.]

Processed in 1959-1964

Revised File Guide prepared in 1972
by Robert O. Lagacé

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Even the elaborately produced and comprehensive Handbook of the Irish Free State (1927), which includes chapters on folklore and literature, remains silent on folk-culture and its significance for an understanding of Irish problems. 114

Our knowledge of the Irish countryside will advance only through field-study and the mapping of our findings. The time has not yet come when one can prepare maps of cultural distributions, but this is the end in view. Our school-books and atlases still give us maps which are purely political and administrative, for the political outlook has kept scientific interests at bay. We need maps of house-types and styles of furniture, of farm implements and the lay-out of fields and fences, of boat-types, of dialects and superstitions, and so on; and we must study these distributions both against the physical and spiritual environments of Ireland and against the wider background of their overseas connexions.

Viewed in its wider setting Ireland is part of the north-western or "Atlantic" province of European folk-culture. The climatic background of storms and mists makes it one with the coastlands and peninsulas which range from Galicia through Brittany and Highland Britain to the fiords of Norway. Everywhere in this region the sea is close at hand: by it man can both gain a livelihood and escape out into a wider world. On land the cultivation of wheat is near its climatic limits, and the dependence on spring-sown cereals greatly simplified the old schemes of crop-rotation. The folding of stock around the winter homestead was not complicated by the necessity of protecting the corn from their depredations. Animal husbandry and stock products are the pivot of rural economy in this humid fringe of Europe, a fact which, together with the independence nourished by man's association with the sea, helped to keep the north-western province out of the bondage of the feudal system. 101 ●

While the simplicity of stock-raising equipment has limited the development of the arts and crafts as compared with, say, the south-eastern province of Europe, or even lowland England, it brings its compensations. As Professor 181

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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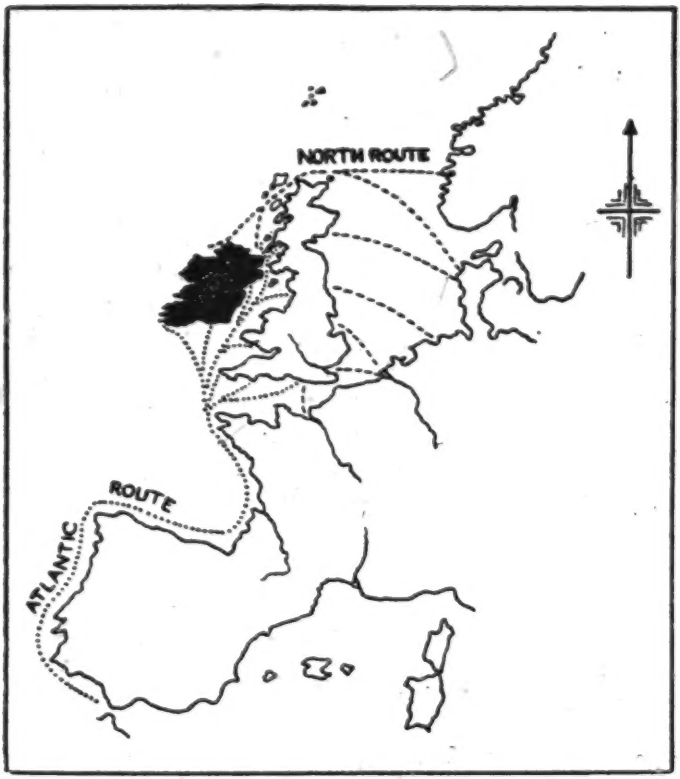

Fig. 1. Ireland and the seaways of "Atlantic" Europe.

The routes from the south brought ancient civilization to the island about 2000 B.C.

[p. 9]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER II.

HOW IRELAND TOOK SHAPE.

101 131 "To comprehend the homestead and its home-folk, from the thatch of the roof to the colour of the children's hair, we must find the locality on the domed surface of the earth, and must realize that this earth is a very large and dominant region round it." So wrote the late Grenville Cole, wisest of Ireland's geographers. This island, then, lies in the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean, midway between the Lofoten Islands and the Straits of Gibraltar, a detached but not isolated fragment of the drowned coast of Eurasia. Throughout the ages, as Europe sank repeatedly under the waters of the ocean, this outer margin, worn down by rains and rivers, received fresh marine deposits over and over again, so that its rocks record all the main features of the history of western Europe.

133 175 Lying in the middle latitudes of the continent, it shares the converging mountain systems of north and south, the older axis of Scandinavia dominating the build of the north of Ireland while the younger axis linked with France and Spain prevails in the south. The lead thus given in the remote ages of geology has been followed, over and over again, by man and his cultures converging on this last outpost of Europe. From across the Atlantic, too, Ireland has received much in recent centuries; here the alien potato was first welcomed; and it was the "praty" which drove masses of Irishmen back along the route it had itself taken. "Ireland lieth aloof in

[p. 15]
[p. 14 is blank]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

121 The inquiry was conducted on almost exactly the same lines as that of last year; the slight differences of method being either due to changes made as the result of former experience or to local causes; but every effort was made to ensure as great uniformity as possible, a matter of much importance as facilitating comparison of results.

In this report the same headings as used in the previous one, and arranged in the same order, have been adhered to as closely as possible, so as to allow of easy reference.

II.—Physiography of the Islands.

131 The two islands under consideration, together with several small uninhabited islets, form the parish of Inishbofin; they are situated 101 outside the mouth of Killary Bay, and are distant some thirty-six miles from Westport, and about sixteen miles from Clifden, Co. Galway, the nearest town of any size. The post town is Cleggan, a small village on a point of the mainland, about seven miles from Inishbofin. Of the two main islands Inishbofin (locally called Bofin or Boffin) is much the larger, as out of the total area of the parish of 3151 acres, it contains 2312.

Its greatest length is about four miles, and it varies in breadth 133 from half a mile to over two miles. The nature of its coast line is greatly varied; at some places, as at Knock-quarter or East End, being low and sandy; at others, as on the north side, and at Dun More on the western extremity, being rocky, at times rising into high and jagged cliffs worn into coves and natural bridges; while, again, in other places it is high bluff overhanging a shingly foreshore. The [504] harbour is very safe and well sheltered, and looks S.W. The coast of Shark, which lies about a mile S.W. of Inishbofin, is much more rocky, and may be said to be precipitous nearly all round, and much broken into by caves and deep fissures a few yards wide, with precipitous overhanging walls. It is difficult to land on this island if the weather be at all rough, and the inhabitants are often stormbound for weeks at a time. The difficulty and danger of landing is not so great [653] as it used to be since the building of a new pier by the Government as a relief work in 1892. Mr. Michael Lavelle, writing about the natives of this island, says:—"It is very hard for these people to live; they may be two months before they can go to Boffin to get some commands, and they live during that time on potatoes and 'white wine.'"

The principal rock of both islands is gneiss, but belts of steatite are also found.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities, one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in 101 its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the 631 little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of 133 North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the [504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Plate XI.

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ANCIENT PARISHES OF COUNTY CLARE.

To face p. 180.

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

[291] [241] [501] [197]

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

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[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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121 The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. In 1846, 25 years before Edward Tylor pronounced his famous anthropological definition of culture, William J. Thoms introduced into English the word "folk-lore," which he defined as "the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the olden time." Ethnology, a scientific discipline whose focus is primitive culture in the Tylor tradition, has had for almost a century its parallel in the humanistic discipline of folklore, whose focus is the culture of the folk, or folklore, in the Thoms tradition. During this time, ethnology has evidenced a humanistic current in its concern with primitive religion, ideology, and esthetics. The discipline of folklore, on the other hand, has evidenced a scientific current, mainly in the research of scholars belonging to the "Finnish School," whose approach to cultural dynamics resembles that of the "American Historical School" of ethnology, and of eastern and northern European folklorists (who often call themselves ethnographers as well) who have been making rather broad cultural studies of peasant communities somewhat in the anthropological mold. American ethnologists employ the term folklore to designate only the oral literature of peoples—their myths, legends, folktales, anecdotes, proverbs, riddles, songs, and the like. I will employ the term in this sense when I deal with Inis Beag esthetics in Chapter 4.

Ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the universities and elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland, but folklore in the humanistic tradition is strongly developed (Delargy 1957; Dorson 1966). The deliberate recording of the immense body of folklore in Ireland began in the early part of the last century, was kindled by the Gaelic Revival, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation, first, of the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936. For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the oral literature and material traits, and their associated behavior, of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the people; moreover, their visits have been brief and intermittent, they have depended on a limited sample of respondents, and most of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (the Irish equivalent of the American *Outline of Cultural Materials* and British *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*), which does not include many categories of significance to anthropologists. Since my wife and I were interested primarily in the nonmaterial elements of Inis Beag culture, and since the oral literature of the folk has been well studied by commission and other folklorists, we placed less emphasis on material culture and folklore in our ethnographic work.

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121 The culture of Inis Beag about to be described is that of 1959 and 1960, and if I intrude data from earlier or later fieldwork I will label them as such. My wife and I also collected a large body of cultural materials in three other Irish islands, for the purposes of making cross-cultural comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. The Inis Beag tradition is shared in large measure by the inhabitants of neighboring islands, especially those of Inis Thiar, and the several cultures together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the Irish system considered as a whole. Many of the peasant customs of Inis Beag are shared with rural peoples on the mainland, where
[184]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

numerous regional subcultures exist, and some are part of a larger European matrix. In fact, as I indicated earlier, Inis Beag culture in its broadest outlines resembles other existing folk cultures. I have decided to employ English terms rather than their Gaelic counterparts whenever possible throughout the book, even though doing so will displease many Irish readers; this decision is based on the fact that most of its readers will be students of anthropology in colleges and universities in the United States. Since the islanders speak both English and Irish and command English equivalents for most Gaelic words and phrases, either language might be utilized.

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[128]

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

One]

JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

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In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

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According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1--2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

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* A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled me to write this chapter.

[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

JOHN C. MESSENGER

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

(standard deviation 11.40 ± 0.08 years). However, crime is 141
principally a phenomenon of youth and the age variability cer- 171
tainly and the stature variability possibly are affected and
reduced thereby.

[102]

Figure 1

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

141 Nevertheless, the plotting of county group averages at in-
tervals of one-half index units reveals some interesting re-
[102] gional variations (fig. 2). Mean indices below 78 are recorded in two geographical areas. The first of these is a block along the middle of the east coast. This block includes Dublin,

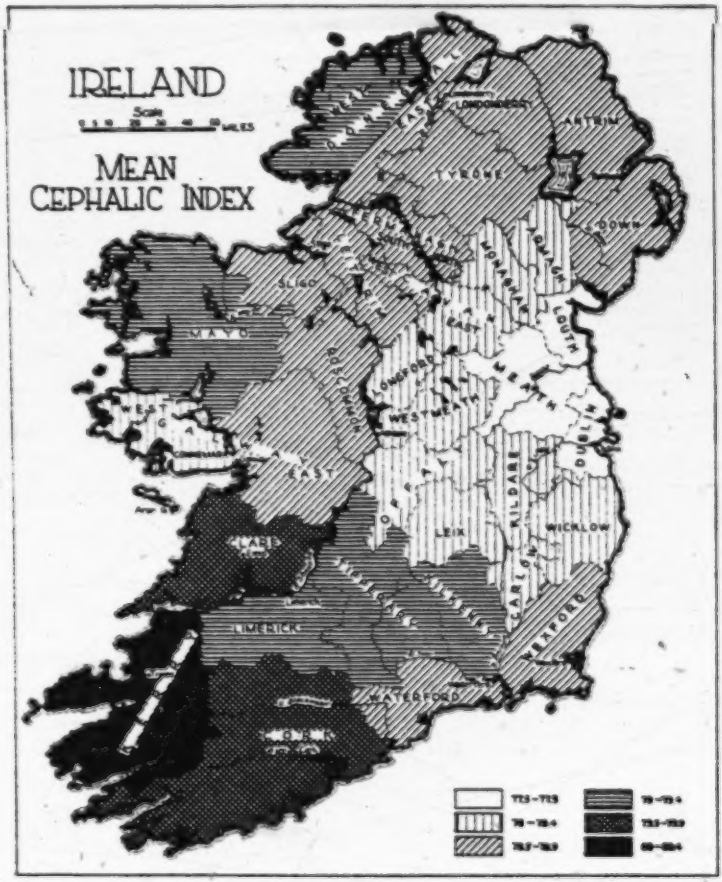

Figure 2

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142 Figure 3 shows the distribution of dark hair (black plus dark brown). The areas in filled cross-hatch on the map have 50% or more of dark hair. These include only Waterford and Wexford, the two southeastern coastal counties. The cross-hatched areas (45-49.9% of dark hair) include a solid strip

[102]

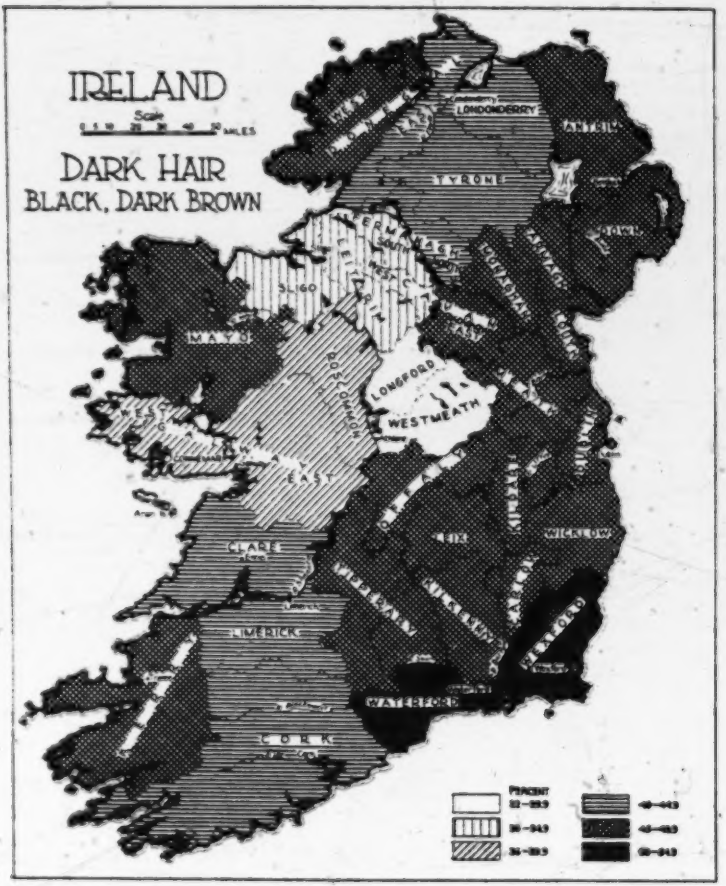

Figure 3

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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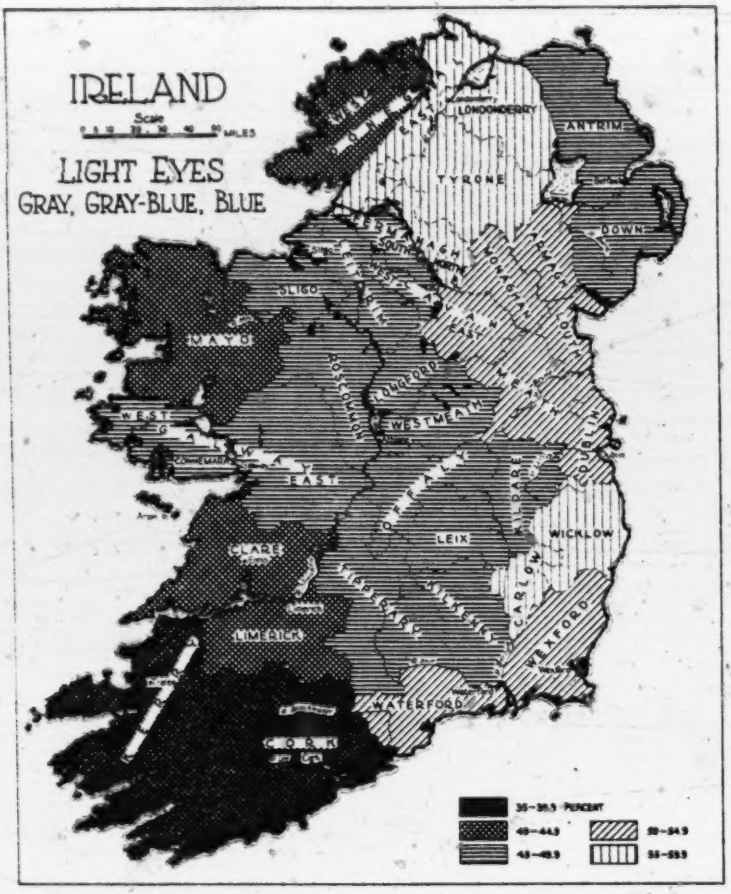

Figure 4

CORRELATION OF MAP DISTRIBUTIONS

Now, if we put together the distribution of stature, head form, hair color and eye color, some interesting correspondences are evident. Ireland presents three masses of high land projecting westward into the Atlantic. These are West Done-

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

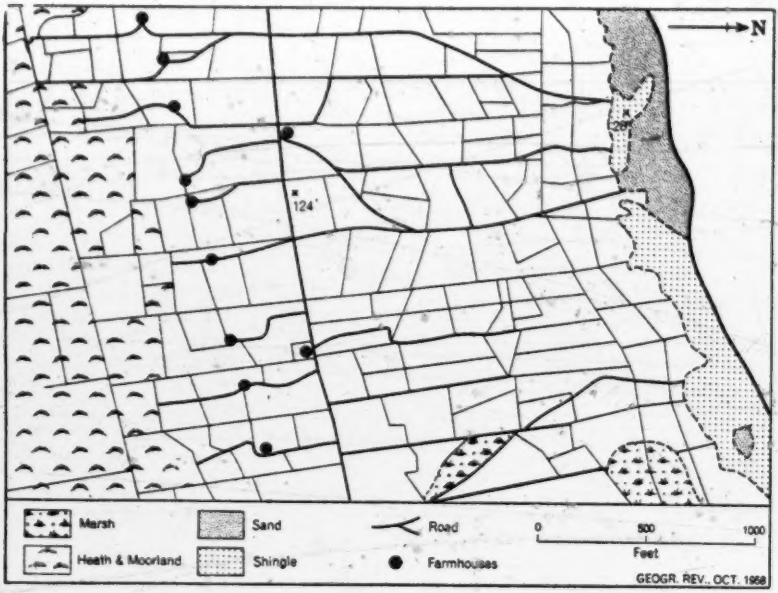

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FIG. 4—"Striped" farms and fields in County Kerry. (Based on the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Minister of Finance, Republic of Ireland.)

mentary authorization. Although it is rarely possible to obtain information on the methods and precise date of consolidation, the destruction of the system can be explained, in broad terms, by its growing inefficiency and by the dissemination of new agricultural techniques. 178 361 311

Some of the unsatisfactory aspects of rundale agriculture sprang from the steady growth of the population of Ireland, which continued from sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century until the Great Famine of 1845–1847.[30] This increase led to a constant encroachment on various uncultivated areas, a process in which the general adoption of the potato as a subsistence crop played a major part.[31] But the "waste" lands brought under cultivation had not been completely unused, since often they were grazed by livestock under a well-developed transhumance.[32] This seasonal movement was important to the rural economy, because efficient rundale farming required that the animals be removed from the unfenced cultivated strips during the growing

[30] K. H. Connell: The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845 (Oxford, 1950). 113

[31] *Idem:* The Colonization of Waste Land in Ireland, 1780–1845, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 3, 1950–1951, pp. 44–71.

[32] J. M. Graham: Transhumance in Ireland, *The Advancement of Sci.*, Vol. 10, 1953–1954, pp. 74–79.

[Text continues on p. 565]

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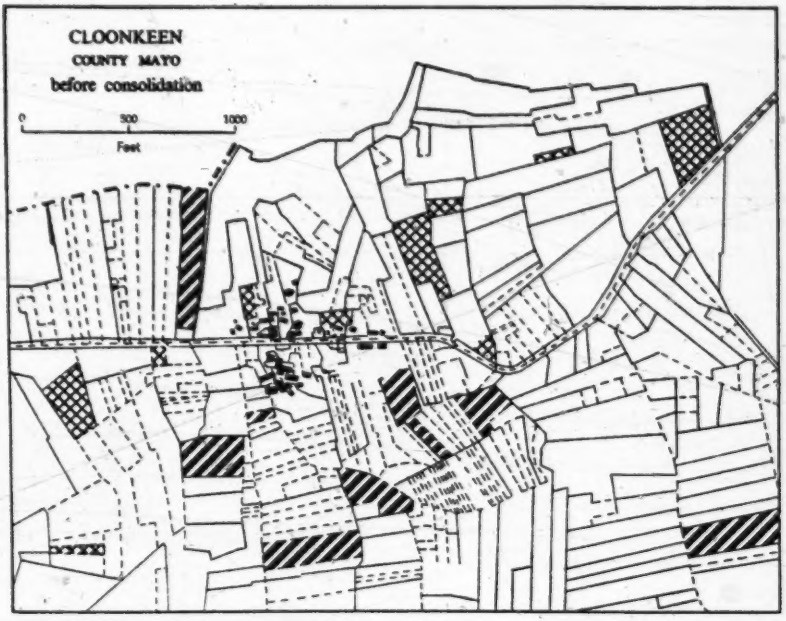

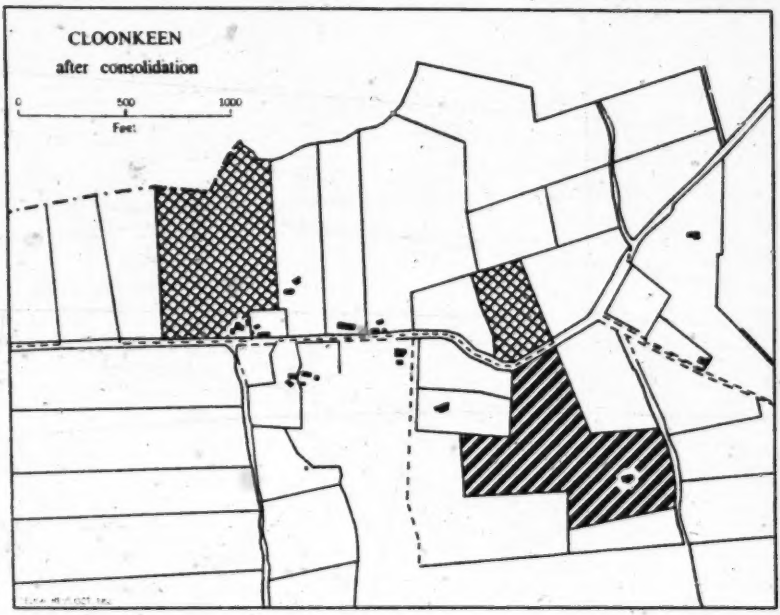

FIG. 5—Cloonkeen, County Mayo, before and after consolidation. The two different shadings (crosshatch and diagonal ruling) represent land held by two typical farmers before and after the consolidation carried out in 1909 by the Congested Districts Board. (Based on information kindly provided by the Irish Land Commission and reproduced by permission.)

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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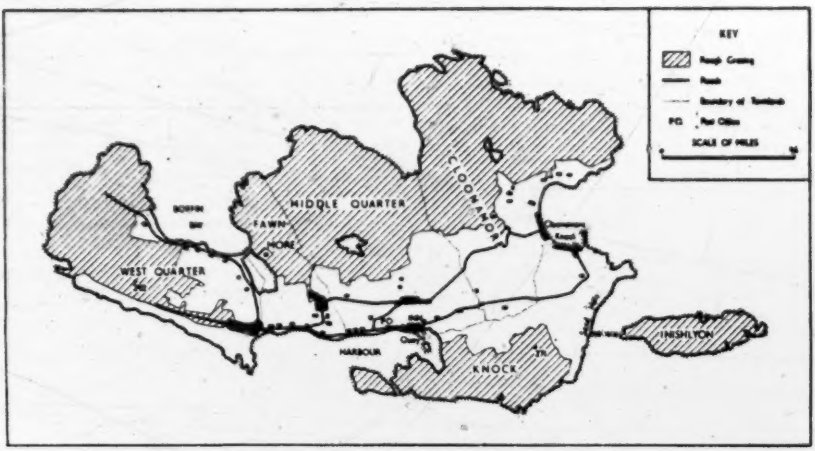

FIG. 1. The townlands of Inishbofin. Inishlyon has no inhabitants, but is used as sheep pasture. Cloonamore and Knock appear as a single line of houses on the shore but are in different townlands. The boundaries of the rough pasture and the distribution of houses were mapped in July, 1954. (Based on Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to 1 mile, Co. Galway, sheet 9, 1898, by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.)

[p. 204(A)]

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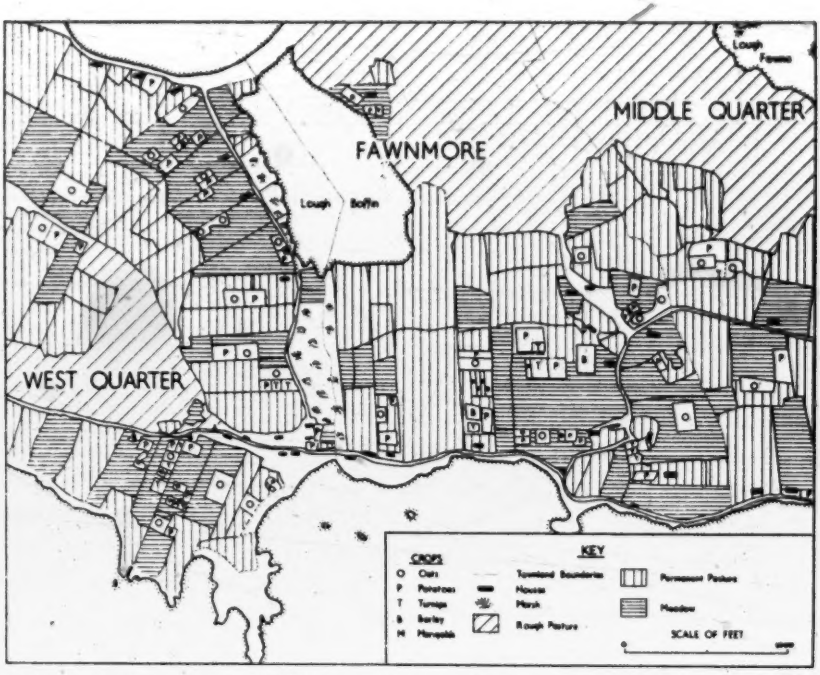

FIG. 2. Land use in part of Inishbofin. The rectangular pattern is characteristic of many areas "striped" by the Congested Districts Board. Small crop "gardens," fields of meadow and improved pasture, exist beside each farmhouse, and roads lead to the "commonage." (Field mapping done by Mr. Clifford Hargreaves, B.A., of the Department of Geography, University of Manchester, in July 1954, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made.)

[p. 205(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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FIG. 2. The Provinces of Ireland.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

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[133]
[132]
[102]

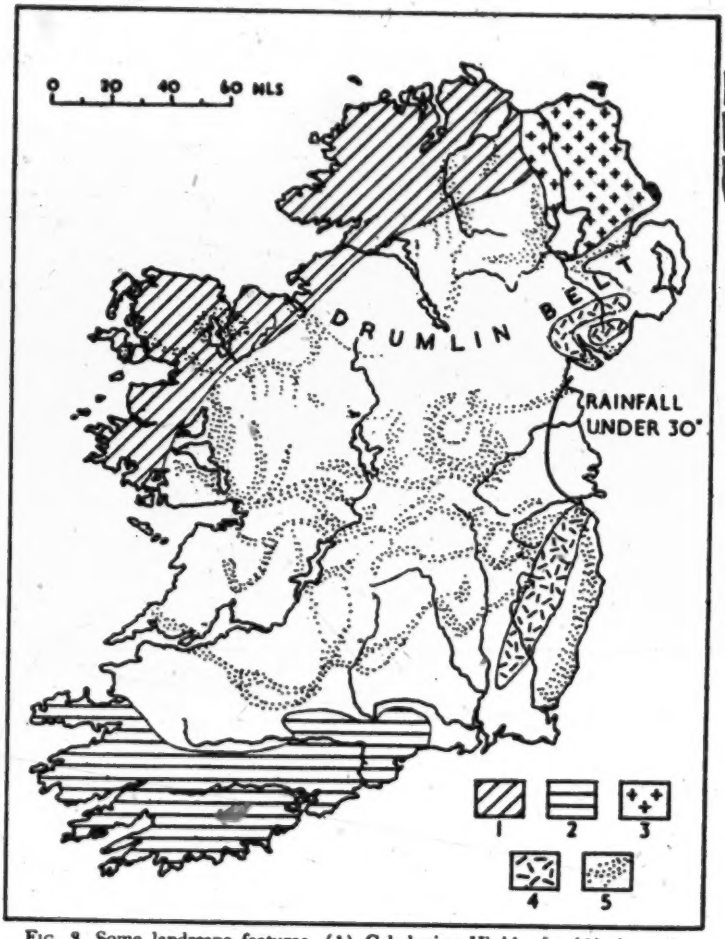

FIG. 3. Some landscape features. (1) Caledonian Highlands, (2) Armorican ridge and valley, (3) North-eastern basalts, (4) Eastern granites, (5) Glacial sands and gravels (eskers) (after J. K. Charlesworth). Drumlins are little hills composed of glacial drift. See Pl. 5, 1.

as they appear. The pattern they make has changed with the centuries in response to new needs and new tools. At present we are in a period of fairly rapid change, for the tractor calls for larger and more regular fields than those made by the spade

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 where the land has been almost the sole available re-
[578] source go far to explain the jealousy with which established rights are maintained, but there are deeper needs and bonds in the rural community.

[491]
[102]

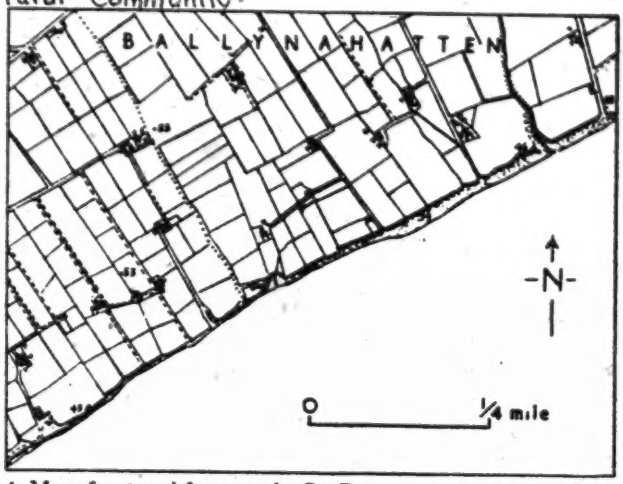

FIG. 4. Map of scattered farms on the Co. Down coast, showing seaweed-roads. (Based upon the Ordnance map with the sanction of the Controller, H.M.S.O.)

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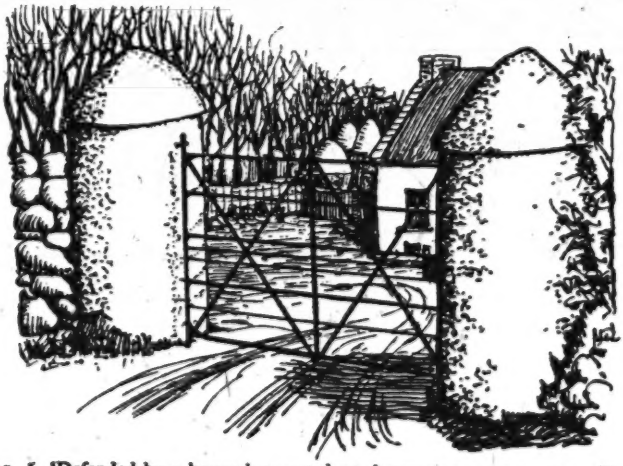


FIG. 5. 'Defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars:' an Ulster farm.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

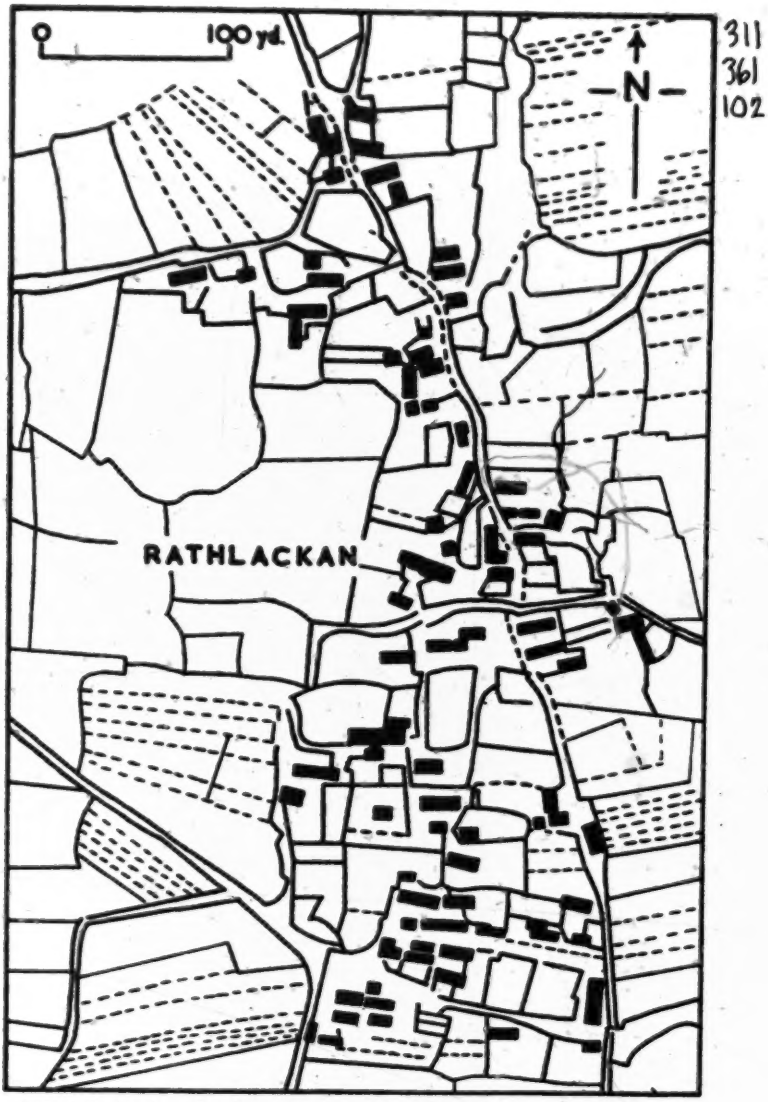


FIG. 6. Rathlackan, Co. Mayo: the rundale cluster with some of the openfield strips as they were before reorganization began in 1918.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Plate XI.

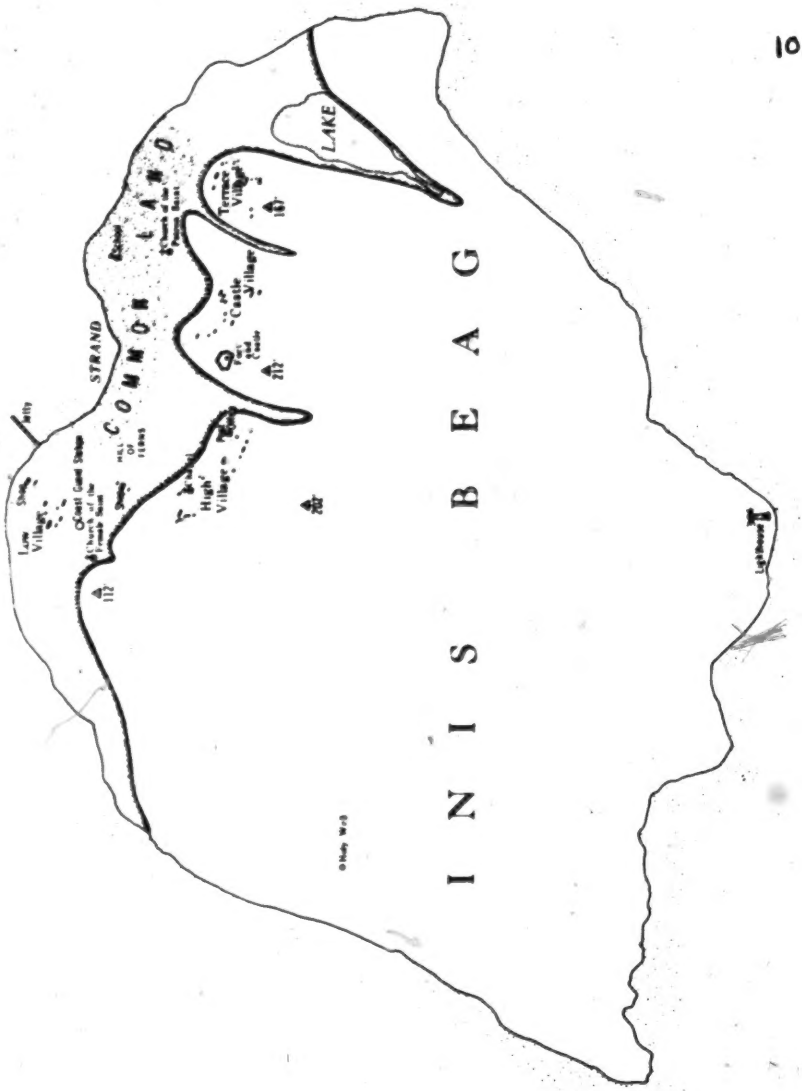
101
102
794
103

ANCIENT PARISHES OF COUNTY CLARE.

To face p. 180.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

[p. ii]



7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of
eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the begin-
172 ning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered. However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of
121 investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the
103 Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of land-holding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviving clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been
121 aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photographs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in
178 what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to
311 find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield
361 system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

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[113] [28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland, *Antiquity*, Vol. 4, 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Castle, on the mainland, and tried there; having been convicted, he was put to death, the means of execution being to chain him on a rock, which is left bare at low water, so that when the tide rose again he was drowned. This rock has ever since borne the name of Carrig Guairim or Gorham's rock. The belief is that ever since a curse has rested on the families connected with the murder, and that, in consequence, no Halligan can ever become a priest; and that several who have tried have all failed from one cause or another. 173 [103]

Cromwell's (or Bosco's) Castle.—There are many stories related about the old castle on Port Island, at the entrance to the harbour. Tradition says that it was built by a pirate named Bosco, about whose nationality there seems to be much uncertainty: one account making him a Spaniard, another a Dane. He was an ally of Grania Uaile, who had a fort a little farther up along the opposite side of the harbour, and for whom he kept a fleet of boats. He had a chain boom stretched across the harbour's mouth, from his castle to a place known in Irish as the Cat's Hole, close to the castle of the Guairim mentioned in the last tale, and to the site of the present R. C. Church, and thus prevented ships from entering or leaving the place without paying heavy dues to him. An embrasure or doorway overhanging the sea is said to have been used by him as a means of disposing of his prisoners; and just outside the mouth of the harbour, and close under the walls of the castle, is a small rocky islet, called the Gun Rock, on which Bosco is said to have had a heavy gun planted to defend the entrance.

During the Commonwealth, the castle is said to have been at first used as a prison for priests and monks transported thither from the mainland, and afterwards to have been strengthened, provided with a small boat-harbour, and supplied with a garrison, for whom a market was opened in Middlequarter. A large treasure is reputed to be buried somewhere within the castle; and a story is told of a priest who at one time attempted to dig for it, but was ordered to desist by a voice which spoke to him in Irish out of the ground.

The Bell of Inishshark.—There once was a marvellous brass bell in Inishshark, which was preserved with the greatest care, as it had at one time belonged to St. Leo, the patron saint of the island, about which the following legend is related. A French ship came to the island, the crew of which plundered the place, and took away the bell; but their theft did not prosper with them, for they had not well got it on board before very rough weather came on, and the vessel

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

423 of different sizes and various origins into which rural Ireland
621 is divided—townland, parish, barony, diocese, rural district and so on—it is the townland which most closely touches the daily life and social relations of the countryman. The townland is his postal address, for individual farms preserve their historic communal anonymity: they still belong to the townland though they have become separate units since the 'town' or cluster has broken up. The farms rarely carry any names other than those of
[103] their owner (Mulligan's place, Thomson's farm or merely O'Brien's) and since there may be a dozen O'Briens in a
[551] particular townland various nicknames[1] and patronymics are used to distinguish between them. Thus one farm may be Kilty O'Brien's (from its left-handed owner), another Patsy Kate O'Brien's (from the owner's mother), and a third Yank O'Brien's (a returned emigrant, this). Similarly, the public house takes its title not from the brewers who supply it or from heraldic beasts such as the Red Lion but from the Mooneys or the Murnaghans who own it. Shops in country towns, too,
[602] carry personal names, and the nucleus of their trade is built up among blood relations.

The townland names, involving so many land holdings, are
423 legal titles, and their Gaelic names, however erroneously spelt
621 on the Ordnance Survey maps, are fossilized in their current
103 forms. Only an Act of Parliament can alter them. A glance at any six-inch Ordnance map will reveal the strange names that Gaelic imagination contrived and English scribes corrupted. Here are a few which I have come across in Ulster: Ballywillwill, Ballymunterhiggin, Aghayeevoge, Treantaghmucklagh. In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of them named Ballybeg (little town). Some 2,000 townlands begin with Knock (a hill); there are sixty called Tully and there are eleven Edens. The degree of repetition shows that these names have come down from a time when life was organized on a local basis. There are between 60,000 and 70,000 townlands in Ireland, averaging 325 acres or
423 ½ sq. mile, and the average townland population in the rural
621 areas is perhaps fifty. In fact their size varies considerably,
184

[1]Writing in 1682 (*West-Meath*, 113), Sir Henry Piers noticed their prevalence in that county '. . . so as no man whatever can escape a nickname.'

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Plate XI.

101
102
794
103

ANCIENT PARISHES OF COUNTY CLARE.

To face p. 180.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and 121
not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, 124
where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions."

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would 103
be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of 173
traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only 776
give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4]

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they 103
occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also 173
premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca-

[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

103 173 baiscinn, occupied the Baronies known down to Tudor times (and still as a rural deanery) as Corcavaskin,—now Moyarta and Clonderalaw, with the Barony of Ibrickan, (which takes its name from a settlement of fugitives from the Norman conquest in Leinster about 1180).

Burren.—Irghus or Eerish, a Firbolg in the oldest of Clare legends,[6] is commemorated by Caherdoonerish stone fort,[7] on Black Head. Finn MacCumhail gives his name to Seefin, on the same hills. The "silver bells" of Kilmoon church are said to be recalled by Cahercloggaun fort and Owenacluggan brook near Lisdoonvarna. In Kilcorney Parish we have two forts, Lisananima and Caherlisananima, named from ghosts; the first name is older than 1652. Beara, another Firbolg, brother of Irghus, gives his name, (found in a poem dating before 1014), to Finnavarra Point, —but not to Kinvarra, which is akin to Kenmare and Kinsale, "Head of the Sea" or "of the brine." The name Bohernamish, or "way of the dishes," with its legend of the miraculous rapine of King Guaire's Easter banquet, about A.D. 630, is found in the mediæval Life of St. Colman MacDuach.[8]

Corcomroe.—The reef of Kilstiffin, Kilstapheen, or Kilstuitheen has a legend of a sunken church and city, of which the golden domes appear once in seven years. The submerged forests and bogs inside the reef in Liscannor Bay, and the record of the great

Armada on the coast, heard by me down to 1878, have been since confirmed by the publication of long-forgotten letters. So historical tradition, even under the unfavourable conditions of recent centuries, has kept wonderfully accurate versions of events. The continuity of the schools and families of the hereditary bards and *ollamhs* favoured still greater accuracy in early times. Ireland had "books and philosophers" in the fourth century, according to Ethicus of Istria (*Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 403), and, possibly for the same period before Christianity as the Armada lies behind our own time, history was handed down truly, at least in its broad outlines.

[6] "Legend of Carn chonaill," "Dindsenchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), pp. 478-80.

[7] "Fort" in this paper means one of the entrenched residences, (usually circular,) of the early inhabitants. These are called in Irish *rath*, *lisz*, and *dun*; the dry stone equivalent is *caher*.

[8] *Misi* also means an altar in early works. Cf. *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, (ed. W. Stokes).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

earthquake and tidal wave that split into three Inis Fitæ[9] on the same coast (A.D. 799-802), incline one to believe in a basis for the legend. In Nonghaval is a fort called Liskeentha, from "fairy songs" heard there. Not far away, in Kilfenora Parish, we have a Boughil or "petrified boy," and in Carran Parish a Farbreag or "petrified man"; such names, originating in strangely-shaped rocks, are rather common. A third Firbolg brother, Daelach, gives his name to the little river Daelach and the townland Ballydeely. In Carran and Kilmanaheen the belief in the *phooka* or *púca*, a demon horse or goat, is stamped on the Poulaphucas, one of which has a fine dolmen; such monuments all over Ireland are found connected with the malignant prototype of Puck. Lisfarbegnagommaun, "the fort of the little men (playing at) hurling," commemorates fairy sports.

Ibrickan.—Poulaphuca in Kilfarboy is, so far as I know, the only mythic name, but Doolough Lake (Nigricantis) is named in the early "Life of Senan"[10] as the prison of the fearful "Cata" of Iniscatha, while the "Legend of the sons of Thorailbh mac Stairn"[11] locates the cavern whence the ferocious "Faracat" launched itself on the heroes' spears, beside its waters. Dunbeg Bay is the scene of a curious merman story.[12]

Moyarta.—At Loop Head, the south-western extremity of the county, we find a Poulnapeiste and a line of forts,—Cahercrochain, Cahersaul, Dundahlin, and Cahernaheanmna,—connected with the monster killed by Dermod O'Duine and the brothers Crochaun, Sal, and Dahlin, whose sister ("the one (lone) woman") gave her title to the last fort.[13] Iniscatha commemorates its dragon, and Lisnarinka fort the "dances" of its fairy dwellers.

Clonderlaw.—Turning inland, up the Shannon and Fergus

[9] Now Inniscaergh or Mutton Island, Illaunwattle, Inismatall, or Mattle Island, and Carrickaneelwar. The first two are named Inishkereth and Inismatall in a charter of 1216.

[10] Colgan, *op. cit.* (March 8).

[11] A romance of about 1750, by Michael Comyn.

[12] Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 1825, vol. ii., p. 31, (The Soul Cagus).

[13] "Adventures of the sons of Thorailbh"; see also *Ordnance Survey Letters*, Co. Clare, Killballyowen Parish, (MS., R.I. Academy).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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confluence, Tobersheefra ("elf's well") and Poulaphuca are named from the fairies and *púca*, and Clondegad from two druids who competed in magic, making "two gads" (or withes) to sail up the stream.

Inchiquin.—Passing on to the settlements of the Dalcassians, we find treasure legends at Cloghanairgid ("rock of the silver (money)") and Skeaghvickencrowe ("MacEnchroe's bush"). Cloghaphuca in Kilnaboy and Poulnabruckee in Rath, with Toberatasha ("spectre's well," perhaps recording an apparition akin to that of Avenel), represent various supernatural beings. Seefin, Caherussheen, and Tirmicbrain near Corofin commemorate Finn, his son Oisin, and his dog Bran. The old pre-Norman Fenian tale of *Feis tighe chonain* is located on the high ridge over Inchiquin Lake, and connects Finn with the district and with a "hunting lodge" at Formoyle, but the first name ("seat of Finn") has been lost since 1839.[14] In the weird terraced hills of bare crag behind Kilnaboy legend meets us at every turn. Slievenaglasha, the Glasgeivnagh Hill, Mohernaglasha, Leabanaglasha, and Mohernagartan, "Smith's Fort," commemorate the Irish Vulcan, Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha), and the wonderful "glaucous cow," the *Glas*, whose hoof prints mark the rocks in every direction. Inchiquin Lake has a beautiful swan-maiden tale,[15] but it "names no name." Still in Kilnaboy we find, near the tall brown peel tower of Ballyportry, a Cloughaphuca and the enchanted Lake of Shandangan.[16] Ruan Parish has Cahernanoorane, taking its name from "fairy melody." Lisheenvicknaheeha ("the little fort of the son of the night") seems ghostly, but the constituent is also an ancient personal name, Macnahaidche, in use down to at least 1084. In Dysert, Crush'banola and the basin stone near it are connected with a

[14] *I.e.* lost so far as I know. Many names supposed to be lost prove, however, still to exist, especially amongst old persons, but should never be asked for directly, as the demand usually creates the supply. This precaution is too little heeded by enquirers in Ireland.

[15] Given by Dr. George U. MacNamara in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxi., p. 212.

[16] Its curious and unusual changes of colour give it the reputation of enchantment.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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curious legend which I reserve. Banola or Manawla is really the historic Tola, living about A.D. 637. Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge may commemorate a ghostly "red dog," like the dogs of Cratloe and Ennistymon in this county, and the *Maelchu* of Kerry. 103 173

Islands.—This small district, although containing the "capital" of Thomond from about 1220, is of little note in names. Poulnaclug contains the hidden bells of Dromcliff Round Tower. Knocknabohilleen probably had a "Boughil" or "Farbreag" (see *Corcomroe supra*). Fairyhill Fort in Kilmaley, and Music Hill, are connected with the "good people." Knockananima near Clare Castle, though superficially a ghost name, is said to be *Cnoc* (or *Cnock an*) *na h iomdna* or "Hurling-field Hill."

Bunratty.—Taking the Upper and Lower Baronies together, both here and in Tulla, we find an oblique allusion to the fairies in Gortnamearacaun ("foxglove field"), called also "Thimbletown,"—the foxglove being the fairies' thimble. Caheraphuca has a fine dolmen and haunted fort. Knocknafearbreaga derives its name and legend from the "seven" (*recte* five) pillar stones, once the seven robbers who ill-treated St. Mochulla's tame bull. It is noteworthy that the life of St. Mochulleus, (sought for vainly by Colgan about 1637 and only recently found in Austria and published), gives the *seven* soldiers and the slaying of the tame bull that ran errands for the saint.[17] In the Lower Barony the fairies are connected with Lissnarinka ("fort of the dance") in Clonloghan, and perhaps Caherfirogue ("young man's fort," 1617), which is now forgotten. Moyeir, Moyross Parks, and Moyri are variants representing the ancient Magh Adhair, the settlement of another Firbolg chief and place of the inauguration of the kings of Thomond from at least A.D. 847 to Tudor times. Slieve suidhe an righ or Slieve oided an righ ("king's seat" or "king's death hill"), in Glennagross, was connected with a legend, probably historical, that King Criomthann died there in A.D. 377 poisoned by his sister, who drank before him to disarm his suspicion and secure the kingship for her son.[18]

Tulla.—In the mass of hills near the Shannon, Carrickeevul, Tobereevul, and Glennagalliach ("hag's glen") commemorate

[17] *Analecta Bollandiana*, xvii., p. 135.
[18] S. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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●103 173 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

173 776 133 [192] Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 776 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

birds, the whisper and rustle of the wind on the grass and heather, and those weird sounds, booming and sobbing out of nowhere, which are supposed to arise from underground streams and caverns.

V. *Will-o-the-wisps and Corpse-lights.*

103 821 The will-o-the-wisp, if not unknown, is at least extremely rare. The name Loughaunaguinnell, or Loughaguinnell, of a pool in Doora refers, I was told, to a "candle" floating over its surface. In the name Doora itself we find the ancient word for water, which occurs as the river Dour in Kerry in Ptolemy's Atlas in the first century. Mr. and Mrs. Hall, in *Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc.* (1841), note that one of their guides told them of "corpse candles" seen on the banks of the Shannon, and voices of the "good people" heard with them. Crofton Croker, in "Florry Cantillon's Funeral,"[2] alludes to the "Blue Man's Lake at midnight," a lonely place in the bog at Shragh, near Kilrush, where "a spectral figure enveloped in a bluish flame" haunted the melancholy waters. Some of the "corpse lights" shining in graveyards, "forts," and deserted buildings I have myself seen. In one case, I traced the light to the stagnant water, full of rotten leaves, in the fosse of a "fort," which, when stirred by waving branches, gave out phosphorescent light. In another case a church gable was observed for many nights lit up with blue flame, after three victims of a railway accident had been laid in their family vault below it. The windows of Inchiquin Castle are seen across the lake, lit up by pale blue fire, which vanishes from the sight of anyone approaching the ruined building though still visible at a distance. A deserted cottage on a ridge not far from Tulla, as I have seen, used to be lit up with pale light, and was reputed haunted. Several graveyards have displayed "corpse lights," and particularly those at Killone Convent (a picturesque twelfth-century ruin on a wooded slope over a beautiful lake near Ennis), and, I hear, Killeemur and Kilmaleery on the Shannon and Fergus, and Clooney in Bunratty Barony.

[2] *Fairy Legends of the South of Ireland*, Part II. (1828), p. 24.

[p.202]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

VI. *Underground Folk.*

To underground folk, other than fairies, I have only found few and uninteresting references, such as,—"an old woman looked out of the side of the fort, and the man ran away"; "he heard *them* talking inside the hill"; and "the little old man came out of the fort, and shut it behind him." 776

VII. *Water Spirits and Mer-folk.*

The Shannon, according to the *Dindsenchas*, derived its name from a sea-lady, but evidently not a "water-breather." Sinenn, daughter of Lodan, came from *Tir-tairngire*, the Land of Youth, under the sea, to visit the well of Connla, under the river now called Shannon. She came to Linn na feile, but was drowned at Tarrchinn "on this side Shannon," and gave her name to the great river.[3] A water spirit, or mermaid, is remembered at Killone Lake and Newhall. The legend is preserved in several variants. In 1839 it was told how O'Brien of Killone saw a lovely girl in the lake, and caught her. Bringing her home, he found to his great disgust and disappointment that she had a fish's tail. He ordered her to be kept in a "crib," and fed and well-treated. As she never spoke, a local fool threw scalding water on her to make her say something. He was only too successful, for, after a wild, blood-curdling shriek, she cried: 103 ● 773 776

> "As the return of the salmon from the stream,
> A return without blood or flesh,
> May such be the departure of the O'Briens
> Like ears of wild corn from Killone."[4]

The legend recorded, almost at the same time (1840), by Crofton Croker was told to me by the old peasantry, about 1876, as follows:—A mermaid used to swim up a stream that flowed under the cellars of Newhall, in order to steal wine. The "master" (an O'Brien), or the butler, hid and stabbed her, (or threw her into a tub of scalding water where she became a big lump of jelly), and her blood ran down the stream and 773 776

[3] "The Dind Senchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), p. 456.
[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii., p. 111.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773 776 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she wailed :—

> "As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> "As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer. [823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of long, low, cross vaults. [342] In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their [103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[8] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

[8] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soul Cages").

[P. 204]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date,
825 for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle.*—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

778 The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round
825 Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an
233 irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St.
823 Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a
[776] river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolipduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolydoolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaunk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

[P 241]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first [241] decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag [241] over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most [501] attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing [197] the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 [1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

• 103 192 [2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping touriss, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

[p.50]

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The Village and the Family

Village Differences

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LOW VILLAGE RECEIVES ITS NAME from its position on the lowest terrace of Inis Beag (see Fig. 4). It borders the ocean and strand, while High Village to the east is located in a wide expanse south of the common land formed by a concavity in the upper terraces. On the western of the two promontories high above the beach, separated from Low and Terrace by rift valleys, is Castle Village. Below it are the cemetery enclosing the church of the patron saint and the new school, and above it are the castle, the ruined monastery, the Napoleonic watch tower, and what remains of the old school next to the tower. The Ordnance Survey Maps place the highest elevation of Inis Beag in the vicinity of the tower, but the folk claim that the most elevated portion of the crest is above High. Terrace Village, on the promontory to the east, presents a breath-taking view of the lake (see Fig. 7), the sound, and towering mountains and cliffs along the mainland coast. Low merges with High, but Castle and Terrace, because they are located on high terraces and bounded by rift valleys, are isolated units. Terrace is aligned north and south, but the other three settlements are aligned roughly east and west. The southernmost house of Terrace and the westernmost one of Low are approximately 1500 yards apart, and the intervening distance can be walked comfortably in less than 12 minutes.

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[823]

Below are the number of inhabited houses and the population of each village:

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	Houses	*Population*
Low Village	24	119
High Village	16	59
Castle Village	17	99
Terrace Village	14	73

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Introduction

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process. 114 121 127

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated. 12 [539] [177] [178]

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next. 105 [121] [161] [241] [436] [511] [161] [593] [681] [177] [178] [829] [165] [212] [829]

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the 668

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

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JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

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In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

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According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1–2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

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* A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled me to write this chapter.

[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

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to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions
there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side,
where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new
soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle
dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

JOHN C. MESSENGER

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

1: Arensberg, Conrad Maynardier and Solon Toothaker Kimball. Family and Community in Ireland. Preface by W. Lloyd Warner. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940.

Pp. xxix, 322; 6 plates; 13 text figures; 9 tables; index.

Yale: B264n. 940a

[This is an account of the community life and kinship system of the small farmers of County Clare in Ireland. It is also an example of community study employing the techniques of social anthropology. The authors discuss, specifically, the small farm economy of rural Ireland, marriage and family patterns, kinship structure, property and inheritance system, housing and settlement patterns, social stratification according to sex, age, and occupation, labor exchange and employment, interpersonal relationships, public opinion and attitudes, and the nature of social and economic ties with areas outside of the farm community. It is demonstrated that the persistent decline in the Irish rural population is not due to poverty of the people but to the traditional social patterns centering on the family. --Analyst]

Field date: 1932-1934
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Ethnologists-5
Processed in 1959

2: Campbell, Åke. Notes on the Irish House. Folkliv, Vol. 1, pp. 205-234. Stockholm: Bokförlags Aktiebolaget Thule, 1937.

Yale: Nk10 ‡F71 1937

[This article is the first part of a two-part study on the Irish peasant house (see source no. 3, this file). In this part, the author is concerned with houses inhabited in modern times, mainly stone-built and mudhouses resting on wooden couples. He deals in turn with the central-chimney house, the gable-chimney house and the developed stone built house, their construction and the essential furniture of the houses. He draws many comparisons with similar houses in other parts of Europe. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1935
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Folklorist, Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1960

3: Campbell, Åke. Notes on the Irish House, II. Folkliv, Vol. 2, pp. 173-196. Stockholm: Bokförlags Aktiebolaget Thule, 1938.

Yale: Nk10 /F71 1938

[This is the second part of a two-part study on the Irish peasant house (see 2: Campbell, this file). This part is devoted to buildings of very archaic or of extremely simplified or primitive construction - stone beehive huts and huts of wickerwork, sod and turf. Ethnographic parallels are drawn widely with other European huts and from the Classical literature. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1935
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Folklorist, Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1960

4: Hooton, Ernest Albert. Stature, Head Form, and Pigmentation of Adult Male Irish. American Journal of Physical Anthropology, Vol. 26, pp. 229-249. Philadelphia: Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology, 1940.

Yale: Nk10 Am41 26

[This source is a preliminary study of the results of a survey made by C. Wesley Dupertuis during 1934-1936 in Ireland of more than 8800 subjects. The results are presented in the form of statistical tables and maps. Subjects discussed include age, stature, cephalic index, hair color, and eye color. On the basis of the distributions inferred from these data, Ireland is divided into three anthropological and geographical areas: the Western Peninsulas; the Central East Coast; and the Blond Crescent (with its horns at Sligo and Galway Bays and its convexity at Longford and Westmeath). Hooton was a noted physical anthropologist at Harvard University. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1936
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Physical Anthropologist 4, 5
Processed in 1960

5: Ó Danachair, Caoimhin. Irish Farmyard Types. Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, Vol. 11, pp. 6-15. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktrykeri, 1956.

Yale: Nk10 +St93 11

[This source describes a number of types of farmyard found in various districts in Ireland. The author discusses the practice of sheltering farm animals within the house and the effect of this practice on types of dwelling. --Analyst]

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Indigene - 5
Processed in 1960

6: Ó Súilleabháin, Seán. Two Death Customs in Ireland. Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, Vol. 11, pp. 208-215. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1956.

Yale: Nk10 +St93 11

[This article, by a well-known Irish folklorist, is concerned with two death customs observed in the Parish of Tuosist in southern Kerry. The first details the social relationships that take place in carrying a coffin across county and parish boundary lines; the second describes the custom of buying and wearing a new suit of clothes for the deceased for the first three Sundays after his death. --Analyst]

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Folklorist - 4, 5
Processed in 1960

7: Johnson, James H. Studies of Irish Rural Settlement. The Geographical Review, Vol. 48, pp. 554-566. New York: American Geographical Society, 1958.

Yale: E10 G132 48

[This source gives a general view of the problems and theories concerning Irish rural settlement. Johnson examines the work of such contemporary workers as Evans and McCourt, and the nineteenth century investigators Seebohm and Meitzen. He examines the distribution of isolated farm settlements as against the clachan type (groupings into hamlets). He devotes some time to methods of investigating the origins, distribution and development of patterns in Irish rural settlement. Johnson is Lecturer in Geography at University College, London. --Analyst]

Field date: no date
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Geographer - 4
Processed in 1960

8: Arensberg, Conrad Maynardier. The Irish Countryman, an Anthropological Study. London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1937.

Pp. xi, 216

Yale: Bz64n 937a

[The materials in this book were first delivered in a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston in 1936. It is essentially the first report on the sociological results of the Harvard Irish Expedition. There are six lectures: on the interpretation of custom, countrymen at work, the family and the land, boys and men, shops, pubs and fairs, and the good people. Much of the material in the first four lectures will also be found in 1:Arensberg, this file. The book as a whole is a functional study of the life of the countryman, showing how many seemingly unrelated aspects of Irish life are closely bound together by the ties of friendship and kinship. --Analyst]

Field date: 1932-1934
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Social Anthropologist - 5
Processed in 1960

9: Evans, Emyr Estyn. Irish Heritage; the Landscape, the People and Their Work. Dundalk: W. Tempest, Dundalgan Press, 1942.

Pp. xvi, 190; 6 plates, 115 text figures

Yale: Edec 942 E

[This is a general work on Irish customs, particularly in relation to material culture, with emphasis on examples from Northern Ireland. The subjects treated include the landscape, crops and animals, fields and woodlands, village and booley, the peasant house, house furnishings, farm buildings, the agricultural cycle, carts and roads, tools, the bog and the seashore, festivals and fairs, and general customs and beliefs. Evans is head of the Department of Geography, Queen's University, Belfast, and has specialized in human geography and prehistory. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1940
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Geographer-5
Processed in 1960

10: Browne, Charles R. The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishshark, County Galway. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Third Series, Vol. 3, pp. 317-370. Dublin, 1894.

Yale: A49 20 19.

[This paper includes the results of an ethnographic expedition made to the Islands of Inishbofin and Inishshark in western Galway during 1893. A large part of the paper is devoted to physical anthropology of the islanders. Also included is material on vital statistics, literacy, psychology, names, occupations, family life and customs, food, clothing, dwelling, transport, folk lore, archeology and history. Some comparison with the Aran Islands is made during the course of the work.]

Field date: 1893
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Medical Doctor-5
Processed in 1960

11: Browne, Charles R. The Ethnography of the Mullet, Inishkea Islands, and Portacloy, County Mayo. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Third Series, Vol. 3, pp. 587-649. Dublin, 1895.

Yale: A49 20 19

[This study includes the results of an expedition to the western portion of the barony of Erris, County Mayo, in 1894. The plan of exposition follows that given in 10: Browne, this file, with the emphasis again being given to physical anthropology, sociology, folk lore and archeology with little interpretation of the basic data. --Analyst]

Field date: 1894
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Medical Doctor - 5
Processed in 1960.

12: Freeman, T. W. Inishbofin - An Atlantic Island. Economic Geography, Vol. 34, pp. 202-209. Worcester: Clark University, 1958.

Yale: Nfc20 Ec7 34

[This short study emphasizing the economic geography of an island off the northwest coast of County Galway sketches briefly the present economy of the island. Emphasis is placed on fishing and potato farming, the landscape, and the settlement pattern and population. The author notes that the present relative comfort of the population has been made possible only by past and present government assistance. The island is not self-supporting under modern economic conditions. Freeman, Reader in Economic Geography at the Victoria University of Manchester, has published several studies on the geography of Ireland. -- Analyst]

Field date: 1954
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Geographer - 5
Processed in 1960

13: Evans, Emyr Estyn. Irish Folk Ways. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957.

Pp. xvi, 324; 16 plates, 92 text figures, preface, bibliography, index.

Rutgers University Library, Newark Colleges: GR147 E9 1957

[This is another volume by Evans in the style of his earlier book Irish Heritage (9:Evans, this file) although it is far more thorough and extensive than the latter. It is a general coverage of Irish peasant culture with an emphasis on the material culture of the farmer. The text material and the many excellent illustrations give a good idea of the extent of the latter. Also included are descriptions of settlement pattern, farming, vehicles, fishing practices, fairs and festivals, weddings and wakes, and old superstitions. There is a general bibliography at the end. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1940
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Geographer - 5
Processed in 1960

14:Westropp, Thomas J. A Folklore Survey of County Clare. Folklore, Vol. 21, pp. 180-199, 338-349, 476-487; Vol. 22, pp. 203-213, 332-341, 449-456; Vol. 23, pp. 88-94, 204-215. London: Published for the Folk-Lore Society by David Nutt, 1910-1912.

Yale: Nkg10. F72. 66, 68, 70

/Repaginated consecutively by HRAF to read pp. 180-271./

/This source is a compilation by the author, a well-known folklorist, of various aspects of Rural Irish folklore as represented by the oral traditions of County Clare. Data presented in this study pertain to place names and legends of places, banshees, the Death Coach, fairies and fairy forts and mounds, various assorted spirits and ghosts, supernatural animals, spectral lands and cities, lucky and unlucky deeds, omens, dreams and divination, wells and well customs, calendar customs, patterns and religious rites, religious objects and their legends, animal and plant superstitions, rocks, caves and stones, earthworks and buildings, and miscellanea and addenda.

14: Westropp, Thomas J.

Since this folklore survey is scattered through the pages of three separate volumes of Folklore without any particular page order, this source has been repaginated consecutively by the analyst, for the convenience of the researcher. --Analyst/

Field date: no date
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Folklorist - 4, 5
Processed in 1962

ER6 Rural Irish

15:Fox, J.R. Structure of Personal Names on Tory Island. Man, Vol. 63, Article 192, pp. 153-155. London: The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1963.

HRAF Copy

/This source consists of a study of personal name usage on Tory Island, County Donegal. The author indicates that the Tory Islanders have at least three sets of names, a Gaelic "ceremonial" set, an English "practical" set, and a Gaelic-English "personal" set. This information is then further expanded to include the acquisition of names, their traditional history, special usages, and matrilineal or patrilineal preferences. The author believes that while his results basically substantiate those of J.M. Synge working on the system of personal names in use in the Aran Islands (1898-1902), there is yet enough distinctiveness in the present data to warrant this separate analysis. Footnotes will be found on p. 155(B). --Analyst/

Field date: 1962
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1964

16: Messenger, John C. Inis Beag, isle of Ireland. Edited with introduction by George and Louise Spindler. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

8, 136 p.; 12 figures; map; bibliography.

HRAF copy. DCL card no.: 70-87858.

[This monograph, written by an American anthropologist under an Exchange Scholarship to Eire and a grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program, is a detailed ethnographic description, interwoven with historic and prehistoric research, analyzing the culture and social structure of an isolated rural Irish ("folk") island community off the western coast of mainland Ireland. The author contrasts his data with those of nativistic and primitivistic accounts and focuses on the interrelationships between the political, social, and religious structures and their influence upon individual personality development. Emigration and repression are presented as the two basic escapes from the puritanistic way-of-life. The processes of cultural change are viewed in the context of their social and ecological settings.]

Field date: 1955-1966
Analysts: Sarah Bridges, marker
Sigrid Khera, checker

Evaluation: Cultural Anthropologist-4, 5
Processed in 1973

17: Messenger, John C. Sex and repression in an Irish folk community. In Donald S. Marshall and Robert C. Suggs, editors., Human Sexual Behavior; Variations in the Ethnographic Spectrum. New York, Basic Books, 1971: 3-37.

HRAF copy. DLC card no.: 78-135552.

[This article is a detailed psycho-social analysis of the manifestations, historical causes, inculcation, and historical and cultural implications of sexual repression in the rural Irish community of Inis Beag. A brief historical-cultural summary is presented as introductory material (see 16: Messenger ER6 Rural Irish for a more thorough descriptive ethnography). Messenger sees strong functional relationships between the Celtic religious tradition mixed with 19th century "puritanical" Catholicism, family relationships and expression of emotion, sexual repression, and rate of emigration. A section of quotations from other authors on the religious influence on personality development is included in this article.]

Field date: 1958-1966
Analysts: Sarah Bridges, marker
Dubravka Schmalzbauer, checker

Evaluation: Cultural Anthropologist-4, 5
Processed in 1973

Carbery, Mary. The Farm by Lough Gur, the Story of Mary Fogarty (Sissy O'Brien). London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940.

Pp. xx, 282

Yale: Bz64n 937 cb

[This book contains a series of recollections by Mary Fogarty, born in 1858 in Limerick, which have been woven by Mary Carbery into a continuous narrative. It presents a rather romanticized account of the kind of life a middle class farmwoman lived in Ireland during the latter part of the nineteenth century. --Analyst]

Evans, Emyr Estyn. Mourne Country, Landscape and Life in South Down. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press (W. Tempest) Ltd., 1951.

Pp. xii, 226; 17 plates, 93 text figures

[This excellent volume is a combination travel book and ethnography of the Mourne Mountains area in County Down. Its contents follow the same general plan as the author's Irish Heritage and Irish Folkways (9: Evans and 13: Evans, this file). However, since it pertains only to a certain district in Northern Ireland, it has not been processed for the ER6 Rural Irish file. --Analyst]

Freeman, T. W. The Congested Districts of Western Ireland. The Geographical Review, Vol. 33, pp. 1-14. New York: The American Geographical Society, 1943.

Yale: E10 G132 v. 33

[This article is a review of the population problems of the congested districts of western Ireland, i. e., of Donegal, Leitrim, Mayo, Galway, Kerry and western Cork. Since the problem is touched on in other works, this source has not been processed for the ER6 Rural Irish file. --Analyst]

Graham, Mrs. J. M. Transhumance in Ireland. The Advancement of Science, Vol. 10, pp. 74-79. London: The British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1953.

Yale: A46 10b 10

[This source is a study based on historical records of transhumance, or "booleying," in Ireland. She draws the conclusion that when English interference with Irish customs was slight, transhumance was an important part of Irish agriculture. --Analyst]

Haddon, Alfred Cort and Browne, C. R. The Ethnography of the Aran Islands, County Galway. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Third Series, Vol. 2, pp. 768-829. Dublin, 1891-1893.

Yale: A49 20 18

[This is a report similar to those in 10: Browne and 11: Browne, this file, on the Aran Islands. Included are discussions of the physiography, physical anthropology, sociology, folklore, archeology and history of the islands. -- Analyst]

Lane, Ralph. Change and Organization in Rural Ireland. Human Organization, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 4-8. New York: The Society for Applied Anthropology, 1955.

Yale: Nml0 +Sol53 13-15

[This article is a brief study of land use and land holdings in rural Ireland, the effect of emigration on their size, and of the three main types of farmers, the small holder, the medium holder and the rancher. It concludes with a brief estimation of the effects of new agricultural organizations on the life of the farmer. --Analyst]

Lucas, A. T. Footwear in Ireland. The Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society, Vol. 13, pp. 309-394. Dundalk, 1956.

Yale: Bz91 L93 C83 13

[This article is concerned mainly with a survey of the use of soleless stockings in Ireland, although it also touches upon other footwear. It is concerned primarily with the historical literature. Some mention of archeological speciments of footwear is also made. --Analyst]

Mogey, John M. Rural Life in Northern Ireland. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1947.

Pp. xvi, 240; 8 plates; 44 text figures; 65 tables

Harvard: Econ 6474.80

[This volume consists of five regional studies made for the Northern Ireland Council of Social Service (Inc.), together with an assessment of rural life in Northern Ireland as a whole. Information is given on ecology, demography, the effect of the government on rural life, and changes in rural social life through the last seventy-five years. A tremendous amount of information is presented in the form of tables and figures, with brief sections explaining the meaning of each. However, since the material is restricted to Northern Ireland and does not deal with Irish rural life in general, it has not been processed for the ER6 Rural Irish file. --Analyst]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 171 built bed in the hall beside the fireplace has been common. But this custom of bed is also known over a wider area along the North Sea. As to the outshot it is to be remarked that it must be compared with the outshots of English and Northwest European houses. Where the outshot tradition is natural to the house-types, the outshots are used for purposes and not only for beds.

In Donegal I have found *cailleachs* closed with wooden doors, similar to the built in beds of North-West Europe. The *cailleach* is cut off by curtains.

It has been mentioned that the dresser at an early stage of development has formed part of the partition. This and other facts (the dresser has generally a fixed traditional place, different in different parts of Ireland) seems to indicate that the dresser belongs — as in Scandinavia and West-European countries — to a rather old set of furniture.

The table however seems not to have any prominent place in the old-fashioned houses at least in Western and Northern Ireland. It is always put along a wall in primitive houses, and one can never sit round it. It never attracted the social activities of the house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating social and family-centre. In this respect the table in Ireland has never supplanted the fireplace. There are no references, as far as I am told in the early tales to people feasting at the table. I think that the table [184] does not belong to the original set of furniture. In many fishermen's dwellings in North-West of Donegal it is still missing. The people sit in front [264] of the fireplace round the shallow-basket, *ciseog*, when eating, the basket resting upon the knees of the familymembers. This basket will be seen after dinner-time hanging to dry on the south wall of the house, pl. XLVIII: 2. I suppose this is the native and original "table", at least in certain cultural spheres of Western and Northern Ireland.

[113] [1] In a valuable article by Ludwig Mühlhausen, Contributions to the study of the concrete material culture of the Gaoltacht, Cork Arch. Soc. Vls. XXXVIII, p. 67, and XXXIX, p. 41, et sqq., is found a very good description of houses in Dingle Peninsula and Cornamona, Co. Galway. I have not come across any more detailed contribution to the study of the Irish house. From books of travel and novels some information can be picked up. See Béaloideas 1935 p. 57 sqq.

[114] [2] The material here presented has been collected by me during journeys in Ireland in the years 1934 and 1935. For the many facilities afforded me in pursuing my investigations in Ireland I must express my thanks to the Irish Folklore Commission and its Director Mr Séamus O'Duilearga, on whose behalf I undertook these studies. I am also grateful to my Irish friends both scholars and country people who kindly lent me their assistance. Here I can only mention Mr Seán O'Suilleabháin, B. A., and Miss Aine Ni Chróinín, M. A., especially for having supplied the Gaelic terms used by me.

[3] As to the Welsh long-houses the cruck construction seems to be an exception (see Peate p. 452).

[4] Cfr. Sigurd Erixon: Skansens Kulturgeschichtliche Abteilung, Führer. Stockholm 1928, p. 92.

[5] *Pinniuir*, f., a gable, a gable-end; fig. a patron, chief, etc. *pinniuir an tighe*, the house-gable, fig. the "head" of the house. Fr. pignon, Eng. pynum. Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ADDENDUM

From this Irish county series, as here discussed, all persons of Protestant religion have been omitted. The number thus excluded is 312 Presbyterians and 488 Church of Ireland, of these the vast majority come from the northern counties— Antrim, Armagh, Fermanagh, Down, Londonderry, Tyrone, Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan. Mr. Dupertuis directed this sorting because he was of the opinion that the Ulster Protestants really represent, in large part, a recent Scotch immigration, and the Church of Ireland English immigrations. In the final report on Ireland these northern Protestants will be included. They could hardly alter the distribution pictures perceptibly, except (possibly) in the counties mentioned.

128
141
142
124

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ARENSBERG, CONRAD M. 1937 The Irish Countryman. New York. 113
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HOOTON, EARNEST ALBERT 1939 The American Criminal. I. Cambridge.

than 30 statute acres is regarded as small, one of from 30 to 100 acres as of medium size and one of over 100 acres as large. Small, medium and large farms may be found in all parts of Ireland, but in the provinces of Leinster and Munster and in parts of south east Connaught there is a preponderance of medium sized farms with, especially in north Leinster, a considerable proportion of large farms.[1] All this area practises mixed farming, but the south western province, Munster, is completely dominated by the milking cow, while in Leinster the northern half is mainly devoted to the raising of beef cattle, and the southern half produces considerable quantities of wheat, oats and barley.[2] In most areas of Connaught and Ulster, the western and northern provinces, the average farm is of small size, and the number of cows kept by each farmer correspondingly small; the value and productivity of these small farms, however, vary greatly from the intensive cultivation of many farms in east and south Ulster to the fisher-farmer economy of the west coastal districts.[3]

Throughout the provinces of Leinster and Munster, and in parts of east Connaught, that is to say, generally in the area of medium and large farms, the predominant, and in many districts exclusive, farmyard type is the courtyard, in which the dwelling house and outhouses are arranged about a rectangular space which is the farmyard proper. Most usually the buildings form three sides of the yard, with the dwelling house forming one side and the outhouses forming two more, the fourth side being closed by a wall with a gate. Usually the building is not continuous, the elements being separate and connected by walls, or having gateways or passages between them. The size and arrangement of the yard and the various buildings vary from one farm to another, and also from district to district; the general type is, however, well established, and conforms to a pattern which is clearly distinguished from the other types to be described later. In many districts the front of the dwelling house faces the farmyard, thus, in Co. Kildare in 1807: "The farmhouses in general consist of a long thatched building of one storey, consisting of a large kitchen and fireplace in the centre, and lodging rooms at either end; the front door looks to the barns and stables on the right, behind which is the haggard, and on the left are placed the cow and bullock houses." This, written a century and a half ago,[4] exactly describes many of the farmyards of to-day, for example that shown in fig. 1, which has the dwelling house in the middle, the cowhouse, calfhouse and a small store (formerly a dairy) on the left, with the manure heap behind them, while on the right are the stable, another store and the pigstye, with the haggard, where the hay and corn stacks are made, behind them. The fourth side is formed by a stone wall, with a gate; this wall fronts on the public roadway. This farmyard is at Duncormick, Co. Wexford, in the south east corner of Ireland, but similar examples may be found in almost every part of the east and south. Figure 2 shows the buildings on a larger farm, also in Co. Wexford. Here the entrance gate leads in between a cart shed on the right and the dairy on the left, with the pump close by. Facing the dwelling house across the yard are the stable and byre and a store, while the corn barn opens into the haggard. The pigsty and manure heap are in the part of the yard most distant from the dwelling house. The openings between the various buildings are closed by stone walls about

[Text continues on p. 12]

[1] Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1930.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Freeman, T. W.: Ireland, Its Physical, Historical, Social and Economic Geography, 1950, chapters viii and xviii to xxiii.

[4] Rawson, T. J.: Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare, 1807, 14–15.

351 four feet high, with gates suitably placed. A door in the back of the dwelling house leads into a
361 garden and orchard. In both these examples the front of the dwelling house is towards the yard, but in very many examples the back of the dwelling house is towards the yard, which is reached by a back door, while the front of the house faces a small garden with flowers and fruit trees through which a path leads to the front door. This is especially common in east Munster. Figure 3 shows the buildings on a smaller farm in the south-eastern part of Co. Galway. Here again we have a courtyard formed by buildings on three sides and a stone wall with a gate on the fourth, but the courtyard is divided into two parts by another wall which protects the portion in front of the dwelling house, which is a little garden with flowers and shrubs, from the animals which pass through the yard.

In the smaller farms of the north and west there usually are fewer buildings, and these are often joined together in one continuous row, as in the example shown in figure 4, on a small farm in Co. Tyrone, where dwelling house, stable, byre and a store form one long block of buildings. Here, the elements are clearly distinguished from each other—the byre and stable are more roughly built, with poorer roof timbers and thinner walls, than the dwelling house, while the store at the other end is narrower than the dwelling house and has a lower roof. Indeed most examples of this well-known and widespread type have the dwelling house clearly distinguishable from the outhouses; thus they must not be confused with the "long-house" of Wales, of which the distinctive feature is internal communication between the byre and the dwelling.[1] In contrast to this, there is no such internal communication in this Irish type, as each house, stable, byre, store and so on has its own entrance door, and very often the dwelling house and byre do not adjoin, but have a stable, store or dairy between them. But, as we shall see below, there is—or was until recently—a primitive form of the "long house" or combined dwelling house and cattle byre to be found in certain parts of Ireland.

Another farmyard form to be found in parts of the north and west, and especially in the hill districts and peninsulas of west Munster, is shown in fig. 5. Here the outhouses are built in one continuous row, and placed a short distance away from, and parallel to, the dwelling house; the space between the dwelling house and the outhouses serving not only as a yard but also as a passage between the public road and the farmer's fields; this yard or passage is, in many districts, called the "street".

In addition to these various farmyard types, there may be found farms in which the buildings are not arranged in any set plan, but are scattered about in a haphazard fashion, sometimes without any yard; these occur but rarely in fertile lowlands but are not infrequent in mountain and moorland localities, such as parts of the Kerry mountains.

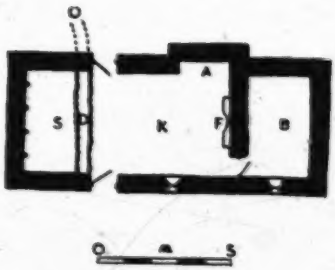
231 It cannot be doubted that the system of having separate compartments or buildings for the dif-
351 ferent kinds of animals and stores is of considerable antiquity in Ireland. The law tract *Crith Gablach*, written about A.D. 700, states that the *bó-aire febhsa* (a certain grade of land owner) must have,
361 in addition to his dwelling house and a share in a corn-mill, a kiln, a barn, a sheep-fold, a pigsty and a calf-pen.[2] Another ancient law tract[3] refers to five "houses", namely, dwelling house, cow-

[113]

[1] Peate, I. C.: The Welsh House, 1940, chapter IV.
[2] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. IV, Dublin, 1879, 309.
[3] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. V, Dublin, 1901, 515.

house, pigsty, calf-pen and sheepfold, and there are several other references in the ancient law tracts to cow-houses and pigstyes.

But, notwithstanding this old and varied farmyard tradition, it is also quite clear that there was, up to the beginning of the present century, a widespread custom of keeping the livestock, or part of it, in the dwelling house. There are very many references to this in descriptions of life and conditions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Few, however, give any description of the internal arrangement of the houses, or the reason for the custom, and usually the accounts refer to small houses and a few poor animals. Some observers have mentioned the fear of wild beasts or robbers. "They are brought in by night for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves."[1] Here the writer refers to the bawns attached to the castles, but of course the same risk existed for the small farmer also. Another traveller writes of a night spent in a house in west Co. Galway: "I had just compos'd myselfe to sleepe when I was strangely surprised to heare the cows and sheep all comeing into my bed chamber. I enquired the meaneing and was told it was to preserve them from the wolfe which everie night was rambling about for prey."[2] Another and much later writer describes a night spent in a small house in the Kerry mountains, near Kenmare: "In the house where I slept—as indeed in every house of the same character in the county—the whole stock of the family, consisting chiefly of cows and sheep, were locked in at night. Such was the extreme poverty of the people that they would not otherwise be safe. ... There was a slight partition between the room where my bed was and the kitchen where there were three cows, a man, his wife and four children."[3]



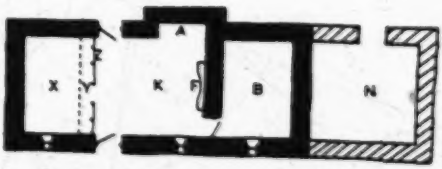


Fig. 10 House at Doolough, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; D, drain; O, drain outlet; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; S, byre.

Fig. 11. House at Srahataggle, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; X, former byre; Y, filled-in drain; Z, screen of canvas on wooden frame; N, present byre.

In many dwelling houses fowl, especially hatching hens, were kept in special coops or boxes, and it was quite usual to have weak or sickly young animals, or calves or lambs which for some reason were separated from their dams, in the kitchen where they had warmth and attention until strong enough to be put with the other animals. In many parts of Ireland the poorest people—

[1] Fynes Morrison: Itinerary, 1617.

[2] Dunton, John: Letter no. 2 (1699), in MacLysaght, E.: Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1939, 339.

[3] Doheny, M.: The Felon's Track.

231 those who had little or no land—commonly kept their animals in the dwelling house (which often
351 had only one room) at night, a cow or two, or perhaps a donkey or pony, a pig or a goat and a
few hens, the larger animals tied to pegs or rings set in the walls, the smaller in coops or boxes.
361 In many houses, even large farmhouses, a special coop or perch was provided for the cock, whose crowing served to call the people of the house in the morning. A vivid description of the housing conditions of a remote and isolated community in the second half of the nineteenth century is given by Tomás Ó Crohan, writing about the Blasket Islands off the coast of Co. Kerry in the extreme south west: "There was a coop beside the partition with hens in it, and a hatching hen in an old pot nearby. At night a cow or two, a calf or two, an ass, two dogs tied to the wall or loose about the house. ... the two or three dogs would lie at the foot of the bed, the cow or two cows below them, tethered to the wall, the calf or two with the run of the kitchen and their muzzles in the fire. The ass was tied on the side of the house opposite the cows, and a cat with a couple of kittens in the fireplace niche ... And as well as all the other animals you might find a pet lamb or two about the house."[1] The custom of bringing the cattle into the dwelling house for milking during the period of the year when they are kept outdoors, as well as keeping them in the dwelling house during the winter period is recorded from Co. Kerry.[2] Indeed it is quite clear that, throughout the west and north of Ireland, the keeping of livestock in their small dwelling houses by the poorer people was quite a common practice up to the last years of the nineteenth century, and in houses from which the animals have long been ejected we may still see the rings or pegs to which they used to be tied.

There was, however, one type of house which was built and arranged as a dwelling for both
342 people and animals, and which was still in use in the early years of the present century in parts of
351 Connaught and Ulster, that is, in west Co. Galway, Co. Mayo, west Co. Sligo and west and north
361 Co. Donegal. Figure 10 shows the plan of a typical specimen, at Doolough, Co. Mayo. This house is 12 m long and 5.5 m wide, built of stone and mortar and roofed with straw or grass thatch.
231 It consists of two apartments, the smaller being a bedroom and the larger a kitchen-livingroom-cattle byre; the two apartments separated by the wall of the hearth. On one side of the hearth is a bed alcove. Two windows, one in each room and both on one side—the front—of the house, give light, and there are two doors, one in the front of the house and one in the back, placed directly opposite each other. On the farther side of these doors from the fire an open drain extends from side to side of the house; this drain is about 50 cm wide and 25 cm deep and is lined with flat stones. The space between this drain and the end wall of the house is the byre, and here, during the winter, three or four cows were kept tethered to the wall. The drain passed under the wall and led to the manure heap outside.

Figure 11 shows the manner in which many of these houses were changed during the last fifty years or so. A byre was built, attached to the house, as here, or quite apart from it. The drain was filled in, and a partition of wood, or, as here of canvas stretched on a wooden frame, erected to enclose the former byre which now became a bedroom. In many houses the partition was formed

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[1] Ó Crohan, Tomás: An tOileánach, chapter III.

[2] Campbell, Áed: "Irish Fields and Houses", Béaloideas, v, 68–70.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or press. 231 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible. 361 351 [173] [184]

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farmyard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type. 361 351

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, XVI, 102, 104.

[2] Flatrès, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 113–24. [113]

were not new, but had, in fact, been made by the shoemaker himself for the dead man, who had worn them only once before his death. The dead man's wife had apparently thought that it was not necessary to order a new pair of boots to be made. The shoemaker had, however, promised the dead man to have the matter set right, so he quietly sent a message to the dead man's wife next day about his dream. She immediately ordered a new pair of shoes to be procured, and these were worn at Mass, along with the rest of the outfit, until the traditional rule had been fully observed. 764 787 292

A friend of mine in the parish of Clanlawrence in County Cork told me the following story to illustrate how carefully the details of the practice must be observed. A woman in that parish had a son who died. She got a new suit made for him, to be worn at Mass on the three Sundays after his burial, and on the Saturday evening prior to the first Sunday she laid the suit (as Mrs. Healy had done when my uncle had died) on the back of a chair in the kitchen, sprinkled it with holy water, and called on the dead son to come for them. Having next placed them at the threshold of the kitchen, she finally left them for a short while in the yard, and sat by the fire for a moment, presumably to allow the dead son to come for the suit. Suddenly she heard something being thrown against the door and, on investigating, she found that it was the new waistcoat. She then remembered that she had deliberately refrained from putting her dead son's watch in the pocket, intending to keep it as a memento. Needless to say, she immediately put the watch in the waistcoat pocket and replaced the garment on the chair in the yard. There was no further disturbance.[1] 764 294 293

[1] For general references to the custom mentioned in 1, see: När Döden Gästar, Louise Hagberg, Stockholm, 1937, pp. 331–379. Also, Über Krankheit, Tod und Jenseitsvorstellungen in Irland, Hans Hartmann, Halle, 1942, pp. 11–115; and Der Totenkult in Irland, by the same author, Heidelberg, 1952, pp. 15–17, 183. [113]

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STUDIES OF IRISH RURAL SETTLEMENT

JAMES H. JOHNSON

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UNTIL recently it was generally thought that isolated farms, dispersed over the cultivated land (Fig. 1), formed a settlement pattern of great antiquity in Ireland. Without investigating the matter deeply, academic geographers explained this pattern in several ways. Some saw it as a product of the pastoral emphasis of Irish agriculture, which necessitated a close relationship between a farmer's residence and his fields.[1] Others, especially Meitzen, regarded the dispersed farms as a direct result of the Celtic heritage of the country.[2] And although professional geographers preferred a cultural explanation, school textbooks tended to seize on an environmental factor, seeing dispersed settlement as a product of the moist Irish climate, which required no concentration on wet-point sites and presumably allowed the cultural factors free play.[3]

Contemporary Studies

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Work by modern geographers on the critical study of Irish rural settlement began in County Donegal. Here E. E. Evans[4] showed that, in parts of the county at least, the single isolated farm is a relatively recent form of settlement, which dates from the nineteenth century rather than survives from any great antiquity. Modern dispersed settlement in Donegal was in fact preceded by "clachans"—clusters of farm dwellings and their associated outbuildings, usually grouped without any formal plan and in the early nineteenth century often consisting of as many as 30–40 houses. Although these clachans normally lacked both inn and church, communal life and the exchange of services were characteristic, and as a rule their inhabitants were related by blood.

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[113] [1] A. Demangeon: La géographie de l'habitat rural (International Geographical Congress, London and Cambridge, 1928: Report of the Commission on Types of Rural Settlement, pp. 41–80), p. 59.

[2] August Meitzen: Siedelung und Agrarwesen der Westgermanen und Ostgermanen, der Kelten, Römer, Finnen und Slawen (3 vols. and atlas, Berlin, 1895), Vol. 1, pp. 174–182.

[312] [3] The advantage of universal water supplies in Ireland is more apparent than real. In parts of County Fermanagh, for example, farmers must carry drinking water hundreds of yards to their dispersed farms (cf. J. M. Mogey: Rural Life in Northern Ireland [Oxford, 1947], pp. 35–36), when nucleation around the most satisfactory supply would seem to be a logical arrangement. Personal observation suggests that this is a not uncommon situation on many Irish farms.

[113] [4] Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System, *Geography*, Vol. 24, 1939, pp. 24–36; Donegal Survivals, *Antiquity*, Vol. 13, 1939, pp. 207–222.

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FIG. 1.—Panoramic view of dispersed farmsteads near Carrickmore, County Armagh, looking west along the drumlin belt of north Ireland. (Photograph by J. K. St. Joseph, from Cambridge University Collection. British Crown Copyright Reserved.)

361 McCourt[5] has been able to map the distribution of relicts of clachan settlement as they were to be found in the 1830's. He has shown that this was a widespread form of settlement in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century, and that it did not disappear in the remoter parts of the country until late in the nineteenth.[6] Indeed, occasional clachans that are still actively functioning can be found today on the Atlantic seaboard (Figs. 2 and 3[7]).

311 Associated with clachan settlement was a form of open-field cultivation,
361 comparable to the Scottish infield-outfield system and generally known in

[5] D. McCourt: The Rundale System in Ireland: A Study of Its Geographical Distribution and Social Relations (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1950).

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[6] D. McCourt: Traditions of Rundale in and around the Sperrin Mountains, *Ulster Journ. of Archaeol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 16, 1953, pp. 69–84; idem: The Rundale System in Donegal: Its Distribution and Decline, *Journ. County Donegal Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1955, pp. 47–60.

[7] The author thanks Captain C. Ó Danachair of the Irish Folklore Commission for drawing his attention to the photograph presented as Figure 3.

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311 Ireland as "rundale" or "runrig."[8] Under rundale the land surrounding a
361 settlement was worked as a joint farm, with individual plots and strips scattered through the arable land, some on the constantly tilled infield and some on shifting outfield patches reclaimed periodically from the waste.[9] By the early nineteenth century this form of agriculture had become extremely
[428] complicated, as a result of the rapidly increasing population and of the Irish practice of subdividing a restricted amount of arable land among all the male heirs of the household. In modern surviving examples the clachan and cultivation in rundale are closely interrelated, and it is generally assumed that they do not function independently. But a complication to this interpretation has emerged in a small area of County Down that has been examined by R. H. Buchanan[10] within the limits set by the available manuscript material. Here a set of estate maps shows clachans apparently developed in association with compact holdings. Although this work, which refers to a small area and uses a narrow range of information, may not weaken the great body of evidence that suggests a direct relationship between rundale agriculture and clachan settlement, at least it indicates that the relationship needs to be carefully appraised in each individual case.

Two Nineteenth-Century Investigators

114 Although changes in the pattern of Irish rural settlement have only
361 recently been uncovered by research, the periodic reports of the various Royal Commissions concerned with nineteenth-century Ireland make it clear
311 that the inhabitants of the country were not unaware of the changes taking place around them.[11] Hence it is not surprising that at least two nineteenth-century scholars, Frederic Seebohm and August Meitzen, knew of clachan settlement.

Seebohm's attention was focused on the manorial and tribal systems and on the open-field system of cultivation.[12] It was this latter interest in particular

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[8] D. McCourt: Infield and Outfield in Ireland, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 7, 1954–1955, pp. 369–376.

[9] Flatrès believes that the outfield was not widely found in Ireland but was a late introduction, brought in the early seventeenth century by Scottish settlers (Pierre Flatrès: Géographie rurale de quatre contrées celtiques—Irlande, Galles, Cornwall & Man [Rennes, 1957]). No attempt has been made here to evaluate Flatrès' ambitious study; of particular interest, however, is his map of the modern field systems of Ireland (Fig. 1). [Reviewed in this number of the *Geographical Review*, p. 599.—Edit. Note.]

[10] The author is grateful to Mr. Buchanan for this information in advance of its publication.

[11] In particular see the evidence presented to the Devon Commission (Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry [Lord Devon, Chairman] into . . . the Occupation of Land in Ireland [6 parts (in 5 vols.), London, 1845; British Parliamentary Papers 1845, XIX–XXIII]).

[12] Frederic Seebohm: The English Village Community, Examined in Its Relations to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry (2nd edit., London, 1883).

[Text continues on p. 558]

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and arable use of land.[17] Further, Meitzen does not seem to have been aware of the widespread distribution of the clachan and its associated field system. In fairness, however, it should be pointed out that Meitzen was not entirely wrong. Recent work suggests that Celtic freemen in Ireland lived in dispersed farmsteads (known to archeologists as "raths"),[18] though this does not establish that modern dispersed settlement was directly derived from such a heritage, particularly in view of the unsettled history of Ireland during the intervening period.

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A Problem in Origins

Moreover, the two forms of settlement—*Einzelhöfe* and clachans—are not necessarily incompatible. Both McCourt and Evans have commented on the way in which clachans wax and wane,[19] largely because of fluctuations in population numbers. Indeed, McCourt cites at least one example from County Antrim in which an individual farm grew into a clachan between 1782 and 1832, and two of the clachans Evans studied in Donegal dissolved into isolated farms sometime between 1834 and 1902.[20]

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The problem here seems to be one of origin. Did the clachan bring the infield-outfield system with it, or were the two separate at this earliest stage? If they were separate, it would suggest that their modern survival together on the Atlantic fringe of Ireland may be the result of the independent preservation of ancient practices in a difficult region. For that matter, was the clachan introduced? Examples have already been given of the growth of nucleated settlements from dispersed farmsteads, often in a very short time, and in view of the clachan's lack of plan this manner of origin seems entirely reasonable.

On the other hand, merely to say that the settlement pattern and the field system grew out of the subdivision of a larger enclosed farm is to oversimplify the problem. Meitzen postulated a Celtic people with a tradition of compact farms; but if subdivision took place, surely it would have been a break with that tradition to produce small farms with scattered strips rather

[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 207–218.

[18] V. B. Proudfoot: The People of the Forths, *Ulster Folklife*, Vol. 1, 1955, pp. 19–26. See also his "Settlement and Economy in Co. Down from the Late Bronze Age to the Anglo-Norman Invasion" (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1957).

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[19] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 28.

[20] McCourt, The Rundale System in Ireland [see footnote 5 above], diagram 27; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 29; E. E. Evans: The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe, *in* Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, edited by W. L. Thomas, Jr. (Chicago, 1956), pp. 217–239, reference on p. 231.

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114 than small compact holdings. A further indication that there may have been
a fundamental distinction between the systems which is not apparent at first
361 sight lies in the fact that, wherever the historical record goes back continuously into the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, both settlement forms are found to have existed side by side in the same areas and over the whole period.[21] No case is yet known in which an area with nothing but dispersed farms was converted into an area where clachans were completely dominant. Hence, drawing an analogy from Wales, where G. R. J. Jones[22] has carefully examined more plentiful medieval documents than have survived in Ireland, Evans has been led to suggest that the dispersed Iron Age farms (the "raths" referred to above) were the homes of freemen; and bondmen, the descendants of pre-Celtic inhabitants, lived in clachans. Later, in historical time, both groups fell under the control of landlords, but remnants of the former situation survived in the settlement pattern.[23] Some confirmation of this theory has come from Proudfoot's work in County Down, where he has been able to show that raths were not the only form of settlement during the Dark Ages; there were also groups of farms without an enclosing bank, which could be dated to the same period.[24] Such an interpretation regards clachan settlement as being of great antiquity, and indeed it is hard to believe that the cooperative kinship unit (which life in a clachan implies) is other than of considerable age. Further, it suggests that the fundamental antithesis was between systems of landholding, rather than between settlement patterns.

114 The infield-outfield system also seems to have been an early introduction.
It could be suggested, of course, that the system represented an adaptation of
311 the medieval three-field system to the small amount of good arable land
361 available in many parts of Ireland. Medieval agriculture on an English pattern had been introduced into southeastern Ireland by the Normans; and a medieval origin has been suggested for some villages in Wexford, formed of groups of strip farms, which were still functioning in the nineteenth century.[25] But even if this can be firmly established, the Norman influence on agriculture was limited to the southeastern part of the country. In any case, the modern

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113 [21] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376.

[22] G. R. J. Jones: Some Medieval Rural Settlements in North Wales, *Inst. of British Geogrs. Publ. No. 19: Trans. and Papers 1953*, London, 1954, pp. 51-72.

[23] Evans, The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe [see footnote 20 above], p. 231. Earlier, Duignan had tentatively suggested a similar idea but did not relate it to the development of settlement patterns (M. Duignan: Irish Agriculture in Early Historic Times, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 124-145; reference on p. 129).

[24] Proudfoot, Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above].

[25] J. Otway-Ruthven: The Origin of Anglo-Irish Agriculture in the Middle Ages, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 81, 1951, pp. 1-13; reference on p. 6.

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survivals of the infield-outfield system in the remoter parts of Ireland would seem to suggest that it dates from a time much earlier than that of the Norman invasion.

Lines of Investigation

These questions and theories widen the field for speculation, but it is difficult to see where to turn for further information, largely because of the meager documentary evidence that survives in Ireland from periods earlier than the eighteenth century. Admittedly, relevant material may be discovered among estate papers, but there are three other lines that might be followed with profit.

One possible approach, field investigation, is illustrated by a project now under way, in which archeological techniques are being used to excavate a clachan in County Down, inhabited until the late nineteenth century. The primary aim is to discover how this particular clachan originated. Did it grow out of a single farm, and, if so, at what date? Two seasons' work has now been completed without conclusive answers to these questions, though some details have been added to the local economic history of County Down.[26] At least it has been shown that a clachan settlement stood on this site about 1780 and that the site had been occupied from sometime near the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Buildings were found underlying the nineteenth-century structures. The fact that some of these remains appear to date from a time before the immigration of Scottish and English settlers into the area in the early seventeenth century should prove important in the study of Irish house types, since the lack of evidence on the development of settlement patterns extends also to the history of individual farm buildings.[27]

Whether this particular excavation will yield further information about

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[26] J. H. Johnson, V. B. Proudfoot, and R. H. Buchanan: Excavations at Minerstown, Co. Down: Preliminary Report on Work Completed in 1956, *Ulster Journ. of Archaol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 21, 1958. (In press.)

[27] Pioneer work on surviving house types was carried out by A. Campbell (Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture, *Béaloideas*, Vol. 5, 1935, pp. 57–74; Notes on the Irish House, *Folkliv*, Vol. 1, 1937, pp. 207–234, and Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 173–196). This has been developed in a series of local studies so that a comprehensive account of the surviving forms of Irish traditional building is becoming increasingly possible. The best and most recent general account is E. E. Evans' "Irish Folk Ways" (London, 1957; with an extensive bibliography), Chapters 4 and 5. Several important articles on house types and related topics have appeared recently; for example, C. Ó Danachair: Irish Farmyard Types, *Arctica: Studia Ethnographia Upsaliensis No. 11*, 1956, pp. 6–15; A. T. Lucas: Wattle and Straw-Mat Doors in Ireland, *ibid.*, pp. 16–35; C. Ó Danachair: Stand und Aufgaben der Hausforschung in Irland, *Bericht über die Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für Deutsche Hausforschung*, Schleswig, 1955, pp. 29–50; R. H. Buchanan: Thatch and Thatching in North-East Ireland, *Gwerin*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 123–142; and C. Ó Danachair: The Bed Out-Shot in Ireland, *Folkliv*, Vols. 19–20, 1955–1956, pp. 26–31.

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121 settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of
172 eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the beginning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered. However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of
121 investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the
103 Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of landholding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviving clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been
121 aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photographs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in
178 what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to
311 find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield
361 system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

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[28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland, *Antiquity*, Vol. 4, 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

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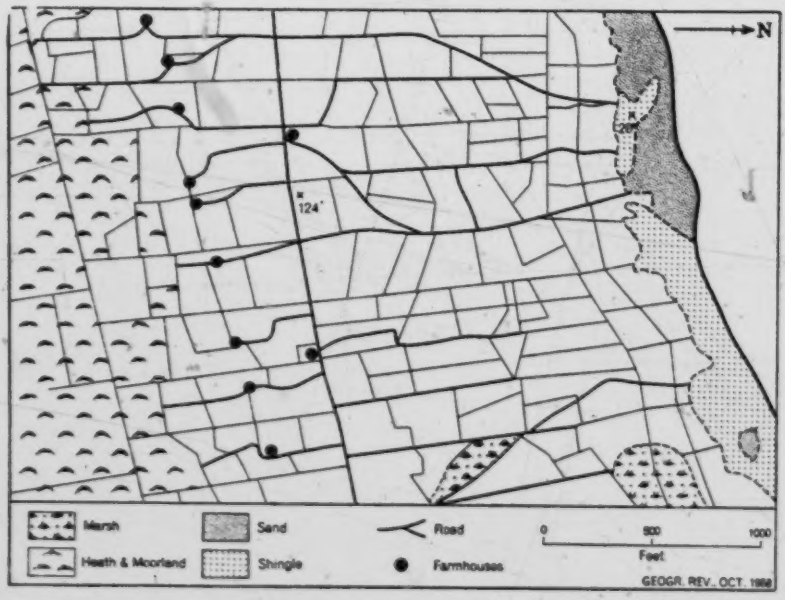

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FIG. 4—"Striped" farms and fields in County Kerry. (Based on the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Minister of Finance, Republic of Ireland.)

mentary authorization. Although it is rarely possible to obtain information on the methods and precise date of consolidation, the destruction of the system can be explained, in broad terms, by its growing inefficiency and by the dissemination of new agricultural techniques. 178 361 311

Some of the unsatisfactory aspects of rundale agriculture sprang from the steady growth of the population of Ireland, which continued from sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century until the Great Famine of 1845–1847.[30] This increase led to a constant encroachment on various uncultivated areas, a process in which the general adoption of the potato as a subsistence crop played a major part.[31] But the "waste" lands brought under cultivation had not been completely unused, since often they were grazed by livestock under a well-developed transhumance.[32] This seasonal movement was important to the rural economy, because efficient rundale farming required that the animals be removed from the unfenced cultivated strips during the growing

[30] K. H. Connell: The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845 (Oxford, 1950).

[31] *Idem*: The Colonization of Waste Land in Ireland, 1780–1845, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 3, 1950–1951, pp. 44–71. 113

[32] J. M. Graham: Transhumance in Ireland, *The Advancement of Sci.*, Vol. 10, 1953–1954, pp. 74–79.

[Text continues on p. 565]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

season; and the end of transhumance made the working of the system more difficult. Similarly, the increase of population led to a remarkable growth in the size of many clachans, which often made life in them increasingly inconvenient. Squabbles over rights of way and other petty affairs were common, and there was a growing awareness that the old methods of farming were becoming unsatisfactory. The introduction of new crops and rotations gave the *coup de grâce* to the efficiency of the system; for they were difficult to integrate into it, and therefore agricultural improvement was retarded. 178 311 361

The impetus behind the changes, however, usually did not come from the farmers themselves but from their landlords. Indeed, it seems possible that peasant resistance to the destruction of rundale was a considerable factor in nineteenth-century opposition to landlordism.[33] Often landlords, intent on improving their estates, would put whole areas of land into the melting pot, consolidating holdings and sometimes evicting the surplus population. Frequently the new holdings were arranged up and down the slope of the land, an arrangement that has resulted in the characteristic striped appearance of much of the modern Irish landscape. Although long, narrow strips were probably not the best possible farm shape (Fig. 4), they represented a compromise between the traditional system of allocating each farmer a share of every quality of land and the landlords' demands for greater efficiency. At the same time the old clachan groups were broken up and new farmhouses were built, each within its own land. In such a way most of the better agricultural land was converted, but at the end of the nineteenth century various areas, particularly in the west of Ireland, still remained under the old system or some modification of it. This hard core has now been largely eliminated by government action. First the British government attempted a general improvement of living conditions in western Ireland by means of the Congested Districts Board, whose work included the reorganization of agricultural holdings (Fig. 5);[34] after 1922 and the establishment of the Irish Free State the task was taken over by the Irish Land Commission.[35]

In some areas, however, the disappearance of clachan settlement was part of a natural process in the late nineteenth century. The population of Ireland started to decrease after the Great Famine of the 1840's, and even in areas where there had been little rearrangement of holdings some clachans became 161 361 178

[33] See, for example, the Devon Commission Report [see footnote 11 above], Part 1, Appendix 14, p. 58. 113

[34] T. W. Freeman: The Congested Districts of Western Ireland, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 33, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[35] On this aspect of the Land Commission's work see "The Consolidation of Fragmented Agricultural Holdings" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Washington, 1950), Chapter 3, "Relief of Rural Congestion in Ireland."

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

235 considered that the abundance of wild white clover, on the seeds of which chickens and young turkeys feed, was another contributory factor. Of the goat it can be said that it is often 231 the poor man's milk supply and supplements the cow on many small farms just as the ass replaces or supplements the horse. But the ass is in fact quite rare in many parts of the country, for example in Donegal, and is regarded with contempt, whereas the horse, as befits its important role since prehistoric times, is held in high regard and is kept by small farmers often as much for the sake of prestige as for its use. "If they have three acres," says a Government Report of last century, "they think they must have a horse." The strength and speed of the Irish race horse have been attributed to the bone-building qualities of limestone pastures: the great breeding and training ground is the morainic waste known as the Curragh of Kildare, but throughout the country there are many districts where, for geographical or historical reasons, horses of quality are bred for export and for the delight of the crowds at local race-meetings. Readers are referred to [113] Dr. Dudley Stamp's *Agricultural Atlas of Ireland* (1931) for further information on agricultural distributions.

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Fig. 9. About 10 ft. high.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 oval in plan: the problem of the origin of the hipped roof is discussed in Chapter 9. It should be realized that there are many transition types, and of course slated houses are rapidly replacing the old styles, but the division into upright gables and hipped roofs is fundamental. Dr. Campbell's pioneer work in this field has met with a hostile reception in some quarters: [113] see for example Mr. Colm Ó Lochlainn's review in *The Irish Book Lover*, January, 1940.

Within these broad divisions there is endless variety of construction, internal lay-out and roofing technique. Of special interest is the projecting bed-wing, the "outshot" or "cailleach" (Fig. 19), which is attached to gabled houses throughout the north-west from Co. Derry to Co. Galway. It may be compared with the "half-neuk" beds of the Orkneys and Faroes, and has its parallels too in the wall-beds of the Hebridean black-houses. The device allows the large bed (6 ft. by 4) to take its traditional place at the fire-end of the house without unduly narrowing the all-important space around the hearth. The bed recess is cut off from the room by curtains or, formerly, by hanging straw mats.

342 231 Single-roomed kitchen byres, where the family occupies the top or hearth-end and cattle the other, are now a thing of the past, but a few examples have survived in their original state, with an open drain crossing the floor and emptying at the side of the door. The custom of taking the animals under the family roof was once prevalent over north-western Europe in regions of difficulty where access to the cattle in all weathers was a determining factor. Tenacious usage rather than poverty ensured its survival into recent times, where the mutual advantage of the custom is summed up in the phrases, "the cow keeps the house warm," and "warmth increases the yield of milk." Two other points should be borne in mind, its relation to the system of booleying described in Chapter 5, and the necessity in former times of protecting the precious animals from wild beasts.

342 As a rule the bottom or byre-end was later converted into a dairy, store or spare bedroom, but the principal bedroom,

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

stated by some to be an Anglicized form of a well-known Irish tribe name; the seven remaining surnames seem to be modern English. 174

Of the 212 families now living on the islands 20[1] have surnames of modern English or Scottish origin—29 Anglo-Norman or Welsh, 22 are Scuffles, 17 Lavelles, and the remaining 134 bear more or less Anglicized forms of old Irish names. It may be concluded from this that the population is, on the whole, not much mixed with any element which might not be expected to be found in western Connaught.

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[1] Including the landlord's.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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EXPLANATION OF PLATES VIII. AND IX.

Plate VIII.

142 Fig. 1.—James Joyce, aged 48 years, No. 5, Middlequarter.

291 Figs. 2 and 3.—Anthony Lavelle, aged 35 years, No. 2, Knock.

Fig. 4.—Group of men, Inishbofin.

Taken in order from left to right, the names are, respectively:—

Back row.—John Burke, boatwright; Michael Halloran, king of Shark; John Tierney, postman; Mick Kerrigan, weaver; Redmond Toole, fisherman.

Front row.—Martin Baker, John Malia (or Malley), Ned Burke, Redmond Toole, all fishermen.

Fig. 5.—Group of women, Westquarter, Inishbofin.

Taken in the same order as the other group, the names are—Margaret Ward, Nancy Browne (first cousins), Nelly Holloran, Mary Holloran (daughter of last), Brigid Concannon.

Plate IX.

412 Fig. 1.—Quern still in use in Middlequarter, Inishbofin.

283 Fig. 2.—Spinning wheel in Middlequarter.

296 Fig. 3.—Method of washing clothes, Church Lough, Knock.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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NOTE.—The late Dean Lyons, of Kilmore, the well-known archæologist, had written the history of Erris, but died without publishing it. The MS. is now missing, but was until lately in the possession of the Rev. James Duncan of Bangor, Erris.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

(*From Photographs, by* C. R. & J. M. BROWNE.)

PLATE XV.

1. Group of men at Muingerena, Mullet. Taken in order from, left to right, the names are:— 142
   Back row—Patrick Toole, James M'Cormack, Patrick Padden 291
   James Dixon, No. 50; J. Lavelle.
   Front row—Francis Coyle, No. 47; Hugh Cafferky, No. 46; Anthony Lavelle, No. 51; H. Joyce.

2, 3. Anthony Dunleavy, aged 60 years, Emlybeg, No. 13.

4. William Gaughan, aged 28 years, Emlybeg, No. 12.

5. —— ——, ——, No. 41; Richard Cane, No. 40. Both from Fallmore, a small village at the southern extremity of the peninsula of the Mullet.

PLATE XVI.

6. Group of men from Iniskea.

7, 7*a*. Michael Cawley, aged 41 years; South Iniskea, No. 4.

8. Philip Lavelle, aged 33 years; North Iniskea, No. 1.

9, 9*a*. Patrick Cawley, aged 40 years; South Iniskea, No. 3.

PLATE XVII.

10. Group of men and boys at Portacloy. The figure on the extreme right shows the dress of the younger boys.

11, 12. William Bourne, aged 33 years, No. 34, and —— Bourne, both from Portacloy.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(B)]

121 IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the
[167] availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated dis-
[434] tricts of the country, an island off the west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly col-
114 lected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of
124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
[578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of
[231] commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

[p. 202(c)]

121 living rarely encountered in the modern world. As will be shown later, however, the island people maintain their simple but not uncomfortable way of living only by help from outside: if [433] one believes that every inhabited area must make its economic contribution to the state, Inishbofin is a debtor on a considerable scale.

"A small and dwindling population 167 maintain a precarious existence on the 657 Atlantic fringe of our industrial society and present upon the whole an aspect of decline and, in some parts, of dereliction." In these words the Scottish crofting report[1] names a problem, com- [659] mon alike to the Atlantic fringe of Ireland and of Scotland, which was investigated by two Congested Districts Boards, in Ireland from 1891–1923[2] and in Scotland from 1897–1911[3]; in both countries the powers of these boards were transferred to the general administration of agricultural affairs. One by one the islands off the west coast of Ireland are being abandoned[4] but on Inishbofin this prospect does not seem immediate: past and present government assistance has resulted in a planned

[1] Department of Agriculture for Scotland, [113] Report of the Commission of enquiry into crofting conditions. H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 1954, Cmd. 9091, para. 281, p. 87.

[2] For a general treatment, T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 23, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[3] Cmd. 9091, 1954, para. 265, p. 81.

[4] T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 120, 1954, p. 332.

[p.204(c)]

133 here, but the original memoir[7] states that the rocks are mainly schists and gneisses, dipping at sharp angles of 30°–89°, much broken by faults and seared by sills and dikes. In short, it is a characteristic pre-Cambrian area.
314 Peat several feet deep is found in the basins between the numerous small hills. Many people cut "scraws," that is, the surface layers of the rough pasture. This time-hallowed practice, noted with disapproval by the Congested Districts Board inspectors 60 years ago,[8] increases year by year the area of exposed rock; it may well be that throughout the peat-consuming areas of Ireland—and of Scotland also—this has happened.[9] As one observer put it, "every

[113]

[7] Memoirs of the Geological Survey, Explanatory Memoir . . . sheets 73 and 74 (in part), 83 and 84, Dublin 1876, pp. 39–42.

[8] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891 (and many more such comments in other reports).

[9] F. Fraser Darling: West Highland Survey, London, 1955, pp. 43, 67, 272–276. See especially an interesting survey of what (in Scotland) is called "skinned land" in Lewis by M. Macdonald.

[Text continues on p. 205(B)]

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[12] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever
437 bought. As one of the islanders put it, "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [12] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p.206(B)]

228 1914–1918 war both the curing stations were used. The first of these was built by Mr. Allies about 1892 and the second by the Board in 1897.[13] In 1898 during the mackerel fishing season, as many as 75 carts a day passed along the hilly road from Cleggan to Clifden with some 1000 boxes of fish to be sold in Dublin[14]; and in 1912, 8754 cwts. of mackerel, valued at £2211, were landed at Cleggan.[15] The fishermen were "the best and most practical . . . on the west coast" in 1892;[16] today, a large number of men have a curragh (made for £30) and fish for the family, but only four hookers, each manned by five men, are now used in the white fish trade. In good years a man may make £50 or more by trapping lobsters and crayfish, which are stored in tanks in the harbor and in Bofin Bay, then taken for a month's feeding in a vast tank near Cleggan, and finally conveyed over a hundred miles by lorry to the Shannon airport for air transport to Paris. The fishermen receive £3 5s. a (baker's) dozen for crayfish, weighing 5–6 lbs., or £1 15s. for a dozen lobsters, weighing up to 3 lbs. From May to September pots are set round the coasts—a long basket is set for crayfish and a smaller one for lobsters. Some of the dozen or so men in this trade make their own with osiers specially grown, but pots are also supplied by the merchant or made by carpenters. Other marine resources are negligible, though carrageen moss is sold to an agent at 5/- a stone. This naturally gelatinous product, used to make a kind of blancmange, is collected from the rocks between February and August. It is possible

[13] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 7th Report, 1898, H.M.S.O., Dublin, Cmd. 9003, p. 23.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[15] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 20th Report, 1912, Cmd. 6353, p. 80.
[16] C. R. Browne: *op. cit.*, p. 350.

[113]

[p.207(B)]

[561] sixteen are in a similarly formless cluster.

Emigration has entered deeply into 167 the fabric of life: in 1841, Inishbofin 161 with Inishark had 1612 people, but ten years later there were only 1047. A rise to 1236 in 1861 and 1262 in 1871 was followed by a drop to 997 in 1891, when there were 215 families of whom one-quarter were said to be "very poor."[18] Steadily the population declined, to 510 in 1936, 406 in 1946, and 341 in 1951, and now less than 300 (including 40 in Inishark). One-quarter of the families were interviewed in 1954; of these only one-third were "normal families" of parents with children. In the school there were only 29 children aged 5-14, whereas the normal figure would be 48. On Inishark there are now only nine able-bodied men, six of whom are needed to man a boat seaworthy in winter, with the result that an epidemic might be disastrous. Permanent emigration to Britain, or, if possible, to America, is favored by the young and adventurous. Even in 1893 seasonal emigration to Britain as harvesters or domestics was declining,[19] though a number of people went to America for several years, saved money, and returned to the islands. A large proportion of the people have spent several years in the United States. In many cases a family has its older relatives in America, its younger ones in Britain.

Conclusion

657 Having reviewed the economic geography of this island certain conclusions emerge. First, the present relative comfort of the population has been made possible only by past and present government assistance bestowed with lib-

[113] [18] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891.
[19] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

[p.208(B)]

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182 The world at large is not interested in the particular ante-
551 cedents of a man and the islanders recognize this in their use of surnames with the outside world. The old 'family'
611 or clan names placed a man in his wider kinship group in the days when this was important—it no longer matters today. Within the community the naming system described above distinguishes a man from other men and places him in his immediate kin group. It helps to establish his descent. Research in small communities in Western societies may reveal similar systems serving similar ends but based on different diacritical criteria.[8]

Notes

113 [1] J. M. Synge, *Four Plays and The Aran Islands*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 263f.

[2] Brief ethnographical details of Tory Island can be found in J. R. Fox, 'The Vanishing Gael,' *New Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1962.

551 [3] The second and subsequent names, when in Gaelic, are in the genitive. Some English names are Gaelicized and given a genitive form. I make no claims for the correctness of the spelling of the names given here (Irish spelling is pretty fluid), except that they are the forms recognized by literate islanders. I could not have made any headway with the Tory naming system and genealogies with-
[115] out the patient help of Máire Nic Fhlaithbheartaigh bean Aodha Uí Dhubhghain, Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh, and Aodh Ó Dubhghain.

[4] See Synge's comment on the use of the surname and the 'Mac' prefix. In the 'ceremonial' names on Tory both Mac and Ó are used, but when a surname is included in the 'personal' set, these prefixes are not usually used.

[5] This could be Paddy-John Uí Fhlaithbheartaigh—roughly Paddy John O'Flaherty. The pronunciation would be the same.

551 [6] A fuller analysis of the structure and functions of these descent
611 groups is in preparation. They seem to be mainly concerned with landholding—as a consequence of the equal division of land amongst all a man's (or woman's) heirs, and the system of keeping land in trust for migrants. Their other functions lie mainly in the sphere of mutual support amongst members in times of crisis.

[7] This distribution could only occur by chance in one sample out of 20: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4{\cdot}30$: $p = < {\cdot}05$.

551 [8] The Welsh system of stringing ancestral names together with
171 'ap' is obviously similar to the Tory method, but the Welsh, I believe, used only male names. Mr. Andrew Dunsire tells me that in some Scottish coastal villages a man will be known by the boat he owns, his children inheriting this epithet. In some working-class communities which I know in England a system similar to that on Tory operates. A man may be known as 'Mary's Tom' and his son as 'Mary's Tom's Johnnie,' etc. Synge notes the use of occupations as marks of distinction in Wales and comments on the lack of occupational differentiation on the Aran Islands which makes this method impossible. In some rural communities a man is known by the name of his farm. W. M. Williams in *The Sociology of an English Village* (Routledge, 1956) gives examples of this. See also his fascinating discussion of Naming and Family Continuity, pp. 79–82 and 229f. The contrast with the Tory system is marked, however, in that one can, in Gosforth, move from 'side' to 'side' in choice of names—both surnames and Christian names being used.

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668 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary,
000 and clerical figures.[9] A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

668 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Associa-
197 tion, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the
538 formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage
[204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

> The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasised the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195–196).

177 Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on
185 language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since
668 the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the
[648] time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

[9] The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to
[113] those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603–1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented. 354 593 178

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street. 342 353 [788] [574]

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists). 571 602 609 [572] 835 602 582 602 609

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias. 428 611

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag. [113] [601]

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Recommended Reading

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DANAHER, K., 1962, *In Ireland Long Ago*. Cork: The Mercier Press.
The author is a member of the Irish Folklore Commission, and presents in this book a series of 26 short essays on facets of traditional Irish folk culture, with special emphasis on the economic aspect and material culture. Six of the closing chapters deal with balladry, factionalism, marriage, and the wake and funeral.

———, 1966, *Irish Country People*. Cork: The Mercier Press.
This volume, a companion to the other, is a collection of 20 more vignettes. Of particular interest to my readers are "Tall Ships," "The Currach Men," and "The People of the Sea." Danaher's two books are literary as well as folkloristic works, and suffer only from the telescoping of historical epochs, a nonfunctional approach (common to folklorists), and occasional nativism and primitivism.

EVANS, E. E., 1942, *Irish Heritage*. Dundalk: W. Tempest, Dundalgan Press.
The two volumes of the author (The other, *Irish Folk Ways*, is listed in References.), like those of Danaher, focus on the economic aspect and material culture, and are illustrated profusely with drawings and photographs of scientific import. Evans is a geographer-folklorist-anthropologist at The Queen's University of Belfast—the only university in Ireland which includes ethnology in its curriculum. My readers will be interested especially in the last six chapters of *Irish Heritage* and the last four of the author's other work, which take up such subjects as wrack, boats and fishing, festivals, weddings and wakes, and non-Christian religious forms (termed beliefs and superstitions by folklorists). Throughout both books are numerous references to the many island communities of Ireland.

FLOWER, R., 1944, *The Western Island*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
This is an account of the author's experiences during holiday visits over 20 years to the Great Blasket Island off the Dingle Peninsula of Co. Kerry. Flower was an English scholar, spoke Irish, and composed the book from lectures delivered on Irish literature at the Lowell Institute of Boston in 1935. It is a literary tour de force and a source of ethnographic data, if the intense primitivism of the author is duly weighed.

HUMPHREYS, A. J., 1966, *New Dubliners*. New York: Fordham University Press.
Fr. Humphreys is a sociologist at Loyola University of Los Angeles, who studied peasant and Dublin families between 1949 and 1951. Although this volume deals mostly with family and class in Dublin, its first, third, and last chapters contain much material on Irish folk culture. The author addresses both the strong Oedipus complex in the family and puritanical Catholicism and their impact; however, he alludes to Augustinianism rather than Jansenism as the doctrine which inclines the Irish countryman "to a jaundiced view of sex" who "places a high premium upon continence, penance and . . . abstemiousness" (pp. 23–27).

MASON, T. H., 1967, *The Islands of Ireland*. Cork: The Mercier Press.
First published in 1936, this classic now in paperback reissue presents descriptive, historical, archeological, zoological, and some ethnographic data on a dozen of the inhabited islands off Ireland—including Tory, Achill, Clare, and the Blasket and Aran Islands. The author was a famous photographer, particularly of birds and wildlife, and an expert on Irish antiquities, while a Dublin optician.

MEENAN, J. and D. A. WEBB, eds., 1957, *A View of Ireland*. Dublin: Hely's Limited.
Twenty-one essays, written by eminent Irish natural and social scientists and subsumed under 12 chapters, make up this volume published for The British

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• 113 Association for the Advancement of Science. Chapters on archeology (by S. P. O Riordain and Francoise Henry), local traditions, and the Irish Language (by Myles Dillon) contain important articles on folklore (by James H. Delargy), place-names (by M. A. O'Brien), and folk life (by T. A. Lucas).

MULLEN, P., 1934, *Man of Aran*. London: Faber & Faber, Ltd.

Robert Flaherty filmed his famous documentary, *Man of Aran*, during 1932 and 1933, and the author served as his assistant. A native of Inis Mor, the largest of the three Aran Islands, Mullen wrote this book as an autobiographical account of his (and his neighbors') involvement in the filming venture. It is rich in dialogue, which many islanders feel best of all literary works captures their syncretistic English. The author now lives in Wales.

———, 1936, *Hero Breed*. London: Faber & Faber, Ltd.

The setting of this novel once again is Inis Mor, and the author sets down the most prominent features of the Aran way of life. Both of Mullen's works betray the exaggerations of pride and primitivism and neglect dysfunction, but this one best serves the self-image of the people, as many hold, although it is criticized locally for revealing pagan retentions. The author also published, in 1940, *Irish Tales* (London: Faber & Faber, ltd.)—a collection of folktales that he had heard as a youth.

NEWMAN, J., ed., 1964, *The Limerick Rural Survey*. Tipperary: Muintir na Tire Rural Publications.

This book includes five lengthy reports (the last by Fr. Newman) by Irish scholars, based on research done in Co. Limerick between 1958 and 1964 under the guidance of American and Dutch social scientists. It represents the first full scale study of the "developmental infra-structure of an Irish county." Its strength for my readers are the 15 chapters which make up the reports on demography and social structure (by Patrick McNabb), while its main weakness is a disregard for religious and psychological variables in accounting for certain phenomena.

O'BRIEN, J. A., ed., 1954, *The Vanishing Irish*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

The causes of "the fading away of the once great and populous nation of Ireland" (p. 3) are examined in this collection of 19 chapters written by 16 authors (Fr. O'Brien has four.). Jansenism and sexual puritanism are dealt with most effectively in chapters by Byan MacMahon, Sean O'Faolain, Arland Ussher, and two by the editor. These themes and their consequences also are discussed in the polemical, but deeply insightful, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, by Paul Blanshard —listed in References.

O CROHAN, T., 1951, *The Islandman*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Complementing Flower's book on the Great Blasket Island are three written by islanders themselves, which are autobiographical in nature and of value to students of Irish folk culture: O Crohan's and those by O'Sullivan and Sayers. O Crohan's volume was published first in Gaelic in 1929, then translated into English by Flower in 1937—"the first attempt by a peasant of the old school . . . uneducated in the modern sense, though . . . trained in the tradition of an old folk culture, to set out the way of his life upon this remote island from childhood to old age (p. v).

O FLAHERTY, T., 1934, *Aranmen All*. Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles.

Like Mullen, the author was a native of Inis Mor and was stimulated by the film, *Man of Aran*, to write his two works dealing with the milieu there. The book is magnificently illustrated with stills from the movie and photographs taken by Mason. Part anecdotal and part imaginative in composition, it rivals Mullen's volumes in providing ethnographic materials.

———, 1935, *Cliffmen of the West*. London: Sands & Co.

Both of O Flaherty's books present sketches—some of them printed previously as newspaper features—of various segments of the Aran tradition at the turn of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

the century. They contain much folk English dialogue, as do Mullen's volumes, but are far less primitivistic in orientation than the latter. All writings of Blasket and Aran islanders emphasize ideal rather than real culture. 113 •

O'SULLIVAN, M., 1957, *Twenty Years A-Growing*. London: Oxford University Press.
Four years after O Crohan's book was published, this work appeared in both Irish and English, and in 1935 was revised by its translators, Moya Llewelyn Davies and George Thomson. It is a series of vignettes, as *Aranmen All*, rather than a life history, as *The Islandman*, which ends when the author as a young adult leaves his home to become a policeman on the mainland, where he died in 1950.

SAYERS, P., 1962, *An Old Woman's Reflections*. London: Oxford University Press.
The author, who married into the Great Blasket Island from a community on the nearby coast, was a famous *scéalaí*—rare among women—known as "the Queen of Gaelic story-tellers" (p. ix). In this volume, translated from Irish by Seamus Ennis, she recounts anecdotes from her colorful life. Writers and critics argue among themselves as to the relative literary merits of this work and those by other unschooled islanders of Ireland; but most agree that O Crohan's has no peer, an opinion with which I tend to agree. As to depth of insight into Irish folk culture and personality, however, I would choose *Twenty Years A-Growing*. To the ethnographer, the chief value of Sayers' book is that it presents a "woman's-eye view" of things Irish.

SYNGE, J. M., 1966, "The Aran Islands," *J. M. Synge Collected Works*, Vol. 2, A. Price, ed., London: Oxford University Press, pp. 45–184.
John M. Synge, most famous as a playwright, spent five months during summers from 1898 to 1902 in the Aran Islands. Out of his experiences there came *Riders to the Sea* and plots of other plays, as well as this chronicle of the local culture of Inis Meain—the middle Aran isle—published in 1907. Although an exceptional work of art, it suffers from primitivism, a lack of concern for the importance of Catholicism in the lives of the folk, and the projection of the author's tragic view of life into his interpretations. An excellent appraisal of Synge as a folklorist is found in Bauman 1965.

Austin Clarke, and Patrick Kavanaugh, and such younger ones as William Murray, John McGahern, Edna O'Brien, John Broderick, Brian Moore, and Benedict Kiely. Irish reviewers of the writings of the younger authors often criticize them for portraying an Ireland of the distant past. But, although conditions there are changing quite rapidly, sexual repression is still a force active enough to command the attention of creative artists and social scientists.[9] The subtle influences of nationalism, religion, and sexual puritanism were very apparent in the revisions suggested by most of the twenty-six "unbiased" scholars of Irish descent—in Ireland, England, and America—to whom I submitted the first version of this article for comment.

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[9] I am confident that one of the major "lines of attack" on my ethnography by Irish nativist reviewers will be that the community described is atypical and conditions in urbanized Ireland no longer bear any resemblance to those in Inis Beag. Since 1957, I have been much criticized by African elitists for describing in my writings a primitive culture which they claim is no longer characteristic of that developing continent.

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

JOHN C. MESSENGER

• 113 McGahern, J.
1965. *The Dark*. London: Faber and Faber.
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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

mensely in scope, and the mechanism of the change can be compared with that in more simple societies.

It is plain that, if we are to develop a full-grown comparative social science of man, the communities of modern life must be included among those studied by anthropologists. If this means that the subject matter of ethnology is the same as that of sociology, so much the better. Anthropologists may then make effective use of sociological methods, sociologists of anthropological ones.

In accordance with these tendencies, when the Department of Anthropology at Harvard began a study of Ireland under the general direction of Professor Earnest A. Hooton, it was decided to send three types of investigators into the field: physical anthropologists, archaeologists, and social anthropologists. As I was at Harvard at that time, I had the pleasure of acting as director of the work of the social anthropologists, Dr. Kimball and Dr. Arensberg. In the summer of 1931 I made a preliminary survey of the twenty-six counties of the Irish Free State and chose County Clare as most likely to fulfill our needs — a county in which there was a blending of older Gaelic and modern British influences, and one that was neither entirely Gaelic nor entirely English in speech. Dr. Arensberg and I settled in Clare in the summer of 1932 and began the task of collecting the necessary ethnographic data. At the end of the summer I returned to Harvard. Dr. Arensberg remained in Clare, where he was later joined by Dr. Kimball, and the two men continued their field work for a period of almost two years. The book that has grown out of their experience there is an excellent contribution to our ever-growing body of knowledge of the communities of the world. From such knowledge we may sometime expect a comparative science of the social life of man.

W. LLOYD WARNER

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
November, 1939

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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the influence of one kind of activity of human culture upon another? Their results have thus always the same general form: men do these things because they do those others. The nature of the causality remains another question, but the connections observed must first be stated. \21

Consequently the book deals with indices, particularly statistical ones, describing all the Irish rural folk. It treats the Irish countrymen and countrywomen actually observed and interviewed as instances of a general condition to which such indices might refer. The instance illuminates the index; two knowns thus forecast the unknown generality. Whether the procedure is legitimate, the authors do not argue here; they merely make use of it. The three communities that appear from time to time in the following pages are thus samples, just as County Clare itself is a sample, a fairly representative mean among the major social and economic conditions in Ireland upon which there was documentation in the year 1932.

A good deal of the material presented here has been presented before, though rather differently. Several passages will be familiar to those who have read *The Irish Countryman* by one of the authors, Conrad M. Arensberg. Chapter X is in great part a reprint from that work. The authors are deeply indebted to the publishers, the Macmillan Company of London, for permission to include such materials here. They make the inclusion in order to put the behavior described in its perspective in relation to the other topics discussed here. Without it, the present story of mutual dependence and functional interconnection between kinds of activity among the small farmers of southern Ireland would be incomplete. For the theoretical problem that is involved in a discussion of the sociology of subsistence in rural Ireland is of far wider importance than any description of things Irish. [114]

The nature of a social system and the nature of cause and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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experts on the Irish scene or to be motivated primarily by a desire to explain things Irish to the world. Much as they desire to understand and give proper value to the nation which so kindly and courteously received them, they do not feel themselves qualified in any way to characterize or evaluate the culture, tradition, or social life of the communities in which they made their study. Therefore, they present the results of their examination of the data they gathered in Ireland in answer to quite another set of problems. If they by chance and inadvertence happen to bring the light of a fresh foreign point of view into matters which are of much more than theoretical interest to Irishmen in the Free State, or to students of Ireland and her problems, they will count themselves lucky indeed. 121

The purpose of the study is not so much to characterize the communities described as it is to examine the behaviors of the persons living in them. The data upon which the argument of the book rests are the data of events, biographies, and situations in which the members of the communities took their parts. But the conclusions which advance the argument and which the authors draw from these data are not primarily intended as characterizations of the behavior involved. They are steps in the elaboration of a view of human behavior in social life to which they impel the authors and toward which it is hoped the reader will likewise find himself drawn.

That this should be the case involves the earliest history of the present research. It was begun in 1932 as an intensive field research in social anthropology as it had grown up in the ethnological work of Malinowski and through the theoretical formulations of Radcliffe-Brown. Neither of the authors of this book had done firsthand work among primitive peoples. They had served apprenticeships in field work under Professor William Lloyd Warner, then of Harvard University, in a study of a contemporary New England city 114 121

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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121

and were thoroughly devoted to social anthropology as a technique for study of modern civilized communities.

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Thus the conclusions of the book are in the nature of answers to the questions originally responsible for setting about the research. Experience in Yankee City in New England had led the authors to the point of view which is the central hypothesis of functional anthropology. The more they worked, the more it grew certain for them that to a certain approximation it is useful to regard society as an integrated system of mutually interrelated and functionally interdependent parts. A study in Ireland, then, should be a study to test this hypothesis. In a setting far different but still in some ways closely comparable to the American scene which the authors already knew, they would try to give it a greater precision.

The pooled experience of the authors, in so far as they themselves can judge it, did not involve a rigid insistence upon or acceptance of any one anthropological view within the broad confines of the functionalist approach. It also carried them far beyond the confines of anthropology, as the reader will soon learn.

For the most part the Irish communities the authors undertook to examine and in which they had a brief but enjoyable participation were, in a sense, laboratories and workshops. They exemplified concretely the problems contained in the concepts, social structure, social system, and organization of human behavior.

That is why, then, even though the authors found themselves becoming, as far as their halting steps would take them, economists, political scientists, folklorists, students of religion and whatnot, they found the general role of ethnologist and social anthropologist most congenial to their task. Even where their data, in part at least, necessitate the formulation of a general sociology, they are still confirmed in what is essentially the ethnologist's point of view. They

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 171 built bed in the hall beside the fireplace has been common. But this custom of bed is also known over a wider area along the North Sea. As to the outshot it is to be remarked that it must be compared with the outshots of English and Northwest European houses. Where the outshot tradition is natural to the house-types, the outshots are used for purposes and not only for beds.

In Donegal I have found *cailleachs* closed with wooden doors, similar to the built in beds of North-West Europe. The *cailleach* is cut off by curtains.

It has been mentioned that the dresser at an early stage of development has formed part of the partition. This and other facts (the dresser has generally a fixed traditional place, different in different parts of Ireland) seems to indicate that the dresser belongs — as in Scandinavia and West-European countries — to a rather old set of furniture.

The table however seems not to have any prominent place in the old-fashioned houses at least in Western and Northern Ireland. It is always put along a wall in primitive houses, and one can never sit round it. It never attracted the social activities of the house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating social and family-centre. In this respect the table in Ireland has never supplanted the fireplace. There are no references, as far as I am told in the early tales to people feasting at the table. I think that the table [184] does not belong to the original set of furniture. In many fishermen's dwellings in North-West of Donegal it is still missing. The people sit in front [264] of the fireplace round the shallow-basket, *ciseog*, when eating, the basket resting upon the knees of the familymembers. This basket will be seen after dinner-time hanging to dry on the south wall of the house, pl. XLVIII: 2. I suppose this is the native and original "table", at least in certain cultural spheres of Western and Northern Ireland.

[113] [1] In a valuable article by Ludwig Mühlhausen, Contributions to the study of the concrete material culture of the Gaoltacht, Cork Arch. Soc. Vls. XXXVIII, p. 67, and XXXIX, p. 41, et sqq., is found a very good description of houses in Dingle Peninsula and Cornamona, Co. Galway. I have not come across any more detailed contribution to the study of the Irish house. From books of travel and novels some information can be picked up. See Béaloideas 1935. p. 57 sqq.

•[114] [2] The material here presented has been collected by me during journeys in Ireland in the years 1934 and 1935. For the many facilities afforded me in pursuing my investigations in Ireland I must express my thanks to the Irish Folklore Commission and its Director Mr Séamus O'Duilearga, on whose behalf I undertook these studies. I am also grateful to my Irish friends both scholars and country people who kindly lent me their assistance. Here I can only mention Mr Seán O'Suilleabháin, B. A., and Miss Aine Ní Chróinín, M. A., especially for having supplied the Gaelic terms used by me.

[3] As to the Welsh long-houses the cruck construction seems to be an exception (see Peate p. 452).

[4] Cfr. Sigurd Erixon: Skansens Kulturgeschichtliche Abteilung, Führer. Stockholm 1928, p. 92.

[5] *Pinniuir*. f., a gable, a gable-end; fig. a patron, chief, etc. *pinniuir an tighe*, the house-gable, fig. the "head" of the house. Fr. pignon, Eng. pynum. Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

STATURE, HEAD FORM, AND PIGMENTATION OF ADULT MALE IRISH

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(Based upon data collected by C. Wesley Dupertuis)

FOUR FIGURES

121
114

In 1931 the Division of Anthropology of Harvard University began an anthropological survey of Ireland. The project included three fields of investigation: archaeology, social anthropology, and physical anthropology. The field work in archaeology consisted of five summers of excavation which investigated Irish culture from the earliest Stone Age through the first millenium of the Christian era. County Clare was selected as a suitable area for intensive social anthropological work. Studies were carried on there by three investigators for an aggregate of more than 3 years. The study of the physical anthropology of the present adult male population of Ireland was conducted by C. W. Dupertuis over a period of 2 years ('34-'36). It has yielded a series of more than 8800 complete anthropometric and anthroposcopic records, which we believe to represent adequate samples of every part of the Irish population in every area with the exception of the large urban centers. Dr. Helen Dawson of the University of Iowa, working under a National Research Council Fellowship in Anthropology, spent 1 year in collecting data upon the physical anthropology of Irish women and secured some 2000 records. Her material is confined, for the most part, to western Ireland. To Dr. W. W. Howells of the American Museum of Natural History we entrusted the task of studying a large

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 skeletal series of medieval and modern age, which was temporarily disinterred in connection with the excavation of the 114 ruined priory at Gallen, County Offaly.

Many technical papers and monographs upon the archaeo-114 logical results of the survey have been published in the proceedings and memoirs of the learned societies of Ireland. Some preliminary lectures upon the social anthropology of the rural districts of County Clare have been issued in book form (Arensberg, '37). No general works correlating the results of the different phases of the survey have been published as yet, since these must await the completion of the detailed technical reports. Nothing at all has been brought out on the physical anthropological side, with the exception of a short preview of the data included in Dr. Carleton S. Coon's recent book, "The Races of Europe" ('39, pp. 376–384), although Dr. Howells' monograph on the Gallen skeletons is in the hands of the printer.

The enormous mass of anthropometric data collected by Mr. Dupertuis and by Dr. Dawson has been statistically reduced. At least 2 years more must elapse before it can be published. It is hoped to bring it out in one very large volume under the joint authorship of the present writer and the two anthropologists who gathered the material. The discussion of stature, head form, and pigmentation hereinafter presented must be regarded as a preview. Interpretation of the data cannot be other than tentative until the entire body of anthropological evidence has been thoroughly studied.

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL BY LOCAL SUBGROUPS

In the tables and maps included in this paper the anthro-128 pological material is divided into nineteen local subgroups. These are single county groups, combinations of adjacent counties, or combinations of part of one county with other counties in whole or in part, or subdivisions of a single county. For 2 years Mr. Dupertuis drove up and down through the whole of Ireland studying the population and the geography of the country. The subgroups were made by him partly upon

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 Ireland as "rundale" or "runrig."[8] Under rundale the land surrounding a
361 settlement was worked as a joint farm, with individual plots and strips scattered through the arable land, some on the constantly tilled infield and some on shifting outfield patches reclaimed periodically from the waste.[9] By the early nineteenth century this form of agriculture had become extremely
[428] complicated, as a result of the rapidly increasing population and of the Irish practice of subdividing a restricted amount of arable land among all the male heirs of the household. In modern surviving examples the clachan and cultivation in rundale are closely interrelated, and it is generally assumed that they do not function independently. But a complication to this interpretation has emerged in a small area of County Down that has been examined by R. H. Buchanan[10] within the limits set by the available manuscript material. Here a set of estate maps shows clachans apparently developed in association with compact holdings. Although this work, which refers to a small area and uses a narrow range of information, may not weaken the great body of evidence that suggests a direct relationship between rundale agriculture and clachan settlement, at least it indicates that the relationship needs to be carefully appraised in each individual case.

Two Nineteenth-Century Investigators

114 Although changes in the pattern of Irish rural settlement have only
361 recently been uncovered by research, the periodic reports of the various Royal Commissions concerned with nineteenth-century Ireland make it clear
311 that the inhabitants of the country were not unaware of the changes taking place around them.[11] Hence it is not surprising that at least two nineteenth-century scholars, Frederic Seebohm and August Meitzen, knew of clachan settlement.

Seebohm's attention was focused on the manorial and tribal systems and on the open-field system of cultivation.[12] It was this latter interest in particular

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113 [8] D. McCourt: Infield and Outfield in Ireland, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 7, 1954–1955, pp. 369–376.

[9] Flatrès believes that the outfield was not widely found in Ireland but was a late introduction, brought in the early seventeenth century by Scottish settlers (Pierre Flatrès: Géographie rurale de quatre contrées celtiques—Irlande, Galles, Cornwall & Man [Rennes, 1957]). No attempt has been made here to evaluate Flatrès' ambitious study, of particular interest, however, is his map of the modern field systems of Ireland (Fig. 1). [Reviewed in this number of the *Geographical Review*, p. 599.—Edit. Note.]

[10] The author is grateful to Mr. Buchanan for this information in advance of its publication.

[11] In particular see the evidence presented to the Devon Commission (Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry [Lord Devon, Chairman] into . . . the Occupation of Land in Ireland [6 parts (in 5 vols.), London, 1845; British Parliamentary Papers 1845, XIX–XXIII]).

[12] Frederic Seebohm: The English Village Community, Examined in Its Relations to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry (2nd edit., London, 1883).

[Text continues on p. 558]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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114 311 361

that led him to pay some attention to the arrangement of settlement on the land. At first sight he does not seem to have been aware of the existence of clachans in Ireland, since he states that under the tribal system homesteads "were scattered over the country and not grouped together in villages and towns," and he seems to suggest that the dispersed settlement of nineteenth-century Ireland was a product of this heritage.[13] But elsewhere in the same work he points out that homesteads were in fact grouped in "arithmetical clusters" which were "the natural method by which the frequent redistributions of the land were made easy; while the runrig form of open-field system was the natural mode of conducting a cooperative and shifting agriculture"[14] —a recognizable description of settlement in clachans. This apparent contradiction must have been produced merely by the lack of a definition of what is meant by the term "village." A clachan was just a group of farm buildings, usually without any other function and without any plan, and hence it would not have appeared "village-like" to an Englishman's eyes, though its total population could have approached that of a village in lowland Britain. Unfortunately, Seebohm's conclusions on Irish settlement cannot be accepted at their face value. Although the form of settlement he describes may have been found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the period from which he drew his information—it does not follow that these conditions represented the form of settlement associated with the original tribal system, as he suggests. However, at least he was aware that the clachan existed in early-nineteenth-century Ireland.

To geographers Meitzen's work is perhaps better known.[15] His assertion that settlement in isolated farms (*Einzelhöfe*) could be traced back to the mode of a Celtic ethnic group has been criticized on the broad European evidence, but in spite of this he was not unaware of the presence of clachans in Ireland. In the atlas that forms part of his great work (perhaps its most valuable part for modern geographers) several plates derived from nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps illustrate clachans and the open fields associated with them.[16] Although he drew much of his information from Seebohm, Meitzen could not accept the theory that clachans originated in Celtic or pre-Celtic time; however, his alternative explanations are unconvincing. It is hard to believe that this settlement form was introduced into Scotland by Scandinavian influence or that in Ireland it was transitional between pastoral

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 223–244.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[15] Meitzen, *op. cit.* [see footnote 2 above].
[16] *Ibid.*, Atlas to Vol. 3, maps 23 and 25–27.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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and arable use of land.[17] Further, Meitzen does not seem to have been aware of the widespread distribution of the clachan and its associated field system. In fairness, however, it should be pointed out that Meitzen was not entirely wrong. Recent work suggests that Celtic freemen in Ireland lived in dispersed farmsteads (known to archeologists as "raths"),[18] though this does not establish that modern dispersed settlement was directly derived from such a heritage, particularly in view of the unsettled history of Ireland during the intervening period.

A Problem in Origins

Moreover, the two forms of settlement—*Einzelhöfe* and clachans—are not necessarily incompatible. Both McCourt and Evans have commented on the way in which clachans wax and wane,[19] largely because of fluctuations in population numbers. Indeed, McCourt cites at least one example from County Antrim in which an individual farm grew into a clachan between 1782 and 1832, and two of the clachans Evans studied in Donegal dissolved into isolated farms sometime between 1834 and 1902.[20]

The problem here seems to be one of origin. Did the clachan bring the infield-outfield system with it, or were the two separate at this earliest stage? If they were separate, it would suggest that their modern survival together on the Atlantic fringe of Ireland may be the result of the independent preservation of ancient practices in a difficult region. For that matter, was the clachan introduced? Examples have already been given of the growth of nucleated settlements from dispersed farmsteads, often in a very short time, and in view of the clachan's lack of plan this manner of origin seems entirely reasonable.

On the other hand, merely to say that the settlement pattern and the field system grew out of the subdivision of a larger enclosed farm is to oversimplify the problem. Meitzen postulated a Celtic people with a tradition of compact farms; but if subdivision took place, surely it would have been a break with that tradition to produce small farms with scattered strips rather

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[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 207–218.

[18] V. B. Proudfoot: The People of the Forths, *Ulster Folklife*, Vol. 1, 1955, pp. 19–26. See also his "Settlement and Economy in Co. Down from the Late Bronze Age to the Anglo-Norman Invasion" (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1957).

[19] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 28.

[20] McCourt, The Rundale System in Ireland [see footnote 5 above], diagram 27; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 29; E. E. Evans: The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe, *in* Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, edited by W. L. Thomas, Jr. (Chicago, 1956), pp. 217–239, reference on p. 231.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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114 than small compact holdings. A further indication that there may have been a fundamental distinction between the systems which is not apparent at first 361 sight lies in the fact that, wherever the historical record goes back continuously into the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, both settlement forms are found to have existed side by side in the same areas and over the whole period.[21] No case is yet known in which an area with nothing but dispersed farms was converted into an area where clachans were completely dominant. Hence, drawing an analogy from Wales, where G. R. J. Jones[22] has carefully examined more plentiful medieval documents than have survived in Ireland, Evans has been led to suggest that the dispersed Iron Age farms (the "raths" referred to above) were the homes of freemen; and bondmen, the descendants of pre-Celtic inhabitants, lived in clachans. Later, in historical time, both groups fell under the control of landlords, but remnants of the former situation survived in the settlement pattern.[23] Some confirmation of this theory has come from Proudfoot's work in County Down, where he has been able to show that raths were not the only form of settlement during the Dark Ages; there were also groups of farms without an enclosing bank, which could be dated to the same period.[24] Such an interpretation regards clachan settlement as being of great antiquity, and indeed it is hard to believe that the cooperative kinship unit (which life in a clachan implies) is other than of considerable age. Further, it suggests that the fundamental antithesis was between systems of landholding, rather than between settlement patterns.

114 The infield-outfield system also seems to have been an early introduction. It could be suggested, of course, that the system represented an adaptation of 311 the medieval three-field system to the small amount of good arable land 361 available in many parts of Ireland. Medieval agriculture on an English pattern had been introduced into southeastern Ireland by the Normans; and a medieval origin has been suggested for some villages in Wexford, formed of groups of strip farms, which were still functioning in the nineteenth century.[25] But even if this can be firmly established, the Norman influence on agriculture was limited to the southeastern part of the country. In any case, the modern

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113 [21] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376.

[22] G. R. J. Jones: Some Medieval Rural Settlements in North Wales, *Inst. of British Geogrs. Publ. No. 19: Trans. and Papers 1953*, London, 1954, pp. 51–72.

[23] Evans, The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe [see footnote 20 above], p. 231. Earlier, Duignan had tentatively suggested a similar idea but did not relate it to the development of settlement patterns (M. Duignan: Irish Agriculture in Early Historic Times, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 124–145; reference on p. 129).

[24] Proudfoot, Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above].

[25] J. Otway-Ruthven: The Origin of Anglo-Irish Agriculture in the Middle Ages, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 81, 1951, pp. 1–13; reference on p. 6.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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survivals of the infield-outfield system in the remoter parts of Ireland would seem to suggest that it dates from a time much earlier than that of the Norman invasion.

Lines of Investigation

These questions and theories widen the field for speculation, but it is difficult to see where to turn for further information, largely because of the meager documentary evidence that survives in Ireland from periods earlier than the eighteenth century. Admittedly, relevant material may be discovered among estate papers, but there are three other lines that might be followed with profit.

One possible approach, field investigation, is illustrated by a project now under way, in which archeological techniques are being used to excavate a clachan in County Down, inhabited until the late nineteenth century. The primary aim is to discover how this particular clachan originated. Did it grow out of a single farm, and, if so, at what date? Two seasons' work has now been completed without conclusive answers to these questions, though some details have been added to the local economic history of County Down.[26] At least it has been shown that a clachan settlement stood on this site about 1780 and that the site had been occupied from sometime near the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Buildings were found underlying the nineteenth-century structures. The fact that some of these remains appear to date from a time before the immigration of Scottish and English settlers into the area in the early seventeenth century should prove important in the study of Irish house types, since the lack of evidence on the development of settlement patterns extends also to the history of individual farm buildings.[27]

Whether this particular excavation will yield further information about

[26] J. H. Johnson, V. B. Proudfoot, and R. H. Buchanan: Excavations at Minerstown, Co. Down: Preliminary Report on Work Completed in 1956, *Ulster Journ. of Archaeol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 21, 1958. (In press.)

[27] Pioneer work on surviving house types was carried out by A. Campbell (Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture, *Béaloideas*, Vol. 5, 1935, pp. 57–74; Notes on the Irish House, *Folkliv*, Vol. 1, 1937, pp. 207–234, and Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 173–196). This has been developed in a series of local studies, so that a comprehensive account of the surviving forms of Irish traditional building is becoming increasingly possible. The best and most recent general account is E. E. Evans' "Irish Folk Ways" (London, 1957; with an extensive bibliography), Chapters 4 and 5. Several important articles on house types and related topics have appeared recently; for example, C. Ó Danachair: Irish Farmyard Types, *Arctica: Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensis No. 11*, 1956, pp. 6–15; A. T. Lucas: Wattle and Straw-Mat Doors in Ireland, *ibid.*, pp. 16–35; C. Ó Danachair: Stand und Aufgaben der Hausforschung in Irland, *Bericht über die Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für Deutsche Hausforschung*, Schleswig, 1955, pp. 29–56; R. H. Buchanan: Thatch and Thatching in North-East Ireland, *Gwerin*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 123–142; and C. Ó Danachair: The Bed Out-Shot in Ireland, *Folkliv*, Vols. 19–20, 1955–1956, pp. 26–31.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934)1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PREFACE

114 It is a rash undertaking for any man, however ripe in experience he may be, to attempt the interpretation of a nation's folk. When the nation he essays is not his own, and his experience is really but very little, rashness becomes foolhardiness. Yet when Dr. Lowell, president-emeritus of Harvard University, did me the honour of asking me to deliver a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston, in March 1936, I found myself impelled to take my courage in my hands. The book which follows represents the lectures given at the Institute. It is an attempt to present to the public some measure of the interest in human social behaviour and the absorbing problems of human societies which inspires and rewards the anthropologist and sociologist in his long quests in field and library. As my own quest had taken me on a definite, concrete mission to southern Ireland, I felt I should best serve my purpose by devoting myself to that country, which had so richly rewarded my own interest.

000 Consequently, if in these pages I make yet another contribution to the growing literature of commentary upon the Irish scene, I do so with a deep sense of humility and gratitude. My debts are

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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tion that goes back, perhaps long into pre-Christian 000
times. Their variant of Celtic culture and language is lost in prehistory. Yet isolation here in the 'outpost of western Europe' has preserved it. Today the historian is in a better position to understand the history of all Europe because the Celtic past has survived latest here, outliving Roman and Christian inundation only here.

For that reason, and because it is still a comparatively unknown province archaeologically, Ireland has become a favourite ground for many others of the students of man who stand under the umbrella of anthropology. The folklorist has discovered Ireland, and today the Free State Government subsidizes the preservation of folklore as a monument to national greatness. The ethnographer finds primitive tools and house-forms, even a wooden plough of Bronze-age days, still in use in remote Waterford or Connemara mountains. The archaeologist 'roots up the raths and the forts', as the country-people say, and lays bare the prehistoric life.

Harvard has played and is still playing a great 114
part in the discovery of Ireland's past. To date four expeditions have gone out. Under the ultimate direction of Dr. Hooton of Harvard they have excavated widely in various parts of the country. The findings of Dr. Hugh Hencken and Mr. Hallam Movius have opened up a new chapter in our knowledge of European prehistory and in the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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114 history of Celtic culture. It is too early to give a full summary of these discoveries, and, of course, the privilege should be reserved for the discoverers. But we can say that much of the darkness of Bronze- and early Iron-age Ireland is lifting. The matter is of interest to us here because it pushes backward the continuities whose final stages will come up in our discussion of the present rural culture.

A people whose life, at least in some of its aspects, has so ancient and so unbroken an historical continuity could not fail to excite the interest of still another kind of anthropologist. In one aspect, the study of man is a human zoology. Man, like all animals, has his species, his subspecies, his races, and his hereditary strains. These differ in physical traits, in morphological characters, and, perhaps, in inherent propensities and abilities. The reduction of man's physical and hereditary variations to uniform laws is a legitimate pursuit in science and one of great interest and importance to us all. Harvard has taken a lead in this field, physical anthropology, in Ireland in recent years. Again under Dr. Hooton's direction, Mr. Wesly Dupertuis has undertaken the physical measurement of large samples of the Irish people throughout the country. The result will be a knowledge of Irish physical type comparable, or even superior, to that we possess of other European peoples. Some day we may know more certainly the biologically determined inherencies of man. Then per-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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haps our knowledge of the strains which make up the peoples of the world, Ireland included, may stand us in good stead. 114

Already such work as this will show us the relation of the Irish to other European strains and help us to trace out historical currents in the country. Think of the field such work opens! Where is the Gael pure today? Who is the Firbolg, the aboriginal whom the Milesians found in possession? Who and where are the invading Gall? Briton, Norman, Dane, Fleming, Saxon, Englishman and Scotsman brought their bloods to this land and mingled them with the Gael. What traces have they all left and what bloods are at work today?

All these queries, nevertheless, do not primarily concern us in this discussion. The antiquity of some of the data stimulates another inquiry. But we cannot escape the sway of these other considerations entirely. There is no reason why we should. Even if they can offer us no direct aid, they can, nevertheless, afford us a stimulation.

Some such thoughts as these must have been in the social anthropologist's mind when he first made his way into a rural community. I cannot speak for my colleagues, Mr. Warner of Chicago University and Mr. Kimball of Harvard, who helped to gather the field material on Ireland. But I *can* speak for myself.

I felt Ireland's fascination as I toiled along behind my bicycle up the mountain road that runs 114 491 133

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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114 from the narrow valley lands at Doolin in the ex-
491 treme north-west of County Clare. I was on my
133 way to my first stay in an Irish west-country farm community. My road, no wider than a bridle-path, led up a sharp escarpment out of the tiny valley which empties its stony river into the Atlantic, not three miles away from the southernmost island of Aran. Once the top of the rim is reached
114 the mountainside flattens out into a green and
133 gently sloping table-land. Standing there one can see the whaleback rocks that are the Aran Islands and the masses of Mount Elva on the southern shore of Galway Bay. Far beyond in Connemara, one can catch the glint of the Twelve Pins, if the day is 'hard' and sunny. Off to the left, the table-land breaks off abruptly three hundred feet downward into the Atlantic, for the famed Cliffs of Moher are here, reminders of an Irish mountain that the sea has shorn off clean.

The community toward which I was making my
361 way lies along the table-land between mountain-
191 top of bracken and black bog and the cliffs. It keeps up the old tradition. It calls itself Luogh, and its language, at least that of the old people, is Irish, but the young people are forgetting the old tongue. English is the more common speech today, even here. Yet Mr. Delargy, the editor of the *Irish*
114 *Folklore Journal*, has collected a large number of
538 stories, songs and traditional tales and sayings here, some of them going back to the saga cycles.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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181 I did not know this as I came to Luogh. But I was to learn it soon in Luogh and in other communities in County Clare. Later I was to find it so even more widely; in newspapers, in novels, in court records, in statistical reports, in political bombasts. It was a way of life with its own laws which included Luogh and the Blaskets and even the fertile small farms of rich Tipperary.

114 When I first came to Luogh I knew only that in this remote little community of small farmers I should find something of the old tradition still alive. My learning was a piecemeal process — a sketching out of wider and wider ramifications of the observations which came my way.

It is this process to which I wish to devote the remainder of this lecture. It is a process in which you can follow me. Perhaps better than anything else it will prepare us for an anthropological study of Irish rural life.

Let me illustrate this process with two examples. I shall call them the 'west room' and the 'old man's curse'. Both of them are related to old custom and both will serve to show the process by which one lays bare the rural life of which old custom is a part.

592 361 The house to which my road into Luogh finally led was a typical small farmer's cottage. It was one of twenty-six in Luogh. It was the seat of a small farm of sixteen acres (with eight more in the valley), 'the place of four cows and a horse', as the country-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER I.

THE REAL IRELAND.

Many aspects of Irish rural life—its charm, its politics, humour and tragedy—have been expressed or exploited in prose, verse and drama, but it is astonishing how little has been written about the daily life of the Irish country man or the physical and social environments in which he moves and works. Even an introductory survey of folk-culture is at present an adventure into ill-charted seas. Yet this Ireland is not only a treasure-house of old ways unrivalled in western Europe but a working example of peasant culture of the highest scientific interest. Whereas Europe north of the Alpine mountains has enjoyed full civic life for a period that can be counted in centuries rather than in millennia, its peasant traditions are of immemorial antiquity. In Ireland we have a unique opportunity of studying the dwellings, tools and customs of a venerable social order which is admittedly dying but has by no means entirely gone. It is surely here, in the activities of a fascinating countryside, that the real Ireland may be found. 114

There has been, in recent years, a slow growth of scientific interest in these matters, but it is typical of this country that attention concentrates on things of the spirit, and tribute must be paid to the work of the Irish Folklore Commission which is busy gathering and classifying material—folktales, songs, old customs and beliefs—from every barony in the country. It would need a separate commission, backed by

[p. 5]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

●114 folk museums on Scandinavian lines, to study, collect and preserve representative examples of the crafts and industries of rural Ireland. The pioneer efforts of Dr. A. C. Haddon in the west of Ireland over half a century ago have not been followed up: indeed there was a feeling that the secrets of peasant life must not be exposed to the prying eye of the enquirer. We have had many glowing eulogies of Irish hearths and homespuns, but this gets us no further than the adverse comments on "wretched cabins" and "mere hovels" which provoke them or the endless tales of "pigs, pipers, praties and poteen." Between prejudice and sentiment disinterested science could find no place, and facts of the greatest ethnological interest went unrecorded in the heat of irrelevant argument. For Ireland has preserved to a remarkable degree the customs and social habits of the pre-industrial phase of western civilisation. It has escaped, even in many parts of the north-east where modern industry has taken root, the devastating changes brought about in England by the industrial revolution, and most of the country was saved also from the repressive spirit of seventeenth century puritanism. The archæologist in Ireland is constantly coming up against customs still practised (or, to his sorrow, remembered but now dead) which have survived through the centuries from a past without history. They come down to us from the beginning, leaving little record of their passage through time, so that "History," in the words of Punch, "somehow seems to miss, interesting points like this."

It is with some of these things that persist out of the wonder of the past that we shall be dealing. We may deplore the lack of interest shown by Irishmen in the relics of ancient culture that lie about them. The truth is that they are so much a part of the present that their significance is not readily appreciated: it is as if, to the peasant mind, "all time is foreshortened into a living present."[1] But one by one the relics of the past, inter-related as they are, pass away unrecorded.

[1] See "An Interpretation of Irish Culture," *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, January 1941, pp. 12-18.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Even the elaborately produced and comprehensive Handbook of the Irish Free State (1927), which includes chapters on folklore and literature, remains silent on folk-culture and its significance for an understanding of Irish problems. 114

Our knowledge of the Irish countryside will advance only through field-study and the mapping of our findings. The time has not yet come when one can prepare maps of cultural distributions, but this is the end in view. Our school-books and atlases still give us maps which are purely political and administrative, for the political outlook has kept scientific interests at bay. We need maps of house-types and styles of furniture, of farm implements and the lay-out of fields and fences, of boat-types, of dialects and superstitions, and so on; and we must study these distributions both against the physical and spiritual environments of Ireland and against the wider background of their overseas connexions.

Viewed in its wider setting Ireland is part of the north-western or "Atlantic" province of European folk-culture. The climatic background of storms and mists makes it one with the coastlands and peninsulas which range from Galicia through Brittany and Highland Britain to the fiords of Norway. Everywhere in this region the sea is close at hand: by it man can both gain a livelihood and escape out into a wider world. On land the cultivation of wheat is near its climatic limits, and the dependence on spring-sown cereals greatly simplified the old schemes of crop-rotation. The folding of stock around the winter homestead was not complicated by the necessity of protecting the corn from their depredations. Animal husbandry and stock products are the pivot of rural economy in this humid fringe of Europe, a fact which, together with the independence nourished by man's association with the sea, helped to keep the north-western province out of the bondage of the feudal system. 101

While the simplicity of stock-raising equipment has limited the development of the arts and crafts as compared with, say, the south-eastern province of Europe, or even lowland England, it brings its compensations. As Professor 181

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 Fleure writes of Wales, another section of "The Celtic Fringe": "the isolated rural communities are, of themselves, poor in material resources, and their efforts have, therefore, not until recently gone into great buildings or sculpture or painting or orchestral music, all demanding a large equipment. Rather have they found their scope in poetry and oratory and song, arts in which the poorest labourer can often compete on fairly equal terms with his richer neighbours. In this way, and in others as well, poverty has been a safeguard of an intensely democratic feeling as well as a help towards the survival of the language and its associations." In the field of human export, too, Ireland's products are scholars, doctors and poets as well as spade-workers.

243 262 114 There are, as we shall try to show, many other features of Irish life which can be related to the pastoral tradition. Because of its value as fodder and for reasons of soil and climate, oats is the "corn" crop of Atlantic Europe. Apart from the value of oats as food for livestock, oatmeal in various forms has been and still is largely consumed, and its baking into thin pan bread over an open fire instead of in an oven has helped to preserve the prehistoric open hearth with its varied 114 and interesting gear and traditions. Ignoring the literary and archæological evidence, many writers have assumed that the inhabitants of ancient Ireland were entirely pastoral and nomadic. On this topic much solemn nonsense has been written, and it gained wide currency because it seemed both to condemn the Irish and to corroborate the prevailing view of man's cultural evolution from hunter to agriculturist through a stage of pastoral nomadism. It now seems certain that man learnt the elements of cultivation at least as soon as he learnt how to domesticate animals, and in the diffusion of these ideas through Europe from the Near East, Ireland received the germs of both sources of food-production at about 114 the same period, let us say 4,000 years ago. There are many 221 signs that in Ireland's dark and middle ages cattle played an even greater role in rural life than in earlier prehistory and later history, but at all times the unit of the fixed family

[Text Continues Top of P. 10]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

114 221 settlement, the baile or townland, kept its significance and its importance. In many cases what has passed for nomadism has been the ancient and normal practice of seasonal movement to the hill pastures, which is still not entirely abandoned and has left many traces in the life and landscape of the country (Chapter 6).

181 462 In essentials Ireland is and has been a peasant country, and it may be well to examine objectively some of the general characteristics of peasant society. A permanent link with the soil on which man lives and works is the essence of a peasantry; and in this work of the fields woman co-operates with man. For her, however, field work is a secondary task since her main interests must lie in the house and in the milking of the stock. Work with spade and plough and the care of the draught animals is for the men, although carrying—necessarily done by women in primitive communities where the men must have their hands free to use their weapons—often remains an activity of the peasant woman where not entirely superseded by animal transport. Where fishing and shore-collecting engage the men's attention the women's sphere of action and responsibilities are widened.

181 323 Among tasks in which the women of some peasantries play a leading part is the making of domestic pottery, but this tradition, though strong in Neolithic Ireland, gave way to the use of metal "pots" and vessels of wood, the making of which was the work of the men. Nor have local survivals of hand-made pottery, like the Barvas ware of the Hebrides, been recorded here.

181 443 796 Periodic gatherings for exchange and social intercourse are a feature of peasant life which has contributed to the growth of towns. The immemorial meetings in fairs and markets have been weakened by modern means of transport and by government marketing boards; and in some parts of the country the whole fabric of rural society is being undermined in consequence. As in North Africa to-day, the fairs were often held near some ancient burial place, and the assemblies were linked with religious festivals which brought

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XIX

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. II.

Shrove Tuesday or " Shraft " was not long ago the great 584
day for weddings in rural Ireland. In older times it seems 585
certain that marriages were celebrated at the seasonal festivals described in Chapter 17. An interesting account of the ceremonies in the barony of Upper Fews, Co. Armagh, [114]
was written down in 1818 and has been printed in a pamphlet published by the Dundalgan Press in 1923. It relates how " the courtship of the parties often commences and is carried on at fairs and patrons, and at wakes and funerals, from whence they run away together, that is, the male brings the female, sometimes by force, to one of his friends house." It goes on to describe the negotiations between the two families and the fixing of the bride's portion or dowry. On 585
the wedding day the two parties, consisting of from 20 to 40 relations, contend, on horseback or afoot, " for who will be at the bride's house first ; where, when the parties arrive, the bridegroom and bride are presented with a plate of oatmeal and salt, of which each of them takes three small mouthfulls. After this the parties mount their horses and join in one grand cavalcade to the alehouse and then to the priest. Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the nuptial benediction will, it is considered, live longest."

Following another visit to the alehouse the parties separate and " scamper away towards the bride's house,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

151 *Sight and Hearing.*—Both these senses are very acute, especially the former, which, in the fishermen, is extremely keen, many of these men can see small objects floating on the water at a distance where, even by the aid of a strong glass, most persons would find great difficulty in seeing them at all.

This description being a general one, little mention has been made 142 of the differences which exist between the people of different parts of 184 the district. It appears to be the general opinion on the mainland, that the inhabitants of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island, and, also, that the natives of both islands are fairer than those of the mainland, and personal inspection has corroborated these opinions. The islanders are readily distinguishable from the mainland people, not only by their dress of blue homespun, but also by their fairer hair and complexion, and their different cast of features.

The men of the district round Portacloy are darker in hair and seem to be of a different type; many of them are exceedingly fine well-built fellows.

In no part of the district are the people of small stature, though 142 a large number of them are descendants of dispossessed Ulster people. 114 On the contrary, they appear to be taller and stouter than the inhabitants of the southern part of the country. A statement,[1] originally made by an anonymous writer, has somehow gained currency, and has been repeatedly quoted abroad, noticeably by M. De Quatrefages,[2] and by M. Devay,[3] that the descendants of the Ulster people driven two centuries ago into Sligo and Mayo, had dwindled into dwarfs of five feet two inches high, prognathous and pot-bellied.

This most certainly does not apply to any section of the inhabitants of this part of Mayo, if indeed it were ever true of any part of the counties named, which repeated inquiries and personal observation agree in denying most positively.

The statement is quite unsupported by other writers dealing with this region at the same time. Thus Mr. P. Knight, writing in 1834, says of the people of Erris that "they are generally a good-humoured, good-natured, hospitable, generous race—*of middle size*—active, intelligent, and, when an opportunity offers of showing it, industrious." C. O.[4] describes the people as tall.

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[1] Dublin University Magazine, No. 48, p. 658.
[2] L'Unité de l'Espèce Humain, ii., 316.
[3] Devay Fr. "Du Danger des Mariages consanguins sous le Rapport Sanitaire."
[4] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

Insanity.—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly
[158] in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
[273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

164 *Fevers.*—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

INISHBOFIN—AN ATLANTIC ISLAND*

T. W. Freeman

● 114 *Mr. Freeman, Reader in Economic Geography in the Victoria University of Manchester, was previously head of the Geography Department in the University of Dublin. His book, "Ireland: its Historical, Social and Economic Geography," was published in 1950; and a second book, "Pre-Famine Ireland: a Study in Historical Geography," appeared in September, 1957.*

[p.202(A)]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p.202(B)]

121 IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the
[167] availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated dis-
[434] tricts of the country, an island off the west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

114 *The material for this paper was partly collected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of
124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
[578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer
[231] told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PREFACE

The generous reception given to my *Irish Heritage*, published fifteen years ago, has encouraged me to go on collecting material on Irish folk life and to prepare this more comprehensive book on the subject. The earlier book was written, under difficult conditions, in the years 1939–41; it was an introductory study of an unexplored field, necessarily speculative and undocumented, and its main purpose was to arouse interest among Irish readers in the treasure-house of the past in which they live. It is hoped that IRISH FOLK WAYS will have a wider appeal. It is abundantly illustrated and fortified by references to a fairly full bibliography. Even so, parts of the text must be taken on trust, since some of the information was gathered from personal observation and conversations up and down Ireland. In the 'mountainy' corners of the country the past is ever-present, a ready topic of talk. I have checked the information where possible, for the inquirer must always be on guard against the countryman's facility of speech, his poetic licence and his fatal desire to please.

There is a great fascination in exploring the living past, but one cannot employ the strict methodology of the historical or natural sciences. The historian is handicapped in studying peasant peoples, not only because they leave no documents but also because their sense of time and values are not those of fully literate folk. The geographer, interested primarily in variations in space, makes an easier approach; yet he will miss much unless he has a concern for origins and a sense of the past. Without knowledge of the past he will not fully observe the present: it is the emotional shock which prints in the memory the first sight of some tool or custom which has survived from an earlier culture-layer. For the historian, on the other hand, the fact that it was described in the eighteenth century is more significant than that it occurs, unrecorded, in the twentieth.

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parts of the country. Two books listed in the bibliography deserve special mention for their relevance to our theme: Sean O'Sullivan's *Handbook of Irish Folklore* and Wood-Martin's remarkable pioneer work on *The Elder Faiths of Ireland*.

Finally I would gratefully place on record the lasting benefits I have received from the teaching and example, at Aberystwyth, of Professor H. J. Fleure, who taught me to study regional social evolution as a continuous interaction between people and their environment. The deficiencies of this book, however, are my own.

Queen's University,
Belfast.
January, 1957

E. E. EVANS

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IRELAND THE OUTPOST

1922. Ireland is one of the last homes of the oral traditions of prehistoric and medieval Europe, which mirror the routine of rural life through the seasons, the contacts of peoples in war and in commerce, and the heroic deeds of half-legendary leaders. Luckily all is not lost: the devoted labours of the Irish Folklore Commission have rescued from the Gaeltacht and catalogued with scientific skill countless stories of the kind which enriched the literature of the medieval world. In Northern Ireland also belated efforts are being made to gather the harvest of lore and legend. 121 178

The study of both the material and spiritual folk-life of Ireland and the oceanic fringes of Europe can throw light on the past and on the evolution of society in Britain and western Europe generally. English anthropologists and ethnographers have searched the farthest continents and enriched scientific literature with their findings, but they have neglected the little island across the Irish Sea. Irish scholars too, perhaps because they find it hard to detach themselves from what is familiar, have shown little interest until recently in the treasure-house of fact and fancy that lies about them. Some writers, indeed, appear to deplore the existence of the folk-customs I am describing in this book: they would conceal or even deny them. It has been learnedly argued, for instance, that the well-authenticated practice of 'ploughing by the tail'[1] was the lying invention of English propagandists, who passed an Act of Parliament prohibiting it, in 1635, merely to demonstrate how degraded the Irish must be! Those features of rural life which cannot be concealed or denied are regarded as due to the repressive hand of England, to penal laws, absenteeism and the poverty imposed by rack-rents and unscrupulous land-agents. Certainly there have been great abuses, and they have left the Irish suspicious and sensitive. It is unfortunate, therefore, that authoritative works recently published in England have needlessly exaggerated the tribal habits and pastoral nomadism of the ancient Irish. A writer in the *Cambridge Economic History*,[2] indeed, goes so far as to describe fifteenth-century Ireland as 'in great part, a 114

[1] *The Irish Book-lover* (May, 1943), 9.
[2] *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*. Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power, 1 (1941), 161.

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114 country of wandering pastoralists'. The Irishman cannot forget the wrongs that his country has suffered and he sees in such statements an echo of the calumnies which he finds in the majority of English descriptions of Ireland. Many of them were written with the preconceived idea of revealing 'a barbarous people devoted only to laziness . . . living on beasts only, and living like beasts . . . a filthy people, wallowing in vice' (to quote the earliest, Giraldus Cambrensis[1]). For several centuries his *Topographia Hiberniae* served as a guide and a gospel to those who sought to prove the Irish unworthy and incapable of self-government and to justify their conquest by England. Geoffrey Keating describes him as 'the bull of the herd for writing the false history of Ireland, wherefore they have no choice of guide'.[2] Gerald's picture of the 'mere Irish', as they came to be called, thus gained wide currency in England and was frequently copied. Between 1566 and 1606, for example, beginning with John Good's *A Description of the Manners and Customs of the Wild Irish*, a dozen colourful accounts were written, most of them little more than diatribes against Irish morals. (The Irish, be it said, retaliated by 'deriding and scoffing at such as lived civilly and after the English manner').[3]

It should be noticed, however, that with the deliberate colonization of Ireland that followed the sixteenth century wars a different note creeps in. The Irish people were still abused, but their country must be made to appear attractive to settlers. The first serious geographical account of the island had appeared in Camden's *Brittania* in 1586, when the Munster plantations were beginning. Detailed surveys and censuses were prepared for the Ulster plantations of the early seventeenth century, but it was left to Sir William Petty (1623–87) to make the most celebrated and exhaustive study of the island. His *Political Anatomy of Ireland*, in reality a human and economic geography, only serves to remind us what was lost when the maps and notes of his larger Down Survey perished in a fire in Dublin Castle in 1711. Petty aimed at a comprehensive survey which would

[1]Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topography of Ireland*. Trans. by J. J. O'Meara (1951), 85, 86, 90.

[2]G. Keating, *History of Ireland*. Irish Texts Society, I, 153.

[3]Sir George Carew, *Survey of Kerry and Desmond* (1617).

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form the basis of a reconstructed Ireland. One of his proposals, perhaps the most original of all the varied suggestions for solving 'the Irish problem', was to import a further 200,000 English settlers so as to bring the total English population to half a million, and then to remove the 20,000 unmarried Irish girls and marry them off 'one in every English parish', replacing them by 20,000 English girls to be married to Irishmen. In this way the Irish language, food, clothing and customs would be replaced by English modes.[1] Petty's scientific approach was devoid of sentiment and left him without sympathy for the Irish past. Other seventeenth-century writers, however, interested themselves in the ancient forts and towers, and Sir James Ware, who published his *Irish Antiquities* in 1654, also collected Irish manuscripts. This antiquarianism was continued by the brothers Molyneux, whose essays were the first of countless misguided speculations on Danish Mounts and Round Towers. 114

The eighteenth century brought a more rational view of Ireland, thanks especially to Arthur Young, whose *Travels in Ireland* (1776–79) are justly renowned. There followed a spate of travellers throughout the nineteenth century, aided by improved communications and attracted, after 1845, by the grim spectacle of the Great Famine. Unfortunately most of the visitors, finding, in the words of the Earl of Bristol, 'nothing curious to engage admiration and nothing horrid enough to stare at', do not give us details such as contemporary travellers were eagerly gathering from remoter lands. Yet their accounts, vitiated as many of them are by prejudice and an assumption of moral superiority, do give us first-hand descriptions of conditions in rural Ireland before and after the famine. From the first decades of the nineteenth century we have valuable sources of information in the Ordnance Survey maps and letters, in the census returns and in the Statistical Surveys compiled for the Royal Dublin Society, covering nearly all the thirty-two counties of Ireland. [659]

If we ask why so much of the past lives on in Ireland we must first notice the position of the island at the north-western extremity of the old world, the 'last outpost of Eurasia'.[2] Until 174

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), 30.
[2]Grenville Cole, *Ireland the Outpost*, 9.

246 milder winters there seems to have been no such response. Although there has been hay-making on the rich meadows of Co. Meath, for example, since medieval times, when the English openfield system was introduced, I have found no literary or archaeological evidence for it anywhere in early Ireland. Indeed Giraldus Cambrensis expressed surprise in the [114] twelfth century that the Irish neither made hay nor built stalls for cattle, and despite his untrustworthiness I believe his witness may be accepted in this instance. Hay-making would have begun on the river bottoms (callows, holms) which, being liable to floods, were not available for winter grazing: this meadow hay is today much less important than 'upland' hay, the significant term used for rotation grass. The hay-making season is nowadays a time of toil for all members of the family, but I suspect that the period from midsummer to late July was under the old order a slack season, the time for raiding and fighting, and catching the English bending in the hayfields. For the Irish it was the 'blue month', when food was scarce (July is also called 'the hungry month') and the meal bins empty. In Ulster at any rate, for reasons which may be older than King William III, July is the holiday month and the time for faction fights. Sir John Myres used to say that in the Mediterranean world, where there is little grass to make hay, the month of May was the slackest time of the summer, the [721] favourite time for fighting instead of hay-making. In Ireland as in classical Greece the winter climate made it difficult and unsportsmanlike to go to war at that season.

To judge from present practice on the tiny farms of the west of Ireland, grass was cut as required from field-banks and odd [462] corners, a creelful at a time to give to the cow as a 'bribe' at milking time, and it was woman's work. The hook used for [412] this purpose, the grass or scythe hook, is smooth-edged, unlike the saw-toothed corn sickle, and what hay was made in former times was probably cut for the most part with the hook. The [231] livestock would be fed in winter mainly on oatstraw, and grazed on the infield stubble, supplemented by the outfield grasses which had been allowed to mature while the bulk of the stock was at the summer booley-grounds. We may be sure that what little hay was saved was treated much as it is on mountainy

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WEDDINGS AND WAKES

The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed mar- 163
riages the population would continue to increase were it not
for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, [167]
sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious prac- [842]
tices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be
cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless
marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some 582
evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or
bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway
and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a
means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested.
The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may
be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in [114]
Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living
traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and Londonderry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive
the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well- 842
organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead
and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns
and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation
in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the
spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings
at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary
histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral
spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to [172]
many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a
reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton
in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves
barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed
certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many
ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic
magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman
who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far re- 584
moved from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day
peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1]R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1766*, 108.
[2]H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

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XXI

OLD PISHROGUES

AMONG the serious nineteenth-century students of Irish folk-life a Dublin surgeon, who is perhaps better known as the father of Oscar Wilde, deserves special mention. Sir William Wilde was not only a frequent contributor to the learned journals but he found time to compile a pioneer catalogue of the Irish antiquities now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. His very active life spanned the Great Famine, and the monumental report on the *Tables of Death* which appeared as Vol. I of Part 5 of the Census of 1851 was largely his work. In it he dwells on the shattering effects of those tragic years, 1845–47, on the immemorial customs and natural poetry of the Irish peasants: 'The closest ties of kinship were dissolved; the most ancient and long-cherished usages of the people were disregarded; the once proverbial gaiety and lightheartedness of the peasant people seemed to have vanished completely, and village merriment or marriage festival was no longer heard or seen throughout the regions desolated by the intensity and extent of the famine.'[1] Another observer noted that the traditions of hospitality were weakened greatly and that padlocks made their first appearance at this time.[2]

Wilde observed that the coming of the railway at about the same period was a contributory factor in the change because it worked to a time-table—more or less—and involved an artificial division of the day instead of an observance of the signs of nature changing with the seasons. Time was related to social activity and had different values at various seasons of the year.

[1] *Census of Ireland* (1851), I, Part 5 (1956), 242.
[2] A. M. Sullivan, *The New Ireland* (1877), 65.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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825 776 enchanted human beings.[4] It gets more definite above Galway Bay, where the Kinealeys are of reputed seal descent. Some such belief may underlie the name Cumarra (or sea-hound) in the MacNamara family. I found more difficulty in getting fisher beliefs in recent years than in getting folklore from the country people. Much of what I heard in 1906 was probably of tourist origin, and, like the *merrow* at Killard,[5] not to be trusted as genuine belief.

Otter.—Beyond vague belief in an enormous "durracow"[6] (the king of the otters), which I heard of as a child on the Shannon Bank about some unnamed lake in east Clare, I am not aware of any folklore about this creature in the county. There was said to be a "remarkable" otter at Glenomera.

Cat.—The cat was much regarded by the early Irish, and holds honourable place in their ancient code of laws. It even appears in the illuminations of the *Book of Kells*. Numerous places in Clare bear its name, but local belief tends to consider the "cat" in these names as a weird monster. The "Cata" and "Faracat" of legend[7] were probably "dragons." The cat has supernatural [763 knowledge. If a cat looks fixedly at a person without apparent 787] reason it forebodes sickness or death, but if it does so to an unmarried person, after making its toilet, it foretells marriage.

[4] So in Aed Baclamp from the *Book of Lismore*, (*Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 72), St. Brendan changes 50 seals into horses, which carry into the sea their riders, who, on reaching it, are, like their steeds, changed into seals.

[5] Vol. xxi., p. 342. Mrs. Dorothea Townshend of Oxford calls my attention to the probability that this story was made up by Dr. Keightley (v. App. to his *Fairy Mythology*). In my original Ms. I expressed great doubt as to this story, having found no equivalent to it near Dunbeg or Kilkee, but this was unfortunately omitted in publication. The Miltown mermaid was probably one of the white seals occasionally seen on the coast. [114]

[6] *I.e. Dobharchu*, water-hound. The Irish called the wolf *faol-chu* (wild hound) and *cu allaid*, and the marten *crann chu* (branch hound). The more common name for the wolf in Clare is *breagh*, as in Breaghva and Breffy, the name of several townlands. The other wolf name *Mac Tire* (son of the country), is attached to Knockaunvicteers hill near Lisdoonvarna (where it refers to the animal), and to Cahermactire, a fort near Inchiquin Hill; at the latter place it may refer to a person, as the name Mac Tire is found in various annals.

[7] Vol. xxi., pp. 477-9. [P. 246]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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Collectanea.

In concluding this survey of the traditional beliefs (other than folk-tales) of County Clare, I am quite prepared to learn that I have failed to secure much that is well known to residents in the county. Even my mistakes and omissions, if they lead the people of Clare to abandon their apathy and to correct and supply the deficiencies of my notes, will have helped on the cause of Irish folklore study, and much that is on the point of being forgotten may be rescued for scientific workers on that most important and fascinating subject.[87] 114

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[87] *Additional Erratum*, vol. xii., p. 54. *For* Terry Island *read* Torry Island.

[p. 271]

[P. 153, B]

551 **192** In *The Aran Islands*[1] Synge makes the following observations on the system of personal names then in use (1898–1902):

> When a child begins to wander about the island, the neighbours speak of it by its Christian name, followed by the Christian name of its father. If this is not enough to identify it, the father's epithet—whether it is a nickname or the name of his own father—is added.
>
> Sometimes when the father's name does not lend itself, the mother's Christian name is adopted as epithet for the children.
>
> Occasionally the surname is employed in its Irish form, but I have not heard them using the 'Mac' prefix when speaking Irish among themselves; perhaps the idea of a surname which it gives is too modern for them, perhaps they do use it at times that I have not noticed.
>
> Sometimes a man is named from the colour of his hair. There is thus a Seaghan Ruadh (Red John), and his children are 'Mourteen Seaghan Ruadh,' etc.
>
> The schoolmaster tells me that when he reads out the roll in the morning the children repeat the local name all together in a whisper after each official name and then the child answers. If he calls, for instance, 'Patrick O'Flaharty,' the children murmer, 'Patch Seaghan Dearg' or some such name, and the boy answers.
>
> If an islander's name alone is enough to distinguish him it is used by itself, and I know one man who is spoken of as Eamonn. There may be other Edmunds on the island, but if so they have probably good nicknames or epithets of their own.

[114 184] While on Tory Island (Oileán Thoraighe), Co. Donegal, in 1962, I collected the names of all living adults and found the system to be basically that reported by Synge for the Aran Islands, with enough distinctiveness to be worth a separate analysis.[2]

601 Kinship terms are rarely used among the islanders except between young children and their parents and parents' 551 siblings. Cousinship is indicated by saying of a person something like 'his mother and my father were the children of two brothers' (*Bhí a mháthair agus m'athair clann na beirte dearbhráthar*), or 'we are children of brother and sister' (*Támuid clann dearbhráthar agus deirbhsheathar*). But in a small community where the genealogical links between persons are common knowledge, such descriptive explanations are rarely called for. Personal names are used 551 instead and in themselves help to indicate a person's position in the kinship structure by showing his line of descent for up to four generations.

A person will in fact have three sets of names: a Gaelic 'ceremonial' set; an English 'practical' set; and a Gaelic-English 'personal' set. A man's full Gaelic name will consist of his baptismal name followed perhaps by his 'epithet' such as Óg (young—usually means youngest of several brothers), Bán (fair), Mór (big), Beag (small—wee), followed by his surname. Such a combination might yield, [585] for example, 'Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh.' A woman, strictly speaking, retains her family name on marriage and adds the descriptive phrase 'wife of' (literally 'woman of')

* *With two tables*

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Foreword

About the Series

000 These case studies in cultural anthropology are designed to bring to students, in beginning and intermediate courses in the social sciences, insights into the richness and complexity of human life as it is lived in different ways and in different places. They are written by men and women who have lived in the societies they write about and who are professionally trained as observers and interpreters of human behavior. The authors are also teachers, and in writing their books they have kept the students who will read them foremost in their minds. It is our belief that when an understanding of ways of life very different from one's own is gained, abstractions and generalizations about social structure, cultural values, subsistence techniques, and the other universal categories of human social behavior become meaningful.

About the Author

• 114 John C. Messenger is a professor in the Department of Anthropology, the Folklore Institute, and the Program of African Studies at Indiana University. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University and taught at Michigan State University and Carleton College before joining the Indiana University [122] faculty. In 1951 and 1952, he conducted fieldwork among the Anang of southeastern Nigeria as an Area Research Training Fellow of the Social Science Research Council; his research during 1959 and 1960, which provided the bulk of the data reported herein, was supported by an Exchange Scholarship to Eire administered by An Bord Scolairteachtai Comalairte of Dublin. Professor Messenger has published numerous articles, chapters in books, and monographs concerning the cultures of the Anang, the Irish, and the Montserrat islanders of the West Indies, whom he studied in 1965 and 1967. A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled him to write a substantial portion of this volume.

About the Book

114 This is a case study of a people widely known through the media of
121 journalism and film. Imbedded in a context of romanticism and nativism, the
123 image of the people and their culture created by these media scarcely approximates reality, for reasons that Dr. Messenger makes clear both in his discussion of nativism and the reasons for its strong influence on characterizations of Irish folk,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and in his descriptive analysis of the culture and social structure of Inis Beag. For these reasons the book will doubtless raise controversy among Irish journalists, particularly those of nativistic persuasion.

Dr. Messenger describes the folk and their culture as he sees them, and within the conceptual structure of the social sciences. The picture that emerges is less heroic than the current romanticized idealization, and very human. The author's personal identification with the island and its people is obvious. He struggles to maintain an objective stance, and largely succeeds, but it is obvious that he and his wife participated exuberantly in the life of Inis Beag. This is in the best tradition of anthropological fieldwork. The problems of identification, friendship, rejection and acceptance, and ambivalence that are invariably associated with such participation are common to all of us who have had this kind of experience.

The case study is notable for its human qualities. It is a descriptive analysis of a significant folk way of life heretofore unrepresented in this series. It is also notable for its significance as an analysis of a closed community that provides mobility only by migration, and for the analysis of the influence of puritanism. This latter emphasis is particularly valuable, for too often we assume that puritanism is associated only with Protestantism. Here, the inter-relationships with Catholicism, particularly with the Jansenist denial of sexuality, is made very clear. Dr. Messenger pursues these themes at both the social and the psychological levels. The case study is also characterized by a strong focus, especially appropriate in the Irish folk context, on folklore, Christian reinterpretations of pagan elements, music, song, and dance. And the dimensions of life that are featured in most ethnographies are well developed—subsistence, material culture, social organization and social control, and values and religion. Dr. Messenger is also careful to provide a historical introduction to Inis Beag, in the context of relevant aspects of Irish history.

GEORGE AND LOUISE SPINDLER
General Editors

Portola Valley, Calif.
May 1969

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Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

[291] [241] [501] [193]

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 [1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

103 192 [2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

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668 fostered immorality, and created mental illness on a vast scale. Primitive and folk peoples, according to this view, represent man as he once was and could or should be again were civilized society drastically reformed.

000 Most of the ideas held by primitivists are as extreme as those maintained by nativists: primitive and folk societies possess simple, static cultures in which dysfunctional forms are rare; their economies are primarily subsistence ones, approximate the householding type, and lack competitive elements; social control is mostly informal; the family is the core social group and is a highly integrated and cooperative unit; religion is a pervasive force which sanctions most behavior and assures psychological security and social cohesion; and, religious dissent and skepticism are unknown. Primitivists also contend that primitive and folk peoples are content with their conditions of life, are seldom if ever mentally ill, and possess character traits that civilization has perverted. It is probable that primitivists would include all of the traits designated as Irish by nativists and would add many others.

114 12 The antiquarians George Petrie and John T. O'Flaherty during the 1820s were the first scientists to undertake research in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. Since that time, there have been short and sporadic visits to the island by a variety of investigators, among them anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians, philologists, and others. Most of the anthropological research has been conducted by archeologists, anthropometricians, and linguists. Several archeological expeditions have examined thoroughly surface sites in Inis Beag, but no prehistorian has excavated as yet, and the accurate dating of artifacts scarcely has begun. Reconstruction of a number of ancient monuments by the government was made possible through the research findings of archeologists, and today site descriptions on mounted plaques mark the principal monuments. Alfred C. Haddon and C. R. Browne in 1892 and E. A. Hooton and C. W. Dupertius between 1932 and 1934 made anthropometric studies, the latter as part of the Harvard University anthropological survey of Ireland, which also included archeological and ethnographic investigations. The ethnographic study—reported in Conrad M. Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman* and Arensberg's and Solon T. Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*—was made in three communities of Co. Clare by these authors with W. Lloyd Warner; it was the first holistic ethnographic study made in Ireland, and my research in Inis Beag in its initial stages was only the third. (The second, by Rosemary Harris, is reported in a 1954 M.A. thesis in the University of London—see References.)

114 12 197 177 178 [162] Linguists, as well as philologists and those wishing to learn Gaelic, long have visited Inis Beag. There now remain only a few areas along the western seaboard of Europe where Gaelic dialects still are spoken, and the island is located in one of these.[4] One-half the population of Ireland spoke the vernacular at the end of the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the last century the ratio had fallen to one-quarter, or approximately 1,500,000 speakers. Sixty years later the

[4] The Celtic languages are Gaulish, Goidelic, and Brittanic, of which the first became extinct at the beginning of the medieval period, and the last two are represented today by the Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects on the one hand, and the Breton and Welsh on the other. Two other related dialects are now extinct: Manx of the Isle of Man and Cornish, the British dialect of Cornwall (Dillon 1957:207).

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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

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The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. In 1846, 25 years before Edward Tylor pronounced his famous anthropological definition of culture, William J. Thoms introduced into English the word "folk-lore," which he defined as "the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the olden time." Ethnology, a scientific discipline whose focus is primitive culture in the Tylor tradition, has had for almost a century its parallel in the humanistic discipline of folklore, whose focus is the culture of the folk, or folklore, in the Thoms tradition. During this time, ethnology has evidenced a humanistic current in its concern with primitive religion, ideology, and esthetics. The discipline of folklore, on the other hand, has evidenced a scientific current, mainly in the research of scholars belonging to the "Finnish School," whose approach to cultural dynamics resembles that of the "American Historical School" of ethnology, and of eastern and northern European folklorists (who often call themselves ethnographers as well) who have been making rather broad cultural studies of peasant communities somewhat in the anthropological mold. American ethnologists employ the term folklore to designate only the oral literature of peoples—their myths, legends, folktales, anecdotes, proverbs, riddles, songs, and the like. I will employ the term in this sense when I deal with Inis Beag esthetics in Chapter 4.

Ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the universities and elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland, but folklore in the humanistic tradition is strongly developed (Delargy 1957; Dorson 1966). The deliberate recording of the immense body of folklore in Ireland began in the early part of the last century, was kindled by the Gaelic Revival, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation, first, of the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936. For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the oral literature and material traits, and their associated behavior, of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the people; moreover, their visits have been brief and intermittent, they have depended on a limited sample of respondents, and most of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (the Irish equivalent of the American *Outline of Cultural Materials* and British *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*), which does not include many categories of significance to anthropologists. Since my wife and I were interested primarily in the nonmaterial elements of Inis Beag culture, and since the oral literature of the folk has been well studied by commission and other folklorists, we placed less emphasis on material culture and folklore in our ethnographic work.

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The culture of Inis Beag about to be described is that of 1959 and 1960, and if I intrude data from earlier or later fieldwork I will label them as such. My wife and I also collected a large body of cultural materials in three other Irish islands, for the purposes of making cross-cultural comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. The Inis Beag tradition is shared in large measure by the inhabitants of neighboring islands, especially those of Inis Thiar, and the several cultures together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the Irish system considered as a whole. Many of the peasant customs of Inis Beag are shared with rural peoples on the mainland, where

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numerous regional subcultures exist, and some are part of a larger European matrix. In fact, as I indicated earlier, Inis Beag culture in its broadest outlines resembles other existing folk cultures. I have decided to employ English terms rather than their Gaelic counterparts whenever possible throughout the book, even though doing so will displease many Irish readers; this decision is based on the fact that most of its readers will be students of anthropology in colleges and universities in the United States. Since the islanders speak both English and Irish and command English equivalents for most Gaelic words and phrases, either language might be utilized.

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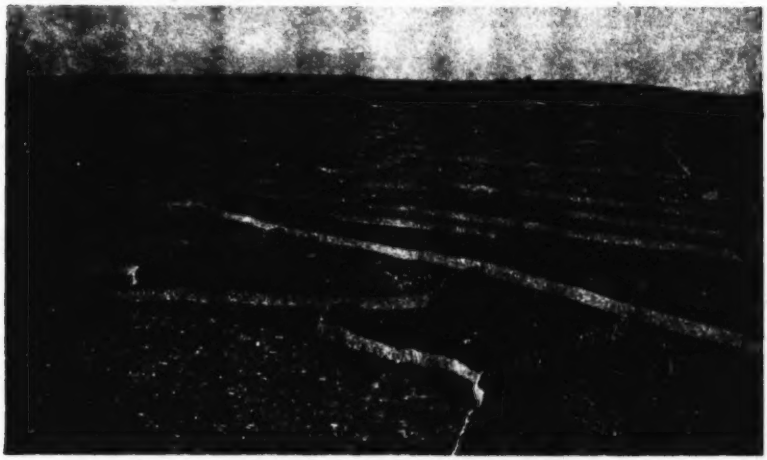

Figure 1. The back of the island from the lighthouse

with an Iron Age culture about 350 B.C.; but only in 1961 were earlier Neolithic, 172
or possibly Mesolithic, implements discovered. When my wife and I arrived in [114]
the island for a seven week visit during the summer of 1962, we were presented
with three slate axe heads which had been unearthed by road workers the previous December. It is possible that they are Mesolithic, for the industry never has been dated accurately.

The principal Copper-Bronze Age monuments of Inis Beag are Megalithic tombs and burial mounds, and possibly kitchen middens and semi-subterranean stone dwellings, called *clochán*. Small gallery graves incorporated into lately built stone walls are common, but it appears that they never have been examined by prehistorians, for there is no record of them in the literature. Archeologists seldom have visited the back of the island where the prehistoric and medieval populations, contrary to present day opinion, may have centered. None of the Inis Beag *clochán* have been dated, but it is known that they were lived in by clerics and ascetics during the Middle Ages, and were still used as living quarters in a nearby island early last century. It is as difficult to ascertain the age of burial mounds and middens in Ireland as it is of stone houses, because they too were formed over several historical periods. Burial mounds of earth and stone, termed respectively tumuli and cairns by archeologists, first were erected during the Copper-Bronze Age and continued to be built into the early modern period (although not for funerary purposes). There are numerous mounds in Inis Beag, but in many instances it is hard to distinguish on sight cairns from *clochán* in their ruinous, overgrown condition. The islanders regard both types of structures as burial sites. [814]
Middens can be dated from the Mesolithic to the end of the medieval era. Most of the island middens are associated with dwelling places from the Middle Ages, but those located near the mouths of caves in the limestone cliffs of the terraces

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241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

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779 • 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [776] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

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belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculcation of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

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harmony, but other biases are at work (Messenger 1968:29–30). Writers of strong religious bent have exaggerated the Catholic moral virtues embodied in the Irish family and community and have disregarded disputes because they involve unchristian behavior, while social scientists with a functional theoretical orientation have emphasized the integration of social groups and have neglected disputes because they betray dysfunction. Those observers who have depended almost entirely on the guided interview to obtain data concerning family and community often have remained oblivious to disputes. Some researchers, however, have collected information on disputes in an objective manner, but have been unwilling to publish it for fear of antagonizing the folk, the church, and the government—thus losing their positions or jeopardizing research in the future. The most valuable study to date on disputes in Ireland is that of Elliott Leyton, which is based on research that he conducted between 1964 and 1966 in Aughnaboy (like Inis Beag, a fictitious name), a village in Co. Down with three times the population of Inis Beag.

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Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' distinction between conscious and unconscious models, Leyton first examines the conscious models—explanatory constructs, or norms, of the people themselves—held by Aughnaboy villagers concerning disputes, then the types of disputes which in fact do occur within the community—from which the unconscious models are inferred by the analyst. Three conscious models held by the villagers are of pertinence to us: those for personal conduct, relations between kinsmen, and relations between non-kin (Leyton 1966:535–536). The first is summarized in the concept of "decency."

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> To be a "decent" man is to carry out one's obligations to society in a style characterized by cheerfulness and friendliness, to pause willingly for a chat and, most importantly, to refrain—regardless of the provocation—from any display of overt hostility. . . . greatest esteem is reserved for those who succeed in maintaining cordial relations with everyone in the village; and the greatest contempt is reserved for those quarrelsome individuals who are frequently involved in disputes.

Relations between kinsmen, Leyton says,

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> . . . are characterized, ideally, by the highest degree of friendliness and harmony. The individual is expected to feel the strongest affection for his kinsmen, and to subordinate all other loyalties . . . to the demands of his kinsmen. . . . individuals are expected to suppress their personal desires and ideals if they conflict with the unity of the group. . . . Close affective ties and regular visiting rarely occur outside the field of kinship. Non-kin are regarded with suspicion and distrust, and the interests of non-kin are seen as being in potential opposition to the interests of one's own kin.

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Ideally, friendliness and harmony characterize relations between non-kin as well in Aughnaboy.

> Non-kin are in general expected to behave according to the standards of "decency" . . . to be cheerful and talkative and to avoid quarrels. . . . Aughnaboy inhabitants conceive relations between non-kin to be a system in equilibrium . . . relations

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121 between the separate groups of kin in the village are seen to be in delicate balance
578 of power which is expressed in the local phrase, "you can't fight anybody around
609 here because all their people will gang up on you." If an individual's kinsmen must defend him in his personal disputes, it necessarily follows that a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin.

114 By and large, these three conscious models apply to Inis Beag as well as Aughnaboy.
121 Leyton discovers broad "disparities between the conscious models and the
578 statistical patterns formed by the actual behaviour" of people in Aughnaboy, manifested in 74 disputes covering a time span of ten years in the memories of his respondents. He classifies these disputes according to three criteria: their severity, the issues provoking them, and the categories of individuals involved (Leyton 1966:537–539). The criterion of severity yields three types of disputes: argument —"characterized by frequent or continuous arguments . . . associated primarily with exchange of verbal abuse;" withdrawal—where "social relations are actually severed and cooperation is withdrawn;" and interference—in which active attempts are made to "interfere with the welfare of the opposing party. These attempts, which may be secret or open, include legal suits, reports to the police, theft and, rarely, physical violence, as well as withdrawal of all cooperation." Three types of disputes also are distinguishable when issues provoking hostility are examined: economic—"which includes conflict such as rivalry between shopkeepers and disputed inheritance;" personality clashes—"which includes disputes primarily attributed to the innately quarrelsome personalities of certain individuals;" and jealousy—"which refers primarily to situations in which an individual's affections are alienated." The categories of persons involved in disputes are agnatic kin, uterine kin, affinal kin, and non-kin. Leyton establishes rank orders for each of his type classifications, and finds that the rank order for the severity classification is withdrawal, interference, and argument; for the issues classification, it is personality clashes, jealousy, and economic; and for the individuals involved classification, it is affinal kin, agnatic kin, non-kin, and uterine kin.

121 In applying Leyton's unconscious models of disputes to Inis Beag, I have
578 modified slightly his severity and issues classifications. To the former, I have added
[521] a fourth type which I call gossip; this is not gossip of the ordinary variety so
[683] common on the island, but rather continuous, pernicious verbal attacks made by a person within earshot of his victim's relatives and close friends, which usually do not lead to argument. In the case of the issues classification, I have broadened the
[157] range of personality clashes. There are several "innately quarrelsome" individuals in Inis Beag, but most personality conflicts involve persons other than these, who have come to dislike one another intensely for numerous reasons, most of which are related to envy, jealousy (other than alienation of affections), resentment
578 against authority, and hostility toward members of the opposite sex. Over 200 disputes have occurred on the island within the past generation, excluding those involving semi-permanent dwellers—curates, lighthouse keepers, and the Dane.
578 The higher incidence of disputes in Inis Beag is attributable, for the most part, to
121 the longer time span appraised and the addition of gossip to the severity classification in my analysis. However, the rank orders of the three type classifications

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closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference. 578 121

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin. 114 121 578 578

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families. 578 609 602 [428] [626] [691] [685]

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than 578 [602] [609] [122] [562]

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578 women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip
[562] and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples.
578 One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism
626 of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into
[828] a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first
[123] meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

121 I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an
578 observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants;
181 this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

• 114 Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

> 114 This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every
> 181 book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21).

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible.

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.).

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor-

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776 787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken [753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until [562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18 [789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan- 776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is 778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged [823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where [123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 776 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call. [428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An [123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last 184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it 763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a 776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those [522] persons considered overly superstitious.

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid	She is deaf and
Dressed in white.	She is dumb.
Give her something	For God's sake,
For the night.	Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
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May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
796 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
776 roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[822] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[778] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to
[233] attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 796 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of [778]
wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to [233]
"give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of 796
the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time [784]
garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. [782]
Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the [777]
Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is [769]
tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for [784]
future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a [638]
small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of 123
the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night 796
when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of 787
cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed
by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whit- 796
sunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as 776
the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually [821]
the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend
to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does
anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a [513]
danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children
and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground
unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the
demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or [461]
decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter [777]
are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then
may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern
day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer [867]
celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather [313]
wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of [372]
Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for [789]
protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A [842]
man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the
failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the
folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the
hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven
between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry
leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish [114]
life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the
plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British
anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns
jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin 539
(O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 796

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

• [114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[64] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

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178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

• 114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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male but sometimes female. Also, the former occupied a higher prestige position [562] than the latter, but there was not the clear-cut distinction between genres appropriate to each type of narrator as elsewhere in Ireland; the *seanchaí* sometimes related the exploits of Finn and the *scéalaí* the pranks of the red man. The two surviving storytellers in 1960 were both old men, but the *seanchaí* died in 1963 and the *scéalaí* two years later. Both had been prolific contributors to Irish Folklore [814] Commission collectors and Continental folklorists. [654]

All of the above kinds of folklore expression, with the exception of folktales, were regarded as true by island folk in the past. The myths either coexisted or were reinterpreted with Biblical stories, and the legends were synchronized with events of ancient world history dating from just before the Flood to the eighth century. The Inis Beag *scéalaí* sometimes was derided by school children for still believing his narratives to be true, as was the *seanchaí* for claiming that the supernatural happenings described in his tales actually were experienced by islanders in the past century. Both narrators for many years had been visited only by folklorists [814] and tourists wishing to hear them relate their repertoires of stories, for the only form of storytelling which has been perpetuated is the occasional gathering of men in a home or pub to exchange anecdotes, mostly related to fishing. I was told that in his prime the *scéalaí* could have recited narratives nightly for "at least a month" without ever repeating a story, had he ever been called on to do so. That [114] the memory of the esteemed narrator is prodigious is revealed in the complete collection of all the material recorded from a single *scéalaí* of Co. Kerry, reported by Delargy, which included 396 pages of text: 186 tales, a few songs and song fragments, and various smaller items of prose and verse. These had been obtained from 27 different sources by the narrator, all of whom save one were neighbors (Delargy 1945:11).

Most liked by the folk were the prose narratives related by the *scéalaí* and 538 tales of recent and contemporary historical events in the region, stories of the 539 supernatural in Inis Beag, and personal experiences told by the *seanchaí*. Few of the stories dealt with historical occurrences in Ireland between the coming of Christianity and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and none of them concerned personages or happenings associated with the church. At my request, the 124 *seanchaí* read three books of Irish folklore that I had brought with me—J. J. Camp- 538 bell's *Legends of Ireland*, Jeremiah Curtin's *Irish Folk-Tales*, and Eileen O'Faolain's 539 *Irish Sagas and Folk-Tales*—and declared that he had heard all of the stories therein as a youth from his father and other island storytellers. However, the versions in the books often were "incorrect," he claimed, and he delighted in "correcting" them; of course, there are many variants of each tale (as many as 527—Aarne-Thompson type 300 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission), and he regarded the Inis Beag stories as the legitimate variants. Most of the local and Irish tales share types (plots) and motifs (incidents, characters, and objects) with those of European and other societies brought about by millennia of diffusion, but the Irish have refashioned these elements in their own corpus according to their culture and personality dispositions.

I will not discuss the various prose narratives told by the *scéalaí* of Inis 538 Beag; the greater number of them can be obtained from Campbell or O'Faolain 114 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent Folktales of Ireland.

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and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party.

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Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

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Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

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are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

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In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

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According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1–2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

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* A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled me to write this chapter.

[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

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Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body. 78 95

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation. 771 178 [184] [182]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit- 114 538

114 tent; they have depended on a limited sample of respondents; and most
538 of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore,* which does not contain numerous categories of significance to anthropologists.

12 My wife and I devoted most of our research to documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also described formal and informal education and the personality traits formed by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many types and probing the memories of aged island respondents, and recorded cultural change in process over an eight-year period. The standard ethnographic research techniques that we employed include guided and open-ended interviews, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, cross-checking, photography, and phonog-
[161] raphy. The sample for much of our data was the total universe of 350 inhabitants.

It is extremely difficult to obtain information in Inis Beag about such matters as amounts and sources of income, disputes, pagan religious retentions and reinterpretations, and sex. This brief list might be increased by at least threefold and gives rise to a consideration of the problems associated with obtaining reliable data from the Irish in general and the
114 islanders in particular. Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled
12 "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing,* humorously
181 presents one of the shortest, yet most discerning analyses of Irish national character yet written by a novelist and predicts the various reactions that her volume will evoke in Irish readers.[4] She concludes with the following remarks about the difficulties surrounding fact finding in Ireland:

This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged
[521] with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing

[4] These reactions appear to be institutionalized, as my writings and conversational remarks have also evoked them. Two additional responses that I have encountered are: my conclusions are invalidated because I failed to consult certain "source materials" written in Gaelic, and my inferior writing style precludes serious consideration of my findings. I take pains to explain, usually in vain, the many methods of fieldwork utilized by ethnographers to Irish persons who are critical of my data and who invariably use the phrase, "You can't trust what an Irishman tells you." On a rare occasion, one listener to my lengthy explanation said, "Ah, you're cuter than we are"—a compliment indeed!

effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe 114 •
myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes
is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their 181
uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my 12
questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I know. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman, sober, will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress. When he has taken a jar or two . . . he will say whatever he judges will give the greatest offence. In neither case does he reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went round and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake. Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953: 20–21).

I will not concern myself with the various cultural and psychological 12
causes accounting for this state of affairs, which would require an essay equal in length to this one. Suffice it to say, the quotation in considerable measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation, wherever possible. The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before attempting an ethnography, to emphasize various modes of participant observation in order to gain added rapport, to devise ad hoc research methods of an unorthodox nature,[5] to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our research, and to

[5] Departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a ballad that I composed. Islanders read at our request books about Inis Beag, and we recorded and analyzed their responses. The ballad that I wrote, now embedded in the local verbal art tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue that we witnessed, and a series of fascinating events which ensued during the following months. The manner of its composition, the alteration of it by Inis Beag singers after it was written, and the circumstances surrounding its public presentation by various balladiers before differing audiences gave us invaluable ethnographic insights.

arose partly out of our desire to alleviate distress and not solely to collect 123
information. We had performed the same role seven years earlier among 831*
primitive Nigerians, and for similar reasons. However, the Africans [171]
were uninhibited, talked freely with us about sex, and were not offended by what we subsequently wrote.

Another important source of information on sex was the island 115
nurses, who supplied us with accounts of their own observations over an eight-year period and gave us access to pertinent medical records. My wife and I believe that our information is, for the most part, reliable, 128
but that some of it may well be erroneous. This report will, we are 123
afraid, offend and alienate some of our Inis Beag friends, for whom we hold deep affection; they do not comprehend the aims and values of anthropology and may regard our reporting of sexual beliefs and behavior as a breach of friendship and trust. Certainly our findings will be denied by many Irish readers.

More than any other type of research, culture and personality 114 •
investigations are needed in Ireland today. Social and cultural anthropologists, rural sociologists, folklorists, and geographers in small numbers have managed to describe and analyze the major sociocultural forms of the Irish folk, but personality generalizations, by and large, have been the by-products of research into other areas and have tended to be impressionistic. Some of the most penetrating studies of Irish character have been made "at a distance" and through the analysis of projective systems and narrow units of culture, such as drinking patterns (Bales 1962). Some Irish writers—"intuitive anthropologists" I call them—also have had insightful things to say about Irish character (usually at a distance too, from church and state). What is sorely needed is a holistic community study done by a culture and personality specialist—a person skilled not only in ethnography, social psychology, and psychiatry (and able to administer projective tests), but well versed in Irish history, literature, and contemporary affairs as well.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Both lack of sexual knowledge and misconceptions about sex among 831*
adults combine to brand Inis Beag as one of the most sexually naive of 864
the world's societies.

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened: and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161–162). [874]

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better if God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105). [864]

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters. 844 864

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent con- 114 155

114 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe,* by
155 William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark,* probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and
[12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and
* 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.[6] Opler and Singer have the following to
15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland:
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> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.
> [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures
> [238] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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[815] [6] Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma,
[779] and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

> The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

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govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble savages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous announcement —often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case.

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

167 Beag, only limited amounts of which have been reported in this chapter.
182 Even though sexual repression and fear of the clergy prevent the folk
[181] from being outspoken in this matter, it is constantly broached among
*[183] themselves.

167 Paramount among external factors stimulating emigration are pros-
177 perity on the mainland and abroad, the impact of the mass media of
182 communication, the increasing number of tourists visiting Inis Beag, the return of former emigrants, and the fact that, with an increase in incomes and scholarship funds, more island children are going to the mainland for their schooling each year. America has been a land of freedom and prosperity to the Irish since before the famine, and, until the Second World War, most islanders migrated there never to return. But the growth of prosperity in England following 1946 shifted the stream of emigration in that direction, for not only were jobs plentiful across the Irish Sea, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in big cities. And it was possible to visit Ireland frequently, as the distance and cost are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic. It is common for youths vacationing in Inis Beag from England to talk others into returning with them. The latter declare
167 that they will soon come back to the island to settle permanently, hope-
177 fully with "great riches," but they seldom return. Since the war, a number of "Yanks" have also returned home, and their stories of life in America make the youthful islanders restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many folk also sow the seeds of discontent.

167 Television was introduced into Inis Beag during 1963, and the two
207 sets now installed always have ready and willing audiences. Almost
182 every cottage has a radio, and, although the islanders seldom read books,
177 a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, as they allow the islanders to glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a
[256] happier and freer world. Television and radio programs are censored, but, even so, the morality expressed in them—especially the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A censor from Inis Beag would most certainly create more discontinuities in films with his shears than do his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin.

• 114 Most of what I have written in this essay is to be found expressed in the works of such older Irish writers as James Joyce, Sean O'Casey,

Austin Clarke, and Patrick Kavanaugh, and such younger ones as William Murray, John McGahern, Edna O'Brien, John Broderick, Brian Moore, and Benedict Kiely. Irish reviewers of the writings of the younger authors often criticize them for portraying an Ireland of the distant past. But, although conditions there are changing quite rapidly, sexual repression is still a force active enough to command the attention of creative artists and social scientists.[8] The subtle influences of nationalism, religion, and sexual puritanism were very apparent in the revisions suggested by most of the twenty-six "unbiased" scholars of Irish descent—in Ireland, England, and America—to whom I submitted the first version of this article for comment.

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[8] I am confident that one of the major "lines of attack" on my ethnography by Irish nativist reviewers will be that the community described is atypical and conditions in urbanized Ireland no longer bear any resemblance to those in Inis Beag. Since 1957, I have been much criticized by African elitists for describing in my writings a primitive culture which they claim is no longer characteristic of that developing continent.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular 444
counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands.

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work 465
is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day.

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, 462
help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The [434]
average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are 871
usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, gene- 584
rally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The mar- 585
riages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some 591
cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family.

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable 585
information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me [115]
that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding,

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Inishshark has about twelve boats of from one to two tons. The natives of this island do not approve of the curragh, for which their coast is too rocky. 501

The ordinary rowing boat is manned by five men, the curragh by three.

The curragh is of the ordinary west coast type, consisting of a light wooden frame covered with tarred canvas.

VI.—FOLK-LORE.

Of this interesting branch of the subject, I regret to be able to give but little information, as the people are chary of talking upon such matters to strangers, and only a local collector working for a considerable time could be expected to gather much. Thanks, however, to the kindness of the Rev. Edward Lavelle, his brother Mr. Michael Lavelle, Mr. Myles Joyce, the schoolmaster of the island, as well as to several of the boatmen and others, I am enabled to give the following few notes on the subject. The legendary lore of these islands, especially Inishshark, has been very fully dealt with by Lady Wilde, to whose work I must refer the reader. These notes, however, are new. Omens and death-warnings, such as the banshee, the death-watch, and as mentioned previously (p. 352), the giving of wood out of a house to make a coffin foretelling the death of the giver, are fully believed in. 609 115 121

Luck.—The sight of a red-haired woman or a cat, on starting out in the morning, will bring bad luck to the fishing; and it is stated that people have resorted to the expedient of getting a red-haired girl to lie in wait for a rival, and cross his path as he was starting. 777

To remove from one house to another is also looked upon as decidedly unlucky; but should a move become necessary, it is always made on Monday to the eastward, and on Tuesday to the westward, according to the Irish saying *Luan Soir, agus Mart Siar* (Monday, eastward, and Tuesday, westward). Should any addition be made to the dwelling it is always to the east, never to the west.

It is extremely unlucky to break a looking-glass; so also it is to mention a priest, or a fox, or a hare while fishing.

No man will buy a cow at the New Year without putting some of her milk into his boots, as otherwise she would certainly run dry.

People born on Whit Sunday are thought to be exceptionally ill-tempered.

The evil-eye, also, is strongly believed in; and if any one praises either a child or a beast belonging to a native without saying "God

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

814 is likely to succeed in collecting much. Fortunately there is a
[609] resident (the Rev. P. A. O'Reilly), who is engaged in collecting the old Irish songs of the district, several of which he has already published. As to the legends, many of these have been recorded by C. O. and Mr. Knight, to whose works the reader is referred.

The following notes, mainly dealing with what may be termed minor folk-lore, were some of them obtained from fishermen and others of the natives, but mainly through the kindness of several residents, some of whom desired that their names should not be mentioned.

115 1. *Customs and Beliefs.*—For the majority of the notes on these I
814 am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, who, being a native of the district, and personally acquainted with nearly everyone in it, has an exceptionally large knowledge of the subject; for a large part of what remains I have also to thank Messrs. F. C. Wallace, D.I. R.I.C., Belmullet, and P. T. O'Reilly, Carn.

777 A very large number of things are considered lucky or the reverse. It is unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, on which day also no change of residence should be made, a Friday should rather be chosen, as that is the lucky day for moving. To meet a red-haired woman on starting out in the morning, to mention a priest while fishing, to take fish out of a house without sprinkling some salt on it, to sell milk without putting in a pinch of salt, to give fire out of the house on May-day, or to anyone in whose dwelling a sick person may be, all these are unlucky. People "born with teeth"
[845] are unlucky also; but to be "born with a caul" is a sign of great good fortune, though should the original owner ever see it his luck will depart; the possession of a caul is believed to protect against death by drowning. A mole on the face, if "above the breath," is considered to have the same protective influence.

787 Death within the year is believed to be the fate of the man who has the temerity to make an addition to the western side of his house, or to build out at the back; several instances of men who died within a short time after thus offending are sure to be told to the incredulous.

The banshee, the death-watch, the creaking of furniture, and the howling of a dog at night are all looked upon as death-warnings. Several persons were met with who asserted that they had heard the banshee before the death of relatives.

585 At weddings the bride and bridegroom must step over the threshold of the chapel door together, as whichever goes out first will be the first to die.

182 The world at large is not interested in the particular ante-
551 cedents of a man and the islanders recognize this in their
611 use of surnames with the outside world. The old 'family' or clan names placed a man in his wider kinship group in the days when this was important—it no longer matters today. Within the community the naming system described above distinguishes a man from other men and places him in his immediate kin group. It helps to establish his descent. Research in small communities in Western societies may reveal similar systems serving similar ends but based on different diacritical criteria.[8]

Notes

113 [1] J. M. Synge, *Four Plays and The Aran Islands*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 263f.

[2] Brief ethnographical details of Tory Island can be found in J. R. Fox, 'The Vanishing Gael,' *New Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1962.

551 [3] The second and subsequent names, when in Gaelic, are in the genitive. Some English names are Gaelicized and given a genitive form. I make no claims for the correctness of the spelling of the names given here (Irish spelling is pretty fluid), except that they are the forms recognized by literate islanders. I could not have made any headway with the Tory naming system and genealogies without the patient help of Máire Nic Fhlaithbheartaigh bean Aodha Uí Dhubhghain, Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh, and Aodh Ó Dubhghain.

[115]

[4] See Synge's comment on the use of the surname and the 'Mac' prefix. In the 'ceremonial' names on Tory both Mac and Ó are used, but when a surname is included in the 'personal' set, these prefixes are not usually used.

[5] This could be Paddy-John Uí Fhlaithbheartaigh—roughly Paddy John O'Flaherty. The pronunciation would be the same.

551 [6] A fuller analysis of the structure and functions of these descent
611 groups is in preparation. They seem to be mainly concerned with landholding—as a consequence of the equal division of land amongst all a man's (or woman's) heirs, and the system of keeping land in trust for migrants. Their other functions lie mainly in the sphere of mutual support amongst members in times of crisis.

[7] This distribution could only occur by chance in one sample out of 20: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4{\cdot}30$: $p = < {\cdot}05$.

551 [8] The Welsh system of stringing ancestral names together with
171 'ap' is obviously similar to the Tory method, but the Welsh, I believe, used only male names. Mr. Andrew Dunsire tells me that in some Scottish coastal villages a man will be known by the boat he owns, his children inheriting this epithet. In some working-class communities which I know in England a system similar to that on Tory operates. A man may be known as 'Mary's Tom' and his son as 'Mary's Tom's Johnnie,' etc. Synge notes the use of occupations as marks of distinction in Wales and comments on the lack of occupational differentiation on the Aran Islands which makes this method impossible. In some rural communities a man is known by the name of his farm. W. M. Williams in *The Sociology of an English Village* (Routledge, 1956) gives examples of this. See also his fascinating discussion of Naming and Family Continuity, pp. 79–82 and 229f. The contrast with the Tory system is marked, however, in that one can, in Gosforth, move from 'side' to 'side' in choice of names—both surnames and Christian names being used.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [787] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

arose partly out of our desire to alleviate distress and not solely to collect 123
information. We had performed the same role seven years earlier among 831*
primitive Nigerians, and for similar reasons. However, the Africans [171]
were uninhibited, talked freely with us about sex, and were not offended by what we subsequently wrote.

Another important source of information on sex was the island 115
nurses, who supplied us with accounts of their own observations over an eight-year period and gave us access to pertinent medical records. My wife and I believe that our information is, for the most part, reliable, 128
but that some of it may well be erroneous. This report will, we are 123
afraid, offend and alienate some of our Iais Beag friends, for whom we hold deep affection; they do not comprehend the aims and values of anthropology and may regard our reporting of sexual beliefs and behavior as a breach of friendship and trust. Certainly our findings will be denied by many Irish readers.

More than any other type of research, culture and personality 114
investigations are needed in Ireland today. Social and cultural anthropologists, rural sociologists, folklorists, and geographers in small numbers have managed to describe and analyze the major sociocultural forms of the Irish folk, but personality generalizations, by and large, have been the by-products of research into other areas and have tended to be impressionistic. Some of the most penetrating studies of Irish character have been made "at a distance" and through the analysis of projective systems and narrow units of culture, such as drinking patterns (Bales 1962). Some Irish writers—"intuitive anthropologists" I call them—also have had insightful things to say about Irish character (usually at a distance too, from church and state). What is sorely needed is a holistic community study done by a culture and personality specialist—a person skilled not only in ethnography, social psychology, and psychiatry (and able to administer projective tests), but well versed in Irish history, literature, and contemporary affairs as well.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Both lack of sexual knowledge and misconceptions about sex among 831*
adults combine to brand Inis Beag as one of the most sexually naive of 864
the world's societies.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN IRELAND

BY

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[p. iii]

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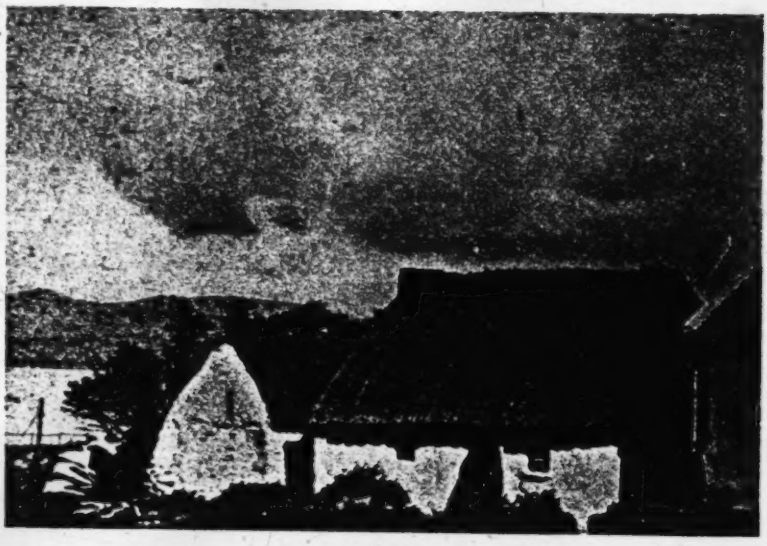

An Irish Cottage

[facing p. iii]

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[p. iv]

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To
EARNEST ALBERT HOOTON

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PREFACE

UNTIL very recently the study of modern social life has been neglected by social anthropologists. In their zeal to understand human social behavior they have not hesitated to study such complex and populous communities as those of India and China or such simple groups as those of New Guinea and Australia. Their failure to study our own society has not been mere oversight, and not entirely because the subject attracted young men who found in it an excuse for faraway adventure among exotic peoples.

Anthropology has been defined by many ethnologists as "the science of man and his works." Yet they themselves have stubbornly refused to accept the validity of this definition. Physical anthropologists have studied men of the modern world as well as those of other races and societies. Archaeologists have done research on the prehistories of both modern and primitive man. But ethnologists have separated modern and primitive society and declared our own social life to be outside the "science of man." This limitation is the result, in part, of the development of anthropology out of the interests of early travelers, who came back from other lands with accounts of customs far different from our own; in part, of academic conservatism and timidity. But probably the most important influence is the uselessness of the methods and theories of the older ethnologists — historical rather than analytical — for the investigation of modern life.

Most older anthropologists, and many contemporary ones as well, insist that anthropology is and should be only a form of history, a study of historical origins and development. All else, including much of the discipline calling itself social anthropology, is illegitimate. With the increase of Émile

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Durkheim's influence upon modern European and American anthropology, however, social anthropology has become a social science investigating the nature of social behavior with hypotheses tested inductively by comparative research upon societies of diverse types. Already ethnographic descriptions of several hundred tribes and communities from all parts of the world have led to the making of simple generalizations about these groups, their institutions, and their means of solving the problems of human existence. Some modern anthropologists have come to realize that the diverse communities of the world can be classified in a range of varying degrees of simplicity and complexity, much as animal organisms have been classified, and that our understanding of each group will be greatly enhanced by our knowledge of its comparative position among the social systems of the world.

Once a comparative sociology seems possible, the next step is to include modern society in the scheme of classification. Euro-American society is one of a few highly differentiated cultures which lie at the extreme pole of complexity. Obviously, if we are to study properly variations in human behavior and arrive at adequate generalizations, it is necessary to examine the most complex groups along with the simplest ones. Inevitably, we must bring our own society into such a study. For example, any examination of simple societies demonstrates that most of them have fully developed family and kinship systems, which pervade their whole community life, but simple, undifferentiated economic orders. In more complex societies — as in China and India — economic institutions have grown in importance, and those of family life have decreased. Yet the latter are still of great influence, and much is to be learned from the interdependence of the two. When our own society is added to the range of complexity, our understanding of the connections of these two kinds of social behavior is greatly increased. Our family life has declined, and our economic life has grown im-

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mensely in scope, and the mechanism of the change can be compared with that in more simple societies.

It is plain that, if we are to develop a full-grown comparative social science of man, the communities of modern life must be included among those studied by anthropologists. If this means that the subject matter of ethnology is the same as that of sociology, so much the better. Anthropologists may then make effective use of sociological methods, sociologists of anthropological ones.

In accordance with these tendencies, when the Department of Anthropology at Harvard began a study of Ireland under the general direction of Professor Earnest A. Hooton, it was decided to send three types of investigators into the field: physical anthropologists, archaeologists, and social anthropologists. As I was at Harvard at that time, I had the pleasure of acting as director of the work of the social anthropologists, Dr. Kimball and Dr. Arensberg. In the summer of 1931 I made a preliminary survey of the twenty-six counties of the Irish Free State and chose County Clare as most likely to fulfill our needs — a county in which there was a blending of older Gaelic and modern British influences, and one that was neither entirely Gaelic nor entirely English in speech. Dr. Arensberg and I settled in Clare in the summer of 1932 and began the task of collecting the necessary ethnographic data. At the end of the summer I returned to Harvard. Dr. Arensberg remained in Clare, where he was later joined by Dr. Kimball, and the two men continued their field work for a period of almost two years. The book that has grown out of their experience there is an excellent contribution to our ever-growing body of knowledge of the communities of the world. From such knowledge we may sometime expect a comparative science of the social life of man.

W. LLOYD WARNER

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
November, 1939

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IT BEFITS the science of man that its practitioners should depend entirely upon human support and human kindness. The number of persons to whom the two authors have repaired, severally and collectively, is larger than can appear here. We can only hope that the many whom we cannot name will know, as we do, how impossible the production of this book would have been without the help they gave.

To the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University we owe the original project, much of its support, and constant stimulation and encouragement over the years during and after our connections there. Dr. Earnest A. Hooton begat the project out of a fertile imagination and a wide vision of mankind, nourished it, and kept a fatherly eye upon it to the end. Mr. William Lloyd Warner, now of the University of Chicago, taught us social science by precept and field work by example, combining roles of teacher and friend that continue to this day. Dr. Alfred M. Tozzer aided and encouraged us. Dr. Carleton Coon and Dr. Eliot Chapple helped us retain the perspective of ethnology. The [122] Society of Fellows of Harvard University made it possible for one of us to bring the work to completion, with generous provision of freedom for research and allowance for travel. The Sheldon Fund gave the other of us a year and more of field work. Generous friends of Irish scholarship in Boston contributed to the project of which our work was a small part. Dr. Lawrence J. Henderson and Dr. Carle C. Zimmerman helped us to fuller views of social and rural study. Dr. Elton Mayo and Dr. Fritz Roethlisberger gave us criticisms and comparisons of interest. The staff of the Peabody Museum, under Mr. Donald Scott, and our archaeological colleagues, Dr. Hugh O'Neill Hencken, Dr. Hallam Movius,

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and Mr. John Otis Brew, made our way easy and pleasant both at home and abroad.

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In preparing our materials for publication we had the assistance of Mrs. Grace Senders Dane, Mrs. Frances Mattison Hill, Miss Josephine Thompson, and, particularly with proofs and style, Mrs. Margaret Arensberg. Mrs. Arensberg's labor has made possible whatever grace the book may have.

The figures were prepared by Miss Helen Mitchell. The illustrations were furnished us through the courtesy of The

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And, last, an apology due the Republic of Eire. The work here reported was done while she was as yet still the Irish Free State; the Ireland of these pages is today the sovereign state of Eire.

C.M.A.
S.T.K.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
December, 1939

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INTRODUCTION

121 OBJECTIVE study of contemporary social behavior has already begun, in recent years, to yield a new field of inquiry into human relations and human activity. Community studies, social surveys, industrial descriptions, and collections of folk culture and folk custom are beginning to put the investigation of modern Euro-American social life on a par with the ethnology of non-European peoples. The company of such reports is still very small, but it has a healthy growth. There is as yet no common name for them, and the scientific interest behind them has ranged very widely, from psychology to population study or economic history. Nevertheless, the basis for a comparative sociology, or social anthropology if you will, of all the world's peoples, both modern and "primitive," is gradually emerging. The present work is a small attempt to place rural southern Ireland on the roster. It submits a description of certain aspects of contemporary Irish "folk culture."

Ireland really has no need of people to represent her. Her writers, statesmen, and emigrants have carried her story far beyond the limits of the English-speaking world. The history of her agrarian movements and reforms and the renascence of her autonomy in political and cultural life have been amply documented. Yet the major social and economic conditions of her existence have been presented only through literary or political commentary and controversy. Consequently, an inquiry into sociological matters in the rural hinterland of the country, aiming at a description of the social matrix out of which her rich tradition springs, breaks new ground. The following report of inquiry into the several aspects of rural life in the south and west, carried on in a limited area by two foreigners,

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121 is offered to the Irish people as a merest beginning in a task they themselves are best equipped to carry on. The country that has taken a place once again among the free nations of the world deserves to be thoroughly known. It deserves to be put forward among students of human affairs as an example of human life and human achievement unique in respect to history and tradition but similar to others the world over in respect to human relations and organization.

Yet the book that follows studies only a very few of the many aspects of contemporary Irish social life. In the course of field work the problem of the influence of family structure and kinship early forced itself into the center of the stage. The form of the community and the lives of its members could not be understood apart from the kind of relations among persons bound by blood and marriage which the country people exhibited. That influence, therefore, became the principal area of investigation. For this reason this report upon field work is a descriptive account of the connection between several aspects of community life among the small farmers of County Clare, which was the region visited, and the system of ordering family relationships to be found among them.

Though the work deals with rural communities, the authors do not intend it to be in any sense a community study or social survey. Intensive observation brought the authors into intimate contact with three small communities, whose names will appear very often. But their field work was not directed toward discovering what was particular to these. It was aimed at a larger problem. It was based on an assumption fundamental to anthropological theory today. It assumed that the chief determinant factor in human society may well be human activity itself. The question behind the authors' inquiries was couched in terms of this hypothesis. What could they learn to help them to an explanation of the uniformities of human action by following

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the influence of one kind of activity of human culture upon another? Their results have thus always the same general form: men do these things because they do those others. The nature of the causality remains another question, but the connections observed must first be stated. 121

Consequently the book deals with indices, particularly statistical ones, describing all the Irish rural folk. It treats the Irish countrymen and countrywomen actually observed and interviewed as instances of a general condition to which such indices might refer. The instance illuminates the index; two knowns thus forecast the unknown generality. Whether the procedure is legitimate, the authors do not argue here; they merely make use of it. The three communities that appear from time to time in the following pages are thus samples, just as County Clare itself is a sample, a fairly representative mean among the major social and economic conditions in Ireland upon which there was documentation in the year 1932.

A good deal of the material presented here has been presented before, though rather differently. Several passages will be familiar to those who have read *The Irish Countryman* by one of the authors, Conrad M. Arensberg. Chapter X is in great part a reprint from that work. The authors are deeply indebted to the publishers, the Macmillan Company of London, for permission to include such materials here. They make the inclusion in order to put the behavior described in its perspective in relation to the other topics discussed here. Without it, the present story of mutual dependence and functional interconnection between kinds of activity among the small farmers of southern Ireland would be incomplete. For the theoretical problem that is involved in a discussion of the sociology of subsistence in rural Ireland is of far wider importance than any description of things Irish. [114]

The nature of a social system and the nature of cause and

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121 effect in human affairs in social life becomes with each decade more and more important a problem for the increasingly self-conscious nations of the age. In its practical applications, the problem pushes beyond the confines of the sociological and anthropological inquiries which fostered it originally. Legislative changes, attempts at reform and planning, essays in propaganda and persuasion, campaigns for solidarity or defense, forecasts of development, all come to depend for practical success more and more upon a knowledge of how the complex social organism of a modern nation or culture will react. The Irish situation is thus merely an instance. It is an essay in the interconnectedness of the conditions of human social life. Whether one wishes to destroy, change, or preserve, the fact of interconnection exists and must be reckoned with.

As an academic problem, the form of the connection between the parts of the social organism, better stated as the effect of some events of human social life upon others, has been largely the concern of a few theoretical sociologists and a single school of anthropologists. The sociologists have dealt principally with its theoretical aspects, formulating abstract forecasts of the necessary connections. The anthropologists, of the "functional" school, have had to face the problem as a concrete requirement of description. Their tribes and native cultures have presented them with whole situations in which each part was foreign to them and in which each part had no other reference than the situation itself could give. Alert readers will detect the influence of both approaches in this book. Yet the emphasis throughout will be placed on the concrete necessities of description. The behavior of the Irish country people and the indices which report it are specific matters of observation and record. The internal connections they may have are equally specific matters.

Yet the authors do not wish to be thought in any sense

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experts on the Irish scene or to be motivated primarily by a desire to explain things Irish to the world. Much as they desire to understand and give proper value to the nation which so kindly and courteously received them, they do not feel themselves qualified in any way to characterize or evaluate the culture, tradition, or social life of the communities in which they made their study. Therefore, they present the results of their examination of the data they gathered in Ireland in answer to quite another set of problems. If they by chance and inadvertence happen to bring the light of a fresh foreign point of view into matters which are of much more than theoretical interest to Irishmen in the Free State, or to students of Ireland and her problems, they will count themselves lucky indeed. 121

The purpose of the study is not so much to characterize the communities described as it is to examine the behaviors of the persons living in them. The data upon which the argument of the book rests are the data of events, biographies, and situations in which the members of the communities took their parts. But the conclusions which advance the argument and which the authors draw from these data are not primarily intended as characterizations of the behavior involved. They are steps in the elaboration of a view of human behavior in social life to which they impel the authors and toward which it is hoped the reader will likewise find himself drawn.

That this should be the case involves the earliest history of the present research. It was begun in 1932 as an intensive field research in social anthropology as it had grown up in the ethnological work of Malinowski and through the theoretical formulations of Radcliffe-Brown. Neither of the authors of this book had done firsthand work among primitive peoples. They had served apprenticeships in field work under Professor William Lloyd Warner, then of Harvard University, in a study of a contemporary New England city 114 121

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114 121 and were thoroughly devoted to social anthropology as a technique for study of modern civilized communities.

121 Thus the conclusions of the book are in the nature of answers to the questions originally responsible for setting about the research. Experience in Yankee City in New England had led the authors to the point of view which is the central hypothesis of functional anthropology. The more they worked, the more it grew certain for them that to a certain approximation it is useful to regard society as an integrated system of mutually interrelated and functionally interdependent parts. A study in Ireland, then, should be a study to test this hypothesis. In a setting far different but still in some ways closely comparable to the American scene which the authors already knew, they would try to give it a greater precision.

The pooled experience of the authors, in so far as they themselves can judge it, did not involve a rigid insistence upon or acceptance of any one anthropological view within the broad confines of the functionalist approach. It also carried them far beyond the confines of anthropology, as the reader will soon learn.

For the most part the Irish communities the authors undertook to examine and in which they had a brief but enjoyable participation were, in a sense, laboratories and workshops. They exemplified concretely the problems contained in the concepts, social structure, social system, and organization of human behavior.

That is why, then, even though the authors found themselves becoming, as far as their halting steps would take them, economists, political scientists, folklorists, students of religion and whatnot, they found the general role of ethnologist and social anthropologist most congenial to their task. Even where their data, in part at least, necessitate the formulation of a general sociology, they are still confirmed in what is essentially the ethnologist's point of view. They

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seek to describe a culture, taking that word in its anthropological sense. And they seek to do so as observers of the minutiae of social life. 121

Naturally the culture so to be described need not have been that of Ireland, as far as the larger purpose of the study was concerned. But Ireland has many advantages for just such an inquiry, and in the authors' view, well warranted choice as a scene of operations.

In the first place, Ireland presented a distinctive and characteristic variant of western European civilization and a long, relatively unbroken tradition dating back to pre-Christian and pre-Roman times. Yet this distinctiveness is comprised within what is, after all, a small compass. Ireland is by no means a large country, and, however its people may be conscious of their own internal differences, it is very homogeneous indeed. Any acquaintance with Ireland at all soon establishes the fact that, far from being on the retreat, the distinctive culture of Ireland is increasing in strength and autonomy, however much it has learned to assimilate the technological and other developments of the modern age.

Nor is the anthropologist abashed by the arguments of those who deny any autonomy to national and ethnic cultures because, after all, they are part and parcel of a larger whole — that of the general occidental civilization. For all classifications of this sort are relative, and need be accepted only for the purpose one wishes to put them to. Just as one can speak of Iroquois culture in contradistinction to Algonquin, though both are eastern woodland American Indians, so one can speak of English and Irish cultures or national groups. The two are distinguishable by differences of behavior and outlook and products of quite different ways of life, even though in many aspects they are comparable and similarly derived historically.

Thus in many cases the data will be distinctly Irish and

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|2| the conclusions may seem to some readers applicable only to Irish conditions. This will be the case particularly where the data meet that reader's disapproval, we are afraid, if he is not an Irishman, or win his enthusiastic support, if he is. Against that sort of interpretation the authors must protect themselves as best they can. Only the development of further studies of similar nature and the growth of understanding of what mechanisms are universal and what are particular in social structure will resolve such controversy.

But the reader must remember that, even though the book draws upon details of the most minute and personal kind, taken out of the most distinctively Irish situations, the use they are put to is not characterizing or descriptive. The authors use the observation of personal relations, individual and group activities, expressions of sentiment and emotion of every kind, as expository matter in the presentation of the general process by which individuals are united, groups are formed, joined, opposed, and in which the cohesion of the community is created, maintained, defended, and lost.

What is here attempted, then, is a work of inductive social analysis. Perhaps the adjectives "analytic" and "interpretive" describe the purpose of the authors best. Detail, local color, dramatic incident, and specific quotation are offered not for themselves, or for the picture they make, but in answer to questions of how and why human beings come to act upon one another in certain ways, to govern their lives in particular fashions, and to accept sentiments and beliefs of the kinds recorded.

The book works toward the problem of the individual as well, particularly so because its data are individual acts, events, expressions of opinion and attitude. For the problem of how science is to deal with individual life and individual behavior is inseparable, as we shall see, from the inquiry here pursued. The authors certainly do not intend any study of Irish psychology *per se*, or attempt psychoanalysis

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of the Irish mind. Rather they work toward the view of the problem of the individual in society which their inductions force upon them. In fact, it is another reason for the authors' adherence to anthropological method and anthropological outlook that the study confirms them in an original view. That is that there is no sociology which is not equally a psychology, nor any psychology which is not equally a sociology. In one aspect, the book will be a treatise on the necessity for abandoning distinctions between the fields and an attempt to force the realization of this identity. 121

If there is any single conclusion to which the authors wish to point with greatest emphasis, it is this: that social life and society must be understood not in terms of any hypostatization either of *the individual* or of *society*. There is no such thing as *the* society or *the* individual. Both concepts are conclusions of relative and limited validity. There are only persons behaving in various ways.

But this view is not the purpose of the book. It is the conclusion to which the authors were led in pursuance of their purpose. Nevertheless, it bears statement here at the outset, because it is so simple. Yet the whole course of the book is necessary to establish it and to show it to be the base upon which objective and inductive social science, still only a distant goal, can be built.

The final purpose of the book is to reach this base. It is an attempt to clear away in a concrete case the manifold complexities of civilized society to a point where an inductive science founded upon simple and measurable data can be begun. Its final purpose is also its conclusion: an objective social science can only be made by developing an impersonal technique for reducing to order the only social data we have which are comparable to those from which the natural sciences developed. These are the data of the interaction of human beings, to be found in what they do to one another.

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FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN IRELAND

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CHAPTER I

The Small Farmers

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CENSUSES have laid bare the existence of two widely different types of agricultural activity in the Irish countryside. There are two widely different groups of persons whom we can tentatively designate as large and small farmers. Indeed, the statistics, if used correctly, give factual base to the divisions the Irish reckon in the countryside themselves. They remind one continually that the large and small farmers are different beings and belong to ways of life which are quite opposed.

In general, the differences are such as to present two groups of persons defined by two different ways of adapting themselves to nature and carrying on the business of agricultural production. Large farmers differ from small farmers in their techniques, in their products, in the use of the soil and the land. They differ in the way in which numbers derive support from their farms. They differ significantly in the organization of labor upon those farms and presumably in consequence in their relations with other elements of the community. Family labor characterizes the small man, hired labor the big fellow.

No one, of course, expects this to be an exact correspondence in which one gets perfect correlations in each instance between the size of the acreage and other factors. A typical small farm economy might well exist on a farm very large in area, and often does so in mountainous areas, where

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241 463 much of the land is useless. Again, a farm small in area might be exclusively devoted to the sort of economy which is usually found on very large farms. In any single case, statistical generalities do not hold, of course. But in the large kind of correlation which a count of varying factors affords, bulk correspondences turn up with complete regularity.

241 463 162 The course by which this conclusion is reached takes one through the devious labyrinth of Free State Government statistical abstracts. In 1926, the last census year before the authors' field work was undertaken, the numbers living in country districts, "outside villages and towns with 200 or more population," made up 63 per cent of the Free State's population of almost 3,000,000. They were 1,815,496. Of the 1,307,662 classed as "occupied persons 12 years of age and over" for the whole Free State, 672,129, or 51 per cent, were engaged in agriculture. Any attempt, then, to understand the human setting of Irish farming involves an inquiry into the forces motivating the lives of well over half the country's people.

241 433 In 1926 this agricultural population produced a total output valued at £64,757,000. Industry in Ireland produced goods to the value of only a little over half that figure (£34,000,000 net output).

231 433 In the agricultural output of that year, the proportions of the various products indicate the character of the agriculture. Foodstuffs, with livestock products among them, made up the bulk of the output. Milk products accounted for £13,600,000; cattle, exported alive or slaughtered within the country, accounted for another £13,800,000. Pigs and eggs made up £9,800,000 and £6,690,000 respectively. Other livestock such as poultry, sheep, and horses accounted for the rest, in that order of importance. Wool and sundry items such as honey brought in a mere £700,000. All of these, the total output of livestock, reached a value of

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£50,555,000. The figures illustrate the preponderant importance of livestock and particularly cattle and pigs in Irish economy.

The remaining £14,000,000 was made up of crops and turf, the latter alone accounting for £5,938,000. Among the crops, potatoes came first, with a value for the year of £3,786,000. Oats, cabbage, and barley accounted for about £900,000 each; and there were a few other items of smaller values, the largest of which was fruit at £466,000. 241 433

These figures of the agricultural products rather underestimate the amount of tillage products raised. In the words of the Census Report, they "do not include any part of the produce which was used for further agricultural production in the Saorstat whether that part was used on the farm on which produced or sold by one farmer to another – e.g. milk fed to calves, potatoes fed to pigs, hay, turnips, mangels fed to cattle, corn used for seed, horses used for farm work." [1]

Within this generality of the monetary value of the goods produced, one can begin to take account of the wide difference of the sizes of the holdings engaged in this agricultural production. A glance at the figure illustrating this kind of economy by relative size of acreage (Fig. 1) will bring the matter out. 231 241 311 471

The agricultural community carried on this production upon farms of very widely different character. Holdings range in size from one acre or less to 500 or more. Those under 30 acres comprise 23 per cent of the total acreage of agricultural land in the Saorstat, those of 30–50, 17 per cent; those of 50–100, 24 per cent; and those of 100–200, 19 per cent. Farms larger than 200 acres cover only 16 per cent of agricultural land.

In general, the smaller ones practice the more generalized economy, their production being markedly different from

[1] *Agricultural Output of Saorstat Eireann, 1926–27* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. 5.

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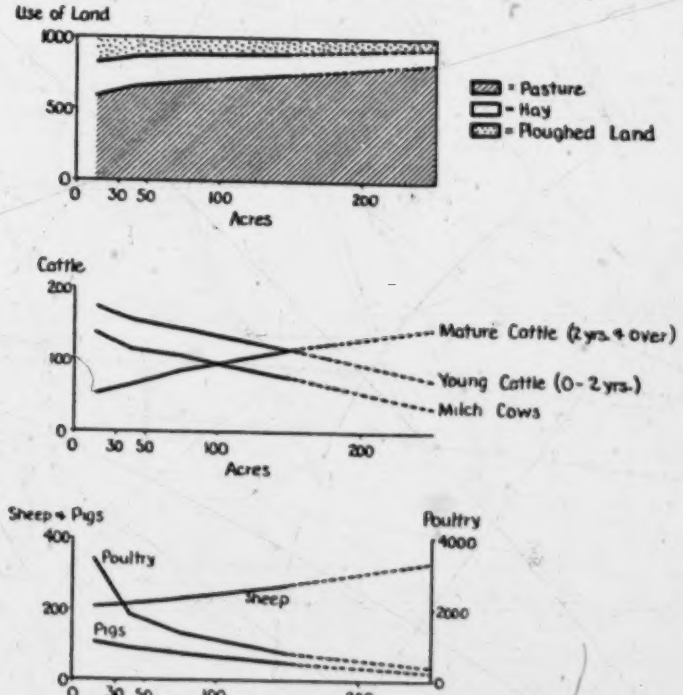
231 that of the large farms. The latter, especially in the mid-
241 land counties, where they are most numerous, raise little
311 more than beef cattle. Their owners are the graziers or
471

FIGURE 1

PRODUCTION ON LARGE AND SMALL HOLDINGS, ALL IRELAND, 1926 CENSUS



(date 1926)

"ranchers" of current political controversy in Ireland. The different economies express themselves in the census as follows:

The numbers of acres ploughed and the numbers under hay per 1000 acres of agricultural land decrease continuously as the size of the holdings increases; the numbers of milch cows, of

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young cattle, of pigs, and of poultry also decrease but the number of dry older cattle and of sheep per 1000 acres increase as the size of the holdings increases. The contrast between the smallest and the largest holdings is exceedingly great and is very great even between the second smallest and second largest. Contrasting the holdings 30–50 acres with holdings 100–200 acres the table shows that on equal areas of agricultural land, the smaller holdings have 32% more ploughed land, 29% more hay, 54% more milch cows, 53% more cattle under one year, 16% more cattle one to two years old, and 9% more cattle of all kinds, 80% more pigs, and 139% more poultry than the holdings 100–200 acres, but the latter have 24% more sheep, 52% more dry cattle, 2 to 3 years old, and 209% more dry cattle 3 years old or over than do holdings 30–50 acres.[2]

In County Clare, the area of our investigation, agriculture presents much the same character and the same difference between small and large farmers as does the whole of Ireland. Clare occupies a middle place among the counties; neither the large nor the small farm predominates. Almost always the small farmer has a garden in potatoes and cabbage with a few oats and turnips and perhaps some rye. The rest of his land will be under several meadows in hay, grazed during the winter months and in fields (pasture land) grazed during both summer and winter, if sheltered. In rough mountain areas sheep are common, particularly in the Broadford and Tubber districts. In addition to cattle, the smaller holder generally has a large flock of ducks, geese, and hens, and he keeps several pigs. These are also fed upon the oats, potatoes, cabbage, and milk left over after the other livestock have been fed. Specialization in poultry raising is still rare, though poultry stations are being established here and there under the supervision of agents of the Department of Agriculture. Certain areas, of course, show minor specializations, such as Miltown Malbay, a seacoast region known for its cabbage, and Newquay, known

[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, Report and Tables* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. xxi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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231 for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted
241 to one crop.
311

With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the
234 small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

234 The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with
246 those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

233 The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he
[244] cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

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them with holdings in other parts of the country when in the latter much mountain land is included. The valuations, however, are exceedingly high, the full valuation of the Ennis district (which includes the Fergus plain) being £67,000 for 112,000 acres compared with the neighboring Killadysert district at £25,000 for 62,000 acres. 233

The second of the "ranching districts" or areas of large holdings practicing this type of agriculture is the region in the northern part of the county called "the hills of Burren" (the Ballyvaughan area). This is a limestone country which provides rich winterage for cattle. Consequently land there is very valuable to the rancher who has to winter his store cattle. Grass grows there fairly richly throughout the winter among the limestone crags, and the cattle are allowed to forage for themselves. In several cases, farmers own large holdings of 200 acres and over in each of the two areas. They drive their cattle down from the winterages in April and back again in November.

Certain other farms of large size, and especially in rich alluvial areas such as Clarecastle and Newmarket-on-Fergus, make extensive use of tillage, primarily of oats. In other areas such as Tubber, Broadford, and Feakle, mountain land is given over to sheep. 233 243

County Clare, in fact, shows a fourfold division into sections differentiated partly geographically, partly by the different utilization of the soil. "West Clare" includes all the peninsula west and south of the ridge culminating in Mount Callan and cutting off the Fergus drainage from the Atlantic. Here the holdings are predominantly small, and the more generalized economy is common. "North Clare" covers the country of the "hills of Burren." "East Clare" contains both the rough country of Feakle and Broadford, where small mountain holdings approximate the conditions of West Clare, and the Tulla and Quin districts, which with "Mid-Clare" and "South Clare" cover the alluvial plain of the 311 471

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311 471 Fergus River, where there are many "ranches" and, in parts, extensive oats tillage.

162 471 Statistics are available only for the whole of Clare; they give a comprehensive view of the county's farming.[3] All but 21.6 per cent of the population of 95,064 lived in country districts. The area they worked, 787,768 acres, was divided into 15,857 holdings, of which 1,179 did not exceed one acre, 909 contained from 1 to 5, 841 from 5 to 10, 1,108 from 10 to 15, and 3,767 from 15 to 30, 3,617 from 30 to 50, and 3,135 from 50 to 100. The farms larger than 100 acres numbered 997 in the 100 to 200 acre group, and 394 exceeding 200 acres. Clare thus fell into a category among counties in which medium-sized holdings were normal, but both the small farms and the large rancher type were present.

241 311 We have no separate statistics for Clare's produce, but we know that in June 1932 the land was being utilized in the following manner. There were only 465 acres of wheat, 335 acres of barley, 207 acres of rye, 1 acre of beans and peas, 147 acres of fruit, 3 acres of sugar beet, 57 acres of experimental ensilage for cattle, and 151 acres of miscellaneous root and green crops. The figures[4] show the small part played by vegetable products other than cabbage and potatoes used for human food. Bread, the great staple, was of course, made from imported flour or wheat. Potatoes and oats, however, made a better showing, with 13,518 and 8,199 acres respectively devoted to them. Turnips and mangels accounted for 3,897 and 306 acres respectively; like potatoes and oats, they are used for both human and animal consumption. This was the extent of ploughed land.

The great bulk of the area was, of course, in hay and pasture. There were 2,791 acres of first-year hay, 131,429 acres of other hay, and 394,791 acres of pasture.

[3] Figures taken from Annual Report, County Clare Council Agricultural Committee, June 1932.

[4] Report of the County Clare Agricultural Committee, 1932.

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These figures coupled with those giving the number of livestock in the county at that date illustrate the greatly preponderant interest in animal products, particularly cattle, pigs, and eggs. The figures for cattle show that Clare is not primarily a ranching county, but that there is, nevertheless, a respectable number of dry, store cattle. In June 1932 there were 786 bulls, 60,149 milch cows, and 1,696 heifers in calf; and besides such breeding stock there were 5,780 dry three-year-olds or over, 23,266 two-year-olds, and 47,918 yearlings. There were also 58,708 under a year old. 231

Returning again to the conditions for all Ireland, it will be seen in how many respects Clare duplicates the various types of agriculture for all Ireland. The Report of Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, describes statistically the difference in farming between large and small holders over the whole country. It finds that for the whole country

> milch cows were densest (in 1926) in the Southwestern Counties [Clare is one], a region of medium sized holdings, next densest in the Northwest with its numerous small holdings and least dense in the Central Eastern Counties. . . . the 13 latter counties included 11 of the counties of the largest percentage of land under holdings of 200 acres or over, 11 of the 13 densest in dry cattle 3 years or over, 10 of the 13 densest in dry cattle 2 to 3 years old and 10 of the 13 densest in sheep. . . . the counties densest in the older dry cattle coincide closely with these densest in large holdings.[5]

Of tillage the Report states that 241

> small farmers adopt a crop rotation very different to that of the large farmers, putting much more of their ploughed land under roots and green crops and much less under corn. . . . Farmers with 1 to 30 acres devote to potatoes nearly three times as large a proportion of their ploughed land as farmers with over 200 acres, and the latter put twice as much . . . under barley and under turnips as the small farmer and a much larger proportion under oats and mangels.

[5] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xxiii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 As regards the smaller crops "the small farmers show a distinct preference for cabbage and rye. . . ."[6]

"Poultry are influenced more than any other class of livestock by size of the farm. . . . They are nine times as dense on holdings of 1 to 30 acres as on holdings over 200 acres. . . . counties densest in poultry coincide with the counties densest in small holdings. . . ."[7]

231 Pigs, however, "seem to be influenced more by densities of tillage and of milch cows than by size of holdings. . . . The Southwestern Counties [Clare is one of them] have dense pig herds and the largest bacon factories."[8]

241 407 The difference reflects itself likewise in the distribution of agricultural implements and machinery over the two types of farm. The figures, dating from 1917,[9] are two decades old, but, in spite of the subsequent increase in mechanization, Irish farming is little given to abundant use of machines, and proportions hold much as at that time. In the words of the Report in discussing the tables it presents, giving numbers of farm implements and machines, enumerating ploughs, harrows, turnip and mangel sowers, corn binders, mowers and reapers, horse-drawn hayforks, and potato diggers per thousand acres of ploughed land or specific crop, on various sized holdings:

> The figures rise regularly to a maximum (in the column representing holdings of 50 to 100 acres) and then fall away regularly. Small figures for the small holdings presumably mean that the less efficient implements are used, (the spade in place of the plough, the scythe instead of the mower), not that co-operation . . . exists to any appreciable extent.[10]

That large holders do not proportionately increase their use of such implements and machines after the 50 to 100 acre maximum is reached lies in the fact that "the small

[6] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, pp. xxvi, xxvii.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*, p. lv.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. lvi. We shall see that this statement is not entirely accurate, though there is no large-scale village coöperation as in Balkan and Slavic lands.

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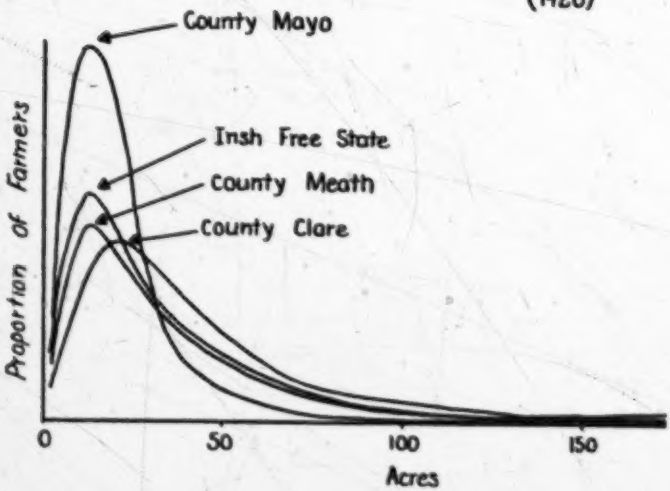
figures for the largest size holdings show that the machines 241
on the smaller farms were more than sufficient for the type 407
of agriculture carried on."[11] For instance, on farms of 30–50 acres there were 137 ploughs to every 1,000 acres of ploughed land. But much less than half that number were

FIGURE 2

Proportion of Farmers on each size holdings (1926) [162]



sufficient for the same acreage of ploughed land on holdings over 500 acres. The difference reflects itself statistically not only in the goods produced but in the tools and techniques used.

More important, however, for an understanding of the 241
social behavior involved, is a further great difference to be 162
seen in the numbers of persons living upon the various sized farms. The numbers of persons supporting themselves upon the small holdings are much greater than those upon

[11] *Ibid.*

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 large farms. Figure 2 shows this graphically. County Mayo
162 there represents one extreme of "congestion" and County Meath another. County Clare is of such mixed character that its position looks anomalous. The figure deals only with farmers and does not, as we shall see, represent the real situation, for it leaves out of account those who work the farm along with its farmer owner.

In 1926 there were 268,930 farmers in the Irish Free State, the largest block of which supported themselves upon farms of from 15 to 30 acres, that is, upon small farms. Their number was 75,225. Farmers numbering 51,196 worked farms of from 30 to 50 acres, and 41,052 farms of from 50 to 100. On smaller farms than the 15–30 acre norm there were 11,608 farmers on 1–5 acre farms and 29,180 on 5–10 acre ones. On larger farms than 100 acres there were, however, only 22,660 farmers.

The counties, of course, differed widely in this respect, but in general the counties where large holdings were numerous supported a much smaller farm population than those where smaller holdings prevailed. Thus Meath, a ranching county of 577,000 acres, supported only 4,403 farmers, while Clare, with an area only about one and one-half times as large, supported 10,320 farmers in a much less rich and more mountainous soil. Indeed, it is one of the anomalies most regretted by the present De Valera government (among others) that Ireland's population is concentrated in the poorer and more mountainous parts of the island. Clare, of course, does not present such an extreme case as the so-called "congested" counties of Mayo, Kerry, and Galway.

In County Clare small farmers are, of course, definitely in the majority. The number of true "ranchers" is few. In 1926 the proportions were 3,020 male farmers on farms 15–30 acres (the largest group), 2,280 on farms 30–50, 2,033 on farms 50–100. In the groups smaller than 15 acres

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there were 828 farmers on farms 10–15 acres and 486 on farms 5–10. Farmers living on farms under 5 acres are few (180). Those on farms up to 200 number 597 and above 200, 218. 241 162

When the total population engaged in agriculture is considered rather than merely the farmers (owners), the greater numbers living upon small holdings become even more apparent. A full report based upon the 1926 census had not yet appeared, but a report was published upon the 1912 figures at the time the 1926 figures were released.[12] From that report it is at once apparent that the difference between large and small farms extends to the population engaged upon them and the type of labor employed. This new difference demonstrates a marked contrast, still apparent today, in the way in which large and small farmers carry on their economies. 241 162 464

In 1926 the number of farmers and relatives assisting them in the Saorstat was 533,025 and those otherwise engaged in agriculture numbered only 139,104. The figures of the Report, based upon the 1912 census, show higher numbers, but the proportion of hired to family labor had not materially changed. From the tables of the Report, it is established that "only 26% were wage earners," that is, were not farmers and their relatives, working without periodic monetary recompense on an employee basis. Relating this to size of farms, it was discovered that not only were "5 times as many persons working on farms of 15 to 30 acres and 3½ times as many on farms of 30–50 acres as on farms of over 200 acres,"[13] but that also "family labor accounted for 89% of the total on farms 1–15 acres but only 24% for farms of over 200 acres. . . . Taking all holdings into account, 74% of the persons working on farms consisted of farmers, their wives, sons, daughters, and other relatives," and only "15% were permanent wage earners and 11%

[12] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. liv. [13] *Ibid.*, p. li.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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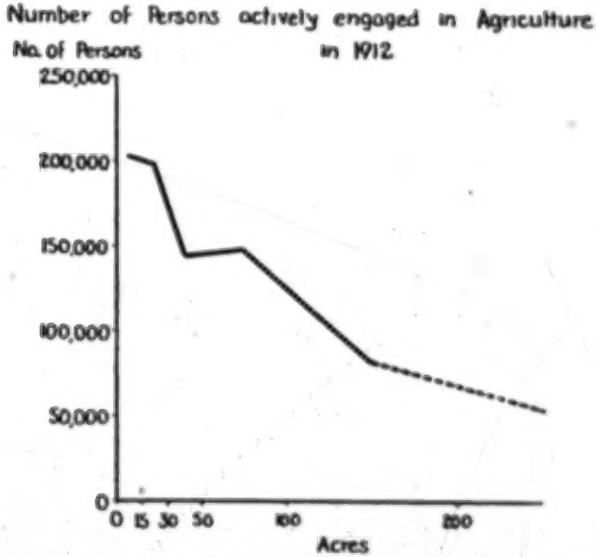
241 were temporary employees."[14] In other words, the small
162 farm is generally worked by the family of the owner, while
464 the large farm, particularly the ranch, is worked by agricultural laborers employed by the owner.

FIGURE 3



These are the actual numbers arranged proportionately, in true descending scale, with the size of the holding. Figures for all Ireland. The figures are quite comparable with those of County Clare for 1932, where in records published in the local newspaper by the County Council Committee on Agriculture it was stated that on farms of 15–30 acres, the median-sized holding, on which the plurality of the farm population live, there were 10 acres to each person. But on farms of 100 acres and over, more than 35 acres were required for each person the farms supported.

In Figure 3 the tables are reduced to a graphic representation which shows well how much truth there is in the Irish assertion that "the smaller the farm, the larger the number of people it supports." One has only to look at it to understand much of Irish political currents.

[14] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. lii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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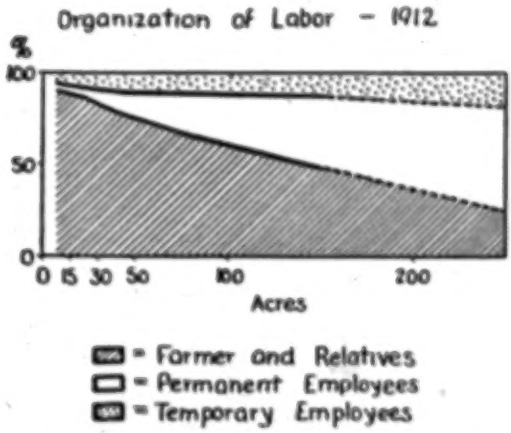
In Clare the same situation is present. Most, if not nearly all, of the work of the small farmers is done by the family relatives. And for the whole county in 1926, 83.5% of all males engaged in agricultural pursuits were farmers or farmers' relatives (and 99 per cent of the rather small number of females). Only in the two districts which we have

FIGURE 4



The chart again shows a constant progression. The larger the farm, the less the dependence upon other members of the family and the more often hired hands are present. The chart begins on the left with a figure of 89 per cent of farmers of 1–15 acres depending upon family help and ends at the right with 24 per cent of farmers of over 100 acres depending upon such help.

already mentioned as regions of large holdings and ranches, Ballyvaughan and Ennis, did the percentage fall appreciably below that figure (to 73 per cent and 75 per cent).

Figure 4 presents this difference in organization of labor for all Ireland in 1912.

Small farmers and large farmers make a different disposal of their products. At the same time there is an exchange of products between the two groups.

These facts are to be got from the many statistics reflect-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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438 ing the internal trade carried on within Ireland. There we can follow the movement of the goods of production through the population.[13] The writers deal with the statistics reflecting conditions before the advent of the De Valera government (1932) because they are the more complete and because changes introduced since then by the Fianna Fáil domestic and foreign policies had not yet (1935) had time to become the settled habit of the people at the time of the study.

438 In 1930 the majority of the agricultural produce of the Free State was exported. Estimated by the value of the
439 products, the destination of the produce was as follows: £23,000,000 worth, or about 35 per cent, was consumed by the agricultural community; about 17 per cent was consumed by others in the Free State; and about 43 per cent was exported. The greater consumption of agricultural [146] products in the country does not, of course, imply a better diet necessarily, since we are disregarding for the moment the large imports of foodstuffs made by both town and country districts, and since much of the country consumption went into further animal production.

439 Export, of course, was designed for the English market. In terms of specific products, 81 per cent of the cattle and sheep production was exported, 59 per cent of the pigs, 37 per cent of the output of butter and cream.[14]

In other words, only a small part of the output of more expensive cattle and sheep was consumed at home, but, at the other extreme, the cheaper stuffs stayed on the farm. The great bulk of the potatoes and turf produced, and just about one-half of the output of such dairy produce as whole milk, butter, eggs, and poultry, were consumed by the producers. Tillage crops tell the same story; they remained at home. The chief and overwhelmingly important exports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

[13] *Agricultural Output of Saorstát Eireann, 1926–27*, pp. 8, 10.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

Of these exports, of course, cattle were the most valuable item and represented the great export staple. They were likewise the crop to which most other produce could be devoted when not used as human food. That this kind of conversion of other stuffs into cattle could take place is to be seen in the figures for milk. Though the Free State produced in the year in question a total of 589,000,000 gallons of milk, including both whole milk and butter, comparing favorably with such an output as Switzerland's yearly 528,000,000 in 1923, only 43 per cent of it was exported, while in Switzerland the export was 67 per cent of the Swiss total.

The figures for exports introduce a new factor of difference between the holdings of large and small size and their populations. Small holdings do not share equally with large holdings either in the consumption of agricultural produce or in its export. In both consumption and export commerce in the Free State, small holders and large holders play distinct roles.

Taking the first of these considerations, the figures for consumption reveal the difference. The estimated human consumption of whole milk (as milk) was some 90,000,000 gallons, according to the statistical record of the year 1928,[17] of which 70,000,000 gallons were consumed by agriculturalists and 20,000,000 by the remainder of the population. It was estimated that on the farms 38 gallons were consumed yearly per person. But that is the figure for all farms. There is a considerable difference here between types of farms.

Thus, in this case, on farms less than 50 acres only 36 gallons per person per annum were consumed, it was estimated, while on farms of over 50 acres, the consumption was 42 gallons. In Munster, the chief milk-producing province,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

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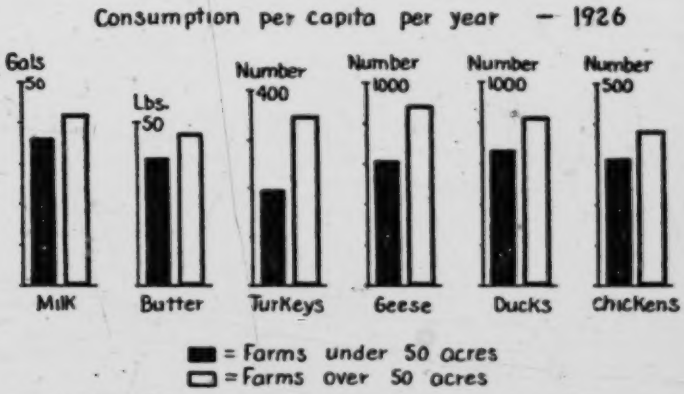
241 the difference is even more marked, the indices being 35
262 gallons and 44 gallons.
511 Similar differences hold as well for the consumption of milk as butter, a commodity of which the Irish consume more than any other civilized country. The difference between farms under and farms over 50 acres can be expressed in the spread between 40 and 48 pounds annual consumption per person. For poultry and for eggs, great farm diet staples, similar differences hold. On farms less than 50 acres, 197 turkeys, 601 geese, 672 ducks, and 3,177 ordinary

FIGURE 5



Notice that in each instance the smaller farms produce more, consume less. The great "money crop," cattle, which neither party consumes to any great degree, tells another story.

fowls, we are told, were consumed in the year in question, for every 1,000 persons living on such farms; while on farms over 50 acres, 325, 884, 873, and 3,823 are the respective figures. "As might be expected, the difference between average consumption on large and small farms of valuable fowl like turkeys is very marked." [28]

In the case of eggs, of those consumed per 100 persons on

[28] *Agricultural Output . . . , 1926–27*, p. 37.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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farms in January 1929,[19] the figures are for small farms 530, for large farms 582. All of these figures reflect a difference of diet the more marked because the small farmer population is so much the larger.

241
262
511

In Figure 5 this difference of consumption is represented in the form of blocks depicting the contrast between small and large farms. One could conclude quite rightly from this kind of picture that in each instance the smaller farms produce more per person at work and eat less. In terms of production, then, the small farm is the more productive. In terms of monetary return, it is a different story. Cattle, of course, are the Irish "money crop," much like cotton and wheat in parts of the United States.

Observation makes it clear that this difference of diet is more marked than even these figures reveal. But figures for other items of diet appearing in agricultural production are not available in correlation with farm size. The home consumption of meats from the farm animals, except pigs, is negligible among both kinds of farmers. Nevertheless, we can gain a substantial insight into the difference in meat-eating between large and small farmers when we realize that, out of the comparatively small total of 123,000 cattle and 504,000 sheep and lambs slaughtered for consumption in the Free State in 1926, a per capita count of average consumption by dressed weight gives such a predominantly large-holding county as Westmeath a weight of 34 pounds per consuming person, counties with large urban population rising higher, while the same count gives such a predominantly small-holding county as Mayo a weight of only 13 pounds. Clare, where small and medium farmers are predominant in the population, shows a similar small consumption of meat, a similar count giving only 19 pounds per person.[20]

In fact, the large farm population shares a meat diet with

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 49.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 the cities and larger towns that is unknown on the small
262 farms. The fact is evident when it is observed that Dublin,
511 Cork, and Waterford counties (each dominated numerically by the city of the name) count an average meat consumption taken on the same scale of 69, 40, and 37 pounds per capita respectively.

231 The difference between the two kinds of farm shows itself
241 again strongly in the export trade from Ireland and in the
439 roles of each in the transfer of farm produce to its ultimate market. The two kinds of farm make a totally different disposal of their produce, particularly their cattle. In this fact we see for the first time that in some regard they have a complementary role. Between them Irish cattle trade is carried on.

231 The huge internal Irish cattle trade is thus significant.
438 It reveals itself in the figures as a movement from small farm to large, an interchange between the two kinds of farmers which shows once again their distinctness. The trade is both geographical and social, in the sense that it flows between two sections of Ireland and between her two great agricultural classes.

To get at the facts which show the case demands looking at the statistics of cattle in the Free State. These illustrate clearly how far the internal cattle trade shows up the great difference between the two types of farm. It is necessary to take into consideration the age groups of cattle in the various areas and in the possession of holders of various acreages in those areas. This roundabout course of determining the outlines of internal cattle trade is necessary because there are no barriers or *octrois* at which count might be made as the cattle move from dealer to dealer across the country.

231 The seven southwestern counties are the areas predominant in milch cattle production; they are the areas of the calf-producing cow. Clare is one of these. A chart of birth dates of cattle in various parts of Ireland demonstrates that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the majority of the calves in the seven southwestern counties are born in March. A large majority of the calves in the eastern part of the country, the thirteen central eastern counties, are born in April, and a majority of the calves born in the northern tier of counties in the area of the Free State, a region we shall call the six northwestern counties, are born in May. This sort of progression of the birth dates of cattle through the spring months is, of course, related to climatic conditions. 231

Because such a progression exists, an annual count of cattle taken on the basis of age, undertaken each June first, the beginning of the butter export season, when cows are in full milk, would lead to the strong presumption that cattle recorded as under one year of age at that date would, in fact, nearly all be under three months of age; yearlings so recorded would, in fact, be under fifteen months, and so on. When an actual count was taken in 1926 of the cattle in Ireland, this presumption was borne out. On it is based the following picture of internal cattle trade to be derived from the Report on Agricultural Statistics already quoted.

Following the reasoning of the Report we learn that since "exceedingly few calves are either exported from or slaughtered in the Saorstat and . . . on June 1st, 1926, there were 78 cattle under one year per 100 milch cows, it follows that any district or group of holdings . . . with much less than 78 must have exported them."[21] Then, transferring this device to the annual count of cattle by age, it becomes readily apparent that all of the central eastern counties who count many over 78 cattle under one year of age per 100 milch cows on June first 1926 must have been importing, while the northern counties, Donegal and Leitrim, and the southern counties, Cork, Kerry, and Limerick, with figures much less than 78, must have been exporting. The last three 231 438

[21] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xvi.

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231 counties named are the principal members of the group of
438 seven southwestern dairying counties.

A great cattle trade thus takes place between the southwestern dairying area and the "ranching" counties of the central eastern area. When yearlings are taken into account by the same statistics, a fuller picture of this trade emerges. All but one of the central eastern counties has considerably more than 100 yearlings for every 100 calves under a year old, showing that the area is continuing to import the cattle as they grow older. The other sections of the country have considerably fewer than 100 yearlings for every 100 younger cattle, and have been continuing their exports. The principal dairying counties again have the fewest yearlings and are again the leaders in export.

Likewise in counting two-year-olds, the same proportions hold, and in counting cattle over three years old they hold again. In the last two cases, however, northern counties show a greater export than do the dairying counties of the southwest, the latter presumably having got rid of a larger proportion of all cattle not designed for milk production at an earlier age.

[439] The importing central eastern counties are devoted largely to raising and fattening dry store cattle for the British market. And since this is the case, it can be seen that the statistics given above reflect a continuous movement of cattle, calves, yearlings, and two-year-olds to the rich grazing lands of the central plain. Yet to regard this trade as exclusively geographical would be misleading and obscuring, for the profound differences between small and large holders which we have been examining are involved here as well.

Further statistical inquiry demonstrates that the trade takes place as much between the different sized farms as between the regions of different soil and climate. If we correlate proportions of cattle of various ages with the size of the holdings in the various county groups we have already

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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named, rather than with the counties as a whole, this great 231
internal cattle trade takes on the new aspect we mention. 438
For example, figures for calves under one year reach 78 and over per 100 milch cows on holdings of all sizes in the thirteen central eastern counties, holdings of all sizes above 30 acres (the average size) in the northern counties, but only on holdings above 100 acres in the calf-producing dairying southwestern counties. That means that, though holdings of all sizes are importing calves in the "ranching" areas, in the other areas only large farms are importing them.

Taking yearlings next, figures on the table showing more than 100 yearlings per 100 calves under one year old appear on all holdings in the thirteen county midland areas except on the very smallest farms, but in the northern and southwestern areas such figures appear only on the very largest holdings. The midlands import yearlings, particularly in the large farms, and in the rest of the country large farms do likewise, but small farmers get rid of them. Thus in the southwestern counties, holders of 200 acres and over, with a count of 118 yearlings per 100 calves, are importers of cattle produced on other farms, as are holders of 100 acres and over in the northern counties, where the counts of yearlings are 132 for the 100–200 acre group and 154 for the 200 and over group. But small farmers in all counties, regardless of the section of the country in which they live, are exporters, not only in dairying Kerry but even in the flatlands of Meath.

Taking a similar count of dry two-year-old cattle, we find that all small holdings in all areas are still exporting, though the size of holding at which exporting ceases is lower in the central eastern area (the 50–100 acre group), and all large holdings in all areas are still importing, though, conversely, the size of holding at which importing begins is higher in the dairying county region.

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For a graphic representation of this argument and its conclusions, let the reader turn to Figures 6 and 7. Figure 6 gives the numbers for various kinds of cattle by various size holdings separated out for the three groups of counties.[22] It shows the characteristic increase of the numbers of store or dry cattle, for export upon holdings as one goes from small to large and from the northern and southern areas of intensive small farm production of different kinds, based upon different soil and climate, to the rich grazing country of the central plain. It shows that one is really dealing with two kinds of increase of holding of dry cattle; the first, the difference of area, and the second, the difference of size of holding. The last seems to be the more important since it has a characteristic influence in each of the areas.

Figure 7 completes the picture. In *A* one sees the characteristic relative absence of milch cows upon large holdings. In *B* one sees that calf production is fairly uniform everywhere. In *C*, however, one begins to see the movement of cattle from small farm to large as the calves grow older. Small holdings have dropped out as possessors of older dry cattle, and through *D* and *E* continue to do so. As the dry cattle mature they become more and more concentrated upon the large holdings. The figure demonstrates at a glance that it is not a geographical trade that is involved so much as it is a trade between the two kinds of economy, between the two rural classes in the Free State.

Numerical statement of the movement of cattle thus shows us that the internal cattle trade in Ireland is in reality a trade between two types of farmers. It reflects again the great difference in the economies of large farmer and small, and shows that this difference extends to their participation in the business, commerce, and export trade of the country. The large farmers are directly concerned with preparation

[22] The figures are based on tables given in *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, pp. xvii, xix.

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FIGURE 6

PROPORTIONS OF STORE CATTLE TO MILCH CATTLE ON VARIOUS SIZE HOLDINGS IN THE AREAS OF DISTINCTIVE ECONOMY IN THE IRISH FREE STATE

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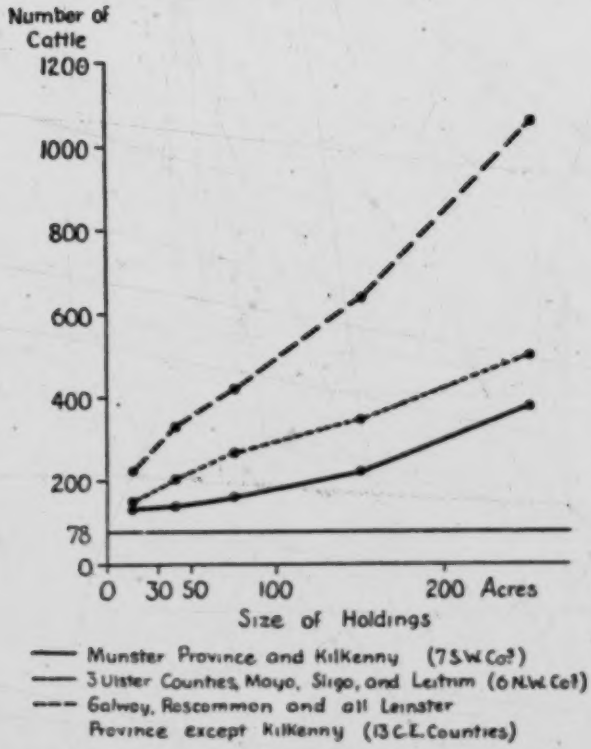
All cattle except milch cows on 1st. June, 1926, per 100 milch cows on that date



The three areas are those of distinctive climatic and soil conditions. The northern and southern areas are alike in being suppliers of young cattle, the central area in retaining herds of dry cattle. Yet one can see at a glance that the difference among the broad areas reflects real differences in cattle-holding on small and large acreages. Points on the graph express for each size holding the number of non-milk-producing cattle per 100 cattle. The number of non-milk-producing cattle then ranges from a proportion of 78 to 100, to over 1,000 to 100.

[p.27]

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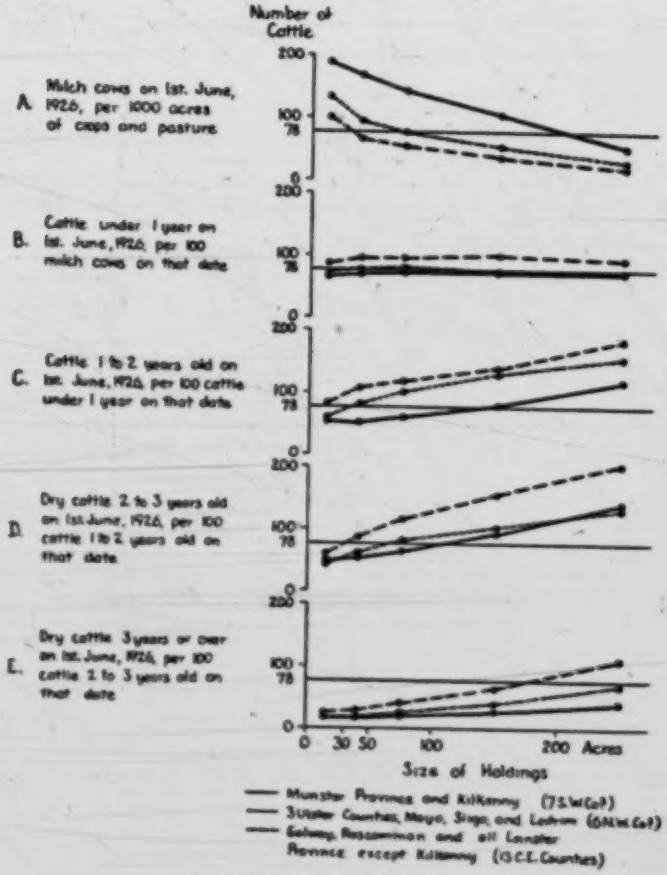
FIGURE 7

CATTLE TRADE BETWEEN CLASSES OF IRISH FARMERS, 1926



For explanation see the text.

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of cattle for direct shipment to the English market; the small farmers are concerned only remotely, for the large farmer himself is their immediate market. They deal in much younger cattle and prepare them for sale to the middlemen and the big farmers. 231 438

Consequently, the small farmers are much less immediately affected by disturbances in the cattle trade with Great Britain. The fact has been evident throughout the years of the De Valera regime. It has blasted the prognostications of those who argued that a restriction and interruption of the trade with England, such as grew up in the "economic war" which followed De Valera's retention of the land annuity payments and the English retaliation in the form of import duties on cattle, would alienate the farmers' support of De Valera's government. It certainly alienated the large farmers, who were immediately affected, but the "farmer" of the politician is not always the whole population of that name. It left the small farmer relatively undisturbed. He was at one or two points removed from the actual trade with England and saw it only as a sale to big farmers. With the small farmers, the economic argument of De Valera's opponents failed. 231 439 648

However this may be, the conclusions as to the great division among farmers that statistics and the cattle trade have yielded us are borne out equally well within the separate counties. County Clare, for instance, shares fully in the internal cattle trade. And in Clare, the trade flows from small farmers to large. There are no statistics on the matter, but the generalities hold. Clare occupies a middle place within the system of exchanges. It is one of the seven southwestern dairying counties we have dealt with. But it does not always follow them statistically. As we have seen, Clare is a county of mixed holdings. Both the midland type of big farmer and the small farmer of the west and south are present. The cattle trade within Clare is a miniature of 231 438

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that of Ireland. Clare buys in as many cattle in certain sections as it exports in others. Those who do the bulk of the buying are big farmers from the flatlands along the Fergus estuary or the hills of Burren. The small farmers of the remaining sections do the selling.

All this tedious statistical inquiry has not been without its purpose. It has established for us through the medium of economic inquiry the existence of two distinct kinds of orientation and adaptation to the soil and two kinds of agricultural activity. In doing so, in marking the first distinctions and differences to be observed among the dwellers of the countryside and showing us something of the relations between them, it has introduced us to the first great group with which we must deal: the small farmers.

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CHAPTER II

Small Farm Economy

THE small farmers' family groups inhabit the holdings or plots of land from which they make the livelihood we have described numerically. Except in a few and special cases, there is no physical separation of house plot from fields; the individual family's plot is usually a continuous one, and the other forms of settlement present in Ireland are rapidly being reshaped with that condition as the ideal. Consequently, the farmhouse is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. In it the farm family group spends its entire life, sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work upon the fields. 361 592

The farm family lives and performs almost all of its work within this spatial unit of land and house. And the unit is identified with the family in the eyes of its community in name and ownership. Outside this range, the farmer has little participation in affairs in comparison with others of the population. His wife and children have even less. Within this range most of the activity marking the relations of the human beings who make up the group takes place. 592

The "land," as we have seen, is usually divided into "field," "meadow," "garden," "bog," and "mountain," according to its character and agricultural use. These divisions make up the holding and represent the productive 231 241 311

[p. 31]

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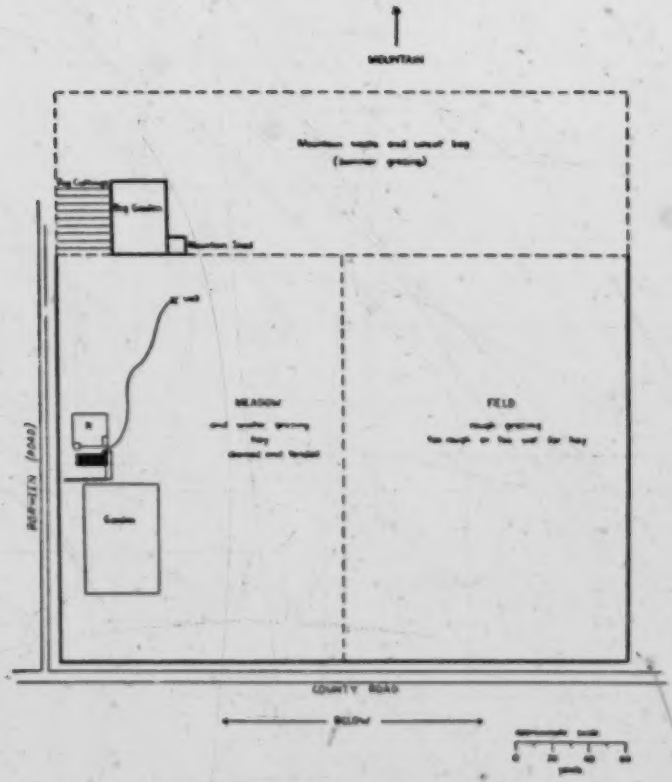
FIGURE 8

Diagrammatic Scheme
of Small Farm
LUOGH
[illegible] ACRES



Schematic representation (not to scale) of composite Clare farm of about five to fifty acres.

[p. 32]

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activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated 231
are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops 241
for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and 311
rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use.

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are 231
the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various 343
sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the 351
house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later.

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called 231
"all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view 241
is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken 311
from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area.

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard 342
also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of 343
the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is carefully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general 351
plan for all such houses of small farmers.

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work 512
which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various

[text continues on p. 35]

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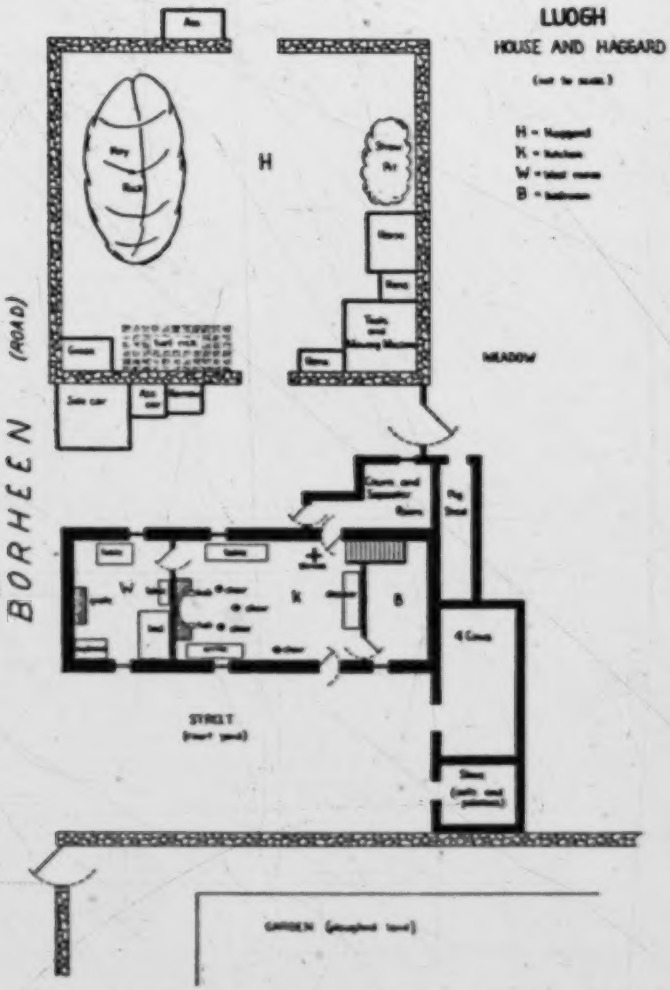
FIGURE 9



Schematic plan of a typical small farmer's house and farmyard, illustrating his familist economy and functional division of his household.

[p.34]

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members and the organization of effort involved. It is to be expected, of course, that there is a great deal of variation at different seasons of the year, a fact which makes it impossible to describe farm activities without reference to seasonal change and the requirements of various crops. Nevertheless, the work round the house is constant and less variant than that outside on the "land," and for that reason it is significant to begin with it. 512

A typical winter day begins for the farm family about seven-thirty in the morning. At other seasons the family rises earlier, but the long wet days have reduced outside work to a bare minimum and confine the work of the family members within doors. To the woman falls the first duty of the day. She must rake together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire in the hearth, put down new sods for the fire, and rekindle the blaze. This done, she hangs the kettle on the hook, making ready for the first tea of the day. For the rest of the day she must keep the hanging kettle ready, for at any moment of the day she may be called upon to serve a cup of tea to her husband, children, and all visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast, usually of bread, eggs, and milk. By the time breakfast is finished, the household is ready for its workaday existence. The farmer father and husband is dressed and ready for his daily tasks, in which he relies upon the aid of whatever grown sons may still be at home, and who now take their breakfasts beside him. Similarly, the farm wife and mother who serves her men, husband and sons, and stands by unwilling to take her place at the deal table before the window at one side of the kitchen hearth until they have eaten their fill, is ready to begin her daily round with the help of the daughters and young children of both sexes who wait their turns with her. 512 462 264 [272] [262]

In the household the responsibility of day-to-day housekeeping belongs to the woman. Hers, too, is the care of the 512 462 356

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512 children. If they are of school age, she must dress them,
462 feed them, and get them off to school. She does all the cook-
356 ing and washing up after meals and keeps the teapot always ready. Each morning she sweeps the house, makes the beds, and so on. The clothes of the household are her care as well, and the indispensable and constant mending of them which rough wear makes necessary all falls to her lot.

This household work is familiar to us; the point of itemizing it is merely to make clear the confined sphere in which the woman's recurrent and indispensable duties fall.

512 But her work stretches beyond the house door. In the
462 morning after breakfast she takes the milk buckets and milks
356 the cows in the sheds in the haggard. This is merely one of
231 the many trips she makes in and out of the kitchen doors for fuel, for water, to feed and tend the animals and the fowl.
234 Her milking finished, she must bring the milk in and separate it. In recent years, more prosperous farms have been able to make use of the separator. If there is none, she must set the milk in large pans and allow the cream to rise. The whole process of the conversion of milk to butter is her charge.

512 After the morning milking and the feeding of her human
462 charges, she must turn her attention to the feeding of the
231 farm animals, especially the young ones. The cows and horses are not her province, but all the care of the calves, pigs, and fowl falls to her lot. She prepares a mixture of warm milk and grain for the calves, feeding them from a bucket. They must not be allowed to suck, as the milk is meant for human consumption. Then she boils a large kettle of potatoes over the fire for the chickens and the pigs, or takes them the leavings of the previous day.

512 Before noon she hangs another kettle over the fire filled
462 with potatoes for the use of the family. In season she adds
[251] white cabbage and nearly always includes a portion or two of bacon, some of it home cured in brine to resemble salt
PORK.

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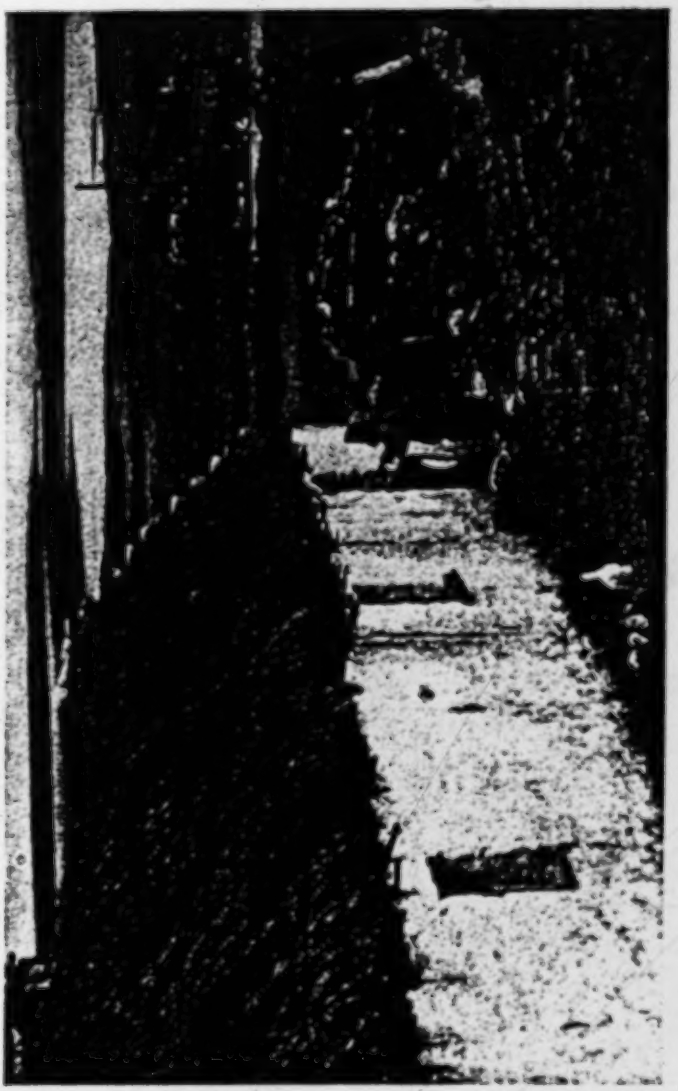

THE WOMAN OF THE HOUSE DRIVES HOME A COW

[facing p.36]

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512 462 pork. By the time this is ready, the men are in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

In the meantime the men have been engaged upon work of their own. The farmer rises when he hears his wife busy herself in rekindling the turf on the hearth. If there are sons, he wakes them. After that he goes to the cow barns in the haggard to inspect the cattle housed there overnight and tend to their wants in water and hay. After breakfast, if the day is fine, neither too bitterly cold nor too soakingly wet, he sallies forth into the fields to whatever work the time of the year demands. If he finds himself confined to the house, he still has plenty to do in house and haggard.

512 462 264 [153] If he and his sons go to the fields, he probably returns about eleven-thirty for the noon meal, the heavy meal of the day. Long habit calls forth his hunger and identifies it with the house. Several countrymen have remarked that they never feel hungry away from the house but are ready to eat when they get inside. The dinner unites most of the family for the first time during the day since breakfast. Only the small children of school age are absent. Their share of the meal is often saved for them until they return about four o'clock.

[262] As at breakfast, the men sit down together immediately, falling to the steaming plates of cabbage, bacon, and potatoes the woman sets before them. As they eat, she stands [521] ready to refill their plates, talking with them about the morning's work and the news of the neighborhood. It is the chief time of family conversation. During the meal the woman has boiled tea and, when the men finish with their plates, she clears away and lays bread and tea before them. Sometimes there is a longer interval between tea and dinner, devoted to smoking and talk.

512 264 As before, the women and children do not eat until the men have finished. They take their places together when [273] the men have left or have moved off to smoke an after-dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.

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512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
[521 silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
858] sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
462 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading
231 the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] news.

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news. An hour or so later the man brings the cattle in from the fields, if they have been grazing during the day. He is ready for evening tea. 512 462 [231]

At that hour the work of the men is over for the day, but that of the woman goes on. She must prepare, serve, and clean up after the tea, and then go milk the cows brought in from the fields. Her work ends only with the separating that takes place when she brings her milk into the house. Even then, while the men may sit round the fire talking over the day's work or the affairs of the community, she is not idle. If the children need help in lessons, it is she who gives it to them. She puts them to bed, and, if she returns then to join the men at the fire, she continues with knitting and baking. When the whole family has finally gone off to bed, it is she who must close up the house at night and slake the fire in the hearth.

Work round and inside the house is continuous and varies very little from day to day and season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfills its needs of nourishment and shelter in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habitual behaviors. What variation there is in the accepted pattern is itself confined to narrow range. Certain chores indispensable in the day-to-day habits of the people are divided among days of the week. One woman informant, a small farmer's wife in Inagh, gave as her weekly round a much more rigid daily division of tasks than is actually to be observed. On Monday she did the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday she made butter, on Friday she went to market, on Saturday she got ready for Sunday, and on Sunday she went to mass and did as little as she could. [527] Really, however, it is only on Sunday that there comes any serious alteration in the daily round.

Work in the land beyond the haggard and the house is less restricted and more varied. It has a greater range of 512

[about 5 P.M. - Analysis]

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512 activity over the farm and over the round of the year. Coupled with such greater variety, there is also a greater freedom of choice among necessary tasks. The necessities imposed by soil and climate permit a wider range of action and a less narrowly repetitious routine than do the ordered regularities of a household.

512 Yet within the greater range of activity there is still a
221 constant and nearly invariant pattern of work. The progression of the seasons brings a recurrent demand upon the farmer in the care of beasts, crops, and the land itself. Each season brings a task which must be performed, begun, or ended if the farmer is to raise his produce successfully.
512 Similarly, the custom and rivalry of the community exert
626 a further restriction upon his activity. He works within the influence of a long-established tradition of ancestral experience which has established for him the best dates for planting, for reaping, for breeding cattle, and for most of the tasks of his yearly round. The community holds that tradition in common, and the farmer is caught in the midst of a mesh of rivalries, competitions, and gossip in praise and condemnation, which binds him the more strongly to the accepted patterning of his yearly activity.

512 The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its lowest pitch
221 in winter. Activity is confined to house and haggard. On bitter wet days little can be done beyond the haggard wall,
462 but within it there is always a variety of necessary tasks involving care of farm machinery, implements, and buildings, and the housing and feeding of the cattle who cannot be driven to graze in the open field. In the house there is much that can be done. Harness can be patched, boots fitted with new soles, plates, and spikes, furniture repaired and occasionally new pieces made.

These tasks fall to the males of the household, the farmer father and his grown or adolescent sons. Any discussion of the annual round of farm work necessarily describes their

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labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents. 512 221 462

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year. 132 527 221

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew. 221 527 574 621

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with 221 132 241 221 521

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221 types, varieties, growth cycles, yields, and care of seeds and
521 cattle passes round by word of mouth.

[805] The first of February, St. Brigid's Day, marks the begin-
221 ning of spring. For the countryman the return of the
132 "hard" days of wind and clear weather herald the season of
241 the land's drying off. Through February and March the gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted, and the fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each hard day is a welcome opportunity, for only then can work in the fields go on. With favorable weather, the work of preparation is over in the beginning of March, and the actual planting begins. By St. Patrick's Day, with its promise of continuous hard weather, the gardens are ready for a second planting.

221 The potatoes demand the greatest attention. A fortnight
241 after they are planted, they must be manured well with manure brought from the pile near the cattle cabins, and the ground must be leveled so that the plant will not go to stalk and thus fail to produce tubers. A fortnight more and the ground must be "softened" and the earth round the plant, which now shows its first leaves, must be "stirred." By the time May is reached, the potatoes must be "landed." Earth must be taken from between the long ridges in which the potatoes are planted and heaped up over them from each side. Thereafter nothing remains until the harvest but a summer spraying against blight.

221 Throughout the spring the cattle have demanded atten-
231 tion. March and April see the birth of calves and the
438 beginning of the milk season and intensified butter-making. The great spring cattle fairs take place. The farmer must devote himself to the all-important business of buying and selling his milch and store cattle and his calves. At home the cattle demand constant care against hunger, disease, and cold as he mixes their diet of fast diminishing hay with the slowly returning pasture grass.

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The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the "landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and whatever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over. 221 241 314

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to allow turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round. 221 372 [805]

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabáiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June. 221 241 262

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up. 221 241

The first true harvest and the most important one of the year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is 246 221

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221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

221 With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
241 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to
[492] the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

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he was in the spring, for the autumn fairs bring him an 23| important market.

If he has been fortunate and industrious, nothing remains 22| for him to do but to prepare his fields for the next year. The 24| soil he has used for root crops must be turned, and the gardens which he intends for grain are ploughed. As he follows the furrows, he can look back upon a year ended, and forward to another to begin. By the time his ploughing is finished, the dead of winter and the holiday season of Christmas is upon him and the yearly round is over.

Yet it is over only to repeat itself. For within the range 22| of the seasonal variation and the demands of growing and maturing crops and animals the pattern of farm work in haggard, garden, meadow, and field is a constant one. Much the same progression of labor flows along year after year, and follows the farmer from boyhood till death. Yet there is much less restriction in choice of operation to be performed, in movement over space, in the possibility of day-to-day variation than in the case of the work of the household.

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CHAPTER III

Family Labor

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AT crucial points in the annual round we have sketched out, the whole family lends its labor. Particularly at the turf making, the hay saving, and the potato planting, all members work together in bog, garden, or meadow. Though tasks vary according to age, sex, and relative status, the group works in a unison of effort in which a definite rhythm can be observed. Under the direction of the father, the husband and farm-owner, the variously divided tasks are correlated to the end in view. The periods of common effort in which all the family members, even to the children, are working in unison are also those in which the greatest speed is needed. At such times the pattern of daily household activity suffers; the regularities belonging to it are transferred to the field. Tea and bread, and perhaps sometimes heavier fare, make their appearance at the regular times, no longer within the house but on the edge of bog or meadow.

Within this concerted effort, a division of labor between the sexes and upon the basis of age appears. The division, however, is not confined entirely to farm work. It covers the whole field of the behavior of the individual. It divides obligations, duties, sentiments, and values of the group, and is enforced by the group. It pertains both among the members of the family groups and in the community at large. It controls individual action and attitudes and gives a standard

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of comparison between one's own farm work and that of one's fellows. The interests and the desires of the individual concur in large measure with the norm, and he finds reward and pleasure in it. He can rely upon similar obligations and duties toward himself on the part of others.

The greatest scope and variation in activity which we have seen to fall to the lot of the male takes its form in part from his relationship to the others of the household. On the normal farm there is an adult male farmer who is husband, father, and owner of the farm. Within the group he has the controlling role, subject to conventional restrictions of his authority. In farm work, as we have seen, he directs the activity of the family as it works in concert. In his special province he looks after and cares for the cattle, has full control over them, and takes complete charge of buying and selling them. He disposes of the income they bring in. But all this he is obliged to do in the interests of his wife and children. Should he fail to get a good price or prove a bad judge of cattle or handle them badly, his wife and children are entitled to a just anger against him.

As we have seen, all the work requiring heavy effort in garden and field falls to his lot. He makes and tends the drains, fences, barns, and shelters, which protect both cattle and garden produce. He works the fields and gardens with plough, mower, harrow, and spade. All the agricultural implements and the heavy work involved in their use and in the use of the horse are his province.

The produce which such work assures is his to be disposed of, as is all income derived from it. He may order it as he sees fit; yet his first charge is to the family he heads. The division of income between household needs and the demands of farm and livestock springs from his decisions; yet it is a matter of nice adjustment between himself and his wife in favor of the group as a whole. Custom and his own desire demand that he provide for his household to

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593 the best of his ability. Though he can make what disposal
462 he will of the funds earned by the labor of the group, his wife and children can expect as of right that he shall make it for the family as a whole in which each member receives his share. For the work of his wife is complementary to his, and in its own sphere of as great importance to the livelihood and the organization of the family unit. While he may demand and expect of his wife that she fulfill her household duties, so may she demand and expect that he fulfill his in the management and working of the farm and in providing for herself and the children.

593 As regards income, all money derived from the sale of eggs and butter, the chief concern of the women beyond the house itself, belongs to her to dispose of as she sees fit. Yet the fruits of her labors are also subject to the needs of the family unit, husband and children.

462 The division of labor between the sexes arises within a
593 field of larger interests and obligations. It is part of the behavior expected reciprocally of husband and wife. It is a functional element of their relationship within the family.

868 The training each sex receives from childhood in farm work reflects this fact. Each learns his or her part in farm economy, not as a vocational preparation but as a making ready for marriage. The boy acquires his man's skills and techniques for the farm and farm family he may head himself some day; the girl learns the woman's role as an integral part of her future state of wife and mother. Each learns to expect of the other not only the loving consideration of husband or wife but the proper skills in farm economy.

462 Among the small farmers this dichotomy of tasks assigned
626 to the sexes in the economy of the farm family is more even
183 than the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, father and mother. It is also an integral part of the personalities of all men and women of the peasant's own kind. One can get many expressions of attitude of this sort. They show that

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the division of labor between males and females is regarded as corresponding to the natural propensities of the two sexes. That a man should concern himself with a woman's work, such as the sale of eggs or the making of butter, is the subject of derisive laughter, while a woman's smaller hands make it "natural" for her to be a better hand at milking the cows. 462 626 183

Even when the communal labor of the family is demanded and women take their place in bog, garden, and meadow, a definite role is assigned them. Usually it is the lighter tasks which are known as women's work. There is no formal taboo confining a woman to women's work. Heavy work is merely felt to be a hardship upon her. At the potato planting the women do the arduous work of planting the sprouts which they have prepared, bending over to put them into the ridges prepared by the men. They do their share, if necessary, of cultivating, but they are not generally accustomed to the spade, which like the plough, the harrow, the mower, scythe, and turf "slan" is regarded as a masculine implement. At the potato lifting they go along behind the man who turns the potatoes out of the ridge with spade and plough, and pick them up. At the haymaking, the pitching, raking, and some of the building of the haycocks are left to them. But the mowing, especially where it involves the horse-drawn mowing machine, and the building of the rick in the haggard, are masculine skills. In all cases of field work of this sort the role of the woman is usually auxiliary. The same holds in turf cutting. The men do the actual cutting in the bog trenches, while the women knead the peat into briquets and pile it for drying. 241 462 [562] [314]

The many attitudes and beliefs which surround this type of division of labor illustrate again the socially determined character of the distinctions and their genesis in the intersexual relationship. Just as the man's work is the harder, the more various, and the wider in scope, so the attitudes express a greater valuation of the men's work within the 241 462 626 183 461

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241 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the
462 authors have heard men admonish a woman for interrup-
626 tion with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we
183 [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laugh-
461 ter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conven-
593 tional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral
183 specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within the farm family. The connection between family status and
626 labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the non-economic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 Within the framework of the division of labor on the
593 basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm
561 family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

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his relationship to his fellows within the group. The controls exercised among members in work and in the life of the family in general show themselves a constant pattern to be observed from farm to farm wherever one elects to examine the daily and annual rounds of activity. 593 561 462

Thus in any of the tasks which the group must perform in its economy, the division of labor between the adult farmer-father and his sons may be observed. The father is owner and director of the enterprise; in him the farm and its income are vested; in the community it is known as his and the sons are spoken of as his "boys." Thus in the draining of a field or the sale of cattle in a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye and refer necessary decisions to him.

Perhaps the best method of illustrating this relationship is to present it from the point of view of the growing individual who takes his place in the farm family. He forms part of the productive unit which is his own family. The techniques of farming are passed on to him, and he learns them under the direction of his father, uncles, and brothers. At their hands he acquires the conditioning which will fit him to form a farm family of his own, thus to continue the traditional pattern. Naturally, his conditioning is more than merely technological; he gets on the farm the full training which makes him a member of his class and time. 462 561 593 868

The growing child ordinarily sees his father as owner and principal worker of the farm. When the whole family group of father, mother, children, and whatever other relatives may be living with them, works in concert, as at the potato planting, the turf cutting, and the haymaking, it is the father who directs the group's activities, himself doing the heavy tasks. The father looks after and takes care of the cattle, delegating minor tasks connected with them to his sons. Even though the cattle may be generally discussed by

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462 the household, he has full control of them, disposes of them,
561 drives them to the fair, handles and uses the money got for
593 them. If he fails to get a good price, handles the beasts badly,
868 or proves himself a bad judge of them, the criticism of his wife and neighbors soon establishes the value of careful husbandry in the son's mind.

462 The father does all the constant heavy work necessary to keep the land in condition in so rainy and treeless a country.
593 He makes drains, ditches, fences, walls, shelters, and barns,
868 as we have seen. As the son grows older, he learns to help at these tasks, finally taking them over. The father prepares the garden, ploughs, plants, and harrows, does all the spade work of cultivation and everything involving the use of horses and agricultural implements. The son soon learns that these are men's tasks, and he gradually assumes his share of them. The adult men of the neighborhood rival one another at these tasks; they chafe and boast back and forth over their prowess. The son cannot fail to hear and value
462 the techniques which he acquires.

593 He learns those techniques in a narrow school. Where
868 tradition is still so strong and the incursions of trained agriculturalists still relatively infrequent, as among the
626 small farmers, there is little variation from the tried and true way. Each operation and each tool demand a technique of their own. The father makes sure that the son learns it well. Command, rivalry, ridicule, and many an adage and bit of folklore all conspire to the same result.

The father must make sure that the son has learned the right and traditional technique. For he must be ready to stand his ground with anyone in the community in farm skills. Every operation becomes the intimate concern of his neighbors; a man must hold his head high. More important,
[461] many skills are plied in coöperative activities, in turf cutting, haymaking, and much of the work of the garden. In such cases, a definite rhythm is necessary for greater effec-

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tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands.

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women.

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's

593 direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to
883 him at his marriage.

If economic apprenticeship is also a process of condition-
593 ing within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

For the child grows up within the full complex of life
593 within the family. The petty errands which constitute his
867 first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members
[864 superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the
684] development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

593 Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his be-
857 ginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for
513 thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm
593 work is again merely incidental to his long years of life
561 with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

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itself in household arrangement and in the grouping of individuals in other spheres than farm work. 593 561

This parental dominance continues as long as the father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the sons, they have no control of the direction of farm activities nor of the disposal of farm income. They go to market and fair from the time they are twelve years old, but they buy or sell little, if anything, for themselves. Thus the small farmer and his sons are often seen at the fairs and markets together, but it is the farmer-father who does the bargaining. Once when one of the authors asked a countryman about this at a potato market, he explained that he could not leave his post for long because his full-grown son "isn't well known yet and isn't a good hand at selling." If the son wants a half crown to go to a hurley match or to take a drink on market day with friends, he must get it from his father. The authors have seen many sons, fully adult, come into shops to buy some farm requirement, such as a bag of meal, and say that the "old fellow" will pay for it. And a few days later the old fellow arrives to pay for the goods "my young fellow got." The son may, of course, earn money in employment off the farm, as many do at work on the roads in occasional employment with governmental bodies or large farmers. But in this case he is expected to contribute the larger part of the money to the general household expenses as long as he remains on the farm.

The procedure of the Land Commission, a government body, in providing additions to small holdings from the [654] break-up of large estates illustrates well this retention of parental authority. It is the policy of the Commission to employ local men as much as possible in the reclamation and fencing work necessary at the division of an estate; the owners of the holdings to be enlarged are entitled to the work. Consequently, when the work is given, the farmer owners are assigned it. But it is the sons who do the work,

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and at the pay-off the "old fellows" walk sometimes many miles to be paid the wages their sons have earned. In one case of land division which the authors witnessed, a Land Commission official walked about the estate pointing out the plots which the selected farmers were to get. The farmers followed in a body at a respectful distance, each ready to step forward when his name was called. Behind them came all the young men of the neighborhood, the farmers' sons. When it was necessary to send someone back to a farmhouse or to cut up stakes to mark boundaries, the orders were transmitted from the official to the farmer and from the farmer to his sons, though these were in the majority of cases adult men. Likewise in country post offices, even after the farm has been made over to the son and the "old people" have the old-age pension, it is the son who comes to collect it for them.

Even at forty-five and fifty, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm, the countryman remains a "boy" in respect to farm work and in the rural vocabulary. A deputy to the *Dáil* (the Irish parliament) raised a considerable laugh in 1933, which echoed into the daily newspapers, when he inadvertently dropped into the country idiom and pleaded for special treatment in land division for "boys of forty-five and older" who have nothing in prospect but to wait for their fathers' farms. Likewise, a countryman, complaining to one of the authors about his position, said: "You can be a boy here forever as long as the old fellow is still alive."

It goes without saying that the father exercises his control over the whole activity of the "boy." It is by no means confined to their work together. Indeed, the father is the court of last resort, which dispenses punishment for deviations from the norm of conduct in all spheres. Within the bounds of custom and law he has full power to exercise discipline. Corporal punishment is not a thing of the past in

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Ireland, and, especially in the intermediate stages of the child's development, from seven to puberty, it gets full play. 593

It is during those years that the characteristic relationship between father and son is developed in rural communities. The son has suffered a remove from the previous almost exclusive control of its mother, in which an affective content of sympathy and indulgence was predominant, and is brought into contact for the first time with the father and older men. But the transfer is not completed. There is a hiatus in his development through the years of school when his participation in men's work and his relationship with his father has little chance of developing into an effective partnership. A real union of interests does not take place until after Confirmation and school-leaving, when for the first time his exclusive contacts and his entire day-to-day activity, particularly in farm work, will be with his father and the older men.

This fact colors greatly the relationship of father and son, as far as affective content goes. There is none of the close companionship and intimate sympathy which characterizes, at least ideally, the relationship in other groups. Where such exists, it is a matter for surprised comment to the small farmers. In its place there is developed, necessarily perhaps, a marked respect, expressing itself in the tabooing of many actions, such as smoking, drinking, and physical contact of any sort, which can be readily observed in any small farm family. Coupled with this is the lifelong subordination the retention of the name "boy" implies, which is never relaxed even in the one sphere in which farmer father and son can develop an intense community of interest — farm work. Nothing prevents the development of great mutual pride, the boy in his experienced and skillful mentor, tutor, and captain in work, and the man in a worthy and skillful successor and fellow workman, but on the other hand everything within the behavior developed in the rela- 593 578

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593 tionship militates against the growth of close mutual sym-
[578] pathy. As a result, the antagonisms inherent in such a situation often break through very strongly when conflicts arise.

The division of labor in the masculine sphere between father and sons, then, is more than an arrangement in farm management. It is very directly part of the systems of controls, duties, and sentiments which make up the whole family life. The apprenticeship and the long subordination of the sons in farm work are reflections of the entirety of their relationship to parents; it is impossible to treat the two spheres of behavior separately.

Similarly, the relationships in farm work between the other members of the household cannot be treated separately.

593 On the other hand, the relationship of mother and son
561 has a very different content. Like that between father and
562 son, it is the product of years of development. It is marked, too, by a similar retention of subordinate status on the part of the son. In farm work the boy is subject to commands of his mother even when, fully adult, he has passed over exclusively to men's work. It is for this reason that many Irish farm widows with grown sons can successfully manage a farm for many years before they ultimately make it over upon a son's marriage, and from their restricted scope within the household and haggard effectively direct operations in the masculine sphere. In such cases, the woman retains control. Even in such an important matter as her son's eventual marriage she has a very dominant voice.

But within the scope of such a subordination there is a
593 quite different affective history. The relationship is the first and earliest into which a child enters. It is very close, intimate, and all-embracing for the first years of life; only gradually does the experience of the child expand to include brothers, sisters, and, last, the older male members of the household.

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Until seven, the child of either sex is the constant companion of its mother. If the family is numerous an elder child, usually a sister, may take over much of the mother's role, but the mother is always near-by. As the woman works in the house or fields, the child is kept by her side. In the house it usually sits in a crib by the fire or plays about on the floor, but always within sight and sound. It learns its speech from its mother, amid a flood of constant endearments, admonitions, and encouragements. The woman's work never separates her from the child. Custom imposes no restraints or interruptions in her solicitude. She looks after its comforts, gives it food, dresses it, etc. She constantly exercises restraints and controls over it, teaching it day by day in a thousand situations the elements of prudery, modesty, and good conduct. 593 855 [868] [867]

The controls she exercises are of a different kind from those of the father. She is both guide and companion. Her authority most often makes itself felt through praise, persuasion, and endearment. Only when a grave breach of discipline demands a restraining power greater than hers, or when an appeal to ultimate authority is needed, does the father begin to play his role. Especially in the years before puberty, the farm father enters the child's cognizance as a disciplinary force. The barriers of authority, respect, extra-household interests, and the imperatives of duty rather than of encouragement make it difficult for any intimacy to develop. 593 861

Even after Confirmation the child's relationship to his mother is not materially weakened. He becomes confirmed, it is true, in a masculine scorn for feminine interests and pursuits, but he can and must still look for protection to his mother against a too-arbitrary exercise of his father's power. In family disputes the mother takes a diplomatic, conciliatory role. From her intermediary position she can call upon the strongest ties between herself and her sons 593

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593 to restore rifts in parental authority and filial submission.

Throughout the years of the son's full activity in the farm economy under the father's headship, the mother still remains the source of comfort and the preparer of food and is still infinitely solicitous of his welfare. It is only at marriage that the bond is broken and undergoes material transformation. If the child must leave the farm for other walks of life, the closest possible relationship is still maintained. When one goes home, it is to see one's mother. There is always an attempt to carry on a correspondence. In exile, the bond lingers as a profound sentimental nostalgia.

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CHAPTER IV

The Relations of Kindred

THE relations of the members of the farm family are 593
best described in terms of the patterns which uniformity of habit and association build up. They are built up within the life of the farm household and its daily and yearly work. The relations of the fathers to sons and mothers to sons fall repeatedly into regular and expectable patterns of this kind that differ very little from farm to farm.

If we are to understand them, then, we must trace them out of this setting and see in what manner they offer us explanation of Irish rural behavior. In terms of a formal sociology, such as Simmel might give us, the position of the parents is one of extreme superordination, that of the children of extreme subordination. The retention of the names "boy" and "girl" reflects the latter position. Sociological adulthood has little to do with physiological adulthood. Age brings little change of modes of address and ways of treating and regarding one another in the relationships within the farm family. The relative positions of the parties must be stated in terms of the events taking place between them. These events run over the years and redefine relationships in their course. This kind of development characterizes and gives form to the family relations we have already detailed. We shall see now that it gives form to all of them and to the farm family itself.

The long years of intimate association in the act and

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593 events of a common life build up very complete adaptations and very close emotional bonds among all those who share the life together. The bonds must be compatible; adjustment is made all round, again through gradual habituation. Otherwise conflict is ready to set off young against old, men against women, persons against one another. There is reciprocity of obligation and expectancy.

But the point of interest here is that it is the bonds that must be dealt with for understanding, not anything within them or the activities associated with them. Here there is an absolute coincidence of "social" and "economic" factors within single relationships. In the case of a small farmer and his son, there is only one relationship; to separate their social from their economic activities is meaningless. They are one in fact, and, as far as the peasants are concerned, they are one in name.

593 554 Thus any of the words designating status in the relationship, such as father, son, owner, employee, heir, etc., might well be used, but in actual practice the first two of them are sufficient to cover all the activities of the relationship. Only the statuses of father and son are distinguished by the country people. These words are the only designations of status that are to be heard among them. All others are unnecessary. They are not part of the experience of the small farmers except as they become so when the outside world breaks in. Consequently, terms designating status are not to be understood or interpreted on a basis of *a priori* or philological meaning, but as references to the events in connection with which they were used.

593 Thus when it comes to understanding the force of such terms for the small farmers who use them, we are able to see why it is that the terms are emotional symbols of very great power. They are part of the peasant's own experience in the very relations we have been discussing, and they make definite and reinforce the relations for him. They cannot

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be divorced from the patterns of relationships which they 593
symbolize, and their role cannot be understood except in the fact.

If then we turn back to the common life of the families of the small farmers, it is these very terms which give us the clue to the relationships which that life builds up.

In the Irish family, the sons and the daughters are equally 593
subordinate; there is no formal distinction made between 601
them. The kinship terms of both the English and the Irish languages reflect this equivalence of siblings. In either case, one term, son or *mac*, reflects the unity of the position of all male children, the procreated generation, from the point of view of the elder or procreant pair, the mother and father. Similarly, a single term in both languages, brother and *dearbhráthair*, expresses for the siblings their common occupancy of that position. Rural Ireland knows neither primogeniture nor junior right. Except as age differences separate them informally, the brothers occupy the same status both within and outside the family group. Thus neighbors and other outsiders refer to them all alike as "the boys" of the farmer's family.

Accordingly, their equality reflects itself in farm activity. 593
All are on an equal footing there. The brothers are all 628
alike under the father's direction and control as long as they remain on the farm. They work together, and the years of common effort and common dependence create a strong solidarity between them. Though only one of them may [428]
ordinarily expect to inherit land and cattle, the others renounce their rights as it were in the interests of the identification of the family group with the land they work. The bloody faction fights which used to disfigure Irish country life have practically passed away, but the forces which brought them into existence still continue. Many a country fight involving a dispute over rights of way and water courses brings in the adherents of all the brothers of either

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 house, and, though the cases nowadays find their way into
628 the courts, a very common defense is that the feud is very long-standing and that "the two grandfathers" began it. The tales written in the last century by William Carleton, who wrote of a life he himself knew intimately, describe faction fights in which whole parishes became involved, but the center of disturbance was invariably a family dispute in which the brothers of a family ranged with their friends against those of another. So fierce is the solidarity which the identification of brothers and their land calls forth that even today in Clare the name "defending Tim Flanagan's title" is jocularly given to forcible resistance to eviction, after a famous stalwart of the last century whose ten sons fought valiantly for their father's farm.

593 In fact, this emotional attachment is strong enough some-
589 times to preclude the breaking up of the family. Two instances of this sort came under the authors' special notice out of the many which occur. It is difficult to get the exact figures, since census materials deal only with the marital status of farm owners, but many of the bachelor-owned farms of Clare may be of this type. In the first case, two brothers and four sisters occupied a small holding of twenty-three acres and a four-room house for over fifty years. Several of them at various times had tried to break away; in fact, two brothers did, but the ones who stayed gave as their reason first that they hadn't wanted to leave the old people and afterwards that none of them had wanted "to be the first to leave." The second case was very similar. Two brothers and a sister had stayed on to work a small farm for their old parents, but, when the old couple died, none of them wanted to leave and each felt too old for marriage.

593 Whatever differences make a rift in this fraternal front
428 are matters more of preparation for leaving the farm family than of internal differentiation in status and behavior. On most small farms only one son can be kept at home as suc-

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cessor to land and chattels. The family property, house, stock, and land, descend to him intact. The other sons must be provided for elsewhere. 428

In choosing the son to remain upon the farm, the father has full power of decision. His interest lies in choosing among his sons the one he thinks will carry on most successfully. There is no rule or norm in the matter; and the brothers are united in expecting an adequate return for their years of service. But none of them may claim more than the other, and they are all dependent upon the father's sense of their fair deserts. In many cases there may be an early difference among them in the inclinations they show in adolescence. But the special position a brother occupies in this regard is a matter of agreement among them all and easy enough of adjustment.

Turning now to the other relationships neither fraternal nor parental within the family, it is obvious that those among the females and between females and males build up in the same way as the ones we have already discussed. 593

The family makes a formal distinction between the female members and their male fellow members in terminology, just as it builds a dichotomy of behavior upon the sexual difference. Thus in the procreated generation daughter and sister, *inghean* and *deirbhshiúr*, correspond to son and brother; for the daughters occupy equivalent positions in a common subordination to the parents. 593 601

These terms express merely a classification of the female individuals and their positions in the complex of reciprocal relationships between family members. What has been said of the conditioning of the boy can be repeated of the girl, with, of course, a difference in the techniques acquired. And no less than in the boy's case, farm work is merely a part of the total adaptation the girl makes toward her fellows and toward the environment in which they live. 593 861

The work of the women is as important in farm economy

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593 as the men's. The coincidence between family status and
861 economic role holds for them as well. Women's work on the small farm is complementary to that of the men, as we have seen, though, of course, it is quite distinct. The young girl growing up on the small farm learns this, just as the young man acquires the masculine techniques. The girl is thrown constantly with the mother and the older women of the household. After she is seven, her pursuits differ completely from those of her brother and, except as she is in very close constant association within the household, she has no working contact with her father.

857 Many minor tasks fall to the girl as she grows up, par-
868 ticularly driving and milking the cows. Her conditioning prepares her to fill the role her mother occupies in the household. All the interior of the house, the immediate vicinity of courts and haggard where the fuel is stacked, the well, the poultry yard and sheds, are her concern. She learns to milk cows, feed the pig, tend the chickens, and look after all the young animals through helping the older women. She learns the lore of disposing of eggs, butter, and occasionally of some of the vegetable produce of the garden, potatoes and cabbage, and occasionally goes to market with her mother.

In the chief business of the women, the house itself, the preparation and serving of food and the repair and upkeep of clothing, she serves a never-ending daily apprenticeship. A young girl may often be delegated to look after the hearth, make and keep the fires going, etc. Only the mother makes small purchases of food and household goods. Only the mother bakes the great variety of breads. But by the time she leaves school, the girl may be proficient in these tasks too. So also with the butter making. Income derived from this and from poultry belongs to the older woman; the girl has no share until she herself has married.

000 In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of

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In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of the clothing of the small farmers was made at home by the women. Now, however, it is nearly all shop-bought. Certain vestiges of the former practice remain, however, in knitting sweaters, gloves, socks, and scarfs; and in the country districts, at least of West and North Clare, there is a custom which demands that some woman of the house be always at work. If there is no other task on hand, they must occupy themselves with knitting. In former days, the daughters of the community might gather in a *meitheal*, or coöperative work group, under the supervision of older women for carding and spinning flax and wool. In any event, the younger woman, the girl, is at the older woman's command.

294 461 476 178

Much the same content of emotion and sentiment exists in this relationship, subordinate as the daughter must remain, as in the case of the boy. But in the case of the daughter there is never a readjustment, and there is never a period of community of interest with the father. Nor need the mother fear a competition with an impatient oncoming successor as must the farm father who knows he cannot put off forever his relinquishing his farm to his son. For, eagerly as the daughter may look forward to her own marriage, she knows that marriage will bring in a rivalry over household control with a totally new person in an entirely new scene. It is her husband's mother, not her own, to whom new adjustments must be made. The implication of this fact, and the struggle it entails, will bear examination in the discussion of marriage.

593

Still another relationship exists within the household under normal circumstances. The relationship of brother to sister has its reflection in farm work. But it is a relationship with a different history from the relationship between siblings of similar sex. Sexual differences in behavior have made a different habit, beginning very early in the child's experience. And, for each of them, the sexual differences are colored a great deal by the norms which mark the rela-

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593 tionship of their parents. Thus there is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. He shares the masculine ultimate control of farm and household. If she remains on the farm after her brother's marriage, she must look to him for her dowry.

The country people have a good deal to say about the strength of this bond. Deep-rooted in the years of common subordination and common association, it survives the re-
[574] moval of the sister to another house and farm. It means much visiting and a close relationship with the coming children. The country people marvel that a young child
[604] may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family name are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.

589 That the complete family is the complete unit of life both
592 social and economic to the small farmer is admirably illustrated by the incomplete families of the countryside. By the term "incomplete" the authors indicate those many small farms which are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, and widows.

589 In such farms, control is exercised by the person owning
592 the farm. A widow is usually helped out by a male rela-
562 tive, brother, nephew, or son. Here again the male devotes himself to the tasks which in ordinary circumstances would fall to the father in a full family unit. The control over expenditure and the disposal of farm goods rests, however, with the woman. But even then the bargaining in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair would be delegated by her to her helping relative. In one instance which came to the authors' notice a young widow called

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her unmarried brother to live with her and directed his efforts in draining a large field. The two of them ran the farm very successfully, though the brother grumbled. In another, a "landless" young man pleaded successfully to a Land Commission official for an addition to his aunt's holding, presented his case, and carried out the negotiations, but the final reference had to be made, of course, to the aunt for whom he worked, for in such case the feeling that the man must represent the family and farm unit in the community at large is sufficiently strong to push a subordinate "boy" into the position usually filled by the farm husband and father. 589 592 562 [654]

Similarly with several old bachelors. A nephew moves in and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control even to regulating the nephew's expenditures for amusements. In one case, where a widower had a small son, the son was taken in by a childless sister and raised by her, and when he grew up and married he inherited the sister's farm. His father remarried and raised a second brood. In another, two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their two cousins. 589 592

The attitudes of the country people to these arrangements show that incomplete farm families are felt to be departures from the normal; they are subjects for commiseration. Such phrases as "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her" and "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow," are commonly applied to them. 589

The policy of the Land Commission in increasing farm holdings is very significant in this regard. The officials recognize the social value of the full family explicitly. According to the official in charge of land division in Clare, who has had successful experience in other regions as well: 654 544

> An old-age pensioner without family could not be considered for an addition of land, nor could a couple of spinsters. . . .

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654 594 Where the question arises, a household consisting of father and mother and sons, rather than daughters alone, would have a prior claim. But, regarding the position of the wife, it is a fact that, if the husband goes, the wife keeps the farm up. She is the person who saves the money and governs everything.

Again:

594 462 Twenty to twenty-five acres of all-purpose land where the mother is normal and the father energetic is sufficient to keep a farmer and his family. It is the province of the mother to look after the fowl, the milk, the butter, the pigs, the calves, and the milking of the cows. A woman on a small farm can milk five cows in thirty minutes. She also takes care of the children, though she sometimes has a girl in to help her for a time. She also makes and repairs the clothes. She does the buying for the house and the husband only for feed, seed and fertilizer. She has the responsibility regarding medical attention, and where she has any showing of culture the family pushes on ahead. In fact, on the mother depends the organization of the family in all ways.

594 Such evidence points to a situation in which the immediate family of husband, wife, and children, the group basic to Irish society and especially to Irish rural life, carries on a corporate economy. The roles of the component individuals are assigned them by virtue of their position in the family. The character of the economic effort, its control, direction, and purposes, are part and parcel of the life of the social group.

476 Beyond the family economy of the small farm, there exists also a certain amount of coöperation in the Irish countryside among the small farmers. Agricultural labor upon the individual farms is not performed in isolated competition, but is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids. That coöperation takes the following forms:

1. Lending tools, or doing the work with one's own, for friends and neighbors who have not the requisite tools, especially in mowing, spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing.

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2. Lending a boy at turf making, spring sowing, hay harvest, oats harvest, or driving cattle to a fair; that is, at any time that the farm needs an extra hand to get its work done quickly. 476
3. Of women: making up a tub of butter, or firkin of salted butter, thus pooling resources, the proceeds to be divided proportionately.
4. Of women: lending a girl on any occasion that an extra hand is needed in the household.
5. Helping at times of distress, or when one household is short or a crop delayed, with gifts of cattle, food, or labor.
6. Working together communally to get a harvest done, particularly the oats reaping and threshing. Here again the actual work is done by the "boys," who are lent by their fathers, though, of course, the latter may also take a hand, if necessary.
7. Obligations surrounding *rites de passage* and ceremonies.

In former days this coöperation was more widespread, according to the testimony of the older people. But even today the oats harvest, which used to be celebrated locally by a large dinner and dance at the expense of the farmer whose crop was being reaped by "friends" [1] and neighbors, still calls forth some coöperation of the next to last type.

In recent years the farmers have been wealthy enough to acquire their own horses, carts (called "cars," only two-wheeled vehicles being used, at least in Clare), and mowing machines. In the last century, however, these were less numerous and, as an older countryman put it: "Once if you had a horse and car, you'd have forty or fifty people helping you with the turf.

Similarly, before the mowing machine became general, ten or a dozen "friends" and neighbors would work each other's meadows in turn with the scythe. Nowadays, the owner of a machine need only go about to his "friends" and cut their hay for them, getting their aid in return in building his own stacks and hayricks.

[1] Used here in the sense explained in Chapter V.

476 The commonest form of coöperation is that which in-
246 volves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed. In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district
[471] of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings, none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners; they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land
[737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest
246 began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh
621 people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral
589 association to the land and to each other. There were three lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter present, if they were old, and many growing children if they
[167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so that a smaller number of young people were present than is
476 perhaps usual.
246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

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476 lies began to save the hay, mowing it, letting it dry, and
246 stacking it as soon as possible, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six to eight foot haycocks. After several weeks it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. There was a great deal of interest and much comment back and forth over the progress of the various families, the probable weather, and the yield of the various meadows. The men seemed to feel a general rivalry to do their work
[407] well and quickly. About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows as quickly as possible, working from earliest morning as long as light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and with that of boys from the families who had no machines of their own. At each subsequent stage of the harvesting, a boy or young man not a member of the family whose meadow was being worked could be seen giving his labor in aid; he took his place at meals during the day.

The mowing done, the farmer then took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed the meadows belonging to his friend. In one instance a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others; in another, of two. Certain meadows were full-handed enough not to require extra hands, and in five cases no help was given, though the mowing and stacking took a very long time with them
[589 in comparison to the others, and they were obviously short-
609] handed. Two of these were bachelors who lived alone, and two more were the "strangers." Two other families had insufficient meadow of their own and were forced to buy
[437] hay on the so-called "conacre" system (buying the hay as it stands and reaping it oneself within a stipulated time).

Here then was an example of an important agricultural operation undertaken by the local community in which provision was made (except in five or six cases) for effective coöperation over and above the usual family economy. This is not an isolated instance; in Luogh it has been the practice

476 from time immemorial. Old people here remembered the
246 day when, there being no mowing machines, scythes alone were used. Then the coöperating groups would have been larger and a more pronounced rotation of the working groups from meadow to meadow could have been observed. The same custom occurs in other places; in fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work. Given the different techniques, the same coöperation had taken place in Luogh and elsewhere at the turf cutting, the oats harvest, and the potato planting.

[164] Yet there was no monetary wage or payment involved. In the community of Luogh and surrounding townlands, the only hired labor was to be seen in the meadows of the large farmer (a cattleman with over three hundred acres), [184] who had not coöperated with the small farmers and whose entire way of life, as well as the agriculture he practiced, was different from theirs. Except in so far as the agricultural operation the small farmers were undertaking was economic in itself, it was evident that an interpretation of the incentives for this coöperation must include other factors.

476 Driven to social rather than economic explanation, the
246 authors were able to ascertain that in each case of this
602 coöperation there was an extended family relationship involved. Thus Carey, who had mowed the meadows of Dennis and Seamus Molony and Brian McMahon, was second cousin to them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively of the two farmers whose meadows he had mowed. The young men or boys who had worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows with the latter's wives and children were also relatives; they were sons of the relatives for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. In no instance, of course, had a man mowed for all his relatives; it was not necessary

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to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

476 241 602 [572] [609]

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

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When asked especially why they were coöperating, the farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; they always help one another."

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Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

476 ties of act, sentiment, and obligation which make up family
577 relationships.

That he is doing so becomes evident when we find that
602 the habitual, obligatorily performed acts toward extended relatives are similarly described, where the context is definitely not economic nor connected with agricultural labor. Thus in the townland where we examined agricultural coöperation there takes place the same lending of a boy or girl and the giving of a hand in aid at such festivals of social and family life as weddings, christenings, wakes, and funerals.

This aid is felt to be the same category. Thus one farmer speaking of another, his second cousin, could say:

> He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. When the children were little and our cow died on us, Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth twelve pounds to us and didn't want anything for it.

And in more general terms, another farmer could explain:

> Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you. They lend you a horse with the hay or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to know if they can help when somebody dies with you.

476 Thus it is part of the "friendliness" for the relatives to
577 make up and serve the food at wakes and weddings, to
602 dig the grave for the dead, and to keen (wail) over the dead.
764 The obligatory character and something of the reciprocities involved in such behavior are well expressed by one countryman who gave as his reason for going to a funeral (at a time when he was needed at home for farm work): "I have right to go (to the funeral of a second cousin); they always come over to this side."

476 Likewise, when in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister
577 took over the child, she was praised for doing the "friendly"
602 thing which she "had right" to do. In the very same terms a

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man called upon his brother-in-law to lend him his son to help drive his cattle to the fair. In a case similar to the last, a violent quarrel arose because an uncle, who "had right" to lend a son badly needed in doing some fence work, refused to do so. And in the same scale of value a family which did not attend the funeral of a relative was subjected to great criticism for being "unfriendly." 476 577 602 476 577 602

In fact, failure to fulfill the pattern of conduct demanded by extended family obligations leads often to punitive action on the part of the aggrieved party. Near R— a small farmer, who neglected his garden and forced his father-in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support, was finally beaten up one night in his own house by the irate in-laws. Ordinarily, of course, failure to fulfill such obligations either in directly social situations or in agricultural coöperation does not lead to such violent conflict, but rather to an estrangement. The niggardly "friend," especially the one who refuses or fails to return an obligation, is held up to general condemnation, not only by his kindred but by the whole community. The position of a small farmer near but not in Luogh was the result of such failure. He was regarded by all his neighbors and kindred as a "miser" and a "Jew" and on several occasions was accused of petty thefts by them, which perpetuated the breach. As a result he lived as a recluse, refusing even to visit others; in return he was not greeted by his "friends." 578 626

The obligations of this sort[2] extend to visiting and to the hospitality which the Irish countryman deems so great a virtue. "A sup of tea" and such food as eggs and bread is 574 602

[2] The word *cóir* (a fit and traditional right or duty) corresponds almost exactly with the full range of the small farmer's obligations, as we have seen. It well reflects the farmer's habit in two other uses. The phrase *cóir mhaith* means good food. When the speaker says, *tá cóir mhaith agam ansud* (there's a good feed for me there), he refers not so much to the food itself as to the social situation in which he finds himself well provided for. And the term of address, *duine cóir* (worthy fellow), indicates that "worthiness" springs from a fit observance of one's obligations.

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574 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to
602 town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local com-
[521] munity gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in
[522] Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

574 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of
602 good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market.
273 "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy
594 as a family situation in which economic effort, individual
182 and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

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CHAPTER V

The Kinship System

THE mothers and fathers who order farm life are themselves sons and daughters. They have or have had (before their creation of a family of their own upon the farm) much the same relationships with their parents as their children have with them. Indeed in many cases households comprise three generations. Grandfathers and grandmothers of the children live in the house. Family structure is not confined to the immediate present family group, but descends with each generation as the boys and girls reach social maturity at marriage and the creation of their own families. 592 593

This descent forms the basis of any kinship system; it provides also the basis upon which the "friends" to whom one has obligations in rural Ireland are reckoned. The individuals comprised within the system are so because of their sharing of that descent in common. These are one's "people" or "friends," in the countryman's vocabulary. 601 612

The terms express the generic category into which the kindred fall. Both terms are, in a sense, translations of Gaelic idiom. The first, people, corresponds exactly with the Irish *muinntear*. The second in ordinary rural usage refers not to a comrade, as in English, but to one's relatives. Even in the towns, one's father, mother, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, are referred to as "immediate friends." In the countryside one speaks of one's kinsmen as one's

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601 "friends," particularly if they occupy one's own generation;
612 one's father's relatives, even his brothers, become "my father's friends." A "distant friend" refers not to distance in space but to that in cousinship.

612 Before we detail the individuals included within this
593 category, let us make two points clear. The first of these is directly associated with the dominance of the father within the family. He comes, as it were, to stand for the group which he heads; the farm is known by his name, and
[591] wife and children bear his name likewise. For the Irish family is patrilocal and patronymic, to use the technical
[611] terms. Farm, house, and most of the household goods descend from father to son with the patronym; we shall follow their general movement in a later section.

611 This patrilineal descent gives a certain accent upon the
612 kinship system; it chooses one line of descent out of the many possible and gives those who make it up a common name. There is a reflection of this fact in the groupings of Irish rural life. To outsiders a person may be known as "a boy of the Shannons" or a "man of the Flaherties," but in a sense these groupings are merely linguistic conveniences. For in many cases two families of Shannons may live side by side, yet not be considered "friends." None of the obligations of kinship bind them. For in the phrase of the countryman: "They are not the same Shannons or, if they are, they are too far out."

Our examination of the various ways of reckoning kinship will make the statement clear. Patriliny is merely one device, an extension of the father-son relationship, by which individuals are included in one's group of "friends."

593 A second observation upon the kinship system springs
582 from the fact that the family relationships regulate sexual conduct. Indeed, our examination of farm agriculture leads us to see that the technological training of the individual goes hand in hand with the sexual. Marriage prohibitions,

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like the sanctions of the exercise of sexual rights in marriage, 593
are part of and take their form in the family group. Conse- 582
quently, in the wider and larger alignments of individuals springing from the family which make up the kinship system, similar prohibitions occur.

For the kindred are the group within which marriage is 582
prohibited. In a sense the formulation of the individuals in 602
it as a group is an abstraction. Kinship bonds come ready 857
formed to the newborn human being. The child is soon brought to know and adopt requisite behavior and sentiments toward the individuals with whom the other persons of his family are reciprocally bound.

Thus the Irish child very early meets his mother's and 602
father's brothers and sisters; he runs errands and receives 431
small gifts from them; as soon as he is able he carries pres- 571
ents. In later years of boyhood he does odd jobs for them; 857
his labor is lent at cooring; he takes his place with them at the family table or round the hearth on visiting. At various times of crisis in his career, such as First Communion, Confirmation, and marriage, he receives gifts from them which signalize the intimacy between him and them. They share his parent's superordination to him, for they belong to the same older generation as his parents.

He is very likely, too, to be thrown constantly with their 602
children, especially if they are substantially of the same age, 571
where his uncles and aunts remain within visiting distance. 857
In country regions, such as Luogh, nearly all of the families are united by complicated, reduplicated bonds of marriage and descent. There the boys and girls grow up together in constant association, both as "friends" and companions. It is with them that the natural course of development creates bonds of sentiment and mutual aid, quite like those within the family, which take the form of that "friendliness" at once obligatory and pleasurable seen in the account of farm work.

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602 571 Likewise, if such development of relations is carried a step higher, the brothers and sisters of the grandfather and grandmother, with their families down to the generation of the growing child himself, can retain an interest which springs out of the original brotherhood or sisterhood between them. The "friendliness," the give-and-take, the "welcome put down before" the individual, come quite naturally to the child at the hands of these relatives. His parents visit their own uncles and aunts, take occasional presents, lend them labor and so on. The child finds himself included; and he finds himself expected to adopt a similar intimacy of behavior with the children of these houses which he visits.

601 In the generation of the father, his father's brothers and mother's brothers are known as uncles; their sisters are known as aunts, both terms being the usual English classificatory ones. In both Irish and English among country people, however, descriptive terms seem to be preferred, though the English terms have been taken into the Irish as *aintín* and *uncail*. In the countryside these classificatory terms are still felt to be slightly foreign, and, as is always the case even within the immediate family relationship, kinship terms are seldom used in address. There is no distinction made between parents' siblings upon seniority. The terms niece and nephew exist, but are used by farmers only in legal contexts. Descriptive terms, such as brother's son, take their place.

In the direct line of ascent, parents' parents are "grandfather" and "grandmother" in English, according to sex, without reference to the sex of the immediate parent of the speaker. In Irish, terms correspond exactly: *seanathair* or *athair criona*, *seanmháthair* or *máthair criona*. In the direct line of descent, however, only the English terms for children's children, grandson and granddaughter, are classificatory and neglect the intervening child. The Irish terms are completely descriptive, specifying the sex of the child whose children are the grandchildren in question. They

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are *mac mhic, mac inghine, inghean mhic, inghean inghine,* 601
respectively (i.e., son's son, daughter's son, son's daughter, and daughter's daughter).

Father's and mother's siblings' children are called, as in English, cousins, or more specifically first cousins, a classificatory term without distinction in sex. The term, however, is never used as a term of address. In fact, "returned Yanks" who bring back the American usage of prefixing the word to the name of their "friends" in address are ridiculed. The word seems to be slightly foreign to the brogue. "Friend" is the usual designation, or a descriptive circumlocution is used both in Irish and English, such as "our fathers were brothers," or *clann na beirte dearbhráthar,* in which relationship is established by reference to an immediate family connection in the ascendant generation.

Irish terms for these relatives are various. The commonest is *col ceathair.* This term is interesting because it introduces the type of reckoning upon which the kinship system is built. *Col* is the term used to refer to blood relationship within which marriage is prohibited. By extension it refers to consanguinity and to an ecclesiastical impediment to marriage. Thus the phrase *cia an col atá agat leis* is used to ask, "What is the blood relationship you have with him?" and to go to the priest for a dispensation removing an impediment to marriage is known as *ceannach col* (buying *col*). Among the English-speaking countrymen of Clare the word "call," pronounced quite similarly, is likewise used to signify relationship. Thus one "friend" is said to "have a call on" another. Whether or not the words are one and the same we do not know; in any case the English word seems to refer both to the obligations and the blood relationship. 601 582

First cousins then are known in Irish as *col ceathair* or fourth *col* whenever the specific designation of these relatives is required. The choice of the numerical adjective is 601

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601 presumably determined by counting the number of individuals or, better, personalities separated by reciprocal relations within which *col* or prohibitions arise. They are, for instance, myself, my father, my father's brother, and my father's brother's son. Here the accent upon the kinship system makes use of the two consanguine reciprocals within the immediate family: parent-child and sibling-sibling. Through the working of the principle of equivalence of siblings only two generations, my father's and my own, are considered. Thus the same reference to an immediate family relationship as we saw in such circumlocutions as "our fathers were brothers" is contained in the term.

601 Another set of terms exists in Irish for reckoning these
612 relatives. The authors have not heard it in use in Clare,
however. In it, first cousins are said to be *a dó a's a dó i*
582 *ngaol*. The phrase means literally "two and two in blood relationship." Here accent is placed upon the lineal father-son (parent-child) descent, for brother and sister are called *a h-aon a's a h-aon i ngaol* — that is, "one and one." The reasoning here traces back to a common parent; in the latter case there is but one step, in the former, two.

The Church uses the system embodied in this last terminology in determining consanguinity. The following slightly abridged quotation indicates that it also recognizes a different system in Roman civil law.

> The civil (Roman) law founded its degrees in the number of generations. Thus between brothers there are two degrees, between first cousins there are four. [Compare *col ceathair*.] Canon law still follows this system in determining inheritance, but the Church for marriages computes, in the collateral line of consanguinity, one series only of generations, and if the series are unequal only the longer one. Hence, the principle of canon law is there are in the transverse or collateral line as many degrees of consanguinity as there are persons in the longer line counting the common stock or root.[1]

[1] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."

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Thus brother and sister are in the first degree, uncle and niece in the second, because niece is "two degrees from grandfather." First cousins are likewise reckoned in the second degree for the same reason. Here, as in the counting *a dó a's a dó i ngaol*, the accent is upon the parent-child reciprocal. The Church calls this the *linea recta* of descent. It bases its prohibition of marriage (incest) in the *linea recta* upon divinely ordained natural law. No dispensations for this type of marriage are ever granted.[2]

Another system is perhaps commonest — at least in Clare, where the authors have met it on several occasions — among the methods used to determine kinship in order to maintain the bounds within which alliance is forbidden. It appears both in Irish and in English speech. The system reckons descent by "generations." The Irish phrase is to *réidhteach gaol* by counting *glúin*.[3] *Gaol*, we remember, is the word for blood relationship in general; *glúin* refers first to a knee joint, then by extension to a step in family descent, a generation. In this reckoning, first cousins, that is, parents' siblings' children, are said to be in the *tríumhadh glúin*, or, in English, "the third generation."

Here the accent is again upon two elements in the constellation of reciprocals within the immediate family: the parent-child reciprocal and the equivalence of siblings. By counting back to the common grandfather or grandmother the *gaol* or "blood" is determined through three generations, i.e., ego's, his father's, and his grandfather's. Each person in the line of descent seems to represent a generation. All so descended in ego's generation are "friends."

Still another system of reckoning cousinship may be contained in certain idiomatic terms for the cousins. The authors here rely only on the Irish language dictionaries, for they have not heard these terms used. First cousins are

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Cf. Canon O'Leary's *Mo Sgeul Féin*, where he has a chapter (*Mo Shinnsear*) in which he reckons his ancestry in these terms.

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601 612 designated in the phrase *tá siad i n-ó amháin*, which can only be translated in some such terms as "they are in the one grandson(ship)," for the word *ó* or *ua* was in ancient and medieval Irish the term for grandson and today seems to survive chiefly in the *O'* of surnames. This last idiomatic usage is merely a restatement of the reckoning by generations, and corresponds with English and Irish usage in explaining cousins by saying that they had the same grandfather.

All these systems of reckoning first cousins we have seen to be extensions outward of immediate family reciprocals to include the parents' siblings' children on the basis of their common descent with ego.

The process, however, does not stop there. For the descent is carried a step further back to a common great-grandparent. Marriage taboos and extended family obligations go backward and upward with the reckoning. Thus second cousins are recognized as being within the kindred and within the prohibited degrees. In fact, in the authors' experience the obligations of cooring and "friendliness" were equally strong with them.

To include these, all the various terminological reckonings of cousinship undergo an expansion. By the various terminologies, the group of kindred who are common descendants with ego of the same great-grandparent become *col seisear* (sixth *col*); relatives in the third degree (as reckoned by the Church); *a trí a's a trí i ngaol* (three and three); members of the *çeathradh glúin* or "fourth generation"; and lastly, in the idiomatic terms for cousinship, *ar a dá ó* (thus: in the second grandsonship).

The first of these terms, "sixth *col*," illustrates again the reckoning through counting the persons separated by reciprocal relations within which prohibitions arise. They are, for instance, patrilineally: ego (1), father (2), father's father (3), father's father's brother (4), father's father's brother's

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son (5), and the last's son (6) who is again normally within ego's generation. By counting the common root, for instance, again patrilineally, father's father's father, four generations are counted together. These four explain the *ceathradh glúin*. 601 612

Now both the Church and Irish rural society reckon descent bilaterally; all possible roots, male and female, are counted. In that case, the count gives thirty-two kinship personalities in ego's own generation who come within this group of first and second cousins. These can all be counted as cousins or "friends." They are within the range of *col* or marriage taboo. They make up the extended family whose behavior we have examined above. Of the thirty-two, only two (father's brother's son and father's father's brother's son's son) in ego's own generation bear the same patronym as he; but the total number of personalities within the system bearing ego's patronym is nine, if the immediate progenitors back to common great-grandfather are counted. [611]

Consanguinity is carried one step further by the Church. As a barrier to marriage, or diriment impediment, it extends to the "fourth degree." This includes the group taken from a common descent yet a generation higher. It brings in those relatives known in English as third cousins. 582 601 612

These include all those descendant from a common great-grand-grandparent, described in the various terminologies as "third cousins," *col ochtar* (eighth *col*), members of the *cúigeadh glúin* or fifth generation, or people *ar a trí ó*. As before, the emphasis in each of these terms is to link together all those kindred of one generation who have common descent. When all possible roots are taken into account, the personalities so linked ideally number 128. The total within the whole system, including those of all generations ascendant, bearing the same patronym as ego, is thirteen, and five contemporaneous generations are comprised. 601 612

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601 This last group is formed then by extension outward of the same principles found within the immediate family
612 which determined the formation of the smaller ones of first and second cousins. Ego's descent from his parents is extended upward through the ascending generations and downward through his children to the descending generations. But ego and his siblings are equivalent in their relation to their parents. So, as the parent-child reciprocal is extended vertically, a lateral extension of the equivalence of the first siblings occurs concomitantly. In this way, an ever-widening circle of individuals are brought into reciprocal relationship with ego, expressed through their bearing a name in common, as his line of descent is traced further back. The marriage taboos within the immediate family follow the extensions both vertical and lateral.

Recapitulating, then, the relationships of ego with his kindred depend upon his place in the successive generations of descent through either male or female progenitors. The emphasis in the system is twofold. In the first instance, it places the individual within a given series of parent-child relationships, and in the second it establishes a commonalty between him and the other individuals who occupy the same place within that series. The structure of the restricted family functions identically; that of the extended family uses the same mechanisms to effect an integration of individuals upon a larger scale. The great proliferation of methods of describing this kinship system arises from a cause inherent in the system. All the terms we discussed are attempts to categorize the widening circles, lateral and vertical, of kindred; the desire to establish reciprocal terms to designate the members of the widening circles; [4] there is no need to particularize except in the horizontal and vertical lines.

[4] The extension of sibling equivalence to embrace widely one's generation is further exemplified in the Irish terminology. *Brdthair*, the word etymologically cognate with *frater*, brother, is used to describe all kinsmen of one's generation;

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When these two emphases upon the kinship system are recognized, it becomes evident why there is a lack of terms describing those individuals appearing above and below ego's generation but not in the direct line. In the direct line we do have such terms as grandfather, grandson, etc., but the others do not figure. They are not named except descriptively, and even then usually only in reference to the generation which they occupy. Thus father's father's brother is called "my grandfather's brother." The term granduncle exists, but it has not found its way into the countryman's vocabulary. 601 612

Similarly, though uncle, aunt, nephew, and niece have become fully acclimated to Ireland, there is still a marked preference for descriptive terms. The son of a cousin is described in such terms, and the immediate progenitors of the cousin are thought of in terms of their place in the precedent generation. They are thus "my father's friends," though they are, of course, within ego's kinship group. In this way, two distantly removed cousins can often establish a relationship and adopt the requisite behavior to one another through establishing a more immediate connection in a parental generation.

The bounds of the consanguine group are naturally not rigid in this type of extensional structure. There is a gradation of intensity in the taboo as it extends towards the peripheral relatives. First and second cousins, to use the more convenient English terms, are tabooed, the first more strongly than the second. Third cousins, felt to be "very far out" and sometimes "not counted" by the Irish, are nevertheless formally tabooed by the Church. Yet dispensations can be obtained with relative ease for kindred of this degree. They are granted for all alliances within the system for "cause" inward even as far as first cousins and uncles and nieces, but 612 582 582 588 612

a different word, *dearbhráthair*, or "true-brother," is reserved for one's father's son.

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612 never within the restricted family.[5] When the dispensation
582 of the Church is obtained, there is no feeling of horror at
588 such marriages. They are, however, always felt to be anomalous and are a matter of comment. In the country areas where there is a necessity among the farmers of keeping farms and dowries within the extended family group, or where the introduction of an outsider is difficult because of class and regional antagonisms, marriages between first and second cousins are not uncommon. Nevertheless the general feeling of the community condemns this type of union. Too close intermarriage of this type is a common charge used by townsmen in condemning the country folk. The authors unfortunately had little chance of observing such alliances in their rural setting.

582 At marriage the individual acquires a new group of kin-
612 dred. This group is also within the marriage prohibition
602 and the "call"; they are "friends." In the formal or ideal arrangement all those related to one's wife become related to oneself in the same degree. This is the view taken by the Catholic Church. A marriage, the doctrine goes, unites husband and wife as "one flesh." "Affinity from a true marriage is a diriment impediment to the fourth degree of consanguinity of the deceased spouse."[6] A widower "may not marry any of his deceased wife's blood relatives as far as the fourth degree of consanguinity."[7]

612 In other words, the union of man and woman brings a
835 union of the two extended families from the point of view
602 of the marrying individuals. In the eyes of the Church, the husband stands in the same relation to a wife's relatives as does the wife herself, and vice versa. So strong is this provision in the eyes of the Church that sexual intercourse with any of the wife's kin creates a barrier to the exercise of conjugal rights over the wife. A dispensation as well as

[5] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

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absolution from the sin of adultery must be obtained before normal relations of husband and wife can be resumed. This is the effect of the infringement of the marriage taboo upon wife's relatives. 602 612 835

In a patrilineal, patrilocal structure, such as the Irish one, the wife is brought into the husband's family, given a place therein, and takes his patronym. Yet the inclusion is not complete, and, though a woman takes the husband's name, especially among the upper classes and at law, becomes the mistress of the husband's house, and in a thousand ways is oriented to her husband's group, her origin is never lost sight of. Her kindred are referred to as "my wife's friends," yet through the integration of the two families at marriage they become likewise "friends" of the husband. Kinship obligations extend to them. 591 602 612

From an internal point of view, however, marriage is a destruction of two former restricted families, in so far as two individuals leave them in order to form a new restricted family in which the individuals are husband and wife. Perhaps because of this disruptive effect on the paternal families, there is no provision made for a closer integration between them. No terms express the new relationship; the emphasis of relationship by affinity is restricted to the point of view of the marrying couple. Where the primary accent is upon vertical descent through blood kindred, there is little scope for a lateral rapport between the parental families of the marrying pair. 612 581 [601]

From the point of view of the marrying pair, however, an extension of kinship bonds is made. They are now one. Thus the immediate family of ego's wife are included in ego's kinship group. In the English terminology these relatives are called father-, mother-, brother-, sister-, son- "in-law." It must be noted that the terms brother-in-law and sister-in-law do not include wife or husband's siblings' spouses. The British and American usage extends the term 581 601 612

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581 to them, but neither the Church nor the Irish farmers in-
601 clude them within the kinship system. Marriage taboo,
which the Church calls diriment impediment, does not ex-
612 tend to them. For this reason two brothers may marry two sisters under canon law, and a man his stepson's widow. There is no "blood" connection. For the same reason, the spouses of mother's and father's siblings, who are called uncles and aunts in American and British terminology, are not included in ego's group; "call" does not extend to them; they do not "belong" to ego.

581 The explanation of this exclusion of all relatives by
611 affinity except those brought in by ego's own individual
612 marriage lies in the concept of marriage uniting only the marrying individuals. For in the Irish system blood descent alone determines kinship: from the point of view of ego only those within a common system of blood descent are recognized as kin. Accordingly, on marrying, only those within a common system of descent with ego's wife become kin. Such a rigid adherence to the principle of descent does not prevent the development of very amicable and prescribed relations with such individuals as one's father's brother's wife. It merely excludes them from one's own kinship group.

601 The Irish terminology expresses the same reckoning of
612 affinity. The word *cleamhnas* covers both marriage and relationship by affinity. It also indicates a "match." The word *céile* is used both as an adverb with the sense of the English word "together" and as a noun meaning "mate."
601 *Céile* is the root of various expressions, such as *céilidheacht*,
612 referring to marriage. In Irish, father-in-law is called either
539 *athair cleamhna* or *athair chéile*, mother-in-law *máthair chéile*, as in the proverb:

> Bean mhic is máthair chéile,
> Mar chat agus luch ar aghaidh a céile

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601 612 [539]

(mother-in-law and daughter-in-law like cat and mouse together).

Similar terms are used for brother- and sister-in-law. But in both languages the tendency is again to use purely descriptive phrases analogous to those we found in designating blood kindred. Thus "my wife's brother" and "my wife's mother," etc., are much more often heard among the farmers, both in English and in Irish.

The Irish language, however, has a separate term for son-in-law. It is *cliamhan*, which is related to the word *cleamhnas*. It is the only nondescriptive term in general use, for daughter-in-law is rendered as "son's wife" (*bean mhic*) in Irish. It may be that the singling out of this relative among those united to one by affinity reflects the greater importance put upon males in a patrilineal system.

The relatives by affinity just described include all those of the spouse's immediate family. The principle at work has been to coalesce ego's immediate or restricted kindred with his wife's. Beyond this group to whom the extension of the kinship behaviors is primary lies the total group of the wife's extended kindred. They are referred to as "my wife's friends"; there is a general tendency to extend kinship behavior to them; and they lie within the prohibited group. They are what might be expressed as potential kindred in the same sense that ego's third, fourth, and fifth cousins, their progenitors and descendants, are potential kindred. Should the need arise, the common descent may be remembered. At times of family crises, particularly at funerals, this sort of bond comes into active force. 612

In this fact lies the peculiar character of a kinship system based upon extension rather than rigidity of form. The demarcations between the kindred groups of one individual and the next are not rigidly drawn. The individual can expand and contract the group outward from the restricted family to which he belongs. If he is important in the com- 612 554 602

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612 munity, he can command the respect and the services of a
554 great number of kindred; it becomes an advantage to the
602 peripheral relatives to establish the reciprocals of behavior which the system allows. On the other hand, if the individual is without personal importance, the scope of his actual integration through behavior to his kindred may be narrowed down to include only members of his immediate family.

612 It is the potentiality of extension and contraction within
602 the kinship group which is both praised and condemned in such phrases as "A neighbor is nearer than a friend" and "The higher the man, the more people he has." If the individual attempts to rise above his fellows or to forget them in his way upward, the cry immediately rises that he is "forgetting his friends." In fact, disloyalty to one's kinship group is felt to be a deadly crime against the group.

596 The Irish extended family, combining in different de-
612 grees of intensity of solidarity all descendants of a common ancestor through five contemporaneous generations, is not a rigidly defined structure set off from the other groups of society. On the contrary, the extended families present a picture of a series of interlocking pyramids in which each individual is assigned a definite place, but in which no two individuals (unless siblings) occupy quite the same place. It is a group of kindred reckoning common bilateral descent, and linking as equals all individuals occupying the same step within that descent to the number of five such steps, and including the corresponding group of the spouse's
[614] kindred. It is in no sense a clan or gens, as its bounds are not constant, but descend and ascend through the total group of possible kindred. That is, an existing group resolves itself into a number of new ones, as descent proceeds from father to son. It is because of this that farmers having the same patronym and living side by side yet may not be "friends."

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Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority. 582 601 612 621 [793]

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside. 602 612 621 [609]

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard, and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each 612 591 602

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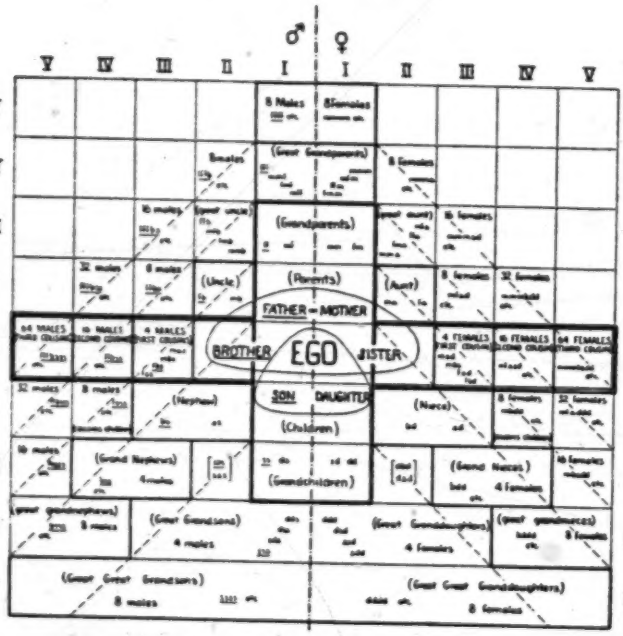
square is contingent to that of its parent of the same sex and to that of its child of the same sex. Thus the lines of descent strike one's eye at a glance. The English terms adorn each square, and small letters in each square give the abbreviation for the designation of the personalities whose place

FIGURE 10

KINSHIP AND DESCENT



the square represents and who are grouped together under a common term. A number is included which lists the number of personalities in all possible descent lines represented by the square.

Anyone interested in explaining to himself the Irish reckonings, such as for instance "fourth *col*," need only count off the squares from ego.

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The groups usually designated are shown within blocks united under heavier margins. Thus those grouped in double black margin across the whole diagram, taking in all the generation marked horizontally as I and O, are ego's "friends." They are members of his generation, united by common descent reckoned back five generations to common great-great-grandparent. 602 612

It goes without saying, of course, that, except for minor variations, this system is essentially that of all northern and western Europe. It is that of the United States. It is technically a descriptive, bilateral, patrilineal system. Like all kinship systems without exception throughout the whole world, it provides for reckoning in a common scheme nine generations, five of which must already occupy the past. Like all others, it represents a self-consistent system built up of the relationships within the immediate family. 602 612 171

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CHAPTER VI

Demography and Familism

161 OF the demographic phenomena the small farmers present, the decline of population is most easily isolated. The facts are as follows: There has been [73] a continuous and characteristic decline since the great famine of 1845. Numbers have fallen from 6,548,000 in 1841 to 2,963,000 in 1926. With the exception of Dublin, the whole of the country has suffered in this decline. On the whole, however, the country districts have suffered at a greater rate than have the towns. In 1841, 80 per cent of the population was rural; today only 63 per cent. In other words, since 1841 there has been an almost continuous increase in the town population at the expense of the rural, though the two have shared a common decline. Put in terms of percentages: since 1841, the country districts have lost 64 per cent of their population, towns from 200 to 500 49 per cent, towns from 5,000 to 10,000 25 per cent, and towns other than Dublin over 10,000 13 per cent. Dublin, on the other hand, has gained 47 per cent. That the enormous [167] emigration associated with this decline is a matter of the contemporary generation is evident when it is recognized that 30 per cent of the native-born Irish were living in other countries in 1926.

161 The closest approach among European countries is the 171 case of Norway, where 15 per cent live outside. Italy, which has provided so many citizens for the United States and the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Argentine, has only 4 per cent of its natives residing in foreign countries. Since 1911 there has, however, been a check in the decrease; only 5 per cent of the population was lost between 1911 and 1926. The region of our investigation, County Clare, shares in this general loss, falling in population from 250,000 in 1841 to 95,000 in 1926. Since 1911 it has lost only 8 per cent.

As the statistics show, this loss of population is in the main a problem of the country districts. The towns have gained proportionately to the countryside; though in a lesser degree, they have, of course, shared the common loss. Many causes for this decline have been operative and, as the excellent work by Dr. William Forbes Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World*,[1] shows, emigration is no new factor in Irish life. The great impetus for an enormous exodus of population was the famine of 1845, but since then emigration has flowed on continuously, coming to an end only in 1932 when for the first time for at least a century more Irishmen returned than left the country.

But far from the famine's having started the emigration from the present Free State, "the growth of emigration between 1815 and 1845," concludes Dr. Adams, "not only made possible the flight after the famine, it caused that flight. The thirty years before 1845 spread the emigrating spirit through all but the highest class until it became the favorite remedy for hard times. The tremendous rush of the next fifteen years could not have taken place without aid from the earlier emigrants." Since then, the land agitation, dissatisfaction with British rule, and periodic hard times have taken their toll, coupled with what Adams calls the greatest single cause of human migration, the work of powerful interests developed first in the early days of Irish emigration, "organizing and developing (immigrant) traffic for their own profit." The movement began long before

[1] New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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167 the great burst of the fifties and has been continuous ever since.

167 Many attempts have been made to find causes for this
178 emigration. Perhaps the most successful have been those
241 dealing with economic factors. Among the most frequently suggested is the change in agriculture since the famine. The assumption advanced is that the change from tillage to livestock production has cut down the rural employment, which in turn has driven the rural population to emigrate. Undoubtedly, there has been a correlation, particularly in the earliest years and at the time of the land clearances after the famine. In fact, from 1847 to 1852 (the famine years) there was a huge decrease in the area under small holdings of 1–30 acres, a decrease of 1,395,000 acres, but since then, in the years from 1852 to 1909 (after which holdings began generally to be increased), the corresponding decrease was only 155,000 acres.

The Report on Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, published by the Free State Department of Agriculture and Commerce, from which the figures are derived, comments that "this comparatively small transference of land from small holdings with high densities to larger holdings with low densities had but little effect upon reducing tillage or increasing livestock," [2] the agricultural changes which are supposed to have affected emigration. The Report demonstrates that between 1854 and 1912 the smaller the holding, the larger the increases in densities of all livestock, except dry cattle two years old and over, and the larger the decrease in density of ploughed land.

In other words, the change in agriculture, whatever may have been its effect upon employment prospects for the small farmer outside his own farm, proceeded more rapidly on the small farms. The tables of the Report show that large farmers decreased their tillage at a more rapid rate than

[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xliii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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small farmers only in the periods of 1917 to 1926 and 1854 to 1874, while continuously over the whole period 1874 to 1926 small farmers "got out of tillage more rapidly than large farmers." Too close appeal accordingly cannot be made to changes in agriculture for an understanding of Irish emigration.

In fact local densities of population do not now and never have shown a great deal of correspondence with densities of tillage. The highest percentage of agricultural land ploughed (29 per cent) was reached in 1851. Since then it has fallen steadily, to 13 per cent in 1926. Sweden comes nearest to this low percentage of tillage, with 52 per cent of her arable land tilled. Consequently, the Irish population was at no time solely dependent upon tillage crops.

Before 1881 a correlation could be drawn with some accuracy between the decrease in tillage and the decrease in rural population. Thus in poor law unions (administrative areas) in which ploughed land decreased population also decreased as shown in Table 1.[3]

TABLE 1

RELATION BETWEEN DECREASE IN PLOUGHED LAND AND DECREASE IN POPULATION

Decrease in Ploughed Land (per cent)	Decrease in Population (per cent)
0–20	13
20–30	26
30–40	28
50 and over	34

But since 1881 similar tables show that there is no correspondence between the decreases, and that even those poor law unions in which tillage has increased show an ordinary loss of population. Consequently, decline in tillage had little effect upon emigration after 1881. This becomes even more evident when it is understood that in both 1854

[3] *Ibid.*, p. lxi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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167 178 241 and 1912 the thirteen counties densest in rural population included only six of the counties densest in ploughed land. "Dense tillage was in the east, dense rural population in the west,"[4] as it still is.

167 178 231 In the same search for economic causes, a better case has been made for the change from milch cattle to beef cattle production. As we have seen, milch cows are characteristically associated with the small farmers. During the period of emigration, the number of dry cattle has risen in proportion to the number of milch cattle almost steadily; the range is from 2,372 total cattle to the 1,000 milch cows in 1854, to 3,334 to the 1,000 in 1926; fluctuations have been very slight. It is true that the number of milch cattle has also risen steadily, if slowly. Such a change in actual numbers of cattle and in proportions of dry to milch cattle, the latter capable of yielding the greater amounts of food for farm consumption, may have had some effect upon the displacement of human beings by cattle, but certainly not a great enough one to determine the emigration. The lack of correspondence between these changes is evident when it is remembered that the change has taken place principally in the former tillage areas, and also that in 1926 the areas of greatest milch cow density were substantially the same as in 1854. The very little direct correspondence there can be is well exemplified in the contrast between County Clare, which fell from a population of 336 to the 1,000 acres of crop and pasture to 129, while milch cows remained practically the same in number (100 to 110 to the 1,000 acres), and County Mayo (a poorer region), where population fell only from 375 to 245 and milch cows also remained practically the same (90 to 100).

From these figures it is evident that the decline in rural population is not directly correlated with decline in tillage or change in cattle production. The failure of employment

[4] *Ibid.*, p. lvi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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coincident upon that change cannot be assigned as the sole cause of emigration.

As the decline in population has been more characteristic of the small farmers, it may be possible to associate it with social conditions pertaining among that class. They have participated in the very agricultural changes which are thought to have caused their dispersal. They enjoyed the high prosperity of the closing decades of the last century, and won the progressive reforms of agrarian tenure. Yet they continued to send forth thousands of emigrants. Fluctuating economic conditions have undoubtedly had their effect, but factors whose greatest demonstrable result is merely to stay or hurry the stream of emigration cannot be evoked as efficient causes. In taking the problem directly to the small farmer, it will become possible to sketch the social setting in which emigration takes its form.

Clearly connected with the decline in population are other demographic statistics, particularly those of marriage. They present features which are unique among civilized peoples. Inasmuch as they are again indications of an underlying uniform social pattern whose occurrences they record, it is necessary to analyze them in terms of the behavior patterns of rural Ireland. Like emigration, they are more characteristic of the country people. Springing from marriage, they are thus directly indicative of social forces within the small farmers' family economy. 162

Briefly stated, they present the following characteristics: In Saorstat Eireann in 1926, according to the census then conducted, there was a larger proportion of unmarried persons of all ages than in any other country for which records are kept. Marriage, furthermore, did not take place until a comparatively late age. Thus 80 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty years of age were unmarried in 1926, 62 per cent of males thirty to thirty-five, 50 per cent of males thirty-five to forty, and 26 per cent of males fifty-five to 162 582 589

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sixty-five. The significance of these figures springs from their comparison with other countries. In the United States only 39 per cent of males twenty-five to thirty are unmarried, 24 per cent between thirty and thirty-five, and only 10 per cent between fifty-five and sixty-five. Denmark, an agricultural country similar in many ways to Ireland, had only 49 per cent, 25 per cent, 15 per cent, and 8 per cent of these age groups not yet benedict, respectively. In England the percentages were 45 per cent, 25 per cent, 16 per cent, and 10 per cent, a great contrast to the sister island. Indeed, in the Free State the percentages of unmarried among the males of each age group are usually double those of other countries.

Unmarried females are also very numerous, though not so excessively so as is the case with the males. In the age groups twenty-five to thirty, thirty to thirty-five, thirty-five to forty, and fifty-five to sixty-five the percentages are respectively 62 per cent, 42 per cent, 32 per cent, and 24 per cent. In Denmark the same groups showed only 39 per cent, 25 per cent, 19 per cent, and 14 per cent; in England, 41 per cent, 26 per cent, 20 per cent, and 15 per cent. Figure 11 gives a graphic comparison between the Irish Free State and three other modern countries.

Later marriage and high incidence of bachelorhood is, like population decline, more pronounced among the country people. And among them, it is highest in those areas where small holdings prevail. In County Clare 88 per cent of the males between twenty-five and thirty in rural districts were unmarried. This percentage is not abnormally high for Ireland, as Sligo, Galway, Mayo, and Leitrim, areas of small holdings, have 90 per cent and Roscommon 91 per cent. In Clare 90 per cent of women between twenty and twenty-five were unmarried, yet six western counties have higher percentages than Clare's.

In fact the thickly populated and poorer western counties

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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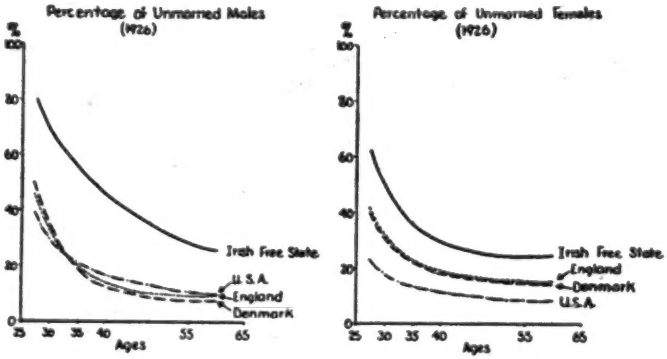
show a higher percentage in all age groups of unmarried than the eastern counties. In spite of this, however, there is a higher percentage of all females in eastern than in western counties. This fact is directly correlated with the difference in sexual ratio between eastern and western coun- 162 589 589

FIGURE 11

UNMARRIED PERSONS IN THE IRISH FREE STATE AND THREE OTHER COUNTRIES, 1926



ties. In Dublin and the other large cities the female population exceeds the male, while in country districts and smaller towns there is a male excess. The proportion of females per thousand males is lower than that of any of the other twenty-one European countries. It is greater, however, than that of such new countries as the United States. There are 973 females to every 1,000 males in the Free State.

If marriage is so long delayed and there are so few women relatively in the country districts, the condition in the towns is not quite so marked. Females outnumber the males there. Likewise marriage takes place much earlier. In County Clare the aggregate rural areas show 88 per cent of males twenty-five to thirty and 73 per cent thirty to thirty-five unmarried, but the aggregate town areas show only

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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162 70 per cent and 50 per cent. There is a general tendency: the larger the town, the earlier marriage takes place. En-
582 nis, the largest town and county seat of Clare (6,000), has a
589 somewhat lower percentage than is usual for towns of its size in Ireland. In fact, Clare's figures, 60 per cent and 30 per cent in those age grades, are better even than those for such a metropolis as Cork City, with 68 per cent and 40 per cent.

Correlations of occupation and marital status[5] support the assumption that the longest delay in marriage is found among the small farmers. Both agricultural laborers and town laborers marry younger and in greater numbers proportionately. No other occupational class, not even the professional class, delays marriage so long or has so many celibate members.

162 These facts obviously relate themselves to the population
163 decline. They are, as it were, two different symptoms of the same condition. But strangely enough in a declining population, fecundity is very high. Although there are fewer married women of childbearing age per 1,000 inhabitants than in other countries (74 in Ireland, 142 in the United States, 125 in Germany, 112 in Denmark, 121 in England, and 119 in Italy), the fertility of these women is remarkably high. For every 100 married women under 45, there are 131 children under five years of age, compared with only 77 in the United States, 71 in England, 93 in Denmark, and 75 in Germany. The number of children is higher again in western counties of Ireland than in eastern. The women of Clare under 45 produced 140 children for every 100 married women, those of Donegal 152, but in County Dublin and County Wicklow, the two eastern counties, only 122 and 124. In spite of this great fecundity there is, however, in Ireland only a normal proportion of children under 15, if Ireland is compared to other countries. The

[5] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, part II: Ages and Conjugal Conditions.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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balance between high fertility and few and late marriages 163
keeps their number down.

The kernel of the problem lies,[1] of course, in the behavior 581
of the country people. Marriage brings both dispersal of the farm family and change of status for boys and girls. The marriage of one of the sons brings re-formation of the whole family group upon the farm. The crux of the matter lies in this reorganization of the farm family and the mechanism of the change and continuity it provides.

The nearly universal form of marriage in the Irish coun- 581
tryside unites transfer of economic control, land ownership, 584
reformation of family ties, advance in family and community status, and entrance into adult procreative sex life. It is a central focus of rural life, a universal turning point in individual histories. This form of marriage is known as matchmaking. It is the usual, in fact until recently the only respectable, method of marriage and usually too of inheritance.

In Figure 12 the reader will find a graphic representation of the description of the movement of the family and the re-formation of relations which the match involves and which is the burden of this chapter. It explains itself, and it gives a very good illustration of the generalities. Organicists should take heart at its resemblance to an amoeba expanding and budding. But the resemblance is accidental. The examples we cite come nearly all from County Clare, but literary references and interviewing in other places have been made to show that matchmaking prevails almost universally among small farmers with very little local modification. It is furthermore imbedded in the Irish (Gaelic) tongue and very old in Irish history.

A match (Gaelic, *cleamhnas*, marriage, and *spré*, a match) is a contractual marriage made by the parents or families of the marrying parties and involving the disposal of properties. Generally it begins with a farmer's casting round for a

[1] [i.e., that of population decline.—Analyst]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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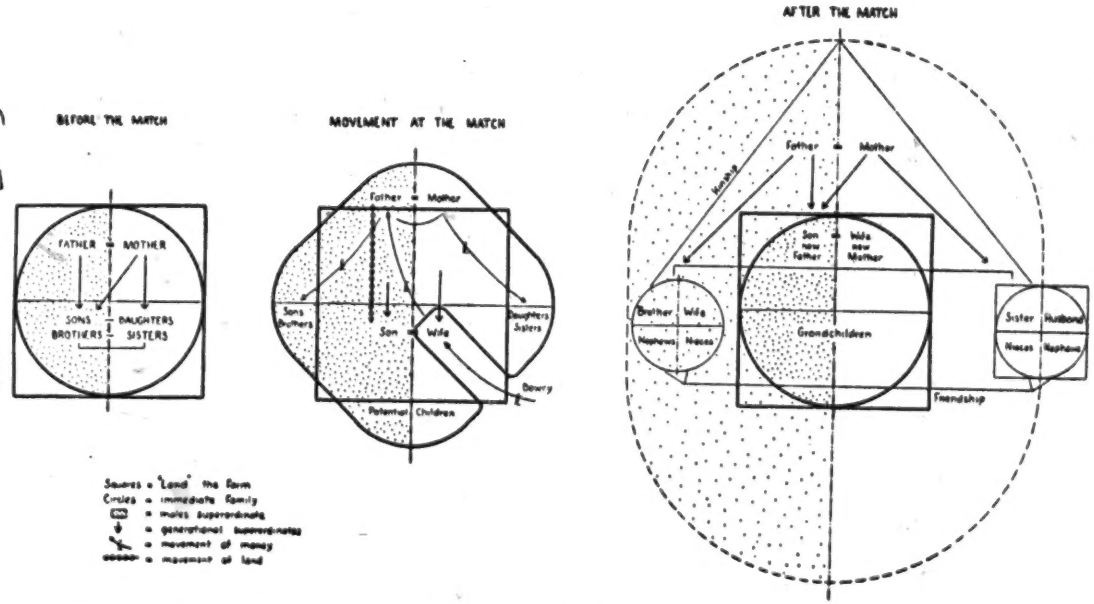
FIGURE 12

THE MATCH
(FARM MARRIAGE)



Diagrammatic representation of the re-formation of farm families at the marriage of the heir. The diagram demonstrates the rearrangement of all the constituent relations between persons and the reëstablishment of the equilibrium of the familistic system.

[p. 108]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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suitable girl for one of his sons who is to inherit his farm. 581
The choice of the heir from among the sons rests in the 584
father's hands. Historically, all the sons and daughters were provided for on the land, and, where possible, this is still the ideal situation, but the closer identification of family with one particular plot of land and the difficulty of land division fostered through three generations of agrarian agitation and land reform have prevented this. One son, then, is ordinarily to be "settled on the land." Typically today only one son remains, and he gets the farm.

In the words of one countryman, the procedure would be: 583

If I wanted to give my farm over to my son and I would be 584
worth, say, two hundred pounds, I would know a fellow up the hill, for instance, that would be worth three hundred pounds. I would send up a neighbor fellow to him and ask him if he would like to join my family in marriage. If the fellow would send back word he would and the girl would say she was willing (and the usual courtesies were exchanged), then on a day they agreed on I and the fellow would meet in Ennistymon (the local market town) and talk over the whole thing as to terms, maybe sitting on it the whole day. Then, before, if it was land I didn't know or the fellow came from afar off, I would walk his land and look at it and the cattle there were on it to make sure of the farm. Then we would go to a solicitor that day and make up the writings in Ennistymon. The money, say three hundred pounds, would be paid over in cash or in promissory notes, and it is usual here to divide it into two parts or sometimes more. One-half is paid at the wedding, and the other is paid a year after.

This statement contains in essence nearly the whole of matchmaking. As the old fellow indicates, the initiative in the matter lies with the owner of the farm, usually the father of the boy. When the time comes for him to relinquish the farm, he lets it be known in the district to those who have daughters ready to be dowered. On the other hand, the father of the girl may often take the initiative, letting it be known that his daughter has a dowry at such and such a

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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583 figure. In either case, when a suitable boy or girl has been
584 found, the farmer sends an emissary to his or her parent. The relative value of the farms and the "fortune" that a farmer will give for his daughter are generally pretty well known in the district, but where the two families are comparative strangers, or belong to different localities, the role of the emissary in laying the proposals of one set of parents before the other is more important. The emissary is not a relative of either party ordinarily. Certain individuals become well known locally as successful negotiators. In former days there was once a fully developed "matchmaker" or marriage broker. The office is said to exist still in Connemara, but it has died out in Clare.

584 Quite often a well-known shopkeeper or local politician comes to play the role. One in particular in Ennistymon (a market town of 1,200) came under the author's notice. The back room of his public house reserved for special customers became one of the centers of local matchmaking. It was there that the fathers of both boy and girl would meet and "sit on the match." Their deliberation, to the accompaniment of many bottles of stout, threshes out the whole matter of the disposal of the properties involved, [582] the relative status of the families, and any possible barriers to the union, such as consanguinity, insanity, or notorious crime in past ancestry.

584 The bargaining is a matter of nice adjustment between
583 the "fortune" and the farm. The custom known as "walking the land," referred to above, insures that the farm is roughly equivalent to the fortune, though each party strives for a higher valuation of its own claims. Thus, where a fortune of five hundred pounds has finally been agreed upon, the girl's father will have offered only four hundred and the boy's will have held out for six hundred, instancing all the prospects and advantages of his farm in support of his figure. Finally, through the offices of the intermediary

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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and after concessions on each side, the two will "split the difference" and thus reach an agreement. The decision rests with the fathers, but they will have had the quite vocal assistance of friends and older members of the kindred. 584 583

Perhaps the words of a countryman best describe the matching of values and prospects the bargaining entails. Farm and spouse are inextricably interwoven in his mind:

> When a young man is once on the lookout for a lady, it is put through his friends for to get a suitable woman for his wife. It all goes by friendship and friends and meeting at public houses. The young man sends a speaker to the young lady and the speaker will sound a note to know what fortune she has, will she suit, and will she marry this Shrove? She and her friends will inquire what kind of a man is he, is he nice and steady? If he suits, they tell the speaker to go ahead and draw it down. So then he goes back to the young man's house and arranges for them to meet in such a place on such a night and we will see about it. The speaker goes with the young man and his father that night, and they meet the father of the girl and his friends or maybe his son and son-in-law. The first drink is called by the young man, the second by the young lady's father. The young lady's father asks the speaker what fortune do he want. He asks him the place of how many cows, sheep, and horses it is. He asks what makings of a garden are in it; is there plenty of water or spring wells? Is it far from the road or on it? What kind of house is in it, slate or thatch? Are cabins good, are they slate or thatch? If it is too far in from the road, he won't take it. Backward places don't grow big fortunes. And he asks too is it near a chapel and the school or near town? If it is a nice place, near the road, and the place of eight cows, they are sure to ask three hundred and fifty pounds fortune. Then the young lady's father offers two hundred and fifty pounds. Then maybe the boy's father throws off fifty pounds. If the young lady's father still has two hundred and fifty pounds on it, the speaker divides the fifty pounds between them, so now it's two hundred and seventy-five. Then the young male says he is not willing to marry without three hundred pounds — but if she's a nice girl and a good housekeeper, he'll think of it. So there's another

1:A ensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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584 drink by the young man, and then another by the young lady's
583 father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day. After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, and maybe another girl, and her brother and father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker. If they suit one another, they will then appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong. The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one. Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points. If the girl's father likes the land, he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes on them. Then they go to an attorney until the next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father [boy's] to sign over the land. Then there comes another day to fit her for a ring. The girl and boy meet in town some day. He buys her some present. They walk the town that day and all admire the pair and gander after them.

584 Several instances have come to notice where agreement
583 was not reached and where a farmer has broken off negotia-
577 tions on finding a girl with fifty pounds more. There are also many subterfuges which, though they are regarded by others as humorous occurrences, are often sore spots between the contracting parties. Thus a farmer near Ennistymon drove his neighbor's cows into his farm on the day of the girl's father's walking the land so that the other would think him richer than he was. After the marriage the deception was discovered, but too late.

[626] In another case, a sure penalty overtook a farmer who abused the bargaining system. I give the description of a neighbor:

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He's nothing but an old blatherer, he was always sitting on 583
matches and saying he would give a fellow his daughter when 577
he hadn't any fortune on her at all. He'd break it off by saying 626
the girl wasn't willing and all the time it was only boasting and drinking the porter he was.

Today the boaster is a local joke, and his daughter has fled to America.

A famous local character round Ennis, a laborer now 522
dead, once bested a countryman through a judicious whet- 584
ting of the farmer's cupidity at matchmaking. The story 583
goes that the laborer broke the countryman's bargaining resistance by distracting his attention from the cow he was selling at the fair to the prospects of a match between the farmer and a purely fictitious sister, who was dowered with an equally fictitious three hundred pounds. Later when the farmer and his friends came to town again to discuss the matter further, the wit told them elaborately that, after making full inquiries, he had decided they belonged to too respectable a family to allow themselves to make a match with his sister, since the sister had already "a little one" out of wedlock.

Another case of subterfuge practiced illustrates a variation 584
in the match. A fellow near Ennistymon got a farmer with 583
a daughter to back his note at the local bank to the extent of 577
six hundred pounds. The borrowing was kept secret, and the endorser does not seem to have known that the security offered was his own farm. Accordingly, when the borrower later offered to bring in the six hundred pounds in marrying the daughter, the farmer accepted, thinking he was to receive the fortune clear of debt. He discovered only too late that he had a son-in-law whose fortune he must make good himself. The deception led to bad blood between the two, but nothing could be done.

This last example illustrates a reversal of the usual pro- 583
cedure. Ordinarily since the Irish farm family is both

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583 patrilineal and patrilocal, the fortune is brought in by the girl and goes to the father of the boy. When, however, there is no male heir, the incoming son-in-law must give a fortune to the farm holder. Generally the man's fortune is much larger than that of the girl. It may be that the necessity for its being larger arises from the fact that he has no land of his own. Frequently the farm into which he marries is known for at least a generation longer by the name of the girl's family, which reflects the identification of the patrilineal line with a particular plot of land, so strong in rural Ireland. It may be that the additional payment is deemed necessary to overcome the anomaly felt at the reversal of the usual roles of sons and daughters. The Irish term for an in-marrying son-in-law is a graphic one; it is *cliamhan isteach* (literally, son-in-law going in).

583 584 A quite similar case illustrates not only the position of the man marrying-in but the different aspirations which may be involved. A local politician, a farmer himself, and an automobile driver, a farmer's son, arranged a match for a girl who had lately inherited a farm and a thriving shop in a tiny country town. The prospective groom was a "returned South African" who had brought back two thousand pounds. At the last minute negotiations fell through be-
[831] cause the young woman objected to the South African's obesity. The driver was to have got a hundred pounds out of it. We learned that several weeks later a second match arranged for the South African turned out more successfully.

583 The "fortune" is a prerequisite of country marriages, even divorced from its usual family setting. Many instances can be cited where returned immigrants have come back with dowries made abroad, to marry into local farms. In three cases that the authors had under particular observation, the small farmers' daughters had spent five, eight, and ten years respectively in the United States as domestic servants. Each returned to Ireland with dowry enough to

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permit her to marry into local farms, in two of the cases on 583
a somewhat better scale than the farms which they had left. The case of the South African shows how the man also may return with his fortune to establish himself in his native district after several years or even a decade or two of exile.

The dowry or marriage portion is, of course, a phenomenon universal in European peasant life. What gives it special interest here is its intimate connection with the farm family and with the land. That connection is evidenced particularly in the "writings."

After the "walking of the land" and the making of the 583
bargain, the two parties to marry go to a solicitor. There 584
the agreements reached are cast into proper legal form. The 428
"writings" is a legal instrument conveying the ownership 888
of the holding to the son. It is usually both marriage settlement and will. On the event of the stipulated marriage, the father conveys the farm and all appurtenances to his son in return for the portion brought in by the girl. The father makes also definite provisions for his own maintenance and that of his wife. Generally, these include the right to the "grass of a cow," to food and the use of the hearth, perhaps the yield of one patch of potatoes, and the use of a room in the house. The room is nearly always, at least in West and North Clare, the one known as the "west room" for reasons we shall examine later. To take care of possible disputes arising out of the failure of these provisions to work smoothly, certain very hard-headed stipulations are often included, allowing for the conversion of these rights into cash support or a lump sum.

In return for the farm, the father receives the fortune 583
brought in by the girl and paid to him by her father. Furthermore, the provisions which must be made for other 428
children are often transferred with the land. The father is now expected to give (if he has not given them already) portions to those of his children who are not to be settled

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583 428 at home on the land. Where the will and marriage settlement are one and the same document, these obligations are passed on to the inheriting son.

The following description of several "writings" (which we examined) given by an Ennis solicitor specializing in this lucrative practice illustrates the type and the possibilities of variation. The solicitor is describing certain marriage settlements, the originals of which he held in his hand:

> In this settlement John F— of C— had one son and two daughters at home. He left the farm, you see, all that goes with it, to his son on condition of his marrying the girl named here in the deed. He also made the transfer subject to the son's providing for the two daughters by giving them rights of residence and keep in the house as long as they remain unmarried, and by making them special money gifts when they should marry. He then reserved a right for his wife, leaving her a small sum, and the right to the potato patch and her bedroom free of all charge as long as she lived. In the event of her not liking the new arrangements, she was to get a monthly stipend in lieu of her keep and room until she died.

We shall go on to give this interview in some detail to illustrate the full character of the arrangements made. The solicitor continues:

> If there are two sons . . . one of them gets the farm, and when the old people find a girl with a suitable fortune, and the son marries her, they give the money over to the next son, or they provide with it for the other children who haven't yet gone off. It's a pernicious system. [An upper-class person is speaking, not a farmer.] You'll go out to a small holding and see several able-bodied men and women waiting around doing nothing. They are waiting for the eldest son to get married and for their share of the fortune the wife brings in.

674 What may happen when such an arrangement fails to work smoothly for one reason or another may be seen from the following examples. The first is the description (recorded in the course of a general conversation, not elicited in any

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way) of the circumstances leading to a murder which was something of a *cause célèbre* in Ireland in 1932. The speaker is a superintendent of civic guards (the police) in charge of the area. It is instructive that the general marriage system is the same as that of Clare, though Roscommon was the county in which the murder (the Frank McDermott case) took place. The speaker began: 64

> The lawyer for the defense at the trial had tried to establish absence of motive. I went into the case thoroughly when the question of reprieve came up. I discovered that the father of the two brothers [accused and murdered man] left the farm to the elder brother with the understanding that he should pay off the younger brother the sum of two hundred pounds to set himself up elsewhere as the farm wasn't big enough for both. The sister was also to be married off with a dowry provided for in the will. But the brother was delicate; he had an asthmatic complaint, and he needed the services of his younger brother on the farm. The farm was paying badly, and there was no two hundred pounds to pay off the other with. In this way the younger brother had no place to turn and he was kept in virtual slavery. He tried to get married in the district, but he had no prospects. The elder brother was also trying to get married to bring in a dowry to pay off his brother and sister, but no girl would have him on account of his asthmatic complaint. In the end the younger fellow decided to take matters into his own hands. He borrowed a gun from his cousin, and went out to a field where he seems to have taken a practice shot, for he apparently had never used a revolver before. No one would have discovered the thing if the cousin hadn't become alarmed when his gun was found and it was thought that he was implicated. The younger brother lay in wait for the elder brother beside a gate leading into their farm. He shot him twice . . . at any rate he left the body where it fell with the revolver beside it, evidence of panicky behavior.

By citing this fratricide, the authors do not mean to indicate that failure of matchmaking leads to such violent conclusions; they mean merely to point out the provenance of the crime in a social situation arising from the family system

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674 herein described. A case in County Clare in K— parish[6] shows the same provenance of conflict in a disturbance of the traditional pattern. The following extract from the diary of one of the authors gives the setting of the dispute:

674 January 19th. K – District Court. Nothing much in court today but the following case: Two lads about nineteen were up
578 for having tarred the house of Tim Nihill, the publican, night before the last fair. This wasn't an isolated occurrence; attempts have been made to intimidate Nihill over a period of years. The guards agree he is himself a peaceable citizen. Both Mr. –, the justice, and Mr. –, the local superintendent of civic guards, agreed that the lads were only "tools of some one behind the scenes who is inciting them." The justice bound them over, gave them a stiff fine. Later he explained to me that a certain Mr. Mulvaney has been calling Nihill a land-grabber in the districts and setting the lads on him. Last year the house was fired into in the night. It all arises out of a farm which Nihill owns and which Mulvaney says ought to be his. Mulvaney is
[583] landless now, only a farm laborer. His mother, who had the farm, was to have left it to him, but he made a runaway match with a servant girl and his mother wouldn't let them into the house. So she sold the farm to Nihill for cash and some debts outstanding and Mulvaney has been blackguarding Nihill ever since.

583 This story introduces the whole position of "runaway matches," as elopements are called. There are a few instances of coercion into matches. The autobiographic sketch of one Hannah M—, an old woman, the widow of a petty shopkeeper, illustrates the form which it can take. To paraphrase her:

She is eighty-four, and guess how long she has been a widow. forty years. She's been behind the counter all the time. She has a sister in America with nine children. The sister sent her over her passage, but the family tore it up and married her here in Ennis. She wanted to be a teacher; the work was easy, the holidays (ample) and it was a good job. There were three candidates

[6] Fictitious names for persons and smaller places have been substituted in this and following incidents.

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her year and she got first. At that time her sister sent over the 583
passage money, and she was about to go when they stopped her
and married her into this shop. Her sister was coming over
before the marriage but her fiancé wouldn't let her go for fear
someone would snatch her up too.

Ordinarily, as so many of the examples we have already 583
given show, marriage in the matchmaking system is a matter
of free agreement within the traditional setting. Love enters 581
the situation, however, only to complicate it. A runaway
match upsets the whole pattern, the interplay of dowries,
land, and portions of it for children, the transition between
adulthood and old age for the parental couple. There are
other considerations, too, which account for the disturbance a runaway match creates, such as those of class involved in "marrying beneath" one, but they are outside our present subject.

The following story illustrates the case. A countryman is describing a happening in his district:

Tom L— was making a match for his daughter with a fine farm of land, and they got as far as picking the gander [the name of a feast given by the bride's people slightly before the wedding]. They were all up there eating and drinking and dancing all night. Now a fellow from Ennistymon [town] came to it, but he was such an ordinary fellow he was not even invited into the front of the house but stayed in the kitchen. He was so poor and lazy, he brought a little turf to market sometimes, but that was all. Next day, the girl came down to the chapel to be married, and before they knew it, didn't she run off with this fellow. Tom cut her off and disowned her, and she's living in Limerick with her fellow now, but it might be in Australia for all Tom will do for her.

Even when matters have not gone so far, the runaway 583
match causes a grave disturbance and destroys the cohesion 578
of the family. The following account given by a publican
in Ennis of country acquaintances shows that reconciliation
occurs after a time, but that the disruptive effect upon the

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583 family is severe. We give the statement in detail in order
578 to show the general situation as he saw it. He is a townsman, and somewhat detached.

The daughter on the farm has to wait till all the sons are got ready for their going off and maybe have been given their passage to America or money to set up in business or to settle on the land. But there are runaway matches all the time, they fall in love, they run off together, and they come in here and take work away from the laborers here. It takes a lot of love and courage because the son is usually cut off and the daughter leaves a very good place for nothing but a cabin and they get none of the money. Maybe after several years the girl will get her fortune, but not always. I remember Jerry N — whose father was very well off as farmers go, but he wouldn't marry the girl they picked for him and took up with a servant girl instead. He's driving a hackney now and lives in a cabin with a flock of children. Jimmy L — ran off but he gradually became reconciled with his people. The father had a good farm of sixty acres, and so had the girl, but the young fellow got nothing out of it. His father helps a little now, sending down a bag of potatoes.

602 Another case which the authors had under observation
from time to time illustrates not only the matchmaking
593 system but the general family setting in which marriage
578 takes place and farm life moves. Sanctions for conduct
627 aggrieving the families are applied by the families themselves. The case is long but worth quoting in the words of the teller for its comprehensive character:

There was a girl of the O'Rourkes from D —, they have a farm out there and she married a fellow named Murphy up in C —. She was a school teacher out in England for several years and she became great with this fellow the farmer, and she used to send him money over from England for when they would get married. She sent about two hundred pounds in all. She has an aunt up in C — married up there and it was all the fault of the aunt. She came home and she hadn't yet told her people anything about it. She was just about ready to get married to the fellow and she told them that she was going to get married. They agreed. Then she said she was going to get married to

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Murphy and they tried to argue her out of it, but she said it was too far gone now and she was committed to marry him, so they hastily gave her their blessing. He lived in a big house up by C— and had sixty acres. 602 593 578

Well, he was a sort of uncouth kind of chap, rough, and she was what you might say anglified, or citified. She wanted to brighten up the house and make it nice and hang up curtains and that sort of thing. He thought the reins of the horse would do for the curtains and so on, and it came to a fight between them, a clash of wills, and in the end, as it must, the stronger one won out; that is, the man's. She got hysterical and he cast round for ways of getting rid of her, and he sent up to Ennistymon for the doctor to come down and examine her to commit her to the asylum. He didn't send her up to C— though that was nearer and in his district, but he sent up for Dr. MacNulty to Ennistymon, leaving Dr. Starr in C— so as to get someone who wouldn't know the case. 627 [158 743]

The married sister of the wife was staying in the house at the time and he was driving her home. He told her the doctor was coming, and she said, "You are doing wrong," and made him turn round and go back to the house where Dr. MacNulty was examining the hysterical woman. Then the married sister got her brother and father to take her back to D—. They came up with Father Brendan of Ennis here and took her away down to D—. After a time they got up a party and invited him down for a reconciliation.

After a while she went back to live with him. He started it again and got her hysterical and called in another doctor, who said that there was nothing wrong with the woman.

One night the three brothers of the girl and her father came up to the house and one went round to the back door and the others went in the front and they caught the fellow. They were going to force him to sign receipts for the money the daughter gave him. Country people demand receipts for money they give and they are right, but the girl hadn't liked to ask and hadn't got any, so her people were going to step in and get them themselves. Murphy had rifled her belongings and torn off his name from all the receipts he had sent her to England. They came in and said that he was lucky he was going to escape with his life. No one in their family had ever been in the asylum and no one belonging to them had ever been insane or robbers.

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602 and that he was trying to black them with the disgrace of it.
593 The girl ran in but they threw her out into the hall where her
father caught her and held her. They said that all the people
578 belonging to him were thieves, and that two of them, two
627 uncles of his, his mother's brothers, were convicted for robbery
and that all his people before him had been insane, and that he
was trying to black the name of a good family. In the end they
caught him and beat him till he consented to sign the receipts.
They gave him a good hiding.

The teller drew his own conclusions from the case:

If the girl had listened to her parents, they would have told her all this and saved her. But she went on and married right ahead on her own advice. She probably thought she was doing well in marrying into sixty acres.

It is interesting that the application of sanctions does not confine itself to a single dereliction. In this case, according to the storyteller:

[46] Murphy was a terrible lazy farmer and wouldn't even till a patch of ground for a garden for himself or his stock, and the woman's people had to send up a load of potatoes for them. They told him when they beat him if he didn't turn into a farmer and do a man's work, till his garden, and provide, they would be up again and make him do it.

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CHAPTER VII

Family Transition at Marriage

WITH the transfer of land at the marriage of the son who remains to work the farm, the relations of the members of the farm family to each other and to the farm they work undergo a drastic change. In the first place, the headship of the old couple under whom the family group worked undergoes change. The old couple relinquish the farm, they enter the age grade of the dying, and direction of the enterprise of the group passes from their hands to those of the young people. Something of the change has already been indicated in the "writings." From the point of view of the father, it means the abandonment of the ownership he has long enjoyed; from the point of view of the old woman it means she is no longer the "woman of the house." Her place is taken by the incoming daughter-in-law. Naturally, this change is accomplished in effect only with difficulty and with considerable reluctance upon the part of the old couple. Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. For example, the authors know one family, consisting of a young man and his wife, their two children, and the old couple, which was regarded as a model of family harmony in the neighborhood. The young man did all the heavy work of the farm, but his father worked by his side. Yet the initiative in agricultural matters was clearly the

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592 young man's. The man, almost eighty, did not want to re-
888 main idle. "Time enough to sit by the fire in the winter," he would say. The greatest compliment the neighbors had for them was: "Look at the C—s. Old Johnny gives his boy a hand with everything. You wouldn't know which one has the farm."

592 The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not
888 so harmonious. Disputes arise, as the provisions made in the "writings" indicate. The following quotation from an
606 official with years of experience in dealing with country people illustrates:

> As years go on, either the parents die or, if they live sufficiently long, they receive the old-age pension. Before they are qualified for this, the farms have to be made over to a son or daughter. This is done on the occasion of the son's marriage. The father reserves to himself and his wife the use of a room and the freedom of the kitchen, and they are entitled to all their food. The points were carefully discussed at length in the process of matchmaking, and the family of the future wife had no hesitation in agreeing, realizing that such points formed the final phase of a cycle of life on the farm. If the daughter-in-law has been well and properly advised by her mother, she immediately on her arrival in the new house submits tactfully to all proposals of her mother-in-law and lets the old lady feel that she is still the master mariner. If she didn't, it would cause a lot of trouble, as sometimes happens.

[626] In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law in the new household, and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control.

[577] An open breach between the two couples is universally condemned, of course; "turning the old people out on the

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side of the road" has occurred, although the authors found no instance of it. If, however, the new family finds the old too great a burden, the old may go to the County Home, where the poor and derelict old people are maintained. A grave stigma of inability to support one's duties still attaches to this. 888 606 577

It is interesting that the old-age pension, originally designed in Great Britain to support the aged members of an industrial population and extended some years later to Ireland, has been incorporated into Irish farm life without upsetting, but rather reinforcing, the matchmaking pattern. The tendency is now to turn the farm over to the son as soon as the father passes his seventieth year. Receipt of the pension facilitates the maintenance of the old people and hastens the transfer of land to the son, as the farmers must divest themselves of their small farms in the majority of cases in order to become eligible for the pension. 592 888 737

Even from the point of view of the household expense, the pension is very welcome. In the words of one farmer:

> To have old people in the house is a great blessing in these times because if you have one, it means ten bob a week and, if you have two, it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'D — and every Friday he will go to Corrofin [town] to collect his ten bob and he may buy a couple of bottles of porter, but spend the rest on things for the house and then come home with a few shillings which will go into the common fund.
>
> Not only that but it adds at least ten years to a man's life because the anticipation that each Friday he is to get ten shillings will cheer him up and keep him keen. Any house which has one old person is well off in the last few years, and, if there are two, it is a great blessing.

But the blessing the pension represents is more than an economic aid in bad times. It plays a great role in the transition the match brings about in family relationships. As one countrywoman phrased it:

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592 There is no chance that the old people would give up the land but for the pension, and there is no hurrying them. Before
888 the old-age pension the father would keep the fat of the land
737 and there would be argument between them, the young woman
578 and the old woman slashing each other with tongs, the doors broke, and it would be two dwellings in the house, like, but since the old-age pension, there are no rows and, if there are, then they make it up with the old people for the ten bob a week.

592 If the transition is smooth, there need be no such violence
888 of dispute as the last quotation describes. Each of the members of the household must adopt a new role in relation to the others. The old man abdicates his controlling position with his transference of the farm to his son. Usually such a change goes smoothly enough. If the son can still seem to defer to superior experience and judgment and refer decisions to the old man, all goes well. The happiest compromise is that suggested in the statement of one countryman:

> Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what he thought I should do for the day, and the old man would say that it is now time to do this or that or that the cows should have something done for them or the garden should be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty to thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then go about my own business.

592 It is in the feminine province of farm work and house-
606 hold control that the transition is most difficult. Under the patrilocal type of marriage here described, the bride is a stranger and of necessity cannot rely upon the experience of an association of years in order to meet the new conditions, as can father and son. In the graphic phrase of the people, she is the "new woman."

For her the transition brings a violent uprooting from prior attachments. Unlike her urban sister, she has little of the ideal of romantic love to help her over the crisis. Consequently her introduction into the new household is

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gradual, and her assumption of her new duties takes place over a moderately lengthy period. Two considerations, of course, are her primary inspiration in moments of stress: first, that she is now a fully adult woman with a household of her own although she must still share its control with her mother-in-law; and second, that the customary usage of the countryside provides her with an occasional escape back to her own people still on the farm at home. The following quotation expresses one woman's remembrance of her emotional difficulty. It is interesting that it is given expression most effectively in terms of Christmas, the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland: 592 606

> When I first came here, I didn't like it; I thought I couldn't stand living here, and I was always wanting to go home. I could go home, then, every fortnight. Now it doesn't matter so much and I go home about twice a year. I especially miss home at Christmas time because it is then that you miss those you always used to see, and Christmas doesn't seem right if they are not in it.

But for the bride, as for the old people, the transition brings forth a new behavior, and a new habit in her relationship with them. She must learn a nice balance between her new freedom and new full status and the continued control and the vested interest of her mother-in-law. It is a matter between the two women of the household; the father and son prefer to remain neutral witnesses to the process. The statement of one countryman illustrates well the possibilities and the type of new attitude and behavior the young woman must learn to make a satisfactory adjustment: 592 606 578

> When a marriage is made, an agreement is drawn up so that the man hands over to his son the land, but makes certain reservations. A new woman is brought into the house. The wife may have modern ideas and be "hoity-toity" about the way to do things, and the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man without interfering would light his pipe and go out until the squabble was over.

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592 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and
606 leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the
578 mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law
522] is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman
[626] must be effected smoothly. The whole moral force of the community as well as the interest of family harmony bear upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighborhood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide its personal troubles as much as possible from the general knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides for continuance.

592 The new position of the old couple and their desires in
888 the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

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press this need for continuance. They are part of the pattern themselves. The statements of the blessings they bring to the farm family with their pension money are very elliptical assessments of their new place within the group.

In their new role, if the transition has been smooth, they retain, if not a dominance of control and direction of the group economic enterprise, at least a dominance of respect and prestige. They occupy a venerable and dignified place in the community and within the household. The sentiments of which they have been the object during the years of their son's youth and manhood undergo no change, even though their strict control relaxes and may disappear.

Likewise when, with the birth of the bride's children, the newly married couple begin to create a full farm family of their own, the old couple remain a part of the united group. They very soon become the objects of the children's love and respect, and enter into the complex of family relationship and family behavior which fashions the status of the children.

This new completion of the family pattern the countrymen express, as they do the reciprocities of kinship, in terms of help and aid to the economic unit of the farm. One countryman generalized as follows:

> When there are children in the house, the old people are a great help to the mother because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see that they did not fall into the fire or something of that nature, and thus the woman can go about her business. The old woman would help while the old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able, because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. As they grew older, they might do some of the lighter work, but they would always help.

He went on to discuss the new relationships between family members and the modification of the immediate family behaviors which the presence of the old couple brings about.

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592 888 His shifting the topic from help to alignments within the family is entirely unconscious; it could not better illustrate the connection between work roles and reciprocal interaction in the family.

> If there was a squabble between the mother and daughter, the old woman would more than likely stand up for the daughter. She would teach her how to do things and would have more patience than the father.

592 888 589 Quite as before in the case of the farm economy, the strength of the pattern reveals itself in the aberrant cases. Where there is no old couple to take up new status and position in the family group, others within the family of the older generation or even of the same may be forced into such a position.

Two cases came under the particular notice of the authors. In one an elder sister became to all intents and purposes the "old woman" in the house. A widow, she owned the farm, was in the "west room," and had the place at the hob. Her younger sister and her husband, who had married into the farm, managed the farm and knew that their children would inherit it. The elder sister helped a bit with the household, but spent much of her time before the fire. Both the man and woman of the house referred to her as "the old woman," a term of respect, and one of the authors, who lived in the house for a time, learned only after much intimacy the half-forgotten fact that she was not mother but sister to the younger woman. In the other case it was a father's sister who took up the role, the product of long substitution for a lost mother, and at the match the writings made provision for her.

888 561 Intimately connected with the transition at marriage are all the phenomena of age grading so marked in Irish country life. The old couple advance one step in their course through life; they enter a new age grade.

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Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 885
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age 886
do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of
their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on
the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which
mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which
betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those dif-
ferentiations of status which are given formal and explicit
recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of
daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers
themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re-
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 561
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 574
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the 576
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by 517
right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit be-
hind them round the room on other chairs or on the window
seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the prin-
cipal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrange-
ment shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old
men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to
sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter
in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the
old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger
men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving
the center of the stage to the old men, and the children
stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men
have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the
divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

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561 When the whole population of a country district is on
571 the move on Sunday, the groupings are especially note-
794 worthy. There are occasional family groups driving in the jaunty car, but generally the older men walk in a group of their own, the older women in another. The young men walk together by themselves and the young women by themselves. On Sunday afternoons the young men can be seen at the nearest crossroad standing together in groups of ten to thirty, while the older men keep more to their houses or visit one another. Before mass, when the weather permits, the men congregate outside the church and do not move in until all the women have entered and the priest has arrived. As the groups stand outside waiting for the mass to begin and gossiping back and forth, the older men stand off together and the younger men keep to themselves. In wakes, weddings, christenings, the same age groupings are observed.

561 There is, of course, no formal prescription of such be-
571 havior nor formal taboo against its infringement; the conduct rather springs from the divisions of the family and the solidarity of the individuals occupying similar status as these forces operate in everyday life. It is evident how close a connection exists between age grading and marital status.

[561] If behavior of this type reflects the age grading within the family and the transitions between age grades which are part
342 of the transformation of the family at marriage, so does the arrangement of the house interior. For a graphic representation of this characteristic arrangement, let the reader return to Figure 9. !The houses of the small farmers show a remark-
[565] able uniformity over great areas; it becomes at once apparent that the variations in house types and forms are more associable with differences of class than of locality. But as we are dealing only with the small farmer or peasant class, we need concern ourselves only with the implications of the striking uniformity in house form among the country people. Throughout West and North Clare the house is rectangular

! [see p. 34. -Analyst]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater 342
part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen. There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of house is common, but there is also a squarer type which may have a second story.

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled, rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the [362]
governmental agencies and patterned after those built first by the Congested Districts Board (1893–1923) are slated and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statistical statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families, but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's population live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings, which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence between the proportion of small farm population to total population.

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is 592
the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking 352
is done, the table around which the family — first the adult 353
males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen [778]
utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the "Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled [415]
with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festivals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is
592 of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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must. They descend from father to son with the house and 620
the farm on which it stands.

It is into this room that the old couple move upon the 592
son's marriage. They move in among the symbols of family 888
unity, among the religious symbols of the house, into surroundings of a certain religious or sacred character. If we can discover certain other indications of the nature of this room, we shall feel warranted in drawing conclusions as to the nature of the change which takes place in the status of the old couple and the attitudes which surround them.

This room we have described is the "west room" men- 592
tioned in the "writings." It is so literally. With remarkable 342
uniformity the small farmers' houses in West and North 775
Clare face east and west, the room behind the hearth being 888
generally at the west end of the house. Now the west room and the western end of the house are associated in folklore with the "fairies" which still flourish in the countrymen's minds, especially among the older generation.

The Irish "fairies" include the spirits of the dead. In fact, the identity between the two is explicitly recognized. It was so at Luogh, where older men could name the "good people" with whom they had had encounters.

It is the west room and the western end of the house that the fairies frequent. Where a fairy path is believed to pass the house, it passes invariably along the western end of the house. The country people of Luogh and other parts of West Clare give this as the reason why no extensions, outhouses, sheds, or other structures are built on that side; bad luck would result. In Luogh none of the twenty-five houses of the townland had any structure of any sort built there. And it is often in this room that the fairies spend the night when they visit a house on their nocturnal travels. If we remember that the old people, relinquishing their adult status and preparing for death, move into this room amid heirlooms, religious pictures, and photographs of dead

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 342 725 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Family and community alike support them in their attitude. A woman could say bitterly, for she was childless: 183 842

> No matter how much money you have and how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you're no good. But if you're ugly as the worst and have children you are all right.

The husband has every right to express his displeasure at his wife's barrenness. To have no children is a source of shame to him and a terrible disappointment in his desire to continue his line upon the farm. One woman put it: 183 593 842

> The man wants children because he is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of the country, especially if you haven't any.

In the country districts they say that he may beat her and in their graphic phrase "bounce a boot off her now and then for it." Country belief still regards the woman as the offending partner in a childless marriage. Near Inagh one farmer, a returned Yankee, was regarded as an anomaly because, though childless, he treated his wife just as well as though she had many and did not get angry when he was twitted on his lack of an heir. They explained it by saying that he "knew it was his own fault." [195]

The day of the "country divorce," as the farmers call it, is rapidly passing. In the old days, they say, a man might send a barren wife back to her parents, though Catholic law forbade him to marry again.. There are cases which illustrate that the custom survives in altered form. They are particularly revealing in our analysis of the desire to preserve the family unity and its identification with farm and household through the generations. Here the brothers act, sociologically, as a single individual in order to insure the desired continuity. For instance, in one case, a middling farmer of Corrofin, childless after several years, got a country divorce. He gave the land thereafter to his brother in return for a thousand pounds, which the brother had inherited in lieu 586 842

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be brought into the house, and matches made for them. In this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

 592

right of a woman to hold property. The patrilineal identification of family and land is incompatible with it. Whatever farm a woman works or controls is regarded as a trust for a son or brother of her husband or father. 562 428

The conflict is naturally never so phrased, nor is it ever debated. Yet there are many instances which show behavior, accepted fully as right and just by the local community, which reveal the patrilineal identification. A widow, for instance, remains upon the farm only if the children are beginning to grow up. If they are very young, she returns to her parents and a husband's brother may take the farm. Even if she marries, she and her new husband merely hold the land in trust. The new husband is, graphically, a "stranger to the land." 562 768 428 587

As a "stranger" he has no right to it. In a village in mid-Clare, to give an example, a "Yank" returned after many years in the United States to his father's farm, from which he and all his brothers had emigrated. His mother, now dead, had married again, and her two children by her second husband still worked the farm. D——, the "Yank," threw the husband out into the road, told him to go home, and took up the land. Later when he gave fortunes to both of the children, the village felt he had made ample amends for the stepfather's years of toil. 587 428

Whether or not there is a legally executed will, it is much the same. In Luogh, a son, inheriting a farm upon the death of his mother, allowed her old second husband to stay on with him. He was said to be "very kind to the old man." In Inagh again, though a small farmer, dying, willed the family's farm to his wife and children, a brother on a neighboring farm got most of the land. "He paid her nothing for it. He took bits of it here and there until it was all gone." Whatever protest there is must come from the growing nephews. Inagh makes none.

In matchmaking, too, legal form may be subordinated to 770

In matchmaking, too, legal form may be subordinated to
583 country-bred aspirations. To insist upon the full letter of
842 the contract, even if its purpose is not fulfilled, is meanness. It is a breach of social convention, even though quite within legal right. For the "writings" is a formal legal instrument nowadays. Not all the farmers have gone so far in safeguarding himself as one F— in Inagh did. "He put it in the writings that he would pay the last half when his daughter was safe delivered," so we were told. For the provisions of the match reflect again the identifying continuity and the importance to all parties of the girl's bearing children for the family into which she marries. Most often the second instalment of the fortune is not paid until the first child is born, or, with more legal formality, till a year after the marriage contract is completed. One informant summed the matter up:

583 If the woman dies after a year and the first part of the fortune is paid, the man doesn't usually claim the rest, although he may
768 be mean enough to claim it. For the young man can marry again. If the man dies, the girl is given the money if there is no heir and is sent home. If there is, then she gets the place.

583 Let us reëxamine the dowry in the light of this complexity of interrelated factors. As has been explained, the fortune goes to the farm owner, in ordinary cases the father of the boy. At the match, land, house, cattle, and household effects move from father to son just as kinship relationships move and as adult status moves. One family, that of the old couple in which the son was merely one of the children, is partially destroyed in order to make way for a new one, in which the son and the incoming wife are now the adult married couple. The movement of goods corresponds to social forces. And the fortune brought in by the new wife moves from her father to the boy's as if to recompense the father for his loss of the farm. It is significant that the fortune is paid always in money. Try as we might, we never found it paid in any other way. Land, cattle, and household effects

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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are not used but are inalienably associated with the family. 583
This is a new development. In Carleton's day, before the famine, a daughter was often dowered with goods as well. Today this is not the case, for the goods like the land are part of an indivisible and corporate whole.

In this way, when we remember that the farm is identified in popular thinking with the patrilineal and patronymic family line of the landowner and that the girl is an outsider brought into that group, the money appears as a payment for the girl's inclusion. There is significantly no corresponding recompense or payment to the girl's father. He loses both daughter and dowry. The identification of his family, both immediate and ancestral, with the family farm is undisturbed. Of course the father of the girl makes sure that his prestige does not suffer. He demands that the farm she enters shall at least equal the dowry. The size of the dowry [554]
he gives his daughter is a very strong index of that prestige. It is both a duty and a great source of pride to provide well for her.

A further indication of the nature of the movement of 583
the dowry is to be found in the terminological (formal) 602
structure of the family which we have already described. It will be remembered that there was no integration between the boy's father and the girl's, and that relationship by affinity proceeded only from the point of view of the young couple. The two fathers-in-law or mothers-in-law are not felt to be related. No kinship terms express the new connection between them. Clearly, then, we have two patrilineal groups still unmerged, still distinct. That this is the case 578
can be seen in Carleton's [1] descriptions of faction fights in 583
which two families are often pitched against one another in 602
spite of their alliance by marriage. The authors have seen some of them, not on the scale of faction fights, it is true,

[1] William Carleton, peasant novelist (1794–1869), principally *Tales and Sketches* (Dublin: J. Duffy, 1845) and *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (10th complete ed.; London: W. Tegg, 1864).

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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602 but ones in which brothers-in-law flared up to strike one another even though after a week or so the two connections became reconciled.

428 Up to this point we have failed to distinguish between wills and marriage settlements in the statement of match-
583 making and transfer of farms. The confusion is justified because in so many cases they are one and the same. Nevertheless, the subject of wills made apart from the son's marriage needs discussion. If our conclusions as to the nature of farm marriage are valid, something of the same play of changes, obligations, and goods must be present.

Money in the dowry functions to recompense the farmer for his relinquishment of the farm and the break-up of the family which he headed. Similarly, in the cases where inheritance proceeds without marriage, money plays the same role. There are many instances in which the old farmer has demanded payment for the property his heir is to receive. Let an Ennis solicitor describe his experience with one of them:

428 I remember an old fellow, Jimmy B — of K — who was taken
763 off dying to the County Home. He called for me to go out there and make a will for him. Seven wills I made for that old codger before he was through. He hadn't any idea of dying. He had only ten or fifteen acres of a farm, but he said he would give it to his son [only] if the son paid him ten pounds a year for it. They often do that, make the son pay from ten pounds to fifty pounds a year for the land. Then [when the solicitor pointed out that the son would inherit the money anyway as the old fellow had no other heirs], old Jimmy made me make another will leaving the money itself to the son.

Another case the authors knew involved no son. The old fellow left a small farm to his cousin and even though he was on the verge of dying, he forced the cousin to pay for it.

In still another instance, an old fellow had some land and about two hundred and fifty pounds to give away. He gave

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the money in a will, but insisted the son pay for the land. 428
After that, there was a cow and a calf left over, which he 763
reserved for himself. When he called in a solicitor to make another will disposing of the cow and calf, this time, as he lay dying in the County Home, the nun in charge said he had been awake all night mumbling to himself about the cow and calf. The solicitor and the nun finally got him to leave the money for masses.

These cases show the hold of the pattern of receiving 428
money for the transfer of family property. It must be understood that under ordinary circumstances the payment the son had to make would be devoted to the other children, as is the dowry. But in these cases the pattern persisted though there were no other children.

Another case occurred in which a farmer named Patrick [429]
N— left money, farm, and everything he had to his nephew Michael in trusteeship to be given to him upon his marriage with the trustee's approval. Here no money was demanded, but another common feature of countrymen's wills was involved which throws light on the general family situation. The old man had other nephews who had given him a hand from time to time in fulfillment of the agricultural pattern. By mischance they discovered the content of the will, called their uncle an "old fraud" and a "robber," and stopped working for him. A generous move on the part of Michael prevented further bad blood.

English law of property gives the owner full right to dispose at will of farm and other real property as personal chattels. That right is, of course, embodied in Irish legal practice. But the situation underlying the Irish farm life is otherwise. In the first cases cited, we see a tendency to enforce payment for the farm, analogous to the dowry. In the last case, the basis for that tendency is the expectation of provision on the part of the family members. With the transfer of the farm and the break of the family at either

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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428 the match or death, the other members of the family must be provided for.

(It may be for this reason, the conflict between legal right and social obligation, that so many countrymen's wills are drawn up in elaborate secrecy, the solicitor creeping out in the dead of night to a lightless cottage in the bogs somewhere to make a will for an old fellow who for one reason or another refuses to fulfill obligations, real or fancied, to his kindred and neighbors. The authors had frequent descriptions of this from solicitors and townsmen to whom the piquancy of the situation appealed, but obtained none, unfortunately, from the countryman's point of view. They did receive accounts from countrymen of their attempts to conceal their visits to solicitors in town.)

Even in these cases in which the usual sequence of events is upset or changed through special circumstances, the same concern for rebuilding and changing the family relationships in a certain definite manner appears. The dowry, like the rest of the behavior at the match, is understandable only in such terms. Even, as in the case of wills of the kind just reported, where transfer of land alone is involved, the same concern is present. That is, the match is here by implication, if nothing else, and the mechanism of social change it provides is at work even *in absentia*.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER VIII

Dispersal and Emigration

THE internal reorganization of the family consequent on the marriage of one of their number produces a marked change in the situation of the as yet unprovided-for brothers and sisters. The other members of the family broken up by the marriage of one of their number on the home farm must be provided for elsewhere. They feel themselves entitled to portions, either in the form of dowries to marry into another farm or of some other means of establishing themselves. If such provisions in fact are not made, conflict arises, as we saw in the case of the McDermott murder. A classical case in the Ennis region of Clare was that of an old farmer of substance who married a nineteen-year-old girl when he was eighty. When the birth of a son precipitated a crisis, he had to be protected from his scandalized relatives, sons, and daughters by the police. When he died the following year, he gave a hundred pounds each to the constable who protected him and the priest "plucky enough to marry me." His sons refused to attend his funeral.

Normally, however, the transfer of land and the break-up of the family which worked it is made with the fullest possible provision for the other children. The dowry brought in is utilized to that end, and the savings of a lifetime on the farm have been used. The following observations made by a Land Commission official, himself a small farmer's son

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 and a man with many years' experience in Irish rural affairs,
428 attempt to give a statement of the generalities. They express, however, an ideal rather than an actuality.

The average household consists of six persons [and the parents]. Of necessity not more than one could be provided for on the holding and assuming, for example, that the family consisted of two girls and four boys, the position would be somewhat as follows:

593 The eldest son would in the course of years assume ownership of the holding. A second son might be provided with a second-
428 ary education and might possibly win a County Council scholar-
874 ship . . . enabling him to pursue a course of engineering or medicine practically free. In the event, however, of his not being so fortunate, the thrift of the family may enable him to pursue a similar course at the university, the intervals between terms and the long vacation being spent on the farm.

Some years ago medicine was the profession usually pursued provided the boy had no vocation for the priesthood. At that time the cost of his board was appreciably reduced by an arrangement through which neighbors' sons lodged together and brought with them supplies of potatoes, oatmeal, home-cured pork, in fact, provided for almost all their own food. When the boy is qualified to his own particular calling, to his credit it may be said that he denies himself many little luxuries in order to pay back the cost of his training and thus assist the other members of his family.

593 The third son either got trained in business and in due course started one of his own, or emigrated where he could also refund
428 the cost to his parents. The fourth son might possibly become a primary school teacher, a civic guard, a tradesman [artisan] apprenticed by his father in the near-by town, or again his family might give him enough to marry into another small holding.

One of the girls received a dowry or, as they say here, she was "fortuned off" into another small holding of similar status. The second girl possibly favored nursing, teaching, business, or domestic service, or again possibly religion, or even a clerical position of some sort either here or abroad.

166 The above quotation states the generalities in terms of
463 upward social mobility. The influx of the country people
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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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into the towns, into governmental, professional positions, and into the ranks of urban occupations must wait for special analysis in itself. It is not possible here to determine how great the effect of this movement from the small farms is upon the current much lamented overcrowding of the professions in Ireland. The point of interest for us is the dispersal of the farm group. 463 593

Naturally enough, this dispersal does not always occur so happily as in the above statement of the ideal. Yet the portioning off of the children and the success with which it is done is the pride as well as the duty of every farm family. A few examples will give the variations. They are more matters of success or failure to advance beyond the level of small farm life, but they show the genesis of the movement in the farm family. In a later section this subject will be dealt with in more detail. These examples, however, are typical, though the names are fictitious.

Leary of F —, a farmer with sixty acres, has a daughter married near-by with a four hundred pound fortune, and another, a nun in Mercy Convent, Ennis. Four sons have entered the priesthood, an expensive training from his point of view. A fifth is at home working, not yet thirty. Leary is a "strong" farmer, highly prosperous.

Tom Casey, K —, is a very poor holder with thirty acres of mountain and bog. Two sons and a daughter are still at home, and a bachelor brother works with him. Another daughter works for herself as a domestic servant in Ennis. One son Tom is apprenticed to a carpenter in Ennis. A daughter emigrated through the good graces of her aunt.

Michael Dunn of T — has twenty acres, but has not prospered. His two sons left at eighteen and twenty respectively to drive hackney automobiles in Ennis, an uncle there giving them a start. Another son now thirty and a daughter are still at home working the farm.

In a mountain townland, Pat Looney's father prospered, won the good graces of the landlord's agent, amassed four farms, the largest fifty acres, the smallest eighteen. He married off two 593 578 428

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 daughters with two hundred pound fortunes, settled three sons
578 and a daughter with her husband in each of the farms. Pat him-
428 self, the eldest, now about eighty, got the largest farm but not the one he wanted. He has been warring with his brothers and his neighbors ever since. He held out against his father for five years, refusing to marry and take his farm. In Pat's youth, land agitation and reform had not yet prevented subdivision and acquiring of new farms by a successful tenant. Pat on his fifty-acre mountain farm has married off a daughter locally at three hundred pounds and sent two sons out to America. Another daughter works in England. Two sons, aged forty-three and thirty-six, are at home and Pat hasn't made up his mind yet which one shall get the land.

593 The examples, various as they are, need not be multiplied.
167 The sons and daughter who are not to be portioned at home, in the words of the Luogh residents, "must travel." To that end both the savings of the family, created through their united efforts under the headship of father and mother, and
[583] the incoming dowry, are devoted. In Luogh there had been only four marriages in ten years; two of them were the usual farm-transferring matches, one a returned emigrant who married a boyhood sweetheart and bought a farm, and one a widower who took a second wife and a second fortune. An old woman described the situation: "There aren't any matches nowadays. Nobody has a fortune to give his daugh-
[454] ter and the young men must travel." Yet the woman who lamented this state of affairs was carefully husbanding half crowns for her baby granddaughter's fortune.

593 Nevertheless this necessary dispersal of the members of
167 the family at its reorganization does not ordinarily destroy
457 the family ties. The bonds of affection and family obligation still hold. If they have emigrated, the family members send
434 back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces and brothers and sisters left at home. A great many farms, especially in West and North Clare, are partially supported by Christmas gifts from Americans and other exiles. It is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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A JAUNTING CAR "FACES THE ROAD"

[facing p. 148]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

593 unfortunate that the authors have not statements of the
167 amount of these annual remittances for local districts. The
457 total for Ireland, however, is enormous. There is a marked
434 tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself, sons and daughters of each generation going out to join the members of the last. One district round Cross to the west of Carrigaholt, a little settlement on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, said locally to be supported by sons in the Shanghai police force. The first to go became chief of police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the force have gone to men of Cross.

167 The authors had the opportunity of examining some of the family setting in which emigrant remittances operate in Luogh. There the greatest number of emigrants had gone out to Boston. In one family, there was a succession of nephews and nieces following uncles and aunts from the same farmhouse for four generations. In four recent cases Luogh boys and girls had married one another in Boston. In two more they had married in Ireland and emigrated together.

434 Remittances from sons and daughters arrive around
593 Christmas. In one family the farmer's wife had written
431 to children in America saying that the family were trying to acquire an addition to their holding from the Land Commission. The children sent them the purchase price. In this case the daughter sent her regular Christmas remittance as well. When she was admonished by her parents for such generosity, she wrote: "I would think it wasn't Christmas and I hadn't any father and mother if I didn't send them something."

[527] Her mention of the festival in the same breath with her parents is understandable when it is realized that Christmas is the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland.

434 The role played by emigrated relatives in providing for
593

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434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
602 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
167 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
484 of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the
533 peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

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destroyed. The best example of this fact is the change which 593
comes over the attitudes of the old people toward their children's personal expenditures. The economic corporation which they directed is destroyed with their headship of the group. Consequently, they no longer can demand the services of their children as before. Thus the authors saw several old couples doing their best to learn how much a returned emigrant had earned but, because of the change in position, not daring to ask outright. If the son had remained on the farm, they would not have hesitated to demand a strict accounting. Likewise, in such important matters as marriage, over which the parents would have had great authority as long as the son or daughter remained at home, the parents lose their control. More than one old couple remarked, on hearing from a distant exiled son of his marriage, that they wished him well but that he must please himself now that he was on his own.

A word more might be said to clarify the position of the 593
dispersed relatives. They equally share the new attenuated 602
bonds which take the place of the old closely integrated family group. But, as might be expected in the structure of a family, which, as we have seen, is based, not upon the principle of rigidity in classification as in many primitive kinship systems, but upon the principle of extensions of relationship outward from the nucleus of the immediate family, the bonds are stronger as the original relationship is closer. The children of each generation growing up on the home farm can look far oftener to a father's or mother's emigrant brother for aid when their own time comes to emigrate than to father's and mother's emigrant cousins. The closer relatives are the ones who most often step forward, though the obligation theoretically binds them all. The following incident from Luogh illustrates the clash between the varying degrees of relationship. Let the small farmer tell the story himself:

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593 A fellow named O'Dwyer — married to a cousin of the old woman out of Ballyheline [a neighboring townland] — was
602 home from Australia one summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a new greatcoat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. [After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship] he asked if he could take the boy (second son) out to Australia with him, and he would set him behind his bar. [He had a hotel there.] I said, yes, he could have him. After the fellow went back to Australia, he sent over fifty pounds for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas's sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia, I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. And I sent back the fifty pounds, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back.

The new behavior, as this example shows, is that of the extended kindred already examined. Where emigration has not removed the brother and sister altogether, they are now "friends" and are bound by reciprocal obligations and sentimental attachment. The necessary disposal of their brothers and sisters provides for the continuance of the family unit upon the farm. The very mechanism which assures that continuance does the dispersing. Yet the dispersed do not leave the family. They stay within the bonds of kinship. They are united by the new more attenuated ties of cousinship. Their displacement, like that of the old people, is a regular social movement, providing for them, as it were, a new place and status, changing radically and necessarily their old family membership, yet still confining them within the web of interest and sentiment, though upon a new footing. Henceforward the relatives see one another, of course, less and less often and rely more and more upon the proxy of mementos and gifts.

593 In summary, the dispersal of the family is part of a general movement arising out of the re-formation of the family

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group. Forces within the relations of the members of the 593
group bring it into being. Yet the dispersal is carried out very often in ways which depend also upon familial ties. The whole movement is carried on in the midst of an orderly and organic transformation which comes over the family regularly at marriage and death. Old and new meet at marriage in Ireland. Between them social organization is passed on though a prior group is partially destroyed.

Let us recapitulate, then, for a moment. Statistical state- 182
ment of productive and consumptive behavior in rural economy revealed a marked difference between small and 593
large farmers. Within that difference the small farmers presented a great statistical uniformity. Consequently, it was necessary to look beyond the numerical count to the actual behavior of the small farmers. In referring the question to the lives of the small farmers themselves, we were led to a new analysis of their behavior and to the discovery of a new uniformity.

The new uniformity, however, is of a different nature. It is itself a coherent and consistent pattern, widely extensive, and responsible to laws of inner development of its own. We are entitled, or rather compelled, to call it a system and to give it the character of other systems, where that word is used with precise meaning and is not warped into a catch-all of common speech.

For, it is evident, the intricate web of human movement and interrelationship involving objects, household and land, which the study of "matchmaking" reveals, is no random movement. It arises in response to definite needs of the family group. It performs a definite function of reorganization and recrystallization in the group. The manifold changes the match brings upon the lives of the family members, the new positions which they take up, and the new behaviors which are theirs are dependent upon its success in this function. We do not need to insist that they are

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fully dependent upon it. It is sufficient that they cannot be adequately understood without some assessment of its influence. If we keep this fact in mind, we are ready for an analytic interpretation of our data. The uniform social behaviors of the small farmers begin to form an interrelated whole.

Marriage, property transfer, and the dispersal of the family members derive their character from family relationships. The immediate family of father, mother, and children form a corporate group engaged in agriculture upon a small farm. The roles of the father and mother make them superordinate to the children. Theirs is the direction of the group enterprise. Within the group, technological roles correspond with family status. Economic endeavor, both upon the individual farms and in the form of coöperation between farms, is controlled through the operation of social forces springing from the family. In the testimony of the farmers themselves, that effort is but part of a larger constellation of behavior patterns, obligations, and sentiments governing the individual in other fields by virtue again of his place in the family group. In total, Irish small farm agriculture presents a picture, not of isolated individuals or units pursuing a course of the greatest economic gain, amassing material objects in response wholly to individual desires and selling labor as a commodity, but of a way of life, only a small part of which we have examined, in which the relations between individuals, the soil, productive work, and the material goods of the household constitute a web of social ties, bearing their own incentive and reward and determining the part of the individual in the labor and the goods of the group.

At marriage and at death, as we have seen, this web of relationships is disturbed. New individuals are introduced, old ones lost. The match brings a re-formation of the family involving a dispersal of former members and an introduction

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of a new set of component individuals into the relationships between land, goods, labor, and human beings.

In the light of this system and of the internal changes which are brought about within it, the Irish population statistics now may become interpretable. Late marriage and the high incidence of bachelorhood are associable with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership, the necessity of acquiring sufficient means to portion children, and the delay in dispersing the closed corporation of the family group until it is possible to establish the new one. The practical self-sufficiency of the family group makes it difficult to destroy. The identification of a single immediate family with the individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new such group upon the land. 161 182 593

As we pointed out, subdivision of holdings practically ceased after 1852. Since then the struggle for land and legal reforms in land tenure have prohibited any great further division. The matchmaking system is very old in Ireland. The works of such Gaelic writers as Canon O'Leary describe it explicitly for the pre-famine period. With the cessation of subdivision of holdings came the necessity of providing for children elsewhere than on the land. From that same cessation of subdivision dates the high incidence of bachelorhood. In 1841, at the time of greatest population, age of marriage was normal. Then only 43 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty-five were unmarried, not 72 per cent, as at present. Then only 15 per cent of males between thirty-five and forty-five were celibate, not 29 per cent as today. Figure 13 represents the percentages of unmarried males and females at each age in each subsequent census from 1841 to 1926.

Viewed in the light of this family structure, the decline of population becomes interpretable not as a flight from intolerable conditions, though economic distress had a powerful effect, not as a political gesture, though political

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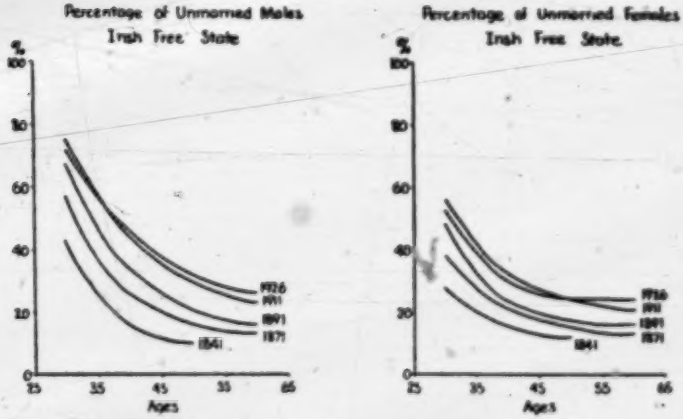
161 disturbance took its toll, but rather as a movement arising
182 from the effect of all these causes upon a family system
593 whose very nature predisposed it to disperse population and which could, therefore, accommodate itself to that dispersal when it occurred. Emigration, no new thing in 1845, ap-

FIGURE 13

PERCENTAGE OF UNMARRIED PERSONS, IRISH FREE STATE



The figures are taken from the censuses from 1841 to 1926.

pears as the logical corollary of this dispersal. It derives much of its character, such as assisted passages and remittances, from the social forces at work in the family. It can become a traditional movement like the movement from country to town without destroying the family structure or the rural culture whose members it takes away.

The authors do not mean to imply that anything within the social forces of the family as it exists in Ireland has had direct causal effect upon the peculiar statistics of Irish population. The authors would rather point out that the forces operative within that structure are of such a nature as to allow the society of which they are a part to continue to

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function in essentially similar fashion through the welter of economic, political, and other events which have impinged upon the human beings who have successively filled the structure. Likewise, the structure is capable of continued and virile existence in the present, governing the lives of its component individuals and modifying itself to take in new influences.

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CHAPTER IX

The Problem of the Aged

888 THE small farmers of the Irish countryside have a characteristic way of treating differences among themselves that is based upon relationships fundamental in the organization of their communities. Naturally these folkways are connected with the norms of family life. Perhaps the most important of them is their treatment of differences in age.

162 Ireland is in some ways an old person's country. The
888 percentages of the old in the population are very high. Naturally the fact is closely allied to an emigration which until recently has drained the country of its young adult manhood and womanhood. And, as in the case of emigration and late marriage, it is the rural districts, or better, the small farmers who inhabit them, that set the norm for the whole country.

A comparison of the distribution of age groups over the population between aggregate rural areas and aggregate town areas, as made in the 1926 census,[1] shows the case clearly. For the whole Free State at that time there are 671 males per 10,000 males aged sixty-five to seventy-four in the aggregate rural areas, while in the aggregate town areas there are only 402 per thousand of that age. The proportions of females of this age to total females are higher

[1] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. I: Ages, Orphanhood and Conjugal Conditions.

[p. 158]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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in both cases, but they show much the same relationship. In both sexes the number of old people is greater in the country districts. Conversely, of course, the country districts show a smaller number of people of adult years. Among males the country areas in the aggregate for the whole of the Free State count only 1,115 per 10,000 aged thirty-five to forty-four, while the towns count 1,234 per 10,000 in the same adult age group.

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When the various county rural areas are subjected to internal comparisons, similar proportions of old and young appear. To give only one example, County Clare counts 752 per 10,000 males aged sixty-five to seventy-four in the aggregate rural areas of the county, but only 528 per 10,000 of the same age in the aggregate of the county's towns. Likewise, Meath, a county of the midland "ranching" area, shows a proportion between rural and urban districts of 620 to 392; and Galway, in part a "congested area," a proportion of 723 to 547. Thus within counties from all parts of Ireland the same greater concentration of the old is found in the country districts.

One can remark immediately from the examples given above that there is a progression in the degree with which, for the counties mentioned, the numbers of old people of the age group selected range above or below the average number of their age per 10,000 males for the whole population of the Free State. This fact introduces us to a new consideration, corollary to the last. It is in general the poorer western counties, where small holders predominate, which have the larger number of aged individuals. Numbers per 10,000 males of the age we have selected before sixty-five to seventy-four rise regularly among the rural populations of the Irish counties from the 614 and 620 of Kilkenny and Meath to the 841 and 835 of Leitrim and Monaghan. In such a scale, the southwestern counties, such as Clare, are again in the middle, though Clare itself

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with a count of 752 leans heavily toward the Leitrim side.

It becomes obvious that census records by age will all support the assumption. It is in the rural areas, and among the small farmers, that, relatively, the largest number of old people are to be found. Tables 2A and 2B [2] illustrate this conclusion graphically.

TABLE 2A

OLD PEOPLE IN IRELAND: RURAL AND URBAN AREAS IN SELECTED COUNTIES

Census Area	Males per 10,000 aged 65–74
Free State (all counties)	
Aggregate rural areas	671
Aggregate urban areas	402
Clare	
Aggregate rural areas	752
Aggregate urban areas	528
Meath	
Aggregate rural areas	620
Aggregate urban areas	393
Galway	
Aggregate rural areas	723
Aggregate urban areas	547

TABLE 2B

OLD PEOPLE IN IRELAND: SELECTED COUNTIES SHOWING MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM IN AGGREGATE RURAL AREAS

Census Area	Males per 10,000 aged 65–74
Kilkenny	614
Meath	620
Clare	752
Monaghan	835
Leitrim	841

That the large proportion of old people is a matter of the agricultural community is very evident again when the figures indicating the age of those following the various occupations are examined. This is important in gauging

[2] Based on tables from *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. I.

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the provision Irish society makes for its old members, for numerically they are a large group. Not only are there larger numbers of old people relatively to other adults in the countryside than in the towns and in agricultural pursuits than in other occupations, but also there are more of them absolutely. Thus out of 550,772 males engaged in agriculture, there was one in 14 of them, or 41,130, over seventy years of age. Among all other "producers, makers and repairers," who numbered 154,016, there were only 3,655 septuagenarian males, or one man in 50. Even among the more sedentary occupations of the towns, the occurrence of old men in commercial, financial, or insurance pursuits was only one in 56 and in professions only one in 75. The occupational figures show that the old are still active and numerous in agriculture. In other fields old people are far less numerous and the numbers of retired persons are greater.

It is only among one sort of agriculturalist, the farm holders and their helping relatives, that this fact is true. Naturally the numbers of the old are high in Ireland, where they represent the survivors of a numerically larger generation thinned much by emigration and where their relative number in the total population is increased by the absence of many men and women who could, without emigration, swell the ranks of the youngadult age groups. Nevertheless, within the framework of these proportions, it is the farmholding agricultural group which sets the norm. Expressing the same proportions in percentages, agriculture counts among its male followers 9 per cent — holders and relatives assisting them — who are over seventy years of age. No other group exhibits such a percentage. The only other occupations to show any similar longevity or length of service are "makers of apparel and made-up textile goods" with 6 per cent of their number still engaged after the age of seventy. All others range much lower in percentage of aged individuals still occupied.

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The relatively great preponderance of the old in agriculture does not extend to the agricultural laborers. They number only 2 per cent of males over seventy. It is only among the farmers and farmers' relatives assisting them that so many old people are alive and active.

It becomes even more evident that it is the farm population which sets the norm for Ireland in this regard when we compare figures of this sort with those of the total population. In all Ireland 6.7 per cent of males are over seventy years of age. Those in the adult years twenty-five to twenty-nine and thirty to thirty-four number only 9.2 per cent and 8.0 per cent of the total males. The farm population with percentages of 8.4 and 8.0 in those ages is the only occupational group to show figures below those of the total population. All others rise above the average percentages for the whole country. Naturally it is the absolutely greater numbers of the farm population which weight the averages. Yet, understanding this, we must also understand that it is among the farm population that the norm is determined.

Statistics for females present rather different ratios. They need not detain us, as they are complicated by the inclusion of a larger category entitled "those engaged in home duties." The category embraces the greater number of urban women and makes comparison with farm women by occupation somewhat precarious. On the other hand, it has the merit of grouping them about household duties and provides in itself a good distinction between urban and rural household workers. Comparing them, then, we find 12 per cent of female farmers and relatives helping farmers over seventy, and of this 5 per cent and 8 per cent aged thirty to thirty-four and thirty-five to forty-four. (We choose here ages in which most of the women who marry are already married.) But among the women "engaged in home duties" (the category which embraces most townswomen, as well as unspecified numbers of countrywomen), only 4.4 per cent are over seventy, and

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conversely the more numerous 11 per cent and 23 per cent are thirty to thirty-four and thirty-five to forty-four. The total female population shows percentages of 8.3 per cent over seventy and 8 per cent and 15 per cent in the younger age grades. It can be seen how these comparisons bear out the conclusions presented by those of the males. It is among the farm population that the largest number of old people are to be found. In this regard the farmers again set the norm for Ireland.

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The largest proportions of the aged among the farmers prevail, furthermore, among the small farmers. One can expect this fact, related as it is to the greater emigration of this class. The statistics correlating the size of the farm and age group proportions bear out the expectation.

Table 3, based again upon census records,[3] expresses the relative percentages of males over seventy years of age and of males thirty to forty-four (the age groups in which emigration comes to an end) in the total of males ranked by age among farmers and farmers' assisting relatives upon the various sizes of farms, for the whole of the Free State:

TABLE 3
OLD AGE AND SIZE OF FARMS

Farm Size in Acres	Percentage of Farmers and Assisting Relatives over 70 Years of Age	Percentage of Farmers and Assisting Relatives Aged 30–44
1–5	15	10
5–10	12	15
10–15	10	11
15–30	9	12
30–50	8	12
50–100	7½	10
100–200	7	16
200–over	1	24

The table reveals a constant diminution of the percentage of the old as the size of farms increases. In other words, the

[3] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. II, Table 7.

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smaller the farm the greater the likelihood that it supports old people. Since we are dealing with census records of occupations actually engaged in at the time of numeration, the figures again point to the fact that larger proportions of old people are still active upon the small farms than elsewhere. On the small farms, then, the old do not retire. That there should be no constant increase in the percentages of the adult age groups does not detract from the validity of the conclusion. The inconsistency of the percentages can be referred to the differential emigration rates of the inhabitants of farms of various sizes. If emigration takes place at different ages and in greater or less proportions from different-sized farm holdings, as other figures not germane in this connection point out, that fact will make it impossible to select any one age group to illustrate the corresponding increase of the proportion of adult males to aged males in the farm size categories.

The table confirms the point. It is among the small holders that the greatest number of old people survive. The peasant population is again responsible for a striking peculiarity of Irish demography.

That the peculiarity is a peasant manifestation can be demonstrated upon a narrower stage. In the various counties of the Free State, the same statistical differences appear between rural areas and small holdings on one hand and urban areas and large holdings on the other. Old people are relatively numerous in the former, relatively few in the latter. In Clare, to take one example, we have seen already that the aggregate rural areas count a larger proportion of the old than do the aggregate urban areas (towns of 1,500 or more inhabitants). The Clare rural districts in which larger holdings are more numerous, Meelick and Ballyvaughan, count 2.4 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively of their people over seventy-five, both male and female. Those in which larger holdings are relatively fewer, e.g., Tulla and

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Ennistymon, count larger percentages (4.6 and 4.0 respectively). Here again, within the bounds of the county, the demographic peculiarity by which the old are so numerous is a characteristic of the small-farm population. The presence of large farmers in any district is enough to weigh proportions away from the peasant norm. Comparisons of occupations by age within the county yield the same result. We need not detail them here.[4]

The demographic peculiarity which gives Ireland so large a proportion of the aged in her population becomes more marked when other nations are compared. The Irish death rate is rather low. Most strikingly, only one civilized country keeping census records of age distribution surpasses Ireland in the large proportion of aged individuals. That country is France, which in 1926 counted 9.4 per cent of its citizens over sixty-five years of age, barely topping the Irish figure of 9.2 per cent. Other countries ranged far below France and the Free State, Scandinavian and Baltic countries coming comparatively near, with such figures as that of 8.8 per cent for Sweden and 7.6 per cent for Norway. Industrial Germany and England (with Wales) occupied a middle place with figures of 5.7 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively, and such "new" countries as Australia and the United States, where the percentages are 4.4 per cent and 4.7 per cent, brought up the rear. These figures (see Table 4) were taken from national censuses of various dates in the various countries in the period 1920–1926 and compiled for the Irish census primarily from the "International Health Year Book 1928 (League of Nations)" and *Aperçu de la démographie des divers pays du monde, 1925* (International Institute of Statistics).

Ireland and France share eminence as abodes of the old. But they reach that eminence through different courses. A comparison of the expectancy of life in the two countries,

[4] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. II, Table 12A, County Clare.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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162 made upon the basis of actuarial computations at the time
165 of the taking of the census in the Free State, reveals this difference. In addition, it reveals a new factor in the question of age distribution in Ireland. At all ages from birth

TABLE 4

PERSONS OVER SIXTY-FIVE IN IRELAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES

Country	Population Percentage
France	9.4
Ireland	9.2
Sweden	8.8
Norway	7.6
England (with Wales)	6.6
Germany	5.7
Australia	4.4
United States	4.7

to eighty, the expectation of life is considerably higher in the Free State than in France. At five (a better age than that of birth to take for purposes of computation because of infant mortality) the Irishman may look forward to fifty-nine years of life, the Frenchman only to fifty-five. At forty he may expect to live thirty-eight years more to the Frenchman's thirty-five. And at eighty, if they both survive so long, the Irishman may hope to outlive the Frenchman by more than a year, their expectancies being at that age 5.8 and 4.3 respectively. As Ireland shows a very high expectation of life at all ages in comparison with other countries, especially for males (the female expectancies being considerably lower), the combination of this fact with her large proportion of old people leads to a new conclusion. Not only are the old in Irish country districts relatively more numerous, but they are absolutely more numerous since they live longer than in other countries. Consequently, whatever conditions produce the large percentage of old people among the total population in France, they are not

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those of Ireland. There low life expectancies go hand in 162
hand with a large proportion of the aged. In Ireland high 165
expectancies, especially at older ages, where they are among the highest in the world for both sexes, go hand in hand with the same phenomenon.

For this reason one cannot appeal too directly to emigration as the determinant of the demographic condition. The Irish countryside is relatively full of old people, not only because so many of the young adults have left, but also because the old people tend to live long lives.

Within this complexity of factors, emigration, a high percentage of the old, and late marriage, the small farmers set the norms for the whole country. Now we can recognize that high expectancies of life also belong to them. A comparison of life expectancies among the three provinces of the Free State will suffice to bear out the fact. Males of Connacht can expect more years of life at all ages than males of Munster; the males of Munster can expect more than those of Leinster; and those of Leinster can expect least of all three. Thus the provinces show higher expectancies the smaller their farms.

Many causes have been advanced to account for Irish 165
longevity. The country people live long and die often very old indeed. Diet, climate, natural selection through infant mortality, racial heredity, have all been suggested by various writers. Probably all of these factors are involved, in one way or another, but the problem is one that has faced students of peasantries often.

The authors have no single efficient cause to offer. The 165
question that poses itself for them is one of effect rather than of cause. The existence of such a large proportion of 888
the old among small farmers presents a problem in the organization of behavior among human beings. Nevertheless, might not the longevity of peasants be after all a simple matter? In the Irish case we shall see that they live long

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888 because they have much to live for. In their own sphere of life, they are honored. They have power.

888 The problem is one which must be referred to the small farmers themselves. As before, it is a question of their sentiments and their conducts and any analysis of their action in the matter must follow upon the presentation of observed generalities in their social life.

Some of these generalities present themselves to the eye immediately. As we saw in the discussion of the house and family, there is a great deal of everyday conduct which expresses the differences of social valuation of age and which one age group follows in its intercourse with many others. This conduct, the sentiments which accompany it, and the attitudes and verbalizations with which it is associated, can be seen every day in the lives of the people. It is part of the *mores* of the community. The child learns it as he grows up upon the small farms. It prepares him to meet all others in the local community who are of substantially the same status, habits of life, and speech as the members of his own family. It provides a scale of valuation in which each individual can place any other within the bounds of variation existing in the local community, and upon which both can build sure expectancies of conduct. On another facet it gives each and every individual a place among individuals occupying similar places. In making status in this way, it governs behavior in high degree, imposing bounds upon it and exacting conformity. We have already seen something of this conduct. In the discussion of the house interior and the grouping and seating of individuals by rough similarity of age, we have seen what might be termed one focal point within the system of relations which is characterized by this conduct. The old people in the farm family occupied that point. Place of honor and privilege within the household is theirs. In their families they are objects of respect and a mild sort of veneration on the part of all younger members.

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They occupy this place and receive this respect from other persons than their relatives. This respect is as much folk custom as the norms of family life. The community can on occasion enforce it upon the family members through gossip, verbal censure, and, more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest. 888 626

The vocabulary of the countryman and a great many of the judgments and comments he makes upon his surroundings express the valuations of the community upon age. In the discussion of the house interior it was remarked that the conducts of the different age groups were too "natural" to the farmers to evoke verbal recognition among them. The statement is true only in a sense. The farmers make no explicit recognition of the organization of behavior upon the basis of age. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. 888 561

More cogent, perhaps, for our understanding are the many expressions which arise from day to day based upon the speaker's place within an age grade. A great part of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the friends and neighbors who pass their lives within a rural community takes its form so. Particularly is this true of discussion of the past, a favorite topic and one which came very frequently indeed to the authors' ears. Gossip and personalities are as frequent a theme, and a speaker rarely fails to qualify the object of his remarks with an appropriate definition of his relative age. Even to intimates a man is referred to as "old John" or "young Michael." 888 561 521

Perhaps it is the discussion of the past which illustrates best partiality for the things of one's own age. The older men and women describe the "old days" with enthusiasm and regret. The "old times" are a ready topic among the country people, or rather among the older ones. Many an evening an old person can be got to tell of the "old times." 888 521

[i.e., the aged. – Analyst]

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888 He or she takes little warming to the task. They were hard
521 times, even "bad times" of famine and death, but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. Even the mention of the lack of tools, draft animals, shoes, and many other amenities of present existence evokes comments such as "Weren't they the poor old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" Phrases of murmured commiseration and headshaking regret or pity are not without a tinge of pride for listener and teller alike. Remembered necessities in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale are now feats of endurance and strength to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young man today to walk from Corrofin to Ballinasloe in his bare feet forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who could shoulder a
[482] creel turf and carry it a hundred yards out through the bog mud to the famine road before the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunnagore?

888 Even the meager diet of the old times is remembered with
521 a certain nostalgic pride. An old man, called upon one
262 winter evening, began his remarks upon the theme characteristically:

> In the old days people used to have a maize gruel "stirabout" for breakfast, but you couldn't get any of the young people to eat it now. There was a potato bread, *stampai*, and it was very good too. The people in the old times had great teeth and, when they died, they would have every one left in their heads. Their teeth would be stronger than a horse's. When the people ate potatoes and bread three times a day, they were healthier and lived to a ripe old age. Now with all the better food, they are not as well.

888 Such a belief rises very frequently to the lips of the old
521 people who remember the days of the past either in their own or their parents' experience. The implication is clear. The young people, the new generation, are not so strong

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nor so hardy nor even so good-natured as those who went before. 888

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. Just as, for the older members of the community, the past reflects their glories and is a convenient vehicle for the expression of their superiority, so the present can be measured against the past in the same terms, usually only to be found lacking. 521

Often the expressions take a different turn. They become that universal complaint, the younger generation.

> Young people today are not what they used to be [said one old farmer in the course of a general discussion of the golden age that was his youth]. They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else go to a dance, and, if they happen to win a turkey, they will nearly shake the house down when they come in. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always to be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. They expect everything to be done for them.

He paused for an illustration, selected one from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on:

> Wasn't Keane out every night with his cattle putting them in small fields and late in the night? He would have his supper waiting for him when he came in, but he would take off his shoes so not to waken his father, and then to bed. Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept it all until he had cattle up by Ballywaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no control of them.

But even among his listeners, all of them "old" like himself, the young people had some defense:

> But there has to be some fun for the young people. If they don't enjoy themselves, there is no heart in them. You can't expect them to be always at home.

But these statements express more than a mere rivalry between young and old. They spring from a feeling of

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mutuality between young and old which transcends rivalry. The old days were better, among other reasons, because the dependence of the young upon the old was greater. The present is less attractive because the young no longer help the old as they should. Both facets of such mutuality may be expressed, even though the speaker, if he is old, casts it in the form of mistrust and dislike for the young. The whole of experience can be brought within this scheme of attitudes. To give an example, let an old fellow, an opponent of the present regime of Gaelicization in Ireland, recite his misgivings about the school system:

> I am patriotic and it may be a bad thing to say but I think the school system they have now is bad and the teaching of Irish is bad. In my day and before, a man might go to school when he could – maybe for only three months out of the twelve – but he would know more than they get now when they go to school all the time. The old people learned more then. When the child finished school, he could be expected to read a newspaper to the old people and to write a letter for them, or to do sums – and he would do it well.

His complaint is much longer, but enough has been given to show his mistrust of a schooling which to his mind makes no provision for the mutuality mentioned. This mutuality was and is strongest in the realm of farm work. The farm family demands the coöperation of all its members. No less, the community makes its valuation of young and old upon that coöperation. General discussions among the country people bring out this fact again and again. To illustrate again, two "old fellows," adult farmers with families, could agree upon a formula running somewhat as follows:

> The men were stronger in the past, they worked harder, while you try to get any young person to do as much work as the old men now and they would laugh at you. The young people today seem to see how little they can do rather than how much, while

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the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work. 888 521

Yet they were later forced to admit:

> The people in the old times were not as knacky as they are now. Isn't it true that they used to have the horse in a stall feeding him while the man would be out with a spade turning over the garden?

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm work. Just as the rivalry between father and son in the farm family is most intimate and most constant in the economy which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community at large takes the same form and finds its expression within the frame of the work that the community must do to live. 888 578 561

Naturally enough, the young people do not express these attitudes. They do not agree with their elders on the score of their own shortcomings. But they have a good deal to say, among themselves, from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them, and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be sweepingly condemned with some such criticism as "old fool" and "old blatherer." Like the son already quoted who gave his father his head in farm work and listened patiently for orders, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations of themselves in which youth and strength outweigh age and wisdom.

But within a system of values in which the old represent the nexus of kinship and bear honor within the community, the young people do not see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the older men and women. The young people recognize themselves as forming a distinct group with interests and sentiments of its own, opposed in the scheme of rural life to the elders. They use the word "we" and oppose it to "them" for the old. They recognize places, pursuits, 578 561

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578 and forms of activity as their own and find much more inter-
561 est in them than in those of the other group. The young men greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gathering of old men in something of the tone of derision which they reserve for women. But the rivalry in their sentiments between respect and egocentric feeling, like the controls imposed by their parents to keep them respectfully silent in the presence of their elders, imposes a silence upon them. Consequently, one cannot find among them the voluble expression of attitudes based upon one's belonging to a certain relative age. One must look for it rather in particular expressions of annoyance, boredom, and chafing against restraint.

Expressions of sentiment about age are the products of a system of values upon it in which the individual makes the valuation from the place he occupies. They express not only a grouping of individuals of similar age but a mutuality between groups so composed. And, too, they form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

561 Let us examine one instance at least of this categorization.
554 The community in rural Ireland bestows many names and
551 titles. They are ephemeral. They have no currency outside the immediate circle of life in the townland or village. At
888 best, they spread through a parish. They are nicknames and express no more than the individual's particular place in the hearts of his fellows. Yet some of them are generic epithets. Like "old" and "young," they may prefix a name and designate the more closely the personality of the person named. Like "boy" and "old fellow," they may express broad categories of a man's age and its associated behavior, and may designate not so much a biologic or physiognomic reality as a sociological status. The words "saint" and *cailleach* are of the last kind of epithet, in rural usage. In the brogue they refer only to the old. In strict philology

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both are metaphorical, for the brogue knows and makes use of the words in their "proper" meanings. *Cailleach*, the Gaelic word, means properly "hag" or "witch." "Saint," of course, is the canonized saint of the church. 561 554 551 888

The small farmer who refers to this or that contemporary and neighbor as a "saint" or a *cailleach* is making a social and moral categorization. He is not concerned with purity of diction. The old man or woman, who follows a behavior proper to his or her status and is an ornament to the community, is a "saint." The old man or woman who does not is the object of distrust and dislike. His or her departures from accepted conduct cause disturbance and strife in the community. Accordingly, he or she is a *cailleach*. Thus, in one North Clare community a "stranger" whom the community disliked was a *cailleach*, despite the feminine gender of the word. Likewise, the old man who lived in harmony with his son upon a farm already transferred, a leader in the village whose oldest hale inhabitant he was, could be described by a neighbor as follows:

> The old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humor and, if he went to town to have a drink, he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as gentle and harmless as a child, and it will be a great loss to the village when he is gone. He and Roche [a neighbor] are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any farm advice, you can go to them and they will give you as good advice as you can get, because both of them have been successful farmers. It would pay a young man to listen to them.

"Saintliness" of this kind is a matter of one's filling one's role. But it is one's role for the village that counts. There is nothing individual in the canon of conduct. The young person who follows ardently the conventions laid down for him is not a "saint" even if he is exceedingly chaste and religious. It is the word "holy," not "saint," which comes

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561 to the countryman's lips in describing him. Nor is a young
554 person a *cailleach*, for, like "saint," the term applies only to
551 the old. Both terms refer to sociological age rather than
888 chronological age, for those old people who occupy the role of "old" only because they have been forced into that position within the farm family can also be "saints." Thus the elder sister described in the discussion of farm marriage, who occupied the west room and the hob by the fire, was known in the neighborhood as a "saint."

Relative age makes a difference in status in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values. And lastly, as in the description of "saint," it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

561 The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself
554 into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland
888 wherever he meets countrymen of different ages together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of such broad age groups in terms of status.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellow, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons — those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great. In the community at large it is little less so. A farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat. His sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake house to honor the dead, the places by the fire go to the older men and women. The boys and girls must group themselves behind. They come forward only when called upon. At

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country "stations"[8] the elder men and women file in for 554
confession and come forward for Communion first. On the 888
road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant 561
discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. 554
No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 888
"stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural 521
community such personal communion is an indispensable [461]
bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men [203]
must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the commu- 561
nity with the outside world. The elder men, these same 554
father-owners, represent the interests of the community be- 888
fore priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and govern-
ment official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to 561
round out the picture. 554

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The 888
better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of 276

[8] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the [594]
private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland.

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561 whiskey, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of tobacco,
554 go to the elder men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter
888 where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require
276 careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe around among one's intimates and guests for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man. He must content himself with an occasional "fag." When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells:

> During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door, I said to her she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. "Let the young bucks go," said I; "they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly." She looked at me and says, "Frank, are you serious?" "I am, faith," says I; "call the old man back." He was just a few paces down the road. She did and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough.

561 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless
554 powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among the
888 small farmers. Without them, the flavor of country life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the never-varying annual round of social activity in the country districts nor any inkling of the importance of those informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. It is here that social patterns of behavior upon age difference assume importance as controls of human activity. It is here that the roles the age grades play in the organization of the community reveal themselves most clearly.

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When the authors first made their way into the small farm communities which they came to know best, they were plunged into a mass of observation which, without knowledge of the valuations of the community upon age, had no interpretation. Night after night, the day's work done, their new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, "gambles," "hooleys," sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive events were age-old survivals of ancient custom, like the bonfires of St. John's Eve. Others were nearly as ancient celebrations of crucial events in individual and family life, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occasional and less specialized gatherings, and others wore a very modern dress: a turkey raffle and a dance round a gramophone. 517 573

But our interest was soon caught by distinctions of participation, rather than those of kind. The people of the village participated variously. Different groups met more or less regularly at specific houses.

For instance, the "old fellows" went out on *cuaird*, as they called their visiting to join one another. They followed a deep-set regular habit. As they phrased it, "a man would feel lonely if he didn't go out on *cuaird*." In most communities, they usually convened at a particular house. Often their gatherings bore particular names. In one North Clare community, Rynamona by name, the old men's meeting was known as the *Dáil*. Before the Free State, it had been the "parliament." The name is a jocular one, of course, but it is expressive of the participants' evaluation of themselves nonetheless. 517 573 887

The young men know the *Dáil* as the "old men's house." They stay away. One of the cronies of Rynamona put the

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517 matter most clearly when he described the old men's gather-
573 ing from its members' point of view:

887 It wouldn't suit [for the young men to come]. They gather in at Jack Roche's and they laugh and joke and play cards. They talk about the next gamble and the next dance, and that is all they know. It is a lot of codology [nonsense, buncombe]. It is only the old men, the men with families and a responsibility on them, they are the ones that come. And in our own way we learn a great deal. If you advance any argument, you must be prepared to defend it from all attack, and John Roche, "the public prosecutor," will ask you questions till he is sure it is right or wrong. Then some evening we have real discussions in which we settle problems. Other times we discuss farming. It wouldn't suit for the young men to come in, but, when we get old and they get married, then they will gather and talk about this and that. That is the way it always has been and that is the way it always will be. There is never any bad blood between any of the village, and one reason is because we talk things over.

This statement on the old men's gathering imparts a deeper reality to what appears to be merely a companionable pastime of the old men. The evening *cuaird* of the old men takes on an institutional flavor. It is a clique, of course, a tightly knit group of males of similar interests and similar status, giving rise to nicknames within itself which, as in the case here mentioned of the public prosecutor, express the members' position in the internal arrangement of the group. It has a definite meeting place and meeting time. It excludes those of dissimilar traits; in this instance, the young men. But it is a clique which operates within a traditional setting: "That is the way it always has been and is the way it always will be."

It is a clique, too, which performs a function for a larger group than those who make it up. In this case it is claimed for it, at least, that it prevents bad blood in the local community.

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CHAPTER X

The Old in the Community[1]

LET us examine the life of a local community in the rural "West of Ireland" and put to the test of observation the claim that the clique of evening visitors among the old men of the community plays a decisive role in its social life. Perhaps Rynamona already mentioned affords the best example. Yet any other community the authors knew well would afford as good a one. In all of them the old men met in much the same way and, in spite of different names and persons, acted in much the same way to form a similar old men's clique. By taking the example of Rynamona, we can throw the generalities of this conduct into relief. 573 887

Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another in the "good land" of rough limestone outcrops stretching back from the sea into the glaciated lakes strewn north in County Clare. To reach Rynamona is no easy task, even for horse and car. The main road north out of Corrofin to Kilfenora passes through Kilnaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel, and a post office are all that remains of an antiquity preserved to the eye only in the ninth-century church and graveyard. 361 491

There, beside the graveyard, a side road leads off toward

[1] Much of the material in this chapter is taken from *The Irish Countryman* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1936), by Conrad M. Arensberg. It is used here by permission of the publishers.

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361 Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along
491 it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear
[311] witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously
cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives
rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward
into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round
the lake.

311 The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with
limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the
crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

361 Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the
621 lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are
471 scattered through the fields and across the lake. These
households and a few more a little further off make up the
community. These are small farms of the kind we met in
Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has
fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the
village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard
gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement
is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and
behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to
these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for
them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles
off.

621 Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated
476 bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all re-
653 lated one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the
491 usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds
itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the
borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the
towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who
break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the
621 village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder.
487 Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

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A VILLAGE ON A HILLTOP WITH ITS GARDENS AND PASTURES

[facing p. 182]

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621 487 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

887 573 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village, is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

> The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

889 542 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

888 573 521 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

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888 573 521 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps [592] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty. As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a [484 great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider 446] experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

573 521 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which allow all to take part.

573 521 589 O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and, though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone. Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road, breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

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Roche, "the public prosecutor," sits by the fire, opposite 573
the old man O'Donoghue. He is a man of sixty or so, with 521
a wife of the same age and an unmarried son and daughter, [592]
both in their thirties, still at home. His is a good farm and
he is still active upon it. He, too, has a reputation for shrewdness, but his role here is a different one. Roche demands "why?" He makes one bring out one's best arguments, and pursues a point to its final conclusion. There his interest stops and he makes way for O'Donoghue, who sums up the agreement of the group. Roche earns his title well. He tests out the other's mettle. No one is offended at his "prosecution," for it clears the issue and brings out the right and the wrong upon which all can agree and O'Donoghue phrase judgment.

Behind them, a little further into the middle of the room 573
away from the hearth, sits Cullinan, the "senator." Cullinan 592
lives across the lake, where he works a middling farm with a wife and five children. Several of the sons are nearing twenty-five and Cullinan himself is well past fifty.

The "senator" is a weighty man. His part in the *cuaird* 573
is in character. Cullinan is the one of them most fertile in 521
cogent and fitting anecdotal illustrations. In a scheme of references, such as this, to past events and traditional precedents, Cullinan's many memories of persons and happenings, slowly and accurately phrased, give weight to the evening discussions.

Still further behind them, and often perched upon settle 573
or table in the kitchen, are two other habitués. The elder 592
of them is Noonan, a man of sixty, who lives in the village with a wife a little younger than himself and two boys and a girl, out of a once numerous progeny still at home. The children are in their twenties and help him in his still active conduct of the farm.

Privately at least, the others think Noonan a bit of a fool. 573
He is as good a farmer as any of them, it is true, and knows 521

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573 how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not
521 a weighty one. Noonan is a very voluble man. He can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with many opinions on all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the public prosecutor's relentless logic, but it helps too to keep the conversation alive and active. Consequently, though he has no important title, he is a member of long standing.

573 The younger of the two sitting in back is John Quin. His
592 position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quin lives on a good farm just outside the village. He married-in there, taking over the
[582] place of a dead husband. But, true to the country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister, who, in turn, married Quin. But both women are still living in the house. The elder sister has become the "old woman" and is treated more like a parent than a contemporary. It is Quin and his wife, the younger sister, who work the farm and who regard it as their own. Their claim is a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune: they are childless at fifty.

573 Quin is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old
561 one, as the countryside reckons age status. His place in the evening gathering reflects this intermediate state. In the two years in which the authors had the old men's house at Rynamona under observation, Quin was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but which showed itself well in his behavior.

573 When we first came, Quin divided his evenings between
561 the old men's house and card playing in several of the young
521 men's gathering places. At one of these, to be described shortly, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had "weight," and he conducted himself importantly and showed a serious demeanor and a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. In the

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old men's house he looked a different person. He was often 573
silent or contented himself with answering questions. 561
When he did speak, it was to "act the playboy," in the 521
country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to dance, and to break into playful banter. Sometimes his lively efforts were successful. Sometimes they were not. But the playboy role did not last long. A year later he was a constant visitor, and he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, the "judge," passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy," he said, "but there's a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. As the 573
evidence of their behavior shows, they are a closely knit 887
clique with a code of conduct and valuation of their own, one strong enough to enforce a specific personality on each of the members in accord with his role in the group.

To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group in Rynamona, we must examine it in relation to the rest of the community. These seven are not the only old men in the community. Roche, the prosecutor, had an elder brother with a good farm across the lake on the line between Rynamona and the next townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door. He is too feeble to come to the *cuaird* house, and his faculties are failing. His sons, still young men, work the farm.

But there is another as well, a more active old man. Moroney is perhaps the strongest farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best also, and he has the best-stocked farm. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, have a son [592]
and daughter nearing thirty still at home. The four work energetically and the household is prosperous. Each year Moroney stands for them in the "station," and the family's

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573 887 dues to the church are greater than any other's in Rynamona. Such prosperity draws him a bit apart from the villagers, and occasionally in political discussions he will identify himself with the Cosgrave party, as a man with a "stake in the country."

All this draws Moroney away from his fellows. Some say there was an incident long ago when Moroney was young, but most have forgotten it. Nevertheless, there is a breach between Moroney and the rest of the older men of the village. He never attends at the old men's house and, when he goes on *cuaird*, it is usually to the house of Oscair, whom we shall describe presently.

Furthermore, just as not all the old men of Rynamona came to O'Donoghue's, so are their households unrepresented there. Unlike the cases of the elder Roche and Moroney, it is because in these other cases the men of the house are not eligible in age.

573 Two houses in the village send no man to the *cuaird* house. One of these is very poor and is a case of the "incomplete farm family" already discussed in a prior section. The only man there is a lad of twenty-five or so, who lives alone with his mother. Another of these is the case of O'Brien, a man of forty, married and with a family of children, the eldest of whom, a boy, is fifteen. O'Brien is a man of uncertain temper, given to gusts of anger. He is a moody man who doesn't do much or go out much. When he does, it is to the young men's gambles. Like John Quin, already described, he is in a transitional state, but he does nothing to hasten his advance.

Among the households beyond the village, one, that of Mackey, is likewise in transition. But with Mackey the process is hardly begun. His parents are dead, but he has only recently married and sent off a brother to the towns. He still visits with the young men.

The same holds for another family of Roches. The man

[i.e., farms worked by spinsters, bachelors, widows and widowers – Analyst]

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of the house is only a few years married. His brother is as yet unprovided for and still lives with him. Both frequent young men's meetings. 573

The old men's house includes all the adult farm fathers of complete families whose children have just succeeded or are nearly ready to succeed them, with two exceptions. It brings in, too, two others, O'Loughlin, the silent old bachelor, and John Quin, whose status among the old age group is still provisional. The interviews already quoted have given an insight into the function this meeting performs for the community. The behavior of the group points again to the same function. This is the seat of judgment in the community. It is the clearing house of information and the court of opinion in which the decisions of the community are reached and the traditional knowledge of the peasantry applied and disseminated. From these meetings the men return home to their wives and sons, and the formulations they have reached spread thus through the community of individuals who share life in Rynamona. 573 621 208 887

Let us examine the type of topic that comes up in the old men's meetings. If we want to assure ourselves that the meeting has the influence its members ascribe to it, a glance at the conversation that takes place there should bear them out.

The old men's meeting is an informal gathering. It arises in response to the community's interests and its immemorial custom. Naturally, different personalities and personal idiosyncrasies make the gathering slightly different in each rural community. Occasionally it may be absent altogether for various causes, such as the dying-off of a central member of the group. Often there is a sort of interregnum between one generation of old men and the next. This was the case in one Clare community studied by the authors. There the old men had lost the central figure of their group and, diminished in number, spent most of their time in enfeebled 573 887

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573 887 loneliness at home. Two new cliques of slightly younger "old men" were competing for central position in the community.

573 521 208 626 887 But despite such variation from community to community, the old men's *cuairds* act very similarly. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. First in importance, however, are those concerning agriculture. Times of sowing, reaping, harvesting are debated; the merits of various seeds are disputed; shop and fair prices are compared; and the community's trade often affected thus. The "old men" are conservative farmers, as are most peasants, and an innovation must be thoroughly tested before it wins, here in the evening *cuaird*, the approval of the community. Traditional methods of farming receive their strongest support here in the web of legend, proverb, and reference to the past that the speakers weave around them.

Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and determined by the old men's agreement. In late years, this has come to be called "politics." It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for example, it was felt that it was in the interest of all that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. The old men's *cuaird* debated the matter and agreed upon support of Fianna Fail, the De Valera party, an allegiance it held for the years 1927 to the time of the authors' visits. Even O'Halloran, whose private views leaned in another direction, begged the authors that no word of his political heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of his neighbors. "I wouldn't want them to think I wasn't with them," he said.

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Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or condition appraised. Even the priest finds each of his acts and even his sermons discussed and debated in the evening *cuaird*, and he "gets a name" according to the decision reached. In Rynamona an incident occurred which shows the type of slow appraisal the community makes and the speed with which, once its judgment is formed, it puts its decision into action. Not far away in the same general region, a gentlewoman moved back after years of absence to a small manor house which the family had had for many years. She was unknown to the farmers and, despite her friendly interest in them, seemed to be unable to establish contact with them. This distressed her, the more that her kindness seemed ineffectual in putting an end to the inevitable petty pilfering which she knew she must expect. One day, about a year later, her horse bolted on the country road. An expert horsewoman, she soon brought him into control. Thereafter her luck with the country people changed. Her exploit had made the rounds of the local community and had won approval for her. The old men agreed she was a grand lady and had a great hand with horses. And the petty pilfering sank to manageable proportions.

573 521 208 626 887 [674]

The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and in action the power which in the critical days of the land agitation won itself an international name: the boycott.

In a later section the sanctions the local community exercises will be discussed. It is sufficient here to point out

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573 626 208 887 this role of the *cuaird*. An example from another community than Rynamona will throw the type of action it can take into relief.

An "incomplete family" affords the example. It was made up of an old woman and her thirty-year-old son. Theirs was a poor farm, and ordinarily they would have been an object of commiseration. But they were not. In fact, they were a constant annoyance. The son was generally regarded as bad and lazy. He neglected his farm and exhibited an obstinate disregard of village opinion in which his mother abetted him. The result was, naturally, that their house was shunned and he went nowhere to *cuaird*.

But no crisis arose till the episode of the pig. One autumn the son brought home a large Irish white sow. The sow was more nimble than most of her kind, and neither the mother nor the son took any pains to keep her at home. She wandered through the village at will and soon devastated many a cabbage patch. The village took alarm, and the more so that the sow might well prove dangerous to young children. There were angry words among the women, and the men for once backed them up. In the *cuaird* it was hinted that the sow might be found dead one morning. But before such an event could take place, the son took warning and sold the pig. "Public pressure," if you will, forced his decision and resolved the conflict, but it left him as low as ever in the village's esteem.

573 887 538 And lastly, the *cuaird* is the seat of traditional lore and entertainment. Its members are the repositories of folklore and legend. And the official belief of the countryside finds its expression and its reaffirmation in the discussion of events and the recounting of histories and incidents. In communities still at least partly Irish-speaking, such as Luogh, most of its members are *seanachaidhthe*, storytellers in the traditional vein. And it is among them that traditional repertories of a saga, folk tale, song, and legend still get an

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audience. The point of importance here is that it is among 887
the old people that folk myth and folk belief are preserved 538
and expressed for the community.

If we are to examine in full rural behavior based upon 571
age and its connection with the old adult clique whose 517
function in the community we are assessing, we must offer
some contrast with the behavior of other age groups.

We have already mentioned that the old men's house in Rynamona was not the only seat of visiting after the day's work, and that the entertainment provided there was merely one instance of many gatherings taking place almost nightly, at least through the winter, in rural communities. In the statements given by older men about the meeting of the young men we have seen something of the manner in which other pursuits than those of the men's house are regarded.

Indeed in all the communities which came under the authors' notice the young men were as ardent evening visitors as were the older men. In Rynamona they were no less so.

There they gathered in most often at the house of Roche, the "prosecutor." They did this from long habit, as did their elders. But they had no larger justification for their doing so. They went because "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys." But there were marked differences in their meeting. There was no central clique so closely integrated as that in O'Donoghue's house. There were pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together.

A greater difference lay in their complete lack of concern
with the affairs of the community. One could get them to [521]
talk only about their own plans or the trials of their own
kind and age. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition. The skills upon which those taking part in the meetings prided themselves and for which

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571 they received their nicknames were of other sorts. Not even
517 farming occupied a large share of their conversation, keen as their rivalry in the matter often was while work was going on.

571 Taking these matters in order, the young men who met
517 at Roche's house met habitually there for card playing.
524 Roche's unmarried son, a man about thirty, was perhaps the central figure. His cousin, another Roche, was the brother of a young man just married, who took part in no *cuaird*. This cousin helped work his brother's farm. He was another central figure. The group that formed itself round them included most of the young men of Rynamona between the ages of twenty and thirty. They played the usual games of the Irish countryside, "forty-five" and "nap," often far into the night.

571 Roche's house was the more informal center. It took in
517 the younger men. But there was present in the community
525 a custom somewhat more organized, namely, the "gamble." As often as once a week a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household, as its turn comes, throws open its doors to the card players. Admission, usually a shilling, is charged and goes toward defraying the expense of the supper of bread and tea for all and toward the prize. What is left after those charges are met belongs to the householder. Often this amount reaches a profitable figure, and, where the custom is firmly entrenched, a certain commercialism shows its head.

But the gamble is a sporting event. Teams, often formed of habitual associates in card playing, are pitted against one another in one form of the gamble. In another, individual high scorers win. The prize is usually a turkey or two geese, even a bonham (young pig), a side of bacon, or a calf. Elab-
[555] orate rules and canons of honesty govern the play, the conduct of the players, and the obligation of the person offering the prize. Play is serious and intense, and the win-

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ner of the prize can count himself a proud man, for to be known in the countryside as a "great gambler" is a coveted mark of shrewdness and skill.

The older men seldom attend the gambles. They are the province of the young. For the latter, they are a crystallization of the more informal card playing, such as that at Roche's house, already described, and they give the successful young men a prestige in the community ordinarily denied them. For in late years tournaments have sprung up covering whole sections of the county and it is a proud team which can bring back a five or ten pound district prize to its home community.

From the standpoint of an enumeration of those taking part in the gambles, too, the gambles show themselves to be such a crystallization. They bring into association on more definite occasions the groups, such as that at Roche's house, which meet habitually. They unite most of the young men, especially the more active among them, with a few of the older. But it is from the young men's world of habit that their union is created.

In Rynamona the young men who gathered nightly at Roche's house were the mainstays of the gambles. They could be counted upon to attend all of them. They played well and long, as they had learned the games among themselves. But they were not the only ones to come. Most of the slightly older men of what we shall call the intermediate *cuaird*, to be described later, such as John Quin, the newcomer to the old men's house already named, came from time to time, and there was always a sprinkling of young men, kinsfolk, and "friends" from near-by communities. It was only the members of the old men's house who stayed away. They alone had given up the habits of young men. To them the gamble was "codology."

Thus the first point of difference between the visiting habits of the old men and the young men, their lack of cen-

571 tral clique, is not without wider interest. The young men
517 are more numerous, and they group themselves together as much as do the old. But it is upon a different basis. It is a synthesis in a looser, more widely inclusive, gathering which
[573] unites smaller cliques of brothers, friends, and boon companions. The gamble is only one of many entertainments
571 they provide themselves. Equally frequently they hold a
517 dance. The country dance is undergoing change in rural
535 Ireland today, but it is still much as it was in the last century, although it may not enliven the country districts as often as it did. Irish square dances, jigs, and flings, most of them variations of sixteenth-century European dance forms, are most common, although some Gaelic-speaking districts preserve an older tradition.

621 The country dance belongs to the young people. It differs from the gamble, from the standpoint of participants, in
536 that it unites both sexes. In most communities it is an
517 affair in which the whole community takes part, the old people as onlookers, the young and the still spry among the older ones as performers. In late years the more formal "all night" dance, an organized dance for which admission is charged and from which the older people are usually absent, has made its appearance. Like the gamble it draws from a wider area.

517 But there is a good deal of the spontaneous dancing which springs up wherever the young people of the community
535 gather even today. The young men and women learn the skills required and value them. There are elaborate codes of etiquette round them and a wealth of proverbs and jocular superstitions. But here again, unlike the behavior followed in the old men's house, these conducts have little larger purpose than uniting the scattered cliques of young people. They are recreations. They are ends in themselves. They are good times that pass the time.

517 The gamble and the dance do not, of course, exhaust the
571 list. The young people have other activities, games, sports,

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contests, and playful roles of solemn occasions, such as acting as strawboys (mummers) at weddings. But all these activities, in which the old members of the community do not directly participate, are alike in their playing no great part in organizing other elements in the community than the young people themselves. They serve other functions. 517 571

All these activities bind the young men, the young people, together in common interests. They provide them with a scope of action in which they are comparatively free, yet which keeps them divorced from the seats of a power over community life which is denied them. In this sphere they may develop complex norms, valuations, and conducts.

But such developments do not serve primarily to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. They are associated with the lesser prestige of the young people. Consequently, the old men's house comes to have in contrast a double function. It unites the old men in much the same way as the gamble and the dance unite the young men, in fact even more strongly. But it does so in terms of the old men's common position as recipients of the respect of the community and in terms of their individual positions as integrators of their families. The difference is structural. The activities of young men unite them across family and clique lines even from one community to the next. But those of the old men do more; they unite young and old as well. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive one, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble and dance may be greater. 517 571 621 888 554 182

In such a system of integrations, that of the old men has the greater prestige. A great gambler or a great dancer wins wide respect. But the distinction is short-lived. It is a nine days' or a nine years' wonder. It bestows great prestige among one's fellows, but it removes one very little, if at all, from one's subordinate, less valued place as "boy" in the community. 182 888 554 621

Where such is the case, the individual's progression

182 554 621 888 through rural life under normal circumstances is not toward a greater and greater prominence in the activities of the young men's group. Rather, there comes a time when one must break away altogether. One faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new kind of behavior. Growing old brings many more changes than the physiological.

888 573 885 554 The case of the newcomer, John Quin, already described, shows the necessary changes. In Rynamona it is brought out very clearly in the clique to which he first belonged and to which we have referred at various times, calling it once the "intermediate."

[551] The clique we name so met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, more commonly known as Oscair (the Hercules of Irish saga) for his physical strength. Oscair was a rural carpenter with only a very small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good singer, a jokester, and a repository of folk tale, though he was not much past forty. He lived just at the edge of the slope leading from Kilnaboy Commons down to Rynamona. The townland was what would be called in urban sociology an "interstitial area." It was higher, rougher, and more craggy than Rynamona and Kilnaboy, lying between them. Its inhabitants were descendants of people evicted from round about who had squatted there. Most of them were "died out and left," and the place was always poor. It acted as a sort of outlying fringe of Rynamona.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged thirty-five to sixty. Just as their ages were intermediate between fully old and fully young, so was their habit here. They very seldom played cards. Talk was the order of the day, enlivened by Oscair's humor and ballads. A few of them spoke of the affairs of the village with some weight. The rest did not. Those who came were as follows:

a. Young Mackey, from the village, the man recently married, still too young for the old men's house.

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b. Moroney, the sixty-year-old, "strongest" (richest) farmer of the village. One of the few who spoke with weight.
c. Young Roche, son of the very old man, still unmarried but entirely in charge of the farm he would soon inherit.
d. O'Sullivan, a herdsman, from near-by, who was a stranger in the community but had won himself a place, despite his being a landless man of sixty-five, by acting as the local veterinarian. He spoke, too, with weight.
e. John Quin, already described, who spoke here with weight.
f. Two forty-year-old Pilkington brothers, unmarried, from the Commons, very small farmers, most often silent.
g. Oscair himself, whose role was to entertain.

Of these men it can be seen that only Mackey, Moroney, and John Quin could make the transition to full farm-owning, farm-father status of old men. Mackey had years to pass before he could so do. His eldest child was very young and he himself not long in possession of his farm. John Quin, in a somewhat anomalous position, could and did move onward. In doing so, as we described, he felt it necessary to break away completely from this group. This he did, with the result that the group, itself never stable, fell to pieces. Moroney, as we remember, had a disagreement with the villagers and would not attend the old men's gatherings.

What was it then that brought these men together? The authors could get no answer from the men themselves, other than their amusement with Oscair and, in Moroney's case, a guardedly phrased dislike of the villagers. Yet, through observation and interview in the community, it became clear that they were all passing through a similar transition. Oscair's visitors were not a stable clique, nor too faithful in attendance. Both young Roche and young Mackey were still going occasionally to the young men's meeting at the other Roche's house, but both felt too great responsibilities for gambling and cards. John Quin gambled heartily enough

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but was more and more impatient with the "playboys" of young fellows. Old Moroney was gruff and lonely. The others were neighbors of Oscair's and, being poor or landless men, felt awkward going elsewhere. O'Sullivan could visit as he pleased, for, as the local "vet," his word carried weight, but, always a stranger in sentiment, he felt most at home here.

The intermediate clique was a product of similarity of interests, in contrast to the interests of other better organized groups. Its members were in some way or another a little different from the ordinary old or young of Rynamona. Some of them were remote topographically, but not all. Some were without full community status, but not all, and some of a transitional age.

Oscair's house was thus a sort of catchall for those whose position in Rynamona was not clearly defined. It was intermediate between the clearly defined groups, and for the small farmers, such as Mackey, Roche, and Quin, was a halfway stage in their advance from the status of young men to that of old.

The progression of which this is the halfway stage is an upward one, metaphorically speaking. It leads no longer to a greater role as "playboy" but toward full family and community status. It leads to a new behavior and new personal desires, more highly valued. One's discarded status and one's discarded behavior fall away into lesser esteem. In terms of this progression we can understand the attitude of the old men on the behavior of the young ones. It is a transitory, impermanent, unimportant thing. It is a "codology." "When they grow older," one old man said, "and become married, they will meet just as we do."

What shows itself in Oscair's clique is a transitional state. For a moment were gathered here those who could move upward, like John Quin. Gradually, they could attain full status. Oscair's hearth for them was a roadside resting place.

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With these intermediates were gathered the representatives of another anomalous social place. Both Oscair and O'Sullivan, the "vet," were important figures in the community. Their occupations and their skills won them respect and admiration over the countryside. O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were "landless" men. They could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism, they were condemned to celibacy. Neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place for them except, as Oscair's behavior showed, as playboys and entertainers. So they too must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

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CHAPTER XI

Familism and Sex

162 834 THE small farmers' treatment of sex and the relations of men and women is no less characteristic of their communities than is their treatment of age differences. The country people are the ones among whom marriage is latest in Ireland, bachelorhood and spinsterhood most common, fecundity greatest. They are the ones among whom there is an excess of males over females, a fact which gives all Ireland a sex ratio (973 females to every 1,000 males) unexampled among the long-settled Old World countries and comparable only to those of the new countries. Yet the best evidence gives them a comparatively low illegitimacy rate, too, and the country people yield to no one in the strictness of their sexual morality.

562 834 In the small farm households of the countryside, the roles, privileges, and duties of male and female are complementary. The division of labor between the sexes is only part of separation of human activity into male and female spheres. By oriental standards, perhaps, physical segregation of the sexes may be lacking. Yet in the countryside the community sets very rigid norms of conduct regulating the relations between men and women.

Indeed, the bounds of propriety among the small farmers are quite well marked. An outsider can come to see something of them almost at once. Men and women are much more often to be seen in the company of members of their

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own sex than otherwise, except in the house itself. Except upon ceremonial occasions in family life or in the considerable affluence of owning a gig or a trap or a motorcar, in Clare at least they go to mass, to town, or to sportive gatherings with companions of their own sex. Till recently and even now in remote districts, a conventional peasant woman always kept several paces behind her man, even if they were walking somewhere together. 562 834

The women do not go out on *cuaird* like the men. Their sphere of interest and influence is better confined within the family circle. Women do not take part directly in the deliberations of such cliques as that described in the old men's house at Rynamona. On the other hand, they are not in the least excluded or treated lightly or in a derogatory fashion. At the old men's *cuaird* the woman of the house is nearly always present. Her being of the company does not seem to stem the flow of talk in the slightest. She remains silent or is ignored so long as their talk deals with the world of the men's interest. But when the talk swings around to her sphere, she is consulted and is ready to take an active part. 562

The girls, of course, the unmarried younger women and adolescents, keep to themselves and form cliques and smaller groups of neighbors and kinswomen among themselves. Occasionally a dance breaks the ordinary succession of work and evening talk in the kitchen. And then, in their more restricted place, they are ready to go about under the tutelage of parent or brother to meet the young men and boys of the community. 562 571 517

All this is nothing new and has been described before. Yet one must review it, because in it one can see the existence of statuses of the kind we have demonstrated before. Old woman, married young woman, and girl, each term is a status in the countryside, in the same manner as in the cases of the boys and men we have already presented. The 561 562

562 561 terms are summaries of status in farm economy, family life, and the cliques of the community.

834 208 Consequently the comment and attitude of the small farmers toward sexual behavior cannot be divorced from their appreciation of status in family and community. For them sexual behavior is merely one aspect, not of individual personality, but of sociological role. If one turns to any record of the sort of commentary and discussion the small farmers carry on among themselves, both in the semi-public discussion of the *cuaird* and in the more private talk of conversation among friends of a common age and status, one encounters a characteristic set of remarks and evaluations. These are for the most part discussions of specific persons in specific events. The attitudes expressed are directed now toward persons, now toward general conditions, now toward moral or ethical imperatives, now toward cosmological principle. Yet always, if sex is the subject, the status of the actors and the interests of the familist farm economy are the themes.

562 842 Women are valued and praised for their fecundity. All this is part of generally accepted convention among the small farmers, and such conversations as the following are not in the least unusual, despite the very great modesty and reticence of the farmers. A small farmer is praising an old woman, the head of the household, to one of the authors and contrasting her to her son's wife, both being listeners:

> Here is a woman that has no more milk of her own. They shouldn't allow a woman like that to breed because a man should always keep his wife in the milk. The old woman, God bless her, raised every child with the didi [breast].

369 831 The country-bred boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of constant reference to sex and breeding. There seems to be little of the ignorance about such matters which the townsman delights so in attributing to country people. In Ireland, no less than elsewhere in the world, the antagonism between town and country often expresses itself in such

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joking ascription of ignorance and stupidity. In Ireland, however, there is another side of the expression of town and country distrust. The countryside points to prostitution and immorality in the towns and finds something to back up its condemnations. The town returns its dislike with double measure and accuses the countryside of primitive lack of all sensitivity of feeling or restraint of impulse. But these antagonistic attitudes and ways of regarding other groups than one's own are not our concern here. They are of interest here because such ascriptions of ignorance are part of a common misapprehension of the complexity of the peasant attitudes. 369 834

For instance, to an outsider the countrymen will seem often to give a mere lip service to the attitudes of the townsman, for one is always apt to mistake the function of hearty laughter. The country people have strict moral and ethical attitudes around the question of sex, as rigid as those of any other class if not more so. Yet they have conventional licenses and conventional niceties which do not coincide with those of the other classes and are thus open to misunderstanding. And, like all classes and peoples, they have two sets of attitudes, not one, and these are "ambivalent," to adopt the Freudian term. 369 834 208

But these attitudes and their "ambivalent" nature, the kind of alternation they seem to present, must be understood in terms of the social relationships of the countryside. The greatest single cause of misapprehension lies here. In different contexts, toward different persons, in connection with different events, one and the same person regards the same subjects quite differently.

For example, in discussions of the peccadillos of young people and the censurable events of the district the farmers and their wives were full of animus against the "crabbit" great "bucks" of lads who led girls astray and from whom the innocent were not safe. Yet even then, in discussing the fault of such amorous lads and the necessity of circum- 369 834 208 522

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369 spection and immediate and frequent confession for girls as
834 their best defense, one sees that the pure young maidens are
208 also not without blame. They bear the taint of Eve. "Sure
522 the boys have no chance," said one woman in this respect, "for the girls always lay the blame on them." Yet these attitudes coexist together with other very hearty, casual, and sometimes ribald attitudes which make their appearance in banter, joke, and repartee even between speakers of different sex. These even take the form of taunts about prowess and mild ridicule for the possession of a greater relish than is meet, or fanciful recitation of past magnificent misdeeds. This is particularly true in the recitations of stories and adventures of persons in the ken of the community, where details of amorous desire and accomplishment are given with considerable gusto, and greeted and reiterated again and again amid hearty laughter.

Certain observers profess to find the puritanical outlook
369 on sexual matters on the increase in the countryside. The
834 country people themselves purport to see a change in their
208 own outlook. And it may be that the last generation has
[178] brought a considerable spread of Catholic moral standards with the spread of education and the opening of the countryside to urban influence.

In any event the laughter and hearty guffaws with which references of nearly any kind to sexual intercourse, sexual attraction, and childbearing are greeted, and the evident interest they evoke, are very much part of the everyday behavior of the small farmers. They do not imply in any sense an approval or acceptance of the deeds described. They are rather expressions of a very definite judgment. They are in the nature of a condemnation in which laughter is itself a sanction upon the forbidden.[3]

[3] The authors accept readily the view of laughter as a response to a situation where socially conditioned values are threatened with upset and yet not so deeply or irrevocably broken as to bring out a full reproval. The view is well developed by Pilkington and agrees with that of Max Eastman. The tabloid reader is not

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The "earthiness" and the ribaldry of the country people 369
is not an antithesis to their strict moral code. Rather it 934
reinforces it. It gives its pietistic and too-respectable, 208
churchly and town-bourgeois aspects an authentic, indigenous touch. Even more important, it makes for a modification of the conventional attitudes which fit them for the country people's social life.

In this ambivalence of attitude one can see the identifications between status in human relations and norms about sexual behavior more clearly. The one view, that "holiness" denies sex, can be reserved to suit the non-procreant statuses of family life. The other, the hearty and open view embodying animal analogy, frank interest, overt desire, can be reserved for the persons whose roles in social life allow free rein to the amatory and procreative urges.

For the small farmers marriages are for the purpose of 581
producing children and assuring continuity of descent and 833
ownership. They are "forever." They are indissoluble. Sexual relations are part of marriage, its pleasure and its duty. They lead to children if one is fortunate and strong and potent. It is the will of God. One may regret that one's childbearing came so early. There might have been more time for free enjoyment. But it is a regret to which one resigns oneself easily.

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weakening his horror of murder or his distaste for adulterous behavior, however familiar his tabloid-viewing may make them. Similarly the Englishman reading his detective stories and the Frenchman listening to his *chansonnes* are merely indulging vicarious "thrills." All of them are going through a playful rehearsal of the conditioned reflexes of social sanction, indignation, rage, and punitive action in the same way a dog growls and bares his fangs at his play fighting. The idea may seem a bit ludicrous in itself, and it will offend the moralists. But let them remember that in most persons moral and ethical activity is absolutely unreasoned, spontaneous, and without any kind of intellectual support at all. It is pure reflex. Like any other reflex, it must be kept alive by a constant restimulation. Only overzealous priests, reformers, teachers, "nice people," and prudes miss this point. They fail to understand that vulgarity often hides far stricter morality than hypocritic cant. This laughter represents a constant and not unpleasurable reiteration of the accepted canons of morality upon so important a matter.

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581 Thus marital and sexual success have but one criterion.
833 One proves one's worth sexually in the marriage bed, which is in turn the childbirth bed. The proof of happy adjust-
842 ment, of masculine virility, and of feminine worth is "the good long family." "Lots of women have no children," you are told, "but the men have no value in them if they don't." Both man and woman are at fault and in misfortune in childlessness. In one case of repeated miscarriages, the man might be at fault, it was said, because "he usedn't to make them [the children] right."

834 It is only with the married men and women who are still engaged in producing offspring that any kind of sexual interest, officially at least, is permitted or even deemed to exist. Among others in the rural communities the interest either does not exist at all, in the eyes of small farmers, or it exists only as an evil, but powerful force. As such it must be subjected to constant control. This is the case among the young. Among the old, if it exists at all, it is only as a survival of embers that should far better be long dead. For adults, in adult family life, sex is divested of any awesome, evil character. "God help us," said one woman in this regard, "what is natural can't be wonderful."

581 Thus one can see why it is that nearly everything the young people do seems to their elders to shape them for the goal of marriage and family headship. Much of local custom comes to have that explanation. The goal is taken for granted. It is the ambition of all the young members. Their activity either marks time until they shall be able to take their places as married family heads or it prepares them for that directly. Even the pastimes and jollities of country life in the communities the authors came to know had that keynote.

The pastimes of the young people in which the usual segregation of the sexes is bridged point toward matchmaking and country marriage.

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Even where matches are made between strangers, some 581
kind of sexual attraction is not to be neglected, and local 584
custom provides for a brief introduction and a setting for courtship. Several cases came to the authors' notice in which advantageous matches were broken off when either boy or girl expressed distaste for his or her prospective partner, usually when confronted with him or her at the preliminary festivities of the country marriage. Other cases again came to their notice in which a shy suitor could be galvanized into a final decision to take matters into his own hands and press a suit, when his family began to cast around for a match for him elsewhere. Matchmaking was, in fact, far from presenting a scene of "loveless" marriages. The match is a convention like any other. For those who are trained in it, it provides occasion for arousing sexual interest and marital aspirations in young couples quite in the manner of "falling in love" in communities where courtship is more immediately a matter of personal initiative.

And, like any other convention, the match could also come to cloak another situation. The match made by the contracting families is the ideal kind of marriage, for the reasons we have discussed. But it does not necessarily imply any one kind of courtship. In many instances a couple who made their own decision had a match made for them. Even in the case of "runaways," as elopements are called, the boy and girl could often be brought back and a match made for them. And lastly, as a way of establishing respectability and providing for the movement of the re-formation of the family, even those cases of marriage necessitated by premarital pregnancy could be fitted into the dominant convention. [836]

Thus the forms of courtship and the development of 581
pairings among the population of boys and girls of the 183
country communities must all be understood, even in their 577
most unusual forms, in terms of the dominant pattern of the

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581 familistic system and the kind of marriage it entails in rural
183 Ireland. The country people feel this. Their attitudes
577 identify the convention with the whole code of morality and folkways of their own class and kind.

183 They equate any departure from the accepted norm as a sin, a lack of religion. They bring the whole weight of all
577 their sanctions and values to bear upon it. They make the
673 ultimate identification between their own norms and the only right conduct, particularly in this matter so central to the rural familistic system. This final attitude was often addressed to the observers, particularly, but there is reason to believe that it is as often expressed among the country people themselves. In discussions of immorality, illegitimacy, premarital intercourse, the question would arise: Would you believe such a thing could happen in Ireland? In such countries as England and America well it might, for there, the country people hear, the boys and girls just take a liking for one another and go off and marry and "never mind the money." And we remember that in this case the "money" means the re-formation of the entire two families as well.

Even those cases which meet condemnation are likewise often thought to have to do with the dominant pattern. Whether or not the suspicions of the country people are correct, the authors do not know. But they were struck with the fact that so very often in discussions of cases of immorality and unethical sexual conduct the country people made no recourse to concepts of search for pleasure or even of the overpowering force of emotion as explanations of the condemned conduct. Both explanations were to be heard in other classes. Rather, the country people insisted upon looking for a motive in terms of the system of organizing human relations which they understood. The culprits, young "bucks," tried deliberately in such cases to impregnate the girls and force marriages. They were motivated

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183 by greed for land and dowries. Sex without familism seemed 577 beyond the country people's imagination. 673

But the last statement must be qualified in a definite direction. It is only for themselves that they seemed to be unable or, better, unwilling to imagine a sexuality without familism. Other patterns of sexual behavior they see and have heard of, but these are immoral and unworthy ways of doing things and acting, departures from the right and normal, sometimes disgusting, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes mysterious. In any event they are marks of standards of a lower class and lesser dignity and respectability than that of the farmers. They are to be repudiated not only for their lack of common sense but for supernatural reasons as well.

Thus the authors heard several instances in which bad 183 luck attended the departure from the usual familistic norm. 777 There was a feeling, sometimes overtly expressed, that at 592 any one time there should be only one sexually active 577 procreant couple in a household. Young and old could well be part of the household in any numbers, but there should be only one adult married couple under one roof. Any other arrangement brought its own punishment and ill luck.

But more often there was identification between the ex- 183 pression of sexual impulse outside the familistic pattern 577 and the debased conduct of the lower ranks of the landless 832 and disreputable of the countryside, the laborers of the towns, the runaways, remnants of broken households. Or else the small farmers put the onus of guilt on other regions "more backward" than their own. At the most, wrong conduct might be the result of some occult compelling force strong enough to break through all sense and caution. The authors were struck with the countryside's version of love charms. In accounts of love charms and love magic, proof of their existence and efficacy was always to be found in the

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183 577 832 otherwise unaccountable cases in which a man or woman abondoned farm and fortune and the favor of friends for a sexual attraction. How else to explain, for instance, an old man's senile infatuation, a young boy's indiscourageable devotion to an older woman who could bring him nothing?

583 A word must be said here of the other ways of bringing about marriage than the formal process of family matchmaking. In the last century, to judge from the accounts of the old people, and to follow the testimony of novelists on Irish life, a stage-managed elopement was often resorted to. It was a semi-respectable kind of marriage. The swain and his friends kidnapped the bride out through the window in the night. They took her away from her father's house to the house of an uncle or other relative of the young man's. There dancing and general jollity reigned, and the young couple were feted. Very often all parties seem to have connived at the result. On other occasions, the elopment was obviously designed to bring about a match to which parents objected or to force parents to a decision. Staged elopements of this kind seem now to have died out in Clare, or at least to be rather infrequent. But the difference between this and a true runaway is slight. In the latter case the young couple take matters into their own hands entirely. Throughout the years many couples have eloped, run off to towns and to emigrate without parental blessing. Others have done likewise and returned to get their portions and a delayed parental sanction. Nevertheless one can see that all these forms are mere modifications upon the dominant convention.

583 581 They too must lead into the familistic pattern. A match must be made, or at least fortunes given and provision for family re-formation made. In cases of premarital pregnancy, the match may be forced or hastened, but it is nonetheless the final and respectable resolution.

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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation. 848 183 581

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls. 183 836 562

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. 837 183 [593]

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire. 834 571

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

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834 571 and play for the young men and women of the rural communities. The customs and conventions which surround them are constant reminders of marriage and its hopes and privileges.

834 571 626 Yet as soon as any intimacy of acquaintanceship builds up between a particular pair, they are matched together in local gossip. They are forced to take a position which is only a single step from betrothal. But, as elsewhere, lovers separate to find others. Though a once or twice fickle or jilted girl is subjected to constant gossip, her luck seems not to doom her entirely if she is attractive or a good match.

834 571 626 535 Such outings as the "patterns," [2] relics of saints' festivals, and race meetings in summer, and the dances in winter, are occasions of courtship, excitement, and philandering of sorts in the countryside. They are objects of censure on the part of those of the clergy, townsmen, and people of higher class who unite in condemning more obvious manifestations of peasant social life with little insight into a custom's function. The clergy, in particular, fulminate constantly against all-night dances. They object not so much to the jollities as to the opportunities for "walking out" among the young couples.

834 535 571 The following quotations from country people describe the situation. In the first a countryman is talking about "crabbit lads" who are to blame for local sexual irregularities, and comes around at last to the local dances:

> They are awfully crabbit around here. If a girl has money or land and she will get it, the boys try any way at all to put her up the hill so they will marry her and get it. And the parents keep the girl away from the boys for fear it will happen. But it is no good to keep the girl in the house, because, if you do, she knows nothing. Let her knock away and she soon learns how to take care of herself. If you don't, there are ways the crabbit lads will get to her.

[2] The local name of country festivals once religious, somewhat like the *pardons* of Brittany.

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That was the way with the girl who married Willie Meaney[3] and he thought to get the money, but the parents said let her go. Now they are in Ennis and she never got anything. The same way with the two who married the Shaughnessy girls. They thought they would get something but they didn't get a thing. Would you believe that? America is not the only place where things like that happen. The people have crosses to bear. Every year we have a talk from the priest about the dances. He says the dances are all right but it is the going home that is bad. There is always a laugh when he says that. Then some of the parents get worried and they won't let their daughters go to a dance for a month or so, and they forget about it after that. 834 571 535

The status of boy and girl involves a "repression" of sexual impulse, virginity, and chastity of thought and expression, but custom and the attitudes of the older people provide a constant stimulation of sexual interest in the direction of the familistic system. The status of boy and girl thus involves a definite kind of sexual organization, based directly upon social relationships. 834 183 554

Nowhere is this better to be seen than in the case of the young woman's "character." Here the Church fathers and the country people seem to have attained quite a unanimity. Sexual orientation is inseparable from social role. Sexual repute and status are identical. The authors do not say this identification is unique. They do not know its historical origins. But they do wish to point out its function in this setting: The young woman's "character" is her full status as a social being because the familistic system is such that sexual activity, no less than economic, is completely integrated with one's role in social life. Consequently her sexual conduct is no concern of hers alone.

In the relationships in family and community in which the young girls of the countryside find their roles, any departure from the norm of conduct on their part is cause for

[3] Names of persons and smaller places in this and subsequent quotations are, of course, fictitious and refer to no actual persons or places of such names.

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834 violent disturbance in the relations uniting others to them-
183 selves and to one another. To "destroy a girl's character"
554 in the countryside is to upset the pattern of family and community life by overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change in farm succession. Much more than a shooting or a fight, a sexual irregularity, which cannot be righted in a match, is capable of destroying the intricate mutual obligations and expectancies of rural familism.

For the family whose "name" is "destroyed" and whose hopes of orderly re-formation are upset, two courses are open. One is to patch up a compromise, to accept the match
[626] forced upon them. The other is to expel the offenders bodily. Community feeling gives full support. In either case the girl concerned can no longer hope for full status. If the match is made or another husband found to father a child, time may right matters and give her full adult status as a farm wife and mother. Her failure as a girl may be forgotten, but it was a failure still. Otherwise there is little further to do but suffer expulsion. Emigration has been the refuge till recently.

836 The country people's attitudes toward illegitimacy and
848 premarital intercourse, one and the same to them, reflect well the disturbances they occasion. In discussing a local
626 case, one woman could voice the community's opinion in the following general terms:

> A young lady with a good fortune even, she couldn't get any man because her character is broken. Unless maybe he is very low. And so she usually goes to America and passes for a maiden. Everyone knows the father of the child but, if he has a good farm of land, no one would say anything, but he would be unlucky and have no family. He would get another woman [a wife, that is] with no bother. The baby might be sent to a home. And after a time they bring it home as a cousin.

836 But it is not always that the boys are treated so leniently,
626 and they, too, must emigrate, driven off by public censure.

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For it is said by country people that "to destroy a girl's 836
'character' is murder." In the logic of the familistic system, 626
the statement is true.

The following incident, described by a countrywoman in a discussion of religion, shows the fate of such cases and the verdict of the community.

> There is no such place as hell. God forbid. No one would be there except a few murderers and a person who destroyed a girl's character. Sure to destroy a girl's character is murder. The C— girl above was great with a boy who was her second cousin and she couldn't marry him here, so they made it up and he went to Canada, and she would go to the States, and they would meet there and marry. He had to go to Canada because he had bad eyes. They went away and seven weeks later she came back and in a few months had a child. Sure no one knows whether she went to the States or what happened to her. The boy was a red-haired, wild lad, and I often ask his sister above if she has heard from him. She says they haven't but we don't know whether they have or not.
>
> The girl put a shame on all people. She isn't married now. Sure who would marry her now that her character is destroyed? The child died after eleven months, and she is living in the house there, and that is why she isn't married. Would you believe such things could happen in Ireland?

The last quotation contains a further consideration. Pres- 836
tige and respectability are bound up with proper conduct 558
and proper fulfillment of the role in social life one's status gives one. If the girl whose "character" is broken gets a husband at all, she must get one of lower standing in the community. She cannot expect to carry the full prestige of her own family with her, even if she does find a farm into which to take a dowry. As the woman quoted remarked, no one will take her unless he is "very low."

Failure to retain and advance in the status assigned the young of the sexes leads to the same kind of relegation to other cliques and other spheres of social participation as in

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836 the case of the followers of rural occupations other than the
558 ownership of land.

Even among the country people improper behavior has the effect of declassing the offender. Just as the farmers attribute sexual laxity to the classes of the population they consider below themselves, such as fishermen, tinkers, and itinerant laborers, and the laborers of the town, so, by a reversal of the view, destruction of status over sexual misdemeanor condemns one to membership in such categories.

This declassing effect of sexual misconduct is, of course, strongest for young women. Apart from the moral censure misconduct brings upon a young woman and the shame it inflicts upon the people of her "name," it brings as well the destruction of her social role. It makes an end of her potentialities, for these, too, are her "character": potential motherhood of a familist line on the one hand, and potential transmission of an advantageous alliance on the other. In a familistic order they are identical. They are both based upon her sex. They make of the unmarried girl a sort of symbol of familistic aspiration. To use the symbol for any but its proper purpose of procreation and alliance is to destroy not only its efficacy but the aspirations that are attached to it. Rural Ireland, indeed, provides a sort of archetype or "pure" form of this sexual outlook, the conventional western European ideal of premarital virginity. It is important here as a living function of a closely integrated social system.

834 When we turn to the rural attitude toward sexuality in the old people, all those who have relinquished farm command in favor of a younger procreant couple, the norms of the small farmers present the reverse of the coin. Both rural expressions and rural standards of conduct seem to reflect the attitude that only the married have a sex life or, if others have it, they should not.

The first facet of this attitude shows itself in many kinds

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of situations. For instance, we have already seen that a 834
woman whose son has married and who fails to get along well with the "new woman" may, quite without censure, move into the house of a daughter and share that house with the daughter's husband's father. Several cases came to notice in which women who had relinquished their farms moved in with the dead husband's brothers.

A famous joke between a well-loved old priest and his 834
bishop in Clare based on a real incident plays around this 522
last theme. On the occasion of his usual pastoral visit, the bishop congratulated the parish priest on the high moral standard of his parish. He had one reservation to make, however. He was shocked to learn that a couple who had recently moved into the priest's parish were living together openly and were not married. The parish priest caught the twinkle in his bishop's eye, but nevertheless he promised to make an inquiry and take necessary action. Next day he reported that he had learned that the couple were an old man and old woman, brother's wife and sister's husband, who had recently moved into a cottage together. They were both seventy, and had been living in the bishop's own parish for the last ten years. Since the bishop had been so shocked by their taking the house together, the priest said he would send them back and let his lordship deal with the problem as he had been doing before.

In such cases, obviously, the difference of sex of the house-mates as a danger to morality has disappeared. This agrees with the equation many country people seem to make between the "saintliness" of the old and their emancipation from the flesh.

By the same token, the old person who has already had 834
his or her day of childgetting and childbearing, and yet 522
still persists in manifesting sexual aspirations, is a stock 587
figure of fun. He or she is the butt of endless ridicule and practical joking in the countryside. Again, of course, such

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834 laughter is best explained as playful censure. For very real
522 censure often breaks out against such a person. It is particu-
587 larly likely to break out into overt punitive action in cases where old farmers threaten the expectations of their heirs by taking young women as second wives. In fact, the one kind of man or woman of considerable age who does not command respect is this. The countryside finds endless amusement in the theme of May and November. Naturally the matchmaking system does lend itself fairly well to matings between oldish men and young women, since ownership of a farm is the basis for a match.

581 The most interesting point of inquiry, then, may well be
554 the connection between the sexual status of the family mem-
183 bers, as we have described it here, and the standing of the family. The sexual status of the members is a reflection of their capacity for carrying alliance among the other families of the countryside. Can we draw, therefore, a connection between rural familistic norms about sexual behavior and the class structure of the rural community?

We know already that marriage in rural Ireland yields us one clue to the connection. At matchmaking the negotiations between the contracting parties concern the relative standing of each. That standing is at stake. The equivalence of dowry and land are arrived at through a careful enumeration of all the past history and the present material substance of the contracting families. The location of the farm, its livestock, its soil, the reputation and ancestry of the family, all these are compared. Backward places, we remember, do not grow big fortunes. Neither do many other kinds of persons and places.

We are dealing here of course only with one broad class, the country people. Yet within the boundaries of rural life there is much to be learned of the country people's treatment of relative prestige and standing among themselves. There are many behaviors in the activity of the countryside

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which express attitudes of social stratification. These do not only express the differences between the country people and outsiders from other classes beyond the confines of the local districts; they have much to do with the intimate details of personal relations in daily life among the small farmers as well. Intimate as they may be, however, these behaviors are nonetheless powerful. Like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization around marriage and matchmaking in country custom. In that they are directly a part of the organization of sexual conduct and attitudes among the small farmers.

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From this fact springs the seeming paradox of Irish rural life, already mentioned. A social system centering so strongly round the institution of the family condemns a large proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only through marriage does one attain full stature and one's family take its full place in the interlocking alliances of extended kindreds in the countryside. Failure to make a match is not only failure to fulfill one's own destiny of mating and procreating; it is also, as we have seen, failure to provide for the dispersal and re-formation of one's group. It is also, as we shall see, failure to maintain or establish the alliances making status among one's peers.

Thus it is the identification of sexual behavior with familistic role on the one hand and attainment of status on the other that makes the problems of marriage and sex of such great social and emotional importance.

Their importance is both individual and social. Individually, the powerful dispositions and sentiments concerned give a deep-seated biological and physiological basis to the institutional imperatives and the behavioral norms learned in experience of human relations. Socially, the fact that such a basis can be relied upon gives added strength to the attitudes evoked in support of the social institutions of the

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countryside and an added, automatic sanction to the enforcement, through public and official channels, of the accepted behaviors. In this manner, based upon and reinforced by such deep-rooted automatic reactions of individual conscience, the canons of morality, custom, personal habit, religious teaching, and social sanction form a whole piece all together. To hazard a comparison, let us select other central nexuses of custom, attitude, and emotion, among other peoples. By the process described, sexual morality becomes to Irish society, from the country people with whom we are dealing upward through other classes of society, what respect for law is to English society, what filial piety once was to Chinese society.

Let us now see how this mutual incorporation of sexual, marital, and stratificational standards works out in the experience of the countryside.

In the system of relations we have described, the fate of persons at the hands of their fellows and the repute they bear among them are closely connected. Local standing is, of course, a product of values arising in local experience. Consequently when we come upon the comedies and tragedies of life within a specific community, and hear described by the people themselves the course of events through which these little dramas took place and the impression they made upon the witnesses, we are close to observation of the experience which builds a scale of values and the place of individuals in it. The problem of local repute and public opinion can be reviewed in the light of concrete events and referred to actual relationships built out of behavior.

Thus one can come to see these petty events not merely as personal histories but also as functions of the patterns of organization we have been detailing.

If then we should take up the life of a local community and its inhabitants and search it through for its family histories of recent years, we should lay bare the roots of local

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values. Such a study was made in one community studied. Family histories since the famine times were secured from two hundred families of a Clare parish. The histories included farms owned or rented, worked, subdivided, added or lost, in each generation since pre-famine days; names, numbers, sexes, and life-sketches of family members of each generation; occupations of each person not taking to farming; emigrations and the destination of the emigrants in each generation; marriages made in each generation, according to farms married into, occupations of husbands and fathers-in-law, and size of dowry. Much of this material was statistical in form, but along with it a considerable amount of anecdotal material was gathered, describing in detail many local incidents. This information is out of place here; and it will be reported elsewhere. But certain conclusions of relevance to the problem of understanding the social role of marital alliances in the countryside are of importance for the present discussion.

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The first of these conclusions concerns the mechanism by which families without farms or with very small and "backward" ones were forced to extinction through celibacy. The second of these conclusions illustrates the means by which alliances made through the matchmaking mechanism provided a channel of upward social movement and incidentally a path of recruitment of the successful children of farmers in the "bad" or poorer lands into the ranks of those of the "good" or better lands.

The first conclusion illustrated by the material of this survey of family histories is one we have already met. Failure to make marital alliances led to failure of family reformation and hence either to celibacy for all the children or to emigration on the part of the whole generation. In the words of the countryside, if a family could find no one with whom to marry "they died out of it."

Even so broad a question as the disappearance of the class

Even so broad a question as the disappearance of the class
183 of artisans in the countryside comes, for its explanation,
581 under this conclusion. It cannot be understood except in
554 terms of responses to values determined in the relations of familism. The social mechanism by which the local artisans have disappeared – whatever the historic and economic occasion of their fate in the industrial revolution and its aftermath – is something specific to the system of social organization we have described.

The few local artisans who survive today were once members of a numerous group. In the days before railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, and smiths followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Their skills descended, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; the trade was "in their blood." Their surplus children have had to disperse to the towns and in emigration. For theirs, too, is a familistic world.

Unless the artisans in the countryside marry within their own fast-diminishing numbers, they, too, must have land and fortune. If they do not get it, they must either marry one of their own kind or stay celibate. Today one finds many survivors of this local class of craftsmen scattered here and there in the countryside. The mere memory of their trade may be all that remains to distinguish them from petty cotters. In the majority of cases they have not married. If they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Thus the family "dies out of it." Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

The mechanism by which this extinction is brought about is clear enough. Occupational names have emotional significance far beyond their reference to skill and economic
183 function. They are symbols evocative of social stratification,
581 among the small farmers as no less elsewhere.
554 In disputes even within a family, angry reference to ties

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outside the family may well be a method of attack. Where, as here, such ties are a matter of one's "blood," the attack is direct and personal. One's status is part of one's person. How close a part it is can well be seen in the quotation of one farmer's account of transition in family relations at the match:

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> If the old people don't like the girl, then the mother and the father go to their room and fight with her every day; and if she has low blood in her, they will take her to task for it, if she has weaver, tinker, or tailor blood. If they don't like her they will not work like they used, but go out on *cuaird* and spread the bad news about her.

The familistic outlook gives all this kind of evocation and reference the character of genealogical commentary. Everything one does or is can be referred to one's "blood." Heredity is the explanation of success or failure, high position or low estate. Since one's heredity includes the occupational and other status of one's forbears and the whole gamut of relations which marked their place in the community, a continuity is preserved between the present and the past which defines one fully as a member of one's group.

Consequently, the instances of failure to find wives and husbands, the instances of courtships opposed by parental and other pressures, the instances of elopements ending in emigration, the instances of families of brothers and sisters who stuck together celibate until old age, are far oftener examples of the force of failure to find a mate of acceptable status than of any other cause. The organization of sexual behavior in the countryside is inseparable from that of the stratification of the community itself.

The second interesting point, again one in which the examination of family histories led to an illumination of the connection between the patterns of sexual organization and those of small farmer familism, is in a sense the reverse of the coin.

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183 581 554 In these histories, when a countrywoman explained that she or someone she knew had married from bad land into good, or paid a larger dowry than she might have, had she stayed in her own townland, she referred to a movement that was quite readily discernible in her parish. She had experienced, and took pride in, a natural wedding of desire and ambition, which combined, for her as an individual, the instincts of a woman to be wife and mother and the demands of her group's advancement in the systems of familist alliances that made up her community. This was the individual side of the matter. Many indeed were the farmers and their wives who were careful to specify to us how successful a match had been in carrying a larger-than-might-be dowry to better land. One might grumble perhaps about one's lot, if there were anything to grumble over, but in such a case one might be proud that one had assured one's children of a better farm and a better standing than one's own.

166 581 But there was a social side of the matter which showed that this ambition was not a merely personal thing. For in the parish in which we gathered detailed information an interesting statistical movement could be seen. This movement was reflected in the geography of the district.

Marriages since 1864 in this parish have shown a tendency to move brides from the westward out of the poorer lands eastward toward richer farms. The parish happens to lie between higher, poorer soil to the westward and a more fertile area to the east. One must know the local topography and the fertility of the soil to understand the details of the movement. But its over-all tendency is statistically clear. None of the marriages among small farmers and their fellows have taken place (if they took place in the County at all) beyond a six-mile range of distance between the farm married-out-of and the farm married-into. In all cases the movement is small. Yet, small as it is, it shows a distinct tendency. In general, the higher and more westerly town-

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lands of the area made up of this parish and the contiguous parishes are the townlands from which marriages have moved brides outward. These same higher and more westerly townlands are also the ones that have lost population fastest and have been marked by the highest rates of celibacy. Since 1860, at least, families of this area have consistently paid higher dowries to establish their girls on better lands nearer urban and shopping centers. These families have married their daughters along the country roads downward and eastward, from the higher, poorer, more westwardly townlands to the better lands in lower and more eastwardly ones. Relatively speaking, there has been no movement of brides in a reverse direction. By comparison with the better lands, the poorer farms have done without brides for their young men. These poorer farms are the ones, then, who have seen their families "die out of it." 166 581

This is merely the evidence from one small parish and its neighbors. But it is instructive that it corresponds with the picture for Ireland as a whole, as the marital statistics of the censuses reveal it. Late marriage, celibacy, the marked preponderance of males in the sex ratio, are all phenomena of the western and poorer farming districts of the country. [162]

Neither the establishment of a peasant proprietorship in the years of agrarian reform since the Land War nor the remarkable growth of prosperity among the farmers since the nadir of famine times has had any success in reversing the long-persistent trend of population decline in the countryside. They have had no effect either, it seems, upon the demographic phenomena associated with that decline. Perhaps the reason for the persistence of the trend despite all changes lies in the considerations revealed by the study of the matter in one small parish, as we have just described them. The acquisition of better lands, the growth of a greater rural prosperity, and the opening up of new opportunities at home have gone hand in hand with a persistence 161

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161 of social sentiments and forms of social organization shaped entirely within the familism of the small farmers. The new opportunities have appeared first and foremost as means for personal and group advancement within the existing social and familist order.

One could hazard that the census figures represent not an "economic problem" in the sense of a flight from poverty or a fight against its restrictions but the movement of a population seizing upon new opportunities and new prosperity without relinquishing at any point the already existing organization of their social sentiments and habits. In such a view the problems of population decline in Ireland are results not of poverty but of prosperity.

161 166 555 However that may be, there is a close parallel between the opening of opportunities for education and for rise into the professions, the ranks of business in the Irish towns, and government, all taking place since 1870, and the demography of the small farmer class. The children of the small farmers have flocked through the doors opened to them into every walk of Irish life. They continue to do so today. The towns and their occupations continue to grow and grow, but the countryside does not. The process is one by which the long delays in marriage, the restriction of children to the few who can be well provided for, and the fierce centering of family ambition in the occupational status of its members, more usually thought of as urban, petit-bourgeois phenomena, have spread outward in to the countryside and overtaken the small farmer on his farm. The mobility of a changing, democratized social order, capable of recruiting the ranks of one class from the children of another, has been combined with the fixity, the conservatism, and the rigidity of an ancient and still vital familism. It should be said that Ireland is not unique in this recombination of elements of social organization. She is unique in illustrating so well, in her special way, a social process universal in the countries of Western European civilization.

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It has already been pointed out that the census figures available at the time of the fieldwork on which this book is based are those of the Irish census of 1926. Since that time some at least of the figures based on the succeeding decennial census, that of 1936, have become available. There are also a number of annual statistics which bear on the questions of Irish population. It is interesting to turn to these for the light they throw on subsequent development in the trends we have noted. 161

The release of the 1936 census figures in 1939 showed conclusively that the demographic trends that have marked Ireland since Famine times continue to persist. Neither the years of the establishment of the Free State up to 1932 nor the years of depression, economic war, and the experimental programs of the De Valera regime since then have affected the trends. Any of the charts prepared for the 1926 figures needs only to be extrapolated along the trend line a few points to show the situation of ten years later.

Stated briefly, these trends recapitulate and reëmphasize the points we have already made. Emigration continues to mark the life of the country, draining the countryside first into the towns and second overseas, now to Great Britain rather than across the oceans. Ireland continues to hold its record of possessing the highest percentage of unmarried men and women in the world. The population over sixty-five years of age continues to rise. The population of children continues to fall. Marriages continue to be fertile, by comparison with many other countries. But they still tend to become fewer and fewer, and the delay of marriage into middle life grows longer and longer. The ratio of females to males continues to fall, until in 1936 there were 975 males for every 935 females in Ireland, the lowest sex ratio in Europe and one of the lowest in the world. 162 166 167 [589]

These figures mark the continued existence of the familistic order we have discussed. They mark as well the continuance of its struggle to fit modern life. Perhaps a figure 582

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582 in the report of the Registrar-General for 1938 gives the best illustration of the culmination of the trends that mark this struggle. In that year slightly over half of all women who married (and only a negligible number of them were not making first marriages) were between thirty-five and forty-five years of age. The problem of delay in marriages seems to be reaching some sort of climax.

161 It is interesting to speculate what that climax might be
178 and what future trend of demography it may inaugurate. It is obvious that the conditions these figures point to, rooted as they are in the social order of the countryside and of the nation, are in any case beyond the reach of ordinary measures. They have marked, as we have seen, every Irish administration since Famine days, whether native or not. They are not matters of "poverty" within the reach of immediate economic policies. If "poverty" refers to hunger and an absolute low level of living, the concept does not apply at all. If it denotes rather relative standing within a community of certain values, it has some meaning. But such meaning waits for its understanding on a realization of the form of family and community these values express.

Yet the old cry about a flight from the land has arisen in Ireland once again. Until the outbreak of war in 1939, the population question, linked now with continuing unemployment in the towns and a shortage of labor in the agricultural districts, had become a football of politics once more. The new small local factories of the regime of industrialization now have their place in the controversy. The opposition in the *Dáil* are bitter against a program they believe subsidizes industry at home out of the farmer's pocket, yet leaves him unable to employ the hands his farm requires. The government finds itself in a quandary. To accept the opposition view would be to admit itself responsible for a condition far beyond its control. To put a stop to the program of industrialization would leave the incoming farm

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sons and daughters with nothing to do at home. It would 161
mean to give up all hope of absorbing them at home. Yet to 178
build the factories is to send into the country districts the very forces of urbanism, such as wage payment, individual recompense, and a job rather than a part in group life, which wean the farm boys and girls away from a familist self-subsistence. Still the farmer of the familist tradition continues to vote the government in and continues to support the factories he must subsidize. For only by some such provision of occupations at home can he provide well for his children, as he must, by ambition and tradition.

There are farmers and farmers in Ireland. The small farmer is by all marks of social life a different person from the "big fellow." It is to be remembered that it is the little fellow who works the familist economy. Only the big fellow normally hires hands. Yet as sons and daughters leave for the towns and the town continues to make inroads on farm life, hired hands must take the vacant places. The migrant children must find new occupations with good pay and a steady hire. The process is one of continuous change at all points in the social order we are tracing out.

These population figures continue to mark, not any single cause or "factor" in social life, but the gradual, generation-slow transformation of an ancient culture, using that word in the anthropological sense. Its central core of familism is offering strong resistance to slow assault. But it changes, and along with it there changes the structure of the community that has been built upon a familistic base. The next chapters deal with these rural communities at the points of transformation: the nonfarming occupations in the countryside and the farmers' markets.

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CHAPTER XII

Occupation and Status

433 COUNTY CLARE, like other more westerly Irish counties agricultural in outlook, presents a picture in which there is little industrial activity at all, comparatively speaking, other than that involved in agriculture, trading in market towns, and administration and communication. The fact holds pretty generally for the whole of the south of Ireland.[1] Whether the inhabitants like it or not, Ireland has long been peripheral to the huge English industrial centers. It has been little more than a market and a source of foodstuffs. A western region like Clare has been nothing more. Ireland was called not very long ago "England's bread basket." But we have already seen, where economic matters have come up, that such a view of her is a bit astigmatic. Ireland was her own bread basket first, long before she was anything else.

288 178 In rural Ireland outside the large cities, other industrial activity than that involved in agriculture is merely a matter of supply and service, as far as the country people are concerned. The market towns, with their fairs, their shops, their banks, and their artisans and laborers, fill functions entirely distributive in nature.

This has not always been the situation. In 1810 the economist Wakefield found domestic woolen manufacture

[1] At the time of the authors' study the De Valera government's program of industrialization had hardly begun.

[p. 232]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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a widespread industry among the country people throughout Ireland. There seems even then to have been quite a widespread cottage industry in wool and linen, later to be destroyed everywhere except in Ulster. The peasantry displayed great ingenuity at the craft. The wool of their sheep was made into frieze at home, carded, spun, woven, dyed, and consumed there. Oils essential to the weaving process were extracted from fern roots, and dyes were got from alder, walnut, oak, and elderberry. This craft survives today as a cottage industry only in remote parts of Donegal and Kerry and in the Scottish highlands and isles. Such home-spinning was once widespread, probably universal. It survived here and there down to a very late date. In Ulster and northern England the industry was gradually brought into the factory, where it laid the foundation for the industrial revolution. But in the rest of Ireland industrial production of woolens was confined to Dublin by 1840 and, as a commercial enterprise, the wool trade was dead except in the region of Belfast. A few small factories survived in several towns, for example at Limerick, Clonmel, and Bandon, but there was no life or power of expansion in them.

Other manufactures originally native to the country repeat the story of wool. A few attempts at cotton manufacture died out. Linen suffered the same fate. At one time flax was grown extensively throughout Ireland, and a home industry of weaving linen was practiced widely in both town and countryside in many parts of the country. O'Brien[2] cites evidence that the older custom in linen making, strongest in Ulster, but not unknown elsewhere, by which weavers occupied plots of land and supplemented their income by farming, was gone by the famine time.

[2] George O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* (London, New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1921). See also O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin and London: Maunsel & Company, Ltd., 1918).

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288 Otway[8] describes the weavers of Drogheda in 1840 subsist-
[427] ing on conacre gardens (plots hired without right other than to the current crop) in circumstances of dire poverty.

433 O'Brien sums up his *Economic History* by concluding
178 that the result of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century was that Ireland abandoned all pretense of being an industrial country and came to rely on agriculture to a greater extent than at any time formerly and even than in the eighteenth century. The accounts of Ireland at the time of the famine and after it bear him out. They show a very great lack of any kind of industrial activity other than agriculture.

463 The petty crafts of the countryside, which never gave
178 any promise of reaching industrial proportions as those in the town centers might have, suffered a similar decline. But with them the decline seems to have come later and to have been part of the general change brought by the industrial revolution. All the supply crafts of the countryside have now come to be concentrated in the market towns. Nevertheless, through western regions, at least, local craftsmen, often with garden plots to help them eke out a living, seem to have long continued to be part of the local scene. In the novels of Carleton written just before and after the famine, many local shoemakers, cobblers, weavers, carpenters, smiths, coopers, nailers, and other followers of small trades appear. Upon them, the agricultural population depended for much of its tools and goods for local consumption. It is impossible to determine now how many of these were rural, since censuses of occupations before 1926 do not distinguish occupations in towns from those in country districts. But these men were part of the generally greater proportions of country dwellers before the rise of towns and the opening up of the railroads during the last century.

[8] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (Dublin: W. Curry, Jr., & Company, 1839).

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Another very great occupational change, though it does not show itself in any great numbers in census records, has been connected with the disappearance of the landlord from the western counties. A whole series of occupations clustering around the management of estates or the tastes of the local gentry and their families has gradually disappeared. Even the adoption of many of the conventions and habits, once exclusive marks of the Ascendancy, by other classes of the population has not served to stem the change. 463 427 178

If we fasten our attention directly upon determining what occupations are characteristically found represented in the countryside rather than in the towns in Ireland today, we get a picture of rural economy in which the followers of other occupations than farming are few indeed in the countryside. The occupations predominantly rural in Ireland are nearly exclusively those of farm ownership or farm labor. Only in recent years has there been any further development of rural pursuits to take the place of those going out with the changes brought about by modern communication and distribution of factory-made products. The chief of the new influences is not yet represented in full, even in the census of 1926. It is too recent a development. The introduction of creameries had not yet made its mark in that year. Plans for industrialization, since undertaken by the De Valera regime, had not yet even been drawn up. 463 178

To get a picture of rural life and the view of technological adaptation which it entails, we can look through the figures for a comparison of urban and rural industry in the years of the study. 463 464

Volume VI of the Irish census of population of 1926 entitled "Industrial Status" gives a view of the industries of the whole country and a preliminary view of the chief forms of industrial organization. Though the volume is largely concerned with unemployment, it also contains tables which classify those at work in the Free State accord-

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ing to occupation and employment. It distinguishes between employers (those employing persons for pay in their principal business) and employees (those working for others) and counts the latter by trade or industry or, if farmers' employees, by size of farm in acres. It further distinguishes those persons working on their own account and those assisting relatives. Persons employing domestics only are not classed as employers. Even in keeping these categories separate, the census ran into difficulties. The following statements indicate the troubles met in separating the smaller farmers from those who engaged in non-agricultural occupation and from hired farm labor.

> Large numbers of small farmers and their sons work as agricultural laborers, road laborers, etc., as opportunity offers and many described their 'principal occupation' in the census (1926) as agricultural labor or road labor. (In gathering agricultural statistics in 1927, they were recorded, however, as farmers.) This is the chief reason why the numbers of farmers, male and female, shown in censuses of population were always so much less than the numbers of occupiers of agricultural holdings as compared with the agricultural statistics.[4]

The introduction to the volume then compares occupiers and farmers from figures of 1929 and 1926 respectively, and finding the occupiers much more numerous than the farmers, particularly in Leinster, the writers conclude:

> It is evident that large numbers of small farmers in all parts of the country did not describe themselves as farmers in the census and that this was more common in Leinster than in Connacht, as more employment can be obtained on the large farms and elsewhere in Leinster than in Connacht.[5]

Thus the presence or absence of big farmers in a district seems to have an effect upon the occupational status of the small farmers, in affording them the chance of employment

[4] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. VI: Industrial Status, p. ix.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. x.

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away from their holdings but within their own area. In 463
such cases the small farmers are both employees and em- 464
ployers employing their own families.

In regard to such difficulties the introduction makes the following final qualifications of its own categories of industrial status:

> As regards the numbers returned as employers, persons working on their own account, persons assisting relatives and employees, it should be explained that persons employing domestic servants only were not classified as employers, that persons assisted in business only by relatives who had no contract for wages were classified as persons 'working on their own account', . . . persons working on their own account and persons assisting relatives were classed as employees (e.g., clergymen, nuns), and finally that many employers having small concerns (blacksmiths, dressmakers, etc.) described themselves not as employers as they should have done but as persons working on their own account.[6]

It is clear that, in segregating country occupations from those of the towns, industrial status as defined in the census is less significant than occupation itself.

For the whole country, taking in all industries, there 464
were in 1926 as totals at work and out of work over twelve years of age some 850,000 men and some 341,082 women. Of these, those employing others numbered 62,605 men and 16,509 women, a fairly large proportion for employers. About 232,340 men and 62,949 women worked on their own account, and 196,034 men and 73,062 women were returned as assisting relatives. Employees of others numbered 402,631 men and 176,324 women. The figure for men, at least, indicates that those working for others were less in fact than those carrying on for themselves and families. The same fact is indicated for women, too, but only after the large figure of those engaged in "home duties" (a class which, according to the census, belongs in no indus-

[6] *Ibid.*, p. xii.

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464 try at all) is included. At the time, 1926, the census recorded 6.9 per cent of men and 3.4 per cent women as unemployed, figures to be added to make industrial totals. The percentages were very low, and by the advent of the De Valera regime in 1931 had increased considerably. However numerous they are, they do not change the industrial pic-
471 ture very much in Ireland. Small enterprises predominate, and very little of the great developments of the machine age is present. The supply and service industries are in a definite preponderance, and in that fact reflect the country's dependence upon its agriculture and agriculturalists.

463 The Census of Occupations is quite different in purpose from that of industries and industrial status and proceeds by different counts. To quote the notes:

> The difference between statistics of occupation and industries must be kept clearly in view. . . . A person's occupation is defined by the operations he performs in earning his living: grainmiller, jamboiler, tramdriver, packer, clerk. A person follows his occupation within a certain industry or service. Some occupations are peculiar to a single industry or service, . . . others are found in very many industries and services. . . .[7]

The Census of Occupations is obviously in many ways an elaboration of that of industries. The two overlap frequently. Yet they are distinct enough to give us an alternate view of Irish industrial activity of great detail. If now we examine this view for what it will tell us of the survival of rural industry, we see again that occupations other than those of farming are very few indeed in the country districts.

463 Table 5 records the occupations of the whole country
369 classed within industries. It lists followers of occupations living in rural districts in the left-hand column and followers of those living in urban districts in the right-hand column. Weighting the figures for all occupied persons properly between towns and country districts, we find that

[7] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. II, p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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TABLE 5

Comparison of Rural and Urban Occupations, 1926
Irish Free State[1]

The table lists in the left-hand column, under the heading "Rural Occupation," those occupations 67 per cent or more of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. It lists in the right-hand column, under the heading "Urban Occupations," those less than 67 per cent of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. Percentage figures near 67 per cent are usually given; those greatly divergent are omitted. Industrial categories grouping occupations are listed at the head of the occupations. Figures for females of each occupation, and sometimes for males, are omitted if very small.

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
I. Agriculture and Fishing	
Farmers, male	Gardeners and nurserymen, 62%
Farmers, female	Gardeners' laborers, 62%
Sons assisting farmers	
Daughters assisting farmers	
Other relatives assisting, male	
Other relatives assisting, female	
Farm managers	
Agricultural laborers living in	
Agricultural laborers living away	
Woodmen	
Other agricultural labor	
Fishermen	
II. Mining and Quarrying	
Coal-mining	
Quarrying and other mining	
III. Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
a. Makers of Food	
Creamery workers, 80%	Employers, managers, 62%
	Bakers, pastry cooks, biscuit makers
	Sugar, sweet, jam makers
	Grain millers
	Other skilled food makers, including foremen
	Other unskilled food makers
b. Makers of Drink and Tobacco	
	Employers, managers, foremen
	Maltsters
	Other skilled workers
	Other makers of drink
	Makers of tobacco and snuff

[1] Based on Irish Free State Census, 1926, vol. II, Occupations. Categories are sometimes not exactly those of the census but are occasionally grouped together for convenience.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

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Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
c. Textile Workers	
Breakers and scutchers, 89%	Employers, managers, foremen
Knitters, female, 67%	Spinners, piecers, carders, winders
	Winders, female
	Weavers, 49%
	Weavers, female, 30%
	Knitters, male
	Hand-lace workers, female, 65%
	Other skilled textile workers
	Other textile workers
d. Makers of Apparel and Textile Goods	
	Employers, managers
	Boot and shoe makers, 40%
	Cutters
	Tailors, tailors' machinists, 50%
	Dressmakers, female, 50%
	Sewers and sewing machinists, female
	Embroidering, female
	Other skilled workers
	Other workers
e. Workers in Hides, Skins, Leather, not Boots or Shoes	
	Workers in hides, skins
	Saddlers, 50%
	Other makers of leather goods
f. Workers in Wood and Furniture	
	Employers and managers
	Carpenters, 57%
	Cartwrights, wheelwrights, 28%
	Sawyers and wood machinists, 28%
	Coopers, 20%
	Basket makers
	Boat and barge builders
	Cabinetmakers
	Upholsterers, coach trimmers
	Other skilled workers
	Other workers
g. Metal Workers	
Employers, managers, 67%	Foundry workers
Smiths, 67%	Motor mechanics, 30%
	Cycle mechanics
	Mechanics
	Fitters
	Plumbers
	Tinsmiths, sheet-metal workers
	Machine-tool workers
	Boilermakers, shipwrights
	Other skilled metal workers
	Other metal workers

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

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Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
h. Electrical Workers	
	Electrical fitters and wiremen
i. Workers in Chemical Processes, Makers of Fertilizers, Soaps, Paints, and Workers in and Makers of Paper and Cardboard	
	Skilled workers
	Other workers
j. Printers, Bookbinders, Photographers	
	Employers, managers, foremen
	Compositors
	Printers
	Bookbinders
	Photographers
	Printing-machine setters and minders
	Machine assistants
	Others
k. Builders, Bricklayers, Stone and Slate Workers and Contractors	
Foremen and overlookers, 75%	Employers and managers
Masons, 75%	Bricklayers
Platelayers, 75 %	Plasterers
Contractors' laborers and navvies, 74%	Slaters, tilers
	Other skilled workers
	Builders' laborers, 25%
	Other workers
l. Painters and Decorators	
	Employers, managers, and foremen
	House, ship, general painters
	Painters of vehicles
	Other workers
m. Other Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
	Watch and clock makers and repairers
	Workers in precious metals
	Electroplate workers
	Makers of bricks and earthenware
	Makers of glass and glassware
	Brushmakers
	Other skilled workers
	Workers in gas works
IV. Transport and Communication	
a. Railway Workers	
	Station masters and railway officials, 50%
	Locomotive engine drivers
	Firemen

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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Cleaners
	Guards
	Signalmen, 58%
	Shunters, level-crossing keepers, 40%
	Ticket collectors, checkers
	Railway porters
	Other special railway occupations
b. Road Transport Workers	
	Proprietors, managers of motor car garages
	Drivers of motor vehicles, 40%
	Drivers of horse vehicles for passengers
	Drivers of horse lorries, carts, vans, 25%
	Tramdrivers
	Tram and bus conductors
	Grooms, 53%
	Other road transport workers
c. Water Transport Workers	
	Ship owners
	Harbor officials and stevedores
	Navigating and engineering officers
	Petty officers, seamen, deck hands
	Firemen, donkeymen
	Barge- and boatmen, 40%
	Dock laborers
	Other water transport workers
d. Other Transport Workers	
	Post office sorters
	Postmen, 61%
	Telegraph operators
	Telephone operators
	Telephone operators, female
	Messengers
	Porters
	Other workers
V. Commercial, Insurance, Finance	
	Cattle, sheep, pig, horse dealers, 53%
	Shopkeepers, male, 43%
	Shopkeepers, female, 39%
	Shop assistants and salesmen, male, 30%
	Shop assistants and salesmen, female, 30%
	Buyers
	Agents and factors (coal, drapery, etc.)

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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Commercial travelers
	Van salesmen and canvassers
	Hawkers of coal, vegetables, etc.
	Newspaper sellers
	Bank officials not clerks
	Insurance officials and agents
	Auctioneers and valuers
	Other commercial, insurance, finance occupations
VI. Public Administration and Defense, excluding Professional Men and Typists	
	Civil service officials and clerks
	Local authority officials and clerks
	Civic guards, 60%
	Army, commissioned officers
	Army, others
	Others in defense
VII. Professional Occupations	
Catholic clergymen, 65%	Other clergymen, 60%
Schoolteachers, male, 65%	Nuns and postulants, female, 34%
Schoolteachers, female, 67%	Christian brothers and monks
	Religious lay brothers
	Theological students, 54%
	Church officials, 50%
	Barristers
	Solicitors
	Medical doctors
	Dentists
	Veterinarians
	Midwives, female, 40%
	Sick nurses, female, 40%
	Music teachers
	Civil engineers and surveyors
	Chartered accountants
	Analytical chemists
	Professional students and articled clerks
	Journalists and authors
	Other professions
VIII. Personal Service	
Gamekeepers, 87%	Domestic servants living in, male, 60%
	Domestic servants living in, female, 58%
	Domestic servants away, male, 40%
	Domestic servants away, female, 45%
	Hotel and restaurant keepers, male and female, 25%

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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Publicans, male, 56%
	Publicans, female, 53%
	Bar attendants, male, 46%
	Bar attendants, female, 54%
	Waiters
	Laundry workers
	Hairdressers
	Caretakers
	Charwomen, office cleaners, female
	Others in personal service
IX. Clerks and Draughtsmen and All Typists, but not in Civil Service or Local Authority	
	Heads of commercial sections of business
	Clerks, 14%
	Typists, male
	Typists, female
	Clerks, female
X. Other Gainful Occupations — Entertainment	
Race horse trainers and jockeys, 78%	Proprietors, managers
	Actors
	Musicians
	Other occupations, sport, entertainment
XI. Warehouses, Stores, Packing	
	Warehousemen and storekeepers
	Packers and other warehouse assistants
XII. Other and Undefined Gainful Occupations	
	Stationary engine drivers
	Timekeepers, gatekeepers
	Watchmen
	General and unclassified laborers, 25%
	Other and unclassified occupations
XIII. Persons Twelve Years Old and Over not Gainfully Occupied	
At school, 12–18, male, 69%	Retired from active occupation, not army or navy, 57%
At school, 12–18, female, 69%	Retired from active occupation, female, 50%
	Ex-officers of army and navy not described, 39%
	Students over 18, male, 50%
	Students over 18, female, 50%

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on the basis of chance expectancy any occupational class should have about two-thirds of its members in the country districts and one-third in the towns. It follows then that any occupation two-thirds or more of whose followers are still recorded as country dwellers can safely be called a rural occupation. Any occupation whose followers are less than two-thirds country dwellers can be called urban. 463 369

In the table, therefore, occupations 67 per cent or more of whose followers are rural are listed in the left-hand column. They are called rural occupations for our purposes. Those occupations which have less than 67 per cent of their followers residing in the country districts are listed in the right-hand column. They are called, for our purposes, urban occupations. In some cases the percentage of the followers of an occupation who are country dwellers is given for reference, particularly where it is near the critical percentage, 67 per cent, but in most cases, where it is not close to 67 per cent, it is omitted.

In actual number the followers of non-agricultural occupations in the countryside are not a small army. They are 249, 930 persons, to compare with 658,800 agriculturalists of one sort or another. Of this army the largest single total is to be found among the "other producers," that is, those not listed in the recognized census industries, such as transport, communications, trade and commerce, the professions, or "personal service." There are 194,969 "other producers" in the country districts today.

A glance at the left-hand column of the table shows that there are practically no characteristically rural occupations left other than agriculture and the small occupations of fishing, coal mining, quarrying, creamery working. Breaking and scutching and hand knitting are still country occupations, but their followers are few. The rest of the textile workers are characteristically townsmen today. Tailors and shoemakers and woodworkers, even carpenters, are towns-

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463 369 men today, overwhelmingly so, though among carpenters quite a few rural ones still survive. Smiths and employers in smithing and other metals businesses, many of whom are presumably smiths employing a few hands, often their sons, are still country dwellers characteristically. Masons and foremen and overlookers of construction and building are still country dwellers, as are contractors' navvies and platelayers. Except for the smith, therefore, there are no characteristically rural artisans left outside the building trades.

Those in the building trades or in construction, in the west at least, are not highly skilled men at all, not even the masons. They are largely laborers and landless cotters who work for local authorities as stone breakers and suppliers of gravel and broken rock for road construction. They are often farmers' sons who get work off the farm whenever they find work is to be had. Yet the local mason who puts up stone houses in the countryside, and the petty contractor ready to get up a crew of local boys for any sort of building, are still characteristically rural dwellers and part of the rural scene.

In transport industries the only occupation which is even nearly rural in complexion is that of postman, for obvious [205] reasons. The local post office is usually a small crossroads shop in the western counties. The post office workers are members of the rural communities they serve.

In commerce, in spite of the two currents at work, no occupation is characteristically rural. Dealers in animal produce, however, come closest to it. Yet most livestock and animal produce dealers are now townsmen, often town shopkeepers as well. The country shop at a crossroad is still important but not characteristic.

Civic guards, clergymen, and schoolteachers make up the only other occupational classes in the country who still live in the rural districts and are part of rural communities.

Three other occupational classes, according to the table,

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are also characteristically rural still today. These are game- 463
keepers, race-horse trainers, and jockeys. These are, of 369
course, employees of the landed gentry who follow the cult of the horse. They are more often to be found now in the eastern midland counties than elsewhere today.

In County Clare rural occupations other than agricultural are equally rare. There the figures necessitate a slightly different definition of rural districts, since certain towns smaller than 1500 possessing local self-government are included in the town areas. But, by the same procedure as before, we can divide the proportions of total population into rural population in the county and then classify the occupations in Clare according to their rural or urban character.

In Clare, of course, there are no very large cities. The 162
county counts 5,023 males and 5,522 females in town dis- 464
tricts, and the overwhelming majority are country dwell- 369
ers as one would expect in the agricultural west. The total rural districts in 1926 numbered 45,048 male inhabitants and 39,471 female. As befits a largely agricultural area such as the county, occupations and industries show a little different distribution. The population is for males 89 per cent rural and for females 88 per cent rural. Those gainfully occupied in rural districts number for males well over two-thirds of the total population, for females only one-fifth of the total, so that for men, at least, the numbers recorded as unoccupied are negligible. The low figure for occupied females is due to the inclusion of housewives among the unoccupied. The rural-urban ratio upon which we can build expectancies of proportions of followers of occupations to be found in towns or countryside is 92 per cent for males and 84 per cent for females. As for the whole country, female occupations are found only in the towns.

The table for Clare (Table 6) repeats practically exactly 463
the same story as that for Ireland as a whole. In fact, the 369

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TABLE 6

463 **Comparison of Rural and Urban Occupations, 1926, County Clare**[1]

369 The table lists in the left-hand column, under the heading "Rural Occupations," those occupations 89 per cent or more of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population or in places having local self-government (a special case). It lists in the right-hand column, under the heading "Urban Occupations," those occupations less than 89 per cent of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. Percentages near 89 per cent are given; those greatly divergent are omitted. Industrial categories grouping occupations are listed at the head of occupations. Occupations represented in Table 5 which are not listed here have so small a following in County Clare that they are included among "Others." Figures in parentheses following occupations give the total numbers for County Clare.

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
I. Agriculture and Fishing	
Agricultural occupations, male, 99% (23,572)	Fishermen, 84% (199)
Agricultural occupations, female, 99% (5,307)	
II. Mining and Quarrying	
Mining and quarrying, 92% (21)	
III. Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
a. Makers of Food	
	Employers, managers, 60% (21)
	Bakers, 50% (82)
	Makers of foods, female, 61% (13)
	Others, 20% (80)
b. Makers of Drink and Tobacco	
	Makers of drink, 99% (12)
	Makers of tobacco (0)
c. Textile Workers	
Textile workers, male, 95% (43)	
Textile workers, female, 87% (15)	
d. Makers of Apparel and Textile Goods	
	Employers, managers, 70% (48)
	Tailors, 67% (180)
	Bootmakers, 65% (141)
	Employers and managers, female, 70% (14)
	Dressmakers, female, 71% (304)
	Milliners, female, 50% (43)
	Others, female, 50% (13)

[1] Based on Irish Free State Census, 1926, vol. II, Occupations. The Census does not divide occupations within this category between rural and urban districts for Clare. It gives merely the total for the category of occupational classifications.

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TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
e. Workers in Hides, Skins, Leather, not Boots or Shoes	
	Saddlers, 67% (45)
f. Workers in Wood and Furniture	
	Employers, managers, foremen, 71% (38)
	Carpenters, 84% (491)
	Cartwrights, 40% (27)
	Others, 60% (66)
g. Metal Workers	
	Employers, managers, 84% (56)
	Smiths, 85% (199)
	Fitters, 67% (31)
	Plumbers, 50% (11)
	Motor mechanics, 40% (91)
	Other mechanics, 80% (69)
	Others, 80% (112)
h. Electrical Workers	
	Electrical apparatus makers and fitters, 80% (87)
i. Workers in Chemical Processes, Makers of Fertilizers, Soaps, Paints, and Workers in and Makers of Paper and Cardboard	
j. Printers, Bookbinders, Photographers	
	Compositors and printers, 0% (16)
k. Builders, Bricklayers, Stone and Slate Workers, and Contractors	
Contractors' laborers and navvies, 91% (2,054)	Employers, managers, foremen, 88% (136)
	Bricklayers, 40% (5)
	Plasterers, 42% (28)
	Masons, 87% (114)
	Builders' laborers, 43% (121)
	Others, 78% (88)
l. Painters and Decorators	
	Painters and decorators, 43% (65)
m. Other Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
	Others, 50% (50)
IV. Transport and Communication	
a. Railway Workers	
	Railway officials not clerks, 84% (21)
	Locomotive engine drivers, 67% (34)
	Firemen, 33% (16)
	Porters, 60% (45)
	Others not clerks, 60% (41)

[p.249]

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TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
b. Road Transport Workers	
	Proprietors, managers, foremen, 50% (21)
	Motor drivers, 50% (231)
	Drivers, horse vehicles for passengers, 60% (13)
	Drivers for goods, 50% (96)
	Others, 50% (6)
c. Water Transport Workers	
	Dock laborers, 9% (54)
	Boatmen, 88% (116)
d. Other Transport Workers	
Postmen and post-office sorters, 89% (190)	Messengers, 50% (39)
	Porters, 13% (63)
	Others, 80% (5)
V. Commerce, Insurance, Finance	
	Cattle, sheep, horse, pig dealers, 65% (69)
	Shopkeepers, 62% (574)
	Shopkeepers, female, 55% (341)
	Shopkeepers' assistants and salesmen, 50% (378)
	Shop assistants, female, 54% (263)
	Commercial travelers, 40% (25)
	Van salesmen and canvassers, 50% (15)
	Insurance canvassers and agents, 50% (19)
	Others not clerks and typists, 47% (83)
	Others not clerks, female, 80% (10)
VI. Public Administration and Defense, excluding Professional Men and Typists	
	Civil service officers and clerks, 68% (102)
	Local authority officers and clerks, 59% (78)
	Civic guards, 82% (260)
	Army officers, 5% (42)
	Civil service officers and clerks, female, 86% (93)
	Local authority officers and clerks, female, 30% (15)
VII. Professional Occupations	
Catholic clergymen, 90% (120)	Other clergymen, 69% (13)
Theological students, 90% (32)	Christian brothers and monks, 35% (14)
Mental attendants, female, 91% (37)	Nuns and postulants, 50% (227)
Schoolteachers, male, 86% (200)	Solicitors, 40% (10)
Schoolteachers, female, 91% (322)	Medical doctors, 77% (46)

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TABLE 6 (*continued*)

RURAL OCCUPATIONS

URBAN OCCUPATIONS

Dentists, 13% (8)
Civil engineers and surveyors, 79% (28)
Other professional, 63% (90)
Other professional, female, 75% (23)
Mental attendants, 50% (33)
Registered midwives, 75% (4)
Sick nurses, female, 77% (121)

VIII. Personal Service

Domestic servants, male, 83% (63)
Domestic servants living in, female, 78% (1,312)
Domestic servants living out, female, 75% (451)
Hotel and boarding-house keepers, male, 78% (45)
Hotel keepers, female, 50% (157)
Publicans, 70% (229)
Publicans, female, 75% (145)
Bar men, 75% (76)
Barmaids, 76% (113)
Waitresses, 67% (15)
Laundry women, 60% (27)
Charwomen, 30% (24)
Others, female, 40% (11)
Hairdressers, 30% (19)
Others, 57% (57)

IX. Clerks and Draughtsmen and All Typists, but not in Civil Service or Local Authority

Clerks, all typists, male, 45% (153)
Clerks, all typists, female, 57% (82)

X. Other Gainful Occupations — Entertainment

Entertainment and sports, male, 59% (42)

XI. Warehouses, Stores, Packing

Warehousemen and assistants, 75%, (23)

XII. Other and Undefined Gainful Occupations

Stationary engine drivers, 80% (45)
All others, 50% (33)
All others, female, 60% (41)
General laborers, 48% (387)

XIII. Persons Twelve Years Old and Over not Gainfully Occupied

Retired, 87% (637)
At school, male, 87% (3,504)
At school, female, 86% (3,482)
Others, male, 90% (1,620)
Engaged in home duties, female, 88% (17,657)
Ex-officers, ex-soldiers, etc., 69% (137)
Students over 18 not elsewhere recorded, 83% (92)
Not yet at work, male, 77% (281)
Not yet at work, female, 75% (336)
Others, female, 83% (3,602)

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463 dropping away of rural occupations other than agricultural
369 is even more marked. Yet the smith, carpenter, mason, building-contractor, employer, and foreman, and their navvies and laborers are characteristically rural producers. Only they of all the occupations and crafts survive in rural districts, with the exception of the very few textile workers. But the figures for the weavers of Clare are somewhat deceptive, since one of Clare's few industries was a tweed factory in Sixmilebridge, a town just too small to be excluded from the rural districts. Actually except for them the rural weaver is nearly entirely gone.

In Clare, as in the whole country, two professional occupations are still rural. Priests and schoolteachers are country dwellers. And theological students, characteristically "strong" farmers' sons destined for the priesthood, are rural too. That female mental hospital attendants should be
[743] characteristically rural in Clare is a statistical accident due entirely to the fact that the County Mental Hospital happens to be just outside an urban boundary.

The statistical record restates the fact that today in Ireland no less than elsewhere social differentiation on the basis of occupation and technique is an urban matter. The countryside has been relegated entirely to the agriculturalist. Only very few others occupy the countryside with him in the face of the extreme division of labor of modern industrial civilization. The Irish countryside is an extreme example of the relegation of the rural districts to agriculture. Nevertheless the statistical record shows us that a few of the rural artisans survive. It demonstrates too that a few men of professional status still serve the rural community. Even the crossroad shopkeeper is an important rural figure still, though he does not count a sufficiently large number to distinguish himself statistically as a rural occupation.

Occupational and technological differentiation is thus not entirely lacking in the country districts. Such division

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of labor of a non-agricultural character as still persists in the country communities is very simple. Yet it is an interesting part of community life. It affords status to local artisans in the lives of the small farmers. 463 369

The families upon the separate farms are not, of course, entirely self-dependent units. We have already had occasion to examine the kind of coöperation called cooring, often based upon the extended family which flourishes in the country districts. Such reciprocal aids in ordinary farm work are only one part of the fabric of services which one meets among the country people. Another part can be distinguished. It takes account of what elementary specialization in local techniques and handicrafts exists. The man or woman skilled in some particular branch of work is called the "handy man." The handy man is an important person at the times when his or her special skill comes into use. The local reputation of such a specialist is sufficient to keep the recognition of his skill alive between periods of use and to afford him a definite status. In the country districts of Clare even full-fledged artisans, appearing in census records as full-time carpenters, smiths, and the like, sons of fathers and grandfathers who followed the same trade, are not much more than local specialists. 476 463

Many a farmer is still a jack-of-all-trades, ready if need be to turn his hand to shoeing his horse or resoling a boot or building himself a house. Only where the products of factory and foundry have become deeply entrenched in farm life, embodying skills of distant workers abroad, do local goods and services represent techniques the small farmer cannot come close to emulating. For example, the smelting of iron is a process completely unknown, and neither the local blacksmith nor the farmer can do more than rework the iron they have at hand. But the blacksmith and the farmer both can do it, though it is the blacksmith who has the greater skill. In the countryside the techniques and the 463 [326]

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463 products of specialized labor are open and visible to everyone, and in some measure they are part of the lore which each man learns. Not all the men come to practice them, but they have all seen them or heard them described, and they are part of the fund of conversation, precedent, and value which is common coin among the people of the community. One's special craft does not segregate one from one's neighbors or take one outside the community here. Rather it is one's mark or sign, one's reputation and status within it.

This is the case particularly where, as here, most of the craftsmen of one sort or another have always depended upon a plot of land or a kitchen garden behind their cabins, with perhaps a pig or a cow or two, nearly as much as they depended upon their craft. By this dependence they were never segregated from the rest of the local population, either physically or occupationally. They too were agriculturalists of a sort and shared farmers' tribulations. Just as the farmers knew something of their techniques, so the local craftsmen were nearly always proficient in the ways of agriculture. Today in rural Clare the handy man may be anything from a veterinarian or bonesetter to a building contractor. He is always without benefit of law, apprenticeship, or formal training, and merely follows a technique of which everyone knows something. The farmers are ready to pass upon his skill, to debate the technical points of his work, to build up or tear down his reputation.

463 467 874 Down to the time of the World War, in the last generation, the close acquaintance the small farmers had with the special skills of the countryside was reinforced by the interest the farmers had in putting their sons to a trade. They could often find a place for them thus. In the towns even today formal apprenticeships, into which the farmer must pay for his son to enter, still flourish.

The statements one can get about the local specialists,

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at least of those of the better recognized trades, are direct 467
and intimate. The following words illustrate something of 874
the character of apprenticeship. A small farmer is speaking of his own knowledge of local conditions:

Before the war there used to be about twenty shoemakers in 463
the neighborhood, but now they've mostly gone away or are in 467
the towns. One of them went into Ennistymon. Whenever a 874
farmer wants a strong pair of boots even yet, he will not go to
a shop but he would go to the shoemaker. It wasn't always the 294
case the son of a shoemaker would follow the trade because there was good money in it. With it they would buy a farm and so for his sons, and they would go to farming. If a farmer had a crippled son, he might send him to the shoemaker to teach him the trade. Papers were signed that bound the boy for three years to the tradesman, and then the boy would go live with the shoemaker. At first he would be taught to tap, then to stick, then to sew, and the last thing would be to cut. If a boy left before the three years were up, no one would give him a job, and no other tradesman would take him on to teach him a trade. The father had to give twenty pounds to twenty-five pounds to teach him. At the end of three years the boy was given his indenture papers which meant he could set himself up any place in the country or, if he had not enough money to do that, he would work as a journeyman for someone else and his papers would give him the right to do it.

There were a great many tailors and smiths too. The time of work was three years. A boy who was a cripple might be sent to tailoring. He was taught three years and then he could set himself up. It was the easiest of them all to get along with because it required no money to start with. In the old days the tailor used to come to the house and stay for a week or so and make clothes for all the men of the house and go to the next house after.

The smiths trained boys also. When I was small, a cousin of 463
mine had a forge below on the road and any wet day all the 874
boys used to gather there and watch and talk. I started out by
blowing the bellows and then doing other things until finally 326
I was as good as anyone. If I had the material I could make shoes, and I always shoe my own horses.

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463 Of these local specialists only the smith survives in any
326 strength today. He shares with the mason the admiration
554 the country people feel for physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this that made the more sedentary occupations of weaver, shoemaker, and tailor of less prestige. Thus the crippled son, as the quotation says, might be put to one of them.

463 The tailor was often a peripatetic. He moved around
294 from house to house and community to community where he was known, living and eating among the family. He was made welcome, not only as a maker of clothes but also as a carrier of gossip. Today the few tailors who survive in the country districts are petty cotters with only a memory of their trade. The few still active ones have retreated to the towns. Most of the farmers' clothing is now shop-bought and factory-made.

463 The weaver was perhaps the most sedentary of the local craftsmen. He is the one who has failed to survive even
286 in the towns. The women of the farm families carded and
[283] spun the wool into yarn until home spinning died out, and broke and scutched the flax for linen, but the weaver made it into cloth. He spent all his days indoors, moving from one side of his loom to the other in a small room heavy-laden with fluff and lint. The farmers seem to remember most strongly the unhealthiness of the life, but they tell one also of the weavers' arrogance when their skill was in great demand. The following is the kind of description one can still get, the first part of it discoursing on weavers in general and the second relating the history of the local man:

> In the old days the weaver might have enough work to keep him busy for four months and, when you went to see him, he would put you off and tell you to come back in a fortnight for your goods. It would be no good for you, none in the world, if you didn't take a bowl of butter and a few dozen eggs to him

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as a way of getting him to start on your yarn in a hurry. If you 463
didn't, he would not do it until he got ready. They were inde- 286
pendent, all right, and then when they were finished, you had to reach down into your pocket and pay for what he did. There used to be a lot of weavers here, but they are all gone now. The women have got out of weaving the wool.

A weaver here, Paddy Seán R—, was a very fine fellow 463
though he drank a lot. You cannot blame him for that because his job was a mean one and bad on the health. He worked to 286
keep his mother out of the workhouse and till the day she died 735
he would not let her go there. Wasn't that a decent thing for him to do? Afterwards he went to Galway and then he came back here and as an old man he died in the workhouse. But wasn't it a decent thing he would not let his poor old mother go [386
and her going up the streets of the town every morning collecting the urine from the people who lived in the house [to use 514]
for bleaching].

These three occupations were the meaner ones in the eyes 463
of the country people. It was not that they degraded their 554
followers. Rather it was that they were intrinsically of less value than the more robust crafts of outdoor life. Something of the sexual dichotomization of labor was involved in this attitude equating sedentary, house-bound pursuits with the feminine spheres of activity.

The chief exponents of the robuster, more masculine crafts within local ken were the carpenter, the mason, the house builder, and the smith. But there were many others. Between the landless or "backward" cotters and laborers, who might turn their hand to anything, and the small farmers, who were themselves occasionally forced to turn to harvesting abroad or to road-mending and stone-breaking at home, there were as many specialists as there were activities in which special renown and skill could be attained. In fact, the development of local skills seems restricted only by the limits of the *matériel* which peasant life requires.

Other local experts were the thatcher, the cattle doctor 463
or "vet," often a herdsmen with a lifelong experience of

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463 cattle, the butcher, expert at pig killing and skinning (pigs are regularly butchered on the small farms), the expert at rigging the great hayricks which stand in the farmers' haggards, and, lately, the threshing machine experts. All these robust, outdoor specialists are male. The feminine sphere of life does not seem to have bred such specialization. Yet many women were known also for their special skill at this and that branch of women's work and were consulted accordingly. Nevertheless, the only traditionally feminine crafts to develop and flourish apart were witchcraft and midwifery.

[754 759]

A local craft or proficiency seems to develop out of some special crucial activity in local life. A local craft or skill of the kind that meets us here builds up directly out of social life itself. It is a development of habitual association about any person who gradually builds a reputation for a particular proficiency. The proficiency may center around some traditionally established technique of peasant life, like the weaving of homespun and shawls, the clothing of the small farmers, or else it may build up about local conventions having no direct economic value. Dances, gambles, and other entertainments and ceremonies of local social life may likewise afford areas in which a special skill gains recognition, gradually to grow into an occupation.

Thus the local specialists included fiddlers, singers, poets, storytellers. In the last century, in a day of great poverty and much displacement from the land, each of these skills gave an occupation to many wanderers along the roads of Ireland. Their followers found employment in the rural communities among the small farmers. Even itinerant dancing masters once flourished in the country districts during Carleton's day.[8]

The existence of other conventions leads likewise to the

[8] Students of Gaelic culture have described these artists very amply. See Robin Flower, Daniel Corkery, *et al.*

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habitual utilization of persons specially skilled in them. 463
They are the ones to whom the small farmers habitually resort. Thus legal sanction might become necessary for matchmaking as soon as land reform made the farmers legal owners of the farms they transfer in the match. But a long experience of court tangles and reprimands by judges was necessary to establish the licensed solicitor as the channel for negotiation. The handy man who was a legal expert and had a fine copyist's hand in the country districts flourished quite a while longer, and flourishes occasionally even now. In the country districts, down to the present, these local specializations were acquired through personal association of one kind or another with former specialists. Very often skills are deemed hereditary in the eyes of the country people. But actually they are acquired as often through gradual development of habit begun out of interest and imitation as by inheritance and parental instruction. They are passed on quite often to others than sons. The following extract from field notes illustrates the development of such skills:

The local man who cuts hair here is a handy man; the man 463
Donnolly, who goes about and kills pigs for his neighbors is a 874
handy man. When we asked, we were told by Flanagan that 231
Donnolly was the butcher and handy man. They butcher only sheep, goats, and pigs. Cattle would be killed by the town butcher. Flanagan said Donnolly was not a true butcher, for he did not serve his time. If they want a boy to be a butcher, they send him to town and pay a fee and he would be trained there. Then they take out papers binding him. Donnolly said he learned it when he was a young man, but now that he was getting old he was not doing it any more. It takes several men to hold the pig, put a hook through the mouth, and kill it with a heavy blow on the head. They take it home, lay it on a table, and take a knife and cut it up. Then it is hung up, salted, and cured. Afterwards the butcher is given a bottle of stout for his work, as well as some fresh meat, while the husbands who helped get nothing.

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463 The country people distinguish between these men who are handy men and have had no formal induction into their trade and those who are legally recognized as "tradesmen." But the line of formal distinction is thin, and more recognized in the abstract than in the concrete. Thus in the story of the development of one local mason, one can see that the difference lies rather more in the kind of remuneration than anything else. One farmer's account of the "tradesmen" of his knowledge led him on as follows:

> There are other men who are carpenters and masons who are handy men, but they usually work for pay because the job might take several days, and no neighbor could stay away from his work with a friend for that length of time. Donovan is a mason and he taught himself. He built his own house and several others. A man cannot build a house because he would not know how to do it. Donovan is a very intelligent man. He has a terrible head on him.

437 That the difference of remuneration is seized upon by
476 countrymen as the distinguishing mark came to the authors'
463 notice again and again. The handy man is the local resident
465 who fits into the local pattern of courtesies, barter, gifts, as in the case of the butcher, described above, who got his reward in the shape of the meat shoved under his arm. In cooring, of course, one never pays. In any act of "friendship" and alliance in a familistic setting no formal remuneration of monetary payment is ever present. We have already seen that it is only at the crucial period of family reorganization, when the whole system of relations between members undergoes change, that any considerations of money enter the schedule of rural services and rewards. The same absence of money payment is the point of distinction here. It distinguishes the relations between the men of a local community and one of themselves who is "handy" through special experience from those between formal client and tradesman. Money payment is the mark of the outsider;

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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.[9]

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

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The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

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Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

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[9] Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

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463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
326 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken,
232 is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exer-
431 cise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
759 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

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wife got her reward in presents, gifts, and whiskey, but not in money. Money, however, would be proferred to the nurse.

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That the factor of payment in money should be crucial is really the cloak of the set of dispositions arising from habitual relations. In the local community the handy man is not paid, since, like "friends" and neighbors, he is one of themselves. Since he is one of the countrymen, he is caught within the system of much the same habitual relations of reciprocal service and mutual aid which make up cooring in agriculture.

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To see this point, we must describe the action of the local community in respect to the work to be done once again. Cooring is a form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. One old fellow described it aptly when he said that it meant that for a day of work given you would receive a day in return. We have already seen its connection with familism and the extended family. But besides cooring, there was another form of the custom known as *meitheal* (mihil). The word *comhair* (coor) referred to the reciprocity, the word *meitheal* to the band of men and teams acting together to perform a task. On various occasions when work beyond the capacity of cooring families was to be done, a *meitheal* of men or women or horses could be made up.

As described by the old people who still remember its heyday, the *meitheal* rested on a foundation slightly different from the reciprocity of cooring. The work was done by a gang of local persons got up for the purpose through the wish and custom of the local inhabitants, but without expectancy of individual return in like measure.

Bands of men and women were got up in rural communities by *meitheal* for the following purposes, of which the authors heard record:

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1. Mowing and harvesting for priest and school teacher.
2. Mowing and harvesting for an old couple without children who could not do it themselves.
3. Hauling and moving where many horses were needed, as a *meitheal* of horses, for bringing sand or seaweed manure from the coast, or moving and re-settling a family.
4. Rebuilding a house and re-settling an evicted family.
5. Collecting a *meitheal* of girls with their spinning wheels from all the community's houses to spin after shearing.
6. Collecting a *meitheal* of men and girls for various processes connected with the conversion of flax to linen.

There were probably many other more extraordinary kinds of coöperative action. But the above list exhausts those which are remembered by the local communities the authors knew in Clare and which are unconnected with the more directly reciprocal and familistic pattern of cooring. The difference between *meitheal* and *comhair* was not a contrast, however, by any means. The term *meitheal*, applied strictly, referred to the band of persons and their tools got together. Yet there was a certain unanimity in the country people's feeling that the word *meitheal* should be reserved specifically for occasions of the local community's communal action. In *meitheal* work no individual or family expected a like return.

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Community action in concert, in which bands of workers are got up for specific purposes, is nowadays very different. Most of the characteristic actions of *meitheal* remembered by the old people are no longer carried out. Just as in the case of cooring, the need of the small farmer for his fellows is no longer so great. Monetary hire is spreading into the country communities. Yet even today the schoolteacher and the priest are donated services at hay harvesting occasionally, though nowadays schoolteacher and priest rely no longer upon bits of land and garden for support but upon fixed monetary salaries from state or church. Such aid is of little importance in their economies. Likewise, old-age

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pensions and other benefits have removed the necessity 571
of action by *meitheal* for the support of the aged and child- 178
less. General prosperity and the spread of machinery and tools have made it unnecessary for such concerted action in other cases, and local self-sufficiency is no longer so complete.

Nevertheless, the foundation of mutual relations between 476
members of the local community upon which *meitheal* was 571
based still exists. It can be called into play in emergency or under special circumstance still. Not all the townsman's accusation that the spirit of self-help and self-sufficiency has gone out of the country people is true by any means. They still will buckle to a community task, if necessity forces action, quite willingly. But they have learned that they have a voice nowadays in the kind of activity to which public funds and public works shall be put. This awareness is part of the extension inward into the community of the lines of relationship with persons and institutions external to the farm community which is so characteristic of the age. Such relationships are now made use of where before there were none of them beyond appeal to a landlord.

Some description of the former kind of activity might 476
be of interest here, though it is in the nature of a digression. 571
The techniques of the last century, particularly those of wool 286
and flax, were different from those of today; yet the situation is in other respects quite like that of today as far as the organization of persons in the community is concerned. The age groups of old and young, the sex division of activity between men and women, and the reciprocities between family groups and the direction of the community in the hands of the old men were even more marked than they are today. But nothing fundamental has changed except the techniques.

The following is an account of the older custom in weaving:

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476 A man would go to town and buy two or more pottles of flax
571 to sow. Then on the first of May he would go to the garden
248 and plant it. In August he would pull it up by the roots and lay it in small bundles to be made into stooks. Then they would take it and put it into a bog and leave it there fifteen or twenty days, after which they could dry it in the house by hanging it from the rafters. About the first of November you would take it down and some men would come in and help break it. They would then put it back and later take it down and scutch it with a pronged tool, drawing the flax over it and breaking it.

476 Some time about Christmas time you would have a *meitheal*
571 of girls come in and they would sit in a semicircle round the fire and clove the flax. It would take several days depending
283 on how much you had. The girls would stay with you all that time. At seven in the evening they would be through and within half an hour you could hear them in the hills leaping and shouting. About eight or eight-thirty the boys would begin
[535] to arrive and there would be a dance and be no more good out of them for that night. They might have a dance every two or three days. You fed them good.

The next thing was the hackling, and this might be done by men or women. You had a box with iron prongs sticking up and you would hit the stalk against the irons and the small particles would fall into the box below. It might take several nights. Old man Roughan was a great man at the hackling, but he was always great for nothing else to do with flax. It was fine if you got him to come and help you and he would be glad to do it. Then you might be good at something else and you would go and help him with that. Some men were good at one thing and others at something else and they would help each other.

After this the next thing was the spinning, and this was done by the woman. She would sit in this corner by the fire and she might be there every night, or whenever she had the time, spinning the flax fiber into thread. She had no one to help her and it was a hard job. After it was made into thread, it would be taken out and bleached and re-wound and then taken to the
[266] weaver. The weaver made it into cloth and you would use it for sheets and shirts and other things. Flax was a hard thing and there was a lot of hard work about it.

248 They have been out of growing it for thirty or forty years

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and now they would never think of growing it but must be 248
running to town and buying what they want.

The process of conversion of wool to yarn and thence 476
into cloth was equally difficult. It demanded the concerted 571
efforts of most of the rural community. It gave scope for
the development of specialists who could give their skills 283
back and forth even though, as before, their skills were part of the equipment of all the young people in the community. Two other old fellows of Inagh combined in the following account:

With the wool it was sheared on May 15 and, if that fell on a Monday or Tuesday and the following was Saturday in town (market day) you would see the men there with wool to sell while others would be there to buy it with large baskets in which to put it. The first thing was to card the wool. About the first of June you would get ready to spin it. For that you go around to all the neighbors and ask for a loan of a girl to spin the wool, and if you got eight or ten you must get the loan of that many spinning wheels. Then they come to the house on a certain day and I have seen eight wheels in this room and two in the other, all the girls spinning and talking away. It
might take several days before they were through and they [535]
would have a dance and the boys would come around. You want to be sure to get the girls early for there is a great demand for them. After the yarn is spun, it is placed on the wall to be taken to the weaver later on.

All this was part of the pattern of work in which the 476
members of the community were accustomed to work in 571
close association. The behavior described here is that
which we have already looked at in the discussion of the obligations of cooring. The *meitheal* referred to the working gang rather than the system in which the local habits were set. That setting was a constant play of habitual work relations between the "friends" and neighbors of the local community in which the characteristic organization of the community aligned sex and age groups and associated the

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476 571 skills of individual experience and prowess with one's place in such groups.

476 461 In dealing with local techniques and local specializations, it is impossible to divorce them from this social setting. The attitudes of the country people support this view. Their emotional outlook on work gives added proof of the identity between work role and the social relations it involves. Solitary work is difficult and tedious. It offers little incentive. Communal effort on the other hand has a pleasant and variegated rhythm which works up an emotional satisfaction which can counteract fatigue and monotony.

Consequently, concerted effort and hard work are not often divorced in the minds of the country people, to judge from what they say of it, from their experience of the *esprit de corps* which they feel. The old people as usual deny any value to present-day activity. The young think the doings of an older day the behavior of savages. We have already seen how the attitudes which express one's age status color one's view of life in the countryside. That is the case again here. If the old people deny the existence of community effort today, it is because they think of the zest of working in unison in youth long ago and remember the times when emotion was highest and the solidarity of communal effort greatest. And the young people forget this. Listening to the accounts of such mighty effort, they think only of the hardship and the ignorance of labor-saving short-cuts it entailed. Similarly the old people forget or fail to see that the young people go through the same experience as they once did.

476 571 Thus one can hear such a description of communal effort and the joys of work in common as follows from the old people and at the same time one can still watch a harvest where coöperative action and competition in skills is just as great. And we can know that the essential patterns are the same, though the techniques may change:

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And at the time of the saving of the hay and up to the War 476
didn't it used to be that a man's place was done in turn and 571
there would be fifteen or twenty men working at a time on the one place. There would be one man make the hayrick and there were no round ricks in it then, they were all long. There would be another who would rack it and two above on the rick putting hay into it. The other men and women would be in the fields bringing the hay in on their backs, and the children would be there too. Each would do as much as he could. Then the man whose field it was would have half a barrel of porter and the men would all drink. At noon and in the evening the neighboring women would come in and spread a great feed with jam and sweet breads and other things out of the ordinary, and in the evening there would be a tea for all of them in the fields.

Then at the cutting of the turf the man might have porter, though the hay saving was a bigger time than the turf cutting. There would be several working together at the cutting of the turf, some cutting and others laying it out, and they would be given a feed and some drink for it. There was a man who agreed to cut turf for a widow woman who had several small children. After he arrived, he was sorry he came, for there was no one to lay out the turf for him. But the widow and children were there and worked all day and never a sod did he get ahead of them. As soon as he had one cut, there was a child there to carry it away.

The people also helped each other with the ploughing and the planting of the garden, several men working to help and be called. There was one woman who would help one neighbor today and another the next and so on. It would kill you if you had to do it alone but you never feel the work when there are several of you all working.

There is none of that today. Everyone is begrudging the other if he manages to get along tolerably well and each man does his own. Then the women used to work together. They had what they called a *meitheal*. On an appointed evening all the girls would gather at the house and work on the flax, scutching it, and they might be there for several days or a week working and living in the same house until all the work was done. Then they might go to another house and stay there. We had a great fortnight long ago at the Murphys here. The young men

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476 would be waiting outside to whisk them away or to have a dance.
571 Then when they ground the oats, they had a quern and the men and women would come together and each take a turn at grinding so it was not tiring and they would have a big supper of spuds and milk for all of them before they would go. Then they would get together for the carding and spinning before the thread was taken to the weaver. The young women might be carding and the old women spinning and the *meitheal* of [535] girls would work away. They would get a dance when they would be done.

All the above description of close concert and deeply imprinted habitual work relations among the members of the local communities in the framework of the organization of behaviors of age and sex depict the now dead past. The same activities today, though certain techniques are different, bring out the same picture of work relations in an emotionally charged unison among persons of similar status within the community. The present-day hay harvest is very little different, though mowing machines are used. The great hayrick is still built in the same setting, and still calls for celebration. Everyone still waits for a signal from the hayrick rigger, a personage of considerable importance on such a day.

476 The unison of working on oats harvest with flails is gone.
But in its place is a threshing machine, and its owners come
571 around and a local crew is got up out of the local men. The
463 same jollities still reign. In all this our chief interest is not
554 in changing custom. Rather it is from this kind of observation that a new conclusion arises. The factors of differentiation about skills and techniques in the rural communities give rise to statuses of the same kind as before, statuses based upon the development of a specialty by a member of the local community which is recognized and valued within the habitual activities of his fellows. Here is an opportunity to see the embryonic form of division of labor and development of occupations in terms of the life of a community. It is a continuous process.

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The formally recognized artisans of the country districts represent a sort of halfway stage in this process. The blacksmith is the most important of them, through historical associations and because his skill suffers so little loss of demand. Others, such as the weaver and tailor, are in process of disappearance; others perhaps in process of emergence. It is the incorporation they experience into the habitual relations of the group that determines their presence or absence and determines whether or not their skill shall develop or be lost. 463 571 461

Take, for instance, the few cases of persons who return to their native communities in the countryside from abroad. They find adjustment extremely difficult. The "returned Yank," if he has been long away, is declassed and to an extent deracinated. This is true of all his behavior, through all his relations with those from whom he went. The process of reabsorbing him is slow and painful. None of this shows itself better than in his inability to fit himself in again technically and occupationally. If he takes a farm, he is better off because he is independent. But otherwise he must learn a different kind of organization of work relations, a different tempo, and he must wait upon the slow development of the relations with his fellows which alone can give him full occupational status among them. This is the reason why innovations of all kinds seem to be infinitely slow in conservative rural life. Ardent agricultural reformers all too often fail to recognize this enforced tempo of habitual working relations in agriculture and suffer disillusionment accordingly. In fact, it is the rock on which most well-meaning reforms or innovations break. Change and innovation do come about, surprisingly quickly from one point of view. But they proceed through social relations; they do not overthrow them. They come about through a new habit's achieving a compatibility with old ones.

In the Irish countryside the organization of the community upon an occupational basis can be understood not 463 571

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463 in terms of such considerations as income, wealth, or skill,
571 or any such factors, but in terms of the place and function of the persons specializing among their fellows. It can be understood in terms of social relations and the organization of habit. Status based upon technical differentiation is built up out of personal relations in the work experience of the community members.

476 If then we take inventory of the kinds of goods and ob-
571 jects which make up the *matériel* of peasant life, and draw
621 up such an inventory to illustrate for us the connection between social relations and these goods and objects, we can construct a series of charts which connect community life and the exchanges and uses of goods, services, and objects in one comprehensive view.

In such a chart those goods and services which come to the farmer from those within his own community come to him in connection with traditional social relations uniting fellow community members. They are the ones transferred under the pattern of cooring: through "friendliness" and non-monetary reciprocal obligation.

Those goods and services which come to the farmer and his family from without the community come to him in connection with more recently developed non-traditional relations uniting him to persons outside the community. They fall into quite different patterns of activity. Likewise any person whose occupation makes him both a member of the local community and part of the outside world, by virtue of his relations extending beyond, is also in a position of oscillation between the first and the second relationships.

For there is a continual attempt to extend the pattern of cooring, as with all local familistic and communal obligation and sentiment, outward on the part of the farmers, and a continual extension inward on the part of outsiders of other patterns of relationship. Much of the enduring pattern of town and country relationship evolved in Irish

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society hinges on this point. Much of political life is explained here. Gifts and personal favors, fashioned on the pattern of the extended family and local community, besiege (or used to besiege) magistrates and government officials. Before land reform they besieged such links with the outer world as the older estate system provided, such as the bog warden, the land steward, and the other functionaries of landlords. Yet against this pattern's sway there runs a continual incursion of other patterns which the institutions extending their sway from town life and higher social classes downward provide. In this meeting and conflict of social patterns much is to be learned of the structure of Irish social classes and of the continuing course of Irish social life.

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The matter is of interest here only as a summary of the life of the rural community itself. It occupies us only in so far as it points to a conclusion about the kinds of relationship which build up within the local community between the farmers and those of their fellows who are not farmers. There is always a primary distinction among them. There are those who have, quantitatively speaking, most of their activities taken up in relations within the local community alone, and there are those who are divided between the local community and the outside world and who make a bridge between. The former fall in one way or another into the pattern of cooring. They are a "cut below" the farmer, yet his intimates. They are the ones in relation to whom the farmer is the dominant party, since it is the farmer who commissions, hires, or otherwise sets off the other's activity, expert as it may be. The secret of the equivalence of the status of these persons with that of the landless boys lies in these facts. For the boys are in exactly the same case.

The others, however, who are in one way or another part of the outside world, are alike if only in that. Various as they are, they are never in the same case as the local handy

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men and the boys. For them the patterns of dominance by the farmer, of recipiency of gifts and cooring favors, of articulation with the peasant cliques in the local community, are never complete, because of their conflict with other, external ties. The crossroad shopkeeper, the policeman, the schoolteacher, the priest, the big farmer, even the local man who becomes a county councillor by election, are always a "cut above" the farmers. They come to form a group apart. They take over near-urban standards first. Some of them, of course, priest, schoolteacher, and policeman, are often residents for only a short term. They have come to the country district they serve as strangers and outsiders, if only from the next parish. But a certain aloofness and a certain difference clings to these men even if they are natives by ancestral descent. Contact with the outer world brings in the outer world's ways and sets them apart and a little above.

Only the wanderers, the tinkers, the itinerant beggars, hawkers, and "dealing" men and women, many of them uprooted urban laborers, whose ties are with the towns and whose visits in country districts are short and predatory, fall outside this pattern. They are a special case. They are also many a "cut below" the farmers. They are an outcast lowest class.

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TABLE 7

Relations of Farmers and Non-Farmers in Three Rural Communities in County Clare

The table which follows is a chart of relationships between farmers and non-farmers in the rural communities of Clare. It lists those of different skill or habit with whom the farmers have relations. Those who fall under the pattern of reciprocities, gifts, and cooring, and the goods and services they provide the farmer, appear in one list. Those who fall under other patterns, who do not figure in the obligations of cooring, are listed in another. At the right of each item in each list is a word or phrase characterizing the initiation of the actions taking place between the farmer and the non-farmer in the course of the provision of the goods or services described.

Read another way, the lists arrange in two groups all the local specialists with whom we have been dealing. They show us that the differences are to be found in social relations, not in goods or services rendered or any other factor. All the specialists of whom the authors got information in the country districts are here. The first list describes the specialists whose relations to the farmers are "internal" to the community. The second list describes those persons who connect the farmers with the outside world and are thus "external." List I gives those who enjoy superior prestige and local standing, whose contacts with the community proceed through the heads of families, the adult men, and who are capable of initiating action among them. In that limited sense only, they are dominant over the farmers and make a higher class. List II gives those who share inferior prestige and local standing, who form cliques with the "boys," and who are not ordinarily capable of initiating action among the adult members of the community except in a course of communal action employing their special skill. These are a lower class in the country districts by such definition.

This configuration of factors reveals the lines of relationship within the community and those extending outward from it.

The reader may judge for himself how close the connection is between the familistic system of farm life and the structure of the rural community.

List I

Extra-Familial Relations within the Local Communities, Internal

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations [1]	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services [2]
Weavers	Homespuns, shawls, cloths, blankets		
Tailors	Clothing		
Carpenters	Furniture, houses, buildings		

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case this consists of gifts and cooring.
[2] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case the farmer commissions the labor.

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Smiths	Farm implements, horseshoes, tools, repairs	Gifts, annual payment, and cooring	
Shoemakers	Boots, shoes		
Thatchers	House thatching		
Hayrick experts	Hayrick building		
Masons	House building, sheds, walls		
Wall builders	Walls		
Whitewashers	Limewashing of houses, sheds		
Water diviners and well diggers	Finding and building of wells		
Threshing-machine operators, owners	Threshing	Payment, gifts and cooring	Farmer commissions labor and machine and pays hire
Midwives	Attendance at childbirth		
Bonesetters	Broken bones		
Local "vets"	Treatment of sick animals		
Local "doctors," wise men or women	Treatment of sick; magic		
Domestic servants	Household aid	Wages only for outsiders not kin	Farmer hires and pays hire, otherwise kinship relations hold
Agricultural laborers, employees of big farmers	Occasional aid in agriculture		Either party requests aid
Gravekeepers	Records of grave locations, tending of graves	Wages by priest, gifts and cooring from farmers	Unobserved
Slate quarrymen	Building and roofing slates	Unobserved	Unobserved
Sextons	Tending of churches	Wages by priest	Unobserved
Limekiln and lime burners	Fertilizer	Gifts and cooring from local men, payment for outsiders	Unobserved

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List II

Extra-Familial Relations with Local Persons Extending Outside the Local Communities, External

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
		Special Cases, Occasional Relationship	
Tinkers	Asses, pots, pans, repairs	Occasional trade at the door	Tinker makes rounds
Dealers, hawkers, feather-mongers	Odds and ends, small trade articles. Feather mongers buy feathers from farmers	Occasional trade at the door	Dealer makes rounds
		Habitual Relationships	
Crossroad shopkeeper	Supplies liquors, foodstuffs, tobacco, sundries not bought in town. (Most trading of staples done in towns, however.) Collects eggs and butter for sale to produce dealers	Farmer an habitual client, purchasing on long-term credit. Relationship overlaid with obligations of "friendliness," involving reciprocal gifts and occasional advances. Barter significant only in the shopkeepers' acting as depot for eggs and butter sales	Relationship habitual over long term (see other columns)
Civic guards, (police) officials and uniformed men (*Gardaí Siochána*)	Local protection of person and property, apprehension and prosecution of misdemeanor and felony. Informally, police settle disputes, report grievances, give amateur legal advice, and gather census data for governmental departments	By law, civic guards must be neither members of the communities in which they are stationed nor related in it by marriage. They are instructed to maintain close rapport and very friendly relations with local people, and seem to succeed. They go in for much sport with the local young men and boys. They are attached to local barracks but, if they are married, maintain homes in the local community	Assigned to stations on departmental orders

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1935) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Big farmer	Occasional employment of local young men; occasional aid to small farmers and local purchase of corn, vegetables, animals, produce	Of a higher class and wider contacts than the small farmers; most often a townsman by culture and even by residence. In the countryside, close informal contacts with others of his kind over a wide area; interest in fashionable recreation and sport. Contacts with small farmers often friendly but usually few, except where big farmer is active politically	
Cattle and produce dealers	Purchase of produce and livestock, providing chief monetary income of small farmers	When not townsmen, whom the farmer meets only at periodic fairs and markets, these men are usually big farmers. Buy "from the land" (that is, from individual farmers not gathered at the local fairs and markets) very rarely; butter and egg dealers nearly always buy through crossroads shopkeepers	

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Parish priest and curate and other clergy	Religious leadership and moral control. Regulation of personal conduct and family behavior. Settlement of conflicts and disputes. Recommendation of "characters" before the outside world. Regulation of formal beliefs and attitudes, supervision of education in the interests of the accepted *mores*. Priest supplies ceremonial and cultural leadership and takes an active part in nearly all recreational and cultural activity, along with the schoolteacher, in country parishes. Only at times of high ceremony or special devotion, as at marriages, or in pilgrimages and retreats, does the small farmer make use of town churches, though he and his wife often contribute to them	In country districts today formal religious relationship seems to be superseding older paternalistic dominance of parish priest. Little informal contact except in the case of young curates in local sport. But the priest still commands greatest respect and reverence and, in many cases, the love of his parishioners. He is still the local court of appeal and the arbiter of local custom. He is consulted a great deal by both men and women. His parishioners are jealous lest he overstep his sphere of authority, particularly in politics, yet they concur in granting him obedience in everything else. Nevertheless the older magical power he possessed once is gone. Today he is often superior to the small farmers in wealth and education, and is not one of them. His more usual associates are other clergy, big farmers, and townsmen	

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CHAPTER XIII

Markets and the Community

621 IN rural Ireland what we have called the "rural community" is no simply defined geographical area. Any one of the recognized divisions of the countryside in Ireland, a townland, a group of townlands, a parish, an old barony, a mountain upland, a portion of a valley floor or plain, except perhaps the newer administrative divisions, is in a sense a community. The lines of relationship among the small farmers are continuous from one of these to another across the land. Geographic barriers serve only to deflect the lines of this continuum, not to divide it.

621 186 We observe of a farmer of Luogh, for example, that he coors largely in Luogh townland. But he has kinsmen scattered around about as far as Mount Elva, four miles to the north, and Liscannor, three miles to the south. He attends the parish church of Killilagh, a two-mile walk from his house, but sends his children to school at Ballycotton, only a mile off. He does most of his shopping in Roadford, a crossroad settlement two miles away. Yet he takes his larger produce for sale and his larger needs of purchase to the market town of Ennistymon, some eight miles off, or the smaller one of Lisdoonvarna, some five miles off. He votes and pays his taxes as a member of a certain electoral district which overlaps exactly none of these regions. He associates himself in tradition with Clare and Munster as a North Clare man, rather than with Galway and Connaught,

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though he may have seen very little of either beyond his 621
market towns. The small farmer of Luogh has allegiances 186
to all these communities. He is quite ready to find his emotion stirred in any one of them. He is ready to back the men of Luogh against the men of the neighboring townland; to back those of the mountain region against those of the valley lands; those of his parish against the rest; those of the countryside against the towns of Lisdoonvarna and Ennistymon; those of North Clare against other sections of the county; those of Clare against all other counties; those of his class against all others; of his religion against all others; of his nation against all others. Each one of these allegiances has a geographical base, though in the last analysis each one of these is built up out of his personal experience of human relations.

A study of the local community among the small farmers 621
must thus be a study of the geographic basis of their relationships. In the course of such study an inquiry into the spatial relationships involved in the distribution of produce and shop goods between the farms and the market towns is a first step.

The chief agencies of distribution in the countryside 438
draw upon well-marked areas. Each crossroad shop, each hamlet, each market town, each fair, has its own hinterland. In recent years creameries have grown up at strategic places. Likewise, in the same years, larger towns have pushed their hinterlands farther back into the country districts, and motor lorries go even into the back roads.

The definition of such market areas and the demarcation of those into which such a rural county as Clare can be divided is a relatively simple task. It can be reached by plotting out on the map lists of customers' names and addresses obtained from each of the myriad crossroad centers and clusters of shops sprinkled over the county, combining them with others obtained from records of tolls paid by

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438 farmers in larger centers. This information can be checked with the testimony of farmers themselves as to where they do their buying and selling. It can be checked again with testimony upon the part of shopkeepers in the market towns as to the area from which they draw their clientele.

Plotting out these lists gives a picture of many superimposed areas. The smallest of all of them groups only a few townlands together about a crossroad or a hamlet. These areas about hamlets cluster together in turn, along the roads, to form larger areas about a village. The area about a village groups together with that round other villages, again depending upon the terrain and the roads, to form a larger district around one of the larger towns. These town-encircling areas themselves fall together to form still larger districts embracing all the farms trading in the largest centers such as Ennis, the county seat of 6,000 population, Kilrush, the metropolis of the West Clare peninsula of 4,000 population, and the city of Limerick. For Limerick draws farmers along the main roads as far as Newmarket-on-Fergus, fifteen miles into Clare. The whole county, of course, centers ultimately in Limerick, since rail, road, and river all lead there rather than over the upland divides to Galway city to the north.

443 Local fairs figure in this plotting. Traditional long-established fairs are sometimes not held within the confines of a town of the present day, though all but a few of them now take place in the streets of some town or on a modern fair-green set aside at one edge of a town. Nevertheless, the areas from which farmers come to fairs yield the same picture of overlapping distributions. The smaller fairs of little attendance draw from the smaller areas, which group together in turn. Widest of all are the areas of the largest fairs, held at Ennis and Kilrush. And there is not a village to be found on the map that does not have its fairs, carefully scheduled so that within the immediate area there will be

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no conflict of schedules. The farmer may go this week to a small village fair two miles or so away in one direction, next week three miles or so in another, and the third week to a larger town.

The list of cattle, sheep, horse, and pig fairs within County Clare given in Table 8 is taken from *Old Moore's*, the farmer's almanac. *Old Moore's* has hung in every farmer's house for nearly a century. It is his infallible guide. A glance at the map of Clare will show how many are the fairs within even a very small compass of a few miles.

TABLE 8

CALENDAR OF FAIRS IN COUNTY CLARE, 1934

Ballina, March 28
Ballyket, March 22, July 4, August 17 (cattle), December 1
Ballynacally, February 28, April 14, June 14, July 30, September 16, November 8
Ballyvaughan, May 29, June 24, September 16, December 18
Bauroe, *see* Feakle
Bridgetown, January 24, April 18, June 10, November 25
Broadford, April 13, June 21, September 13, November 21
Carrigaholt, June 1, July 5, August 19 (cattle, pigs, and sheep)
Clare Castle, May 30 (pigs day previous), November 11 (pigs day previous)
Clonroad (Ennis), May 8, July 31, October 13, December 2
Connolly, January 2, April 17, July 18, October 3
Corofin, February 19, May 20, July 20, September 12, November 22, December 14 (cattle, sheep, and pigs)
Doonbeg, February 8, April 1, May 2, July 1 and 26, October 8, December 16
Ennis (*see also* Clonroad), January 5 (sheep), 6, 11 (pigs only), February 2, 8 (pigs only), March 2, 3, 8 (pigs only), April 4 (horses and sheep), 5, 10 (pigs only), 16 (cattle), 18 and 19 (sheep), May 10 (pigs only), June 14 (pigs only), July 12 (pigs only), August 9 (pigs only), September 4 (cattle and sheep), 13 (pigs only), October 11 (pigs only), November 8 (pigs only), December 13 (pigs only)
Ennistymon, January 22, February 12, March 24, April 15, May 15, July 2, August 22, September 29, November 19, December 13. Pig market last Tuesday of each month
Feakle, January 24, February 17 (Bauroe), March 24, April 24, May 17 (Bauroe), June 20, July 24, August 17 (Bauroe), September 24, October 24, November 17 (Bauroe), December 20
Kilclaran, June 1
Kildysart, January 21, February 20, March 15, April 24, May 22, July 15, August 27, October 24, December 18. Pig fair second Thursday of each month
Kilenena, March 11, June 13, September 12, December 12
Kilfenora, February 25, April 9, June 2, August 15, October 9, November 4 (cattle, sheep, and pigs)
Kilkee, January 8, February 24, April 15, May 13, July 10, August 13, October 5, November 26. Pig fair second Tuesday of each month
Kilkishen, January 20, March 15, May 9, August 31, December 23

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TABLE 8 (*continued*)

443 Killaloe, third Monday in January, February 28, March 28, April 12, May 20, June 26, July 16, August 12, September 3, October 20, November 17, first Tuesday after Christmas, cattle and sheep
Kilmihill, January 7, February 15, March 30, May 19, July 18, August 15, September 28, November 1, December 13
Kilmurry M'Mahon, May 24
Kilrush, last Wednesday in each month, for pigs; January 16, February 22, April 13, May 10, June 12, September 1, October 12, November 16, for cattle and sheep; March 25, first Thursday in June, October 10, November 23, for horses
Labasheeda, June 10, August 10, October 10, December 10
Liscannor, January 6
Lisdoonvarna, April 1, May 1, November 1, December 1
Miltown Malbay, February 1, March 9, May 4, June 21, August 11, September 10, October 18, December 9. Pigs first Thursday of each month
Mullagh, January 1, March 17
Newmarket-on-Fergus, December 20
O'Brien's Bridge, March 18, July 25, November 17
O'Callaghan's Mills, June 27, November 14
Quin, July 7 (cattle and sheep), November 1 (horses, cattle, and sheep)
Ruane, June 17, September 26
Scarriff, January 5, February 1, March 3, April 3, May 1, June 2, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 3, December 9, pigs day previous
Sixmilebridge, December 5
Spancil-hill, June 23, 24
Tulla, last Tuesday in January and February, March 25, April 25, May 13, June 15, July 19, August 15, September 29, October 19, November 9, December 7

438 In these ever-larger overlapping market areas the natural
133 physical divisions of the countryside are well represented. The great central mass of Mount Callan divides West Clare from the rest of the county. It divides as well the market districts of Ennis and Kilrush. In the valley of the Fergus River, which drains the highlands of Mid-Clare to the north and East Clare beyond the corcasses (rough marshlands) to the east, the human flow of trade and produce exchange tends downward to the towns of Ennis and Clarecastle, at the head of tidewater. The high country marking the divides over into the Inagh and Cullinagh rivers and into the lake country of North Clare, just south of the gaunt hills
438 of Burren, divides the market district of Ennis from the smaller districts upon which the villages of Ennistymon, Corrofin, and Lisdoonvarna draw. Yet these villages in their turn are within the region of Clare from which the

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farmers converge upon Ennis. In each case a center, 438
whether a larger market town or one of the smaller villages, serves a natural area demarcated by the configuration of the land and the course of the roads.

In such natural regions, particularly in more remote and 491
mountainous country, the roads determine the intercourse 361
of the communities with one another. Today each focal 438
point is joined with another by a motor road. As the roads wind out from the larger centers, shops come to be placed at the strategic crossroad; a public house springs up; perhaps a schoolhouse, a parochial house, a chapel of the parish, rise beside them. Nowadays creameries are put up at these or still other points along the roads, where they are most conveniently accessible to small and medium farms producing milk. Even more recently lorries have begun to come direct [494] to the crossroad to pick up produce that once, before motor traffic, had to be carried by the farmers themselves all the way to town.

Plotting out the market areas of the towns and villages 438
of the countryside reveals a characteristic of social and economic space even here where the deepest hinterlands are never more than a half-day's leisurely trip by horse and cart. Any list of customers plotted by residence around a minor center gives an area which extends considerably farther in the direction away from the nearest larger center than it does in the direction leading to it. The minor centers draw principally from the hinterlands behind them and their areas extend only a little way along the roads in the direction of the next larger center. Ennistymon in North Clare draws custom twelve miles to the north, but to the south its influence reaches only three miles up the valley of the Inagh River, where the region of the larger center, Ennis, begins. Ennis itself serves all Clare, and its own immediate area extends, to judge from the residences of the farmers who come to buy and sell in her markets, beyond Ennistymon

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438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

491 Today the roads both great and small provide all-weather
494 routes for every kind of local traffic. They carry many lorries
496 and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad – the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

491 The main roads are much more direct. They follow divides and occasionally cut right across high bog country. Today they negotiate bogs, which once would have prohibited any sort of transportation during wet weather, by dint of side ditches and high crowns of gravel and dirt. Over high country they have better foundations and wander in comparatively straight fashion through the country.

491 At various points along these main roads there are
653 branches today penetrating the countryside. These are rougher and simpler constructions of crushed stones taken from local quarries, leased by the County Council. The stone is broken by laborers and small farmers of the district through which the road runs. In the case of the smaller roads each landholder is responsible for the bit of the road that runs by his land. "Road metal," as the crushed stone is called, is spread during the late autumn, winter, or very early spring. When the weather is dry, in summer, a fine white dust rises after every vehicle. But in the rainy months of spring and winter the roads are soft and full of chuck holes, and new stones must be laid down. Then the heavy
[493] iron-tired carts of the farmers break them further and press them into the soft roadbeds.

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The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction. 491 [731] 361 491 [487]

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics. 491 653

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler. 493 494

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

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493 two or three motor cars for important guests and the prin-
494 cipals. At election time the local political organizations of the national parties provide free transport to the polls for the old and lame. In all else the motor car is the mark of the townsman, either the produce-collector in his lorry or the man of influence on a jaunt.

493 Even at such times of high ceremony as weddings, funerals,
494 and elections the country people still use the horse and
554 trap or sidecar. This is the traditional mode of polite travel, and it retains its popularity today. The trap is used only by the whole family or by its adult farm-owning members. It is used only in connection with activities of importance which mark their own status and those to whom they travel. It is always used at funerals and marriages. It sometimes transports all the family in Sunday best to church. It is brought out to honor a visitor or announce the arrival or departure of a friend. And it is used occasionally on visits of state to the town. Sunday clothes always go with it. It would be a very big farmer who used the trap in all his trips to town.

493 The vehicle-of-all-work, and the one on which produce
494 goes to market and shop-bought goods come back, is the common two-wheeled cart. The farmers call it a "car." With the addition of side boards it becomes a "creel" and can carry small livestock, turf, and many another bulky object. Occasionally it appears on Sunday, but one never sees it in times of high ceremony such as in a funeral procession. It is the vehicle of everyday working life. Even the younger members of the family may use it sometimes in going about their work. But it is most often to be seen in the hands of the man of the house.

The ass and car, on the other hand, ordinarily has no such eminence. The donkey cart is a woman's vehicle. It takes her and her farm produce to and from the crossroad center. In a town market it is no accident that one can find the

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ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets. 493 494

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. 481 At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields [487] in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add 493 perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just be- 494 ginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only 492 adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related

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The methods of transport in the countryside are related
489 to the distances to be traveled and the errands to be run. These things are matters of the organization and relationships of family and community. It is not only the means of transport which can be related to the constituent relationships of country social life. Each kind of farm product exported and farm need purchased involves a different distance of travel, a holder of a different status in family and community, and a different relation with the outsider.

489 The goods the farmer produces travel to the centers at
443 which they are exchanged over distances which are com-
438 mensurate with their value, their importance in farm economy, and their association with the status of the persons in the rural communities under whose charge they are produced. Horses take most care, are most valuable, and are the very special charge of the man of the house. The horse fair accordingly draws from the largest area. Cattle are the great money crop, the export staple. Accordingly the cattle fairs are among the chief lodestones of the larger centers, drawing from the deepest hinterlands of the major market areas. They are masculine affairs. Likewise potatoes and corn crops, oats, come to market only in the major centers. Farm fathers bring them down by horse and car from the deepest hinterlands.

Pigs represent a much shorter period of work and care. They are often in woman's province. The pig fairs are smaller gatherings, held in small centers, drawing from small hinterlands. Lesser vegetables, principally cabbage, travel no such distance as potatoes, and women often sell them. Finally, butter and eggs travel the shortest distance of all. They are often bartered at the crossroad centers. Before creameries were introduced, salted firkins or tubs of butter, representing a longer accumulation, went longer distances to the village centers.

234 Creamery associations were not established until the
438 middle of the time of research in County Clare. They are

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part of a new economics which brings distributing agencies 234
to the farmer's door. Consequently they do not fit this pic- 438
ture and are among the great forces of gradual change. They have made dairying the pursuit of the farm father, as it was not before. Like motor lorries, they represent the new geographic order that is gradually overcoming the old.

The goods that reach the farmer cover distances between 438
their ultimate distributing center and consumer in the farm 462
families in the same proportion as they are bound in with 484
the statuses and relationships in work and life of the familistically organized groups. The men go to the larger towns with or without their wives for the larger annual purchases of boots and cloth goods or furniture or tools and implements. The boys may go for the more ordinary purchases of flour and foodstuffs and feeds and so on, to be bought in their fathers' names, to the local centers and villages. The household needs from day to day are the women's province. Tallow, candles, oil, sugar, tea, are to be had either in the villages or in the crossroad centers. The only need the men may fill so close to home is the recurrent hunger for tobacco and drink.

If we turn this view of travel and distribution and personal relationship into generality, we see that the pattern is such that it fits those of community life we have described. In the masculine sphere of life the disposal of produce means masculine travel and masculine building of relationship with the outside world of greatest geographical range. Taking each item of masculine produce in the descending order of its importance to the farm families, the area out of which the product is brought to a center is progressively smaller. The same fact is true of the feminine produce, with the difference, of course, that the range is smaller to begin with. The area of widest contacts established by women and the areas drawn upon by women and the areas

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438 drawn upon by centers of distribution of women's produce
462 are always much less in extent than those of men.
484 It is not enough to point out that the distance to be traveled and the size of the area which a center serves are in
438 direct proportion to the monetary value of the goods con-
484 cerned. This is the case. It is an old story among economists.
571 But like all generalities it does not fail to have many exceptions. The point of interest is not the monetary but the sociological aspect of the matter.

Areas of distributive service coincide roughly with áreas of personal contact and habitual travel. They coincide also with areas of effective social relationship. Thus there is a direct correlation between the area over which a peasant moves and has social relations and the value of the product he raises, as the economist would point out. But the source of this correlation is not to be found in economic considerations alone. The economic matters are themselves the outcome of the patterning of activities between persons. They show us the interdependence of the internal organization of the peasant community and the relationships making that community's articulation with the outside world.

Nothing in the world prevents any small farmer from going to Dublin markets to sell his cattle, not even the price of the ticket, for he has that. But he goes only so rarely as to make the fact negligible. On the other hand, the big farmer, the cattleman, in County Clare habitually goes farther, buying and selling far beyond the confines of the local market areas, purchasing his household and family goods in the great urban centers, patronizing even a Dublin tailor sometimes. The difference in travel is a part once again of the difference by class and economy between large farmer and small. The small farmer's community is made up of the persons related to him who are also small farmers and the persons who connect these men with the outside world. This we saw in the discussion of occupations. The

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market areas are the areas of effective, habitual relationship among farmers. They are definable only in terms of social relations made up of the acts of specific local persons. Such relations differ in duration and the frequency of the events making them up. Change such relations and geography is changed. For a human setting geography is merely the locus of relationship. The system of distribution that orders space in rural Ireland functions to do so within a system of social relations, which we have called familism. 438 484 571

It is not surprising that the relationships existing between the small farmers and their local distributing agencies go farther by far than economic acts of barter, purchase, and sale. The country crossroad shopkeepers, especially, win very special status in rural communities out of these relationships. In Ireland and in Clare shopkeeping is predominantly an urban and small-town trade. Yet shops are numerous and important in the country districts, and a word must be said of them. 444 571

In typical western rural communities the smallest and poorest of the crossroad shops, serving the minutest areas, are ordinary cottages or farmhouses. The slightest alteration has sufficed to turn one of the rooms into an emporium where makeshift till, counter, and shelves carry little more than tobacco, matches, oil, and a few sweets and small sundries. 444

Such a shop is usually run by a woman, who subsists upon it and a plot of land or garden. She is often a widow, or the wife of a local tradesman. In many cases the little shop is the local post office as well, and a salary from the state contributes to the owner's upkeep. Such a shop is sometimes, too, a local gathering place for the boys, in the way the local smithy once was such a gathering place. The boys get their fags here. It is encumbent upon the woman who keeps the shop to make them presents at Christmas time, in recognition of their custom. Everyone agrees that the woman [205] [431]

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444 subsists only because she is a part of the local community. Though she charges a bit more, she spares one the longer walk to the village center.

Country shops are often larger than hers. Sometimes where the distance to the village center is greater, they sell nearly everything one could get in town, outside the specialized drapers' or hardware, boot, and shoe shops. They sell all the farm staples, such as groceries, sugar, flour, tea, and tobacco. Here people may come from two or three miles around. The farmers all know they pay more, but the shop is a convenience. It may get the only newspaper in the district, and men drop in to hear the news. In the evenings a local school of cards may flourish here and the boys foregather.

[203 571]

The country shop reaches its zenith at the crossroad, where a church, a parochial house, a school, and a creamery may stand as well. Here the shop often dates from the days just after the famine and has had a long history of prosperity. In the past generation many such crossroads produced county councillors, and the rewards of public service often meant the acquisition of several rich farms in addition to the shop. The shop serves the surrounding countryside and collects its produce, and it derives its reward from the service it performs.

441 565 571 The position of the country shopkeeper is to be found in his place within the system of relations which make up the community of small farmers behind his shop. His function as economic agent of distribution is only part of his role. He is in a situation which must be described as a perpetual seesaw. If he is drawn too far within the local community, he loses contact with the outside world. If he is drawn too far outward, he loses touch with his customers. He must maintain a balance in a delicate equilibrium.

He is caught within a pattern of mutual obligations to the farmers on the one hand and the social system of the

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town classes on the other. Let it suffice to show his place that in a recitation of such a shopkeeper's intimates and associates it is most often not the farmers but the members of the community who are in a similar position who figure. His associates are the parish priest, the schoolmaster, the local police, and the local "rancher." When marriages are made for his daughters, they are made with big farmers, and husbands are got at considerably greater distances than in the case of the small farmers. Along with his associates, he makes up the rural middle class, at once a halfway point and a channel of movement for the infiltration of gradual change, poised between the small farmers of the countryside and the middle and upper classes of the urban centers. 441 565 571

Other agencies of exchange and contact between rural communities and the outside world are as much overlaid with social sentiment and custom expressive of valuations upon local status as is the position of the crossroad shopkeeper. The form of exchange is ceremonial, and a ritual exists to express much more than the mere mechanism of contact and exchange.

The two chief occasions of economic exchange outside the shops at the crossroad or in the towns are the best examples of such ceremonial. Let us take the fairs first. The fairs are still the most important mechanism of exchange between the small farm producers and the middlemen who start farm produce upon its journey to the ultimate consumer. Nothing has risen to threaten them seriously even in this day of economic complexity. The farmers of the rural hinterland of towns and villages journey with cattle, pigs, corn, and wool to market, to sell them that day or else to carry them home again. Some big farmers sell from the land direct to dealers and jobbers. A few small farmers sell direct to neighbors. These are exceptions, and sales in market and fair are well-nigh universal. 443

The fairs are not only universal, they are also elaborately

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443 conventional. How much, if anything, survives of medieval commerce in them and how much comes down from the days of the medieval Irish *aonach* is a matter for the historian. In ancient times the fair was a gathering for purposes much more widely embracing than exchange of produce. The *aonach* was often the occasion of a royal or chieftainly court, a bardic contest, and local games. Nothing of this remains today.

443 Cattle, horse, sheep, and pig fairs are fixed, habitual
424 occasions. Their dates and places of meeting are universal knowledge in the countryside. An extension of medieval English law has made most of them proprietary, making of the right to hold a fair a legal title to be bought and sold and charged for in the shape of tolls. But they are public occasions none the less.

443 The lore of fairs is an inexhaustible fund of information among the small farmers. Among them, indeed, the size of the local fairs is a matter of local pride. It is an index of the industry and wealth of the region. The state of prices is as much a clue to the fate of the local universe as the financial vagaries of Wall Street or the City reveal the destinies of the world.

443 All this is natural enough where fairs and local markets
462 represent the chief outlets for produce and the chief source of monetary income. As cattle are the chief concern of the
562 males of the family and source of ultimate success or failure for the family, so the cattle fair is the great testing ground for male prowess, skill, and intelligence. In the market place of the cattle fair, the male command of the family corporation and masculine representation of that corporation in the community makes public display of its stewardship. On this stage, the farmer can meet the outsider on his own terms and with his own weapons of shrewdness and experience.

437 The farmers criticize bitterly any departure from cus-
443 tomary procedure. Even though they complain that the fair

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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation. 437 443 555

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers. 443 868

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance. 521 443

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities. 443 484 574 602

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the 443 484

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443 morning. To dress, snatch a cup of tea, and bless himself
484 takes only a moment. Usually he has arranged for companionship, and he and his neighbors drive their beasts along the roads together. Company makes the night less lonely and the handling of the animals easier. Driving them is a skilled task against the dangers of the road, both natural and eerie. The men hope to reach the site of the fair before daybreak. They want to arrive in time to find a "good pitch," as they call it. They want to take their stand in the drawn-up lines of men and beasts where buyers are most likely to notice them. His pitch taken, each man stands over his beasts, ready for the inspection of buyers, careful that his beasts do not wander off or get mixed up with the others.

443 As dawn breaks, the buyers arrive. They are nearly always
438 cattle dealers and big farmers. Only occasionally are they local men. One can recognize them as they hurry about,
[291] businesslike, wearing trench coat, bowler, and leggings. The costume is practically a uniform with them, quite different from the drab coats and boots of the countrymen. They carry chalk or scissors and pencils and a notebook to mark the beasts of their choice and record their purchases.

In the good days of high prices, as during the World War, the buyers arrive even before dawn and buy by lantern light. All the good beasts of the fair may be gone by the time the sun comes up. On occasions of little demand, however, the buyers have time to look about carefully and make the exhaustive tests of quality that long experience has convinced them are the secret of commercial success.

443 The procedure of choice, bargaining, and sale is as un-
437 changing a ritual as any church provides. The buyer — dealer or farmer — strolls unconcernedly along the lines of farmers and their beasts. Here and there he greets an acquaintance. But he is appraising the animals all the while. Rigid custom forbids his breaking in on a bargain already

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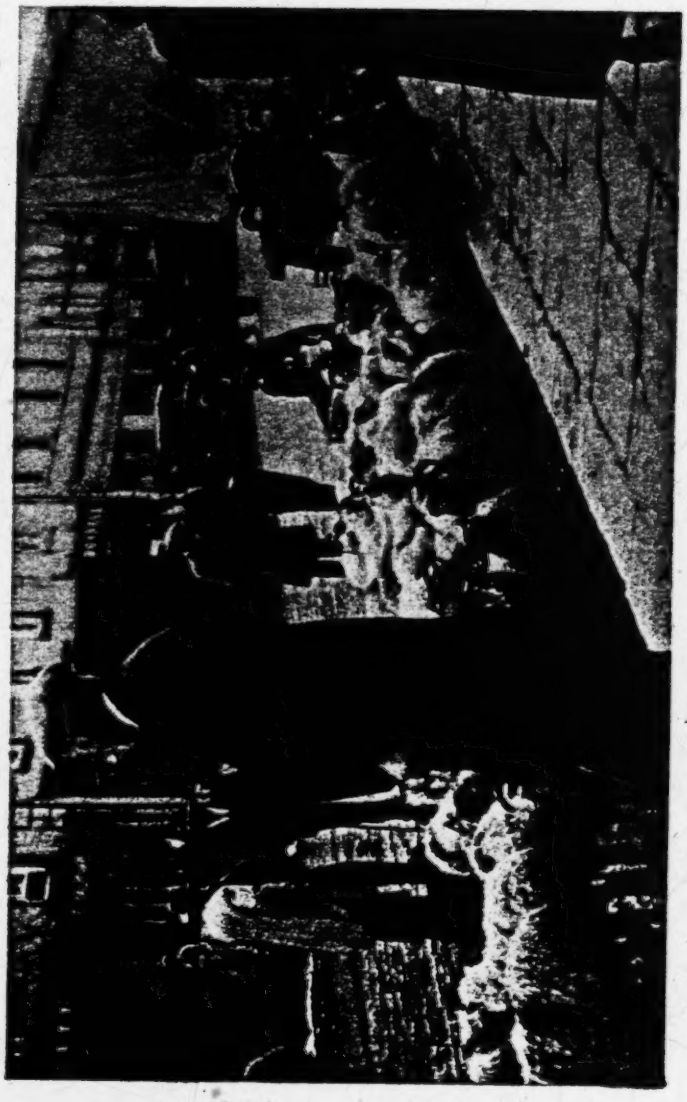

SHEEP FAIR IN A MARKET TOWN

[facing p. 300]

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443 begun. He must find a farmer who is free for the moment.
437 Should he catch sight of an unoccupied owner of a likely animal, he crosses over to him and begins the business of the day. His first move is to ask the price, knowing well he will get one larger than the farmer really hopes to receive. This first exchange is merely the occasion for the closer inspection of the cattle and a notice to the other that a bargain is in process.

Such a move is a signal. As questions and offers pass between buyer and farmer, a crowd of bystanders soon collects. They offer suggestions, shout out commentaries, encourage one party or the other, contributing animatedly to the debate, which will eventually culminate in a sale at a price which instantly becomes the knowledge of buyers and sellers alike.

One of the bystanders almost invariably adopts a well-recognized role. He becomes an intermediary between buyer and seller. He turns all his energy, backed by the plaudits of the crowd, to the consummation of the sale. He may be a friend of either buyer or seller, brought in for his shrewdness or experience or skill, or he may be a wandering tinker in hopes of a commission from one or the other. He may even be only an interested bystander.

The intermediary is almost always a major factor in the transaction. He is the one who forges an agreement over the distrust and shyness of the farmer and the autocratic impatience of the buyer. All the parties are vociferous, the farmer in praise of his wares and the buyer in depreciation of them. The intermediary turns grandiose claims into laughter, wears down the resistance of the farmer by wit, and raises the offers of the buyer by appeals to fair dealing. Time and time again he will drag back a buyer who rushes off in well-feigned disgust at an outrageous demand or push forward the hand of a reluctant farmer to be seized by the buyer in the handclasp that marks completion of the sale.

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443 Amid the encouragements of the bystanders, he repeats the
437 old bargaining cries. He shouts, "Split the difference!" when taking-price and asking-price approach one another, and he wrings concessions from each party until agreement is reached. They end with a handshake between them. The sale is made.

If the buyer is ready to pay for his purchase on the spot, the older custom, all three parties step off the fair ground into any convenient near-by pub. There they celebrate the transaction at the expense of the buyer, the purchase money changes hands, and they make assurances all round. The seller turns back a "luck penny" out of the purchase price. This is a payment often as large as half a crown, depending upon the transaction, repaid to the buyer in token of good faith.

Custom is changing here. A large-scale dealer may have little time or inclination for such amenities. He may give the seller a ticket or slip of paper as his record of the transaction and arrange to see him later in the day. He stands, slip in hand, ready to receive payment in his turn. Later on, then, at the time arranged, the farmer takes his place with the others with whom the dealer has been dealing during the day. Even then the farmer usually gives back a luck penny, even though he knows the dealer may reckon it a reduction of price rather than a ceremonial gesture. For it is a traditional gesture of independence and equality on his part.

443 Fairs beginning at dawn are usually over by noon. By that time the farmers are clear that they must sell at a sacrifice or drive the beasts home unsold to wait for another day. If prices are good, eager buyers have snatched up everything except unsalable scrubs.

443 For the farmer this mart is more than a simple economic
437 exchange. The form of exchange is as important as the exchange itself. It is an instance of traditional behavior

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on the part of the small farmers, supported by sanctions and 443
sentiment. In the ritual of bargaining and exchange in the 437
fair, many relationships are acted out: the relations between farmer and farmer; the relations between farmers and their sons and the boys of their kindred; the relations between farmers and persons from the outside world of big farms, business and trade, and the towns. Throughout the whole of the proceedings one can see all these get a periodic, ceremonial reiteration here.

The economic circumstances of the fair are only part of 443
the picture the fair presents. The fair and market are almost the only sources of monetary income for the farmers. They are the chief occasions for realizing the labor of a year's agricultural work. Consequently they are also the traditional occasions for settling debts, for making payments on accounts with shopkeepers. They are also the occasion of stocking up with everything from boots and clothes to feed and manure.

Indeed the fairs are the chief occasions of commercial and monetary activity in the agricultural counties. They are periodic high points of local activity in which laborers and local government have as much interest as the farmers. They are great events at which the economy of the western and southern parts of Ireland gets its only general, public, and spectacular circulation of funds. Yet they have a ceremonial side equally vivid.

The lining up of the farmers and their sons before their cattle to await the inspection and commencement of bargaining we must not idly dismiss as a mere convenience in bringing cattle to the attention of the prospective buyer. Like the other conventions of conduct in the fair, it deserves a careful treatment. These conventions can be put under a common explanatory scheme with those of farm life. In the arrangements of events in the fairs there are new events among persons which follow the same course as in the

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443 daily life of the family members at home on the farm and in the rural community. But in this case there is a far different setting.

443 At a fair the dealers or buyers initiate transactions or ter-
437 minate the bargaining at will. They are free to choose both the cattle they shall buy and the farmers with whom they shall deal. This is the same organization of relations between farmers and outsiders as that which prevails in the local community. The efforts of the intermediary and the emotional connotations of the luck penny as well as the grumbles of the farmers fit into this pattern of social and economic relations. There is some antagonism here, of the farmers against the others, but the solidarities of the two parties carry their own check. Prices may be so low that the farmers refuse to sell. Buyers band together to force a low price on various occasions. Resentments are mutual and common enough. But the ceremonial survives. It is an enactment of the community relations of the small farmers. It will change only as those relations change. The familistic farmer stands for himself, and his community is built only on gossip, public opinion, and common values. His mechanism of economic exchange expresses his social order and the community it serves.

443 Beside the cattle fairs there are fairs for dealing in sheep, pigs, and horses. These take much the same form, their complexity and importance depending upon the importance of the animal sold. Sheep, for example, are not so important in farm economy as cattle. Neither do they command such high prices. Consequently, sheep fairs are less imposing affairs, often held in conjunction with cattle fairs. The conventions are the same as in the cattle fairs.

443 Horse fairs again are very similar. Because of the higher
437 value of the horse and the use of the horse for sport and ceremony among the upper classes, the horse fairs are less frequent than cattle fairs, but more elaborate. In the case of

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cattle, the farmer must usually drive the beasts he has sold 443
to the station himself. In the case of horses, the buyer 437
exercises a greater care. A deal is closed not only by the usual handclasps but by the change of halters as well. Horses are put through their paces very carefully, sometimes in secrecy off in a side field or down a dark street. The majority of horses are sold between farmers and destined for farm work, but there is always a strong atmosphere of riches and brilliant chance about the proceedings. Many are the tales of half-bred horses, picked up for a song, that have come to win all before them.

Since most of the fairs are legally proprietary, they are 443
protected by law. In many cases the towns have bought out 424
the rights to tolls from private families, finding them a welcome source of revenue. To safeguard these rights, action may be brought against illicit buyers and sellers. In practice, however, it is only in horse-dealing that the owners of the tolls exercise vigilance, since there the tolls are so great. All this contributes to the atmosphere of importance that surrounds the horse fairs.

Pigs are sold more frequently, especially as they repre- 443
sent a great deal shorter period of development. Every town has its bonham and pig market. Every Saturday may witness a few transactions complete with the same rituals of inspection, repartee, and bargaining, but there are times of greater activity as well. It is generally only in pig markets that women are to be seen at fairs.

The second chief occasions of economic exchange, which afford further examples of the ceremonial surrounding the small farmer's mechanisms of contact with the outside world, are the produce markets of the towns. In them similar enactments of family and community relations are to be seen.

Each market town has its weekly market day. The day is fixed so as not to conflict with that of any other near-by

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443 center. Only in the central largest town of a whole area is Saturday the market day *par excellence*. In Clare, for instance, only Ennis and Kilrush have Saturday markets. Smaller centers set other days of the week aside.

In the larger towns such markets may be held in stores and yards owned by the municipality. More often custom has set aside a section of a street or a central square for each kind of produce. In Ennis a separate yard and shed serves as a butter market, another yard and shed with a weighhouse serves for corn and wool. Pigs, lambs, cabbage, and other vegetables are sold in the streets.

The principal commodities sold at the weekly markets in Clare are oats, mangels, turnips, wool, potatoes, hay, straw, cabbage, calves, lambs, kids (an Easter delicacy), pigs, bonhams, chickens, geese, other poultry. Records of these sales itemize the commerce of the whole hinterland in agricultural produce. Public institutions in the town buy through contracts awarded to various suppliers, the weighing and delivery taking place through the public market. Dealers for each product visit the markets. Even those who have come recently to use lorries that tour the country crossroads still appear at the weekly markets.

443 For those interested in a typical view of this kind of com-
438 merce, Table 9 presents a picture of the tolls received in the town of Ennis during the years 1927–33. The table is arranged as a calendar and gives average toll receipts for each product for each month during the period. One can see the monthly fluctuations at a glance and the annual periods of activity in sales. The chief change during the period was the dropping off of butter sales, a fact accounted for by the rise of creameries in other parts of the county and the introduction of the lorry. Otherwise sales were of much the same volume each year. As the tolls were constant during the period charted, the figures are a very good index to the local produce marketed.

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TABLE 9

Sales of Ennis Market, 1927–1933 *

Item	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Cattle	£54.00	?[a]	0	0	0	20.00	?[a]	0	?[g]	30.00	41.00	44.00
Sheep	£19.00	?[b]	0	?[a]	0	?[d]	?[f]	0	?[h]	3.00	4.00	5.00
Butter	£ 8.00	18.00	25.00	27.00	32.00	28.00	26.00	15.00	6.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Potatoes	£14.00	9.00	6.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	9.00	9.00	17.00
Roots	£ 3.00	.75	.13	0	0	0	0	2.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	4.00
Corn	£ 3.00	.50	.13	.0	0	12.00	30.00	29.00	17.00	8.00	5.00	9.00
Hay	£13.00	1.00	.13	.13	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	9.00
Wool	£ .75	2.00	13.00	7.00	3.00	4.00	7.00	2.00	.50	.20	1.00	.50
Pigs	262	56	37	46	76	118	115	118	118	94	84	90
Bonhams	1122	155	111	84	94	99	117	115	64	42	59	112

* Toll receipts are given in pounds or hundredths of pounds except in the case of the last two, which are given in shillings. The figures are average total receipts for the month named over the six-year period.

[a] Figures only for 1928, 1932 (£49, £11 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[b] Figures only for 1928, 1932 (£22, £17 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[c] Figures only for 1932 (£4). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[d] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£8, £12 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[e] Figures only for 1932 (£18). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[f] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£35, £37 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[g] Figures only for 1932 (£11). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[h] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£9, £10 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.

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443 In buying and selling in the town markets, bargaining
437 ritual is very much the same as in the fairs. Every seller
must negotiate for himself, but the luck penny is neglected.
462 The sexual division of labor on the farm is amply represented. The women stand over and bargain about their eggs, butter, and poultry. Men alone are to be seen dealing in pigs, lambs, wool, and corn. Yet it is not unusual to see a woman dealing for a sack of potatoes or for bonhams.

443 In all these transactions the usual ritual of bargaining
437 appears. It is customary, though in a curtailed and abbreviated form, in the purchasing that the small farmer does in the shops. It appears wherever persons of diverse allegiance are brought together in the life of the farmers. It appears, as we have seen, in the making of a match between two families. Like monetary payment for services, it figures only in the external relations of the farmers' groups. Indeed, it is the behavior characteristically connected with monetary payment.

Occasionally a small farmer buys from another in his own community, but the practice is rare. Goods change hands rather through the mechanisms of borrowing and gifts in the patterns of kinship and cooring. The difference of behavior must be referred to the different relationships.

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CHAPTER XIV

Conclusion

ENOUGH has been said already to demonstrate the conclusion to which the study of rural behavior and social organization in the communities of the small farmers leads. The sociological conditions of Irish rural life are those determined in a system of relationships among persons based upon the Irish form of the family, family subsistence, and familistic custom. The demographical indices of population cannot be understood except in such a context. 182

Each topic of local life and custom, and each statistical index, as we have examined it, has led us back into this nucleus of organization among the small farmers. Something in the course of events prescribed there by the habitual arrangement of human lives existing in the small farmers' homes and communities has always lain behind the form of custom and the kind of attitude we have encountered. Something in that course of events has always likewise lain behind the numerical indices demographic count has yielded the census-taker.

This something is of the nature of an interdependent variable. The Irish small farmers of the present day behave as they do in the matters in which we have investigated them because they are members of a social system of a certain kind. A system implies a state of equilibrium in which elements are in mutual dependence. If change is introduced

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182 at one point, change follows at another. If the first change is not too great — that is, if it is not so great that destruction of the system ensues [1]— then subsequent changes do not alter the situation out of recognition. Far from it, since the elements are woven into a common whole, the effect of the change is soon dissipated. The system reverts to its former state. It may be said to have thus an equilibrium which it regains after each disturbance.

The doctrine of mutual dependence within a system helps us far more in understanding the events of life among the country people of Ireland than any ascription of cause and effect. The sorts of behavior we have dealt with do not have a single cause. They must be referred to a setting which must be looked at as a whole. Likewise the historical, economic, or personal events which impinge upon the country people of our communities do not ever succeed in changing very much either the people or what is really coterminous with them, their pattern of life. The traditional custom of life persists and continues to wield its power in essentially similar fashion decade after decade and generation after generation. Change goes on, in plenty, but it is gradual change of outlines already existing. It is no new departure.

Yet that custom operates always within a framework of relations uniting the same persons by various paths in space and having various histories in time. On each farm and among most of the farms of each area one cares to describe, these relations have certain uniformities. They turn up over and over again, and the course of events which they follow repeats itself in essentially similar fashion over and over. Circumstances alter cases, but not very far. Custom is not to be separated from this framework. The fol-

[1] For a discussion of the theory of the equilibrium of a social system, the reader is referred to *The Social Theory of Pareto*, by L. J. Henderson (Harvard University Press, 1936).

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lowers of customary behavior are those related in uniform fashion through the recurrence of similar events. 182

We are now ready, therefore, to make a summary and tentative definition of the communities and families of the Irish countryside. The definition is also an interpretation of the behavior of the persons concerned. It is also, too, an explanation of the events of human life in which they take part. And lastly, it is a social psychology of the country people.

In the discussion of each topic, the outlines of such a summary have become clearer and clearer. New events and new patterns of action fell into place as we drew their connection with old ones. Recapitulating this progress, let us take a step toward putting these connections in an abstract and general form. The sociology of the Irish rural life and small-farm subsistence is largely a matter of the anatomy of two institutions of characteristic form. These are the family and the rural community. The latter, in turn, cannot be described apart from the former. It is a framework of long-term customary relationships uniting persons beyond their family ties. Together these two unite essentially all the persons of the rural areas. With a few other institutions not here described (not, however, autonomous as are family and community), such as the parish (the formal, hierarchic community of religious belief and observance), they make up the entire anatomy of the small-farm class, the largest in the land.

Taking these two alone, however, what can we say of this framework of relationships upon which custom moves? It is a master system articulating five major subsidiary systems. These five comprise:

1. *The relationships of the familistic order.* These are the pattern of family life and subsistence, and its extension in kinship reckoning, obligation, and coöperation. They undergo periodic re-formation at the match and effect the dispersal of

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182 emigrants and the continuity of the pattern of farm subsistence.

2. *The relationships of age grading, or generation.* These are uniform habitual relations of persons of locally subsistent families who are similar and dissimilar in age. For each person we can trace them to specific events of interaction patterned by custom and compatible with the behavior of familism. In the large, they make up a structure of cliques or age groups, usually of persons of similar sex. Such cliques are opposed to one another, yet integrated under the headship of one of them, that of the heads of families, the so-called "old men." They are characterized by activities of discussion, gossip, and recreation, and make for common and long-established values and opinions, and membership in them bestows certain status, limited, however, by family status.

3. *The relationships of sex organization.* These are relations among persons, similarly the growth of habitual conduct, uniting the same persons of locally subsistent families who are similar and dissimilar by sex. They make up an organization of behavior canalizing the sexual drives in the direction of family life and forming a common attitude toward sexual behavior and a common norm of conduct and standard of sexual morality. This organization is compatible with that of familism and that of age grading and may be said to reinforce both. It also is capable of providing a standard for differentiating farmers from others.

4. *The relationships of local division of labor.* These are still other relations, similarly formed among the same persons, uniting those of similar and different occupation and technical skill. These involve action dealing with goods and services of practical value to the farmers and their subsistence. They fit the persons of a locality into two categories of relationship, depending upon those persons' association with other local persons on the one hand and their connections with persons beyond local ken on the other. The customary behavior marking the relations of the first of these categories duplicates that of familism in many ways and affords status similar to that found in age organization. The behavior marking the relations of the second of these categories does not. It is in this latter case only that class difference makes its appearance in the country districts. Those of higher class than the farmer, in his own community, are those who have connections extending beyond the range of his associates.

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5. *The relationships of economic exchange and distribution in fairs and markets.* Finally there are still further relations among these persons, uniting them over space among themselves and with others from outside the local area in effecting the transfer of farm produce outward and the distribution of non-local goods and services inward. These relations are habitual, customary, and in many cases ceremonial, as in the fairs. They represent a form of organization reflecting familism, age, sex, and local technical organization. 182

These five classes of relationships summarize the incidents, biographies, and events that are here observed and described. They are a classification of them that has explanatory force. They do not themselves explain every event. But they point out to us, as does any faithful map, where we must look. All together they make up a configuration of social patterns, set off and different from others in Ireland. All together as a system, they determine events in the countryside. No event can be understood with reference to them. No sociological or demographical index can be interpreted without them.

This master system is the framework of social life in the countryside. It is the form of the social network in which the greater part of the Irish population are points. It is the system of forces in which any doing of the small farmers, or anything done to them, is a movement, a change of direction, an impact either from within or without.

If a view of the conditions which administrators or legislators of any institution, governmental or private, might wish to attack is to be realistic and adequate, it must take this master system into account. It must be wide enough to allow for its existence. It is not enough to plan an attack as a unilateral action from above. One must know and assess the place in the system into which an action might fit. It is not enough to institute an agency of reform or take an economic measure or put into effect regulatory devices on the basis of a single limited purpose or a single

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simple diagnosis. The equilibrium of the system must not be forgotten. If it is forgotten, disaster will not follow, in the ordinary case. The social organism is very tough and can stand a great deal of rough handling. But failure of the measure will follow. If the measure is merely a wishful effort, a sop to constituents, a gesture of good will, or an act of ritual or propaganda, its failure is no matter. But, if it is a sincere attempt at changing conditions, for whatever purpose or desire, its failure will be all the more perplexing. Today, in all the civilized countries, conscious efforts at social change are being made. Complexity is too great and problems too pressing to continue to rely as of old upon the traditional tools of politics: intuition, compromise, and a flair for practicalities. Great centralized bureaucracies have grown up in each country, even in one so small as Ireland. If they are to be effective, they must know the societies they serve. For them an understanding of local scenes and local social organisms, so remote from bureaucratic headquarters and national capitals, becomes more and more essential.

The foregoing remarks do not apply to Ireland any more than to any other country. The extension of central authority is a universal phenomenon of the age, probably a result of the new technology of science. Yet it has its applications in the case of Ireland as well. It is not for foreigners, such as the authors, to offer suggestions to the Irish people and their government. The Irish have demonstrated quite amply an enviable ability to rule themselves. Besides, the role of the academic man is to provide the tools of theory, not the recipes for action.

Nevertheless, one of the central problems of Irish economic and social life today stands in great need of a theoretical formulation such as is here advanced. The matter of demographical conditions — continuous emigration, decline of population, delay of marriage, and rise of bachelorhood

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— is a persistent and recalcitrant phenomenon. It seems to resist every change and every attack. No one knows why.

Yet the reason for resistance is simple enough. The matter escapes every observer and evades every attack upon the problem merely because no observer has conceived it adequately. Social conditions are the products of social systems. Yet attacks on them are predicated, as in this case, on the assumption that they are simple effects of simple causes.

The argument is the familiar argument. The phenomenon is conceived only as an economic one. Human action is merely the pursuance of economic goals. In this case, the argument runs specifically, the matter is the result of poverty. Since the condition persists, it is a matter of "endemic" poverty. One has only to change the cause, do away with the poverty, and all else will right itself.

Such a view is inadequate by virtue of two counts. On the first count, it hides a fallacy that vitiates it from the start. The fallacy is this: It asserts, in its very premise, that people act according to logic in pursuance of their wants. As a statement of a theory of economic exchange, the assertion is impeccable. As an approximation to what men actually do in social life away from the market place, or as a description of what in particular those men who are the marriage-less small farmers do, it is valueless. None of the many very well designed attacks upon the problems of rural poverty and rural employment in Ireland has had the slightest effect on demographic conditions. Yet the level of prosperity, by every account, is much greater than ever before. Whatever makes the country people act as they do in these matters, it is not poverty alone.

On the second count, such a view is inadequate because it offers nothing further to learn. If the problem is a matter of wealth or of goods or of material conditions alone, supply the goods or right the wrong and the job is done. But such

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a remedy tells us nothing about other and related problems of human life and social behavior. It offers a practical rule of thumb for a particular instance, no more. We are already well along the way to a science of the practical. The production and transportation and distribution of the necessary goods and material services should be done easily enough today. It awaits only the knowledge of the "human element." But a science of the human element, capable of predicting, manipulating, and directing the growth of social life and institutions, controlling for any purpose the forces of human emotion and habit and will, is lacking and continues so. It is lacking, for one reason, because too few people of all kinds, whether official, academic, or what not, are aware that it is needed, or willing to work to develop it.

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SIGURD ERIXON

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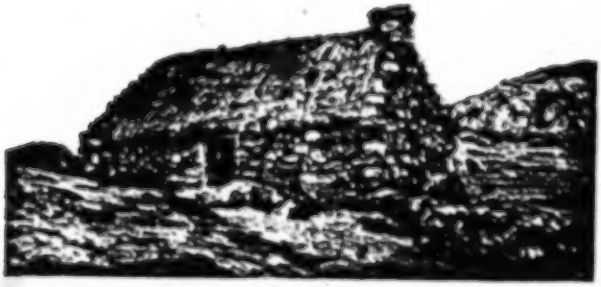

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1. Central-chimney house. Spiddle, Co. Galway.

2. Gable-chimney house. The weaver's house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

3. Central-chimney house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

2. Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Mayo

PLATE XLII

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1. The caillioch built close to the fireplace. Fallmore, Co. Mayo.

2. Gable-chimney house. Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

342

[p.206]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

121 In the discussions on the complicated problems of the European house traditions, the peasant Irish house has hitherto been almost ignored, in spite of the fact that the Irish house could certainly yield some important information. Ireland constitutes a reservoir of Celtic and other traditions of great antiquity and of special importance for the moulding of European folk-culture.[1]

To study the Irish peasant house, it is first of all necessary to make detailed field surveys for all parts of Ireland and then to compare these with the results of similar investigations in all related countries. But not less important is it to consider these conclusions in the light of the information we get in the Ancient Irish Laws (the culture here described dates from pagan times i. e. prior to the middle of the 5th century A. D.) the literature (particularly the Heroic tales of the Ulster cycle), and the vocabulary of the older language as well as that of the modern Irish dialects.

128 Postponing for further discussion (in part II of this article) the buildings of very archaic constructions, viz. the stone beehive huts or rectangular huts roofed by a system of overlapping stones and the most primitive or simplified house types (huts of wickerwork, sod, turf), I will here firstly consider Irish houses, stone-built and mudhouses with roof resting on wooden couples. These houses represent a slightly more developed stage of construction than the above mentioned types. They are all inhabited in modern times.[2]

341 It is a remarkable fact that even the most primitive Irish houses still inhabited — houses with only one room showing traces of its original task to shelter both the human family and the cattle, walls built without mortar, fireplace without any chimney etc. — are already divided into two principal types, namely (1) the house with the fire-place placed somewhere near the centre of the house or at least not just at the gablewall, so there are bedplaces behind the fire-place in the upper end of the house, often thatched gables, and (2) the house with stone-built gables and the fireplace close to the gable wall. In a former article (Béaloideas 1935 p. 57 et sq.) I have

341 called the first type *the central-chimney house,* because the chimney will be erected over the fire-place somewhere about the middle of the roof, (fig. 1 and pl. XLI: 1, 2, 3 ; the second *the gable chimney house* because here the chimney will be close to the gable often being built as a part of the stone-built gable (fig. 2 and pl. XLI: 2). The outside chimney then not seldom forms a pronounced gabletop or gable-finial.

The Central-chimney house.

342 Some of the most primitive houses I found in Ireland belong to the central chimney house type. To illustrate I choose a house from Spiddle, Co. Galway (fig. 3 and pl. XLI: 1). The house is said to have been built before 1839 and to have withstood the "big wind" of that year. How old it actually is I had no means of discovering. The walls are of stone with the mortar put on afterwards on the inside and outside, but not used in the actual construction of the walls. Some outhouses belonging to this farm are all of dry wall construction. The roof of straw rests on couples of beams, supported on the inner edge of the walls, so that the thatch does not quite reach as far as the outside edge of the wall, but leaves a narrow space uncovered. [171] This is an archaic feature found now in very old buildings in Ireland, as always in the black houses of Scotland.

The house is built on a slope, so that the fireplace end of the house lies higher than the entrance door. There is only one room, but a low partition wall at the back of the fire cuts off a section which is used as a bedroom. [352] In the lower end of the house a dresser is placed so that it together with a small table cuts off another section that nowadays is also used as a bedroom. Some stools, a cradle and a churn are the other contents. There are two doors opposite of each other, both provided with half-doors. The fireplace consists of some flat stones on the floor. Over the fireplace there is a [354] wattled chimney resting on two beams, supported by a cross beam. The chimney is adapted to a hole in the thatched roof, so there is no outside chimney. On one side of the house, the sheltered side, there are two windows.

About other houses of the same kind, I have heard from the inhabitants [231] that in olden times the lower end of the house was used for the cattle. In late times the cattle have been removed to an outhouse and this part of the house has been adopted as a living room.

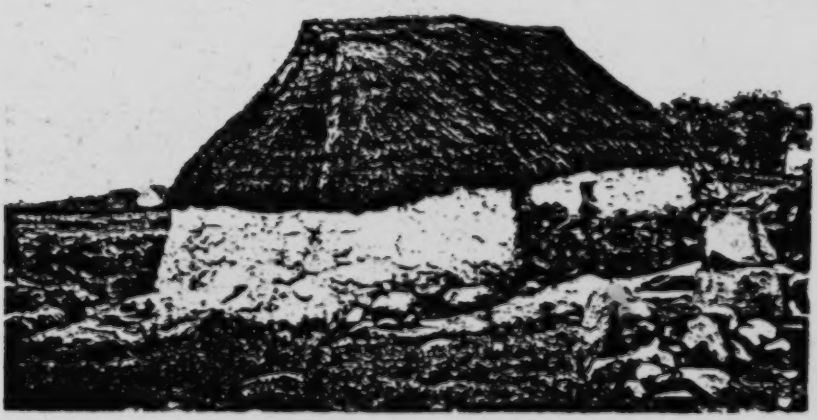
342 171 The division of the house into three sections, which is characteristic of the central-chimney house type, is quite clear in the Scottish houses, namely the black houses, the bedroom being at the upper end of the house behind the

[Text continues top of p. 211]

342 1. Dry stone walls. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry.

2. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

1.



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[p. 209]

PLATE XLIV

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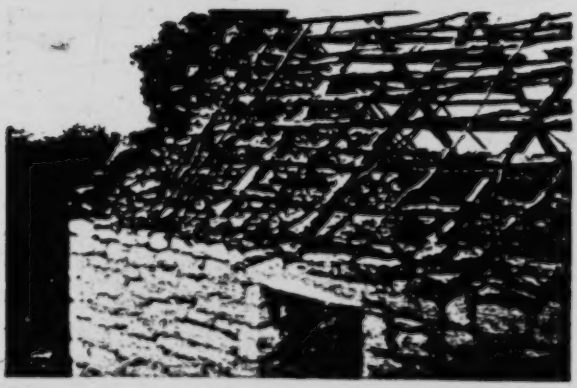
1.



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1. House with stepgables. The small stones interlaying the bigger stones. Annaghdown, Co. Galway.

2. Roof-construction. Annaghdown, Co. Galway.

3. The gables facing the sea. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry.

[p.210]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 fire, and the byre at the lower end of the house. In the Welsh long-house
171 the hearth generally seems to face the living room and bedroom part of the house, and cuts these sections from the byre part. The two doors, opposite to each other, very typical of the Irish house (see p. 217), are also found in the Welsh long-houses, but here the space between the two doors has a more pronounced feeding-walk character, than we find common in Ireland, at least to-day when the cattle are generally removed from the dwelling house. For the three sections of some South Scandinavian houses see p. 222.

The gable-chimney house.

342 In various parts of Ireland I have found numbers of primitive houses with stone-built gables. These houses are always rectangular in form, never oval. Externally the type varies greatly depending mostly on the prevailing wind. On the coast, in very windy districts, the roof will not be built very high, but in more sheltered parts, it will be more lofty.

The gable finial, the gable top often consitutes a very characteristic feature of this house-type, pl. XLII: 2. Only where the low roof is used, the gable top is not especially accentuated. The outside chimney constitutes the gable top of the chimney-gable. On the opposite gable the gable-finial may be form-
[341] ed in a corresponding way, as a chimneyshaft without any flue. The chimney-shafts at the gables form perhaps the single example in the Irish peasant house of intentional architecture conforming with a wide-spread custom in Western Europe. As regards the serrated gable-ends see p. 226.

342 In small dwellings of this type there is only one room, the fireplace is si-
354 tuated against one gable-wall. The most convenient place for the beds is be-
352 side the fire, and at least one bed is to be found here. This is a very original feature of this house-type which is confirmed by Scottish material, old Irish descriptions, and even drawings. In the middle-west and north of Ireland, the bed is built in a projection outwards, *cailleach,* or at least in a niche in the side wall close to the fireplace, pl. XLII: 2, as in the Scottish *tig dubh.*

342 As in the central-chimney house, there are sometimes two doors opposite each other, but even a single door is common in small old houses.

Windows have come at a later period here also. In old-fashioned houses there is generally only one window, sometimes none at all.

342 At the lower end of the house, there was in more remote times place for
231 domestic animals. The division of the room by means of the dresser may have been adopted at an early stage, the dresser being especially suitable as

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 a kind of partition. When the domestic animals were removed, often to an
231 additional building at the gablewall, this part of the house would be used as a living room, just as in the former type of house, fig. 4. In a few very pri-
342 mitive houses of this as well as of the foregoing type I have found firepla-
354 ces with no chimney at all, the smoke leaving the house through a hole in the roof above the fireplace. Sometimes I have found two smoke holes, one in each end of the roof. The doors and half doors constitute together with the smokeholes a complicated machinery, providing the current of air to regulate the turf-fire and the smoke.

Dwelling houses without chimneys were found by me in 1935 at Belmullet, Co. Mayo and in Co. Sligo.

342 The houses with thatched gables sometimes have rounded corners so that the base foundation may have an almost oval shape on the outside, while the inside room may be rectangular in form, pl. XLIII: 2. It is evident that the oval house form and the thatched gables complement each other. They could have existed together from a very early stage in building traditions. In a windy district the rounded and thatched gables are suitable, as the house will be more stream lined.

The roof with a thatched gable can easily have replaced the stone, or cyclopic roof, in cabins and huts (both, bothán). This fact and certain similarities would seem to indicate that the oval house form in the abovementioned houses with thatched gables, may have developed from the round
[171] or beehive house type. Parallels may be found among the stone-built huts with similar roofs in Estremadura and elsewhere.

On the other hand, houses with stone-built gables represent quite clearly the rectangular house type, as in such constructions the gables are never rounded.

342 The stone-built gable constitutes a very practical way of solving the pro-
346 blem of how to protect the gable ends of the roof of an oblong house against the wind, pl. XLIV: 3. But there is another point to be considered. In mediæval houses in villages and cities, the gables have often developed according to the use and importance of the gable wall; when the house faces the street or main road the gable wall would be far more important than the side walls. Other features point to ecclesiastical architecture. In the early churches, in Ireland and elsewhere, the gable wall constituted the front wall. In Ireland the early primitive churches were often furnished with pronounced gable finials. Furthermore it has been suggested that the introduction of the rectangular form of house is due to the first propagators of Christianity

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

in Ireland, as we find in an early Irish stanza predicting this and other Christian innovations (Life of St. Patrick, translated by Colgan, p. 123). 342 346

It seems to me to be very likely that the above mentioned architecture of villages, towns and churches in Western Europe, giving prominence to the gable-wall, may have played an important role in the development of rectangular houses with stone-built gables in Ireland and elsewhere in Western Europe. As to Irish conditions, I would observe that the very small primitive rectangular churches, hardly bigger than an ordinary house, known from the Aran Islands and other places, have surely been built by no other builders than those who built the peasant houses. The clergy instructed them and planned the architecture. Then the people learned that the stone built gable was very useful both as protection for the ends of the thatched roof and as an arrangement for the fire, readily forming a chimney or stone-built venthole for the smoke. 346

But the early Christian churches cannot have constituted the original primitive form for every kind of rectangular house in Western Europe. As Addy (Addy: Evolution of the English House, p. 38 sq.) has mentioned, very primitive huts built in "bays" formed by "crucks" are known from the Welsh Laws as "Summer Houses". These houses consisted of a pair of "crucks" and a ridge-tree, and were completed by wattles. This form of house can be shown to be of great antiquity and can be studied over a large area. Material from Africa, the Mediterranean countries, the countries on the shores of the Atlantic, show that the square form is of greater antiquity than Christianity, so it does not follow that the rectangular house in Western Europe must necessarily owe its origin to Christian innovations, it can very well go back to a much earlier form of culture. 171

Regarding the higher development of the cruck-construction (or crutch) as discussed by S. O. Addy with examples from England, I would observe that the small stone-built one-storeyed Irish houses, the primitive Welsh long-house, the black houses of Scotland, as well as the small houses of Scandinavia and elsewhere have been sufficiently roofed by a very primitive small roof of pairs of beams, similar to that of the above mentioned huts, summerhouses etc. Even circular huts may have been roofed by a thatched roof, resting on a radial framework of branches without any central pole as in the Sudan circular hut, *tukl*, mentioned by A. E. Robinson, who has suggested that some prehistoric huts in Ancient Britain were of the *tukl* type (Antiquity 1930, p. 230). In Lewis (Scotland) according to Thomas (Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Vol. III, p. 130) circu- 342 171

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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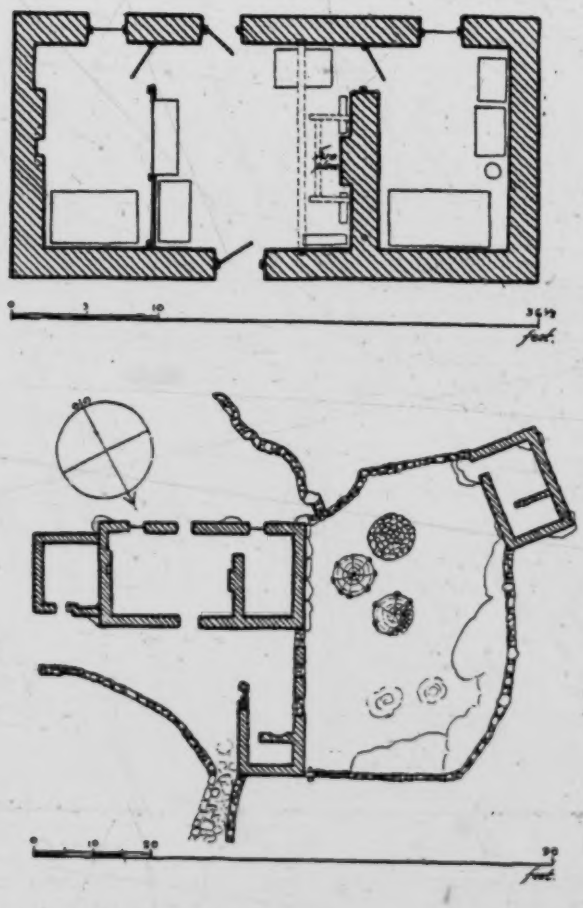

Fig. 1. Central-chimney house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

lar stone roofed houses *bothan*, existed side by side with timber proofed oblong houses called *aridhean* (p. 138).

The highly developed roof-constructions of the English crucktype, as well as those of the Saxon and other West European houses, have been of little or no importance for the development of Spanish, Welsh[3], Scottish and Scandinavian houses in early or in later times. The cruck construction as well as the roof construction with supporting poles seems to belong to a more limited sphere of building traditions. This fact however does not exclude the possibility that these traditions could have been in some way —

[Text continues top of p. 217---Analyst]

PLATE XLV

342 1. Roof with couples joined by two crossbeams. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. Stream-lined roof. Port, Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

1.

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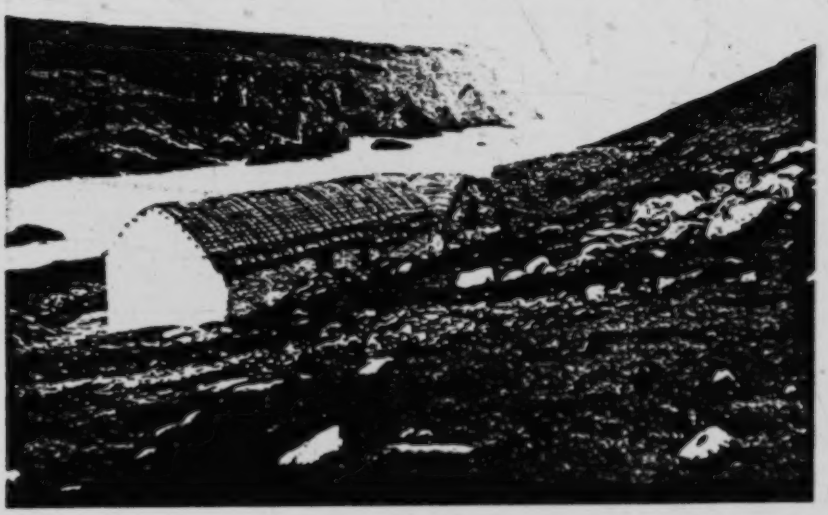

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[p.215]

PLATE XLVI

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1.

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2.

[p. 216] [captions on p. 219, bottom]

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 771 as a result of certain circumstances, such as social organisation, the demands and standard of the aristocracy, the clan, and the family etc. — introduced in Ireland, Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. This appears from some prehistoric materials as for example the Gall Arus near Dingle, Co. Kerry, and the so-called "kämpagravshuset" and the Viking Hall in Scandinavia.

Some of the features mentioned above in the descriptions of the central chimney-house and the gable-chimney house are common to nearly all primitive recent Irish houses.

342 354 It is especially interesting to notice the practice of providing two doorways, central and opposite, fig. 1, 3 and 4. In recent Irish houses the front door is called *doras tosaigh*, and the backdoor *doras cúl*. In Donegal however, I was told that the front door was called *doras an fhosgaidh*, door of the shelter, and the back door, *doras nagaoithe*. The opening and the closing of these two doors is determined by theprevailing wind, and its effect on the draught through the smokeholes. Thus the two doors were very often in Ireland made up of halfdoors, *leath dhoras*, constituting in co-operation with the smoke holes a machinery regulating the fire. In Ireland this is generally a turf-fire which needs special attention in its making, lighting and maintenance. The drawing off the smoke is also of importance.

342 777 Some superstitions connected with these two doors suggest that very old traditions lie behind them. There is a belief in Co. Kerry that it is very unlucky to go in one door and out the other. You must always go out of the door you entered by, otherwise you are supposed to take the luck of the house with you.

342 How the two doorways could be used with regard to the cattle I have shown by an example from Co. Kerry in my article in Béaloideas (op. cit. p. 70).

The two doorways are well-known from the Ancient Irish Laws and the old literature. The inches house and even larger houses had two doorways, a door in one and a hurdle (wattle) in the other (see Ancient Irish laws, Vol. IV, p. 305). O'Carry says that the principal house, even of kings, had but one room to which when the house was of an oblong form there were generally two doors, one opening east and one west. In the round houses on the other hand there seems to have been but one door, which faced south, west or east, and sometimes though rarely north. (O'Curry, Manners and customs of the ancient Irish. Vol. I). In Scottish beehive houses inhabited about 342 191 1850 however, there are often two opposite doors, about which Thomas says: "The two doors are a decided improvement, for the one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weater door — is closed with a stone or

PLATE XLVI

1. Fastening the hay-ropes, when thatching. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
2. Scollop-thatching. Connemara, Co. Galway.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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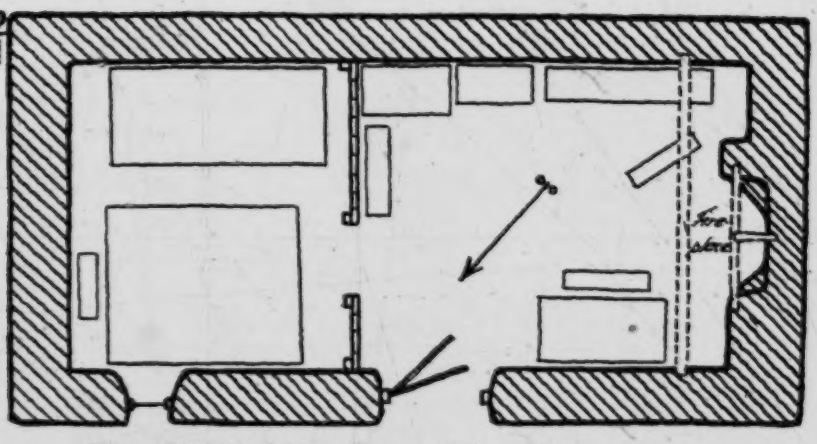

Fig. 2. Gable-chimney house. The weaver's house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the heads of the inhabitants and through the Farlos (the smoke-hole in the apex of the roof)" F. L. W. Thomas, in Proceedings of the Soc. of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III and vol. VII.

Also in Wales the two opposite doors have been known from prehistoric times to recent days. The Welsh long-house generally has these doors (see I. C. Peate, Welsh houses, Antiquity, 1936). They have also been found in prehistoric Welsh farm buildings excavated by Cyril and Aileen Fox (see Cyril and Ailen Fox, Forts and Farms on Margam Mountain, Glamorgan, Antiquity, 1934, p. 395 sq.).

The use of two opposite doors is however widespread. In Denmark and Southern Sweden (the plainlands in Skåne) the turf-fire was common until 1900, and the inside chimney is not so very old. In the 18th century, houses without any chimney were common, the two opposite doors and even the halfdoors being used for the regulation of the fire in the same way as in Ireland (see Åke Campbell, Skånska bygder under förra hälften av 1700-talet, Uppsala 1928, p. 208 sqq.). The complete stone-built chimney was introduced earlier in the woodlands of Scandinavia, where the wood-fire was common and the fire was not regulated by any two-door system.

In Spain and Italy I have seen the two doors, and Sigurd Erixon (in Den romerska Campagnans herdehyddor och deras konstruktiva karaktär, Arkeologiska studier tillägnade H. K. H. Kronprins Gustaf Adolf, Stockholm 1932, p. 255, p. 261 and p. 124 sqq. in this number) has mentioned them when

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 221 ----- ANALYST]

2: Campbell B, E-5 _(1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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1. Thatched-chimney. Co. Clare.
2. Making hay-ropes. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
3. Hobwalls carrying the chimney. Toormakeady, Co. Galway.

1.

2.

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3.

[p. 219]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Donegal

PLATE XLVIII

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1.

1. Fire-place with iron-grate. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. The basket hanging to dry on the southwall of the house. Lough Eske, Co. Donegal.

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[p. 220]

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 discussing the herdsmen's oval and square straw-built houses in the Roman
171 Campagna. He indicates two different systems (1) the smoke leaving through the door and (2) the smoke leaving through a hole in the roof.

In English and especially in Saxon and other West European houses, the two opposite doors sometimes are placed in the same way as in the Welsh longhouses, or in the Irish houses, but the broad plan of these extremely large buildings makes the comparisons very vague.

Besides the types now mentioned which form the basis for the development of native house types, we find in Ireland of the present day many house types which are likely of foreign origin mostly introduced by government and landlord activities.

Belonging to this group I must also reckon a feature of housebuilding which is found particularly in Leinster and Eastern Connaught but also scattered here and there in other parts of the country. This distribution more
[412] or less coincides with the distribution of the two-eared English spade, while the native type of house coincides with the single-eared Irish spade.

A partition of stone, mud or wood and lath is built on the side of the fireplace adjacent to the door, so that a person sitting at the fire cannot be seen through the open door. In the partition is a spyhole, through which one can see who is entering by the door, fig. 5.

This adjacence of fire and door with intervening partition is wellknown in England. As far as my knowledge goes I cannot look upon this as being an independent or original Irish type. Everything points to its being a late innovation. Such houses usually have a porch built at the entrance door and the arrangements of the rooms are not at all primitive.

The developed stone built house.

342 It is evident that as soon the primitive one-roomed stage is left, it will be difficult or impossible to decide whether the house represents the traditions of the central-chimney house or the traditions of the gable-chimney house.

In two ways the one-roomed stage has been left (1) by dividing up the one-roomed house by partition walls, (2) by building additions to it at the gables.

Usually it seems that the room at the lower end of the house has been made by building a thin partition wall, *sileail*, which separates it from the other part of the house, fig. 2 and 4. It is as far as I know, very unusual to build an addition to this part of the house. When new rooms are made by building additions, these are usually made to the chimney or fireplace gable.

342 This custom should be compared with the proverb which I have heard in different parts of Western Ireland: "Only a man stronger than God can [539] build back (westward) of his house" *(Is treise ná Dia an fear a chuireann siar le na theach")*. Additions made at the fireplace end of the house are always used as bedrooms. Therefore it will be very difficult to decide whether the bedroom behind the fireplace has originated as an addition to a gable-chimney house or as a partition of a central chimney house. When the wall behind the fire-place does not reach the roof the house must be regarded as a central-chimney house. Now and then it is also possible to discover in another way whether the bedroom belongs to the original house, or is built as an addition to a gable-chimney house.

In both house types the partition walls at the lower end of the house very often were made by very thin wooden partitions, *sileála*. As already mentioned, furniture especially the dresser may be used instead of a partition wall, fig. 1.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland you will find the fireplace cut off to a certain degree from the living room and forming a special kitchen corner by stone-built breasts or piers at both or at one side of the fire-place. This side wall of the fire-place can also be built of wood, fig. 6, and can go a good way into the room, so that the kitchen corner will be more like a closed room.

342 171 Such houses with fireplace partition apparently have their parallels in Welsh houses. The Irish house, then, closely resembles to the living room of the Welsh long-house. This type of Irish house can be called "house with fireplace partition".

Another way of arranging accommodation in the house is to build lofts, *lochta*, and rooms on an upper floor. This upper floor will be arranged at both ends of the living room or kitchen. Then the arrangement with the house divided into three sections and with lofts at both ends is very similar to a house type in southern Sweden, the socalled Sydgötiska huset.[4] which has the kitchen or "stugan" in the centre of the house without any loft and at both ends additional chambers with lofts. Another likeness between the Irish and South Swedish houses is that there are bedplaces in the same way in the additional rooms.

[417] In the Irish house the loft can be reached by a ladder from the kitchen.

The construction of the different elements of the house.

342 Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building-material, the Irish peasant house never

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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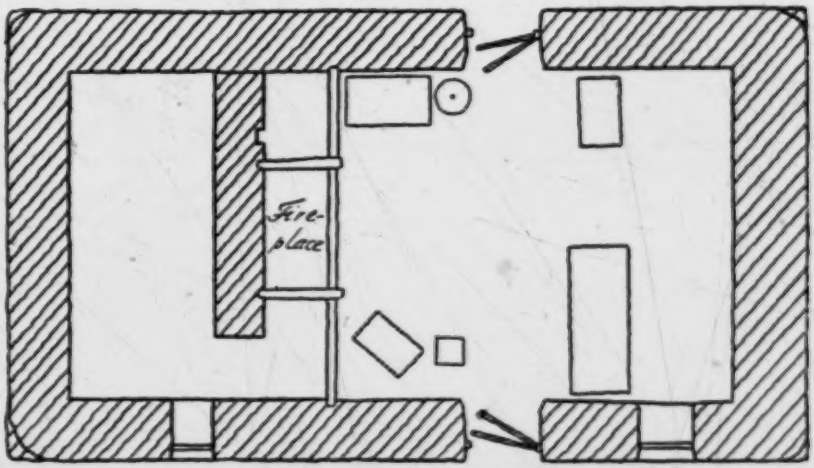

Fig. 3. Central-chimney house. Spiddle, Co. Galway.

stands out in bold relief against its background, but melts into it even as a tree or a rock. Built of stone, clay, sods, grass and straw brought from the vicinity, the house harmonizes with the landscape to which it belongs. Whenever the old building traditions are faithfully maintained its features are of a fine simplicity.

Here I shall not describe how the house has been determined by the different types of landscape, and by the social structure of the human community, to which it belongs. I only observe that the settlements and houses often are scattered but sometimes can be found built in groups or rows. 361 342

Very archaic dwelling houses generally are erected on a slope, the difference in level between the high end and the low end of the house being one, two or three feet. In houses where the farm animals have been under the same roof as the family, the places for the animals always were at the low end and the fireplace and bedplaces at the high end. This is the same arrangement as in the Scottish black houses.

The floor. The floor is commonly earthen, but generally paved at the fireplace. Now and then the upper end of the house is totally paved, or the whole floor is flagged. Very often the place round the fire is distinctly separated from the rest of the floor by its special paving. In modern times the floor is very often concrete. A covering with wooden boards at the upper end of the house and in the bedroom is often to be seen now-a-days. The stone or earth- 342

The stone or earth-

342 en floor may be sprinkled for instance with coral beachsand to help in sweeping it.

[356] In some primitive houses, where the cattle still had their places, in the

[231] low end, I have found a gutter or conduit going across the low end and leading out through the door.

333 *The walls.* There are two main types of wall construction representing very

342 old building traditions.

[172] 1. The dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara* — met with in the prehistoric buildings, *clocháns* etc. — are built of stones (often flattish) without mortar. Dwelling-houses which have been built with dry stone walls have in later times been covered both inside and outside with mortar, pl. XLIII: 1. The space between the bigger stones are often carefully filled up by small stones, *spallaí*.

Especially in Co. Clare I have admired the precision developed in the construction of the walls.

[172] 2. Of prehistoric origin are also the mud, clod or clay walls, *falla feidín*. A fantastic explanation of the term makes it equal to *falla ar feadh dín*, a wall that endures as long as the roof is kept properly thatched (Dinneen).

The clay was pulverized and made into a thick mortar by wetting it and mixing it with cut rushes or course sprat hay. The well built mud-wall houses form comfortable dwellings and it has happened that people have regretted leaving excellent thatched "mud walls" to live in cold stone-walled slatted dwellings.

342 The foundation of the walls is sometimes a pronunced feature of the house. Whilst the walls usually have a width of 1½, 2 or 3 feet, the foundation is wider, forming a shelf or broad step along the building serving as a pathway to the door. The foundation is sometimes not very dissimilar to some prehistoric house-foundations. In this connection I would like to remark that the pathway and nearest surroundings of the entrance door are sometimes

[191] paved by a mosaic of small cobble-stones from the sea-shore. This I have seen in costal districts in South West, and I suggest that it is the same kind of pavement as appears in Portugal, Madeira, Marocco and elsewhere at the border of the Atlantic And the Mediterranean Sea.

Doors and windows. In many primitive houses of to-day the construction of the door-opening is extremely archaic: flat stones serving as lintel and as threshold. The frame of the door is wooden.

The doors usually have bolts of wood and a hasp to close the door. A thick wooden beam can be placed across inside the door on stormy nights, certain holes in the wall at both sides of the door being made for this beam,

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

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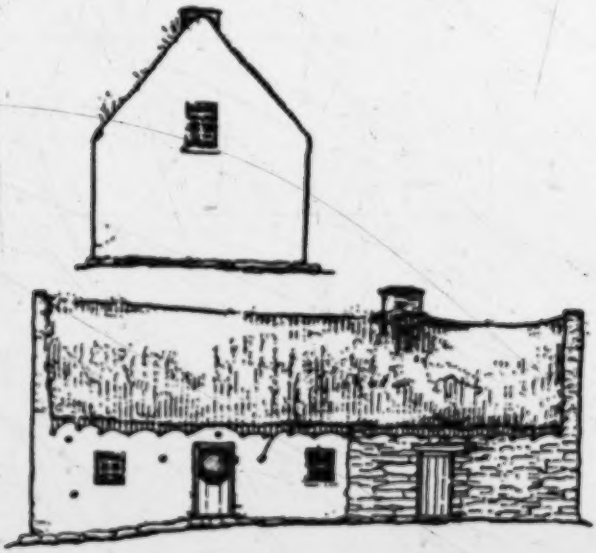

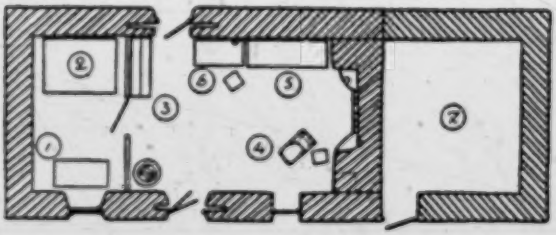

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Fig. 4. Gable-chimney house. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry. The cattle once in the lower end of the house. Now removed to a house added to the upper gable wall. 1 table, 2 bed, 3 dresser, 4 cradle, 5 bench, 6 table, 7 sowhouse.

fig. 4. In Co. Kerry, Co. Galway and other parts of Ireland, I have been told [171] of rough strong doors of wattles bound together with ropes of *sugán*. Such a door, the hurdle door, *sgálán fraoigh* or *scalpán*, was more commonly used as a door for cattle sheds. It is found also in Scotland (see e. g. an illustration showing sheilings in Jura (S. W. Scotland) in Pinkertons Voyages and Travels, vol. III, p. 278, London 1809) and it is mentioned in the Ancient Irish laws. About the two opposite doors and the half-doors see p. 217.

In older times a hole in the wall, a looplight, served as window. It was closed [284, at night with a hay-wisp or a wooden shutter, *cómhla*, which was removed 414] by day and secured at night by a stick placed across or by a latch.

342 Windows, as well as chimneys, were taxed, hence the oldfashioned blind
[65] wall and the old fireplace (without chimney) being preserved. The daylight was admitted to the kitchen by the door opening. A pad of straw was placed at the door, *sop i mbéal dorais* (Dinneen) on which tailors and other crafts-
[294] men used to sit to avoid window-tax. When windows came later on, they were placed on the side of the house sheltered from the prevailing wind.

The gables. The stone built gables are higher or lower according to the form of the roof, which is determined by the wind. In some districts of Ireland
[184] especially in the Aran Islands, Connemara, Sligo, Mayo there are often even in very primitive buildings, step gables or serrated gables. In other parts of Ireland the gables are straight up to the top. In Southern and Eastern Ireland the gables are generally of this type. Half thatched or hipped gables are sometimes found in the east, where now and then the thatch is also bent over the gable edge in the same way as in Wales. This is common on mud houses.

How the gables protect the ends of the thatched roof and support the horizontal ribs is shown in pl. XLIV: 2.

The roof. Roof and wall constructions meet one another in the most primitive stages, when the house is only a roof over a foundation wall, of a cavity, or when the roof is constructed similarly to the *clochán*s with the upper course of stones slightly overlapping the lower course. This construction is not known among dwelling houses of to-day, but can be found in outhouses, sweating buths etc.

Roofs made by wide slates or stone flags will be seen in some parts of Ireland when there is a natural access to stones suitable for slates as in Co. Clare where such roofs are found on outhouses with the narrow stone walls carrying the flags.

The Irish house from olden times generally has had not a stone roof, but a thatched roof, *ceann tuighe*. The art of making good thatched roofs is now dying out but in earlier times Irishmen had developed great skill in roofing with thatch.

The thatched roof is supported internally by beams joined in pairs forming
[804] the couples, *cúplaí*. The couples are placed at a certain distance and the space enclosed between two couples must be looked upon as a sort of architectural unit. The length of the house can be measured by the number of couples.
[171] A very similar kind of measuring is well known in Denmark and Skåne. In many old houses the length of the house seems to indicate traditions from the ancient Irish laws (See Addy, p. 84).

The roof-supporting system of beams varies very little. The beams can

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be more or less primitive. The couples can be constructed in two slightly different ways depending on the intended height of the roof. In very windy districts near the sea very low, semi-circular roofs that do not catch much wind are used. The roof is streamlined and there is no comb along the roof, pl. XLV: 2. 342

This roof is made in the following way. Very strong couples rest on the walls and are joined by two crossbeams, the lower called *faradh* and the upper *maide mullaigh*. These joining beams are just as strong as the couples themselves. They are joined to the couples by means of one or two wooden pegs on each side. The couples never meet. Above this arrangement are the purlins, *taobháin*. Transversally across these are slender laths called *cleithedin*, pl. XLV: 1.

High roofs with combs are supported by couples joined in pairs and held together at the top by a wooden peg, *pionna*. The ridge beam, *maide droma*, rests on the hollows formed at the junctions of the couples, and parallel to it but lying transversally on the couples are purlins, *tobháin*, on each side of which run the whole length of the roof. To brace the couples there are tiebeams, *maidi snaidhm*, pl. XLIV.

On this foundation of roofing, sticks are spread tough sods of grass, the earthen side inwards. The sods cut from the ground can either be made about 5 ft. long and 2 ft. wide or a bit longer than the side of the roof and about 3 ft. broad. In the former case the sods overlap, the higher over the lower. In the latter case the sods stretch from the wall to the ridge and are bent over the ridge. Over the ridge then there are two layers of sods. In both cases the one row of sods overlaps the second row beside it. I have found the short sods used in Southern Ireland, and the long ones in Donegal. [824] [784]

The thatch is put on in two ways. One method of thatching corresponds to the thatched houses of the European continent viz: the scollop-thatching or rod-thatching, pl. XLVI: 2. The other method is the hay-rope or *sugán* thatching known from the border of the North Atlantic and the North Sea. The scollop-thatching is made in such a way that straw, *tuighe*, or mountain grass, *fineán*, is fastened to the sods by means of horizontal rows of rods, *scolb*. The rods are fastened to the underlying sods by twigs, *bannai*. Both *scolb* and *bannai* are of hazel or sally. Oat, wheat, or barley straw is used for thatching but on the western seabord rye straw is used. Rye is considered most durable. According to scollop-thatching the thatching of the ridge is of certain interest. Here and round the chimney-shaft but seldom at the thatch of eaves, *bun tsop*, a kind of ornament can be formed by the twigs and scollops. But this is an ornament caused by the necessity of fastening and 342 824 342

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 trimming the thatch. When using the *sugán* or hay-rope method the straw, bound in large bunches, is placed on the roof in rows, each 'set' about 18" wide. The thatcher beginning from below takes a handful of straw and puts the top part of the straw against the roof. He then puts another handful slightly above the last, so that the handfuls lie on top of each other. The bottom part of the handful is spread and flattened out with hands. Then the 342 ropes are put on. A man stays on a ladder at each gable of the house, pl. 284 XLVI: 1. Another man carries the rope along the roof by means of a hay-fork while another walks beside him loosening the ball of ropes. The first rope is put on along the eave, the next above until the top of the house is reached. The ropes are fastened along the gables by means of stone plugs. Then the vertical ropes are put on, and fixed to the front and back walls of the house, also by stone plugs. The two systems of ropes can also be intertwined with each other, so that the ropes form a kind of unintentional ornamentation. Other means of fastening the ropes are by weighting the vertical ropes with stones attached to the ends. The stones are placed in two different ways, (1) hanging below the eave of the house, this is the most primitive way, (2) laying the stones on the roof just above the eave to press down the thatch at the same time as they hold the ropes. The rows of stones when finally laid give a good finish. This is also an example of unintentional ornamentation. It is worth noticing that the hay cocks too may be fastened in nearly the same three ways by means of hay ropes.

342 In order to produce hay-ropes used for binding the thatch and the hay cocks etc. a multitude of simple tools has been invented, pl. XLVII: 2.

To sum up some conclusions about thatching and roof, it seems clear to me that two, perhaps related, but nevertheless unlike traditions have been at work here, namely the scollop thatching, with the highly elevated roof resting on couples that meet each other, on the one hand, and on the other hand hay rope thatching, with the hay ropes fastened to stones, and often a low roof without perceptible ridge resting on a couple construction, where the couples do not join. Parallels to the former tradition are to be found on the European continent and the latter are mainly found, as far as I know, along the coast of the Atlantic and the North Sea.

I must add that the well-built thatched roof is at the same time a masterpiece of technical ability and a feat of artistic skill. The best Irish thatching give the finest peasant roof in Europe. It is unfortunately, however, very expensive and demands constant attention to keep it in good repair so it is very often replaced by a cheap, shoddy roof of foreign origin.

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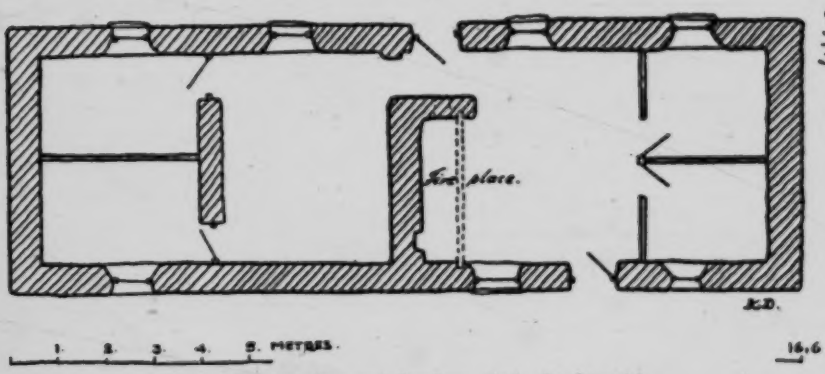

Fig. 5. Entrance-door and fireplace. Cush, Co. Limerick.

The fireplace and the chimney.

Slowly, step by step, or suddenly, by an abrupt innovation the fireplace has developed from its simplest original form, i. e. the placing of the fire directly on the flagstones of the floor. I have never found a fire lying quite free on the floor in Ireland, although I have heard of such fires where one could go round the fire. From Tousist, Co. Kerry, I have heard of houses which had the fire in the centre of the floor, and a casing, *simné*, of woven twigs, *slata fighe*, over it to convey the smoke out through the opening in the centre of the roof. This arrangement has been obsolete here for upwards of 80 years.

In both central-chimney houses and gable-chimney houses of recent time there is always a wall at the back of the firehob. This wall constitutes the endwall, *pinniuir*,[8] of the kitchen in gable-chimney houses. In more newly built central-chimney houses this wall reaches the top of the roof as the stonebuilt chimney is joined to it, but in old central chimney houses it only reaches the same height as the side walls.

The hearth, *teinteán*, is usually at floor level in many parts of Ireland. There is a great variety of hearth-stones: large flags of stone, small cobblestones from the seashore etc. Even round the hearth or fire-place there is a pavement owing to the oldfashioned way of using the fire for cooking. Bits of fire are taken from the fire, and put on the floor round the fire-place, for instance when they are baking in the bastible, and at the same time cooking, or when they wish to leave the tea drawing. Sometimes there can be two or three small fires at the same time round the hearth.

The fireplace thus represents the pure hearth-type, being in direct contrast

342 to the Middle and especially East European fireplace traditions, which are
354 dominated by the stonebuilt oven. The built-in oven is unfamiliar and unknown to the Irish fireplace, and the Irish types of bread. For baking,
252 which is done every day in Ireland, special utensils, representing very old
354 and original traditions, are used. For baking the griddle bread, *arán greadaille*, the griddle or grid iron, *greadall*, is used. The griddle rests on the tripod, *teannta* or *crann aráin*. In Northern Ireland, bread irons are used, which are not put on the tripod over the fire, but the cake is placed in an upright position supported by the bread iron which is placed before the fire. Very primitive is the method to lean the cake against the bread-stick, *crothnán* or *maide aráin*, which is only a wooden twig of three branches or a three forked root. In Ancient Ireland according to O'Curry (op. cit. vol. I, p. CCCLXIII) the wheatmeal and barley cakes were baked on a griddle, but the oatmeal cakes called *bkocaire* or *blethach* were always baked in upright position before the fire by means of the threepronged fork or stick called *maide an bkocaire* or the *cranachan*.

There is also another certainly old Irish method of bread baking i. e. in
[177] the bastible, *bácús*. When metal stores however are found in peasant houses, they are definitely a late cultural loan from England.

342 Standing at the back of the hearth is one large, thickish flag or often three
354 or more stones forming the hob, *iarta*. In very primitive dwellings I have seen only a couple of rough stones used as hobstones, *leac iarta*. In districts where mud-houses are common a mass or boss of clay behind the fireplace makes up the hob. The pot, *corcán*, or kettle, *citeal*, rests against the hob or hobstones when on the fire. The hob constitutes a protection even for the wall behind.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland and even elsewhere the hob is built up carefully from stone and mortar. An ash corner will be found at the sides of the hob.

In the very primitive stage there is no chimney at all, the smoke finding its way out through the door or a hole in the roof. As I have already mentioned, there can be two smoke holes, one at each gable end of the roof. This is a stage of the black houses very seldom seen in Ireland to day.

At the next stage a kind of basket or wooden chimney is hung over the fire to create a draught, *tarrac*, and to lead the smoke out through the hole in the roof. When there is no chimney but even later, when the chimney has come, to regulate the circulation of air in the kitchen, is is necessary to open and close one of the doors to allow for the changing winds. In the Irish houses the woman who looks after the fire always takes the "wind door" and

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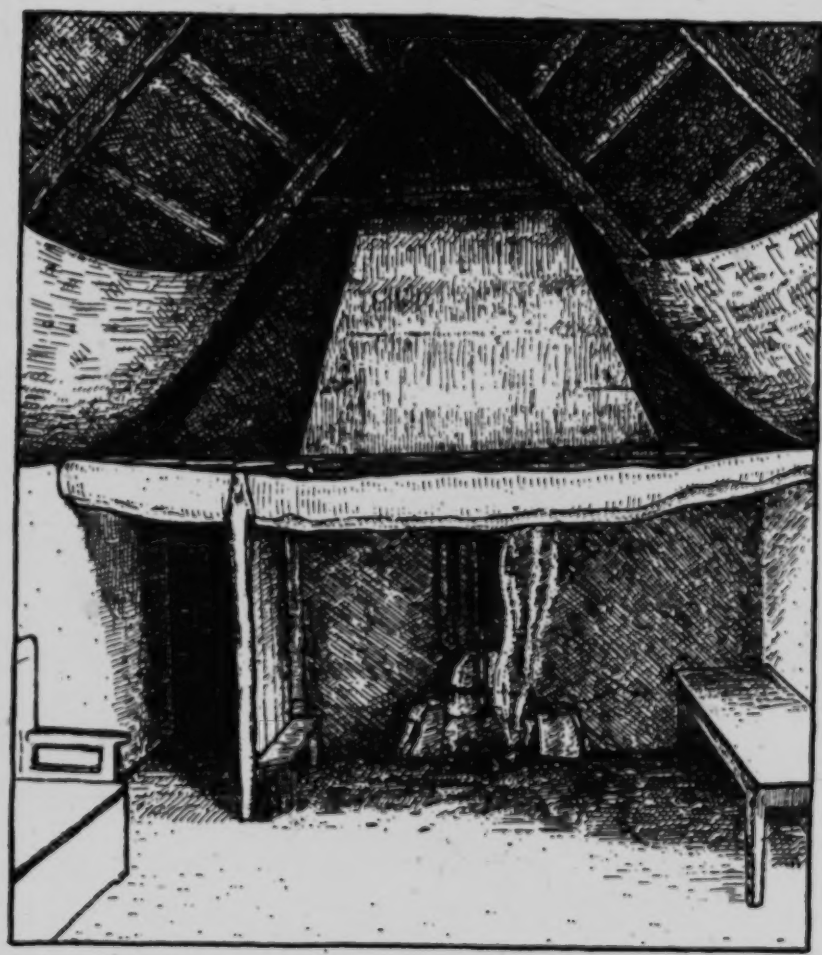

Fig. 6. Wooden side-wall of the fireplace. The kitchen corner. Kyle, Ballinglen, Co. Wicklow.

the "shelter door" into consideration, the whole kitchen being of importance with regard to the fire.

The basket chimney, *síneán*, is plastered with clay inside and outside to resist sparks from the fire. A plaster mixture of clay and calfmanure is said to be very useful. The older chimneys were straight i. e. on looking up from the fireplace the sky was visible above. In later ones the flue, *poll an deataigh*, [237]

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342 is bent from side to side to create more draught. The chimney narrowed gra-
354 dually upwards until the basket, *cis*, on top was reached. In old houses the chimney was not always capped by the basket-like contraption on the outside, for instance not in coastal districts in the North, pl. XLV: 2. The external chimney however is a noteworthy detail. It was now and then of woven rods of twig or willow and it was thatched in some parts of Ireland, pl. XLVII: 1. In other old houses pieces of board were placed on edge in square formation.

The external chimney is sometimes lacking even if there is an inside chimney. In Donegal in places exposed to the wind, I have seen this even in houses with a stonebuilt chimney.

The basket or wooden chimney is supported by two wooden beams resting on the side walls, sometimes however projecting from the gable wall, pl. XLVII: 3. In a later stage there are two pillar walls or hobwalls carrying the basket chimney.

Across the chimney (inside) halfway up or more, a stick of cut tree-branch projects across the chimney. This stick is supporting the chimneyrack or pot-rack, hanger, *drol*, which is an iron bar and hangs down to the fire-level. Another way of hanging pots over the fire is to use the crane, *croch*, a hooked bar of wood (in older times) or iron. Usually the hangers and the crane are combined and in fact there are many hangers hanging at the same time from the crane. Now and then a chain is used as a hanger.

[352] At the side of the fireplace there is a stool, *stól*, or a number of stools, often varying a little in size, but usually very low. Primitive is the block of wood, *bloc*, a section of a tree, used as a stool. This I have seen in chimney-corners in Co. Kerry. There the round stool of coiled hay-ropes, *suidhistín*, also will be found.

The hob or protection wall behind the fire can develop in such a way that it incorporates the two stools at both sides of the fire, so that there will be two stone-built seats.

Also the pier of the fireplace will be built by pilasters on both sides forming a stonebreast, *piléar an teintedin*, on which the wattled or wooden chimney rests.

[352] In the pier, as well as in the stone wall behind the fireplace, in the hob, and underneath the stone-seats, there are small closets or holes used to keep utensils. In Donegal, I have seen a hole in the wall at each side of the fire, the one hole for the woman's snuffbox and knitting, the other exclusively for the man's pipe.

In later times the chimney is often built of stone and when at last the pier

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, 342
the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on 354
a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Done- [184]
gal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in 592
Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted 354
to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All [775]
Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the [171]
fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, [184]
I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot 352
with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district 171
between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh*, where the in-

352 171 built bed in the hall beside the fireplace has been common. But this custom of bed is also known over a wider area along the North Sea. As to the outshot it is to be remarked that it must be compared with the outshots of English and Northwest European houses. Where the outshot tradition is natural to the house-types, the outshots are used for purposes and not only for beds.

In Donegal I have found *cailleachs* closed with wooden doors, similar to the built in beds of North-West Europe. The *cailleach* is cut off by curtains.

It has been mentioned that the dresser at an early stage of development has formed part of the partition. This and other facts (the dresser has generally a fixed traditional place, different in different parts of Ireland) seems to indicate that the dresser belongs — as in Scandinavia and West-European countries — to a rather old set of furniture.

The table however seems not to have any prominent place in the old-fashioned houses at least in Western and Northern Ireland. It is always put along a wall in primitive houses, and one can never sit round it. It never attracted the social activities of the house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating social and family-centre. In this respect the table in Ireland has never supplanted the fireplace. There are no references, as far as I am told in the early tales to people feasting at the table. I think that the table [184] does not belong to the original set of furniture. In many fishermen's dwellings in North-West of Donegal it is still missing. The people sit in front [264] of the fireplace round the shallow-basket, *ciseog*, when eating, the basket resting upon the knees of the familymembers. This basket will be seen after dinner-time hanging to dry on the south wall of the house, pl. XLVIII: 2. I suppose this is the native and original "table", at least in certain cultural spheres of Western and Northern Ireland.

[113] [1] In a valuable article by Ludwig Mühlhausen, Contributions to the study of the concrete material culture of the Gaoltacht, Cork Arch. Soc. Vls. XXXVIII, p. 67, and XXXIX, p. 41, et seq., is found a very good description of houses in Dingle Peninsula and Cornamona, Co. Galway. I have not come across any more detailed contribution to the study of the Irish house. From books of travel and novels some information can be picked up. See Béaloideas 1935. p. 57 seq.

[114] [2] The material here presented has been collected by me during journeys in Ireland in the years 1934 and 1935. For the many facilities afforded me in pursuing my investigations in Ireland I must express my thanks to the Irish Folklore Commission and its Director Mr Séamus O'Duilearga, on whose behalf I undertook these studies. I am also grateful to my Irish friends both scholars and country people who kindly lent me their assistance. Here I can only mention Mr Seán O'Suilleabháin, B. A., and Miss Aine Ni Chróinín, M. A., especially for having supplied the Gaelic terms used by me.

[3] As to the Welsh long-houses the cruck construction seems to be an exception (see Peate p. 452).

[4] Cfr. Sigurd Erixon: Skansens Kulturgeschichtliche Abteilung, Führer. Stockholm 1928, p. 92.

[5] *Pinniuir*, f., a gable, a gable-end; fig. a patron, chief, etc. *pinniuir an tighe*, the house-gable, fig. the "head" of the house. Fr. pignon, Eng. pynum. Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary.

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NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE. II.

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

341 In the Ireland of today there exist not only buildings of a more developed stage of construction, *i. e.* stone-built or mud houses with roofs resting on wooden couples[1] but also buildings of very archaic or of extremely simplified or primitive construction. The stone beehive huts, roofed by a [172] system of overlapping stones and some oval or oblong houses are identical with or closely linked with prehistoric house-types. The huts of wickerwork, sod and turf, on the other hand, represent very simple house-types, of which not all can with certainty be characterized as archaic, but rather as imitations in a simplified form of advanced house-types, or as simple temporary structures, or solutions of individual building problems often due to poverty or lack of better building material.

These groups of buildings offer possibilities of very wide, but at the same time very vague, comparisons throughout the fields of archæological, historic literary and ethnological facts.

341 Ireland's cultural position is of great interest, whether Ireland be looked 171 upon as a relic-zone where many culture-elements still persist after they have become extinct in Continental Europe, or whether it be supposed to constitute a critical point in the Atlantic intercepting the different streams of culture flowing from North, South, and East.[2]

There are features common to Irish and Scandinavian archaic or primitive buildings, to Irish and Spanish-Portuguese buildings or to Irish and English buildings, but it would be premature to come to any decision about the origin of these features until the whole area of their distribution has been surveyed. Adapting T. J. Westropp's words about the ancient Irish "Forts" I would say: The key to the origin of the Irish house-types lies as much in a comparison with cognate buildings over the rest of Europe as in the native Irish records.

As it is not possible to arrive at any definite conclusions until investigations have been made on a broader basis, I must content myself here with pointing out some types of buildings and some problems which seem to me to be of certain importance.

The clochán type with domed roof.

172 342 The clochán, or stone bee-hive hut, no doubt represents a very old stage of house-tradition (pl. 29,a—32), although it can be studied from material still existing and, in some cases, still in use in Ireland today (pl. 33, a, b). As it represents a prehistoric type of building, investigations of the Irish clochán and other types of bee-hive, oval or oblong houses from the Iron Age and later times become of immediate interest for the study of recent Irish house-traditions.

A comparison between the common Irish (developed) houses of today and the clochans (prehistoric or of later date) may give the impression that there is a gap between them that cannot be bridged. Nevertheless the clochán-type constitutes a very suitable starting point for discussion of the recent Irish peasant houses and their history. There are indeed some significant parallels from various countries and different periods, which help to illuminate the problem here in question. In particular I would like to draw [173] attention to the Scottish bee-hive house but also to the black house *(bothán, aridhean, tigh dubh)*, to the remains of circular and roughly oblong huts of stone in other parts of the Brittish Isles, *e. g.* in Carnarvon, Wales, and to the very similar settlements in Spain and Portugal,[3] and in Italy and Greece. In Scandinavia, such settlements and forts as have been excavated in Denmark, Norway and the Swedish provinces of Öland and Gotland must be considered as parallels to the West European material here mentioned.

Descriptions of Irish clochans can be found in several archæological works. I quote here some descriptions given by Macalister:[4]

"A clochán was built in this manner. A space of the size and shape intended was marked out on the ground with loose stones. Usually the plan was circular or oval, but sometimes the building is circular outside and square within. Above these stones another course was laid, slightly oversailing the course below. A third course overhung the second, and so on; the walls being made thick enough, as they rose, to secure stability. At last the sides of the building approximated together so that the hole in the top of the chamber could be closed with a single flag-stone or with two or more such stones. No mortar of any kind was needed or used, though the outer surface may have been covered with sods or some protection to keep out the rain. As a rule the stones of which the building was composed were laid not quite horizontal, but were sloped outward, so as to shed off rain-water to the outside of the building."

The most famous remains of clochans are perhaps the six bee-hive cells at

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P 177.---Analyst]

PLATE 29.

a. Clochán (beehive hut). Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Note to the left in back-ground a very large clochán which has collapsed. The remains of several other collapsed clochans are inside same *caiseal*, (circular wall enclosing a group of buildings, huts, etc.).

b. Clochans inside a cashel. Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry.

3: Campbell B. E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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a

b

[p. 175]
[captions on p. 174]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 30

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[p. 176]
[captions on p. 177]

3: Campbell B. E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

172 342 Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry, and the so called "City of Fahan", which probably includes the largest number of buildings of this kind (pl. 29, 30,b).[5] But no investigation has been made — as far as I know — of round stone huts in Ireland built and inhabited in later times. Such investigation has, however, been made on the Scottish Islands by F. L. W. Thomas.[6] It is evident that the bee-hive huts (*both*) of Lewis described by Thomas, are very close to or identical with the Irish clochàns, and represent the same building traditions. This also agrees with the accounts of Irish cabins in the literature.[7] I will confine myself here to two descriptions made by Thomas and published in 1860 and in 1869, both dealing with stone bee-hive huts built in late times and used as dwellings. As these descriptions are inaccessible to most readers I must quote them at some length.

342 171 The normal and, Thomas presumes, most modern form of bee-hive house (in the middle of the 19th century) is "an irregular circle, six or seven feet in diameter, the walls rising perpendicularly for three feet; each successive course of stone then overlaps or projects beyond the one below, and then the roof gradually closes in and takes a beehive form. — — — A hole, called the *Farlos (farleus*, a skylight), is left in the apex of the roof for the escape of the smoke, and is closed with a turf or flat stone as requisite. (See pl. 34,c). There are two doors, 2½ feet high and 2 feet broad, and they are placed so that a line joining them cuts off on one side about two thirds of the enclosed area. The two doors are a decided improvement, for that one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weather door — is closed with a stone or turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the head of the inhabitants and through the Farlos. From door to door a row of flat stones, a few inches in height, forms the bench or seat, *being*, and behind this the area is filled up with hay or rushes for a bed. I had a native estimate of its capacity, and found it calculated to hold three people. In front of the bench, and midway between the two doors, is the fire — of peat of course, and not much needed except for cooking. Above the fire, a longish stone draws in and out of the wall for the purpose of hanging a pot on, and in nearly every ruin did we find this primitive instrument in its place, shoved back into the wall."[8]

With the investigations made by Thomas in 1857 and later, the *clochàn* as an inhabited living dwelling is brought within the horizon of the study of today. In the following example which is taken from Thomas' description, this house-type of a prehistoric time is allied with a late innovation, namely the stone-built chimney, which in the course of the 19th century seems to

PLATE 30.
a. Clochàn na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.
b. Clochàn, Fahan, Co. Kerry.

3: Campbell B.E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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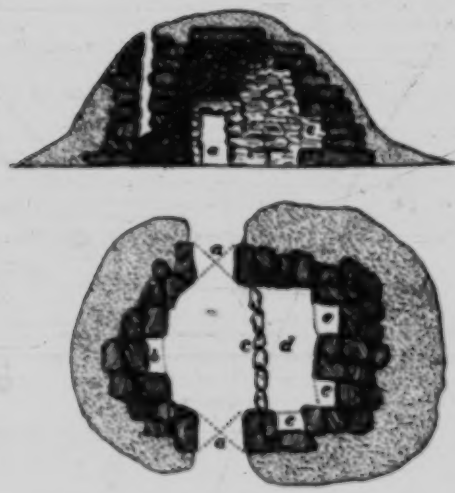

Fig. 1. A both or clochán on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, a, doors; b, fire-place; c, a row of stones in front of the bed place; d, the bed; e, e, e, small recesses in the wall to serve for cupboards.

become more and more common even in the dwellings of this remote district, thus heralding the total replacement of the black-houses by the white-houses with stone-built chimneys at the gable walls. With regard to the arrangement for the fire, this clochán stands on the same level of development as the many houses or huts of this and later times, the roof of which has been broken through by the stone-built chimney.

The *bo'h (both)* or *clochán* on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis, fig. 1, is the most modern that Thomas has seen — "and at the same time the last, in all probability, that will be constructed in this manner." It is of bee-hive form, about 18 feet in diameter, 9 feet high, and roofed by the horizontal or cyclopean arch, *i. e.* by a system of overlapping stones. The outside is covered with green turf. There are two doors (fig. 1 a.a) opposite to each other, higher (3 feet) and better formed than is usual. Within, the chamber is dome-shaped and is between 7 and 8 feet square on the floor. A row of stones (c), half a foot in height, cuts off one half of the floor for a bed (d). There are several small recesses (e, e, e) in the wall to serve for cupboards. But what distinguishes this *bo'h* from all others is the presence of a chimney over the fireplace (b). Thomas concludes, from what he heard from the woman who was living in it in 1867, and from va-

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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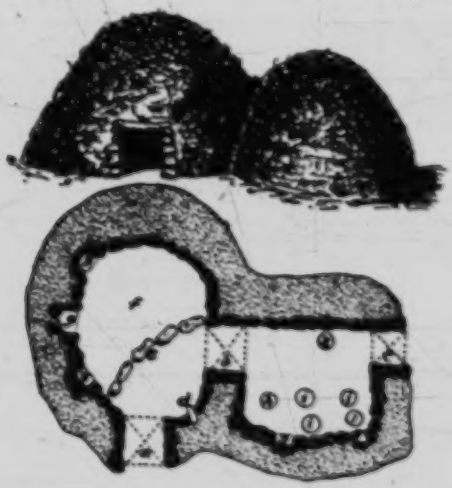

Fig. 2. A double both, the garry or summer pasturage of the tenants of Corlista, Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, b, c, doorways; d, fire-place; e, row of stones in front of the bed-place; f, the bed; g, g, niches; h, cream tub; i, i, i, three milk or cheese tubs, covered by slaty stones; j, a churn; k, a stoup for carrying water.

rious circumstances, that this *bo'h* was made about ninety years ago (from 1867).

With regard to Thomas's own comparisons, I will only add here that he has made a rather daring comparison between the *both* of Lewis and the Eskimo domed-shaped hut of Greenland. But perhaps a comparison of the grouping of the houses would be more effective than a comparison of the house construction of each type.[14] The Greenland hypothesis, however, seems to me to be worth studying. But at the same time we must not lose sight of stone-built huts and huts of straw, sods, mud and wickerwork, round or oval in form, used especially by cattle-breeding peoples in the Iberian Peninsula (*e. g.* in Estremadura, Andalusia, Granada), Italy and elsewhere.

Bee-hive houses of the *clochán* type in Ireland of today are to be found in some parts of the Gaeltacht (the Gaelic-speaking districts of Ireland), as on the coast and islands from Kerry to Mayo. There the stone-built bee-hive houses are used — not as dwellings, so far as I know — but as milk-houses or for storing turf etc. In the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, bee-hive houses are still being built as outhouses. There are also modernised clocháns with wooden doors — they can even have a glass ball to decorate the top.

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The only stone-built and stone-roofed houses equipped with a fireplace and

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 a smokehole which I have found, was an ancient sweating bath, *teach allais*, in Co. Mayo. This building is square in form.

171 Thomas's material is however interesting from a certain point of view. From prehistoric times are found agglomerations of round, oblong and square houses in Ireland (*e. g.* Skellig-Michael), in Wales[9] and in other parts of the

341 British Isles. The same mixture of round and square or oblong buildings can be observed in Portugal,[10] Spain and elsewhere in Western and Southern Europe.

From Thomas's material we now learn what an *inhabited* settlement of this kind looks like. In Lewis, for example, the stone-roofed circular houses, *bothan*, have been erected in the same *gearraidhean*, *i. e.* place for booleying, as the timber-roofed huts, *aridhean*.[10] We are forced to infer that round, oval, oblong, square buildings must be studied with regard to each other and with regard to different constructions in timber, branches, sods, stone etc.

The *oblong form* of building can obviously have developed or been invented in a number of ways, as there are varying antecedent conditions in different cases.[11] There is however *one* oval or oblong form of building which may have its origin in the stone-built domed-roofed bee-hive house.

The construction with a domed roof does not permit of much widening of the space between the walls. Even if very long and suitable flag-stones are at hand, the limits for the cyclopean arch will make it impossible for the primitive builder to enlarge the circumference of his house to any great degree. To get more room he must put two or more circular bee-hive buildings together, or he must go over to the oval or oblong form. Thomas himself touches upon the problem in these words: "It is evident that in this style of architecture (domed roofed buildings) the size of the rooms is limited by the nature of the stone; and although a tolerably safe roof may be made in this manner with rough moor-stones to cover an area of six feet it would have a most uncomfortable and suspicious appearance if extended over twice those dimensions (six or seven feet in diameter). Even in the Orkneys where is abundance of flag stone, although there are chambers there forty-five feet long the breadth was only five feet."

342 To elucidate this important problem the Irish oval *clochán* offers us the most valuable material. I refer to the series of photographs, kindly placed at my disposal by the distinguished author of The Islands of Ireland, Thomas Mason.[12] This *clochán* (Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore Island, Aran, Co. Galway, pl. 30 a, 31, and 32) is of oval shape, the entrance door being at the long sidewall. The roof is made of overlapping stones, one row of large slabs covering the space between the two long sides of the roof, which are

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
COUNTY GALWAY

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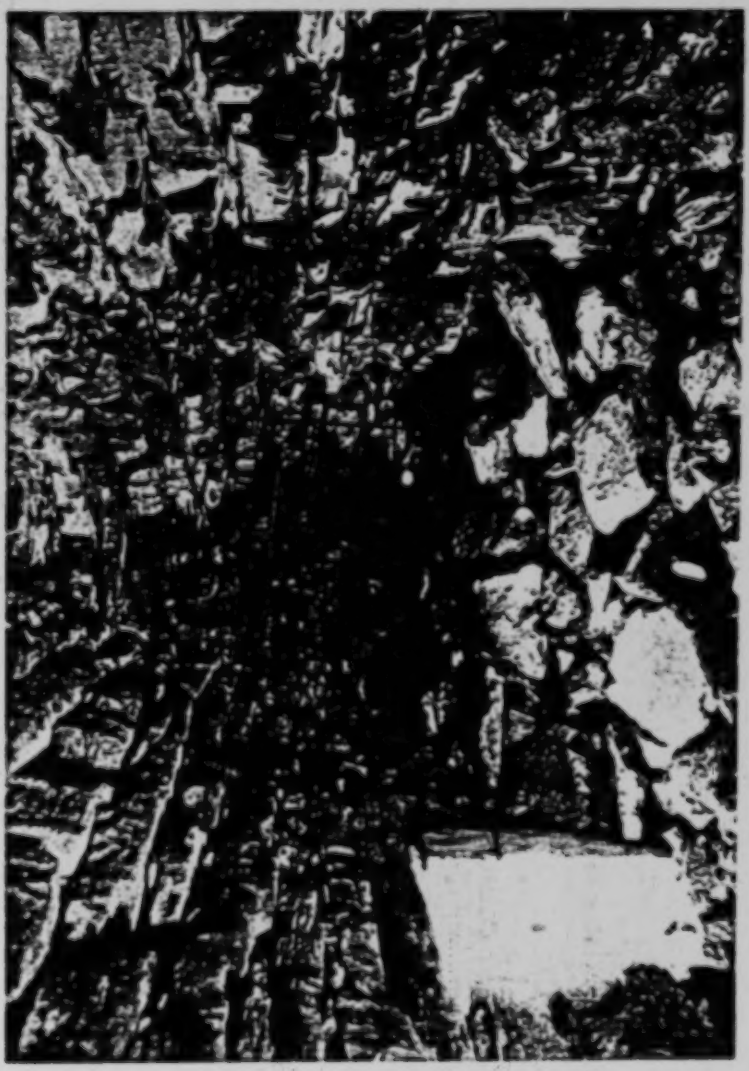

Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

PLATE 32

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Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

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3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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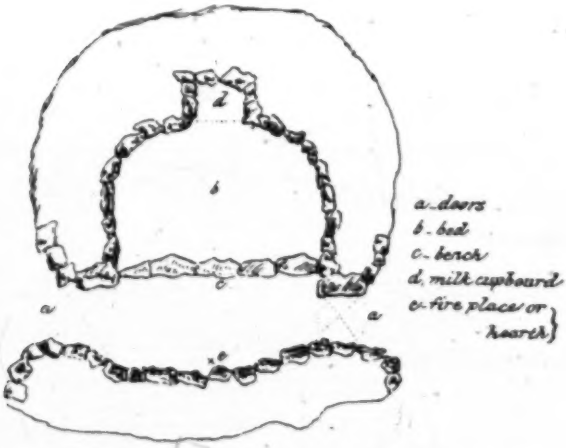

Fig. 3. Both, on West side of Loch an ath Ruadh. Uig, Lewis. From Thomas.

joined together in this manner (pl. 32, an interior showing roof formation. Camera was placed on the ground pointing upwards).

Primitive dwellings and hypogea of the Scottish isles also show the same arrangements. Thus it seems to be evident that the study of the oblong houses there (black-houses, *tigh dubh)* cannot be separated from the study of the *clochán* type. In consequence, it also will be necessary to compare the so-called Norse building customs in the Scottish Isles, which have been put forward by Aage Roussell,[12] not only with Thomas's black-house material — as Roussell does — but also with Thomas's other material including the stone-roofed houses.

[2]

Stone built timber-roofed oval houses.

If my working hypothesis holds, a thorough study of the oval houses will throw much light on Irish building traditions. At least in some parts of Ireland the oval houses formed the basis for the development of native houses of today, *e. g.* the one-roomed central-chimney houses with thatched gables.

It is evident that oval house-types can easily have been reached in places where the round or oval clochán as well as the hut with thatched roof resting on timber are known. When suitable large slabs were scarce, the primi-

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 tive builder has replaced the doomed roof by the thatched roof if, naturally, timber and material for thatching were at hand.

A great number of houses of this type have been in use as late as the 19th century in remote parts of Ireland. Many references are given in the travel sketches and other literature of that time.

Particular attention may be called to the houses in Achill, Co. Galway, which belong to booleying settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, describing the island of Achill[124a] tell us about a certain kind of booleying (the cattle were brought down towards the coast when the season for fishing was on). They sketch the houses in a picture, pl. 34,a, and in words:

"The habitations of the islanders are very singular. Their houses are heaps of rude stones moulded by the tide, procured from the beach, uncemented; they are rounded at the gables, and roofed with fern, heath, and shingles, fastened on by straw bands. In the village of Dooagha, consisting of about forty cabins, there is not a single chimney. Some of the wealthier graziers, however, have an odd custom of residing in such houses, or in houses of a still more simple construction, only during the summer months, when the season for fishing is "on", and their cattle are brought down towards the coast to feed on the young herbage. These hovels, they call 'Builly houses'."

[556] [221] [231]

From another traveller, Caesar Otway, who made a short excursion in Achill in the summer 1838, can be collected some valuable informations.[124b] Otway mentions (p. 353, 356) a certain type of wall construction, viz, the pilledpin double wall: two dry stone walls with the interspace filled in with sand. This is the same archaic construction, which Thomas describes from Lewis. It is also known from archaeological excavations in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

342 361

"An Achill village consisted of congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky, and their construction was as follows: — a dry stone wall was built of a form like an obtuse oval, for they had not arrived at the art of making a square quoin, or erecting a gable end. Outside this wall, and at about a foot distance, another loose wall was run up, and the space between the two filled with sea sand, and then this was roofed, generally with timber washed on shore from wrecks, and covered with heath, which covering did not reach over the outside wall, and form an eave, but rested on the middle between the walls, and the moisture from above passed, as it should, through the intervening sand."

"— — — we entered the village of Dugurth. Just such a village as I

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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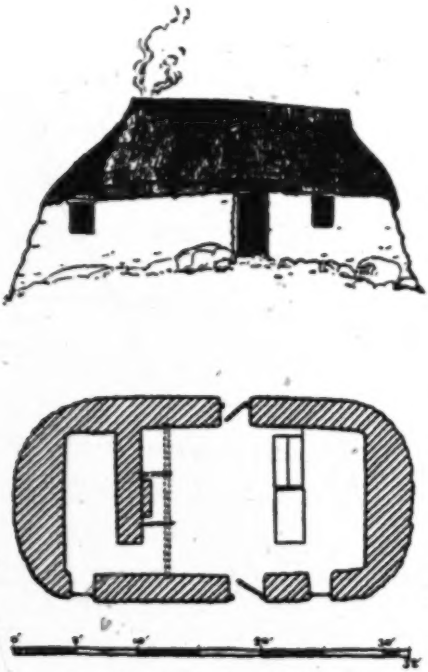

Fig. 4. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

have above described, but certainly containing some houses that *had* gable-ends; but for the most part of the construction I have alluded to, a dirty, dreary, uncouth place — — —."

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Later on (p. 401) Otway has learnt to know the summerherding (booleying) and the difference between winterhouses and summerhouses, and he compares the Irish summerhouses with the Swiss *chalets*.

"Keem, I said, was a singular village; it is only inhabited in summer — who would suppose that the Achillians had such a superfluity of houses, that they had both their winter and summer residences. The Greenlanders and Esquimaux are so changeful, from their excessive vicissitudes of heat and cold — but here I was surprised to find empty every house but two (and these were the residences of the coast-guard), all with their doors fastened

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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342 and untenanted; and certainly such miserable wigwams, I had never be-
361 fore seen — all built, as I have already described, without gable-ends. It
221 seems the owners of the village of Keem, and the renters of the adjoining district, have other houses in a distant part of the island, where they spend the winter and spring; thence they come when their oats and potatoes are planted and spend the summer months, herding their cattle on these heights, and leading a pastoral life. Thus in Switzerland they have their chalets on the hills, and in old times in Ireland the creaghts (as they were called) had their boolies on the mountains; but I don't think I ever saw a summer-herding village before."

342 What is said to have been the last oval house in Achill (pl. 33,a), was destroyed in the last two years. An old man (he is seen in the doorway) had lived in it and would not change to any other kind of residence. When he died, the house was pulled down.

This house had dry stone walls. In the middle of the floor stood a beam of bog fir from the top of which beams and branches, also of bog fir, spread out like the ribs of an umbrella, to carry the thatched roof. (This central beam may have been a temporary structure? Cf. p. 192 about the *tuireadh* of the wickerwork house described by O'Curry). The house had no windows and no chimney. The smoke came out through a hole in the roof.

In the year 1936, I measured an inhabited oval house in Inveran, Co. Galway, fig. 4 and pl. 34, b, 35, a, b. This house embodies many interesting features known from prehistoric times. It is built upon very uneven ground and runs from east to west. The several feet thick walls slope as the walls of the oval clochán from the ground upwards. In later times these, built as dry stone walls, have been plastered from outside and whitelimed and the windows added.

The interior is made up by one room, which, however, is divided up to the west by the hob and a protecting wall behind it. Here is the bedroom, in harmony with the wide-spread old tradition mentioned in my former article.[12c] To the east, a dresser and a table cut off the lower part to form another bed-alcove.

The house has no outside chimney, but a basket resting on beams leads the smoke out through a hole in the roof. This basket is wattled from osiers and covered with plaster. As the wall behind the fireplace does not go up as far as the roof, canvas is hung to complete the wall.

There are the usual two doors, central and opposite to each other.[12d] The roof of straw, scollop-thatched, rests on couples of beams, supported on the

 [Text continues top of p. 189 ---- Analyst]

PLATE 33.

a. Oval house. Keel, Achill, Co. Mayo. Photographed in 1903.
b. Clochán, used for storage purpose. Blasket Island.

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[Captions on p. 186]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 34

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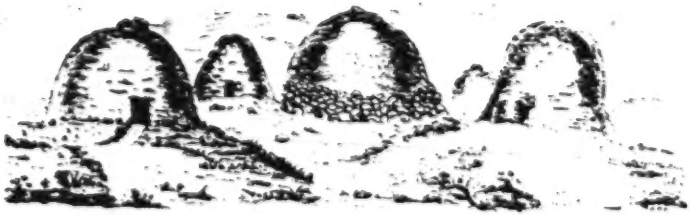

c

[Captions on p. 189]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 inner edge of the walls. As the oval house form does not permit any stone-built gables the roof has rounded and thatched gables.

The house as it now stands as a still inhabited homestead constitutes a good example of the stone-built, timber-roofed, oval house, wellknown from the early part of the 19th century. This house can, no doubt, be classified as a link or a cross between the prehistoric oval clochán and the primitive central-chimney house of later times. Thus, if my theory holds, there is no gap, from the point of view of classification, in the Irish house-tradition, as far as the central-chimney house is concerned.

Huts of wicker-work; sods, turf.

Although the material here concerned may often seem to be of a very indefinite character, from which only a few certain conclusions can be drawn (see p. 173), it is nevertheless necessary to study thoroughly every kind of primitive hut. The many references to Irish building-culture given in the old literature, indicate the very interesting fact that it was the wickerwork huts and other houses built of various materials, and not the stone-built *clocháns* that may have been very common as small dwellings in olden times.

342 171 During my rather short visits to Ireland, I have not come across any huts of such a kind as wicker-houses, oak-houses, *tech daraeh* etc., as are described by Eugene O'Curry[15] and by him compared with the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius. But inquiries along this line may show that such houses did exist in Ireland not so long ago. Certainly I have got some reports about booleying practised *e. g.* in Donegal up to ninety years ago. The people took their cattle to the mountains in the summer and there they erected huts, *bothogai*, for themselves. But how were these huts constructed? It is probable that they, at least somewhere in Ireland, have been made in a fashion similar to the creel houses in the Scottish Highlands of the same period. I will give some references from Scottish authors, mentioned by Thomas.[16]

According to Walker's Economical History of the Hebrides,[17] the farmers in most Highlands had their homesteads on the arable land, where they dwelt in what are called the winter houses. Soon after the middle of June, when the arable land was sown, they moved with their cattle to a mountainous place belonging to the farm. There they quickly erected or repaired their summer houses which were composed chiefly of sods and branches of trees. "Where wood is at hand, they erect what are called creel houses.

PLATE 34.

a. Houses in Achill, Co. Galway, From Ireland, its Scenery, Character etc., by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall.

b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

c. Beehive houses. Uig, Lewis, Hebrides. Inhabited 1859. After F. W. L. Thomas.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 17 These are formed of wooden posts, interlaced with branches of trees, like wicker-work, and covered on the outside with turf."

Robertson[19] describes a type of tenant's house, the construction of which must be like the wicker-work houses above-mentioned. "When such a house is to be built, the first thing done is to construct a coarse frame of wood, corresponding to the dimensions of the house, in length and breadth; then upon this frame to fix standards inclining inward, at proper distances, which rise to the height of the intended wall, and are kept in a firm position by being morticed in a tree above of the same dimensions with the tree below. These standards are closely woven with wicker work, to keep the sods from falling in; which, being built on the outside, finish the side walls of a creel-house."

342 221 As the Irish booleying custom, *buaile*, doubtless preserved many primitive and archaic building traditions it should form an important subject of study also with regard to wicker-work huts. However, the summer huts which are mentioned in the Welsh laws are not referred to in the Irish lawtracts. Professor Mac Néill has kindly informed me that this does not mean that the *buaile* custom did not exist in ancient Ireland. "It was probably practised by the less opulent class who had a limited supply of pasture land. The laws have little to say about these, as in general they were under the jurisdiction of a noble."

342 343 The huts erected in later times of sods or turf and used as shelters for donkeys, pigs, etc., which can be met with in various parts of Ireland, would also well repay study. In the literature of the 19th and the early 20th centuries can be found travellers' accounts of such houses, although they seldom go into details about the construction. I refer, *e. g.*, to a description of Caesar Otway's from his "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly", an account of his travels in Northwestern Ireland in 1840:

"The dwellers here were bog troglodytes — the foundations of their dwellings are sunk eight feet or more below the surface of the surrounding black bog, the walls are constructed of wet sods, cut off from the surface of that bog; there is no door or door-case, no chimney; the orifices by which the people enter, and through which the smoke *should* issue, are filled up as suits the wind, with bundles of heath or turf-kreels, filled with potato-stalks; a drain comes out from under the floor of the dwelling, from which the superabundant moisture escapes, or else it would be a common boghole: but, by its means, the water that springs abundantly from the sides and bottom, flows away, and the people sitting or standing within, are free from actual overflow."

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Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[19] Mårten Stenberger[20] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boëthius[21] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands. 231 349

A glance at the literary material.

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[22] 172 174

In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *fallai fuara*, as in the stone-built *clochàns*, but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin*, and of *fraigh, i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[23] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[24] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion. 174

O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that 174 342

174 342 these two wooden wall types can perhaps be compared with such Danish and Scanian walltypes as the "stakavägg" and the "sprötavägg".[26]) The houses were of two forms, 1) long quadrilateral buildings, built of wood or mud and straw like the existing mud cabins, and covered with thatch, and 2) cylindrical houses made of wicker-work and having a cup-shaped or hemispherical roof. The houses built in dirt and in stone *caiscals*, and those surrounded by mounds of earth, were probably in all cases round houses. As has already been mentioned, O'Curry is of the opinion that the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius correspond accurately to the *tech darach* or oak-house with a *cuach-cleithe* or wicker cup roof described in a tale called the "Intoxication of Ulster".

The round wicker-work house is described by O'Curry as follows: "The round wicker house was built by setting up perpendicularly a number of poles or posts of more or less solidity arranged in a circle of the necessary diameter and at equal distances from each other. The interstices between these poles or posts were then filled up with stout hazel and other rods in the form of wicker or basket work until it reached the required height of the wall. In the meantime there was firmly set up in the centre within a stout post called a *tuireadh* of length commensurate with the required height of the roof; into which were inserted by mortices or otherwise attached a certain number of rafters which descended slantingly all round to the tops of the upright posts of the wall into which they were received by tenon and mortice or otherwise attached. — — —

Across the rafters and ribs thus inserted were then laid bands of laths or narrow strips of wood which were fastened with pegs or with gods, *i. e.* twisted withies forming a regular network from the top of the roof-tree to the walls. On these, again, were laid or fastened, at short distances, what may be called a sheeting of rods and thin branches of trees, stretching from the roof-tree to the wall. And now, the shell of the house being finished, it was thatched with straw, rushes, or sedge and neatly fastened down with scollops. — — — I cannot say how they staunched the walls of the round wicker-house, whether with clay, moss, or skins — — —."

In the Ancient Irish Laws are many references to the wicker-house, *tech fithi*.[26]

The following quotation is a translation of part of a law tract which deals here with the status of an *ócaire*, one of the lesser of the freeholding ranks.[27a]

"The size of his house: it is larger than a house of rentcharge. For the size of the latter is seventeen feet. It is of wickerwork to the lintel. From this to the roof-tree, a *dit* between every two weavings (?). Two doorways

 [Text Continues Top of P. 195 ----Analyst]

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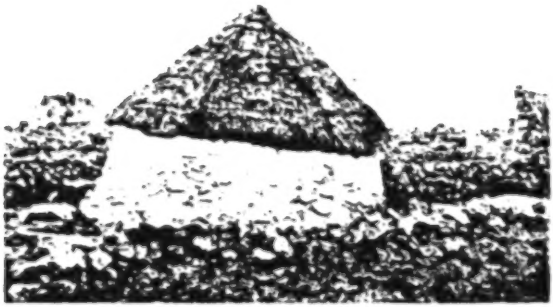

a. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

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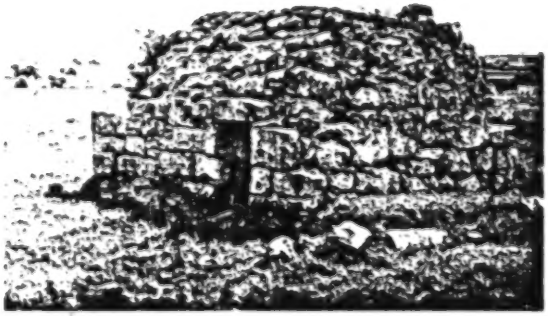

c. Sweating bath. Tuan, Co. Galway.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 36

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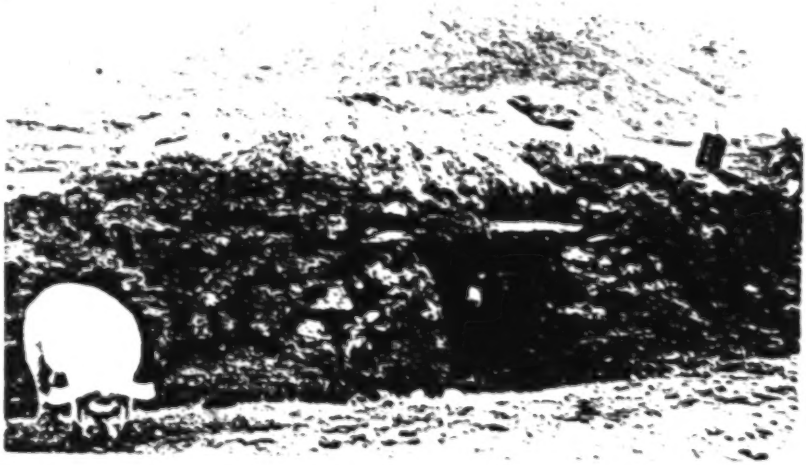

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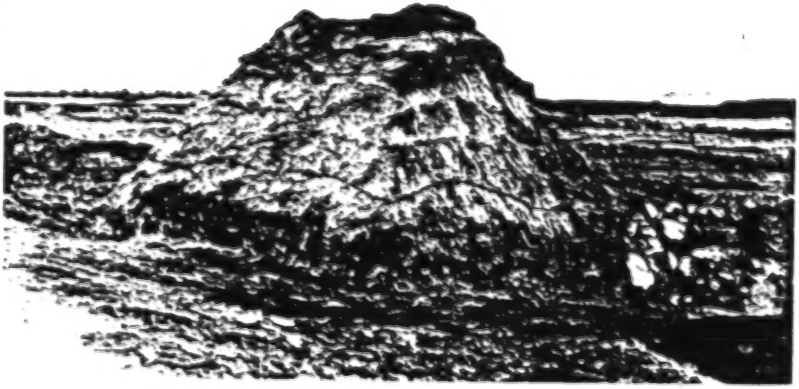

a. Sod house, Connemara, Co. Galway.
b. Sod house, Glin, Co. Limerick.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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in it. A door for one of them, a hurdle for the other, and this (the hurdle) without (projecting) wattles, without protuberances (?). A bare fence of boards around it. An oaken plank between every two beds."

The designations in the Laws and in early tales as Fled Bricrend, Suidigud Taigi Midehuarta etc., are still difficult to understand, as their vocabulary has not hitherto been elucidated. It will be possible to draw more definite conclusions from them as soon as a joint study by philologists and ethnologists has been carried out. In many parts of Ireland there still survive remains of old building traditions, which in connection with the dialect words, will help to throw light upon the problems of ancient building culture as they are met with in the old Irish literature.

A consideration of the old upper-class house, however, embraces a field outside the scope of this article, involving a discussion of cultural connections over a very wide area.[14]

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[1] Described in Part I of this article, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 207—234. I repeat my thanks expressed in my former article to the Irish Folklore Commission and to my Irish friends. I want to add the names of Professor Eóin Mac Néill, Mr. Thomas Mason and Miss Máire Mac Néill, who have kindly given me information and assistance.

[2] Cyril Fox, The Personality of Britain, Cardiff 1933, p. 34 sq.

[3] Wheeler, Prehistoric and Roman Wales, Oxford 1925, p. 260 sq., and Bosch-Gimpera, Etnologia de la Peninsula Ibérica, Barcelona 1932, p. 490 sq.

[4] The Archæology of Ireland, p. 242.

[5] Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy XXXI, p. 209 sq. Still other references to beehive houses may be found in archæological literature. Oscar Montelius has previously dealt with beehive houses, *e. g.* in Boning, grav och tempel, Antikvarisk tidskrift, vol. 21.

[6] In Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III, p. 127 sq., and vol. VII, p. 153 sq.

[7a] Cf. Analecta Hibernica No. 2, Jan. 1931 p. 53; Arthur Young, A tour in Ireland 1780.

[8] Thomas, op. cit. vol. III, p. 136.

[9] See R. E. M. Wheeler, op. cit. p. 261.

[10] See P. Bosch-Gimpera, op. cit., p. 490 sq.

[11] See *e. g.* S. O. Addy, The Evolution of the English House, London 1933, p. 38 sq.; S. Erixon, Some primitive constructions, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 124 sq.

[12] Norse building customs, in the British Isles, Copenhagen 1934.

[12a] Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc., Vol. III., London 1843.

[12b] Caesar Otway, A tour in Connaught: comprising sketches of Clonmacnoise, Joyce County, and Achill, Dublin 1839.

[12c] Folkliv 1937, p. 208.

[12d] See Folkliv 1937, p. 217.

[13] Thomas, op. cit., vol. III, p. 136.

[14] The study of the Scottish material shows that the ancient so-called forts or subterranean or semi-subterranean chambers may also be considered. I shall not, however, enter here on a discussion of this complicated matter.

[14b] I am also grateful to Mr. Mason for having supplied all the photographs of Irish clochán used by me in this article.

[15] On the manners and customs of the ancient Irish, vol. III, p. 33 and elsewhere.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[16] Op. cit. vol. VII, p. 177 sq.

[17] Vol. I, p. 5.

[18] Agricultural Survey of Inverness, Vol. I, p. 318.

[19] Fra de Færoske Bygder, Copenhagen 1895, p. 198 sqq.

[20] Oland under äldre järnåldern, Stockholm 1933.

[21] Gotlandska gårdar och byar under äldre järnåldern, Stockholm 1933, p. 179.

[22] Macalister, op. cit. p. 94.

[23] Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary, Dublin 1937.

[24] Manners and customs of the ancient Irish, London 1873.

[25] See Sigurd Erixon, Skansens Kulturhistoriska avdelning, Stockholm 1925, p. 87.

[26] Ancient Irish Houses, ed. O'Donovan, Dublin 1865—1901, Vol. V, p. 496, Vol. VI, p. 497, foot note.

[27] Ancient Irish Laws, Vol. IV, p. 305.

[28] From a paper by Eoin Mac Néill on Ancient Irish Law: Law of Status or Franchise, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Vol. XXXVI, Sect. C, p. 287 sq.

[29] Some prehistoric houses in the Rhineland and elsewhere in Central Europe, have been compared with the Irish upper class houses and described as survivals from the Celtic wave spreading westward over the Continent. See Collingwood, The Archaeology of Roman Britain, p. 129—134. Even the Romano-British barn dwelling has been discussed in this connection, see J. A. Richmond, The Analogies of the Romano British Barn Dwelling, in the Journal of Roman Studies, Vol. XXII, London 1932, p. 66, and the Frisian and Saxon houses of today.

[17]

Photographs: Author: pl. 34, a—b; 35, a—c; 36, a—b. Mr. Thomas Mason: pl. 29, a—b; 30, a—b; 31; 32; 33, b.

Out of the following books are illustrations taken: F. W. L. Thomas: Notice of Beehive houses in Harris and Lewis, in Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III and VII: pl. 34, a. Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall: Ireland, its Scenery, Character etc., vol. III, London 1843, 34, a.

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4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

STATURE, HEAD FORM, AND PIGMENTATION OF ADULT MALE IRISH

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Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

(Based upon data collected by C. Wesley Dupertuis)

FOUR FIGURES

121 114 In 1931 the Division of Anthropology of Harvard University began an anthropological survey of Ireland. The project included three fields of investigation: archaeology, social anthropology, and physical anthropology. The field work in archaeology consisted of five summers of excavation which investigated Irish culture from the earliest Stone Age through the first millenium of the Christian era. County Clare was selected as a suitable area for intensive social anthropological work. Studies were carried on there by three investigators for an aggregate of more than 3 years. The study of the physical anthropology of the present adult male population of Ireland was conducted by C. W. Dupertuis over a period of 2 years ('34-'36). It has yielded a series of more than 8800 complete anthropometric and anthroposcopic records, which we believe to represent adequate samples of every part of the Irish population in every area with the exception of the large urban centers. Dr. Helen Dawson of the University of Iowa, working under a National Research Council Fellowship in Anthropology, spent 1 year in collecting data upon the physical anthropology of Irish women and secured some 2000 records. Her material is confined, for the most part, to western Ireland. To Dr. W. W. Howells of the American Museum of Natural History we entrusted the task of studying a large

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121 114 skeletal series of medieval and modern age, which was temporarily disinterred in connection with the excavation of the ruined priory at Gallen, County Offaly.

Many technical papers and monographs upon the archaeo-
114 logical results of the survey have been published in the proceedings and memoirs of the learned societies of Ireland. Some preliminary lectures upon the social anthropology of the rural districts of County Clare have been issued in book form (Arensberg, '37). No general works correlating the results of the different phases of the survey have been published as yet, since these must await the completion of the detailed technical reports. Nothing at all has been brought out on the physical anthropological side, with the exception of a short preview of the data included in Dr. Carleton S. Coon's recent book, "The Races of Europe" ('39, pp. 376–384), although Dr. Howells' monograph on the Gallen skeletons is in the hands of the printer.

The enormous mass of anthropometric data collected by Mr. Dupertuis and by Dr. Dawson has been statistically reduced. At least 2 years more must elapse before it can be published. It is hoped to bring it out in one very large volume under the joint authorship of the present writer and the two anthropologists who gathered the material. The discussion of stature, head form, and pigmentation hereinafter presented must be regarded as a preview. Interpretation of the data cannot be other than tentative until the entire body of anthropological evidence has been thoroughly studied.

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL BY LOCAL SUBGROUPS

In the tables and maps included in this paper the anthro-
128 pological material is divided into nineteen local subgroups. These are single county groups, combinations of adjacent counties, or combinations of part of one county with other counties in whole or in part, or subdivisions of a single county. For 2 years Mr. Dupertuis drove up and down through the whole of Ireland studying the population and the geography of the country. The subgroups were made by him partly upon

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the basis of geography, partly upon his knowledge of the regional anthropological differences. Convenience also dictated the use of county boundaries in the majority of instances. 128

AGE

The average age of 8809 Irish males is 34.55 ± 0.10 years. In the anthropometric survey of a population it seems desirable to include the males of subadult age (18-20 years) as an offset to those who are presumably senile (60 years and upward). The incomplete growth of the subadults tends to counterbalance the diminished height of the aged. The standard deviation of age for the entire series is 13.95 ± 0.07 years. The county subgroup means of ages range from 29.45 ± 0.29 (Longford, Westmeath) to 38.80 ± 0.51 (Waterford and Wexford). 145

STATURE

Stature was measured by the standard technique with the Martin anthropometer. Subjects, of course, were required to remove their shoes. 141 171

Table 1 presents the data on stature and figure 1 plots the means of stature by local subgroups in intervals of 1 cm. The mean of stature for the whole of Ireland is 172.02 cm., which, of course, is tall. The actual range of subgroup means is only 4 cm.—from 170.52 cm. (Meath, Louth, County Dublin) to 174.54 cm. (Aran Islands). The variabilities of the nineteen subgroups are for the most part neither significantly higher nor lower than that of the total series. The standard deviation of stature for the total series (6.81 ± 0.03 cm.) is not very high when the age range of the population is taken into consideration. It is somewhat higher than that of any of the eight European ethnic series recorded by Davenport and Love as a result of measurements taken upon troops during demobilization after the World War ('21, p. 113). Standard deviations in these series ranged from 6.06 cm. (Italians) to 6.62 cm. (English). The mean height of 6164 Irish was 171.36 cm. and the standard deviation of stature 6.31 cm. Thus our

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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141 171 sample from all of Ireland is taller and somewhat more variable in stature than the United States army sample. It should be recalled, however, that most of the soldiers were between the ages of 18 and 31 years and that certain stature standards were enforced for the acceptance of recruits. Consequently, the variability of the army sample has probably been reduced

TABLE 1

Stature by county subgroups

	NO.	RANGE	MEAN	S. D.	V.
West Donegal	212	146–193	171.90 ± 0.33	5.17 ± 0.23	4.17 ± 0.14
Mayo	594	143–196	172.17 ± 0.20	7.20 ± 0.14	4.18 ± 0.08
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	725	146–202	172.05 ± 0.17	6.72 ± 0.12	3.91 ± 0.07
West Galway (Connemara)	451	155–196	173.13 ± 0.20	6.36 ± 0.14	3.67 ± 0.08
Aran Islands	136	158–193	174.54 ± 0.41	7.14 ± 0.29	4.09 ± 0.17
Clare	944	146–196	172.14 ± 0.14	6.57 ± 0.10	3.82 ± 0.06
Kerry	519	152–199	173.16 ± 0.20	6.90 ± 0.14	3.98 ± 0.08
Cork	565	152–193	172.71 ± 0.19	6.69 ± 0.13	3.87 ± 0.08
Limerick	339	152–193	171.75 ± 0.25	6.75 ± 0.17	3.93 ± 0.10
East Galway, Roscommon	479	149–196	173.28 ± 0.22	7.11 ± 0.15	4.10 ± 0.09
Longford, Westmeath	717	149–187	171.27 ± 0.16	6.30 ± 0.11	3.68 ± 0.07
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	513	152–193	171.57 ± 0.20	6.75 ± 0.14	3.93 ± 0.08
Tipperary, Kilkenny	623	149–196	171.99 ± 0.19	6.87 ± 0.13	3.99 ± 0.08
Waterford, Wexford	425	149–190	171.24 ± 0.23	6.99 ± 0.16	4.08 ± 0.09
Wicklow, Carlow	273	149–202	170.88 ± 0.28	6.96 ± 0.20	4.14 ± 0.12
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	427	155–193	170.52 ± 0.21	6.45 ± 0.15	3.78 ± 0.09
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	388	155–190	170.91 ± 0.23	6.63 ± 0.16	3.88 ± 0.09
Antrim, Down	167	149–187	171.39 ± 0.38	7.29 ± 0.27	4.25 ± 0.16
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone Londonderry	310	152–190	171.96 ± 0.25	6.57 ± 0.18	3.82 ± 0.10
Total	8807	143–202	172.02 ± 0.05	6.81 ± 0.03	3.96 ± 0.02

by these factors. In a study of native born White criminals of native parentage in the United States the mean of statnre was 171.90 cm. and the standard deviation 6.45 ± 0.05 cm. (Hooton, '39, Table V-14). The age range of the American criminals is more closely comparable with that of the Irish population, bnt, again, the criminals average somewhat younger (30.70 ± 0.12 years) and have a lower age variability

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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(standard deviation 11.40 ± 0.08 years). However, crime is principally a phenomenon of youth and the age variability certainly and the stature variability possibly are affected and reduced thereby. 141 171

[102]

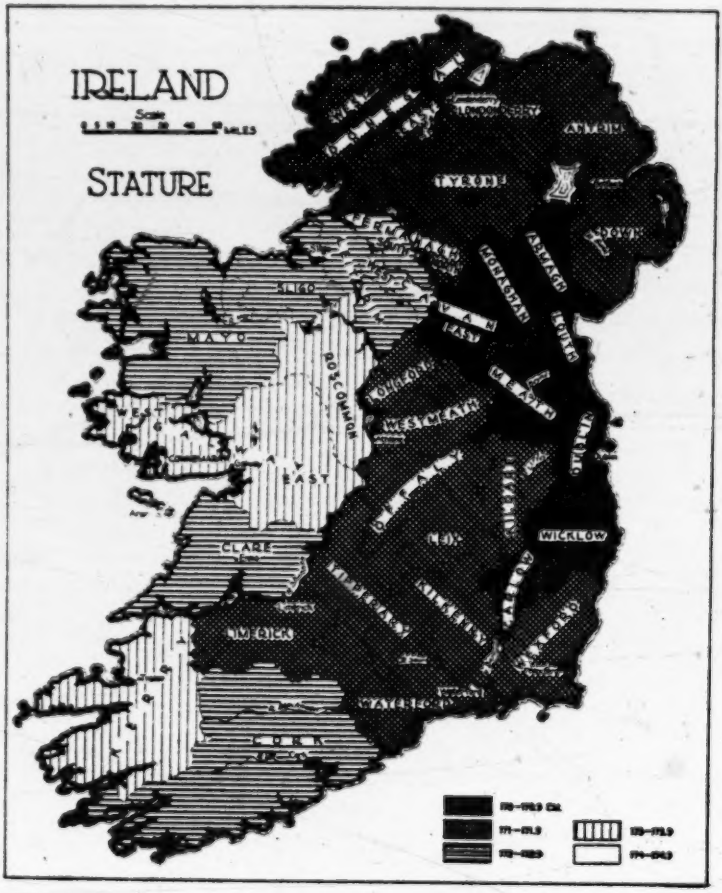

Figure 1

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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141 On the whole it seems probable that statural variation in Ireland is high, even when the factors reducing variability in comparable series are taken into consideration. It is useless to speculate upon the causes of the statural superiority of our series over the Irish soldiers in the American army. The latter may have been derived in disproportionate numbers from some of the areas in Ireland where stature tends to be relatively low. The former may have enjoyed the statural increment which appertains in many civilized countries to the younger generation. Who can say?

The regional variation in the means of stature in Ireland is very striking (fig. 1). The shortest statures (170-170.9 cm.) extend in a solid band of county groups along the central portion of the east coast. They include Carlow, Wicklow, Meath, Dublin, Louth, East Cavan, Monaghan, and Armagh. There are two separate blocks of areas with stature means which are submedium for Irish (171-171.9 cm.). The northern block includes Down, Antrim, North Fermanagh, Tyrone, Londonderry, East and West Donegal. The southern block is approximately triangular, with its apex in the center of the island at Longford, the eastern angle of the base at Wexford and the western at Limerick. The western leg of this triangle is roughly the course of the river Shannon. This central triangle of submedium statures is pinched off from the northern block by a westward protrusion of small stature (170-170.9) in East Cavan which meets an Eastern angle of medium stature (172-172.9) made by Leitrim and West Cavan.

There are three separate areas or islands of medium stature, all in the western half of Ireland. A northern island includes South Fermanagh, West Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo and Mayo. The central island is Clare and the southern Cork. Two blocks of tall stature are separated by the medium height area of County Clare. The northern tall block consists of Roscommon, East Galway and West Galway; the southern is Kerry. Finally in the Bay of Galway and off the west coast of Clare stature attains its maximum in Ireland in the isolated Aran Islands.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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A first glance reveals no striking correlations of these stature areas with temperature, rainfall, vegetation or general topography. A consideration of the significance of these distributions may be deferred until the other data of this paper have been presented.

CEPHALIC INDEX

The length-breadth index of the head yields a mesocephalic mean in every Irish subgroup. The mean of the entire Irish series is 78.87 ± 0.02 and the regional range is from 77.79 (Meath, Louth, County Dublin) to 80.04 (Kerry). Thus the spread of subgroup averages is only 2.25 index units. The standard deviation of the total series (3.33 ± 0.02) is low, as are also those of all of the subgroups (table 2).

TABLE 2

Cephalic index by county subgroups

	NO.	RANGE	MEAN	S. D.	V.
West Donegal	212	71–91	79.20 ± 0.14	3.12 ± 0.10	3.94 ± 0.13
Mayo	594	71–91	79.44 ± 0.09	3.42 ± 0.07	4.31 ± 0.08
Silgo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	722	68–91	78.75 ± 0.08	3.21 ± 0.06	4.08 ± 0.07
West Galway (Connemara)	451	68–91	78.48 ± 0.10	3.12 ± 0.07	3.98 ± 0.09
Aran Islands	134	68–88	77.85 ± 0.09	3.18 ± 0.13	4.08 ± 0.17
Clare	944	65–91	79.65 ± 0.07	3.39 ± 0.05	4.36 ± 0.07
Kerry	518	68–91	80.04 ± 0.10	3.30 ± 0.07	4.12 ± 0.09
Cork	565	68–94	79.62 ± 0.10	3.42 ± 0.07	4.30 ± 0.09
Limerick	338	71–91	79.38 ± 0.12	3.21 ± 0.08	4.04 ± 0.10
East Galway, Roscommon	477	68–91	78.60 ± 0.10	3.21 ± 0.07	4.08 ± 0.09
Longford, Westmeath	717	65–94	78.00 ± 0.08	3.30 ± 0.06	4.23 ± 0.08
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	513	59–91	78.21 ± 0.10	3.42 ± 0.07	4.37 ± 0.09
Tipperary, Kilkenny	623	68–91	79.02 ± 0.09	3.30 ± 0.06	4.18 ± 0.08
Waterford, Wexford	425	71–91	78.75 ± 0.11	3.27 ± 0.08	4.15 ± 0.10
Wicklow, Carlow	273	68–88	78.30 ± 0.12	3.03 ± 0.09	3.87 ± 0.11
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	427	71–88	77.79 ± 0.10	2.94 ± 0.07	3.78 ± 0.09
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	388	68–88	78.06 ± 0.11	3.12 ± 0.08	4.00 ± 0.10
Antrim, Down	167	65–91	78.93 ± 0.18	3.42 ± 0.13	4.33 ± 0.16
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	310	65–91	78.66 ± 0.12	3.21 ± 0.09	4.08 ± 0.11
Total	8798	59–94	78.87 ± 0.02	3.33 ± 0.02	4.22 ± 0.02

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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141 Nevertheless, the plotting of county group averages at in-
[102] tervals of one-half index units reveals some interesting regional variations (fig. 2). Mean indices below 78 are recorded in two geographical areas. The first of these is a block along the middle of the east coast. This block includes Dublin,

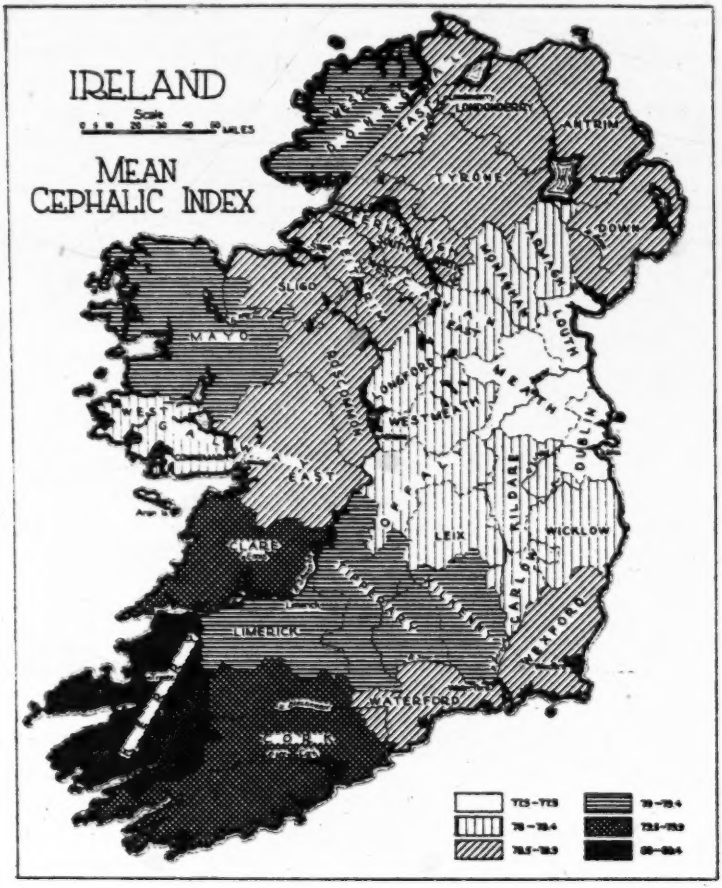

Figure 2

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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Louth, and Meath. The other area of lowest cephalic index is the Aran Islands off the west coast. Bordering the relatively long-headed eastern area are subgroups with slightly higher mean cephalic indices (78-78.4). On the northern fringe we have Armagh, Monaghan, and East Cavan; on the southern, Carlow, Wicklow, Kildare, Leix, and Offaly; on the west, Longford and Westmeath. West Galway (Connemara) occupies a similar marginal position of slightly less accentuated long-headedness north of the comparatively dolichocephalic Aran Islands. 141

A group of counties with mean head forms approaching the value for all of Ireland (78.5-78.9) includes a large northern and central block and a southeastern island which consists of Wexford and Waterford. The great north central block has its broad base in the northeastern counties—Down, Antrim, East Donegal and Londonderry, and extends southwest in a wide band including Tyrone, North and South Fermanagh, West Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, and East Galway.

There are two islands of somewhat broader-headed mesocephals in the northwest—West Donegal and Mayo—with cephalic indices from 79 to 79.4. Correspondingly, in the south central section the three counties of Kilkenny, Tipperary, and Limerick, also belong to this category. Then in the southwest we have Clare on the north and Cork on the south with still higher mesocephaly (79.5-79.9), each bordering upon Kerry, the most broad-headed area in the island.

HAIR COLOR

Hair color in Ireland is predominantly brown. Nine out of ten men have some shade of brown hair (dark brown, brown, red-brown, golden brown, or ash brown). The modal shade, however, is dark brown, both in the total series and in thirteen of nineteen county subgroups. Black hair is found in only 2.73% of the total series, although it rises to 8.02% in West Donegal and sinks below 1% in the Aran Islands, East Galway, Roscommon, Longford and Westmeath. Medium brown or flat brown which constitutes 35.37% of the total series is 142

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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142 commonest in the Aran Islands (50%) and in Longford and Westmeath (44.49%). Red-brown hair is also at its maximum in the Aran Islands. Golden brown, which is a shade usually classified as blond, is found in 9.11% of the total series. It is least common in West Donegal (4.72%) and attains from 10% to 13% in several subgroups. Ash brown, golden, and ash are very rare throughout the entire island. Red hair is not perhaps as common as might be expected (4.28% in the total series). It rises to 8.03% in Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh and West Cavan, but drops to 1.65% in Waterford and Wexford.

Brown and red-brown, which are the medium shades of hair color, aggregate 40.77%. The really dark hair (black and dark brown) amount to 42.39%. Light shades total 14.98%, if red is included as "light," which, in my opinion, is its correct classification. All of the details are set forth in table 3.

TABLE 3

Hair color, head, by county subgroups

	BLACK		DARK BROWN		BROWN		RED-BROWN	
	No.	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*
West Donegal	17	8.02	87	41.04	73	34.43	10	4.72
Mayo	20	3.37	267	44.95	193	32.49	35	5.89
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	11	1.52	239	33.10	256	35.46	53	7.34
West Galway (Connemara)	6	1.33	161	35.70	161	35.70	36	7.98
Aran Islands	1	0.76	29	21.97	66	50.00	15	11.36
Clare	39	4.14	371	39.34	322	34.15	71	7.53
Kerry	24	4.62	220	42.39	173	33.33	20	3.85
Cork	14	2.48	217	38.41	197	34.87	26	4.60
Limerick	8	2.37	140	41.42	114	33.73	22	6.51
East Galway, Roscommon	4	0.84	173	36.12	183	38.20	37	7.72
Longford, Westmeath	2	0.28	194	27.40	315	44.49	39	5.51
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	10	1.95	224	43.75	172	33.59	33	6.45
Tipperary, Kilkenny	15	2.41	273	43.82	192	30.82	30	4.82
Waterford, Wexford	15	3.53	200	47.06	112	26.35	14	3.29
Wicklow, Carlow	15	5.49	112	41.03	98	35.90	9	3.30
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	16	3.75	196	45.90	151	35.36	6	1.41
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	15	3.87	178	45.88	145	37.37	9	2.32
Antrim, Down	2	1.20	79	47.31	60	35.93	4	2.40
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	6	1.94	125	40.32	125	40.32	6	1.94
Total	240	2.73	3485	39.66	3108	35.37	475	5.40

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

	GOLDEN BROWN		ASH-BROWN		GOLDEN		ASH		
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	
West Donegal	10	4.72	0	0	1	0.47	0	0	14
Mayo	30	5.05	1	0.17	6	1.01	2	0.34	
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	70	9.70	4	0.55	4	0.55	0	0	
West Galway (Connemara)	54	11.97	1	0.22	4	0.89	0	0	
Aran Islands	10	7.58	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Clare	64	6.79	3	0.32	8	0.85	0	0	
Kerry	41	7.90	3	0.58	11	2.12	0	0	
Cork	72	12.74	0	0	10	1.77	1	0.18	
Limerick	28	8.28	2	0.59	5	1.48	0	0	
East Galway, Roscommon	45	9.39	1	0.21	4	0.84	0	0	
Longford, Westmeath	92	12.99	8	1.13	10	1.41	5	0.71	
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	41	8.01	3	0.59	4	0.78	0	0	
Tipperary, Kilkenny	65	10.43	2	0.32	6	0.96	1	0.16	
Waterford Wexford	54	12.71	4	0.94	3	0.71	2	0.47	
Wicklow, Carlow	20	7.33	3	1.10	0	0	1	0.37	
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	35	8.20	0	0	1	0.23	0	0	
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	23	5.93	3	0.77	3	0.77	0	0	
Antrim, Down	17	10.18	0	0	1	0.60	0	0	
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	30	9.68	3	0.97	4	1.29	1	0.32	
Total	801	9.11	41	0.47	85	0.97	13	0.15	

	RED		WHITE		TOTAL
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.
West Donegal	12	5.66	2	0.94	212
Mayo	31	5.22	9	1.52	594
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	58	8.03	27	3.74	722
West Galway (Connemara)	20	4.43	8	1.77	451
Aran Islands	9	6.82	2	1.52	132
Clare	48	5.09	17	1.80	943
Kerry	16	3.08	11	2.12	519
Cork	15	2.65	13	2.30	565
Limerick	12	3.55	7	2.07	338
East Galway, Roscommon	25	5.22	7	1.46	479
Longford, Westmeath	34	4.80	9	1.27	708
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	19	3.71	6	1.17	512
Tipperary, Kilkenny	25	4.01	14	2.25	623
Waterford Wexford	7	1.65	14	3.29	425
Wicklow, Carlow	9	3.30	6	2.20	273
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	16	3.75	6	1.41	427
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	9	2.32	3	0.77	388
Antrim, Down	4	2.40	0	0	167
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	7	2.26	3	0.97	310
Total	376	4.28	164	1.87	8788

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142 Figure 3 shows the distribution of dark hair (black plus dark brown). The areas in filled cross-hatch on the map have 50% or more of dark hair. These include only Waterford and Wexford, the two southeastern coastal counties. The cross-hatched areas (45-49.9% of dark hair) include a solid strip

[102]

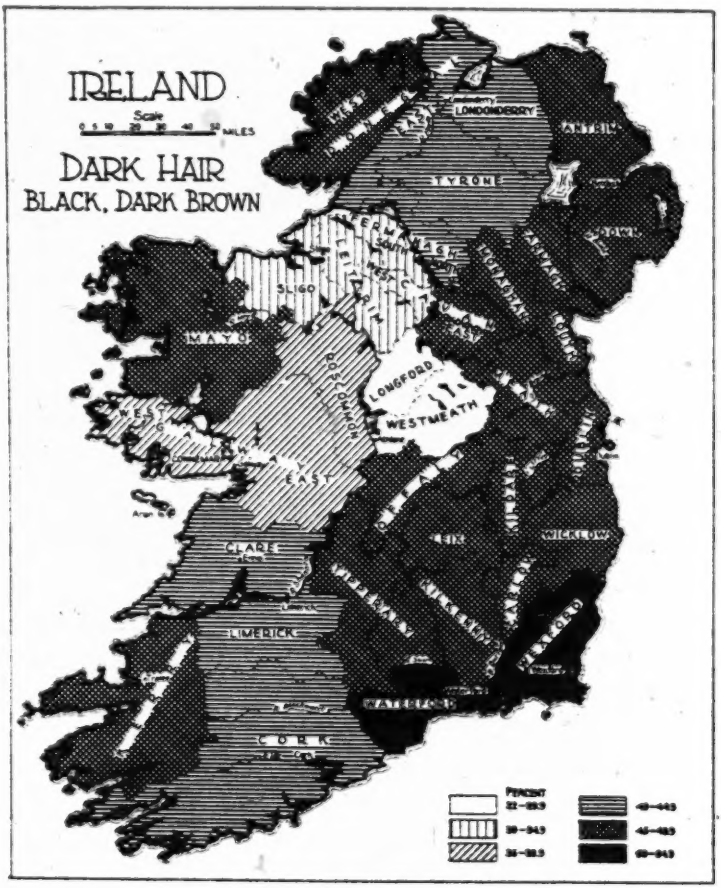

Figure 3

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

along the east coast from Antrim in the north through Wicklow in the south and extending westward into central Ireland in Armagh, East Cavan, Meath, Offaly, Leix, Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny, and Tipperary. Three isolated areas of this same rather dark-haired dominance occur in the west peninsulas of West Donegal, Mayo, and Kerry. From Londonderry and East Donegal there extends in a southwesterly direction a zone of counties in which dark hair is less frequent. Both the northeast third of this band (Londonderry, East Donegal, Tyrone and North Fermanagh) and the southwest third (Clare, Limerick, and Cork) show percentages of dark hair between 40 and 45. The middle portion of this zone is much lighter in hair color. Almost in the center of the island Longford and Westmeath present proportions of dark hair less than 30, while a similar condition is to be observed in the Aran Islands off the west coast. From the light-haired concentration of Longford and Westmeath there extends northwestward another relatively light-haired band including Leitrim, West Cavan, South Fermanagh, and Sligo. To the south and west another extension of this light-haired area, not quite so intense, consists of Roscommon and the whole of Galway. Thus County Mayo is cut off from the dark-haired area along the east coast by a broad semicircular band of relative blondness.

If we make a new plotting in which the residue of dark hair minus light is mapped (black plus dark brown) minus (golden brown plus ash-brown plus ash plus golden plus red), the picture of hair pigmentation in Ireland is not greatly altered. Longford, Westmeath and the Aran Islands still show the lightest hair color, but a dark-haired band extends from Antrim down the east coast to Wicklow which corresponds to the Western outposts of West Donegal and Mayo. On the other hand, the southwestern county, Kerry, shows a smaller residuum of dark hair than these areas named; as do also Waterford and Wexford, which in dark hair alone take first place. Then, too, Cork shows an unexpected diminution of dark hair, due to its high percentage of golden brown. However, in general, the distribution remains the same—a broad band of light

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142 hair running through the center of the island, separating two darker areas and reaching the west seaboard in the two regions surrounding Sligo Bay and Galway Bay.

EYE COLOR

Perhaps the most striking feature of Irish anthropology is the persistent association of light eyes with dark hair. Table 4 gives the distribution of eye color. Less than ½% of all Irish males have pure brown eyes—either light or dark. But nearly 42% have pure blue eyes. The dominant mixed shade is blue-brown which occurs in 44.34% of the total series, ranging from 31.94% in North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, and Londonderry, to 55.68% in Kerry. Gray-brown and green-brown are not very common and gray is nearly as rare as pure brown.

The highest percentage of pure blue eyes is found in Wicklow and Carlow with 50.18%. This is extremely curious in view of the fact that these counties are very low in light hair. If we consider the distribution of pure light eyes (fig. 4) some strange contradictions become apparent. The areas of lowest percentage of light eyes (35-39.9%) are Kerry and Cork. Kerry actually has the lowest percentage and this is consistent with the fact that it has the largest residuum of dark hair. West Donegal and Mayo, together with Limerick and Clare, also fall naturally into groups with comparatively small proportions of light eyes. But the Aran Islands, which are among the lightest in hair color are strangely low in light eyes, whereas all the eastern county strip of dark-haired peoples is high in light eyes—higher indeed than most of the central zone in which light hair predominates.

If we consider the distribution of mixed eyes, the result is about the same. In the west areas high in mixed eyes are also high in dark hair, with the exception of the Aran Islands. The central zone of comparatively blond counties has less pure blue eyes than the eastern and southeastern darker haired zone. Waterford and Wexford, which have the highest absolute percentage of dark hair, are among the lowest counties in proportions of mixed eyes.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

TABLE 4

Eye color by county subgroups

	Dark and light brown		Gray-brown		Green-brown		Blue-brown		142
	No.	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	
West Donegal	0	0	10	4.72	7	3.30	107	50.47	
Mayo	1	0.17	25	4.21	17	2.86	300	50.50	
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	7	0.97	15	2.07	25	3.45	327	45.10	
West Galway (Connemara)	1	0.22	20	4.43	15	3.33	200	44.35	
Aran Islands	0	0	1	0.74	0	0	75	55.15	
Clare	0	0	58	6.14	17	1.80	443	46.93	
Kerry	1	0.19	24	4.62	17	3.28	289	55.68	
Cork	2	0.36	33	5.84	8	1.42	312	55.22	
Limerick	1	0.29	17	5.01	6	1.77	165	48.67	
East Galway, Roscommon	1	0.21	15	3.13	16	3.34	215	44.89	
Longford, Westmeath	9	1.25	34	4.73	32	4.45	301	41.86	
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	6	1.17	25	4.87	24	4.68	206	40.16	
Tipperary, Kilkenny	2	0.32	37	5.94	26	4.17	265	42.54	
Waterford, Wexford	2	0.47	31	7.29	28	6.59	142	33.41	
Wicklow, Carlow	1	0.37	12	4.40	11	4.03	94	34.43	
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	3	1.17	25	5.85	18	4.22	165	38.64	
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	1	0.26	12	3.09	11	2.84	146	37.63	
Antrim, Down	1	0.60	13	7.78	13	7.78	58	34.73	
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	1	0.32	18	5.81	12	3.87	99	31.94	
Total	42	0.48	425	4.82	303	3.44	3909	44.37	

	Gray		Gray-blue		Blue		Unmatched		Total
	No.	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*
West Donegal	2	0.94	4	1.89	81	38.21	1	0.47	212
Mayo	2	0.34	15	2.53	232	39.06	2	0.34	594
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	1	0.14	19	2.62	330	45.52	1	0.14	725
West Galway (Connemara)	2	0.44	14	3.10	198	43.90	1	0.22	451
Aran Islands	0	0	3	2.21	57	41.91	0	0	136
Clare	0	0	36	3.81	388	41.19	3	0.32	944
Kerry	1	0.19	7	1.35	175	33.72	4	0.77	519
Cork	2	0.35	15	2.65	189	33.45	4	0.71	565
Limerick	2	0.59	9	2.65	138	40.71	1	0.29	339
East Galway, Roscommon	1	0.21	10	2.09	219	45.72	2	0.42	479
Longford, Westmeath	3	0.42	51	7.09	289	40.19	0	0	719
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	4	0.78	30	5.85	216	42.11	2	0.39	513
Tipperary, Kilkenny	0	0	39	6.28	250	40.13	4	0.64	623
Waterford, Wexford	0	0	26	6.12	194	45.65	2	0.47	425
Wicklow, Carlow	1	0.37	16	5.86	137	50.18	1	0.37	273
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	4	0.94	23	5.39	187	43.79	0	0	427
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	2	0.52	17	4.38	193	49.74	6	1.55	388
Antrim, Down	2	1.20	6	3.59	71	42.51	3	1.80	167
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	4	1.29	20	6.45	154	49.68	2	0.65	310
Total	33	0.37	360	4.08	3698	41.98	39	0.44	8809

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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142
[102]

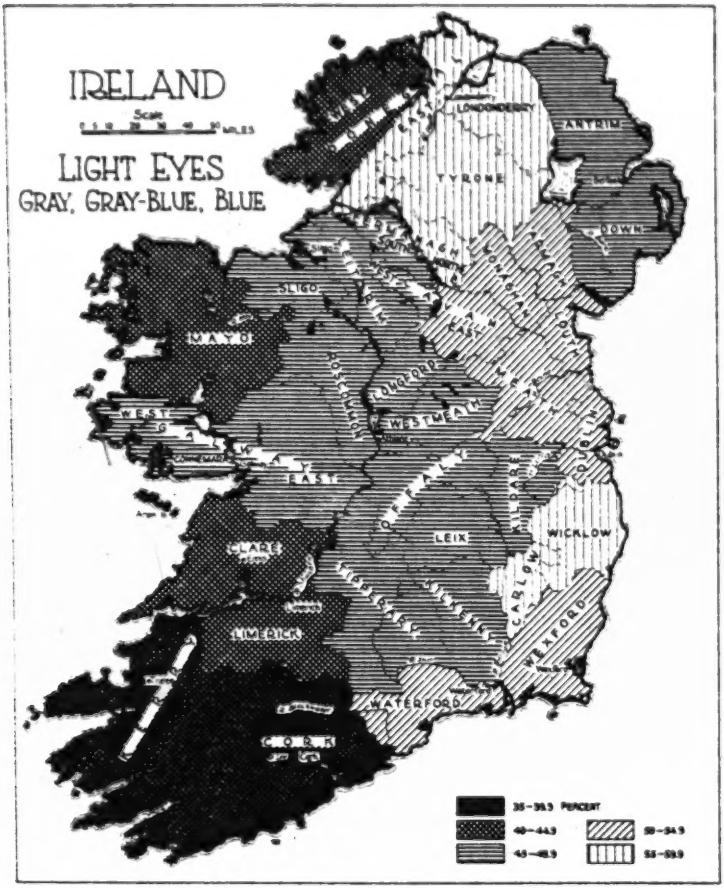

Figure 4

CORRELATION OF MAP DISTRIBUTIONS

Now, if we put together the distribution of stature, head form, hair color and eye color, some interesting correspondences are evident. Ireland presents three masses of high land projecting westward into the Atlantic. These are West Done-

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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gal, Mayo and West Galway, Kerry and (in part) Cork. The Aran Islands represent a fourth western area. West Donegal seems to be characterized by excesses of dark hair and mixed eyes and a very slightly higher mesocephaly than the total Irish series. Mayo is slightly high in stature and in cephalic index, definitely so in proportions of dark hair and mixed eyes. West Galway, on the other hand, is notable for markedly tall stature, lowering of the cephalic index, and lighter hair and eyes. This tendency is still further accentuated in the Aran Islands which are tallest of all of the Irish subgroups, are almost dolichocephalic, and have nearly the highest proportion of light hair shades. Yet eye color in the Aran Islands is predominantly mixed. 142

Kerry is also tall, but the most round-headed of the Irish subgroups and excessive in dark hair, and lowest in light eyes.

The central plain of Ireland and especially the counties of Westmeath and Longford show the strongest concentration of blondness which is accompanied by slightly shortened stature, diminished lightness of eye, and mesocephaly. This blond area is sharply delimited to the east by a coastal band of darker haired and even shorter dolichocephals, notably concentrated in Meath, Louth, and County Dublin, which is the shortest and most dolichocephalic area of Ireland, but ranks high both in darkness of hair and in lightness of eyes.

Now it is quite reckless to attempt definitive racial correlations on the basis of the coincidences and differences in geographical distribution of separately plotted anthropological characters. Actually, racial type distributions can be accurately ascertained only by correlations of morphological and metric features in individuals. From the data presented in this paper, however, a few purely preliminary and tentative suggestions may be made, subject to revision or retraction in the light of an exhaustive study of all of the material and a consideration of historical and prehistorical events.

It may be presumed that the western parts of the island represent to some extent refuge areas occupied by the earlier strata of the population. It is in precisely these areas (West 142 174 [197]

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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142 Donegal, Mayo, West Galway, the Aran Islands and Kerry)
174 that our information gives us the highest predominance of
[197] Gaelic speech. If the anthropological characters plotted separately actually combine in the populations of these areas we should say that the earliest population stratum of the island consists of tall, subbrachycephals with dark hair and mixed eyes and a second element, even taller, subdolichocephalic with light hair and mixed eyes. Then since the latter type presents the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers we should be inclined to hazard a guess that the tall brunet brachycephals represent the earlier pre-Keltic population and that Gaelic languages were introduced by the tall, long-headed near-blonds.

The blond, long-headed element in the central plain, concentrated in Longford and Westmeath is presumably Nordic and possibly represents a survival in great part from Iron Age Nordic, Viking, and other Scandinavian occupations. The Aran Islanders and the inhabitants of Galway may perhaps owe their comparative blondness and long-headedness to the mixture with these invaders which has gone on throughout the plain, but it is also possible, as previously stated, that the original Goidelic invaders may have been near-Nordics.

Along the east coast the short dark dolichocephals with long heads but very light eyes may also be, for the most part, the survivals of pre-Keltic populations. Some element in the population must have been responsible for the introduction of the Megalithic monuments and I believe it to have been these brunets with blue eyes. The association of light eyes with dark hair was formerly considered by me to be the result of the crossing of a pure brunet Mediterranean stock with a pure blond Nordic stock in which the eye color of one race combined with the hair color of another. However, recent anthropometric studies in Iran and Iraq, especially those of Dr. Henry Field, reveal the presence of many otherwise purely brunet, long-headed stocks of basic Mediterranean affinities which have almost no pure brown eyes, but generally irides of mixed pigmentation—brown in the pupillary zone and blue in the

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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peripheral zones. Of course, there can be no doubt that the 142
inhabitants of Ireland have undergone extensive mixture with 174
blue-eyed Nordics. However, it seems certain that some Mediterranean stocks have developed what Dr. Carleton Coon calls "incipient eye blondness" without any necessary intermixture with the generally depigmented Nordic race.

One consideration in regard to the county subgroups must 142
be given some space here. The highest percentage of dark hair occurs in Waterford and Wexford and the highest percentage of light hair in Longford and Westmeath. Now blondness in mixed stocks diminishes with age and it happens that the Waterford and Wexford subgroup is the oldest of the nineteen included in the series (38.80 years), whereas the Longford, Westmeath group is the youngest (29.45 years). The latter is, in fact, 3 years below the mean age of any other subgroup. Thus it is possible that the blondness of this subgroup may have been exaggerated by this age factor, but it hardly seems probable that the excess of dark hair in Wexford and Waterford is wholly due to superior age since the increments of age bring excessive graying of hair (at a maximum) in this group. This senile change detracts from the proportion of dark hair.

One of the most striking facts of the anthropometric distri- 142
butions here plotted is the dolichocephalic blond crescent 174
which swings from the northwest at Sligo Bay through the Central Plain and back westward terminating in West Galway and the Aran Islands. It suggests rather strongly a Nordic penetration by way of these west coast ports. It is tempting to connect it with the Viking period. Ingress to the rich lands of the Central Plain would have been possible by this route, although it must not be forgotten that West Galway—a barren area—has this same blondness and long-headedness associated with tall stature. It is also notable that this blond crescent is not as light-eyed as the areas further east, and, in its central portion, is not characterized by particularly high stature. Further, its dolichocephaly is not so marked as that of the counties to the east of the upper course of the Shannon.

4:Hooton D-4.5 (1934-1936) 1940
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142 On the basis then of these raw distribution maps on which
174 are plotted uncorrelated anthropometric means and pigmentation percentages we may discern the following three more or less clearly demarcated anthropological and geographical areas.

1. The Western Peninsulas: West Donegal, Mayo and Kerry (including parts of Clare and Cork). This region finds the association of tall stature, sub-brachycephaly, dark hair and mixed eyes. It is strongly Gaelic in speech and possibly includes the largest numbers of the Mesolithic stock which first settled Ireland from Scotland.

2. The Central East Coast: The shortest and most dolichocephalic region with highest concentration of light eyes (especially blue eyes), but very dark hair. Perhaps this may be the area settled by the Megalithic people who sailed up the Irish Channel.

3. The Blond Crescent (with its horns at Sligo and Galway Bays and its convexity at Longford and Westmeath). In its belly it is the blondest area in Ireland, in the southwest horn (West Galway and the Aran Islands) it is the tallest and almost the longest-headed area in Ireland. All of this area is notably characterized by grayish and light mixed eyes rather than pure blue eyes. It seems to be peopled by a majority of Predominantly Nordic and Nordic peoples. It may contain the bulk of the descendants of any or all of the three following putative groups of early populations: Bronze Age peoples coming from Scotland (Goidels?); Iron Age Nordic invaders (if there were such); Viking and other Scandinavian historic colonists, possibly entering by way of Galway and Sligo Bays.

It should be reiterated here that superimposed distribution maps of isolated characters may not represent in any accurate sense the combinations of features in individuals which constitute racial types. Subsequent study of the distribution of racial types by individuals may alter considerably our prediction of the arrangement of racial areas in Ireland.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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ADDENDUM

From this Irish county series, as here discussed, all persons 128
of Protestant religion have been omitted. The number thus
excluded is 312 Presbyterians and 488 Church of Ireland, of 141
these the vast majority come from the northern counties— 142
Antrim, Armagh, Fermanagh, Down, Londonderry, Tyrone, 124
Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan. Mr. Dupertuis directed this sorting because he was of the opinion that the Ulster Protestants really represent, in large part, a recent Scotch immigration, and the Church of Ireland English immigrations. In the final report on Ireland these northern Protestants will be included. They could hardly alter the distribution pictures perceptibly, except (possibly) in the counties mentioned.

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STUDIA ETHNOGRAPHICA UPSALIENSIA. XI

ARCTICA

[title page]

1956

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to
132 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual
251 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on
231 which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume
234 or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten cows" is still a familiar term.

311 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less
241

than 30 statute acres is regarded as small, one of from 30 to 100 acres as of medium size and one 311
of over 100 acres as large. Small, medium and large farms may be found in all parts of Ireland, 241
but in the provinces of Leinster and Munster and in parts of south east Connaught there is a preponderance of medium sized farms with, especially in north Leinster, a considerable proportion of large farms.[1] All this area practises mixed farming, but the south western province, Munster, is completely dominated by the milking cow, while in Leinster the northern half is mainly devoted to the raising of beef cattle, and the southern half produces considerable quantities of wheat, oats and barley.[2] In most areas of Connaught and Ulster, the western and northern provinces, the average farm is of small size, and the number of cows kept by each farmer correspondingly small; the value and productivity of these small farms, however, vary greatly from the intensive cultivation of many farms in east and south Ulster to the fisher-farmer economy of the west coastal districts.[3]

Throughout the provinces of Leinster and Munster, and in parts of east Connaught, that is to say, generally in the area of medium and large farms, the predominant, and in many districts exclusive, farmyard type is the courtyard, in which the dwelling house and outhouses are arranged 361 351
about a rectangular space which is the farmyard proper. Most usually the buildings form three sides of the yard, with the dwelling house forming one side and the outhouses forming two more, the fourth side being closed by a wall with a gate. Usually the building is not continuous, the elements being separate and connected by walls, or having gateways or passages between them. The size and arrangement of the yard and the various buildings vary from one farm to another, and also from district to district; the general type is, however, well established, and conforms to a pattern which is clearly distinguished from the other types to be described later. In many districts the front of the dwelling house faces the farmyard, thus, in Co. Kildare in 1807: "The farmhouses in general consist of a long thatched building of one storey, consisting of a large kitchen and fireplace in the centre, and lodging rooms at either end; the front door looks to the barns and stables on the right, behind which is the haggard, and on the left are placed the cow and bullock houses." This, written a century and a half ago,[4] exactly describes many of the farmyards of to-day, for example that shown in fig. 1, which has the dwelling house in the middle, the cowhouse, calfhouse and a small store (formerly a dairy) on the left, with the manure heap behind them, while on the right are the stable, another store and the pigstye, with the haggard, where the hay and corn stacks are made, behind them. The fourth side is formed by a stone wall, with a gate; this wall fronts on the public roadway. This farmyard is at Duncormick, Co. Wexford, in the south east corner of Ireland, but similar examples may be found in almost every part of the east and south. Figure 2 shows the buildings on a larger farm, also in Co. Wexford. Here the entrance gate leads in between a cart shed on the right and the dairy on the left, with the pump close by. Facing the dwelling house across the yard are the stable and byre and a store, while the corn barn opens into the haggard. The pigsty and manure heap are in the part of the yard most distant from the dwelling house. The openings between the various buildings are closed by stone walls about

[Text continues on p. 12]

[1] Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1930.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Freeman, T. W.: Ireland, Its Physical, Historical, Social and Economic Geography, 1950, chapters viii and xviii to xxiii. [113]

[4] Rawson, T. J.: Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare, 1807, 14–15.

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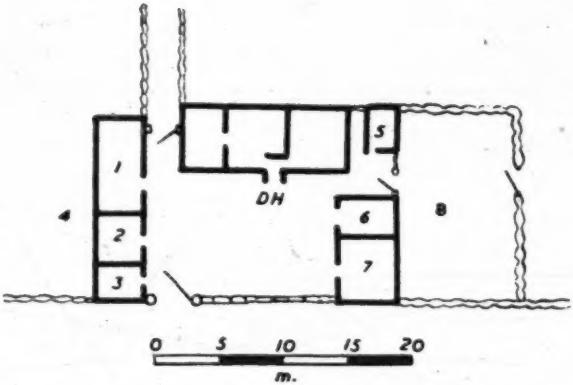

Fig. 1. Farmyard at Duncormick, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, calf house; 3, store; 4, manure heap; 5, pigsty; 6, cart house; 7, stable; 8, haggard.

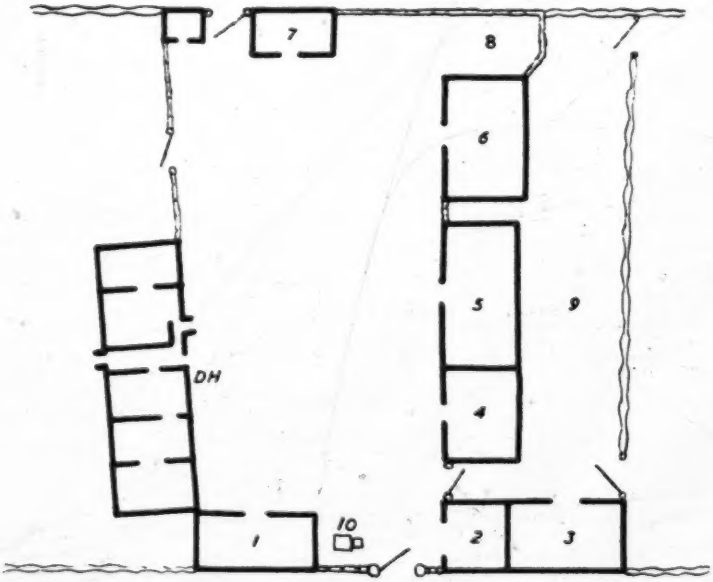

Fig. 2. Farmyard at Kilmore, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, cart house; 3, corn barn; 4, stable; 5, byre; 6, store; 7, pigsty; 8, manure heap; 9, haggard; 10, pump.

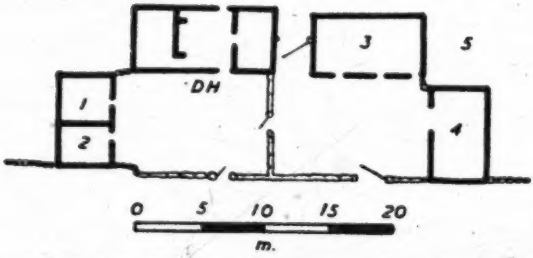

Fig. 3. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, store; 3, byre, 4, stable and carts; 5, manure heap.

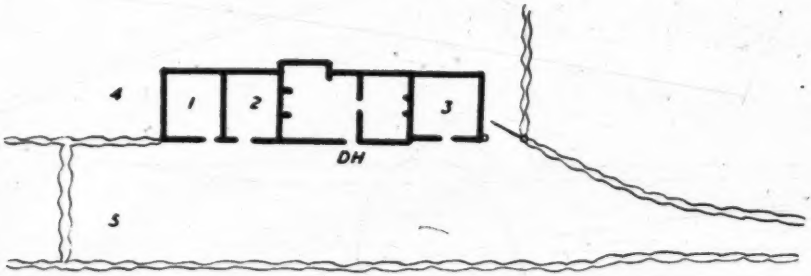

Fig. 4. Farmyard at Glenhull, Co. Tyrone. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, stable; 3, store; 4, haggard; 5, manure heap.

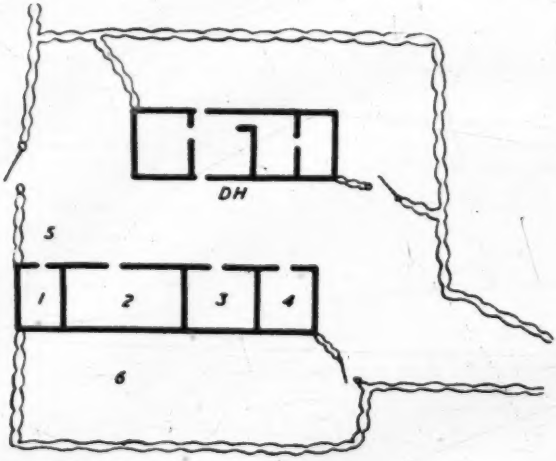

Fig. 5. Farmyard, Athea, Co. Limerick. DH, dwelling house; 1, pigs; 2, byre; 3, stable; 4, store; 5, manure heap; 6, haggard.

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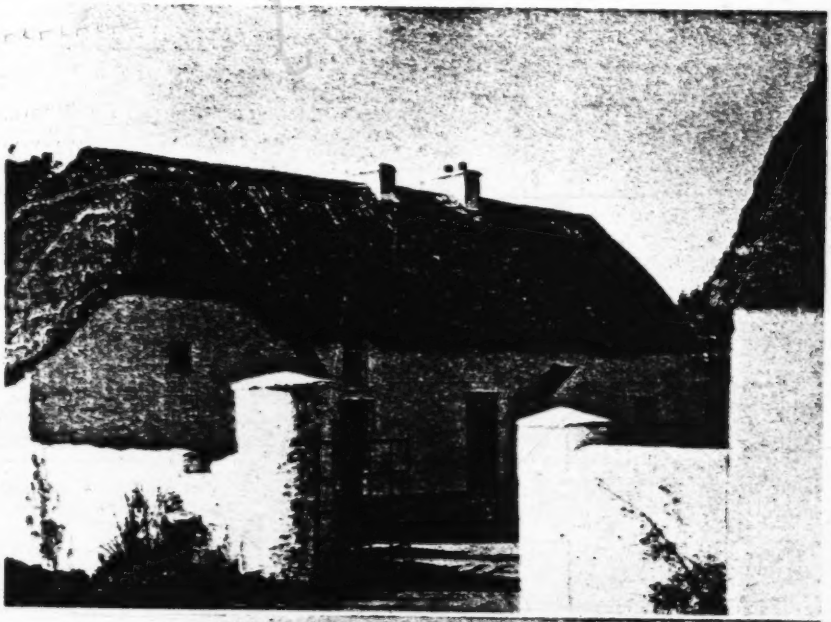

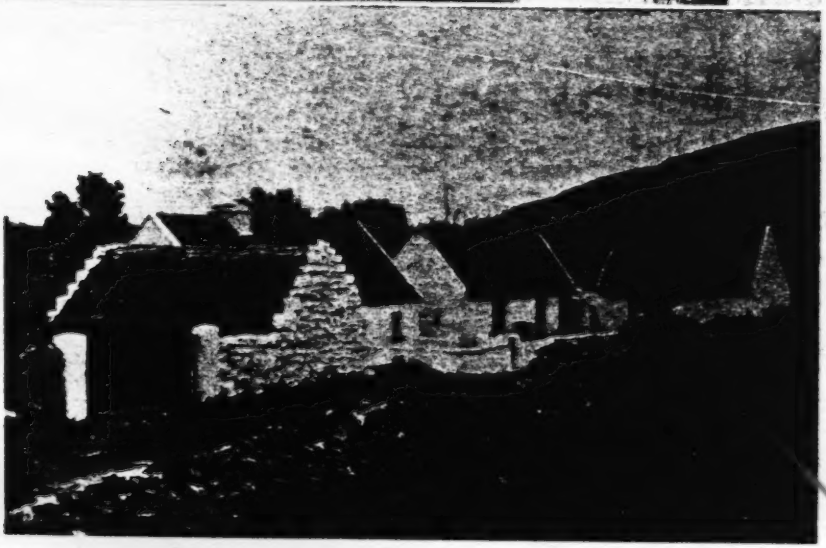

Fig. 6. Farmhouse and yard, Kilmore, Co. Wexford (fig. 2).

Fig. 7. Farmyard, Killimy, Co. Galway (fig. 3).

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Fig. 8. Farm buildings, Glenhull, Co. Tyrone (fig. 4).
Fig. 9. Farm buildings, parallel lay-out, Lohar, Co. Kerry.

[p. 11]

35/ four feet high, with gates suitably placed. A door in the back of the dwelling house leads into a
36/ garden and orchard. In both these examples the front of the dwelling house is towards the yard, but in very many examples the back of the dwelling house is towards the yard, which is reached by a back door, while the front of the house faces a small garden with flowers and fruit trees through which a path leads to the front door. This is especially common in east Munster. Figure 3 shows the buildings on a smaller farm in the south-eastern part of Co. Galway. Here again we have a courtyard formed by buildings on three sides and a stone wall with a gate on the fourth, but the courtyard is divided into two parts by another wall which protects the portion in front of the dwelling house, which is a little garden with flowers and shrubs, from the animals which pass through the yard.

In the smaller farms of the north and west there usually are fewer buildings, and these are often joined together in one continuous row, as in the example shown in figure 4, on a small farm in Co. Tyrone, where dwelling house, stable, byre and a store form one long block of buildings. Here, the elements are clearly distinguished from each other—the byre and stable are more roughly built, with poorer roof timbers and thinner walls, than the dwelling house, while the store at the other end is narrower than the dwelling house and has a lower roof. Indeed most examples of this well-known and widespread type have the dwelling house clearly distinguishable from the outhouses; thus they must not be confused with the "long-house" of Wales, of which the distinctive feature is internal communication between the byre and the dwelling.[1] In contrast to this, there is no such internal communication in this Irish type, as each house, stable, byre, store and so on has its own entrance door, and very often the dwelling house and byre do not adjoin, but have a stable, store or dairy between them. But, as we shall see below, there is—or was until recently—a primitive form of the "long house" or combined dwelling house and cattle byre to be found in certain parts of Ireland.

Another farmyard form to be found in parts of the north and west, and especially in the hill districts and peninsulas of west Munster, is shown in fig. 5. Here the outhouses are built in one continuous row, and placed a short distance away from, and parallel to, the dwelling house; the space between the dwelling house and the outhouses serving not only as a yard but also as a passage between the public road and the farmer's fields; this yard or passage is, in many districts, called the "street".

In addition to these various farmyard types, there may be found farms in which the buildings are not arranged in any set plan, but are scattered about in a haphazard fashion, sometimes without any yard; these occur but rarely in fertile lowlands but are not infrequent in mountain and moorland localities, such as parts of the Kerry mountains.

23/ It cannot be doubted that the system of having separate compartments or buildings for the dif-
35/ ferent kinds of animals and stores is of considerable antiquity in Ireland. The law tract *Crúth Gabh-*
36/ *lach*, written about A.D. 700, states that the *bó-aire febhsa* (a certain grade of land owner) must have, in addition to his dwelling house and a share in a corn-mill, a kiln, a barn, a sheep-fold, a pigsty and a calf-pen.[2] Another ancient law tract[3] refers to five "houses", namely, dwelling house, cow-

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[1] Peate, I. C.: The Welsh House, 1940, chapter IV.
[2] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. IV, Dublin, 1879, 309.
[3] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. V, Dublin, 1901, 515.

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house, pigsty, calf-pen and sheepfold, and there are several other references in the ancient law tracts to cow-houses and pigstyes.

But, notwithstanding this old and varied farmyard tradition, it is also quite clear that there was, up to the beginning of the present century, a widespread custom of keeping the livestock, or part of it, in the dwelling house. There are very many references to this in descriptions of life and conditions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Few, however, give any description of the internal arrangement of the houses, or the reason for the custom, and usually the accounts refer to small houses and a few poor animals. Some observers have mentioned the fear of wild beasts or robbers. "They are brought in by night for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves."[1] Here the writer refers to the bawns attached to the castles, but of course the same risk existed for the small farmer also. Another traveller writes of a night spent in a house in west Co. Galway: "I had just compos'd myselfe to sleepe when I was strangely surprised to heare the cows and sheep all comeing into my bed chamber. I enquired the meaneing and was told it was to preserve them from the wolfe which everie night was rambling about for prey."[2] Another and much later writer describes a night spent in a small house in the Kerry mountains, near Kenmare: "In the house where I slept—as indeed in every house of the same character in the county—the whole stock of the family, consisting chiefly of cows and sheep, were locked in at night. Such was the extreme poverty of the people that they would not otherwise be safe. ... There was a slight partition between the room where my bed was and the kitchen where there were three cows, a man, his wife and four children."[3]

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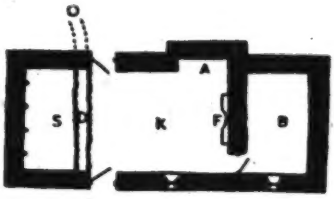

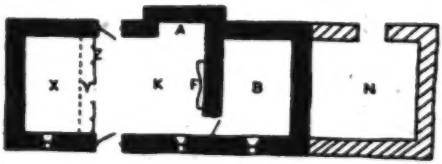

Fig. 10 House at Doolough, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; D, drain; O, drain outlet; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; S, byre.

Fig. 11. House at Srahataggle, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; X, former byre; Y, filled-in drain; Z, screen of canvas on wooden frame; N, present byre.

In many dwelling houses fowl, especially hatching hens, were kept in special coops or boxes, and it was quite usual to have weak or sickly young animals, or calves or lambs which for some reason were separated from their dams, in the kitchen where they had warmth and attention until strong enough to be put with the other animals. In many parts of Ireland the poorest people—

[113]

[1] Fynes Moryson: Itinerary, 1617.

[2] Dunton, John: Letter no. 2 (1699), in MacLysaght, E.: Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1939, 339.

[3] Doughty, M.: The Felon's Track.

those who had little or no land—commonly kept their animals in the dwelling house (which often had only one room) at night, a cow or two, or perhaps a donkey or pony, a pig or a goat and a few hens, the larger animals tied to pegs or rings set in the walls, the smaller in coops or boxes. In many houses, even large farmhouses, a special coop or perch was provided for the cock, whose crowing served to call the people of the house in the morning. A vivid description of the housing conditions of a remote and isolated community in the second half of the nineteenth century is given by Tomás Ó Crohan, writing about the Blasket Islands off the coast of Co. Kerry in the extreme south west: "There was a coop beside the partition with hens in it, and a hatching hen in an old pot nearby. At night a cow or two, a calf or two, an ass, two dogs tied to the wall or loose about the house. ... the two or three dogs would lie at the foot of the bed, the cow or two cows below them, tethered to the wall, the calf or two with the run of the kitchen and their muzzles in the fire. The ass was tied on the side of the house opposite the cows, and a cat with a couple of kittens in the fireplace niche ... And as well as all the other animals you might find a pet lamb or two about the house."[1] The custom of bringing the cattle into the dwelling house for milking during the period of the year when they are kept outdoors, as well as keeping them in the dwelling house during the winter period is recorded from Co. Kerry.[2] Indeed it is quite clear that, throughout the west and north of Ireland, the keeping of livestock in their small dwelling houses by the poorer people was quite a common practice up to the last years of the nineteenth century, and in houses from which the animals have long been ejected we may still see the rings or pegs to which they used to be tied.

There was, however, one type of house which was built and arranged as a dwelling for both people and animals, and which was still in use in the early years of the present century in parts of Connaught and Ulster, that is, in west Co. Galway, Co. Mayo, west Co. Sligo and west and north Co. Donegal. Figure 10 shows the plan of a typical specimen, at Doolough, Co. Mayo. This house is 12 m long and 5.5 m wide, built of stone and mortar and roofed with straw or grass thatch. It consists of two apartments, the smaller being a bedroom and the larger a kitchen-livingroom-cattle byre; the two apartments separated by the wall of the hearth. On one side of the hearth is a bed alcove. Two windows, one in each room and both on one side—the front—of the house, give light, and there are two doors, one in the front of the house and one in the back, placed directly opposite each other. On the farther side of these doors from the fire an open drain extends from side to side of the house; this drain is about 50 cm wide and 25 cm deep and is lined with flat stones. The space between this drain and the end wall of the house is the byre, and here, during the winter, three or four cows were kept tethered to the wall. The drain passed under the wall and led to the manure heap outside.

Figure 11 shows the manner in which many of these houses were changed during the last fifty years or so. A byre was built, attached to the house, as here, or quite apart from it. The drain was filled in, and a partition of wood, or, as here of canvas stretched on a wooden frame, erected to enclose the former byre which now became a bedroom. In many houses the partition was formed

[1] Ó Crohan, Tomás: An tOileánach, chapter III.

[2] Campbell, Ake: "Irish Fields and Houses", Béaloideas, v, 68–70.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or press. 231 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible. 361 351 [173] [184]

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farmyard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type. 361 351

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, xvi, 102, 104.

[2] Flatrès, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24. [113]

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STUDIA ETHNOGRAPHICA UPSALIENSIA. XI

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6: Ó Súilleabháin B-4, 5 (no date) 1956 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Two Death Customs in Ireland

SEÁN Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN

DUBLIN

121 In this article, I wish to draw the attention of students of the cult of the dead to two customs associated with it which have been observed for many generations in the southwest of Ireland. So far as I know, neither of them has hitherto been described in detail in any scientific journal or other work.

1. Funeral Boundaries

764 The importance of *an teampoll dúchais*, the traditional family burial-ground, is shown by the many customs and superstitions relating to it which are still fairly common in rural communities in Ireland. How often have we heard or read of a strange funeral seen at night, which was composed of deceased relatives of some recently dead person who had died and had been buried far from his family graveyard; the dead concourse was taking the body home (often even across the Atlantic) to find rest with his deceased kith and kin? Or, of a decapitated or maimed corpse which had been buried in the proper graveyard; the missing head or other member, however, was carefully carried by a "dead funeral" at night and laid in the same grave as the body? Thus, every effort within reason was made to bury the dead in the family burial-ground. This might have been due either to (a) respect for the dead, (b) fear of evil results, if the duty was ignored, (c) the wish of the dying person to be buried with his ancestors, or (d) any of a long list of other reasons which might be adduced. Even within a far-flung parish, the distance which the corpse had to be carried might amount to twenty miles. The distance would naturally be greater when the person had died in a remote district or county. Thus, funerals often took days in such cases, and halts had to be made overnight. The hardship endured by the coffin-bearers, who in olden times [482] almost always carried the coffin on their shoulders, may well be imagined.

In Ireland, as in most European countries, in the days when coffins were borne on men's shoulders, and even still in certain parts of Ireland, certain resting-places for funerals were traditionally appointed along the route. These were often at crossroads, at ancient market-crosses, which may have been associated with boundaries, or at boundaries between lands, parishes, or counties. In olden times, the corpse was not allowed to touch the earth at these resting-places; the toes of the

boots of the bearers or else the type of barrow (of wood or straw) on which the coffin was borne, served to prevent the coffin from touching the soil. Again, in Ireland (at least, in parts of County Wexford), as in some European countries, wooden crosses or other memorials were left behind at such halts; in the Kilmore area of South Wexford, two crosses are carried with each funeral—one is left at the roadside at a halting-place, the other is set up on the grave. Cairns were often associated with funeral resting-places. It was customary in certain European countries for the bearers to partake of food and drink at resting-points; this, I am told, was the practice also in parts of Donegal and Waterford. Having rested for a while, fresh bearers took up the coffin, and the graveyard was ultimately reached. 764 [264]

I have already referred to the practice of laying down the coffin when a boundary-line was reached. My father, who died six years ago, at the age of 86, told me about a funeral-boundary custom in my native parish of Tuosist, in County Kerry, in the extreme southwest corner of Ireland. He was born in 1863 in the townland of Clogherane in Kerry, only a mile distant from the County Cork border. The high range of the Caha Mountains runs for over thirty miles through the peninsula of Béara, and separates at this point the Kerry parish of Tuosist from the Cork parish of Clanlawrence. During the Famine period of 1845–50 the men who lived at either side of the pass, Bealach Scairte, which led from one county (and parish) to the other, were employed, by way of a relief-scheme, in building a road across the pass. When the work ceased, the middle portion—about two miles in length—still remained undone. And so it remained until about twenty-five years ago, when, by the aid of State funds, the road now known as The Healy Pass was built across the mountain and the two ends were joined up. I often crossed by the old path from Kerry to Cork myself, before the new road was built; it was not so difficult in the early stage of the journey, but when the narrow defile (An Céim Cumhang) at the border was reached, one had to clamber as best one could over and between huge boulders which had fallen into the defile, some of them weighing forty or fifty tons, at a rough estimate. 764 491 [794]

Any funeral which now has occasion to pass from Cork to Kerry (or *vice versa*), can do so with the luxury of a hearse and motor-cars. But it was different when my father was a boy, and for long generations before that. He told me that one day, when he was on his way to the school at Glenmore—it was in the 1870's—he saw a large concourse of men, both young and old, passing along the old road at the foot of the mountain and through the fields. They were all carrying weapons or implements of some kind—some had hay-forks, he said, others had scythes, others hatchets, still others heavy sticks. He asked later on where they were going, and was told that they were going to meet a funeral, which was coming into Kerry from Cork, at the boundary-line. He told me that he knew well the Kerryman, who was leader of the large group; I knew him too, as he lived to a great age, and could speak no English. His name was Conchobhar Uaithne Ó Súilleabháin, and he lived at Shinnagh in the parish of Tuosist. My father told me that he heard later from some of those that were present at the boundary-line, that when the Corkmen appeared at the border, carrying the corpse tortuously on their shoulders, Conchobhar stepped in front of the bearers and stood with his stick raised on the large flat stone which marked the border at this point. The stone, by the way, is still known as Leac na gCorp (The Stone of the Corpses), and it is in the middle of the hollow which, avoiding the defile, was used by funerals, or by cattle 764 578 [191]

764 578 and sheep and horses being driven across to fairs at either side. The hollow is still named Eisc na gCorp (The Hollow of the Corpses), but travellers over the new road, which by-passed the hollow, cannot see it except they are told about it and search for it. To get back to my father's story: the Kerrymen, a hundred or more strong, had lined the boundary-line with their weapons ready for action and, as the Corkmen approached the flat stone, the Kerry leader ordered them to lay down the coffin on it.

"*Leagaidh síos annsan anois í! Ná téighidh a thuille!*"[1] he ordered, indicating the stone with his stick.

The Corkmen obeyed the order, and the Kerrymen then took the coffin on their shoulders and bore it down the mountainside into their own territory and along the six miles of road to the graveyard at Kilmackillogue. No fighting took place at the border-line on that day. But it was not always so on previous occasions. I heard the old people of the parish say that fights took place in former years when funerals crossed the boundary at Leac na gCorp, and that some of those engaged had been killed.

I know of three other boundary-lines where similar precautions were taken against those who carried the coffin to the border-line forcing their way across, while still carrying the remains. The first was at Glaise'n Fhineáin, a stream some miles to the west of Leac na gCorp, in the Béara peninsula, whose waters separate the counties of Cork and Kerry. The second was at Barrlinn, an old mountain road between counties Cork and Kerry, which ran southwards from Kilgarvan in the latter county to Bantry in the former; a cairn lies just beside the boundary-line where funerals halted and bearers were exchanged; fights are said to have taken place here in former times when funerals crossed the border. These two boundary-lines, as well as that described in more detail at Leac na gCorp, are all fairly close together, and all three are at the dividing-lines of parishes as well as counties. I have been told of still another boundary-line where fights took place on funeral days. This is the mountain pass known as Mullach Bhéal in the Dingle peninsula in Kerry, over which funerals passed in former times (before the Connor Hill road was built). These funerals were either on their way westwards from the parish of Clochán to some graveyard in the parishes to the west, or *vice versa*. Old people in that area tell of coffins even having been broken at this point during the attempt to force the boundary-line, and a large cairn marks the spot. Even when this old route was by-passed by the building of the Connor Hill road, and funerals followed the new route, the men from either side who assembled at the boundary insisted that the coffin be handed over to them at that point, and they carried it into their own parish. [493] When carts replaced shoulder-bearers at a later date, the coffin had to be transferred from the cart which had carried it to the border to one from the other parish.

The reason given in more recent times for the insistence on the change of bearers being made at the border was that the men of the second parish (to which the funeral was going) did not wish it to be said by the men of the first parish that their assistance was needed to carry the coffin further; they were strong enough to bear the coffin into and through their own parish without any help from outsiders. This reason is hardly the main one, however, and is likely to have been put forward only when the original reason had been forgotten.

[1] "Lay it down there now! Don't go any further!"

In Tuosist the reason given to me by my father and some other old people was that ill-luck would fall upon Kerry and especially on the parish of Tuosist, if the Corkmen succeeded in forcing the coffin across Leac na gCorp and laid it down on Kerry soil. Sickness, bad crops, and misfortunes of many kinds would follow the corpse, if it were laid beyond the boundary-stone. This is undoubtedly the original reason for the defence of the border on funeral days. A corpse has in many lands for long been regarded as having evil magical power (known scientifically as *orenda* or *mana*) of an impersonal kind latent in itself. In Ireland, for example, fishermen regarded it as unlucky to take the corpse of a drowned person into a boat. Also, *an féar gorta* ("the hungry grass"), which grew wherever a corpse touched the earth, had the power of causing all those who walked over the spot to be stricken with abnormal hunger. Many other instances of the evil power of a corpse might be cited. Just two hundred years ago, Morty Óg O'Sullivan, a native chieftain of Béara in West Cork, who had fought against the British both in Ireland and in many European countries as a member of the "Wild Geese", was slain outside his own house near Eyeries in Béara. The British took his body to a warship at Bere Island and dragged it through the sea in the wake of the ship about sixty miles to Cork. A poet who described this happening wrote the couplet:

764 578 778

[539]

Ní raibh aon rath ar an uisce ó Chorcaigh go Béara
Ó tairngeadh tríd an bradán gléigeal.[1]

No fish were said to have since been caught in the sea-route through which the corpse was dragged.

In Sweden, Miss Louise Hagberg tells us, if a corpse were carried over cultivated ground or over lakes, they became thereby unfruitful, and crop-growing fields lost their vegetation. She also says that during the Middle Ages those persons over whose lands a corpse was carried unlawfully had the right to compensation; in Västergötland anybody who carried a corpse across the land of another, without the permission of the owner, rendered himself liable to a prescribed fine.

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Thus, the funeral-boundary customs in the Cork-Kerry area, which have died out only in comparatively recent times, seem to fit into the wider pattern of custom and superstition devised to give protection against the magical evil power associated with corpses.

2. Wearing Clothes for the Dead

In the year 1918 or so, an uncle of mine died in the townland of Fehanagh, in the parish of Tuosist, in southwest Kerry. This is my native parish. Jerry Sullivan was my uncle's name; he died at the age of sixty-four. I was fifteen years old at the time, and was spending some weeks of my summer holidays at my uncle's when he became ill and died. I was allowed to remain in the house during the illness, wake, and funeral.

764 294 292

It is still the immemorial custom in that parish to get a suit of clothes specially made by a local tailor when a person dies. The suit is not worn by the corpse in the coffin. Still, it is intended

[1] There has been no luck on the water from Cork to Béara
Since the gleaming salmon was dragged through it.

764 294 292 specifically for the dead person; I will describe in a moment the use to which it is put. Even though the dead person had a new suit of clothes at the time of his death, which he had never worn, but which he had ordered and got made for himself, this suit will not serve the purpose I mention, after his death. Still another new suit must be ordered immediately the person dies, and must be ready for wear on the Sunday following his death. There are certain rules which are *de rigeur* as far as the suit is concerned: (a) it must not be made to measure—the tailor would know most of the people of the parish and would have made clothes for many of them from time to time; when, therefore, a suit is ordered by the relatives of the man who has died, the tailor knows fairly well what the measurements of the deceased were, and makes the suit accordingly; (b) the material used in making the suit must be of good quality—otherwise the dead man will not be properly clad in the next world; (c) the suit must be complete in every detail; (d) it must not be tried on to see if it fits. Stories about events which followed a disregard for these rules will be referred to later.

764 292 When the clothes for my deceased uncle reached the house from the tailor on the Saturday evening after the burial, an interesting ritual was carried out, according to local custom. I remember the evening quite well; it was a very fine summer, and the mountains all around the valley were bathed by the rays of the setting sun. A neighbouring woman, named Mrs. Healy, who lived next door, came to the house of my late uncle at dusk, and asked his wife, children, and myself, to leave. We went some distance away from the house into a field. I heard afterwards from my aunt and from her children that Mrs. Healy then carried out the following rites: She was alone in the house, as I have said, and she first laid out the clothes, garment by garment, on the back of a kitchen chair, which was in the middle of the floor; the underclothes were on top of the pile of clothes, then came the shirt, then the trousers, then the waistcoat, then the coat, then the socks and shoes, and finally the hat and walking-stick underneath. Having thus arranged them, she then called on my deceased uncle three times by name, using the following words: "Here are your clothes, Jerry Sullivan! Come for them, and may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this!" She then sat down by the fire for short time. She then arose, took the chair and the garments to the threshold of the kitchen, leading to the yard, and repeated the same call and words three times. Having sat at the fireside again for a while, she took the chair and clothes out into the yard, again called three times on the dead man, and returned to the house alone, closing the door behind her. Having allowed some little time to elapse, she went out into the yard, brought the chair and clothes into the kitchen, and put them as they were, in the room at the bottom of the kitchen until next morning.

When she had finished her task, which occupied about a half-hour, as far as I can remember, she called us back to the house, and we all had our evening meal, as if nothing unusual had happened.

Early next morning, at the dawn of day, before anyone else in the house was up, my cousin, the dead man's son, arose, and Mrs. Healy again arrived to complete her task. My cousin went out through the kitchen door, turned round, and knelt on the threshold. Mrs. Healy then placed the suit, still arranged on the chair, inside the open door. My cousin then asked her for each garment in turn, in the name of the dead person, and she handed them to him as he asked for them.

He later put on the suit for Mass, and wore it at the Divine Service and afterwards, until he returned home. Although there was a disparity of over thirty years in the ages of my cousin and that of his father, the resemblance caused by the unusual dress was striking. 764 292

This custom of wearing clothes for the dead is still quite strong in Tuosist. It is also practised either fully, or in varying degrees of decadence, in some of the surrounding parishes, as well as in the south-western part of the adjoining county of Cork. In the Dingle peninsula, further north, in West Kerry, the custom now is to bring a suit of clothes for the dead person in a parcel to Mass on the three prescribed Sundays. A suit of clothes which had already belonged to the deceased suffices for the fulfilment of the practice in some districts in the southwest of Ireland, where, as far as can be judged by the vigour of its survival, the custom had its stronghold. It is difficult to say whether the accounts of the wearing of clothes for the dead in Counties Cavan and Wexford, which I have been given, point to a country-wide distribution in olden times or to the practice having taken hold in these two widely separated counties through some other cause.

The elaborate ceremony carried out by Mrs. Healy after the death of my uncle, which I have described above, was confined to the first Saturday evening and Sunday morning. My cousin took off the suit on his return from Mass on that day, and wore it at Mass again on the two succeeding Sundays, without any preliminary ceremony. Even when a neighbour wears the clothes instead of some member of the household, he must return them to the house on each of the first two Sundays; he may retain them altogether after the third Sunday, if the immediate relatives so arrange. Otherwise they are given to some poor person to wear in the normal way. A neighbour is called upon to wear the clothes only when there is no relative of the deceased who can fulfil the custom, e.g., when the sons of the dead man have emigrated or are too young for the purpose. [602] [621]

Almost everybody in the parish of Tuosist, where, as I have said, the practice of wearing clothes for the dead at Mass on three consecutive Sundays after the interment is still faithfully carried out, is a Catholic, and a large congregation attends Mass every Sunday. After Mass, it is customary for the people to spend some time chatting near the church when Mass is over. They all notice that a certain young man from the parish, as the case may be, is dressed like an old man on three particular Sundays, but, knowing well that he is fulfilling the age-old custom referred to, they pass no comment on it. While the custom of wearing the clothes for adults is still strong in the parish, the Saturday evening and Sunday morning rituals have, however, now died out.

It is evident from the words used by Mrs. Healy in the Saturday evening ritual ("may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this") that the traditional and original intention of the making of a special suit of clothes in this manner was to provide the dead person with raiment in the afterworld. That the dead were believed to have some kind of continuing existence after passing from this life is also indicated by, among other things, the variety of goods which were buried in coffins with the dead: in Ireland, we have references to such things as food, pipes, tobacco, defensive weapons, tools or implements, watches and other jewellery, as well as money, being placed in coffins in former times. The practice was well-known in other countries also. Prior to the introduction of the special cerements for the bodies of the dead, which have come to be known in Catholic lands as habits, it was customary to fit out the dead for burial in their best clothes. Young unmarried girls were often dressed as brides in Northern Europe, 764 775 292

764 perhaps to indicate that they had become the spouses of Death itself. It is probable, therefore, that
775 the Irish practice of providing, as well as the habit, a normal type of new suit for the dead, is but
an extension of the burial of clothes with the corpse itself. The fact that it is pagan in its origin,
292 yet is still carried out by devout Catholics in a parish like Tuosist, who wear the clothes for the dead at Mass on three Sundays after the death has taken place, shows both the tenacity of pre-Christian ideas concerning the afterworld and the easy way in which Pagan ideas and practices were in this, as in many other cases, clothed over with Christian raiment. Indeed, it is possible that the Church itself, may have been instrumental in getting the Catholics under their care to wear the clothes to Mass for a certain number of Sundays with the intention of reminding the congregation of the person who had died and of getting them to pray for his soul.

764 Stories about the displeasure and even the sufferings of the dead whenever the custom of wear-
292 ing special clothes for them was not properly carried out are legion in the areas where the practice was known. I have already mentioned some of the traditional rules which had to be observed in the making and the wearing of the suit. Disregard of any or all of these was believed to give offence to the dead, and the reaction of the deceased to such indifference or carelessness on the part of the living relatives forms the basis of most of the stories. A few examples will illustrate their trend.

764 A man whom I knew well died in Tuosist about thirty years ago. A cousin of his was asked to
wear the clothes for the dead man on the three Sundays after his burial, and he agreed to do so.
787 During the week after the first Sunday (on which day the suit was first worn to Mass), a friend
292 of mine, a shoemaker in the district, told me that he had a very vivid dream. He dreamt that he was making his way home along a lonely by-road late at night, and at a certain place, where the dead man had often stacked turf, he saw the dead man sitting with his back to the fence at the roadside. The moon shone down on his face and the shoemaker had no difficulty in recognising him in the dream. Plucking up courage, he saluted the dead man.

"Good night, Dan," said the shoemaker.

"Good night, Tim," was the reply.

"How are you?" asked the shoemaker, knowing that he was dead.

"I'm all right, except for one thing," said the dead man. "They gave me a fine suit and a fine shirt and a fine hat"—and he indicated each garment in turn—"but look at the boots they gave me!" And he pointed at the tattered boots on his feet.

"I'll attend to that, Dan," said the shoemaker, and he bade the other good night and made his way home, very much frightened.

Next morning he awoke with vivid recollections of the strange dream he had had during the night. It was Sunday morning, so he knew that the dead man's cousin would be wearing the clothes for the deceased at Mass for the second time that day. The church was four miles from his home, and having walked the mountainous road to Mass, he joined the congregation at the cross-roads afterwards. Without saying anything to anybody concerning his dream, he kept on the look-out for the dead man's cousin, and when he saw him, the shoemaker went over to join the group of men who were chatting with him. The shoemaker quietly concentrated his attention on the boots which the cousin was wearing, and it did not take long to establish that they

were not new, but had, in fact, been made by the shoemaker himself for the dead man, who had worn them only once before his death. The dead man's wife had apparently thought that it was not necessary to order a new pair of boots to be made. The shoemaker had, however, promised the dead man to have the matter set right, so he quietly sent a message to the dead man's wife next day about his dream. She immediately ordered a new pair of shoes to be procured, and these were worn at Mass, along with the rest of the outfit, until the traditional rule had been fully observed. 764 787 292

A friend of mine in the parish of Clanlawrence in County Cork told me the following story to illustrate how carefully the details of the practice must be observed. A woman in that parish had a son who died. She got a new suit made for him, to be worn at Mass on the three Sundays after his burial, and on the Saturday evening prior to the first Sunday she laid the suit (as Mrs. Healy had done when my uncle had died) on the back of a chair in the kitchen, sprinkled it with holy water, and called on the dead son to come for them. Having next placed them at the threshold of the kitchen, she finally left them for a short while in the yard, and sat by the fire for a moment, presumably to allow the dead son to come for the suit. Suddenly she heard something being thrown against the door and, on investigating, she found that it was the new waistcoat. She then remembered that she had deliberately refrained from putting her dead son's watch in the pocket, intending to keep it as a memento. Needless to say, she immediately put the watch in the waistcoat pocket and replaced the garment on the chair in the yard. There was no further disturbance.[1] 764 294 293

[1] For general references to the custom mentioned in 1, see: När Döden Gästar, Louise Hagberg, Stockholm, 1937, pp. 331–379. Also, Über Krankheit, Tod und Jenseitsvorstellungen in Irland, Hans Hartmann, Halle, 1942, pp. 11–115; and Der Totenkult in Irland, by the same author, Heidelberg, 1952, pp. 15–17, 183. [113]

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STUDIES OF IRISH RURAL SETTLEMENT

JAMES H. JOHNSON

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UNTIL recently it was generally thought that isolated farms, dispersed over the cultivated land (Fig. 1), formed a settlement pattern of great antiquity in Ireland. Without investigating the matter deeply, academic geographers explained this pattern in several ways. Some saw it as a product of the pastoral emphasis of Irish agriculture, which necessitated a close relationship between a farmer's residence and his fields.[1] Others, especially Meitzen, regarded the dispersed farms as a direct result of the Celtic heritage of the country.[2] And although professional geographers preferred a cultural explanation, school textbooks tended to seize on an environmental factor, seeing dispersed settlement as a product of the moist Irish climate, which required no concentration on wet-point sites and presumably allowed the cultural factors free play.[3]

Contemporary Studies

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Work by modern geographers on the critical study of Irish rural settlement began in County Donegal. Here E. E. Evans[4] showed that, in parts of the county at least, the single isolated farm is a relatively recent form of settlement, which dates from the nineteenth century rather than survives from any great antiquity. Modern dispersed settlement in Donegal was in fact preceded by "clachans"—clusters of farm dwellings and their associated outbuildings, usually grouped without any formal plan and in the early nineteenth century often consisting of as many as 30–40 houses. Although these clachans normally lacked both inn and church, communal life and the exchange of services were characteristic, and as a rule their inhabitants were related by blood.

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[113] [1] A. Demangeon: La géographie de l'habitat rural (International Geographical Congress, London and Cambridge, 1928: Report of the Commission on Types of Rural Settlement, pp. 41–80), p. 59.

[2] August Meitzen: Siedelung und Agrarwesen der Westgermanen und Ostgermanen, der Kelten, Römer, Finnen und Slawen (3 vols. and atlas, Berlin, 1895), Vol. 1, pp. 174–182.

[312] [3] The advantage of universal water supplies in Ireland is more apparent than real. In parts of County Fermanagh, for example, farmers must carry drinking water hundreds of yards to their dispersed farms (cf. J. M. Mogey: Rural Life in Northern Ireland [Oxford, 1947], pp. 35–36), when nucleation around the most satisfactory supply would seem to be a logical arrangement. Personal observation suggests that this is a not uncommon situation on many Irish farms.

[113] [4] Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System, *Geography*, Vol. 24, 1939, pp. 24–36; Donegal Survivals, *Antiquity*, Vol. 13, 1939, pp. 207–222.

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FIG. 1—Panoramic view of dispersed farmsteads near Carrinure, County Armagh, looking west along the drumlin belt of north Ireland. (Photograph by J. K. St. Joseph, from Cambridge University Collection. British Crown Copyright Reserved.)

361 McCourt[5] has been able to map the distribution of relicts of clachan settlement as they were to be found in the 1830's. He has shown that this was a widespread form of settlement in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century, and that it did not disappear in the remoter parts of the country until late in the nineteenth.[6] Indeed, occasional clachans that are still actively functioning can be found today on the Atlantic seaboard (Figs. 2 and 3[7]).

311 Associated with clachan settlement was a form of open-field cultivation,
361 comparable to the Scottish infield-outfield system and generally known in

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[5] D. McCourt: The Rundale System in Ireland: A Study of Its Geographical Distribution and Social Relations (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1950).

[6] D. McCourt: Traditions of Rundale in and around the Sperrin Mountains, *Ulster Journ. of Archæol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 16, 1953, pp. 69–84; *idem*: The Rundale System in Donegal: Its Distribution and Decline, *Journ. County Donegal Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1955, pp. 47–60.

[7] The author thanks Captain C. Ó Danachair of the Irish Folklore Commission for drawing his attention to the photograph presented as Figure 3.

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311 Ireland as "rundale" or "runrig."[8] Under rundale the land surrounding a
361 settlement was worked as a joint farm, with individual plots and strips scattered through the arable land, some on the constantly tilled infield and some on shifting outfield patches reclaimed periodically from the waste.[9] By the early nineteenth century this form of agriculture had become extremely
[428] complicated, as a result of the rapidly increasing population and of the Irish practice of subdividing a restricted amount of arable land among all the male heirs of the household. In modern surviving examples the clachan and cultivation in rundale are closely interrelated, and it is generally assumed that they do not function independently. But a complication to this interpretation has emerged in a small area of County Down that has been examined by R. H. Buchanan[10] within the limits set by the available manuscript material. Here a set of estate maps shows clachans apparently developed in association with compact holdings. Although this work, which refers to a small area and uses a narrow range of information, may not weaken the great body of evidence that suggests a direct relationship between rundale agriculture and clachan settlement, at least it indicates that the relationship needs to be carefully appraised in each individual case.

Two Nineteenth-Century Investigators

114 Although changes in the pattern of Irish rural settlement have only
361 recently been uncovered by research, the periodic reports of the various Royal Commissions concerned with nineteenth-century Ireland make it clear
311 that the inhabitants of the country were not unaware of the changes taking place around them.[11] Hence it is not surprising that at least two nineteenth-century scholars, Frederic Seebohm and August Meitzen, knew of clachan settlement.

Seebohm's attention was focused on the manorial and tribal systems and on the open-field system of cultivation.[12] It was this latter interest in particular

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113 [8] D. McCourt: Infield and Outfield in Ireland, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 7, 1954–1955, pp. 369–376.

[9] Flatrès believes that the outfield was not widely found in Ireland but was a late introduction, brought in the early seventeenth century by Scottish settlers (Pierre Flatrès: Géographie rurale de quatre contrées celtiques—Irlande, Galles, Cornwall & Man [Rennes, 1957]). No attempt has been made here to evaluate Flatrès' ambitious study; of particular interest, however, is his map of the modern field systems of Ireland (Fig. 1). [Reviewed in this number of the *Geographical Review*, p. 599.—Edit. Note.]

[10] The author is grateful to Mr. Buchanan for this information in advance of its publication.

[11] In particular see the evidence presented to the Devon Commission (Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry [Lord Devon, Chairman] into . . . the Occupation of Land in Ireland [6 parts (in 5 vols.), London, 1845; British Parliamentary Papers 1845, XIX–XXIII]).

[12] Frederic Seebohm: The English Village Community, Examined in Its Relations to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry (2nd edit., London, 1883).

[Text continues on p. 558]

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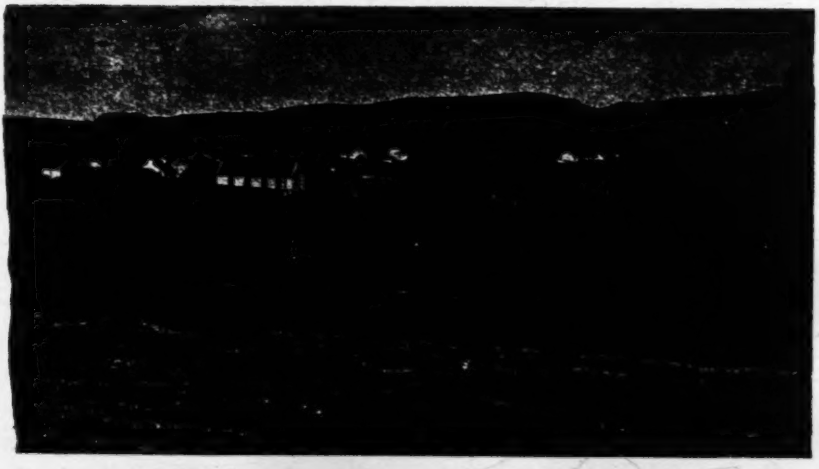

FIG. 2—Ballyhillin, a present-day clachan near Malin Head, County Donegal.

FIG. 3—Kiltullagh, a hamlet of a form common in County Galway. The regularity in the arrangement of the houses is possibly the result of the activity of a former landlord, though it is noticeable that the houses are not perfectly oriented to the road. (Photograph from Irish Press.)

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114 that led him to pay some attention to the arrangement of settlement on the
311 land. At first sight he does not seem to have been aware of the existence of
361 clachans in Ireland, since he states that under the tribal system homesteads "were scattered over the country and not grouped together in villages and towns," and he seems to suggest that the dispersed settlement of nineteenth-century Ireland was a product of this heritage.[13] But elsewhere in the same work he points out that homesteads were in fact grouped in "arithmetical clusters" which were "the natural method by which the frequent redistributions of the land were made easy; while the runrig form of open-field system was the natural mode of conducting a cooperative and shifting agriculture"[14] —a recognizable description of settlement in clachans. This apparent contradiction must have been produced merely by the lack of a definition of what is meant by the term "village." A clachan was just a group of farm buildings, usually without any other function and without any plan, and hence it would not have appeared "village-like" to an Englishman's eyes, though its total population could have approached that of a village in lowland Britain. Unfortunately, Seebohm's conclusions on Irish settlement cannot be accepted at their face value. Although the form of settlement he describes may have been found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the period from which he drew his information—it does not follow that these conditions represented the form of settlement associated with the original tribal system, as he suggests. However, at least he was aware that the clachan existed in early-nineteenth-century Ireland.

To geographers Meitzen's work is perhaps better known.[15] His assertion that settlement in isolated farms (*Einzelhöfe*) could be traced back to the mode of a Celtic ethnic group has been criticized on the broad European evidence, but in spite of this he was not unaware of the presence of clachans in Ireland. In the atlas that forms part of his great work (perhaps its most valuable part for modern geographers) several plates derived from nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps illustrate clachans and the open fields associated with them.[16] Although he drew much of his information from Seebohm, Meitzen could not accept the theory that clachans originated in Celtic or pre-Celtic time; however, his alternative explanations are unconvincing. It is hard to believe that this settlement form was introduced into Scotland by Scandinavian influence or that in Ireland it was transitional between pastoral

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 223–244.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[15] Meitzen, *op. cit.* [see footnote 2 above].
[16] *Ibid.*, Atlas to Vol. 3, maps 23 and 25–27.

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and arable use of land.[17] Further, Meitzen does not seem to have been aware of the widespread distribution of the clachan and its associated field system. In fairness, however, it should be pointed out that Meitzen was not entirely wrong. Recent work suggests that Celtic freemen in Ireland lived in dispersed farmsteads (known to archeologists as "raths"),[18] though this does not establish that modern dispersed settlement was directly derived from such a heritage, particularly in view of the unsettled history of Ireland during the intervening period.

A Problem in Origins

Moreover, the two forms of settlement—*Einzelhöfe* and clachans—are not necessarily incompatible. Both McCourt and Evans have commented on the way in which clachans wax and wane,[19] largely because of fluctuations in population numbers. Indeed, McCourt cites at least one example from County Antrim in which an individual farm grew into a clachan between 1782 and 1832, and two of the clachans Evans studied in Donegal dissolved into isolated farms sometime between 1834 and 1902.[20]

The problem here seems to be one of origin. Did the clachan bring the infield-outfield system with it, or were the two separate at this earliest stage? If they were separate, it would suggest that their modern survival together on the Atlantic fringe of Ireland may be the result of the independent preservation of ancient practices in a difficult region. For that matter, was the clachan introduced? Examples have already been given of the growth of nucleated settlements from dispersed farmsteads, often in a very short time, and in view of the clachan's lack of plan this manner of origin seems entirely reasonable.

On the other hand, merely to say that the settlement pattern and the field system grew out of the subdivision of a larger enclosed farm is to oversimplify the problem. Meitzen postulated a Celtic people with a tradition of compact farms; but if subdivision took place, surely it would have been a break with that tradition to produce small farms with scattered strips rather

[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 207–218.

[18] V. B. Proudfoot: The People of the Forths, *Ulster Folklife*, Vol. 1, 1955, pp. 19–26. See also his "Settlement and Economy in Co. Down from the Late Bronze Age to the Anglo-Norman Invasion" (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1957).

[19] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 28.

[20] McCourt, The Rundale System in Ireland [see footnote 5 above], diagram 27; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 29; E. E. Evans: The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe, *in* Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, edited by W. L. Thomas, Jr. (Chicago, 1956), pp. 217–239, reference on p. 231.

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114 than small compact holdings. A further indication that there may have been
a fundamental distinction between the systems which is not apparent at first
361 sight lies in the fact that, wherever the historical record goes back continuously into the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, both settlement forms are found to have existed side by side in the same areas and over the whole period.[21] No case is yet known in which an area with nothing but dispersed farms was converted into an area where clachans were completely dominant. Hence, drawing an analogy from Wales, where G. R. J. Jones[22] has carefully examined more plentiful medieval documents than have survived in Ireland, Evans has been led to suggest that the dispersed Iron Age farms (the "raths" referred to above) were the homes of freemen; and bondmen, the descendants of pre-Celtic inhabitants, lived in clachans. Later, in historical time, both groups fell under the control of landlords, but remnants of the former situation survived in the settlement pattern.[23] Some confirmation of this theory has come from Proudfoot's work in County Down, where he has been able to show that raths were not the only form of settlement during the Dark Ages; there were also groups of farms without an enclosing bank, which could be dated to the same period.[24] Such an interpretation regards clachan settlement as being of great antiquity, and indeed it is hard to believe that the cooperative kinship unit (which life in a clachan implies) is other than of considerable age. Further, it suggests that the fundamental antithesis was between systems of landholding, rather than between settlement patterns.

The infield-outfield system also seems to have been an early introduction.
114 It could be suggested, of course, that the system represented an adaptation of
311 the medieval three-field system to the small amount of good arable land
361 available in many parts of Ireland. Medieval agriculture on an English pattern had been introduced into southeastern Ireland by the Normans; and a medieval origin has been suggested for some villages in Wexford, formed of groups of strip farms, which were still functioning in the nineteenth century.[25] But even if this can be firmly established, the Norman influence on agriculture was limited to the southeastern part of the country. In any case, the modern

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113 [21] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376.

[22] G. R. J. Jones: Some Medieval Rural Settlements in North Wales, *Inst. of British Geogrs. Publ. No. 19: Trans. and Papers 1953*, London, 1954, pp. 51–72.

[23] Evans, The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe [see footnote 20 above], p. 231. Earlier, Duignan had tentatively suggested a similar idea but did not relate it to the development of settlement patterns (M. Duignan: Irish Agriculture in Early Historic Times, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 124–145; reference on p. 129).

[24] Proudfoot, Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above].

[25] J. Otway-Ruthven: The Origin of Anglo-Irish Agriculture in the Middle Ages, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 81, 1951, pp. 1–13; reference on p. 6.

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survivals of the infield-outfield system in the remoter parts of Ireland would seem to suggest that it dates from a time much earlier than that of the Norman invasion.

Lines of Investigation

These questions and theories widen the field for speculation, but it is difficult to see where to turn for further information, largely because of the meager documentary evidence that survives in Ireland from periods earlier than the eighteenth century. Admittedly, relevant material may be discovered among estate papers, but there are three other lines that might be followed with profit.

One possible approach, field investigation, is illustrated by a project now under way, in which archeological techniques are being used to excavate a clachan in County Down, inhabited until the late nineteenth century. The primary aim is to discover how this particular clachan originated. Did it grow out of a single farm, and, if so, at what date? Two seasons' work has now been completed without conclusive answers to these questions, though some details have been added to the local economic history of County Down.[26] At least it has been shown that a clachan settlement stood on this site about 1780 and that the site had been occupied from sometime near the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Buildings were found underlying the nineteenth-century structures. The fact that some of these remains appear to date from a time before the immigration of Scottish and English settlers into the area in the early seventeenth century should prove important in the study of Irish house types, since the lack of evidence on the development of settlement patterns extends also to the history of individual farm buildings.[27]

Whether this particular excavation will yield further information about

[26] J. H. Johnson, V. B. Proudfoot, and R. H. Buchanan: Excavations at Minerstown, Co. Down: Preliminary Report on Work Completed in 1956, *Ulster Journ. of Archaeol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 21, 1958. (In press.)

[27] Pioneer work on surviving house types was carried out by A. Campbell (Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture, *Béaloideas*, Vol. 5, 1935, pp. 57–74; Notes on the Irish House, *Folklív*, Vol. 1, 1937, pp. 207–234, and Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 175–196). This has been developed in a series of local studies, so that a comprehensive account of the surviving forms of Irish traditional building is becoming increasingly possible. The best and most recent general account is E. E. Evans' "Irish Folk Ways" (London, 1957; with an extensive bibliography), Chapters 4 and 5. Several important articles on house types and related topics have appeared recently; for example, C. Ó Danachair: Irish Farmyard Types, *Arctica: Studia Ethnographia Upsaliensis No. 11*, 1956, pp. 6–15; A. T. Lucas: Wattle and Straw-Mat Doors in Ireland, *ibid.*, pp. 16–35; C. Ó Danachair: Stand und Aufgaben der Hausforschung in Irland, *Bericht über die Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für Deutsche Hausforschung*, Schleswig, 1955, pp. 29–50; R. H. Buchanan: Thatch and Thatching in North-East Ireland, *Gwerin*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 123–142; and C. Ó Danachair: The Bed Out-Shot in Ireland, *Folklív*, Vols. 19–20, 1955–1956, pp. 26–31.

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121 settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of
eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the begin-
172 ning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered. However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of
121 investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the
103 Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of land-holding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviving clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been
121 aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photographs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in
178 what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to
311 find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield
361 system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

[28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[113] [29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland, *Antiquity*, Vol. 4, 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

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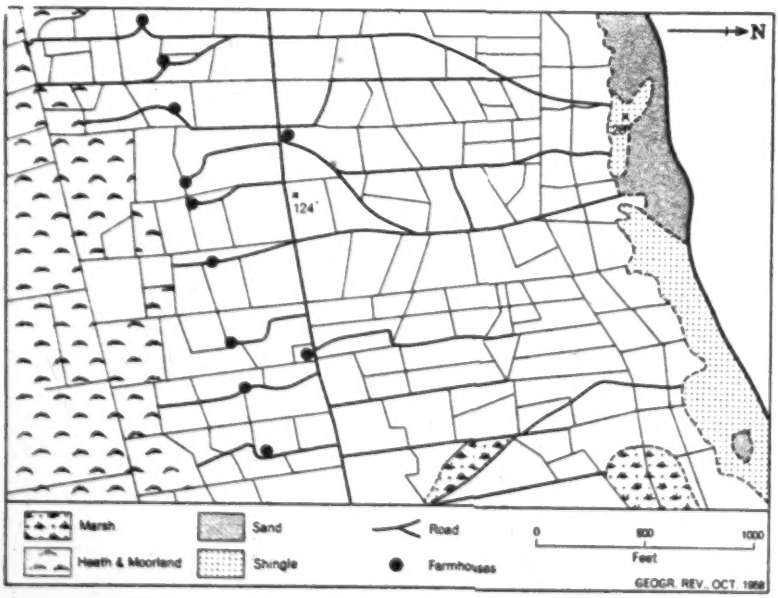

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FIG. 4—"Striped" farms and fields in County Kerry. (Based on the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Minister of Finance, Republic of Ireland.)

mentary authorization. Although it is rarely possible to obtain information on the methods and precise date of consolidation, the destruction of the system can be explained, in broad terms, by its growing inefficiency and by the dissemination of new agricultural techniques. 178 361 311

Some of the unsatisfactory aspects of rundale agriculture sprang from the steady growth of the population of Ireland, which continued from sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century until the Great Famine of 1845–1847.[30] This increase led to a constant encroachment on various uncultivated areas, a process in which the general adoption of the potato as a subsistence crop played a major part.[31] But the "waste" lands brought under cultivation had not been completely unused, since often they were grazed by livestock under a well-developed transhumance.[32] This seasonal movement was important to the rural economy, because efficient rundale farming required that the animals be removed from the unfenced cultivated strips during the growing

[30] K. H. Connell: The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845 (Oxford, 1950).

[31] *Idem:* The Colonization of Waste Land in Ireland, 1780–1845, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 3, 1950–1951, pp. 44–71. 113

[32] J. M. Graham: Transhumance in Ireland, *The Advancement of Sci.*, Vol. 10, 1953–1954, pp. 74–79.

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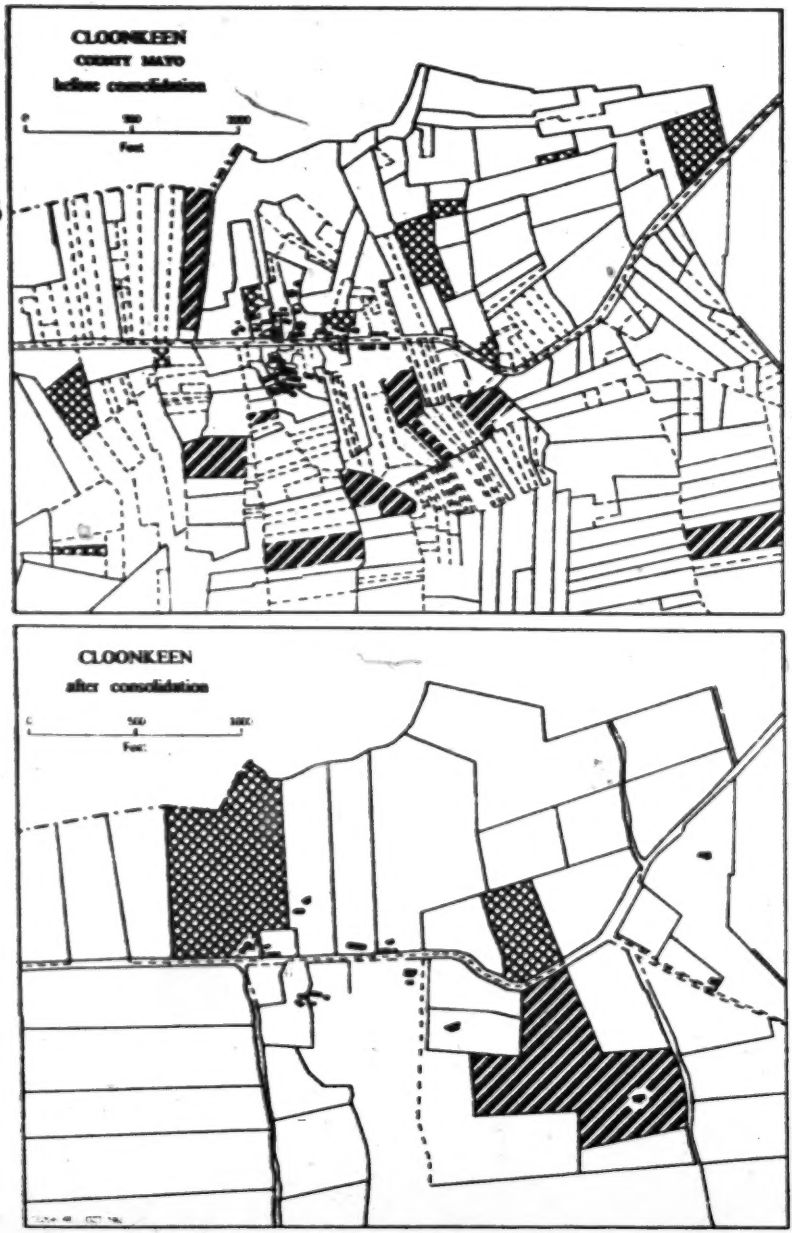

FIG. 5—Cloonkeen, County Mayo, before and after consolidation. The two different shadings (crosshatch and diagonal ruling) represent land held by two typical farmers before and after the consolidation carried out in 1909 by the Congested Districts Board. (Based on information kindly provided by the Irish Land Commission and reproduced by permission.)

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season; and the end of transhumance made the working of the system more difficult. Similarly, the increase of population led to a remarkable growth in the size of many clachans, which often made life in them increasingly inconvenient. Squabbles over rights of way and other petty affairs were common, and there was a growing awareness that the old methods of farming were becoming unsatisfactory. The introduction of new crops and rotations gave the *coup de grâce* to the efficiency of the system; for they were difficult to integrate into it, and therefore agricultural improvement was retarded.

The impetus behind the changes, however, usually did not come from the farmers themselves but from their landlords. Indeed, it seems possible that peasant resistance to the destruction of rundale was a considerable factor in nineteenth-century opposition to landlordism.[33] Often landlords, intent on improving their estates, would put whole areas of land into the melting pot, consolidating holdings and sometimes evicting the surplus population. Frequently the new holdings were arranged up and down the slope of the land, an arrangement that has resulted in the characteristic striped appearance of much of the modern Irish landscape. Although long, narrow strips were probably not the best possible farm shape (Fig. 4), they represented a compromise between the traditional system of allocating each farmer a share of every quality of land and the landlords' demands for greater efficiency. At the same time the old clachan groups were broken up and new farmhouses were built, each within its own land. In such a way most of the better agricultural land was converted, but at the end of the nineteenth century various areas, particularly in the west of Ireland, still remained under the old system or some modification of it. This hard core has now been largely eliminated by government action. First the British government attempted a general improvement of living conditions in western Ireland by means of the Congested Districts Board, whose work included the reorganization of agricultural holdings (Fig. 5);[34] after 1922 and the establishment of the Irish Free State the task was taken over by the Irish Land Commission.[35]

In some areas, however, the disappearance of clachan settlement was part of a natural process in the late nineteenth century. The population of Ireland started to decrease after the Great Famine of the 1840's, and even in areas where there had been little rearrangement of holdings some clachans became

[33] See, for example, the Devon Commission Report [see footnote 11 above], Part 1, Appendix 14, p. 58.

[34] T. W. Freeman: The Congested Districts of Western Ireland, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 33, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[35] On this aspect of the Land Commission's work see "The Consolidation of Fragmented Agricultural Holdings" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Washington, 1950), Chapter 3, "Relief of Rural Congestion in Ireland."

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161 uninhabited and in others only a single family remained. In these areas, too,
361 partial consolidation was carried out by adding the fields of an emigrating
179 farmer to those of some neighbor or relative who remained at home. The decrease in population had a more general influence as well: throughout Ireland it prevented former conditions from reasserting themselves. Everywhere there was diminished pressure on the land, and the growth of larger farms rather than renewed subdivision.

000 There are still gaps, then, in the story of Irish rural settlement. Until documentary and field evidence slowly yields the missing chapters, the past will remain a subject for speculation rather than for confident explanation. The rural systems of previous centuries are now disappearing, but the surviving remains may hold clues to former conditions, and their interpretation remains a continuing challenge.

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THE IRISH COUNTRYMAN

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THE IRISH COUNTRYMAN

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY

BY

CONRAD M. ARENSBERG, PH.D.

SOCIETY OF FELLOWS, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

[p. iii]

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TO

WILLIAM LLOYD WARNER

OF CHICAGO

AND

PATRICK JOSEPH MEGHEN

OF DUBLIN

GOOD COMPANIONS, PHILOSOPHERS, AND FRIENDS,

INTERPRETERS EACH OF HIS OWN COUNTRY

AND OF HIS FELLOW-MEN

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PREFACE

114 It is a rash undertaking for any man, however ripe in experience he may be, to attempt the interpretation of a nation's folk. When the nation he essays is not his own, and his experience is really but very little, rashness becomes foolhardiness. Yet when Dr. Lowell, president-emeritus of Harvard University, did me the honour of asking me to deliver a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston, in March 1936, I found myself impelled to take my courage in my hands. The book which follows represents the lectures given at the Institute. It is an attempt to present to the public some measure of the interest in human social behaviour and the absorbing problems of human societies which inspires and rewards the anthropologist and sociologist in his long quests in field and library. As my own quest had taken me on a definite, concrete mission to southern Ireland, I felt I should best serve my purpose by devoting myself to that country, which had so richly rewarded my own interest.

000 Consequently, if in these pages I make yet another contribution to the growing literature of commentary upon the Irish scene, I do so with a deep sense of humility and gratitude. My debts are

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perhaps greater than I realize. As an inquisitive, even importunate, stranger in a foreign land, seeking out intimacies and sanctities scarcely acknowledged among friends and fellow-countrymen, I was utterly dependent upon the hospitable good-nature and the intelligent understanding of the people among whom I worked. I never knew it to fail. My first debt is to the people of Ireland, of all walks of life, who took me in. They are too numerous to mention by name, even those whom I might well single out for special recognition. Yet if I owe any group of them a greater debt than another, it is the people of the 'Banner' County of Clare, among whom I lived.

Academic indebtedness is of a different nature. The fraternity of science is a reality today in which every practitioner has a part. One is greatly dependent upon the inspiration, the co-operation, and the criticism that fraternity affords. My own dependence has rested chiefly upon my colleagues, Professor Lloyd Warner of Chicago and Dr. Solon Kimball of Harvard, with whom I did much of the field work whose results this book records. Some of the observations made are theirs, though the responsibility for error and misjudgment is entirely my own.

But my reliance upon the aid and criticism of Professors Hooton, Tozzer and L. J. Henderson and Dr. Eliot D. Chapple, all of Harvard, has been no less great. Each in his way has contributed to

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the development of the interest out of which this 000 book springs. In Ireland, too, there were other contributors, from whom much of whatever understanding of Ireland I may have derives. Professors Eoin MacNeil and George O'Brien of the National University, Drs. Henry Kennedy and Seumas O Duilearga of Dublin and Daniel Coghlan of Ennis all led me along their chosen paths. Through the friendship and encouragement of Mr. Patrick Meghen of the Irish Civil Service many a door to Irish life fell open. In dedicating the book to him and to Professor Warner I make what little recognition of their parts in it I can.

C. M. A.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
September 1936

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I

The Interpretation of Custom

609 The arrival of a stranger in a west country Irish
123 town is still an event. The age of machinery has not yet destroyed the leisure of curiosity. But when the stranger shows no intent of hurrying on, like an ordinary tourist, and sports none of the weapons of field and stream, the matter assumes no mean local importance. A new bank clerk or land commissioner is expectable; he soon sinks into the colour of his position and surroundings. Even a 'returned Yank', once his parentage and probable savings have been determined, and his clothes and manners scrutinized, soon drops out of mind.

But there is no understanding a stranger whose only apparent business is to chat with people and to walk about with notebook in hand. And when he calls himself an 'anthropologist', the mystery thickens. The 'squinting windows', for which Brinsley MacNamara once named a novel of the Irish countryside, do not soon lose their squint; and an eddy of whispered speculation follows the stranger up and down the narrow old-world streets of the town.

But time brings acceptance of most mysteries.

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609 It finds a formula for them that gives them a
123 familiar ring. So, the anthropologist gradually found acceptance. Even his formidable title grew easier as its translation spread. The Irish today
[212] are a very literate people. And a sudden increase in the circulation of books on anthropology
[217] from the county library helped very quickly to establish the anthropologist as 'looking for old customs'.

Once, perhaps, the translation would have been
121 adequate. But anthropology today is much more than a search for ancient custom. Even in Ireland, where the traditional Celtic life still lingers on, the anthropologist must conceive his purpose in broader terms. I want to devote this first lecture to the new purpose and its application to the Irish scene. In the remaining five lectures I shall try to present to you certain of the factors of custom and belief in the countryside of the south and west of Ireland and to analyse them in terms of the purpose we discuss here.

000 First of all we must clear up the matter of presumption. It may seem presumptuous that an anthropologist should profess to discuss the life of a modern nation. To some of us it may seem something like an engineer or a physicist, who deserts his field for metaphysics and morals. To others it may seem to betray a rather derogatory attitude toward the nation discussed. But neither desertion nor derogation can rightfully be charged. Our con-

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fusion, if we do have it, springs from our associations with the word 'anthropology'. 000

We are prone to think of the anthropologist as a collector of strange facts about savage, and at best, semi-civilized peoples. When analogues to these facts appear from time to time among civilized men we regard them as superstitious survivals at best, worthy of our study only as *curiosa*. Why then an anthropology of modern Ireland? Whatever we may think of her, we cannot include Ireland among the primitive and barbarous peoples. If we go on to relate primitive survivals to the way of life of the Irish country-people, we certainly do not condemn them wholesale as barbarians, nor can we rightfully regard them as primitive. [181]

If this is the case, our associations with the word 'anthropology' must be at fault. So let us set about revising them.

To make the revision is really to explain the development of anthropological science. In common with the rest of us, the anthropologists have gone through something of a mental and moral revolution. The changes in the conceptual basis of science, rapidly spreading in the last thirty years, have not passed them by.

Long ago it was necessary to give up all hope of establishing unilinear evolution. The student of man had very early to admit that the course of humanity's growth was no simple straight path. At first he had thought of the primitive as a backward

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000 child, held back in the lower grades of mankind's school of experience. That view broke down. With new evidence it became clear that there were many schools. To continue the figure, it grew apparent that the schools were only indirectly comparable and that they had very little of common curriculum. Each people makes its own adaptation. Today it is these adaptations rather than historical continuities which invite comparison.

The very evidence that had led us to believe in a common curriculum began to take on a new meaning. All modern societies, our own included, present many continuities with supposed prior states of human development. The evolutionary analogy gives us their name—they are survivals: earmarks of a lower and outmoded way of life. In the analogy of the child, they are obscure memories of forgotten childhood.

But today the analogy of the child falls down too. The psycho-analyst finds the mind of childhood by no means forgotten in the adult. His work has stripped the adult of his mask of rationality and laid bare the subconscious unreason below. Much the same development took place in anthropology. The field ethnologist soon demolished civilized man's pretension to the sole possession of the adult mind. One cannot read a page of modern ethnological description from Malinowski in Melanesia to the Herskovitzes in Guiana without a shock to one's complacency. The savage mixes the rational

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and irrational in much the same way as we do. 000 Only the ingredients of the mixture are different. The work of a Pareto on our own society helps to tear away the last threads of our illusion. For he could devote four great volumes to our non-logicality!

Alongwith this new realization the anthropologist was forced to share the moral uncertainties of our age. We are no longer so sure of progress as our fathers and grandfathers were. Nor are we so sure that today our civilization is the highest point yet reached in man's upward sweep to an inevitable perfection. Relativity has invaded even our valuation of civilization.

But this shaking of our convictions has not been without one good result, at least in the science of man. It has led to an ever greater objectivity. It has enabled us to see moral absolutes themselves as expressions of particular times and places. The anthropologist had to learn this tolerance very early. To carry his own valuation into a thousand different moral atmospheres over the world was to invite a thousand antagonisms and to learn nothing, except perhaps invective. 'Customs beastly, manners none', was great invective but it added little to our knowledge.

It is the search for new facts that has brought a new face upon anthropology. Non-normative science is the statement of relationship between observed data. But the reconstructions of human

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000 history to which evolutionary ideas had led cannot be observed. On the other hand, the actualities of primitive life in the present lie before one's eyes. New facts were still at hand if one hurried to look for them.

As the result, field work gained immensely in value and prestige. It was not enough to discuss a particular trait or custom, to follow its temporal and spatial course, to trace it from time to time and tribe to tribe. This was a valuable inquiry, but it led nowhere beyond its avowed purpose: a study of cultural diffusion and human interchange. It could not even be, as it hoped, a record of human inventiveness, for the origin of culture traits is lost in the mists of the past.

The limitations, then, of the diffusionist technique forced attention in a new direction. Detailed study of the particular field began to command interest. The tribe, the savage community, the clan, might throw into relief new facts. The focus of interest need no longer be the culture-trait nor the single custom, better perhaps to look at the human beings who are the momentary bearers of the culture. It is paradoxical that the science of man should stand in need of a thorough humanizing. But it did, and a long course of ethnological work was necessary to bring it about.

The new facts were human rather than cultural data. This does not sound so revolutionary. The anthropologist has always written about man's

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doings and sought to explain them. But he had never made them the central focus of his interest in savages and primitives. It was in this shift of emphasis that the revolution lay.

To give crude examples, the change was of this sort. Once the question asked was whether this or that tribe practised monogamy and from whom it acquired the habit; what was the development of monogamy and what prior states did it succeed. Now the question became rather, "What do the tribesmen do and think in getting mates, what makes them act so, and how do their actions affect other departments of their lives?" Where once a savage who used the bow was asked, "Where did you get it, and how did you learn to make your particular kind of bow?" Now he was asked, "What use do you make of your bow, what does it mean to you and your friends, with whom do you share its quarry, and why do you flourish it so in your dances?"

In other words, it was a shift from a history of forms and institutions to a study of behaviour. The answers to the new questions might not illuminate us about human evolutions, but they would not be any the less valuable as data of human behaviour.

As you can see, this new curiosity was social. Man is a social creature. The study of his customs is a study of social behaviour, for he acts as a member of a family, clan, tribe, or community. It

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000 early became very clear that his customs had an intimate relation to the life of his groups; their meaning lay in the social adaptation of the individual.

Once this step had been taken anthropology had to recognize its new face. It must conceive itself more and more as a social science.

Thus the term 'social anthropology', an old term, underwent a shift in meaning. It came to cover the field that it occupies in this discussion. The branch of the study of man which deals as we are going to do, with his acts rather than his anatomy or physiognomy or the archaeological remains of his past cultures, had gone through a revolution which brought it next door to a sociology.

But the social branch of anthropology reached the study of man as a social creature through a different course from that followed by more conventional sociologies. It came to the social field with its own techniques and its own experience.

Consequently, it felt it could make a contribution of its own. The barrier between the barbarian and the civilized man, as we have seen, is no longer conceivable in simple terms. Typically modern logic is not at all a *rara avis* among Bushmen; typically 'primitive' behaviour characterizes us all at moments. We even share many institutions with our savage brothers (or third cousins, if you prefer) —such as the family, the association, even political forms such as royalty and the democratic vote (an

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Iroquois habit). We like to think of these as 'rudimentary forms', it is true. But that salves our pride without removing the fact of our likeness to the primitive. 000

The anthropologist's experience in such matters, he felt, was of particular importance. He had been led to it in his study of primitive communities. There he was brought face to face with social wholes. He caught a glimpse of the forest beyond the separate trees. He could see his people whole, above and beyond the discrete parts of their culture —institutions, particularities of custom, categories of belief. This was the experience he felt made him eligible for trying his hand in a larger field.

He gained this confidence, as I have said, as a direct result of a new emphasis upon human behaviour—part of the humanizing of the savage I have mentioned. The new emphasis soon developed into a study of wholes. Most primitive peoples are small in number. Yet even so they exhibit all the characteristics of a large society. They are minuscule social systems. The activities we name economics, literature, art, philosophy, religion, manners, pedagogy, law, custom, government, are all present among them. Only the words for them are lacking; and their differentiation is less marked.

For the observer the difference in scale has an immense value. It allows him an objective view of the whole which is practically impossible in our own modern life. It throws the articulation of the

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000 parts into relief. Half of his work of isolating relationships is done for him already, by the very simplicity the scale demands.

The value of the smaller scale does not stop there. In sociology today, the immensity of our society and the infinity of kinds of behaviour which it entails makes the clearing away of obscuring data and the definition of manageable social problems a colossal task. Think what it means to study, let us say, politics, not for political theory but for political practice. Or what it means to portray the political party not for what it is or ought to be, but for its function in the multiple lives which it affects. A Lincoln Steffens might do it after a life of muckraking, an Al Smith might do it were he more articulate. But how little even their wide experience can help us along the road to formulating generalities capable of explaining the real behaviour of individuals in the realm we label politics! Difficult as such a task is, it pales into a sinecure before the further task of interpreting, say, a Tammany Hall, not as a blot upon the fair face of American civic life, but in its relation to laws governing the behaviour of mankind.

I do not for a moment suggest that the social anthropologist at work among primitives has found the open sesame to such immensities as these. But I do hope to show that he has a first clue. I hope I can demonstrate to you that the smaller scale in which he could work upon comparable problems in

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minute social systems affords a technique which has a bearing on such queries.

For when in the Trobriands of Melanesia a dispute among brothers can arise out of and set in motion the whole traditional, habitual apparatus of tribal life—when the means of settlement adopted reveal the patterns of social action which make up the reciprocities binding tribesman to tribesman and kinsman to kinsman—when magic and spirit-lore can be seen at work influencing the conduct of this and that member of the community in such a way as to canalize the retribution the offender comes to make—when in fact, all of the patterns of tribal life are swung into action round a nuclear disturbance in conventional behaviour, as in the case of the suicide who assuaged his crime of clan-incest, then the dynamic functions of a whole social system are capable of description. The smallness of the scale, and the complete detachment of the ethnologist, affords a chance for an objective analysis of social forces as controllable and as demonstrable as a study of chemical interaction.

This experience of dynamic social wholes growing out of individual behaviour steels the anthropologist to make the step into modern life. Those who have read the Lynds on 'Middletown' can remember the pioneer attempt. It was a formal field research, largely descriptive. With the Lynds, not even Main Street is safe from the ethnologist's prying eye. Since then, other studies more and

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000 more analytical in character have begun and are progressing. If Main Street has become fair game for the anthropologist, Ireland has little to fear.

I am afraid I have been very long in getting back to Ireland and the 'collector of old customs'. I hope you have borne with me. You can see now how inadequate the countryside's translation was. Old custom and belief *are* our concern, but our *emphasis* is a new one. What do the old customs alive today mean for the countryman? What is the way of life of which they are still a part after centuries of existence? It is all very well to speculate about their origin in the dim mist of time; we shall do some of that. But we shall not rely on that speculation entirely. If we do so, we forgo the opportunity the present gives us.

The present can tell one little enough of what a given custom or belief meant at its inception. But it *can* teach one what it means now, in the lives of the persons who follow the custom or hold the belief.

But care must be taken not to make this new inquiry a matter of speculation. Interpretation should be put to the test of experience. Anthropology, in one of its many branches, has grown from a history largely conjectural to a social dynamics. It has become a behavioural, or better, an operational science, to use the term Bridgman has introduced into the natural sciences. If the anthro-

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pologist avoids all explanations except those which 000
arise out of his observations of what men do, and if he accepts them only when he can test them again against observed behaviour, he will be, if only imperfectly, in the main line of scientific development.

Before one makes a frontal attack, it is good tactics to survey one's ground. One likes to know what interest it holds in store.

Ireland, particularly Celtic southern Ireland, has always had a fascination for most of us. The cities, particularly Dublin, the last stronghold of the art of conversation, are as charming as the countryside. But it is the country districts which occupy us here.

Most of us probably know at least four countrysides in Ireland. Like Caesar we divide our Gaul. But the divisions we make are not geographical. Our four Irelands are lands of the spirit.

Perhaps our first Ireland is the mystic land of 538
the past. This is the land of the 'Celtic twilight', 181
the country of Synge and Yeats and Stephens. It is the seat of an age-old tradition, of the remains of a once brilliant Celtic civilization. Literature has taught us to look for this land in the barren moors and rugged mountains of the west, among the tiny white cabins of Connemara and along the misty headlands of Kerry and West Cork. It is the Ireland

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181 of Aran and the Blaskets. There a remnant of the
538 sagas and hero-tales can still be heard, a wandering poet sang but yesterday in the lilt of Blind Raferty. There old men and old women sitting by turf fires still spin tales of banshees and the good people; and just the other day in Daniel Corkery's hidden Munster the hedge school-master and the wandering scholar had Ovid and Horace at his tongue's tip. And there too the riders to the sea go down to their deaths amid the keening women, whose language rings to us of simple, old-world poetry long ago passed from our own tongues.

A second Ireland is a gay, full-blooded picture, though some among the nationalists dislike it. It is the Ireland of the merry and happy-go-lucky present. Handled badly, it becomes the land of the 'stage-Irishman', that buffoonish figure which the nation's pride so justly resents. But handled well, by a Lady Gregory, a George Birmingham, and on the stage by the Abbey Players, it is a world of its own. In it, innocent boasting, the excitement of a race-meeting, the hurly-burly of a fair, the flashing wit of a court-room, and the staccato thunder of a political campaign, reveal a talkative, mercurial, witty people, amusing and intelligent, romantic and gallant.

181 The third Ireland most of us know is a more serious scene. One might even call it a grimmer land. It is a sober, hard-working land of minute towns and small farms upon a soil not always

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grateful. It is a land of hard realities. This Ireland /81 is subject to hot flashes of anger and dispute which throw into relief deep-lying hatreds and fierce loyalties. We all know something of the Land War and Sinn Fein and the bitter internecine strife of the Trouble. If we know anything of Ireland's history we see these rough upheavals of a tranquil scene as great punctuation marks upon a red page of struggle lasting seven hundred years. This is the Ireland of bitter economic fate and political unrest. Much of this can be laid at England's door, but not all. The Ireland of the Irish is no more free of internal strife than any other land.

Most of us recognize a fourth Ireland as well, /81 especially those who are Catholics. It is the Ireland 77| of the Faith, the Island of Saints and Scholars. It 78| is the land of the devout, where word and deed breathe a religious fervour which most of us have forgotten. This is the land of holy wells and pilgrimages and roadside shrines. Well-filled churches rise above every hamlet now and the black-frocked priest is a familiar friendly figure. To many of us, perhaps a paradox lies here. Fierce love of political liberty goes hand in hand with a deep devotion to the most authoritarian of Christian creeds.

Nor is this the only paradox in a land of sur- /81 prises where even the sun and sky are inconsistent. The beauty of the Irish landscape lies in the never-ending change of colour. A momentary break of sun

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181 transforms the sky from dull yellow to bright, rain-washed blue. It lights a hillside to brilliant green, or mottles it in brown and green and mauve. A moment later it disappears, dashing the sky back again to mournful purples and misty greys. So it is with the Irish character. What is too harshly called the 'superstition' of Irish folklore coexists with Catholic piety; a puritanical morality goes hand in hand with the hilarity of a race-meeting. The loyalty too harshly named 'clannishness' runs side by side with the personal acquisitiveness of a peasant proprietorship. Small wonder then the Irish feel no foreigner will ever fully understand.

000 This is the terrain in which I hope to campaign. If we are to make an attempt at a whole view, we must see the country whole. I must try to show you all four Irelands.

For the inhabitants of this fourfold land are 'Irishmen All', as George Birmingham once named a book. But unlike his characters they are all the same people. The inhabitants of the countryside dwell in all four of our lands of the spirit. The division we make is only illusive. It marks our interests, not the realities of the Irishman's life.

That life, so various, so capable of being looked at from many angles, affords many fascinating questions to us in pursuance of our study. What are its laws? How does it relate to old custom and belief?

This people preserves an unbroken ancient tradi-

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tion that goes back, perhaps long into pre-Christian 000
times. Their variant of Celtic culture and language is lost in prehistory. Yet isolation here in the 'outpost of western Europe' has preserved it. Today the historian is in a better position to understand the history of all Europe because the Celtic past has survived latest here, outliving Roman and Christian inundation only here.

For that reason, and because it is still a comparatively unknown province archaeologically, Ireland has become a favourite ground for many others of the students of man who stand under the umbrella of anthropology. The folklorist has discovered Ireland, and today the Free State Government subsidizes the preservation of folklore as a monument to national greatness. The ethnographer finds primitive tools and house-forms, even a wooden plough of Bronze-age days, still in use in remote Waterford or Connemara mountains. The archaeologist 'roots up the raths and the forts', as the country-people say, and lays bare the prehistoric life.

Harvard has played and is still playing a great 114
part in the discovery of Ireland's past. To date four expeditions have gone out. Under the ultimate direction of Dr. Hooton of Harvard they have excavated widely in various parts of the country. The findings of Dr. Hugh Hencken and Mr. Hallam Movius have opened up a new chapter in our knowledge of European prehistory and in the

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114 history of Celtic culture. It is too early to give a full summary of these discoveries, and, of course, the privilege should be reserved for the discoverers. But we can say that much of the darkness of Bronze- and early Iron-age Ireland is lifting. The matter is of interest to us here because it pushes backward the continuities whose final stages will come up in our discussion of the present rural culture.

A people whose life, at least in some of its aspects, has so ancient and so unbroken an historical continuity could not fail to excite the interest of still another kind of anthropologist. In one aspect, the study of man is a human zoology. Man, like all animals, has his species, his subspecies, his races, and his hereditary strains. These differ in physical traits, in morphological characters, and, perhaps, in inherent propensities and abilities. The reduction of man's physical and hereditary variations to uniform laws is a legitimate pursuit in science and one of great interest and importance to us all. Harvard has taken a lead in this field, physical anthropology, in Ireland in recent years. Again under Dr. Hooton's direction, Mr. Wesly Dupertuis has undertaken the physical measurement of large samples of the Irish people throughout the country. The result will be a knowledge of Irish physical type comparable, or even superior, to that we possess of other European peoples. Some day we may know more certainly the biologically determined inherencies of man. Then per-

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haps our knowledge of the strains which make up the peoples of the world, Ireland included, may stand us in good stead. 114

Already such work as this will show us the relation of the Irish to other European strains and help us to trace out historical currents in the country. Think of the field such work opens! Where is the Gael pure today? Who is the Firbolg, the aboriginal whom the Milesians found in possession? Who and where are the invading Gall? Briton, Norman, Dane, Fleming, Saxon, Englishman and Scotsman brought their bloods to this land and mingled them with the Gael. What traces have they all left and what bloods are at work today?

All these queries, nevertheless, do not primarily concern us in this discussion. The antiquity of some of the data stimulates another inquiry. But we cannot escape the sway of these other considerations entirely. There is no reason why we should. Even if they can offer us no direct aid, they can, nevertheless, afford us a stimulation.

Some such thoughts as these must have been in the social anthropologist's mind when he first made his way into a rural community. I cannot speak for my colleagues, Mr. Warner of Chicago University and Mr. Kimball of Harvard, who helped to gather the field material on Ireland. But I *can* speak for myself.

I felt Ireland's fascination as I toiled along behind my bicycle up the mountain road that runs 114 491 133

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114 from the narrow valley lands at Doolin in the ex-
491 treme north-west of County Clare. I was on my
133 way to my first stay in an Irish west-country farm community. My road, no wider than a bridle-path, led up a sharp escarpment out of the tiny valley which empties its stony river into the Atlantic, not three miles away from the southernmost island of Aran. Once the top of the rim is reached
114 the mountainside flattens out into a green and
133 gently sloping table-land. Standing there one can see the whaleback rocks that are the Aran Islands and the masses of Mount Elva on the southern shore of Galway Bay. Far beyond in Connemara, one can catch the glint of the Twelve Pins, if the day is 'hard' and sunny. Off to the left, the table-land breaks off abruptly three hundred feet downward into the Atlantic, for the famed Cliffs of Moher are here, reminders of an Irish mountain that the sea has shorn off clean.

The community toward which I was making my
361 way lies along the table-land between mountain-
191 top of bracken and black bog and the cliffs. It keeps up the old tradition. It calls itself Luogh, and its language, at least that of the old people, is Irish, but the young people are forgetting the old tongue. English is the more common speech today, even here. Yet Mr. Delargy, the editor of the *Irish*
114 *Folklore Journal*, has collected a large number of
538 stories, songs and traditional tales and sayings here, some of them going back to the saga cycles.

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Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawling village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train runs between the two. 361 621 494

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this remoteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing machine, out of an English steel works, and some of the houses own a mechanical cream separator, even though next door a wooden hand churn is still in use which looks no different from those found deep in the bogs. 185 621 234

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's attention turns to the life into which these few strays of modernity find their way. 185 621

For Luogh is like many another community of small farms over Clare and southern and western Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are even more remote. Many are better off; some few are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language better; others have abandoned it altogether for the brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded in their common folk life. 621 184 191

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181 I did not know this as I came to Luogh. But I was to learn it soon in Luogh and in other communities in County Clare. Later I was to find it so even more widely; in newspapers, in novels, in court records, in statistical reports, in political bombasts. It was a way of life with its own laws which included Luogh and the Blaskets and even the fertile small farms of rich Tipperary.

When I first came to Luogh I knew only that in 114 this remote little community of small farmers I should find something of the old tradition still alive. My learning was a piecemeal process — a sketching out of wider and wider ramifications of the observations which came my way.

It is this process to which I wish to devote the remainder of this lecture. It is a process in which you can follow me. Perhaps better than anything else it will prepare us for an anthropological study of Irish rural life.

Let me illustrate this process with two examples. I shall call them the 'west room' and the 'old man's curse'. Both of them are related to old custom and both will serve to show the process by which one lays bare the rural life of which old custom is a part.

The house to which my road into Luogh finally 592 led was a typical small farmer's cottage. It was one 361 of twenty-six in Luogh. It was the seat of a small farm of sixteen acres (with eight more in the valley), 'the place of four cows and a horse', as the country-

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people describe it. Much of it was rough, wet 592
mountain land, but the phrase implies that it was 361
good enough at least to provide grass for animals. All farms are described in this way, for by the cows and the small 'gardens' of potatoes, cabbage, oats and turnips, the small farmers live. We shall have more to say of agriculture in another context; I think the explanation is sufficient here.

My host's house in Luogh, as I have said, was 342
like the others. It was a bit 'stronger', that is, neater, better built and kept, than many of the others, but it was like the others in all essentials. It was a white-washed stone cottage, rectangular, roofed with slate (though it was only a few years ago that they gave up thatch). Its long sides faced roughly north and south, each with a door opening directly out into the yards. In the gable of the roof was a loft for sleeping; otherwise it was confined to a single story. The central room, the largest by far, was the kitchen. There the family passed their lives and prepared and ate the food cooked on the hearth. The hearth was an open turf fire, built in a chimney large enough to have two hobs or seats deep within on either side. It had, too, an iron hook which swung the cooking-pots out into the room from off the fire.

Behind this hearth was another room. It was 342
called, for its position in the house, the 'west room'. 353
This is the 'west room' which is to provide my first example.

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342 In most countrymen's houses, especially in
353 poorer regions, the 'west room', that behind the hearth, is the only room except for the kitchen and the loft. In some houses, however, there is another room too. This is usually a bedroom, at the opposite end of the kitchen. This was the case at my host's.

353 But in either case it soon becomes apparent that there is something special about the west room. At Luogh this struck one's eye immediately. At my host's the room was a sort of parlour into which none but distinguished guests were admitted. In it were kept pictures of the dead and emigrated members of the family, all 'fine' pieces of furniture, symbolic brass objects brought in by the bride at marriage; the rubrics used when mass was celebrated in the house, in fact all religious objects, crucifixes, and so forth, except the 'blessed lamp' and a 'holy picture' in the kitchen. Nor were my hosts alone in keeping objects of sentimental and religious value in this special room. Other houses did likewise. The general feeling was that such objects 'belonged' there.

353 But these facts had little significance until others
776 began to appear. Here we enter the realm which we ordinarily call 'old custom'. The 'west room' had still another association, of a supernatural cast. This appeared only gradually. The 'west room' was of central importance in fairy lore.

In this all Luogh concurred, though few could

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be found to give it expression. The cult of the 353
fairies, these days, is branded as 'superstition'. It 776
is under fire from townsman, school-teacher, and priest. But even those who could express no views could be seen to act as if they too were believers.

Where fairy paths were remembered to pass the house, they went by the west room. Where food and water was left out at night, it was left there. No outhouse, shed, or other building could be built on this side of the house. That would bring bad [777]
luck. Very few could or would tell why; they left it to a common inference. The building would be 'in the way'. Nevertheless, reluctant as they might be to express belief, my hosts none the less practised it. No house of Luogh's twenty-six had any shed or [342]
outhouse at its western end.

Here were two very definite associations with the west room. What did they mean? The attitudes they represented were respect, and perhaps a little fear; but it was respect that was dominant. What was this respect and why should it show itself in fairy-lore and in household furnishing?

Faced with such a problem the anthropologist's 353
usual recourse is to history. Traditionally the west 773
is the land of the dead. In the ancient sun-cult, in 776
which early man has likened his own progress to that of the sun's daily and yearly course, the west is the sacred abode of the dead. Even today, we speak of dying, half jocularly, as 'going west'. In ancient Celtic mythology, the heaven at life's end,

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353 *Tír na nÓg*, and Avalon, the island of apple trees
773 which the Greeks knew as the Garden of the
776 Hesperides, and which in a Christian rendering the blessed Saint Brendan may have reached, lies to the west in the setting sun. It is very likely that in this folk practice there survives nearly all that remains of an elaborate early mythology.

Alas for our questioning, no one remembers Avalon in Luogh, *Tír na nÓg* is a dying legend. If you ask the old men about the west, tales of sunken cities and strange sea-creatures greet your ears; ask about the fairies and fairy paths and you get, first, indignant denials of such degrading belief, and then anecdotes, tales, incidents, which illustrate their character and their power for good and evil. Ask about the furniture of this room, and you learn only that it is the right and fitting thing that the objects fill this room and no other. No one can trace the continuity; tradition is felt in the mass rather than in the particular.

We are left then with what we can hear and observe about the present. To question upon anything else is to get nowhere; it merely starts a chain of obscuring generalities more inspired by the question than by what Luogh feels and thinks and does.

But the case is not hopeless. If one casts one's
353 reliance upon observations and questions in the
888 present, new facts appear. The west room figures in marriage. In the contracts drawn up it is often

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mentioned by name. It is the room reserved for 353
themselves by the old people, the father and mother 888
of the groom; they reserve it for their own use after they turn over the farm to their sons at marriage.

Ask about this and more information comes to you. It is into this room that the old couple move. The room is theirs. Younger members of the household dare not enter it except with permission. Indeed, it is the old couple who throw their aura around the room; the respect owed them is very like that felt toward the room they occupy. Here one enters a new field of behaviour and attitude in human relations. The honour and command of the old couple do not leave them altogether when they retire from active ownership of the farm. They enter a new status of which the associations round the west room are one reflexion.

So it goes, the new questions and new observations lead not to a prehistory or a chain of continuities, but to an ever-widening number of living associations which colour the relations of men and women, old and young. They lead to a realization of the laws and custom by which the small farmers find their lives ordered. In this instance, the west room of Luogh is a dim survival, perhaps, of Avalon and *Tír na nÓg*. But more certainly it is a focal point in a system of values some little of which we have begun to glimpse. Old custom in the west room thus gives

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121 us the first example of our method. An inquiry into the present of rural life leads us into the ways of human behaviour rather than into those of cultural descent.

754 I called my second example 'the old man's curse'. It is perhaps not so pleasant an example and it springs out of infinitely rarer occasions. Yet it will serve as well as did the west room to show us where our queries must lie. The example of the old man's curse concerns a lost eye. Many of the country-people believed that the curse was directly responsible for the loss of a young man's eye. The young man in question lived in a district not far from Luogh; and the old man who cursed him was a neighbour. This is the baldest possible statement of the occurrence, and it would suffice if we were interested merely in collecting instances of magical injury.

For the baneful effects of curses, of black magic, of the 'evil eye', are a commonplace of anthropological literature. They are common enough too in Irish folklore. Men suffer injury in some way from supernatural causes. The possessor of the evil eye can blight, maim, and kill; the priest's curse, though in this case uttered only for cause, can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliever's head upon his shoulder; strike blindness; and the shrill imprecations of old men and women, or the *rann* of a satiric poet, can bring equal harm. Supernatural injuries of this sort are as

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old as the Celtic sagas. The belief is spread, of 754
course, far beyond Ireland. The Neapolitan fisherman paints his boat against the evil eye, the Balkan woman embroiders her petticoat to ward off evil and curses. The West African sorcerer knows the technique to perfection; our own Pennsylvania Dutch 'hexes' are modern practitioners. For the belief belongs to the infinite realm of magic.

If one were satisfied with the bald collector's statement, one would be content to leave the young man in such company. But by inquiring more deeply into the incident, one can look into the situation in which he suffered. If the belief can be seen at work in a situation which can be readily assessed, then it will serve better as a guide toward understanding the life in which it can still operate.

The situation has many elements. In the first place, the details of the young man's trouble are simple enough. In working a scythe round the bush-choked wall of a field, he fell in such a way as to drive a sliver of bush into his eye. We should call it, I suppose, a simple accident and pity him his bad luck.

But the small farmers among whom he lived 754
wove another world of explanation round that eye. 578
Gradually the tale unfolds. Perhaps the loss of 888
the eye is a punishment. For the young man was not entirely blameless. An unvoiced suspicion had pointed his way.

For there had been a few weeks before what used

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to be called, in more heated days, 'an agrarian outrage'. Two old men, bachelors living alone, had been fired upon in the night. Some one had pumped gunshot through the window of their poor cabin, high up the mountainside. As was probably intended, the shots buried themselves harmlessly in the cabin floor. But they awakened the old men, and frightened them badly.

The occurrence shocked the community. The two old men were harmless creatures; they were 'saints' in the country phrase. Who would want to injure them or drive them out?

The country-people had their suspicions; but the police could get nothing from them. There was nothing for the inspector to do but report another 'agrarian intimidation'. Even if he too knew, there was nothing to do; he could prove nothing without witnesses.

The country-people kept silence for good reason, from their point of view. If their suspicions were correct, the matter was a private affair, a family squabble. It was no business of theirs.

For the old men, by the standards of rural kinship, were not entirely blameless either. They held a farm they did not work. They took none of their kinsmen in. They should long ago have given up their land. One of them should have brought a girl in, married her and raised a family. They should have passed the land on to their sons, or failing sons, they should have brought in a nephew

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or other boy of their kindred. Then they could have 754
turned the farm over to the boy, when they felt 578
themselves too old, and let him marry, in order that 888
their kindred's name continue and grow in land.

But the old men had never had a 'taste for marrying'. They were victims themselves of a too-intense loyalty. I say victims, because their loyalty had been narrowest of all. Their old mother had lived too long in her turn. She had never decided which one should get the land and bring in a girl. Perhaps their father might have decided, had he lived, but their mother survived him by many years. Neither of them wished to leave her side and neither would leave to make room for the other. When at last the mother died, the two bachelor sons were already old; they were long past marrying and set in celibate ways. They lingered on in an ever narrower round.

In the community they were 'saints', as I have 626
said; they were 'no trouble to man or beast'. 578
Yet, from another point of view, they were not 888
doing the 'natural' thing; they made no provisions 754
for their kinsmen; they did not pass on the land to those to whom by country right it should go. They refused to fill their proper roles in life. No wonder, then, that their cabin was a byword for neglect and disrepair. The countrymen would tell you, in a moralizing vein, it had become so 'for lack of a woman's hand'.

But to censure them for their misspent lives was

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626 no affair of the community's. The kindred of the
578 old men were the aggrieved parties. Their name
888 suffered and their sons were landless and unborn;
754 land belonging to them lay idle. So, whoever did the shooting—perhaps he had a reason for it. Suspicion might point here and there, but whatever measures the kinsmen might take to remedy their grievance concerned the kinsmen alone. Let those to whom the old men's duty lay see that they followed it. It was best to say nothing beyond one's immediate circle.

But the community could not entirely condone the shooting either. It was a bad thing, no good could come of it. To disturb the peace in such a way shook the security of them all; it gave the district 'a bad name'.

So, when a new event took place, the community found outlet for its censure. When the young man lost his eye, the community was ready for this reaffirmation of its threatened values. For the young man was one of the aggrieved kindred; he was a landless cousin's son; to him and his brothers the old men's farm should have gone. In the loss of his eye, the community felt he paid his penalty. No one knew just how it was inflicted; one does not attempt to unveil such mysteries. Their force is too great, too little controllable. Some felt the 'old man's curse' had done it, some felt that the priest might have done it, for the old men had appealed to him. Some blamed a vague mysterious power in the bush

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the young man cut. Whatever it was, the fact was 626
plain. Only a week or so after the shooting, the 578
young man lost his eye. His crime found a sure 888
punishment in a realm in which all could agree 754
without running risk of retaliation at the hands of the disputing parties.

I have couched this incident in vague, unprecise language for a reason. In the realm of folk-belief outlines are not clear and concepts are not precise. No one could formulate logically this retribution which put out the young man's eye. Nevertheless all felt it. And a moralist among them could sum up: "It is right to respect the old people".

The second example, then, points in the same direction as the first. Both 'west room' and the 'old man's curse' reflect age-old tradition. But both reveal a system of values which rules life in the present. That system of values dictates attitudes and reflects itself in behaviour. For example, neither the young man who may or may not have done the shooting, nor the old men who were shot at, were free agents. They both followed interests growing out of the values of rural life. Sometimes, as in this case, these interests conflict. If open fighting is not to tear life asunder, ways must be found to resolve the conflict, to find a formula of agreement, as the diplomats say.

I have tried in the last of my two examples to 000
show you something of the movements of this sort and something of the agreement which can be

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reached. The two examples have pointed along the same road; they point to a life with its own laws and its own controls. If we are to see in 'old customs' more than mere *curiosa*, we must reach this life and reduce it to understanding.

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II

Countrymen at Work

To bring you closer to the way of life we glimpsed 000
through the window of old custom, I must try to clothe it in flesh and blood. It will not do to make the mistake of etherealizing it. Men everywhere face the same first necessities; they must live; they must feed, clothe and shelter themselves.

My subject, then, is the countryman at work. How does he make his livelihood in the Irish countryside? What is the work he does, and what are his incentives and rewards? Economic interpretations of history, sociology, anthropology are the fashion. What understanding can an economic inquiry yield us?

The first task in such an inquiry is to clear away 369
the ground one is to examine. To look at the work 241
of the countryman of rural Ireland demands dipping into the economics of the whole Free State. The countryman occupies an important place which must be recognized. It should not be discouraging that the task involves recourse to cold statistics. After all, the greatest array of numbers is a mere count of some sort of human activity; one can remember the living beings behind them.

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369 In the search for the countryman, one can break
241 through census records and production figures to find him pursuing his daily and annual round.

The task is simplified immensely by the fact that in 1926 the Free State Government undertook a complete census of the country. In the tables prepared there, the countrymen distinguish themselves
[162] in a variety of ways. They are the most numerous group in the country. Out of nearly three million inhabitants, one million eight hundred thousand, or 63 per cent, live in rural areas, outside cities and towns. Not all these country-dwellers are farmers,
241 of course, but the vast majority are. Fifty-one per cent of all occupied persons, male and female, in southern Ireland work at agriculture.

But these agriculturalists are not all alike, of course. Distinctions appear among them which are important to an understanding of the countryman. For example, the farms on which they work differ widely in size. Relative proportions of small and large farms vary with different parts of the country, but nevertheless small farms predominate in all Ireland. A farm over 200 acres is a rarity, comparatively speaking; most of them do not reach 100 acres. Thirty or fifty acres is the average size.

When one looks at the numbers of people these farms support, however, the small holdings come forward much more strongly. There are many more persons supported upon farms under thirty acres

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than there are on farms over fifty. In fact, one could almost say 'the smaller the farm the greater number of persons it supports'. The plurality of Irish farmers support themselves upon farms averaging from fifteen to thirty acres in area. Almost eight of every ten persons working in agriculture live by small-farm production.

By our standards, a farm under thirty acres or even under fifty acres is very small. So it is regarded in Ireland. When I call the Irish countryman a small farmer, I am following standards the Irish use themselves. Yet, to deal with the life of the small farmers is to deal with that of the single largest group on the land.

Furthermore, that group is concentrated in the west and south of Ireland. Historical and economic currents have massed the population in the more rugged 'mountainy' regions of south and west. A county of the rich central plain, such as Meath, where large farms are most numerous, has a density of about fifty persons per square mile. But a poorer, mountainous county such as Mayo, where small farms are very numerous indeed, supports seventy-five persons per square mile or an almost 50 per cent greater density.

But do those who support themselves by small farms form a true category? Are they a group unto themselves or are they a numeration meaningless for the student of human behaviour? Statistics have a way of revealing real categories in life, but they

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241 also send one upon many false scents. One must use them with proper care. In such a case as this, care consists in discovering correlations and fitting them into wholes. For example, one learns little or nothing of various kinds of human beings if one counts only single characteristics. On the other hand, if one counts a wide variety of numerable features and finds one human group distinguishing itself again and again within this wide variety, one is justified in thinking one is dealing with a class of which the individuals are instances.

So it is with the economic data in the Irish records. The small farmers do appear as a true category. They reveal themselves in the cold figures as a class with habits of life of its own, different in kind and in quantitative expression from all others.

Rather than delay over the reasoning which leads to this conclusion, I should prefer to recite the distinguishing marks in the economic sphere.

231 First, it is clear that the small farmers practise
241 a type of agriculture all their own. Their products
434 differ widely from those of the large farmers, some-
437 times in kind, sometimes in proportion. The large farmer is a cattleman, a stockman. The small farmer is typically what we have come to call in this country 'a subsistence farmer'. Both depend primarily upon livestock, for Ireland is a country of grass and pasturage, depending less upon tillage than any other European land. But their economies

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are quite distinct. The small farmer cultivates a 231
'garden' of oats, rye, potatoes, cabbage and tur- 241
nips, and devotes his pasture and the hay of his 434
fields to milch cattle. He sells his cows' increase 437
each year. He keeps large numbers of hens and a few pigs. But the milch cow is the centre round which this economy revolves. Nearly all he raises he consumes at home; his family and his farm animals take the greater part of his produce. It is only his surplus and his annual crop of calves which break out of the circle of subsistence and in so doing bring him the only monetary income he receives.

In all this he differs considerably from the big farmer, particularly the so-called 'rancher' of Irish agriculture. The big farmer is primarily a producer of beef. He concentrates upon the production of fat cattle; he depends upon a monetary market in which to dispose of his fattened stock. Upon this market he relies for the supplies which feed himself and his labourers. If he is wealthier and much more of a man of business, he is also nearly entirely dependent upon the whims of price and demand.

Naturally, then, the small farmer and big farmer play quite distinct roles in the economics of exchange, distribution and commerce. The small farmer disposes of his cattle, usually calves of his own breeding, quite differently. He sells this surplus to the dealer, the middleman, the big farmer.

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231 As calves grow up they move from the small farm
241 to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them
434 until they are ready for the English table. Con-
437 sequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

With all this, it is natural that the small farmers
262 should be different consumers from the rest.
184 They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

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present the one staple which he must buy off the 262
farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and 184
the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for 184
mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are 241
cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs 412
again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their 184
lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer- 241
owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the 464
owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of 241
peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in 231
a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is 434
that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

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231 which beasts feed him in their turn. He need go
241 to town only for clothing and sundries, for flour
434 and tea, and to sell at the fairs the calves and yearlings which bring in his principal monetary income and provide thus for whatever he cannot produce at home. These cattle go to big farmers, ranchers and shippers; and with the sale his participation in trade and commerce, in 'business', is finished except for his account with the shopkeeper (and in late years, the creamery). As you can well imagine, it is a livelihood little connected with the outside world, and now that agrarian reform has made him full owner of his holding, it is little open to disturbance from the outside.

This is the external view of the small farm. It is the view that usually satisfies the economist. But if one probes deeper and looks at the small farmer's livelihood from within, a fuller picture appears.

241 That the small farmer is a family man even at
593 work is important for the study of human be-
[461] haviour. Eight out of ten people working in agriculture in Ireland work not for wages and salaries but by virtue of their family relationship. The work a man does and the directions he gives and receives take form within a social group. That fact yields an opportunity for the anthropologist. Here, in a modern country, is an economy in which there are other controls on labour than those we know—money, contracts, individual profit. To under-

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stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus 241 593
of the countryman's way of life.

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the 361
small farmer's family lives upon the holding it 592
works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them.

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, 231
it is natural that this unit should be known and 311
judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in 592
Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun-

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311 tain', and wherever possible, it includes a 'bit of
231 bog' for 'turf' for the year's fuel. When a small
592 farmer tells you he 'has the place of four cows' he sums up this sort of farm, judging it for its ability to support himself and his family in the country manner and to give pasture to four milch cows. In the phrase he epitomizes rural economy.

592 Ordinarily the house opens directly into the
361 'haggard', as the farmyard is called. There in the haggard are the cabins in which cattle are housed and the various sheds and stalls, often built into the masonry of the house itself. In them, farm machines, tools and carts are kept and crops and seed are stored. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are housed there, and in one of the sheds pig or pigs find their quarters. The winter's supply of fodder stands there in the form of the great hayrick. The straw-covered pit of turnips and mangels, not far away, will serve for men and cattle; and the turf-rick is near at hand. As for the house itself we have already looked inside, in our search for the 'west room'.

592 The family with which this unit is associated centres its activity round house and haggard. Even for the men, whose work lies primarily in field, garden and meadow, work centres round the house for a good part of the year. If I give you a sketch of this activity as my co-workers and I saw it day after day in several rural communities in Clare, I hope to throw its general features into relief.

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Following the countryman at his work, we can 592
learn what his role is, what determines it, and what keeps him to it; we can see its controls and the organization of labour it entails.

The first duty of the farm family's day falls to 462
'the woman of the house'. Before the others are up, 512
she rakes together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire, puts down new sods, and rekindles the blaze. Then she hangs the kettle on the hook over the hearth, making ready for the first tea of the day. All day long the kettle will hang there, for [272]
at any moment she must be ready to serve a cup of tea to husband, children and visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast: bread, eggs and milk.

By the time breakfast is over, the household is ready for its workaday life. The men are up and dressed for the day's tasks, and the farm wife and [264]
mother who serves them and stands by unwilling to sit down till they have had their fill, has begun her daily round. She takes her place later with her daughters and young children who help her throughout the day.

But familiar housework is not the whole of the woman's duty. Her work takes her beyond the house door. After breakfast she takes the milk buckets and goes to milk the cows in the sheds. This is merely one of many trips she makes out into the haggard, for fuel, for water, and to feed the animals and poultry. Milking over, she must not rest, for the whole process of converting milk

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462 to butter is her charge. She is an expert at the
512 churn.

Her human charges fed, she must feed the animals in their turn. The full-grown cattle and the horse are not her charge, but she must tend calves and pigs and fowl. Milk and potatoes must be prepared for them all.

Before noon, she hangs a second kettle from the hook. This time she fills it with potatoes for the
[262] family. In season, she will add white cabbage, and a portion or two of bacon or salt pork. By the time this is ready the men will be in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

For the men have not been idle. The farmer-father and husband wakes his sons, inspects the cattle and horse, if there is one, and gives them hay and water. If the day is fine, he sallies forth to the fields; if not, and the weather confines him to house and haggard, he has still plenty to do, in building walls, repairing and making machine parts, harness and tools.

Dinner unites the family for the first time since breakfast. Only children of school age are absent and their share of the meal is saved till later. As before, the women and children do not eat till the men have finished. But as the women serve, they
[521] all talk about the experiences of the day. It is the chief time of general family conversation. Only the children are silent, for in rural Ireland a well-
[858] behaved child is a silent one.

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After dinner, work begins anew. For the women 462
chores are much the same as in the morning. 512
Should routine duties come to a pause, there is still plenty to do. Washing, mending, knitting must be done; and their hands are never idle.

The great staple, bread, is baked daily, upon the 'griddle' at the hearth. The women may bake at any time, and even late in the evening when the family is gathered round the fire, their last task may be to bake for supper of bread and tea.

At four in the 'evening', as the countryman [805]
divides the day, children arrive from school, to be fed and questioned. For they are important pur- [203]
veyors of news. Later, the men are home from the fields, driving the cattle home, bedding them for the night. The woman must serve supper and milk the cows, bringing the milk in to separate. But though her day is over with the separating, she may not sit idly with the men for long beside the evening's fire. Children, knitting, and baking can still be attended to; tradition and proverb demand that 'one woman in the house be always working'.

Work round house and haggard is continuous; it varies little from season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfils its first needs in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habit. What variation there is, is itself confined to a narrow range. Certain chores are divided among days of the week, but they show nothing of the swift change

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462 of a Solomon Grundy. A farmer's wife of Clare
512 divided her week more rigidly in describing it than she did in practice. "On Monday", she said, "I do the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday I make butter, on Friday to market, on Saturday I get ready for Sunday, and on Sunday I go to mass and do as little as I can." Really it is only on Sunday that any change seriously alters the daily round; for the country-people are strict sabbatarians, at least regarding work.

241 Work on the 'land' beyond the haggard and the
462 house is less restricted. It has a greater range over
221 the farm and offers a wider variety of tasks round the year. There is a wider freedom of choice among tasks as well. Soil and climate are just as insistent as is the household, but they do not force such narrow regularities.

Yet each season brings a task the farmer must perform. Custom and rivalry in the community restrict him as well. He is in fact less free to choose the date of sowing than his wife the hour of dinner. Long-established tradition and ancestral experience imprint upon his mind the best dates for planting, for reaping, for harrowing, for breeding cattle, and so forth. The farmer is caught, willingly of course, in a mesh of rivalries, competitions, condemnations, which binds him the more strongly to the community's patterning of his yearly round.

The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its low in winter. On bitter wet days little can be done

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beyond the haggard wall, as we have noted. All the 241
many tasks of patching and repair are men's work, 221
they fall to the farmer-father and his sons. The 462
annual round is theirs, as the daily one belongs to the women.

For the countryman, the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to the Epiphany or 'Little Christmas', is the dead of winter. All farm work is at a standstill. The farmer is free to devote the season to holiday. Outside the weather is unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. For him the year has stopped and is waiting to renew its forces.

With the Epiphany, the succession of bitter wet days does not end, but holiday does. One's mind turns to the earnest work of the year to come. The farmer plans his spring planting. On drier days he can clean ditches and drains; he can lay in seed and repair machines. In the evenings, conversation on [521]
visits and at home revolves round the coming planting and calving, and traditional experience goes from mouth to mouth. In fact, it is the time for all new plans, for it is Shrovetide, the season of match-making and marriage.

St. Bridget's Day, February 1, marks the begin- [805]
ning of spring. For St. Bridget promised every [776]
second day thereafter would be 'hard'. The return of the 'hard' days of wind and clear weather herald the land's drying-off. Through February and March, gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted,

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221 fields made ready for the return of the cattle to
241 them. Each 'hard' day is more than welcome, for
462 then work in the fields can go on. By St. Patrick's day, they say in Clare, the potatoes should all be 'down'; after that there still remains much to do,
[776] though the worst is over. St. Patrick promised that after his day *every* day would 'come hard'.

Through the rest of the spring, work is at its most intense. Potatoes must be 'stirred' and 'landed'; other root crops 'put down'. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the season of greater milk yields and intensified butter-making. Before that in February and March
[443] the 'great spring fairs' take place, and the year's buying and selling of cattle must be done.

Then, gradually, with the return of warm weather and the drying-off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is often the first summer month. Soon the bogs are dry enough for cutting the year's supply of turf and for stacking it to dry under the summer warmth at the bog's edge.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the first fruits of the farmer's labour begin to appear. The first crop is cabbage, which was planted at odd times very early. It is practically the only green of the diet and old people remember June or July *an*
[261] *chabáiste*, 'the hungry month', when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semi-starvation upon cabbage. Today new varieties of potatoes mature as early as June. But

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the mature potatoes mark no harvest; they are turned out of the ridges with spade and plough as they are needed.

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241
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The first true harvest, and the most important one of the year, is the haymaking. Mowing begins in late July or early August. The haymaking is a race against time and rainy weather. Every effort must be bent to mow, rake, dry and stack the grasses, first in small haycocks, then in the great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers speak of it aptly when they call it 'saving the hay'.

Corn crops, oats and rye, come in next, and then through September, October and November the other roots, mangels and turnips, must be 'pulled'. Turf must be brought down to the haggard from the bog-ricks; and everything made ready for man and cattle for the coming winter. Autumn fairs bring a new high in buying and selling cattle; and with the last of them, winter sets in again and Advent has returned. In late November the farmer may turn over his gardens with the plough, to prepare them for the spring. As he follows the furrow, he can look back upon a year ended and forward upon a new one to begin.

Yet, unvarying as this yearly round is, and much as the recurrent patterns of work in garden, meadow and field follow the farmer year after year, from boyhood to death, this work—man's round—is freer and more various, even perhaps

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221 more arduous, than woman's. We must remember
241 this difference. It reflects an important dichotomy
462 between the sexes in the organization of labour.

We can see this dichotomy even when the group
462 works as a unit. At various crucial points in the annual round we have just followed, the whole family bends to the tasks at hand together. At potato planting, turf-cutting and haymaking, one can see them working in unison. Even the young children contribute their share to the common rhythm of the task. Yet the woman's role is separate. It is auxiliary; the simpler, less arduous tasks fall to her. The heavier work and command of the enterprise rests with the men. The plough, the harrow, the mower, the scythe, the spade and the turf-cutting *slán* are regarded as masculine implements. The attitudes of the countryside forbid a woman's using them. In the same way, they heap ridicule upon the thought of a man's interesting himself in the feminine sphere, in poultry, or in the churning.

Immemorial folklore bolsters this division. The
[777] woman is unlucky to masculine enterprises, for instance: it is dangerous to see a woman on the road to the fair. Likewise, man is dangerous to the woman's work. If he so much as takes his lighted pipe out of the house while she is churning, he may 'take the butter', through fairy magic.

In this dichotomy, of course, the male sphere bears higher value. But dichotomy implies no de-

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rogation. Man's role and woman's role are complementary; both are indispensable patterns of skill without which the farm family cannot live. And for that reason each is reciprocal to the other. Each feels a right to expect good work from the other, in his or her proper sphere. A good husband is a skilful farmer; a good wife is a skilful, willing household worker and auxiliary field hand. The family makes its way through a nice adjustment of these reciprocal roles. A small farmer of mid-Clare describes the situation in his own words:

"Here is something I want to tell you and you can put it in your head and take it back with you. The small farmer (in Ireland) has to have an intelligent wife or he won't last long. He may do for a few years, but after that he can't manage. You take children's clothes . . . if she knows how to buy material and make the clothes she saves a lot of money, and there are a thousand ways an intelligent woman makes money." Here his wife interrupted him and asked, "What about the tillage?" "That's all right," he went on. "But if it wasn't for the woman the farmer wouldn't last, and when he is getting a wife for one of his sons, he should look to a house where there has been an industrious and intelligent woman, because she has taught her daughters how to work and that is what is needed."

Here, then, we have one important control in work. The division of labour between the sexes arises within a larger field of interests and mutual

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462 obligations. It is a function of the relationship of husband and wife within the family.

But it is more, too. The attitudes of the countryside toward men's work and women's work show that their respective skills are regarded also as integral parts of the personalities of all men and women of the countryman's own kind. Here we can see how strongly social dispositions influence both mind and vocabulary. 'Natural' is a word very frequently on the countryman's lips. Thus, it is 'natural' for a woman to be a better milker, her smaller hands are proof. And it is laughably 'unnatural' that a man should bother about the sale of eggs. This division is embedded in tradition, too. Luogh still tells a humorous old tale of the spades, men's tools, that used to work of themselves in the olden days, till a woman forgot to say "God bless the work" to them. This division is bolstered in [789] magic, too, for the 'coulter of a plough', that masculine implement, can bring back the butter the fairies have taken.

The division of labour between the sexes is not the only important division within the countryman's pattern of farm work. Work is divided just as much upon the basis of age. Within the masculine sphere, male family members divide the practice of masculine techniques. Within the feminine sphere, there are similar divisions.

462 Let us look at the men at their work. The father 593 and husband is normally owner and director of

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the enterprise. The farm and its income are 462
vested in him. The farm bears his name in the 593
community and sons are spoken of as his 'boys'. In the draining of a field or the sale of cattle at a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye, and refer necessary decisions to him.

But this relationship is much more than economic. Perhaps the best way of describing it is to 462 593 trace its development. The child forms part of the 861 productive unit which is his own family. His growing up is also an apprenticeship. He learns the techniques which will make him a full-fledged member of his class; but there is no divorce between technical and non-technical training. All he learns fits him for one end—to become a farmer-father-husband in a family of his own.

The child sees his father as owner, director and principal worker of the farm. From his example, he learns which are men's tasks and he learns to value the skills they demand. In family deliberations he learns, too, the nice balance between the needs of household and land. It is true he learns these techniques in a narrow school; his father makes sure that he does not deviate from the right and traditional pattern, which folklore, adage and the censure of the village support. But he learns well, by example, competition and practice.

This process is the daily experience of many years; it is very gradual and is embedded in tradi-

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462 tional social life. The boy's first duties, as soon as
593 he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands
857 to neighbours and near-by friends. Until he is seven and passes through first communion, his place is in the house with the women, and he shares the same bed with his sisters. After that year, he leaves his mother's apron strings, and is slowly drawn into men's ways; he is thrown more and more with his elder brothers and sleeps with them henceforward. [291] In remote regions he takes off girl's clothing for [789] the first time; for girl's clothing has protected him from the fairies, they say. Both socially and economically he is becoming a male, but his male status is still very little. By the time he is ten or eleven, he is brought home from school when needed to take part in the important agricultural work of the year. But not until he passes confirmation and leaves school, usually at the same time, does he take on full men's work and assume men's clothing. Even then, as he reaches maturity, and takes on more and more the heavy tasks of the farm, he never escapes his father's direction. Only when his father makes over the farm to him, at death or at his own marriage, can he assume command, and with it full adult status.

Economic apprenticeship is thus a process of conditioning within the family. But there is no separation of economic and non-economic spheres. The father's direction of the enterprise coincides with his dominant, controlling role as parent and

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adult; the boy learns work as he learns manhood. 462

Also, the child grows up within the full complex 593
of life within the farm family. His first petty 861
errands are a mere incident in the relationship he 857
builds up with his parents and brothers. He learns not only his work but the whole code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his class, at their hands. This conduct is itself part of his relation to them. It ranges all the way from the errands he runs for his superiors in the family to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make sexual behaviour of any kind an offence, and of that within the family, incest.

Consequently, in so well-knit a group, the com- 462
mand which his father (and his mother) exercises 593
over the son in farm work is only one aspect of that control. His subordination continues as long as his father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the son and his brothers, they have no control of the direction of farm work nor the disposal of the farm's income. I say the son and his brothers, for all the sons are equal in this [554]
subordination; rural Ireland knows neither primo- [858]
geniture nor junior right. As long as they remain at home upon the farm they share this status equally.

The behaviour that reflects this state of affairs 593
can be readily observed. Sons go to market and fair from the time they are ten or twelve, but they buy or sell little if anything. Father and sons can be

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593 seen together at the local markets, but it is the father who does the bargaining. Their attitudes are in agreement with this arrangement. Once I asked a countryman about it at a potato market in Clare. He explained he could not leave his post for long because his full-grown son wasn't well enough known yet and was not yet a good hand at selling. If a son in Luogh and other Clare communities wants a half-crown to go to a hurley match, he must get it from his father. The son may earn money in employment off the farm, on the roads, [465] or as a labourer, but even then he is expected to contribute everything he receives to the household, as long as he remains on the farm. Very often, as the author saw in Luogh, in work on land division, the old fellows will walk to the pay-off to collect for themselves the wages their sons have earned.

You will say, perhaps, that all this has a very familiar ring; it is characteristic of closely knit farm families everywhere. So it is, but we are prone to disregard the familiar; we forget that the familiar stuff of life has often more important implications than the exotic. In the Irish countryside we must not undervalue the familiar. For the implications of these factors of family life are the signposts along the road.

593 885 In the countryside this subordination of the sons does not gradually come to an end. It is a constant. Even at forty-five and fifty, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm, the countryman re-

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mains a 'boy', both in farm work and in the rural 593
vocabulary. In 1933, a deputy to the Dáil raised 885
considerable laughter in the sophisticated Dublin papers when he inadvertently used the country idiom in expressing country realities. He pleaded for special treatment in land division for "boys of forty-five and older"—boys who have nothing in prospect but to wait for their father's farm. For 'boyhood' in this instance is a social status rather than a physiological state. A countryman complained to me in words which tell the whole story. "You can be a boy forever," he said, "as long as the old fellow is alive."

Had we more time we might devote a long in- 593
quiry to this relationship, to its affective content, to the mutual respect and pride of father and son. The Irish countryside values the stern father perhaps more highly than the indulgent one; the peasant father takes great pride in a sturdy successor and competent fellow-worker. Camaraderie and intimacy may not flourish between them; but deeper-felt affections underlie formal respect and gruff command. The Irish mother, compassionate, indulgent, is of course a counterpoise to this stern paternality. She has an emotional role in the balance of reciprocal sentiments as indispensable to the family's existence as the economic role she plays. Freud might illuminate us about the sort of conflicts such a human structure engenders, but he has little to say of the far more important, and

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593 more apparent, balance of emotional forces which it entails.

For this balance is the health of a complete social organism. The countryman who occupies boyhood status so long ordinarily does not revolt. His economic dependence galls him perhaps at times, but he cannot regard it as an injustice. That dependence is itself a product of healthy balance. He has expectancies and prospects; father and mother owe him obligations for which he can and does wait; emotional bonds are fiercely strong, for there is little opportunity to diffuse them. The solidarity of his own family is strengthened through competition with other socio-economic units. The endless petty disputes of the countryside over rights of way, boundaries, cattle trespasses, drainages, are much more than defences of property. "The two grandfathers" of the contestants "began it" is the usual defence in court. That solidarity is a mountain of strength against the outside world. "Defending
[195] Tim Flanagan's title" is the jocular way of describing armed resistance to eviction in the country districts in Clare. For Tim Flanagan worked a farm with ten strong adult sons; evicting ten armed stalwarts is no small matter for the best of police. Sons and brothers are a better title than the clearest deed.

The controls in farm work, then, are those of a social group—the family. The countryman at work is little concerned with the usual economic cate-

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gories. He is a family man. He may be the shrewd- 593
est of traders and the best of farmers, but what gives him his occupational status, determines his pattern of work, provides his incentive, is a set of dispositions arising in the balanced interests and reciprocal obligations of the social group to which he belongs.

We can test this conclusion. There are a large 589
number of small farms in the countryside worked 593
by what we can call incomplete families. They are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, widows. In such farms the person owning the farm exercises control. A widow, for instance, is helped out by a male relative—brother, nephew or son. The male takes over the tasks which would ordinarily fall to a farm father. Even if the widow retains control of ex- [462]
penditures and disposal of farm goods, the bargaining, buying and selling in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair rests with the man. For instance, in one example which came to my knowledge, a 'landless' young man pleaded successfully to the Land Commission for an addition to his aunt's holding. It was he who carried out the negotiations successfully. The feeling of the community was sufficiently strong to push the young man into a position beyond his status. Some male must represent the aunt and her holding in the outer world. With old bachelors, a nephew moves in and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control, even to regulating sums spent by the

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593 nephew for amusement. Where a widower had a
589 small son, the son was taken by a childless sister. She brought him up to inherit her husband's farm, and her brother might marry again. Two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their cousins.

To the country-people, such arrangements, successful enough economically sometimes, are makeshifts, subjects for commiseration. One hears often enough such phrases as these: "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her." "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow." Even government officials nowadays recognize the social value of the full family. A household of father, mother and sons gets preference in land division. The work to be done is the strengthening of the social group; personal enrichment and use of the soil are merely incidental.

Up to this point, I have described the country-
476 man as though he worked in isolation from his
593 fellows. In a measure this is true, for his first duties are to his immediate family. Still, there is a great deal of work which goes on between farms. There is a certain amount of co-operation of an informal kind. Work in the countryside is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids.

476 Co-operation of this sort takes many forms. Men lend tools, or work with tools of their own for 'friends' and neighbours, particularly at mowing,

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spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing. They send 476
along a boy to help whenever the farm needs an extra hand to get its work done quickly. Women pool resources in making up a tub or firkin of butter or they lend a girl to a short-handed household. 'Friends' and neighbours help one another at times of distress, or when a household is short or a crop delayed. Gifts of cattle, food and labour are made. Or they work together communally, particularly at turf-cutting, oats harvest and threshing. Here again much of the actual work is done by the 'boys' lent by their fathers, though the latter take a hand when necessary. Lastly, there is a great deal of aid given and received in preparing for ceremonial and social occasions, at christenings, weddings and funerals.

Once this co-operation was more widespread. Older people remember the days when "once if you had a horse and car you'd have forty or fifty people helping you with the turf". Before mowing-machines came in, ten or a dozen 'friends' would work each other's meadows in turn with the scythe. In that way the slender resources of the countrymen were pooled; and the work of life went forward. Nowadays, the small farmer is better off; he has less immediate need of his fellows. Nevertheless, he has not forgotten them; in all but the communities where large farmers have forsaken peasant life for a monetary agriculture, he can and does rely upon them still. Nowadays, however, the

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476 co-operating groups are smaller; tools are more modern and better distributed; resources are fuller.

Lending a 'boy' is the commonest form of co-
246 operation. It goes on constantly, but can best be
476 described in a scene of great activity, such as hay-making. I met it first there, in Luogh, the townland in which we found the 'west room'. The hay was early in Luogh in 1933. Harvest began in mid-July. The weather was just right. Warm dry days had brought the grasses to maturity, and gave promise of continuing. The families of Luogh set to work to 'save the hay': mowing it, letting it dry as it lay, and then stacking it, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six- to eight-foot hay-cocks. Later, after several weeks, it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. Now it was a question of mowing, drying and stacking it before rains caught the farmers in mid-course.

There was much interest in every family's pro-
[521] gress. The weather and the yields of the meadows drove all other subjects out of conversation. The men felt spurred to work well and quickly; there was a general rivalry in the air. The women were as eager, and brought their children to the meadow's edge, while they worked with their rakes behind the mowers.

About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows, working from earliest morning as long as

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light held. They worked with the aid of their sons 246
and of boys from the families who had no machines. 476
At each stage of the process a boy not a member of the family gave his labour; he took his place at meals during the day.

His own mowing done, the farmer paid his debt. He took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed that man's meadow. In one instance, a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others. In another, a farmer mowed for two others. Certain meadows in Luogh were full-handed enough to do without extra hands; but in five cases, though mowing and stacking took a very [184]
long time and they were obviously short of hands, no help was given. Two of these cases were bachelors, who lived alone; two more were 'strangers'.

Here was an important agricultural operation undertaken by the small local community in which provision was made for effective co-operation over and above the usual family economy. It was no isolated instance; it is immemorial practice in Luogh. In fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work.

There was no monetary payment involved in this
work. In the country surrounding Luogh, the only [464]
hired labour to be seen worked the meadows of a large farmer, a cattleman with over 300 acres. He did not co-operate; in fact, his whole life was cut out of a different cloth.

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476 This co-operation is woven deeply into the
602 countryman's habit and sentiment. Questioning in the life of the present soon brought out the base upon which it rests. In every case an extended-family relationship was involved. The countryman is a family man in this co-operation with his fellows, as well as in his work at home. Carey, who mowed for Denis and Seamus Moloney and for Brian MacMahon, was second cousin to each of them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively to the two farmers whose meadows he mowed. The 'boys' who worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows were also relatives; they were sons of the kinsmen for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. No man had mowed for all his relatives, that was not necessary. One man had mowed not for a relative, but for a boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors, whom no one had helped, had been able to help no one. The two 'strangers', who had moved into the
[609] townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives 'on this side'.

The small farmers of Luogh explained their co-operation in their own general terms. They call it 'cooring' in the brogue. The word is the Irish *comh-air*, meaning aid, partnership, and alliance. They explained their 'cooring' in terms of the 'friendliness' of the place. Their answer was that they "had right to help their friends", or in a more general

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statement, "country people do be very friendly, they always help one another". 476 602

Now, 'have right' and 'friend' are both expressions in the brogue. Like so much of that rich English dialect, for it is a true dialect with an ancient history, both words translate Gaelic idiom. A 'friend' is a relative. To 'have right' expresses an obligation, a duty and the traditional fitness of an act. It is an anglicization of an Irish *tá cóir orm*, 'the obligation is on me'. The countryman is explaining his acts as part of the traditional reciprocities of sentiment and duty which make up his system of kinship. 476 602 195 [197]

This fact strikes one the more strongly when one finds him describing other traditional acts of obligation to kindred in exactly the same terms. Aid lent and duties performed at wedding and funeral are felt to be in the same category as co-operation in farming. Thus a farmer of my acquaintance could say of a cousin: "He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth £12 to us and didn't want anything for it." And he could go on in more general terms: "Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you; they lend you a horse with the hay, or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to help when somebody dies with you". It is part of the 'friendliness' owed one's kinsmen to make up and serve food at wakes and weddings, to dig the grave, to carry the coffin, to 476 602

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476 keen over the dead. This conduct is reciprocal;
602 'friendliness' implies mutual obligation. One countryman gave me as his reason for going to the funeral of a second cousin: "I have right to go, they always come over to this side". When in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister took over the child, she did the 'friendly' thing that she 'had right to do'. In the very same terms a man 'made bold' upon his brother-in-law to lend him a son to help drive cattle to the fair, as the brother-in-law 'had right' to do.

In fact, failure to fulfil the pattern of conduct demanded by the obligations of 'friendliness' may bring punitive action on the part of the aggrieved kindred. We have seen this before in the story of the 'old man's curse' in the first lecture. In a part of Clare, not many miles from Luogh, a small farmer neglected his garden and forced his father-
[578] in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support. He was finally beaten up one night in his own house by his irate in-laws. Ordinarily, perhaps
[626] failure leads rather to an estrangement; it holds one up to general condemnation by the whole community. Persistence in failure leads to social death; the recluse is greeted by no one, not even his 'friends'.

574 But fulfilment entrenches one in social life. The
602 obligations extend to visiting and hospitality, the countryman's great virtue. 'A sup of tea' is 'put down before' the countryman who is travelling to

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town, or to the fair, or only making the evening 602
cuaird or visit. The obligations pattern good- 574
fellowship and holiday, for friends treat one another when they meet near a pub. In fact one countryman complained to me that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his friends, but others seem to manage their obligations better.

And lastly, the obligations of kinship are a bulwark against disaster. The Johnny mentioned above sent the cow down when it was badly needed. If you have read the book from the Blaskets called *The Islandman*, you remember that the Islandman [582]
might not marry the girl of his choice because she was a mainlander and the friends she would bring him would be too far away from Great Blasket when he needed aid. In the system of reciprocal duties which surround kinship, much of the strength of the countryside against external destruction and internal disaster is explained.

We have followed the countryman a long way. 000
In watching him at his work, we have begun to recognize the outlines of the way of life which is his. He is a subsistence farmer, as we now call the peasant, but he is more. He is part of an intricate social system which patterns his life along definite channels, which brings him rewards, gives him incentives, and deals its own punishments. The traditional patterns of old custom have a place in this system; folklore surrounds it as in the

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000 dichotomy between men's and women's work. But tradition is not all its secret; it is a living structure with a balance and a growth of its own. It is built out of the behaviour and the sentiments men and women have toward one another. Farm work is merely one expression of the balanced pattern of relations between human beings. We now must see what that structure is and how it maintains itself.

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III

The Family and the Land

Balance, pattern, system, structure, may perhaps seem formidable terms. They may seem too heavy and too prosaic to do justice to the countryman's way of life. Or again, they may strike you as too formal; for what I name with them is compounded of a thousand personal intimacies. Yet no other terms represent so well the fluid realities of social life. I do not mean that there are not others that might not serve as well. I mean only that the anthropologist cannot use the others; for they are infused with the very emotions which he must coldly dissect. The others are sacred to the patriot and the poet; they are tabu to the uninspired.

I traced the Irish countryman at his work in the last lecture. He finds his role in life and farm labour made for him in the groups to which he belongs. His activities, incentives and rewards take shape within the habitual expectancies and mutualities which make up the pattern of his family. A great deal of his activity beyond the farmhouse door derives from the reciprocities of his system of kinship. Looked at externally, as we are looking at him, he is a unit in a balance of human relation-

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182 ships. He may never attain such a view of himself, of course; from his point of vantage, he is a staunch 'friend' and a loyal son and brother. The balance, which we can see objectively, is to him a deep personal intuition.

Now I face the question: How does this balance maintain itself? What does it imply for him? The point round which the balance revolves is marriage. As we have seen, the 'west room' takes its aura from a change which comes over the parental [885] couple; the 'boy' reaches adult status when he marries and inherits the farm. The family and the land are both involved in this crucial reorganization.

584 Country marriage in Ireland follows an ancient and widespread pattern. It is called 'match-making' and it is the sort of *mariage de convenance* involving parental negotiations and a dowry which is nearly universal in Europe. In Ireland its importance is such as to make it the crucial point of rural social organization.

To describe the match one has to sink one's teeth into the countryman's way of life. For the match is made up of many things. It unites transfer of economic control and advance to adult status. It is the only respectable method of marriage and the usual method of inheritance in the Irish countryside. It is embedded in the Gaelic tongue, in joke and story, and in folklore.

A match usually begins when a farmer casts

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round for a suitable wife for one of his sons. The son to be married is to inherit the farm. The farmer has full power to choose among his sons. A hundred years ago, before famine, clearances and land reform, all the sons and daughters could hope to be provided for on the land. Such a situation is still an ideal, but little more. One cannot subdivide one's holding any longer, and new farms are hard to get. Today the farmer looks forward, ordinarily, to 'settling' only one son 'on the land'.

"When a young man is on the lookout for a young lady", a farmer of Inagh in mid-Clare told me, "it is put through his friends for to get a suitable woman for him for his wife. It all goes by friendship and friends and meeting at public-houses." I think we can remember from the last lecture what he means. Getting married is no carefree, personal matter; one's whole kindred help, even to suggesting candidates.

"The young man", the farmer goes on, "sends a 'speaker' to the young lady and the speaker will sound a note to know what fortune she has, will she suit, and will she marry this Shrove? She and her friends will inquire what kind of a man he is, is he nice and steady. And if he suits, they tell the speaker to go ahead and 'draw it down'. So then he goes back to the young man's house and arranges for them to meet in such a place, on such a night and we will see about it." With this, the first step in the delicate negotiations is safely passed.

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584 The Inagh farmer goes on: "The speaker goes with the young man and his father that night, and they meet the father of the girl and his friends or maybe his son and son-in-law. The first drink is [273] called by the young man; the second by the young lady's father.

"The young lady's father asks the speaker what fortune do he want. He asks him the place of how many cows, sheep, and horses is it? He asks what makings of a garden are in it; is there plenty of water or spring wells? Is it far in from the road, or on it? What kind of house is in it, slate or thatch? Are the cabins good, are they slate or thatch? If it is too far in from the road, he won't take it. Backward places don't grow big fortunes. And he asks, too, is it near a chapel and the school, or near town?"

The Inagh countryman could pause here; he had summarized a very long and important negotiation.

583 "Well," he went on, getting to the heart of the
584 matter, "if it is a nice place, near the road, and the place of eight cows, they are sure to ask £350 fortune. Then the young lady's father offers £250. Then maybe the boy's father throws off £50. If the young lady's father still has £250 on it, the speaker divides the £50 between them. So now it's £275. Then the young man says he is not willing to marry without £300—but if she's a nice girl and a good
273 housekeeper, he'll think of it. So, there's another
584 drink by the young man, and then another by the

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young lady's father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day." 584 [273]

The farmer paused here again; for the match is developing marvellously. "All this is one day's work," he continued. "After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, maybe another girl, and her brother and her father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker.

"If they suit one another, then they will appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong.

"The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one." He said this last slyly, for to pretend to own more stock than one really has, is an unfair trick in the bargaining.

"Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points.

"If the girl's father likes the land he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes

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584 on them. Then they go to an attorney next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father of the boy to sign over the land." With the writings, the match is made, and the wedding can go forward.

This long statement, in fact, contains the essence of the whole of match-making. It serves very well as a general guide. A great deal is at stake in this elaborate negotiation. To our eyes, such a way of winning a wife seems very unromantic. It savours a little too much of hard-headed business. We should call a man a cynic who put farm and fortune ahead of personal attractions.

584 Yet we should be wrong to make such an evalua-
182 tion of the countryman. The sentiments prompting him, and his expectations, are quite different; they must be understood in their proper setting. In matchmaking, the interests of all the members of both families are deeply involved. The match is a convention by which they are expressed and realized. We are prone to forget that a living convention can be just as joyous, even more so, in fact, than bohemian revolt.

182 For example, the heated, formal bargaining
556 quickly summarized by the quotation has deep
584 significance. It effects a necessary and balanced equality between the two families. Superficially, it seems merely a nice adjustment between the farm and fortune. But looked at more closely, it assures many things.

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The girl's family know that she will be well 584
provided for. They make sure of it when they 182
'walk the land'. They make sure their standing in 556
the countryside will not suffer. Fortune and farm must be roughly equivalent. In the scale of rural prestige, each farm is valued against the fortune it can pay out with its daughters and the fortune it can bring in with its inheriting son's wife. In the words of the Inagh countryman quoted: "Backward places do not grow big fortunes". And as the farm is identified socially with the family whose members work it, these dowries measure the family's standing.

On the side of the family receiving the fortune, too, interests are served. The girl's dowry comes to them, to be used for their own purposes. With it, they are assured a competent 'new woman', as they call the new wife and daughter-in-law. She is trained to their position in life and to their own habits and sentiments. Girl and dowry are a fair exchange for prestige and alliance.

But these are not the only values at stake. The 'fortune' in the match is woven into the internal necessities of farm family life.

When agreement is finally reached between the 584
negotiating parties, they go to a solicitor to make up 675
the 'writings', as we saw in the quotation. By this, the countryman means they cast their agreement into legal form. For the 'writings' is a contractual instrument which unites marriage settlement and

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584 675 will. Reforms in land tenure have made it necessary recently to give an age-old custom proper legality, since the transfer of the farm is involved.

584 675 888 In the 'writings' the father of the groom makes over the farm and all its appurtenances to his son. In return, the girl's fortune goes to him. The father also makes provision for his own maintenance and that of his wife. It is his abdication, and like Charles V, he keeps only one monastery out of a vast empire for himself. He usually reserves the right to the 'grass of a cow', his keep, the use of the hearth, and the use of a room in the house. That room is the 'west room' already described, the best in the house. Thus, the cycle of life on the farm is completing itself. He and his wife step down from active command.

584 593 In payment for his abdication, he receives the fortune of the girl. A fair arrangement, we should say. But we should be wrong; it is much more. True to the obligations of his social role, he may not use it entirely for himself. The Irish small farmer does not retire, like the Iowan, to sunny California and the Townsend plan. He must meet the interests of the group. Ordinarily, the other children have been stalwart workers in the farm family corporation. They are not to be 'settled on the land'; some other provision must be made. They may come forward now for their long due reward and their corporate share.

Here the purposes behind the match show them-

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selves again. One daughter is ordinarily married 584
into a near-by farm. The family makes a match for 593
her. With her, of course, goes a fortune equal to that the son's bride brings in. Perhaps, a son may be similarly married into a farm where there are only daughters; even though a *cliamhan isteach*, 'son-in-law going-in', as he is graphically called in Irish, must pay a much larger fortune. He has to overcome the anomaly felt in reversing the usual role of sons and daughters and has to compensate the family for the loss of 'their name on the land'.

But it is a very fortunate farmer indeed who can provide for all his sons and daughters so. Usually, only the heir and one daughter are married and dowered, the one with the farm, the other with the fortune. All the rest, in the words of the Luogh residents, 'must travel'.

Thus, either at the match or in preparation for it comes the inevitable dispersal of the farm family. The unit must break up. Time and change are inevitable in human affairs; only an orderly social mechanism can tame their ravages.

The match provides rural Ireland with this mechanism. It accomplishes the necessary transformation of the family. The balance of interests and duties, of prides and loyalties, hinges upon it.

There are two facets to the change, an external 584
and an internal. The distinction is understandable, 593
it is that between internal constitution and external 182
face. Or better, let us state it in figurative terms.

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182 Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage" was pro-
584 found sociology. Life in organized society is a
593 drama. In the match, even though the marriage of one principal is the theme, the action includes the whole cast. Internally, the action forcibly and finally changes the interrelations of all the characters; externally, the parts they play to the audience alter and grow. The changes must run their course till the action resolves itself in the crystallization of a new situation; and the act is over.

It is this dramatic quality which gives the sociologist and the social anthropologist the right to use such terms as 'structure', 'dynamics' and 'equilibrium'. He has that right in describing the life of the countryman. The match brings changes in dramatic completeness. It forces the relationships of the constituent human beings into a new equilibrium and creates a scaffolding for new behaviours and sentiments.

182 Let us look at the external change first. The sons
593 and daughters who must travel are forced out of
166 the closely knit group in which they once had their being. Yet, unless they emigrate beyond hope of call, they do not drop out of sight. The sentiments of years of close association do not die out. It has been a matter of pride and duty with the farm father to provide well for his children. Wherever he can, he has found them an opening. He has sent them into the towns, into the shops, the professions, the trades, and into the Church. As in nearly

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all modern countries today, there is in Ireland a great and constant flow of population from country to city. Much of this is made up of the farm sons and daughters.

Yet, they do not always go to the towns, of course. The farm father tries to settle them on the land round about him, too, as we have seen. In either case, nevertheless, they are not lost to the new family which supplant them on the farm. They are merely removed a single step. They have become 'friends'. They are part of the extended kinship system which stretches from the farmhouse door. They owe the obligations of kindred which we saw in farm work; they are the uncles and their children the cousins of the new generation in the home farm.

Out of this sort of expansion Irish kinship is built. The point of integration is the farm father and mother, whose relinquishment of command forces dispersal. Projected backward and upward through the generations, to common grandfathers and great-grandfathers, this transferred remembrance of the duty and sentiment between father and son unites ever wider circles of descendants in the ties of brotherhood. It provides a scaffolding for the behaviours of 'friendliness' and 'cooring' between members of contemporaneous generations. In it each man has a place, reckoned upon 'blood' as he calls it. With the word, a social structure of interwoven habit patterns and emotional

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reciprocities gains a mystic force, all the more compelling.

For all its intensity, Irish kinship is no 'clan', as anthropology uses the term. For there are no fast bounds and no rigidities; it is a system of potentialities. It is expansive, rather than restrictive. Both the Gaelic language and the brogue are very chary of kinship terms. One finds no huge vocabulary such as categorizes each Australian blackfellow for his comrades. All the reckonings proceed from the heart of the system; they are appeals to 'blood'. Because of the structural simplicity of the system they are insistent upon membership in a common generation in a common descent. Thus one hears countrymen distinguish between 'my friends' and 'my father's friends', specifying two generational groups. In his own generation, he will make a similar distinction, categorizing with a variety of expressions all those who occupy the same place as he does in descent from a common ancestor. Thus, he embraces ever wider numbers of his contemporaries. For him 'a distant friend' is less to be relied upon than a 'near' one; but the distance he reckons is not that of space. Rather it is that of cousinship.

Though he has no elaborate terminology of kinship in which to enmesh his relatives, the countryman has another weapon, in appeal to common 'blood'. He is no rootless parvenu. Like the medieval Irish annalists, whose kinship system

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he inherits, he is proud to be an able genealogist. 182
Genealogy permeates his view of man and the 602
world.

He judges himself and his contemporaries by 182
their 'blood'. Like many another people, he makes 602
a *deus ex machina* of this verbal identification. 578
'Good blood' explains success and high position; 'bad blood' failure and low estate. To insult a man it is enough to suggest he has 'tinker blood' or 'robber blood' in his veins. One damns thus a whole kindred by impugning its descent. Even such a socially undesirable state of affairs as a feud between two angry, warring kindreds can be given a name in accordance with this identification. It is said that 'there is bad blood between them'.

In fairy-tales and folklore the mystic force of 182
common descent is stronger than fate and cir- 602
cumstance. The rightful son and brother, lost or stolen away, is finally restored to the heritage of his blood. For the 'blood' and the 'land' are identified as well. The social mind is not content with half-hearted inclusions. One's blood calls to one's possessions. A particular ancestral line is inseparable from a particular plot of earth. All others are 'strangers to the land'.

But there is, of course, a practical side too. We have seen it already in the account of agricultural co-operation, not, unfortunately, the kind A. E. and Sir Horace Plunkett advocated, but the pattern of centuries of local life. We shall learn more of it

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182 when we discuss shops, pubs and fairs. In either
602 of these cases, the kinsmen, the dispersed children, remain within the confines of local life.

167 The new equilibrium has a place even where
602 emigration removes the dispersed children alto-
182 gether. The behaviours and sentiments of kinship 'travel' with them. They send back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces, brothers and sisters. There is a marked tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself. Sons and daughters of each generation go out to join the members of the last. One little settlement called Cross, on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, is said locally to be supported by the Shanghai police force. The first man to go is now Chief of Police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the Force have gone to men of Cross.

Such services are part of the same 'friendliness' which sums up the kinship system. And naturally, where kinship is based upon extension, bonds are stronger as the original relationship is closer. Thus a brother is more likely to aid one's self and one's children than is a cousin, though the obligation binds them both. An incident from Luogh will show the human setting in which emigration often takes place. The farmer tells the story himself:

"A fellow named O'Dwyer married to a cousin of the old woman's out of Ballyheline (a neighbour-

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ing townland) was home from Australia one 167
summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a great 602
new coat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day 182
when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. (After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship) he asked could he take the boy (my second son) out to Australia with him, and he would put him behind his bar (he had a hotel out there). I said yes, he could have him.

"After this fellow went back to Australia, he sent over £50 for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas' sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. I sent back the £50, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back."

So much for the external change which the 182
match brings. What now can we learn of the 602
internal change and the new internal equilibrium 888
that change brings?

The transfer of the land to the son who marries 182
carries with it a drastic reformation in the relations 593
of the household members who remain. The head- 888
ship of the parental couple is profoundly modified. The 'old people' move into a new status, that of old age. For both the man and the woman it means an abandonment of power; they are no longer the 'man and woman of the house'.

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182 593 888 Where the transition is smooth, father and son continue to work together. One family in Luogh, for example, was regarded as a model of family harmony. It was made up of a young man and his wife and two children and the old couple. But the old man worked by his side, and the son deferred to his judgment. The greatest compliment the neighbours had for them was this: "Look at the Careys; old Johnny gives his boy a hand in everything. You wouldn't know which one has the land."

182 745 593 888 The introduction of the old-age pension has facilitated this transfer. Originally designed for the support of the aged in an industrial population in England, it has speedily woven itself into the fabric of Irish rural life. Nowadays, the farmer can turn over his land at the age of seventy. In doing so, he divests himself of his property which stands in the way of his receiving the pension. One countryman of my acquaintance sang the praises of the pension [434] in no uncertain terms. His words show clearly that, even with this new source of income at his disposal, the old, abdicating farm father still forms part of the family economic unit. "To have old people in the house", he said, "is a great blessing in these times, because if you have one it means ten bob a week and if you have two it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'Donoghue (a neighbour) and every Friday he will go to Corofin to collect his ten bob. He may buy a couple of bottles of porter but he'll spend the

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rest on things for the household and then come home 593
with a few shillings to go into the common fund." 888 [745]

For the old couple are still very important within the family. Their years of command do not disappear overnight. The change must be handled smoothly. The happiest compromise is that one farmer of Inagh described: "Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what I should do for the day, and the old man would say it is now time to do this or that, or the cows should have something done for them, or the garden be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty-thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then I would go do my own business."

The solution rural Ireland suggests to this prob- 182
lem is deference and respect. There can be no 578
equality between the generations. In the words of 593
one local sage, who could discuss the matter with 888
the experience of a Dorothy Dix: "When the new woman is brought into the house, she may have modern ideas and be hoity-toity about the way to do things. So the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man wouldn't say anything but he would light his pipe and go out till the squabble is over. It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave, and go live with her daughter some place. She could do this if the daughter's husband's mother were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house.

"But these squabbles are bad things. If the new

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182 woman would ask the old person her opinion on
593 how to do this and that there never would be any
888 trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just
578 as she pleased. Then the old woman would think she was doing it the way that she said. If the daughter-in-law did what she ought, she would do this and treat the old folks nice."

Deference and respect solve the problem, then, but if they do not, it is the older woman who must leave. That this should be the case reflects one great function of farm marriage. The son must cleave to his bride. If the worst comes to the worst, the new family may 'turn the old people out on the side of the road'. Terrible as such an ending would be, it is the necessary one. For the pattern of family and land must continue in the persons of the new man and woman and their children.

182 This desire is the binding force in the relations
593 of all the household. It is as strong in the old people
887 as in the new couple. The new balance of senti-
602 ments finds its expression in the inclusion of the children born to the young man and woman. Like so much of their behaviour, the country-people describe the new ties in terms of the 'help' they afford to the family corporation. And once again, naturally, an economic explanation is all too elliptical. A thoughtful farmer of Inagh generalized the matter in words which show the identity between help in farm work and social reciprocities: "When there are children in the house, the old

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people are a great help to the mother, because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see they didn't fall into the fire or something of that nature. The old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. The old woman would help in the house. If there was a squabble between the mother and the daughter, the old woman would be more likely to stand up for the daughter. She would also teach her how to do things and have more patience than the mother. The grandfather would show the boy how to do things and would have more patience than the father." 182 593 887 602

Accordingly, the chief duty of the 'new woman' is to bear children. She succeeds or fails as a supplier of new persons to the family. Only with children can the new balance complete itself and the essential social continuity be assured. 182 593 606 842

The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law upon her success in this role. The first year of the girl's marriage is a time of apprenticeship. Her work is light. Highly ceremonialized custom grants her an occasional escape back to her own people. Her major duty is pregnancy, and the old couple watch her like a hawk for signs of fertility. All during her child-bearing years the old people will help her, praising her in terms of her increase, and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as she does herself.

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182 One countryman of North Clare put that first
593 year into words: "At first", he said, "the boy's
606 people make much of the new woman. They would
842 hardly let her work at all. This carries on for seven or eight months, and if then the old people don't see evidence of increase of young, they get angry and abuse her. But if they do, they don't let her do any work at all now and are so proud."

In such a situation barrenness is a curse and a disgrace. The husband has every right to express his disappointment and his displeasure. It is a source of shame to him as well. He fails in preserving the continuity of his line upon the land.

One childless woman of Inagh in Clare knew bitterly how much both family and community support these attitudes: "No matter how much money you have," she said, "no matter how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you are no good. But if you are ugly as the worst and have children, you are all right." Then she went on, to perpetrate an Irish bull, perhaps, but to express the matter very forcibly: "The man wants children just as much as the woman. He is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of this country, especially if you haven't any."

182 Nevertheless, there are other ways of ensuring
593 the continuity. They 'keep the name on the land'
428 too, but they are makeshifts at best. These makeshifts transfer control of the land, as does the match.

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But in each case, they conform to the system 182
of values lying at the centre of the countryman's 593
way of life. They are social detours, ways past the 428
obstacles of adverse circumstance and bad luck.

For instance there used to be, not long ago, 182
what was known as a 'country divorce'. In the old 586
days, they say, a farmer might send a barren wife 593
back to her parents. He could not marry again, of 428
course; Catholic law forbids it. But he could do something just as effective in assuring the family descendants. He could remarry, not in his own person, but in that of his brother. The two men are equivalent in status, why should they not act sociologically as a single individual. Even today this device survives. Thus a farmer of Corofin, in North Clare, could make use of it. Childless after several years, he got a 'country divorce'. Then he gave the land to his brother, in return for a large fortune, on the stipulation that his brother should marry. One brother thus got wife and farm; the other the dowry. The identity of land and family were preserved for another generation.

What other devices are possible has already 182
appeared in what I previously called 'incomplete 602
families'. Nephews, nieces, even grandchildren 428
may be brought in. In time, a match is made for them, and normal succession assured. The former owners move to the 'west room'; they become the old people, and the pattern of a complete farm family unit is restored. To the country-people it

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182 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land,
602 and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such con-
428 duct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can
182 arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at
589 all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own
428 person. That does not mean she cannot exercise
593 full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her
[766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

Even if she marries, she and her new husband
182 merely hold the land in trust. The second husband
428 and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The
587 rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the
593 land, may turn them out. So strong is the identifica-
578 tion. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

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may be often quite different and run counter to rural values, breeding strife and forcing the aggrieved to seek redress outside the law.

Here, then, is the new equilibrium in the countryman's social life. The match provides a transition between the generations. Within the family unit, it provides for the establishment of a new nuclear group. It makes room for an essential continuity in which all the members may share and round which all their interests may be centred. Externally, it regathers those whom it must disperse. Round this dispersal, the web of kinship can be built. In the persons of the old people moved one step toward death, and in the identifications round them, 'descent' and 'blood' and 'the name on the land', the emotions of human groups can find their nexus.

In this movement, household, land, adult status, economic control, all move together. Marriage is a turning point round which rural life hinges. It is a structural centre. Every tie between human beings is modified. Then, in a new form, they can crystallize again—to give scope for movement, to allow continuities, to habituate human beings to new social places.

The whole of this movement takes place within a frame of human sentiments, ambitions and desires. Emotion lends its force. Convention, habit and the sanctions of public opinion and private anger keep the bounds and punish transgression. Public honour and self-satisfaction reward conformity.

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182 Yet, all this is still a primary social adaptation. It is not reasoned; it is made up of the habitual face-to-face contact of human beings and the folkways of the community. Yet, neither does it shut out reason; there is ample play for wits, for intelligence and for self-interest. For there is certainly nothing remote, esoteric or formal within this frame. There are no rules to learn that the countryman does not feel within himself or his fellows.

This rural familism is based upon psychological and physiological realities. Within it, the drives of the human animal find satisfaction. Hunger, reproduction, love and anger, domination and submission—all have a place. But these satisfactions, as you can see, are far from being haphazard. They are carefully patterned and controlled. The conditioning the countryman receives is personal; it is a conditioning to other human beings. It is part of an intricate web of human relationship. It is a balance of personalities in movement, crystalline at moments, fluid at others, and transformed when necessary in regular and orderly fashion.

167 In the light of a rural life which can be looked upon as a whole system, the peculiarities of Irish population figures take on meaning.

The Free State exhibits a very interesting and peculiar demography. The statistics of population in Ireland are startling, in many ways. Long-

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continued emigration has brought about an enormous decline in population, at times when most other nations have been increasing rapidly. The enormous exodus which followed the Famine was only the high-water mark of the tide of emigration. The outward flow began long before the Famine and has continued down to the present. Only in 1932, in a time of world-wide depression and immigration barriers, did it come to what may be an end. For the first time for well over a century, more Irishmen returned to their native land than left the country.

Naturally, after so long an emigration, this outward flow of population had become a permanent condition in the life of the nation. In 1926, the census-takers reckoned that 30 per cent of all native-born Irish were then living outside the country of their birth. Put in more intimate terms, this meant, roughly, that every child growing up must expect to see at least three out of every ten of his playmates and companions go beyond the seas. And unlike the Greek or the Sicilian, and many another national, he could not expect them to return. He must lose them permanently.

But this three out of ten is an unfair representation. The country districts have suffered this loss at a much greater rate than the towns. On the whole, the towns have gained over the countryside. The cities, as everywhere else, have swollen at the expense of the rest of the country. The countryside has been the victim of two enormous drains—one

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167 the normal, small farmers' flow from country to town—the other, overseas. As this group, the small farmers, is overwhelmingly the most numerous in the land, the drain has taxed it most.

582 But the small farmers, the country-people, are the very group who exhibit most strongly another statistical peculiarity. They set the norm for the country in marital statistics. In this, the Irish Free State occupies a unique place. Marriage takes place at a later age than in any other country for which records are kept. Sixty-two per cent of all males between the ages of thirty to thirty-five are still unmarried. Nor is it only the men who escape matrimony so long. Forty-two per cent of all women who reach that age of middle life are single. In the United States, in England, in Denmark, in all other countries in fact, there is no such long delay in marrying. In all three of the countries named, comparative figures for both men and women do not reach 25 per cent. Only in Ireland is a single man or woman of thirty the rule rather than the exception.

But it is not a question merely of the Irishman's hanging back a little longer from an inescapable fate. For a surprising number escape altogether. One man out of every four men who reach fifty in Ireland is still a bachelor. And though the women have slightly better luck in finding mates, the same figure holds for them.

Other countries usually delay marriage longest in the urban professional classes. But in Ireland, it is

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the country-people who marry latest. One can range the country in something of a scale in this regard. The more numerous in a county the numbers of small holdings, roughly, the later marriage takes place, and the greater number of bachelors, particularly males, of all ages, there are. Late marriage and bachelorhood are characteristics today of the countryman's way of life. 582

In the problem presented by these statistics, the structural approach to the countryman's way of life can bring a new illumination. It throws into relief the human setting in which economic and historical changes have run their course. 167 582 178

After the terrible disaster of the Famine, agriculture underwent a change. Canadian and Argentine wheat forced Irish land into cattle production. The great land clearances took place, turning out the population to make way for pasture. Then the small farmer followed the large into pasturage for dry cattle, on a lesser scale, and the milch cow declined. Small towns and crossroads distributing centres and the railroads sprang up all through the country; and abroad, the roaring industrial expansion, first of England and then of America, gave opportunities denied at home. Through all this: through curtailment of employment at home, through substitution of cattle for men upon the land, through denial of local opportunity, the stream of emigration kept its steady flow.

Through all this, too, the figures of Irish mar-

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riage kept pace. Age of marriage was normal in the year of the first census. In 1841 there was a normally low percentage of the unmarried in the population, and men and women married as early as they do in the United States today. At each decennial census afterwards, marriage was a little later and the unmarried a little more numerous. Through all the welter of changes, the figures grew steadily toward wider and wider spread celibacy.

Then when the economic and political tides turned, the human setting still endured. The clearances ceased; land reform won security of tenure; years of prosperity after 1870 brought an income that could be used more and more at home, as lowered rents spread and freehold was assured. Finally, the war brought undreamed-of prosperity and on its heels the strength for revolution and civil war. The milch cow came back to a position from which it had only retreated very little; dairying could be organized and come to vie with beef cattle as a market outlet. Finally, as a last step, industry began to make its call at home.

In all this flow of circumstance who can say what factor determined the numerical count of Irish population? Emigration went on as before, checked this year, hurried the next, until, perhaps from external check, the flow grew less and less.[1]

[1] Preliminary reports of the current (1936) census indicate emigration still continues, though now largely directed toward Great Britain rather than overseas.

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On the other hand, the corollary check on the population—late marriage—did not lag. It still grew. In the census of 1911 it reached its peak and has held it since. It alone shows no sign of falling-off in response to new economics and better days. For a social system is no brittle, changeable thing. Its adjustments to change and circumstance are a lesson, not in economics, but in the tenacity of human sentiment and human habit. Late marriage in Ireland can be associated with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership. It is part of the long struggle to acquire means to portion children. The closed corporation of the family cannot be dispersed until it is possible to establish a new one. The self-sufficiency of the group makes it always difficult to destroy. And now, today, the identification of a single family with a single individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new group upon the land.

So, when subdivision of holdings ceased after the Famine, Irish familism made its adaptation. The local community could not any longer settle its sons at home; it could no longer divide its land among them. Yet, unless it were to die it must live on. I say must, for a social system is co-extensive with the lives of its members. The Polynesians, in their island paradises, might die out nation by nation when their culture crashed, bled by a malady stronger than foreign germs or foreign guns. The Irish countrymen were tougher.

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167 In living on, the system could still mould the
178 lives of its members. As prosperi y arrived, and
582 land agitation fixed the attention of the farmer, 'land' became more and more a central value. Irish rural familism felt more and more strongly the threefold identification of 'land', 'blood' and local standing. Where land, alliance and prestige all follow the same lines, in marriage, the group finds its coherence in, and centres its tightly woven bonds round, that crucial reorganization of social life.

So, the 'landless' and the 'backward' must die out. In rural Ireland, however, it is not men but families which are so forced to their deaths. "Backward places do not grow big fortunes", we remember. That homely phrase is full of social meaning. The all-too-human drives for social rise, for prestige, leave them behind and marriage-less. And in a familistic world, celibacy leads to extinction.

000 With the homely phrase we enter a new field in social life, yet one just as central to the way of rural Ireland. This is the broad area of social stratification. Under the awkward term are subsumed the judgments man makes among his fellows upon rank, upon prestige, upon inferiority and superiority, and the behaviours that embody them. All societies exhibit them ; all organize them in one way or another. Even the animals show analogous behaviours. They practise dominance and submit

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to subordination, though they cannot clothe their 000
acts in words and build moralities and philosophies out of them.

Today, in a democratic country, it is part of the folkways either to deny that such activities exist, or to demand that, like some unmentionable, they remain unstudied and unsaid. Yet, the student of human behaviour cannot neglect so rich and so deep-rooted a fount of human action. Nor can he afford to relegate the study entirely to distant horizons. Caste in India is a relatively safe topic for an American; caste in New England or in the South is a high explosive. Only the most painstaking objectivity and the most colourless vocabulary can safeguard the temerarious investigator. And the only fair treatment is that of the laboratory: to treat the behaviours in their own settings and to analyse them for nothing more than their function in that setting. If one adopts this view, one can no more blame the Smiths for snubbing the Joneses then one can berate one protoplasm for repelling another. In either case, one seeks the reason why and describes the manner how.

In the Irish countryside we are dealing with one 565
broad class, the country-people. The behaviours 554
which preserve the distinctions between them and others—townsmen, big farmers, gentry, and so on —do not concern us here. Yet within their own community — within the essential democracy of rural life—the country-people can be seen to act

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554 in many ways to separate, to draw distinctions, to
565 repel the nonconformable. Remember that preposition 'within'. For these behaviours do not discriminate between broad groups, like the hauteur of a nobleman toward a lackey.

They operate within a larger inclusion. They are remotely like the ways of a schoolboy of the eighth grade who may scoff at the seventh-grader, look down on him, and bully him half in fun. Yet let the outside world break in, in the person of the teacher or rival schoolboys, and the distinction vanishes in the violence of united opposition. Nevertheless, intimate as they may be, these behaviours are none the less powerful. And like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization at the match, in country marriage.

From this fact springs the seeming paradox of
182 Irish rural life. A social system centring so strongly
554 round marriage and the family condemns a large
565 proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only the words are antithetical. It is through marriage that one's group and oneself attains and retains full stature. Failure in either sphere leaves unrealized the other.

From this fact, too, comes much of the homely comedy and tragedy of rural life. One prefers the human terms. That comedy and that tragedy show themselves to the student of social behaviour in

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another guise. They are controls upon the system. 182
They are unconscious patterns of human action 554
whose social function is to ensure conformities and 565
to enforce cohesions against internal disruption and external defection. Much of the fate of human beings, both at their own hands and at those of their fellows, conforms to the controls the community exerts in response to the system of customs and values by which it builds itself and in which it ensures its preservation.

Tragedy, for example, lies in the fate of one 463
romantic human type in rural Ireland. In the last 178
century before the introduction of railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, smiths, followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Open any account of rural Ireland before the last quarter of the last century, such as the tales of William Carleton, and you will be rewarded with a full-blooded picture of this lusty crew. Their crafts were very primitive, but their place was sure. Since then, nearly all of them, except the smith, their peer, have been swept away before the skill of townsmen and factory. These men supplied their neighbours, lived among them, were an integral part of rural life. When poverty struck too deep, they became peripatetics, like the wandering singers, scholars, fiddlers, spalpeen labourers, petty hawkers and beggars who swarmed the roads of Ireland. The world of fairy-tale was

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178 not remote from the farmers who knew these men.
463 Rumpelstiltskin, in a Gaelic dress, was at one's very doors.

In remote communities some few of these survive. Where they do, the community can still make use of them. Commissioning them follows a traditional pattern of gifts and courtesies little resembling conventional monetary commerce. Their skill descends, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; it is 'in the blood'. Their surplus children must disperse to towns and in emigration. For theirs too is a familistic world.

178 Unless they marry within their own fast-
463 diminishing numbers, they too must have land and fortune. Now and again one of them rises in the
556 world. He acquires land, he sets aside a fortune, he marries sons and daughters on the land. Year by year, his trade goes into the discard, till one fine day he is a full-fledged small farmer.

463 But such upward mobility is rare and difficult.
554 Economic change has swept his skill aside. The local artisan is more often a landless man, with nothing but a garden patch. The services he performs, however indispensable, do not give him equality with his neighbours. His standing is low, though his person is welcome. A farmer might 'put a son to a trade', perhaps, and often did not long ago. But it would be the lame son, the one not 'suited to the land'.

So today one finds broken remnants of this local

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craftsmanship scattered in cabins here and there 463
through the countryside. The mere memory of 554
their trade may be all that still remains to them to tell one that they are not the petty cotters they seem to be. They have not married, or if they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Or here and there the countryman will point out the shells of their houses; "The family all died out of it", he will explain.

For the pressure of social standing is a powerful force, even in such a setting. Rather than admit an inevitable decline into the status of a landless labourer, they must 'die out of it'. One's standing, we remember, is one's blood. If they cannot amass a tangible representation of that blood in the dowry, they cannot marry. Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

Even if they do succeed, and merge by marriage into the farmers' commonality, they bear a trace of a different origin yet a while longer. Change is slow where lines are tightly drawn; even peasant society knows its parvenus. And if dispute and anger flare up to strip life to its essential core, what insults do we hear? The countryman 'throws up' to 463
his fellow, not his face or his manners or his 554
animal likeness, in a wild *chameau* or *schwein*, but 578
his descent. He damns him with the reminder of 'carpenter' or 'weaver blood'.

Strange as this epithet may seem to us, it brings

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463 an adequate, instantaneous response. The psycho-
554 logist knows that expressions of anger, like any
578 other emotion, are conditioned within particular social systems. And here the Irish system works, in its own fashion, to draw and to reinforce the inevitable distinctions and discriminations of social life.

From this fact springs comedy as well. Joke and
522 fun play round this central theme. A good deal of old custom and traditional pastime cluster here. The picturesque buffoonery of the 'strawboys' —privileged masqueraded figures whose mock-dangerous invasion of the wedding feast has been dignified to represent a last remnant of a primeval bride-capture—is better explained thus more simply. Such symbolism as the gaiety of Shrove Tuesday, when in Clare, at least, young men beat loudly on the doors of those unmarried women who took no husband through the Shrovetide, is still direct enough.

For comedy and laughter soften the sharpness of social controls. They are the velvet glove that clothes the iron hand.

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IV

Boys and Men

I HAVE mentioned the rural community several times throughout the previous lectures. Irish rural familism is nothing if not bound to one's own stretch of countryside. But nowhere have I defined the term. I have given you no adequate picture of the countryman's way of life which ties it fast to time and place. I admit the deficiency. In self-justification I can only plead my inability. A full-sized study of the human being within a specific setting is not my art. It is that of the novelist. 621

Yet the question of the organization of the community confronts the social anthropologist. He seeks to analyse the means by which men relate themselves over space and time. In Ireland, the question is important for the student of old custom, too. For tradition works locally.

Irish familism is of the soil. It operates most strongly within allegiances to a definite small area. Life moves within this area for the countryman; he very rarely goes beyond it except on periodic visits to his market town. He counts his fellows from within these same narrow bounds. Beyond the

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621 next stream, over the next hill, down the valley, a similar allegiance begins and ends. Across the line are people no different from himself; but they are 'strangers', 'from beyond', or 'from the other side'.

The countryman's round of life brings him into contact, close and intimate, with those within this area. The others in turn group themselves about him, through attachment to home and familiar associations. It is this group, defined variously in space, less so perhaps in numbers, that makes up the local community. However its topographic range may correspond to man-made or natural divisions of the earth's face, it is, first of all, a habit-woven social unity. Anyone who knows a summer resort has felt this fact. How little force the common landscape has in welding disparities, such as 'the summer people' and 'the natives'! Anyone who remembers childhood can recall the boundaries between his own gang and the next. For childish empires carve up space as quickly as do full-grown warrior bands.

To relate the form of the community, then, to rural life, once again leads to human behaviour. If I am to show you Irish familism in its proper local setting, I must bring you once more to observe and watch and question the life of the present. I do not mean the great antiquity of local groupings has no importance. Townland boundaries, parish lines, market areas, baronies, counties, dioceses and

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provinces often still today mark divisions among 621
human beings that go back variously into remote past ages. A cleavage of the earth's face agreed upon long ago between forgotten clans can still persist in memory and influence conduct. The boundary of a parish, along which just the other day the countrymen fought hard-contested hurley-matches may once have marked an ancient kingdom's frontier. I mean, rather, that to understand the local past, one must first know the local present. Only then is it clear how such tradition moves and how it wields its force among men.

Therefore, I wish to devote this lecture to directing your attention inside such lines, to the behaviours which pattern local life inside them. We have already examined much of those that mark distinctions within the community, dividing it by 'blood' and by prestige. A good deal more could well be said of kinship and social stratification, were it not that we must hurry on. The existence of similar patterns which redirect integration across such distinctions is a new challenge.

One such pattern thrusts itself into notice im- 561
mediately and insistently in rural Ireland. It clusters about age and age status. The conducts and sentiments round age are perhaps the most important factor, after familism, in shaping the countryman's way of life. Naturally, they are related to all that I have described before; they dovetail into family life. In them, the community

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finds its most compatible and its most enduring organization. No other social disposition sets a deeper stamp upon the countryman. No other is more immediate to the observer, tourist or anthropologist. No other, too, explains better why old custom lives today.

Ireland is in many ways an old person's country. Where emigration carries youth away, old age is disproportionately numerous. But that fact is not all the story, for the rural Irish are long-lived. The country districts set a norm for the Free State which shows itself statistically. Despite poverty, hardship, and the erroneously assumed 'decline of rural life', the countryman lives long and dies, often very old indeed. Many causes have been sought for this strange fact, but might it not be after all a simple matter? They live long because they have much to live for. In their own sphere of life, they are honoured; they have power.

We remember that the household and the family centres itself in them. Their room is semi-sacred in the fairy-lore; it is the best in the house. The chair by the fire, the seat of honour and most comfort, is theirs. Even with the transfer of command up on the farm, they are objects of marked deference.

But this is more than a family matter. The old people have privilege among and receive respect from others than their own relatives. The conduct which bestows both upon them is as much the folk

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custom of the community as it is the habit of family 888
life. Where necessary, the community can enforce 626
its maintenance. The community can, as it were, invade the family and regulate its members through gossip, verbal censure, and more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest.

The countryman's vocabulary is full of allusions 561
to values upon age. A great deal of the judgments 888
and the comments he makes upon his surroundings 626
express them. Naturally, they do not discuss the organization of behaviour upon age in explicit terms; for such conducts are 'natural' and unchangeable in the minds of those who are shaped by them. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. The upstart 'boy', the 'bold' child, the 'old man who ought to have shame for acting like that' are as constant objects of reproof and censure as the 'bad' father or son.

In general statements, one hears many expressions, day after day, which arise from the speaker's place within an age group. The broad opposition between 'old' and 'young' colours rural thinking powerfully. A great deal of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the 'friends' and neighbours who pass their lives within the rural community takes its form within this social context.

This is particularly true of discussion of the 521
past. The past is a favourite topic; the 'old days' 888
something of an obsession in the countryside. This 561

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521 is not only because one of the listeners was the
888 anthropologist 'looking for old custom'. For, where
561 descent is a critical nexus of habitual relationship and old age the most honoured state, the past cannot fail to be the focus of interest.

Thus the older men and women are very partial to the things of their own age. And the young people are, in part, swept along with them. The 'old times' are a very ready topic among the country-people. Many a time an old person will be got to tell of them; he or she takes little warming to the task. They were the hard times, even bad times, of famine and death but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. There were few tools, no draft-animals, no shoes, none of the amenities of present existence. The listeners murmur phrases of commiseration and shake their heads in pity. "Weren't they the bad old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" they ask one another. But there is a tinge of pride in their voices, in the manner of tellers and listeners alike.

For remembered necessities, in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale, are now feats of endurance to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young
[481] man today to walk from Corofin to Ballinasloe, walk in his bare feet the forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who

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Where is the woman today who
could shoulder a creel of turf a hundred yards out 521 561 through the bog mud to the famine road, before 888 the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunna- [482] gore?

Often the expressions take a different turn. They 517 become that universal complaint — the younger 521 generation. "Young people aren't what they used 561 to be," said one old farmer in the course of a 888 general discussion of the golden age that was his youth. "They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else to a dance, and if they happen to win a turkey they will nearly shake the house down [in their triumph]. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. Now you can't get them to do anything unless you pay them."

Here he paused for an illustration, chose one 561 from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on. 521 "Wasn't old Keane out every night with his cattle 888 and he putting them in small fields and late in the [231] night? Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept at it till he had cattle all the way up by Ballyvaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no controlling them."

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. The past, for the older members of the community,

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reflects their glories and serves as a convenient vehicle for the expression of their superiority. In the same spirit, the present can be measured against the past, usually only to be found lacking.

But these statements express much more than a mere rivalry between old and young. They spring from a mutuality between them which transcends rivalry. The old days are better among other things, because the interdependence of young and old was greater. The present is less attractive because the old no longer control the young, and the young no longer aid the old, as they should. Both facts of this interrelation may be expressed, even though the speaker, if he be old, may cast them in terms of mistrust and dislike for the young. In fact, the whole of experience may be brought within this scheme of attitudes. To give an example, here is one old fellow's rationalization of his misgivings about the present Irish school system:

"I am patriotic and it may be a bad thing to say but I think the school system they have now is bad and the teaching of Irish is bad. In my day and before, a man might go to school when he could—maybe for only three months in the year. But he would know more than they get now when they go to school all the time. The old people learned more then. When a child finished school he would be expected to read a newspaper to the old people, and to write a letter for them, or to do sums. And he would do it well." His complaint is much longer

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but you have heard enough to see his mistrust of a system which to his mind makes no provision for the mutuality between young and old. 561 521 888

This mutuality was and is strongest in the realm of farm work. The farm family demands the co-operation of all its members. No less the community makes its valuation of young and old upon that co-operation. General discussions among the country-people bring out this fact again and again. To illustrate by quotation once more: two old fellows, adult farmers with families, could reach agreement upon a formula running somewhat as follows:

"The men were stronger in the past, they worked harder, while you try to get any young person to do as much work as the old men now and they would laugh at you. The young people today seem to see how little work they can do rather than how much. While the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work." [461]

So they went on, but even in the midst of their theme they were forced to admit that there were compensations: "It is true for you that the people in the old times weren't as knacky as they are now. Wasn't it how they used to have the horse in a stall feeding, while they [themselves] would be out with a spade turning over the garden [and no plough]."

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm

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521 work. Just as the rivalry between father and son is
888 most intimate and most constant in the economy
561 which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community takes the same form.

You will probably ask if there are not grains of truth in the older generation's statements. My answer is that I neither know nor care. And I feel the countryman is not much more concerned. For this is a very old rivalry and once its expression was even more formalized than it is today. We owe the first poem of the eighteenth-century poet O'Rahilly to the expression of this rivalry, in an older day when Gaelic poetry still survived. He was called in to defend the young unmarried men, the 'boys' of today, in a poetic contest over respective merits between them and the 'old men', that is, the married men of family and substance. And he played, too, in the hurley game which fought out the contest in another field. For we are dealing here not so much with truths or falsities as with group-attitudes reciprocally held. Pareto would call them derivations; he would find their residues in the sentiments of those grouped together about a common status in the community. Once these sentiments were expressed ceremonially as in O'Rahilly's day. Even now the men of Luogh point out a large stone. With that stone the 'men' and the 'boys' competed at tests of strength till just a few years ago.

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For the young people do not agree with their 521
elders on the score of their own shortcomings. They 561
do not express these attitudes. They have a good 888
deal to say, on the other hand, among themselves from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them; and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be swept aside with some such sweeping condemnation as 'old fool' and 'old blatherer'. Like the son I quoted in the last lecture, who listened patiently to his father, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations in which youth and strength outweigh age and ripe experience.

Yet within a system of values in which the old 561
represent the nexus of kinship and bear honour 888
within the community, the young people do not 576
see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the old people. In the non-verbal behaviour of daily conduct, deference is uppermost. This fact sobers their group's egocentricity. In their position there is a necessary balance between subordination and compensatory vauntings and distastes. If you remember Synge's *Playboy*, you remember how reality broke in upon the playboy when the community saw his father still very much alive.

So, within this framework the young men can 561
recognize themselves as a distinct group—an age 888
grade, to use technical language. They have their

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561 888 own interests and sentiments, opposed in the scheme of rural life to those of their elders. Various places, pursuits and forms of activity are their own preserve. They greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gatherings of the old men with something of the derision they reserve for women. But the ambivalence of their attitudes makes general expression difficult. Their position imposes silence, except among themselves. Consequently, one finds their attitudes rather more frequently in particular annoyances, boredoms and chafings against restraint. Rural ceremony gives them few outlets today; the fine articulateness of O'Rahilly's day is either dammed or searches out more devious outlets.

The sentiments of both groups, then, are the products of a system of values about age status. The individual makes his statements and entertains his feelings by virtue of the place he occupies. These express not only a rough grouping of individuals of similar age and status but a rough interrelation between the groups so composed. They form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

551 888 One can trace this process in rural Ireland in the many names and epithets the local community bestows. Local titles are ephemeral; they have little currency outside the immediate circle of the townland and the village. At best they spread through a parish. They are nicknames, and express no more

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than the named-one's place in the hearts of his 551
fellows. Yet many of them, too, are generic epithets 888
and like 'old' and 'young' they may prefix a name and designate the bearer's social place. They thus come to express broad categories of a man's behaviour and describe not a biological or a physiognomic but a sociological individuality. All well-developed social systems show this power; rural Ireland makes much use of it.

Thus two common epithets in the brogue are of this latter kind. The countryman speaks often of a 'saint', in praise, and a *cailleach*, in condemnation. Both words refer only to the 'old'. In strict linguistics, both are metaphors, of course, for the brogue knows and makes use of the words in their proper meanings. *Cailleach*, the Gaelic word, is properly a 'hag' or 'witch'. A 'saint', of course, is canonized by the Church.

But the countryman who refers to this or that contemporary as a *cailleach* or a saint is not concerned with purity of diction. He is making a sociological categorization with an ethical bias. He is judging an old man or woman for his or her success in filling the role rural life assigns. His thinking is social, not reformist, as the term has come to be loosely used, but rather conditioned within the dispositions of a particular social pattern. Thus one man in Luogh, already referred to, who was a model of family harmony and 'had a kind word for everyone' in the local community, was a 'saint'.

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551 888 Another old fellow, a leader in his village, could be described by a neighbour as follows:

"That old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humour and if he went to town to take a drink he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as harmless as a child. He and his friend Roche are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any advice in farming, you can go to them and they will give as good advice as you can get. It would pay a young man to listen to them."

181 551 888 I have quoted this rural eulogy for a reason. It shows much better than words of mine could how the speaker's mind could flow uninterruptedly, without any sense of transition, from ethical judgment to agricultural advice. For 'saintliness' of this kind is a matter of filling a social role. But it is one's role for the community that counts. That role runs all the way from peaceful and friendly demeanour to directing farm work. There is nothing individual in it; it is the behaviour the community patterns about the old man. It is his *noblesse oblige*. That the word 'saint' should be borrowed from religion should surprise no one. It is merely proof that one society survives in western civilization in which theology and the popular mind have not yet suffered a divorce. The early Puritan and the ancient Roman would have understood such a state of affairs.

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Relative age thus makes a difference in status 561
in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values, and lastly, it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland. One finds it wherever one meets the countrymen together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of the broad age groups.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellows, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons—those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great; in the community at large it is little less so. A [574]
farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat, his sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake- [764]
house to honour the dead, the places by the fire go to the old adult 'men' and 'women'; the 'boys and girls' must group themselves behind. They

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561 come forward only when called upon. At country 'stations' the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for communion first. On the road to shop, church or fair, the young man must keep pace, and the elder may call him to his side.

521 561 The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 'stopping on the road to pass the time of day'. In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form, in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must 'listen in'.

[203] At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the 'boys' are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

561 571 Then, secondly, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners, represent

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the interests of the community, before priest, 561
schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman and govern- 571
ment official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel.

The relation extends in fact to very small matters 276
indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of 561
bread, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of 576
tobacco, go to the older men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe round among one's ~~intimates~~ and guests, for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man; he must content himself with an occasional 'fag'. When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells: "During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door I said to her—she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. Let the young bucks go, says I, they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly. She looked at me and says, Frank, are you serious? I am, faith, says

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276 I; call back the old man. He was just a few paces
561 down the road. She did, and his face lighted up and
576 he couldn't thank her enough."

Informal as these differences are, they are never-
561 theless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct
517 among small farmers. Without them the flavour of rural life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the continual round of informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. For the country-people have their entertainments, like their more sophisticated urban contemporaries. The student of society cannot afford to dismiss them as inconsequential. They are often important controls of human activity.

When my colleagues and I first made our way into the rural communities we were to come to know best, we were plunged into a mass of observations which seemed to have no interpretation. Night after night, their day's work done, our new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, gambles, sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive gatherings were age-old customs like the bonfires of St. John's Eve; others celebrated crucial events, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occa-

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sional and less specialized gatherings; and others 561
again wore a very modern dress: a turkey raffle and 517
a dance round a gramophone.

But our interest was soon caught by distinctions of participation, rather than those of kind. The personalities of the 'village' participated variously, different groups met more or less regularly at specific houses.

For instance, the 'old fellows' went out on 517
cuaird, as they called their visiting, to join one 561
another. They followed a deep-set regular habit. 573
As they phrased it "a man would feel lonely if he didn't go out on *cuaird*".

In most communities they usually convened at a particular house. Often their gatherings bore particular names. In one North Clare community, Rynamona by name, the old men's meeting was known as the 'Dáil'. Before the Free State, it had been the 'parliament'. The name is a jocular one, of course, but as we shall see, it is expressive of the participants' evaluation of themselves, none the less.

The young men know the 'Dáil' as the 'old men's house'; they stay away. One of the cronies of Rynamona put the matter most clearly, when he described the old men's gathering from its members' point of view:

"It wouldn't suit [for the young men to come]," he said. "They gather in at Jack Roche's and they laugh and joke and play cards; they talk about the

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561 next gamble and the next dance, and that is all they
577 know. It is a lot of codology [he means, nonsense,
573 buncombe]. It is only the old men, the men with families and a responsibility on them, they are the ones that come. And in our own way we learn a great deal. If you advance any argument you must be prepared to defend it from all attack, and John Roche, 'the public prosecutor', will ask you questions till he is sure it is right or wrong. Then some evening we have real discussions in which we settle problems. Other times we discuss farming. It wouldn't suit for the young men to come in, but when we get old and they get married, then they will gather just as we do and talk about this and that. That is the way it always has been and that is the way it always will be. There is never any bad blood between any of the village, and one reason is because we talk things over."

The statement, then, imparts a deeper reality to what appears at first sight to be merely a companionable pastime of the older men. This meeting of theirs is a clique, a tightly knit group of males of similar status and interests. It is strong enough and binding enough to bestow nicknames upon its members as in the case of the 'public prosecutor'. But it is a clique, too, which operates within a traditional setting. It has a function to perform for others than the cronies who make it up. The speaker claims for it at least that it prevented bad blood in the village.

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In such a clique, the student of social behaviour can see fairly closely the interplay of social dispositions and individual character. Concrete cases have a way of disposing of controversies by transporting the issue to a new plane. In the study of such a case as this, as we shall see, the old question whether the individual affects the society or the society moulds the individual—a long-standing scholastic debate among sociologists—can be pushed into well-merited oblivion. For the answer is that both interpretations are correct; and that neither is at all penetrating. The issue is free to move to a new plane: the relations between behaviours and the patterning of sentiment and conduct.

In the old men's clique of Rynamona we have our concrete instance. Similar old men's gatherings from any other of the rural communities my colleagues and I knew would serve as well. They are remarkably similar even to duplicating nicknames. For as our informant explains: "That is the way it always was and that is the way it always will be". A social system endures in past and future and exists in space, its changes are changes of this spatial and temporal world, its constancies are likewise bound to earth and time.

Rynamona, then, shall be our present instant in time and space. Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another of the 'good land'

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361 of rough limestone outcrops that stretch back from the sea into the glaciated lake-stream North Clare country. To reach Rynamona is no easy
361 task, even for horse and car. The main road north
491 out of Corofin to Kilfenora passes through Killinaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel and a post-office mark an ancient settlement. Only a ruined ninth-century church and graveyard attest to its great antiquity.

There, beside the graveyard, a side-road leads off toward Glanquin mountain, and the hills of Burren beyond. One follows this road along through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
361 This is Killinaboy Commons, and its many small fields, laboriously cleared of stones, bear witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted. The upland is not high. It merely gives rise enough to start a half-mile of gentle slope into a basin whose bottom is filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round the lake, at the end of a rough borheen.

The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with limestone ridges. Yet the grass grows richly among the crags, and the farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the lake shore. This is 'Rynamona village'. Five others are scattered through the fields and across the lake. These households, with a few more a little farther off, make up the community.

The farms are all small; they are of the kind we

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have met in Luogh. None has ten cows, and only 361
one has a single beast. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard wall. In the case of the villagers, the fields are scattered about and behind the haggards in irregular patterns. Besides these home fields, most of Rynamona has two or three acres in additions carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Re- 621
duplicated bonds of kinship unite all the house- 602
holds. "We are all related one way or another", they say. 'Cooring' is the usual form of co-operation. The village holds itself responsible amid grumbles for maintaining the borheen which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays, the County Council pays the sons who break [499]
stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of paths criss-crosses the fields in all directions.

Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the 573
village, is the 'old men's house'. Mrs. Ruin, a neighbour, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village. "The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?"

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But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the day's work shortest. Soon after supper they begin to gather. Perhaps this or that *habitué* may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here" and take their accustomed places.

O'Donoghue has the place of honour. He sits in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer very active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his wife. The nephew and nephew's wife have no children, but must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm; the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man's judgment in most matters.

O'Donoghue is the 'judge' in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place round his hearth he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man. All must defer to his opinions. Usually he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again, a slow, measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing. Only occasionally does he add a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdote as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes; when he does, his theme is the 'old times'.

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the

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central position in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through him. He takes the proffered verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And, when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "so it is" that settles the point for good. 573

O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the 'drawer down' in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a mature man of fifty or more. He owns a farm a little better perhaps than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearly thirty. As he has no parents left alive, O'Halloran is the 'old man' and the 'man of the house'. But, individually, he is more. "He has a great head on him", they say. He has had a somewhat wider experience; once he travelled over the roads of southern Ireland as a salesman. Yet, though he is a little sceptical occasionally, and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are de Valera men today, almost to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

His title of 'drawer down' is an apt one. O'Halloran seeks information. Most frequently it is he who brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them, he is most at home in finding apt illustrations in definite, precisely told anecdotes. But his chief role is to 'draw the talk down' to common levels of interest.

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O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or more, and though he comes here, he has little to say. He is silent nearly all the time. When he breaks silence it is only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin, the bachelor, lives alone, is very poor, and having no family, can neither 'coor' nor work his land to best advantage. Occasionally he works with the 'boys' at stone-breaking on the roads. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

Roche, the 'public prosecutor', sits in the chair before the hearth opposite the old man O'Donoghue. He is a man of sixty. He has a wife and an unmarried son and daughter, both in their thirties, still at home. His is a good farm, and he is still active upon it. Roche also has a reputation for shrewdness, but his role here is a different one. Roche demands 'why', he forces one to parade one's best arguments, he pursues a point relentlessly to its final conclusion. There his interest stops, and he makes way for O'Donoghue, who sums up the agreement of the group.

Roche earns his title well; he tests one's mettle. No one takes offence at his 'prosecution'. It clears the issue and brings out the right and the wrong upon which all can agree and O'Donoghue phrase judgment.

Behind these two, a little further into the middle of the room, sits Cullinan, the 'senator'. Cullinan

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lives across the lake. He works a middling farm 573
with his wife and five children. Several of the sons are nearing twenty-five, and Cullinan himself is well past fifty.

The 'senator' is a 'weighty' man. His part here is in character. Cullinan is the one of them most fertile in cogent and fitting anecdotal illustration. In a scheme, such as this, of reference to past event and traditional precedent, Cullinan's memory of persons and happenings, slowly and accurately, even pompously phrased, gives 'weight' to the evening's discussions.

Still further behind them, and often perched upon settle or table in this kitchen, are two other *habitués*. The elder of them is Ruin, a man of sixty, who lives in the village with a wife considerably younger than himself, and two boys and a girl, out of a once more numerous progeny, still at home. The children are in their twenties, and help him in his still active conduct of the farm.

Privately, at least, the others think Ruin 'a bit of a fool'. He is as good a farmer as any of them, it is true, and knows how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not a weighty one. Ruin is a very voluble man; he can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with a deal of opinion upon all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the 'public prosecutor's' relentless logic. Nevertheless, it helps to keep the conversation alive and active. Conse-

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573 quently, though he has no important title, Ruin is a member of long standing.

The younger of the two men sitting in back, of which Ruin is one, is John Quinn. His position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quinn works a good farm just beyond the village. He married-in there, taking over the place of a dead husband. But, true to country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister who in turn married Quinn. Both women are still living in the house. But the elder sister has become the 'old woman' and is treated more like a parent than like a contemporary. It is Quinn and his wife who work the farm and regard it as their own. Their claim would be a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune; they are childless, at fifty.

Quinn is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old one, as the countryside reckons age status. And his place in the evening gathering reflects this indeterminate state. In the two years in which my colleagues and I had Rynamona under observation, Quinn was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but one which showed itself well in his behaviour.

When we first came, Quinn divided his evenings between the old men's house and card-playing in several of the young men's gathering places. At one of these, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had

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'weight'. He showed in his serious manner a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. 573

In the old men's house, however, he looked a different figure. He was often silent, or contented himself with answering questions. When he did speak, it was to 'act the playboy', in the country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent, and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to break into playful banter. Sometimes his efforts were successful, sometimes they were not.

But Quinn's playboy role did not last long. A year later he was an *habitué* of the old men's *cuaird*; he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, 'the judge', passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy", he said, "but he has a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. One can see how closely knit a clique they are. They have code and values of their own, strong enough to enforce specific personalities on each of the members, in accordance with the role of each in the group.

But there is an external side to this clique as well. To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group in Rynamona, one must know its place in the community. These seven men, for instance, are not the only old men in Rynamona. Roche the 'public prosecutor' has a brother, with a good farm, 571 573

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571 across the line between Rynamona and the next
573 townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door; he is too feeble. His sons, still 'young men', work the farm.

But there is also another, and more active, old fellow. Moroney is, perhaps, the 'strongest' farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best in the townland, and his farm the best stocked. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, work it with the help of a son and daughter, both nearing thirty. Each year, Moroney stands for them all at the 'station' and the family's dues to the Church are greater than any other's in Rynamona. Such prosperity draws Moroney a bit apart from the villagers. Occasionally, in discussions of politics, he will identify himself with the Cosgrave party, as a man with a 'stake in the country'.

All this sets Moroney a bit apart. Some say there was an incident long ago when Moroney was young; but most have forgotten it. Nevertheless, the breach is there. Moroney never attends at the old men's house.

Furthermore, just as not all the old men of Rynamona come to O'Donoghue's, so are there also households which have no representative there. With them, however, the transition we saw in John Quinn's case has scarcely begun. Two examples will show you the case. O'Brien is a man of forty. He is married, his parents are dead, his

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children none older than fifteen. He is eligible in age and status, perhaps, but he does nothing to hasten the transition from young man to old. For O'Brien is a man of moody temper, given to gusts of anger. He goes out very little at all; when he does it is to the young men's gambles.

With Mackey, the process is hardly begun. Mackey's parents are dead, and the farm is his. But Mackey is only very recently married, and he sent off a brother to the towns only a year or so ago. He, too, still visits with the young men.

Therefore, with these easily accounted-for exceptions, the old men's house includes all the farm-fathers of complete families. It is made up of those who are married and in the words already quoted 'have a responsibility on them'. Informal as it is, it nevertheless unites these men of full status within the community and unites them, too, in such a way as to crystallize and canalize the influence their status gives them.

For this clique is built round discussion and decision, as its nicknames show us, because discussion and decision are its role for the community at large. In the persons of these old men, in their deliberation, the integration of the community is accomplished.

The old man's superior status in the family and in the community cannot be separated from his half of a mutuality which unites him to his subordinates, and gives him, as it were, his *noblesse*

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571 *oblige*. In the same way, the old men's clique
573 operates.

For here in the old men's house, the countryman's way of life exerts its strongest sway upon him. It is the 'parliament' of his fellows. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. Agriculture, perhaps, comes first. Times of sowing, reaping and harvesting are debated. Prices are compared, innovations tested. Traditional methods receive their strongest support here, in the web of legend, proverb and reference to the past the speakers throw round them.

573 Much of the community's relation to the outer
621 world takes its form here, determined in the old
66 men's argument and agreement. In late years this has come to be called 'politics'. Petitions for relief road work, for expansion of agricultural prize schemes, most, in fact, of the business of the County Council and its committees originates on the side of local community in the discussions of the old men's *cuaird*. It is here, too, that the community reaches unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for instance, it is felt that the interest of all demands that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. Consequently, even O'Halloran, the 'drawer down', whose private views leaned in a different direction from those of the villagers, begged that no word of his heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of Rynamona. "I wouldn't want

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them to think I wasn't with them", he put it. No 573
wonder, then, that the political allegiances of whole 621
countrysides are constant factors in Irish politics. [66]

The community reaches agreement upon its 621
internal affairs, too, through the old men's dis- 573
cussions. It is in just this type of activity that one 626
can at last put one's finger upon that nebulous force among men: public opinion. That force is not implemented; it is merely the power of gossip and censure; only in critical days, as in the time of land agitation, can it rise to action, as a last resort, and win itself an international name: the boycott. But it is none the less powerful.

But, in rural Ireland, the group through which 573
this power flows serves another function which 888
cannot be disassociated from its role as the seat of 538
public opinion. The members of the old men's *cuaird* are the living repositories of tradition. In communities, such as Luogh, where the Irish language lingers on, many of them are *seanachaidhthe* or story-tellers. Among them the ancient repertories of legend, saga and folk-tale still find an audience. That the exponents of fairy-lore have always been, and are still, old men and old women, is no social accident. For the pattern of local life retains its continuity and preserves what it can of its conformity with the past through them.

But what of the young men, those who have not 884
attained full status? They do not attend at the old 573
men's house; they take no part in the deliberations

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there. From their own point of vantage, they scorn their elders, as much as their subordinate position allows. And they, too, walk out on *cuaird* upon the roads night after night and gather-in at this house and that.

In Rynamona, they were as ardent evening visitors as the older men. But their habit showed a great difference. There was no single central clique so closely knit as that of the old men's house. They had no larger justification, as the old men had, for their meetings. They went because, frankly, "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys". They formed pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together. A still greater difference marked these groups. One rarely heard them talk of the affairs of the community. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition and precedent. They spoke most often of their own plans, and the trials of their own age and kind. The skills upon which the cliques prided themselves and from which they drew their nicknames were of other sorts. Not even farming occupied a large share of their conversation, keen as their rivalry often was when work was going on.

In Rynamona the most frequent centre for the gatherings of the young men was the house of Roche, 'the public prosecutor', whose eldest son, a keen farmer about thirty, was something of a leader

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among them. Most of the young men between 884
twenty-five and thirty-five met there. Through the 573
winter months they met nearly every night, and played the usual games of the countryside, 'nap' and 'forty-five', often far into the wee hours. Other groups through the community met like these men and followed like pursuits with an equal zest.

At times, a custom somewhat more organized, 884
the 'gamble', unites them all. It often brings in 525
other young men across the lines separating com- 573
munity from community. As often as once a week, a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household in its turn throws open its doors to the card-players. Admission, usually a shilling, goes to defraying the expense of a supper and tea for all and goes toward the prize.

For the gamble is one of many sporting events. The prize may be a turkey, or two geese, even a young pig or calf. Elaborate conventions govern the play, and the winner may count himself a proud man. To be known in the countryside, far and wide, as a 'great gambler' is a coveted distinction proving shrewdness and skill. The country dance 535
is another such event, and still enlivens the country- 884
side in the winter months, bringing the younger 573
members of the communities together and providing honour for the distinguished. For 'a great dancer' is as widely known. In summer, hurley, the 526
national game, has the same effect; and nowadays, 884
through the nation-wide organization of the Gaelic 573

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526 Athletic Association, the 'great hurler' may win his
573 way to the admiration of all Ireland.
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But at home, in the local community, the young
884 men remain what they are. Their distinction lifts
573 them not at all from their status. Their skills are nothing more than proficiencies. The pursuits of the subordinate generation are no more than 'good times' that 'pass the time'. For, through no plan or design, but merely through the force of the social organization of values and behaviours, the activities of the young men's cliques exert no larger role within the community.

For the young men's cliques do not primarily serve to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. The difference is structural. The activities of the young men unite them from farm to farm, from clique to clique, even from one community to the next. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive integration than that the old men's clique performs, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble, dance or hurley match are much greater.

888 For the old men's clique unites, in its controlling
573 voice, both young and old. The old men's clique unites the old men in terms of their common individual positions as recipients of the respect of the community, and as heads, owners and commanders of their family corporations. It expresses for the community the same subordination of the young men that is their lot within their families.

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In such a case, the course of the countryman's 573
path through rural life is plainly charted. In the 554
normal event, the circle of his friends and contemporaries must change and progress. There comes a time when either he or they must break away altogether. Distinction in the world of the young men's pursuits is at best but a nine days' or nine years' wonder. He faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new sort of behaviour. Just as he moves to a new social place at marriage, he must move onward among the cliques of his fellows in the community.

The case of John Quinn in Rynamona, the newcomer to the old men's house, can bear re-examination in this light. Quinn first belonged to a group which met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, better known as Oscair, the Hercules of Irish saga, for his great strength. Oscair was the centre of the group. He was a rural carpenter, with only a small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good workman, a good singer, a gay-hearted jokester, and something of a repository of folk-tale. He was between forty-five and fifty.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged from thirty-five to sixty. Like their age, their habit was intermediate between old and young. Talk was the order of the day; they seldom played cards. Oscair's song and ballad enlivened the gathering.

Some of the men who came here spoke with

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573 'weight'; they tried to turn the talk into a discussion
554 of the affairs of the community. Old Moroney, the 'strongest' farmer of Rynamona, who would not go to the old men's house, came here. John Quinn came. Before he began his entrance into the old men's house, which we have described, he spoke here with 'weight'. He gambled willingly enough, but he showed himself more and more impatient with the 'playboys' of young fellows. Another man, O'Sullivan, a herdsman of sixty-five and the local 'vet', also came. The rest were younger men, farmer's sons.

But this was a very unstable group. When finally John Quinn moved onward it fell to pieces, and Oscair's hearth was left untenanted each night.

For what shows itself here is a transitional state; the members of the group were in some way or another a little off the centres of their kind in Rynamona. For a moment were gathered here those who could move upward, like John Quinn. Gradually, they could attain full status, they could move into the social place which centres family headship, the land, a line of descent, and the old man's role within the community. Oscair's hearth for them was a roadside resting-place.

With these intermediates were gathered the representatives of another anomalous social place. Both Oscair and O'Sullivan 'the vet' were important figures in the community; their occupations and their skills won them respect and admiration

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over the countryside. At least, O'Sullivan, the older 573
man, was free to come and go wherever he might 554
wish. But both were 'landless' men; they could
never attain full peasant status. In the identifica- [589]
tions of Irish familism they were condemned to
celibacy; neither could feel comfortable in the old
men's *cuaird*. There was no place there for them,
except as Oscair's behaviour showed, as 'playboys'
and entertainers. So they, too, must occupy an
interstice in the structural alignments of rural
social life.

For once again the examination of rural life leads 182
one perforce to concepts of structural balance. The 621
organization of the community takes its form in the 573
social behaviour of cliques among the country-
people. That behaviour cannot be disassociated
from the characteristic alignment of sentiment and
interests which at once separates and reintegrates
the generations. And the alignment itself in its turn
relates the countrymen to one another in the com-
munity, upon the basis of relative age, with the
familistic nexus in which are balanced prestige,
command, the land and the continuities of descent.
That to which the countryman is attached is a
social order, as Sir Horace Plunkett alone among
the commentators on the Irish scene could see.
And a social order is an active living growth whose
embrace soon gathers in the whole of life.

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V

Shops, Pubs and Fairs

369 In many ways the town is an alien world, even a hostile one, to the countryman. He feels its scorn of his rusticity and distrusts its urbane way. Yet the town has an attraction for him no less strong in rural Ireland than elsewhere in the world. It weans away his sons and daughters. It brings him the breath of the outer world. After all, metropolis is a relative term. Metropolitan prestige is an infinite gradation in which the smallest hamlet may have a share with Megalopolis. Metropolitan prejudice is no less capable of minute division, and country towns engender little cockneys as quickly as might London produce a great one. They, too, would feel with Dr. Johnson that the fairest prospect in all Scotland was the road to London Town.

For if Megalopolis is the crossroads of the world, the country town is no less so. The difference is merely one of scale. Broadway, Piccadilly, and the Place de l'Opéra have counterparts in any country town.

361 In Ireland the parallel is more apt than one might credit at first thought. Irish towns have always been little more than crossroad centres.

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They are market-towns and administrative seats. 361
Their economics is that of distribution, not production. The industrial revolution has passed southern Ireland by. The shop, the pub, the fair bring the towns their life-blood and link them to their hinterlands and to the outside world. Many of them still collect market tolls on rural produce, as if they still had a ring of stone-wall fortification about them. Many of them have no fair green but throw open all their streets to shouting, bargaining men and milling cattle, on the day of the fair, surrendering themselves entirely to the countryside upon which they live.

One still approaches many of them today as one approached them in the sixteenth century, [491]
although now perhaps an automobile road breaks a new entrance into them or the railroad halts a [496]
jaunting car's distance away. The roads that radiate inward toward the heart of the town are still lined with labourers' and artisans' thatched cottages long before one reaches the town itself. As one proceeds along them, the cottages give way to shops and public houses which rise higher and more stately as one nears the centre, in the market-place or in the central square. There, quite often, that emporium of the most valuable commodity of all—the local bank—now dominates the scene.

Between the shop-fronts, back lanes lead off to the recesses in which the labourers live; and, off by

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361 themselves in a proud segregation, stand the more pretentious houses of a residential area, and the great grey buildings in which local government and justice are housed. But the centre remains the point at which the shop-lined streets that lead from deep within the countryside converge. The life of the country and that of the town meet and mingle along these converging lines.

175 That mingling represents the latest stage of an
361 age-old struggle in which the countryside has won out at last. It has been a conquest of assimilation, like the victories of Chinese life over the barbarian invader. The town in Irish history was originally, and often long remained, a foreign growth. In the great age of Celtic civilization, the monastery and the royal seat centred Irish life. Later the Celto-Norman castle scorned an urban fortress wall. The town was first a Danish importation; only Galway, of Irish cities, was not a Norseman's settlement. Throughout the long wars and counter-wars with the English foe and the alien English life, the town was many times alternately absorbed by native life and reconquered for the alien. Even Galway still bore its famous inscription above its city gate not three centuries ago. "O Lord," it read, "deliver us from the fury of the O'Flaherties." Law, at first, forbade even the entrance of the 'Irishry' into the towns and then later decreed that no Irishman should trade with another. The towns were to remain English, and later, Protestant, and

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the merchant-burghers who flourished in them must remain of English blood and habit. 175 361

All that, of course, has long since vanished. The Irish have occupied the towns of their own land, their blood and habit hold sway and fashion urban commerce in the towns and cities. The change has been a slow and durable growth, flowing on beneath the surface of political and cultural strife. But like all growth it has been a process of incorporation, too. Today, to a casual eye, the shops, the commerce, the social life of the Irish town is much like that of all modern western Europe.

Such is the history, briefly put, which has provided the scene that interests the social anthropologist. It is in this scene that he can inquire into the bonds this conquest has created. He can appraise through them the factors which make up the countryman's participation in the larger world. Many fields for investigation present themselves in this connection. Townsmen and countrymen are now equally part, each in his own way, of that whole we name Irish society. From his own vantage each acts toward the other and builds up a relationship with him in such a way as to determine in some degree the form of that whole. This relation, an instance of the age-old reciprocity between town and country, invites our examination. 369

In Ireland today, one can see this relation most definitely and most significantly in the ties between shopkeeper and countryman. In the west and south

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369 of the Free State, at least, the landlord is gone and the true big farmer is rare. The town's hinterland is the world of the small farmers. And the town lives by its connection with the social order to which the countryman is attached. One need probe only a little way beneath the surface of conventionalities to learn that the connection is much more than the economics of distribution and exchange.

366 In the first place, the shop is also the seat of a
347 familistic identification, very like that of land and
369 farm. Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least
342 in number, than any comparable European nation. A very large proportion of her population lives by retail trade. But one must not think of these shops, so numerous in every Irish town, as great department stores, or as units in a country-wide chain. The former, of course, do exist in cities, and the latter, called multiple-shops, are a new invasion. They have little place as yet in the smaller towns. The typical shop is a less imposing affair. It supports, normally, only the family which works it.

Such a shop is most often a small two-story building. The ground floor is evenly divided between the business premises and the household kitchen. In front, a single step in from the street, a single deep room, whose width is that of the building's front, houses counter, shelves, shop-stock and money-till. The business of a lifetime goes forward in this room. In back, a flagstone-floored kitchen with an open hearth duplicates, on

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a more elaborate scale perhaps, the country farm 366
house kitchen. Like its country counterpart it is the 347
seat of family life. 369
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Upstairs, a front room facing the street is transformed, by family portraits, an ornamental mantle and a piece or two of good mahogany, into a ceremonial parlour. Behind this, range the bedrooms of the family. Perhaps, in affluence and refinement there is an upstairs sitting-room as well. For the shop is no mere place of business. It is first of all a household, of which one section and one only is devoted to the world of affairs.

The family which this household houses and 443
supports, in the majority of cases, works the shop 369
in much the same way that the family of the farmer 593
works the land. It conducts its business as a united corporation in which all members may take a hand and each have his place. Husband and wife tend the counter together and between them shopkeeping is divided; sons and daughters work as shop-assistants, as long as they remain at home. Only when affluence lifts the shop to importance and dignifies the shopkeeper with the title and station of merchant, expanding his business to wholesaling, is this arrangement greatly modified.

Yet, self-sufficient as this familistic shop-world 369
is, the countryman has many a connection with it. 443
It lives its own quiet life and plies its own trade so different from the farmer's work upon the farm. Town life breeds its own sentiment and weaves its

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369 own bonds, making of the townsmen a community
443 of conduct, feeling and values. But, nevertheless, despite this isolating process which shuts the countryman out, he is not at all remote. The first great tie, and the obvious one, is the economic. The country-dwellers buy the shop goods which move across the townsmen's counters and bring in the moneys realized in fair and market in exchange for retail goods.

But the economic tie is not sufficient, in Irish life, for permanence. Time and assimilation have woven a full social pattern round it. The pattern is really an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order. The market town fills its role as a metropolis of native sentiment in that extension.

There is a saying in the towns of Ireland that summarizes well the movements of town life. "The country-people flock into the towns," they say, "and the townspeople all die out of them." A moment's investigation bears out the fact. Though the town, too, is a familistic world, like the countryside, it differs in that it is a world in slow movement. Generation after generation, a new family sets up shop or public-house, flourishes or fails and then passes on out of the town's life; pressed from behind by the vigour of new country blood or graduated upward economically and socially into the professions. Some families withstand the movement a long time; here and there one can point to

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a century or more of burgher succession. Others 369
have known a more rapid change of station down- 443
ward or upward in a single generation. But all of them together can feel the compelling sweep of movement which is part of town life.

Is it really the countryman's vigour that sweeps thus through the Irish towns? I know that is the usual explanation, where such a situation in town and urban life exists. Much has been written in Ireland and in all modern countries about the debilitating effect of urban and near-urban life. It is the fashion to lament the onward sweep which fills the towns and cities with fresh blood, names and faces and pushes out the old. Landmarks change out of recognition; the old families disappear mysteriously, and one can cry out that a new barbarian flood is sweeping away the life's blood of the educated urban classes.

But such a view is very blind. It is astigmatic from a too close looking upon the immediate, instant case. It neglects entirely the organization of human behaviour and sentiment, unreasoned and unplanned though it be, that makes our human societies. It confounds the force of ordered change with weakness and decay.

Nowhere would the view fail worse than in southern Ireland. The countryman who presses in upon the townsman does not drive him out through superior vigour, nor does the townsman fade away in weak decay. Each is caught in a social

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369 pattern which fashions many lifetimes and their desires, ambitions, achievements and failures. History and habit have wrought a series of pathways almost as definite as those of a termite's nest; but history and habit care little which termite follows them. Vigour, if it exists, can only be measured in the ease with which the path-follower travels along his course, and the change which his passing makes upon it.

I am sure I shall be accused of a thorough-going, even mystical determinism in human affairs. But let us follow the countryman and the towns-dweller and see wherein my heresy is justifiable and wherein we may temper it.

In the communities my colleagues and I came
369 to know, the country customer who brings his
443 trade into the shop does so in response to the ties
571 of kinship and friendliness. He 'goes with' a shopkeeper or publican, most often, as he 'coors' with his country friends. This is not his only incentive but it is his principal one. The social order of which he is a part embraces the town-dwelling shopkeeper; trade follows friendship. Many indeed are the shops which rely almost entirely upon this 'family trade'. Others know it to be the base upon which they must build.

But, we remember, the relation of kinship and friendship is reciprocal. The shopkeeper is bound in his turn to his 'family trade'. He owes obligation to the 'country cousins' who buy from him. In

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this way, a durable bond is created which exists 369
over and above the economics of retail trade. It is 443
of the kind that the countryman understands best; 571
it charges the relationship with interest for him; it infuses it with sentiment, habit and reciprocal force. The shopkeeper, too, can rely upon it. Even though he be caught in the demands it makes upon him, he, nevertheless, can rely heavily upon its expectancies.

The ordinary modest retail shop or pub lives upon this tie. In many cases the tie infuses business with a social content which becomes co-extensive with the distributive function the shop performs in economic exchange. If the tie is weakened, if it dies, the shop weakens and dies too. And with it dies the family which derives livelihood, status and much of its corporate existence from that shop. For possession of the shop gives status and prestige and marks one's social place for the family, as much as does the 'farm of land' in the countryside. The family's 'name is on the shop' in much the same way as the country family's name is 'on the land'. In fact, almost symbolically, that name is literally [551] on the shop, for in Ireland most often a single word —the family name—rather than any announcement of the type of retail trade carried on—hangs over the door to proclaim the shop's existence to the buying public. And when the 'family trade' dies, that name dies out of the shop world with it.

Business, then, in the market-towns is no frantic

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search for better qualities at lower prices. It is first of all a technique in social relations. It demands an orientation to a social order, that of the countryman-customer. Customer and retailer are brought together, not primarily through a cheap price nor an eye-compelling package, but through personalities and through blood and marriage bonds.

In this social context, the interests of shopkeeper and farmer coincide. If the shop is to live it must renew its ties with the rural hinterland; if the farm on the land is to grow in status and strength it must ally itself in a higher and wider social sphere, and in so doing, provide well for its dispersed children. This coincidence of interest determines much of the shopkeeper's life; through it the countryman has assimilated the town to his own way of life.

The town represents that higher and wider sphere for the countryman. Its life is that of a higher station in life; it is a centre of metropolitan prestige. So the farmer can come to send his son into a shop, as he sends a daughter 'into the land' in match-making, to provide him with a better place in life, to make a gentleman of him. The shopkeeper may need a young and pliable assistant in his business. He must have one upon whose kindred he can depend for extension of his trade. He takes in the farmer's son.

In this way, the first of the social bonds that unite the shop and the pub to the rural hinterland

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is created. A pathway is created along which human 369
lives can move and play out their roles in social 443
life. One of the farmer's sons can hope, with luck 571
and affluence, to become a shop-assistant in the market-town. The portion he receives upon the dispersal of the farm family may well take the form of such a start in life. The farmer-father pays the 467
boy's apprentice bond. 443

Formal apprenticeships still flourish in Irish 369
country towns and nowhere better than in the shop 571
or pub. The country boy is bound in custom and in law to his new employer and learns the alien way of business and social habit under a master's eye. Eventually he may succeed to a shop of his own, but first he 'must serve his time'. In this, rural Ireland has preserved an older form and charged it with its own peculiar content. The town-bred lad is seldom hired; he brings no rural kindred with him. Then, too, he is neither so impressionable nor so easy to control. The country lad, at first, is both. The shopkeeper taps the social order of the countryside in the person of his fledgling 'prentice boy.

But time brings ordered change in social life, in 369
the town no less than in the countryside. The boy 443
grows up; he serves his time. He acquires the 571
experience and the technique which fit him for 166
the role for which his parents paid his apprentice bond. Unless he is to retain a subordinate and unimportant place as shop-assistant for a lifetime, he must move on. He must acquire a shop himself.

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369 And so he does, if he humanly can, and to that end
443 his savings go.

571 So much for the farmer's son. In his person, he
166 represents a rough one-half of the countryside's invasion of the town. Yet he has sisters, too, at home upon the farm. The attraction of metropolis is no less great for them; they, too, must be provided for in the dispersal of the family upon the land. And with them goes the rural social order and the ties of kinship and community.

In this fact one can see another rough half of the
369 rural tide that sweeps into the ranks of business in
443 the towns. The shop-world taps its country hinter-
571 land again in the persons of the daughters of the
584 farms. The farmer must, if he can, marry his daughter off well; prestige and alliance go with her and the dowry which she carries as her portion. The shopkeeper must renew his ties with the countryside with each new generation, if the shop is to survive. In this coincidence of interest, again, a great deal of the marriage custom of the town revolves. The world of shops and pubs is caught within the ordered mechanism of change called *match-making*, in the same way as is the 'farm of land'.

Currently in country towns, the 'match' is the accepted type of marriage for publican and shopkeeper as much as it is for the farmer. The more sophisticated and more affluent shopkeepers, those who are close, or would like to be, to the higher

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status of merchant, would repudiate the rustic word. They would tell you that they make instead 'proper marriage settlements'. But their humbler fellow-tradesmen, whose shops have not such pretensions, are closer to the soil. They would admit what is for both of them the fact.

Consequently, one can find in the town, round the shop and pub, the same reorganization of human relationships that goes forward when the country match transfers land and household command to a marrying son. But there is one great difference. In the town one must bring a country-woman in.

If one analyses the census of marriage, age and occupation in the Free State made in 1926, one can see how general this reorganization is. It lies behind the statistics of a great part of the country. Without it, one cannot explain the striking uniformity that gives a roughly similar grouping of individuals by age, by sex, by marital conditions, in all the towns, except the large cities, of southern Ireland. For instance, shop-assistants everywhere are young unmarried men and women. Entrance into the ownership of shop and public-house takes place at the same age as does entrance into married state. Though the towns show no such marked extremes as do the country districts, marriage is long delayed and bachelorhood and spinsterhood are very frequent by world standards. One need not be a demographer or statistician to be struck with the parallel, and to wonder at such coincidence between

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369 the lives of the followers of occupations so dissimilar
443 as agriculture and retail commerce.

571 For this statistical correspondence overlies the
584 facts of social life. It merely expresses numerically the community of custom between country and town. If one cares to probe deeper, among the lives whose events the census records, one finds the custom at the root of human behaviour and human sentiment. One lays bare the outline of the balance in which the lives of townsmen and countrymen co-mingle in a larger whole.

For setting up a shop means setting up a family; it means marriage and the bringing-in of a country girl. There are exceptions, of course; custom is only a general imperative. Nevertheless, the country match is the generality.

Most often, the shopkeeper-father turns over the shop to the son who is to succeed him when that son marries. The daughter-in-law is the daughter of a farmer of the countryside. Her people 'walk the shop' as they would 'walk the land' in a country match. Long negotiation equates the dowry they give with the shop, its stock, its debts and its prospects. The two families cast the agreement into proper legal form. The shopkeeper transfers his control and his ownership to the son and the son's wife. The other shop children are dispersed and are provided for, where possible. The older generation retires; and a new family is established in business in the town.

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This is a smooth and orderly transition. The shop keeps its identification with human ties unbroken, from parents to children. It renews them once again, outward into the rural hinterland, in the persons of kindred the young wife brings 'into the shop'. The shop's life blood is renewed: literally, in the persons of the new master and mistress; socially, in the extensions of kinship and alliance; and economically, because trade follows personal ties.

The erstwhile apprentice boy, the farmer's son, who sets up 'on his own', follows the same course and makes a comparable transition. His marriage and his setting up his own shop most often coincide. His savings and the bride's fortune make possible, together, many a start in the life of the market-towns. Money buys the shop, credit may stock its shelves, but it is the social alliance, contracted in a country marriage, which supplies the trade upon which business rests.

One might ask here if the role of the sexes is not reversible. Might not the young man marry-in into the shop, and the girl rise from assistantship to full-fledged ownership? Naturally, such a course might well be taken; a social order allows many channels. It has not the rigidity of formal law. Or the girl may inherit a shop, or receive one, in the towns, as her particular portion. For to set up a daughter in a small shop is to provide well for her and to assure her station for her lifetime; even

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369 though little wealth will come to her through that
443 shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases,
571 these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a
584 finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly
369 universal occurrence where a society preserves some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural
443 necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic
571 order. In India, for instance, it is immediately
582 recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

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gain a foothold in the world of shops. For that, the countryman is willing, currently, to pay about twice the usual dowry-price. 369 443 571 582

And in his willing adherence to custom, stability is achieved. The relationship between class and class, like that in the countryside between kindred and kindred, attains some permanence of form. The bride carries social bonds with her; in this case she carries them upward and townward into the shops and pubs of metropolis.

Her brother, on the other hand, carries with him another social function, in his capacity of male. His place is that of a potential fatherhood in a line of patrilineal descent. He carries on a corporate name upon the land or shop. Where he cannot inherit, in such descent, a sure place among his fellows, he must win it. The man is the bread-winner who carves out a place for his line; round him the family must be grouped. The woman, on the other hand, is the uniting force within the grouping. In this dichotomization of social role between the sexes, the Irish town and the Irish countryside, like the Church to which they both subscribe, are agreed. Hypergamy takes its form in the agreement. Along the lines laid down by the social bonds of apprenticeship and hypergamous marriage, the world of the market-town and the rural hinterland are united; along the same lines the flow of the country-people townward moves.

Once again, then, we see how complete the in-

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369 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives
443 on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he
571 be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must
582 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

This order, one must not forget, is nothing
182 esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than
369 it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire
443 among the constituent human beings, both make
571 it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern
584 into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

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to cook, sew, keep house, and she hasn't a lot of grand ideas in her head that the town girls have. When she comes to town, she feels she's got on in the world; while the town girl will only be wanting more than her husband can give her, or she won't do her share." 182 369 443 571 584

The speaker was a townsman, born and bred, but one can see that he endorsed the system heartily. He was an older man who had made his adaptations to social life successfully.

For others, for those whom the life of the town has caught up and who have acquired 'grand ideas', as the last speaker called them, adaptation is more difficult. The town, as I have said, engenders its own near-urban values. These come to conflict with those which unite the shop world to its countryside. Thus ambition is born, which means a severance of old ties. The ties become thwarting chains, and here and there a young man, caught within the pulls of two incompatible forces, becomes a bitter and scornful rebel.

One such young man, who found himself swept back into the ways of the market-towns after a brief flight into larger horizons in Dublin, fought against the fate that closed him in. He tells his own story: "This town is very dull. I don't understand what brings you here. The trouble with everybody here is that they are all misfits and that they are all in jobs they loathe. Successful men give you good counsel: they tell you to work hard and forget your

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182 troubles. But that is because they are in occupations
369 which they like. There is something glamorous
443 about being a solicitor, and everybody comes to
571 you. I would like to have been one. There will be
584 opportunity here when the older men clear out.

"I went off and studied in Dublin for a long while. Then my father died and my mother was stricken with paralysis and I had to come back here and work behind the counter, which I loathe. There's no one else now but my sister. Most shopkeepers make out through their family trade; and the only thing for me to do now is to marry some rich woman in from the country and then all her friends will come in. If you want to get married here there is nothing in it at all but to look out for a country girl. If you don't want to make a fool of yourself and go in for politics, you have to depend on your friends and your wife's friends, and if you can, you've got to marry a girl from the country. Then she'll bring in all her people for miles round, with all their relatives and their married families, and they're the ones that will buy your flour and sugar and tea. You can't get on without them."

182 In this rebellious young man's lament, another
369 aspect of the life of the towns appears and takes its proper place. The social order which demands the maintenance of personal bonds between countryman and townsman carries with it the seeds of change as well. The young man I have just quoted is caught within the very wheels of this change. A

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new time and place bring new adaptations in 182
human lives and with them new values which con- 369
flict with and destroy the old.

In that fact, simply, lies the explanation of the movement by which the "country-people flock into the towns and the townspeople all die out of them".

The rebellious young man shows well in his own history the point at which change of habit drives the townsman and the countryman apart. After years of near-urban life the townsman loses touch. He can no longer meet the rural ways; he is trained in a different habit; he develops a different turn of mind. He is no longer fitted socially to meet the countryman on the old terms and to respond to the demands the social bonds connecting him with the rural hinterland put upon him. If he is born in the town, a second-generation migrant, he is all the more alien. Metropolis has won his mind, his heart, his soul. New vistas of advancement and new personal ties grow up which attract him further and further into the town's life. The bonds with the countryside are broken; they fall away before a new orientation.

So the shop dies out. The family of which the shopkeeper is a part moves onward. If it is affluent and ambitious, its members rise into the professions perhaps, or seek larger worlds to conquer. If it is not, then oblivion swallows it. It seeks a new place in the ranks of the town in which the countryside

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182 has no part. New blood fills its old place along the
369 converging lines of shops and pubs which make up the market-town. The new blood succeeds by virtue of the same ties which originally brought success to the first immigrants from the countryside. It brings with it new bonds of friendship and kinship.

This is a continual movement, a flow along definite pathways in which human lives work out their courses. The country family 'on the land', as we know, buds off with each new generation upon the farm. With the dispersed children go those relationships of a familistic order which unite the human beings in time and space. In this movement ever renewed, yet ever the same, the market-town is caught. Its shops, its pubs, its business life, the whole economic function it performs, flows with this movement.

369 I have described this relation between the
571 country and the town as though it had no other content than that of kinship bonds. This, of course, is a much too simple view. There are other pathways of success and there are other ties less intimate in nature. But one cannot understand these others till this first has been fully sketched out. For the bonds round kinship and friendship form the great all-pervading base to which all the others must be referred.

In this fact lies a new consideration. In retaining

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older custom and a more intense emotional and 369
purely social organization of life, Ireland may well 571
have preserved better than most nations of western civilization that unity of spirit which, underneath the surface of superficial strife, welds a nation into a single crucible. If the rationale of economic and social individualism with its attempted divorce between sentiment and logical self-interest seems lacking, the matter is no cause for lamentation or disdain. Who knows ultimately which is the better way? Each people seeks its own better union; unconsciously in social habit, consciously through religion, through politics, through detached and enlightened social thought. Either the conscious or the unconscious may be the more congenial, to nations as well as to individuals.

But danger lies in neglecting one entirely for the other. In the so-called Anglo-Saxon lands one feels that the unconscious organization of social habit has been neglected for the conscious. The logical has been too often mistaken for the ultimate. The all-powerful force of human sentiment has been neglected and too lightly regarded. We are prone to forget, with many an economist, that man not only does not, but cannot and will not, live by bread alone.

The social habit of rural Ireland entertains no such fallacy. In the light of this consideration, the rest of the adaptation of the countryman to his market-town acquires a depth of meaning which

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369 lifts it far beyond the plane of the mere economics
571 of the exchange of goods and the distribution of rural and urban products.

For example, a great deal has been said and
369 written about the so-called 'credit system' of rural
571 Ireland. Much indignation has been wasted pro
452 and con upon it. The term refers to the economics of retail distribution in the market-towns. The farmer is often chronically in debt to his shopkeeper. He must live upon credit from fair to fair, paying off a little of his debt from year to year with the price his cattle bring him, but seldom working himself entirely clear. Such a system of chronic indebtedness has analogues in other countries. In Ireland, many commissions have investigated it and many attempts to break its hold have been made. The shopkeeper has been called, sometimes, alas, with cause, a usurer, a 'gombeen-man'. His power as creditor is very great. Where, as here, the farmer-debtor is dependent for his shop-bought foods and farm materials upon the shop, and where no other source of credit exists, that power is, of course, well open to abuse. This is the old problem of equity, the rights of creditor and debtor, and the controls each may put upon the other. It interests us here because in it the countryman's way of life is deeply involved. Let us see what peculiar content his social order gives it.

Any credit system exists, the economist will tell

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you, upon a peculiar state of mind in which expectancies are roughly balanced. He calls it, sometimes, 'confidence'. Should all the debts be called in and all outstanding obligations mature at a single blow, the system would perforce come to an end. If 'confidence' fails, he will tell you, and a movement to dissolve the fiscal ties grows swift and strong, a crash results. The world has had bitter experience of this fact in recent years.

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Yet how little we know even today of that brittle and momentous thing we name 'confidence'! We have the word, but we have not yet decided to what factors it refers. Today we grope toward it in this way and that and wrangle endlessly about the means of creating and restoring it.

In the credit system of the market-towns of rural Ireland, the problem of confidence is a simpler one. Townsmen and countrymen have not yet reached the sophistication of using the word; but they are immediately concerned with the factors to which it refers in their special case. Those factors lie immediately before them, in the social habit which they both follow.

Thus, once the shop has established trade in the creation of the bonds uniting it to the countryside: through the 'family trade' of brothers, fathers, cousins, country wives and country 'prentice boys, that trade must be retained.

The shop must have a permanent expectancy of clientele; the farmer a permanent expectancy of

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receiving goods and shop articles necessary in the economy by which the farm family lives. The farmer cannot shop about, paying cash; his monetary income comes only periodically: largely in the spring and autumn fairs, to a lesser extent in weekly produce markets. Nor can the shopkeeper depend upon the casual passers-by, for their number is infinitely small. The needs of countryside and town are thus coincident.

In the countryside, I must repeat it once again, kinship and friendship, practically synonymous, provide the base for this coincidence. They make the same provision for the life of the town. They are reciprocal in nature; a favour given is a favour received. A good turn done, the 'friendly thing', creates the expectancy of reciprocity. On such a base a social relationship, reciprocal and permanent, is built.

So the permanence that each party demands is the permanence of social obligation. The credit system of the market-towns rests upon this base. In such a situation, the debt the farmer owes, like the fortune he gives in marriage, is a tangible monetary symbol of alliance and mutual obligation. To owe money is not merely to accept a convenience, for either townsman or countryman. To owe money is to accept a social obligation.

One can call this disposition the 'confidence' upon which the credit system of rural Ireland rests. Naturally, the relationship is not perfectly sym-

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metrical. The shopkeeper, as creditor, has the 369
whip-hand. As an urbanite, he has the superior 571
status. Yet he is no less under obligation to his 452
debtor.

Habit and sentiment weave amusing identifica- 369
tions round this social pattern. For example, to pay 571
off a debt entirely is perforce to dissolve the rela- 452
tionship. It is to destroy the mutuality of expecta- 626
tions. If one's debt is paid off one loses, not only a 578
customer, but a friend, quite literally. The ordinary small farmer would pay off all his debt only in a fit of anger. By so doing he would mean to break the tie completely and irrevocably. Consequently, he remains upon the shopkeeper's books indefinitely, paying off periodically bit by bit, but never working himself entirely clear. Should he do so, the shopkeeper would be fully warned. He would know his customer was about to carry his trade elsewhere, and to enter a new tie better suited to his desires.

But the shopkeeper is obligated, too, in his turn. He may not dun his customer heedlessly. To do so is to cast doubt upon the customer's ability or willingness, not to pay a money debt but to meet his obligation. It is in fact to call into question the social status which is his. If the shopkeeper errs in this nice tact, the debt is paid forthwith perhaps, but the relationship is broken.

Nor can he press even a just claim too far. He may often have to carry credit endlessly, in hope of better days. This is part of his obligation, and

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369 boycott awaits the offender or the usurper. To
571 carry the claim to court is of no avail; one cannot
452 these days foreclose on land in rural Ireland. Per-
626 haps eventually he might win the farmer's holding
578 from him, in satisfaction of his claim. But one must remember the farmer's 'name is on the land'. A whole kindred and the whole community with which the kindred is related become his bitter and dangerous enemies. In a familistic world that enmity endures for life and longer, even into the next generation.

If even then, in spite of this, the shopkeeper persists and grinds his debtor down, still another sanction closes in upon him. The countryman will make his last resort to age-old folk-belief. He will tell you, for instance, that the shopkeeper or publican dies out because the curses of men and women and the tears and prayers of broken families have wreaked a sure retribution. What better way indeed to express, in traditional mystical and quasi-religious terms, the force of social censure? The countryside can bring its whole traditional scheme of attitudes to bear upon the offender; it can justify the forces of social and personal action in the realm of the awesome mysteries of belief before which all must bow.

369 Thus one can see why, in folk-belief, money it-
571 self is evil. It is one of those mysterious powers
452 which can bring, as though of its own awful and
626 incomprehensible efficacy, both good and evil in its

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train. The finder of the 'crock of gold' is stricken down in the flush of discovery; the townsman who rises too high and waxes too arrogant in his wealth may soon be stricken, too, and his family and its shop or public-house seems mysteriously to melt away.

Nor is this the only instance in which the social order overlies the economic form of debt and shapes it to its purposes. The debt, like the dowry, can and does become a measure of status, too. It is a sign of one's ability to support that network of social obligation which gives one's self and one's family a place in social life. In this fact, too, lies 'confidence'. The debt descends with the land or the shop from father to son. It moves onward with the progression of the generations. Many a small farmer pays off bit by bit the family debt of a parent or relative. Social obligation, in which pride and sentiment are involved, long outlives the statute of limitations. In this disposition, religion, sentiment and custom coincide. Many a shopkeeper till recently has assisted a boy or girl to emigrate, in the sure knowledge that his or her remittances would eventually reach his money-till.

In the days of the British, a Royal Commission found itself mystified by this so-called 'honesty'. The debt to the landlord, in the form of rent, seemed to them an honest debt. Yet the countryman, often as not, scorned honesty in that direction; though he might bend his last efforts in what

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369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
452
626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
668 public life who has contributed so much to humour
443 and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

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the 1916 Rebellion, have other broad social classes 178
of what used to be called the 'Irishry' made a sub- 668
stantial contribution to organized political life, 443
though all of them figured well enough in patriotic rebellion. 1898 is the crucial date, because then the landlords were displaced in the management of local affairs. The older Grand Jury system, based upon large property qualifications, gave way to the elective County Councils.

At about the same time, land war had broken the last remaining ties between the landlords, as a class, and the social order of the countryside. The growth of the towns since the Famine had by then well established the new relation between the market-town and its rural hinterland which I have described. In the new situation, the shopkeeper and the publican could best represent the united interests of the social order of which they were, in their own way, an important part.

All nations infuse political forms with their own genius. The Irish were not slow to do so; they soon made their own infusion. The reciprocities of a familistic order, in which sentiment and habit found effective organization, were the materials they had at hand. The bonds between town and countryside provided channels through which the infusion could flow.

For, as I have tried to show you, the shop- 443
keeper-publican occupied then, and still does, a 661
strategic place in the organization of the country- 626

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443 side. From that point of vantage he could serve
661 many ends. His business depended upon the social
626 role he performed; the countryman expected favours for favours rendered. He knew best the direct personal approaches of social obligation. So, at first, geese and country produce besieged the new officers and magistrates; a favourable decision or a necessary public work performed was interpreted as a favour given. It demanded a direct and personal return. 'Influence' to the countryman was and is a direct personal relationship, like the friendship of the countryside along which his own life moves. Like money, 'influence' was a somewhat mysterious entity; it seemed to be a powerful agent for both good and evil. But its real content seemed understandable enough; it was an easily recognizable social bond.

Then, too, the shop and the pub was and is the countryman's metropolitan club. The man who worked it was a friend and kinsman, one of one's own kind. Near-urban prestige made him a superior, as one in touch with seats of power, fashion and law. But it made him no more, in the last analysis, than a *primus inter pares*. In all this, the conventional moralistic concept of public administration might well be little developed, on both sides. But there was much popular wisdom.

For the shopkeeper-publican dealt effectively first with the realities in which life, his own and his country constituents', is fashioned. To cry corrup-

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tion is to mistake the issue. To enforce a political 443
morality without emotional conviction would be 626
false conversion indeed. 661

Thus, the shopkeeper-publican-politician was a very effective instrument, both for the countryside which used him and for himself. He might perhaps exact buying at his shop in return for the performance of his elective duties, as his enemies charge: but he also saw to it that those duties were performed for the very people who wished to see them done. Through him, as through no other possible channel, Ireland reached political maturity and effective national strength. That strength persists today, despite superficial strife and internal growth and change. And it persists by virtue of its connection with the society from which it springs.

For a social order, we can see clearly now, is a 121
thing of very wide inclusions indeed. The same set 182
of dispositions runs right through, from the 'west room' of remote Luogh to the political life of the market-towns and cities of Ireland. In this study, for instance, we began our examination of the countryman's way of life with a discussion of 'old custom'—folklore and folk-belief. By now it is clear to you, I think, that 'old custom' is more than a dying survival of an age-old habit. It is part of a larger whole, a whole which in its total is co-extensive with the total-pattern of the life of which old custom is still a part. Our two original ex-

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121 amples, the 'west room' and 'the old man's curse',
182 which came up in the first lecture, lead one on to an analysis of the countryman's way of life. In its turn, that way of life yields one clue at least to the understanding of a nation and its people.

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VI

The Good People

In this last lecture we are finally ready to return to 538
'old custom'. Folklore is part of the social order 182
which we have been sketching out. Folk-custom and folk-belief, even though 'survivals' of an ancient day, have an important role in the life of the countryman. Something of that role I have already tried to show you. Ancient belief surrounded and reinforced the conventional division of labour. It gave point and interest to the necessary changes of social and family life. It helped provide sanctions and formulae of agreement in which the local community could pursue and regulate its unconscious organization of human lives. It cropped up again in the synthesis between the life of the town and that of the countryside.

What is it then that gives old custom and belief this power? What does it contain within itself that allows it to persist and outlive the centuries? The anthropologist Marrett said once: "Survivals are no mere wreckage of the past, but are likewise symptomatic of those tendencies of our common nature which have the best chance of surviving in the long run".

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182 The anthropologist must take note of such
538 'tendencies' in folklore. Consequently, rather than devote time to a description of folk-belief as it still exists, I prefer to attack such questions. In attacking them, I hope to proceed as we have done before. I shall try to treat folklore as it occurs in the life of the countryman and find the answers to our queries there.

538 In so doing, I must give warning that I must leave aside a good deal of the most picturesque elements of Irish folklore. Remnants of hero-tales, fragments of the sagas of Oisín and Fionn MacCumhaill and the Fianna are still to be heard sometimes upon the lips of the old people. A popular history, half-legend, commemorates patriots and the enemies they fought, and weaves itself round the monuments of the past which crowd the Irish landscape. Norman barons, Celtic chieftains, noble lines both native and alien throng the unwritten pages of this history and elbow for room with saints and martyrs, Cromwellian soldiers, moonlighters and 'ripparees', minstrel poets and hedge-schoolmasters of learning. A great many religious legends, in fact a whole popular hagiology, still survive, infusing local piety with romantic glamour. International tales, like those Grimm recorded first in Germany, traceable from India and Siberia to the remotest Irish coasts, can still be heard, regarbed in a traditional Gaelic dress. But all these are a popular literature, unwritten perhaps, but

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none the less evolved in response to canons of 538
literary expression. They have been dealt with by more competent commentators than I.

I must give warning, too, that I am not equipped to give you the usual collector's report. I can give little account of the marvellous fauna and flora that filled the Irish countryside till recently. Better collectors than I have done ample justice to many a headless black dog that haunts a road in country districts and to many a *péist* or *broc-shidhe* that dwells in lake and cave. Nor can I regale you with the marvellous or fearsome deeds of 'weasels', 'hares' and 'worms' that clothe a fairy power in animal form. Likewise the whole great field of charms and nostrums, magic cures, lucky and unlucky deeds and days and things, is a world of detail into which I cannot lead you very far, except in furtherance of the purpose of this discussion.

For in attempting to relate folklore to social life, interest lies not so much in the minutiae of particular folk-belief as in the part the scheme of thought they make up plays in customary conduct. The problem is not so much just what is believed, but the effect of and the reason for such belief.

In such a discussion, some preliminary definition of the folklore we deal with is necessary. The usual definition is very loose: the unrecorded traditions of the people as they appear in popular fiction, custom and belief, magic and ritual. I prefer rather to narrow the field down, and to leave aside the

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538 historical question involved. But even then, we are left with a very broad field of inquiry. All the acts and rituals associated with belief in supernatural powers not directly recognized and regulated by the official doctrine of the Church remain for us to examine.

776 538 The chief of these powers is usually called the 'fairies'. The country-people have many other names for them which they prefer. But, most often, they feel no need of distinguishing them by particular names. They call them simply 'them'. In the pronoun they summarize both their nameless power and their immanence. No greater specification is necessary where such powers crowd so closely in upon one's life. The acts and rituals which spring out of this belief are similarly broad in scope. They range from minor doings and turns of speech of daily life to the most hidden practices of rare and deadly black magic.

Perhaps the native name gives the best definition. The whole fairy-cult is under attack these days. The forces of Church and school are pitted against it. It is nothing more than 'pisherogues', the countryman will tell you. The word is usually translated as 'superstition', but the English word contains too great a bias for us to use it. The 'pisherogues' are much more than ignorant superstitions. In the light of an acquaintance with the practices of the world's peoples, they are easily understandable in much broader terms. They form

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a symbolic order overlying the values of social life 776
and clothing them in emotional terms in much the 538
same way as do unofficial dogmas and unofficial, non-logical cosmologies among all peoples, not excepting those of our own urban civilization of today. In that, they respond to recognizable sociological and psychological necessities. In its own way, Yankee New England is as fertile of such non-logical beliefs as is rural Ireland. Rural Ireland is different only in that she has preserved an older and more ancient terminology in which to build her particular symbolism. She has her own genius in the matter which expresses the age-long continuities of her culture.

I think you will perhaps understand me better if I go on to sketch out the symbolism which the 'pisherogues' contain.

First, one must notice that the Irish countryman 781
is a very devout man. His life is ordered in his 789
adherence to his religion. Much of his habit of 776
mind and his view of the world responds to his Faith. He is a devout and practising Catholic. But he is also devout in another direction too, very often. Just as there is room in his mind and heart for patriotic fervour along with religious zeal, so is there room for fairy belief. Sometimes, of course, these devotions may conflict; but ordinarily they need not. They can intermesh and support one another.

789
Thus in his daily life, one finds the countryman 776

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789 carrying out many acts which are related both to
776 his Church and his fairy belief. His allegiance to the first is, of course, definitely greater, but he has room for both. One finds him, for instance, 'blessing' himself on setting out for the day's work, or on beginning a trip or a new undertaking such as the potato-planting, with two purposes in mind. If you ask him, you learn, first, that he dedicates his day or his enterprise to God. He throws himself upon divine protection. Secondly, he seeks that protection to a definite end. He hopes to ward off thus the forces of evil and ill-luck. He hopes to assure himself the enterprise will prosper. He guards himself against molestation from 'the good people'.

That does not mean he is motivated by fear even when 'the good people' are concerned. His devotion springs from deeper and wider emotional sources than mere fear. Rather he makes his peace with the fairies; he pays them their due. His religion is *the* Faith to him, and his acts are primarily, first and foremost, acts of religious devotion. But the popular mind is not distressed very much with logical inconsistencies, and somewhere in the act, very secondarily, of course, may lurk the other lesser faith he holds.

776 Thus, in one aspect, the 'pisherogues' occupy, like nearly all folklore, the border-line between the natural, profane, mundane world and that of the supernatural, the sacred, and the religious. It is

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along this border-line that we must trace the 776
countryman.

I say fear is not his chief motive. For the good people are not entirely fearsome. I have often heard countrymen, steeped in the old lore, say, "They'll leave you alone if you don't be in their way". One makes a great mistake to think of any holder of popular belief as a person ridden with superstitious fear, unable to make his way through ordinary life. As one countryman told another collector, Lady Gregory, in the days before the war: "If we knew how to be neighbourly with them, they would be neighbourly and friendly with us".

It is a question, then, of giving 'them' their due. 776
Where older custom survives, certain precautions 626
must be taken. You are probably all familiar with many of them. Food and water must be left for them at night. Dirty water must not be thrown out at night. For the night is a 'lonely time'; 'you wouldn't like to be out in it'. The fairies are abroad. Were the water thrown out, there is danger that it might dirty them as they pass along a fairy-path or make a nocturnal visit. Then they will be angry, and disaster will follow. A hen, a pig, a cow, even a child may sicken and die.

But this anger of theirs, you see, results from direct affront. And that affront lies, really, in improper conduct. In the case of dirty water, it lies directly in improper conduct of the household.

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776 Throwing out dirty water is slovenly and bad
626 management. The community condemns it as much as do the fairies who might be wetted.

Consequently, one can begin to see the existence of a projection of values into the world of belief. Dangerous as 'they' are, they bring good luck and prosperity as well, if they receive their proper due. Their favour follows proper conduct of the household and good household management in daily life. Thus one finds such statements possible as the following, in which an old fellow of North Clare, an authority on such matters, speaks of 'their' nocturnal visits:

"They very often put up at a house in the night. They would come to certain houses, and if they liked the house and it was good and clean and everything swept for them, they would come often to the same house, and that house would be prosperous. If it was dirty and they found no comfort in it they would not stop. They'd go to strong houses like the Careys' [he named a comfortable, neat family of small farmers in the neighbourhood]. You often see a little old woman going along the road and stopping in asking for a bite to eat, and you might give it to her, and she looking to see was it a good house for them to stop in it."

Thus many tales told of the good people point a moral. In this light such a common tale as that of the herdsman's house is readily understandable. The herdsman, as a landless man, is regarded by

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the small farmers as being a 'cut' below them- 776
selves; consequently, his untidiness is a byword 626
among them. One version of the story goes, in synopsis, as follows:

"Many families moved into a herdsman's place, but they were all chased out of it. Finally, one family moved in, cleaned up the house, and a 'paving path' round it. A little old woman visits the wife, borrows a cooking-pot, and is similarly well treated. In gratitude she explains that the woman of the house and her husband will always prosper and never be molested, because they alone of all the families had cleaned up the place where 'they' walk."

In this way the values of daily life are projected [181]
into and reinforced by the supernatural world. The 626
same state of affairs holds good even in the con- 576
vention of social intercourse. The vocabulary of the 152
countryman is full of homely pieties. On entering a house the proper greeting is "God bless all here". On coming upon another at work, one says, "God bless the work". Similarly, "God spare you the health" is 'put on' anyone who 'coors' with you. Any praise of person, child, or animal is accompanied with a "God bless it"; any mention of unpleasantness or danger is followed with some such homily as "God bless the mark", and so on. If one omits such pieties, one is sure to rouse resentment in the listeners. For one must remember that emotion supports these conventions. But the

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152 resentment springs from other causes, too. These
576 formulae are known to the folklorist as 'protective
626 formulae'. He means by that that they have reference to the lesser faith as well as to the greater that the countryman holds.

751 If you ask the countryman why he uses such terms, he will give you several answers. First, "You
152 have right to do it, because you owe it to God",
576 and then, second, "It will bring good luck, it will
626 keep 'them' away". For the countryman, both answers are true. The phrases are both acts of pious invocation and protective devices warding off evil. Their omission is really dangerous. It puts the person or thing so neglected in jeopardy; the negligent speaker is open to suspicion of an evil intent. Thus there are many stories which attribute disease, disaster and death to such omissions. In this way again, persons and things of value to the countryman are brought into the scope of his beliefs and attitudes. The forces which affect them are brought into a shape in which he can understand them and in which he can cope with them.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this process
776 is to be found in the way in which the goods by which the countryman lives are brought into his belief. The good people affect the household and all its goods. They 'take' those things which one values, round which one's interest and sentiments, as a member of the farm-working family, are centred. One Galway woman phrased this idea to

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Lady Gregory: "They have cows, and sheep, and 776
chickens out in the raths just the way we have them with us. For it is they that take them when the bad luck is on us and then whatever we do won't stop them." The 'other people', as they are also called, are not very different in this regard from ordinary mortals; they surround themselves with much the same materials of life.

So, then, when ill-luck descends upon him, the 234
countryman knows something at least of its nature, 776
enough to allow him to cope with it. Take the 789
example of butter. Butter is an important staple of farm diet; it is of great interest to all the family group. Yet the making of butter, especially with a hand-churn, is a notoriously tricky process. Should it fail to come in the churning, the matter is one of grave concern. One woman of North Clare put the matter very clearly when she said: "And queer things do happen to butter, and it's a fact it often wouldn't come and you don't know why. You'd be trying every way you could and still you'd be without it but for what your friends would give you."

But in that event, the countryman is not left helpless. His belief provides him with a sure knowledge of what the trouble is, and of what may be done about it. The fairies have 'taken' the butter and must be induced to bring it back. Many of the tales he has heard year after year attest to this taking. For instance, here is the synopsis of a story

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234 776 789 told by a Clare farmer of friends of his, whose house he named:

"Two men return from a fair to the house of one 234 of them to have breakfast. There the woman was 776 churning, but no butter would come. The first of 789 the men suggested maybe they [the men] were 539 holding it up, and they left the house, but with no result, for when they returned there was still no butter. Upon finding out that an old woman, a stranger, had borrowed a bit of milk the day before, the first man closed the doors, took a ploughshare and held it in the turf fire. Soon there came a knock at the door, and after the third knock the woman of the house went to it. Then an old woman's hand passed a jug of milk through the crack of the door and a voice said: 'put this back in the churn'. She did so, and immediately all the milk turned to good butter."

But the farmer knows, too, that the fairies do not 776 always work alone. There is often a human agency 754 involved along with theirs. Here one enters the really dangerous 'pisherogues', the practices of wicked magic. A human being may perform a rite or omit a precaution in such a way as to bring about a visitation of ill-luck and disaster. He may transfer disease and sickness from his own farm to the next, he may steal the butter of another's churn, he may destroy, steal, maim and kill by inducing the supernatural powers to commit the havoc.

776 789 But sometimes the human being who brings

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about such a visitation upon another does so un- 776
intentionally, innocent of evil intent. A person can 789
be either lucky or unlucky; he may tap a fairy [777]
power without meaning to. Thus one humorous story, a favourite yarn of the fairy-lore, found widely over Ireland, relates the misadventures of one rash fellow:

"A man that was usually drunk was going by a 789
fort one night and he heard 'them' talking in it, and 776
saying, 'I'll take half of it and let you have the 539
other.' 'I'll have all of it', shouted my boy-o, never thinking. When he got home, his wife was making butter, but she couldn't get any to come. But now she tried again, and it came in and filled the churn twice over and ran over the floor. There was a big farmer near by, and it was all his butter she was getting. She was an honest woman and knew the butter wasn't hers and she wanted to make it known she hadn't anything to do with it, so she told the priest about it."

Other things than butter are so taken, of course. 776
Cattle figure prominently in folk belief. Cattle, as 789
we know, are very important to the countryman. 233
The time of calving is a crucial event in farm-family life. Consequently, precautions must be taken; danger is abroad, and rites must be performed. If cattle fall sick, other rites drive off the threatening good people and restore the cow to health. Fairy-tales are full of the taking of cattle by the people of the raths.

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755 Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well,
776 bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take
[233] anything from hens to men and women. When they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless, he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper and friend of former years. The vitality has gone out of him or her. The country-people can believe that 'they' have spirited away the real person and left in his place "some spent old man that they had with them for a long time". The real person is 'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not
[753] mean that they do not recognize what we might call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too well, from bitter experience. It means only that they have an explanation for it that infuses it with the associations they have about their belief.

776 For the belief in changelings, about which you all have heard a great deal, has its root in the fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die
[761] are taken, except the old people". Only for them is death the natural course of events; all others have fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

776 Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy
183 belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by
82 any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

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of an emotionally charged explanatory scheme. 776
The trouble overtaking them becomes interpret- 183
able for him; he knows what has happened and is 82
in some measure ready to take the necessary steps. The fate of his goods and his fellows affects him vitally, it upsets the attachments he feels. But belief is common property; it is given to him and held for him by that community of his fellows of which he is a part. It is a socially held ideology to which he gives credence and in which he is dependent upon his fellows for ways and means, for corroboration, for solace.

But this ideology is much more than a mere in- 776
terpretative device. Certain anthropologists have 183
tried to see in magic and magic belief a groping, primitive science; but the concept has failed them if pressed very far. For the fairy faith enforces definite behaviour upon the countryman; it lays down rites and practices which he must perform. If he is to recover his goods that have been taken, restore his threatened animals, friends or children, he must follow a definite course. That course is laid down for him again by his community of belief and habit.

If we examine the course he must adopt to com- 776
bat ill-luck and disaster, we see a new incorporation 789
into belief of the things he values. In cures, nostrums, and other means of combating evil, the goods upon which he and his fellows are dependent and to which they are attached are once more

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776 brought into the scope of belief. They become
789 repositories of 'power'..They come to carry in their own substance the same supernatural efficacy for good or evil which belongs to the good people.

754 So, when the good people strike, the countryman
776 who still follows the old folklore is not unprepared.
789 If butter fails to come, for instance, he can take a hearth-coal and sear the bottom of the churn. He can apply iron in a variety of forms; for "there is great power in iron". He can use a hazel-stick, of the kind used in driving cattle, to cure cattle, or to give relief from sickness. He can ward off the disease that has struck his farm or household by transferring the dead thing to another's land, thus forcing the evil 'penalty' to follow it. Or, even more simply, he can merely transfer an egg, a potato, the hearth ashes, of his own threatened household to another's land or garden, and the danger goes with them. These practices drive off the 'good people'.

Similarly, when any of the household goods fall into another's possession, there is danger ahead for the household whose integrity is so broken. If butter fails, borrowed hearth-coals, or tools, or milk may hold the cause. One has merely to find the missing bit of goods, restore it to its rightful place, and thus restore the breach through which the good people have made their dangerous entrance into the life of one's family group and its possessions.

Naturally, then, transfer of this sort is dangerous

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to the persons to whose land the object is transferred. Consequently, the fearsome 'pisherogues' of black magic often take this form. An egg, a potato, a wand of hazel or thorn mysteriously found in one's own garden is evidence of witchcraft, and danger for one's land and stock and family. That the reason ascribed to the outbreak of ill-luck may be arrived at after the fact, makes it none the less compelling. Belief is a social habit which events confirm.

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I shall give you two examples, one of them about a dead thing, and another where simple, homely household objects come to have supernatural power. The first is the account a shopkeeper in a country town gave of a countryman-customer of his. "A countryman came into the shop one day and I asked him how things were going. Bad, said he, he was after losing three cows. I asked how was that, and Martin said it was the 'pisherogues'. He was working down in the bog and found the carcass of a cow there. What did you do with it? I asked him. He left it there, said himself. He was not going to move it for fear of the 'pisherogues'. Didn't they carry it there to put the curse on him, and wasn't it the next week his own cows sickened and died? . . . Then I was asking him, why didn't you get a vet, man? Sure, he said, why should I throw good money after a vet, and I knowing very well what happened to them?"

The second example is an account of disaster and

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776 its happy termination from a farmer who told the
789 story in a traditional vein, but whose own record of
754 actuality it is. I might say that the role of the curate
[193] in the episode was probably very different from that which the countryman imagined it to be.

"A fellow he knows was hilling potatoes and he got three young fellows to help him. Each of them found an egg in the garden, one a hen's egg, the second a goose egg, the third a turkey's egg. [He told this with great dramatic effect.] Well, the man hadn't any poultry on his farm at all.

"The boys went home and told their mothers, and the women told other women about it till it got all round the parish. The curate heard of it and one day he went over to the farmer and
[793] stopped in. They talked about all sorts of other things, and finally the curate said, I am sorry for you. Why? said himself. Because you are going to have bad luck. And he told him about the eggs.

"Well, the farmer had terrible hardships. His stock died on him, he'd go out in the morning and find his ewes dead on their backs with their legs in the air and lambs dropped dead out of their wombs. He had five cows in calf and after that spring he had only one cow left. A pig died on him, and his sister took sick, like to die herself she was. [After a
[793] time] the curate came . . . and he held masses in the farmer's house.

"He's doing well again now and has a fine lot of stock. That was about four years ago."

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Here then one can see a new kind of incorpora- 776
tion of the values of the countryman's life into 789
belief. The goods round which his interests are 754
centred come to be either beneficial or dangerous to 183
the group to which he belongs, depending upon their connection with it in the critical situations which threaten disease and disaster. Ordinarily, there is nothing supernatural or dangerous about an egg or a hazel-stick, to the countryman. But in these special situations, in which tradition comes to his rescue, they take on a wholly different character. Thus we have the seemingly paradoxical case that the things of greatest 'power' are not by any means always the wondrous, unusual, and fearsome things, but the homely articles of use and familiar associations. Iron cures, but iron is not mysterious. An egg becomes a sign of witchcraft; a pinch of salt protects one against evil; but neither are fearsome things in themselves. Yet in critical circumstances they have the power to heal, to hurt, to cure, to destroy.

For what the countryman's belief is doing for 183
him is something belief always seems destined to do, wherever it is found. Tradition is bearing upon him to keep alive and organize the regard his group must feel for the codes of conduct and the objects of use by which it lives. Belief focuses his attention and his emotions upon them. It gives sanctity to his conventions, his needs, and his goods. It infuses them with emotional associations far beyond

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183 their normal capacity to carry sentiment. It gives them symbolic form.

In this way it holds before him, in emotion, in ritual act, in hope of cure, and defence against evil, the important place they have in the social life upon which he is dependent in habit and sentiment. It throws him back upon the secure and stable order of ordinary, traditional life.

In this fact lies the strength of folk-belief. But you may ask, how can this be? How does a belief in the curative powers of an object both throw him back upon his social habit in such a way as to secure him emotionally in it, and effect the purpose of the cure?

The answer lies in the part established association plays in psychological balance. The cures restore; they provide a form of action in which the countryman can regain an emotional equilibrium. The hazel-stick is his sure and habitual means of driving cattle; the egg is his tried staple of diet; iron is his old friend in tools and implements. They all figure in his own habit and in that of his group's life; they are all tried and true associations of his normal security. He sees them as more than mere unrelated things; he sees them as vital parts of his normal security.

Then, when disease and death stalk his possessions and his friends, and threaten him in his regard for them, the countryman makes his appeal to the tried and true. If a cow is sick, he may well try

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castor-oil first, for he is a rational man. But if 183
castor-oil is unavailing, then other means can be tried. He seizes upon a symbol of normal associations and habitual undisturbed security. The means he adopts restores not the cow so much as it does the peace of mind of him who uses it.

And the belief he holds makes a logical synthesis between this act and the cause of his disturbance. It fits them both into a symbolic order above and beyond, yet closely bound up with, the order of his own life. Put into words, this synthesis takes causal form. "There is great power in a hazel-stick", he says. "It drives 'them' away." And the statement is perfectly true, in the logic of emotions.

In some such way as this, ever broader areas of 181
his associations with normal social life are given 183
'power'. They are incorporated into belief and wield the same forces of restoring and upsetting that life as do the good people, whose attributes they become. Events, personalities, landmarks, are brought into this order, in one way or another. Nearly everything here below comes to be projected, in imagination traditionally refurbished, into the other world of awe and wonder and mysterious 'power'. The countryman relates himself to the things so projected through their place in his belief; he knows what to do about them and finds his regard for them fashioned in the common folk faith.

The fairy-belief becomes a world-view, a *Welt-*

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181 *anschauung*, in which all experience has a place in
183 the logic of emotional associations. Thus one old fellow summed up a discussion of the sea creatures
181 which still haunt the western coasts of Ireland: "Everything that does be on the land is in the sea,
183 too, if we could see them". This world-view in-
821 corporates the world into the life the countryman follows and knows. To the same old fellow, winds along the Clare and Galway border that separates Munster and Connaught provinces could appear as the battles of fairy hosts, for do not men today still remember human battles and still taunt the men of the other province in joke and banter? The rustle of a breeze and the flitting of bats in a ruin where men lived and died is not mere noise; it is still part of human life. One old fellow described to me the experience of 'them' that he got at close quarters, when he lived near the ruin of Ballyvaughan workhouse:

"They were so plentiful there that everybody living round it and myself got so used to them that we wouldn't mind them at all. The place is full of them and everywhere you go there is a door and long windows in the cowl, and you hear them going in and out. There was a great lot of people died in it long ago in the bad times. They are in every room and you hear them on all sides of you. I got so
181 used to it, I never minded them at all, but I heard
183 them every day."

823 The great cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast are
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a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but 823 183 the tales of it that best survive are those that relate 181 it to the life of the present and express in the fairy- 776 belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to [481] go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillenasearrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a 181 common end. They provide the countryman with 183 a world-view in which his regard for things and 776 scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

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order takes its form. Consequently, we should expect fairy-belief and rite to symbolize the regard he has for his fellows even more strongly than that he holds to the non-human associations of his life.

The expectation is amply borne out. Fairy-belief is first and foremost a symbolism of social life. In the logic of emotional identifications, it organizes, directs, and controls the feelings of human beings for their fellows.

Thus fairy power and dangerous influence are strongest at times when the interest of human beings in their fellows is strongest. With every change overtaking the individual in his course through life among his fellows, the supernatural world steps in. At such times as birth, growing-up, marriage, becoming a parent, growing old and dying, belief catches the countryman in a web of precautions and reminders which signalize forcefully the importance of the change. For example,

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the birth of a child is not just another event in nature. It is a change of vital importance to the family group, and indirectly to the community. It is cause for rejoicing and congratulation, but it is cause, too, for resolve and determination in the face of new duties. It brings a new orientation in the lives of those who welcome the newcomer. Their relations to one another undergo development; they must henceforth learn new ways which include the newcomer and which prepare a place for him in the life of his fellows.

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Consequently, rural ceremony signalizes the 181
event. Custom brings together those concerned, 183
for rejoicing, for recognition of the place of the 851
newcomer in the group, for an expression of the 776
sentiments that unite them all. The rural 'christening' is no mere idle jollification; it is a secular baptism, as important for social life as is the Sacrament of Baptism for religion. Naturally, then, fairy-belief is represented very strongly. It surrounds the crucial event of birth and its consequences with a hundred necessities of action which carry with them powerful emotional dispositions. Fear, awe, wonder, religious feeling, and plain caution can all be pressed into service to mould the countryman into an acceptance of the new state of affairs; the logic of belief fits these emotions into the countryman's world-view.

The good people are particularly active at such 181
times as this. Every association with birth is infused 183
with power and danger. Even the midwife who 844
attends becomes a magic figure; the aura that sur- 776
rounds the dangerous and crucial event invests her entire personality. She can command the fairies, disperse their attacks, travel through the air, transfer labour pains at will to a truculent or negligent husband. She is in communication with the fairy powers; in tale and story she often finds her ministrations commandeered by them and her person wafted off into the forts and raths to attend a fairy-woman there. She herself may deny all this; but it

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181 is true, none the less, in belief. Like all else at birth,
183 she is linked to the good people, and in the linkage
776 an explanation is given for the identity of the
844 emotional associations which surround both her and them.

181 Similarly, all other crucial changes in social life,
183 as well as those of the religious life, come to fit into
776 the same scheme for many of the country-people
852 who still follow the old tradition. The good people figure in them all.

Thus, First Communion and Confirmation—events of first magnitude in the life of the devout countryman—bring changes in emotional well-being; they bestow a real, if mysterious and holy, strength. This, of course, is first of all a part of religious experience. But the events are also accompanied, in the countryside, by changes in one's relations to one's fellows, in traditional social organization. The child is separated first from others of opposite sex after First Communion; he is introduced to full farm work and, very often, leaves school after Confirmation. His fellows in family and community must henceforward have a new regard for him and treat him differently. So, in these changes, the good people have their role, too. Precautions against their influence reinforce one's dependence upon a symbolic order which incorporates these changes. They make definite and unforgettable the magnitude of the change and the new dispositions which must be learned. Thus,

Again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

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again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social 000
habit.

If we leave aside marriage, where folk-custom 183
and folk-belief are no less important toward the 181
same ends, we can devote our attention to the 761
greatest change of all. Death brings the greatest disturbance in social habit. It shakes emotional equilibrium to its foundation. Yet society must allow for death; it must provide an orderly transition and continuance.

The devout Irishman, of course, finds his greatest consolation in his Catholic Faith. He knows the fate of his loved ones. His religion teaches him how to communicate with them, in the Communion of Saints, through prayer. Faith heals his hurt and it gives him a way of filling the void death creates.

Yet, as I have said, he has room in his heart and 181
mind for the fairy-belief too. Social life must take 183
account of death no less than religion. When death 761
removes one of the human beings to whom he is 776
related as brother, friend or fellow, it leaves behind the traces of sentiment and habit that were once bonds of relationship and association. These must be reformed, and in the reformation a new synthesis between the dead member of the group and the living be found. The countryman resembles us all in this respect; he cannot forget 'the old familiar faces'. He must have an explanation in the world-view of folklore and folk-custom for

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181 the effect they still exert upon him after they are
183 gone.

761 So the dead join 'them'. On the border-line
776 between the mundane world and the mysteries of
[775] Faith, they find a place in the ranks of the good people, as the misnamed fairies are often called. They are the denizens of rath and fort and hill and cave. There is nothing fundamentally incompatible between this and religious belief, however folklore may escape the control of dogma and sometimes, in its humbler vein, run counter to it. The dead do affect the living, in memory and in tradition. Death is the 'other world' to which we are all advancing. As one fellow could say in a burst of poetic imagery growing out of folk-belief: "The old people in the west room are going down with the sun".

Why not indeed, when we remember that the good people are not always by any means evil and forbidding? They exert their power for both good and evil. They bring reward as well as punishment. The countryman has friends among them as he has friends among men in this world. An Aran woman put the belief for Lady Gregory in words which transport earthly loyalties to the other world. "There's often fighting heard about the house when one is sick. That is what we call the fighting of
181 friends, for we believe it is the friends and enemies
183 of the sick person fighting for him."
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775 Indeed, the same aids that make up habit and

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give base to sentiment in mundane affairs can be 181
projected into the after-world. One must act to- 183
ward 'them' in death as one acts toward the living; 775
one must do the 'friendly' thing. Thus they can tell 776
a story in Luogh of a man there who they say "was walking along the road and he saw the ghost of his brother. He didn't say anything to it and it walked home with him all in silence. They sat at the fire for a long time, the [living] man waiting for the other to go, so he could go to bed. Finally, the dead man said: 'You have put me to great trouble tonight by not saluting me when we met. I must go now and now I won't be able to defend you in the council in the rath.' And it was true for him, too: the cow that was ailing with the man was taken the next week."

Thus, you see, one can envision 'them' both in 181
mystic terms and in terms sometimes very bald and 183
intimate indeed. The younger people in Luogh still 753
follow the old belief, though they leave its expres- 776
sion to their elders. Yet they could explain the tumour on an old man's head in words which show how near 'the other people' are and how direct is the aid one's friends among them can give:

"Old Seumas was coming along the road drunk and he met a crowd of them on the road and one of them slapped him. If he'd taken the slap he'd be all right but he took off his coat and dared any one of them to stand down to him. They beat him and

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181 gave him a terrible knock over the poll. One of
183 them that was great friends with him saved
753 him."
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Nor are 'they' always fearsome, even in their
181 most wondrous apparitions. The dead are too
183 much a part of life in rural Ireland for that. For
775 the old people they are too near; too many friends have crossed the line between this world and the next.

Thus the dead may come to cover nearly every association of life; in the eyes of some of the old people, the other world of wonders where the 'other people' reign spreads all about them. To the initiate in such mysteries there is nothing to fear. Let me give you my record of one conversation of mine with a very old man of North Clare, a man of clear mind and great folk-learning. His answers to my naïve questions will show you how well he felt, accepted and expressed the symbolic order of the countryside:

I asked what a 'cowl' was. "They are the houses where the family has died out of them. People would live in them if they wasn't too bad, falling down and dirty. You often see old people sitting in them." "What people?" I asked. "The people that used to be in it," he replied. "Do you mean ghosts?" He answered me scornfully: "You might see lights in the cowl and you going along the road at night and you pass people you don't know and you can't tell if they are ghosts or not. Of all the

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people you pass in the town, how would you know what it is they are?"

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Only the young men, like myself, would be frightened by this uncertainty in rural Ireland. For all but the old people, such mysteries are awesome and compelling. Once again, folk-belief fashions itself for a social end. In belief the believers unconsciously agree upon an emotional organization of human relations; folklore expresses once again the organization of the community upon age and upon the past. The old couple who move in among the fairy influences and the symbols of family tradition and sentiment in the west room, the old people in whom rural kinship is centred and through whom sentiment is directed to the mystic past of ancestral blood lineage, the old men and women round whose influence the local community patterns its local life, need not fear greatly the imagery that symbolizes the very place they occupy. Rather they can come to immerse themselves in it. They grow very learned in this lore. They are the ones who sometimes come to manipulate it. They are themselves, sometimes, half fairy. 'Wise men' and 'wise women' are always old. It is no accident that the commonest representation of the fairy power is an old man or woman. They are the initiates in the mysteries of the fairy faith.

In this fact one can see the final synthesis between social habit and belief. Rural kinship organizes men and women in a common orientation

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181 backward and upward toward the dead and the
183 ancestral. The community bestows ever greater
888 status and influence as one progresses further and
776 further toward the age-grade of the old, in whom
775 tradition and precedent are preserved and expressed. In the sphere of credence and emotion the fairy faith acts to the same end and is so designed. The design, in this instance as in all the others, is not conscious; no one has planned it. It is a design drawn from the social order and acting back upon it. Its imagery is traditional, but its efficacy is of the present. And for that reason it lives.

Thus, in the identification between the old, the dead and the influences which affect the goods, the conducts and the values of the countryman's life, the symbolic order is completed. Folk-belief, in the ancient fairy-cult, with its age-old imagery, makes a complete emotional synthesis, overlying and reacting back upon the sentiment and habit out of which it springs again and again with each generation that learns the old way of life. Consequently, each new generation works a change upon it; elements of the synthesis undergo constant re-embellishment and shift of emphasis. Both old and young are controlled by it, but each in a different way. Today the young are sceptical and a little rebellious; they repudiate much of the
[178] older imagery. All that the Church condemns in the 'pisherogues', they also condemn. Today folk-belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

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belief is undergoing marked change like all else 181
in this world, like all else in Ireland. 183

But that does not mean the death-knell of folk- 775
lore, as some students of folklore seem to think. 776
Far from that, it means only that a symbolic order like any growth in human life must change and grow onward. New forms and new imagery will grow up to clothe in emotional terms the necessary reformations of habit and sentiment in social life, and new syntheses will fashion new belief, changing the old or supplanting it inch by inch.

One can see this process at work in rural Ireland 178
today. Those who repudiate the fairies repudiate 183
only the outmoded symbols, the outworn images. They do not deny the necessity of a symbolic order in their own lives. The student of man is coming to think today that they could not do so, because no people can. There must always be some socially efficacious organization of the sentiments of social life in the logic of belief and imagery. Belief provides first of all a conception of life; then, and then only, does it carry on to become a conception of the world. But life among men includes emotional attitudes at once very necessary and very satisfying; one can starve the spirit only so far. And for that reason the logic of a social order is not that of science and prose, it is that of emotion. Consequently, those of the countryside who repudiate the older symbols merely demand that their emphasis be shifted. They do not cry out for bald

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178 science, nor abandon symbolism. They merely
183 insist upon new symbols.

There are currently two directions in which the shift can be made. And, as usual, the popular mind has room for both movements; for they are related, and both are compatible with the countryman's social order. The first direction leads more deeply into the greater Faith of the countryman. Religion can come more and more to provide the emotional balances necessary in social life. Thus Catholicism is a growing, spreading force in the countryside, overtaking many an area of the mind where the 'pisherogues' still flourished till recently. The second direction leads to a reaffirmation, in ever stronger form, of that part of belief in which the dead and death are related to the disturbances and the securities of social life. After all, this is one of the indispensable cores of faith, and it expresses most forcefully the organization of life upon tradition and continuities. It can be retained even if the more picturesque imagery must go.

It is for that reason that the fairy gives way more
178 and more to the ghost in rural Ireland today. Dead
183 'Tans' now patrol the roads where the banshee may
775 have walked. In stressing the part of the dead in folk-belief, the necessary synthesis between emotional associations and social life can still persist and respond to change and growth. The ghost does his work as well as does the fairy, though he is perhaps less given to poetic dress.

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In the treatment of death, one can see the social 764
system of rural Ireland in the full perspective of its 183
deep-rooted strength. In the flashes of poetic genius 602
which seem so prone to trip from an Irish tongue, 776
death acquires a deeper and more poignant meaning than many another racial tongue could give it. And so it is in the mundane, prosaic world of social life. The most important secular ceremony of rural life is the wake and funeral. In the crowds that come to the wake-house to pay their respects to the dead and condole with the living; in the long lines of marching figures, traps, jaunting cars and motor-cars that make a slow procession over the open roads from wake-house to church and from church to graveside, the observer glimpses an epitome of rural life in which all its values are mingled.

Kinship bonds are at their strongest. Traditional custom enforces upon the kindred important roles in laying out the dead, in carrying the coffin, in digging the grave, in keening him, in reciting funeral laments that are the last survivals of bardic elegies, in preparing entertainment for all comers, in which the dead man's survivors proudly affirm their place and his in the life of the community.

In all this the fairy-lore takes part. The banshee's cry is merely the funeral keen issued from a fairy voice. It signalizes death in the symbolic world just as the keen of the living signalizes living personal loss. It is the lament over common loss in a common cause, for relatives of the dead must greet each other with the keen at the wake-house.

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000 other with the keen at the wake-house.

764 The goods of household and farm suffer incor-
183 poration into emotional symbolism once more;
181 precautions must be taken to protect them and
776 prevent their going beyond with the lost one. Time and place of death are clothed with a hundred supernatural associations.

The reciprocities which make up friendship and give status in the community get full play. Every man, in death, can command a multitude. To stay away, to make no recognition of the day, is to give deadly affront. Every 'right Irishman' turns and walks, if only a few steps, along with the procession. In towns, all the blinds upon the street are drawn and shop-fronts are boarded, in recognition. In the Gaelic tongue, indeed, one and the same word does service for both funeral and multitude. And in the fairy-lore "there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind". Many a countryman, steeped in the old lore, sees in a whirlwind or puff of mist a *socraid sidhe* or fairy-funeral.

He knows thereby that somewhere the chief expression of traditional social life is calling the countrymen together through a whole countryside for a re-enactment, both solemn and gay, of their sentiments about their fellows and about their view of life and death and destiny.

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CORN HARVEST

[Frontispiece]

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My heaviest debt is to the friendly countryfolk and craftsmen in all parts of Ireland who have shared my interests or suffered my questions. I owe much to scientific friends, North and South, with whom I have discussed various points from time to time, and I am grateful to Dr. Delargy and the staff of the Irish Folklore Commission for their interest and encouragement, although circumstances have prevented me from making use of their great store of records so freely offered. Most of my material has been gathered over a number of years during field-work in geography and archæology, supplemented by systematic surveys of certain areas undertaken with students of my department or with members of the Le Play Society working under my direction. Several of my past students have supplied me with information gathered in the course of their researches: I may refer particularly to Mr. J. M. Mogey. I have followed with interest and profited by the promising survey work of the Swedish school of ethnology which, interrupted by the war, has borne its first-fruits in the form of three articles by its director, Dr. A. Campbell. The Harvard University Mission to Ireland has given us an admirable study of *The Irish Countryman*, by Dr. C. M. Arensberg, and there is promise of more to come. Two recent historical works—E. MacLysaght's *Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century* and Professor C. Maxwell's *Country and Town in Ireland under the Georges*—bear welcome witness to the growth of interest in peasant life, but the plea made to historians by D. Lindsay Keir (in the *Bulletin of the Irish Committee of Historical Sciences*, No. 14, 1941) is worth recalling: he

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stresses the need " to see clearly the condition of the Roman Catholic church in eighteenth century Ireland as an organised institution ; to trace the conservation, through it, or by other means, of traditions and ways of life anterior to the eighteenth century." The vast field of Gaelic literature and legendary history remains almost unexplored as a source for the critical study of ancient geography, of economic and social history, in the light of present-day knowledge.

On the geographical side there is little to draw on, but Grenville Cole's stimulating essay, "*Ireland the Outpost*," and the regional sections of W. Fitzgerald's, *The Historical Geography of Early Ireland* must be mentioned.

To the curators and staffs of several museums I am indebted for many courtesies and for permission to sketch objects under their care : Mr. A. Deane and Mr. A. George (Belfast Municipal Museum) for Figs. 33d, 69 (left) and 70 ; Dr. J. Raftery and Mr. M. Duignan (National Museum, Dublin) for Figs. 16, 17, 32, 57, 58, 77, 78 (No. 5), 79, 80, 92 (lower), 94 (top right) and 113 ; Monsignor Hynes (Galway University College Museum) for Figs. 81, 82, 88 (lower) and 100 ; Mr. T. G. F. Paterson (County Museum, Armagh) for Figs. 36, 44 and 109. Fig. 46 is taken from a photograph by the late R. J. Welch, Fig. 33e from photographs by Mr. O. Davies, and Fig. 47 from a drawing by Mr. T. G. F. Paterson. Nearly all the other objects illustrated have been drawn in their natural settings up and down the country. The Lisburn eel-spear (Fig. 94) was kindly contributed by Mr. Colin Middleton, the farm basket (Fig. 54) by Miss E. B. Sibbett, Fig. 110 by a former student, Mr. P. Stinson, and Figs. 9, 39, 40 and the Tailpiece by Mr. H. G. Tempest.

For the loan of blocks I have to thank the editors of *Geography* (Professor H. J. Fleure)—Figs. 13 and 14—and of the *Irish Naturalists' Journal* (Mr. J. A. S. Stendall)—Plate IV, from photographs by the late R. J. Welch. The Committee of the *Ulster Journal of Archæology* (Mr. O. Davies, editor-in-chief) has been very generous in allowing me to use Plates I to III and Plate VI ; also Figs. 1 (from a drawing by Miss

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M. E. Rea), 6, 7 (by courtesy of Dr. J. Raftery and the artist, Mr. H. E. Kilbride-Jones), 23, 24, 83, 85, 97 and 98 (by a former student, Mr. P. O'Neill) 99, and 111 (from drawings by Miss E. Kinnaird). Fig. 84 is reproduced by kind permission of the National Museum of Ireland and Plate V is from a photograph generously supplied by Mr. T. H. Mason, in whose magnificently illustrated book, *The Islands of Ireland*, it has already appeared. To Mr. S. T. C. Langford I am indebted for the use of his photograph of the reaper as Frontispiece. The Irish eskers on Fig. 2 are taken from a map prepared by Professor J. K. Charlesworth. Figs. 8 and 107 are borrowed from W. Fitzgerald's *The Historical Geography of Early Ireland* by kind permission of the author and publishers, Messrs. George Philip and Son.

My colleague, Mr. A. J. Allaway, has been good enough to read through the proofs at short notice and I have profited from his observations. Finally I wish to record my indebtedness to my publisher, Mr. H. G. Tempest, not only for inviting me to write this book, but for his constant interest and careful supervision.

For convenience of reference every effort has been made to place the illustrations in close proximity to the relevant part of the text, but this has not always been possible and the reader will find it useful to consult the list of illustrations on page xiii as a guide. The pages on which drawings occur are also shown in italics in the index. In a work of this kind I have not thought it necessary to encumber the text with footnotes and references. These must await full scientific publication.

E. ESTYN EVANS.

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Belfast.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

In a number of plates, the blocks very kindly lent were originally made for quarto pages. From this cause the margins in some cases unfortunately have had to be much narrower than is usual or desirable.

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INTRODUCTION.

The cleavage between town and country has grown steadily sharper in Britain since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, and has recently been emphasised by the partial failure of evacuation schemes. As a result, closer attention is being given to the problems of the countryside, and, reflecting this interest, stories of Farmer Giles have given way to a flood of books recording the details of his daily and seasonal tools and tasks. 369

Outside the capital cities of Dublin and Belfast the cleavage between town and country has not gone very deep in Ireland; and even in Belfast business men and doctors are rarely more than a generation or two "off the land." In Eire 63% of the population is "rural dwelling," that is living outside "towns" with over 200 inhabitants. The corresponding figure for Britain would be well below 20%. Even in Northern Ireland, despite its great manufacturing industries, farming remains the most important industry, and 50% of the population lives in rural areas. Yet the younger people, at least, are often ignorant of the affairs of the countryside, and what is worse find no interest in them. I was recently approached in Co. Antrim by evacuated boys in their teens who wanted to know if a bunch of acorns they carried were hazel nuts!

This book does not pretend to be more than an introduction to a vast subject of inexhaustible interest, and I am fully conscious of the risks involved in venturing into an unexplored field and attempting to summarise its varied 121

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121 features: each of the following chapters could without difficulty be expanded into a book. The so-called Celtic fringe is in reality a broad mantle of fascinating pattern and colour. While I have tried to give summary accounts applying to Ireland as a whole, most of my material is drawn from Ulster, a province which, although six of its nine counties are politically separated from the rest of the island, is, archæologically at any rate, its most representative region and has its full share of country relics. When districts or counties are mentioned it must not be assumed that they are the only places where the practices or objects referred to occur. They happen to be examples which have come under my notice, and they are located not because they occur nowhere else, but because it is a scientific duty to record locations. I have not concentrated on the Gaeltacht in seeking survivals: I have rather been concerned to show how widespread are the customs and habits which are popularly supposed to be the peculiar possession of the Irish-speaking districts. Consequently I have not given Gaelic terms except in so far as they may be hidden in dialect words which I have, as a rule, spelt phonetically. They are for the most part the terms used in counties Antrim and Down. There are some obvious omissions in the topics discussed: I have deliberately said very little, for instance, about the homespun industry with all its varied gear and traditions, because it is fairly well known. Nor have I ventured into the controversial realms of religion or politics.

The Ireland I am writing about is one which is passing away, and some of the customs and tools described and illustrated in the following pages have almost entirely gone, but I have learnt that it is rarely safe to use the past tense in writing about Irish matters. I have more than once come across customs which were described as dead half a century ago: the old ways are an unconscionable time a-dying. When ancient arts and crafts become dissociated from the control of magical practices (*cf.* Chapters 18 and 19), decline often sets in. It is now realized that deterioration has been

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a powerful factor in the history of human culture, and that it needs spiritual as well as economic force to bring about new growth. But I am no supporter of those who, indulging in sentimental regrets for a Celtic twilight of doubtful authenticity, find in the past a Golden Age to which they would have us return. Our view should be forward. There is in Ireland, thanks to the astonishing virility of peasant tradition, a great opportunity to save and transform rural life, as happened in Denmark, before it has declined too far. In that revival education must play its part. A geographer may be forgiven for attributing the general ignorance about the foundations of rural culture to the very backward position of geography teaching in Ireland, where none of the Universities has given the subject full recognition—a state of affairs perhaps unparalleled in any part of Europe. Moreover, except for a few well-equipped and well-staffed schools, the standard of geography teaching in the schools is half a century behind the times.

Peasant ownership, for good or ill—it has not so far provided the answer to Ireland's problems—is now established. In Northern Ireland 38% of the farm holdings are under 15 acres in extent and only 4% exceed 100 acres: 27½% are between 15 and 30 acres (the corresponding figure in Eire is 27%). Cheap electricity may provide a basis for restoring rural industries as an essential and intimate part of the life of the countryside. The undoubted virtues of the Ulster character were surely related to the traditions of peasant weavers before that tradition was submerged in the Industrial Revolution. The essentials of the country craft—simplicity of form, soundness of construction and fitness to purpose—must somehow be restored. The traditional skill in wood working can be revived: re-afforestation should be undertaken on bold lines, and every effort made to save the native flora and fauna from further destruction. The difficulties of the present time are forcing on our attention the view expressed by many leading thinkers, that the rural tradition is of special importance for the maintenance of society, and that there are

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OOOspiritual and aesthetic as well as economic dangers in rural depopulation and decay. The material put together in the following pages will, it is hoped, provide an incentive to further research into the past as well as the present, for without understanding the past how can we hope to plan for the future? An eminent anthropologist has said that "survivals have the best chances of surviving in the long run." By no means all the customs described in the following pages are worth preserving, but the best of them can be retained and developed.

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CHAPTER I.

THE REAL IRELAND.

Many aspects of Irish rural life—its charm, its politics, humour and tragedy—have been expressed or exploited in prose, verse and drama, but it is astonishing how little has been written about the daily life of the Irish country man or the physical and social environments in which he moves and works. Even an introductory survey of folk-culture is at present an adventure into ill-charted seas. Yet this Ireland is not only a treasure-house of old ways unrivalled in western Europe but a working example of peasant culture of the highest scientific interest. Whereas Europe north of the Alpine mountains has enjoyed full civic life for a period that can be counted in centuries rather than in millennia, its peasant traditions are of immemorial antiquity. In Ireland we have a unique opportunity of studying the dwellings, tools and customs of a venerable social order which is admittedly dying but has by no means entirely gone. It is surely here, in the activities of a fascinating countryside, that the real Ireland may be found. 114

There has been, in recent years, a slow growth of scientific interest in these matters, but it is typical of this country that attention concentrates on things of the spirit, and tribute must be paid to the work of the Irish Folklore Commission which is busy gathering and classifying material—folktales, songs, old customs and beliefs—from every barony in the country. It would need a separate commission, backed by

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114 folk museums on Scandinavian lines, to study, collect and preserve representative examples of the crafts and industries of rural Ireland. The pioneer efforts of Dr. A. C. Haddon in the west of Ireland over half a century ago have not been followed up: indeed there was a feeling that the secrets of peasant life must not be exposed to the prying eye of the enquirer. We have had many glowing eulogies of Irish hearths and homespuns, but this gets us no further than the adverse comments on "wretched cabins" and "mere hovels" which provoke them or the endless tales of "pigs, pipers, praties and poteen." Between prejudice and sentiment disinterested science could find no place, and facts of the greatest ethnological interest went unrecorded in the heat of irrelevant argument. For Ireland has preserved to a remarkable degree the customs and social habits of the pre-industrial phase of western civilisation. It has escaped, even in many parts of the north-east where modern industry has taken root, the devastating changes brought about in England by the industrial revolution, and most of the country was saved also from the repressive spirit of seventeenth century puritanism. The archæologist in Ireland is constantly coming up against customs still practised (or, to his sorrow, remembered but now dead) which have survived through the centuries from a past without history. They come down to us from the beginning, leaving little record of their passage through time, so that "History," in the words of Punch, "somehow seems to miss, interesting points like this."

It is with some of these things that persist out of the wonder of the past that we shall be dealing. We may deplore the lack of interest shown by Irishmen in the relics of ancient culture that lie about them. The truth is that they are so much a part of the present that their significance is not readily appreciated: it is as if, to the peasant mind, "all time is foreshortened into a living present."[1] But one by one the relics of the past, inter-related as they are, pass away unrecorded.

[1] See "An Interpretation of Irish Culture," *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, January 1941, pp. 12-18.

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Even the elaborately produced and comprehensive Handbook of the Irish Free State (1927), which includes chapters on folklore and literature, remains silent on folk-culture and its significance for an understanding of Irish problems. 114

Our knowledge of the Irish countryside will advance only through field-study and the mapping of our findings. The time has not yet come when one can prepare maps of cultural distributions, but this is the end in view. Our school-books and atlases still give us maps which are purely political and administrative, for the political outlook has kept scientific interests at bay. We need maps of house-types and styles of furniture, of farm implements and the lay-out of fields and fences, of boat-types, of dialects and superstitions, and so on; and we must study these distributions both against the physical and spiritual environments of Ireland and against the wider background of their overseas connexions.

Viewed in its wider setting Ireland is part of the north-western or "Atlantic" province of European folk-culture. The climatic background of storms and mists makes it one with the coastlands and peninsulas which range from Galicia through Brittany and Highland Britain to the fiords of Norway. Everywhere in this region the sea is close at hand: by it man can both gain a livelihood and escape out into a wider world. On land the cultivation of wheat is near its climatic limits, and the dependence on spring-sown cereals greatly simplified the old schemes of crop-rotation. The folding of stock around the winter homestead was not complicated by the necessity of protecting the corn from their depredations. Animal husbandry and stock products are the pivot of rural economy in this humid fringe of Europe, a fact which, together with the independence nourished by man's association with the sea, helped to keep the north-western province out of the bondage of the feudal system. 101

While the simplicity of stock-raising equipment has limited the development of the arts and crafts as compared with, say, the south-eastern province of Europe, or even lowland England, it brings its compensations. As Professor 181

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181 Fleure writes of Wales, another section of "The Celtic Fringe": "the isolated rural communities are, of themselves, poor in material resources, and their efforts have, therefore, not until recently gone into great buildings or sculpture or painting or orchestral music, all demanding a large equipment. Rather have they found their scope in poetry and oratory and song, arts in which the poorest labourer can often compete on fairly equal terms with his richer neighbours. In this way, and in others as well, poverty has been a safeguard of an intensely democratic feeling as well as a help towards the survival of the language and its associations." In the field of human export, too, Ireland's products are scholars, doctors and poets as well as spade-workers.

243 262 114 There are, as we shall try to show, many other features of Irish life which can be related to the pastoral tradition. Because of its value as fodder and for reasons of soil and climate, oats is the "corn" crop of Atlantic Europe. Apart from the value of oats as food for livestock, oatmeal in various forms has been and still is largely consumed, and its baking into thin pan bread over an open fire instead of in an oven has helped to preserve the prehistoric open hearth with its varied 114 and interesting gear and traditions. Ignoring the literary and archæological evidence, many writers have assumed that the inhabitants of ancient Ireland were entirely pastoral and nomadic. On this topic much solemn nonsense has been written, and it gained wide currency because it seemed both to condemn the Irish and to corroborate the prevailing view of man's cultural evolution from hunter to agriculturist through a stage of pastoral nomadism. It now seems certain that man learnt the elements of cultivation at least as soon as he learnt how to domesticate animals, and in the diffusion of these ideas through Europe from the Near East, Ireland received the germs of both sources of food-production at about 114 the same period, let us say 4,000 years ago. There are many 221 signs that in Ireland's dark and middle ages cattle played an even greater role in rural life than in earlier prehistory and later history, but at all times the unit of the fixed family

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 10]

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Fig. 1. Ireland and the seaways of "Atlantic" Europe.

The routes from the south brought ancient civilization to the island about 2000 B.C.

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114 settlement, the baile or townland, kept its significance and its
221 importance. In many cases what has passed for nomadism has been the ancient and normal practice of seasonal movement to the hill pastures, which is still not entirely abandoned and has left many traces in the life and landscape of the country (Chapter 6).

181 In essentials Ireland is and has been a peasant country,
462 and it may be well to examine objectively some of the general characteristics of peasant society. A permanent link with the soil on which man lives and works is the essence of a peasantry; and in this work of the fields woman co-operates with man. For her, however, field work is a secondary task since her main interests must lie in the house and in the milking of the stock. Work with spade and plough and the care of the draught animals is for the men, although carrying—necessarily done by women in primitive communities where the men must have their hands free to use their weapons—often remains an activity of the peasant woman where not entirely superseded by animal transport. Where fishing and shore-collecting engage the men's attention the women's sphere of action and responsibilities are widened.

181 Among tasks in which the women of some peasantries
323 play a leading part is the making of domestic pottery, but this tradition, though strong in Neolithic Ireland, gave way to the use of metal "pots" and vessels of wood, the making of which was the work of the men. Nor have local survivals of hand-made pottery, like the Barvas ware of the Hebrides, been recorded here.

181 Periodic gatherings for exchange and social intercourse
443 are a feature of peasant life which has contributed to the
796 growth of towns. The immemorial meetings in fairs and markets have been weakened by modern means of transport and by government marketing boards; and in some parts of the country the whole fabric of rural society is being undermined in consequence. As in North Africa to-day, the fairs were often held near some ancient burial place, and the assemblies were linked with religious festivals which brought

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people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major 181
operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of 443
peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair 796
seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the 181
cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures 789
of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic 181
magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, 842
common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of 181
marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the [582]
highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and 181
duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and 476

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181 individual ownership they have by no means entirely collapsed.
476 The principle of service, of mutual aid within the local family groups, survives; the element of competition is reduced to a minimum. Though the old social laws have been "abolished" by acts of parliament, such external decrees could destroy only the superficial features and hardly touched the minds in
181 which these customs were rooted. The primary unit of land
631 division—the townland—is still a very real thing; and as the townland retains its Gaelic name even in the districts of Dublin and Belfast, so there survives beyond the city's influence the social fabric of the townland community. Reeves and Joyce have argued that the careful subdivision of Irish land points to the existence of a considerable settled population in remote antiquity, and recent archæological research supports this view. There are no less than 62,205 townlands in the country; their size, which varies from curiosities of less than an acre to large tracts of moorland of 1,000 acres, averages 325 acres.

181 The townlands in turn group themselves into baronies
631 corresponding to the petty kingdoms of old. Writers tell us
291 that even into the 19th century one barony could be easily distinguished from another by the dresses peculiar to each. Thus there were the dark blue and damson of Cork and Waterford, the grey of Kerry and the blue of Galway. A traveller in 1830 remarked wisely that "such peculiarities frequently point out the natural divisions of a country in more important matters than dress": they are an index to regional diversity. The distinctive features of particular districts are well illustrated in the case of "the Irish Flanders," the isolated tract in Co. Wexford comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth; while nothing could reveal the separateness of some island communities better than the heaviest punishment meted out to offenders in Rathlin or Clear I.: it consisted of "banishment to Ireland."

000 Enough has been said to suggest that the traditions of the Irish countryside are of long standing, and that many strains in those traditions are not only of Celtic but of pre-Celtic antiquity. Before we consider some of the relics of the

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past it is necessary to say something of the country itself. How is it possible to understand the genius of a people without knowing something of the environment in which it arose? Irishmen overseas do not make new Irelands: Irish peasant life is inseparable from the country which helped to mould it. We must have our eyes fixed on both man and his environment. The whole story of human culture is indissolubly bound up with the landscape which it has both influenced and been influenced by. In the words of W. H. Hudson: "Every feature of the landscape, everything that we see, hear, smell and feel, enters not into the body only, but into the soul, and helps to shape and colour it."

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CHAPTER II.

HOW IRELAND TOOK SHAPE.

101 131 "To comprehend the homestead and its home-folk, from the thatch of the roof to the colour of the children's hair, we must find the locality on the domed surface of the earth, and must realize that this earth is a very large and dominant region round it." So wrote the late Grenville Cole, wisest of Ireland's geographers. This island, then, lies in the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean, midway between the Lofoten Islands and the Straits of Gibraltar, a detached but not isolated fragment of the drowned coast of Eurasia. Throughout the ages, as Europe sank repeatedly under the waters of the ocean, this outer margin, worn down by rains and rivers, received fresh marine deposits over and over again, so that its rocks record all the main features of the history of western Europe.

133 175 Lying in the middle latitudes of the continent, it shares the converging mountain systems of north and south, the older axis of Scandinavia dominating the build of the north of Ireland while the younger axis linked with France and Spain prevails in the south. The lead thus given in the remote ages of geology has been followed, over and over again, by man and his cultures converging on this last outpost of Europe. From across the Atlantic, too, Ireland has received much in recent centuries; here the alien potato was first welcomed; and it was the "praty" which drove masses of Irishmen back along the route it had itself taken. "Ireland lieth aloof in

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133 the West Ocean," wrote Campion, but one cannot attempt to
175 interpret Ireland without reference to its neighbouring lands and seas. The links with Britain are strongest and oldest, alike in geology and history, in the north-east. Here both rocks and men have common roots on both sides of the North Channel: from Carlingford round to Swilly this "Region of the Loughs" looks out towards familiar coasts and islands. In geology as in history, it is as difficult to consider Ireland apart from Britain as the islets of Ireland apart from Ireland. A brief summary will reveal a geological story as troubled as its political history. Fig. 2.

133 The oldest rocks are the gnarled and crumpled sediments of the north and west, running in broken masses from Connemara to north Antrim. Here the resistent hardened sandstones (quartzites) stand up in conspicuous cones (Errigal, Muckish, Croagh Patrick, the Twelve Pins) while the gleaming schists are generally worn down into bog-filled hollows, though they rise to over 2,000 feet in the Sperrins. These rocks, together with great thicknesses of shales and mudstones worn off them, were involved in the great earth-ridgings named, from their presence in Scotland, "Caledonian." Further south, hard quartzites also give the Great Sugarloaf of Co. Wicklow its bold outline, while massive intrusions of molten rock forced up during the Caledonian folding cooled to give wide exposures of moorland granites both in the long chain of the Wicklows and in scattered hills of the north and west.

Next in succession came the Old Red Sandstones, formed under semi-arid conditions out of the débris of sand and pebbles rolled down from the mountains. As the sea flooded back once more, a rich marine life left behind a great thickness of limestone, still to-day, despite its solubility and rapid weathering, the most continuous and widespread of all the Irish rocks. The Great Central Plain, worn down to a uniform level, is floored with limestone, and the seas have cut into it, in Donegal and Galway Bays, so as to separate the three mountain masses of the west coast and leave Connacht projecting like a Wilder Wales from the Irish mainland.

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133

Fig. 2.

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133 At the end of the Carboniferous period, swamp and forest darkened the surface of the limestone, and the coal measures were laid down. Then the earth's crust was crumpled once more along lines running east and west through south Ireland and through Brittany and Spain. Thus Cork and Kerry received their folded structure and scenic features. Except for small patches the coal measures have all been worn away by the agents of denudation, and so Ireland has been saved the wealth and the poverty of an industrial revolution. The limestones too have gone from the summits of the ridges, leaving barren but picturesque masses of the underlying sandstones exposed in long mountain lines—the Reeks of Kerry, the purple hills of Killarney and the high walls of the Galtees and the Comeraghs. This folding is known as the Armorican or Hercynian—named after Brittany and the Harz Mts. respectively (Fig. 2).

Again the land rose to receive deposits of New Red Sandstones, followed by the clean chalk and sandy beaches of the Cretaceous Sea. When Ireland once more emerged, its rolling chalk downs were destined to be carved away except in the north-east, where molten rocks poured out around the North Channel to make the Antrim basalts, protecting the underlying chalk and giving this corner of Ireland its striking coast scenery of black and white rocks. In the chalk the first inhabitants of the island, coming from the Scottish coast, were to find abundant flint for their implements. During the igneous phase the granite Mournes and the Carlingford Hills were thrust up, the last additions to the Irish mountains.

From this time on, although there have been ups and downs, Ireland was never submerged beneath the sea, but before it took final shape it suffered the invasion of ice which has left its mark on every feature of the landscape. In the north-east, true to tradition, it was Scottish ice that swept over the Region of the Loughs from Swilly to Carlingford, but elsewhere the ice-fields were fed by the glaciers of Donegal, Sligo, Galway and Kerry. The great central "basin" became the dumping ground for the débris of the surrounding

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hills, whose rocks were scraped into the smooth rounded 133
forms known as "roches moutonnées," or splintered, in steep rock faces above the ice, into the walls of mountain corries. Widely scattered over the plain and through the marginal valleys from Limerick to Carlow and from Cavan to Antrim are the winding ridges of sand and gravel called eskers. They mark the stages in the retreat of the ice-sheet as it melted away and left its rock rubbish to be sorted out by water into great curving dumps. To-day these "green hills," as they are often called, rise in surprising freshness of contour and colour from the level plain. They are often followed by [487]
winding tracks which thus avoid the damp plain. Fig. 2.

Elsewhere the ice left behind a solid residue of clay and boulders, often to a depth of many feet, generally levelled by flooding waters from the ice-edge but sometimes piled into shapely steep-sided hills elongated in the direction in which the ice moved. These drumlins, or "little hills," give much of the border country, from south Down through Armagh and Monaghan to Cavan, Lough Erne and Donegal Bay its characteristic scenery. Their steep sides and the confused drainage of winding streams and lakelets to which they give rise long made the drumlin country a considerable obstacle to movement; and with other physical factors it helped to isolate the north from the rest of the country in early times. Southwards over the western parts of the plain, ice scooped out hollows and blocked rivers to form lakes many of which have been filled up with bog. But on the whole the ice-sheet, through its mantle of deposits, gave more than it took away: "the cold that for a time drove out life, in the end largely contributed to the fertility of Irish land." Fig. 3.

When warmer times returned and plants and animals began to find their way to the outpost of Europe, the land stood higher than to-day. Ireland was then, as it has been through most of its geological history, an integral part of Europe, and the great Irish deer roamed over the continent from the Atlantic to the Baltic. We are now within measurable distance of modern times, say 10,000 years ago, and it is

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133 possible that the first Irishmen saw the great deer before it disappeared. But again the land sank and tides swept through the North Channel while the Atlantic storms carved their way deep into the western seaboard. Drowned valleys indent the coast and the hills have their feet in the water. There have been minor oscillations since, so that the clays of Belfast and the beaches of County Antrim lie raised above water level, but the stage was now set, in the essentials of hills and valleys, clouds and rains, for man and his animals to come and do their work. Basalt and granite, sand and clay, sandstone and slate, limestone and chalk and flint—all in various ways have helped man to make the cultural landscape of fields, fences, roads and buildings.

Ireland as man first saw it, then, was an island of many mountain masses, varied in rock structure and shape, clothed with wild forests and separated by many inlets of the sea, by slow-flowing rivers and wide stretches of shallow lakes and plains. Its highest summits rise near the sea: Slieve Donard in Mourne, Errigal, the Twelve Pins, Carrantuohill, the Comeraghs, and Lugnaquilla in the Wicklows, all of them between 2,400 and 3,400 feet high, are all in sight of the sea. Yet this land of mountains has an extensive plain, averaging only 250 feet in height, set in its heart, while marginal plains are half-submerged in the north-east (Lough Neagh) in the north-west (Lough Erne) and the west (Loughs Mask and

Fig. 3. Drumlin landscape of the N.W., with quartzite cone behind.

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Corrib). Difficulties of communication are such that the 133
Central Plain has never been central in anything more than
name: Athlone has become a national centre only with radio [207]
communication, and the Shannon remains a boundary river
throughout its course. The important part of the plain is the 133
fifty mile stretch which faces the Irish Sea between the bays of 175
Dundalk and Dublin, the heart of the old Kingdom of Meath
and of the English Pale, and the setting of Ireland's capital
sites from the sacred tombs of New Grange through the age
of Celtic Tara to the historic city of Dublin. One factor in the
location of this metropolitan area is suggested by Fig. 8; it [132]
is favoured by the relatively low rainfall of less than 30 ins.

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CHAPTER III.

THE LANDSCAPE.

THE BEGINNINGS.

133 The landscape of a long inhabited country like Ireland is
137 in large measure the work of man, whose farms, fields and
311 fences are the result of many centuries of sustained effort. One might think of the wild thorn hedges and the piled stone "ditches" as mere sample remnants of woods and stones that once covered the face of the land. The extent of the change brought about may be judged by the fact that from being a land clothed with forest from the sea-coasts high up into the mountains, Ireland to-day is the least wooded country in Europe. In this work of forest destruction man has been assisted by his domestic animals and by changes of climate which have resulted in the accumulation of bogland. It is one of the paradoxes of Ireland that while the main lines of her mountains took shape in the remote ages of geological time, wide areas are dominated by the peat deposits which have been formed in the few thousand years that have elapsed since the ice age. The contrast of age is accentuated by those of colour and relief, for far across the level brown bogs rise blue in the distance some of the oldest mountains in Europe. In the middle distance, completing the picture, will be the green hills of the eskers.

137 The heart of the island, the Irish midlands, is a veritable Black Country, black with peat, not with the grime of coal-fields. Here in the boglands there are twelve contiguous

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137 counties, none of which has any settlement of 5,000 people. Irish peat, or turf as it is properly called, covers an area of some 3 million acres and has an average depth, in the central plain, of 19 feet. Shallower deposits are very extensive in the mountains, particularly along the western seaboard from Kerry round to Inishowen. Apart from their economic [372] importance—it is estimated that they form the sole fuel supply of two-thirds of the farming population (see Chapter 15)—the peats are of great interest to scientists, and during recent years an intensive investigation, under Danish leadership, has solved many problems concerning their origin and growth.

While bogs accumulate most readily in imperfectly drained lowlands, the heavy precipitation of the mountains is the main factor in their wide distribution. The south coast, with its excellent drainage, and the dry east coast, with the exception of the Wicklows, are largely peat-free. So are many areas of limestone which, with its cracks and joints, swallows the heaviest rains. And the eskers, though they may pond the drainage and thus cause water-logging and bog formation, are themselves free of peat. Regions favourable for human settlement are thus closely related to the distribution of peat, but the control is not merely negative since access to supplies of turf is often an important consideration.

For the scientist the value of turf-bogs lies in the fact that they preserve not only wood, twigs and the seeds and fruits of plants but even the minute grains of pollen, so that as they accumulate they write their own record, a record which the pollen-analyst can read. Moreover the phases of vegetation and climate thus chronicled can be correlated with the story of Irishmen who, careless or forgetful, have left behind at different levels objects of stone, metal or wood which the archæologist can use as clues in his detective work. In this way a sequence of climate, vegetation and human industries has been worked out, and we now have an outline of the whole story from the time when the first layers of lake clay were laid down in hollows of the surface while the ice still lingered in the mountain corries: they contain remains of arctic willow and the bones of the giant deer.

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Antrim

Plate I

137

TREE ROOTS IN BOG FACE

ARMOY, CO. ANTRIM

[facing p. 24]

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137 Birch and hazel are the next vegetation recorded, then the pine spread rapidly to give way to oak and alder as the climate grew warmer. The oldest layers of turf in the deep bogs grew round the stumps of this oak forest, following the sinking of the land and the consequent bad drainage accompanying a stormy period which lasted from about 5000 to 2500 years B.C. To this climatic phase the term "Atlantic" is applied. There followed a warm dry period, called the sub-Boreal, which came to an end about the middle of the last millennium B.C.; it was during this phase that the Irish forests reached their greatest development, when oak, birch, alder, hazel and pine spread right to the western coasts and high up the mountain sides. It is estimated that the rainfall in the west was only half its present quantity and that the westerly winds were weak. When the storms returned the climate became cooler and even wetter than it is to-day, and during this "sub-Atlantic" period the western forests were submerged in extensive bogs to give the landscape its familiar barren appearance. Everywhere this dark age of storms, from about 500 B.C. to 100 B.C., was a time of maximum peat formation, layer upon layer of spongy vegetation, cotton grass, bog rush and sphagnum moss, accumulating in the hollows of the plain and on the mountain slopes. Thereafter there have been fluctuations when pine forests spread repeatedly on dried bog surfaces only to be swamped in succeeding wet phases, and in the end the pines disappeared from Ireland, leaving their resinous bog timber as a gift from the past to the treeless present. Not only timber but all organic matter such as bone, leather and even textiles and human bodies are wonderfully preserved by bog acid. Pl. 1.

172 Archæology tells us that man[1] first crossed the narrow seas from Scotland when the land stood higher before the "Atlantic" submergence. Hemmed in by the forest he clung to the beaches under the flint-bearing chalk cliffs of

[1] "Mesolithic" man. The term (Middle Stone Age) embraces the period from *c.* 7000-2500 B.C. falling between the Palæolithic (Old Stone) and the Neolithic (New Stone) Ages. Man's first appearance in Ireland is probably to be dated about 5000 B.C.

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172 Antrim, and excavation in the beaches at Larne and elsewhere has revealed the tools at depths which show that he remained in the area throughout the beach-forming Atlantic period. Some have conjectured that his flint knives and choppers were used for wood-working and boat-building. When fishing failed he had recourse to shell-fish, for the warm seas which replaced the Arctic waters had brought great quantities of edible molluscs to our shores. From the beginning, then, the north-east, the region of the Loughs, was the bridgehead by which overseas movements reached Ireland.

When at length, perhaps under pressure from further incursions from Scotland, the coast-dwellers moved on, it was in the Bann valley, by Lough Neagh and other rivers and lakes that they settled down; and on coastal sites, near the river mouths that the salmon seek, we find, buried in sand, the relics of their "kitchen middens." In places such as the caves at Ballintoy, Co. Antrim, fisherfolk and shell-gatherers continued to cling to their old life century after century, and there can be little doubt, as anthropological research is beginning to show, that the racial characters of these original Irishmen survive in many a coastal area to this day. Readers are referred to papers by Professor T. Walmsley and J. M. Mogey in the *Ulster Journal of Archæology*. The results of a wider survey conducted by the Harvard University Mission to Ireland are awaited.

By low watersheds and lakes the fisherfolk seem to have found their way to the Barrow, to the Shannon and the teeming Corrib of Galway, so that the four provinces of Ireland have a substratum of the oldest stocks in the population. It is tempting to think of the Irish curraghs (Chapter 16) as a relic of this culture: they were covered with hide until recently, and it is noteworthy that even in Lough Neagh, where [396] the curragh has not been recorded in historic times, the fishermen speak of giving their boats a new "hide" when they repair them. Wooden foot traps for catching deer (the so-called otter-traps) which have been found in the bogs and which are figured on some of the Celtic crosses, are presumably

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another heritage of the Mesolithic. Research will probably show that many details of material culture as well as a substantial element in the racial composition of the Irish people derive from the Mesolithic background, which has been termed " the main vital period in the setting out of the human map of Europe."

172

Left to themselves, however, it is unlikely that these fisherfolk, specialized as they were in the arts and crafts of food-gathering, would have advanced to the full status of civilisation. If our eyes were fixed on Ireland alone we should be unable to account for the origin of Irish agriculture and stock-raising, for the crops and animals that came to be used are not found in the native flora and fauna. It was from distant western Asia, by way of the seas and islands of the Mediterranean and the western peninsulas of Europe that the new ideas found their way to Ireland. And although the food-gatherers and fisherfolk had blazed the trail, it was a revolution in food production that now brought with it the elements of true civilisation. To it the term Neolithic (new stone) Revolution is applied.

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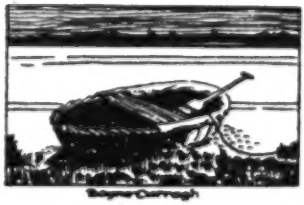

Fig. 4.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE WORK OF MAN: CROPS AND ANIMALS.

172 It was probably a century or two before 2000 B.C. that the first farmers reached the Irish shores and began, however slowly, the moulding of the landscape with their tools of cultivation and their hungry animals. They brought with them not only crops and beasts from the sunny south, but new and strange gods endowed with magic powers. It has been conjectured that many of the old food-gatherers were held in subjection and forced to pay tribute in fish to the new masters. Certainly great salmon rivers like the Bann continued to be well settled, and the present eel-weir at Toome, with its wattled lanes, probably had a not very different forerunner on the same site in prehistoric days. Excavation has shown that the tanged flint flakes, of which hundreds of thousands are found along the Bann, were employed as the prongs of fish spears, and the hearths where the catches were smoked and dried have been unearthed.

Two innovations in such excavated sites betray the influence of our newcomers: they are the use of the polished stone axe and the manufacture of pottery. It is the former that gives its name to the New Stone (Neolithic) Age, while the use of pottery is the hallmark of a certain stage of culture and domestic industry. It has been suggested that the art of shaping stone tools by grinding and polishing arose, in the sandy soils of south-western Asia, through observing the wear

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172 on stones used as hoes for cultivation. We have direct evidence that some form of agriculture was practised at this time in Ireland, about forty centuries ago, and it is here that the foundations of Ireland's peasant culture must be sought. Some scholars have argued that a simple wooden plough reached Atlantic Europe not long afterwards from the Mediterranean, but the digging stick was probably the main cultivating tool: the digging tradition has remained all-powerful in Ireland, and even to-day the narrow Irish spade or loy (Chapter 13) is little more than an iron-shod digging stick.

Fig 5
Fashions in Pots.

Communal tombs of great stones built by these bringers of civilisation—the giants' graves of the countryfolk and the megalithic monuments of the archæologists—tell us a great deal, from their distribution and their contents, of the areas occupied and the beliefs held by the first Irish farmers. Glacial sands and limestone exposures attracted them on account of their easily-worked soils and natural clearings, while the thin soils and therefore light forest-cover of the hill-slopes and plateaux drew them by stages into all the scattered mountains from Wicklow to Kerry and from Antrim to Donegal. The discovery of grains of wheat and of saddle-querns for grinding corn, as well as countless sherds of hand-made pottery, show that they were settled farmers: their large round-bottomed pots, often provided with holes or lugs for suspension over the fire, are plausible forerunners of the common iron "pots" which are indispensible in every farm and cottage to-day. It should be borne in mind that the sub-boreal period (Chapter 3), from which this culture dates, was a time of warm dry climate, so that settlement and cultivation of wheat and probably barley were possible at elevations where they would now be difficult if not impracticable.

Bone-finds tell us that the Irishman's oldest animals were the pig and the ox. By analogy with other parts of northern Europe we should expect the earlier folk of the Mesolithic to have possessed the dog, though there is no clear proof of this. The horse, the goat and the sheep were perhaps

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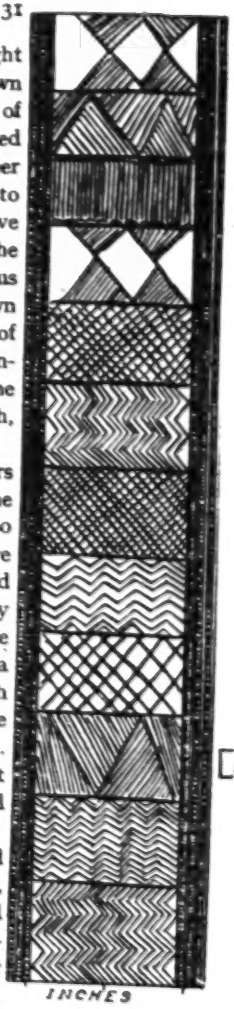
introduced in the Bronze Age, while the ass, which one might suppose to be long-established, was in fact hardly known before the 19th century. The wolf was the worst enemy of man's domestic animals: it was not finally exterminated until the end of the 18th century. Neither the Giant Deer nor the wild boar can be proved to have survived so long as to be contemporaneous with man. But there was a rich native fauna which could be hunted for food to supplement the products of crops and livestock. The red deer is still with us and was known in a wild state in the west of Ireland down to a century ago. Charcoal examined from the remains of domestic and ritual fires corroborates the evidence of pollen-analysis as to the forest cover of prehistoric Ireland. The common trees were oak, willow, birch and hazel, with ash, elm, alder and pine less widely distributed.

The beliefs and ritual practices of the megalith-builders were closely bound up with ideas of magic and fertility: the great stone monuments themselves, still standing after 4,000 years, seem to symbolize man's faith in a future life and were the outcome of the revolution of thought which accompanied food-production. No visitor can fail to be deeply moved by the splendour of the great chamber at New Grange on the Boyne, or by the mystery of the windy cairn on Knocknarea above Sligo. The two main entrances used by the megalith builders were the Boyne Valley and Carlingford Lough (whence archæologists speak of the Boyne and Carlingford cultures). These cultures show many interesting differences and no doubt contributed to the enduring distinction between North and South in matters of material folk-culture.

New crops and animals continued to reach Ireland during the 1,500 years of the Bronze Age (1800-300 B.C.), when the islanders engaged in active trade, exporting the gold of the Wicklows in the form of dress-ornaments and elaborating their tools and implements of bronze, using native copper and imported tin. Archæologists and philologists cannot yet agree as to the period when the Celtic language was introduced to Ireland, nor can the Pictish tongue be identified with any clearly recognized culture. All are agreed, however, that



[184]

Fig. 6. Ornament on bronze age pottery vessel from Co. Tyrone, date c. 700 B.C.

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172 the Celtic tongue was imported by warlike overlords or "planters" somewhere within the limits of the Bronze Age, and that it was accompanied by the infiltration of ideas and customs that have their ultimate origin in central Europe and therefore represent a culture-pattern differing from the pre-existing "Atlantic" civilisation. But archæology teaches us that the older background was strong enough to survive and mould the new into characteristic Irish forms: even the virile curvilinear "La Tène" art style of the Early Iron Age, which entered Ireland by the north-eastern "bridgehead," was soon changed into new designs which the expert can at once recognize as "Irish" (Fig. 7). In peasant culture the continuity is incontrovertible.

But great changes were meanwhile taking place in the climate and natural landscape, and corresponding adaptations had to be made in Irish life. The onset of a cold stormy period not far from 500 B.C. forced man to move downhill and to concentrate on the drier lowlands, while on plateau and plain alike the old forests went down under layer after layer of wet bogland. When the veil is half lifted in the twilight of the Celtic Annals ten domesticated creatures are mentioned: kine, swine, horses, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, hens, geese and bees. To-day the only important additions would be the ass, the turkey and the duck. There are many signs that during the bad climate of sub-Atlantic times (say 500 B.C.-100 B.C.) cattle assumed the preponderating place in peasant economy which they have since maintained. It was their grazing, and the nibbling of the accompanying goats, which caused the great decline in the indigenous woodlands long before the forest remnants were destroyed by the English. The old custom of putting a goat with a herd of cows is perhaps a [23] survival of former practice, for the goats would have kept down tree-growth and so prepared pasture for the cattle.

But it must be insisted that the theoretical nomadism of the Celtic period finds little support in archæology: the 28,000 surviving earthworks known as "raths"—the sites of villages and cattle-enclosures—testify to the settled life of the dark

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TWO VIEWS OF LEGANANNY "DOLMEN"

CO. DOWN

[Facing p. 32]

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Fig. 7. Bronze disc of the Early Iron Age, from River Bann, date approx. 300 A.D.

[p. 33]

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172 ages. It was probably in the late Bronze Age that oats, introduced perhaps from Spain, found their place as the leading corn-crop of Ireland and Highland Britain, better adapted than wheat to the damp conditions. The working of "bog iron-ore"—found in concretions in swampy places—is attested from the early Iron Age, and the traditions of the country smith have their origins in this period. Man's attack on the woodlands was accelerated with the possession of iron axes and adzes. We are not able to say how far Roman culture and novelties influenced the pattern of Irish life. Was poultry their contribution, and what of the cabbage, the only common Irish vegetable before the potato came in? Nor must we omit the contributions of the continental contacts maintained throughout the early Christian period, above all in improved architecture and the fine arts as well as in traditions of gardening and orchard-planting. Their influence can be seen, no doubt, in the relatively high standards of living and cultivation around places like Armagh. And it is to the early Christians and the Vikings that Ireland owes its earliest cities. From the Vikings, too, much was borrowed in matters of boat-building and metal-working. Since Norman times the contacts with Britain have steadily increased.

175 244 But we have yet to record the import of most significance for Irish peasant life—the introduction of the potato from the New World. The part that this crop has played in the social history of the island is a subject which calls for full investigation. While it gave bulky yields as food for man and beast, its cultivation brought about a decline in crops such as rye and beans. Thriving on a minimum of attention, its social influence has not been altogether for good: its effects on native habits might be compared with those of another New World crop, maize, in southern Europe and Africa. Ripening underground, potatoes had a great advantage over corn in the wet and windy climate of the west. Moreover the crop was less easy to pillage: "even the soldiers could not extirpate them." By the middle of the 17th century the newcomer was well established in Ireland.

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It undoubtedly helped the Irish peasants to survive through 175
troubled times, enabled them to live on the hills and waste 244
places to which they were driven, and also to multiply exceedingly in the decades before the great famines of the forties.

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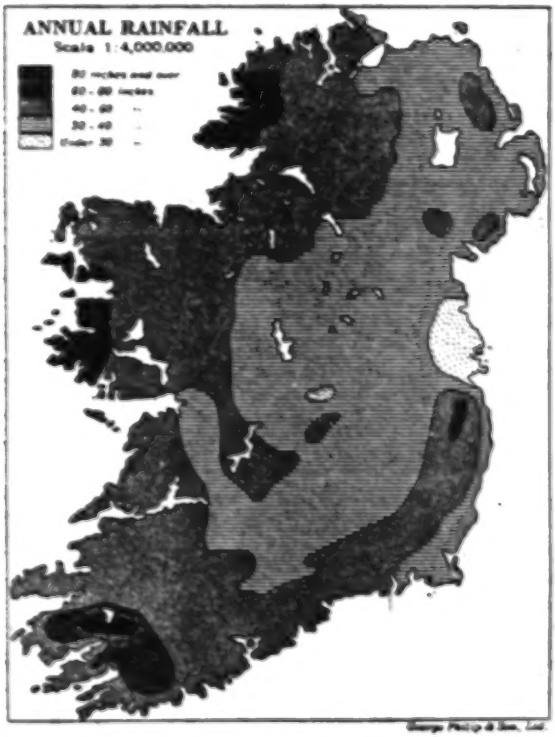

Fig. 8.

It will be well at this stage to say something of the climate and crops of present-day Ireland. The abundant rainfall, the prevailing cloud-cover, the high degree of atmospheric humidity, the strong winds, the cool summers and mild

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132 winters—all these characteristics are related to the eastward moving stream of cyclones coming off the warm North Atlantic drift. Rain is heaviest wherever mountain masses place obstacles in the path of the moisture-bearing winds, and the peninsulas of Donegal, Connemara and Kerry have from 60 to 100 inches of rain each year (Fig. 8). By contrast the east coast gets about half this amount, while the low-lying tract between Dublin and Drogheda is favoured by a fall of under 30 ins. Everywhere the mildness and the damp encourage grasses and moisture-loving plants, but too often waterlogging has caused green pastures and woodlands to deteriorate into brown bogland. The prolonged autumns, another gift of the Atlantic, are important because they give man a sporting chance of saving his harvests: the heaviest rains are delayed until November and December. Similarly the relatively dry springs (March-May) are conducive to work in field and turf-bog at that season. (Chapter 15).

311 231 241 Reviewing the distribution of the chief crops and animals to-day, the following facts may be noted. Nearly one half the land devoted to crops, excluding hay, is occupied by oats and perhaps three-quarters of the yield is fed to livestock. Only in the wettest peninsulas of Connemara and Kerry does another crop (potatoes) occupy more land. It is estimated that the "consumption" of potatoes amounts to about ¾ ton per head of the population each year, but the greater part of this goes to pigs and other livestock. The greatest concentration of wheat production is in the comparatively sunny corner of Wexford, with secondary areas along the dry east coast in Cos. Dublin and Down. Recent years have witnessed an increase in wheat growing but there is still far less than in the record years of a century ago. when wheat was being exported to England. Barley, which is more intolerant of damp than wheat, is found on the well-drained soils of Co. Louth but particularly of Wexford and the sheltered valleys of the Nore, Suir and Barrow. It has declined less than wheat [273] because of the demand of the breweries and distilleries, but the drop in the illicit making of poteen has reduced its production in many a secluded spot along the west coast.

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Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where 248
the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and 244
the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has 311
been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered 231
that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the
pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. [178]
But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their
importance in the past : one minor factor in the decline is the [273]
fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained 235
and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

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235 considered that the abundance of wild white clover, on the seeds of which chickens and young turkeys feed, was another contributory factor. Of the goat it can be said that it is often
231 the poor man's milk supply and supplements the cow on many small farms just as the ass replaces or supplements the horse. But the ass is in fact quite rare in many parts of the country, for example in Donegal, and is regarded with contempt, whereas the horse, as befits its important role since prehistoric times, is held in high regard and is kept by small farmers often as much for the sake of prestige as for its use. "If they have three acres," says a Government Report of last century, "they think they must have a horse." The strength and speed of the Irish race horse have been attributed to the bone-building qualities of limestone pastures: the great breeding and training ground is the morainic waste known as the Curragh of Kildare, but throughout the country there are many districts where, for geographical or historical reasons, horses of quality are bred for export and for the delight of the crowds at local race-meetings. Readers are referred to
[113] Dr. Dudley Stamp's *Agricultural Atlas of Ireland* (1931) for further information on agricultural distributions.

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Fig. 9. About 10 ft. high.

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CHAPTER V.

WOODLANDS, FIELDS, FENCES AND GATES.

We have seen that the Irish landscape, in ancient times very well wooded, is now one of the most treeless in Europe, and we have shown how changes of climate as well as the depredations of livestock made great inroads into the forests. In later centuries many woodlands were destroyed by the English for strategic reasons, while the demands of shipbuilders, of charcoal burners, tanners and stave-makers reduced the oakwoods to insignificant proportions. Poor scrub growth was in many areas all that was left. "An oak, an ash, or an elm," wrote Arthur Young of Mitchelstown in Co. Cork, "is almost as great a rarity as an olive, an orange or a mulberry." Ash remains the commonest tree, especially on the limestone of the Central Plain, despite the fondness of cattle for its leaves. We know that its valuable wood was used from the Bronze Age for handles and spear-shafts, and in the Pale it was insisted that "every husbandman having a plough shall set by the year twelve ashes in the ditches and closes of his farm." In the words of Evelyn: "It serves the soldier, the carpenter, the wheelwright, cartwright, cooper, turner and thatcher . . . from the pike, spear and bow to the plough." 137

Acorns and hazel nuts were often used as a source of food before the coming of the potato, and almost every tree had its particular uses in a society living on its own resources and [262]

[p. 39]

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137 bound by innumerable ties to a countryside richer and fuller
[262] than that of to-day. Thus birch, rowan, hazel, thorn, sally and holly all had their special purposes, and yew was in great demand for croziers and shrines. So we might go on down to the humblest lichen (for crottle dye) and the seaweed (Chapter 16). Bog timber, oak and "fir," had many uses—for furniture and implements, for roofs, gates, slide-cars and boat-timber as well as for fir ropes and lighting "splits." Superstitious customs are associated with several of the native trees, especially the rowan, the ash, hazel and whitethorn (Chap. 18).

Sycamore and beech, neither of them native to Ireland, have been extensively planted in recent centuries and grow so well that many have assumed them to be indigenous. The beech loves the well-drained moraines, while the sycamore, one of the few trees which will stand up to the full force of
[351] the salt-laden winds, is planted in coastal districts for the shelter it provides: behind its dense summer foliage many a
313 low cabin lies hidden. Its white easily-worked timber is
137 sought by the wood-turner. Formerly the beetling engines of the linen country made a demand for beech and sycamore—the former for the beaters and the latter for the great beam. On steep hillsides which man has been unable to utilize one may still see patches of what may be regarded as wild scrub, a tangle of hazel, ash, black and white thorn, or birch, rowan and alder; but apart from the high-walled demesnes where giant trees are allowed to grow old and rot, the Irish landscape
137 is singularly bare of timber. Visitors from England will notice the poor development of hedgerow trees except for the ash of Co. Meath. This must be attributed largely to the fact that hedge trees have to grow in raised banks or "ditches," as they are called. Hedges and trees are very rarely planted on the level, for the ditch-tradition is older than the hedge. To quote Young once more: "I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks." But there is some compensation, in autumn, in the wealth of blackberries which they produce (Fig. 10).

137 Travellers of the early 19th century constantly refer to
311 landscapes without a single tree or shrub or any trace of

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hedgerows. It is hard to realize that the close-set pattern of hedged or walled fields which now distinguishes so much of the countryside is for the most part only a century or so old. In many cases it can be shown that the fields and fences were laid out within the last hundred years, following the break-up of the rundale village system and the re-distribution of the land (Chapter 6). In the eastern lowlands, where English influence has long been at work, the field pattern and hedgerows are no doubt much older, but in general the small cultivated patches were separated by mere balks or waste strips, varying from one to ten feet in width. Stones from the fields, hand-picked or removed with crow-bar and slipe (Chapter 12) were dumped on the balks or, more frequently, piled into " cairns " in the middle of the fields. Such stone-heaps are often found accompanying prehistoric field-systems, for example in Jutland.

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[179]

Fig. 10.

Stone walls or high earthen fences surrounded the house-clusters and enclosed each group of open fields, separating them from the common grazing land which lay outside and stretched away to the " head-ditch " on the mountain. As the rundale holdings gave way to individual farms the land was re-divided, the old ditches planted with whitethorn and new ditches, also set with thorn, were constructed—a process which was being actively carried out during the first half of the 19th century. One result of the scattering of the farms was the appearance of the long strip or " ladder farms," the cross hedges of the strip resembling the rungs of a ladder.

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The oldest fences, then, are the protective banks around farms which occupy old village sites—a survival no doubt of the rings around the ancient raths—and the march-dykes or divisions between townlands. The varied vegetation on these older banks betrays them just as it does the pre-enclosure hedgerows in England: their massive tumbled ruins are overgrown with whins, blackthorn, sally, ash and bramble. There are, however, still older forgotten divisions on the hillsides dating from various prehistoric periods; some have

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172 been discovered under many feet of peat. Several types can
311 be recognized, for example those with upright stones at
351 intervals, which are sometimes left as "standing stones" after the intervening walls have been removed. Old field fences at Cush, Co. Limerick, claimed to be contemporary with raths of the late Bronze Age and "essentially similar to those built by an Irish farmer of to-day" have been described by Professor O'Riordain. This appears to be a striking example of continuity, for the fences are closely followed by existing field-boundaries. Since they lie some 800 ft. above sea-level they do not invalidate the general picture I shall draw in the following chapter, but it is clear that much more work on the lines followed at Cush is required.

351 Hedges of whins (that is, gorse or furze) about the
314 farmstead are much prized not only for the shelter they afford
137 to stock—they are dense and do not drip—but because they form an admirable clothes line on washing day and a ready
[231] source of kindling wood. Formerly the young whin shoots were crushed and fed to horses. The heavy wooden maul and stone block used in the process may still be seen occasionally. It would require years of enquiry and observation to describe and classify the types of sod ("scraw") earth and stone fences which now parcel out the Irish soil into its patchwork of small fields. One may easily recognize the sod ditches of the rich grazing lands of Meath, with their tall thorn hedges and ash trees giving shelter to the cattle, the well-built dry-stone walls of the granite mountain slopes which vainly seek to stop the black-faced sheep, and the loose lace-like walls precariously constructed out of rough boulders in the morainic hills.

351 In the wind-swept mountains and along the coasts the
311 ditches are hedgeless, carrying only a tangle of heather or whins
137 and an occasional stunted tree, but throughout the lowlands the prevailing type of fence is a stone-faced bank of sods, in the side of which quick-thorn is planted (Fig. 10). These are cut back ruthlessly at longish intervals and are never pleached in the English way, so that the hedge is full of gaps. Occasion-

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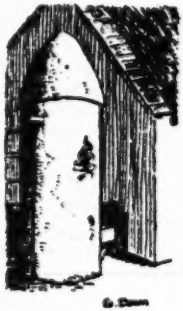
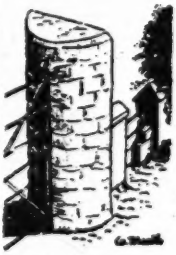
ally one comes across very wide ditches of this type with a 351
double hedge and paths or even cart-tracks in between, for 311
example in Co. Limerick. In Rathlin Island the only hedge 137
material that seems to escape the ravages of goats is the balsam poplar. Another plant of New World origin, born in Scotland of South American parents, is the Fuchsia, which runs riot along the coasts. Basket willows and wild "black sallies" for creels are sometimes grown—the latter has the advantage that it is not cropped by cattle.

The scarcity of good oak timber in a country once famed 351
for its oaks—notice the frequency of the element "derry" 417
in townland names—goes far to explain the prevalence of iron field-gates, which are hung on stout pillars of built stone. The newcomer to Ireland cannot fail to be struck by the massive gateposts along the roadsides and about the farm premises. In many districts they are whitewashed annually, and since they often assume proportions out of all relation to their function they are unnaturally conspicuous in a landscape bare of heavy timber. In parts of Ulster, for instance, they are such a characteristic feature of the countryside that it is difficult to imagine it without their cheering twinned greeting. Yet most of them must have been erected within the last century or so: writers of Irish travels before that time frequently comment on the absence of gates, for which in fact there was very limited need so long as the rundale system of farming persisted (Chapter 6). In the small village-communities of the west where the old scheme still prevails the gaps in the fences that surround the open field are closed with jagged root-stumps dragged from the bogs, or with a few thorn bushes. Sampson, writing of Co. Derry in 1814, states that gates were almost unknown except near towns, and that a common substitute was a hay-rope strung with thorns—an interesting rustic forerunner of the hated barbed wire.





Gate pillars and stiles

Fig. 11.

It might appear from the association of built piers with landlords' residences in Donegal that settlers introduced them to Ireland, but I am far from convinced that this is the

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explanation. It is true that they occur in Anglesea and in parts of the Scottish lowlands, but in both cases they are likely to be due to Irish influence. It seems to me more probable that an indigenous custom was taken up and diffused by improving landlords. I like to think of the Irish rath defended and glorified by two white stone pillars at the entrance, though I confess that this finds no support in reports of archæological excavations. The only dated piers I know bear the date 1839, but there is an eight-foot pair in Inishowen which, tradition says, had already lost their gates in 1709. The variety of styles and the superstitious beliefs connected with the pillars do strongly suggest that their origin is to be sought far back.

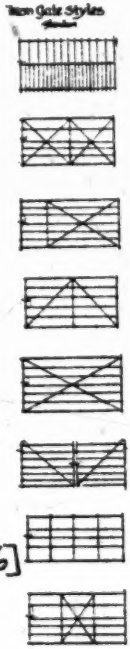

Fig. 12.

I imagine they were used, before the general adoption of fences, to shut off the farmyard from the surrounding open field. Mr. T. G. F. Paterson tells me that in Co. Armagh the gateposts are sometimes referred to as "husband and wife." The most popular shape is cylindrical (Fig. 11), and the average dimensions about three feet in diameter and six feet high. Pretentious specimens may be as high as ten feet. The top is generally finished in a low cone but varies considerably from one district to another: in some parts they are flat-topped "so that the fairies can dance on them." In Co. Meath the usual shape is semi-circular and may have originated in the common practice of building the pillars against a wall at the entrance to the farmyard. In some counties they are square, with a pyramidical roof or a coping of large stones.

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The gates, whether of iron or wood fitted with iron straps, are generally hung in an old-fashioned way: they pivot in a stone socket or "spud-stone," while the top of the beel turns in a perforated stone, nowadays replaced by an iron eye. The gates are not seldom made by the smith, who fashions them out of worn wheel hoops, for instance; and this helps to explain the pleasing absence of standardisation. Fastenings, too, are of many different kinds. Only in a few wooded areas are home-made wooden gates popular: they are light

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constructions of pegged branches, interwoven it may be with willow or hazel and turning in hoops of wire or cord on a wooden post. But as often as not, even where there are built gate-pillars, the gap is closed with an old cart or a few thorn bushes. The Irishman does not take the same pride as the English farmer in having a well-hung gate. It would appear that more importance is attached to the gateposts than to the gate!

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CHAPTER VI.

VILLAGE AND BOOLEY.

361 Throughout the Irish countryside the farmhouses and cottages lie scattered as though casually spilt over the surface, forming an even film of population everywhere except in the mountains and bogs. Among students of rural settlement this country is rightly taken as one of the best European examples of the dispersed type of habitation. We very rarely see, except in a few exotic " plantations " which languish here and there, large agricultural villages of the English or European pattern, with their tree-shaded greens, their shops, churches and inns. A cluster of more than a dozen houses is almost sure to be the result of industrial influence—the erection of a mill or factory. Such a scheme of scattered dwellings, each set among its own fields, seems appropriate to a region where there are no inducements such as the needs of defence or the lack of water to encourage agglomeration, and where pastoral interests predominate, the animals needing constant attention.

361 174 But if we look more carefully at the Irish scene, and if we turn back to the records of history and prehistory, we shall find proof that the completely isolated farms are a fairly modern feature in most parts, and that house-clusters formerly predominated. Here and there, especially in the west, we see little " clusters " " onsets " or " clachans " of peasant houses, a dozen or so together, which preserve something of the character of the old villages we shall try to describe in this chapter. Over a wider area we find smaller clusters, three or

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361 four houses together, which can almost invariably be shown
174 to have once been larger: even these tiny groupings are referred to as "towns," and the use of this word suggests that such clusters were once the nuclei of the "townlands." It is because of this association with the vital townland unit, and because many rural customs find their explanation in past conditions, that I have thought it worth while to attempt a reconstruction of the chief features of these old communities. This is based largely on records and on surviving examples which I have studied in Co. Donegal and Co. Antrim. Allowance must be made for differences between one region and another, but I believe the following description to be applicable to most parts of Ireland, though the decay of the village-system began earlier in some areas than in others.

Travellers a century or so ago tell us that villages with 50 or 60 houses were not uncommon. In 1802 Donegal is said to have had about 500 villages, with an average perhaps of 20 or 30 families to each, but they were "dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings" (Figs. 13 & 14). One uses the term village for want of a better word, for such clusters lack many of the well-known features of the English village. They were essentially communities of related families bound together in "friendship"—the word "friend" means a blood-relation in Ireland—with one or two surnames predominating in each group. This fact is still true of townland populations even though the holdings are scattered, and it
[551] helps to explain the prevalence of nicknames in rural Ireland, and, for the same reason, in Wales and Scotland. The houses were clustered without plan or order (and never strung together end-to-end) generally in some sheltered hollow in the richest part of the townland, though they might be disposed along a road with some semblance of regularity. Shelter is always the first consideration. I have been told in Donegal that house sites were selected by the simple process of throwing up a hat on a windy day and letting the wind decide by noting its resting place.

174 Made roads were almost unknown in hilly districts—there
491 was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one
361 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 50--ANALYSIS]

Fig. 13. Two Donegal townlands in 1834; showing village clusters.

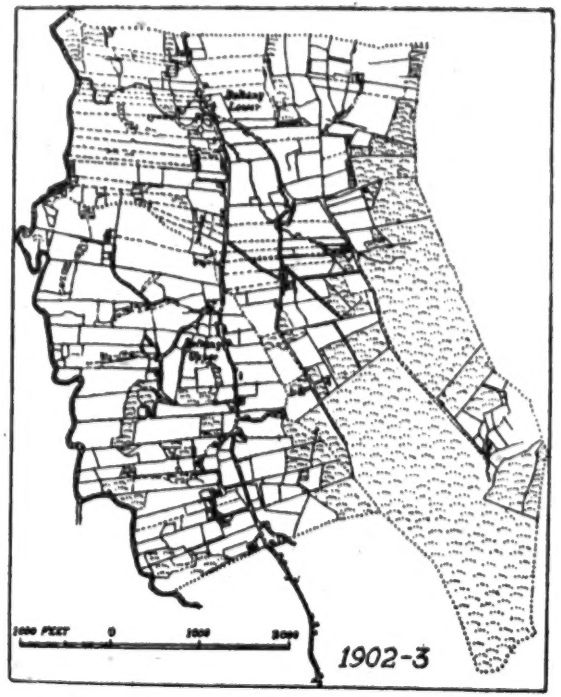

Fig. 14. The same, showing scattered dwellings and separate holdings (Einzelhöfe) in 1902/3.

Based on the Ordnance Survey by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.

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174 Donegal parish in 1837—and all the carrying depended upon
[49] slide cars and creels (Chapter 12). The village had neither
361 shop nor inn, and required little besides salt and iron from the market town. These self-sufficing communities were held together by blood ties and by the exchange of services under the Irish open-field or "rundale" system of cultivation. Around the house-clusters were small walled gardens and haggards, but the arable land was an unenclosed open field in which each holder had his scattered patches, averaging perhaps a quarter of an acre in area. There are cases on record where
[423] 29 partnership-peasants shared 422 plots of ground, where one man held 32 different patches, or again where 26 people had shares in a field of half an acre. In some districts it is known that the plots changed hands periodically. but no memory of this survives in the areas I am acquainted with. Live stock was sometimes subject to joint-ownership, with disastrous results where, for instance, three men claimed shares in a horse and could not agree as to the ownership of the fourth leg. But most of the stories that are told about rundale farming belong to the period of its decline.

174 Between the cultivated patches, which were dug with the
221 spade or ploughed and devoted almost exclusively to potatoes
361 and oats, ran waste strips or balks ("mearings," "bones" or "ribs") often left as much as three yards wide, apparently from a sort of pride, though they had their uses both as a source of hay and as tracks for the creel ponies when they could not enter the waterlogged plots. In the absence of fences all livestock had to be tethered, spancelled, herded, or sent to the mountain pastures during the crop season, which traditionally began on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) and ended on the last day of October (Hallowe'en), when the animals were free to wander over the whole townland throughout the winter. "Any that had not their potatoes dug, or other crops off the ground, were much injured, neither could any one man venture to grow turnips, clover or other green crops . . . no one would attempt to manure better or otherwise improve his proportion, as his neighbour's cattle only would have the benefit." It is clear that the introduction of the

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potato was one of the factors that led to the decline of rundale 174
agriculture, both because of its late harvest and because it 221
resulted in increased populations which brought disastrous 361
subdivision of the holdings. Under the " gavelkind " code of inheritance a man's property was divided equally among all his sons, so that the impossibly small fields came to be spoken [428] of not as the standard " cow's grass," but as a " foot " and even a half-foot or " cleet."

Much has been written of the drawbacks of the rundale 174
system. It is so easy to condemn it—the " fights, trespasses, 621
confusion, disputes and assaults " to which it gave rise, the wretched poverty which it bred, the evil consequences of dwelling in packed house clusters—that it is well to recall the better side of the system before it fell into decline. A writer in 1853 has left his " recollections of nights of social converse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of defence against bailiff or gauger which contrasted mournfully with the solitary grandeur of the new dwelling." Another apologist wrote : " the closer the rundale system is followed, the more the unwritten customs and regulations observed, the more do intelligent tenants regret a departure from them." Many of its better features, indeed, have survived the enclosure movement and the separation of farms ; we may cite co-operation in farm work and the social fire-side evenings or " caileys." " Gatherings " of many kinds, for work and pleasure, distinguished the rundale communities. Every village had its musician, piper or fiddler, who was often maimed in some way and supported himself by his skill. Folk songs, occupational airs and epic tales were kept alive in this way.

It was formerly the task of an appointed leader in a [622]
townland or group of townlands to see that customs were observed, to arrange the casting of lots in re-allotting strips, and so on. Probably we should see in the " king " not long ago recognized as leader in such communities as Rathlin and Tory a relic of this custom.

To understand the village-system in working order we 174
must see it as part of a wider pattern in which cattle-herding 621 221 231

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174 621 221 231 played a dominant part, to which the claims of agriculture were subordinated. It was customary for the young folk, and in some cases the whole family, to leave the village as soon as the crops were sown and migrate to summer pastures among the hills. This custom is still widely followed in various mountain areas in Europe, for instance Switzerland and Spain, where it can be shown to be of great antiquity. To it the name "transhumance" is given, but we shall use the term "booleying," from "booley" (milking place), or summer hill dwelling. It is strange that scarcely any attention has been given or any importance attached to this aspect of the Irish past, despite its direct bearing on the social and cultural as well as the economic development of rural Ireland, on language and literature, music and the arts. From rare memories or survivals of the custom—it is still followed on Achill Island—and by analogy with transhumant societies overseas, we can envisage the part played by booleying in ancient Ireland, where its wide occurrence was facilitated by the presence of scattered mountain masses in all parts of the island (Chapter 2). We shall refer to some survivals below. The illustration (Fig. 15) shows a bullock's "horn" which used to be blown not long ago at a farm in the Torr Head district of Co. Antrim, to summon people together. One is tempted to see in this custom a relic of the pastoral heritage. Traditions of hospitality are a common accompaniment of pastoral life: there is no need to stress the reputation of the country people in this connexion, but it is relevant to add that the lavish hospitality for which the landed aristocracy have been famous may well have been derived from Gaelic custom.

[534]

Bullock's Horn
Ballycastle, Co. Antrim

Fig. 15.

Wherever it is found, this seasonal nomadism assumes a ritual significance, especially where, as in the old Ireland, cattle are its main concern. Thus the departure of the herds and their attendants in spring is accompanied by festivities and ceremonial; and the return to the homestead in autumn is the occasion for the rejoicings and reunions of Hallowe'en, when the youngsters play seasonal games among themselves and tricks upon their elders. We shall revert to this topic in chapter 17. Here we are concerned rather to describe the life

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among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, "the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible." 174 621 221 231

Many townland names ending in "booley" or "boley" assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular "town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of "whitemeats" that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This "bog-butter" frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations: it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter. 221 342 343 221 234 [251]

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Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

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the 17th century, the natives withdrew themselves to the 221
mountains, where they lived a life that some historians have mistaken for aboriginal nomadism.

221
231

The booleying tradition, finally, throws light on many of the customs connected with cattle and sheep, and helps to explain the absence of the dairy in permanent dwellings which formerly had to serve as winter houses only, most of the dairy work being done in summer. It also helps us to attribute to custom rather than solely to laziness and neglect the Irish farmer's traditional indifference to the fate of his crops during the summer months. "Spring and harvest time," we quote a typical 19th century observer, "are the only periods at which the peasants exert themselves, and then they work very hard; for the rest of the year they are idle."

Rush "Frung" Basket
Fig. 18. Co. Antrim.

The old customs of tending ("herding") the cattle and tethering or spancelling them also derive from the rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. "Cattle, sheep, pigs and goats," wrote Arthur Young, "are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw . . . . cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom." Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used: even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. Where animals still run in common under the system of "sums" it is necessary to give them distinguishing marks. Apart from the well-known methods of branding or colouring [422]
the sheep's wool it is the custom in parts of Ireland, as in Wales, to ear-mark sheep by cutting or notching the ear with proprietary shapes. In Clare Island the geese are "tokened" by having holes punched in their webbed feet. Incidentally [413]
it is worth noticing that, so far as I am aware, the iron-tipped shepherd's crook is unknown in Ireland, a bent ash stick taking its place. "Gatherings" and co-operation are of course a feature of sheep-shearing and dipping. Sheep-pens of dry stone construction are often associated with ancient [343]
settlements among the hills: they are of various shapes and would repay study.

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Plate III

342
[492]
[493]

THATCHED ROOF SECURED WITH PEGGED FIR-ROPES

N. ANTRIM

SCOLLOP THATCH OF MARROM GRASS

MAGILLIGAN CO. DERRY

ROPED THATCH OF RYE STRAW

ARTICLAVE, CO. DERRY

[Facing p. 57]

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CHAPTER VII.

THE IRISH PEASANT HOUSE.

342 The Irish peasant house consists of a low single-storied rectangle, some 12 to 15 feet wide internally but of varying length, customarily thatched and whitewashed; but this generalised description embraces a surprising range of styles. So much abuse has been levelled at the Irish cabin that it is well to recall the opinion of a Swedish scientist who writes as follows :—" Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building material, the Irish peasant house never stands out in bold relief against its background but melts into it even as a tree or rock. Whenever the old building traditions are faithfully maintained its features are of a fine simplicity. The best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe."

342 362 571 The other side of the picture is the dirt and smells inseparable from the long habits of close association with livestock, so that within living memory, " cows and calves, men, women and children, horse and poultry were herded together in one apartment." Poverty and the rack-rent system have been blamed for this, but behind it lie facts of ethnology which are rooted in the remote past. Local authorities are striving to wipe away the stigma of the old order, and are spreading a " rash " of red-roofed cottages over the fair face of the country, but there is still a great mass of material for study.

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342 It has often been asserted that the Irish lived, until a few centuries ago, in wattled circular huts. Archæology tells us, however, that well-built stone structures were used from the very dawn of civilisation: the dry walling of the megalith builders is of superb construction and the stone foundations of houses of the period, both round and rectangular in plan, have been unearthed. It seems probable that stone, timber, wattle, clay and sods were all employed from very early times and that Ireland shared the traditions of the "timber province" of northern Europe and the "stone province" of the Mediterranean. Although it is well-nigh impossible to discuss present house forms without reference to the past we shall confine ourselves to the last half-century in this necessarily brief review. But reference must be made to the lay-out of some old cabins which have been described, for it throws light on surviving customs and nomenclature. These were built on a slope at right-angles to the contours—more recent houses are placed along the slope—so that the top end was excavated into the hill-side and profited from the semi-subterranean warmth, while the lower end housed the animals, the slope allowing the refuse to drain away. The terms "top" and "bottom" gable are still applied to houses of the gable-chimney type.

This brings us to the fundamental division of present-day Irish cabins into gable-hearth and central-hearth types. Owing to the practice of extending gabled houses behind the chimney it is not always possible to say at a glance whether the presence of a chimney near the centre of the roof denotes a central-hearth house. And even when the hearth is situated against the gable it can sometimes be shown that it has been moved to that position within the last century or so. For our present purpose it is simpler to classify the cabins into gabled and hip-roofed types (Fig. 19). The former is universal in the north, but as one travels south one sees the tops of the gables rounding into a half-hip until, at the Boyne, the hipped style is established, though the gabled form is found side by side with it throughout the south. Some examples in the west have rounded corners, making them an elongated

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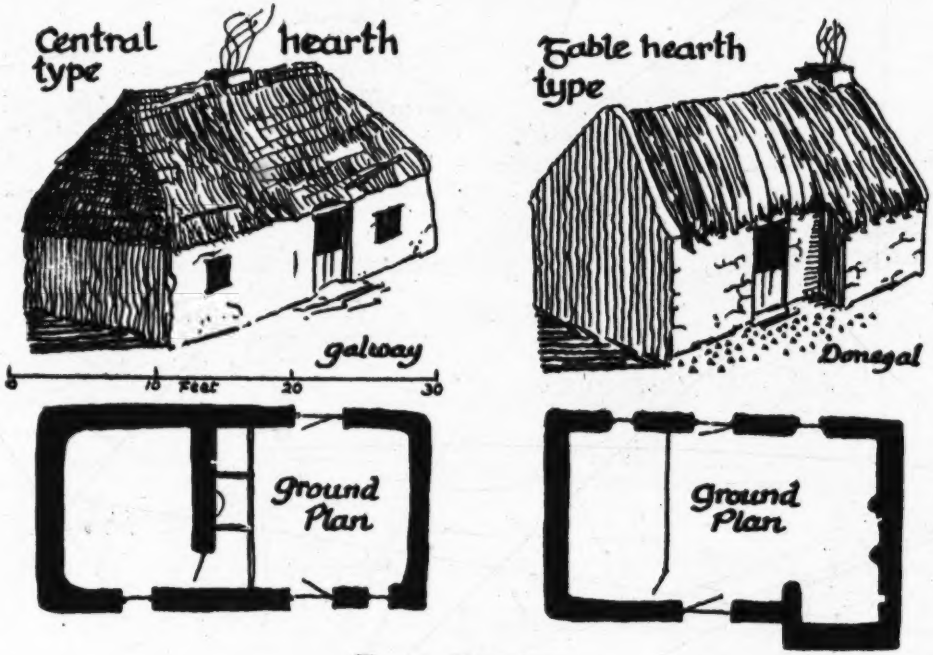

Fig. 19. House types.

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342 oval in plan: the problem of the origin of the hipped roof is discussed in Chapter 9. It should be realized that there are many transition types, and of course slated houses are rapidly replacing the old styles, but the division into upright gables and hipped roofs is fundamental. Dr. Campbell's pioneer work in this field has met with a hostile reception in some quarters: [113] see for example Mr. Colm Ó Lochlainn's review in *The Irish Book Lover*, January, 1940.

Within these broad divisions there is endless variety of construction, internal lay-out and roofing technique. Of special interest is the projecting bed-wing, the "outshot" or "cailleach" (Fig. 19), which is attached to gabled houses throughout the north-west from Co. Derry to Co. Galway. It may be compared with the "half-neuk" beds of the Orkneys and Faroes, and has its parallels too in the wall-beds of the Hebridean black-houses. The device allows the large bed (6 ft. by 4) to take its traditional place at the fire-end of the house without unduly narrowing the all-important space around the hearth. The bed recess is cut off from the room by curtains or, formerly, by hanging straw mats.

342 231 Single-roomed kitchen byres, where the family occupies the top or hearth-end and cattle the other, are now a thing of the past, but a few examples have survived in their original state, with an open drain crossing the floor and emptying at the side of the door. The custom of taking the animals under the family roof was once prevalent over north-western Europe in regions of difficulty where access to the cattle in all weathers was a determining factor. Tenacious usage rather than poverty ensured its survival into recent times, where the mutual advantage of the custom is summed up in the phrases, "the cow keeps the house warm," and "warmth increases the yield of milk." Two other points should be borne in mind, its relation to the system of booleying described in Chapter 5, and the necessity in former times of protecting the precious animals from wild beasts.

342 As a rule the bottom or byre-end was later converted into a dairy, store or spare bedroom, but the principal bedroom,

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called simply " the room " or—in the Gaeltacht—the " west room," though not always at the west end, extends behind the chimney which helps to warm it. A wealth of customs and superstitions centres in the West Room; they have been described by Dr. Arensberg in his book, " The Irish Countryman." It is considered unlucky to build on to the other end of the house, that is the bottom gable. Similarly it is unlucky to widen a house. The " developed " Irish house thus consists of three compartments and is never more than a single room in width. The older houses are for the most part of stone, either dry-built or with mud laid as mortar. But mud-walled structures are common in areas where stone is not convenient: they by no means denote extreme poverty because from the absence of stones they are often situated in the richest alluvial valleys. A Dublin daily paper recently asked its readers, in a column headed " Believe it or not," to marvel at the fact that certain African tribes actually lived in houses built of mud! Here and there a few sod houses survive, and there is still standing in Co. Antrim a roomy dwelling occupied by a healthy and intelligent family, cut out of solid turf to the height of the eaves, the surrounding peat-bottom, now the farmland, having had several feet of turf removed from it. The stone and mud houses are almost invariably whitewashed both inside and out. Walls vary greatly in thickness but average from 20 to 30 inches.

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[777]

A feature of many of these older houses is the two opposite doors at back and front, the latter always supplemented by a half-door which keeps animals and children in or out, forms an arm-rest for conversational interludes, and helps to regulate the fire draught. Back or front door could be used according to the wind, and this is the reason commonly advanced to explain the opposite doors. We have seen in the previous chapter, however, its relation to the pastoral tradition, and it should be added that parallels can be adduced from a wide province extending from southern Europe to Scandinavia. We may mention the feeding walk found in the old Welsh " long houses." As with many other parts of the house, superstition attaches to the use of the back door, for

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342 instance the stranger must not be allowed to leave the house that way lest he take the luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands it was the custom to carry out the corpse through [764] the back door.

The deal door has not long since replaced, in remote spots, the wickerwork frame, lined with straw, or the hanging straw mat, and I have been told of houses where a creel offered the only protection. There may be only one small window, towards the hearth-end, for the open door provides light. [281] A dried sheepskin was a substitute for glass, and I have come across windows where a sheet of glass was sealed with clay without any frame. Where the hole was open, a handful of hay or a wicker shutter closed it at nights. These conditions help us to understand why the window or windows, even now, tend to be restricted to the side sheltered from the prevailing winds.

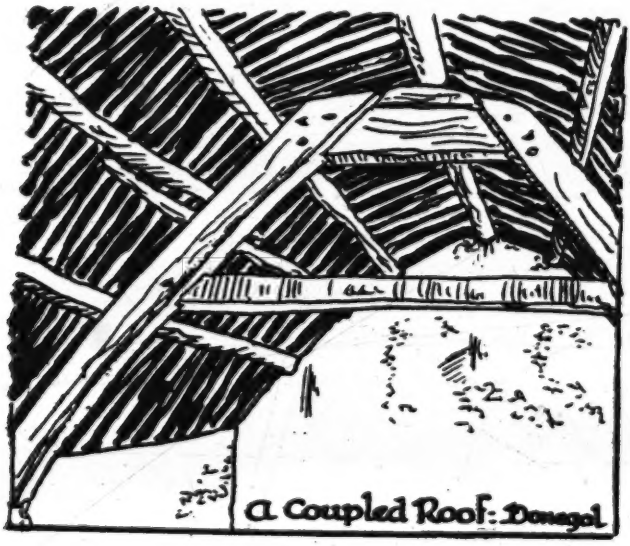

Fig. 20.

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We now come to the roof with its timber framework and thatch. It generally consists of couples resting on the side-walls and joined together by tie-beams at the top; and houses are referred to not as measuring so many feet but as being two- three- or four-coupled. The rib-lengths, between the couples, are a kind of architectural unit.[1] In most old cottages the frame of the roof is of bog-fir, but its use has been superseded by imported "fir." There are many different methods of joining the couples, for example in Donegal they do not actually meet but have a short tie at the top which rounds the roof against the wind (Fig. 20). If the walls are of clay, sod or turf, the couples may be supported on internal beams placed upright against the side-walls, but the purlin method is generally adopted to avoid the thrust of the couple ends. Long beams run from gable to gable, and may be seen projecting outside to allow for the possible movement of the end-walls. This method of roofing allows of greater width than the coupled roof and is preserved, for example, in the old weavers' houses around Lough Neagh, where space was needed for the large looms. (Figs. 22c, 27 & 28.)

On the framework of couples or purlins lighter timber was placed at intervals and on these were laid at right angles rows of branches or laths, often made out of split bog timber. Where teasels were cultivated for the home woollen industry their dried stalks were employed for this purpose. Then came a layer of "scraws," peeled from a carefully selected spot where the grass is tough with a spade or flachter (Chapter 15) and placed on the roof in long overlapping strips with the matted roots inwards. The scraws were of standard sizes, for instance 12 ft. long by 2 ft. by 1½ inches thick. but they were shorter than this in the south, where the flachter was not known. The scraws were generally sewn to the roof timbers with loops of sugán or fir-rope (Fig. 21). The sod layer, while universal in old houses throughout the north, is not always found in the south. Professor O'Riordain has described old houses in Co. Limerick, for example, where the thatch is sown directly on to the battens.

[283]

[184]

Fig. 21.

[1] *cf.* the fork-intervals or "bays" of the old English house.

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Then comes the thatch itself, which, while customarily of straw—rye is considered the best—may consist of tough mountain grass, rushes, marrom grass, flax, reeds, and not long ago, heather or even potato haulms. Old houses in the north-east sometimes have a thick layer of flax waste or "shows" under the thatch. With the many ways of shaping and securing the thatch it is not possible to deal at length. One of the oldest devices is the sugán or rope method (Fig. 22), common in the west and in coastal or exposed situations elsewhere. A network of ropes is secured to stone pegs at the eaves or weighted down with stones that may either hang loose or rest on the roof above the eaves. Where the gable end rises above the thatch the ropes run over the roof-ridge and are supplemented only by a single eave-rope or lath, but in Mayo the gable is stepped so that horizontal ropes may be carried through the angles and secured in the gable ends. Another coastal method, found for example in north Antrim and in Connemara, consists of horizontal bands or ropes of bog-fir, sally or heather, pegged into the thatch at intervals (Fig. 22). A common way of securing the thatch is to plaster the ridge and, in mud-walled houses, the strips above the gable-tops, with mud, or latterly with cement. In the latter case the thatch protects the mud walls by projecting over the ends (Fig. 22). Dwellings roofed in this way are known in Inishturk, off the Mayo coast, as "shaken houses," in contrast to the "stitched houses" of tied ropes. Finally there is the scollop or scobe thatch, secured by bent rods which are hidden (Fig. 23) except at the ridge and along the eaves, where they may be worked into lozenge patterns. The tools of a scollop thatcher are illustrated in Fig. 24. This method, it has been claimed, is due to English influence, but it would be instructive to compare its distribution with known culture borrowals. It occurs as far west as Kerry and even Connemara and is the usual method on the steep-roofed houses of Galway city. (*cf.* Pl. III.)

Fig. 22 Methods of securing thatch. Note projecting purlin-ends in gable "c"

Two protruding elements of the house remain to be mentioned—the porch and the chimney. Neither was common a century ago, and where they are present on an old house they

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Fig. 23. Scollop thatch

[413]

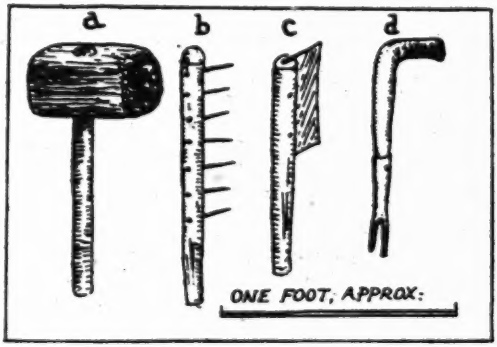

Fig. 24. Tools of a scollop-thatcher.

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342 can be shown or assumed to be additions. A wicker windbreak of birch or hazel (called the wassock or corrag in Co. Antrim), was occasionally erected at one side of the door. Here, too, there was often a stone bench or "stile." The chimney generally betrays its modernity by being built of brick, but wooden or wattled chimneys, neatly thatched and bound with sugán, are not uncommon, and there are a few chimneyless dwellings still inhabited in the west. Old houses frequently have no more than a few inches of chimney projecting, and it is recorded that when efficient chimneys were built by improving landlords they were promptly covered with a sod, "because the smoke keeps them warm." It remains to be said that in former days house-building, like so many tasks demanding much labour, was a communal affair. "The custom on such occasions"—the scene is Donegal a century ago—"is for the person who has the work to be done to hire a fiddler, upon [476] which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs [482] to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing [535] and working while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day."

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE: FIRESIDE AND FOOD.

As we step inside an old Irish cottage, over a threshold of 352 stone slabs or a pattern of small cobble-stones, we tread on a 342 hard mud floor in which we may see, towards the hearth, the "pot hole" where the large iron pot rests when it is lifted off the fire. I have noticed similar holes in the mud floor, with the remains of the round-bottomed pottery vessel inside, near the excavated hearths of Irish houses nearly 40 centuries old. In paved kitchens a block of wood set flush with the flags [354] answers the same purpose or there may be an iron pot rest (Fig. 25). The area surrounding the hearth is always paved, and the fire itself, in the old style, is at floor level. We shall be invited to take a seat at the fire, for this is the place of honour given to strangers: the fireside is both the focus of 352 family life and the symbol of hospitality. The seat may be a [574] stone slab built into the fireplace, so that the social tradition is incorporated in the architecture of the hearth, or it may be a roughly made but sturdy chair, bench or "creepie" (Fig. 26). The low stool not only brings one near fire-level, but keeps one's head out of the peat smoke hanging in the open rafters, while its three legs find firm footing on the uneven floor. Other low stools are made of solid turf or wood—a section of a tree-trunk —or again of coiled straw-rope, while chairs are often made with seats of sugán or of rush. Comfortable high-backed chairs fashioned out of straw in the manner of a

Fig. 25.

Fig. 26.

[p. 67]

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352 bee-hive were common in some districts, but in parts of Mayo one rarely sees chairs of any kind. Step or ladder backed chairs with rush or straw seats are widespread: in the north-east chairs with wooden seats and upright-barred backs are [372] perhaps more usual. The turf fire is never allowed to go out: the glowing turves are heaped with ash at night and can be readily blown into a flame in the morning.

342 If the house has kept its brace and wattled chimney we shall be sitting under a canopy which tapers upwards to the smoke hole. The brace is a great beam extending from wall to wall, or resting at one end on a post some 5 feet out from the end-wall: between post and wall there may be a side partition or curtain-wall (Fig. 27) known in the Armagh-Meath area as the jamb-wall or the "hollan."[1] In some districts the front door is placed opposite this wall, but not, I fancy, in really old houses. In that case there may be a small window—the "spy-hole" "entry," or "jamb-window"—in the partition, allowing the sitter at the fireside to keep an eye on the open door. I have seen several houses in Co. Armagh where one has to stoop under the projecting brace to enter the house (Fig. 27). A further development is to hang a door on the brace-post, thus making a kind of internal porch or small hall. The jamb-wall is found from Co. Down to Co. Limerick but I have not seen it in the north-western province of the outshot.

342 The canopy is constructed of wattles or of sugán, plastered 352 with mud and cow-dung and white-washed outside. Canvas or boards are recent substitutes. At the sides of the chimney, above the ends of the brace, are small lofts or storeplaces, and there may be a larger "half-loft" over the other end of the kitchen—a relic of the time when corn and hay were kept here for feeding the animals below. A usual feature, under the stone seat to one side of the fire, is the ash or rubbish pit, another survival from far prehistory; and balancing it on the other side of the fire there may be a warm stone recess for the [23] sitting hen. At the back of the fire is a thick flag—the backstone—or a mass of clay forming the hob, but this is carefully built up of stones or bricks in eastern and southern

[1] This word is also used in N. England and Scotland for the curtain-wall. In Lancashire it is termed the "speer."

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Armagh

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Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth with Brace. Derryinver T.L.

Fig. 27. Note wheel-bellows.

Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth, Jambwall & window. Derrytresna.

Fig. 28. Note "jamb-window."

[p. 69]

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342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-holes (" boles ") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes or the knitting : they are usually reserved for special purposes and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these
[805] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for drying clothes.

251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or " ark,"
352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now almost dead, is the " tramping " of the meal, the children
[857] being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead immediately behind the chimney, in the " room," where it would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other fireside gear later in the chapter.

354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west, that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its cailleach or not, lies at one side of the fire : alternatively there may be a large settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine

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Donegal

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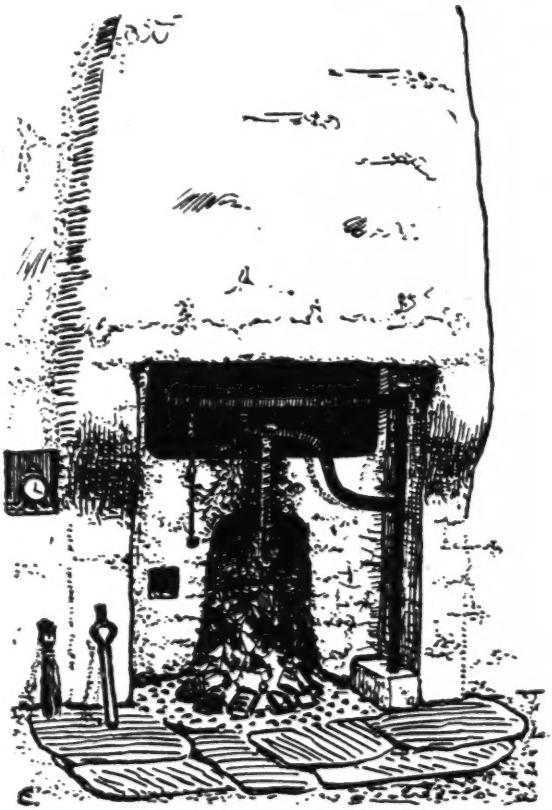

a Donegal Hearth

Fig. 29.—Note keeping-holes, besom, tongs, crane and pot-hanger (crook).

[p. 71]

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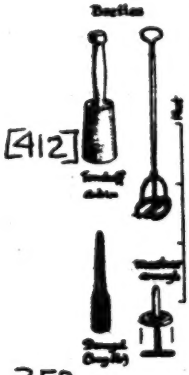
352 workmanship of the Welsh oak dressers, is an essential part of the kitchen and, like the keeping-holes mentioned above, has its prototype in the stone shelves of some of our oldest prehistoric dwellings. The dresser belongs, like so many of the other elements we are discussing, to the "Atlantic" province of European folk-culture. It accompanies the open hearth tradition as distinct from the "oven tradition" of central Europe, and may be thought of (compare the absence of the large table mentioned below) as providing storage while taking up a minimum of the valuable floor space in small single-roomed houses. The dresser has its fixed place in the layout of the kitchen, the position varying, however, according to the district, the type of house, disposition of the doors, and so on. In the outshot houses it stands against the side wall alongside the bed, whereas in the central-hearth type it lies
352 across the kitchen opposite the fire and helps to partition off
415 the end room. The bottom of the dresser is open. Here the hen-coops, of straw, wattle or wood, were sometimes kept, but one is more likely to see a collection of iron pots and the crocks, buckets or wooden stave-built vessels (piggins) for holding water or milk. The latter I have seen covered with roughly trimmed stone slabs (Fig. 68), a prehistoric device which has the advantage of coolness and gives protection from the cats. On the dresser are a few bits of "delph" and the tin mugs which have displaced the wooden noggins. Delph, as kitchen-ware is called, has not long since become general in remote parts. Of Mayo in the last century we read that "all their vessels were of wood, most of them cut out of solid timber." These included not only platters, spoons and ladles, but also methers or drinking cups of various sizes. Where the crockery tradition is of old standing, plates, jugs and long rows or nests of bowls "whammeled," that is tumbled on their sides, line the dresser shelves. Here, too, are the beetles of different shapes (Fig. 30) used for pounding or mashing the potatoes. The upright milk churn commonly finds its place alongside the dresser.



352 Fig. 30.

One very rarely sees a table of any antiquity in an Irish kitchen: it is generally of deal and it is placed against one of

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the side walls so that it is impossible to sit round it. The 352
table is not a centre of social activities and has nothing like the same importance as in an English farmhouse. There are crofters' dwellings in Donegal where no table is used; instead, [264]
at meal times, the shallow potato basket or skeehogue (Fig. 31) is taken on the knees of the members of the family as they sit in front of the fire, or an upturned creel may serve instead. Very low oblong tables or trays cut from the solid were formerly used and are occasionally dug up from the bogs. They have holes by which they could be suspended from the wall when not in use, and it may be for convenience of transport during the summer migrations. The potato basket will be seen after meals hanging to dry on the south wall of the house.

Fig. 31.

To understand the fireside appliances and methods of 354
cooking certain facts should be borne in mind—the absence 252
of the brick oven, the use of turf, a slow-burning fuel admirable for stewing and for things requiring a steady heat, and the universal preference for "thin-bread," or "bread in cakes," as English observers called it. Once more we have to remind 252
ourselves that parallels to surviving habits can be found 40 centuries back, for pottery baking slabs are known from Neolithic western Europe and of course oatcakes are best baked in this way. Flagstone griddles were apparently common down to a few centuries ago, and a dated specimen of a bakestone is illustrated in Fig. 33. Though oatcakes are now baked on the griddle, it is not long since they were set upright before the fire after drying a little, and turned frequently. The simple "bread-stick" (Fig. 32) or even a lump of turf may serve the purpose, but in the north of Ireland, where bread seems to have been relatively more important than in

Fig. 32. Co. Galway. Height 1 ft.

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Oatcake Toasters (Harnen Stands)

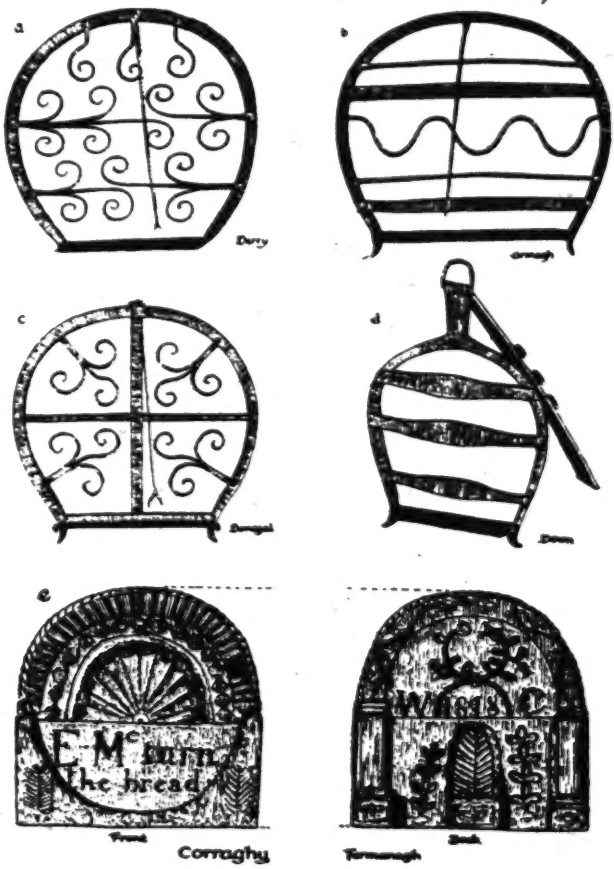

Fig. 33. Scale ½. a, b, c, d, iron; e, stone.

[p. 74]

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the south, local smiths vied with each other in producing elaborately-made toasters, or "harnen stands," which are of many different styles and deserve study before they all find their way to the scrap-heap (Fig. 33). When grates became fashionable, toasting "fenders" were hung on the bars. The large flat oatcake is cut into four quarters or "farls." 252

[415]

[417]

Fig. 34.

Fig. 35.

Nowadays the oatcakes have been superseded by wheaten bread of various kinds: the flour is often mixed with a bit of maize or barley flour and the baking is done either on the griddle (Fig. 34), in a deep "fry pan," or in the pot-oven or "bastible" (Fig. 34). Meat roasted in the pot-oven can be delicious and I have a taste for rice puddings done in this way. Others may tell of the virtues of the "bap" and of potato "slim bread," and it is not for me to repeat the strictures of Young and Cobbett on the strong tea which they said would ruin the peasantry. It should be added that the thin-bread tradition has been developed by the town bakeries into a bewildering variety of breads and scones.

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415 The round-bottomed three-legged iron pots (Figs. 5 and 34), of various sizes from the small porridge pot to the giant 18 gallon potato pot, are descended from the bronze cauldrons of which there are many specimens in the museums ranging in date from 700 B.C. to 1700 A.D. The cauldron was in old times the special property of the head of the house and figures prominently in Celtic mythology and folklore. The pot has been described as the "maid of all work," but boiling potatoes for man and beast is now its main task. The heaviest pots are going out of use with the introduction of raised grates.

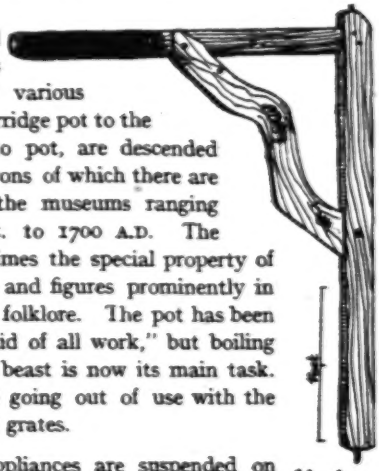

Fig. 36.

These various appliances are suspended on the iron crook or adjustible pot hook, to which many different kinds of fittings or "bools" (Fig. 35) can be attached. The crook may simply hang from a bar placed across the chimney, but more commonly from a crane (Fig. 29) which swivels at the side of the fire. A few examples of the wooden crane survive (Fig. 36) By the fireside, too, are kept the short iron tongs or "mudyees" and the heather besom (Fig. 29) which is more efficient than any broom in cleaning among the hearthstones. A goose-wing serves to dust the pots and clean the griddle when baking. Here by the fireside was hung the crusie oil lamp (Chapter 16, Fig. 105) which is another element of the north-western province of European folk-culture and may have its prototype in the famous "hanging bowls" of over 1,000 years ago. A selection of old-fashioned smith-made iron light-holders of different kinds is shown in Fig. 37. There are more elaborate styles, but the charm of these homely appliances lies in their simplicity. The upper figures from Co. Armagh (a and b) show weavers' candlesticks, made for suspension from the loom. Figure (e) is for holding a "split" or thin strip of resinous bog-fir. The others (c and d) are

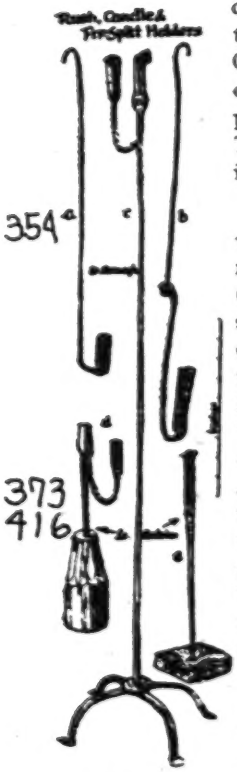

Fig. 37.

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rush-light holders with attached candle-sockets. The dipped 373
rushes were sometimes plaited together to make the light last 416
longer. It is of interest to note that the war-time shortage of oil and candles has led to a revival of the use of rush-lights in some country districts.

A great amount of interesting information might be 262
collected about the food of the Irish peasantry, the methods of cooking, times of meals and the many customs and superstititions connected with food and drink. We may close this chapter with a few remarks about some foods other than bread It is curious to reflect that the diet of some western districts, "potatoes for 10 months and Indian meal for two," is so largely dependent on crops of New World origin! Potatoes were made tasty with "kitchen" or "point," that is a bit of
relish such as a salted herring; and in difficult times they were [25]
only half boiled so that the hard core, called the "moon" or "bone," might prolong the processes of digestion. In Ulster the name given to July was "the blue month" because it was a time of scarcity between the old potatoes and the new crop, but generally speaking milk products were consumed during the summer months. Meat, by which the countryman means
beef, was often salted down and reserved for winter use, but [25]
meat eating tended to be restricted to certain seasons or festivals such as Christmas, Shrove and Easter.

Another seasonal food was the "sowens" or porridge made from soured "meal-seeds" sifted from the oatmeal. It was traditionally eaten at Hallowe'en; and the Irish name for the 1st of November is Samhain, or "Sowin." I have heard this dish nicknamed "water bewitched." The thin liquid resulting from steeping the fine meal-dust was also drunk and called "thewin," a substitute for buttermilk. A kind of whey ("troander") was made by mixing sweet milk and buttermilk, and "drammock" was a harvest drink consisting of raw oatmeal and water. Then there is the boxty bread made from potato flour and cooked on the griddle. Many traditional foods and drinks are now little more than memories and of some, for instance "heather beer," the country folk say that "the secret has been lost." But one might still

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262 make a long list of the plants and herbs which are gathered and dried for use as simples. In some areas, for example Tyrone and Derry, it is recorded that the cattle used to be
237 bled in summer, " in a smooth place, each layer of coagulating
262 blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed, which was cut up in squares and laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year." In Wicklow (1780) " they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food."
273 In the days before sugar was known honey played a considerable part in domestic economy and mead or metheglin, made from honey, was once a popular beverage. We have no knowledge of the period when whiskey distillation was first practised but stills and worms of some antiquity have been found in the bogs, and it is natural to correlate the popularity of whiskey and poteen with the dampness of the climate. A fact worth recording is that until recently illicit stills were made and kept in repair by travelling tinkers in whom it is perhaps not extravagant to see shades of the skilled craftsmen of the later Bronze Age who made cauldrons out of sheet bronze (*cf.* Fig. 5).

252 Far into the historic period heated stones were employed in cooking and it may be that memories of this old method linger on. The nearest thing I have seen is the custom of plunging a hot poker into cow's milk to " singe it " when it is given to lambs. The explanation offered was that this made its taste resemble that of sheep's milk.

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CHAPTER IX.

FARM BUILDINGS.

First in importance in this pastoral country comes the 343
cow byre, which is often an old dwelling house converted or 234
an extension built on to the end of the kitchen. We have seen that in the west it is not long since the cows were housed in the bottom end of the kitchen, and even now one gets the impression from the proximity of the byre and its smells that there is a reluctance to be separated by any distance from the beasts which play such a large part in the life and traditions of the countryside. Along one side of the byre, above the feeding place, runs the rannel- or revel-tree to which the vertical cow-stakes are secured at intervals: "thin as a ravel-tree" is an expression sometimes heard. Alternatively, in the west, the stakes are held in place by iron staples or perforated stone slabs let into the wall. Iron chains have almost entirely replaced the rush "binnen ropes" (Chapter 14) which were fastened to a plaited ring of sally, hazel or rowan— called a "woody"—sliding up and down the stake. In Co. [184]
Clare the animals were secured by a straw rope tied round the horns, and no doubt different methods could be described from various districts. Milking times also vary from place to place, and there is no topic about which so much lore might be collected as about cows and their products. It is commonly said that there is a right and a wrong side on which to milk a cow. In Ireland, so far as my observation goes, it is the right-hand side.

[p. 79]

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343 234 Behind the cows there runs a slab-lined drain or groop, which carries the refuse through the "groop hole" in the wall to the midden. Hanging from the rannel-tree you may perchance see a charm in the shape of a perforated flint [776] pebble, while over the door, decaying Brigid's Crosses dating [751] back for several successive years show that the cattle are under the special protection of the Irish saint. In the byre gable it is not uncommon to see a dove-cote, at any rate along [235] the east coast where English influence has been strong since Norman times. Pigeons are fond of heat and thrive near farm animals. In Lecale, Co. Down, I have seen nests made of straw rope hung above the horses in the stable.

343 251 The barn is not infrequently built above the byre. When the dwelling house alongside remains, in the Irish tradition, single-storied, the effect of the towering barn is rather incongruous. This arrangement makes it simple to feed the animals, provides a springy wooden floor for thrashing, and also gives a better draught for the purpose. Moreover, the raised position helps to make the corn secure from damp and rats. The barn has opposite doors and half doors to regulate the through draught and to keep out stray animals while work goes on inside. Access to the barn is obtained by external stone steps or a sloping ramp, under which the stone dog kennel is often built in. Some of the activities and appurtenances of the barn are described in Chapter 14.

343 Little need be said about the stable, since small farms have as a rule only one mare. In the old-time single-roomed kitchen-byres, the mare had her stall alongside the cows, and you will sometimes see the keeping-hole above the back door where the brush and curry comb were stored. The stable, like the byre, may be attached to the house or may be separate, but for convenience and economy it tends to be built as part of a range of buildings. In decayed rundale clusters now occupied by only one or two holders there were, ready to hand, many old dwelling houses which could be put to different uses as "offices."

Before we turn to the housing of other livestock, mention should be made of the turf-house, for which many different

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kinds of construction are employed. Some districts use strong 343
stone buildings—for example of the bee-hive style to be described below—others roofless rectangles of stone with one end open, and others again timber-posted structures with roofs and walls of many different materials. These supplies are generally supplemented by well-built turf-stacks, and it used to be the custom to build a great stack against the gable of the house, both for shelter and to keep the house warm. Turf-stacks were occasionally built hollow to serve as a pigsty. [23]
In the north of Ireland the pig is by no means universally kept, though most old homesteads have a building which once did duty as a sty, and in some parts of the country these are of bee-hive construction, so strongly built that they have defied the ravages of time.

Just as old practices live on as children's games, so certain ancient types of buildings have descended in the social scale in the course of history. The bee-hive corbelled huts and the corn-drying kilns are examples. Both are circular in plan and built of dry stones or stones and mud. In the Gaeltacht the bee-hive houses are used, from Mayo to Kerry, for storing milk or turf. They are made by overlapping the flat slabs of the walls until they meet at the top in a false dome—a style of building which, in its origin, long precedes the arch and is seen at its best in some of the oldest monuments of human industry in Ireland, the prehistoric chambered tombs of the Boyne [172]
valley. Not far from this metropolis of ancient culture, in the Carlingford Hills of north Louth, Mr. H. G. Tempest has shown me several corbelled huts, some of which are still used as pigsties, while in Lecale in Down there are many examples, both circular and square in plan, which have been used as pigsties and hen houses (Figs. 38 & 39). These are generally grouted on top and whitewashed, but those of Louth and the west may have a covering of earth which, growing a crop of grass and weeds, gives the little houses the appearance of natural hillocks. Similar pigsties are known in south-eastern Wales, and have been described by Dr. I. C. Peate in his book *The Welsh House*. Corbelled huts are also used as pigsties and poultry houses in Caithness and the Orkneys.

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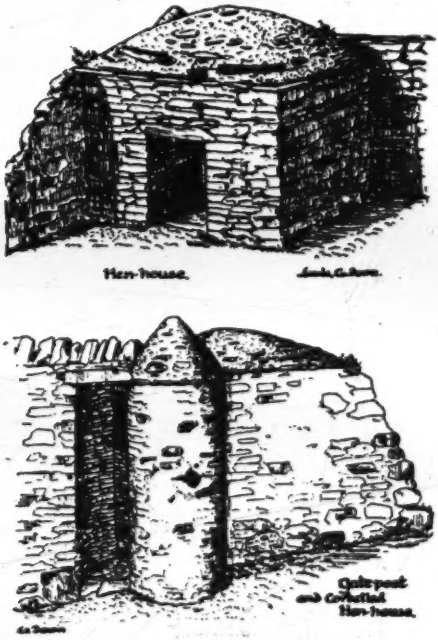

Fig. 38. Two views of hen-house.

515
343 Some of the holy wells visited throughout Ireland for their reputed curative powers are protected by corbelled coverings of some antiquity: one may cite the wells at Struell near Downpatrick and Ronogue's Well near Cork. Domestic wells also frequently show some degree of corbelling, but free standing well-covers like that shown in Fig. 41 are rare. To the same class of construction belong most of the surviving [757] sweat-houses which were resorted to by rheumatic cases, profuse sweating being induced by heating the interior with turf fires beforehand. In certain counties, for example Cavan, these structures are quite common and were used into living memory. In Rathlin Island I was told that girls would go to

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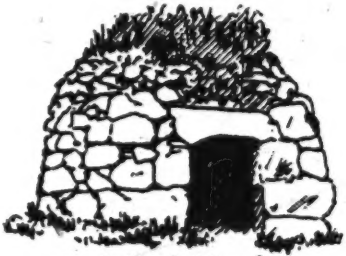
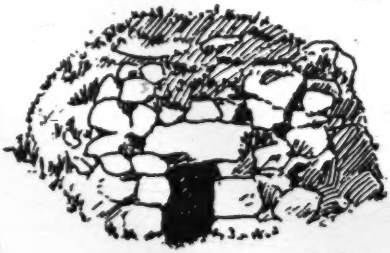


Corbelled Pig sty
Co. Louth

Fig. 39.

the sweathouses in order to improve their complexions before paying a visit to the Lammas fair at Ballycastle. It should be added that the treatment is said to have included a final plunge into cold water: running water is generally found alongside the sweat-houses (Fig. 40).

Such buildings are, from the simplicity of their construction, undateable: there is nothing to show, in many cases, whether they were erected a hundred, a thousand or even four thousand years ago, and though one suspects that many examples are no more than a century or two old—indeed the Gaeltacht turf-houses are still being built—they are in truth ageless. But the functions of the stone-roofed houses have changed. Once tombs of the dead and homes of the 343



Sweathouse. Co. Louth

Fig. 40.

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343 living, they have been relegated to lesser positions in the economy of peasant life. Apart from the well-known monastic cells of Skellig Michael and other early Christian sites, there is good evidence that oval "clocháns," as they are termed, were built as peasant houses in stoney districts such as the Aran Islands. They have been described as having two opposite doors and measuring as much as 21 ft. by 12 ft., with the walls three feet thick. Dr. Campbell has suggested that the sloping hipped roofs of thatched houses derive from the corbelled ends of such oval clocháns, and has pointed out that

A Corbelled Well.

Fig. 41.

some of the oldest surviving thatched cabins of the west are somewhat oval in plan.

While a full discussion of this interesting thesis would be out of place here, there are other possibilities in the shape of surviving structures. I have in mind the simple device known as the "flat roof," which is of widespread occurrence in Ireland, and which, from the ease of its construction, was probably common in very early times. It is employed on cart-houses and other outbuildings where the width is not too great to bear the weight of the solid roof. Horizontal beams and branches span the breadth from wall to wall and carry a superstructure of potato haulms, whins, old straw or turf and

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similar farm rubbish, which is roughly thatched with rushes. 343 In building up loose material of this kind, as in making a turf-stack or a potato clamp, the hipped form is naturally adopted (Fig. 42) and *cf.* the turf stack or rick (Fig. 93). I have often seen old houses or outbuildings with upright gables the triangular tops of which, above the level of the eaves, are built of sods or turf. While other explanations may be offered, it seems to me that this carries on the tradition of the "flat" roof and hints that it was more generally found in former times.

Fig. 42.

Corn-drying kilns were mentioned above as an example of 343 structures which have descended in the social scale. It seems 251 likely that constructionally they are miniature replicas of circular houses, and it is certainly true that they are now put to uses which cannot be called legitimate. They are used surreptitiously in preparing grain for making poteen, and I have seen examples built not long ago for drying a cargo of corn recovered from a wreck. A few generations ago every little village had its corn kiln, but the large kilns attached to corn mills have done away with them. So far as I have been able to find out the Irish kilns were all circular or semicircular and they were often built into a sloping hill. Some were open on top like a lime-kiln but others had a conical thatch. Again, one variety had the fire underneath while in another the heat was drawn along a flue from a fireplace some distance away. The corn was laid on a linen sheet resting on a carefully prepared bed of straw; hence the phrase "soft as kiln bedding." The dried corn was ground forthwith in a hand quern.

Although underground refuges or "souterrains"—called 343 "caves" by country folk—come into the category of ancient monuments they deserve mention here for two reasons. The first is because they often show in their roofs the technique of corbelling described above. The second fact which gives them interest is that, though some are known to have been built in the Bronze Age, they have been used as hiding places at many periods. I have found in them "ammunition" of 1,000 years ago side by side with explosives dating from the

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343 "troubles" of 25 years ago. Moreover underground "hides" have been constructed in recent times by poteen-makers. A description of a Donegal example said to have been made about 150 years ago will be found in *Antiquity*, June, 1939, p. 220.

351 361 Finally, something should be said about the disposition of the farm buildings, but this is a subject which calls for research. Broadly speaking the arrangement native to the country is some kind of long house, with the offices under the same roof as the kitchen and room. I use the word "native" because in areas of strong English influence such as Wexford what seems to be an introduced type of lay-out is the courtyard style where the buildings are grouped round the sides of a square. There are many approximations to this arrangement in various parts of the east and south of Ireland, and I do not think, as my friend Colonel R. G. Berry has suggested, that the type is native. Where the Old Irish homestead has a number of outbuildings these tend to be placed in front of and parallel to the dwelling house. Efforts to persuade the peasant to put his manure heap and his animals behind the house have, until recently, failed, for he likes to keep an eye on his wealth!

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CHAPTER X.

SEEDTIME.

Except in a few districts where winter wheat is grown the 241
farmer's year may be said to begin in spring when, from 221
February on, the land is ploughed or dug for the new crops. Several arguments are advanced against autumn ploughing—that the land is too wet and that the winter destroys the seed-bed—but as with many other things the preference is best explained by deep-rooted custom. So long as the land was held in rundale autumn ploughing was out of the question since the stock had the run of the whole townland after Hallowe'en.

We have very little information about old Irish ploughs. 241
Owing to the fact that they were made almost entirely of wood 407
archæology cannot help us much, but shaped stones that may have been shares and coulters have been found, and plough-irons do sometimes turn up. The discovery by Dr. O'Neill Hencken of a large iron coulter in the Ballinderry crannog shows that a heavy plough necessitating a big team had reached Co. Westmeath by the 10th century A.D. Pipe-rolls of the 13th century refer to plough teams of 8 oxen in Co. Meath: this was the normal complement under the English three-field system. At the other end of the scale, as it were, there survived into living memory along the west coast the custom of attaching the horse to the plough or harrows by [492] the tail, and although the practice was severely condemned it had the advantage that the horse would stop if the plough

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241 407 [492] struck a rock, thus saving the share, the traces and the ploughman from injury. The tying of the tail-hair to the traces, which were commonly of sugán or fir rope, required a difficult knot known in later days to very few. This undoubtedly ancient practice seems to have been linked with other customs such as walking backwards before the plough horses, burning the corn in the straw, and plucking or clipping wool from the sheep whenever it was required. It appears that we have in this group of survivals an older culture-laver overlaid by newer methods some of which are themselves of high antiquity. There is some evidence that the original simpler wooden plough mentioned below, together with the clod-breaker and the winnowing tray (Chapter 14) belong to the older layer, whereas the improved wooden plough, the harrow and the flail are later arrivals.

English visitors of the 18th century and the writers of the Statistical Accounts published by the Royal Dublin Society have given many particulars of the varying practices of a century and a half ago. From them we select a few observations. The method of ploughing in Co. Clare was to use four horses abreast, the driver walking backwards between the two middle horses. This is also described as "the old method" in Co. Roscommon. Four oxen were employed in Co. Dublin and Co. Tipperary, "never less than four oxen or four horses" in Kilkenny, six in Meath, three in Fermanagh and two in King's County. The large teams of some regions may imply that co-aration had at one time been practised. [476 171] The four horses of the north Antrim plough-team were contributed or "pooled" by four farmers under the system of "morrowing" or "neighbour dealing" which finds ready parallels in Scotland. In Co. Clare this pooling custom is known as "cooring," and in other parts as "milling." The Irish farm horse, it should be remembered, is a small light breed: except near large towns heavy cart horses are rarely seen.

Nevertheless in the more backward parts the two horse plough seems to have been general, as it is to-day, and it has been supposed that the two-ox plough was standard in early

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Celtic times. I have never seen the wooden plough in use, but I have attempted to reconstruct a drawing (Fig. 43) with the help of discarded specimens and descriptions given by men who have worked with them, and I find that my sketch closely resembles an example in the National Museum of Ireland which I have since examined. It consists of a short " head " fitted with an iron share or sock attached by means of folded flanges like the turf spade or the loy, and also shod with an iron sole-shoe. Into the head is morticed the main handle, in such a way that its left side forms a straight line with the head and with the straight side of the sock. To the main handle are fastened both the " wee handle " and the long " beam " which in turn is keyed to the head and carries the coulter. Finally a block of wood known as the rest is secured to the right side of the head and has above it a nine-inch mould board. The plough horses had no bits or reins, and the outfit needed two men, one to hold and one to drive. It was often necessary for a third hand to walk alongside " with a strong stick bearing on the beam to keep the plough in the ground."

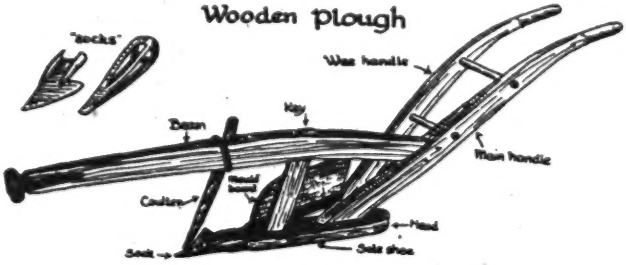

Fig. 43.

The wooden plough was lighter than the all-iron plough, and was considered to break the earth better than the smooth share and curved breast of the swing plough which took its place, but it did not effectively turn the sods: the so-called mould-board did little more than prevent some of the soil from falling back into the furrow. Yet this is the " new wooden plough " which in Donegal replaced only a century

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241 ago a still simpler plough described as a " crooked stick armed
407 with a bit of iron," which must have been in no way different, apart from " the bit of iron," from the plough of the Bronze Age. In fact there were wide areas where a plough of any
[412] kind was practically unknown, and it must be admitted that in the small stoney fields of the west the spade is much more serviceable. It is still the only implement used on hundreds of small farms, and at best the spade had to supplement the old types of plough around the headlands and among the stones and rocks. Moreover the wooden plough left the ground so uneven that lumps had to be broken with a maul
[412] or " mell " (Fig. 44) and holes filled in with the spade to prevent the seed being " lost." This process was known in Co. Antrim as " mannering." Cross-ploughing seems to be an old Irish custom and helps to explain why the field system is rectangular in contrast to the long strips of ploughland associated with the heavy English wheeled plough.

Fig. 44.

In preparing ground whether for corn or potatoes the practice was to plough the land in narrow ridges varying in width from about 4 to 12 sods (say 3½ to 10 feet) according to the depth and nature of the soil. The furrow or " sheugh " between the ridges would be some two feet wide. This was scraped with the plough but not turned, and it provided the earth for shovelling on the ridges after the seed had been sown. " An old ridge in the ground," runs an Irish saying, " outlives three yews " ; and indeed ancient cultivation ridges can be seen at all but the highest levels and have been observed underneath bogs when they are cut away. The plough ridges

Fig. 45.

Old cultivation ridges and remains of rath, Scrabo, Co. Down.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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are nowadays much wider: the narrow ridges and deep 241
furrows are quite unsuited to the use of machinery (Fig. 45).

February, March and April are the busy ploughing months. Corn was generally sown directly "on the furrow," but the seed-bed often required careful preparation either by breaking the clods and dragging along a strong thorn bush weighted with stones or by harrowing. The time is remembered when the old "six bull" wooden harrow was fitted with wooden tines or cows' horns, arranged in consecutive order and not "staggered." These were frequently dragged by the horse's tail. Oats were sown with a one-hand cast from a linen sheet hung round the neck. This is the method still employed on small farms, although the practice of covering the seed with the shovel is almost abandoned. An alternative method, which is perhaps of fairly recent introduction, is to sow with the "fiddle and bow"—the silent fiddler making a striking picture as he strides firmly up and down the field. The seed drill, it goes without saying, is gradually replacing hand sowing. but the older generation is convinced that much better crops resulted from burying the seed, and it is claimed that the land was better drained by the deep furrows between the ridges.

Potatoes are still planted in the old ridge-and-furrow way 244
on small farms. We need not describe the drill method which is universally adopted on larger farms, except to notice that different methods and many types of simple implements are used to prepare and level the drills. My colleague, Mr. O. Davies, tells me that a common practice in Co. Wexford is to break the lumps in the drills with a "drag," a heavy block of granite on which the farmer stands as he drives the horse along the drill. When old grassland is broken up for potatoes, set-rigs or "lazy-beds" are made with the spade (Fig. 46), as in the Scottish Highlands. In the north the push plough or "flachter" (Chapter 15 and Figs. 83-85) was formerly used for this purpose.

The finished lazy-bed closely resembles the ploughed potato ridge, but it is all spade-work and gets its name from the fact that the sod under the ridge is not dug. The width of

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244

[462]

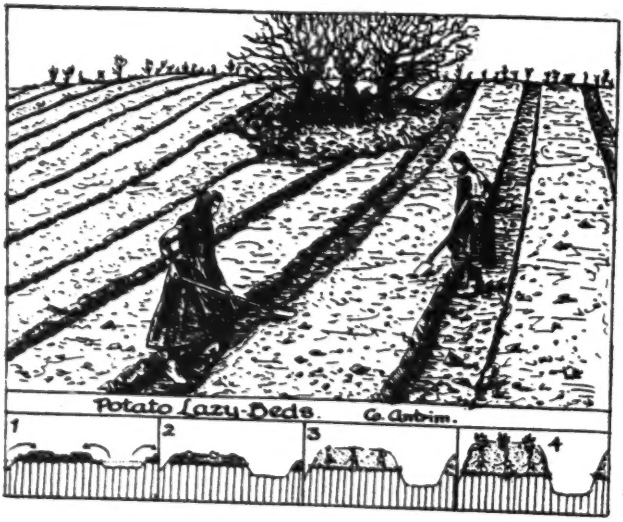

Fig. 46.

the bed and the furrow varies considerably from one locality to another. The latter may be as much as three feet on shallow soils, for it is essential to have sufficient earth both to cover the seeds and to mould the young plants, generally in two stages, later on, but an average width is 1½ feet. Similarly the ridges, while about 4 feet wide as a rule, may be as narrow as two feet. The first step is to turn over the sods from the furrow, one sod on each side, and place them face down, that is grass against grass, on the ridges, so that when they are buried the grass rots and helps to feed the growing crop. With the many methods of turning the sod, of preparing the seed-bed, manuring, setting and covering the potatoes it is impossible to deal here, for the customs differ from one district to another, the manure being spread, for example, sometimes under and sometimes over the seeds. But it is relevant to notice that the old Irish spade or loy (Chapter 13) is a specialized implement adapted for sod cutting and turning and not for

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digging or shovelling. For these processes the digging fork 244
and long-handled shovel are the proper tools. (Fig. 65). It 412
should also be remarked that the preparation of lazy-beds
was communal team-work, undertaken by groups of from [462]
8 to 16 men who shared their labour under the system of [476]
voluntary co-operation which distinguished the village
community. The custom is maintained in a few localities.

The loy served in certain districts as a dibber for setting the potatoes "against the back of the spade." but various special dibbers were also used. There was, for instance, the large two-handed "steeveen" found from Co. Leitrim to Co. Clare. As another example of a dibber we illustrate the clumsy-looking "stamp" from Co. Armagh (Fig. 47), employed in sowing turnips. Reference will be made elsewhere (Chapter 16) to the use of seaweed as manure. Old thatch, with its content of soot from the turf fire, is occasionally used as a fertilizer, and I am told that in Achill Island miniature stone, sod or turf buildings used as "soot houses" are roofed with rafters and scraws each autumn. Fires are lit in them, the smoke depositing soot on its passage through the thatch. This is then stripped off and, with the ashes of the fires, spread on the land as manure in spring. The thatch of the Hebridean black houses was utilized in the same way.

Fig. 47.

A practice which was formerly widespread and attracted a 241
great deal of heated discussion in the period of agricultural 412
development at the end of the 18th century was the preparing of waste ground for cultivation by "paring and burning," or "denshiring." It seems probable that this was a survival of ancient custom, and I believe that old-fashioned tool, the flachter, was probably employed for the purpose, just as its sister-tool, the breast-plough, was in England. Many types
of tools were perfected for land reclamation, including a [185]
special skinning-plough. In the south-west a heavy hoe or mattock, known as a graffan—similar to the implement still used in Kerry for breaking clods on potato ridges—was popular as a paring tool, the sod being rolled with the foot as it was cut. By such laborious processes, and by centuries of

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241 toil and grazing, by plough and spade, hoof and muzzle, have
412 Ireland's green fields been "moulded."

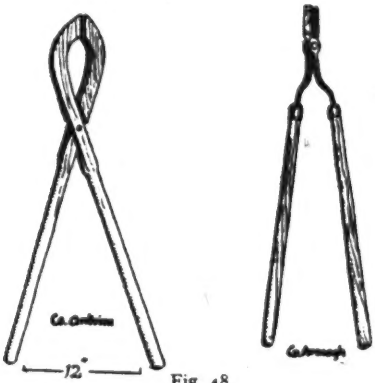

Fig. 48.
Clips

Although we cannot touch on the other crops and have given a very inadequate idea of the bustle, worries and humours of the Irish springtime, when all the crops demand to be put in the ground at the same time, we must end this chapter with a few comments on the growing season. The general practice when thinning root crops is to work on the
[516] knees with the hands: one rarely sees a hoe being used for thinning. Yet paradoxically corn is weeded, if it gets any attention at all, with a pair of wooden pincers or thistle-pullers, called, in Co. Antrim, "clips" (Fig. 48). This tool is already
[184] mentioned in a Tour of Ireland in 1752. The weeders are not so common in the south of the country and are fitted with iron pincers in some counties. Another home-made device once familiar in the north was the crow-scarer or "corn-crake," a noisy instrument made on the principle of the watchman's rattle or—to give a modern instance—the gas rattle of the A.R.P. services.

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CHAPTER XI.

HARVEST.

In this chapter we shall give an account of some harvesting 241
customs which depend on a minimum of mechanical appliances. 246
We begin with the hay harvest, the first of the season. The new agriculture represented by turnips and rotation grasses has, in its diffusion from England during the last two centuries, still barely touched the remoter parts of Ireland, where hay until lately had no place in the scheme of cultivation. Successive crops of corn and potatoes were taken so long as the land would yield anything, when it was allowed to grow wild grasses and weeds until the time came to break it up once more. Oat straw, which is never chaffed, to some extent took the place of hay, which, apart from a limited amount of meadow hay and " sprit," was chiefly gathered from waste places and [231] mearings and reserved for horses and milk cows. It should be noticed that the old customs of herding, tethering and spancelling permitted the stock to graze in places where hay could not be made. Moreover natural hay, ripened but left uncut, was utilized to a great extent along the mild coasts.

Scandinavian archæologists have shown that the practice 246
of preserving grass as hay for winter use began in that region during the cold wet phase of climate known as the Sub-Atlantic (Chapter 4). So it may have been in Ireland, too: the scythe and the iron hook have their origin in the Early Iron Age, and some of the methods of securing the crop can have changed little in two thousand years. On small farms

[p. 95]

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246 throughout the north of Ireland the hay is made and "saved"—how eloquent is this word of the desperate struggle with the weather!—almost entirely by hand. The traditional date for commencing the hay harvest is the famous 12th of July, and an even more celebrated day—March 17th—was the time for "closing" the hay-fields. Cut with the scythe, supplemented by the hook and by hand-pulling on steep banks or around trees and bushes, the swathes are shaken and gathered into parallel wind-rows or "coles" and then "lapped," that is folded into small muff-like heaps against the leg (Fig. 49). In lapping, the cut grass is smoothed down on both sides so that the rain will run off, while the inside is [184] left open to allow the air to pass through. The practise of lapping is found as far south as Meath and Galway but I have not seen it further south: it would be interesting to trace its exact distribution and compare it with that of other cultural traits. Even in districts well-equipped with machinery the method of lapping is retained, as an alternative to tying into sheaves, for the crops of seed-hay which are a valuable source of income on the small farms of lowland Ulster. This

Lapping Hay, Glendun, Co. Antrim

Fig. 49.

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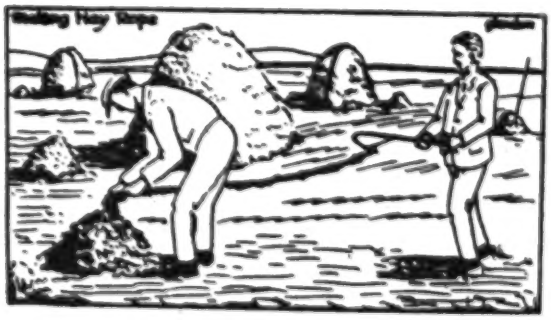
rotation grass is referred to as upland hay to distinguish it 246
from meadow hay, although in fact it often grows at lower levels. Sometimes at this stage the hay is hung on bushes and fences something after the Scandinavian manner.

When sufficiently dry the laps are opened and the hay piled into small cocks (ricks or lumps), and this process is repeated a number of times if the weather is bad until the stage of large hand-cocks is reached, or, if the hay is in good condition, even larger "tramp-cocks," trodden down firmly. The cocks are tied down with a hay-rope made on the spot (Fig. 50) and left "to season" for a period which may be only a week or two but which, to the stranger, seems generally an unconscionable time. In this matter the Irish



[283]

Fig. 50.

are confirmed in what the English call their lazy ways. Admittedly there are dry years when it would do no harm to the hay to stack it at once, but the Irish method is adapted to the average season, and rooted in a firmly-fixed rota of farm work. In August the turf must be carried home while the [314]
bogs are firm enough to take the carts, and in many parts the busy time of flax-pulling and retting is come. Although these alternative demands on the farmer's time are not always present, they may have helped in the past to standardize the 492
rotation of work. Moreover, when the opportunity of carry- 246

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492 246 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, [493] which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently [407] old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

246 In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built [171] around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to [476] hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

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[246]
[284]

Fig. 51.

Fig. 52.

or "swapped" between neighbouring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing. The flax is harvested in August, after the fleeting pale blue flower has gone. Prepared beforehand and lying ready to hand in bundles of 60 or so (enough for a certain number of stooks) are the lint bands of green rushes for tying the sheaves or "beets." The bands consist of two lengths of rushes, placed with the flowering ends together and tied in a reef-knot with a single movement involving a quick manipulation of thumbs and fingers (Fig. 52). The beets are stooked heads down, in which position also they are drowned or "dubbed," as soon as may be, in the "lint hole" or flax dam, where soft water has been warming up ready for the steeping. A horizontal layer of beets and a covering of bracken weighted with large stones completes the filling of the dam, and the process of retting, which takes on the average 10 or 12 days, is soon advertized by a smell of foul yet fascinating intensity. We need not follow the flax on its career from the rank pit to

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248 the purest of linen—the story has often been told—and though the scutching mill with its busy waterwheel is an intimate part of the wintry countryside, the flax and tow soon pass into the factories. But we cannot omit a reference to the picturesque oblong stacks "sleighs" or "rays" in which the flax is built after being taken from the dam and dried. And we have referred in another place (Chapter 7), to the "shows" or waste which comes from the scutching mill.

243 But the most important crop throughout Ireland, and as a rule the most difficult to save because it comes late in the season, is oats. September is the harvest month, but in the hills October frequently sees the corn uncarried and even uncut. It is on record that in 1817—in Co. Armagh—"the grain was not reaped in many places until after Christmas." [422] Often the equinoctial gales play havoc with the stooks, and in the days of small scattered rundale plots it was customary for each holder to tie his sheaves with a proprietary knot so that he might claim his own.

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Fig. 53.

Both the toothed hook or sickle (Fig. 53) and the smooth "scythe hook" are used in reaping: the reaping machine and the self-binder have not reached many parts. Sickles are of several varieties, classified in the catalogues as round,

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square, crane and "Sligo." The steel edge of its narrow 243
blade is notched on the underside, the notches radiating so 412
that they all cut at an angle of about 70 degrees.

It is much more difficult to use than the smooth hook; the straw must be held firmly in one hand and sawn through with a pulling motion. Some writers have indulged in idealized pictures of hand reaping which bear little relation to the cruel toil and "terrible strain" more faithfully and unforgettably portrayed by Richard Jefferies in his "Field and Hedgerow." There was no respite for reapers or binders: "Down with the head and up with the tail" was the descriptive phrase which I was given in the Glens of Antrim. In some parts, however, the reaper knelt down on one knee. Women and children generally did the binding. The corn was cut before it was fully ripe, "between green and gold," and as an illustration of the interdependence of the old ways it is worth noting that such straw was much more suitable for good thatching than the dry straw from the reaper. The old-fashioned scythe (see Frontispiece), not yet entirely displaced by the new style, was straight-handled. A short bladed tool, known in Co. Antrim as the "bramble scythe," is used for cutting coarse vegetation or mowing hay around bushes.

Corn stooks vary greatly in the number of sheaves they 243
contain and in the methods of construction. They are often tied at the top with a straw band, and cap-sheaves are frequently seen. In wet districts the sheaves are later built into small round stacks, "barts" or "huts," until the time comes to carry them home. On small farms this is still done on the back, using a burden rope (Chapter 14), but the [482]
rick-lifter is also employed. Or the sheaves are piled high on ponies so that they resemble walking stacks. At harvest time two-ply twists of straw are worn in the button-hole (Fig. 114): they are part of the ceremonial of harvest time. The custom is general in north-eastern Ireland but I am not aware of it from other parts: it may be a feature of the Plantation. More widespread and fundamental are the practices, now mere

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243 survivals, associated with the cutting of the last sheaf—the "churn" or the "Cailleach" (Chapter 19).

Corn stacks are more varied in shape than haystacks and need better protection from weather and from vermin. [824] Sprigs of apple-mint (*M. arvensis*) may be thrown through the sheaves to keep away mice. The stone stack-stands or staddels, called "hovels," are a picturesque feature of the stackyard in some districts. With their steep tops rising above the house clusters, the golden corn stacks turn the little Irish villages into African kraals, or in the fields one may count as many as 30 round stacks in a row, rising against the sky up the hillside. Then the whole countryside seems fuller than usual. New colours and odours meet one on all sides, and the horses as they pass give off the sharp smell which comes from crunching the fresh oats. The country smiths used to make a small light fork or "pike," fitted with a long handle, for throwing the last sheaves high up (Fig. 66). The stacks are thatched with rushes, twisted into bundles known as "stapples" which are pushed into the straw.

[285]
[415]

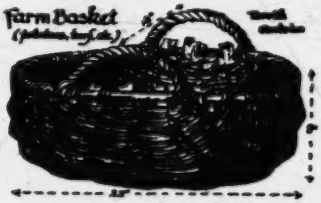

Fig. 54.

241 We cannot touch on the methods of harvesting and stacking the other cereal crops, wheat, barley and rye, but a word must be said in conclusion on the last harvest of the year—the root crops. Although turnips and the new sugar beet are important in some areas, it is the potato crop which means most to the peasant. All available hands are in the fields, gathering the precious food-supply into wicker baskets or boxes (Figs. 54 and 55); and the school children are given

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special holidays. The potatoes are sorted, the small and faulty roots being put aside for the stock and poultry. The crop is then "pitted," that is piled in long heaps in the field and covered with straw and earth. October is the potato month, and under the old system the limiting date was Hallowe'en, for after that the animals were allowed to roam freely over the village or townland. It should be noticed that early potatoes are little esteemed in Ireland apart from commercial cultivation in a few coastal districts. A curious example of specialized potato-growing is cited in Chapter 16. 241

[415]

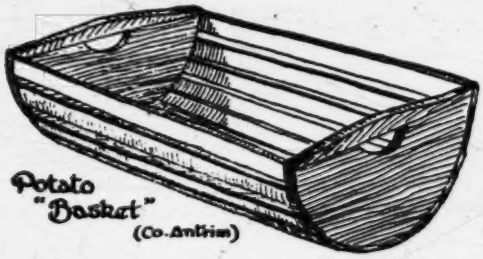

Fig. 55. (22" by 16")

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CHAPTER XII.

CARTS AND ROADS.

499 It has been claimed that the humble vehicles of certain regions of survival such as the Glens of Antrim represent an evolutionary sequence, the assumption being that the sledge or "slipe" was developed locally into the slide-car and the latter into the solid-wheeled car until the stage of the spoke-wheeled Scotch cart was reached. This argument ignores the wide distribution of similar means of transport in countries overseas, and the extent to which simple ideas are diffused from a common centre. It would be strange indeed if that centre were to be located on the extreme periphery of Europe when parallel forms of transport are found as far away as China. Nevertheless the Irish vehicles are of great ethnological interest, and they have survived because they are adapted to the soft turf bogs or the steep mountain sides. In more recent times the two-wheeled cart has blossomed into several specialized means of transport such as the side-car, the long-car, and the hay-cart or rick-lifter (Chapter 11). The latter is also found in Lowland Scotland and may possibly have originated there.

482 But something must first be said about the still humbler transport agents such as the burden-rope, the back-creel and side-creel, the use of which has greatly declined, however, during the last half century. The two former show to what extent men and women, but especially women, act as beasts of

[p. 105]

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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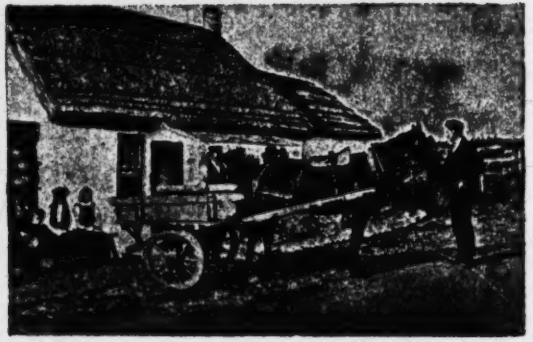
Antrim

SLIDE CAR WITH KISH : STRAW HARNESS

LOW-BACK CAR



BOX-CAR WITH DISC WHEELS

Plate IV.
ALL FROM GLENS OF ANTRIM

SPOKE-WHEELED CAR

[Facing p. 105]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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482 burden in Ireland as among other peasantries. The burden-
rope, constructed of rushes, horse-hair or grass-rope (Chap.
[283] 14 and Figs. 79 & 80), was employed for carrying surpris-
ingly large loads of hay, corn or bushes—" as much as a pony
could draw," I have been told—while the burden-creel, slung
over one shoulder or worn like a rucksack by women who
would thus have their hands free for knitting, was mainly used
for carrying turf. Nor should we omit the wheel-barrow, both
[493] box and turf types (Chapter 15 and Fig. 90), the hand
barrow (for loads of stones and also for fish and nets) and the
two-man turf creel (Fig. 91).

493 Side-creels are the panniers attached to an ass or small
492 pony. Most of them are constructed with a hinged bottom
so that the contents of turf, wrack, gravel or manure are
automatically unloaded (Fig. 58). The sides are broken by
ornamental " windows " which give a handhold for lifting and
help to lighten the creel. Comparative study would reveal
several regional and specialized forms of creel, and I have
observed different methods of attachment even in neighbouring
valleys. They are generally slung on wooden pegs driven
into a roof-shaped crutch or straddle (Fig. 56) which rests on
two straw mats. In the example figured from Tuam (Fig. 57)
the straw mats are pegged together, and the straddle is
strengthened by two osier ties, to one of which the tail-sugán
is fastened. When hay or corn is being carried the creels may
be dispensed with and the " bottles " or sheaves hung on the
straddle pegs with an osier ring. Alternatively the creels are
tied together with ropes which pass over a thick straw pad laid
along the animal's spine, and the straddle is not used. The
creels are D-shaped and can be made of openwork, for turf
or wrack, or of closely-woven sides for manure. We shall
have something more to say about their construction in
Chapter 14.

Fig. 56.

493 Among horse-drawn vehicles the sledge or slipe is very
generally employed for transporting stones, manure, or turf
and also for conveying the plough and harrows from one field
to another. I illustrate the common slipe of Co. Antrim

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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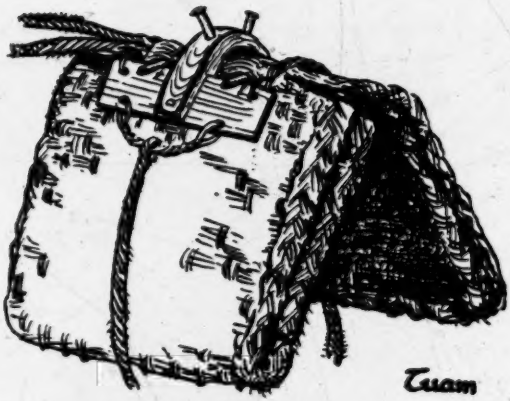

Straw pads & straddle for Creels

Fig. 57.

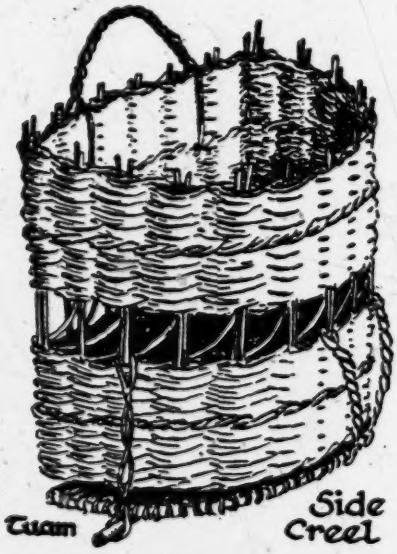

Fig. 58.

[p. 107]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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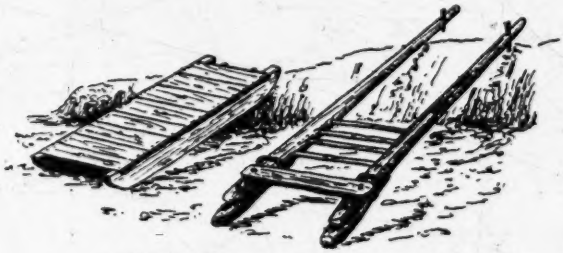
493 (Fig. 59): the type used for drawing manure in Co. Down has the runners set close together so that it can be easily tipped over to empty. An even simpler sledge described as a "triangular framework" is said to have been used for dragging boulders out of fields. I have not seen this, but a similar "forked runner sledge" is known in Sweden.



Slipe & Slidecar. Glendun.

Fig. 59.

The slide-car (Fig. 59), now confined to a few hilly districts such as the Antrim Glens, was almost universal a century ago. It consists of two strong poles or shafts—bog timber was often used for the purpose—the ends of which slide on the ground. Attached to the ends by wooden pegs and an iron ring (called the "bowman") are short pieces of hardwood which take the wear and tear, though nowadays thin iron runners are often substituted. The shafts are tied together by cross-beams making a rough platform on which rests the wicker "kish," resembling the smaller creels but oval in shape, and like them, adapted to carry either turf or manure. For other loads such as hay or timber the kish is dispensed with. Although they will carry but small weights they can be taken on the roughest of moorland tracks and down slopes of incredible steepness.
492 The harness of the slide-car pony was until recent years
493 made entirely of wood and straw apart from a bit and halter for leading purposes. The straw collar (Chapter 14) was fitted with wooden hames attached to the shafts by short sugán

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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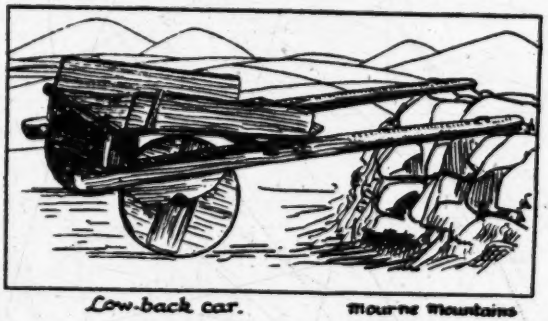
traces. The shafts were also tied by straw ropes to the pegs 492
of a straddle which rested on a back sugán secured in turn by 493
a tail rope of straw. Bridles and halters were sometimes made of horse hair.

The slide car, like so many of the Irish relics we are 171
considering, was found not long ago in the Scottish Highlands and is still used in central Wales. It is common in the Baltic lands and far afield through the mountain country of Europe and the Siberian tundra; and its wide and scattered distribution betokens its high antiquity. In general the slide car is employed for transporting hay and timber in mountain country; and it is of interest to find that in Sweden it is



[493]

Low-back car. Mourne Mountains

Fig. 60.

especially associated with the mountain dairies which are paralleled by the Irish booleys (Chapter 6). Scandinavian ethnologists have shown how areas which had the slide-car have become regions of the one-horse cart and have generally remained without the four-wheeled waggon. This applies with peculiar force to Ireland. (Pl. IV.)

The older style of two-wheeled cart is that known as the 493
"wheel" or "low-back" car, which survives in the same environments as the slide-car. I illustrate an example from the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down (Fig. 60). The solid disc wheels lie under the body of the car and are fixed to an axle,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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493 now of iron but formerly of wood, that rotates with them. The wheels are so small—little more than two feet in diameter—that the floor of the car has to be raised up behind, and it carries such a small load that the number of horses in Ireland is said to have been considerably reduced when the spoke-wheeled cart took its place. In the 18th century "wheel-cars were used throughout the kingdom" in town and country alike: the Dublin "noddies" were of this type, and according to illustrations published in the early 18 hundreds the driver rode on the horse's rump. The low-backed car is now generally fitted with sides to make a "box car," but in former days it carried a kish of the kind used with the slide car. It should be noticed that until roads and tracks were [491] metalled—mostly within the last two centuries—the disc wheel had the advantage over the spoked wheel in soft loose ground. Even "superior farmers" in Donegal had only low-back cars as late as 1821, and we may repeat the statement made in Chapter 6 that there was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one Donegal parish in 1837. The slide [177] car and the creel did all the carrying. In the Glens of Antrim, too, the wheel-car was apparently something of a novelty about that time. An old man told me that his grandmother remembered the first car seen in her valley.

It must not be assumed from this that wheeled vehicles [401] were unknown in ancient Ireland: the literature suggests that they were in regular use but doubtless confined to the wealthier classes and districts. On analogy with other parts of north-western Europe the wheel was already known in Bronze Age Ireland. It is wrong to assume that the wheel was "invented" by the Irish peasants who adapted it to their slide cars. The disc and in turn the spoked wheel are ancient discoveries which came into use gradually as social conditions and road-making improved, and it was natural that the slide car should keep its form though lifted off the ground. Although we cannot accept the theory of local "evolution" for the spoke-wheeled cart, it is none the less clear that local experience controlled the details of its construction when it became

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred 493
years.

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little " dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long " runners " which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or " trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a " box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a " soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are [531]
markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for [492]
investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate.

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 493
17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and 178
tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the " two-wheeled " culture region.

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads 491
and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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491 unprofitable pastime. The many old metalled roads running from town to town in direct Roman fashion seem to be military or post roads no more than a couple of centuries old. A few ridgeway tracks are certainly ancient, probably prehistoric, and they need studying in connexion with seasonal booleying routes. Some old timber roads have also been observed in or under the bogs, but in general it seems that the majority of existing roads and lanes were constructed to keep pace with the improvements of agriculture and means of transport, and to feed the single farms which resulted from the break-up of the village system. Any large-scale map will show the extraordinary pattern of narrow lanes which is required to supply the evenly scattered homesteads. An economist might calculate how much valuable agricultural land is wasted by this multiplicity of tracks, but the "loanin's" and "bohereens" are an intimate part of the rural scene whose value is not to be assessed in money, and it is at the "loan-ends" that the young folk assemble on summer evenings.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XIII.

SPADES.

The rich variety of the rural scene is perhaps best illustrated in that most characteristic of Irish implements, the spade. It is worth recalling that the spade-work of immigrant navvies—or "navigators," named after the canal-diggers—was one of Ireland's contributions to England's Industrial Revolution. A visit to city garden-plots will provide a useful introduction to the study of spades, for the countryman insists on his own pattern, and you may play the game of spotting the native heaths of Belfast's or Dublin's retired policemen by identifying the spades of Derry, Fermanagh, Cavan or Clare. Some idea of the variety of tastes catered for can be gained from the output of a Galway spade-factory: including turf spades (Chapter 15) it turns out about 150 shapes of blade.

Obviously it would require prolonged travel and study to record and interpret this fascinating diversity, and to compare the distribution of spade-types with landforms and territorial divisions, with dialects, folk-customs, house-types and other aspects of material culture. But it is possible to give some tentative generalisations which emerge from a preliminary study. The primary division is between the one-eared and the two-eared types (Fig. 61). The former, known as the "loy" or "fack," prevails along the western and southern coasts. It is now unknown in the Six Counties—though the "kib," as it was called, is remembered by a few old men—and is fast disappearing from Donegal and from the Midlands,

Fig. 61.

[p.113]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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where its place has been taken by the two-eared spade; and it seems clear that the latter is the result of English influence, though in its Irish forms it differs considerably from the modern English spade.

These differences are no doubt adaptations to native taste and usage: they include the long straight handle, without hand-grip, the long narrow blade with its thick sides, the foot-plates, and the "lift" in the blade, that is the forward bend below the socket, which makes it enter the ground at an angle. North of the Boyne, however, the handle is shorter and is fitted with a crutch-end (Fig. 62), although there are certain "islands" of Irishry, such as the Mourne Mountains of Down, which cling to the long handle. Within the two-eared spade province there are many regional and even seasonal types of blade, for instance the Sligo-Roscommon area demands a long-bladed spade in spring and a shorter type in autumn, the length varying from 16 to 13 inches. In this spade the blade tapers, say from 5 inches at the shoulders to 3½ at the mouth; the Lurgan spade is a long variety familiar from the phrase: "a face as long as a Lurgan spade." While characterising the east coast and the Midlands the type spreads westwards to Sligo without, however, influencing Leitrim, which uses the loy, or Cavan, where the spade has an expanding edge, half an inch or more wider than the shoulders. A strong "cranked lift" of 6 inches (about 22°) is a feature of the Cavan spade, and of the Leenane spade in Galway. North Monaghan, Donegal and Fermanagh (Fig. 62) also use a spade with expanding edge and cranked lift. The taper spades, on the other hand, generally have a "round lift," that is the blade bends forward in a smooth curve, but both the degree of lift and the dish, that is the curve in the mouth, vary from one locality to another. Tyrone and Armagh have a spade which widens slightly towards the mouth but has a round lift instead of the cranked lift of Cavan and Fermanagh. A spade map would throw light on many aspects of rural history and geography, but these humble motters do not engage the attention of our educationalists.

The Spade.

Fig. 62.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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These two-eared spades are always attached to the haft 412
by means of straps about 6 inches long, generally with two 284
rivets: the foot-plates are fastened to the blade by mortice and tenon and to the handle by a drawn-down tongue bent up and nailed between the straps (Fig. 62). A visit to one of the 391
9 or 10 Irish spade "factories"—there were many more a few decades ago—provides a thrilling illustration of craftsmanship and co-ordination of labour. The five hundredweight tilt-hammer, driven by a water wheel, beats out the red steel in a series of operations under the skilled hand and eye of the spade-maker: between each process the steel must be re-heated, and the interchange of the "moulds" and "plates" between furnace-man and hammer-man goes on without pause, for the "bit" of the hammer must not be allowed to strike without having the hot metal ready on the anvil. In addition to supplying his mate, the furnace-man has to bend over the "fullered mould" and weld and shape it on a small anvil: he must also apply sand and water to the plates if they get overheated, and dip the folded end in dust so that the two straps do not weld together under the hammer. After a period of ceaseless labour and watchfulness a pile of blue-grey drawn plates, their hammer grooves throwing back the glow of the furnace, lies ready for the finishing smith.

He shears them to the desired dimensions—all the [804]
measuring is done by eye although there are dozens of different sizes—cuts out the tenons and punches the rivet holes. The points of the straps separate when the ends are clipped, and the socket is now opened up and shaped on a mandrel. Then comes the finishing: the plate is heated once more, hammered into the correct lift and dish, and tempered. Meanwhile lengths of rivets have been cut and the foot-plates drawn down: the ash handle is inserted and riveted, the straps hammered tight against the wood and the foot-plates morticed and nailed on. Four generations of experience lay behind the smith whom I watched recently in a Co. Antrim spade factory; the result was a product of exquisite proportions and economy of structure, the essentials of the country craft.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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391 326 412 We must visit a factory in the south if we wish to see the single-eared "Irish" spade being made. The country smith may still forge or repair an occasional loy, but the trip-hammer does away with so much heavy sledging that most of the work is concentrated in the "factories." Yet, as the amazing variety of patterns demonstrates, there is no tendency towards specialization: the factory has merely taken over the work of dozens of rural smiths. Thus at least five different types of loy are used in Co. Galway alone. The blade may be straight sided, it may taper slightly or it may expand towards the mouth, and like the two-eared spade it may have a cranked or a round lift; but it is always narrow, ranging in width from 3½ to 5 inches. The loy is in fact a specialized implement, adapted for sod-cutting and ridge-making (Chapter 10); it is not designed to turn over dug soil, and like the two-eared spade which has taken over its functions in the north and east, it enters the ground at an angle and not vertically.

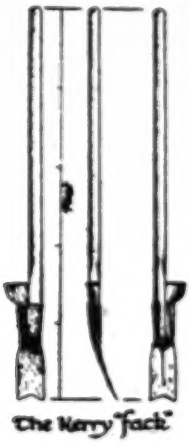

Fig. 63.

412 In the south-west, from Clare round to Kilkenny, the "fack" ends in a fish-tail, presumably to facilitate penetration (Fig. 63). In central Galway the loy has a 14 inch

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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blade with a slightly fish-tailed edge which is a little wider (5 inches) than the foot end (4½ inches): it has a cranked lift. In east Galway a similar loy is fitted with a curious two-piece haft: the foot-rest or "spade-tree" which goes into the socket of the blade is fastened to the stout ash shaft with iron bands (*cf.* Fig. 88). A similar loy was formerly used in Leix and other counties. In Limerick and Kerry the foot-piece is a small wedge pushed into the socket alongside the handle (Fig. 63). In parts of Galway and Mayo the foot-rest is carved out of a broad handle, and a variant of this is the loy of Cavan and Longford (Fig. 61), where the stout foot-rest is some distance above the socket and the handle is curved forward. In Clare, again, the handle bends backwards towards the user. 412

But loys of all shapes have long handles, about 4 feet in length, with no hand-grip. And they all take the handle in an open socket formed by bending the wings, which may or may not be further secured by nails, over the wood (Fig. 63). This method of hafting goes back to the prehistoric Iron Age in England. In Ireland, bill-hooks, axes and knives from crannogs and forts a thousand years old were hafted in this way, and though I am not aware of any ancient spades having been found in excavations, it is to the La Tène period (Chapter 4) that we should probably look for their origin. But until some attention and support are given to problems of cultural origins and evolution we are merely groping in the dark. Allowance must be made, therefore, for possible inaccuracies in the present account.

Loys of all types can be fitted with the ear or foot-rest on either side according to the practice of the locality or the individual user. Generally speaking, about eleven out of twelve loys are right footed, but towards the east the proportion of left-footed users increases, and as we reach the north-east, where, of course, the two-eared spade is universal, from one-half to two-thirds are left-footed diggers. Hence, presumably, the phrase applied in the north to those of the Roman Catholic faith: "they dig with the wrong foot."

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Fig. 64. [794]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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412 While it is difficult to estimate the antiquity of the two-eared
184 spade tradition in Ulster and Leinster, its spread into the west has taken place in the last half century. The decline in the use of the loy is symbolic of the disappearance of the old
[178] fashions, and they tend to vanish together because the culture pattern is a closely interwoven web. Thus it was considered in Donegal a century ago that the new iron spades "would be useless," since few workers had shoes: the wooden spade was adapted to the bare feet.

391 The spade-maker is called on to turn out other types of
412 agricultural tools, spades, shovels and forks. There is the very narrow tapered draining spade and the heavy "mountain draining spade" used in the moorland areas of the north and west (Fig. 64): its great "shark's head" blade is 17 inches long and almost as wide. Occasionally he is asked to rough out a flachter (Fig. 85), which the country smith finishes into the required shape, or it may be, in the south-west, a graffan or heavy hoe (Chapter 10). But as the turf-cutting season comes round most of his energies go into the making of turf slanes (Chapter 15). Of shovels there are several different types, generally classified into two shapes, round-pointed and square-pointed: the latter kind is favoured in the west. There is also the tanged shovel of Co. Wexford. The shovels are long-handled, but short handles are used for special purposes. The welding of the socket in the thin hard steel of the shovels is one of the smith's most difficult tasks (Fig. 65).

412 Then there are short and long-handled square-shouldered digging forks with three or with four prongs (Fig. 65), and the round-shouldered manure-forks or graips, the prongs of which may be round, oval, or in old-fashioned work, square. There are drags for unloading manure, for gathering wrack (Fig. 103), for cleaning drains and gathering stones. Hay-forks may be tanged or strap-hafted, with 4-foot or 5-foot handles and so on. Some country-made forks are illustrated in Fig. 66. It may be added that hayforks with wooden prongs cut from the solid have also been used in the past. Some of the loys, like the old Ulster kib, are essentially wooden spades merely shod with iron, and even this was dispensed with in sandy soils. Wooden

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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spades are said to have been used in Magilligan, Co. Derry, and 412
in Mayo the forked-spade or "gowl-gob" is perhaps not entirely forgotten. It consisted of a wooden blade, with

Fig. 65.

Fig. 66.

two prongs each some three inches wide shod with iron, and was employed for potato-digging in sandy or loose bog soils.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Aran Islands

Plate V.

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MAKING A SKIB
INISHERE, ARAN
CREEL IN GROUND BEHIND

[facing p. 121]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XIV

WOOD, SKIN, STRAW AND RUSH WORK.

234
322 Many old-fashioned tools will be found lying around an old farmstead, some of them still used and others discarded but hoarded as is the way of the countryman. With some of these, generally dismissed in farm auction bills as "other objects too numerous to mention," we shall deal briefly in this chapter. Upright butter churns of oak are to be found in every county: they are made by the cooper and their construction is a specialized craft. I illustrate (Fig. 67) some varieties of churn and staff ("dasher" or "lonny"). They differ in size because the churns are "made to measure" according to the number of milking cows kept. One of the drawings shows the dash churn in cross-section: it should be added that the joins between the staves of the bottom are sealed with rushes. Ancient churns discovered in the bogs are generally cut out of the solid. They have a narrow neck and are provided with lugs for transport. Old accounts tell us that the dairymaid used to plunge in her arm to make the butter, and thus the dasher may be regarded as an implement developed directly from the human arm and hand. The staff was often worked by an arrangement of levers known as "glaiks," but this is rarely seen nowadays.

The full equipment of stave-built vessels supplied by the cooper included, besides the churn, the buttermilk butt and the cream butt or "keeler," the butter tub, the milk "can," into which the fresh milk was poured, and the piggin. Many

[p. 121]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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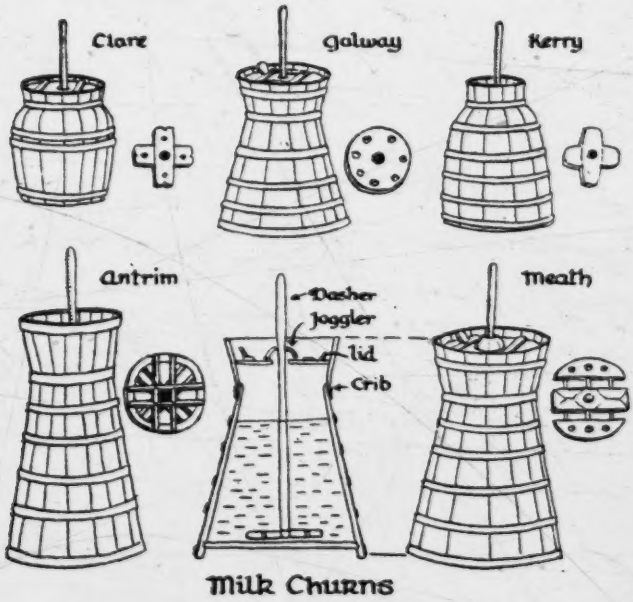

Fig. 67.

Fig. 68.

[415] of these are in regular use: I illustrate a piggin or milking vessel (Fig. 68), a butter tub, and an old-fashioned tub of bog-fir, bound, as were the other stave-vessels before the adoption of iron hoops, with split sally rods, and covered with a stone lid. Two smaller stave-built noggins for holding water, milk or porridge are also shown (Fig. 69), the Tyrone example being of oak with an ash wrapping, the Donegal specimen of bog-fir and sally bands. Passing mention must be made of wooden spoons and the handsomely carved butter stamps (Fig. 70). Wooden dishes, ladles (Fig. 70) skimmers and jogglers (Fig. 67) are made of sycamore and turned on the pole-lathe.

[281] Sieves of various kinds found a use in the dairy as well as in kitchen and barn. Among the exports from Ireland in

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former centuries animal hides and skins figured prominently, and it is not uncommon in the west to see cured skins of wild and domestic animals used as floor-coverings. No doubt in earlier days skins and furs were worn, but in modern times raw-hide has been employed only for shoes such as the "pampooties" worn by the Aran Islanders. These have the advantage that they do not damage the frail curraghs, just as the Islandman's headgear is the knitted Tam o' Shanter which the wind cannot blow off. A century ago one might have seen a dried sheep-skin serving as a window, or even a cowhide used as a door-hanging. Sheep- and goat-skins still find their uses as back-protectors (Chapter 16), in the making

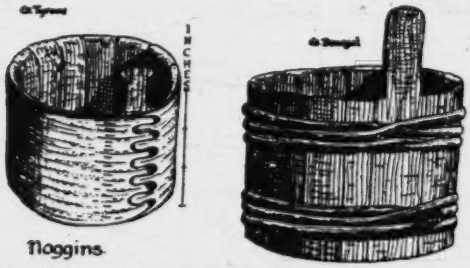

Fig. 69.

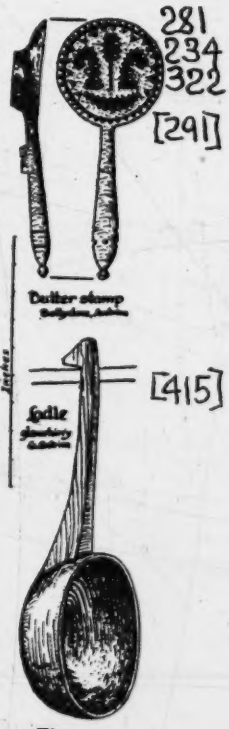

Fig. 70.

of thongs for flails, and especially in providing bottoms for various trays and sieves, the only difference between them being that the sieve-skin is perforated.

The skin, scraped and dried, is wrapped or sewn on to a rim of ash or bog-fir (Fig. 71), and a good deal of skill is required to stretch it on without a wrinkle. These trays are called wights or wechts in the north-east: the peat wight is for carrying turf to the house and the corn wight for pouring corn into a sack. The winnowing tray sometimes has small perforations to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken on to a cloth. A windy spot was selected for the purpose, and numerous "Shelling Hills" get their name from this operation. The perforations, about one-eighth of an inch

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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281 across, are commonly arranged in patterns having, for example,
415 the maker's initials and the date left unpierced. A deeper tray used for carrying corn or for fruit-picking is known as a "dallan." Then there is the meal sieve, which has fine perforations, for sifting the coarse skins (meal seeds) from the oatmeal. Similar to this is the buttermilk sieve with which,
285 before the adoption of the hair sieve, the small particles of
415 butter were strained from the buttermilk. A milk-strainer made of birch bark folded into a cone and filled with straw is referred to in a 17th century account quoted by Mr. E. MacLysaght. In Tory, according to Mr. T. Mason, the wight is "composed simply of sheepskin with a twisted straw rope forming the rim."

The corn sieve, for getting out dust and dirt, and the corn riddle (Fig. 71), for separating bits of straw and "hairy

[281]

Fig. 71.

tails," consist of interwoven splits of ash or bog-fir attached to a rim of the same material. The only difference between them is that the mesh of the former is one-eighth of an inch, of the latter perhaps ¼ inch, though it may vary for different kinds of grain. Efficient riddling is a difficult and nowadays rather rare art. I have not come across sieves of rushes or split willow, but it is very likely that they may be found.

243 The corn riddle and the winnowing tray lead us back to
412 the thrashing floor in the barn. Here we will probably see a flail hanging on the wall. The sound of the flail is by no means rare in Ireland, for in outlying districts the small farmer has no other means of thrashing. The three parts of the flail are the helve or "hand-stave," a straight stick of any light wood such as ash or larch, the shorter and heavier swingel or beater, called in Ireland the "souple" (generally made of hazel, occasionally of holly or birch) and the flail-joint, hanging or
[284] "mid-kipple," which may be a sheep- or goat-skin thong, a

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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 243 412

length of flax, or an eel skin. The methods of attaching the hanging to the hand-stave and souple vary, as will be seen [284] from a random selection of drawings (Fig. 72). The joint

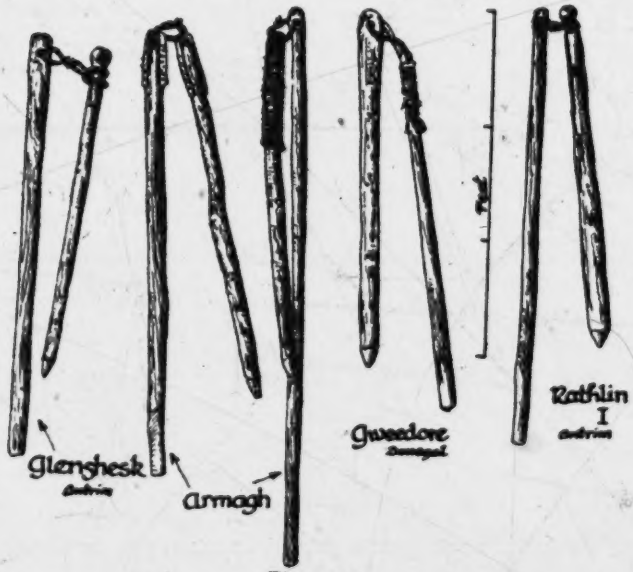

Fig. 72.

shown in the Armagh flail (left), resembles a common English style, but it occurs as far west as Galway. Varied too, are the proportions between the component parts and the methods of swinging the flail. Thus in Antrim the souple is flung round the head while in Donegal it is kept to the side of the body. On fine days the thrashing may take place out of doors, but the usual place is " between doors " in the barn or even in the kitchen, for the opposite doors create a draught which carries away the dust. A besom of heather or of dried [824] kale flower-stalks keeps the barn floor clean.

One of the most interesting and varied and probably one 285 of the oldest crafts practised by countryfolk is the making of

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285 baskets, and of creels and other objects of wickerwork. To do the subject justice would require a large volume, and we must confine ourselves to some broad aspects. We have referred to creels and kishes of various kinds in Chapter 12. These are objects which the countryman makes for himself, as distinct from the "fancy" basket work which is generally in the hands of special families. To take the creels first, they are constructed bottom-upwards in the same way as the framework of the Boyne curragh, by sticking the stout standards in the earth as though to make wattles and bending them over [824] to form the foundation of the bottom. Strong black sally, hazel or rowan are employed instead of the soft basket willows. The standards are left projecting above the rim of the creel when it is finished, so that the sides do not lift off. But a well woven "mouth" is also necessary to prevent slipping: it may be made single or double. Both creels and kishes may have windows in the sides (Chapter 12 and Fig. 58), an ornamental feature also found in the old wicker cradles. Creels and kishes may be loosely or tightly woven according to whether they are intended for turf or manure. Openwork creels are made in Co. Antrim by pegging the side rods into the two corner standards at intervals of about 4 inches. The old custom in Donegal is to repair two old creels and make two new ones each year. (*See Plate V.*)

285 227 Lobster-pots (Chapter 16), stock-pots, fruit and fish hampers, are made on a perforated wooden frame which may be regarded as a substitute for the earth, but most of the

[283]

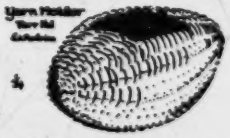

Fig. 73. Length 19".

285 "fancy work" is undertaken by specialized basket makers, and we can do no more than indicate the variety and skill of their products. There are certain localities where the tradition of basket-making is strong, for instance the shores of

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Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of " calf basket " (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a " cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or " floats " are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

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415
[482]
[184]
[482]

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184
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482

Line Baskets

Fig. 76. Length *c.* 3 ft.

into a narrow mouth, a feature which is found in all Aran basket-work. Miss Gahan of the Irish Homespun Society regards it as an adaptation to the conditions on the islands, for the contents might easily be spilled owing to the number of loose stone walls which have to be crossed on a journey to the fields. Many of the Aran carrying baskets (" kishauns ") are constructed of coiled straw rope bound together with split bramble (Fig. 77). They no doubt help to keep warm the food carried in them, such as boiled potatoes, boiled in their skins needless to say, in the Irish fashion. Such " lipe-work " was once common in Wales, where seed-baskets, yarn-holders, hassocks and meal containers were made in this way, but in Ireland the only coiled work I have seen outside the Aran Islands is the bee-skep of rye straw, tied with bramble. The illustration shows the small bone pin or awl used by the islanders in threading the brambles. Similar pins, which doubtless had many uses, are frequently found in archæological excavations, particularly on sites where a Mesolithic heritage may be suspected.

[282]

[231]

Coiled Straw Basket

Fig. 77.
Note bone pin.

This brings us to the very large topic of the uses made of straw. There is no need to refer to the value of oat straw as fodder or as thatch, though it does not last long as roofing material, and either wheat or rye straw is preferred. A humble example of the use of thatch is shown in the beehive (Fig. 77a) Rope (sugán) made of straw or hay still finds many uses, especially for tying down thatch on houses and stacks. It is twisted on a " thraw-hook " of ash or hazel, with a sally hand-grip, but the old styles are declining with the spread of a simple " twister " of strong bent wire (Fig. 78). This type is found throughout the British Isles in many forms some of which are

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[231]

283

Fig. 77a.
Height 4 ft.

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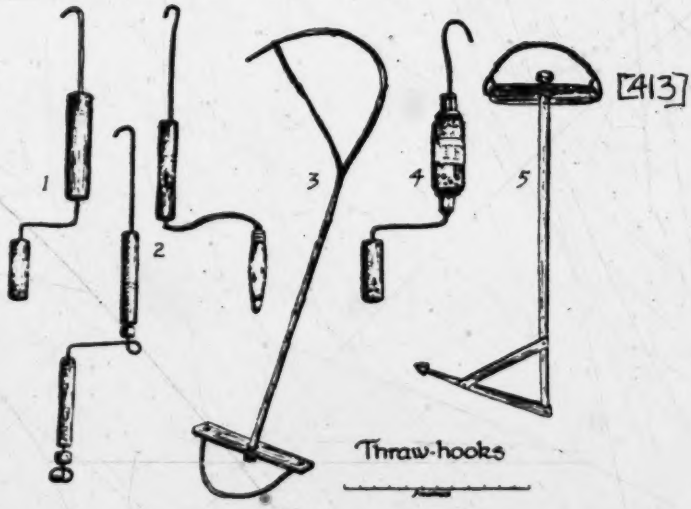
known to be of mediæval descent. The method of manufacture is shown in Fig. 50, and the tying down of a hay pike in Fig. 51. Sugán was sometimes employed instead of wattle 283



[413]

Fig. 78.

Sugán twisters 1. Co. Antrim. 2. Both Donegal. 3. Lecale, Down. 4. Leitrim. 5. Dingle, Kerry.

in the chimney canopies. It was used for the seats of chairs and for the clothes-line which stretched across the kitchen. A short length was sometimes worn as a girdle around a child's dress. From it were made tethering ropes, spancels and langles, traces and tail-ropes; and on the Donegal seaboard I have heard of cabbages being tethered "against the wind" by three hay-ropes! It is on record that the men of Mayo would descend the seacliffs suspended by a straw-rope.

A length of sugán is also the foundation course of many more complex objects of straw such as mats, mattresses, screens, beehives, nesting boxes, stools, arm-chairs, baskets and hampers. I illustrate (Fig. 79) one of the conical hen-nests which are hung on pegs in the kitchen: large

[244]

[481]

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Straw Hen-nest

Fig. 79.

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Fig. 80.

Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugán and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a "tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way: some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or "mell"), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply: finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. "Langles" and "burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

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and similarly the cattle were fastened in the byre by ropes 231
of straw, as in Clare, or of horse-hair, as in Kerry. Of the 283
two burden ropes illustrated (Figs. 80, 81) the Donegal example is a two-ply rush rope with an eye made of a peeled stick bent into a loop: the Aran specimen is of grass (Manilla) rope [284]
passing through a hole in a wooden runner. Similar blocks of wood serve as a swivel to prevent kinks in tethering ropes, separate lengths of rope passing through each hole.

Reference has been made to the fir-ropes used in securing 283
roofing scraws and thatch. Thin splits of straight-grained bog-fir about four feet long and an inch wide are twisted by hand into hollow cylinders, joined end to end to make a coil of about 50 feet. Two or three of these are twisted together to give the finished product, which combines great strength and elasticity with the capacity to stand up to all weathers. Fir-rope was often stretched across the wooden bed-frame to [352]
make a springy mattress. A short "tie" of fir-rope is shown in Fig. 21, p. 63.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE BOG.

3/4 I have called this chapter " the Bog " rather than " Turf " because fuel is not the only product of the Irish turf bogs. The rough grazings once so important in mountain economy (Chapter 6) are commonly located on thin peat, while " buried treasure " is obtained in the form of bog-timber and also, it may be, in objects of wood or metal lost or deposited in the turf in ancient times. Measured by the time and labour of cutting, footing, stacking, and carrying, turf is an expensive fuel. At best, work in the bogs involves a constant struggle against water-logging underfoot and mists and rain overhead: at the worst there comes an occasional season wetter than usual when little or no turf can be won, and the bare countryside must be searched for sticks and rotting timber to burn. [237] In these circumstances dried cowdung is often used as fuel. [372] Moreover, the heavy drain upon all available hands comes in early summer, and the growing crops and livestock are liable to be neglected. " A great impediment to good husbandry," is the verdict of one writer.

The turf is cut in a normal year from the beginning of May onwards, or as soon as the potatoes and corn are in the ground, but the great thing is to begin as early as possible in [132] order to profit from the dry weather of spring. In districts where few crops are grown April, the driest month of the year, is the chosen time. A current of excitement runs through

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314 the homestead as preparations are made to visit the bog, which may lie at any distance up to some miles away. I fancy turf-cutting was one of the tasks undertaken in the old days by the young people who took the cattle to the booleys. It used to be a communal task, for instance in Donegal until lately [476] six or eight men with their women and child helpers would pool their labour, receiving their meals for the day from the owner of each successive bank to be cut. Similarly each man would take his burden-creel to assist in the communal gathering and stacking in July or August.

Fig. 83. The flachter in use, Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim.

Fig. 84. Flachter in "at rest" position.

The first process in turf-cutting is the removal of the surface "parings"—the scraw—consisting of tough matted roots, coarse grass and moss, to a depth of anything from three or four inches to as much as 18 inches. The scraw is not taken as fuel except in areas where turf is scarce, but in some localities where the bogs have all been cut out, as in Rathlin and Tory, thin scraw scraped off the rock is the only fuel, and a very dirty and inefficient fire it makes. A broad spade is employed for paring, supplemented by some sharp cutting tool such as a hay-knife (Fig. 82), or an old scythe blade hafted and fitted with a foot-spur, for notching the vertical

[413]

Fig. 82.

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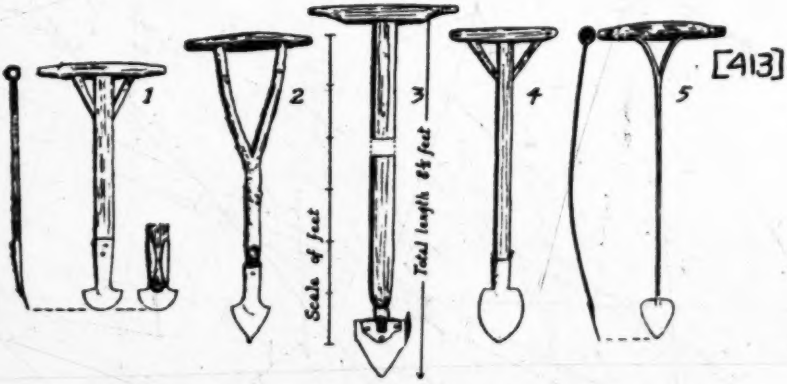
cuts. It is customary to replace the sod on the floor of the bog as the face is cut back, so that the rough grazing is preserved. If the sub-soil is suitable, lowland bogs are reclaimed and good cropping land secured for hay and potatoes. In Armagh strawberries, raspberries, currants and rhubarb grow excellently on the peaty soils. 314 [311] [185]

In the mountain bogs of the north-east a variety of push plough known as the flachter—a word derived from the same root as "flay"—cuts off a scraw some six inches thick as it is driven by vigorous thrusts of the thighs against the stout cross-bar (Figs. 83, 84). Unlike the English breast-



[413]

Fig. 85. Flachters.

1. Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim. 3. Glenravel, Co. Antrim (English type).
2. Glendun, Co. Antrim. 4. Co. Tyrone (1802).
5. Tirmeel, Co. Derry (iron shaft).

plough, the blade has no side wing. It is fastened to the shaft by the old-fashioned device of folded flanges which we have already come across in the sock of the wooden plough and in the loy. I illustrate in Fig. 85 some varieties of flachter and, for comparison, a breast-plough of English type from mid-Antrim (centre). In connexion with the short-

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314 handled variety the story is told that on old turf-cutter at Coolnagoppoge, on seeing his first aeroplane pass overhead, reported that he had seen "the devil riding a flachter!"

314 413 The prepared turf bank may now be cut in one of two ways, either by "breasting" or by digging "underfoot." Different types of spade or "slane" are required according to which method is adopted, and within these two groups of slanes there is a multitude of regional styles and shapes. In breast-work the digger stands facing the turf bank, and thrusts in his spade horizontally, whereas in underfooting he stands on the bank and cuts vertically. Many factors enter into the distribution of these two digging-modes: the nature and grain of the peat, the depth of the face, and the local tradition. I have seen both methods used side by side on the same mountain, but I have also met foot-slanesmen who had never seen a breast-slane and vice-versa. In the thin mountain bogs the underfoot method is customary, while breasting is favoured in the deep lowland mosses. The turf slane is clearly a specialized version of the narrow loy, with the addition of a side wing to cut out the turf at one stroke. The old styles take the handle in bent-over flanges like the loy, but the new fashions of "factory" spade have borrowed the straps of the "English" digging spade (Fig. 86). Slanes were formerly made by the country smith, and the spade-factories which now forge them must cater for the demands and tastes of innumerable provinces of local culture which correspond, if one may hazard a guess, with old territorial units such as the baronies.

[391] Co. Londonderry Turf foot Spade

Fig. 86.

One factor in the varying shapes is the angle made by the cutting edge of the wing with the mouth of the blade: it may be at right-angles but is more likely to be set backward or forward at an angle which may be as much as 23°. In the breast-slane it tends to be set back (Fig. 89), while in the foot-slane it may be set forward at a sharp angle (Fig. 86). The edge of the wing measures anything from 4½ to 7 inches: the mouth of the spade averages 4½ inches but I have seen them up to 6 inches. Details vary so much, in fact, that to generalize is dangerous. The top or back of the wing is treated

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in many different ways, for instance around Ballymoney it is 3|4
hooked and the slanesman uses it to pull the turf-barrow into 4|3
position. A foot-rest is provided on the foot-slane, on the side opposite the wing. There are left and right-footed workers, but it is not always necessary to use the foot, the strength of the arm sufficing. As with some of the loys (Chapter 13), there is a type of slane in the Midlands which has a separate spade-tree to which the handle is attached by two iron bands (Fig. 88). The spade-tree is of light wood, elm, or larch. Lightness is an essential quality in the slane: the blade is thin and sharp and weighs about 1½ pounds. The old type of

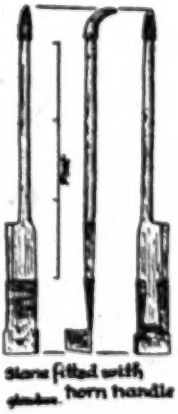

Fig. 87.

slane, like the loy, is straight handled, but it is customary to affix a cow's horn as hand-grip (Fig. 87.) Another type of handle is shown in Fig. 86.

Where the bogs are soft, especially in the area from Galway to Meath, a broad flat breast spade is employed in place of the winged slane. Its blade measures some 13 inches by 5 and it is sharpened at the sides as well as the mouth (Fig. 88). A Co. Derry variety has the edge expanded to 5½ inches: its blade is slightly dished and has a gentle rounded lift. Details of this kind assist in the penetration and with-

[237]

Fig. 88.

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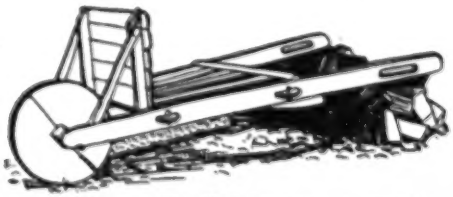
3|4
4|3

drawal of the blade, and the expanded socket acts in the same way. An interesting method of hafting is found in the "diamond" breast spade of East Galway (Fig. 88) in which the handle is fitted by soaking it to expand and grip the diamond-shaped perforations in the socket. The flat breast spade has to make two separate cuts before a turf is detached from the face. It has a short handle the length of which, about 2 ft., is adjusted to the length of the user's arm.

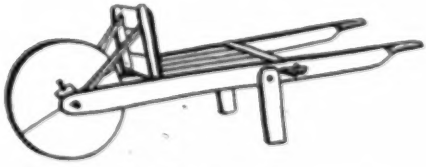
An experienced slanesman works with astonishing precision which recalls the steady ticking of a clock, his

[493]

Fig. 89.
Top two are breast slanes.



Turf Barrow. Co. Meath



Turf Barrow. Co. Antrim

Fig. 90.

strong thrusts alternating with little jabs, designed to clean the edge of the spade, which remind the onlooker of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the smith's hammer between his blows. Similarly the co-operation between slanesman, pitcher and spreader, or "holer," is a delightful thing to watch. But the work is hard and relentless. The severed turves may be placed directly on the barrow from the spade, or lifted off by hand two at a time and either loaded or pitched to a third hand who places them on the barrow. On deep

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cuttings a long-handled graip is sometimes used, and the 314
smiths turned out special two-pronged pitching forks for the 413
purpose (Fig. 66). If the peat is soft a long-handled shovel is employed instead. A barrow-load varies in capacity, for instance it is 10 turves in parts of Antrim and 14 in Armagh. [493]
The difference depends on the dimensions of the turves as well as the size of the barrow and the state of the bog surface: turves range from about 22 inches by 4 by 5 to 10 inches by 4 by 3, but they shrink considerably as they dry.

The turf barrow is a low solid-wheeled archaic-looking 314
vehicle (Fig. 90) the details of its construction showing as 493
many adaptations to local conditions and traditions as the slane itself. It is a compromise between two opposing needs—a large wheel for ease of pushing over the rough bog surface and a low chassis to facilitate loading and emptying, for the barrow is merely tilted on one side by the spreader, the turves slipping off and standing on end in serried rows to dry. The barrow must be as light as possible: hence no iron is used in its construction except for the axle-ends, and, perhaps, a light tyre for the solid wheel or "trundle." In soft bogs the trundle must be wide—as much as 5 inches—but three inches is more usual. Its diameter ranges from 12 to 18 inches. The legs of the barrow are always short and may be mere lugs, or they may be absent, in which case there must be some arrangement for enabling the handles to be gripped: they are either perforated or upturned (Fig. 90). An interesting variant which I have noticed around Athenry has the legs bent [492]
backwards in a curve to act as slides or runners. A curious adaptation to soft bogland is recorded a century ago from Co. [481]
Mayo, where both horses and men were "shod with boards" when working in the moss. Box-barrows are something used to transport dried turf, or a "kish" may be placed on the flat barrow. In Armagh "carrying baskets" are employed (Fig. 91).

Little can be said here about the methods adopted to dry 314
the turf: the shapes and names of the various piles into which

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3/4 the fuel is built differ from one area to another, and I give as a sample the list prepared by Mr. J. M. Mogey for Co. Antrim. After about a fortnight the spread turf is stacked in small "foots" formed by leaning a number of turves together, and later in "turn-foots" and "castles" which are built up in storeys. These are then combined into larger "rickles" or

[482]
[285]

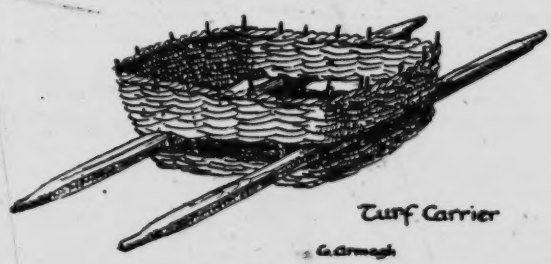

Fig. 91.

"clamps" and finally stored in "hand-stacks" erected alongside a bog road or in larger stacks built at the homestead (Fig. 93).

[413]

Fig. 92.

In many parts of the country the low-lying bogs are too wet to cut with the spade, and other methods of "winning" the turf must be adopted. Making "hand-turf" by moulding or "kneading" the black mud into balls is the simplest solution of the problem, but systematic methods have been evolved in some districts, and we give an account of the process as observed in Co. Meath, where mud turf is highly prized and considered to burn better and last longer than cut peat. It is dug in pits, broken down with short-handled shovels and graips and well mixed with water until the slushy mixture is ready to shovel into a box barrow, that is an ordinary manure barrow or a turf barrow fitted with sides, It is wheeled on to a smooth place and spread in a layer some 9 inches thick. When dry enough to take a man's weight the layer is notched in deep parallel grooves made with the edges of the hands, with cross grooves at intervals. The worker

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walks backwards, bare-footed, during this process of 314
"running," dipping his hands from time to time in a bucket of water to clean them. The great slab of notched turf then resembles a huge tray of treacle toffee. The brick-like slabs, some 12 inches by 4, are later cut out with a sharp flat turf spade or a hay-knife, and go through the usual processes of footing, clamping and stacking.

Turf stack, footings, castles, spread turf, etc. Co. Antrim.

Fig. 93.

We must now consider briefly the uses made of bog 313
timber, chiefly "fir" (Scots pine), oak and birch. The great [413]
fir stumps are cleaved with a heavy fir-hatchet, from 5 to as much as 14 pounds in weight (Fig. 92). A "lifter" of rather unusual type is also illustrated. The resinous wood makes excellent firing and kindling, but the toughest stumps defy the axe and their twisted roots make a convenient substitute for a gate or a stop-gap. Straight-grained fir was much in demand for making "splits," that is thin strips used for lighting purposes and for making the rims and bottoms of sieves.

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313 In the north long splits were twisted into fir-rope, a craft which is almost dead (Fig. 21 and Chapter 14). Both fir and oak were employed for constructional work of all kinds: old cabins will be found to be roofed with bog timber in most districts, and many implements, dressers, settles, stools, churns, tubs, slide-cars and even boats were fashioned from it. The buried trunks are located in winter by seeking frost-free patches on the bog-surface, or on summer mornings by noting where the dew lies thinnest. Their size and soundness are tested with an iron probing rod or "bog auger" and if satisfactory the trunks are then dug out.

491 Much might be said about the bog roads and means of access to the turf. In Armagh and Monaghan, to quote Mr. T. G. F. Paterson, the track or "car-path" by which the turf is carted home is called the "rampar" or "turf-pad," the rampar being the standing strip of bog preserved between cuttings. The various methods of tenure and rights of turbary are an interesting topic but a notorious source of trouble, and the Irish peasant finds ample opportunity for [691] indulging his litigious tastes in disputes over drainage and rights of way.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE SEASHORE.

The seashore, where the first Irishmen picked up a living 22
some thousands of years ago, still plays a significant role in the islands and around the coasts and is laid under contribution for seaweed and drift weed (wrack), for sand and gravel, and for accessory supplies of food. On many an Irish strand too, seasonal festivals, horse-racing and country games have only slowly given way to holiday makers from the city. Communal rights in the seashore were jealously guarded, and one constantly comes across ancient customs that have survived in this most changeless of environments. I recall the country-
man "on the brew" (bureau; that is, on the dole) whom I [283]
watched in County Down twisting on his bare thigh, his palm dried with a dusting of wood-ash from the hearth, the two-ply "crop" of horse-hair for his fishing line—each ply consisting of twenty-one strands taken from the tail of a white mare. This method of twisting is found amongst almost all primitive 227
peoples, and can be paralleled, for instance, from the remote 226
Andaman Islands. His outfit for codling fishing is illustrated in Fig. 94, which shows two hair crops attached to a home-made sinker of lead—called from its shape a "frog"; the use of horse-hair has survived in this case because it is stiffer than
gut and serves to keep the hooks from fouling each other. [237]
Rock-fishing lines in Co. Antrim are sometimes made of black horse-hair, but for the part next the hook, called the foot-line, white hair is used. Well-made lines of carefully selected hair

[Text continues top of p. 144—Analyst]

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226 227 are said to last a lifetime. I have seen such lines twisted between the palms of the hand and also made by spinning round a cap to which the two loose ends are pinned. In County Galway similar foot-lines are made of mixed horse and

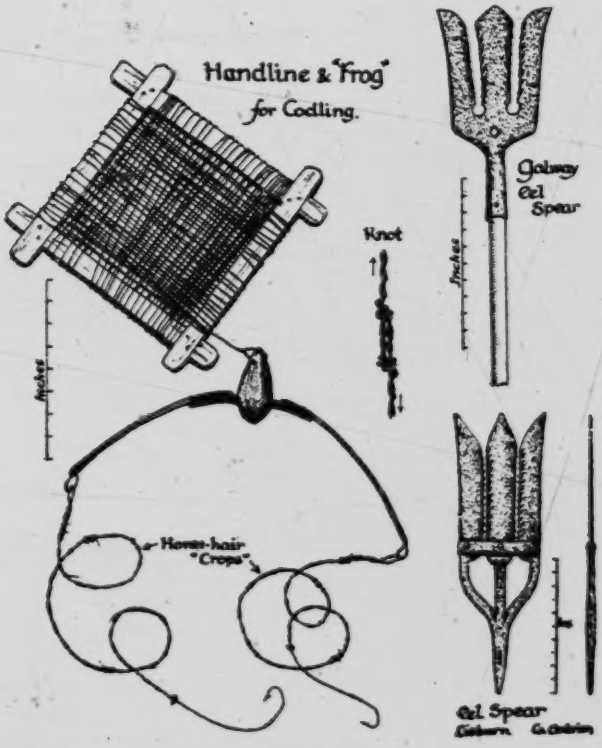

Fig. 94.

[284] cow hair. The short lengths of hair cord are tied with a special knot (Fig. 94) which is "set" with saliva. Horse-hair [827] cords were formerly used to fasten together the curragh framework in Donegal.

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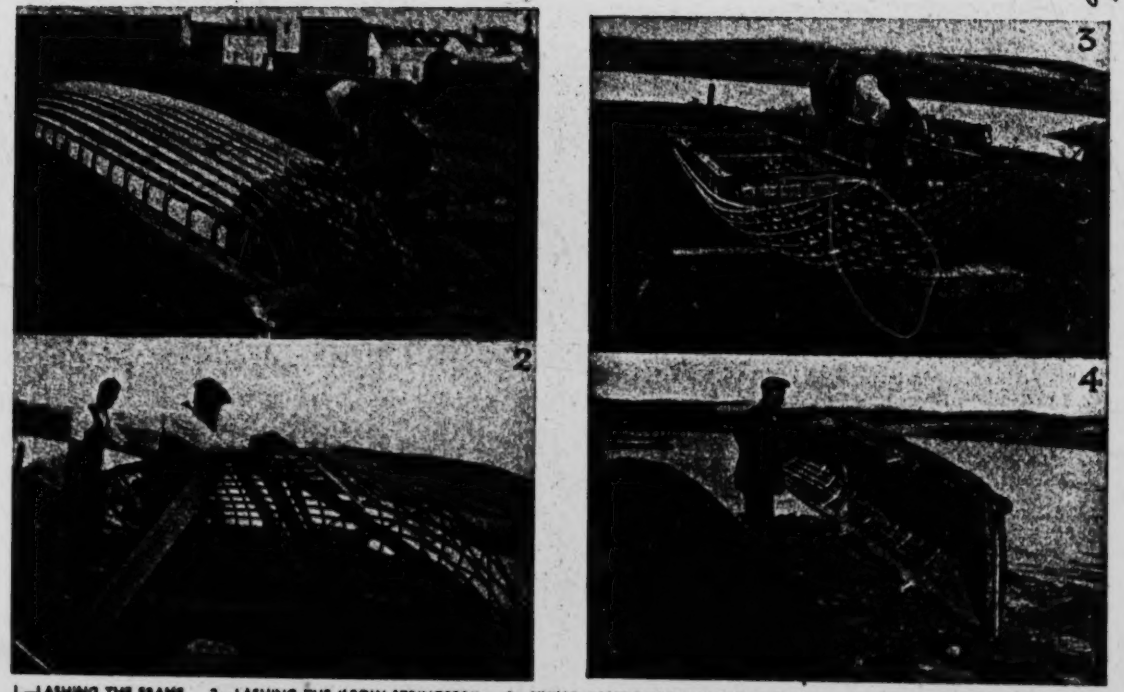

1.—LASHING THE FRAME 2.—LASHING THE "BOW STRINGERS" 3.—FIXING COUPLE-ENDS TO THE GUNWALE 4.—COVERED AND READY FOR USE

Plate VI STAGES IN THE MAKING OF A SHEEPHAVEN CURRAGH, Co. Donegal.

[facing p.144]

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226 Hazel sticks are often used as fishing rods, but the sea itself may cast up gifts in the shape of bamboo poles. In a general way each species of fish must be tempted with its appropriate bait or lure in its proper season, and when the varied traditions and fish of different stretches of coast are recalled it will be realized that a vast amount of information could be collected on this topic. The bait necessary for bottom fishing—mussels, limpets, "slaters," "buckies," crab, lug-worm and so on—is different from that used in 'streaming"—young eels, small fish, or artificial lures in the form of white feathers or hair.

Then there are the different methods employed in attaching the bait, in throwing the lines or using the rod both in rock and boat fishing. In Strangford Lough, County Down, for example, the rod is plunged deep into the water from the stern of the rowing-boat, the swirl of the current helping to agitate the streaming bait. An ingenious device found on the west coast is the "protected hook" used for fishing amongst sea-weeds: to prevent the fouling of the hook a shield made of the carapace of a crab is attached to the line. The stone sinker is made from a pebble by chipping out two notches to hold the line. Nor should we fail to mention that "the best hooks in the world" were formerly made at Limerick: the name is still attached to the graded hooks one buys in seaside towns.

In the north of Ireland the fish most commonly caught from the rocks or from small boats inshore is the dark coal-fish, variously called, according to its age and size, cudden or gelpin, pickock or pickies, glashan or blockan, grey lord, [251] stanlock, black jack, and so on. Lightly salted, the split blockan may be seen drying on the thatched roofs of houses along many a stretch of coast. A close rival in popularity and abundance is the pollack or "lythe." Ling, one of our oldest foods, is still, like the salted herring which go so well [251] with potatoes, a favourite in rural Ireland. They used to be dried beside the kelp kilns down the west coast. These

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226 larger fish, including cod and skate, are generally caught on "long lines," hung with hundreds of hooks, in deeper water. The antiquity of some such method of fishing is suggested by the discovery of cod bones with the remains of our raised beach cultures. Old fashioned devices are found in long-line fishing, too: floats of inflated dog skin ("stookies") and sinkers of grooved stone (Fig. 95) are in daily use.

[227]

Fig. 95.

804 The illustration also shows a grooved stone resembling the type well known to archæologists as grooved hammer-stones. This example was employed as a 10 lb. weight for weighing wool. I have seen similar stones kept for weighing butter and kelp.

227 The line baskets present interesting variations of shape: I illustrate (Fig. 76) examples from Co. Antrim and from Co. Galway. The long Aran basket has a raised end, while the Waterford pattern is a short shallow basket. Types of net

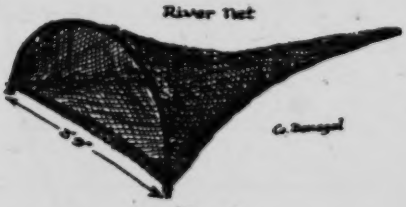

Fig. 96.

for inshore fishing, including salmon nets, differ considerably from place to place and need study. Mention should also be made of the "otter," better known from its adoption in mine-sweeping as the paravane, which is widely used for

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227

netting in sea and lake and for poaching. And in this connexion one may whisper that the illegal eel-spear (Fig. 94), the leister or salmon spear, and the trout net (Fig. 96)[1] will sometimes be shown to the discreet inquirer. Old garden forks and shovels are often fashioned into spears by the smith. Resinous bog-fir sometimes provided the torches for "burning the river" in salmon-poaching. Much might be said of these dark practices, but this is not the place to give away all the secrets of the countryside. We may properly refer to the huge "legitimate" catches of eels in weirs such as those of "the fishy fruitful Bann."

The well-known curraghs of the Boyne and the west coast have recently been described in James Hornell's book, "British Coracles and Irish Curraghs," but details of rowing and sailing craft of all kinds should be recorded and sketched before regional types give way, as they are slowly doing, to standardised boats. It is probably not too much to say that every coastal county, every large river and lake, has its own traditional styles of vessels, and their comparative study would be an important contribution to science. Some of the small oval curraghs of the Boyne are still covered with cow-hide, but tarred canvas has taken its place in the larger sea-going curraghs of the west coast. These display many interesting variations according to local conditions and custom, but all, with the exception of the paddle curraghs of Tory Island, are fitted with single thole pins on which the oars swivel, the wooden pin passing through a hole in the heavy "bool" of the oar (Fig. 99). This curious device is employed also on some river and lake boats (e.g., the Corrib, the Shannon and Lough Neagh) and was until recent years found on the fishing boats of the Scotch Quarter at Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. I have no information on the distribution of the single thole-pin oar outside Ireland, except that Mr. Hornell has reported (in a letter) that the method is used in the Sudan on the Nile. It is true of such ethnographical studies

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 150--ANALYST]

[1] Similar poaching nets were made in the Hebrides—and probably also in Ireland—of heather stems and even sedge roots (*Carex flacca*).

[416]

501

Fig. 99.

[824]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Donegal

501

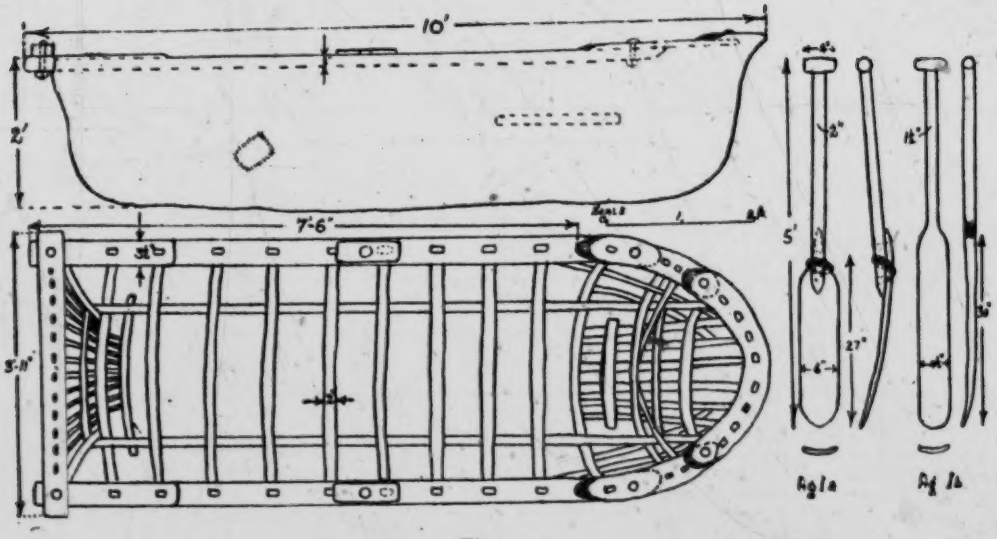

Fig. 97.
The Bunbeg paddle-curragh, Co. Donegal, with types of paddles, old and new.

[p. 148]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Donegal

501

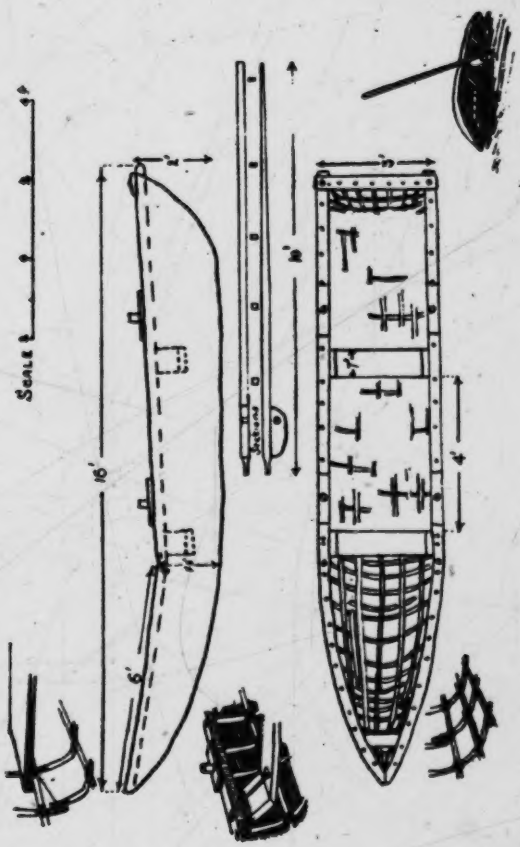

Fig. 98. The rowing curragh of Sheephaven, Co. Donegal.

[p. 149]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Fig. 100.
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.

Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

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cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

222

[413]
[244]

Fig. 102.

[439]

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222
262

Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

227
228
[439]

Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

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317 We referred in the first paragraph to sand and gravel: the white shell sand is taken for manure and is also strewn on the kitchen floor, while beach stones and gravel find many uses as cobble stones, pebble-dashing and so on. Among other 226 by-products of the sea we must not forget fish-oil, manu- 373 factured not only as a medicine for cattle but also as an illuminant. The iron crusie lamp (Fig. 105) was not long since the chief source of light in the islands, and until half a century ago large sea-shells are said to have been employed for the purpose in Co. Kerry. The wick of the crusie was a peeled rush or a twist of cotton: because of the strong smell the lamp was hung under the chimney so that the draught carried away the fumes. The abundant sea shells are also utilized for lime on some islands, for example Tory, by burning them in a kiln made of turf.

317 228

Fig. 105. Length 15"

Finally, we must not omit the dread harvest of the sea cast up after storms—the timber and food-stuffs and wreckage—always welcome and perhaps in olden days not uninvited. Many an islandman's cabin is roofed with couples of ships' masts, and a visit to treeless Tory or Rathlin will reveal the many uses to which drift timber is put. Mysterious objects brought by the currents from the West Indies occasionally turn up: pumice, perhaps from this source, has been found, treasured no doubt as a magic stone, in sandhill settlements of 4,000 years ago.

162 It is not to be wondered at, when we consider the ancient 226 and varied, if often toilsome and dangerous life of the Irish shores, that the coasts carry a much denser population than districts inland. It should be stressed that these various activities are carried on not as a rule by specialized fishermen but by farmers and peasants to whom the sea offers an accessory source of life and interest, and who often perpetuate the old communal schemes by taking shares in a boat and nets. Old ways die hardest by the sea; prohibitions and super- [462] stitions are rife, and fishing is one of the few occupations in which women take no active part.

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CHAPTER XVII

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS: THE COUNTRY TOWN.

Although the Celtic year began with All Hallows Day (November 1st), for our purpose we may regard it as starting on February 1st, or St. Bridget's Day. This was the first day of Spring, and of field work, for the Saint promised that every second day thereafter would be hard and dry. The circle of the year ran its course through the seasons, punctuated by certain fixed festivals and by the uncertain advent of births, marriages, illness and death. It is with the fixed festivals that we are concerned in this chapter. The four seasons have their opening days on the first of February, May, August and November, and the celebration of these days and the preceding Eves is a pagan survival breaking through the Christian calendar. The festivals of February and of November have been taken under the special protection of the Church through their association with St. Bridget and All Saints, but many traces of the "elder faiths" of nature worship live on, sanctified by tradition if not always by the Church. 221 796 805 [821] [996]

On St. Bridget's Eve (January 31st) it is customary for country children to pull rushes—they must not be cut with a knife—and take them home to be made into crosses by the family gathered round the fire. A fixed ritual, varying from one district to another, determines the procedure, and it traditionally included the St. Bridget's supper of pancakes or sowens taken from a plate laid on top of a rush cross. The 221 796 788 285

[p. 153]

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796 crosses, of various patterns, are hung up over doors and beds
988 and in the byre to bring good luck. Some of them are very
285 elaborate, but the oldest style, to judge from its Celtic form,
is the three-legged cross (Fig. 106) which is specially associated
[777] with cattle and is not, like the other shapes, taken to church to
be blessed, a ceremony which is kept up even in parts of
Belfast. In the Glens of Antrim a small bed is fashioned out
of rushes and placed by the fire on St. Bridget's Eve: the door
is left unlatched so that the Saint may come in and rest.

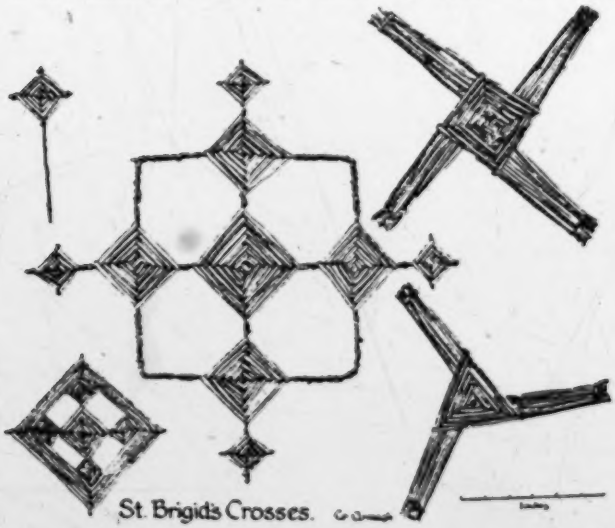

Fig. 106.

In Co. Kerry young lads called "Biddy Boys" wear hats of straw on the first of February, and in other parts of the west, I am told, "Bridget Belts" of plaited straw are worn.

796 The next important day in the calendar comes about the
221 middle of the three months of Spring, that is at the time now
kept as a national holiday in North and South alike—St.
Patrick's Day, March 17th. This is regarded as the proper
time to commence sowing, and the countryman counts on

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planting his first potatoes on that day, when St. Patrick 796
"turned the warm side of the stone uppermost." In the 221
Antrim Glens the hay meadows are closed on St. Patrick's Day, and under the rundale system the animals which had run through the townland from Hallowe'en were now carefully herded or driven to the rough grazing grounds so that they could not trespass on the unfenced cropland. A little later come the many memories of seed-time ritual and the spring sacrifice now represented in Easter egg-rolling games.

The May festival ranked next in importance to that of November: these are the major turning points of the year, where Nature decks herself in fresh green or in "rich Autumn's golden quittance." On the first days of these months the cattle were numbered, and it is a commonplace that these are still the rent or "gale days" in Ireland. On May Day the young crops were visited with torches and the cattle blessed before being driven to the mountain booleys, and hill-top fires played a large part in the rites. These Beltane fires were originally [372]
need-fires, that is they were produced by the friction of two pieces of wood. All hearth fires were extinguished on May Eve, and re-lit from the sacred fire. It is still a common [177]
superstition that it is unlucky to give away fire, even as light for a pipe, on May Day, for that would be to give away your luck for the year. In Donegal it is considered unlucky to be the first house to show smoke on May morn: the cattle are milked and the byres cleaned before the fire is made up. The Beltane ritual included the eating of oatcakes "which must not touch iron," and dancing three times clockwise round the fire. Many volumes could be written on the customs and superstitions connected with this festival, touching fire and food, salt and butter, the rowan and the flowers of the field, especially the marsh-marigold or May-flower. The city urchins have turned the celebrations into a prolonged parading of May Queens and collecting of pennies. See Chapter 19.

It is probable that fires continue to be lit on May eve in 372
some parts. Certainly the mid-Summer festival which 221
follows on St. John's Eve (June 23rd) still keeps its hold, for 796
then fires will be seen blazing on hilltops in almost every Irish

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372 county. Originally they were intended, it is thought, to keep
796 the sun, now about to decline, on its course, but they also
221 played a part in the blessing of crops and animals. In Donegal until lately a burning turf was flung into each patch of growing corn. These and the other relics recorded are of course, not peculiar to Ireland: they are part of the common heritage of the ancient civilization of Eurasia. There is evidence that this festival was important also in fishing communities. The inhabitants of the Galway Claddagh, for instance, marched through the town in procession on St. John's Eve, "gaily dressed and miming, to the accompaniment of music; they collected money for merrymaking from the townspeople, and spent the evening dancing, drinking, and lighting bonfires in their own quarters."

796 The Lammas festival is nowadays particularly associated
221 with fairs, and the first of August, is referred to in Gaelic as "Lewy's Fair." But other traces of old custom survive. My colleague Dr. O'Brien tells me that in mid-Down, on the first Sunday in August, crowds of countryfolk assemble, accompanied by fiddlers, at the great prehistoric hill-top cairn on Slieve Croob. The "Criocan Thorn," in the heart of Slieve Bloom, is the scene of similar assemblies on the last Sunday in July. Here they dance to the pipes, and bilberries are eaten: the day is called "Fraochán (bilberry) Sunday."

So the year goes on its course to the culminating festival of All Hallows. We have touched on one of its former functions, the reunion of the family after the summer booleying, in Chapter 6. It is an occasion of reunion still: all Irish
[574] folk like to be at home on this date, which is in some ways the most significant of the year, for it corresponds with what was once the New Year. Fires were lighted to mark the end of the
[372] period of growth and to herald the new year. (In England the ceremonies have become assimilated to the Guy Fawkes celebrations on November 5th). As at Beltane, the Halloween fire used long ago to supply light to rekindle the domestic fire, which now serves as a substitute in the many games of divination played by the young at this time. Hazel-nuts, apples and other fruits of the autumn take an important place

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in the combined pastimes of feasting and foretelling the future, 796
and cabbages figure in many an old game, for they are of 221
ancient lineage: the potato, barely three centuries introduced, has not displaced them in traditional ceremony. It is the young folks' day. Many of the games played turn upon the theme of identifying the future husband, and we shall see in the following chapters that match-making and marriage were among the functions of the great festivals, closely linked up with the magic of the earth's increase and the prosperity of crops and animals.

In parts of Ireland curious traditions attach to St. Martin's Eve (November 10th) and the feast on the following day. A sheep or a fowl is ceremonially killed and its blood [782]
sprinkled in the corners of the house. No wheel must turn on the day of the festival. Finally there are the mid-winter celebrations, now marked by Christmas and New Year, which carry the year round towards St. Bridget's Eve. On St. Stephen's Day (December 26th) the hunting of the wren was formerly an occasion for general revel: it is now little more than a children's game.

We must conclude this chapter with some suggestions, 443
necessarily brief and tentative, as to the importance of these 527
seasonal gatherings in the social and commercial life of peasant Ireland. From very early times the major ritual assemblies of the year provided opportunity for exchange of goods, of livestock and of news, and for the maintenance of folk tradition and bardic skill. In ancient Ireland it is recorded that there were two kinds of assemblies, the "aonach" for pleasure and the "aireacht" for business, but it seems probable that, like the great fairs of recent times, they served both purposes. It is suggestive of the ritual and religious element in the old assemblies that they generally met upon hill-tops—often the sites of prehistoric burials—and that they took place at the fixed times marking the beginning of the Celtic seasons. May and November remain the favourite periods for country fairs, and the hiring fairs were always held at these times. A century ago the February and August fairs were also of considerable importance. The Old Lammas Fair

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443 527 at Ballycastle, for instance, lasted a full week and though now limited to a single day is still the great event of the year in north Antrim. August and perhaps February were closely associated with the sale of sheep, the May and November fairs with cattle. In the early 19th century the great fair of Ballinasloe in Co. Galway handled as many as 20,000 cattle and 90,000 sheep. "Their whole thought," wrote Knight of the Mayo peasantry about that time, "seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging." "A yard of linen or a couple of chickens," says Arthur Young, "will carry an unemployed hand ten miles."

443 366 It is by the fairs and not by the calendar that the countryman dates events. It may be observed that the popularity of fairs, with their emphasis on livestock, illustrates the strength of the pastoral tradition. They have been something of an obstacle to good husbandry because they occur at the changes of the seasons and thus interfere with field work, particularly with harvest. Nowadays most of the fairs are associated with urban settlements, but the name "Fair *Hill*" still clings to the streets where they are held, and many a town has its fair hill just outside. On such sites tents were formerly erected for refreshment, and there are certain old fair grounds now abandoned where you may see the grassy foundations of the huts and the fire holes where the giant cauldrons were boiled. In the ancient aireachts streets of booths were set up for the fair period, so that they might be described as temporary towns. Professor MacNeill has put forward the thesis that these were the "cities" named by Ptolemy in his description of Ireland.

369 361 This brings us to the problem of urban origins. It is perhaps true to say that the fair used to be regarded as the product of the town, but recent research supports the view that the fair precedes the town and was one factor in its rise. Apart from comparative evidence drawn from certain north African communities, for instance, anyone who has watched a small town on fair day must get the impression that he is looking at something which has been going on throughout the

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ages. He sees the country taking complete possession of the town, blocking its streets, ignoring its traffic: he is in the presence of a force older and more fundamental than the town which has given it hospitality (Fig. 110).

When we inquire into the origins and antiquity of the Irish towns we find that very few go back to pre-Norman times, while it is abundantly clear that periodic gatherings in "temporary towns" are far older. The pre-Christian fortress-palaces such as Tara and Navan did not survive into historic times, and as a rule the church in Celtic lands had no civic interests, though many a confiscated monastic site was revived as the nucleus of a town when occupied by English troops in the 16th century. Some coastal cities such as Dublin and Waterford were founded by Norsemen, but most of the inland towns grew up as castle-market-towns during the Anglo-Norman period or in the plantations of the 16th and 17th centuries. To-day the five chief seaports, none of them strictly "native," contain one quarter of the total population: very few inland towns have more than 10,000 people, and only one of these is outside the industrial Six Counties. Most of the fair centres have a population of from 500 to 5,000: there are 187 towns of this size in Eire. There are 202 "towns" with from 200 to 500 inhabitants and only 25 with more than 5,000 (Fig. 107).

It is to these small towns, scattered at convenient intervals of 10 or 15 miles up and down the country, that the fairs have been attracted, the centre of authority and administration becoming the centre of exchange. Although most of the settlements are of "foreign" origin, they have become thoroughly Irish. The family system and blood-ties link up town and country, and trade follows the personal bond of "friendship," that is, blood relationship, however remote. Over shops and inns it is family names one sees painted up: O'Flynn and Flanagan take the place of the English "General Stores" and "Red Lion." Since the countryman's money comes only at the periodic fairs, he relies on the shopkeeper's credit, and the debt must never be entirely paid off, for that

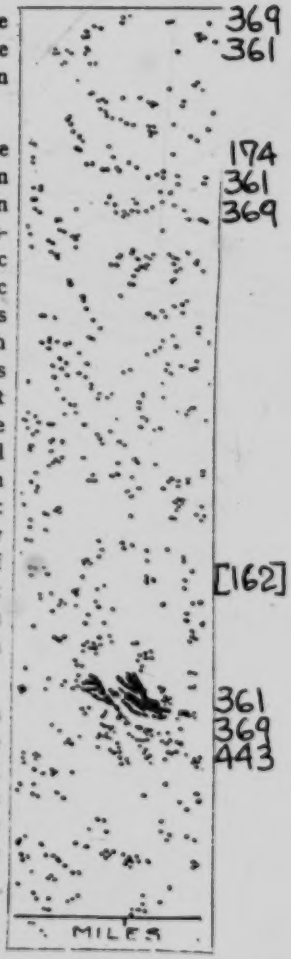

Fig. 107.
A market town with scattered country population. Each dot represents a building.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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361 would "spoil" social relations. Even in the larger towns the
[369] shopkeeper is reluctant to have his bills completely settled by
[443] his customers. These personal ties readily give rise to cliques and municipal corruption: it must be admitted that the

[162]

Fig. 108.

corporate spirit is poorly developed. Similarly the Irish country town is generally lacking in any native traditions of
[344] civic architecture, and even the splendid buildings of Dublin and Galway together with the distinctive court-houses of smaller towns owe much to outside influence. The small

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town consists of streets of houses of peasant style strung The small 361 [364] end to end, picturesque with their washes of many colours, but perpetuating and even accentuating the filth which can be tolerated in a village setting of streams and fields but which becomes highly objectionable under urban conditions. On the other hand there are some spaciously-planned country towns which have an air of quiet opulence reminding one of the English heritage to which they owe their foundation. I am aware that in saying this I am ignoring the "inner flame" of the Irish towns, but it cannot be denied that externally they have much to learn from the older civic traditions of the sister isle. Dr. Arensberg has analysed the pattern of the country town and described it as "an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order." He shows that, until recent times, its economy has been that of distribution, not production. Banks and pubs and shops do most of the business and owing to the family system "Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation." If we exclude the Lough Neagh basin, [162] all the denser areas of population are coastal and most of the country's manufacturing industries are concentrated in the ports (Fig. 108).

To return to the fair, we have tried to show how the 443 periodic gatherings in which they originated were associated 786 with ritual and emotional experiences connected with the 578 celebration of recurring events such as seed-time and harvest. Breaking the routine of toil, it is characteristic that much licence was permitted on these occasions. Until recent times a strong spirit of revelry and a temporary slackening of the moral code distinguished the great Irish fairs. Even to-day the police or civic guards make allowances for fair day and turn a blind eye to many offences against the law: it is recognized as a time of special licence. Games, dancing and faction fights were the order of the day once the buying and selling were over. Until a generation ago cruel "knuckle-dusters" (Fig. 109) were carried in readiness, and the country-man's heavy felt hat was worn as a defence against the blackthorn shillelagh.

[411]
Fig. 109.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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443 blackthorn shillelagh. Trailing the long coat or "trusty"
786 was a recognized invitation for a fight.
578 To the onlooker it appears as though the business of selling is itself in the nature of a fight, such are the hearty and
443 resounding slappings of open hands up and down the street. Then follows the prolonged argument, the cut and thrust of keen bargainers in a circle of interested onlookers, over the amount of "luck money" to be given back to the seller. It is an age-old ritual far removed from the mechanical sale of a pen of cattle at an auction. The establishment of auction sales and latterly of marketing boards not only undermines the business of the country town, but threatens to destroy the intricate fabric which binds together a thousand homesteads in the intercourse of fair day. It is a sad commentary on rural development that in recent years "dole-days" have brought as many people to town as "fair-days."

[493]

Fig. 110. Fair Day.
A bargain is being struck on the left.

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CHAPTER XVIII

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. I.

With the many material survivals from the past which 771
we have mentioned in earlier chapters there lives on an imposing body of customs and superstitious beliefs of which we can attempt to give no more than a summary description. They concern not only the visible world with its common elements and events—water, fire, stones, salt, iron, trees, cattle, crops, harvest, food and drink, birth, marriage and death—and the relics of former ages—raths or "forths," great stone monuments, stone axes, flint arrowheads, spinning whorls and "crocks of gold"—but also the unseen or rarely glimpsed world of giants, fairies and other beings. All the major processes of the farmer's year had their appropriate magic rites which clung to them from the beginning. Many of these superstitions are so deep-rooted that centuries of opposition from the Christian Church have failed to suppress them, and while it has driven some practices into secrecy it has been forced to take others under its protection.

This applies, for instance, to the cult of holy wells, which 312
is, like the worship of stones and the veneration of thorn trees, 788
probably megalithic in origin and seems to carry us back to 755
the sunnier lands of the Mediterranean where the megalithic 778
religion took its rise. It has been calculated that there are some 3,000 holy wells in Ireland: many of them are still visited, generally at the festival seasons which we described in the last chapter, and it is customary for the devotees to tie

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312 strings of beads, rags or bits of clothing in the holy tree which
788 often overhangs the well, so that it may bear their ailments.
955 I happened to come across a well near Cork just after mid-
778 summer this year. Alongside were the smouldering remains of a great bonfire which had been lit on St. John's Eve. The visitors to the well, having drunk the water, walked three times sunwise around the corbelled stone well-cover, and taking up pebbles kept ready to hand in crevices, they made the sign of the cross on certain stones which were marked with deep grooves which generations of patrons had cut by the same process. Some wells have old "cup-marks" instead of crosses, and it seems probable that these pagan symbols were made long ago in the same way as the crosses which have replaced them. Their round completed, the visitors
[825] looked into the well, for if they were to recover from their ailments they would see the trout which is reputed to live there and to show itself only to the cured.

The virtues of these wells are many: they are believed to be efficacious in such varied complaints as eye-disease, lameness, toothache and in some cases barrenness The first Sunday of each quarter of the Celtic year is generally the visiting time, but perhaps on account of the weather the summer festivals, and especially midsummer, are most popular. Pins and other bits of metal are sometimes deposited in wells. Offerings are also made to certain trees in the form of pins stuck in the bark, each pin representing a wish. Special gatherings known as patterns or pardons were held at such sites on the anniversary of the patron saint of the district. Devotions were followed by dancing and games which often degenerated into fights. It is possible to see relics of paganism in the sanctity of such sites, and it is worth recalling that some of the more celebrated centres of pilgrimage in western Europe, like Santiago da Compostella, seem to have megalithic connexions.

788 The mention of cup-marks brings us to the superstitions
823 concerning the great stone monuments with which they are
778 often associated. A recent article in the *Ulster Journal of*

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Archæology (July, 1940) by I. R. Crozier and L. C. Rea, entitled "Bullauns and other Basin-stones," summarizes the various beliefs connected with cup-holes and the larger "bullauns" or stone basins, which the authors suggest were made in the same way by gradual ceremonial attrition. The water which accumulates in these artificial hollows is considered to possess special virtues, for instance as a cure for warts, and offerings of pins and coins are often made in them. It is significant that some of the basins seem to have served as fonts in the early churches. (Fig. 111.) Small boulders

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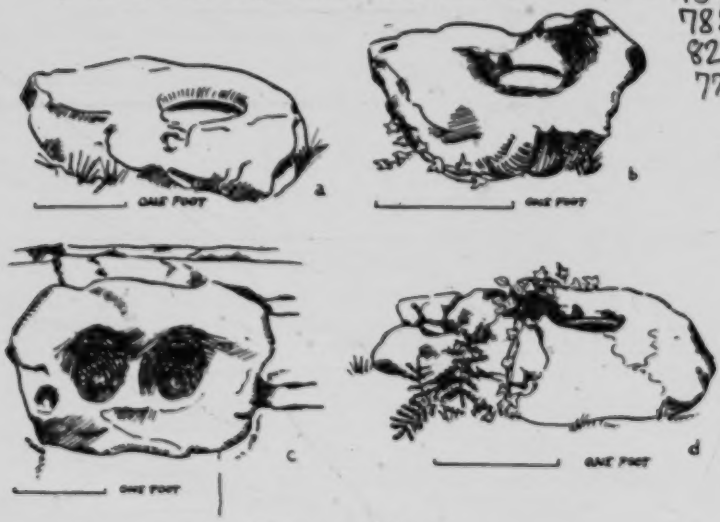

Fig. 111. Bullauns.

(*a*) Portmore Church, Co. Antrim.
(*b* & *d*) Aghalee, Co. Antrim (basins on both sides of the same stone).
(*c*) "St. Columba's Font," Londonderry. (Two bullauns and a cup-mark.

lying in certain basin-stones are occasionally employed as cursing stones, the ritual consisting of turning the stones against the sun in their holes—there may be as many as ten in one boulder—at the same time uttering a curse against the offending person,

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788 823 778 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the [755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 776 [778] The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a [165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 [777] It has more than once been my experience to be refused permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth [824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

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able part in the ceremonies of megalithic burial: we remember the significance attached to hazel nuts in the Hallowe'en games of divination (Chapter 7). 764 824

The ancient raths or forths, earthen enclosures around old homesteads, are also favourite haunts of fairies, and many are the tales of mysterious happenings in their neighbourhood at night, and of signs of habitation and sweet music issuing from them. Protection from fairies is believed to be obtained by possession of a black-hafted knife, while oatmeal or oat-cakes are also specifics against their malign influence. From fairies as from witches the supreme hour of peril to mortals is at the eves of Beltane, Midsummer and All Hallows. Cattle afflicted with disease were believed to be "elf-shot"—the belief is not entirely dead—and flint arrowheads were produced as proof of the attack. The cure was to give the affected animal a drink of the water in which the arrow had been placed. Among other archæological relics the polished stone axes of the Neolthic and Bronze ages are known as thunderbolts and are acredited with healing powers, and the small spinning-whorls are termed fairy mill-stones. As Arthur Mitchell writes of Scotland: "It is believed that stone celts assist the birth of children; that they increase the milk of cows; that they cure the diseases of the eye; that they protect the houses in which they are kept from lightning; and that they have many other such marvellous virtues. It is believed that, as they have a sort of supernatural origin, they may reasonably be supposed to have supernatural powers." 776 789 829 778

When food is taken out of doors it is a common belief that some must be left behind for the fairies, otherwise the dreaded "hungry grass" will grow; and the countryman will often spill a portion of his drink as a perhaps unconscious libation to the wee folk. Their activities are peculiarly dangerous to cattle and to butter-making. Among the charms designed to secure a good supply of butter in the churn we find the use of a horse-shoe, of a rusty nail from a coffin or the hand of a corpse, of rowan branches, salt, a live turf, or a cross made of verbena leaves. 776 789 [751]

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776 veronica leaves. In the North it is considered unlucky for a
789 person to enter a house where churning is taking place without
[177] "giving a brash," that is lending a hand at the churn-staff. In the words of a countryman in the west, "Queer things do happen to butter." Fairy tales are full of cattle and cattle-stealing: so are the epic tales. Writers of last century tell of cows that might be seen "with rags about their horns as a charm against the gentry," or gentle-folk, a name often applied to the fairies.

824 This brings us to the fairy or gentry thorns, skeaghs, or lone bushes, that is the solitary whitethorn trees which are regarded with dread. These trees, which must be counted by the thousand, are said "never to have been planted but to have grown of their own accord." They may be found on ancient monuments or alongside holy wells but the great majority are scattered through the fields, and it is worthy of notice that the cult is at least as strong in the Protestant north-east as in other parts of the country. A venerable thorn, pink-flowering, stands under my window as I write and casts its shadow into the Senate Room of the University. But no one will remove it or even lop its branches, and the story goes that when the buildings were being erected the plans had to be changed in order that the thorn should not be interfered with. If a lone tree surrounded by half a dozen scientific departments has claimed such respect it can be imagined in what awe the country thorns are held! See Tailpiece.

It has recently been suggested that the veneration of thorn trees was a Belgic custom introduced to Ireland some 2,000 years ago, but it seems more likely that as with sacred stones and wells we should look even further away in time and space to Mediterranean origins and regard the cult of trees as part of the nature worship connected with man's first use of the Irish soil. Certain thorns dedicated to Irish saints figure also
[164] in ceremonies of burial: when funerals pass by they halt and stones are placed beside the thorn until they have become cairns. Wayside cairns, in the form of memorial monuments,

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Wayside cairns in the form of memorial monuments 824
line the roads to the graveyards of Aran. On thorns at cross roads it is the custom in Co. Wexford to hang small crosses, [211] made of coffin wood, as the funeral procession passes by. [764]

We cannot deal at any length with the superstitious practices which cling so tenaciously to death and burial: 764 they recall the customs of many other regions, such as Brittany, where the old megalithic cult was strong and seems to have lived on in obsessions about death and accompanying notions of re-birth. The anxiety to be buried with relatives reminds us of the strength of the blood-tie, and "bestows even on death a feeling of social interest." It is an Irish belief that the dead live on in the graveyard, and that the last person buried acts as servant to the others, a belief which not long ago led to disputes as to which of two bodies to be buried should be interred first. There are certain old graveyards where women only are said to be buried, and no living woman will enter them. On Innishmurray there are separate graveyards for men and women. [766] Unbaptised infants were generally interred in special burial grounds, some of which appear to be prehistoric cairns. There is no need to add to the many accounts that have been written of the keening of the dead and of wakes. In connexion with wakes we need only refer to the tricks, pastimes and games which were their accompaniment. The dramatic games were known under such titles as "The Walls of Troy," "Short Castle," "Building the Ship," "Turning the Spit," "Selling the Pig," "Building the Fort," "The Horse Fair," "The Mock Marriage" and "Shuffle the Brogue." While some seem to have been for amusement only, in others it is difficult not to see sex-symbolism and fertility-rites. In recent times the wake-games [786] have often degenerated into licence and drinking. Maria Edgeworth tells us that "more matches were made at wakes than at weddings."

When going to a funeral it was customary, in parts of the west until the beginning of the present century, to carry some salt in the pocket in order to avert evil influences. Arensberg quotes the belief that "there is never a funeral but the other

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764 people are at it, too, walking along behind." In the Aran Islands, as we saw in Chapter 7, the corpse was carried out through the back door, and the front doors of all houses were closed as the funeral passed by. In Co. Mayo the coffin was carried three times round the church, sunwise, and pipes [982] filled with tobacco were left, presumably as offerings, on the grave. To prevent the spirit returning to the house of the living, it used to be thought necessary to apply a "lick" of whitewash around the door and window openings. The association of white stones and white shells with graves is [822] probably another prehistoric survival. Many of the megalithic cairns were covered with white quartz stones. It often happens that old superstitions and customs survive under the guise of children's games, and we shall have something to say about toys and games in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER XIX

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. II.

Shrove Tuesday or "Shraft" was not long ago the great 584
day for weddings in rural Ireland. In older times it seems 585
certain that marriages were celebrated at the seasonal
festivals described in Chapter 17. An interesting account
on the ceremonies in the barony of Upper Fews, Co. Armagh, [114]
was written down in 1818 and has been printed in a pamphlet
published by the Dundalgan Press in 1923. It relates how
"the courtship of the parties often commences and is carried
on at fairs and patrons, and at wakes and funerals, from
whence they run away together, that is, the male brings the
female, sometimes by force, to one of his friends house."
It goes on to describe the negotiations between the two
families and the fixing of the bride's portion or dowry. On 585
the wedding day the two parties, consisting of from 20 to 40
relations, contend, on horseback or afoot, "for who will be
at the bride's house first; where, when the parties arrive, the
bridegroom and bride are presented with a plate of oatmeal
and salt, of which each of them takes three small mouthfulls.
After this the parties mount their horses and join in one
grand cavalcade to the alehouse and then to the priest.
Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the
nuptial benediction will, it is considered, live longest."

Following another visit to the alehouse the parties
separate and "scamper away towards the bride's house,

[p. 171]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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585 whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold this race for the bottle. The first person to reach the bride's house is victorious; he is rewarded with a bottle (? of poteen) which is drunk by the company and then broken by the bridegroom. Next "a cake of oatmeal or flour, called the bride's cake, is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young persons present for the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow. Another scene of noisy festivity then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties."

Fig. 112.

585 532 A wedding custom recorded within the last 50 years from Sligo, Mayo, Galway and Kerry was the wearing of straw masks by "straw-boys" or "soppers," who went about begging money and drink and threatening mischief. The styles of mask varied from one district to another: we illustrate (Fig. 112) the pattern worn in Mayo. It is hardly necessary to add that parallels to this kind of ceremonial dress and mime can be found in many parts of the world. Among the practices connected with childbirth attention has been 846 drawn to survivals of the "couvade," whereby the husband is supposed to share the woman's pains. It is stated that in

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It is stated that in
Mayo a ploughman would be called in to shake a woman at a 845
difficult childbirth, presumably because it is he who prepares the ground and shakes the seed which brings new life to the fields.

Music, dancing, games and dramatic performances also 536
played their part in the seasonal gatherings, and one may 527
hazard the guess that the Irishman's passion for betting 796
derives from this source. A ritual element, as in the wake 842
games mentioned in the previous chapter, can often be detected, for example in the following account taken from the source quoted above. It describes a May game or pantomime from the Louth-Armagh border, modified survivals of which were current through most of the 19th century in the Slieve Gullion district. "On May day the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby.' Around it a man and woman (generally his wife) dressed also fantastically with straw, dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures, the figure at the same time being kept moving by the rustic maiden that supports it. These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children also attend (some of them from a considerable distance) to see this figure and exhibition, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children. Money is collected, and when the actors and musician have received some remuneration the remainder is laid out in drink, and the evening passes by jovially." This magic pantomime was originally intended to secure the success of the year's crops.

Such rites and gatherings have gradually been suppressed 517
or won over by the Church; and Sunday evening is now the 526
favourite recreation time for dancing and games. Among the older games, hurley is most popular, and horse-racing has by no means lost its appeal although it has suffered like other amusements from commercial exploitation. On many a

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517 sea-strand, hurley, horse-racing and games have drawn
526 together large crowds at certain seasons of the year, and in summer there were also boat or curragh races. These have by no means lost their appeal: one may instance the gatherings at Omey Island, Co. Mayo. If bull-baiting, doubtless a relic of ceremonial bull-fights, is now dead, cock-fighting is still secretly indulged in, while the illegal "long bullets,"[1] played with a heavy ball along the roads of Co. Armagh and Co. Cork—a curious distribution, for I have not come across it elsewhere—is still popular, and though Wakefield seems to attribute it to English influence it recalls the skill of the Irish peasantry in stone-throwing. This was, legend tells us, one of the playful habits of the giants of old, and a phrase used of the Aran Islands—"quarrels usually end in stone-throwing"—would not be inapplicable to some Irish cities during the "troubles." In the Claddagh of Galway a favourite amusement, turned at times into its original use as "a mode of warfare," used to be casting stones with slings. "When a man was able to strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen, he was considered a good shot." O'Curry states that it was the custom of the ancient Irish to use a flat circular stone in warfare: it was carried in the hollow of the shield.

526 Games which have kept their seasonal character are still played at Hallowe'en, especially that known as "diving for apples." "Riding and shoeing the wooden mare" is perhaps no longer played, but we must repeat that it is rarely safe to speak of old customs as extinct in rural Ireland. It has more than once been my experience to come across habits and beliefs which were described as dead half a century ago. Certain
534 toys should also find a place in this brief summary: there is,
524 for instance, the "bull-roarer," a thin lath of wood with serrated edges which is swung round on a string so as to

[1] An interesting account of bullet throwing is given by Michael J. Murphy in *At Slieve Gullion's Foot*, 1941, p. 78. Both iron and stone bullets were home-made, and the writer describes how the latter were fashioned in "bullet-holes" resembling the ancient cup-marks mentioned above on p. 164. The game was also played round Dunleer, Co. Louth, fifty years ago, but in the Cork style, that is by overhand "bowling."

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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produce a buzzing noise. The toy is known in Co. Carlow as 534
a "whee-doodle" and in Co. Down, where it seems formerly 524
to have been regarded as a "sacred" thing, as a "boomer." Professor Haddon has described specimens from Co. Antrim and Co. Cork. About the Co. Carlow example in the Dublin Museum Dr. Raftery provides me with the following note. [777]
"A boy was whirling it around and an old man who saw him was very angry and told him to take the thing home and burn it, as otherwise he would bring bad luck on the countryside." This was in 1921. I illustrate a "bull-roarer" from Cape Clear, Co. Cork (Fig. 113). Its Irish name is Cláirín Búirthe.

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524
534
Fig. 113.

It is, of course, possible that some Irish localities may have learnt the use of this toy from stray specimens brought home from regions where it is still in regular ceremonial use, but when we remember all the other Irish survivals we cannot doubt that the bull-roarer is a relic of the past that has lost, or nearly lost, its sacred character. The bull-roarer has an almost world-wide distribution. It is said to have been employed in ancient Greece in connexion with the Dionysiac mysteries. We can imagine its employment in the initiation rites and magical practices of pagan times so picturesquely reconstructed by Professor Macalister in his book "Ancient Ireland." In various parts of the modern world the bull-roarer is used as a rain charm, in raising a wind or producing thunder, in driving game, herding cattle (*cf.* Chapter 6) or preparing for fishing, in rites of initiation and circumcision, in funeral festivities and mask dances: it is a general rule that the instrument must not be seen by women or children on pain of death. In the words of Haddon: "This insignificant toy is perhaps the most ancient, widely spread and sacred religious symbol in the world."

Of great antiquity and wide distribution, the spear- 171
thrower is another instrument which appears to have survived 524
in Ireland as a toy, used as a throwing stick in boys' games. [411]
And another toy "not yet connected with any ceremonial usage" but paralleled among the Chinese and the North

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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171 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a
524 circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

857 Many examples could be given of children's games and
524 rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.
754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance
789 of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love
821 charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

241 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting
289 of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

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A good deal of skill was required and "the contestants were hindered by the unkind jokes of their friends. When the cailleach was eventually "stretched" or "cut and dead," she was "waked," carried into the house or barn, and generally kept until the following year." To quote Mr. Paterson once more, "Sometimes a party followed the ceremony, at which it was usual for the boys and girls to wear harvest knots." I illustrate two examples of knots, one with the ears left on, which is done in three plait, and the other the more common two-straw pattern (Fig. 114). It has been claimed that the 241 289

Fig. 114.

latter form is a late introduction from England, but it is known that the first type was worn by girls, in their hair, and the second by boys. They were often made before the actual cutting of the corn and are not necessarily associated with the ceremony of the last sheaf. Mr. Paterson tells me that in Armagh they used to be exchanged between the sexes as a token of admiration or love. [431]

Finally we must not forget the countless superstitious beliefs connected with birds and trees, with water beasts, and

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000 sea monsters, with animals both wild and tame, with red hair, physical deformities and so on, nor the wealth of folk-lore and folk tales which the Irish Folklore Commission is rescuing from every barony in the country. A beginning has been made in the immense task of sorting out, mapping and interpreting these beliefs. One would like to know the distribution of many persistent customs and practices, for this is the best guide to their origin and significance. How far south, for instance, does the typical Ulster greeting on 576 the road extend—that slow silent half-negative sideways nod of the head? Some day it may be possible, as I wrote five years ago, "to interpret the subtle differences between one region and another which make up the attractive variety of rural Ireland and provide sources of friendly rivalry and rich humour."[1]

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A Fairy Thorn

[1] *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, July 1945.

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XVII.

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF INISHBOFIN AND INISHSHARK, COUNTY GALWAY.

By CHARLES R. BROWNE, B.A., M.D., M.R.I.A., of the Anthropological Laboratory, Trinity College, Dublin. (Plates VIII. and IX.)

[Read November 30, 1893.]

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I.—Introduction.

121 In pursuance of the plan adopted by the Dublin Anthropometric Committee of combining the ordinary work of the Laboratory with local investigation in selected parts of the country, and first tried last year in the Ethnographic Expedition to the Aran Islands, I, this autumn, made the second local inquiry, the field chosen being the islands of Inishbofin and Inishshark, Co. Galway.

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The inquiry was conducted on almost exactly the same lines as
121 that of last year; the slight differences of method being either due to changes made as the result of former experience or to local causes; but every effort was made to ensure as great uniformity as possible, a matter of much importance as facilitating comparison of results.

In this report the same headings as used in the previous one, and arranged in the same order, have been adhered to as closely as possible, so as to allow of easy reference.

II.—Physiography of the Islands.

The two islands under consideration, together with several small
131 uninhabited islets, form the parish of Inishbofin; they are situated
101 outside the mouth of Killary Bay, and are distant some thirty-six miles from Westport, and about sixteen miles from Clifden, Co. Galway, the nearest town of any size. The post town is Cleggan, a small village on a point of the mainland, about seven miles from Inishbofin. Of the two main islands Inishbofin (locally called Bofin or Boffin) is much the larger, as out of the total area of the parish of 3151 acres, it contains 2312.

Its greatest length is about four miles, and it varies in breadth
133 from half a mile to over two miles. The nature of its coast line is greatly varied; at some places, as at Knock-quarter or East End, being low and sandy; at others, as on the north side, and at Dun More on the western extremity, being rocky, at times rising into high and jagged cliffs worn into coves and natural bridges; while, again, in other places it is high bluff overhanging a shingly foreshore. The
[504] harbour is very safe and well sheltered, and looks S.W. The coast of Shark, which lies about a mile S.W. of Inishbofin, is much more rocky, and may be said to be precipitous nearly all round, and much broken into by caves and deep fissures a few yards wide, with precipitous overhanging walls. It is difficult to land on this island if the weather be at all rough, and the inhabitants are often stormbound for weeks at a time. The difficulty and danger of landing is not so great as it used to be since the building of a new pier by the Government
[653] as a relief work in 1892. Mr. Michael Lavelle, writing about the natives of this island, says:—"It is very hard for these people to live; they may be two months before they can go to Boffin to get some commands, and they live during that time on potatoes and 'white wine.'"

The principal rock of both islands is gneiss, but belts of steatite are also found.

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The surface of the land presents much variety, a large part consisting either of moor and bog or of rocky hills, some of which reach a height of nearly 300 feet, but much of the soil is said to be of good quality. There are several small loughs in Inishbofin, lying in the hollows between the hills, and numerous wells and small rills which are kept well supplied by the frequent heavy rains. 133 [134]

The following description of the islands is given in the memoir of Sheet 83 of the Geological Survey.

With reference to Inishshark the authors say:—

"It is bleak and wild, rocky towards the west and north-west, while there is an envelope of drift on the eastern slopes. At the north-west shore are high and almost perpendicular cliffs.

"As the drift contains numerous angular and semi-angular blocks and fragments of local rocks, it is probably of moraine origin. . . . . On Inishshark there are igneous rocks. . . . identical with those which have been called melapyre by Mr. David Forbes. These occur in wide dykes, weathering much more rapidly than the associated schists, and form deep narrow ravines that have the local name of Boher-na-collig (*Anglice*, the road of the old hag or witch). . . . *Inishbofin* has a general E. and W. bearing; on the average it is four miles long and two wide, but the north and south coasts are indented with bays; and at Lough Bofin, from sea to sea, is not half a mile.

"The island consists of five hills, namely, Westquarter, its greatest height being 292 feet; it forms a promontory nearly separate from the rest of the island, being connected by the previously-mentioned low isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated; Middlequarter, highest peak, 288 feet; Cloonamore, the N.E. hill having a height of 157 feet; Knock, the hill east of the harbour, 271 feet; and, Inishlyon, 143 feet, which is a tidal island, and separated from the other hills during high water. Most of the island is rocky, having a thin peat coating, except the valley of Boffin Harbour, where there is a considerable thickness of drift which gives the island a verdant aspect when viewed from the southward."

The climate is mild even in winter, frost being rare, and snow not lying if it should chance to fall; but these advantages are counterbalanced by the frequent fierce storms which often cut off all communication with the mainland for days, and by the heavy and long-continued rains. 132

The warmth and damp of the climate are probably due, to some extent, to the impinging of part of the Gulf Stream upon the islands, as several of the glass globes set afloat to test the current have been

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132 washed up on them; at least four of these are now in Inishbofin, and large quantities of drift of various kinds are thrown up on the shores from time to time.

The botany and zoology of the islands is outside of the scope of the 137 present Paper, but a few words of general description may help to make the picture of the place more complete.

Here, as elsewhere, on our western coast, there is a tradition that the islands were at one time well wooded; and this is corroborated by the occasional discovery of tree-trunks in the bogs. At the present day, though under the influence of the warm, moist climate, other vegetation flourishes, trees of any sort cannot be got to grow, and all attempts to rear them have hitherto been failures, as the strong winds quickly destroyed them. Even in the most sheltered spots bushes will hardly grow, and there are not a dozen of five feet in height to be found in the islands.

Large numbers of sea-birds nest on the rocky islets round the 136 coasts; pigeons in large numbers inhabit the caves of Inishshark, and, until within a few years ago, eagles used regularly to nest on a high pinnacle of rock, known as the Boughal, in the channel between the islands. Rabbits and rats are both very plentiful; but hares, bats, weasels, and frogs are not found on either island.

Around the coast, porpoises, sea-otters, and seals (which latter [821] are looked upon as forerunners of stormy weather when they appear) are often seen, and the "sun-fish" (*Selache maxima*, the great basking shark) appears usually about the end of March; it leaves nearly always before the end of June, and was until a few years ago regularly fished for.

III.—Anthropography.

1. *Methods.*—These do not require any very extended notice, being 125 practically the same as those employed last year, and described in the report on the Aran investigation. A few changes were made, consisting mainly in the substitution of measurements and instruments shown by experience to be needed, for some which had proved unnecessary, and the use of the new observation form provisionally adopted by the Irish Sub-Committee for the Ethnographic Survey of the British Association. This form, though not perfect, proved to be of much value for field work as, owing to its arrangement, observations can be made with much greater rapidity than is possible by the old system; and the chance of omitting any important point is almost entirely avoided. The economy of time alone is a point of much im-

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portance when there are several persons to be examined, for, if kept waiting, they will most probably either slip off or refuse to be measured. 125

(A). *Hair and Eye Colour.*—In the obtaining of these data the methods, cards, and tables were precisely the same as those used in the expedition to Aran, to the report of which the reader is referred for particulars.

(B). *Measurements.*—These were, with the exceptions hereafter mentioned, the same as previously. The head circumference and external binocular breadth, not having proved satisfactory, were omitted, and for them were substituted:—(1). The upper face length measured from the naso-frontal suture to the separation between the central incisors at the gum. (2). The height sitting. This, though it is certainly a most valuable measurement, for which reason it was inserted in the observation schedule, was found to be altogether unsuited for field work, as it could only be taken in a few exceptional cases, so I had reluctantly to abandon it. (3). Auriculo-mental radius, measured with the Dublin craniometer, from the centre of the ear-hole to the point of the chin.

(C). *Instruments used.*—These consisted of Garson's anthropometer, a sliding measure for the limbs, Broca's compas d'épaisseur and compas glissière and a Chesterman steel tape. Instead of the fixed metallic Cunningham craniometer, the new portable pattern of the same instrument (made specially for field work by Messrs. Robinson, of Grafton-street, Dublin) was taken, and stood the test well, being quite as rigid as the older pattern when set up, and, as it is made of boxwood, much lighter. Its portability is a great advantage, as by the removal of one screw-bolt the whole instrument may be disjointed and carried in the coat-pocket. A set of Snellen test-types for accurately estimating the keenness of eyesight was also taken, and proved to be very useful. 126

The whole, with note-books and observation forms, were carried, fitted in a canvas knapsack, and, as they weighed under ten pounds, were light enough to be easily carried even in long walks over very rough ground.

(D). *Remarks on the Methods employed.*—There were several difficulties experienced in the making of the observations this year, due partly to the visit being made at harvest time when most of the people were engaged in the fields, partly to local causes, the principal of which were the shyness of the people, the manner in which the hair of most of the women was covered by the shawl which was drawn more closely on the approach of a stranger, and the closeness with 124 [609] [291] [302]

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124 which the hair of many of the men was cut, which often rendered dis-
[302] tinction of shade very difficult. Owing to the season most of the observations had to be made in the morning when the people were going to their work, or early in the evening when they were returning, or gathered around their cottage doors; in many cases, however, they were followed to the harvest field and measured there.

The taking of photographs did not, as elsewhere, cause the assembly
126 of the knot of spectators which usually affords so good an opportunity
[123] for the collection of eye and hair colours; it had rather the opposite effect, as the people have a strong dislike to having their portraits taken.

In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 241 individuals, on 40 of whom (being about one-fifth of the adult males of the islands) measurements and other observations were taken.

Care was exercised that none of those measured should be entered in the ordinary nigrescence cards, as well as to avoid recording the same individual twice or the noting of persons who were not natives.

(K). *Photography.*—For the reasons already mentioned there could not be as much done in this department as had been hoped; but, in spite of the strong aversion shown by many of the people to having their portraits taken, and the strong winds prevailing during our stay, my brother, J. M. Browne, who accompanied me to do the necessary photography, succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of typical groups, as well as some single portraits in full face and profile, and a series of views illustrative of the modes of life and environment of the people.

2.—Physical Characters.

142 (A). The people, on the whole, much resemble the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Connemara, and their appearance testifies to a mixed origin. The following is believed to be a correct description of their average physical characters:—

Stature and bulk.—The men, as a rule, are stoutly built, and of medium height; very few can fairly be termed tall, and there is a very considerable proportion of men of low stature. The average height is
[141] 1633 mm., or about 5 feet 6½ inches, which falls short of the Irish mean stature as found by Gould, the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association, and others, by about two inches.

142 The women are of a slighter build than the men, and, apparently,
143 more even in height; they also show more strikingly that great simi-

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larity of appearance produced by the constant intermarriage of the same families through several generations. 142 [143]

Limbs.—The hand is often short and broad, and the forearm and upper arm long. In no case was the span of arms (*grande envergue*) observed to be less than the stature, a peculiarity which was observable in nearly a quarter of the persons measured in Aran last year.

Head.—The head is, in many cases, of large size, and is usually well-shaped, with an almost straight or but slightly projecting occiput. It rises to a considerable height above the ears (yielding a mean height index of 69·2), and has a mean cephalic index, when reduced to the cranial standard by the subtraction of two units, of 78·4, or, in other words, it is mesaticephalic; about a quarter of the men measured, however, were brachycephalic, and an eighth slightly dolichocephalic. The eleven crania of both sexes measured at Tempull Colman yielded an average cephalic index of 77·0, thus nearly agreeing with the measurements on the living subject (see p. 333). The forehead is broad and upright, but not very high. Superciliary ridges and glabella very slightly marked, and eyebrows thick, level, and seldom showing much tendency to arch. 142 141

Face.—The face is long and scutiform, narrowing in rapidly in the bigonial region. The cheek-bones are not prominent; the horizontal lines at the "root" of the nose are very deep, and have between them a raised ridge or fold of skin. The eyes have irides of a blue or light bluish-grey, seldom hazel, and are moderately wide apart; being often half-closed they give the impression of being small, and are marked externally by deep horizontal wrinkles. The nose is in many cases rather short, and in profile is usually straight or sinuous, rarely aquiline, and then not to a great degree. The mouth is large and frequently open with lips of medium thickness. The teeth are remarkably short, broad, and even, remaining white, and, apparently, sound to an advanced period of life. The chin is long, but not projecting; the mental process being small, and the jaw is very long with but little curve. The ears are small, outstanding,[1] and somewhat coarsely moulded, and in nearly half the cases observed had the lobule adherent or absent. Several abnormalities were observed, as presence of the Darwinian tubercle, flattening of the upper part of the pinna, with obliteration of the anti-helix, and in one case (No. 5 of those measured) 142

[1] This is probably due to the lateral bulging of the mastoid processes so noticeable in the crania.

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142 there was arrest of growth of the left ear which was about a third of the size of the right.

Skin.—The complexion is pale and very seldom freckled, not bronzing from exposure to the sun, but becoming a clear red. Wrinkles come early, especially about the eyes.

Hair.—The hair is usually a dark brown, sometimes, though seldom, black; in many cases it is of a dark shade scarcely distinguishable, when cut close, from true black; the beard, which is usually much lighter than the hair of the scalp, in these cases is often a clear dark brown. As a general rule the dark hair is accompanied by blue or grey eyes, and the black by light or dark hazel. The hair of both sexes is often abundant, but partial baldness is not at all uncommon even in men under forty. The beard is usually fairly large.

151 *Sight and hearing.*—Both of these are very acute; of 18 men tested with Snellen's types, not one had vision of less than $\frac{4}{5}$, and nine of them could read the 5 metre type at over 14 metres. The distance at which they can make out a sail or a bird on the wing is amazing. Their hearing is also very acute.

(B). *Statistics of Hair and Eye Colour:—*

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CHILDREN.—I. BOYS.

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	1	—	—	1	2·27
Fair, ..	7	—	—	7	15·90
Brown, ..	25	4	—	29	65·91
Dark, ..	4	1	—	5	11·36
Black, ..	—	1	1	2	4·54
Totals, ..	37	6	1	44	
Percentage Eye Colours,	84·09	13·64	2·27	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . 2·26.

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II. GIRLS.

HAIR.	EYES.			TOTALS.	PERCENTAGE HAIR COLOURS.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	4	—	—	4	6·78
Fair, ..	7	—	—	7	11·86
Brown, ..	27	—	—	27	45·76
Dark, ..	12	7	2	21	35·59
Black, ..	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, ..	50	7	2	59	
Percentage Eye Colours,	84·75	11·86	3·39	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . 16·95.

ADULTS.—I. MALES.

HAIR.	EYES.			TOTALS.	PERCENTAGE HAIR COLOURS.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	4	—	—	4	4·82
Fair, ..	3	—	—	3	3·62
Brown, ..	30	3	—	33	39·76
Dark, ..	31	5	2	38	45·78
Black, ..	—	2	3	5	6·02
Totals, ..	68	10	5	83	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	81·93	12·05	6·02	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . 49·38.

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II. Females.

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Hair.	Eyes.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	2	—	—	2	3·51
Fair, ..	1	—	—	1	1·75
Brown, ..	23	1	—	24	42·11
Dark, ..	16	9	—	25	43·86
Black, ..	1	3	1	5	8·77
Totals, ..	43	13	1	57	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	75·44	22·81	1·75	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . . 56·14.
Combined Index (both sexes), . 52·76.

Total, Inishbofin and Inishshark.—I. Males.

Hair.	Eyes.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	5	—	—	5	3·94
Fair, ..	10	—	—	10	7·88
Brown, ..	55	7	—	62	48·82
Dark, ..	35	6	2	43	33·85
Black, ..	—	3	4	7	5·51
Totals, ..	105	16	6	127	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	82·68	12·60	4·72	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . 33·05.

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II. FEMALES.

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	6	—	—	6	5·17
Fair, ..	8	—	—	8	6·90
Brown, ..	50	1	—	51	43·96
Dark, ..	28	16	2	46	39·66
Black, ..	1	3	1	5	4·31
Totals, ..	93	20	3	116	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	80·17	17·25	2·58	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . . 36·21.
Combined Index (both sexes), . 34·63.

(c). *Detailed List of Measurements.*—(See following Table):—

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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
1	Boyce, Myles, .	62	Middlequarter	blue	dark-brown	ruddy	Nose sinuous; schoolmaster.
2	Lavelle, Anthony,	35	Knock	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Nose aquiline.
3	Reilly, John, . .	63	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; is somewhat bald.
4	Malia, John, . .	50	Westquarter	grey	dark	pale	Nose straight; bald on vertex.
5	Joyce, James, .	48	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Lobe of ear attached; large left ear only partially developed.
6	Malia, Michael, .	35	Knock	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight.
7	Walsh, Patrick, .	24	Middlequarter	blue-grey	dark	pale	Sight very keen; nose straight.
8	Halloran, John, .	20	Shark	blue-grey	brown	sallow	Nose straight.
9	Cannon, Michael,	19	Middlequarter	blue	fair	pale	Lobes of ears absent.
10	King, John, . .	40	Cloonamore	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Vision very acute.
11	Powell, Patrick, .	24	Knock	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Vision very keen; nose straight; lobes of ears attached.
12	Cloherty, Festus,	24	Knock	dark-hazel	dark	ruddy	Nose retroussé.
13	Toole, John, . .	21	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Nose aquiline.
14	Scuffle, Patrick, .	(?)	Cloonamore	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; would not give age; lobes of ears attached.
15	Malia, George, .	24	Shark	grey	dark	pale	Lobes of ears attached: vision very keen.
16	Halloran, John, .	25	Westquarter	blue	red	ruddy	Nose sinuous.
17	Kenny, Michael, .	31	Cloonamore	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight.
18	M'Greal, Michl.,	20	Shark	green	dark	sallow	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; a fine-looking specimen of the islanders.
19	Burk, Thomas, .	19	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose retroussé; lobes of ears attached.
20	Joyce, Michael, .	19	Middlequarter	grey	dark-brown	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
21	Prendergast, Wm.	53	Middlequarter	brown	black	ruddy	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; teeth even and meeting.

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Cephalic.		Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Stature.	Forelimb.		
Length.	Breadth.	Length.	Upper Face Length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Bi-ocular Breadth.	Cranial Height.	Nasial.	Alveolar.		Span.	Hand.	Forearm.
206	163	125	62	148	113	54	36	32	130	98	102	1580	—	170	245
196	160	144	76	142	114	64	38	30	137	100	97	1795	—	200	270
191	158	118	70	135	114	54	36	38	127	98	100	1685	—	197	254
193	145	134	72	136	114	54	33	36	131	100	101	1664	—	188	250
194	153	114	72	138	114	54	36	36	128	93	96	1640	1760	185	235
188	156	120	62	140	118	48	36	32	134	94	100	1654	—	191	253
203	152	124	72	132	104	54	36	30	136	99	99	1722	1771	193	250
198	155	128	74	136	115	54	33	29	138	95	96	1723	—	188	283
190	157	121	62	129	102	52	34	33	132	96	93	1715	1837	194	268
196	160	127	70	150	110	52	34	30	132	100	107	1685	1800	197	248
188	150	120	68	140	112	56	40	34	135	95	97	1665	1766	180	252
199	157	129	78	142	113	54	35	37	135	96	95	1830	1913	206	279
195	157	126	72	140	112	55	34	34	131	95	93	1739	1880	193	270
196	162	124	74	138	108	56	37	37	138	99	103	1666	1750	193	250
196	152	120	74	134	108	56	34	32	127	97	97	1660	1725	184	244
197	166	130	78	144	112	56	38	30	132	101	100	1722	1823	201	273
195	160	128	74	142	112	42	34	36	126	102	107	1700	1754	198	256
198	152	123	72	118	108	50	40	32	135	88	96	1768	1885	193	260
194	154	118	70	138	107	52	39	30	136	98	95	1674	1695	188	255
192	160	134	74	134	118	58	37	33	128	97	95	1654	1708	186	234
192	161	124	74	139	104	52	30	33	133	94	88	1585	1638	175	246

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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
22	Lenane, John,	50	Middlequarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Lobes of ears attached.
23	Leonard, John,	30	Middlequarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; teeth meet.
24	Walsh, John,*	30	Middlequarter	brown	black	pale	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears absent; sight keen.
25	Malia, Patrick,	—	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; would not give age; sight good.
26	Cannon, Edward,	54	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
27	Cannon, John,	53	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
28	Lavelle, ——,	60	(?)	dark-hazel	dark	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
29	Cloherty, Patrick	19	Westquarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears absent; vision acute.
30	Lavelle, Thomas,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous.
31	Martin, Thomas,	60	Westquarter	blue	dark	pale	Hair dark, when young; lobes of ears attached; sight very keen.
32	Cloherty, John,	38	Westquarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears attached.
33	Lavelle, Michael,	50	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
34	Moran, Michael,	55	Middlequarter	dark-grey	brown	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
35	Mogan, ——,	23	Westquarter	grey	black	pale	Hair on face brown; nose straight.
36	Halloran, Thomas	53	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; slightly bald.
37	Halloran, Redmond,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Obliterated folds of pinna; slightly bald; head of large size.
38	Lavelle, Patrick,	30	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous; folds of pinna slightly obliterated.
39	Lavelle, John,	17	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Hair curly; lobes of ears attached.
40	Naughten, Michl.	50	Middlequarter	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; says he is of Scotch descent.

* Name indistinct.

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Cephalic.		Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Stature.	Forelimb.		
Length.	Breadth.	Length.	Upper Face Length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Bi-ocular Breadth.	Cranial Height.	Nasial.	Alveolar.		Span.	Hand.	Forearm.
200	159	135	76	146	111	55	40	35	144	101	100	1720	1743	201	250
197	160	135	72	140	108	53	36	36	133	100	99	1712	1789	185	263
190	148	122	70	138	116	56	35	30	128	101	106	1710	1797	190	256
198	150	140	80	139	110	62	38	31	140	98	102	1669	1758	190	250
204	154	126	70	138	106	53	36	35	137	99	98	1619	1767	195	253
202	157	125	76	148	120	58	40	32	131	100	107	1700	1850	199	262
194	150	138	72	139	112	56	38	37	127	95	97	1642	1687	191	246
190	149	125	68	135	102	57	30	29	135	100	100	1623	1690	180	245
202	153	128	76	140	106	58	34	28	130	97	101	1726	1780	195	246
188	149	120	72	130	104	58	31	33	125	85	86	1603	1683	185	244
200	158	132	80	146	110	60	34	35	132	95	95	1662	1703	186	228
208	162	140	80	144	116	60	34	34	137	105	105	1672	1770	202	237
196	160	120	72	134	110	54	38	38	132	94	95	1665	1677	187	252
200	151	130	73	138	108	52	33	33	131	93	97	1707	1850	197	273
196	159	136	80	139	104	64	34	32	133	96	95	1720	1840	194	255
212	174	132	78	148	109	64	38	33	140	98	98	1792	1890	199	270
184	162	122	74	138	108	60	34	32	128	90	90	1669	1725	183	253
192	152	120	70	136	107	50	34	33	134	95	94	1590	1615	182	243
208	170	126	72	152	110	50	42	36	138	95	96	1698	1785	192	242

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No.	Indices.						Proportions to Stature: Height 100.					
	Cephalic.	Height.	Facial.	Bigonial.	Alveolar.	Nasal.	Hand.	Forearm.	Span.	Face.	Upper face.	Nose.
1	79·1	63·1	118·4	90·4	104·1	66·7	10·76	15·51	—	7·01	3·92	3·41
2	81·6	69·9	98·6	79·2	97·0	59·4	11·40	15·04	—	8·02	4·23	3·56
3	82·7	66·5	114·4	96·6	102·0	66·7	11·69	15·07	—	7·00	4·16	3·20
4	75·1	67·9	101·5	85·0	101·0	61·1	11·30	15·02	—	8·11	4·33	3·24
5	78·9	66·0	121·1	100·0	103·2	66·7	11·28	14·33	107·31	6·95	4·39	3·29
6	83·0	71·3	116·7	98·3	106·4	75·0	11·54	15·29	—	7·25	3·74	2·90
7	74·9	67·0	106·5	83·9	100·0	66·7	11·20	14·51	102·84	7·20	4·18	3·13
8	78·3	69·7	106·3	89·8	101·1	61·1	10·91	16·42	—	7·43	4·29	3·13
9	82·6	69·5	106·6	84.3	96·9	65·4	11·31	15·62	107·11	7·05	3·61	3·03
10	81·6	67·3	118·1	86·6	107·0	65·4	11·69	14·18	106·88	7·54	4·15	3·10
11	79·8	71·8	116·7	93·3	102·1	71·4	10·81	15·13	106·06	7·20	4·08	3·36
12	78·9	67·8	110·1	87·6	99·0	64·8	11·25	15·24	104·53	7·04	4·26	2·95
13	80·5	67·2	111·1	88·9	97·9	61·8	11·09	15·53	108·10	7·24	4·45	3·16
14	82·7	70·4	111·3	87·0	104·0	66·1	11·58	15·00	105·04	7·43	4·44	3·36
15	77·6	64·8	111·7	90·0	100·0	60·7	11·08	14·64	103·91	7·22	4·40	3·37
16	84·3	67·0	110·8	86·2	99·0	65·0	11·67	15·79	105·86	7·55	4·53	3·25
17	82·1	64·6	110·9	87·5	104·9	81·0	11·64	15·05	103·17	7·11	4·35	2·47
18	76·8	68·2	95·9	87·8	109·1	80·0	10·92	14·70	106·62	6·96	4·07	2·82
19	79·4	70·1	117·0	90·7	96·9	75·0	11·23	15·29	101·25	7·05	4·18	3·16
20	83·3	66·7	100·0	88·0	97·9	63·8	11·24	14·15	103·50	8·10	4·47	3·50
21	83·9	69·3	112·1	83·9	93·6	57·7	11·04	15·52	103·34	7·82	4·66	3·28
22	79·5	72·0	108·1	82·2	99·0	72·7	11·68	14·53	104·24	7·84	4·42	3·19
23	81·2	67·5	103·7	80·0	99·0	67·9	10·80	15·94	104·50	7·88	4·20	3·09
24	77·9	67·4	113·1	95·1	105·0	62·5	11·69	14·98	105·09	7·13	4·09	3·27
25	75·8	70·7	99·3	78·6	104·1	61·3	11·38	14·98	105·33	8·38	4·79	3·71
26	75·5	67·2	109·5	84·1	99·0	67·9	12·04	15·01	109·14	7·72	4·32	3·27
27	77·7	64·9	118·4	96·0	107·0	69·0	11·71	15·41	108·82	7·35	4·47	3·41
28	77·2	65·5	108·6	87·5	102·1	68·0	11·62	14·98	102·74	7·19	4·38	3·41
29	78·4	71·1	108·0	81·6	100·0	52·6	11·09	15·09	104·12	7·71	4·12	3·51
30	75·7	64·4	109·4	82·8	104·1	58·6	11·23	14·25	103·12	7·41	4·46	3·36
31	79·3	66·5	108·3	86·7	101·2	53·4	11·54	15·22	104·99	7·49	4·48	3·61
32	79·0	66·0	110·6	83·3	100·0	56·7	11·19	13·60	102·46	7·94	4·81	3·61
33	77·9	65·8	102·8	82·8	100·0	56·7	12·08	14·17	105·86	8·37	4·78	3·59
34	81·6	67·3	111·7	91·7	101·1	70·4	11·23	15·13	100·72	7·20	4·32	3·24
35	75·5	65·5	106·2	83·1	104·3	63·5	11·60	16·08	109·01	7·66	4·36	3·06
36	81·1	67·9	102·2	76·5	99·0	53·1	11·28	14·82	106·98	7·91	4·65	3·72
37	82·1	66·0	112·1	82·6	100·0	59·4	11·10	15·56	105·47	7·36	4·35	3·57
38	88·0	69·6	113·1	88·5	100·0	56·7	10·96	15·15	103·35	7·31	4·43	3·59
39	79·2	69·8	113·3	89·16	98·9	68·0	11·44	15·28	101·57	7·54	4·40	3·14
40	83·9	69·3	112·0	83·9	93·6	57·7	11·31	14·25	105·12	7·42	4·24	2·94
Mean.	80·4	69·2	110·1	87·1	101·2	64·9	11·33	15·03	104·95	7·48	4·42	3·30

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141 CEPHALIC INDICES, CORRECTED FOR COMPARISION WITH SKULLS.

No.	Index.	A. Corrected Indices.	B. Actual Indices.
38	86·0		
16	82·3		
21	81·9		
20	81·3		
6	81·0		
3	80·7	10 Brachycephalic.	
14	80·7		
9	80·6		
17	80·1		17 Brachycephals.
37	80·1		
40	79·7		
2	79·6		
10	79·6		
34	79·6		
23	79·2		
36	79·1		
13	78·5		
11	77·8		
22	77·5		
19	77·4		
31	77·3		
39	77·2	23 Mesaticephalic.	
1	77·1		
32	77·0		
5	76·9		
12	76·9		
29	76·4		
8	76·3		
33	75·9		22 Mesaticephals.
24	75·9		
27	75·7		
15	75·6		
28	75·3		
18	74·8		
25	73·8		
30	73·7		
26	73·5	7 Dolichocephalic.	
35	73·5		
4	73·1		
7	72·9		1 Dolichocephal.

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141 (D). *Proportional Measurements.*—The proportional measurements are of some interest, as differing, in some respects, not only from those of the Aran Islanders, but also from the accepted canons, and from the proportions obtained by Quetelet, Gould, and others, in their investigations on several European peoples. The stature is taken as equaling 100.

FACE.

Here, as was observed to be the case last year, the proportion borne by the face to the height is very great, the total face-length being to the stature as 7·48 to 100 (the canon being 6·60).

Nose.—This is not very constant in its relations to the body-height, varying between 2·47 and 3·72, and giving an average of 3·30, nearly exactly that of the French canon. It may be stated that the proportion is less than three in only five instances, and out of the forty measured, one only is below 2·80.

UPPER LIMB.

Span.—This nearly corresponds with the average Irish proportion. In every case it is greater than the stature, but in one instance is very nearly equal to it. The average proportion is 104·95, thus testifying to the length of limb. The extremes were 100·72 and 109·14. The mean span of the Aran series was 101·94, and that of Gould's series of 827 Irish soldiers 104·6.

Hand.—This ranges between 10·76 and 12·08, but as a rule is slightly below the French canon of 11·50, the average being 11·33.

Forearm.—This section of the upper limb is subject to considerable variation. On the whole it is long, but not to so great a degree as in the case of the Aran Islanders, where it was 15·18, while here it is 15·03; this, with the greater proportion of the span to the stature, is probably due to the burlier build of the Bofin men.

(E). *Crania.*—In addition to the observations made on the living
14) subject, the measurements of a series of crania, the first ever put on
764 record from this island,[1] were obtained at St. Colman's Church, in Knock townland. As they could not be removed at the time of my
172 first visit, I was forced to measure them on the spot, and, as it turned out afterwards, it was well that this precaution had been taken, as, on revisiting the place some time after, in the hope of being able to obtain some of them, I found that they had all disappeared, having in the meantime been removed to some place of concealment.

[1] Since this was written Professor A. C. Haddon has read before the Academy a Paper on some crania obtained by him from Inishbofin: *antea*, p. 311.

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The specimens, about twenty in number, were piled in a heap in a small recess near the east window, and were all in a very bad state of preservation, being much weathered from long exposure, in addition to which they had suffered such extensive mutilations that only eleven, all calvaria, were in a suitable condition to allow of measurement; the others were merely shattered fragments of the cranial bones, presenting no feature of interest except their thinness. 141 764 172

The following description of those examined is extracted from the entries made in my note-book at the time. 141

The specimens examined are very uniform in their characters, which are, in the main, as follows:— 172

Norma verticalis.—The cranial outline is a short but very even oval, sometimes showing an approach to the quadrate in form, as the frontal region is flattened, and the frontal and parietal eminences are well-marked.

Norma lateralis.—The profile rises almost perpendicularly to the culmination of the frontal eminences, as the glabella and superciliary ridges project very slightly, and the frontal sinuses are not large. The upper part of the curve sweeps evenly backwards, and dips down rather suddenly below the lambda, in some cases projecting again below.

Norma facialis.—The forehead is seen to be broad, but not of any great height, and the superior borders of the orbits are nearly level or but slightly curved.

The muscular markings, as the inion superior curved line, and mastoids, are in four cases (Nos. 1, 4, 6, and 11) strong; in all the others they are very slight.

The sutures are rather complex, and by the very considerable amount of obliteration they have undergone, would seem to have belonged to persons of rather advanced age.

Pterion.—In every instance this is of the H type, but in two cases it contains small epactals.

Indices.—The crania are, without exception, mesaticephalic, having a mean cephalic index of 77, with extremes of 75·5 and 79·2. The vertical index can only be obtained in three cases, owing to the extremely shattered state of the specimens. All are tapeino-cephalic, the figures being 70·5, 75·3, and 71·9. The auriculo-vertical height is obtainable only on the same crania as the basi-bregmatic.

Curves.—The longitudinal curves, measurable in five instances, in three of which the frontal arc exceeded the parietal, and, in all, it is greater than the occipital. The parietal arc exceeds the occipital in four cases, and is less than it in one.

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Description of Individual Crania:—

141 (1). Calvarium of an adult male; very much weathered; of fair
172 size. Glabella small, but frontal sinuses fairly large. Forehead high and perpendicular. Inion and superior curved line very lightly marked, but mastoid processes very large, and bulged outwards; digastric grooves deep. Sutures complex and much obliterated.

(2). Female (?), much broken and weathered. Sutures very complex, and obliteration advanced. Markings slight. Forehead perpendicular, and frontal sinuses small.

(3). Probably male, small and very much broken. Markings slight.

(4). Male, extensively mutilated, the whole cranial base being broken away. Forehead high and straight. Markings very strong, the inion being immense. Viewed in norma verticalis the outline is almost quadrangular.

(5). Calvarium undoubtedly female, with very slight markings. Straight forehead, and complex much obliterated sutures. Norma verticalis oval, with broadest part anterior.

(6). Male, with strong markings, mastoids being very large, and projecting laterally. Perpendicular but low forehead. Small frontal sinuses and projecting occiput. Norma verticalis almost quadrate. The meningeal vessels have grooved the bone very deeply.

(7). Probably female, small, with a regular oval outline. Glabella very small, and other markings slight, with the exception of the mastoid processes and frontal sinuses, which are rather large.

(8). Probably male. Shape, when viewed in norma verticalis, a blunt oval, approaching the quadrate. Markings slight, and frontal sinuses small. Occiput projects above, but is flattened off below the superior curved line. Sutures simple and unobliterated. Metopic suture persistent. Condition, very much broken.

(9). Female calvarium, very much shattered, the whole base being broken away. Shape, nearly quadrate. Forehead perpendicular, and glabella of medium size.

(10). Probably female. Specimen is very much weathered, and so shattered that two measurements only can be taken. There is a very peculiar pit, about the size of half a walnut, occupying the spot on which the inion ought to be situated. It is probably due to the pressure of a wen or tumour.

(11). Male (?) calvarium of regular oval form, with perpendicular forehead, and large glabella and superciliary ridges. Condition: this specimen consists only of a much weathered and broken cranial vault.

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NUMBER, SEX, AGE,	1. M. AD.	2. F. (?) AD.	3. M. (?) AD.	4. M. AD.	5. F. AD.	6. M. AD.	7. F. (?) AD.	8. M. (?) AD.	9. F. AD.	10. F. (?) AD.	11. M. (?) AD.
Glabello-occipital length,	193	188	178	192	184	192	178	186	178	178	188
Maximum breadth,	148	146	141	146	142	148	136	143	138	138	142
Basi-bregmatic height,	136	140	w	w	w	w	128	w	w	w	w
Auriculo-bregmatic height,	121	120	w	w	w	w	118	w	w	w	w
Minimum frontal breadth,	90	96	82	94	100	102	90	99	w	w	w
Stephanic breadth,	115	w	w	w	109	w	w	w	w	w	w
Asterionic breadth,	w	113	w	w	111	w	w	w	w	w	w
Vertical transverse arc,	322	320	w	w	w	w	308	w	w	w	w
Frontal longitudinal arc,	w	w	130	135	w	w	w	130	118	w	128
Parietal longitudinal arc,	w	w	115	133	w	w	w	129	123	w	120
Occipital longitudinal arc,	w	w	120	123	w	w	w	109	95	w	117
Total longitudinal arc,	w	w	365	381	w	w	w	368	336	w	365
Foramen magnum length,	36	35	w	w	w	w	31	w	w	w	w
Foramen magnum breadth,	30	32	w	w	w	w	27	w	w	w	w
Horizontal circumference,	540	529	w	540	521	w	w	532	w	w	w
INDICES.											
Cephalic,	76·7	77·2	79·2	76	77·2	77·1	76·4	76·9	77·5	77·5	75·5
Altitudinal,	70·5	75·3	w	w	w	w	71·9	w	w	w	w
Auriculo-vertical,	62·7	63·8	w	w	w	w	66·3	w	w	w	w
Foraminal,	83·3	91·4	w	w	w	w	88·0	w	w	w	w

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(3). Vital Statistics (General and Economic).

161 (a.) *Population.*—The population of these islands, though still dense, is, like that of the rest of Ireland, steadily decreasing, though in this case the decline is of recent date compared with many other parts of the country.

161 Between the years 1851 and 1871 the population had increased from 1047 persons, occupying 196 houses, to 1262, and 251, respectively.
167 Some time after 1871, however, emigration began to take a sensible effect; and between that year and the census of 1891 there has been a loss in people of 20·99 per cent., and in houses of 11·55 per cent. That the decrease is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths for the decennial period 1880–1890, in which time the births exceeded the deaths by 89 or 38·7 per cent., the respective numbers being births 230, deaths 141.

161 The Table given below shows the population of the islands at each census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average
592 number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head. It thus indicates the period at which the decrease began, and the amount of congestion of the district, both past and present. This congestion, however, must be greater than what the figures show, as under the heading of Inishbofin are grouped some fifty-four other islands or islets, all uninhabited, and varying in size from seventy-four acres downwards. Some of these are utilized for grazing by the people of the two larger islands, but a large number of them are quite useless, being mere barren rocks.

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	1047	196	5·34	3·00
1861	1236	239	5·17	2·55
1871	1262	251	5·03	2·50
1881	1166	250	4·67	2·70
1891	997	215	4·64	3·10

161 That the overcrowding is, even now, great, will be seen when it is considered that the density of population per square mile is 202, whilst that of the Aran Islands is 171, of the county of Galway 86, and of Ireland, as a whole, 146.[1]

[1] In the Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland (1846), the population of the islands in 1831 is given as 1462, number of houses not given; population in 1841 as 1612, houses, 285. The decrease afterwards is evidently due to the famine in 1847.

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The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:— 162 592

Islands.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
Inishbofin, .	2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark, .	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, . .	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males. 162 167

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons. [142]

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6*s.* A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled 423 311 [495]

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

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423 311 to give by the kindness of the proprietor, Cyril Allies, Esq., J. P. :—

Townland.	Area.	Commonage.
	A. R. P.	A. R. P.
Westquarter, ...	493 3 32	349 2 8
Fawnmore, ...	194 1 14	116 1 15
Middlequarter, ...	612 2 0	375 3 9
Knock, ...	366 1 9	161 3 39
Cloonamore, ...	645 1 1	424 3 29
Inishshark, ...	581 1 12	435 3 12
Islets, ...	257 3 35	—
Total, ...	3151 3 1	1864 1 32

Taking the available area at 930 acres, and the number of families at 215, the average size of a holding per house is 4·3 acres, with a [435] corresponding average valuation of £2 13*s*. The size of a holding, [427] however, varies from 1A. 3R., at a rent of 14*s*. 6*d*., to 56 acres, at £7. Out of 127, the particulars of which were furnished me by Mr. Allies, there were :—

3	holdings of	1	acre and under	2	acres.
21	,,	2	,,	3	,,
17	,,	3	,,	4	,,
8	,,	4	,,	5	,,
23	,,	5	,,	6	,,
15	,,	6	,,	7	,,
12	,,	7	,,	8	,,
17	,,	8	,,	10	,,
5	,,	10	,,	13	,,
4	,,	13	,,	18	,,
1	holding of	25	acres		
1	,,	56	,,		

It will be observed that most of the holdings in this list are of very small size, only eleven being more than ten acres in extent, and 59 or 46·5 per cent. being under 5 acres.

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In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at, or under, £2. 423 311 [435]

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inishshark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among themselves, but many of the children and young people have little or no acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark, which is less in communication with the outer world than Inishbofin. 191

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. were illiterate :— 212 162

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160 females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65 females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inishbofin.

(D.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were— 145 162

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
" 80 " 85, 5 males and 14 females,
" 85 " 90, 4 " 0 "

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164 (E.) *Health.*—Taken as a whole, the people may be said to be a healthy one. Serious diseases, apart from accidents incident to their callings, are but few in number; and the general physique of the people speaks to a healthy active life.

582 588 *Consanguineous Unions.*—A large proportion of the marriages come under this heading, including not only those of persons within the prohibited degrees, for which dispensations are obtained, but also those which take place between people who are related in some recognisable but hardly nameable degree. Cases of the first class, or those which require dispensations, are of frequent occurrence, but seldom or never take place between persons nearer of kin than third cousins. The other cases, of course, are the most common of all, as from the size of the population and its isolated position, every family must, after a few generations, become more or less related to every other. Marriages with strangers, though more numerous of late years, are not common. The uniformity of strain does not appear to have produced any effect except the great similarity of appearance already noticed (p. 322); no cases of malformation or congenital disease are ascribed to it.

164 *Diseases.*—For most of the following facts I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. P. J. Hart, the medical officer of the islands, who, besides affording me much valuable information relative to the people and their ailments, the result of his long experience of them, kindly allowed me to look over his notes of cases. The main diseases may be classed as follows:—

[158] *Insanity.*—There is at present no case of this among the natives of the islands, nor has there been one since 1888 when a case which, however, was not of long duration, occurred in Inishshark.

164 732 *Idiocy and Imbecility.*—Properly speaking there is no idiocy; but there are two cases in which the persons, though shrewd and sharp enough about most of their own affairs, yet show signs of mental want in a sufficient degree to amount to slight imbecility.

Epilepsy is not common, but two cases are known in one of which the patient is subject to delusions, and always states, after a fit, that he has been with the fairies on the mainland. Of the other no information could be obtained except that the patient had had "fits."

Deaf-mutism has not been known for years on either island, but a case of temporary dumbness occurred on Inishshark in 1892.

Blindness is equally rare, there being but one case, a man over sixty years of age who acquired it late in life.

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Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

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164 very even and white, and seem to last well; even men of over sixty
[142] often have good incisors; but many suffer from toothache. Abscess of the alveolus, unlike what is seen in Aran, is not at all common.

Skin.—Ulcers due to the friction of ropes and of the thick home-spun clothing when wet, eczema, "sea-boils," scabies, and acne, are frequently met with, as is anthrax or carbuncle; but, perhaps, the most common of all skin affections, especially among the younger members of the population, is tinea tonsurans. Alopecia areata, whether caused by the last-mentioned affection or not, seems to be common. Uterine troubles are not at all common. Venereal diseases are practically unknown.

164 *Accidents* arising out of the surroundings and occupation of the people are, as might be expected, very numerous. These are burns,
752 severe cuts from reaping hooks, injuries inflicted by domestic animals, and, above all, contusions and fractures due in most cases to falls from rocks and ponies.

4. *Psychology.*—For one who has had only a short experience of
181 the people this very difficult and delicate point is exceedingly hard to deal justly with, but the following description, for the most part obtained from local sources, both on the islands and on the opposite part of the mainland, and to some small degree from personal observation, is believed to be accurate as far as it goes.

To strangers, the people are not, at first, attractive, as their manner
[609] is shy and not unmarked by suspicion; but after this reserve is broken through they reveal themselves in a much more attractive light, and are kindly, courteous, and very communicative.

Among themselves they are cheerful and social, given much to gossip and chaff, though their wit is not of a very sparkling character.
[517] They contrast strongly with the Aran Islanders in their taste for music and dancing, concertinas and melodions being in common use in several houses.

In their dealings with one another they are honest and fair, even
181 a petty theft being an extremely rare occurrence. As to their dealings
674 with the people of the mainland, the usual hostile statements, common with all insular communities, are made by both sides with respect to
[609] each others honesty, but much reliance cannot be put in these vague assertions. Crime is almost unknown, and the administration of justice is seldom called into requisition, and then only for small quarrels among neighbours.

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Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

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551 Aran report there occurs the name Ryder, marked as having originally come from Inishbofin.[1]

SURNAMES OF INISHBOFIN—NO. OF FAMILIES, 186.

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
Allies, ...	1	Lavelle, ...	15
Baker, ...	3	Lacy, ...	5
Barret, ...	4	Mannion, ...	3
Burke, ...	6	Martin, ...	1
Clogherty, ...	9	Moran, ...	6
Cloonane, ...	2	Melia, ...	10
Coyne, ...	1	Madden, ...	1
Corbett, ...	1	Mullen, ...	1
Concannon, ..	8	Mogan, ...	1
Conneely, ...	4	M'Cann, ...	1
Cummins, ...	1	M'Namara, ..	1
Cunnane, ...	7	M'Donagh, ..	4
Davis, ...	1	M'Kendrick, ..	1
Darcy, ...	1	Naughton, ..	4
Davin, ...	1	Price, ...	2
Dimond, ...	1	Powel, ...	2
Grodan, ...	1	Prendergast, ..	2
Halloran, ...	8	Quigley, ...	1
Hart, ...	3	Reilly, ...	1
Hughes, ...	4	Scuffle, ...	22
Joyce, ...	4	Smith, ...	1
King, ...	4	Tierney, ...	11
Kerrigan, ...	2	Toole, ...	4
Kenny, ...	1	Ward, ...	2
Leenane, ...	2	Walsh, ...	1

SURNAMES OF INISHSHARK.—NO. OF FAMILIES, 26.

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
Cloonane, ...	6	Lucy, ...	6
Davis, ...	1	Lavelle, ...	2
Dimond, ...	2	Melia, ...	2
Halloran, ...	2	Murray, ...	3
King, ...	1	Ward, ...	1

19 6. *Language.*—As I am not competent to speak with any authority

[1] One of the women photographed at Westquarter was named Browne, a surname not given in the list. (See Pl. VIII.).

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on this subject, I shall not attempt the treatment of it myself, but shall quote the opinion of the Rev. Eugene O'Growney, who has an exceptional knowledge of both people and language, and has kindly furnished me with some of his notes relating to them. He says:— "The Irish spoken in Boffin has a very poor vocabulary, as far as I heard it spoken. I must say, however, that it was not easy to get the people to speak it, and many children at first refused point blank to utter a word of Irish. In most of the Irish-speaking districts of the west, the people have preserved a number of old poetic prayers and hymns. Many of these are very beautiful, and some appear to be of great age. I was particularly interested at the time of my visit in these hymns, but was told that the only hymn in use in Boffin and Shark was the *ortha Mhuire*, or prayer of Mary. I could not find any person in Boffin who could recite it, and the only person in Shark who was supposed to have it in full was out at sea. An old man in Boffin recited for me a portion of a quaint old religious composition in English." In another place he states that the people speak neither English nor Irish well, their dialect of the language containing many corrupted English words, and at least one curious word. "I recollect that the cove in which St. Leo's well is situated is called *fuath Leo*. I take the word *fuath*, which is the usual word in Inishshark and Inisboffin for a 'cove,' to be a corruption of *uamh*, which is used by the Four Masters in the year 893 as meaning 'cave.'"[1] 19 [538]

IV. SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Every family combines fishing and farming, and has some share in a boat. The farms are small (see p. 340), about three acres and a-half under potatoes and oats, being about the average amount of tillage per family. All are held direct from the landlord, who resides on Inishbofin, there being no subletting or con-acre. The rents average about £2 per holding, but vary much according to the extent and quality of the land. 241 [226] 427

The holdings are not divided up into small fields, as in Aran, but are often insufficiently fenced, allowing the cattle to stray, which 241 423

[1] The Rev. E. A. Lavelle has, since the above was written, sent a translation of a curious old Irish litany used on both islands, both in Irish and English, which he obtained from an old man, aged 84, whose father, Peter Lavelle, fought under Nelson at Trafalgar. As the litany is in English and of great length, it is not inserted here, but it is to be hoped that the Irish form will be recorded and preserved as it may possess the linguistic value wanting in a translation.

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241 sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone
[423] walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.
[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be to some extent neglected. A family keeps a couple of pigs, some
[231] sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on
[237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de vâche*) are used as fuel.

373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

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but a few years ago the ordinary means of lighting the houses was a rude open lamp, filled with oil extracted from the livers of fish, and having a piece of peeled rush for a wick. 373

Kelp-burning was formerly one of the industries of the islands, but of late years it declined rapidly, and is now practically extinct. As to the cause of this decay of a formerly profitable source of income, very different accounts are given, some alleging the poor quality of the weed; others that they were not fairly treated in selling; and others again that it does not pay as well as the fish-curing. 381

The fish most taken are sea-bream, glassan (a sort of pollock), mackerel, turbot, and plaice, used mostly for home consumption; cod and ling, which are cured at the fish-curing station for exportation, and oil extracted from their livers; also large quantities of crabs and lobsters, which are taken to Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, from which they are forwarded to the English market. The boat used for conveying them is of peculiar construction, and has a large salt-water tank amidships, in which the lobsters are kept alive. The lobster-pots are of the usual type. There is nothing unusual about their ordinary method of fishing, except that the Inishbofin men, as mentioned in a footnote to the account of that island in the Memoir of the Geological Survey, already alluded to, do not follow the shoals of fish around the western headland, but carry their boats across the narrow isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated. 226 439 [501] [502]

The pursuit of the "sun-fish," or basking-shark (*Selache maxima*), was formerly a source of considerable profit to the islanders, but has been almost altogether abandoned of late years owing to the decline in the price of the oil, and partly, it is said, to the loss of several lives on one occasion when a boat was charged and overturned by a wounded fish, also to the partial disappearance for some years of the sharks. 226

The season for this enterprise is from April until the end of June, and in that time large numbers of these fish were taken formerly, and some are still killed from time to time. Mr. G. H. Kinahan, to whom I am indebted for several notes relative to the condition of the islands some years ago, says:—"The sun-fish fishing was considerable in my time (1870). I have seen strings of seven and nine fish; when caught, they towed them into the harbour, cut out the liver, and left the carcass to rot, or be eaten by the pigs; the stench in the harbour was something to remember." A very full description of the fishing is given by Sir H. W. Gore-Booth in a recent article. He states that the value of the oil (from eight to twelve petroleum barrels full) obtained from the liver of one of these fish has been variously estimated

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226 to him by old fishermen at from £30 to £100, so that the loss of this industry must have told considerably on a poor community such as this. The primitive method which he found in use on his visit to the islands he describes in full as it was explained by Michael Halloran, the 'king'[1] of Inishshark, a veteran harpooner, who had just killed his nineteenth fish a few days before.

"I had been told that these sun-fish generally took from sixteen to eighteen hours, and frequently longer, to kill; in fact, I have heard it sometimes took two days, so naturally felt considerable interest in the gear used for the purpose. The king brought with him his trusty harpoon, which, to my mind, looked a most antiquated arrangement, especially designed to cut out of a fish, instead of holding it. I could
226 not see a whale-boat or anything like one, so inquired where the boat
501 was, and was shown an ordinary square-sterned boat, about 16 feet in the keel, which had nailed on her starboard bow a piece of wood about 1 foot long, with three small notches, or scores, barely half an inch deep, cut in it. I found out that these notches or scores were all they had to run the line through, and that when a boat fastened a fish, it was a pulling match between our friend the shark on one hand, and sixteen men on the other, a regular case of 'pull devil, pull baker'! Such a thing as a bollard head to take a turn of the line round seems never to have entered their heads."

In addition to fishing and farming, the other occupations are fish-
463 curing at the station recently established by the landlord, Cyril Allies, Esq., J.P., who resides on the island, and personally superintends it, and the trades, represented by a boat-builder, a blacksmith, a shoemaker who imports his leather from the mainland, a tailor, who still adheres to the old method of measuring his clients without a tape, using instead a sheet of paper, on which the several lengths are recorded by "snips," or notches cut with the scissors; there is one weaver who makes use of a rather archaic form of hand-loom, four men who, on occasion, act as sawyers, extemporising a saw-pit in the nearest convenient spot by the aid of trestles, and using to mark their lines a cord blackened with the ashes of straw or shavings, and finally, a fiddler.

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[622] [1] In answer to an inquiry of mine relative to the position of king, Mr. Myles Joyce, National Teacher of Bofin, writes:—"The title of king is not hereditary in the island. There is at present a man removed something beyond his neighbours in the way of education and position, who is, *par excellence*, the king; and to whom all persons who want any information about the island or its history must apply."

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There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular 444
counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands.

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work 465
is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day.

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, 462
help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The [434]
average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are 871
usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, gene- 584
rally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The mar- 585
riages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some 591
cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family.

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable 585
information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me [115]
that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding,

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585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen
582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully
844 watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if
763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their
764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great
[762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to
[178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin
[482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women
764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own
533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

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monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the gravestones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

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272 every meal; it is made extremely strong, and, as elsewhere, is the cause of a good deal of dyspepsia.

273 Alcoholic liquors are not much drunk, as illicit distilling has altogether ceased in this district.

264 An average working day's dietary is as follows:—Breakfast: tea, and home made bread. Dinner: fish, or eggs and potatoes. Supper; the same as breakfast.

291 177 4. *Clothing.*—The homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics still constitute the bulk of the clothing worn, but are being superseded by imported slop clothes of inferior quality; and the dress on working days is nondescript and often ragged. On Sundays and holidays the proportion of imported clothing seen is greater, and the homespun suits are sometimes very different from the old types, being imitations in cut of the imported goods. The dress of the men consists of a shirt of thick white or chocolate-coloured homespun, with a rather high plain band collar, and large bone buttons, or, in some cases, it is made of imported flannel, purchased in Clifden or Westport. The single or double-breasted waistcoat, with the large collar-flaps buttoned back, is, when worn, generally put on inside the bawneen, or white flannel coat, instead of outside, as was formerly the case.

Trousers are of homespun or corduroy.

A thick comforter is worn about the neck by many, even in very warm weather.

For head-dress, soft felt hats and caps of various shapes, all imported, are now in general use, the old home-made flat, blue bonnet being but little worn, except by the older men. It may be most frequently seen in Westquarter and Inishshark.

291 The men wear thick worsted stockings of dyed or "natural" wool, and very stout boots of native make, as a regular part of their daily attire, but the women and children go bare-footed, except on Sundays and holidays. The dress of the women shows as great changes as that of the men; it is of the well-known Connemara type.

The head is covered by a red kerchief, or small shawl, often a plaid, but so far as seen never by a "mutch" (a cap with white frill). Over the shoulders a small red tartan shawl is folded, half hiding a jacket, or bodice, of homespun, or imported woollen stuff; the petticoat is short, and dyed a bright red with madder, and sometimes trimmed with a few rows of black braid, and a wide check apron is usually worn. Some women, on Sundays, wear the old large blue cloak with hood and double cape.

The small boys wear the kilt-like frock of white, red, or brown

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homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, 291
until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the
homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange [386]
used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black
and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a [824]
small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but
sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant.

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bed- 342
rooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar,
though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the
walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the
exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses
are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors,
front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen: and the
windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very
small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they
are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot
square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the [354]
usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that
in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the
top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the
gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass
turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the [284]
ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The
gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does
not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water
getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is
put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones,
until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and
quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The [241]
floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes
boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is
wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood,
washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the
islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people
having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings
or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The 352
furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe croithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

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352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, 415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of [491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a sideways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies [243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

For water transport there are a good many boats of various 501 descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

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[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

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Inishshark has about twelve boats of from one to two tons. The natives of this island do not approve of the curragh, for which their coast is too rocky. 501

The ordinary rowing boat is manned by five men, the curragh by three.

The curragh is of the ordinary west coast type, consisting of a light wooden frame covered with tarred canvas.

VI.—FOLK-LORE.

Of this interesting branch of the subject, I regret to be able to give but little information, as the people are chary of talking upon such matters to strangers, and only a local collector working for a considerable time could be expected to gather much. Thanks, however, to the kindness of the Rev. Edward Lavelle, his brother Mr. Michael Lavelle, Mr. Myles Joyce, the schoolmaster of the island, as well as to several of the boatmen and others, I am enabled to give the following few notes on the subject. The legendary lore of these islands, especially Inishshark, has been very fully dealt with by Lady Wilde, to whose work I must refer the reader. These notes, however, are new. Omens and death-warnings, such as the banshee, the death-watch, and as mentioned previously (p. 352), the giving of wood out of a house to make a coffin foretelling the death of the giver, are fully believed in. 609 115 121

Luck.—The sight of a red-haired woman or a cat, on starting out in the morning, will bring bad luck to the fishing; and it is stated that people have resorted to the expedient of getting a red-haired girl to lie in wait for a rival, and cross his path as he was starting. 777

To remove from one house to another is also looked upon as decidedly unlucky; but should a move become necessary, it is always made on Monday to the eastward, and on Tuesday to the westward, according to the Irish saying *Luan Soir, agus Mart Siar* (Monday, eastward, and Tuesday, westward). Should any addition be made to the dwelling it is always to the east, never to the west.

It is extremely unlucky to break a looking-glass; so also it is to mention a priest, or a fox, or a hare while fishing.

No man will buy a cow at the New Year without putting some of her milk into his boots, as otherwise she would certainly run dry.

People born on Whit Sunday are thought to be exceptionally ill-tempered.

The evil-eye, also, is strongly believed in; and if any one praises either a child or a beast belonging to a native without saying "God

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777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be
[788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch,
754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the
821 barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these
825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27) :—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Congaile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It
[551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is sub-
776 ject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by
854 the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

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or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

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778 like a basin; it contains almost a gallon of water; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

527 The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

773 2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could
823 be collected are given below; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

Lough Bofin (The Lake of the White Cow).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.[1] As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

Carrig Guairim.—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or
173 Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the roadside in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act; he was taken over to Rinvyle

[276] [1] Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

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Castle, on the mainland, and tried there; having been convicted, he was put to death, the means of execution being to chain him on a rock, which is left bare at low water, so that when the tide rose again he was drowned. This rock has ever since borne the name of Carrig Guairim or Gorham's rock. The belief is that ever since a curse has rested on the families connected with the murder, and that, in consequence, no Halligan can ever become a priest; and that several who have tried have all failed from one cause or another. 173 [103]

Cromwell's (or Bosco's) Castle.—There are many stories related about the old castle on Port Island, at the entrance to the harbour. Tradition says that it was built by a pirate named Bosco, about whose nationality there seems to be much uncertainty: one account making him a Spaniard, another a Dane. He was an ally of Grania Uaile, who had a fort a little farther up along the opposite side of the harbour, and for whom he kept a fleet of boats. He had a chain boom stretched across the harbour's mouth, from his castle to a place known in Irish as the Cat's Hole, close to the castle of the Guairim mentioned in the last tale, and to the site of the present R. C. Church, and thus prevented ships from entering or leaving the place without paying heavy dues to him. An embrasure or doorway overhanging the sea is said to have been used by him as a means of disposing of his prisoners; and just outside the mouth of the harbour, and close under the walls of the castle, is a small rocky islet, called the Gun Rock, on which Bosco is said to have had a heavy gun planted to defend the entrance.

During the Commonwealth, the castle is said to have been at first used as a prison for priests and monks transported thither from the mainland, and afterwards to have been strengthened, provided with a small boat-harbour, and supplied with a garrison, for whom a market was opened in Middlequarter. A large treasure is reputed to be buried somewhere within the castle; and a story is told of a priest who at one time attempted to dig for it, but was ordered to desist by a voice which spoke to him in Irish out of the ground.

The Bell of Inishshark.—There once was a marvellous brass bell in Inishshark, which was preserved with the greatest care, as it had at one time belonged to St. Leo, the patron saint of the island, about which the following legend is related. A French ship came to the island, the crew of which plundered the place, and took away the bell; but their theft did not prosper with them, for they had not well got it on board before very rough weather came on, and the vessel

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173 began to sink.[1] Suspecting that the bell was the cause of their misfortune, they threw it into the sea, and the ship was saved. Next morning, when some of the islanders were searching for sea-weed on the shore, they found the bell lying broken among the rocks. This [778] relic has long ago disappeared, having been cut up into pieces which were worn as amulets, most of which have been taken to America, but it is said that some are still kept as great treasures by some old people in Inishbofin, who refuse to show them to anyone.

Richard O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, makes mention of this bell ("H-Iar Connaught," p. 117) . . . "Inisark is of the same property with Bofin and the saint therein worshipped, St. Leo; of whose reliques is a bell there extant."

773 *St. Leo's Foot-print.*—There is pointed out an impression in the rock on which Cloghan Leo is built, which is said to be the imprint of 823 the saint's foot, and the people's explanation of how it came there is, that when he had finished building the cloghan he had to leap down, as he had no ladder, and alighting on the rock he left the print of his foot upon it, where it still remains.

173 There is a tradition on the islands of a large treasure of gold being hidden on Davillaun (a small island of the Bofin group), on which a large vessel of the Spanish Armada was wrecked, and some of the people claim to know exactly where it is. There are also many stories about Lord Nelson, under whom several men from these islands served, and wild tales of the old smugglers; and a very narrow passage between two dangerous rocks through which a daring smuggler once steered his vessel, and thus baffled his pursurers, is pointed out.

Archæology.

178 Though making no pretentions to being an archæologist, yet as an inquiry of this sort would be imperfect without, at least, a partial [172] description of the antiquities of the place, I hope that the notes hereunder given may, in some degree at least, supply the want.

1. *Survivals.*—In these the locality is comparatively rich, a good many old implements and methods of working, which have become extinct in other places, being still common. Such are the continuance of the use of plants and lichens as dyes, and some details of dress, such as the old blue cap, &c., which have been referred to before.

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[1] One version of the story states that the ship had got as far as the Bay of Biscay!

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The spinning-wheel and hand-loom are the same as those commonly used on the west coast, the former, as usual, having no treadle. 172 [283]

Querns are still in use, and in connection with them the boran, or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, used for screening the meal. [252] [412]

Grain is still winnowed by shaking it in a sieve in a strong wind. [243]

The method of washing clothes is the same as that customary in Connemara, the clothes being folded, laid in the water of a lake or pool, and beaten with a club or paddle. [296]

The tailor, when making clothes, does not measure his customers with a tape, but takes all his measurements on one sheet of paper, marking the lengths by cutting notches out of the edge. [294]

The curraghs, which are still in use, are of the usual form; they are rapidly going out of fashion, however. [501]

The anchor used for small boats is a stone, not fixed in a wooden clamp, as in Clare and Aran, but having a groove around it for the rope.

As mentioned previously, the apparatus used for the shark-fishing is very rude and primitive.

2. *Antiquities.*—Inishbofin is not very rich in architectural antiquities, and the few that still remain are being rapidly destroyed; some ruins which were standing in the first half of the present century have altogether disappeared, and the others are much shattered. 172

In Inishshark, also, the buildings have sustained a great injury.

It does not lie within my province to enter upon any detailed description of the ruins; but I desire, in the following notes (extracted almost *verbatim* from my Field Note-book), to direct the attention of archæologists to the buildings of interest in these islands which are being rapidly blotted out of existence. The number and nature of these have been described by the late Mr. O'Donovan, Mr. Hardiman, Mr. G. H. Kinahan, and others.

In the account of their present condition given below, they are arranged in the order in which they are described by Mr. Hardiman.[1]

Inishbofin.—(1). St. Colman's church, in Knock townland, built in A.D. 667, is in a very ruinous state, and the interior is filled with rough gravestones and weeds, and in a small recess near the east window is a pile of crania and broken bones. In the enclosure around the church the foundations of the cells (cloghans (?)) of the abbey, or monastic colony, may still be traced, though with difficulty, but the

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

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172 cells themselves, as well as parts of the church walls, have been pulled down to serve as gravestones, or to build the wall of the enclosure. In the immediate neighbourhood of the church, what is supposed to have been a font, has recently been discovered.

(2). Tober Flannain, close to the church, is now surrounded by a wall to keep the cattle away from it.

(3). *Ait tighe Guairim.*—The remains of the building which used to stand on this spot, said by some of the older people to have been of large size, have been cleared away to make room for the parish priest's residence.

(4). *Dun Graine*, which formerly stood on a large table-like rock a short distance from the entrance to the harbour, has entirely disappeared, and hardly even the traces of its foundations can be seen.

(5). *Dun-mor.*—No traces are now left of the earthen fort which formerly stood here.

(6). The castle or fort on Port Island, at the mouth of the harbour, known as Cromwell's, or Bosco's, castle. This was a small fortified barrack, consisting of a strong wall with four small bastions, enclosing a courtyard of no great size, which was bounded on three sides by buildings capable of lodging a small garrison, and containing a draw-well in the centre. It is daily becoming more ruinous from the [339] exertions of the seekers after stones to burn for lime, who have knocked away all the corner-stones of blue limestone, with the exception of those of one angle which overhangs the sea, and have now extended the same work of demolition to the fine arched doorway. The walls of the inner buildings are also being torn down, to get at any limestones that may be in them, the draw-well has been filled up with rubbish, and a cowshed, constructed of stones torn from the walls, has been built up beside the entrance gate. If it were not for the great tenacity and hardness of the mortar it is hardly likely that any of the building would now remain.

Inishshark.—(1). *Teampull Leo.*—This old church is now restored, whitewashed, and slated, and is used as the place of worship on the occasions on which the island is visited by the priest.

(2). The stone cross, *Leac Leo*, is now mounted on the east gable of the church; it is said to have carved on one side of it a chalice, and on the other a human figure, supposed to represent a bishop, with hands extended.

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There is another cross in the church which is of much finer workmanship, and is probably the true *Leac Leo*. In 1870, when Mr. Kinahan visited the island, the church was in ruins, and was used as a cattle pen, and the cross, or a stone coffin lid, he is not at this time able to say which, was set up on its side, leaving a space between it and the wall to form a trough. 172 [231]

(3.) *St Leo's Cave* (*Uaimh Leo*), on the south side of the island.

(4.) *Thobhar Leo.*—St. Leo's Well is situated, not in the cave, but some distance from the top of a deep and almost precipitous cove, called *Fuath Leo.*

(5.) *Cloghan Leo* is a small round cell, now almost completely ruinous, built within an enclosure of very little larger area. The saint's footprint is pointed out in the rock on which the building stands.

VII.—HISTORY.

As a Paper of this nature would be incomplete without some mention of the changes and vicissitudes that the population of the islands has undergone, a slight historical sketch is attempted here. It is not, and does not pretend to be, complete, as unfortunately the material available is very scanty, especially in regard to its earlier history; for, though the Venerable Bede, the Four Masters, and others make several references to the islands, yet these nearly all relate to ecclesiastical events, which have at most only a secondary bearing on the history of the people, and are not within the scope of this Paper. 175

The annalists record that in the second century a tribe of the Firbolgs (Clann Humoir) who occupied that part of the mainland opposite the islands were conquered and enslaved by Tuathal Teachtmar, a Scotic or Milesian monarch, and it is probable, if the islands were inhabited by members of the first-named people, that they shared the same fate as the rest of their tribe. It is not known whether such was the case, as this is "the only mention of this teritory while in the hands of the Belgae," says O'Donovan in his "Letters," except that one of their chiefs named Modh, or Modha, gave his name to Inis Modha, or the Clew Bay islands. After the conquest of the Clann Humoir the territory came into the hands of the Milesians, and the records about it relate, at first, to the deaths of their chiefs, and later on in the 9th century to the incursions of pirates (believed to have been Scandinavians), but make no specific mention of Inishbofin or its inhabitants.

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175 In A.D. 667 (according to the Four Masters, the Venerable Bede, and others), St. Colman, having quarrelled with Wilfridus at Lindisfarne, left that place, where he had been bishop for seven-and-twenty years previously, and taking with him all the Scots (Irish) among the monks, and in addition, some thirty English, he sailed away to Inishbofin, where he settled and founded the abbey in Knock-quarter. To quote the words of the Venerable Bede (given in Hardiman's Notes on O'Flaherty's "H-Iar Connaught"), "Secessit ad insulam quondam parvam, quæ ad occidentalem plagam ab Hibernia procul secreta, sermone Scotico *Inisbofinde*, id est, 'Insula Vitulæ Albæ' nuncupatur." When they had got settled on the island a quarrel arose between the Irish monks and their English brethren, who apparently did not get the best of the dispute, for St. Colman founded a monastery for them at Magh-eo on the mainland, but seems himself to have lived mostly in Inishbofin, where he died on the 8th of August, 676.

From this time forth until the tenth century, when all mention of the abbey ceases, there are several references made by the annalists to the island, but these all relate to the deaths of various abbots or bishops, and no mention is made of any other population than the monastic one.

After this there is a large gap in the records. Hardiman says:—"From the seventh century to the seventeenth this island was little known beyond the neighbouring shores of Iar Connaught and Umhall ui Mhaille; but during the latter eventful century it was considered of importance by the then contending parties in Ireland, and was alternately fortified by them."[1] The only break in this long period of silence is the traditional account of the possession, for a time, of the islands by a piratical crew, and of the establishment there, in the sixteenth century, of a fort and station for her fleet by the celebrated Grace O'Malley.

On the 14th February, 1652, the islands surrendered to the Parliamentary forces, and it was at first resolved to repair the fort, which seems to have been done, for it was occupied for three years afterwards, and in 1655, it was recommended to the Council of State that the garrison should be withdrawn, the works abandoned, and that £600, along with the right to "sell the barque Elizabeth, of Galway, which was sent to Buffin to carry limestone[2] there," should be granted to any undertaker who would block up the harbour.

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

[2] The limestone referred to was probably the cut stone doorway and corner stones of the fort.

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The recommendation was not carried out, however, for in 1656, the fort was repaired and provided with larger guns, instead of some of those formerly in use, of which there were twenty-two. In the same year it was resolved to appoint an "able pious and orthodox minister of the gospell to be settled in Bofin and paid by the company" also "that Sir Charles Coote do consider of ordering that Colonel John Honnor, the governor there shall suffer no Irish to keepe any boats upon any part of that coast of Ir-conaght the co. of Mayo, or adjacent islands" also to exclude all "ill affected Irish" from the island, and to remove from the same all dangerous persons, to appoint a magistrate and make good highways towards the islands. 175

During the Commonwealth the island, as well as the Aran Islands, was used as a prison for priests and monks deported thither from the mainland, and allowed sixpence a-day for their maintenance. The garrison is said to have been kept up for protection against the Dutch, who had formerly made use of the fisheries there, and for whose ships the harbour would have offered a safe place of retreat. Richard O'Flaherty, writing in the reign of Charles II. (1684), makes no mention of the history of the islands beyond stating that they had formerly belonged to "this countrey of Conmacny-mara (Connemara) in old times," but had for three hundred years belonged to "the Owles," the Anglicized form of Umhall, or Umhall Ui Maille, the ancient territory of the O'Malleys, which comprised the modern baronies of Murrisk and Burrishoole, in the County Mayo, which were formerly named Umhall uachtrach, and Umhall iochtrach, or Upper and Lower Umhall.

In the reign of James II. the island gave the title of Baron Bophin to John, ninth Earl of Clanricarde.

Whether the garrison was regularly kept up after the restoration is uncertain, but it was so during the war in the reign of James II., for we learn that Colonel O'Riordan, who held the place for that monarch, surrendered to a detachment of the Williamite troops after the capitulation of Galway. The victorious party now garrisoned the place for a while to keep off the French privateers, who would otherwise have made use of Bofin Harbour, as a secure station.

The islands are but seldom mentioned after this, indeed they seem hardly to have been known to the outer world. In Seward's "Topographica Hibernia" (1795), Inishbofin is barely mentioned, and Carlisle's "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland" (1810) speaks of it as supposed to contain 1200 acres, and to be situated at the distance of about a mile and a-half from the mainland; its valuation in the King's

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175 Books was at that time ten shillings sterling. In neither of these works is Inishshark mentioned.

The islands seem to have remained in the possession of the Clanricarde family until early in the present century, when they passed, by exchange into the hands of the then Marquess of Sligo, from whom they came into the possession of the Wilberforce family, and from them into the hands of the present proprietor, Cyril Allies, Esq. The islands were transferred on 1st February, 1873, from the barony of Murrisk, County of Mayo, to the barony of Ballynahinch, County of Galway, by an Order in Council.

The establishment of the fishery station and the construction of new piers at Knock, and at the landing-place at Inishshark, by the Government in 1892, are the latest occurrences in the history of the islands.

VIII.—Ethnology.

174 In the present condition of Irish ethnology, it would be vain to attempt to propound any theory or form any exact conclusion as to what race or admixture of races gave origin to the present inhabitants of the islands. Their own traditional history speaks of the intermarriage of some of the islanders with members of the Cromwellian garrison, and of an earlier introduction of a foreign element (some say French, others Danish or Spanish) by a piratical colony; and I am informed by Mr. G. H. Kinahan that he has heard that "a good sprinkling of foreigners remained in Bofin, that went there while the mine was working."

Judging from the list of surnames given on a preceding page, it would appear that the amount of foreign blood introduced must be considerably exaggerated, as an analysis of the list shows that a great majority of the names are those of old Connaught families. If the name of the proprietor of the islands, who is English, be left out, there are just fifty surnames on the islands, and thirty-three of these are distinctively Irish, and most of them are to be found in the account of the tribes of Hy Fiachrach, compiled by Duald MacFirbis (though nearly all in Anglicized forms), eight are Welsh or Anglo-Norman, but of old standing in Connaught, dating back to the 13th century, two are Scotch (Naughton and M'Kendrick); one, Scuffle, is asserted by the people to be of Scandinavian or other foreign origin, and may probably be a corruption of Scholfield or Scovell; another, Lavelle, seems to be considered locally to be foreign also, but it is

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stated by some to be an Anglicized form of a well-known Irish tribe name; the seven remaining surnames seem to be modern English. 174

Of the 212 families now living on the islands 20[1] have surnames of modern English or Scottish origin—29 Anglo-Norman or Welsh, 22 are Scuffles, 17 Lavelles, and the remaining 134 bear more or less Anglicized forms of old Irish names. It may be concluded from this that the population is, on the whole, not much mixed with any element which might not be expected to be found in western Connaught.

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[1] Including the landlord's.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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EXPLANATION OF PLATES VIII. AND IX.

Plate VIII.

142 Fig. 1.—James Joyce, aged 48 years, No. 5, Middlequarter.

291 Figs. 2 and 3.—Anthony Lavelle, aged 35 years, No. 2, Knock.

Fig. 4.—Group of men, Inishbofin.

Taken in order from left to right, the names are, respectively:—

Back row.—John Burke, boatwright; Michael Halloran, king of Shark; John Tierney, postman; Mick Kerrigan, weaver; Redmond Toole, fisherman.

Front row.—Martin Baker, John Malia (or Malley), Ned Burke, Redmond Toole, all fishermen.

Fig. 5.—Group of women, Westquarter, Inishbofin.

Taken in the same order as the other group, the names are—Margaret Ward, Nancy Browne (first cousins), Nelly Holloran, Mary Holloran (daughter of last), Brigid Concannon.

Plate IX.

412 Fig. 1.—Quern still in use in Middlequarter, Inishbofin.

283 Fig. 2.—Spinning wheel in Middlequarter.

296 Fig. 3.—Method of washing clothes, Church Lough, Knock.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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[End Plate A]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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[End Plate B]

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XXXVII.

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE MULLET, INISHKEA ISLANDS, AND PORTACLOY, COUNTY MAYO.

By CHARLES R. BROWNE M.D., M.R.I.A.

(Plates XV., XVI., and XVII.)

[Read February 25, 1895.]

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I.—Introduction.

121 In continuance of the series of local surveys undertaken by the Dublin Anthropometric Committee and carried out as part of the work of the Anthropological Laboratory of Trinity College, the third of these surveys was made by me last August in the western portion of the

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121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities,
101 one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the
631 little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of
133 North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the
[504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

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extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies 133
Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-
station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern [502]
boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low
rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills.
Off this part of the coast lie Iniskea and Duvillaun, having a sandy
or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore
along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low.

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal [134]
of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones.

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. [504]
The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and 132
snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe.

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very 137
few and only grow in sheltered localities.

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the 491
mail road from Ballina runs.[1]

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great 125
extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north [133]
rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks* that *have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward.

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125 changes were made to bring our observation form into closer accord with that adopted by the Ethnographic Survey Committee of the British Association for use in England. The new form admits of very rapid noting, and in collecting easily and accurately the main physical characters of the persons examined. It has not, however, any advantage over the old form, of which it is a modification, in the convenience of working up results, in fact it is inferior in this respect as the spaces for indices at the bottom of the page, which are omitted, proved a great help in tabulating the results of the Inishbofin Survey; another defect is that some of the points to be noted are not strictly defined, and leave too much to the personal opinion of the observer.

(A.) *Hair and eye colour.*—No change was made in this part of the work, the method being exactly that used on the two previous occasions. For full particulars the reader is referred to the Report on the visit to the Aran Islands.[1]

(B.) *Measurements and instruments.*—These were the same as formerly employed, with two additions:—(1) *The height of the head*; and (2) *height of cranium*, both projections, directions for taking which were printed on the observation forms. These measurements were given a trial, as they form part of the series on the English form, but after a time they were abandoned for reasons given below.

126 The same set of instruments as used in Inishbofin was carried, packed in a canvas case. It consisted of compas d'epaisseur, compas glissière, the portable pattern of Cunningham's craniometer, Garson's anthropometer, steel tape, Snellen test types, note books, nigrescence cards, and observation forms, as before. The only new appliance was a Trinity hand camera, made by Messrs. Curtis, Suffolk-street, Dublin, which, though subjected to rather rough treatment, stood the test admirably and did very satisfactory work. When not in use it was carried in a stout waterproof case slung over the shoulder.

(C). *Remarks on methods employed.*—The work had to be carried on 124 under rather different circumstances from those experienced before, as the weather prevailing during my visit to the district was not too well suited for field work, the rains being frequent and heavy, and the wind very strong, besides this, the population is much more scattered than any dealt with before, and long journeys had often to be made for very little result. In some ways, however, the work

[1] Ethnography of the Aran Islands, Co. Galway, Proc. R. I. A., vol. II., 3rd ser., p. 768.

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was easier, the measuring being, in many cases, done under shelter, 124
instead of on the hills, the roadside, or the sea-shore.

As is mentioned above the two new measurements had to be abandoned owing to practical difficulties. It is a matter of experience in work of this sort in Ireland that persons do not *come* to be measured, [123]
they have to be sought out and induced to submit themselves to the process, often no easy matter; there are generally several to be measured in quick succession, but if kept waiting long they will one by one slip off and refuse to allow measurement; and as the adapting of the anthropometer for these projections takes some time, the instrument [126]
having to be unshipped for each, and then fitted up again to measure the next comer, it became evident that these projections would have to be given up if anything like a sufficient number of persons was to be measured. Moreover, accuracy in taking projection measurements is by no means easily obtained, even under the most favourable circumstances in a laboratory, and the difficulty is increased so much in field work, where it is not at all easy to get the men to understand exactly what position they are wanted to assume, so as to make the results unreliable.

The noting of the colours of the hair and eyes also presented some difficulties, the chief being to distinguish between those who were natives and strangers from other districts, which was rendered greater by the absence of a distinctive dress (except in the case of the people of Inishkea). In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 494 individuals, on 62 (male adults) of whom the full series of measurements and observations was made. As on the two former surveys precautions were taken against recording the same person twice, as well as against the inclusion of the men measured in the ordinary nigrescence cards.

(D). *Photography.*—Owing to the rain and rough weather as much 126
could not be done in this department as had been hoped, but in spite of the difficulties of cloudy skies and high winds a number of photographs were taken, including, 17 portraits, 14 of them individuals measured, 19 groups, taken in all parts of the district, 30 illustrations of the occupations, modes of transport, and habitations of the people, also several of the antiquities of the district, and a set of views showing surface of land and nature of coast line, &c.

Some of these photographs were taken by myself, others by my brother J. M. Browne. The addition of the hand camera to our appliances has proved to be a great advantage, enabling portraits of unwilling subjects to be taken, and adding to the value of the photo-

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126 graphs of occupations by admitting of their being taken when the performers were in motion. It could also be used on occasions when the high winds would not allow the setting up of a tripod stand.

2.—*Physical Characters*:—

(A). The general physical characters of the people are as given 142 below, though some differences exist between the inhabitants of different parts of the district.

The people on the whole are good-looking, especially when young; [145] many of the girls and young women are very handsome, but they appear to age rapidly and early become wrinkled.

Stature and bulk.—The men of this district are as a rule of fair average stature, very stoutly built, and broad shouldered; while there are few who can fairly be termed very tall, yet many reach a good height, and the proportion of small men is by no means large. The [141] average stature of the 62 adult males measured was 1725 mm., or about 5 feet 8 inches. The extremes were 1628 mm. (5 feet 4 inches), and 1820 mm., or about 5 feet 11½ inches.

The women seem to be more even in height than the men.

Limbs.—The hands are usually of medium size, broad and with fingers squarely clubbed at the ends. The forearms (measured from styloid process to the head of radius) are often very long for the stature, and the span is sometimes very great, though in a few cases it is less than the stature, a character also noted in the Aran Islands, though the proportion of cases in which it was observed was much greater there.

Head.—The head is generally well shaped and is often of large size. The forehead is broad and upright (rarely receding), rounded away at the sides, and of fair height; superciliary ridges and glabella of no great size, eye-brows thick and level.

The cranial curve rises to a pretty fair height above the ears [141] (height index 65·8), though not attaining the altitude seen in the people of Aran and the men of Inishbofin, and descends in an even sweep to the occipital protuberance as the occipital region does not usually project.

In the majority of cases, as will be seen from the table of indices, 141 the head is mesaticephalic, the mean index being 77·4 (when two units are deducted to reduce to the cranial standard). Of the 62 persons measured, 10 were brachycephalic, and 11 dolichocephalic. The extremes were 86·2 and 72·3.

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Face.—The face is of medium length, with prominent cheek-bones, and is rather broader in the bigonial region than observed in either Aran or Inishbofin.

The nose is short and has nearly always a straight profile; of the 62 men measured, 50 had straight, 8 sinuous, 2 aquiline, and 2 retroussé noses.

The wrinkles on the face are very deep, most so about the eyes and at the "root" of the nose, where there is often a raised fold of skin between two deep furrows. The mouth is large, with lips of medium thickness, often kept habitually apart when the face is at rest, but the large hanging lower lip is not so noticeable a character here as in other localities of the west coast.

The teeth are usually very short and even.

The chin is prominent, but not long, and the angles of the jaw are rather oblique.

The eyes, which are placed moderately wide apart, have irides of a light blue or bluish-gray, and being deep set and (in the fishermen) habitually half closed, they present to a casual observer the appearance of being small in size.

The ears are small, projecting, and rather coarsely moulded. Abnormalities of the lobule are common, and were seen in 33 out of the 62 men on whom observations were made; of these the lobule was absent in 10, and attached in 23. Absence of the lobule is very common in the northern part of the Mullet, and appears to be a local character there; in nearly all the men seen at Muingerena this part of the organ was either of very small size or was absent altogether. Flattening out of the pinna and Darwinian tubercle were observed in several cases. [143]

Skin.—Wrinkles, as before mentioned, come early, first appearing about the eyes.

The complexion is either ruddy or pale, rarely sallow; on exposure to the sun and wind it becomes a clear red, seldom freckling or turning brown.

Hair.—The prevailing colour for the hair is dark brown, next in order of frequency is brown or chestnut, next black; fair and red hair are comparatively scarce.

In the case of the Inishkea people, the most usual hair colour seems to be a clear brown, accompanied by reddish-brown beard and blue-grey eyes; in these islands also, there is a larger proportion of fair hair than on the mainland. The hair and beard (when worn) are fairly abundant. Greyness does not appear to set in early.

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151 *Sight and Hearing.*—Both these senses are very acute, especially the former, which, in the fishermen, is extremely keen, many of these men can see small objects floating on the water at a distance where, even by the aid of a strong glass, most persons would find great difficulty in seeing them at all.

This description being a general one, little mention has been made 142 of the differences which exist between the people of different parts of 184 the district. It appears to be the general opinion on the mainland, that the inhabitants of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island, and, also, that the natives of both islands are fairer than those of the mainland, and personal inspection has corroborated these opinions. The islanders are readily distinguishable from the mainland people, not only by their dress of blue homespun, but also by their fairer hair and complexion, and their different cast of features.

The men of the district round Portacloy are darker in hair and seem to be of a different type; many of them are exceedingly fine well-built fellows.

In no part of the district are the people of small stature, though 142 a large number of them are descendants of dispossessed Ulster people. 114 On the contrary, they appear to be taller and stouter than the inhabitants of the southern part of the country. A statement,[1] originally made by an anonymous writer, has somehow gained currency, and has been repeatedly quoted abroad, noticeably by M. De Quatrefages,[2] and by M. Devay,[3] that the descendants of the Ulster people driven two centuries ago into Sligo and Mayo, had dwindled into dwarfs of five feet two inches high, prognathous and pot-bellied.

This most certainly does not apply to any section of the inhabitants of this part of Mayo, if indeed it were ever true of any part of the counties named, which repeated inquiries and personal observation agree in denying most positively.

The statement is quite unsupported by other writers dealing with this region at the same time. Thus Mr. P. Knight, writing in 1834, says of the people of Erris that "they are generally a good-humoured, good-natured, hospitable, generous race—*of middle size*—active, intelligent, and, when an opportunity offers of showing it, industrious." C. O.[4] describes the people as tall.

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[1] Dublin University Magazine, No. 48, p. 658.
[2] L'Unité de l'Espèce Humain, ii., 316.
[3] Devay Fr. "Du Danger des Mariages consanguins sous le Rapport Sanitaire."
[4] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

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CEPHALIC INDICES, CORRECTED FOR COMPARISON WITH SKULLS.

No.	Index	A. Corrected Indices.	B. Actual Indices.
41	86.2		
11	85.1		
32	83.4		
15	82.8		
8	82.5		
60	82.5	10	Brachycephalic.
54	82.1		
57	81.5		
53	81.3		
31	80.6		
61	79.7		20 Brachycephals.
7	79.4		
30	79.1		
43	79.1		
51	79.1		
3	78.5		
13	78.4		
19	78.4		
23	78.0		
34	78.0		
2	77.9		
35	77.9		
36	77.9		
47	77.6		
50	77.6		
28	77.4		
1	77.2		
18	77.0		
26	77.0		
62	77.0		
27	76.9	41	Mesaticephalic.
46	76.9		
37	76.8		
16	76.6		
22	76.6		
25	76.5		
24	76.4		
42	76.2		
20	76.1		
44	76.1		39 Mesaticephals.
49	76.0		
52	75.9		
33	75.9		
29	75.8		
39	75.8		
58	75.7		
56	75.5		
48	75.3		
38	75.0		
12	75.0		
55	75.0		
4	74.8		
6	74.5		
59	74.4		
40	74.3		
9	74.0		
17	74.0	11	Dolichocephalic.
10	73.5		
14	73.5		
45	72.7		
21	72.5		3 Dolichocephals.
5	72.3		

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(B.) *Statistics of Eye and Hair Colours:—*

ADULTS.—I. *Males.*

142

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	4	1	—	5	2.43
Fair, ..	14	—	—	14	6·79
Brown, ..	74	7	2	83	40·29
Dark, ..	79	6	3	88	42·72
Black, ..	8	5	3	16	7·77
Totals, ..	179	19	8	206	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	86·89	9·22	3·89	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . 49·04.

ADULTS.—II. *Females.*

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	5	—	—	5	3·47
Fair, ..	2	—	—	2	1·39
Brown, ..	52	2	4	58	40·28
Dark, ..	33	21	12	66	45·83
Black, ..	7	2	4	13	9·03
Totals, ..	99	25	20	144	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	68·75	17·36	13·89	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . . 59·03.
Combined Index (both sexes), . 54·03.

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CHILDREN.—I. *Boys.*

HAIR.	EYES.			TOTALS.	PERCENTAGE HAIR COLOURS.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	4	—	—	4	5·40
Fair, ..	10	—	—	10	13·51
Brown, ..	34	—	—	34	45·95
Dark, ..	23	1	—	24	32·43
Black. ..	2	—	—	2	2·71
Totals, ..	73	1	—	74	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	98·65	1·35	—	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . 18·94.

CHILDREN.—II. *Girls.*

HAIR.	EYES.			TOTALS.	PERCENTAGE HAIR COLOURS.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	—	—	—	—	—
Fair, ..	10	—	—	10	15·87
Brown, ..	29	1	—	30	47·62
Dark, ..	16	2	4	22	34·92
Black, ..	1	—	—	1	1·59
Totals, ..	56	3	4	63	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	88·89	4·76	6·35	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, ... 23·23.
Combined Index (both sexes), . 21·09.

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TOTAL.—I. *Males.*

142

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	8	1	—	9	3·21
Fair, ..	24	—	—	24	8·57
Brown, ..	108	7	2	117	41·79
Dark, ..	102	7	3	112	40·00
Black, ..	10	5	3	18	6·43
Totals, ..	252	20	8	280	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	90·0	7·14	2·86	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . 41·08.

TOTAL.—II. *Females.*

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	5	—	—	5	2·41
Fair, ..	12	—	—	12	5·79
Brown, ..	81	3	4	88	42·52
Dark, ..	49	23	16	88	42·52
Black, ..	8	2	4	14	6·76
Totals, ..	155	28	24	207	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	74·88	13·53	11·59	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . . 47·84.
Combined Index (both sexes), . 44·46.

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(c.) *Physical Proportions.*—As in foregoing reports, the proportions borne by the main measurements to the stature (taken as 100) have been calculated, and are given in this paper: they differ considerably from those of the people of the districts previously visited. 141

FACE.

The face is not so long in proportion as met with in either of the other localities. It varies between 6·48 and 8·26, with a mean of 7·36: it is over 8 in one instance, and below 7 in nine out of the sixty-two recorded.

Upper Face.—Mean 4·30, as compared with 4·42 for Inishbofin.

Nose.—This is not very constant in its relation to body-height, having a mean of 3·10 and extremes of 2·65 and 3·98. Thus, on the whole, this feature is much shorter in the Erris people than in the Aran Islanders (3·38) or the natives of Inishbofin, in whom the mean exactly equalled the canon (3·30).

SITTING HEIGHT.

This measurement was for the first time taken regularly in field-work in this district. The mean of the series is 51·33, but it varies in individual cases between 49·44 and 55·29.

UPPER LIMB.

Span.—Several cases are recorded in this series in which this measurement falls short of the stature, a character found to be common in the Aran Islands, where it was met with in more than one-fourth of those measured. The proportion in this case is one in fifteen. Of the four cases, three are from North Inishkea and one from the Mullet. The mean occupies a position between that of Aran and that of Inishbofin, being 104·36 as against 101·94 and 104·95.

Hand.—This member is rather short, and is, as a rule, fairly constant in its proportion to stature. It ranges, however, in extreme cases between 10·10 and 12·24, and averages 11·34, being thus the same as the mean of Inishbofin (11·33).

Forearm.—The forearm is long, giving a mean of 15·43, very much greater than is the case either in the Aran series (15·18) or in that of Inishbofin (15·03).

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(p.) *Detailed List of Measurements:—*

No.	Indices.						Proportions to Stature.—Height = 100.						
	Cephalic.	Height.	Facial.	Bigonial.	Alveolar.	Nasal.	Hand.	Forearm.	Span.	Height Sitting.	Face.	Upper Face.	Nose.
1	79·2	64·4	115·6	92·2	98·0	66·7	10·99	14·70	105·92	52·73	7·21	4·06	3·04
2	79·9	63·3	123·3	91·7	95·1	64·2	10·88	14·71	101·76	53·65	7·06	3·88	3·12
3	80·5	66·7	100·0	85·5	97·9	63·3	10·10	15·29	100·06	53·93	7·75	4·38	3·37
4	76·8	63·1	103·0	81·8	97·9	63·0	10·91	14·98	97·41	52·77	7·78	4·48	3·18
5	74·3	62·9	104·5	88·1	102·1	60·0	11·38	15·65	104·15	51·68	7·63	4·44	3·42
6	76·5	61·8	93·9	78·2	101·0	56·7	11·57	15·45	104·78	49·44	8·26	4·38	3·37
7	81·4	64·4	104·6	87·7	100·0	68·0	11·24	14·78	101·71	53·34	7·69	4·43	2·95
8	84·5	66·8	103·7	80·1	92·6	65·4	10·59	15·03	99·94	54·10	7·70	4·30	2·94
9	76·0	63·0	111·7	85·0	100·0	57·1	11·11	14·62	103·10	52·63	7·02	4·21	3·27
10	75·5	65·0	123·6	94·5	102·1	68·8	10·55	15·85	98·23	51·95	6·71	4·15	2·92
11	87·1	69·4	115·0	86·7	97·8	62·1	10·60	14·40	101·29	53·51	7·03	4·21	3·40
12	77·0	65·0	111·1	87·3	100·0	84·3	12·02	14·42	108·77	51·56	7·57	4·03	3·43
13	80·4	65·2	105·6	84·9	95·8	45·5	11·87	15·72	107·23	51·51	7·59	4·88	3·98
14	75·5	64·3	103·9	71·9	101·1	52·6	11·95	15·42	101·14	52·08	7·63	4·67	3·24
15	84·8	67·0	115·6	89·1	98·9	57·6	11·35	15·10	—	52·50	7·26	4·26	3·35
16	78·6	64·8	113·5	88·9	106·0	73·1	11·65	14·99	105·09	54·33	7·38	4·51	3·04
17	76·0	62·5	109·7	89·6	110·3	65·4	11·26	16·86	104·85	51·10	7·74	4·68	3·18
18	79·0	67·5	105·3	83·2	106·2	60·0	11·49	15·63	102·71	52·66	7·41	4·19	3·11
19	80·4	64·9	98·7	79·4	105·3	58·2	11·11	15·76	100·51	51·81	7·97	4·46	3·11
20	78·1	67·3	104·5	82·4	105·3	56·1	11·65	14·84	100·25	50·72	7·20	4·01	2·80
21	74·5	62·5	111·5	94·3	108·3	55·6	11·55	16·72	104·06	53·45	7·08	4·59	3·13
22	78·6	65·3	113·8	86·2	99·0	73·5	11·89	15·79	108·97	52·74	7·58	4·43	2·86
23	80·0	66·5	111·9	87·3	102·1	74·5	11·41	16·55	104·12	53·47	7·53	4·55	3·05
24	78·4	64·8	103·7	91·9	97·9	52·7	11·74	16·95	105·22	56·43	8·00	4·62	3·26
25	78·5	67·0	115·0	95·6	102·1	61·1	11·47	15·09	104·42	50·89	6·48	3·84	3·10
26	79·0	68·2	110·7	91·0	105·4	64·7	11·16	14·72	102·26	53·71	7·24	4·39	3·03
27	78·9	65·8	115·8	93·0	98·9	59·6	11·61	15·79	109·21	54·05	7·00	4·73	3·50
28	79·4	65·5	103·2	86·5	101·1	54·5	11·35	15·70	100·65	51·73	7·41	4·47	3·29

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29	77·8	67·0	111·8	82·7	97·8	56·6	10·88	14·89	101·68	51·65	6·98	4·23	2·91
30	81·1	65·8	115·2	96·8	104·5	58·5	11·71	15·28	104·30	53·48	7·07	3·96	3·00
31	82·6	65·8	103·8	84·8	102·1	57·1	11·42	15·29	103·98	53·90	7·73	4·22	3·34
32	85·4	68·5	122·8	98·2	95·8	62·3	11·82	15·06	104·29	53·48	6·60	4·00	3·07
33	77·9	64·8	107·6	85·6	102·0	53·4	11·94	15·54	108·31	54·43	7·47	4·38	3·25
34	80·0	66·5	128·1	96·5	110·2	69·4	11·69	15·25	109·88	55·29	6·66	3·97	2·86
35	79·9	66·1	110·0	92·5	98·9	61·2	10·59	15·04	102·40	54·43	7·02	4·21	2·87
36	79·9	64·4	104·5	76·7	108·2	66·7	10·86	16·53	106·24	52·20	7·69	4·45	3·12
37	78·8	65·5	115·7	100·0	92·7	61·5	11·26	15·53	111·49	54·14	6·88	4·27	2·96
38	77·0	63·5	106·7	88·0	107·9	71·4	11·11	15·31	105·44	53·85	7·60	4·37	3·17
39	77·8	66·2	113·0	87·8	103·3	60·7	11·77	14·98	108·11	53·21	6·93	4·28	3·15
40	76·3	68·7	113·6	83·3	97·9	66·7	10·64	14·52	102·66	53·91	7·30	4·16	3·16
41	88·2	71·5	118·4	83·2	90·5	61·1	10·13	15·26	105·78	53·58	7·23	4·28	3·12
42	78·2	64·5	120·8	100·0	100·0	67·9	11·16	15·20	99·31	52·20	6·94	4·22	3·06
43	81·1	67·3	120·5	93·4	104·2	68·0	11·23	15·05	103·17	53·64	7·29	4·30	2·93
44	78·1	64·8	112·8	92·8	102·1	72·9	11·71	15·61	102·32	55·18	7·62	4·63	2·93
45	74·7	65·7	110·4	88·0	100·0	61·4	11·30	15·65	104·47	52·76	7·22	4·36	3·27
46	78·9	64·7	113·5	85·7	106·1	72·7	11·85	14·53	105·17	53·52	7·26	4·18	3·20
47	79·6	64·3	111·3	90·3	99·0	61·5	11·35	16·16	108·50	51·99	7·25	4·45	3·09
48	77·3	68·6	115·6	90·2	96·1	60·0	11·41	15·70	106·51	52·74	6·96	4·05	3·14
49	78·0	66·0	118·3	93·6	101·0	66·0	11·05	15·69	105·96	54·42	7·27	4·35	3·04
50	79·6	67·0	117·6	95·4	103·8	66·0	11·07	15·04	104·59	52·85	7·33	3·97	2·80
51	81·1	63·8	115·9	94·1	100·0	75·5	11·66	14·44	105·62	51·89	7·00	4·32	2·90
52	77·9	67·3	109·8	88·7	98·9	62·1	11·59	15·07	104·64	52·75	7·71	4·46	3·34
53	83·3	65·6	104·5	81·8	100·0	66·0	12·24	16·30	106·36	50·90	8·00	4·48	3·21
54	84·1	68·7	129·1	100·1	101·1	73·3	11·96	15·62	104·60	50·68	6·48	3·71	2·65
55	77·0	65·2	118·7	95·9	94·7	77·1	11·41	15·54	106·38	54·73	7·27	3·96	2·84
56	77·5	64·2	109·9	96·2	100·0	74·0	11·33	16·46	110·00	53·20	7·24	3·98	2·71
57	83·5	68·6	123·1	97·4	97·1	62·3	11·64	16·12	108·41	52·84	6·99	4·36	3·16
58	77·7	62·4	122·2	102·6	101·0	72·9	11·08	15·41	103·53	52·68	7·13	4·08	2·92
59	76·4	65·9	104·5	85·8	100·0	65·4	11·13	15·29	104·57	53·02	7·85	4·51	3·05
60	84·5	68·0	107·7	91·0	102·1	55·3	10·87	15·94	104·52	51·28	7·25	4·12	3·12
61	81·7	70·2	112·9	91·1	100·0	57·9	11·26	15·91	101·36	53·21	7·31	4·54	3·36
62	79·0	66·7	112·4	91·5	100·0	73·6	11·33	15·85	104·52	54·26	7·57	4·39	3·10
Mean.	79·4	65·8	111·9	89·3	100·6	64·0	11·34	15·43	104·36	51·33	7·36	4·30	3·10

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No.	Name.	Age.	Locality.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Ears.	Cephalic. Length.	Cephalic. Breadth.
141 1	Lavelle, Philip, .	33	Inishkea, N.	blue	dark-brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	202	160
142 2	Lavelle, William,	38	Inishkea, N.	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	199	159
551 3	Cawley, Patrick,	40	Inishkea, S.	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Lobes attached	210	169
4	Cawley, Michael,	41	Inishkea, S.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	198	152
5	Lavelle, Michael,	32	Inishkea, N.	blue	light-brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes detached	202	150
6	Lavelle, William,	27	Inishkea, N.	dark-grey	black	pale	Outstanding, lobes detached	204	156
7	Reilly, Michael, .	32	Inishkea, N.	blue	fair	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	158
8	Reilly, John, . .	28	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding	193	163
9	Lavelle, Patrick, .	28	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding	200	152
10	Lavelle, John, .	31	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	—	200	151
11	O'Reilly, P. T.,	17	Carne, Mullet	dark-grey	dark	pale	Flat	186	162
12	Gaughan, Wm., .	28	Emlybeg, Mullet	dark-grey	dark	freckled	Flat, lobes absent	200	154
13	Dunlevy, Anth., .	60	Emlybeg, Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	184	148
14	Gaughan, Michl.,	60	Moyrahan, Mullet	blue	black	ruddy	Outstanding	196	148
15	Clery, Francis, .	22	Belmullet	dark-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	191	162
16	Coyle, William, .	28	Shanaghy	light-brown	black	dark	Outstanding	196	154
17	Geraghty, Michl.,	30	Mullaghroe	blue	dark	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	200	152
18	Cawley, Patrick,	58	Aughleam	blue	black	pale	Outstanding	200	158
19	Monaghan, Wm.,	51	Crossrenagh	blue	black	ruddy	Outstanding	194	156
20	Gaughan, John, .	33	Gladree	blue	dark	pale	Flat, lobes attached	196	153
21	Reilly, Peter, .	35	Duvillaun (?)	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	200	149
22	Barrett, Michael,	44	Drumreagh	light-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	196	154
23	Barrett, William,	30	Mullaghroe	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	200	160
24	Henry, Phelim,	40	Name of locality not decipherable	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	199	156
25	Coyle, Michael, .	18	Belmullet	blue	dark	pale	Outstanding	191	150
26	M'Cormac, Thos.,	21	Aughaglassheen, Belmullet	dark-grey	dark	dark	Outstanding, lobes attached	195	154
27	Doocy, Patrick, .	19	Porturlin	blue	dark	pale	Outstanding	190	150
28	Flannery, Thos.,	60	Srahataggle	light-grey	dark	pale	Outstanding	194	154
29	Gannon, Richard,	26	Carrowboy (?)	light-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding	194	151
30	Dogherty, Wm.,	21	Portacloy	green	red	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	196	159
31	Naughton, Michl.	40	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	190	157

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Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Height.		Forelimb.			Remarks.
Face length.	Upper Face length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Binocular bdth.	Cranial Height.	Nasial.	Alveolar.	Standing.	Sitting.	Span.	Hand.	Forearm.	
128	72	148	118	54	36	32	130	101	99	1775	935	1880	195	261	"King" of Inishkea.
120	66	148	110	53	34	30	126	103	98	1700	912	1730	185	251	Brother of No. 1.
138	78	138	118	60	38	36	130	96	94	1780	960	1781	200	272	Mother from N. Inishkea.
132	76	136	108	54	34	36	125	97	95	1696	895	1652	185	254	Brother of No. 3; beard fair.
134	78	140	118	60	36	34	127	96	98	1757	908	1830	200	275	Front teeth even.
147	78	138	114	60	34	32	126	100	101	1780	888	1865	206	275	Beard brown.
130	76	136	114	50	34	32	125	88	88	1691	902	1720	180	250	Nose sinuous.
136	76	141	109	52	34	33	129	95	88	1766	955	1765	187	270	Brother of No. 7; nose sinuous.
120	72	134	104	56	32	31	126	93	93	1710	900	1763	190	250	—
110	68	136	104	48	33	29	130	94	96	1640	852	1612	173	260	Brother of No. 9; beard fair.
120	72	138	104	58	36	26	129	90	88	1708	914	1730	181	246	—
126	67	140	110	51	43	32	130	95	95	1664	858	1810	200	240	*Nez rétroussé.*
126	81	133	107	66	30	29	120	95	91	1660	855	1780	197	261	—
134	82	139	100	57	30	27	126	88	89	1757	925	1777	210	272	People originally from Ballycroy.
128	75	148	114	59	34	33	128	95	94	1762	925	—	200	266	People originally from Donegal, 200 years ago.
126	77	144	112	52	38	31	127	100	106	1708	928	1795	199	256	—
134	81	147	120	55	36	35	125	97	107	1732	885	1816	195	292	—
131	74	138	109	55	33	37	135	97	103	1766	930	1814	203	276	—
141	79	139	112	55	32	29	126	95	100	1770	917	1875	198	279	—
131	73	137	108	57	32	29	132	95	100	1820	923	1865	212	270	Father's people from Ballycroy.
122	79	136	115	54	30	29	125	96	104	1723	921	1793	200	288	—
130	76	148	112	49	36	36	128	96	95	1716	905	1870	204	271	Beard dark-brown.
126	76	141	110	51	38	30	133	97	99	1674	888	1793	191	277	Descended from the Clan Barretts, of "the Proud House of Barret" in the Mullet.
135	78	140	124	55	29	31	129	97	95	1687	952	1775	198	286	People originally from Donegal.
113	67	130	108	54	33	30	128	95	97	1743	887	1820	200	264	—
122	74	135	111	51	33	31	133	93	98	1685	905	1723	188	248	—
114	77	132	106	57	34	28	125	95	94	1628	880	1778	189	257	Believes grandfather to have been French.
126	76	130	109	55	30	29	127	92	93	1701	880	1712	193	267	—
127	77	142	105	53	30	30	130	91	89	1820	942	1850	198	271	—
125	70	144	121	53	31	29	129	89	93	1767	945	1843	207	270	Ancestors from Ulster.
132	72	137	112	56	32	29	125	95	97	1707	920	1775	195	261	—

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No.	Name.	Age.	Locality.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Ears.	Cephalic. Length.	Cephalic. Breadth.
32	Magrath, Patk.,	44	Portacloy	blue	dark	pale	Flat	178	152
33	Bourne, William,	33	Portacloy	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Flat	199	155
34	Bourke, John,	33	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	200	160
35	Toole, Thomas,	33	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Outstanding	189	151
36	Hogan, John,	40	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	155
37	Bourke, Domk.,	21	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	203	160
38	Hevernan, Philip,	50	Aughleam, Mullet	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Outstanding	200	154
39	Reilly, James,	35	Drum, Mullet	light-grey	brown	pale	Outstanding	198	154
40	Kane, Richard,	—	Fallmore, Mullet	green	brown	—	Outstanding	211	161
41	———	—	Mullet	blue	brown	pale & freckled	Outstanding	186	164
42	M'Loughlin, Th.,	25	Blacksod, Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Flat	197	154
43	Meenaghan, Th.,	18	Blacksod, Mullet	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	196	159
44	Dixon, ——,	50	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	dark	Attached lobules	196	153
45	Cafferky, Hugh,	—	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Attached lobules	198	148
46	Coyle, Francis,	47	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	204	161
47	Padden, Domk.,	22	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Outstanding, lobes absent	196	156
48	Padden, John,	18	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	pale, freckled	Flat, lobes absent	194	150
49	Dixon, James,	28	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Flat, lobes absent	200	156
50	Lavelle, Anthony,	24	Tip., Mullet	green	black	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	206	164
51	Meenaghan, Ml.,	—	Inishkea, S.	green	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	196	159
52	M'Ginty, Owen,	35	Inishkea, S.	blue	black-brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	208	162
53	Monaghan, Ml.,	59	Inishkea, S.	light-brown	black	dark	Outstanding	192	160
54	Keane, Patrick,	19	Inishkea, S.	blue	fair	ruddy, freckled	Outstanding	195	164
55	O'Donnell, John,	24	Inishkea, S.	blue	fair	ruddy, freckled	Outstanding, lobes attached	204	157
56	Dixon, Patrick,	33	Aghadoon, Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat	204	158
57	Carey, Martin,	26	Aghadoon, Mullet	dark-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	194	162
58	Lavelle, Patrick,	30	Aghadoon, Mullet	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	202	157
59	Dixon, Patrick,	30	Aghadoon, Mullet	green	black	pale	Flat	208	159
60	Burke, John,	23	Belmullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	164
61	Joyce, Patrick,	18	Buncrena, Mullet	blue	fair	ruddy	Outstanding	191	156
62	Padden, Michael,	22	Knocknashambo, Mullet	blue	brown	dark	Flat, lobes attached	195	154

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Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Height.		Forelimb.			Remarks.
Face length.	Upper Face length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Binocular bdth.	Cranial Height.	Nasal.	Alveolar.	Standing.	Sitting.	Span.	Hand.	Forearm.	
114	69	140	112	53	33	27	122	95	91	1726	923	1800	204	260	—
132	78	142	113	58	31	31	129	101	103	1782	970	1930	213	277	Name is an Anglicized form of O'Conboirne.
114	68	146	110	49	34	31	133	98	108	1711	946	1870	200	274	—
120	72	132	111	49	30	28	125	91	90	1709	932	1750	181	257	—
133	77	139	102	54	36	35	125	97	105	1730	903	1838	188	286	Father's people from Co. Clare, 50 years ago.
121	75	140	121	52	32	31	133	96	89	1758	952	1960	198	273	—
134	77	143	118	56	40	32	127	101	109	1764	950	1860	196	270	—
123	76	139	108	56	34	32	131	92	95	1776	945	1920	209	266	—
132	75	150	110	57	38	32	145	97	93	1805	973	1853	192	263	—
125	74	148	104	54	33	28	133	95	86	1730	927	1830	195	264	Did not give name; mother's name Lynsky.
120	73	145	120	53	36	33	127	100	100	1730	903	1718	193	263	Beard fair.
122	72	147	114	49	34	34	132	95	99	1674	198	1727	188	252	—
125	76	141	116	48	35	30	127	96	98	1640	905	1678	192	256	—
125	76	138	110	57	35	30	130	101	101	1744	920	1822	197	273	Nose slightly acquiline.
126	72	143	108	55	40	35	132	99	105	1721	921	1810	204	250	—
124	75	138	112	52	32	37	126	104	103	1683	885	1826	191	272	Nose sinuous.
122	71	141	110	55	33	34	133	103	99	1752	925	1866	200	275	—
126	76	148	118	53	35	33	132	101	102	1746	950	1850	193	264	—
131	71	154	124	50	33	35	138	105	109	1788	945	1870	198	269	Extremely muscular.
119	73	138	112	49	37	32	125	92	92	1690	877	1785	197	244	Nose sinuous.
133	77	143	118	58	36	27	140	91	90	1725	910	1805	200	260	—
132	74	138	108	53	35	20	126	93	93	1650	840	1765	202	269	—
110	63	142	111	45	33	36	134	93	95	1697	860	1775	203	265	—
123	67	146	118	48	37	32	133	95	90	1692	926	1800	193	263	Father's people from Co. Galway.
131	72	144	126	50	37	31	131	98	98	1810	963	1991	205	298	—
117	73	144	114	53	33	33	133	102	99	1675	885	1816	195	270	Folds of pinna obliterated.
117	67	143	120	48	35	33	126	99	100	1642	865	1700	182	253	—
134	77	140	115	52	34	31	137	102	102	1707	905	1785	190	264	—
130	74	140	118	56	31	34	132	94	96	1794	920	1875	195	286	—
124	77	140	112	57	33	28	134	96	96	1697	903	1720	191	270	—
129	75	145	118	53	39	30	130	100	100	1703	934	1780	193	271	—

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(E.) *Analysis of the Statistical Tables* :—

141 The variations in type in the inhabitants of the different parts of the district are shown by the following Table, which appears to corroborate the belief entertained by the people that the men of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island or of the Mullet. They also show the greater proportion of light hair in the islanders :

	Mullet.	North Inishkea.	South Inishkea.	Portacloy.
Number measured, ...	35	8	7	12
Cephalic Index, ...	79·5	78·4	80·1	80·0
Stature, ...	1704 (5 ft. 7 in.)	1727 (5 ft. 8 in.)	1705 (5 ft. 7 in.)	1727 (5 ft. 8 in.)
Proportion to stature—Span, .	104·55	102·45	103·58	105·65
,, ,, Hand, .	11·34	11·04	11·41	11·41
,, ,, Forearm,	15·47	15·60	15·32	15·57
Nigrescence Index,[1] . .	62·30	10·5		77·52

Though the people in all sections of the district are seen to be mesaticephalic (if two units be subtracted to reduce the index to cranial standard), yet in two, South Inishkea and Portacloy, there is an approach to the brachycephalic form. None of the men measured in either place are dolichocephalic, and in most cases the cephalic proportion inclines towards the higher index rather than to the lower.

It would appear also that the North Inishkea men are shorter-limbed than any of their neighbours, as out of the four cases met with in which the span (*grande envergue*) was less than the height, three were from this island.

3. *Vital Statistics* (*General and Economic*) :—

161 (A.) *Population.*—Erris is not now very thickly peopled, the general decrease affecting the population of Ireland during the last
167 fifty years having especially affected this district.

The census returns show a constant and steady decline since 1851, the slight increases which have from time to time occurred in some

[1] Not taken from number measured but from nigrescence cards.

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townlands having only been temporary. That this loss is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths in the registration district of Binghamstown for the decennial period 1884–1893 in which space of time the births numbered 1260, and the deaths 707, an excess of 553, or 22·7 per cent. The following Table, which refers only to the parish of Kilmore, shows the population of the district at each census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head.[1] 161 [167]

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	7379	1106	6·67	3·99
1861	6452	1243	5·19	4·57
1871	5552	1054	5·27	5·31
1881	5327	911	5·85	5·53
1891	4111	694	5·92	7·17

[592]

The density of population is thus seen to be about 89 per square mile, but varies with locality, being greatest on S. Inishkea, where it is about 304.

The town of Belmullet, which is not included in the table given above, has fluctuated much since its foundation in 1825. In 1831 its population was 585, and it continued to increase until after 1851, when it had attained its maximum of 935; from that time forth it declined. In 1861 its inhabitants numbered 907; in 1871, 849; in 1881 there was a slight increase, 852; and at the last census, in 1891, the population had fallen to 652.

It was difficult to lay down any exact boundaries to what, for the purposes of this report, is termed the Portacloy district; but the three townlands—Srahataggle, Portacloy, and Curraunboy, from which most of those measured at Portacloy came, have been taken to represent it; in these the population has not undergone the same change as that of Kilmore, the population having risen since 1851, from 248, inhabiting 46 houses, to 299 in 53 houses. 634 161

[1] In 1831 the population of Kilmore Erris was 9287.

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161 The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and outbuildings was as follows in 1891 :—

Locality.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
The Mullet, .	23,333 1 27	3757	1893	1864	600	532
N. Inishkea, .	464 1 32	126	60	66	21	4
S. Inishkea, .	344 3 19	180	92	88	32	33
23 Islets, . .	350 0 17	48	22	26	10	27
Portacloy, .	7845 1 1	299	148	151	54	29
Totals, . . .	32,338 0 6	410	2215	2195	717	625

423 (B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area of the district is that of
311 Kilmore, being 29,492 acres, and the three townlands forming the Portacloy district, 7,845 acres.

The total valuation of Kilmore is £4,055 18*s.*, and of Portacloy
[435] £163 7*s.*

There is very little commonage in the Mullet, but about Portacloy there is a good deal.

The holdings are not large, averaging about 4½ or 5 acres at a
[427] rental of about £3 10*s.* in the Mullet, and about £2 10*s.* in "the mountains." There is considerable variation, however, as there are some farms of good size, but the majority are small.

In 1891 there were, in Kilmore, 210 holdings of between £4 and £10 valuation, 305 of £2 and under £4, and no less than 252 at, or under, £2 valuation.

The land is mostly held now at judicial rentals (the people having early taken advantage of the Land Act of 1881), but sixty years ago the greater part of the land was held in common, and the mode of
175 tenure is thus described by Knight :—" In the whole of the peninsula there are few farms divided . . . the usual system being commonage both in tillage and pasture. In tillage, lots are cast every third year for the number of ridges each person is entitled to after the usual rotation is over. Potatoes the first year, then barley or oats, after which new lots must be cast for new potato ground. The holdings are by sums or collops, which originally meant the number

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of heads of cattle the farm could rear by *pasture*; but as some tillage became afterwards necessary, they divided the crop-ground into collops also, as well as the pasture, and each farm then had its number of tillage collops and of grazing collops. The tillage collop is supposed to be capable of supporting one family by its produce. In many instances poor families have no pasture to correspond with their tillage collop, and even of this they may have only a half or quarter, called a *geerla*. . . . The prices of these collops vary according to the quality of the farm; the average is about one guinea. The pasture collop is the grass of a horse, or a cow, or two year old heifers, or six or eight sheep. It is evident from this system, that although a man may expend a good deal of labour in digging and manuring his ridge, it is only a chance whether he will enjoy the labour so expended the third year, and hence that he is careless of future benefits, and that, of course, the land will be but imperfectly cultivated. . . . There is a headman or *king* appointed in every village, who is deputed to cast the lots every third year, and to arrange with the community what work is to be done during the year in fencing, &c. . . . The king takes care generally to have the rent collected, applots the proportion of taxes with the other elders of the village, for all is done in a patriarchal way, *coram populo*."

The following table, extracted from Mr. Knight's valuable little book on Erris (p. 58), is given here as illustrating the condition of people sixty years ago.

KNIGHT'S POPULATION TABLE.

Population, &c.			Remarks.
Families,		1723	
Males,	4290	8662	By public census, in the year 1831, 9287; but I believe this to be more correct. The whole Barony, in 1821, was 17,879; in 1831, 22,824.
Females,	4372		
Rental,		£4300	Or about 50s. to each family.
Sums or collops,		4469	Green acres as before 6100; collops different in size and quality, more than 2½ to each family.
Amount of Tithes,		£258	There is no composition, the old mode followed in collecting. There is now (1834) a composition for £300.
Boats (sail),		5	These six items show the little attention paid to the fishing, one boat of *every kind* in thirteen families, and one net in every seven. Three or four families frequently join in a boat, and two or three in a herring net, or set of nets.
Boats (row),		88	
Curraghs,		38	
Nets,		256	
Lines,		131	
Spilleta,		8	

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KNIGHT'S POPULATION TABLE—*continued.*

175

Population, &c.			Remarks.
Horses,	587	943	Or only one beast of burden nearly, to every two families. Major Bingham and a few others have some good horses. The general breed is small, but hardy.
Asses,	356		
Cows,		1967	This is more than one to each family.
Sheep,		2348	
Pigs,		919	
Ploughs,			At Major Bingham's, Rev. Mr. Dawson's, and Rev. Mr. Lyons's.
Carts,			Same.
Feather beds,		624	Or nearly one to every third family. The substitute—straw, rushes, or bent.
Blankets,		1838	
Men without shoes,		734	
Men, women, and children,		3156	Wanting clothes, or nearly one-third of the whole population.
Buying provisions,		751	In a year of great plenty, but after two of great scarcity.
Sick,		454	
Died (1831),		236	
Carriages (four-wheeled),		2	
Carriages (two-wheeled),		8	

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—I regret to be unable to
191 give here the proportion of people speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, as the census authorities make the return by baronies only. The great majority of the people are bi-lingual, speaking both Irish and English, employing Irish mainly when speaking among themselves, but there is some small proportion, especially among the older people, who speak no English. The inhabitants of Inishkea do not usually speak anything but Irish on their own islands, though having a fair knowledge of English; but many of the women on these islands have no knowledge of the last-named language. About Portacloy there are many who "have no English."

212 *Illiteracy.*—The return for this is given by parishes. In Kilmore, in 1891, there were 3590 persons of five years old and upwards; of these 2135 or 59·5 per. cent. were illiterate.

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	3590	1811	1779
Illiterate,	2135	978	1157
Percentage,	59·5	54·0	65·0

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(D.) *Health.*—It was found to be a difficult matter to obtain reliable information on this point, but there seems to be, on the whole, but little serious disease, and the people appear to be strong and healthy. The affections suffered from are mainly due to the nature of their food and occupations, and the unwholesome state of their dwellings. 164

Consanguineous Marriages.—The intermarriage of relations seems to be very common, not only on the islands, but also on the mainland, where it is most common in small fishing hamlets difficult of access, such as Fallmore, Tip, and Portacloy. While visiting Inishkea inquiries were made as to these unions, and several of the inhabitants assured me that intermarriage between the people of the North and South Islands was not common, it being a far more usual thing for the islanders to marry people from the opposite shore of the Mullet; thus, the South Island people seem to intermarry a good deal with the inhabitants of Fallmore, a very primitive village at the extreme end of the peninsula, which has only being provided with a road, such as it is, since 1881. On both islands, however, the majority of the marriages seem to take place between members of the community. 582

It does not seem as if it were usual for first cousins to marry, but matches between relatives of all degrees farther out seem to be of very common occurrence.

Through the kindness of the Rev. H. Hewson, P.P. of Belmullet, I am enabled to give actual figures, as he has kept the record of dispensations for these marriages since 1875; from that date until August, 1894, there were in the Parish of Kilmore, which contains about 700 families, altogether 276 marriages, and of these 61 or 22·1 per cent. obtained dispensations, as the parties were relatives. In the Parish of Belmullet, number of families 460, there were in the same period 247 with 26 consanguineous (or 10·5 per cent.) and Kilcommon, with about 620 families, had 276 marriages, for 72 of which, or 26·1 per cent., dispensations were granted. The average in the whole three parishes was thus 19·5 per cent. To these may be added some 10 or 12 more cases of marriages of first cousins dispensed by the bishop of the diocese. There does not seem to be any marked result from this long continued close intermarriage, except the very marked local types observable in the more isolated places, which seem to have been fixed or preserved by this cause. This is especially the case in the islands whose inhabitants, while bearing a general resemblance to each other, differ much in appearance from their neighbours of the mainland. 582 588

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114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

Insanity.—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly
[158] in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
[273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

164 *Fevers.*—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

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"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis and struma are stated to be comparatively rare. 164

Malignant disease is very common in the Mullet, especially in the electoral district of Binghamstown South, which includes all the southern part of the peninsula. The majority of these cases are said to fall into the hands of "cancer curers," who use arsenic paste.

Rheumatism is one of the most prevalent troubles, especially in the elderly and old.

"Gravel" is a common complaint all over the district, and a good many deaths from this cause are registered.

Dietetic diseases.—Digestive troubles are very common everywhere, but more especially in the inland parts where the dietary is less varied; "boxty," or potato-bread and the abuse of strong tea seem to be very largely responsible. 164 292

Along the coast, ento-parasites, due to the large proportion of fish in the dietary, are of very frequent occurence.

Respiratory diseases.—Bronchitis is very prevalent in the winter and spring, and spasmodic asthma is stated to be not an uncommon affection. 164

Local affections are few and not very serious. Conjunctivitis is common, and much aggravated by the peat-smoke of the houses.

As regards dental troubles, the people are by no means free from these, though as a rule the teeth are even and white, and remain sound until late in life. [142]

"Female" troubles seem to be very common.

Venereal diseases are practically non-existant.

Skin.—Skin diseases are very prevalent. Among these the most common are—tinea tonsurans, eczema, sea boils, and scabies.

Accidental injuries.—Owing to the mode of life of the people and their environment, accidents frequently happen, especially fractures and contusions from falls, bites and other injuries from domestic animals, and burns. [752]

4. *Psychology.*—The difficulties of treating this part of the subject justly are, in the case of a stranger, very great, as his acquaintance with the people cannot be of sufficiently long standing to allow of the knowledge of more than the superficial part of their character, while, in the case of a resident, personal likes and antipathies, and local quarrels or friendships, largely influence his opinions. 81

The following description, though to some extent derived from personal observation, is for the most part obtained from several local

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181 sources, my informants being those who are brought into close contact with the everyday life of the people. So far as it goes it is believed to be accurate. No attempt has been made to do otherwise than describe the actual state of the case, and while the faults of the people are not extenuated, yet any circumstances which may explain these are given as far as possible, and their good qualities are believed to be stated without exaggeration.

181 To the casual visitor the people, on acquaintance, are decidedly attractive; in the outlying parts of the district, it is true, they are at 609 first rather suspicious of strangers, but after a short time are very obliging and communicative, ready to show anything of interest in their neighbourhood, and hospitable to the best of their power. The natives of both the islands at Inishkea, are very hospitable and kindly to strangers, of whom they are, however, rather distrustful, [574] a visitor being welcomed into their houses, and entertained with the best they can give. With each other they seem in all parts of the district to be much given to chaff and joking of a more or less practical nature, and their sense of the ridiculous seems to be rather keen. In times of trouble or distress they are very kind, generous with what they have, and helpful to one another.

181 They are fond of music, dancing, and bright colours, and more than one song-maker in their own tongue, the Irish, has been a native 517 of this district; amongst these was the celebrated Dick Barrett, 53 several of whose productions have been collected and published. In common with most of the people of our rural districts, there do not seem to be many traces of artistic taste, and a native art is conspicious by its absence. One or two instances of attempted decoration were observed in Inishkea, none on the mainland.

181 On the whole, though cases of dishonesty and sharp practice in bargaining occur, they are honest in their dealings with one another. 577 As is often the case in remote districts, the people of one locality are sometimes on strained relations with those of another; thus there exists a certain amount of jealousy and distrust between the natives of the two Inishkeas, while the people of the mainland do not readily amalgamate with those of either island.

181 As regards intelligence, they are extremely sharp and shrewd, and seem rather fond of argumentation. There is but little crime, 691 with the exception of illicit distillation and drunkenness, but the people are very litigious, going to law with each other about slight trespasses and similar matters. This tendency is not by any means of recent origin, but has been remarked on by several writers. Maxwell

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mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771]
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady 181
occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment 426
of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577
truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

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5. ***Folk Names.***—The following list of surnames was obtained, comprising all those of the district, with the exception of a few new comers, and the names of the inhabitants of the town of Belmullet:—

55/

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
Barrett, ...	27	Garrett, ...	1
Bingham, ...	3	Gavan, ...	2
Boland, ...	1	Gaughan, ...	23
Boylan, ...	2	Gaynard, ...	4
Brotherick, ..	3	Geoghan, ...	2
Burnes, ...	3	Geraghty, ...	15
Burke, ...	2	Gibbon, ...	1
Carden, ...	1[1]	Gilbert, ...	1
Carey, ...	12	Gilboy, ...	1
Cattigan, ...	2	Ginnelly, ...	8
Caufield, ...	1	Ginnings, ...	1
Cawley, ...	13	Ginty, ...	1
Connell, ...	2	Goonan, ...	1
Connolly, ...	1	Gonigal, ...	1
Connor, ...	2	Hannely, ...	1
Conroy, ...	3	Haveron, ...	7
Conway, ...	3	Henry, ...	1
Costello, ...	1	Henaghan, ...	4
Cosgrove, ...	1	Heaveran, ...	3
Coyle, ...	5	Hogan, ...	1
Craine, ...	7	Hopkins, ...	1
Cuff, ...	1	Horkin, ...	4
Curduff, ...	4	Howard, ...	3
Curley, ...	1	Hughes, ...	1
Daviti, ...	3	Joyce, ...	7
Deane, ...	8	Keane, ...	5
Dent, ...	1	Kelly, ...	5
Devanny, ...	1	Keeraghan, ..	1
Diamond, ...	2	Kearney, ...	1
Dinnery, ...	2	Kennedy, ...	6
Diver, ...	2	Kilker, ...	3
Dixon, ...	16	Kilkoyne, ...	1
Dogherty, ...	1	King, ...	1
Doogan, ...	2	Lally, ...	9
Dunleavy, ...	4	Langan, ...	1
Earley, ...	6	Lavelle, ...	31
Egan, ...	2	Lenaghan	1
Follan, ...	1	Loftus, ...	1
Friel, ...	1	Lynch, ...	1
Gallagher, ..	8	Lynskey, ...	2
Gammell, ...	1	Lyons, ...	1
Gannon, ...	3	Malowney, ...	1
Garvan, ...	1	M'Andrew, ..	8

[1] Not native.

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LIST OF SURNAMES—*continued.*

551

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
M'Cormack, ..	1	Neely, ...	1
M'Dermott, ..	1	O'Boy, ...	1
M'Donnell, ..	6	O'Donnell, ...	4
M'Loughlin, ..	1	O'Mallen, ...	1
M'Ginty, ...	4	O'Malley, ...	2
M'Grath, ...	5	Padden, ...	16
M'Guinness, ..	2	Palmer, ...	1
M'Hale, ...	4	Philbin, ...	3
M'Intyre, ...	3	Quigley, ...	1
M'Mannam, ..	2	Reilly, ...	27
M'Namara, ..	1	Richards, ...	1
M'Neely, ...	1	Ruane, ...	5
M'Nulty, ...	3	Ruddy, ...	7
Meenaghan, ..	14	Scanlon, ...	2
Monaghan, ..	20	Tighe, ...	10
Monnelly, ..	4	Togher, ...	12
Monghan, ..	4	Tollet, ...	1
Moran, ...	1	Toole, ...	2
Mullaney, ...	1	Walker, ...	2
Mu phy, ...	9	Walshe, ...	10
Murray, ...	4	Ward, ...	1
Nallon, ...	2	Williams, ...	4
Neary, ...	1	Wilson, ...	4

While the original localities of some of these names are easily traced, those of others are very obscure, and this for several reasons: one of these is the anglicising of old Irish surnames, often into forms bearing little or no resemblance to the original; which here, as in other parts of the country, has taken place to a very great extent: a second is the hibernicising of the names and branches of Welsh and Anglo-Norman families, *e.g.* M'Andrew, which has been adopted by a branch of the Barretts: a third difficulty is the use by many of the people of double surnames, one employed when speaking Irish, the other in speaking English; thus, Togher is anglicised Swift.

The following names are traceable, either by tradition, or by historical evidence.

(A.) The ancient surnames of the territory (Hy Fiachrach), in which this district was included, still persist to a large extent, though in altered forms; and all the principal of these now extant, as far as

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551 could be ascertained, are given below in both the ancient and the modern forms.

Modern Form.	Ancient Name.
Boland,	O'Beollain.
Burnes,	Mac Conboirne.
Conroy,	O'Mailchonairi.
Connolly,	Mac Conghaile.
Crain or Crean,	O'Criadhchen.
Doogan = Egan,	Mac Egan.
Earley,	O'Mailfomhair.
Friel,	O'Farghil (from Ulster originally).
Gannon,	Mag Fhionnain.
Gaughan,	O'Gaibhtheachain.
Heaveran & Haveron,	O'Fuathmharain.
Henaghan,	O'h-Eidhneachan.
Hughes,	O'h-Aodha.
Kean, or Kane,	O'Cathan, or O'Caithneadh.
Kearney,	O'Cearnaigh.
Lavelle,	O'Maolfabhaill.
Loftus,	O'Lachtna.
Lyons,	O'Liathain (?).
Mac Dermott,	———
Mac Hale,	Mac Cele.
Mac Grath,	O'Moran.
Meenaghan,	O'Muinhneachain.
Moran,	O'Moran.
Monghan,	Mochain (originally from Roscommon) (?).
Murphy,	O'Murchada.
Murray,	O'Muireadhaigh.
Ruane,	O'Ruaidhin.
Ruddy,	Brodaibh.
Scanlon,	Scanlain.

Although these are the only names which I have been able to trace, (chiefly from O'Donovan), yet there can be no doubt that many other surnames of the region are quite as long established, though the families bearing them may not have been of sufficient historical importance to have received record.

(B.) The next in order of antiquity are Welsh or Anglo-Norman families, who, for so long, held the reins of power in this part of

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Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(C.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Doghertys, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(D.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(E.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dennistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. 463 241 There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. [351] The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct. [412]

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [407] [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

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241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive,
372 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time.
[435] The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen, and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

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from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

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58 not, like an Inishbofin man, consider himself disgraced, nor is he inconsolable.

Engaged couples or newly married people often come in for an amount of attention from the children of the neighbourhood, which, however flattering it may be, is decidedly embarrassing; they are followed about and cheered whenever they appear together. Weddings
585 are occasions of family festivities, and are usually followed by a dance.
533 "Straw-boys" go round to the house on these occasions and take part in the dancing. They are disguised in tall conical-shaped straw
292 masks, adorned with strips of red and green cloth, white shirts decorated with coloured ribbons, and white or red petticoats. The band is headed by a captain and a mate, who enter the house first and declare that they are shipwrecked sailors, and that they have come to dance at the wedding; the captain then dances with the bride, the mate with the bridesmaid, and the rest of the band with the other girls. It is usual to treat the straw-boys to drink, but they often refuse it, and never demand money, or indulge in any rowdy conduct.

The young couple usually set up house on their own account,
591 except in the case of the youngest son, who inherits his parents' house and property, in which case the bride goes to live with her people-in-law.

When a person is dying, windows and doors are thrown open, and
763 the clock (if there be one) stopped; it is considered unlucky or im-
777 proper for any of those in the house to cry until after the death has actually occured.

Wakes are still held in this district, and many of the old obser-
764 vances and games are kept up; but owing to the discouragement of these by the clergy, the people show a great reluctance to give any information on the matter. A good deal of drinking usually takes place on these occasions.

The funeral customs have undergone some change during the past thirty years, but much still remains that is worthy of notice. A grave is not usually dug until the coffin reaches the graveyard, if begun before hand it is never dug on a Monday, or commenced at least, but a start is made, if necessity compels, by raising a few sods on Sunday. It is beleved to be unlucky to bury a corpse on New Year's Day, an act
[777] which is thought to bring misfortune to the whole neighbourhood.

The coffin is usually taken out the back door of the house, and conveyed to the cemetery by the longest route. At the graveyard the *caoine* is raised by the women immediately after the religious ceremony

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is concluded. The burial grounds are kept much better than in many other parts of the West; and on Inishkea, as well as in the Mullet, it it is customary to decorate the graves with large white pebbles, and to place at the head a neatly made wooden cross. A curious custom exists, some instances of which were observed at Tarmoncarra, of placing tobacco pipes on the graves; these are the pipes which were left unused after the wake. What the reason is for so placing them could not be ascertained, but it is considered extremely unlucky to remove them. 764 [777]

Unbaptised infants are interred in separate burying grounds by themselves, several of which are in the district. 766

It is now no longer customary for the people of the Mullet to bury their dead in Inisglora, the last instance of this having occured over thirty years ago. Formerly many families used regularly to make use of this island as a cemetery, always taking a body over from a point of the mainland opposite, which was stated by tradition to have once been connected with the main, but to have got separated afterwards by a channel which has gradually widened. 773 764

Maxwell,[1] writing in 1832, says—"There are no people on earth more punctilious in the interment of their dead than the peasantry of this remote district. A strange and unaccountable custom exists of burying different families resident on the main in island cemeteries, and great difficulty and often great danger attends the conveyance of a corpse to its insulated resting place. No inducement will make these wild people inter a body apart from the tomb of its fathers, and, if a boat will live, the corpse will be transported to the family tomb. At times the weather renders this impracticable, but the deceased is kept for many days unburied in the hope that the storm may subside; and only when frail mortality evinces unequivocal tokens of decay will the relatives consent to unite its dust with the ashes of a stranger." 764

A considerable number of migratory labourers leave this district annually to do harvesting work in England, on the proceeds of which work they in part support themselves during the winter. The number doing thus has decreased somewhat of late years. 167

There is not much to be said about the everyday mode of life. The men fish and attend to their holdings; the women manage household affairs and assist at field work in times of pressure. The people are early risers in the summer months, and, as a rule, retire to bed early, few lights being seen in the hamlets after nine or ten p.m. 512

[1] Maxwell, W. H., "Wild sports of the West," chap. XIX.

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241 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one
231 time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow fastened to the horses tail.

The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed
513 in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and *is regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the
[834] strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but
262 fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more
[272] extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal)
264 stirabout, buttermilk.

[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

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Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or 264
stirabout and milk.

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being [439]
exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small [437]
dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money.

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit dis- 273
tilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent.

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear 291
to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character.

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all [439]
shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local [444]
shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel.

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the [443]
poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction.

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

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291 the town, where they sit down by the roadside, and put on their boots and stockings, taking them off again when starting for home.

The old-fashioned frock or kilt-shaped garment, made of red or grey homespun, and buttoned up the back, is still worn by boys up to twelve years of age.

The dress of the women is on the whole less changed than that of the men. Many of the elderly women wear the white-frilled cap, others have a small red kerchief tied under the chin. Over the shoulders a shawl of tartan or other striking pattern is folded, but this is not so frequently of a bright red, as in other districts, as the darker colours seem to be more in favour; beneath the shawl is a boddice of some dark material. The petticoat is short, but is only occasionally the typical red homespun of the western peasant. It is often grey, or dyed purple, blue, or some other bright colour, and is sometimes ornamented by a few rows of black braid. Aprons of check are much worn. Many of the older women wear the heavy blue cloak with cape and hood on Sundays and holidays. The younger women to a large extent copy modern fashions on festive occasions, but the result is not happy, as their taste in colours is curious, and they certainly look better in native costume.

286 A great variety of homespuns are made in the district, there being several weavers who turn out coarse flannel, tweeds, and friezes, some of which are very good specimens of hand-loom work. The dyes 386 are nearly all imported, indigo and the made-up aniline dyes being [824] most used. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), which was at one time pretty generally employed for this purpose, is now only used for dying stockings.

5. *Dwellings.*—The habitations of the people present considerable 342 variety, some being extremely poor, others of a fairly good class. The description given below applies solely to the houses of the people of the rural parts, and not to Belmullet (which is a cleanly and well-built little town, composed almost entirely of good-slated houses of two stories) nor to the houses of the proprietors or large holders.

Of late years there has been much improvement in the style of dwelling, but few indeed of the old turf cabins remain; while the semi-subterranean huts, some of which were inhabited in 1841, have become altogether extinct.

The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1846) describes the majority of dwellings as being built partly of stone and partly of turf, and consisting of only one or at most two rooms.

An average dwelling now is built of stone, sometimes dry, at others

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cemented by "dobe" or tempered clay, or sometimes mortar. It 342
generally consists of two apartments, the kitchen and the "room." The kitchen, which is usually of pretty large size, is used as the living room; it has a floor of beaten clay. This room has one, or perhaps, two windows of small size, and seldom made to open. These are always glazed now-a-days, but in the last century they were covered with oiled sheepskin. The house has two doors, both of which open directly into the kitchen, and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the partition wall of the two apartments.

The end of the kitchen farthest from the fire is used as a pen for [231]
the cattle and pigs. The fowl roost where they can, often on the backs of the cattle.

Above the beams or couples in this part of the kitchen boards are sometimes placed, making a sort of loft, in which fishing and boat tackle, agricultural implements, and other articles are stored.

The fireplace is built against the partition wall between the [354]
kitchen and the room. It consists of a stone hearth backed by a "hob," also of stone, built out slantwise behind it to make the fire draw well. This class of house has no chimney, the smoke escaping through a circular hole in the roof immediately above the hearth.

"The room" is a smaller apartment than the kitchen, (measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet) it has one or two small windows, and the floor is sometimes boarded.

The furniture of the house is poor and scanty, that of the kitchen 352
consisting of a bedstead, rudely made up of drift-wood, two posts being driven into the floor, a longitudinal piece uniting these and two cross-beams at head and foot resting by one end on the posts, and having the other built into the wall. Sometimes it is built up into four-poster shape and has curtains. The bedding is composed either of feather ticks, or, with the poorer people, of straw, covered with coarse sacking. The bedclothes are often very dirty. There is a dresser covered with earthenware plates, cups, and jugs of a poor and cheap description, a table, two or three chairs, and a couple of forms or settles. A long straw rope is usually stretched across the apartment to hang clothes to dry on. Worsted when spun, nets, &c., are hung from the couples.

"The room" contains one or two beds of the sort described, a chair or two, a table (in some cases), and a large chest.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual three-legged pot, a 415
griddle, a gridiron, and sometimes a pot oven, a few staved wooden piggins, a boran or sheepskin sieve, and, in the mountains and islands, a quern, now only used usually for grinding barley for cattle food,

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415 though it may be put to the less innocent purpose of preparing malt for poteen, and a spinning-wheel of the usual type. For light at night
373 modern lamps are coming into use, but in many houses the "flare" is used. It consists of a rude sconce, in which is fastened a cylindrical reservoir for oil, closed at the top by a lid, and having a spout like that of a coffee-pot, through which the wick is drawn. Rush lights are still used by some.

The house is often whitewashed outside; the roof is thatch, of
342 straw in most localities, but on the islands, and some places in the peninsula, bent is use instead. This is laid on over "scraws" of grass-turf and fastened down by sougans (straw ropes), the ends of which may be attached to pegs driven into the walls, or have long pieces of
[284] wood or heavy stones fastened to them. These ropes are often arranged in a net work so as to hold the thatch more securely. Coir rope, bought in Belmullet, is now used by some instead of sougans. The gable is stepped or cut away so that the thatch does not project over the end wall.

There are several other types of houses, though the style just described is the most common. Most of the newer houses and those building have chimneys, pig-styes of turf or stone, and in some cases byres. Few of the old one-roomed dwellings, built partly or altogether of turf, are still to be seen, but there are a number of one-roomed huts of stone, many of which have no windows.

The most primitive habitations in the district, and perhaps in Ireland, are the rude huts (*boolies*) on Inishglora, inhabited during the lobster fishing season by the men of Inishkea; they are about a dozen in number, rudely built of dry stone and thatched with "scraws." There is not room to stand upright in them, the height from floor to roof being about 5 feet. Internally they contain a rude bunk filled with straw for sleeping in and a few large stones to sit upon. Cooking appears to be done out of doors. Successive batches of men live in these huts for about three months of the year. Some of the poorest houses on the mainland are in the isolated and primitive village of Fallmore, where few of the dwellings have windows and few or none chimneys. The houses on the islands are decidedly among the best in the district. Many are whitewashed inside, and the furniture is of a superior class, abundant material being thrown up as drift wood. The beds are four-posted structures, with flat board tops, and some of them have bright-coloured curtains, and the bedding is clean and tidy-looking.

489 6. *Transport.*—Lying as it does far from towns of any size, and separated from the nearest by a wide stretch of wild and thinly-

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populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are 492
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few
boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class
boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are
about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their
turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate [609]
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish

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814 is likely to succeed in collecting much. Fortunately there is a
[609] resident (the Rev. P. A. O'Reilly), who is engaged in collecting the old Irish songs of the district, several of which he has already published. As to the legends, many of these have been recorded by C. O. and Mr. Knight, to whose works the reader is referred.

The following notes, mainly dealing with what may be termed minor folk-lore, were some of them obtained from fishermen and others of the natives, but mainly through the kindness of several residents, some of whom desired that their names should not be mentioned.

115 1. *Customs and Beliefs.*—For the majority of the notes on these I
814 am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, who, being a native of the district, and personally acquainted with nearly everyone in it, has an exceptionally large knowledge of the subject; for a large part of what remains I have also to thank Messrs. F. C. Wallace, D.I. R.I.C., Belmullet, and P. T. O'Reilly, Carn.

777 A very large number of things are considered lucky or the reverse. It is unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, on which day also no change of residence should be made, a Friday should rather be chosen, as that is the lucky day for moving. To meet a red-haired woman on starting out in the morning, to mention a priest while fishing, to take fish out of a house without sprinkling some salt on it, to sell milk without putting in a pinch of salt, to give fire out of the house on May-day, or to anyone in whose dwelling a sick person may be, all these are unlucky. People "born with teeth"
[845] are unlucky also; but to be "born with a caul" is a sign of great good fortune, though should the original owner ever see it his luck will depart; the possession of a caul is believed to protect against death by drowning. A mole on the face, if "above the breath," is considered to have the same protective influence.

787 Death within the year is believed to be the fate of the man who has the temerity to make an addition to the western side of his house, or to build out at the back; several instances of men who died within a short time after thus offending are sure to be told to the incredulous.

The banshee, the death-watch, the creaking of furniture, and the howling of a dog at night are all looked upon as death-warnings. Several persons were met with who asserted that they had heard the banshee before the death of relatives.

585 At weddings the bride and bridegroom must step over the threshold of the chapel door together, as whichever goes out first will be the first to die.

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The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [253]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be buried alive with its wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [823] [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

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775 bank by the roadside; after a time it rises, walks across the road to the mound, and then vanishes.

The ghost of Major —— is reported to be sometimes seen riding a phantom horse at a spot near Carn, and circles on the grass are pointed out as marking the scene of his equestrian feats; he is also said to ride at times to Bingham Castle.

776 There is a strong belief in fairies, and many people are to be found who say that they have seen them. They are said to dance at night and cause fairy rings; they dwell in grassy mounds and travel from place to place, using stems of the ragweed as horses.

The mirage which is sometimes seen off the coast is ascribed to [822] the fairies if it assumes the appearance of boats or ships; they are believed to have been seen to land on the shore, haul up their boats, and vanish. Many stories are told respecting the impudent pranks of these beings, and to their revenge for some injury, disease in man and cattle is sometimes ascribed. A man may become paralysed or waste away and die from fairy influence as well as from the evil eye, but their malice may have a less serious ending, and may only produce some disfigurement. Some time ago a man was one day walking homewards, when he saw lying on the road a bright new razor; he picked it up and took it home with him, but after shaving [828] with it got *sycosis menti*, and the implement was then declared to be a "fairy razor."

Women dying in puerperal fever are believed to have been taken [775] by the fairies to act as wet-nurses, and infants may be "taken away," and changelings put in their places. The changeling may be got rid of by putting on a roaring fire and throwing him behind it, when he [372] at once vanishes in the smoke. The *ignus fatuus* is believed to be caused by the fairies to lead people astray.

The attentions of these creatures are not expended on human beings alone, for they may revenge themselves on those who vex them by attacking domestic animals. Cattle becoming ill suddenly are supposed to be "shot" by the fairies, and the owners will often go to a great deal of trouble to find a person who possess a "fairy [823] stone," which is the only remedy. These stones are treasured very carefully and are kept wrapped up in a piece of cloth; they are used by rubbing them on the afflicted animal, and repeating a charm or prayer. Unfortunately no specimen of these stones was seen, so it cannot be stated positively whether they are flint arrow-heads or not.

A farm-house at a place called Illaunglass, in the Mullet, has a tale connected with it, illustrating the causing of disease in cattle by

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the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 178 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

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832 believed in, or at least spoken of, though not practised. It is called the spancel, and is thus described by C. O.[1]:—"This spancel, called in Irish 'stheioul dhrum agus tharragh,' signifying the skin of the back and of the belly, consists of a continuous band of skin taken from round the length of the body, viz. from the side of one foot up the outside of that leg and side, over the head and down the other side to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the stripe meets where it first set out; it is used as a love charm, and its power is believed to be irresistible, it being only necessary in order to secure the affections of the victim, to tie the spancel round him while asleep; if he does not awake during the operation all *must* turn out to the wish of the operator; if he does awake, he dies before the end of the year, so the poor desired one has no escape." The same author mentions several instances of this, which were said to have occurred shortly before he wrote (1841), one of which, the discovery of three young women taking the spancel off a corpse, is still remembered by some of the older inhabitants. There
312 are several holy wells in the district, but the most famous is the well
778 of St. Brendan, on Inishglora, the water of which is said to remain sweet and pure if drawn by a man, but to turn bloody and become
823 full of worms if a woman has the temerity to take it. Many tales are told of the misfortunes which have happened to women who persisted in drawing water from this well after being warned. There is now resident in Belmullet an old man who lived for some years on Inishglora. This man solemnly declared to the Rev. P. O'Reilly and the writer that he had three times cleared out the well after women had taken water from it, and that on each occasion it was "full of blood and corruption"; he also said that from the time he began to clean out the well until the job was completed no water flowed in, though it began to come as soon as the cleansing was finished. He added that if a woman were left alone on the island with only a male child of a month old, and she wanted to get water, the vessel would have to be held by the child's hand to prevent the water from becoming bloody.

[753] 2. *Charms and Leechcraft.*—Disease is often ascribed to supernatural agencies, and for this reason is often treated by charms or
755 incantations. There are several local "wise" men and women who treat disorders partly by means of charms, partly by herbal and animal remedies. In some cases the idea underlying the treatment

[1] "Erris and Tyrawley," p. 90.

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seems to be the transferrence of the malady to some inanimate object, which, if found, may transmit the disease to the finder. 755

Charms, &c.—For "the Rose" (erysipelas) the following is sometimes made use of, but to be efficacious it is thought that it must always be applied by a person of the opposite sex to the patient:—

The operator rubs salt butter into the part affected, and prays over it, this process being repeated twice a week. (Communicated by a friend, who has seen it employed.)

For the same—the old woman who performs this takes ten pebbles from a well or brook, one she throws back into the water, the other nine she takes to the patient, and having muttered some prayers over them she puts each down on its upper side (*i.e.* the side prayed over, and taking them up one by one, she rubs them on the affected part in the name of the Trinity, and of the *King of the Rose.* She then takes the stones to a stream and throws them in, praying that so and so (naming the patient) may never have "the rose" so long as the stones remain there.

The following is employed for a mote or piece of barley beard in the eye. The woman who practises this takes a clean bowl and a jug or cup full of clear water, she rinses her mouth with the water until it ceases to be sullied, when she takes a fresh quantity in her mouth and holds it there until she has repeated, or is supposed to repeat, some prayer or charm. She then empties her mouth into the clean vessel, and shows the mote floating in it.[1] Written charms for the toothache are sometimes worn about the person.

For a headache "head measuring" is employed; several old woman practise it. The cause of the pain is believed to be the opening of the head by separation of the bones. To cure this state of affairs. the woman takes a cord which she passes round the head, and marks the length; this done she mutters a charm or prayer and measures again, showing the patient that the circumference is now less and that the head is closed, a kerchief is usually kept bound around the brows for some time afterwards to prevent recurrence of the pain. There is great faith in the efficacy of the touch of a seventh son, especially in "evil" and ringworm. An Inishkea fisherman stated that on the islands it is believed that toothache may be completely removed and will never return if the tooth be rubbed with a dead man's finger.

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[1] I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. H. Hewson, P.P., Belmullet, for the description of these two charms both of which he has seen performed.

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845 In cases of difficult labour a ploughman may be called in to lift and shake the woman gently, which it is thought will produce the desired effect. The reason given is that as he shakes and scatters the seed on the earth, so also he ought to produce a good effect here.

[752] A nail which has got into the foot is always thrown into the fire.

Leechcraft.—Though regular medical assistance is usually sought 757 for serious complaints, yet, the more common ailments are often 278 treated by the people themselves, several of the older men and women enjoying some local celebrity for this.

The following list of substances used medicinally was collected; it is believed to be but a small fraction of the local pharmacopœia.

(A.) Animal substances.—Saliva is used for many purposes; thus button scurvy is treated by spitting on the floor and rubbing on the mixed saliva and dust with the right thumb.

Seal oil is rubbed in for sprains and rheumatism, for which it has a great reputation locally; it is sold in Belmullet at a pretty high price.

The tongue of a fox is used as a poultice to extract thorns, &c.

(B.) Herbs.—Mr. Nolan kindly provided the following list of plants in use in the district, most of which he has seen used. The qualities of many of these were also described to me by several of the country people.

Dandelion (*Leoontodon taraxacum*), used for "liver troubles."

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), used as a styptic.

Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*), used, boiled in milk, for heart-burn.

Self-heal (locally called Heartsease) (*Brunella vulgaris*), used for palpitations.

Mountain sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), used "for the heart" and in cough mixtures.

Ground-wood, or Bog-bark (not identified), used for gravel (boiled in milk).

Bugloss (*Echium* or *Lycopsis*), used, in poultices with oat-meal, for abscesses, &c.

Ground-ivy (*Nepeta glechoma*), used, as a "tea," for "heart beat," or mixed with other herbs for a cough.

Nettles (*Urtica dioica*), used, with ginger, for "wind on the stomach."

Ivy (*Hedera helix*), leaves used as a cap for a "scabby head."

Burdock root (*Arctium lappa*),
Furze tops (*Ulex*),
Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*),
Carageen moss (*Sphærococcus europæus*),
} usually combined and boiled with sugar-stick to form a cough-syrup.

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Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), used as an expectorant. 757
Marsh-mallow (*Althæa officinalis*), used as poultice for "sore breast." 278
Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), used as an infusion for coughs.
Parsely (*Petroselinum sativum*), boiled in milk for "gravel."
Belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*), used for palpitation or "heart beat."

It will be seen from this list that several of the remedies used are officinal; and others, though not officially recognised, possess medicinal properties.

3. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many of these current in the district, but only a small number could be collected. Among all these, few bearing on the early history of this region seem to have come down to the present time, except the tradition of a great battle fought at Cross, in the Mullet, between the people of the country, and an invading army under a king of Munster who was slain in the fight, and over whose remains a tumulus was erected. 173

There is, so far as could be ascertained, no tradition as to the origin of the earlier inhabitants, either of the mainland, or of the islands; but the families whose ancestors came from Ulster two centuries ago are well known, and sometimes are called by the name Ultagh, instead of their own surnames. [551]

It would be expected that there would be some tales connected with the duns, of which there are several, but very few seem to be known, even the oldest inhabitants not seeming to have heard any history of them. The story of Dun Donald, related by Knight,[1] the vague tradition that Dunamoa was built by the Burkes, and besieged by the "Danes"; and another concerning Dun Fiachrach, which is believed to have been a favourite resting place for the children of Lir, and the fishermen of the neighbourhood say that the founder of the fort used to ride a "water-horse," on which he could leap across the deep caves on to the cliffs on each side of the dun. Many of the people ascribe these forts to "the Danes."

The favourite tales and poems are either ancient myth, or of a semi-religious character; legends of the saints forming a large portion of the old chroniclers' stock.

Mr Knight says[2]—"It is not from these cairns (Seefins) alone we claim Fingal and Ossian as *peculiarly* ours; we have heard them in *real song*, and many a winter's evening have I heard the old chronicler lying on his back quietly, in the bed beyond the fire, repeat the

[1] P. Knight, Erris, &c., p. 166. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

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173 'deed of old' to delighted listening ears, but in language so ancient as to be now almost unintelligible to most Irish speakers of the modern school." The tradition of St. Brendan's discovery of America is well known, but the statement made by old writers about the supposed anti-putrefactive nature of the soil of Inishglora, does not seem to be recognised by the people of the district, who point to the bones among the ruins in disproof of the story.

O'Flaherty, in his "Ogygia," mentions the island in the following
539 lines:—

> "In Innisglore on Erris shore,
> Should we the bodies of our sires explore
> We'ed find them blooming, fresh and fair,
> No human flesh can rot or perish there."

The Priest's Leap.—Just below the sea face of Dunnamoe, and
173 separated from it by a narrow channel, is a large rock, which, tradition
823 relates, was once part of the cliff on which the fort is built. It is said that once in the old times, some say the time of Cromwell, a priest was saying Mass at Tarmoncarra, when he was surprised by the soldiery. Not knowing whither to fly, he ran towards the cliffs and reached them at this spot, his pursuers coming close behind him. Just when all seemed lost the large mass of rock on which he was broke away from the cliff and settled down in the sea as an islet, bearing down the priest with it, comfortably seated, in a niche, known as the "priest's chair," sheltered from the bullets of his enemies. Thus protected he remained until night, when he was taken off in a curragh by his people. The place has since been known as the "Priest's Leap."

The Namhoge or Neewoge.—There was formerly on Iniskea a small
778 stone figure called the *neewoge* (little saint), which was believed to have great power over the weather, and was accordingly treated with great reverence and used to be invoked for favourable winds. It is said that a pirate landed on the island, and after carrying off all that was portable, set fire to the houses, with the exception of the one in which the *neewoge* was kept, which did not take fire. Search was made for the cause and the image was taken out and broken. The *neewoge* never fully recovered this treatment. His power, though still great, was not the same as it had been.

Some years ago the attention of the parish priest became directed to the existence of this image, and having obtained the stone by a stratagem from the woman who was its custodian he threw it into the sea. As he died not very long after this, some of the islanders ascribe

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his death to his interference with this figure. An Inishkea man spoke about the matter with much indignation even after the lapse of years, and said that they had never known misfortune or hunger in the island until after the distruction of this *neewoge.* 778

Many different accounts have been given of the image itself. One writer (C. O.) states that it was a stone figure of rude workmanship, and that it was dressed in a suit of homespun, renewed every year.

The description given by those who have seen it agree in stating that it was not a statue but a small flat stone. One informant believed it to be part of the head of a stone figure. This was enveloped in a small bag of homespun, which was replaced when it got old and soiled, and was kept in a blind window or recess in the wall in one of the houses.

St. Brendan and the Devil.—During my visit to Inishglora some of the Inishkea fishermen, who were camped there at the time, pointed out that no grass grew on a part of the island, and gave the following explanation :—St. Brendan was one day disturbed in his devotions by the devil, who appeared to him in the form of a beautiful girl and tempted him. The saint indignantly repulsed the temptress, and drove her towards the end of the island, blessing the soil as he went, but at the point where the grass ends, Satan changed his form and assumed the shape of a ram, which so astonished the saint that in his excitement he ceased blessing and gave chase to the evil one who ran to the rocks and jumped into the sea. The unblessed land is that on which the grass does not grow. 776

VI. ARCHÆOLOGY.

The few notes made in this section do not purport to be fully descriptive, but merely to indicate the nature of the antiquities of the region, which are of importance in the study of the people as bearing on the history of their past, and to direct the attention of archaeologists to the quantity of material worthy of study and record which is still to be met with in this part of county Mayo. 172 178

1. *Survivals.*—The district is comparatively rich in these, though many articles in use in the localities previously reported on are now quite extinct in Erris. The primitive condition of many of the houses, the absence of chimneys, and the custom of taking cattle into the dwellings have already been referred to. 178

The quern is still in use in several houses, especially on the islands and in the remoter localities, though now only employed for 178 412

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178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen.*

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tinware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

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is perfect, that overhanging the sea on the south side. Where the original wall-face shows it is like the forts of Aran, composed of blocks of stone, fitted neatly together without mortar; it is about ten feet high and eight feet in thickness. The ground in front of the wall was originally provided with a fosse and a wide belt of stone-stakes fixed upright in the earth, as in Dun Ængus on Inishmore, Aran; but all of these, with the exception of a few stumps, have now disappeared. A full description of this fort is given by O'Donovan in his MS. letters to the Ordnance Survey. The name of this fort, Dunnamoe, is now believed by the people to be *Dun-na-mbo*, or the fort of the cows, a name, the origin of which is stated in a MS. letter[1] by a Mr. Owen Heenaghan, of Emlybeg, in the Mullet, dated May, 1821. to be explained by the local tradition, that the cattle of the people were kept there at the time of the battle at Cross, to be afterwards referred to. O'Donovan, however, believed it to have been originally named *Dun Modha*, after Modha, a chief of the Clann Huamore, Belgae, who also gave his name to Inis Modha, or the Clew Bay Islands. 172

The other forts are *Dun Fiachra*, which consists of an earthen wall across the narrowest part of the neck of a long narrow peninsula, with precipitous coast, situated in the townland of Aghadoon; the remains of a stone doon, "Spinkadoon," of somewhat larger area, are situated a short distance to the north of this fort. *Dunadearg*, the fort of the red man, is also situated on the west coast of the Mullet. *Porth*, an earthen dun situated near the rectory, is barely traceable. *Dunavinalla*, a large fort, stands on a rocky height just outside the inlet of Portacloy.

There are several monuments of early date, the most remarkable of which is *Leacht var Erris*, the monument of the slaughter of Erris, near Cross, traditionally said to mark the sepulchre of a King of Munster, who was slain there in a battle with the people of Connaught. It is an irregularly pyramidal cairn, about fifteen feet in height; it lies within the remains of a nearly circular entrenchment; there are several such cairns in the neighbourhood, one of which, on being opened, was found to contain the skeleton of a man buried in the upright position. Leacht var Erris was for a long time buried beneath the sandhills, though its name and situation, and the history of the battle were still remembered by the people; but one night early in the present century a great storm blew off the sand

[1] This letter is pasted inside the cover of a copy of Knight's "Erris" in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy.

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and left the monument exposed, as well as a wide space round it, which was strewed with human bones. There are also the remains of an ancient cemetery, containing many graves, or cists of stone flags in the sands of Cross; these tombs are arranged in groups of three, lying parallel to one another. C. O. states that the remains in these had been burnt, as the bones were charred; polished flat stones and fragments of rings of steatite were discovered in these graves. About half a mile to the southward is another stone tomb, known as *Leacht na Calliagh*, or the hag's monument.

Some of the ruins at Inisglora were considered by O'Donovan and others to have originally been the dwellings of the aboriginal inhabitants, the Damnonii, converted in after times to monastic use. These are, three *tor-thighs*, or bee-hive shaped houses, the largest *tor-thigh mor* being 10½ feet in diameter,[1] the other about 10 feet; an artificial cave, or *uaigh*, now closed up, said to communicate with some of the other buildings; and a *caisiol* or circular-walled enclosure containing these. It would appear to have been about fifty yards in diameter. In 1838 the foundations of about fifty-six yards of this *caisiol* were traceable.[2]

The Christian antiquities, though interesting to the archæologist, are of little importance in a survey of this nature, and consequently require but slight mention.[3] They consist of ruins of churches and monasteries, crosses and wells. On the mainland of the Mullet the ruins are not of any very ancient date, the oldest probably being St. Derible's Church at Fallmore, in the immediate neighbourhood of which are her grave and her "keeve" or vat, at which two "patrons" used to be held annually, which were abolished about 1825 owing to some disorders arising out of them.[4] The other remains are the Church of Tarmoncarra, of which only a small portion of the wall remains, and Cross Abbey, a structure of comparatively modern date, having been founded posterior to 1216. "By an inquisition taken, 27th Queen Elizabeth, this monastery was found in possession of three-quarters of land, with the tithes of the same each quarter being valued at 13*s.* 4*d.* sterling annually" (Knight, p. 111).

The ecclesiastical buildings on the islands are of earlier date, the

[1] This is now known to the people as "St. Brendan's Cell."
[2] O'Donovan, MS. letters.
[3] For information as to these, see Lord Dunraven's "Notes on Irish Architecture."
[4] This church is fully described and illustrated in Lord Dunraven's "Notes on Irish Architecture."

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oldest probably being the small oratory of St. Brendan, on Inisglora, of dry stone, and measuring twelve feet by eight internally.[1] This building contains the remains of the wooden statute of St. Brendan, long famed on this coast; it used formerly be kissed by all visitors, and miraculous powers were imputed to it; now from exposure and damp it has been reduced to a shapeless lump of decayed wood; besides this there are two churches, *Teampull na-bfear*, the church of the men, 23 feet by 10 feet, and *Teampull na-mban*, the church of the women. There are also small enclosures, supposed to be the garden of the monastic settlement, in which garlic grows wild. The island was inhabited as late as 1616 by a monk named Walsh. On North Inishkea there is an old church which was dedicated to St. Columbkille; it has a doorway of the wedge shape, and is in fairly good preservation, the islanders being very scrupulous in the care of their antiquities. 172

On South Inishkea the foundations of a similar building may be traced. The holy wells are those of St. Derible on Inishkea and at Fallmore, and the celebrated well of St. Brendan on Inishglora; the belief in the antifeminine qualities of this well seem to have arisen from its being inside the bonds of the monastery. Finally, there are several ancient crosses, the most curious being the incised slabs of Inishkea and Duvillane; the others are the cross of Tarmoncarra referred to in a previous section, and the monumental stone near Fallmore, known as *Lecht Mic Maithin, Ioris*, after a native of that region, whose house was at that time the most western in Connaught; he does not seem to have been distinguished for anything else.

(*b*) There have of late years been many finds of antiquities consisting chiefly of articles of ecclesiastical use, mainly in North Inishkea. Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, has obtained in the shell mounds on Inishkea a considerable number of pins and needles of bone, bronze, and copper; some of these are of curious workmanship. He also possesses the fragments of a bowl of composition with a jet edge, found by some of the islanders, who broke it up as being a "fairy bowl." An antique bell (bronze?) was found some time ago in the ruins of St. Columbkille's Church, North Inishkea, by Phillip Lavelle, king of the island, who preserved it.

Other objects of later date have been found—a chalice of the seventeenth century, on Inishkea, a pectorial cross and pyx of silver, dated 1669, some coins, &c.[2]

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[1] The antiquities of Inishglusir are described in "Notes on Erris."

[2] Since the above was writen several querns of smaller size than any now in use have been found in some of the duns.

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VII.—History.

175 The history of the district forms a necessary portion of a report such as this, to show what changes have occurred in the composition of the population, what elements have been imported, and their effects. Unfortunately the material for a history of Erris is both meagre and much scattered, long periods being left unaccounted for, except by vague tradition or by the fanciful conjectures of some writers.

The following sketch, though not pretending to be complete, gives an outline of what seems to be the recorded history as gathered from the few writers who have dealt with the subject.

Erris was anciently known as *Iorrus Domhnann* from its earliest recorded possessors the *Domhnanns* or Damnonii ("deep diggers"), a party of Firbolgs, who, landing at Broad Haven under the leadership of their chiefs *Genann* and *Rudhraighe*, settled the surrounding country, which they held for some centuries, together with another tribe of the same people, the Gamaradii (*Gamhraidhe Iorris*). They were first subjugated to some extent by the *Danaans*, and in the second century, were, according to the annalists, conquered and enslaved by Tuathal Teachtmar, a Milesian or Scotic monarch; it does not appear, however, that the conquerers in either case drove out or exterminated the original population, who were probably too numerous for that, and it is even doubtful if it was permanently subjugated, as many of the old writers speak of the Belgae as being still in power in the fifth century. From this period until the year 1180, there is no record of the people. Adamnan indeed speaks of the district as Erris of the Damnonii, but does not state whether that people were still in power or no. Respecting this long silence, O'Donovan says (MS. Letters): "I, who have felt deep interest in the history of Erris these seven years, and who have studied a great part of the "*rags and rhymes*" of history, have not yet discovered any notice of it from the period of the Belgae till the year 1180, when the Fiachrian O'Caithniadh[1] is mentioned as the chief of it.

The following are the records in the "Annals of the Four Masters" respecting this family:—

"A.D. 1180.—Aodh O'Caithniadh, lord of Iorris, was treacherously slain by O'Ceallachain at Cill Chomain."

"A.D. 1206.—Caithniadh O'Cathniadh, lord of Iorris, died."

[1] This name is probably modernised O'Kane.

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"A.D. 1274.—Feargal O'Caithniadh, lord of Iorris, died in Hy-Mac Caichaim (near Invermore, in the north of Erris)." 175

These O'Caithniadhs were thus in power up to the end of the thirteenth century, after which there is no more mention made of them. They were a branch of the descendants of Fiachra, a Milesian chieftain, and Erris, during their sway, formed part of the region known as Hy Fiachrach or the O'Dowda's country. The chief seats of the O'Dowd's in Erris were *Oileach of the King's*, a fort built nearly on the spot where Bingham's Castle now stands, and Dun Caechain (now Dun Keeghan, on Broad Haven), but there is another smaller fort, Dun Fiachra in Aughadoon, north of the Mullet, traditionally said to have been another of their seats. The O'Dowda's reign came to an end, and the Barrets, Burkes, Lynnots, and other Welsh and Anglo-Norman families began to obtain a footing in the country about the beginning of the fourteenth century, and by 1386 seem to have got the sovereignty. They built several castles in the Mullet, of which the remains of only one can now be traced. Their rule was wide-spread, and many of their descendants are to be met with who still nourish the memory of their ancestors glory. The keeping and defence of Erris was given after the battle of Moyne by *William Mor na Maighare* (William the Great of Moyne)[1] the head of the Barrets, to Toimin and to Philpin, the grandson of Toimin (Duald M'Firbis). The Barrets ruled until the reign of Elizabeth, when some of their property was forfeited, as is thought by O'Donovan, who, however, states that he has no documentary proof.

In the reign of James I. one Darby Cormick bought a large part of this territory, and his descendants ruled until the reign of Charles II., when the land was forfeited. It was somewhere at or before this time that an influx of Ulster Celts into the district took place. These were mainly O'Donnels, O'Reillys, and a few others. Other parts of the district were forfeited during the commonwealth, so that when M'Firbis wrote there was neither Bourke, Barret, nor O'Dowd holding property in Erris. In the reign of Charles II. a grant was made of the whole half barony of Erris, the parish of Doonfeeny, in Tyrawley, and the parish of Tarmonbarry in the county of Roscommon to certain London citizens in charge for Sir James Shaen, Knight and Baronet. Sir Arthur Shaen, son of Sir James, introduced into Erris a Protestant colony who were mainly settled in the Mullet; they were

[1] This battle was fought in 1281, between the Barrets and Cusack who was assisted in the fight by two of the native Irish, Faithleach O'Boyle and Faithleach O'Dowd; it resulted in the defeat of the Barrets.

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175 given leases and were accompanied by a clergyman of their own persuasion; the only original inhabitants obtaining leases were the Cormicks. This colony does not appear to have made any extensive change in the composition of the population, as the settlers after a time ceased to be agriculturists to any extent, and took the natives of the district on to their lands as tenants. A curious petition to Sir Henry Bingham, Governor of Connaught, in reference to the revenge taken on these settlers by the natives, shows the names of those in the district in the reign of Queen Anne, and of these but two now remain, all the rest having disappeared, a fate which is ascribed by Mr. Knight to the habits of extravagance induced by the nature of their life. Sir Arthur Shaen began the canal across the neck of the Mullet, but soon abandoned the project, which was not revived until after the foundation of the town of Belmullet. Sir Arthur's two daughters, he had no sons, married, one Henry Boyle Carter of Castlemartin, county Kildare, and the other John Bingham Esq., Newbrook, county Mayo, and the property was divided between these two.

In the year 1793 a fight took place in the Mullet between the local yeomanry and the people of the district, in which thirty-six of the latter were slain. The origin of the fight was the opposition to the enrolment of the militia, then causing a great stir in the west of Ireland. Major Bingham having come to reside in the Mullet in 1796 built Bingham Castle at Eley, and began to make some roads and reclaim some of the land. The first road into the district was made in 1823, and about the same period Major Bingham founded the town in the Mullet known as Binghamstown, which at first was fairly prosperous and had at one time a population of 673.

In 1823 the first vehicle entered the Mullet, and in 1824 Mr. W. H. Carter founded the town of Belmullet at the neck of the peninsula. This town being more favourably situated, has completely destroyed its rival Binghamstown, which, though once containing some fine buildings, is now in ruins, and contains only about a dozen inhabited houses. From the time of the establishment of Belmullet and the construction of good roads into the districts, the condition of the people has [511] shown steady improvement, though it is still extremely primitive and poverty-stricken.

VIII.—Concluding Remarks.

174 This report being, like its two predecessors, a record of available facts, as found, in order to form a basis for comparison between different parts of the country, all advocacy of personal theories or opinions

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has been carefully avoided, it being evident that in the present state of British ethnology there is not sufficient material available from which to draw exact conclusions as to what race or admixture of races forms the bulk of the population of this part of Erris. History when combined with a study of the folk-names gives some slight help in this respect. So far as records go, the population seems to have been until comparately recent times an almost unmixed one, as it does not appear as if the aboriginal inhabitants, though several times subdued and enslaved, had ever been driven out or exterminated. Of the immigrations into the district those having greatest effect upon the population would seem to have been that of the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries, the rule of the Barrets, Burkes, and other Walsh or Anglo-Norman families, whose surnames now bulk largely among the people, and the influx into Erris of the O'Donnells and others from Ulster in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Of these two the former would seem to have entered more largely into the composition of the people than the latter, but it should not be concluded that all those who bore the surnames of Barret, Burke, &c., were of Welsh or Anglo-Norman blood, as the followers of many of the chiefs of these names were in the habit of assuming their leaders' names, though themselves aborigines of Connaught. The descendants of the Ulster people, though to some extent settled in this district, are for the greater part a colony by themselves in the mountainous region of Ballycroy in the south of Erris.

Tne English Protestant colony introduced by Sir Arthur Shane, having almost from the first set up as small landlords or middlemen, subletting their holdings, did not mix to any extent with the original inhabitants who became their tenants, have left but few descendants, most of the families having left this part of the country. It is said that about Portacloy the people are mainly of Ulster origin, but that there has been a slight admixture of French blood from the intermarriage amongst them of some soldiers of Humbert's forces who, escaping after their defeat at Ballinamuck, found refuge in that wild mountainous district.

The inhabitants of Inishkea possess, as has been before stated, quite different characters, physically and otherwise, from those of their mainland neighbours; they have no traditions as to their origin, but may be looked upon as probably the most unmixed representatives of the original inhabitants of the district.

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NOTE.—The late Dean Lyons, of Kilmore, the well-known archæologist, had written the history of Erris, but died without publishing it. The MS. is now missing, but was until lately in the possession of the Rev. James Durcan of Bangor, Erris.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

(*From Photographs, by* C. R. & J. M. BROWNE.)

PLATE XV.

1. Group of men at Muingcrena, Mullet. Taken in order from, left to right, the names are:— 42 291
   Back row—Patrick Toole, James M'Cormack, Patrick Padden James Dixon, No. 50; J. Lavelle.
   Front row—Francis Coyle, No. 47; Hugh Cafferky, No. 46; Anthony Lavelle, No. 51; H. Joyce.

2, 3. Anthony Dunleavy, aged 60 years, Emlybeg, No. 13.

4. William Gaughan, aged 28 years, Emlybeg, No. 12.

5. —— ——, ——, No. 41; Richard Cane, No. 40. Both from Fallmore, a small village at the southern extremity of the peninsula of the Mullet.

PLATE XVI.

6. Group of men from Iniskea.

7, 7*a*. Michael Cawley, aged 41 years; South Iniskea, No. 4.

8. Philip Lavelle, aged 33 years; North Iniskea, No. 1.

9, 9*a*. Patrick Cawley, aged 40 years; South Iniskea, No. 3.

PLATE XVII.

10. Group of men and boys at Portacloy. The figure on the extreme right shows the dress of the younger boys.

11, 12. William Bourne, aged 33 years, No. 34, and —— Bourne, both from Portacloy.

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[End Plate A]

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9 (a)

7 (a)

[End Plate B]

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[End Plate C]

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INISHBOFIN—AN ATLANTIC ISLAND*

T. W. Freeman

114 *Mr. Freeman, Reader in Economic Geography in the Victoria University of Manchester, was previously head of the Geography Department in the University of Dublin. His book, "Ireland: its Historical, Social and Economic Geography," was published in 1950; and a second book, "Pre-Famine Ireland: a Study in Historical Geography," appeared in September, 1957.*

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[p. 202(B)]

121 IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the
[167] availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated districts of the country, an island off the
[434] west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly col-
114 lected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of
124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
[578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer
[231] told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

[p. 202(c)]

121 living rarely encountered in the modern world. As will be shown later, however, the island people maintain their simple but not uncomfortable way of living only by help from outside: if [433] one believes that every inhabited area must make its economic contribution to the state, Inishbofin is a debtor on a considerable scale.

"A small and dwindling population 67 maintain a precarious existence on the 65? Atlantic fringe of our industrial society and present upon the whole an aspect of decline and, in some parts, of dereliction." In these words the Scottish crofting report[1] names a problem, com- [659] mon alike to the Atlantic fringe of Ireland and of Scotland, which was investigated by two Congested Districts Boards, in Ireland from 1891–1923[2] and in Scotland from 1897–1911[3]; in both countries the powers of these boards were transferred to the general administration of agricultural affairs. One by one the islands off the west coast of Ireland are being abandoned[4] but on Inishbofin this prospect does not seem immediate: past and present government assistance has resulted in a planned

[113] [1] Department of Agriculture for Scotland, Report of the Commission of enquiry into crofting conditions. H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 1954, Cmd. 9091, para. 281, p. 87.

[2] For a general treatment, T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Res.*, Vol. 23, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[3] Cmd. 9091, 1954, para. 265, p. 81.

[4] T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 120, 1954, p. 332.

167 landscape combined with financial help
657 of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is sep-
[131] arated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring
311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs
132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[a] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

505 Isolation is a major problem, but on four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost
[261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport problems

[137] [a] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
167 or—in comparatively few instances—by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[8] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[8] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

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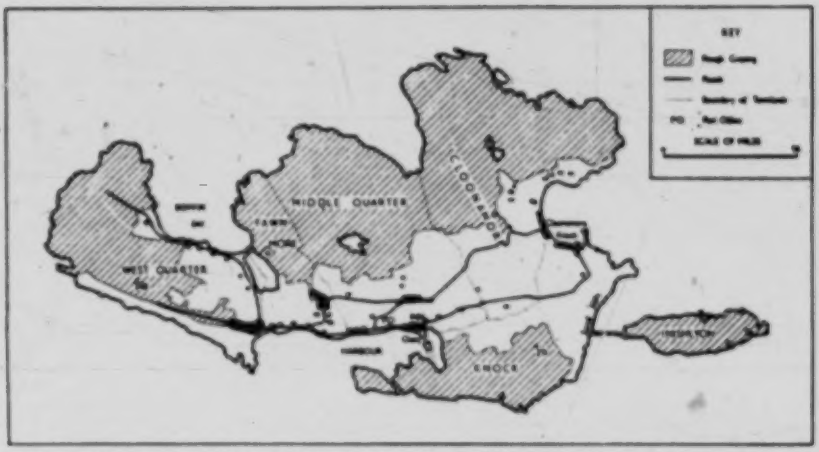

FIG. 1. The townlands of Inishbofin. Inishlyon has no inhabitants, but is used as sheep pasture. Cloonamore and Knock appear as a single line of houses on the shore but are in different townlands. The boundaries of the rough pasture and the distribution of houses were mapped in July, 1954. (Based on Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to 1 mile, Co. Galway, sheet 9, 1898, by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.)

[p. 204(A)]

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000 railway was closed in 1925. But the
206 Inishbofin postmistress operates a radio-telephone.

THE LANDSCAPE

Three types of landscape are char-
133 acteristic: first, craggy hills of no great altitude, with a maximum of 292 feet in Westquarter, 288 feet in Middlequarter, and 271 feet in Knock; second, the farmed rolling countryside ranging from sea level to about 150 feet, and having some natural drainage; and, third, an area of sand dunes and blown
[311] sand in the extreme east, once settled and farmed but now used only for rough pasture. The larger of the two lakes, Lough Bofin, is held back by a magnificent shingle ridge in a fine bay, partially protected from strong winds and high seas but open to northerly gales. The coast is rocky almost every. where and there are some splendid cliffs
[504] with outlying stacks: the best harbor is the long inlet on the south side. No recent geological work has been done

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133 here, but the original memoir[7] states that the rocks are mainly schists and gneisses, dipping at sharp angles of 30°-89°, much broken by faults and seared by sills and dikes. In short, it is a characteristic pre-Cambrian area.
314 Peat several feet deep is found in the basins between the numerous small hills. Many people cut "scraws," that is, the surface layers of the rough pasture. This time-hallowed practice, noted with disapproval by the Congested Districts Board inspectors 60 years ago,[8] increases year by year the area of exposed rock; it may well be that throughout the peat-consuming areas of Ireland—and of Scotland also—this has happened.[9] As one observer put it, "every

[113]

[7] Memoirs of the Geological Survey, Explanatory Memoir . . . sheets 73 and 74 (in part), 83 and 84, Dublin 1876, pp. 39–42.

[8] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891 (and many more such comments in other reports).

[9] F. Fraser Darling: West Highland Survey, London, 1955, pp. 43, 67, 272–276. See especially an interesting survey of what (in Scotland) is called "skinned land" in Lewis by M. Macdonald.

[Text continues on p. 205(B)]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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361
102

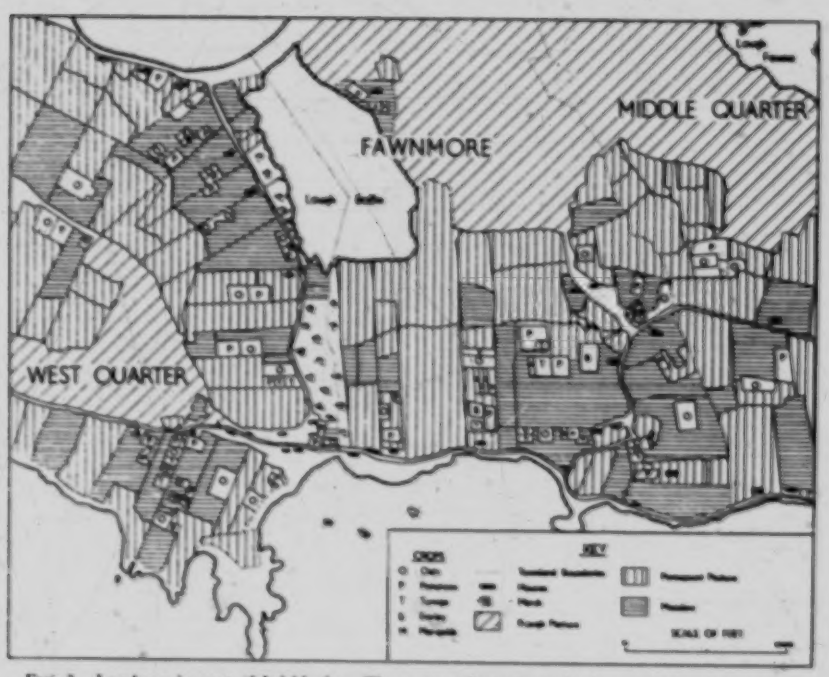

FIG. 2. Land use in part of Inishbofin. The rectangular pattern is characteristic of many areas "striped" by the Congested Districts Board. Small crop "gardens," fields of meadow and improved pasture, exist beside each farmhouse, and roads lead to the "commonage." (Field mapping done by Mr. Clifford Hargreaves, B.A., of the Department of Geography, University of Manchester, in July 1954, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made.)

[p.205(A)]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
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Inishbofin

[p.205(B)]

314 year the feed of a dozen sheep is burnt in the homes."

Agricultural life depends on the use
311 of the "commonage," or rough pasture,
231 and the improved land, which is almost entirely drift fertilized by seaweed and
632 farmyard manure. Two-thirds of the island's 2480 acres is rough pasture, used for the sheep, cattle, ponies, and donkeys, as well as for peat collection. Figure 1 shows that the island is divided into five townlands, in each of which the commonage is shared, with the result that a farmer may take his animals not to the rough pasture near his holding but to ground as much as a mile away. There is a band of farm lands
311 stretching from lough Bofin to the har-

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p.205(c)]

311 bor, and then with no break to Cloon-
amore on the east side.

This island has a planned landscape.
311 The roads of the commonage pastures
657 and peat bogs have been built under relief schemes and the farms include seven acres of improved land, "striped" or defined by the Congested Districts Board after the land was acquired from its owner, Mr. C. Allies, in 1907.[18]
342 Since then new houses of concrete, with
511 a concrete floor, roofed with asbestos
657 slate or, rarely, ordinary slates, have

[18] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 18th report for the year ending March 31, 1909, Cmd. 4927, p. 139. The price paid was £8301, including £401 for tenants' interests. Up to March 31, 1915, £7047 was spent on the island, 23rd report, 1915, Cmd. 8076.

342 been built for almost the entire popula-
511 tion. In 1893 it was said that there
[651] were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds, so that peat was stacked in a corner of the cottage with the fowls roosting on it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace, the cattle in a pen at the other end of the room, and the farm implements and fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] Now the
[343] old houses are the outbuildings, still thatched, with oat straw (not rye as formerly) laid on sods and tied down with home-made straw ropes weighted with large stones. Only five thatched houses were still inhabited in 1954. Some of the thatch has sprouting oats and some of it is rotten, but, when a roof is beyond further repair, it is all stripped off and the sodding and thatching begins again. Happily, corrugated iron is not used as it cannot stand the weather.

Farming

241 Agricultural practice is almost uniform: an acre or so is divided between oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—barley, and there is generally a small patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions, carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen. The ground used for crops is called the "garden," and its fertility is maintained by using animal manure and seaweed, and also by rotating the crops. Strange (or "foreign") seed is favored, and
[657] bought at a cheap rate under a government scheme. The remainder of the farmstead consists of a varying amount of meadow, generally 1–3 acres, and some pasture. The precious crops are carefully walled, but some of the farm-
[231] ers open their fields to the cattle and sheep after the harvest, partly as a means of natural fertilizing.

231 Each farmer has one or two cows and
439

[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[p. 206(A)]

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[13] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island. No butter is sold and little is ever
234 bought. As one of the islanders put it,
437 "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it." Sheep are kept in large numbers and
236 pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [13] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p. 206(B)]

231 is said to be due to the expense of im-
porting feedstuffs. Donkeys and Con-
[492] nemara ponies are kept as draft ani-
mals, and almost everything is conveyed
in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was
made in 1907 by a local carpenter from
one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required,
including lobster pots, fishing nets, fur-
niture, doors, windows, and hand bar-
rows, which consist of two shafts joined
by slats and a single wheel in the rear,
all of wood.

Digging and manuring of the land
221 begins in late February, and seaweed is
brought from the shore as needed. The
potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's
Day (March 17); oats, two to three
weeks later; barley and mangolds at the
end of April or in May. Most calves
are born from March to May. In dry
years peat is cut from May onwards,
laid out to dry, and eventually stacked
in ricks six feet high secured by large
stones, or placed against a stone wall.
Apart from routine work, there is little
to do until the hay harvest, generally in
August or September, though sometimes
a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with
the hope of a second crop in the autumn.
Oats and barley are harvested in Sep-
tember, after which the main potato
digging takes place, though some are
dug earlier for the household. From
October to late February, there is little
to do except tend the stock, though
some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under gov-
ernment schemes. Few farmers make
the ricks of peat beside their houses so
commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch
it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major
aim of the Congested Districts Board,
and from the eighteen-nineties to the

228 1914–1918 war both the curing stations were used. The first of these was built by Mr. Allies about 1892 and the second by the Board in 1897.[13] In 1898 during the mackerel fishing season, as many as 75 carts a day passed along the hilly road from Cleggan to Clifden with some 1000 boxes of fish to be sold in Dublin[14]; and in 1912, 8754 cwts. of mackerel, valued at £2211, were landed at Cleggan.[15] The fishermen were "the best and most practical . . . on the west coast" in 1892;[16] today, a large number of men have a curragh (made for £30) and fish for the family, but only four hookers, each manned by five men, are now used in the white fish trade. In good years a man may make £50 or more by trapping lobsters and crayfish, which are stored in tanks in the harbor and in Bofin Bay, then taken for a month's feeding in a vast tank near Cleggan, and finally conveyed over a hundred miles by lorry to the Shannon airport for air transport to Paris. The fishermen receive £3 5s. a (baker's) dozen for crayfish, weighing 5–6 lbs., or £1 15s. for a dozen lobsters, weighing up to 3 lbs. From May to September pots are set round the coasts—a long basket is set for crayfish and a smaller one for lobsters. Some of the dozen or so men in this trade make their own with osiers specially grown, but pots are also supplied by the merchant or made by carpenters. Other marine resources are negligible, though carrageen moss is sold to an agent at 5/- a stone. This naturally gelatinous product, used to make a kind of blancmange, is collected from the rocks between February and August. It is possible

[13] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 7th Report, 1898, H.M.S.O., Dublin, Cmd. 9003, p. 23.
[113]
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[15] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 20th Report, 1912, Cmd. 6553, p. 80.
[16] C. R. Browne: *op. cit.*, p. 350.

[p. 207(B)]

228 to collect one stone in an hour. Kelp
[381] (seaweed) burning for iodine on the beaches was almost extinct by 1894.[17]

Settlement and Population

361 Of the 96 houses counted as inhabited, 53 are in five hamlets and another six in a loose cluster near the harbor. There is no village as the term is commonly understood, though the main center is beside the harbor, where the inn occupies the one-time "big house" of the Allies family, with the church and the Post Office a short distance away. In
[444] all there are eight shops, none of which is recognizable from the outside, as everyone knows them: one is attached to the inn, another to the Post Office, a third occupies a specially built room in a farmyard, and the rest are in front rooms of houses. All the houses except about six have land attached.

Is this nucleated settlement as such?
361 On the first Ordnance Survey map (1838) there were large clusters of houses
178 and on the 1898 map the vast majority
621 of the houses were in clusters. The redistribution of land and building of new houses has broken up many hamlets or made new ones, for example in Knock townland (405 acres) where an old hamlet on a sandy site has been replaced by a new one on drier ground by the shore, with 15 of the townland's 17 houses. In Cloonamore (663 acres)
361 eight houses are placed along the shore
621 and eleven others scattered over the hillside; in Middlequarter (608 acres) there are eleven houses in the main hamlet, six beside the harbor and eleven others at various points beside the shore or on side roads; in Fawnmore (199 acres) six houses out of sixteen are in a loosely defined hamlet; and in West-
361 quarter (523 acres) nine houses out of

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[p.208(A)]

[861] sixteen are in a similarly formless cluster.

167 Emigration has entered deeply into the fabric of life: in 1841, Inishbofin
161 with Inishark had 1612 people, but ten years later there were only 1047. A rise to 1236 in 1861 and 1262 in 1871 was followed by a drop to 997 in 1891, when there were 215 families of whom one-quarter were said to be "very poor."[18] Steadily the population declined, to 510 in 1936, 406 in 1946, and 341 in 1951, and now less than 300 (including 40 in Inishark). One-quarter of the families were interviewed in 1954; of these only one-third were "normal families" of parents with children. In the school there were only 29 children aged 5-14, whereas the normal figure would be 48. On Inishark there are now only nine able-bodied men, six of whom are needed to man a boat seaworthy in winter, with the result that an epidemic might be disastrous. Permanent emigration to Britain, or, if possible, to America, is favored by the young and adventurous. Even in 1893 seasonal emigration to Britain as harvesters or domestics was declining,[19] though a number of people went to America for several years, saved money, and returned to the islands. A large proportion of the people have spent several years in the United States. In many cases a family has its older relatives in America, its younger ones in Britain.

Conclusion

657 Having reviewed the economic geography of this island certain conclusions emerge. First, the present relative comfort of the population has been made possible only by past and present government assistance bestowed with lib-

[113] [18] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891.
[19] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

[p.208(B)]

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[20]

167 Second, emigration has been of vast benefit to the community; money comes
434 in to most of the homes from America[21] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

443 Third, it is regrettable that the lack of commercial facilities means that eggs,
489 poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [20] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only three barrels a week in winter. The standard
[304] content of a barrel is 256 pints.
[21] Many of the children are dressed in Amer-
[291] ican clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

443 creameries or to dealers brings useful
489 income. The difficulty lies in transport, especially during the winter when the isolation is most acutely felt.

Fourth, remote and isolated as their
484 island may be, some of its people have seen much of the world. It is unlikely that many of the young people will remain here in the future; on the other hand, some former emigrants have come back to rest with thankfulness after their labors elsewhere. As one of them said, "America is a good place for the young, but this is a good place when you're old."

000 To summarize, Inishbofin now is neither a tragic island nor a romantic enclave of ancient ways. It is an area in which the work begun by the Congested Districts Board has borne fruit, whose people live reasonably well by crofting standards thanks to the help of emigrants and of the state. So long as the fuel holds out, there seems to be no reason why this island should not remain inhabited; but the problems of so curious a population age structure (p. 208) need investigation by a sociologist, and the cost of maintaining this community to the state and its relatives could well form a subject for an economist. For this island is not, and presumably cannot be, self-supporting under modern conditions.

[p. 209(B)]

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IRISH FOLK WAYS

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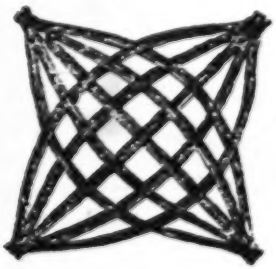
IRISH FOLK WAYS

by

E. ESTYN EVANS
Professor of Geography, Queen's University, Belfast



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PREFACE

The generous reception given to my *Irish Heritage*, published fifteen years ago, has encouraged me to go on collecting material on Irish folk life and to prepare this more comprehensive book on the subject. The earlier book was written, under difficult conditions, in the years 1939–41; it was an introductory study of an unexplored field, necessarily speculative and undocumented, and its main purpose was to arouse interest among Irish readers in the treasure-house of the past in which they live. It is hoped that IRISH FOLK WAYS will have a wider appeal. It is abundantly illustrated and fortified by references to a fairly full bibliography. Even so, parts of the text must be taken on trust, since some of the information was gathered from personal observation and conversations up and down Ireland. In the 'mountainy' corners of the country the past is ever-present, a ready topic of talk. I have checked the information where possible, for the inquirer must always be on guard against the countryman's facility of speech, his poetic licence and his fatal desire to please.

There is a great fascination in exploring the living past, but one cannot employ the strict methodology of the historical or natural sciences. The historian is handicapped in studying peasant peoples, not only because they leave no documents but also because their sense of time and values are not those of fully literate folk. The geographer, interested primarily in variations in space, makes an easier approach; yet he will miss much unless he has a concern for origins and a sense of the past. Without knowledge of the past he will not fully observe the present: it is the emotional shock which prints in the memory the first sight of some tool or custom which has survived from an earlier culture-layer. For the historian, on the other hand, the fact that it was described in the eighteenth century is more significant than that it occurs, unrecorded, in the twentieth.

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PREFACE

121 However interesting we may find 'bygones' for their own sake—and most of us take a natural interest in the way our forefathers lived—there is need to know not only how these relics were made and used but also what beliefs were held about them. Wherever possible I have studied the techniques of making and using tools as well as their lore, and by assisting in the processes have learnt more than books can teach. There is a clear relationship between the ways in which men's basic needs are satisfied and the social organization. Nothing less than the whole of the past is needed to explain the present, and in this difficult task we cannot afford to neglect the unrecorded past. The crafts of arable farming, of animal husbandry and the home industries have done more to shape our instincts and thoughts than the trampling of armies or the wranglings of kings which fill the documents from which history is written.

The outstanding interest of Ireland for the student of European origins lies in the fact that in its historic literature, language and social organization, as well as in its folklore and folk customs, it illustrates the marginal survival of archaic elements of the Indo-European world. Myles Dillon has shown how the three classes of ancient Irish society—the learned class, the warriors and the peasantry—are closely paralleled in the three main castes of Hinduism: Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya. The ethnographer may be led even farther afield in discovering a skin boat, a rush charm or a wheel-less cart that will take him on a scientific trail to the ends of the earth. And geologists and botanists find a similar interest in the peripheral survival in Ireland of rock-formations and floras which in their day dominated a wider scene.

The decades of demographic instability which culminated in
178 the Great Famine of 1845–7 brought radical changes in the
121 economy and landscape of rural Ireland. A correspondent in *The Times* of May 19th, 1853, noted that 'all accounts describe the country and its inhabitants as assuming more of the half-picturesque, half-comfortable aspect, of an English landscape', no doubt because hedges and an orderly husbandry had transformed the naked famine-stricken scene. The famine, as we shall see, was a great social watershed and it marked the end of an era that might well be termed prehistoric. But it is the

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changes which are taking place today, a hundred years later, 178
that are finally extinguishing the prehistoric traditions. Me-
chanization and mass-production are invading the remotest 121
glens, and things which were the commonplaces of fifty years ago are becoming as remote to the young as the Middle Ages. Knowledge of ways of life that have altered little for centuries is passing away; skills whose loss the practical countryman may have cause to regret are disappearing. The Irish Universities have a unique opportunity of fostering local studies and folk-lore-research, but only University College, Dublin, has seriously supported this work. The Government of Northern Ireland, however, is to be congratulated on having offered to help to finance an Ulster Folk Museum on the lines of St. Fagans in Wales and those of the Scandinavian countries.

Meanwhile the National Museum in Dublin, the Belfast
Municipal Museum and the County Museum, Armagh, have 127
been busy collecting and displaying the portable elements of material culture, and I have drawn freely on their exhibits for sketches of objects which it is now too late to find in everyday use. I wish to thank Mr. A. T. Lucas and Dr. J. Raftery, of the 000
National Museum, Mr. W. A. Seaby of the Belfast Museum, and Mr. T. G. F. Paterson of Armagh for their assistance and encouragement. Among many other friends and colleagues whose help I cannot forget are Kevin Danaher and Sean O'Sullivan of the Irish Folklore Commission, Professor Michael Duignan, Professor M. J. O'Kelly, Professor Sean O'Riordain, H. G. Tempest, and Dr. A. E. J. Went; and among my former students R. H. Buchanan, Rosemary Harris, N. C. Mitchel, Dr. D. McCourt, Dr. J. M. Mogey, V. B. Proudfoot and G. B. Thompson. I have to thank the editors of the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* and of *Ulster Folklife* and Mr. W. A. Seaby for the loan of blocks, and Mr. Seaby also for permission to use several photographs from the collection of the late R. J. Welch. Mr. W. A. Green, Miss H. E. Henry, Mr. Frank Scovell and Mr. C. E. F. Trench have kindly supplied me with photographs. Miss Eileen Duncan has prepared the four maps, and other acknowledgements appear under the text-figures. It is a pleasure also to acknowledge the help received, either orally or in correspondence, from numerous Irishmen in all

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000 parts of the country. Two books listed in the bibliography deserve special mention for their relevance to our theme: Sean [114] O'Sullivan's *Handbook of Irish Folklore* and Wood-Martin's remarkable pioneer work on *The Elder Faiths of Ireland*.

Finally I would gratefully place on record the lasting benefits I have received from the teaching and example, at Aberystwyth, of Professor H. J. Fleure, who taught me to study regional social evolution as a continuous interaction between people and their environment. The deficiencies of this book, however, are my own.

Queen's University,
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January, 1957

E. E. EVANS

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I

IRELAND THE OUTPOST

THE charm of Ireland, north as well as south, lies as much in the colourful speech and old-fashioned ways of her people as in the beauty of her green fields and blue hills, the silver-glint of lake waters and the gold of the scented whins. The observant visitor cannot fail to be attracted by customs and turns of speech, by traditions and tools which are obsolescent if not archaic in England. He will occasionally see in use in field and farmyard implements which went out of fashion so long ago in most parts of Great Britain that one may truly speak of them as medieval. Thus the toothed sickle, the flail, the one-eared spade, the clod-breaking mallet and seed-rake, the upright churn and the three-legged pot can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life (Fig. 1). The boon-work which was an obligation owed by tenants to English landlords in the Middle Ages survives in the flax-pulling boons of Ulster, and the Anglo-Norman word for the lord's part of an estate, the demesne, is universally applied to the parklands of Ireland. The Irish baronies or kingdoms, as they are sometimes called, are similarly relics of the Middle Ages. The prevalence of the Roman Catholic religion, to which 76 per cent of the population of Ireland adheres—the figure is 94 per cent for the Republic of Ireland—reinforces this sense of the past; and the English dialects spoken in many districts, even if shot through with Gaelic-derived turns of phrase, are strikingly Elizabethan. A strong medieval flavour attaches to the feast-day gatherings and patterns, to strawboys, wrenboys and the Christmas mummers. Medieval too is the diversity of folk-customs and of locally-made tools, which will be found to vary from one

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178
[412]
[415]
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FIG. 1. 'The toothed sickle (1), the flail (2), the one-eared spade (4), the clod-breaking mallet (5), and seek-rake (7), the upright churn (6), and the three-legged pot (3), can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life.'

district to another. The interest of these relics is enhanced when one discovers parallels among simple societies in distant parts of the world.

These ancient diversities are being ironed out at an increasing rate, and the opportunity of seeing and, what is more important, placing on record these age-old crafts and rites will soon pass. The wonder is that so many have persisted through the political, economic and social upheavals of the last 150 years. During that period the steady decline of the Gaelic language resulted in the loss of a great deal of information on local and regional life and of a vast store of oral literature, in which the lore of an ancient civilization was enshrined. The scientist must regard this loss as a tragedy comparable to that suffered by the historian in the disastrous burning of the Dublin Four Courts in

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1922. Ireland is one of the last homes of the oral traditions of prehistoric and medieval Europe, which mirror the routine of rural life through the seasons, the contacts of peoples in war and in commerce, and the heroic deeds of half-legendary leaders. Luckily all is not lost: the devoted labours of the Irish Folklore Commission have rescued from the Gaeltacht and catalogued with scientific skill countless stories of the kind which enriched the literature of the medieval world. In Northern Ireland also belated efforts are being made to gather the harvest of lore and legend. 121 178

The study of both the material and spiritual folk-life of Ireland and the oceanic fringes of Europe can throw light on the past and on the evolution of society in Britain and western Europe generally. English anthropologists and ethnographers have searched the farthest continents and enriched scientific literature with their findings, but they have neglected the little island across the Irish Sea. Irish scholars too, perhaps because they find it hard to detach themselves from what is familiar, have shown little interest until recently in the treasure-house of fact and fancy that lies about them. Some writers, indeed, appear to deplore the existence of the folk-customs I am describing in this book: they would conceal or even deny them. It has been learnedly argued, for instance, that the well-authenticated practice of 'ploughing by the tail'[1] was the lying invention of English propagandists, who passed an Act of Parliament prohibiting it, in 1635, merely to demonstrate how degraded the Irish must be! Those features of rural life which cannot be concealed or denied are regarded as due to the repressive hand of England, to penal laws, absenteeism and the poverty imposed by rack-rents and unscrupulous land-agents. Certainly there have been great abuses, and they have left the Irish suspicious and sensitive. It is unfortunate, therefore, that authoritative works recently published in England have needlessly exaggerated the tribal habits and pastoral nomadism of the ancient Irish. A writer in the *Cambridge Economic History*,[2] indeed, goes so far as to describe fifteenth-century Ireland as 'in great part, a 114

[1] *The Irish Book-lover* (May, 1943), 9.
[2] *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*. Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power, 1 (1941), 161.

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country of wandering pastoralists'. The Irishman cannot forget the wrongs that his country has suffered and he sees in such statements an echo of the calumnies which he finds in the majority of English descriptions of Ireland. Many of them were written with the preconceived idea of revealing 'a barbarous people devoted only to laziness . . . living on beasts only, and living like beasts . . . a filthy people, wallowing in vice' (to quote the earliest, Giraldus Cambrensis[1]). For several centuries his *Topographia Hiberniae* served as a guide and a gospel to those who sought to prove the Irish unworthy and incapable of self-government and to justify their conquest by England. Geoffrey Keating describes him as 'the bull of the herd for writing the false history of Ireland, wherefore they have no choice of guide'.[2] Gerald's picture of the 'mere Irish', as they came to be called, thus gained wide currency in England and was frequently copied. Between 1566 and 1606, for example, beginning with John Good's *A Description of the Manners and Customs of the Wild Irish*, a dozen colourful accounts were written, most of them little more than diatribes against Irish morals. (The Irish, be it said, retaliated by 'deriding and scoffing at such as lived civilly and after the English manner').[3]

It should be noticed, however, that with the deliberate colonization of Ireland that followed the sixteenth century wars a different note creeps in. The Irish people were still abused, but their country must be made to appear attractive to settlers. The first serious geographical account of the island had appeared in Camden's *Brittania* in 1586, when the Munster plantations were beginning. Detailed surveys and censuses were prepared for the Ulster plantations of the early seventeenth century, but it was left to Sir William Petty (1623–87) to make the most celebrated and exhaustive study of the island. His *Political Anatomy of Ireland*, in reality a human and economic geography, only serves to remind us what was lost when the maps and notes of his larger Down Survey perished in a fire in Dublin Castle in 1711. Petty aimed at a comprehensive survey which would

[1]Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topography of Ireland*. Trans. by J. J. O'Meara (1951), 83, 86, 90.

[2]G. Keating, *History of Ireland*, Irish Texts Society, I, 153.

[3]Sir George Carew, *Survey of Kerry and Desmond* (1617).

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form the basis of a reconstructed Ireland. One of his proposals, 114
perhaps the most original of all the varied suggestions for solving 'the Irish problem', was to import a further 200,000 English settlers so as to bring the total English population to half a million, and then to remove the 20,000 unmarried Irish girls and marry them off 'one in every English parish', replacing them by 20,000 English girls to be married to Irishmen. In this way the Irish language, food, clothing and customs would be replaced by English modes.[1] Petty's scientific approach was devoid of sentiment and left him without sympathy for the Irish past. Other seventeenth-century writers, however, interested themselves in the ancient forts and towers, and Sir James Ware, who published his *Irish Antiquities* in 1654, also collected Irish manuscripts. This antiquarianism was continued by the brothers Molyneux, whose essays were the first of countless misguided speculations on Danish Mounts and Round Towers.

The eighteenth century brought a more rational view of Ireland, thanks especially to Arthur Young, whose *Travels in Ireland* (1776–79) are justly renowned. There followed a spate of travellers throughout the nineteenth century, aided by improved communications and attracted, after 1845, by the grim spectacle of the Great Famine. Unfortunately most of the visitors, finding, in the words of the Earl of Bristol, 'nothing curious to engage admiration and nothing horrid enough to stare at', do not give us details such as contemporary travellers were eagerly gathering from remoter lands. Yet their accounts, vitiated as many of them are by prejudice and an assumption of moral superiority, do give us first-hand descriptions of conditions in rural Ireland before and after the famine. From the first decades of the nineteenth century we have valuable sources of information in the Ordnance Survey maps and letters, in the census returns and in the Statistical Surveys compiled for [659]
the Royal Dublin Society, covering nearly all the thirty-two counties of Ireland.

If we ask why so much of the past lives on in Ireland we must 174
first notice the position of the island at the north-western extremity of the old world, the 'last outpost of Eurasia'.[2] Until

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), 30.
[2]Grenville Cole, *Ireland the Outpost*, 9.

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174 the way to the New World was opened up—a route the Irish were fated to follow in their millions—cultures and peoples moving across Europe found their last resting place in this Atlantic island. Here we need only pick out some of the most striking examples of such movements. Archaeologists have shown that the first Irishmen, who entered the island by the short sea-route from Scotland at a time, perhaps 7,000 or 8,000 years ago, when thanks to a lower sea-level it was even shorter than it is today, were the descendants of Old Stone Age man who sought refuge there. For nearly half the period that has since elapsed they were the only occupants of a heavily forested land which they shared with the beasts and the birds. As hunters, fishers and fowlers they spread slowly along the coasts and by tangled lakes and waterways south and south-west across Ireland. Their physical characters may be found in a small proportion of modern Irishmen, and certain of their habits, such as the building of lake-dwellings (crannogs) survived until a few centuries ago, while some of their skills—for example the skin boat or curragh—and their cults—the ancient rituals of fisherfolk and hunters—linger on to this day. The description, in the Irish legendary histories, of the first inhabitants of the land as fishers and fowlers may well be a genuine folk memory. In this oldest stratum, now almost submerged, Ireland preserves a sample of Palaeolithic Europe. Deep in this layer lie the roots of many superstitious customs, which [789] depend for their efficacy on sympathetic magic such as is believed to have inspired the cave-artists of France and Spain.

The revolution in human economy and thought which is associated with food-production, the Neolithic revolution, began to affect Ireland about 4,000 years ago, carried by refugees and adventurers from Britain and also from France, Spain and the western Mediterranean lands. Thanks to an abundance of alluvial gold and copper the early metal age which followed was a period of increasing prosperity and industrial skill, when the products of Irish craftsmen found distant markets in Britain and on the continent. Throughout the Bronze Age the island was protected from the full force of the continental invasions which spent themselves in Britain: it was able to absorb such influences as trickled across the Irish Sea and to retain many of

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its old habits, as is illustrated by the persistence of cremation rites from the earliest megalithic phase to the end of the Bronze Age, almost on the threshold of the Christian era. 174

At some stage towards the close of the Bronze Age the expanding Celtic culture, carried with the sword across western Europe, was able to gain a foothold in the north-east, whence in time it imposed itself and its language on the whole of Ireland and later, by way of Argyll, on Scotland too. But the price of this conquest was the loss of many elements of Celtic culture or their adaptation to the Irish environment and to long-established native tradition. The art of the Celtic overlords, for example, quickly develops forms and features which are insular and distinctively Irish. In other words there is more continuity of folk ways throughout the prehistoric period in Ireland than in Britain. And this Irish-Celtic civilization of the Early Iron Age was able, during the following period, to maintain itself through the centuries when the Roman Empire embraced nearly all western Europe. The spirit of its art and life was almost untouched by the mass-production and standardization of imperial Rome. It survived long enough to be caught up and revitalized in the late Celtic phase by the fervour of a Christian faith whose adaptation to Celtic tradition is illustrated in Saint Columba's famous phrase: 'Christ is my druid'. It was a time of great missionary enterprise, but at home its greatest achievement was the taming of the damp lowland forests which earlier peoples had shunned. Legendary history, now receiving confirmation from archaeological research, tells of technological advances and increasing population and settlement from about the seventh century onwards. [776]

Irish Christianity grew up within the forms of Irish life: the church claimed no martyrs and there is little evidence of conflict with older beliefs, which clearly were absorbed. The Celtic church was peculiar in that the centres of its life were the great monasteries: there were no cities to form the seats of powerful bishops. Instead, the founders' kin retained the ownership of the monasteries, and the Celtic tradition survived in administration as in art and architecture. It was only after the ravages of the Vikings and the reassertion of pagan cults that the Irish Church was reformed by Saint Malachy, who established 795 175

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175 a system of dioceses and raised St. Patrick's Church at Armagh
[195] to the primacy in the eleventh century.

But it was the Norsemen who established the first port-cities
175 of Ireland—Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick—
162 and provided the Anglo-Normans with bases from which to attempt their conquest. It was the fate of these newcomers, as of earlier invaders, to be absorbed, but the towns which they and their successors established became the instruments of Anglicization. Yet outside the nine south-eastern counties where the Anglo-Norman influence was strongest, there are few towns which are older than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as late as 1841 less than 15 per cent of the Irish population was urban. It is significant that even today no inland Irish town has a population reaching 20,000: in the Republic, indeed, only one or two exceed 10,000, and that barely. It is the immemorial peasant tradition which dominates the heart of Ireland. In some inland counties the rural population is still as much as 90 per cent of the total: for the Republic of Ireland as a whole it amounts to 62 per cent, and the figure for the more industrialized counties of Northern Ireland is only slightly under 50 per cent. In Ulster the plantation of English and especially of Scots Presbyterian settlers in the seventeenth century was at last successful in maintaining its identity, though as we shall see the material culture is strongly moulded to its Irish environment. Partly because this region of entry has received through the centuries almost every culture-layer that has been deposited in Ireland, there is perhaps a greater variety of survivals in Ulster than in any other part of Ireland. In some ways this most British part of Ireland is also the most Irish.

Although the tribal nomadism of medieval Ireland has been
311 exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the pastoral tradition
361 has dominated Irish life through the ages. Cultivation was
175 certainly practised from Neolithic times, but the older crops, wheat and barley, were in course of time supplemented and in many parts replaced by oats, which became the corn of Ireland as of Scotland, food for men as well as animals. For half the year the arable land was under stubble, pastured and manured by grazing stock, so that the favoured acres around the settle-

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ment—the infield—might produce grain year after year. The rough grazing beyond—the outfield—was broken up periodically in temporary enclosures, and it may be assumed that such a system had developed from the shifting agriculture of prehistoric times. Relics of outfield cultivation, usually in association with family-communes, can be traced in many regions of difficulty throughout Western Europe, both in the mountains of the centre and along the oceanic fringe from Spain to Norway. 'If we knew medieval England completely', states Sir John Clapham, 'we should find plenty of it.'[1] In most lowland areas of good soil throughout western Europe, however, it was replaced by a system involving large open fields, normally three in number, each of which was used in rotation for autumn sown corn, usually wheat, followed by spring corn and fallow. This scheme called for considerable organization and a large variety of tools and implements: it came to be governed by complex regulations and controlled by the lord of the manor, and it is significant that the feudal system and in due course the nation-state evolved in areas where the openfield economy was practised. There was more freedom and flexibility in the smaller and simpler outfield system, and in Ireland the feudal order was successfully established only in the English Pale, where the three-field system was introduced by Anglo-Norman settlers. Elsewhere the tribal system prevailed, and for the study of folk-customs the important unit within that system was the family commune living in clustered house-groups, hamlets or clachans. The prevailing cattle-economy called for a minimum of equipment, the subordinate cultivation little more than spades or light ploughs and hand-operated tools. Even the lowliest members of society had some interest in the land and its cultivation was not beyond their means. Possession of a cow, a horse, a pig or a few sheep demanded even less in the way of equipment and tools. The simple arts and crafts of prehistoric times proved adequate, and the poorest man was able to play his part in the community and stand on his own feet. A democratic

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[1]H. J. Clapham, *A Concise Economic History of Britain* (1949), 48. Similarly Gilbert Slater, *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields* (1907) regards what he terms the Celtic system 'as influencing to varying degrees the type of village community in England.'

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175 way of life was fostered by the ease with which the humbler
311 members of the community could compete with others in arts
361 demanding not wealth but personal qualities, in poetry, oratory, song and physical prowess. Down to our own day the small size of the average farm has encouraged the survival of simple tools and limited the acquisition of machines. Subdivision of farms and the depressing effects of short leases and absenteeism were contributory factors. Subdivision of holdings was prohibited under an Act of 1881, but like so many other prohibited practices it did not cease.

The retention of many of the attributes of a peasant society
175 is the key to the survival of the folk ways with which we are
602 concerned in the following chapters. Even the Great Famine
178 which marks a grim watershed in social and economic history did not entirely obliterate them, though it had such far-reaching effects that it might be regarded as the end of prehistoric times in Ireland. First in importance is the strength of blood-ties in extended family groups, still maintained even in many urban communities. During the air raids on Belfast, for example, the problem of finding billets for evacuated homeless was complicated by the refusal of large groups of related families to be separated from each other. In remote rural areas the blood-tie is a dominant force, governing economic as well as social relationships,[1] its loyalties overriding the impartial administration of justice. A relative is a 'friend', even if 'far-out'—that is, remotely connected—and friendship is a matter of blood relationship. A peasant community is concerned first and foremost with the maintenance and continuity of society: it does not judge—and cannot be judged—purely by economic standards. Immemorially peasant families have been large, and child-bearing is widely regarded as part of the ritual necessary to bring success with the stock and the crops. In rural Ireland
[842] barrenness in a wife still tends to be regarded as an unnatural and disgraceful thing, and many superstitious cures for 'the
178 sterile curse' are recorded. This is but one example of a wide-spread attitude towards life, to which comparative anthropology
789 offers many parallels. Sympathetic magic, or the performance

[1] C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940), Ch. 13.

of certain acts in the hope of inducing success in similar fields 178
of action, provides an explanation of many of the folk-practices [789]
with which we are concerned.

Pushed too far, however, the observance of such antiquated practices in the end defeated its purpose and threatened the extinction of traditional life. A clue to much of the paradox in Irish culture is to be found in the reaction which follows an adherence to custom carried beyond the breaking-point. Spade-labour for example has reluctantly given way to the plough, but once the plough is generally accepted the spade becomes a despised implement so that a vegetable garden is a rare thing, at best a tiny plot left to the care of the women. In another [177]
field, the substitution of the vilest American films for the [546]
traditional ceilidhe gathering is a sad change. The crisis of the Great Famine was a major turning-point, and there followed a general reaction against everything associated with it. This was particularly true of the Irish peasants who sought refuge across the Atlantic: the American immigrants, driven from the land by extreme poverty, were determined to have nothing more to do with it and became almost invariably town-dwellers. The donkey and the goat, symbols of poverty, are neglected and despised in many parts of Ireland. A Donegal crofter once told me he dare not keep a donkey for fear of being unable to marry off his daughters: instead he kept a horse, though he could ill afford one, for its prestige value. The dangerously 178
monotonous diet of Irish countryfolk, also, can be explained
in the light of the famine. So bitter is the folk-memory of these 262
times that useful wild sources of food are now neglected and despised; for example, wild berries of all kinds, the ubiquitous eel, hare and rabbit; the cresses and the edible seaweeds and fungi. It should be added, however, that some of these foods were apparently tabu—the rabbit, an Anglo-Norman invader, was rarely eaten—and that the potato had played its part in debasing diet in the period before the famine.[1]

Perhaps the most striking example of reaction is to be found 178
in the expressed desire of most country people to have an iso-
lated dwelling-house. The clachan or hamlet, once the centre of 361
communal life and tradition, is despised, a symbol of squabbling

[1]R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), Ch.15.

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178 poverty, and it is the wish of nearly everyone to have a house
[361] where he cannot be overlooked. What is surprising in the light of these physical changes is the extent to which old customs and habits of mind survive to this day. As the late R. A. S. Macalister wrote in his last book, perhaps not entirely without malice: 'The importance of Ireland is that, thanks to the 'time-lag', it has rendered to Anthropology the unique, inestimable, indispensable service of carrying a primitive European *Precivilization* down into late historic times, and there holding it up for our observation and instruction.'[1]

178 Finally we should notice how the physical diversity of the country conspired with its remoteness to permit the survival
133 through the centuries of indigenous peoples and customs. 'Mountainy men', in the picturesque Irish phrase, keep their foothold in every corner of the land, for mountain refuges lie all around the coast. Even the broad central lowland is diversified by several isolated ranges, still more by extensive bogs where movement has always been difficult. Before forest clearance and drainage were effected, woods, lakes and bogs were widespread, and the English made every effort to destroy the forest remnants because they sheltered the native 'wood-kernes'. So it had been in Norman England; where the land became difficult, through mountain or forest, or where water filled large spaces, the pikesman or bowman could hold his own against the man on horseback, and a democratic flavour was in the air.

[1]R. A. S. Macalister, *The Archaeology of Ireland* (1949), x.

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II

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

THE tools and traits we are describing in this book have persisted through the centuries because of their close adaptation to the Irish environment, physical and social. They have gathered around them, in that environment, associations of usage and ritual without which they are meaningless, so that transplanted into another land they would be museum-pieces, as indeed they are rapidly becoming in many parts of Ireland. To understand them, therefore, we should consider them not in isolation but as part and parcel of a particular environment. To a large extent a culture owes its specific peculiarities to its geographical setting, and that is why our first chapters will be concerned with the face of the land and with the fields, farms and houses in which generations of Irish countryfolk have lived and worked. 121

It was from a forest environment that the cultural landscape slowly emerged. The destruction of the native forests was virtually complete by the seventeenth century. Thereafter constructional timber had to be imported, and the rural population turned to the fossil oak and pine of the bogs. In the eighteenth century landlords planted their lowland demesnes with exotic species of trees, but only in our own day, under government schemes of reafforestation, are the hill lands here and there being planted and abandoned fields being put back into forest. With the passing of the oak forests a wealth of woodcraft and tree lore perished and a wide range of skills declined, of which we get tantalizing glimpses from archaeological discoveries and legendary tales. Instead of the almost unbroken forest cover which once existed a 'closed association' of farms and fenced fields 137 824

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137 [824] now stretches from coast to coast. So much of the scene is fashioned by man that it requires an effort of the imagination as well as the findings of scientific research to picture the landscape as it was before his coming. Palaeo-botanists, from their studies of plant-remains and pollen-grains preserved in the peats (Chapter XIV), are slowly reconstructing the post-glacial succession of forests as arctic willow, birch, hazel, pine, alder and oak spread in turn over the face of the land. The dwarf vegetation of the early post-glacial period, with its scattered birchwoods, was too thin to form peat, but with the warmer climate of the Boreal phase (beginning about 7000 B.C.) pine and hazel, followed by oak and elm, spread across the country, and both fen-peat and wood-peat began to form in the undrained hollows of the lowlands. The growth of forest and peats was accelerated as the warm seas of the succeeding Atlantic period flooded the coasts at a time of rising sea-level, between 5000 and 2500 B.C. During this phase the alder flourished and the high humidity brought the rapid growth of sphagnum moss on the bogs.

It was during the following sub-Boreal period (2500–500 B.C.) that the Irish forests reached their greatest development, covering even the exposed seaward slopes of the western mountains where today not a single tree can be found growing. During this period, among the thinning forests of rocky hill-slopes, man made his first clearings for cultivation and turned the mountain winds to profit in drying and harvesting his crops.
133 Thus the distribution of mountain masses gives a clue to the nuclear regions of Irish civilization, though it should be noticed that there are parts of the Central Lowland where thin dry gravel or limestone soils gave a more kindly foothold. As compared with the broad upland masses of Great Britain, the mountains of Ireland are broken into many fragments which lie scattered around the coasts. They fall, however, into four major divisions which are broadly distinguished by age and structure: those of the north (Ulster) the west (Connacht) the south-west (Munster) and the south-east (Leinster) (Fig. 2).

Geologically the northern mountains are of immense antiquity, and rocks younger than the coal-measures, apart from the ubiquitous glacial deposits, are everywhere rare except in

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FIG. 2. The Provinces of Ireland.

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133 the extreme north-east, where granites and lavas of Tertiary age are outliers of the Scoto-Icelandic igneous province. In Co. Antrim the basaltic lavas have covered and preserved with their armour-plating both red Triassic sandstone and white Cretaceous limestone (chalk) to give sea cliffs of strangely contrasted colours facing the North Channel. The western mountains are also of great age: the monotony of their bog-strewn schists is relieved only by lines of great quartzite peaks which break into the ocean at Croaghaun and Slievemore in Achill Island. In the south-west the parallel folds of Old Red Sandstone finger out to the Atlantic between Dingle Head and Mizen Head, and here again the highest summits are all in sight of the sea. The granite core of the Wicklow Mountains dominates the south-east in the most massive and continuous high ground in the country, and touches the sea on the outskirts of Dublin. Similarly in the north-east Slieve Donard, the highest summit of the Mourne Mountains, raises its great dome to 2,796 ft. only 1½ miles from the Irish Sea.

174 Only on the east coast, between the Wicklow Chain and the Carlingford Mountains, is the highland rim broken wide open
133 in a 50-mile gateway giving access to the interior. Floored by well-drained glacial soils and favoured by a low rainfall of less than thirty inches in the year, this strip of coast has been for 1,000 years Ireland's metropolitan region. In fact, long before Dublin was founded by the Vikings, Tara claimed to be the capital of all Ireland, and not far away the island's most spectacular prehistoric monuments—the corbelled chamber tombs of the Boyne Valley—take us back to the early Bronze Age. The dark age Middle Kingdom of Meath, based on Tara and the Boyne Valley, looks backward to the glories of the Bronze Age and forward to the English Pale which was the first conquest and the final refuge of the Anglo-Norman planters. Its landscape and character are distinctive to this day. What the Middle Kingdom and the Pale both lacked was a natural frontier to the west comparable to the Border Hills of Scotland or to the upland edge of the Welsh Marches.

The other four kingdoms, which have survived as the four
174 provinces, broadly correspond to the four areas—north, west, south-west and south-east—which have upland massifs as their

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

nuclei. We may think of the four kingdoms as slowly crystallizing throughout prehistoric times around areas of primary settlement among the hills. The political organization of these areas had to await the coming of Celtic conquerors, but fundamental in their differentiation are the divergencies in megalithic practice. The penetration of megalithic culture to all parts of the island is one of the most striking facts in the prehistory of Ireland. Again and again, in seeking for the origins of persistent customs we find ourselves led back to the megalith builders and their monumental preoccupation with death and the afterworld. The domination of the megalithic cult was much more complete in the western isle than in Britain, where it took root mainly in the uplands facing the Irish Sea. 174

All around the Irish coasts the megalith builders found hill masses where shallow soils and thinning forests gave them a foothold and ice-carried boulders provided the material for their gigantic tombs and ritual circles. It is significant that the megaliths appear to fall into four major regional groups—five if we include the Boyne area—which correspond with the historic provinces. This has been most clearly demonstrated for Ulster where the distribution of 'horned cairns' has been shown to correspond closely with the upland areas north of the Dundalk-Sligo line.[1] Similarly Meath, Dublin and Louth contain the finest passage-graves, of which New Grange on the Boyne is the supreme example. I have no doubt that the ground pattern of regional differentiation in Ireland was established in the megalithic era during the first half of the second millennium B.C.

It remains to say something of the lowland heart of Ireland where the four provinces meet along the line of the middle Shannon north and south of Lough Ree, which is the geometrical centre both of the lowlands and of the whole island. Near-by Athlone, therefore, serves as the centre of Eire's broadcasting [207] system, but in no terrestrial sense is this bog-strewn central lowland a dominant cultural region. Its function has been largely negative, for it has served as a refuge area remote from the contacts of the coastal fringe and the urban forces which radiate

[1] O. Davies and E. E. Evans, 'The Horned Cairns of Ulster', *U.J.A.* 6 (1943), 7–23.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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174 from it. The Gaelic conquest of the Irish Midlands was not completed until the sixth century A.D., and down to the Anglo-Norman invasions the distinction between free and tributary tribes remained.[1] The counties bordering the middle Shannon—Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and the western parts of Westmeath and Offaly—are probably as full of survivals as any in Ireland. This is the land of the loy and the steeveen (Chapter X) and the last home of many an ancient custom. The lowland [133] of which it is the centre is floored with limestone levelled off at about 200 ft. but diversified by occasional low hills, by intricate solution lakes and by glacial eskers and drifts among which lie countless small lakes and bogs (Fig. 3). It is hard to realize [489] the isolation from which this area suffered before the introduction of improved wheeled vehicles and the coming of the canal and the railway.[2]

311 Let us now look at the cultural landscape which the hand of man has fitted to the physical frame of the island. Although man has been in this country for only a fraction of the time he has occupied South England and the continent, his mark is everywhere. Wander where you will through the length and breadth of the island, and through the dozens of lesser isles around its shores, and you will never fail to see traces of human activity, past or present, even in the most empty and inaccessible spots. Apart from the more or less datable remains of church and rath, castle and cairn, the land is covered with the marks of man's toil. The history of rural Ireland could be read out of doors, had we the skill, from the scrawlings made by men in the field boundaries of successive periods. In them the unlettered countryman wrote his runes on the land. The student of historical geography has been greatly assisted in the task of interpreting this palimpsest by the new tool of air-photography which, given suitable conditions, will pick out all man-made marks on the face of the earth.

311 178 The sturdy field walls and hedged banks which give the countryside its intimate character are by no means as immutable

[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), 204.

[2] Improvements in public transport were initiated by the Italian, Bianconi, who, profiting from the cavalry horses thrown on the market after the Napoleonic wars, began his famous fleet of 'cars' in Tipperary in 1815.

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FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

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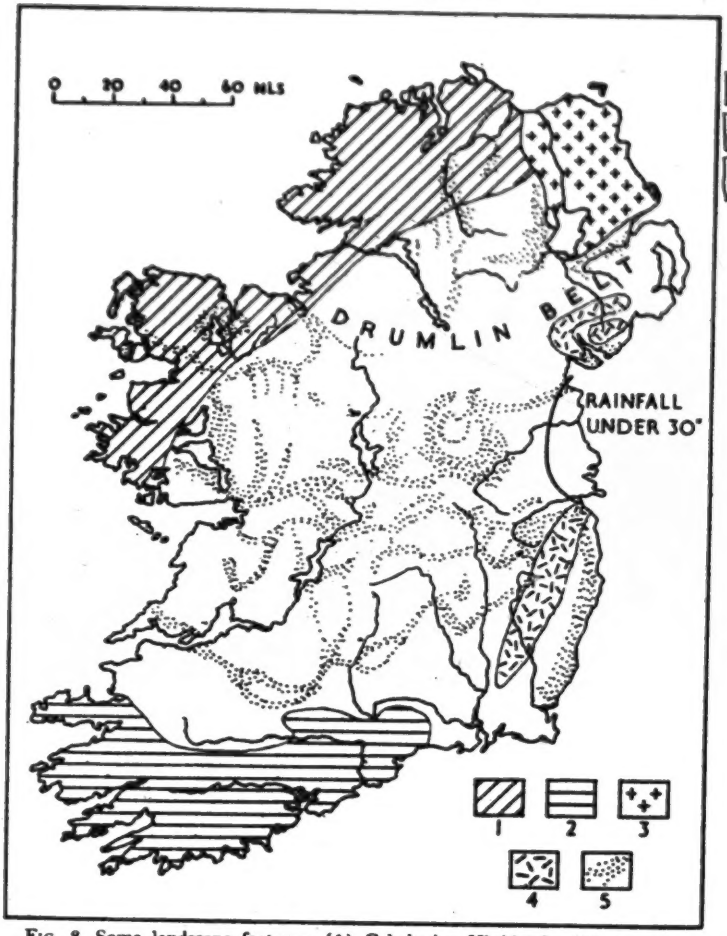

FIG. 3. Some landscape features. (1) Caledonian Highlands, (2) Armorican ridge and valley, (3) North-eastern basalts, (4) Eastern granites, (5) Glacial sands and gravels (eskers) (after J. K. Charlesworth). Drumlins are little hills composed of glacial drift. See Pl. 5, 1.

as they appear. The pattern they make has changed with the centuries in response to new needs and new tools. At present we are in a period of fairly rapid change, for the tractor calls for larger and more regular fields than those made by the spade

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178 and the horse-plough, and old hedges are being grubbed up to
311 give the machine elbow-room. This in turn leads to a demand for larger farms, for the small holdings which are characteristic of Ireland (one half of the farms are between fifteen and fifty acres) have customarily just so many fields as will give a proper balance between pasture and plough, and where two or three tiny fields are knocked into one the balance is upset. In the same way earlier technological advances, though on a smaller scale, have changed the cultural landscape at different periods. Demographic crises have had similar effects. Before the Great Famine, for example, 80 per cent of all Irish farms were under fifteen acres.

From the earliest times, it seems, Ireland was a land of small holdings and small field-plots. Yet the actual pattern of small hedged fields as we know it today is of no great antiquity. For the most part it is a consequence of the agrarian revolution which affected the country, at various dates in different parts, between about 1750 and 1850. It was the planting of thorn hedgerows and the building of stone walls that fixed what had previously been ill-defined and temporary field boundaries, associated with the openfield or rundale system of land use. With permanent enclosure went the consolidation of holdings into compact independent blocks, though in some districts independence was achieved without grouping the fields together so that properties consist of scattered hedged fields which reflect the disposition of plots under the earlier openfield system. The hedge in fact has had a hard struggle for survival in the poorer districts. Both the thorns and the gates which enclosure brought with it were frequently hacked down for
[417] firewood, and to this day a wooden gate is a rarity in the countryside: the field gates are almost invariably of iron. There are many districts where the thorn hedge itself is almost unknown, where low earthen mounds half overgrown with bramble and whin (gorse) give us a glimpse of a stage between permanent enclosures and the openfields which they replaced. In Donegal gangs of villagers threw down the landlords' fences as quickly as they were erected,[1] and in some parts of the county they are still kept in repair for the summer months only.

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 41.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

Little attention has been given to the Irish openfield system.[1] 311
It has escaped the notice of historians because the revolution which broke it down was a prolonged and silent one, involving no Enclosure Acts such as those which record the disappearance of the English openfields. Under the Irish system it was the practice, in some areas at least, for the plots to change hands periodically among co-partners by the casting of lots. Thus the transition to consolidated holdings was easier than under the English system, where the scattered plough strips were apparently permanently held. It is important to examine the openfield system more closely than might seem to be warranted by its almost complete disappearance from the modern scene, because it was against this background that many of the tools and customs we shall discuss were evolved. Just as in lowland England the English village was inseparable from its openfields, so in Ireland hamlets or 'clachans' accompanied the old form of land utilization. They will crop up again and again in the chapters which follow. But today and for the last century o. so the isolated farm has characterized the Irish rural scene (Fig. 4). From some elevated viewpoint in the mountainy 311
parts one may count hundreds of small whitewashed homesteads 361
dotted among the fields, each nestling behind a handful of wind-bent trees and approached by its own access-road—the loaning or borheen beloved of the sentimental song writers. Every farmstead has the air of a fortress, an independent unit within its jealously guarded boundary fences, defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars (Fig. 5) and claiming rights of way whose protection keeps the town solicitors profitably engaged. The degree of independence has been notably strengthened by the Land Acts (1869–1925) [423]
under which former tenants have become their own landlords. Peasant-proprietorship is an established fact throughout the country, though it has by no means solved Ireland's problems as some politician-prophets claimed it would.

The truth is that, taking the country as a whole, most of the 311
farms are too small to be truly independent of their neighbours. 578
Bitter experience and the traditional land-hunger of a community

[1] E. E. Evans, *Geography*, 24 (1939), 24–36; D. McCourt, *Economic History Review*, 7, 369–76.

311 where the land has been almost the sole available re-
[578] source go far to explain the jealousy with which established rights are maintained, but there are deeper needs and bonds in the rural community.

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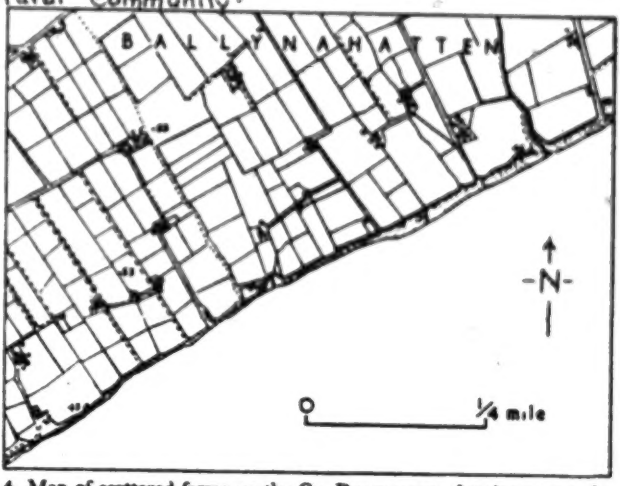

FIG. 4. Map of scattered farms on the Co. Down coast, showing seaweed-roads. (Based upon the Ordnance map with the sanction of the Controller, H.M.S.O.)

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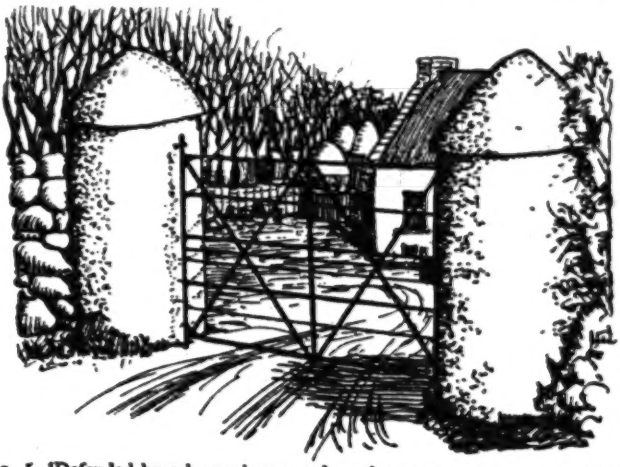

FIG. 5. 'Defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars:' an Ulster farm.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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311 continuous tradition of partnership. Rundale, as we find it in
361 decay in the nineteenth century, was a diseased system that had outlived its purpose. A few examples will serve to illustrate the appalling conditions to which it led when the removal of traditional checks and the adoption of the potato had allowed the population to expand recklessly within the framework of an inherited system of land use and settlement.

311 Our first example comes from the present century, and from
361 Co. Mayo. The clachan of Rathlackan, when the Congested
659 Districts Board tried to disperse it in 1918, was occupied by fifty-six families whose land was scattered in 1,500 fragments, some of them no more than a dozen square yards in area (Fig. 6). A two-acre holding was split into eighteen tiny plots, and on the average twenty-seven lots were held by each farm. Such was the confusion that it was not until 1942 that the process of redistribution and consolidation of holdings was completed, with the result that 'fairly compact holdings' were provided for thirty-two families.[1]

The following quotations are from the pamphlets of an 'improv-
311 ing landlord' in Donegal, and refer to a period about a hundred
361 years earlier, in the 1840s.

'We suppose it would not be believed that in this district, until very lately, fences were altogether unknown. In some instances a tenant having any part of a townland (no matter how small), had his proportion in thirty or forty different places, and without fences between them. One poor man who had his inheritance in thirty-two different places, abandoned them in utter despair of ever being able to make them out . . . The rundale system was a complete bar to any attempt at improvement; as, on a certain day, all the cattle belonging to the townland were brought from the mountains and allowed to run indiscriminately over the arable land. And in spring no individual occupier would set or sow, or labour in the fields, before a certain day, when the cattle were again sent to the hills, until after harvest. In one instance a small field of about half an acre was held by twenty-six people.'[2]

[1] *The Irish Times* (12th Jan., 1948). This was achieved only at the cost of the physical collapse of one land-officer and the mental breakdown of another.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22, 46.

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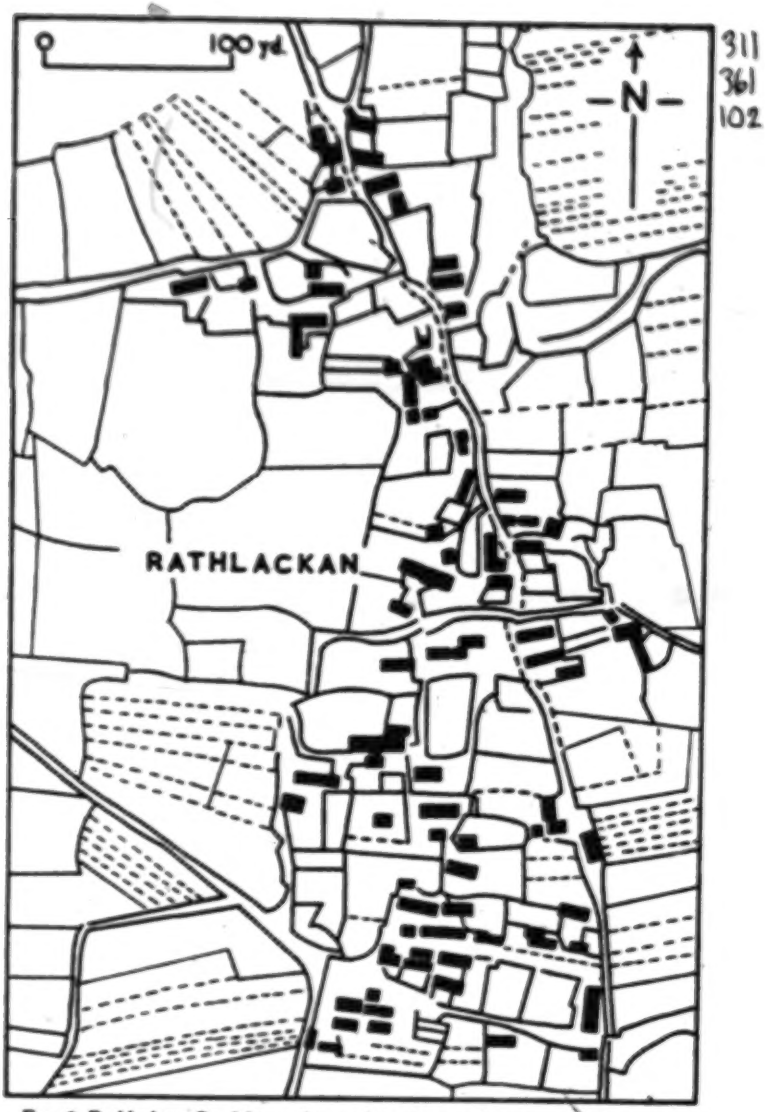

FIG. 6. Rathlackan, Co. Mayo: the rundale cluster with some of the openfield strips as they were before reorganization began in 1918.

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311 In Connacht conditions were even worse, as may be judged
361 by the persistence of the Rathlackan cluster down to 1942. So swollen were some of these settlements that one of them, Menlough near Galway, now consisting of a dozen farms set among the ruins of others, is said to have had 2,000 inhabitants in 1845, while lacking 'head or centre, market, church, chapel or school'.[1]

In Ulster there are many examples of small clusters which have persisted because they did not become swollen to disastrous proportions. They were characteristic, for instance, of flax-growing areas and were occupied by farmer-weavers who depended on each others' services at harvest-time, and they survived the crisis of the great famine although many decayed with the decline of hand-loom weaving soon afterwards. Despite all the disadvantages of life in these clachans, their inhabitants were reluctant to leave them. It was stated in evidence before the Devon Commission that even if they were moving only half a mile away 'they were crying as if they were going to America'. It was in fact from such decaying house-clusters that a great number of the emigrants to the United States set out across the seas in the second half of last century.

[1]T. C. Foster, *Letters*, 298.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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III

BALLY AND BOOLEY

BAILE (bally) is the Gaelic word for the home-place or townland,[1] Ireland's smallest administrative unit; buaile (booley) the name of the summer milking-place or shieling where in times past the flocks and their tenders spent the summer months. I believe that seasonal nomadism (transhumance) between bally and booley is an important and neglected aspect of Irish social history, and one which goes far to explain many features of traditional life. It is significant that the Irish word for a boy (buachaill) originally meant a herdsman. The charge of nomadism, using the word in its worst connotation, which English writers made against the Irish, finds some justification in the prevalence of a pastoral economy which was, in fact, more comparable to that of the Swiss peasants or the Norwegian milk-girls. Wherever transhumance is or has been practised, it is associated with difficult environments and marginal conditions, where it has provided opportunities for escape from authority and served as a means of preserving and transmitting ancient traditions. This is well illustrated in the example of the Carpathian shepherds of Roumania. 221

It is clear from the Irish laws and from the findings of archaeology that farming practice had permitted some degree of permanent settlement long before the dawn of the Middle Ages, probably by early Celtic times. Of all the administrative units 423 621

[1] I have discussed the townland unit in my *Mourne Country*, Ch. 11. My colleague Mr. J. B. Arthurs thinks that the word *baile* may be a very old pre-Goidelic word, and that where 'ballys' are numerous the indigenous peoples had been left mainly undisturbed by Goidelic expansion.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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423 of different sizes and various origins into which rural Ireland
621 is divided—townland, parish, barony, diocese, rural district and so on—it is the townland which most closely touches the daily life and social relations of the countryman. The townland is his postal address, for individual farms preserve their historic communal anonymity: they still belong to the townland though they have become separate units since the 'town' or cluster has broken up. The farms rarely carry any names other than those of
[103] their owner (Mulligan's place, Thomson's farm or merely O'Brien's) and since there may be a dozen O'Briens in a
[551] particular townland various nicknames[1] and patronymics are used to distinguish between them. Thus one farm may be Kilty O'Brien's (from its left-handed owner), another Patsy Kate O'Brien's (from the owner's mother), and a third Yank O'Brien's (a returned emigrant, this). Similarly, the public house takes its title not from the brewers who supply it or from heraldic beasts such as the Red Lion but from the Mooneys or the Murnaghans who own it. Shops in country towns, too,
[602] carry personal names, and the nucleus of their trade is built up among blood relations.

423 The townland names, involving so many land holdings, are
621 legal titles, and their Gaelic names, however erroneously spelt
103 on the Ordnance Survey maps, are fossilized in their current forms. Only an Act of Parliament can alter them. A glance at any six-inch Ordnance map will reveal the strange names that Gaelic imagination contrived and English scribes corrupted. Here are a few which I have come across in Ulster: Ballywillwill, Ballymunterhiggin, Aghayeevoge, Treantaghmucklagh. In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of them named Ballybeg (little town). Some 2,000 townlands begin with Knock (a hill); there are sixty called Tully and there are eleven Edens. The degree of repetition shows that these names have come down from a time when life was organized on a local basis. There are between 60,000 and 70,000 townlands in Ireland, averaging 325 acres or
423 ½ sq. mile, and the average townland population in the rural
621 areas is perhaps fifty. In fact their size varies considerably,
184

[1]Writing in 1682 (*West-Meath*, 113), Sir Henry Piers noticed their prevalence in that county '. . . so as no man whatever can escape a nickname.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

since they were based on the fertility of the land rather than its acreage, and it seems that many moorland tracts were not divided until fairly recent times, for they were formerly shared as common summer pasturage by the people of a whole parish or barony, covering 100 sq. miles or more. In such hilly areas the townlands may be as much as 2,000 acres: on the other hand in thickly-settled lowlands they are frequently less than 100 acres, and some anomalous fragments of an acre or two are designated townlands. This diversity also reflects cultural differences both between regions and between various classes from the kings and chiefs down to the humblest of bondmen. The first Ordnance Survey (1830–42) suppressed many of the local names for subdivisions and applied the term townland universally. Though the townland appears to have been equated with an agricultural unit, the ploughland or *seisrach*, it is clear that in many parts of the country 'the cow's grass' was the effective unit of measurement. Of Donegal about 1840 we read: 'The land is never let, sold or devised by the acre, but by 'a cow's grass'. This is a complement of land well understood by the people, being in fact the general standard; and they judge of the dimensions of a holding by its being to the extent, as the case may be, of one, two or three 'cows' grass'. They have divided not only into the fourth part of a cow's grass, called a 'foot', but into the eighth part of a cow's grass, or half a foot, denominated 'a cleet'.'[1] In Bantry, Co. Cork, land was let 'in the wilder parts by what is termed the gneeve, which is the twelfth part of a townland, and therefore of very undefined acreage'.[2]

To judge from surviving examples of clachans and openfields, it was customary for each house in the cluster to have a small enclosure or 'gort' (garden) adjacent to it, their high walls lining a maze of narrow lanes winding haphazard among the houses (Fig. 6). These settlements were characterized by an extreme disorder, as though the houses, in the words of one writer, had fallen 'in a shower from the sky'.[3] Linear villages, it is true, are not uncommon along the western seaboard,

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 26.
[2]*Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1844), s.v. Bantry.
[3]Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (1839), 353.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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361 arranged in some semblance of order along a road, but they are likely to be late colonies or the result of land re-distribution. As a visitor during the famine years wrote: 'The villages in which the greater portion of the people (of western Ireland) reside . . . consist of collections of hovels . . . grouped without regularity, formed of clay, or loose stone with green sods stuffed into the interstices'.[1] A little earlier, in 1839, the people of Achill Island are described as 'living in little cabins built in loose clusters varying from twenty to eighty in a cluster: these clusters or villages are sixteen in number'.[2] Still earlier, in 1802, Donegal is said to have had about 500 'villages', which were, however, 'dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings'.[3]

361 The absence of any discernible plan as compared with many English or German villages has led visiting critics to regard
342 the clachan as a reflection of the disordered Irish mentality. The word that best fits the untidy house cluster is one often heard in Ireland—'throughother'—which is properly applied and probably owes its origin to the scattered plots of the openfield (Fig. 6). Despite this apparently casual disorder the selection of a house-site was a matter for the most careful deliberation. Shelter from the prevailing winds was a prime need, so that the houses seem to snuggle together, generally located in a hollow or on a lee slope. To this end a man might throw his hat into the air on a day of wild winds and mark its falling place. But it seems it was at all costs necessary to avoid giving offence to the fairies by building across one of their 'pads'. In Tyrone it is said that 'no man would build a house till he had stuck a new spade into the earth'. If the fairies had not removed it overnight the site was safe.[4] In Cavan I was told that a small line of stones was first built on the site: if it was intact next morning the fairies were not displeased. The ill-luck which dogged the person who had inadvertently built his house across a fairy pad is one of the many themes which crop up in the stories one hears throughout the country.

[1]J. Pim, *The Condition and Prospects of Ireland* (1848), 116.
[2]Edward Newman in *The Magazine of Natural History* (1839), 569–77.
[3]James McParlan, *Statistical Survey of the County of Donegal* (1802), 64.
[4]Rose Shaw, *Carleton's Country* (1950), 15.

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BALLY AND BOOLEY

These clachans, while some had their speciality such as weaving or thatching, were concerned primarily and almost exclusively with agriculture and attracted none of the elements of the true village, whether church, inn or shops. Itinerant 'tinkers and tailors' paid periodic visits and with the pedlars and beggars brought news of other districts, but the economic and social needs of the hamlet were met by periodic visits to the fairs and by seasonal gatherings of various kinds. Within the group the bonds of kinship were close and strong, and ties of marriage carrying reciprocal responsibilities linked one clachan with another within small neighbourhood units consisting of perhaps half a dozen townlands. With the close kinship bonds went corresponding rivalries with adjacent neighbourhoods which provided social motive force by acting as incentives. These rivalries broke out characteristically into feuds and blood-letting at fairs and gatherings. But in later days, at any rate, internal rivalries and squabbles were more conspicuous and found more opportunities within overgrown kinship groups which had become too complicated to function smoothly. A few illustrations will suffice. 361 621

One visitor explained the presence of the back-doors on clustered houses, for which we shall offer other explanations in the following chapter, by the fact that the women needed an escape when too hotly engaged in rows with neighbours.[1] Joint ownership sometimes extended to single animals with strange results. For example: 'three men were concerned in one horse; but the poor brute was rendered useless, as the unfortunate foot of the supernumerary leg remained unshod . . . and accordingly it became quite lame.[2] We are reminded of the difficulties arising from the joint ownership of fruit trees in some Mediterranean countries. It was in Donegal too that I heard of a ram which died of exposure when it was part-shorn by one of its joint owners. In the same district a man wishing to build a wall around one of his fields but unable to get his neighbour to agree, deliberately erected it a yard or two on his own side of the boundary so that the neighbour would still be forced to herd or tether his cow to prevent it trespassing on the 361 578 311 423 [422]

[1]Isaac Weld, *Statistical Survey of Roscommon* (1832), 475.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 23.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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361 narrow strip between the boundary and the wall. 'Fights, tres-
578 passes, confusion, disputes and assaults, were the natural and
311 unavoidable consequences of the rundale system.'[1] On the other
423 hand we must recall the extreme reluctance with which the system was at last abandoned, the social benefits it conferred on members of the kin. The reforming landlord, Lord George Hill, comments that 'the pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together, made them consider the removal of the houses, from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built to the separate farms, a great grievance.'[2] Another writer gives as the basis of the tenants' grievance, 'the recollection of nights of social concourse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of
[517] defence against bailiff or gauger'.[3] There were ceilidhes and spinning parties, and many a clachan had its shanachie (story-teller) and its fiddler or piper—usually a maimed or simple person—who accompanied with folk-tunes. Folk-songs, occupational airs and legendary tales were kept alive in this way. Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there
[252] would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some
[343] districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains.

The openfield which lay around the cluster, normally on the
311 down-hill side so that the vital manure could be 'sliped' down-
423 slope (see Chapter XIII), seems to have been kept in cultivation in some areas at least year after year. This was the infield, in contrast to the outfield, the outlying rough pasture bits of which were temporarily reclaimed and then left to rest for long periods. We shall return to the plough and spade and methods of cultivation in another place but may refer here to the allotment of the holdings in the common fields. Although in many parts of the country the holdings, by the end of the eighteenth century, had become fixed in their scattered parcels on the several qualities of land in the openfield, there is abundant

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.
[2]ibid., 42.
[3]W. R. Wilde, *Dublin University Magazine*, 41 (1853), 20.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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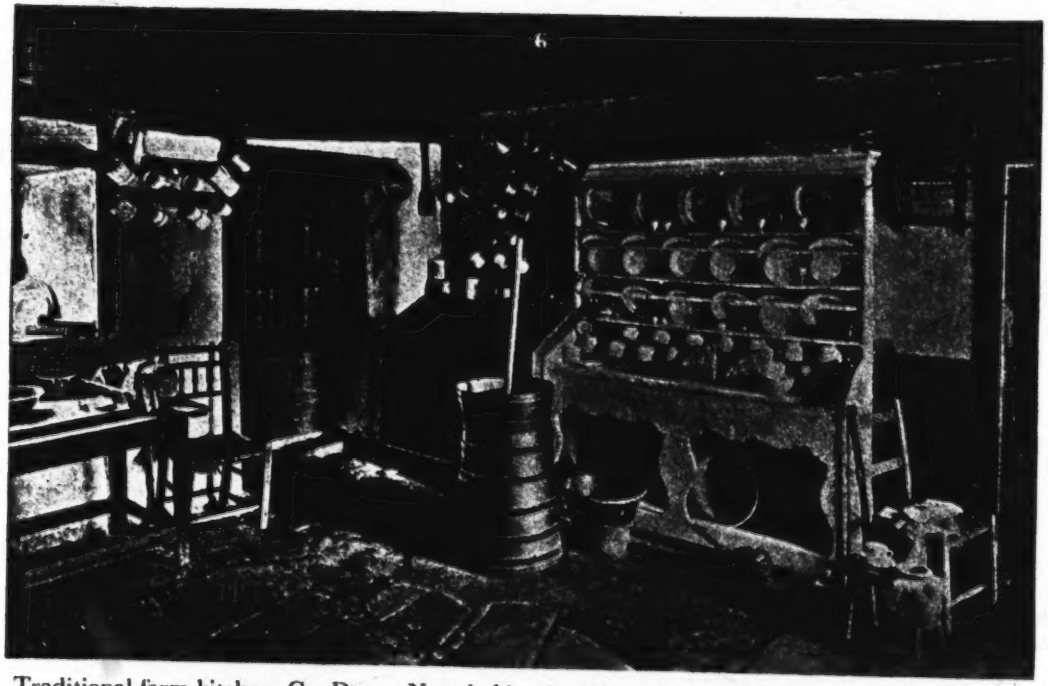
PLATE I



Traditional farm kitchen, Co. Down. Note baking-board on table (*left*) and meal ark to left of dresser, with beetle hanging above.

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[Facing p. 32]

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evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean, even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat. Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable. Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter. And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at that season, when food for livestock is scarce.

Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen

[1]Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 349.

[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.

[3]ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.

[4]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.

[5]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Antrim

PLATE 2

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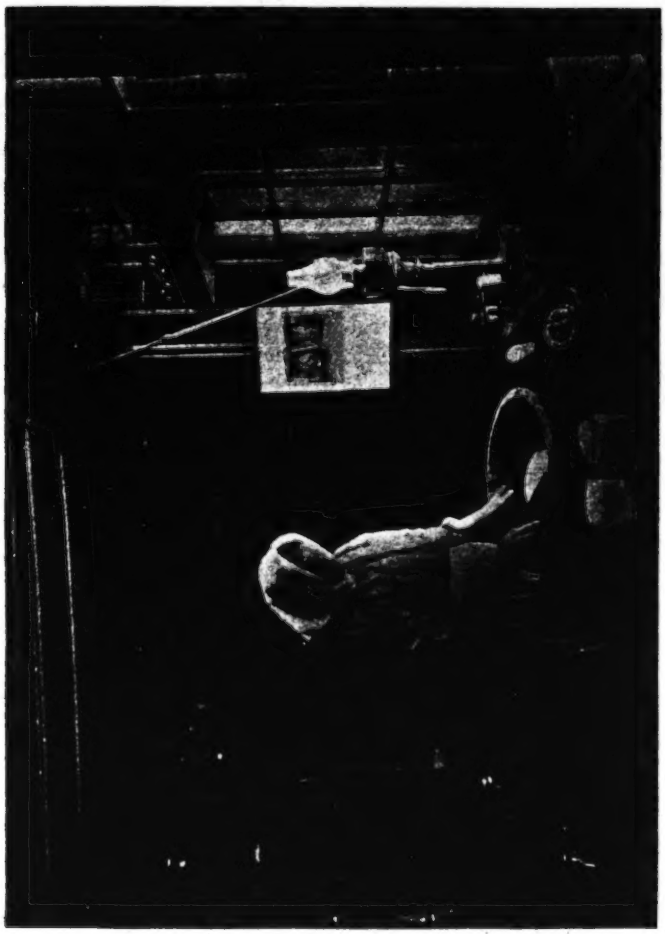

Butter-making in a Co. Antrim farm kitchen.

[facing p. 33]

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311 tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year!'[1] Sea
221 wrack and shell sand were carted up to thirty miles inland from
[241] the coast.[2] In the absence of permanent fences the majority of
[237] the cattle must be moved away during the summer and those remaining carefully herded or tethered on the outfield, or put in temporary enclosures to manure that part of the outfield which was due for cultivation.[3] In its origins and full development the rundale system depended on the movement of most of the livestock to summer booleys situated some distance away. Here the widely distributed uplands and boglands played their part in the traditional economy. Although late survivals of the booleying system are hard to find, little of it managing to outlive the crisis of the Great Famine, we are beginning to track down its history and significance. The Irish texts are as disappointing and vague as they are in many matters touching the common people, but folk-memory comes to our aid. There are stories, and place-name evidence, from most parts of the country, and regional variants of the practice are being studied and mapped.[4]

We give first some quotations from the few discerning observers who drew attention to the practice. Edmund Spenser's enlightened spirit of inquiry is shown in his remark: 'Have you ever heard what was the occasion and first beginning of this custom? for it is good to know the same.' He writes, in 1595,
221 'There is one use amongst them, to keep their cattle and to
234 live themselves the most part of the year in boolies, pasturing upon the mountain and waste wild places.'[5] His objections to the system, however, reveal his Englishry: the booleys hid outlaws and loose people, and the wandering life made the Irish barbarous. The following brief reference comes from O'Flaherty's famous account of West Connacht: 'In summertime they drive their cattle to the mountains, where such as look to the cattle live in small cabins for that season.'[6] In the eighteenth

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country* (1951), 141.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 131.
[4]J. M. Graham, 'Transhumance in Ireland', in *The Advancement of Science*, 37 (1953), 74–9.
[5]Quoted in H. Morley, *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James I* (1890), 67.
[6]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 17.

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century we find a description from Ulster: 'In the bosom of the Mourne Mountains there is a place called the Deers' Meadow to which great numbers of poor people resort in the summer months to graze their cattle. They bring with them their wives, children and little wretched furniture, erect huts, and there live . . . and often cut their turf.'[1] A century later a fuller account of a more complicated transhumance, reminiscent of the Norwegian seaboard, comes from Donegal: 'It often happens that a man has three dwellings—one in the mountains, another upon the shore, and the third upon an island, he and his family flitting from one to another of these habitations . . . This change usually takes place upon a fixed day, the junior branches of the family generally perform the land journey on the top of the household goods with which the pony may often be seen so loaded, and at the same time so obscured, that little more than the head can be observed; and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected et cetera . . . creep along the roads.'[2] The author goes on to comment on the restrictions imposed on the comfort and possessions of the peasants by their 'Arab mode of life'. In Achill Island too the movements were complicated, involving the entire population which, having moved to the summer pastures and sowed their corn, returned to the permanent coastal village for the high summer to fish and went back to gather the harvest at the booley in the autumn.[3]

For the most part we are dependent on folk tradition for details of booleying. The Ordnance Survey Letters written in the 1830s contain valuable material from Counties Antrim and Londonderry, and the following extract relates to the parish of Dunaghy: 'Some of the very old men of the country recollect seeing the boliehouses inhabited. They were built of sods upon a foundation of earth and stones and were thatched with heath. Many of the poorer sort lived here in summer grazing the cattle upon land that nobody appears to have claimed and supporting themselves upon their milk and blood which they took from

[1]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 125.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.
[3]An account by Sir William Wilde, written in 1836, is contained in Wood-Martin, *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (1888), 238.

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them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rectangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of booleying there are no discernible traces, for the flimsy constructions in such sites, built without stones, have been buried under the peat. Frequently the huts were built into a sloping bank of peat or gravel, and the roofs were constructed of bog timbers covered by long strips of sod and thatched with heather secured with ropes. We shall see that long roofing-sods are typical of traditional peasant dwellings to this day, and their use may go back to pastoral origins. It was observed 361 342

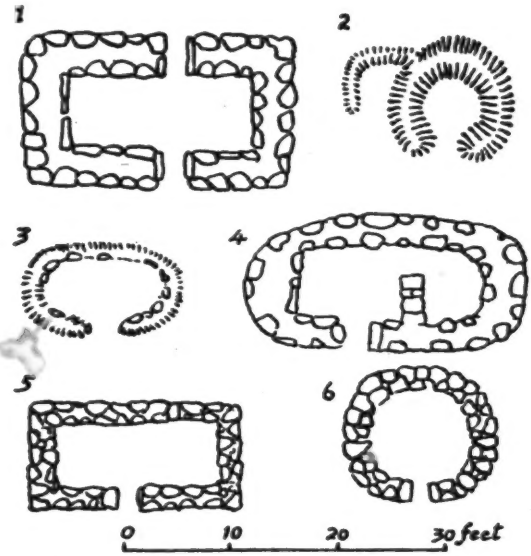

FIG. 7. Plans of booley houses. Nos. 1, 4, 5, Achill Island; Nos. 2 and 3, Mourne Mountains, Co. Down; No. 6, Co. Mayo.

near Newry in 1690 that the cabins were built so conveniently of hurdles and long turf 'that they can remove them in summer towards the mountains, and bring them down to the valleys in winter.'[1] Circular hut-foundations are also found, some built of stones, others of sods, and the former may well have had corbelled stone roofs. The huts are generally in groups of

[1]George Story, *An Impartial History of the Wars of Ireland* (1691), 2nd ed. (1698), 16.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 from five to twenty, either clustered or spaced within calling
distance of each other. They are nearly always located near
361 running water, usually near the headwaters of mountain streams,
where patches of bright green grass and such characteristic
flowers as tormentil may reveal their sites even when almost
all trace has gone (Fig. 7).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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IV

THE THATCHED HOUSE

VISITORS to Ireland have not failed to comment on the wide gap which separates the splendid if often dilapidated 342 mansions of the landed gentry from the humble dwellings of the mass of the rural population. This is a characteristic dichotomy which runs through Irish life and goes deep into the Irish past: it was foreshadowed in the distinction between the Gaelic overlords and the tributary tribes who were still in an inferior position at the time of the Anglo-Norman conquest. By English standards the Irish farmer is a small-holder. Substantial farmhouses with some pretensions to architectural dignity are in general restricted to the planted areas and they are few in number compared with the traditional single-storied thatched cabins of the peasantry. These have so frequently been condemned as artless and insanitary that it might be supposed nothing could be said in their favour. Their disadvantages indeed are obvious, and they have given way in many districts to slated houses of cement-blocks or bricks and are [178] doomed to vanish entirely under a wave of thin-walled boxes with garish red roofs. But it is not only sentimentalists who deplore their disappearance. With their passing, writes Robin Flower, something of the old world passes away, 'for the older type of house was in a right harmony with its surroundings, while these high and bare constructions stand in a perpetual contradiction of the whole environment of hill and sea and sky in which they are so violently set down.'[1]

In fact a good deal more could be said in favour of the old styles, at their best providing homes of character, comfort and

[1]Robin Flower, *The Western Isle* (1944), 46.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 beauty which vary subtly from one region to another in response to local climates, conditions and contacts. The use of local building materials meant that they fitted into landscapes of which they were literally a part, their clay or stone walls gathered from the earth on the spot, their timbers dug from the bogs, their thatch harvested from the fields. A Swedish ethnographer writes that 'the best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe.'[1] The result of an unbroken tradition was a fine simplicity of style and proportions, with nothing of the vulgar obtrusiveness of the new fashions in country houses, based too often on urban styles and red-brick respectability. Before the famine, houses in the market towns also were very largely of traditional local style save in the central square. Isaac Weld, describing Roscommon in 1832, states that out of its 517 houses no less than 462 were thatched.[2]

Our concern is with the old-style house as a shelter for man
342 and beast and as the vehicle of family lore and regional tradition.
362 In the crowded clachans limitations of space and the fact that
231 diarying was mainly practised in the summer booleys go far to explain the absence of separate byres or dairies. Sanitation was of the crudest and closets unknown. It is these aspects of Irish rural life that have most readily aroused the amused indignation of the critics and the defensive wrath of Irish patriots. As we read in an earlier description of the Western Isle:[3]

> At one of th' ends he kept his cows,
> At th'other end he kept his spouse.

The custom of housing man and beast together has been very general among pastoral peoples in regions of difficult climate, whether in Highland Britain or the European mountain zone. Parts of Ireland, however, have long had a different type of house giving more family privacy: in the lowland parts of Leinster, East Munster and South Ulster the house with central chimney and fireside partition did not easily allow of the keeping of livestock in the house, and one is inclined to regard

[1]Åke Campbell, *Folk-Liv*. (1937), 228.
[2]Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 307.
[3]W(illiam) M(offatt), *A Description of the Western Isle*, Dublin (1724), Canto 2.

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this style as an improvement introduced by English settlers. This central-chimney house with its 'jamb-wall' hearth will be described in the following chapter. In any event, although stray hens, a pet lamb or a farrowing pig may occasionally join the cats and dogs in an Irish kitchen, the keeping of cattle in the house is a thing of the past. Yet it was so recently practised, especially along the Atlantic seaboard, that many existing houses are not far removed from kitchen-byres, a cross partition conveniently converting the byre into a bedroom, store or dairy.

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Moreover the shape and internal arrangements of the prevailing pattern of traditional rural dwelling are conditioned by these antecedents. The long rectangular shape was sanctioned by custom and preserved by superstition; a house, to be 'lucky', must not be more than one room wide (Fig. 8). 'Widen the house', I have heard it said in Donegal, 'and the family will get smaller'. The hearth gable of the house was, where possible, dug into the slope of rising ground, so that it would have been difficult to enlarge the house by widening it: it could grow more easily in length. The long shape is also characteristic of humble dwellings in the small straggling Irish towns. Their streets are lined by whitewashed cabins strung end to end interminably; in the 'cabin suburbs' one rarely sees a house that is not aligned along the road. Describing Ballymoney in Co. Antrim about 1830 the Ordnance Survey Letters state that many houses facing the main street had no access to the byres and stables behind, so that cows and horses had to be taken in and out through the house. In parts of western Ireland cows were brought into single-roomed houses within living memory. In Clare Island, Co. Mayo, there were at the turn of the century only five or six houses out of the total of 120 into which the cattle and pigs were not taken at night.[1] Writing of the village of Kilgever near Westport in 1880 an observer states: 'It is a terrible thought that these huge heaps (of manure about the doorsteps) had all been taken from the single rooms, each of which formed a common stye for men, women, children, horses, cows, pigs and poultry.[2]' It is still characteristic of many small farms that the manure heap is not far from the

[1]C. R. Browne, *Clare Island and Inishturk.*
[2]J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught in the Spring of 1880* (1888), 54

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 front door, for the cows are kept in a byre which is a continua-
362 tion of the dwelling house, an obvious convenience though there
231 is not, as in the longhouse of Wales and Dartmoor, direct access from kitchen to feeding-walk.

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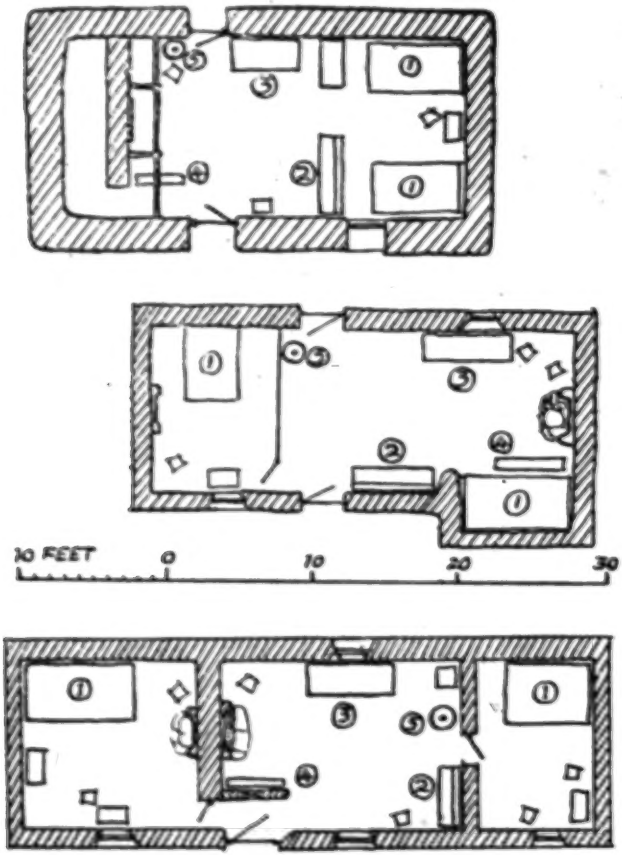

FIG. 8. House plans. *Above:* hipped-roof house, Co. Galway (compare Fig. 13, 2). *Centre:* house with outshot, Co. Donegal (compare Fig. 12, 3). *Below:* house with jamb-wall, Co. Down. (1) bed, (2) dresser, (3) table, (4) bench, (5) churn.

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THE THATCHED HOUSE

Poverty and rack-renting undoubtedly contributed to the long survival of such conditions, but they ultimately derive from cultural forces of wide distribution and high antiquity. It used to be said in defence of the custom of sharing the house with the cow that she helped to keep the house warm and that in turn the cow yielded more milk. Inquire further and you will find that it was thought to be unlucky if the cow was not able to get a glimpse of the fire. Behind this belief there lies faith in the power of the fire to dispel evil spirits. The end of the house farthest from the hearth is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-end', a relic of the time when it housed the cattle, for it was obviously wise to have the floor sloping down towards the byre. Many cabins and huts were constructed as lean-tos against a bog-face or an old fence (ditch). Hence the saying applied, for example, to the Cappagh district of Co. Armagh, that 'you can't cross a ditch or you'll fall down a chimney'. It should be recalled that in Ireland the tenants built and repaired their own houses with, normally, no assistance from the landlord, and there was little inducement to build houses to last longer than the lease of say twenty-one years. Only in Ulster under the custom of tenant right could outgoing tenants claim recompense from the new tenants for improvements made.

342 362 231 [372] [361] [539]

The simple rectangular shape is a feature of west European house-types from prehistoric times and has characterized some houses of Neolithic age excavated in Ireland. Such houses were usually built of timber, clay or sods (scraws). Circular or oval houses are of similar antiquity, whether made of stone or of wattles, but although a few round ended rectangular houses survive, the round hut of corbelled stone slabs is used today only as a store place or animal house (Chapter IX). The houses of Achill Island are described by several writers about 1840 as circular or oval in shape, built of boulders without mortar and having the thatched roof continuous with the walls. They had neither chimneys nor windows, and the single door was sometimes not more than four feet high. None of these houses is now inhabited though their ruins can be seen. The round or oval house, however, has probably contributed to certain features of the traditional rectangular-house in some areas, for example the central hearth and the hipped roof which is proper

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 to a round-ended house. But there are many missing links in the evolution of the Irish house, which archaeological excavation will hope to find some day. Interpretative studies of Dark-Age texts are also needed.[1]

342 Clues to old methods of house building may also be found in
524 forms of construction used for outbuildings or in children's
787 games. There is, for example, a Hallowe'en spell or divination game known as 'building the house' in which twelve couples of holly twigs are arranged in a circle, pushed into the ground and tied together at the apex. A live turf representing the fire is placed in the centre. The coupled twigs are named after the boys and girls present, and the pair which first catches fire indicates which boy and girl will first be coupled in marriage.[2] Compare with this a description of Irish houses in the early seventeenth century: 'the baser cottages are built of underwood, called wattles, and covered with thatch . . . of a round form and without chimneys, and in my imagination resemble so many hives of bees about a country farm.'[3]

Today nearly all Irish farm-houses are a simple rectangle
342 in ground plan, anything from ten to twenty feet in width and of varying length according to the number of rooms they comprise, each room being the full width of the house. The normal developed house has three rooms, consisting of a central kitchen with a bedroom at the bottom end and another—the best room, called simply 'the room'—behind the chimney, which helps to warm it (Fig. 8). This, in the Gaeltacht, is the 'west room', reserved for family mementoes, for the old people and especially for the dead. Here the body is placed during wakes, and a wealth of superstition gathers around this room.[4] Arensberg may have been mistaken in translating the Gaelic *iarthar* as 'west', for the word also means 'back', but there are old beliefs about the orientation of the dwelling house, and it is possible that there was an association between death and the direction of the setting sun. The confusion between 'west' and 'back' is amusingly illustrated in the story of the Irish boy who,

[1]Angus Graham, 'Archaeological Gleanings from Dark Age Records', *P.S.A. Scot.* (1950–51), 64–91.

[2]Lady Wilde, *Ancient Legends of Ireland* (1888), 111.

[3]Luke Gernon, *A Discourse of Ireland, Anno 1620.*

[4]C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman* (1937), Ch. 1.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied 342
"'twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the
fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the [763]
west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the [777]
luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was always carried out to the graveyard through the back door, [764]
and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the [354]
room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the [231]
flagged passage between the doors served as a path for livestock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh, [777]
in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands*.
[3] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

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342 morning—and evening—milking of the cows', each animal being driven in turn, in at the front door and out at the back door.[1]

The Census of 1841 estimated that nearly half the families of the rural population of Ireland, then some 85 per cent of the total, were living in the lowest state, in one-roomed mud cabins. In Co. Kerry the percentage was as high as 67 per cent, and in Bear barony in Co. Cork it reached 81 per cent. Although mud houses are now in a minority, many substantial examples remain as well as innumerable decayed specimens. Over many parts of the bog-strewn Central Lowland, where stone is not readily available and transport of materials is difficult, the clay-walled house remains typical. Formerly many single-roomed cabins were made of sods (scraws), especially in boggy country. In Tipperary they were said to be the commonest type about 1780.[2] A few survive. I have seen one in Co. Antrim partly cut out of a bog-bank, housing a large healthy family; and they have been described from other parts of Ireland. Booley houses, we have seen, were frequently built of sods. At its best the mud-walled house can be both durable and comfortable, and many observers warn us not to assume the poverty of their builders. As Arthur Young remarks: 'Before we can attribute such deficiencies to absolute poverty we must take into account the customs and inclinations of the people.'[3]

Mud walls were built up with a fork in layers twelve to eighteen inches deep of a mixture of damp clay and cut rushes which had been left to sour. A stone foundation layer sunk into the ground was usually built first, and sometimes the gable ends, especially if a chimney flue was to be included, were built entirely of stone. They were afterwards trimmed with a sharp spade to a thickness which averages about twenty inches but may be as much as thirty. They had to be of massive construction for stability, and the doors which were cut out subsequently were kept narrow. Similarly the window openings were narrow and placed high in the walls, coming directly under the thatch, so that they resemble eyes glinting below shaggy eye-

[1] Åke Campbell, 'Irish Fields and Houses', *Béaloideas*, 5 (1935), 57–74, 70.
[2] (Thomas Campbell), *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland* (1778), 145.
[3] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 37.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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brows. Thick coats of limewash renewed annually gave protection from the weather and it was essential that the thatch should overhang at the eaves. The roof is typically thatched at the gable, that is, hipped, for it was difficult to build the walls above about six feet high. Alternatively the gables above this height were often finished with turf or sods (Fig. 9). The overhang of the thatch makes the mud-walled house unsuited to the windy coasts of the north and west where the thatch is securely tied down with ropes and trimmed flush with the eaves. Close observation will show the most intimate relationship

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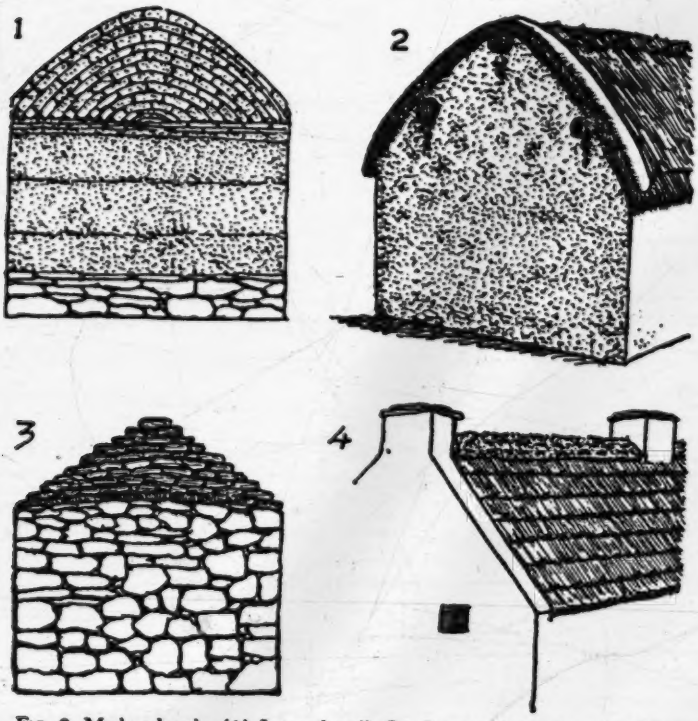

FIG. 9. Mud and sods. (1) Internal wall, Co. Down, of stone, mud and mud bricks, (2) projecting purlin ends of mud house, Co. Armagh: mud coping, (3) internal wall, Co. Meath, with sod top, (4) thatch secured with pegged fir-ropes and ridge of pegged sods, north Antrim.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 between building materials and techniques and types of thatch, and when slates or tiles are adopted for roofing it will be found that old roof patterns are faithfully followed by local builders. An interesting variant of the mud house occurs around Lough Neagh, where the main weight of the roof is carried on three massive purlins the ends of which can be seen projecting outside the upright gables (Fig. 9). I suspect these houses were built to take tall looms, for the use of purlins means that there are no couple-ties crossing the room, but the distinction between the purlin and the coupled-rafter roof may be fundamental. The purlin-roof may go back to the log house with which it is associated, for example, in Scandinavia. One advantage of the upright gable over the hipped roof is that it made the extension of the house by the addition of further rooms much simpler. It could have been copied from medieval churches or planters' houses.

For constructional reasons, and also because window glass was long a luxury, the windows of the traditional cabin were few and small and placed for preference on the side away from the prevailing winds. Many of the surviving houses, moreover, were built in the early nineteenth century, when tax was levied on the number of windows. The ever-open door, its lower part closed with the additional half-door, admitted most of the light. The half-door is often regarded as peculiarly Irish, but in fact it is an old-fashioned feature which has lived on longer in the [171] western isle than in Great Britain. It is found in parts of the north of England, for example in miners' cottages in Co. Durham, and it is said to be characteristic of Chinese houses. In Ireland the half-door serves to let in the light while keeping out unwanted animals, and it makes a convenient arm-rest for purposes of conversation or contemplation. This is how a countryman justified it to me: 'A man standing at the open door would be wasting time, but leaning on the half-door he is just passing time'. To give maximum efficiency, the window openings widen internally, an arrangement behind which there may be a lingering tradition of defence against unwelcome strangers. At any rate most of the light came from the doorway, and thus one sees the force of the picturesque phrase referring to the unwanted visitor as one who 'darkens

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLATE 3

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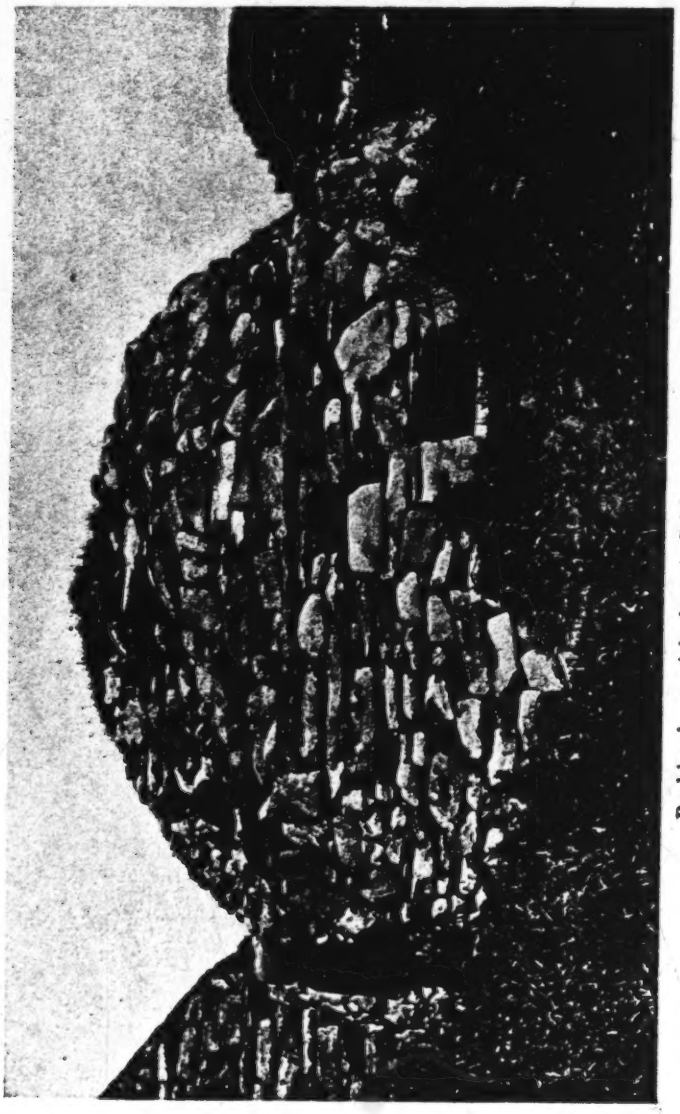

Beehive house (clochaun), Irishmurray, Co. Sligo.

[facing p. 48]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLATE 4

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"Lashing" rye, Aran Islands. Note the woven belt (criss) supporting the hand-woven tweed trousers.

[facing p.49]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the door'. A wattle frame, a handful of straw or a dried sheep-skin served as a substitute for glass, and it is remembered in Co. Fermanagh that a mare's cleanings (the placenta) best served the purpose. My informant added significantly: 'No bayonet would go through it'! In one Donegal parish in 1837, according to a petition sent by the school teacher to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, there was 'not more than ten square feet of glass in windows in the whole (some 1,500 houses) with the exception of the chapel, the school house, the priest's house, Mr. Dombrain's house and the constabulary barrack'.[1]

342
[237]

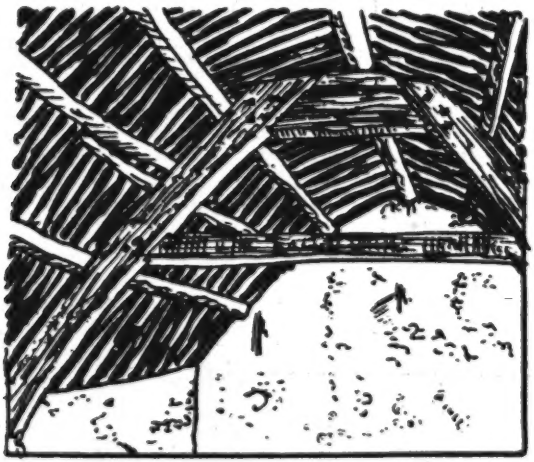

FIG. 10. A coupled roof of bog-oak, Co. Donegal, the ridge rounded against the wind (compare Fig. 12, 3).

Details of the roof-frame of the long house show many minor variations from place to place, but as a general rule it is composed of coupled rafters traditionally of bog-oak chosen for its strength as well as from the scarcity of live oak trees (Fig. 10). A house is measured, not in feet, but by the number of bays it contains, a bay being the distance between the couples, which is standard in any one district. There is some evidence that the

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 16.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 coupled roof was borrowed from the frame-house introduced by English planters: it may, however, have evolved from the wattled house if this was supported, as seems likely, by crucks. The coupled rafters are joined by one or two cross-ties secured by wooden pins, and pegs driven into the rafters hold in place the long purlins which support a layer of branches or thin laths of bog-fir. On these rests a warm blanket of carefully fitted sods (scraws), an essential element of the traditional roof, keeping out cold and damp and serving as a hold for the rods (scollops) with which the thatch, over the greater part of
342 the country, is secured (Fig. 11). The sod undercoat is an
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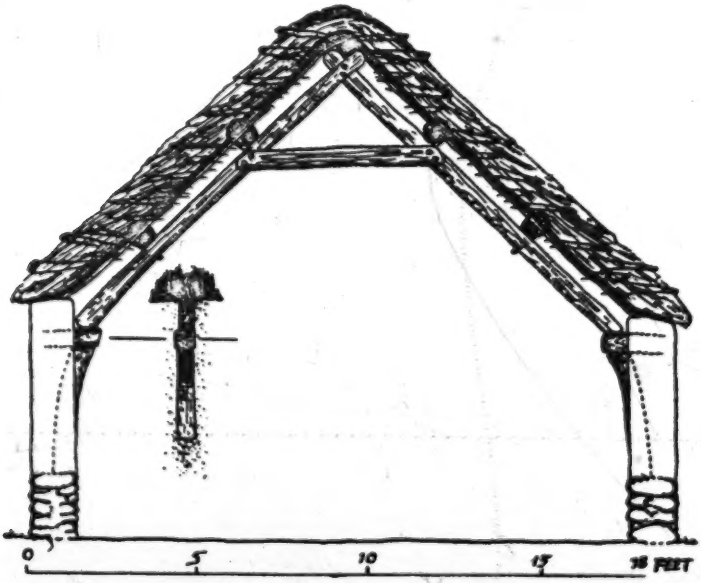

FIG. 11. Cross-section through old house, Maghery, Co. Armagh. The coupled rafters are supported on uprights set in the mud walls. The scraws are sewn to the purlins with fir-ropes. Successive layers of thatch are secured with rods pinned down with hair-pin scollops.

archaic element which overrides all differences in house and roof construction and must be of high antiquity. It has been taken over from an old culture-layer—it finds parallels in

Norway and other sub-arctic regions—and from an economy where straw was not available. We have already noticed that cattle-herders in the early seventeenth century built their booley houses of boughs coated with long strips of green turf. The long sods made a portable roof which could be slung on a pole between two pack-horses. 342 [171]

The sods were cut in strips from carefully selected spots where a close-grazed sward gave a thick mat of grass-root. They measure two to three feet wide and about one and a half inches thick, and as they were cut they were rolled on to a stick and carried like a carpet. Their roofing sods, wrote Thomas Campbell in 1778, 'they call scraws (they are rolled up like scrolls) but they would be better called hides, for they are flayed off the earth.'[1] In the north, where the flachter or breast-plough was used for paring sods (Chapter X), the scraws might be as much as twelve or fourteen feet long, though short turves were also used. They were carried on to the roof up two ladders and laid on grass upwards, overlapping at the ridge on the side away from the wind. They overlapped laterally also, the scraw on the windward side running over its neighbour on the lee (Fig. 14). In many such details careful attention was paid to the wind and the rain, for example the strongest purlins were put on the side whence driving rain was most to be expected. Similarly the stoutest couples were placed at the weather end of the house, and they were sometimes given a slight inclination towards the wind. A seemingly artless cabin may thus be found to show the most careful adaptation to local conditions. 342 314

The first thin layer of thatch was, in some parts of the country, sewn on to the purlins with a thatching needle—the older pattern has a large eye to take hay-rope (Fig. 15)—and the roof might then be finished in one of several regional styles. In the eastern part of Co. Down, and sporadically elsewhere, the straw is laid on in specially prepared bundles or stapples[2] (Gaelic *Stapull*) and the thatch is plastered down at eaves, gable and ridge with clay or mud. A few scollops are added at ridge and eaves. This is probably a very ancient method, 342 [413] [177]

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 146.
[2]K. Danaher, *Béaloideas* (1948), 203–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 designed for temporary habitations, for it results, after repeated
177 additions of straw and mud, in an extremely thick and heavy roof. Yet its distribution on the east coast seems to point to introduction from overseas, and in Co. Down it is known as English thatch. One would like to know more about old thatching techniques in other parts of north-western Europe. In Galway a house with mud-sealed thatch is known as a 'shaken house'.[1]

Another way of securing the thatch, which has a limited
342 distribution chiefly along the Antrim coast, we may term the
[283] pegged method. Horizontal two-ply ropes made of sally, heather, or the tough fibres of bog-fir roots are laid along the roof parallel to the eaves at intervals of a foot or so and pegged to the scraw with wooden pins which are pushed in upwards so as not to lead water through the roof. A row of scraws is pegged to the rather sharp ridge (Fig. 9, 4). I have observed this style of thatch in south-west Lancashire. Much more widely distributed is the thatch which is found along the north and west coasts from east Ulster round to Kerry, but comes into its own particularly in Donegal, where it gives some of the most attractive roofs in north-western Europe. In Donegal they are rounded at the ridge to throw off the winds, the supporting couples being designed to this end with short cross-pieces breaking the angle of the ridge (Fig. 10). In some
[284] districts the ropes, formerly of twisted straw or bog fir but now generally ready-made of sisal, run in both directions to make a complete network; in others the horizontal ropes are omitted because of the obstructing gable-ends which, rising above the thatch, protect it from the winds. The ropes are secured to the walls by means of a row of stone-pegs below each eave. This method of tying is found also in north Mayo, most typically in areas known to have been settled from Donegal in the seventeenth century.[2] Here the horizontal ropes are carried over the gable in steps left for the purpose (Fig. 12, 2). Such roofs are said to be 'stitched': a close mesh may require up to a mile's length of roping. The older method of securing the ropes, from Mayo to Kerry, is to fasten the ends to small boulders

[1] C. R. Browne, *Inishbofin and Inishshark*. [Text continues on p. 54]
[2] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

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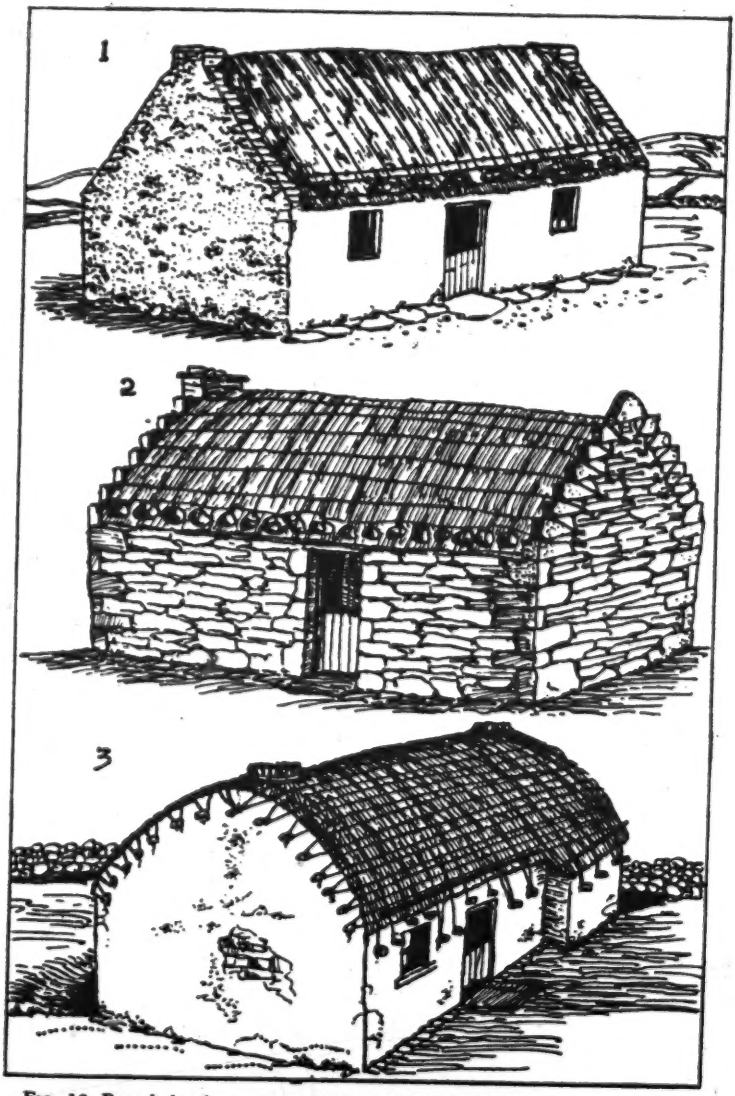

FIG. 12. Roped thatch, western seaboard. (1) Dingle, Co. Kerry. (2) Achill Island, Co. Mayo. (3) Teelin, Co. Donegal.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 which rest on the thatch directly over the eaves (Fig. 12, 1). This method has an extremely primitive air but it has the advantage over the pinned ropes in that it is simpler to keep the ropes taut. A still older method, frequently seen on thatched stacks and rarely on buildings, is to let the weighted ropes hang from the eaves. In Donegal a century ago boulders weighing fifty or sixty pounds are stated to have been suspended on hay ropes.[1] This very primitive mode is found also in the Inner Hebrides.[2] Roped thatch in general seems to be characteristic [171] of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe and areas around the North Sea.

The most widely distributed mode of thatching is by means of scollops, or sally rods (sometimes hazel, briar or bog-fir), which pin down the thatch. In well-finished work the rods are hidden, for if exposed they tend to let water seep through the scraw, but it is customary to leave a row exposed at the eaves and ridge and against the gables, where the outer layer of straw should lie snugly. The exposed scollops are often arranged [531] in lattice patterns, and the expert thatcher delights in showing his skill and leaving his grace-mark in finishes of various designs which are practical as well as decorative, serving for example to distribute the rain and prevent 'guttering'. Thus twists of straw (bobbins) at the gables carry the drips evenly to the ground. When the ridge—and sometimes the eaves as well—is also adorned with a row of bobbins the scollop-thatched roof can be most attractive (Fig. 13, 1). A thatched chimney occasionally adds the last finishing touch. The word scollop is derived from the Gaelic, and it is natural to assume that this most widely distributed of all styles—from north Antrim through the heart of the Irish midlands to south Cork—is [171] indigenous. But rod-thatching is widespread in England and on the continent, and it may have reached Ireland with the Celts. There are various ways of pushing in the scollops: they may be thrust in at each end (Fig. 14) or bent into wooden staples resembling large hairpins, which secure the ends of horizontal rods (Fig. 13, 1). The scolloped thatch is perhaps best suited to, and is almost universal on, roofs which are

[1] *Dub. Univ. Mag.* 41 (1853), 715.
[2] Colin Sinclair, *Thatched Houses* (1963), 36. [Text continues on p. 56]

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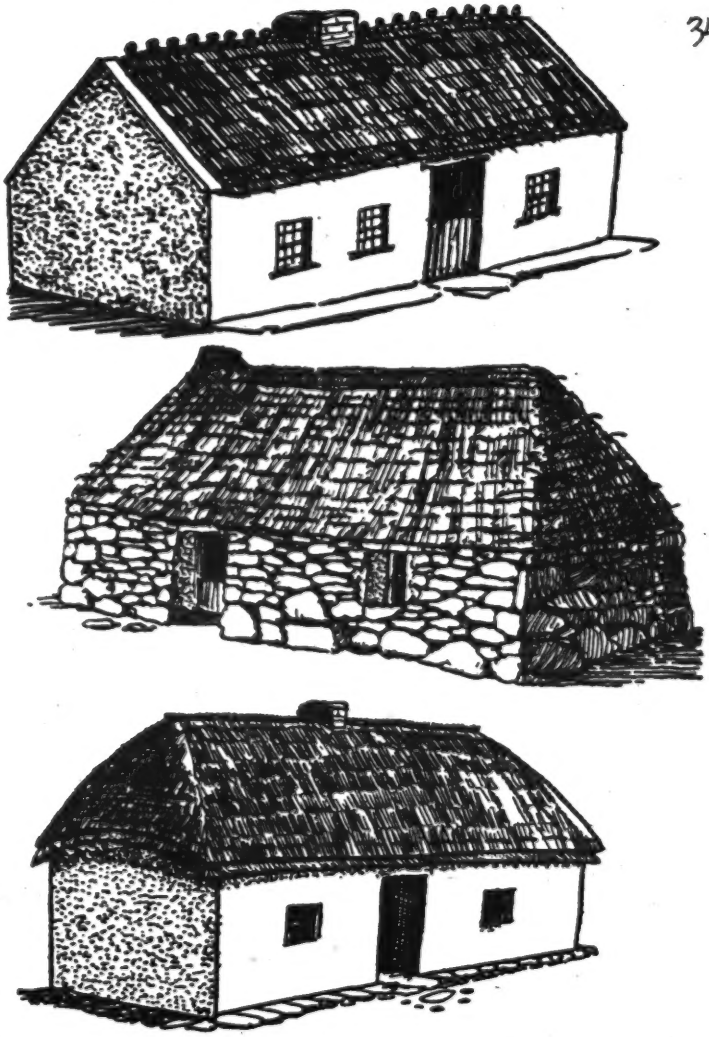

FIG. 13. Scollop thatch. *Above:* Co. Cavan, with ridge of bobbins. *Centre:* Co. Galway, with thatched chimney. *Below:* Co. Tipperary (after R. H. Buchanan).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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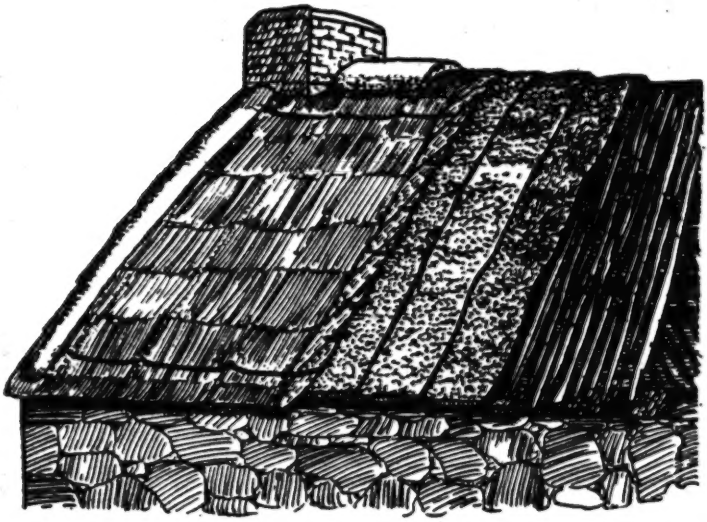

FIG. 14. Detail of scollop thatch, Co. Armagh, showing roof construction, sods and mud coping (after R. H. Buchanan).

hipped. The best work is seen on houses of the jamb-wall type.

824 Oat-straw, despite its poor lasting qualities, is employed for
342 thatching in some districts, because it is the only available material. Being pliable it is widely used for patching. In the old days outfield straw was preferred for thatching because it was tougher than that grown on the infield. Wheat or rye is much
[241] more durable than oat straw and rye is specially grown for its straw in parts of Donegal, where I have known flax also cultivated to provide thatching material. Reeds are fairly commonly employed in the south-west and locally elsewhere if no straw is available. I have seen heather used in north Donegal, and in other areas marram grass, rushes and 'mountain grass' (probably *molinea*). The expert thatcher prefers his straw to be cut with a sickle and thrashed by hand and he scorns machine-thrashed straw. Best of all is straw from which the corn has been removed by hand-scutching or 'lashing' over a stick or stone, the 'barrel' of the straw being thus unbroken (Chapter XV).
342 Nowadays a thatched roof is becoming a mark of sophistication,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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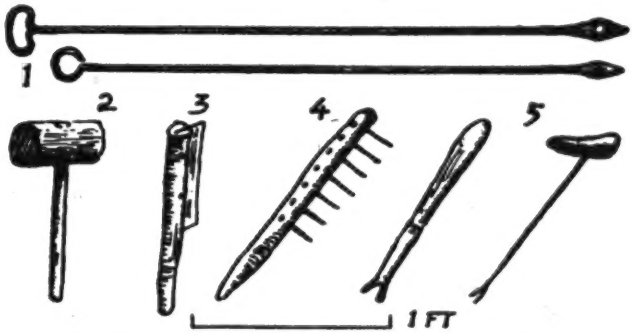
and among the farming population a new roof is hardly ever covered with thatch. The country thatcher finds employment in patching, not thatching. 342 [463]

The erection of such simple houses as I have described did not call for the services of specialists. When the need arose the collective skills of a whole community were available, and one can readily see how prescribed methods were handed down in any particular area. 'The custom on such occasions', wrote Lord George Hill[1]—he is speaking of Donegal in the years before the Great Famine—'is for the person who has the work 342 476 527



[413]

FIG. 15. Thatching tools. (1) Needles, the upper one for hay or fir ropes. (2) Mallet. (3) Trimming knife. (4) Rake. (5) Spurtles for stappling and patching. All from Co. Down except the last, from Co. Meath.

to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and singing while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day'. Like all work done in common, the thatching too was regarded as a sort of festival. In the Aran Islands 'from the moment a roof is taken in hand there is a whirl of laughter and talk till it is ended, and, as the man whose house is being covered is a host instead of an employer, he lays himself out to please the men who work with

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 40.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 him'.[1] Synge goes on to remark that much of the intelligence
476 and charm of the islanders is due to the absence of a division of
527 labour and to the wide development of each individual. Truly it may be said that with the disappearance of the thatched house something more than a picturesque archaism passes from the land.

[1]J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*, 156.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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V

HEARTH AND HOME

THE kitchen and the hearth are the very core of the Irish house, and the turf fire burning continuously day and night, throughout the year, is the symbol both of family continuity and of hospitality towards the stranger. When it goes out, it has been said, the soul goes out of the people of the house. The fire serves not only to prepare food and dry clothes, to bring warmth and comfort to the family and to ailing animals, but also to keep the thatch dry and preserve the roof timbers, so that 'when the smoke dies out of a house, it does soon be falling down'. This is one reason for the persistence of single-storey houses open to the roof, where the turf smoke could circulate among the rafters and keep the scraws and under-thatch dry. A 'smoke', in the seventeenth century inventories and to this day among country folk, means a house. In the days before chimneys were adopted the cabins were described as oozing smoke through the thatch so that they resembled 'reeking dunghills'. It should be remembered that the brick or stone chimney flue is a relative newcomer and, as we are constantly being reminded in these days of fuel shortage, a great waster of heat. The chimneyless open fire was much more effective as a house-warmer. The turf smoke, it is true, despite the draught-regulating mechanism of the double doors, must often have been troublesome, but as we shall see the furniture was designed to keep heads low.

Dry peat burns too quickly if the draught is strong, and the fire does best at floor level, glowing on a great stone slab or on a cobbled hearth set in the mud floor. The area immediately around the fire is also paved, but the rest of the old-style

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 kitchen is generally floored with puddled clay which takes a surprisingly well-wearing surface. The housewife will tell you that such a floor raises less dust than one of concrete, and if it tends to wear unevenly this matters little since the cooking pots [415] and some of the furniture which is not built-in has three legs [352] instead of four and will therefore stand firmly on an uneven floor. The rocking chair, despite New England's claim to have invented it, was surely first devised for such a floor. Lime, cowdung or ashes were sometimes added to the floor when it was being prepared, and mud scraped off the road, already well puddled, was considered an excellent floor material.[1] In Armagh, we are told, floors were made by simply digging up the ground and trampling it: 'They sometimes have a dance for that purpose, and many a match comes out of a thing of the sort.'[2] Another method was to keep a flock of sheep moving about the newly spread floor for some hours until it was well puddled. The bottom byre-end of the old-style one-roomed farm house was cobbled, and a flagged walk led from door to door. Devices 231 for tying up the cows were secured to or built into the bottom 353 gable: a variety of stone and wooden fasteners may still be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island. One writer humorously observes of Co. Galway that the cow had to be tethered lest she should eat the bed-straw, but that pigs and poultry were free to roam.[3] The hens spent the night on a rope or pole hung across the kitchen from eave to eave, and laid their eggs in handsome nesting-baskets of woven straw (Fig. 16). Here we may notice a curious bit of folklore which suggests that hens were carefully looked after for superstitious reasons, as well as for their economic value and for the cockerels' time-keeping. It is said that every night the hens, when they argue among themselves before settling down, are plotting to leave Ireland and fly back to Norway, but in the end they decide to postpone the trip for another day! In Co. Limerick elaborate three-tier wooden hen-coops are sometimes seen in the kitchen, and in Co. Down I have found the sitting

[1] J. Binns, *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland* (1837), 1, 112.
[2] Ibid., 186.
[3] T. A. Finlay, 'The Economics of Carna', in *The New Ireland Review* (April, 1898).

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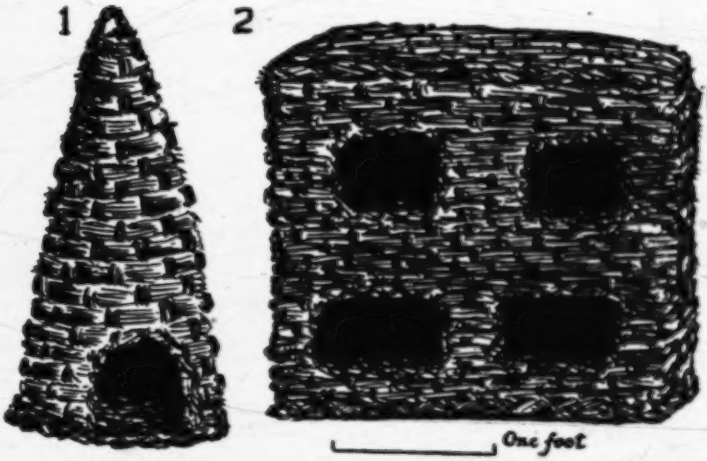

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[285]

FIG. 16. Straw hens' nests. (1) Co. Clare. (2) Co. Leitrim.

hen warmly ensconced in a stone-box alongside the fire. In the mud floor one may sometimes see large 'pot-holes', hollows in which the heavy iron pot is placed when the boiled potatoes are pounded for pig-food (Fig. 19). The wooden or iron 'beetles' with which the pounding is done are as varied in shape and size as they are indispensable (Fig. 17). Sometimes

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[415]
[413]

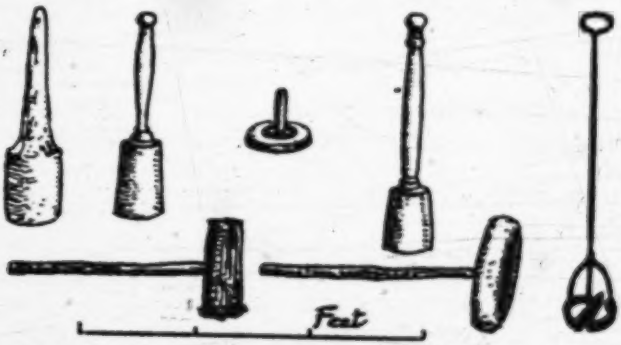

FIG. 17. Beetles, for pounding potatoes and, below, mells for 'knocking whins', Co. Antrim. Beetles similar to the first example were formerly used also for washing clothes and for breaking flax before hand-scutching.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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353 a wooden plank is set in the floor as a footing for the pot, or to give the spinning wheel a firm base. The upright churn also needs a firm footing and in the Mourne Mountains a movable granite flag was kept for this purpose. I have seen a mud floor in Co. Down with several round holes in which milk was poured [231] for each member of a family of cats. In the Bronze-Age Orkney village of Skara Brae every hut had stone-lined holes sunk in the floor, which were thought to have been used to store limpets.[1] In archaeological excavations near Belfast I have found holes which were presumably used for storing milk-products sunk in the clay floor of an 'earth-house' (souterrain) of the Dark Ages.[2] In some old houses there is a hole near the fire, either in front or let into the wall alongside, which is used to store the ashes.

354 In nearly every example of prehistoric and early historic houses which have been excavated, the hearth occupies a central position, and cooking pots would have been suspended either from the roof timbers or from specially constructed supports. We know from English travellers that this continued into recent centuries. Thus Fynes Moryson: 'the chief men in their houses make fires in the midst of the room, the smoke whereof goeth out at a hole in the top thereof.'[3] He goes on to say that the humbler clay or wattled cabins also had their fires in the middle, and in the early nineteenth century we read of houses in West Antrim where the fire, though not in the centre of the room, was 'advanced some feet from the gable wall so that the persons of the family can readily sit round it.'[4] The description given by Charles Lever of the little cabin of Owen Joyce on one of the Brannocks Islands off the west coast, even if fictional, is worth quoting because Lever was probably drawing on tradition. It reads: 'It was built in a circular form, the chimney in the middle. Certain low partitions sub-divided the space into different chambers, making the centre the common apartment of the family, where they cooked, and ate, and chatted.'[5] In the course of time, however, the fire has come to

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 17.
[2] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 5–27.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 231.
[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 275.
[5] Charles Lever, *The Martins of Cro' Martin* (1864), 2, ch. 31

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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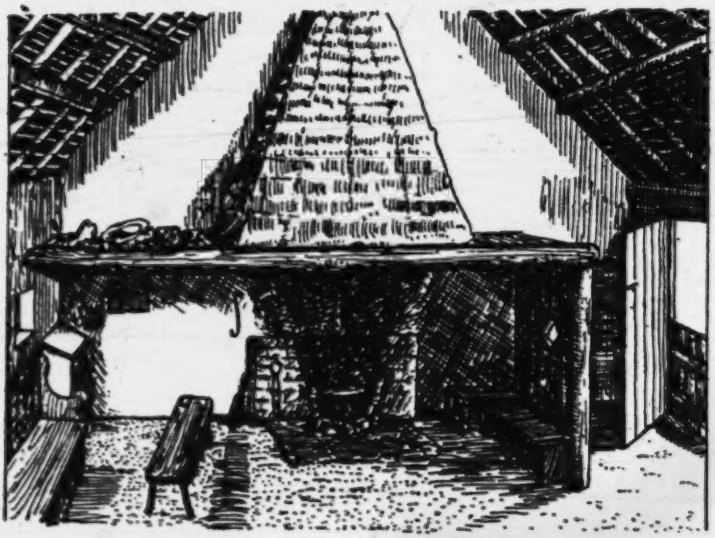
be placed against the gable or, in the central chimney house, 354
against a partition-wall, and one cannot doubt that the general adoption of chimney flues has been the deciding factor. This innovation, slowly adopted from about the sixteenth century onwards, gave rise in time to many regional styles of chimney breast in brick and stone. I suspect that the wattled smoke canopy (Fig. 18) was the native response to the novelty of chimney flues, but I cannot find that it was adopted outside the areas of strong English influence. The substitution of peat for



[352]

FIG. 18. Hearth with jamb-wall and wattled smoke-canopy, Co. Armagh. Meal-bin and settle-bed on left.

wood seems to have made little difference to the architecture of the hearth. When coal came to be burnt, however, the fire had to be lifted off the floor, or the hearth fire given a stronger draught by installing a built-in 'fan bellows' which forced air through a tube into the floor of the fire.

The wattled smoke canopy or brace (? breast) is still fairly 354
common in houses with central chimney and fireside partitions, 342
mainly in the south and east. The front of the canopy rests on a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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354 strong horizontal beam, the brace-tree, which may extend right
342 across the kitchen from wall to wall, four or five feet out from the fire and five or six feet from the ground. Or one end of the beam may rest on a supporting jamb set under one corner of the
342 canopy. In that case—and invariably where the front door is
353 adjacent—there may be a draught screen of wood mud or stone —the jamb-wall—built out from the fireside and terminating in the jamb, so as to partition off the fireside. This curtain-wall is pierced by a small window known as the entry or spy-hole, through which an approaching visitor can be spied from the fireside through the open door (Fig. 18). I have seen a few jamb-wall houses of this type in Co. Armagh where the brace-tree nevertheless continued to the side-wall, so that the visitor had to stoop under it on entering the house. If a door is swung on the jamb-post a small hall or internal porch is readily provided. This is characteristic of developed houses of traditional style in the Lagan Valley near Belfast, and a further refinement is to hang a mirror over the jamb-window, a looking glass replacing the plain glass of the peep hole and reflecting changing fashions. The jamb-wall, called also in Ulster the hollan-
[171] wall, is well-known under that name in the south of Scotland and the north of England and may thence have reached eastern Ireland in plantation times. In Cumberland it was termed the sconce and in Lancashire the speer, which was the name of the screen which crossed the end of the halls in the Oxford colleges. James Walton tells me that in north Yorkshire the jamb post, called the witch post, is occasionally found to be covered with designs intended to protect the hearth from evil spirits. Sprigs of rowan are tied to its top for the same purpose. The partitioned hearth is characteristic of eastern and southern Ireland: it extends into the Central Lowlands but it is almost entirely lacking in the west and in the north-western province of the outshot-house to be described below. Dr. Desmond McCourt tells me that he knows of two or three hybrids—having both the outshot and the partitioned hearth—in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains, where two cultural pro-
342 vinces meet.

354 The smoke canopy varies in shape and method of construction from one region to another. The commonest type is made of

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laths and wattles (willow, hazel or briar), plastered with a 354
mixture of clay and cowdung or ashes and coated with limewash. 342
In parts of the south hay or straw ropes soaked in mud (putogs) were used, twisted between a frame of horizontal rungs and plastered over with mud or limewash. In Co. Armagh one [237]
occasionally sees a heron's wing hung on the brace: it is used for dusting the hearth. The jamb-walls—and internal walls in general—were traditionally constructed of wattle and daub, or of mud or wood. The wattle and daub construction is undoubtedly an old technique which, in the days of plentiful timber, was much more generally used in house-building. Internal partitions carried up to the roof, however, probably followed the adoption of the chimney flue, and if so this innovation must be reckoned as a contribution to privacy as well as to comfort. We note in passing that wattlework found its last traditional 342
use in house construction in the wicker doors of the west, and in the windbreaks of the north, bundles of hazel or birch branches (wassocks) set up on the windward side of the door. The stone-built external porch must be regarded as a relatively novel addition to the traditional house style.

Wooden or stone seats are often built in near the hearth, 352
and the wall behind the fire, protected by a flagstone or a built-up hob, usually has a keeping hole on each side of the fire (Fig. 19). Known as boles in Antrim and coves in Cavan, these may be elaborated in Achill Island, for example, into two- or three-tier wall-dressers whose ancestry lies in the stone house tradition of the mountain country. There is an old belief that the left-hand keeping hole belongs to the woman and the right-hand one to the man of the house. Here you may see in safe keeping, on one side the woman's knitting, on the other the man's clay pipe. Stone dressers were a characteristic feature of [171]
the huts at Skara Brae,[1] where also Professor Childe found evidence that the women occupied the left side of the fire and the men the right. In the Hebridean black-houses the left-hand side of the fire was the woman's quarter.[2] Similarly in the old turf houses of the Highlands, 'the women were invariably ranged around the central fire on one side, the men on the

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 15.
[2] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 52.

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[354]

FIG. 19. A Donegal hearth, with crane, creepie and bread-iron. Pot and pot-hole on right.

other'.[1] It is interesting to notice that it is the Mongol usage to allot the right side of the yurt to men and the left side to women.[2] We are surely dealing with a very ancient tradition related perhaps to the ordered routine of a pastoral nomadic life. For the Mongols the right and left sides were symbolized respectively by horse and cow. In the humblest Irish farms, [514] which lack sanitary conveniences of any kind, it is customary for the women to use the byre and the men the stable.

If we now turn to the methods of suspending cooking pots 354 over the fire we shall see how the woman's functions are best 821 carried out on the left side. Besides the convenience of this for a normal right-handed person, there lies behind it the notion that for good luck significant actions involving the food supply—such as ploughing, casting a net or taking a pot off the fire—should follow the direction of the sun's movement in the sky. Thus the crane on which the pots are hung is almost

[1]Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (1857), 96
[2]E. D. Chapple and C. S. Coon, *Anthropology* (1946), 539.

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invariably pivoted on the left side of the fire so that it swings out with the sun. The iron crane is more characteristic of stone fireplaces than of those with wattled braces, which tend to preserve older methods of hanging. Some of them, indeed, have a large crane or 'gallows' of bog-oak with a long arm pivoting on a massive heel six feet high: I have come across several in Co. Armagh (Fig. 20). One may guess that well-appointed houses of the central-hearth style had some such appliance in early times, turning, perhaps, as do similar hanging-devices in the Roumanian shepherds' wooden *stanas*, on an upright post pivoted in the tie beam of the rafters. Framed within the white- 354 [821]

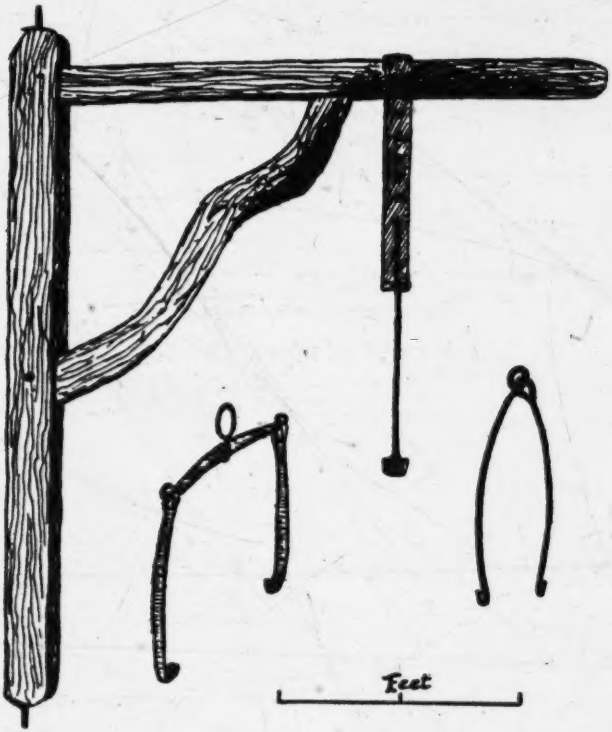

FIG. 20. Bog-oak crane and adjustable pot-hanger, Co. Armagh, with fittings for hanging griddle and pots.

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354 washed jambs of a stone chimney (Fig. 19) the simple wrought-iron crane has the simple beauty of fitness to purpose which most hand-made things possess. The smith rarely attempted the decorative scrolls which were more suited to light objects such as oatcake toasters. From the cranes must hang the mighty iron pots, some with a capacity of 25 gallons, to hold [406] food for man and beast. One hears of examples which were literally 'cranes', fitted with a windlass and chain to lift pots on and off the fire. Such capacious vessels could not have come into use had the fire not been at floor level.

The adjustable pot-hanger which hooks on to the arm of the crane is a simple but effective device for adjusting the height of the hanging pot (Fig. 20). Like so many of the culture-elements we are describing in this book, it apparently belongs to the Atlantic fringes of Europe. While it could be a medieval or later introduction to Ireland, research may show that it is a Celtic trait (fire-irons are a ritual feature of early Celtic cultures) which has found its last refuge in the open hearths of the west. The crane and other fire-irons and the very soot that [372] clings to them have been regarded with superstitious reverence by virtue of their association with fire. Soot carried in the pocket, [484] for example, gave protection on a journey. More ancient in origin than the crane is the hanging chain suspended from a crook-stick and terminating in a movable pot-hook (crook). From existing examples one could work out a plausible evolutionary sequence of hangings from the roof-suspension which can still be seen in the black-houses of the Hebrides. The sequence begins with a wooden peg stuck high in the back wall of the fire, giving way to a transverse bar set parallel to the wall in the smoke canopy, which might in turn become the arm of the crane. These crook-sticks are said to have been made of holly. The long chain of the first example certainly gives more 'play' than the short suspension from a chimney bar, but the peg is more inaccessible and this supports the contention that it is a survival of the long hanging from the roof-timbers over a chimneyless central hearth.

Pots and pans and other hearth-gear we shall discuss in the next chapter, but here we should notice some further architectural fittings of the partitioned fireside. On one side of the

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canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354
shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373] were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse-collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made [492] partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342
is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the 353
chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231] to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513] the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352
the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

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FIG. 91. Fireside with quern, Belturbet, Co. Cavan.

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quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional 352
width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed—
the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the [171]
Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart 462
and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, 372
the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to
the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' [539]
The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is [574]
invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can [787]
give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which an- [769]
cestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

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VI

POTS AND PANS

323 STORIES of 'the crock of gold' remind us of the superstitions
415 which have gathered around the humble unglazed vessels of baked clay used in prehistoric times for domestic and funerary purposes. The novel art of pot-making—the magic transformation of soft clay into indestructible pottery—must have made a deep impression on the native mind when introduced into Atlantic Europe from the Mediterranean region some forty centuries ago. It symbolized, too, a new way of life, for it accompanied the revolutionary arts of food-production and the establishment of settlements which were more or less permanently fixed to the soil. The possession of pottery greatly facilitates cooking and boiling and marks the beginning of the long line of peasant soups, stews and porridges. But primitive pottery does not stand up to hard use and the wastage was great—to the delight of archaeologists. For prolonged stewing metal vessels were preferable, and in Ireland 'the pot', in recent centuries, invariably refers to the three-legged iron cooking pot. Life revolves about the fire and the pot, and it was remarked during famine years that victims 'clung to the pot when all else had gone'.

For the archaeologist potsherds are an invaluable guide to
172 changes of culture. Clay vessels had religious as well as domestic significance, and we know that as the Bronze Age advanced through the second millennium B.C. the domestic food vessel was adopted as a cinerary urn, and the deposition of cremated bones in urns continued in Ireland into the Christian era. Earlier, some of the megalithic cults had involved the offering to the dead of enormous quantities of broken pots. In

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a late Neolithic burial cairn at Lyles Hill near Belfast I found 172
tens of thousands of potsherds which had been collected from domestic refuse and thrown into the cairn during the course of its erection.[1] The broken plates which may be seen exposed on the graves in some old burial-grounds in Co. Mayo are [764]
probably placed there in continuation of ancient practice. The breaking of pots is one of the elements in Hallowe'en pranks— [769]
one might almost say rites—and again we notice the association with the dead, for All-Hallows is the time when the dead are believed to return to their homes.

It would appear that by breaking a pot you broke its spirit; 772
and by transference the power of the dead to do harm. Readers 775
will recall the significant lines from *Hamlet*, referring to the suicide of Ophelia: 'Her death was doubtful . . . for charitable prayers, shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.'[2] In some places in south-west England potsherds figure in the 'lent crocking' rites at Easter: like Easter eggs they are symbols of fertility. The association of fertility and decay, of life and death, comedy and tragedy, is clearly displayed in the wake games which are described in Chapter XX. This association, we note in passing, is ever-present in the mind of the Irish countryman, and the juxtaposition gives dramatic quality to the work of many Anglo-Irish playwrights.

This is not the place to enlarge on the technology of early 323
pot-making, but it may be observed that the designs, fabric 172
and finish of the Neolithic family of pottery in Ireland were far superior to those of succeeding periods: indeed it was not until wheel-made pots found local markets in the medieval towns that technically superior vessels were made in this country. In late prehistoric and early historic times the wealthy were able to import fine wares in small quantities from the 323
continent, but the peasant homes over most of Ireland apparent- 415
ly did without pottery—the Gaelic word for potter is a loan-word—and vessels of wood, metal or leather did duty for the now universal imported 'delph'. The Dutchman, Gerard Boate, writing in 1645, said that 'the use of earthen vessels hath been very rare among them, and to the most part unknown even

[1] E. E. Evans, *Lyles Hill: a late Neolithic site in Co. Antrim*, H.M.S.O. (1953).
[2] *Hamlet*, Act V, Sc. 1.

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323 until these very last times, although a great number of English
415 potters have set up their trade'.[1] No tradition of hand-made pottery survived in Ireland as it did in the Barvas ware of Lewis in the Hebrides. On the other hand another ancient craft
415 of prehistoric origins persisted into living memory in the making of wooden noggins in which milk and porridge were taken. They
322 are small stave-built vessels of oak, having one stave projecting

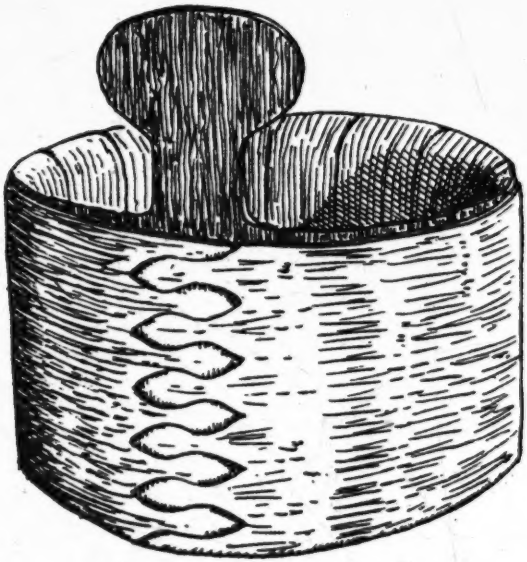

FIG. 22. Wooden noggin, Co. Down. Height of rim, 3 in.

to serve as a handle. The staves are held together and the single-piece base kept in place by a thin band of ash joined by inter-
[171] locking tongues (Fig. 22). This method of fastening the wooden band is found on the similar 'piggins' of parts of Britain, also in Scandinavia and throughout the Asiatic Arctic region, and it may well derive in these islands from an ancient circumpolar culture. The noggins were made by skilled craftsmen who

[1]Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History* (1652), 159.

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were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the 322
place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have 415
heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants [539]
a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the 323
country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when
bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-
vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the 172
climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more 326
reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits 415
and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly
prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the
special property of the head of the house and they seem to
have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They
were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the
ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his
rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent
place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest pre- 172
historic pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthen- 171
ware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a
pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is [323]
one of the indications of a common substratum in the early
civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels
simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have
continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know
that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in
Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older
custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the
Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a
vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitu-
tion of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent
Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide [437]
should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots,
as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched
on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they
seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set
over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

171 cooking places, which have been popularly known to Irish-
172 speakers as *fulachta fiadha* (deer roasts), consisting of mounds of burnt stones usually set in marshy places. Excavations have shown that they contain dug-out trunks or plank-lined pits sunk in peat where water was heated by hot stones. Hundreds of these mounds are known in Cos. Cork and Kilkenny and they occur sporadically in other parts of the country, as also in Wales and more rarely in England and Scotland. Some Irish examples have been dated to the Bronze Age, though it is believed that their construction continued into the Middle Ages.[1] They are interpreted as the bivouacs of summer hunting parties, and would represent an archaic tradition preserved by the privileged classes, but they have their humble counterparts in the stone-lined pits filled with hot turf, in which, I have been told, peasants would cook their potatoes when working some distance from home.

[415]

FIG. 23. Cooking pots: round-bottomed suspension vessels through 4,000 years: Neolithic (earthenware); late Bronze Age (bronze); medieval (bronze); and modern (cast iron).

The essential continuity of form and function is strikingly demonstrated by a series of Irish cooking pots such as is illustrated in Fig. 23, from the round-bottomed Neolithic bowl with its suspension holes to the present-day globular iron pot with its twin lugs and its three stubby legs—a concession to a hard uneven floor. The three-legged pot is the countrywife's maid-of-all-work and it is only slowly giving way to flat-bottomed pans and kettles. The oven-pot also, a kind of Dutch
415 oven, is widely utilized, and the pot-roasts which it cooks to perfection have replaced spit-roasted meat. It is said to get its other name, the bastible, from the fact that it was first made at

[1]M. J. O'Kelly, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 84 (1954), 105–55.

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Barnstaple in Devon. The oven-pot may be suspended over the fire but in the south rests on a trivet: the lid is dished so that live turves may be placed on top. It is used also for bread-baking, though the griddle is most commonly employed for this purpose (Fig. 24). 415

FIG. 24. Oven-pot, griddle and trivet.

Here we come to a fundamental fact in the geography of the Irish hearth—the absence of the built-in oven. The one exception which proves the rule is its occurrence in the extreme south-east, where, in Co. Wexford, the baronies of Bargy and Forth have retained many features dating from their English settlement in medieval times. Over most of Ireland even when a cooking-range is installed in the hearth, the oven is not used for bread-baking, for oven-bread is not a native food. In central Europe on the other hand the bread-oven, originally of clay, is of great antiquity and the stone or metal oven has come to dominate the fireplace. The difference in bread-types is related on the one hand to environment and economic organization and on the other hand to a whole set of eating habits and ethical values. 354 [262] [171]

Thin bread, or bread in cakes, made without yeast, has been from early times the common bread in most parts of Atlantic Europe, from North Scandinavia to the Basque Country, including Highland Britain and Ireland. Farther afield it is typical of many Mediterranean areas and parts of Asia. In north-western Europe it is closely linked with the cultivation of oats, though home-baked wheaten bread is made in the same way and mixtures with maize and with potatoes are similarly prepared. Potato bread (fadge), a mixture of wheat flour and boiled potatoes, is a popular food which surely had its origins in difficult times. 262 252 171

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252 As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the
262 price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America,
that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline
171 in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial
baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly
recent development virtually confined to the large towns, especially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads. We should probably make an exception of the English-settled parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargy. Dublin and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as
[256] standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, similarly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost
[493] unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life: its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
262 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully
252 inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread. The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
[857] and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children, they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

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chest was considered to be the best place to store a well-dried ham. 251

Originally the flat round oatcakes were baked on a flat stone, and such flagstone griddles continued to be used in the nineteenth century in parts of Co. Kerry. A late seventeenth-century traveller wrote: 'Their general food is a thin oatcake which they bake upon a broad flat stone made hot, a little sheep's milk cheese, or goat's milk, boiled leeks and some roots.'[1] In Yorkshire the flagstone was built-in over a separate fire and gave way slowly to the iron 'bakestone'. The bread was hardened in front of the fire, resting against a three-legged 'bread-stick' of the type shown in Fig. 25. Representations of bread on the sculptured high crosses of the Early Middle Ages show just such round discs. The traditional form of thin bread, however, is the farl (fardel), shaped like a quarter-circle. The large circular cake is marked with a cross so that it can be readily broken into quarters (farls) after baking and hardening. The 'harning' is done on a wrought iron 'harnen stand' or toaster which has taken the place of the simple bread-stick. It is worth noticing that the Beltane cakes, formerly eaten at the fires which were lit on hill-tops on May Eve, were baked, in Scotland at any rate, before the fire without touching iron.[2] I have seen a few examples of carved stone breadstands which were designed to bake the bread in front of the fire, and no doubt rough stones were originally used for this purpose. The baking stones are elaborately carved and often carry dates ranging, in Scottish examples, from 1674 to 1791.[3] Irish examples seem to be confined to Ulster and they probably represent one of the many culture traits introduced from Scotland (Fig. 25, 6). The wrought iron toasters are tastefully designed and exhibit a great variety of ornament. Specimens from north Ulster and from Scotland display an almost Spanish exuberance in the intricacies of their spiral terminals, and one would like to know if they have their counterparts along the Atlantic coasts of Europe. They are now for the most part museum pieces, for one rarely sees them in use and great numbers have found their way to the scrap heap in the last half century.

252 354 171 [262]

[1] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1673–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.* x (1904), 96.
[2] J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-east of Scotland* (1929).
[3] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 259.

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415

FIG. 25. Oatcake toasters (harnen stands). The first three 'bread-sticks' make an evolutionary series. They are from Armagh, Galway and Clare. Nos. 4 and 5 are bread-irons from Derry and Down; the latter is fitted with a spit-rack. No. 6 (from Fermanagh) is in stone. No. 7 is an unusual type from Armagh. No. 8 is a toasting fender from Antrim.

252 Among food gatherers such as the Californian Indians we find that wild oats are parched before they are ground in a mortar. A similar custom, known as 'burning the corn in the ear', survived until recent times in Ireland and met with as

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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much scorn from English observers as did 'ploughing by the tail' and other archaic customs. In fact it seems to have been associated with tail-ploughing and certain other practices and would thus represent a very ancient cultural substratum which it was once fashionable to call Pictish. It was sufficiently prevalent in the seventeenth century to justify the passing of an Act of Parliament forbidding it, in 1635. 'The wild Irish', writes Fynes Moryson, 'do not thresh their oats, but burn them from the straw and so make cakes thereof.'[1] A fuller description comes from Martin Martin's famous account of the Western Isles: 'The ancient way of dressing corn . . . is called Graddan, from the Irish word Grad, which signifies quick. A woman sitting down, takes a handful of corn, holding it by the stalks in her left hand, and then sets fire to the ears, which are presently in a flame; she has a stick in her right hand . . . beating off the grain at the very instant when the husk is quite burnt, for if she miss of that, she must use the kiln. The corn may be so dressed, winnowed, ground, and baked within an hour after reaping from the ground.'[2] Graddan bread was esteemed for its sweetness. Burstin is the Shetland name for corn dried in this way, or by rolling hot stones among it, or sometimes by deliberately roasting the grain in a kettle.

The taste for butter which makes the Irish consumption per head, one of the highest in the world recalls the traditional place of 'whitemeats' in the diet. The Foreign Agricultural Circular of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (October 1955) giving the *per capita* consumption of dairy products for various countries in 1954, shows that the Republic of Ireland is second only to New Zealand in butter consumption, but on the basis of milk and milk products Ireland comes first, with a *per capita* consumption of 1,425 lb. The explanation is to be found not in a large consumption of milk—here Ireland ranks eighth—but in the low average fat content of Irish milk. Nevertheless the *per capita* consumption of butter is extremely high, 41 lb. per annum, as compared with 14 lb. in the United Kingdom and 9 lb. in the U.S.A. Butter spread thickly on fresh bread is a tasty if simple food, and one suspects that in pre-famine times

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 229.
[2]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles* (1703), (1934 ed., 244).

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262 the staple was butter and oatcake rather than oatcake and butter. When bread was made from gritty quern-ground flour the butter would have served as a lubricant to assist the swallowing process. 'They swallow lumps of butter mixed with oatmeal', wrote Fynes Moryson about the year 1600, 'and love no meat more than sour milk curdled.'[1] When food was left out for the fairies it was generally oatmeal and butter: needless to say, particularly when accompanied by whiskey, it disappeared during the night. In the very high present-day Irish consumption of milk products we notice once more the survival of ancient custom, for milk products were the staple food of medieval times in all parts of the British Isles.[2] The Irish laws distinguish between summer and winter food, and the consumption of meat was almost confined to the winter months. Pork was the most highly esteemed meat, but no doubt deer and other products of the chase augmented the fare for the upper classes. Surplus cattle were presumably killed off at
251 Martinmas and salted as 'marts', but among the peasantry the emphasis was on milch cows, and cow's meat was fit only for stews. Butter—and whiskey also—was preserved in bogs to be available in the lean days of spring (Chapter XIV). On the other
234 hand there is little evidence of cheese-making apart from soft cheese, including that made from sheep's milk, and the Irish consumption of cheese is today probably the lowest in Europe. The making of hard cheese is a comparatively late development everywhere, so that Ireland may be said once more to have remained faithful to ancient practice. With a *per capita* consumption of 2·7 lb. in 1954, the Irish republic comes last in the fifteen countries for which figures are given in the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Circular quoted above; the highest is Norway with 19 lb. per head. I may add that I have found no record or tradition of the milking of sows which occurs in parts of Spain and which, it is suggested, may have been a Celtic custom.[3] It is said in Ireland that if a man drinks sow's milk he can see the wind for ever after.

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[2]J. C. Drummond and A. Wilbraham, *The Englishman's Food* (1939), 51.
[3]R. U. Sayce, 'Milking and Dairying', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 51 (1951–52), 120–54.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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POTS AND PANS

Despite certain conservative elements it must be recognized that very great changes have taken place in the Irishman's diet in recent centuries. Tea and the potato, invaders from east and west, have largely replaced whitemeats, although another more recent pair of intruders, maize-meal and rice, distributed by the British government during the famine, have made no such conquest. Dr. Salaman has fully discussed the depressing effects of the potato on diet and culture.[1] Unless one has seen a peasant family sitting down to a meal of boiled potatoes it is hardly possible to credit the consumption figures. It used to be reckoned that a stone a day was the allowance for a labourer, and it was 'by no means uncommon, in times of plenty, for a labourer to eat 14 lb. of potatoes at a meal'.[2] An average consumption of 8 lb. per day for each member of a family is well authenticated. It is not surprising that there was a general craving for 'kitchen', tasty relishes such as strong butter when this bulky, starchy and monotonous food came to dominate the Irish diet. There seems to have been an expansion of sea fishing to keep pace with the demand for 'kitchen'. Down to recent times salt fish were hawked through the autumn countryside by noisy 'cadgers', and the careful housewife would have a barrel or two of salt herrings put by for the winter. One is reminded of the 'relishes' with which many African peoples relieve the monotony of a diet of mealies.

One of the many Irish customs which the English found revolting was the bleeding of cattle. Fynes Moryson wrote: 'they often let their cows' blood, eating the congealed blood with butter'.[3] Arthur Young notes that in Wicklow 'they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food'.[4] In Ulster cattle were bled 'in a smooth place, the coagulating blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed. This was cut up into squares and 'laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year'.[5] Unfortunately few details of the bleeding operation have come down to us though I have been told that it was customary to close the wound with a cloven stick.

[1] R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), chs. 11–18.
[2] I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 429.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[4] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 62.
[5] C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 333.

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262 In some parts of the country the blood was made into puddings.
231 Sheep's blood, in this case caught at the slaughtering, is used for making blood puddings in parts of the south, and black puddings made from pig's blood are popular in other parts of the country. I believe one might divide Ireland into two regions according to the popularity of black and white puddings, but I would hesitate to demarcate the border!

264 A great deal of information could be collected on local and festive foods and on food substitutes which were resorted to in famine years. The traditional times and names of meals also offer a fruitful field of investigation and they should be listed before new fashions entirely replace them. In many parts of the country only two meals were taken, at morning and evening, a fact to be remembered when considering the colossal quantities of food that were consumed at a meal, but it should be added that there were times when little food of any kind was available to the poorer people.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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VII

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

GOOD craftsmanship in wood is so rarely seen in the Irish peasant house that one easily notices a piece of quality furniture. The chances are that it has come out of 'the big house' or, near the coast, from a wrecked ship. Very little oak furniture has survived from the days before the famine, and what there is is likely to be of bog-oak, that is timber dug out of the bogs. The truth seems to be that by the time improved styles of furniture and settled conditions of life had come about, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the native oak-woods had been almost everywhere destroyed, and the common furniture came to be made of bog wood or imported soft woods. The gentry favoured mahogany. Already in the early seventeenth century Ireland was importing pine wood from western Scotland,[1] and during the eighteenth century it was the returning timber ships from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia that initiated Southern Irish emigration to the New World.

No doubt this lack of good quality peasant furniture may be partly attributed to poverty, and to the recurrent famines, of fuel as well as food, which brought despair and led to the burning of furniture. But it also reflects the weak tradition of built-up furniture among a people predominantly pastoral and to some extent nomadic. Certainly degrading poverty and insecure tenancies did not provide the means of support for skilled craftsmen: yet in Wales, where conditions under an

[1]H. G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the 18th Century*, 4th ed. (1937), 196. On bog timber see A. T. Lucas in *Béaloideas*, 33, 71–134.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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322 often oppressive landlordism were not dissimilar, a strong
352 tradition of good quality oak furniture was standardized in the eighteenth century and has remained a source of inspiration and pride ever since. The destruction of the native oak woods and the stronger pastoral strain in Ireland were perhaps the dominant factors, but once more we note the exceptional position of the barony of Bargy and Forth, where Gabriel Beranger commented in 1780 on the good-quality, well-kept furniture: 'I have seen in these cabins bureaus of oak so clean that they shone like polished mahogany.'[1]

Sturdiness rather than elegance was the characteristic feature of Irish peasant furniture, and many small household and dairy fittings were hand-cut from the solid or lathe-turned. Yet there
353 was no lack of care taken in the proper arrangement of the furniture in the house. Its disposition was fixed by long custom and varied little throughout the country. One is reminded of the careful division of the limited floor-space of the nomads' tent among the Lapps or Mongols. In fact only by adhering to a strict formula could the family and all their belongings be fitted into a single room which was traditionally also a byre. Invariably the centre of the room, and the whole space in front of the fire, was kept open. This was, for the bulk of the peasant population down to the eighteenth century, the family sleeping-place. According to an account of Mayo in 1799, they slept
513 naked with their feet to the fire, lying on rushes, with a covering of blankets or day-clothes.[2] An earlier account of the Rosses of Donegal, relating to the middle of the eighteenth century, gives us more details: 'All the family lay together in one bed, and, if any visitors came in the evening, they too slept with them; for they set no bounds to their hospitality . . . heath or bent bushes were spread across the floor, to a length sufficient for the number present, and in breadth about six feet; over this litter, the mistress of the house laid part of a long plaid or blanket, on which the others, having stripped off their clothes, lay down as fast as they could; men and women together, all naked: then the mistress having drawn the rest of the blanket over them, lay down herself, naked also. This they call a

[1]Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 132.
[2]In C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 28, 32.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Thorough-bed.'[1] The Poor Law Commissioners reported in 1836 that nearly three-quarters of the 10,000 inhabitants of one parish were sleeping on the floor, though they add that this was because the bedsteads had been burnt to boil potatoes. Even after 1850 the custom of sleeping 'in stradogue' as it was called, was not unknown in the west.[2] In Ulster, too, though the master and mistress of the house would have slept in their wall-bed, the young children, where there was only one room, must have slept on the floor. Long custom as well as wretched poverty explains the statement made by Patrick McKye of a Donegal parish in 1837: 'Nor can many of them afford a second bed, but whole families of sons and daughters of mature age indiscriminately lie together . . . and all in the bare buff.'[3] The wall-bed was a wooden frame built into the outshot which has been described earlier. It had its own wooden covering or tester to give protection from roof drips, and originally, to judge by the Hebridean black-houses, the covering was of sods. In Donegal, bog timber supplied the bed frame, and the mattress was made of wattles or of ropes twisted from the root fibres of bog-fir. That fir-rope mattresses were once standard fittings is shown by the specification for the beds to be supplied to the Belfast Charitable Association in 1774.[4] But some of the wall-beds in parts of Connacht were until recently mere stone benches covered with dried bracken. Half-ruined examples may be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island.

In the house with fireside partition the kitchen bed often takes the form of a settle-bed, a seat by day and a bed by night. The front and seat are in one piece, hinged at the bottom so that the whole can be folded down to make a low bed (Fig. 18). In bachelor homes, where the settle-bed has been retained, I have been offered a seat on one which had been closed a moment before by bundling in the mattress and bedclothes. Placed against one of the side walls near the fire, the settle-bed

[1] J. C. Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, 2nd ed. (1818), Appendix 1, 196–204.
[2] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 192.
[3] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 16.
[4] R. W. M. Strain, *The Ulster Medical Journal*, 22 (1953), 37.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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352 admirably illustrates the economy of space and function characteristic of Irish kitchen fittings, but I doubt whether this rather complicated piece of furniture is of any great antiquity: it was probably introduced by planters or adapted from a settle fitted with a coffer seat.

The black-houses, as described in the nineteenth century, had no table, and there are still to be seen, in Donegal for instance, houses where there is no kitchen table. At meal-times [264] the family sit around a shallow potato basket resting on the circle of knees. The origin of the tripod tray-table of south-eastern Europe and south-western Asia is surely to be sought in a similar custom. In fact the Blasket Island table was described as a tripod to which was fitted a board which hung on the wall when not in use.[1] The little round table is known from many parts of western Europe. There is, for example, the three-legged 'cricket' table of Wales, which has a special place in the affections of the family. Placed near the fire, it is reserved at meal-times for the father and mother while the children and servants eat at the big table. In Ireland the kitchen table is a flimsy construction, and its place is against the side wall, under a window. Not infrequently it is hinged to the wall as a 'falling leaf table' which drops when not in use, thus enlarging the open space in front of the fire.

Bishop Pococke describes the Tirawley (Mayo) table as 'a long sort of stool about 20 inches high and broad and two yards long',[2] clearly designed to be stowed away along a wall. Small tables which have been found in the bogs are little more than small boards, their four short legs being cut from the solid. They are provided with holes by which they could be transported or hung up when not in use (Fig. 26). It follows that table-chairs were unnecessary: long, low, narrow stools or three [516] legged 'creepies' would serve, and the children would have squatted eastern-fashion on the floor.

The table, therefore, in the words of a Swedish student of 352 Irish ethnology, 'never attracted the social activities of the 592 house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating

[1] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman* (1934), 40.
[2] *Pococke's Tour, 1752* (1891), 87.

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social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the 352
fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served 592
since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in the English language gave its name to a committee, has not replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies [776]
or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged [769]
around the fire.

FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means 354
of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the 373
table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke. The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from [171]
Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said, that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

[1] Å. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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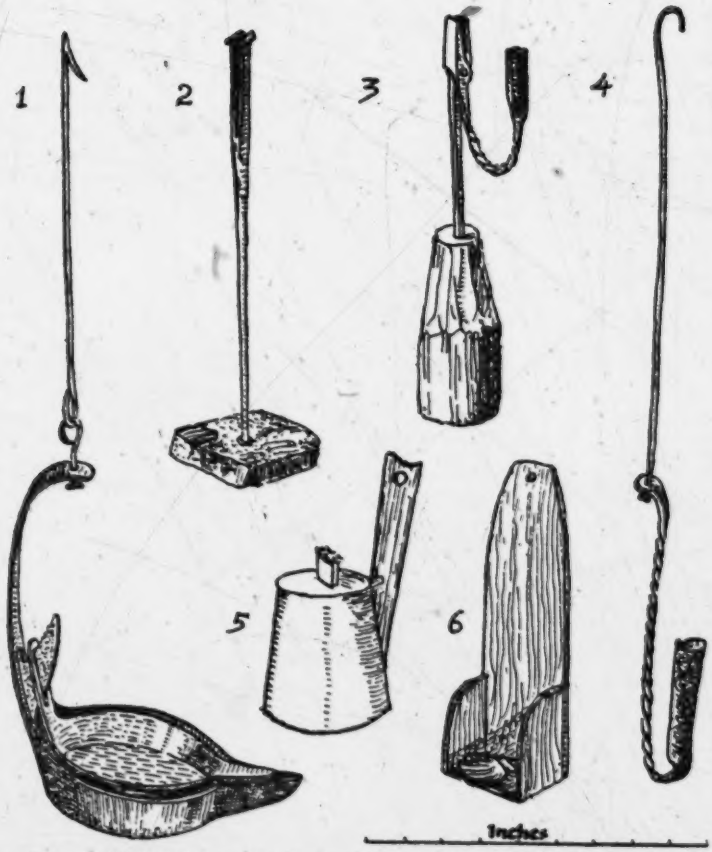

FIG. 27. Light-holders. (1) Crusie, Co. Antrim (scale × 2). (2) Fir-split holder, Co. Antrim. (3) Rush and candle-holder, Co. Antrim. (4) Weavers' candle-holder, Co. Armagh. (5) Hob lamp, Co. Cavan. (6) Scollop shell lamp, Aran Islands.

and by rush-lights held in iron pincers mounted on wooden or wrought-iron stands (Fig. 27). Candles of resin, tallow and beeswax were also made at home by dipping prepared strips of cloth repeatedly in an iron grisset and rolling out the candles on a board. Such candles played an important part in various

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church festivals and at wakes, and though they are now bought they are made by hand in a few towns by chandlers who carry on a medieval tradition. One Dublin firm, established in 1488, manufactures large church candles of beeswax by methods which can have changed little with the centuries. In the home the candles were supported in wrought-iron holders or stuck into a turf by the fireside. Tall standard holders, often with adjustable fittings, were designed to give light to the weaver at the loom, and they are most typically found in Ulster (Fig. 28). The fine embroidery which occupied the women in the linen districts must have imposed a great strain on the eyes: there are stories of a single candle serving as a central source of light for a ring of seamstresses, each of whom held her work against a bottle full of water which acted as a magnifier.

In Ireland, as throughout Atlantic Europe, the dresser ranks as the most important and elaborate piece of furniture in the kitchen, and its position is prescribed by custom. It stands either against the side wall or against the partition between kitchen and bedroom. Since this partition is of no great antiquity we can be sure that the original place of the dresser was against the side-wall and that it has developed from, and taken the place of, shelves built into or attached to the side-wall. In part of Ulster it is referred to as 'the shelf'. I have already mentioned the tiers of stone shelves set in the wall which are preserved in the deserted houses of the Slievemore cluster on Achill Island. It is believed that the fashion of open crockery shelves was diffused from the court sideboards of the later Middle Ages in France and England, and it may be surmised that the wooden dresser was readily accepted in Celtic lands to replace wall shelves, from Elizabethan times on. The adoption of delph and tea-drinking in the eighteenth century no doubt accelerated the spread of the dresser, which had become, by that time, an essential part of Irish kitchen furniture (Plate 1). The corner-cupboard, evolving in much the same way from corner-shelves, is another article of furniture with a north-west European distribution. Similarly the coffer or store-chest spread through western Europe from the later Middle Ages onwards, replacing skin, straw, hollowed wood, or basket-work containers.

 [Text continues on p. 93]

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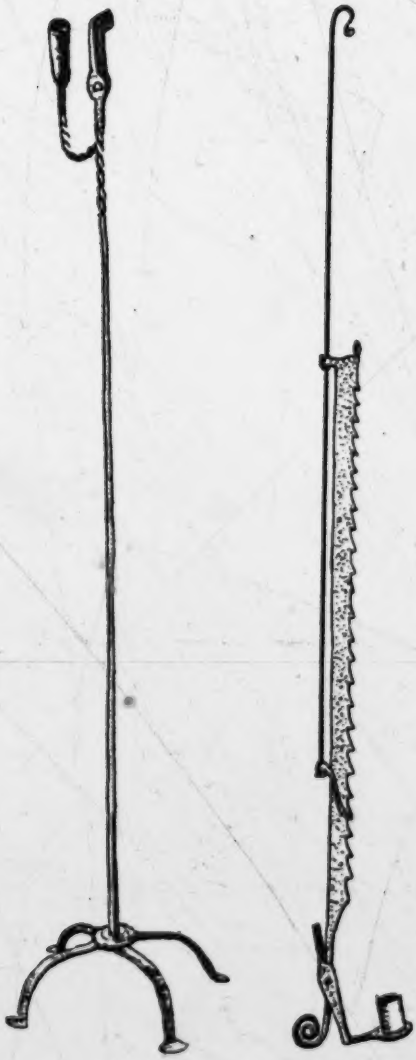

FIG. 28. Weavers' light-holders, Co. Armagh. Height, 3 ft.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

Low stools and benches seem to have been the traditional form of seating, and no doubt the floor served for the children. 352
Travellers noted that this was the best way to avoid the smoke:

> By sitting low, on rushes spread,
> The smoke still hover'd overhead;
> And did more good than real harm,
> Because it kept the long house warm.[1]

Fireside seats, more or less fixed, were often of stone, a solid block of wood or a large lump of turf. In the 'round about' hearths which were common in parts of Co. Antrim, and which people who remember them have described to me, the seat behind the fire, a log of wood, was known as the dais, a dialect word for a bench or seat which appears to be of north English origin. Solid seats of coiled straw or rushes were also common (Fig. 29) but the favourite fireside stool was the three-legged creepie, resembling a milking stool and like it finding a firm hold no matter how uneven the floor. There is little evidence of chairs of any antiquity. A three-legged type found in parts of the west, with a triangular seat and a narrow one-piece back has probably evolved from the creepie but looks Germanic. The nearest approach to a distinctive Irish style is the straw or rush-seated chair, which finds its best-known homes in Co. Down and Co. Limerick. High-backed armchairs made entirely of coiled straw rope after the manner of a beehive used to be found in the west, and since they can be paralleled in many parts of western Europe from the Orkneys to Spain it is probable that their manufacture is a peasant craft of some antiquity (Fig. 29). Cradles, too, were made of straw as well as of wood [854]
and basketwork, and they were sometimes suspended from the roof. I have heard of a cradle being improvised by laying a horse-collar on the floor. The phrase 'rocked in a pot' applied to [848]
an illegitimate child is said to derive from the use of a large fireside cooking pot as cradle and hiding place: round-shouldered infants were therefore suspect.

Down to recent times it was the custom to keep most of the 234
dairying equipment in the kitchen, and in the traditional peasant 353
house the upright churn still occupies a place against the wall,

[1] W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle* (1724). Canto 2. [Text continues on p 95]

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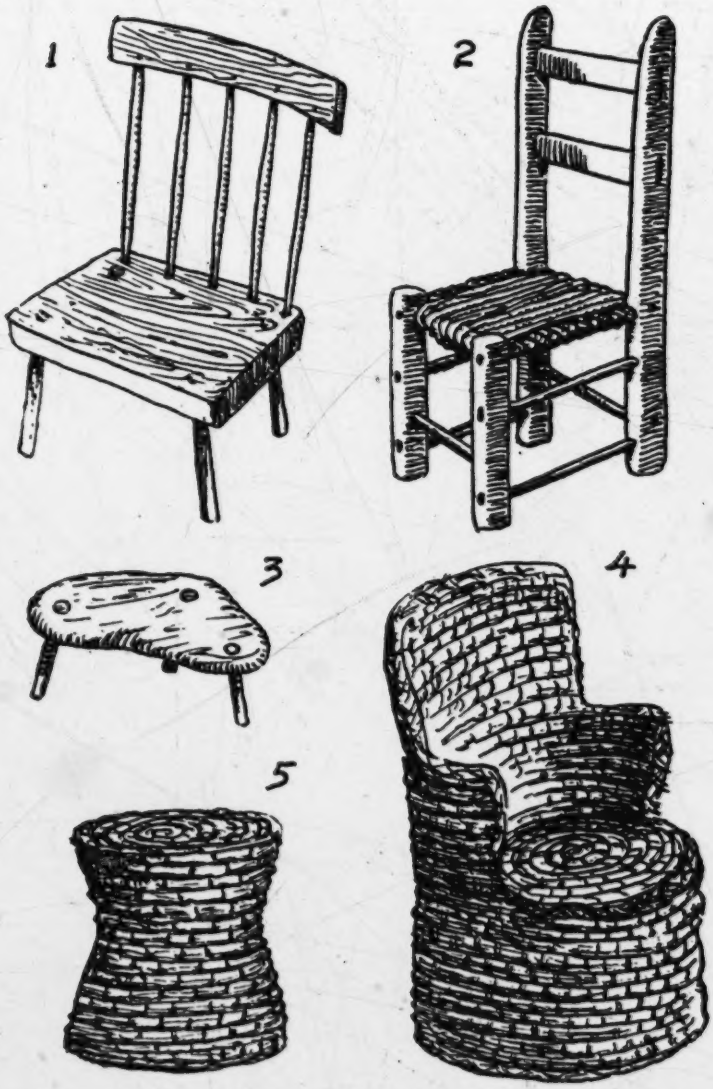

[285]

Fig. 29. (1) Co. Antrim chair. (2) Co. Down straw-seated chair. (3) Creepie. (4) Armchair of coiled straw-rope, Co. Cork. (5) Straw seat, Co. Clare.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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usually opposite the fire. The absence, in a country predominantly pastoral and consuming large quantities of milk products, of a building or room set aside as a dairy is at first sight strange. Milk cattle, however, were closely identified with the woman of the house, and as we have seen they commonly shared the kitchen with the family. Owing to the scarcity of winter feeding-stuffs, moreover, the supply of milk must have been, down to a couple of centuries ago, largely confined to the summer months and butter-making was therefore undertaken at the booley houses. It must have been difficult to store the considerable amounts of milk products required for winter food, especially when one remembers that most of the peasant houses were made of wattles, sods or mud, and there is some evidence, as we shall see in Chapter IX, that they were kept underground under the old Celtic economy, in even temperatures and safe from the depredations of animals. 234 353 [251]

However this may be, the kitchen is the traditional place for keeping the churn, and for churning. The stave-built upright plunge churn, prototype of the metal milk-churn which at first faithfully copied its shape, belongs to a family of wooden vessels which has been diffused across the Old World from Ireland to Tibet and now survives most abundantly towards the limits of its range (Fig. 30). Made by local coopers, Irish churns display a considerable variety in shape and size, the shapes differing regionally, the sizes depending on the number of cows kept on the farm, for they were 'made to measure'. The small barrel-shaped churn of the south-west, with a narrow vertical mouth, would appear to be the older style. The mouth, designed to hold a lid through a hole in which the churn staff passes, is usually a separate unit attached to the body by a join—the crib—skilfully contrived and concealed under one of the encircling hoops. Some old churns have hoops of split rods, hazel or sally, but it was reckoned lucky to have one of the hoops of rowan. The staves are invariably of oak: the circular base is made in three pieces, dowelled together and having the joins sealed with rushes. Small churns which have been dug out of the bogs are generally found to have been cut from the solid, and they often have projecting lugs perforated for ease of transport. Those with holed lids were certainly churns, but others 234 184

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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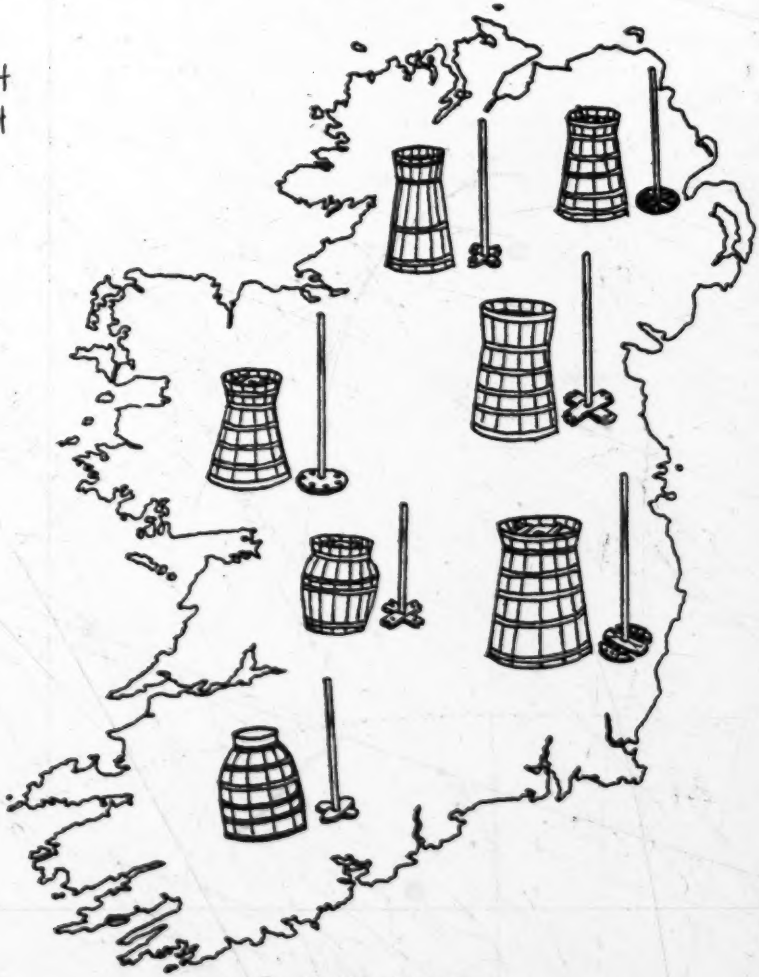

FIG. 30. Map of churn types.

were probably kegs for carrying milk: they have a rim of hoops which would allow a cloth or skin cover to be securely tied on.
234 A most interesting stave-built churn dating from the ninth century was discovered by Gerhard Bersu during the excavation

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Down

PLATE 5

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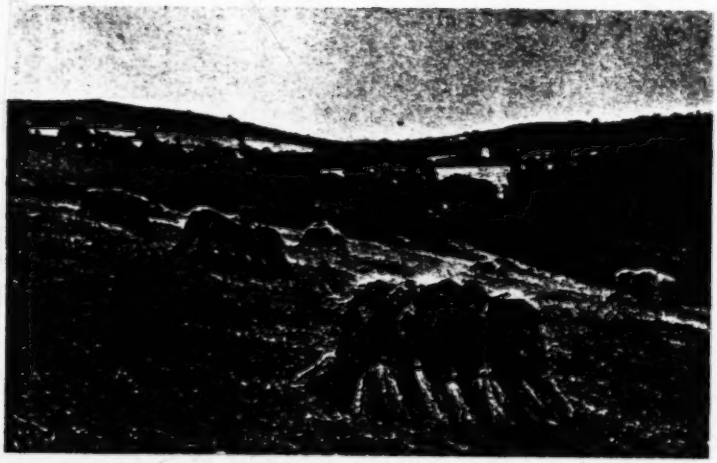

1. Flax in stook in drumlin country, Co. Down. Flax-dam on right.

2. Spreading flax from the dam, Co. Down.

[facing p. 96]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Antrim

PLATE 6

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516
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412

1. Shearing oats with the toothed sickle, Co. Antrim.

291
342
351
243
412

2. Thrashing oats with flails, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 97]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of a rath (farmstead) at Lissue, Co. Antrim, in 1946.[1] Its barrel- 234
shaped body has the unusual refinement of an oval mouth, designed for pouring, with an iron rim-mount over which a cloth could be tied. A central iron band has two rings attached, evidently for suspension. A century ago, that is a thousand years after the Lissue churn was in use, we know that butter was made not far away on the shores of Lough Neagh by swinging the churn to and fro, suspended from the roof timbers. The Lissue churn could also have been used to carry milk from the summer pastures to the homestead. There are stories in the Mourne Mountains of milk transported in this way which would turn to butter by the automatic churning of the rough journey home from the hills. Evidently the lidless churn is the older type, and I have seen large specimens in Donegal. It was pre- [492]
sumably from a churn of this kind, slung from a pony's back, that the Donegal child was observed 'peeping and screeching' as the pastoral cavalcade moved up to the summer booleys in the days before the Great Famine.[2]

The simplest form of churn dash, found along the west coast, 234
terminates in a wooden cross. A similar Norwegian dasher has 777
the ends of the cross joined with a sally ring, and a rope of cowhair is said to have been used for the purpose in Scotland. It was considered lucky to have the cross-pieces made of two different woods; indeed everything about the churn had to be made 'right'. In the whole business of handling milk luck was more important than labour, and butter-making in particular was a task fraught with unseen dangers. Often the butter would mysteriously refuse to break, and many were the precautions taken and the remedies sought. It seems that the old Irish method was to churn from the whole milk, and it was customary until recently to pour the skim milk into the churn along with the risen cream. It should be remembered, too, that the butterfat content was low, and that since many peasant farmers had no more than one cow at a time in milk, its quality would be more variable than the milk of a large herd. The unaccountable variations in the success of churning were widely attributed to the intervention of witches or fairies.

[1]G. Bersu, *U.J.A.*, X (1947), 50–58.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

234 Bad luck could not always be avoided, but at least it was desirable to make the toil less wearisome, and to this end a
407 number of ingenious fittings were applied to the churn staff. Most of the examples I have seen, in the north-east, depend on the recoil of a strong spring to lift the staff, and they may well have been evolved from a spring pole, such as is used for the pole lathe, attached to the roof timbers.[1] Other devices enabled the staff to be moved in both directions by an arrangement of levers hinged to a couple-baulk. These engines, which have almost entirely gone out of use, were known as glaiks (Fig. 31).

[415]

FIG. 31. Glaiks for churning, Co. Down, with milk 'keeler' and piggin, Co. Donegal.

353 Here we may mention other things which were hung from the roof timbers: in the more prosperous homes sides of bacon
788 and portions of the autumn-killed ox, the mart; in poorer houses the salted ling or other 'kitchen'. And there was a strange custom of keeping in the roof, to bring luck to the livestock, part of a carcase, such as an animal's leg. This undoubtedly had its origin in the days when living-room and byre were under

[1]For another device, fitted to the churn, see my *Mourne Country*, Fig. 84.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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one roof. A relic of this practice may perhaps be seen in the 353
sheep's bones that one occasionally finds tucked away in the 788
keeping-holes of old-fashioned houses. Above the door the Bridget's Cross gives protection from fire and other dangers.

Besides the churn the old-time farm will have a wide range of 415
other wooden dairying utensils, some stave-built, others carved
or turned from the solid. They will include milking-piggins 234
(Fig. 31), cream-skimmers, ladles, butter-scoops, and -prints, butter tubs and buttermilk butts. A shallow stave-built 'keeler' or a large turned bowl is kept for setting milk (Fig. 31). The solid and often shapely carved cups and methers (literally mead bowls) are already archaeological specimens (Fig. 65), and many of the other wooden containers are going the same way, including the little stave noggins described in an earlier chapter.

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VIII

FARMYARDS AND FENCES

351 THE paved area in front of the traditional Irish farmhouse is known as 'the street', a word here used in its original sense of a pavement. The old style street is usually cobbled, and occasionally, especially along the coast where the materials lay to hand, neat arrangements of waterworn pebbles made a pretty pattern at the door. This is a technique of prehistoric origin which is found along the Atlantic coasts and in the Mediterranean region. The area around the hearth also may be pebbled, but I have not seen in Ireland the entire kitchen floor so treated, as in parts of Wales. There may be a stone bench against the front of the house near the door, and here, or in specially constructed wall coves across the cobbled street, pots and buckets are put out to dry (Fig. 32).

Immediately in front of the house is the traditional location of
237 the dungheap. 'The dunghill before each door' was commented
351 on by nearly every nineteenth-century traveller. The apologists, it is true, remind us that tenants would not move the dunghill for fear of having their rents raised because of 'improvements'. But its proximity to the dwelling house need occasion no surprise when we recall that down to a century or two ago, in remote parts, the dung was allowed to accumulate at the end of the living-room. We recall that in 1837 a school teacher wrote that some houses in Donegal had 'within their walls from ten to fifteen tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year'.[1] Nowadays, however, from hygienic motives, the manure is removed to a less conspicuous part of the farmyard, though if possible still in sight of the door, for the farmer likes

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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to keep an eye on his wealth. The muck-heap is the source of 237
good crops and good luck, a potent symbol of well-being: 351
'where there is muck there is luck'. It was the custom, recorded [177]
for instance in the Glens of Antrim, to stick a sprig of rowan
tree upright in the midden on May Eve to protect the farm [188]
from mischievous fairies. The muck symbolizes the fertility of the farm.

FIG. 32. Keeping-hole for pots, Co. Down.

In many parts of the country, especially in the northern 351
counties and in Co. Wexford, the entrance to the farmyard is 417
dignified by a pair of massive stone gate piers, generally built-up from field-stones in the form of a conical topped cylinder and kept whitewashed. There are many modern variants in concrete, and the old style piers are steadily disappearing and are often hastened to their end by carelessly driven tractors or lorries. They seem far too massive for the gates they carry, resembling twin bastions defending the entrance to a fortified enclosure (Figs. 5, 33). In some areas, probably under the influence of improving landlords or land agents, field entrances are also dignified by built-up stone piers, and it is possible to explain the fashion as part of the agrarian revolution which resulted in enclosure. In the virtual absence of well-grown oak trees they provided an Irish alternative to the oak gate-post of the English farm, sturdy enough to carry the iron gate which for the same reason took the place of the five-barred oaken gate.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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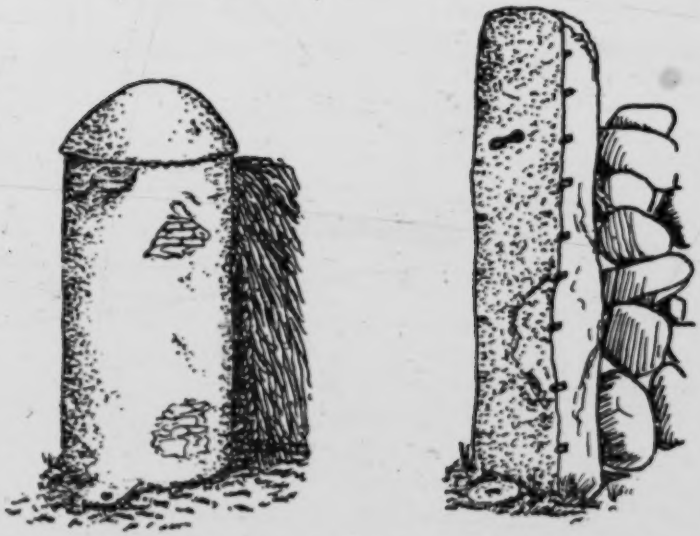

FIG. 33. Gateposts, Co. Down. *Left:* built-up pier with stone hinge and spud-stone. *Right:* granite slab with iron hinge and spud-stone.

[342] The shortage of suitable timber also led to the disappearance of the native wattled house and of the introduced timber-framed house, and the fact that such houses were more combustible (and that wooden gates, as one observer remarked, would have been stolen for firewood) was of less importance. The prototype of the stone piers of the farmyard may perhaps be seen in the great entrance pillars of the fortified 'bawns' erected by the seventeenth-century planters. Yet the style is quaintly archaic, and they have often been compared to miniature round towers. Very stout examples do indeed resemble the stone beehive 'clochauns' which we describe later, except that they are solid. In their construction the method of marking out the circumference and maintaining a vertical line by means of a string attached to a central post which is later removed is primitive enough. Moreover the method of hanging the gate is archaic. It is the harr-hanging which is found also in Scotland, the Lake District, Cornwall and Brittany and has survived in these stony

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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refuge corners of Europe. The gate swings like a fire-crane, not on hinges or rings-and-hooks, but directly on its heel, on a projecting iron spud which swivels in a stone socket. These stone sockets or spud-stones are frequently seen around old farm sites, and very similar stones in Mesopotamia go back into the fifth millennium B.C. In the days before the iron gate was introduced wooden gates were hung in the same way, and we know from Scotland that they were sometimes tipped with stone.[1] A projecting stone perforated to hold the top of the gate-post (Fig. 33) has now been replaced, as a rule, by an iron eye. 351 417

In Co. Armagh I have heard the farm gate-piers referred to as the man and wife of the house, and one of the pair may have a flat top whereon, it is said, the fairies like to dance. The old people used to place the two first plates of champ—the Hallowe'en festival dish of mashed potatoes—on the top of the pier.[2] While all this may be nothing more than an exuberant play of fancy we cannot overlook the megalithic practice of selecting alternating pointed and flat-topped monoliths for some of their ritual erections, symbolizing, it is thought, male and female. The twin portal stones of many megalithic chamber graves come to mind, and pairs of such stones now standing in isolation, as at Lisdivin in Co. Tyrone,[3] may well have been a symbolic entrance to some vanished ceremonial enclosure. The tradition of large entrance piers dies hard. Not infrequently today the first thought of an improving farmer is to erect imposing concrete pillars at the entrance to his property. They are as a rule garishly painted and pebble-dashed, a poor substitute for their simple whitewashed forerunners. [769]

In the early nineteenth century field gates were almost unknown except near towns, and we read of the rustic forerunner of the iniquitous barbed wire—a hay-rope strung with thorns.[4] In boggy areas one commonly sees the gnarled root stumps of bog trees doing service as a gate, much as the Canadian pioneer will make a temporary fence with grubbed-up stumps. The huge

[1] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 127.
[2] Michael Murphy, *At Slieve Gullion's Foot* (1940), 64.
[3] O. Davies, *U.J.A.*, 2 (1939), 169.
[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 288.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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351 417 defensive horns of the long-extinct Irish elk, dug from the bogs, have been utilized for this purpose! That the gate-piers are more significant than the gate is evident when one sees a bundle of thorns or a collection of decaying farm implements doing service as a stop-gap between a pair of magnificent pillars. Where stones of suitable dimensions are available, in granite or limestone country, for example, single uprights take the place of the built-up piers (Fig. 33). In the Aran Islands the field-walls, a single stone in width, have no permanent openings, but phantom gates—a portion of wall which is knocked down and rebuilt as required—are defined by upright slabs (Fig. 34).

FIG. 34. *Above:* a 9-ft. wide wall in the Mourne Mountains. 'Monumental relics of secular toil, such walls may record by their successive accretions periods of agricultural activity through the ages.' *Below:* stone gateway, Aran Islands.

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FARMYARDS AND FENCES

This was formerly the custom also in Connemara and Co. Clare, 351
and it finds an explanation not so much in the scarcity of wood 417
or iron for gates as in the desirability of giving the wind no way into the fields. Such stone walls, seemingly artless constructions of rough boulders, are characteristic of the thin-soiled hillsides throughout Ireland. Most of them are of no great age, for permanent enclosure on this scale is comparatively recent, yet dry-stone walls were built by the men of the megaliths, and there was a lingering tradition of wall-building among the stony hills, which blossomed with intricate garlands of dry-stone walls when enclosure came. What distinguishes these boulder walls is their flimsy lace-like appearance when seen against the sky. Herein lies their strength, for they are full of holes and offer less resistance to the wind than a solid wall. They are most characteristic of hillsides where stony moraines and drift-boulders occur: other types of stone call for different treatment, and taking into account those fences which are partly or entirely made of sods or earth there is an endless variety in the tens of thousands of miles of ditches which mark out this now much-enclosed land.

To speak of a ditch without defining the Irish meaning of the word is to mislead the English reader. It is used in the sense of dyke, a raised bank, and it is not difficult to see why, since the positive and negative earth-ditch usually accompany each other, the word should change meaning. The older meaning of 'ditch' in the north of England was a bank. Similarly in Normandy the word 'fosse' is applied to a raised bank dividing the fields. An Ulster M.P. is said to have caused much amusement at Westminster in a debate on fox-hunting when describing how Irish horses jumped a ditch by changing feet on top! In the north of Ireland as in Scotland the open drain alongside the ditch is known as the sheugh.

We know from archaeological evidence that many existing types of ditch are of prehistoric antiquity. The dry-stone walls of the circular enclosures known as cashels and the earthen ditches of the countless raths of the Dark Ages were, by and large, little more than farmyard fences. Scores of existing farmsteads occupy the old sites and even when, as is more usual, the farms are on sites of fairly recent choice the ditch surrounding

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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351 the farmyard tends to be a substantial construction. Where the
417 farm is a survivor of a clachan, the small fields near the house, little more than gardens in size, are surrounded by massive winding walls attractive to the eye and always worth examining. Over rough ground they pick their way erratically, incorporating great boulders which could not be moved and which, centuries ago perhaps, became the nuclei of smaller boulders cleared from the fields. Knotted tangles of walls ten or twelve feet thick have resulted, monumental relics of secular toil. Such walls may
351 record by their successive accretions periods of agricultural
417 activity through the ages (Fig. 34). When more stones are
172 removed from the fields they are added as an outer skin, and one can easily recognize the latest additions by the bleached unlichened nakedness of the stones. Archaeological material may be accidentally incorporated in the core of the wall. The wall-builders, too, apparently had a habit of thrusting into the crevices curiosities picked up when working in the fields or bits of abandoned tools, and I have occasionally found prehistoric polished stone axes which their finders had pushed into a wall. The core of the wall is likely to contain similar oddments and bits of pottery, so that the excavation of old walls can be quite profitable to the archaeologist. In Denmark it has been possible to date ancient field-walls to various periods stretching back into prehistory, mainly by means of the stray objects they contain.

In Ireland the clearest evidence for the antiquity of some field boundaries comes from the remains found buried under the bogs. Examples in Co. Londonderry have been described by Dr. Oliver Davies as consisting of irregularly piled stone slabs with standing stones set at intervals.[1] Some of these ancient walls, which country people in Ulster call Danish fences, seem to have enclosed large areas and appear from their contour-alignment to have been head-dykes, enclosing land once arable, but now overgrown with peat, and demarcating it from the rough outfield. I have seen examples both in Ulster and in Munster which are of massive dry-stone work tied to great standing stones set at fairly regular intervals. Often it is only the standing stones, deep-bedded by the builders, that remain to puzzle the archaeologist. A characteristic of these fences is that

[1] O. Davies, *U.J.A.*, 2 (1939), 61–65.

many of the stones are set vertically or diagonally.[1] Others of the same character, or equally massive earthen banks, may be observed to radiate from some of the raths or 'Danish forts' which we now know to have been farmsteads of the Dark Ages and, since they seem to have been single farms held in severalty, the enclosures which they presuppose are likely to be co-eval with the raths. Indeed Professor O'Riordain has claimed that the existing earthen field fences around the group of raths at Cush in Co. Limerick closely follow those of the late Bronze Age which were 'essentially similar' . . . 'the present-day field system is the direct descendant of the ancient one'.[2] 351 417 172

Much smaller and more irregular are the walls one sees associated with areas of megalithic settlement, though this may be because of their great age. Indeed one example recently discovered during the excavation of a megalithic tomb in Co. Down, which was older than the construction of the cairn and partly preserved by it, was built in coursed dry-stone work.[3] We have as yet little information to draw on but it seems likely that these oldest walls were mainly the result of the casual piling-up of stones cleared from little patches of cultivated ground. Some of the great walls associated with clachans and referred to above may well be built on the foundations of such lines of stones pitched around and between bedded boulders which could not be moved. Yet the size of some of the stones built into these ancient walls is astonishing. I have watched a loose-limbed farmer, who seemed to inherit the physical characters as well as the skills of the megalith builders, handle with superb ease great boulders which one would think it beyond human power to move. A stout timber or iron bar and a sturdy slipe (Chapter XIII) are the tools used. Alternatively boulders may be buried *in situ* if there is sufficient depth of soil, but until recently there was a reluctance, for superstitious reasons, to break up large stones. I have not come across the old miners' practice of cracking stones with fire,[4] and except near towns or quarries the splitting of field stones by means of wedges, 'plug 351 417 [483] [316]

[1] O. Davies, loc. cit., 62.
[2] S. P. O'Riordain, *P.R.I.A.*, 45 (1940), 83–181.
[3] A. E. P. Collins and D. M. Waterman, *Millin Bay, a late Neolithic Cairn in Co. Down*, H.M.S.O. (1955), 8.
[4] But A. Young (*Tour*, 2, 115) describes the process near Killarney in 1778.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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351 and feathers', or explosives is a comparatively recent develop-
417 ment. These methods took a heavy toll of the megalithic
[316] monuments of granite-quarrying districts such as the Mourne Mountains in the nineteenth century, though superstitious tales are still told of the misfortunes which befell the stone-workers.

Another type of stone ditch popular in the limestone plain of east Galway is curiously similar to the Scots Galloway dyke and may well have been introduced by improving landlords or their agents. The lower portion of the ditch is a dry wall of small stones about two feet high carefully levelled on top, and on this rests a wall of boulders of lace-work type two or three feet high. The heavy superstructure not only secures the lower part with its weight but, perhaps because of its slight overhang and tottering appearance, is said to deter cattle and sheep from approaching the wall (Fig. 35). The low walls of loosely piled

FIG. 35. East Galway ditch of Galloway type, and cross-section.

stones on Rathlin Island are said to act as a deterrent on the principle of the modern electric fence: I was told that animals give them a wide berth once having learnt that they collapse almost at a touch. At the other extreme are the ten-foot walls which run for miles around many demesnes, isolating them physically from the surrounding country so that only at the entrances or the now numerous gaps does one get a glimpse of the decayed grandeur inside. A good many of them are 'famine
[731] walls' built to relieve distress during famine years, in return for a meagre allowance of food and a wage of perhaps a few pence per day.

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FARMYARDS AND FENCES

Throughout the lowland farming country the commonest ditch is an earthen bank faced on one side with stones and planted with quicks slipped in near the base among the stones (Fig. 36). This was the 'approved mode' of enclosing the land 351 417

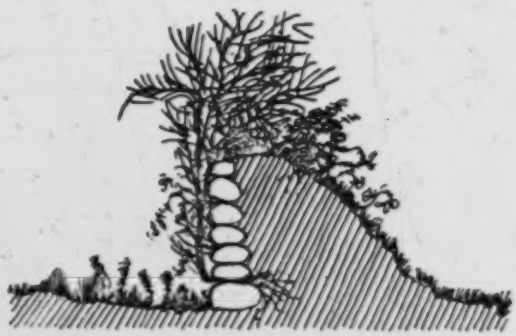

FIG. 36. The hedged ditch, cross-section.

advocated by the reformers from the late eighteenth century onwards, but it was noted that 'the planting of hedgerows was repugnant to the practice of the country' and in many districts the hedges were neglected and the livestock still had to be tethered in the fields.[1] The tradition of temporary fences died hard. 'A year's ditch passeth for a very strong fence', wrote Sir John Davies to the Earl of Salisbury in 1606. These sod fences were deliberately thrown down after harvest, and the decayed sods enriched the soil. The *Advertisements for Ireland* published in 1623 state: 'Their fields lie open and unclosed. Where wood is plentiful they hedge in all their corn with stakes and bushes and pull them down in the winter and burn them.'[2] When fixed field-divisions were adopted, the hedgeless earthen bank was preferred in many parts of the country, usually growing a luxuriant crop of brambles and gorse (whins). These were a useful source of firewood and provided both shelter and food for the livestock, the 'pounded whins' being fed to horses. The knocking stones, flat slabs or stone basins where the whins [231] [246]

[1] *Report on the Estates of the Drapers' Company in Ireland*, 1829.
[2] *Advertisements for Ireland* (1623), Ed. G. O'Brien (1923), 33.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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351 were 'melled' with a wooden maul, are sometimes to be seen
in the farmyard, and there were a few water-driven 'whin-mills'.
417 Their use is almost forgotten as is the custom of growing a
[246] field of whins to provide fodder. This was done in Co. Cavan and it is a recognized method of land utilization in the poorer parts of Brittany. A gorse hedge near the homestead is still popular as a place for drying clothes on washing day. 'Firing being scarce', wrote Gabriel Beranger of the barony of Bargy and Forth, 'they plant all their ditches with furze, which serves them for firing, and is reckoned equal in value with the produce of the land.'[1] Small farmers in Co. Down preferred wide earthen ditches because, as Binns was told: 'we have both sides of the ditch for feeding the cattle, and whins to bruise for the horses'.[2] The economy of the grass-grown ditch becomes clearer when we realize that on boulder-strewn hillsides where wide stone ditches separate the tiny fields a high proportion of the land is sterilized. Such wide earth banks often serve as footpaths where
[487] the land is wet, and in Co. Limerick I have seen cart tracks on top of them. This habit may go back to the wide balks between some of the openfield patches, which were used as access ways where the boggy fields were too soft to take a cart. Such double ditches, when faced with stones on both sides, are undoubtedly an old type of fence, for they are characteristic of many raths or Dark Age farmsteads. These 'dry fences' are common in Co. Kerry and also in north Antrim, and they occur in Brittany, and in parts of Anglesey and north Pembrokeshire. In stony country the filling of a double ditch may be of loose stones gathered from the fields, and here again we have ancient examples in the enclosing walls of smal cashels which are the equivalent in thin-soiled areas of the raths of the lowlands.

What nearly all these many types of field fences have in com-
351 mon is their untidy appearance. Dry stone walls tend to be cyclopean, lacking the precision of those of north England or the Cotswold country. Rough glacial boulders are a poor substitute for oolite, and one recalls the comment of Sir John Russell that Irish architecture suffered because of the virtual absence of Jurassic rocks in the geological series. Rarely does

[1] Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 192.
[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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one see a well-kept or neatly trimmed field-hedge and never a staked and pleached hedgerow to compare with those of the English lowlands. The whole art of hedging is poorly developed, and the craft of laying a hedge almost unknown. The thorns are allowed to grow freely—as though they were the true fairy thorns which must never be damaged—and cut back ruthlessly at long intervals, when the many gaps are stuffed with dead thorns. The truth is that it is the bank rather than the hedge which makes the fence, and the thorns do little more than provide some shelter for livestock. But while the earthen banks grow tall hedges they will not support good hedgerow timber. The few starved ashes, sycamores or stunted beeches compare very unfavourably with the great oaks and elms of the English Midlands. Arthur Young brought his English common sense and prejudices to bear on the subject: 'To permit a hedge to grow too long without cutting not only ruins it for a fence but spoils the trees that are planted with it . . . I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks.' And consequently, 'the greatest part of the kingdom presents a naked bleak dreary view for want of wood.'[1] Elsewhere he writes, of Mitchelstown in Co. Cork, 'An oak, an ash, or an elm is almost as great a rarity as an olive, an orange or a mulberry.'[2] 351 [137]

The planting of hedges and hedgerow timber had been advocated by improvers since the sixteenth century. The Ordinances for the Government of Ireland (1534) lay down that 'every husbandman having a plough within the English Pale shall set by the year twelve ashes in the ditches and closes of his farm'. The ditch-bank was evidently already a feature of the farms in the Pale, and it is interesting that there, as generally through the east and north of the country, the ash—providing the most useful timber for general farm use—is the favourite hedgerow tree. But it is in the closes (the farmyards) that one sees most trees today, chief among them the sycamore whose dense foliage gives protection from the winds and from the prying eyes of neighbours. Next to the sycamore in popularity, and similarly providing a thick cover, come the beech and the conifers, and it is noteworthy that none of these species is 351 313

[1] Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 66
[2] Ibid, 2, 272.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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native to the country. Around the coasts the sycamore is almost the only tree that persists, for it will stand up to the salt-laden gales everywhere save on the most exposed parts of the west coast. R. U. Sayce has recorded the belief, from Montgomeryshire, that 'sycamore trees keep the fairies away and stop them spoiling the milk',[1] but this bit of lore cannot be of any great antiquity since the tree did not reach Britain from its home in the mountain belt of southern Europe until the sixteenth century. It presumably arose from the association of the tree with the farmyard. In Ireland the sycamore probably came in with the early seventeenth century planters, though the beech may be a medieval or even older introduction. Both trees had many economic uses, especially for dry-coopering, that is the manufacture of provision casks and butter firkins, and the sycamore is an excellent wood for turnery. Later, as the linen industry became mechanized, the beetling mills demanded sycamore for the great beam of the engine and beech for the vertical beetles.

The lay-out of farm buildings seems to have been, in the native single-farms, as haphazard and formless as was that of the houses themselves in an old clachan. As separate farms with outbuildings ('offices') became fashionable improvements after the middle of the eighteenth century, the latter were built for convenience of access and they were put close to the farmhouse, either attached to one end or lying parallel to provide a windbreak. Only in the planted areas does one find old examples of planned 'courtyard farms' where the house and offices enclose a square or rectangular yard. I fancy the stone or wooden 'hovel-stands' with their picturesque mushroom-like staddle-stones are also confined to planted districts. In the west a favourite method of making stacks is to build them about a central pole. (See p. 164.)

The wayside style is another absentee in the native Irish countryside, as is the footpath which is its companion. Short-cuts are rarely worth while in a land of tiny fields, and if there is a right of way there is sure to be a tolerable road. In fact there are so many farm lanes and access ways to mountain, seashore or bog that an economist might regard the amount of land so taken out of cultivation as excessive. It has been

[1] R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 45 (1938).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Donegal

PLATE 7

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133

Winnowing oats with a skin wight, Co. Donegal.

[facing p. 112]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Antrim

PLATE 8

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1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

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2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[Facing p. 113]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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calculated that in some thickly settled and much-enclosed town- 487
lands the land wasted in ditches may amount to a quarter of the whole area.[1] The peasant proprietor, however, would regard the loss of land as the price he pays for his independence, remembering 'the fights, trespasses, confusion, disputes and assaults' which were 'the natural and unavoidable consequences' of the openfield rundale system.[2]

[1]*Devon Commission*, 1, 422.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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IX

KILNS AND CLOCHAUNS

343 WHILE the timber building has almost entirely disap-
333 peared from the Irish scene, there survives an archaic tradition of building in dry stone which is best illustrated in the humble structures erected for special purposes in or adjacent to the farmyard. Since stonework has a much better chance of survival than timber it is possible, even without excavation, to trace the descent of some of these small buildings through the ages. They include corbelled animal houses (clochauns), corn-drying kilns, sweat-houses and turf-shelters. We shall consider also small outhouses of sods or wattles, including soot-houses and animal shelters. Some of these, reduced in scale and status, are the successors of buildings once erected for higher purposes.

The clochauns of south-western Ireland, corbelled stone struc-
172 tures, nowadays used mainly for keeping pigs or poultry, are indis-
343 tinguishable from the monastic huts such as are found on the precipitous island of Skellig Michael off the coast of Co. Kerry. Similar stone huts accompany monastic settlements in other parts of Ireland—and also in the Hebrides and in islands off the coast of Brittany—and they have been preserved, thanks to their sanctity or their isolation, as examples of a mode of building which was common when Christianity reached the west. Some clochauns in the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, have been erected within living memory, but we also know that this type of construction is far older than Christianity in Ireland, that it was already two millennia old when Christian converts adopted it for their dwellings and their oratories. It is probable that some of the megalith-builders lived in clochauns and that their magnificent corbelled tombs have alone survived because they

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were buried under great cairns such as those at New Grange on the River Boyne. Clusters of ruined clochauns surrounded by old field walls litter the hillslopes of the Dingle peninsula near Fahan; but we can only guess at the age of these 'beehive farms'. Some of the large oval clochauns would give standing room to as many as sixty people. Many of the existing farms in the district have at least one round clochaun, used for keeping pigs or poultry or for storing milk or turf (Fig. 37). 172 343

In the Aran Islands both oval and circular stone-roofed buildings are to be seen, though most of them are ruined. O'Flaherty in the seventeenth century described them as being 'so ancient that nobody knows how long ago any of them was made'.[1] The oval houses measure up to 21 ft. by 12 ft. internally; they are rectangular inside and some have two opposite doors (Pl. 3). Smaller round huts are also known.[2] In north-eastern Ireland, too, in north Louth and south-east Down, both round and square clochauns have been constructed down to recent times for housing pigs and poultry: a few are still in use.[3] The corbelled pigsty is known also in Wales,[4] and has been recorded in Caithness and the Orkney Islands.[5] Very similar corbelled buildings attached to old farms on Dartmoor are said to have been used as ash houses, for holding the embers taken from the fire at night.[6] One example, now used as a chicken house, is described as a winnowing hut.

Other parts of western and southern Europe can show both ancient and recent examples of corbelled constructions, though most of them, in so far as such a timeless style can be dated, were probably erected within the last two or three centuries, and some of them are known to have been built within living memory. They are found, either in ruins or serving as shelters or as animal- and tool-houses, in south France, especially in and around the Central Plateau, in Spain, Portugal and Majorca, in the heel of Italy, in the western Balkans and in Crete, where the mountain dairies appear to be very similar to the stone 171

[1] R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 68.
[2] Å. Campbell, *Folk-Liv*, 1938, 173–96; G. H. Kinahan, *P.R.I.A.*, 10, 23
[3] R. H. Buchanan, *U.J.A.*, 19 (1956), 92–112.
[4] I. C. Peate, *The Welsh House* (1944), 42.
[5] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 71.
[6] *Trans. Plymouth Institute*, XVIII (1944), 34.

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FIG. 57. Clochauns. (1) Oval house, Aran Island. (2) Hut, Skellig Michael. (3) Poultry house, Dingle. (4, 5) Pigsties, Co. Down. (6) Sweat-house, Co. Leitrim.

171 booley huts and shielings of Ireland and the Hebrides. The corbelled buildings of Vaucluse, in the mountains behind Avignon, are both round and rectangular, the latter bearing a striking resemblance to Irish oratories of the type of Gallarus,

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Co. Kerry, which is believed to date from the sixth or seventh 171
century. Whether or not the origin of this style of building in western Europe should be placed, as I am inclined to believe, in the megalithic period, there can be no doubt that it represents, in various parts of the Mediterranean-Atlantic route, the survival of an ancient method of building. It has had a long life in exposed hilly districts where suitable materials lay to hand, especially where the interests of simple shepherds and cattlemen were dominant. Villages of houses with domed or conical stone or mud-brick roofs are a feature of south-east Italy and Syria, and of the dry belt stretching eastwards to India.

Some of the Co. Kerry farmyard clochauns are still used for 343
storing milk; their thick walls are admirable for maintaining 291
even temperatures. Their association with the pig may also be an archaic feature, for the pig was perhaps the first domesticated animal to be brought to Ireland, and although much altered in breed, it still thrives best in warm, draught-proof surroundings recalling the sultry jungles of its original south-east Asiatic home. The well-worn phrase about 'the gentleman that pays the rent' not only summarizes the role of the pig in recent historic times but carries a humorous hint of the veneration in which the pig was once held in southern and western Europe. Here archaeologists have postulated an early Neolithic matriarchal 'swine-culture', vestiges of which would explain the fact that the pig was the only cult animal of the oldest of the Greek mysteries, the Eleusinian.[1] Later pork became the favourite food of both the Roman and Celtic worlds. In parts of Ireland the pig is driven into the house for luck on May morning, and the [?55]
pigsty figures in a strange ritual for certain cures, e.g., 'a sufferer from mumps should be led with an ass-halter three times round the sty! Further, there is surely a supernatural quality in an animal which is reputed to be able to see the wind! In many parts of the British Isles, especially in Scotland, it is unlucky to speak of a pig when fishing at sea. Superstitions about the pig are numerous in Scotland, and in the Highlands there was formerly a tabu against keeping pigs and eating pork. This was apparently true also of those parts of the north of Ireland which have had close connections with the Western Isles.

[1]C. O. Sauer, *Agricultural Origins and Dispersals*, 57.

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KILNS AND CLOCHAUNS

343 In discussing the association of pigs and clochauns, which may well have reached Ireland together, reference must be made to a curious variety of underground 'outhouse', the stone-built souterrain, which is frequently found attached to ancient farmsteads of the Dark Ages. Many thousands have been recorded from all parts of the country, and they have their counterparts in Scotland, Cornwall and western France. Stripped of their cover of earth, the chambers which are incorporated in many souterrains would resemble free-standing clochauns. The long galleries which are perhaps the most characteristic element in souterrains could have originated as passages into the buried chambers. Some of the chambers may have served as pigsties, but it is a more plausible theory that these structures, long regarded as refuge places, were primarily storage places, designed to maintain an even temperature for keeping food and especially milk products. The custom of building souterrains, which must have called for considerable labour and skill, seems to have stopped, after a long life, before the early Middle Ages. We do not know what cultural factors were responsible for this change of custom, or what forms of storage took the place of the 'coves', but the change marks one aspect of the decline of the old Gaelic world of rath and tuath which had passed its zenith by the tenth century. The practice of building underground storage places, however, did not entirely die out. K. Danaher has recorded stone-lined structures in Donegal, associated with still remembered booley-sites, which are said to have [251] been used for storing butter.[1] One wonders whether the custom of burying butter in the bogs (Chapter XIV) was generally adopted when souterrains were no longer built.

The souterrains, whatever their original purpose, have occasionally been pressed into service as hiding places for outlaws, for illegal possessions or small livestock. It is known that the Irish, in the worst days of landlordism, were in the habit of hiding their stock to avoid confiscation when they were in arrears of rent. Some examples, which had not been opened within living memory, were found, when entered, to reek strongly of animals. And I know one souterrain in Co. Antrim which is littered with the remains of home-made bombs dating

[1] K. Danaher, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 204–12.

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from 'the troubles' of the early nineteen-twenties. Souterrains have also been used for other illegal activities which were enjoyed irrespective of political party, such as the making of illicit whiskey—poteen—an activity which is not yet entirely suppressed and which called for secrecy. I have more than once been shown specially-made underground hiding-holes where the poteen-makers went to earth when the gaugers were scented. 343 [273] [674]

In the category of temporary shelters we place the wretched 'fever-huts' erected to isolate victims of infectious diseases in the famine years. We cannot wonder that no detailed descriptions are to be found, but the account of a structure of 'turf built up in the form of a cone, with an entrance scarcely large enough for a dog to crawl through'[1] hints that some of these huts presented features of interest to the ethnographer. Temporary windbreaks erected by turf-cutters are also of considerable interest. One which I saw in Co. Fermanagh (Fig. 38) [758]

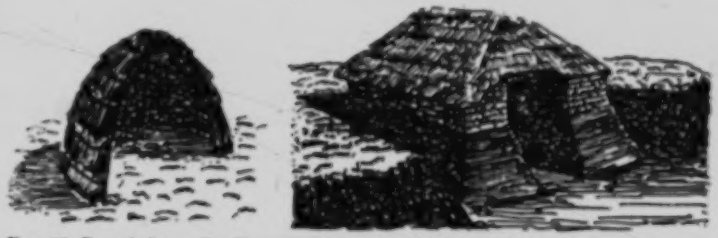

FIG. 38. Bog shelters, Co. Fermanagh. Left, for turf-cutters; right, partly dug out of the bog, for calves.

was built of birch rods bent over and neatly thatched with branches and rushes. The construction of animal shelters in great variety, too, built of sods or wattles, doubtless perpetuates skills once devoted to human habitations. I illustrate in Fig. 39 an outhouse with a solid hipped roof, known as a flat roof.

Unusual, because so far as I know confined to Achill Island, are little soot-houses erected for the special purpose of manufacturing supplies of soot and ashes as fertilizers. It is probable that we have to deal with a custom which has died out elsewhere and has maintained itself here in insular isolation. It will 343 387

[1] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 143.

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343 be recalled that Achill was the last Irish home of booleying,
387 and there may be some connection between the two practices, the soot-houses being the diminutive descendants of the winter dwellings whose roofs, on this theory, were stripped in spring in the days when the whole family migrated to the summer pastures. At any rate the soot-house season runs from October to May, that is the winter half-year. In the Hebrides it was customary to strip the soot-laden thatch of the black-houses annually for use as manure, and the roof was left without a smoke-hole to encourage the deposit of soot. The smoke 'oozes out over the whole roof, giving the house, when seen from a distance, the general appearance of a dung-heap in warm wet weather. The object of the roof is . . . to accumulate soot.'[1]

FIG. 39. Soot house, Achill Island; animal shelter with walls of whins and 'flat roof', Co. Cavan.

The soot-huts are rectangular gabled structures, measuring some ten by five feet externally and about eight feet high. They are built either out in the fields, where peat and sods are at hand, or near the farms, in which case they often serve in summer as hen-houses. The low side-walls are of dry-stone construction though when built in the fields they are more usually of sods: the entrance, in the gable, is only some two-and-a-half to three feet high. The roof structure is of the simplest, consisting of a ridge pole against which bits of driftwood serving as rafters rest without ties of any kind, the whole being kept in place by a great thickness of sods laid horizontally, the lowest layer resting on the thick wall-tops. At the end of harvest the huts

[1] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 53.

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are repaired and re-roofed with sods, and turf fires lit inside 343
are kept smouldering with wet sods until the spring, when the 387
huts are half-full of ashes and the soot-laden roof-sods are ready to collapse. The roof is then broken up and the soot and ashes spread on the ridges as potato manure (Fig. 39).

Although I know of no parallel in other parts of Ireland it 342
seems likely that the custom of removing the roof-covering of the winter-house was once fairly general, at any rate in houses of the old Achill type, which in many details closely resembled the Hebridean black-house. I should be inclined to correlate the custom with the roped style of thatching, which betrays little of the care of other styles and in the old form where the ropes were weighted by hanging stones had a distinctly ephemeral appearance. Where sods were used for walls as well as roofs the whole house would have become a convenient source of fertilizers for the infield. This may be the explanation of the remark made by Dr. Madden that in the south of Ireland 'cottar houses of dirt, sticks and straw were generally removed once a year'.[1] There are indications met with in excavations of houses in Dark Age raths that reconstructions were more frequent than would be justified by ordinary wear and tear. In Sutherland, down to the early nineteenth century, sod-houses were abandoned periodically and pulled down to be utilized as manure, a new hut being erected near by. In this instance the cause was said to be that the accumulation of filth had rendered the place uninhabitable,[2] but this underestimates the tolerance of the Gael. The soot-houses, at any rate, seem to perpetuate old custom, and one thinks back to the earliest days of agriculture when crops were sown in the highly productive soils of newly burnt woodland. Faith in the use of fire persisted longer than the woods. Burning the land, we shall see in Chapter XI, was a very general practice down to the famine years when rough pasture was being reclaimed for potato-growing.

We come now to a group of stone structures built to serve as 343
kilns for drying or burning. The drying-kilns were principally 251
needed for drying corn before it was ground, though flax-drying kilns were also required in the days when the fibre was extracted

[1]Dr. Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions* (1738).
[2]Quoted in F. T. Smith, *The Land of Britain*, Part 3, Sutherland.

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343 by hand. The corn-drying kiln is a culture-trait clearly adapted
251 to the climatic conditions of the Atlantic coasts of Europe. In extreme cases, as in the Faroe Islands—where even barley does not ripen fully—the ears are kiln-dried before thrashing, but the purpose of the Irish kilns was to harden the thrashed grain before grinding. They can be traced back archaeologically to the last centuries B.C. and on present evidence their introduction may be linked chronologically with grain-storage pits and with the rotary quern. Thus the custom of parching the grain in the straw would be a survival of an older culture layer associated with the saddle-quern and the mortar and possibly with harvesting by pulling the corn by the roots.

One early type of kiln was made of wattles plastered with clay, and was perhaps used like an oven, being heated before the corn was put in it to dry, but those which have come down into recent times were stone-lined pits into which a long flue was led. The fuel used was peat. It is stated that down to famine times every townland in some parts of the country had its kiln, though in other parts they went out of use long ago when landlords, following Anglo-Norman custom, insisted that all corn should be ground at the mill. In Co. Cavan for example, 'every estate has its cornmill and the tenantry is bound under severe penalty to grind their corn thereat and pay toll'.[1] These
[376] watermills should be distinguished from the native clackmills, built over little streams and driven by small horizontal wheels. They were characteristically held in joint ownership, as were the kilns. The Mayo kiln is described as resembling a large tobacco pipe, the circular stone-lined bowl being dug into a sloping bank and the horizontal stem or flue emerging lower down the slope. A bee-hive cap of timber and thatch was the only part visible. In it a straw-covered wattled hatch gave access to the kiln floor, a wooden frame half-way down the bowl of the pipe, on which thrashed sheaves were spread, heads to centre. The grain, laid on this, took about twenty-four hours to dry. The taste of the oatmeal made from grain so dried was said to be delicious.[2] A man who had seen a similar kiln working in Co. Antrim told me that the corn was laid on a linen sheet

[1] C. Coote, *Cavan* (1802), 251.
[2] H. T. Knox, *P.R.I.A.*, 26 (1906–7), 265.

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resting on a well-prepared bed of drawn straw spread on a hurdle, and he recalled the phrase 'soft as kiln bedding' to illustrate the care devoted to the operation. The Gaelic language has quite an extensive vocabulary describing every detail of the floor and the bedding of a corn-kiln. Because of the risk of fire, the Laws stipulated that the kiln must not be placed within so many paces of the dwelling house. 343 251

Lint-kilns, for drying flax after it had been taken from the retting dams, were in general use in Ulster in the days of hand-scutching, and a few half-ruined specimens are still in existence. As with corn-kilns—and lime-kilns—they were of two kinds, which may be termed pot-kilns and pipe-kilns. The former are described in Co. Armagh as 'small sod buildings, left open at the top . . . built by the sides of fences near the cabins: they are four or five feet in diameter, and have a hurdle of sticks placed across them at a convenient height (about four feet) on which a small quantity of flax is spread to dry over a turf fire'.[1] The stone-built kilns, known in Co. Tyrone as 'farrows' were similar in construction to the 'tobacco pipe' corn-kilns. The flax, well shaken and loose, was placed on end on a wattled platform set across the bowl of the pipe. When dried it was beaten on a melling-stone with a heavy wooden mell until every stalk was flattened and it then passed to the hand-scutcher. 343 248

As the corn-drying kiln has been superseded by the kiln attached to the country grist-mill, so the small lime-kiln has given way, over most of the country, to the large quarry-kiln. At the same time coal has replaced turf as a fuel. The little circular pot-kiln of sods or stones filled with alternate layers of turf and limestone may be met with in the west, but in general the home-burning of lime did not long survive the Great Famine. Down to that time, wherever limestone could be obtained, almost every farm or farm cluster had a lime-kiln. It was the importation of guano and later of artificial manure that put an end to a most advantageous practice. The application of lime to acid soils is a comparatively recent practice, but one likes to think that the little pot-kiln was in use long ago to burn lime or sea-shells for the whitewash with which the mud houses were lightened and brightened. Kelp-kilns, similarly (see Chapter 343 381

[1] I. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties* (1837), I, 178.

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343 XVI), had their great days in the eighteenth and nineteenth
381 centuries, but small-scale wrack-burning is far older than this. In the later eighteenth century, when framed windows and brick chimneys became fashionable in the more prosperous
[339] lowland farms, the bricks were locally burnt in circular kilns plastered with clay.

Another class of outbuilding, allied to the clochaun in con-
343 struction, is the stone sweat-house, the Irish version of the
757 Turkish bath, which the Germans, indeed, call the Irish bath. There is a theory that the idea reached Ireland with Christian missionaries who were accustomed to Roman practices, but heat-treatment as a cure is so widespread throughout the world (cf. the sweat-houses of Finland and pre-Columbian California) that one thinks of remoter origins. What is certain is that they were visited for cures within living memory in several parts of Ireland. In west Cavan twenty-five sweat-houses have been listed in one district, and many more are known to have been destroyed. A French traveller of the late eighteenth century observed that 'wherever there are four or five cabins near each other there is sure to be a sweating-house'.[1] And old people in Cavan confirm that every four or five families once shared a sweat-house, in which sweating cures were taken in summer and autumn (Fig. 37, 6).

The sweat-house is a dry-stone corbelled structure, measuring internally from four to seven feet in diameter and rather less in height. A low lintelled doorway is the only means of access though some specimens have a roughly constructed chimney flue to allow the smoke to escape. This was closed with sods during the treatment, as was the door. The fire of turf—straw and bracken seem also to have been used—had been kept burning inside for a day or two previously. The floor, normally an earthen floor though some examples were cobbled or paved, was then swept clean and strewn with green rushes. On these, or on grass sods or low stools which they took in with them, from two to as many as six or seven persons would sit, naked and sweating profusely. After half an hour or so they would emerge and cool themselves either in a near-by stream or with a bucket

[1] De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland* (1796–97). Ed. J. Stevenson (1917), 193.

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of water. I was told on Rathlin Island that eligible girls would 343
take a sweating bath to clear their complexions before the annual 757
visit to the Lammas Fair at Ballycastle on the mainland. They [815]
were in demand also during kelp-burning operations—a notoriously filthy occupation. Not all sweat-houses were built of stone. Wood-Martin quotes accounts of some which were dug into an earth bank and 'finished with sods', while others were excavated in turf banks.[1] He also records that water was sometimes poured on stones inside the sweat-house, 'thus converting it into a vapour- as well as a sweat-bath'.[2]

More intimately linked with the house is the turf-shelter, the 343
Irish equivalent of the English coal-shed. In the drier eastern 372
part of the country a built shelter is not necessary, and the peats, skilfully built into a huge turf-stack protected from the driving rains by a wall or gable, perhaps improve by exposure to the winds, but in the wetter west unless the turf is under cover it must be dried in small quantities in the loft or by the fire before burning. In parts of Kerry the turf is stored in large clochauns: elsewhere narrow oblong or oval stone enclosures are erected, their walls loosely built to allow the wind to blow through. The peat-store or cleit of St. Kilda was similar—an oblong corbelled stone building with open joints.

The well is another essential item of equipment of farm or 312
clachan, and it is often provided with a corbelled stone cover. 343
Since springs are abundant, except in bare limestone country, the wells are not deep and few are fitted with windlasses. In their absence quite elaborate ramps with stone steps are sometimes needed to obtain access to the water, and the whole structure being roofed, some examples (for instance in the south-east of Co. Down) are considerable architectural feats (Fig. 40). In the limestone districts the woman of the house may have to walk as much as half a mile to carry drinking water from a dip-well. It is now carried in buckets but was formerly transported in stave-built piggins balanced on the head. The peasant makes a virtue of necessity by asserting that almost every spring well yields 'the finest water in all Ireland, and never runs dry'. Wells are regarded as chancy things, not to be

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, II (1902), 166.
[2] Ibid., 165.

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343 lightly meddled with, and if the water is not as good as usual
312 you will be told, in the phrase used for an ailing human being, that the well is 'not *at* itself at all'.

FIG. 40. Well-covers, Co. Cavan and Co. Down.

343 Finally we come to a miscellaneous assortment of outbuild-
ings and shelters built to house various animals and birds.
235 Elaborate pigeon houses (ducats) designed to house hundreds of birds seem to be confined to the east and south coasts and to areas planted by English or Scots. They are no doubt manorial in origin but some existing examples were built in the early nineteenth century, though they are no longer in use. In these areas the smaller farms may have little pigeon houses made for a dozen birds, and the humblest stable is likely to have a pigeon hole or two in the gable. The birds formerly nested in hanging nests of plaited straw.

343 Cavities in the thick walls about many old farms were built
as dog-kennels or duck-houses, and simple shelter holes ('boles'
231 in Ulster) were intended to house assorted three-legged iron pots (Fig. 32). An interesting variant is the bee-bole, a shelter for the bee-skep, a few examples of which have been observed in eastern Ireland.[1]

[1]R. M. Duruz and E. E. Crane, *English Bee Boles* (1953). (National Beekeeping Museum Pamphlet No. 1.)

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLOUGH AND SPADE

STRONG arms have been the Irish labourer's passport to labouring jobs overseas, and it may be recalled that the word 'navvy' derives from the canal-diggers or navigators, many of them Irish, who opened the waterways of industrial England. Later it was Irish labourers who built the first railroad tracks of North America. Those arms were toughened by spade-work in field and bog, for the Irish spade is much more than a gardening tool: it was, and still is in backward areas and in the boglands, an implement for field cultivation and for cutting turf. The small field pattern of all except the most fertile regions is in part a reflection of this historic fact. An acre or two and often less in area, the tiny hillside fields are a measure of spade work just as the wide prairie wheatlands mirror the multiple plough or the mounded garden plots of an African village are the mark of women's work with mattock and digging-stick. Even in the deep-soiled lowlands where the plough is now universal the observant eye, still more the viewer from the air, will pick out the narrow ridges made by the spade faintly showing, as in a palimpsest, through the more regular pattern of wide plough ridges. In hilly country, especially in the west, the spade is still in common use in the fields, and the traveller moving about Ireland in spring, when the potatoes are being planted, will notice an astonishing variety of spades in use. Even in districts where the plough is universal the spade may still be pressed into service to deal with stony patches or awkward corners, and I have seen it supplementing the plough in another way by being tied on to a lea plough to convert it into a double-sided drill plough.

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PLOUGH AND SPADE

412 The Irish spade is not a digging implement: it is essentially a ridge-maker or hand-plough, adapted to the business of undercutting ad turning the sod. Its narrow bent blade is ill fitted to the lifing of soil, and for this purpose the long-handled shovel is used,an efficient implement for lifting loose earth and placing it witi precision where required, for example to fill holes on the ridges. The Irish spade is more specialized and more primitive than the 'common or garden' English spade (Fig. 41).

407 412 The evidence of the Irish Law Texts and the discovery of plough coulter on sites of pre-Norman date show that heavy

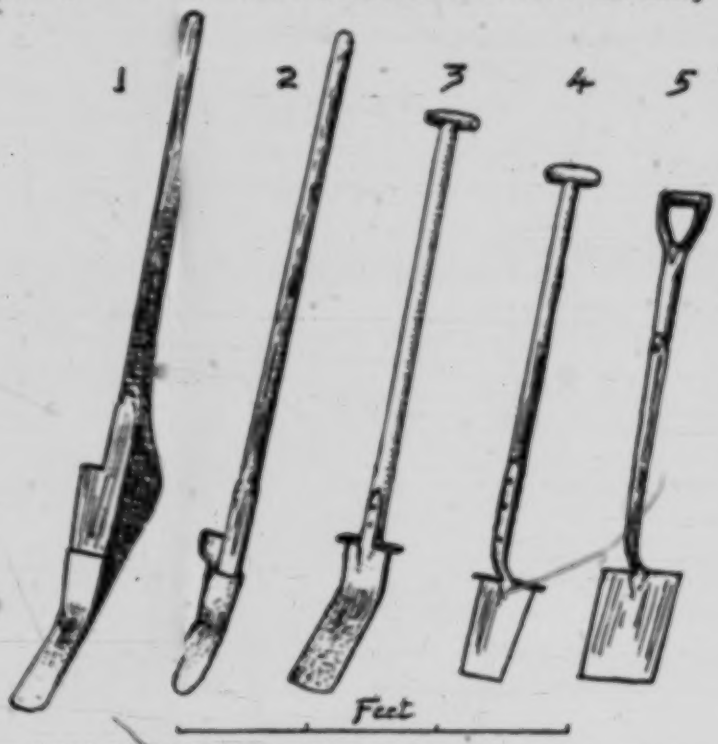

FIG. 41. Spades. The five examples form an approximate evolutionary series. (1) Loy, Co. Leitrim. (2) One-eared spade, Kerry. (3) Two-eared bent ridging spade, Fermanagh. (4) Treaded garden spade, Wexford. (5) English spade

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ploughs were known in parts of Celtic Ireland, but the light 407
plough or *ard* almost certainly prevailed, and it is unlikely that 412
ploughs of any kind were employed outside the 'few favoured acres' of the infield. A light plough, at any rate, would be unfit to break the tough sod of the outfield, which was allowed to rest for long periods. Even today the answer I have been given when I have asked ridgemakers in old outfield why they were using spades has been: "Tis too tough for the plough!" Ploughing 'by the tail', similarly, becomes intelligible only if one envisages it as restricted to infield cultivation. The iron plough with curved mould board did not reach the outlying corners of the country until late in the nineteenth century, and down to the time of the famine iron ploughs were used only in progressive areas where there were improving landlords. The prototype of these ploughs was the Scottish two-horse swing [177] plough invented by James Small about the year 1765. By the end of the century it had reached Ireland (and also Norway) and it was a powerful instrument in breaking down the archaic system of openfield husbandry. The Irish were amazed when they first saw a ploughman with a Scots plough both driving the horses and holding the stilts.[1]

Under the traditional system ploughing was 'merely marking 407
the land with furrows'[2]: a spade or mattock was commonly 241
needed to turn back the earth, and to force the share into the ground it was often necessary to have a man walking alongside [412] the plough, pressing down on the beam with a stout stick. No bits or reins were used, and the plough itself required two men or a man and a boy, 'one to hold and one to drive', that is one holding the plough stilts and the other leading the horses by walking backwards before them. Evidently the man at the handles needed to give all his attention to the plough. It was, as a Cavan man described it to me, a process of 'jerking up 407
and down'. Many of these practices were probably taken over 241
from the days of ox-teams. Ploughing with oxen is believed to 231
have died out in late medieval times, though it was reintroduced by some landowners in the late eighteenth century. The small farmer did not use oxen for the plough because unlike horses

[1] R. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 111.
[2] I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 656.

407 they could not be put to other purposes such as going to the
241 fair.

[231] The wooden plough has now been almost entirely replaced by the iron plough, but in many districts a wooden plough, often converted from a lea plough, is preferred for opening drills (Fig. 42). The potato growers of the kingdom of Mourne in Co. Down, for example, find that it suits their stony soils and is less likely to be damaged by boulders. The rough wooden mould-boards carry the earth with them and distribute it more evenly than the iron drill-plough, which tends, moreover, to 'put a skin' on the soil and to pile up pointed ridges which would require to have their tops flattened later.

FIG. 42. Wooden drill plough and plough slides, Co. Down: the lower slide is of iron.

The improved wooden plough did not reach remote hill regions until roads were built after the middle of the eighteenth century. Even in the nineteenth century it is described as a newcomer in Co. Donegal, where spade labour had previously
[412] been supplemented only by 'a crooked stick armed with a bit of iron, with a second stick grafted to it to give two handles'.[1] This archaic implement must have resembled the wooden 'ard' (araire) of Mediterranean lands. It was so light that when the improved wooden plough with mould-board was introduced into Donegal the ponies were not equal to the task of pulling it. In west Cork the new wooden ploughs were not to be

[1] John Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience as an Irish Landlord*, 47.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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seen on the small farms until after the Great Famine: 'the things called ploughs would only scratch the surface, a log of wood sharpened and shod with iron'.[1] This 'poorer sort of plough' was made of alder in Co. Londonderry.[2] Observers attributed the Irish addiction to cross-ploughing to the fact that the ribs of unploughed land could only be broken by this means. Small squarish cultivation plots and fields are a natural consequence of cross-ploughing. 407 241

It seems that even these light ploughs, quite incapable of penetrating lea ground, were pulled by three or four horses abreast, 'so weak and small are the horses'.[3] Thus 'coaring' (coaration) was necessary, though one suspects that tradition rather than need lay behind the large teams. In the seventeenth century four horses abreast pulled the plough by the tails in Co. Clare, 'which was the custom all over Ireland. The tackle and traces being made of gadds or withies of twigs twisted, would be broken to pieces otherwise . . . But the horses being sensible stop until the ploughman lifts the plough over the rock.'[4] At the same time we find complaints from the midland counties that the native plough was 'heavy and unmanageable, distressing to men and horses.[5] Here we probably have to deal with the descendant of the heavy Anglo-Norman plough. 407 241 492

Unfortunately we have no details of the Irish *ard*. One would like to know, for instance, whether it turned the furrow or rather threw the earth—for it merely scratched the soil—to the left or to the right. It has been found that in certain parts of western Europe left-sided ploughs are traditional whereas, of course, the common plough is almost universally right-sided. Mr. Robert Aitken has traced the left-sided plough in a clearly defined area of south France and north-east Spain.[6] The explanation may be that in these areas cultivation was originally done with a foot plough, for which the right foot was used, so that the soil, as with the Scottish caschrom, was turned to the left, and that the plough when adopted became a traction- 407 241

[1] W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland* (1880), 20.
[2] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir* (1814), 230.
[3] W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. Sligo.
[4] *Dineley's Tour in Ireland* (1681), Ed. J. Graves, (1870), 162.
[5] W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. King's Co. and Queen's Co.
[6] R. Aitken, *Man*, 1955, 286.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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407 version of the foot-plough. This is an almost unexplored field
241 of rural history. Mr. Aitken is of the opinion, however, that the left-sided plough goes with the use of the right hand as holding hand.

At any rate it is interesting to find that in Ireland the majority
412 of diggers use the right foot, and although in theory the
241 wooden foot-rest of the native one-eared spade can be fitted either to left or right of the narrow blade it is, in the west, almost invariably on the right side. Presumably only habitually left-handed people use the left foot. In eastern Ireland, on the other hand, and particularly in the Protestant districts of the north-east, the left foot is normally the digging-foot, though judging from the proportions of right to left (about one to three in the north-east), the old Irish stocks continue to dig with the right foot. Hence there is a basis of fact in the phrase 'digging
[539] with the wrong foot'. (To say that someone digs with the other
[798] foot is in Ireland an oblique way of referring to his religious faith.) The old Irish spade, we have seen, is a highly specialized tool. It may have been preceded by some kind of hoe or planting stick such as are represented today by the graffan or the steeveen which we describe in the following chapter.

We have no direct evidence of Bronze Age ploughs in Ire-
174 land, though marks of furrows have been observed underneath
407 burial barrows of that period in Jutland and Holland and it has been claimed that the *ard* had reached the west Baltic region
412 before the end of the Neolithic phase. However this may be the sod-cutting spade, which could be supplemented by the wooden shovel, is not likely to have been introduced much before the beginning of the Christian era, since it required an efficient knowledge of iron-working. By facilitating the building of ridges it would have improved crop yields during a climatic period, the sub-Atlantic, which was even wetter than at present. A mould-board plough capable of forming ridges did not reach Ireland on present evidence until about the seventh century, and as we have seen it had not been adopted in parts of the west until the nineteenth century. Thus the narrow spade, coming into use at about the same time as oats, would have been a factor in stabilizing settlement by permitting ridge cultivation on the outfield grazing ground round about. This is speculative,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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but it is at least clear that with the introduction of the potato in the seventeenth century it was the spade that facilitated the breaking-in of rough pasture by means of 'lazy-beds', and so made possible the great expansion of cultivation and population in the century before the Great Famine. To this day the one-eared spade, in endless variety, has kept its medieval simplicity and diversity, though it is fast disappearing in favour of the two-eared spade. It may still be seen in the west and south, and a heavy variety is at home in the upper Shannon basin, in the counties of Leitrim, Sligo, west Cavan, Longford, and Roscommon. This is the loy (Fig. 41) a veritable foot-plough with a massive heavy handle expanding on one side into a foot-ledge and below into a stout heel which acts as a pivot when the undercut sod is being turned over in ridge-making. 'This machine they prefer to ploughs', wrote McParlan.[1] Seasoned old men will tell you that they couldn't make ridges unless they had a loy, and they add, scornful of the rising generation, that 'the young people going nowadays couldn't carry a loy'. There was much opposition to the light two-eared spades when they made their appearance in the early nineteenth century. They were objected to above all because, the diggers not wearing boots—the native shoe was at best a flimsy raw-hide cover—the iron would cut their feet. To this day the Irish two-eared spade is distinguished from the English spade by having iron foot-plates (Fig. 41).

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The metal spade probably began its life as a mere cutting edge of iron attached to the mouth of a narrow wooden spade. It is still little more than an attachment to a wooden shaft, consisting of an open iron socket which folds around the end of the shaft and passes at an angle into a strong narrow blade. I regard the loy as the most primitive type because the pivot or 'lift' is largely in the heel of the wooden shaft or 'tree', whereas in the rather lighter Munster spade—variants of which are also found in Kilkenny and Galway—the whole pivot is provided by the bent blade. The Longford-Cavan loy, which is adapted to heavy glacial or peaty soils, is a very clumsy digging tool, though well adapted for sod-turning. In experienced hands the loy 'would go in of itself' thanks to its weight and the expanded

[1] J. McParlan, *Leitrim* (1802), 23.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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412 mouth which opened a way and prevented the blade from wedging.

It was reckoned that twelve men armed with loys could turn an acre a day.[1] This compares not unfavourably with the estimated rate of 'ploughing' with a caschrom, and is nearly twice the speed of spade digging. In the Munster spade the foot-rest is a separate piece of wood which is wedged into the open socket to one side of the shaft, normally the right. The shape of this wedge, and the dimensions and curve of the iron blade, vary from one district to another. When new the spade mouth has two points resembling a fish-tail, or the blade may taper to the mouth to facilitate digging in light gravelly soils. The old Galway spade has its footpiece cut out of a single piece of wood to which a separate handle is attached. This is considered to lessen the shock when the spade is thrust into the ground, and the device is frequently found on old-fashioned turf spades. A curious forked spade formerly common in Mayo also has this feature. This is the 'gowl-gob', a two-eared wooden spade with twin narrow iron-shod blades, and it was reckoned to be very suitable for making ridges in loose sandy or boggy soils (Fig. 43). This may be the last survival of a prehistoric spade, for 'a two-pointed pronged spade' is said to be an ancient Mediterranean tool,[2] and a 'bidente' is used in parts of Spain.

The two-eared iron spade which is replacing the loy in its last lairs has gradually ousted the one-eared spade in most parts of the country during the course of the nineteenth century. But in doing so it has copied even the minor variations of the spades it replaced, so that the spade remains an index of regionalism, a tool of sociological research as well as an instrument of labour (Fig. 44). Until water-driven tilt-hammers
326 were introduced for the manufacture of spades—perhaps half
412 a dozen of them are still in operation—they were made by
184 local blacksmiths for local customers. A good spade-maker occasionally won a reputation which might be compared to that of a medieval sword-forger. The smith needed two helpers to hammer out the metal plates, and the work was very heavy.

[1]Coote, *Canon* (1808), 51.
[2]*The Cambridge Economic History* (Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power), I (1941), 94.

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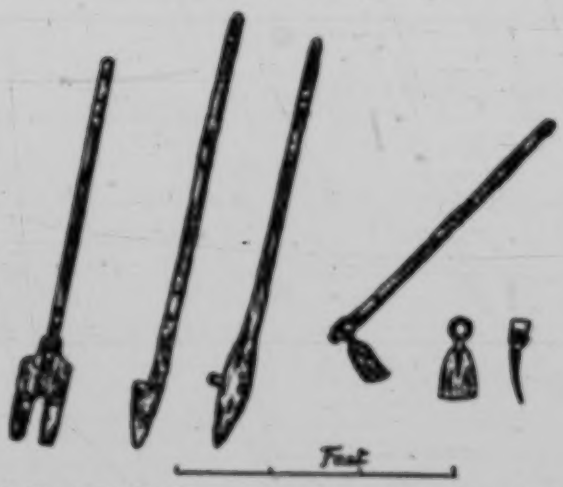

FIG. 48. 'Gowl-grub', Co. Mayo; steevens, Longford and Cavan; and graffan, Kerry.

The precise requirements of each group of townlands forming 412
a neighbourhood-unit resulted from the balance of many 184
physical, human and economic factors—such as conditions of soil and slope, methods of digging, types of crop, length of arm and leg—cemented by usage and sanctioned by tradition. The 'spade gauge book' of a County Tyrone factory, which has lately closed, lists some 250 different patterns, not counting the special turf spades, and it served only Ulster and the west. I quote the dimensions for the length and breadth, at shoulder and mouth, of the spades of a few districts in Ulster to illustrate the variety and precision of the gauges: Armagh, 18 in. × 5$\frac{11}{16}$ × 6$\frac{11}{16}$; Omagh, 17$\frac{1}{8}$ × 5$\frac{1}{8}$ × 6$\frac{1}{8}$; Dungannon, 17$\frac{1}{8}$ × 5$\frac{3}{8}$ × 5$\frac{7}{8}$; Portrush, 16 × 6$\frac{7}{8}$ × 6$\frac{1}{8}$; Kilkeel, 15 × 6$\frac{1}{8}$ × 4$\frac{1}{8}$; Monaghan, 20 × 4$\frac{3}{8}$ × 6. It will be noticed that the spades vary not only in size but also in shape, some having 'broad points', that is expanding at the mouth, some 'narrow points', that is tapering, and others being parallel sided. The blades range in weight from 3 to 6 lb., in length from 13 to 22 in., in width at the shoulder from 3$\frac{1}{8}$ to 8 in. and at the mouth from 3 to 8 in. In addition great attention is paid to the longitudinal

 [Text continues on p. 137]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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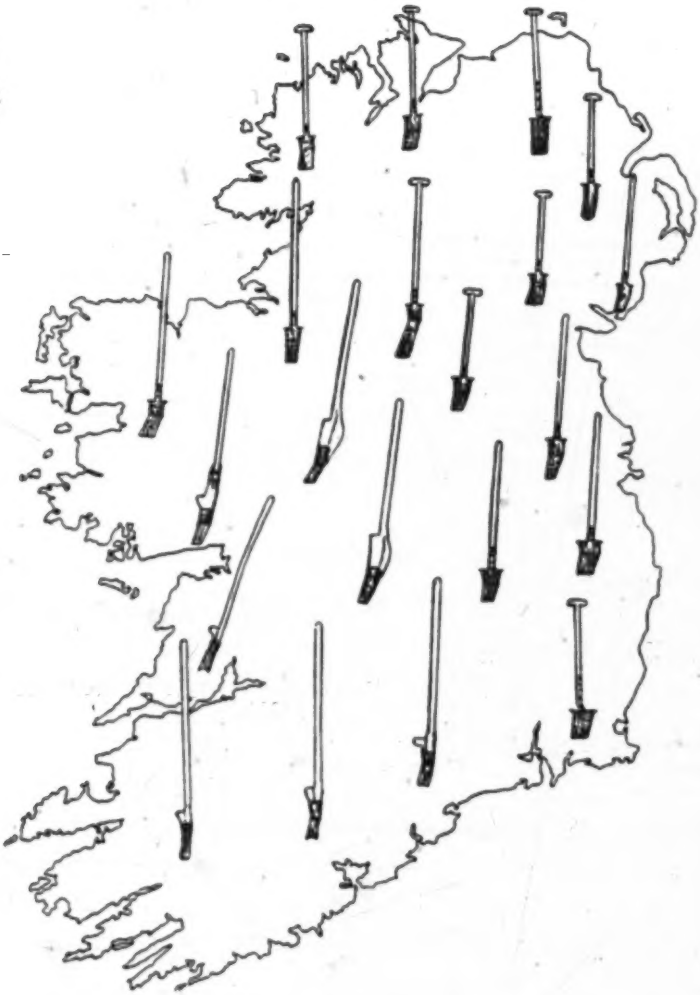

FIG. 44. Map of spade types.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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bend or 'lift' of the blade and to the lateral bend or 'dish'. The lift may be well distributed or it may be concentrated at one point; it may be curved or cranked. 412 184

The shape of the blade being thus precisely standardized for each area, various sizes are made to suit individual users and also the seasons of the year. Thus four or five spades of different sizes, ranging say from 13 to 17 in. in length, will be seen on sale in the market towns. In addition some longer spades may be offered for old-fashioned folk, for the blade of the spade is now made shorter than it used to be. These shorter spades, [178] required for digging potatoes, retain the often awkward shape of the long spring spade—designed for ridge-making—which is going out of favour with drill cultivation.

The Irish spade differs from the English not only in its narrow bent blade but also in its thickened sides, its foot-plates, its straight handle and the short straight straps or tails to which the handle is attached. Whereas the English spade derives its digging power from the curvature above the blade, in the Irish spade the curvature is all in the blade. Moreover the Irish prefer a long shaft (4 ft.) without hand-grip, though in Ulster the shaft is short (3 ft.) and headed, i.e. fitted with a cross-piece at the end. The headed shaft, however, is replacing the long headless shaft which is better adapted to the process of sod turning than to digging. With the headed shaft the control of the spade is mainly in the hand that grips the head, which thus tends to be the right hand: consequently this type of spade goes with left-footed digging (Fig. 41).

These differences are largely explained by differences of function, for the primary purpose of the Irish two-eared spade, like the loy which it has replaced, is to turn the sod. It is a hand plough rather than a digging tool, and it owes its remarkable development to the expansion of potato cultivation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To the new crop, as we shall see, the old method of burying the seed in prepared beds was quickly adapted, for ridge cultivation was ideally suited to a root-planting culture, and in fact potatoes are grown in ridges on the Andean plateaux. Thus the adoption of the potato helped to perpetuate tools and methods of cultivation which might otherwise have died out. Nowadays, however, 244 412

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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412 [244] drill-cultivation has replaced lazy-beds over most of the country.

Some ridge-making tools have almost entirely disappeared, 412 for example the mattock and the breast-plough, which were once [178] characteristic respectively of the south-west and the north-east of the country and which may still be seen occasionally in Cos. Kerry and Antrim. The mattock ('graffan') is a tool of ancient [171] lineage which finds its parallels in Wales, in Spain and Mediterranean lands, and throughout the tropics (Fig. 43). In Kerry and west Cork it has had many uses—for breaking sods and

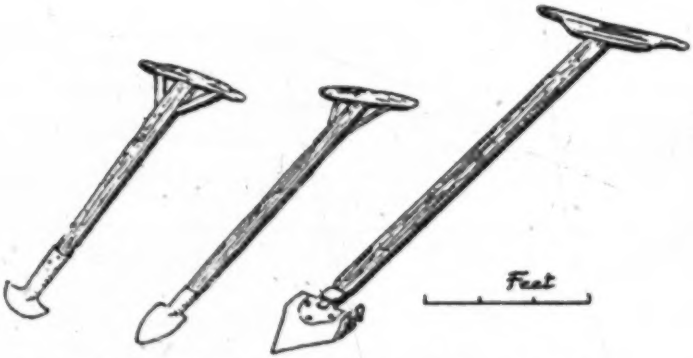

FIG. 45. Flachters or breast-ploughs, north-east Ireland. (1) North Antrim. (2) Co. Tyrone. (3) Mid-Antrim.

clods on the ridges, for loosening the earth of the furrows before shovelling, and also for cutting sods for ridge-making, for 'paring and burning' and for roof-covering. Arthur Young describes the process of graffaning a field by rolling the sod with the foot as it was cut: it was reckoned very heavy work.[1] The breast-plough or flachter (Fig. 45) served the same purpose in Cos. Antrim and Londonderry and earned the same reputation. This instrument is now largely restricted to paring bogland in preparation for turf-cutting. During the second world war I broke in a neglected mountain garden by making lazy-beds with a flachter and I heartily agree with the verdict of an Antrim labourer: 'half a day with it was enough for any ordinary

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 10.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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mortal, but there was ones made a profession of it and could 4/2
keep on most of a day.' The normal flachter is wingless after the Scots pattern: the winged blade of English type, curiously restricted to mid-Antrim (Fig. 45), is probably a landlord's introduction.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XI

LAZY-BEDS

241 IN the Western Isle, as throughout Highland Britain, climate and custom have conspired to limit the farmer's work in the fields to little more than half the year, from March to October. It is geared to a régime of spring-sown crops, supplemented since the agrarian revolution by intensive hay-farming. Wheat-growing is now encouraged under the Republican drive towards economic self-sufficiency, but it is a risky crop except in the drier eastern lowlands, and though it was the chief cereal in early prehistoric times there is some evidence to suggest that it was then a spring-sown crop. Barley has been grown in small amounts since early times and was especially popular in remote places during the great days of poteen-making, but it is now insignificant as a crop in comparison with oats and potatoes. Before the coming of the potato the oats (corn) crop was all-important, and the routine of its cultivation set the pattern of the farming year and was closely integrated with pastoral needs. In bad seasons even the oats may not ripen properly, and their safe harvesting is at best a gamble in the oceanic climate of the west where autumn is the wettest season of the year. Thus great toil was endured and every care taken in the preparations for sowing, rites of propitiation were performed during the growing season, and every chance of harvesting the crop was quickly seized. It was in the nature of a rescue operation, and indeed the Irish farmer always speaks of 'saving' his harvest. The normal worries of a cereal farmer are here accentuated, and the harvest period is so vital that autumn in rural Ireland is
241 always referred to as 'harvest'.

461 Spells of fine weather in spring and harvest were times of

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intense effort, when the toilers were spurred on by rivalries in 241
their efforts to avoid the bad luck which tradition wisely bes- 461
towed on the laggards. The seasonal festivals which marked the end of these periods of strain—at the beginning of May and November—were not merely celebrations of work completed and a new season begun, but also the occasion for the release of emotional stresses. The Irishman's capacity for bouts of strenuous work, and his more notorious addiction to spells of complete idleness, are surely related to the experience accumulated through countless springs, harvests, and winters. Winter was a dead season for man as for the world around him. It was no time for fairs, fighting or raiding, for selling or even stealing animals which were not worth the trouble of stealing: the problem was to maintain life in them.

Long tradition explains the neglect of winter ploughing 241
which is still characteristic of the greater part of Ireland. The 311
infield stubble was required to augment the very poor and limited outfield grazing available for the wintering stock. There are some townlands, in the west, where to this day all the fields become common grazing during the winter, and only the strongly-enclosed 'gardens' are safe places to grow cabbages, for instance, or a little rye for the thatch. Moreover even with improved ploughs the grass tends to grow in the furrows of ploughed land during a mild winter. And when it is recalled that much of the old infield land was on sloping ground, if only for the sake of the natural drainage thus provided, it can be conceded that there was wisdom in not breaking the earth in winter and opening the way to soil erosion. Moreover the loss of fertility by the leaching of exposed soils can be serious.

Preparing the land for seed had thus to await the spring, and 241
pressure of time as well as the uncertainties of weather strength- 476
ened the tradition of co-operative labour in the form of pooled plough-teams in the infield and gangs of ridgemakers in the outfield. The plough-team, normally of four horses or oxen supplied by as many neighbours, had to be supplemented by spade and mell, for the furrows were badly turned, and after the seed-bed had been prepared and the corn sown the seed was covered with shovelled soil. In order to facilitate drainage,

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LAZY-BEDS

241 in the days before field drains, the land was ploughed in ridges
476 or 'lands' some ten or twelve feet wide, separated by trenches which provided the soil for burying the corn. Lazy-beds, that is spade-ridges for potatoes, made even heavier demands on many hands (Fig. 46). A writer in the 1830s describing the scene in the fields as neighbours worked together in teams, remarks that 'these congregations give vivacity to the labour . . . and occasionally an animated shout is set up by the whole body'.[1] The pooling of labour resources, 'sharing' or 'morrowing'—there are several terms for this co-operative system—is still by no means uncommon even if there is nowadays less need for it. It not only cements social relationships but provides the
[461] stimulus of competitive effort. In the north of Ireland Protestant and Roman Catholic neighbours frequently share their labour in this way.

FIG. 46. Ploughed ridges, Co. Cavan, and spade ridges (lazy-beds), Co. Mayo.

241 By tradition the vital spring-time preparations are hedged around with tabus and omens. The ploughman should turn his horses with the sun, from left to right, to invoke its blessing on the work, and when yoking or unyoking his team his horses' heads should be facing south. Friday—which is regarded as a lucky day to begin all operations not needing iron—is the best day to begin sowing, and Good Friday is best of all. The sower going forth should begin his labours with the solemn words 'In the name of God', and he should give the horses a handful of corn from the seed-bag and throw a handful of earth over each horse's rump. Ashes from the turf fire were sometimes mixed with the seed for luck and there are traditions of the ashes of the midsummer bonfires being kept for this purpose.

In some parts of the country, chiefly in the south and east, the sower carried a straw seed-basket, and this is presumably

[1] Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 660.

an English introduction since 'sowing baskets' are listed in the 241
medieval pipe-rolls of the Pale. In parts of the west, for example
Mayo, a skin tray was used for sowing. But the usual Irish
method is to sow from a linen sheet, kept specially for the pur-
pose, which is tied round the sower. The seed is thrown with a
one-handed cast, and it is not everyone's privilege to be allowed
to undertake this important task. It calls for skill and concen-
trated care, for 'a missed bit' is a bad omen, foretelling death [787]
The seed should all be safely 'buried' by the beginning of May,
and in Co. Armagh the first cuckoo's call was taken as a sign.
To be found sowing corn after this was a mark of deep disgrace: [825]
the laggard was labelled 'a cuckoo farmer'.

With modern ploughs and improved drainage it is not often, save in the tiny fields of the west, that one comes across cereal crops sown in ridges, but the lazy-bed method is very generally employed for potatoes and other crops where the spade is used, though the great bulk of the potato crop is sown in drills. The potato ridge presumably derives its name, lazy-bed, from the fact that the sod under the ridge is not dug: the bed is built up on top of the grass with sods and soil dug from the trenches between the ridges. Not only does this method make full use of the humus and decaying grass but it prevents the sets from becoming waterlogged and rotting, for the whole bed is raised above the water-table. And the unbroken sod checks the down-wash of plant nutrients. The trenches or furrows between the ridges provide open drains, and the lazy-beds are always care-fully aligned with the slope of the land. Moreover, when the trenches are dug a second time for earthing the potatoes, they often go deep enough to penetrate the hard layer of iron pan which tends to form under heavily leached soils by the washing down of iron salts. This the old-fashioned plough could not do. Breaking the impermeable pan not only improves the drainage but provides minerals which are returned to the topsoil when the potatoes are earthed. The ridges in which potatoes are grown in their Andean homeland appear to be similar to the Irish lazy-beds, and tuber crops throughout the tropics are planted in ridges or mounds, but the ridge-technique is cer-tainly older than the potato in Ireland. Clearly an efficient 241
shovel is a requirement in the construction of ridges of any 412

241 width, and it is here that the long-handled shovel comes into
412 its own. In Britain such a shovel, which remains characteristic of south-west England, is of at least Roman antiquity. Specimens from the Roman period are, however, made entirely of wood, and several similar shovels of unknown age have been found in the Irish bogs (Fig. 47). In the west, down to famine times, the common shovel was made of a single piece of wood, usually willow, shod with a narrow strip of iron along the edge.[1]

FIG. 47. Long-handled shovels used for finishing the ridges. The wooden one was found at Glenoe, Co. Antrim.

241 In some districts potato ridges are made with the plough,
[407] either with an ordinary lea-plough or else with a special paring-plough, fitted with a wide sock, which reproduces the special feature of the lazy-bed, that is, it does not break the grass of the bed but inverts a wide sod on to it from either side. In both instances the trench is then broken up by a plough with the mould board removed to provide earth for shovelling on to the ridges. The much wider corn ridges were normally made with the plough, except in those retarded mountainy districts where the plough seems never to have been adopted. Wheat was grown on narrower ridges, some five to seven feet wide. In Co. Londonderry it was customary to plough a 'rid-hint', that is, to take a second furrow out of the subsoil of the trench to facilitate drainage.[2] We can readily picture the arable land as eighteenth century observers saw it, with 'the strips piled high and the furrows scraped bare'. Lazy-beds vary in width according to local conditions and conventions and may be as little as

[1]W. R. Wilde, *Catalogue* (1857), 207.
[2]G. V. Sampson, *Memoir* (1814), 282.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Fermanagh
County Antrim

PLATE 9

314
516
493
291
412

1. Cutting turf (underfooting) in a Co. Fermanagh bog.

314
417
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291

2. Building a peat stack, Co. Antrim.

[FACING p.144]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Meath

PLATE 10

314
291
[412]

1. Spreading mud turf with long-handled shovel, Co. Meath.

[516]

2. "Running" the spread turf.

[Facing p.145]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

two feet or as much as eight feet wide, the furrows between them being from one to three feet in width. These dimensions and the different methods of building the ridges are intimately related to the depth and quality of the soil and to the types of spade used in each locality. Both the breadth and length of the ridges are commonly measured by the spade, and the term score-ground, applied in Co. Kerry to potato land let in conacre, that is from year to year, refers to twenty spade-lengths. When the crop is lifted the ridges are roughly levelled, and the following year they are split, that is the new furrow is dug in the middle of the old ridge. 241

It is not easy to describe the process of ridge-making with the spade and impossible to portray all the varieties of technique employed. It is back-breaking work, yet it is performed with an easy rhythm and a seemingly effortless and almost mechanical efficiency. In its simplest form the grassy strip which is to become the furrow is notched centrally down its length and the sods on each side are each undercut by two spade-thrusts and levered over on to the beds, where they lie flat, grass to grass, like closed hinges (Fig. 48). Normally the manure has already

Fig. 48. Lazy-beds.

been spread on the beds, and if the potato sets have also been planted all that is needed to complete the ridge is to break the earth of the furrow and shovel it on to the ridge. More commonly, however, the beds are fully prepared before the sets are planted, and it is the task of the women and children to follow the ridgemakers and thrust the potatoes into the sandwich of sods and manure. This is the method appropriate to the wetter [462] [857]

241 west, for it means that the ridges can be prepared beforehand as opportunity offers. What is known as the Munster mode of planting 'with the back of the spade' is to thrust the narrow spade through the inverted top sod and drop the set behind the blade as it is levered forward. On the average three rows of potatoes go to each bed, but there are also one- two- and four-set ridges.

A special wooden dibber known as the steeveen, kibbin (little 241 spade) or gugger is employed for planting in Cavan, Leitrim 412 and Longford and may perhaps be correlated with the heavy loy as another archaic tool which has kept its hold in that area. The steeveen with its conical head (Fig. 48) will break through the toughest sod and open a way for the young sprouts. Typi- [462] cally 'guggering' is woman's work, the children following, [857] dropping in the sets and closing the hole with a fork or a mell. I like to think that the steeveen is descended from that universal tool of the women of humble cultivating societies, the digging or planting stick, remote ancestor of the spade. It is a plausible theory that the crops of wheat and barley sown by the first Irish cultivators were planted in this way in the ashes of burnt woodland on the mountainsides. Larger dibbers or 'stamps' with several teeth for planting corn were used until quite recently in some counties, for example Armagh (Fig. 49).

[407]

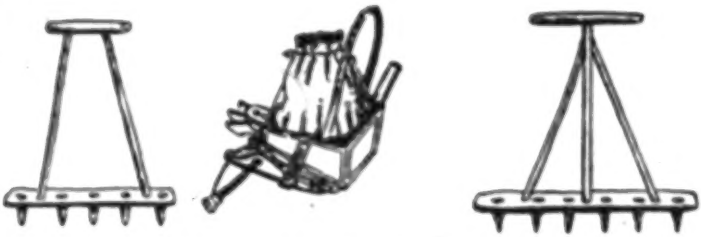

FIG. 49. Dibbers and (*centre*) sowing fiddle, Co. Armagh.

They are probably the descendents of specimens introduced by English 'planters' of the early seventeenth century. It is the [539] dibberhole which is referred to in the rhyme which has outlived the action it once accompanied:

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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LAZY-BEDS

241
[559]

Four seeds in a hole,
One for the rook
One for the crow
One to rot
And one to grow.

The sowing fiddle which scatters seed broadcast and which may frequently be seen in use in some districts, for example Co. Down, is another introduction from England which has survived here longer than in its presumed home (Fig. 49). The fiddler makes a striking figure, seen from a distance, as he strides steadily up and down the field with his silent instrument; he must beware of changing his pace whether going uphill or downhill or the crop will grow in uneven strips. [407]

In many parts of the world burning of the vegetation is a necessary preliminary to shifting cultivation, and the use of fire in the preparation of the outfield for ridge cultivation therefore raises some interesting questions. We know that the burning of sods pared from rough pasture, sometimes called 'denshiring' from its reputed Devonshire home, was widely practised in Ireland down to the time of the famine. In the early nineteenth century nine-tenths of the potatoes grown in Co. Clare were planted on burnt land,[1] and a special skinning plough was used to pare off the sod. Elsewhere the graffan and flachter were put to a like purpose. From a description of Donegal in 1880 it seems that the drying and warming of the soil were regarded as more important than the fertilizing ashes: 'There is on the fresh bogs a process of heating resorted to in the Spring, i.e., the end of April and the first half of May: the piles of earth are never allowed to burn out into a fire but combustion is kept stopped up within the mass . . . the heated earth, not ashes, is scattered and the first crop put in.'[2] Where the land was of fairly good quality only the furrow sods were burnt. They were stood on edge to dry and then burnt in piles on the ridges, after which the ashes were spread and the potato sets planted in them, to be covered with earth dug from the trenches in the usual way.[3] The process of paring and burning seems to

[1] H. Dutton, *Clare* (1808), 56.

[2] *Report of the Royal Commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881* (1887), Appendix B, 137.

[3] R. Thompson, *Meath*, 272.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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241 have been greatly accelerated in the eighteenth century, thanks no doubt to the stimulus of contemporary English practice, but it may well be that the custom perpetuates the prehistoric method of clearing the land for cultivation. The fact that burning the land was prohibited by various Acts of Parliament in Ireland would point to its being another abominable native custom, like ploughing by the tail. We have referred to the graffan as a [412] skinning tool of ancient lineage, and may add that in Devon and Cornwall the implement used 'in the infancy of the art of paring'[1] was a mattock or adze which also served as a clod-breaker. The 'hack' of the Pennine country comes to mind here. The flachter, the Highland equivalent of the breast-plough which became the standard English paring instrument, may well be, in fact, the ancestor of the breast-plough, and I suggest that it came into use for skinning the outfield before burning and planting. We know that outfield cultivation of burnt-over forest lasted in France, in the Vosges country, into the eighteenth century, and the custom probably survived long enough in Ireland to be replaced by 'paring and burning'. This view is certainly in line with the other evidences of cultural continuity from prehistoric times. The customs of throwing the ashes of May Day and Midsummer bonfires into the fields and the mixing of peat ash from the hearth with the seed corn may be magical residues of the ancient practice of firing the land before sowing.

241 We shall describe in a later chapter the various methods of carrying manure to the fields: here we may refer to another 412 simple implement which serves in the preparation of the ridges. This is the clod-breaking wooden mallet or mell, resembling a croquet mallet (Fig. 1). The subject of our drawing might have been taken straight from the Luttrell Psalter of the fourteenth century, but it is a mell which I saw in use in Co. 241 Armagh a few years ago. Hurling sticks served the same pur- 526 pose in some southern counties,[2] and one wonders whether the Gaelic game of hurling evolved in this way by playfully knocking a rounded stone among the rigs. Patrick Geddes amusingly, if erroneously, traced the origin of the game of golf back to the

[1] *Loudon's Encyclopædia of Agriculture* (1831).
[2] W. Tighe, *Kilkenny* (1802), 182.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

idle Scots shepherd who with his crook knocked a white sea pebble into a rabbit hole among the dunes. And one recalls the theory that the game of cricket, with its 22-yard pitch, had its beginnings in the English openfields among ploughboys (players) and landlords' sons (gentlemen) who threw clods at the ploughman's marking sticks across the chain-wide acre strips completed at the end of a day's work. At any rate cricket has not strayed far from the English openfields and village greens, and in Ireland it clings to the larger towns and to the English-settled areas along the east coast.

Among other implements for preparing the soil the roller is probably of no great antiquity, though examples of wood or stone are of considerable interest. Alternatively, flat boulders or specially-built clod-slipes are driven over the ploughed ground, the driver being carried along on the platform thus provided and adding to its weight. I have seen the former in Co. Wexford and the latter in Co. Down. In the west the breaking of clods on the ridges is done by hand with a heavy rake (Fig. 1), and the 'harrows' which were formerly pulled by the horse's tail was a similar implement, a block of wood armed with a few wooden teeth. Even the larger harrows were a source of amusement to visiting farmers like Arthur Young, 'more fit to raise laughter than soil', as one observer put it.

The weeding and protection of the young corn were serious matters in the days when a patch of oats provided a family with its only cereal food. The tethering and herding of livestock were universal habits, and hand-weeding was another task for the young folk. O'Flaherty writes of Connacht: 'They go and lie prostrate or sit upon the corn, to weed it with their bare hands, leaving nothing behind but pure corn'.[1] Swedes are almost invariably weeded and thinned by hand. Thistles growing in corn or flax are pulled with special pincers or 'clips' made either of iron or more usually of wood, of a type which is illustrated in the Luttrell Psalter. The very similar French weeders known as Havre pincers were also used for catching eels. Docks were removed with a heavy forked spud (Fig. 50). There were other less arduous ways of inducing a bounteous crop. The custom of placing a sickle in the corn-field at the

[1] R. O'Flaherty, *H'Ia Connaught* (1684), 89.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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241
[412]

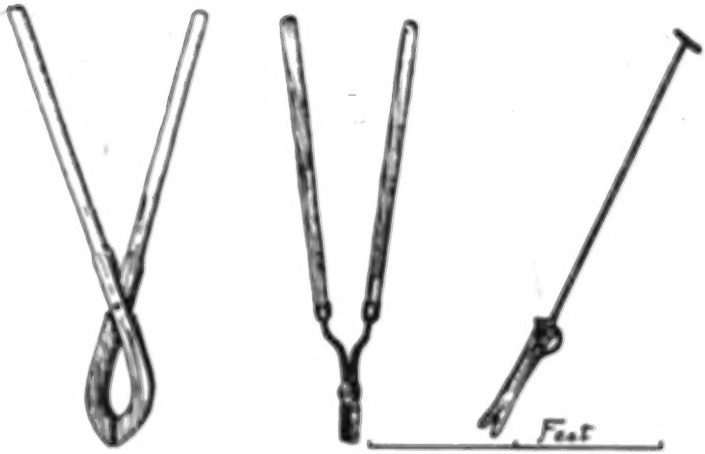

FIG. 50. Weeding 'clips', Antrim and Armagh, and iron dock-lifter, Antrim.

Midsummer festival was an easy way of showing the spirits of the corn what was expected of them. You might also hope to transfer ill-luck to someone else's crop by burying a dead animal,
[787] a piece of meat, or even an egg on his land. It would be worth while listening for the call of the cuckoo on the first day of July, for to hear it was a sign of a good harvest. Prognostications were so many and so easily procured that they apparently provided a fatalistic society with a ready means of avoiding steady work. In some parts of the country, docks, thistles and
[824] couch grass were apparently regarded as a good sign, because they kept the crop warm.[1]

[1] W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland*, 87.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XII

HARVEST

THANKS to the necessity of 'winning' (seasoning) hay and 241
corn in the fields before the crops are carried home, harvest 221
time drags on from late summer to the edge of winter, and the
word 'harvest' as we have seen is a synonym for autumn. In [805]
this pastoral Irish country the hay harvest is nowadays of vital
importance in farm economy, yet I cannot find any evidence
that hay played a significant part in the traditional Gaelic
system of farming. It is the sickle, not the scythe, which [412]
figures in folk-lore and in place-names, and the scythe seems to
be a relative newcomer in most parts of the country. It requires
a stone-free sward which would be hard to seek on hill farms.
The business of hay-making was, I believe, of little importance
until the economic changes of the agrarian revolution and the
introduction of rotation grass. In the North the date of the first
hay-cutting is fixed by a celebrated but relatively new festival,
the Orangeman's day on the 12th of July. After hay comes flax,
which is pulled from late July to mid-August, followed by wheat
and barley in the areas where they are grown, by the corn
harvest in September and the potato-lifting in October. In bad
years hay may still be uncut in late August, the mountain corn
is green even at the end of September, and late-cut corn some-
times stays stacked in the fields up to Christmas—indeed there
are records of the grain being reaped after Christmas[1]—but
traditionally all harvest work was completed by All-Hallows.

In Scandinavia it has been claimed that hay-making began in 246
pre-historic times as a result of the climatic deterioration which
took place during the last millennium B.C. In Ireland with its

[1] For example in 1817. J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 93.

246 milder winters there seems to have been no such response. Although there has been hay-making on the rich meadows of Co. Meath, for example, since medieval times, when the English openfield system was introduced, I have found no literary or archaeological evidence for it anywhere in early Ireland. Indeed Giraldus Cambrensis expressed surprise in the [114] twelfth century that the Irish neither made hay nor built stalls for cattle, and despite his untrustworthiness I believe his witness may be accepted in this instance. Hay-making would have begun on the river bottoms (callows, holms) which, being liable to floods, were not available for winter grazing: this meadow hay is today much less important than 'upland' hay, the significant term used for rotation grass. The hay-making season is nowadays a time of toil for all members of the family, but I suspect that the period from midsummer to late July was under the old order a slack season, the time for raiding and fighting, and catching the English bending in the hayfields. For the Irish it was the 'blue month', when food was scarce (July is also called 'the hungry month') and the meal bins empty. In Ulster at any rate, for reasons which may be older than King William III, July is the holiday month and the time for faction fights. Sir John Myres used to say that in the Mediterranean world, where there is little grass to make hay, the month of May was the slackest time of the summer, the [721] favourite time for fighting instead of hay-making. In Ireland as in classical Greece the winter climate made it difficult and unsportsmanlike to go to war at that season.

To judge from present practice on the tiny farms of the west of Ireland, grass was cut as required from field-banks and odd [462] corners, a creelful at a time to give to the cow as a 'bribe' at milking time, and it was woman's work. The hook used for [412] this purpose, the grass or scythe hook, is smooth-edged, unlike the saw-toothed corn sickle, and what hay was made in former times was probably cut for the most part with the hook. The [231] livestock would be fed in winter mainly on oatstraw, and grazed on the infield stubble, supplemented by the outfield grasses which had been allowed to mature while the bulk of the stock was at the summer booley-grounds. We may be sure that what little hay was saved was treated much as it is on mountainy

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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farms today. The scythed grass is shaken out by hand and 246
spread thinly over the field. When partly dry it is gathered into windrows and lapped or coiled, that is folded against the leg over the forearm into small 'lap-cocks' resembling a lady's muff, the hole permitting the wind to pass through and the smooth rounded top allowing the rain to run off. Like all practised hand-work it is a job carried through with apparently mechanical indifference, but the old hands will take care to ensure that the laps are properly made and laid down so that they are aligned with the prevailing wind. Even on rich lowland farms the hay will be 'lapped' if it is first season's grass grown, as in Ulster, for the seed, which is a valuable export. Alter- [499]
natively seed grass is tied in sheaves and 'gaited' like flax or stooked like a cereal crop (Fig. 51).

[248]
[243]

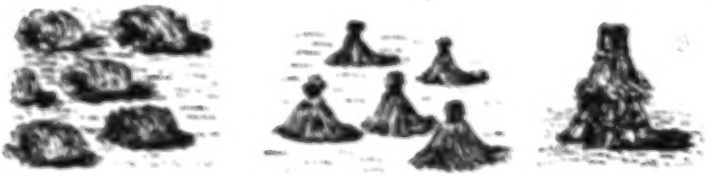

FIG. 51. Laps of hay, gaits of flax and stook of wheat, with 'hudders'.

When dry the laps are shaken open and built into small cocks or lumps which are later enlarged into hand cocks. Or if the hay is in good condition it is made, chiefly in the drier parts of the country, into larger ricks or tramp cocks which are trodden down firmly and secured with a hay-rope (Fig. 52, 10). The process of hay-making is thus, like the winning of turf (Chapter XIV), one of gradually increasing the size of the pile as the material is dried by sun and wind. The cocked hay is left standing for some weeks in the fields to season, so that it seems to the English visitor, as Arthur Young remarked, that the Irish are generally two months 'making or marring their hay'.[1] The explanation given is the necessity of avoiding overheating, but English critics say that it is the farmers who dislike getting overheated! A more charitable view is that by the

[1] A. Young, Tour, 2, 266.

 [Text continues on p 155]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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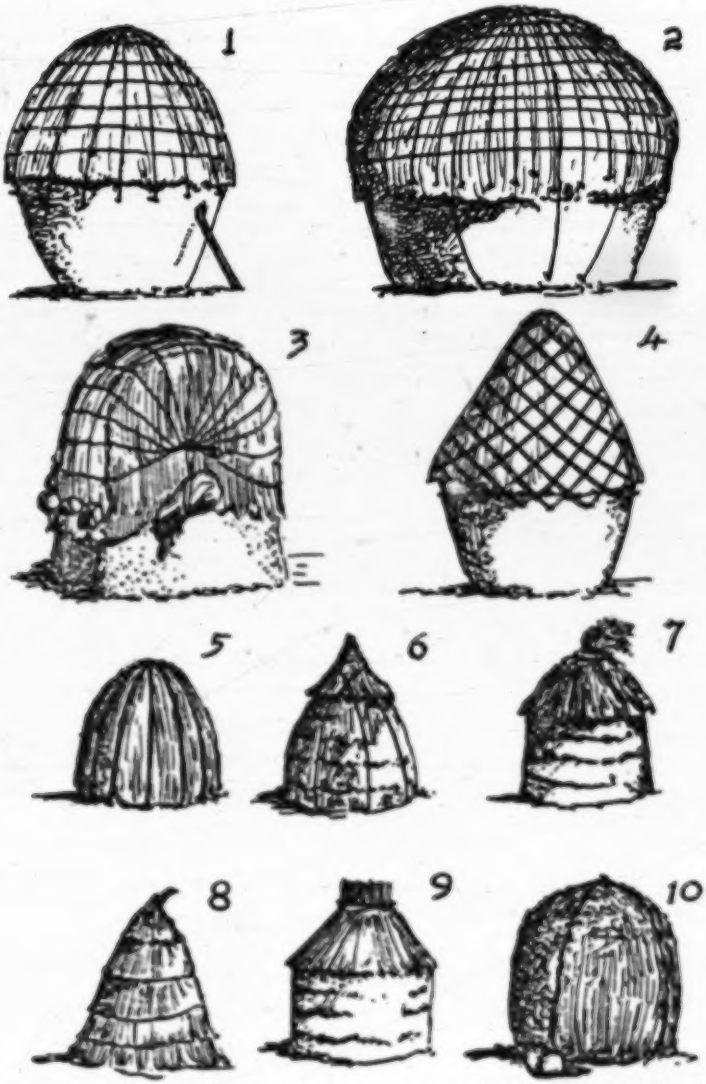

FIG. 52. Stacks and huts roped in many patterns. (1) Cavan (flax). (2) Cork (hay). (3) Mayo (hay). (4) Antrim (oats). (5) Donegal (hay). (6) Donegal (oats). (7) Down (oats). (8) Down (seed hay). (9) Cavan (oats). (10) Down (tramp-cock of hay).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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time large-scale hay-making developed it had to fit into a 246
fixed rota of farm work which kept men busy in late July and August at flax-pulling and turf-carrying, so that the cocked hay had to wait. Today the baling machine is speeding up the process, but the bales, whether from the need of seasoning or from force of habit, are left piled in angular cocks scattered over the hayfield.

Carried at last to the haggard on rick-shifters or slipes— [493]
formerly on slide-cars or the backs of men and ponies—the hay [492]
is built into small circular stacks (pikes). As a protection against
wind and rain they are thatched with rushes forthwith and [482]
roped (Fig. 52). Since the stacks are thatched before they have 246
had time to settle, the pegged or scolloped thatch found in 284
England is not used. Not only do ropes hold the thatch more securely but it is a simple matter to tighten them as the stack sinks. In the simplest form of roping, hanging stones are attached to the rope ends so that the adjustment is automatic. But where the roof of the stack is not rounded but conical a straw-rope is wrapped round in a spiral which can later be tightened by vertical ropes pegged into the lower part of the stack. One sees this spiral roping also in parts of western Britain. Several other patterns of roping are found, some making a complete network; and the shape of the stack also shows many regional variations (Fig. 52). The size and shape depend not only on local custom but to some extent on the weather and the condition of the hay. Small rounded stacks are most usual, for they are wind-resistant. They are characteristic too of much of Highland Britain from Caithness to Cornwall.

The scythe has not entirely given way to the mowing machine 246
on small farms in whose tiny fields it would anyhow be difficult to turn a machine. The Irish scythesmen, though not so well known as the spalpeens or reapers, had their brief day in the English harvest-fields, and those who remember working 'across the water' in the nineteenth century tell of great feats of piece-work. I was told of one heroic figure who could scythe seven acres in the day, 'and four lifters wouldn't lift after him'. Henry Stephens, in 1855, reckoned that the English labourer would scythe four acres of oats or barley in a ten-hour working day.[1]

[1]Quoted in E. C. Curwen, *Plough and Pasture* (1946), 98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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246 412 The Irish prefer the long-handled scythe. The sned, about five-and-a-half feet long, has the lower handgrip offset, and a pointed iron spike is sometimes driven into the end of the sned to anchor it safely when honing (Fig. 53). A test of a well-

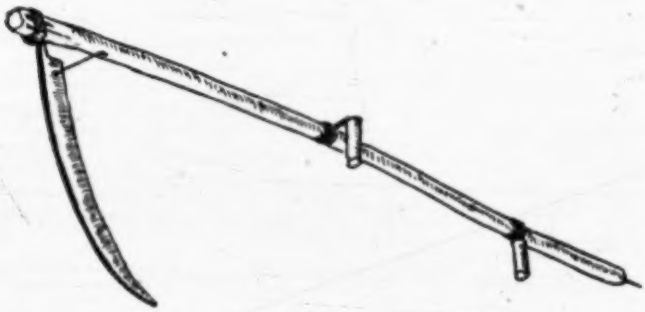

FIG. 53. Long-handled scythe, Donegal.

sharpened scythe is that it should 'cut wool moving downstream', and there was a special charm used in sharpening. The sanded scytheboard (strickle) has now given way to the artifi-
[133] cial stone, though hones of natural stone, including the fossilized wood of Lough Neagh, are used locally. A smith-made scythe-blade is highly prized and long after its legitimate life has ended lengths of it will be utilized for choppers and turnip knives. For full efficiency one must be measured for the fitting and hanging of a scythe. The lower handle should be at arm's length from the bottom of the sned, the upper one distant from the top by the length from elbow to finger-tips. The two handles should also be a cubit apart. The angle of the blade is determined by swinging the left leg and adjusting the blade until its point comes within a nicely determined distance of it when the sned is held upright against the right leg. The scythe cradle, for gathering the swathe as it is cut, is rarely met with
[184] in Ulster, save for makeshift devices such as a bit of sacking fitted against the 'grass-nail' which joins sned and blade in the angle where they meet. In the south and south-east of the country, where the scythe is an old introduction, quite elaborate cradles both of wood and of finely-wrought iron are to be seen.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay 243
to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century 412
there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the 178
good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East. The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal
possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with [422]
reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed [426]
directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects, may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should 248
be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands
are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to [476]
thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in
diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist [284]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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248 [284] of two lengths of green rushes knotted at the flowering end. When tied, the end of the band is thrust under towards the head of the beet, that is 'with the grain' of the flax. The beets are carried as soon as possible to be steeped (drowned or dubbed) in the flax dam or 'lint hole' where soft peaty water has been standing for some days to warm up. If they cannot be steeped forthwith the beets are built into stooks, for they are damaged if left lying on the ground. The beets are placed upright in the dam, with a slight inclination to facilitate their later removal, and when well packed may be covered, if the water is deep enough, with a horizontal layer or 'sheeting row' on which large boulders are placed to keep the flax under water. The process of retting (rotting) takes from seven to twelve days and is soon advertised by a foul and penetrating odour as the core or 'bone' of the stalk decays. Then the slimy, stinking beets are taken out of the dam and 'grassed', that is spread on grass, usually a new-mown hayfield. This is a skilled but dirty (Pl. 5, 2) job. To ensure that the stalks do not stick together the beets are shaken loose over the left forearm so that the flax lies evenly in ordered rows. After a couple of days it is once more tied into beets, but if the weather is bad it is first 'gaited' for a day or so to complete the drying (Fig. 51). This provides one of the more picturesque scenes of flax harvest, for the gaits look like the skirts of invisible dancers or the tents of a fairy host. The drying stalks of each beet are gathered and spread around the leg to make a hollow broad-based cone which will stand upright. It seems probable that gaiting was at one time a method of drying cereal crops as well as flax in these difficult Highland regions. The 'gaitner' was a recognized member of the harvest gang in Northumberland in the early nineteenth century. 'He follows close on the reapers and, the corn being laid in the band near the tops of the corn, he . . . brings the sheaf up to the left knee, gives the band a peculiar twist and sets the sheaf upright, giving it a half turn so that the skirts fly out to look like the cover of a beehive'.[1] Gaited corn was said to 'win' well and it was carried to the stack without stooking.

Ideally the flax after gaiting is ready for breaking and scutching, and in the old days when the farmer was also a

[1] *Loudan's Encyclopaedia of Agriculture* (1831).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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weaver it would be hung in the rafters to be used as required. 248
Nowadays the scutching-mills cannot store all the flax they handle, so that the farmer stacks it in the fields until the mill can take it. It is built into large oblong stooks variously known as barts, sleighs, hovels or rays, containing as many as a hundred beets or more. The barts are two-storied. On top of the first storey, which consists of three rows of beets on each side, a row of sheaves is placed along each eave like wall-plates, and others are laid transversely between them. On these, in turn, a central row is placed lengthwise to act as a support for the upper storey, and against this row two or three layers of sheaves are laid like rafters on each side. The hipped roof is then thatched with grass or rushes roped on (Fig. 54). The bart[1] is thus kept

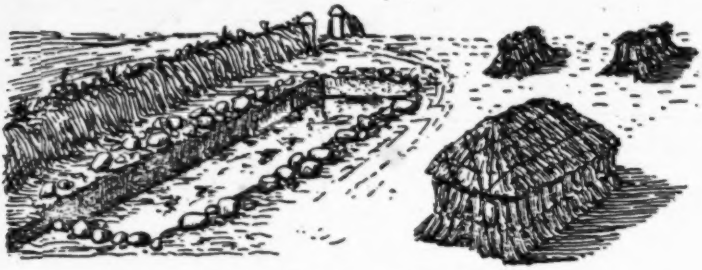

FIG. 54. Flax dam, stooks and bart.

dry while its open structure allows the wind to blow through, drying the beets and also lessening the risk of its being blown down. The farmer-weaver, needing the fibre, might have to dry the flax in a kiln after it had lain spread for a few days (Chapter IX). The whole sequence of breaking (melling) the flax, scutching, cloving, hackling, spinning, weaving, and bleaching was then carried out by hand. The water-driven scutching mill was 288
introduced in the eighteenth century though hand-scutching continued in some districts into the present century. All processes are now mechanized apart from a little high-quality hand-loom weaving in Ulster, and very little flax is home-grown even in the traditional linen districts.

[1]'Bearts' of oats are referred to in medieval documents. See W. R. Wilde in *Census of Ireland 1851*, Part 5, Vol. 1, 98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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HARVEST

243 Corn harvest did not begin until a certain set day which differed in various parts of the country, and the appointed day was a time of much excitement. The following description of [171] the Reaping Blessing in the Scottish Highlands would probably apply to Ulster, though I have not found a record of it in Ireland. 'The day the reaping began was one of commotion and ceremonial. The whole family repaired to the field dressed in their best . . . the father of the family took his sickle and, facing the sun, cut a handful of corn. Putting it three times sunwise round his head, the Reaping Blessing was sung'.[1] We know that in Ireland it was the custom for the first sheaves cut to be scutched or lashed, that is the grain was beaten out without using the flail. The winnowed grain was parched over the fire, ground in a quern and boiled in time to make a breakfast for the reapers.[2] This ceremonial breakfast undoubtedly preserves archaic practices.

Reaping with hook or sickle is by no means uncommon on little hill farms where fields are small and uneven, but the days of the great 'gatherings' are no more, when down to late in the last century as many as seventy men might have been seen at work. Most of the lore of these reaping boons has passed away unrecorded, and we get only glimpses of the terrible strain imposed on the toilers and the compensating gaieties. The [558] pressure was most severe when to the rivalry between workers was added the drive of a pace-setter, for it was a mark of disgrace not to keep pace. In Ulster the leader of the boon was 'stubble hook', so called because his ridge was the first of the 'set', next the stubble. (A set was the number of ridges equal to the number of reapers in the boon). The driver, called 'corn-land', took the rig or land next to the standing corn, and between the two the other reapers on their ridges would strive to keep a straight line. 'A bad shearer', runs the Ulster saying, [539] 'always gets a big rig and a blunt hook'. But a spirited reaper, I have been told, 'would die upon the rig before he would suffer "corn-land" to pass him'. Between each set a rest was taken at the 'land-end' and it was an interlude of 'crack and courting'. If we may judge from a Scottish custom, any visiting

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928).
[2] *Béaloideas*, 10, 298.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Antrim

PLATE II

222
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Kelp gatherers near Fair Head, Co. Antrim.

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387

Kelp-burning, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 160]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLATE 12

501

1. Curraghs, the Aran Islands.

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342

2. Dragging home the hay in the west of Ireland.

[Facing p. 161]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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stranger was accosted and held down on the ground, a woman 243
would lie on top of him and another woman would tumble them over.[1] Such horse-play was more than a consequence of the high spirits of harvest, the 'rural saturnalia' described by Richard Jefferies in *The Toilers of the Field*. Displays of the rites and symbols of fertility were closely bound up with the bounty of harvest.

There were many variations in the methods of reaping, or shearing—to use the old term—depending on the type of hook, which might be smooth or notched, on the width of the ridges, [412] the condition of the crop and so on. The toothed sickle is probably the older implement, going back to the time when iron was a new metal and could not be given a sharp steel edge. Whereas the smooth or scythe hook is wielded with a slashing cut which may spill the grain, especially of rye, if the crop is ripe and the edge not kept very keen, the sickle is pulled towards the shearer, who holds each bunch as it is cut, pressing it back into the standing corn. As a rule three handfuls or 'loghters' go to each sheaf, the bands of which are prepared beforehand and laid out for the reaper to place the loghters on them straight from the hook (Pl. 6, 1).

The term shearing implies that the crop was cut close to the ground as wool is clipped from a sheep, and indeed urban officials have been known to confuse the operations. Pride was taken in a stubble-field that looked as if it had been shaved. 'Low and clean' was the injunction, 'cut it down to the living earth!' 'Down with the head and up with the tail' were my instructions when I lent a hand at harvest in the Glens of [516] Antrim. Mercifully one worked uphill: where the land was level the reaper would go down on one knee, wearing a knee-pad. If the ridges were wide there might be two shearers and one binder to each ridge, the shearers working from the furrows on each side, the depth of which minimized the amount of stooping required. A 'crack hooksman' could reap and tie fifty twelve-sheaf stooks a day, or say an Irish acre (= 1⅔ English acres). It is necessary to have worked with a gang of reapers to appreciate the relentless pace of the work and at the same time the care with which every operation is carried out. There must be no

[1] M. Banks, *British Calendar Customs*, Scotland, I (1937).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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243 heads of corn at the wrong end, or they would be missed in thrashing with the flail, and for the same reason the ears of the straw band-knot should lie towards the top of the sheaf. The sheaves should be laid with their butts to the wind, for these need most drying. The bands should be tied with nice judgement, tight but not over-tight: one should not be able to put the toe of one's boot under the band when one stands on the butt of the sheaf.

[468] As in all farming operations conducted in traditional ways, music and magic to ease the labour were part of the scene. There were shearing songs to match the rhythm of the sickle, [825] and its efficiency was improved by keeping a fly or other insect imprisoned in the handle; perhaps its incessant activity was meant to speed up the work. Another strange belief was that [777] luck followed the reaper who carried a child on his back. The world of magic and fairy was close by at harvest time: it was believed that the top grain (pickle) of every stalk of corn was empty because it had been taken by the fairies and was their due. The sheaf had its share of lore, too, related possibly to its [754] semblance of human shape. A curse could be worked by sticking pins into the joints of the straw, and the sheaf might be properly waked and buried so that as it withered the object of the curse would decline. Stooks with their 'hudders' (Fig. 51) (hooding sheaves) also take on human forms, and I have known various terms for these large stooks applied as nicknames to broad-based country women. 'The last sheaf' also is known as the cailleach or hag.

Beliefs and customs connected with the last sheaf are legion and find their counterparts in many parts of the world. 'Winning the churn' was an incentive to the reaper, for good luck attended those who had their rigs sheared quickly if only because they avoided the ill-luck of being last. Stories are told of rigs being left unclaimed and uncut because their owners feared to incur 'the famine of the farm', of having the hag to feed until next harvest. The basis of this belief was that the last sheaf was sometimes hidden overnight in the corn of lazy farmers, who would watch at nights and reap by moonlight to avoid what was an omen of misfortune or death.

[787] The last handful of standing corn, selected for the purpose,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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was twisted into a three-stranded plait. Standing back at a mark, the reapers threw their spinning hooks at it in turn until it was severed and 'stretched'. At this a triumphant shout was raised. The cailleach was sometimes 'waked' before it was lifted: the 'corpse' was hung round the neck of the triumphant slayer, who was guest at the subsequent 'churn' (the harvest feast and dance) and who was fated to be the reaper who would be first married. It was, perhaps, more usual for the cailleach to be put around the neck of the master or mistress of the house. From the threat of being hanged by it they would purchase their freedom by providing the churn supper, for which special food was prepared. There are many variant practices but it is clear that they all turn on the same themes, the spirit of the corn and the luck of a speedy harvest. In some districts the cailleach was known as the hare, and the cry which kept the toiling shearers to their task was; 'We'll put the hare out of it today!' 243 787 243

It was customary to hang the churn in the kitchen, either over the door, on the dresser, or about the chimney hearth, and to keep it until the following harvest, when it was given to the cows. Or it might be fed to the horses on the first day of ploughing. In some houses the last sheaf was preserved year after year, and I have seen specimens half a century old. One of these was dressed with coloured papers, hinting that there was formerly more ceremony connected with the last sheaf than has survived. These dressed cailleachs figure in the harvest festival decoration in some churches in Co. Armagh, where also miniature corn ricks surmounted by a harvest knot are displayed, the Church thus having won over and preserved the pagan symbols of harvest (See Tailpiece).

Harvest knots or bows are decorative twists of straw which were worn by the harvesters, and are still quite commonly carried by young men at harvest time in some districts (Plate 13, 1). Girls would wear them in their hair, boys in their coats, and in former times they were exchanged by the sexes as a sign of mutual attachment. They are made in a fine plait of two straws tied into loops or interlaced, those worn by the girls having the ears of the corn left on. The best examples are made from wheat, and some exceptionally fine specimens are made from 243 301 [584]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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243 grasses and flax. The many practical uses of straw will be
[301] described in a later chapter and its employment in fashioning various kinds of dolls, ceremonial dresses and masks, for example on St. Briget's Day. Certain protective charms were
789 also made of oat-straw, for example the Bratóg Brighde (St.
243 Briget's rag or mantle) worn by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection against storms. Here the explanation may lie in the power of wind over bits of loose straw which by association gives the straw the secret of controlling the wind. This is the basis of the phrase used in Co. Cavan to describe something
[195] which circulates quickly: 'going round like the straws'. It was
[821] the custom to ward off storms by running with a handful of straws from one farm to another.

With corn, as with hay and turf, the harvesting proceeds by
243 building up stooks and ricks of increasing size according to the nature of the crop and the weather conditions. Little stooks (footings) of four or six sheaves are the first stage in the construction of the twelve-sheaf stooks (ten standing and two inverted hooding sheaves) which, however, are generally confined to wheat (Fig. 51). It is the general practice to build the little stooks of corn, after one or two weeks' seasoning, into hand-stacks which are of a convenient size to make a load for the rick-shifter, or for the tractor-lifter which is replacing it. The shapes of these miniature stacks, varying from one district to another, are often extremely picturesque, and their serried rows marching up the hillsides give the autumn fields a populated appearance. Their many names (hut, shig, bart, adag, and so on) would indicate that they are no novelty, and these little field stacks are as characteristic of Wales and Scotland as they are of Ireland (Fig. 52). A picturesque variety of hay-stack, commonly seen in Connacht, is the sheep-cock, built around a tall pole which prevents the cock from collapsing when eaten away at the base.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XIII

CARS AND CARTS

PEASANT communities concerned primarily with livestock 493
which can be moved on the hoof have little need for elaborate
means of transport. Long-tried devices adapted to the difficulties [489]
of the terrain continue to be used even in this age of tractors, and Ireland can show a remarkable variety of archaic farm vehicles of simple types. The heavy lumbering wagon would be out of place and out of scale in this environment. It is included in medieval inventories of manors and monasteries but it never took hold of the country, and although some landlords re-introduced English farm wagons in the eighteenth century, they were soon 'laid aside'.[1] The common Irish car was better adapted to the needs and skills of the people as well as to the condition of the roads.

The Irish low-back car, which is not yet extinct, is a light vehicle fitted with block wheels rigidly attached to a rotating axle (Fig. 55). Arthur Young commented that the loads they carried were 'such as an Englishman would be ashamed to take in a wheelbarrow'.[2] Yet he praised them because they required only one horse and did little damage to the roads. Prior to the eighteenth century there were very few roads except for those connecting the towns, and it seems that even the humble low-back cars were rare outside the urban spheres. For farm-work the wheel-less slide-car was used almost everywhere, supplemented by sledges, panniers, back-creels, and burden-ropes. It 491
was progressive landlords who initiated, in the interests of the 493
new agriculture, the construction of roads on their estates; and

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 22.
[2] ibid., 2, 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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491 when the making and repair of 'cross roads' became a public
493 charge it was done on the basis of baronies, and the Grand Juries—composed largely of landlords—became responsible, under the presentment system, for local road-making and repairing. Thus from about 1760 onwards a fairly close network of roads began to be established in the richer parts of the country—especially about the big demesnes—and the way was open for the more capacious spoke-wheeled cart which held its own until in our own day it is being replaced by the lorry and the tractor-trailer.

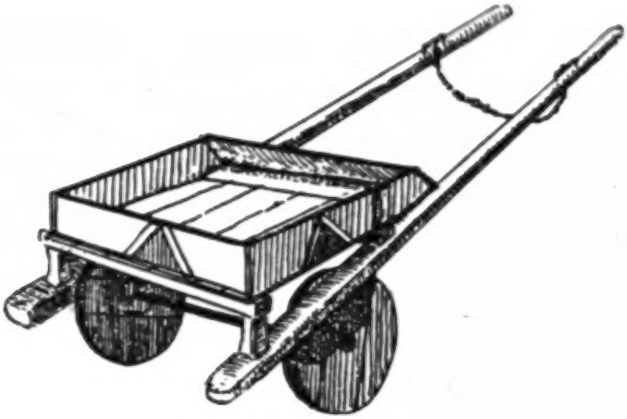

FIG. 55. Wheel-car, Co. Antrim.

175 In the face of abundant evidence as to the backwardness of
493 rural transport and the rarity of wheeled vehicles and made roads until quite recent times, it is startling to read of the prominence of chariotry and of the rapid movement of armies in the Irish legendary histories. In fact, up to date, the archaeological evidence which would clearly establish the use of chariots in early Celtic Ireland is scanty. There can be little doubt, however, that horse-drawn spoke-wheeled vehicles were a significant element in Celtic culture, and it is known that the Romans took into their language nearly a dozen Celtic names for horse-
[492] drawn vehicles.[1] Such fragments of harness as have been re-

[1]E. M. Jope, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 57–60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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covered from early Celtic sites in Ireland suggest that the horse 175
was held in high regard and was perhaps reserved for pageants, 493
combats and ceremonies. The detailed evidence in the legendary [492]
histories of ancient Ireland for the existence of roads, however,
is clear. The fact that the Celtic roads are rarely traceable today [491]
is understandable in view of the physical conditions of the
country, especially the prevalence of obliterating bogs. Moreover the road system must have decayed with the decline of Celtic culture. In any case it is evident that the use of the chariot was confined to the highest castes, and that its humble relation the block-wheeled car was fated to outlast it. The finely-spoked wheeled vehicles of the Celtic invaders were as much out of place in Ireland as the great wagons which later overlords introduced from England. The block-wheeled car, if not previously known in Ireland, may have been the native response to the impressive magic of the Celtic wheel, or it may have reached this country with Celtic camp-followers. We shall see that it could have been developed from the slide-car which almost certainly preceded it in Europe. The term 'wheel-car' as used in Ireland refers to the block-wheeled car and is clearly meant to distinguish it from the wheel-less slide-car. The spoke-wheeled cart is a newcomer in most parts. Nevertheless there is evidence that a light spoke wheeled cart continued to be used in early Christian times: an example drawn chariot-wise by two horses is figured on the eighth century Ahenny Cross in Co. Tipperary. It seems that such light carts were used for personal transport, for example St. Sampson took one with him, according to an eleventh-century account of his travels, to carry his books across Cornwall on his way from Ireland to Brittany.[1] And the spoke-wheeled cart must have been known in the planted areas since the Middle Ages, so that it is very probable that in parts of the country the cart has had a continuous life since early Celtic times.

But we should first examine certain archaic methods of 492
transport which depend on the carrying power of beasts and [482]
men, or rather women, for in simple societies the bearers of children are also the burden-bearers. The romance of rural

[1] O. G. S. Crawford, 'Western Seaways' in *Custom is King* (1936), 196.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 Ireland has so often been symbolized by a bare-footed colleen bashfully hiding behind a creel-carrying donkey that it comes as a shock to discover that the animal is a relative novelty in the Irish scene. There is no evidence of the use of the ass as a beast of burden in Ireland until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Professor Mahaffy, who wrote learnedly 'On the Introduction of the Ass as a Beast of Burden into Ireland',[1] pointed out that the little donkey was conquering Hibernia when the Great Duke was subduing Iberia. In fact asses came in to replace the Irish horses which were being drawn on in large numbers to maintain the British cavalry in the peninsular wars. Although they were apparently introduced, like so many
177 other novelties, by way of Scotland, they proved unsuited to the
492 comparative rigours of the climate of the northern coasts of Ireland, and it was in the west of the country that they fitted best into the physical and social environment. It is strange to reflect that a culture-trait so well adapted to a region which has ancient physical and human relations with Iberia should have been so long in reaching Lusitanian Ireland and should have got there by the back door, through Ulster.

Down to recent times, then, the horse—a pony, not a heavy
492 cart horse—was the universal draught animal and beast of
48 burden save where poverty or environmental difficulties imposed carrying duties on men, women and children. There were places such as soft bogs or slippery seashores where even pack-horses could not find a footing, and there went the women and children with their back-creels to carry the peats and sea-wrack. In spring, when the men were fully occupied with ridge-making, the transport of manure seems to have been the special task of the women, though in time the ass came to relieve them of this duty. The manure creels or pots (pardogs) of a fashion which has been recorded all along the Atlantic coastlands from Spain to Scotland, have a hinged or slip bottom which allows the load to be dropped where required (Fig. *56*). Nowadays the creels are hung in pairs on the donkey's wooden straddle (pack saddle), and in the west it is no uncommon sight to see convoys of asses so laden picking their way from the dung-hill to the fields. I have also seen hay being transported by hanging

[1] *P.R.I.A.*, 35 (1916–17), 530–8.

 [Text continues on p. 170]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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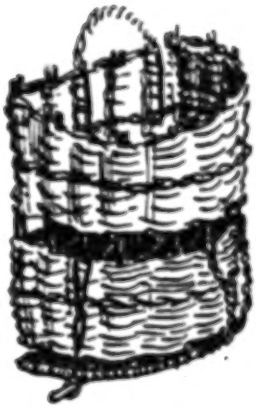

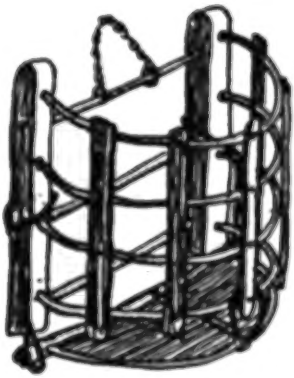

FIG. 56. Ass with straw pads and straddle, Co. Fermanagh. Creels with slip-bottoms for manure, Co. Galway and wrack, Co. Down.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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492 tied bundles on to the straddle-pins, and both sheaves and
firewood are occasionally carried on light V-shaped wooden
482 frames. A similar carrying frame is known from Spain. There
are several varieties of straddle, and a pattern found on Clare
Island, in which one side engages in a hole bored through the
[171] other side, finds a parallel in the Shetland Islands and among
the Lapps of north Norway: it could be of Norwegian origin.
For long hauls the pack animal was undoubtedly the chief means
of transport until the coming of the spoke-wheeled cart. For
short distances the burden rope (Chapter XV) or the carrying
creel was more convenient and it is still not uncommon to see
the back-creel, the carrying basket or the hand barrow used for
transporting turf or wrack over rough, soft or slippery ground
(Fig. 57).

493 In some parts of the country, especially along the east coast,
483 a form of sled fitted with a box body is kept for the transport

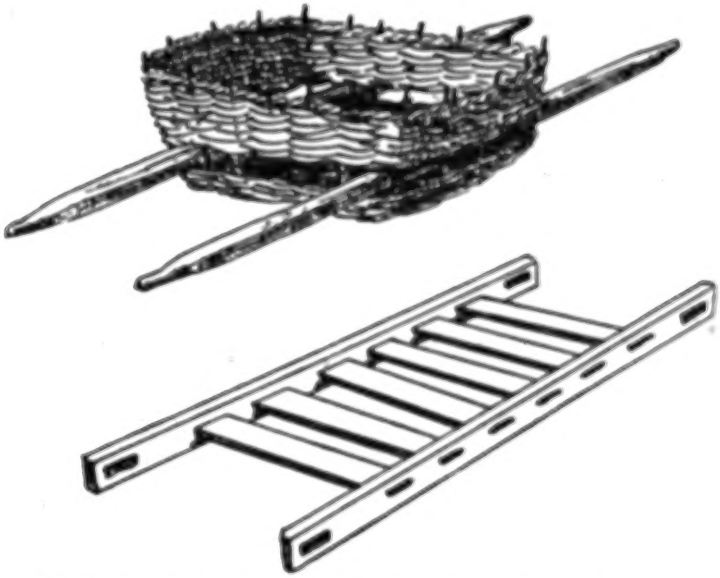

FIG. 57. Turf-basket, Co. Armagh and hand barrow, for carrying nets, Co. Antrim.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

of manure, though it is also used for carrying earth on steep slopes where the soil is washed away and is tediously replaced. In this form of sled the runners are deep and set close together so that the load can be tipped out over the side (Fig. 58, 4). The sled or slipe is a transport-agent of remarkable versatility, ideally suited to small-scale operations involving heavy loads, and it persists because for some purposes no more convenient method of transport can be devised. In the apple-orchards of Co. Armagh, for example, a large, low box-slipe, involving little lifting of the apples, conveys the gathered crop to the store with a minimum of jolting, and it is frequently drawn by a tractor. Similarly the flat slipe finds its uses in hauling large stones in quarry and field, side by side with, and supplementing, elaborate modern machines. To the great advantage of its low body is added its suitability on slopes which are too steep or soils which are too sodden to take wheeled vehicles.

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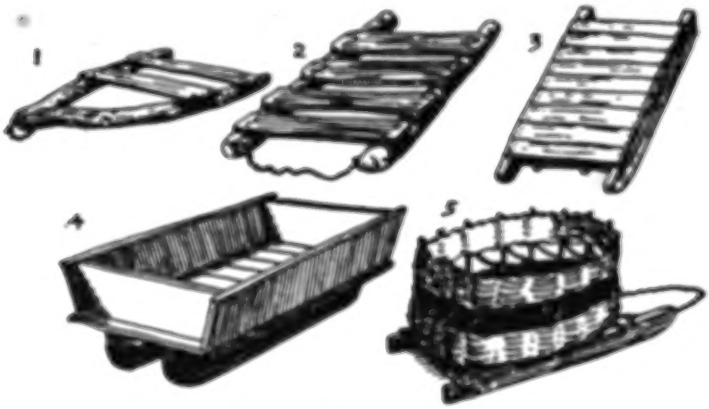

FIG. 58. Slipes. (1) Forked slipe, Co. Antrim. (2, 3) Stone slipes, Co. Down. (4) Manure slipe, Co. Down. (5) Turf slipe, Co. Antrim.

The simplest form of slipe consists of nothing more than a forked branch or young tree with a drag-chain secured to the point of the V (Fig. 58, 1). This forked sledge is not shod and it finds its principal use in moving large boulders from the fields. Some examples I have examined are made of holly which,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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in addition to its strength, is reputed to have special sliding qualities. A forked slipe can be dragged over rough, trackless, boulder-strewn hillsides, where it will make and widen its own path as it goes. In such circumstances, given a favourable gradient, it can be man-hauled, and the persistent use of similar sledges for transporting large stones in other regions of megalithic culture such as the Dordogne—and indeed in Assam for surviving megalithic cults—hints that it comes down to us from very early times. The present distribution area of the forked sledge in Europe, from Scandinavia round to the western Mediterranean, can be correlated with many archaic culture-elements.[1] Its preparation calls for no tool more sophisticated than an axe—even a stone axe would suffice—and as I have watched huge stones being sliped from the fields I have easily imagined myself transported to a clearing in a long vanished Neolithic forest.

The standard flat slipe is a rectangular platform supported on two low parallel runners which may be shod with iron. It will be found on many farms and serves numerous purposes—for hauling stones, potatoes or turf, or for transporting the plough or the harrows from field to field (Fig. 58, 2, 3). There is, however, a simple, light slipe, made either of wood or of iron, which is kept specially for moving the wheel-less plough (Fig. 42). The wooden form finds exact parallels in Sweden and the east Baltic lands.

In the Antrim Glens, where topographic conditions and isolation have preserved an unusually full series of archaic vehicles, I have seen a light forked slipe loaded with sacks of peat being man-hauled, the forked end being lifted off the ground by a rope bearing on the puller's shoulder. This is in effect a slide-car, and although the Irish slide-car is always pulled by a pony, it may be noticed that the Swedish slide-car, used mainly for carrying hay, is often man-hauled. No doubt the forked form is the more primitive and there is some evidence to suggest that it was from a forked slide-car that the first European carts and wagons were evolved by the addition of

[1] E. E. Evans, 'Some Archaic Forms of Agricultural Transport in Ulster' in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), (1951), 108–23; J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, *Man*, 51 (1951), 3–5.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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wheels and a draught-pole. The body of the traditional ox-cart of Spain and many parts of India is suggestively triangular in shape. 493 [483]

The horse-drawn, wheel-less slide-car consists in its simplest form of two parallel poles, serving both as shafts and runners, fastened together by cross-pieces which form a carrying platform (Fig. 59). It was widely used down to the eighteenth century, but is now confined in distribution almost entirely to Ulster and in function mainly to the transport of turf from mountain bogs down steep tracks to the valley farms. For this purpose a large creel or kish is secured to the carrying platform, and it will take loads of potatoes or manure as required, but as a vehicle for general farm use the slide-car is now virtually extinct. That it has lingered so long in the mountainous corners of Ulster is perhaps due to the fact that the creel-carrying ass did not supplant it as it did in the milder south and west of Ireland (Pl. 8, 1).

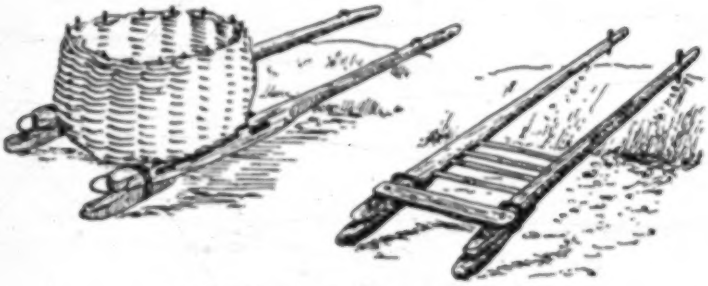

FIG. 59. Slide-cars, Cos. Tyrone and Antrim.

This primitive vehicle, which can be constructed entirely of wood—in treeless districts even bog-timber was utilized[1]—is of high antiquity and of great ethnographic interest. It has been contended that the one-horse wheel-car evolved from a slide-car to which a log roller had been fitted, and in view of the fact that the wheel-car has a revolving axle such an evolutionary sequence seems probable. Gösta Berg thinks that this evolution took place in the heart of Asia,[2] but there is the possibility that

[1]H. Dutton, *Clare* (1808), 65.
[2]Gösta Berg, *Sledges and Wheeled Vehicles* (1935), 140.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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493 the block wheel was independently invented in north-western Europe, or at least adapted from the log roller as a native response to the novelty of the spoked wheel.

A feature of the Ulster slide-cars which distinguishes them both from Scots and Welsh examples and from most other slide-cars is the provision of separate wooden runners or 'shoes' which are pegged to the ends of the shafts and can be replaced when worn out. They have the effect of reducing somewhat the slope of the platform and its load. Formerly a special slide-car was kept for carrying corn, the sheaves being supported by a [171] hooped frame of osiers which finds parallels in Sweden and Finland. Another archaic feature was the harness, which was [492] constructed, until quite recent times, entirely of wood, straw and withies (Fig. 69).

Slide-cars, 'strange survivals from the twilight of history',[1] 171 are found not only in Highland Britain and the Baltic lands but 493 in many parts of east central Europe, in Siberia, China, Siam and the Indian Deccan. Such a distribution points to a dispersal in high antiquity, probably from western Asia. There is no direct archaeological evidence of ancient slide-cars but it has been plausibly argued that the well-known 'cart tracks' of Malta were made by slide-cars some 3,000 years ago.[2] This humble vehicle is well suited to simple societies, whose transport needs are few, and to country, especially hilly country, without made roads, where the wheel would be out of place.

In Ireland the wheel-car clings to the same districts as the 493 slide-car and serves much the same purpose, but it may occasionally be used for longer journeys by road, for example to take an animal to the fair. (Slide-cars are very injurious to roads and were driven off them by ordinances against their [494] use on the highways). On steep slopes the wheels, being secured to a rotating axle, act as a brake on each other. Measuring only some two feet in diameter, they are composed of three segments of wood dowelled together as in the oldest known Mesopotamian wheels, and shod with an iron hoop. They revolve under the car inside the shafts, so that the body must be raised to give clearance. It is supported by vertical struts morticed into the

[1] A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man* (1898), 161.
[2] H. S. Gracie, *Antiquity* (1954), 91–98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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rear ends of the shafts, which are, however, left projecting so as to take the weight of the tilted car when it is not in use. It is these projecting shafts or 'trams' which give the wheel-car the appearance of a slide-car on wheels and seem to confirm the suggested evolution (Fig. 55). 493

In eighteenth-century Ireland possession of a wheel-car was a mark of social distinction, and entire districts were without wheeled vehicles of any kind. Down to the middle of the nineteenth century it was considered 'respectable' to go to 'meetings' in a wheel-car in the Presbyterian parts of north Antrim. In the course of the nineteenth century, as the larger spoke-wheeled cart was adopted by prosperous farmers, the little wheel-car sought refuge in the poor mountainous districts where we find it clinging precariously today. As late as the 1914–18 war one was in use on a farm on Black Mountain, within the city boundary of Belfast (Pl. 8, 2). 493 554

The wheel-car has its place in history because it was the ancestor of the nineteenth century jaunting-car which Lloyd Praeger rightly lists as one of the essentially native Irish products.[1] The platform of the wheel-car, to which a box body or a wicker-work creel was secured when goods were being carried, became a seat, covered with a straw mat, when the vehicle was used for social occasions. The passengers sat on each side, back to back, their feet dangling near the ground or resting on a hay-rope slung fore and aft, which could accommodate any length of leg. By the end of the eighteenth century this 'side-car', fitted with wooden foot-rests, had become a standard hiring vehicle, and it needed only the substitution of spoked for solid wheels, the addition of springs and consequent alterations of height to give the Irish jaunting-car which Bianconi adopted in 1815 and later developed into the four-wheeled long-car.[2] There can be no doubt that 'the Bians', traversing the highways and byways of the whole country, made a contribution to the social and economic life of Ireland which was, in its day, as important as that of the railway in the latter part of the century or the motor bus in the twentieth century. 493

The spoked wheel, which throughout the eighteenth century 401 177

[1]R. Ll. Praeger, *The Way that I Went* (1937), Ch. I.
[2]I. J. Herring, *U.J.A.*, 3 (1940), 115–22; *U.J.A.*, 7 (1944), 42–46.

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493 was reserved for coaches and the carriages of the rich, was popu-
177 larized by its adoption for farm carts (Scots carts) under the
[401] improving zeal of landlords towards the end of the century. In Ulster, which has always looked to Scotland for its inspiration, the Scots cart was first used for transporting linen, and one thinks of it spreading along the improved roads and being copied and adapted to local needs and traditions. Around Lough Erne, for instance, one reads of large one-horse carts, adopted by carriers in the early nineteenth century, which had 'trams' or rearshafts four feet long,[1] and these projections, surely a reminiscence of the long slide-car runners, are still characteristic of the 'flat' carts of the west and south-west (Fig. 60).

493 The Scots cart with its four-foot wheels was able to take twice the load of the native wheel-car, and as industry increased and roads were improved through the nineteenth century it drove the block-wheeled cars off the roads. But for rough work in the fields and bogs various types of slipe were preferred: the cart
[554] was little used for harvesting and its possession was to some extent a sign of prestige. (Unlike the native car, the woodwork
[531] of the cart was and is brightly painted, usually in red and blue.) The slipe and slide-car were better adapted to moist ground, to undrained fields and the uneven surface of ridge and furrow. As roads and farm practice were improved it was a new version of Scots cart (Fig. 60) which ultimately drove out the slide-car and the wheel-car in Ulster. It seems that the older varieties of Irish carts were derived from the Leith cart of the eastern lowlands of Scotland.[2] The body consisted of little more than a slatted platform without fixed sides and ends. This 'flat cart', as distinct from the 'box cart', is the usual pattern of farm cart in the west of Ireland and, fitted with springs, is the common hawker's cart. As a farm cart it suits the small farmer because it can be used for a variety of purposes by fitting different kinds of sides, for example tall slatted 'crates' for carrying turf.

493 Towards the middle of the nineteenth century there was
177 evolved, in Lanarkshire and the neighbouring counties, the box
531 cart with upright panelled sides perhaps derived from the

[1] L. Atthill, *Recollections of an Irish Doctor* (1911), 44.
[2] R. L. Edgeworth, *An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages* (1813).

 [Text continues on p. 178]

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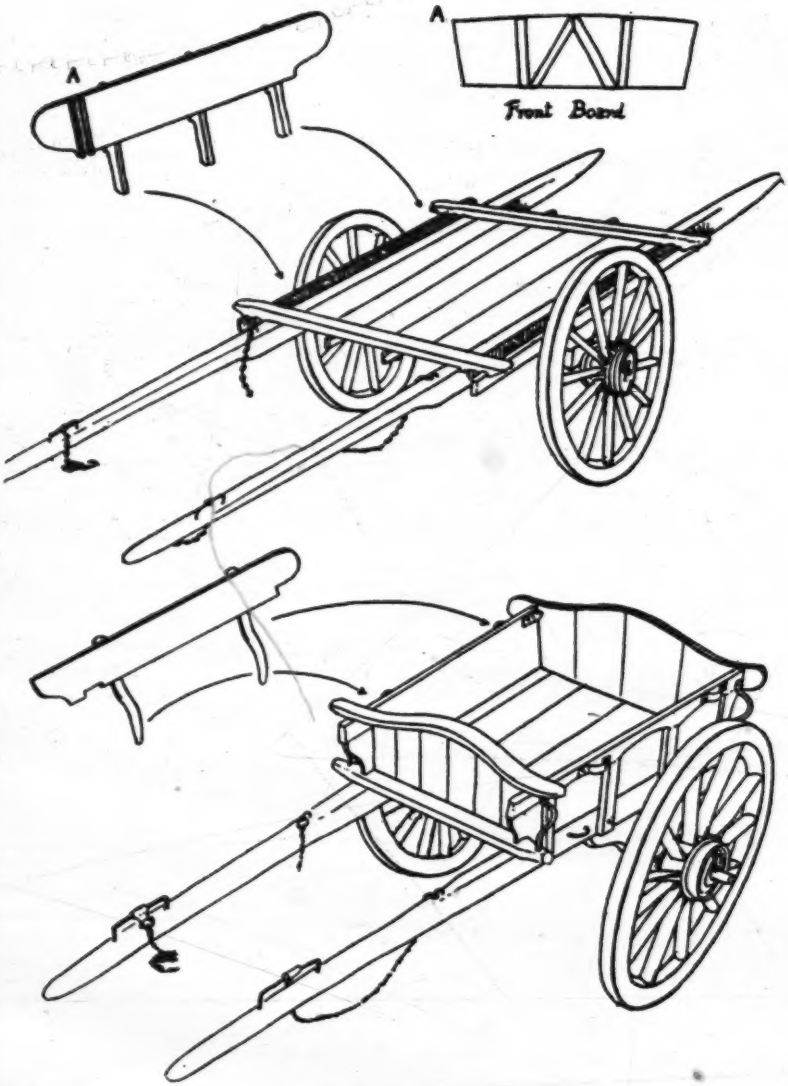

FIG. 60. The Scots cart in Ireland. *Above:* the flat cart with projecting trams, Killarney, Co. Kerry. *Below:* the improved box cart, Cushendall, Co. Antrim (after G. B. Thompson).

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wagon, a sturdy vehicle which was manufactured by large Scottish firms and exported far and wide and also copied locally. Its distribution can be readily traced because it carried an unusual design on the front board—the 'spectacles'—consisting of a pattern of linked circles out cut of an outer layer of horizontal boarding which is applied to the main vertical boarding of the front-board. The design is further emphasized by being painted a contrasting colour, red or blue. The spectacle design became a kind of trade-mark of the Lanarkshire style of cart. It may have evolved simply by the gradual enlargement of two curving strengthening boards at top and bottom, until they met to form a design which became standardized (Fig. 61). C. F. Tebbutt is inclined to seek an origin in the magic *oculi* such as occur in prehistoric pottery and to this day on Mediterranean boats, but it is difficult to see the connecting links.[1] If one looks for a more practical origin it could be argued that when freshly painted front-boards were first fitted to carts they were marked and damaged by the rump and tail of the horse. At any rate I have occasionally noticed a spectacle-like pattern rubbed by the horse on to the paint of Scots carts not fitted with the recessed front-board. On this theory the board was strengthened by means of panelling while at the same time the shaped recess gave the horse's rear a little more space and saved the paint.

In Ireland the Scots cart with 'fiddle' (spectacle) decoration has an interesting distribution corresponding closely with the area of historic Scottish influence, from east Down across Antrim to Londonderry and north Donegal. It has replaced the flat-cart over much of Ulster, but the latter survives in south Fermanagh, in an area where thatched houses with hipped roofs are also found, representing an older culture-layer. In Scotland it is found throughout the Highlands and Islands, in the central lowlands and the south-west. In eastern England the Scots cart has replaced older forms over a wide area extending from Lincolnshire to North Bedfordshire and from Essex to South-east Nottinghamshire. Mr. Tebbutt believes that it was first introduced to the fenlands by improving farmers who, in the second half of last century, looked to the Scottish lowlands as a model of farming methods. In all these areas the original

[1]C. F. Tebbutt, *Man*, 55 (1955), 113–17.

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spectacle design was retained but in time instead of being panelled it was merely painted on the front-board. In Ulster carts of this kind, lacking the tilting device of the Scots prototype, have been made until recent years by many local wheelwrights, and it is interesting to notice how the original panelled design, which is present on old specimens, has been replaced by painted motifs which break up into many varieties, some of which are shown in Fig. 61. Mr. Tebbutt illustrates similar sequences of derived decoration on English carts. 493 177 531

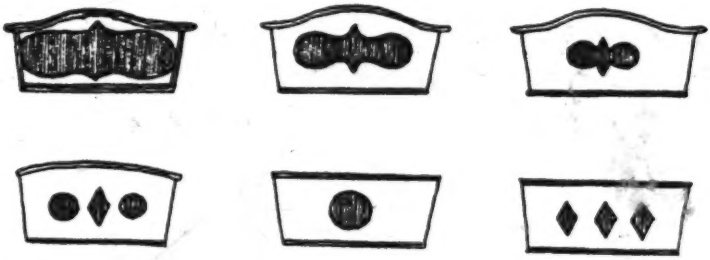

FIG. 61. The 'fiddle' design on the Scots cart in north-eastern Ireland. The front-boards illustrated are all from Co. Antrim and suggest both the derivation and the deterioration of the design. The upper examples are panelled and painted, the lower simply painted. The recess in the 'cape' of the first example is for the horse's tail.

The Scots cart with its box body, ideal for holding sacks of corn or potatoes, is not suited for carrying home crops, and both in Scotland and Ireland it is supplemented by a specialized harvest carrier known as the rick-shifter. This is a large platform with low wheels, fitted with a windlass by which the cock of hay or hut of corn is dragged into position on the platform. It is often dispensed with in moving hay cocks to the haggard, for they can easily be pulled or 'traced' along the ground simply by harnessing a horse to a chain placed around the base of the cock, a method which was used in the eighteenth century (Pl. 12). Six bullocks 'yoked as for ploughing' were employed for this purpose in Co. Meath.[1] The rick-shifter appears to have evolved 493 177 [492]

[1] W. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 217. See also J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, loc. cit.

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from the platform carts of the East Scottish or Leith type. Edgeworth remarks in 1813 that carts of this kind were common in the Low Countries and many parts of France. What more likely than that this model should have reached Scotland by way of the port of Leith? The district bordering the Firth of Forth was an area of rapid agricultural improvement after 1750, and it was to it that Irish landlords turned for new ideas at the end of the century. The rick-shifter was probably evolved at some period from the same source, for Edgeworth tells us that the platform carts of the Low Countries were fitted with windlasses attached to the shafts. But it is risky to speculate on these matters: for example, a simple horse-drawn hay-rake, now rarely seen, used to be considered characteristically Irish and was popularly known as a 'tumbling paddy'. This rotating sweep is stated to have been introduced from America in 1850.[1]

[1] *Agricultural Implements and Machinery* (Science Museum), 1930.

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XIV

TURF AND SLANE

IT should perhaps be explained that this chapter has nothing to do with horses, for the word *turf* in Ireland keeps its old meaning—as in German *torf* and French *tourbe*—and is the equivalent of the English word *peat*. Only in the extreme north-east of the country, in districts settled by Scots planters, does one hear turves cut from the bog referred to as peats. The cutting-spade, a highly specialized tool, is known as a turf-spade or sleán, a Gaelic word which may be anglicized as slane. 314

Moving about the Irish countryside one is never long out of sight or scent of turf. The scent arises not from the bogs themselves, which for all their accumulated decay are free of the odours of putrifaction, but from the surprisingly sweet smell of burning turf which announces their proximity. For the returning exile nothing so surely tugs at the trigger of memory: the faintest whiff of turf smoke hanging in the damp air is enough to recall the whole scene, the glowing fire on the hearth, the half-light of the kitchen, the great turf stack at the gable and all the toil that went to its making. And in the background is the bog itself, save at the cutting season a quiet empty place, holding a stillness which deepens when the curlew's cry fades away or the startled pipit drops back into the heather. Green and gold in spring, it beckons with waving bog-cotton in summer and glows with reds and russets as of a great peat fire in autumn. These are scents and scenes not readily forgotten.

The use of turf as fuel is nowadays an index of isolation and economic self-sufficiency. Mechanical excavation of fuel for power plants is being successfully applied by Bord na Mona (the Irish Turf Board) but for domestic fuel nothing can replace 372 314

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314 the costly hand-cutting, -wheeling, and -turning. The calorific value of peat is less than half that of coal, and its bulk makes
372 transport costs high. Small coal-boats put in at harbours all round the coast, and in the larger towns, whose adjacent supplies
[439] were early exhausted, coal has been the chief fuel since the days when Dean Swift vainly advised the Irish to burn everything English except their coal. During the second world war, however, even Dublin had to depend on turf brought from the west and stacked in immense piles in Phoenix Park. Some peat is still burnt in the towns, especially in the interior of the country, but it is in the small farms that the bulk of the annual turf harvest is consumed. So necessary was a supply of peat in former times that proximity to a turf bog was a factor in land values. As to the antiquity of its use as fuel in Ireland we have little evidence, though Pliny describes its preparation in ancient Germany. Petty tells us in the second half of the seventeenth century that 'their fuel is turf in most places',[1] although Professor O'Brien, writing of the same century states that 'until the woods began to sink to very small proportions, turf was not at all employed for heating.'[2] The difficulty is that such a lowly pursuit as peat-cutting is not likely to be mentioned in the Irish law texts, and if we rely on documentary evidence alone we might suppose that all sorts of ancient practices were introduced by the English who first described them. To judge from the bright red ashes one frequently sees in the excavated hearths of Dark Age habitations peat was used as firing before history begins in upland areas and along the wind-swept coasts. But we may accept the view that over most of the country turf-cutting on its historic scale developed, probably under the stimulus of improved techniques brought in by English settlers, after the major forest clearances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is evidence from some parts of the country, for the eighteenth century, that the cutting of peat for winter use was one of the occupations of transhumant herders who took their livestock to the bog pastures in summer.[3] But it is unreasonable to suppose that the great labour involved

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), 82.
[2]G. O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century*, 44.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down*, 125.

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would have been undertaken so long as supplies of timber were 314
available, though Petty observed that 'the cutting and carriage
of turf was easier than that of wood.'[1] We may think of turf 372
as supplementing and then coming to replace wood fuel, though in fact some wood is still very desirable to supplement the slow-burning turf, especially the quick-burning gorse and bog-fir which are the most readily available sources in treeless areas.

It is calculated that at least one fifth of the country is coated 314
with bog, but a small proportion of this could be classed as
reclaimed bog. It occurs not only in all the mountain areas but [133]
also, and more conspicuously, in the ill-drained hollows of the lowlands where glacial deposits had blocked the natural flow of waters or human occupation had brought about environmental changes. It is estimated that in recent years over 5 million tons of dried domestic fuel have been cut annually, representing a weight as cut of some 40 million tons. At this rate the supply is reckoned to last for 500 years, but this makes no allowance for
the increasing exploitation of peat for the thermal generation of [375]
electricity and for the extraction of by-products. There is, however, a slow accretion of peat in many areas, though this consists mostly of sphagnum peat and the good-quality fen and forest peats of the deeper bogs are not being replaced. In fact these deeper layers tend to remain untapped either because the water cannot be drained away, or because layers of tree-stumps defy the attacks of both spade and mechanical digger.

The main causative factor in bog-formation is waterlogged 137
soil, which checks the decomposition of vegetable remains. It
therefore depends to a considerable extent on climate and on the 314
balance between precipitation and evaporation. It is generally held that past phases of bog-growth can be correlated with periods of climatic deterioration, and horizons which are believed to mark the changed conditions can be traced in most of the deep bogs. In Scandinavia the most important of such 'recurrence horizons' has been dated by pollen-analysts and archaeologists to about 400 B.C.: the stormy sub-Atlantic climate whose beginning is thus chronicled is believed to have improved somewhat early in the Christian era, but to have suffered two further periods of worsening about A.D. 400 and

[1]Sir W. Petty, op. cit., 82.

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A.D. 1800. Attempts to extend this chronological scheme to cover Ireland have not been successful, and the current view is that some at least of the recurrence horizons should be attributed to ecologic changes brought about by human action which led to the redistribution of water and the blocking of drainage. Admittedly the basal Boreal peats of lowland bogs, and the Atlantic peats which succeeded them, must have been formed without any appreciable human interference, for in those periods traces of man are either absent or few and limited in distribution, but from sub-Boreal times onwards, after 2500 B.C., we have to reckon with human societies equipped with tools and domestic animals capable of working far-reaching changes in environmental conditions. The blanket bogs which cover the mountain slopes and in the west spread indiscriminately over hundreds of square miles of upland and lowland alike are admittedly associated with areas of heavy precipitation and high humidity, but the significant fact is that some of them can be shown to have been initiated in sub-Boreal times following extensive clearance of the woodlands which previously grew there. Walking over the upland bogs, I have stepped on to the roofing slab of a great stone monument which once stood seven feet clear of the ground: it had been completely engulfed in peat formed since its erection. Study of the bottom layer of this bog showed that it contained pollen grains of cereal type and of weeds of cultivation such as ribwort plantain.[1] Leaching of soils exposed by shallow cultivation and the formation of iron-pan seem to have followed human occupation of the sandy moraines and residual soils to which early man was attracted by their dryness and by the lightness of their forest cover. The extensive areas affected, despite the presumably small population, may be explained if we suppose that cultivation was temporary and that settlements were moved every few years.

These blanket bogs are rarely more than six or eight feet thick and many stretches have been reduced by turf cutting and erosion to a mere skin with occasional residual hags betraying their former depth. The so-called raised bogs of the lowlands, in contrast, are not easily cut-out: they are often very deep,

[1] G. F. Mitchell, *P.R.I.A.*, 53B (1951), 159.

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averaging some twenty feet, and they have had a far longer life. 137
In their natural condition their surface is slightly convex, and
they may come to stand, perversely, above the level of the 314
surrounding countryside, though they began life in ill-drained hollows where reeds grew to make fen-peat. These lower layers tend to be alkaline in nature and when the upper layers are cut away the bogs may be turned into productive cropland if adequate drainage can be provided. Small areas of this type occur to the south of Lough Neagh, but Ireland has nothing to compare with the English fenlands. Yet the Irish bogs take their place in the agricultural economy as summer grazing grounds, [311]
formerly for mixed stock and for cattle in particular, latterly mainly for sheep. In the past, too, considerable use was made of [313]
buried timber dug from the bogs,[1] of oak for roofing beams and of pine for kindling and resinous 'splits' to give light. The long 'trying iron' with which buried timber was located is shown in Fig. 66, together with the massive 'fir hatchet' and 'fir rooter'.

To the ecologist the bogs provide a unique field of research into the history of the occupation of the country by plants, animals and man. In the waterlogged depths of the peats everything is preserved, even the tiniest seeds and insects. Centuries of successive summers are chronicled in countless pollens of trees and grasses which the botanist can identify and thereby reconstruct the changes of vegetation from prehistoric times down to the recent past. When man appeared on the scene not only did he leave his pathways and possessions in the bogs, but, as we have seen, he was an agent in their growth. His tools of stone and copper, bronze and iron, evolving in that order, are found lying at levels which can be correlated with the vegetation-history by analysing the pollens that cling to them. Thanks to the labours of Knud Jessen and Frank Mitchell we now have an approximate chronological sequence of landscapes and human cultures in Ireland going back several thousand years.

The pollen grains from the lowest layers of the upland bogs include those of shrubs such as hazel, birch, rowan and thorn, as well as, occasionally, those of cereals and the weeds of cultivation. Evidently the clearings soon became threatened with forest and field weeds, and these companions of the earliest

[1]E. E. Evans, *Irish Heritage*, 142; A. T. Lucas, *Béaloideas*, 23, 71–134.

137 farmers, both the flowers of the fields and the shrubs of the
314 forest edge, took on a special significance which they have retained in the peasant mind to the present day. There is powerful magic in the flowers of May, in the hazel twig, the fairy birch, the rowan branch and above all in the flowering hawthorn. This most beautiful of trees first became common in the Neolithic period. In a later chapter we shall consider some of the enduring spiritual aspects of man's association with this environment of his own making. At about this time, too, when the Neolithic economy was both absorbing the older population and being supplemented by metal tools, pollen studies reveal a marked decline of the elm tree which has been explained by the use of its bark and branches as cattle fodder. The oak forests, however, persisted in strength, and were presumably treasured for their supply of pig-fattening mast. Alder also was abundant, occupying soils which were too damp to be cultivated.

The onset of the sub-Atlantic climatic deterioration in the last millennium B.C. seems to have accelerated the peat-forming processes. Both oak and elm decline, but the birch tree spreads widely. In County Antrim, for instance, extensive oak forests growing up to heights of 1,000 feet were overwhelmed in the spreading bogs. The pine had become rare by the end of prehistoric times, though it may have lingered into the historic period on sandy eskers and on the dried surfaces of some of the raised bogs. Despite climatic change and human interference, considerable oak and alder forests survived here and there into the seventeenth century, but these last remnants of the Irish forests were almost all destroyed by the military and economic demands of that troubled century. Among the many consequences was the almost universal exploitation of the peat bogs for fuel. In addition great quantities of turf were consumed by the linen bleachers from the late eighteenth century, and kilns for burning lime and bricks and for drying agricultural produce made considerable demands on the bogs. A minor traditional
[372] use which may be mentioned in passing was for the preparation of charcoal for smith's work. The peat was charred in pits.

314 For all its toil turf-cutting provides a welcome break from
786 the routine of farmwork, a time when friends and neighbours come together away from the familiar surroundings of fields

and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this 314
time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals
and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf- [786]
cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the
lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a
stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out
of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades
and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on
fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an
exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers
that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the differ-
ence between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere
the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an [132]
early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the
planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month,
so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There
is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when [821]
the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the
tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it
is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but
once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep
cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a [521]
'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the [423]
decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when
banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally
has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or [476]
three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in
turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the
helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient
fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required
depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf.
Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown
top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a
proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist
humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like
coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is
the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that [804]
a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading, [461]

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314 could account for twenty-five loads in a day, but, my in-
[461] formant added, 'they would need to be strong in the back and weak in the head'; as at corn harvest competitive cutting and 'striving' brought intense excitement and severe strain.

'Opening up' a bank involves first of all the removal of the top layer of tough fibrous peat—'flow' or 'fum'—to a depth of a foot or so. It grows heather, tough grasses or mosses and makes poor firing, though there are districts, especially on the islands, which have exhausted their turf and burn nothing but the even more fibrous sods or 'rough-heads' skinned off the rocks. The common spade is usually employed for opening a face, supplemented often by a sharp nicking tool, a hay-knife
[412] or a portion of an old scythe-blade hafted for the purpose. In parts of north Ulster the thin top-layer of the mountain bogs is removed with a small variant of the breast-plough known as a flachter or flaying-spade, one of the tools which this region shares with western Scotland (Fig. 45). The term breast-plough is a euphemism, for it is really a groin-plough, pushed forward by thrusts of the thighs and groin.

The bog parings are generally spread on the cut-over bog below the bank, where they give a dry footing for the barrow-men wheeling away the turves. The pared sods in time consolidate, so that the rough grazing of the bog is preserved at a lower level. Conditions vary considerably from one bog to another, and so do the methods of working and the shapes of the tools. The minutiae of the craft are so perfected that a team of diggers works with the rhythm of a machine. Strong arms are required—a single turf may weigh up to 20 lb. when cut—but experience and a good eye are necessary for speed, and skilled 'slanesmen' are becoming scarce. Great importance was attached to 'keeping a straight face', that is keeping the cutting face vertical, and a poor digger was referred to as a 'clod-cutter'. To break a turf was almost a crime: in the old days 'they'd have thrown you out of the bog'. Not only do broken turves double the handling each time they are lifted or turned, but they tend to break adjacent turves when stacked, and the stack will show by its shape if the turf has been badly cut. At the end of the bank it is customary, in the north, to leave three steps of turf uncut. They enable one to scramble out on to the

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uncut bog above, but one suspects that behind the custom there 314
lies the widespread notion that a task should never be completely finished and that a small portion of anything taken by man should be left for luck or the fairies. You will be told that the steps are cut to avoid the curse of Columbkille, for it is [776]
said that the saint was once trapped in a bog hole and laid a curse on all who did not cut the three steps.

There are two methods of cutting, vertically or 'underfooting' and horizontally or 'breasting', and they tend to be used respectively on thin upland and deep lowland bogs, though these have to be cut underfoot if badly drained unless a platform or 'footgo' of flow turf can be built up for the breaster to stand on. Also, the upper layers of brown turf which preserve some of the tough plant fibres are easier to cut vertically. Breasting not only imposes less strain on the back but speeds up the work, since the turves can be retained on the slane and placed directly on the barrow. (The vertical digger can do this only if his spade has a lift, that is bends forward.) In consequence the [493]
breast-cutter's turf-barrow will be designed for his convenience, for example it commonly has no legs so that he can swing it into position laterally by hooking the wing of his spade over the handle. Slanes, as well as barrows, will be found to vary in some 314
slight degree from one bog to another, and a seemingly trivial 412
difference can generally be explained in terms of differences of local conditions and techniques: the human ecology of the bogs is no less interesting than the plant ecology. In essentials the turf slane is a narrow straight-shafted steel blade with a wing set at right-angles after the manner of a cheese-knife, which is said, indeed, to owe its origin to 'an ingenious cutler of Dublin' who borrowed the idea from the slane.[1] The purpose of the wing is to detach a complete turf at a single stroke of the spade. The breadth and length of blade and wing are variables depending on many factors, but mainly on the size of turf required, and this in turn is determined to a considerable extent by the nature of the bog. If it is a very wet bog, for example, the turves must be cut larger than normal to allow for greater shrinkage on drying. When absolutely dry peat will shrink to less than one-eighth its original volume, and though air-dried peat still contains

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*, 96

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314 about 25 per cent water, when cut it may have 90 per cent
412 or more. Again, some kinds of peat come away easily so that the turves can be cut somewhat larger than the dimensions of the slane, which for ease of working is naturally made as small and light as possible.

Increasingly in this as in every other department of rural labour, standardized implements are gaining ground, but the Irish spade factories still cater for scores of different tastes. When slanes were smith-forged almost every turf-cutter had his individual tool, made to measure. The factory-made slane weighs about 3¾ lb., but the old-style slane was merely a thin sheath of steel wrapped around a wooden blade and weighing about 1½ lb. It comprised four parts, blade, spade-tree, shaft and hilt, though shaft and spade-tree were sometimes in one piece, the shaft flattening out to enter the blade in a long 'web' (Fig. 62, 1). The thick round shaft, which had to be truly centred in the blade, was polished smooth as a piston with peaty sweat rubbed in. The two-piece haft, with separate spade-tree (No. 2), gave a certain springiness which eased the work. In the same

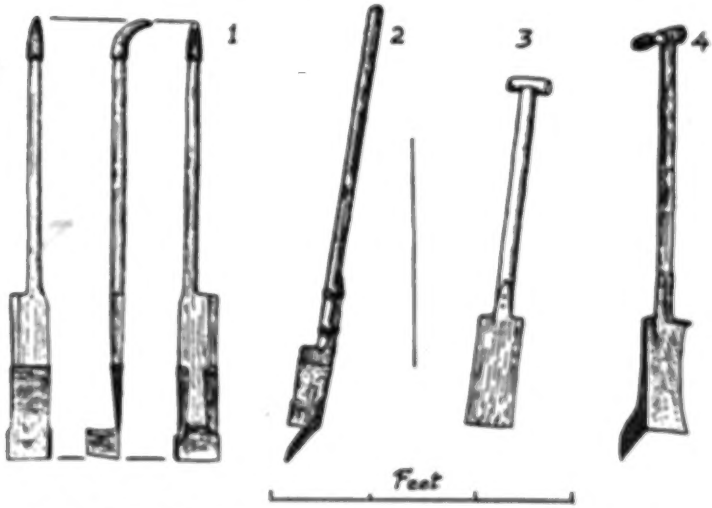

FIG. 62. Slanes old and new. Nos. 1 (Co. Antrim) and 3 (Co. Down) are breast spades; Nos. 2 (Co. Galway) and 4 (Co. Londonderry) are underfoot.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

way a separate hilt, frequently a cow's horn well polished by use, saved the strain on the palm of the hand, but many slanesmen preferred a handle shaped to their own taste and to the needs of the cutting technique required. In the Antrim Glens I have seen a bent piece of black sally carefully spliced on: this wood is said to have the virtue of absorbing sweat. The blade itself widens towards the cutting edge which is from four to six inches in width, the splay preventing the spade from sticking in the wet peat. The cutting edge of the wing is anything from four to seven inches long, and the top edge is finished in a variety of pleasing shapes and is often notched with the proprietary marks of the owner. 314 412

A breast slane can as a rule be distinguished from the underfoot by the upward slant of the cutting edge of the wing as viewed from the side with the spade held vertically, whereas the wing of the underfoot slane slopes down. This ensures that the face of the bog which is left after cutting shall be vertical when breasting and horizontal when underfooting, for the strokes are naturally made with a slight downward slope in the former case and a forward slope in the latter. Another difference is that the underfoot slane is normally provided with a foot-step on one side or the other, depending on whether the user is left or right handed. In practice the foot is not used, however, unless the peat is very tough and little humified. Bits of fibrous matter (called fog, cat or 'old wife's tow') clogging the cutting edge are troublesome, but it is kept clean by a quick preliminary jab into the peat, which reminds one of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the blacksmith. Modern slanes tend to have the blade made all in one piece, riveted to the haft with straps and fitted with a narrow foot-plate on the side away from the wing. (Fig. 62, 4.) The breast slane has been partly replaced, especially in wet bogs, by a short-handled flat spade which cuts larger peats (Fig. 62, 3). They are of a good shape for stacking and for transport on the canal-boats and, latterly, the lorries which supply Dublin with turf.

For taking the cut peats to the spread-field two wheelers and turf barrows are the minimum needs. The severed turves may be placed directly from the spade on to the waiting barrow, but a loader is more often required, lifting two turves at a 314 493

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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314 time: his finger marks can still be seen when the dried turves
are burning in the fire. In deep bogs the lifter may use a long-
493 handled fork (Fig. 66, 2) or shovel, pitching the turves for the
barrowman to load. A barrow load is anything from ten to
twenty peats. Apparently crude and artless, the turf barrow is
well designed for its purpose, and it shows many adaptations
to local conditions and traditions (Fig. 63). It is slatted for
lightness and is made almost entirely of wood, yet it must be
strong enough to take heavy loads over rough ground: it should
be low and flat for convenience in loading and unloading, yet it
needs a large broad wheel for pushing over an uneven surface.
Legs may be dispensed with, reduced to lugs or swept back to
serve as runners. Again the shape of the handles and the slope
of the front board depend on the method of loading and tipping,
over the side or over the front. Every detail of the design is in
answer to a general or local problem. If the ground is very
rough or soft the barrow must be pulled, not pushed, and in
extreme cases its place is taken by a slipe. In Antrim alone there
are several varieties of turf slipe. All are slatted lengthwise—
because the peats are loaded transversely—and are fitted with
short corner posts and tipping handles. An interesting variant—
the roller slipe—has been recorded but is no longer seen: it had
two rollers fitted under the body of the sledge.[1] The dried peats
also may be transported, if the bog is soft, on a slipe (Fig. 58, 5)
or in a carrying basket (Fig. 57).

Despite ingenious shifts towards greater speed the spreading
314 and drying of turf are inefficient because of the time taken in
372 wheeling and handling and the great difficulty of drying turf
which is spread on almost saturated surfaces. In exceptionally
wet summers the peats do not dry out, and tragedy may follow
if the winter is severe. It is then that the countryside is stripped
of what little timber it can provide, and before coal was obtain-
able anything from furniture to fishbones and cowdung was
297 utilized to boil the pot. In bogless districts dung was quite
372 regularly used: there are several accounts of it in travel records
of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed in the tree-
less islands dung was until recently carefully harvested, gathered
in piles in the fields in spring, and sometimes worked with the

[1] E. E. Evans in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), plate 8a.

 [Text continues on p. 194]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Armagh

PLATE 13

243
301
284

1. Harvest knots, Co. Armagh.

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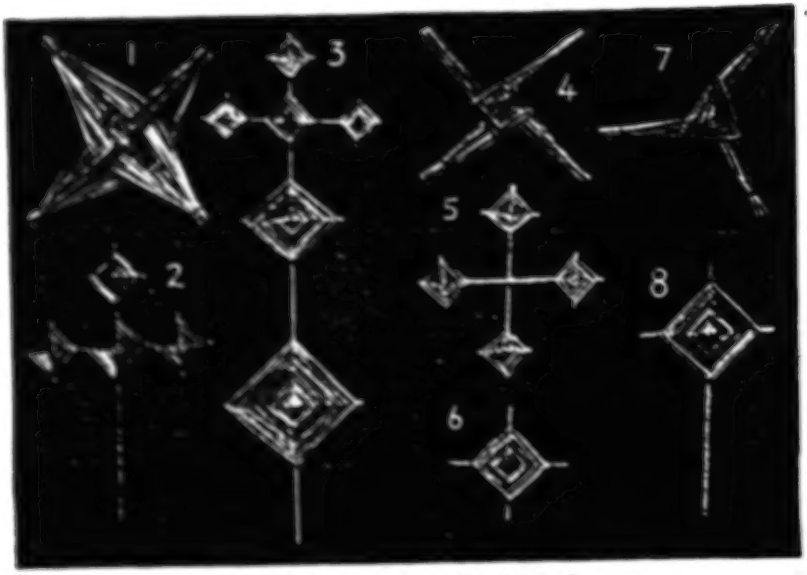

2. Bridget's Crosses, Co. Armagh.

[facing p. 192]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Galway

PLATE 14

764

Salruck graveyard, Co. Galway, with tobacco pipes left on graves.

[Facing p. 193]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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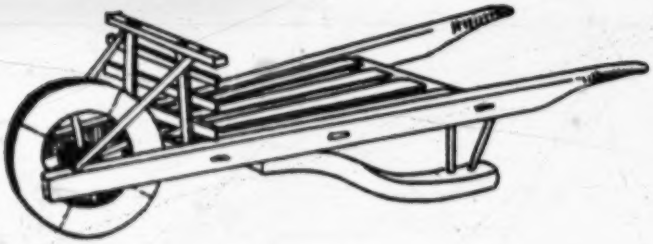
493



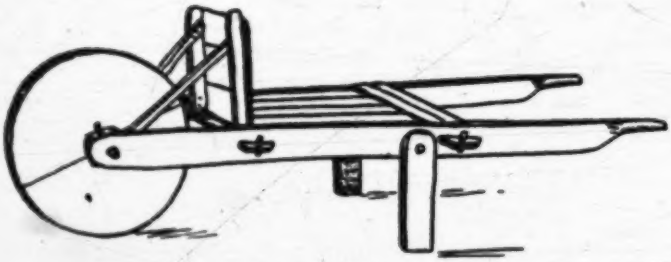


FIG. 63. Turf barrows from Cos. Meath, Donegal and Antrim

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

372 hands into cakes and piled against a wall until dry enough to
237 carry home.[1]

After lying spread on the ground for a week or two the turves
314 are footed, that is a dozen or so are put to lean together in the shape of a pitched roof, to catch the wind (Fig. 64). This is
[462] work for women and for children, who are, in some districts,
[857] given a week's holiday from school. Through the months of June and July and often into August there is constant coming and going as the peats are turned and built into larger and larger piles, turn-foots, castles, rickles, lumps and clamps—the names and the shapes show considerable regional variation—until they can be ricked or stacked on the bog ready to be carried to the farms as opportunity offers. The wind is the main drying agent, and once dried the peats acquire a waterproof skin. A well-built stack will throw off the rain, but it is usual in the west to thatch with rushes and add a coping of sods or stones against the wind. Open-sided turfsheds specially built
[343] of wood or stone are the exception rather than the rule. A favourite place for the stack is against the house gable, where it provides a protective warmth even before the turf is burnt. The fuel is taken into the house in baskets, creels or wights, and a small supply is kept handy by the fireside or stored, as in the Aran Islands, on the kitchen loft (Pl. 9, 2).

FIG. 64. Stages in the drying and stacking of turf (not to scale; the stack, right, is about 9 feet high).

Some lowland bogs are too waterlogged to be cut into turves, and if no slane-turf is available the black turf-mud is moulded by hand into bricks or balls which are stacked to dry. In some counties, for instance Meath and Cavan, mud turf is highly prized and its preparation follows a well-ordered routine. After

[1]C. R. Browne and A. C. Haddon, *The Aran Islands*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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removing the sods over a rectangular area the turf is dug over to a spit's depth and worked into a slush with forks and bare feet, water being added if necessary. The slush is shovelled into box barrows and spread out to dry in a layer about nine inches thick. The process is repeated, a spit at a time, until the bottom of the bog or the water table is reached. After a few days, when the layer of black mud is hard enough to bear a man's weight, it is marked out in criss-cross grooves made with the edges of the hands, the bare-footed 'baker' or 'runner' walking backwards during the process and dipping his hands from time to time in water to clean them (Plate 10). The turf bricks marked out in this way are separated with a sharp spade, much as the Romans are said to have cut out their bricks, and they are then laid on end, footed, clamped and stacked in the ordinary way. Gerald Boate's description of the making of mud turf in the first half of the seventeenth century shows how little the methods have changed. 'They fall to the business, dividing it so among the labourers, that one part of them do dig out the earth, or rather the mud, and by spadesfull cast it on a heap, either by the side of the pit or somewhere within the same, where others stand, who very well work it, turning it to and fro, and then with their shovels fill it into certain wooden trays, amongst the English in Ireland peculiarly called lossels; the which being full, another part of the labourers draw the same, with great cords fastened to them, to some dry place within the bog . . . where having poured out the mud, they go back to fetch more, and so go to and fro all day long. On that dry place . . . sit certain women upon their knees, who mould the mud, using nothing else but their hands . . . the turf is fashioned flat and broad beneath, growing narrower towards the top; which being done, the turf is let lie upon the ground the space of a week or more . . . and being reasonably well dried, it is piled up in little heaps, leaving everywhere empty spaces between, that the air and the wind passing through them, they may dry the sooner.' He adds that two women moulders were sufficient to keep twenty men at work.[1] 314

From time to time the worker in the bogs comes across objects lost or buried there as the bog was growing, and we saw above 314 172

[1]G. Boate, *Ireland's Natural History* (1652), 155.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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314 how these are used by the pollen-specialists to build up a bog
172 chronology. Some, like the magnificent gold ornaments of the Bronze Age, were deposited in the bogs, or in lakes where the bogs later grew, for magical purposes. Other objects were sometimes hidden in the hope of being recovered, and still others were thrown into a bog hole when they were worn out. All have been almost perfectly preserved by the peat, whether made of metal or organic material such as wood, leather or clothing. None of the discoveries which occasionally astonish
314 the turf-cutter and relieve the monotony of his labours is more
172 mysterious than the 'bog butter' which is found in wooden
251 vessels or baskets, occasionally in containers of cloth, bark or skin, in quantities ranging from a few pounds to as much as a hundredweight (Fig. 65). During the first half of last century,

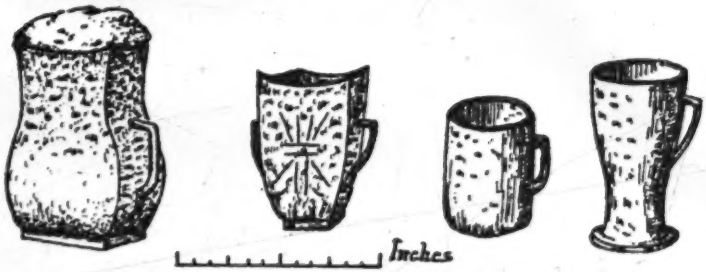

FIG. 65. Methers and wooden cups (Belfast Museum). The first example, from Co. Londonderry, contains bog butter. The cups are from the Aran Islands.

when the pressure of population and industrial needs led to immense inroads on the turf bogs, an astonishing number of finds was made. The 'butter' was a perquisite of the finder, and there are records of its being taken to the fair to be sold as grease for wheel-cars, which, like the 'singing carts' of Spain, were very noisy. In fact it resembles lard rather than butter and analysis shows that its composition has changed, but there can be no doubt that it was originally butter. There are many references to the practice of burying butter in bogs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the explanations offered are also many. Petty thought it was done in order to

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

make the butter rancid, since the Irish, he says, preferred strong butter.[1] An eighteenth century writer states that some of the buried butter was 314 172 251

> So strong, a dog with help of wind,
> By scenting out, with ease might find.[2]

Others have claimed that it was buried to mature and purify it, and one writer has seen an explanation in the need to have butter available at Lent. It is reasonable to suppose that the surplus butter of summer would be stored in this way once the preservative properties of peat were known, but the practice is certainly pre-Christian in origin. None of the Irish finds has been securely dated—the majority of the wooden containers have an ageless 'medieval' appearance—but a discovery in Skye was satisfactorily dated to the very beginning of the Christian era (it contained not only cowhairs but some strands from the head of a fair-haired dairymaid).[3] I am inclined to think that a practice which came to be generally adopted for utilitarian reasons had its origin in magic, and that deposits were originally made in the hope of appeasing the powers of evil and inducing an abundant flow of milk from the pastures.[4] The custom may well have originated during the crisis of the climatic deterioration in the last centuries of the pre-Christian era. Surviving folklore is full of the magic properties of butter, and in the west of [234] Ireland it is known that lumps of butter were thrown into loughs and springs through which cattle were driven in order to restore them to health. It seems from the accounts of discoveries in the bogs that some of the butter containers had been thrown into a bog hole rather than buried. Later, no doubt, it became the practice to bury butter in order to preserve it, but if this had always been so I cannot think that there would have been so many unclaimed deposits left to await the slane of the turf-cutter. It should be noticed that the custom of preserving [171] butter in bogs or in moist earth is found also in Scandinavia, Iceland, India and Morocco.[5] It is interesting that bog butter

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*, 82.
[2]W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle*, Canto 2.
[3]J. Ritchie, *P.S.A.S.*, 75, 5–22.
[4]E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 10, 59–65.
[5]ibid., 59.

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[412]

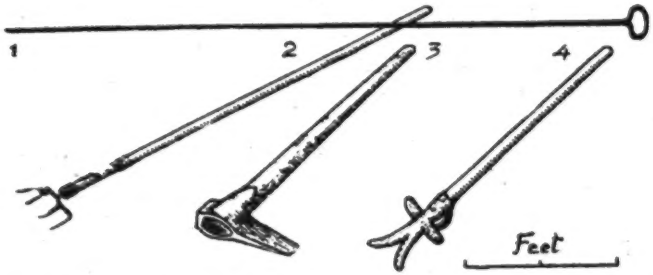

FIG. 66. Some tools used in the bog. (1) Trying iron for locating buried timber, Co. Cork. (2) Turf fork, Co. Armagh. (3) Fir-hatchet or 'finhow', Co. Armagh. (4) Fir-rooter, Co. Galway.

314 contains no salt, but the explanation may be that it was difficult to obtain and that its addition was not necessary when the
172 butter was preserved by burying it. This is confirmed by the
251 following quotation which shows also that the custom of preserving butter in a bog-hole was still remembered a generation ago in Co. Limerick. Lady Carbery writes: 'In their grandfather's time, butter, flavoured with wild garlic and unsalted (salt cost too much to buy except in small quantities) used to be put in a bog-hole and left to ripen.'[1]

[1]M. Carbery, *The Farm by Lough Gur*, 128.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XV

HOME-MADE THINGS

UNTIL the agrarian and industrial revolutions broke up economic self-sufficiency nearly every material need on the small farms was satisfied by the work of the family and the local community. Houses, furniture, food, clothing, simple implements and tools were home made or home produced. The most important specialist was the maker of edged tools, the blacksmith who thus occupied a special position in the community. His forge, customarily placed at a cross roads near running water, was never locked and became a rallying centre for idle men on wet days and for dancing in the evenings. His strength and skill were proverbial and magic powers were attributed to him and to the forge water. The smith was the first person to be invited to social functions. Not being a food producer he was, like the seers and later the priests, entitled to tribute of corn and first fruits. When a beast was slain the head was the perquisite of the smith. The ancient laws prescribe in detail the allotment of the various parts of the carcase to different offices, and the smith's right was maintained down to recent times. George Petrie, the nineteenth century antiquarian, is reported to have said that he remembered the time when a smith might have 50 or 100 heads of cows and pigs pickled in his kitchen.[1] Other craftsmen were itinerant because they could not be supported by the work available in any one district, and the last

[1]See Stephen Gwynn, *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906), 219. The method of dividing a carcase is thus described about the year 1600: the head, tongue and feet to the smith, the neck to the butcher, two small ribs that go with the hindquarters to the tailor, the kidneys to the physician, the udder to the harper, the liver to the carpenter and sweetbread to her that is with child. *C.S.P.* (*I*) (1601–3), 684. Dr. Johnson refers to the custom in the account of his journey to the Western Isles: cf. Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 171.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of
178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

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HOME-MADE THINGS

By far the most versatile of home-produced rope-making 283
materials is straw. Rye straw is longer, softer and more flexible than any other, but very little rye is now grown save along the west coast where it is still the most popular thatching material. Wheat straw is the best substitute, but in fact most farmers must now depend on oat straw, thus 'tying up' some of their fodder. Straw rope (súgán) not only had many direct uses but served as the basis for such crafts as the making of mats, baskets, bee-skeps, mattresses, hen roosts, pigeons' nests and horse harness. It was used for seating chairs and making arm-chairs, and for a great variety of hobbles and tethers for animals and ties for holding down thatch. The fondness of the Irish for tethering and hobbling their livestock must be seen [231] in the light of inadequate fences and the conditions of partnership farming in open fields. Not only the larger animals, but hens, turkeys, and geese were commonly restrained in this way. 'All livestock of the poorer man is in this sort of thraldom' wrote Arthur Young.[1] One may still see a tethered hen with her chickens that might have stepped out of the illuminated pages of the fourteenth century Luttrell Psalter. A straw rope stretched across the kitchen made a serviceable clothes-line. Torches were sometimes made from twisted straw; on the other hand, when [373] suitably coated with mud, straw ropes made a fireproof smoke-canopy. Chopped straw or layers of straw ropes were also used in constructing mud walls, and it is possible that, as in Sweden, [333] stakes wrapped in straw rope daubed in clay were once an alternative to 'wattle and daub' for wall building. It has been stated that the fowlers of the Mayo coast would let themselves down the cliffs on straw ropes,[2] which must have been exceptionally well made; ropes made from the fibres of bog fir were more reliable. In Co. Antrim fowling ropes were of horse hide, but bent ropes are also recorded.[3] I have seen countrymen on a windy fair day wearing an improvised belt over their long coats in the form of a straw rope, and in the early nineteenth century children in Co. Cork were described as 'clad in nothing except a coarse woollen shirt that came half way down the thighs and

[1] Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 37.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 55.
[3] R. Dobbs, *County Antrim in 1683*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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283 was bound about the waist with a suggan of straw.' The Rev. Philip Skelton was said by his biographer 'in cold weather, to go through Pettigo with a straw rope about him, to keep his large coat on.'[1]

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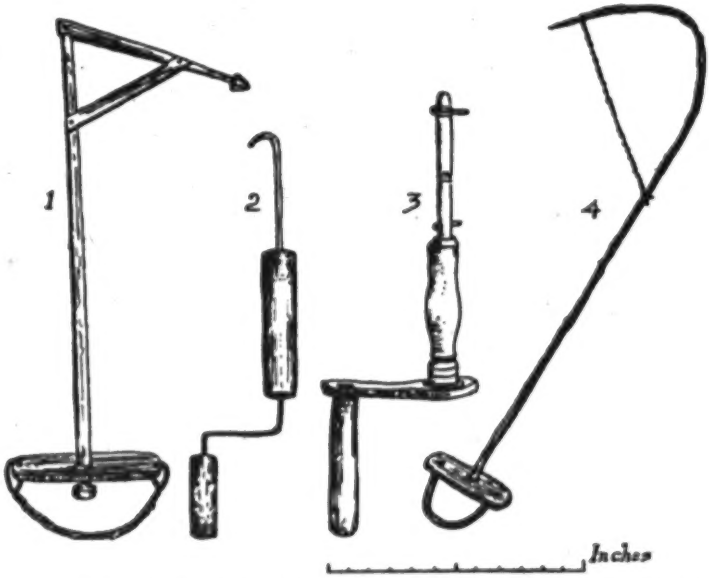

FIG. 67. Rope-twisters. (1) Co. Kerry. (2) Co. Antrim. (3) Co. Armagh. (4) Co. Down. Nos. 1 and 4 are the old-style 'thraw-hooks'.

Short lengths of rope ('thumb-ropes' of hay or straw) are skilfully twisted by hand or, if the material is fine, made by wrapping it round a stick and pulling it out, but a simple tool of ancient lineage, the throw-crook or thraw-hook, is employed when long ropes are needed: it is known also in England and in Scandinavia. A twister of cranked wire resembling a carpenter's brace has, however, largely replaced the wooden hook; it is more tiring but requires less skill (Fig. 67). I have seen a wooden hayrake serving as an improvised thraw-hook. The
283 prepared ropes are wound into golden balls (clews) up to two

[1]S. Burdy, *The Life of Philip Skelton*, 131.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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feet in diameter. (Small, carefully made clews of hay rope, with 283
a centre of rags or corks, are occasionally used as footballs; similar coils of rope in England seem to be oval in shape and would serve rather as balls for Rugby football.) Laying by a stock of clews was a useful occupation for a wet day. The man of the house chose the sedentary end of the rope, sitting under cover in the barn among the thrashed straw and feeding it evenly into the rope as the other end was twisted by a retreating youth armed with a thraw-hook. As the rope grew, the boy had to withdraw into the rain away from the shelter and the sociability of the barn, and this simple scene is the theme of one of Douglas Hyde's Irish plays, *Casadh an tSugáin* (The Twisting [538] of the Rope). A rival suitor makes love to a girl in the barn while the unfortunate twister is forced by his unco-operative employer to watch the proceedings from the end of a lengthening and apparently endless rope.

Hay ropes are both softer and stronger than straw and were used, for example, for parts of the harness where straw ropes would have chafed and broken. They were naturally employed for securing large cocks of hay (tramp cocks, Fig. 52) against the wind; and tethers for young animals were often made of hay rope. A Donegal landlord writing of the early nineteenth century tells of cabbages tethered against the wind with three hay ropes.[1] The shearing rope, four or five feet long, by which the legs of sheep were tied together when clipping the wool, was also made of hay or marram grass. Here we may take note of the curious practice of piecemeal shearing, recorded from [236] Mayo[2] and Donegal[3] and possibly to be attributed to ancient usage rather than to indolence. It seems that the women were in the habit of clipping bits off the sheep at any season, as they needed the wool. Stronger than ropes of straw or hay are those made of rushes or sedges, and stronger still those of fir, heather, birch twigs, willow bark, horsehair or rawhide. Bog fir ropes were still being twisted in north Antrim, a few years ago, for securing thatch and making bed-frames. Ropes were made even from seaweed, as we shall see in the following chapter. Many

[1]J. Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience*, 19.
[2]C. R. Browne, *Garumna and Letterfullen*.
[3]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

283 of these rope-making materials had other uses as well, not forgetting their functions in ceremony and magic as represented by Briget's crosses, harvest knots, the blaeberry baskets of Lammas and the rush ladders of Hallowe'en. Better known, [373] though no longer made, are the rushlights whose feeble glow, in the words of Gilbert White, made 'darkness visible'.

[284] [285]

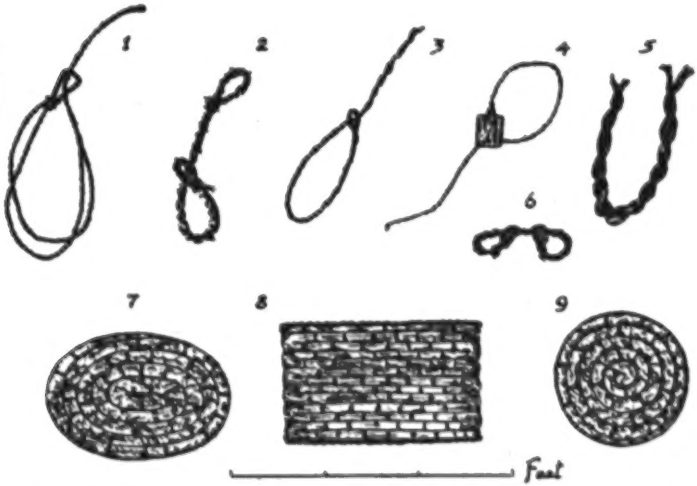

FIG. 68. Ropes and mats. (1) Rush burden rope, Co. Donegal. (2) Tie of cow-hair, Co. Kerry. (3) Willow bark burden rope, Co. Roscommon. (4) Grass burden rope, Aran Islands. (5) Tie of fir-rope, from roof, Co. Down. (6) Sheep's langle of oat straw, Co. Down. (7) Plaited mat of marram grass, Co. Wexford. (8) Coiled mat of rye straw, Aran Islands. (9) Coiled mat of oat straw, Co. Donegal.

283 Examples of ropes and mats of various kinds are shown in Fig. 68. The burden ropes, carefully made in two or three ply, 482 enabled quite heavy loads to be carried from inaccessible places. A correspondent in Co. Cork has sent me the following account of one method of lifting the burden, in this case of furze (gorse, whin) which was harvested both for bedding and for fodder. 'Passing his rope round the bundle, the carrier would throw himself on his back on top of the bundle, kick his heels in the air and jerk himself to the vertical, walking away completely concealed beneath a moving mountain of furze.' Where tracks

were poor and there were no wheeled vehicles, or where there 283
was no horse for a slide-car, the burden rope was all that was [482]
required to carry home the harvest; distances were mercifully
small on the tiny farms. Rushes for rope making were cut when
fully grown, beetled with a mell and broken by hand to rid
them of pith. They were then spread to dry and afterwards tied in
bundles ready to be fashioned into ropes when wintry weather
brought indoor leisure. Ropes made of cowhair as well as 283
horsehair, sometimes mixed with seasoned sedge (sprit) once 237
found many uses about the farm. Horsehair fishing lines and 223
snares for seabirds are described elsewhere, but we may refer
here to snares for small birds which in south Armagh, for
example, are laid on the grass in hard wintry weather over a
scattering of grain or breadcrumbs. Inside the frame of a pegged
string or a bent sally rod are tied a dozen or more snares made
of single or double horsehair. By this means blackbirds, thrushes,
sparrows, and finches are caught by the feet, nowadays for
sport but, no doubt, once as a welcome addition to the food
supply. Similar horsehair snares for catching small birds are
known from England and, further afield, from the Sudan. Reins
of horsehair are said to have been common quite recently in
Donegal, and I would hazard a guess that horsehair nets, such
as were made in Harris (Martin Martin tells us) for catching
seals, were formerly made there.

Mats and baskets of many kinds were fashioned from straw 285
and other materials such as marram grass. This tough grass is [314]
harvested in places all around the coast and put to many uses,
including thatching. It is cut below the surface of the sandy
dunes, and in Donegal I have seen a toothed sickle used for the
purpose. The techniques of constructing mats and baskets of
these materials are closely related and seem to fall into three
classes, sown plaits, built-up plaits and coiled work. Coiled
basketry is best represented in the once universal bee-skep, in
the seed-baskets of the south, the seats and armchairs of the
west, and in the food-carrying baskets of the Aran Islands
(Fig. 69). It is an interesting detail of their construction that a
bone pin is used to insert the ties, which are usually made of
split briar. The conical hens' nests hung on pegs on the kitchen
walls (Fig. 16) are also constructed in a coil technique, but

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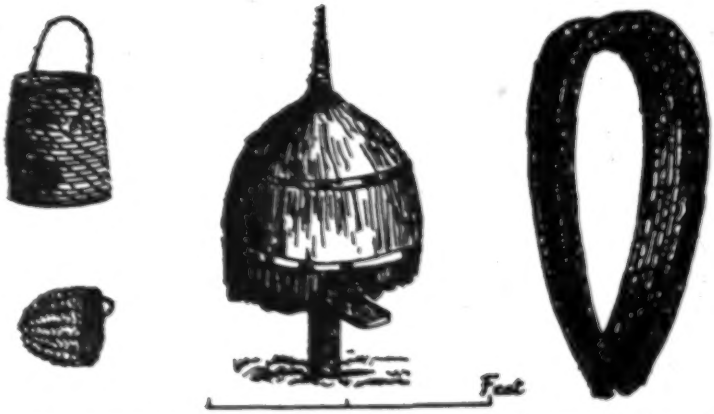

FIG. 69. Coiled food-basket, Aran Islands; calf muzzle, Co. Clare; beehive and horse-collar, Co. Antrim; all of straw except the calf muzzle.

some large rectangular examples seem to be made of built-up plait as described below. The distribution of coiled basketry in western Europe suggests that it is an extension northwards from south European and African regions where it is a richly developed art. A straw underthatch from Co. Down—the only one of its kind I have seen in the north—was made in a simple weaving technique, using straw ropes. But the commonest method of making mats was by what I have called built-up plaiting; beginning with a straw rope twisted on itself, wisps of straw are inserted in every third twist and their ends worked into plait in combination with the combined ends of the previous wisp. Fresh handfuls of straw are regularly inserted into the plaits. They are given different names in various parts of the country; for example, tates in Antrim, kets in Down, and gleogs in Meath.

Such mats can be made of any desired size, and in the past they served many purposes, as hangings to mark off bedrooms or bed alcoves, as linings for the wattled doors of houses, and as mattresses. Their long-continued use with wattled doors on houses of mud or stone carries the suggestion that wattled [342] houses of the better class may once have been lined with straw mats serving as draught screens and taking the place of the

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hanging skins, carpets or tapestries of other cultures. Today 285
the most familiar use of the plaited mats is as creel mats on the [342]
backs of asses (Fig. 56). When creels are dispensed with and
the load is placed directly on the ass a simple 'sugan' is some- 285
times made—a ring of straw some fifteen inches in diameter 492
bound with a fine straw rope. This is a variant of the head-wreath once widely worn in western Europe as a carrying pad. Straw collars—made entirely of straw and not merely straw-stuffed—have so recently gone out of use that I have seen several decayed specimens on hill farms in the north, and the art of making them is not forgotten. In their construction several oval rings of three-strand straw plait are stitched together (Fig. 69). Unlike the ordinary Irish horse collar, they are, of course, not made to open; they were carefully shaped to hold flattish wooden hames.

Many varieties of baskets of straw rushes and other pliant 285
materials which were once made in the homes are now known
only by name: for example, the puckan of built-up plaiting which 415
held seed potatoes in Co. Down, or, hung in the stable, served as a nest for pigeons. They had short lives, and few specimens have survived, so that we shall never know the full range of such domestic skills. On the other hand fancy basket work, using both whole and split fine sally rods, has probably long been a specialized craft, and has clung to certain districts such as the shores of Lough Neagh and the Suir Valley. As in these areas so all around the coasts of the island it is a craft which accompanies fishing skills. The long-line fishermen of the sea coasts have traditionally made their own line and fish baskets, but it is only inland communities such as those mentioned who have become commercial basket-makers, possibly because their fishing was more seasonal than that of the sea folk. Their products are now mainly baskets for carrying potatoes or turf (Fig. 71). In a special class are the large creels and carrying baskets made of hazel or black sally which were generally employed for farm transport before wheeled carts were adopted. In many districts these were made by itinerant creel-makers who were held in very low esteem, next above the hackler and the tinker. The method of construction, in which the standard rods are stuck upright in the ground, stamps the craft as being of

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285 ancient origin. We shall see that it is the way the Boyne
415 curraghs are built, and it is said that the African pygmies make their carrying baskets in similar fashion. For lightness and to facilitate lifting one or more rows of open 'windows' are left in the sides of the creels. Those used for seaweed were sometimes quite open in construction, and like the manure pots they were generally fitted with hinged bottoms for unloading (Fig. 86).

301 Besides their utilitarian uses, rushes, grasses and straw have
524 long been playthings for young folk who fashion out of them,
285 for love or for luck, many varieties of decorations and emblems. We describe the Briget's Crosses elsewhere (Fig. 85). Harvest
[892] knots, twisted out of the ripe straw of harvest, seem formerly to have been in truth love tokens, though now worn merely as buttonholes for the harvest fair (Plate 13). As one might expect, the girls' knots were the more ornate and they differed from those worn by the boys in having the ears left attached. Some exceptionally fine specimens are fashioned out of flax or fine wild grasses. Star-shaped emblems in these materials are also made (Fig. 70). More complicated knots have four or six strand work, but the ordinary knots are in two ply, made by bending the straws sharply over each other at right angles. Before being knotted they make tolerably strong cords: I have experimented with these on unbaked clay pots and find that when impressed in the soft clay they make very good imitations of the 'cord impressions' seen on Bronze Age pottery. I have heard that in Nigeria the same two-ply technique is employed in making roulettes, from the fibres of the wine palm, for decorating the native pottery. Among the many toys and playthings made of rushes we find baskets for wild strawberries and blaeberries, rattles, butterfly cages, fishing nets, caps, bracelets, belts, hatbands, mock-ceremonial whips, canes and swords and imitation birds' feet and flowers, some of which are shown in Fig. 70. Many of them are associated with particular
[517] occasions of the year, for example the imitation flowers with Easter and the blaeberry baskets with Garland Sunday (Chapter XIX) but in general they are the products of the infinite leisure of long summer days of cattle-tending in field, bog or mountain. Probably a number of these objects once had a practical value

 [text continues on p. 210]

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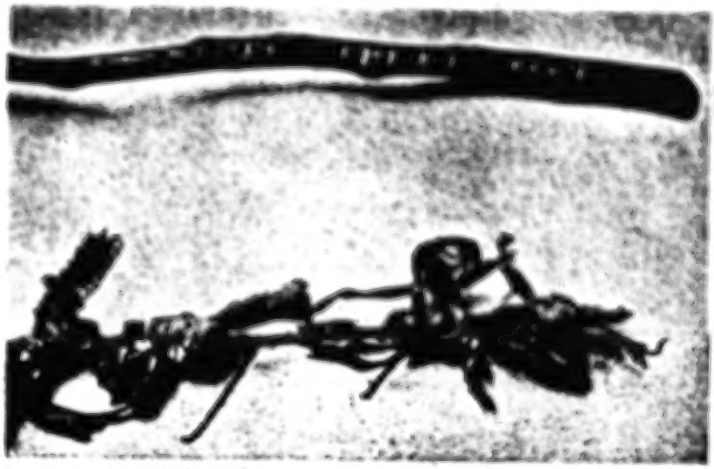
1. Holestone "altar", Inishkeel, Co. Donegal.



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2. *Above*, Pilgrim's prayer-tally, Gouganeburra, Co. Cork.
Below, Rags on bramble at a wart-well.

[facing p.208]

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PLATE 16

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Holy well at Doon, Co. Donegal. Crutches and bushes (ádhar) washed in rags.

[Facing p. 209]

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FIG. 70. Rush, grass and straw-work. (1) Cuckoo pint made of rushes, Co. Armagh. (2) Butterfly cage of rushes, Co. Down. (3) Rush bracelet in nine-strand plait, Co. Armagh. (4) 'Hen's claw' of grass, Co. Mayo. (5) 'Brigit's rag' of oat straw. Tory Island charm. (6) 'Harvest star' of flax, Co. Antrim. (7) Rush rattle, Co. Mayo. (8) Blaeberry basket of rushes, Co. Down. (9) Harvest knot of flax, Co. Armagh.

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301 and others were ceremonial; some may be no more than simple
524 pastimes prompted by fancy. Rush baskets were in fact made
until recently in some of the Hebridean islands for carrying the
285 fishermen's bait and for holding fish. Baskets of birch twigs, dock stems, ragwort and thistles have also been recorded, and it should be recalled that several examples of grass, sedge, and even moss, made in a similar cross-twisted technique have been recorded from Bronze Age burials in Scotland. The cone-shaped hat of rushes or straw made by children (Fig. 86) recalls in shape at least the traditional headdress of the leprechauns, and it may be noticed that tall steeple hats and helmets seem to have been popular among the Irish down to the seventeenth century.[1] In Co. Kerry the rush hats are worn in mock fights and seem to be regarded as helmets.

Of all these rush toys, none is stranger than the butterfly
524 cage (Fig. 70) which is deftly made by bending long rushes,
222 held upright between the fingers, over others placed transversely. One side of the cage may be left open and a dock leaf inserted as a door. The ends of the rushes are bound together to make a handle. This pastoral plaything can be paralleled in many parts of the world: in the cages in which Spanish shepherd boys carry insects, in the little baskets of dried grass which the Indian herd children make for grasshoppers, in the locust traps which Greek boys, Theocritus tells us, used to weave out of asphodel stalks, and even among the nomads of the Gobi Desert, where, when the cicada begins to call in the great heat, 'every child cuts the desert grass to make a tiny cage to hold one of the fascinating tree-hoppers . . . The Gobi baby's rattle, too, is a hollow ball of twisted grass enclosing a large bead.'[2] The Irish rush rattle is provided with two hazel nuts. Some of the leaves and bracelets are plaited with four, six, nine, or even twelve strands, and a nine strand plait is also seen in one variety of three-cornered Briget's Cross (Fig. 85, 3; Pl. 13, 7).

The conical straw masks and the capes worn by strawboys
524 (Chapter XX, Fig. 88) stripped of their gay ribbons, have been
285 compared with the straw dresses of peasants in Spain or China,
292 and, no doubt, they had their practical prototypes in Ireland.

[1] H. F. McClintock, *Old Irish and Highland Dress*, 88.
[2] M. Cable and F. French, *The Gobi Desert*, 100.

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HOME-MADE THINGS

The straw cape placed over the bee-skep (Fig. 69) is a humble 524
relation. Straw masks are worn also by Biddy Boys on St. 285
Briget's Eve, and by the Christmas Rhymers. On St. Briget's [292]
Eve, too, a small straw doll (Brideóg) was dressed up and carried from door to door in the south-west of Ireland. A charm of plaited straw known as Bratóg Brighde (literally, Briget's [789]
Rag) is carried by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection against storms (Fig. 70, *5*). There was also Briget's Girdle, a two-strand straw rope, a circle with crosses attached, which was passed over the body as a protective charm, by inserting one leg and then pushing the head through on the Saints' Feast Day (Fig. 85).

Before the Irish live-cattle trade developed there had been 281
for some centuries a great export of hides and skins, and if one goes back earlier it becomes clear that these products must have found a multitude of uses about the farm. For a number of purposes where toughness and durability are specially needed animal skin has remained a traditional material, and in old-fashioned mountainy areas the countryman makes a habit of curing the skins of wild and domesticated animals on the principle that 'you never know but what they'll come in useful'. On analogy with the Hebrides, with which Donegal in particular shows close cultural affinities, skin mealbags should have had a place in cottage economy in north Ireland. When grinding corn, a skin was laid on the floor under the quern to catch the meal. Seal skin served many purposes, from plough traces, in Harris, to the covers of curraghs in Donegal. We have descriptions of cured sheepskins serving as windows,[1] and (from St. Kilda) of fowling ropes bound with strips of salted cowhide to prevent them from being cut by the rocks.[2] But it is in the skin tray, the 281
wecht or wight, that one is most likely to see tradition main- 415
tained (Fig. 71). The well-scraped skin of sheep, or sometimes of goat, is stitched on to a rim of ash, bog fir or, in the naked islands which have exhausted even their bog timber, a ring of sugan. To secure the skin free of wrinkles is skilled work, and the finished product is not unlike a tambourine: in fact, it closely resembles the Eskimo caribou drum. Irish wrenboys

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 25.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 315.

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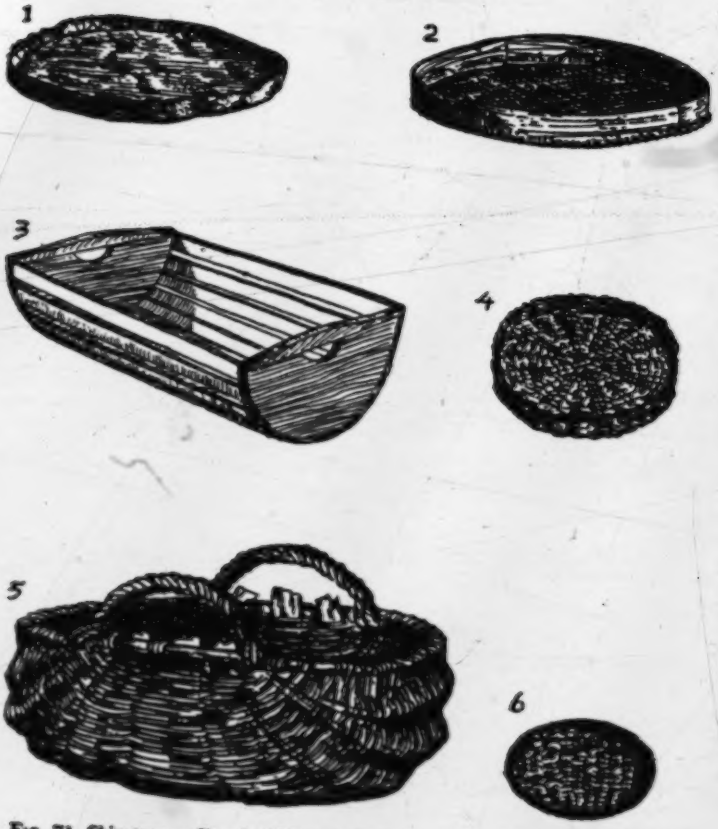

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FIG. 71. Skin-tray, split-ash riddle and potato baskets. Approximate scale 1/9 (No. 5, 1/6). (1) Sheep-skin tray or wight. (2) Split-ash riddle. (3) Potato 'basket'. (4) Potato skib. (5) Potato basket. (6) Potato skib. (All Co. Antrim.)

[534] carried a skin tambourine which they beat when hunting the Irish wren boys wren on St. Stephen's Day, and one wonders whether the drummers from whom the Orange performers on King William's Day inherit their wild rhythms were trained on ceremonial wights. (There are also sieves, riddles and shallow baskets of split ash or sally, but these, for example the flat round potato skib—a communal self-service plate—should properly be classed as the work of specialists. 212 (Fig. 71).

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as the work of specialists (Fig. 71). The pampooties of the Aran Islands deserve mention here. Made of calfskin, but formerly of sealskin,[1] these one-piece shoes were once doubtless widely worn and have kept their hold in Aran because of their suitability for wet rocks and frail curraghs. The rivlins of Scotland and the Highland *brògan* were very similar and I have seen rawhide shoes of the same type from Norway and the Pyrenees. They all have the hair outside and are secured by lacing back and front.

The wight serves both to hold corn, in filling a sack for instance, and to convey peats from the stack to the fireside: perforated it becomes a meal-sieve (boran) for sifting the skins (seeds) from oatmeal, or a buttermilk sieve for taking out the last grains of butter from the churn. The winnowing tray or dallan is a larger version, and it, too, may be perforated to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken out on to a spread cloth. There are, up and down Ireland, many bold windy Shilling Hills where the 'shellings' (husks) were, in past times, separated from the grain in this way (Pl. 7).

This brings us to the flail and its 'hanging' (the mid-kipple, hooden, gad, middling, or tug) which was commonly a thong of cow-, horse-, sheep, or goat-skin, though sometimes of rabbit- or eel-skin or a cord of flax. The flail, the proverbial 'stick-and-a-half', consists of a three to four feet long helve or hand-staff, usually made of ash, and a shorter beater, swingle or souple of hazel or holly. There are two principal methods of 'hanging' the parts together. In one variety, the tie passes through two leather caps lashed over the ends (Fig. 72, 1). This appears to be a variant of the common English flail-hanging, where, however, the cap is made of steamed ash or yew and there is no linking piece. Its distribution in Ireland, down the east coast, points to derivation from England. Modifications, occurring as far west as Donegal (Fig. 72, 1*a*, *b*), have the linking thong passing through a hole made either in the helve or in the beater. Kevin Danaher states that the capped flail is characteristic of central Europe: it is believed to have first appeared in north France in the early Middle Ages.[2] The

[1] O'Flaherty, *H'Ier Connaught*, 59 (footnote).
[2] *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 60 (1955), 6–14.

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412 other method of hanging has a somewhat peripheral distribu-
171 tion in Europe (Scandinavia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Switzerland,
284 the Pyrenees) and also in Ireland, and as its simplicity as well as its distribution suggest, it is the older type. The tie passes around grooves cut in both hand-staff and souple (Fig. 72, 2) though again there are variants, one end of the tie, for example, being passed through a hole (Fig. 72, 2*a*). The grooved hanging, it is claimed by its users, is superior to the capped because the join is almost universal and there is no need to turn the halve in the hand when flailing. The holed fastening may be the most ancient method of all: it is found in parts of Atlantic Europe and the Baltic lands, but in Ireland is apparently restricted to Ulster (Pl. 6, 2).

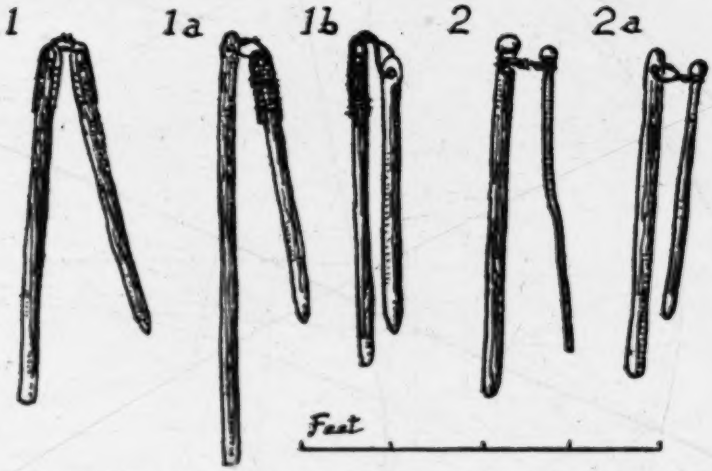

FIG. 72. Flails. (1) Co. Meath. (1*a*) Co. Armagh. (1*b*) Co. Donegal. (2) Co. Cavan. (2*a*) Co. Antrim.

243 Ancient and rudimentary as the flail is, requiring for its
412 making no tool save a sharp knife, there are some thrashers
171 who dispense with it, 'scutching' the corn instead with a stick or 'lashing' it over a barrel, a stone or a board (Plate 4). Many a small farmer in the north of Ireland harvests his seed grass in this way. The scutching method is used also in the

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Pyrenees and in Africa, but the flail, apparently spreading 243
through western Europe in post-Roman times, in time replaced 412
it almost everywhere, to be in turn displaced by the mechanical 171
thrasher. Thus the sound of the flail has almost gone from the countryside. The best thrashing place is the floor of the barn above the byre, with its opposite doors to draw the wind and 343
advertise the flailer's industry. Such barns, however, were not 243
built outside the planted districts before agrarian changes and 171
improvements spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ireland knows nothing of the carefully built thrashing floors of England and Scandinavia. At best on the farms lacking a barn a thrashing board was sometimes kept, a square wooden platform raised a few inches off the ground. A good thrashing floor should bend to meet the flail, and in Scandinavia, for instance, great pains were taken in the old days to construct floors which would make the flails sing. They were occasionally strung with wires, and to magnify the echo of clay floors a horse's skull was buried under each corner.[1] It has been thought that this purpose was secondary to the luck it was hoped would follow from what was originally a foundation sacrifice. In Ireland [777]
traditions of the burying of horses' skulls under the floors of dwelling houses are both widespread and well authenticated. The usual explanation again is that this gives the house an echo, but it is also said to be lucky, and Sean O'Sullivan concludes that the custom of burying skulls began as a substitute for foundation sacrifices.[2] In Armagh 'the frontal bones of a [825]
horse's head are regarded as being peculiarly sonsie; they were often buried in barn floors and under the thresholds of dwelling houses for that reason.'[3]

In time, the expressed object came to be to magnify the music 243
of the singing flails as well as that of the ballad-singing and 789
dancing before the fire. The space between the doors of the old style kitchen-byre, it will be recalled, was a favourite thrashing place in times past. The Briget's Crosses above the door would have blessed the thrashing as well as the cattle. It

[1]Albert Sandkelf, *Singing Flails* (Folklore Fellows Communications, Helsinki, No. 136), (1949).
[2]Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 45–52.
[3]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fenn in 1858*, 77.

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243 is worth noticing that symbols in the form of a swastika, but
789 including also circles, pentagrams and horses, were formerly cut as protective devices in the beams of barns in Scandinavia. Some of the designs are reminiscent of the art of the Bronze Age.

243 An Irish verse giving the four essentials of a good thrashing, collected in Co. Armagh, runs in translation:

[539]

A hand-staff of holly,
A souple of hazel,
A single sheaf,
And a clean floor.

This is where the besom of heather or bent comes in: it is still preferred to the sweeping-broom for a clay floor or to get into the joins of boards or cobbles. Thrashing was a daily job, carried out on well-run farms night and morning before the cattle were fed. It was held that the cattle throve best on freshly thrashed oats, and the storage of grain would anyhow have been difficult where there were no barns.[1] For this reason, too, the level 'street' in front of the house, or even the public road was often the most suitable floor available. The thrashing was usually done on a strong linen sheet. Publicity as well as a steady echoing beat seem to have been the desired aims. Every-
[555] where prestige has attached to a noisy thrashing, and partly no doubt for self-aggrandisement a solitary thrasher would beat with his feet to make the noise of two. Everywhere too the
[533] sound of the flail has been turned into jingles and rustic rhymes. They did not accompany the work itself because it was too noisy and too exhausting to allow talking or singing. The flails' beaters made their own merry music; was it, one wonders, originally intended to drive away evil spirits from the precious food supply?

222 In this chapter we have confined ourselves to some of the
824 things that were made at home out of materials that lay to hand. To describe the utilization of all the lesser plants that have

[343] [1]Mr. A. T. Lucas, however, has described traditional outdoor granaries, now restricted to west Cork, constructed of thick straw ropes, which when completed resemble round stacks (*Gwerin*, I (1956), 2–20). Mr. V. B. Proudfoot calls my attention to the similar 'corn bykes' of Caithness (*P.S.A.S.* (1952), 156–7).

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figured in the economy of the farm or in medicinal and magical lore would be an almost endless task. One recalls that a group of Californian Indians practising a food-gathering economy is said to have made use of 176 species of wild plants for satisfying almost all their needs. A few examples of the survival of a collecting culture in Ireland may be given, taken from various sources such as Wood-Martin's pioneer work, but also from folk-memory. From the roots of ferns were extracted oils used in weaving, from those of the water lily, a cherished red dye, a substance for tanning from tormentil roots, and ink from the roots of flags (saggins). Bracken and wood ash were kept for making soap, and the ashes of thistles were the perquisite of the herdsmen. Large lake rushes provided materials for caulking boats and churns, and phragmites stems for winding yarn in the shuttle. Lady's bedstraw besides being rubbed on bee-skeps to attract a swarm, produced both dye and rennet. For cures we have the carrageen or Irish moss as well as the moss growing on crosses and other special stones, and a great number of flowers and herbs. Yarrow, in Irish, is called 'the herb of the seven cures'. But the sovereign remedy was the essence of all wild flowers contained in what was euphemistically known as 'all-flower water', i.e., cow's urine.[1] We shall return to these topics in Chapter XXI.

222 824 [278] [237]

[1]W. G. Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 183.

Note. Mr. A. T. Lucas has recently published accounts of hurling balls made of cowhair (see *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 57, 99–104; 59, 78–81).

[526] [237]

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XVI

WRACK AND WRECK

000 NO part of Ireland is more than sixty miles from the sea and its most populous districts have for ages been strung along the shore. This is as true today for Co. Donegal as it is for Co. Dublin. Yet we think of the seashore as the most natural part of our scenic heritage, the zone least affected by the hand of man which, inland, has wrought massive changes and turned forests into bogs and farmlands. True the great headlands must have presented to ancient man much the same majestic outlines as we admire today, but the lowlying stretches of coast, unstable in the face of erosion and deposition, have been considerably modified also by human interference. Deep in the ancient beach deposits and layer upon layer in the sand-hills where we picnic and play lie the relics of ancient shore dwellers. It was here of necessity that man found his first foothold on the island, to it he has clung and to it inlanders have returned to satisfy a variety of needs. Here by the shore man has gathered cockles and mussels, dug for bait and reaped the harvests of wreck and wrack, here he has built weirs and traps for fish, slips and shelters for boats, racks for drying nets and kilns for burning seaweed. Here too he was wont to hold festival with rites and games in seasonal gatherings long before port cities blocked the estuaries and holiday crowds thronged the open beaches. Easter and Harvest were the old times of festival, when the moon was full and the tides ran low.

222 231 A teeming population of shellfish was the shore's first attraction, a steady supply of food supplemented at the nesting season by seabirds and their eggs and in summer by the anadromous fish seeking fresh water. In hard winters and late

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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springs when fodder was scarce cattle, sheep and horses found 222
edible seaweed on the shore. Scottish planters in Co. Down 231
found that their sheep 'kept fat and wholesome all winter and spring by feeding on the oare.'[1] This is nowadays one of nature's neglected resources partly, no doubt, owing to enclosure and the loss of grazing rights. It has been claimed as the result of experiments that the feeding value of *Ascophyllum nodosum* (knob wrack), which grows towards high tide mark, is almost equal to that of meadow hay. Certain species of seaweed are still, 222
however, gathered for human consumption—carrageen or Irish 262
moss (*Chondrus crispus*) sloke or laver (*Porphyra*), dulse (*Rhodymenia*) and dulaman (probably chanelled weed)—whether as medicine or 'kitchen', that is a tasty morsel to be chewed between meals, or boiled to be eaten with potatoes. In lean times the kitchen might become the staple, and a writer in the 1830's stated that when the potatoes gave out 'hundreds of the people may be seen going to the seaside to gather dulaman.'[2] Carrageen, besides being made into a jelly possessing many virtues, was used as a thickener for milk.

The most profitable way of exploiting seaweed down to 222
recent times was for the burning of kelp, which became a considerable business among shore-dwellers in the eighteenth century as the growth of industry stimulated the production of soap, bleaching materials and glass: more recently kelp was chiefly in demand for the preparation of iodine. But there are dimly remembered ways of utilizing seaweed ashes in the home which would make kelp-burning a traditional occupation. In the Western Isles of Scotland kelp-burning is said to have been introduced from Ireland about 1735, but there too it must have been an ancient custom, for Martin Martin tells us at the end of the seventeenth century that seals, seafowl and fish were [251]
preserved in 'the ashes of burnt seaware'.[3] (Cheese, we learn, was preserved in the same way, or 'lapped in tang'). Kelp was made by burning the thick stems of tangle (*Laminaria*) or other coarse weeds—to which, as well as to the ashes, the name kelp is applied—which are thrown up in the winter storms or

[1] W. Montgomery, *Description of Ardes Barony* (1683), 139.
[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 50.
[3] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 135, 159.

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222 cut at low tide. The weeds were dried on low stone walls and ricked and thatched until ready for the kiln on summer days. Rain rots the weeds, so that in wet weather the heavy kelp had to be shaken and turned repeatedly until it could be safely ricked. The half obliterated ruins of drying-walls and kilns made of sea-boulders can be seen on stormy beaches all around the coast (Fig. 78). In the early decades of the century the

[417]

[413]

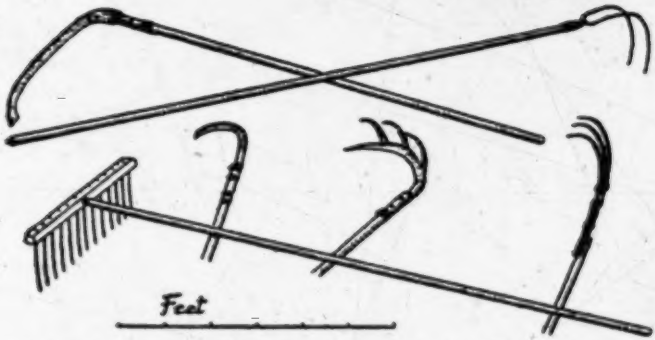

FIG. 78. Kelp harvest. Kelp kiln and stack. Co. Galway. Hooks, knives and drags, west and south coasts (See Pl. 11).

dense oily smoke from the kilns drifting far inland was a familiar sight, each kiln burning for many hours and consuming several tons of weed, which was fed in a little at a time. It is said that 60 tons of weed are required to provide 1 ton of kelp, and the work was both arduous and filthy. If the supply of drift-weed failed the heavy tangles were laboriously dragged ashore or cut with knives mounted on handles up to twenty feet long to [413] reach the best weeds, free of sand, growing in deep water. A

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combined knife and drag found in Connacht has three heavy hooks attached to a strong sickle-shaped blade mounted on a 12-ft. pole (Fig. 73). Powerful long-handled scythes and great hand-rakes with teeth a foot long were used on the south coast. In Donegal the men would wield their long knives from curraghs while the women dragged the weed ashore. 222 413

In the Rosses of west Donegal around 1750 the rents were paid in kelp: any surplus was bartered for 'the two luxuries, spirits and tobacco, enjoyed by men and women alike.'[1] For the lesser weeds growing in shallow water ordinary sickles were employed when the tide was low, but these species made inferior kelp. Yet in some areas, for example Strangford Lough, stones were planted on the shore to grow wrack for kelp burning: Arthur Young commented on this practice in 1776.[2] Old seaweed beds may be seen also in Lough Swilly, Clew Bay, Achill Sound and probably elsewhere. 222 [427] [437]

Today the most remarkable area of cultivated weed is near the mouth of Carlingford Lough in County Down, where at low tide a wide stretch of mud and sand is exposed in Mill Bay. It is grown solely to supply fertilizer for the potato crop. Wrack rights are mentioned in grants of land in County Down as far back as 1506, but the earliest reference I have found to the cultivated weed in Carlingford Lough is in a guidebook of 1846. As we have seen, however, Arthur Young refers to the growing of wrack for kelp-burning in Strangford Lough, and since the best species for kelp grow in deeper water the planting of seaweed beds is not likely to have originated with the kelp industry. Through the second half of last century some 1,100 beds, covering well over a square mile in area, were maintained in Mill Bay, and it was not until the depression between the two world wars that they began to be neglected. Today the use of wrack has almost entirely given way to artificial fertilizers, with a great easement of labour but a loss of annually renewed organic matter in the soil. The wrackbeds, or 'plans', are half-acre rectangles set with rows of boulders a foot or so in diameter, but many beds are subdivided into small 'cuts' for sub-letting, and the Estate Map showing the beds has the 222 387 423

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.
[2] A. Young, *Tour*, 1, 194.

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222 minutely fragmented appearance of land held in rundale. Rights
387 of access, by narrow lanes between the beds, were often dis-
423 puted, and there were occasions for fights when as many as a hundred carts from forty townlands might converge on Mill Bay
[578] at low tide. I first heard of the seaweed beds from an Air Force pilot who brought me air photographs of what he thought was submerged farmland: the little rectangular fields of Mourne seemed to march out beneath the sea.[1] In fact they were necessary adjuncts to the arable land, and the rents of up to twenty pounds an acre were often higher than those paid for the fields of coarse sand and gravel which the wrack enriched. An auctioneer told me he had sold a wrackbed of one Irish acre for
[435] £145 not many years ago. Nearly all of the several hundred farmers who had wrack rights here held two or three beds, and each man's plans were scattered so that he had different kinds of weed growing on them: 'knob wrack' close inshore, then 'bladder wrack' and farther out still the 'lazy wrack' whose fronds are submerged at high water even at neaps and which therefore grows faster than the other species.

222 The crop was harvested with knives and sickles between March and June, the bare-footed reapers at the same time lifting, turning and re-setting the heavy boulders which tend to get buried in the sand. Carts too are liable to sink, and when the going is too soft the weed is rafted ashore. It is allowed to float on the incoming tide and a boat dragging a rope pulls the
[501] load together and tows it ashore. Very large rafts, secured by a rope of seaweed, used to be floated ashore on the tide in Mayo. Patrick Knight, describing Ballycroy about 1830, observed that the steersman, armed with a pole, might be seen 'sitting on the heap, roasting his potatoes and shellfish'.[2]

222 The great bulk of the wrack taken all round the coast for manure was driftweed thrown up during storms, but the supply
423 was often supplemented by cutting or pulling weed from the rocks, and in some places there were complicated methods of regulating and distributing the harvest. On a stretch of coast familiar to me in south Down one can pick out strips running out into the sea, demarcated by marked boulders. They were

[1] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 15.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 99.

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formerly allotted to tenants in proportion to the acreages of 222
their farm holdings. The weed had to be carried away among the 423
slippery boulders in back-creels and hand-barrows and stacked on the beach ready for the carts and creel-asses. The driftweed cast up by the storms of winter was more accessible but its division gave rise to endless disputes and was often regulated by careful procedure and the casting of lots, though some beaches were subdivided by standing stones. In Donegal I was told how at low tide, by the light of lanterns, men would dash into the sea up to their necks to drag out the floating weed. It is an interesting example of manorial privilege that on one beach, below the Norman castle at Greencastle, County Down, all the wrack blown in after 17th March goes to the farm which occupies the ruined castle. Every little bay where the weed collects has its wrack road leading down (Fig. 4), and fields near the shore may have a seaweed gate giving direct access. From Christmas onwards a careful watch was kept on the weather, and a spirit of excitement spread inland from the 222
shore as the wind rose. Every bay has its own particular wind, [821]
blowing from 'the right art', for a good yield of wrack. (For kelp, however, an offshore wind was needed, because it is the returning undertow which brings the deeper weeds ashore). There are many accounts of the extraordinary zeal of the wrack 222
gatherers and their feats of endurance. Even English visitors 461
were forced to admit that 'it would be impossible to witness a scene of greater industry than was being enacted by these lazy Irish'.[1]

As on other occasions when men left their lonely farms and gathered together there was much merry-making and noisy recollection of past wrack harvests. One cannot doubt that the harvest of the fields, its 'luck' as well as its bounty, was felt to depend on success in this first step in the farming year. The desire to be first and the intense rivalry were prompted by motives stronger than the wish for material gain. In Scotland one reads of the great anxiety that was shown to secure the first load of wrack on New Year's Day, and on that day a portion of seaweed was laid at the doors of the farmstead and in each of the fields.[2] In Jersey the *vraic* (wrack) harvest is

[1] J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught*, 54.
[2] M. Banks, *British Calendar Customs: Scotland*, 2, 97.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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222 461 described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful [482] on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

226 Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland [492] and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed [241] lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable [517] gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters, [462] when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2]T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[4]A. B., *The Rures in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]

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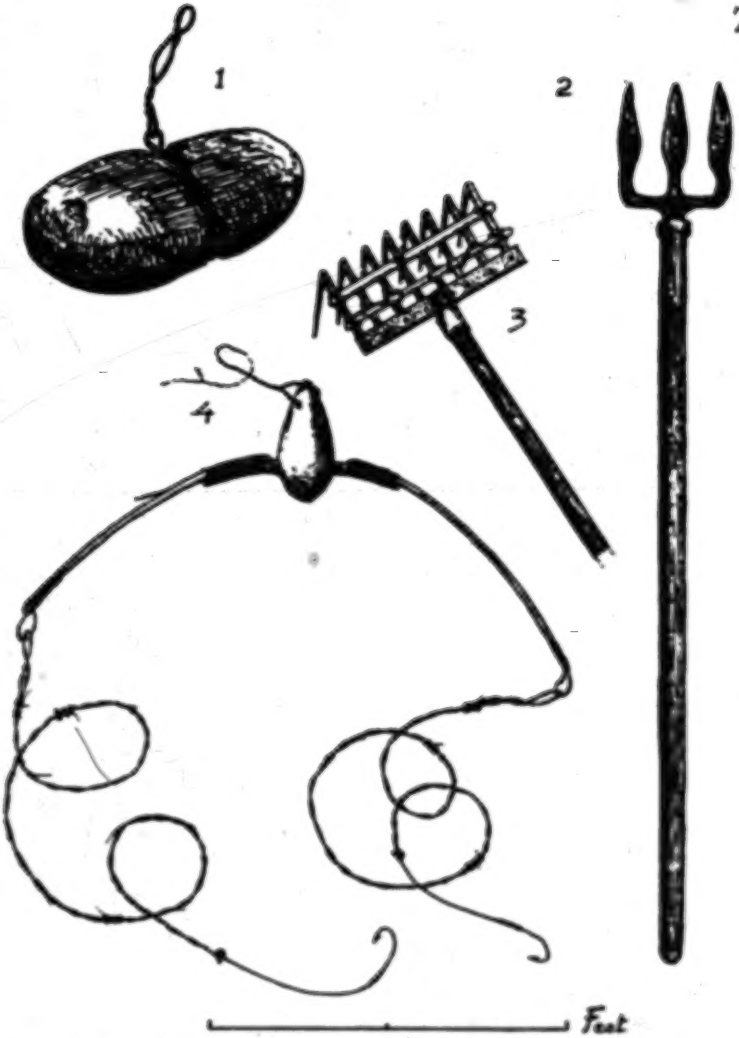

FIG. 74. Fishing gear. (1) Stone sinker for long lines, Co. Antrim (scale ×⅓). (2) Fork for digging lug worms, Co. Down. (3) Mussel rake, Co. Louth. Handle 15 ft. (after H. G. Tempest). (4) 'Frog' with horsehair crops for codling fishing, Co. Down (scale ×⅓).

WRACK AND WRECK

226 Scallop shells were put to many uses and were often a
[415] substitute for the iron oil-pan of the open-wicked crusie.
[386] Seashells were also burnt to make lime for whitewashing the houses.

[262] In late summer the sprat come ashore in vast numbers on the west and south coasts, so that in Donegal 'they constituted the chief food of the peasantry during three or four months of the year.'[1] They were taken from the water in buckets and sieves, and the mackerel pursuing their prey close against the rocks might be caught almost as easily. In Waterford harbour there were specially erected wickerwork head weirs to take the sprat; and Dr. Went has described a wattled sprat-weir in working order in the estuary of the Blackwater.[2] Fishing from the rocks, too, is most popular in harvest time and though now little more than a pastime it once provided a reserve of food for the winter. About hay-harvest the ballan wrasse is at its best, 'when the flags (wild iris) are in bloom', they say. Known as bavin, byan, morran and by other names, it is now despised nearly everywhere, as is the coalfish which was salted and dried
[192] and which has different names in Gaelic for every stage of its growth to demonstrate its former importance and popularity. 'Glassan' oil was the luminant for the crusie lamps in Rathlin Island. On the north coast you may see anglers 'frassing' for small coalfish, that is attracting them by spitting into the water chewed potatoes or limpets. Formerly ground bait was made
[412] by pounding limpets in rock basins of the type known as 'bullauns' (Fig. 90). Occasionally you may come across a fisherman casting a feather lure for pollack with a line made wholly or in part of horsehair. One method of twisting these lines, with quills, will be described in the following chapter. For short lengths next the hook—the fine foot-lines—white hair is preferred, and I have seen it made in County Down by
[283] twisting the hair between the bare thigh and a hand dusted with wood ash, a method practised by 'primitives' in many parts of the world. Two strands of from fifteen to twenty hairs are twisted on each other. (The anglers in the Seine at Paris are also said to prefer a 'crop' made from a grey mare's tail.) To

[1] 'Kinrfaela', *The Cliff Scenery of South-Western Donegal*, 19.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *Antiquity*, 25 (1951), 32-35.

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watch rock-fishing from the great limestone cliffs of the Aran Islands is a memorable sight, the 300 foot line being flung out weighted with a large grooved stone. 226

Inshore net fishing, which will be considered in the next chapter, has probably taken the place of other methods of catching fish close to the land. In some river estuaries and across the mouths of little streams in many shallow bays curving lines of boulders are all that is left of fishing weirs in which salmon and flatfish were once trapped (Fig. 75). I first noticed an example in Belfast Lough some years ago, and later came across a seventeenth century reference to their occurrence in Strangford Lough. The 'wares and fishyards' are described as being built of loose stones which allowed the tide to flow through, and fish seeking food from the fresh water were carried over the weir at the flood to be trapped as the tide ebbed. They were then netted or speared. The weirs were said to have decayed 'since fish days were neglected',[1] but the remains of many of them can still be seen around the lough. Such 'tidal fishing engines', to judge from their world-wide distribution, are an extremely ancient fishing device. More elaborate are the V-shaped wickerwork weirs of which Dr. A. E. J. Went has made an historical study.[2] One or two are still worked but they became obsolete over a century ago when the Scotch stake net was introduced for salmon fishing, and they were later condemned as obstacles to navigation. In Waterford harbour alone no less than forty-four were destroyed. These head weirs were operated by holding a conical net below a platform which crossed an opening placed at the apex of the V. Large weirs of this kind required considerable capital to keep in repair and were owned by the privileged classes but they have no doubt

[1] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 14 (1951), 46.

[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 76 (1946), 176-94; 78 (1948), 1-4. Professor C. M. Yonge (*The Times*, 10th November 1955), in an article on the mussel industry of La Rochelle in the Bay of Biscay, attributes it to a resourceful Irishman, Patrick Walton, who is said to have been wrecked there in the year 1835. He is given credit for erecting a tidal head weir which also served as a bouchot or mussel bed, and for devising a net for catching sea-birds and a narrow plank-boat pushed by one leg over the soft mud. 'The French naturalist, Quatrefages, writing about 1850, reported that a direct descendant of Walton was then engaged in mussel culture and took a natural pride in the name he bore.' No doubt Patrick Walton derived some of his ingenious ideas from his native land. [177]

227 [Text continues on p. 229]

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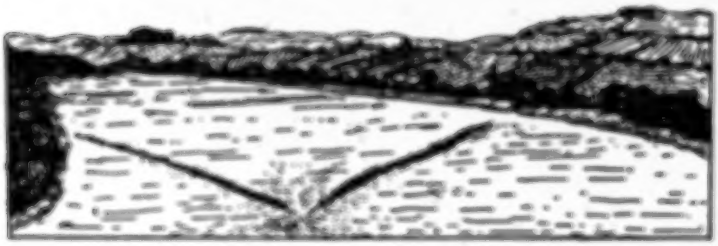

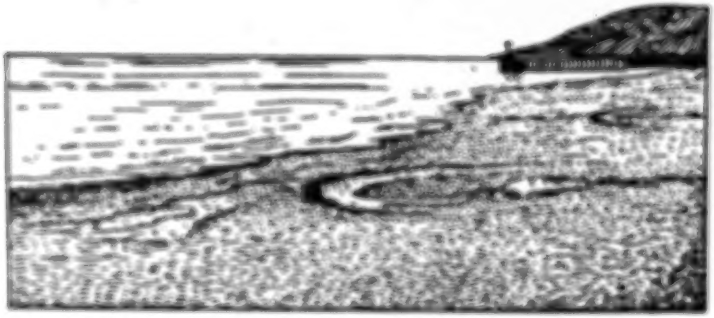

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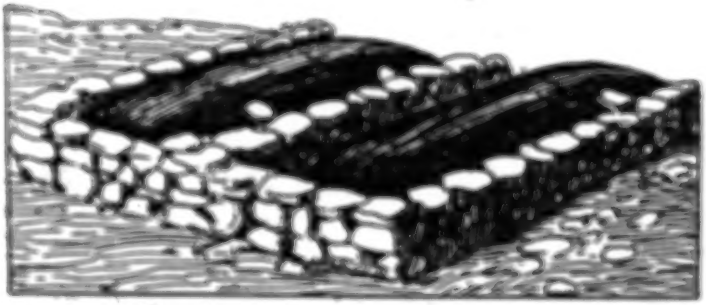

FIG. 73. Fishing weirs and curragh pens. *Above*: wattled head weir in River Bride, Co. Waterford (after Wren). *Centre*: old stone fishing weirs at Newcastle, Co. Down. *Below*: curragh pens, Achill Island, Co. Mayo (after Piggott).

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developed from wicker constructions which, like the stone weirs, were once built by shore dwellers for their own needs. 226
But weirs were not the only structure built in tidal waters. The inquiring visitor will observe along many stretches of coast straight lines of stones running out to sea which are the 504
remains of little piers alongside which small boats could lie. Back of them beyond the reach of the tide there may be the ruins of a boat shelter which might never have been more than a rectangular pen of stone walls or earth banks. Such pens are still used to protect the curraghs of the west coast from the wind which is their worst enemy.[1] The vessels are in addition weighted down with stones (Fig. 75), and to this end the gunwales often project at the rear of the curraghs to give purchase for the boulders (Fig. 78).

On the lonely and now abandoned island of St. Kilda the 223
portion which a woman took to her husband on marriage is said to have been 'a pound of horsehair to make a gin to catch fowls'.[2] [583]
Martin Martin in his account of the island also tells us that the 200 inhabitants yearly killed and preserved above 20,000 birds, and in addition prodigious numbers of seabirds' eggs were consumed. The killing of seabirds and the taking of eggs for export to England during the worst period of food shortage in the second world war brought about a temporary revival of old skills on many parts of the Irish coast. Down to times still remembered fowling was a seasonal activity on most of the islands where seabirds assemble to nest. Birds of the auk family were caught in horsehair 'dulls' (snares) pegged to the ground. For other birds such as rock pigeons the snares were baited. July was the busy month, and the birds not eaten in this 'hungry month' were salted down for the winter. On Rathlin Island the cliffs and sea-slopes were apportioned in strips and demarcated by spikes driven into the rocks. It is remembered that single men in search of eggs would let themselves alone [481]
down ropes attached to iron pins in the cliff edge. Traditions of other ways of catching the birds have been lost but one may be fairly sure that the various methods described by Martin Martin and more recently by Kenneth Williamson for the

[1] S. Piggott, *Antiquity*, 28 (1954), 19–24.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 317.

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223 Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of
225 seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-
[481] climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes involving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed.
[292] The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The
[251] meat was salted down.

Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now
226 neglected and even despised, though there are commercial
[228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he
[481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular,
[227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned
[578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

222 If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of
674 such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 90.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 187.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

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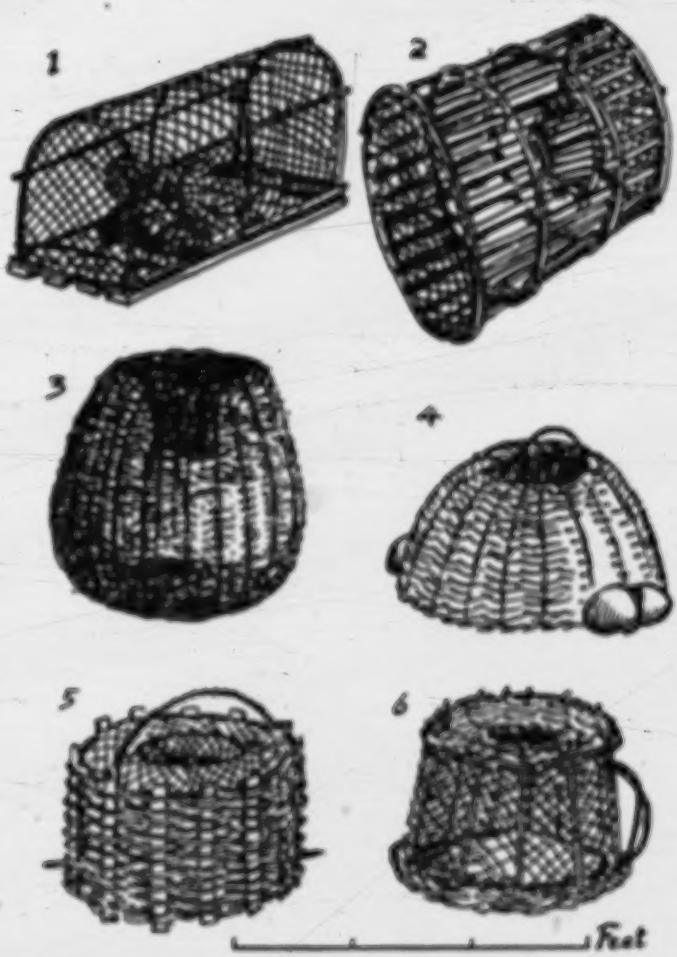

FIG. 76. Creels and pots. (1) Lobster, Co. Antrim. (2) Crayfish, French pattern south and west coasts. (3) Lobster, Co. Mayo. (4) Crab, Co. Antrim. (5) Buckies Co. Down. (6) Crab, Co. Down.

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222 674 of the common people and have not been caught in the net of written records, it is still harder to throw light on some of the darker aspects of shore life. Both smuggling and wrecking have almost everywhere at one time or another been regarded as legitimate methods of obtaining food and acquiring goods from the sea. A dread harvest from ships sunk by enemy action was reaped with seeming callousness during two world wars by coastal dwellers who would risk their own lives in the process. Driftwood has always been an acceptable gift, and many a fisherman's cabin is roofed with ship's timbers and its fittings augmented with ship's furniture. Nearly all these varied shore 222 476 activities demand a measure of co-operation, and one finds that communal schemes of one kind and another and old ways and beliefs live long among folk who have to deal with the sea. Collective effort is necessary in hauling boats and handling nets, and while there are traditional rivalries between different coastal settlements each one tends to be a closely knit com- [186] munity displaying a strong spirit of independence. They were often able to resist the repressive hand of landlords and they still remain suspicious of the efforts of government bodies to improve their lot.

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XVII

BOATS AND FISHING

THE lower reaches of the River Boyne, celebrated among archaeologists as the setting of one of the most remarkable groups of chamber tombs in western Europe, have another claim on our interests as the last refuge of a venerable craft. This is perhaps the only place in Europe where the phrase 'the skin of a boat' preserves its literal meaning. The lath or wicker-work coracle is known on several of the Welsh rivers, but only in the Boyne curragh (Ir. *currach*) is the covering still made of hide. The ox-hides now used are imported: the one I examined during a recent visit to the salmon fisheries near Drogheda had been tanned by a specialist in the dressing of beaver skins. Each hide may outlast several 'baskets' or boat-frames, for these quickly rot with repeated wettings and dryings, and on the average two frames of doubled hazel wands are required each season, which lasts from 12th February to 12th August. A few other Irish rivers kept their curraghs into recent centuries—the curragh was certainly known on the Shannon and the Erne and possibly on the Bann—but on most of the inland waters dug-outs seem to have been traditional, and if we knew more about the two distributions important cultural inferences might be drawn. Dug-outs have been found, however, in nearly every part of the country, including the River Boyne.

The curragh is not likely to survive much longer and its lore should be fully recorded. Netting salmon in fresh water on all Irish rivers has been illegal since 1st January 1948, so that the curragh's last legal refuge is the tidal portion of the Boyne. But it has been long a-dying. I was told that no more would be made after the death of that fine craftsman Michael O'Brien

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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501 some twenty years ago, but it was not so. I find that W. F. Wakeman was informed that the two curraghs which he sketched on the Boyne in 1848 were 'probably the last which would be constructed for use on those waters'.[1]

396 Fortunately James Hornell has published a careful study of *British Coracles and Irish Curraghs*,[2] and the following account is based on his book, supplemented by personal observation. On the level sward—his rustic shipyard—the boat-builder first marks out, with string and pegs, two semicircles of 2 ft. radius, their centres being about twenty inches apart. This will give the basket a mouth measuring 6 ft. by 4 ft., a size determined by the average size of a hide. Joining the two circles into an ellipse, he thrusts into the ground along this line, at intervals of about nine inches, long pointed hazel rods which have been cut the previous autumn after the leaf-fall and allowed to season (Fig. 77). They are pushed about six inches into the ground, at an angle so that they slope outwards somewhat. At one end, the bow-to-be, an extra rod is inserted on either side to give strength where the weight of the kneeling paddleman will fall. Against the ground a strong gunwale of withies is woven on to the rods, and above it a skirting of lighter withies. Opposite rods on each side are now bent over and their thin ends pushed into the ground to secure them temporarily. The fore-and-aft rods are similarly bent over and heavy stones placed on the basket, their weight distributed so as to make a symmetrical frame with the top (that is the bottom of the curragh) as nearly flat as possible. At this stage two or three days are allowed for the frame to set. Then the crossings of the rods are lashed with a continuous twine and again the frame is left weighted. The thin ends of the rods are now broken off at the last lashings in such a way as to leave the bark projecting to prevent the ends from damaging the hide. This, which has meanwhile been softening in the river, is sewn on to the gunwale with twine, the basket having been pulled out of the ground and inverted. The thwart is fixed in position amidship, its ends suspended from the gunwale with withy ties, and withy braces are laced across the stern portion to form a rest for the

[1] W. F. Wakeman, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1872), 76.
[2] J. Hornell, *British Coracles and Irish Curraghs* (1938).

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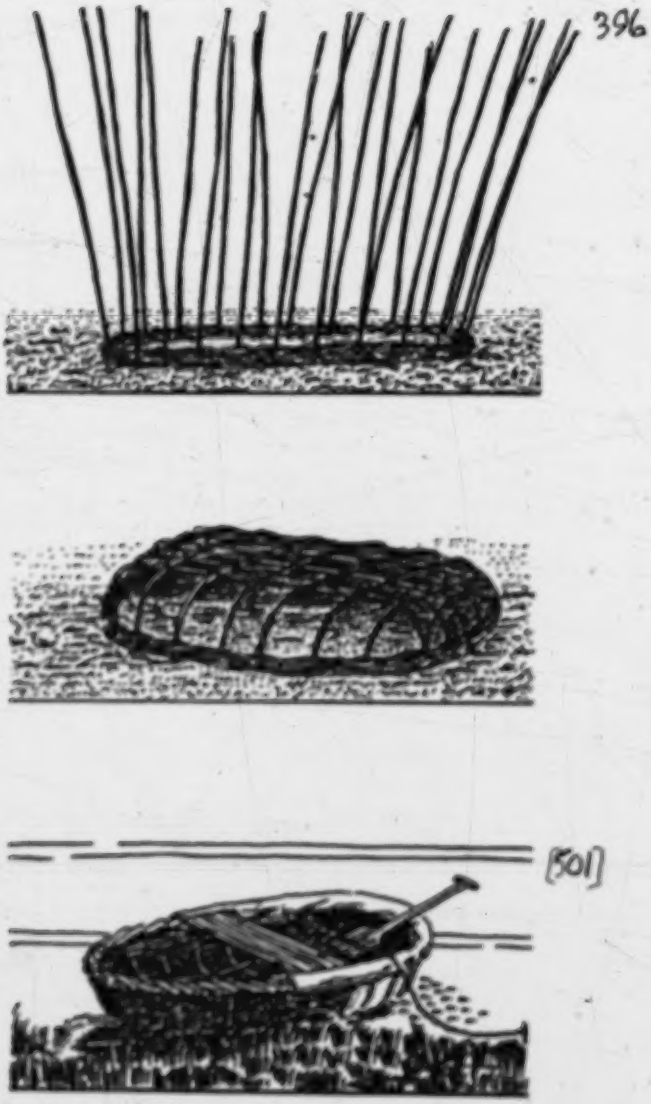

FIG. 77. The Boyne curragh: construction of basket.

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396 net. Sitting on the thwart, the boat-builder now drives in the projecting rod-ends to tighten the skin, and trims them to within an inch of the gunwale. Finally he weaves on a protecting mouth of hazel rods which he binds to the gunwale and covers, behind the thwart, with canvas to save the net from damage as it is played out.

The curragh was well adapted to the draft-net salmon fishery
501 at the Oldbridge weir on the Boyne. The following account is
226 based on notes made at Oldbridge in 1947: 'Every half hour of daylight during the season, the curragh makes its brief trip with a draft-net around the pool of water where the salmon lie below the weir. Its virtue lies in its lightness and ease of handling—though not for the novice—in the method of paddling over the bows which allows it to keep close to the banks, and especially in the shallow draught which enables it to pass right under the weir without being swept down by the under-current. The paddler kneels in the deep bows and draws the boat along with rapid strokes alternately to left and right. The net-man sits on the thwart facing backwards and plays out the net, the end of which is held by a third man on the bank. Having reached the far end of the weir the paddler races downstream and returns across the current to join the third man and close the net. The salmon are dispatched with a heavy 'priest' here called the killing-stick.' The fishermen still operate two rectangular fishtraps below the weir, one near each bank, composed of iron gratings which have probably replaced wicker traps since they are known as 'hurdles'. The salmon are taken out with a landing net. A weir has probably been worked continuously at this spot since the Middle Ages, for the monks of Mellifont Abbey operated a weir here.[1]

It comes as a shock, after seeing the little basket-curragh of
501 the Boyne, to recall that the legendary histories tell of much trafficking across the seas in splendid curraghs which carried sails. *The Voyage of Teigue* was made in a curragh constructed of forty oxhides and fitted with twenty-five thwarts.[2] Allowance must be made for picturesque exaggeration, but there is no doubt that the monks of the Irish Church went far afield in

[1] A. E. J. Went, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1955), 18-23.
[2] Standish O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica* (1892), 596.

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their skin boats and almost certainly reached Iceland before the Norsemen. An account of the legendary voyagings of St. Brendan speaks of the hides of his curragh as dressed with butter. Port-na-Curaich, on the island of Iona, commemorates the landing of another Irish saint, St. Columba, though one hesitates to accept the tradition that the long mound which may be seen there is the place where he buried his curragh so that he could not return to Ireland. The sea-going curraghs were ideal craft for the Irish raiders who plundered west Britain during and after the Roman occupation: light in weight, of shallow draught and capable of flying over the waves. Probably the plank-built longboats of the Vikings drove the curraghs from the Irish Sea, but its descendants are still to be found in the rowing curraghs of the west coast from Donegal to Kerry. The Boyne curragh is a fossilized relic of an earlier form, if indeed it is not, as Hornell thought, a degeneration product. 501

But besides the rowing curraghs up to twenty-five feet in length there are also, in Donegal, smaller paddling curraghs eight or ten feet long which seem to stand between the oval river baskets and the sharp-pointed rowing curraghs. In an account of the Rosses in the 1750s we read of the funeral processions to the island of Aranmore in Donegal which comprised as many as sixty or eighty curraghs covered with seal skins.[1] We learn from a description of their construction written nearly 100 years later that the frame of sallies and laths, at that time 'skinned with a hide or tarred canvas' was lashed together with cords of horsehair.[2] The same writer tells us that cattle were transported in them by lifting an animal into the curragh on its back, with its legs tied, and carrying the loaded vessel into the water. He gives the following example of 'the reckless daring of these islanders. A man and his wife coming out of the island of Aranmore, in a little boat filled with turf, had a horse standing on top of it; with the roll of the sea, the animal was thrown out, and as they were a long way from land, must have been drowned, had not the man cleverly succeeded in getting him into the boat again!' It seems from what records are available that the hides used for covering the vessels, [505] [281]

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 208.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 91.

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501 whether seal-skin or the hide of a cow or horse, were untanned.
I can add little to the historical account given by Hornell, but
[281] it should be noticed that the paddle curragh, covered with horsehide, was common in Erris, Co. Mayo, around 1850[1] and that, to judge from an entry in a Rathlin Island account book of 1760—'paid for one mare's hide for the boat, 1s. and 6d.'—the paddle curragh was used there also.

The long rowing curragh with its high pointed nose is
501 widely distributed on the west coast from Donegal to Kerry,
3% and its seaworthy qualities are known to many from its dramatic participation in such films as *Man of Aran* and *Shark Island*. This vessel too is built bottom upwards, but the frame is pegged, not into the ground but into a strong wooden gunwale frame, single or double, which Hornell believes was borrowed, along with the fixed thwarts which give lateral rigidity, from plank-built boats. Yet the method of pivoting the oar on a single tholepin, originally perhaps a strong projecting rib of the curragh frame, rather than in a rowlock, suggests that the rowing curragh has native forerunners. There are many variations in constructional details from one district to another but nearly all the vessels are now built of laths and all are covered with tarred canvas. An emergency repair is contrived by an operation which, if you are a timid passenger, looks like 'burning your boats': the curragh is inverted, the tar around the hole is set alight and a calico patch stuck on when the tar has run. The curraghs are rowed by two, three or four men, and the largest are said to have a carrying capacity of two tons. In Kerry they are masted to carry a small lug sail. A feature of
[177] many curraghs is a small bottle of holy water, a protection against misfortune, suspended on a string in the bows.

The looms of the long narrow oars overlap so that the oars-
501 man pulls cross-handed. A heavy wooded counterweight, the bool, is attached near the loom, and the oar pivots by means of a round hole in the bool on a single wooden peg, the tholepin, driven into the gunwale (Fig. 78). This method of rowing is found on many lake and river boats in Ireland, perhaps es-
[171] pecially in those areas, such as the Shannon and Lough Neagh,

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1856), 86. See also *Pococke's Tour* 1758, 64.

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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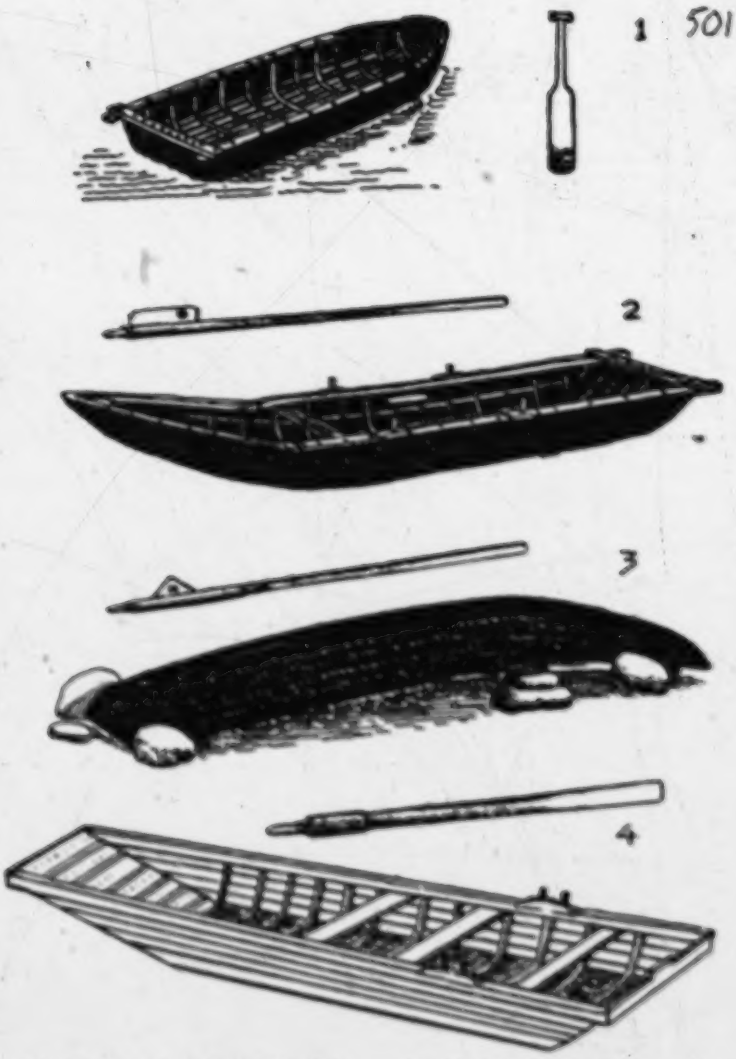

FIG. 78. Currughs and cot. (1) Paddle currugh and paddle, Bunbeg, Co. Donegal. (2) Rowing currugh and oar, Sheephaven, Co. Donegal. (3) Rowing currugh and oar, Spiddal, Co. Galway. (4) Cot and oar, Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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501 where curraghs were formerly known. But it is also characteristic of Scottish cobles and the boats of some English lakes.
171 The inshore fishing boats of Co. Antrim also had booled oars,[1] and farther afield the single tholepin is said to typify the rowing boats of Madeira, the sardine boats of Portugal and some vessels of the Upper Nile. These often use a grommet, as do the boats of the north-east coast of England.

Sea-going curraghs are put to many uses, for inshore net
226 fishing, for setting lobster pots or long lines, for gathering kelp and for carrying freight, livestock and passengers. But the most spectacular purpose to which they have been put is for hunting the basking shark or sunfish from whose liver, before
[573] the advent of paraffin, oil for lighting was obtained. A single fish will yield from seven to ten barrels of liver. Measuring up to forty feet in length, the basking shark is one of the world's largest fish and though harmless—its diet is minute copepods—its bulk makes it a formidable adversary. These fish move down the west coast in summer, and in early May they haunt the Sunfish Bank thirty miles off Achill Island, where they come to the surface in the morning and evening. The bank is remarkable for the break of the tide on it, although it lies between seventy and ninety fathoms near the edge of 'soundings'—the continental shelf—and a heavy swell makes conditions difficult for small boats. Here and elsewhere the sunfish used to be harpooned from curraghs, but the advantage lay with decked vessels which could stand by for several days. In the early nineteenth century as many as thirty or forty fish were sometimes killed on the Sunfish Bank in a single day of fine weather. Nowadays the sharks are taken in strong nets fixed to island headlands around which they swim. They are occasionally seen off the other Irish coasts, where they cause great havoc if they get involved in the fishing nets.

Of the small open clinker-built boats of traditional type which
501 takes the place of the curragh on the north, east and south
[174] coasts, no systematic study has been made. Some of them betray their Norse inheritance in their lines or their names, for example the Wicklow skiff and the drontheim (Trondhjem) of the north coast. These boats are double-ended—unlike the cur-

[1] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 178.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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raghs—and would not be out of place in the fiords. In fact 501
during the nineteenth century, and perhaps from earlier times,
many yawls were imported unfinished from Norway, carrying [439]
only the bottom (garboard) strakes hollowed from a thick
plank. Local materials, always scarce in Ireland in recent [396]
centuries, were utilized where possible, holly for the keel (it
wears smooth and slides well on beach gravel) ropes of bog fir,
and a 'whin root' for the tiller. In Kerry the entire vessel was
sometimes built from bog fir: for this purpose as for making
roof-frames it had the advantage of impermeability.[1] For off-
shore fishing in the Irish Sea the lugger—a name now applied
to the motor drifter which has taken its place—developed in
the nineteenth century under the influence of visiting 'nickies',
the Manx name for Cornish lug-sailed herring boats, said to
have been given because so many of their crews were named
Nicholas. On the west coast the Galway hookers are now, des-
pite their name, used almost entirely for carrying turf and live-
stock. The lug-sailed pookhauns used for fishing are a variant
of the Irish Sea yawl, of clumsy construction thanks to limited
resources and unsuitable building materials.

On many inland loughs and larger rivers dug-out boats not
much different from those of the Bronze Age seem to have
continued to be made into the seventeenth century and probably
even later in places. The most serious problem to be solved in 396
hollowing out a solid log is how to keep the sides and bottom
of the vessel of even thickness. Some of the ancient dug-outs
recovered from the Irish lakes and rivers show that their makers
had availed themselves of a method which is practised today
in parts of Indonesia. The method is to bore holes through the
shell and plug the holes with pegs of the right length to serve
as gauges. The plugged holes observed in the bottom of many
an Irish dug-out have been explained as drainage holes, but
the pegs would in that case have been left protruding, and one
hole would surely have sufficed. As the country lost its forests it
must have become difficult to obtain trees of the right size and
kind, especially oak, for boat making, and by the eighteenth
century, it seems, plank boats retaining some features of the
dug-out were substituted. Around 1800 the salmon-fishing cots 501

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 89.

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501 of the River Nure were described as 'flat narrow boats equal at both ends and propelled by paddles'.[1] Earlier, about 1645, Gerard Boate described the cots as 'things like boats, but very unshapely, being nothing but square pieces of timber made hollow.' 'They are very common throughout all Ireland . . . even upon the great rivers and loughs'.[2]

To judge from the numerous discoveries of small dug-outs at [491] river crossings their last surviving use was for ferrying purposes. They were replaced locally by flat-bottomed cots built with wide planks laid edge to edge, such as serve the eel-fishers of the River Bann. These are propelled with a pole. The punt-like cot is also the old craft of the River Shannon. A number of dug-outs are found to have been adapted for propulsion with oars, using the single thole-pin of the rowing-curragh. The large rowing boats of Lough Neagh also use the single thole-pin: to give greater leverage for the heavy oars the iron thole-pin is set out from the gunwale on an outrigger or 'bolster'. In the cots of Lough Erne the oar is worked between double thole-pins (Fig. 78). The maze of lakes which make up the Lough Erne group have yielded many ancient dug-outs of varied types, some of them spoon-shaped, others rectangular and provided with carrying lugs. Others again seem to be both boat and sledge, an alternative to the portable curragh in a land strewn with little lakes. But the strangest vessel, apparently misnamed a curragh, was a kind of raft which is said to have survived until a hundred years ago, 'composed of wreaths of bull-rushes tied upon a frame or raft made of rough branches of trees'.[3]

Methods of fishing in river and lake include not only legiti- 226 mate forms of angling and netting, but many ways of killing fish which game laws and other vested interests have made illegal, but have not extinguished. The spearing of salmon, prohibited since 1714, is now left to poachers, but well into the last century it was openly practised in the city of Galway.[4] On [423] Lough Neagh yellow (feeding) eels are caught illicitly on long lines by fisherfolk whose claims to ancient rights have not been recognized by the courts.

[1] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 180.
[2] G. Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 64, 156.
[3] W. F. Wakeman, *loc. cit.*
[4] A. E. J. West, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 68 (1938), 110

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been recognized by the courts. 'Bobbing' for eels with a ball of worms attached to a string is practised on dark stormy nights, and on the River Bann a vicious-looking eel-rake is used to jab among the river weeds. Its teeth of sharp steel, often discarded hackle-pins, are set an inch apart in the end of a long pole. Bone pins of prehistoric date recovered in quantities from the bed of the river may have been put to a similar use, and this method of catching fish, probably of ancient origin, is widely distributed. There are specimens of eel-rakes in the Danish museums (Fig. 79). A very similar eel-comb is known in China, and a herring rake, used by the native fishermen of north-western America and mounted with sharp bone teeth, was first described by Captain Cook in 1778.[1] For taking salmon, poachers in the River Barrow use a staked net fashioned into a conical trap, and trout are taken in the north of Ireland in home-made 'loop nets' large enough to bridge small streams (Fig. 80). Salmon are also 'strokehauled' with naked hooks, and gaffed when within reach of the river banks. Trout are taken not only by 'ginling' (tickling) but also with a 'dull' or horsehair noose.

Dr. Went has made a careful study of Irish fish spears and the interested reader may be referred to his paper.[2] It may be mentioned that two of the three classes of eel-spears which he describes have been recovered from crannogs of the Dark Ages: they are the barbed spears known as rock- or sun-spears, so named from the conditions which are required for the eels to be impaled, and the more common mud-spears, which are within the law and of which excellent specimens can still be seen in parts of the country. They have flat tines, notched at the sides to prevent the enmeshed eels escaping. Spears of this type are plunged blindly into the mud. Consequently they are often very large and heavy, a seven-pronged example from the River Bann weighing over nine pounds and having a handle 30 feet long. Old specimens have a circular aperture at the junction of each pair of tines which facilitated the removal of the eels. The advantage of the mud-spear, which has a much wider distribution than the primitive looking rock-spear (which is apparently

[1] *Captain Cook's Third Voyage*, Ed. C. R. Low (N.D.), 386.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 82 (1952), 109–34.

 [Text continues on 246]

FIG. 79. Eel spears and rakes. (1) Mud-spear, Co. Antrim. (2, 3) Mud-spears, Co. Westmeath (after West). (4, 5) Rock- or sun-spears, Co. Westmeath (after West). (6) Wexford harbour eel-spear (after West). (7) Eel-rake, River Bann (after N. C. Mitchel). (8) Eel-rake, Denmark (National Museum, Copenhagen).

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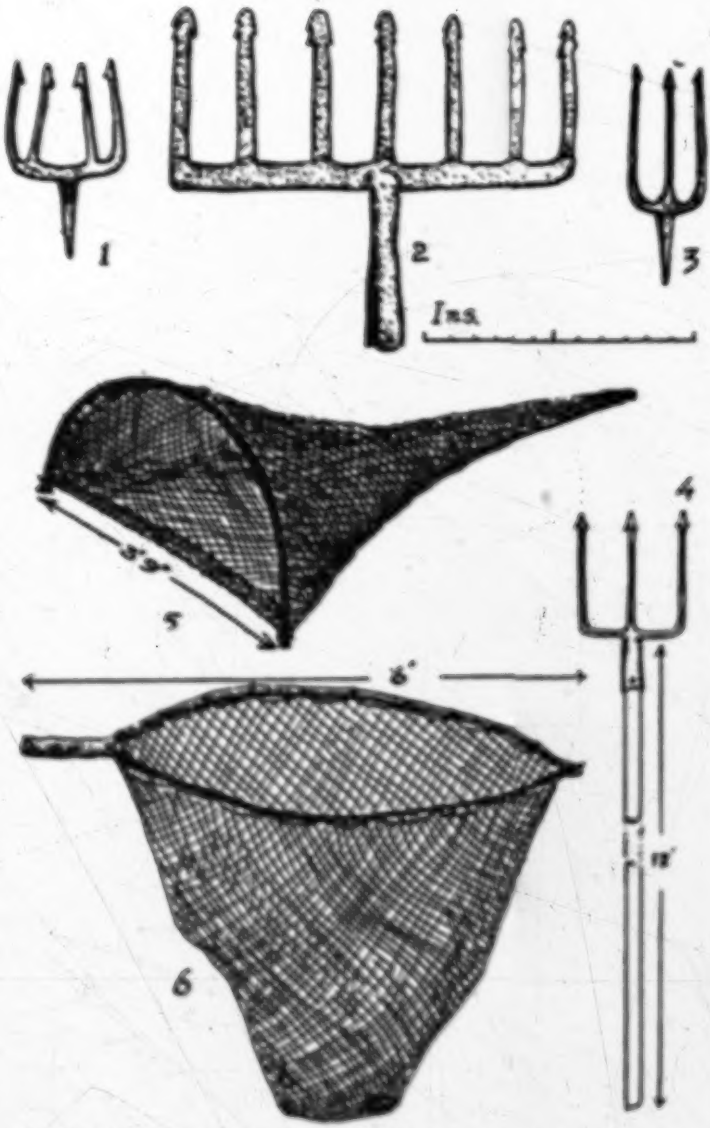

FIG. 80. Salmon spears and river nets. (1) River Mázaire (after West). (2) River Suir (after West). (3) Co. Down. (4) Co. Antrim. (5) Co. Donegal. (6) Co. Tyrone (after E. N. Carruthers).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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227 confined to Co. Westmeath) is that the eel was undamaged and its skin could therefore be utilized. Apart from their use as [237] thongs and flail-hangings eel-skins were worn as charms against [751] rheumatic pains. Eel fat, too, is esteemed as a cure for rheuma- [757] tism. The third type of eel-spear is quite different in form and methods of use. It is confined to Wexford Harbour and would appear to be a relic of Scandinavian influence in that half-foreign south-eastern corner of Ireland comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth. It consists of two splayed prongs between which is ingeniously mounted a single barbed prong on to which 227 the eel is guided by the outer members (Fig. 79). When the 226 tide covers the mudflats the fisherman lies in a punt with his head over the prow, and with a spear in each hand propels the boat until he spies an eel in the mud, when his punting pole becomes a weapon. At low tide the eel fishers wear yard-long [481] 'scooches' or mud-shoes, wooden boards turned up at the front like miniature skis. We note in passing that boards were formerly worn by both men and horses in working on soft bogs in Co. Mayo.[1]

The salmon spear or leister, being illegal, is normally a light three-pronged instrument, but large specimens weighing up to eight pounds and made after the fashion of the Westmeath eel-spears are found on the River Suir (Fig. 80). The fish were attracted at night by 'burning the river' with resinous splits of bog-fir or lumps of peat soaked in oil.

Riverine weirs of many kinds have been the privilege of religious houses and landed properties through the ages, and many examples specially designed for the capture of migratory fish, salmon and eels are maintained. There are traditions of temporary weirs of heather stems weighted down with stones, into which trout were driven to be extracted when the bundles of heather were pitched on to the bank. Gerard Boate describes the weirs in his day as consisting of 'big stones set close together from the one side of the river to the other, leaving only one hole . . . before which hole a basket being laid, they take 227 therein a great quantity of fish'.[2] 'Fish baskets' and 'weels' are referred to in many ancient fishing grants, but I have not

[1] J. McPartlan, *Mayo*, 94.
[2] Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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come across surviving examples of these ancient devices. The 227
iron 'cribs' associated with modern salmon weirs, however, appear to derive from wattled traps. And the long conical 'coghill' nets in which the eels are caught in the weirs of the Bann, the Shannon and (until recently) the Erne, are shaped like weels and indeed they are sometimes built up of a series of cones. The fine meshed 'tail' of the net is made to open and the eels, nowadays, are poured directly into submerged tanks. A detail suggestive of long custom is that the 'skiver' with which the tail is closed in the coghills of the weirs at Portna on the Bann consists of a perforated rib-bone of horse or cow. The pin is attached to a cord, which is wound round the end of the net and secured by thrusting the pin into the windings. The walls of the weirs are often still built of wattles, and the old style of weir on the Erne consists of a base of large stones into which the wattled superstructure is thrust.[1]

The wattles are known on the Bann as *sleaghs*: of the six weirs now fishing there four are of the traditional type and two have been modernized. At Athlone on the Shannon there were twenty-two eel weirs in the early seventeenth century, and nearly all were still working in the nineteenth century: a single weir is now fished there.[2] The eel weirs of the River Erne had been reduced to five when they were abandoned owing to the recent construction of a dam for the Ballysharnon [976] hydro-electric scheme. The Bann silver eel fisheries are probably the largest of their kind in western Europe, and it is significant that the Bann is one of the richest rivers in Europe for archaeological discoveries ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the [178] early medieval period. Both salmon and eels have now become money-crops and the catches are exported. Already in the eighteenth century Irish salt salmon was exported in considerable [439] quantities to America. The ice-house in which salmon used to be preserved is one of the many ruined buildings to be seen [343] about the decaying houses of the gentry, and most country houses also had their fish ponds.

Among the common folk eels are esteemed only by the folk 262
who catch them, legally or otherwise, but they were formerly

[1] A. E. J. West, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 71 (1941), 215-22.
[2] A. E. J. West, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 80 (1950), 146-54.

262 sold fresh in the markets of the Bann Valley, and were salted down for winter use in place of herrings.[1] They have gone the way of most of the pre-famine 'relishes' which came to be despised as the threat of famine faded after the middle of last century. The elvers, too, used to be taken out of the teeming rivers in spring with sieves and pressed into cakes or boiled in milk and made into a kind of eel-cheese. In the River Bann the 226 elvers are now trapped at the first weir, at the tidal limit, and transported upstream, up to 50 million a year being given an easy passage in this way. A marked reduction in the size of the silver eels netted on their return to the sea some ten years later has been interpreted as a result of this interference with nature. The bulk of the eels taken are sold live in the London markets. [231] In addition to elvers salmon fry also was in former times taken for food and fed to pigs, and by an Act of Elizabeth's reign swine were prohibited from feeding on the shores of tidal rivers 'where they destroy a great quantity of salmon and eel fry'.[2]

Many traditional methods of fishing survive on the lakes of the Irish midlands. The otter board, now more often seen along the coast where fishermen trawl for flat fish in sandy bays, was formerly widely used in lake fishing and is considered to be 'an implement of very ancient origin in Ireland'.[3] Related to it is the 'pooka', a board fitted with mast and sail which carried out the baited long lines.[4] Fishing lines were until recently 263 sometimes made of horsehair by an interesting and undoubtedly ancient method. The instruments employed are goose or swan quills, cut down to make open-ended tubes some three inches long, two or three being needed according to whether a two- or three-strand line is being prepared. From ten to twenty long hairs taken from a horse's tail are threaded through each quill and knotted together at one end, the other ends of the quills being plugged with short pieces of quill which grip the hairs yet allow them to slide through. The quills are now rolled one against the other in the fingers, and as the strands twist on one another they pull down the hairs which feed them. The

[1] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 245.
[2] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 148.
[3] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*. See also R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 58 (1964).
[4] W. H. Maxwell, *Wild Sports of the West*, 77.

line grows as if by magic as the quills rotate in nimble fingers. 295
A fresh supply of hairs is inserted from time to time by removing the plugs. I illustrate an example of this fascinating apparatus made for me by Mr. T. J. Barron of Knockbride, Co. Cavan (Fig. 81). Mr. A. T. Lucas has described the Cavan

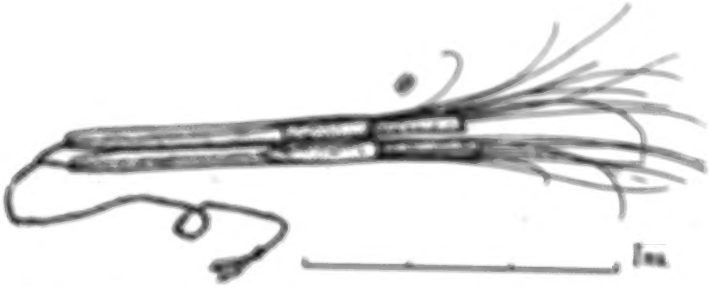

FIG. 81. Quills used for making horsehair fishing lines, Co. Cavan. The quills are rolled between the forefingers.

specimens and others from Co. Mayo.[1] In Cavan the lines were (226)
made for bream fishing: the bream were both split, salted and
dried and stored fresh in little ponds on the lake shores. Around [251]
the coasts—I have seen examples from the Aran Islands and from Co. Down—a more complicated machine was made for twisting long lines of hemp, three spindles being rotated by pulling on an endless cord twisted round each spindle.[2] A very similar device is employed in China for making bamboo ropes [171]
for raising coal in primitive mines. On the shores of Lough Neagh the long lines are manufactured in rustic rope-walks. These night-lines, which have tended to replace draft-nets, are set in lengths of up to four miles. The season of yellow (feeding) 226
eel fishing runs from March to October. It is illegal, as we have mentioned, but shows no signs of being given up. The eel fishermen claim immemorial rights and are not deterred by the fines imposed when they are caught. Their vocabulary, like that of the men who work the eel weirs on the River Bann, has many [172]
words which have come down from Gaelic and perhaps from

[1] A. T. Lucas, *Journal of the Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc.*, 24 (1951), 111–14.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, Fig. 43.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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226 pre-Gaelic tongues, and there can be little doubt that the eel
[192] fishery is prehistoric in origin. The draft nets in which pollan
are caught in the lake—the pollan is a fresh-water herring
[227] peculiar to some Irish and Scottish lakes—also display old
features. The sections, known as webs, are sewn together with
a bone needle into long nets, which are weighted with stone
sinkers. The draft-net is widely used in the salmon rivers, as
described on the Boyne earlier in this chapter, and references
to draft-netting go back to the twelfth century. On some rivers
[349] tall towers are erected from which a watcher signals the
[202] presence of fish.[1]

We are not here concerned with the commercial offshore fisheries, but something must be said of the inshore fishing because it has been characteristically combined with farming all around the coast. This type of fishing was well suited to the Irish crofter economy, so that the comment frequently made by improving visitors and despairing Government officials was that the Irish would not go out to fish, but waited for the fish to come close inshore. The shore-dwelling farmer is knowledgeable about the ways of fish and knows all 'the signs'. He has been accustomed to keep a net to hand and watch for shoals of different fish at the right seasons. There are watching points on the cliffs overlooking many a small bay, and it was from such vantage points on the south and west coasts that the pilchard 'huers' directed the seine boats to the shoals that visit Ireland intermittently.[2] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Irish pilchard fishery grew to large proportions but it has now declined to something like its older local significance. When the industry was capitalized by promoters like Sir William Petty it was the train oil pressed out during the packing of the pilchards for export which found an Irish market.
[281] It was used both as a luminant and in the preparation of leather. The seine boats have now turned their attention to herring and mackerel, and Dr. Went has pointed out that the seine is used for catching salmon only in Kenmare Bay, where Petty introduced it for pilchard fishing about the year 1672.

In the Irish Sea the herrings come close inshore in September

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 85 (1955), 22–23, Pl. 3A.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 51 (1946), 137–57.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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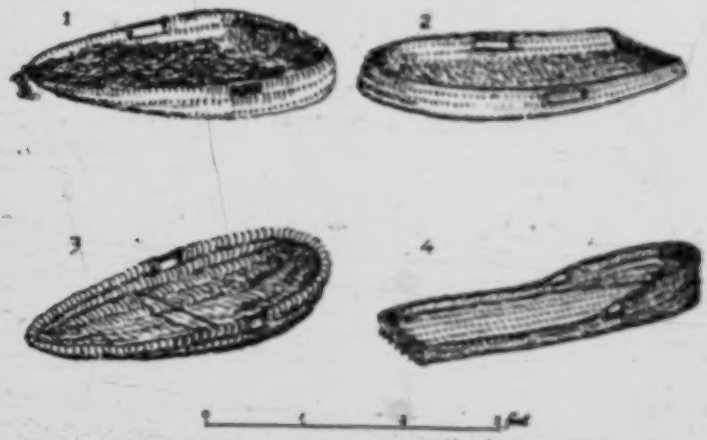
and are therefore known as 'harvest herrings'. It is then that the yawls or skiffs which lie half hidden for most of the year have their brief spell of activity, and the farmers who jointly own them find on moonlight nights a cool relief from the hot pressure of harvest. The fish are caught in trammel nets, and they were formerly in great demand not only locally but for many miles inland for salting down as winter 'kitchen'.[1] A more varied diet has lessened the demand, for the great days of the salt herring were the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when a potato diet cried out for a tasty accompaniment. On the north-west coast the herring fishery extends through the winter, with consequent serious risks which the Donegal men have none the less been willing to take. Here, perhaps, is one explanation for the survival of the light rowing curragh down to the coming of powered vessels, for a small sail boat brings many hazards on this stormy Atlantic coast.

226 [501]



[285] [45]

FIG. 82. Long-line baskets. (1) Co. Antrim. (2) Co. Galway. (3) Co. Down. (4) Aran Islands.

Long line fishing for cod, skate, ling and other big fish is almost certainly far older than the herring fishery, and it has preserved down to our own day many ancient practices and

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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226 types of gear. It used to be said that you should never risk taking a dog into some of the fishing villages on the north coast: [281] their skins were in great demand for making the line floats or 'stookies'. Very probably seal skins were formerly used for this purpose, as among the Eskimo. The sinkers of grooved stones from the beach might well pass for prehistoric implements (Fig. 74). The beautifully made line-baskets of unpeeled [285] willow have the graceful curves that one associates with the work of untouched 'primitives' (Fig. 82). And the division of labour was on a primitive level, for to the womenfolk fell the [462] tedious labour of baiting and preparing the hooks. The long-line fishermen were exceptionally hardy and were regarded with awe and respect by the inshore fishermen-farmers. No doubt the timid and the weakly had been weeded out by continual stress. Their knowledge of the sea and of the fishing [429] marks was a guarded secret, and the best banks were some- [777] times allotted, no doubt to avoid fights, by casting lots. In the Hebrides this was done on Bride's Day. There also, and possibly in Ireland, the banks were held in rotation in a kind of marine rundale.

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XVIII

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

THE Irish countryman enjoys nothing so much as 'a gathering' of people, and when he is forced to leave his native land he does not willingly settle down away from large urban centres. At home a crowd goes to his head like poteen. The daily routine of life on an isolated farm presents him with few opportunities for seeing people from outside his immediate neighbourhood, and on fine summer evenings his favourite pastime is to throw himself against a roadside ditch with a knot of companions and watch the passers-by. That the remarkably large attendances at rural churches and chapels owe something to the social needs of a scattered population is suggested by the phrase, applied to someone who arrives late at chapel: 'he missed the mass but hit the gathering'—he had something worth while for his trouble. In the Irish laws the freeman's rights of assembly were carefully defined: there were assemblies for transacting legal business (the oireacht), and others for commerce and games (the aenach) which came to be called fairs. With the coming of Christianity the traditional gatherings at sacred sites were transmuted into patterns (pardons), at which the new religion was quickened by practices of the elder faiths. In fact most gatherings served more than one purpose. The secret assemblies of Roman Catholics at 'mass rocks' in penal days no doubt also provided opportunities for social and commercial dealings, and the 'sacrament Sabbaths' of Presbyterian Ulster were great gatherings having something of the nature of fairs. Tents and booths were erected for the occasion, and indeed they were popularly known as 'holy fairs'.

Although the fair has lost something of its former significance in Northern Ireland, thanks to Government marketing schemes

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543 and purchasing boards, it is still a powerful commercial and
443 social force in the rest of Ireland. In fact the numbers of fairs have increased with the post-famine dominance of the cattle trade, though they have tended to be concentrated in fewer centres as many small fair-towns have been by-passed by improved means of communication. On the other hand the weekly markets have declined or disappeared, their place taken by shops which typically handle drinks as well as groceries, clothing as well as hardware. Thus the fair has retained and even strengthened its magnetic hold on the countryfolk, and though many of its subsidiary functions have been taken over by institutions of more recent origin, the fair itself retains a pagan aura. There is a widespread belief, by no means confined to Ireland,
[821] that fair days are always rainy days. This belief may well be justified by climatic averages, but I have heard it explained as a consequence of the lies and profanity, the fights and pagan ways of the fair. Many an ancient fair has become extinct, no doubt because it no longer fulfilled its economic functions, but the explanation usually given is that it was abandoned 'on account of the fighting'.

In Europe, north of the Alpine mountains, the fair as a means
172 of exchange and social intercourse is an institution older than
543 the town, and older far than Christianity. The periodic assemblies of early Celtic Ireland served as temporary towns, and it was probably these sites which Ptolemy marked as cities on his map of the second century A.D. They were held on hill-tops hallowed by an antiquity which archaeology has in some instances traced back to the Bronze Age, and the regions which they served were, we have suggested, already taking shape in the late Neolithic period. Ireland has a number of large enclosures of Neolithic date analogous to Windmill Hill in Wiltshire, which apparently functioned as seasonal meeting places where stock was rounded-up and sorted. An enclosure of rather different type but of similar age—the Giant's Ring
[541] near Belfast—was the scene of horse-racing down to recent centuries. On the cairn-crowned Cave Hill, too, overlooking
543 Belfast, crowds used to assemble on Easter Monday 'in accordance with immemorial usage'.[1] We may see in the 'parles

[1] J. B. Doyle, *Tours in Ulster* (1854), 102.

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upon hills', which the Dublin government found so obnoxious in the sixteenth century, the persistent efforts of the Irish to maintain their ancient rights and customs of public assembly. In the Anglo-Norman period and again during the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries towns were deliberately established with the intention of bringing 'civilized ways of living to the wild Irish'. Many of them are characterized by a wide street or square—the 'diamond' in Northern Ireland—where fairs and other gatherings could be dominated and controlled from a castle which overlooked it. These urban settlements were known to the Irish, whose native 'towns' were rarely anything more than disorderly clachans, as 'street towns'. They are found scattered at fairly regular intervals all through the countryside, usually at some river crossing or hill gap where routeways meet. Some of them, well-placed in good fertile country, have expanded, while others have decayed or remained mere villages. Often one will find not far away the old Fair Hill from which the fair was attracted as the facilities of the town outweighed the traditional pull of the inconvenient hilltop. But for long the Irish kept to their own fairs which continued, according to an Act of 1651, to 'take great customs and profits to the depression of the boroughs and the trading towns'.[1] The old assembly places are not entirely forgotten, and it often happened that they were visited for games and horse-racing long after they had lost their function as places of commerce. They are celebrated in local ballads and their sites can still be traced by the grassy mounds which are the remains of booths and cattle pens. The lost fairs of Ireland deserve a study such as is being made of the lost villages of England, but the chief sources for such a study, in the absence of records, must lie in field work and the fast-fading memories of the countryside.

The fairs were formerly organized in a recognized sequence of goods and livestock, terminating in sports and horse-racing—and not infrequently in bloodshed. Several of them achieved a notoriety which made their names a byword, and among them none was more notorious, owing partly no doubt to its proximity to Dublin, than Donnybrook Fair. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of 1845 forgets its sober purpose in thus describing

[1] T. W. Freeman, *Ireland*, 98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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443 it: 'During the week, beginning on the 26th August, is held
543 the notorious Donnybrook Fair, professedly for the sale of
578 horses and black cattle, but really for vulgar dissipation, and
786 formerly for criminal outrage and the most revolting debauchery. It was for generations a perfect prodigy of moral horrors —a concentration of disgrace upon, not Ireland alone, but civilized Europe. It far surpassed all other fairs in the multitude and grossness of its disgusting incidents of vice; and, in general, it exhibited such continuous scenes of riot, bloodshed, debauchery and brutality, as only the coarsest taste and the most hardened heart could witness without painful emotion.' This was by day; 'the orgies of the night may be better imagined than described'. An anonymous writer is quoted as saying: 'We venture to say that there is more misery and madness, devilment and debauchery, than could be found crowded into an equal space of ground in any other part of this our globe, during five times the same space, which is spent at Donnybrook, in one given year'. The *Gazetteer* then recovers itself and offers excuses for 'describing what ought never to have been described'. One regrets rather that the compiler was so overcome by horror as to forget his statistical duties.

The absence of moral restraint which led to extremes of
543 lawlessness at Donnybrook and elsewhere was a normal and
527 characteristic accompaniment of these periodic folk-gatherings.
443 Such moral holidays are a feature of many societies which have
[786] not been greatly influenced by urban ways and values. Their purpose appears to be cathartic, but that there is a lingering fertility magic underlying the excitement is suggested by such strange rituals as those which mark the 'Puck Fair and Pattern' of Kilorglin at the head of Dingle Bay in Co. Kerry. The fair is unfortunately not mentioned in the *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, though the village of Kilorglin is described as 'an unprosperous, sequestered, and almost squalid seat of population; and appears to have acquired marvellously little profit from the advantageousness of its position for both inland and seaward trade'. Puck Fair, held every August, is the great event of the year in West Kerry, and lasts three days. 10th August is 'Gathering Day', the 11th is 'Fair Day', and the 12th 'Scattering Day', terms which have no doubt been handed down from days when

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'the order of the fair' was prescribed and the business lasted several days. On the evening of Gathering Day a procession assembles at the bridge and makes its way to the central square carrying (nowadays in a large cage mounted on a lorry) a billy-goat bedecked with ribbons. He is chained by the horns on a high platform erected for the purpose and, supplied with a liberal stock of cabbages, he presides over the fair. Tradition says that the goat used to stand, 'garlanded by greenery' on the old castle which was erected here by the Geraldines in the thirteenth century. The business of the fair is the sale of livestock, and as with many another large fair it is a traditional gathering place for the tinkers who in Ireland take the place of the gypsies. On the evening of Scattering Day the Puck is borne triumphantly back to the bridge. The popular explanation of the custom is that it commemorates an occasion when the noise of goats warned the Irish of advancing English forces, but it is more reasonable to see Puck as a symbol of fertility and good luck. 12th August is Old Lammas, and Lammas Day, the 1st August, was known to the Irish as 'Lewy's Fair', in memory of a pre-Christian deity. This season of high summer has many associations with the pastoral freedom of the hills, with young people and with dancing and courting. There are traditions of other Puck Fairs in the south of Ireland, and there were certain fairs at which a white horse was paraded through the assembled crowds and then tied up to preside over the proceedings.

Another celebrated gathering place was the great fair of Ballinasloe, which brought such fame to this Galway town that the *Gazetteer* describes it as 'the cynosure of much the larger part of the western province of Ireland', so prosperous that even its poorer quarters, 'a segregation of lanes, and houses, and cabins, aggregately repulsive', were yet 'greatly less haggard than what constitutes the whole of many a third or second rate town in Ireland'. The fair was held from the 5th to the 9th of October, and during the first half of the nineteenth century the average numbers of sheep and cattle offered for sale were respectively 90,000 and 18,000. Ballinasloe Fair served the west of Ireland in much the same way as the great trysts of Crieff and Falkirk served the Scottish Highlands in the days of

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443 the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous
527 gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone
543 grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon
[361] and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry
[487] footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those
489 of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement
439 of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-
441 dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose
439 experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'palvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland*.

[i.e., Ballinasloe.-Analyst]

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as they are called, were born in the mountain country of Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, adjoining the rich plains of the Pale where their ancestors sharpened their wits on the English settlers. Many stories are told of the tricks by which 'the goatmen' disposed of their animals before they reached their goal at Barnet Fair, of billy-goats sold to the innocent English as good milkers or as an infallible means of keeping a garden free of weeds. 'Every guy who comes here selling cloth', said a Canadian rancher, 'tells me he is from Slieve Gullion. It must be some city.' 441 439

Although the export of live cattle from Ireland was prohibited, in the interests of British farming, through most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the short sea-crossings from north-east Ireland enabled dealers to ship them to southern Scotland. The embargo was lifted in 1765, and by the early nineteenth century many thousands of cattle were reaching Portpatrick and being driven to the fairs at Dumfries and Carlisle, and farther afield to Barnet in Hertfordshire and St. Faith's near Norwich. Many Irish harvesters and other summer migrants followed the trails trodden by Irish cattle and their drovers, but after 1850, with the coming of the steamship, Glasgow, the Mersey and Holyhead became, as they remain, the chief points of entry for both animals and men. 439

Before the agrarian revolution and the import of feeding stuffs made it possible to keep stock through the winter, the months of October and November were critical for the farmer, who had to dispose of many of his animals at this time. The trade is now better distributed through the year, but although monthly fairs have become general since the famine, the sales vary a good deal from month to month, and the important fairs still fall at the turning points of the pastoral year, particularly in May and November. The spring fairs of February and March and the Lammas fairs of July and August were to a large extent concerned respectively with horses and with sheep and wool, but those of May and November were the great cattle fairs and also the hiring fairs. We are reminded that the Celtic year in pre-Christian times had only two seasons, winter and summer, and that the first days of November and May are still the Irish gale-days, the times when rents fall due. 439 443 543 [905] [927]

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443 One may readily see how this[1] came about, for these were the
437 times when the stock was gathered and sorted, and dues were paid to the overlords in cattle. In the ordinary business of the fair exchange and barter gave way in time to money transactions, but one has only to visit a cattle fair to sense that the noisy ritual of assessing values and the prolonged bargaining have come down from a time before the use of money was general. The vigorous hand-slapping by which bargains
[201] are sealed in tight-lipped silence could derive from the days when different languages were spoken at the fairs. Apart from the difference between English and Gaelic it should be remembered that in many districts pockets of non-Gaelic speech, perhaps even of non-Aryan tongues, survived well into the Christian era. Another interesting accompaniment of the con-
[771] cluded bargain is the piece of money, the luck penny, which the seller hands back to the purchaser as a gesture of independence when a price has finally been agreed on. Many a fight has begun because a buyer has been dissatisfied with the
[578] amount of his luck money. Similar bargaining took place when a servant was being hired for the half year, and he received his earles or earnest money as a sign that the contract was concluded, handing over to his employer his bundle of clothes in return.

543 The countryman will find any excuse for going to the fair, and it is his proud boast that he has seen so many fairs. It
[805] is by the fairs, and not by the calendar, that he measures time and dates important events in the life of the community. 'Their whole thought seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging', it was written of the Mayo peasantry in 1856,[1] and in the seventeenth century we find this comment on 'the inferior rank of husbandmen' in Westmeath: '(they) are very crafty and subtile in all manner of bargaining, especially in their dealings in fairs and markets'.[2] Your luck at the fair might depend
777 on the colour of the hair of the first person you met on the road,
543 and it was unlucky to be passed on the way, so that horsemen riding at full gallop were not merely trying out their paces for the races which followed. For good luck you should carry with

[1] W. Knight, *Ennis in the Irish Highlands*, 104.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 115.

[1 [i.e. the seasons and quarter days 880 falling from 1 May and 1 November. — Analyst]

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you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be 777
thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be 545
tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a
fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the
good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you
should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you
have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair [885]
that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own
at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which [538]
raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who
exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with 437
success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases
of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over 493
some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the 432
fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and
enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a com-
munal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should
never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old
belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent
on some special purchase, for example there should be some
'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash
set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been
made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy
something made of metal with the money. In parts of the coun-
try there were certain things which it was thought should never
be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example.
And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold
only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a [558]
woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject
poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of 443
the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend
to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remark-
able features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes
and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable [439]
export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country
fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1] P. Knight, *Knit in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

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443 trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-
322 lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples
443 are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there
543 were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of
443 ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 83), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for
[584] a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts,
[582] binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints'
796 days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1] See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland, 1796-97*, 190.
[2] R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 225.

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them have had to be suppressed: they became occasions of law- 796
lessness and bloodshed. Like the fairs they drew their adherents
from several rival neighbourhoods and therefore brought 796
feuding clans together. The following is a typical comment of
the early nineteenth century: 'On these patron days, which [796]

[322]
[415]

FIG. 68. Turnery. (1) Wooden bowl, Co. Armagh. (2) Butter stamp, Co. Fermanagh. (3) Butter stamp, Co. Antrim. (4) Ladle, Co. Antrim.

generally fall out on Sundays, great numbers of young persons of both sexes assemble, tents are erected, music, dancing, drinking and every kind of excess takes place, and the revel not infrequently terminates in battery and bloodshed, from the contention of adverse factions'.[1] Sir William Wilde's description

[1] W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, I, 246 (of Listerlin, Co. Kilkenny).

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796 of the Pattern of Glendalough in Co. Wicklow was written
579 later in the century. The fights would begin early on the eve of the patron's day, on 23rd June; 'the scene was remarkable, an immense crowd had bivouacked among the ruins (of the seven churches of Glendalough) and were cooking their evening meal, gipsy-wise, throughout the space of the sacred enclosure. Dancing, drinking, thimble-rigging, prick-o'-the-loop and other amusements continued even while the bare-
[788] headed venerable pilgrims and bare-kneed voteens were going their prescribed rounds. Towards evening the fun became fast and furious . . . the crowd thickened, sticks were brandished and the faction fight began. It was an unsafe locality unless a stipendiary magistrate and about 100 police could keep the combatants, the Byrnes, Tools and Farrells, etc., separate'.[1]

796 Some of the most notorious patterns were connected with
786 holy wells named after a saint but not necessarily located near an old church site. Reading the accounts of witnesses in the early nineteenth century it is hard to believe that religious devotion could be associated with such profanity, but granting that social conditions in the decades before the great famine must have contributed to scenes which the church itself described as 'drunkenness and debauchery', there was, as with the wakes for the dead, a vestige of innocent paganism in the rituals. Some patterns survived their banning by the church and have persisted, stripped of their grosser elements, to this day. The
[788] celebrated wells of St. Patrick at Struell in Co. Down, which are still visited by a few pilgrims on St. John's Eve, were the scene of the gathering of great crowds of people and of strange rites until a few years ago. Here as often happened the chief celebration was on the Eve of the Feast of St. John the Baptist and not on the patron saint's day, so that it was not strictly a pattern. Another Midsummer gathering which has often been described is that of St. Ronogue's Well near Cork, which has changed beyond recognition since Mrs. Hall, in 1824, described it as an assembly of 'the worthless and dissipated of the whole county. To the superstitious rites of the morning succeeded the saturnalia of the evening;—the having drunk of the water being considered as a licence for every sort of debauchery . . .

[1] Sir William Wilde, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1873), 446.

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788
532

FIG. 94. Portable crucifix ('penal cross'). Found at Hillsborough, Co. Down.

dancing, shouting, fiddling, courting, drinking and fighting'.[1] 796
In some celebrated instances the holy wells are associated [786]
with lakes and islands, for example Gouganeburra at the source 788
of the River Lee, and the most famous of all Irish pilgrimages 778

[1] Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character Etc.*, I, 181.

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788 is that of St. Patrick's Purgatory, on a small island in Lough
778 Derg in Donegal. Still a powerful attraction, it has been maintained since the early middle ages and has been described, with piety or derision, by innumerable writers since one of the earliest accounts was written by Giraldus Cambrensis, about 1185. The pilgrimage became very popular in the early nineteenth century, when the numbers of visitors are said to have averaged 10,000 annually. Mr. A. T. Lucas has shown that this pilgrimage resulted in the distribution through the country of certain portable wooden crucifixes popularly known as penal crosses.[1] Carved from the solid in a characteristic style, they bear dates between 1700 and 1850 (Fig. 84). It seems that they were sold to pilgrims at Lough Derg and taken home as souvenirs after being used in the devotional ritual. They were a local development, no doubt initiated by some peasant woodcarver, of simple crosses, consisting merely of two sticks tied together, such as are still made at some patterns and occasionally at the festivals of St. Briget and All-Hallows. In this way, as in sanctifying the gatherings themselves, Christianity has taken over the symbols and strength of the elder faiths.

The pilgrimage of Croagh Patrick, in Co. Mayo, is the most celebrated of those held at the end of July, involving the ascent of high mountains and marking, by tradition, the close of summer and the beginning of harvest, as discussed in the following chapter. Here we may quote once more the *Parliamentary Gazetteer* for 1845: 'No place in Ireland is the scene of more superstitious observances, or a more popular resort of pilgrims and devotees, or the site of more numerous small memorials of superstition, or the subject of more generally credited legends of hagiology. Vast crowds of miserable human beings . . . swarm all over its summit and sides and skirts; one grand current legend is almost everywhere believed in the
[773] teeth of all credulity, that St. Patrick gathered hither, and swept
[776] hence all venomous creatures in Ireland.'

[1] A. T. Lucas, in *Louth Arch. Journ.*, 15 (1964), 245–76.

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XIX

FIXED FESTIVALS

THE great fairs, patterns and pilgrimages were attended by people who travelled considerable distances and included strange folk from the outside world, 'beyond the mountain men'. It was partly for this reason that they earned a reputation for lawlessness, especially where 'the gatherings' had outlived their original purpose and their real business had become subordinate to pleasure. A Nottingham Goose Fair or a Marlborough Mop Fair may still be conducted with propriety, but in Ireland they would probably have become Donnybrooks. Having little opportunity for regular social contacts as compared with the villagers of the ploughlands, a pastoral people makes the most of the periodic pauses in the cycle of the season. 527 571 [221]

For climatic reasons these great gatherings have been largely confined to the summer half-year between May and November. The winter festivals have been more local, involving the family and the townland rather than rival groups from different parishes and baronies. The feast days of both St. Briget and St. Patrick fall in early spring and their associations are more intimate and have more local colour than those of the saints of high summer such as St. John the Baptist. But the entire round of the year is liberally sprinkled with days of festival, and if we begin with St. Briget it is not merely because she was Irish-born but because her feast marks the beginning of the pastoral year. The blessed Bridie was a cowherd and is therefore associated with cattle and with such flowers as the dandelion—the Plant of Bride—yielding a milky juice which was believed to nourish the young lambs in spring. St. Briget's Feast was very popular and many superstitious practices, more or less 527 [229]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 Christianized, cling to the preparations made on St. Briget's Eve, the last day of January. On that day rushes are fashioned into protective charms known as Briget's Crosses, a name 527 which illustrates how the church has won over pagan symbols, 778 for the 'crosses' take the form of either swastikas or lozenges, 301 and comparative evidence suggests that they are magic symbols of suns or eyes (Fig. 85). A three-legged swastika, presumably an old form, is reserved for use in the byre: its shape may be compared with the Celtic triskele. The lozenge-shaped charms have their counterparts in many parts of the world. The Huichols of Mexico make similar charms of wool mounted on a bamboo frame: known as a 'god-eyes', they bring good health and [170] long life to children.[1] A Californian Indian charm made of grass or rushes is very similar. In the Old World similar magic 'squares' have a wide distribution, in Europe, Africa, Tibet, Burma, Assam and Indonesia, and farther afield in Melanesia, Polynesia and Australia. Among the Nagas of Assam the squares, made of coloured thread, are placed on the graves of women and protect them against evil spirits.[2] In Sweden and Estonia straw squares are strung up as Christmas decorations and tied to the straw masks worn during Christmas games (Fig. 86).

Briget's Crosses are believed to protect the house and the livestock from harm and from fire. No evil spirit could pass the charm, which was therefore hung above the door of house and byre. The rushes must be pulled, not cut, on St. Briget's Eve, and care must be taken to fashion the crosses from left to right, with the sun. As a rule they are left in position until replaced the following year, though I have seen byres with many crosses thrust into the underthatch, the decaying accumulation of annual offerings. In Co. Galway similar crosses made of wood or straw were also placed in the rafters at Hallowe'en, and the discovery of a partly burnt rush cross which had been deposited in a megalith in Co. Limerick points to a more general cult of the 'cross'.[3] A 'love-knot' of similar shape, fashioned out of sedge leaves, is known from South Wales.

[1] F. Tow, *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* (1947), 78.
[2] H. E. Kauffmann, *J.R.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 101, 106.
[3] P. O'Riordain, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 1 (1936), 96. For a study of Briget's Crosses in Co. Armagh, see T. G. F. Paterson, *U.J.A.*, 8 (1945), 45–66.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON p. 270]

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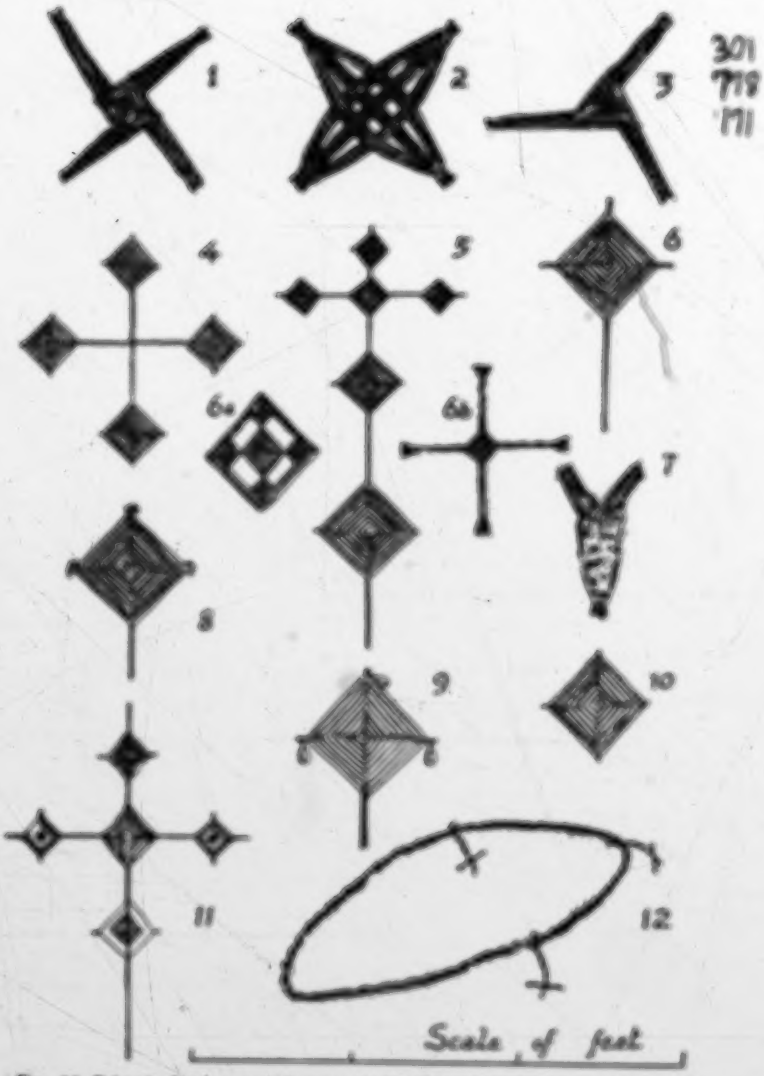

FIG. 66. Brigit's Crosses and charms. (1–7) all made of rushes, are from Co. Armagh (in County Museum, Armagh). (8) is a Naga thread-square (after Kauffmann). (9) is a Wailaki charm of rushes (after Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*). (10) is an Estonian straw-square, worn as decoration on straw hats at Christmas (see Fig. 86, *5*). (11) is a Mexican 'God-eyes' made of woven wool (after Tour). (12) is a Brigit's Girdle (in National Museum, Dublin).

FIXED FESTIVALS

527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[552] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated
[264] by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[187] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[224] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[19] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

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FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1]

527 527 584

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning.

527 [784] [788] [769] [857] [195] [787]

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 48.

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FIXED FESTIVALS

527 The May Festival, the Gaelic Beltane, remained almost untouched by Christianity, and an astonishingly rich growth of magic beliefs and superstitious customs accumulated around it. They were concerned with the safety of the familiar things which supported life, and especially the milk cows whose 'whitemeats' were to provide the main food-supply until harvest came round once more. It was a matter of pride to have a last formal dish of stirabout on May Day, 'for if they can hold out so well with bread they can do well enough . . . for then milk becomes plenty, and butter, new cheese, and curds and shamrocks are the food of the meaner sort all this season'.[1] It was considered [43] most unlucky and unwise to give away salt, water or fire on May Day lest the luck and 'profit' of the farm went with the gifts. Witches and fairies were unusually active at this time, and [776] many tales are told of the wiles they adopted to outwit the unwary and gain admission to house or byre to do their mischief. It was a wise precaution to pour milk on the threshold, or at the roots of a fairy thorn, and the many protective charms against the stealing of cattle and milk were augmented by others special to the occasion. 'On May Eve the peasantry used to drive all their cattle into old raths and forts thought to be much frequented by the fairies, bleed them, taste their blood, and pour the remainder on the earth'.[2] It was said that the ghosts of cattle that had been lost could be seen in such places.

Portents, prognostications and protection were sought in the 527 familiar flowers of field and hedgerow, in the weeds and shrubs 824 which had followed in man's footsteps and were associated with 751 his secular struggle for survival, especially in those that carried the promise of butter in their golden cups and a free flow of milk in their bounteous white blossom. May flowers, primroses and gorse gathered before sunrise were scattered on the threshold of the house and garlands of 'Summer', as the flowers were called, were hung on the doorposts and even tied to the cows' tails. In the Antrim Glens the mayflowers were crushed to provide a juice with which the cows' udders were washed, and elsewhere buttercups were used for the purpose. Cow dung, if less hygienic, had similar protective power, presumably in

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.
[2] *U.J.A.* 3 (1855), 165.

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the belief that it contained the essence of the flowers of the 527
fields. Sprigs of rowan were stuck in the midden, placed over 824
the door of the byre and hung on the cows' horns. Flowers were 751
also put around the well, for it was supposed that a milk-thief could steal your summer's milk and butter by skimming the water at this time, or by dragging a rope across a field to collect the dew. Boundary streams were also potent in this connexion, and I was told in Donegal that the milk churn had to be washed on May Day in 'three landlords' waters', that is the meeting place of three properties.

Besides these family rites there were public ceremonies, the 527
lighting of bonfires and parades of May Babies, of May Boys and the May Queen. One of the rhymes sung by May Boys in the west of Ireland runs, in translation:

> Summer! Summer! the milk of the heifers, [539]
> And ourselves brought the summer with us,
> The yellow summer, and the white daisy,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us.[1]

The May Baby parades link the festival with the fertility of the 527
family as well as the fields. I give an account of the ceremonies 842
as described in Co. Louth in the early nineteenth century: 'On 831
May Day, the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby' . . . Around this figure a man and woman (generally his wife) of the humble class, dressed also fantastically with straw, etc., dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures . . . These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children to their husbands also attend to see this figure and performance, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children.'[2]

The May Day bonfires and the May Queens are now little 527
more than children's games and excuses for begging. The 372
burning of bones—whence the word bonfire, which in Ireland keeps its original pronunciation—and in particular of horses'

[1] Lady Wilde, *The Dublin University Magazine* (1849), 541–60.
[2] J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 bones, were formerly considered proper to the occasion. There
[372] were dances round the fires, performed with great dexterity and precision by youths armed with cudgels. The May-pole,
[177] however, and the May-bush observances seem to go with areas of strong English influence and do not seem to have been
[324] generally adopted by the Irish, perhaps because May-trees, which are not given this name in Ireland, are likely to be fairy thorns and therefore should not be damaged. The May Eve assemblies are thus described in eighteenth century Kilkenny: 'Bloody battles and much confusion and uproar is the mischief that follows from the barbarous and unheeded custom of collecting *May-balls* among the new-married folks . . . The hedges and fences, in the outlets of our city, are stripped of full-grown hawthorns, whose late blooming pride and fragrancy is now miserably dying away on dunghills before cabin doors, by way of *May-bushes*, no longer, alas! to afford a nuptial bed to the new-married linnet and his mate, but fastened in the ground for the vilest purpose—to hang filthy clouts upon'.[1] The gold and white balls which were hung on maypoles have been regarded as symbols of sun and moon—or it may be of butter and milk. Another May Day custom was the licence allowed
[786] young boys to run about stinging people with nettles, a privilege which in my youth in Shropshire was permitted only on 29th May, the victims being those who did not wear an oak-apple.

If the May Day fires are now more in evidence in the back streets
527 of Belfast than on the high hills, the Midsummer fires still burn
372 strongly in some country districts and their pagan flames have not been so easily quenched. I saw dozens of them in Co. Galway on Midsummer Eve in 1956, mostly at country crossroads. Old men in Donegal have told me that they remembered the time when they had counted from their hilltop fire nearly a hundred others. Young men would show their mettle by jumping to and fro through the flames, and girls by doing so hoped to marry early and have many children. We recall that
[789] leaping is in folk tradition a widely approved method of making the crops grow high, and the fires, it is conjectured, were meant to encourage the sun, now at its turning point, to shine on through the harvest. Midsummer was a time when evil influ-

[1] *Finn's Leinster Journal* (4th May, 1768).

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ences affecting human beings and the animals and crops were usually potent. It is remembered that 'the oldest woman in the town' would go round the fire three times on her knees, reciting prayers. To walk three times sunwise round the fire was to ensure a year without sickness, and as the flames died down the cattle were driven through the embers and their backs were singed with a lighted hazel wand: the sticks were preserved and utilized for driving the cows. By tradition everyone carried home a burning stick from the fire, and whoever was first to take it into the house brought the good luck of the year with him. A glowing turf from the fire was carried three times sunwise round the dwelling house, and others were thrown into the growing crops. Yarrow was hung in the house to ward off illness. Fernseed was gathered for its magic powers and divinations made from the roots of bracken and lilies. We have already noticed the custom of retaining some of the ashes from the Midsummer fires to mix with the following season's seed corn.

The third fire-festival of the year is associated with St. Peter's Eve on 29th June, but I have not come across many traditions of St. Peter's bonfires except in Armagh and Wexford: it may thus be mainly restricted to areas where English influence was strong. More widespread and better known, because they have been caught up in many patterns and in such popular pilgrimages as that to Croagh Patrick, are the celebrations of Lammas, originally 1st August, now held on Lammas Sunday, the last in July, which is also known as Garland, Bilberry or Height Sunday. This marked the end of summer and the beginning of harvest: it was a first-fruits festival into which the alien potato has been fitted, and no potatoes were dug before this time. Offerings of flowers and fruits were made at holy wells, and in some places cattle were made to swim through streams and loughs into which lumps of fresh butter had been cast:[1] 'They think no beast will live the whole year through unless they be thus drenched'.[2] In hilly districts Height Sunday is observed by climbing to a recognized picnic place where bilberries are gathered and games and dancing were formerly enjoyed. In Co. Down a large prehistoric

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 1, 282.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.

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527 cairn on the summit of Slieve Croob was until recent years the
372 scene of a great gathering on the first Sunday in August. The fiddling and dancing are no more, though numbers of young people still assemble there and frolic in the heather. Blaeberries (bilberries) were picked into little rush baskets made on the spot (Fig. 70) and that the occasion was recognized as a
[584] legitimate time of courting is shown by the comment that 'many a lad met his wife on Blaeberry Sunday'. The name Garland Sunday derives from the hoops decorated with ribbons and flowers which were made by unmarried girls and, latterly, carried to church before being set up in the graveyard to preside over the dancing with which the day terminated. Rites in
[769] honour of the dead seem to have marked the old Lammas festival, so that again we notice the association of ancestral spirits with the fertility of farm and family.

527 By St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, harvest is well under way and the first-saved corn is ready to be thrashed. By tradition the flails were made ready on this day, and if the high harvest winds are blowing it is said that the saint is testing his flails. Next comes Michaelmas, 29th September, linked closely with the sea, with horses, and, strangely, with the ceremony of killing a cock or a goose, originally as a sacrifice in honour of the saint. In some parts Michaelmas was regarded as one of the most important feasts of the year, but I have not found any districts where it was, as in Uist, 'much the most imposing pageant and most popular demonstration of the Celtic year': nor have I come across any tradition of the rites of digging up and making presents of wild carrots which was associated, in the Hebrides, with the eating of cakes made of mixed flour baked before a stone flag, with the killing of a lamb, visits to graveyards, and a night of 'dance, song and love-making'.[1]

527 Throughout Ireland these lesser feast days pale in comparison
769 with the culminating festival which marks the end of the dying year on All-Hallows Eve. An astonishing amount of lore still clings to Hallowe'en, and we must restrict ourselves to picking out some of the main elements of this crowded occasion. The crops should now be all gathered in and no fruit should be picked

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928), 198.

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after this date, for the *púca*, a supernatural being, is busy befouling unpicked fruit at Hallowe'en. Here again we notice superstition acting as a stimulus towards the completion of routine tasks. The return of the livestock from their summer grazings, once accompanied by their herders, made the occasion one of family reunion, and this is a strong element in the present festival. But it was also a reunion with the ancestral spirits of the family: for Hallowe'en was preeminently a commemoration of the dead, a time when ghosts and fairies were unusually active, the whole of the world of the supernatural astir and the dead returned to their earthly homes. On that night the grass-grown homesteads—the fairy raths—were wide open and the fairies were on the move to winter quarters, surely a folk memory of a former transhumance. It used to be thought unlucky not to make preparations for the return of the dead by leaving the door of the house open, putting out tobacco and traditional dishes such as sowans—a kind of porridge—and setting seats around the fire. The games and amusements which still survive have commonly degenerated into pranks and horseplay, but one can detect in them echoes of magical observances. The many divination customs may well have begun as rites to avert evil or to secure the benefits which they now pretend to forecast. Among the things involved in these games and divinations are apples, nuts, oatcakes, cabbages, a ball of yarn, articles made of straw and rushes (Fig. 86), and herbs such as yarrow. The wearing of straw dresses and the breaking of pots are certainly archaic elements. In Co. Cork there survived well into last century a Hallowe'en ceremony similar to the well-known Mari Lwyd of South Wales: a procession was led by a figure clad in a white shirt and carrying a horse's head. This 'white mare' was followed by youths blowing cow-horns, and as they stopped to levy toll from farmhouses they recited a long string of verses 'savouring strongly of paganism'.[1] Hallowe'en bonfires and noisy demonstrations remind us that these features of Guy Fawkes' Day have, in England, been stolen from the older festival. 527 769

In certain districts, especially in Connacht, north Munster and south Leinster, strange customs have been associated with 527 782

[1] *J.R.S.A.I.* (1859), 503—19.

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527 782 the Feast of St. Martin on 11th November. On St. Martin's Eve the blood of a farm animal or fowl was spilled and sprinkled in the corners of the house, on the door-posts and windows, and in the byre and stable. In some areas the blood was also used to make the mark of a cross on the forehead of each member of the household. The flesh was eaten on St. Martin's Day, which is by tradition one of the feast days on which flesh meat is taken.

[292] [285] [769]

FIG. 88. Hallowe'en caps. *Left:* of plaited straw, Co. Down. *Right:* of woven rushes, Co. Kerry.

We recall that in Scotland a mart was an animal killed at Martinmas to be salted down as winter food, and it may well be that this very practical custom grew out of the cult, which was intended 'to exclude evil spirits for the year'.[1] It seems that seabirds were sometimes killed for the occasion, and there are many superstitions relating to the ill luck which attended anyone who went fishing at Martinmas. Wheel-turning of any kind, whether on cart, mill or spinning wheel, was prohibited. These sacrificial offerings and tabus must be of great antiquity and relate to the preparations for winter. St. Martin's Summer was regarded as the last spell of fine weather before the gales began in earnest. There are hints in folklore that ailing children were

[1] T. Weld, *Rannamor*, 555.

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sometimes killed at this time, so that the animal slaughter may be a sacrificial substitute. 527 [782]

Although Christmas is the outstanding Christian festival of the year its traditional 'Twelve Days' of holiday are steeped in pagan lore and in folk practices relating to the winter solstice and the new year. In Co. Cavan I came across a custom known as 'blowing the Christmas horns' by which youths heralded the festival by blowing horns from hilltops. The burning of candles on Christmas Eve is a ceremony which involved divination as well as devotion. 'Each district seems to have its taste in colour. For example, in Limerick and Clare white candles are mainly used, while red and green are popular everywhere. In the Midland areas pink candles are sought, and in some parts of Dublin only blue candles will be taken. In Killarney nothing less than a 6-lb. candle will suffice for the occasion'.[1] On Christmas Day traditional ball-games were played, often between parishes, and [526] near the coasts these meetings took place on the strands.

St. Stephen's Day is in many parts of the country associated with the hunting of the wren, and the sport is not entirely extinct. It seems that some details of the ceremony, such as the rhymes which are sung, are of English origin, but the wrenboys often wore straw masks in the native tradition, and occasionally animal skins or horns. The wrens were killed beforehand by noisy and excited bands of youths, and carried on a holly bush or a decorated wooden tray on St. Stephen's Day (Fig. 87). The procession, shouting and singing the prescribed songs to the accompaniment of home-made skin tambourines, made its way from house to house demanding money or drinks. The wrenboy processions, despite their English rhymes, appear to be a degeneration of more elaborate performances of native origin which had affinities with the mummers' plays and which like them may have been attracted by the powerful prestige of the Christmas festival from their proper season of spring. At one time the wrenboy ceremonies involved much fertility symbolism and were attended by men disguised as women.[2] The robin, linked with the wren in superstition, was also the object of persecution in south-western Ireland, but in this case the tail 527 825

[1] *Ireland* (Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs) No. 308 (1955), 10.
[2] E. R. R. Green, *U.J.A.*, 9 (1946), 8-21.

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527 was pulled out and the bird's life spared: 'In severe winters a robin with a tail was rarely seen.'[7] Another popular Boxing-Day pastime was bull-baiting, though in Kilkenny, where it was officially supported by the town officials and was presumably an English introduction, it was held on the following day, St. John's. In several parts of the country bull-baiting continued well into last century, in Kilkenny down to 1857.[8]

[293] [524]

FIG. 67. Hunting the wren. Wren Box for carrying dead wren, and wrenboys' tambourine and stick, Co. Clare. (National Museum, Dublin.)

527 New Year's Day similarly has attracted to itself some of the portents proper to the older year's beginning on 1st November. The prosperity of the individual and the household is felt to depend on the events of New Year's Day. The fairies are active on New Year's Eve and it is well for people to stay indoors that night. First-footing ceremonies appear to be confined to families of recent Scots origin, but the idea behind them is widespread. In parts of Co. Down it is customary for youths to prepare little 'wisps' of straw or dry grass and go from house to house distributing them together with New Year's greetings in the expectation of a gift. In the west on the last night of the year (or alternatively on the eve of Twelfth Night) a large 'Christmas Loaf' specially prepared for the occasion was taken

[7] W. R. Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, 41.
[8] J. G. R. Prim, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1855), 326.

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by the head of the house and hammered against the barred doors 527
and windows to the accompaniment of an Irish rhyme which warned famine to retire.[1] This too has parallels with the banging of doors and the 'pounding away of hunger' at Hallowe'en.

[1] *J.R.S.A.I.* (1939), 146.

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XX

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

582 178 781 796 THE average age of marriage among Irish countrywomen, about 28, is said to be higher than in any other country in the world: that of the men is higher still, and in addition there are many who never marry. These are among the demographic consequences of the economic and social changes which followed the Great Famine of 1846–47, for down to that time the mass of the population had nothing to lose and everything to gain by marrying young. Among the economic factors which led to the postponement of marriage may be mentioned the rising standards of living, the prohibition of the subdivision of holdings so that only one son could inherit, and the need for larger farms consequent on the decline of subsistence farming and the increase of pastoral husbandry, which meant that the peasant had to look and plan ahead. Equally important, I believe, was the effect of the crisis of the famine in breaking down patterns of behaviour which had continued with little change since prehistoric times. The elder faiths were rudely shattered so that today we have only the broken remnants left, stray survivals which have lost their meaning in a modern setting. The scattering of the fairy hosts is the constant lament of old people for whose parents they were a reality. Over large parts of the country, down to famine times the fairies (among them the ancestral spirits), and the powers of nature in sun and stone, tree, flower and welling water were ruling forces whose malice must somehow be averted, and whose beneficence must be courted by magical acts. Nature's reproductive surplus on which [842] human life depended could best be assured by breeding children to capacity.

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The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed marriages the population would continue to increase were it not for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious practices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested. The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and Londonderry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well-organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far removed from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1] R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1766*, 108.
[2] H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

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584 not subject to recognized laws of marriage. Romantic unions there must have been, but among the farming population they would have been followed by prolonged arguments and arrangements as to the bride-price. An unusually detailed account of marriage customs in County Armagh in the early nineteenth century is worth quoting at some length:

'The acquaintance and courtship of the parties often commence and are carried on at fairs, patrons and other public places of rural sports and amusements, and at wakes, funerals, etc. from whence they run away together—that is, the male brings the female to one of his friends or relations house. This was heretofore sometimes accomplished by force . . . Shortly after the running away, as it is termed, some of the female's relatives follow her and negotiations commence respecting the match, which often terminate by the female's unhappy father being obliged to promise more portion than his abilities will allow, in order to preserve the reputation of his daughter. The match being agreed upon and the day appointed for the wedding, the intended bride is permitted to return to her father's house, where a scene of preparation commences for the wedding dinner, which generally consists of bruised potatoes and flour . . . and large quantities of oatbread and butter.

585 'On the day appointed for the wedding, the bridegroom's party, from ten to twenty of his relations . . . mount their horses, the women behind the men, except a few of the latter that are single and intend running for the bottle, and advance towards the bride's residence, where they are met by a few single horsemen belonging to the bride's party. When the parties meet, those of them that are single-mounted then contend for who will be at the bride's house first; where, when the parties arrive, the bridegroom and bride are presented . . . with a plate of oatmeal and salt, of which each of them take three small mouthfuls; probably to prevent the power of witchcraft or the effect of an evil eye. After this the parties . . . mount their horses, and the whole then join in one grand cavalcade, the van being led by the bridegroom; the bride riding behind the bridesman, until they reach the ale-house most convenient to where the priest lives. (Here it should be explained that there were few Roman Catholic places of worship

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at that time and that the ceremony presumably took place in the 585
priest's house.)

'Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the nuptial benediction, will, it is considered, live longest . . .; after this scene is over they again adjourn to the public house . . ., after which the company again mount their horses, the bride being then changed behind the bridegroom's man, and scamper away towards the bride's house, whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold the race for the bottle. The winning of the bottle is frequently contended for between the bridegroom's and the bride's parties; the first person that arrives at the bride's house is victorious. The victor then receives the bottle and again returns to the main body of the wedding, where he hands it to the bridegroom, who [272] first drinks of it and hands it to his bride, who also partakes, it then goes the round until nearly finished, when . . . the bridegroom flings it with the remaining contents away. On their arrival at the bride's house a cake of oatmeal or flour, which is called the bride's cake is broken over the bride's head, [787] and is greedily seized upon by young people of both sexes for the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow, in order that they may dream of their future partners in life. Another scene of noisy festivity and drunkenness then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties; there being frequently a kind of rivalry between them in supporting the dignity of the bridegroom and bride, particularly if they do not happen to be of one line of ancestors.'[7]

No doubt where land and livestock were involved such 581
marriages were not so uninhibited as it might appear. Physical 583
attraction was not a prime consideration. The normal course was for a peasant to marry a girl whose capabilities were known or could be fairly judged, preferably 'a far-out friend', who lived close enough for family visits and exchanges of labour to be made. We know from other accounts of marriage customs in the early nineteenth century that the order of events as described above was sometimes reversed: 'The marriage is agreed upon by bargain, and the theft or abduction follows as a concerted

[7] J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 64-66.

583 [581] matter of form to make valid the marriage.[1] After the famine, at least, the mutual attraction of the suitors themselves was a secondary consideration. An ill-favoured girl could be made pretty with a dowry of cows or its equivalent in cash, known in the west as 'dry-money'. A marriage between near relatives was not unknown if it meant keeping the name on the land or enlarging the patrimony: 'a blanket is the better of being doubled,' it was said. 'We are all related one way or another' is a comment one hears in isolated mountain districts. In general romantic love was the luxury of the landless, but whatever the motives of marriage there were many charms and omens to be taken into account in winning a person's affections, and some of the magic devices to which a girl might resort are listed in one of Bryan Merryman's poems of the late eighteenth century:

[539]

> Up the chimney stuck the flail
> Slept with a spade without avail,
> Hid my wool in the limekiln lore
> And my distaff behind the churchyard door;
> Flax in the road to halt coach and carriage,
> And haycocks stuffed with heads of cabbage.[2]

582 To this day the marriage or remarriage of old men to young women is regarded as unnatural and wrong, perhaps because it complicates the question of succession. In Co. Wexford, and probably elsewhere, unpopular marriages of this kind are marked by noisy gatherings of young men who serenade the married couple with horn-blowing. A similar custom, the *rito*, is well-known in Andalusia, where it includes the ringing of cow-bells and the singing of scurrilous songs. One of the strangest traditional features of Irish weddings is the visitation of 'straw-boys', that is youths wearing straw masks who attend as uninvited guests and disport themselves at the dance which normally follows a wedding (Fig. 88). I am told that they may still be seen occasionally in Co. Cavan and parts of the west. Formerly the visitors also wore straw suits or white shirts and red petticoats decorated with coloured ribbons. The leader

585 [292]

[1] Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 92.
[2] *The Midnight Court*, translated by Frank O'Connor (1945).

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[272]

FIG. 69. Straw hats and dress. (1) Strawboys' wedding mask, Co. Mayo. (2) Strawboys' straw suit, Co. Kerry (National Museum, Dublin). (3) Bobbyboys' straw hat, Co. Londonderry. (4) Mummers' straw hat, Co. Fermanagh. (5) Estonian straw hat, worn at Christmas games.

of the strawboys claimed the right to dance with the bride, and they were all well entertained. It seems that they would sometimes claim to be shipwrecked sailors, and whatever the origin of the custom it is evident that disguise was an important element in it.[1]

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

585 The good luck of the bottle race referred to above may be
[177] associated with the 'agreement bottle' of whiskey which was
272 drunk, according to a seventeenth-century account, when the parents and relations of the young couple had reached a marriage agreement.[1] To this day in parts of Co. Down 'running for the broth' is a feature of country marriages, a bowl of broth being the reward given to the person who reaches the bride's house first after the wedding. Until recently, also, the young couple were expected to appear at the Bride's Show on the first Sunday after their marriage: they were accompanied to a special sloping field where they ran hand-in-hand to a stone near the bottom of the field, followed by pairs of linked boys and girls, each boy kissing the stone. Games and what was described to us as 'general carrying on' followed the Bride's Show.[2]

534 In more remote parts of the country match-making is still a recognized procedure. The professional match-maker is a well-known figure, usually a shrewd elderly person well versed in the arts of rural diplomacy, and his role has been fully described by Arensberg. He acts for the farmer who is ready for his son to marry—the son being often well into middle age—by negotiating with the parents of the girl whom the farmer has selected. In the prolonged bargaining as to the amount of the 'fortune' which the girl is to bring with her the values of peasant living stand clearly revealed.[3] Marriage is not so much a personal relationship as a union between groups, reinforcing relations which extend far beyond individuals.

There was a popular belief that the curse of sterility could be placed on the bride by any ill-disposed person who tied knots in a string during the marriage ceremony. A more obvious example of magic was the custom of tying a hen which was about to lay an egg to the bed-post on the marriage night.
585 There are widespread traditions of the days when landlords exercised the *jus primae noctis* over their tenants' wives, and one hears of leases which contained clauses governing the right.
899 During pregnancy it was lucky to do certain things and to avoid

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, I, 182.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 198
[3] C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, ch. 3.

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doing others; and there is simple symbolic magic in the act of blowing the bellows in a forge to ensure safe delivery. In Mayo a ploughman would be called in to lift and shake a woman in difficult labour,[1] and there are hints of the *couvade* in the custom of wearing the husband's jacket during childbirth in the belief that he will then bear some of the pain. Mothers and babies were thought to be especially liable to be abducted by the fairies, and protective charms were hidden in a baby's dress or placed in the cradle. When children were taken to be baptised, too, special preparations were made and precautions taken, for example, a Co. Antrim clergyman reported that his parishioners would place a piece of bread and cheese in the child's clothing.[2] The old custom of dressing boys in girls' clothes, in long frocks, until they were ten or eleven years of age has been explained as a means of deceiving the fairies, who were always on the lookout for healthy young boys whom they could replace by feeble 'changelings'. For the same reason it is unwise to praise a child without adding a saving 'God bless him', and young boys are still half jocularly referred to as 'rogues and tories'. The belief in 'changelings' may have arisen as an explanation of the high mortality rate among baby boys as compared with girls.

When we come to the topic of the omens and rites of death and burial the supernatural world is ever-present. The custom of opening windows and doors to let the spirit of the dead depart is well known: in addition a hole was sometimes made in the roof thatch. Of Co. Sligo early last century we read: 'As soon as the breath has departed from a sick person, the bed is carried out, and if there be high ground near the house, it is there set on fire and consumed to ashes, while the air resounds with doleful cries.'[3] When death was imminent the sick person was laid on the floor, for this was believed to ease the escaping spirit. Two persons of the household should take part in every necessary task at this time, and two persons were sent out to carry news of the death, traditionally to the livestock and the bees as well as to the neighbours. Great care was taken to

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 39.
[3] W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 2, 303.

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763 observe the correct procedure in laying out the corpse, generally on a table or a door. A plate containing tobacco or salt was placed on the corpse and sometimes a turf, which was believed to prevent decomposition, a transference from the observed preservative qualities of the bogs.

764 786 Although a great deal of information on the wakes which followed has been collected, it is difficult to obtain precise details about the wake games because of their apparent obscenity. Some of them survive as innocent games in districts where wakes have not been entirely suppressed, but it should be stressed that the full ritual of the traditional wake games was carried out in innocence: 'the peasantry who practised them had no idea of outraging propriety or religion in their performance, holding an unquestioning faith that such observances were right and proper at wakes, whilst under any other circumstances they would shrink with horror from such indelicate exhibitions'.[1] Moreover, they were generally 'reserved for the deaths of old people who had survived the ordinary span of life, or young children who could not be looked upon as an irreparable loss.'[2]

Apart from a great variety of informal amusements which were traditional at wake gatherings—riddles, jokes, singing, dancing, horse-play, tricks, feats of strength or agility, wrestling and so on—a list of 130 specific wake games has been collected by Seán Ó Súilleabháin, and it is 'of necessity incomplete.'[3] Some of them were dramatic performances of considerable complexity; and one recalls the Irishman's traditional skill in dramatization. In Kilkenny the principal game was the *frannsa*, a mock ceremony during which several young folk were 'married' by a mock priest, usually a weaver or a tailor, who was dressed in straw and wore a huge straw rope as a stole. 'After each couple was married, he put them to bed in a corner of the room, sprinkled them with water and gave them plain advice about their future conduct as man and wife.'[4] We need not be surprised that, after this initiation, in the words of

[1] J. G. A. Prim, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 334.
[2] J. G. A. Prim, loc. cit.
[3] S. Ó Súilleabháin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, 602.
[4] J. O'Donovan, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1858), 31.

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Maria Edgeworth, 'more matches were made at wakes than at weddings.' The most frank account of the nature of the games I have come across reads as follows: 'They were placed under the conduct of some peasant of the district who excelled in rustic wit and humour, who went under the title of "Borekeen", and whose orders were carried into force by subordinate officers, all arrayed in fantastic habiliments. The "game" usually first performed was termed "Bout", and was joined in by men and women, who all acted a very obscene part which cannot be described. The next scene generally was termed "Making the Ship', with its several parts of "laying the keel", forming the "stem and stern", and erecting "the mast", the latter of which was done by a female using a gesture and expression, proving beyond doubt that it was a relic of Pagan rites. The "Bull and the Cow" was another game strongly indicative of a Pagan origin, from circumstances too indelicate to be particularized. The game called "Hold the Light", in which a man is blindfolded and flogged, has been looked upon as a profane travestie of the passion of our Lord; and religion might also be considered as brought into contempt by another of the series, in which a person caricaturing a priest, and wearing a rosary, composed of small potatoes strung together, enters into conflict with the "Borekeen", and is put down and expelled from the room by direction of the latter . . . "Turning the Spit" and "Selling the Pig" are the names of two others of those games; in that called "Drawing the Ship out of the Mud" the men engaged actually presented themselves before the rest of the assembly, females as well as males, in a state of nudity, whilst in another game the female performers attired themselves in men's clothes and conducted themselves in a very strange manner.'[1] From other sources we learn that boys and girls, in some games, wore hides and appeared representing bulls and cows.

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Parallels to these practices can be adduced from the so-called simple societies in many parts of the world, and as in Ireland Christian missionaries found it very difficult to suppress the rituals enacted between death and burial. The keening of the corpse likewise carries us through time to the earliest emotions of human societies faced with the mystery of death. The liberal

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[1]J. G. A. Prim, loc. cit.

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764 distribution of food and drink on these occasions, and the pro-
171 vision of tobacco or snuff—a magic substance in Negro Africa—are widespread practices. In an Irish wake the distribution of tobacco and clay pipes follows a well-established routine. Curative properties were attributed to snuff left over from a wake, and the pipes were sometimes buried, apparently often in or near a prehistoric burial place, for quantities of old pipes not infrequently turn up in archaeological excavations of such sites. Among preliterate peoples in Africa ritual demonstrations similar to those of the wake games usually form part of ceremonies directed towards ancestral spirits who had power over the luck and livelihood of the group. The women on these occasions often assume a dominant role and behave lewdly, and as part of this reversal or normal behaviour they wear men's clothes. Such rituals of rebellion, it is claimed, by canalizing social tensions, perpetuate the established systems of political organization.[1] We cannot expect to piece together the frag-
764 mentary evidences of Irish folk customs to make a coherent pattern, yet it is clear that the cathartic extravagances of the wakes not only served to dissipate overcharged tensions but were closely concerned with ancestral spirits and the perpetuation of the life of the community. Despite the emphasis on tobacco, which was, one supposes, a substitute for some forgotten magic substance, there are many hints of old custom in the names and rites of the wake games. Did the tobacco pipes, one wonders, take the place of offerings of potsherds when locally-made pottery ceased to be available? It is interesting to find that cheese is regarded as a necessary part of the food offered at wakes, for cheese is now rarely eaten by Irish countryfolk though we know that it was once an essential part of the summer diet.

Many superstitious customs pursued the corpse to the burying ground. The chairs on which the coffin rested were shaken in all directions before it was lifted off, and it was customary for those following the coffin to take some protective substance such as salt in the pocket, for 'there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind'.[2] With the

[1]Max Gluckman, *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa*, 24.
[2]C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, 216.

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idea no doubt of deceiving the spirit of the dead the coffin was carried to the graveyard by the longest route, preferably a disused track, and the procession made a sunwise circle around some place or object on the way, a cross, a church-site, a lone thorn tree or a crossroads. In Connacht, stones were added to small cairns which stood at stopping places on the way. In many areas tradition tells that the coffin was carried three times around the ruined church that stands in many old graveyards. Dr. Browne's account of the procedure in the graveyard was written of Ballycroy, Co. Mayo: 'On reaching the cemetery the coffin is carried to the place where it is to be interred, and then the people all scatter to kneel and pray at the graves of their own relatives. After this, new pipes and tobacco are served out to those present, who sit down and smoke. After the pipes have been smoked, the weeds are cleared away and the grave is dug. It may be worthy of remark here that a grave is not dug on Monday if possible, and if for any reason a burial has to be made on that day, a sod is raised the day before. After the grave has been dug and the coffin lowered into it, a band of women gather round it and sing the *caione*, which here has not degenerated into mere discordant wailing . . . but is often really very musical and plaintive. When this has been done, the mourners are sprinkled with holy water and then engage in prayer: after which the grave is filled in, covered over with rough stones, often white in colour, and the unused pipes placed upon it.'[1] (Plate 14.) In Achill Island I have seen plates, which presumably once held food, left on the graves, and there are firm traditions of food and tools being placed in the coffin. 'Our neighbour John Ryan', wrote W. R. Le Fanu, 'put two pairs of shoes in the coffin of his wife—a strong one for bad weather, a light pair for ordinary wear.'[2] It was believed that the last person to be buried would be placed in charge of the other dead, and would have to carry water for them. This is the reason given for the fights which, it is said, sometimes broke out at the graveyard between rival funeral parties as to which corpse should be buried first, but it seems that fighting not infrequently occurred on the occasion of graveyard gatherings, and I have heard it justified

[1]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[2]W. R. Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, 36.

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764 by the tradition that 'there must be blood spilt at a funeral'. In some parts of the country there were separate graveyards for men and women, and the prohibition against burying the wrong sex lasted into the present century in Inishmurray, Co. Sligo.

Many gruesome superstitions gather around old graveyards, yet it is to them that the old people wish to be taken, however neglected and overcrowded they may be. As one observer put it: 'The anxiety to be interred with their deceased relatives bestows even on death a feeling of social interest.'[1] I have referred to the Saints' Beds—small stone enclosures in very old graveyards which were perhaps oratories—and their power of curing barrenness. Bits of skulls, too, or scrapings of the moss growing on them, were sought as cures for various ailments, and the clay from the graves of priests was considered efficacious, with fine impartiality, for human sins and for the diseases of cattle. Such cures were apparently mixed with water and taken as medicine, and as part of the ritual the cloth in which they were removed was replaced on the grave. A potent love
789 charm is said to have been worked by wrapping around the desired person, when sleeping, a long strip of skin removed from a corpse, and a dead man's hand, thrust into the milk, was, as a last resort, a sure way of getting the cream to rise.

[1]T. C. Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 167.

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XXI

OLD PISHROGUES

AMONG the serious nineteenth-century students of Irish folk-life a Dublin surgeon, who is perhaps better known as the father of Oscar Wilde, deserves special mention. Sir William Wilde was not only a frequent contributor to the learned journals but he found time to compile a pioneer catalogue of the Irish antiquities now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. His very active life spanned the Great Famine, and the monumental report on the *Tables of Death* which appeared as Vol. I of Part 5 of the Census of 1851 was largely his work. In it he dwells on the shattering effects of those tragic years, 1845–47, on the immemorial customs and natural poetry of the Irish peasants: 'The closest ties of kinship were dissolved; the most ancient and long-cherished usages of the people were disregarded; the once proverbial gaiety and lightheartedness of the peasant people seemed to have vanished completely, and village merriment or marriage festival was no longer heard or seen throughout the regions desolated by the intensity and extent of the famine.'[1] Another observer noted that the traditions of hospitality were weakened greatly and that padlocks made their first appearance at this time.[2]

Wilde observed that the coming of the railway at about the same period was a contributory factor in the change because it worked to a time-table—more or less—and involved an artificial division of the day instead of an observance of the signs of nature changing with the seasons. Time was related to social activity and had different values at various seasons of the year.

[1] *Census of Ireland* (1851), I, Part 5 (1856), 242.
[2] A. M. Sullivan, *The New Ireland* (1877), 65.

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805 The whistle of the 7.15 now replaced cock-crow. But if it were
178 indeed true that peasant values had perished entirely and that
the rural population was transformed into the moronic cattle-
[496] herders of Filson Young's *Ireland at the Cross-Roads*, then this
book could not have been written. Luckily a mountain farmer
will still relate time to nature and refer to a moment of summer
twilight, in a memorable phrase quoted by Dr. James Delargy,
as 'the time when the dew was thinking of falling'. The wonder
178 is that so much lore and so many relics of pre-famine days have
771 survived. Yet the term 'old pishrogues' which is applied to all
varieties of witchcraft and fairy lore—even if sometimes used
in awe rather than contempt—shows that these things are
now regarded objectively and are no longer an accepted part
of social life. Superstitious practices tend to be carried out in
secret and to be resorted to only when more rational methods
have been tried and found wanting. Many of the old customs,
however, have had their life prolonged by children's games,
the seasonal bonfires and May Queens becoming their amuse-
ments.

823 Most of the pishrogues relate to fairies and to trees, wells
and stones; and that these elder faiths have their roots in a very
171 remote pre-agricultural phase of human evolution is attested by
their very general observance among primitive people. As an
example we may take the South African Bushmen, one of the
lowliest branches of the human family. In a recent report from
G. P. van der Post's expedition to the Kalahari we read that in
the heart of the Bushman country there are sacred hills which
are regarded as the home of very ancient spirits. Van der Post
was told that 'right on the top of the central hill there was a
spring of water and beside it a tree which bore the fruit of
knowledge, and close by the tree a rock with deep marks where
the greatest spirit of all had knelt to pray'.[1] The sacred hill-
tops, the ancestral spirits, the well of water, the 'gentle' tree
and the cup-marked stone are familiar themes in Irish folk
tradition. Throughout western Europe, from the fifth century
Council of Arles onwards, churchmen denounced those 'who
offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones'. The great religions
have had to come to terms with such cults, in Monsoon Asia as

[1] *The Times* (14th December, 1955).

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in Europe, and the emphasis on different elements of the complex naturally varies with regional circumstances and traditions. In Ireland the trees which the elder faiths had endowed with magic qualities were all small trees and shrubs—especially the rowan, holly, elderberry and whitethorn—and the evidence of archaeology and palaeobotany is that these plants first became common in the prehistoric landscape as weeds of cultivation following forest clearance by early cultivators. Thus they would have become symbols of the farming year, their white blossoms a sign of spring and the end of killing frosts, their red berries a token of the fulfilment of harvest and the promise of renewed life. At first sight one may wonder why the thorn tree should have been singled out for special attention, for it is ubiquitous in the lowland landscapes. The hedgerow thorns, of course, are newcomers, and they may be hacked with impunity, but woe betide the man who damages a fairy thorn, that is one not planted by man but growing on its own in the fields or on some ancient cairn or rath. They are to be found in every part of Ireland, but to see the fairy thorn in full majesty one should go to the naked hillsides where it stands in splendid isolation against the stone dykes and the bare hills (Fig. 89). As with the sacred groves of China, not even fallen dead branches which would serve as firewood should be removed. I have

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FIG. 89. Fairy thorns. A cluster of 'gentle bushes' near Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh: 'If you were in there on the hottest day it would starve you.'

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824 known instances when a branch accidentally broken from a fairy thorn was carefully tied back in position.

The policy of the Church was to attach new myths to old 797 rites, but only occasionally has the thorn tree been nominally 312 won over to Christianity by dedication to local saints or by its 778 association with sacred sites, with wells or Lammas celebrations, as for example the Criocan Thorn in the heart of Slieve Bloom.[1] On the other hand well-worship has had less stubborn roots, and 'holy water' has been more readily absorbed into Christian ritual. Nearly all the holy wells have close associations with the saints. Over 3,000 examples have been listed, most of them now half forgotten, others visited in secret and a declining number openly resorted to for cures. It is not difficult to understand the universal attraction of a spring of pure water. In the eyes of countryfolk a sense of mystery attaches to the upwelling of a spring well: it is considered lucky to have access to such a source of domestic water—a true 'well', not a hole bored in the ground—and one is invariably told that the local well yields the purest water for miles around, or even 'in all Ireland'. The attributes of purification, healing and fertility are natural concomitants of the magic welling of spring water, but besides possessing supernatural powers of this kind the holy wells are regarded as having had miraculous origins. The most famous sites where patterns are held have already been mentioned: the local holy well is rather an ever-present source of healing resorted to in need. One cannot but think of an ancient cult of waters springing from deep sources in primitive religion which was reinforced and adapted by successive intrusive cultures from the megalithic to the Christian (Pl. 16).

The ritual of 'paying rounds' at a well frequently involves 312 associated stones and trees. A sunwise circuit of the well is 778 made and the pilgrim, after taking a drink from the well, 788 hangs a rag or a rosary on an adjacent bush. The ritual commonly includes also tracing with a pebble on a stone of the well-covering the mark of a cross which has been incised by countless other pebbles. This practice has a bearing on the mysterious cup-marked stones and basin-stones (bullauns) which are associated with numerous ritual sites, including wells, for I

[1] V. Cornish, *Historic Thorn Trees in the British Isles*, 53.

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believe that many examples were ground out in much the same way before the sign of the cross replaced that of the circle. Cup-marked stones are commonly found in megalithic graves, on standing stones and Bronze Age cists, both in the British Isles and further afield. Some of the larger bullauns were certainly mortars, and very similar 'knocking stones' were used until recent times for preparing barley meal by pounding the grain with a beetle or maul (Fig. 90). To judge from the frequency with which one finds a knocking stone in the ruins of an old clachan it was one of the communal possessions of such a settlement. Old specimens, more especially when the basins are sunk in an outcrop of rock, are frequently found to hold water, and they are then regarded as 'wells', the water being held efficacious as a cure for warts. That such rock-basins have magic powers is illustrated by the following reference to a site in Scotland. On the Loch Avon side of Cairngorm is a shelving rock bearing hand-made basins about a foot wide and correspondingly deep: 'sitting on them is said to be efficacious in cases of barrenness.'[1]

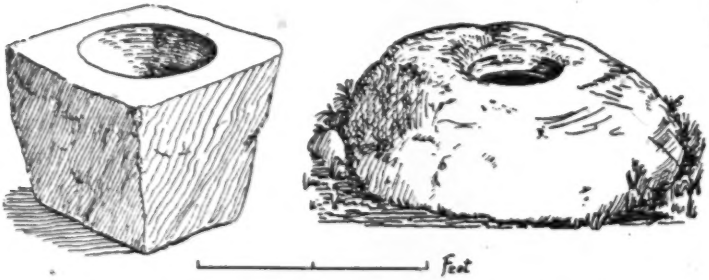

FIG. 90. Knocking stone and bullaun. Both Co. Antrim.

It is an interesting illustration of the pagan associations of cup-marks, and of the success of the symbol of the cross, that their use survived in folk practice only as cursing stones. Smooth pebbles resting in certain stone basins are turned three times against the sun. There are many examples in the west, some

[1]A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 265.

754 occurring on natural rock outcrops (Fig. 91), others ground into stone slabs resting on built-up foundations and termed altars, as at Inishmurray off the coast of Sligo. I have little doubt that they were the communal mortars of pre-Christian settlements. Their utilization as cursing stones continued into recent times. I was told of the example illustrated at Killinagh in Co. Cavan, that 'you would think twice before turning the stones, because the curse would come back on you unless the

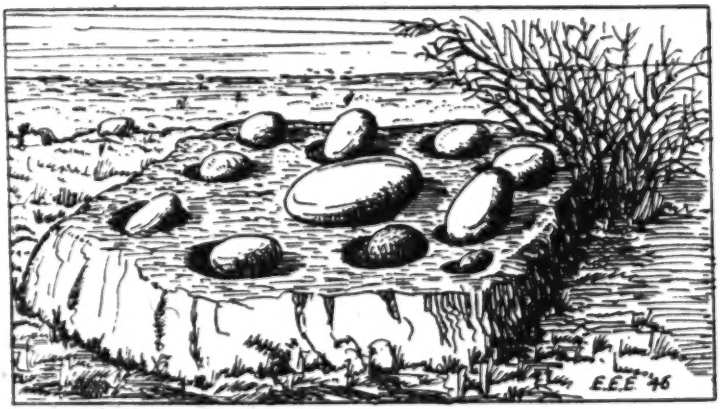

FIG. 91. Cursing stones by Upper Lough Macnean at Killinagh, Co. Cavan. (For scale, the large central stone measures 15 in. by 12 in.)

cause was just'. At many holy wells curiously shaped stones
823 were regarded as having curative powers, and they were bor-
755 rowed for use by people too ill to visit the well. At St. Olan's Well, Dromatimore, Co. Cork, the rounds include visits to the saint's Cap and Stone. The former is an oval quartzite stone which rests on an ogham-inscribed monolith and which replaces one, removed by the parish priest a century ago, which was invested with magical properties. 'It was said to be an unfailing talisman, and was much sought after for various feminine ailments, particularly maternity cases. If worn on the head and carried three times round the church it was said to cure the most violent headaches and, in addition, it had the gift of locomotion in that, if removed to any distance, it unfailingly

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returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder 823
bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint 755
of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some
which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded [776]
with superstitious awe up and down the country and were
generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or
standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs
which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to
cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin 823
slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with
aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice
of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major
festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote
of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts [584]
are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to
signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.'
Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork,
women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes [844]
through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to
secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in
many other localities of women similarly situated drawing
clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-
headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup- 526
marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the
purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'.
Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern
Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co.
Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally
surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve
Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were
manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three
to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn
in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

[1]P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 108.
[2]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

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526 perfect sphere the rounded igneous pebbles which are selected for the purpose. One wonders whether some of the many cup-marked stones which turn up in the fields in certain districts—I have seen many in Inishowen in Donegal—were used for shaping stones, such as the sling-stones with which champion slingers, of whom the legendary Cuchulainn was one, performed [411] their feats. The sling and the sling-rod were originally hunting weapons and probably instruments of war, and one of the last refuges of slinging as a pastime was the now vanished Claddagh, the fishing suburb of Galway, where a man was not reckoned a good shot until he could strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen.[1]

312 Where a holy well has dried up—the usual explanation is that it was desecrated and moved its position—the sanctity of the 824 site may be transferred to a tree. The so-called pin-well at 778 Arboe in Co. Tyrone is a beech tree, hirsute with pins and nails, growing in the burying ground on a Celtic monastic site. A rag-well at Clonmel is visited by mountain farmers who hang rag offerings on briars at lambing and calving times, and afterwards place more rags appropriate in number to the increase obtained.[2] There is on the island of Inishmurray a wind- [821] well which has the power of controlling the wind, the ritual being to empty the well to produce a calm. Sticks and stones also 789 figure in wind-raising ceremonies, and 'the rude stone image of 778 Inniskea' (Inishkea in Co. Mayo), which was dressed up in flannel each New Year's Day, had powers of producing either storm or calm.[3] Powerful magic was worked by a wooden statue of St. Macdara, formerly kept in his chapel—an oratory of early type with projecting *antae*—on an island dedicated to the saint in the extreme south-western corner of Co. Galway. Sailors passing the island dipped their sails three times in honour of the image, but we are left to guess what superstitions were involved from the statement that about the year 1640 'the bishop of Tuam caused it to be buried for weighty reasons'.[4]

[1] *U.J.A.*, 2 (1854), 164.
[2] *Béaloideas*, 15 (1945), 284.
[3] C. Otway, *Erris and Tyrawly*, 107.
[4] C. R. Browne, *Carna and Mweenish*.

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OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and, we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne 'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour, and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh-water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 52.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

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234 newly-calved cow should be milked on to a piece of metal
825 placed in the pail. Offerings of the 'beastlings' were poured in the raths and at the roots of fairy thorns, to appease the fairies. When taking a drink out of doors, the old countryman will casually spill a portion of the draught on the earth as a complimentary libation to the good people. 'When a cow fell sick through fairy malice, it was formerly by no means an uncommon practice, in the west of Ireland, to devote the ailing animal to St. Martin. The ceremony was performed by letting a few drops of blood from the cow in honour of the saint.'[1] Cows which, for no apparent reason, are not thriving are said to be
[172] elf-shot. The elf-stones or fairy-darts which are supposed to have caused the mischief are prehistoric flint arrowheads such as can be picked up in the fields. One of the tricks of the cow-doctor who is called in, and who keeps a few arrowheads handy, is to produce one by sleight of hand from the flank of the ailing beast. Or counter-magic can be worked by means of a flint arrowhead which must not be allowed to touch the ground after it has been found. The cow-doctor uses sympathetic magic in curing calves believed to be suffering from intestinal knots by drawing apart over the animal's back the loose ends of a string tied in a complicated witch-knot or 'bat', of the type which comes undone when pulled. But as always he must work the magic correctly, for if the knot is not resolved another one is tied
789 inside the calf.

234 Hanging in the byre one sometimes sees a flint pebble sus-
[823] pended on a string through a natural hole. It is a witch-stone, protecting the cows from milk-stealers, and it may owe its virtue to the flint or to its symbolic ever-watching eye. In the Ardenne a holed flint hung in the stable is believed to preserve
[171] the horses from nightmares,[2] and nearer home in the Yorkshire dales holed stones known as ring-stones protected the cows from the evil eye. 'Blessings on all that I can see' is the traditional formula to use when one enters a byre. An ill-disposed person could, merely by looking at it, 'blink' a cow so that its milk would yield no butter. The cow could be cured by burning under its nose a portion of the blinker's clothes

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 6.
[2]H. H. Turney-High, *Ch'teau-Gérrad* 53(19), 232.

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and a handful of thatch taken from above the door of his house. 234
Butter-making must have been a chancy and critical business
when each family had only one or two cows, ill-fed for a large 789
part of the year, and there were fairies, witches and blinkers to contend with. The protective charms and prognostications connected with churning are legion. If you should enter an old-style mountain kitchen when churning is in progress you may well be invited to lend a hand, or at least to 'leave your weight on the staff,' just to show that your intentions are not evil. There must be no bad words during churning, no quarrels, no singing or drinking: to drink anything is presumably to dilute the milk. If the milk splashes the churner is fated to marry a drunken mate. When the butter at last breaks a small ball of it is traditionally taken and smeared on the wall or tossed on top of the dresser to bring luck to the house, perhaps originally as an offering to the fairies. And when the churning is finished the staff should be twisted round three times and placed across the mouth of the churn. There are many other precautions that may be taken: a horseshoe—preferably 'a shoe of one heating'—tied to the churn or nailed to the bottom; a nail from a horseshoe or from a coffin driven into churn or staff; a ring of salt placed on the lid; a twig of rowan tied round the churn. Or the plough coulter should be heated in the fire, and the churnstaff tied with a straw rope to the fire-crane: if the staff is made of rowan-wood so much the better. If despite all precautions the butter does not come there are ways of catching the thief. For instance, a cake is baked and stuck with pins and a bunch of yarrow placed in the churn. The thief will come crying to the door in pain, and he must not be allowed in but turned away.

Special precautions should also be taken to make the house 512
safe at night from unwanted visitations. Before the fire is raked
and 'smoored' (buried in peat-ash) a spark should be dropped 352
into the foot-water, the water in which feet have been washed
and to which many superstitions are attached. The carded flax [515]
should be placed under a weight, the band taken off the spinning wheel and the quern dismantled. Many stories are told of the risks involved in letting the fairies have access to these things. Finally the besom should be placed against the door: the

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512 besom's association with everyday tasks and with the fireside
352 endows it with special power. Thrown after a departing match-
[777] maker or anyone going on an important errand, it brings luck to his mission.

For most people, needless to say, such things are now mean-
771 ingless superstitions—old pishrogues. True, one still hears
789 occasionally of cows being blinked, of a black cock buried alive
178 as a cure for epilepsy, of a healthy woman pining away because a neighbour was sticking pins into a waxen image. These are stray survivals, doomed to disappear; but in a larger sense the past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds of men and in the landscapes they have fashioned.

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[For information on peat deposits and their exploitation as a source of fuel, see category 314.]

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[For data on the gathering and cultivation of seaweed as a crop, see category 222.]

[For data on the size of farming plots and the Rundale system of land holdings, see category 311.]

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County Clare

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[LXVI.]

[title page]

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Plate XI.

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ANCIENT PARISHES OF COUNTY CLARE.

To face p. 180.

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COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united
politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond,
631 though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon.
Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the
enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve
until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric
past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces
of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*,
776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle
787 (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317,
and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs
of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago,
foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Plists*
or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devour-
ing seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early
date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human
beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con-
121 sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen-
124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I
propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the ban-
shee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

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since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions."

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4]

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca-

[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamarras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

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103 173 baiscinn, occupied the Baronies known down to Tudor times (and still as a rural deanery) as Corcavaskin,—now Moyarta and Clonderalaw, with the Barony of Ibrickan, (which takes its name from a settlement of fugitives from the Norman conquest in Leinster about 1180).

Burren.—Irghus or Eerish, a Firbolg in the oldest of Clare legends,[6] is commemorated by Caherdoonerish stone fort,[7] on Black Head. Finn MacCumhail gives his name to Seefin, on the same hills. The "silver bells" of Kilmoon church are said to be recalled by Cahercloggaun fort and Owenacluggan brook near Lisdoonvarna. In Kilcorney Parish we have two forts, Lisananima and Caherlisananima, named from ghosts; the first name is older than 1652. Beara, another Firbolg, brother of Irghus, gives his name, (found in a poem dating before 1014), to Finnavarra Point, —but not to Kinvarra, which is akin to Kenmare and Kinsale, "Head of the Sea" or "of the brine." The name Bohernamish, or "way of the dishes," with its legend of the miraculous rapine of King Guaire's Easter banquet, about A.D. 630, is found in the mediæval Life of St. Colman MacDuach.[8]

Corcomroe.—The reef of Kilstiffin, Kilstapheen, or Kilstuitheen has a legend of a sunken church and city, of which the golden domes appear once in seven years. The submerged forests and bogs inside the reef in Liscannor Bay, and the record of the great

Armada on the coast, heard by me down to 1878, have been since confirmed by the publication of long-forgotten letters. So historical tradition, even under the unfavourable conditions of recent centuries, has kept wonderfully accurate versions of events. The continuity of the schools and families of the hereditary bards and *ollamhs* favoured still greater accuracy in early times. Ireland had "books and philosophers" in the fourth century, according to Ethicus of Istria (*Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 403), and, possibly for the same period before Christianity as the Armada lies behind our own time, history was handed down truly, at least in its broad outlines.

[6] "Legend of Carn chonaill," "Dindsenchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), pp. 478-80.

[7] "Fort" in this paper means one of the entrenched residences, (usually circular,) of the early inhabitants. These are called in Irish *rath*, *lis*, and *dun*; the dry stone equivalent is *caher*.

[8] *Mish* also means an altar in early works. Cf. *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, (ed. W. Stokes).

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earthquake and tidal wave that split into three Inis Fitæ[9] on the same coast (A.D. 799-802), incline one to believe in a basis for the legend. In Nonghaval is a fort called Liskeentha, from "fairy songs" heard there. Not far away, in Kilfenora Parish, we have a Boughil or "petrified boy," and in Carran Parish a Farbreag or "petrified man"; such names, originating in strangely-shaped rocks, are rather common. A third Firbolg brother, Daelach, gives his name to the little river Daelach and the townland Ballydeely. In Carran and Kilmanaheen the belief in the *phooka* or *púca*, a demon horse or goat, is stamped on the Poulaphucas, one of which has a fine dolmen; such monuments all over Ireland are found connected with the malignant prototype of Puck. Lisfarbegnagommaun, "the fort of the little men (playing at) hurling," commemorates fairy sports.

Ibrickan.—Poulaphuca in Kilfarboy is, so far as I know, the only mythic name, but Doolough Lake (Nigricantis) is named in the early "Life of Senan"[10] as the prison of the fearful "Cata" of Iniscatha, while the "Legend of the sons of Thorailbh mac Stairn"[11] locates the cavern whence the ferocious "Faracat" launched itself on the heroes' spears, beside its waters. Dunbeg Bay is the scene of a curious merman story.[12]

Moyarta.—At Loop Head, the south-western extremity of the county, we find a Poulnapeiste and a line of forts,—Cahercrochain, Cahersaul, Dundahlin, and Cahernaheanmna,—connected with the monster killed by Dermod O'Duine and the brothers Crochaun, Sal, and Dahlin, whose sister ("the one (lone) woman") gave her title to the last fort.[13] Iniscatha commemorates its dragon, and Lisnarinka fort the "dances" of its fairy dwellers.

Clonderlaw.—Turning inland, up the Shannon and Fergus

[9] Now Inisiscaragh or Mutton Island, Illaunwattle, Inismatail, or Mattle Island, and Carrickaneelwar. The first two are named Inishereth and Inismatail in a charter of 1216.

[10] Colgan, *op. cit.* (March 8).

[11] A romance of about 1750, by Michael Comyn.

[12] Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 1825, vol. ii., p. 31, (The Soul Cages).

[13] "Adventures of the sons of Thorailbh"; see also *Ordnance Survey Letters*, Co. Clare, Killballyowen Parish, (MS., R.I. Academy).

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103 173 confluence, Tobersheefra ("elf's well") and Poulaphuca are named from the fairies and *púca*, and Clondegad from two druids who competed in magic, making "two gads" (or withes) to sail up the stream.

Inchiquin.—Passing on to the settlements of the Dalcassians, we find treasure legends at Cloghanairgid ("rock of the silver (money)") and Skeaghvickencrowe ("MacEnchroe's bush"). Cloghaphuca in Kilnaboy and Poulnabruckee in Rath, with Toberatasha ("spectre's well," perhaps recording an apparition akin to that of Avenel), represent various supernatural beings. Seefin, Caherussheen, and Tirmicbrain near Corofin commemorate Finn, his son Oisin, and his dog Bran. The old pre-Norman Fenian tale of *Feis tighe chonain* is located on the high ridge over Inchiquin Lake, and connects Finn with the district and with a "hunting lodge" at Formoyle, but the first name ("seat of Finn") has been lost since 1839.[14] In the weird terraced hills of bare crag behind Kilnaboy legend meets us at every turn. Slievenaglasha, the Glasgeivnagh Hill, Mohernaglasha, Leabanaglasha, and Mohernagartan, "Smith's Fort," commemorate the Irish Vulcan, Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha), and the wonderful "glaucous cow," the *Glas*, whose hoof prints mark the rocks in every direction. Inchiquin Lake has a beautiful swan-maiden tale,[15] but it "names no name." Still in Kilnaboy we find, near the tall brown peel tower of Ballyportry, a Cloughaphuca and the enchanted Lake of Shandangan.[16] Ruan Parish has Cahernanoorane, taking its name from "fairy melody." Lisheenvicknaheeha ("the little fort of the son of the night") seems ghostly, but the constituent is also an ancient personal name, Macnahaidche, in use down to at least 1084. In Dysert, Crush'banola and the basin stone near it are connected with a

[14] *I.e.* lost so far as I know. Many names supposed to be lost prove, however, still to exist, especially amongst old persons, but should never be asked for directly, as the demand usually creates the supply. This precaution is too little heeded by enquirers in Ireland.

[15] Given by Dr. George U. MacNamara in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxi., p. 212.

[16] Its curious and unusual changes of colour give it the reputation of enchantment.

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curious legend which I reserve. Banola or Manawla is really the historic Tola, living about A.D. 637. Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge may commemorate a ghostly "red dog," like the dogs of Cratloe and Ennistymon in this county, and the *Maelchu* of Kerry. 103 173

Islands.—This small district, although containing the "capital" of Thomond from about 1220, is of little note in names. Poulnaclug contains the hidden bells of Dromcliff Round Tower. Knocknabohilleen probably had a "Boughil" or "Farbreag" (see *Corcomroe supra*). Fairyhill Fort in Kilmaley, and Music Hill, are connected with the "good people." Knockananima near Clare Castle, though superficially a ghost name, is said to be *Cnoc* (or *Cnock an*) *na h iomdna* or "Hurling-field Hill."

Bunratty.—Taking the Upper and Lower Baronies together, both here and in Tulla, we find an oblique allusion to the fairies in Gortnamearacaun ("foxglove field"), called also "Thimbletown,"—the foxglove being the fairies' thimble. Caheraphuca has a fine dolmen and haunted fort. Knocknafearbreaga derives its name and legend from the "seven" (*recte* five) pillar stones, once the seven robbers who ill-treated St. Mochulla's tame bull. It is noteworthy that the life of St. Mochulleus, (sought for vainly by Colgan about 1637 and only recently found in Austria and published), gives the *seven* soldiers and the slaying of the tame bull that ran errands for the saint.[17] In the Lower Barony the fairies are connected with Lissnarinka ("fort of the dance") in Clonloghan, and perhaps Caherfirogue ("young man's fort," 1617), which is now forgotten. Moyeir, Moyross Parks, and Moyri are variants representing the ancient Magh Adhair, the settlement of another Firbolg chief and place of the inauguration of the kings of Thomond from at least A.D. 847 to Tudor times. Slieve suidhe an righ or Slieve oided an righ ("king's seat" or "king's death hill"), in Glennagross, was connected with a legend, probably historical, that King Criomthann died there in A.D. 377 poisoned by his sister, who drank before him to disarm his suspicion and secure the kingship for her son.[18]

Tulla.—In the mass of hills near the Shannon, Carrickeevul, Tobereevul, and Glennagalliach ("hag's glen") commemorate

[17] *Analecta Bollandiana*, xvii., p. 135.
[18] S. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii.

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103 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a
173 "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

173 Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of
176 mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff
133 of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones
[172] that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all
176 Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

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as their war-goddess,[21] so, before the baptism of King Cairthinn, (first Christian Prince of his House, about A.D. 430), the ancestors of the Dalcassians may have worshipped Aibhinn on her holy hill, and her equally lovely sister Aine, crowned with meadowsweet, on the tamer mound of Knockaney. Whether, if so, they found her already enthroned at Craglea on their conquest of the district, or whether the conqueror Lugad consecrated the mountains to his patroness, it is now impossible to guess. Aibhill, as banshee, held her own. We find her even usurping the place of the "Sybil" in a translation of the *Dies Iræ*,[22] in unwonted companionship with King David, and she was a commonplace of local threnodies during the eighteenth, and even the nineteenth, century. In the lake below Rathblamaic in Inchiquin she has down to recent years been seen, with the twenty-five other banshees of Clare that call her their queen, washing clothes before any impending disaster.[2]

The next appearance of a banshee in local history is of a very different spirit three centuries later. The *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* ("Triumphs of Torlough") was written probably about A.D. 1350 by Seean mac Craith, the hereditary historian.[23] It contains accounts of three spirit women,—one, the "Sovereignty of Erin," being of surpassing loveliness, and the two others, (if not the same,—"Dismal" and "Water Dismal"), of loathsome hideousness. The hags, however, probably survive, while the "Sovereignty" has perished. Bronach ("the sorrowful or dismal one") of Ceann Boirne was known as the "Hag of Black Head" from the modern name of the older Ceann (or Rinn) of Burren. She was in full repute in 1839, and I have heard of her vaguely about 1885 or 1887. In August, 1317, she

[21] Cf. *Revue Archéologique*, N.S., vol. xviii. (1868), p. 1; Sir Samuel Ferguson's paper, from the Irish point of view, in *Dublin University Magazine*, Oct. 1834, p. 463; W. M. Hennessy, "The War Goddess of the Ancient Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x., p. 425.

[22] Mss., Royal Irish Academy, 23.M.47.

[23] As yet only in manuscript,—one copy of A.D. 1509, and another probably from one of 1449. For its age see *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxxii., p. 139.

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was able to appear in "the dark before sunrise" and foretell destruction by words and hideous action. The supporters of Prince Murchad O'Brien, (then absent in Dublin), under his brother Dermot invaded the territory of his rival Prince Donchad O'Brien. The latter got together an army, "even the man in a souterrain (*uamh*) of a fort" being summoned, and marched round the site of the modern village of Ballyvaughan, his foe having sheltered in Corcomroe Abbey, in a nook of the bare hills some miles to the north-west. Approaching Lough Rasga, (still known as Rask), "they looked on the shining mere, and there they saw the monstrous and distorted form of a lone, ancient hag, that stooped over the bright Lough shore. She was thatched with elf locks, foxy grey and rough like heather, matted and like long sea-wrack, a bossy, wrinkled, ulcerated brow, the hairs of her eye-brows like fish hooks; bleared, watery eyes peered with malignant fire between red inflamed lids; she had a great blue nose, flattened and wide, livid lips, and a stubbly beard."[24] The writer adds detail on detail (some 90 in all), many too disgusting to copy. The hag was washing human limbs and heads with gory weapons and clothes, till all the lake was defiled with blood, brains, and floating hair. Donchad at last spoke. "What is your name and race, and whose kin are those maltreated dead?" She replied,—"I am Bronach of Burren, of the Tuatha Dé Danann. This slaughter heap is of your army's heads; your own is in the middle." The angry men raised their javelins, but she rose on the wind, yelling more and more words of woe till she vanished. "Heed her not," said Donchad, "she is a friendly *Bodbh* of Clan Torlough" (his opponents). The army hurried on to the ridge of the Abbey, where Donchad and all his kindred, save one brother, were slain before evening.

Not to the Irish alone did the banshee foretell ruin. In May, 1318, Richard de Clare, leader of the Normans, was marching to what he supposed would be an easy victory over the O'Deas of Dysert. The English came to the "glittering, running water of fish-containing Fergus," when they saw a horrible beldam

[24] I have to thank Mr. Standish Hayes O'Grady for this and other extracts from the work, the translations in the library of the Royal Irish Academy being, (it is understood), very crude.

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washing armour and rich robes till the red gore churned and splashed through her hands.[25] Calling an Irish ally to question her, De Clare heard that "the armour and clothes were of the English, and few would escape immolation." "I am the Water Doleful One. I lodge in the green fairy mounds (*sidh*) of the land, but I am of the Tribes of Hell. Thither I invite you. Soon we shall be dwellers in one country." Next day De Clare, his son, and nearly all his English troops lay dead upon the fields near the ford of Dysert for miles over the country in their flight. 175 776 763

The belief of the early eleventh and fourteenth centuries is still extant, for local legend near Dysert tells how Aibhill and twenty-five banshees washed blood-stained clothes in Rath Lake before "Claraghmore" (De Clare) fell, and that they still do so when mischief is afoot.[26]

For nearly 300 years there is no other Clare banshee tale, till the famous one of 1642 in the *Memoires of Lady Fanshawe*, (published in 1665).[27] It is so well known that a brief abstract will suffice. Her Ladyship, staying with some of the O'Briens, was sleeping in a room, of which the window overhung water at some height, at a castle, perhaps Bunratty or Castle Lake. She was awakened by a horrible scream, and saw a girl outside the window. The apparition was pale, rather handsome, and with her reddish hair hanging dishevelled over her shoulders. After some time the unwelcome visitor vanished, with other ghastly shrieks. In the morning Lady Fanshawe, telling her tale, was told of the death of a relative of the family whose illness had been concealed from her. The spirit was that of the peasant wife of a former owner of the castle, drowned in the moat by her husband and of evil omen to his descendants. [538]

The next story was told in my own family and, I understand, in that of the Ross Lewins. I have traced it to a daughter of Jane Ross Lewin, one of the girls who saw the banshee. It related to Jane's father, Harrison Ross Lewin of Fortfergus, who probably died in 1776, as his will, dated November, 1775, was proved in

[25] Another "washer of the ford" appears in "Da Choca's Hostel," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi. (1900), p. 157, and she is also a Bodbh.

[26] Told me by Prof. Brian O'Looney in 1890, and I have heard more recently of the existence of the belief.

[27] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 83-6.

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175 March, 1777; but I have hitherto been unable to verify the circumstances or place of his death. Mr. Ross Lewin had gone
763 to Dublin on business, the journey at that time taking five days,
776 and the several stages being Limerick, Nenagh, Mountrath, Kildare, and Dublin. In his absence the "young people" went to a friend's house for the evening. The road passed an old church (Kilchrist), which was unenclosed, standing in an open field. As the party returned under bright moonlight, they were startled by loud keening and wailing from the direction of the ruin. Coming in sight, all clearly saw a little old woman with long white hair and a black cloak running to and fro on the top of the side wall, clapping her hands and wailing. The young men, leaving the girls together on the road, sent some of their number to watch each end of the building, and the remainder entered and climbed up on the wall. The apparition vanished as they approached the church, and, after a careful search, could not be found. The party, thoroughly frightened, hurried home, and found their mother in even greater terror. She had been sitting in the window when a great raven flapped three times at the glass, and, while she told them, the bird again flew against the window. Some days later, news arrived from Dublin that Ross Lewin had died suddenly on the very evening of the apparition and omen.

763 It is curious that an English family, no matter how long settled in Ireland, should have acquired the ministration of a banshee,
776 but, besides the Ross Lewins, both the Stamers and the Westropps were so endowed in Clare.[28] The Westropps had also death warnings in the shape of a white owl and the headless coach. This bird last appeared, it is said, before a death in 1909, but it would be more convincing if it appeared at places where the white owl does *not* nest and fly out every night. The banshee has been conspicuously absent of late years, although on the death of my father, the

[28] Among families with banshees, Thomas Crofton Croker (*op. cit.*, ed. 1862, p. 115,) names old Englishry such as the Burkes, Rices, Husseys (the Norman, not the Gaelic, name), Trants, and Keatings. The FitzGeralds of Kerry and Limerick had also a banshee. Of the Clare families the Westropps came from Yorkshire, the Stamers from Essex, and the Lewins probably from Durham. Some banshees may have been acquired by marriage, for the three latter families were related to O'Briens, MacNamaras, and O'Gradys, to name only a part of their Celtic connections.

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late John Westropp, at Attyflin, in 1866, keening and weird lamentation, (probably of some of the country folk who held him in deep affection), were heard the same night by the servants and some of the family. When Mrs. Stamer died at Stamer Park, Ennis, in January, 1883, the banshee and death coach were also supposed to have been heard,—though far more satisfactory explanations of the noises were forthcoming. The popular belief in Clare is that each leading Irish race had a banshee, Eevul, the banshee of the royal O'Briens, ruling over twenty-five other banshees always attendant on her progresses. The stream from Caherminaun to Dough, (the Daelach), was called the "Banshee's Brook," and when, as sometimes happens after an unusually dry summer, the water gets red from iron scum, everyone is on the alert to hear the rustling flight of the banshee, (not apparently Eevul), and her attendants through the air. In the prevailing suspense someone generally succeeds, and then there is unrest and fear until a death removes the uncertainty. There are many other modern tales of banshees. Mr. Casey of Ruan heard a banshee cry at the death of his father. The late Dr. MacNamara of Corofin was similarly honoured; indeed, when his family lived at Ballymarkahan, near Quin, there were numerous "authentic instances" recorded. The Corofin banshees, however, did not lag behind the age by maintaining aristocratic prejudices, for one, at least, used to sit near the cross road leading to the workhouse and foretell the deaths of the poor inmates.[29]

The most recent visit of a banshee told to me was in 1905,[30] and is sadly tame when compared with the stories of MacCraith and Lady Fanshawe. Some scattered cottages form a sort of suburb to Newmarket-on-Fergus at a temporary lake (or *turlough*) called Lough Gaish. The inhabitants were greatly alarmed by the loud and ghastly wailing of some unknown being on several successive nights. Local panic spread, and few ventured out after dark. Had any tragedy happened, the reputation of the banshee would have rested on a rock of belief for another generation; but nothing occurred, and it is now doubted "whether it was a banshee at all, at all."

[29] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara at Caherminane and Corofin.

[30] By Mrs. and Miss Neville and Miss G. C. Stacpoole of Newmarket.

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III. *The Death Coach.*[31]

763 The "headless Coach" or "coach a bower" seems of far later date than the banshee. Ghostly chariots such as that of Cuchu-
787 lain figure in very early tales, but neither their appearance nor their sound foretold death.[32] In Clare, at sight or sound of the coach, all gates should be thrown open, and then it will not stop at the house to call for a member of the family, but only foretell the death of some relative at a distance.[33]

763 I collected five stories, three of well-defined character, and give them in order of time as the dates can be fixed. The first appearance, on the night before June 18th, 1806, was related to my three informants[34] most solemnly by their fathers and uncles. Two told it in a general and confused way, but varied from the story of the third, which I give, only by omissions. Ralph Westropp, of Attyflin and Lismehane,—the latter place is in Clare, but I never could learn where he died,—lay sick unto death. His sons in the late dusk waited on the steps for the arrival of the doctor. Suddenly they saw and heard a large coach drive into the paved court before the house. One of them stepped down to open the door, but the dark object rumbled past and drove down the long, straight avenue, which was fenced on both sides. Two of the watchers ran after it, hearing it ahead of them. The noise stopped, and they expected to find the coach at the gate. They ran full tilt against the bars, the gate being closed and locked. They called up the lodgekeeper, and he was found to have been asleep with the keys still beside him. The sick man died the next morning.

Lismehane, under its later name of Maryfort, afterwards became the residence of the O'Callaghan family, its present occupants. On the night of April 29th, 1821, two servants,—one of whom was "Matty Halloran" who died not long ago at an advanced

[31] Cf. "Irish Folklore from Cavan, Meath, Kerry, and Limerick," vol. xix., pp. 320-1; vol. x., p. 119.

[32] Is not the death coach, and not the Hellequin, the "hell waine" of Reginald Scot's list of spirits in *The discoverie of witchcraft*, Bk. vii., cap. xv.?

[33] Cf. Herefordshire belief about corpse candles.

[34] The late Capt. Ralph Westropp of Coolreagh (in 1879), and the late Mrs. Wilmie and Mrs. Pitcairn, whose fathers were present.

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age, and the other was a butler named Richard Burke,—were sitting up to receive a son of the family, Cornelius O'Callaghan, who had travelled for his health in vain and was returning home. Halloran, who told the tale with fearless faith and weary frequency, said that the heavy rumble of a coach roused them. Burke stood on the top of the long flight of steps with a lamp, and sent Halloran down to open the carriage door. He reached out his hand to do so, saw a skeleton looking out, gave one yell, and fell in a heap. When the badly-scared Burke picked him up, there was no sign or sound of any coach. A little later the invalid arrived, so exhausted that he died suddenly in the early morning. The present generation seems to have got the story from Halloran alone.

On the night of December 11th, 1876, a servant of the MacNamaras was going his rounds at Ennistymon, a beautiful spot in a wooded glen, with a broad stream falling in a series of cascades. In the dark he heard the rumbling of wheels on the back avenue, and, knowing from the hour and place that no "mortal vehicle" could be coming, concluded that it was the death coach and ran on, opening the gates before it. He had just time to open the third gate and throw himself on his face beside it, at the bank, before he "heard a coach go clanking past." It did not stop at the house, but passed on, and the sound died away. On the following day Admiral Sir Burton MacNamara died in London.[35]

A man living at Annaghneale was returning from Tulla late at night. As he reached the corner of Fortanne demesne he heard a heavy rumbling behind him, and horses trotting. Surprised after a time by its not coming nearer, he looked back and saw a large dark mass with a figure on the box. It came no closer to him, and in a fright he hurried on. At a bend in the road he ventured to stand at the fence and look again. This time he saw the horses and carriage drive over the wall and ditch into Fortanne. He fell, nearly insensible with terror, but, hearing and seeing nothing more, hurried home. This was told to a steward at Maryfort about twenty years ago, and happened "long after the sale of Fortanne" to its present owner in 1879. The present tradition

[35] From Mr. R. Twigge, F.S.A., whose wife is a daughter of the House of Ennistymon.

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763 of Fortanne says that the coach was heard at the deaths of certain Westropps after 1873, but nothing happened after its last appearance.

The phantom of a coach and horse was seen not far from Corofin, at Cragmoher, not long since, but it is agreed that no death took place after the apparition. An equally vague story was told about 1870 at Attyflin by a very old woman, Norry Halloran, whom the sound of the coach pursued one dark evening for a long way, but it did not pass her door, and nothing happened afterwards.

IV. *Fairies and Fairy Forts and Mounds.*

776 MacCraith, in the *Triumphs of Torlough*, in describing the prognostics of the death of Prince Donchad early in the fourteenth 823 century says that "lights shone on the fairy forts," and it has [538] already been noted that the *sidhs* or fairy mounds were lodgings of appalling apparitions, like Bronach when not at her proper residence in the lower deep. The *Dindsenchas*,—that early encyclopædia invaluable for everything but the reliable account of the origin of place names which it purports to be,—describes how a lady dwelling in such a mound sprang out at her would-be lover in the form of a dragon.[36] Probably such beliefs, and the consequent fear of irate and deadly beings in earthworks, have helped until recent years to preserve the residential earthen "forts," although the ring walls were destroyed with but little scruple. Nevertheless the son of a farmer named Nihill told me in 1892 that, after some days wreckage and removal of the outer wall of the fine triple stone fort of Cahercalla, near Quin, his father was stricken with acute pain, and only recovered from his illness when the work was stopped,—whence this interesting ruin has been preserved to the present day. A certain landlord, still living, nearly lost the use of one eye from the dust of an explosion when blasting a rock in an earth fort which was being removed, and this incident has upheld the faith and fear of the fairies in north-eastern Clare. A locally famous "astronomer" and weather prophet tried, many years ago, to blast a dolmen in Inchiquin Barony, and a splinter hit his hand, which was badly injured and

[36] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv., p. 441.

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afterwards festered. The wreckage of the dolmen was lying untouched on the ground a few years ago. The collapse of a calf shed on its occupants followed the demolition of Templenaraha oratory for building the unstable structure;[37] this might be ascribed to a more sacred anger than that of the fairies, but the oratory stood in a ring fort. Another case of supposed vengeance occurred near Lehinch on the Atlantic. Some workmen were employed to level the earthworks of Dooneeva,[38] a fort on a low cliff at the end of the bay and near the modern Protestant Church. The man who originated this outrage was digging at the mounds when he fell to all appearance dead. The news was at once taken to his wife, a reputed "wise woman," and she ran to a "fairy spot" and "did magic." She then went to her apparently lifeless husband, and ordered the fairies in a peremptory way to restore him at once and take his stick. Then, before everyone, the stick vanished, and the "dead man" sat up none the worse for his "rapture to the land of faëry."[39] The date of this event could not be fixed, but it seems to be attributed to the period before 1840, and Dooneeva seems to have been in its present condition in 1839.

Two forts named Lissardcarney and Ballyhee in Templemaley Parish were in 1839 reputed strongholds garrisoned by troops of fairies. The songs of the fairies were heard in Cahernanoorane in Inchiquin, and Leskeentha near Noughaval.[40] They danced in the Lisnarinkas, played "hurley" in Lisfearbegnagommaun, and laid in wait to worry the belated traveller in Rathfollane and a small fort near the rectory, to the south of it, near Newmarket-on-Fergus. Fairies haunted the well of Tobesheefra, while even at the holy well of the powerful and vengeful St. Mochulla at Fortanne milk was once offered to them. The butter had refused to "come," and the mistress of the house, (a Protestant woman of good birth and fair education), as she told me herself about 1878, took some of the refractory milk to the well, made the sign

[37] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara about 1907.

[38] *Not* Doonmeeve as on the Ordnance Survey maps.

[39] Told to Miss Diana Parkinson. I heard it locally, but more vaguely, in 1907.

[40] Local traditions, 1904, 1908.

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776 of the cross over it, said the Lord's Prayer, dug a hole in the mud
823 at the well with her left heel, and went away without looking back.
[789] As might have been expected, the butter had "come" by the time she had got home again, and she used to quote the case as "proof positive." Besides the forts and wells, the dolmens are believed to have been fairy homes, but in my enquiries since
776 1892 I have never been able to authenticate a case of offerings
782 at them of milk and butter, although small basins like the Swedish "elf mills" are found in the covers of more than one of these
823 structures, and large *bullauns* or basins at others, such as Ballyganner Hill near Noughaval, Cappaghkennedy on the hills above Corofin, and Newgrove and Kiltanon near Tulla in eastern Clare. Food and drink, however, have been, until at least the present century, set out in plates and cups in Inchiquin and Moyarta Baronies, and in the latter, on the Shannon bank, the slops were thrown out and clean plates, water, chairs, and a well-swept hearth left by a punctilious servant for fairy guests in 1888 or 1889.

776 The greatest fairy monarch in Clare was "Donn of the Sand-
823 hills" (now the golf links), near the old castle of Doogh, (*i.e.* Dumhach or Sand Dune), near Lehinch. He, or one of the other fairy princes named Donn, appears in a list of the divine race of the Tuatha Dé Danann,[41] and is therefore of the family of the Dagda, and, it may be presumed, a lineal descendant of the ancient Ana, Mother of the Gods. A well-known Irish scholar and antiquary, Andrew MacCurtin, before 1730 addressed a political petition to Donn of Dumhach complaining, like most Irish antiquaries, of the neglect of the gentry, and praying for any menial post at his Court.[42] As there was none that answered, the petitioner had to rest content with the hospitality of the MacDonnells of Kilkee and the O'Briens of Ennistymon. Donn's heartless conduct met poetic justice, for he has ever since "lacked a sacred bard," and, save for a slight uneasiness in a few poor old people passing across the sandhills after the golfers have left and the sun has set, he is now all but forgotten. In another poem of MacCurtin's, on a monk's horse "overlooked" and killed by the evil eye, or by the look of a red-haired woman, or

[41] *Cath Finntraga* (ed. Kuno Meyer), p. 15.

[42] Mss. Royal Irish Academy, 23. M. 47.

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by "the stroke of a fairy," the poet recommends the holy man to get the aid of a local practitioner of renown, Peter the Fairy Killer.[43] 776 823

In recent years I have met only one sign of true respect for the "Sheevra" race. A small patch of land was left untilled in the midst of a cornfield at the end of the steep descent from Carran old church to Eanty in the Burren. It was left for three years amidst the tillage, and then the field was allowed to return to grass. The owners obviously disliked to explain the matter, but the act was clearly understood in the neighbourhood as a concession to the spirits of the field when the grass land was broken up for the first time in human memory.[44]

The appearances of the fairies also seem now very rare indeed. At Newmarket-on-Fergus, a centre of much folklore, we find that, besides the two forts named above and a low earth mound (perhaps sepulchral), only one spot has been honoured by an actual apparition in the last ten years. In this case a man walking on the Ennis road, not far from Lough Gaish, saw a very little man neatly dressed in green and walking on the path. Suspecting the green man to be a *leprechaun*,—and hence an owner of gold,—the Clare man tried to grasp him, but the sprite vanished out of his hands.[45]

The "literary movement" will probably affect the folklore very soon, as it is already affecting historical tradition,—which is shown by the variations in certain legends collected at long intervals at the same sites. By some the Danann have been identified with the Danes as "fort builders." If this were so, why did Dane's fort become Caher Loghlanach, (Caher Loglin, 1652), and similar forms? The people once knew better, for forts were attributed to all sorts of times and races, not only to members of the Tuatha Dé Danann, but also to Firbolgs and mythical persons such as Aenghus, Eerish, Eir, Farvagh, and 776 538

[43] *Ibid.* 23. K. 10.

[44] It was certainly not the darker belief that in Scotland dedicated an offering to the one called euphemistically "The Goodman," nor like the sheaf sometimes dedicated to Brigit and other saints in West Munster, or, indeed, in other parts of Ireland.

[45] Collected by Miss Katherine Neville. The sprite was, of course, proved not to be a *leprechaun*, as that being can be held by the eye alone.

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776 Croaghan, and Celts such as Lachtna (A.D. 820-840), and Brian
538 Boru (A.D. 980-1014). In one notable instance, King Conor (A.D. 1242-69) is the reputed builder of the great stone fort of Dun Conor in Aran, which in the eleventh-century legend is evidently connected with Conchiurn or Conchraed the Firbolg,—a relation accepted in 1685 by Roderic O'Flaherty, although he called its hero "Conquevar" (*i.e.* Chonchobhar or Conor). Any modern allusion to the Danann is therefore "suspect." Many visits to the recesses of the hills in Burren from 1878 onwards,—and I may add that
776 the same is true of the rest of Clare,—only gave me, in 1905, one
788 direct reference to the Danann.[48] At the natural moat crowned
823 by the small stone ring wall of Croaghateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna, we were told to cross ourselves as a protection against the Danann. The place was, nevertheless, undoubtedly regarded by the older people living near it as a most dangerous fairy fort, and we were told how certain badger hunters,—(who brought drink with them), —after a long festival on its summit got benighted there; they eventually returned home sobered by fright, as they suddenly "saw the whole fleet" of "them" coming up the mound, and escaped only just in time.

776 The "whirlwinds" along dusty roads and sudden gusts were
788 not long ago everywhere supposed to be caused by the progress of
821 fairy beings. The older folk believed, and trembled,—crossing themselves, or saying a word of prayer,—while the younger folk, more than half in jest, raised their hats, as is still sometimes done to the unlucky "single magpie" and the weasel.

776 I know of two cases of reputed changelings. My second sister, whose delicacy, when an infant, excited remark, was, about 1842, taken out by a servant to be exposed on a shovel on the doorstep at Carnelly. The angry and hasty intervention of another servant saved the child, but the would-be "exposer" was convinced of the propriety of her attempt "to get back the real child" from the fairies. A very old woman, Kate (Geerin) Molony, a henwife at Maryfort, near Tulla, whom I faintly remember in 1869, was many years before anxious about her little daughter's failing health, and went to a "wise woman," who assured her that the child was "changed." She spoke of this on her return, and unfortunately

[48] Apart from Lon, at Slievnaglasha, and the "hags."

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the patient was old enough to understand the fearful decision. 776
The poor child turned over on the bed with a groan, and was a little later found to be dead.

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(*To be continued.*)

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COLLECTANEA.

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In a preceding article I have dealt with place names and legends of names, banshees, the death coach, and fairies, and in the present one I propose to deal mainly with other appearances of a spectral or spiritual character. In doing this it is necessary carefully to avoid attributing to older writers beliefs which they never held. It is more than probable that the writer of the *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, and Seean MacCraith, the author of the *Triumphs of Torlough*, were no more under a delusion when they personified the spirits of Valour, Bloodshed, Terror, and Sovereignty than the modern journalist who writes of "Public Opinion sitting in judgment," or the "Spirit of Loyalty attending King George." The first ancient writer, describing the terrors of the deadly combat of the Irish and the Norse in 1014, tells us that there was "a bird of valour and championship fluttering over Murchad's head and flying on his breath." He also tells how there flew a dark, merciless, (and many more adjective-endowed) *bodbh*, screaming and fluttering over the combatants, while "the satyrs (*bannanaig*), the idiots, the maniacs of the glens, the witches, the goblins, the ancient birds, the destroying demons of the air and sky, and the feeble demonic phantom host" arose to accompany the warriors in the combat. He probably meant little more than "Amazement in the van and Flight combined with Sorrow's faded form and Solitude behind," though possibly the various uncanny "creatures of the wild" were real to him in their proper places in the hills and glens, but not in daylight on the fields beside Dublin. The second writer (*airs*

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1350) describes King Torlough, about 1286, returning from a successful raid, which has left its mark very clearly on the legal rolls of the day, ravaging the English lands round the mountains of eastern County Limerick and northern Tipperary, and marching up the western (Clare) shore of Lough Derg. A lovely maiden appeared, "modest, strange in aspect, glorious in form, rosy-lipped, soft-taper-handed, pliant-wavy-haired, white-bosomed." She was the "Sovereignty of Erin" come to rebuke the chief for letting De Burgh dissuade him from attempting the reconquest of all Ireland, and vanished in a lustrous cloud. The author's intent here is unmistakable. MacCraith has one other passage, so suggestive and remarkable that it can only be regarded as a literal statement of the beliefs of the warriors at the burial of some of whom his father, Ruadri, presided, a few years later, in 1317. Donchad, a prince of the Clan Torlough line, aided by William de Burgh, gave his deadly enemy, Richard de Clare, a severe defeat near Bunratty in 1311. At the moment of victory De Burgh was captured by the foe, and the victors fled in indescribable confusion,—the English to their nearest castles, and the Irish to their stone strongholds, the great terraced mountains of Burren. De Clare and his protegé, Prince Dermot, camped on two ridges at Cruchwill and Tullycommaun, a long ridge capped with tumuli, dolmens, and "forts." Donchad lay across the valley and lake on the spurs of Slieve Carran opposite. The soldiers of Donchad, we are told, "were disturbed by phantoms and delusive dreams, lights shone on the fairy forts," the waves of Erin[1] groaned, "the deep plaint resounded from the woods and streams," shades were seen, and hollow groans were heard. This is evidently a true tale of the reminiscences of the depressed and anxious men who lay looking at the foes' camp fires opposite. I have often heard with wonder on these lonely hills

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> "undescribed sounds
> That come a swooning over hollow grounds
> And wither drearily on barren moors,"

the noise of the winds in the rocks and bushes, the strange prattle of streams in crannies deep down in the rocks, the cry of night

[1] Misfortune was foretold by great waves at four spots on the Irish coast, to which later belief added a fifth at Malbay in Clare.

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birds, the whisper and rustle of the wind on the grass and heather, and those weird sounds, booming and sobbing out of nowhere, which are supposed to arise from underground streams and caverns.

V. *Will-o-the-wisps and Corpse-lights.*

103 821 The will-o-the-wisp, if not unknown, is at least extremely rare. The name Loughaunaguinnell, or Loughaguinnell, of a pool in Doora refers, I was told, to a "candle" floating over its surface. In the name Doora itself we find the ancient word for water, which occurs as the river Dour in Kerry in Ptolemy's Atlas in the first century. Mr. and Mrs. Hall, in *Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc.* (1841), note that one of their guides told them of "corpse candles" seen on the banks of the Shannon, and voices of the "good people" heard with them. Crofton Croker, in "Florry Cantillon's Funeral,"[2] alludes to the "Blue Man's Lake at midnight," a lonely place in the bog at Shragh, near Kilrush, where "a spectral figure enveloped in a bluish flame" haunted the melancholy waters. Some of the "corpse lights" shining in graveyards, "forts," and deserted buildings I have myself seen. In one case, I traced the light to the stagnant water, full of rotten leaves, in the fosse of a "fort," which, when stirred by waving branches, gave out phosphorescent light. In another case a church gable was observed for many nights lit up with blue flame, after three victims of a railway accident had been laid in their family vault below it. The windows of Inchiquin Castle are seen across the lake, lit up by pale blue fire, which vanishes from the sight of anyone approaching the ruined building though still visible at a distance. A deserted cottage on a ridge not far from Tulla, as I have seen, used to be lit up with pale light, and was reputed haunted. Several graveyards have displayed "corpse lights," and particularly those at Killone Convent (a picturesque twelfth-century ruin on a wooded slope over a beautiful lake near Ennis), and, I hear, Killeemur and Kilmaleery on the Shannon and Fergus, and Clooney in Bunratty Barony.

[2] *Fairy Legends of the South of Ireland*, Part II. (1828), p. 24.

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Plate XIV.

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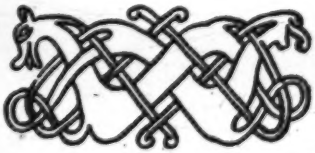
Rath-Blathmaic. "Broc-sidh" and "Sheelah".



"Peists"
Dysert-O'Dea

1910 "Ghost Stone". Clonlara. JGW

[Facing p. 202]

~~To face p. 340~~

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VI. *Underground Folk.*

To underground folk, other than fairies, I have only found few and uninteresting references, such as,—"an old woman looked out of the side of the fort, and the man ran away"; "he heard *them* talking inside the hill"; and "the little old man came out of the fort, and shut it behind him." 776

VII. *Water Spirits and Mer-folk.*

The Shannon, according to the *Dindsenchas*, derived its name from a sea-lady, but evidently not a "water-breather." Sinenn, daughter of Lodan, came from *Tir-tairngire*, the Land of Youth, under the sea, to visit the well of Connla, under the river now called Shannon. She came to Linn na feile, but was drowned at Tarrchinn "on this side Shannon," and gave her name to the great river.[3] A water spirit, or mermaid, is remembered at Killone Lake and Newhall. The legend is preserved in several variants. In 1839 it was told how O'Brien of Killone saw a lovely girl in the lake, and caught her. Bringing her home, he found to his great disgust and disappointment that she had a fish's tail. He ordered her to be kept in a "crib," and fed and well-treated. As she never spoke, a local fool threw scalding water on her to make her say something. He was only too successful, for, after a wild, blood-curdling shriek, she cried: 103 773 776

> "As the return of the salmon from the stream,
> A return without blood or flesh,
> May such be the departure of the O'Briens
> Like ears of wild corn from Killone."[4]

The legend recorded, almost at the same time (1840), by Crofton Croker was told to me by the old peasantry, about 1876, as follows:—A mermaid used to swim up a stream that flowed under the cellars of Newhall, in order to steal wine. The "master" (an O'Brien), or the butler, hid and stabbed her, (or threw her into a tub of scalding water where she became a big lump of jelly), and her blood ran down the stream and 773 776

[3] "The Dind Senchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), p. 456.
[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii., p. 111.

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773 776 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she wailed :—

> "As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> "As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer. [823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of long, low, cross vaults. [342] In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their [103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[5] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

[5] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soul Cages").

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Malbay. She was white-skinned and had well-shaped white hands. The party tried to make friends with her, giving her bread, which she ate. Then a Quilty fisherman got frightened, said she was "something bad," and threw a pebble at her, on which she plunged into the sea and disappeared. Soon afterwards King Edward died. An old man at Spanish Point said the last mermaid was seen the year of the Great Famine (1846), and that such an appearance foretells a public disaster. 776 [787]

VIII. *Ghosts and Haunted Houses.*

Here, "where'er we tread is haunted," and libellous, ground, so that in the majority of cases the names and definite addresses must be withheld, although in every case I am acquainted with them. 775

Taking first the ancient buildings, I am unable to state the nature of the haunter of Lisananima (ghost fort) in Kilcorney, or of the other places of like name, although, as regards the former, Dr. George MacNamara and I did our best, about 1897, to find out, for the ghost was said to have been seen recently; so also at Toberatasha (spectre well). At Lisfuadnaheirka, near Kilkee, we were told in 1896 of a "horned ghost," but "Fuadnaheirka" was a local "terror by night" who slew people, as Eugene O'Curry says his bare legs knew when, (as a boy in 1816), he lived close to Dunaheirka (or Liscroneen), a large fort, which was the chief seat of this being, and was evidently a place to be run past on dark winter evenings.[6] It is not wonderful that stories should be so vague. A form "that shape has none" terrifies some nervous or drunken person, who afterwards speaks often of the ghost, but can give no details. The subject is usually regarded too seriously for verbal embroidery.

A fisherman, being detained on Scattery Island by a storm early last century, and hence unable to attend mass at Kilrush, went up into the "cathedral"[7] to pray. After a time he looked up and saw a crowd of monks and laity with priests at the altar in

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol i., pp. 370 *et seq.*

[7] This is the Church of St. Mary near the Round Tower.

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775 gorgeous vestments. He shut his eyes in terror and prayed, and when he ventured to look again he saw only "the clouds flitting over the roofless church and the old ravens croaking and wheeling over their nests on the tower top."[8] At Stamer Park I was told, in 1873, that "a string of monks" used formerly to pass up the garden to the Abbey of Ennis, but, even then, it was only a vague tradition. A 'she-ghost' haunted the canal bridge of Clonlara, while it was being built in 1769, and was at last exorcised by a slab, still remaining, with her figure cut on it in low relief and the date (Plate XIV.). This figure closely resembles the grotesque (and usually indecent) carvings of prophylactic female figures called "hags of the castle," and now [532] *sheelanagigs* from a well-known carving in County Cork. Two undoubted examples of these figures remain in Clare, a much-defaced one above the door of Kilnaboy church, and a perfect one, struggling with two dragons, on the ornate, and possibly eleventh-century, sill at Rath-Blathmaic church.[9] The Clonlara figure, if older than 1769, may have been brought from one of the ruined towers of Rinroe, Newtown, and Aharinagh, not far away.

The back avenue near the castle of Teermicbrain or Adelphi was haunted, until 1885 at least, by a dark shadowy figure. A "grey man" haunted the lonely storm-beaten shell of Dunlicka Castle, on the cliffs near Kilkee, one of the wildest and most beautiful parts of that glorious coast. He tried to point out hidden treasure, but failed owing to the fears of the man who saw him, and who, when at last venturing back, could not remember the exact hiding-place. The disgusted treasure guardian has made no later attempt.[10] Doonmore, a shore castle farther north, was notorious for the ghastly sounds heard in its vaults, probably caused by waves lapping into rock crannies,

[8] Told by an old peasant of his grandfather, *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. viii. (1841), p. 548. The same person one moonlight night saw a dim figure making signs, and, following it, found his cow with her legs firmly fixed in a hole and in great danger.

[9] See Plate XIV. and the figures in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., pp. 27, 33.

[10] From two residents at Moveen in 1908.

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but imputed to the perturbed spirits of those who had perished miserably in the dungeons.[11] At Clare Castle, there used to be seen a ghost, said to be the wife of the first Colonel George Stamer of Carnelly (1680), who held the place under Lord Clare. Legend said that her infant had sprung from her arms through an open window into the river Fergus beneath. The mother went mad and died, and her ghost could be seen vainly searching for her lost child along the bank.[12] But in the records her place is occupied by a business-like lady who brought much land and money to her husband, survived him, and died, (evidently in full possession of her senses to the last), at a ripe old age with her children around her. At Carrigaholt Castle, on the Shannon, the ghosts of Lord Clare and his "yellow dragoons" could, I was told in 1875, be seen at military exercises in the castle field.[13] This seems now to be forgotten. Fortanne, or Rosslara Castle, near Tulla, and the old roadway south from it, were reputed to be "airy" (eery); the haunting beings whispered, laughed, and rustled in the hedges, and "things flew out." (I have often been there in the dusk, and, as in most lonely lanes on a hill-slope facing "the wild west wind," found the noises very weird and curious).

While, as we know, the country in darkness abounds with uncanny sounds, this is still more the case with old mansions. Such houses, with disused chimney flues and attics, ill-fitting casements, ivy and snails to tap on the windows, owls to flap and moan overhead, rats, shaking doors, and warped stairs to imitate footsteps, only need a legend and a few nervous inmates to become treasure-houses of ghost-lore.

One house on the verge of the Atlantic was haunted by a "breathing ghost," and had also a footstep passing with a faintly-clanking chain up and down a lobby. Our servant, after a couple of weeks in 1887, heard the first, and we heard the footsteps

[11] Alluded to by Crofton Croker in "Florry Cantillon's Funeral," *op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), p. 23. I heard it locally in 1892.

[12] So Mrs. Stamer in 1881.

[13] Their ghostly appearances sliding through Moyarta, and their plunging into the Shannon, are alluded to in 1816. Cf. Mason, *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 430.

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775 frequently. I finally located the latter in a dully-jarring sash which resounded in the flooring, the "chain" was a loose pump-handle, and both were actuated by the fairly regular recurrence of a prevailing sea-breeze in the stillest part of the night. A little inland, and not many miles from Lisdoonvarna, two rooms in an old family house are reputed haunted. The ghost of a faithless wife used to be seen getting out of the study window, just before dawn on the anniversary of her elopement. Loud noises, shaking the floor, were heard in the room overhead. The ghost of a legendary "Countess of Antrim," whose portrait was preserved there, haunted the hall and passages, and it was told that she had made away with her stepson in order that her own child might succeed. She was not visible, but revealed herself in a rustling of garments and turning of handles. A fragment of a poem on her crime is remembered :—

> "The blood on the cradle's the worst blood of all,
> For the young Lord of Antrim lies dead in the hall."[14]

Corofin has several haunted houses, both new and old, in and about it. One ghost haunted a house in the village for half a year, putting out candles and throwing sods of turf about at night. Near Moyhill, in the same district, a ghost was seen by a Mr. O'Neill coming through a ceiling; it used to put its hands on sleeping people, causing much alarm, but, like the preceding spectre, it lapsed into the Silence after a few months.[15] In a house near Ennis, a soft footstep hurried on some nights through several rooms, in one of which a cupboard used to open after the noise; this was not only seen and heard by the family and accustomed guests (like myself), but by new visitors unacquainted with the story.

It is not clear whether the beings that haunted two farmers' houses between Kilkee and Liscrona were ghosts or elves. The families began to "see things," and notably a little old man who used to sit on a sod of turf. This inoffensive haunting was more than the occupants could bear. One of them fitted up a cow-house as his dwelling-place, and the other actually built a new

[14] So Mrs. Twigge. [15] So Dr. G. U. MacNamara.

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house. The old residences are in ruins, and their desertion took place over sixteen years ago.[16] 775

It is to the credit of the people of Eastern Clare that it possesses hardly any haunted houses, but there are two of transcending interest.

The first lay near the Fergus. A footstep followed one at night on the upper stairs, and curtains were drawn round the old-fashioned beds,—if not by "a hand of bone," at least by a "thing that no man sees." On more than one occasion all the bed-clothes were lifted, "as if by four people," off a sleeper. Even the late Mr. Richard Stacpoole, a man of iron nerve, told how once on a visit this happened to him; indignant at what he supposed to be a foolish joke, he got up, locked the door, searched the room, and kept awake, only to find the action repeated twice; he struck a light at once, but no one was visible. Hands were laid on the doors and their handles. Anyone who "married into" the family or its connections was liable to have their hands kissed in the dark on their first visit. An invisible dog used to howl before deaths, being only heard from the room of the relation of the foredoomed person. A ghost, (said to be of no less a person than Maureen Rhue, the famous Amazonian O'Brien of 1640-50), used to pass up and down the long, straight avenue. Legend said that, after the murder of her twenty-fifth husband,—(only three husbands are known to history, which is also ignorant of their murders),—she was fastened into a hollow tree and starved to death. There were also the ghosts of two nuns,—for the place was said to have been a convent, without a particle of evidence,[17]—and, in 1838, a lady on horseback at a "Druid's Altar." (The last-named was probably a pure invention of the then owner.) There was, however, another ghostly object of which I heard from an eye-witness still living. A dark spot used to break out in the wall of a quaint old brick-floored room, with an inside window looking down into the kitchen. The legend was that an old nurse, a pensioner of the family about 1750, used to live in this room, and died, aged over 90, suddenly [763] [773]

[16] So Mrs. MacDonnell.

[17] Except that skeletons, and, it is said, crucifixes, were found in the garden just beside the house.

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775 and mysteriously. One evening the kitchen-maid brought up some beer, and fancied she saw "a black shadow hanging over" the nurse. The latter was much alarmed at hearing this, and took her chair over to the inner window, where she could see into the kitchen. Next morning, when the girl brought up the breakfast, the beer stood untouched, and the old woman sat leaning back with a look of appalling horror on her face and with her hands resting on the table. The other servants ran up at the maid's shrieks and lifted the nurse, who was stone-dead, with a deep cut on the back of her head. There was a small patch of blood on the wall, and ever since it comes out as a dark spot on the wall about the anniversary of the nurse's mysterious death.[18]

The second house, now a dismantled ruin in a lonely valley in the eastern hills, had a far worse reputation. It brought misfortune on anyone who rented it, and a heavy doom lay on its actual owners; certainly, when my family rented it for the shooting, its reputation was maintained by the falling on us of a subsequent heavy trouble. Its most ghastly legend will be told later, and relates to a skeleton found buried under a peat rick in the yard, when the rick was removed owing to scarcity of peat; according to another version, told at Tulla, the rick was set on fire, and, when the white ashes blew away, the unconsumed skull of a murdered man remained.[19] One room was fastened up with iron clamps, tradition said, because its floor was soaked in ineffaceable blood. Another legend, (which I never heard locally or, indeed, in Eastern Clare at all), told how long ago a detachment of a Scottish regiment, quartered there, was poisoned by the owner. The drummer boy escaped the poison, but only to be brutally murdered as he tried to escape from the window. My informant (in the far west of the county), says that "the boy's ghost has been seen by many credible witnesses." There was some vague tale of a light on the lake, where dredging yielded a vast quantity of bones, said to be human and mainly of children, but I distrust profoundly the *dicta* of Clare people on comparative anatomy. The stories I give next were told me by

[18] So Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort.
[19] So the late Mrs. Speight of Affock.

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at least six of my relatives, including my mother and two of my brothers. Those who stayed in the house rarely rested undisturbed, for whisperings and mutterings, footsteps down the passages, low sobbing, and strange shrieks and laughter were usual. Sometimes grimmer visitors came. My mother told how she and my father were awakened by the clang of a door and heavy footsteps. Someone then entered their room, though the door was afterwards found locked, and they both felt a horrible sense of some fearful presence in the darkness, seeing,—but unseen. After a few long minutes of suspense "It" passed back through the door and up the corridor, another door crashed to, and nothing more was heard. The clanging door was believed to be the one clamped up. My sisters also had a tale to tell. The curtains of their great bed had been carefully drawn and tucked in all round, but in the night my eldest sister awoke, and, feeling a gust of air and hearing a rustle, called to the others. She found the curtains drawn back, and all heard a horrible mocking laugh, but nothing was found in the room when the candle was lit. Noises and rustlings, with groans, sobs, and hurrying feet in the corridor, were heard for four nights. My brothers attested most of the noises, and I believe that most occupants of the place told similar tales.

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(To be continued.)

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A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

IX. *Supernatural Animals.*

776 There is a rich fauna of supernatural animals in the county, even snakes being represented in it. There can be little doubt that the highly imaginative early Irish personified the more terrifying powers of nature, such as the sea, the storm, and the thunder. The roaring, writhing waves in a sea creek or river swirl may have suggested some great creature, (too great to be natural), wallowing under the waters, and so given rise to the endless *phist* names and legends, in which a distinction is never drawn between the spectral and the natural.

[136] *Phists.*—Ireland, although free from serpents at all times known to science, was yet much dominated by them mentally. Probably no lake of any importance in Clare was untenanted by a serpent, a wonderful animal, or a city. A *phist* could, however, be chained or slain by a hero or saint, and the majority of the *phists* were believed to have been eliminated by such warriors in the same way as the bear and, later, the wolf were cleared away by ordinary mortals. *Phist* only meant beast, and seems to mean no more in many place-names not belonging to lakes or river pools. Cappanapeasta near Inchicronan need not imply a monster, but Poulnapeasta we may always venture to translate as "water dragon's lair." There are many examples in tradition of the "dweller in the waters," "the serpent-god of this hallowed stream." In the *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* we find a *phist* with "ears as large as the gate of a Cathair" (stone fort) and "tusks as big as a tree."[1] The saga of *Da Derg's Hostel* brings into one the Norse, Irish, and Hebrew beliefs of the *phist*, Midgard Snake, and Leviathan by its tale of the "Leuidan, that surrounds the globe and strikes with its tail to overturn the world."[2] The *Feis tighe chonain* and *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* are full of allusions, and contain a dialogue with a Gredan *phist*, and tell how Finn slew spectres, arrachs, and aimids (women bugbears), and "banished from the raths (earth forts) each *phist*." Even in a nearly contemporary history of a hero of the time of Canute, a

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 5. [2] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi., p. 54.

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Clare prince Murchad, son of King Brian, and, like his father, slain at the moment of victory in 1014, is described as "the second powerful Hercules who destroyed and exterminated *péists* and monsters."[3] It is interesting to note how the deserted forts, even in pre-Norman times,[4] were believed to be the haunt of strange monsters, and to afford an equivalent to "big game shooting" for the local warriors:

> "He slew the spectre of Drom Cliabh,
> And the spectre and serpent of Lough Ree.
> Fionn banished from the raths
> Each piast he went to meet.
> A serpent in the refulgent Shannon
> He slew by frequenting the "lake.""[5]

First in importance amongst the *péists* is the "Cata." St. Senan (about A.D. 500) found that this monster dwelt in Iniscatha, now Scattery, in the estuary of the Shannon, where Finn had killed a like infester. The Cata devoured the saint's smith, Narach, but Senan brought him forth again alive. The subsequent combat promised great things, but ended tamely. The Cata advanced "its eyes flashing flame, with fiery breath, spitting venom and opening its horrible jaws," but Senan made the sign of the cross, and the beast collapsed and was chained and thrown into Doolough near Mount Callan (the black lake, "Nigricantis aquae juxta montem Callain in Tuamonia").[6] In the oldest (metrical) Life of Senan, the *péist* appears as the "immanis bellua" or "bestia," while Iniscatha is rendered "Belluanam Insulam." The legend is alluded to even in the late eighth-century *Calendar of Oengus* under March 8th, "Senan of InisCathaig gibbetted Naroch's foe." The story is remembered widely, and among all

[3] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series), p. 187. This curious and bombastic panegyric proves statistically that the valour of Murchad was $\frac{1}{1000}$th part of that of Hector of Troy, who was seven times more valiant than the Tuatha Dé Danann god Lug-long-hand.

[4] The Normans held similar beliefs. Giraldus Cambrensis gives an account of spectral apparitions in a fort during the conquest of Leinster.

[5] *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*, vol. vi.; cf. vol. ii., p. 58.

[6] Prose Life of St. Senanus, Colgan, *Acta S. Hib.*, under March 8th, Section xxxviii. See also Wh. Stokes, *Lives of the Irish Saints from the Book of Lismore.*

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776 classes at Scattery and along both banks of the river, at Kilkee, Kilmihil, and round Doolough and Miltown Malbay. In the fifteenth-century details of the "Cathedral" of Scattery a large-eyed dragon with crocodile jaws is conspicuous; there was another carving at Kilrush; and a third,—the "pattern-stone" removed from Scattery and until lately at Kilkee,—showed the Cata as "the amphibious beast of this blessed Isle," a nondescript creature with spiked back, scales, fish tail, nose curling up spirally, and clawed forefeet.

St. MacCreehy, a generation later than Senan (about 580), rivals the latter as a "dragon queller." He subdued the "Bruckee," a demon badger (*broc sidh*), at Rath Blathmaic near Inchiquin, which slew men and cattle and resisted the prayers of six local saints.[7] MacCreehy by his holiness soon overpowered and chained it; the aged saint then threw it

> "Deep in that forgotten mere
> Among the tumbled fragments of the hills"

below the hill of Scamhal (or Scool) where its den Poulnabruckee (Poll na broic sidhe) is still shown. As already suggested (p. 181) the Bruckee may have been a bear, and "a terrible bear,—he is death to a herd of cattle" in *Bricriu's Feast*[8] sounds like an allusion to a common occurrence. The Bruckee on "MacCreehy's tomb" in Kilmacreehy church, on the shore of Liscannor Bay, is exactly like the Cata carvings in Scattery, with long pointed ears, large eyes, and huge jaws blunt-ended, but bristling with pointed teeth. In the fifteenth century it had become a dragon in local belief.

Another Bruckee haunted Shandangan Lough near Corofin, a little pool famous, when I first knew it, for remarkable changes of colour. There are two funnel holes, eight to ten feet wide, full of water, in the soft ground near the pool which are still

[7] See Plate XIV., p. 340, *ante*. O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, vol. iii., p. 322; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxix., p. 249.

[8] P. 64 (ed. *Irish Texts Society*). However, if the animal was common in the literary period, one might expect that the Life of King David would have suggested an Irish counterpart to the monks. Fights with the wolf are practically absent from Irish tales, and it seems safer to regard the identity with the bear of the badger "as big as a cow" as a mere speculation.

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regarded with fear and suspicion. Ned Quin of Coad, a honest truthful man who died about eight years ago, firmly believed that he had seen the Bruckee in this lake. When he and a man named Pilkington were passing by, they saw a brown hairy monster swimming and plunging in the water, and it had eyes as large as turnips.[9] It was probably a "tussock" of peat and coarse grass that had, as often happens, fallen off the crumbling shore. There is no tradition that this pest was confined by the local sainted lady (Findclu) Inghean Baoith.

John Windele, amongst much speculation as to there being a dragon temple (*draconium*) at Scattery and others at Loop Head in Clare and at Dun Farvagh in the Middle Isle of Aran, asserts, on the authority of *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, a romance written in 1750, that several other formidable monsters belong to this district.[10] These were the Faracat,[11] Fearboc or Fearbach, and three other dragons, the spawn of the "all-devouring sow, on the rock of Cruine" reared by "the red demon of Doolough." Comyn, in the same romance, derives the name of Illaunmattle, an island off the neighbouring coast, from the Matal, a formidable beast, (perhaps a demon boar), defeated by the same heroes.[12] How far those of Comyn's stories without local attestation are genuine folklore is doubtful. Akin to these monsters is the mighty serpent hunted and slain by the O'Briens' army down the valley of the Daelach in Corcomroe. They stoned it with rocks which still form the great cairn of Carnconnachtach, near Ennistymon, over its remains.[13] This cairn, being at Ballydeely (Daelach's town *par excellence*), may have been the reputed tomb of the Firbolg chief Daelach, son of Umór, and is almost certainly the "Carn mic Tail" where the O'Conors of Corcamodruad inaugurated their chiefs.

[9] So Dr. G. U. MacNamara.

[10] Windele, *Topographical MS.* (Royal Irish Academy), p. 3; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 350.

[11] *Ante*, p. 183.

[12] The Mata, a giant, many-legged, and carapaced monster, infested the Boyne valley, and left a pyramid of its bones in the cemetery of Brugh. See "Dindsenchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), pp. 292, 329.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 309.

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776 These beliefs are obviously early, as in the "Agallamh" of *The Book of Lismore*[14] is a lough *péist* which kills men and hounds, and *The Book of Feenagh* tells of "Loc na pesti," where a hideous *péist* slew 900 youths as they bathed. The *Seanchus Mór* has a lake monster, the Murdris, which expands and contracts like a smith's bellows. The same idea takes shape in the reputed gigantic (if not supernatural) eels and pikes in certain lakes. An enormous pike haunts Gurteen Lough, an old property of the Stamers, in Lower Bunratty. The peasants dare not bathe in its waters, and believe they have seen in the dusk a huge misty form in the lough and even crawling up its shores, whence it has frequently carried off lambs, and even calves.[15]

Bulls.—In ruins and hollow trees sometimes a strong breeze from some particular point will cause a deep intermittent bellow, which might originate a belief in ghostly bulls. At Rosslara (Fortanemore) Castle near Tulla we have heard the wind from some undetermined point towards the north-west, when sufficiently strong, raise a roar so mighty as to be audible far from the ruin. I traced the noise to a small deep window nearly filled by a slope of earth and stones. The Castle enjoys the fame of being haunted, but I have heard no bull legend. At Rinroe (or Elmhill) Castle near Clonlara, the bull was seen about 1890 by the then owner of the farm on which the ivied tower stands. Having missed several "trams" of hay, the farmer was lying in wait in some bushes in the Castle field, and at last saw a huge black bull come out of the ruin, and throw its tail round a "tram" of hay and draw it into the castle.[16] There is an old lane way at a beautiful spot on the shore of Lough Derg opposite to the "Holy Island" of Iniscaltra with its lofty round tower and clustered churches with their noble setting of lake and mountains. In this old road are two dreaded spots, one haunted by a ghostly black bull with fiery eyes, and the other by a less awe-inspiring object "a ghost like a turkey cock"! Farther north is the scene of a curious variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, with frogs instead of rats and a brutal boy in place of a cruel prelate.[17]

[14] Translated by S. H. O'Grady in *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., pp. 101-265.
[15] So the late Ralph Hugh Westropp and Mrs. Stamer.
[16] The late Hugh Massy Westropp heard this from the farmer.
[17] So Capt. Hibbert.

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Water Cattle.—I have not found a water-bull legend clearly told in Clare, but cow's horns are seen over the waters of one lake and "something roared" under the waters of another.[18] In 1877 I heard of cattle coming out of some lake near Kilkishen, (perhaps Cullaun, with its enchanted city or palace), but I could not recover the story when searching twenty years later. "*Loch na bó girre* which is called *loch Gréine*" is given[19] as an old name for the large lake of Lough Graney in the Aughty mountains on the north border of Clare. This probably implies that it had a legend like that of Lough bo Girr, near Cahir in County Tipperary, whence an enormous long-horned cow used to issue. 776

Púcas and Horses.—Though the *púca* has influenced very often the place-names of Clare, its legends in the county are dry and vague. One man near Clonlara had the misfortune to become its sport. It took the form of a pony, and, finding the man searching for treasure in a gravel-pit, in which he had dreamed that gold was concealed, bore him away on a long rough ride and dropped him at the spot from which it started, where he was found bruised and insensible next morning.[20] The *púca* also appears as a hideous goat. I was told by a servant, about 1870, of a demon "black puck-goat with fiery eyes" appearing to a poor country woman on a roadside bank in the Cratloe hills.[21] The tale was very blood-curdling, but, doubtless to my relief then but regret now, I put it out of mind, and now forget its details. The *púca* always puts its hoof on the blackberries at Michaelmas, after which they become unfit to eat.[22]

Of spirit horses other than the *púca*, I have heard of one at a deep gravel quarry, near Trough in the same hills. The ghostly presentment of a Limerick gentleman, a Mr. Furnell, appeared one moonlight night on horseback. He rode at full gallop, with 776 763

[18] I think Lough Breeda, exit from Tulla, and Clonlea Lake were intended. I am to blame for not making a note at the time, but was only interested in the legend. My notes only begin in 1878, though embodying earlier matter, and are too often "car notes" from drivers and others and not properly located. Where possible, I re-examined them from 1892 upwards.

[19] In the "Agallamh," *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 126.

[20] So the late Sir Hugh Dillon Massy at Doonass.

[21] So Mrs. O'Shea at Clonane, Limerick.

[22] Cf. similar English belief as regards the devil.

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776 hounds in full cry, and the sound of horns, across the upper field,
763 leaped the fence, and disappeared into the quarry with a crash and groan. Mr. Francis Drew of Drewsborough, who was driving past with a friend, recognised and called to the ghostly rider; when he saw the supposed accident, he ran into the quarry, but could find nothing. Next day he heard of the death of the hunter, but far away from the quarry.[23]

776 Supernatural, but evidently material, were the horses which came out of the caves of Kilcorney in the heart of the Burren,[24] for they left descendants, noted for their high spirits and fierceness, by earthly mares in the valley. A similar tale of sea-horses coming out of Galway Bay was told some thirty-five years since, and we owned a reputed scion of their race, a cob from Connemara on the opposite side of the Bay.

Dogs.—One spectral dog haunts the road between Carrigaholt and Ross in the long peninsula of the Irrus, and is believed to be the spirit of a comparatively recent local celebrity, "Robin of Ross," of whom many tales are told. He was a member of the Keane family, and one version makes his ghost a different dog from the one near Carrigaholt.[25] Another dog accompanies a human ghost on its nightly patrol between the railway bridge and the cemetery at the venerable church and shattered round tower of Dromcliff. The precincts of Ennistymon House were haunted by the spectre of a large black hound, quite harmless.[26] Once very famous, but now nearly forgotten, was the ghostly "Black Dog of Cratloe." Many believed that they had seen the apparition, which used often to accompany the D'Esterre's coach and the mail car. My mother and my brother Ralph Hugh Westropp, who travelled through the great floods of the Shannon on February 1st, 1869, told a very circumstantial tale of the dog.[27]

[23] So the late Capt. Ralph Westropp, from Mr. Drew.

[24] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236; cf. Gough, *Camden*, vol. iv., p. 366.

[25] So the MacDonnells and a driver named Russell. "Robin" lived in the early eighteenth century.

[26] So Mrs. Twigge.

[27] My mother in her diary notes,—"Drove home through several floods, the worst at Bunratty.... Saw the phantom dog at Cratloe."

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I was present at its first telling, before they heard from our old servant, Mrs. Julia MacHugh, of the local belief. The tale, I have heard, was fully confirmed by their driver and a guide, a workman of the D'Esterres, who piloted them along a flooded and unfenced reach of the road a little to the east of Bunratty. A large, dark, shadowy dog seemed to run upon the moonlit water, first to one side and then to the other of the carriage, and was more than once lashed at by the driver. It disappeared near where the road ascends from the low marshy "corcasses" along the foot of the Cratloe hills. Julia MacHugh, a woman of wide local knowledge, at once "explained" the apparition and said that the omen was good if the dog ran alongside, but bad if he leaped at the carriage or horses. On one occasion he leaped at the mail car, and soon afterwards its driver was thrown off and killed on the spot. I recently learnt that a ghostly black dog haunts by night the lonely road above the old ruined house of Glenomera. 776

Seals.—The belief that seals are disguised human beings prevailed, I am told, in Clare forty years ago, at least along the Kilkee coast.[28] I never heard it myself from fisherfolk. A little further north, from Connemara up to Mayo, the Kinealys are reputed to be descended from a beautiful seal-woman. The belief is nearly universal, and is attached even to a few of the family in Clare. [825]

Rabbits.—Early this year a clever intelligent man, near Ennis, went with a boy and a ferret to shoot rabbits from a fort. Three ran out and were shot at and missed. The man then called the boy to come at once, and ran off in great excitement and fear, saying that the rabbits were fairies. Some such belief must be widely spread, as Mrs. MacDonnell of Newhall told me that, when a girl, she took up a small and very tame white rabbit in the glen at Edenvale and immediately afterwards found that she had lost a ring. The people who helped in the search, and her father's gamekeeper, were convinced that the rabbit was a fairy and had taken the ring with it.

Birds.—I have read of an enchanted bird which was caught in the cave of Kilcorney and spoke with a human voice.[29] The

[28] So the late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[29] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236.

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776 ravens and owls connected with the Ross-Lewins, Westropps, and other families as death warnings have already been referred to (p. 190).

X. *Spectral Lands and Cities.*

773 Clare formed a part of the outmost fringe of the ancient world, and its people were deeply impressed with the mysteries and wonders of the Outer Ocean. The voyage of Maelduin tells of the son of a Clare man sailing out into "the great endless deep" and finding isles of surpassing beauty and wonder, and the "Hui Corra" in deep repentance sailed towards the setting sun from the creek at the northern bound of Clare "to meet the Lord on the sea."[20] St. Brendan, eager to seek out new islands, went for advice to St. Enda, a saint closely connected with Clare, (where Killeany bears his name), and its appanage, Aran. In the bay to the north of Clare William Ires, a native of Galway, became accustomed to the ocean which he crossed with Columbus, and it may be that his tales of Hy Brasil, of St. Brendan's Isle, and of the "thrice fifty distant Isles in the ocean to the west of us. Larger than Erin, twice is each of them, or thrice,"[21] encouraged the frightened sailors of the great Admiral to persevere a little longer.

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Hy Brasil,[22] the Isle of the Blessed, is possibly a legacy from ancient paganism, which placed its Tirnan-oge, The Land of Youth, in the waves "on the west side down from Aran, where goes the sun to its couch."[23] The desire for the ageless, deathless land prevailed all up the western coast, and was strong in Kilkee in 1868-78, and perhaps even still. I myself saw the mirage several times in 1872 giving the perfect image of a shadowy island with wooded hills and tall towers springing into sight for a moment as the sun sank below the horizon. I have also heard from Kilkee fishermen legends, like that embodied in the verses of Gerald

[20] "Voyage of the Hui Corra," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiv. (1893), p. 37; *Voyage of Bran*, (ed. Kuno Meyer), vol. i., p. 12; "Voyage of Maelduin," *Revue Celtique*, vol. ix. (1888), p. 45.

[21] *Voyage of Bran*, vol. i., p. 14.

[22] It is marked on a series of ancient maps from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries.

[23] *Gralla an Fhéiné*, (Irish Texts Society, vol. i.), p. 21.

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Griffin, of men starting seaward to reach its fairy shores, and never returning. 773

Another magic island was Kilstuitheen, or Kilstuiffen, in Liscannor Bay. On the southern shore, in 1839, there was said to have been an ecclesiastical city swallowed up by the earthquake that split Innis Fitae into the present three islands,[84] which suggests derivation from O'Conor's then recent version of the various Irish Annals. On the northern shore the tradition was fuller. Kilstuitheen sank when its chieftain lost its golden key in battle, nor will it be restored until the key is recovered from its hiding place, some say, under the ogham-inscribed gravestone of "Conan" on Mount Callan. (When that place was dug out only bones and rusted iron were found.)[85] The island, with its golden-roofed palaces, churches, and towers, may at times be seen shining far below the waves, but once in seven years it rises above them, and those who see it then are said to die before its next appearance. The fishermen [731] [763]

> "point how high the billows roll above lost Kilsafeen,
> Its palaces and towers of pride
> All buried in the rushing tide
> And deep-sea waters green."[86]

Comyn, in *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh* (1750), connects it with the raid of Crochaun, Dahlin, and Sal in the time of Finn and their defeat of Ruidin, Ceannir, and Stuithin. Legend near Lehinch places the battle at Bohercrochaun. A pretty legend in 1878 told how those rowing over the sunken island smell the flowers of its fields through the waters.[87]

[84] Annals of Ulster, Clonmacnoise, and the Four Masters; *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 304.

[85] *The Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, ser. ii., vol. i. (1872), pp. 269 *et seq.*

[86] *Monks of Kilcrea.*

[87] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., pp. 300-4, vol. ii., pp. 74, 99; *Handbook to Lisdoonvarna* (1896), p. 64; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxx., p. 289; *Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. iii., p. 197, where I have collected the materials at some length. Other sunken monasteries and churches are alleged at Monaster Letteragh, off the coast of Mayo, and the Cantillons' Church in Ballyheigue Bay in Kerry. I do not regard the story in the *Irish Penny Journal*, vol. i., p. 362, by J. Geraghty MacTeague, as anything but a work of fiction; it is very artificial,

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773 Another sunken island off Loop Head is named by the Rev. John Graham and the Halls,[38] and called Kilstiffin or Kilstapheen. I heard no such tradition in Moyarta, but O'Curry alludes to it without contradiction, although he was a native and son of a veritable repertory of the local legends of the Irrus.[39] The towers and other edifices were visible at times under the waves, and its [821] inhabitants sometimes raised destructive storms over its site when all around was calm.

The large lake of Cullaun (Cullaunyheeda) near Tulla is reputed to cover a palace or a city. Tradition said that a chief, Sioda MacNamara, (probably the restorer of the beautiful "Abbey" of Quin in 1402), was carried into the depths by a [774] "water horse" which he had caught and trained. The rock off which his treacherous steed leaped was shown before 1870, and the chief was believed to be sleeping till "the last weird battle in the west," doomed to win Ireland her liberty and a glorious place amongst the nations. It seems likely that it was from the same lake that magic cattle issued, as I heard about Kilkishen, near it, in 1877. A local bard, Michael Hogan, refers to the lake in one of his poems,[40] but how far he embodies local legend I am unable to say. His light-hearted, if lawless, hero is surprised on coming to "Cullaun's fairy waters" to see a noble park instead of a lake. He hits his cow in surprise, and she leaps the fence. Following her he reaches the palace of an ancient chief, who entertains him and dismisses him with his marvellously fattened cow. He finds at the fair that he has been absent for a year under the waters of the lake.

"Thro' wild Cullane's embowering shades—
Beneath the silver starlight, sleeping,
He pass'd—the trees, with silent heads,
Upon his darken'd path hung weeping.

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following other romances, and contradicting the genuine legends in several particulars.

[38] *Mason's Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 490, collected by Rev. J. Graham from the Behanes, Landers, Contis, and Cooneries of Kilrush and Carrigaholt; Mr. and Mrs. S. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery etc.*, vol. ii., p. 436.

[39] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii.

[40] *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, pp. 13, 20.

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He turned to see the Lake's blue plain,
With all its emerald glories round it;
But there appear'd a grand demesne,
By towering elms and poplars bounded.

. . . . . .

He look'd behind—the scene was gone—
A thrill of wonder gather'd o'er him;
For, nothing save the blue Lake shone
With all its silver curls, before him."

There was another legend, but a very vague one, about a city submerged by a magic well under the beautiful lake of Inchiquin. The legend seems to have died out near Corofin. Another curious legend about Inchiquin lake was found by Dr. G. U. MacNamara, to the effect that the lake originated from an old woman piercing the earth with a spindle, when waters burst out and filled the valley.

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(To be continued.)

FIFTY HAUSA FOLK-TALES (*continued*).

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19. *The Hyæna and the Wrestling Match.* (B. G.)

This is about the Hyæna. She had a husband, a male hyæna.[1] So she arose and got a vessel to go to the stream. So she went and came to (the place where) games were being held (by) the Elephant, the Buffalo, the Hartebeeste, the Roan Antelope, the Gazelle, the Jerboa, the Hare, the Lizard, and the Water-lizard. They were having a game. Now the Elephant was the great one, the umpire. So she (Elephant) said,—"Now (in this) wrestling game whoever throws down another may eat the flesh of him whom he has beaten." Now, on the Hyæna's arrival, they said,—"Are you not coming to play?" She said,—"I am (playing) certainly." When she had put down

[1] "Kura" is nearly always employed for both sexes, but the word itself ending in "a" is feminine; only in story 28 is it made masculine. The male hyæna is larger than the female.

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COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued from p.* 60).

XII. *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds.*

It is unlucky to see the new moon through glass; to throw dust or slops out of a house on New Year's Day, as you throw away with them all the good luck of the year; to throw dust or slops towards a neighbouring "fort";[1] to see one magpie, or a "weazel" (stoat), without saluting it by bowing or taking off your hat; to go out of a house where they are churning without "putting your hand to the churn," *i.e.* giving a few strokes with the churn "dash," so that you will not "take" the butter; and to take fire out of a house,—so that, if you light a pipe indoors, it should be smoked out before leaving. Iron and pins,—except crooked pins with the points towards you,—should be picked up, and the first thrown over the left shoulder. Rub your hand on wood if it itches or after a boastful speech or speaking too confidently of the future; in east Clare you touch wood twice, with the phrase, "Good word (*or* time) be it spoken," after an imprudent expression.[2] You should bow to the new moon. Turn your money for luck after seeing the new moon. On visiting a friend in a new house, you should give some present, however small. In east Clare some persons are careful to throw a hen or other fowl that has died of disease over the fence on to their neighbour's land, to remove the ill-luck from their own poultry.[3] Others will not wash eggs offered for sale, as it stops

[1] So Dr. Macnamara and others.
[2] "Scratch it in wood, and it will come good," says a rhyme.
[3] Practised near Tulla, and resulting in some cases in great ill-will.

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777 the hens from laying more; this is held at least near Tulla and Sixmilebridge, but seems dying out near the former place.

XIII. *Omens, Dreams, and Divination.*

787 *Omens.*—It is an unlucky sign to meet "a stranger woman with red hair," or a hare, or a fox, when setting out in the morning. A poem by Andrew MacCurtin, as already noted,[4] condoles with Father MacDonnell, a Franciscan living in Corcomroe, for the loss of his horse, and suggests that the *garran* [562] fell a victim to the evil eye or to the look of a red-haired woman. A sign much feared in north-east Clare is the flying of a bat into one's face, which forebodes sickness. A robin, a stray cat, or [763] a cricket coming into a house is lucky, but some regard the last as a sign of death,—though this belief is rare and perhaps imported, for in Dublin "the ever-faithful cricket" is also a death omen. If the right ear tingles some one is praising you, and if the left someone is abusing you. If the right hand itches you will lose money, and if the left you will receive it, providing you rub or scratch it on wood. Any one of these omens from itching is good after sunset, and rubbing the right hand on wood saves the situation or the money in either case. To get dirt on one is most lucky,—"the dirtier the better." To stumble upstairs, [777] and to be looked at by a cat after it has washed its face, are signs of approaching marriage.

Dreams.—It is most unlucky to dream of church or clergy, and, above all, of the sacraments. To dream of a cat foretells an enemy; of a dog, a friend; of crows or filth, riches and plenty; of silver, disappointment; and of dirty or stormy water, trouble. Cheap dream books have corrupted local belief so much that it is now almost impossible to separate the older dream lore.

Divination.—I have not found many methods of foretelling the future, but the following were of such common knowledge that I need cite no single authorities. On All Hallows Eve, I remember, before 1870, a blindfolded person would touch one of several saucers in which were respectively earth, water, salt, a bean, etc., symbolising death, emigration, luck, marriage, etc., in

[4] Vol. xxi., p. 196.

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the ensuing year. In the same way a forecast was given by a ring, coin, bean, or red rag in the cake on the same day, and by a ring in the pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. On the former day also lead was melted and poured through a key handle into water for fortune-telling. The key of a bachelor's house or room and a piece of wedding-cake put under a girl's pillow produced a prophetic dream in which she might see her future husband or lover. A slug or snail put under a saucer on a slate or cabbage leaf, sprinkled with turf ashes or flour, traced the future lover's initials, as did a long apple or orange peel waved thrice round the head and then thrown down. "Cup-tossing" (*i.e.* cup-turning with tea leaves) was used, unsuccessfully, by a lady in 1879 to find out the future purchaser of her family's demesne. Wandering beggar-women used cup-tossing for the fortunes of both maids and mistresses, and some gained much repute. One of these crones showed a sister of mine a rearing horse in the tea leaves, and foretold that her client was about to have a very narrow escape from death on the hunting field that day, which came true. Biddy Erly, a famous white witch living between Bodyke and Feakle in the middle of last century, used to foretell the death or recovery of her patients by a shamrock leaf in some fluid in a bottle; if it rose they recovered, but if it sank they died, and her prophecies were received with such undoubting faith that it is likely that they worked sometimes their own fulfilments. I heard that by a Protestant servant a key was shut and tied up in a Bible, its wards on Ruth's reply when Naomi asked her to return from her, the book being then swung and the representative of Boaz surmised from the direction in which it pointed; but this may not have been true Clare folklore. Among the country folk crystal-gazing is unknown, and palmistry little, if at all, in use, but the more primitive methods have not been put down by increase of education, and the warning is still necessary of the quatrain cited in 1280, according to the *Cathreim Thoirhealbaigh*, by King Torlough mór O'Brien, as he set out to fight in this county,—"Attempt ye not the prediction of the lips; neither in curved (new) moon nor in presage of soothsayer put your trust."

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XIV. *Calendar Customs.*

796 178 Most of these customs are so widely spread as to require only brief notice, and were noted, before 1816, by the Rev. James Grahame, the curate of Kilrush. They comprise the eating of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and of eggs at Easter; playing tricks and "fooling" on April 1st; setting May bushes before houses on Old May Day; lighting bonfires on Midsummer Eve, dancing round them, and driving cattle through them; beginning hunting on Michaelmas Day; Hallowe'en practices on October 31st; midnight processions, with music, on certain nights in the week before Christmas, (which had just been discontinued in 1816); and mummers, wren boys, and bull-baiting on St. Stephen's Day.[5] The May bush died out, I believe, during the dark years of the Great Famine; I never heard of any limit, other than the clearance of the crops, for beginning hunting; but, except the bull-baiting and the waits, all the rest still exist.

It is well to have to record the dying out of the custom of killing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, even if it springs from [825] laziness rather than from humanity. "Who cares for the birds but God!" was once retorted when I "put in a word for" the wren. There is probably a very old prejudice against it, for the "droleen" stood confessed as a "little druid" among birds, and the "druid" of Irish tradition was not the majestic white-robed priest of the oak grove, but a sorcerer who injured meanly by spells, a foe of God and of His servants, but a contemptible and impotent one. This feeling was expressed in the contemptuous [828] term *shandruee* ("old druid") for a worthless old man, in use in my boyhood. How far the wren rites have orthodox ritual or etiquette is doubtful. Formerly the youth of a whole district combined as wren boys, but now they go in bands of from two to six,[6] and the wren bush is often a mere branch with a few rags and no wren. A structure of evergreens, in general design like a *crux ansata*, covered with streamers and with the dead bird hung

[5] Mason's *Parochial Survey* (1816), vol. ii.

[6] See Plate IX., from a photograph taken on December 26th, 1910, by Mrs. O'Callaghan Westropp of Coolreagh.

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up or in a sort of cage,[7] was till lately carried around. There is still sometimes to be found tolerable dancing and singing, as a break in the weary succession of small begging parties, shuffling and playing stupid buffoonery. The verses usually begin :—

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> "The wran, the wran, the king of all birds,
> On Stephen's Day was caught in the furze."

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but the next lines are greatly varied :—

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> "Although he is little, his family is great,
> And (*or* So) I pray you all ladies (*or* good Christians) to give him a treat."

I noted the following haunting lines on Stephen's Day in 1909 :—

> "Put your hand in your pocket and take out your purse
> And give us some money to bury the wran."

Equally melodious were lines in vogue some thirty years ago :—

> "We broke his bones with sticks and stones,
> And give us some money to get us a drink."

There was another form, evidently from an "artificial" source, heard by my elder brothers about Carnelly, perhaps sixty years ago or more :—

> "Landlady, Landlady, give us some cheer,
> Landlady, Landlady, give us some beer.
> If you give us of the best,
> We'll pray your soul in Heaven may rest.
> If you give us of the worse,
> We'll pray it will (*or* may) be quite the reverse."

It was generally believed that St. Stephen had hid in a cave, and that his retreat had been betrayed to his enemies by the wren. Mummers are now reappearing, after a long lapse of time, among the wren boys.

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Another practice which my predecessors often saw before the Famine was the carrying of a sort of scarecrow figure, to represent St. Brigit, by women in August about the Clare Castle district. St. Brigit's rites in some places take place on Lady Day (August 15th).

Killing an animal, or a goose, at Martinmas and a goose at Michaelmas are of recent occurrence. On St. John's Eve I have, as a child, leaped over or passed between fires, and been told of cattle being forced to do the same. About 1895 very few bonfires were lighted, and the custom appeared likely to expire, but of late the

[7] A somewhat similar wren's cage has been procured for the National Museum, Dublin.

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178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased
the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites con-
[789] nected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed
secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and
then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
527 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted
175 down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old
people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so
much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this
place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the
beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the
native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so
down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (phonetically
Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but
steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in
1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh
(Tuanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—
"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined
to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound
in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are
numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877
onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh
("Fair or Assembly Crag")[8] on the bare hill over Termon in the
Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter
probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in
1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and
may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with
a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten
assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings")
in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later
under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

823 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their
religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[8] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

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important subject somewhat bald. The pagan Irish, of course, reverenced wells, and the famous "King of the Waters" in Mayo was connected with St. Patrick by early biographers.[9] With the usual wise tactfulness of the ancient Irish missionaries all that was harmless was adopted into the new religion, and the wells lost none of their old observances and honour. The dedications of the Clare wells form a most valuable record, for, even when the founder of the church was forgotten, or a new patron invoked, the well usually kept the name of the ancient local saint. Unfortunately since about 1850 names of wells have been locally forgotten, and a re-dedication, often to St. Joseph, is common. Strange to say, the noteworthy saints Enda and Luchtighern are forgotten at the wells at their churches. The early mediæval life of St. Senan, (Colgan, *Vita S.S.*, March), says that, when that saint was born at Magh Lacha, Moylough, there was no water at hand to baptize him,—a rare thing in County Clare,—so he told his mother to pull up three rushes, and a spring welled out. The tale was still told in 1816.[10] The life of St. Mochulleus (Mochuille or Mochulla), about 1141 tells us how that early seventh-century saint struck a rock near a lake to the north of Tulla and three streams broke out. The well dedicated to him to the east of Loch Graney is evidently intended, and *two* streams still flow from it down the hillside. Some have supposed the wells of Tobereendowny, ("well of the King of the Sabbath," or, as suggested by Prof. Macalister and others, "of the world"),—were dedicated to a pre-Christian deity. Tobereevul is dedicated to Aibhill.[11] The flooded dolmen, Tobergrania, is named from Finn's fugitive spouse, "Granny's bed" occurring also as a dolmen name in Clare. Among Christian dedications we have Tobercruhnorindowan (of "the creator of the world") at Killard, Tober Isa (of "Jesus"), and Tobernacrohynaeve (*i.e.* Tobar-na-croiche-naoimh, of "the Holy Cross"). To the Virgin are dedicated wells at Drimelihy-Westby, Kilmacduan, and Killadysert. Of non-local saints,—usually, it is probable, late dedications,—we find St. John has

[9] *E.g.*, in the *Tripartite Life*, ed. W. Stokes, among the early "annotations" of Tirechan.

[10] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., under Kilrush Parish.

[11] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 186.

823 [797] 796 823 778 [P. 230]

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776 the wells of Killone and Tromra, St. Michael wells at Kilbrecan,
778 Cappagh (Bunratty) and the Kilmihils, St. Augustine at Kilshanny
and Gallynagry, St. Bartholomew at Toberpartholaun in Rath
823 (Inchiquin), and St. Martin at Moyarta, Ballynecally, and Lemaneagh. All the dedications to St. Joseph are modern. St. Patrick did not enter Clare, but has wells at Correen (Kilnaboy), Clooney (Bunratty Barony), and Rossalia. The following list of wells dedicated to local saints may be useful for reference. *Brecan* (c. 480) has wells at Noughaval near Clare Castle (Kilbrecan), Doora, and Clooney (Bunratty); *Brendan* (date doubtful), at Kilmoon and Farighy (Moyarta); *Brigid*, (probably the Abbess of Feenish Island, c. 550), Kiltanon, Cappafeeaun, Finnor, and Coney Island; *Caimin* (d. 653), Iniscaltra and Moynoe; *Caritan* (c. 550), Kilcredaun in Kilballyowen, Kilcredaun near O'Brien's Bridge, and Kilcredaunadober near Bunratty; *Carrol* (doubtful), Kilcarrol, where a wooden image of him existed in 1816; *Colan* of Tomgraney (d. 552), to the west of that village; *Colman mac Duach* of Kilmacduach (c. 630), Kinallia, Oughtmāma (where "the three Colmans" probably originate in a confusion of texts), Teernea, Lough George, and Crusheen: *Columba* of Iona (d. 597), Crumlin and Glen Columbcille; *Cornan* (unknown), Kilcornan and Tobercornan in Gleninagh; *Croine* (unknown), Kilcrony and Liscrona in Moyarta; *Cronan* (probably of Tomgraney, c. 505), Inchicronan, Terryncronan, Killokennedy, and Corrakyle; *Dioma*, Kildimo; *Enda* (c. 480), Killeany; *Fachtnan* (doubtful), Kilfenora; *Flannan* (c. 680), Killaloe; *Imer* (unknown), Killimer; *Inghean Baoith* (c. 630), Kilnaboy, Commons, Glenseeade, Inakerstown, Killavella, Dulick (Templemaley), Kiltacky, Kilshanny, Aglish, Moy-Ibrickan, Magowna, Ballycoree, Shalee (two), Cullaun, Castletown (Spansil Hill), Dromumna, and Quin; *Kirin* (not Kieran), Kilkierin (locally Kilkereen); *Lachtin*, Kilnamona, Kilfarboy, and Stacpoole Bridge near Miltown Malbay; *Lonan* (c. 580), Killaspuglonane and Derrynavahagh (Kilmoon); *Luchtighern* (c. 550), Tomfinlough and, probably, Moy Ibrickan; *Macreehy* (c. 580), Kilmacreehy, Kilmanaheen, and Inagh; *Mainchin* (perhaps "St. Munchin," patron of Limerick), Kilmanaheen; *Mochonna* (unknown), Feakle and Moynoe; *Mochulla* (c. 620), Tulla, Templemoculla (Clonlara), Lough Graney, Lough

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ST. SENAN'S TREE WITH RAG OFFERINGS, KILTINANLEA.

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[Facing P. 231]

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Breeda, Miltown, Kilgorey, Fortanne, Broadford, Trough, Ralahine, Cragg, Lahardan, and Cappavilla, with perhaps, (if not of St. Molocus, c. 550), Moylough, Scattery, and Carrigaholt; *Molua* (c. 620), Killaloe; *Onchu*, Killonaghan; *Sanctan*, Dromline; *Screbann*, Clondegad and Kilmaley; *Senan* (d. 552), Iniscatha, Moylough, Iniscaeragh (Mutton Island), Kilclogher, Carrow (Kilmaduan), Erribul (Kilfiddan), Kilshanny, Killaneena, Cooraclare, Kilcredaun, and Drim (Quin); *Tola* (c. 635), Dysert O'Dea and Kiltola; and *Voydan* or *Braighdean* (unknown), Kilvoydan, Corofin, and Kilraughtis. 776 778 823

Healing Powers.—The *Ordnance Survey Letters*[12] mention the following:—Gleninagh well, which has a fifteenth-century well-house or "turry," cured sore eyes; Tober Cholmain, above Oughtmāma churches, sufferers from "the pearl," the films falling off the eyes at the third washing; St. Maccreehy's well, near Liscannor, eye troubles, which were also cured by St. Inghean Baoith's well near Kilshanny (even then nearly deserted), Tobermoghna near Clooney (Corcomroe), St. Senan's well on the cliffs south-west from Kilkee, Kilcrony well near Carrigaholt, Tobercuan in Kiltrellig near Loop Head, Tobershenan in Moyfadda, the Virgin's well at Templemaley, and Tober Isa at Corlack Glebe (Bunratty). Tobernatasha, ("well of the relic" or, as some say, "spectre"), in Kilmaley was shaped like a coffin, and delicate children used to be laid on their backs in it.[13] The black mud which gave its name to Toberduff cured sore eyes and swelled limbs. So did Senan's well at Kilkee; horrible to tell, the devotees,—down to 1875, at least, when a washing-tank was made outside the well-house,—used to wash in this, the only supply of drinking-water for the then fashionable watering-place. Toberlachtin at Kilnemona cured several diseases, its "day" being March 19th. Eyes were also healed by the well south from Newmarket-on-Fergus, and by the wetted moss of St. Mochulla's well near Tulla (the moss being put back to complete the cure). The latter well is said to have avenged itself, about 1780, on its landlord, who had dug away part of its enclosure, by rendering 757 778 823 [755]

[12] Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Mss. 14B 23. 24, (Co. Clare), vols. i. and ii.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 183.

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757 his son and daughter imbecile. The son survived till 1853, and
no other members of the family were affected after the well was
778 restored.[14] The Newmarket well indignantly removed itself to its
present site when "a dirty woman washed her feet in it," and it
823 also gave her the complaint it usually cured. So, also, when the
holy well above Oughtmāma[15] was offended, it closed, and broke
out lower down the hillside, as the Sruhaunanaeve or "saints'
stream," and the water of Killone well refused to boil. The
Cunninghams, living near it, spoilt their cooking by using its
water, though "they knew it would not boil." John Windele tells
of other resentful wells in Cork and Kerry; for example, the well
at Labba Molagga (Cork) ran dry when a woman washed her
clothes in it, and at Maunaholtora the well near a dolmen ran dry,
and its water refused to boil.[16] The Irish "Nennius" tells a story
of ducks that could not be boiled because the water would
not get hot while they were in it. In the last century a woman
who drew water from a well and saw it did not boil found a fish in
it. She took the fish back to the well, and the water then boiled
without any difficulty. The mud of the dolmen or "well" of
Tobergrania at Ballycroum cured sore or short-sighted eyes, and
that of the bullaun or basin at Kiltinanlea church near Clonlara
did the same. The well of St. Michael at Kilmihil was once
powerful. Father Anthony Bruodin, a Franciscan and author of
a history of his order[17] full of curious particulars about Clare
before 1640, tells how "Lady" Mariana, wife of Thomas
MacGorman, of the author's kinsfolk, had in 1632 long suffered
from gout. The Archangel appeared to her in a dream, and bade
her go to his church and dig where she should see rushes growing
near it. Aided by her son and Dermot O'Quaely, the parish
priest of Kilmihil, she found the well and was cured. Many other
persons got similar relief, but there seems no tradition of any cures
by it preserved among the people of Kilmihil.

778 *Offerings.*—It is right, on visiting a well, to make offerings of
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[14] So Mrs. Connors at Fortanne.

823 [15] Pronounced Ooght-máw-mā. It is a weird spot with three ancient churches in a grassy basin on the flank of a terraced hill of bare grey limestone.

[16] Windele, Mss. Royal Irish Academy; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. iii., pp. 765-9.

[17] *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Fidei*, 1665.

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small objects, only of value as homage. Rag offerings are naturally most frequent where there is a "blessed bush" at the well, but they are frequently hung on a bramble, or even, on the Atlantic coast, kept in place by stones. Rags abounded, with other offerings, at Gleninagh, at least till 1899, being tied to the twigs of an old elder bush. They were hung in quantities on the stunted old hawthorn at Oughtmāma well, and were found at Tobersraheen, at Aglish graveyard in Ogonello, and on the large fallen hawthorn near the basin at Kiltinanlea. They are often accompanied by rosaries, religious medals, necklaces and ribbons, broken or whole plaster and china figures and vessels, and glass, buttons, pins, and nails. Such objects are abundant at many wells, such as the little rock well in Glensleade between the largest Berneens dolmen and the road, Killone altar, St. Senan's well near Kiltinanlea (Plate XI.), Fortanne, Kilseily, St. Lachtin's well near Miltown Malbay, Kilcredaun, and a well of St. Inghean Baoith (stopped by a too zealous Protestant, but recently reopened and dedicated to St. Joseph) near Inchiquin lake. The almost disused dolmen-well of Tobergrania had in 1893 two rude crosses of laths tied together, buttons, bottles, glass, crockery, and a coin.[18] In 1889 Kilfarboy well near Milltown was frequented on Sundays and Thursdays by sick persons, and abounded in such offerings as bits of leather, crockery, and blacking pots. (I am not certain whether this note refers to St. Lachtin's well or to one near Kilfarboy church.) China and pebbles have been offered at Kilcredaun in a cleft beside the Shannon estuary, and pebbles placed in the "Font" of Doughnambraher in central Clare.[19]

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(*To be continued.*)

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XVI. *Patterns and Religious Rites.*

796 The three chief *patterns*, (or religious rites at wells and holy places), were held on Iniscatha or Scattery Island in the Shannon, at Killone near Ennis, and on Iniscaltra in Lough Derg. To all three thousands of persons came from Clare, Kerry, and more distant counties, until by degrees dissipation crept in and the clergy suppressed the festivals, leaving only a purely devotional shadow.

The Scattery pattern was held at the beginning of March, and celebrated St. Senan's victory over the "Cata" monster.[1] Its best record is a stone, which I last saw and sketched in 1875 in a garden at Naboclish Lodge in Kilkee, to which it had been brought from Kilrush by the late Capt. Kennedy. It had been brought over from the island to Kilrush when the pattern was suppressed by Dean Kenny,—some say in 1810 and others "before 1827," though the pattern was still celebrated in 1816. John Windele some sixty years ago thus copied it:—

"In the name of God, Amen | Bare head, bare feet, all pious Christians are to kneel | At every station say or read, five Paters, Aves and a Creed | Five times round each blessed place | singing hymns and partner (? pater) beads. | Round the altar is a first | And two noted stations on the strand annex (? are next). | Round the Island on the water's edge: | Fourth, the Nun's[2] tomb on the strand du (*sic*) west. | Whoever kneels and read (*sic*) a prayer will not meet a watery grave. | Bringing up a stone to Monument Hill[3] perform there and that's the fifth. | Sixth, N. East a place called Laoth[4] and at our Lady's church women stop. | Eighth, the large church. Ninth is the S[illegible] (? Saviour's). Tenth is the bed called St. Synan's grave.[5] | The well is eleventh finish and pray for ye souls of ye erectors of this blessed place."

[1] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 477.

[2] St. Cannara, buried on the strand as the saint would not permit her to land on the island.

[3] Knocknanangel to the south of the cathedral.

[4] Lacht.

[562] [5] No woman dared approach, and still less enter, St. Senan's church, the most northern of the group. For a description and plan see *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., pp. 276–89. "S. F." says, (*The Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 547), that no woman dares to approach the Lady's Well. [P 235]

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The names Thomas, James, and Patt. Cusack, and carvings of the round tower, Crucifixion, an angel, and a figure with a chalice, also appeared, as well as St. Senan with a crozier driving out a beast with a serrated back, belly, and tail, and the inscription "St. Synon and the Angel casting the amphibious beast out of the blessed Island." I could not find the stone after 1878. The devotees in 1816 took their rounds about the holy well annually on their bare knees, and it was the practice of those who could not conveniently attend to hire for a small payment some poor person to act as their substitute. The pattern was sometimes held on Easter Monday, and, as it was degenerating into drunkenness, the Roman Catholic Dean of Killaloe endeavoured to stop it.[6] His curate also persuaded several women to enter St. Senan's church, but their families were soon after evicted and left the Island, so that the fame of the saint's legendary misogyny was established more firmly than ever. But in 1878, when I first visited the Island, women entered the church without protest.

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At Killone the great patterns have been long since suppressed,[7] and I could learn nothing about the actual rites. "Rounds" are still performed at other times, being frequently vowed in sickness or for a sick relative. The rite consists in going on the bare knees, with bare head, sunwise round the green tongue of land from the altar between the crags and the lake. This being done, prayers are offered at the altar itself. Some pilgrims also wash their heads, feet, and hands in the bathing tank. The details vary according to the vow, and count is kept of the rounds and prayers by the rounded stones on the altar.[8] None of the observances seem to extend to the neighbouring abbey. The Pilgrim's Road is still visible, running north from the well far towards Ennis. The altar was last repaired by Anthony Roche, an Ennis merchant, in 1731.

The patterns on Iniscaltra, in Lough Derg, have long been nearly forgotten. In 1877 an old boatman told me that he had heard from old people of the flotillas of boats from every side of the great lake, the villages of tents, and the crowds of beggars,

[6] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 459, under Kilrush parish.

[7] The summer pattern on St. John's Day still attracts a fair number of devotees, but seems to have no very exceptional feature.

[8] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate III.

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796 devotees, and merrymakers. A legend was then told how a wild young squire of the Brady family in attempting to carry off a lovely peasant girl from the pattern was overtaken by the vengeance of 796 St. Caimin. The boat was upset by a squall, and the squire and 688 his "understrapper" (a foster-brother) were drowned; the girl and boatman clung to the keel, and floated ashore unharmed. The local horror of the sacrilege was emphasized by the gruesome addition that, when "the young master" was waked in the "big house" and the foster-brother in the barn, all stole away to the better entertainment, and, when the barn was unlocked in the morning, the bare skeleton of the instigator of the outrage was found covered with rats and *keerogues* (black-beetles). The horrible "turf rick legend"[9] says that the Iniscaltra pattern lasted for three days.

796 Other less famous patterns were held on the sandhills near Lehinch in honour of St. MacCreehy. The celebration got shifted to "Garland Sunday" (*Domhnach cruim duibh*, the last in July), and to the honour of St. Brigit of Kildare. It was [78] finally replaced by races, which at Kilnaboy and elsewhere may also represent degenerated patterns.

At St. Lachtin's well, near Miltown Malbay, a few poor old people may be seen, especially on Sundays and Thursdays, making "rounds." These are usually two sets of five each,—the first on the causeway round the well, and the second on a wider circle "sunwise." The devotees take off their shoes, stockings, and hats, (or, if women, their shawls and bonnets), and start for the well repeating the prescribed prayers. They climb to kiss a cross on the branch of one of the weird old weather-bent trees in the hollow, and, lastly, pour water from the well on their faces, hands, and feet.[10]

Patterns were held near the very early church of Termonchronain, near Castletown in the Burren, and, not many miles away, on the last day of summer "rounds" are performed at the two altars of the oratory of St. Colman MacDuach at Kinallia.[11] Stations were held till late years at Kilmoon, and at Tobermogus,

[9] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 348.

[10] *Limerick Field Club Journal*, vol. iii., p. 15.

[11] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate IV. [P. 237]

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and at Noughaval, both in Burren. At the last well a huge hollow ash collapsed before 1896, and the fragments rooted and grew up into considerable trees; the pattern was on Feb. 10th. The stations at Kilcameen Hospital near Kilfenora had nearly ceased by 1839. In that year the *Ordnance Survey Letters* record others at Tobermacraven well, in Kilshanny parish; Clooney, Corcomroe; Moy, Ibrickan, (Sundays and Thursdays); Tobernamanorha, at Moyasta Creek; St. Martin's well at Kilinny or Clarefield in Moyarta;[12] Toberkeereen, Killoffin, (on Sundays); and Ballynagun, Tobermurry in Drimeliky, and Tobersenan in Carhoo, these three being in Kilmacdúan. We have little information about these rites in eastern Clare, but stations subsisted in 1839 at Uggoon; St. Brigit's well, Kiltanon; the Tobermochullas at Knockdrumleague and Fortanne; St. Senan's well, Killaneena, Clonlea; and at Kilseily. Although opposed by the parish priest, stations were also held at Tobermaleery, south from Newmarket-on-Fergus.

Somewhat different from ordinary patterns are those held on Sundays at Lough Fergus.[13] A credo, paternoster, and other prayers are said, and then the devotees make a circuit round certain cairns, one called the "altar" having a rude "cross" at which the "rounds" commence. There is also a well, Toberlonan, a little more than a mile from the lake near Clooney church (Corcomroe), at which "rounds" are performed, but these are reputed to be useless until after the rites are done at the lake, with which the well is supposed to communicate by a long passage. It is possible that the Lough, being the source of the chief river in County Clare, was an object of worship in early times, as no church nor saint is connected with the shore and cairns, and the "cross" is natural.

There are "rounds" at other wells, but these depend for their time and details on the devotee, who very often does not know even the name of the patron of the well.

[12] Moyasta and Moyarta (Moyfertagh) are at opposite ends of the parish of the latter name.

[13] An excellent account, with a photograph of the "altar" and "cross," was published by Dr. George U. MacNamara in the *Limerick Field Club Journal*, vol. ii., p. 217.

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XVII. *Religious Objects and their Legends.*

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Clare was once rich in religious objects, and some important ones have survived until our times, such as the Bell Shrine of St. Senan, the croziers of St. Blathmac of Rath and St. Tola of Dysert O'Dea, and the bells of Rath, Burren, and Kilshanny,—all, except the last, in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, besides the reputed bell of Iniscatha.[14] St. Colman MacDuach and St. Lachtin were also closely connected with the county, and the crozier of the first and shrine of the arm of the second are preserved in the Irish collection. We read in early records how the Norse, in their destruction of the monastery of Iniscaltra in 922, "drowned its relics and shrines" in Lough Derg. The early *Life of St. Senan* tells how his bell descended ringing from heaven, and the place where this is reputed to have happened is still shown at Cross, between Kildimo and Farighy. The richly-enshrined crozier of St. Flannan of Killaloe (c. 680), and the bell brought from Rome by St. MacCreehy (c. 620), were extant when their *Lives* were written in the middle of the twelfth century. Early in the seventh century "the relics of Columb, son of Crimthann, were brought in a wain" to Caimin of Iniscaltra.[15] There were a number of relics and a bell "gold-enshrined" at Tulla in 1318.[16] Recent legend tells of the bells of the round towers of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy being hidden in the pool of Poulaclug and the marsh below the latter monastery, and of a silver bell of Kilmoon or Killeany, in the Burren, hidden in the stream named from it Owennaclugga. A brass bell found in the round tower of Dysert was sold in Limerick about 1837. The Black Bell of the MacNamaras was probably one of the relics at Tulla, and may be the one attributed to St. Mochulla in 1141. The "Black Book" of that saint was probably a register, and existed down to 1627, when it was used (and disappeared) in a lawsuit

[14] It was exhibited in Dublin in 1853 by a Mr. John Cooke, and sold to the British Museum. There is no local tradition attached to it.

[15] *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, "Calendar of Oengus," (early ninth century, ed. Whitley Stokes), under Dec. 13, p. 182; also published by Henry Bradshaw Society.

[16] *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh*:—"Tullach nan espoc sanctified by bell and precious mass, by relic, gold-enshrined, by rare piety and notable miracles."

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of the Delahoydes. The shrine of St. Lachtin's arm,[17] made for Cormac MacCarthy, king of Munster between 1118-27, was preserved in his church at Kilnamona, and about 1640 removed to Lislachtin Abbey in Kerry; no folklore seems attached to it. The crozier of St. Blawfugh, *i.e.* Blathmac, son of Onchu, was preserved at Rath, near Corofin, and then in a hole in the wall of the old chapel of Corofin, where it was used for very solemn swearing and was much feared. The crozier of St. Manaula (Bán Thola) of Dysert was purchased from an old woman, daughter of an O'Quin, its last hereditary keeper, and was held in great reverence for cures and as an object upon which oaths were taken. The most important of all these relics is the Clog-an-oir, or "golden bell,"[18] the empty bell shrine preserved by the Keanes of Beechpark, one of whom had married the daughter of one of the Keanes or O'Cahans the "coarbs" (*comharba*) or successors of St. Senan. It consists of a bronze cover of the twelfth century, adorned by later silver plates, and violation of an oath taken on this shrine twisted the perjurer's face or resulted in convulsions and death. It is told that a gentleman living in County Galway sent his servant to borrow the "bell" to test his servants about a theft. His messenger happened to be the thief, and on the way home again threw the dreaded object into the sea. He then boldly told his master that the Keanes would not lend it. "You are a liar," was the reply, "for there it is on the table before you." The man fell on his knees, and confessed. It was last asked for in 1834, when a farmer had been robbed of twenty pounds, and borrowed the "bell" to swear the neighbours after Mass. On the Saturday night before the ordeal his family was awakened by a crash, as something was thrown in through the window. This proved to be the missing notes, tied with the original string. There are many similar stories, and the Clog-an-oir is said to have been stolen, but to have always returned to its rightful owners.[19]

[17] An illustration of this was published by Vallancey in 1770. See Mr. Geo. Coffey's *Guide to the Christian Antiquities in the Collection of the Royal Irish Academy*, pp. 53-4, 60-2, and for the croziers of Dysert and Rath and bell of Rath, *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., pp. 337-9.

[18] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxx., pp. 237-44.

[19] Much of this information came from Mr. Marcus Keane of Beechpark, the present possessor, and the remainder from the paper cited in note 18.

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XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date,
825 for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle.*—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

778 The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round
825 Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an
233 irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural
823 stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St.
[776] Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolydoolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacausk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1. [P 241]

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buttons, and broken crockery. Patients sit in the "chair" to cure lumbago. It is believed that the water of this lake cannot be boiled and that no one can be drowned by it, and sixty or seventy years ago cattle were cured by it. The beasts were brought in herds to the lake to drink, and were driven into it. If they turned to the right hand they would recover, but not if they swam to the left. It is said that on one occasion a cow sank, but was found next day grazing in a field beside the lake, completely cured. In consequence of drainage works, the water level has fallen, and the mud round the shore is too deep to allow the cattle to be driven through it, so on May Day every year, before sunrise, a little crowd gathers, of perhaps over 100 persons, to fill bottles with the water for curing cattle, especially of "the worm." The water keeps good till the next anniversary, and is also used to give a "good churning" and to clear a "garden" of caterpillars.[22]

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In 1839 Lough Iona (now Eenagh) was reputed to cure sick cattle on Mondays and Thursdays.[23] In 1808 the smiths were in some districts employed to kill the cattle,—or rather to fell them for slaying,—and their perquisites were the animals' heads.[24]

Persons over sixty years of age are often firm believers in the charming away, or "taking," of milk and butter. The younger folk usually deny that they hold this belief, and, where they take part in quarrels caused by it, avowedly only do so to support their elders. Two families living in the south-east corner of the county had about 1890 a quarrel resulting in a serious feud, hardly as yet appeased. It seems that for about three years the cows of the first household gave but little milk, and that little so bad and unwholesome for pigs and calves that several died. Ordinary veterinary practitioners, and even the local "knowing men," did no good, so the farmer sought a "wise man" of renown in another parish. This sage directed his client to watch the local well all May Eve, and to let no one come near it till after midnight. The farmer and his sons hid near it, saw a man and a woman of the

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[22] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. ii.

[23] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 161.

[24] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 359. The smith was a magician amongst the Irish, and the ancient *St. Patrick's Lorica* prays against the spells of "smiths, women, and druids."

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627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the
233 newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
823 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26]
789 In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
826 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to
789 the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale. [P. 243]

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with the churn "dash," and if you are smoking you should finish the pipe in the house, or you may "take" the butter. There is still living to the south of Ennis a man who is afraid to touch a churn lest the butter should "go away," and he get the discredit of "butter-taking." (I may boast myself of the repute of having "the lucky hand" that "brings" the butter quickly.) Long ago the O'Briens of Kells near Corofin told the late Dr. G. U. MacNamara of the latter place how one "Donogho buidhe" (yellow Donal), a local "fairy man," being offended one day about getting a glass of whiskey, left the house angrily. After his exit no amount of churning would bring the butter. He was pursued and appeased, and took a bit of paper from under the churn, when the butter came at once. In a case in the Tulla district in which a farmer's butter was "taken," he consulted the priest, by whose direction he searched in the corner of his corn-field, and found a small sheaf with a hazel rod in it. After destroying this the butter "came" in great abundance.[28]

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[28] Cf. *ante*, p. 58.

(*To be continued.*)

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COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions* (*continued*).

Horse.—I have found no folklore relating to horses except that already given regarding supernatural animals.[1] I have since recalled a legend of a dangerous spectral horse, probably a *púca*, haunting the bridge over the Blackwater, between Limerick and Clonlara, and the tree-darkened road towards the latter place,—a terror by night to passengers till about twenty years ago. There was also the bodiless head of a spectral horse which used to float beside cars on a road near Clooney, of which I heard about 1876, but now forget the details. The riding of horses by fairies was not unknown. 825 776

Dog, Fox, and Hare.—Besides the supernatural dogs already noted,[2] and the "Red Dog" (or Fox?), near Cragmoher, at Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge, there is little to tell. Finn's famous hound Bran was drowned at Tirmicbrain lake, and a ghastly dog broke the bones in some graveyard, (perhaps Doora or Clooney), before 1876.[3] It is unlucky to meet a fox, a red-haired woman, or a hare "first thing" in the morning. The hare is said to eat human flesh,—probably from being often "started" in graveyards. I have been told by several Clare people of witches turning into hares, but the alleged incident was never located in the county. [777] [791]

Seal.—A very vague belief prevails on the coast that seals are

[1] Vol. xxi., pp. 481-2.

[2] Vol. xxi., pp. 482-3.

[3] As in most of my recollections of folk-tales heard before 1876, the details are forgotten.

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825 776 enchanted human beings.[4] It gets more definite above Galway Bay, where the Kinealeys are of reputed seal descent. Some such belief may underlie the name Cumarra (or sea-hound) in the MacNamara family. I found more difficulty in getting fisher beliefs in recent years than in getting folklore from the country people. Much of what I heard in 1906 was probably of tourist origin, and, like the *merrow* at Killard,[5] not to be trusted as genuine belief.

Otter.—Beyond vague belief in an enormous "durracow"[6] (the king of the otters), which I heard of as a child on the Shannon Bank about some unnamed lake in east Clare, I am not aware of any folklore about this creature in the county. There was said to be a "remarkable" otter at Glenomera.

Cat.—The cat was much regarded by the early Irish, and holds honourable place in their ancient code of laws. It even appears in the illuminations of the *Book of Kells.* Numerous places in Clare bear its name, but local belief tends to consider the "cat" in these names as a weird monster. The "Cata" and "Faracat" of legend[7] were probably "dragons." The cat has supernatural [763 knowledge. If a cat looks fixedly at a person without apparent 787] reason it forebodes sickness or death, but if it does so to an unmarried person, after making its toilet, it foretells marriage.

[4] So in Aed Baclamp from the *Book of Lismore*, (*Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 72), St. Brendan changes 30 seals into horses, which carry into the sea their riders, who, on reaching it, are, like their steeds, changed into seals.

[114] [5] Vol. xxi., p. 342. Mrs. Dorothea Townshend of Oxford calls my attention to the probability that this story was made up by Dr. Keightley (v. App. to his *Fairy Mythology*). In my original Ms. I expressed great doubt as to this story, having found no equivalent to it near Dunbeg or Kilkee, but this was unfortunately omitted in publication. The Miltown mermaid was probably one of the white seals occasionally seen on the coast.

[6] *I.e. Dobharchu*, water-hound. The Irish called the wolf *faol-chu* (wild hound) and *cu allaid*, and the marten *crann chu* (branch hound). The more common name for the wolf in Clare is *breagh*, as in Breaghva and Breffy, the name of several townlands. The other wolf name *Mac Tire* (son of the country), is attached to Knockaunvicteera hill near Lisdoonvarna (where it refers to the animal), and to Cahermactire, a fort near Inchiquin Hill; at the latter place it may refer to a person, as the name Mac Tire is found in various annals.

[7] Vol. xxi., pp. 477-9. [P. 246]

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The wild cat is believed to have a spike or hook at the end of its tail which it can stick into a pursuer, but I found no such fine legend in Clare on this point as I did near Kenry in Limerick, where the cats pursued, and anchored themselves on, a farmer and his dog, after chasing them from Clorane to Old Kildimo! 825 776

Elk.—The Irish elk is known among the turf cutters of Clooney and Tulla as the "Fiaghmore" (so pronounced, but really *fiadh mor*, big deer),—"it might be one of the deer Finn hunted." Its numerous remains have given to one townland the name "Fiaghmore, Fiah,"[8] in 1655. The "Agallamh"[9] has an interesting allusion. Diarmaid kills a huge deer, and its antler, when resting on his foot, reaches above his head, despite his great height. Caoilte produces this horn from a lake to convince St. Patrick of the truth of his stories of the heroes.

Badger, Squirrel, and Marten.—It is asserted that there are two kinds of badgers,—the "dog-badger," which eats carrion and digs into graves, and the "pig-badger," which is a strict vegetarian and is eatable. In the *Boroma* tract from the *Book of Leinster*,[10] and the "Agallamh," badger bacon and squirrels are mentioned as fit to set before a king or hero. It is doubtful whether the *togmal*, (kept as a pet by Queen Maeve and killed on her shoulder by Cuchullin's slingstone), was a squirrel or a bird, but squirrel skins, along with marten skins, formed a considerable export from Ireland at least from 1230 to 1580, and in 1686 Roderic O'Flaherty names the squirrel amongst the animals of Connaught.[11] The true marten was until recently common in east Clare, and, like the supposed "marten-cat" (a large red domestic cat that has gone wild), was reputed uncanny in my boyhood. I have seen martens at play in the Clare woods in 1869, and had one stuffed in 1876, but they seem now to be extinct. [262]

Hybrids.—Besides the "dog-badger," there were said to be uneatable hybrids of the cat and the rabbit, and of the rook and [262]

[8] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv., p. 94.

[9] *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 176. Antlers over six feet long have been found in Clare, and there is a fine single antler 6 ft. 2 in. long at Violet Hill, Broadford.

[10] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiii., p. 47.

[11] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xl., p. 245.

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825 776 [262] the domestic hen. The "soft egg laid by the cock" was looked on with suspicion, and so was the egg of the bat, which was even unlucky to find, and could be used for malignant charms.

Stoat.—In Clare the stoat is always called "weazel." A corruption of the strange Irish name *Feasóg* (the little beard) is as often used, even by English speakers, as the *whishshoge* or *whushshoge*. The creature was equally disliked and respected. It is wished "Good morning, ma'am," by some, and generally saluted by raising the hat on meeting; but others spit and cross themselves. It is regarded as peevish and persistent; "as cross as a bag of weazels" is a proverb in east Clare, while Finn is compared to a weazel in the pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne. I have heard many stories about its revengefulness "when its nest is killed," and of one of its persistent attempts to get at a corpse in a house in south-east Clare, rather, it was thought, for magical purposes than from hunger. Old belief ascribed to the animal the power of poisoning. At Carnelly a labourer told that when cutting a meadow near the "Druids' Altar"[12] he killed a young weazel. Soon afterwards his wife brought him his dinner and a can of sour milk. While they talked, she cried out that a weazel was spitting into the can, but the man laughed and drank the milk. Soon afterwards he got violent gripes, and gave himself up for lost. The doctor had great difficulty in persuading him to try any remedy, and his wife was almost scandalized by his recovery. A similar tale was told at my old home, Attyflin, in which young weazels were not killed but put on a wisp of grass safely in a bush. The parents were seen spitting into the milk, but, on finding the young ones safe, they returned and upset the can.[13] So "even the weazel has justice." Both stories probably originated in the animal's love for milk.

Rat.—A Clare woman told me that a man whose love was [775] rejected by a girl living in Limerick city died, and his soul went into a rat and used to bite her throat until she had to emigrate.[14] The rat tried to follow her and was drowned, and so the persecution ended. A curious "parliament of rats" was held near Durra in

[12] Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort and others.
[13] Late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[14] Mrs. M. MacCormick.

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Upper Bunratty, the fields being covered with them, but, when it broke up, the "troops" dispersed, and no bands were seen at any distance from the rendezvous. A rat was "heard talking with the Devil" in the grave of an unpopular person before 1875, but how the holders of this curious conversation were identified was never stated. I have met a belief in speaking rats in eastern Clare and among fishermen at Kilkee. 825 776

Hedgehog.—This animal is reputed to steal apples and suck cows and eggs, so that it is persecuted and called *grainoge* (little ugly thing).

Birds.—A pair of ravens roosted in a top window of the round tower of Iniscatha (Scattery) early in the last century. The birds were said to escort their young, when fully fledged, across the Shannon to Carrigfoile Castle in Kerry, and not to let them return to the island.[15] Scaldcrows (roystons) are considered unlucky, and much feared. The old Irish regarded them as incarnations of the war-goddess Bodbh.[16] Birds as omens have already been noted.[17] The bat is looked on as a sort of bird, and it is ominous of death for it to fly at one's face. The entry of a robin into a house is a death omen near Tulla, but elsewhere a sign of good fortune. Although swans are so plentiful that I have often seen more than forty together in Inchiquin and other lakes, the only folklore associated with them seems to be a tale of swan-maidens at Inchiquin. The hunting of the wren has been described in Section XIV.[18] [777] [763]

Fishes.—It was regarded as a custom among the fishermen of Kilrush and Scattery that no one should go fishing for three days after the arrival of the herring shoals, but, when the first day dawned, a crowd of boats was always discovered, and much quarrelling resulted.[19] As the shoals arrived, a mass used to be celebrated on the shore at Kilmurry, Ibrickan, to secure good 226 825

[15] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 546.

[16] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x.; *Revue Celtique*, vol. i.; Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 267.

[17] Vol. xxi., p. 190.

[18] *Ante*, pp. 206-7, and Plate IX.

[19] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare* (1808), pp. 228, 259.

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226 825 fishing and to keep off dogfishes and small sharks.[20] The reputed giant lake pikes and eels have already been mentioned.[21]

"*Worms.*"—Newts, lizards, and large caterpillars are included by the peasantry under this term. They are supposed to be very dangerous to both men and cattle, and are relentlessly destroyed. 825 Of late years I have even had difficulty in saving the pretty little grey lizards, now much rarer than when, over thirty years ago, they swarmed in Clare Abbey and other sunny and sheltered ruins. A colony of unfortunate little lizards in a hollow tree was reported to me as "a nest of adders." My informant[22] about the sacrifice on the dolmen of Maryfort,—the daughter of an old Peninsular veteran, living near Clonlara,—told me a circumstantial tale which was faintly remembered at Clonlara many years later. A "worm with legs" ran down a man's throat as he slept in a field, and he pined away, with an ever-increasing appetite, until he was persuaded to consult a "wise person." He was kept from drinking for two days by the expert, and then fed on bacon and taken to a stream. The patient's mouth was fastened open, and a freshly-toasted piece of bacon put near it. The thirsty "worm" heard the running water, and came out into the man's mouth, where it smelt the meat and sprang on it, fixing its claws in it. The "wise man" then threw the bacon into the water, and the man rapidly recovered. A similar story from near Tulla ended in the "worm" drinking and trying to jump back into the patient's mouth, but being killed by the doctor.[23] Children were told that, if they slept with their mouths open, "worms" (apparently caterpillars of the death's head or the puss moth in Inchiquin and central Clare) or

[20] Canon Dwyer, *Diocese of Killaloe*, p. 503, writes unsympathetically about this touching faith of the poor fishers.

[21] Vol. xxi., p. 480. [22] Mrs. Eliza Egan; see *ante*, p. 51.

[23] I have heard an almost identical story told among my mother's relatives as happening in Lancashire. [The belief in "animals in people's insides" is almost universal in the British Isles; for examples see *N. & Q.*, 1st S., vol. vi., pp. 221, 338, 466, vol. ix., pp. 29, 84, 276, 523; 6th S., vol. i., pp. 311, 392; 9th S., vol. vii., pp. 222, 332, 390, vol. viii., pp. 89, 346, vol. xi., p. 467, vol. xii., pp. 414, 471; *Folk-Lore*, vol. x., p. 251; *British Medical Journal*, 1906; and many newspaper paragraphs, such as one in *Morning Leader*, June 3, 1908. I have heard the tale told in London with a large community of cockroaches as the tenants.—Ed.]

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frogs (at Newmarket-on-Fergus) would creep down their throats. The finding of flukes and other parasites in sheep and cattle has helped the belief, and a beast's tongue, if swollen, is supposed to have been "stung by a worm." We have already noted a cure for "worm" in cattle,[24] and the milk of the "Seven Sisters" plant[25] boiled in milk cures similar cases in human beings.[26] [757]

Frog.—Besides jumping down children's throats, the frog cures a cough if held by the legs, put for a moment into the sufferer's mouth, and returned to the water.[27] In a variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, at Bohatey, near Lough Derg, frogs mob and devour a boy who has tortured one of their number.[28] Frogs are said to have been rained on a field in eastern Burren more than once.

Insects etc.—An old woman at Maryfort in 1869 scandalized her neighbours by asserting butterflies to be dwellings of the human soul, and that her own soul would go into a "blessed (tortoise-shell) butterfly." Whence she derived this belief is unknown. I heard about the same time, and, it may be, from the same source, a horrible story of a "spider as big as a *bonnive*" (young pig) sucking the blood of children in the dark, but I forget the details. It is lucky to kill the "daudayle" (*dubh dael*) or "devil's coach-horse," for this hideous but harmless creature has the repute of having guided Judas to Gethsemane.[29] When it "cocks up its hind end," you should crush it, preferably with your bare foot, for you are then spared a day, hour, or week in Purgatory. In Clare I have only found this belief near Tulla, but it is common in other counties. [774]

[24] *Ante*, p. 58. [25] Cf. *ante*, p. 57.

[26] So the late Michael Hazelton, an astrologer and herb doctor near Limerick.

[27] So Mrs. O'Callaghan.

[28] So Capt. Hibbert of Woodpark. A similar tale is told about toads by Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerary in Wales*, cap. ii.

[29] In Ulster the "connach worm" replaces the beetle. The tale says that men were sowing a corn-field when Our Lord and the faithful disciples passed, and that He told the sowers to inform His pursuers that they had last seen Him when they were sowing. The corn at once sprang into ear, and the pursuers, on getting the answer to their enquiry, were turning back when the worm cried out that the seed had only just been sown. The Ulster tale was collected by Mr. W. F. De Vismes Kane, D.L., of Monaghan. In Clare Island (Mayo) Mr. N. Colgan found a similar tale told of St. Patrick and his enemies. [184]

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Plants.—The "hungry grass" grows on mountains, and, if trodden on, causes a sickening hunger which kills if not relieved. I knew a man in County Limerick who said he "knew it to happen to another man" on the Clare hills, and the victim got food in bare time to save him.[30] Seven strips of a plantain leaf stop the bleeding of a bad wound. The "Seven Sisters" plant for healing purposes must be picked at a particular period of the sun and moon in August. Fern "dust" (seeds) heals cuts from rushes; the dock charms nettle stings; and the four-leafed shamrock brings luck if found accidentally. The belief that house-leek preserves a house from burning[31] is widespread in north and east Clare. The pennywort has a sectarian bias, and only cures Protestants,[32] and this is connected near Bunratty with a curious legend of Anne Boleyn. This hapless queen, after enjoying by means of the plant the greatest influence over her terrible spouse,[33] "got into trouble, but, when she was sent to jail, she couldn't get the plant, and they hanged her." The rowan, or mountain ash, is a luck-bringer and preservative from magic, and I remember small forked twigs being carried. A rowan, planted at Iniscaltra about 890 by King Cormac mac Cuileanan, bore apples.[34] Moss from a skull, or an ancient cross such as that at Dysert O'Dea, or a pillar, is curative; the moss at Fortanne well was used for the eyes, but had to be replaced. If you see a "button mushroom" you should pluck it, as "it will never grow any more once it is looked at."[35]

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(*To be continued.*)

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XIX. *Rocks, Caves, and Stones.*

133 773 823 *Rock markings.*—The strange marks left in the flat crags by the weathering of softer portions and of fossils have caused numerous legends. The dish-like hollows in the crags below the hermitage of St. Colman MacDuach, at the great "Cliff of the Eagle," in Kinallia, the name Bohernameesh (*bothar na mias, i.e.* road of the dishes), and marks like the footprints of men and animals all seem to have been seized on by the saint's biographers.[1] Colman, brother of King Guaire "the hospitable," of Hy Fiachrach Aidhne (the district round Gort), early in the seventh century retired to fast and pray in the wilderness. After a most austere observance of Lent, a companion monk yearned for meat, and Colman pitied him and prayed. The king's Easter feast therefore flew to the hermitage, pursued by the whole Court. Terrified by the angry warriors Colman again prayed, and their feet and the hoofs of their horses stuck fast in the rocks. The legend is still told in a form identical with that in the Life.[2] The servant is said to have died from the feast, and his grave is shown beside the Boher.[3]

Where Burren and Inchiquin meet, on the Glasgeivnagh Hill,

[1] Cf. *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* (ed. W. Stokes, Rolls Ser.), p. 405.

[2] Colgan, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ.*

[3] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100 (Ms. Royal Irish Academy).

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the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Cahercommaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of Lon the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of Lon's seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like débris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown Luno" of (Macpherson's) Ossian.[4]

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At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbanaheanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In this bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.[5]

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On Scattery Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara[6] floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint.

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[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

[5] From M[illegible] Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtdarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

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776 Another knee-stone of St. Senan was beside the creek of Poulanishery on the opposite shore to Scattery. Between Dysert
823 O'Dea and Rath Blamaic a rock with two basins bore the marks of St. Manawla's knees when she carried off the round tower of Rath.[7] St. Columba's thumb and finger marks are shown on a limestone boulder in the road fence near the lane to his entrenched church in Glen Columbcille. The bosses on the "plague stone" at Tomfinlough church were the two plague swellings torn from a woman's head and thrown against the stone by St. Luchtighern.

773 Not only the saints, but also Finn MacCumhail and his warriors have left marks on the rocks of Clare. A huge rock
823 named Cloughmornia or Cloughlea, near Ballysheen and not far from Sixmilebridge, has in its sides long straight gashes where Finn and his band tried (or sharpened) their swords.[8] Finn's fingerprints are visible on a rock which was brought to Cullaun House near Quin early in the last century by the facetious Tom Steele from Birr in King's County, where it was seen by Thomas Dineley about 1680. The stone was called "the Navel of Ireland,"[9] and the V-marks are now regarded as the footprints of the cock that crowed at St. Peter's denial.

Hughey's Rock, a great boulder on the brow of the ridge between Edenvale and Rockmount near Ennis, bears the finger-marks of Hughey, a giant who threw it at another giant from Mount Callan.[10]

Caves.—I have heard at Newhall of a cave "between Ennis and Lisdoonvarna" in which runs an underground river that

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 50. A similar legend occurs in the *Book of Lecan.*

[8] *The Battle of Magh Leana*, p. 30 (notes). The legend was still surviving at Ballysheen in 1899.

[9] *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Society*, vol. viii. (1864), p. 360. The cock legend is often represented on tombstones etc., and appears at Ennis Abbey (1460). In a version gathered by me in eastern Limerick, the cock says,—"I'm only a cock, and you're an apostle; but I'm the better gentleman any day!" In *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 415, the Angel Victor in the form of a bird leaves footmarks on a stone.

[10] So told me by Shaneen (Little John) O'Halloran at Edenvale in 1869 and later.

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makes old people young. The exact locality is unknown, as the people who have gone to use it have never been seen again. Lismulbreeda cave, in Dromcliff parish and near the Kilrush road, is marked all over its soft sandstone sides and roof with crosses, figures, and initials, which it is considered lucky to cut on a visit. Horses are said to have come out of the Kilcorney cave, and left descendants in the valley below.[11] The caves of the Broc-sidh and Faracat have already been mentioned.[12] There is a tale of a wild boar in a cave some miles to the north-east of Feakle.

Dolmens.—These were supposed to be giants' graves, and, if called "altars," the word was understood in a Christian sense, with a belief that they had been used for the mass during the prevalence of the cruel penal laws. For example, Altoir Ultach was said to be named from an Ulster priest who served the mass there in the eighteenth century because the nearest magistrates were more tolerant than those of the north.[13] There is no evidence of any general popular belief that they were pagan altars, such an idea, where it existed, being derived from the "learned ignorance" of local gentry. The dolmens were, and are, called *leaba* (*labba*, "bed") and *leaba Diarmuid agus Grainne* (*labba 'iermuth a'us graunya*) from the elopement of those famous lovers. Legend on the west coast of Clare told that Diarmuid, finding that Finn could learn all the movements of his wife by biting his prophetic thumb, put seaweed on the cover of the dolmen. Finn, finding that seaweed was over the lovers, imagined

[11] This cave was famous in the eighteenth century for throwing out floods of water full of fish—(cf. *inter alia*, Gough's *Camden*),—and this is remembered traditionally, although the floods have been rare and insignificant since 1833. Other similar phenomena are recorded in Irish annals; *e.g.* in the Ulster Annals in 759 "Bennmuilt poured forth a stream with fishes," and in 867 "a strange eruption of water from Sliabh Cualann with little black fishes."

[12] Vol. xxi., pp. 180, 183, 479. The Faracat, according to *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, was a monstrous cat having a crescent on its forehead and a sharp nail in its tail.

[13] In fact, the Westropps, Drews, and Patersons acted as trustees under friendly "Protestant discoveries" to preserve the properties of the O'Briens, Macnamaras, and Barretts from the hostile effect of the laws, c. 1730-90.

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773 that they had drowned themselves, and gave up the pursuit.[14]
823 Possibly the legend originated the association of indecency with the Clare dolmens found in 1808 by Hely Dutton.[15] A girl would not guide him to the fine one at Ballygannor until assured
[831 that he was a stranger, for, it was explained to him, a woman
778] could refuse nothing to a man at one of these monuments. Some such reason probably lay behind the belief that, if a couple unblessed with children went to a *labba*, the defect in their house-
[842] hold was amended. I have been told that this belief existed in Clare, but got no direct evidence of it. The Tuam an goskaigh monument in Ballynahown was believed to be the grave of a giant buried with his great sword, to recover which certain young men dug and overthrew the stones; but they found nothing, and afterwards prospered so ill that they had to emigrate.[16] Grania was supposed to be a male saint near Feakle, and the "scoop" in the west end of Tobergrania dolmen-well at Ballycroum was supposed to be the place where he put in his head to drink.[17] The long grave of Ballykelly, famed for its lovely outlook high over the woods and lake of Doon on the flank of Slieve Bernagh, was known as "Old Grania," but the term "Granny's bed" was not unknown in East Clare. I heard no legend of a "hag" at any dolmen. The alleged rites at the "Druid's Altars" at Maryfort and Carnelly have already been noted.[18] When two blocks of the latter structure were removed for use as gateposts, they returned during the night to their original site, and were never again removed. The hand of the destroyer of a dolmen near Ruan was struck by a splinter and severely injured,[19] the remains of the blocks being left where

[14] Corcomroe legend, given to me by the late Prof. Brian O'Looney.

[15] *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 318. On the Continent indecent names and legends are also attached to dolmens; cf. Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 555; vol. iii., p. 845.

[16] Messrs. Hilary and Kelleher of Oughtdarra.

[17] So among the inhabitants in 1896-9.

[18] Vol. xxii., p. 51.

[19] Told to me by the sufferer. His predecessor, who had overthrown some blocks, was also unlucky. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 212.

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they lay,—but no vengeance overtook those who levelled many dolmens at Miltown near Tulla.

Basin stones occur not infrequently at or near dolmens, *e.g.* at Kiltanon and Newgrove near Tulla, and at Ballyganner and Cappaghkennedy on the borders of Burren, at the last of which five appear in one slab. In the Life of St. Mochulleus,[20] written in 1141, a basin "like a large *hydria*" was found in a polished block of stone when the saint was levelling the site of his church on Tulla hill. The basins were evidently regarded as very early in date even in the twelfth century. The basin of Doughnambraher (Dabthach nam brathar) at Kyleeane has already been noticed.[21] A large block with two basins is amongst the remains at the place of inauguration of the local kings at Magh Adhair.[22]

Pillar stones and rocks.—Boughils ("petrified Boys") and *farbreags* ("petrified men") have been referred to in Section I.[23] A frog-like natural rock, close to the west side of the road from Kilkishen to Fortanne, was blasted and removed after 1887, but I have a sketch of it made in that year. There was a vague saying that it had been made, (and I think I was told also that it was a creature petrified when cursed), by some saint. The Coad stone is said to have been the same height (*com fhod*, "equal height or length," whence Co'ad),[24] as King Teige Acomhad O'Brien about 1460. It, the Cloghlea near Tomgraney, and the "cross" near Kilmoon were evidently boundary marks of church lands. Another legend of Coad

[20] *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvii.; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xli., p. 9. The basin was filled with milk by a hind. Similar legends are found in Glendalough (County Wicklow) and elsewhere. Giraldus tells how a hollow stone at Skellig used to be filled with wine for the sacrament.

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[21] Vol. xxii. (Plate IV). The name is Killian on the map, but is pronounced Kyle-e-aan, with a long stress on the last syllable.

[22] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., p. 79, vol. xxxiv., pp. 190-1.

[23] Vol. xxi., pp. 183, 186, and the legend of Knocknafearbreaga on p. 185; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv. (c), p. 97, vol. xxvi. (c), p. 471.

[24] *Com-fhod* is also a synonym for a grave.

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stone was that the *liagann*[25] was exacted by a father from the slayer of his son, and was the length of the victim. The story of Prince Lachtna (ante 840) tells that an adviser of King Phelim of Cashel tried to arouse his suspicions of Lachtna by an alleged oracle of a pillar stone Liag na neasain, near Killaloe, against "a fair man from Craglea."

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[25] Dr. G. U. MacNamara. A *liagann* of equal length to the slain son of the Dagda was claimed as an *eric* by the victim's father, "Dind Senchas", *Revue Celtique*, vol. xvi., p. 42.

(*To be continued.*)

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XX. *Earthworks and Buildings.*

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Fairy forts and mounds have been dealt with in Section iv., haunted houses in Section viii., and foundation sacrifices in Section xi.

Forts.—The ring walls and mounds in County Clare are probably residential, or, more rarely, sepulchral, but certainly not military. They consist of one or more walls (or banks), usually slightly oval, and the earthworks have fosses and traces of stone facing. They are named *dun*, *lis*, *rath*, and even *caher* (*cathair*), but the last name is usually reserved for the dry stone ring walls. *Ooan* (*uamh*) is used both for forts and for artificial caves in them, and also, for a fort-souterain, in 1317 in the *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (History of the Wars of the O'Briens and de Clares). The country people have no limited views as to the makers of the 2400 forts in Clare. Croaghateeaun near Ballinalacken is attributed to the ancient deities, the Danánn, and one should cross oneself in entering its garth.[1] Mohernagartan and Mohernaglasha were made by the smith god Lon,—the latter for the grey "cloud and rain cow," the Glas. Oisin the poet lived in Caherussheen near Corofin, and the great stone fort on Turlough Hill probably belonged to the "Irish Militia" (Finn's warriors). Chonan, one of Finn's men, dwelt in the now levelled fort on Keentlae (*ceann tsleibh*) on Inchiquin Hill.[2] Three contemporaries, Crochaun (lumped hill), Dahlin, and Sall (the brine), made the forts bearing their names at Loop Head, and one at Cahernaheanmná near them for their sister the beloved of the hero Dermot O'Duine.[3] Oircheannaigh "of the golden cap" made the vast triple Moghane for his "fighting ring."[4] A giant dwelt in the promontory fort of Doonaunmore at Ballinahown who lost his magic staff and was

[1] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 345.

[2] "*Feis tighe chonain.*"

[3] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxviii., p. 351.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 281; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxvii., pp. 218 *et seq.*

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slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran.

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign.

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman.

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional,

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

172 823 776 823 173 823 778 346 773 [P. 261]

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346 773 founder of the building, and is held to explain the rude and inferior work of parts of it. Quin "Abbey" was built by the famous Master Mason Gobbán Saor, who twisted the spiral pillars of its beautiful cloister with his own hands. The builder of the south transept (1433) fell from its gable, and was killed where a tombstone with the scribed figure of an axe marks his grave. The north-west corner of Carran church overhangs, and is destined to fall on the wisest man that shall pass below it.

344 773 *Castles.*—A belief similar to that about Carran church was attached to Ballymulcassel or Mountcashel castle. It is a peel tower, built by King Conor na Srona, about 1460, on a steep little knoll of rock beside the road from Sixmilebridge to Kilkishen. It was to fall on the handsomest person, and gossip told of a very ugly man who always took a longer road to avoid passing it. The same legend and gossip was attached to Newcastle peel tower, near Limerick and not far from the border of Clare. A wizard who lived in Shalee castle was so pestered by his wife that he flew away with half the tower, which remains as Glen castle near Ennistymon station. A guest praised Dysert castle to its owner, 344 173 O'Dea, and wished that it were full of gold. "I'd rather have it full of O'Hiumhairs," replied O'Dea,[7] the family so complimented being a small but warlike clan, of which one member fought in the wars of 1313-8 and is reported to have slain Richard de Clare at Dysert in 1318. I heard in 1869 that the castles near Doonass were built by seven brothers, and that six came to an untimely end at the hands of the seventh, but the legend seems now forgotten at Clonlara.

346 776 173 *Round Towers.*—The peasants seem never to have adopted the various druidic, Cuthite, phallic, and other theories of 1770 onwards from the so-called "educated classes." To them, as to our earlier writers, the towers are steeples built by saints. John Lloyd, in 1780,[8] calls that of Scattery "the loftiest old Steeple in the Kingdom." Michael O'Brannan, in 1794,[9] tells how St.

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 157. The tale closely resembles a legend of St. Caimin of Iniscaltra and Guaire Aidhne at Iniscaltra, Lough Derg.

[8] *A Short Tour etc.*, p. 21.

[9] Poem on Shannon, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. ii., pp. 15-8.

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Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

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173 son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with
173 Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the
823 other side of the "Rine."

XXI. *Miscellanea and Addenda.*

173 *Treasure legends and hunting.*—Many forts have been much
556 defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are few. Caherscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib of 1551),[14] is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*" or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the finest of all drinks").[15] Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially
[137] of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost. Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results, in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver) near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka castle[16] near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told
[172] to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

[14] In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrogh, Earl of Thomond.

[15] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvi., p. 368.

[16] See also vol. xxi., p. 344. [p. 264]

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MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimneaigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan.

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe.

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764 placed on the new coffin. Where burials take place at short intervals the results are best left untold, but such cases are rare. A consequence of this fearful overcrowding is that no old graveyard is free from coffin planks and plates, bones, and fragmentary or whole skulls.[20] Those who saw Quin "Abbey" before 1879 will remember the enormous heap of skulls, (even then, however, much diminished), heaped round a tree near the graveyard gate. At Tomfinlough the bones and skulls were neatly stacked in a recess, at Kilmacreehy they were heaped on a sort of side altar in the chancel, and in other churches (Coad etc.) I have seen single skulls staring out of holes in the wall.

766 Places for the burial of strangers and unbaptized children are common, and are usually *killeens*, old forgotten church sites, sometimes in a fort, sometimes at a well, or unenclosed in a field.[21] Those at Kilquane, near Ennis; Fomerla, near Tulla; Kyleeáne, near Barefield (with Doughnambraher stone); and Kilvoydane, near Spansil Hill, have basin stones. Some *killeens*, such as that between the forts of Mortyclogh, near Corcomroe Abbey, and that at Fortanne, have crept back into favour for adult burial, but several ancient churches at which bones are found have not been so used in traditional memory (*e.g.* Toomullin, Crumlin, Killonaghan, and Kilbract, round Lisdoonvarna; Templeline, in Carran; Temple-an-aird, near Carrigaholt; St. Senan's, on Mutton Island; Temple aed O'Connell, near Ruan; and several churches on Scattery and Iniscaltra). The church of Kilcashen was not remembered to have been a burial place before Eugene O'Curry's grandfather, Melachein O'Curry, in a pestilence about 1760, charitably [731] collected the deserted unburied corpses "on carts and sledges," and buried them at the ruin on his farm.[22] Bodies were similarly buried during the Great Famine at the Lisheen, near Lough Fergus. Oughtdarra, near Lisdoonvarna, has the remains of a [776] church of St. Sinnach MacDara,[23] where children under seven

[20] See also vol. xxii., p. 56.

[21] For a list, with notes, see *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. vi., ser. iii., p. 129.

[22] Kilcashen, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 369.

[23] A saint famous all round Galway Bay, but not found in the ancient Calendars. Some suppose him to be a Fox Hero, *i.e.* Sinnach mac Dara, Fox

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years of age are buried; after that age bodies are taken to the parish graveyard at Killilagh. In Shanakill, on the Shannon bank opposite Scattery, it was believed that the dead were moved supernaturally under the river into the Sacred Isle.[24] 766 [775]

I know of a case in eastern Clare where parents, having lost several of their children, tried to break the deadly record by changing their burial place, but, alas! without success.

I am not aware of any belief in Clare that the spirit of the last-comer in a graveyard has to watch the place or to bring water to the souls in Purgatory. There was, however, recently a race between two funerals to Rathblamac graveyard, which may imply some such belief. The custom of burying a stone from a church or an ancient tombstone in a new grave, (which has led to the disappearance of several early monuments at Clonmacnoise), prevails at Tomgraney, two ancient tombstones having recently been recovered on digging new graves. As we have already seen,[25] St. Mochulla's well avenged the encroachment of its landlord on the *killeen* beside it, but the graveyards of Kildimo, near Kilkee, and St. Catherine's at Kells, near Corofin, are under cultivation. Dr. MacNamara noted a curious allusion to the last-named in O'Daly's fierce satire on "The Tribes of Ireland" in 1610. The people of Kells are there reproached for "digging the churchyard in the snow." The oldest Irish Law Code, the *Seanchus Mór*, has a clause against digging in a churchyard or breaking bones there. Kildimo was levelled, and its site included in an orchard by 1816.[26] Interference with human remains is deeply and dangerously resented, yet spells are sometimes worked with them.[27] The stealing of a dead man's hand for a butter charm is said to have taken place near Kilkee,[28] and the bones of a Franciscan with the brown cloth of his gown still adhering, found during the repairs at Ennis Abbey, were nearly all taken, but probably from most reverential motives. 764 [775] [765] 789

son of oak tree. There is a Knockaunatinnagh (little hill of the foxes) beside his church. [776]

[24] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii. (1841), p. 545.

[25] Vol. xxii., p. 211.

[26] W. G. Mason, *A Statistical Account etc.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

[27] See *Burial and Skull Beliefs*, vol. xxii., pp. 55-6, 456.

[28] Vol. xxii., p. 340.

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625

Charms.[39]—The charming of rats, which was described by Eugene O'Curry to Dr. J. Henthorne Todd, seems to have been forgotten in the Doonaha district, where, at least, I never heard of it during several visits in the neighbourhood from 1896. The performance is ancient, being described after A.D. 600 by the famous bard Seanchan Torpeist, a contemporary of King Guaire Aidhne of Gort, who ruled the district adjoining Clare on the north from about A.D. 610. O'Curry's story is that a certain John O'Mulconry joined the Established Church, and was ordained, being eventually advanced to be curate of Kilrush and Kilfieragh in the south-west corner of Clare. Now Kilfieragh graveyard was so horribly infested by rats that serious accidents occurred at every burial (I presume from their attacks), and every corpse buried there was entirely devoured by the following morning. The curate, horrified by the scenes he witnessed at a burial, proceeded to charm the rats, as the country folk firmly believed him able to do from his knowledge of old Irish literature. A certain John Foley, of Querin on the Shannon, saw that evening what looked like a bank of low-lying fog crossing a bog between him and Kilfieragh. He fancied it was the fairy host, and ran to one side, when he saw it was a compact body of rats. They went through his cornfield, without stopping, to Querin point, then burrowing into the dry sand and disappearing. They soon proved as destructive as ever, gnawing the fishermen's nets and boats (probably leather *curraghs*). The sufferers gathered a great number of neighbours, amongst whom was Owen Mór O'Curry, the writer's father, and proceeded to dig out and kill the vermin. An incredible number were slain, but the survivors seemed innumerable, and in the end, with the courage of despair, attacked the slayers, trying to run up their clothes and bite them. Wearied and terrified at the swarms, the peasantry at last gave up the fight and fled. Eugene O'Curry never heard what became of the remnant of the rats.

Thomas O'Keane, a land surveyor, told O'Curry in 1820 that he knew and used an ancient satirical poem to expel rats, and that he had successfully driven out all that infested his house and mill at Bealahagas, near Dunlicka Castle. The charm was in archaic and enignatical Irish. Fired by emulation, young O'Curry

[39] Addenda to Section xi., vol. xxii., pp. 49-60.

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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31] 585 796 626

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

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777 Leochain, who was slain in 1024. The King of Cashel (over-king, therefore, of North Munster) was forbidden to pass a night at Latteragh in northern Tipperary at the beginning of harvest; to encamp for nine consecutive nights at the river Suir; to hold a border meeting at Gowran; and to listen to the groans of women (in a raid) in southern Tipperary. The King of Connacht was not to go in a speckled cloak,—the prose adds "on a piebald horse," —to the heath of Luchaid in Clare. On the other hand, the ruler of Cashel brought good luck by plundering cattle in Connacht while the cuckoo sings; burning north Leinster; passing over Sliabh Cua,—"on a Tuesday," says the prose,—to pacify south Munster; crossing Magh Ailbhe with a light grey host; and resting six weeks (of Lent) every year at Cashel. It was most unlucky for him to wait for a feast at Killarney Lake for a full week from a Monday. At the present day some families still have their own tabus, lucky and lucky deeds and days, dreams, and omens, which sometimes even run counter to beliefs generally received,—*e.g.* that [787] the Friday falling on the thirteenth of any month, or to dream of a wild cat or other wild animal, is lucky.

741 825 *Witch hare.*[35]—Anthony Bruodin (*Bruodinus* or *Prodinus*), a Franciscan of Quin Abbey, tells in *Corolla Oecodemiae Minoritica* (Prague, 1664, p. 73) how his uncle (*patruus*), Florence of Moynaeo (Moynoe on Lough Derg) went out at the dawn of the first of May with his eldest son Bonaventura, (who died in Spain in 1643), and with their hounds to hunt hares. At last the servants saw one sucking a cow. The hounds chased it, biting it as it escaped, into a cottage, where an old woman was found torn behind.

776 *Glasgeivnagh cow.*[36]—Vague legends are told of her living at Treanahow, Shallee, and Ballygannon.

Ghosts or fairy men.—Mary (Mescal) Doyle, of Newmarket-on-Fergus, tells how she saw two ghostly men in black walking on a road near that village.

173 *Stolen bride.*—A legend of a stolen bride at Querin on the Shannon is told in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends etc. of Ireland* (1887), vol. i., p. 49.

[35] Addendum to vol. xxii. p. 449. [p.270]
[36] Addendum to p. 89 *supra*.

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In concluding this survey of the traditional beliefs (other than folk-tales) of County Clare, I am quite prepared to learn that I have failed to secure much that is well known to residents in the county. Even my mistakes and omissions, if they lead the people of Clare to abandon their apathy and to correct and supply the deficiencies of my notes, will have helped on the cause of Irish folklore study, and much that is on the point of being forgotten may be rescued for scientific workers on that most important and fascinating subject.[87] 114

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[87] *Additional Erratum*, vol. xii., p. 54. *For* Terry Island *read* Torry Island.

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OCTOBER, 1963 *MAN* No. 192

STRUCTURE OF PERSONAL NAMES ON TORY ISLAND*

By J. R. Fox, London School of Economics and Political Science

[P.153, B]

551 **192** In *The Aran Islands*[1] Synge makes the following observations on the system of personal names then in use (1898–1902):

> When a child begins to wander about the island, the neighbours speak of it by its Christian name, followed by the Christian name of its father. If this is not enough to identify it, the father's epithet—whether it is a nickname or the name of his own father—is added.
>
> Sometimes when the father's name does not lend itself, the mother's Christian name is adopted as epithet for the children.
>
> Occasionally the surname is employed in its Irish form, but I have not heard them using the 'Mac' prefix when speaking Irish among themselves; perhaps the idea of a surname which it gives is too modern for them, perhaps they do use it at times that I have not noticed.
>
> Sometimes a man is named from the colour of his hair. There is thus a Seaghan Ruadh (Red John), and his children are 'Mourteen Seaghan Ruadh,' etc.
>
> The schoolmaster tells me that when he reads out the roll in the morning the children repeat the local name all together in a whisper after each official name and then the child answers. If he calls, for instance, 'Patrick O'Flaharty,' the children murmer, 'Patch Seaghan Dearg' or some such name, and the boy answers.
>
> If an islander's name alone is enough to distinguish him it is used by itself, and I know one man who is spoken of as Eamonn. There may be other Edmunds on the island, but if so they have probably good nicknames or epithets of their own.

[114 184] While on Tory Island (Oileán Thoraighe), Co. Donegal, in 1962, I collected the names of all living adults and found the system to be basically that reported by Synge for the Aran Islands, with enough distinctiveness to be worth a separate analysis.[2]

601 Kinship terms are rarely used among the islanders except between young children and their parents and parents' 551 siblings. Cousinship is indicated by saying of a person something like 'his mother and my father were the children of two brothers' (*Bhí a mháthair agus m'athair clann na beirte dearbhráthar*), or 'we are children of brother and sister' (*Támuid clann dearbhráthar agus deirbhsheathar*). But in a small community where the genealogical links between persons are common knowledge, such descriptive explanations are rarely called for. Personal names are used 551 instead and in themselves help to indicate a person's position in the kinship structure by showing his line of descent for up to four generations.

A person will in fact have three sets of names: a Gaelic 'ceremonial' set; an English 'practical' set; and a Gaelic-English 'personal' set. A man's full Gaelic name will consist of his baptismal name followed perhaps by his 'epithet' such as Óg (young—usually means youngest of several brothers), Bán (fair), Mór (big), Beag (small—wee), followed by his surname. Such a combination might yield, [585] for example, 'Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh.' A woman, strictly speaking, retains her family name on marriage and adds the descriptive phrase 'wife of' (literally 'woman of')

* *With two tables*

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551 and the names of her husband, *e.g.* 'Máire Ní Dhubhghain
[585] bean Shéamuis Mhic Ruadhraigh'—literally, 'Mary, daughter of Doohan, wife of James the son of Rory.' A number of circumstances will determine whether or not her husband's name will 'stick' as a surname or whether she will go on being known by her maiden name. These names in their full forms are only used on ceremonial occasions such as dances—when a man or woman is called upon to sing or step-dance—, or for prayers in church during a serious illness, or for calling the roll in school, or for putting on a tombstone.

551 The practical names are the rough English equivalents
191 of the Gaelic names, used in dealing with English-speakers generally and particularly for use when working in England
167 and Scotland. The Government is usually dealt with in English for several reasons, mainly because although the
464 islanders all speak Gaelic as their native tongue, the language they read and write is English—a situation brought about by the pattern of migrant labouring which forced literacy on them when working in Britain. Also they find 'Dublin' or 'civil service' Irish difficult to follow. Most islanders, then, have an 'English' name. Our examples would be 'Paddy Rogers' and 'Mary Doohan' to the outside world. Sometimes these names stick and are used amongst the islanders rather like nicknames. Usually the English version is a rough phonetic equivalent of the Gaelic—Ó Duibhir becomes Diver, Ó Dubhgain becomes Doogan or Duggan, Mac Fhlaithbheartaigh becomes MacClafferty, etc. Sometimes this is abandoned and an English name taken for its 'likeness' to the Gaelic as with MacRuadhraigh and Rogers—Roger being the English name most like 'Rory.' The name Fioruisce is sometimes hopefully rendered Whorriskey, but mostly this is not even tried and the simple 'Waters' is substituted. Those going to England for work are particularly inclined to pick an 'English' name, *i.e.* one the foreman will recognize.

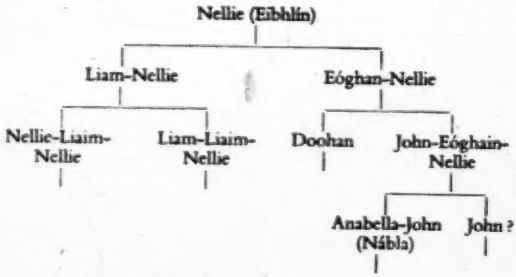
551 The third set of names, used for reference, consists of two or more Christian names, either Gaelic or English or both, 'strung' together in the manner described by Synge for Aran. Some people have as many as five or six names and 'epithets' strung together in this fashion. These names are the names of lineal ancestors either on the mother's or the father's side of the family. A person will take as many names as is necessary to distinguish him from all other persons, the surname system being inadequate for this task. (Four surnames cover 80 per cent. of the population.) He does not, however, pick these names arbitrarily but inherits the whole string. He can stop at any point in the string. Thus if a man was called 'Jimmy-Dhonnchadha-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his father must have been 'Donnchadh-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his paternal grandmother 'Máire-Mhicí' or maybe 'Máire-Mhicí-Tom.'[1] Thus if our man wanted to add to his names, he would have to add 'Tom.' Usually one or at most two names are enough to distinguish a person, in

551 addition to his own. As Synge observes, if a man's name is unique in some way he may be known by it alone, although on Tory he will usually have a 'latent' string of names which he never actually uses but which could be used if his Christian name were to crop up again. If any of the ancestors in the 'string' had epithets (using this to mean descriptive terms), these are included. But there is a tendency to use only the epithet of the last person in the string. Sometimes, if an ancestor was firmly known by his surname (if, say, he was an immigrant and the first of his name on the island) then this is added also.[4] Below are some examples of these names:

Eóghan-John-Dooley-Mhalainne	Dooley was a man from Malin in Co. Donegal.
Mary-John-Dooley-Mhalainne	Eóghan's sister.
Kate-Dooley-Mhalainne	His paternal aunt.
Jimmy-Mhuire-Bhillí	Jimmy-Mary-Willy (Billy)
Peggy-Phaidí-Shéamuis-Dhomhnaill	Peggy-Paddy-Jimmy-Donal
Pádraig-Hughdie-Dhuibhir	Patrick Hugh Diver
Paddy-Johnnie-Fhlaithbheartaigh	Paddy John (Mac)-Clafferty[5]

An alternative type of name—and a man may have two or three alternative types—consists of the addition of the Christian name of a parent to the surname. Thus two paternal first cousins might be respectively 'Jimmy Diver Nancy' and 'Jimmy Diver Madge.'

551 611 The segmentary process in the cognatic descent groups on the island affects this naming mechanism. This is illustrated in the following diagram:



This is an actual descent group tracing its ancestry to a widow, Nellie Doohan. The first four generations of the group are shown here, there being eight altogether. Nellie's descendants, 'Clann Nellie,' are divided into the Liam-Nellies and the Eóghan-Nellies. Clann Liaim-Nellie are subdivided into the Nellie-Liaim-Nellies and the Liam-Liaim-Nellies. The descendants of Eóghan-Nellie are segmented into the John-Eóghain-Nellies and another group known as the Doohans. There have only been sons in this latter group, and they have tended to be known by the 'John Doohan Nancy' type of name. The four or five generations below those shown on the diagram are not clearly segmented as yet. Amongst these, the name continuity is not so strong, but they all regard themselves as 'Liam-Nellies' or 'John-Eóghain-Nellies' or Doohans' according to the level of segmentation relevant to their various collective activities.[6] The degree to which the

551 name continuity of such a group can be maintained, con-
611 verging on the founder's name as in our example, is some measure of the continuing solidarity of the group. This tends to weaken after about six generations and the disintegration of the group is reflected in the native commentary—*Tá na h-ainmneacha caillte*, 'the names is lost.'
[182] The attempt to keep the name continuity often conflicts with the desire to distinguish person from person, hence the existence of alternative name types.

The following formula[1] shows the ideal structure of the Tory name using the following symbols: C = Christian name, S = surname, E = epithet, Fa = father's Christian name, Mo = mother's Christian name. A symbol in the lower case indicates that the item can be omitted from the progression of names.

		Generation 0	Generation +1	Generation +2
Patrilateral		Ce +S	Fa e es s +	FaFa e es s; FaMo e es s
			fa	———
			mo	
Matrilateral			Mo e es s +	MoFa e es s; MoMo e es s

The columns represent the alternative possibilities, the rows the matrilateral and patrilateral 'progression' of names. The formula can be expanded according to the same rules.

To see how this basic choice between matrilateral and patrilateral 'progressions' worked out in practice I tabulated instances of each type of name progression in my collection, distinguishing by sex of nominee (m and f) but ignoring the optional epithets and surnames (Table I). I collected these names separately from the two settlements on the island, East Town (*Baile Thoir*) and West
[184] Town (*Baile Thiar*), and they are so listed on the table. It is commonly believed that the East is more traditional than the West, but this does not show up in any differences in the naming systems.

What emerges from this table is the overwhelming preference for taking the father's name (and his father's) by both men and women, and the fact that for both sexes one possible combination does not occur—m/f+ Mo+ MoMo. I am told that this has occurred in the past, but infrequently. The fourth cluster of name types in the table is a group of residual types. The oddities here are the girl who took her father's brother's name and the rest which skip a generation and start with the grandparental names. These cases usually result from an uncle or grandparents bringing up children in the absence of parents. If these relatives are seen as *in loco parentis* then the pattern remains the same as for the majority.

[1] [This formula has been corrected according to the specifications given in Man, vol. 63, article 248, p. 195, Dec. 1963. Analyst]

[P. 155, A]

TABLE I

551 611 184

Name type	West Town	East Town	Total
m + *Fa*	24	25	49
f + *Fa*	26	16	42
m + *Mo*	13	4	17
f + *Mo*	6	4	10
m + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	15	5	20
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	13	4	17
m + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
f + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
m + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	0	3	3
f + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	2	1	3
m + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	3	3
f + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*	2	1	3
m + *MoFa*	3	1	4
f + *MoFa*	1	0	1
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	3	0	3
f + *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	0	1	1
f + *FaBro*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	3	0	3
f + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	1	0	1
	112	70	182

551 611 Table II summarizes the 'laterality preference' as it affects men and women respectively.

TABLE II

	Patrilateral	*Matrilateral*	*Total*
m	72 (70·6 *per cent.*)	30 (29·4 *per cent.*)	102
f	67 (83·75 *per cent.*)	13 (16·25 *per cent.*)	80
Total	139 (76·4 *per cent.*)	43 (23·6 *per cent.*)	182

The figures in parenthesis are percentages of the row totals.

The overall preference is, as we have seen, patrilateral, but there is an interesting minority preference amongst males for matrilateral names. Practically a third of the men and less than a sixth of the women have matrilateral names.[7] There are several explanations for this trend amongst [162] males. It may stem from the large number of widows with sons, or from the name continuity of the descent system. In a number of cases it follows from the fact that a man is given his father's Christian name as his own and hence takes his mother's name to distinguish him, although this 182 is not all that common.

551 611 Such a highly personalized naming system only works within the particularistic boundaries of a small community.

182 The world at large is not interested in the particular ante-
551 cedents of a man and the islanders recognize this in their use of surnames with the outside world. The old 'family'
611 or clan names placed a man in his wider kinship group in the days when this was important—it no longer matters today. Within the community the naming system described above distinguishes a man from other men and places him in his immediate kin group. It helps to establish his descent. Research in small communities in Western societies may reveal similar systems serving similar ends but based on different diacritical criteria.[8]

Notes

113 [1] J. M. Synge, *Four Plays and The Aran Islands*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 263f.

[2] Brief ethnographical details of Tory Island can be found in J. R. Fox, 'The Vanishing Gael,' *New Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1962.

551 [3] The second and subsequent names, when in Gaelic, are in the genitive. Some English names are Gaelicized and given a genitive form. I make no claims for the correctness of the spelling of the names given here (Irish spelling is pretty fluid), except that they are the forms recognized by literate islanders. I could not have made
[115] any headway with the Tory naming system and genealogies without the patient help of Máire Nic Fhlaithbheartaigh bean Aodha Uí Dhubhghain, Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh, and Aodh Ó Dubhghain.

[4] See Synge's comment on the use of the surname and the 'Mac' prefix. In the 'ceremonial' names on Tory both Mac and Ó are used, but when a surname is included in the 'personal' set, these prefixes are not usually used.

[5] This could be Paddy-John Uí Fhlaithbheartaigh—roughly Paddy John O'Flaherty. The pronunciation would be the same.

551 [6] A fuller analysis of the structure and functions of these descent
611 groups is in preparation. They seem to be mainly concerned with landholding—as a consequence of the equal division of land amongst all a man's (or woman's) heirs, and the system of keeping land in trust for migrants. Their other functions lie mainly in the sphere of mutual support amongst members in times of crisis.

[7] This distribution could only occur by chance in one sample out of 20: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4{\cdot}30$: $p = < {\cdot}05$.

551 [8] The Welsh system of stringing ancestral names together with
171 'ap' is obviously similar to the Tory method, but the Welsh, I believe, used only male names. Mr. Andrew Dunsire tells me that in some Scottish coastal villages a man will be known by the boat he owns, his children inheriting this epithet. In some working-class communities which I know in England a system similar to that on Tory operates. A man may be known as 'Mary's Tom' and his son as 'Mary's Tom's Johnnie,' etc. Synge notes the use of occupations as marks of distinction in Wales and comments on the lack of occupational differentiation on the Aran Islands which makes this method impossible. In some rural communities a man is known by the name of his farm. W. M. Williams in *The Sociology of an English Village* (Routledge, 1956) gives examples of this. See also his fascinating discussion of Naming and Family Continuity, pp. 79–82 and 229f. The contrast with the Tory system is marked, however, in that one can, in Gosforth, move from 'side' to 'side' in choice of names—both surnames and Christian names being used.

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

[p. i]

CASE STUDIES IN 000
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

GENERAL EDITORS

George and Louise Spindler

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

INIS BEAG

Isle of Ireland

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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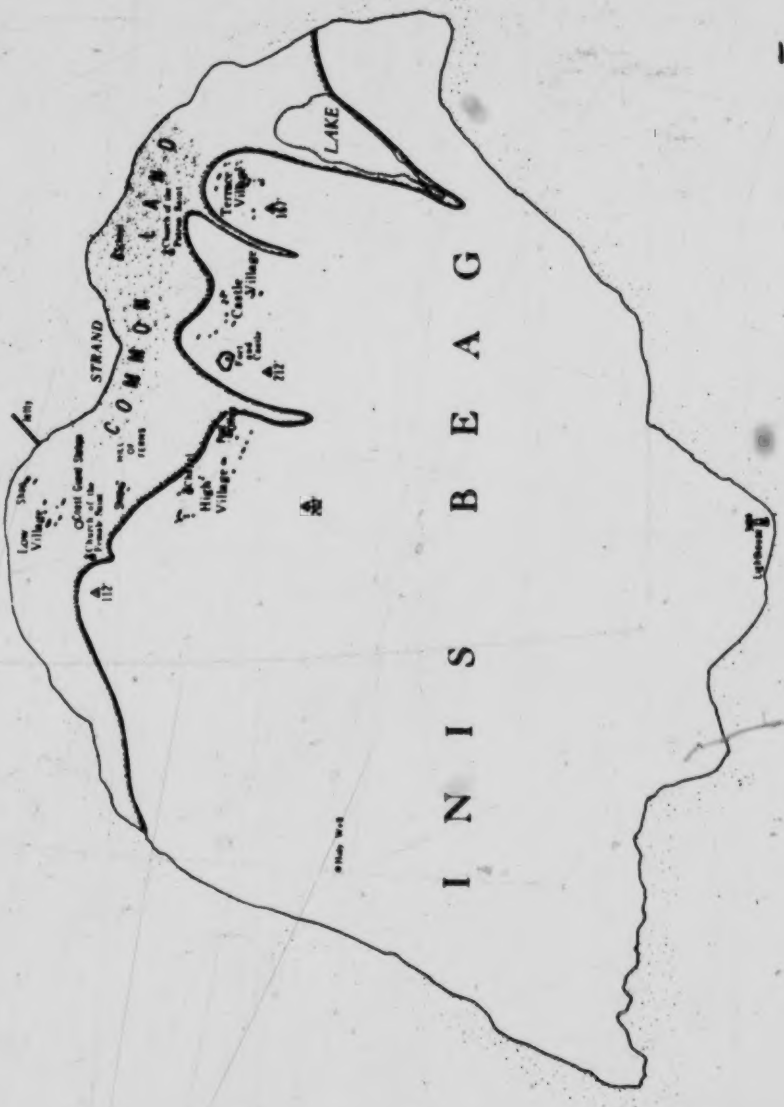

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[p. iii]

INIS BEAG

Isle of Ireland

By
JOHN C. MESSENGER
Indiana University

[title page]

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Foreword

About the Series

000 These case studies in cultural anthropology are designed to bring to students, in beginning and intermediate courses in the social sciences, insights into the richness and complexity of human life as it is lived in different ways and in different places. They are written by men and women who have lived in the societies they write about and who are professionally trained as observers and interpreters of human behavior. The authors are also teachers, and in writing their books they have kept the students who will read them foremost in their minds. It is our belief that when an understanding of ways of life very different from one's own is gained, abstractions and generalizations about social structure, cultural values, subsistence techniques, and the other universal categories of human social behavior become meaningful.

About the Author

114 John C. Messenger is a professor in the Department of Anthropology, the Folklore Institute, and the Program of African Studies at Indiana University. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University and taught at Michigan State University and Carleton College before joining the Indiana University [122] faculty. In 1951 and 1952, he conducted fieldwork among the Anang of southeastern Nigeria as an Area Research Training Fellow of the Social Science Research Council; his research during 1959 and 1960, which provided the bulk of the data reported herein, was supported by an Exchange Scholarship to Eire administered by An Bord Scolairteachtai Comalairte of Dublin. Professor Messenger has published numerous articles, chapters in books, and monographs concerning the cultures of the Anang, the Irish, and the Montserrat islanders of the West Indies, whom he studied in 1965 and 1967. A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled him to write a substantial portion of this volume.

About the Book

114 This is a case study of a people widely known through the media of
121 journalism and film. Imbedded in a context of romanticism and nativism, the
123 image of the people and their culture created by these media scarcely approximates reality, for reasons that Dr. Messenger makes clear both in his discussion of nativism and the reasons for its strong influence on characterizations of Irish folk,

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and in his descriptive anaysis of the culture and social structure of Inis Beag. For 114 121 these reasons the book will doubtless raise controversy among Irish journalists, 123 particularly those of nativistic persuasion.

Dr. Messenger decribes the folk and their culture as he sees them, and 114 within the conceptual structure of the social sciences. The picture that emerges is 121 less heroic than the curren romanticized idealization, and very human. The author's 123 personal identification with the island and its people is obvious. He struggles to 128 maintain an objective staice, and largely succeeds, but it is obvious that he and his wife participated exuberantly in the life of Inis Beag. This is in the best tradition of anthropological fildwork. The problems of identification, friendship, rejection and acceptance, and ambivalence that are invariably associated with such participation are common to all of us who have had this kind of experience.

The case study is notable for its human qualities. It is a descriptive analysis 114 of a significant folk way of life heretofore unrepresented in this series. It is also 128 notable for its significance as an analysis of a closed community that provides mobility only by migration, and for the analysis of the influence of puritanism. This latter emphasis is particularly valuable, for too often we assume that puritanism is associated only with Protestantism. Here, the inter-relationships with Catholicism, particularly with the Jansenist denial of sexuality, is made very clear. Dr. Messenger pursues these themes at both the social and the psychological levels. The case study is also characterized by a strong focus, especially appropriate in the Irish folk context, on folklore, Christian reinterpretations of pagan elements, music, song, and dance. And the dimensions of life that are featured in most ethnographies are well developed—subsistence, material culture, social organization and social control, and values and religion. Dr. Messenger is also careful to provide a historical introduction to Inis Beag, in the context of relevant aspects of Irish history.

GEORGE AND LOUISE SPINDLER
General Editors

Portola Valley, Calif.
May 1969

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Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, [241] of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first [241] decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag [501] over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most [197] attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 [1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

103 192 [2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process. 114 121 127

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated. 12 [539] [177] [178]

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next. 105 [121] [160] [241] [436] [511] [161] [593] [581] [177] [178] [829] [165] [212] [829]

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the 668

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668 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary,
000 and clerical figures.[3] A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

668 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Associa-
197 tion, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the
538 formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage
[204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

> The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasised the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195–196).

177 Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on
185 language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since
668 the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the
[648] time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

[113] [3] The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603–1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

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choice of cultural elements to be revived and perpetuated. Countless forms of peasant culture, many of which are still widespread, have come to be demeaned and even their existence denied by the more militant nativists. The attitude of these persons toward traditional songs, dances, and sports such as hurling is quite at variance with that toward matchmaking in courtship and the belief in fairies, ghosts, and witches. It is the prevalence of such customs as the latter in rural Ireland which has been largely responsible for bringing the term peasant into such disrepute.

Some of the extreme points of view held by Irish nativists are: the Irish today are a "pure" Celtic "race" and possess psychological and behavioral traits which are "racially" rooted, including even a "racial memory;" Celtic civilization developed before and was "superior" to Greek and Roman civilizations, and the Irish branch of European civilization during the Middle Ages was "advanced" over those of other European societies; the Irish literary tradition has been "richer" and of greater esthetic "worth" than other European traditions of the past; the Irish language is a more effective communicator of ideas than other languages (especially English) and mirrors the distinctive Irish or Celtic "personality," "spirit," or "soul;" in order to achieve national identity, unity, and greatness, the Gaelic tongue once again must be spoken universally in the nation; and, Ireland is the "most Catholic" of all countries—in historical tradition, strength of belief, and morality. Inis Beag folk have been singled out for adulation by nativists because they are Gaelic speakers, pious Catholics, and believed to be lineal decendants of Celts who lived in the island two millennia ago. Their character is thought to embody those traits of ancient origin held in highest esteem by the Irish: spirituality, independence, self-reliance, industriousness, strength, courage, imaginativeness, sanity, and emotional stability.

Nativism has had a profound impact both on government policies affecting Inis Beag and other Gaeltacht communities, and on the interpretations of the Inis Beag milieu by writers and film, radio, and television producers. The extensive services and subsidies afforded the islanders reflect, in part, the nativistic outlook of the government; it is hoped that they will halt emigration and preserve the Irish tongue and other valued cultural forms which are preserved here but are disappearing rapidly from the rest of the country. Nativism also has caused artists, who have most observed and publicized the folk, to distort the Inis Beag way of life in their works. Too often they have been unaware of, ignored, exaggerated, or misinterpreted beliefs and behavior so as to present a desired picture of the folk, one in keeping with the nativistic stereotype.

Distortions of Inis Beag culture also have been caused by primitivism—the idealization of past or future cultural estates or of contemporary primitive and folk cultures. Like nativism, it provides psychological compensation for frustrations created by personal or social disorganization. Its origins are manifold and can be traced back to antiquity, but in its modern guise it is an amalgam of utopianism since the sixteenth century, Enlightenment views of "natural man," rural attitudes toward urban life since the industrial revolution, Marxian socialism, late nineteenth-century cultural evolutionism, and early twentieth-century ethnology. Central to the primitivistic position is the belief that civilization has dehumanized man and undermined his valued institutions; it has caused social bonds to disintegrate,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

668 fostered immorality, and created mental illness on a vast scale. Primitive and folk peoples, according to this view, represent man as he once was and could or should be again were civilized society drastically reformed.

000 Most of the ideas held by primitivists are as extreme as those maintained by nativists: primitive and folk societies possess simple, static cultures in which dysfunctional forms are rare; their economies are primarily subsistence ones, approximate the householding type, and lack competitive elements; social control is mostly informal; the family is the core social group and is a highly integrated and cooperative unit; religion is a pervasive force which sanctions most behavior and assures psychological security and social cohesion; and, religious dissent and skepticism are unknown. Primitivists also contend that primitive and folk peoples are content with their conditions of life, are seldom if ever mentally ill, and possess character traits that civilization has perverted. It is probable that primitivists would include all of the traits designated as Irish by nativists and would add many others.

114 12 The antiquarians George Petrie and John T. O'Flaherty during the 1820s were the first scientists to undertake research in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. Since that time, there have been short and sporadic visits to the island by a variety of investigators, among them anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians, philologists, and others. Most of the anthropological research has been conducted by archeologists, anthropometricians, and linguists. Several archeological expeditions have examined thoroughly surface sites in Inis Beag, but no prehistorian has excavated as yet, and the accurate dating of artifacts scarcely has begun. Reconstruction of a number of ancient monuments by the government was made possible through the research findings of archeologists, and today site descriptions on mounted plaques mark the principal monuments. Alfred C. Haddon and C. R. Browne in 1892 and E. A. Hooton and C. W. Dupertius between 1932 and 1934 made anthropometric studies, the latter as part of the Harvard University anthropological survey of Ireland, which also included archeological and ethnographic investigations. The ethnographic study—reported in Conrad M. Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman* and Arensberg's and Solon T. Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*—was made in three communities of Co. Clare by these authors with W. Lloyd Warner; it was the first holistic ethnographic study made in Ireland, and my research in Inis Beag in its initial stages was only the third. (The second, by Rosemary Harris, is reported in a 1954 M.A. thesis in the University of London—see References.)

114 12 197 177 178 [162] Linguists, as well as philologists and those wishing to learn Gaelic, long have visited Inis Beag. There now remain only a few areas along the western seaboard of Europe where Gaelic dialects still are spoken, and the island is located in one of these.[4] One-half the population of Ireland spoke the vernacular at the end of the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the last century the ratio had fallen to one-quarter, or approximately 1,500,000 speakers. Sixty years later the

[4] The Celtic languages are Gaulish, Goidelic, and Brittanic, of which the first became extinct at the beginning of the medieval period, and the last two are represented today by the Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects on the one hand, and the Breton and Welsh on the other. Two other related dialects are now extinct: Manx of the Isle of Man and Cornish, the British dialect of Cornwall (Dillon 1957:207).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

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121 The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. In 1846, 25 years before Edward Tylor pronounced his famous anthropological definition of culture, William J. Thoms introduced into English the word "folk-lore," which he defined as "the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the olden time." Ethnology, a scientific discipline whose focus is primitive culture in the Tylor tradition, has had for almost a century its parallel in the humanistic discipline of folklore, whose focus is the culture of the folk, or folklore, in the Thoms tradition. During this time, ethnology has evidenced a humanistic current in its concern with primitive religion, ideology, and esthetics. The discipline of folklore, on the other hand, has evidenced a scientific current, mainly in the research of scholars belonging to the "Finnish School," whose approach to cultural dynamics resembles that of the "American Historical School" of ethnology, and of eastern and northern European folklorists (who often call themselves ethnographers as well) who have been making rather broad cultural studies of peasant communities somewhat in the anthropological mold. American ethnologists employ the term folklore to designate only the oral literature of peoples—their myths, legends, folktales, anecdotes, proverbs, riddles, songs, and the like. I will employ the term in this sense when I deal with Inis Beag esthetics in Chapter 4.

Ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the universities and elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland, but folklore in the humanistic tradition is strongly developed (Delargy 1957; Dorson 1966). The deliberate recording of the immense body of folklore in Ireland began in the early part of the last century, was kindled by the Gaelic Revival, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation, first, of the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936. For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the oral literature and material traits, and their associated behavior, of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the people; moreover, their visits have been brief and intermittent, they have depended on a limited sample of respondents, and most of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (the Irish equivalent of the American *Outline of Cultural Materials* and British *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*), which does not include many categories of significance to anthropologists. Since my wife and I were interested primarily in the nonmaterial elements of Inis Beag culture, and since the oral literature of the folk has been well studied by commission and other folklorists, we placed less emphasis on material culture and folklore in our ethnographic work.

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121 The culture of Inis Beag about to be described is that of 1959 and 1960, and if I intrude data from earlier or later fieldwork I will label them as such. My wife and I also collected a large body of cultural materials in three other Irish islands, for the purposes of making cross-cultural comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. The Inis Beag tradition is shared in large measure by the inhabitants of neighboring islands, especially those of Inis Thiar, and the several cultures together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the Irish system considered as a whole. Many of the peasant customs of Inis Beag are shared with rural peoples on the mainland, where

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numerous regional subcultures exist, and some are part of a larger European matrix. In fact, as I indicated earlier, Inis Beag culture in its broadest outlines resembles other existing folk cultures. I have decided to employ English terms rather than their Gaelic counterparts whenever possible throughout the book, even though doing so will displease many Irish readers; this decision is based on the fact that most of its readers will be students of anthropology in colleges and universities in the United States. Since the islanders speak both English and Irish and command English equivalents for most Gaelic words and phrases, either language might be utilized.

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The Island and Its Past

Prehistoric Period (9000 B.C. to 500 A.D.)

133 FORMED SINCE THE RETREAT over 12,000 years ago of the Weichsel glacier, Inis Beag consists of a block of limestone, Carboniferous in age, the geological axis of which is aligned northwest to southeast. The block has a gentle southwest dip, and its massive grey limestone strata are separated by narrow bands of water-bearing shales. There are two physical subdivisions in the island. On the northeast side, differential erosion has formed a series of terraces
133 separated by small cliffs a dozen or so feet in height. The greater share of good
134 arable land is found in this subdivision, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and ice. These soils have been deepened artificially by the islanders through adding sand, seaweed, and compost. On the southwest side of Inis Beag is a more even surface, composed largely of pavement covered here and there by indigenous and manufactured soils, sloping from the 212-feet-high terrace crest almost as the dip of the strata to the Atlantic coast. The bare limestone surfaces are intersected in all directions by deep crevices, and in places the rocks form large slabs or are so fissured as to present a series of
133 vertical ridges. Found in the joints are most of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs
[134]—of the island. The rocky appearance of the "back of the island" (see Fig. 1), as the people call this second subdivision, is accentuated by numerous granite and sandstone erratics dropped by the retreating glacier.

172 As yet no evidence of the Paleolithic has come to light in Ireland. The Mesolithic is dated from 6500 to 3000 B.C.; thus early man may have entered Ireland hard on the heels of the disappearing ice, as he did in other parts of Europe, crossing from the Continent on land bridges which then existed where the English Channel and Irish Sea now flow. A Neolithic period lasting only 1000 years existed in Ireland, and its artifacts at particular sites show a merging with earlier Mesolithic and later Copper-Bronze Age forms. Inis Beag contains a profusion of Copper-Bronze Age remnants, created before the coming of the Celts

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Figure 1. The back of the island from the lighthouse

with an Iron Age culture about 350 B.C.; but only in 1961 were earlier Neolithic, or possibly Mesolithic, implements discovered. When my wife and I arrived in the island for a seven week visit during the summer of 1962, we were presented with three slate axe heads which had been unearthed by road workers the previous December. It is possible that they are Mesolithic, for the industry never has been dated accurately. 172 [114]

The principal Copper-Bronze Age monuments of Inis Beag are Megalithic tombs and burial mounds, and possibly kitchen middens and semi-subterranean stone dwellings, called *clochán*. Small gallery graves incorporated into lately built stone walls are common, but it appears that they never have been examined by prehistorians, for there is no record of them in the literature. Archeologists seldom have visited the back of the island where the prehistoric and medieval populations, contrary to present day opinion, may have centered. None of the Inis Beag *clochán* have been dated, but it is known that they were lived in by clerics and ascetics during the Middle Ages, and were still used as living quarters in a nearby island early last century. It is as difficult to ascertain the age of burial mounds and middens in Ireland as it is of stone houses, because they too were formed over several historical periods. Burial mounds of earth and stone, termed respectively tumuli and cairns by archeologists, first were erected during the Copper-Bronze Age and continued to be built into the early modern period (although not for funerary purposes). There are numerous mounds in Inis Beag, but in many instances it is hard to distinguish on sight cairns from *clochán* in their ruinous, overgrown condition. The islanders regard both types of structures as burial sites. Middens can be dated from the Mesolithic to the end of the medieval era. Most of the island middens are associated with dwelling places from the Middle Ages, but those located near the mouths of caves in the limestone cliffs of the terraces [814]

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172 may be much older. I was told that foreign collectors long ago purchased from the folk copper and bronze artifacts which had been exhumed from cave middens.

172 333 The Iron Age in Inis Beag is best represented by a fort constructed of limestone rocks quarried locally and fitted together without mortar, which bears no name other than the Irish word for fort—*Dún* (see Fig. 2). It commands the rim of a promontory, and its oval shape measures 170 by 127 feet. Unfortunately, from the point of view of the prehistorian, its inner wall was greately reduced in height and any outer ramparts and stone *chevaux de frise* completely destroyed to furnish building materials for a medieval tower house which stands at its center. To the south about 500 feet, and on somewhat higher ground, are the remains of what may have been a monastery. According to island historians, it was pulled down by soldiers attacking the "castle" with cannons, and most of its stones were employed later in the construction of a watch tower nearby. Another monastery at the back of the island on the southeast side may indeed be the ruins of a fort, as the oldest of its three names bears the word fort.

Medieval Period (500 to 1500)

17 The end of the Iron Age in Ireland is dated conveniently by historians as 431 (or 462), when St. Patrick arrived from Wales as a missionary to convert the pagan Celts. But, of course, prehistoric cultural elements persisted for many cen-

Figure 2. Castle enclosed by the Iron Age promontory fort

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Arán Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on [776]
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the offi-
ciating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient
tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured
soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the
church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hun-
dreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appear-
ance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

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Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

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on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

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The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,

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is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The 174
middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting 175
from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 712
from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower.

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its 175
strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her follow- 648
ing their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics [504]
who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged [167]
himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his [798]
followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade.

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided 175
into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My gene- 423
alogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from 167
immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the 142
seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have inter- 127
married and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and 125
blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket.

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of 829
poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that 648
they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered 241
by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth 175
and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and [437]
O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period [648]
during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British [712]
Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, [726]
one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion.

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[712] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

176 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island
form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are
situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the
rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are
Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common
land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the
monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common
land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the com-
munity. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 275
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve
the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small
enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop
are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes
purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [443]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an
aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the
106 lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings
349 in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by
[427] islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the
[464] other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

743 Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

344 The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor,
205 just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room
206 with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use
[203] in matters pertaining to the service during the prescribed hours. When the freighter ran aground before dawn, it was discovered by islanders who informed the company; Radio Eireann reported the plight of the vessel, on the basis of S.O.S. messages, in the seven o'clock news, but the company had reached the reef before the telephone was available.

346 Inis Beag has only a small church, known as the "chapel." After the church of the patron saint was abandoned, a house served as the place of worship for a time, then was superseded by the old chapel whose foundations can be discerned

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [674]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

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823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 663 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil; ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

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skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *currach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

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Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and [182] indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most [521] activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the [676] climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, [127] and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland; though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of [137] islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, [865] several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own [207] sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

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centuries of careful observations. I collected 250 of these signs and placed them 821
in the following general categories: density, location, and time of mist; type of [126]
frost and heaviness of dew; size and position of rings around sun and moon; color and conformation of sky and clouds at particular times of the day; density and location of fog banks; position and time of rainbows; clarity, closeness, and color of Inis Thiar and the mainland; changes in the weather in relation to tides; actions of animals; and pains in the human body. Of special interest are the signs associ- [825]
ated with animal behavior, such as the height at which swallows fly, the prevalence of fly hordes, the crowing of roosters and braying of asses, the position that cats assume at the hearth, and whether or not spiders weave their webs across trails. The expert forecaster will weigh together as many as ten signs before announcing his prediction, and I once collected 16 from an old man in Low Village assessing conditions 12 hours hence. Some signs are quite obviously undependable, among them the quacking of ducks which some say will "call" rain, and the scratching of floors and furniture by cats which, according to others, will point the direction of the wind following a shift in the near future. The folk believe that the moon and [828]
tides exert a profound influence on both weather and human behavior; my wife on one occasion was told that her "snappish" mood (the words of a neighbor, not mine) was caused by the new moon.

The climate, in part, determines the conception of seasons held by the islanders. Four seasons are recognized, but their duration deviates from the norm of Western culture. Winter is conceived as embracing only December and January, while spring is thought to commence in February and end in early April. The other two seasons are not so well defined, but most folk agree that summer takes up the greater part of the year—from April until mid-September—and autumn the remaining three months. December and January are regarded as the coldest months, during which time there is a lull in economic activities, but planting begins early in February. Although the prevailing winds during the year are from the west and southwest, for several weeks between January and mid-March icy winds blow steadily from the southeast quarter and cause much physical discomfort and illness. In late March and early April, temperatures rise rapidly, and some islanders believe that March "steals" three days from April so that summer cannot be expected until after April 3rd. The circumstances of the theft are revealed in a legend.

The reason that summer is thought to extend for so long is a psychological [154]
one: the folk dislike winter with its cold and dampness and attendant sickness and the sense of isolation from the world that it brings. Few outsiders visit Inis Beag during the winter, and often the steamer is unable to leave port or must turn back because of gales or high seas. It is not out of the ordinary for the island to be totally isolated for a week or ten days because of inclement conditions. From late January on, warm weather is anticipated eagerly, and I was told time and again that summer was imminent when spells of cold and rainy weather occurred between March and June of 1960. During a quarrel with her husband over his confident weather forecasting ability, a woman noted for being an outspoken realist declared, "Inis Beag has only one summer month—July."

The island experiences but eight hours of daylight, from nine o'clock in 132
the morning until five in the afternoon, at the time of the winter solstice, and

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132 only four hours of relative darkness, from midnight on, six months later at mid-
512 summer. People tend to sleep late during the winter, sometimes to nine or even
132 ten o'clock, and to begin their social activities early in the evening, while in June and July they arise an hour or two earlier and work as late as ten o'clock at night. My wife and I have attended parties during the 12 days of Christmas when guests assembled before eight o'clock, whereas in July we have waited until almost midnight for festivities to commence, when darkness afforded privacy of movement, desirable for reasons to be explained later. Times for meals, feeding and milking cattle, and many other enterprises also follow the lengthening and shortening of daylight hours from season to season.

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

2

The Land and the Sea

Standard of Living

THE STANDARD OF LIVING of the folk has improved vastly since the establishment of the Irish Land Commission in 1881 and the Congested Districts Board ten years later, and the islanders are better off today than the inhabitants of some other areas of the Gaeltacht. In 1891, the Congested Districts were delineated as regions in which the population did not possess sufficient land to maintain life except at an extremely low standard. Between that year and 1951, the population in the districts declined 42 percent—from 541,000 to 367,000 persons. The few areas which would rank as congested now, on the 1891 basis, are mainly in Cos. Donegal, Mayo, and Galway (Freeman 1960:121–123). A vigorous and continuing effort to stem the tide of emigration, in part caused by poverty, led the commission, the board, subsequently the Gaeltacht Eireann which replaced the board after 1925, and other government agencies appointed in this century, to improve the standard of living by various actions: the enlargement of land holdings for more effective farming, the encouragement of small factory and domestic industries, the improvement of fishing, the construction of public works, and the introduction of various subsidies. Seasonal laboring in England, often practiced out of necessity by mainland farmers but not by the islanders, and remittances from relatives who have emigrated are income sources which also have served to alleviate poverty; but the major palliative throughout Ireland has been emigration. One of the factors limiting migration from Inis Beag to the mainland until recent decades was the low standard of living which prevailed in the country at large. An islander could not escape local hardships and privations by emigrating to urban centers as he can today; he had to turn his back on Ireland.

Most Inis Beag people believe themselves to be materially poor, although they resent others agreeing publicly with this view. A well-known Dublin newspaper feature writer in 1963 was denounced, and a vow made not to permit him to

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511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *currach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [667] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young chil-
dren. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring
groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend
less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them
more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men
of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school,
at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and
their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the house-
hold. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the
other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often de-
manded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially
when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about
being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer
hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in
America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

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561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

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size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

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241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[431] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

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as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small 824
boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine [437]
content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960.
Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried [241]
immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the
year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed
fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it
and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace
villagers.

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore 222
bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore
on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four
villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a stand-
still. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are 222
assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. 423
Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is
assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion
of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of
the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its
seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to
Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to
the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse
were maintained.

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive 222
with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade [482]
out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod
baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above
"high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water
and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying
creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried 241
on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored
from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before
seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to
whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should
be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of
opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at
the several stages of "setting" a garden.

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers 241
as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. 654
But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not [177]
disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a [178]
great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all
four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they [184]
have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is
lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no
credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by

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Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[435] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce, under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the
[433] agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[431] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

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ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

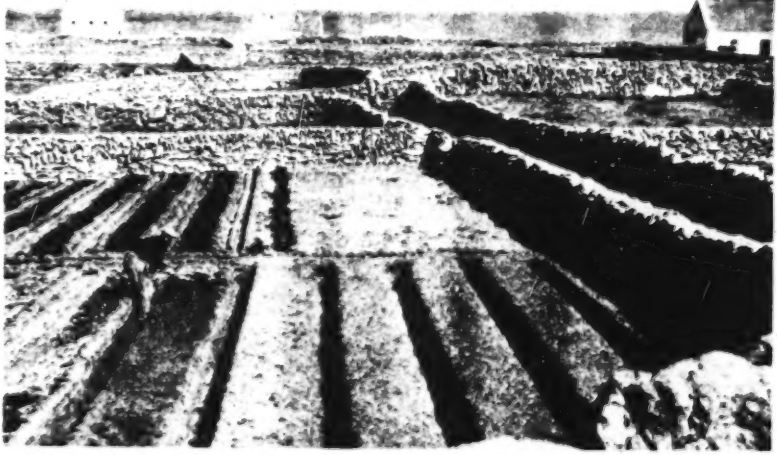

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

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244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a 246
task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot 221
only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted.

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a 246
"reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The [293]
farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most [461]
strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to [343]
transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder.

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent 434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts 437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of island- [231] ers. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [226] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [311] eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [654] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [241] fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [231] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [331] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

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221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [431] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 [232] [224] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. [541]

Fishing

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It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *currach*, much as did their grandfathers. [601]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [759]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[82] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[602] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. 262
Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat 272
biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals. [561]

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the 252
open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread
which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring [443]
must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a
family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally 252
made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in 262
a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and [234]
also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the
fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial
product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are
eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking [273]
their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread gener-
ously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained
of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on
the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their [561]
bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing
six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days
will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, [443]
mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the
shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from
mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy
are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other
shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or
cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and [824]
are considered delicacies: *creamnach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled
but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which
when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed [751]
to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard
them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even 262
when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking 252
pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than 415
its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat
them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. 262
They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed 264
only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is 415
thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the [829]
folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor
did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which
the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes
when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
516 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters 291 294
are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are
sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn 291
lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white [192]
woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel,
but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen
waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn
directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the
ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and
shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting [462]
and darning stockings for their husbands and children. [286] [296]

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue
skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat
when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, [286]
made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep
tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the
front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, [301]
somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the
neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen
dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool,
which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets [178]
are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always [292]
is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and
children of all ages go barefooted or put on sandals during the summer and add
hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers,
bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings
are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their
dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only
decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes [296]
that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt,
and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing;
the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer [513]
attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed
during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

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291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathrubs.

Crafts

463 434 [501] [295] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [438] [657] [437] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-
501 502 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 [502] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the [433] [322] crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, [184] and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

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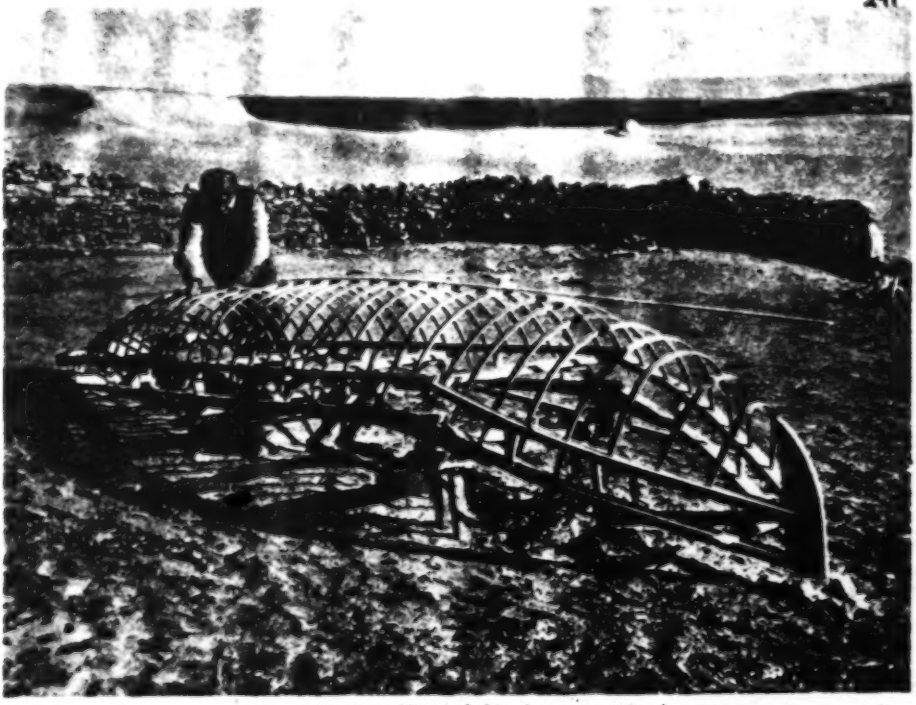

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

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folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A [184]
curach takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds [194]
for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of 501
holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen 789
seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the [178]
cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter [177]
hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens [187]
known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time
of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea;
if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is
postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause post-
ponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on
the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is 000

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The knit sweater

291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[195] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[65] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach
the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear
the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the
Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has
its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able
to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41
sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn
slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls
choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion
dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase
their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into
island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal,
a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although
made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have
heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish
expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by
weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland
shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to
monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[198] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[822] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[999] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new
crios if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants
who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

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422 valuable commodities. Vessels which have run aground in the past have been
[175] stripped, and in 1960 a portion of the stricken freighter's cargo—namely Scotch
[722] whiskey, yarn, boiler pipes, toilet fixtures, sacks, shoes, and other goods—was
[432] obtained by the folk under the law of wrack. The importance and tenacity of the law were attested by the fact that "salvaging" was continued in the face of opposition from ship owners, insurance representatives, customs officials, visiting police, and even the imprecations of curate and parish priest.

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[p.50]

3

The Village and the Family

Village Differences

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LOW VILLAGE RECEIVES ITS NAME from its position on the lowest terrace of Inis Beag (see Fig. 4). It borders the ocean and strand, while High Village to the east is located in a wide expanse south of the common land formed by a concavity in the upper terraces. On the western of the two promontories high above the beach, separated from Low and Terrace by rift valleys, is Castle Village. Below it are the cemetery enclosing the church of the patron saint and the new school, and above it are the castle, the ruined monastery, the Napoleonic watch tower, and what remains of the old school next to the tower. The Ordnance Survey Maps place the highest elevation of Inis Beag in the vicinity of the tower, but the folk claim that the most elevated portion of the crest is above High. Terrace Village, on the promontory to the east, presents a breath-taking view of the lake (see Fig. 7), the sound, and towering mountains and cliffs along the mainland coast. Low merges with High, but Castle and Terrace, because they are located on high terraces and bounded by rift valleys, are isolated units. Terrace is aligned north and south, but the other three settlements are aligned roughly east and west. The southernmost house of Terrace and the westernmost one of Low are approximately 1500 yards apart, and the intervening distance can be walked comfortably in less than 12 minutes.

[138]
[823]

Below are the number of inhabited houses and the population of each village:

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	Houses	*Population*
Low Village	24	119
High Village	16	59
Castle Village	17	99
Terrace Village	14	73

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361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and
often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis
Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping
slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more
concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all
Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to
the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality,
men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested
successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also
are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives
and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in
social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of
Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the
people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis
Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well
abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who
come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and
primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain
a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines
in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held
accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148).
Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although
fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied
secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined
denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting
towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn main-
land attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their
English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency
than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever
my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by
islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other
business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the
folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of
the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them,
the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness
of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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by choice, an old woman said, "City folk are always troubled. They aren't their own bosses, and they get up too early and work too hard. They face the dangers of traffic, and, worst of all, they meet with temptations of the flesh."

In the last chapter, I discussed two facets of the Inis Beag self-image: their seldom admitted poverty and indolence. Other facets have just been revealed in their appraisals of various groups, and still more are apparent when one examines their attitudes toward visitors to the island. During the summer, they enjoy the presence of strangers on the strand at steamer time, in the pubs, and at parties, and when winter comes many conversations dwell on those who were "great gas" —entertaining in song, dance, or repartee. But outsiders fulfill a far deeper need, in that most of them express admiration for the island and its inhabitants. They praise the beauty, antiquities, and history of Inis Beag, but more importantly the friendliness of the people and those customs and personality traits publicized by writers and film producers, which are "discovered" even when nonexistent or considerably "diluted." Departing tourists usually vow that they will return, and they are asked repetitiously what it was that so pleased them and if they will be "lonesome after they leave." Reflected here are the profound feelings of inferiority of the folk and their need for constant reassurance of their worth. Much of the depression among islanders during winter months is related to the absence of outsiders who stimulate them and are subjects of gossip.

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The people of Inis Beag regard themselves as friendly, polite, and hospitable to outsiders—not at all like their Inis Thiar neighbors, who are said not to like tourists and to extort money from them for giving information and allowing themselves to be photographed. Strangers never are derided for behaving in a disapproved fashion but are "treated with dignity," although some men will try to gain free drinks and other favors from outsiders in a calculating and beguiling manner (called "being cute" in Ireland), which is frowned on by the majority of folk. During the summer when tourists are plentiful, many islanders behave according to the nativistic and primitivistic expectations of the strangers: attire becomes more traditional and newer costumes are worn, canoes are rowed with greater vigor, conversations become more boastful, and the like. The sensitivity of the islanders to nativism and primitivism is quite selective, however, in that they extol certain of their indigenous customs and are ashamed of others. Actions which give credence to such character traits as spirituality, strength, and courage are exaggerated, while those which belie such traits as independence, self-reliance, and industriousness are carefully hidden. My wife and I kept a careful record of the responses of Inis Beag folk to questions that we posed concerning their history and culture when we first visited the island in 1958. More than 40 replies turned out to be erroneous, and some of them would have done credit to the most ardent nativist or primitivist.

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Most tourists who visit Inis Beag share a mystique fostered by interpretations of island life in the works of writers and film producers. A similar mystique is found elsewhere in the world among idealized primitive and peasant peoples. In Inis Beag, it often causes visitors to seek acceptance from the folk, to resent the presence of other outsiders, to boast of their intimate knowledge of Inis Beag customs, and, in some cases, to "go native" in so far as circumstances permit.

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000 Strangers who spend weeks or months in Inis Beag and are able to grasp some of the realities of life there often leave emotionally distraught, knowing that they 609 never will be accepted by the people. Acceptance by the islanders is a problem faced by not only outsiders, but by immigrants. The latter remain strangers for two or three generations, and some people, particularly descendants of fisherfolk, are regarded as outsiders despite the fact that the families of some have resided in [152] Inis Beag for almost a century. Later we will learn that the islanders have difficulty [602] forming affectional bonds among themselves, even among kin; thus, they are able to give even less of themselves to those "who do not belong." Strangers who know Inis Beag well often complain that they must do all of the "giving," as the folk can only "take."

The islanders also share attitudes toward other individuals and groups, which I can mention only in passing. Among the most important are those concerning outsiders who have lived in Inis Beag for long periods of time (the expatriate Dane, lighthouse keepers, Brendan Behan the writer, and Siobhain McKenna the actress); writers who have composed works about the island and have dwelled there or are folk themselves; particular persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands (a policeman, a teacher, a man of great strength, a keeper of a guest house, and a man who provides taxi service between the islands and the mainland in a small boat); peasants from bordering counties; religious groups (Protestants generally, members of the Church of Ireland, Jews, and even Italian Catholics); ethnic and racial groups (Americans, English, Germans, Negroes, tinkers, and foreigners as a class); and, finally, politicians and government bureaucrats and the Irish press.

609 I know of but few cases of discrimination practiced against any of these, 829 but prejudices held against some of them abound, based either on historical 186 experiences (with the English and the Church of Ireland) or on views inculcated by returned emigrants (concerning Jews and Negroes, who seldom visit Inis Beag). [123] Islanders, as well as most Irish, are ambivalent about "Yanks," as visiting emigrants from the United States are called, but are mostly critical of them; often my wife and I have been asked on first meeting an Irish person whether we are Irish-Americans or "real Americans," and when we have admitted to being the latter we have been well received. Conversely, we have seen Yanks shunned on revealing their pedigree. They are accused of "lording it over" their Irish kin and friends.

Formal Social Control

000 Anthropologists customarily classify social control systems as formal and informal. Formal systems are governments whose controls are based on physical violence or its threat—physical punishment, ostracism, banishment, and extermination; while informal systems include sanctions of a religious or economic nature and those exercised by primary groups—gossip, ridicule, persuasion, and opprobrium. Controls of a negative nature are buttressed by positive rewards, such as services provided by a government or the feeling of security gained from primary group approval. It is not the formal system of local and national governments

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 It is not the formal system of local and national governments which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate. 779 67

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly is sought and even expected as an obligation, or "right," of the government by the islanders (especially since nativism engendered by the Gaelic Revival has made Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht," to quote a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders. 829 657 [181] [668]

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes were commanded by politicians who put forth grandiose plans for the betterment of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular —and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide. The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords. [66] [653] [346]

Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configuration, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history. 829 181

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail 829 666

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829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [521] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gael receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

625 There are no police, called *gardai* and "guards," in the island, but three, including a sergeant, are posted in a nearby island and visit Inis Beag at least 674 once a month. Crime is virtually unknown among the folk, the few cases on record [683] being for assault and battery and destruction of property; most cases are civil ones, [684] involving property ownership and inheritance, and are tried intermittently by a 829 visiting magistrate. The guards are subjected to frequent criticism and derision, 625 especially when they come to the island dressed in plain-clothes to search for [673]

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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

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779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [776] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

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The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

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The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

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One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and funtionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "madhouse" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

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Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its

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representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

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the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a 829
symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter [123]
despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic 793
and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among 829
themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of 178
pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should 624
be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control 876
system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have [626]
been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older [793]
men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs [178]
and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance
although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they [666]
were provided with food, given *curach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was
owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are [793]

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more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held, because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches. Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority sentiment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

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with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well
able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power
are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided
him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the
insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed
while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than him-
self—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has
their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months
without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying
only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they
may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests,
politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting
Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another
source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most
of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and
amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of
remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his
displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse
discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging
of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility
toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the
cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be
salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the
islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of
wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to [793]
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement. . . . It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. . . . Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

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> conditions appraised. . . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and . . . boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191).

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king.

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

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521 203 571 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [539] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other 589 Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of 162 the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [288]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 562
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[154]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 589 581 562 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the [154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to remain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that 584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently 173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love 584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, [208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the 584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his 584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The 574 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [789]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

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585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [538] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of 343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of 621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

592 162

Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.' "

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit) —still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [198] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [778] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with [352] "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [595] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 593
a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178
from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342
placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353
serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788]
two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574]
floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571
kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602
tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609
strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572]
parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835
most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602
genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582
forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602
collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609
are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428
is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611
--with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113]
in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo [601]
type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

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593 —with a strong agnatic bias. Rights and duties are distributed among cognates,
602 but they are less strong among uterine and affinal kin, as well as among relatives of both lines according to distance from ego. Rights and duties include obligations to assist and defend, and mutual assistance in Inis Beag characterizes farming, fishing, housebuilding, unloading turf, carrying the coffin at a funeral, and many other activities. Reciprocation in some form for services rendered is almost an obsession among both kin and non-kin, and not to reciprocate adequately means to lose face. The matter of mutual defense will be considered in later sections and chapters.

551 Only 13 surnames are represented on the island, and there are 27 families bearing a single one, 11 bearing another, and 8 a third. Most Christian names are those of the Blessed Virgin and of saints, especially from the Irish past. Michael, Patrick, Sean (which often is transformed into John, although Eoin is John in Irish), Thomas, Martin, Peter, Coleman, and Joseph—in that order—are the most popular first names for males, while for females it is Mary, Brigid, Margaret, Ann,
[B44] Catherine, Sarah, Nora, and Teresa. In the past, it was customary for Inis Beag
[177] women to bear their offspring at home attended by nurse, midwife, or skilled female relative; but during the past decade, most infants have been delivered in the mainland hospital serving the island, where mothers have learned of "different" surnames and have assigned them to their own children—such as Gerard, Xavier, Christopher, and Pius for boys, and Rita, Carmel, Veronica, and Jude for girls.

601 Each person in the island has a term of reference which never is employed
561 as a term of address.[2] For a man, it is a nickname or his Christian name followed by that of his father: "The General" or Sean Michael. Women ordinarily are not given nicknames; if single, they append their father's first name to their own, and if married, their husband's. An adult man may bear the Christian name of his mother following his own rather than his father's, if, for instance, his mother was widowed early or unduly dominated her husband. Nicknames relate to such things as occupations, abodes, personality idiosyncracies, stature, color of hair, and events of the past; and many are uncomplimentary to the degree of fomenting disputes if uttered at improper times or to inappropriate persons.

155 Before turning to reciprocal relationships which exist between certain
593 agnatic, uterine, and affinal relatives, it is necessary to examine two phenomena which have a vital bearing on kinship and other behavior: the Oedipus complex and male solidarity. Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys says that there is in Ireland a ". . . centripetal mechanism built into the fabric of rural life. This is the strong, preferential love of the rural mother for her sons. She is a magnetic center of the family and her cohesive power is affection. This love, which leads her 'to slave' for her sons and to demand that her daughters do likewise, cushions the sons' hard lot. It mollifies the constant rub of his subordination to his father . . ."

[2] A term of reference is a name used to refer to a person who is not present, while a term of address is a name used to address a person to his face. In America, one might say in referring to his mother, "That woman walking toward us is my mother.", and then greet her as she joins the group, "Hi, Mom."; in this case, mother is a term of reference and Mom a term of address. Often terms of address in the Western world are Christian names, and some terms of reference and address may be identical. Anthropologists usually collect only terms which are used to designate various kin.

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(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family: 155 593

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent. . . . An Irish male . . . beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. . . . Irish resistance to role identification . . . was seen as . . . having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters. . . . [The] . . . basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt . . . (Opler and Singer 1956:15–18). [154] [582] [589]

Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present: 155 572 154

> *Grania* is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman . . . would be forever excluded . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all. . . . A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145–146). 155 572 154 562

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581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
[578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[154] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[662] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
562 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céilí* on the common land, which married women do not.

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Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858
children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842
high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162
average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593
done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861
mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864]
elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155]
and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593
bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582]
to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606]
law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother'" (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593
have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828]
hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155]
rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562]
with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831]
the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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593 [155] [562] [831] belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between 593 brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the 598 mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when [858] the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand 603 that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculca- 593 tion of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

596 The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background 888 reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. [606] Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

114 Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied 578 seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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harmony, but other biases are at work (Messenger 1968:29–30). Writers of strong 578
religious bent have exaggerated the Catholic moral virtues embodied in the Irish family and community and have disregarded disputes because they involve unchristian behavior, while social scientists with a functional theoretical orientation have emphasized the integration of social groups and have neglected disputes because they betray dysfunction. Those observers who have depended almost entirely on the guided interview to obtain data concerning family and community often have remained oblivious to disputes. Some researchers, however, have collected information on disputes in an objective manner, but have been unwilling to publish it for fear of antagonizing the folk, the church, and the government—thus losing their positions or jeopardizing research in the future. The most valuable study to date on disputes in Ireland is that of Elliott Leyton, which is based on research that he conducted between 1964 and 1966 in Aughnaboy (like Inis Beag, a fictitious name), a village in Co. Down with three times the population of Inis Beag.

Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' distinction between conscious and uncon- 121
scious models, Leyton first examines the conscious models—explanatory constructs, 578
or norms, of the people themselves—held by Aughnaboy villagers concerning disputes, then the types of disputes which in fact do occur within the community —from which the unconscious models are inferred by the analyst. Three conscious models held by the villagers are of pertinence to us: those for personal conduct, relations between kinsmen, and relations between non-kin (Leyton 1966:535–536). The first is summarized in the concept of "decency." 121 578 577

> To be a "decent" man is to carry out one's obligations to society in a style characterized by cheerfulness and friendliness, to pause willingly for a chat and, most importantly, to refrain—regardless of the provocation—from any display of overt hostility . . . greatest esteem is reserved for those who succeed in maintaining cordial relations with everyone in the village; and the greatest contempt is reserved for those quarrelsome individuals who are frequently involved in disputes.

Relations between kinsmen, Leyton says, 121 578 602

> . . . are characterized, ideally, by the highest degree of friendliness and harmony. The individual is expected to feel the strongest affection for his kinsmen, and to subordinate all other loyalties . . . to the demands of his kinsmen. . . . individuals are expected to suppress their personal desires and ideals if they conflict with the unity of the group. . . . Close affective ties and regular visiting rarely occur outside the field of kinship. Non-kin are regarded with suspicion and distrust, and the 121 interests of non-kin are seen as being in potential opposition to the interests of one's 578 own kin. 604

Ideally, friendliness and harmony characterize relations between non-kin as well in Aughnaboy.

> Non-kin are in general expected to behave according to the standards of "decency" . . . to be cheerful and talkative and to avoid quarrels. . . . Aughnaboy inhabitants conceive relations between non-kin to be a system in equilibrium . . . relations

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121 between the separate groups of kin in the village are seen to be in delicate balance
578 of power which is expressed in the local phrase, "you can't fight anybody around
609 here because all their people will gang up on you." If an individual's kinsmen must defend him in his personal disputes, it necessarily follows that a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin.

114 By and large, these three conscious models apply to Inis Beag as well as Aughnaboy.
121 Leyton discovers broad "disparities between the conscious models and the
578 statistical patterns formed by the actual behaviour" of people in Aughnaboy, manifested in 74 disputes covering a time span of ten years in the memories of his respondents. He classifies these disputes according to three criteria: their severity, the issues provoking them, and the categories of individuals involved (Leyton 1966:537–539). The criterion of severity yields three types of disputes: argument —"characterized by frequent or continuous arguments . . . associated primarily with exchange of verbal abuse;" withdrawal—where "social relations are actually severed and cooperation is withdrawn;" and interference—in which active attempts are made to "interfere with the welfare of the opposing party. These attempts, which may be secret or open, include legal suits, reports to the police, theft and, rarely, physical violence, as well as withdrawal of all cooperation." Three types of disputes also are distinguishable when issues provoking hostility are examined: economic—"which includes conflict such as rivalry between shopkeepers and disputed inheritance;" personality clashes—"which includes disputes primarily attributed to the innately quarrelsome personalities of certain individuals;" and jealousy—"which refers primarily to situations in which an individual's affections are alienated." The categories of persons involved in disputes are agnatic kin, uterine kin, affinal kin, and non-kin. Leyton establishes rank orders for each of his type classifications, and finds that the rank order for the severity classification is withdrawal, interference, and argument; for the issues classification, it is personality clashes, jealousy, and economic; and for the individuals involved classification, it is affinal kin, agnatic kin, non-kin, and uterine kin.

121 In applying Leyton's unconscious models of disputes to Inis Beag, I have
578 modified slightly his severity and issues classifications. To the former, I have added
[521] a fourth type which I call gossip; this is not gossip of the ordinary variety so
[683] common on the island, but rather continuous, pernicious verbal attacks made by a person within earshot of his victim's relatives and close friends, which usually do not lead to argument. In the case of the issues classification, I have broadened the
[157] range of personality clashes. There are several "innately quarrelsome" individuals in Inis Beag, but most personality conflicts involve persons other than these, who have come to dislike one another intensely for numerous reasons, most of which are related to envy, jealousy (other than alienation of affections), resentment
578 against authority, and hostility toward members of the opposite sex. Over 200 disputes have occurred on the island within the past generation, excluding those involving semi-permanent dwellers—curates, lighthouse keepers, and the Dane.
578 The higher incidence of disputes in Inis Beag is attributable, for the most part, to
121 the longer time span appraised and the addition of gossip to the severity classification in my analysis. However, the rank orders of the three type classifications

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closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference.

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin.

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families.

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than

578 women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip
[662] and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples.
578 One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism
626 of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into
[828] a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first
[123] meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

121 I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an
578 observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants;
181 this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

114 Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

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> This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21). 114 181

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife [124] and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible.

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous 114 cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times 12 after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many 181 folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this [538] tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.).

Prestige Status

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Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human [423] relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," [471] "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different [511] from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its 556 possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor-

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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
[171] of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
567 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

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526 struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. A famous writer
181 claimed that he introduced into Inis Beag a feat of agility that he had learned in
[171] France, which consists of holding a stick in both hands at the knees and jumping back and forth across it without losing grip; the islanders attest that this "trick" was known locally for at least a century, and one man boasted that his father was
123 able to leap back and forth a dozen times in quick succession. My rapport with the men was enhanced by the fact that I had been a weight thrower and lifter and used to entertain them by putting a granite boulder, throwing a discus that I had brought with me, and performing repetition presses with a barrel of stout. However, the one time that I was persuaded to compete for Inis Beag against Inis Thiar in putting the shot (a flat-bottomed store weight of 14 pounds), I fouled with my foot all three times and thus suffered ignominious defeat. The curate who officiated at the event appeared pleased, but the islanders who had placed wagers on me were of opposite disposition.

4

The Supernatural and the Esthetic

Catholicism

BECAUSE OF THE WRITINGS OF NATIVISTS, most visitors to Inis Beag believe 771
that the Catholicism of the folk embodies an ideal unattained even on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for all of Christendom. In fact, however, the worship of the islanders is obsessively oriented [776]
toward salvation in the next world with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a marked tendency toward polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and certain Irish saints; rituals and sacred artifacts, Christian as well as pagan, often are employed by them to serve magical ends; and, finally, many observances that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or to Ireland. Christian morality in its outward [626]
manifestations, as we have seen, is realized to a remarkable degree, but it is less a product of the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation than of the techniques of social control exercised by the priests and an overwhelming fear of damnation.

Coexisting with Catholicism in Inis Beag are pre-Celtic, Celtic, and early 771
medieval Christian retentions of religious beliefs and behavior. It is these which 178
are accentuated in the writings of primitivists, some of whom have ignored altogether Catholicism in the lives of the folk. Nativists and primitivists part company in the matter of religion in peasant Ireland, and writers of nativistic persuasion have exerted the most influence on visitors to Inis Beag, who are preponderantly Irish Catholic. Theologians and scholars in Ireland label as pagan unorthodox religious forms from any historical period, and many of these have become reinterpreted with similar Catholic elements. The pagan array of supernatural beings [776]
includes a variety of spirits and demons, witches, ghosts, and phantom ships; among other retentions are taboos, signs which foretell the future, charms and incantations of a protective nature, folk medicines, and the aforementioned emphasis on natural foods and other products impinging on the human body.

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779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, [123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying
793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and
776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them
165 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are
562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of
[829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk
[788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obliga-
771 tions can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some
828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical anecdotes and ballads.

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dispossessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island.

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him.

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if

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771 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience,
775 "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

775 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St.
[178] Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are
[182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming,
796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent
[262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people
[273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only,
796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St.
[527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the
[171] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which,
[292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

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796 627 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is [574] to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for [262] the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [364] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262]
mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [363]
sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and
balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [574]
St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are
treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

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Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

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When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [654] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

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The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 178 of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

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178 characterized by storytelling, games of various sorts, contests of strength, taunting and mocking, mischief-making, and factional fighting (O Suilleabhain 1967:
764 26–129). It is hard to imagine a wake more somber than that which takes place in Inis Beag. Most of those who attend it do so before midnight and stay two to three hours, coming and going at will, while "only those who own him stay all night." Each visitor on arrival prays briefly at the bedside of the deceased or in the doorway of the room before expressing condolences, and at midnight all who are anywhere in the wake-house kneel and recite the responses of the Rosary intoned
[178] by the curate. Immediate kin express their grief in muffled sobs beside the corpse, but the ancient wailing lament for the dead, known as the "keen," no longer is
[293] heard in Inis Beag. Tables and benches are set up in the kitchen on which the
[296] men sit silently or converse in whispers with their neighbors, as they drink stout
[562] or whiskey and pass around clay pipes offered them "to keep the night awake." Most of the women congregate in the room of the dead, where only very old women smoke pipes. I have counted as many as 18 minutes of absolute silence at a wake and have never heard laughter.

[562] Before the procession to the church forms, men tend to gather in small groups outside the house of the deceased and women gather inside the house. After the corpse is placed in the coffin, close relatives and even friends shake the hand and kiss the face of the dead person before the top is nailed down; then the box is carried to the front street and placed across two chairs for prayers to be said and holy water sprinkled over it by the priest. A white sheet is draped on the casket, and six pallbearers shoulder it and carry it through a gap made in the stone fence to the road which leads to the chapel. The pallbearers are both agnatic and uterine kin of the deceased, excluding his sons, and two of them have the further duty of digging the shallow grave that night or in the morning before the body is interred. Moving slowly behind the coffin bearers, the procession is headed by the spouse and sons of the dead person, followed by his daughters, then women, and finally men in a long, slow moving, silent column; children other than the offspring of the deceased seldom join the procession, and the sexes walk separately.
[793] The curate may or may not lead this procession and the one the next morning, sometimes preferring to go ahead to church and cemetery by himself. A son of the dead person treats the grave diggers to stout in a pub before they set out with spades for the graveyard, as he does the pallbearers after they return from the
[178] church. In the past, the grave was dug as part of the funeral service, but this custom was altered as the cemetery became filled and occasionally diggers by acci-
[538] dent broke into previously interred coffins revealing their contents. A number of grisly legends and anecdotes tell of islanders buried alive by mistake, or whose bodies were partially preserved, as revealed by such accidents.

The procession from the chapel to the graveyard leaves the modern road, as we saw in Chapter 1, to follow an ancient, obliterated trail past a church believed to have been buried beneath the sand centuries ago, and then climbs the long hill of kitchen midden and sand to the gate of the cemetery. Here the column breaks up, some people going to the graves of relatives to pray and others to the newly opened grave. Men and women kneel separately at the graveside for the service (see Fig. 11), and many of the women cry as the casket is lowered into the shallow

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families involved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [178] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, [798] rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [775] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating." 771 798 178 [115] [775]

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons. 771 178 776 [538] [823]

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal- 776 787 [821] [123] [172] [798] [793] [763]

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776
787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[562] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health
[789] or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted
to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping
776 fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered overly superstitious.

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 171
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346]
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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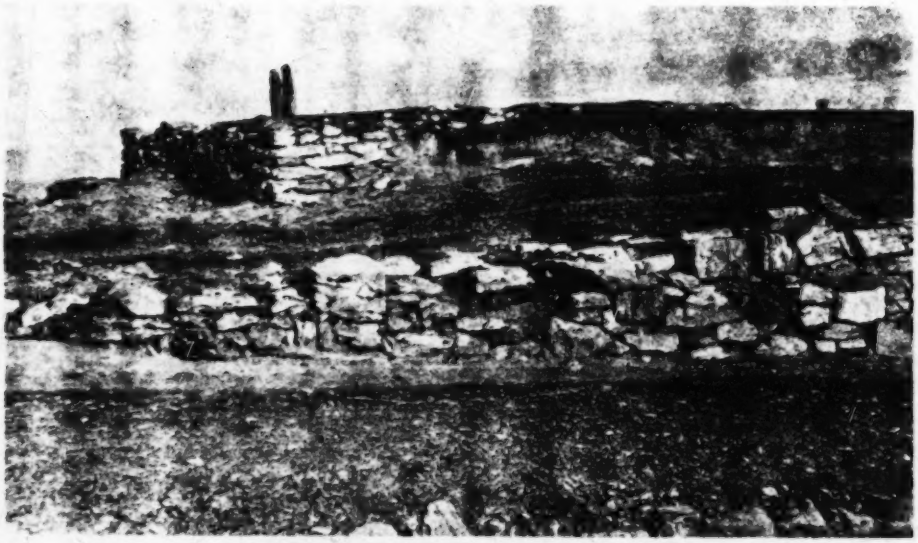

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured 754
by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the [576]
calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly 754
arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds 756
after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, [789]
and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those [789]
in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being [827]
captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious 787
practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced [793]
techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly [798]
to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills [178]
of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of [789]
magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal [174]
doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and 787
do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share 759
a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound 184
the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk 755
medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of [759]
magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting 753
ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on 175
February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on 796
November 1st.

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175 796 221 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes, while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bonfires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility. The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with 796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St. 178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec- [771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in [114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 [824] Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's 776 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into 778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes, [824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched [174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged [175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially 735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who 776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large 778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu- [538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre- [782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536 735 431 776 778 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.

796 776 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow" roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive [822] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle [778] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to [233] attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

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539 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November
796 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with
[178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main
[182] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous
[262] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter.
796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during
796 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few
798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil
796 and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is
796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be
782 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck
[234] during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes
[825] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying
[231] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to
825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to
417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following
53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed
[184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with
776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld.
711 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies;
775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771 775
"strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783]
penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771
magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776
God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754
presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178
right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826
tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822]
of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world; as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171]
symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793]
even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775
Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772
fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

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775 792 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of [173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of [825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

157 791 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

157 831 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century. [174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

157 831 864 626 793 834 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and 831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run 203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland [609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

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124 831 855 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 886 [123] Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 828 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 [193] [832] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[168] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[889] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

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273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[64] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

177 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
178 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those
53 found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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male but sometimes female. Also, the former occupied a higher prestige position than the latter, but there was not the clear-cut distinction between genres appropriate to each type of narrator as elsewhere in Ireland; the *seanchaí* sometimes related the exploits of Finn and the *scéalaí* the pranks of the red man. The two surviving storytellers in 1960 were both old men, but the *seanchaí* died in 1963 and the *scéalaí* two years later. Both had been prolific contributors to Irish Folklore Commission collectors and Continental folklorists.

All of the above kinds of folklore expression, with the exception of folktales, were regarded as true by island folk in the past. The myths either coexisted or were reinterpreted with Biblical stories, and the legends were synchronized with events of ancient world history dating from just before the Flood to the eighth century. The Inis Beag *scéalaí* sometimes was derided by school children for still believing his narratives to be true, as was the *seanchaí* for claiming that the supernatural happenings described in his tales actually were experienced by islanders in the past century. Both narrators for many years had been visited only by folklorists and tourists wishing to hear them relate their repertoires of stories, for the only form of storytelling which has been perpetuated is the occasional gathering of men in a home or pub to exchange anecdotes, mostly related to fishing. I was told that in his prime the *scéalaí* could have recited narratives nightly for "at least a month" without ever repeating a story, had he ever been called on to do so. That the memory of the esteemed narrator is prodigious is revealed in the complete collection of all the material recorded from a single *scéalaí* of Co. Kerry, reported by Delargy, which included 396 pages of text: 186 tales, a few songs and song fragments, and various smaller items of prose and verse. These had been obtained from 27 different sources by the narrator, all of whom save one were neighbors (Delargy 1945:11).

Most liked by the folk were the prose narratives related by the *scéalaí* and tales of recent and contemporary historical events in the region, stories of the supernatural in Inis Beag, and personal experiences told by the *seanchaí*. Few of the stories dealt with historical occurrences in Ireland between the coming of Christianity and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and none of them concerned personages or happenings associated with the church. At my request, the *seanchaí* read three books of Irish folklore that I had brought with me—J. J. Campbell's *Legends of Ireland*, Jeremiah Curtin's *Irish Folk-Tales*, and Eileen O'Faolain's *Irish Sagas and Folk-Tales*—and declared that he had heard all of the stories therein as a youth from his father and other island storytellers. However, the versions in the books often were "incorrect," he claimed, and he delighted in "correcting" them; of course, there are many variants of each tale (as many as 527—Aarne-Thompson type 300 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission), and he regarded the Inis Beag stories as the legitimate variants. Most of the local and Irish tales share types (plots) and motifs (incidents, characters, and objects) with those of European and other societies brought about by millennia of diffusion, but the Irish have refashioned these elements in their own corpus according to their culture and personality dispositions.

I will not discuss the various prose narratives told by the *scéalaí* of Inis Beag; the greater number of them can be obtained from Campbell or O'Faolain or Sean O'Sullivan's recent Folktales of Ireland.

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchai*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [524] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchai* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semicircle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller 538 561
performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or [868]
too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not
called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time 538
by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and 537
particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were
asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially [177]
by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" [273]
afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag 537
were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with 538
equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, how- 539
ever, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure 191
prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

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538 539 191 [537] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb 539 derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than 534 its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [178] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of [177] the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

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and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party.

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[83] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

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574 273 Women [562] [514] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 [533] [562] [857] The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 [123] 574 273 [533] [535] Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 [576] Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [356] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. 574 535 The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 123 [572] My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, 574 579 178 [738] so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

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275 The best singers will be
273 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[157] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
273 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[578] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
273 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
273 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk
211 who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the
[576] free stout brought me in."

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5

The Future of the Island

Emigration

MANY ELDERS IN INIS BEAG fear that the island and its neighbors will go the way of the Blasket Islands of Co. Kerry, whose remaining inhabitants were removed by the government because their support had become an economic liability. With only slight fluctuations, the population of Inis Beag has been diminishing since it reached its zenith of 532 persons in 1861. Below are population figures since 1821—when the first census was compiled—until the present time: 829 168 161

1821	421
1841	456
1861	532
1881	497
1901	483
1926	409
1936	445
1946	447
1956	376
1960	350

The upsurge in population after 1926 reflects the depression in the United States and the Second World War, when emigrants returned home to escape unemployment and conscription, while the downsurge after 1946 reflects the shift of emigration from America to England. Frequently discussed by elders is the steady increase in emigration during the past 15 years, the decreasing age of emigrants, and the presence within the past decade—for the first time in three centuries—of aged parents all of whose children have emigrated, and of land which is idle or rented out by emigrants who probably never will return to Inis Beag. Jokes concerning the building of a hotel by the Germans or a missile site by the Americans in the island to stimulate the economy, as well as serious suggestions that the 161 167 829 168 829 [522]

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168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

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167 178 ble to visit Inis Beag frequently, as the cost and distance are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic.

The many vacationing emigrants who now return to the island at Christmas or Easter or during the summer months often succeed in persuading relatives and acquaintances to return to England with them. Those so persuaded declare that they will return soon with their "fortunes" to settle permanently, but they seldom do once "emancipated." Since the Second World War, several Americans have returned home, and their stories of life in the United States make the youth restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many islanders also sow the seeds of discontent. A favorite subject of talk in the pubs is the relative advantages to be gained from migrating to particular cities in England and America, and anthropologists as well as returned emigrants are called on as consultants in this matter by youths.

167 204 207 Almost every cottage in Inis Beag has a radio, or "wireless," and although the folk seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, because they allow islanders a glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and 177 freer world. Television was introduced into Inis Beag in 1963 at the lighthouse, 207 and a second set was procured for the new "dance hall" when it was completed two years later. Few islanders venture to the lighthouse to view television, but I am told by correspondents that many now visit the hall during the several evening hours when transmission from Telefis Eireann takes place. As a result, television has become an acculturative medium to be reckoned with. Both radio and television programs are censored in Ireland, but even so the morality expressed in them—especially in the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A hypothetical censor from Inis Beag most certainly would create more discontinuities with his shears in television performances than would his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin. My wife and I found that viewing television with islanders at the lighthouse on two occasions was a traumatic experience; it gave us a different (and even more disquieting) perspective on programs in the United States and their enculturative effects than can be obtained at home.

167 873 Since the Second World War, 28 island youths have pursued secondary education elsewhere in Ireland, either in high schools, called "colleges," or in technical schools, and most have been supported by government scholarships. The usual high school scholarship is for 5 years, and a student must be 14 years of age and qualify by competitive examination to receive one. Only 4 of these 28 students 873 —of which 2 are teachers in the national school—have returned to Inis Beag. One [562] young man watched 2 girls, either of whom he eventually might have married, go off to the mainland for school and said, "Scholarships are killing the island;" what he was referring to, other than his own disappointment, is the fact that 19 of the 28 students who left for advanced education are girls. The reason for the disproportionate number of girls receiving scholarships is that they are far more moti- [829] vated academically and have better scholastic records than boys. There is, however, a widespread belief in the island that certain families are favored by priests and

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teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds.

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths.

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school.

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there

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167 168 are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, 829 or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any [191] of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as [668] much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

167 127 My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

167 114 It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jack- 167 son's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss 121 two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag cul- 114 ture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled sys- [582] tematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

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000 are at work. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation Inis Beag emigrants suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when second generation, and beyond, descendants of emigrants disassociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have emigrated to probe this and other phenomena.

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Recommended Reading

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DANAHER, K., 1962, *In Ireland Long Ago*. Cork: The Mercier Press.

The author is a member of the Irish Folklore Commission, and presents in this book a series of 26 short essays on facets of traditional Irish folk culture, with special emphasis on the economic aspect and material culture. Six of the closing chapters deal with balladry, factionalism, marriage, and the wake and funeral.

———, 1966, *Irish Country People*. Cork: The Mercier Press.

This volume, a companion to the other, is a collection of 20 more vignettes. Of particular interest to my readers are "Tall Ships," "The Currach Men," and "The People of the Sea." Danaher's two books are literary as well as folkloristic works, and suffer only from the telescoping of historical epochs, a nonfunctional approach (common to folklorists), and occasional nativism and primitivism.

EVANS, E. E., 1942, *Irish Heritage*. Dundalk: W. Tempest, Dundalgan Press.

The two volumes of the author (The other, *Irish Folk Ways*, is listed in References.), like those of Danaher, focus on the economic aspect and material culture, and are illustrated profusely with drawings and photographs of scientific import. Evans is a geographer-folklorist-anthropologist at The Queen's University of Belfast—the only university in Ireland which includes ethnology in its curriculum. My readers will be interested especially in the last six chapters of *Irish Heritage* and the last four of the author's other work, which take up such subjects as wrack, boats and fishing, festivals, weddings and wakes, and non-Christian religious forms (termed beliefs and superstitions by folklorists). Throughout both books are numerous references to the many island communities of Ireland.

FLOWER, R., 1944, *The Western Island*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

This is an account of the author's experiences during holiday visits over 20 years to the Great Blasket Island off the Dingle Peninsula of Co. Kerry. Flower was an English scholar, spoke Irish, and composed the book from lectures delivered on Irish literature at the Lowell Institute of Boston in 1935. It is a literary tour de force and a source of ethnographic data, if the intense primitivism of the author is duly weighed.

HUMPHREYS, A. J., 1966, *New Dubliners*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Fr. Humphreys is a sociologist at Loyola University of Los Angeles, who studied peasant and Dublin families between 1949 and 1951. Although this volume deals mostly with family and class in Dublin, its first, third, and last chapters contain much material on Irish folk culture. The author addresses both the strong Oedipus complex in the family and puritanical Catholicism and their impact; however, he alludes to Augustinianism rather than Jansenism as the doctrine which inclines the Irish countryman "to a jaundiced view of sex" who "places a high premium upon continence, penance and . . . abstemiousness" (pp. 23–27).

MASON, T. H., 1967, *The Islands of Ireland*. Cork: The Mercier Press.

First published in 1936, this classic now in paperback reissue presents descriptive, historical, archeological, zoological, and some ethnographic data on a dozen of the inhabited islands off Ireland—including Tory, Achill, Clare, and the Blasket and Aran Islands. The author was a famous photographer, particularly of birds and wildlife, and an expert on Irish antiquities, while a Dublin optician.

MEENAN, J. and D. A. WEBB, eds., 1957, *A View of Ireland*. Dublin: Hely's Limited.

Twenty-one essays, written by eminent Irish natural and social scientists and subsumed under 12 chapters, make up this volume published for The British

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113 Association for the Advancement of Science. Chapters on archeology (by S. P. O Riordain and Francoise Henry), local traditions, and the Irish Language (by Myles Dillon) contain important articles on folklore (by James H. Delargy), place-names (by M. A. O'Brien), and folk life (by T. A. Lucas).

MULLEN, P., 1934, *Man of Aran*. London: Faber & Faber, Ltd.

Robert Flaherty filmed his famous documentary, *Man of Aran*, during 1932 and 1933, and the author served as his assistant. A native of Inis Mor, the largest of the three Aran Islands, Mullen wrote this book as an autobiographical account of his (and his neighbors') involvement in the filming venture. It is rich in dialogue, which many islanders feel best of all literary works captures their syncretistic English. The author now lives in Wales.

———, 1936, *Hero Breed*. London: Faber & Faber, Ltd.

The setting of this novel once again is Inis Mor, and the author sets down the most prominent features of the Aran way of life. Both of Mullen's works betray the exaggerations of pride and primitivism and neglect dysfunction, but this one best serves the self-image of the people, as many hold, although it is criticized locally for revealing pagan retentions. The author also published, in 1940, *Irish Tales* (London: Faber & Faber, Ltd.)—a collection of folktales that he had heard as a youth.

NEWMAN, J., ed., 1964, *The Limerick Rural Survey*. Tipperary: Muintir na Tire Rural Publications.

This book includes five lengthy reports (the last by Fr. Newman) by Irish scholars, based on research done in Co. Limerick between 1958 and 1964 under the guidance of American and Dutch social scientists. It represents the first full scale study of the "developmental infra-structure of an Irish county." Its strength for my readers are the 15 chapters which make up the reports on demography and social structure (by Patrick McNabb), while its main weakness is a disregard for religious and psychological variables in accounting for certain phenomena.

O'BRIEN, J. A., ed., 1954, *The Vanishing Irish*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

The causes of "the fading away of the once great and populous nation of Ireland" (p. 3) are examined in this collection of 19 chapters written by 16 authors (Fr. O'Brien has four.). Jansenism and sexual puritanism are dealt with most effectively in chapters by Bryan MacMahon, Sean O'Faolain, Arland Ussher, and two by the editor. These themes and their consequences also are discussed in the polemical, but deeply insightful, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, by Paul Blanshard —listed in References.

O CROHAN, T., 1951, *The Islandman*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Complementing Flower's book on the Great Blasket Island are three written by islanders themselves, which are autobiographical in nature and of value to students of Irish folk culture: O Crohan's and those by O'Sullivan and Sayers. O Crohan's volume was published first in Gaelic in 1929, then translated into English by Flower in 1937—"the first attempt by a peasant of the old school . . . uneducated in the modern sense, though . . . trained in the tradition of an old folk culture, to set out the way of his life upon this remote island from childhood to old age (p. v).

O FLAHERTY, T., 1934, *Aranmen All*. Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles.

Like Mullen, the author was a native of Inis Mor and was stimulated by the film, *Man of Aran*, to write his two works dealing with the milieu there. The book is magnificently illustrated with stills from the movie and photographs taken by Mason. Part anecdotal and part imaginative in composition, it rivals Mullen's volumes in providing ethnographic materials.

———, 1935, *Cliffmen of the West*. London: Sands & Co.

Both of O Flaherty's books present sketches—some of them printed previously as newspaper features—of various segments of the Aran tradition at the turn of

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the century. They contain much folk English dialogue, as do Mullen's volumes, but are far less primitivistic in orientation than the latter. All writings of Blasket and Aran islanders emphasize ideal rather than real culture. 113

O'SULLIVAN, M., 1957, *Twenty Years A-Growing*. London: Oxford University Press.
Four years after O Crohan's book was published, this work appeared in both Irish and English, and in 1935 was revised by its translators, Moya Llewelyn Davies and George Thomson. It is a series of vignettes, as *Arannien All*, rather than a life history, as *The Islandman*, which ends when the author as a young adult leaves his home to become a policeman on the mainland, where he died in 1950.

SAYERS, P., 1962, *An Old Woman's Reflections*. London: Oxford University Press.
The author, who married into the Great Blasket Island from a community on the nearby coast, was a famous *scéalaí*—rare among women—known as "the Queen of Gaelic story-tellers" (p. ix). In this volume, translated from Irish by Seamus Ennis, she recounts anecdotes from her colorful life. Writers and critics argue among themselves as to the relative literary merits of this work and those by other unschooled islanders of Ireland; but most agree that O Crohan's has no peer, an opinion with which I tend to agree. As to depth of insight into Irish folk culture and personality, however, I would choose *Twenty Years A-Growing*. To the ethnographer, the chief value of Sayers' book is that it presents a "woman's-eye view" of things Irish.

SYNGE, J. M., 1966, "The Aran Islands," *J. M. Synge Collected Works*, Vol. 2, A. Price, ed., London: Oxford University Press, pp. 45–184.
John M. Synge, most famous as a playwright, spent five months during summers from 1898 to 1902 in the Aran Islands. Out of his experiences there came *Riders to the Sea* and plots of other plays, as well as this chronicle of the local culture of Inis Meain—the middle Aran isle—published in 1907. Although an exceptional work of art, it suffers from primitivism, a lack of concern for the importance of Catholicism in the lives of the folk, and the projection of the author's tragic view of life into his interpretations. An excellent appraisal of Synge as a folklorist is found in Bauman 1963.

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Historic Ireland ER2

[For information pertaining to the nativistic movement in the 19th century Ireland, see 16: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 2-6.]

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Historic Ireland ER2

[For information pertaining to the history of Ireland (ca. 1500-1900 A.D.), see 16: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 13-15.]

[For information pertaining to the Prehistoric Period in Ireland (ca. 9000 B.C. to 500 A.D.), see 16: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 9-11.]

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Celtic Ireland ER4

[For information pertaining to the Medieval Period in Ireland (ca. 500 to 1500 A.D.), see 16: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 11-13; 98; 102-103.]

16: Messenger

ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[For information pertaining to the marriage patterns abroad of emigrants from Inis Beag, see 16: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, pp. 130-131.]

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HUMAN SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

VARIATIONS IN THE ETHNOGRAPHIC SPECTRUM

EDITED BY

DONALD S. MARSHALL

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Inis Beag

One]

JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

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[101]

In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

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According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1–2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

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* A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled me to write this chapter.

[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

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the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [184]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [165]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [212]
heritance is patrilineal). [611]

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions
there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side,
where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new
soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle
dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

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which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

433
434
226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip,
674 ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body. 78 95

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation. 771 178 [184] [182]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit- 114 538

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114 tent; they have depended on a limited sample of respondents; and most
538 of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, which does not contain numerous categories of significance to anthropologists.

12 My wife and I devoted most of our research to documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also described formal and informal education and the personality traits formed by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many types and probing the memories of aged island respondents, and recorded cultural change in process over an eight-year period. The standard ethnographic research techniques that we employed include guided and open-ended interviews, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, cross-checking, photography, and phonog-
[161] raphy. The sample for much of our data was the total universe of 350 inhabitants.

It is extremely difficult to obtain information in Inis Beag about such matters as amounts and sources of income, disputes, pagan religious retentions and reinterpretations, and sex. This brief list might be increased by at least threefold and gives rise to a consideration of the problems associated with obtaining reliable data from the Irish in general and the
114 islanders in particular. Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled
12 "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously
181 presents one of the shortest, yet most discerning analyses of Irish national character yet written by a novelist and predicts the various reactions that her volume will evoke in Irish readers.[4] She concludes with the following remarks about the difficulties surrounding fact finding in Ireland:

This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged
[521] with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing

[4] These reactions appear to be institutionalized, as my writings and conversational remarks have also evoked them. Two additional responses that I have encountered are: my conclusions are invalidated because I failed to consult certain "source materials" written in Gaelic, and my inferior writing style precludes serious consideration of my findings. I take pains to explain, usually in vain, the many methods of fieldwork utilized by ethnographers to Irish persons who are critical of my data and who invariably use the phrase, "You can't trust what an Irishman tells you." On a rare occasion, one listener to my lengthy explanation said, "Ah, you're cuter than we are"—a compliment indeed!

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe 114
myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes
is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their 181
uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my 12
questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I know. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman, sober, will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress. When he has taken a jar or two . . . he will say whatever he judges will give the greatest offence. In neither case does he reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went round and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake. Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953: 20–21).

I will not concern myself with the various cultural and psychological 12
causes accounting for this state of affairs, which would require an essay equal in length to this one. Suffice it to say, the quotation in considerable measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation, wherever possible. The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before attempting an ethnography, to emphasize various modes of participant observation in order to gain added rapport, to devise ad hoc research methods of an unorthodox nature,[5] to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our research, and to

[5] Departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a ballad that I composed. Islanders read at our request books about Inis Beag, and we recorded and analyzed their responses. The ballad that I wrote, now embedded in the local verbal art tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue that we witnessed, and a series of fascinating events which ensued during the following months. The manner of its composition, the alteration of it by Inis Beag singers after it was written, and the circumstances surrounding its public presentation by various balladiers before differing audiences gave us invaluable ethnographic insights.

12 cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which characterize ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as an epistemology.

181 The use by the folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and
195 "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition
[178] of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is a product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can very effectively serve to shield genuine thoughts
[538] and feelings and thus protect the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition of verbal skill, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*. (At least one folklorist has collected "Joycean utterances" from Irish peasants.)

123 Most of our information came from observation and unguided interviews. It proved impossible to take field notes openly, except when collecting innocuous data—such as the number of livestock owned by each householder—from a few particular persons. Thus, we were forced to limit our visits to less than two hours, after which we immediately
[562] transcribed what our combined memories could resuscitate. Despite frequent explanations of our presence in Inis Beag, which were candid and truthful, it was thought by the islanders that I was interested only in archeological sites and oral literature, and that my wife was not a trained and experienced co-worker; this, obviously, reflects their previous experiences with scientists and their conception of the position of women in society. Their inability to evaluate adequately our intentions proved
[609] to be a research boon. For once "accepted" (a relative term, since no outsider is ever accepted) after many months in the island, we were allowed to listen to and participate in conversations and activities from which we would otherwise have been excluded.

123 Our data on sex came from my involvement as a participant-
*831 observer in personal and often intimate conversations with men and my wife's counseling of women who were bothered by such matters as explaining and coping with menstruation, menopause, mental illness, the sexual curiosity of their children, and "excessive" sexual demands of their spouses. Our sexual knowledge and sympathy coupled with their needs and inquisitiveness gave rise to a "counselor-client" relationship between many of the folk and ourselves. They came to speak freely, albeit indirectly at times, with each of us about this sphere of behavior which arouses so much anxiety and fear. I must mention that the relationship

arose partly out of our desire to alleviate distress and not solely to collect 123
information. We had performed the same role seven years earlier among 831*
primitive Nigerians, and for similar reasons. However, the Africans [171]
were uninhibited, talked freely with us about sex, and were not offended by what we subsequently wrote.

Another important source of information on sex was the island 115
nurses, who supplied us with accounts of their own observations over an eight-year period and gave us access to pertinent medical records. My wife and I believe that our information is, for the most part, reliable, 128
but that some of it may well be erroneous. This report will, we are 123
afraid, offend and alienate some of our Inis Beag friends, for whom we hold deep affection; they do not comprehend the aims and values of anthropology and may regard our reporting of sexual beliefs and behavior as a breach of friendship and trust. Certainly our findings will be denied by many Irish readers.

More than any other type of research, culture and personality 114
investigations are needed in Ireland today. Social and cultural anthropologists, rural sociologists, folklorists, and geographers in small numbers have managed to describe and analyze the major sociocultural forms of the Irish folk, but personality generalizations, by and large, have been the by-products of research into other areas and have tended to be impressionistic. Some of the most penetrating studies of Irish character have been made "at a distance" and through the analysis of projective systems and narrow units of culture, such as drinking patterns (Bales 1962). Some Irish writers—"intuitive anthropologists" I call them—also have had insightful things to say about Irish character (usually at a distance too, from church and state). What is sorely needed is a holistic community study done by a culture and personality specialist—a person skilled not only in ethnography, social psychology, and psychiatry (and able to administer projective tests), but well versed in Irish history, literature, and contemporary affairs as well.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Both lack of sexual knowledge and misconceptions about sex among 831*
adults combine to brand Inis Beag as one of the most sexually naive of 864
the world's societies.

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*831 the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children
864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
[163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant
83 Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset
158 of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
828 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
[784] illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] [864]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

291 834 759 155 bathing his chest in the mother s absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

158 751 291 834 753 It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 827 863 825 562 273 241 Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

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* 831 522 154 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

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regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks 522 and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in 831* Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, [123] from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears 834 to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The 535 set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, [178] some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, [571] and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party [574] necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become [154] overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account 831* for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The 114 former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence 181 of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural 182 (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and 155 psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration 792 are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic 779 aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to 121 factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says [152] that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting 831* to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes: 155 181 182 792 779

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Ireland was . . . one of the world's most ascetic countries, and the monastic ideal has undoubtedly left a deep mark on the Irish mind. Although Irish priests were permitted to have wives as late as the eighth century, sexual renunciation came to be identified with virtue and distinction in the community, and thousands of the best men and women lived apart from each other. Kevin Devlin in his *Christus Rex* article on "Single and Selfish" . . . says of the ancient Irish that "when they 'fell in love with Christianity' . . . they took to the ideal of virginity with a Pauline enthusiasm unknown elsewhere. St. Patrick himself noted this with an inflection of surprise in the *Confessions* . . ." (Blanshard 1954: 160–161).

Several Irish scholars since 1955 have expressed the opinion in personal conversations that the rapidity of Irish conversion to monasticism in the early medieval period can be attributed, in large measure, to masochism. [53] This ancient character trait is most evident in the projective system of early Irish verbal art, if one discounts the possibility of widespread distortion through the actions of Celtic defense mechanisms and later revisionists.

In a recent book, the impact of Augustinianism at this time and in the centuries to come is examined by Fr. Alexander Humphreys. He says in *New Dubliners:*

The specific doctrinal tradition to which Ireland and the Irish countryman in particular has fallen heir is the Augustinian. . . . [It] lays relatively greater emphasis on the weakness and evil to which human nature is prone as the result of original sin. By the same token, it attributes relatively less efficacy to natural knowledge and human action and relatively more validity to God's revelation and more power to the action of God's grace. . . . [The] Irish countryman has acquired a more than average distrust of native human reason. As a Catholic he cannot and does not deny the validity of rational thought, but he tends to be quite suspicious of the pride of the mind and so wary of ultimate rationalism that he shies away from reasoned discussions of high truths. . . . The tradition he inherits tends toward a certain historical and theological positivism in regard to the major truths and values of life, and, together with other historical factors, has led him to an intensified reliance upon the teaching power of the Church as voiced by the clergy. At the same time, while appreciating the need for positive good works, he is inclined to place relatively greater emphasis on those which are directly concerned with obtaining grace and relatively lesser store by simple ethical behaviour. And finally, although he is certain that man's bodily nature with its emotions is at root good, he is rather more suspicious of it and deals with it somewhat more severely. As a result he inclines to a jaundiced view of sex and a generally ascetic outlook which

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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*831 enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theo-
155 logians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the
175 British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister
178 William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory
181 strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged
779 in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have
795 long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of
798 the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly
[785] could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

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155 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges
178 of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one
181 Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism
779 as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the
798 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of
[874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

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chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161–162). [874]

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better it God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105). [864]

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters. 844 864

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent con- 114 155

114 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe,* by
155 William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark,* probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and
[12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and
* 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.[6] Opler and Singer have the following to
15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland:
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> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.
> [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures
> [838] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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[815] [6] Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent
about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma,
[779] and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample-latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

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539 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers
571 further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the
828 quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their main-
829 spring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

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177 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed
178 to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the
181 penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not
*831 exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread
795 throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism,
779 which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

*831 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined
181 in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions,
182 enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control"
626 —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter. 831* 181 182 626

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as employing informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative experiences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorganization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere. 831* 626 793 [779] [872] [155] 831* 626 684 793

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in 831* 797 626 771 [796] [783] [781]

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, 121
and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized [626]
by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, [114]
and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble sav- [181]
ages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every 831*
opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its 626
victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind [609]
fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at [167]
the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous [574]
announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case. 831*

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities 626
of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem [562]
the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, [167]
they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples [584]
who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

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[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the [839]
apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

*831
626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
154 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

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HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression. 831* 182 582 589 178

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this. 162 589 582 582 589 182 428 [745] [593] [167] [311]

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision 589 593 [606] [155] [793]

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes
582 from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
[586] articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades! 582

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration. 161 168 167 182 582 589

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining. [434] [657] [434] [183] [178] [582]

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis [831]* 181 183 829 167 182 [181]

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167 Beag, only limited amounts of which have been reported in this chapter.
182 Even though sexual repression and fear of the clergy prevent the folk
[181] from being outspoken in this matter, it is constantly broached among
[83] themselves.

167 Paramount among external factors stimulating emigration are pros-
177 perity on the mainland and abroad, the impact of the mass media of
182 communication, the increasing number of tourists visiting Inis Beag, the return of former emigrants, and the fact that, with an increase in incomes and scholarship funds, more island children are going to the mainland for their schooling each year. America has been a land of freedom and prosperity to the Irish since before the famine, and, until the Second World War, most islanders migrated there never to return. But the growth of prosperity in England following 1946 shifted the stream of emigration in that direction, for not only were jobs plentiful across the Irish Sea, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in big cities. And it was possible to visit Ireland frequently, as the distance and cost are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic. It is common for youths vacationing in Inis Beag from England to talk others into returning with them. The latter declare
167 that they will soon come back to the island to settle permanently, hope-
177 fully with "great riches," but they seldom return. Since the war, a number of "Yanks" have also returned home, and their stories of life in America make the youthful islanders restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many folk also sow the seeds of discontent.

167 Television was introduced into Inis Beag during 1963, and the two
207 sets now installed always have ready and willing audiences. Almost
182 every cottage has a radio, and, although the islanders seldom read books,
177 a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, as they allow the islanders to glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a
[656] happier and freer world. Television and radio programs are censored, but, even so, the morality expressed in them—especially the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A censor from Inis Beag would most certainly create more discontinuities in films with his shears than do his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin.

114 Most of what I have written in this essay is to be found expressed in the works of such older Irish writers as James Joyce, Sean O'Casey,

Austin Clarke, and Patrick Kavanaugh, and such younger ones as William Murray, John McGahern, Edna O'Brien, John Broderick, Brian Moore, and Benedict Kiely. Irish reviewers of the writings of the younger authors often criticize them for portraying an Ireland of the distant past. But, although conditions there are changing quite rapidly, sexual repression is still a force active enough to command the attention of creative artists and social scientists.[8] The subtle influences of nationalism, religion, and sexual puritanism were very apparent in the revisions suggested by most of the twenty-six "unbiased" scholars of Irish descent—in Ireland, England, and America—to whom I submitted the first version of this article for comment.

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[8] I am confident that one of the major "lines of attack" on my ethnography by Irish nativist reviewers will be that the community described is atypical and conditions in urbanized Ireland no longer bear any resemblance to those in Inis Beag. Since 1957, I have been much criticized by African elitists for describing in my writings a primitive culture which they claim is no longer characteristic of that developing continent.

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154 Ireland ER1
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[For information pertaining to emigration and its relation to sexual repression, late marriage, celibacy, and family relations in Ireland, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 32-36.]

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Ireland ER1

[For information pertaining to the historical background of Irish national character and personality development, the relation to sexual repression and theological dogma, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 20-27.]

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[For Information on the attitudes of the Rural Irish towards sex, see category 116, pp. 13-36.]

[For information pertaining to governmental activities in Inis Beag, see category 657.]

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor" Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood, production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe, the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

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fostered immorality, and created mental illness on a vast scale. Primitive and folk peoples, according to this view, represent man as he once was and could or should be again were civilized society drastically reformed.

Most of the ideas held by primitivists are as extreme as those maintained by nativists: primitive and folk societies possess simple, static cultures in which dysfunctional forms are rare; their economies are primarily subsistence ones, approximate the householding type, and lack competitive elements; social control is mostly informal; the family is the core social group and is a highly integrated and cooperative unit; religion is a pervasive force which sanctions most behavior and assures psychological security and social cohesion; and, religious dissent and skepticism are unknown. Primitivists also contend that primitive and folk peoples are content with their conditions of life, are seldom if ever mentally ill, and possess character traits that civilization has perverted. It is probable that primitivists would include all of the traits designated as Irish by nativists and would add many others.

The antiquarians George Petrie and John T. O'Flaherty during the 1820s were the first scientists to undertake research in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. Since that time, there have been short and sporadic visits to the island by a variety of investigators, among them anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians, philologists, and others. Most of the anthropological research has been conducted by archeologists, anthropometricians, and linguists. Several archeological expeditions have examined thoroughly surface sites in Inis Beag, but no prehistorian has excavated as yet, and the accurate dating of artifacts scarcely has begun. Reconstruction of a number of ancient monuments by the government was made possible through the research findings of archeologists, and today site descriptions on mounted plaques mark the principal monuments. Alfred C. Haddon and C. R. Browne in 1892 and E. A. Hooton and C. W. Dupertius between 1932 and 1934 made anthropometric studies, the latter as part of the Harvard University anthropological survey of Ireland, which also included archeological and ethnographic investigations. The ethnographic study—reported in Conrad M. Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman* and Arensberg's and Solon T. Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*—was made in three communities of Co. Clare by these authors with W. Lloyd Warner; it was the first holistic ethnographic study made in Ireland, and my research in Inis Beag in its initial stages was only the third. (The second, by Rosemary Harris, is reported in a 1954 M.A. thesis in the University of London—see References.)

Linguists, as well as philologists and those wishing to learn Gaelic, long have visited Inis Beag. There now remain only a few areas along the western seaboard of Europe where Gaelic dialects still are spoken, and the island is located in one of these.[4] One-half the population of Ireland spoke the vernacular at the end of the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the last century the ratio had fallen to one-quarter, or approximately 1,500,000 speakers. Sixty years later the

[4] The Celtic languages are Gaulish, Goidelic, and Brittanic, of which the first became extinct at the beginning of the medieval period, and the last two are represented today by the Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects on the one hand, and the Breton and Welsh on the other. Two other related dialects are now extinct: Manx of the Isle of Man and Cornish, the British dialect of Cornwall (Dillon 1957:207).

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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21).

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible.

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.).

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor-

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168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than 168 to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, 829 did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under con- • 12 sideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of 428 inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and 589 personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, 592 which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the [121] literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness 168 of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and 581 go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents [829] opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, [162] seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip,
674 ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag--usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Inis Beag

JOHN C. MESSENGER

114 tent; they have depended on a limited sample of respondents; and most
538 of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, which does not contain numerous categories of significance to anthropologists.

12 My wife and I devoted most of our research to documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also described formal and informal education and the personality traits formed by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many types and probing the memories of aged island respondents, and recorded cultural change in process over an eight-year period. The standard ethnographic research techniques that we employed include guided and open-ended interviews, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, cross-checking, photography, and phonog-
[161] raphy. The sample for much of our data was the total universe of 350 inhabitants.

It is extremely difficult to obtain information in Inis Beag about such matters as amounts and sources of income, disputes, pagan religious retentions and reinterpretations, and sex. This brief list might be increased by at least threefold and gives rise to a consideration of the problems associated with obtaining reliable data from the Irish in general and the
114 islanders in particular. Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled
12 "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously
181 presents one of the shortest, yet most discerning analyses of Irish national character yet written by a novelist and predicts the various reactions that her volume will evoke in Irish readers.[4] She concludes with the following remarks about the difficulties surrounding fact finding in Ireland:

> This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged
> [521] with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing

[4] These reactions appear to be institutionalized, as my writings and conversational remarks have also evoked them. Two additional responses that I have encountered are: my conclusions are invalidated because I failed to consult certain "source materials" written in Gaelic, and my inferior writing style precludes serious consideration of my findings. I take pains to explain, usually in vain, the many methods of fieldwork utilized by ethnographers to Irish persons who are critical of my data and who invariably use the phrase, "You can't trust what an Irishman tells you." On a rare occasion, one listener to my lengthy explanation said, "Ah, you're cuter than we are"—a compliment indeed!

effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I know. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman, sober, will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think: he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress. When he has taken a jar or two . . . he will say whatever he judges will give the greatest offence. In neither case does he reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went round and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake. Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953: 20-21).

I will not concern myself with the various cultural and psychological causes accounting for this state of affairs, which would require an essay equal in length to this one. Suffice it to say, the quotation in considerable measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation, wherever possible. The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before attempting an ethnography, to emphasize various modes of participant observation in order to gain added rapport, to devise ad hoc research methods of an unorthodox nature,[5] to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our research, and to

[5] Departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a ballad that I composed. Islanders read at our request books about Inis Beag, and we recorded and analyzed their responses. The ballad that I wrote, now embedded in the local verbal art tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue that we witnessed, and a series of fascinating events which ensued during the following months. The manner of its composition, the alteration of it by Inis Beag singers after it was written, and the circumstances surrounding its public presentation by various balladiers before differing audiences gave us invaluable ethnographic insights.

12 cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which characterize ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as an epistemology.

181 The use by the folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and 195 "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition [178] of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is a product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can very effectively serve to shield genuine thoughts [538] and feelings and thus protect the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition of verbal skill, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*. (At least one folklorist has collected "Joycean utterances" from Irish peasants.)

123 Most of our information came from observation and unguided interviews. It proved impossible to take field notes openly, except when collecting innocuous data—such as the number of livestock owned by each householder—from a few particular persons. Thus, we were forced to limit our visits to less than two hours, after which we immediately [562] transcribed what our combined memories could resuscitate. Despite frequent explanations of our presence in Inis Beag, which were candid and truthful, it was thought by the islanders that I was interested only in archeological sites and oral literature, and that my wife was not a trained and experienced co-worker; this, obviously, reflects their previous experiences with scientists and their conception of the position of women in society. Their inability to evaluate adequately our intentions proved [609] to be a research boon. For once "accepted" (a relative term, since no outsider is ever accepted) after many months in the island, we were allowed to listen to and participate in conversations and activities from which we would otherwise have been excluded.

123 Our data on sex came from my involvement as a participant-
*831 observer in personal and often intimate conversations with men and my wife's counseling of women who were bothered by such matters as explaining and coping with menstruation, menopause, mental illness, the sexual curiosity of their children, and "excessive" sexual demands of their spouses. Our sexual knowledge and sympathy coupled with their needs and inquisitiveness gave rise to a "counselor-client" relationship between many of the folk and ourselves. They came to speak freely, albeit indirectly at times, with each of us about this sphere of behavior which arouses so much anxiety and fear. I must mention that the relationship

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

114 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe*, by
155 William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark*, probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and
• [12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and
* 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.[6] Opler and Singer have the following to
15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland:
[593]

> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.
> [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures
> [838] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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[815] [6] Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma,
[179] and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

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INTRODUCTION

121 OBJECTIVE study of contemporary social behavior has already begun, in recent years, to yield a new field of inquiry into human relations and human activity. Community studies, social surveys, industrial descriptions, and collections of folk culture and folk custom are beginning to put the investigation of modern Euro-American social life on a par with the ethnology of non-European peoples. The company of such reports is still very small, but it has a healthy growth. There is as yet no common name for them, and the scientific interest behind them has ranged very widely, from psychology to population study or economic history. Nevertheless, the basis for a comparative sociology, or social anthropology if you will, of all the world's peoples, both modern and "primitive," is gradually emerging. The present work is a small attempt to place rural southern Ireland on the roster. It submits a description of certain aspects of contemporary Irish "folk culture."

Ireland really has no need of people to represent her. Her writers, statesmen, and emigrants have carried her story far beyond the limits of the English-speaking world. The history of her agrarian movements and reforms and the renascence of her autonomy in political and cultural life have been amply documented. Yet the major social and economic conditions of her existence have been presented only through literary or political commentary and controversy. Consequently, an inquiry into sociological matters in the rural hinterland of the country, aiming at a description of the social matrix out of which her rich tradition springs, breaks new ground. The following report of inquiry into the several aspects of rural life in the south and west, carried on in a limited area by two foreigners,

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121 is offered to the Irish people as a merest beginning in a task they themselves are best equipped to carry on. The country that has taken a place once again among the free nations of the world deserves to be thoroughly known. It deserves to be put forward among students of human affairs as an example of human life and human achievement unique in respect to history and tradition but similar to others the world over in respect to human relations and organization.

Yet the book that follows studies only a very few of the many aspects of contemporary Irish social life. In the course of field work the problem of the influence of family structure and kinship early forced itself into the center of the stage. The form of the community and the lives of its members could not be understood apart from the kind of relations among persons bound by blood and marriage which the country people exhibited. That influence, therefore, became the principal area of investigation. For this reason this report upon field work is a descriptive account of the connection between several aspects of community life among the small farmers of County Clare, which was the region visited, and the system of ordering family relationships to be found among them.

Though the work deals with rural communities, the authors do not intend it to be in any sense a community study or social survey. Intensive observation brought the authors into intimate contact with three small communities, whose names will appear very often. But their field work was not directed toward discovering what was particular to these. It was aimed at a larger problem. It was based on an assumption fundamental to anthropological theory today. It assumed that the chief determinant factor in human society may well be human activity itself. The question behind the authors' inquiries was couched in terms of this hypothesis. What could they learn to help them to an explanation of the uniformities of human action by following

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the influence of one kind of activity of human culture upon another? Their results have thus always the same general form: men do these things because they do those others. The nature of the causality remains another question, but the connections observed must first be stated. 121

Consequently the book deals with indices, particularly statistical ones, describing all the Irish rural folk. It treats the Irish countrymen and countrywomen actually observed and interviewed as instances of a general condition to which such indices might refer. The instance illuminates the index; two knowns thus forecast the unknown generality. Whether the procedure is legitimate, the authors do not argue here; they merely make use of it. The three communities that appear from time to time in the following pages are thus samples, just as County Clare itself is a sample, a fairly representative mean among the major social and economic conditions in Ireland upon which there was documentation in the year 1932.

A good deal of the material presented here has been presented before, though rather differently. Several passages will be familiar to those who have read *The Irish Countryman* by one of the authors, Conrad M. Arensberg. Chapter X is in great part a reprint from that work. The authors are deeply indebted to the publishers, the Macmillan Company of London, for permission to include such materials here. They make the inclusion in order to put the behavior described in its perspective in relation to the other topics discussed here. Without it, the present story of mutual dependence and functional interconnection between kinds of activity among the small farmers of southern Ireland would be incomplete. For the theoretical problem that is involved in a discussion of the sociology of subsistence in rural Ireland is of far wider importance than any description of things Irish. [114]

The nature of a social system and the nature of cause and

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121 effect in human affairs in social life becomes with each decade more and more important a problem for the increasingly self-conscious nations of the age. In its practical applications, the problem pushes beyond the confines of the sociological and anthropological inquiries which fostered it originally. Legislative changes, attempts at reform and planning, essays in propaganda and persuasion, campaigns for solidarity or defense, forecasts of development, all come to depend for practical success more and more upon a knowledge of how the complex social organism of a modern nation or culture will react. The Irish situation is thus merely an instance. It is an essay in the interconnectedness of the conditions of human social life. Whether one wishes to destroy, change, or preserve, the fact of interconnection exists and must be reckoned with.

As an academic problem, the form of the connection between the parts of the social organism, better stated as the effect of some events of human social life upon others, has been largely the concern of a few theoretical sociologists and a single school of anthropologists. The sociologists have dealt principally with its theoretical aspects, formulating abstract forecasts of the necessary connections. The anthropologists, of the "functional" school, have had to face the problem as a concrete requirement of description. Their tribes and native cultures have presented them with whole situations in which each part was foreign to them and in which each part had no other reference than the situation itself could give. Alert readers will detect the influence of both approaches in this book. Yet the emphasis throughout will be placed on the concrete necessities of description. The behavior of the Irish country people and the indices which report it are specific matters of observation and record. The internal connections they may have are equally specific matters.

Yet the authors do not wish to be thought in any sense

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experts on the Irish scene or to be motivated primarily by a desire to explain things Irish to the world. Much as they desire to understand and give proper value to the nation which so kindly and courteously received them, they do not feel themselves qualified in any way to characterize or evaluate the culture, tradition, or social life of the communities in which they made their study. Therefore, they present the results of their examination of the data they gathered in Ireland in answer to quite another set of problems. If they by chance and inadvertence happen to bring the light of a fresh foreign point of view into matters which are of much more than theoretical interest to Irishmen in the Free State, or to students of Ireland and her problems, they will count themselves lucky indeed. 121

The purpose of the study is not so much to characterize the communities described as it is to examine the behaviors of the persons living in them. The data upon which the argument of the book rests are the data of events, biographies, and situations in which the members of the communities took their parts. But the conclusions which advance the argument and which the authors draw from these data are not primarily intended as characterizations of the behavior involved. They are steps in the elaboration of a view of human behavior in social life to which they impel the authors and toward which it is hoped the reader will likewise find himself drawn.

That this should be the case involves the earliest history of the present research. It was begun in 1932 as an intensive field research in social anthropology as it had grown up in the ethnological work of Malinowski and through the theoretical formulations of Radcliffe-Brown. Neither of the authors of this book had done firsthand work among primitive peoples. They had served apprenticeships in field work under Professor William Lloyd Warner, then of Harvard University, in a study of a contemporary New England city 114 121

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114 and were thoroughly devoted to social anthropology as a
121 technique for study of modern civilized communities.

121 Thus the conclusions of the book are in the nature of answers to the questions originally responsible for setting about the research. Experience in Yankee City in New England had led the authors to the point of view which is the central hypothesis of functional anthropology. The more they worked, the more it grew certain for them that to a certain approximation it is useful to regard society as an integrated system of mutually interrelated and functionally interdependent parts. A study in Ireland, then, should be a study to test this hypothesis. In a setting far different but still in some ways closely comparable to the American scene which the authors already knew, they would try to give it a greater precision.

The pooled experience of the authors, in so far as they themselves can judge it, did not involve a rigid insistence upon or acceptance of any one anthropological view within the broad confines of the functionalist approach. It also carried them far beyond the confines of anthropology, as the reader will soon learn.

For the most part the Irish communities the authors undertook to examine and in which they had a brief but enjoyable participation were, in a sense, laboratories and workshops. They exemplified concretely the problems contained in the concepts, social structure, social system, and organization of human behavior.

That is why, then, even though the authors found themselves becoming, as far as their halting steps would take them, economists, political scientists, folklorists, students of religion and whatnot, they found the general role of ethnologist and social anthropologist most congenial to their task. Even where their data, in part at least, necessitate the formulation of a general sociology, they are still confirmed in what is essentially the ethnologist's point of view. They

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seek to describe a culture, taking that word in its anthropological sense. And they seek to do so as observers of the minutiae of social life. 121

Naturally the culture so to be described need not have been that of Ireland, as far as the larger purpose of the study was concerned. But Ireland has many advantages for just such an inquiry, and in the authors' view, well warranted choice as a scene of operations.

In the first place, Ireland presented a distinctive and characteristic variant of western European civilization and a long, relatively unbroken tradition dating back to pre-Christian and pre-Roman times. Yet this distinctiveness is comprised within what is, after all, a small compass. Ireland is by no means a large country, and, however its people may be conscious of their own internal differences, it is very homogeneous indeed. Any acquaintance with Ireland at all soon establishes the fact that, far from being on the retreat, the distinctive culture of Ireland is increasing in strength and autonomy, however much it has learned to assimilate the technological and other developments of the modern age.

Nor is the anthropologist abashed by the arguments of those who deny any autonomy to national and ethnic cultures because, after all, they are part and parcel of a larger whole — that of the general occidental civilization. For all classifications of this sort are relative, and need be accepted only for the purpose one wishes to put them to. Just as one can speak of Iroquois culture in contradistinction to Algonquin, though both are eastern woodland American Indians, so one can speak of English and Irish cultures or national groups. The two are distinguishable by differences of behavior and outlook and products of quite different ways of life, even though in many aspects they are comparable and similarly derived historically.

Thus in many cases the data will be distinctly Irish and

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|2| the conclusions may seem to some readers applicable only to Irish conditions. This will be the case particularly where the data meet that reader's disapproval, we are afraid, if he is not an Irishman, or win his enthusiastic support, if he is. Against that sort of interpretation the authors must protect themselves as best they can. Only the development of further studies of similar nature and the growth of understanding of what mechanisms are universal and what are particular in social structure will resolve such controversy.

But the reader must remember that, even though the book draws upon details of the most minute and personal kind, taken out of the most distinctively Irish situations, the use they are put to is not characterizing or descriptive. The authors use the observation of personal relations, individual and group activities, expressions of sentiment and emotion of every kind, as expository matter in the presentation of the general process by which individuals are united, groups are formed, joined, opposed, and in which the cohesion of the community is created, maintained, defended, and lost.

What is here attempted, then, is a work of inductive social analysis. Perhaps the adjectives "analytic" and "interpretive" describe the purpose of the authors best. Detail, local color, dramatic incident, and specific quotation are offered not for themselves, or for the picture they make, but in answer to questions of how and why human beings come to act upon one another in certain ways, to govern their lives in particular fashions, and to accept sentiments and beliefs of the kinds recorded.

The book works toward the problem of the individual as well, particularly so because its data are individual acts, events, expressions of opinion and attitude. For the problem of how science is to deal with individual life and individual behavior is inseparable, as we shall see, from the inquiry here pursued. The authors certainly do not intend any study of Irish psychology *per se*, or attempt psychoanalysis

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of the Irish mind. Rather they work toward the view of the problem of the individual in society which their inductions force upon them. In fact, it is another reason for the authors' adherence to anthropological method and anthropological outlook that the study confirms them in an original view. That is that there is no sociology which is not equally a psychology, nor any psychology which is not equally a sociology. In one aspect, the book will be a treatise on the necessity for abandoning distinctions between the fields and an attempt to force the realization of this identity. 12/●

If there is any single conclusion to which the authors wish to point with greatest emphasis, it is this: that social life and society must be understood not in terms of any hypostatization either of *the individual* or of *society*. There is no such thing as *the* society or *the* individual. Both concepts are conclusions of relative and limited validity. There are only persons behaving in various ways.

But this view is not the purpose of the book. It is the conclusion to which the authors were led in pursuance of their purpose. Nevertheless, it bears statement here at the outset, because it is so simple. Yet the whole course of the book is necessary to establish it and to show it to be the base upon which objective and inductive social science, still only a distant goal, can be built.

The final purpose of the book is to reach this base. It is an attempt to clear away in a concrete case the manifold complexities of civilized society to a point where an inductive science founded upon simple and measurable data can be begun. Its final purpose is also its conclusion: an objective social science can only be made by developing an impersonal technique for reducing to order the only social data we have which are comparable to those from which the natural sciences developed. These are the data of the interaction of human beings, to be found in what they do to one another.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

121 In the discussions on the complicated problems of the European house traditions, the peasant Irish house has hitherto been almost ignored, in spite of the fact that the Irish house could certainly yield some important information. Ireland constitutes a reservoir of Celtic and other traditions of great antiquity and of special importance for the moulding of European folk-culture.[1]

To study the Irish peasant house, it is first of all necessary to make detailed field surveys for all parts of Ireland and then to compare these with the results of similar investigations in all related countries. But not less important is it to consider these conclusions in the light of the information we get in the Ancient Irish Laws (the culture here described dates from pagan times i. e. prior to the middle of the 5th century A. D.) the literature (particularly the Heroic tales of the Ulster cycle), and the vocabulary of the older language as well as that of the modern Irish dialects.

128 Postponing for further discussion (in part II of this article) the buildings of very archaic constructions, viz. the stone beehive huts or rectangular huts roofed by a system of overlapping stones and the most primitive or simplified house types (huts of wickerwork, sod, turf), I will here firstly consider Irish houses, stone-built and mudhouses with roof resting on wooden couples. These houses represent a slightly more developed stage of construction than the above mentioned types. They are all inhabited in modern times.[2]

341 It is a remarkable fact that even the most primitive Irish houses still inhabited — houses with only one room showing traces of its original task to shelter both the human family and the cattle, walls built without mortar, fireplace without any chimney etc. — are already divided into two principal types, namely (1) the house with the fire-place placed somewhere near the centre of the house or at least not just at the gablewall, so there are bedplaces behind the fire-place in the upper end of the house, often thatched gables, and (2) the house with stone-built gables and the fireplace close to the gable wall. In a former article (Béaloideas 1935 p. 57 et sq.) I have

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[17]

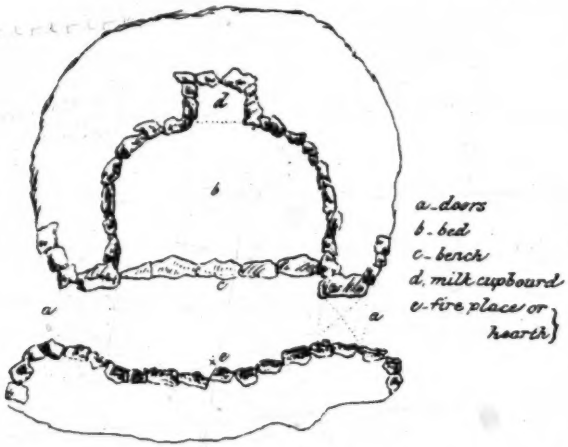

Fig. 3. Both, on West side of Loch an ath Ruadh. Uig, Lewis. From Thomas.

joined together in this manner (pl. 32, an interior showing roof formation. Camera was placed on the ground pointing upwards).

Primitive dwellings and hypogea of the Scottish isles also show the same arrangements. Thus it seems to be evident that the study of the oblong houses there (black-houses, *tigh dubh)* cannot be separated from the study of the *clochán* type. In consequence, it also will be necessary to compare the so-called Norse building customs in the Scottish Isles, which have been put forward by Aage Roussell,[12] not only with Thomas's black-house material — as Roussell does — but also with Thomas's other material including the stone-roofed houses.

[12]

Stone built timber-roofed oval houses.

If my working hypothesis holds, a thorough study of the oval houses will throw much light on Irish building traditions. At least in some parts of Ireland the oval houses formed the basis for the development of native houses of today, *e. g.* the one-roomed central-chimney houses with thatched gables.

It is evident that oval house-types can easily have been reached in places where the round or oval clochán as well as the hut with thatched roof resting on timber are known. When suitable large slabs were scarce, the primi-

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

STATURE, HEAD FORM, AND PIGMENTATION OF ADULT MALE IRISH

EARNEST A. HOOTON
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

(Based upon data collected by C. Wesley Dupertuis)

FOUR FIGURES

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In 1931 the Division of Anthropology of Harvard University began an anthropological survey of Ireland. The project included three fields of investigation: archaeology, social anthropology, and physical anthropology. The field work in archaeology consisted of five summers of excavation which investigated Irish culture from the earliest Stone Age through the first millenium of the Christian era. County Clare was selected as a suitable area for intensive social anthropological work. Studies were carried on there by three investigators for an aggregate of more than 3 years. The study of the physical anthropology of the present adult male population of Ireland was conducted by C. W. Dupertuis over a period of 2 years ('34-'36). It has yielded a series of more than 8800 complete anthropometric and anthroposcopic records, which we believe to represent adequate samples of every part of the Irish population in every area with the exception of the large urban centers. Dr. Helen Dawson of the University of Iowa, working under a National Research Council Fellowship in Anthropology, spent 1 year in collecting data upon the physical anthropology of Irish women and secured some 2000 records. Her material is confined, for the most part, to western Ireland. To Dr. W. W. Howells of the American Museum of Natural History we entrusted the task of studying a large

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 skeletal series of medieval and modern age, which was tem-
114 porarily disinterred in connection with the excavation of the ruined priory at Gallen, County Offaly.

Many technical papers and monographs upon the archaeo-
114 logical results of the survey have been published in the proceedings and memoirs of the learned societies of Ireland. Some preliminary lectures upon the social anthropology of the rural districts of County Clare have been issued in book form (Arensberg, '37). No general works correlating the results of the different phases of the survey have been published as yet, since these must await the completion of the detailed technical reports. Nothing at all has been brought out on the physical anthropological side, with the exception of a short preview of the data included in Dr. Carleton S. Coon's recent book, "The Races of Europe" ('39, pp. 376–384), although Dr. Howells' monograph on the Gallen skeletons is in the hands of the printer.

The enormous mass of anthropometric data collected by Mr. Dupertuis and by Dr. Dawson has been statistically reduced. At least 2 years more must elapse before it can be published. It is hoped to bring it out in one very large volume under the joint authorship of the present writer and the two anthropologists who gathered the material. The discussion of stature, head form, and pigmentation hereinafter presented must be regarded as a preview. Interpretation of the data cannot be other than tentative until the entire body of anthropological evidence has been thoroughly studied.

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL BY LOCAL SUBGROUPS

In the tables and maps included in this paper the anthro-
128 pological material is divided into nineteen local subgroups. These are single county groups, combinations of adjacent counties, or combinations of part of one county with other counties in whole or in part, or subdivisions of a single county. For 2 years Mr. Dupertuis drove up and down through the whole of Ireland studying the population and the geography of the country. The subgroups were made by him partly upon

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to
132 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual
251 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on
231 which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume
234 or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten cows" is still a familiar term.

311 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less
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6: Ó Súilleabháin B-4, 5 (no date) 1956 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Two Death Customs in Ireland

SEÁN Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN

DUBLIN

121 In this article, I wish to draw the attention of students of the cult of the dead to two customs associated with it which have been observed for many generations in the southwest of Ireland. So far as I know, neither of them has hitherto been described in detail in any scientific journal or other work.

1. Funeral Boundaries

764 The importance of *an teampoll dúchais*, the traditional family burial-ground, is shown by the many customs and superstitions relating to it which are still fairly common in rural communities in Ireland. How often have we heard or read of a strange funeral seen at night, which was composed of deceased relatives of some recently dead person who had died and had been buried far from his family graveyard; the dead concourse was taking the body home (often even across the Atlantic) to find rest with his deceased kith and kin? Or, of a decapitated or maimed corpse which had been buried in the proper graveyard; the missing head or other member, however, was carefully carried by a "dead funeral" at night and laid in the same grave as the body? Thus, every effort within reason was made to bury the dead in the family burial-ground. This might have been due either to (a) respect for the dead, (b) fear of evil results, if the duty was ignored, (c) the wish of the dying person to be buried with his ancestors, or (d) any of a long list of other reasons which might be adduced. Even within a far-flung parish, the distance which the corpse had to be carried might amount to twenty miles. The distance would naturally be greater when the person had died in a remote district or county. Thus, funerals often took days in such cases, and halts had to be made overnight. The hardship endured by the coffin-bearers, who in olden times [482] almost always carried the coffin on their shoulders, may well be imagined.

In Ireland, as in most European countries, in the days when coffins were borne on men's shoulders, and even still in certain parts of Ireland, certain resting-places for funerals were traditionally appointed along the route. These were often at crossroads, at ancient market-crosses, which may have been associated with boundaries, or at boundaries between lands, parishes, or counties. In olden times, the corpse was not allowed to touch the earth at these resting-places; the toes of the

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

STUDIES OF IRISH RURAL SETTLEMENT

JAMES H. JOHNSON

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UNTIL recently it was generally thought that isolated farms, dispersed over the cultivated land (Fig. 1), formed a settlement pattern of great antiquity in Ireland. Without investigating the matter deeply, academic geographers explained this pattern in several ways. Some saw it as a product of the pastoral emphasis of Irish agriculture, which necessitated a close relationship between a farmer's residence and his fields.[1] Others, especially Meitzen, regarded the dispersed farms as a direct result of the Celtic heritage of the country.[2] And although professional geographers preferred a cultural explanation, school textbooks tended to seize on an environmental factor, seeing dispersed settlement as a product of the moist Irish climate, which required no concentration on wet-point sites and presumably allowed the cultural factors free play.[3]

Contemporary Studies

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Work by modern geographers on the critical study of Irish rural settlement began in County Donegal. Here E. E. Evans[4] showed that, in parts of the county at least, the single isolated farm is a relatively recent form of settlement, which dates from the nineteenth century rather than survives from any great antiquity. Modern dispersed settlement in Donegal was in fact preceded by "clachans"—clusters of farm dwellings and their associated outbuildings, usually grouped without any formal plan and in the early nineteenth century often consisting of as many as 30–40 houses. Although these clachans normally lacked both inn and church, communal life and the exchange of services were characteristic, and as a rule their inhabitants were related by blood.

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[113] [1] A. Demangeon: La géographie de l'habitat rural (International Geographical Congress, London and Cambridge, 1928: Report of the Commission on Types of Rural Settlement, pp. 41–80), p. 59.

[2] August Meitzen: Siedelung und Agrarwesen der Westgermanen und Ostgermanen, der Kelten, Römer, Finnen und Slawen (3 vols. and atlas, Berlin, 1895), Vol. 1, pp. 174–182.

[312] [3] The advantage of universal water supplies in Ireland is more apparent than real. In parts of County Fermanagh, for example, farmers must carry drinking water hundreds of yards to their dispersed farms (cf. J. M. Mogey: Rural Life in Northern Ireland [Oxford, 1947], pp. 35–36), when nucleation around the most satisfactory supply would seem to be a logical arrangement. Personal observation suggests that this is a not uncommon situation on many Irish farms.

[113] [4] Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System, *Geography*, Vol. 24, 1939, pp. 24–36; Donegal Survivals, *Antiquity*, Vol. 13, 1939, pp. 207–222.

➤ MR. JOHNSON is Lecturer in Geography at University College, London.

[p.554]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

survivals of the infield-outfield system in the remoter parts of Ireland would seem to suggest that it dates from a time much earlier than that of the Norman invasion.

Lines of Investigation

These questions and theories widen the field for speculation, but it is difficult to see where to turn for further information, largely because of the meager documentary evidence that survives in Ireland from periods earlier than the eighteenth century. Admittedly, relevant material may be discovered among estate papers, but there are three other lines that might be followed with profit.

One possible approach, field investigation, is illustrated by a project now under way, in which archeological techniques are being used to excavate a clachan in County Down, inhabited until the late nineteenth century. The primary aim is to discover how this particular clachan originated. Did it grow out of a single farm, and, if so, at what date? Two seasons' work has now been completed without conclusive answers to these questions, though some details have been added to the local economic history of County Down.[26] At least it has been shown that a clachan settlement stood on this site about 1780 and that the site had been occupied from sometime near the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Buildings were found underlying the nineteenth-century structures. The fact that some of these remains appear to date from a time before the immigration of Scottish and English settlers into the area in the early seventeenth century should prove important in the study of Irish house types, since the lack of evidence on the development of settlement patterns extends also to the history of individual farm buildings.[27]

Whether this particular excavation will yield further information about

[26] J. H. Johnson, V. B. Proudfoot, and R. H. Buchanan: Excavations at Minerstown, Co. Down: Preliminary Report on Work Completed in 1956, *Ulster Journ. of Archæol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 21, 1958. (In press.)

[27] Pioneer work on surviving house types was carried out by A. Campbell (Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture, *Béaloideas*, Vol. 5, 1935, pp. 57–74; Notes on the Irish House, *Folkliv*, Vol. 1, 1937, pp. 207–234, and Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 173–196). This has been developed in a series of local studies, so that a comprehensive account of the surviving forms of Irish traditional building is becoming increasingly possible. The best and most recent general account is E. E. Evans' "Irish Folk Ways" (London, 1957; with an extensive bibliography), Chapters 4 and 5. Several important articles on house types and related topics have appeared recently; for example, C. Ó Danachair: Irish Farmyard Types, *Arctica: Studia Ethnographia Upsaliensis No. 11*, 1956, pp. 6–15; A. T. Lucas: Wattle and Straw-Mat Doors in Ireland, *ibid.*, pp. 16–35; C. Ó Danachair: Stand und Aufgaben der Hausforschung in Irland, *Bericht über die Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für Deutsche Hausforschung*, Schleswig, 1955, pp. 29–50; R. H. Buchanan: Thatch and Thatching in North-East Ireland, *Gwerin*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 123–142; and C. Ó Danachair: The Bed Out-Shot in Ireland, *Folkliv*, Vols. 19–20, 1955–1956, pp. 26–31.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the beginning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered. However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of land-holding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviving clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photographs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

[28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland, *Antiquity*, Vol. 4, 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

609 It finds a formula for them that gives them a
123 familiar ring. So, the anthropologist gradually found acceptance. Even his formidable title grew easier as its translation spread. The Irish today
[212] are a very literate people. And a sudden increase in the circulation of books on anthropology
[217] from the county library helped very quickly to establish the anthropologist as 'looking for old customs'.

Once, perhaps, the translation would have been
121 adequate. But anthropology today is much more than a search for ancient custom. Even in Ireland, where the traditional Celtic life still lingers on, the anthropologist must conceive his purpose in broader terms. I want to devote this first lecture to the new purpose and its application to the Irish scene. In the remaining five lectures I shall try to present to you certain of the factors of custom and belief in the countryside of the south and west of Ireland and to analyse them in terms of the purpose we discuss here.

000 First of all we must clear up the matter of presumption. It may seem presumptuous that an anthropologist should profess to discuss the life of a modern nation. To some of us it may seem something like an engineer or a physicist, who deserts his field for metaphysics and morals. To others it may seem to betray a rather derogatory attitude toward the nation discussed. But neither desertion nor derogation can rightfully be charged. Our con-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

mentioned by name. It is the room reserved for 353
themselves by the old people, the father and mother 888
of the groom; they reserve it for their own use after they turn over the farm to their sons at marriage.

Ask about this and more information comes to you. It is into this room that the old couple move. The room is theirs. Younger members of the household dare not enter it except with permission. Indeed, it is the old couple who throw their aura around the room; the respect owed them is very like that felt toward the room they occupy. Here one enters a new field of behaviour and attitude in human relations. The honour and command of the old couple do not leave them altogether when they retire from active ownership of the farm. They enter a new status of which the associations round the west room are one reflexion.

So it goes, the new questions and new observations lead not to a prehistory or a chain of continuities, but to an ever-widening number of living associations which colour the relations of men and women, old and young. They lead to a realization of the laws and custom by which the small farmers find their lives ordered. In this instance, the west room of Luogh is a dim survival, perhaps, of Avalon and *Tír na nÓg*. But more certainly it is a focal point in a system of values some little of which we have begun to glimpse. Old custom in the west room thus gives

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 us the first example of our method. An inquiry into the present of rural life leads us into the ways of human behaviour rather than into those of cultural descent.

754 I called my second example 'the old man's curse'. It is perhaps not so pleasant an example and it springs out of infinitely rarer occasions. Yet it will serve as well as did the west room to show us where our queries must lie. The example of the old man's curse concerns a lost eye. Many of the country-people believed that the curse was directly responsible for the loss of a young man's eye. The young man in question lived in a district not far from Luogh; and the old man who cursed him was a neighbour. This is the baldest possible statement of the occurrence, and it would suffice if we were interested merely in collecting instances of magical injury.

For the baneful effects of curses, of black magic, of the 'evil eye', are a commonplace of anthropological literature. They are common enough too in Irish folklore. Men suffer injury in some way from supernatural causes. The possessor of the evil eye can blight, maim, and kill; the priest's curse, though in this case uttered only for cause, can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliever's head upon his shoulder; strike blindness; and the shrill imprecations of old men and women, or the *rann* of a satiric poet, can bring equal harm. Supernatural injuries of this sort are as

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
452
626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
668 public life who has contributed so much to humour
and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and
cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

tion is to mistake the issue. To enforce a political morality without emotional conviction would be false conversion indeed.

Thus, the shopkeeper-publican-politician was a very effective instrument, both for the countryside which used him and for himself. He might perhaps exact buying at his shop in return for the performance of his elective duties, as his enemies charge: but he also saw to it that those duties were performed for the very people who wished to see them done. Through him, as through no other possible channel, Ireland reached political maturity and effective national strength. That strength persists today, despite superficial strife and internal growth and change. And it persists by virtue of its connection with the society from which it springs.

For a social order, we can see clearly now, is a thing of very wide inclusions indeed. The same set of dispositions runs right through, from the 'west room' of remote Luogh to the political life of the market-towns and cities of Ireland. In this study, for instance, we began our examination of the countryman's way of life with a discussion of 'old custom'—folklore and folk-belief. By now it is clear to you, I think, that 'old custom' is more than a dying survival of an age-old habit. It is part of a larger whole, a whole which in its total is co-extensive with the total-pattern of the life of which old custom is still a part. Our two original ex-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 amples, the 'west room' and 'the old man's curse',
182 which came up in the first lecture, lead one on to an analysis of the countryman's way of life. In its turn, that way of life yields one clue at least to the understanding of a nation and its people.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

INTRODUCTION.

The cleavage between town and country has grown steadily sharper in Britain since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, and has recently been emphasised by the partial failure of evacuation schemes. As a result, closer attention is being given to the problems of the countryside, and, reflecting this interest, stories of Farmer Giles have given way to a flood of books recording the details of his daily and seasonal tools and tasks. 369

Outside the capital cities of Dublin and Belfast the cleavage between town and country has not gone very deep in Ireland; and even in Belfast business men and doctors are rarely more than a generation or two "off the land." In Eire 63% of the population is "rural dwelling," that is living outside "towns" with over 200 inhabitants. The corresponding figure for Britain would be well below 20%. Even in Northern Ireland, despite its great manufacturing industries, farming remains the most important industry, and 50% of the population lives in rural areas. Yet the younger people, at least, are often ignorant of the affairs of the countryside, and what is worse find no interest in them. I was recently approached in Co. Antrim by evacuated boys in their teens who wanted to know if a bunch of acorns they carried were hazel nuts!

This book does not pretend to be more than an introduction to a vast subject of inexhaustible interest, and I am fully conscious of the risks involved in venturing into an unexplored field and attempting to summarise its varied 121

[p. 1]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 features: each of the following chapters could without difficulty be expanded into a book. The so-called Celtic fringe is in reality a broad mantle of fascinating pattern and colour. While I have tried to give summary accounts applying to Ireland as a whole, most of my material is drawn from Ulster, a province which, although six of its nine counties are politically separated from the rest of the island, is, archæologically at any rate, its most representative region and has its full share of country relics. When districts or counties are mentioned it must not be assumed that they are the only places where the practices or objects referred to occur. They happen to be examples which have come under my notice, and they are located not because they occur nowhere else, but because it is a scientific duty to record locations. I have not concentrated on the Gaeltacht in seeking survivals: I have rather been concerned to show how widespread are the customs and habits which are popularly supposed to be the peculiar possession of the Irish-speaking districts. Consequently I have not given Gaelic terms except in so far as they may be hidden in dialect words which I have, as a rule, spelt phonetically. They are for the most part the terms used in counties Antrim and Down. There are some obvious omissions in the topics discussed: I have deliberately said very little, for instance, about the homespun industry with all its varied gear and traditions, because it is fairly well known. Nor have I ventured into the controversial realms of religion or politics.

The Ireland I am writing about is one which is passing away, and some of the customs and tools described and illustrated in the following pages have almost entirely gone, but I have learnt that it is rarely safe to use the past tense in writing about Irish matters. I have more than once come across customs which were described as dead half a century ago: the old ways are an unconscionable time a-dying. When ancient arts and crafts become dissociated from the control of magical practices (*cf.* Chapters 18 and 19), decline often sets in. It is now realized that deterioration has been

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a powerful factor in the history of human culture, and that it needs spiritual as well as economic force to bring about new growth. But I am no supporter of those who, indulging in sentimental regrets for a Celtic twilight of doubtful authenticity, find in the past a Golden Age to which they would have us return. Our view should be forward. There is in Ireland, thanks to the astonishing virility of peasant tradition, a great opportunity to save and transform rural life, as happened in Denmark, before it has declined too far. In that revival education must play its part. A geographer may be forgiven for attributing the general ignorance about the foundations of rural culture to the very backward position of geography teaching in Ireland, where none of the Universities has given the subject full recognition—a state of affairs perhaps unparalleled in any part of Europe. Moreover, except for a few well-equipped and well-staffed schools, the standard of geography teaching in the schools is half a century behind the times.

Peasant ownership, for good or ill—it has not so far provided the answer to Ireland's problems—is now established. In Northern Ireland 38% of the farm holdings are under 15 acres in extent and only 4% exceed 100 acres: 27½% are between 15 and 30 acres (the corresponding figure in Eire is 27%). Cheap electricity may provide a basis for restoring rural industries as an essential and intimate part of the life of the countryside. The undoubted virtues of the Ulster character were surely related to the traditions of peasant weavers before that tradition was submerged in the Industrial Revolution. The essentials of the country craft—simplicity of form, soundness of construction and fitness to purpose—must somehow be restored. The traditional skill in wood working can be revived: re-afforestation should be undertaken on bold lines, and every effort made to save the native flora and fauna from further destruction. The difficulties of the present time are forcing on our attention the view expressed by many leading thinkers, that the rural tradition is of special importance for the maintenance of society, and that there are

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

XVII.

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF INISHBOFIN AND INISHSHARK, COUNTY GALWAY.

By CHARLES R. BROWNE, B.A., M.D., M.R.I.A., of the Anthropological Laboratory, Trinity College, Dublin. (Plates VIII. and IX.)

[Read November 30, 1893.]

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I.—Introduction.

In pursuance of the plan adopted by the Dublin Anthropometric Committee of combining the ordinary work of the Laboratory with local investigation in selected parts of the country, and first tried last year in the Ethnographic Expedition to the Aran Islands, I, this autumn, made the second local inquiry, the field chosen being the islands of Inishbofin and Inishshark, Co. Galway.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

121 The inquiry was conducted on almost exactly the same lines as that of last year; the slight differences of method being either due to changes made as the result of former experience or to local causes; but every effort was made to ensure as great uniformity as possible, a matter of much importance as facilitating comparison of results.

In this report the same headings as used in the previous one, and arranged in the same order, have been adhered to as closely as possible, so as to allow of easy reference.

II.—Physiography of the Islands.

131 The two islands under consideration, together with several small uninhabited islets, form the parish of Inishbofin; they are situated
101 outside the mouth of Killary Bay, and are distant some thirty-six miles from Westport, and about sixteen miles from Clifden, Co. Galway, the nearest town of any size. The post town is Cleggan, a small village on a point of the mainland, about seven miles from Inishbofin. Of the two main islands Inishbofin (locally called Bofin or Boffin) is much the larger, as out of the total area of the parish of 3151 acres, it contains 2312.

Its greatest length is about four miles, and it varies in breadth
133 from half a mile to over two miles. The nature of its coast line is greatly varied; at some places, as at Knock-quarter or East End, being low and sandy; at others, as on the north side, and at Dun More on the western extremity, being rocky, at times rising into high and jagged cliffs worn into coves and natural bridges; while, again, in other places it is high bluff overhanging a shingly foreshore. The
[504] harbour is very safe and well sheltered, and looks S.W. The coast of Shark, which lies about a mile S.W. of Inishbofin, is much more rocky, and may be said to be precipitous nearly all round, and much broken into by caves and deep fissures a few yards wide, with precipitous overhanging walls. It is difficult to land on this island if the weather be at all rough, and the inhabitants are often stormbound for weeks at a time. The difficulty and danger of landing is not so great
[653] as it used to be since the building of a new pier by the Government as a relief work in 1892. Mr. Michael Lavelle, writing about the natives of this island, says:—"It is very hard for these people to live; they may be two months before they can go to Boffin to get some commands, and they live during that time on potatoes and 'white wine.'"

The principal rock of both islands is gneiss, but belts of steatite are also found.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Inishshark has about twelve boats of from one to two tons. The natives of this island do not approve of the curragh, for which their coast is too rocky. 501

The ordinary rowing boat is manned by five men, the curragh by three.

The curragh is of the ordinary west coast type, consisting of a light wooden frame covered with tarred canvas.

VI.—FOLK-LORE.

Of this interesting branch of the subject, I regret to be able to give but little information, as the people are chary of talking upon such matters to strangers, and only a local collector working for a considerable time could be expected to gather much. Thanks, however, to the kindness of the Rev. Edward Lavelle, his brother Mr. Michael Lavelle, Mr. Myles Joyce, the schoolmaster of the island, as well as to several of the boatmen and others, I am enabled to give the following few notes on the subject. The legendary lore of these islands, especially Inishshark, has been very fully dealt with by Lady Wilde, to whose work I must refer the reader. These notes, however, are new. Omens and death-warnings, such as the banshee, the death-watch, and as mentioned previously (p. 352), the giving of wood out of a house to make a coffin foretelling the death of the giver, are fully believed in. 609 115 121

Luck.—The sight of a red-haired woman or a cat, on starting out in the morning, will bring bad luck to the fishing; and it is stated that people have resorted to the expedient of getting a red-haired girl to lie in wait for a rival, and cross his path as he was starting. 777

To remove from one house to another is also looked upon as decidedly unlucky; but should a move become necessary, it is always made on Monday to the eastward, and on Tuesday to the westward, according to the Irish saying *Luan Soir, agus Mart Siar* (Monday, eastward, and Tuesday, westward). Should any addition be made to the dwelling it is always to the east, never to the west.

It is extremely unlucky to break a looking-glass; so also it is to mention a priest, or a fox, or a hare while fishing.

No man will buy a cow at the New Year without putting some of her milk into his boots, as otherwise she would certainly run dry.

People born on Whit Sunday are thought to be exceptionally ill-tempered.

The evil-eye, also, is strongly believed in; and if any one praises either a child or a beast belonging to a native without saying "God

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

XXXVII.

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THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE MULLET, INISHKEA ISLANDS, AND PORTACLOY, COUNTY MAYO.

By CHARLES R. BROWNE M.D., M.R.I.A.

(Plates XV., XVI., and XVII.)

[Read February 25, 1895.]

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I.—Introduction.

/2/ In continuance of the series of local surveys undertaken by the Dublin Anthropometric Committee and carried out as part of the work of the Anthropological Laboratory of Trinity College, the third of these surveys was made by me last August in the western portion of the

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities, one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in 101 its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the 631 little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of 133 North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the [504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(B)]

121 [167] IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated districts of the country, an island off the [434] west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably con- [794] tented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly collected during a visit with the Geographical 114 Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of 124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was [578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer [231] told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

[p. 202(c)]

●121 living rarely encountered in the modern world. As will be shown later, however, the island people maintain their simple but not uncomfortable way of living only by help from outside: if [433] one believes that every inhabited area must make its economic contribution to the state, Inishbofin is a debtor on a considerable scale.

"A small and dwindling population 167 maintain a precarious existence on the 657 Atlantic fringe of our industrial society and present upon the whole an aspect of decline and, in some parts, of dereliction." In these words the Scottish crofting report[1] names a problem, com- [659] mon alike to the Atlantic fringe of Ireland and of Scotland, which was investigated by two Congested Districts Boards, in Ireland from 1891–1923[2] and in Scotland from 1897–1911[3]; in both countries the powers of these boards were transferred to the general administration of agricultural affairs. One by one the islands off the west coast of Ireland are being abandoned[4] but on Inishbofin this prospect does not seem immediate: past and present government assistance has resulted in a planned

[1] Department of Agriculture for Scotland, [113] Report of the Commission of enquiry into crofting conditions. H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 1954, Cmd. 9091, para. 281, p. 87.

[2] For a general treatment, T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 23, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[3] Cmd. 9091, 1954, para. 265, p. 81.

[4] T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 120, 1954, p. 332.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PREFACE

The generous reception given to my *Irish Heritage*, published fifteen years ago, has encouraged me to go on collecting material on Irish folk life and to prepare this more comprehensive book on the subject. The earlier book was written, under difficult conditions, in the years 1939–41; it was an introductory study of an unexplored field, necessarily speculative and undocumented, and its main purpose was to arouse interest among Irish readers in the treasure-house of the past in which they live. It is hoped that IRISH FOLK WAYS will have a wider appeal. It is abundantly illustrated and fortified by references to a fairly full bibliography. Even so, parts of the text must be taken on trust, since some of the information was gathered from personal observation and conversations up and down Ireland. In the 'mountainy' corners of the country the past is ever-present, a ready topic of talk. I have checked the information where possible, for the inquirer must always be on guard against the countryman's facility of speech, his poetic licence and his fatal desire to please.

There is a great fascination in exploring the living past, but one cannot employ the strict methodology of the historical or natural sciences. The historian is handicapped in studying peasant peoples, not only because they leave no documents but also because their sense of time and values are not those of fully literate folk. The geographer, interested primarily in variations in space, makes an easier approach; yet he will miss much unless he has a concern for origins and a sense of the past. Without knowledge of the past he will not fully observe the present: it is the emotional shock which prints in the memory the first sight of some tool or custom which has survived from an earlier culture-layer. For the historian, on the other hand, the fact that it was described in the eighteenth century is more significant than that it occurs, unrecorded, in the twentieth.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PREFACE

121 However interesting we may find 'bygones' for their own sake—and most of us take a natural interest in the way our forefathers lived—there is need to know not only how these relics were made and used but also what beliefs were held about them. Wherever possible I have studied the techniques of making and using tools as well as their lore, and by assisting in the processes have learnt more than books can teach. There is a clear relationship between the ways in which men's basic needs are satisfied and the social organization. Nothing less than the whole of the past is needed to explain the present, and in this difficult task we cannot afford to neglect the unrecorded past. The crafts of arable farming, of animal husbandry and the home industries have done more to shape our instincts and thoughts than the trampling of armies or the wranglings of kings which fill the documents from which history is written.

The outstanding interest of Ireland for the student of European origins lies in the fact that in its historic literature, language and social organization, as well as in its folklore and folk customs, it illustrates the marginal survival of archaic elements of the Indo-European world. Myles Dillon has shown how the three classes of ancient Irish society—the learned class, the warriors and the peasantry—are closely paralleled in the three main castes of Hinduism: Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya. The ethnographer may be led even farther afield in discovering a skin boat, a rush charm or a wheel-less cart that will take him on a scientific trail to the ends of the earth. And geologists and botanists find a similar interest in the peripheral survival in Ireland of rock-formations and floras which in their day dominated a wider scene.

The decades of demographic instability which culminated in
178 the Great Famine of 1845–7 brought radical changes in the
121 economy and landscape of rural Ireland. A correspondent in *The Times* of May 19th, 1853, noted that 'all accounts describe the country and its inhabitants as assuming more of the half-picturesque, half-comfortable aspect, of an English landscape', no doubt because hedges and an orderly husbandry had transformed the naked famine-stricken scene. The famine, as we shall see, was a great social watershed and it marked the end of an era that might well be termed prehistoric. But it is the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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changes which are taking place today, a hundred years later, that are finally extinguishing the prehistoric traditions. Mechanization and mass-production are invading the remotest glens, and things which were the commonplaces of fifty years ago are becoming as remote to the young as the Middle Ages. Knowledge of ways of life that have altered little for centuries is passing away; skills whose loss the practical countryman may have cause to regret are disappearing. The Irish Universities have a unique opportunity of fostering local studies and folklore-research, but only University College, Dublin, has seriously supported this work. The Government of Northern Ireland, however, is to be congratulated on having offered to help to finance an Ulster Folk Museum on the lines of St. Fagans in Wales and those of the Scandinavian countries.

Meanwhile the National Museum in Dublin, the Belfast Municipal Museum and the County Museum, Armagh, have been busy collecting and displaying the portable elements of material culture, and I have drawn freely on their exhibits for sketches of objects which it is now too late to find in everyday use. I wish to thank Mr. A. T. Lucas and Dr. J. Raftery, of the National Museum, Mr. W. A. Seaby of the Belfast Museum, and Mr. T. G. F. Paterson of Armagh for their assistance and encouragement. Among many other friends and colleagues whose help I cannot forget are Kevin Danaher and Sean O'Sullivan of the Irish Folklore Commission, Professor Michael Duignan, Professor M. J. O'Kelly, Professor Sean O'Riordain, H. G. Tempest, and Dr. A. E. J. Went; and among my former students R. H. Buchanan, Rosemary Harris, N. C. Mitchel, Dr. D. McCourt, Dr. J. M. Mogey, V. B. Proudfoot and G. B. Thompson. I have to thank the editors of the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* and of *Ulster Folklife* and Mr. W. A. Seaby for the loan of blocks, and Mr. Seaby also for permission to use several photographs from the collection of the late R. J. Welch. Mr. W. A. Green, Miss H. E. Henry, Mr. Frank Scovell and Mr. C. E. F. Trench have kindly supplied me with photographs. Miss Eileen Duncan has prepared the four maps, and other acknowledgements appear under the text-figures. It is a pleasure also to acknowledge the help received, either orally or in correspondence, from numerous Irishmen in all

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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I

IRELAND THE OUTPOST

THE charm of Ireland, north as well as south, lies as much in the colourful speech and old-fashioned ways of her people as in the beauty of her green fields and blue hills, the silver-glint of lake waters and the gold of the scented whins. The observant visitor cannot fail to be attracted by customs and turns of speech, by traditions and tools which are obsolescent if not archaic in England. He will occasionally see in use in field and farmyard implements which went out of fashion so long ago in most parts of Great Britain that one may truly speak of them as medieval. Thus the toothed sickle, the flail, the one-eared spade, the clod-breaking mallet and seed-rake, the upright churn and the three-legged pot can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life (Fig. 1). The boon-work which was an obligation owed by tenants to English landlords in the Middle Ages survives in the flax-pulling boons of Ulster, and the Anglo-Norman word for the lord's part of an estate, the demesne, is universally applied to the parklands of Ireland. The Irish baronies or kingdoms, as they are sometimes called, are similarly relics of the Middle Ages. The prevalence of the Roman Catholic religion, to which 76 per cent of the population of Ireland adheres—the figure is 94 per cent for the Republic of Ireland—reinforces this sense of the past; and the English dialects spoken in many districts, even if shot through with Gaelic-derived turns of phrase, are strikingly Elizabethan. A strong medieval flavour attaches to the feast-day gatherings and patterns, to strawboys, wrenboys and the Christmas mummers. Medieval too is the diversity of folk-customs and of locally-made tools, which will be found to vary from one

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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178
[412]
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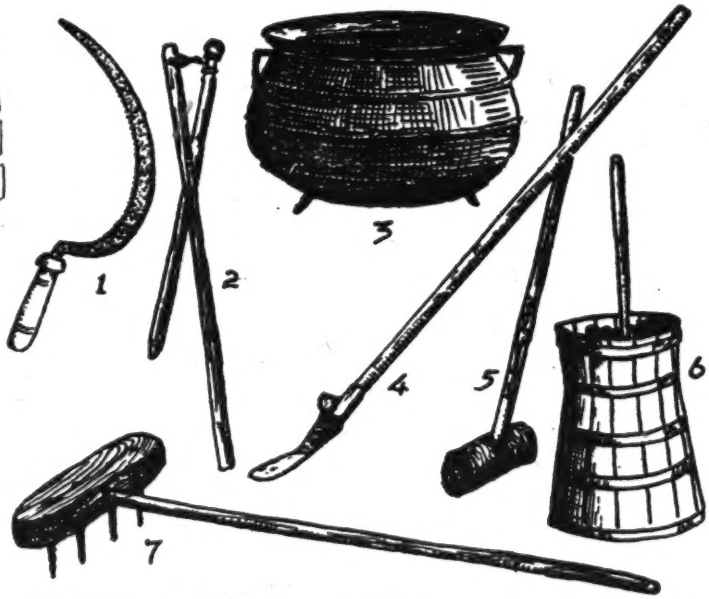

FIG. 1. 'The toothed sickle (1), the flail (2), the one-eared spade (4), the clod-breaking mallet (5), and seek-rake (7), the upright churn (6), and the three-legged pot (3), can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life.'

district to another. The interest of these relics is enhanced when one discovers parallels among simple societies in distant parts of the world.

These ancient diversities are being ironed out at an increasing rate, and the opportunity of seeing and, what is more important, placing on record these age-old crafts and rites will soon pass. The wonder is that so many have persisted through the political, economic and social upheavals of the last 150 years. During that period the steady decline of the Gaelic language resulted in the loss of a great deal of information on local and regional life and of a vast store of oral literature, in which the lore of an ancient civilization was enshrined. The scientist must regard this loss as a tragedy comparable to that suffered by the historian in the disastrous burning of the Dublin Four Courts in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

IRELAND THE OUTPOST

1922. Ireland is one of the last homes of the oral traditions of prehistoric and medieval Europe, which mirror the routine of rural life through the seasons, the contacts of peoples in war and in commerce, and the heroic deeds of half-legendary leaders. Luckily all is not lost: the devoted labours of the Irish Folklore Commission have rescued from the Gaeltacht and catalogued with scientific skill countless stories of the kind which enriched the literature of the medieval world. In Northern Ireland also belated efforts are being made to gather the harvest of lore and legend. 121 178

The study of both the material and spiritual folk-life of Ireland and the oceanic fringes of Europe can throw light on the past and on the evolution of society in Britain and western Europe generally. English anthropologists and ethnographers have searched the farthest continents and enriched scientific literature with their findings, but they have neglected the little island across the Irish Sea. Irish scholars too, perhaps because they find it hard to detach themselves from what is familiar, have shown little interest until recently in the treasure-house of fact and fancy that lies about them. Some writers, indeed, appear to deplore the existence of the folk-customs I am describing in this book: they would conceal or even deny them. It has been learnedly argued, for instance, that the well-authenticated practice of 'ploughing by the tail'[1] was the lying invention of English propagandists, who passed an Act of Parliament prohibiting it, in 1635, merely to demonstrate how degraded the Irish must be! Those features of rural life which cannot be concealed or denied are regarded as due to the repressive hand of England, to penal laws, absenteeism and the poverty imposed by rack-rents and unscrupulous land-agents. Certainly there have been great abuses, and they have left the Irish suspicious and sensitive. It is unfortunate, therefore, that authoritative works recently published in England have needlessly exaggerated the tribal habits and pastoral nomadism of the ancient Irish. A writer in the *Cambridge Economic History*,[2] indeed, goes so far as to describe fifteenth-century Ireland as 'in great part, a 114

[1] *The Irish Book-lover* (May, 1943), 9.
[2] *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*. Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power, 1 (1941), 161.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

II

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

THE tools and traits we are describing in this book have persisted through the centuries because of their close adaptation to the Irish environment, physical and social. They have gathered around them, in that environment, associations of usage and ritual without which they are meaningless, so that transplanted into another land they would be museum-pieces, as indeed they are rapidly becoming in many parts of Ireland. To understand them, therefore, we should consider them not in isolation but as part and parcel of a particular environment. To a large extent a culture owes its specific peculiarities to its geographical setting, and that is why our first chapters will be concerned with the face of the land and with the fields, farms and houses in which generations of Irish countryfolk have lived and worked. 121

It was from a forest environment that the cultural landscape slowly emerged. The destruction of the native forests was virtually complete by the seventeenth century. Thereafter constructional timber had to be imported, and the rural population turned to the fossil oak and pine of the bogs. In the eighteenth century landlords planted their lowland demesnes with exotic species of trees, but only in our own day, under government schemes of reafforestation, are the hill lands here and there being planted and abandoned fields being put back into forest. With the passing of the oak forests a wealth of woodcraft and tree lore perished and a wide range of skills declined, of which we get tantalizing glimpses from archaeological discoveries and legendary tales. Instead of the almost unbroken forest cover which once existed a 'closed association' of farms and fenced fields 137 824

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united
631 politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond, though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon. Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*,
776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle
787 (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317, and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago, foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Plists* or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con-
121 sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen-
124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p. 180]

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since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions." 121 124

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4] 103 173 776

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca- 103 173

[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

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Foreword

About the Series

000 These case studies in cultural anthropology are designed to bring to students, in beginning and intermediate courses in the social sciences, insights into the richness and complexity of human life as it is lived in different ways and in different places. They are written by men and women who have lived in the societies they write about and who are professionally trained as observers and interpreters of human behavior. The authors are also teachers, and in writing their books they have kept the students who will read them foremost in their minds. It is our belief that when an understanding of ways of life very different from one's own is gained, abstractions and generalizations about social structure, cultural values, subsistence techniques, and the other universal categories of human social behavior become meaningful.

About the Author

114 John C. Messenger is a professor in the Department of Anthropology, the Folklore Institute, and the Program of African Studies at Indiana University. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University and taught at Michigan State University and Carleton College before joining the Indiana University [122] faculty. In 1951 and 1952, he conducted fieldwork among the Anang of southeastern Nigeria as an Area Research Training Fellow of the Social Science Research Council; his research during 1959 and 1960, which provided the bulk of the data reported herein, was supported by an Exchange Scholarship to Eire administered by An Bord Scolairteachtai Comalairte of Dublin. Professor Messenger has published numerous articles, chapters in books, and monographs concerning the cultures of the Anang, the Irish, and the Montserrat islanders of the West Indies, whom he studied in 1965 and 1967. A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled him to write a substantial portion of this volume.

About the Book

114 This is a case study of a people widely known through the media of
• 121 journalism and film. Imbedded in a context of romanticism and nativism, the
123 image of the people and their culture created by these media scarcely approximates reality, for reasons that Dr. Messenger makes clear both in his discussion of nativism and the reasons for its strong influence on characterizations of Irish folk,

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and in his descriptive analysis of the culture and social structure of Inis Beag. For these reasons the book will doubtless raise controversy among Irish journalists, particularly those of nativistic persuasion.

Dr. Messenger describes the folk and their culture as he sees them, and within the conceptual structure of the social sciences. The picture that emerges is less heroic than the current romanticized idealization, and very human. The author's personal identification with the island and its people is obvious. He struggles to maintain an objective stance, and largely succeeds, but it is obvious that he and his wife participated exuberantly in the life of Inis Beag. This is in the best tradition of anthropological fieldwork. The problems of identification, friendship, rejection and acceptance, and ambivalence that are invariably associated with such participation are common to all of us who have had this kind of experience.

The case study is notable for its human qualities. It is a descriptive analysis of a significant folk way of life heretofore unrepresented in this series. It is also notable for its significance as an analysis of a closed community that provides mobility only by migration, and for the analysis of the influence of puritanism. This latter emphasis is particularly valuable, for too often we assume that puritanism is associated only with Protestantism. Here, the inter-relationships with Catholicism, particularly with the Jansenist denial of sexuality, is made very clear. Dr. Messenger pursues these themes at both the social and the psychological levels. The case study is also characterized by a strong focus, especially appropriate in the Irish folk context, on folklore, Christian reinterpretations of pagan elements, music, song, and dance. And the dimensions of life that are featured in most ethnographies are well developed—subsistence, material culture, social organization and social control, and values and religion. Dr. Messenger is also careful to provide a historical introduction to Inis Beag, in the context of relevant aspects of Irish history.

GEORGE AND LOUISE SPINDLER
General Editors

Portola Valley, Calif.
May 1969

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, [241] of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first [241] decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag [501] over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most [197] attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

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[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

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The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. In 1846, 25 years before Edward Tylor pronounced his famous anthropological definition of culture, William J. Thoms introduced into English the word "folk-lore," which he defined as "the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the olden time." Ethnology, a scientific discipline whose focus is primitive culture in the Tylor tradition, has had for almost a century its parallel in the humanistic discipline of folklore, whose focus is the culture of the folk, or folklore, in the Thoms tradition. During this time, ethnology has evidenced a humanistic current in its concern with primitive religion, ideology, and esthetics. The discipline of folklore, on the other hand, has evidenced a scientific current, mainly in the research of scholars belonging to the "Finnish School," whose approach to cultural dynamics resembles that of the "American Historical School" of ethnology, and of eastern and northern European folklorists (who often call themselves ethnographers as well) who have been making rather broad cultural studies of peasant communities somewhat in the anthropological mold. American ethnologists employ the term folklore to designate only the oral literature of peoples—their myths, legends, folktales, anecdotes, proverbs, riddles, songs, and the like. I will employ the term in this sense when I deal with Inis Beag esthetics in Chapter 4.

Ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the universities and elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland, but folklore in the humanistic tradition is strongly developed (Delargy 1957; Dorson 1966). The deliberate recording of the immense body of folklore in Ireland began in the early part of the last century, was kindled by the Gaelic Revival, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation, first, of the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936. For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the oral literature and material traits, and their associated behavior, of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the people; moreover, their visits have been brief and intermittent, they have depended on a limited sample of respondents, and most of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (the Irish equivalent of the American *Outline of Cultural Materials* and British *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*), which does not include many categories of significance to anthropologists. Since my wife and I were interested primarily in the nonmaterial elements of Inis Beag culture, and since the oral literature of the folk has been well studied by commission and other folklorists, we placed less emphasis on material culture and folklore in our ethnographic work.

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The culture of Inis Beag about to be described is that of 1959 and 1960, and if I intrude data from earlier or later fieldwork I will label them as such. My wife and I also collected a large body of cultural materials in three other Irish islands, for the purposes of making cross-cultural comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. The Inis Beag tradition is shared in large measure by the inhabitants of neighboring islands, especially those of Inis Thiar, and the several cultures together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the Irish system considered as a whole. Many of the peasant customs of Inis Beag are shared with rural peoples on the mainland, where

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numerous regional subcultures exist, and some are part of a larger European matrix. In fact, as I indicated earlier, Inis Beag culture in its broadest outlines resembles other existing folk cultures. I have decided to employ English terms rather than their Gaelic counterparts whenever possible throughout the book, even though doing so will displease many Irish readers; this decision is based on the fact that most of its readers will be students of anthropology in colleges and universities in the United States. Since the islanders speak both English and Irish and command English equivalents for most Gaelic words and phrases, either language might be utilized.

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823 which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and
[121] philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several
[653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small
312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells,
663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have
312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet
[333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches
[241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen
333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across
[653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but
[178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

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226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality, men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148). Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn mainland attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them, the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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harmony, but other biases are at work (Messenger 1968:29–30). Writers of strong religious bent have exaggerated the Catholic moral virtues embodied in the Irish family and community and have disregarded disputes because they involve unchristian behavior, while social scientists with a functional theoretical orientation have emphasized the integration of social groups and have neglected disputes because they betray dysfunction. Those observers who have depended almost entirely on the guided interview to obtain data concerning family and community often have remained oblivious to disputes. Some researchers, however, have collected information on disputes in an objective manner, but have been unwilling to publish it for fear of antagonizing the folk, the church, and the government—thus losing their positions or jeopardizing research in the future. The most valuable study to date on disputes in Ireland is that of Elliott Leyton, which is based on research that he conducted between 1964 and 1966 in Aughnaboy (like Inis Beag, a fictitious name), a village in Co. Down with three times the population of Inis Beag.

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Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' distinction between conscious and unconscious models, Leyton first examines the conscious models—explanatory constructs, or norms, of the people themselves—held by Aughnaboy villagers concerning disputes, then the types of disputes which in fact do occur within the community —from which the unconscious models are inferred by the analyst. Three conscious models held by the villagers are of pertinence to us: those for personal conduct, relations between kinsmen, and relations between non-kin (Leyton 1966:535–536). The first is summarized in the concept of "decency."

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> To be a "decent" man is to carry out one's obligations to society in a style characterized by cheerfulness and friendliness, to pause willingly for a chat and, most importantly, to refrain—regardless of the provocation—from any display of overt hostility. . . . greatest esteem is reserved for those who succeed in maintaining cordial relations with everyone in the village; and the greatest contempt is reserved for those quarrelsome individuals who are frequently involved in disputes.

Relations between kinsmen, Leyton says,

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> . . . are characterized, ideally, by the highest degree of friendliness and harmony. The individual is expected to feel the strongest affection for his kinsmen, and to subordinate all other loyalties . . . to the demands of his kinsmen. . . . individuals are expected to suppress their personal desires and ideals if they conflict with the unity of the group. . . . Close affective ties and regular visiting rarely occur outside the field of kinship. Non-kin are regarded with suspicion and distrust, and the interests of non-kin are seen as being in potential opposition to the interests of one's own kin.

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Ideally, friendliness and harmony characterize relations between non-kin as well in Aughnaboy.

> Non-kin are in general expected to behave according to the standards of "decency" . . . to be cheerful and talkative and to avoid quarrels. . . . Aughnaboy inhabitants conceive relations between non-kin to be a system in equilibrium . . . relations

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121 578 609 between the separate groups of kin in the village are seen to be in delicate balance of power which is expressed in the local phrase, "you can't fight anybody around here because all their people will gang up on you." If an individual's kinsmen must defend him in his personal disputes, it necessarily follows that a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin.

114 By and large, these three conscious models apply to Inis Beag as well as Aughnaboy.
121 578 Leyton discovers broad "disparities between the conscious models and the statistical patterns formed by the actual behaviour" of people in Aughnaboy, manifested in 74 disputes covering a time span of ten years in the memories of his respondents. He classifies these disputes according to three criteria: their severity, the issues provoking them, and the categories of individuals involved (Leyton 1966:537–539). The criterion of severity yields three types of disputes: argument —"characterized by frequent or continuous arguments . . . associated primarily with exchange of verbal abuse;" withdrawal—where "social relations are actually severed and cooperation is withdrawn;" and interference—in which active attempts are made to "interfere with the welfare of the opposing party. These attempts, which may be secret or open, include legal suits, reports to the police, theft and, rarely, physical violence, as well as withdrawal of all cooperation." Three types of disputes also are distinguishable when issues provoking hostility are examined: economic—"which includes conflict such as rivalry between shopkeepers and disputed inheritance;" personality clashes—"which includes disputes primarily attributed to the innately quarrelsome personalities of certain individuals;" and jealousy—"which refers primarily to situations in which an individual's affections are alienated." The categories of persons involved in disputes are agnatic kin, uterine kin, affinal kin, and non-kin. Leyton establishes rank orders for each of his type classifications, and finds that the rank order for the severity classification is withdrawal, interference, and argument; for the issues classification, it is personality clashes, jealousy, and economic; and for the individuals involved classification, it is affinal kin, agnatic kin, non-kin, and uterine kin.

121 578 [521] [683] In applying Leyton's unconscious models of disputes to Inis Beag, I have modified slightly his severity and issues classifications. To the former, I have added a fourth type which I call gossip; this is not gossip of the ordinary variety so common on the island, but rather continuous, pernicious verbal attacks made by a person within earshot of his victim's relatives and close friends, which usually do not lead to argument. In the case of the issues classification, I have broadened the [151] range of personality clashes. There are several "innately quarrelsome" individuals in Inis Beag, but most personality conflicts involve persons other than these, who have come to dislike one another intensely for numerous reasons, most of which are related to envy, jealousy (other than alienation of affections), resentment 578 against authority, and hostility toward members of the opposite sex. Over 200 disputes have occurred on the island within the past generation, excluding those involving semi-permanent dwellers—curates, lighthouse keepers, and the Dane. 578 121 The higher incidence of disputes in Inis Beag is attributable, for the most part, to the longer time span appraised and the addition of gossip to the severity classification in my analysis. However, the rank orders of the three type classifications

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closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference.

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin.

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by mem- of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families.

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than

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578 women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip
[562] and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples.
578 One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism
626 of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into
[828] a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first
[123] meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

• 121 I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an
578 observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants;
181 this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

114 Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

> 114 This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every
> 181 book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send
[753] the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief. Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than 168 to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, 829 did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under con- 12 sideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of 428 inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and 589 personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, 592 which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the [121] literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness 168 of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and 581 go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents [829] opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, [162] seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

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are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

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JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

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In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

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According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1–2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

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[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

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which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble savages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case.

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

Austin Clarke, and Patrick Kavanaugh, and such younger ones as William Murray, John McGahern, Edna O'Brien, John Broderick, Brian Moore, and Benedict Kiely. Irish reviewers of the writings of the younger authors often criticize them for portraying an Ireland of the distant past. But, although conditions there are changing quite rapidly, sexual repression is still a force active enough to command the attention of creative artists and social scientists.[8] The subtle influences of nationalism, religion, and sexual puritanism were very apparent in the revisions suggested by most of the twenty-six "unbiased" scholars of Irish descent—in Ireland, England, and America—to whom I submitted the first version of this article for comment.

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[8] I am confident that one of the major "lines of attack" on my ethnography by Irish nativist reviewers will be that the community described is atypical and conditions in urbanized Ireland no longer bear any resemblance to those in Inis Beag. Since 1957, I have been much criticized by African elitists for describing in my writings a primitive culture which they claim is no longer characteristic of that developing continent.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IT BEFITS the science of man that its practitioners should depend entirely upon human support and human kindness. The number of persons to whom the two authors have repaired, severally and collectively, is larger than can appear here. We can only hope that the many whom we cannot name will know, as we do, how impossible the production of this book would have been without the help they gave.

To the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University we owe the original project, much of its support, and constant stimulation and encouragement over the years during and after our connections there. Dr. Earnest A. Hooton begat the project out of a fertile imagination and a wide vision of mankind, nourished it, and kept a fatherly eye upon it to the end. Mr. William Lloyd Warner, now of the University of Chicago, taught us social science by precept and field work by example, combining roles of teacher and friend that continue to this day. Dr. Alfred M. Tozzer aided and encouraged us. Dr. Carleton Coon and Dr. Eliot Chapple helped us retain the perspective of ethnology. The [122] Society of Fellows of Harvard University made it possible for one of us to bring the work to completion, with generous provision of freedom for research and allowance for travel. The Sheldon Fund gave the other of us a year and more of field work. Generous friends of Irish scholarship in Boston contributed to the project of which our work was a small part. Dr. Lawrence J. Henderson and Dr. Carle C. Zimmerman helped us to fuller views of social and rural study. Dr. Elton Mayo and Dr. Fritz Roethlisberger gave us criticisms and comparisons of interest. The staff of the Peabody Museum, under Mr. Donald Scott, and our archaeological colleagues, Dr. Hugh O'Neill Hencken, Dr. Hallam Movius,

[p.xi, p. x is blank]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Foreword

About the Series

000 These case studies in cultural anthropology are designed to bring to students, in beginning and intermediate courses in the social sciences, insights into the richness and complexity of human life as it is lived in different ways and in different places. They are written by men and women who have lived in the societies they write about and who are professionally trained as observers and interpreters of human behavior. The authors are also teachers, and in writing their books they have kept the students who will read them foremost in their minds. It is our belief that when an understanding of ways of life very different from one's own is gained, abstractions and generalizations about social structure, cultural values, subsistence techniques, and the other universal categories of human social behavior become meaningful.

About the Author

114 John C. Messenger is a professor in the Department of Anthropology, the Folklore Institute, and the Program of African Studies at Indiana University. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University and taught at Michigan State University and Carleton College before joining the Indiana University [122] faculty. In 1951 and 1952, he conducted fieldwork among the Anang of southeastern Nigeria as an Area Research Training Fellow of the Social Science Research Council; his research during 1959 and 1960, which provided the bulk of the data reported herein, was supported by an Exchange Scholarship to Eire administered by An Bord Scolairteachtai Comalairte of Dublin. Professor Messenger has published numerous articles, chapters in books, and monographs concerning the cultures of the Anang, the Irish, and the Montserrat islanders of the West Indies, whom he studied in 1965 and 1967. A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled him to write a substantial portion of this volume.

About the Book

114 This is a case study of a people widely known through the media of
121 journalism and film. Imbedded in a context of romanticism and nativism, the
123 image of the people and their culture created by these media scarcely approximates reality, for reasons that Dr. Messenger makes clear both in his discussion of nativism and the reasons for its strong influence on characterizations of Irish folk,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [776] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference. 578 121

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin. 114 121 578 578

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families. 578 609 602 [428] [626] [691] [685]

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than 578 [602] [609] [122] [562]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among
[122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries,
[123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying
793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and
776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them
165 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are
562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of
[829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk
[788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or
[154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obliga-
771 tions can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some
828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

One]

JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

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In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

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According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1–2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

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* A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled me to write this chapter.

[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

I

The Interpretation of Custom

609 The arrival of a stranger in a west country Irish
123 town is still an event. The age of machinery has not yet destroyed the leisure of curiosity. But when the stranger shows no intent of hurrying on, like an ordinary tourist, and sports none of the weapons of field and stream, the matter assumes no mean local importance. A new bank clerk or land commissioner is expectable; he soon sinks into the colour of his position and surroundings. Even a 'returned Yank', once his parentage and probable savings have been determined, and his clothes and manners scrutinized, soon drops out of mind.

But there is no understanding a stranger whose only apparent business is to chat with people and to walk about with notebook in hand. And when he calls himself an 'anthropologist', the mystery thickens. The 'squinting windows', for which Brinsley MacNamara once named a novel of the Irish countryside, do not soon lose their squint; and an eddy of whispered speculation follows the stranger up and down the narrow old-world streets of the town.

But time brings acceptance of most mysteries.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

609 It finds a formula for them that gives them a
123 familiar ring. So, the anthropologist gradually found acceptance. Even his formidable title grew easier as its translation spread. The Irish today
[212] are a very literate people. And a sudden increase in the circulation of books on anthropology
[217] from the county library helped very quickly to establish the anthropologist as 'looking for old customs'.

Once, perhaps, the translation would have been
121 adequate. But anthropology today is much more than a search for ancient custom. Even in Ireland, where the traditional Celtic life still lingers on, the anthropologist must conceive his purpose in broader terms. I want to devote this first lecture to the new purpose and its application to the Irish scene. In the remaining five lectures I shall try to present to you certain of the factors of custom and belief in the countryside of the south and west of Ireland and to analyse them in terms of the purpose we discuss here.

000 First of all we must clear up the matter of presumption. It may seem presumptuous that an anthropologist should profess to discuss the life of a modern nation. To some of us it may seem something like an engineer or a physicist, who deserts his field for metaphysics and morals. To others it may seem to betray a rather derogatory attitude toward the nation discussed. But neither desertion nor derogation can rightfully be charged. Our con-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

124 which the hair of many of the men was cut, which often rendered dis-
[302] tinction of shade very difficult. Owing to the season most of the observations had to be made in the morning when the people were going to their work, or early in the evening when they were returning, or gathered around their cottage doors; in many cases, however, they were followed to the harvest field and measured there.

The taking of photographs did not, as elsewhere, cause the assembly
126 of the knot of spectators which usually affords so good an opportunity
[123] for the collection of eye and hair colours; it had rather the opposite effect, as the people have a strong dislike to having their portraits taken.

In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 241 individuals, on 40 of whom (being about one-fifth of the adult males of the islands) measurements and other observations were taken.

Care was exercised that none of those measured should be entered in the ordinary nigrescence cards, as well as to avoid recording the same individual twice or the noting of persons who were not natives.

(K). *Photography.*—For the reasons already mentioned there could not be as much done in this department as had been hoped; but, in spite of the strong aversion shown by many of the people to having their portraits taken, and the strong winds prevailing during our stay, my brother, J. M. Browne, who accompanied me to do the necessary photography, succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of typical groups, as well as some single portraits in full face and profile, and a series of views illustrative of the modes of life and environment of the people.

2.—Physical Characters.

142 (A). The people, on the whole, much resemble the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Connemara, and their appearance testifies to a mixed origin. The following is believed to be a correct description of their average physical characters:—

Stature and bulk.—The men, as a rule, are stoutly built, and of medium height; very few can fairly be termed tall, and there is a very considerable proportion of men of low stature. The average height is
[141] 1633 mm., or about 5 feet 6½ inches, which falls short of the Irish mean stature as found by Gould, the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association, and others, by about two inches.

142 The women are of a slighter build than the men, and, apparently,
143 more even in height; they also show more strikingly that great simi-

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

was easier, the measuring being, in many cases, done under shelter, 124
instead of on the hills, the roadside, or the sea-shore.

As is mentioned above the two new measurements had to be abandoned owing to practical difficulties. It is a matter of experience in work of this sort in Ireland that persons do not *come* to be measured, [123] they have to be sought out and induced to submit themselves to the process, often no easy matter; there are generally several to be measured in quick succession, but if kept waiting long they will one by one slip off and refuse to allow measurement; and as the adapting of the anthropometer for these projections takes some time, the instrument [126] having to be unshipped for each, and then fitted up again to measure the next comer, it became evident that these projections would have to be given up if anything like a sufficient number of persons was to be measured. Moreover, accuracy in taking projection measurements is by no means easily obtained, even under the most favourable circumstances in a laboratory, and the difficulty is increased so much in field work, where it is not at all easy to get the men to understand exactly what position they are wanted to assume, so as to make the results unreliable.

The noting of the colours of the hair and eyes also presented some difficulties, the chief being to distinguish between those who were natives and strangers from other districts, which was rendered greater by the absence of a distinctive dress (except in the case of the people of Inishkea). In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 494 individuals, on 62 (male adults) of whom the full series of measurements and observations was made. As on the two former surveys precautions were taken against recording the same person twice, as well as against the inclusion of the men measured in the ordinary nigrescence cards.

(D). *Photography.*—Owing to the rain and rough weather as much 126
could not be done in this department as had been hoped, but in spite of the difficulties of cloudy skies and high winds a number of photographs were taken, including, 17 portraits, 14 of them individuals measured, 12 groups, taken in all parts of the district, 30 illustrations of the occupations, modes of transport, and habitations of the people, also several of the antiquities of the district, and a set of views showing surface of land and nature of coast line, &c.

Some of these photographs were taken by myself, others by my brother J. M. Browne. The addition of the hand camera to our appliances has proved to be a great advantage, enabling portraits of unwilling subjects to be taken, and adding to the value of the photo-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Foreword

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• 123 image of the people and their culture created by these media scarcely approximates reality, for reasons that Dr. Messenger makes clear both in his discussion of nativism and the reasons for its strong influence on characterizations of Irish folk,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and in his descriptive analysis of the culture and social structure of Inis Beag. For these reasons the book will doubtless raise controversy among Irish journalists, particularly those of nativistic persuasion.

Dr. Messenger describes the folk and their culture as he sees them, and within the conceptual structure of the social sciences. The picture that emerges is less heroic than the current romanticized idealization, and very human. The author's personal identification with the island and its people is obvious. He struggles to maintain an objective stance, and largely succeeds, but it is obvious that he and his wife participated exuberantly in the life of Inis Beag. This is in the best tradition of anthropological fieldwork. The problems of identification, friendship, rejection and acceptance, and ambivalence that are invariably associated with such participation are common to all of us who have had this kind of experience.

The case study is notable for its human qualities. It is a descriptive analysis of a significant folk way of life heretofore unrepresented in this series. It is also notable for its significance as an analysis of a closed community that provides mobility only by migration, and for the analysis of the influence of puritanism. This latter emphasis is particularly valuable, for too often we assume that puritanism is associated only with Protestantism. Here, the inter-relationships with Catholicism, particularly with the Jansenist denial of sexuality, is made very clear. Dr. Messenger pursues these themes at both the social and the psychological levels. The case study is also characterized by a strong focus, especially appropriate in the Irish folk context, on folklore, Christian reinterpretations of pagan elements, music, song, and dance. And the dimensions of life that are featured in most ethnographies are well developed—subsistence, material culture, social organization and social control, and values and religion. Dr. Messenger is also careful to provide a historical introduction to Inis Beag, in the context of relevant aspects of Irish history.

GEORGE AND LOUISE SPINDLER
General Editors

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628
829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and
often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis
Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping
slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more
concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all
Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to
the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality,
men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested
successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also
are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives
and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in
social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of
Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the
people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis
Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well
abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who
come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and
primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain
a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines
in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held
accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148).
Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although
fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied
secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined
denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting
towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn main-
land attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their
English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency
than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever
my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by
islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other
business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the
folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of
the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them,
the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness
of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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000 Strangers who spend weeks or months in Inis Beag and are able to grasp some of the realities of life there often leave emotionally distraught, knowing that they 609 never will be accepted by the people. Acceptance by the islanders is a problem faced by not only outsiders, but by immigrants. The latter remain strangers for two or three generations, and some people, particularly descendants of fisherfolk, are regarded as outsiders despite the fact that the families of some have resided in [152] Inis Beag for almost a century. Later we will learn that the islanders have difficulty [602] forming affectional bonds among themselves, even among kin; thus, they are able to give even less of themselves to those "who do not belong." Strangers who know Inis Beag well often complain that they must do all of the "giving," as the folk can only "take."

The islanders also share attitudes toward other individuals and groups, which I can mention only in passing. Among the most important are those concerning outsiders who have lived in Inis Beag for long periods of time (the expatriate Dane, lighthouse keepers, Brendan Behan the writer, and Siobhain McKenna the actress); writers who have composed works about the island and have dwelled there or are folk themselves; particular persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands (a policeman, a teacher, a man of great strength, a keeper of a guest house, and a man who provides taxi service between the islands and the mainland in a small boat); peasants from bordering counties; religious groups (Protestants generally, members of the Church of Ireland, Jews, and even Italian Catholics); ethnic and racial groups (Americans, English, Germans, Negroes, tinkers, and foreigners as a class); and, finally, politicians and government bureaucrats and the Irish press.

609 I know of but few cases of discrimination practiced against any of these, 829 but prejudices held against some of them abound, based either on historical 186 experiences (with the English and the Church of Ireland) or on views inculcated by returned emigrants (concerning Jews and Negroes, who seldom visit Inis Beag). • [123] Islanders, as well as most Irish, are ambivalent about "Yanks," as visiting emigrants from the United States are called, but are mostly critical of them; often my wife and I have been asked on first meeting an Irish person whether we are Irish-Americans or "real Americans," and when we have admitted to being the latter we have been well received. Conversely, we have seen Yanks shunned on revealing their pedigree. They are accused of "lording it over" their Irish kin and friends.

Formal Social Control

000 Anthropologists customarily classify social control systems as formal and informal. Formal systems are governments whose controls are based on physical violence or its threat—physical punishment, ostracism, banishment, and extermination; while informal systems include sanctions of a religious or economic nature and those exercised by primary groups—gossip, ridicule, persuasion, and opprobrium. Controls of a negative nature are buttressed by positive rewards, such as services provided by a government or the feeling of security gained from primary group approval. It is not the formal system of local and national governments

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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

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779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [795] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

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the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a 829
symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter [123]
despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic 793
and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among 829
themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of 178
pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should 624
be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control 876
system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have [626]
been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older [793]
men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs [178]
and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance
although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they [666]
were provided with food, given *curach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was
owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are [793]

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624 875 more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held,
because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are
[793] apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the
[554] headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports
his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school
with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly
contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches.
[591] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects
and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present
headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has
exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities
of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he
associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in
social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders
often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors
of him.

875 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of
593 their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom
visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems
of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him
875 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity
876 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in
[861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This
[123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me
with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man
of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the
coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents
until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the
school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students
is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents
[171] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a
favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe
the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the
transient room there.

624 Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority senti-
[829] ment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk,
the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and
role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and
[123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning
curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

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with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility
toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of
wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to [793]
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

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521 203 571 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [539] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other 589 Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of 162 the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

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578 women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip
[562] and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples.
578 One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism
626 of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into
[828] a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first
[123] meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

121 I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an
578 observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants;
181 this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

114 Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

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> This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
171 of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[565]

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526 struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. A famous writer
181 claimed that he introduced into Inis Beag a feat of agility that he had learned in
[177] France, which consists of holding a stick in both hands at the knees and jumping back and forth across it without losing grip; the islanders attest that this "trick" was known locally for at least a century, and one man boasted that his father was
• 123 able to leap back and forth a dozen times in quick succession. My rapport with the men was enhanced by the fact that I had been a weight thrower and lifter and used to entertain them by putting a granite boulder, throwing a discus that I had brought with me, and performing repetition presses with a barrel of stout. However, the one time that I was persuaded to compete for Inis Beag against Inis Thiar in putting the shot (a flat-bottomed store weight of 14 pounds), I fouled with my foot all three times and thus suffered ignominious defeat. The curate who officiated at the event appeared pleased, but the islanders who had placed wagers on me were of opposite disposition.

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779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among
[122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries,
[123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying
793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and
776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them
165 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are
562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of
[829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk
[788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or
[154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obliga-
771 tions can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some
828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical anecdotes and ballads.

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dispossessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island.

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him.

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if

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and its fate In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating." 771 798 178 [115] [775]

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons. 771 178 776 [538] [823]

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal- 776 787 [821] [123] [172] [798] [793] [763]

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787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping
776 fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered overly superstitious.

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123] •
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 177
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346]
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 796 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of [778]
wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to [233]
"give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of 796
the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time [784]
garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. [782]
Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the [777]
Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is [769]
tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for [784]
future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a [658]
small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of 123
the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night 796
when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of 787
cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed
by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whit- 796
sunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as 776
the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually [821]
the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend
to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does
anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a [613]
danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children
and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground
unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the
demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or [461]
decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter [777]
are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then
may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern
day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer [857]
celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather [313]
wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of [372]
Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for [789]
protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A [842]
man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the
failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the
folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the
hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven
between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry
leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish [114]
life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the
plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British
anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns
jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin 539
(O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 796

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124 831 855 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 886 [123] Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 828 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 [793] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal [832] sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [571] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; 533
music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and 534
figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied 536
by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the
lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance 535
music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for [123]
dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of
fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several [177]
occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home,
to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records
seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I
frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing
music for a night long party.

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a 114
consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, 533
also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and
population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of
the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their 533
music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung 184
publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly
local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to [538]
the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous
product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized)
of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and [171]
motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and
it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders [173]
believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—
were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in 533
the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar
who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in
and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out [539]
of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago,
is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the
pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes [126]
to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, [539]
emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with
the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous 533
songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as 184
ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song
categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of
the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[834] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

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574 273 Women [562] [514] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 [535] [562] [857] 574 834 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 [123] 574 273 [533] [535] Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 [576] Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [351] 574 535 Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 123 [577] 574 579 178 [738] My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

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275 The best singers will be
273 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[167] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
273 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[678] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower
[123] of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
273 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
273 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the
[576] free stout brought me in."

12 cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which characterize ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as an epistemology.

181 The use by the folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and 195 "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," [178] which often is a product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can very effectively serve to shield genuine thoughts [538] and feelings and thus protect the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition of verbal skill, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*. (At least one folklorist has collected "Joycean utterances" from Irish peasants.)

• 123 Most of our information came from observation and unguided interviews. It proved impossible to take field notes openly, except when collecting innocuous data—such as the number of livestock owned by each householder—from a few particular persons. Thus, we were forced to limit our visits to less than two hours, after which we immediately [562] transcribed what our combined memories could resuscitate. Despite frequent explanations of our presence in Inis Beag, which were candid and truthful, it was thought by the islanders that I was interested only in archeological sites and oral literature, and that my wife was not a trained and experienced co-worker; this, obviously, reflects their previous experiences with scientists and their conception of the position of women in society. Their inability to evaluate adequately our intentions proved [609] to be a research boon. For once "accepted" (a relative term, since no outsider is ever accepted) after many months in the island, we were allowed to listen to and participate in conversations and activities from which we would otherwise have been excluded.

123 Our data on sex came from my involvement as a participant-
*831 observer in personal and often intimate conversations with men and my wife's counseling of women who were bothered by such matters as explaining and coping with menstruation, menopause, mental illness, the sexual curiosity of their children, and "excessive" sexual demands of their spouses. Our sexual knowledge and sympathy coupled with their needs and inquisitiveness gave rise to a "counselor-client" relationship between many of the folk and ourselves. They came to speak freely, albeit indirectly at times, with each of us about this sphere of behavior which arouses so much anxiety and fear. I must mention that the relationship

arose partly out of our desire to alleviate distress and not solely to collect 123 •
information. We had performed the same role seven years earlier among 831*
primitive Nigerians, and for similar reasons. However, the Africans [171]
were uninhibited, talked freely with us about sex, and were not offended by what we subsequently wrote.

Another important source of information on sex was the island 115
nurses, who supplied us with accounts of their own observations over an eight-year period and gave us access to pertinent medical records. My wife and I believe that our information is, for the most part, reliable, 128
but that some of it may well be erroneous. This report will, we are 123
afraid, offend and alienate some of our Inis Beag friends, for whom we hold deep affection; they do not comprehend the aims and values of anthropology and may regard our reporting of sexual beliefs and behavior as a breach of friendship and trust. Certainly our findings will be denied by many Irish readers.

More than any other type of research, culture and personality 114
investigations are needed in Ireland today. Social and cultural anthropologists, rural sociologists, folklorists, and geographers in small numbers have managed to describe and analyze the major sociocultural forms of the Irish folk, but personality generalizations, by and large, have been the by-products of research into other areas and have tended to be impressionistic. Some of the most penetrating studies of Irish character have been made "at a distance" and through the analysis of projective systems and narrow units of culture, such as drinking patterns (Bales 1962). Some Irish writers—"intuitive anthropologists" I call them—also have had insightful things to say about Irish character (usually at a distance too, from church and state). What is sorely needed is a holistic community study done by a culture and personality specialist—a person skilled not only in ethnography, social psychology, and psychiatry (and able to administer projective tests), but well versed in Irish history, literature, and contemporary affairs as well.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Both lack of sexual knowledge and misconceptions about sex among 831*
adults combine to brand Inis Beag as one of the most sexually naive of 864
the world's societies.

*831 the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children
864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
[163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual
83 categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset
158 of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
828 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
[784] illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

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291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

158 751 [291] [834] [753] It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 827 [863] [825] [562] [273] [241] Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

237 372 514 283 [462]

* 831 522 [154] Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

[123]

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves" with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ADDENDUM

From this Irish county series, as here discussed, all persons of Protestant religion have been omitted. The number thus excluded is 312 Presbyterians and 488 Church of Ireland, of these the vast majority come from the northern counties—Antrim, Armagh, Fermanagh, Down, Londonderry, Tyrone, Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan. Mr. Dupertuis directed this sorting because he was of the opinion that the Ulster Protestants really represent, in large part, a recent Scotch immigration, and the Church of Ireland English immigrations. In the final report on Ireland these northern Protestants will be included. They could hardly alter the distribution pictures perceptibly, except (possibly) in the counties mentioned.

128
141
142
124

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113

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

portance when there are several persons to be examined, for, if kept waiting, they will most probably either slip off or refuse to be measured. 125

(A). *Hair and Eye Colour.*—In the obtaining of these data the methods, cards, and tables were precisely the same as those used in the expedition to Aran, to the report of which the reader is referred for particulars.

(B). *Measurements.*—These were, with the exceptions hereafter mentioned, the same as previously. The head circumference and external binocular breadth, not having proved satisfactory, were omitted, and for them were substituted:—(1). The upper face length measured from the naso-frontal suture to the separation between the central incisors at the gum. (2). The height sitting. This, though it is certainly a most valuable measurement, for which reason it was inserted in the observation schedule, was found to be altogether unsuited for field work, as it could only be taken in a few exceptional cases, so I had reluctantly to abandon it. (3). Auriculo-mental radius, measured with the Dublin craniometer, from the centre of the ear-hole to the point of the chin.

(C). *Instruments used.*—These consisted of Garson's anthropometer, a sliding measure for the limbs, Broca's compas d'épaisseur and compas glissière and a Chesterman steel tape. Instead of the fixed metallic Cunningham craniometer, the new portable pattern of the same instrument (made specially for field work by Messrs. Robinson, of Grafton-street, Dublin) was taken, and stood the test well, being quite as rigid as the older pattern when set up, and, as it is made of boxwood, much lighter. Its portability is a great advantage, as by the removal of one screw-bolt the whole instrument may be disjointed and carried in the coat-pocket. A set of Snellen test-types for accurately estimating the keenness of eyesight was also taken, and proved to be very useful. 126

The whole, with note-books and observation forms, were carried, fitted in a canvas knapsack, and, as they weighed under ten pounds, were light enough to be easily carried even in long walks over very rough ground.

(D). *Remarks on the Methods employed.*—There were several difficulties experienced in the making of the observations this year, due partly to the visit being made at harvest time when most of the people were engaged in the fields, partly to local causes, the principal of which were the shyness of the people, the manner in which the hair of most of the women was covered by the shawl which was drawn more closely on the approach of a stranger, and the closeness with 124 [609] [291] [302]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

124 which the hair of many of the men was cut, which often rendered dis-
[302] tinction of shade very difficult. Owing to the season most of the observations had to be made in the morning when the people were going to their work, or early in the evening when they were returning, or gathered around their cottage doors; in many cases, however, they were followed to the harvest field and measured there.

The taking of photographs did not, as elsewhere, cause the assembly
126 of the knot of spectators which usually affords so good an opportunity
[123] for the collection of eye and hair colours; it had rather the opposite effect, as the people have a strong dislike to having their portraits taken.

In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 241 individuals, on 40 of whom (being about one-fifth of the adult males of the islands) measurements and other observations were taken.

Care was exercised that none of those measured should be entered in the ordinary nigrescence cards, as well as to avoid recording the same individual twice or the noting of persons who were not natives.

(K). *Photography.*—For the reasons already mentioned there could not be as much done in this department as had been hoped; but, in spite of the strong aversion shown by many of the people to having their portraits taken, and the strong winds prevailing during our stay, my brother, J. M. Browne, who accompanied me to do the necessary photography, succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of typical groups, as well as some single portraits in full face and profile, and a series of views illustrative of the modes of life and environment of the people.

2.—Physical Characters.

142 (A). The people, on the whole, much resemble the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Connemara, and their appearance testifies to a mixed origin. The following is believed to be a correct description of their average physical characters:—

Stature and bulk.—The men, as a rule, are stoutly built, and of medium height; very few can fairly be termed tall, and there is a very considerable proportion of men of low stature. The average height is
[141] 1633 mm., or about 5 feet 6½ inches, which falls short of the Irish mean stature as found by Gould, the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association, and others, by about two inches.

142 The women are of a slighter build than the men, and, apparently,
143 more even in height; they also show more strikingly that great simi-

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

125 changes were made to bring our observation form into closer accord with that adopted by the Ethnographic Survey Committee of the British Association for use in England. The new form admits of very rapid noting, and in collecting easily and accurately the main physical characters of the persons examined. It has not, however, any advantage over the old form, of which it is a modification, in the convenience of working up results, in fact it is inferior in this respect as the spaces for indices at the bottom of the page, which are omitted, proved a great help in tabulating the results of the Inishbofin Survey; another defect is that some of the points to be noted are not strictly defined, and leave too much to the personal opinion of the observer.

(A.) *Hair and eye colour.*—No change was made in this part of the work, the method being exactly that used on the two previous occasions. For full particulars the reader is referred to the Report on the visit to the Aran Islands.[1]

(B.) *Measurements and instruments.*—These were the same as formerly employed, with two additions:—(1) *The height of the head*; and (2) *height of cranium*, both projections, directions for taking which were printed on the observation forms. These measurements were given a trial, as they form part of the series on the English form, but after a time they were abandoned for reasons given below.

The same set of instruments as used in Inishbofin was carried,
126 packed in a canvas case. It consisted of compas d'epaisseur, compas glissière, the portable pattern of Cunningham's craniometer, Garson's anthropometer, steel tape, Snellen test types, note books, nigrescence cards, and observation forms, as before. The only new appliance was a Trinity hand camera, made by Messrs. Curtis, Suffolk-street, Dublin, which, though subjected to rather rough treatment, stood the test admirably and did very satisfactory work. When not in use it was carried in a stout waterproof case slung over the shoulder.

(C). *Remarks on methods employed.*—The work had to be carried on
● 124 under rather different circumstances from those experienced before, as the weather prevailing during my visit to the district was not too well suited for field work, the rains being frequent and heavy, and the wind very strong, besides this, the population is much more scattered than any dealt with before, and long journeys had often to be made for very little result. In some ways, however, the work

[1] Ethnography of the Aran Islands, Co. Galway, Proc. R. I. A., vol. II., 3rd ser., p. 768.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

was easier, the measuring being, in many cases, done under shelter, instead of on the hills, the roadside, or the sea-shore. 124

As is mentioned above the two new measurements had to be abandoned owing to practical difficulties. It is a matter of experience in work of this sort in Ireland that persons do not *come* to be measured, they have to be sought out and induced to submit themselves to the process, often no easy matter; there are generally several to be measured in quick succession, but if kept waiting long they will one by one slip off and refuse to allow measurement; and as the adapting of the anthropometer for these projections takes some time, the instrument having to be unshipped for each, and then fitted up again to measure the next comer, it became evident that these projections would have to be given up if anything like a sufficient number of persons was to be measured. Moreover, accuracy in taking projection measurements is by no means easily obtained, even under the most favourable circumstances in a laboratory, and the difficulty is increased so much in field work, where it is not at all easy to get the men to understand exactly what position they are wanted to assume, so as to make the results unreliable. [123] [126]

The noting of the colours of the hair and eyes also presented some difficulties, the chief being to distinguish between those who were natives and strangers from other districts, which was rendered greater by the absence of a distinctive dress (except in the case of the people of Inishkea). In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 494 individuals, on 62 (male adults) of whom the full series of measurements and observations was made. As on the two former surveys precautions were taken against recording the same person twice, as well as against the inclusion of the men measured in the ordinary nigrescence cards.

(D). *Photography.*—Owing to the rain and rough weather as much could not be done in this department as had been hoped, but in spite of the difficulties of cloudy skies and high winds a number of photographs were taken, including, 17 portraits, 14 of them individuals measured, 12 groups, taken in all parts of the district, 30 illustrations of the occupations, modes of transport, and habitations of the people, also several of the antiquities of the district, and a set of views showing surface of land and nature of coast line, &c. 126

Some of these photographs were taken by myself, others by my brother J. M. Browne. The addition of the hand camera to our appliances has proved to be a great advantage, enabling portraits of unwilling subjects to be taken, and adding to the value of the photo-

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(B)]

121 IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the
[167] availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated dis-
[434] tricts of the country, an island off the west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly col-
114 lected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of
●124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
[578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of
[231] commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united
631 politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond, though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon. Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*,
776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle
787 (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317, and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago, foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Plists* or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con-
121 sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen-
●124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p. 180]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions." 121 124

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4] 103 173 776

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca- 103 173

[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

611 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [427] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young chil-
dren. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring
groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend
less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them
more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men
of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school,
at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and
their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the house-
hold. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the
other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often de-
manded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially
when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about
being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer
hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in
America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

793 795 [753] In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

793 626 One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and funtionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "madhouse" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

793 829 [609] Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

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with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has
their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility
toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of
wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to [743]
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

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> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21). 114 181

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible. [124]

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.). 114 12 181 [538]

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor- 554 [423] [471] [511] 556

tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
[171] of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the 203 influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case. [609] [124]

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics. 797 793 [776] [783] [577] [431] [781]

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis. 861 155 855 [561] [856] [864] [863] 858 562 [593] [872] 562 [794] [858] [609] [832] [164]

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could 204 831 124 831 855

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124 831 855 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 886 [123] Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 828 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 [793] [832] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[64] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

177 178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the
• 124 lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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male but sometimes female. Also, the former occupied a higher prestige position [662] than the latter, but there was not the clear-cut distinction between genres appropriate to each type of narrator as elsewhere in Ireland; the *seanchaí* sometimes [654] related the exploits of Finn and the *scéalaí* the pranks of the red man. The two surviving storytellers in 1960 were both old men, but the *seanchaí* died in 1963 and the *scéalaí* two years later. Both had been prolific contributors to Irish Folklore [814] Commission collectors and Continental folklorists.

All of the above kinds of folklore expression, with the exception of folktales, were regarded as true by island folk in the past. The myths either coexisted or were reinterpreted with Biblical stories, and the legends were synchronized with events of ancient world history dating from just before the Flood to the eighth century. The Inis Beag *scéalaí* sometimes was derided by school children for still believing his narratives to be true, as was the *seanchaí* for claiming that the supernatural happenings described in his tales actually were experienced by islanders in the past century. Both narrators for many years had been visited only by folklorists [814] and tourists wishing to hear them relate their repertoires of stories, for the only form of storytelling which has been perpetuated is the occasional gathering of men in a home or pub to exchange anecdotes, mostly related to fishing. I was told that in his prime the *scéalaí* could have recited narratives nightly for "at least a month" without ever repeating a story, had he ever been called on to do so. That [114] the memory of the esteemed narrator is prodigious is revealed in the complete collection of all the material recorded from a single *scéalaí* of Co. Kerry, reported by Delargy, which included 396 pages of text: 186 tales, a few songs and song fragments, and various smaller items of prose and verse. These had been obtained from 27 different sources by the narrator, all of whom save one were neighbors (Delargy 1945:11).

Most liked by the folk were the prose narratives related by the *scéalaí* and 538 tales of recent and contemporary historical events in the region, stories of the 539 supernatural in Inis Beag, and personal experiences told by the *seanchaí*. Few of the stories dealt with historical occurrences in Ireland between the coming of Christianity and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and none of them concerned personages or happenings associated with the church. At my request, the 124 • *seanchaí* read three books of Irish folklore that I had brought with me—J. J. Camp- 538 bell's *Legends of Ireland*, Jeremiah Curtin's *Irish Folk-Tales*, and Eileen O'Faolain's 539 *Irish Sagas and Folk-Tales*—and declared that he had heard all of the stories therein as a youth from his father and other island storytellers. However, the versions in the books often were "incorrect," he claimed, and he delighted in "correcting" them; of course, there are many variants of each tale (as many as 527—Aarne-Thompson type 300 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission), and he regarded the Inis Beag stories as the legitimate variants. Most of the local and Irish tales share types (plots) and motifs (incidents, characters, and objects) with those of European and other societies brought about by millennia of diffusion, but the Irish have refashioned these elements in their own corpus according to their culture and personality dispositions.

I will not discuss the various prose narratives told by the *scéalaí* of Inis 538 Beag; the greater number of them can be obtained from Campbell or O'Faolain 114 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent Folktales of Ireland.

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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

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Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus com- 593
plex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to 154
the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength 114
of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

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Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread dis- 577
affection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is 829
blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

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During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle else- 000
where, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

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132 washed up on them; at least four of these are now in Inishbofin, and large quantities of drift of various kinds are thrown up on the shores from time to time.

The botany and zoology of the islands is outside of the scope of the 137 present Paper, but a few words of general description may help to make the picture of the place more complete.

Here, as elsewhere, on our western coast, there is a tradition that the islands were at one time well wooded; and this is corroborated by the occasional discovery of tree-trunks in the bogs. At the present day, though under the influence of the warm, moist climate, other vegetation flourishes, trees of any sort cannot be got to grow, and all attempts to rear them have hitherto been failures, as the strong winds quickly destroyed them. Even in the most sheltered spots bushes will hardly grow, and there are not a dozen of five feet in height to be found in the islands.

Large numbers of sea-birds nest on the rocky islets round the 136 coasts; pigeons in large numbers inhabit the caves of Inishshark, and, until within a few years ago, eagles used regularly to nest on a high pinnacle of rock, known as the Boughal, in the channel between the islands. Rabbits and rats are both very plentiful; but hares, bats, weasels, and frogs are not found on either island.

Around the coast, porpoises, sea-otters, and seals (which latter [821] are looked upon as forerunners of stormy weather when they appear) are often seen, and the "sun-fish" (*Selache maxima*, the great basking shark) appears usually about the end of March; it leaves nearly always before the end of June, and was until a few years ago regularly fished for.

III.—Anthropography.

1. *Methods.*—These do not require any very extended notice, being 125 practically the same as those employed last year, and described in the report on the Aran investigation. A few changes were made, consisting mainly in the substitution of measurements and instruments shown by experience to be needed, for some which had proved unnecessary, and the use of the new observation form provisionally adopted by the Irish Sub-Committee for the Ethnographic Survey of the British Association. This form, though not perfect, proved to be of much value for field work as, owing to its arrangement, observations can be made with much greater rapidity than is possible by the old system; and the chance of omitting any important point is almost entirely avoided. The economy of time alone is a point of much im-

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portance when there are several persons to be examined, for, if kept waiting, they will most probably either slip off or refuse to be measured. 125

(A). *Hair and Eye Colour.*—In the obtaining of these data the methods, cards, and tables were precisely the same as those used in the expedition to Aran, to the report of which the reader is referred for particulars.

(B). *Measurements.*—These were, with the exceptions hereafter mentioned, the same as previously. The head circumference and external binocular breadth, not having proved satisfactory, were omitted, and for them were substituted:—(1). The upper face length measured from the naso-frontal suture to the separation between the central incisors at the gum. (2). The height sitting. This, though it is certainly a most valuable measurement, for which reason it was inserted in the observation schedule, was found to be altogether unsuited for field work, as it could only be taken in a few exceptional cases, so I had reluctantly to abandon it. (3). Auriculo-mental radius, measured with the Dublin craniometer, from the centre of the ear-hole to the point of the chin.

(C). *Instruments used.*—These consisted of Garson's anthropometer, a sliding measure for the limbs, Broca's compas d'épaisseur and compas glissière and a Chesterman steel tape. Instead of the fixed metallic Cunningham craniometer, the new portable pattern of the same instrument (made specially for field work by Messrs. Robinson, of Grafton-street, Dublin) was taken, and stood the test well, being quite as rigid as the older pattern when set up, and, as it is made of boxwood, much lighter. Its portability is a great advantage, as by the removal of one screw-bolt the whole instrument may be disjointed and carried in the coat-pocket. A set of Snellen test-types for accurately estimating the keenness of eyesight was also taken, and proved to be very useful. 126

The whole, with note-books and observation forms, were carried, fitted in a canvas knapsack, and, as they weighed under ten pounds, were light enough to be easily carried even in long walks over very rough ground.

(D). *Remarks on the Methods employed.*—There were several difficulties experienced in the making of the observations this year, due partly to the visit being made at harvest time when most of the people were engaged in the fields, partly to local causes, the principal of which were the shyness of the people, the manner in which the hair of most of the women was covered by the shawl which was drawn more closely on the approach of a stranger, and the closeness with 124 [609] [241] [302]

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extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills. Off this part of the coast lie Iniskea and Duvillaun, having a sandy or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low. 133 [502]

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones. [134]

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe. [504] 132

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very few and only grow in sheltered localities. 137

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the mail road from Ballina runs.[1] 491

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few 125

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks* that *have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward. [133]

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125 changes were made to bring our observation form into closer accord with that adopted by the Ethnographic Survey Committee of the British Association for use in England. The new form admits of very rapid noting, and in collecting easily and accurately the main physical characters of the persons examined. It has not, however, any advantage over the old form, of which it is a modification, in the convenience of working up results, in fact it is inferior in this respect as the spaces for indices at the bottom of the page, which are omitted, proved a great help in tabulating the results of the Inishbofin Survey; another defect is that some of the points to be noted are not strictly defined, and leave too much to the personal opinion of the observer.

(A.) *Hair and eye colour.*—No change was made in this part of the work, the method being exactly that used on the two previous occasions. For full particulars the reader is referred to the Report on the visit to the Aran Islands.[1]

(B.) *Measurements and instruments.*—These were the same as formerly employed, with two additions:—(1) *The height of the head*; and (2) *height of cranium*, both projections, directions for taking which were printed on the observation forms. These measurements were given a trial, as they form part of the series on the English form, but after a time they were abandoned for reasons given below.

The same set of instruments as used in Inishbofin was carried,
126 packed in a canvas case. It consisted of compas d'epaisseur, compas glissière, the portable pattern of Cunningham's craniometer, Garson's anthropometer, steel tape, Snellen test types, note books, nigrescence cards, and observation forms, as before. The only new appliance was a Trinity hand camera, made by Messrs. Curtis, Suffolk-street, Dublin, which, though subjected to rather rough treatment, stood the test admirably and did very satisfactory work. When not in use it was carried in a stout waterproof case slung over the shoulder.

(C). *Remarks on methods employed.*—The work had to be carried on
124 under rather different circumstances from those experienced before, as the weather prevailing during my visit to the district was not too well suited for field work, the rains being frequent and heavy, and the wind very strong, besides this, the population is much more scattered than any dealt with before, and long journeys had often to be made for very little result. In some ways, however, the work

[1] Ethnography of the Aran Islands, Co. Galway, Proc. R. I. A., vol. II., 3rd ser., p. 768.

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is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

by choice, an old woman said, "City folk are always troubled. They aren't their own bosses, and they get up too early and work too hard. They face the dangers of traffic, and, worst of all, they meet with temptations of the flesh."

In the last chapter, I discussed two facets of the Inis Beag self-image: their seldom admitted poverty and indolence. Other facets have just been revealed in their appraisals of various groups, and still more are apparent when one examines their attitudes toward visitors to the island. During the summer, they enjoy the presence of strangers on the strand at steamer time, in the pubs, and at parties, and when winter comes many conversations dwell on those who were "great gas" —entertaining in song, dance, or repartee. But outsiders fulfill a far deeper need, in that most of them express admiration for the island and its inhabitants. They praise the beauty, antiquities, and history of Inis Beag, but more importantly the friendliness of the people and those customs and personality traits publicized by writers and film producers, which are "discovered" even when nonexistent or considerably "diluted." Departing tourists usually vow that they will return, and they are asked repetitiously what it was that so pleased them and if they will be "lonesome after they leave." Reflected here are the profound feelings of inferiority of the folk and their need for constant reassurance of their worth. Much of the depression among islanders during winter months is related to the absence of outsiders who stimulate them and are subjects of gossip.

The people of Inis Beag regard themselves as friendly, polite, and hospitable to outsiders—not at all like their Inis Thiar neighbors, who are said not to like tourists and to extort money from them for giving information and allowing themselves to be photographed. Strangers never are derided for behaving in a disapproved fashion but are "treated with dignity," although some men will try to gain free drinks and other favors from outsiders in a calculating and beguiling manner (called "being cute" in Ireland), which is frowned on by the majority of folk. During the summer when tourists are plentiful, many islanders behave according to the nativistic and primitivistic expectations of the strangers: a[illegible] becomes more traditional and newer costumes are worn, canoes are rowed with greater vigor, conversations become more boastful, and the like. The sensitivity of the islanders to nativism and primitivism is quite selective, however, in that they extol certain of their indigenous customs and are ashamed of others. Actions which give credence to such character traits as spirituality, strength, and courage are exaggerated, while those which belie such traits as independence, self-reliance, and industriousness are carefully hidden. My wife and I kept a careful record of the responses of Inis Beag folk to questions that we posed concerning their history and culture when we first visited the island in 1958. More than 40 replies turned out to be erroneous, and some of them would have done credit to the most ardent nativist or primitivist.

Most tourists who visit Inis Beag share a mystique fostered by interpretations of island life in the works of writers and film producers. A similar mystique is found elsewhere in the world among idealized primitive and peasant peoples. In Inis Beag, it often causes visitors to seek acceptance from the folk, to resent the presence of other outsiders, to boast of their intimate knowledge of Inis Beag customs, and, in some cases, to "go native" in so far as circumstances permit.

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124 which the hair of many of the men was cut, which often rendered dis-
[302] tinction of shade very difficult. Owing to the season most of the observations had to be made in the morning when the people were going to their work, or early in the evening when they were returning, or gathered around their cottage doors; in many cases, however, they were followed to the harvest field and measured there.

The taking of photographs did not, as elsewhere, cause the assembly
126 of the knot of spectators which usually affords so good an opportunity
[123] for the collection of eye and hair colours; it had rather the opposite effect, as the people have a strong dislike to having their portraits taken.

In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 241 individuals, on 40 of whom (being about one-fifth of the adult males of the islands) measurements and other observations were taken.

Care was exercised that none of those measured should be entered in the ordinary nigrescence cards, as well as to avoid recording the same individual twice or the noting of persons who were not natives.

(K). *Photography.*—For the reasons already mentioned there could not be as much done in this department as had been hoped; but, in spite of the strong aversion shown by many of the people to having their portraits taken, and the strong winds prevailing during our stay, my brother, J. M. Browne, who accompanied me to do the necessary photography, succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of typical groups, as well as some single portraits in full face and profile, and a series of views illustrative of the modes of life and environment of the people.

2.—Physical Characters.

142 (A). The people, on the whole, much resemble the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Connemara, and their appearance testifies to a mixed origin. The following is believed to be a correct description of their average physical characters:—

Stature and bulk.—The men, as a rule, are stoutly built, and of medium height; very few can fairly be termed tall, and there is a very considerable proportion of men of low stature. The average height is
[141] 1633 mm., or about 5 feet 6½ inches, which falls short of the Irish mean stature as found by Gould, the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association, and others, by about two inches.

142 The women are of a slighter build than the men, and, apparently,
143 more even in height; they also show more strikingly that great simi-

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(C). *Remarks on methods employed.*—The work had to be carried on 124 under rather different circumstances from those experienced before, as the weather prevailing during my visit to the district was not too well suited for field work, the rains being frequent and heavy, and the wind very strong, besides this, the population is much more scattered than any dealt with before, and long journeys had often to be made for very little result. In some ways, however, the work

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was easier, the measuring being, in many cases, done under shelter, 124
instead of on the hills, the roadside, or the sea-shore.

As is mentioned above the two new measurements had to be abandoned owing to practical difficulties. It is a matter of experience in work of this sort in Ireland that persons do not *come* to be measured, [123] they have to be sought out and induced to submit themselves to the process, often no easy matter; there are generally several to be measured in quick succession, but if kept waiting long they will one by one slip off and refuse to allow measurement; and as the adapting of the anthropometer for these projections takes some time, the instrument [126] having to be unshipped for each, and then fitted up again to measure the next comer, it became evident that these projections would have to be given up if anything like a sufficient number of persons was to be measured. Moreover, accuracy in taking projection measurements is by no means easily obtained, even under the most favourable circumstances in a laboratory, and the difficulty is increased so much in field work, where it is not at all easy to get the men to understand exactly what position they are wanted to assume, so as to make the results unreliable.

The noting of the colours of the hair and eyes also presented some difficulties, the chief being to distinguish between those who were natives and strangers from other districts, which was rendered greater by the absence of a distinctive dress (except in the case of the people of Inishkea). In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 494 individuals, on 62 (male adults) of whom the full series of measurements and observations was made. As on the two former surveys precautions were taken against recording the same person twice, as well as against the inclusion of the men measured in the ordinary nigrescence cards.

(D). *Photography.*—Owing to the rain and rough weather as much 126
could not be done in this department as had been hoped, but in spite of the difficulties of cloudy skies and high winds a number of photographs were taken, including, 17 portraits, 14 of them individuals measured, 12 groups, taken in all parts of the district, 30 illustrations of the occupations, modes of transport, and habitations of the people, also several of the antiquities of the district, and a set of views showing surface of land and nature of coast line, &c.

Some of these photographs were taken by myself, others by my brother J. M. Browne. The addition of the hand camera to our appliances has proved to be a great advantage, enabling portraits of unwilling subjects to be taken, and adding to the value of the photo-

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126 graphs of occupations by admitting of their being taken when the performers were in motion. It could also be used on occasions when the high winds would not allow the setting up of a tripod stand.

2.—*Physical Characters*:—

(A). The general physical characters of the people are as given 142 below, though some differences exist between the inhabitants of different parts of the district.

The people on the whole are good-looking, especially when young; [145] many of the girls and young women are very handsome, but they appear to age rapidly and early become wrinkled.

Stature and bulk.—The men of this district are as a rule of fair average stature, very stoutly built, and broad shouldered; while there are few who can fairly be termed very tall, yet many reach a good height, and the proportion of small men is by no means large. The [141] average stature of the 62 adult males measured was 1725 mm., or about 5 feet 8 inches. The extremes were 1628 mm. (5 feet 4 inches), and 1820 mm., or about 5 feet 11½ inches.

The women seem to be more even in height than the men.

Limbs.—The hands are usually of medium size, broad and with fingers squarely clubbed at the ends. The forearms (measured from styloid process to the head of radius) are often very long for the stature, and the span is sometimes very great, though in a few cases it is less than the stature, a character also noted in the Aran Islands, though the proportion of cases in which it was observed was much greater there.

Head.—The head is generally well shaped and is often of large size. The forehead is broad and upright (rarely receding), rounded away at the sides, and of fair height; superciliary ridges and glabella of no great size, eye-brows thick and level.

The cranial curve rises to a pretty fair height above the ears [141] (height index 65·8), though not attaining the altitude seen in the people of Aran and the men of Inishbofin, and descends in an even sweep to the occipital protuberance as the occipital region does not usually project.

In the majority of cases, as will be seen from the table of indices, 141 the head is mesaticephalic, the mean index being 77·4 (when two units are deducted to reduce to the cranial standard). Of the 62 persons measured, 10 were brachycephalic, and 11 dolichocephalic. The extremes were 86·2 and 72·3.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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centuries of careful observations. I collected 250 of these signs and placed them 821
in the following general categories: density, location, and time of mist; type of [126]
frost and heaviness of dew; size and position of rings around sun and moon; color and conformation of sky and clouds at particular times of the day; density and location of fog banks; position and time of rainbows; clarity, closeness, and color of Inis Thiar and the mainland; changes in the weather in relation to tides; actions of animals; and pains in the human body. Of special interest are the signs associ- [825]
ated with animal behavior, such as the height at which swallows fly, the prevalence of fly hordes, the crowing of roosters and braying of asses, the position that cats assume at the hearth, and whether or not spiders weave their webs across trails. The expert forecaster will weigh together as many as ten signs before announcing his prediction, and I once collected 16 from an old man in Low Village assessing conditions 12 hours hence. Some signs are quite obviously undependable, among them the quacking of ducks which some say will "call" rain, and the scratching of floors and furniture by cats which, according to others, will point the direction of the wind following a shift in the near future. The folk believe that the moon and [828]
tides exert a profound influence on both weather and human behavior; my wife on one occasion was told that her "snappish" mood (the words of a neighbor, not mine) was caused by the new moon.

The climate, in part, determines the conception of seasons held by the islanders. Four seasons are recognized, but their duration deviates from the norm of Western culture. Winter is conceived as embracing only December and January, while spring is thought to commence in February and end in early April. The other two seasons are not so well defined, but most folk agree that summer takes up the greater part of the year—from April until mid-September—and autumn the remaining three months. December and January are regarded as the coldest months, during which time there is a lull in economic activities, but planting begins early in February. Although the prevailing winds during the year are from the west and southwest, for several weeks between January and mid-March icy winds blow steadily from the southeast quarter and cause much physical discomfort and illness. In late March and early April, temperatures rise rapidly, and some islanders believe that March "steals" three days from April so that summer cannot be expected until after April 3rd. The circumstances of the theft are revealed in a legend.

The reason that summer is thought to extend for so long is a psychological [154]
one: the folk dislike winter with its cold and dampness and attendant sickness and the sense of isolation from the world that it brings. Few outsiders visit Inis Beag during the winter, and often the steamer is unable to leave port or must turn back because of gales or high seas. It is not out of the ordinary for the island to be totally isolated for a week or ten days because of inclement conditions. From late January on, warm weather is anticipated eagerly, and I was told time and again that summer was imminent when spells of cold and rainy weather occurred between March and June of 1960. During a quarrel with her husband over his confident weather forecasting ability, a woman noted for being an outspoken realist declared, "Inis Beag has only one summer month—July."

The island experiences but eight hours of daylight, from nine o'clock in 132
the morning until five in the afternoon, at the time of the winter solstice, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

538 539 191 [537] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb 539 derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

539 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than 534 its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [178] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of [177] the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

changes which are taking place today, a hundred years later, that are finally extinguishing the prehistoric traditions. Mechanization and mass-production are invading the remotest glens, and things which were the commonplaces of fifty years ago are becoming as remote to the young as the Middle Ages. Knowledge of ways of life that have altered little for centuries is passing away; skills whose loss the practical countryman may have cause to regret are disappearing. The Irish Universities have a unique opportunity of fostering local studies and folklore-research, but only University College, Dublin, has seriously supported this work. The Government of Northern Ireland, however, is to be congratulated on having offered to help to finance an Ulster Folk Museum on the lines of St. Fagans in Wales and those of the Scandinavian countries.

Meanwhile the National Museum in Dublin, the Belfast Municipal Museum and the County Museum, Armagh, have been busy collecting and displaying the portable elements of material culture, and I have drawn freely on their exhibits for sketches of objects which it is now too late to find in everyday use. I wish to thank Mr. A. T. Lucas and Dr. J. Raftery, of the National Museum, Mr. W. A. Seaby of the Belfast Museum, and Mr. T. G. F. Paterson of Armagh for their assistance and encouragement. Among many other friends and colleagues whose help I cannot forget are Kevin Danaher and Sean O'Sullivan of the Irish Folklore Commission, Professor Michael Duignan, Professor M. J. O'Kelly, Professor Sean O'Riordain, H. G. Tempest, and Dr. A. E. J. Went; and among my former students R. H. Buchanan, Rosemary Harris, N. C. Mitchel, Dr. D. McCourt, Dr. J. M. Mogey, V. B. Proudfoot and G. B. Thompson. I have to thank the editors of the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* and of *Ulster Folklife* and Mr. W. A. Seaby for the loan of blocks, and Mr. Seaby also for permission to use several photographs from the collection of the late R. J. Welch. Mr. W. A. Green, Miss H. E. Henry, Mr. Frank Scovell and Mr. C. E. F. Trench have kindly supplied me with photographs. Miss Eileen Duncan has prepared the four maps, and other acknowledgements appear under the text-figures. It is a pleasure also to acknowledge the help received, either orally or in correspondence, from numerous Irishmen in all

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, [241] of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first [244] decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most [501] attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing [197] the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 [1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

163 192 [2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process. 114 121 127

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated. 12 [539] [177] [178]

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next. 105 [121] [161] [241] [436] [511] [161] [593] [581] [177] [178] [829] [165] [212] [829]

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the 668

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and [182] indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most [521] activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently [676] in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, • [127] and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of [137] islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, [815] several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess [207] barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

121 In the discussions on the complicated problems of the European house traditions, the peasant Irish house has hitherto been almost ignored, in spite of the fact that the Irish house could certainly yield some important information. Ireland constitutes a reservoir of Celtic and other traditions of great antiquity and of special importance for the moulding of European folk-culture.[1]

To study the Irish peasant house, it is first of all necessary to make detailed field surveys for all parts of Ireland and then to compare these with the results of similar investigations in all related countries. But not less important is it to consider these conclusions in the light of the information we get in the Ancient Irish Laws (the culture here described dates from pagan times i. e. prior to the middle of the 5th century A. D.) the literature (particularly the Heroic tales of the Ulster cycle), and the vocabulary of the older language as well as that of the modern Irish dialects.

128 Postponing for further discussion (in part II of this article) the buildings of very archaic constructions, viz. the stone beehive huts or rectangular huts roofed by a system of overlapping stones and the most primitive or simplified house types (huts of wickerwork, sod, turf), I will here firstly consider Irish houses, stone-built and mudhouses with roof resting on wooden couples. These houses represent a slightly more developed stage of construction than the above mentioned types. They are all inhabited in modern times.[2]

341 It is a remarkable fact that even the most primitive Irish houses still inhabited — houses with only one room showing traces of its original task to shelter both the human family and the cattle, walls built without mortar, fireplace without any chimney etc. — are already divided into two principal types, namely (1) the house with the fire-place placed somewhere near the centre of the house or at least not just at the gablewall, so there are bedplaces behind the fire-place in the upper end of the house, often thatched gables, and (2) the house with stone-built gables and the fireplace close to the gable wall. In a former article (Béaloideas 1935 p. 57 et sq.) I have

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 skeletal series of medieval and modern age, which was tem-
114 porarily disinterred in connection with the excavation of the ruined priory at Gallen, County Offaly.

Many technical papers and monographs upon the archaeo-
114 logical results of the survey have been published in the proceedings and memoirs of the learned societies of Ireland. Some preliminary lectures upon the social anthropology of the rural districts of County Clare have been issued in book form (Arensberg, '37). No general works correlating the results of the different phases of the survey have been published as yet, since these must await the completion of the detailed technical reports. Nothing at all has been brought out on the physical anthropological side, with the exception of a short preview of the data included in Dr. Carleton S. Coon's recent book, "The Races of Europe" ('39, pp. 376–384), although Dr. Howells' monograph on the Gallen skeletons is in the hands of the printer.

The enormous mass of anthropometric data collected by Mr. Dupertuis and by Dr. Dawson has been statistically reduced. At least 2 years more must elapse before it can be published. It is hoped to bring it out in one very large volume under the joint authorship of the present writer and the two anthropologists who gathered the material. The discussion of stature, head form, and pigmentation hereinafter presented must be regarded as a preview. Interpretation of the data cannot be other than tentative until the entire body of anthropological evidence has been thoroughly studied.

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL BY LOCAL SUBGROUPS

In the tables and maps included in this paper the anthro-
● 128 pological material is divided into nineteen local subgroups. These are single county groups, combinations of adjacent counties, or combinations of part of one county with other counties in whole or in part, or subdivisions of a single county. For 2 years Mr. Dupertuis drove up and down through the whole of Ireland studying the population and the geography of the country. The subgroups were made by him partly upon

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the basis of geography, partly upon his knowledge of the regional anthropological differences. Convenience also dictated the use of county boundaries in the majority of instances. 128

AGE

The average age of 8809 Irish males is 34.55 ± 0.10 years. In the anthropometric survey of a population it seems desirable to include the males of subadult age (18-20 years) as an offset to those who are presumably senile (60 years and upward). The incomplete growth of the subadults tends to counterbalance the diminished height of the aged. The standard deviation of age for the entire series is 13.95 ± 0.07 years. The county subgroup means of ages range from 29.45 ± 0.29 (Longford, Westmeath) to 38.80 ± 0.51 (Waterford and Wexford). 145

STATURE

Stature was measured by the standard technique with the Martin anthropometer. Subjects, of course, were required to remove their shoes. 141 171

Table 1 presents the data on stature and figure 1 plots the means of stature by local subgroups in intervals of 1 cm. The mean of stature for the whole of Ireland is 172.02 cm., which, of course, is tall. The actual range of subgroup means is only 4 cm.—from 170.52 cm. (Meath, Louth, County Dublin) to 174.54 cm. (Aran Islands). The variabilities of the nineteen subgroups are for the most part neither significantly higher nor lower than that of the total series. The standard deviation of stature for the total series (6.81 ± 0.03 cm.) is not very high when the age range of the population is taken into consideration. It is somewhat higher than that of any of the eight European ethnic series recorded by Davenport and Love as a result of measurements taken upon troops during demobilization after the World War ('21, p. 113). Standard deviations in these series ranged from 6.06 cm. (Italians) to 6.62 cm. (English). The mean height of 6164 Irish was 171.36 cm. and the standard deviation of stature 6.31 cm. Thus our

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ADDENDUM

From this Irish county series, as here discussed, all persons of Protestant religion have been omitted. The number thus excluded is 312 Presbyterians and 488 Church of Ireland, of these the vast majority come from the northern counties— Antrim, Armagh, Fermanagh, Down, Londonderry, Tyrone, Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan. Mr. Dupertuis directed this sorting because he was of the opinion that the Ulster Protestants really represent, in large part, a recent Scotch immigration, and the Church of Ireland English immigrations. In the final report on Ireland these northern Protestants will be included. They could hardly alter the distribution pictures perceptibly, except (possibly) in the counties mentioned.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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M. E. Rea), 6, 7 (by courtesy of Dr. J. Raftery and the artist, Mr. H. E. Kilbride-Jones), 23, 24, 83, 85, 97 and 98 (by a former student, Mr. P. O'Neill) 99, and 111 (from drawings by Miss E. Kinnaird). Fig. 84 is reproduced by kind permission of the National Museum of Ireland and Plate V is from a photograph generously supplied by Mr. T. H. Mason, in whose magnificently illustrated book, *The Islands of Ireland*, it has already appeared. To Mr. S. T. C. Langford I am indebted for the use of his photograph of the reaper as Frontispiece. The Irish eskers on Fig. 2 are taken from a map prepared by Professor J. K. Charlesworth. Figs. 8 and 107 are borrowed from W. Fitzgerald's *The Historical Geography of Early Ireland* by kind permission of the author and publishers, Messrs. George Philip and Son.

My colleague, Mr. A. J. Allaway, has been good enough to read through the proofs at short notice and I have profited from his observations. Finally I wish to record my indebtedness to my publisher, Mr. H. G. Tempest, not only for inviting me to write this book, but for his constant interest and careful supervision.

For convenience of reference every effort has been made to place the illustrations in close proximity to the relevant part of the text, but this has not always been possible and the reader will find it useful to consult the list of illustrations on page xiii as a guide. The pages on which drawings occur are also shown in italics in the index. In a work of this kind I have not thought it necessary to encumber the text with footnotes and references. These must await full scientific publication.

E. ESTYN EVANS.

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Belfast.

[p. viii is blank]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and in his descriptive analysis of the culture and social structure of Inis Beag. For these reasons the book will doubtless raise controversy among Irish journalists, particularly those of nativistic persuasion.

Dr. Messenger describes the folk and their culture as he sees them, and within the conceptual structure of the social sciences. The picture that emerges is less heroic than the current romanticized idealization, and very human. The author's personal identification with the island and its people is obvious. He struggles to maintain an objective stance, and largely succeeds, but it is obvious that he and his wife participated exuberantly in the life of Inis Beag. This is in the best tradition of anthropological fieldwork. The problems of identification, friendship, rejection and acceptance, and ambivalence that are invariably associated with such participation are common to all of us who have had this kind of experience.

The case study is notable for its human qualities. It is a descriptive analysis of a significant folk way of life heretofore unrepresented in this series. It is also notable for its significance as an analysis of a closed community that provides mobility only by migration, and for the analysis of the influence of puritanism. This latter emphasis is particularly valuable, for too often we assume that puritanism is associated only with Protestantism. Here, the inter-relationships with Catholicism, particularly with the Jansenist denial of sexuality, is made very clear. Dr. Messenger pursues these themes at both the social and the psychological levels. The case study is also characterized by a strong focus, especially appropriate in the Irish folk context, on folklore, Christian reinterpretations of pagan elements, music, song, and dance. And the dimensions of life that are featured in most ethnographies are well developed—subsistence, material culture, social organization and social control, and values and religion. Dr. Messenger is also careful to provide a historical introduction to Inis Beag, in the context of relevant aspects of Irish history.

GEORGE AND LOUISE SPINDLER
General Editors

Portola Valley, Calif.
May 1969

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

numerous regional subcultures exist, and some are part of a larger European matrix. In fact, as I indicated earlier, Inis Beag culture in its broadest outlines resembles other existing folk cultures. I have decided to employ English terms rather than their Gaelic counterparts whenever possible throughout the book, even though doing so will displease many Irish readers; this decision is based on the fact that most of its readers will be students of anthropology in colleges and universities in the United States. Since the islanders speak both English and Irish and command English equivalents for most Gaelic words and phrases, either language might be utilized.

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

arose partly out of our desire to alleviate distress and not solely to collect 123
information. We had performed the same role seven years earlier among 831*
primitive Nigerians, and for similar reasons. However, the Africans [171]
were uninhibited, talked freely with us about sex, and were not offended by what we subsequently wrote.

Another important source of information on sex was the island 115
nurses, who supplied us with accounts of their own observations over an eight-year period and gave us access to pertinent medical records. My wife and I believe that our information is, for the most part, reliable, 128 •
but that some of it may well be erroneous. This report will, we are 123
afraid, offend and alienate some of our Inis Beag friends, for whom we hold deep affection; they do not comprehend the aims and values of anthropology and may regard our reporting of sexual beliefs and behavior as a breach of friendship and trust. Certainly our findings will be denied by many Irish readers.

More than any other type of research, culture and personality 114
investigations are needed in Ireland today. Social and cultural anthropologists, rural sociologists, folklorists, and geographers in small numbers have managed to describe and analyze the major sociocultural forms of the Irish folk, but personality generalizations, by and large, have been the by-products of research into other areas and have tended to be impressionistic. Some of the most penetrating studies of Irish character have been made "at a distance" and through the analysis of projective systems and narrow units of culture, such as drinking patterns (Bales 1962). Some Irish writers—"intuitive anthropologists" I call them—also have had insightful things to say about Irish character (usually at a distance too, from church and state). What is sorely needed is a holistic community study done by a culture and personality specialist—a person skilled not only in ethnography, social psychology, and psychiatry (and able to administer projective tests), but well versed in Irish history, literature, and contemporary affairs as well.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Both lack of sexual knowledge and misconceptions about sex among 831*
adults combine to brand Inis Beag as one of the most sexually naive of 864
the world's societies.

662 539 571 828 829 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

182 177 178 181 *831 795 779 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

*831 181 182 626 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER II.

HOW IRELAND TOOK SHAPE.

101
131 "To comprehend the homestead and its home-folk, from the thatch of the roof to the colour of the children's hair, we must find the locality on the domed surface of the earth, and must realize that this earth is a very large and dominant region round it." So wrote the late Grenville Cole, wisest of Ireland's geographers. This island, then, lies in the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean, midway between the Lofoten Islands and the Straits of Gibraltar, a detached but not isolated fragment of the drowned coast of Eurasia. Throughout the ages, as Europe sank repeatedly under the waters of the ocean, this outer margin, worn down by rains and rivers, received fresh marine deposits over and over again, so that its rocks record all the main features of the history of western Europe.

133
175 Lying in the middle latitudes of the continent, it shares the converging mountain systems of north and south, the older axis of Scandinavia dominating the build of the north of Ireland while the younger axis linked with France and Spain prevails in the south. The lead thus given in the remote ages of geology has been followed, over and over again, by man and his cultures converging on this last outpost of Europe. From across the Atlantic, too, Ireland has received much in recent centuries; here the alien potato was first welcomed; and it was the "praty" which drove masses of Irishmen back along the route it had itself taken. "Ireland lieth aloof in

[p. 15]
[p. 14 is blank]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

121 The inquiry was conducted on almost exactly the same lines as that of last year; the slight differences of method being either due to changes made as the result of former experience or to local causes; but every effort was made to ensure as great uniformity as possible, a matter of much importance as facilitating comparison of results.

In this report the same headings as used in the previous one, and arranged in the same order, have been adhered to as closely as possible, so as to allow of easy reference.

II.—Physiography of the Islands.

131 101 The two islands under consideration, together with several small uninhabited islets, form the parish of Inishbofin; they are situated outside the mouth of Killary Bay, and are distant some thirty-six miles from Westport, and about sixteen miles from Clifden, Co. Galway, the nearest town of any size. The post town is Cleggan, a small village on a point of the mainland, about seven miles from Inishbofin. Of the two main islands Inishbofin (locally called Bofin or Boffin) is much the larger, as out of the total area of the parish of 3151 acres, it contains 2312.

133 Its greatest length is about four miles, and it varies in breadth from half a mile to over two miles. The nature of its coast line is greatly varied; at some places, as at Knock-quarter or East End, being low and sandy; at others, as on the north side, and at Dun More on the western extremity, being rocky, at times rising into high and jagged cliffs worn into coves and natural bridges; while, again, in other places it is high bluff overhanging a shingly foreshore. The [504] harbour is very safe and well sheltered, and looks S.W. The coast of Shark, which lies about a mile S.W. of Inishbofin, is much more rocky, and may be said to be precipitous nearly all round, and much broken into by caves and deep fissures a few yards wide, with precipitous overhanging walls. It is difficult to land on this island if the weather be at all rough, and the inhabitants are often stormbound for weeks at a time. The difficulty and danger of landing is not so great as it used to be since the building of a new pier by the Government [653] as a relief work in 1892. Mr. Michael Lavelle, writing about the natives of this island, says:—"It is very hard for these people to live; they may be two months before they can go to Boffin to get some commands, and they live during that time on potatoes and 'white wine.'"

The principal rock of both islands is gneiss, but belts of steatite are also found.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities, one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in 101 its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the 631 little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

133 Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the [504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

167 landscape combined with financial help
657 of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is sep-
[131] arated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring
311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs
132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[5] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

505 Isolation is a major problem, but on four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost
[261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport problems

[137] [5] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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635
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102

FIG. 2. The Provinces of Ireland.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond, 631 though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon. Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*, 776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317, 787 and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago, foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Plists* or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con- 121 sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen- 124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p. 180]

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, [291] of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first [241] decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag [501] over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most [197] attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 103 192

[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[712] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
• [131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents. 512 221 462

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year. 132 527 221

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew. 221 527 574 621

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with 221 132 241 221 521

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

221 types, varieties, growth cycles, yields, and care of seeds and
521 cattle passes round by word of mouth.

[805] The first of February, St. Brigid's Day, marks the begin-
221 ning of spring. For the countryman the return of the
132 "hard" days of wind and clear weather herald the season of
241 the land's drying off. Through February and March the gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted, and the fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each hard day is a welcome opportunity, for only then can work in the fields go on. With favorable weather, the work of preparation is over in the beginning of March, and the actual planting begins. By St. Patrick's Day, with its promise of continuous hard weather, the gardens are ready for a second planting.

221 The potatoes demand the greatest attention. A fortnight
241 after they are planted, they must be manured well with manure brought from the pile near the cattle cabins, and the ground must be leveled so that the plant will not go to stalk and thus fail to produce tubers. A fortnight more and the ground must be "softened" and the earth round the plant, which now shows its first leaves, must be "stirred." By the time May is reached, the potatoes must be "landed." Earth must be taken from between the long ridges in which the potatoes are planted and heaped up over them from each side. Thereafter nothing remains until the harvest but a summer spraying against blight.

221 Throughout the spring the cattle have demanded atten-
231 tion. March and April see the birth of calves and the
438 beginning of the milk season and intensified butter-making. The great spring cattle fairs take place. The farmer must devote himself to the all-important business of buying and selling his milch and store cattle and his calves. At home the cattle demand constant care against hunger, disease, and cold as he mixes their diet of fast diminishing hay with the slowly returning pasture grass.

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

132 The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual 251 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on 231 which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume 234 or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten cows" is still a familiar term.

311 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less
241

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Corrib). Difficulties of communication are such that the 133
Central Plain has never been central in anything more than
name: Athlone has become a national centre only with radio [209]
communication, and the Shannon remains a boundary river
throughout its course. The important part of the plain is the 133
fifty mile stretch which faces the Irish Sea between the bays of 175
Dundalk and Dublin, the heart of the old Kingdom of Meath
and of the English Pale, and the setting of Ireland's capital
sites from the sacred tombs of New Grange through the age
of Celtic Tara to the historic city of Dublin. One factor in the [132]
location of this metropolitan area is suggested by Fig. 8; it
is favoured by the relatively low rainfall of less than 30 ins.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

It undoubtedly helped the Irish peasants to survive through 175
troubled times, enabled them to live on the hills and waste 244
places to which they were driven, and also to multiply exceedingly in the decades before the great famines of the forties.

132

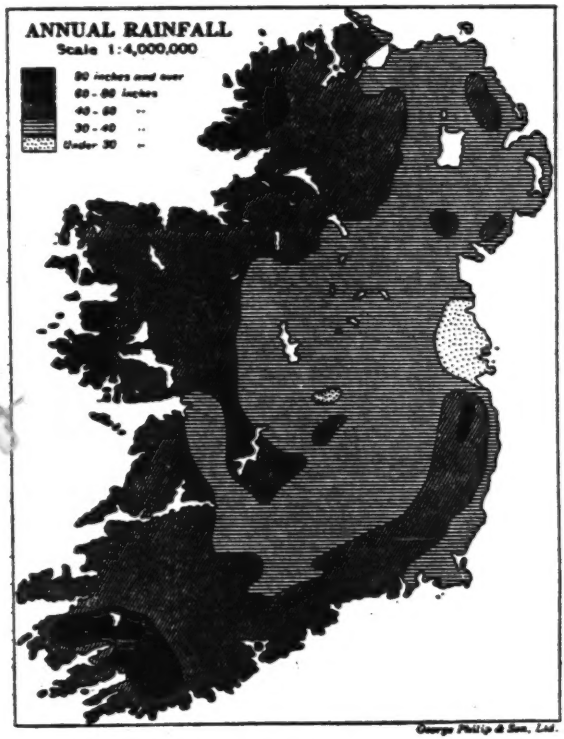

Fig. 8.

It will be well at this stage to say something of the climate and crops of present-day Ireland. The abundant rainfall, the prevailing cloud-cover, the high degree of atmospheric humidity, the strong winds, the cool summers and mild

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

●132 winters—all these characteristics are related to the eastward moving stream of cyclones coming off the warm North Atlantic drift. Rain is heaviest wherever mountain masses place obstacles in the path of the moisture-bearing winds, and the peninsulas of Donegal, Connemara and Kerry have from 60 to 100 inches of rain each year (Fig. 8). By contrast the east coast gets about half this amount, while the low-lying tract between Dublin and Drogheda is favoured by a fall of under 30 ins. Everywhere the mildness and the damp encourage grasses and moisture-loving plants, but too often waterlogging has caused green pastures and woodlands to deteriorate into brown bogland. The prolonged autumns, another gift of the Atlantic, are important because they give man a sporting chance of saving his harvests: the heaviest rains are delayed until November and December. Similarly the relatively dry springs (March-May) are conducive to work in field and turf-bog at that season. (Chapter 15).

311 231 241 Reviewing the distribution of the chief crops and animals to-day, the following facts may be noted. Nearly one half the land devoted to crops, excluding hay, is occupied by oats and perhaps three-quarters of the yield is fed to livestock. Only in the wettest peninsulas of Connemara and Kerry does another crop (potatoes) occupy more land. It is estimated that the "consumption" of potatoes amounts to about ¾ ton per head of the population each year, but the greater part of this goes to pigs and other livestock. The greatest concentration of wheat production is in the comparatively sunny corner of Wexford, with secondary areas along the dry east coast in Cos. Dublin and Down. Recent years have witnessed an increase in wheat growing but there is still far less than in the record years of a century ago. when wheat was being exported to England. Barley, which is more intolerant of damp than wheat, is found on the well-drained soils of Co. Louth but particularly of Wexford and the sheltered valleys of the Nore, Suir and Barrow. It has declined less than wheat [273] because of the demand of the breweries and distilleries, but the drop in the illicit making of poteen has reduced its production in many a secluded spot along the west coast.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XV.

THE BOG.

3/4 I have called this chapter " the Bog " rather than " Turf " because fuel is not the only product of the Irish turf bogs. The rough grazings once so important in mountain economy (Chapter 6) are commonly located on thin peat, while " buried treasure " is obtained in the form of bog-timber and also, it may be, in objects of wood or metal lost or deposited in the turf in ancient times. Measured by the time and labour of cutting, footing, stacking, and carrying, turf is an expensive fuel. At best, work in the bogs involves a constant struggle against water-logging underfoot and mists and rain overhead: at the worst there comes an occasional season wetter than usual when little or no turf can be won, and the bare countryside must be searched for sticks and rotting timber to burn. [237] In these circumstances dried cowdung is often used as fuel. [372] Moreover, the heavy drain upon all available hands comes in early summer, and the growing crops and livestock are liable to be neglected. " A great impediment to good husbandry," is the verdict of one writer.

The turf is cut in a normal year from the beginning of May onwards, or as soon as the potatoes and corn are in the ground, but the great thing is to begin as early as possible in [132] order to profit from the dry weather of spring. In districts where few crops are grown April, the driest month of the year, is the chosen time. A current of excitement runs through

[p. 133]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The surface of the land presents much variety, a large part consisting either of moor and bog or of rocky hills, some of which reach a height of nearly 300 feet, but much of the soil is said to be of good quality. There are several small loughs in Inishbofin, lying in the hollows between the hills, and numerous wells and small rills which are kept well supplied by the frequent heavy rains. 133 [134]

The following description of the islands is given in the memoir of Sheet 83 of the Geological Survey.

With reference to Inishshark the authors say:—

"It is bleak and wild, rocky towards the west and north-west, while there is an envelope of drift on the eastern slopes. At the north-west shore are high and almost perpendicular cliffs.

"As the drift contains numerous angular and semi-angular blocks and fragments of local rocks, it is probably of moraine origin. . . . . On Inishshark there are igneous rocks. . . . identical with those which have been called melapyre by Mr. David Forbes. These occur in wide dykes, weathering much more rapidly than the associated schists, and form deep narrow ravines that have the local name of Boher-na-collig (*Anglice*, the road of the old hag or witch). . . . *Inishbofin* has a general E. and W. bearing; on the average it is four miles long and two wide, but the north and south coasts are indented with bays; and at Lough Bofin, from sea to sea, is not half a mile.

"The island consists of five hills, namely, Westquarter, its greatest height being 292 feet; it forms a promontory nearly separate from the rest of the island, being connected by the previously-mentioned low isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated; Middlequarter, highest peak, 288 feet; Cloonamore, the N.E. hill having a height of 157 feet; Knock, the hill east of the harbour, 271 feet; and, Inishlyon, 143 feet, which is a tidal island, and separated from the other hills during high water. Most of the island is rocky, having a thin peat coating, except the valley of Boffin Harbour, where there is a considerable thickness of drift which gives the island a verdant aspect when viewed from the southward."

The climate is mild even in winter, frost being rare, and snow not lying if it should chance to fall; but these advantages are counterbalanced by the frequent fierce storms which often cut off all communication with the mainland for days, and by the heavy and long-continued rains. 132

The warmth and damp of the climate are probably due, to some extent, to the impinging of part of the Gulf Stream upon the islands, as several of the glass globes set afloat to test the current have been

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

132 washed up on them; at least four of these are now in Inishbofin, and large quantities of drift of various kinds are thrown up on the shores from time to time.

The botany and zoology of the islands is outside of the scope of the 137 present Paper, but a few words of general description may help to make the picture of the place more complete.

Here, as elsewhere, on our western coast, there is a tradition that the islands were at one time well wooded; and this is corroborated by the occasional discovery of tree-trunks in the bogs. At the present day, though under the influence of the warm, moist climate, other vegetation flourishes, trees of any sort cannot be got to grow, and all attempts to rear them have hitherto been failures, as the strong winds quickly destroyed them. Even in the most sheltered spots bushes will hardly grow, and there are not a dozen of five feet in height to be found in the islands.

Large numbers of sea-birds nest on the rocky islets round the 136 coasts; pigeons in large numbers inhabit the caves of Inishshark, and, until within a few years ago, eagles used regularly to nest on a high pinnacle of rock, known as the Boughal, in the channel between the islands. Rabbits and rats are both very plentiful; but hares, bats, weasels, and frogs are not found on either island.

Around the coast, porpoises, sea-otters, and seals (which latter [821] are looked upon as forerunners of stormy weather when they appear) are often seen, and the "sun-fish" (*Selache maxima*, the great basking shark) appears usually about the end of March; it leaves nearly always before the end of June, and was until a few years ago regularly fished for.

III.—Anthropography.

1. *Methods.*—These do not require any very extended notice, being 125 practically the same as those employed last year, and described in the report on the Aran investigation. A few changes were made, consisting mainly in the substitution of measurements and instruments shown by experience to be needed, for some which had proved unnecessary, and the use of the new observation form provisionally adopted by the Irish Sub-Committee for the Ethnographic Survey of the British Association. This form, though not perfect, proved to be of much value for field work as, owing to its arrangement, observations can be made with much greater rapidity than is possible by the old system; and the chance of omitting any important point is almost entirely avoided. The economy of time alone is a point of much im-

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills. Off this part of the coast lie Iniskea and Duvillaun, having a sandy or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low. 133 [502]

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones. [134]

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe. [504] 132

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very few and only grow in sheltered localities. 137

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the mail road from Ballina runs.[1] 491

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few 125

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks that have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward. [133]

167 landscape combined with financial help
657 of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is separated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring
311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs
132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[5] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

505 Isolation is a major problem, but on four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost
[261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport problems

[137] [5] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[133]
[132]
[102]

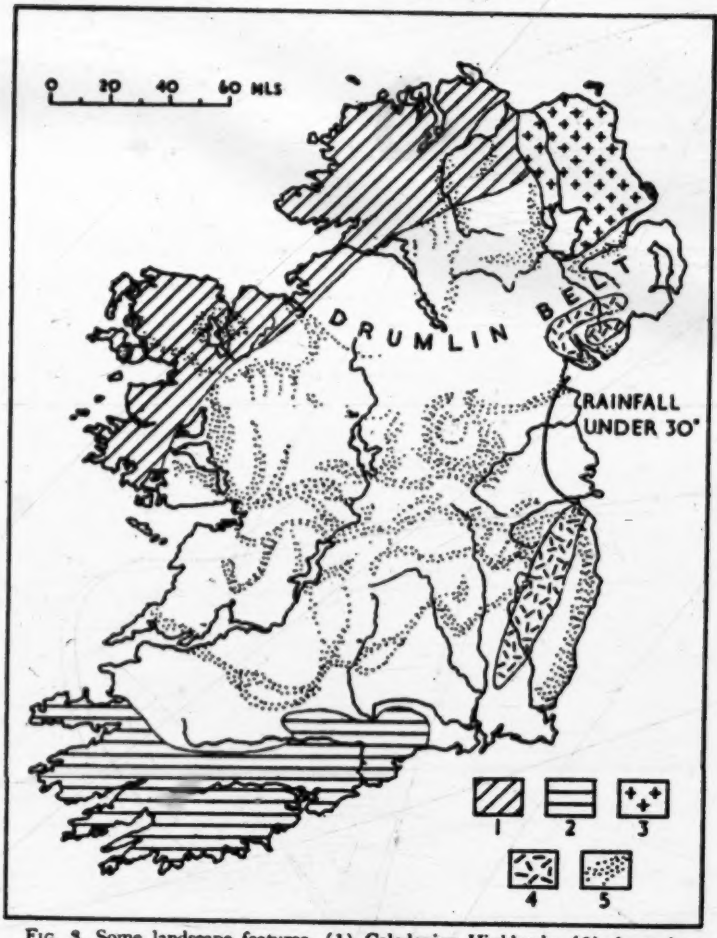

FIG. 3. Some landscape features. (1) Caledonian Highlands, (2) Armorican ridge and valley, (3) North-eastern basalts, (4) Eastern granites, (5) Glacial sands and gravels (eskers) (after J. K. Charlesworth). Drumlins are little hills composed of glacial drift. See Pl. 5, 1.

as they appear. The pattern they make has changed with the centuries in response to new needs and new tools. At present we are in a period of fairly rapid change, for the tractor calls for larger and more regular fields than those made by the spade

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this 314
time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals
and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf- [786]
cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the
lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a
stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out
of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades
and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on
fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an
exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers
that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the differ-
ence between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere [132]
the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an
early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the
planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month,
so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There
is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when [821]
the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the
tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it
is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but
once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep
cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a [521]
'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the [423]
decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when
banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally
has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or [476]
three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in
turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the
helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient
fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required
depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf.
Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown
top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a
proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist
humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like
coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is
the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that [804]
a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading, [461]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and [182] indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most [521] activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently [676] in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

• 132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, [127] and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of [137] islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, [815] several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own [207] sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

centuries of careful observations. I collected 250 of these signs and placed them 821
in the following general categories: density, location, and time of mist; type of [126]
frost and heaviness of dew; size and position of rings around sun and moon; color and conformation of sky and clouds at particular times of the day; density and location of fog banks; position and time of rainbows; clarity, closeness, and color of Inis Thiar and the mainland; changes in the weather in relation to tides; actions of animals; and pains in the human body. Of special interest are the signs associ- [825]
ated with animal behavior, such as the height at which swallows fly, the prevalence of fly hordes, the crowing of roosters and braying of asses, the position that cats assume at the hearth, and whether or not spiders weave their webs across trails. The expert forecaster will weigh together as many as ten signs before announcing his prediction, and I once collected 16 from an old man in Low Village assessing conditions 12 hours hence. Some signs are quite obviously undependable, among them the quacking of ducks which some say will "call" rain, and the scratching of floors and furniture by cats which, according to others, will point the direction of the wind following a shift in the near future. The folk believe that the moon and [828]
tides exert a profound influence on both weather and human behavior; my wife on one occasion was told that her "snappish" mood (the words of a neighbor, not mine) was caused by the new moon.

The climate, in part, determines the conception of seasons held by the islanders. Four seasons are recognized, but their duration deviates from the norm of Western culture. Winter is conceived as embracing only December and January, while spring is thought to commence in February and end in early April. The other two seasons are not so well defined, but most folk agree that summer takes up the greater part of the year—from April until mid-September—and autumn the remaining three months. December and January are regarded as the coldest months, during which time there is a lull in economic activities, but planting begins early in February. Although the prevailing winds during the year are from the west and southwest, for several weeks between January and mid-March icy winds blow steadily from the southeast quarter and cause much physical discomfort and illness. In late March and early April, temperatures rise rapidly, and some islanders believe that March "steals" three days from April so that summer cannot be expected until after April 3rd. The circumstances of the theft are revealed in a legend.

The reason that summer is thought to extend for so long is a psychological [154]
one: the folk dislike winter with its cold and dampness and attendant sickness and the sense of isolation from the world that it brings. Few outsiders visit Inis Beag during the winter, and often the steamer is unable to leave port or must turn back because of gales or high seas. It is not out of the ordinary for the island to be totally isolated for a week or ten days because of inclement conditions. From late January on, warm weather is anticipated eagerly, and I was told time and again that summer was imminent when spells of cold and rainy weather occurred between March and June of 1960. During a quarrel with her husband over his confident weather forecasting ability, a woman noted for being an outspoken realist declared, "Inis Beag has only one summer month—July."

The island experiences but eight hours of daylight, from nine o'clock in 132
the morning until five in the afternoon, at the time of the winter solstice, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

132 only four hours of relative darkness, from midnight on, six months later at mid-
512 summer. People tend to sleep late during the winter, sometimes to nine or even
132 ten o'clock, and to begin their social activities early in the evening, while in June and July they arise an hour or two earlier and work as late as ten o'clock at night. My wife and I have attended parties during the 12 days of Christmas when guests assembled before eight o'clock, whereas in July we have waited until almost midnight for festivities to commence, when darkness afforded privacy of movement, desirable for reasons to be explained later. Times for meals, feeding and milking cattle, and many other enterprises also follow the lengthening and shortening of daylight hours from season to season.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

TABLE 8 (*continued*)

443 Killaloe, third Monday in January, February 28, March 28, April 12, May 20, June 26, July 16, August 12, September 3, October 20, November 17, first Tuesday after Christmas, cattle and sheep
Kilmihill, January 7, February 15, March 30, May 19, July 18, August 15, September 28, November 1, December 13
Kilmurry M'Mahon, May 24
Kilrush, last Wednesday in each month, for pigs; January 16, February 22, April 13, May 10, June 12, September 1, October 12, November 16, for cattle and sheep; March 25, first Thursday in June, October 10, November 23, for horses
Labasheeda, June 10, August 10, October 10, December 10
Liscannor, January 6
Lisdoonvarna, April 1, May 1, November 1, December 1
Miltown Malbay, February 1, March 9, May 4, June 21, August 11, September 10, October 18, December 9. Pigs first Thursday of each month
Mullagh, January 1, March 17
Newmarket-on-Fergus, December 20
O'Brien's Bridge, March 18, July 25, November 17
O'Callaghan's Mills, June 27, November 14
Quin, July 7 (cattle and sheep), November 1 (horses, cattle, and sheep)
Ruane, June 17, September 26
Scarriff, January 5, February 1, March 3, April 3, May 1, June 2, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 3, December 9, pigs day previous
Sixmilebridge, December 5
Spancil-hill, June 23, 24
Tulla, last Tuesday in January and February, March 25, April 25, May 13, June 15, July 19, August 15, September 29, October 19, November 9, December 7

438 In these ever-larger overlapping market areas the natural
133 physical divisions of the countryside are well represented. The great central mass of Mount Callan divides West Clare from the rest of the county. It divides as well the market districts of Ennis and Kilrush. In the valley of the Fergus River, which drains the highlands of Mid-Clare to the north and East Clare beyond the corcasses (rough marshlands) to the east, the human flow of trade and produce exchange tends downward to the towns of Ennis and Clarecastle, at the head of tidewater. The high country marking the divides over into the Inagh and Cullinagh rivers and into the lake country of North Clare, just south of the gaunt hills
438 of Burren, divides the market district of Ennis from the smaller districts upon which the villages of Ennistymon, Corrofin, and Lisdoonvarna draw. Yet these villages in their turn are within the region of Clare from which the

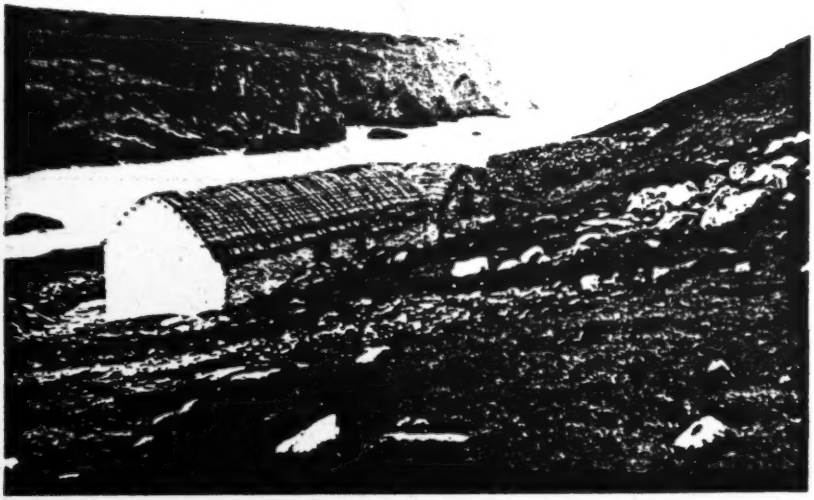
PLATE XLV

342 1. Roof with couples joined by two crossbeams. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. Stream-lined roof. Port, Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

1.

[133]



2.

[p. 215]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361
311
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FIG. 1—Panoramic view of dispersed farmsteads near Carrickmore, County Armagh, looking west along the drumlin belt of north Ireland. (Photograph by J. K. St. Joseph, from Cambridge University Collection. British Crown Copyright Reserved.)

361 McCourt[5] has been able to map the distribution of relicts of clachan settlement as they were to be found in the 1830's. He has shown that this was a widespread form of settlement in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century, and that it did not disappear in the remoter parts of the country until late in the nineteenth.[6] Indeed, occasional clachans that are still actively functioning can be found today on the Atlantic seaboard (Figs. 2 and 3[7]).

311 361 Associated with clachan settlement was a form of open-field cultivation, comparable to the Scottish infield-outfield system and generally known in

[5] D. McCourt: The Rundale System in Ireland: A Study of Its Geographical Distribution and Social Relations (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1950). [113]

[6] D. McCourt: Traditions of Rundale in and around the Sperrin Mountains, *Ulster Journ. of Archaeol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 16, 1953, pp. 69–84; *idem*: The Rundale System in Donegal: Its Distribution and Decline, *Journ. County Donegal Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1955, pp. 47–60.

[7] The author thanks Captain C. Ó Danachair of the Irish Folklore Commission for drawing his attention to the photograph presented as Figure 3.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

haps our knowledge of the strains which make up the peoples of the world, Ireland included, may stand us in good stead. 114

Already such work as this will show us the relation of the Irish to other European strains and help us to trace out historical currents in the country. Think of the field such work opens! Where is the Gael pure today? Who is the Firbolg, the aboriginal whom the Milesians found in possession? Who and where are the invading Gall? Briton, Norman, Dane, Fleming, Saxon, Englishman and Scotsman brought their bloods to this land and mingled them with the Gael. What traces have they all left and what bloods are at work today?

All these queries, nevertheless, do not primarily concern us in this discussion. The antiquity of some of the data stimulates another inquiry. But we cannot escape the sway of these other considerations entirely. There is no reason why we should. Even if they can offer us no direct aid, they can, nevertheless, afford us a stimulation.

Some such thoughts as these must have been in the social anthropologist's mind when he first made his way into a rural community. I cannot speak for my colleagues, Mr. Warner of Chicago University and Mr. Kimball of Harvard, who helped to gather the field material on Ireland. But I *can* speak for myself.

I felt Ireland's fascination as I toiled along behind my bicycle up the mountain road that runs 114 491 133

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

114 from the narrow valley lands at Doolin in the ex-
491 treme north-west of County Clare. I was on my
133 way to my first stay in an Irish west-country farm community. My road, no wider than a bridle-path, led up a sharp escarpment out of the tiny valley which empties its stony river into the Atlantic, not three miles away from the southernmost island of Aran. Once the top of the rim is reached
114 the mountainside flattens out into a green and
133 gently sloping table-land. Standing there one can see the whaleback rocks that are the Aran Islands and the masses of Mount Elva on the southern shore of Galway Bay. Far beyond in Connemara, one can catch the glint of the Twelve Pins, if the day is 'hard' and sunny. Off to the left, the table-land breaks off abruptly three hundred feet downward into the Atlantic, for the famed Cliffs of Moher are here, reminders of an Irish mountain that the sea has shorn off clean.

The community toward which I was making my
361 way lies along the table-land between mountain-
191 top of bracken and black bog and the cliffs. It keeps up the old tradition. It calls itself Luogh, and its language, at least that of the old people, is Irish, but the young people are forgetting the old tongue. English is the more common speech today, even here. Yet Mr. Delargy, the editor of the *Irish*
114 *Folklore Journal*, has collected a large number of
538 stories, songs and traditional tales and sayings here, some of them going back to the saga cycles.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER II.

HOW IRELAND TOOK SHAPE.

101 131 "To comprehend the homestead and its home-folk, from the thatch of the roof to the colour of the children's hair, we must find the locality on the domed surface of the earth, and must realize that this earth is a very large and dominant region round it." So wrote the late Grenville Cole, wisest of Ireland's geographers. This island, then, lies in the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean, midway between the Lofoten Islands and the Straits of Gibraltar, a detached but not isolated fragment of the drowned coast of Eurasia. Throughout the ages, as Europe sank repeatedly under the waters of the ocean, this outer margin, worn down by rains and rivers, received fresh marine deposits over and over again, so that its rocks record all the main features of the history of western Europe.

133 175 Lying in the middle latitudes of the continent, it shares the converging mountain systems of north and south, the older axis of Scandinavia dominating the build of the north of Ireland while the younger axis linked with France and Spain prevails in the south. The lead thus given in the remote ages of geology has been followed, over and over again, by man and his cultures converging on this last outpost of Europe. From across the Atlantic, too, Ireland has received much in recent centuries; here the alien potato was first welcomed; and it was the "praty" which drove masses of Irishmen back along the route it had itself taken. "Ireland lieth aloof in

[p. 15]
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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133 the West Ocean," wrote Campion, but one cannot attempt to
175 interpret Ireland without reference to its neighbouring lands and seas. The links with Britain are strongest and oldest, alike in geology and history, in the north-east. Here both rocks and men have common roots on both sides of the North Channel: from Carlingford round to Swilly this "Region of the Loughs" looks out towards familiar coasts and islands. In geology as in history, it is as difficult to consider Ireland apart from Britain as the islets of Ireland apart from Ireland. A brief summary will reveal a geological story as troubled as its political history. Fig. 2.

133 The oldest rocks are the gnarled and crumpled sediments of the north and west, running in broken masses from Connemara to north Antrim. Here the resistent hardened sandstones (quartzites) stand up in conspicuous cones (Errigal, Muckish, Croagh Patrick, the Twelve Pins) while the gleaming schists are generally worn down into bog-filled hollows, though they rise to over 2,000 feet in the Sperrins. These rocks, together with great thicknesses of shales and mudstones worn off them, were involved in the great earth-ridgings named, from their presence in Scotland, "Caledonian." Further south, hard quartzites also give the Great Sugarloaf of Co. Wicklow its bold outline, while massive intrusions of molten rock forced up during the Caledonian folding cooled to give wide exposures of moorland granites both in the long chain of the Wicklows and in scattered hills of the north and west.

Next in succession came the Old Red Sandstones, formed under semi-arid conditions out of the débris of sand and pebbles rolled down from the mountains. As the sea flooded back once more, a rich marine life left behind a great thickness of limestone, still to-day, despite its solubility and rapid weathering, the most continuous and widespread of all the Irish rocks. The Great Central Plain, worn down to a uniform level, is floored with limestone, and the seas have cut into it, in Donegal and Galway Bays, so as to separate the three mountain masses of the west coast and leave Connacht projecting like a Wilder Wales from the Irish mainland.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133

Fig. 2.

[p. 17]

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133 At the end of the Carboniferous period, swamp and forest darkened the surface of the limestone, and the coal measures were laid down. Then the earth's crust was crumpled once more along lines running east and west through south Ireland and through Brittany and Spain. Thus Cork and Kerry received their folded structure and scenic features. Except for small patches the coal measures have all been worn away by the agents of denudation, and so Ireland has been saved the wealth and the poverty of an industrial revolution. The limestones too have gone from the summits of the ridges, leaving barren but picturesque masses of the underlying sandstones exposed in long mountain lines—the Reeks of Kerry, the purple hills of Killarney and the high walls of the Galtees and the Comeraghs. This folding is known as the Armorican or Hercynian—named after Brittany and the Harz Mts. respectively (Fig. 2).

Again the land rose to receive deposits of New Red Sandstones, followed by the clean chalk and sandy beaches of the Cretaceous Sea. When Ireland once more emerged, its rolling chalk downs were destined to be carved away except in the north-east, where molten rocks poured out around the North Channel to make the Antrim basalts, protecting the underlying chalk and giving this corner of Ireland its striking coast scenery of black and white rocks. In the chalk the first inhabitants of the island, coming from the Scottish coast, were to find abundant flint for their implements. During the igneous phase the granite Mournes and the Carlingford Hills were thrust up, the last additions to the Irish mountains.

From this time on, although there have been ups and downs, Ireland was never submerged beneath the sea, but before it took final shape it suffered the invasion of ice which has left its mark on every feature of the landscape. In the north-east, true to tradition, it was Scottish ice that swept over the Region of the Loughs from Swilly to Carlingford, but elsewhere the ice-fields were fed by the glaciers of Donegal, Sligo, Galway and Kerry. The great central "basin" became the dumping ground for the débris of the surrounding

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

hills, whose rocks were scraped into the smooth rounded 133
forms known as "roches moutonnées," or splintered, in steep rock faces above the ice, into the walls of mountain corries. Widely scattered over the plain and through the marginal valleys from Limerick to Carlow and from Cavan to Antrim are the winding ridges of sand and gravel called eskers. They mark the stages in the retreat of the ice-sheet as it melted away and left its rock rubbish to be sorted out by water into great curving dumps. To-day these "green hills," as they are often called, rise in surprising freshness of contour and colour from the level plain. They are often followed by [487]
winding tracks which thus avoid the damp plain. Fig. 2.

Elsewhere the ice left behind a solid residue of clay and boulders, often to a depth of many feet, generally levelled by flooding waters from the ice-edge but sometimes piled into shapely steep-sided hills elongated in the direction in which the ice moved. These drumlins, or "little hills," give much of the border country, from south Down through Armagh and Monaghan to Cavan, Lough Erne and Donegal Bay its characteristic scenery. Their steep sides and the confused drainage of winding streams and lakelets to which they give rise long made the drumlin country a considerable obstacle to movement; and with other physical factors it helped to isolate the north from the rest of the country in early times. Southwards over the western parts of the plain, ice scooped out hollows and blocked rivers to form lakes many of which have been filled up with bog. But on the whole the ice-sheet, through its mantle of deposits, gave more than it took away: "the cold that for a time drove out life, in the end largely contributed to the fertility of Irish land." Fig. 3.

When warmer times returned and plants and animals began to find their way to the outpost of Europe, the land stood higher than to-day. Ireland was then, as it has been through most of its geological history, an integral part of Europe, and the great Irish deer roamed over the continent from the Atlantic to the Baltic. We are now within measurable distance of modern times, say 10,000 years ago, and it is

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133 possible that the first Irishmen saw the great deer before it disappeared. But again the land sank and tides swept through the North Channel while the Atlantic storms carved their way deep into the western seaboard. Drowned valleys indent the coast and the hills have their feet in the water. There have been minor oscillations since, so that the clays of Belfast and the beaches of County Antrim lie raised above water level, but the stage was now set, in the essentials of hills and valleys, clouds and rains, for man and his animals to come and do their work. Basalt and granite, sand and clay, sandstone and slate, limestone and chalk and flint—all in various ways have helped man to make the cultural landscape of fields, fences, roads and buildings.

Ireland as man first saw it, then, was an island of many mountain masses, varied in rock structure and shape, clothed with wild forests and separated by many inlets of the sea, by slow-flowing rivers and wide stretches of shallow lakes and plains. Its highest summits rise near the sea: Slieve Donard in Mourne, Errigal, the Twelve Pins, Carrantuohill, the Comeraghs, and Lugnaquilla in the Wicklows, all of them between 2,400 and 3,400 feet high, are all in sight of the sea. Yet this land of mountains has an extensive plain, averaging only 250 feet in height, set in its heart, while marginal plains are half-submerged in the north-east (Lough Neagh) in the north-west (Lough Erne) and the west (Loughs Mask and

Fig. 3. Drumlin landscape of the N.W., with quartzite cone behind.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Corrib). Difficulties of communication are such that the 133
Central Plain has never been central in anything more than
name: Athlone has become a national centre only with radio [207]
communication, and the Shannon remains a boundary river
throughout its course. The important part of the plain is the 133
fifty mile stretch which faces the Irish Sea between the bays of 175
Dundalk and Dublin, the heart of the old Kingdom of Meath
and of the English Pale, and the setting of Ireland's capital
sites from the sacred tombs of New Grange through the age
of Celtic Tara to the historic city of Dublin. One factor in the
location of this metropolitan area is suggested by Fig. 8; it [132]
is favoured by the relatively low rainfall of less than 30 ins.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER III.

THE LANDSCAPE.

THE BEGINNINGS.

133 137 311 The landscape of a long inhabited country like Ireland is in large measure the work of man, whose farms, fields and fences are the result of many centuries of sustained effort. One might think of the wild thorn hedges and the piled stone "ditches" as mere sample remnants of woods and stones that once covered the face of the land. The extent of the change brought about may be judged by the fact that from being a land clothed with forest from the sea-coasts high up into the mountains, Ireland to-day is the least wooded country in Europe. In this work of forest destruction man has been assisted by his domestic animals and by changes of climate which have resulted in the accumulation of bogland. It is one of the paradoxes of Ireland that while the main lines of her mountains took shape in the remote ages of geological time, wide areas are dominated by the peat deposits which have been formed in the few thousand years that have elapsed since the ice age. The contrast of age is accentuated by those of colour and relief, for far across the level brown bogs rise blue in the distance some of the oldest mountains in Europe. In the middle distance, completing the picture, will be the green hills of the eskers.

137 The heart of the island, the Irish midlands, is a veritable Black Country, black with peat, not with the grime of coal-fields. Here in the boglands there are twelve contiguous

[p.23]
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10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The inquiry was conducted on almost exactly the same lines as
121 that of last year; the slight differences of method being either due to changes made as the result of former experience or to local causes; but every effort was made to ensure as great uniformity as possible, a matter of much importance as facilitating comparison of results.

In this report the same headings as used in the previous one, and arranged in the same order, have been adhered to as closely as possible, so as to allow of easy reference.

II.—Physiography of the Islands.

The two islands under consideration, together with several small
131 uninhabited islets, form the parish of Inishbofin; they are situated
101 outside the mouth of Killary Bay, and are distant some thirty-six miles from Westport, and about sixteen miles from Clifden, Co. Galway, the nearest town of any size. The post town is Cleggan, a small village on a point of the mainland, about seven miles from Inishbofin. Of the two main islands Inishbofin (locally called Bofin or Boffin) is much the larger, as out of the total area of the parish of 3151 acres, it contains 2312.

Its greatest length is about four miles, and it varies in breadth
133 from half a mile to over two miles. The nature of its coast line is greatly varied; at some places, as at Knock-quarter or East End, being low and sandy; at others, as on the north side, and at Dun More on the western extremity, being rocky, at times rising into high and jagged cliffs worn into coves and natural bridges; while, again, in other places it is high bluff overhanging a shingly foreshore. The
[504] harbour is very safe and well sheltered, and looks S.W. The coast of Shark, which lies about a mile S.W. of Inishbofin, is much more rocky, and may be said to be precipitous nearly all round, and much broken into by caves and deep fissures a few yards wide, with precipitous overhanging walls. It is difficult to land on this island if the weather be at all rough, and the inhabitants are often stormbound for weeks at a time. The difficulty and danger of landing is not so great
[653] as it used to be since the building of a new pier by the Government as a relief work in 1892. Mr. Michael Lavelle, writing about the natives of this island, says:—"It is very hard for these people to live; they may be two months before they can go to Boffin to get some commands, and they live during that time on potatoes and 'white wine.'"

The principal rock of both islands is gneiss, but belts of steatite are also found.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The surface of the land presents much variety, a large part consisting either of moor and bog or of rocky hills, some of which reach a height of nearly 300 feet, but much of the soil is said to be of good quality. There are several small loughs in Inishbofin, lying in the hollows between the hills, and numerous wells and small rills which are kept well supplied by the frequent heavy rains. 133 [134]

The following description of the islands is given in the memoir of Sheet 83 of the Geological Survey.

With reference to Inishshark the authors say:—

"It is bleak and wild, rocky towards the west and north-west, while there is an envelope of drift on the eastern slopes. At the north-west shore are high and almost perpendicular cliffs.

"As the drift contains numerous angular and semi-angular blocks and fragments of local rocks, it is probably of moraine origin. . . . . On Inishshark there are igneous rocks. . . . identical with those which have been called melapyre by Mr. David Forbes. These occur in wide dykes, weathering much more rapidly than the associated schists, and form deep narrow ravines that have the local name of Boher-na-collig (*Anglice*, the road of the old hag or witch). . . . *Inishbofin* has a general E. and W. bearing; on the average it is four miles long and two wide, but the north and south coasts are indented with bays; and at Lough Bofin, from sea to sea, is not half a mile.

"The island consists of five hills, namely, Westquarter, its greatest height being 292 feet; it forms a promontory nearly separate from the rest of the island, being connected by the previously-mentioned low isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated; Middlequarter, highest peak, 288 feet; Cloonamore, the N.E. hill having a height of 157 feet; Knock, the hill east of the harbour, 271 feet; and, Inishlyon, 143 feet, which is a tidal island, and separated from the other hills during high water. Most of the island is rocky, having a thin peat coating, except the valley of Boffin Harbour, where there is a considerable thickness of drift which gives the island a verdant aspect when viewed from the southward."

The climate is mild even in winter, frost being rare, and snow not lying if it should chance to fall; but these advantages are counterbalanced by the frequent fierce storms which often cut off all communication with the mainland for days, and by the heavy and long-continued rains. 132

The warmth and damp of the climate are probably due, to some extent, to the impinging of part of the Gulf Stream upon the islands, as several of the glass globes set afloat to test the current have been

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities,
101 one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the
631 little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

●133 Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the
[504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills. Off this part of the coast lie Iniskea and Duvillaun, having a sandy or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low. 133 [502]

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones. [134]

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe. [504] 132

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very few and only grow in sheltered localities. 137

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the mail road from Ballina runs.[1] 491

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few 125

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks* that *have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward. [133]

[p.204(B)]

000 railway was closed in 1925. But the
206 Inishbofin postmistress operates a radio-telephone.

THE LANDSCAPE

Three types of landscape are char-
●133 acteristic: first, craggy hills of no great altitude, with a maximum of 292 feet in Westquarter, 288 feet in Middlequarter, and 271 feet in Knock; second, the farmed rolling countryside ranging from sea level to about 150 feet, and having some natural drainage; and, third, an area of sand dunes and blown
[311] sand in the extreme east, once settled and farmed but now used only for rough pasture. The larger of the two lakes, Lough Bofin, is held back by a magnificent shingle ridge in a fine bay, partially protected from strong winds and high seas but open to northerly gales. The coast is rocky almost every. where and there are some splendid cliffs
[504] with outlying stacks: the best harbor is the long inlet on the south side. No recent geological work has been done

[p.204(C)]

●133 here, but the original memoir[7] states that the rocks are mainly schists and gneisses, dipping at sharp angles of 30°–89°, much broken by faults and seared by sills and dikes. In short, it is a characteristic pre-Cambrian area.

314 Peat several feet deep is found in the basins between the numerous small hills. Many people cut "scraws," that is, the surface layers of the rough pasture. This time-hallowed practice, noted with disapproval by the Congested Districts Board inspectors 60 years ago,[8] increases year by year the area of exposed rock; it may well be that throughout the peat-consuming areas of Ireland—and of Scotland also—this has happened.[9] As one observer put it, "every

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[7] Memoirs of the Geological Survey, Explanatory Memoir . . . sheets 73 and 74 (in part), 83 and 84, Dublin 1876, pp. 39–42.

[8] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891 (and many more such comments in other reports).

[9] F. Fraser Darling: West Highland Survey, London, 1955, pp. 43, 67, 272–276. See especially an interesting survey of what (in Scotland) is called "skinned land" in Lewis by M. Macdonald.

[Text continues on p. 205(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

178 poverty, and it is the wish of nearly everyone to have a house
[361] where he cannot be overlooked. What is surprising in the light of these physical changes is the extent to which old customs and habits of mind survive to this day. As the late R. A. S. Macalister wrote in his last book, perhaps not entirely without malice: 'The importance of Ireland is that, thanks to the 'time-lag', it has rendered to Anthropology the unique, inestimable, indispensable service of carrying a primitive European *Precivilization* down into late historic times, and there holding it up for our observation and instruction.'[1]

178 Finally we should notice how the physical diversity of the country conspired with its remoteness to permit the survival
133 through the centuries of indigenous peoples and customs. 'Mountainy men', in the picturesque Irish phrase, keep their foothold in every corner of the land, for mountain refuges lie all around the coast. Even the broad central lowland is diversified by several isolated ranges, still more by extensive bogs where movement has always been difficult. Before forest clearance and drainage were effected, woods, lakes and bogs were widespread, and the English made every effort to destroy the forest remnants because they sheltered the native 'wood-kernes'. So it had been in Norman England; where the land became difficult, through mountain or forest, or where water filled large spaces, the pikesman or bowman could hold his own against the man on horseback, and a democratic flavour was in the air.

[1]R. A. S. Macalister, *The Archaeology of Ireland* (1949), x.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 [824] now stretches from coast to coast. So much of the scene is fashioned by man that it requires an effort of the imagination as well as the findings of scientific research to picture the landscape as it was before his coming. Palaeo-botanists, from their studies of plant-remains and pollen-grains preserved in the peats (Chapter XIV), are slowly reconstructing the post-glacial succession of forests as arctic willow, birch, hazel, pine, alder and oak spread in turn over the face of the land. The dwarf vegetation of the early post-glacial period, with its scattered birchwoods, was too thin to form peat, but with the warmer climate of the Boreal phase (beginning about 7000 B.C.) pine and hazel, followed by oak and elm, spread across the country, and both fen-peat and wood-peat began to form in the undrained hollows of the lowlands. The growth of forest and peats was accelerated as the warm seas of the succeeding Atlantic period flooded the coasts at a time of rising sea-level, between 5000 and 2500 B.C. During this phase the alder flourished and the high humidity brought the rapid growth of sphagnum moss on the bogs.

It was during the following sub-Boreal period (2500–500 B.C.) that the Irish forests reached their greatest development, covering even the exposed seaward slopes of the western mountains where today not a single tree can be found growing. During this period, among the thinning forests of rocky hill-slopes, man made his first clearings for cultivation and turned the mountain winds to profit in drying and harvesting his crops. 133 Thus the distribution of mountain masses gives a clue to the nuclear regions of Irish civilization, though it should be noticed that there are parts of the Central Lowland where thin dry gravel or limestone soils gave a more kindly foothold. As compared with the broad upland masses of Great Britain, the mountains of Ireland are broken into many fragments which lie scattered around the coasts. They fall, however, into four major divisions which are broadly distinguished by age and structure: those of the north (Ulster) the west (Connacht) the south-west (Munster) and the south-east (Leinster) (Fig. 2).

Geologically the northern mountains are of immense antiquity, and rocks younger than the coal-measures, apart from the ubiquitous glacial deposits, are everywhere rare except in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIG. 2. The Provinces of Ireland.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133 the extreme north-east, where granites and lavas of Tertiary age are outliers of the Scoto-Icelandic igneous province. In Co. Antrim the basaltic lavas have covered and preserved with their armour-plating both red Triassic sandstone and white Cretaceous limestone (chalk) to give sea cliffs of strangely contrasted colours facing the North Channel. The western mountains are also of great age: the monotony of their bog-strewn schists is relieved only by lines of great quartzite peaks which break into the ocean at Croaghaun and Slievemore in Achill Island. In the south-west the parallel folds of Old Red Sandstone finger out to the Atlantic between Dingle Head and Mizen Head, and here again the highest summits are all in sight of the sea. The granite core of the Wicklow Mountains dominates the south-east in the most massive and continuous high ground in the country, and touches the sea on the outskirts of Dublin. Similarly in the north-east Slieve Donard, the highest summit of the Mourne Mountains, raises its great dome to 2,796 ft. only 1½ miles from the Irish Sea.

Only on the east coast, between the Wicklow Chain and the
174 Carlingford Mountains, is the highland rim broken wide open
133 in a 50-mile gateway giving access to the interior. Floored by well-drained glacial soils and favoured by a low rainfall of less than thirty inches in the year, this strip of coast has been for 1,000 years Ireland's metropolitan region. In fact, long before Dublin was founded by the Vikings, Tara claimed to be the capital of all Ireland, and not far away the island's most spectacular prehistoric monuments—the corbelled chamber tombs of the Boyne Valley—take us back to the early Bronze Age. The dark age Middle Kingdom of Meath, based on Tara and the Boyne Valley, looks backward to the glories of the Bronze Age and forward to the English Pale which was the first conquest and the final refuge of the Anglo-Norman planters. Its landscape and character are distinctive to this day. What the Middle Kingdom and the Pale both lacked was a natural frontier to the west comparable to the Border Hills of Scotland or to the upland edge of the Welsh Marches.

The other four kingdoms, which have survived as the four
174 provinces, broadly correspond to the four areas—north, west, south-west and south-east—which have upland massifs as their

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 from it. The Gaelic conquest of the Irish Midlands was not completed until the sixth century A.D., and down to the Anglo-Norman invasions the distinction between free and tributary tribes remained.[1] The counties bordering the middle Shannon—Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and the western parts of Westmeath and Offaly—are probably as full of survivals as any in Ireland. This is the land of the loy and the steeveen (Chapter X) and the last home of many an ancient custom. The lowland [133] of which it is the centre is floored with limestone levelled off at about 200 ft. but diversified by occasional low hills, by intricate solution lakes and by glacial eskers and drifts among which lie countless small lakes and bogs (Fig. 3). It is hard to realize [489] the isolation from which this area suffered before the introduction of improved wheeled vehicles and the coming of the canal and the railway.[2]

311 Let us now look at the cultural landscape which the hand of man has fitted to the physical frame of the island. Although man has been in this country for only a fraction of the time he has occupied South England and the continent, his mark is everywhere. Wander where you will through the length and breadth of the island, and through the dozens of lesser isles around its shores, and you will never fail to see traces of human activity, past or present, even in the most empty and inaccessible spots. Apart from the more or less datable remains of church and rath, castle and cairn, the land is covered with the marks of man's toil. The history of rural Ireland could be read out of doors, had we the skill, from the scrawlings made by men in the field boundaries of successive periods. In them the unlettered countryman wrote his runes on the land. The student of historical geography has been greatly assisted in the task of interpreting this palimpsest by the new tool of air-photography which, given suitable conditions, will pick out all man-made marks on the face of the earth.

311 178 The sturdy field walls and hedged banks which give the countryside its intimate character are by no means as immutable

[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), 204.

[2] Improvements in public transport were initiated by the Italian, Bianconi, who, profiting from the cavalry horses thrown on the market after the Napoleonic wars, began his famous fleet of 'cars' in Tipperary in 1815.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

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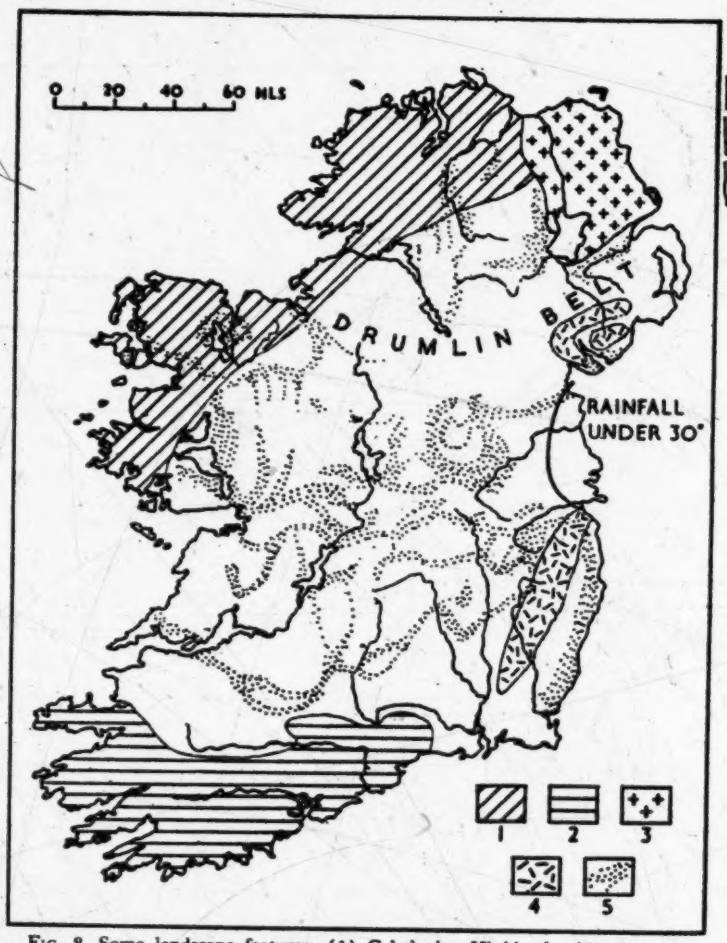

FIG. 3. Some landscape features. (1) Caledonian Highlands, (2) Armorican ridge and valley, (3) North-eastern basalts, (4) Eastern granites, (5) Glacial sands and gravels (eskers) (after J. K. Charlesworth). Drumlins are little hills composed of glacial drift. See Pl. 5, 1.

as they appear. The pattern they make has changed with the centuries in response to new needs and new tools. At present we are in a period of fairly rapid change, for the tractor calls for larger and more regular fields than those made by the spade

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Down

PLATE 5

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1. Flax in stook in drumlin country, Co. Down. Flax-dam on right.

2. Spreading flax from the dam, Co. Down.

[facing p. 96]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Donegal

PLATE 7

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Winnowing oats with a skin wight, Co. Donegal.

[facing p. 112]

HARVEST

246 412 The Irish prefer the long-handled scythe. The sned, about five-and-a-half feet long, has the lower handgrip offset, and a pointed iron spike is sometimes driven into the end of the sned to anchor it safely when honing (Fig. 53). A test of a well-

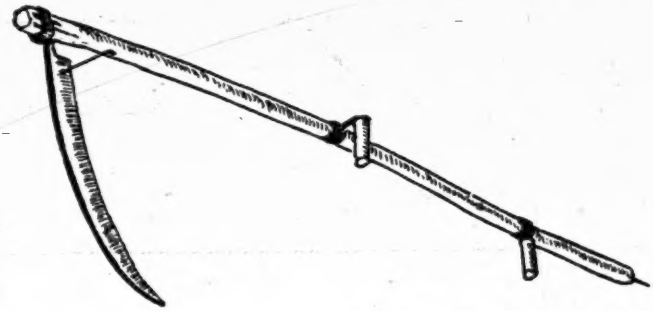

FIG. 53. Long-handled scythe, Donegal.

sharpened scythe is that it should 'cut wool moving downstream', and there was a special charm used in sharpening. The sanded scytheboard (strickle) has now given way to the artifi-
[133] cial stone, though hones of natural stone, including the fossilized wood of Lough Neagh, are used locally. A smith-made scythe-blade is highly prized and long after its legitimate life has ended lengths of it will be utilized for choppers and turnip knives. For full efficiency one must be measured for the fitting and hanging of a scythe. The lower handle should be at arm's length from the bottom of the sned, the upper one distant from the top by the length from elbow to finger-tips. The two handles should also be a cubit apart. The angle of the blade is determined by swinging the left leg and adjusting the blade until its point comes within a nicely determined distance of it when the sned is held upright against the right leg. The scythe cradle, for gathering the swathe as it is cut, is rarely met with
[184] in Ulster, save for makeshift devices such as a bit of sacking fitted against the 'grass-nail' which joins sned and blade in the angle where they meet. In the south and south-east of the country, where the scythe is an old introduction, quite elaborate cradles both of wood and of finely-wrought iron are to be seen.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 11

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Kelp gatherers near Fair Head, Co. Antrim.

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Kelp-burning, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 160]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

would have been undertaken so long as supplies of timber were available, though Petty observed that 'the cutting and carriage of turf was easier than that of wood.'[1] We may think of turf as supplementing and then coming to replace wood fuel, though in fact some wood is still very desirable to supplement the slow-burning turf, especially the quick-burning gorse and bog-fir which are the most readily available sources in treeless areas. 314 372

It is calculated that at least one fifth of the country is coated with bog, but a small proportion of this could be classed as reclaimed bog. It occurs not only in all the mountain areas but also, and more conspicuously, in the ill-drained hollows of the lowlands where glacial deposits had blocked the natural flow of waters or human occupation had brought about environmental changes. It is estimated that in recent years over 5 million tons of dried domestic fuel have been cut annually, representing a weight as cut of some 40 million tons. At this rate the supply is reckoned to last for 500 years, but this makes no allowance for the increasing exploitation of peat for the thermal generation of electricity and for the extraction of by-products. There is, however, a slow accretion of peat in many areas, though this consists mostly of sphagnum peat and the good-quality fen and forest peats of the deeper bogs are not being replaced. In fact these deeper layers tend to remain untapped either because the water cannot be drained away, or because layers of tree-stumps defy the attacks of both spade and mechanical digger. 314 [133] [375]

The main causative factor in bog-formation is waterlogged soil, which checks the decomposition of vegetable remains. It therefore depends to a considerable extent on climate and on the balance between precipitation and evaporation. It is generally held that past phases of bog-growth can be correlated with periods of climatic deterioration, and horizons which are believed to mark the changed conditions can be traced in most of the deep bogs. In Scandinavia the most important of such 'recurrence horizons' has been dated by pollen-analysts and archaeologists to about 400 B.C.: the stormy sub-Atlantic climate whose beginning is thus chronicled is believed to have improved somewhat early in the Christian era, but to have suffered two further periods of worsening about A.D. 400 and 137 314

[1]Sir W. Petty, op. cit., 82.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

103 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a
173 "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

173 Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of
776 mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff
●133 of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones
[172] that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all
776 Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

XIX. *Rocks, Caves, and Stones.*

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Rock markings.—The strange marks left in the flat crags by the weathering of softer portions and of fossils have caused numerous legends. The dish-like hollows in the crags below the hermitage of St. Colman MacDuach, at the great "Cliff of the Eagle," in Kinallia, the name Bohernameesh (*bothar na mias, i.e.* road of the dishes), and marks like the footprints of men and animals all seem to have been seized on by the saint's biographers.[1] Colman, brother of King Guaire "the hospitable," of Hy Fiachrach Aidhne (the district round Gort), early in the seventh century retired to fast and pray in the wilderness. After a most austere observance of Lent, a companion monk yearned for meat, and Colman pitied him and prayed. The king's Easter feast therefore flew to the hermitage, pursued by the whole Court. Terrified by the angry warriors Colman again prayed, and their feet and the hoofs of their horses stuck fast in the rocks. The legend is still told in a form identical with that in the Life.[2] The servant is said to have died from the feast, and his grave is shown beside the Boher.[3]

Where Burren and Inchiquin meet, on the Glasgeivnagh Hill,

[1] Cf. *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* (ed. W. Stokes, Rolls Ser.), p. 405.

[2] Colgan, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ.*

[3] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100 (Ms. Royal Irish Academy).

[P. 253]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Cahercommaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of Lon the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of Lon's seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like débris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown Luno" of (Macpherson's) Ossian.[4]

133 ● 773 823

At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbanaheanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In this bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.[5]

823 773

On Scattery Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara[6] floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint.

776 823

[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

[5] From Messrs. Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtdarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

[P. 254]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

1

The Island and Its Past

Prehistoric Period (9000 B.C. to 500 A.D.)

• 133 FORMED SINCE THE RETREAT over 12,000 years ago of the Weichsel glacier, Inis Beag consists of a block of limestone, Carboniferous in age, the geological axis of which is aligned northwest to southeast. The block has a gentle southwest dip, and its massive grey limestone strata are separated by narrow bands of water-bearing shales. There are two physical subdivisions in the island. On the northeast side, differential erosion has formed a series of terraces
133 separated by small cliffs a dozen or so feet in height. The greater share of good
134 arable land is found in this subdivision, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and ice. These soils have been deepened artificially by the islanders through adding sand, seaweed, and compost. On the southwest side of Inis Beag is a more even surface, composed largely of pavement covered here and there by indigenous and manufactured soils, sloping from the 212-feet-high terrace crest almost as the dip of the strata to the Atlantic coast. The bare limestone surfaces are intersected in all directions by deep crevices, and in places the rocks form large slabs or are so fissured as to present a series of
133 vertical ridges. Found in the joints are most of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs
[134]—of the island. The rocky appearance of the "back of the island" (see Fig. 1), as the people call this second subdivision, is accentuated by numerous granite and sandstone erratics dropped by the retreating glacier.

172 As yet no evidence of the Paleolithic has come to light in Ireland. The Mesolithic is dated from 6500 to 3000 B.C.; thus early man may have entered Ireland hard on the heels of the disappearing ice, as he did in other parts of Europe, crossing from the Continent on land bridges which then existed where the English Channel and Irish Sea now flow. A Neolithic period lasting only 1000 years existed in Ireland, and its artifacts at particular sites show a merging with earlier Mesolithic and later Copper-Bronze Age forms. Inis Beag contains a profusion of Copper-Bronze Age remnants, created before the coming of the Celts

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 1. The back of the island from the lighthouse

with an Iron Age culture about 350 B.C.; but only in 1961 were earlier Neolithic, or possibly Mesolithic, implements discovered. When my wife and I arrived in the island for a seven week visit during the summer of 1962, we were presented with three slate axe heads which had been unearthed by road workers the previous December. It is possible that they are Mesolithic, for the industry never has been dated accurately. 172 [114]

The principal Copper-Bronze Age monuments of Inis Beag are Megalithic tombs and burial mounds, and possibly kitchen middens and semi-subterranean stone dwellings, called *clochán*. Small gallery graves incorporated into lately built stone walls are common, but it appears that they never have been examined by prehistorians, for there is no record of them in the literature. Archeologists seldom have visited the back of the island where the prehistoric and medieval populations, contrary to present day opinion, may have centered. None of the Inis Beag *clochán* have been dated, but it is known that they were lived in by clerics and ascetics during the Middle Ages, and were still used as living quarters in a nearby island early last century. It is as difficult to ascertain the age of burial mounds and middens in Ireland as it is of stone houses, because they too were formed over several historical periods. Burial mounds of earth and stone, termed respectively tumuli and cairns by archeologists, first were erected during the Copper-Bronze Age and continued to be built into the early modern period (although not for funerary purposes). There are numerous mounds in Inis Beag, but in many instances it is hard to distinguish on sight cairns from *clochán* in their ruinous, overgrown condition. The islanders regard both types of structures as burial sites. Middens can be dated from the Mesolithic to the end of the medieval era. Most of the island middens are associated with dwelling places from the Middle Ages, but those located near the mouths of caves in the limestone cliffs of the terraces [814]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

174
778 on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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648
721 At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

174
175
712 The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[702] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
• 133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the
[361] lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

133 361 311

Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island
form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are
situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the
rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are
Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common
land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the
monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common
land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the com-
munity. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 275
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve
the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small
enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop
are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes
purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [443]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an
aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

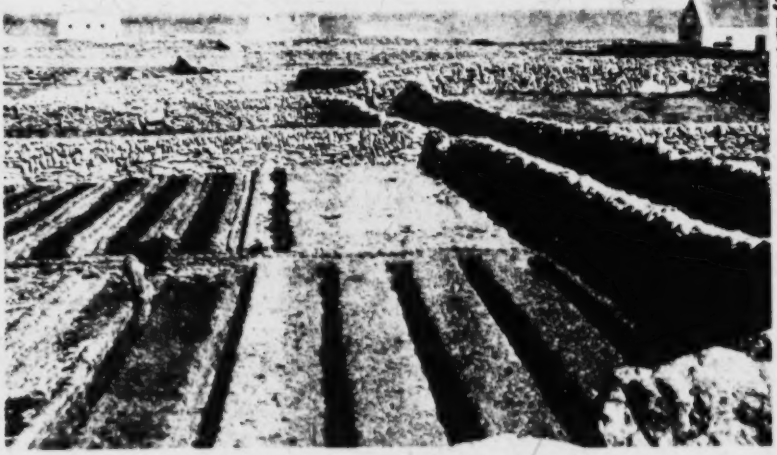

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a 246
task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot 221
only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted.

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a 246
"reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The [293]
farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most [461]
strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to [343]
transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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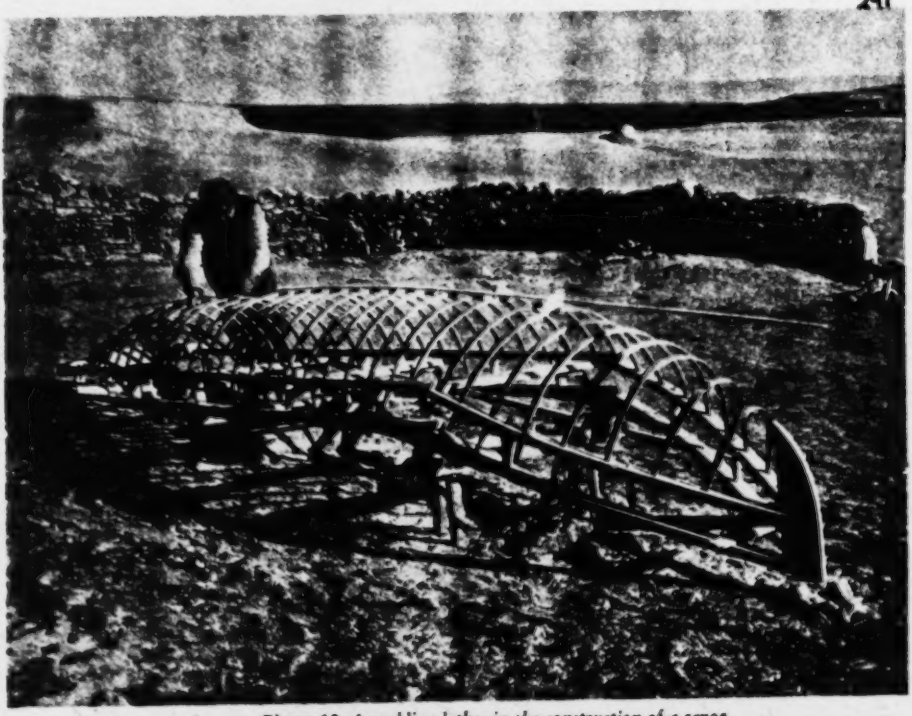

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

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folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A [184]
curach takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds [434]
for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of 501
holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen 789
seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the [178]
cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter [177]
hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens [187]
known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time
of St. Patrick, it is claimed which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea;
if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is
postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause post-
ponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on
the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is 000

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

[p.50]

3

The Village and the Family

Village Differences

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103 LOW VILLAGE RECEIVES ITS NAME from its position on the lowest terrace of Inis Beag (see Fig. 4). It borders the ocean and strand, while High Village to the east is located in a wide expanse south of the common land formed by a concavity in the upper terraces. On the western of the two promontories high above the beach, separated from Low and Terrace by rift valleys, is Castle Village. Below it are the cemetery enclosing the church of the patron saint and the new school, and above it are the castle, the ruined monastery, the Napoleonic watch tower, and what remains of the old school next to the tower. The Ordnance Survey [138] [823] Maps place the highest elevation of Inis Beag in the vicinity of the tower, but the folk claim that the most elevated portion of the crest is above High. Terrace Village, on the promontory to the east, presents a breath-taking view of the lake (see Fig. 7), the sound, and towering mountains and cliffs along the mainland coast. Low merges with High, but Castle and Terrace, because they are located on high terraces and bounded by rift valleys, are isolated units. Terrace is aligned north and south, but the other three settlements are aligned roughly east and west. The southernmost house of Terrace and the westernmost one of Low are approximately 1500 yards apart, and the intervening distance can be walked comfortably in less than 12 minutes.

Below are the number of inhabited houses and the population of each village:

361
162

	Houses	*Population*
Low Village	24	119
High Village	16	59
Castle Village	17	99
Terrace Village	14	73

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

778
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172
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Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

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which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The surface of the land presents much variety, a large part consisting either of moor and bog or of rocky hills, some of which reach a height of nearly 300 feet, but much of the soil is said to be of good quality. There are several small loughs in Inishbofin, lying in the hollows between the hills, and numerous wells and small rills which are kept well supplied by the frequent heavy rains. 133 [134]

The following description of the islands is given in the memoir of Sheet 83 of the Geological Survey.

With reference to Inishshark the authors say:—

"It is bleak and wild, rocky towards the west and north-west, while there is an envelope of drift on the eastern slopes. At the north-west shore are high and almost perpendicular cliffs.

"As the drift contains numerous angular and semi-angular blocks and fragments of local rocks, it is probably of moraine origin. . . . . On Inishshark there are igneous rocks. . . . identical with those which have been called melapyre by Mr. David Forbes. These occur in wide dykes, weathering much more rapidly than the associated schists, and form deep narrow ravines that have the local name of Boher-na-collig (*Anglice*, the road of the old hag or witch). . . . *Inishbofin* has a general E. and W. bearing; on the average it is four miles long and two wide, but the north and south coasts are indented with bays; and at Lough Bofin, from sea to sea, is not half a mile.

"The island consists of five hills, namely, Westquarter, its greatest height being 292 feet; it forms a promontory nearly separate from the rest of the island, being connected by the previously-mentioned low isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated; Middlequarter, highest peak, 288 feet; Cloonamore, the N.E. hill having a height of 157 feet; Knock, the hill east of the harbour, 271 feet; and, Inishlyon, 143 feet, which is a tidal island, and separated from the other hills during high water. Most of the island is rocky, having a thin peat coating, except the valley of Boffin Harbour, where there is a considerable thickness of drift which gives the island a verdant aspect when viewed from the southward."

The climate is mild even in winter, frost being rare, and snow not lying if it should chance to fall; but these advantages are counterbalanced by the frequent fierce storms which often cut off all communication with the mainland for days, and by the heavy and long-continued rains. 132

The warmth and damp of the climate are probably due, to some extent, to the impinging of part of the Gulf Stream upon the islands, as several of the glass globes set afloat to test the current have been

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills. Off this part of the coast lie Iniskea and Duvillaun, having a sandy or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low. 133 [502]

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones. [134]

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe. [504] 132

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very few and only grow in sheltered localities. 137

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the mail road from Ballina runs.[1] 491

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few 125

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks* that *have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward. [133]

1

The Island and Its Past

Prehistoric Period (9000 B.C. to 500 A.D.)

133 FORMED SINCE THE RETREAT over 12,000 years ago of the Weichsel glacier, Inis Beag consists of a block of limestone, Carboniferous in age, the geological axis of which is aligned northwest to southeast. The block has a gentle southwest dip, and its massive grey limestone strata are separated by narrow bands of water-bearing shales. There are two physical subdivisions in the island. On the northeast side, differential erosion has formed a series of terraces
133 separated by small cliffs a dozen or so feet in height. The greater share of good
134 arable land is found in this subdivision, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and ice. These soils have been deepened artificially by the islanders through adding sand, seaweed, and compost. On the southwest side of Inis Beag is a more even surface, composed largely of pavement covered here and there by indigenous and manufactured soils, sloping from the 212-feet-high terrace crest almost as the dip of the strata to the Atlantic coast. The bare limestone surfaces are intersected in all directions by deep crevices, and in places the rocks form large slabs or are so fissured as to present a series of
133 vertical ridges. Found in the joints are most of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs
[134] —of the island. The rocky appearance of the "back of the island" (see Fig. 1), as the people call this second subdivision, is accentuated by numerous granite and sandstone erratics dropped by the retreating glacier.

172 As yet no evidence of the Paleolithic has come to light in Ireland. The Mesolithic is dated from 6500 to 3000 B.C.; thus early man may have entered Ireland hard on the heels of the disappearing ice, as he did in other parts of Europe, crossing from the Continent on land bridges which then existed where the English Channel and Irish Sea now flow. A Neolithic period lasting only 1000 years existed in Ireland, and its artifacts at particular sites show a merging with earlier Mesolithic and later Copper-Bronze Age forms. Inis Beag contains a profusion of Copper-Bronze Age remnants, created before the coming of the Celts

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Pboillin* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions
there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side,
where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new
soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle
dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

13: Evans ER6 Rural Irish ER6

135, 317, 372

[For information on peat deposits and their exploitation as a source of fuel, see category 314.]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 100.
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.

Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

132 washed up on them; at least four of these are now in Inishbofin, and large quantities of drift of various kinds are thrown up on the shores from time to time.

The botany and zoology of the islands is outside of the scope of the 137 present Paper, but a few words of general description may help to make the picture of the place more complete.

Here, as elsewhere, on our western coast, there is a tradition that the islands were at one time well wooded; and this is corroborated by the occasional discovery of tree-trunks in the bogs. At the present day, though under the influence of the warm, moist climate, other vegetation flourishes, trees of any sort cannot be got to grow, and all attempts to rear them have hitherto been failures, as the strong winds quickly destroyed them. Even in the most sheltered spots bushes will hardly grow, and there are not a dozen of five feet in height to be found in the islands.

Large numbers of sea-birds nest on the rocky islets round the ● 136 coasts; pigeons in large numbers inhabit the caves of Inishshark, and, until within a few years ago, eagles used regularly to nest on a high pinnacle of rock, known as the Boughal, in the channel between the islands. Rabbits and rats are both very plentiful; but hares, bats, weasels, and frogs are not found on either island.

Around the coast, porpoises, sea-otters, and seals (which latter [821] are looked upon as forerunners of stormy weather when they appear) are often seen, and the "sun-fish" (*Selache maxima*, the great basking shark) appears usually about the end of March; it leaves nearly always before the end of June, and was until a few years ago regularly fished for.

III.—Anthropography.

1. *Methods.*—These do not require any very extended notice, being 125 practically the same as those employed last year, and described in the report on the Aran investigation. A few changes were made, consisting mainly in the substitution of measurements and instruments shown by experience to be needed, for some which had proved unnecessary, and the use of the new observation form provisionally adopted by the Irish Sub-Committee for the Ethnographic Survey of the British Association. This form, though not perfect, proved to be of much value for field work as, owing to its arrangement, observations can be made with much greater rapidity than is possible by the old system; and the chance of omitting any important point is almost entirely avoided. The economy of time alone is a point of much im-

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

IX. *Supernatural Animals.*

776 There is a rich fauna of supernatural animals in the county, even snakes being represented in it. There can be little doubt that the highly imaginative early Irish personified the more terrifying powers of nature, such as the sea, the storm, and the thunder. The roaring, writhing waves in a sea creek or river swirl may have suggested some great creature, (too great to be natural), wallowing under the waters, and so given rise to the endless *péist* names and legends, in which a distinction is never drawn between the spectral and the natural.

[136] *Péists.*—Ireland, although free from serpents at all times known to science, was yet much dominated by them mentally. Probably no lake of any importance in Clare was untenanted by a serpent, a wonderful animal, or a city. A *péist* could, however, be chained or slain by a hero or saint, and the majority of the *péists* were believed to have been eliminated by such warriors in the same way as the bear and, later, the wolf were cleared away by ordinary mortals. *Péist* only meant beast, and seems to mean no more in many place-names not belonging to lakes or river pools. Cappanapeasta near Inchicronan need not imply a monster, but Poulnapeasta we may always venture to translate as "water dragon's lair." There are many examples in tradition of the "dweller in the waters," "the serpent-god of this hallowed stream." In the *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* we find a *péist* with "ears as large as the gate of a Cathair" (stone fort) and "tusks as big as a tree."[1] The saga of *Da Derga's Hostel* brings into one the Norse, Irish, and Hebrew beliefs of the *péist*, Midgard Snake, and Leviathan by its tale of the "Leuidan, that surrounds the globe and strikes with its tail to overturn the world."[2] The *Feis tighe chonain* and *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* are full of allusions, and contain a dialogue with a Grecian *péist*, and tell how Finn slew spectres, arrachs, and aimids (women bugbears), and "banished from the raths (earth forts) each *péist*." Even in a nearly contemporary history of a hero of the time of Canute, a

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 115. [2] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi., p. 54.

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER III.

THE LANDSCAPE.

THE BEGINNINGS.

133 The landscape of a long inhabited country like Ireland is
137 in large measure the work of man, whose farms, fields and
311 fences are the result of many centuries of sustained effort. One might think of the wild thorn hedges and the piled stone "ditches" as mere sample remnants of woods and stones that once covered the face of the land. The extent of the change brought about may be judged by the fact that from being a land clothed with forest from the sea-coasts high up into the mountains, Ireland to-day is the least wooded country in Europe. In this work of forest destruction man has been assisted by his domestic animals and by changes of climate which have resulted in the accumulation of bogland. It is one of the paradoxes of Ireland that while the main lines of her mountains took shape in the remote ages of geological time, wide areas are dominated by the peat deposits which have been formed in the few thousand years that have elapsed since the ice age. The contrast of age is accentuated by those of colour and relief, for far across the level brown bogs rise blue in the distance some of the oldest mountains in Europe. In the middle distance, completing the picture, will be the green hills of the eskers.

137 The heart of the island, the Irish midlands, is a veritable Black Country, black with peat, not with the grime of coal-fields. Here in the boglands there are twelve contiguous

[p.23]
[p.22 is blank]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 counties, none of which has any settlement of 5,000 people. Irish peat, or turf as it is properly called, covers an area of some 3 million acres and has an average depth, in the central plain, of 19 feet. Shallower deposits are very extensive in the mountains, particularly along the western seaboard from Kerry round to Inishowen. Apart from their economic [372] importance—it is estimated that they form the sole fuel supply of two-thirds of the farming population (see Chapter 15)—the peats are of great interest to scientists, and during recent years an intensive investigation, under Danish leadership, has solved many problems concerning their origin and growth.

While bogs accumulate most readily in imperfectly drained lowlands, the heavy precipitation of the mountains is the main factor in their wide distribution. The south coast, with its excellent drainage, and the dry east coast, with the exception of the Wicklows, are largely peat-free. So are many areas of limestone which, with its cracks and joints, swallows the heaviest rains. And the eskers, though they may pond the drainage and thus cause water-logging and bog formation, are themselves free of peat. Regions favourable for human settlement are thus closely related to the distribution of peat, but the control is not merely negative since access to supplies of turf is often an important consideration.

For the scientist the value of turf-bogs lies in the fact that they preserve not only wood, twigs and the seeds and fruits of plants but even the minute grains of pollen, so that as they accumulate they write their own record, a record which the pollen-analyst can read. Moreover the phases of vegetation and climate thus chronicled can be correlated with the story of Irishmen who, careless or forgetful, have left behind at different levels objects of stone, metal or wood which the archæologist can use as clues in his detective work. In this way a sequence of climate, vegetation and human industries has been worked out, and we now have an outline of the whole story from the time when the first layers of lake clay were laid down in hollows of the surface while the ice still lingered in the mountain corries: they contain remains of arctic willow and the bones of the giant deer.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Antrim

Plate I

137

TREE ROOTS IN BOG FACE

ARMOY, CO. ANTRIM

[facing p. 24]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 Birch and hazel are the next vegetation recorded, then the pine spread rapidly to give way to oak and alder as the climate grew warmer. The oldest layers of turf in the deep bogs grew round the stumps of this oak forest, following the sinking of the land and the consequent bad drainage accompanying a stormy period which lasted from about 5000 to 2500 years B.C. To this climatic phase the term "Atlantic" is applied. There followed a warm dry period, called the sub-Boreal, which came to an end about the middle of the last millennium B.C.; it was during this phase that the Irish forests reached their greatest development, when oak, birch, alder, hazel and pine spread right to the western coasts and high up the mountain sides. It is estimated that the rainfall in the west was only half its present quantity and that the westerly winds were weak. When the storms returned the climate became cooler and even wetter than it is to-day, and during this "sub-Atlantic" period the western forests were submerged in extensive bogs to give the landscape its familiar barren appearance. Everywhere this dark age of storms, from about 500 B.C. to 100 B.C., was a time of maximum peat formation, layer upon layer of spongy vegetation, cotton grass, bog rush and sphagnum moss, accumulating in the hollows of the plain and on the mountain slopes. Thereafter there have been fluctuations when pine forests spread repeatedly on dried bog surfaces only to be swamped in succeeding wet phases, and in the end the pines disappeared from Ireland, leaving their resinous bog timber as a gift from the past to the treeless present. Not only timber but all organic matter such as bone, leather and even textiles and human bodies are wonderfully preserved by bog acid. Pl. 1.

172 Archæology tells us that man[1] first crossed the narrow seas from Scotland when the land stood higher before the "Atlantic" submergence. Hemmed in by the forest he clung to the beaches under the flint-bearing chalk cliffs of

[1] "Mesolithic" man. The term (Middle Stone Age) embraces the period from *c.* 7000-2500 B.C. falling between the Palæolithic (Old Stone) and the Neolithic (New Stone) Ages. Man's first appearance in Ireland is probably to be dated about 5000 B.C.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER V.

WOODLANDS, FIELDS, FENCES AND GATES.

We have seen that the Irish landscape, in ancient times very well wooded, is now one of the most treeless in Europe, and we have shown how changes of climate as well as the depredations of livestock made great inroads into the forests. In later centuries many woodlands were destroyed by the English for strategic reasons, while the demands of shipbuilders, of charcoal burners, tanners and stave-makers reduced the oakwoods to insignificant proportions. Poor scrub growth was in many areas all that was left. "An oak, an ash, or an elm," wrote Arthur Young of Mitchelstown in Co. Cork, "is almost as great a rarity as an olive, an orange or a mulberry." Ash remains the commonest tree, especially on the limestone of the Central Plain, despite the fondness of cattle for its leaves. We know that its valuable wood was used from the Bronze Age for handles and spear-shafts, and in the Pale it was insisted that "every husbandman having a plough shall set by the year twelve ashes in the ditches and closes of his farm." In the words of Evelyn: "It serves the soldier, the carpenter, the wheelwright, cartwright, cooper, turner and thatcher . . . from the pike, spear and bow to the plough." 137

Acorns and hazel nuts were often used as a source of food before the coming of the potato, and almost every tree had its particular uses in a society living on its own resources and [262]

[p. 39]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 bound by innumerable ties to a countryside richer and fuller
[262] than that of to-day. Thus birch, rowan, hazel, thorn, sally and holly all had their special purposes, and yew was in great demand for croziers and shrines. So we might go on down to the humblest lichen (for crottle dye) and the seaweed (Chapter 16). Bog timber, oak and "fir," had many uses—for furniture and implements, for roofs, gates, slide-cars and boat-timber as well as for fir ropes and lighting "splits." Superstitious customs are associated with several of the native trees, especially the rowan, the ash, hazel and whitethorn (Chap. 18).

Sycamore and beech, neither of them native to Ireland, have been extensively planted in recent centuries and grow so well that many have assumed them to be indigenous. The beech loves the well-drained moraines, while the sycamore, one of the few trees which will stand up to the full force of
[351] the salt-laden winds, is planted in coastal districts for the shelter it provides: behind its dense summer foliage many a
313 low cabin lies hidden. Its white easily-worked timber is
139 sought by the wood-turner. Formerly the beetling engines of the linen country made a demand for beech and sycamore—the former for the beaters and the latter for the great beam. On steep hillsides which man has been unable to utilize one may still see patches of what may be regarded as wild scrub, a tangle of hazel, ash, black and white thorn, or birch, rowan and alder; but apart from the high-walled demesnes where giant trees are allowed to grow old and rot, the Irish landscape
137 is singularly bare of timber. Visitors from England will notice the poor development of hedgerow trees except for the ash of Co. Meath. This must be attributed largely to the fact that hedge trees have to grow in raised banks or "ditches," as they are called. Hedges and trees are very rarely planted on the level, for the ditch-tradition is older than the hedge. To quote Young once more: "I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks." But there is some compensation, in autumn, in the wealth of blackberries which they produce (Fig. 10).

137 Travellers of the early 19th century constantly refer to
311 landscapes without a single tree or shrub or any trace of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

hedgerows. It is hard to realize that the close-set pattern of hedged or walled fields which now distinguishes so much of the countryside is for the most part only a century or so old. In many cases it can be shown that the fields and fences were laid out within the last hundred years, following the break-up of the rundale village system and the re-distribution of the land (Chapter 6). In the eastern lowlands, where English influence has long been at work, the field pattern and hedgerows are no doubt much older, but in general the small cultivated patches were separated by mere balks or waste strips, varying from one to ten feet in width. Stones from the fields, hand-picked or removed with crow-bar and slipe (Chapter 12) were dumped on the balks or, more frequently, piled into "cairns" in the middle of the fields. Such stone-heaps are often found accompanying prehistoric field-systems, for example in Jutland.

137 311

[177]

Fig. 10.

Stone walls or high earthen fences surrounded the house-clusters and enclosed each group of open fields, separating them from the common grazing land which lay outside and stretched away to the "head-ditch" on the mountain. As the rundale holdings gave way to individual farms the land was re-divided, the old ditches planted with whitethorn and new ditches, also set with thorn, were constructed—a process which was being actively carried out during the first half of the 19th century. One result of the scattering of the farms was the appearance of the long strip or "ladder farms," the cross hedges of the strip resembling the rungs of a ladder. 351 361 311

The oldest fences, then, are the protective banks around farms which occupy old village sites—a survival no doubt of the rings around the ancient raths—and the march-dykes or divisions between townlands. The varied vegetation on these older banks betrays them just as it does the pre-enclosure hedgerows in England: their massive tumbled ruins are overgrown with whins, blackthorn, sally, ash and bramble. There are, however, still older forgotten divisions on the hillsides dating from various prehistoric periods; some have 172 311 351

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

172 been discovered under many feet of peat. Several types can
311 be recognized, for example those with upright stones at
351 intervals, which are sometimes left as "standing stones" after the intervening walls have been removed. Old field fences at Cush, Co. Limerick, claimed to be contemporary with raths of the late Bronze Age and "essentially similar to those built by an Irish farmer of to-day" have been described by Professor O'Riordain. This appears to be a striking example of continuity, for the fences are closely followed by existing field-boundaries. Since they lie some 800 ft. above sea-level they do not invalidate the general picture I shall draw in the following chapter, but it is clear that much more work on the lines followed at Cush is required.

351 Hedges of whins (that is, gorse or furze) about the
314 farmstead are much prized not only for the shelter they afford
●137 to stock—they are dense and do not drip—but because they form an admirable clothes line on washing day and a ready
[231] source of kindling wood. Formerly the young whin shoots were crushed and fed to horses. The heavy wooden maul and stone block used in the process may still be seen occasionally. It would require years of enquiry and observation to describe and classify the types of sod ("scraw") earth and stone fences which now parcel out the Irish soil into its patchwork of small fields. One may easily recognize the sod ditches of the rich grazing lands of Meath, with their tall thorn hedges and ash trees giving shelter to the cattle, the well-built dry-stone walls of the granite mountain slopes which vainly seek to stop the black-faced sheep, and the loose lace-like walls precariously constructed out of rough boulders in the morainic hills.

351 In the wind-swept mountains and along the coasts the
311 ditches are hedgeless, carrying only a tangle of heather or whins
137 and an occasional stunted tree, but throughout the lowlands the prevailing type of fence is a stone-faced bank of sods, in the side of which quick-thorn is planted (Fig. 10). These are cut back ruthlessly at longish intervals and are never pleached in the English way, so that the hedge is full of gaps. Occasion-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ally one comes across very wide ditches of this type with a 351
double hedge and paths or even cart-tracks in between, for 311
example in Co. Limerick. In Rathlin Island the only hedge 137
material that seems to escape the ravages of goats is the balsam poplar. Another plant of New World origin, born in Scotland of South American parents, is the Fuchsia, which runs riot along the coasts. Basket willows and wild "black sallies" for creels are sometimes grown—the latter has the advantage that it is not cropped by cattle.

The scarcity of good oak timber in a country once famed 351
for its oaks—notice the frequency of the element "derry" 417
in townland names—goes far to explain the prevalence of iron field-gates, which are hung on stout pillars of built stone. The newcomer to Ireland cannot fail to be struck by the massive gateposts along the roadsides and about the farm premises. In many districts they are whitewashed annually, and since they often assume proportions out of all relation to their function they are unnaturally conspicuous in a landscape bare of heavy timber. In parts of Ulster, for instance, they are such a characteristic feature of the countryside that it is difficult to imagine it without their cheering twinned greeting. Yet most of them must have been erected within the last century or so: writers of Irish travels before that time frequently comment on the absence of gates, for which in fact there was very limited need so long as the rundale system of farming persisted (Chapter 6). In the small village-communities of the west where the old scheme still prevails the gaps in the fences that surround the open field are closed with jagged root-stumps dragged from the bogs, or with a few thorn bushes. Sampson, writing of Co. Derry in 1814, states that gates were almost unknown except near towns, and that a common substitute was a hay-rope strung with thorns—an interesting rustic forerunner of the hated barbed wire.

Gate pillars and stiles

Fig. 11.

It might appear from the association of built piers with landlords' residences in Donegal that settlers introduced them to Ireland, but I am far from convinced that this is the

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

132 washed up on them; at least four of these are now in Inishbofin, and large quantities of drift of various kinds are thrown up on the shores from time to time.

The botany and zoology of the islands is outside of the scope of the ● 137 present Paper, but a few words of general description may help to make the picture of the place more complete.

Here, as elsewhere, on our western coast, there is a tradition that the islands were at one time well wooded; and this is corroborated by the occasional discovery of tree-trunks in the bogs. At the present day, though under the influence of the warm, moist climate, other vegetation flourishes, trees of any sort cannot be got to grow, and all attempts to rear them have hitherto been failures, as the strong winds quickly destroyed them. Even in the most sheltered spots bushes will hardly grow, and there are not a dozen of five feet in height to be found in the islands.

Large numbers of sea-birds nest on the rocky islets round the 136 coasts; pigeons in large numbers inhabit the caves of Inishshark, and, until within a few years ago, eagles used regularly to nest on a high pinnacle of rock, known as the Boughal, in the channel between the islands. Rabbits and rats are both very plentiful; but hares, bats, weasels, and frogs are not found on either island.

Around the coast, porpoises, sea-otters, and seals (which latter [821] are looked upon as forerunners of stormy weather when they appear) are often seen, and the "sun-fish" (*Selache maxima*, the great basking shark) appears usually about the end of March; it leaves nearly always before the end of June, and was until a few years ago regularly fished for.

III.—Anthropography.

1. *Methods.*—These do not require any very extended notice, being 125 practically the same as those employed last year, and described in the report on the Aran investigation. A few changes were made, consisting mainly in the substitution of measurements and instruments shown by experience to be needed, for some which had proved unnecessary, and the use of the new observation form provisionally adopted by the Irish Sub-Committee for the Ethnographic Survey of the British Association. This form, though not perfect, proved to be of much value for field work as, owing to its arrangement, observations can be made with much greater rapidity than is possible by the old system; and the chance of omitting any important point is almost entirely avoided. The economy of time alone is a point of much im-

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies 133
Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-
station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern [502]
boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills. Off this part of the coast lie Iniskea and Duvillaun, having a sandy or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low.

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal [134] of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones.

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. [504] The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the 132 rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe.

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very 137 ● few and only grow in sheltered localities.

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the 491 mail road from Ballina runs.[1]

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great 125 extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north [133] rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks* that *have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward.

167 landscape combined with financial help
657 of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is sep-
[131] arated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring
311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs
132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[5] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

505 Isolation is a major problem, but on four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost
[261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport problems

[137] [5] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

II

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

THE tools and traits we are describing in this book have persisted through the centuries because of their close adaptation to the Irish environment, physical and social. They have gathered around them, in that environment, associations of usage and ritual without which they are meaningless, so that transplanted into another land they would be museum-pieces, as indeed they are rapidly becoming in many parts of Ireland. To understand them, therefore, we should consider them not in isolation but as part and parcel of a particular environment. To a large extent a culture owes its specific peculiarities to its geographical setting, and that is why our first chapters will be concerned with the face of the land and with the fields, farms and houses in which generations of Irish countryfolk have lived and worked.

It was from a forest environment that the cultural landscape slowly emerged. The destruction of the native forests was virtually complete by the seventeenth century. Thereafter constructional timber had to be imported, and the rural population turned to the fossil oak and pine of the bogs. In the eighteenth century landlords planted their lowland demesnes with exotic species of trees, but only in our own day, under government schemes of reafforestation, are the hill lands here and there being planted and abandoned fields being put back into forest. With the passing of the oak forests a wealth of woodcraft and tree lore perished and a wide range of skills declined, of which we get tantalizing glimpses from archaeological discoveries and legendary tales. Instead of the almost unbroken forest cover which once existed a 'closed association' of farms and fenced fields

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 [824] now stretches from coast to coast. So much of the scene is fashioned by man that it requires an effort of the imagination as well as the findings of scientific research to picture the landscape as it was before his coming. Palaeo-botanists, from their studies of plant-remains and pollen-grains preserved in the peats (Chapter XIV), are slowly reconstructing the post-glacial succession of forests as arctic willow, birch, hazel, pine, alder and oak spread in turn over the face of the land. The dwarf vegetation of the early post-glacial period, with its scattered birchwoods, was too thin to form peat, but with the warmer climate of the Boreal phase (beginning about 7000 B.C.) pine and hazel, followed by oak and elm, spread across the country, and both fen-peat and wood-peat began to form in the undrained hollows of the lowlands. The growth of forest and peats was accelerated as the warm seas of the succeeding Atlantic period flooded the coasts at a time of rising sea-level, between 5000 and 2500 B.C. During this phase the alder flourished and the high humidity brought the rapid growth of sphagnum moss on the bogs.

It was during the following sub-Boreal period (2500–500 B.C.) that the Irish forests reached their greatest development, covering even the exposed seaward slopes of the western mountains where today not a single tree can be found growing. During this period, among the thinning forests of rocky hill-slopes, man made his first clearings for cultivation and turned the mountain winds to profit in drying and harvesting his crops. 133 Thus the distribution of mountain masses gives a clue to the nuclear regions of Irish civilization, though it should be noticed that there are parts of the Central Lowland where thin dry gravel or limestone soils gave a more kindly foothold. As compared with the broad upland masses of Great Britain, the mountains of Ireland are broken into many fragments which lie scattered around the coasts. They fall, however, into four major divisions which are broadly distinguished by age and structure: those of the north (Ulster) the west (Connacht) the south-west (Munster) and the south-east (Leinster) (Fig. 2).

Geologically the northern mountains are of immense antiquity, and rocks younger than the coal-measures, apart from the ubiquitous glacial deposits, are everywhere rare except in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

one see a well-kept or neatly trimmed field-hedge and never a staked and pleached hedgerow to compare with those of the English lowlands. The whole art of hedging is poorly developed, and the craft of laying a hedge almost unknown. The thorns are allowed to grow freely—as though they were the true fairy thorns which must never be damaged—and cut back ruthlessly at long intervals, when the many gaps are stuffed with dead thorns. The truth is that it is the bank rather than the hedge which makes the fence, and the thorns do little more than provide some shelter for livestock. But while the earthen banks grow tall hedges they will not support good hedgerow timber. The few starved ashes, sycamores or stunted beeches compare very unfavourably with the great oaks and elms of the English Midlands. Arthur Young brought his English common sense and prejudices to bear on the subject: 'To permit a hedge to grow too long without cutting not only ruins it for a fence but spoils the trees that are planted with it . . . I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks.' And consequently, 'the greatest part of the kingdom presents a naked bleak dreary view for want of wood.'[1] Elsewhere he writes, of Mitchelstown in Co. Cork, 'An oak, an ash, or an elm is almost as great a rarity as an olive, an orange or a mulberry.'[2] 351 [137]

The planting of hedges and hedgerow timber had been advocated by improvers since the sixteenth century. The Ordinances for the Government of Ireland (1534) lay down that 'every husbandman having a plough within the English Pale shall set by the year twelve ashes in the ditches and closes of his farm'. The ditch-bank was evidently already a feature of the farms in the Pale, and it is interesting that there, as generally through the east and north of the country, the ash—providing the most useful timber for general farm use—is the favourite hedgerow tree. But it is in the closes (the farmyards) that one sees most trees today, chief among them the sycamore whose dense foliage gives protection from the winds and from the prying eyes of neighbours. Next to the sycamore in popularity, and similarly providing a thick cover, come the beech and the conifers, and it is noteworthy that none of these species is 351 313

[1]Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 66
[2]ibid, 2, 272.

would have been undertaken so long as supplies of timber were available, though Petty observed that 'the cutting and carriage of turf was easier than that of wood.'[1] We may think of turf as supplementing and then coming to replace wood fuel, though in fact some wood is still very desirable to supplement the slow-burning turf, especially the quick-burning gorse and bog-fir which are the most readily available sources in treeless areas. 314 372

It is calculated that at least one fifth of the country is coated with bog, but a small proportion of this could be classed as reclaimed bog. It occurs not only in all the mountain areas but also, and more conspicuously, in the ill-drained hollows of the lowlands where glacial deposits had blocked the natural flow of waters or human occupation had brought about environmental changes. It is estimated that in recent years over 5 million tons of dried domestic fuel have been cut annually, representing a weight as cut of some 40 million tons. At this rate the supply is reckoned to last for 500 years, but this makes no allowance for the increasing exploitation of peat for the thermal generation of electricity and for the extraction of by-products. There is, however, a slow accretion of peat in many areas, though this consists mostly of sphagnum peat and the good-quality fen and forest peats of the deeper bogs are not being replaced. In fact these deeper layers tend to remain untapped either because the water cannot be drained away, or because layers of tree-stumps defy the attacks of both spade and mechanical digger. 314 [133] [375]

The main causative factor in bog-formation is waterlogged soil, which checks the decomposition of vegetable remains. It therefore depends to a considerable extent on climate and on the balance between precipitation and evaporation. It is generally held that past phases of bog-growth can be correlated with periods of climatic deterioration, and horizons which are believed to mark the changed conditions can be traced in most of the deep bogs. In Scandinavia the most important of such 'recurrence horizons' has been dated by pollen-analysts and archaeologists to about 400 B.C.: the stormy sub-Atlantic climate whose beginning is thus chronicled is believed to have improved somewhat early in the Christian era, but to have suffered two further periods of worsening about A.D. 400 and 137 314

[1]Sir W. Petty, op. cit., 82.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

314 A.D. 1300. Attempts to extend this chronological scheme to cover Ireland have not been successful, and the current view is
● 137 that some at least of the recurrence horizons should be attributed to ecologic changes brought about by human action which led to the redistribution of water and the blocking of drainage. Admittedly the basal Boreal peats of lowland bogs, and the Atlantic peats which succeeded them, must have been formed without any appreciable human interference, for in those periods traces of man are either absent or few and limited in distribution, but from sub-Boreal times onwards, after 2500 B.C., we have to reckon with human societies equipped with tools and domestic animals capable of working far-reaching changes in environmental conditions. The blanket bogs which cover the mountain slopes and in the west spread indiscriminately over hundreds of square miles of upland and lowland alike are admittedly associated with areas of heavy precipitation and high humidity, but the significant fact is that some of them can be shown to have been initiated in sub-Boreal times following extensive clearance of the woodlands which previously grew there. Walking over the upland bogs, I have stepped on to the roofing slab of a great stone monument which once stood seven feet clear of the ground: it had been completely engulfed in peat formed since its erection. Study of the bottom layer of this bog showed that it contained pollen grains of cereal type and of weeds of cultivation such as ribwort plantain.[1] Leaching of soils exposed by shallow cultivation and the formation of iron-pan seem to have followed human occupation of the sandy moraines and residual soils to which early man was attracted by their dryness and by the lightness of their forest cover. The extensive areas affected, despite the presumably small population, may be explained if we suppose that cultivation was temporary and that settlements were moved every few years.

These blanket bogs are rarely more than six or eight feet thick and many stretches have been reduced by turf cutting and erosion to a mere skin with occasional residual hags betraying their former depth. The so-called raised bogs of the lowlands, in contrast, are not easily cut-out: they are often very deep,

[1]G. F. Mitchell, *P.R.I.A.*, 53B (1951), 159.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

averaging some twenty feet, and they have had a far longer life. 137 ●
In their natural condition their surface is slightly convex, and
they may come to stand, perversely, above the level of the 314
surrounding countryside, though they began life in ill-drained hollows where reeds grew to make fen-peat. These lower layers tend to be alkaline in nature and when the upper layers are cut away the bogs may be turned into productive cropland if adequate drainage can be provided. Small areas of this type occur to the south of Lough Neagh, but Ireland has nothing to compare with the English fenlands. Yet the Irish bogs take their place in the agricultural economy as summer grazing grounds, [311] formerly for mixed stock and for cattle in particular, latterly mainly for sheep. In the past, too, considerable use was made of buried timber dug from the bogs,[1] of oak for roofing beams and [313] of pine for kindling and resinous 'splits' to give light. The long 'trying iron' with which buried timber was located is shown in Fig. 66, together with the massive 'fir hatchet' and 'fir rooter'.

To the ecologist the bogs provide a unique field of research into the history of the occupation of the country by plants, animals and man. In the waterlogged depths of the peats everything is preserved, even the tiniest seeds and insects. Centuries of successive summers are chronicled in countless pollens of trees and grasses which the botanist can identify and thereby reconstruct the changes of vegetation from prehistoric times down to the recent past. When man appeared on the scene not only did he leave his pathways and possessions in the bogs, but, as we have seen, he was an agent in their growth. His tools of stone and copper, bronze and iron, evolving in that order, are found lying at levels which can be correlated with the vegetation-history by analysing the pollens that cling to them. Thanks to the labours of Knud Jessen and Frank Mitchell we now have an approximate chronological sequence of landscapes and human cultures in Ireland going back several thousand years.

The pollen grains from the lowest layers of the upland bogs include those of shrubs such as hazel, birch, rowan and thorn, as well as, occasionally, those of cereals and the weeds of cultivation. Evidently the clearings soon became threatened with forest and field weeds, and these companions of the earliest

[1] E. E. Evans, *Irish Heritage*, 142; A. T. Lucas, *Béaloideas*, 23, 71–134.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

●137 farmers, both the flowers of the fields and the shrubs of the
314 forest edge, took on a special significance which they have retained in the peasant mind to the present day. There is powerful magic in the flowers of May, in the hazel twig, the fairy birch, the rowan branch and above all in the flowering hawthorn. This most beautiful of trees first became common in the Neolithic period. In a later chapter we shall consider some of the enduring spiritual aspects of man's association with this environment of his own making. At about this time, too, when the Neolithic economy was both absorbing the older population and being supplemented by metal tools, pollen studies reveal a marked decline of the elm tree which has been explained by the use of its bark and branches as cattle fodder. The oak forests, however, persisted in strength, and were presumably treasured for their supply of pig-fattening mast. Alder also was abundant, occupying soils which were too damp to be cultivated.

The onset of the sub-Atlantic climatic deterioration in the last millennium B.C. seems to have accelerated the peat-forming processes. Both oak and elm decline, but the birch tree spreads widely. In County Antrim, for instance, extensive oak forests growing up to heights of 1,000 feet were overwhelmed in the spreading bogs. The pine had become rare by the end of prehistoric times, though it may have lingered into the historic period on sandy eskers and on the dried surfaces of some of the raised bogs. Despite climatic change and human interference, considerable oak and alder forests survived here and there into the seventeenth century, but these last remnants of the Irish forests were almost all destroyed by the military and economic demands of that troubled century. Among the many consequences was the almost universal exploitation of the peat bogs for fuel. In addition great quantities of turf were consumed by the linen bleachers from the late eighteenth century, and kilns for burning lime and bricks and for drying agricultural produce made considerable demands on the bogs. A minor traditional
[372] use which may be mentioned in passing was for the preparation of charcoal for smith's work. The peat was charred in pits.

For all its toil turf-cutting provides a welcome break from
314 the routine of farmwork, a time when friends and neighbours
786 come together away from the familiar surroundings of fields

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and [182] indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most [521] activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently [576] in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, [127] and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of [137] islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, [815] several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess [207] barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

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133 [197] [361] [417] which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

105 [205] [206] [871] [759] [288] [464] [502] [793] The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less 177 178 cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has 505 had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the [191] tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can dis- [484] cover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

17 [211] The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[101] [121] [2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the basis of geography, partly upon his knowledge of the regional anthropological differences. Convenience also dictated the use of county boundaries in the majority of instances. 128

AGE

The average age of 8809 Irish males is 34.55 ± 0.10 years. In the anthropometric survey of a population it seems desirable to include the males of subadult age (18-20 years) as an offset to those who are presumably senile (60 years and upward). The incomplete growth of the subadults tends to counterbalance the diminished height of the aged. The standard deviation of age for the entire series is 13.95 ± 0.07 years. The county subgroup means of ages range from 29.45 ± 0.29 (Longford, Westmeath) to 38.80 ± 0.51 (Waterford and Wexford). 145-

STATURE

Stature was measured by the standard technique with the Martin anthropometer. Subjects, of course, were required to remove their shoes. 141 171

Table 1 presents the data on stature and figure 1 plots the means of stature by local subgroups in intervals of 1 cm. The mean of stature for the whole of Ireland is 172.02 cm., which, of course, is tall. The actual range of subgroup means is only 4 cm.—from 170.52 cm. (Meath, Louth, County Dublin) to 174.54 cm. (Aran Islands). The variabilities of the nineteen subgroups are for the most part neither significantly higher nor lower than that of the total series. The standard deviation of stature for the total series (6.81 ± 0.03 cm.) is not very high when the age range of the population is taken into consideration. It is somewhat higher than that of any of the eight European ethnic series recorded by Davenport and Love as a result of measurements taken upon troops during demobilization after the World War ('21, p. 113). Standard deviations in these series ranged from 6.06 cm. (Italians) to 6.62 cm. (English). The mean height of 6164 Irish was 171.36 cm. and the standard deviation of stature 6.31 cm. Thus our

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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141 171 sample from all of Ireland is taller and somewhat more variable in stature than the United States army sample. It should be recalled, however, that most of the soldiers were between the ages of 18 and 31 years and that certain stature standards were enforced for the acceptance of recruits. Consequently, the variability of the army sample has probably been reduced

TABLE 1

Stature by county subgroups

	NO.	RANGE	MEAN	S. D.	V.
West Donegal	212	146–193	171.90 ± 0.33	7.17 ± 0.23	4.17 ± 0.14
Mayo	594	143–196	172.17 ± 0.20	7.20 ± 0.14	4.18 ± 0.08
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	725	146–202	172.05 ± 0.17	6.72 ± 0.12	3.91 ± 0.07
West Galway (Connemara)	451	155–196	173.13 ± 0.20	6.36 ± 0.14	3.67 ± 0.08
Aran Islands	136	158–193	174.54 ± 0.41	7.14 ± 0.29	4.09 ± 0.17
Clare	944	146–196	172.14 ± 0.14	6.57 ± 0.10	3.82 ± 0.06
Kerry	519	152–199	173.16 ± 0.20	6.90 ± 0.14	3.98 ± 0.08
Cork	565	152–193	172.71 ± 0.19	6.69 ± 0.13	3.87 ± 0.08
Limerick	339	152–193	171.75 ± 0.25	6.75 ± 0.17	3.93 ± 0.10
East Galway, Roscommon	479	149–196	173.28 ± 0.22	7.11 ± 0.15	4.10 ± 0.09
Longford, Westmeath	717	149–187	171.27 ± 0.16	6.30 ± 0.11	3.68 ± 0.07
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	513	152–193	171.57 ± 0.20	6.75 ± 0.14	3.93 ± 0.08
Tipperary, Kilkenny	623	149–196	171.99 ± 0.19	6.87 ± 0.13	3.99 ± 0.08
Waterford, Wexford	425	149–190	171.24 ± 0.23	6.99 ± 0.16	4.08 ± 0.09
Wicklow, Carlow	273	149–202	170.88 ± 0.28	6.96 ± 0.20	4.14 ± 0.12
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	427	155–193	170.52 ± 0.21	6.45 ± 0.15	3.78 ± 0.09
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	388	155–190	170.91 ± 0.23	6.63 ± 0.16	3.88 ± 0.09
Antrim, Down	167	149–187	171.39 ± 0.38	7.29 ± 0.27	4.25 ± 0.16
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone Londonderry	310	152–190	171.96 ± 0.25	6.57 ± 0.18	3.82 ± 0.10
Total	8807	143–202	172.02 ± 0.05	6.81 ± 0.03	3.96 ± 0.02

by these factors. In a study of native born White criminals of native parentage in the United States the mean of stature was 171.90 cm. and the standard deviation 6.45 ± 0.05 cm. (Hooton, '39, Table V-14). The age range of the American criminals is more closely comparable with that of the Irish population, but, again, the criminals average somewhat younger (30.70 ± 0.12 years) and have a lower age variability

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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(standard deviation 11.40 ± 0.08 years). However, crime is principally a phenomenon of youth and the age variability certainly and the stature variability possibly are affected and reduced thereby. 141 171

[102]

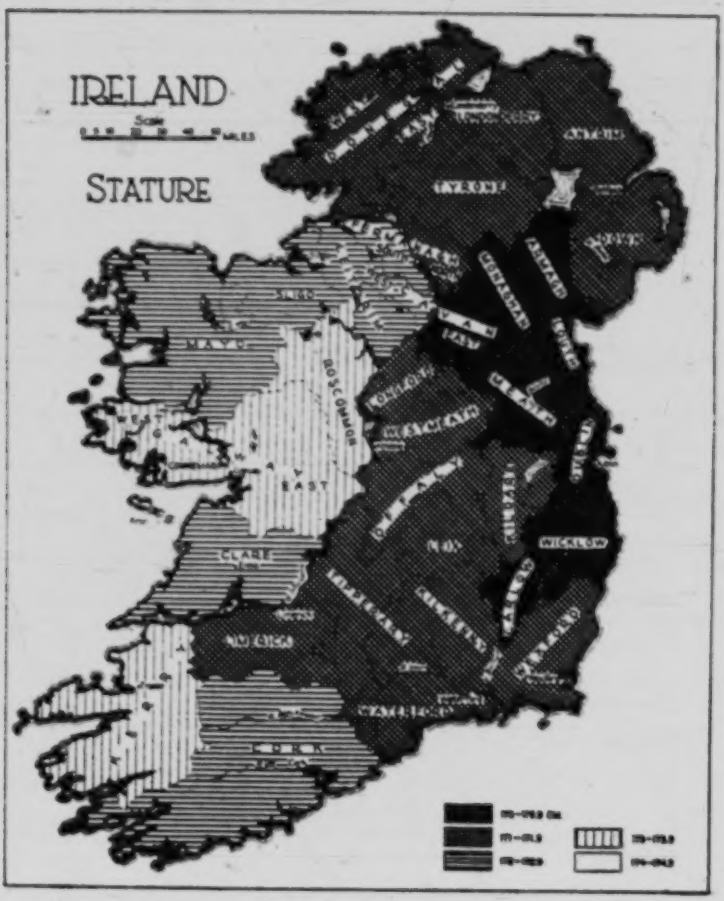

Figure 1

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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141 On the whole it seems probable that statural variation in Ireland is high, even when the factors reducing variability in comparable series are taken into consideration. It is useless to speculate upon the causes of the statural superiority of our series over the Irish soldiers in the American army. The latter may have been derived in disproportionate numbers from some of the areas in Ireland where stature tends to be relatively low. The former may have enjoyed the statural increment which appertains in many civilized countries to the younger generation. Who can say?

The regional variation in the means of stature in Ireland is very striking (fig. 1). The shortest statures (170-170.9 cm.) extend in a solid band of county groups along the central portion of the east coast. They include Carlow, Wicklow, Meath, Dublin, Louth, East Cavan, Monaghan, and Armagh. There are two separate blocks of areas with stature means which are submedium for Irish (171-171.9 cm.). The northern block includes Down, Antrim, North Fermanagh, Tyrone, Londonderry, East and West Donegal. The southern block is approximately triangular, with its apex in the center of the island at Longford, the eastern angle of the base at Wexford and the western at Limerick. The western leg of this triangle is roughly the course of the river Shannon. This central triangle of submedium statures is pinched off from the northern block by a westward protrusion of small stature (170-170.9) in East Cavan which meets an Eastern angle of medium stature (172-172.9) made by Leitrim and West Cavan.

There are three separate areas or islands of medium stature, all in the western half of Ireland. A northern island includes South Fermanagh, West Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo and Mayo. The central island is Clare and the southern Cork. Two blocks of tall stature are separated by the medium height area of County Clare. The northern tall block consists of Roscommon, East Galway and West Galway; the southern is Kerry. Finally in the Bay of Galway and off the west coast of Clare stature attains its maximum in Ireland in the isolated Aran Islands.

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A first glance reveals no striking correlations of these stature areas with temperature, rainfall, vegetation or general topography. A consideration of the significance of these distributions may be deferred until the other data of this paper have been presented. 141

CEPHALIC INDEX

The length-breadth index of the head yields a mesocephalic mean in every Irish subgroup. The mean of the entire Irish series is 78.87 ± 0.02 and the regional range is from 77.79 (Meath, Louth, County Dublin) to 80.04 (Kerry). Thus the spread of subgroup averages is only 2.25 index units. The standard deviation of the total series (3.33 ± 0.02) is low, as are also those of all of the subgroups (table 2).

TABLE 2

Cephalic index by county subgroups

	NO.	RANGE	MEAN	S. D.	V.
West Donegal	212	71–91	79.20 ± 0.14	3.12 ± 0.10	3.94 ± 0.13
Mayo	594	71–91	79.44 ± 0.09	3.42 ± 0.07	4.31 ± 0.08
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	722	68–91	78.75 ± 0.08	3.21 ± 0.06	4.08 ± 0.07
West Galway (Connemara)	451	68–91	78.48 ± 0.10	3.12 ± 0.07	3.98 ± 0.09
Aran Islands	134	68–88	77.85 ± 0.09	3.18 ± 0.13	4.08 ± 0.17
Clare	944	65–91	79.65 ± 0.07	3.39 ± 0.05	4.36 ± 0.07
Kerry	518	68–91	80.04 ± 0.10	3.30 ± 0.07	4.12 ± 0.09
Cork	565	68–94	79.62 ± 0.10	3.42 ± 0.07	4.30 ± 0.09
Limerick	338	71–91	79.38 ± 0.12	3.21 ± 0.08	4.04 ± 0.10
East Galway, Roscommon	477	68–91	78.60 ± 0.10	3.21 ± 0.07	4.08 ± 0.09
Longford, Westmeath	717	65–94	78.00 ± 0.08	3.30 ± 0.06	4.23 ± 0.08
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	313	59–91	78.21 ± 0.10	3.42 ± 0.07	4.37 ± 0.09
Tipperary, Kilkenny	623	68–91	79.02 ± 0.09	3.30 ± 0.06	4.18 ± 0.08
Waterford, Wexford	425	71–91	78.75 ± 0.11	3.27 ± 0.08	4.15 ± 0.10
Wicklow, Carlow	273	68–88	78.30 ± 0.12	3.03 ± 0.09	3.87 ± 0.11
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	427	71–88	77.79 ± 0.10	2.94 ± 0.07	3.78 ± 0.09
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	388	68–88	78.06 ± 0.11	3.12 ± 0.08	4.00 ± 0.10
Antrim, Down	167	65–91	78.93 ± 0.18	3.42 ± 0.13	4.33 ± 0.16
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	310	65–91	78.66 ± 0.12	3.21 ± 0.09	4.08 ± 0.11
Total	8798	59–94	78.87 ± 0.02	3.33 ± 0.02	4.22 ± 0.02

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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141 [102] Nevertheless, the plotting of county group averages at intervals of one-half index units reveals some interesting regional variations (fig. 2). Mean indices below 78 are recorded in two geographical areas. The first of these is a block along the middle of the east coast. This block includes Dublin,

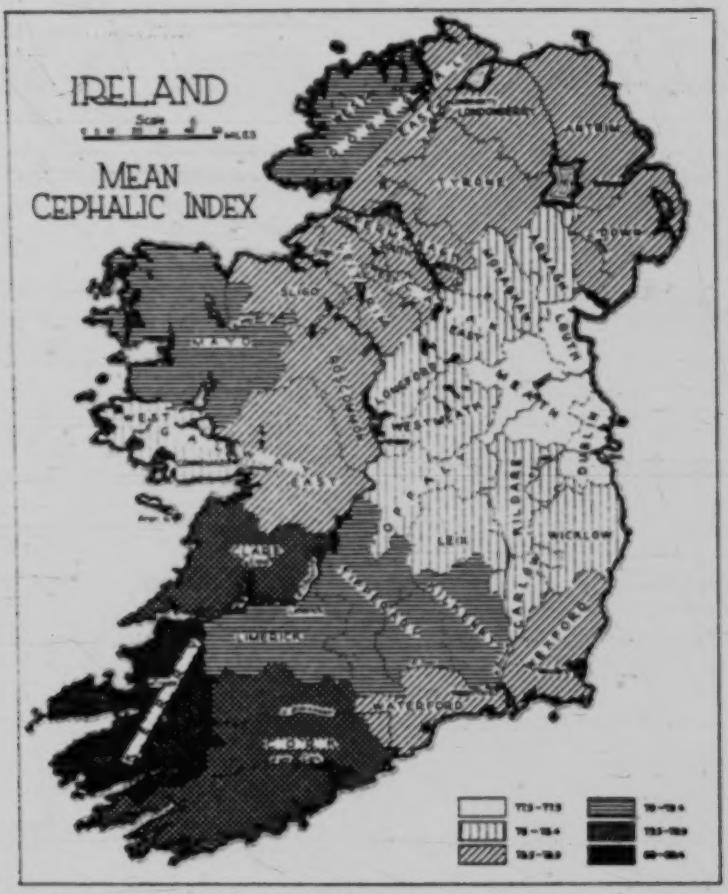

Figure 2

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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Louth, and Meath. The other area of lowest cephalic index is the Aran Islands off the west coast. Bordering the relatively long-headed eastern area are subgroups with slightly higher mean cephalic indices (78-78.4). On the northern fringe we have Armagh, Monaghan, and East Cavan; on the southern, Carlow, Wicklow, Kildare, Leix, and Offaly; on the west, Longford and Westmeath. West Galway (Connemara) occupies a similar marginal position of slightly less accentuated long-headedness north of the comparatively dolichocephalic Aran Islands. 141

A group of counties with mean head forms approaching the value for all of Ireland (78.5-78.9) includes a large northern and central block and a southeastern island which consists of Wexford and Waterford. The great north central block has its broad base in the northeastern counties—Down, Antrim, East Donegal and Londonderry, and extends southwest in a wide band including Tyrone, North and South Fermanagh, West Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, and East Galway.

There are two islands of somewhat broader-headed mesocephals in the northwest—West Donegal and Mayo—with cephalic indices from 79 to 79.4. Correspondingly, in the south central section the three counties of Kilkenny, Tipperary, and Limerick, also belong to this category. Then in the southwest we have Clare on the north and Cork on the south with still higher mesocephaly (79.5-79.9), each bordering upon Kerry, the most broad-headed area in the island.

HAIR COLOR

Hair color in Ireland is predominantly brown. Nine out of ten men have some shade of brown hair (dark brown, brown, red-brown, golden brown, or ash brown). The modal shade, however, is dark brown, both in the total series and in thirteen of nineteen county subgroups. Black hair is found in only 2.73% of the total series, although it rises to 8.02% in West Donegal and sinks below 1% in the Aran Islands, East Galway, Roscommon, Longford and Westmeath. Medium brown or flat brown which constitutes 35.37% of the total series is 142

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ADDENDUM

From this Irish county series, as here discussed, all persons of Protestant religion have been omitted. The number thus excluded is 312 Presbyterians and 488 Church of Ireland, of these the vast majority come from the northern counties—Antrim, Armagh, Fermanagh, Down, Londonderry, Tyrone, Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan. Mr. Dupertuis directed this sorting because he was of the opinion that the Ulster Protestants really represent, in large part, a recent Scotch immigration, and the Church of Ireland English immigrations. In the final report on Ireland these northern Protestants will be included. They could hardly alter the distribution pictures perceptibly, except (possibly) in the counties mentioned.

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124 which the hair of many of the men was cut, which often rendered dis-
[302] tinction of shade very difficult. Owing to the season most of the observations had to be made in the morning when the people were going to their work, or early in the evening when they were returning, or gathered around their cottage doors; in many cases, however, they were followed to the harvest field and measured there.

The taking of photographs did not, as elsewhere, cause the assembly
126 of the knot of spectators which usually affords so good an opportunity
[123] for the collection of eye and hair colours; it had rather the opposite effect, as the people have a strong dislike to having their portraits taken.

In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 241 individuals, on 40 of whom (being about one-fifth of the adult males of the islands) measurements and other observations were taken.

Care was exercised that none of those measured should be entered in the ordinary nigrescence cards, as well as to avoid recording the same individual twice or the noting of persons who were not natives.

(K). *Photography.*—For the reasons already mentioned there could not be as much done in this department as had been hoped; but, in spite of the strong aversion shown by many of the people to having their portraits taken, and the strong winds prevailing during our stay, my brother, J. M. Browne, who accompanied me to do the necessary photography, succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of typical groups, as well as some single portraits in full face and profile, and a series of views illustrative of the modes of life and environment of the people.

2.—Physical Characters.

142 (A). The people, on the whole, much resemble the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Connemara, and their appearance testifies to a mixed origin. The following is believed to be a correct description of their average physical characters:—

Stature and bulk.—The men, as a rule, are stoutly built, and of medium height; very few can fairly be termed tall, and there is a very considerable proportion of men of low stature. The average height is
[141] 1633 mm., or about 5 feet 6½ inches, which falls short of the Irish mean stature as found by Gould, the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association, and others, by about two inches.

142 The women are of a slighter build than the men, and, apparently,
143 more even in height; they also show more strikingly that great simi-

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larity of appearance produced by the constant intermarriage of the same families through several generations. 142 [143]

Limbs.—The hand is often short and broad, and the forearm and upper arm long. In no case was the span of arms (*grande envergue*) observed to be less than the stature, a peculiarity which was observable in nearly a quarter of the persons measured in Aran last year.

Head.—The head is, in many cases, of large size, and is usually well-shaped, with an almost straight or but slightly projecting occiput. It rises to a considerable height above the ears (yielding a mean height index of 69·2), and has a mean cephalic index, when reduced to the cranial standard by the subtraction of two units, of 78·4, or, in other words, it is mesaticephalic; about a quarter of the men measured, however, were brachycephalic, and an eighth slightly dolichocephalic. The eleven crania of both sexes measured at Tempull Colman yielded an average cephalic index of 77·0, thus nearly agreeing with the measurements on the living subject (see p. 333). The forehead is broad and upright, but not very high. Superciliary ridges and glabella very slightly marked, and eyebrows thick, level, and seldom showing much tendency to arch. 142 141

Face.—The face is long and scutiform, narrowing in rapidly in the bigonial region. The cheek-bones are not prominent; the horizontal lines at the "root" of the nose are very deep, and have between them a raised ridge or fold of skin. The eyes have irides of a blue or light bluish-grey, seldom hazel, and are moderately wide apart; being often half-closed they give the impression of being small, and are marked externally by deep horizontal wrinkles. The nose is in many cases rather short, and in profile is usually straight or sinuous, rarely aquiline, and then not to a great degree. The mouth is large and frequently open with lips of medium thickness. The teeth are remarkably short, broad, and even, remaining white, and, apparently, sound to an advanced period of life. The chin is long, but not projecting; the mental process being small, and the jaw is very long with but little curve. The ears are small, outstanding,[1] and somewhat coarsely moulded, and in nearly half the cases observed had the lobule adherent or absent. Several abnormalities were observed, as presence of the Darwinian tubercle, flattening of the upper part of the pinna, with obliteration of the anti-helix, and in one case (No. 5 of those measured) 142

[1] This is probably due to the lateral bulging of the mastoid processes so noticeable in the crania.

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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
1	Boyce, Myles, .	62	Middlequarter	blue	dark-brown	ruddy	Nose sinuous; schoolmaster.
2	Lavelle, Anthony,	35	Knock	light-grey	dark*	ruddy	Nose aquiline.
3	Reilly, John, . .	63	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; is somewhat bald.
4	Malia, John, . .	50	Westquarter	grey	dark	pale	Nose straight; bald on vertex.
5	Joyce, James, .	48	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Lobe of ear attached; large left ear only partially developed.
6	Malia, Michael, .	35	Knock	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight.
7	Walsh, Patrick, .	24	Middlequarter	blue-grey	dark	pale	Sight very keen; nose straight.
8	Halloran, John, .	20	Shark	blue-grey	brown	sallow	Nose straight.
9	Cannon, Michael,	19	Middlequarter	blue	fair	pale	Lobes of ears absent.
10	King, John, . .	40	Cloonamore	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Vision very acute.
11	Powell, Patrick, .	24	Knock	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Vision very keen; nose straight; lobes of ears attached.
12	Cloherty, Festus,	24	Knock	dark-hazel	dark	ruddy	Nose retroussé.
13	Toole, John, . .	21	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Nose aquiline.
14	Scuffle, Patrick, .	(?)	Cloonamore	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; would not give age; lobes of ears attached.
15	Malia, George, .	24	Shark	grey	dark	pale	Lobes of ears attached; vision very keen.
16	Halloran, John, .	25	Westquarter	blue	red	ruddy	Nose sinuous.
17	Kenny, Michael, .	31	Cloonamore	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight.
18	M'Greal, Michl.,	20	Shark	green	dark	sallow	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; a fine-looking specimen of the islanders.
19	Burk, Thomas, .	19	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose retroussé; lobes of ears attached.
20	Joyce, Michael, .	19	Middlequarter	grey	dark-brown	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
21	Prendergast, Wm.	53	Middlequarter	brown	black	ruddy	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; teeth even at meeting.

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Cephalic.		Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Stature.	Forelimb.		
Length.	Breadth.	Length.	Upper Face Length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Bi-ocular Breadth.	Cranial Height.	Nasial.	Alveolar.		Span.	Hand.	Forearm.
206	163	125	62	148	113	54	36	32	130	98	102	1580	—	170	245
196	160	144	76	142	114	64	38	30	137	100	97	1795	—	200	270
191	158	118	70	135	114	54	36	38	127	98	100	1685	—	197	254
193	145	134	72	136	114	54	33	36	131	100	101	1664	—	188	250
194	153	114	72	138	114	54	36	36	128	93	96	1640	1760	185	235
188	156	120	62	140	118	48	36	32	134	94	100	1654	—	191	253
203	152	124	72	132	104	54	36	30	136	99	99	1722	1771	193	250
198	155	128	74	136	115	54	33	29	138	95	96	1723	—	188	283
190	157	121	62	129	102	52	34	33	132	96	93	1715	1837	194	268
196	160	127	70	150	110	52	34	30	132	100	107	1685	1800	197	248
188	150	120	68	140	112	56	40	34	135	95	97	1665	1766	180	252
199	157	129	78	142	113	54	35	37	135	96	95	1830	1913	206	279
195	157	126	62	140	112	55	34	34	131	95	93	1739	1880	193	270
196	162	124	74	138	108	56	37	37	138	99	103	1666	1750	193	250
196	152	120	74	134	108	56	34	32	127	97	97	1660	1725	184	244
197	166	130	78	144	112	56	38	30	132	101	100	1722	1823	201	273
195	160	128	74	142	112	42	34	36	126	102	107	1700	1754	198	256
198	152	123	72	118	108	50	40	32	135	88	96	1768	1885	193	260
194	154	118	70	138	107	52	39	30	136	98	95	1674	1695	188	255
192	160	134	74	134	118	58	37	33	128	97	95	1654	1708	186	234
192	161	124	74	139	104	52	30	33	133	94	88	1585	1638	175	246

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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
22	Lenane, John,	50	Middlequarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Lobes of ears attached.
23	Leonard, John,	30	Middlequarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; teeth meet.
24	Walsh, John,*	30	Middlequarter	brown	black	pale	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears absent; sight keen.
25	Malia, Patrick,	—	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; would not give age; sight good.
26	Cannon, Edward,	54	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
27	Cannon, John,	53	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
28	Lavelle, ——,	60	(?)	dark-hazel	dark	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
29	Cloherty, Patrick	19	Westquarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears absent; vision acute.
30	Lavelle, Thomas,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous.
31	Martin, Thomas,	60	Westquarter	blue	dark	pale	Hair dark, when young; lobes of ears attached; sight very keen.
32	Cloherty, John,	38	Westquarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears attached.
33	Lavelle, Michael,	50	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
34	Moran, Michael,	55	Middlequarter	dark-grey	brown	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
35	Mogan, ——,	23	Westquarter	grey	black	pale	Hair on face brown; nose straight.
36	Halloran, Thomas	53	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; slightly bald.
37	Halloran, Redmond,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Obliterated folds of pinna; slightly bald; head of large size.
38	Lavelle, Patrick,	30	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous; folds of pinna slightly obliterated.
39	Lavelle, John,	17	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Hair curly; lobes of ears attached.
40	Naughten, Michl.	50	Middlequarter	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; says he is of Scotch descent.

* Name indistinct.

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Cephalic.		Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Stature.	Forelimb.		
Length.	Breadth.	Length.	Upper Face Length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Bi-ocular Breadth.	Cranial Height.	Nasal.	Alveolar.		Span.	Hand.	Forearm.
200	159	135	76	146	111	55	40	35	144	101	100	1720	1743	201	250
197	160	135	72	140	108	53	36	36	133	100	99	1712	1789	185	263
190	148	122	70	138	116	56	35	30	128	101	106	1710	1797	190	256
198	150	140	80	139	110	62	38	31	140	98	102	1669	1758	190	250
204	154	126	70	138	106	53	36	35	137	99	98	1619	1767	195	253
202	157	125	76	148	120	58	40	32	131	100	107	1700	1850	199	262
194	150	138	72	139	112	56	38	37	127	95	97	1642	1687	191	246
190	149	125	68	135	102	57	30	29	135	100	100	1623	1690	180	245
202	153	128	76	140	106	58	34	28	130	97	101	1726	1780	195	246
188	149	120	72	130	104	58	31	33	125	85	86	1603	1683	185	244
200	158	132	80	146	110	60	34	35	132	95	95	1662	1703	186	226
208	162	140	80	144	116	60	34	34	137	105	105	1672	1770	202	237
196	160	120	72	134	110	54	38	38	132	94	95	1665	1677	187	252
200	151	130	73	138	108	52	33	33	131	93	97	1707	1850	197	273
196	159	136	80	139	104	64	34	32	133	96	95	1720	1840	194	255
212	174	132	78	148	109	64	38	33	140	98	98	1792	1890	199	270
184	162	122	74	138	108	60	34	32	128	90	90	1669	1725	183	253
192	152	120	70	136	107	50	34	33	134	95	94	1590	1615	182	243
208	170	126	72	152	110	50	42	36	138	95	96	1698	1785	192	242

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No.	Indices.						Proportions to Stature: Height 100.					
	Cephalic.	Height.	Facial.	Bigonial.	Alveolar.	Nasial.	Hand.	Forearm.	Span.	Face.	Upper face.	Nose.
1	79·1	63·1	118·4	90·4	104·1	66·7	10·76	15·51	—	7·01	3·92	2·41
2	81·6	69·9	98·6	79·2	97·0	59·4	11·40	15·04	—	8·02	4·23	3·56
3	82·7	66·5	114·4	96·6	102·0	66·7	11·69	15·07	—	7·00	4·16	3·20
4	75·1	67·9	101·5	85·0	101·0	61·1	11·30	15·02	—	8·11	4·33	3·24
5	78·9	66·0	121·1	100·0	103·2	66·7	11·28	14·33	107·31	6·95	4·39	3·29
6	83·0	71·3	116·7	98·3	106·4	75·0	11·54	15·29	—	7·25	3·74	2·90
7	74·9	67·0	106·5	83·9	100·0	63·7	11·20	14·51	102·84	7·20	4·18	3·13
8	78·3	69·7	106·3	89·8	101·1	61·1	10·91	16·42	—	7·43	4·29	3·13
9	82·6	69·5	106·6	84.3	96·9	65·4	11·31	15·62	107·11	7·05	3·61	3·03
10	81·6	67·3	118·1	86·6	107·0	65·4	11·69	14·18	106·88	7·54	4·15	3·10
11	79·8	71·8	116·7	93·3	102·1	71·4	10·81	15·13	106·06	7·20	4·08	3·36
12	78·9	67·8	110·1	87·6	99·0	64·8	11·25	15·24	104·53	7·04	4·26	2·95
13	80·5	67·2	111·1	88·9	97·9	61·8	11·09	15·53	108·10	7·24	4·45	3·16
14	82·7	70·4	111·3	87·0	104·0	66·1	11·58	15·00	105·04	7·43	4·44	3·36
15	77·6	64·8	111·7	90·0	100·0	60·7	11·08	14·64	103·91	7·22	4·40	3·37
16	84·3	67·0	110·8	86·2	99·0	65·0	11·67	15·79	105·86	7·55	4·53	3·25
17	82·1	64·6	110·9	87·5	104·9	81·0	11·64	15·05	103·17	7·11	4·35	2·47
18	76·8	68·2	95·9	87·8	109·1	80·0	10·92	14·70	106·62	6·96	4·07	2·82
19	79·4	70·1	117·0	90·7	96·9	75·0	11·23	15·29	101·25	7·05	4·18	3·16
20	83·3	66·7	100·0	88·0	97·9	63·8	11·24	14·15	103·50	8·10	4·47	3·50
21	83·9	69·3	112·1	83·9	93·6	57·7	11·04	15·52	103·34	7·82	4·66	3·28
22	79·5	72·0	108·1	82·2	99·0	72·7	11·68	14·53	104·24	7·84	4·42	3·19
23	81·2	67·5	103·7	80·0	99·0	67·9	10·80	15·94	104·50	7·88	4·20	3·09
24	77·9	67·4	113·1	95·1	105·0	62·5	11·69	14·98	105·09	7·13	4·09	3·27
25	75·8	70·7	99·3	78·6	104·1	61·3	11·38	14·98	105·33	8·38	4·79	3·71
26	75·5	67·2	109·5	84·1	99·0	67·9	12·04	15·01	109·14	7·72	4·32	3·27
27	77·7	64·9	118·4	96·0	107·0	69·0	11·71	15·41	108·82	7·35	4·47	3·41
28	77·2	65·5	108·6	87·5	102·1	68·0	11·62	14·98	102·74	7·19	4·38	3·41
29	78·4	71·1	108·0	81·6	100·0	52·6	11·09	15·09	104·12	7·71	4·12	3·51
30	75·7	64·4	109·4	82·8	104·1	58·6	11·23	14·25	103·12	7·41	4·46	3·36
31	79·3	66·5	108·3	86·7	101·2	53·4	11·54	15·22	104·99	7·49	4·48	3·61
32	79·0	66·0	110·6	83·3	100·0	56·7	11·19	13·60	102·46	7·94	4·81	3·61
33	77·9	65·8	102·8	82·8	100·0	56·7	12·08	14·17	105·86	8·37	4·78	3·59
34	81·6	67·3	111·7	91·7	101·1	70·4	11·23	15·13	100·72	7·20	4·32	3·24
35	75·5	65·5	106·2	83·1	104·3	63·5	11·60	16·08	109·01	7·66	4·36	3·06
36	81·1	67·9	102·2	76·5	99·0	53·1	11·28	14·82	106·98	7·91	4·65	3·72
37	82·1	66·0	112·1	82·6	100·0	59·4	11·10	15·56	105·47	7·36	4·35	3·57
38	88·0	69·6	113·1	88·5	100·0	56·7	10·96	15·15	103·35	7·31	4·43	3·59
39	79·2	69·8	113·3	89·16	98·9	68·0	11·44	15·28	101·57	7·54	4·40	3·14
40	83·9	69·3	112·0	83·9	93·6	57·7	11·31	14·25	105·12	7·42	4·24	2·94
Mean.	80·4	69·2	110·1	87·1	101·2	64·9	11·33	15·03	104·95	7·48	4·42	3·30

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141 CEPHALIC INDICES, CORRECTED FOR COMPARISION WITH SKULLS.

No.	Index.	A. Corrected Indices.	B. Actual Indices.
38	86·0		
16	82·3		
21	81·9		
20	81·3		
6	81·0		
3	80·7	10	Brachycephalic.
14	80·7		
9	80·6		
17	80·1		17 Brachycephals.
37	80·1		
40	79·7		
2	79·6		
10	79·6		
34	79·6		
23	79·2		
36	79·1		
13	78·5		
11	77·8		
22	77·5		
19	77·4		
31	77·3		
39	77·2	23	Mesaticephalic.
1	77·1		
32	77·0		
5	76·9		
12	76·9		
29	76·4		
8	76·3		
33	75·9		22 Mesaticephals.
24	75·9		
27	75·7		
15	75·6		
28	75·3		
18	74·8		
25	73·8		
30	73·7		
26	73·5	7	Dolichocephalic.
35	73·5		
4	73·1		
7	72·9		1 Dolichocephal.

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141 (D). *Proportional Measurements.*—The proportional measurements are of some interest, as differing, in some respects, not only from those of the Aran Islanders, but also from the accepted canons, and from the proportions obtained by Quetelet, Gould, and others, in their investigations on several European peoples. The stature is taken as equaling 100.

FACE.

Here, as was observed to be the case last year, the proportion borne by the face to the height is very great, the total face-length being to the stature as 7·48 to 100 (the canon being 6·60).

Nose.—This is not very constant in its relations to the body-height, varying between 2·47 and 3·72, and giving an average of 3·30, nearly exactly that of the French canon. It may be stated that the proportion is less than three in only five instances, and out of the forty measured, one only is below 2·80.

UPPER LIMB.

Span.—This nearly corresponds with the average Irish proportion. In every case it is greater than the stature, but in one instance is very nearly equal to it. The average proportion is 104·95, thus testifying to the length of limb. The extremes were 100·72 and 109·14. The mean span of the Aran series was 101·94, and that of Gould's series of 827 Irish soldiers 104·6.

Hand.—This ranges between 10·76 and 12·08, but as a rule is slightly below the French canon of 11·50, the average being 11·33.

Forearm.—This section of the upper limb is subject to considerable variation. On the whole it is long, but not to so great a degree as in the case of the Aran Islanders, where it was 15·18, while here it is 15·03; this, with the greater proportion of the span to the stature, is probably due to the burlier build of the Bofin men.

(E). *Crania.*—In addition to the observations made on the living subject, the measurements of a series of crania, the first ever put on record from this island,[1] were obtained at St. Colman's Church, in Knock townland. As they could not be removed at the time of my first visit, I was forced to measure them on the spot, and, as it turned out afterwards, it was well that this precaution had been taken, as, on revisiting the place some time after, in the hope of being able to obtain some of them, I found that they had all disappeared, having in the meantime been removed to some place of concealment.

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[1] Since this was written Professor A. C. Haddon has read before the Academy a Paper on some crania obtained by him from Inishbofin: *antea*, p. 311.

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The specimens, about twenty in number, were piled in a heap in a small recess near the east window, and were all in a very bad state of preservation, being much weathered from long exposure, in addition to which they had suffered such extensive mutilations that only eleven, all calvaria, were in a suitable condition to allow of measurement; the others were merely shattered fragments of the cranial bones, presenting no feature of interest except their thinness. 141 764 172

The following description of those examined is extracted from the entries made in my note-book at the time. 141

The specimens examined are very uniform in their characters, which are, in the main, as follows:— 172

Norma verticalis.—The cranial outline is a short but very even oval, sometimes showing an approach to the quadrate in form, as the frontal region is flattened, and the frontal and parietal eminences are well-marked.

Norma lateralis.—The profile rises almost perpendicularly to the culmination of the frontal eminences, as the glabella and superciliary ridges project very slightly, and the frontal sinuses are not large. The upper part of the curve sweeps evenly backwards, and dips down rather suddenly below the lambda, in some cases projecting again below.

Norma facialis.—The forehead is seen to be broad, but not of any great height, and the superior borders of the orbits are nearly level or but slightly curved.

The muscular markings, as the inion superior curved line, and mastoids, are in four cases (Nos. 1, 4, 6, and 11) strong; in all the others they are very slight.

The sutures are rather complex, and by the very considerable amount of obliteration they have undergone, would seem to have belonged to persons of rather advanced age.

Pterion.—In every instance this is of the H type, but in two cases it contains small epactals.

Indices.—The crania are, without exception, mesaticephalic, having a mean cephalic index of 77, with extremes of 75·5 and 79·2. The vertical index can only be obtained in three cases, owing to the extremely shattered state of the specimens. All are tapeino-cephalic, the figures being 70·5, 75·3, and 71·9. The auriculo-vertical height is obtainable only on the same crania as the basi-bregmatic.

Curves.—The longitudinal curves, measurable in five instances, in three of which the frontal arc exceeded the parietal, and, in all, it is greater than the occipital. The parietal arc exceeds the occipital in four cases, and is less than it in one.

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Description of Individual Crania:—

141 (1). Calvarium of an adult male; very much weathered; of fair
172 size. Glabella small, but frontal sinuses fairly large. Forehead high and perpendicular. Inion and superior curved line very lightly marked, but mastoid processes very large, and bulged outwards; digastric grooves deep. Sutures complex and much obliterated.

(2). Female (?), much broken and weathered. Sutures very complex, and obliteration advanced. Markings slight. Forehead perpendicular, and frontal sinuses small.

(3). Probably male, small and very much broken. Markings slight.

(4). Male, extensively mutilated, the whole cranial base being broken away. Forehead high and straight. Markings very strong, the inion being immense. Viewed in norma verticalis the outline is almost quadrangular.

(5). Calvarium undoubtedly female, with very slight markings. Straight forehead, and complex much obliterated sutures. Norma verticalis oval, with broadest part anterior.

(6). Male, with strong markings, mastoids being very large, and projecting laterally. Perpendicular but low forehead. Small frontal sinuses and projecting occiput. Norma verticalis almost quadrate. The meningeal vessels have grooved the bone very deeply.

(7). Probably female, small, with a regular oval outline. Glabella very small, and other markings slight, with the exception of the mastoid processes and frontal sinuses, which are rather large.

(8). Probably male. Shape, when viewed in norma verticalis, a blunt oval, approaching the quadrate. Markings slight, and frontal sinuses small. Occiput projects above, but is flattened off below the superior curved line. Sutures simple and unobliterated. Metopic suture persistent. Condition, very much broken.

(9). Female calvarium, very much shattered, the whole base being broken away. Shape, nearly quadrate. Forehead perpendicular, and glabella of medium size.

(10). Probably female. Specimen is very much weathered, and so shattered that two measurements only can be taken. There is a very peculiar pit, about the size of half a walnut, occupying the spot on which the inion ought to be situated. It is probably due to the pressure of a wen or tumour.

(11). Male (?) calvarium of regular oval form, with perpendicular forehead, and large glabella and superciliary ridges. Condition: this specimen consists only of a much weathered and broken cranial vault.

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NUMBER, SEX, AGE,	1. M. AD.	2. F. (?) AD.	3. M. (?) AD.	4. M. AD.	5. F. AD.	6. M. AD.	7. F. (?) AD.	8. M. (?) AD.	9. F. AD.	10. F. (?) AD.	11. M. (?) AD.
Glabello-occipital length,	193	188	178	192	184	192	178	186	178	178	188
Maximum breadth,	148	146	141	146	142	148	136	143	138	138	142
Basi-bregmatic height,	136	140	w	w	w	w	128	w	w	w	w
Auriculo-bregmatic height,	121	120	w	w	w	w	118	w	w	w	w
Minimum frontal breadth,	90	96	82	94	100	102	90	99	w	w	w
Stephanic breadth,	115	w	w	w	109	w	w	w	w	w	w
Asterionic breadth,	w	113	w	w	111	w	w	w	w	w	w
Vertical transverse arc,	322	320	w	w	w	w	308	w	w	w	w
Frontal longitudinal arc,	w	w	130	125	w	w	w	130	118	w	128
Parietal longitudinal arc,	w	w	115	133	w	w	w	129	123	w	120
Occipital longitudinal arc,	w	w	120	123	w	w	w	109	95	w	117
Total longitudinal arc,	w	w	365	381	w	w	w	368	336	w	365
Foramen magnum length,	36	35	w	w	w	w	31	w	w	w	w
Foramen magnum breadth,	30	32	w	w	w	w	27	w	w	w	w
Horizontal circumference,	540	529	w	540	521	w	w	532	w	w	w
INDICES.											
Cephalic,	76·7	77·2	79·2	76	77·2	77·1	76·4	76·9	77·5	77·5	75·5
Altitudinal,	70·5	75·3	w	w	w	w	71·9	w	w	w	w
Auriculo-vertical,	62·7	63·8	w	w	w	w	66·3	w	w	w	w
Foraminal,	83·3	91·4	w	w	w	w	88·0	w	w	w	w

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126 graphs of occupations by admitting of their being taken when the performers were in motion. It could also be used on occasions when the high winds would not allow the setting up of a tripod stand.

2.—*Physical Characters*:—

(A). The general physical characters of the people are as given 142 below, though some differences exist between the inhabitants of different parts of the district.

The people on the whole are good-looking, especially when young; [145] many of the girls and young women are very handsome, but they appear to age rapidly and early become wrinkled.

Stature and bulk.—The men of this district are as a rule of fair average stature, very stoutly built, and broad shouldered; while there are few who can fairly be termed very tall, yet many reach a good height, and the proportion of small men is by no means large. The [141] average stature of the 62 adult males measured was 1725 mm., or about 5 feet 8 inches. The extremes were 1628 mm. (5 feet 4 inches), and 1820 mm., or about 5 feet 11½ inches.

The women seem to be more even in height than the men.

Limbs.—The hands are usually of medium size, broad and with fingers squarely clubbed at the ends. The forearms (measured from styloid process to the head of radius) are often very long for the stature, and the span is sometimes very great, though in a few cases it is less than the stature, a character also noted in the Aran Islands, though the proportion of cases in which it was observed was much greater there.

Head.—The head is generally well shaped and is often of large size. The forehead is broad and upright (rarely receding), rounded away at the sides, and of fair height; superciliary ridges and glabella of no great size, eye-brows thick and level.

The cranial curve rises to a pretty fair height above the ears [141] (height index 65·8), though not attaining the altitude seen in the people of Aran and the men of Inishbofin, and descends in an even sweep to the occipital protuberance as the occipital region does not usually project.

In the majority of cases, as will be seen from the table of indices, 141 the head is mesaticephalic, the mean index being 77·4 (when two units are deducted to reduce to the cranial standard). Of the 62 persons measured, 10 were brachycephalic, and 11 dolichocephalic. The extremes were 86·2 and 72·3.

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CEPHALIC INDICES, CORRECTED FOR COMPARISON WITH SKULLS.

No.	Index.	A. Corrected Indices.	B. Actual Indices.
41	86.2		
11	85.1		
32	83.4		
15	82.8		
8	82.5		
60	82.5	10	Brachycephalic.
54	82.1		
57	81.5		
53	81.3		
31	80.6		
61	79.7		20 Brachycephals.
7	79.4		
30	79.1		
43	79.1		
51	79.1		
3	78.5		
13	78.4		
19	78.4		
23	78.0		
34	78.0		
2	77.9		
35	77.9		
36	77.9		
47	77.6		
50	77.6		
28	77.4		
1	77.2		
18	77.0		
26	77.0		
62	77.0		
27	76.9	41	Mesaticephalic.
46	76.9		
37	76.8		
16	76.6		
22	76.6		
25	76.5		
24	76.4		
42	76.2		
20	76.1		
44	76.1		39 Mesaticephals.
49	76.0		
52	75.9		
33	75.9		
29	75.8		
39	75.8		
58	75.7		
56	75.5		
48	75.3		
38	75.0		
12	75.0		
55	75.0		
4	74.8		
6	74.5		
59	74.4		
40	74.3		
9	74.0		
17	74.0	11	Dolichocephalic.
10	73.5		
14	73.5		
45	72.7		
21	72.5		3 Dolichocephals.
5	72.3		

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(c.) *Physical Proportions.*—As in foregoing reports, the proportions borne by the main measurements to the stature (taken as 100) have been calculated, and are given in this paper: they differ considerably from those of the people of the districts previously visited. 141

FACE.

The face is not so long in proportion as met with in either of the other localities. It varies between 6·48 and 8·26, with a mean of 7·36: it is over 8 in one instance, and below 7 in nine out of the sixty-two recorded.

Upper Face.—Mean 4·30, as compared with 4·42 for Inishbofin.

Nose.—This is not very constant in its relation to body-height, having a mean of 3·10 and extremes of 2·65 and 3·98. Thus, on the whole, this feature is much shorter in the Erris people than in the Aran Islanders (3·38) or the natives of Inishbofin, in whom the mean exactly equalled the canon (3·30).

SITTING HEIGHT.

This measurement was for the first time taken regularly in field-work in this district. The mean of the series is 51·33, but it varies in individual cases between 49·44 and 55·29.

UPPER LIMB.

Span.—Several cases are recorded in this series in which this measurement falls short of the stature, a character found to be common in the Aran Islands, where it was met with in more than one-fourth of those measured. The proportion in this case is one in fifteen. Of the four cases, three are from North Inishkea and one from the Mullet. The mean occupies a position between that of Aran and that of Inishbofin, being 104·36 as against 101·94 and 104·95.

Hand.—This member is rather short, and is, as a rule, fairly constant in its proportion to stature. It ranges, however, in extreme cases between 10·10 and 12·24, and averages 11·34, being thus the same as the mean of Inishbofin (11·33).

Forearm.—The forearm is long, giving a mean of 15·43, very much greater than is the case either in the Aran series (15·18) or in that of Inishbofin (15·03).

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(p.) *Detailed List of Measurements:—*

No.	Indices.						Proportions to Stature.—Height = 100.						
	Cephalic.	Height.	Facial.	Bigonial.	Alveolar.	Nasial.	Hand.	Forearm.	Span.	Height Sitting.	Face.	Upper Face.	Nose.
1	79·2	64·4	115·6	92·2	98·0	66·7	10·99	14·70	105·92	52·73	7·21	4·06	3·04
2	79·9	63·3	123·3	91·7	95·1	64·2	10·88	14·71	101·76	53·65	7·06	3·88	3·12
3	80·5	66·7	100·0	85·5	97·9	63·3	10·10	15·29	100·06	53·93	7·75	4·38	3·37
4	76·8	63·1	103·0	81·8	97·9	63·0	10·91	14·98	97·41	52·77	7·78	4·48	3·18
5	74·3	62·9	104·5	88·1	102·1	60·0	11·38	15·65	104·15	51·68	7·63	4·44	3·42
6	76·5	61·8	93·9	78·2	101·0	56·7	11·57	15·45	104·78	49·44	8·26	4·38	3·37
7	81·4	64·4	104·6	87·7	100·0	68·0	11·24	14·78	101·71	53·34	7·69	4·43	2·95
8	84·5	66·8	103·7	80·1	92·6	65·4	10·59	15·03	99·94	54·10	7·70	4·30	2·94
9	76·0	63·0	111·7	85·0	100·0	57·1	11·11	14·62	103·10	52·63	7·02	4·21	3·27
10	75·5	65·0	123·6	94·5	102·1	68·8	10·55	15·85	98·23	51·95	6·71	4·15	2·92
11	87·1	69·4	115·0	86·7	97·8	62·1	10·60	14·40	101·29	53·51	7·03	4·21	3·40
12	77·0	65·0	111·1	87·3	100·0	84·3	12·02	14·42	108·77	51·58	7·57	4·03	3·43
13	80·4	65·2	105·6	84·9	95·8	45·5	11·87	15·72	107·23	51·51	7·59	4·88	3·98
14	75·5	64·3	103·9	71·9	101·1	52·6	11·95	15·42	101·14	52·08	7·63	4·67	3·24
15	84·8	67·0	115·6	89·1	98·9	57·6	11·35	15·10	—	52·50	7·26	4·26	3·35
16	78·5	64·8	113·5	88·9	106·0	73·1	11·65	14·99	105·09	54·33	7·38	4·51	3·04
17	76·0	62·5	109·7	89·6	110·3	65·4	11·26	16·86	104·85	51·10	7·74	4·68	3·18
18	79·0	67·5	105·3	83·2	106·2	60·0	11·49	15·63	102·71	52·66	7·41	4·19	3·11
19	80·4	64·9	98·7	79·4	105·3	58·2	11·11	15·76	100·51	51·81	7·97	4·46	3·11
20	78·1	67·3	104·5	82·4	105·3	56·1	11·65	14·84	100·25	50·72	7·20	4·01	2·80
21	74·5	62·5	111·5	94·3	108·3	55·6	11·55	16·72	104·06	53·45	7·08	4·59	3·13
22	78·6	65·3	113·8	86·2	99·0	73·5	11·89	15·79	108·97	52·74	7·58	4·43	2·86
23	80·0	66·5	111·9	87·3	102·1	74·5	11·41	16·55	104·12	53·47	7·53	4·55	3·05
24	78·4	64·8	103·7	91·9	97·9	52·7	11·74	16·95	105·22	56·43	8·00	4·62	3·26
25	78·5	67·0	115·0	95·6	102·1	61·1	11·47	15·09	104·42	50·89	6·48	3·84	3·10
26	79·0	68·2	110·7	91·0	105·4	64·7	11·16	14·72	102·26	53·71	7·24	4·39	3·03
27	78·9	65·8	115·8	93·0	98·9	59·6	11·61	15·79	109·21	54·05	7·00	4·73	3·50
28	79·4	65·5	103·2	86·5	101·1	54·5	11·35	15·70	100·65	51·73	7·41	4·47	3·29

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29	77·8	67·0	111·8	82·7	97·8	56·6	10·88	14·89	101·68	51·65	6·98	4·23	2·91
30	81·1	65·8	115·2	96·8	104·5	58·5	11·71	15·28	104·30	53·48	7·07	3·96	3·00
31	82·6	65·8	103·8	84·8	102·1	57·1	11·42	15·29	103·98	53 90	7·73	4·22	3·34
32	85·4	68·5	122·8	98·2	95·8	62·3	11·82	15·06	104·29	53·48	6·60	4·00	3·07
33	77·9	64·8	107·6	85·6	102·0	53·4	11·94	15·54	108·31	54·43	7·47	4·38	3·25
34	80·0	66·5	128·1	96·5	110·2	69·4	11 69	15·25	109·88	55·29	6·66	3·97	2·86
35	79·9	66·1	110·0	92·5	98·9	61·2	10·59	15·04	102·40	54·48	7·02	4·21	2·87
36	79·9	64·4	104·5	76·7	108·2	66·7	10·86	16·53	106·24	52·20	7·69	4·45	3·12
37	78·8	65·5	115·7	100·0	92·7	61·5	11·26	15·53	111·49	54·14	6·88	4·27	2·96
38	77·0	63·5	106·7	88·0	107·9	71·4	11·11	15·31	105·44	53·85	7·60	4·37	3·17
39	77·8	66·2	113·0	87·8	103·3	60·7	11·77	14·98	108·11	53·21	6·93	4·28	3·15
40	76·3	68·7	113·6	83·3	97·9	66·7	10·64	14·52	102·66	53·91	7·30	4·16	3·16
41	88·2	71·5	118·4	83·2	90·5	61·1	10·13	15·26	105·78	53·58	7·23	4·28	3·12
42	78·2	64·5	120·8	100·0	100·0	67·9	11·16	15·20	99·31	52·20	6·94	4·22	3·06
43	81·1	67·3	120·5	93·4	104·2	68·0	11·23	15·05	103·17	53·64	7·29	4·30	2·93
44	78·1	64·8	112·8	92·8	102·1	72·9	11·71	15·61	102·32	55·18	7·62	4·63	2·93
45	74·7	65·7	110·4	88·0	100·0	61·4	11·30	15·65	104·47	52·76	7·22	4·36	3·27
46	78·9	64·7	113·5	85·7	106·1	72·7	11·85	14·53	105·17	53·52	7·26	4·18	3·20
47	79·6	64·3	111·3	90·3	99·0	61·5	11·35	16·16	108·50	51·99	7·25	4·45	3·09
48	77·3	68·6	115·6	90·2	96·1	60·0	11·41	15·70	106·51	52·74	6·96	4·05	3·14
49	78·0	66·0	118·3	93·6	101·0	66·0	11·05	15·69	105·96	54·42	7·27	4·35	3·04
50	79·6	67·0	117·8	95·4	103·8	66·0	11·07	15·04	104·59	52·85	7·33	3·97	2·80
51	81·1	63·8	115·9	94·1	100·0	75·5	11·66	14·44	105·62	51·89	7·00	4·32	2·90
52	77·9	67·3	109·8	88·7	98·9	62·1	11·59	15·07	104·64	52·75	7·71	4·46	3·34
53	83·3	65·6	104·5	81·8	100·0	66·0	12·24	16·30	106·36	50·90	8·00	4·48	3·21
54	84·1	68·7	129·1	100·1	101·1	73·3	11·96	15·62	104·60	50·68	6·48	3·71	2·55
55	77·0	65·2	118·7	95·9	94·7	77·1	11·41	15·54	106·38	54·73	7·27	3·96	2·84
56	77·5	64·2	109·9	96·2	100·0	74·0	11·33	16·46	110·00	53·20	7·24	3·98	2·71
57	83·5	68·6	123·1	97·4	97·1	62·3	11·64	16·12	108·41	52·84	6·99	4·36	3·16
58	77·7	62·4	122·2	102·6	101·0	72·9	11·08	15·41	103·53	52·68	7·13	4·08	2·92
59	76·4	65 9	104·5	85·8	100·0	65·4	11·13	15·29	104·57	53·02	7·85	4·51	3·05
60	84·5	68·0	107·7	91·0	102·1	55·3	10·87	15·94	104·52	51·28	7·25	4·12	3·12
61	81·7	70·2	112·9	91·1	100·0	57·9	11·26	15·91	101·36	53·21	7·31	4·54	3·36
62	79·0	66·7	112·4	91·5	100·0	73·6	11·33	15·85	104·52	54·26	7·57	4·39	3·10
Mean.	79·4	65·8	111·9	89·3	100·6	64·0	11·34	15·43	104·36	51·33	7·36	4·30	3·10

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No.	Name.	Age.	Locality.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Ears.	Cephalic. Length.	Cephalic. Breadth.
1	Lavelle, Philip.	33	Inishkea, N.	blue	dark-brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	202	160
2	Lavelle, William,	38	Inishkea, N.	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	199	159
3	Cawley, Patrick,	40	Inishkea, S.	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Lobes attached	210	169
4	Cawley, Michael,	41	Inishkea, S.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	198	152
5	Lavelle, Michael,	32	Inishkea, N.	blue	light-brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes detached	202	150
6	Lavelle, William,	27	Inishkea, N.	dark-grey	black	pale	Outstanding, lobes detached	204	156
7	Reilly, Michael,	32	Inishkea, N.	blue	fair	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	158
8	Reilly, John,	28	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding	193	163
9	Lavelle, Patrick,	28	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding	200	152
10	Lavelle, John,	31	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	—	200	151
11	O'Reilly, P. T.,	17	Carne, Mullet	dark-grey	dark	pale	Flat	186	162
12	Gaughan, Wm.,	28	Emlybeg, Mullet	dark-grey	dark	freckled	Flat, lobes absent	200	154
13	Dunlevy, Anth.,	60	Emlybeg, Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	184	148
14	Gaughan, Michl.,	60	Moyrahan, Mullet	blue	black	ruddy	Outstanding	196	148
15	Clery, Francis,	22	Belmullet	dark-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	191	162
16	Coyle, William,	28	Shanaghy	light-brown	black	dark	Outstanding	196	154
17	Geraghty, Michl.,	30	Mullaghroe	blue	dark	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	200	152
18	Cawley, Patrick,	58	Aughleam	blue	black	pale	Outstanding	200	158
19	Monaghan, Wm.,	51	Crossrenagh	blue	black	ruddy	Outstanding	194	156
20	Gaughan, John,	33	Gladree	blue	dark	pale	Flat, lobes attached	196	153
21	Reilly, Peter,	35	Duvillaun (?)	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	200	149
22	Barrett, Michael,	44	Drumreagh	light-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	196	154
23	Barrett, William,	30	Mullaghroe	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	200	160
24	Henry, Phelim,	40	Name of locality not decipherable	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	199	156
25	Coyle, Michael,	18	Belmullet	blue	dark	pale	Outstanding	191	150
26	M'Cormac, Thos.,	21	Aughaglassheen, Belmullet	dark-grey	dark	dark	Outstanding, lobes attached	195	154
27	Doocy, Patrick,	19	Porturlin	blue	dark	pale	Outstanding	190	150
28	Flannery, Thos.,	60	Srahataggle	light-grey	dark	pale	Outstanding	194	154
29	Gannon, Richard,	26	Carrowboy (?)	light-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding	194	151
30	Dogherty, Wm.,	21	Portacloy	green	red	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	196	159
31	Naughton, Michl.	40	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	190	157

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Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Height.		Forelimb.			Remarks.
Face length.	Upper Face length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Binocular bdth.	Cranial Height.	Nasial.	Alveolar.	Standing.	Sitting.	Span.	Hand.	Forearm.	
128	72	148	118	54	36	32	130	101	99	1775	935	1880	195	261	"King" of Inishkea.
120	66	148	110	53	34	30	126	103	98	1700	912	1730	185	251	Brother of No. 1.
138	78	138	118	60	38	36	130	96	94	1780	960	1781	200	272	Mother from N. Inishkea.
132	76	136	108	54	34	36	125	97	95	1696	895	1652	185	254	Brother of No. 3; beard fair.
134	78	140	118	60	36	34	127	96	98	1757	908	1830	200	275	Front teeth even.
147	78	138	114	60	34	32	126	100	101	1780	888	1865	206	275	Beard brown.
130	76	136	114	50	34	32	125	88	88	1691	902	1720	180	250	Nose sinuous.
136	76	141	109	52	34	33	129	95	88	1766	955	1765	187	270	Brother of No. 7; nose sinuous.
120	72	134	104	56	32	31	126	93	93	1710	900	1763	190	250	—
110	68	136	104	48	33	29	130	94	96	1640	852	1612	173	260	Brother of No. 9; beard fair.
120	72	138	104	58	36	26	129	90	88	1708	914	1730	181	246	—
126	67	140	110	51	43	32	130	95	95	1664	858	1810	200	240	*Nez rétroussé.*
126	81	133	107	66	30	29	120	95	91	1660	855	1780	197	261	—
134	82	139	100	57	30	27	126	88	89	1757	925	1777	210	272	People originally from Ballycroy.
128	75	148	114	59	34	33	128	95	94	1762	925	—	200	266	People originally from Donegal, 200 years ago.
126	77	144	112	52	38	31	127	100	106	1708	928	1795	199	256	—
134	81	147	120	55	36	35	125	97	107	1732	885	1816	195	292	—
131	74	138	109	55	33	37	135	97	103	1766	930	1814	203	276	—
141	79	139	112	55	32	29	126	95	100	1770	917	1875	198	279	—
131	73	137	108	57	32	29	132	95	100	1820	923	1865	212	270	Father's people from Ballycroy.
122	79	136	115	54	30	29	125	96	104	1723	921	1793	200	288	—
130	76	148	112	49	36	36	128	96	95	1716	905	1870	204	271	Beard dark-brown.
126	76	141	110	51	38	30	133	97	99	1674	888	1793	191	277	Descended from the Clan Barretts, of "the Proud House of Barret" in the Mullet.
135	78	140	124	55	29	31	129	97	95	1687	952	1775	198	286	People originally from Donegal.
113	67	130	108	54	33	30	128	95	97	1743	887	1820	200	264	—
122	74	135	111	51	33	31	133	93	98	1685	905	1723	188	248	—
114	77	132	106	57	34	28	125	95	94	1628	880	1778	189	257	Believes grandfather to have been French.
126	76	130	109	55	30	29	127	92	93	1701	880	1712	193	267	—
127	77	142	105	53	30	30	130	91	89	1820	942	1850	198	271	—
125	70	144	121	53	31	29	129	89	93	1767	945	1843	207	270	Ancestors from Ulster.
132	72	137	112	56	32	29	125	95	97	1707	920	1775	195	261	—

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No.	Name.	Age.	Locality.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Ears.	Cephalic. Length.	Cephalic. Breadth.
32	Magrath, Patk.,	44	Portacloy	blue	dark	pale	Flat	178	152
33	Bourne, William,	33	Portacloy	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Flat	199	155
34	Bourke, John,	33	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	200	160
35	Toole, Thomas,	33	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Outstanding	189	151
36	Hogan, John,	40	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	155
37	Bourke, Domk.,	21	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	203	160
38	Hevernan, Philip,	50	Aughleam, Mullet	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Outstanding	200	154
39	Reilly, James,	35	Drum, Mullet	light-grey	brown	pale	Outstanding	198	154
40	Kane, Richard,	—	Fallmore, Mullet	green	brown	—	Outstanding	211	161
41	———	—	Mullet	blue	brown	pale & freckled-	Outstanding	186	164
42	M'Loughlin, Th.,	25	Blacksod, Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Flat	197	154
43	Meenaghan, Th.,	18	Blacksod, Mullet	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	196	159
44	Dixon, ——,	50	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	dark	Attached lobules	196	153
45	Cafferky, Hugh,	—	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Attached lobules	198	148
46	Coyle, Francis,	47	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark-	ruddy	Flat	204	161
47	Padden, Domk.,	22	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Outstanding, lobes absent	196	156
48	Padden, John,	18	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	pale, freckled	Flat, lobes absent	194	150
49	Dixon, James,	28	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Flat, lobes absent	200	156
50	Lavelle, Anthony,	24	Tip., Mullet	green	black	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	206	164
51	Meenaghan, Ml.,	—	Inishkea, S.	green	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	196	159
52	M'Ginty, Owen,	35	Inishkea, S.	blue	black-brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	208	162
53	Monaghan, Ml.,	59	Inishkea, S.	light-brown	black	dark	Outstanding	192	160
54	Keane, Patrick,	19	Inishkea, S.	blue	fair	ruddy, freckled	Outstanding	195	164
55	O'Donnell, John,	24	Inishkea, S.	blue	fair	ruddy, freckled	Outstanding, lobes attached	204	157
56	Dixon, Patrick,	33	Aghadoon, Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat	204	158
57	Carey, Martin,	26	Aghadoon, Mullet	dark-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	194	162
58	Lavelle, Patrick,	30	Aghadoon, Mullet	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	202	157
59	Dixon, Patrick,	30	Aghadoon, Mullet	green	black	pale	Flat	208	159
60	Burke, John,	23	Belmullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	164
61	Joyce, Patrick,	18	Buncrena, Mullet	blue	fair	ruddy	Outstanding	191	156
62	Padden, Michael,	22	Knocknashambo, Mullet	blue	brown	dark	Flat, lobes attached	195	154

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Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Height.		Forelimb.			Remarks.
Face length.	Upper Face length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Binocular bdth.	Cranial Height.	Nasial.	Alveolar.	Standing.	Sitting.	Span.	Hand.	Forearm.	
114	69	140	112	53	33	27	122	95	91	1726	923	1800	204	260	—
132	78	142	113	58	31	31	129	101	103	1782	970	1930	213	277	Name is an Anglicized form of O'Conbóirne.
114	68	146	110	49	34	31	133	98	108	1711	946	1870	200	274	—
120	72	132	111	49	30	28	125	91	90	1709	932	1750	181	257	—
133	77	139	102	54	36	35	125	97	105	1730	903	1838	188	286	Father's people from Co. Clare, 50 years ago.
121	75	140	121	52	32	31	133	96	89	1758	952	1960	198	273	—
134	77	143	118	56	40	32	127	101	109	1764	950	1860	196	270	—
123	76	139	108	56	34	32	131	92	95	1776	945	1920	209	266	—
132	75	150	110	57	38	32	145	97	95	1805	973	1853	192	263	—
125	74	148	104	54	33	28	133	95	86	1730	927	1830	195	264	Did not give name; mother's name Lynsky.
120	73	145	120	53	36	33	127	100	100	1730	903	1718	193	263	Beard fair.
122	72	147	114	49	34	34	132	95	99	1674	198	1727	188	252	—
125	76	141	116	48	35	30	127	96	98	1640	905	1678	192	256	—
125	76	138	110	57	35	30	130	101	101	1744	920	1822	197	273	Nose slightly acquiline.
126	72	143	108	55	40	35	132	99	105	1721	921	1810	204	250	—
124	75	138	112	52	32	37	126	104	103	1683	885	1826	191	272	Nose sinuous.
122	71	141	110	55	33	34	133	103	99	1752	925	1866	200	275	—
126	76	148	118	53	35	33	132	101	102	1746	950	1850	193	264	—
131	71	154	124	50	33	35	138	105	109	1788	945	1870	198	269	Extremely muscular.
119	73	138	112	49	37	32	125	92	92	1690	877	1785	197	244	Nose sinuous.
133	77	143	118	58	36	27	140	91	90	1725	910	1805	200	260	—
132	74	138	108	53	35	20	126	93	93	1650	840	1765	202	269	—
110	63	142	111	45	33	36	134	93	95	1697	860	1775	203	265	—
123	67	146	118	48	37	32	133	95	90	1692	926	1800	193	263	Father's people from Co. Galway.
131	72	144	126	50	37	31	131	98	98	1810	963	1991	205	298	—
117	73	144	114	53	33	33	133	102	99	1675	885	1816	195	270	Folds of pinna obliterated.
117	67	143	120	48	35	33	126	99	100	1642	865	1700	182	253	—
134	77	140	115	52	34	31	137	102	102	1707	905	1785	190	264	—
130	74	140	118	56	31	34	132	94	96	1794	920	1875	195	286	—
124	77	140	112	57	33	28	134	96	96	1697	903	1720	191	270	—
129	75	145	118	53	39	30	130	100	100	1703	934	1780	193	271	—

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(E.) *Analysis of the Statistical Tables* :—

141 The variations in type in the inhabitants of the different parts of the district are shown by the following Table, which appears to corroborate the belief entertained by the people that the men of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island or of the Mullet. They also show the greater proportion of light hair in the islanders:

	Mullet.	North Inishkea.	South Inishkea.	Portacloy.
Number measured, . . .	35	8	7	12
Cephalic Index, . . .	79·5	78·4	80·1	80·0
Stature, ...	1704 (5 ft. 7 in.)	1727 (5 ft. 8 in.)	1705 (5 ft. 7 in.)	1727 (5 ft. 8 in.)
Proportion to stature—Span, .	104·55	102·45	103·58	105·65
,, ,, Hand, .	11·34	11·04	11·41	11·41
,, ,, Forearm,	15·47	15·60	15·32	15·57
Nigrescence Index,[1] . .	62·30	10·5		77·52

Though the people in all sections of the district are seen to be mesaticephalic (if two units be subtracted to reduce the index to cranial standard), yet in two, South Inishkea and Portacloy, there is an approach to the brachycephalic form. None of the men measured in either place are dolichocephalic, and in most cases the cephalic proportion inclines towards the higher index rather than to the lower.

It would appear also that the North Inishkea men are shorter-limbed than any of their neighbours, as out of the four cases met with in which the span (*grande envergue*) was less than the height, three were from this island.

3. *Vital Statistics* (*General and Economic*) :—

161 (A.) *Population.*—Erris is not now very thickly peopled, the general decrease affecting the population of Ireland during the last
167 fifty years having especially affected this district.

The census returns show a constant and steady decline since 1851, the slight increases which have from time to time occurred in some

[1] Not taken from number measured but from nigrescence cards.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

Insanity.—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly
[158] in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
[273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

Fevers.—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter
164 being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

2. Campbell B.E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Mayo

PLATE XLII

142
291

1.

1. The cailleach built close to the fireplace. Fallmore, Co. Mayo.

2. Gable-chimney house. Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

342

2.

[p. 206]

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Louth, and Meath. The other area of lowest cephalic index is the Aran Islands off the west coast. Bordering the relatively long-headed eastern area are subgroups with slightly higher mean cephalic indices (78-78.4). On the northern fringe we have Armagh, Monaghan, and East Cavan; on the southern, Carlow, Wicklow, Kildare, Leix, and Offaly; on the west, Longford and Westmeath. West Galway (Connemara) occupies a similar marginal position of slightly less accentuated long-headedness north of the comparatively dolichocephalic Aran Islands. 141

A group of counties with mean head forms approaching the value for all of Ireland (78.5-78.9) includes a large northern and central block and a southeastern island which consists of Wexford and Waterford. The great north central block has its broad base in the northeastern counties—Down, Antrim, East Donegal and Londonderry, and extends southwest in a wide band including Tyrone, North and South Fermanagh, West Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, and East Galway.

There are two islands of somewhat broader-headed mesocephals in the northwest—West Donegal and Mayo—with cephalic indices from 79 to 79.4. Correspondingly, in the south central section the three counties of Kilkenny, Tipperary, and Limerick, also belong to this category. Then in the southwest we have Clare on the north and Cork on the south with still higher mesocephaly (79.5-79.9), each bordering upon Kerry, the most broad-headed area in the island.

HAIR COLOR

Hair color in Ireland is predominantly brown. Nine out of ten men have some shade of brown hair (dark brown, brown, red-brown, golden brown, or ash brown). The modal shade, however, is dark brown, both in the total series and in thirteen of nineteen county subgroups. Black hair is found in only 2.73% of the total series, although it rises to 8.02% in West Donegal and sinks below 1% in the Aran Islands, East Galway, Roscommon, Longford and Westmeath. Medium brown or flat brown which constitutes 35.37% of the total series is 142

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142 commonest in the Aran Islands (50%) and in Longford and Westmeath (44.49%). Red-brown hair is also at its maximum in the Aran Islands. Golden brown, which is a shade usually classified as blond, is found in 9.11% of the total series. It is least common in West Donegal (4.72%) and attains from 10% to 13% in several subgroups. Ash brown, golden, and ash are very rare throughout the entire island. Red hair is not perhaps as common as might be expected (4.28% in the total series). It rises to 8.03% in Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh and West Cavan, but drops to 1.65% in Waterford and Wexford.

Brown and red-brown, which are the medium shades of hair color, aggregate 40.77%. The really dark hair (black and dark brown) amount to 42.39%. Light shades total 14.98%, if red is included as "light," which, in my opinion, is its correct classification. All of the details are set forth in table 3.

TABLE 3

Hair color, head, by county subgroups

	BLACK		DARK BROWN		BROWN		RED-BROWN	
	No.	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*
West Donegal	17	8.02	87	41.04	73	34.43	10	4.72
Mayo	20	3.37	267	44.95	193	32.49	35	5.89
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	11	1.52	239	33.10	256	35.46	53	7.34
West Galway (Connemara)	6	1.33	161	35.70	161	35.70	36	7.98
Aran Islands	1	0.76	29	21.97	66	50.00	15	11.36
Clare	3[illegible]	4.14	371	39.34	322	34.15	71	7.53
Kerry	24	4.62	220	42.39	173	33.33	20	3.85
Cork	14	2.48	217	38.41	197	34.87	26	4.60
Limerick	8	2.37	140	41.42	114	33.73	22	6.51
East Galway, Roscommon	4	0.84	173	36.12	183	38.20	37	7.72
Longford, Westmeath	2	0.28	194	27.40	315	44.49	39	5.51
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	10	1.95	224	43.75	172	33.59	33	6.45
Tipperary, Kilkenny	15	2.41	273	43.82	192	30.82	30	4.82
Waterford, Wexford	15	3.53	200	47.06	112	26.35	14	3.29
Wicklow, Carlow	15	5.49	112	41.03	98	35.90	9	3.30
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	16	3.75	196	45.90	151	35.36	6	1.41
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	15	3.87	178	45.88	145	37.37	9	2.32
Antrim, Down	2	1.20	79	47.31	60	35.93	4	2.40
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	6	1.94	125	40.32	125	40.32	6	1.94
Total	240	2.73	3485	39.66	3108	35.37	475	5.40

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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	GOLDEN BROWN		ASH-BROWN		GOLDEN		ASH	
	No.	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*
West Donegal	10	4.72	0	0	1	0.47	0	0
Mayo	30	5.05	1	0.17	6	1.01	2	0.34
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	70	9.70	4	0.55	4	0.55	0	0
West Galway (Connemara)	54	11.97	1	0.22	4	0.89	0	0
Aran Islands	10	7.58	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clare	64	6.79	3	0.32	8	0.85	0	0
Kerry	41	7.90	3	0.58	11	2.12	0	0
Cork	72	12.74	0	0	10	1.77	1	0.18
Limerick	28	8.28	2	0.59	5	1.48	0	0
East Galway, Roscommon	45	9.39	1	0.21	4	0.84	0	0
Longford, Westmeath	92	12.99	8	1.13	10	1.41	5	0.71
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	41	8.01	3	0.59	4	0.78	0	0
Tipperary, Kilkenny	65	10.43	2	0.32	6	0.96	1	0.16
Waterford Wexford	54	12.71	4	0.94	3	0.71	2	0.47
Wicklow, Carlow	20	7.33	3	1.10	0	0	1	0.37
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	35	8.20	0	0	1	0.23	0	0
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	23	5.93	3	0.77	3	0.77	0	0
Antrim, Down	17	10.18	0	0	1	0.60	0	0
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	30	9.68	3	0.97	4	1.29	1	0.32
Total	801	9.11	41	0.47	85	0.97	13	0.15

	RED		WHITE		TOTAL
	No.	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*
West Donegal	12	5.66	2	0.94	212
Mayo	31	5.22	9	1.52	594
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	58	8.03	27	3.74	722
West Galway (Connemara)	20	4.43	8	1.77	451
Aran Islands	9	6.82	2	1.52	132
Clare	48	5.09	17	1.80	943
Kerry	16	3.08	11	2.12	519
Cork	15	2.65	13	2.30	565
Limerick	12	3.55	7	2.07	338
East Galway, Roscommon	25	5.22	7	1.46	479
Longford, Westmeath	34	4.80	9	1.27	708
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	19	3.71	6	1.17	512
Tipperary, Kilkenny	25	4.01	14	2.25	623
Waterford Wexford	7	1.65	14	3.29	425
Wicklow, Carlow	9	3.30	6	2.20	273
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	16	3.75	6	1.41	427
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	9	2.32	3	0.77	388
Antrim, Down	4	2.40	0	0	167
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	7	2.26	3	0.97	310
Total	376	4.28	164	1.87	8788

142 Figure 3 shows the distribution of dark hair (black plus dark brown). The areas in filled cross-hatch on the map have 50% or more of dark hair. These include only Waterford and Wexford, the two southeastern coastal counties. The cross-hatched areas (45-49.9% of dark hair) include a solid strip

[102]

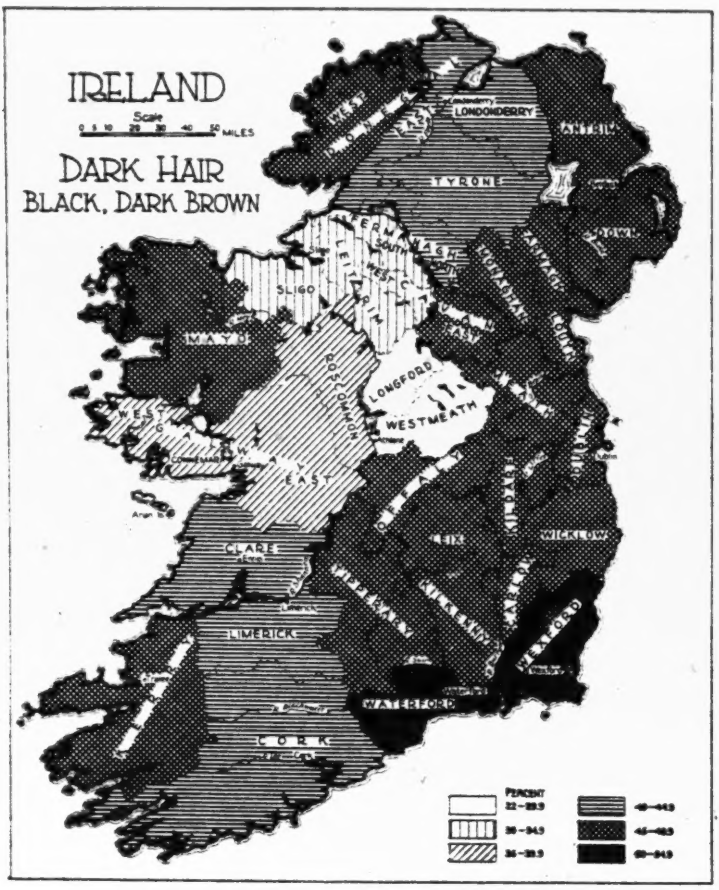

Figure 3

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

along the east coast from Antrim in the north through Wicklow in the south and extending westward into central Ireland in Armagh, East Cavan, Meath, Offaly, Leix, Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny, and Tipperary. Three isolated areas of this same rather dark-haired dominance occur in the west peninsulas of West Donegal, Mayo, and Kerry. From Londonderry and East Donegal there extends in a southwesterly direction a zone of counties in which dark hair is less frequent. Both the northeast third of this band (Londonderry, East Donegal, Tyrone and North Fermanagh) and the southwest third (Clare, Limerick, and Cork) show percentages of dark hair between 40 and 45. The middle portion of this zone is much lighter in hair color. Almost in the center of the island Longford and Westmeath present proportions of dark hair less than 30, while a similar condition is to be observed in the Aran Islands off the west coast. From the light-haired concentration of Longford and Westmeath there extends northwestward another relatively light-haired band including Leitrim, West Cavan, South Fermanagh, and Sligo. To the south and west another extension of this light-haired area, not quite so intense, consists of Roscommon and the whole of Galway. Thus County Mayo is cut off from the dark-haired area along the east coast by a broad semicircular band of relative blondness.

If we make a new plotting in which the residue of dark hair minus light is mapped (black plus dark brown) minus (golden brown plus ash-brown plus ash plus golden plus red), the picture of hair pigmentation in Ireland is not greatly altered. Longford, Westmeath and the Aran Islands still show the lightest hair color, but a dark-haired band extends from Antrim down the east coast to Wicklow which corresponds to the Western outposts of West Donegal and Mayo. On the other hand, the southwestern county, Kerry, shows a smaller residuum of dark hair than these areas named; as do also Waterford and Wexford, which in dark hair alone take first place. Then, too, Cork shows an unexpected diminution of dark hair, due to its high percentage of golden brown. However, in general, the distribution remains the same—a broad band of light

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142 hair running through the center of the island, separating two darker areas and reaching the west seaboard in the two regions surrounding Sligo Bay and Galway Bay.

EYE COLOR

Perhaps the most striking feature of Irish anthropology is the persistent association of light eyes with dark hair. Table 4 gives the distribution of eye color. Less than ½% of all Irish males have pure brown eyes—either light or dark. But nearly 42% have pure blue eyes. The dominant mixed shade is blue-brown which occurs in 44.34% of the total series, ranging from 31.94% in North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, and Londonderry, to 55.68% in Kerry. Gray-brown and green-brown are not very common and gray is nearly as rare as pure brown.

The highest percentage of pure blue eyes is found in Wicklow and Carlow with 50.18%. This is extremely curious in view of the fact that these counties are very low in light hair. If we consider the distribution of pure light eyes (fig. 4) some strange contradictions become apparent. The areas of lowest percentage of light eyes (35-39.9%) are Kerry and Cork. Kerry actually has the lowest percentage and this is consistent with the fact that it has the largest residuum of dark hair. West Donegal and Mayo, together with Limerick and Clare, also fall naturally into groups with comparatively small proportions of light eyes. But the Aran Islands, which are among the lightest in hair color are strangely low in light eyes, whereas all the eastern county strip of dark-haired peoples is high in light eyes—higher indeed than most of the central zone in which light hair predominates.

If we consider the distribution of mixed eyes, the result is about the same. In the west areas high in mixed eyes are also high in dark hair, with the exception of the Aran Islands. The central zone of comparatively blond counties has less pure blue eyes than the eastern and southeastern darker haired zone. Waterford and Wexford, which have the highest absolute percentage of dark hair, are among the lowest counties in proportions of mixed eyes.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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TABLE 4

Eye color by county subgroups

	DARK AND LIGHT BROWN		GRAY-BROWN		GREEN-BROWN		BLUE-BROWN	
	No.	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*
West Donegal	0	0	10	4.72	7	3.30	107	50.47
Mayo	1	0.17	25	4.21	17	2.86	300	50.50
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	7	0.97	15	2.07	25	3.45	327	45.10
West Galway (Connemara)	1	0.22	20	4.43	15	3.33	200	44.35
Aran Islands	0	0	1	0.74	0	0	75	55.15
Clare	0	0	58	6.14	17	1.80	443	46.93
Kerry	1	0.19	24	4.62	17	3.28	289	55.68
Cork	2	0.36	33	5.84	8	1.42	312	55.22
Limerick	1	0.29	17	5.01	6	1.77	165	48.67
East Galway, Roscommon	1	0.21	15	3.13	16	3.34	215	44.89
Longford, Westmeath	9	1.25	34	4.73	32	4.45	301	41.86
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	6	1.17	25	4.87	24	4.68	206	40.16
Tipperary, Kilkenny	2	0.32	37	5.94	26	4.17	265	42.54
Waterford, Wexford	2	0.47	31	7.29	28	6.59	142	33.41
Wicklow, Carlow	1	0.37	12	4.40	11	4.03	94	34.43
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	5	1.17	25	5.85	18	4.22	165	38.64
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	1	0.26	12	3.09	11	2.84	146	37.63
Antrim, Down	1	0.60	13	7.78	13	7.78	58	34.73
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	1	0.32	18	5.81	12	3.87	99	31.94
Total	42	0.48	425	4.82	303	3.44	3909	44.37

	GRAY		GRAY-BLUE		BLUE		UNMATCHED		TOTAL
	No.	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*	*Per cent*	*No.*
West Donegal	2	0.94	4	1.89	81	38.21	1	0.47	212
Mayo	2	0.34	15	2.53	232	39.06	2	0.34	594
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	1	0.14	19	2.62	330	45.52	1	0.14	725
West Galway (Connemara)	2	0.44	14	3.10	198	43.90	1	0.22	451
Aran Islands	0	0	3	2.21	57	41.91	0	0	136
Clare	0	0	36	3.81	388	41.19	3	0.32	944
Kerry	1	0.19	7	1.35	175	33.72	4	0.77	519
Cork	2	0.35	15	2.65	189	33.45	4	0.71	565
Limerick	2	0.59	9	2.65	138	40.71	1	0.29	339
East Galway, Roscommon	1	0.21	10	2.09	219	45.72	2	0.42	479
Longford, Westmeath	3	0.42	51	7.09	289	40.19	0	0	719
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	4	0.78	30	5.85	216	42.11	2	0.39	513
Tipperary, Kilkenny	0	0	39	6.28	250	40.13	4	0.64	623
Waterford, Wexford	0	0	26	6.12	194	45.65	2	0.47	425
Wicklow, Carlow	1	0.37	16	5.86	137	50.18	1	0.37	273
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	4	0.94	23	5.39	187	43.79	0	0	427
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	2	0.52	17	4.38	193	49.74	6	1.55	388
Antrim, Down	2	1.20	6	3.59	71	42.51	3	1.80	167
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone, Londonderry	4	1.29	20	6.45	154	49.68	2	0.65	310
Total	33	0.37	360	4.08	3698	41.98	39	0.44	8809

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142
[102]

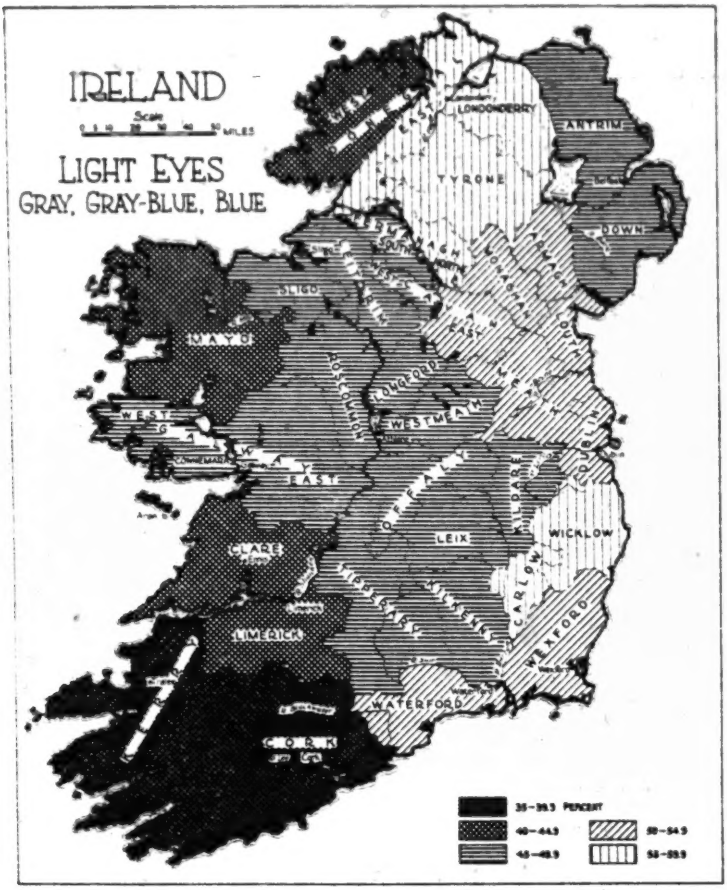

Figure 4

CORRELATION OF MAP DISTRIBUTIONS

Now, if we put together the distribution of stature, head form, hair color and eye color, some interesting correspondences are evident. Ireland presents three masses of high land projecting westward into the Atlantic. These are West Done-

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

gal, Mayo and West Galway, Kerry and (in part) Cork. The Aran Islands represent a fourth western area. West Donegal seems to be characterized by excesses of dark hair and mixed eyes and a very slightly higher mesocephaly than the total Irish series. Mayo is slightly high in stature and in cephalic index, definitely so in proportions of dark hair and mixed eyes. West Galway, on the other hand, is notable for markedly tall stature, lowering of the cephalic index, and lighter hair and eyes. This tendency is still further accentuated in the Aran Islands which are tallest of all of the Irish subgroups, are almost dolichocephalic, and have nearly the highest proportion of light hair shades. Yet eye color in the Aran Islands is predominantly mixed. 142

Kerry is also tall, but the most round-headed of the Irish subgroups and excessive in dark hair, and lowest in light eyes.

The central plain of Ireland and especially the counties of Westmeath and Longford show the strongest concentration of blondness which is accompanied by slightly shortened stature, diminished lightness of eye, and mesocephaly. This blond area is sharply delimited to the east by a coastal band of darker haired and even shorter dolichocephals, notably concentrated in Meath, Louth, and County Dublin, which is the shortest and most dolichocephalic area of Ireland, but ranks high both in darkness of hair and in lightness of eyes.

Now it is quite reckless to attempt definitive racial correlations on the basis of the coincidences and differences in geographical distribution of separately plotted anthropological characters. Actually, racial type distributions can be accurately ascertained only by correlations of morphological and metric features in individuals. From the data presented in this paper, however, a few purely preliminary and tentative suggestions may be made, subject to revision or retraction in the light of an exhaustive study of all of the material and a consideration of historical and prehistorical events.

It may be presumed that the western parts of the island represent to some extent refuge areas occupied by the earlier strata of the population. It is in precisely these areas (West 142 174 [197]

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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142 174 [197] Donegal, Mayo, West Galway, the Aran Islands and Kerry) that our information gives us the highest predominance of Gaelic speech. If the anthropological characters plotted separately actually combine in the populations of these areas we should say that the earliest population stratum of the island consists of tall, subbrachycephals with dark hair and mixed eyes and a second element, even taller, subdolichocephalic with light hair and mixed eyes. Then since the latter type presents the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers we should be inclined to hazard a guess that the tall brunet brachycephals represent the earlier pre-Keltic population and that Gaelic languages were introduced by the tall, long-headed near-blonds.

The blond, long-headed element in the central plain, concentrated in Longford and Westmeath is presumably Nordic and possibly represents a survival in great part from Iron Age Nordic, Viking, and other Scandinavian occupations. The Aran Islanders and the inhabitants of Galway may perhaps owe their comparative blondness and long-headedness to the mixture with these invaders which has gone on throughout the plain, but it is also possible, as previously stated, that the original Goidelic invaders may have been near-Nordics.

Along the east coast the short dark dolichocephals with long heads but very light eyes may also be, for the most part, the survivals of pre-Keltic populations. Some element in the population must have been responsible for the introduction of the Megalithic monuments and I believe it to have been these brunets with blue eyes. The association of light eyes with dark hair was formerly considered by me to be the result of the crossing of a pure brunet Mediterranean stock with a pure blond Nordic stock in which the eye color of one race combined with the hair color of another. However, recent anthropometric studies in Iran and Iraq, especially those of Dr. Henry Field, reveal the presence of many otherwise purely brunet, long-headed stocks of basic Mediterranean affinities which have almost no pure brown eyes, but generally irides of mixed pigmentation—brown in the pupillary zone and blue in the

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

peripheral zones. Of course, there can be no doubt that the inhabitants of Ireland have undergone extensive mixture with blue-eyed Nordics. However, it seems certain that some Mediterranean stocks have developed what Dr. Carleton Coon calls "incipient eye blondness" without any necessary intermixture with the generally depigmented Nordic race. 142 174

One consideration in regard to the county subgroups must be given some space here. The highest percentage of dark hair occurs in Waterford and Wexford and the highest percentage of light hair in Longford and Westmeath. Now blondness in mixed stocks diminishes with age and it happens that the Waterford and Wexford subgroup is the oldest of the nineteen included in the series (38.80 years), whereas the Longford, Westmeath group is the youngest (29.45 years). The latter is, in fact, 3 years below the mean age of any other subgroup. Thus it is possible that the blondness of this subgroup may have been exaggerated by this age factor, but it hardly seems probable that the excess of dark hair in Wexford and Waterford is wholly due to superior age since the increments of age bring excessive graying of hair (at a maximum) in this group. This senile change detracts from the proportion of dark hair. 142

One of the most striking facts of the anthropometric distributions here plotted is the dolichocephalic blond crescent which swings from the northwest at Sligo Bay through the Central Plain and back westward terminating in West Galway and the Aran Islands. It suggests rather strongly a Nordic penetration by way of these west coast ports. It is tempting to connect it with the Viking period. Ingress to the rich lands of the Central Plain would have been possible by this route, although it must not be forgotten that West Galway—a barren area—has this same blondness and long-headedness associated with tall stature. It is also notable that this blond crescent is not as light-eyed as the areas further east, and, in its central portion, is not characterized by particularly high stature. Further, its dolichocephaly is not so marked as that of the counties to the east of the upper course of the Shannon. 142 174

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142 174 On the basis then of these raw distribution maps on which are plotted uncorrelated anthropometric means and pigmentation percentages we may discern the following three more or less clearly demarcated anthropological and geographical areas.

1. The Western Peninsulas: West Donegal, Mayo and Kerry (including parts of Clare and Cork). This region finds the association of tall stature, sub-brachycephaly, dark hair and mixed eyes. It is strongly Gaelic in speech and possibly includes the largest numbers of the Mesolithic stock which first settled Ireland from Scotland.

2. The Central East Coast: The shortest and most dolichocephalic region with highest concentration of light eyes (especially blue eyes), but very dark hair. Perhaps this may be the area settled by the Megalithic people who sailed up the Irish Channel.

3. The Blond Crescent (with its horns at Sligo and Galway Bays and its convexity at Longford and Westmeath). In its belly it is the blondest area in Ireland, in the southwest horn (West Galway and the Aran Islands) it is the tallest and almost the longest-headed area in Ireland. All of this area is notably characterized by grayish and light mixed eyes rather than pure blue eyes. It seems to be peopled by a majority of Predominantly Nordic and Nordic peoples. It may contain the bulk of the descendants of any or all of the three following putative groups of early populations: Bronze Age peoples coming from Scotland (Goidels?); Iron Age Nordic invaders (if there were such); Viking and other Scandinavian historic colonists, possibly entering by way of Galway and Sligo Bays.

It should be reiterated here that superimposed distribution maps of isolated characters may not represent in any accurate sense the combinations of features in individuals which constitute racial types. Subsequent study of the distribution of racial types by individuals may alter considerably our prediction of the arrangement of racial areas in Ireland.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ADDENDUM

From this Irish county series, as here discussed, all persons of Protestant religion have been omitted. The number thus excluded is 312 Presbyterians and 488 Church of Ireland, of these the vast majority come from the northern counties— Antrim, Armagh, Fermanagh, Down, Londonderry, Tyrone, Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan. Mr. Dupertuis directed this sorting because he was of the opinion that the Ulster Protestants really represent, in large part, a recent Scotch immigration, and the Church of Ireland English immigrations. In the final report on Ireland these northern Protestants will be included. They could hardly alter the distribution pictures perceptibly, except (possibly) in the counties mentioned.

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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CORN HARVEST

[Frontispiece]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

124 which the hair of many of the men was cut, which often rendered dis-
[302] tinction of shade very difficult. Owing to the season most of the observations had to be made in the morning when the people were going to their work, or early in the evening when they were returning, or gathered around their cottage doors; in many cases, however, they were followed to the harvest field and measured there.

The taking of photographs did not, as elsewhere, cause the assembly
126 of the knot of spectators which usually affords so good an opportunity
[123] for the collection of eye and hair colours; it had rather the opposite effect, as the people have a strong dislike to having their portraits taken.

In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 241 individuals, on 40 of whom (being about one-fifth of the adult males of the islands) measurements and other observations were taken.

Care was exercised that none of those measured should be entered in the ordinary nigrescence cards, as well as to avoid recording the same individual twice or the noting of persons who were not natives.

(E). *Photography.*—For the reasons already mentioned there could not be as much done in this department as had been hoped; but, in spite of the strong aversion shown by many of the people to having their portraits taken, and the strong winds prevailing during our stay, my brother, J. M. Browne, who accompanied me to do the necessary photography, succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of typical groups, as well as some single portraits in full face and profile, and a series of views illustrative of the modes of life and environment of the people.

2.—Physical Characters.

142 (A). The people, on the whole, much resemble the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Connemara, and their appearance testifies to a mixed origin. The following is believed to be a correct description of their average physical characters:—

Stature and bulk.—The men, as a rule, are stoutly built, and of medium height; very few can fairly be termed tall, and there is a very considerable proportion of men of low stature. The average height is
[141] 1633 mm., or about 5 feet 6½ inches, which falls short of the Irish mean stature as found by Gould, the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association, and others, by about two inches.

142 The women are of a slighter build than the men, and, apparently,
143 more even in height; they also show more strikingly that great simi-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

larity of appearance produced by the constant intermarriage of the same families through several generations. 142 [143]

Limbs.—The hand is often short and broad, and the forearm and upper arm long. In no case was the span of arms (*grande envergue*) observed to be less than the stature, a peculiarity which was observable in nearly a quarter of the persons measured in Aran last year.

Head.—The head is, in many cases, of large size, and is usually well-shaped, with an almost straight or but slightly projecting occiput. It rises to a considerable height above the ears (yielding a mean height index of 69·2), and has a mean cephalic index, when reduced to the cranial standard by the subtraction of two units, of 78·4, or, in other words, it is mesaticephalic; about a quarter of the men measured, however, were brachycephalic, and an eighth slightly dolichocephalic. The eleven crania of both sexes measured at Tempull Colman yielded an average cephalic index of 77·0, thus nearly agreeing with the measurements on the living subject (see p. 333). The forehead is broad and upright, but not very high. Superciliary ridges and glabella very slightly marked, and eyebrows thick, level, and seldom showing much tendency to arch. 142 141

Face.—The face is long and scutiform, narrowing in rapidly in the bigonial region. The cheek-bones are not prominent; the horizontal lines at the "root" of the nose are very deep, and have between them a raised ridge or fold of skin. The eyes have irides of a blue or light bluish-grey, seldom hazel, and are moderately wide apart; being often half-closed they give the impression of being small, and are marked externally by deep horizontal wrinkles. The nose is in many cases rather short, and in profile is usually straight or sinuous, rarely aquiline, and then not to a great degree. The mouth is large and frequently open with lips of medium thickness. The teeth are remarkably short, broad, and even, remaining white, and, apparently, sound to an advanced period of life. The chin is long, but not projecting; the mental process being small, and the jaw is very long with but little curve. The ears are small, outstanding,[1] and somewhat coarsely moulded, and in nearly half the cases observed had the lobule adherent or absent. Several abnormalities were observed, as presence of the Darwinian tubercle, flattening of the upper part of the pinna, with obliteration of the anti-helix, and in one case (No. 5 of those measured) 142

[1] This is probably due to the lateral bulging of the mastoid processes so noticeable in the crania.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

142 there was arrest of growth of the left ear which was about a third of the size of the right.

Skin.—The complexion is pale and very seldom freckled, not bronzing from exposure to the sun, but becoming a clear red. Wrinkles come early, especially about the eyes.

Hair.—The hair is usually a dark brown, sometimes, though seldom, black; in many cases it is of a dark shade scarcely distinguishable, when cut close, from true black; the beard, which is usually much lighter than the hair of the scalp, in these cases is often a clear dark brown. As a general rule the dark hair is accompanied by blue or grey eyes, and the black by light or dark hazel. The hair of both sexes is often abundant, but partial baldness is not at all uncommon even in men under forty. The beard is usually fairly large.

Sight and hearing.—Both of these are very acute; of 18 men tested
151 with Snellen's types, not one had vision of less than $\frac{4}{5}$, and nine of them could read the 5 metre type at over 14 metres. The distance at which they can make out a sail or a bird on the wing is amazing. Their hearing is also very acute.

(B). *Statistics of Hair and Eye Colour:—*

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CHILDREN.—I. BOYS.

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	1	—	—	1	2·27
Fair, ..	7	—	—	7	15·90
Brown, ..	25	4	—	29	65·91
Dark, ..	4	1	—	5	11·36
Black, ..	—	1	1	2	4·54
Totals, ..	37	6	1	44	
Percentage Eye Colours,	84·09	13·64	2·27	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . 2·26.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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II. GIRLS.

HAIR.	EYES.			TOTALS.	PERCENTAGE HAIR COLOURS.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	4	—	—	4	6·78
Fair, ..	7	—	—	7	11·86
Brown, ..	27	—	—	27	45·76
Dark, ..	12	7	2	21	35·59
Black, ..	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, ..	50	7	2	59	
Percentage Eye Colours,	84·75	11·86	3·39	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . 16·95.

ADULTS.—I. MALES.

HAIR.	EYES.			TOTALS.	PERCENTAGE HAIR COLOURS.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	4	—	—	4	4·82
Fair, ..	3	—	—	3	3·62
Brown, ..	30	3	—	33	39·76
Dark, ..	31	5	2	38	45·78
Black, ..	—	2	3	5	6·02
Totals, ..	68	10	5	83	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	81·93	12·05	6·02	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . 49·38.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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II. Females.

Hair.	Eyes.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	2	—	—	2	3·51
Fair, ..	1	—	—	1	1·75
Brown, ..	23	1	—	24	42·11
Dark, ..	16	9	—	25	43·86
Black, ..	1	3	1	5	8·77
Totals, ..	43	13	1	57	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	75·44	22·81	1·75	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . . 56·14.

Combined Index (both sexes), . 52·76.

Total, Inishbofin and Inishshark.—I. Males.

Hair.	Eyes.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	5	—	—	5	3·94
Fair, ..	10	—	—	10	7·88
Brown, ..	55	7	—	62	48·82
Dark, ..	35	6	2	43	33·85
Black, ..	—	3	4	7	5·51
Totals, ..	105	16	6	127	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	82·68	12·60	4·72	100·00	

Index of Nigrescence, . . 33·05.

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II. FEMALES.

HAIR.	EYES.			TOTALS.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	6	—	—	6	5·17
Fair, ..	8	—	—	8	6·90
Brown, ..	50	1	—	51	43·96
Dark, ..	28	16	2	46	39·66
Black, ..	1	3	1	5	4·31
Totals, ..	93	20	3	116	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	80·17	17·25	2·58	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . . 36·21.

Combined Index (both sexes), . 34·63.

(c). *Detailed List of Measurements.*—(See following Table):—

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
1	Boyce, Myles, .	62	Middlequarter	blue	dark-brown	ruddy	Nose sinuous; schoolmaster.
2	Lavelle, Anthony,	35	Knock	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Nose aquiline.
3	Reilly, John, . .	63	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; is somewhat bald.
4	Malia, John, . .	50	Westquarter	grey	dark	pale	Nose straight; bald on vertex.
5	Joyce, James, .	48	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Lobe of ear attached; large left ear only partially developed.
6	Malia, Michael, .	35	Knock	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight.
7	Walsh, Patrick, .	24	Middlequarter	blue-grey	dark	pale	Sight very keen; nose straight.
8	Halloran, John, .	20	Shark	blue-grey	brown	sallow	Nose straight.
9	Cannon, Michael,	19	Middlequarter	blue	fair	pale	Lobes of ears absent.
10	King, John, . .	40	Cloonamore	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Vision very acute.
11	Powell, Patrick, .	24	Knock	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Vision very keen; nose straight; lobes of ears attached.
12	Cloherty, Festus,	24	Knock	dark-hazel	dark	ruddy	Nose retroussé.
13	Toole, John, . .	21	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Nose aquiline.
14	Scuffle, Patrick, .	(?)	Cloonamore	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; would not give age; lobes of ears attached.
15	Malia, George, .	24	Shark	grey	dark	pale	Lobes of ears attached: vision very keen.
16	Halloran, John, .	25	Westquarter	blue	red	ruddy	Nose sinuous.
17	Kenny, Michael, .	31	Cloonamore	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight.
18	M'Greal, Michl.,	20	Shark	green	dark	sallow	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; a fine-looking specimen of the islanders.
19	Burk, Thomas, .	19	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose retroussé; lobes of ears attached.
20	Joyce, Michael, .	19	Middlequarter	grey	dark-brown	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
21	Prendergast, Wm.	53	Middlequarter	brown	black	ruddy	Nose straight: lobes of ears attached; teeth even and meeting.

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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
22	Lenane, John,	50	Middlequarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Lobes of ears attached.
23	Leonard, John,	30	Middlequarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; teeth meet.
24	Walsh, John,*	30	Middlequarter	brown	black	pale	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears absent; sight keen.
25	Malia, Patrick,	—	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; would not give age; sight good.
26	Cannon, Edward,	54	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
27	Cannon, John,	53	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
28	Lavelle, ——,	60	(?)	dark-hazel	dark	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
29	Cloherty, Patrick	19	Westquarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears absent; vision acute.
30	Lavelle, Thomas,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous.
31	Martin, Thomas,	60	Westquarter	blue	dark	pale	Hair dark, when young; lobes of ears attached; sight very keen.
32	Cloherty, John,	38	Westquarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears attached.
33	Lavelle, Michael,	50	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
34	Moran, Michael,	55	Middlequarter	dark-grey	brown	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
35	Mogan, ——,	23	Westquarter	grey	black	pale	Hair on face brown; nose straight.
36	Halloran, Thomas	53	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; slightly bald.
37	Halloran, Redmond,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Obliterated folds of pinna; slightly bald; head of large size.
38	Lavelle, Patrick,	30	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous; folds of pinna slightly obliterated.
39	Lavelle, John,	17	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Hair curly; lobes of ears attached.
40	Naughten, Michl.	50	Middlequarter	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; says he is of Scotch descent.

* Name indistinct.

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10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:— 162 592

Islands.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
Inishbofin, .	2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark, .	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, . .	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males. 162 167

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons. [142]

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6*s.* 423 311 A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled [435]

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest 164
of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and 732
a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident.

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. 164
Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is [464]
ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the [483]
lifting of heavy weights.

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary [364]
state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare.

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form 164
the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something 262
to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found.

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bron- 164
chitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months.

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—
Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

164 very even and white, and seem to last well; even men of over sixty
[142] often have good incisors; but many suffer from toothache. Abscess of the alveolus, unlike what is seen in Aran, is not at all common.

Skin.—Ulcers due to the friction of ropes and of the thick homespun clothing when wet, eczema, "sea-boils," scabies, and acne, are frequently met with, as is anthrax or carbuncle; but, perhaps, the most common of all skin affections, especially among the younger members of the population, is tinea tonsurans. Alopecia areata, whether caused by the last-mentioned affection or not, seems to be common. Uterine troubles are not at all common. Venereal diseases are practically unknown.

164 *Accidents* arising out of the surroundings and occupation of the
752 people are, as might be expected, very numerous. These are burns, severe cuts from reaping hooks, injuries inflicted by domestic animals, and, above all, contusions and fractures due in most cases to falls from rocks and ponies.

4. *Psychology.*—For one who has had only a short experience of
181 the people this very difficult and delicate point is exceedingly hard to deal justly with, but the following description, for the most part obtained from local sources, both on the islands and on the opposite part of the mainland, and to some small degree from personal observation, is believed to be accurate as far as it goes.

To strangers, the people are not, at first, attractive, as their manner
[609] is shy and not unmarked by suspicion; but after this reserve is broken through they reveal themselves in a much more attractive light, and are kindly, courteous, and very communicative.

Among themselves they are cheerful and social, given much to gossip and chaff, though their wit is not of a very sparkling character.
[517] They contrast strongly with the Aran Islanders in their taste for music and dancing, concertinas and melodions being in common use in several houses.

In their dealings with one another they are honest and fair, even
181 a petty theft being an extremely rare occurrence. As to their dealings
674 with the people of the mainland, the usual hostile statements, common with all insular communities, are made by both sides with respect to
[609] each others honesty, but much reliance cannot be put in these vague assertions. Crime is almost unknown, and the administration of justice is seldom called into requisition, and then only for small quarrels among neighbours.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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EXPLANATION OF PLATES VIII. AND IX.

PLATE VIII.

142 FIG. 1.—James Joyce, aged 48 years, No. 5, Middlequarter.

291 FIGS. 2 AND 3.—Anthony Lavelle, aged 35 years, No. 2, Knock.

FIG. 4.—Group of men, Inishbofin.

Taken in order from left to right, the names are, respectively:—

Back row.—John Burke, boatwright; Michael Halloran, king of Shark; John Tierney, postman; Mick Kerrigan, weaver; Redmond Toole, fisherman.

Front row.—Martin Baker, John Malia (or Malley), Ned Burke, Redmond Toole, all fishermen.

FIG. 5.—Group of women, Westquarter, Inishbofin.

Taken in the same order as the other group, the names are—Margaret Ward, Nancy Browne (first cousins), Nelly Holloran, Mary Holloran (daughter of last), Brigid Concannon.

PLATE IX.

412 FIG. 1.—Quern still in use in Middlequarter, Inishbofin.

283 FIG. 2.—Spinning wheel in Middlequarter.

296 FIG. 3.—Method of washing clothes, Church Lough, Knock.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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[End Plate A]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

126 graphs of occupations by admitting of their being taken when the performers were in motion. It could also be used on occasions when the high winds would not allow the setting up of a tripod stand.

2.—*Physical Characters*:—

(A). The general physical characters of the people are as given 142 below, though some differences exist between the inhabitants of different parts of the district.

The people on the whole are good-looking, especially when young; [145] many of the girls and young women are very handsome, but they appear to age rapidly and early become wrinkled.

Stature and bulk.—The men of this district are as a rule of fair average stature, very stoutly built, and broad shouldered; while there are few who can fairly be termed very tall, yet many reach a good height, and the proportion of small men is by no means large. The [141] average stature of the 62 adult males measured was 1725 mm., or about 5 feet 8 inches. The extremes were 1628 mm. (5 feet 4 inches), and 1820 mm., or about 5 feet 11½ inches.

The women seem to be more even in height than the men.

Limbs.—The hands are usually of medium size, broad and with fingers squarely clubbed at the ends. The forearms (measured from styloid process to the head of radius) are often very long for the stature, and the span is sometimes very great, though in a few cases it is less than the stature, a character also noted in the Aran Islands, though the proportion of cases in which it was observed was much greater there.

Head.—The head is generally well shaped and is often of large size. The forehead is broad and upright (rarely receding), rounded away at the sides, and of fair height; superciliary ridges and glabella of no great size, eye-brows thick and level.

The cranial curve rises to a pretty fair height above the ears [141] (height index 65·8), though not attaining the altitude seen in the people of Aran and the men of Inishbofin, and descends in an even sweep to the occipital protuberance as the occipital region does not usually project.

In the majority of cases, as will be seen from the table of indices, 141 the head is mesaticephalic, the mean index being 77·4 (when two units are deducted to reduce to the cranial standard). Of the 62 persons measured, 10 were brachycephalic, and 11 dolichocephalic. The extremes were 86·2 and 72·3.

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151 ***Sight and Hearing.***—Both these senses are very acute, especially the former, which, in the fishermen, is extremely keen, many of these men can see small objects floating on the water at a distance where, even by the aid of a strong glass, most persons would find great difficulty in seeing them at all.

142 184 This description being a general one, little mention has been made of the differences which exist between the people of different parts of the district. It appears to be the general opinion on the mainland, that the inhabitants of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island, and, also, that the natives of both islands are fairer than those of the mainland, and personal inspection has corroborated these opinions. The islanders are readily distinguishable from the mainland people, not only by their dress of blue homespun, but also by their fairer hair and complexion, and their different cast of features.

The men of the district round Portacloy are darker in hair and seem to be of a different type; many of them are exceedingly fine well-built fellows.

142 114 In no part of the district are the people of small stature, though a large number of them are descendants of dispossessed Ulster people. On the contrary, they appear to be taller and stouter than the inhabitants of the southern part of the country. A statement,[1] originally made by an anonymous writer, has somehow gained currency, and has been repeatedly quoted abroad, noticeably by M. De Quatrefages,[2] and by M. Devay,[3] that the descendants of the Ulster people driven two centuries ago into Sligo and Mayo, had dwindled into dwarfs of five feet two inches high, prognathous and pot-bellied.

This most certainly does not apply to any section of the inhabitants of this part of Mayo, if indeed it were ever true of any part of the counties named, which repeated inquiries and personal observation agree in denying most positively.

The statement is quite unsupported by other writers dealing with this region at the same time. Thus Mr. P. Knight, writing in 1834, says of the people of Erris that "they are generally a good-humoured, good-natured, hospitable, generous race—*of middle size*—active, intelligent, and, when an opportunity offers of showing it, industrious." C. O.[4] describes the people as tall.

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[1] Dublin University Magazine, No. 48, p. 658.
[2] L'Unité de l'Espèce Humain, ii., 316.
[3] Devay Fr. "Du Danger des Mariages consanguins sous le Rapport Sanitaire."
[4] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

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(B.) *Statistics of Eye and Hair Colours:—*

ADULTS.—I. *Males.*

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HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	4	1	—	5	2.43
Fair, ..	14	—	—	14	6·79
Brown, ..	74	7	2	83	40·29
Dark, ..	79	6	3	88	42·72
Black, ..	8	5	3	16	7·77
Totals, ..	179	19	8	206	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	86·89	9·22	3·89	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . 49·04.

ADULTS.—II. *Females.*

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	5	—	—	5	3·47
Fair, ..	2	—	—	2	1·39
Brown, ..	52	2	4	58	40·28
Dark, ..	33	21	12	66	45·83
Black, ..	7	2	4	13	9·03
Totals, ..	99	25	20	144	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	68·75	17·36	13·89	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . . 59·03.
Combined Index (both sexes), . 54·03.

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CHILDREN.—I. *Boys.*

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	4	—	—	4	5·40
Fair, ..	10	—	—	10	13·51
Brown, ..	34	—	—	34	45·95
Dark, ..	23	1	—	24	32·43
Black. ..	2	—	—	2	2·71
Totals, ..	73	1	—	74	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	98·65	1·35	—	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . 18·94.

CHILDREN.—II. *Girls.*

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	—	—	—	—	—
Fair, ..	10	—	—	10	15·87
Brown, ..	29	1	—	30	47·62
Dark, ..	16	2	4	22	34·92
Black, ..	1	—	—	1	1·59
Totals, ..	56	3	4	63	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	88·89	4·76	6·35	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, ... 23·23.
Combined Index (both sexes), . 21·09.

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TOTAL.—I. *Males.*

Hair.	Eyes.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	8	1	—	9	3·21
Fair, ..	24	—	—	24	8·57
Brown, ..	108	7	2	117	41·79
Dark, ..	102	7	3	112	40·00
Black, ..	10	5	3	18	6·43
Totals, ..	252	20	8	280	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	90·0	7·14	2·86	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . 41·08.

TOTAL.—II. *Females.*

Hair.	Eyes.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	5	—	—	5	2·41
Fair, ..	12	—	—	12	5·79
Brown, ..	81	3	4	88	42·52
Dark, ..	49	23	16	88	42·52
Black, ..	8	2	4	14	6·76
Totals, ..	155	28	24	207	100·00
Percentage Eye Colours,	74·88	13·53	11·59	100·00	—

Index of Nigrescence, . . . 47·84.
Combined Index (both sexes), . 44·46.

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No.	Name.	Age.	Locality.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Ears.	Cephalic. Length.	Cephalic. Breadth.
1	Lavelle, Philip, .	33	Inishkea, N.	blue	dark-brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	202	160
2	Lavelle, William,	38	Inishkea, N.	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	199	159
3	Cawley, Patrick,	40	Inishkea, S.	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Lobes attached	210	169
4	Cawley, Michael,	41	Inishkea, S.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	198	152
5	Lavelle, Michael,	32	Inishkea, N.	blue	light-brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes detached	202	150
6	Lavelle, William,	27	Inishkea, N.	dark-grey	black	pale	Outstanding, lobes detached	204	156
7	Reilly, Michael, .	32	Inishkea, N.	blue	fair	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	158
8	Reilly, John, . .	28	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding	193	163
9	Lavelle, Patrick, .	28	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding	200	152
10	Lavelle, John, . .	31	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	—	200	151
11	O'Reilly, P. T.,	17	Carne, Mullet	dark-grey	dark	pale	Flat	186	162
12	Gaughan, Wm., .	28	Emlybeg, Mullet	dark-grey	dark	freckled	Flat, lobes absent	200	154
13	Dunlevy, Anth., .	60	Emlybeg, Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	184	148
14	Gaughan, Michl.,	60	Moyrahan, Mullet	blue	black	ruddy	Outstanding	196	148
15	Clery, Francis, .	22	Belmullet	dark-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	191	162
16	Coyle, William, .	28	Shanagby	light-brown	black	dark	Outstanding	196	154
17	Geraghty, Michl.,	30	Mullaghroe	blue	dark	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	200	152
18	Cawley, Patrick,	58	Aughleam	blue	black	pale	Outstanding	200	158
19	Monaghan, Wm.,	51	Crossrenagh	blue	black	ruddy	Outstanding	194	156
20	Gaughan, John, .	33	Gladree	blue	dark	pale	Flat, lobes attached	196	153
21	Reilly, Peter, .	36	Duvillaun (?)	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	200	149
22	Barrett, Michael,	44	Drumreagh	light-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	196	154
23	Barrett, William,	30	Mullaghroe	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	200	160
24	Henry, Phelim,	40	Name of locality not decipherable	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	199	156
25	Coyle, Michael, .	18	Belmullet	blue	dark	pale	Outstanding	191	150
26	M'Cormac, Thos.,	21	Aughaglassheen, Belmullet	dark-grey	dark	dark	Outstanding, lobes attached	195	154
27	Doocy, Patrick, .	19	Porturlin	blue	dark	pale	Outstanding	190	150
28	Flannery, Thos.,	60	Srahataggle	light-grey	dark	pale	Outstanding	194	154
29	Gannon, Richard,	26	Carrowboy (?)	light-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding	194	151
30	Dogherty, Wm.,	21	Portacloy	green	red	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	196	159
31	Naughton, Michl.	40	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	190	157

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	Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Height.		Forelimb.			
	Face length.	Upper Face length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Binocular bdth.	Cranial Height.	Nasal.	Alveolar.	Standing.	Sitting.	Span.	Hand.	Forearm.	Remarks.
141	128	72	148	118	54	36	32	130	101	99	1775	935	1880	195	261	"King" of Inishkea.
	120	66	148	110	53	34	30	126	103	98	1700	912	1730	185	251	Brother of No. 1.
	138	78	138	118	60	38	36	130	96	94	1780	960	1781	200	272	Mother from N. Inishkea.
	132	76	136	108	54	34	36	125	97	95	1696	895	1652	185	254	Brother of No. 3; beard fair.
	134	78	140	118	60	36	34	127	96	98	1757	908	1830	200	275	Front teeth even.
	147	78	138	114	60	34	32	126	100	101	1780	888	1865	206	275	Beard brown.
	130	76	136	114	50	34	32	125	88	88	1691	902	1720	180	250	Nose sinuous.
	136	76	141	109	52	34	33	129	95	88	1766	955	1765	187	270	Brother of No. 7; nose sinuous.
	120	72	134	104	56	32	31	126	93	93	1710	900	1763	190	250	—
	110	68	136	104	48	33	29	130	94	96	1640	852	1612	173	260	Brother of No. 9; beard fair.
	120	72	138	104	58	36	26	129	90	88	1708	914	1730	181	246	—
	126	67	140	110	51	43	32	130	95	95	1664	858	1810	200	240	*Nez rétroussé.*
	126	81	133	107	66	30	29	120	95	91	1660	855	1780	197	261	—
	134	82	139	100	57	30	27	126	88	89	1757	925	1777	210	272	People originally from Ballycroy.
	128	75	148	114	59	34	33	128	95	94	1762	925	—	200	266	People originally from Donegal, 200 years ago.
	126	77	144	112	52	38	31	127	100	106	1708	928	1795	199	256	—
	134	81	147	120	55	36	35	125	97	107	1732	885	1816	195	292	—
	131	74	138	109	55	33	37	135	97	103	1766	930	1814	203	276	—
	141	79	139	112	55	32	29	126	95	100	1770	917	1875	198	279	—
	131	73	137	108	57	32	29	132	95	100	1820	923	1865	212	270	Father's people from Ballycroy.
	122	79	136	115	54	30	29	125	96	104	1723	921	1793	200	288	—
	130	76	148	112	49	36	36	128	96	95	1716	905	1870	204	271	Beard dark-brown.
	126	76	141	110	51	38	30	133	97	99	1674	888	1793	191	277	Descended from the Clan Barretts, of "the Proud House of Barret" in the Mullet.
	135	78	140	124	55	29	31	129	97	95	1687	952	1775	198	286	People originally from Donegal.
	113	67	130	108	54	33	30	128	95	97	1743	887	1820	200	264	—
	122	74	135	111	51	33	31	133	93	98	1685	905	1723	188	248	—
	114	77	132	106	57	34	28	125	95	94	1628	880	1778	189	257	Believes grandfather to have been French.
	126	76	130	109	55	30	29	127	92	93	1701	880	1712	193	267	—
	127	77	142	105	53	30	30	130	91	89	1820	942	1850	198	271	—
	125	70	144	121	53	31	29	129	89	93	1767	945	1843	207	270	Ancestors from Ulster.
	132	72	137	112	56	32	29	125	95	97	1707	920	1775	195	261	—

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No.	Name.	Age.	Locality.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Ears.	Cephalic. Length.	Cephalic. Breadth.
32	Magrath, Patk.,	44	Portacloy	blue	dark	pale	Flat	178	152
33	Bourne, William,	33	Portacloy	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Flat	199	155
34	Bourke, John,	33	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	200	160
35	Toole, Thomas,	33	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Outstanding	189	151
36	Hogan, John,	40	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	155
37	Bourke, Domk.,	21	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	203	160
38	Hevernan, Philip,	50	Aughleam, Mullet	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Outstanding	200	154
39	Reilly, James,	35	Drum, Mullet	light-grey	brown	pale	Outstanding	198	154
40	Kane, Richard,	—	Fallmore, Mullet	green	brown	—	Outstanding	211	161
41	———	—	Mullet	blue	brown	pale & freckled	Outstanding	186	164
42	M'Loughlin, Th.,	25	Blacksod, Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Flat	197	154
43	Meenaghan, Th.,	18	Blacksod, Mullet	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	196	159
44	Dixon, ——,	50	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	dark	Attached lobules	196	153
45	Cafferky, Hugh,	—	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Attached lobules	198	148
46	Coyle, Francis,	47	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	204	161
47	Padden, Domk.,	22	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Outstanding, lobes absent	196	156
48	Padden, John,	18	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	pale, freckled	Flat, lobes absent	194	150
49	Dixon, James,	28	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Flat, lobes absent	200	156
50	Lavelle, Anthony,	24	Tip., Mullet	green	black	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	206	164
51	Meenaghan, Ml.,	—	Inishkea, S.	green	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	196	159
52	M'Ginty, Owen,	35	Inishkea, S.	blue	black-brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	208	162
53	Monaghan, Ml.,	59	Inishkea, S.	light-brown	black	dark	Outstanding	192	160
54	Keane, Patrick,	19	Inishkea, S.	blue	fair	ruddy, freckled	Outstanding	195	164
55	O'Donnell, John,	24	Inishkea, S.	blue	fair	ruddy, freckled	Outstanding, lobes attached	204	157
56	Dixon, Patrick,	33	Aghadoon, Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat	204	158
57	Carey, Martin,	26	Aghadoon, Mullet	dark-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	194	162
58	Lavelle, Patrick,	30	Aghadoon, Mullet	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	202	157
59	Dixon, Patrick,	30	Aghadoon, Mullet	green	black	pale	Flat	208	159
60	Burke, John,	23	Belmullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	164
61	Joyce, Patrick,	18	Buncrena, Mullet	blue	fair	ruddy	Outstanding	191	156
62	Padden, Michael,	22	Knocknashambo, Mullet	blue	brown	dark	Flat, lobes attached	195	154

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Facial.				Nasal.			Auricular Radii.			Height.		Forelimb.			Remarks.
Face length.	Upper Face length.	Breadth.	Bigonial Breadth.	Length.	Breadth.	Internal Binocular bdth.	Cranial Height.	Nasal.	Alveolar.	Standing.	Sitting.	Span.	Hand.	Forearm.	
114	69	140	112	53	33	27	122	95	91	1726	923	1800	204	260	—
132	78	142	113	58	31	31	129	101	103	1782	970	1930	213	277	Name is an Anglicized form of O'Conboirne.
114	68	146	110	49	34	31	133	98	108	1711	946	1870	200	274	—
120	72	132	111	49	30	28	125	91	90	1709	932	1750	181	257	—
133	77	139	102	54	36	35	125	97	105	1730	903	1838	188	286	Father's people from Co. Clare, 50 years ago.
121	75	140	121	52	32	31	133	96	89	1758	952	1960	198	273	—
134	77	143	118	56	40	32	127	101	109	1764	950	1860	196	270	—
123	76	139	108	56	34	32	131	92	95	1776	945	1920	209	266	—
132	75	150	110	57	38	32	145	97	93	1805	973	1853	192	263	—
125	74	148	104	54	33	28	133	95	86	1730	927	1830	195	264	Did not give name; mother's name Lynsky.
120	73	145	120	53	36	33	127	100	100	1730	903	1718	193	263	Beard fair.
122	72	147	114	49	34	34	132	95	99	1674	198	1727	188	252	—
125	76	141	116	48	35	30	127	96	98	1640	905	1678	192	256	—
125	76	138	110	57	35	30	130	101	101	1744	920	1822	197	273	Nose slightly acquiline.
126	72	143	108	55	40	35	132	99	105	1721	921	1810	204	250	—
124	75	138	112	52	32	37	126	104	103	1683	885	1826	191	272	Nose sinuous.
122	71	141	110	55	33	34	133	103	99	1752	925	1866	200	275	—
126	76	148	118	53	35	33	132	101	102	1746	950	1850	193	264	—
131	72	154	124	50	33	35	138	105	109	1788	945	1870	198	269	Extremely muscular.
119	73	138	112	49	37	32	125	92	92	1690	877	1785	197	244	Nose sinuous.
133	77	143	118	58	36	27	140	91	90	1725	910	1805	200	260	—
132	74	138	108	53	35	20	126	93	93	1650	840	1765	202	269	—
110	63	142	111	45	33	36	134	93	95	1697	860	1775	203	265	—
123	67	146	118	48	37	32	133	95	90	1692	926	1800	193	263	Father's people from Co. Galway.
131	72	144	126	50	37	31	131	98	98	1810	963	1991	205	298	—
117	73	144	114	53	33	33	133	102	99	1675	885	1816	195	270	Folds of pinna obliterated.
117	67	143	120	48	35	33	126	99	100	1642	865	1700	182	253	—
134	77	140	115	52	34	31	137	102	102	1707	905	1785	190	264	—
130	74	140	118	56	31	34	132	94	96	1794	920	1875	195	286	—
124	77	140	112	57	33	28	134	96	96	1697	903	1720	191	270	—
129	75	145	118	53	39	30	130	100	100	1703	934	1780	193	271	—

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"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis and struma are stated to be comparatively rare. 164

Malignant disease is very common in the Mullet, especially in the electoral district of Binghamstown South, which includes all the southern part of the peninsula. The majority of these cases are said to fall into the hands of "cancer curers," who use arsenic paste.

Rheumatism is one of the most prevalent troubles, especially in the elderly and old.

"Gravel" is a common complaint all over the district, and a good many deaths from this cause are registered.

Dietetic diseases.—Digestive troubles are very common everywhere, but more especially in the inland parts where the dietary is less varied; "boxty," or potato-bread and the abuse of strong tea seem to be very largely responsible. 164 292

Along the coast, ento-parasites, due to the large proportion of fish in the dietary, are of very frequent occurence.

Respiratory diseases.—Bronchitis is very prevalent in the winter and spring, and spasmodic asthma is stated to be not an uncommon affection. 164

Local affections are few and not very serious. Conjunctivitis is common, and much aggravated by the peat-smoke of the houses.

As regards dental troubles, the people are by no means free from these, though as a rule the teeth are even and white, and remain sound until late in life. [142]

"Female" troubles seem to be very common.

Venereal diseases are practically non-existant.

Skin.—Skin diseases are very prevalent. Among these the most common are—tinea tonsurans, eczema, sea boils, and scabies.

Accidental injuries.—Owing to the mode of life of the people and their environment, accidents frequently happen, especially fractures and contusions from falls, bites and other injuries from domestic animals, and burns. [752]

4. *Psychology.*—The difficulties of treating this part of the subject justly are, in the case of a stranger, very great, as his acquaintance with the people cannot be of sufficiently long standing to allow of the knowledge of more than the superficial part of their character, while, in the case of a resident, personal likes and antipathies, and local quarrels or friendships, largely influence his opinions. 181

The following description, though to some extent derived from personal observation, is for the most part obtained from several local

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SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE:
"Oiḋe Ċloinne Lir. The Fate of the Children of Lir." (Dublin, 1883.) 113

TROTTER.—"Walks through Ireland."

WARREN, R.—"Birds observed breeding on the coasts of Sligo and Mayo." "The Irish Naturalist," vol. iv. p. 180. (Dublin, 1895.)

NOTE.—The late Dean Lyons, of Kilmore, the well-known archæologist, had written the history of Erris, but died without publishing it. The MS. is now missing, but was until lately in the possession of the Rev. James Durcan of Bangor, Erris.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

(*From Photographs, by* C. R. & J. M. BROWNE.)

PLATE XV.

1. Group of men at Muingcrena, Mullet. Taken in order from, left to right, the names are:— 1420 291

Back row—Patrick Toole, James M'Cormack, Patrick Padden James Dixon, No. 50; J. Lavelle.

Front row—Francis Coyle, No. 47; Hugh Cafferky, No. 46; Anthony Lavelle, No. 51; H. Joyce.

2, 3. Anthony Dunleavy, aged 60 years, Emlybeg, No. 13.

4. William Gaughan, aged 28 years, Emlybeg, No. 12.

5. ——, ——, ——, No. 41; Richard Cane, No. 40. Both from Fallmore, a small village at the southern extremity of the peninsula of the Mullet.

PLATE XVI.

6. Group of men from Iniskea.

7, 7*a*. Michael Cawley, aged 41 years; South Iniskea, No. 4.

8. Philip Lavelle, aged 33 years; North Iniskea, No. 1.

9, 9*a*. Patrick Cawley, aged 40 years; South Iniskea, No. 3.

PLATE XVII.

10. Group of men and boys at Portacloy. The figure on the extreme right shows the dress of the younger boys.

11, 12. William Bourne, aged 33 years, No. 34, and —— Bourne, both from Portacloy.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

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2 3 4

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[End Plate A]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

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9 (a)

7 (a)

[End Plate B]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

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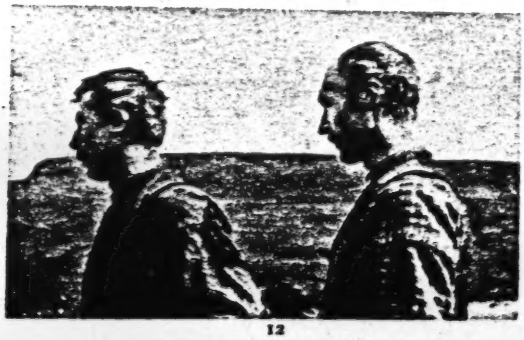

12

[End Plate C]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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142
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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

764

grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

[211]

796

Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families involved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

[793]
[356]
[783]
[674]
[777]
[776]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

124 which the hair of many of the men was cut, which often rendered dis-
[302] tinction of shade very difficult. Owing to the season most of the observations had to be made in the morning when the people were going to their work, or early in the evening when they were returning, or gathered around their cottage doors; in many cases, however, they were followed to the harvest field and measured there.

The taking of photographs did not, as elsewhere, cause the assembly
126 of the knot of spectators which usually affords so good an opportunity
[123] for the collection of eye and hair colours; it had rather the opposite effect, as the people have a strong dislike to having their portraits taken.

In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 241 individuals, on 40 of whom (being about one-fifth of the adult males of the islands) measurements and other observations were taken.

Care was exercised that none of those measured should be entered in the ordinary nigrescence cards, as well as to avoid recording the same individual twice or the noting of persons who were not natives.

(E). *Photography.*—For the reasons already mentioned there could not be as much done in this department as had been hoped; but, in spite of the strong aversion shown by many of the people to having their portraits taken, and the strong winds prevailing during our stay, my brother, J. M. Browne, who accompanied me to do the necessary photography, succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of typical groups, as well as some single portraits in full face and profile, and a series of views illustrative of the modes of life and environment of the people.

2.—Physical Characters.

142 (A). The people, on the whole, much resemble the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Connemara, and their appearance testifies to a mixed origin. The following is believed to be a correct description of their average physical characters:—

Stature and bulk.—The men, as a rule, are stoutly built, and of medium height; very few can fairly be termed tall, and there is a very considerable proportion of men of low stature. The average height is
[141] 1633 mm., or about 5 feet 6½ inches, which falls short of the Irish mean stature as found by Gould, the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association, and others, by about two inches.

142 The women are of a slighter build than the men, and, apparently,
143 more even in height; they also show more strikingly that great simi-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

larity of appearance produced by the constant intermarriage of the same families through several generations. 142 [143]

Limbs.—The hand is often short and broad, and the forearm and upper arm long. In no case was the span of arms (*grande envergue*) observed to be less than the stature, a peculiarity which was observable in nearly a quarter of the persons measured in Aran last year.

Head.—The head is, in many cases, of large size, and is usually well-shaped, with an almost straight or but slightly projecting occiput. It rises to a considerable height above the ears (yielding a mean height index of 69·2), and has a mean cephalic index, when reduced to the cranial standard by the subtraction of two units, of 78·4, or, in other words, it is mesaticephalic; about a quarter of the men measured, however, were brachycephalic, and an eighth slightly dolichocephalic. The eleven crania of both sexes measured at Tempull Colman yielded an average cephalic index of 77·0, thus nearly agreeing with the measurements on the living subject (see p. 333). The forehead is broad and upright, but not very high. Superciliary ridges and glabella very slightly marked, and eyebrows thick, level, and seldom showing much tendency to arch. 142 141

Face.—The face is long and scutiform, narrowing in rapidly in the bigonial region. The cheek-bones are not prominent; the horizontal lines at the "root" of the nose are very deep, and have between them a raised ridge or fold of skin. The eyes have irides of a blue or light bluish-grey, seldom hazel, and are moderately wide apart; being often half-closed they give the impression of being small, and are marked externally by deep horizontal wrinkles. The nose is in many cases rather short, and in profile is usually straight or sinuous, rarely aquiline, and then not to a great degree. The mouth is large and frequently open with lips of medium thickness. The teeth are remarkably short, broad, and even, remaining white, and, apparently, sound to an advanced period of life. The chin is long, but not projecting; the mental process being small, and the jaw is very long with but little curve. The ears are small, outstanding,[1] and somewhat coarsely moulded, and in nearly half the cases observed had the lobule adherent or absent. Several abnormalities were observed, as presence of the Darwinian tubercle, flattening of the upper part of the pinna, with obliteration of the anti-helix, and in one case (No. 5 of those measured) 142

[1] This is probably due to the lateral bulging of the mastoid processes so noticeable in the crania.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Face.—The face is of medium length, with prominent cheek-bones, and is rather broader in the bigonial region than observed in either Aran or Inishbofin.

The nose is short and has nearly always a straight profile; of the 62 men measured, 50 had straight, 8 sinuous, 2 aquiline, and 2 retroussé noses.

The wrinkles on the face are very deep, most so about the eyes and at the "root" of the nose, where there is often a raised fold of skin between two deep furrows. The mouth is large, with lips of medium thickness, often kept habitually apart when the face is at rest, but the large hanging lower lip is not so noticeable a character here as in other localities of the west coast.

The teeth are usually very short and even.

The chin is prominent, but not long, and the angles of the jaw are rather oblique.

The eyes, which are placed moderately wide apart, have irides of a light blue or bluish-gray, and being deep set and (in the fishermen) habitually half closed, they present to a casual observer the appearance of being small in size.

The ears are small, projecting, and rather coarsely moulded. Abnormalities of the lobule are common, and were seen in 33 out of the 62 men on whom observations were made; of these the lobule was absent in 10, and attached in 23. Absence of the lobule is very common in the northern part of the Mullet, and appears to be a local character there; in nearly all the men seen at Muingerena this part of the organ was either of very small size or was absent altogether. Flattening out of the pinna and Darwinian tubercle were observed in several cases. [143]

Skin.—Wrinkles, as before mentioned, come early, first appearing about the eyes.

The complexion is either ruddy or pale, rarely sallow; on exposure to the sun and wind it becomes a clear red, seldom freckling or turning brown.

Hair.—The prevailing colour for the hair is dark brown, next in order of frequency is brown or chestnut, next black; fair and red hair are comparatively scarce.

In the case of the Inishkea people, the most usual hair colour seems to be a clear brown, accompanied by reddish-brown beard and blue-grey eyes; in these islands also, there is a larger proportion of fair hair than on the mainland. The hair and beard (when worn) are fairly abundant. Greyness does not appear to set in early.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

[158] *Insanity.*—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
[273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

164 *Fevers.*—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the basis of geography, partly upon his knowledge of the regional anthropological differences. Convenience also dictated the use of county boundaries in the majority of instances. 128

AGE

The average age of 8809 Irish males is 34.55 ± 0.10 years. In the anthropometric survey of a population it seems desirable to include the males of subadult age (18-20 years) as an offset to those who are presumably senile (60 years and upward). The incomplete growth of the subadults tends to counterbalance the diminished height of the aged. The standard deviation of age for the entire series is 13.95 ± 0.07 years. The county subgroup means of ages range from 29.45 ± 0.29 (Longford, Westmeath) to 38.80 ± 0.51 (Waterford and Wexford). 145

STATURE

Stature was measured by the standard technique with the Martin anthropometer. Subjects, of course, were required to remove their shoes. 141 171

Table 1 presents the data on stature and figure 1 plots the means of stature by local subgroups in intervals of 1 cm. The mean of stature for the whole of Ireland is 172.02 cm., which, of course, is tall. The actual range of subgroup means is only 4 cm.—from 170.52 cm. (Meath, Louth, County Dublin) to 174.54 cm. (Aran Islands). The variabilities of the nineteen subgroups are for the most part neither significantly higher nor lower than that of the total series. The standard deviation of stature for the total series (6.81 ± 0.03 cm.) is not very high when the age range of the population is taken into consideration. It is somewhat higher than that of any of the eight European ethnic series recorded by Davenport and Love as a result of measurements taken upon troops during demobilization after the World War ('21, p. 113). Standard deviations in these series ranged from 6.06 cm. (Italians) to 6.62 cm. (English). The mean height of 6164 Irish was 171.36 cm. and the standard deviation of stature 6.31 cm. Thus our

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at, or under, £2. 423 311 [435]

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inishshark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among themselves, but many of the children and young people have little or no acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark, which is less in communication with the outer world than Inishbofin. 191

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. were illiterate :— 212 162

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160 females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65 females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inishbofin.

(D.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were— 145 162

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
" 80 " 85, 5 males and 14 females,
" 85 " 90, 4 " 0 "

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

126 graphs of occupations by admitting of their being taken when the performers were in motion. It could also be used on occasions when the high winds would not allow the setting up of a tripod stand.

2.—*Physical Characters*:—

(A). The general physical characters of the people are as given 142 below, though some differences exist between the inhabitants of different parts of the district.

The people on the whole are good-looking, especially when young; [145] many of the girls and young women are very handsome, but they appear to age rapidly and early become wrinkled.

Stature and bulk.—The men of this district are as a rule of fair average stature, very stoutly built, and broad shouldered; while there are few who can fairly be termed very tall, yet many reach a good height, and the proportion of small men is by no means large. The [141] average stature of the 62 adult males measured was 1725 mm., or about 5 feet 8 inches. The extremes were 1628 mm. (5 feet 4 inches), and 1820 mm., or about 5 feet 11½ inches.

The women seem to be more even in height than the men.

Limbs.—The hands are usually of medium size, broad and with fingers squarely clubbed at the ends. The forearms (measured from styloid process to the head of radius) are often very long for the stature, and the span is sometimes very great, though in a few cases it is less than the stature, a character also noted in the Aran Islands, though the proportion of cases in which it was observed was much greater there.

Head.—The head is generally well shaped and is often of large size. The forehead is broad and upright (rarely receding), rounded away at the sides, and of fair height; superciliary ridges and glabella of no great size, eye-brows thick and level.

The cranial curve rises to a pretty fair height above the ears [141] (height index 65·8), though not attaining the altitude seen in the people of Aran and the men of Inishbofin, and descends in an even sweep to the occipital protuberance as the occipital region does not usually project.

In the majority of cases, as will be seen from the table of indices, 141 the head is mesaticephalic, the mean index being 77·4 (when two units are deducted to reduce to the cranial standard). Of the 62 persons measured, 10 were brachycephalic, and 11 dolichocephalic. The extremes were 86·2 and 72·3.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

438 ing the internal trade carried on within Ireland. There we can follow the movement of the goods of production through the population.[15] The writers deal with the statistics reflecting conditions before the advent of the De Valera government (1932) because they are the more complete and because changes introduced since then by the Fianna Fáil domestic and foreign policies had not yet (1935) had time to become the settled habit of the people at the time of the study.

438 In 1930 the majority of the agricultural produce of the Free State was exported. Estimated by the value of the
439 products, the destination of the produce was as follows: £23,000,000 worth, or about 35 per cent, was consumed by the agricultural community; about 17 per cent was consumed by others in the Free State; and about 43 per cent was exported. The greater consumption of agricultural [146] products in the country does not, of course, imply a better diet necessarily, since we are disregarding for the moment the large imports of foodstuffs made by both town and country districts, and since much of the country consumption went into further animal production.

439 Export, of course, was designed for the English market. In terms of specific products, 81 per cent of the cattle and sheep production was exported, 59 per cent of the pigs, 37 per cent of the output of butter and cream.[16]

In other words, only a small part of the output of more expensive cattle and sheep was consumed at home, but, at the other extreme, the cheaper stuffs stayed on the farm. The great bulk of the potatoes and turf produced, and just about one-half of the output of such dairy produce as whole-milk, butter, eggs, and poultry, were consumed by the producers. Tillage crops tell the same story; they remained at home. The chief and overwhelmingly important exports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

[15] *Agricultural Output of Saorstát Éireann, 1926–27*, pp. 6, 10.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and 557 793
two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanc- [555]
tity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary.

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, 554
fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not 555
bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed [178]
publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the [241]
quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden [626]
there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through perform- 554
ing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills 461
of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary [462]
islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag 555
before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small [538]
social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, [178]
are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 555
years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. 156
When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, 159
singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk.

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous 539
deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted 655
more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within 181
earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by [526]
former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half- [147]
hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing [793]
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as
Time and *Life* mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15 •
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be 181
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 152
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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175
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779
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[For information pertaining to the historical background of Irish national character and personality development, the relation to sexual repression and theological dogma, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 20-27.]

114 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe*, by
155 William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark*, probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and
[12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and
+ 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.[6] Opler and Singer have the following to
• 15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland:
[593]

> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.
> [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures
> [838] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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[815] [6] Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma,
[779] and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 • [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

142 there was arrest of growth of the left ear which was about a third of the size of the right.

Skin.—The complexion is pale and very seldom freckled, not bronzing from exposure to the sun, but becoming a clear red. Wrinkles come early, especially about the eyes.

Hair.—The hair is usually a dark brown, sometimes, though seldom, black; in many cases it is of a dark shade scarcely distinguishable, when cut close, from true black; the beard, which is usually much lighter than the hair of the scalp, in these cases is often a clear dark brown. As a general rule the dark hair is accompanied by blue or grey eyes, and the black by light or dark hazel. The hair of both sexes is often abundant, but partial baldness is not at all uncommon even in men under forty. The beard is usually fairly large.

151 *Sight and hearing.*—Both of these are very acute; of 18 men tested with Snellen's types, not one had vision of less than $\frac{4}{5}$, and nine of them could read the 5 metre type at over 14 metres. The distance at which they can make out a sail or a bird on the wing is amazing. Their hearing is also very acute.

(B). *Statistics of Hair and Eye Colour:*—

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CHILDREN.—I. BOYS.

HAIR.	EYES.			Totals.	Percentage Hair Colours.
	Light.	Medium.	Dark.		
Red, ..	1	—	—	1	2·27
Fair, ..	7	—	—	7	15·90
Brown, ..	25	4	—	29	65·91
Dark, ..	4	1	—	5	11·36
Black, ..	—	1	1	2	4·54
Totals, ..	37	6	1	44	
Percentage Eye Colours,	84·09	13·64	2·27	100·00	

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10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
1	Boyce, Myles, .	62	Middlequarter	blue	dark-brown	ruddy	Nose sinuous; schoolmaster.
2	Lavelle, Anthony,	35	Knock	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Nose aquiline.
3	Reilly, John, . .	63	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; is somewhat bald.
4	Malia, John, . .	50	Westquarter	grey	dark	pale	Nose straight; bald on vertex.
5	Joyce, James, .	48	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Lobe of ear attached; large left ear only partially developed.
6	Malia, Michael, .	35	Knock	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight.
7	Walsh, Patrick, .	24	Middlequarter	blue-grey	dark	pale	Sight very keen; nose straight.
8	Halloran, John, .	20	Shark	blue-grey	brown	sallow	Nose straight.
9	Cannon, Michael,	19	Middlequarter	blue	fair	pale	Lobes of ears absent.
10	King, John, . .	40	Cloonamore	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Vision very acute.
11	Powell, Patrick, .	24	Knock	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Vision very keen; nose straight; lobes of ears attached.
12	Cloherty, Festus,	24	Knock	dark-hazel	dark	ruddy	Nose retroussé.
13	Toole, John, . .	21	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Nose aquiline.
14	Scuffle, Patrick, .	(?)	Cloonamore	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; would not give age; lobes of ears attached.
15	Malia, George, .	24	Shark	grey	dark	pale	Lobes of ears attached: vision very keen.
16	Halloran, John, .	25	Westquarter	blue	red	ruddy	Nose sinuous.
17	Kenny, Michael, .	31	Cloonamore	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight.
18	M'Greal, Michl.,	20	Shark	green	dark	sallow	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; a fine-looking specimen of the islanders.
19	Burk, Thomas, .	19	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose retroussé; lobes of ears attached.
20	Joyce, Michael, .	19	Middlequarter	grey	dark-brown	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
21	Prendergast, Wm.	53	Middlequarter	brown	black	ruddy	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; teeth even and meeting.

[p. 328]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
22	Lenane, John, .	50	Middlequarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Lobes of ears attached.
23	Leonard, John, .	30	Middlequarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; teeth meet.
24	Walsh, John,* .	30	Middlequarter	brown	black	pale	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears absent; sight keen.
25	Malia, Patrick, .	—	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; would not give age; sight good.
26	Cannon, Edward,	54	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
27	Cannon, John, .	53	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
28	Lavelle, ——, .	60	(?)	dark-hazel	dark	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
29	Cloherty, Patrick	19	Westquarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears absent; vision acute.
30	Lavelle, Thomas,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous.
31	Martin, Thomas,	60	Westquarter	blue	dark	pale	Hair dark, when young; lobes of ears attached; sight very keen.
32	Cloherty, John, .	38	Westquarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears attached.
33	Lavelle, Michael,	50	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
34	Moran, Michael, .	55	Middlequarter	dark-grey	brown	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
35	Mogan, ——, .	23	Westquarter	grey	black	pale	Hair on face brown; nose straight.
36	Halloran, Thomas	53	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; slightly bald.
37	Halloran, Redmond,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Obliterated folds of pinna; slightly bald; head of large size.
38	Lavelle, Patrick,	30	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous; folds of pinna slightly obliterated.
39	Lavelle, John, .	17	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Hair curly; lobes of ears attached.
40	Naughten, Michl.	50	Middlequarter	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; says he is of Scotch descent.

* Name indistinct.

[p. 330]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

●151 ***Sight and Hearing.***—Both these senses are very acute, especially the former, which, in the fishermen, is extremely keen, many of these men can see small objects floating on the water at a distance where, even by the aid of a strong glass, most persons would find great difficulty in seeing them at all.

This description being a general one, little mention has been made
142 of the differences which exist between the people of different parts of
184 the district. It appears to be the general opinion on the mainland, that the inhabitants of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island, and, also, that the natives of both islands are fairer than those of the mainland, and personal inspection has corroborated these opinions. The islanders are readily distinguishable from the mainland people, not only by their dress of blue homespun, but also by their fairer hair and complexion, and their different cast of features.

The men of the district round Portacloy are darker in hair and seem to be of a different type; many of them are exceedingly fine well-built fellows.

In no part of the district are the people of small stature, though
142 a large number of them are descendants of dispossessed Ulster people.
114 On the contrary, they appear to be taller and stouter than the inhabitants of the southern part of the country. A statement,[1] originally made by an anonymous writer, has somehow gained currency, and has been repeatedly quoted abroad, noticeably by M. De Quatrefages,[2] and by M. Devay,[3] that the descendants of the Ulster people driven two centuries ago into Sligo and Mayo, had dwindled into dwarfs of five feet two inches high, prognathous and pot-bellied.

This most certainly does not apply to any section of the inhabitants of this part of Mayo, if indeed it were ever true of any part of the counties named, which repeated inquiries and personal observation agree in denying most positively.

The statement is quite unsupported by other writers dealing with this region at the same time. Thus Mr. P. Knight, writing in 1834, says of the people of Erris that "they are generally a good-humoured, good-natured, hospitable, generous race—*of middle size*—active, intelligent, and, when an opportunity offers of showing it, industrious." C. O.[4] describes the people as tall.

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[1] Dublin University Magazine, No. 48, p. 658.
[2] L'Unité de l'Espèce Humain, ii., 316.
[3] Devay Fr. "Du Danger des Mariages consanguins sous le Rapport Sanitaire."
[4] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
602 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
167 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
484 of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the
533 peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the small farmers as being a 'cut' below them- 776
selves; consequently, his untidiness is a byword 626
among them. One version of the story goes, in synopsis, as follows:

"Many families moved into a herdsman's place, but they were all chased out of it. Finally, one family moved in, cleaned up the house, and a 'paving path' round it. A little old woman visits the wife, borrows a cooking-pot, and is similarly well treated. In gratitude she explains that the woman of the house and her husband will always prosper and never be molested, because they alone of all the families had cleaned up the place where 'they' walk."

In this way the values of daily life are projected [181]
into and reinforced by the supernatural world. The 626
same state of affairs holds good even in the con- 576
vention of social intercourse. The vocabulary of the 152
countryman is full of homely pieties. On entering a house the proper greeting is "God bless all here". On coming upon another at work, one says, "God bless the work". Similarly, "God spare you the health" is 'put on' anyone who 'coors' with you. Any praise of person, child, or animal is accompanied with a "God bless it"; any mention of unpleasantness or danger is followed with some such homily as "God bless the mark", and so on. If one omits such pieties, one is sure to rouse resentment in the listeners. For one must remember that emotion supports these conventions. But the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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152 resentment springs from other causes, too. These
576 formulae are known to the folklorist as 'protective
626 formulae'. He means by that that they have reference to the lesser faith as well as to the greater that the countryman holds.

751 If you ask the countryman why he uses such
152 terms, he will give you several answers. First, "You
576 have right to do it, because you owe it to God",
626 and then, second, "It will bring good luck, it will keep 'them' away". For the countryman, both answers are true. The phrases are both acts of pious invocation and protective devices warding off evil. Their omission is really dangerous. It puts the person or thing so neglected in jeopardy; the negligent speaker is open to suspicion of an evil intent. Thus there are many stories which attribute disease, disaster and death to such omissions. In this way again, persons and things of value to the countryman are brought into the scope of his beliefs and attitudes. The forces which affect them are brought into a shape in which he can understand them and in which he can cope with them.

776 Perhaps the most interesting part of this process is to be found in the way in which the goods by which the countryman lives are brought into his belief. The good people affect the household and all its goods. They 'take' those things which one values, round which one's interest and sentiments, as a member of the farm-working family, are centred. One Galway woman phrased this idea to

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

000 Strangers who spend weeks or months in Inis Beag and are able to grasp some of the realities of life there often leave emotionally distraught, knowing that they 609 never will be accepted by the people. Acceptance by the islanders is a problem faced by not only outsiders, but by immigrants. The latter remain strangers for two or three generations, and some people, particularly descendants of fisherfolk, are regarded as outsiders despite the fact that the families of some have resided in Inis Beag for almost a century. Later we will learn that the islanders have difficulty [152] [602] forming affectional bonds among themselves, even among kin; thus, they are able to give even less of themselves to those "who do not belong." Strangers who know Inis Beag well often complain that they must do all of the "giving," as the folk can only "take."

The islanders also share attitudes toward other individuals and groups, which I can mention only in passing. Among the most important are those concerning outsiders who have lived in Inis Beag for long periods of time (the expatriate Dane, lighthouse keepers, Brendan Behan the writer, and Siobhain McKenna the actress); writers who have composed works about the island and have dwelled there or are folk themselves; particular persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands (a policeman, a teacher, a man of great strength, a keeper of a guest house, and a man who provides taxi service between the islands and the mainland in a small boat); peasants from bordering counties; religious groups (Protestants generally, members of the Church of Ireland, Jews, and even Italian Catholics); ethnic and racial groups (Americans, English, Germans, Negroes, tinkers, and foreigners as a class); and, finally, politicians and government bureaucrats and the Irish press.

609 I know of but few cases of discrimination practiced against any of these, 829 but prejudices held against some of them abound, based either on historical 186 experiences (with the English and the Church of Ireland) or on views inculcated by returned emigrants (concerning Jews and Negroes, who seldom visit Inis Beag). [123] Islanders, as well as most Irish, are ambivalent about "Yanks," as visiting emigrants from the United States are called, but are mostly critical of them; often my wife and I have been asked on first meeting an Irish person whether we are Irish-Americans or "real Americans," and when we have admitted to being the latter we have been well received. Conversely, we have seen Yanks shunned on revealing their pedigree. They are accused of "lording it over" their Irish kin and friends.

Formal Social Control

000 Anthropologists customarily classify social control systems as formal and informal. Formal systems are governments whose controls are based on physical violence or its threat—physical punishment, ostracism, banishment, and extermination; while informal systems include sanctions of a religious or economic nature and those exercised by primary groups—gossip, ridicule, persuasion, and opprobrium. Controls of a negative nature are buttressed by positive rewards, such as services provided by a government or the feeling of security gained from primary group approval. It is not the formal system of local and national governments

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
[578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[164] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[662] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
662 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céilí* on the common land, which married women do not.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send
[753] the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief. Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power,* says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 462 pork. By the time this is ready, the men are in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

In the meantime the men have been engaged upon work of their own. The farmer rises when he hears his wife busy herself in rekindling the turf on the hearth. If there are sons, he wakes them. After that he goes to the cow barns in the haggard to inspect the cattle housed there overnight and tend to their wants in water and hay. After breakfast, if the day is fine, neither too bitterly cold nor too soakingly wet, he sallies forth into the fields to whatever work the time of the year demands. If he finds himself confined to the house, he still has plenty to do in house and haggard.

512 462 264 [153] If he and his sons go to the fields, he probably returns about eleven-thirty for the noon meal, the heavy meal of the day. Long habit calls forth his hunger and identifies it with the house. Several countrymen have remarked that they never feel hungry away from the house but are ready to eat when they get inside. The dinner unites most of the family for the first time during the day since breakfast. Only the small children of school age are absent. Their share of the meal is often saved for them until they return about four o'clock.

[262] [521] As at breakfast, the men sit down together immediately, falling to the steaming plates of cabbage, bacon, and potatoes the woman sets before them. As they eat, she stands ready to refill their plates, talking with them about the morning's work and the news of the neighborhood. It is the chief time of family conversation. During the meal the woman has boiled tea and, when the men finish with their plates, she clears away and lays bread and tea before them. Sometimes there is a longer interval between tea and dinner, devoted to smoking and talk.

512 264 [273] As before, the women and children do not eat until the men have finished. They take their places together when the men have left or have moved off to smoke an after-dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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centuries of careful observations. I collected 250 of these signs and placed them 821
in the following general categories: density, location, and time of mist; type of [126]
frost and heaviness of dew; size and position of rings around sun and moon; color and conformation of sky and clouds at particular times of the day; density and location of fog banks; position and time of rainbows; clarity, closeness, and color of Inis Thiar and the mainland; changes in the weather in relation to tides; actions of animals; and pains in the human body. Of special interest are the signs associ- [825]
ated with animal behavior, such as the height at which swallows fly, the prevalence of fly hordes, the crowing of roosters and braying of asses, the position that cats assume at the hearth, and whether or not spiders weave their webs across trails. The expert forecaster will weigh together as many as ten signs before announcing his prediction, and I once collected 16 from an old man in Low Village assessing conditions 12 hours hence. Some signs are quite obviously undependable, among them the quacking of ducks which some say will "call" rain, and the scratching of floors and furniture by cats which, according to others, will point the direction of the wind following a shift in the near future. The folk believe that the moon and [828]
tides exert a profound influence on both weather and human behavior; my wife on one occasion was told that her "snappish" mood (the words of a neighbor, not mine) was caused by the new moon.

The climate, in part, determines the conception of seasons held by the islanders. Four seasons are recognized, but their duration deviates from the norm of Western culture. Winter is conceived as embracing only December and January, while spring is thought to commence in February and end in early April. The other two seasons are not so well defined, but most folk agree that summer takes up the greater part of the year—from April until mid-September—and autumn the remaining three months. December and January are regarded as the coldest months, during which time there is a lull in economic activities, but planting begins early in February. Although the prevailing winds during the year are from the west and southwest, for several weeks between January and mid-March icy winds blow steadily from the southeast quarter and cause much physical discomfort and illness. In late March and early April, temperatures rise rapidly, and some islanders believe that March "steals" three days from April so that summer cannot be expected until after April 3rd. The circumstances of the theft are revealed in a legend.

The reason that summer is thought to extend for so long is a psychological [154]
one: the folk dislike winter with its cold and dampness and attendant sickness and the sense of isolation from the world that it brings. Few outsiders visit Inis Beag during the winter, and often the steamer is unable to leave port or must turn back because of gales or high seas. It is not out of the ordinary for the island to be totally isolated for a week or ten days because of inclement conditions. From late January on, warm weather is anticipated eagerly, and I was told time and again that summer was imminent when spells of cold and rainy weather occurred between March and June of 1960. During a quarrel with her husband over his confident weather forecasting ability, a woman noted for being an outspoken realist declared, "Inis Beag has only one summer month—July."

The island experiences but eight hours of daylight, from nine o'clock in 132
the morning until five in the afternoon, at the time of the winter solstice, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has
their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility
toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of
wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to [793]
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

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582 589 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few
581 562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the
[154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has
[593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous
work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land,
581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because
155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to
retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run
[589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors
and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the
sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that
584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently
173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love
584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on,
[208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost
has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to
have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the
sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the
occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and
[175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two
generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women
the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about
the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani-
[581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding
into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths
for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the
584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man
who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his
584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The
571 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a
bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young
man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and
acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for
matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three
more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the
bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12
days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon
[521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these
times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink-
585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the
[829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the
[582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of
the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree
[593] of consanguinity.

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(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family: 155 593

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.... An Irish male ... beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous.... all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications.... Irish resistance to role identification ... was seen as ... having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters.... [The] ... basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt ... (Opler and Singer 1956:15–18). [154] [582] [589]

Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present: 155 572 154

> *Grania* is ... a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas ... Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work.... it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman ... would be forever excluded ... such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines ... are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all.... A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar ... to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145–146). 155 572 154 562

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581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
[578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[154] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[562] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
562 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céilí* on the common land, which married women do not.

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829
779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, [123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying
793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and
776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them
165 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are
562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of
[829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk
[788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or
• [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obliga-
771 tions can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some
828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case. 203 [609] [124]

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics. 797 793 [776] [783] [577] [431] [781]

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis. 861 155 855 [561] [856] [864] [863] 858 562 [593] [872] 562 [794] [858] [609] [832] [164]

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could 204 831 124 831 855

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[64] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

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178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

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[For information pertaining to emigration and its relation to sexual repression, late marriage, celibacy, and family relations in Ireland, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 32-36.]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" 158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. 751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with [291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear [834] of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism [753] and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac- 514 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and 827 animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha- [863] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. [825] Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at [562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting [273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most [241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main- 237 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and 372 burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another 514 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the 283 secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are re- [462] quired to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

* 831 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are 522 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows • [154] little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore [123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

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626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
• 154 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

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581 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few
562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the
[154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has
[593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous
work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land,
581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because
• 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to
retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run
[589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors
and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the
sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that
584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently
173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love
584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on,
[208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost
has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to
have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the
sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the
occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and
[175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two
generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women
the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about
the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani-
[581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding
into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths
for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the
584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man
who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his
584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The
574 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a
bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young
man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and
acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for
matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three
more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the
bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12
days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon
[521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these
times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink-
585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the
[829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the
[582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of
[593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree
of consanguinity.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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593 —with a strong agnatic bias. Rights and duties are distributed among cognates,
602 but they are less strong among uterine and affinal kin, as well as among relatives of both lines according to distance from ego. Rights and duties include obligations to assist and defend, and mutual assistance in Inis Beag characterizes farming, fishing, housebuilding, unloading turf, carrying the coffin at a funeral, and many other activities. Reciprocation in some form for services rendered is almost an obsession among both kin and non-kin, and not to reciprocate adequately means to lose face. The matter of mutual defense will be considered in later sections and chapters.

551 Only 13 surnames are represented on the island, and there are 27 families bearing a single one, 11 bearing another, and 8 a third. Most Christian names are those of the Blessed Virgin and of saints, especially from the Irish past. Michael, Patrick, Sean (which often is transformed into John, although Eoin is John in Irish), Thomas, Martin, Peter, Coleman, and Joseph—in that order—are the most popular first names for males, while for females it is Mary, Brigid, Margaret, Ann,
[B44] Catherine, Sarah, Nora, and Teresa. In the past, it was customary for Inis Beag
[177] women to bear their offspring at home attended by nurse, midwife, or skilled female relative; but during the past decade, most infants have been delivered in the mainland hospital serving the island, where mothers have learned of "different" surnames and have assigned them to their own children—such as Gerard, Xavier, Christopher, and Pius for boys, and Rita, Carmel, Veronica, and Jude for girls.

601 Each person in the island has a term of reference which never is employed
561 as a term of address.[2] For a man, it is a nickname or his Christian name followed by that of his father: "The General" or Sean Michael. Women ordinarily are not given nicknames; if single, they append their father's first name to their own, and if married, their husband's. An adult man may bear the Christian name of his mother following his own rather than his father's, if, for instance, his mother was widowed early or unduly dominated her husband. Nicknames relate to such things as occupations, abodes, personality idiosyncracies, stature, color of hair, and events of the past; and many are uncomplimentary to the degree of fomenting disputes if uttered at improper times or to inappropriate persons.

• 155 Before turning to reciprocal relationships which exist between certain
593 agnatic, uterine, and affinal relatives, it is necessary to examine two phenomena which have a vital bearing on kinship and other behavior: the Oedipus complex and male solidarity. Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys says that there is in Ireland a ". . . centripetal mechanism built into the fabric of rural life. This is the strong, preferential love of the rural mother for her sons. She is a magnetic center of the family and her cohesive power is affection. This love, which leads her 'to slave' for her sons and to demand that her daughters do likewise, cushions the sons' hard lot. It mollifies the constant rub of his subordination to his father . . ."

[2] A term of reference is a name used to refer to a person who is not present, while a term of address is a name used to address a person to his face. In America, one might say in referring to his mother, "That woman walking toward us is my mother.", and then greet her as she joins the group, "Hi, Mom."; in this case, mother is a term of reference and Mom a term of address. Often terms of address in the Western world are Christian names, and some terms of reference and address may be identical. Anthropologists usually collect only terms which are used to designate various kin.

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(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family:

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.... An Irish male... beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous.... all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications.... Irish resistance to role identification... was seen as... having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters.... [The]... basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt... (Opler and Singer 1956:15–18).

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Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present:

> *Grania* is... a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas... Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work.... it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman... would be forever excluded... such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines... are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all.... A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar... to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145–146).

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Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858 children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842 high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162 average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593 done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861 mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864] elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155] and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593 bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582] to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606] law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother' " (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593 have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828] hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155] rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562] with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831] the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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593 [155] belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually [562] responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]

[831] As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between 593 brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the 578 mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when [858] the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand 603 that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculca- 593 tion of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

596 The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background 888 reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. [606] Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

114 Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied 578 seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

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779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, [123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying
793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and
776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them
165 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are
562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of
[829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk
[788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obligations can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some
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828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" 158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. 751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with [291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear [834] of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism [753] and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac- 514 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and 827 animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha- [863] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. [825] Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at [562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting [273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most [241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main- 237 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and 372 burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another 514 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the 283 secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are re- [462] quired to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are * 831 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood 522 by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows [154] little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song [123] that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

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• 155 Ireland was . . . one of the world's most ascetic countries, and the monas-
181 tic ideal has undoubtedly left a deep mark on the Irish mind. Although
182 Irish priests were permitted to have wives as late as the eighth century,
792 sexual renunciation came to be identified with virtue and distinction in the
779 community, and thousands of the best men and women lived apart from each other. Kevin Devlin in his *Christus Rex* article on "Single and Selfish" . . . says of the ancient Irish that "when they 'fell in love with Christianity' . . . they took to the ideal of virginity with a Pauline enthusiasm unknown elsewhere. St. Patrick himself noted this with an inflection of surprise in the *Confessions* . . ." (Blanshard 1954: 160–161).

Several Irish scholars since 1955 have expressed the opinion in personal conversations that the rapidity of Irish conversion to monasticism in the early medieval period can be attributed, in large measure, to masochism.
[53] This ancient character trait is most evident in the projective system of early Irish verbal art, if one discounts the possibility of widespread distortion through the actions of Celtic defense mechanisms and later revisionists.

In a recent book, the impact of Augustinianism at this time and in the centuries to come is examined by Fr. Alexander Humphreys. He says in *New Dubliners:*

The specific doctrinal tradition to which Ireland and the Irish countryman in particular has fallen heir is the Augustinian. . . . [It] lays relatively greater emphasis on the weakness and evil to which human nature is prone as the result of original sin. By the same token, it attributes relatively less efficacy to natural knowledge and human action and relatively more validity to God's revelation and more power to the action of God's grace. . . . [The] Irish countryman has acquired a more than average distrust of native human reason. As a Catholic he cannot and does not deny the validity of rational thought, but he tends to be quite suspicious of the pride of the mind and so wary of ultimate rationalism that he shies away from reasoned discussions of high truths. . . . The tradition he inherits tends toward a certain historical and theological positivism in regard to the major truths and values of life, and, together with other historical factors, has led him to an intensified reliance upon the teaching power of the Church as voiced by the clergy. At the same time, while appreciating the need for positive good works, he is inclined to place relatively greater emphasis on those which are directly concerned with obtaining grace and relatively lesser store by simple ethical behaviour. And finally, although he is certain that man's bodily nature with its emotions is at root good, he is rather more suspicious of it and deals with it somewhat more severely. As a result he inclines to a jaundiced view of sex and a generally ascetic outlook which

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

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Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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*831 enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theo-
• 155 logians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the
175 British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister
178 William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory
181 strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged
779 in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have
795 long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of
798 the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly
[785] could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges
155 of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one
178 Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism
181 as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the
779 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still
798 very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of
[874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161–162).

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better it God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105).

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters.

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent con-

114 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe*, by
• 155 William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark*, probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and
[12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and
+ 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.[6] Opler and Singer have the following to
15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland:
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> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.
> [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures
> [838] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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[815] [6] Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent
about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma,
[179] and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as employing informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative experiences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorganization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
• [155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
793 doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes
582 from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
[586] articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

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by choice, an old woman said, "City folk are always troubled. They aren't their own bosses, and they get up too early and work too hard. They face the dangers of traffic, and, worst of all, they meet with temptations of the flesh."

In the last chapter, I discussed two facets of the Inis Beag self-image: their seldom admitted poverty and indolence. Other facets have just been revealed in their appraisals of various groups, and still more are apparent when one examines their attitudes toward visitors to the island. During the summer, they enjoy the presence of strangers on the strand at steamer time, in the pubs, and at parties, and when winter comes many conversations dwell on those who were "great gas" —entertaining in song, dance, or repartee. But outsiders fulfill a far deeper need, in that most of them express admiration for the island and its inhabitants. They praise the beauty, antiquities, and history of Inis Beag, but more importantly the friendliness of the people and those customs and personality traits publicized by writers and film producers, which are "discovered" even when nonexistent or considerably "diluted." Departing tourists usually vow that they will return, and they are asked repetitiously what it was that so pleased them and if they will be "lonesome after they leave." Reflected here are the profound feelings of inferiority of the folk and their need for constant reassurance of their worth. Much of the depression among islanders during winter months is related to the absence of outsiders who stimulate them and are subjects of gossip.

The people of Inis Beag regard themselves as friendly, polite, and hospitable to outsiders—not at all like their Inis Thiar neighbors, who are said not to like tourists and to extort money from them for giving information and allowing themselves to be photographed. Strangers never are derided for behaving in a disapproved fashion but are "treated with dignity," although some men will try to gain free drinks and other favors from outsiders in a calculating and beguiling manner (called "being cute" in Ireland), which is frowned on by the majority of folk. During the summer when tourists are plentiful, many islanders behave according to the nativistic and primitivistic expectations of the strangers: attire becomes more traditional and newer costumes are worn, canoes are rowed with greater vigor, conversations become more boastful, and the like. The sensitivity of the islanders to nativism and primitivism is quite selective, however, in that they extol certain of their indigenous customs and are ashamed of others. Actions which give credence to such character traits as spirituality, strength, and courage are exaggerated, while those which belie such traits as independence, self-reliance, and industriousness are carefully hidden. My wife and I kept a careful record of the responses of Inis Beag folk to questions that we posed concerning their history and culture when we first visited the island in 1958. More than 40 replies turned out to be erroneous, and some of them would have done credit to the most ardent nativist or primitivist.

Most tourists who visit Inis Beag share a mystique fostered by interpretations of island life in the works of writers and film producers. A similar mystique is found elsewhere in the world among idealized primitive and peasant peoples. In Inis Beag, it often causes visitors to seek acceptance from the folk, to resent the presence of other outsiders, to boast of their intimate knowledge of Inis Beag customs, and, in some cases, to "go native" in so far as circumstances permit.

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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

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with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has
their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility
toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of
wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to [793]
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

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121 between the separate groups of kin in the village are seen to be in delicate balance
578 of power which is expressed in the local phrase, "you can't fight anybody around
609 here because all their people will gang up on you." If an individual's kinsmen must defend him in his personal disputes, it necessarily follows that a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin.

114 By and large, these three conscious models apply to Inis Beag as well as Aughnaboy.
121 Leyton discovers broad "disparities between the conscious models and the
578 statistical patterns formed by the actual behaviour" of people in Aughnaboy, manifested in 74 disputes covering a time span of ten years in the memories of his respondents. He classifies these disputes according to three criteria: their severity, the issues provoking them, and the categories of individuals involved (Leyton 1966:537–539). The criterion of severity yields three types of disputes: argument —"characterized by frequent or continuous arguments . . . associated primarily with exchange of verbal abuse;" withdrawal—where "social relations are actually severed and cooperation is withdrawn;" and interference—in which active attempts are made to "interfere with the welfare of the opposing party. These attempts, which may be secret or open, include legal suits, reports to the police, theft and, rarely, physical violence, as well as withdrawal of all cooperation." Three types of disputes also are distinguishable when issues provoking hostility are examined: economic—"which includes conflict such as rivalry between shopkeepers and disputed inheritance;" personality clashes—"which includes disputes primarily attributed to the innately quarrelsome personalities of certain individuals;" and jealousy—"which refers primarily to situations in which an individual's affections are alienated." The categories of persons involved in disputes are agnatic kin, uterine kin, affinal kin, and non-kin. Leyton establishes rank orders for each of his type classifications, and finds that the rank order for the severity classification is withdrawal, interference, and argument; for the issues classification, it is personality clashes, jealousy, and economic; and for the individuals involved classification, it is affinal kin, agnatic kin, non-kin, and uterine kin.

121 In applying Leyton's unconscious models of disputes to Inis Beag, I have
578 modified slightly his severity and issues classifications. To the former, I have added
[521] a fourth type which I call gossip; this is not gossip of the ordinary variety so
[683] common on the island, but rather continuous, pernicious verbal attacks made by a person within earshot of his victim's relatives and close friends, which usually do not lead to argument. In the case of the issues classification, I have broadened the
[151] range of personality clashes. There are several "innately quarrelsome" individuals in Inis Beag, but most personality conflicts involve persons other than these, who have come to dislike one another intensely for numerous reasons, most of which are related to envy, jealousy (other than alienation of affections), resentment
578 against authority, and hostility toward members of the opposite sex. Over 200 disputes have occurred on the island within the past generation, excluding those involving semi-permanent dwellers—curates, lighthouse keepers, and the Dane.
578 The higher incidence of disputes in Inis Beag is attributable, for the most part, to
121 the longer time span appraised and the addition of gossip to the severity classification in my analysis. However, the rank orders of the three type classifications

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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
[171] of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

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775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been
772 created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of
[173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of
[825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

157 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag
771 islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

157 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is
831 sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century.
[174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

157 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in
831 three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the
864 islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in
626 the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice
793 it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves
834 "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and
831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run
203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland
[609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

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275 The best singers will be
293 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
• [167] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
293 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[578] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
273 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
273 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the
[576] free stout brought me in."

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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

*831
626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
154 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

• 157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Murphy and they tried to argue her out of it, but she said it was too far gone now and she was committed to marry him, so they hastily gave her their blessing. He lived in a big house up by C— and had sixty acres. 602 593 578

Well, he was a sort of uncouth kind of chap, rough, and she was what you might say anglified, or citified. She wanted to brighten up the house and make it nice and hang up curtains and that sort of thing. He thought the reins of the horse would do for the curtains and so on, and it came to a fight between them, a clash of wills, and in the end, as it must, the stronger one won out; that is, the man's. She got hysterical and he cast round for ways of getting rid of her, and he sent up to Ennistymon for the doctor to come down and examine her to commit her to the asylum. He didn't send her up to C— though that was nearer and in his district, but he sent up for Dr. MacNulty to Ennistymon, leaving Dr. Starr in C— so as to get someone who wouldn't know the case. 627 [158 743]

The married sister of the wife was staying in the house at the time and he was driving her home. He told her the doctor was coming, and she said, "You are doing wrong," and made him turn round and go back to the house where Dr. MacNulty was examining the hysterical woman. Then the married sister got her brother and father to take her back to D—. They came up with Father Brendan of Ennis here and took her away down to D—. After a time they got up a party and invited him down for a reconciliation.

After a while she went back to live with him. He started it again and got her hysterical and called in another doctor, who said that there was nothing wrong with the woman.

One night the three brothers of the girl and her father came up to the house and one went round to the back door and the others went in the front and they caught the fellow. They were going to force him to sign receipts for the money the daughter gave him. Country people demand receipts for money they give and they are right, but the girl hadn't liked to ask and hadn't got any, so her people were going to step in and get them themselves. Murphy had rifled her belongings and torn off his name from all the receipts he had sent her to England. They came in and said that he was lucky he was going to escape with his life. No one in their family had ever been in the asylum and no one belonging to them had ever been insane or robbers.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

164 (E.) *Health.*—Taken as a whole, the people may be said to be a healthy one. Serious diseases, apart from accidents incident to their callings, are but few in number; and the general physique of the people speaks to a healthy active life.

582 588 *Consanguineous Unions.*—A large proportion of the marriages come under this heading, including not only those of persons within the prohibited degrees, for which dispensations are obtained, but also those which take place between people who are related in some recognisable but hardly nameable degree. Cases of the first class, or those which require dispensations, are of frequent occurrence, but seldom or never take place between persons nearer of kin than third cousins. The other cases, of course, are the most common of all, as from the size of the population and its isolated position, every family must, after a few generations, become more or less related to every other. Marriages with strangers, though more numerous of late years, are not common. The uniformity of strain does not appear to have produced any effect except the great similarity of appearance already noticed (p. 322); no cases of malformation or congenital disease are ascribed to it.

164 *Diseases.*—For most of the following facts I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. P. J. Hart, the medical officer of the islands, who, besides affording me much valuable information relative to the people and their ailments, the result of his long experience of them, kindly allowed me to look over his notes of cases. The main diseases may be classed as follows:—

[158] *Insanity.*—There is at present no case of this among the natives of the islands, nor has there been one since 1888 when a case which, however, was not of long duration, occurred in Inishshark.

164 732 *Idiocy and Imbecility.*—Properly speaking there is no idiocy; but there are two cases in which the persons, though shrewd and sharp enough about most of their own affairs, yet show signs of mental want in a sufficient degree to amount to slight imbecility.

Epilepsy is not common, but two cases are known in one of which the patient is subject to delusions, and always states, after a fit, that he has been with the fairies on the mainland. Of the other no information could be obtained except that the patient had had "fits."

Deaf-mutism has not been known for years on either island, but a case of temporary dumbness occurred on Inishshark in 1892.

Blindness is equally rare, there being but one case, a man over sixty years of age who acquired it late in life.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

Insanity.—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly
[158] in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
[273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

164 *Fevers.*—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

• 158 751 [291] [834] [753] It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 827 [363] [325] [562] [273] [241] Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

237 372 514 283 [462]

• 831 522 [154] [123] Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has
their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility
toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his [743]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [655]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER VI

Demography and Familism

161 OF the demographic phenomena the small farmers present, the decline of population is most easily isolated. The facts are as follows: There has been [73] a continuous and characteristic decline since the great famine of 1845. Numbers have fallen from 6,548,000 in 1841 to 2,963,000 in 1926. With the exception of Dublin, the whole of the country has suffered in this decline. On the whole, however, the country districts have suffered at a greater rate than have the towns. In 1841, 80 per cent of the population was rural; today only 63 per cent. In other words, since 1841 there has been an almost continuous increase in the town population at the expense of the rural, though the two have shared a common decline. Put in terms of percentages: since 1841, the country districts have lost 64 per cent of their population, towns from 200 to 500 49 per cent, towns from 5,000 to 10,000 25 per cent, and towns other than Dublin over 10,000 13 per cent. Dublin, on the other hand, has gained 47 per cent. That the enormous [167] emigration associated with this decline is a matter of the contemporary generation is evident when it is recognized that 30 per cent of the native-born Irish were living in other countries in 1926.

161 The closest approach among European countries is the 171 case of Norway, where 15 per cent live outside. Italy, which has provided so many citizens for the United States and the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Argentine, has only 4 per cent of its natives residing in foreign countries. Since 1911 there has, however, been a check in the decrease; only 5 per cent of the population was lost between 1911 and 1926. The region of our investigation, County Clare, shares in this general loss, falling in population from 250,000 in 1841 to 95,000 in 1926. Since 1911 it has lost only 8 per cent.

As the statistics show, this loss of population is in the main a problem of the country districts. The towns have gained proportionately to the countryside; though in a lesser degree, they have, of course, shared the common loss. Many causes for this decline have been operative and, as the excellent work by Dr. William Forbes Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World*,[1] shows, emigration is no new factor in Irish life. The great impetus for an enormous exodus of population was the famine of 1845, but since then emigration has flowed on continuously, coming to an end only in 1932 when for the first time for at least a century more Irishmen returned than left the country.

But far from the famine's having started the emigration from the present Free State, "the growth of emigration between 1815 and 1845," concludes Dr. Adams, "not only made possible the flight after the famine, it caused that flight. The thirty years before 1845 spread the emigrating spirit through all but the highest class until it became the favorite remedy for hard times. The tremendous rush of the next fifteen years could not have taken place without aid from the earlier emigrants." Since then, the land agitation, dissatisfaction with British rule, and periodic hard times have taken their toll, coupled with what Adams calls the greatest single cause of human migration, the work of powerful interests developed first in the early days of Irish emigration, "organizing and developing (immigrant) traffic for their own profit." The movement began long before

[1] New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

 182 593

of a new set of component individuals into the relationships between land, goods, labor, and human beings.

In the light of this system and of the internal changes which are brought about within it, the Irish population statistics now may become interpretable. Late marriage and the high incidence of bachelorhood are associable with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership, the necessity of acquiring sufficient means to portion children, and the delay in dispersing the closed corporation of the family group until it is possible to establish the new one. The practical self-sufficiency of the family group makes it difficult to destroy. The identification of a single immediate family with the individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new such group upon the land. 161 182 593

As we pointed out, subdivision of holdings practically ceased after 1852. Since then the struggle for land and legal reforms in land tenure have prohibited any great further division. The matchmaking system is very old in Ireland. The works of such Gaelic writers as Canon O'Leary describe it explicitly for the pre-famine period. With the cessation of subdivision of holdings came the necessity of providing for children elsewhere than on the land. From that same cessation of subdivision dates the high incidence of bachelorhood. In 1841, at the time of greatest population, age of marriage was normal. Then only 43 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty-five were unmarried, not 72 per cent, as at present. Then only 15 per cent of males between thirty-five and forty-five were celibate, not 29 per cent as today. Figure 13 represents the percentages of unmarried males and females at each age in each subsequent census from 1841 to 1926.

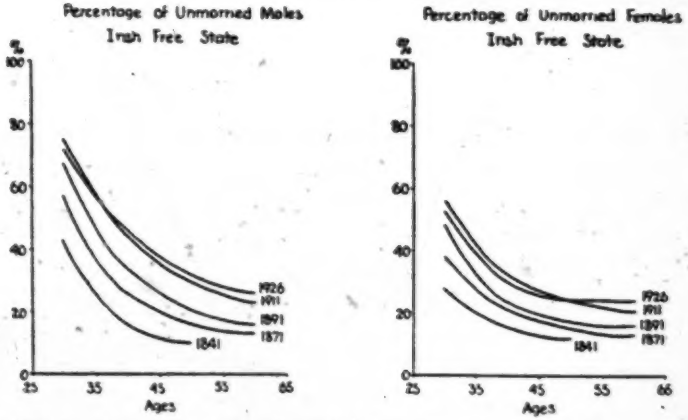
Viewed in the light of this family structure, the decline of population becomes interpretable not as a flight from intolerable conditions, though economic distress had a powerful effect, not as a political gesture, though political

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

161 182 593 disturbance took its toll, but rather as a movement arising from the effect of all these causes upon a family system whose very nature predisposed it to disperse population and which could, therefore, accommodate itself to that dispersal when it occurred. Emigration, no new thing in 1845, ap-

FIGURE 13

PERCENTAGE OF UNMARRIED PERSONS, IRISH FREE STATE



The figures are taken from the censuses from 1841 to 1926.

pears as the logical corollary of this dispersal. It derives much of its character, such as assisted passages and remittances, from the social forces at work in the family. It can become a traditional movement like the movement from country to town without destroying the family structure or the rural culture whose members it takes away.

The authors do not mean to imply that anything within the social forces of the family as it exists in Ireland has had direct causal effect upon the peculiar statistics of Irish population. The authors would rather point out that the forces operative within that structure are of such a nature as to allow the society of which they are a part to continue to

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

function in essentially similar fashion through the welter of economic, political, and other events which have impinged upon the human beings who have successively filled the structure. Likewise, the structure is capable of continued and virile existence in the present, governing the lives of its component individuals and modifying itself to take in new influences.

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

lands of the area made up of this parish and the contiguous parishes are the townlands from which marriages have moved brides outward. These same higher and more westerly townlands are also the ones that have lost population fastest and have been marked by the highest rates of celibacy. Since 1860, at least, families of this area have consistently paid higher dowries to establish their girls on better lands nearer urban and shopping centers. These families have married their daughters along the country roads downward and eastward, from the higher, poorer, more westwardly townlands to the better lands in lower and more eastwardly ones. Relatively speaking, there has been no movement of brides in a reverse direction. By comparison with the better lands, the poorer farms have done without brides for their young men. These poorer farms are the ones, then, who have seen their families "die out of it." 166 581

This is merely the evidence from one small parish and its neighbors. But it is instructive that it corresponds with the picture for Ireland as a whole, as the marital statistics of the censuses reveal it. Late marriage, celibacy, the marked preponderance of males in the sex ratio, are all phenomena of the western and poorer farming districts of the country. [162]

Neither the establishment of a peasant proprietorship in the years of agrarian reform since the Land War nor the remarkable growth of prosperity among the farmers since the nadir of famine times has had any success in reversing the long-persistent trend of population decline in the countryside. They have had no effect either, it seems, upon the demographic phenomena associated with that decline. Perhaps the reason for the persistence of the trend despite all changes lies in the considerations revealed by the study of the matter in one small parish, as we have just described them. The acquisition of better lands, the growth of a greater rural prosperity, and the opening up of new opportunities have gone hand in hand with a persistence 161

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

161 of social sentiments and forms of social organization shaped entirely within the familism of the small farmers. The new opportunities have appeared first and foremost as means for personal and group advancement within the existing social and familist order.

One could hazard that the census figures represent not an "economic problem" in the sense of a flight from poverty or a fight against its restrictions but the movement of a population seizing upon new opportunities and new prosperity without relinquishing at any point the already existing organization of their social sentiments and habits. In such a view the problems of population decline in Ireland are results not of poverty but of prosperity.

161 166 555 However that may be, there is a close parallel between the opening of opportunities for education and for rise into the professions, the ranks of business in the Irish towns, and government, all taking place since 1870, and the demography of the small farmer class. The children of the small farmers have flocked through the doors opened to them into every walk of Irish life. They continue to do so today. The towns and their occupations continue to grow and grow, but the countryside does not. The process is one by which the long delays in marriage, the restriction of children to the few who can be well provided for, and the fierce centering of family ambition in the occupational status of its members, more usually thought of as urban, petit-bourgeois phenomena, have spread outward in to the countryside and overtaken the small farmer on his farm. The mobility of a changing, democratized social order, capable of recruiting the ranks of one class from the children of another, has been combined with the fixity, the conservatism, and the rigidity of an ancient and still vital familism. It should be said that Ireland is not unique in this recombination of elements of social organization. She is unique in illustrating so well, in her special way, a social process universal in the countries of Western European civilization.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

It has already been pointed out that the census figures available at the time of the fieldwork on which this book is based are those of the Irish census of 1926. Since that time some at least of the figures based on the succeeding decennial census, that of 1936, have become available. There are also a number of annual statistics which bear on the questions of Irish population. It is interesting to turn to these for the light they throw on subsequent development in the trends we have noted. 161

The release of the 1936 census figures in 1939 showed conclusively that the demographic trends that have marked Ireland since Famine times continue to persist. Neither the years of the establishment of the Free State up to 1932 nor the years of depression, economic war, and the experimental programs of the De Valera regime since then have affected the trends. Any of the charts prepared for the 1926 figures needs only to be extrapolated along the trend line a few points to show the situation of ten years later.

Stated briefly, these trends recapitulate and reëmphasize the points we have already made. Emigration continues to mark the life of the country, draining the countryside first into the towns and second overseas, now to Great Britain rather than across the oceans. Ireland continues to hold its record of possessing the highest percentage of unmarried men and women in the world. The population over sixty-five years of age continues to rise. The population of children continues to fall. Marriages continue to be fertile, by comparison with many other countries. But they still tend to become fewer and fewer, and the delay of marriage into middle life grows longer and longer. The ratio of females to males continues to fall, until in 1936 there were 975 males for every 935 females in Ireland, the lowest sex ratio in Europe and one of the lowest in the world. 162 166 167 [589]

These figures mark the continued existence of the familistic order we have discussed. They mark as well the continuance of its struggle to fit modern life. Perhaps a figure 582

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

582 in the report of the Registrar-General for 1938 gives the best illustration of the culmination of the trends that mark this struggle. In that year slightly over half of all women who married (and only a negligible number of them were not making first marriages) were between thirty-five and forty-five years of age. The problem of delay in marriages seems to be reaching some sort of climax.

161 It is interesting to speculate what that climax might be
178 and what future trend of demography it may inaugurate. It is obvious that the conditions these figures point to, rooted as they are in the social order of the countryside and of the nation, are in any case beyond the reach of ordinary measures. They have marked, as we have seen, every Irish administration since Famine days, whether native or not. They are not matters of "poverty" within the reach of immediate economic policies. If "poverty" refers to hunger and an absolute low level of living, the concept does not apply at all. If it denotes rather relative standing within a community of certain values, it has some meaning. But such meaning waits for its understanding on a realization of the form of family and community these values express.

Yet the old cry about a flight from the land has arisen in Ireland once again. Until the outbreak of war in 1939, the population question, linked now with continuing unemployment in the towns and a shortage of labor in the agricultural districts, had become a football of politics once more. The new small local factories of the regime of industrialization now have their place in the controversy. The opposition in the *Dáil* are bitter against a program they believe subsidizes industry at home out of the farmer's pocket, yet leaves him unable to employ the hands his farm requires. The government finds itself in a quandary. To accept the opposition view would be to admit itself responsible for a condition far beyond its control. To put a stop to the program of industrialization would leave the incoming farm

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

sons and daughters with nothing to do at home. It would mean to give up all hope of absorbing them at home. Yet to build the factories is to send into the country districts the very forces of urbanism, such as wage payment, individual recompense, and a job rather than a part in group life, which wean the farm boys and girls away from a familist self-subsistence. Still the farmer of the familist tradition continues to vote the government in and continues to support the factories he must subsidize. For only by some such provision of occupations at home can he provide well for his children, as he must, by ambition and tradition.

There are farmers and farmers in Ireland. The small farmer is by all marks of social life a different person from the "big fellow." It is to be remembered that it is the little fellow who works the familist economy. Only the big fellow normally hires hands. Yet as sons and daughters leave for the towns and the town continues to make inroads on farm life, hired hands must take the vacant places. The migrant children must find new occupations with good pay and a steady hire. The process is one of continuous change at all points in the social order we are tracing out.

These population figures continue to mark, not any single cause or "factor" in social life, but the gradual, generation-slow transformation of an ancient culture, using that word in the anthropological sense. Its central core of familism is offering strong resistance to slow assault. But it changes, and along with it there changes the structure of the community that has been built upon a familistic base. The next chapters deal with these rural communities at the points of transformation: the nonfarming occupations in the countryside and the farmers' markets.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

season; and the end of transhumance made the working of the system more difficult. Similarly, the increase of population led to a remarkable growth in the size of many clachans, which often made life in them increasingly inconvenient. Squabbles over rights of way and other petty affairs were common, and there was a growing awareness that the old methods of farming were becoming unsatisfactory. The introduction of new crops and rotations gave the *coup de grâce* to the efficiency of the system; for they were difficult to integrate into it, and therefore agricultural improvement was retarded.

The impetus behind the changes, however, usually did not come from the farmers themselves but from their landlords. Indeed, it seems possible that peasant resistance to the destruction of rundale was a considerable factor in nineteenth-century opposition to landlordism.[33] Often landlords, intent on improving their estates, would put whole areas of land into the melting pot, consolidating holdings and sometimes evicting the surplus population. Frequently the new holdings were arranged up and down the slope of the land, an arrangement that has resulted in the characteristic striped appearance of much of the modern Irish landscape. Although long, narrow strips were probably not the best possible farm shape (Fig. 4), they represented a compromise between the traditional system of allocating each farmer a share of every quality of land and the landlords' demands for greater efficiency. At the same time the old clachan groups were broken up and new farmhouses were built, each within its own land. In such a way most of the better agricultural land was converted, but at the end of the nineteenth century various areas, particularly in the west of Ireland, still remained under the old system or some modification of it. This hard core has now been largely eliminated by government action. First the British government attempted a general improvement of living conditions in western Ireland by means of the Congested Districts Board, whose work included the reorganization of agricultural holdings (Fig. 5);[34] after 1922 and the establishment of the Irish Free State the task was taken over by the Irish Land Commission.[35]

In some areas, however, the disappearance of clachan settlement was part of a natural process in the late nineteenth century. The population of Ireland started to decrease after the Great Famine of the 1840's, and even in areas where there had been little rearrangement of holdings some clachans became

[33] See, for example, the Devon Commission Report [see footnote 11 above], Part 1, Appendix 14, p. 58.

[34] T. W. Freeman: The Congested Districts of Western Ireland, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 33, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[35] On this aspect of the Land Commission's work see "The Consolidation of Fragmented Agricultural Holdings" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Washington, 1950), Chapter 3, "Relief of Rural Congestion in Ireland."

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

uninhabited and in others only a single family remained. In these areas, too, partial consolidation was carried out by adding the fields of an emigrating farmer to those of some neighbor or relative who remained at home. The decrease in population had a more general influence as well: throughout Ireland it prevented former conditions from reasserting themselves. Everywhere there was diminished pressure on the land, and the growth of larger farms rather than renewed subdivision.

There are still gaps, then, in the story of Irish rural settlement. Until documentary and field evidence slowly yields the missing chapters, the past will remain a subject for speculation rather than for confident explanation. The rural systems of previous centuries are now disappearing, but the surviving remains may hold clues to former conditions, and their interpretation remains a continuing challenge.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

than there are on farms over fifty. In fact, one 241
could almost say 'the smaller the farm the greater number of persons it supports'. The plurality of Irish farmers support themselves upon farms averaging from fifteen to thirty acres in area. Almost eight of every ten persons working in agriculture live by small-farm production.

By our standards, a farm under thirty acres or even under fifty acres is very small. So it is regarded in Ireland. When I call the Irish countryman a small farmer, I am following standards the Irish use themselves. Yet, to deal with the life of the small farmers is to deal with that of the single largest group on the land.

Furthermore, that group is concentrated in the 241
west and south of Ireland. Historical and economic 161
currents have massed the population in the more rugged 'mountainy' regions of south and west. A county of the rich central plain, such as Meath, where large farms are most numerous, has a density of about fifty persons per square mile. But a poorer, mountainous county such as Mayo, where small farms are very numerous indeed, supports seventy-five persons per square mile or an almost 50 per cent greater density.

But do those who support themselves by small 241
farms form a true category? Are they a group unto themselves, or are they a numeration meaningless for the student of human behaviour? Statistics have a way of revealing real categories in life, but they

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

(3). Vital Statistics (General and Economic).

(a.) *Population.*—The population of these islands, though still
161 dense, is, like that of the rest of Ireland, steadily decreasing, though in this case the decline is of recent date compared with many other parts of the country.

Between the years 1851 and 1871 the population had increased
161 from 1047 persons, occupying 196 houses, to 1262, and 251, respectively.
167 Some time after 1871, however, emigration began to take a sensible effect; and between that year and the census of 1891 there has been a loss in people of 20·99 per cent., and in houses of 11·55 per cent. That the decrease is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths for the decennial period 1880–1890, in which time the births exceeded the deaths by 89 or 38·7 per cent., the respective numbers being births 230, deaths 141.

The Table given below shows the population of the islands at each
161 census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average
592 number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head. It thus indicates the period at which the decrease began, and the amount of congestion of the district, both past and present. This congestion, however, must be greater than what the figures show, as under the heading of Inishbofin are grouped some fifty-four other islands or islets, all uninhabited, and varying in size from seventy-four acres downwards. Some of these are utilized for grazing by the people of the two larger islands, but a large number of them are quite useless, being mere barren rocks.

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	1047	196	5·34	3·00
1861	1236	239	5·17	2·55
1871	1262	251	5·03	2·50
1881	1166	250	4·67	2·70
1891	997	215	4·64	3·10

161 That the overcrowding is, even now, great, will be seen when it is considered that the density of population per square mile is 202, whilst that of the Aran Islands is 171, of the county of Galway 86, and of Ireland, as a whole, 146.[1]

[1] In the Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland (1846), the population of the islands in 1831 is given as 1462, number of houses not given; population in 1841 as 1612, houses, 285. The decrease afterwards is evidently due to the famine in 1847.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

(E.) *Analysis of the Statistical Tables* :—

141 The variations in type in the inhabitants of the different parts of the district are shown by the following Table, which appears to corroborate the belief entertained by the people that the men of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island or of the Mullet. They also show the greater proportion of light hair in the islanders :

	Mullet.	North Inishkea.	South Inishkea.	Portacloy.
Number measured, . . .	35	8	7	12
Cephalic Index, . . .	79·5	78·4	80·1	80·0
Stature, ...	1704 (5 ft. 7 in.)	1727 (5 ft. 8 in.)	1705 (5 ft. 7 in.)	1727 (5 ft. 8 in.)
Proportion to stature—Span, .	104·55	102·45	103·58	105·65
,, ,, Hand, .	11·34	11·04	11·41	11·41
,, ,, Forearm,	15·47	15·60	15·32	15·57
Nigrescence Index,[1] . .	62·30	10·5		77·52

Though the people in all sections of the district are seen to be mesaticephalic (if two units be subtracted to reduce the index to cranial standard), yet in two, South Inishkea and Portacloy, there is an approach to the brachycephalic form. None of the men measured in either place are dolichocephalic, and in most cases the cephalic proportion inclines towards the higher index rather than to the lower.

It would appear also that the North Inishkea men are shorter-limbed than any of their neighbours, as out of the four cases met with in which the span (*grande envergue*) was less than the height, three were from this island.

3. *Vital Statistics* (*General and Economic*) :—

161 (A.) *Population.* — Erris is not now very thickly peopled, the general decrease affecting the population of Ireland during the last
167 fifty years having especially affected this district.

The census returns show a constant and steady decline since 1851, the slight increases which have from time to time occurred in some

[1] Not taken from number measured but from nigrescence cards.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

townlands having only been temporary. That this loss is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths in the registration district of Binghamstown for the decennial period 1884–1893 in which space of time the births numbered 1260, and the deaths 707, an excess of 553, or 22·7 per cent. The following Table, which refers only to the parish of Kilmore, shows the population of the district at each census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head.[1]

161 [167]

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	7379	1106	6·67	3·99
1861	6452	1243	5·19	4·57
1871	5552	1054	5·27	5·31
1881	5327	911	5·85	5·53
1891	4111	694	5·92	7·17

[592]

The density of population is thus seen to be about 89 per square mile, but varies with locality, being greatest on S. Inishkea, where it is about 304.

The town of Belmullet, which is not included in the table given above, has fluctuated much since its foundation in 1825. In 1831 its population was 585, and it continued to increase until after 1851, when it had attained its maximum of 935; from that time forth it declined. In 1861 its inhabitants numbered 907; in 1871, 849; in 1881 there was a slight increase, 852; and at the last census, in 1891, the population had fallen to 652.

It was difficult to lay down any exact boundaries to what, for the purposes of this report, is termed the Portacloy district; but the three townlands—Srahataggle, Portacloy, and Curraunboy, from which most of those measured at Portacloy came, have been taken to represent it; in these the population has not undergone the same change as that of Kilmore, the population having risen since 1851, from 248, inhabiting 46 houses, to 299 in 53 houses.

634
161

[1] In 1831 the population of Kilmore Erris was 9287.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and outbuildings was as follows in 1891 :—

Locality.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
The Mullet, .	23,333 1 27	3757	1893	1864	600	532
N. Inishkea, .	464 1 32	126	60	66	21	4
S. Inishkea, .	344 3 19	180	92	88	32	33
23 Ialeta, . .	350 0 17	48	22	26	10	27
Portacloy, .	7845 1 1	299	148	151	54	29
Totals, . . .	32,338 0 6	410	2215	2195	717	625

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area of the district is that of Kilmore, being 29,492 acres, and the three townlands forming the Portacloy district, 7,845 acres.

The total valuation of Kilmore is £4,055 18*s.*, and of Portacloy £163 7*s.*

There is very little commonage in the Mullet, but about Portacloy there is a good deal.

The holdings are not large, averaging about 4½ or 5 acres at a rental of about £3 10*s.* in the Mullet, and about £2 10*s.* in "the mountains." There is considerable variation, however, as there are some farms of good size, but the majority are small.

In 1891 there were, in Kilmore, 210 holdings of between £4 and £10 valuation, 305 of £2 and under £4, and no less than 252 at, or under, £2 valuation.

The land is mostly held now at judicial rentals (the people having early taken advantage of the Land Act of 1881), but sixty years ago the greater part of the land was held in common, and the mode of tenure is thus described by Knight :—"In the whole of the peninsula there are few farms divided . . . the usual system being commonage both in tillage and pasture. In tillage, lots are cast every third year for the number of ridges each person is entitled to after the usual rotation is over. Potatoes the first year, then barley or oats, after which new lots must be cast for new potato ground. The holdings are by sums or collops, which originally meant the number

[961] sixteen are in a similarly formless cluster.

167 Emigration has entered deeply into the fabric of life: in 1841, Inishbofin 161 with Inishark had 1612 people, but ten years later there were only 1047. A rise to 1236 in 1861 and 1262 in 1871 was followed by a drop to 997 in 1891, when there were 215 families of whom one-quarter were said to be "very poor."[18] Steadily the population declined, to 510 in 1936, 406 in 1946, and 341 in 1951, and now less than 300 (including 40 in Inishark). One-quarter of the families were interviewed in 1954; of these only one-third were "normal families" of parents with children. In the school there were only 29 children aged 5–14, whereas the normal figure would be 48. On Inishark there are now only nine able-bodied men, six of whom are needed to man a boat seaworthy in winter, with the result that an epidemic might be disastrous. Permanent emigration to Britain, or, if possible, to America, is favored by the young and adventurous. Even in 1893 seasonal emigration to Britain as harvesters or domestics was declining,[19] though a number of people went to America for several years, saved money, and returned to the islands. A large proportion of the people have spent several years in the United States. In many cases a family has its older relatives in America, its younger ones in Britain.

Conclusion

657 Having reviewed the economic geography of this island certain conclusions emerge. First, the present relative comfort of the population has been made possible only by past and present government assistance bestowed with lib-

[113] [18] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891.
[19] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

[p.208(B)]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process. 114 121 127

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated. 12 [539] [177] [178]

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next. 105 [121] [161] [241] [434] [611] [161] [593] [584] [177] [178] [829] [165] [212] [829]

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the 668

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[702] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[698] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[437] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

5

The Future of the Island

Emigration

MANY ELDERS IN INIS BEAG fear that the island and its neighbors will go the way of the Blasket Islands of Co. Kerry, whose remaining inhabitants were removed by the government because their support had become an economic liability. With only slight fluctuations, the population of Inis Beag has been diminishing since it reached its zenith of 532 persons in 1861. Below are population figures since 1821—when the first census was compiled—until the present time: 829 168 161

1821	421
1841	456
1861	532
1881	497
1901	483
1926	409
1936	445
1946	447
1956	376
1960	350

The upsurge in population after 1926 reflects the depression in the United States and the Second World War, when emigrants returned home to escape unemployment and conscription, while the downsurge after 1946 reflects the shift of emigration from America to England. Frequently discussed by elders is the steady increase in emigration during the past 15 years, the decreasing age of emigrants, and the presence within the past decade—for the first time in three centuries—of aged parents all of whose children have emigrated, and of land which is idle or rented out by emigrants who probably never will return to Inis Beag. Jokes concerning the building of a hotel by the Germans or a missile site by the Americans in the island to stimulate the economy, as well as serious suggestions that the 161 167 829 168 829 [522]

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [184]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [165]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [212]
heritance is patrilineal). [611]

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions
there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161 •
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side,
where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new
soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle
dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

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114 tent; they have depended on a limited sample of respondents; and most
538 of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore,* which does not contain numerous categories of significance to anthropologists.

12 My wife and I devoted most of our research to documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also described formal and informal education and the personality traits formed by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many types and probing the memories of aged island respondents, and recorded cultural change in process over an eight-year period. The standard ethnographic research techniques that we employed include guided and open-ended interviews, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, cross-checking, photography, and phonog-
[161] raphy. The sample for much of our data was the total universe of 350 inhabitants.

It is extremely difficult to obtain information in Inis Beag about such matters as amounts and sources of income, disputes, pagan religious retentions and reinterpretations, and sex. This brief list might be increased by at least threefold and gives rise to a consideration of the problems associated with obtaining reliable data from the Irish in general and the
114 islanders in particular. Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled
12 "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing,* humorously
181 presents one of the shortest, yet most discerning analyses of Irish national character yet written by a novelist and predicts the various reactions that her volume will evoke in Irish readers.[4] She concludes with the following remarks about the difficulties surrounding fact finding in Ireland:

This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged
[521] with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing

[4] These reactions appear to be institutionalized, as my writings and conversational remarks have also evoked them. Two additional responses that I have encountered are: my conclusions are invalidated because I failed to consult certain "source materials" written in Gaelic, and my inferior writing style precludes serious consideration of my findings. I take pains to explain, usually in vain, the many methods of fieldwork utilized by ethnographers to Irish persons who are critical of my data and who invariably use the phrase, "You can't trust what an Irishman tells you." On a rare occasion, one listener to my lengthy explanation said, "Ah, you're cuter than we are"—a compliment indeed!

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

241 463 much of the land is useless. Again, a farm small in area might be exclusively devoted to the sort of economy which is usually found on very large farms. In any single case, statistical generalities do not hold, of course. But in the large kind of correlation which a count of varying factors affords, bulk correspondences turn up with complete regularity.

241 463 162 The course by which this conclusion is reached takes one through the devious labyrinth of Free State Government statistical abstracts. In 1926, the last census year before the authors' field work was undertaken, the numbers living in country districts, "outside villages and towns with 200 or more population," made up 63 per cent of the Free State's population of almost 3,000,000. They were 1,815,496. Of the 1,307,662 classed as "occupied persons 12 years of age and over" for the whole Free State, 672,129, or 51 per cent, were engaged in agriculture. Any attempt, then, to understand the human setting of Irish farming involves an inquiry into the forces motivating the lives of well over half the country's people.

241 433 In 1926 this agricultural population produced a total output valued at £64,757,000. Industry in Ireland produced goods to the value of only a little over half that figure (£34,000,000 net output).

231 433 In the agricultural output of that year, the proportions of the various products indicate the character of the agriculture. Foodstuffs, with livestock products among them, made up the bulk of the output. Milk products accounted for £13,600,000; cattle, exported alive or slaughtered within the country, accounted for another £13,800,000. Pigs and eggs made up £9,800,000 and £6,690,000 respectively. Other livestock such as poultry, sheep, and horses accounted for the rest, in that order of importance. Wool and sundry items such as honey brought in a mere £700,000. All of these, the total output of livestock, reached a value of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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311 471 Fergus River, where there are many "ranches" and, in parts, extensive oats tillage.

●162 471 Statistics are available only for the whole of Clare; they give a comprehensive view of the county's farming.[3] All but 21.6 per cent of the population of 95,064 lived in country districts. The area they worked, 787,768 acres, was divided into 15,857 holdings, of which 1,179 did not exceed one acre, 909 contained from 1 to 5, 841 from 5 to 10, 1,108 from 10 to 15, and 3,767 from 15 to 30, 3,617 from 30 to 50, and 3,135 from 50 to 100. The farms larger than 100 acres numbered 997 in the 100 to 200 acre group, and 394 exceeding 200 acres. Clare thus fell into a category among counties in which medium-sized holdings were normal, but both the small farms and the large rancher type were present.

241 311 We have no separate statistics for Clare's produce, but we know that in June 1932 the land was being utilized in the following manner. There were only 465 acres of wheat, 335 acres of barley, 207 acres of rye, 1 acre of beans and peas, 147 acres of fruit, 3 acres of sugar beet, 57 acres of experimental ensilage for cattle, and 151 acres of miscellaneous root and green crops. The figures[4] show the small part played by vegetable products other than cabbage and potatoes used for human food. Bread, the great staple, was of course, made from imported flour or wheat. Potatoes and oats, however, made a better showing, with 13,518 and 8,199 acres respectively devoted to them. Turnips and mangels accounted for 3,897 and 306 acres respectively; like potatoes and oats, they are used for both human and animal consumption. This was the extent of ploughed land.

The great bulk of the area was, of course, in hay and pasture. There were 2,791 acres of first-year hay, 131,429 acres of other hay, and 394,791 acres of pasture.

[3] Figures taken from Annual Report, County Clare Council Agricultural Committee, June 1932.

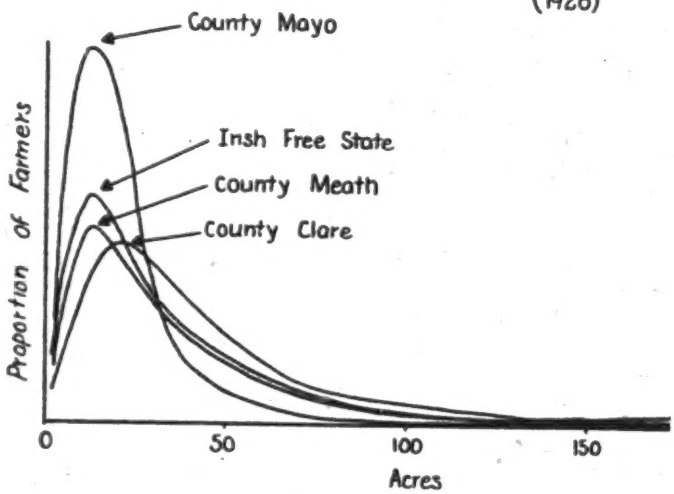
[4] Report of the County Clare Agricultural Committee, 1932.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

figures for the largest size holdings show that the machines 241
on the smaller farms were more than sufficient for the type 407
of agriculture carried on."[11] For instance, on farms of 30–50 acres there were 137 ploughs to every 1,000 acres of ploughed land. But much less than half that number were

FIGURE 2

Proportion of Farmers on each size holdings (1926) [162]



sufficient for the same acreage of ploughed land on holdings over 500 acres. The difference reflects itself statistically not only in the goods produced but in the tools and techniques used.

More important, however, for an understanding of the 241
social behavior involved, is a further great difference to be 162
seen in the numbers of persons living upon the various sized farms. The numbers of persons supporting themselves upon the small holdings are much greater than those upon

[11] *Ibid.*

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

241 large farms. Figure 2 shows this graphically. County Mayo
162 there represents one extreme of "congestion" and County Meath another. County Clare is of such mixed character that its position looks anomalous. The figure deals only with farmers and does not, as we shall see, represent the real situation, for it leaves out of account those who work the farm along with its farmer owner.

In 1926 there were 268,930 farmers in the Irish Free State, the largest block of which supported themselves upon farms of from 15 to 30 acres, that is, upon small farms. Their number was 75,225. Farmers numbering 51,196 worked farms of from 30 to 50 acres, and 41,052 farms of from 50 to 100. On smaller farms than the 15–30 acre norm there were 11,608 farmers on 1–5 acre farms and 29,180 on 5–10 acre ones. On larger farms than 100 acres there were, however, only 22,660 farmers.

The counties, of course, differed widely in this respect, but in general the counties where large holdings were numerous supported a much smaller farm population than those where smaller holdings prevailed. Thus Meath, a ranching county of 577,000 acres, supported only 4,403 farmers, while Clare, with an area only about one and one-half times as large, supported 10,320 farmers in a much less rich and more mountainous soil. Indeed, it is one of the anomalies most regretted by the present De Valera government (among others) that Ireland's population is concentrated in the poorer and more mountainous parts of the island. Clare, of course, does not present such an extreme case as the so-called "congested" counties of Mayo, Kerry, and Galway.

In County Clare small farmers are, of course, definitely in the majority. The number of true "ranchers" is few. In 1926 the proportions were 3,020 male farmers on farms 15–30 acres (the largest group), 2,280 on farms 30–50, 2,033 on farms 50–100. In the groups smaller than 15 acres

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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there were 828 farmers on farms 10–15 acres and 486 on farms 5–10. Farmers living on farms under 5 acres are few (180). Those on farms up to 200 number 597 and above 200, 218. 241 162

When the total population engaged in agriculture is considered rather than merely the farmers (owners), the greater numbers living upon small holdings become even more apparent. A full report based upon the 1926 census had not yet appeared, but a report was published upon the 1912 figures at the time the 1926 figures were released.[12] From that report it is at once apparent that the difference between large and small farms extends to the population engaged upon them and the type of labor employed. This new difference demonstrates a marked contrast, still apparent today, in the way in which large and small farmers carry on their economies. 241 162 464

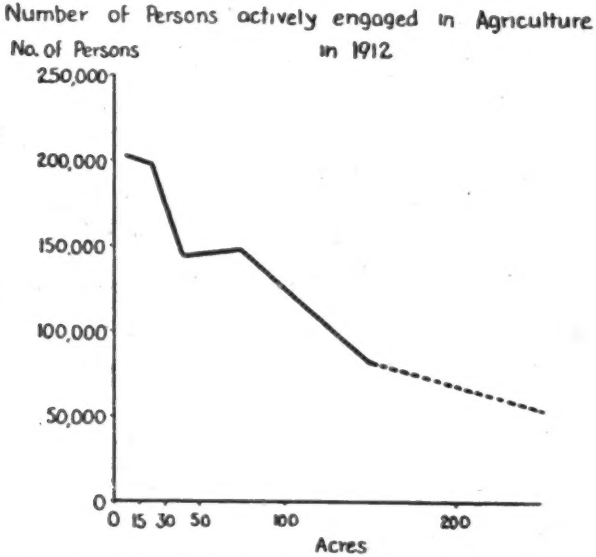
In 1926 the number of farmers and relatives assisting them in the Saorstat was 533,025 and those otherwise engaged in agriculture numbered only 139,104. The figures of the Report, based upon the 1912 census, show higher numbers, but the proportion of hired to family labor had not materially changed. From the tables of the Report, it is established that "only 26% were wage earners," that is, were not farmers and their relatives, working without periodic monetary recompense on an employee basis. Relating this to size of farms, it was discovered that not only were "5 times as many persons working on farms of 15 to 30 acres and 3½ times as many on farms of 30–50 acres as on farms of over 200 acres,"[13] but that also "family labor accounted for 89% of the total on farms 1–15 acres but only 24% for farms of over 200 acres. . . . Taking all holdings into account, 74% of the persons working on farms consisted of farmers, their wives, sons, daughters, and other relatives," and only "15% were permanent wage earners and 11%

[12] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. liv. [13] *Ibid.*, p. li.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

241 were temporary employees."[14] In other words, the small
162 farm is generally worked by the family of the owner, while
464 the large farm, particularly the ranch, is worked by agricultural laborers employed by the owner.

FIGURE 3



These are the actual numbers arranged proportionately, in true descending scale, with the size of the holding. Figures for all Ireland. The figures are quite comparable with those of County Clare for 1932, where in records published in the local newspaper by the County Council Committee on Agriculture it was stated that on farms of 15–30 acres, the median-sized holding, on which the plurality of the farm population live, there were 10 acres to each person. But on farms of 200 acres and over, more than 35 acres were required for each person the farms supported.

In Figure 3 the tables are reduced to a graphic representation which shows well how much truth there is in the Irish assertion that "the smaller the farm, the larger the number of people it supports." One has only to look at it to understand much of Irish political currents.

[14] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. lii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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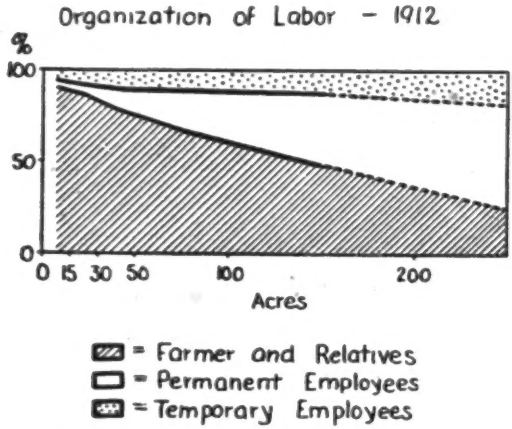
In Clare the same situation is present. Most, if not nearly all, of the work of the small farmers is done by the family relatives. And for the whole county in 1926, 83.5% of all males engaged in agricultural pursuits were farmers or farmers' relatives (and 99 per cent of the rather small number of females). Only in the two districts which we have

FIGURE 4



The chart again shows a constant progression. The larger the farm, the less the dependence upon other members of the family and the more often hired hands are present. The chart begins on the left with a figure of 89 per cent of farmers of 1–15 acres depending upon family help and ends at the right with 24 per cent of farmers of over 200 acres depending upon such help.

already mentioned as regions of large holdings and ranches, Ballyvaughan and Ennis, did the percentage fall appreciably below that figure (to 73 per cent and 75 per cent).

Figure 4 presents this difference in organization of labor for all Ireland in 1912.

Small farmers and large farmers make a different disposal of their products. At the same time there is an exchange of products between the two groups.

These facts are to be got from the many statistics reflect-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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coincident upon that change cannot be assigned as the sole cause of emigration.

As the decline in population has been more characteristic of the small farmers, it may be possible to associate it with social conditions pertaining among that class. They have participated in the very agricultural changes which are thought to have caused their dispersal. They enjoyed the high prosperity of the closing decades of the last century, and won the progressive reforms of agrarian tenure. Yet they continued to send forth thousands of emigrants. Fluctuating economic conditions have undoubtedly had their effect, but factors whose greatest demonstrable result is merely to stay or hurry the stream of emigration cannot be evoked as efficient causes. In taking the problem directly to the small farmer, it will become possible to sketch the social setting in which emigration takes its form.

Clearly connected with the decline in population are other demographic statistics, particularly those of marriage. They present features which are unique among civilized peoples. Inasmuch as they are again indications of an underlying uniform social pattern whose occurrences they record, it is necessary to analyze them in terms of the behavior patterns of rural Ireland. Like emigration, they are more characteristic of the country people. Springing from marriage, they are thus directly indicative of social forces within the small farmers' family economy. 162

Briefly stated, they present the following characteristics: In Saorstat Eireann in 1926, according to the census then conducted, there was a larger proportion of unmarried persons of all ages than in any other country for which records are kept. Marriage, furthermore, did not take place until a comparatively late age. Thus 80 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty years of age were unmarried in 1926, 62 per cent of males thirty to thirty-five, 50 per cent of males thirty-five to forty, and 26 per cent of males fifty-five to 162 582 589

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

162 582 589

sixty-five. The significance of these figures springs from their comparison with other countries. In the United States only 39 per cent of males twenty-five to thirty are unmarried, 24 per cent between thirty and thirty-five, and only 10 per cent between fifty-five and sixty-five. Denmark, an agricultural country similar in many ways to Ireland, had only 49 per cent, 25 per cent, 15 per cent, and 8 per cent of these age groups not yet benedict, respectively. In England the percentages were 45 per cent, 25 per cent, 16 per cent, and 10 per cent, a great contrast to the sister island. Indeed, in the Free State the percentages of unmarried among the males of each age group are usually double those of other countries.

Unmarried females are also very numerous, though not so excessively so as is the case with the males. In the age groups twenty-five to thirty, thirty to thirty-five, thirty-five to forty, and fifty-five to sixty-five the percentages are respectively 62 per cent, 42 per cent, 32 per cent, and 24 per cent. In Denmark the same groups showed only 39 per cent, 25 per cent, 19 per cent, and 14 per cent; in England, 41 per cent, 26 per cent, 20 per cent, and 15 per cent. Figure 11 gives a graphic comparison between the Irish Free State and three other modern countries.

Later marriage and high incidence of bachelorhood is, like population decline, more pronounced among the country people. And among them, it is highest in those areas where small holdings prevail. In County Clare 88 per cent of the males between twenty-five and thirty in rural districts were unmarried. This percentage is not abnormally high for Ireland, as Sligo, Galway, Mayo, and Leitrim, areas of small holdings, have 90 per cent and Roscommon 91 per cent. In Clare 90 per cent of women between twenty and twenty-five were unmarried, yet six western counties have higher percentages than Clare's.

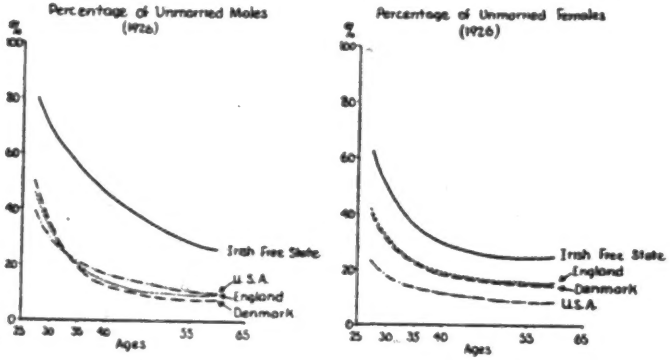
In fact the thickly populated and poorer western counties

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

show a higher percentage in all age groups of unmarried than the eastern counties. In spite of this, however, there is a higher percentage of all females in eastern than in western counties. This fact is directly correlated with the difference in sexual ratio between eastern and western coun- 162 589 589

FIGURE 11

UNMARRIED PERSONS IN THE IRISH FREE STATE AND THREE OTHER COUNTRIES, 1926



ties. In Dublin and the other large cities the female population exceeds the male, while in country districts and smaller towns there is a male excess. The proportion of females per thousand males is lower than that of any of the other twenty-one European countries. It is greater, however, than that of such new countries as the United States. There are 973 females to every 1,000 males in the Free State.

If marriage is so long delayed and there are so few women relatively in the country districts, the condition in the towns is not quite so marked. Females outnumber the males there. Likewise marriage takes place much earlier. In County Clare the aggregate rural areas show 88 per cent of males twenty-five to thirty and 73 per cent thirty to thirty-five unmarried, but the aggregate town areas show only

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

162 70 per cent and 50 per cent. There is a general tendency: the larger the town, the earlier marriage takes place. Ennis, the largest town and county seat of Clare (6,000), has a 582 589 somewhat lower percentage than is usual for towns of its size in Ireland. In fact, Clare's figures, 60 per cent and 30 per cent in those age grades, are better even than those for such a metropolis as Cork City, with 68 per cent and 40 per cent.

Correlations of occupation and marital status[5] support the assumption that the longest delay in marriage is found among the small farmers. Both agricultural laborers and town laborers marry younger and in greater numbers proportionately. No other occupational class, not even the professional class, delays marriage so long or has so many celibate members.

162 These facts obviously relate themselves to the population decline. They are, as it were, two different symptoms of the 163 same condition. But strangely enough in a declining population, fecundity is very high. Although there are fewer married women of childbearing age per 1,000 inhabitants than in other countries (74 in Ireland, 142 in the United States, 125 in Germany, 112 in Denmark, 121 in England, and 119 in Italy), the fertility of these women is remarkably high. For every 100 married women under 45, there are 131 children under five years of age, compared with only 77 in the United States, 71 in England, 93 in Denmark, and 75 in Germany. The number of children is higher again in western counties of Ireland than in eastern. The women of Clare under 45 produced 140 children for every 100 married women, those of Donegal 152, but in County Dublin and County Wicklow, the two eastern counties, only 122 and 124. In spite of this great fecundity there is, however, in Ireland only a normal proportion of children under 15, if Ireland is compared to other countries. The

[5] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, part II: Ages and Conjugal Conditions.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

 162 163

balance between high fertility and few and late marriages keeps their number down.

The kernel of the problem lies, of course, in the behavior of the country people. Marriage brings both dispersal of the farm family and change of status for boys and girls. The marriage of one of the sons brings re-formation of the whole family group upon the farm. The crux of the matter lies in this reorganization of the farm family and the mechanism of the change and continuity it provides. 581

The nearly universal form of marriage in the Irish countryside unites transfer of economic control, land ownership, reformation of family ties, advance in family and community status, and entrance into adult procreative sex life. It is a central focus of rural life, a universal turning point in individual histories. This form of marriage is known as matchmaking. It is the usual, in fact until recently the only respectable, method of marriage and usually too of inheritance. 581 584

In Figure 12 the reader will find a graphic representation of the description of the movement of the family and the re-formation of relations which the match involves and which is the burden of this chapter. It explains itself, and it gives a very good illustration of the generalities. Organicists should take heart at its resemblance to an amoeba expanding and budding. But the resemblance is accidental. The examples we cite come nearly all from County Clare, but literary references and interviewing in other places have been made to show that matchmaking prevails almost universally among small farmers with very little local modification. It is furthermore imbedded in the Irish (Gaelic) tongue and very old in Irish history.

A match (Gaelic, *cleamhnas*, marriage, and *spré*, a match) is a contractual marriage made by the parents or families of the marrying parties and involving the disposal of properties. Generally it begins with a farmer's casting round for a

1 [i.e., that of population decline.—Analyst]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER IX

The Problem of the Aged

888 THE small farmers of the Irish countryside have a characteristic way of treating differences among themselves that is based upon relationships fundamental in the organization of their communities. Naturally these folkways are connected with the norms of family life. Perhaps the most important of them is their treatment of differences in age.

162 Ireland is in some ways an old person's country. The 888 percentages of the old in the population are very high. Naturally the fact is closely allied to an emigration which until recently has drained the country of its young adult manhood and womanhood. And, as in the case of emigration and late marriage, it is the rural districts, or better, the small farmers who inhabit them, that set the norm for the whole country.

A comparison of the distribution of age groups over the population between aggregate rural areas and aggregate town areas, as made in the 1926 census,[1] shows the case clearly. For the whole Free State at that time there are 671 males per 10,000 males aged sixty-five to seventy-four in the aggregate rural areas, while in the aggregate town areas there are only 402 per thousand of that age. The proportions of females of this age to total females are higher

[1] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. I: Ages, Orphanhood and Conjugal Conditions.

[p. 158]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

in both cases, but they show much the same relationship. In both sexes the number of old people is greater in the country districts. Conversely, of course, the country districts show a smaller number of people of adult years. Among males the country areas in the aggregate for the whole of the Free State count only 1,115 per 10,000 aged thirty-five to forty-four, while the towns count 1,234 per 10,000 in the same adult age group.

162
888

When the various county rural areas are subjected to internal comparisons, similar proportions of old and young appear. To give only one example, County Clare counts 752 per 10,000 males aged sixty-five to seventy-four in the aggregate rural areas of the county, but only 528 per 10,000 of the same age in the aggregate of the county's towns. Likewise, Meath, a county of the midland "ranching" area, shows a proportion between rural and urban districts of 620 to 392; and Galway, in part a "congested area," a proportion of 723 to 547. Thus within counties from all parts of Ireland the same greater concentration of the old is found in the country districts.

One can remark immediately from the examples given above that there is a progression in the degree with which, for the counties mentioned, the numbers of old people of the age group selected range above or below the average number of their age per 10,000 males for the whole population of the Free State. This fact introduces us to a new consideration, corollary to the last. It is in general the poorer western counties, where small holders predominate, which have the larger number of aged individuals. Numbers per 10,000 males of the age we have selected before sixty-five to seventy-four rise regularly among the rural populations of the Irish counties from the 614 and 620 of Kilkenny and Meath to the 841 and 835 of Leitrim and Monaghan. In such a scale, the southwestern counties, such as Clare, are again in the middle, though Clare itself

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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with a count of 752 leans heavily toward the Leitrim side.

It becomes obvious that census records by age will all support the assumption. It is in the rural areas, and among the small farmers, that, relatively, the largest number of old people are to be found. Tables 2A and 2B[2] illustrate this conclusion graphically.

TABLE 2A

OLD PEOPLE IN IRELAND: RURAL AND URBAN AREAS IN SELECTED COUNTIES

Census Area	Males per 10,000 aged 65–74
Free State (all counties)	
Aggregate rural areas	671
Aggregate urban areas	402
Clare	
Aggregate rural areas	752
Aggregate urban areas	528
Meath	
Aggregate rural areas	620
Aggregate urban areas	393
Galway	
Aggregate rural areas	723
Aggregate urban areas	547

TABLE 2B

OLD PEOPLE IN IRELAND: SELECTED COUNTIES SHOWING MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM IN AGGREGATE RURAL AREAS

Census Area	Males per 10,000 aged 65–74
Kilkenny	614
Meath	620
Clare	752
Monaghan	835
Leitrim	841

That the large proportion of old people is a matter of the agricultural community is very evident again when the figures indicating the age of those following the various occupations are examined. This is important in gauging

[2] Based on tables from *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. I.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the provision Irish society makes for its old members, for numerically they are a large group. Not only are there larger numbers of old people relatively to other adults in the countryside than in the towns and in agricultural pursuits than in other occupations, but also there are more of them absolutely. Thus out of 550,772 males engaged in agriculture, there was one in 14 of them, or 41,130, over seventy years of age. Among all other "producers, makers and repairers," who numbered 154,016, there were only 3,655 septuagenarian males, or one man in 50. Even among the more sedentary occupations of the towns, the occurrence of old men in commercial, financial, or insurance pursuits was only one in 56 and in professions only one in 75. The occupational figures show that the old are still active and numerous in agriculture. In other fields old people are far less numerous and the numbers of retired persons are greater.

It is only among one sort of agriculturalist, the farm holders and their helping relatives, that this fact is true. Naturally the numbers of the old are high in Ireland, where they represent the survivors of a numerically larger generation thinned much by emigration and where their relative number in the total population is increased by the absence of many men and women who could, without emigration, swell the ranks of the young adult age groups. Nevertheless, within the framework of these proportions, it is the farm-holding agricultural group which sets the norm. Expressing the same proportions in percentages, agriculture counts among its male followers 9 per cent — holders and relatives assisting them — who are over seventy years of age. No other group exhibits such a percentage. The only other occupations to show any similar longevity or length of service are "makers of apparel and made-up textile goods" with 6 per cent of their number still engaged after the age of seventy. All others range much lower in percentage of aged individuals still occupied.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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The relatively great preponderance of the old in agriculture does not extend to the agricultural laborers. They number only 2 per cent of males over seventy. It is only among the farmers and farmers' relatives assisting them that so many old people are alive and active.

It becomes even more evident that it is the farm population which sets the norm for Ireland in this regard when we compare figures of this sort with those of the total population. In all Ireland 6.7 per cent of males are over seventy years of age. Those in the adult years twenty-five to twenty-nine and thirty to thirty-four number only 9.2 per cent and 8.0 per cent of the total males. The farm population with percentages of 8.4 and 8.0 in those ages is the only occupational group to show figures below those of the total population. All others rise above the average percentages for the whole country. Naturally it is the absolutely greater numbers of the farm population which weight the averages. Yet, understanding this, we must also understand that it is among the farm population that the norm is determined.

Statistics for females present rather different ratios. They need not detain us, as they are complicated by the inclusion of a larger category entitled "those engaged in home duties." The category embraces the greater number of urban women and makes comparison with farm women by occupation somewhat precarious. On the other hand, it has the merit of grouping them about household duties and provides in itself a good distinction between urban and rural household workers. Comparing them, then, we find 12 per cent of female farmers and relatives helping farmers over seventy, and of this 5 per cent and 8 per cent aged thirty to thirty-four and thirty-five to forty-four. (We choose here ages in which most of the women who marry are already married.) But among the women "engaged in home duties" (the category which embraces most townswomen, as well as unspecified numbers of countrywomen), only 4.4 per cent are over seventy, and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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conversely the more numerous 11 per cent and 23 per cent are thirty to thirty-four and thirty-five to forty-four. The total female population shows percentages of 8.3 per cent over seventy and 8 per cent and 15 per cent in the younger age grades. It can be seen how these comparisons bear out the conclusions presented by those of the males. It is among the farm population that the largest number of old people are to be found. In this regard the farmers again set the norm for Ireland.

The largest proportions of the aged among the farmers prevail, furthermore, among the small farmers. One can expect this fact, related as it is to the greater emigration of this class. The statistics correlating the size of the farm and age group proportions bear out the expectation.

Table 3, based again upon census records,[3] expresses the relative percentages of males over seventy years of age and of males thirty to forty-four (the age groups in which emigration comes to an end) in the total of males ranked by age among farmers and farmers' assisting relatives upon the various sizes of farms, for the whole of the Free State:

TABLE 3

OLD AGE AND SIZE OF FARMS

Farm Size in Acres	Percentage of Farmers and Assisting Relatives over 70 Years of Age	Percentage of Farmers and Assisting Relatives Aged 30–44
1–5	15	10
5–10	12	15
10–15	10	11
15–30	9	12
30–50	8	12
50–100	7½	10
100–200	7	16
200–over	1	24

The table reveals a constant diminution of the percentage of the old as the size of farms increases. In other words, the

[3] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. II, Table 7.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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162 888 smaller the farm the greater the likelihood that it supports old people. Since we are dealing with census records of occupations actually engaged in at the time of numeration, the figures again point to the fact that larger proportions of old people are still active upon the small farms than elsewhere. On the small farms, then, the old do not retire. That there should be no constant increase in the percentages of the adult age groups does not detract from the validity of the conclusion. The inconsistency of the percentages can be referred to the differential emigration rates of the inhabitants of farms of various sizes. If emigration takes place at different ages and in greater or less proportions from different-sized farm holdings, as other figures not germane in this connection point out, that fact will make it impossible to select any one age group to illustrate the corresponding increase of the proportion of adult males to aged males in the farm size categories.

The table confirms the point. It is among the small holders that the greatest number of old people survive. The peasant population is again responsible for a striking peculiarity of Irish demography.

That the peculiarity is a peasant manifestation can be demonstrated upon a narrower stage. In the various counties of the Free State, the same statistical differences appear between rural areas and small holdings on one hand and urban areas and large holdings on the other. Old people are relatively numerous in the former, relatively few in the latter. In Clare, to take one example, we have seen already that the aggregate rural areas count a larger proportion of the old than do the aggregate urban areas (towns of 1,500 or more inhabitants). The Clare rural districts in which larger holdings are more numerous, Meelick and Ballyvaughan, count 2.4 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively of their people over seventy-five, both male and female. Those in which larger holdings are relatively fewer, e.g., Tulla and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Ennistymon, count larger percentages (4.6 and 4.0 respectively). Here again, within the bounds of the county, the demographic peculiarity by which the old are so numerous is a characteristic of the small-farm population. The presence of large farmers in any district is enough to weigh proportions away from the peasant norm. Comparisons of occupations by age within the county yield the same result. We need not detail them here.[4]

The demographic peculiarity which gives Ireland so large a proportion of the aged in her population becomes more marked when other nations are compared. The Irish death rate is rather low. Most strikingly, only one civilized country keeping census records of age distribution surpasses Ireland in the large proportion of aged individuals. That country is France, which in 1926 counted 9.4 per cent of its citizens over sixty-five years of age, barely topping the Irish figure of 9.2 per cent. Other countries ranged far below France and the Free State, Scandinavian and Baltic countries coming comparatively near, with such figures as that of 8.8 per cent for Sweden and 7.6 per cent for Norway. Industrial Germany and England (with Wales) occupied a middle place with figures of 5.7 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively, and such "new" countries as Australia and the United States, where the percentages are 4.4 per cent and 4.7 per cent, brought up the rear. These figures (see Table 4) were taken from national censuses of various dates in the various countries in the period 1920–1926 and compiled for the Irish census primarily from the "International Health Year Book 1928 (League of Nations)" and *Aperçu de la démographie des divers pays du monde, 1925* (International Institute of Statistics).

Ireland and France share eminence as abodes of the old. But they reach that eminence through different courses. A comparison of the expectancy of life in the two countries,

[4] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. II, Table 12A, County Clare.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

162 made upon the basis of actuarial computations at the time
165 of the taking of the census in the Free State, reveals this difference. In addition, it reveals a new factor in the question of age distribution in Ireland. At all ages from birth

TABLE 4

PERSONS OVER SIXTY-FIVE IN IRELAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES

Country	Population Percentage
France	9.4
Ireland	9.2
Sweden	8.8
Norway	7.6
England (with Wales)	6.6
Germany	5.7
Australia	4.4
United States	4.7

to eighty, the expectation of life is considerably higher in the Free State than in France. At five (a better age than that of birth to take for purposes of computation because of infant mortality) the Irishman may look forward to fifty-nine years of life, the Frenchman only to fifty-five. At forty he may expect to live thirty-eight years more to the Frenchman's thirty-five. And at eighty, if they both survive so long, the Irishman may hope to outlive the Frenchman by more than a year, their expectancies being at that age 5.8 and 4.3 respectively. As Ireland shows a very high expectation of life at all ages in comparison with other countries, especially for males (the female expectancies being considerably lower), the combination of this fact with her large proportion of old people leads to a new conclusion. Not only are the old in Irish country districts relatively more numerous, but they are absolutely more numerous since they live longer than in other countries. Consequently, whatever conditions produce the large percentage of old people among the total population in France, they are not

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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those of Ireland. There low life expectancies go hand in 162
hand with a large proportion of the aged. In Ireland high 165
expectancies, especially at older ages, where they are among the highest in the world for both sexes, go hand in hand with the same phenomenon.

For this reason one cannot appeal too directly to emigration as the determinant of the demographic condition. The Irish countryside is relatively full of old people, not only because so many of the young adults have left, but also because the old people tend to live long lives.

Within this complexity of factors, emigration, a high percentage of the old, and late marriage, the small farmers set the norms for the whole country. Now we can recognize that high expectancies of life also belong to them. A comparison of life expectancies among the three provinces of the Free State will suffice to bear out the fact. Males of Connacht can expect more years of life at all ages than males of Munster; the males of Munster can expect more than those of Leinster; and those of Leinster can expect least of all three. Thus the provinces show higher expectancies the smaller their farms.

Many causes have been advanced to account for Irish 165
longevity. The country people live long and die often very old indeed. Diet, climate, natural selection through infant mortality, racial heredity, have all been suggested by various writers. Probably all of these factors are involved, in one way or another, but the problem is one that has faced students of peasantries often.

The authors have no single efficient cause to offer. The 165
question that poses itself for them is one of effect rather than of cause. The existence of such a large proportion of 888
the old among small farmers presents a problem in the organization of behavior among human beings. Nevertheless, might not the longevity of peasants be after all a simple matter? In the Irish case we shall see that they live long

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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CHAPTER XI

Familism and Sex

162 834 THE small farmers' treatment of sex and the relations of men and women is no less characteristic of their communities than is their treatment of age differences. The country people are the ones among whom marriage is latest in Ireland, bachelorhood and spinsterhood most common, fecundity greatest. They are the ones among whom there is an excess of males over females, a fact which gives all Ireland a sex ratio (973 females to every 1,000 males) unexampled among the long-settled Old World countries and comparable only to those of the new countries. Yet the best evidence gives them a comparatively low illegitimacy rate, too, and the country people yield to no one in the strictness of their sexual morality.

562 834 In the small farm households of the countryside, the roles, privileges, and duties of male and female are complementary. The division of labor between the sexes is only part of separation of human activity into male and female spheres. By oriental standards, perhaps, physical segregation of the sexes may be lacking. Yet in the countryside the community sets very rigid norms of conduct regulating the relations between men and women.

Indeed, the bounds of propriety among the small farmers are quite well marked. An outsider can come to see something of them almost at once. Men and women are much more often to be seen in the company of members of their

[p 202]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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lands of the area made up of this parish and the contiguous parishes are the townlands from which marriages have moved brides outward. These same higher and more westerly townlands are also the ones that have lost population fastest and have been marked by the highest rates of celibacy. Since 1860, at least, families of this area have consistently paid higher dowries to establish their girls on better lands nearer urban and shopping centers. These families have married their daughters along the country roads downward and eastward, from the higher, poorer, more westwardly townlands to the better lands in lower and more eastwardly ones. Relatively speaking, there has been no movement of brides in a reverse direction. By comparison with the better lands, the poorer farms have done without brides for their young men. These poorer farms are the ones, then, who have seen their families "die out of it."

This is merely the evidence from one small parish and its neighbors. But it is instructive that it corresponds with the picture for Ireland as a whole, as the marital statistics of the censuses reveal it. Late marriage, celibacy, the marked preponderance of males in the sex ratio, are all phenomena of the western and poorer farming districts of the country.

Neither the establishment of a peasant proprietorship in the years of agrarian reform since the Land War nor the remarkable growth of prosperity among the farmers since the nadir of famine times has had any success in reversing the long-persistent trend of population decline in the countryside. They have had no effect either, it seems, upon the demographic phenomena associated with that decline. Perhaps the reason for the persistence of the trend despite all changes lies in the considerations revealed by the study of the matter in one small parish, as we have just described them. The acquisition of better lands, the growth of a greater rural prosperity, and the opening up of new opportunities at home have gone hand in hand with a persistence

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

It has already been pointed out that the census figures available at the time of the fieldwork on which this book is based are those of the Irish census of 1926. Since that time some at least of the figures based on the succeeding decennial census, that of 1936, have become available. There are also a number of annual statistics which bear on the questions of Irish population. It is interesting to turn to these for the light they throw on subsequent development in the trends we have noted. 161

The release of the 1936 census figures in 1939 showed conclusively that the demographic trends that have marked Ireland since Famine times continue to persist. Neither the years of the establishment of the Free State up to 1932 nor the years of depression, economic war, and the experimental programs of the De Valera regime since then have affected the trends. Any of the charts prepared for the 1926 figures needs only to be extrapolated along the trend line a few points to show the situation of ten years later.

Stated briefly, these trends recapitulate and reëmphasize the points we have already made. Emigration continues to mark the life of the country, draining the countryside first into the towns and second overseas, now to Great Britain rather than across the oceans. Ireland continues to hold its record of possessing the highest percentage of unmarried men and women in the world. The population over sixty-five years of age continues to rise. The population of children continues to fall. Marriages continue to be fertile, by comparison with many other countries. But they still tend to become fewer and fewer, and the delay of marriage into middle life grows longer and longer. The ratio of females to males continues to fall, until in 1936 there were 975 males for every 935 females in Ireland, the lowest sex ratio in Europe and one of the lowest in the world. 162 166 167 [589]

These figures mark the continued existence of the familistic order we have discussed. They mark as well the continuance of its struggle to fit modern life. Perhaps a figure 582

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

are also characteristically rural still today. These are game- 463
keepers, race-horse trainers, and jockeys. These are, of 369
course, employees of the landed gentry who follow the cult of the horse. They are more often to be found now in the eastern midland counties than elsewhere today.

In County Clare rural occupations other than agricultural are equally rare. There the figures necessitate a slightly different definition of rural districts, since certain towns smaller than 1500 possessing local self-government are included in the town areas. But, by the same procedure as before, we can divide the proportions of total population into rural population in the county and then classify the occupations in Clare according to their rural or urban character.

In Clare, of course, there are no very large cities. The 162
county counts 5,023 males and 5,522 females in town dis- 464
tricts, and the overwhelming majority are country dwell- 369
ers as one would expect in the agricultural west. The total rural districts in 1926 numbered 45,048 male inhabitants and 39,471 female. As befits a largely agricultural area such as the county, occupations and industries show a little different distribution. The population is for males 89 per cent rural and for females 88 per cent rural. Those gainfully occupied in rural districts number for males well over two-thirds of the total population, for females only one-fifth of the total, so that for men, at least, the numbers recorded as unoccupied are negligible. The low figure for occupied females is due to the inclusion of housewives among the unoccupied. The rural-urban ratio upon which we can build expectancies of proportions of followers of occupations to be found in towns or countryside is 92 per cent for males and 84 per cent for females. As for the whole country, female occupations are found only in the towns.

The table for Clare (Table 6) repeats practically exactly 463
the same story as that for Ireland as a whole. In fact, the 369

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 In the search for the countryman, one can break
241 through census records and production figures to find him pursuing his daily and annual round.

The task is simplified immensely by the fact that in 1926 the Free State Government undertook a complete census of the country. In the tables prepared there, the countrymen distinguish themselves in a variety of ways. They are the most numerous [162] group in the country. Out of nearly three million inhabitants, one million eight hundred thousand, or 63 per cent, live in rural areas, outside cities and towns. Not all these country-dwellers are farmers,
241 of course, but the vast majority are. Fifty-one per cent of all occupied persons, male and female, in southern Ireland work at agriculture.

But these agriculturalists are not all alike, of course. Distinctions appear among them which are important to an understanding of the countryman. For example, the farms on which they work differ widely in size. Relative proportions of small and large farms vary with different parts of the country, but nevertheless small farms predominate in all Ireland. A farm over 200 acres is a rarity, comparatively speaking; most of them do not reach 100 acres. Thirty or fifty acres is the average size.

When one looks at the numbers of people these farms support, however, the small holdings come forward much more strongly. There are many more persons supported upon farms under thirty acres

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

317 We referred in the first paragraph to sand and gravel: the white shell sand is taken for manure and is also strewn on the kitchen floor, while beach stones and gravel find many uses as cobble stones, pebble-dashing and so on. Among other 226 by-products of the sea we must not forget fish-oil, manu- 373 factured not only as a medicine for cattle but also as an illuminant. The iron crusie lamp (Fig. 105) was not long since the chief source of light in the islands, and until half a century ago large sea-shells are said to have been employed for the purpose in Co. Kerry. The wick of the crusie was a peeled rush or a twist of cotton: because of the strong smell the lamp was hung under the chimney so that the draught carried 317 away the fumes. The abundant sea shells are also utilized for lime on some islands, for example Tory, by burning them in a kiln made of turf.

Fig. 105.
Length 15"

Finally, we must not omit the dread harvest of the sea cast up after storms—the timber and food-stuffs and wreckage—always welcome and perhaps in olden days not uninvited. Many an islandman's cabin is roofed with couples of ships' masts, and a visit to treeless Tory or Rathlin will reveal the many uses to which drift timber is put. Mysterious objects brought by the currents from the West Indies occasionally turn up: pumice, perhaps from this source, has been found, treasured no doubt as a magic stone, in sandhill settlements of 4,000 years ago.

162 It is not to be wondered at, when we consider the ancient 226 and varied, if often toilsome and dangerous life of the Irish shores, that the coasts carry a much denser population than districts inland. It should be stressed that these various activities are carried on not as a rule by specialized fishermen but by farmers and peasants to whom the sea offers an accessory source of life and interest, and who often perpetuate the old communal schemes by taking shares in a boat and nets. Old ways die hardest by the sea; prohibitions and super- [462] stitions are rife, and fishing is one of the few occupations in which women take no active part.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ages. He sees the country taking complete possession of the town, blocking its streets, ignoring its traffic: he is in the presence of a force older and more fundamental than the town which has given it hospitality (Fig. 110).

When we inquire into the origins and antiquity of the Irish towns we find that very few go back to pre-Norman times, while it is abundantly clear that periodic gatherings in "temporary towns" are far older. The pre-Christian fortress-palaces such as Tara and Navan did not survive into historic times, and as a rule the church in Celtic lands had no civic interests, though many a confiscated monastic site was revived as the nucleus of a town when occupied by English troops in the 16th century. Some coastal cities such as Dublin and Waterford were founded by Norsemen, but most of the inland towns grew up as castle-market-towns during the Anglo-Norman period or in the plantations of the 16th and 17th centuries. To-day the five chief seaports, none of them strictly "native," contain one quarter of the total population: very few inland towns have more than 10,000 people, and only one of these is outside the industrial Six Counties. Most of the fair centres have a population of from 500 to 5,000: there are 187 towns of this size in Eire. There are 202 "towns" with from 200 to 500 inhabitants and only 25 with more than 5,000 (Fig. 107).

It is to these small towns, scattered at convenient intervals of 10 or 15 miles up and down the country, that the fairs have been attracted, the centre of authority and administration becoming the centre of exchange. Although most of the settlements are of "foreign" origin, they have become thoroughly Irish. The family system and blood-ties link up town and country, and trade follows the personal bond of "friendship," that is, blood relationship, however remote. Over shops and inns it is family names one sees painted up: O'Flynn and Flanagan take the place of the English "General Stores" and "Red Lion." Since the countryman's money comes only at the periodic fairs, he relies on the shopkeeper's credit, and the debt must never be entirely paid off, for that

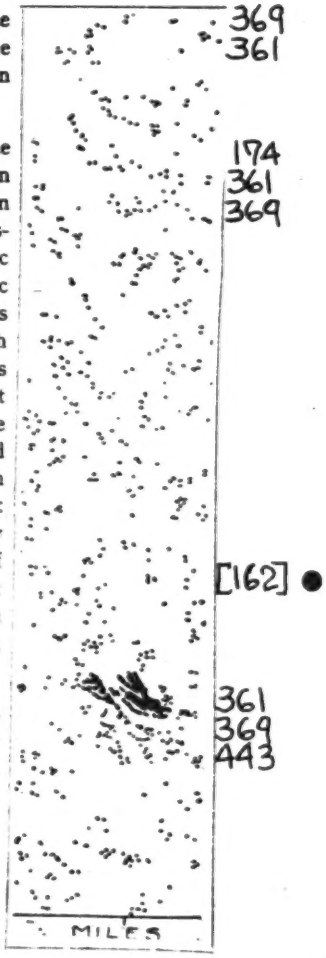


Fig. 107.
A market town with scattered country population. Each dot represents a building.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 would "spoil" social relations. Even in the larger towns the
[369] shopkeeper is reluctant to have his bills completely settled by
[443] his customers. These personal ties readily give rise to cliques and municipal corruption: it must be admitted that the

[162]

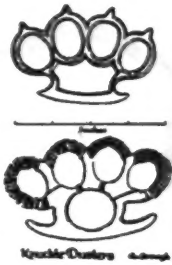
Fig. 108.

corporate spirit is poorly developed. Similarly the Irish country town is generally lacking in any native traditions of
[344] civic architecture, and even the splendid buildings of Dublin and Galway together with the distinctive court-houses of smaller towns owe much to outside influence. The small

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

town consists of streets of houses of peasant style strung The Small 361 [364] end to end, picturesque with their washes of many colours, but perpetuating and even accentuating the filth which can be tolerated in a village setting of streams and fields but which becomes highly objectionable under urban conditions. On the other hand there are some spaciously-planned country towns which have an air of quiet opulence reminding one of the English heritage to which they owe their foundation. I am aware that in saying this I am ignoring the "inner flame" of the Irish towns, but it cannot be denied that externally they have much to learn from the older civic traditions of the sister isle. Dr. Arensberg has analysed the pattern of the country town and described it as "an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order." He shows that, until recent times, its economy has been that of distribution, not production. Banks and pubs and shops do most of the business and owing to the family system "Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation." If we exclude the Lough Neagh basin, [162] all the denser areas of population are coastal and most of the country's manufacturing industries are concentrated in the ports (Fig. 108).

To return to the fair, we have tried to show how the 443 periodic gatherings in which they originated were associated 786 with ritual and emotional experiences connected with the 578 celebration of recurring events such as seed-time and harvest. Breaking the routine of toil, it is characteristic that much licence was permitted on these occasions. Until recent times a strong spirit of revelry and a temporary slackening of the moral code distinguished the great Irish fairs. Even to-day the police or civic guards make allowances for fair day and turn a blind eye to many offences against the law: it is recognized as a time of special licence. Games, dancing and faction fights were the order of the day once the buying and selling were over. Until a generation ago cruel "knuckle-dusters" (Fig. 109) were carried in readiness, and the countryman's heavy felt hat was worn as a defence against the blackthorn Shillelagh.



[411]
Fig. 109.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:— 162 592

Islands.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farm-steadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
Inishbofin, .	2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark, .	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, . .	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males. 162 167

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons. [142]

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6s. A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled 423 311 [495]

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at, or under, £2. 423 311 [435]

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inishshark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among themselves, but many of the children and young people have little or no acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark, which is less in communication with the outer world than Inishbofin. 191

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. were illiterate :— 212 162

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160 females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65 females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inishbofin.

(D.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were— 145 162

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
,, 80 ,, 85, 5 males and 14 females,
,, 85 ,, 90, 4 ,, 0 ,,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

175 a system of dioceses and raised St. Patrick's Church at Armagh
[795] to the primacy in the eleventh century.

But it was the Norsemen who established the first port-cities
175 of Ireland—Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick—
162 and provided the Anglo-Normans with bases from which to attempt their conquest. It was the fate of these newcomers, as of earlier invaders, to be absorbed, but the towns which they and their successors established became the instruments of Anglicization. Yet outside the nine south-eastern counties where the Anglo-Norman influence was strongest, there are few towns which are older than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as late as 1841 less than 15 per cent of the Irish population was urban. It is significant that even today no inland Irish town has a population reaching 20,000: in the Republic, indeed, only one or two exceed 10,000, and that barely. It is the immemorial peasant tradition which dominates the heart of Ireland. In some inland counties the rural population is still as much as 90 per cent of the total: for the Republic of Ireland as a whole it amounts to 62 per cent, and the figure for the more industrialized counties of Northern Ireland is only slightly under 50 per cent. In Ulster the plantation of English and especially of Scots Presbyterian settlers in the seventeenth century was at last successful in maintaining its identity, though as we shall see the material culture is strongly moulded to its Irish environment. Partly because this region of entry has received through the centuries almost every culture-layer that has been deposited in Ireland, there is perhaps a greater variety of survivals in Ulster than in any other part of Ireland. In some ways this most British part of Ireland is also the most Irish.

Although the tribal nomadism of medieval Ireland has been
311 exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the pastoral tradition
361 has dominated Irish life through the ages. Cultivation was
175 certainly practised from Neolithic times, but the older crops, wheat and barley, were in course of time supplemented and in many parts replaced by oats, which became the corn of Ireland as of Scotland, food for men as well as animals. For half the year the arable land was under stubble, pastured and manured by grazing stock, so that the favoured acres around the settle-

15: Fox E-5 (1962) 1963 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Tory Island

[P. 155, A]

TABLE I

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Name type	West Town	East Town	Total
m + *Fa*	24	25	49
f + *Fa*	26	16	42
m + *Mo*	13	4	17
f + *Mo*	6	4	10
m + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	15	5	20
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	13	4	17
m + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
f + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
m + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	0	3	3
f + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	2	1	3
m + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	3	3
f + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*	2	1	3
m + *MoFa*	3	1	4
f + *MoFa*	1	0	1
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	3	0	3
f + *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	0	1	1
f + *FaBro*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	3	0	3
f + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	1	0	1
	112	70	182

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611

Table II summarizes the 'laterality preference' as it affects men and women respectively.

TABLE II

	Patrilateral	*Matrilateral*	*Total*
m	72 (70·6 *per cent.*)	30 (29·4 *per cent.*)	102
f	67 (83·75 *per cent.*)	13 (16·25 *per cent.*)	80
Total	139 (76·4 *per cent.*)	43 (23·6 *per cent.*)	182

The figures in parenthesis are percentages of the row totals.

The overall preference is, as we have seen, patrilateral, but there is an interesting minority preference amongst males for matrilateral names. Practically a third of the men and less than a sixth of the women have matrilateral names.[7] There are several explanations for this trend amongst males. It may stem from the large number of widows with sons, or from the name continuity of the descent system. In a number of cases it follows from the fact that a man is given his father's Christian name as his own and hence takes his mother's name to distinguish him, although this is not all that common.

[162]

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Such a highly personalized naming system only works within the particularistic boundaries of a small community.

Introduction

INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

668 fostered immorality, and created mental illness on a vast scale. Primitive and folk peoples, according to this view, represent man as he once was and could or should be again were civilized society drastically reformed.

000 Most of the ideas held by primitivists are as extreme as those maintained by nativists: primitive and folk societies possess simple, static cultures in which dysfunctional forms are rare; their economies are primarily subsistence ones, approximate the householding type, and lack competitive elements; social control is mostly informal; the family is the core social group and is a highly integrated and cooperative unit; religion is a pervasive force which sanctions most behavior and assures psychological security and social cohesion; and, religious dissent and skepticism are unknown. Primitivists also contend that primitive and folk peoples are content with their conditions of life, are seldom if ever mentally ill, and possess character traits that civilization has perverted. It is probable that primitivists would include all of the traits designated as Irish by nativists and would add many others.

114 12 The antiquarians George Petrie and John T. O'Flaherty during the 1820s were the first scientists to undertake research in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. Since that time, there have been short and sporadic visits to the island by a variety of investigators, among them anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians, philologists, and others. Most of the anthropological research has been conducted by archeologists, anthropometricians, and linguists. Several archeological expeditions have examined thoroughly surface sites in Inis Beag, but no prehistorian has excavated as yet, and the accurate dating of artifacts scarcely has begun. Reconstruction of a number of ancient monuments by the government was made possible through the research findings of archeologists, and today site descriptions on mounted plaques mark the principal monuments. Alfred C. Haddon and C. R. Browne in 1892 and E. A. Hooton and C. W. Dupertius between 1932 and 1934 made anthropometric studies, the latter as part of the Harvard University anthropological survey of Ireland, which also included archeological and ethnographic investigations. The ethnographic study—reported in Conrad M. Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman* and Arensberg's and Solon T. Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*—was made in three communities of Co. Clare by these authors with W. Lloyd Warner; it was the first holistic ethnographic study made in Ireland, and my research in Inis Beag in its initial stages was only the third. (The second, by Rosemary Harris, is reported in a 1954 M.A. thesis in the University of London—see References.)

114 12 197 177 178 [162] Linguists, as well as philologists and those wishing to learn Gaelic, long have visited Inis Beag. There now remain only a few areas along the western seaboard of Europe where Gaelic dialects still are spoken, and the island is located in one of these.[4] One-half the population of Ireland spoke the vernacular at the end of the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the last century the ratio had fallen to one-quarter, or approximately 1,500,000 speakers. Sixty years later the

[4] The Celtic languages are Gaulish, Goidelic, and Brittanic, of which the first became extinct at the beginning of the medieval period, and the last two are represented today by the Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects on the one hand, and the Breton and Welsh on the other. Two other related dialects are now extinct: Manx of the Isle of Man and Cornish, the British dialect of Cornwall (Dillon 1957:207).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

[p.50]

3

The Village and the Family

Village Differences

361
103 LOW VILLAGE RECEIVES ITS NAME from its position on the lowest terrace of Inis Beag (see Fig. 4). It borders the ocean and strand, while High Village to the east is located in a wide expanse south of the common land formed by a concavity in the upper terraces. On the western of the two promontories high above the beach, separated from Low and Terrace by rift valleys, is Castle Village. Below it are the cemetery enclosing the church of the patron saint and the new school, and above it are the castle, the ruined monastery, the Napoleonic watch tower, and what remains of the old school next to the tower. The Ordnance Survey [138] [823] Maps place the highest elevation of Inis Beag in the vicinity of the tower, but the folk claim that the most elevated portion of the crest is above High. Terrace Village, on the promontory to the east, presents a breath-taking view of the lake (see Fig. 7), the sound, and towering mountains and cliffs along the mainland coast. Low merges with High, but Castle and Terrace, because they are located on high terraces and bounded by rift valleys, are isolated units. Terrace is aligned north and south, but the other three settlements are aligned roughly east and west. The southernmost house of Terrace and the westernmost one of Low are approximately 1500 yards apart, and the intervening distance can be walked comfortably in less than 12 minutes.

Below are the number of inhabited houses and the population of each village:

361
162

	Houses	*Population*
Low Village	24	119
High Village	16	59
Castle Village	17	99
Terrace Village	14	73

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

521 203 571 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] [512] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] [539] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 589 162 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of 343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of 621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

592 162

Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit) —still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858
children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842
high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162 •
average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593
done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861
mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864]
elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155]
and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593
bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582]
to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606]
law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother' " (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593
have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828]
hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155]
rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562]
with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831]
the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

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589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

• 162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes
582 from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
[586] articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

162 70 per cent and 50 per cent. There is a general tendency: the larger the town, the earlier marriage takes place. Ennis, the largest town and county seat of Clare (6,000), has a somewhat lower percentage than is usual for towns of its size in Ireland. In fact, Clare's figures, 60 per cent and 30 per cent in those age grades, are better even than those for such a metropolis as Cork City, with 68 per cent and 40 per cent.

582
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Correlations of occupation and marital status[5] support the assumption that the longest delay in marriage is found among the small farmers. Both agricultural laborers and town laborers marry younger and in greater numbers proportionately. No other occupational class, not even the professional class, delays marriage so long or has so many celibate members.

162 These facts obviously relate themselves to the population decline. They are, as it were, two different symptoms of the same condition. But strangely enough in a declining population, fecundity is very high. Although there are fewer married women of childbearing age per 1,000 inhabitants than in other countries (74 in Ireland, 142 in the United States, 125 in Germany, 112 in Denmark, 121 in England, and 119 in Italy), the fertility of these women is remarkably high. For every 100 married women under 45, there are 131 children under five years of age, compared with only 77 in the United States, 71 in England, 93 in Denmark, and 75 in Germany. The number of children is higher again in western counties of Ireland than in eastern. The women of Clare under 45 produced 140 children for every 100 married women, those of Donegal 152, but in County Dublin and County Wicklow, the two eastern counties, only 122 and 124. In spite of this great fecundity there is, however, in Ireland only a normal proportion of children under 15, if Ireland is compared to other countries. The

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[5] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, part II: Ages and Conjugal Conditions.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

 162

balance between high fertility and few and late marriages 163
keeps their number down.

The kernel of the problem lies,[1] of course, in the behavior 581
of the country people. Marriage brings both dispersal of the farm family and change of status for boys and girls. The marriage of one of the sons brings re-formation of the whole family group upon the farm. The crux of the matter lies in this reorganization of the farm family and the mechanism of the change and continuity it provides.

The nearly universal form of marriage in the Irish coun- 581
tryside unites transfer of economic control, land ownership, 584
reformation of family ties, advance in family and community status, and entrance into adult procreative sex life. It is a central focus of rural life, a universal turning point in individual histories. This form of marriage is known as matchmaking. It is the usual, in fact until recently the only respectable, method of marriage and usually too of inheritance.

In Figure 12 the reader will find a graphic representation of the description of the movement of the family and the re-formation of relations which the match involves and which is the burden of this chapter. It explains itself, and it gives a very good illustration of the generalities. Organicists should take heart at its resemblance to an amoeba expanding and budding. But the resemblance is accidental. The examples we cite come nearly all from County Clare, but literary references and interviewing in other places have been made to show that matchmaking prevails almost universally among small farmers with very little local modification. It is furthermore imbedded in the Irish (Gaelic) tongue and very old in Irish history.

A match (Gaelic, *cleamhnas*, marriage, and *spré*, a match) is a contractual marriage made by the parents or families of the marrying parties and involving the disposal of properties. Generally it begins with a farmer's casting round for a

1 [i.e., that of population decline. —Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed mar- 163
riages the population would continue to increase were it not
for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, [167]
sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious prac- [842]
tices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be
cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless
marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some 582
evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or
bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway
and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a
means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested.
The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may [114]
be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in
Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living
traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and London-
derry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive 842
the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well-
organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead
and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns
and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation
in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the
spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings
at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary
histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral
spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to [172]
many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a
reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton
in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves
barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed
certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many
ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic
magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman
who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far re- 584
moved from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day
peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1]R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1766*, 108.
[2]H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

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*831 the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children
864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
• [163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant
83 Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset
158 of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
828 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
[784] illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

164 (K.) *Health.*—Taken as a whole, the people may be said to be a healthy one. Serious diseases, apart from accidents incident to their callings, are but few in number; and the general physique of the people speaks to a healthy active life.

Consanguineous Unions.—A large proportion of the marriages come 582 under this heading, including not only those of persons within the 588 prohibited degrees, for which dispensations are obtained, but also those which take place between people who are related in some recognisable but hardly nameable degree. Cases of the first class, or those which require dispensations, are of frequent occurrence, but seldom or never take place between persons nearer of kin than third cousins. The other cases, of course, are the most common of all, as from the size of the population and its isolated position, every family must, after a few generations, become more or less related to every other. Marriages with strangers, though more numerous of late years, are not common. The uniformity of strain does not appear to have produced any effect except the great similarity of appearance already noticed (p. 322); no cases of malformation or congenital disease are ascribed to it.

Diseases.—For most of the following facts I am indebted to the 164 kindness of Dr. P. J. Hart, the medical officer of the islands, who, besides affording me much valuable information relative to the people and their ailments, the result of his long experience of them, kindly allowed me to look over his notes of cases. The main diseases may be classed as follows:—

Insanity.—There is at present no case of this among the natives of [158] the islands, nor has there been one since 1888 when a case which, however, was not of long duration, occurred in Inishshark.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Properly speaking there is no idiocy; but 164 there are two cases in which the persons, though shrewd and sharp 732 enough about most of their own affairs, yet show signs of mental want in a sufficient degree to amount to slight imbecility.

Epilepsy is not common, but two cases are known in one of which the patient is subject to delusions, and always states, after a fit, that he has been with the fairies on the mainland. Of the other no information could be obtained except that the patient had had "fits."

Deaf-mutism has not been known for years on either island, but a case of temporary dumbness occurred on Inishshark in 1892.

Blindness is equally rare, there being but one case, a man over sixty years of age who acquired it late in life.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

164 very even and white, and seem to last well; even men of over sixty
[142] often have good incisors; but many suffer from toothache. Abscess of the alveolus, unlike what is seen in Aran, is not at all common.

Skin.—Ulcers due to the friction of ropes and of the thick home-spun clothing when wet, eczema, "sea-boils," scabies, and acne, are frequently met with, as is anthrax or carbuncle; but, perhaps, the most common of all skin affections, especially among the younger members of the population, is tinea tonsurans. Alopecia areata, whether caused by the last-mentioned affection or not, seems to be common. Uterine troubles are not at all common. Venereal diseases are practically unknown.

164 *Accidents* arising out of the surroundings and occupation of the
752 people are, as might be expected, very numerous. These are burns, severe cuts from reaping hooks, injuries inflicted by domestic animals, and, above all, contusions and fractures due in most cases to falls from rocks and ponies.

4. *Psychology.*—For one who has had only a short experience of
181 the people this very difficult and delicate point is exceedingly hard to deal justly with, but the following description, for the most part obtained from local sources, both on the islands and on the opposite part of the mainland, and to some small degree from personal observation, is believed to be accurate as far as it goes.

To strangers, the people are not, at first, attractive, as their manner
[609] is shy and not unmarked by suspicion; but after this reserve is broken through they reveal themselves in a much more attractive light, and are kindly, courteous, and very communicative.

Among themselves they are cheerful and social, given much to gossip and chaff, though their wit is not of a very sparkling character.
[517] They contrast strongly with the Aran Islanders in their taste for music and dancing, concertinas and melodions being in common use in several houses.

In their dealings with one another they are honest and fair, even
181 a petty theft being an extremely rare occurrence. As to their dealings
674 with the people of the mainland, the usual hostile statements, common with all insular communities, are made by both sides with respect to
[609] each others honesty, but much reliance cannot be put in these vague assertions. Crime is almost unknown, and the administration of justice is seldom called into requisition, and then only for small quarrels among neighbours.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

(D.) *Health.*—It was found to be a difficult matter to obtain reliable information on this point, but there seems to be, on the whole, but little serious disease, and the people appear to be strong and healthy. The affections suffered from are mainly due to the nature of their food and occupations, and the unwholesome state of their dwellings. 164

Consanguineous Marriages.—The intermarriage of relations seems to be very common, not only on the islands, but also on the mainland, where it is most common in small fishing hamlets difficult of access, such as Fallmore, Tip, and Portacloy. While visiting Inishkea inquiries were made as to these unions, and several of the inhabitants assured me that intermarriage between the people of the North and South Islands was not common, it being a far more usual thing for the islanders to marry people from the opposite shore of the Mullet; thus, the South Island people seem to intermarry a good deal with the inhabitants of Fallmore, a very primitive village at the extreme end of the peninsula, which has only being provided with a road, such as it is, since 1881. On both islands, however, the majority of the marriages seem to take place between members of the community. 582

It does not seem as if it were usual for first cousins to marry, but matches between relatives of all degrees farther out seem to be of very common occurrence.

Through the kindness of the Rev. H. Hewson, P.P. of Belmullet, I am enabled to give actual figures, as he has kept the record of dispensations for these marriages since 1875; from that date until August, 1894, there were in the Parish of Kilmore, which contains about 700 families, altogether 276 marriages, and of these 61 or 22·1 per cent. obtained dispensations, as the parties were relatives. In the Parish of Belmullet, number of families 460, there were in the same period 247 with 26 consanguineous (or 10·5 per cent.) and Kilcommon, with about 620 families, had 276 marriages, for 72 of which, or 26·1 per cent., dispensations were granted. The average in the whole three parishes was thus 19·5 per cent. To these may be added some 10 or 12 more cases of marriages of first cousins dispensed by the bishop of the diocese. There does not seem to be any marked result from this long continued close intermarriage, except the very marked local types observable in the more isolated places, which seem to have been fixed or preserved by this cause. This is especially the case in the islands whose inhabitants, while bearing a general resemblance to each other, differ much in appearance from their neighbours of the mainland. 582 588

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
● 164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

Insanity.—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly
[158] in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
[273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

164 *Fevers.*—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis and struma are stated to be comparatively rare. 164

Malignant disease is very common in the Mullet, especially in the electoral district of Binghamstown South, which includes all the southern part of the peninsula. The majority of these cases are said to fall into the hands of "cancer curers," who use arsenic paste.

Rheumatism is one of the most prevalent troubles, especially in the elderly and old.

"Gravel" is a common complaint all over the district, and a good many deaths from this cause are registered.

Dietetic diseases.—Digestive troubles are very common everywhere, but more especially in the inland parts where the dietary is less varied; "boxty," or potato-bread and the abuse of strong tea seem to be very largely responsible. 164 292

Along the coast, ento-parasites, due to the large proportion of fish in the dietary, are of very frequent occurence.

Respiratory diseases.—Bronchitis is very prevalent in the winter and spring, and spasmodic asthma is stated to be not an uncommon affection. 164

Local affections are few and not very serious. Conjunctivitis is common, and much aggravated by the peat-smoke of the houses.

As regards dental troubles, the people are by no means free from these, though as a rule the teeth are even and white, and remain sound until late in life. [142]

"Female" troubles seem to be very common.

Venereal diseases are practically non-existant.

Skin.—Skin diseases are very prevalent. Among these the most common are—tinea tonsurans, eczema, sea boils, and scabies.

Accidental injuries.—Owing to the mode of life of the people and their environment, accidents frequently happen, especially fractures and contusions from falls, bites and other injuries from domestic animals, and burns. [752]

4. *Psychology.*—The difficulties of treating this part of the subject justly are, in the case of a stranger, very great, as his acquaintance with the people cannot be of sufficiently long standing to allow of the knowledge of more than the superficial part of their character, while, in the case of a resident, personal likes and antipathies, and local quarrels or friendships, largely influence his opinions. 181

The following description, though to some extent derived from personal observation, is for the most part obtained from several local

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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262
264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[757] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Ennistymon, count larger percentages (4.6 and 4.0 respectively). Here again, within the bounds of the county, the demographic peculiarity by which the old are so numerous is a characteristic of the small-farm population. The presence of large farmers in any district is enough to weigh proportions away from the peasant norm. Comparisons of occupations by age within the county yield the same result. We need not detail them here.[4]

The demographic peculiarity which gives Ireland so large a proportion of the aged in her population becomes more marked when other nations are compared. The Irish death rate is rather low. Most strikingly, only one civilized country keeping census records of age distribution surpasses Ireland in the large proportion of aged individuals. That country is France, which in 1926 counted 9.4 per cent of its citizens over sixty-five years of age, barely topping the Irish figure of 9.2 per cent. Other countries ranged far below France and the Free State, Scandinavian and Baltic countries coming comparatively near, with such figures as that of 8.8 per cent for Sweden and 7.6 per cent for Norway. Industrial Germany and England (with Wales) occupied a middle place with figures of 5.7 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively, and such "new" countries as Australia and the United States, where the percentages are 4.4 per cent and 4.7 per cent, brought up the rear. These figures (see Table 4) were taken from national censuses of various dates in the various countries in the period 1920–1926 and compiled for the Irish census primarily from the "International Health Year Book 1928 (League of Nations)" and *Aperçu de la démographie des divers pays du monde, 1925* (International Institute of Statistics).

Ireland and France share eminence as abodes of the old. But they reach that eminence through different courses. A comparison of the expectancy of life in the two countries,

[4] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. II, Table 12A, County Clare.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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162 made upon the basis of actuarial computations at the time
165 of the taking of the census in the Free State, reveals this difference. In addition, it reveals a new factor in the question of age distribution in Ireland. At all ages from birth

TABLE 4

PERSONS OVER SIXTY-FIVE IN IRELAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES

Country	Population Percentage
France	9.4
Ireland	9.2
Sweden	8.8
Norway	7.6
England (with Wales)	6.6
Germany	5.7
Australia	4.4
United States	4.7

to eighty, the expectation of life is considerably higher in the Free State than in France. At five (a better age than that of birth to take for purposes of computation because of infant mortality) the Irishman may look forward to fifty-nine years of life, the Frenchman only to fifty-five. At forty he may expect to live thirty-eight years more to the Frenchman's thirty-five. And at eighty, if they both survive so long, the Irishman may hope to outlive the Frenchman by more than a year, their expectancies being at that age 5.8 and 4.3 respectively. As Ireland shows a very high expectation of life at all ages in comparison with other countries, especially for males (the female expectancies being considerably lower), the combination of this fact with her large proportion of old people leads to a new conclusion. Not only are the old in Irish country districts relatively more numerous, but they are absolutely more numerous since they live longer than in other countries. Consequently, whatever conditions produce the large percentage of old people among the total population in France, they are not

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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those of Ireland. There low life expectancies go hand in 162
hand with a large proportion of the aged. In Ireland high 165
expectancies, especially at older ages, where they are among the highest in the world for both sexes, go hand in hand with the same phenomenon.

For this reason one cannot appeal too directly to emigration as the determinant of the demographic condition. The Irish countryside is relatively full of old people, not only because so many of the young adults have left, but also because the old people tend to live long lives.

Within this complexity of factors, emigration, a high percentage of the old, and late marriage, the small farmers set the norms for the whole country. Now we can recognize that high expectancies of life also belong to them. A comparison of life expectancies among the three provinces of the Free State will suffice to bear out the fact. Males of Connacht can expect more years of life at all ages than males of Munster; the males of Munster can expect more than those of Leinster; and those of Leinster can expect least of all three. Thus the provinces show higher expectancies the smaller their farms.

Many causes have been advanced to account for Irish 165
longevity. The country people live long and die often very old indeed. Diet, climate, natural selection through infant mortality, racial heredity, have all been suggested by various writers. Probably all of these factors are involved, in one way or another, but the problem is one that has faced students of peasantries often.

The authors have no single efficient cause to offer. The 165
question that poses itself for them is one of effect rather than of cause. The existence of such a large proportion of 888
the old among small farmers presents a problem in the organization of behavior among human beings. Nevertheless, might not the longevity of peasants be after all a simple matter? In the Irish case we shall see that they live long

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

888 because they have much to live for. In their own sphere of life, they are honored. They have power.

888 The problem is one which must be referred to the small farmers themselves. As before, it is a question of their sentiments and their conducts and any analysis of their action in the matter must follow upon the presentation of observed generalities in their social life.

Some of these generalities present themselves to the eye immediately. As we saw in the discussion of the house and family, there is a great deal of everyday conduct which expresses the differences of social valuation of age and which one age group follows in its intercourse with many others. This conduct, the sentiments which accompany it, and the attitudes and verbalizations with which it is associated, can be seen every day in the lives of the people. It is part of the *mores* of the community. The child learns it as he grows up upon the small farms. It prepares him to meet all others in the local community who are of substantially the same status, habits of life, and speech as the members of his own family. It provides a scale of valuation in which each individual can place any other within the bounds of variation existing in the local community, and upon which both can build sure expectancies of conduct. On another facet it gives each and every individual a place among individuals occupying similar places. In making status in this way, it governs behavior in high degree, imposing bounds upon it and exacting conformity. We have already seen something of this conduct. In the discussion of the house interior and the grouping and seating of individuals by rough similarity of age, we have seen what might be termed one focal point within the system of relations which is characterized by this conduct. The old people in the farm family occupied that point. Place of honor and privilege within the household is theirs. In their families they are objects of respect and a mild sort of veneration on the part of all younger members.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

561 finds its most compatible and its most enduring organization. No other social disposition sets a deeper stamp upon the countryman. No other is more immediate to the observer, tourist or anthropologist. No other, too, explains better why old custom lives today.

561 Ireland is in many ways an old person's country.
888 Where emigration carries youth away, old age is
165 disproportionately numerous. But that fact is not all the story, for the rural Irish are long-lived. The country districts set a norm for the Free State which shows itself statistically. Despite poverty, hardship, and the erroneously assumed 'decline of rural life', the countryman lives long and dies, often very old indeed. Many causes have been sought for this strange fact, but might it not be after all a simple matter? They live long because they have much to live for. In their own sphere of life, they are honoured; they have power.

888 We remember that the household and the family centres itself in them. Their room is semi-sacred in the fairy-lore; it is the best in the house. The chair by the fire, the seat of honour and most comfort, is theirs. Even with the transfer of command up on the farm, they are objects of marked deference.

888 But this is more than a family matter. The old
626 people have privilege among and receive respect from others than their own relatives. The conduct which bestows both upon them is as much the folk

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance
[778] some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[777] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process. 114 121 127

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated. 12 [539] [177] [178]

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those of most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next. 105 [121] [161] [241] [434] [611] [161] [593] [581] [177] [178] [829] [165] [212] [829]

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the 668

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional subcultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 and a man with many years' experience in Irish rural affairs,
428 attempt to give a statement of the generalities. They express, however, an ideal rather than an actuality.

The average household consists of six persons [and the parents]. Of necessity not more than one could be provided for on the holding and assuming, for example, that the family consisted of two girls and four boys, the position would be somewhat as follows:

593 The eldest son would in the course of years assume ownership of the holding. A second son might be provided with a second-
428 ary education and might possibly win a County Council scholar-
874 ship . . . enabling him to pursue a course of engineering or medicine practically free. In the event, however, of his not being so fortunate, the thrift of the family may enable him to pursue a similar course at the university, the intervals between terms and the long vacation being spent on the farm.

Some years ago medicine was the profession usually pursued provided the boy had no vocation for the priesthood. At that time the cost of his board was appreciably reduced by an arrangement through which neighbors' sons lodged together and brought with them supplies of potatoes, oatmeal, home-cured pork, in fact, provided for almost all their own food. When the boy is qualified to his own particular calling, to his credit it may be said that he denies himself many little luxuries in order to pay back the cost of his training and thus assist the other members of his family.

593 The third son either got trained in business and in due course started one of his own, or emigrated where he could also refund
428 the cost to his parents. The fourth son might possibly become a primary school teacher, a civic guard, a tradesman [artisan] apprenticed by his father in the near-by town, or again his family might give him enough to marry into another small holding.

One of the girls received a dowry or, as they say here, she was "fortuned off" into another small holding of similar status. The second girl possibly favored nursing, teaching, business, or domestic service, or again possibly religion, or even a clerical position of some sort either here or abroad.

166 The above quotation states the generalities in terms of
463 upward social mobility. The influx of the country people
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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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 166 463 593

into the towns, into governmental, professional positions, and into the ranks of urban occupations must wait for special analysis in itself. It is not possible here to determine how great the effect of this movement from the small farms is upon the current much lamented overcrowding of the professions in Ireland. The point of interest for us is the dispersal of the farm group.

Naturally enough, this dispersal does not always occur so happily as in the above statement of the ideal. Yet the portioning off of the children and the success with which it is done is the pride as well as the duty of every farm family. A few examples will give the variations. They are more matters of success or failure to advance beyond the level of small farm life, but they show the genesis of the movement in the farm family. In a later section this subject will be dealt with in more detail. These examples, however, are typical, though the names are fictitious.

Leary of F —, a farmer with sixty acres, has a daughter married near-by with a four hundred pound fortune, and another, a nun in Mercy Convent, Ennis. Four sons have entered the priesthood, an expensive training from his point of view. A fifth is at home working, not yet thirty. Leary is a "strong" farmer, highly prosperous.

Tom Casey, K —, is a very poor holder with thirty acres of mountain and bog. Two sons and a daughter are still at home, and a bachelor brother works with him. Another daughter works for herself as a domestic servant in Ennis. One son Tom is apprenticed to a carpenter in Ennis. A daughter emigrated through the good graces of her aunt.

Michael Dunn of T — has twenty acres, but has not prospered. His two sons left at eighteen and twenty respectively to drive hackney automobiles in Ennis, an uncle there giving them a start. Another son now thirty and a daughter are still at home working the farm.

In a mountain townland, Pat Looney's father prospered, won the good graces of the landlord's agent, amassed four farms, the largest fifty acres, the smallest eighteen. He married off two 593 578 438

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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183 581 554 In these histories, when a countrywoman explained that she or someone she knew had married from bad land into good, or paid a larger dowry than she might have, had she stayed in her own townland, she referred to a movement that was quite readily discernible in her parish. She had experienced, and took pride in, a natural wedding of desire and ambition, which combined, for her as an individual, the instincts of a woman to be wife and mother and the demands of her group's advancement in the systems of familist alliances that made up her community. This was the individual side of the matter. Many indeed were the farmers and their wives who were careful to specify to us how successful a match had been in carrying a larger-than-might-be dowry to better land. One might grumble perhaps about one's lot, if there were anything to grumble over, but in such a case one might be proud that one had assured one's children of a better farm and a better standing than one's own.

166 581 But there was a social side of the matter which showed that this ambition was not a merely personal thing. For in the parish in which we gathered detailed information an interesting statistical movement could be seen. This movement was reflected in the geography of the district.

Marriages since 1864 in this parish have shown a tendency to move brides from the westward out of the poorer lands eastward toward richer farms. The parish happens to lie between higher, poorer soil to the westward and a more fertile area to the east. One must know the local topography and the fertility of the soil to understand the details of the movement. But its over-all tendency is statistically clear. None of the marriages among small farmers and their fellows have taken place (if they took place in the County at all) beyond a six-mile range of distance between the farm married-out-of and the farm married-into. In all cases the movement is small. Yet, small as it is, it shows a distinct tendency. In general, the higher and more westerly town-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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lands of the area made up of this parish and the contiguous parishes are the townlands from which marriages have moved brides outward. These same higher and more westerly townlands are also the ones that have lost population fastest and have been marked by the highest rates of celibacy. Since 1860, at least, families of this area have consistently paid higher dowries to establish their girls on better lands nearer urban and shopping centers. These families have married their daughters along the country roads downward and eastward, from the higher, poorer, more westwardly townlands to the better lands in lower and more eastwardly ones. Relatively speaking, there has been no movement of brides in a reverse direction. By comparison with the better lands, the poorer farms have done without brides for their young men. These poorer farms are the ones, then, who have seen their families "die out of it."

This is merely the evidence from one small parish and its neighbors. But it is instructive that it corresponds with the picture for Ireland as a whole, as the marital statistics of the censuses reveal it. Late marriage, celibacy, the marked preponderance of males in the sex ratio, are all phenomena of the western and poorer farming districts of the country.

Neither the establishment of a peasant proprietorship in the years of agrarian reform since the Land War nor the remarkable growth of prosperity among the farmers since the nadir of famine times has had any success in reversing the long-persistent trend of population decline in the countryside. They have had no effect either, it seems, upon the demographic phenomena associated with that decline. Perhaps the reason for the persistence of the trend despite all changes lies in the considerations revealed by the study of the matter in one small parish, as we have just described them. The acquisition of better lands, the growth of a greater rural prosperity, and the opening up of new opportunities at home have gone hand in hand with a persistence

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161 of social sentiments and forms of social organization shaped entirely within the familism of the small farmers. The new opportunities have appeared first and foremost as means for personal and group advancement within the existing social and familist order.

One could hazard that the census figures represent not an "economic problem" in the sense of a flight from poverty or a fight against its restrictions but the movement of a population seizing upon new opportunities and new prosperity without relinquishing at any point the already existing organization of their social sentiments and habits. In such a view the problems of population decline in Ireland are results not of poverty but of prosperity.

161 However that may be, there is a close parallel between
166 the opening of opportunities for education and for rise into
555 the professions, the ranks of business in the Irish towns, and government, all taking place since 1870, and the demography of the small farmer class. The children of the small farmers have flocked through the doors opened to them into every walk of Irish life. They continue to do so today. The towns and their occupations continue to grow and grow, but the countryside does not. The process is one by which the long delays in marriage, the restriction of children to the few who can be well provided for, and the fierce centering of family ambition in the occupational status of its members, more usually thought of as urban, petit-bourgeois phenomena, have spread outward in to the countryside and overtaken the small farmer on his farm. The mobility of a changing, democratized social order, capable of recruiting the ranks of one class from the children of another, has been combined with the fixity, the conservatism, and the rigidity of an ancient and still vital familism. It should be said that Ireland is not unique in this recombination of elements of social organization. She is unique in illustrating so well, in her special way, a social process universal in the countries of Western European civilization.

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It has already been pointed out that the census figures available at the time of the fieldwork on which this book is based are those of the Irish census of 1926. Since that time some at least of the figures based on the succeeding decennial census, that of 1936, have become available. There are also a number of annual statistics which bear on the questions of Irish population. It is interesting to turn to these for the light they throw on subsequent development in the trends we have noted. 161

The release of the 1936 census figures in 1939 showed conclusively that the demographic trends that have marked Ireland since Famine times continue to persist. Neither the years of the establishment of the Free State up to 1932 nor the years of depression, economic war, and the experimental programs of the De Valera regime since then have affected the trends. Any of the charts prepared for the 1926 figures needs only to be extrapolated along the trend line a few points to show the situation of ten years later.

Stated briefly, these trends recapitulate and reëmphasize the points we have already made. Emigration continues to mark the life of the country, draining the countryside first into the towns and second overseas, now to Great Britain rather than across the oceans. Ireland continues to hold its record of possessing the highest percentage of unmarried men and women in the world. The population over sixty-five years of age continues to rise. The population of children continues to fall. Marriages continue to be fertile, by comparison with many other countries. But they still tend to become fewer and fewer, and the delay of marriage into middle life grows longer and longer. The ratio of females to males continues to fall, until in 1936 there were 975 males for every 935 females in Ireland, the lowest sex ratio in Europe and one of the lowest in the world. 162 166 167 [589]

These figures mark the continued existence of the familistic order we have discussed. They mark as well the continuance of its struggle to fit modern life. Perhaps a figure 582

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage" was pro-
584 found sociology. Life in organized society is a
593 drama. In the match, even though the marriage of one principal is the theme, the action includes the whole cast. Internally, the action forcibly and finally changes the interrelations of all the characters; externally, the parts they play to the audience alter and grow. The changes must run their course till the action resolves itself in the crystallization of a new situation; and the act is over.

It is this dramatic quality which gives the sociologist and the social anthropologist the right to use such terms as 'structure', 'dynamics' and 'equilibrium'. He has that right in describing the life of the countryman. The match brings changes in dramatic completeness. It forces the relationships of the constituent human beings into a new equilibrium and creates a scaffolding for new behaviours and sentiments.

182 Let us look at the external change first. The sons
593 and daughters who must travel are forced out of
166 the closely knit group in which they once had their being. Yet, unless they emigrate beyond hope of call, they do not drop out of sight. The sentiments of years of close association do not die out. It has been a matter of pride and duty with the farm father to provide well for his children. Wherever he can, he has found them an opening. He has sent them into the towns, into the shops, the professions, the trades, and into the Church. As in nearly

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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all modern countries today, there is in Ireland a great and constant flow of population from country to city. Much of this is made up of the farm sons and daughters.

Yet, they do not always go to the towns, of course. The farm father tries to settle them on the land round about him, too, as we have seen. In either case, nevertheless, they are not lost to the new family which supplant them on the farm. They are merely removed a single step. They have become 'friends'. They are part of the extended kinship system which stretches from the farmhouse door. They owe the obligations of kindred which we saw in farm work; they are the uncles and their children the cousins of the new generation in the home farm.

Out of this sort of expansion Irish kinship is built. The point of integration is the farm father and mother, whose relinquishment of command forces dispersal. Projected backward and upward through the generations, to common grandfathers and great-grandfathers, this transferred remembrance of the duty and sentiment between father and son unites ever wider circles of descendants in the ties of brotherhood. It provides a scaffolding for the behaviours of 'friendliness' and 'cooring' between members of contemporaneous generations. In it each man has a place, reckoned upon 'blood' as he calls it. With the word, a social structure of interwoven habit patterns and emotional

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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is created. A pathway is created along which human 369
lives can move and play out their roles in social 443
life. One of the farmer's sons can hope, with luck 571
and affluence, to become a shop-assistant in the market-town. The portion he receives upon the dispersal of the farm family may well take the form of such a start in life. The farmer-father pays the 467
boy's apprentice bond. 443

Formal apprenticeships still flourish in Irish 369
country towns and nowhere better than in the shop 571
or pub. The country boy is bound in custom and in law to his new employer and learns the alien way of business and social habit under a master's eye. Eventually he may succeed to a shop of his own, but first he 'must serve his time'. In this, rural Ireland has preserved an older form and charged it with its own peculiar content. The town-bred lad is seldom hired; he brings no rural kindred with him. Then, too, he is neither so impressionable nor so easy to control. The country lad, at first, is both. The shopkeeper taps the social order of the countryside in the person of his fledgling 'prentice boy.

But time brings ordered change in social life, in 369
the town no less than in the countryside. The boy 443
grows up; he serves his time. He acquires the 571
experience and the technique which fit him for 166
the role for which his parents paid his apprentice bond. Unless he is to retain a subordinate and unimportant place as shop-assistant for a lifetime, he must move on. He must acquire a shop himself.

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369 And so he does, if he humanly can, and to that end
443 his savings go.
571 So much for the farmer's son. In his person, he
● 166 represents a rough one-half of the countryside's invasion of the town. Yet he has sisters, too, at home upon the farm. The attraction of metropolis is no less great for them; they, too, must be provided for in the dispersal of the family upon the land. And with them goes the rural social order and the ties of kinship and community.

In this fact one can see another rough half of the
369 rural tide that sweeps into the ranks of business in
443 the towns. The shop-world taps its country hinter-
571 land again in the persons of the daughters of the
584 farms. The farmer must, if he can, marry his daughter off well; prestige and alliance go with her and the dowry which she carries as her portion. The shopkeeper must renew his ties with the countryside with each new generation, if the shop is to survive. In this coincidence of interest, again, a great deal of the marriage custom of the town revolves. The world of shops and pubs is caught within the ordered mechanism of change called *match-making*, in the same way as is the 'farm of land'.

Currently in country towns, the 'match' is the accepted type of marriage for publican and shopkeeper as much as it is for the farmer. The more sophisticated and more affluent shopkeepers, those who are close, or would like to be, to the higher

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476 The commonest form of coöperation is that which in-
246 volves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed. In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings,
[471] none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners; they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land
[737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest
246 began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh
621 people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral association to the land and to each other. There were three
589 lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter present, if they were old, and many growing children if they
[167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so that a smaller number of young people were present than is
476 perhaps usual.
246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

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CHAPTER VI

Demography and Familism

161 OF the demographic phenomena the small farmers present, the decline of population is most easily isolated. The facts are as follows: There has been [73] a continuous and characteristic decline since the great famine of 1845. Numbers have fallen from 6,548,000 in 1841 to 2,963,000 in 1926. With the exception of Dublin, the whole of the country has suffered in this decline. On the whole, however, the country districts have suffered at a greater rate than have the towns. In 1841, 80 per cent of the population was rural; today only 63 per cent. In other words, since 1841 there has been an almost continuous increase in the town population at the expense of the rural, though the two have shared a common decline. Put in terms of percentages: since 1841, the country districts have lost 64 per cent of their population, towns from 200 to 500 49 per cent, towns from 5,000 to 10,000 25 per cent, and towns other than Dublin over 10,000 13 per cent. Dublin, on the other hand, has gained 47 per cent. That the enormous [167] emigration associated with this decline is a matter of the contemporary generation is evident when it is recognized that 30 per cent of the native-born Irish were living in other countries in 1926.

161 The closest approach among European countries is the 171 case of Norway, where 15 per cent live outside. Italy, which has provided so many citizens for the United States and the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Argentine, has only 4 per cent of its natives residing in foreign countries. Since 1911 there has, however, been a check in the decrease; only 5 per cent of the population was lost between 1911 and 1926. The region of our investigation, County Clare, shares in this general loss, falling in population from 250,000 in 1841 to 95,000 in 1926. Since 1911 it has lost only 8 per cent. 161 171

As the statistics show, this loss of population is in the main a problem of the country districts. The towns have gained proportionately to the countryside; though in a lesser degree, they have, of course, shared the common loss. Many causes for this decline have been operative and, as the excellent work by Dr. William Forbes Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World*,[1] shows, emigration is no new factor in Irish life. The great impetus for an enormous exodus of population was the famine of 1845, but since then emigration has flowed on continuously, coming to an end only in 1932 when for the first time for at least a century more Irishmen returned than left the country. 161 167

But far from the famine's having started the emigration from the present Free State, "the growth of emigration between 1815 and 1845," concludes Dr. Adams, "not only made possible the flight after the famine, it caused that flight. The thirty years before 1845 spread the emigrating spirit through all but the highest class until it became the favorite remedy for hard times. The tremendous rush of the next fifteen years could not have taken place without aid from the earlier emigrants." Since then, the land agitation, dissatisfaction with British rule, and periodic hard times have taken their toll, coupled with what Adams calls the greatest single cause of human migration, the work of powerful interests developed first in the early days of Irish emigration, "organizing and developing (immigrant) traffic for their own profit." The movement began long before 167

[1] New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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167 the great burst of the fifties and has been continuous ever since.

167 178 241 Many attempts have been made to find causes for this emigration. Perhaps the most successful have been those dealing with economic factors. Among the most frequently suggested is the change in agriculture since the famine. The assumption advanced is that the change from tillage to livestock production has cut down the rural employment, which in turn has driven the rural population to emigrate. Undoubtedly, there has been a correlation, particularly in the earliest years and at the time of the land clearances after the famine. In fact, from 1847 to 1852 (the famine years) there was a huge decrease in the area under small holdings of 1–30 acres, a decrease of 1,395,000 acres, but since then, in the years from 1852 to 1909 (after which holdings began generally to be increased), the corresponding decrease was only 155,000 acres.

The Report on Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, published by the Free State Department of Agriculture and Commerce, from which the figures are derived, comments that "this comparatively small transference of land from small holdings with high densities to larger holdings with low densities had but little effect upon reducing tillage or increasing livestock,"[2] the agricultural changes which are supposed to have affected emigration. The Report demonstrates that between 1854 and 1912 the smaller the holding, the larger the increases in densities of all livestock, except dry cattle two years old and over, and the larger the decrease in density of ploughed land.

In other words, the change in agriculture, whatever may have been its effect upon employment prospects for the small farmer outside his own farm, proceeded more rapidly on the small farms. The tables of the Report show that large farmers decreased their tillage at a more rapid rate than

[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xliii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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small farmers only in the periods of 1917 to 1926 and 1854 to 1874, while continuously over the whole period 1874 to 1926 small farmers "got out of tillage more rapidly than large farmers." Too close appeal accordingly cannot be made to changes in agriculture for an understanding of Irish emigration.

In fact local densities of population do not now and never have shown a great deal of correspondence with densities of tillage. The highest percentage of agricultural land ploughed (29 per cent) was reached in 1851. Since then it has fallen steadily, to 13 per cent in 1926. Sweden comes nearest to this low percentage of tillage, with 52 per cent of her arable land tilled. Consequently, the Irish population was at no time solely dependent upon tillage crops.

Before 1881 a correlation could be drawn with some accuracy between the decrease in tillage and the decrease in rural population. Thus in poor law unions (administrative areas) in which ploughed land decreased population also decreased as shown in Table 1.[3]

TABLE 1

RELATION BETWEEN DECREASE IN PLOUGHED LAND AND DECREASE IN POPULATION

Decrease in Ploughed Land (per cent)	Decrease in Population (per cent)
0–20	13
20–30	26
30–40	28
50 and over	34

But since 1881 similar tables show that there is no correspondence between the decreases, and that even those poor law unions in which tillage has increased show an ordinary loss of population. Consequently, decline in tillage had little effect upon emigration after 1881. This becomes even more evident when it is understood that in both 1854

[3] *Ibid.*, p. lxi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

167 178 241 and 1912 the thirteen counties densest in rural population included only six of the counties densest in ploughed land. "Dense tillage was in the east, dense rural population in the west,"[4] as it still is.

167 178 231 In the same search for economic causes, a better case has been made for the change from milch cattle to beef cattle production. As we have seen, milch cows are characteristically associated with the small farmers. During the period of emigration, the number of dry cattle has risen in proportion to the number of milch cattle almost steadily; the range is from 2,372 total cattle to the 1,000 milch cows in 1854, to 3,334 to the 1,000 in 1926; fluctuations have been very slight. It is true that the number of milch cattle has also risen steadily, if slowly. Such a change in actual numbers of cattle and in proportions of dry to milch cattle, the latter capable of yielding the greater amounts of food for farm consumption, may have had some effect upon the displacement of human beings by cattle, but certainly not a great enough one to determine the emigration. The lack of correspondence between these changes is evident when it is remembered that the change has taken place principally in the former tillage areas, and also that in 1926 the areas of greatest milch cow density were substantially the same as in 1854. The very little direct correspondence there can be is well exemplified in the contrast between County Clare, which fell from a population of 336 to the 1,000 acres of crop and pasture to 129, while milch cows remained practically the same in number (100 to 110 to the 1,000 acres), and County Mayo (a poorer region), where population fell only from 375 to 245 and milch cows also remained practically the same (90 to 100).

From these figures it is evident that the decline in rural population is not directly correlated with decline in tillage or change in cattle production. The failure of employment

[4] *Ibid.*, p. lvi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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coincident upon that change cannot be assigned as the sole cause of emigration.

As the decline in population has been more characteristic of the small farmers, it may be possible to associate it with social conditions pertaining among that class. They have participated in the very agricultural changes which are thought to have caused their dispersal. They enjoyed the high prosperity of the closing decades of the last century, and won the progressive reforms of agrarian tenure. Yet they continued to send forth thousands of emigrants. Fluctuating economic conditions have undoubtedly had their effect, but factors whose greatest demonstrable result is merely to stay or hurry the stream of emigration cannot be evoked as efficient causes. In taking the problem directly to the small farmer, it will become possible to sketch the social setting in which emigration takes its form.

Clearly connected with the decline in population are other demographic statistics, particularly those of marriage. They present features which are unique among civilized peoples. Inasmuch as they are again indications of an underlying uniform social pattern whose occurrences they record, it is necessary to analyze them in terms of the behavior patterns of rural Ireland. Like emigration, they are more characteristic of the country people. Springing from marriage, they are thus directly indicative of social forces within the small farmers' family economy. 162

Briefly stated, they present the following characteristics: In Saorstat Eireann in 1926, according to the census then conducted, there was a larger proportion of unmarried persons of all ages than in any other country for which records are kept. Marriage, furthermore, did not take place until a comparatively late age. Thus 80 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty years of age were unmarried in 1926, 62 per cent of males thirty to thirty-five, 50 per cent of males thirty-five to forty, and 26 per cent of males fifty-five to 162 582 589

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 daughters with two hundred pound fortunes, settled three sons
and a daughter with her husband in each of the farms. Pat him-
578 self, the eldest, now about eighty, got the largest farm but not
428 the one he wanted. He has been warring with his brothers and his neighbors ever since. He held out against his father for five years, refusing to marry and take his farm. In Pat's youth, land agitation and reform had not yet prevented subdivision and acquiring of new farms by a successful tenant. Pat on his fifty-acre mountain farm has married off a daughter locally at three hundred pounds and sent two sons out to America. Another daughter works in England. Two sons, aged forty-three and thirty-six, are at home and Pat hasn't made up his mind yet which one shall get the land.

593 The examples, various as they are, need not be multiplied.
● 167 The sons and daughter who are not to be portioned at home, in the words of the Luogh residents, "must travel." To that end both the savings of the family, created through their united efforts under the headship of father and mother, and
[583] the incoming dowry, are devoted. In Luogh there had been only four marriages in ten years; two of them were the usual farm-transferring matches, one a returned emigrant who married a boyhood sweetheart and bought a farm, and one a widower who took a second wife and a second fortune. An old woman described the situation: "There aren't any matches nowadays. Nobody has a fortune to give his daugh-
[454] ter and the young men must travel." Yet the woman who lamented this state of affairs was carefully husbanding half crowns for her baby granddaughter's fortune.

593 Nevertheless this necessary dispersal of the members of
167 the family at its reorganization does not ordinarily destroy
457 the family ties. The bonds of affection and family obligation still hold. If they have emigrated, the family members send
434 back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces and brothers and sisters left at home. A great many farms, especially in West and North Clare, are partially supported by Christmas gifts from Americans and other exiles. It is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 unfortunate that the authors have not statements of the
167 amount of these annual remittances for local districts. The
457 total for Ireland, however, is enormous. There is a marked
434 tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself, sons and daughters of each generation going out to join the members of the last. One district round Cross to the west of Carrigaholt, a little settlement on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, said locally to be supported by sons in the Shanghai police force. The first to go became chief of police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the force have gone to men of Cross.

167 The authors had the opportunity of examining some of the family setting in which emigrant remittances operate in Luogh. There the greatest number of emigrants had gone out to Boston. In one family, there was a succession of nephews and nieces following uncles and aunts from the same farmhouse for four generations. In four recent cases Luogh boys and girls had married one another in Boston. In two more they had married in Ireland and emigrated together.

434 Remittances from sons and daughters arrive around Christmas. In one family the farmer's wife had written
593 to children in America saying that the family were trying
431 to acquire an addition to their holding from the Land Commission. The children sent them the purchase price. In this case the daughter sent her regular Christmas remittance as well. When she was admonished by her parents for such generosity, she wrote: "I would think it wasn't Christmas and I hadn't any father and mother if I didn't send them something."

[527] Her mention of the festival in the same breath with her parents is understandable when it is realized that Christmas is the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland.

434 The role played by emigrated relatives in providing for
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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
602 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
167 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
484 of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the
533 peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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It has already been pointed out that the census figures available at the time of the fieldwork on which this book is based are those of the Irish census of 1926. Since that time some at least of the figures based on the succeeding decennial census, that of 1936, have become available. There are also a number of annual statistics which bear on the questions of Irish population. It is interesting to turn to these for the light they throw on subsequent development in the trends we have noted. 161

The release of the 1936 census figures in 1939 showed conclusively that the demographic trends that have marked Ireland since Famine times continue to persist. Neither the years of the establishment of the Free State up to 1932 nor the years of depression, economic war, and the experimental programs of the De Valera regime since then have affected the trends. Any of the charts prepared for the 1926 figures needs only to be extrapolated along the trend line a few points to show the situation of ten years later.

Stated briefly, these trends recapitulate and reëmphasize the points we have already made. Emigration continues to mark the life of the country, draining the countryside first into the towns and second overseas, now to Great Britain rather than across the oceans. Ireland continues to hold its record of possessing the highest percentage of unmarried men and women in the world. The population over sixty-five years of age continues to rise. The population of children continues to fall. Marriages continue to be fertile, by comparison with many other countries. But they still tend to become fewer and fewer, and the delay of marriage into middle life grows longer and longer. The ratio of females to males continues to fall, until in 1936 there were 975 males for every 935 females in Ireland, the lowest sex ratio in Europe and one of the lowest in the world. 162 166 167 [589]

These figures mark the continued existence of the familistic order we have discussed. They mark as well the continuance of its struggle to fit modern life. Perhaps a figure 582

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 when we discuss shops, pubs and fairs. In either
602 of these cases, the kinsmen, the dispersed children, remain within the confines of local life.

167 The new equilibrium has a place even where
602 emigration removes the dispersed children alto-
182 gether. The behaviours and sentiments of kinship 'travel' with them. They send back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces, brothers and sisters. There is a marked tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself. Sons and daughters of each generation go out to join the members of the last. One little settlement called Cross, on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, is said locally to be supported by the Shanghai police force. The first man to go is now Chief of Police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the Force have gone to men of Cross.

Such services are part of the same 'friendliness' which sums up the kinship system. And naturally, where kinship is based upon extension, bonds are stronger as the original relationship is closer. Thus a brother is more likely to aid one's self and one's children than is a cousin, though the obligation binds them both. An incident from Luogh will show the human setting in which emigration often takes place. The farmer tells the story himself:

"A fellow named O'Dwyer married to a cousin of the old woman's out of Ballyheline (a neighbour-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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ing townland) was home from Australia one 167
summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a great 602
new coat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day 182
when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. (After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship) he asked could he take the boy (my second son) out to Australia with him, and he would put him behind his bar (he had a hotel out there). I said yes, he could have him.

"After this fellow went back to Australia, he sent over £50 for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas' sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. I sent back the £50, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back."

So much for the external change which the 182
match brings. What now can we learn of the 602
internal change and the new internal equilibrium 888
that change brings?

The transfer of the land to the son who marries 182
carries with it a drastic reformation in the relations 593
of the household members who remain. The head- 888
ship of the parental couple is profoundly modified. The 'old people' move into a new status, that of old age. For both the man and the woman it means an abandonment of power; they are no longer the 'man and woman of the house'.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 Yet, all this is still a primary social adaptation. It is not reasoned; it is made up of the habitual face-to-face contact of human beings and the folkways of the community. Yet, neither does it shut out reason; there is ample play for wits, for intelligence and for self-interest. For there is certainly nothing remote, esoteric or formal within this frame. There are no rules to learn that the countryman does not feel within himself or his fellows.

This rural familism is based upon psychological and physiological realities. Within it, the drives of the human animal find satisfaction. Hunger, reproduction, love and anger, domination and submission—all have a place. But these satisfactions, as you can see, are far from being haphazard. They are carefully patterned and controlled. The conditioning the countryman receives is personal; it is a conditioning to other human beings. It is part of an intricate web of human relationship. It is a balance of personalities in movement, crystalline at moments, fluid at others, and transformed when necessary in regular and orderly fashion.

167 In the light of a rural life which can be looked upon as a whole system, the peculiarities of Irish population figures take on meaning.

The Free State exhibits a very interesting and peculiar demography. The statistics of population in Ireland are startling, in many ways. Long-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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continued emigration has brought about an enormous decline in population, at times when most other nations have been increasing rapidly. The enormous exodus which followed the Famine was only the high-water mark of the tide of emigration. The outward flow began long before the Famine and has continued down to the present. Only in 1932, in a time of world-wide depression and immigration barriers, did it come to what may be an end. For the first time for well over a century, more Irishmen returned to their native land than left the country.

Naturally, after so long an emigration, this outward flow of population had become a permanent condition in the life of the nation. In 1926, the census-takers reckoned that 30 per cent of all native-born Irish were then living outside the country of their birth. Put in more intimate terms, this meant, roughly, that every child growing up must expect to see at least three out of every ten of his playmates and companions go beyond the seas. And unlike the Greek or the Sicilian, and many another national, he could not expect them to return. He must lose them permanently.

But this three out of ten is an unfair representation. The country districts have suffered this loss at a much greater rate than the towns. On the whole, the towns have gained over the countryside. The cities, as everywhere else, have swollen at the expense of the rest of the country. The countryside has been the victim of two enormous drains—one

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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167 the normal, small farmers' flow from country to town—the other, overseas. As this group, the small farmers, is overwhelmingly the most numerous in the land, the drain has taxed it most.

582 But the small farmers, the country-people, are the very group who exhibit most strongly another statistical peculiarity. They set the norm for the country in marital statistics. In this, the Irish Free State occupies a unique place. Marriage takes place at a later age than in any other country for which records are kept. Sixty-two per cent of all males between the ages of thirty to thirty-five are still unmarried. Nor is it only the men who escape matrimony so long. Forty-two per cent of all women who reach that age of middle life are single. In the United States, in England, in Denmark, in all other countries in fact, there is no such long delay in marrying. In all three of the countries named, comparative figures for both men and women do not reach 25 per cent. Only in Ireland is a single man or woman of thirty the rule rather than the exception.

But it is not a question merely of the Irishman's hanging back a little longer from an inescapable fate. For a surprising number escape altogether. One man out of every four men who reach fifty in Ireland is still a bachelor. And though the women have slightly better luck in finding mates, the same figure holds for them.

Other countries usually delay marriage longest in the urban professional classes. But in Ireland, it is

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the country-people who marry latest. One can range the country in something of a scale in this regard. The more numerous in a county the numbers of small holdings, roughly, the later marriage takes place, and the greater number of bachelors, particularly males, of all ages, there are. Late marriage and bachelorhood are characteristics today of the countryman's way of life.

In the problem presented by these statistics, the structural approach to the countryman's way of life can bring a new illumination. It throws into relief the human setting in which economic and historical changes have run their course.

After the terrible disaster of the Famine, agriculture underwent a change. Canadian and Argentine wheat forced Irish land into cattle production. The great land clearances took place, turning out the population to make way for pasture. Then the small farmer followed the large into pasturage for dry cattle, on a lesser scale, and the milch cow declined. Small towns and crossroads distributing centres and the railroads sprang up all through the country; and abroad, the roaring industrial expansion, first of England and then of America, gave opportunities denied at home. Through all this: through curtailment of employment at home, through substitution of cattle for men upon the land, through denial of local opportunity, the stream of emigration kept its steady flow.

Through all this, too, the figures of Irish mar-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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riage kept pace. Age of marriage was normal in the year of the first census. In 1841 there was a normally low percentage of the unmarried in the population, and men and women married as early as they do in the United States today. At each decennial census afterwards, marriage was a little later and the unmarried a little more numerous. Through all the welter of changes, the figures grew steadily toward wider and wider spread celibacy.

Then when the economic and political tides turned, the human setting still endured. The clearances ceased; land reform won security of tenure; years of prosperity after 1870 brought an income that could be used more and more at home, as lowered rents spread and freehold was assured. Finally, the war brought undreamed-of prosperity and on its heels the strength for revolution and civil war. The milch cow came back to a position from which it had only retreated very little; dairying could be organized and come to vie with beef cattle as a market outlet. Finally, as a last step, industry began to make its call at home.

In all this flow of circumstance who can say what factor determined the numerical count of Irish population? Emigration went on as before, checked this year, hurried the next, until, perhaps from external check, the flow grew less and less.[1]

[1] Preliminary reports of the current (1936) census indicate emigration still continues, though now largely directed toward Great Britain rather than overseas.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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On the other hand, the corollary check on the population—late marriage—did not lag. It still grew. In the census of 1911 it reached its peak and has held it since. It alone shows no sign of falling-off in response to new economics and better days. For a social system is no brittle, changeable thing. Its adjustments to change and circumstance are a lesson, not in economics, but in the tenacity of human sentiment and human habit. Late marriage in Ireland can be associated with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership. It is part of the long struggle to acquire means to portion children. The closed corporation of the family cannot be dispersed until it is possible to establish a new one. The self-sufficiency of the group makes it always difficult to destroy. And now, today, the identification of a single family with a single individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new group upon the land.

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So, when subdivision of holdings ceased after the Famine, Irish familism made its adaptation. The local community could not any longer settle its sons at home; it could no longer divide its land among them. Yet, unless it were to die it must live on. I say must, for a social system is co-extensive with the lives of its members. The Polynesians, in their island paradises, might die out nation by nation when their culture crashed, bled by a malady stronger than foreign germs or foreign guns. The Irish countrymen were tougher.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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167 178 582 In living on, the system could still mould the lives of its members. As prosperity arrived, and land agitation fixed the attention of the farmer, 'land' became more and more a central value. Irish rural familism felt more and more strongly the threefold identification of 'land', 'blood' and local standing. Where land, alliance and prestige all follow the same lines, in marriage, the group finds its coherence in, and centres its tightly woven bonds round, that crucial reorganization of social life.

So, the 'landless' and the 'backward' must die out. In rural Ireland, however, it is not men but families which are so forced to their deaths. "Backward places do not grow big fortunes", we remember. That homely phrase is full of social meaning. The all-too-human drives for social rise, for prestige, leave them behind and marriageless. And in a familistic world, celibacy leads to extinction.

000 With the homely phrase we enter a new field in social life, yet one just as central to the way of rural Ireland. This is the broad area of social stratification. Under the awkward term are subsumed the judgments man makes among his fellows upon rank, upon prestige, upon inferiority and superiority, and the behaviours that embody them. All societies exhibit them ; all organize them in one way or another. Even the animals show analogous behaviours. They practise dominance and submit

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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train. The finder of the 'crock of gold' is stricken 369
down in the flush of discovery; the townsman who 571
rises too high and waxes too arrogant in his wealth 452
may soon be stricken, too, and his family and its 626
shop or public-house seems mysteriously to melt away.

Nor is this the only instance in which the social order overlies the economic form of debt and shapes it to its purposes. The debt, like the dowry, can and does become a measure of status, too. It is a sign of one's ability to support that network of social obligation which gives one's self and one's family a place in social life. In this fact, too, lies 'confidence'. The debt descends with the land or the shop from father to son. It moves onward with the progression of the generations. Many a small farmer pays off bit by bit the family debt of a parent or relative. Social obligation, in which pride and sentiment are involved, long outlives the statute of limitations. In this disposition, religion, sentiment and custom coincide. Many a shopkeeper till [167] ●
recently has assisted a boy or girl to emigrate, in the sure knowledge that his or her remittances would eventually reach his money-till.

In the days of the British, a Royal Commission found itself mystified by this so-called 'honesty'. The debt to the landlord, in the form of rent, seemed to them an honest debt. Yet the countryman, often as not, scorned honesty in that direction; though he might bend his last efforts in what

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

(3). Vital Statistics (General and Economic).

161 (a.) *Population.*—The population of these islands, though still dense, is, like that of the rest of Ireland, steadily decreasing, though in this case the decline is of recent date compared with many other parts of the country.

161 Between the years 1851 and 1871 the population had increased from 1047 persons, occupying 196 houses, to 1262, and 251, respectively. Some time after 1871, however, emigration began to take a sensible 167 effect; and between that year and the census of 1891 there has been a loss in people of 20·99 per cent., and in houses of 11·55 per cent. That the decrease is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths for the decennial period 1880–1890, in which time the births exceeded the deaths by 89 or 38·7 per cent., the respective numbers being births 230, deaths 141.

The Table given below shows the population of the islands at each 161 census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average 592 number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head. It thus indicates the period at which the decrease began, and the amount of congestion of the district, both past and present. This congestion, however, must be greater than what the figures show, as under the heading of Inishbofin are grouped some fifty-four other islands or islets, all uninhabited, and varying in size from seventy-four acres downwards. Some of these are utilized for grazing by the people of the two larger islands, but a large number of them are quite useless, being mere barren rocks.

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	1047	196	5·34	3·00
1861	1236	239	5·17	2·55
1871	1262	251	5·03	2·50
1881	1166	250	4·67	2·70
1891	997	215	4·64	3·10

161 That the overcrowding is, even now, great, will be seen when it is considered that the density of population per square mile is 202, whilst that of the Aran Islands is 171, of the county of Galway 86, and of Ireland, as a whole, 146.[1]

[1] In the Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland (1846), the population of the islands in 1831 is given as 1462, number of houses not given; population in 1841 as 1612, houses, 285. The decrease afterwards is evidently due to the famine in 1847.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:— 162 592

Islands.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
Inishbofin, .	2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark, .	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, . .	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males. 162 167

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons. [142]

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6s. A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled 423 311 [435]

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the gravestones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

(E.) *Analysis of the Statistical Tables*:—

141 The variations in type in the inhabitants of the different parts of the district are shown by the following Table, which appears to corroborate the belief entertained by the people that the men of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island or of the Mullet. They also show the greater proportion of light hair in the islanders:

	Mullet.	North Inishkea.	South Inishkea.	Portacloy.
Number measured, . . .	35	8	7	12
Cephalic Index, . . .	79·5	78·4	80·1	80·0
Stature, ...	1704 (5 ft. 7 in.)	1727 (5 ft. 8 in.)	1705 (5 ft. 7 in.)	1727 (5 ft. 8 in.)
Proportion to stature—Span, .	104·55	102·45	103·58	105·65
,, ,, Hand, .	11·34	11·04	11·41	11·41
,, ,, Forearm,	15·47	15·60	15·32	15·57
Nigrescence Index,[1] . .	62·30	10·5		77·52

Though the people in all sections of the district are seen to be mesaticephalic (if two units be subtracted to reduce the index to cranial standard), yet in two, South Inishkea and Portacloy, there is an approach to the brachycephalic form. None of the men measured in either place are dolichocephalic, and in most cases the cephalic proportion inclines towards the higher index rather than to the lower.

It would appear also that the North Inishkea men are shorter-limbed than any of their neighbours, as out of the four cases met with in which the span (*grande envergue*) was less than the height, three were from this island.

3. *Vital Statistics* (*General and Economic*):—

161 (A.) *Population.*—Erris is not now very thickly peopled, the general decrease affecting the population of Ireland during the last
● 167 fifty years having especially affected this district.

The census returns show a constant and steady decline since 1851, the slight increases which have from time to time occurred in some

[1] Not taken from number measured but from nigrescence cards.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

townlands having only been temporary. That this loss is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths in the registration district of Binghamstown for the decennial period 1884–1893 in which space of time the births numbered 1260, and the deaths 707, an excess of 553, or 22·7 per cent. The following Table, which refers only to the parish of Kilmore, shows the population of the district at each census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head.[1] 161 [167]

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	7379	1106	6·67	3·99
1861	6452	1243	5·19	4·57
1871	5552	1054	5·27	5·31
1881	5327	911	5·85	5·53
1891	4111	694	5·92	7·17

[592]

The density of population is thus seen to be about 89 per square mile, but varies with locality, being greatest on S. Inishkea, where it is about 304.

The town of Belmullet, which is not included in the table given above, has fluctuated much since its foundation in 1825. In 1831 its population was 585, and it continued to increase until after 1851, when it had attained its maximum of 935; from that time forth it declined. In 1861 its inhabitants numbered 907; in 1871, 849; in 1881 there was a slight increase, 852; and at the last census, in 1891, the population had fallen to 652.

It was difficult to lay down any exact boundaries to what, for the purposes of this report, is termed the Portacloy district; but the three townlands—Srahataggle, Portacloy, and Curraunboy, from which most of those measured at Portacloy came, have been taken to represent it; in these the population has not undergone the same change as that of Kilmore, the population having risen since 1851, from 248, inhabiting 46 houses, to 299 in 53 houses. 634 161

[1] In 1831 the population of Kilmore Erris was 9287.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

is concluded. The burial grounds are kept much better than in many other parts of the West; and on Inishkea, as well as in the Mullet, it it is customary to decorate the graves with large white pebbles, and to place at the head a neatly made wooden cross. A curious custom exists, some instances of which were observed at Tarmoncarra, of placing tobacco pipes on the graves; these are the pipes which were left unused after the wake. What the reason is for so placing them could not be ascertained, but it is considered extremely unlucky to remove them. 764 [777]

Unbaptised infants are interred in separate burying grounds by themselves, several of which are in the district. 766

It is now no longer customary for the people of the Mullet to bury their dead in Inisglora, the last instance of this having occured over thirty years ago. Formerly many families used regularly to make use of this island as a cemetery, always taking a body over from a point of the mainland opposite, which was stated by tradition to have once been connected with the main, but to have got separated afterwards by a channel which has gradually widened. 773 764

Maxwell,[1] writing in 1832, says—"There are no people on earth more punctilious in the interment of their dead than the peasantry of this remote district. A strange and unaccountable custom exists of burying different families resident on the main in island cemeteries, and great difficulty and often great danger attends the conveyance of a corpse to its insulated resting place. No inducement will make these wild people inter a body apart from the tomb of its fathers, and, if a boat will live, the corpse will be transported to the family tomb. At times the weather renders this impracticable, but the deceased is kept for many days unburied in the hope that the storm may subside; and only when frail mortality evinces unequivocal tokens of decay will the relatives consent to unite its dust with the ashes of a stranger." 764

A considerable number of migratory labourers leave this district annually to do harvesting work in England, on the proceeds of which work they in part support themselves during the winter. The number doing thus has decreased somewhat of late years. 167

There is not much to be said about the everyday mode of life. The men fish and attend to their holdings; the women manage household affairs and assist at field work in times of pressure. The people are early risers in the summer months, and, as a rule, retire to bed early, few lights being seen in the hamlets after nine or ten p.m. 512

[1] Maxwell, W. H., "Wild sports of the West," chap. XIX.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(B)]

121 IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the
●[167] availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated dis-
[434] tricts of the country, an island off the west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly col-
114 lected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of
124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
[578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of
[231] commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(c)]

121 living rarely encountered in the modern world. As will be shown later, however, the island people maintain their simple but not uncomfortable way of living only by help from outside: if [433] one believes that every inhabited area must make its economic contribution to the state, Inishbofin is a debtor on a considerable scale.

167 "A small and dwindling population maintain a precarious existence on the 657 Atlantic fringe of our industrial society and present upon the whole an aspect of decline and, in some parts, of dereliction." In these words the Scottish crofting report[1] names a problem, com- [659] mon alike to the Atlantic fringe of Ireland and of Scotland, which was investigated by two Congested Districts Boards, in Ireland from 1891–1923[2] and in Scotland from 1897–1911[3]; in both countries the powers of these boards were transferred to the general administration of agricultural affairs. One by one the islands off the west coast of Ireland are being abandoned[4] but on Inishbofin this prospect does not seem immediate: past and present government assistance has resulted in a planned

[113] [1] Department of Agriculture for Scotland, Report of the Commission of enquiry into crofting conditions. H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 1954, Cmd. 9091, para. 281, p. 87.

[2] For a general treatment, T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 23, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[3] Cmd. 9091, 1954, para. 265, p. 81.

[4] T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 120, 1954, p. 332.

167 landscape combined with financial help
657 of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is sep-
[131] arated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring
311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs
132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[5] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

Isolation is a major problem, but on
505 four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost
[261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport problems

[137] [5] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives, or—in comparatively few instances—
167 by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[8] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[491] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[8] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

[861] sixteen are in a similarly formless cluster.

167 Emigration has entered deeply into the fabric of life: in 1841, Inishbofin 161 with Inishark had 1612 people, but ten years later there were only 1047. A rise to 1236 in 1861 and 1262 in 1871 was followed by a drop to 997 in 1891, when there were 215 families of whom one-quarter were said to be "very poor."[18] Steadily the population declined, to 510 in 1936, 406 in 1946, and 341 in 1951, and now less than 300 (including 40 in Inishark). One-quarter of the families were interviewed in 1954; of these only one-third were "normal families" of parents with children. In the school there were only 29 children aged 5–14, whereas the normal figure would be 48. On Inishark there are now only nine able-bodied men, six of whom are needed to man a boat seaworthy in winter, with the result that an epidemic might be disastrous. Permanent emigration to Britain, or, if possible, to America, is favored by the young and adventurous. Even in 1893 seasonal emigration to Britain as harvesters or domestics was declining,[19] though a number of people went to America for several years, saved money, and returned to the islands. A large proportion of the people have spent several years in the United States. In many cases a family has its older relatives in America, its younger ones in Britain.

Conclusion

657 Having reviewed the economic geography of this island certain conclusions emerge. First, the present relative comfort of the population has been made possible only by past and present government assistance bestowed with lib-

[113] [18] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891.
[19] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

[p.208(B)]

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[20]

167 434 Second, emigration has been of vast benefit to the community; money comes in to most of the homes from America[21] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

443 489 Third, it is regrettable that the lack of commercial facilities means that eggs, poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [804] [20] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only three barrels a week in winter. The standard content of a barrel is 256 pints.

[291] [21] Many of the children are dressed in American clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

VII

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

GOOD craftsmanship in wood is so rarely seen in the Irish peasant house that one easily notices a piece of quality furniture. The chances are that it has come out of 'the big house' or, near the coast, from a wrecked ship. Very little oak furniture has survived from the days before the famine, and what there is is likely to be of bog-oak, that is timber dug out of the bogs. The truth seems to be that by the time improved styles of furniture and settled conditions of life had come about, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the native oak-woods had been almost everywhere destroyed, and the common furniture came to be made of bog wood or imported soft woods. The gentry favoured mahogany. Already in the early seventeenth century Ireland was importing pine wood from western Scotland,[1] and during the eighteenth century it was the returning timber ships from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia that initiated Southern Irish emigration to the New World.

No doubt this lack of good quality peasant furniture may be partly attributed to poverty, and to the recurrent famines, of fuel as well as food, which brought despair and led to the burning of furniture. But it also reflects the weak tradition of built-up furniture among a people predominantly pastoral and to some extent nomadic. Certainly degrading poverty and insecure tenancies did not provide the means of support for skilled craftsmen: yet in Wales, where conditions under an

[1]H. G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the 18th Century*, 4th ed. (1937), 196. On bog timber see A. T. Lucas in *Béaloideas*, 33, 71–134.

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed mar- 163
riages the population would continue to increase were it not
for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, [167]
sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious prac- [842]
tices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be
cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless
marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some 582
evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or
bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway
and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a
means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested.
The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may
be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in [114]
Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living
traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and Londonderry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive
the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well- 842
organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead
and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns
and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation
in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the
spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings
at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary
histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral
spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to [172]
many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a
reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton
in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves
barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed
certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many
ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic
magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman
who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far re- 584
moved from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day
peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1]R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1755*, 103.
[2]H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

[P.153, C]

551 and the names of her husband, *e.g.* 'Máire Ní Dhubhghain
[585] bean Shéamuis Mhic Ruadhraigh'—literally, 'Mary, daughter of Doohan, wife of James the son of Rory.' A number of circumstances will determine whether or not her husband's name will 'stick' as a surname or whether she will go on being known by her maiden name. These names in their full forms are only used on ceremonial occasions such as dances—when a man or woman is called upon to sing or step-dance—, or for prayers in church during a serious illness, or for calling the roll in school, or for putting on a tombstone.

551 The practical names are the rough English equivalents
191 of the Gaelic names, used in dealing with English-speakers generally and particularly for use when working in England
● 167 and Scotland. The Government is usually dealt with in English for several reasons, mainly because although the
464 islanders all speak Gaelic as their native tongue, the language they read and write is English—a situation brought about by the pattern of migrant labouring which forced literacy on them when working in Britain. Also they find 'Dublin' or 'civil service' Irish difficult to follow. Most islanders, then, have an 'English' name. Our examples would be 'Paddy Rogers' and 'Mary Doohan' to the outside world. Sometimes these names stick and are used amongst the islanders rather like nicknames. Usually the English version is a rough phonetic equivalent of the Gaelic—Ó Duibhir becomes Diver, Ó Dubhgain becomes Doogan or Duggan, Mac Fhlaithbheartaigh becomes MacClafferty, etc. Sometimes this is abandoned and an English name taken for its 'likeness' to the Gaelic as with MacRuadhraigh and Rogers—Roger being the English name most like 'Rory.' The name Fioruisce is sometimes hopefully rendered Whorriskey, but mostly this is not even tried and the simple 'Waters' is substituted. Those going to England for work are particularly inclined to pick an 'English' name, *i.e.* one the foreman will recognize.

551 The third set of names, used for reference, consists of two or more Christian names, either Gaelic or English or both, 'strung' together in the manner described by Synge for Aran. Some people have as many as five or six names and 'epithets' strung together in this fashion. These names are the names of lineal ancestors either on the mother's or the father's side of the family. A person will take as many names as is necessary to distinguish him from all other persons, the surname system being inadequate for this task. (Four surnames cover 80 per cent. of the population.) He does not, however, pick these names arbitrarily but inherits the whole string. He can stop at any point in the string. Thus if a man was called 'Jimmy-Dhonnchadha-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his father must have been 'Donnchadh-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his paternal grandmother 'Máire-Mhicí' or maybe 'Máire-Mhicí-Tom.' Thus if our man wanted to add to his names, he would have to add 'Tom.' Usually one or at most two names are enough to distinguish a person, in

16: Messenger

ER6 Rural Irish ER6

• 167
582

[For information pertaining to the marriage patterns abroad of emigrants from Inis Beag, see 16: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, pp. 130-131.]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower.

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade.

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket.

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[702] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[848] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

2

The Land and the Sea

Standard of Living

THE STANDARD OF LIVING of the folk has improved vastly since the establishment of the Irish Land Commission in 1881 and the Congested Districts Board ten years later, and the islanders are better off today than the inhabitants of some other areas of the Gaeltacht. In 1891, the Congested Districts were delineated as regions in which the population did not possess sufficient land to maintain life except at an extremely low standard. Between that year and 1951, the population in the districts declined 42 percent—from 541,000 to 367,000 persons. The few areas which would rank as congested now, on the 1891 basis, are mainly in Cos. Donegal, Mayo, and Galway (Freeman 1960:121–123). A vigorous and continuing effort to stem the tide of emigration, in part caused by poverty, led the commission, the board, subsequently the Gaeltacht Eireann which replaced the board after 1925, and other government agencies appointed in this century, to improve the standard of living by various actions: the enlargement of land holdings for more effective farming, the encouragement of small factory and domestic industries, the improvement of fishing, the construction of public works, and the introduction of various subsidies. Seasonal laboring in England, often practiced out of necessity by mainland farmers but not by the islanders, and remittances from relatives who have emigrated are income sources which also have served to alleviate poverty; but the major palliative throughout Ireland has been emigration. One of the factors limiting migration from Inis Beag to the mainland until recent decades was the low standard of living which prevailed in the country at large. An islander could not escape local hardships and privations by emigrating to urban centers as he can today; he had to turn his back on Ireland.

Most Inis Beag people believe themselves to be materially poor, although they resent others agreeing publicly with this view. A well-known Dublin newspaper feature writer in 1963 was denounced, and a vow made not to permit him to

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	13	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

628
829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality, men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148). Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn mainland attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them, the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [188]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 562
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[154]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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796 527 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is [574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [521] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for [262] the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [364] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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5

The Future of the Island

Emigration

MANY ELDERS IN INIS BEAG fear that the island and its neighbors will go the way of the Blasket Islands of Co. Kerry, whose remaining inhabitants were removed by the government because their support had become an economic liability. With only slight fluctuations, the population of Inis Beag has been diminishing since it reached its zenith of 532 persons in 1861. Below are population figures since 1821—when the first census was compiled—until the present time:

1821	421
1841	456
1861	532
1881	497
1901	483
1926	409
1936	445
1946	447
1956	376
1960	350

The upsurge in population after 1926 reflects the depression in the United States and the Second World War, when emigrants returned home to escape unemployment and conscription, while the downsurge after 1946 reflects the shift of emigration from America to England. Frequently discussed by elders is the steady increase in emigration during the past 15 years, the decreasing age of emigrants, and the presence within the past decade—for the first time in three centuries—of aged parents all of whose children have emigrated, and of land which is idle or rented out by emigrants who probably never will return to Inis Beag. Jokes concerning the building of a hotel by the Germans or a missile site by the Americans in the island to stimulate the economy, as well as serious suggestions that the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

• 167 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than 168 to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, 829 did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under con- 12 sideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of 428 inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and 589 personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, 592 which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the [121] literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness 168 of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and 581 go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents [829] opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, [162] seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

• 167
178 ble to visit Inis Beag frequently, as the cost and distance are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic.

The many vacationing emigrants who now return to the island at Christmas or Easter or during the summer months often succeed in persuading relatives and acquaintances to return to England with them. Those so persuaded declare that they will return soon with their "fortunes" to settle permanently, but they seldom do once "emancipated." Since the Second World War, several Americans have returned home, and their stories of life in the United States make the youth restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many islanders also sow the seeds of discontent. A favorite subject of talk in the pubs is the relative advantages to be gained from migrating to particular cities in England and America, and anthropologists as well as returned emigrants are called on as consultants in this matter by youths.

167 Almost every cottage in Inis Beag has a radio, or "wireless," and although
204 the folk seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines
207 and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, because they allow islanders a glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and
177 freer world. Television was introduced into Inis Beag in 1963 at the lighthouse,
207 and a second set was procured for the new "dance hall" when it was completed two years later. Few islanders venture to the lighthouse to view television, but I am told by correspondents that many now visit the hall during the several evening hours when transmission from Telefis Eireann takes place. As a result, television has become an acculturative medium to be reckoned with. Both radio and television programs are censored in Ireland, but even so the morality expressed in them—especially in the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A hypothetical censor from Inis Beag most certainly would create more discontinuities with his shears in television performances than would his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin. My wife and I found that viewing television with islanders at the lighthouse on two occasions was a traumatic experience; it gave us a different (and even more disquieting) perspective on programs in the United States and their enculturative effects than can be obtained at home.

167 Since the Second World War, 28 island youths have pursued secondary
873 education elsewhere in Ireland, either in high schools, called "colleges," or in technical schools, and most have been supported by government scholarships. The usual high school scholarship is for 5 years, and a student must be 14 years of age and qualify by competitive examination to receive one. Only 4 of these 28 students
873 —of which 2 are teachers in the national school—have returned to Inis Beag. One
[562] young man watched 2 girls, either of whom he eventually might have married, go off to the mainland for school and said, "Scholarships are killing the island;" what he was referring to, other than his own disappointment, is the fact that 19 of the 28 students who left for advanced education are girls. The reason for the disproportionate number of girls receiving scholarships is that they are far more moti-
[829] vated academically and have better scholastic records than boys. There is, however, a widespread belief in the island that certain families are favored by priests and

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teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds.

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths.

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school.

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

167 168 829 are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any [191] of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as [668] much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

167 127 My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

167 114 It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jack-
167 son's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss
121 two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag cul-
114 ture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled sys-
[582] tematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom 121
islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage 114
among those who have left the country. 582

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic 167
communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus com- 593
plex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to 154
the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength 114
of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have 829
married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread dis- 577
affection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is 829
blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen 114
islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported 124
herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether 167
more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they 581
made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one 829
that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle else- 000
where, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

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Ireland ER1

[For information pertaining to emigration and its relation to sexual repression, late marriage, celibacy, and family relations in Ireland, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 32-36.]

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, 121
and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized [626]
by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, [114]
and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble sav- [181]
ages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every 831*
opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its 626
victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind [609]
fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at [167]
the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous [574]
announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case. 831* 626

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities [562]
of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem [167]
the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples [584]
who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the [839]
apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
• 167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
582 articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in
[586] Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades! 582

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration. 161 168 167 • 182 582 589

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining. [434] [657] [434] [183] [178] [582]

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis [831]• 181 183 829 167 182 [181]

167 Beag, only limited amounts of which have been reported in this chapter.
182 Even though sexual repression and fear of the clergy prevent the folk
[181] from being outspoken in this matter, it is constantly broached among
[83] themselves.

167 Paramount among external factors stimulating emigration are pros-
177 perity on the mainland and abroad, the impact of the mass media of
182 communication, the increasing number of tourists visiting Inis Beag, the return of former emigrants, and the fact that, with an increase in incomes and scholarship funds, more island children are going to the mainland for their schooling each year. America has been a land of freedom and prosperity to the Irish since before the famine, and, until the Second World War, most islanders migrated there never to return. But the growth of prosperity in England following 1946 shifted the stream of emigration in that direction, for not only were jobs plentiful across the Irish Sea, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in big cities. And it was possible to visit Ireland frequently, as the distance and cost are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic. It is common for youths vacationing in Inis Beag from England to talk others into returning with them. The latter declare
167 that they will soon come back to the island to settle permanently, hope-
177 fully with "great riches," but they seldom return. Since the war, a number of "Yanks" have also returned home, and their stories of life in America make the youthful islanders restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many folk also sow the seeds of discontent.

167 Television was introduced into Inis Beag during 1963, and the two sets now installed always have ready and willing audiences. Almost
207 every cottage has a radio, and, although the islanders seldom read books,
182 a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers
177 find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, as they allow the islanders to glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a
[656] happier and freer world. Television and radio programs are censored, but, even so, the morality expressed in them—especially the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A censor from Inis Beag would most certainly create more discontinuities in films with his shears than do his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin.

114 Most of what I have written in this essay is to be found expressed in the works of such older Irish writers as James Joyce, Sean O'Casey,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

2

The Land and the Sea

Standard of Living

THE STANDARD OF LIVING of the folk has improved vastly since the establishment of the Irish Land Commission in 1881 and the Congested Districts Board ten years later, and the islanders are better off today than the inhabitants of some other areas of the Gaeltacht. In 1891, the Congested Districts were delineated as regions in which the population did not possess sufficient land to maintain life except at an extremely low standard. Between that year and 1951, the population in the districts declined 42 percent—from 541,000 to 367,000 persons. The few areas which would rank as congested now, on the 1891 basis, are mainly in Cos. Donegal, Mayo, and Galway (Freeman 1960:121–123). A vigorous and continuing effort to stem the tide of emigration, in part caused by poverty, led the commission, the board, subsequently the Gaeltacht Eireann which replaced the board after 1925, and other government agencies appointed in this century, to improve the standard of living by various actions: the enlargement of land holdings for more effective farming, the encouragement of small factory and domestic industries, the improvement of fishing, the construction of public works, and the introduction of various subsidies. Seasonal laboring in England, often practiced out of necessity by mainland farmers but not by the islanders, and remittances from relatives who have emigrated are income sources which also have served to alleviate poverty; but the major palliative throughout Ireland has been emigration. One of the factors limiting migration from Inis Beag to the mainland until recent decades was the low standard of living which prevailed in the country at large. An islander could not escape local hardships and privations by emigrating to urban centers as he can today; he had to turn his back on Ireland.

Most Inis Beag people believe themselves to be materially poor, although they resent others agreeing publicly with this view. A well-known Dublin newspaper feature writer in 1963 was denounced, and a vow made not to permit him to

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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5

The Future of the Island

Emigration

MANY ELDERS IN INIS BEAG fear that the island and its neighbors will go the way of the Blasket Islands of Co. Kerry, whose remaining inhabitants were removed by the government because their support had become an economic liability. With only slight fluctuations, the population of Inis Beag has been diminishing since it reached its zenith of 532 persons in 1861. Below are population figures since 1821—when the first census was compiled—until the present time:

1821	421
1841	456
1861	532
1881	497
1901	483
1926	409
1936	445
1946	447
1956	376
1960	350

The upsurge in population after 1926 reflects the depression in the United States and the Second World War, when emigrants returned home to escape unemployment and conscription, while the downsurge after 1946 reflects the shift of emigration from America to England. Frequently discussed by elders is the steady increase in emigration during the past 15 years, the decreasing age of emigrants, and the presence within the past decade—for the first time in three centuries—of aged parents all of whose children have emigrated, and of land which is idle or rented out by emigrants who probably never will return to Inis Beag. Jokes concerning the building of a hotel by the Germans or a missile site by the Americans in the island to stimulate the economy, as well as serious suggestions that the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds. 873 [829]

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths. 167 177 874 [658] [668] [829] [186]

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school. 167 168 653 344 [793] [657] [829] [657] [874]

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there 167 168 829

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis

172 may be much older. I was told that foreign collectors long ago purchased from the folk copper and bronze artifacts which had been exhumed from cave middens.

172 333 The Iron Age in Inis Beag is best represented by a fort constructed of limestone rocks quarried locally and fitted together without mortar, which bears no name other than the Irish word for fort—*Dun* (see Fig. 2). It commands the rim of a promontory, and its oval shape measures 170 by 127 feet. Unfortunately, from the point of view of the prehistorian, its inner wall was greatly reduced in height and any outer ramparts and stone *chevaux de frise* completely destroyed to furnish building materials for a medieval tower house which stands at its center. To the south about 500 feet, and on somewhat higher ground, are the remains of what may have been a monastery. According to island historians, it was pulled down by soldiers attacking the "castle" with cannons, and most of its stones were employed later in the construction of a watch tower nearby. Another monastery at the back of the island on the southeast side may indeed be the ruins of a fort, as the oldest of its three names bears the word fort.

Medieval Period (500 to 1500)

17 The end of the Iron Age in Ireland is dated conveniently by historians as 431 (or 462), when St. Patrick arrived from Wales as a missionary to convert the pagan Celts. But, of course, prehistoric cultural elements persisted for many cen-

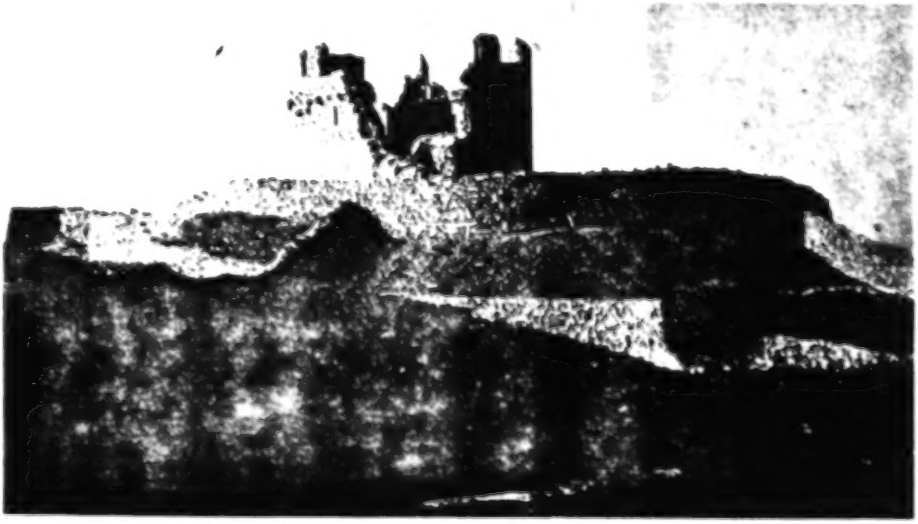

Figure 2. Castle enclosed by the Iron Age promontory fort

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and [796]
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the offi-
ciating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient
tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured
soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the
church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hun-
dreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appear-
ance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The groups usually designated are shown within blocks 602
united under heavier margins. Thus those grouped in 612
double black margin across the whole diagram, taking in all the generation marked horizontally as I and O, are ego's "friends." They are members of his generation, united by common descent reckoned back five generations to common great-great-grandparent.

It goes without saying, of course, that, except for minor 602
variations, this system is essentially that of all northern and 612
western Europe. It is that of the United States. It is technically a descriptive, bilateral, patrilineal system. Like all 171
kinship systems without exception throughout the whole world, it provides for reckoning in a common scheme nine generations, five of which must already occupy the past. Like all others, it represents a self-consistent system built up of the relationships within the immediate family.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER VI

Demography and Familism

161 OF the demographic phenomena the small farmers present, the decline of population is most easily isolated. The facts are as follows: There has been [73] a continuous and characteristic decline since the great famine of 1845. Numbers have fallen from 6,548,000 in 1841 to 2,963,000 in 1926. With the exception of Dublin, the whole of the country has suffered in this decline. On the whole, however, the country districts have suffered at a greater rate than have the towns. In 1841, 80 per cent of the population was rural; today only 63 per cent. In other words, since 1841 there has been an almost continuous increase in the town population at the expense of the rural, though the two have shared a common decline. Put in terms of percentages: since 1841, the country districts have lost 64 per cent of their population, towns from 200 to 500 49 per cent, towns from 5,000 to 10,000 25 per cent, and towns other than Dublin over 10,000 13 per cent. Dublin, on the other hand, has gained 47 per cent. That the enormous [167] emigration associated with this decline is a matter of the contemporary generation is evident when it is recognized that 30 per cent of the native-born Irish were living in other countries in 1926.

161 The closest approach among European countries is the ● 171 case of Norway, where 15 per cent live outside. Italy, which has provided so many citizens for the United States and the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Argentine, has only 4 per cent of its natives residing in foreign countries. Since 1911 there has, however, been a check in the decrease; only 5 per cent of the population was lost between 1911 and 1926. The region of our investigation, County Clare, shares in this general loss, falling in population from 250,000 in 1841 to 95,000 in 1926. Since 1911 it has lost only 8 per cent.

As the statistics show, this loss of population is in the main a problem of the country districts. The towns have gained proportionately to the countryside; though in a lesser degree, they have, of course, shared the common loss. Many causes for this decline have been operative and, as the excellent work by Dr. William Forbes Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World*,[1] shows, emigration is no new factor in Irish life. The great impetus for an enormous exodus of population was the famine of 1845, but since then emigration has flowed on continuously, coming to an end only in 1932 when for the first time for at least a century more Irishmen returned than left the country.

But far from the famine's having started the emigration from the present Free State, "the growth of emigration between 1815 and 1845," concludes Dr. Adams, "not only made possible the flight after the famine, it caused that flight. The thirty years before 1845 spread the emigrating spirit through all but the highest class until it became the favorite remedy for hard times. The tremendous rush of the next fifteen years could not have taken place without aid from the earlier emigrants." Since then, the land agitation, dissatisfaction with British rule, and periodic hard times have taken their toll, coupled with what Adams calls the greatest single cause of human migration, the work of powerful interests developed first in the early days of Irish emigration, "organizing and developing (immigrant) traffic for their own profit." The movement began long before

[1] New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.

341 called the first type *the central-chimney house,* because the chimney will be erected over the fire-place somewhere about the middle of the roof, (fig. 1 and pl. XLI: 1, 2, 3 ; the second *the gable chimney house* because here the chimney will be close to the gable often being built as a part of the stone-built gable (fig. 2 and pl. XLI: 2). The outside chimney then not seldom forms a pronounced gabletop or gable-finial.

The Central-chimney house.

342 Some of the most primitive houses I found in Ireland belong to the central chimney house type. To illustrate I choose a house from Spiddle, Co. Galway (fig. 3 and pl. XLI: 1). The house is said to have been built before 1839 and to have withstood the "big wind" of that year. How old it actually is I had no means of discovering. The walls are of stone with the mortar put on afterwards on the inside and outside, but not used in the actual construction of the walls. Some outhouses belonging to this farm are all of dry wall construction. The roof of straw rests on couples of beams, supported on the inner edge of the walls, so that the thatch does not quite reach as far as the outside edge of the wall, but leaves a narrow space uncovered. [171] This is an archaic feature found now in very old buildings in Ireland, as always in the black houses of Scotland.

The house is built on a slope, so that the fireplace end of the house lies higher than the entrance door. There is only one room, but a low partition wall at the back of the fire cuts off a section which is used as a bedroom. [352] In the lower end of the house a dresser is placed so that it together with a small table cuts off another section that nowadays is also used as a bedroom. Some stools, a cradle and a churn are the other contents. There are two doors opposite of each other, both provided with half-doors. The fireplace consists of some flat stones on the floor. Over the fireplace there is a [354] wattled chimney resting on two beams, supported by a cross beam. The chimney is adapted to a hole in the thatched roof, so there is no outside chimney. On one side of the house, the sheltered side, there are two windows.

About other houses of the same kind, I have heard from the inhabitants [231] that in olden times the lower end of the house was used for the cattle. In late times the cattle have been removed to an outhouse and this part of the house has been adopted as a living room.

342 171 The division of the house into three sections, which is characteristic of the central-chimney house type, is quite clear in the Scottish houses, namely the black houses, the bedroom being at the upper end of the house behind the

[Text continues top of p. 211]

342 fire, and the byre at the lower end of the house. In the Welsh long-house
171 the hearth generally seems to face the living room and bedroom part of the house, and cuts these sections from the byre part. The two doors, opposite to each other, very typical of the Irish house (see p. 217), are also found in the Welsh long-houses, but here the space between the two doors has a more pronounced feeding-walk character, than we find common in Ireland, at least to-day when the cattle are generally removed from the dwelling house. For the three sections of some South Scandinavian houses see p. 222.

The gable-chimney house.

342 In various parts of Ireland I have found numbers of primitive houses with stone-built gables. These houses are always rectangular in form, never oval. Externally the type varies greatly depending mostly on the prevailing wind. On the coast, in very windy districts, the roof will not be built very high, but in more sheltered parts, it will be more lofty.

The gable finial, the gable top often consitutes a very characteristic feature of this house-type, pl. XLII: 2. Only where the low roof is used, the gable top is not especially accentuated. The outside chimney constitutes the gable top of the chimney-gable. On the opposite gable the gable-finial may be form-
[341] ed in a corresponding way, as a chimneyshaft without any flue. The chimney-shafts at the gables form perhaps the single example in the Irish peasant house of intentional architecture conforming with a wide-spread custom in Western Europe. As regards the serrated gable-ends see p. 226.

342 In small dwellings of this type there is only one room, the fireplace is si-
354 tuated against one gable-wall. The most convenient place for the beds is be-
352 side the fire, and at least one bed is to be found here. This is a very original feature of this house-type which is confirmed by Scottish material, old Irish descriptions, and even drawings. In the middle-west and north of Ireland, the bed is built in a projection outwards, *cailleach,* or at least in a niche in the side wall close to the fireplace, pl. XLII: 2, as in the Scottish *tig dubh.*

342 As in the central-chimney house, there are sometimes two doors opposite each other, but even a single door is common in small old houses.

Windows have come at a later period here also. In old-fashioned houses there is generally only one window, sometimes none at all.

342 At the lower end of the house, there was in more remote times place for
231 domestic animals. The division of the room by means of the dresser may have been adopted at an early stage, the dresser being especially suitable as

342 a kind of partition. When the domestic animals were removed, often to an
231 additional building at the gablewall, this part of the house would be used as a living room, just as in the former type of house, fig. 4. In a few very pri-
342 mitive houses of this as well as of the foregoing type I have found firepla-
354 ces with no chimney at all, the smoke leaving the house through a hole in the roof above the fireplace. Sometimes I have found two smoke holes, one in each end of the roof. The doors and half doors constitute together with the smokeholes a complicated machinery, providing the current of air to regulate the turf-fire and the smoke.

Dwelling houses without chimneys were found by me in 1935 at Belmullet, Co. Mayo and in Co. Sligo.

342 The houses with thatched gables sometimes have rounded corners so that the base foundation may have an almost oval shape on the outside, while the inside room may be rectangular in form, pl. XLIII: 2. It is evident that the oval house form and the thatched gables complement each other. They could have existed together from a very early stage in building traditions. In a windy district the rounded and thatched gables are suitable, as the house will be more stream lined.

The roof with a thatched gable can easily have replaced the stone, or cyclopic roof, in cabins and huts (both, bothán). This fact and certain similarities would seem to indicate that the oval house form in the abovementioned houses with thatched gables, may have developed from the round
● [171] or beehive house type. Parallels may be found among the stone-built huts with similar roofs in Estremadura and elsewhere.

On the other hand, houses with stone-built gables represent quite clearly the rectangular house type, as in such constructions the gables are never rounded.

342 The stone-built gable constitutes a very practical way of solving the pro-
346 blem of how to protect the gable ends of the roof of an oblong house against the wind, pl. XLIV: 3. But there is another point to be considered. In mediæval houses in villages and cities, the gables have often developed according to the use and importance of the gable wall; when the house faces the street or main road the gable wall would be far more important than the side walls. Other features point to ecclesiastical architecture. In the early churches, in Ireland and elsewhere, the gable wall constituted the front wall. In Ireland the early primitive churches were often furnished with pronounced gable finials. Furthermore it has been suggested that the introduction of the rectangular form of house is due to the first propagators of Christianity

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

in Ireland, as we find in an early Irish stanza predicting this and other Christian innovations (Life of St. Patrick, translated by Colgan, p. 123). 342 346

It seems to me to be very likely that the above mentioned architecture of villages, towns and churches in Western Europe, giving prominence to the gable-wall, may have played an important role in the development of rectangular houses with stone-built gables in Ireland and elsewhere in Western Europe. As to Irish conditions, I would observe that the very small primitive rectangular churches, hardly bigger than an ordinary house, known from the Aran Islands and other places, have surely been built by no other builders than those who built the peasant houses. The clergy instructed them and planned the architecture. Then the people learned that the stone built gable was very useful both as protection for the ends of the thatched roof and as an arrangement for the fire, readily forming a chimney or stone-built venthole for the smoke. 346

But the early Christian churches cannot have constituted the original primitive form for every kind of rectangular house in Western Europe. As Addy (Addy: Evolution of the English House, p. 38 sq.) has mentioned, very primitive huts built in "bays" formed by "crucks" are known from the Welsh Laws as "Summer Houses". These houses consisted of a pair of "crucks" and a ridge-tree, and were completed by wattles. This form of house can be shown to be of great antiquity and can be studied over a large area. Material from Africa, the Mediterranean countries, the countries on the shores of the Atlantic, show that the square form is of greater antiquity than Christianity, so it does not follow that the rectangular house in Western Europe must necessarily owe its origin to Christian innovations, it can very well go back to a much earlier form of culture. 171

Regarding the higher development of the cruck-construction (or crutch) as discussed by S. O. Addy with examples from England, I would observe that the small stone-built one-storeyed Irish houses, the primitive Welsh long-house, the black houses of Scotland, as well as the small houses of Scandinavia and elsewhere have been sufficiently roofed by a very primitive small roof of pairs of beams, similar to that of the above mentioned huts, summerhouses etc. Even circular huts may have been roofed by a thatched roof, resting on a radial framework of branches without any central pole as in the Sudan circular hut, *tukl*, mentioned by A. E. Robinson, who has suggested that some prehistoric huts in Ancient Britain were of the *tukl* type (Antiquity 1930, p. 230). In Lewis (Scotland) according to Thomas (Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Vol. III, p. 130) circu- 342 171

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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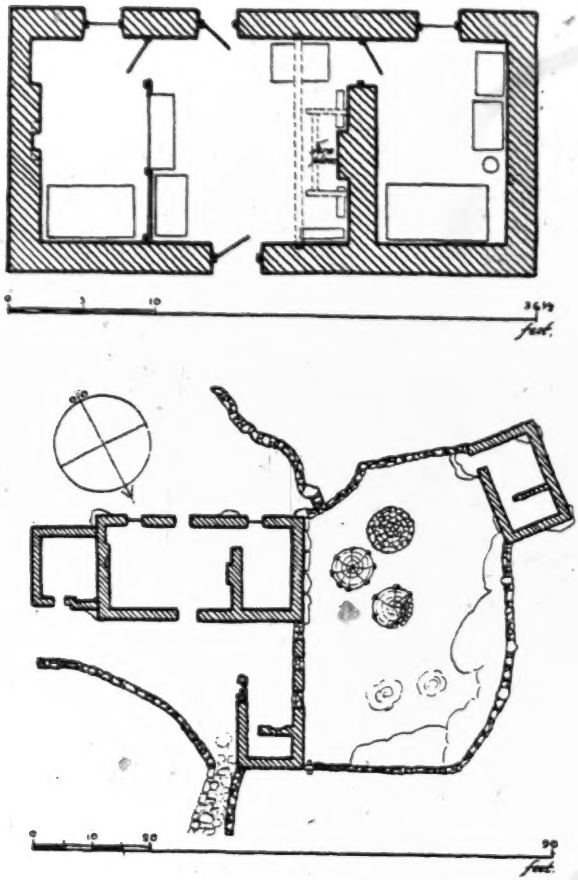

Fig. 1. Central-chimney house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

lar stone roofed houses *bothan*, existed side by side with timber proofed oblong houses called *aridhean* (p. 138).

The highly developed roof-constructions of the English crucktype, as well as those of the Saxon and other West European houses, have been of little or no importance for the development of Spanish, Welsh[3], Scottish and Scandinavian houses in early [illegible] in later times. The cruck construction as well as the roof construction with supporting poles seems to belong to a more limited sphere of building traditions. This fact however does not exclude the possibility that these traditions could have been in some way —

[Text continues top of p. 217 ---Analyst]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 171 as a result of certain circumstances, such as social organisation, the demands and standard of the aristocracy, the clan, and the family etc. — introduced in Ireland, Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. This appears from some prehistoric materials as for example the Gall Arus near Dingle, Co. Kerry, and the so-called "kämpagravshuset" and the Viking Hall in Scandinavia.

Some of the features mentioned above in the descriptions of the central chimney-house and the gable-chimney house are common to nearly all primitive recent Irish houses.

342 354 It is especially interesting to notice the practice of providing two doorways, central and opposite, fig. 1, 3 and 4. In recent Irish houses the front door is called *doras tosaigh*, and the backdoor *doras cúl*. In Donegal however, I was told that the front door was called *doras an fhosgaidh*, door of the shelter, and the back door, *doras nagaoithe*. The opening and the closing of these two doors is determined by theprevailing wind, and its effect on the draught through the smokeholes. Thus the two doors were very often in Ireland made up of halfdoors, *leath dhoras*, constituting in co-operation with the smoke holes a machinery regulating the fire. In Ireland this is generally a turf-fire which needs special attention in its making, lighting and maintenance. The drawing off the smoke is also of importance.

342 777 Some superstitions connected with these two doors suggest that very old traditions lie behind them. There is a belief in Co. Kerry that it is very unlucky to go in one door and out the other. You must always go out of the door you entered by, otherwise you are supposed to take the luck of the house with you.

342 How the two doorways could be used with regard to the cattle I have shown by an example from Co. Kerry in my article in Béaloideas (op. cit. p. 70).

The two doorways are well-known from the Ancient Irish Laws and the old literature. The inches house and even larger houses had two doorways, a door in one and a hurdle (wattle) in the other (see Ancient Irish laws, Vol. IV, p. 305). O'Carry says that the principal house, even of kings, had but one room to which when the house was of an oblong form there were generally two doors, one opening east and one west. In the round houses on the other hand there seems to have been but one door, which faced south, west or east, and sometimes though rarely north. (O'Curry, Manners and customs of the ancient Irish. Vol. I). In Scottish beehive houses inhabited about 342 171 1850 however, there are often two opposite doors, about which Thomas says: "The two doors are a decided improvement, for the one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weater door — is closed with a stone or

PLATE XLVI

1. Fastening the hay-ropes, when thatching. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
2. Scollop-thatching. Connemara, Co. Galway.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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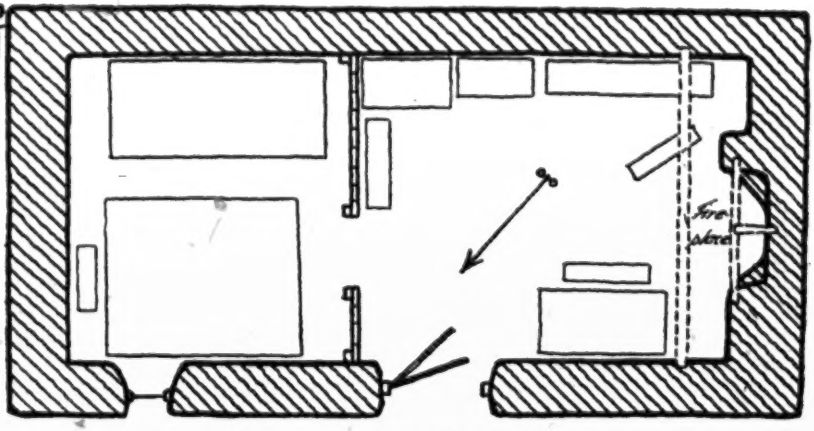

Fig. 2. Gable-chimney house. The weaver's house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the heads of the inhabitants and through the Farlos (the smoke-hole in the apex of the roof)" F. L. W. Thomas, in Proceedings of the Soc. of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III and vol. VII.

Also in Wales the two opposite doors have been known from prehistoric times to recent days. The Welsh long-house generally has these doors (see I. C. Peate, Welsh houses, Antiquity, 1936). They have also been found in prehistoric Welsh farm buildings excavated by Cyril and Aileen Fox (see Cyril and Ailen Fox, Forts and Farms on Margam Mountain, Glamorgan, Antiquity, 1934, p. 395 sq.).

The use of two opposite doors is however widespread. In Denmark and Southern Sweden (the plainlands in Skåne) the turf-fire was common until 1900, and the inside chimney is not so very old. In the 18th century, houses without any chimney were common, the two opposite doors and even the halfdoors being used for the regulation of the fire in the same way as in Ireland (see Åke Campbell, Skånska bygder under förra hälften av 1700-talet, Uppsala 1928, p. 208 sqq.). The complete stone-built chimney was introduced earlier in the woodlands of Scandinavia, where the wood-fire was common and the fire was not regulated by any two-door system.

In Spain and Italy I have seen the two doors, and Sigurd Erixon (in Den romerska Campagnans herdehyddor och deras konstruktiva karaktär, Arkeologiska studier tillägnade H. K. H. Kronprins Gustaf Adolf, Stockholm 1932, p. 255, p. 261 and p. 124 sqq. in this number) has mentioned them when

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 221 ----- ANALYST]

342 discussing the herdsmen's oval and square straw-built houses in the Roman
171 Campagna. He indicates two different systems (1) the smoke leaving through the door and (2) the smoke leaving through a hole in the roof.

In English and especially in Saxon and other West European houses, the two opposite doors sometimes are placed in the same way as in the Welsh longhouses, or in the Irish houses, but the broad plan of these extremely large buildings makes the comparisons very vague.

Besides the types now mentioned which form the basis for the development of native house types, we find in Ireland of the present day many house types which are likely of foreign origin mostly introduced by government and landlord activities.

Belonging to this group I must also reckon a feature of housebuilding which is found particularly in Leinster and Eastern Connaught but also scattered here and there in other parts of the country. This distribution more
[412] or less coincides with the distribution of the two-eared English spade, while the native type of house coincides with the single-eared Irish spade.

A partition of stone, mud or wood and lath is built on the side of the fireplace adjacent to the door, so that a person sitting at the fire cannot be seen through the open door. In the partition is a spyhole, through which one can see who is entering by the door, fig. 5.

This adjacence of fire and door with intervening partition is wellknown in England. As far as my knowledge goes I cannot look upon this as being an independent or original Irish type. Everything points to its being a late innovation. Such houses usually have a porch built at the entrance door and the arrangements of the rooms are not at all primitive.

The developed stone built house.

342 It is evident that as soon the primitive one-roomed stage is left, it will be difficult or impossible to decide whether the house represents the traditions of the central-chimney house or the traditions of the gable-chimney house.

In two ways the one-roomed stage has been left (1) by dividing up the one-roomed house by partition walls, (2) by building additions to it at the gables.

Usually it seems that the room at the lower end of the house has been made by building a thin partition wall, *síleail,* which separates it from the other part of the house, fig. 2 and 4. It is as far as I know, very unusual to build an addition to this part of the house. When new rooms are made by building additions, these are usually made to the chimney or fireplace gable.

342 This custom should be compared with the proverb which I have heard in different parts of Western Ireland: "Only a man stronger than God can [539] build back (westward) of his house" *(Is treise ná Dia an fear a chuireann siar le na theach")*. Additions made at the fireplace end of the house are always used as bedrooms. Therefore it will be very difficult to decide whether the bedroom behind the fireplace has originated as an addition to a gable-chimney house or as a partition of a central chimney house. When the wall behind the fire-place does not reach the roof the house must be regarded as a central-chimney house. Now and then it is also possible to discover in another way whether the bedroom belongs to the original house, or is built as an addition to a gable-chimney house.

In both house types the partition walls at the lower end of the house very often were made by very thin wooden partitions, *síleála*. As already mentioned, furniture especially the dresser may be used instead of a partition wall, fig. 1.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland you will find the fireplace cut off to a certain degree from the living room and forming a special kitchen corner by stone-built breasts or piers at both or at one side of the fire-place. This side wall of the fire-place can also be built of wood, fig. 6, and can go a good way into the room, so that the kitchen corner will be more like a closed room.

342 Such houses with fireplace partition apparently have their parallels in ● 171 Welsh houses. The Irish house, then, closely resembles to the living room of the Welsh long-house. This type of Irish house can be called "house with fireplace partition".

Another way of arranging accommodation in the house is to build lofts, *lochta*, and rooms on an upper floor. This upper floor will be arranged at both ends of the living room or kitchen. Then the arrangement with the house divided into three sections and with lofts at both ends is very similar to a house type in southern Sweden, the socalled Sydgötiska huset.[4] which has the kitchen or "stugan" in the centre of the house without any loft and at both ends additional chambers with lofts. Another likeness between the Irish and South Swedish houses is that there are bedplaces in the same way in the additional rooms.

[417] In the Irish house the loft can be reached by a ladder from the kitchen.

The construction of the different elements of the house.

342 Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building-material, the Irish peasant house never

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 en floor may be sprinkled for instance with coral beachsand to help in sweeping it. The stone or earth-

[356] In some primitive houses, where the cattle still had their places, in the low end, I have found a gutter or conduit going across the low end and leading out through the door. [231]

333 342 *The walls.* There are two main types of wall construction representing very old building traditions.

[172] 1. The dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara* — met with in the prehistoric buildings, *clocháns* etc. — are built of stones (often flattish) without mortar. Dwelling-houses which have been built with dry stone walls have in later times been covered both inside and outside with mortar, pl. XLIII: 1. The space between the bigger stones are often carefully filled up by small stones, *spallaí.*

Especially in Co. Clare I have admired the precision developed in the construction of the walls.

[172] 2. Of prehistoric origin are also the mud, clod or clay walls, *falla feidín.* A fantastic explanation of the term makes it equal to *falla ar feadh dín,* a wall that endures as long as the roof is kept properly thatched (Dinneen).

The clay was pulverized and made into a thick mortar by wetting it and mixing it with cut rushes or course sprat hay. The well built mud-wall houses form comfortable dwellings and it has happened that people have regretted leaving excellent thatched "mud walls" to live in cold stone-walled slatted dwellings.

342 The foundation of the walls is sometimes a pronunced feature of the house. Whilst the walls usually have a width of 1½, 2 or 3 feet, the foundation is wider, forming a shelf or broad step along the building serving as a pathway to the door. The foundation is sometimes not very dissimilar to some prehistoric house-foundations. In this connection I would like to remark that the pathway and nearest surroundings of the entrance door are sometimes paved by a mosaic of small cobble-stones from the sea-shore. This I have seen in costal districts in South West, and I suggest that it is the same kind of pavement as appears in Portugal, Madeira, Marocco and elsewhere at the border of the Atlantic And the Mediterranean Sea. [171]

Doors and windows. In many primitive houses of to-day the construction of the door-opening is extremely archaic: flat stones serving as lintel and as threshold. The frame of the door is wooden.

The doors usually have bolts of wood and a hasp to close the door. A thick wooden beam can be placed across inside the door on stormy nights, certain holes in the wall at both sides of the door being made for this beam,

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

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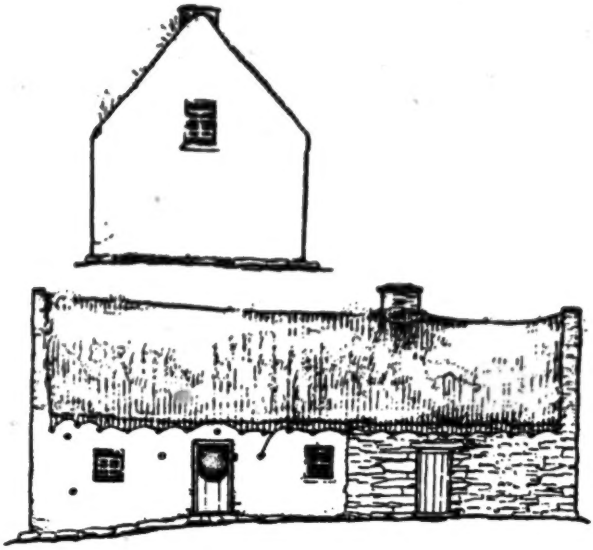

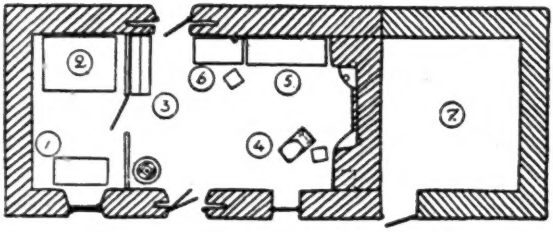

[231]

Fig. 4. Gable-chimney house. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry. The cattle otice in the lower end of the house. Now removed to a house added to the upper gable wall. 1 table, 2 bed, 3 dresser, 4 cradle, 5 bench, 6 table, 7 sowhouse.

fig. 4. In Co. Kerry, Co. Galway and other parts of Ireland, I have been told of rough strong doors of wattles bound together with ropes of *sugáin*. Such a door, the hurdle door, *sgálán fraoigh* or *scalpán*, was more commonly used as a door for cattle sheds. It is found also in Scotland (see e. g. an illustration showing sheilings in Jura (S. W. Scotland) in Pinkertons Voyages and Travels, vol. III, p. 278, London 1809) and it is mentioned in the Ancient Irish laws. About the two opposite doors and the half-doors see p. 217. [171]

In older times a hole in the wall, a looplight, served as window. It was closed at night with a hay-wisp or a wooden shutter, *cómhla*, which was removed by day and secured at night by a stick placed across or by a latch. [284, 414]

342 Windows, as well as chimneys, were taxed, hence the oldfashioned blind [65] wall and the old fireplace (without chimney) being preserved. The daylight was admitted to the kitchen by the door opening. A pad of straw was placed at the door, *sop i mbéal dorais* (Dinneen) on which tailors and other crafts- [294] men used to sit to avoid window-tax. When windows came later on, they were placed on the side of the house sheltered from the prevailing wind.

The gables. The stone built gables are higher or lower according to the form of the roof, which is determined by the wind. In some districts of Ireland [184] especially in the Aran Islands, Connemara, Sligo, Mayo there are often even in very primitive buildings, step gables or serrated gables. In other parts of Ireland the gables are straight up to the top. In Southern and Eastern Ireland the gables are generally of this type. Half thatched or hipped gables are sometimes found in the east, where now and then the thatch is also bent over the gable edge in the same way as in Wales. This is common on mud houses.

How the gables protect the ends of the thatched roof and support the horizontal ribs is shown in pl. XLIV: 2.

The roof. Roof and wall constructions meet one another in the most primitive stages, when the house is only a roof over a foundation wall, of a cavity, or when the roof is constructed similarly to the *clochán*s with the upper course of stones slightly overlapping the lower course. This construction is not known among dwelling houses of to-day, but can be found in outhouses, sweating buths etc.

Roofs made by wide slates or stone flags will be seen in some parts of Ireland when there is a natural access to stones suitable for slates as in Co. Clare where such roofs are found on outhouses with the narrow stone walls carrying the flags.

The Irish house from olden times generally has had not a stone roof, but a thatched roof, *ceann tuighe*. The art of making good thatched roofs is now dying out but in earlier times Irishmen had developed great skill in roofing with thatch.

The thatched roof is supported internally by beams joined in pairs forming [804] the couples, *cúplaí*. The couples are placed at a certain distance and the space enclosed between two couples must be looked upon as a sort of architectural unit. The length of the house can be measured by the number of couples. [171] A very similar kind of measuring is well known in Denmark and Skåne. In many old houses the length of the house seems to indicate traditions from the ancient Irish laws (See Addy, p. 84).

The roof-supporting system of beams varies very little. The beams can

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or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, 342
the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on 354
a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Done- [184]
gal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in 592
Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted 354
to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All [775]
Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the [171]
fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, [184]
I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot 352
with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district 171
between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh*, where the in-

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 171 built bed in the hall beside the fireplace has been common. But this custom of bed is also known over a wider area along the North Sea. As to the outshot it is to be remarked that it must be compared with the outshots of English and Northwest European houses. Where the outshot tradition is natural to the house-types, the outshots are used for purposes and not only for beds.

In Donegal I have found *cailleachs* closed with wooden doors, similar to the built in beds of North-West Europe. The *cailleach* is cut off by curtains.

It has been mentioned that the dresser at an early stage of development has formed part of the partition. This and other facts (the dresser has generally a fixed traditional place, different in different parts of Ireland) seems to indicate that the dresser belongs — as in Scandinavia and West-European countries — to a rather old set of furniture.

The table however seems not to have any prominent place in the old-fashioned houses at least in Western and Northern Ireland. It is always put along a wall in primitive houses, and one can never sit round it. It never attracted the social activities of the house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating social and family-centre. In this respect the table in Ireland has never supplanted the fireplace. There are no references, as far as I am told in the early tales to people feasting at the table. I think that the table [184] does not belong to the original set of furniture. In many fishermen's dwellings in North-West of Donegal it is still missing. The people sit in front [264] of the fireplace round the shallow-basket, *ciseog*, when eating, the basket resting upon the knees of the familymembers. This basket will be seen after dinner-time hanging to dry on the south wall of the house, pl. XLVIII: 2. I suppose this is the native and original "table", at least in certain cultural spheres of Western and Northern Ireland.

[113] [1] In a valuable article by Ludwig Mühlhausen, Contributions to the study of the concrete material culture of the Gaoltacht, Cork Arch. Soc. Vls. XXXVIII, p. 67, and XXXIX, p. 41, et sqq., is found a very good description of houses in Dingle Peninsula and Cornamona, Co. Galway. I have not come across any more detailed contribution to the study of the Irish house. From books of travel and novels some information can be picked up. See Béaloideas 1935. p. 57 sqq.

[114] [2] The material here presented has been collected by me during journeys in Ireland in the years 1934 and 1935. For the many facilities afforded me in pursuing my investigations in Ireland I must express my thanks to the Irish Folklore Commission and its Director Mr Séamus O'Duilearga, on whose behalf I undertook these studies. I am also grateful to my Irish friends both scholars and country people who kindly lent me their assistance. Here I can only mention Mr Seán O'Suilleabháin, B. A., and Miss Aine Ni Chróinín, M. A., especially for having supplied the Gaelic terms used by me.

[3] As to the Welsh long-houses the cruck construction seems to be an exception (see Peate p. 452).

[4] Cfr. Sigurd Erixon: Skansens Kulturgeschichtliche Abteilung, Führer. Stockholm 1928, p. 92.

[5] *Pinniúir*, f., a gable, a gable-end; fig. a patron, chief, etc. *pinniúir an tighe*, the house-gable, fig. the "head" of the house. Fr. pignon, Eng. pynum. Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary.

3: Campbell B. E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE. II.

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

341 In the Ireland of today there exist not only buildings of a more developed stage of construction, *i. e.* stone-built or mud houses with roofs resting on wooden couples[1] but also buildings of very archaic or of extremely simplified or primitive construction. The stone beehive huts, roofed by a [172] system of overlapping stones and some oval or oblong houses are identical with or closely linked with prehistoric house-types. The huts of wickerwork, sod and turf, on the other hand, represent very simple house-types, of which not all can with certainty be characterized as archaic, but rather as imitations in a simplified form of advanced house-types, or as simple temporary structures, or solutions of individual building problems often due to poverty or lack of better building material.

These groups of buildings offer possibilities of very wide, but at the same time very vague, comparisons throughout the fields of archæological, historic literary and ethnological facts.

341 171 Ireland's cultural position is of great interest, whether Ireland be looked upon as a relic-zone where many culture-elements still persist after they have become extinct in Continental Europe, or whether it be supposed to constitute a critical point in the Atlantic intercepting the different streams of culture flowing from North, South, and East.[2]

There are features common to Irish and Scandinavian archaic or primitive buildings, to Irish and Spanish-Portuguese buildings or to Irish and English buildings, but it would be premature to come to any decision about the origin of these features until the whole area of their distribution has been surveyed. Adapting T. J. Westropp's words about the ancient Irish "Forts" I would say: The key to the origin of the Irish house-types lies as much in a comparison with cognate buildings over the rest of Europe as in the native Irish records.

As it is not possible to arrive at any definite conclusions until investigations have been made on a broader basis, I must content myself here with pointing out some types of buildings and some problems which seem to me to be of certain importance.

The clochán type with domed roof.

172 342 The clochán, or stone bee-hive hut, no doubt represents a very old stage of house-tradition (pl. 29,a—32), although it can be studied from material still existing and, in some cases, still in use in Ireland today (pl. 33, a, b). As it represents a prehistoric type of building, investigations of the Irish clochán and other types of bee-hive, oval or oblong houses from the Iron Age and later times become of immediate interest for the study of recent Irish house-traditions.

A comparison between the common Irish (developed) houses of today and the clocháns (prehistoric or of later date) may give the impression that there is a gap between them that cannot be bridged. Nevertheless the clochán-type constitutes a very suitable starting point for discussion of the recent Irish peasant houses and their history. There are indeed some significant parallels from various countries and different periods, which help to illuminate the problem here in question. In particular I would like to draw [171] attention to the Scottish bee-hive house but also to the black house *(bothán, aridhean, tigh dubh)*, to the remains of circular and roughly oblong huts of stone in other parts of the Brittish Isles, *e. g.* in Carnarvon, Wales, and to the very similar settlements in Spain and Portugal,[3] and in Italy and Greece. In Scandinavia, such settlements and forts as have been excavated in Denmark, Norway and the Swedish provinces of Öland and Gotland must be considered as parallels to the West European material here mentioned.

Descriptions of Irish clocháns can be found in several archæological works. I quote here some descriptions given by Macalister:[4]

"A clochán was built in this manner. A space of the size and shape intended was marked out on the ground with loose stones. Usually the plan was circular or oval, but sometimes the building is circular outside and square within. Above these stones another course was laid, slightly oversailing the course below. A third course overhung the second, and so on; the walls being made thick enough, as they rose, to secure stability. At last the sides of the building approximated together so that the hole in the top of the chamber could be closed with a single flag-stone or with two or more such stones. No mortar of any kind was needed or used, though the outer surface may have been covered with sods or some protection to keep out the rain. As a rule the stones of which the building was composed were laid not quite horizontal, but were sloped outward, so as to shed off rain-water to the outside of the building."

The most famous remains of clocháns are perhaps the six bee-hive cells at

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P 177---Analyst]

PLATE 29.

a. Clochán (beehive hut). Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Note to the left in back-ground a very large clochán which has collapsed. The remains of several other collapsed clocháns are inside same *caiseal*, (circular wall enclosing a group of buildings, huts, etc.).
b. Clocháns inside a cashel. Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

172 342 Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry, and the so called "City of Fahan", which probably includes the largest number of buildings of this kind (pl. 29, 30,b).[5] But no investigation has been made — as far as I know — of round stone huts in Ireland built and inhabited in later times. Such investigation has, however, been made on the Scottish Islands by F. L. W. Thomas.[6] It is evident that the bee-hive huts (*both*) of Lewis described by Thomas, are very close to or identical with the Irish clocháns, and represent the same building traditions. This also agrees with the accounts of Irish cabins in the literature.[7] I will confine myself here to two descriptions made by Thomas and published in 1860 and in 1869, both dealing with stone bee-hive huts built in late times and used as dwellings. As these descriptions are inaccessible to most readers I must quote them at some length.

342 171 The normal and, Thomas presumes, most modern form of bee-hive house (in the middle of the 19th century) is "an irregular circle, six or seven feet in diameter, the walls rising perpendicularly for three feet; each successive course of stone then overlaps or projects beyond the one below, and then the roof gradually closes in and takes a beehive form. — — — A hole, called the *Farlos (farleus*, a skylight), is left in the apex of the roof for the escape of the smoke, and is closed with a turf or flat stone as requisite. (See pl. 34,c). There are two doors, 2½ feet high and 2 feet broad, and they are placed so that a line joining them cuts off on one side about two thirds of the enclosed area. The two doors are a decided improvement, for that one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weather door — is closed with a stone or turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the head of the inhabitants and through the Farlos. From door to door a row of flat stones, a few inches in height, forms the bench or seat, *being*, and behind this the area is filled up with hay or rushes for a bed. I had a native estimate of its capacity, and found it calculated to hold three people. In front of the bench, and midway between the two doors, is the fire — of peat of course, and not much needed except for cooking. Above the fire, a longish stone draws in and out of the wall for the purpose of hanging a pot on, and in nearly every ruin did we find this primitive instrument in its place, shoved back into the wall."[8]

With the investigations made by Thomas in 1857 and later, the *clochán* as an inhabited living dwelling is brought within the horizon of the study of today. In the following example which is taken from Thomas' description, this house-type of a prehistoric time is allied with a late innovation, namely the stone-built chimney, which in the course of the 19th century seems to

PLATE 30.

a. Clochán na Carraighe. Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

b. Clochán. Fahan, Co. Kerry.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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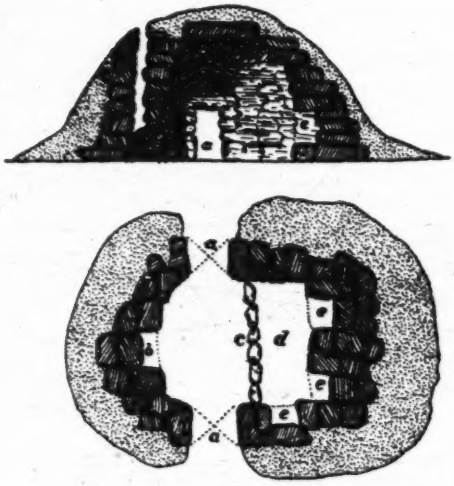

Fig. 1. A both or clochán on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, a, doors; b, fire-place; c, a row of stones in front of the bed place; d, the bed; e, e, e, small recesses in the wall to serve for cupboards.

become more and more common even in the dwellings of this remote district, thus heralding the total replacement of the black-houses by the white-houses with stone-built chimneys at the gable walls. With regard to the arrangement for the fire, this clochán stands on the same level of development as the many houses or huts of this and later times, the roof of which has been broken through by the stone-built chimney.

The *bo'h (both)* or *clochán* on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis, fig. 1, is the most modern that Thomas has seen — "and at the same time the last, in all probability, that will be constructed in this manner." It is of bee-hive form, about 18 feet in diameter, 9 feet high, and roofed by the horizontal or cyclopean arch, *i. e.* by a system of overlapping stones. The outside is covered with green turf. There are two doors (fig. 1 a,a) opposite to each other, higher (3 feet) and better formed than is usual. Within, the chamber is dome-shaped and is between 7 and 8 feet square on the floor. A row of stones (c), half a foot in height, cuts off one half of the floor for a bed (d). There are several small recesses (e, e, e) in the wall to serve for cupboards. But what distinguishes this *bo'h* from all others is the presence of a chimney over the fireplace (b). Thomas concludes, from what he heard from the woman who was living in it in 1867, and from va-

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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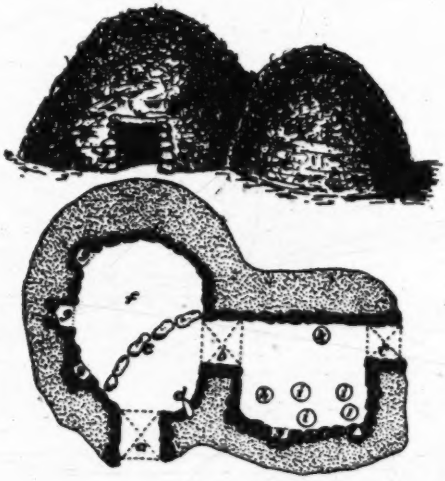

Fig. 2. A double both, the garry or summer pasturage of the tenants of Corlista. Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, b, c, doorways; d, fire-place; e, row of stones in front of the bed-place; f, the bed; g, g, niches; h, cream tub; i, i, i, three milk or cheese tubs, covered by slaty stones; j, a churn; k, a stoup for carrying water.

rious circumstances, that this *bo'h* was made about ninety years ago (from 1867).

With regard to Thomas's own comparisons, I will only add here that he has made a rather daring comparison between the *both* of Lewis and the Eskimo domed-shaped hut of Greenland. But perhaps a comparison of the grouping of the houses would be more effective than a comparison of the house construction of each type.[14] The Greenland hypothesis, however, seems to me to be worth studying. But at the same time we must not lose sight of stone-built huts and huts of straw, sods, mud and wickerwork, round or oval in form, used especially by cattle-breeding peoples in the Iberian Peninsula (*e. g.* in Estremadura, Andalusia, Granada), Italy and elsewhere.

Bee-hive houses of the *clochán* type in Ireland of today are to be found in some parts of the Gaeltacht (the Gaelic-speaking districts of Ireland), as on the coast and islands from Kerry to Mayo. There the stone-built bee-hive houses are used — not as dwellings, so far as I know — but as milk-houses or for storing turf etc. In the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, bee-hive houses are still being built as outhouses. There are also modernised clocháns with wooden doors — they can even have a glass ball to decorate the top.

343

The only stone-built and stone-roofed houses equipped with a fireplace and

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 a smokehole which I have found, was an ancient sweating bath, *teach allais,* in Co. Mayo. This building is square in form.

171 Thomas's material is however interesting from a certain point of view. From prehistoric times are found agglomerations of round, oblong and square houses in Ireland (*e. g.* Skellig-Michael), in Wales[9] and in other parts of the
341 British Isles. The same mixture of round and square or oblong buildings can be observed in Portugal,[10] Spain and elsewhere in Western and Southern Europe.

From Thomas's material we now learn what an *inhabited* settlement of this kind looks like. In Lewis, for example, the stone-roofed circular houses, *bothan,* have been erected in the same *gearraidhean, i. e.* place for booleying, as the timber-roofed huts, *aridhean.*[12] We are forced to infer that round, oval, oblong, square buildings must be studied with regard to each other and with regard to different constructions in timber, branches, sods, stone etc.

The *oblong form* of building can obviously have developed or been invented in a number of ways, as there are varying antecedent conditions in different cases.[13] There is however *one* oval or oblong form of building which may have its origin in the stone-built domed-roofed bee-hive house.

The construction with a domed roof does not permit of much widening of the space between the walls. Even if very long and suitable flag-stones are at hand, the limits for the cyclopean arch will make it impossible for the primitive builder to enlarge the circumference of his house to any great degree. To get more room he must put two or more circular bee-hive buildings together, or he must go over to the oval or oblong form. Thomas himself touches upon the problem in these words: "It is evident that in this style of architecture (domed roofed buildings) the size of the rooms is limited by the nature of the stone; and although a tolerably safe roof may be made in this manner with rough moor-stones to cover an area of six feet it would have a most uncomfortable and suspicious appearance if extended over twice those dimensions (six or seven feet in diameter). Even in the Orkneys where is abundance of flag stone, although there are chambers there forty-five feet long the breadth was only five feet."

342 To elucidate this important problem the Irish oval *clochán* offers us the most valuable material. I refer to the series of photographs, kindly placed at my disposal by the distinguished author of The Islands of Ireland, Thomas Mason.[14] This *clochán* (Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore Island, Aran, Co. Galway, pl. 30 a, 31, and 32) is of oval shape, the entrance door being at the long sidewall. The roof is made of overlapping stones, one row of large slabs covering the space between the two long sides of the roof, which are

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[17]

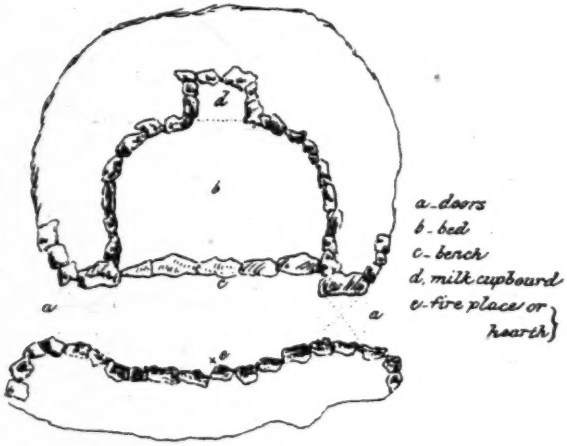

Fig. 3. Both, on West side of Loch an ath Ruadh. Uig, Lewis. From Thomas.

joined together in this manner (pl. 32, an interior showing roof formation. Camera was placed on the ground pointing upwards).

Primitive dwellings and hypogea of the Scottish isles also show the same arrangements. Thus it seems to be evident that the study of the oblong houses there (black-houses, *tigh dubh)* cannot be separated from the study of the *clochán* type. In consequence, it also will be necessary to compare the so-called Norse building customs in the Scottish Isles, which have been put forward by Aage Roussell,[12] not only with Thomas's black-house material — as Roussell does — but also with Thomas's other material including the stone-roofed houses.

[2]

Stone built timber-roofed oval houses.

If my working hypothesis holds, a thorough study of the oval houses will throw much light on Irish building traditions. At least in some parts of Ireland the oval houses formed the basis for the development of native houses of today, *e. g.* the one-roomed central-chimney houses with thatched gables.

It is evident that oval house-types can easily have been reached in places where the round or oval clochán as well as the hut with thatched roof resting on timber are known. When suitable large slabs were scarce, the primi-

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 inner edge of the walls. As the oval house form does not permit any stone-built gables the roof has rounded and thatched gables.

The house as it now stands as a still inhabited homestead constitutes a good example of the stone-built, timber-roofed, oval house, wellknown from the early part of the 19th century. This house can, no doubt, be classified as a link or a cross between the prehistoric oval clochán and the primitive central-chimney house of later times. Thus, if my theory holds, there is no gap, from the point of view of classification, in the Irish house-tradition, as far as the central-chimney house is concerned.

Huts of wicker-work; sods, turf.

Although the material here concerned may often seem to be of a very indefinite character, from which only a few certain conclusions can be drawn (see p. 173), it is nevertheless necessary to study thoroughly every kind of primitive hut. The many references to Irish building-culture given in the old literature, indicate the very interesting fact that it was the wickerwork huts and other houses built of various materials, and not the stone-built *clochán*s that may have been very common as small dwellings in olden times.

342 171 During my rather short visits to Ireland, I have not come across any huts of such a kind as wicker-houses, oak-houses, *tech darach* etc., as are described by Eugene O'Curry[15] and by him compared with the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius. But inquiries along this line may show that such houses did exist in Ireland not so long ago. Certainly I have got some reports about booleying practised *e. g.* in Donegal up to ninety years ago. The people took their cattle to the mountains in the summer and there they erected huts, *bothogai*, for themselves. But how were these huts constructed? It is probable that they, at least somewhere in Ireland, have been made in a fashion similar to the creel houses in the Scottish Highlands of the same period. I will give some references from Scottish authors, mentioned by Thomas.[16]

According to Walker's Economical History of the Hebrides,[17] the farmers in most Highlands had their homesteads on the arable land, where they dwelt in what are called the winter houses. Soon after the middle of June, when the arable land was sown, they moved with their cattle to a mountainous place belonging to the farm. There they quickly erected or repaired their summer houses which were composed chiefly of sods and branches of trees. "Where wood is at hand, they erect what are called creel houses.

PLATE 34.

a. Houses in Achill, Co. Galway. From Ireland, its Scenery, Character etc., by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall.

b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

c. Beehive houses. Uig, Lewis, Hebrides. Inhabited 1859. After F. W. L. Thomas.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 171 These are formed of wooden posts, interlaced with branches of trees, like wicker-work, and covered on the outside with turf."

Robertson[18] describes a type of tenant's house, the construction of which must be like the wicker-work houses above-mentioned. "When such a house is to be built, the first thing done is to construct a coarse frame of wood, corresponding to the dimensions of the house, in length and breadth; then upon this frame to fix standards inclining inward, at proper distances, which rise to the height of the intended wall, and are kept in a firm position by being morticed in a tree above of the same dimensions with the tree below. These standards are closely woven with wicker work, to keep the sods from falling in; which, being built on the outside, finish the side walls of a creel-house."

342 221 As the Irish booleying custom, *buaile*, doubtless preserved many primitive and archaic building traditions, it should form an important subject of study also with regard to wicker-work huts. However, the summer huts which are mentioned in the Welsh laws are not referred to in the Irish lawtracts. Professor Mac Néill has kindly informed me that this does not mean that the *buaile* custom did not exist in ancient Ireland. "It was probably practised by the less opulent class who had a limited supply of pasture land. The laws have little to say about these, as in general they were under the jurisdiction of a noble."

342 343 The huts erected in later times of sods or turf and used as shelters for donkeys, pigs, etc., which can be met with in various parts of Ireland, would also well repay study. In the literature of the 19th and the early 20th centuries can be found travellers' accounts of such houses, although they seldom go into details about the construction. I refer, *e. g.*, to a description of Caesar Otway's from his "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly", an account of his travels in Northwestern Ireland in 1840:

"The dwellers here were bog troglodytes — the foundations of their dwellings are sunk eight feet or more below the surface of the surrounding black bog, the walls are constructed of wet sods, cut off from the surface of that bog; there is no door or door-case, no chimney; the orifices by which the people enter, and through which the smoke *should* issue, are filled up as suits the wind, with bundles of heath or turf-kreels, filled with potato-stalks; a drain comes out from under the floor of the dwelling, from which the superabundant moisture escapes, or else it would be a common boghole: but, by its means, the water that springs abundantly from the sides and bottom, flows away, and the people sitting or standing within, are free from actual overflow."

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

000 [16] Op. cit., vol. VII, p. 177 sq.

[17] Vol. I, p. 5.

[18] Agricultural Survey of Inverness, Vol. I, p. 318.

[19] Fra de Færöske Bygder, Copenhagen 1929, p. 196 sqq.

[20] Öland under äldre Järnåldern, Stockholm 1933.

[21] Gotländska gårdar och byar under äldre järnåldern, Stockholm 1933, p. 179.

[22] Macalister, op. cit. p. 94.

[23] Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary, Dublin 1937.

[24] Manners and customs of the ancient Irish, London 1873.

[25] See Sigurd Erixon, Skansens Kulturhistoriska avdelning, Stockholm 1925, p. 87.

[26] Ancient Irish Houses, ed O'Donovan, Dublin 1865—1901, Vol. V, p. 496, Vol. VI, p. 497, foot note

[27] Ancient Irish Laws, Vol. IV, p. 305.

[27a] From a paper by Eóin Mac Néill on Ancient Irish Law: Law of Status or Franchise, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Vol. XXXVI, Sect. C, p. 287 sq.

[28] Some prehistoric houses in the Rhineland and elsewhere in Central Europe, have been compared with the Irish upper class houses and described as survivals from the Celtic wave spreading westward over the Continent. See Collingwood, The Archæology of Roman Britain, p. 129—134. Even the Romano-British barn dwelling has been discussed in this connection, see J. A. Richmond, The Analogies of the Romano-British Barn Dwelling, in the Journal of Roman Studies, Vol. XXII, London 1932, p. 66, and the Frisian and Saxon houses of today.

[17]

Photographs: Author: pl. 34, a—b; 35, a—c; 36, a—b. Mr. Thomas Mason: pl. 29, a—b; 30, a—b; 31; 32; 33, b.

Out of the following books are illustrations taken: F. W. L. Thomas: Notice of Beehive houses in Harris and Lewis, in Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III and VII: pl. 34, a. Mr and Mrs. S. C. Hall: Ireland, its Scenery, Character etc., vol. III, London 1843, 34, a.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the basis of geography, partly upon his knowledge of the regional anthropological differences. Convenience also dictated the use of county boundaries in the majority of instances. 128

AGE

The average age of 8809 Irish males is 34.55 ± 0.10 years. In the anthropometric survey of a population it seems desirable to include the males of subadult age (18-20 years) as an offset to those who are presumably senile (60 years and upward). The incomplete growth of the subadults tends to counterbalance the diminished height of the aged. The standard deviation of age for the entire series is 13.95 ± 0.07 years. The county subgroup means of ages range from 29.45 ± 0.29 (Longford, Westmeath) to 38.80 ± 0.51 (Waterford and Wexford). 145

STATURE

Stature was measured by the standard technique with the Martin anthropometer. Subjects, of course, were required to remove their shoes. 141 171

Table 1 presents the data on stature and figure 1 plots the means of stature by local subgroups in intervals of 1 cm. The mean of stature for the whole of Ireland is 172.02 cm., which, of course, is tall. The actual range of subgroup means is only 4 cm.—from 170.52 cm. (Meath, Louth, County Dublin) to 174.54 cm. (Aran Islands). The variabilities of the nineteen subgroups are for the most part neither significantly higher nor lower than that of the total series. The standard deviation of stature for the total series (6.81 ± 0.03 cm.) is not very high when the age range of the population is taken into consideration. It is somewhat higher than that of any of the eight European ethnic series recorded by Davenport and Love as a result of measurements taken upon troops during demobilization after the World War ('21, p. 113). Standard deviations in these series ranged from 6.06 cm. (Italians) to 6.62 cm. (English). The mean height of 6164 Irish was 171.36 cm. and the standard deviation of stature 6.31 cm. Thus our

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

141 sample from all of Ireland is taller and somewhat more vari-
171 able in stature than the United States army sample. It should be recalled, however, that most of the soldiers were between the ages of 18 and 31 years and that certain stature standards were enforced for the acceptance of recruits. Consequently, the variability of the army sample has probably been reduced

TABLE 1
Stature by county subgroups

	NO.	RANGE	MEAN	S. D.	V.
West Donegal	212	146–193	171.90 ± 0.33	7.17 ± 0.23	4.17 ± 0.14
Mayo	594	143–196	172.17 ± 0.20	7.20 ± 0.14	4.18 ± 0.08
Sligo, Leitrim, South Fermanagh, West Cavan	725	146–202	172.05 ± 0.17	6.72 ± 0.12	3.91 ± 0.07
West Galway (Connemara)	451	155–196	173.13 ± 0.20	6.36 ± 0.14	3.67 ± 0.08
Aran Islands	136	158–193	174.54 ± 0.41	7.14 ± 0.29	4.09 ± 0.17
Clare	944	146–196	172.14 ± 0.14	6.57 ± 0.10	3.82 ± 0.06
Kerry	519	152–199	173.16 ± 0.20	6.90 ± 0.14	3.98 ± 0.08
Cork	565	152–193	172.71 ± 0.19	6.69 ± 0.13	3.87 ± 0.08
Limerick	339	152–193	171.75 ± 0.25	6.75 ± 0.17	3.93 ± 0.10
East Galway, Roscommon	479	149–196	173.28 ± 0.22	7.11 ± 0.15	4.10 ± 0.09
Longford, Westmeath	717	149–187	171.27 ± 0.16	6.30 ± 0.11	3.68 ± 0.07
Offaly, Leix, Kildare	513	152–193	171.57 ± 0.20	6.75 ± 0.14	3.93 ± 0.08
Tipperary, Kilkenny	623	149–196	171.99 ± 0.19	6.87 ± 0.13	3.99 ± 0.08
Waterford, Wexford	425	149–190	171.24 ± 0.23	6.99 ± 0.16	4.08 ± 0.09
Wicklow, Carlow	273	149–202	170.88 ± 0.28	6.96 ± 0.20	4.14 ± 0.12
Meath, Louth, Co. Dublin	427	155–193	170.52 ± 0.21	6.45 ± 0.15	3.78 ± 0.09
East Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh	388	155–190	170.91 ± 0.23	6.63 ± 0.16	3.88 ± 0.09
Antrim, Down	167	149–187	171.39 ± 0.38	7.29 ± 0.27	4.25 ± 0.16
North Fermanagh, East Donegal, Tyrone Londonberry	310	152–190	171.96 ± 0.25	6.57 ± 0.18	3.82 ± 0.10
Total	8807	143–202	172.02 ± 0.05	6.81 ± 0.03	3.96 ± 0.02

by these factors. In a study of native born White criminals of native parentage in the United States the mean of stature was 171.90 cm. and the standard deviation 6.45 ± 0.05 cm. (Hooton, '39, Table V-14). The age range of the American criminals is more closely comparable with that of the Irish population, but, again, the criminals average somewhat younger (30.70 ± 0.12 years) and have a lower age variability

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

(standard deviation 11.40 ± 0.08 years). However, crime is principally a phenomenon of youth and the age variability certainly and the stature variability possibly are affected and reduced thereby.

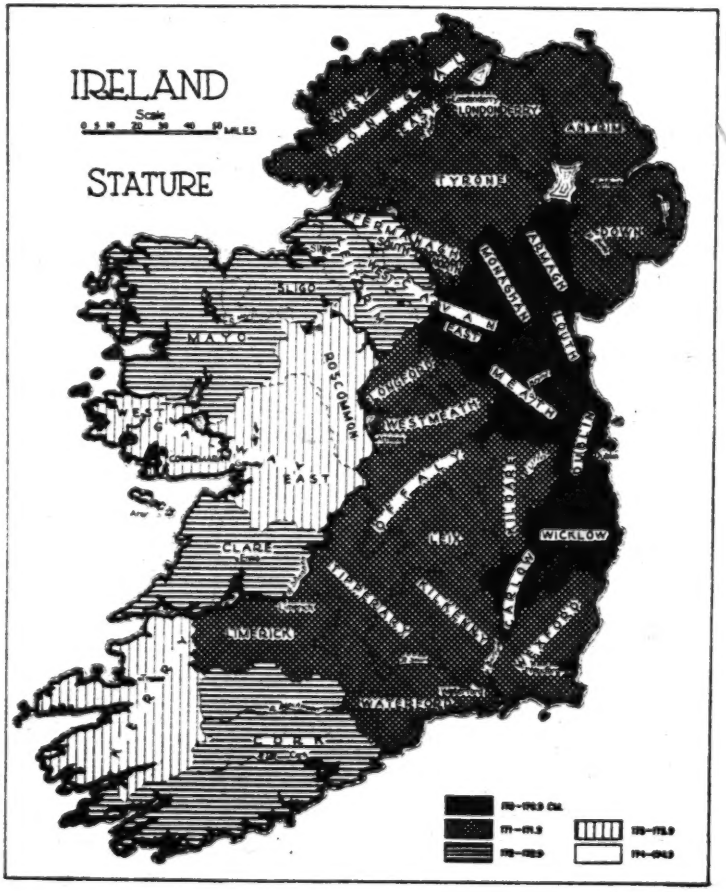

Figure 1

In Tuosist the reason given to me by my father and some other old people was that ill-luck would fall upon Kerry and especially on the parish of Tuosist, if the Corkmen succeeded in forcing the coffin across Leac na gCorp and laid it down on Kerry soil. Sickness, bad crops, and misfortunes of many kinds would follow the corpse, if it were laid beyond the boundary-stone. This is undoubtedly the original reason for the defence of the border on funeral days. A corpse has in many lands for long been regarded as having evil magical power (known scientifically as *orenda* or *mana*) of an impersonal kind latent in itself. In Ireland, for example, fishermen regarded it as unlucky to take the corpse of a drowned person into a boat. Also, *an féar gorta* ("the hungry grass"), which grew wherever a corpse touched the earth, had the power of causing all those who walked over the spot to be stricken with abnormal hunger. Many other instances of the evil power of a corpse might be cited. Just two hundred years ago, Morty Óg O'Sullivan, a native chieftain of Béara in West Cork, who had fought against the British both in Ireland and in many European countries as a member of the "Wild Geese", was slain outside his own house near Eyeries in Béara. The British took his body to a warship at Bere Island and dragged it through the sea in the wake of the ship about sixty miles to Cork. A poet who described this happening wrote the couplet:

764 578 778

[539]

Ní raibh aon rath ar an uisce ó Chorcaigh go Béara
Ó tairngeadh tríd an bradán gléigeal.[1]

No fish were said to have since been caught in the sea-route through which the corpse was dragged.

In Sweden, Miss Louise Hagberg tells us, if a corpse were carried over cultivated ground or over lakes, they became thereby unfruitful, and crop-growing fields lost their vegetation. She also says that during the Middle Ages those persons over whose lands a corpse was carried unlawfully had the right to compensation; in Västergötland anybody who carried a corpse across the land of another, without the permission of the owner, rendered himself liable to a prescribed fine.

171

Thus, the funeral-boundary customs in the Cork-Kerry area, which have died out only in comparatively recent times, seem to fit into the wider pattern of custom and superstition devised to give protection against the magical evil power associated with corpses.

2. Wearing Clothes for the Dead

In the year 1918 or so, an uncle of mine died in the townland of Fehanagh, in the parish of Tuosist, in southwest Kerry. This is my native parish. Jerry Sullivan was my uncle's name; he died at the age of sixty-four. I was fifteen years old at the time, and was spending some weeks of my summer holidays at my uncle's when he became ill and died. I was allowed to remain in the house during the illness, wake, and funeral.

764 294 292

It is still the immemorial custom in that parish to get a suit of clothes specially made by a local tailor when a person dies. The suit is not worn by the corpse in the coffin. Still, it is intended

[1] There has been no luck on the water from Cork to Béara
Since the gleaming salmon was dragged through it.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 though little wealth will come to her through that
443 shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases,
571 these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a
584 finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly
369 universal occurrence where a society preserves
443 some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural
571 necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic
582 order. In India, for instance, it is immediately recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

 [171]

gain a foothold in the world of shops. For that, the countryman is willing, currently, to pay about twice the usual dowry-price. 369 443 571 582

And in his willing adherence to custom, stability is achieved. The relationship between class and class, like that in the countryside between kindred and kindred, attains some permanence of form. The bride carries social bonds with her; in this case she carries them upward and townward into the shops and pubs of metropolis.

Her brother, on the other hand, carries with him another social function, in his capacity of male. His place is that of a potential fatherhood in a line of patrilineal descent. He carries on a corporate name upon the land or shop. Where he cannot inherit, in such descent, a sure place among his fellows, he must win it. The man is the bread-winner who carves out a place for his line; round him the family must be grouped. The woman, on the other hand, is the uniting force within the grouping. In this dichotomization of social role between the sexes, the Irish town and the Irish countryside, like the Church to which they both subscribe, are agreed. Hypergamy takes its form in the agreement. Along the lines laid down by the social bonds of apprenticeship and hypergamous marriage, the world of the market-town and the rural hinterland are united; along the same lines the flow of the country-people townward moves.

Once again, then, we see how complete the in-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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241 407 [492] struck a rock, thus saving the share, the traces and the ploughman from injury. The tying of the tail-hair to the traces, which were commonly of sugán or fir rope, required a difficult knot known in later days to very few. This undoubtedly ancient practice seems to have been linked with other customs such as walking backwards before the plough horses, burning the corn in the straw, and plucking or clipping wool from the sheep whenever it was required. It appears that we have in this group of survivals an older culture-laver overlaid by newer methods some of which are themselves of high antiquity. There is some evidence that the original simpler wooden plough mentioned below, together with the clod-breaker and the winnowing tray (Chapter 14) belong to the older layer, whereas the improved wooden plough, the harrow and the flail are later arrivals.

English visitors of the 18th century and the writers of the Statistical Accounts published by the Royal Dublin Society have given many particulars of the varying practices of a century and a half ago. From them we select a few observations. The method of ploughing in Co. Clare was to use four horses abreast, the driver walking backwards between the two middle horses. This is also described as "the old method" in Co. Roscommon. Four oxen were employed in Co. Dublin and Co. Tipperary, "never less than four oxen or four horses" in Kilkenny, six in Meath, three in Fermanagh and two in King's County. The large teams of some regions may imply that co-aration had at one time been practised. [476 171] The four horses of the north Antrim plough-team were contributed or "pooled" by four farmers under the system of "morrowing" or "neighbour dealing" which finds ready parallels in Scotland. In Co. Clare this pooling custom is known as "cooring," and in other parts as "milling." The Irish farm horse, it should be remembered, is a small light breed: except near large towns heavy cart horses are rarely seen.

Nevertheless in the more backward parts the two horse plough seems to have been general, as it is to-day, and it has been supposed that the two-ox plough was standard in early

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492 246 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, [493] which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently [407] old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

246 In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built [171] around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to [476] hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

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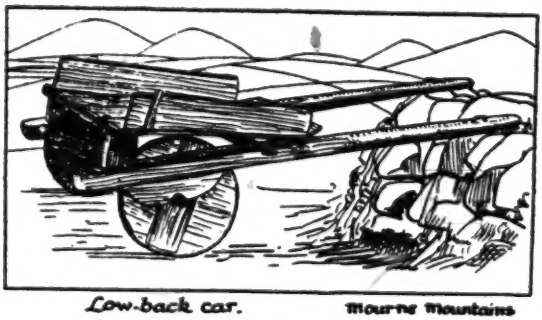
traces. The shafts were also tied by straw ropes to the pegs 492
of a straddle which rested on a back sugán secured in turn by 493
a tail rope of straw. Bridles and halters were sometimes made of horse hair.

The slide car, like so many of the Irish relics we are 171
considering, was found not long ago in the Scottish Highlands and is still used in central Wales. It is common in the Baltic lands and far afield through the mountain country of Europe and the Siberian tundra; and its wide and scattered distribution betokens its high antiquity. In general the slide car is employed for transporting hay and timber in mountain country; and it is of interest to find that in Sweden it is



[493]

Low-back car. Mourne Mountains

Fig. 60.

especially associated with the mountain dairies which are paralleled by the Irish booleys (Chapter 6). Scandinavian ethnologists have shown how areas which had the slide-car have become regions of the one-horse cart and have generally remained without the four-wheeled waggon. This applies with peculiar force to Ireland. (Pl. IV.)

The older style of two-wheeled cart is that known as the 493
"wheel" or "low-back" car, which survives in the same environments as the slide-car. I illustrate an example from the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down (Fig. 60). The solid disc wheels lie under the body of the car and are fixed to an axle,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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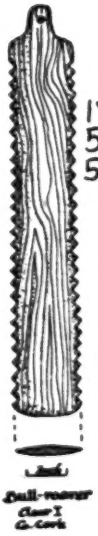
produce a buzzing noise. The toy is known in Co. Carlow as 534
a "whee-doodle" and in Co. Down, where it seems formerly 524
to have been regarded as a "sacred" thing, as a "boomer." Professor Haddon has described specimens from Co. Antrim and Co. Cork. About the Co. Carlow example in the Dublin Museum Dr. Raftery provides me with the following note. [777]
"A boy was whirling it around and an old man who saw him was very angry and told him to take the thing home and burn it, as otherwise he would bring bad luck on the countryside." This was in 1921. I illustrate a "bull-roarer" from Cape Clear, Co. Cork (Fig. 113). Its Irish name is Cláirín Búirthe.



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524
534
Fig. 113.

It is, of course, possible that some Irish localities may have learnt the use of this toy from stray specimens brought home from regions where it is still in regular ceremonial use, but when we remember all the other Irish survivals we cannot doubt that the bull-roarer is a relic of the past that has lost, or nearly lost, its sacred character. The bull-roarer has an almost world-wide distribution. It is said to have been employed in ancient Greece in connexion with the Dionysiac mysteries. We can imagine its employment in the initiation rites and magical practices of pagan times so picturesquely reconstructed by Professor Macalister in his book "Ancient Ireland." In various parts of the modern world the bull-roarer is used as a rain charm, in raising a wind or producing thunder, in driving game, herding cattle (*cf.* Chapter 6) or preparing for fishing, in rites of initiation and circumcision, in funeral festivities and mask dances: it is a general rule that the instrument must not be seen by women or children on pain of death. In the words of Haddon: "This insignificant toy is perhaps the most ancient, widely spread and sacred religious symbol in the world."

Of great antiquity and wide distribution, the spear- 171
thrower is another instrument which appears to have survived 524
in Ireland as a toy, used as a throwing stick in boys' games. [411]
And another toy "not yet connected with any ceremonial usage" but paralleled among the Chinese and the North

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171 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a
524 circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

857 Many examples could be given of children's games and
524 rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.
754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance
789 of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love
821 charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

241 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting
289 of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

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342 between building materials and techniques and types of thatch, and when slates or tiles are adopted for roofing it will be found that old roof patterns are faithfully followed by local builders. An interesting variant of the mud house occurs around Lough Neagh, where the main weight of the roof is carried on three massive purlins the ends of which can be seen projecting outside the upright gables (Fig. 9). I suspect these houses were built to take tall looms, for the use of purlins means that there are no couple-ties crossing the room, but the distinction between the purlin and the coupled-rafter roof may be fundamental. The purlin-roof may go back to the log house with which it is associated, for example, in Scandinavia. One advantage of the upright gable over the hipped roof is that it made the extension of the house by the addition of further rooms much simpler. It could have been copied from medieval churches or planters' houses.

For constructional reasons, and also because window glass was long a luxury, the windows of the traditional cabin were few and small and placed for preference on the side away from the prevailing winds. Many of the surviving houses, moreover, were built in the early nineteenth century, when tax was levied on the number of windows. The ever-open door, its lower part closed with the additional half-door, admitted most of the light. The half-door is often regarded as peculiarly Irish, but in fact it is an old-fashioned feature which has lived on longer in the western isle than in Great Britain. It is found in parts of the [171] north of England, for example in miners' cottages in Co. Durham, and it is said to be characteristic of Chinese houses. In Ireland the half-door serves to let in the light while keeping out unwanted animals, and it makes a convenient arm-rest for purposes of conversation or contemplation. This is how a countryman justified it to me: 'A man standing at the open door would be wasting time, but leaning on the half-door he is just passing time'. To give maximum efficiency, the window openings widen internally, an arrangement behind which there may be a lingering tradition of defence against unwelcome strangers. At any rate most of the light came from the doorway, and thus one sees the force of the picturesque phrase referring to the unwanted visitor as one who 'darkens

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 coupled roof was borrowed from the frame-house introduced by English planters: it may, however, have evolved from the wattled house if this was supported, as seems likely, by crucks. The coupled rafters are joined by one or two cross-ties secured by wooden pins, and pegs driven into the rafters hold in place the long purlins which support a layer of branches or thin laths of bog-fir. On these rests a warm blanket of carefully fitted sods (scraws), an essential element of the traditional roof, keeping out cold and damp and serving as a hold for the rods (scollops) with which the thatch, over the greater part of the country, is secured (Fig. 11). The sod undercoat is an

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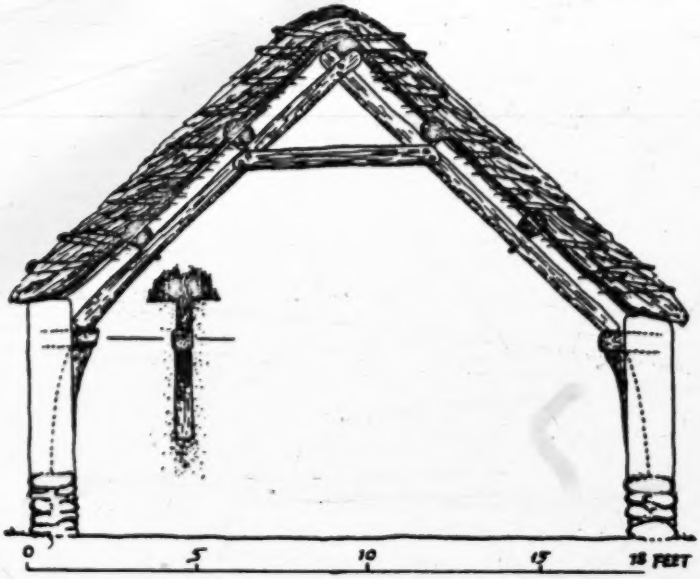

FIG. 11. Cross-section through old house, Maghery, Co. Armagh. The coupled rafters are supported on uprights set in the mud walls. The scraws are sewn to the purlins with fir-ropes. Successive layers of thatch are secured with rods pinned down with hair-pin scollops.

archaic element which overrides all differences in house and roof construction and must be of high antiquity. It has been taken over from an old culture-layer—it finds parallels in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Norway and other sub-arctic regions—and from an economy where straw was not available. We have already noticed that cattle-herders in the early seventeenth century built their booley houses of boughs coated with long strips of green turf. The long sods made a portable roof which could be slung on a pole between two pack-horses. 342 [171]

The sods were cut in strips from carefully selected spots where a close-grazed sward gave a thick mat of grass-roots. They measure two to three feet wide and about one and a half inches thick, and as they were cut they were rolled on to a stick and carried like a carpet. Their roofing sods, wrote Thomas Campbell in 1778, 'they call scraws (they are rolled up like scrolls) but they would be better called hides, for they are flayed off the earth.'[1] In the north, where the flachter or breast-plough was used for paring sods (Chapter X), the scraws might be as much as twelve or fourteen feet long, though short turves were also used. They were carried on to the roof up two ladders and laid on grass upwards, overlapping at the ridge on the side away from the wind. They overlapped laterally also, the scraw on the windward side running over its neighbour on the lee (Fig. 14). In many such details careful attention was paid to the wind and the rain, for example the strongest purlins were put on the side whence driving rain was most to be expected. Similarly the stoutest couples were placed at the weather end of the house, and they were sometimes given a slight inclination towards the wind. A seemingly artless cabin may thus be found to show the most careful adaptation to local conditions. 342 314

The first thin layer of thatch was, in some parts of the country, sewn on to the purlins with a thatching needle—the older pattern has a large eye to take hay-rope (Fig. 15)—and the roof might then be finished in one of several regional styles. In the eastern part of Co. Down, and sporadically elsewhere, the straw is laid on in specially prepared bundles or stapples[2] (Gaelic *Stapull*) and the thatch is plastered down at eaves, gable and ridge with clay or mud. A few scollops are added at ridge and eaves. This is probably a very ancient method, 342 [413] [177]

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 146.
[2]K. Danaher, *Béaloideas* (1948), 203–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 which rest on the thatch directly over the eaves (Fig. 12, 1). This method has an extremely primitive air but it has the advantage over the pinned ropes in that it is simpler to keep the ropes taut. A still older method, frequently seen on thatched stacks and rarely on buildings, is to let the weighted ropes hang from the eaves. In Donegal a century ago boulders weighing fifty or sixty pounds are stated to have been suspended on hay ropes.[1] This very primitive mode is found also in the Inner Hebrides.[2] Roped thatch in general seems to be characteristic [171] of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe and areas around the North Sea.

The most widely distributed mode of thatching is by means of scollops, or sally rods (sometimes hazel, briar or bog-fir), which pin down the thatch. In well-finished work the rods are hidden, for if exposed they tend to let water seep through the scraw, but it is customary to leave a row exposed at the eaves and ridge and against the gables, where the outer layer of straw should lie snugly. The exposed scollops are often arranged [531] in lattice patterns, and the expert thatcher delights in showing his skill and leaving his grace-mark in finishes of various designs which are practical as well as decorative, serving for example to distribute the rain and prevent 'guttering'. Thus twists of straw (bobbins) at the gables carry the drips evenly to the ground. When the ridge—and sometimes the eaves as well—is also adorned with a row of bobbins the scollop-thatched roof can be most attractive (Fig. 13, 1). A thatched chimney occasionally adds the last finishing touch. The word scollop is derived from the Gaelic, and it is natural to assume that this most widely distributed of all styles—from north Antrim through the heart of the Irish midlands to south Cork—is [171] indigenous. But rod-thatching is widespread in England and on the continent, and it may have reached Ireland with the Celts. There are various ways of pushing in the scollops: they may be thrust in at each end (Fig. 14) or bent into wooden staples resembling large hairpins, which secure the ends of horizontal rods (Fig. 13, 1). The scolloped thatch is perhaps best suited to, and is almost universal on, roofs which are

[1] *Dub. Univ. Mag.* 41 (1853), 715.
[2] Colin Sinclair, *Thatched Houses* (1953), 36. [Text continues on p. 56]

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354 strong horizontal beam, the brace-tree, which may extend right
342 across the kitchen from wall to wall, four or five feet out from the fire and five or six feet from the ground. Or one end of the beam may rest on a supporting jamb set under one corner of the
342 canopy. In that case—and invariably where the front door is
353 adjacent—there may be a draught screen of wood mud or stone —the jamb-wall—built out from the fireside and terminating in the jamb, so as to partition off the fireside. This curtain-wall is pierced by a small window known as the entry or spy-hole, through which an approaching visitor can be spied from the fireside through the open door (Fig. 18). I have seen a few jamb-wall houses of this type in Co. Armagh where the brace-tree nevertheless continued to the side-wall, so that the visitor had to stoop under it on entering the house. If a door is swung on the jamb-post a small hall or internal porch is readily provided. This is characteristic of developed houses of traditional style in the Lagan Valley near Belfast, and a further refinement is to hang a mirror over the jamb-window, a looking glass replacing the plain glass of the peep hole and reflecting changing fashions. The jamb-wall, called also in Ulster the hollan-
[171] wall, is well-known under that name in the south of Scotland and the north of England and may thence have reached eastern Ireland in plantation times. In Cumberland it was termed the sconce and in Lancashire the speer, which was the name of the screen which crossed the end of the halls in the Oxford colleges. James Walton tells me that in north Yorkshire the jamb post, called the witch post, is occasionally found to be covered with designs intended to protect the hearth from evil spirits. Sprigs of rowan are tied to its top for the same purpose. The partitioned hearth is characteristic of eastern and southern Ireland: it extends into the Central Lowlands but it is almost entirely lacking in the west and in the north-western province of the outshot-house to be described below. Dr. Desmond McCourt tells me that he knows of two or three hybrids—having both the outshot and the partitioned hearth—in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains, where two cultural pro-
342 vinces meet.

354 The smoke canopy varies in shape and method of construction from one region to another. The commonest type is made of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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laths and wattles (willow, hazel or briar), plastered with a 354
mixture of clay and cowdung or ashes and coated with limewash. 342
In parts of the south hay or straw ropes soaked in mud (putogs) were used, twisted between a frame of horizontal rungs and plastered over with mud or limewash. In Co. Armagh one [237]
occasionally sees a heron's wing hung on the brace: it is used for dusting the hearth. The jamb-walls—and internal walls in general—were traditionally constructed of wattle and daub, or of mud or wood. The wattle and daub construction is undoubtedly an old technique which, in the days of plentiful timber, was much more generally used in house-building. Internal partitions carried up to the roof, however, probably followed the adoption of the chimney flue, and if so this innovation must be reckoned as a contribution to privacy as well as to comfort. We note in passing that wattlework found its last traditional 342
use in house construction in the wicker doors of the west, and in the windbreaks of the north, bundles of hazel or birch branches (wassocks) set up on the windward side of the door. The stone-built external porch must be regarded as a relatively novel addition to the traditional house style.

Wooden or stone seats are often built in near the hearth, 352
and the wall behind the fire, protected by a flagstone or a built-up hob, usually has a keeping hole on each side of the fire (Fig. 19). Known as boles in Antrim and coves in Cavan, these may be elaborated in Achill Island, for example, into two- or three-tier wall-dressers whose ancestry lies in the stone house tradition of the mountain country. There is an old belief that the left-hand keeping hole belongs to the woman and the right-hand one to the man of the house. Here you may see in safe keeping, on one side the woman's knitting, on the other the man's clay pipe. Stone dressers were a characteristic feature of [171]
the huts at Skara Brae,[1] where also Professor Childe found evidence that the women occupied the left side of the fire and the men the right. In the Hebridean black-houses the left-hand side of the fire was the woman's quarter.[2] Similarly in the old turf houses of the Highlands, 'the women were invariably ranged around the central fire on one side, the men on the

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 15.
[2] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 52.

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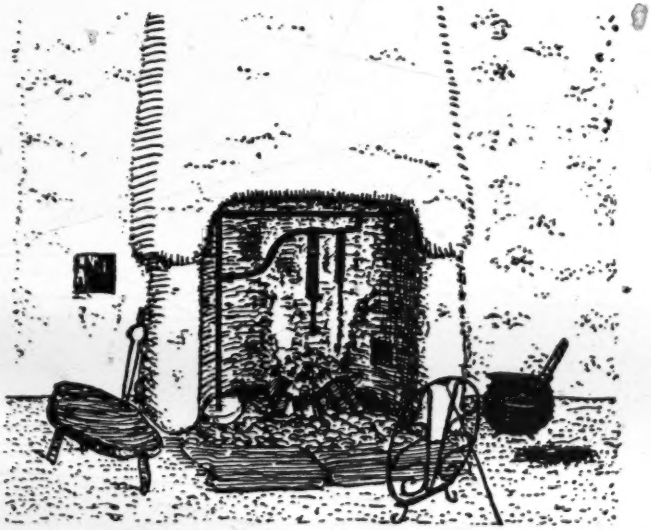

FIG. 19. A Donegal hearth, with crane, creepie and bread-iron. Pot and pot-hole on right.

other'.[1] It is interesting to notice that it is the Mongol usage to allot the right side of the yurt to men and the left side to women.[2] We are surely dealing with a very ancient tradition related perhaps to the ordered routine of a pastoral nomadic life. For the Mongols the right and left sides were symbolized respectively by horse and cow. In the humblest Irish farms, which lack sanitary conveniences of any kind, it is customary for the women to use the byre and the men the stable.

[514]

If we now turn to the methods of suspending cooking pots over the fire we shall see how the woman's functions are best carried out on the left side. Besides the convenience of this for a normal right-handed person, there lies behind it the notion that for good luck significant actions involving the food supply—such as ploughing, casting a net or taking a pot off the fire—should follow the direction of the sun's movement in the sky. Thus the crane on which the pots are hung is almost

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[1]Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (1857), 96
[2]E. D. Chapple and C. S. Coon, *Anthropology* (1946), 539.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional 352
width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed— the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the [171] Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart 462
and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, 372
the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' [539] The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire [574] that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can [787] give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which ancestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1] [769]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

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323 until these very last times, although a great number of English
415 potters have set up their trade'.[1] No tradition of hand-made pottery survived in Ireland as it did in the Barvas ware of Lewis in the Hebrides. On the other hand another ancient craft
415 of prehistoric origins persisted into living memory in the making of wooden noggins in which milk and porridge were taken. They
322 are small stave-built vessels of oak, having one stave projecting

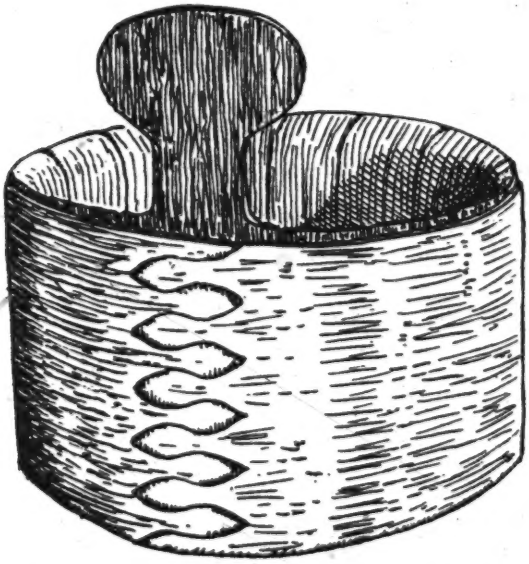

FIG. 22. Wooden noggin, Co. Down. Height of rim, 3 in.

to serve as a handle. The staves are held together and the single-piece base kept in place by a thin band of ash joined by inter-
● [171] locking tongues (Fig. 22). This method of fastening the wooden band is found on the similar 'piggins' of parts of Britain, also in Scandinavia and throughout the Asiatic Arctic region, and it may well derive in these islands from an ancient circum-polar culture. The noggins were made by skilled craftsmen who

[1]Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History* (1652), 159.

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were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the 322
place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have 415
heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants [539]
a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the 323
country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when
bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-
vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the 172
climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more 326
reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits 415
and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly
prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the
special property of the head of the house and they seem to
have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They
were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the
ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his
rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent
place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest pre- 172
historic pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthen- 171
ware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a [323]
pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is
one of the indications of a common substratum in the early
civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels
simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have
continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know
that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in
Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older
custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the
Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a
vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitu-
tion of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent
Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide [437]
should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots,
as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched
on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they
seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set
over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

171 cooking places, which have been popularly known to Irish-
172 speakers as *fulachta fiadha* (deer roasts), consisting of mounds of burnt stones usually set in marshy places. Excavations have shown that they contain dug-out trunks or plank-lined pits sunk in peat where water was heated by hot stones. Hundreds of these mounds are known in Cos. Cork and Kilkenny and they occur sporadically in other parts of the country, as also in Wales and more rarely in England and Scotland. Some Irish examples have been dated to the Bronze Age, though it is believed that their construction continued into the Middle Ages.[1] They are interpreted as the bivouacs of summer hunting parties, and would represent an archaic tradition preserved by the privileged classes, but they have their humble counterparts in the stone-lined pits filled with hot turf, in which, I have been told, peasants would cook their potatoes when working some distance from home.

[415]

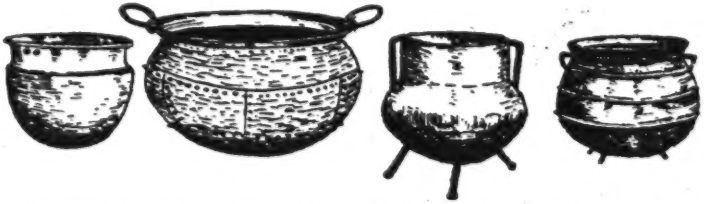

FIG. 23: Cooking pots: round-bottomed suspension vessels through 4,000 years: Neolithic (earthenware); late Bronze Age (bronze); medieval (bronze); and modern (cast iron).

The essential continuity of form and function is strikingly demonstrated by a series of Irish cooking pots such as is illustrated in Fig. 23, from the round-bottomed Neolithic bowl with its suspension holes to the present-day globular iron pot with its twin lugs and its three stubby legs—a concession to a hard uneven floor. The three-legged pot is the countrywife's maid-of-all-work and it is only slowly giving way to flat-bottomed pans and kettles. The oven-pot also, a kind of Dutch
415 oven, is widely utilized, and the pot-roasts which it cooks to perfection have replaced spit-roasted meat. It is said to get its other name, the bastible, from the fact that it was first made at

[1]M. J. O'Kelly, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 84 (1954), 105–55.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Barnstaple in Devon. The oven-pot may be suspended over the fire but in the south rests on a trivet: the lid is dished so that live turves may be placed on top. It is used also for bread-baking, though the griddle is most commonly employed for this purpose (Fig. 24). 415

Fig. 24. Oven-pot, griddle and trivet.

Here we come to a fundamental fact in the geography of the Irish hearth—the absence of the built-in oven. The one exception which proves the rule is its occurrence in the extreme south-east, where, in Co. Wexford, the baronies of Bargy and Forth have retained many features dating from their English settlement in medieval times. Over most of Ireland even when a cooking-range is installed in the hearth, the oven is not used for bread-baking, for oven-bread is not a native food. In central Europe on the other hand the bread-oven, originally of clay, is of great antiquity and the stone or metal oven has come to dominate the fireplace. The difference in bread-types is related on the one hand to environment and economic organization and on the other hand to a whole set of eating habits and ethical values. 354 [262] [171]

Thin bread, or bread in cakes, made without yeast, has been from early times the common bread in most parts of Atlantic Europe, from North Scandinavia to the Basque Country, including Highland Britain and Ireland. Farther afield it is typical of many Mediterranean areas and parts of Asia. In north-western Europe it is closely linked with the cultivation of oats, though home-baked wheaten bread is made in the same way and mixtures with maize and with potatoes are similarly prepared. Potato bread (fadge), a mixture of wheat flour and boiled potatoes, is a popular food which surely had its origins in difficult times. 262 252 171

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252 As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the
262 price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America,
that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline
171 in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial
baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly
recent development virtually confined to the large towns, especially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads. We should probably make an exception of the English-settled parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargy. Dublin and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as
[256] standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, similarly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost
[493] unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life: its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
262 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully
252 inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread. The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
[857] and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children, they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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chest was considered to be the best place to store a well-dried ham. 251

Originally the flat round oatcakes were baked on a flat stone, 252 and such flagstone griddles continued to be used in the nineteenth century in parts of Co. Kerry. A late seventeenth-century traveller wrote: 'Their general food is a thin oatcake which they bake upon a broad flat stone made hot, a little sheep's milk cheese, or goat's milk, boiled leeks and some roots.'[1] In Yorkshire the flagstone was built-in over a separate fire and gave way slowly to the iron 'bakestone'. The bread was hardened in front of the fire, resting against a three-legged 'bread-stick' of the type shown in Fig. 25. Representations of bread on the sculptured high crosses of the Early Middle Ages show just such round discs. The traditional form of thin bread, however, is the farl (fardel), shaped like a quarter-circle. The large circular cake is marked with a cross so that it can be readily broken into quarters (farls) after baking and hardening. The 'harning' is done on a wrought iron 'harnen stand' or toaster which has taken the place of the simple bread-stick. It is worth noticing that the Beltane cakes, formerly eaten at the fires which were lit on hill-tops on May Eve, were baked, in Scotland at any rate, before the fire without touching iron.[2] I have seen a few examples of carved stone breadstands which were designed to bake the bread in front of the fire, and no doubt rough stones were originally used for this purpose. The baking stones are elaborately carved and often carry dates ranging, in Scottish examples, from 1674 to 1791.[3] Irish examples seem to be confined to Ulster and they probably represent one of the many culture traits introduced from Scotland (Fig. 25, 6). The wrought iron toasters are tastefully designed and exhibit a great variety of ornament. Specimens from north Ulster and from Scotland display an almost Spanish exuberance in the intricacies of their spiral terminals, and one would like to know if they have their counterparts along the Atlantic coasts of Europe. They are now for the most part museum pieces, for one rarely sees them in use and great numbers have found their way to the scrap heap in the last half century.

354 171 [262]

[1] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.* x (1904), 96.
[2] J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-east of Scotland* (1929).
[3] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 239.

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social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the 352
fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served 592
since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in the English language gave its name to a committee, has not replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies [776]
or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged [769]
around the fire.

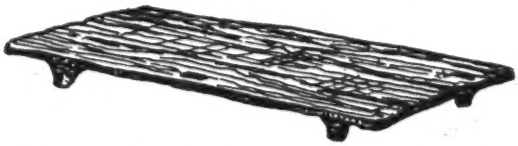

FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means 354
of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the 373
table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke. The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from [171]
Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said, that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

[1] Å. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

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were buried under great cairns such as those at New Grange on the River Boyne. Clusters of ruined clochauns surrounded by old field walls litter the hillslopes of the Dingle peninsula near Fahan; but we can only guess at the age of these 'beehive farms'. Some of the large oval clochauns would give standing room to as many as sixty people. Many of the existing farms in the district have at least one round clochaun, used for keeping pigs or poultry or for storing milk or turf (Fig. 37). 172 343

In the Aran Islands both oval and circular stone-roofed buildings are to be seen, though most of them are ruined. O'Flaherty in the seventeenth century described them as being 'so ancient that nobody knows how long ago any of them was made'.[1] The oval houses measure up to 21 ft. by 12 ft. internally; they are rectangular inside and some have two opposite doors (Pl. 3). Smaller round huts are also known.[2] In north-eastern Ireland, too, in north Louth and south-east Down, both round and square clochauns have been constructed down to recent times for housing pigs and poultry: a few are still in use.[3] The corbelled pigsty is known also in Wales,[4] and has been recorded in Caithness and the Orkney Islands.[5] Very similar corbelled buildings attached to old farms on Dartmoor are said to have been used as ash houses, for holding the embers taken from the fire at night.[6] One example, now used as a chicken house, is described as a winnowing hut.

Other parts of western and southern Europe can show both ancient and recent examples of corbelled constructions, though most of them, in so far as such a timeless style can be dated, were probably erected within the last two or three centuries, and some of them are known to have been built within living memory. They are found, either in ruins or serving as shelters or as animal- and tool-houses, in south France, especially in and around the Central Plateau, in Spain, Portugal and Majorca, in the heel of Italy, in the western Balkans and in Crete, where the mountain dairies appear to be very similar to the stone 171

[1] R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 68.
[2] Å. Campbell, *Folk-Liv*, 1938, 173–96; G. H. Kinahan, *P.R.I.A.*, 10, 25
[3] R. H. Buchanan, *U.J.A.*, 19 (1956), 92–112.
[4] I. C. Peate, *The Welsh House* (1944), 42.
[5] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 71.
[6] *Trans. Plymouth Institute*, XVIII (1944), 34.

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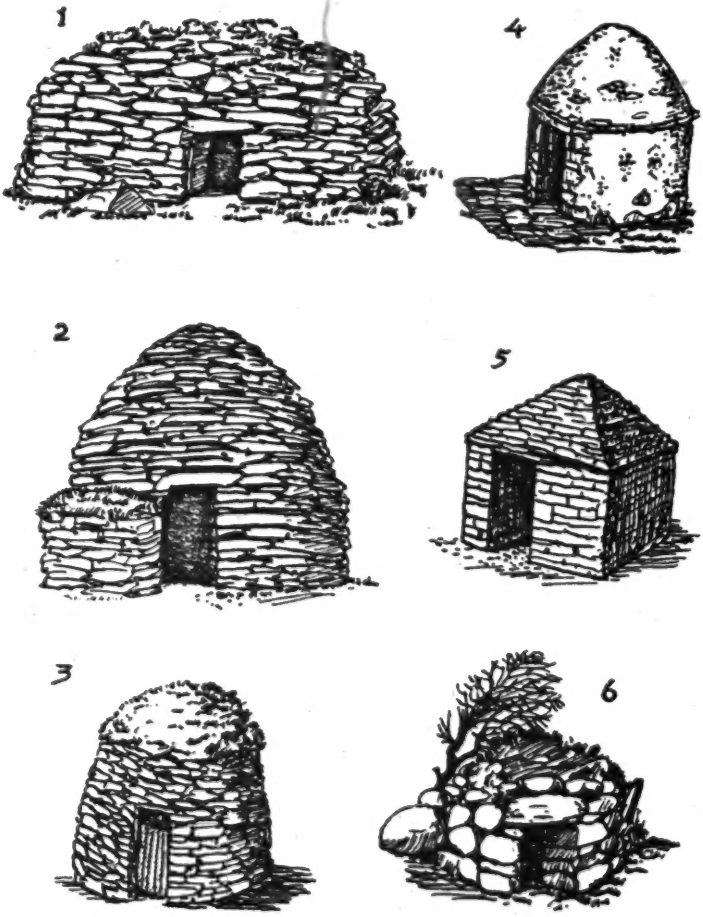

FIG. 37. Clochauns. (1) Oval house, Aran Island. (2) Hut, Skellig Michael. (3) Poultry house, Dingle. (4, 5) Pigsties, Co. Down. (6) Sweat-house, Co. Leitrim.

●171 booley huts and shielings of Ireland and the Hebrides. The corbelled buildings of Vaucluse, in the mountains behind Avignon, are both round and rectangular, the latter bearing a striking resemblance to Irish oratories of the type of Gallarus,

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Co. Kerry, which is believed to date from the sixth or seventh 171
century. Whether or not the origin of this style of building in western Europe should be placed, as I am inclined to believe, in the megalithic period, there can be no doubt that it represents, in various parts of the Mediterranean-Atlantic route, the survival of an ancient method of building. It has had a long life in exposed hilly districts where suitable materials lay to hand, especially where the interests of simple shepherds and cattlemen were dominant. Villages of houses with domed or conical stone or mud-brick roofs are a feature of south-east Italy and Syria, and of the dry belt stretching eastwards to India.

Some of the Co. Kerry farmyard clochauns are still used for 343
storing milk; their thick walls are admirable for maintaining 231
even temperatures. Their association with the pig may also be an archaic feature, for the pig was perhaps the first domesticated animal to be brought to Ireland, and although much altered in breed, it still thrives best in warm, draught-proof surroundings recalling the sultry jungles of its original south-east Asiatic home. The well-worn phrase about 'the gentleman that pays the rent' not only summarizes the role of the pig in recent historic times but carries a humorous hint of the veneration in which the pig was once held in southern and western Europe. Here archaeologists have postulated an early Neolithic matriarchal 'swine-culture', vestiges of which would explain the fact that the pig was the only cult animal of the oldest of the Greek mysteries, the Eleusinian.[1] Later pork became the favourite food of both the Roman and Celtic worlds. In parts of Ireland the pig is driven into the house for luck on May morning, and the [755]
pigsty figures in a strange ritual for certain cures, e.g., a sufferer from mumps should be led with an ass-halter three times round the sty! Further, there is surely a supernatural quality in an animal which is reputed to be able to see the wind! In many parts of the British Isles, especially in Scotland, it is unlucky to speak of a pig when fishing at sea. Superstitions about the pig are numerous in Scotland, and in the Highlands there was formerly a tabu against keeping pigs and eating pork. This was apparently true also of those parts of the north of Ireland which have had close connections with the Western Isles.

[1]C. O. Sauer, *Agricultural Origins and Dispersals*, 57.

4/2 [244] drill-cultivation has replaced lazy-beds over most of the country.

Some ridge-making tools have almost entirely disappeared, 4/2 for example the mattock and the breast-plough, which were once [178] characteristic respectively of the south-west and the north-east of the country and which may still be seen occasionally in Cos. Kerry and Antrim. The mattock ('graffan') is a tool of ancient [171] lineage which finds its parallels in Wales, in Spain and Mediterranean lands, and throughout the tropics (Fig. 43). In Kerry and west Cork it has had many uses—for breaking sods and

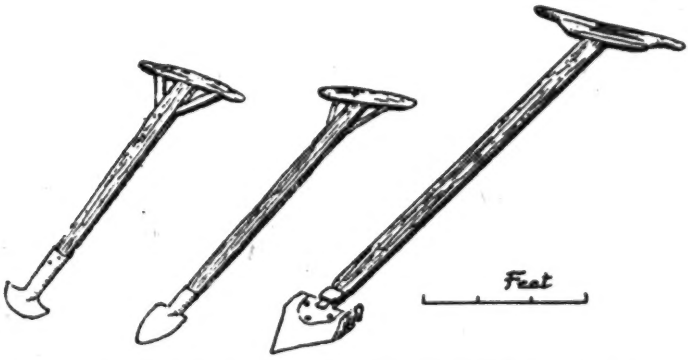

FIG. 45. Flachters or breast-ploughs, north-east Ireland. (1) North Antrim. (2) Co. Tyrone. (3) Mid-Antrim.

clods on the ridges, for loosening the earth of the furrows before shovelling, and also for cutting sods for ridge-making, for 'paring and burning' and for roof-covering. Arthur Young describes the process of graffaning a field by rolling the sod with the foot as it was cut: it was reckoned very heavy work.[1] The breast-plough or flachter (Fig. 45) served the same purpose in Cos. Antrim and Londonderry and earned the same reputation. This instrument is now largely restricted to paring bogland in preparation for turf-cutting. During the second world war I broke in a neglected mountain garden by making lazy-beds with a flachter and I heartily agree with the verdict of an Antrim labourer: 'half a day with it was enough for any ordinary

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 10.

HARVEST

243 Corn harvest did not begin until a certain set day which differed in various parts of the country, and the appointed day was a time of much excitement. The following description of [171] the Reaping Blessing in the Scottish Highlands would probably apply to Ulster, though I have not found a record of it in Ireland. 'The day the reaping began was one of commotion and ceremonial. The whole family repaired to the field dressed in their best . . . the father of the family took his sickle and, facing the sun, cut a handful of corn. Putting it three times sunwise round his head, the Reaping Blessing was sung'.[1] We know that in Ireland it was the custom for the first sheaves cut to be scutched or lashed, that is the grain was beaten out without using the flail. The winnowed grain was parched over the fire, ground in a quern and boiled in time to make a breakfast for the reapers.[2] This ceremonial breakfast undoubtedly preserves archaic practices.

Reaping with hook or sickle is by no means uncommon on little hill farms where fields are small and uneven, but the days of the great 'gatherings' are no more, when down to late in the last century as many as seventy men might have been seen at work. Most of the lore of these reaping boons has passed away unrecorded, and we get only glimpses of the terrible strain imposed on the toilers and the compensating gaieties. The [558] pressure was most severe when to the rivalry between workers was added the drive of a pace-setter, for it was a mark of disgrace not to keep pace. In Ulster the leader of the boon was 'stubble hook', so called because his ridge was the first of the 'set', next the stubble. (A set was the number of ridges equal to the number of reapers in the boon). The driver, called 'corn-land', took the rig or land next to the standing corn, and between the two the other reapers on their ridges would strive to keep a straight line. 'A bad shearer', runs the Ulster saying, [539] 'always gets a big rig and a blunt hook'. But a spirited reaper, I have been told, 'would die upon the rig before he would suffer "corn-land" to pass him'. Between each set a rest was taken at the 'land-end' and it was an interlude of 'crack and courting'. If we may judge from a Scottish custom, any visiting

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928).
[2] *Béaloideas*, 10, 293.

492 tied bundles on to the straddle-pins, and both sheaves and firewood are occasionally carried on light V-shaped wooden
482 frames. A similar carrying frame is known from Spain. There are several varieties of straddle, and a pattern found on Clare Island, in which one side engages in a hole bored through the
[171] other side, finds a parallel in the Shetland Islands and among the Lapps of north Norway: it could be of Norwegian origin. For long hauls the pack animal was undoubtedly the chief means of transport until the coming of the spoke-wheeled cart. For short distances the burden rope (Chapter XV) or the carrying creel was more convenient and it is still not uncommon to see the back-creel, the carrying basket or the hand barrow used for transporting turf or wrack over rough, soft or slippery ground (Fig. 57).

493 In some parts of the country, especially along the east coast,
483 a form of sled fitted with a box body is kept for the transport

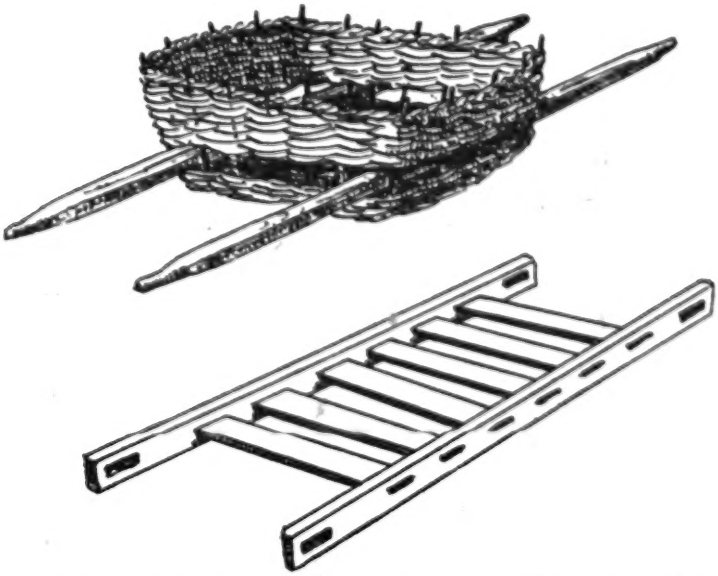

FIG. 57. Turf-basket, Co. Armagh and hand barrow, for carrying nets. Co. Antrim.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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493 in addition to its strength, is reputed to have special sliding qualities. A forked slipe can be dragged over rough, trackless,
483 boulder-strewn hillsides, where it will make and widen its own path as it goes. In such circumstances, given a favourable gradient, it can be man-hauled, and the persistent use of similar sledges for transporting large stones in other regions of megalithic culture such as the Dordogne—and indeed in Assam for surviving megalithic cults—hints that it comes down to us from very early times. The present distribution area of the forked [171] sledge in Europe, from Scandinavia round to the western Mediterranean, can be correlated with many archaic culture-elements.[1] Its preparation calls for no tool more sophisticated than an axe—even a stone axe would suffice—and as I have watched huge stones being sliped from the fields I have easily imagined myself transported to a clearing in a long vanished Neolithic forest.

The standard flat slipe is a rectangular platform supported on two low parallel runners which may be shod with iron. It will be found on many farms and serves numerous purposes—for hauling stones, potatoes or turf, or for transporting the plough or the harrows from field to field (Fig. 58, 2, 3). There is, however, a simple, light slipe, made either of wood or of iron, which is kept specially for moving the wheel-less plough (Fig. 42). The wooden form finds exact parallels in Sweden and the east Baltic lands.

In the Antrim Glens, where topographic conditions and isolation have preserved an unusually full series of archaic vehicles, I have seen a light forked slipe loaded with sacks of peat being man-hauled, the forked end being lifted off the ground by a rope bearing on the puller's shoulder. This is in effect a slide-car, and although the Irish slide-car is always pulled by a pony, it may be noticed that the Swedish slide-car, used mainly for carrying hay, is often man-hauled. No doubt the forked form is the more primitive and there is some evidence to suggest that it was from a forked slide-car that the first European carts and wagons were evolved by the addition of

[1]E. E. Evans, 'Some Archaic Forms of Agricultural Transport in Ulster' in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), (1951), 108–23; J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, *Man*, 51 (1951), 3–5.

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493 the block wheel was independently invented in north-western Europe, or at least adapted from the log roller as a native response to the novelty of the spoked wheel.

A feature of the Ulster slide-cars which distinguishes them both from Scots and Welsh examples and from most other slide-cars is the provision of separate wooden runners or 'shoes' which are pegged to the ends of the shafts and can be replaced when worn out. They have the effect of reducing somewhat the slope of the platform and its load. Formerly a special slide-car was kept for carrying corn, the sheaves being supported by a [171] hooped frame of osiers which finds parallels in Sweden and Finland. Another archaic feature was the harness, which was [492] constructed, until quite recent times, entirely of wood, straw and withies (Fig. 69).

Slide-cars, 'strange survivals from the twilight of history',[1] 171 are found not only in Highland Britain and the Baltic lands but 493 in many parts of east central Europe, in Siberia, China, Siam and the Indian Deccan. Such a distribution points to a dispersal in high antiquity, probably from western Asia. There is no direct archaeological evidence of ancient slide-cars but it has been plausibly argued that the well-known 'cart tracks' of Malta were made by slide-cars some 3,000 years ago.[2] This humble vehicle is well suited to simple societies, whose transport needs are few, and to country, especially hilly country, without made roads, where the wheel would be out of place.

In Ireland the wheel-car clings to the same districts as the 493 slide-car and serves much the same purpose, but it may occasionally be used for longer journeys by road, for example to take an animal to the fair. (Slide-cars are very injurious to [494] roads and were driven off them by ordinances against their use on the highways). On steep slopes the wheels, being secured to a rotating axle, act as a brake on each other. Measuring only some two feet in diameter, they are composed of three segments of wood dowelled together as in the oldest known Mesopotamian wheels, and shod with an iron hoop. They revolve under the car inside the shafts, so that the body must be raised to give clearance. It is supported by vertical struts morticed into the

[1] A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man* (1898), 161.
[2] H. S. Gracie, *Antiquity* (1954), 91–98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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make the butter rancid, since the Irish, he says, preferred strong butter.[1] An eighteenth century writer states that some of the buried butter was 314 172 251

> So strong, a dog with help of wind,
> By scenting out, with ease might find.[2]

Others have claimed that it was buried to mature and purify it, and one writer has seen an explanation in the need to have butter available at Lent. It is reasonable to suppose that the surplus butter of summer would be stored in this way once the preservative properties of peat were known, but the practice is certainly pre-Christian in origin. None of the Irish finds has been securely dated—the majority of the wooden containers have an ageless 'medieval' appearance—but a discovery in Skye was satisfactorily dated to the very beginning of the Christian era (it contained not only cowhairs but some strands from the head of a fair-haired dairymaid).[3] I am inclined to think that a practice which came to be generally adopted for utilitarian reasons had its origin in magic, and that deposits were originally made in the hope of appeasing the powers of evil and inducing an abundant flow of milk from the pastures.[4] The custom may well have originated during the crisis of the climatic deterioration in the last centuries of the pre-Christian era. Surviving folklore is full of the magic properties of butter, and in the west of [234] Ireland it is known that lumps of butter were thrown into loughs and springs through which cattle were driven in order to restore them to health. It seems from the accounts of discoveries in the bogs that some of the butter containers had been thrown into a bog hole rather than buried. Later, no doubt, it became the practice to bury butter in order to preserve it, but if this had always been so I cannot think that there would have been so many unclaimed deposits left to await the slane of the turf-cutter. It should be noticed that the custom of preserving [171] butter in bogs or in moist earth is found also in Scandinavia, Iceland, India and Morocco.[5] It is interesting that bog butter

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*, 82.
[2]W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle*, Canto 2.
[3]J. Ritchie, *P.S.A.S.*, 75, 5–22.
[4]E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 10, 59–65.
[5]ibid., 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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as the work of specialists (Fig. 71). The pampooties of the Aran Islands deserve mention here. Made of calfskin, but formerly of sealskin,[1] these one-piece shoes were once doubtless widely worn and have kept their hold in Aran because of their suitability for wet rocks and frail curraghs. The rivlins of Scotland and the Highland *bròganx* were very similar and I have seen rawhide shoes of the same type from Norway and the Pyrenees. They all have the hair outside and are secured by lacing back and front.

The wight serves both to hold corn, in filling a sack for instance, and to convey peats from the stack to the fireside: perforated it becomes a meal-sieve (boran) for sifting the skins (seeds) from oatmeal, or a buttermilk sieve for taking out the last grains of butter from the churn. The winnowing tray or dallan is a larger version, and it, too, may be perforated to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken out on to a spread cloth. There are, up and down Ireland, many bold windy Shilling Hills where the 'shellings' (husks) were, in past times, separated from the grain in this way (Pl. 7).

This brings us to the flail and its 'hanging' (the mid-kipple, hooden, gad, middling, or tug) which was commonly a thong of cow-, horse-, sheep, or goat-skin, though sometimes of rabbit- or eel-skin or a cord of flax. The flail, the proverbial 'stick-and-a-half', consists of a three to four feet long helve or hand-staff, usually made of ash, and a shorter beater, swingle or souple of hazel or holly. There are two principal methods of 'hanging' the parts together. In one variety, the tie passes through two leather caps lashed over the ends (Fig. 72, 1). This appears to be a variant of the common English flail-hanging, where, however, the cap is made of steamed ash or yew and there is no linking piece. Its distribution in Ireland, down the east coast, points to derivation from England. Modifications, occurring as far west as Donegal (Fig. 72, 1*a*, *b*), have the linking thong passing through a hole made either in the helve or in the beater. Kevin Danaher states that the capped flail is characteristic of central Europe: it is believed to have first appeared in north France in the early Middle Ages.[2] The

[1] O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught*, 59 (footnote).
[2] *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 60 (1955), 6–14.

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412 other method of hanging has a somewhat peripheral distribu-
171 tion in Europe (Scandinavia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Switzerland,
284 the Pyrenees) and also in Ireland, and as its simplicity as well as its distribution suggest, it is the older type. The tie passes around grooves cut in both hand-staff and souple (Fig. 72, 2) though again there are variants, one end of the tie, for example, being passed through a hole (Fig. 72, 2*a*). The grooved hanging, it is claimed by its users, is superior to the capped because the join is almost universal and there is no need to turn the halve in the hand when flailing. The holed fastening may be the most ancient method of all: it is found in parts of Atlantic Europe and the Baltic lands, but in Ireland is apparently restricted to Ulster (Pl. 6, 2).

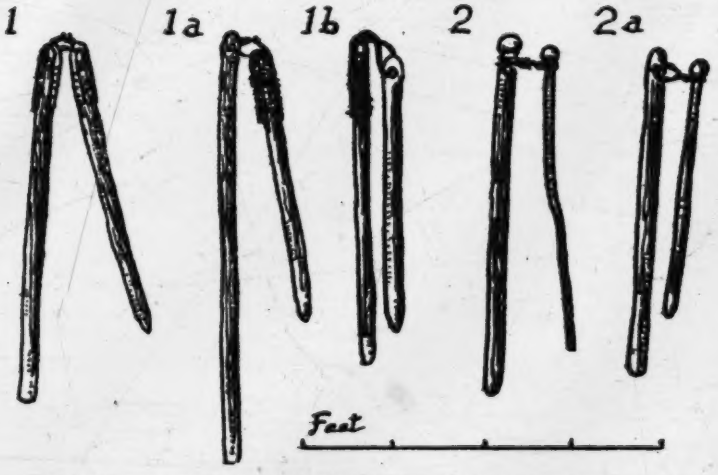

FIG. 72. Flails. (1) Co. Meath. (1*a*) Co. Armagh. (1*b*) Co. Donegal. (2) Co. Cavan. (2*a*) Co. Antrim.

243 Ancient and rudimentary as the flail is, requiring for its
412 making no tool save a sharp knife, there are some thrashers
171 who dispense with it, 'scutching' the corn instead with a stick or 'lashing' it over a barrel, a stone or a board (Plate 4). Many a small farmer in the north of Ireland harvests his seed grass in this way. The scutching method is used also in the

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Pyrenees and in Africa, but the flail, apparently spreading through western Europe in post-Roman times, in time replaced it almost everywhere, to be in turn displaced by the mechanical thrasher. Thus the sound of the flail has almost gone from the countryside. The best thrashing place is the floor of the barn above the byre, with its opposite doors to draw the wind and advertise the flailer's industry. Such barns, however, were not built outside the planted districts before agrarian changes and improvements spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ireland knows nothing of the carefully built thrashing floors of England and Scandinavia. At best on the farms lacking a barn a thrashing board was sometimes kept, a square wooden platform raised a few inches off the ground. A good thrashing floor should bend to meet the flail, and in Scandinavia, for instance, great pains were taken in the old days to construct floors which would make the flails sing. They were occasionally strung with wires, and to magnify the echo of clay floors a horse's skull was buried under each corner.[1] It has been thought that this purpose was secondary to the luck it was hoped would follow from what was originally a foundation sacrifice. In Ireland traditions of the burying of horses' skulls under the floors of dwelling houses are both widespread and well authenticated. The usual explanation again is that this gives the house an echo, but it is also said to be lucky, and Sean O'Sullivan concludes that the custom of burying skulls began as a substitute for foundation sacrifices.[2] In Armagh 'the frontal bones of a horse's head are regarded as being peculiarly sonsie; they were often buried in barn floors and under the thresholds of dwelling houses for that reason.'[3]

In time, the expressed object came to be to magnify the music of the singing flails as well as that of the ballad-singing and dancing before the fire. The space between the doors of the old style kitchen-byre, it will be recalled, was a favourite thrashing place in times past. The Briget's Crosses above the door would have blessed the thrashing as well as the cattle. It

[1]Albert Sandkelf, *Singing Flails* (Folklore Fellows Communications, Helsinki, No. 136), (1949).
[2]Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 45–52.
[3]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 77.

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501 whether seal-skin or the hide of a cow or horse, were untanned.
I can add little to the historical account given by Hornell, but
[281] it should be noticed that the paddle curragh, covered with horsehide, was common in Erris, Co. Mayo, around 1830[1] and that, to judge from an entry in a Rathlin Island account book of 1760—'paid for one mare's hide for the boat, 1s. and 6d.'—the paddle curragh was used there also.

The long rowing curragh with its high pointed nose is
501 widely distributed on the west coast from Donegal to Kerry,
396 and its seaworthy qualities are known to many from its dramatic participation in such films as *Man of Aran* and *Shark Island*. This vessel too is built bottom upwards, but the frame is pegged, not into the ground but into a strong wooden gunwale frame, single or double, which Hornell believes was borrowed, along with the fixed thwarts which give lateral rigidity, from plank-built boats. Yet the method of pivoting the oar on a single tholepin, originally perhaps a strong projecting rib of the curragh frame, rather than in a rowlock, suggests that the rowing curragh has native forerunners. There are many variations in constructional details from one district to another but nearly all the vessels are now built of laths and all are covered with tarred canvas. An emergency repair is contrived by an operation which, if you are a timid passenger, looks like 'burning your boats': the curragh is inverted, the tar around the hole is set alight and a calico patch stuck on when the tar has run. The curraghs are rowed by two, three or four men, and the largest are said to have a carrying capacity of two tons. In Kerry they are masted to carry a small lug sail. A feature of
[777] many curraghs is a small bottle of holy water, a protection against misfortune, suspended on a string in the bows.

The looms of the long narrow oars overlap so that the oars-
501 man pulls cross-handed. A heavy wooded counterweight, the bool, is attached near the loom, and the oar pivots by means of a round hole in the bool on a single wooden peg, the tholepin, driven into the gunwale (Fig. 78). This method of rowing is found on many lake and river boats in Ireland, perhaps es-
[171] pecially in those areas, such as the Shannon and Lough Neagh,

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 56. See also *Pocock's Tour* 1752, 64.

 [Text continues on p. 240]

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501 where curraghs were formerly known. But it is also characteristic of Scottish cobles and the boats of some English lakes.
● 171 The inshore fishing boats of Co. Antrim also had booled oars,[1] and farther afield the single tholepin is said to typify the rowing boats of Madeira, the sardine boats of Portugal and some vessels of the Upper Nile. These often use a grommet, as do the boats of the north-east coast of England.

Sea-going curraghs are put to many uses, for inshore net
226 fishing, for setting lobster pots or long lines, for gathering kelp and for carrying freight, livestock and passengers. But the most spectacular purpose to which they have been put is for hunting the basking shark or sunfish from whose liver, before
[373] the advent of paraffin, oil for lighting was obtained. A single fish will yield from seven to ten barrels of liver. Measuring up to forty feet in length, the basking shark is one of the world's largest fish and though harmless—its diet is minute copepods—its bulk makes it a formidable adversary. These fish move down the west coast in summer, and in early May they haunt the Sunfish Bank thirty miles off Achill Island, where they come to the surface in the morning and evening. The bank is remarkable for the break of the tide on it, although it lies between seventy and ninety fathoms near the edge of 'soundings'—the continental shelf—and a heavy swell makes conditions difficult for small boats. Here and elsewhere the sunfish used to be harpooned from curraghs, but the advantage lay with decked vessels which could stand by for several days. In the early nineteenth century as many as thirty or forty fish were sometimes killed on the Sunfish Bank in a single day of fine weather. Nowadays the sharks are taken in strong nets fixed to island headlands around which they swim. They are occasionally seen off the other Irish coasts, where they cause great havoc if they get involved in the fishing nets.

Of the small open clinker-built boats of traditional type which
501 takes the place of the curragh on the north, east and south
[174] coasts, no systematic study has been made. Some of them betray their Norse inheritance in their lines or their names, for example the Wicklow skiff and the drontheim (Trondhjem) of the north coast. These boats are double-ended—unlike the cur-

[1] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 276.

000
been recognized by the courts. 'Bobbing' for eels with a ball of 226
worms attached to a string is practised on dark stormy nights, 227
and on the River Bann a vicious-looking eel-rake is used to jab among the river weeds. Its teeth of sharp steel, often discarded hackle-pins, are set an inch apart in the end of a long pole. Bone pins of prehistoric date recovered in quantities from the bed of the river may have been put to a similar use, and this method of catching fish, probably of ancient origin, is widely distributed. There are specimens of eel-rakes in the Danish [171] museums (Fig. 79). A very similar eel-comb is known in China, and a herring rake, used by the native fishermen of north-western America and mounted with sharp bone teeth, was first described by Captain Cook in 1778.[1] For taking salmon, poachers in the River Barrow use a staked net fashioned into a conical trap, and trout are taken in the north of Ireland in home-made 'loop nets' large enough to bridge small streams (Fig. 80). Salmon are also 'strokehauled' with naked hooks, and gaffed when within reach of the river banks. Trout are taken not only by 'ginling' (tickling) but also with a 'dull' or horsehair noose.

Dr. Went has made a careful study of Irish fish spears and 227
the interested reader may be referred to his paper.[2] It may be mentioned that two of the three classes of eel-spears which he describes have been recovered from crannogs of the Dark Ages: they are the barbed spears known as rock- or sun-spears, so named from the conditions which are required for the eels to be impaled, and the more common mud-spears, which are within the law and of which excellent specimens can still be seen in parts of the country. They have flat tines, notched at the sides to prevent the enmeshed eels escaping. Spears of this type are plunged blindly into the mud. Consequently they are often very large and heavy, a seven-pronged example from the River Bann weighing over nine pounds and having a handle 30 feet long. Old specimens have a circular aperture at the junction of each pair of tines which facilitated the removal of the eels. The advantage of the mud-spear, which has a much wider distribution than the primitive looking rock-spear (which is apparently

[1] *Captain Cook's Third Voyage*, Ed. C. R. Low (N.D.), 395.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 82 (1952), 109–34.

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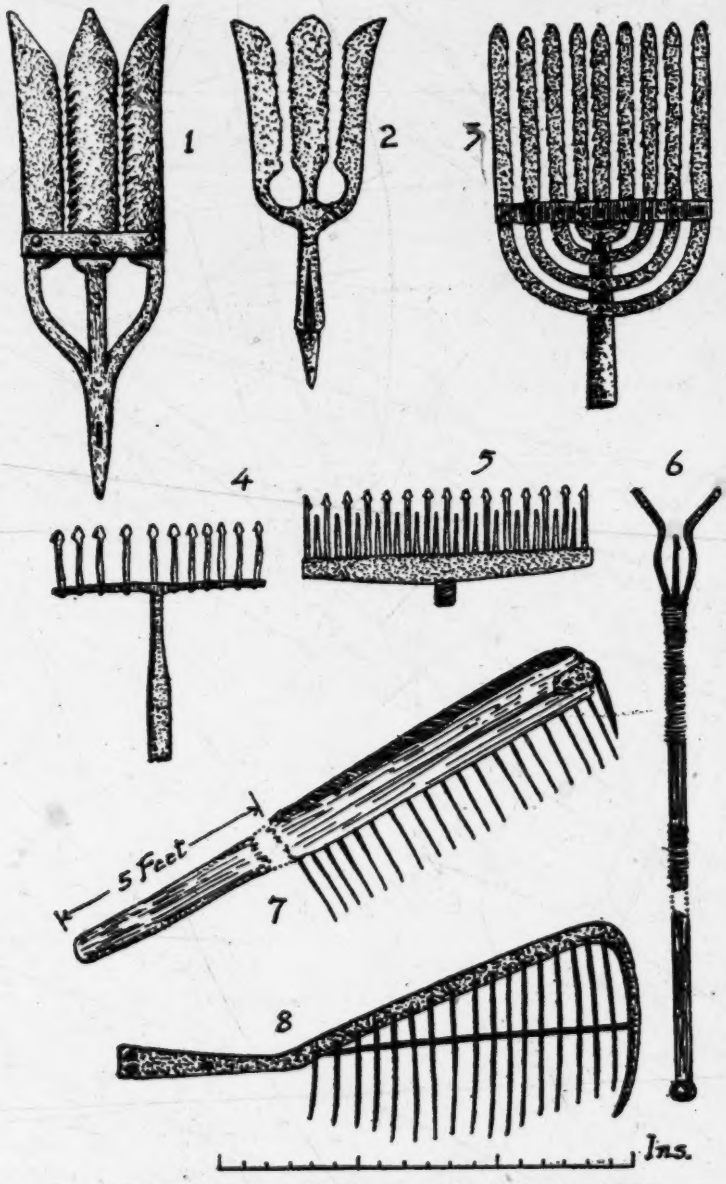

FIG. 79. Eel spears and rakes. (1) Mud-spear, Co. Antrim. (2, 3) Mud-spears, Co. Westmeath (after Went). (4, 5) Rock- or sun-spears, Co. Westmeath (after Went). (6) Wexford harbour eel-spear (after Went). (7) Eel-rake, River Bann (after N. C. Mitchel). (8) Eel-rake, Denmark (National Museum, Copenhagen).

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line grows as if by magic as the quills rotate in nimble fingers. 283
A fresh supply of hairs is inserted from time to time by removing the plugs. I illustrate an example of this fascinating apparatus made for me by Mr. T. J. Barron of Knockbride, Co. Cavan (Fig. 81). Mr. A. T. Lucas has described the Cavan

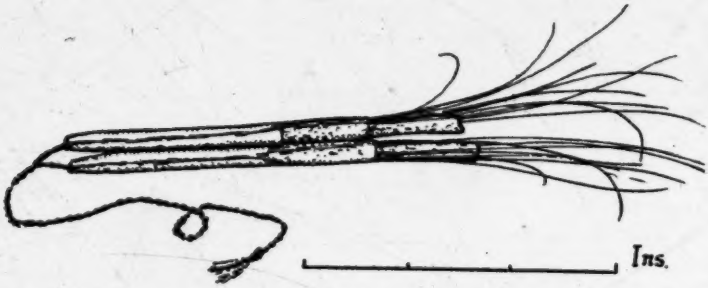

FIG. 81. Quills used for making horsehair fishing lines, Co. Cavan. The quills are rolled between the forefingers.

specimens and others from Co. Mayo.[1] In Cavan the lines were [226]
made for bream fishing: the bream were both split, salted and
dried and stored fresh in little ponds on the lake shores. Around [251]
the coasts—I have seen examples from the Aran Islands and from Co. Down—a more complicated machine was made for twisting long lines of hemp, three spindles being rotated by pulling on an endless cord twisted round each spindle.[2] A very
similar device is employed in China for making bamboo ropes [171]
for raising coal in primitive mines. On the shores of Lough Neagh the long lines are manufactured in rustic rope-walks. These night-lines, which have tended to replace draft-nets, are set in lengths of up to four miles. The season of yellow (feeding) 226
eel fishing runs from March to October. It is illegal, as we have mentioned, but shows no signs of being given up. The eel fishermen claim immemorial rights and are not deterred by the fines imposed when they are caught. Their vocabulary, like that
of the men who work the eel weirs on the River Bann, has many [192]
words which have come down from Gaelic and perhaps from

[1]A. T. Lucas, *Journal of the Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc.*, 24 (1951), 111–14.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, Fig. 63.

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527 Christianized, cling to the preparations made on St. Briget's Eve, the last day of January. On that day rushes are fashioned into protective charms known as Briget's Crosses, a name 527 which illustrates how the church has won over pagan symbols, 778 for the 'crosses' take the form of either swastikas or lozenges, 301 and comparative evidence suggests that they are magic symbols of suns or eyes (Fig. 85). A three-legged swastika, presumably an old form, is reserved for use in the byre: its shape may be compared with the Celtic triskele. The lozenge-shaped charms have their counterparts in many parts of the world. The Huichols of Mexico make similar charms of wool mounted on a bamboo frame: known as a 'god-eyes', they bring good health and [171] long life to children.[1] A Californian Indian charm made of grass or rushes is very similar. In the Old World similar magic 'squares' have a wide distribution, in Europe, Africa, Tibet, Burma, Assam and Indonesia, and farther afield in Melanesia, Polynesia and Australia. Among the Nagas of Assam the squares, made of coloured thread, are placed on the graves of women and protect them against evil spirits.[2] In Sweden and Estonia straw squares are strung up as Christmas decorations and tied to the straw masks worn during Christmas games (Fig. 85).

Briget's Crosses are believed to protect the house and the livestock from harm and from fire. No evil spirit could pass the charm, which was therefore hung above the door of house and byre. The rushes must be pulled, not cut, on St. Briget's Eve, and care must be taken to fashion the crosses from left to right, with the sun. As a rule they are left in position until replaced the following year, though I have seen byres with many crosses thrust into the underthatch, the decaying accumulation of annual offerings. In Co. Galway similar crosses made of wood or straw were also placed in the rafters at Hallowe'en, and the discovery of a partly burnt rush cross which had been deposited in a megalith in Co. Limerick points to a more general cult of the 'cross'.[3] A 'love-knot' of similar shape, fashioned out of sedge leaves, is known from South Wales.

[1] F. Toor, *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* (1947), 72.
[2] H. E. Kauffmann, *J.R.A.I.*, 78 (1948), 101, 106.
[3] S. P. O'Riordain, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 1 (1936), 36. For a study of Briget's Crosses in Co. Armagh, see T. G. F. Paterson, *U.J.A.*, 8 (1945), 43–48.

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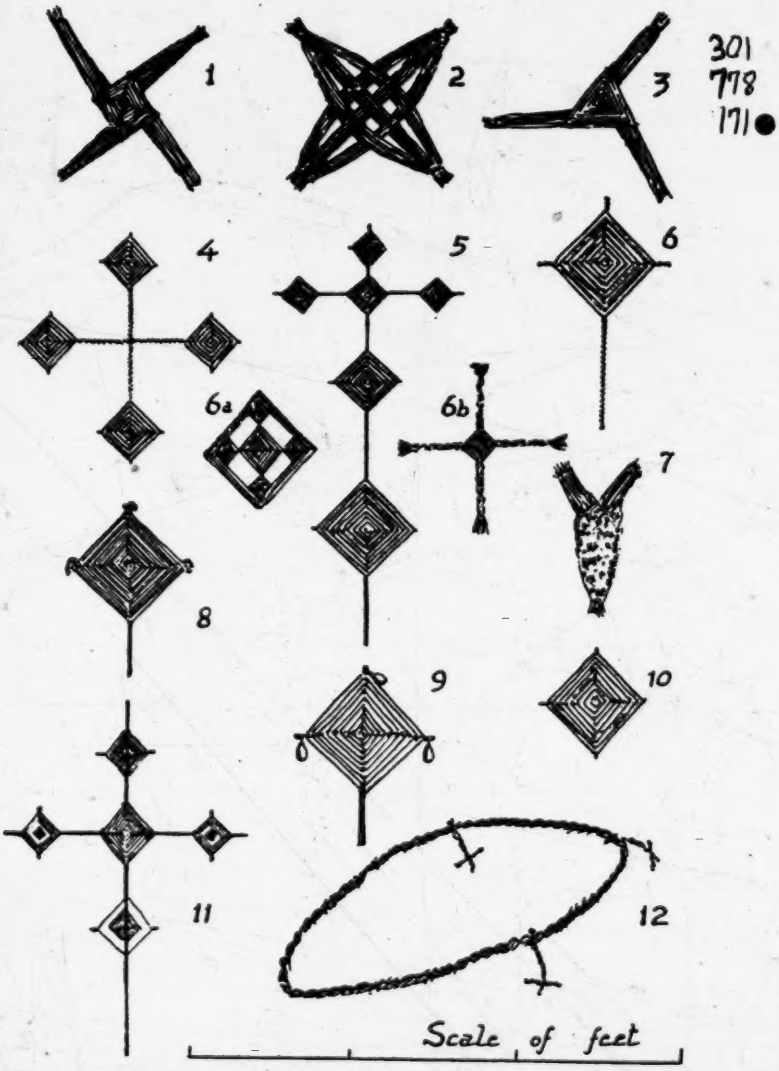

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FIG 85. Briget's Crosses and charms. (1–7) all made of rushes, are from Co. Armagh (in County Museum, Armagh). (8) is a Naga thread-square (after Kauffmann). (9) is a Wailaki charm of rushes (after Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*). (10) is an Estonian straw-square, worn as decoration on straw hats at Christmas (see Fig. 88, 5). (11) is a Mexican 'God-eyes' made of woven wool (after Toor). (12) is a Briget's Girdle (in National Museum, Dublin).

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WEDDINGS AND WAKES

Maria Edgeworth, 'more matches were made at wakes than at weddings.' The most frank account of the nature of the games I have come across reads as follows: 'They were placed under the conduct of some peasant of the district who excelled in rustic wit and humour, who went under the title of "Borekeen", and whose orders were carried into force by subordinate officers, all arrayed in fantastic habiliments. The "game" usually first performed was termed "Bout", and was joined in by men and women, who all acted a very obscene part which cannot be described. The next scene generally was termed "Making the Ship', with its several parts of "laying the keel", forming the "stem and stern", and erecting "the mast", the latter of which was done by a female using a gesture and expression, proving beyond doubt that it was a relic of Pagan rites. The "Bull and the Cow" was another game strongly indicative of a Pagan origin, from circumstances too indelicate to be particularized. The game called "Hold the Light", in which a man is blindfolded and flogged, has been looked upon as a profane travestie of the passion of our Lord; and religion might also be considered as brought into contempt by another of the series, in which a person caricaturing a priest, and wearing a rosary, composed of small potatoes strung together, enters into conflict with the "Borekeen", and is put down and expelled from the room by direction of the latter . . . "Turning the Spit" and "Selling the Pig" are the names of two others of those games; in that called "Drawing the Ship out of the Mud" the men engaged actually presented themselves before the rest of the assembly, females as well as males, in a state of nudity, whilst in another game the female performers attired themselves in men's clothes and conducted themselves in a very strange manner.'[1] From other sources we learn that boys and girls, in some games, wore hides and appeared representing bulls and cows.

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Parallels to these practices can be adduced from the so-called simple societies in many parts of the world, and as in Ireland Christian missionaries found it very difficult to suppress the rituals enacted between death and burial. The keening of the corpse likewise carries us through time to the earliest emotions of human societies faced with the mystery of death. The liberal

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[1] J. G. A. Prim, loc. cit.

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764 distribution of food and drink on these occasions, and the pro-
●171 vision of tobacco or snuff—a magic substance in Negro Africa—are widespread practices. In an Irish wake the distribution of tobacco and clay pipes follows a well-established routine. Curative properties were attributed to snuff left over from a wake, and the pipes were sometimes buried, apparently often in or near a prehistoric burial place, for quantities of old pipes not infrequently turn up in archaeological excavations of such sites. Among preliterate peoples in Africa ritual demonstrations similar to those of the wake games usually form part of ceremonies directed towards ancestral spirits who had power over the luck and livelihood of the group. The women on these occasions often assume a dominant role and behave lewdly, and as part of this reversal or normal behaviour they wear men's clothes. Such rituals of rebellion, it is claimed, by canalizing social tensions, perpetuate the established systems of political organization.[1] We cannot expect to piece together the frag-
764 mentary evidences of Irish folk customs to make a coherent pattern, yet it is clear that the cathartic extravagances of the wakes not only served to dissipate overcharged tensions but were closely concerned with ancestral spirits and the perpetuation of the life of the community. Despite the emphasis on tobacco, which was, one supposes, a substitute for some forgotten magic substance, there are many hints of old custom in the names and rites of the wake games. Did the tobacco pipes, one wonders, take the place of offerings of potsherds when locally-made pottery ceased to be available? It is interesting to find that cheese is regarded as a necessary part of the food offered at wakes, for cheese is now rarely eaten by Irish countryfolk though we know that it was once an essential part of the summer diet.

Many superstitious customs pursued the corpse to the burying ground. The chairs on which the coffin rested were shaken in all directions before it was lifted off, and it was customary for those following the coffin to take some protective substance such as salt in the pocket, for 'there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind'.[2] With the

[1]Max Gluckman, *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa*, 24.
[2]C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, 216.

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OLD PISHROGUES

805 The whistle of the 7.15 now replaced cock-crow. But if it were
178 indeed true that peasant values had perished entirely and that
the rural population was transformed into the moronic cattle-
[496] herders of Filson Young's *Ireland at the Cross-Roads*, then this
book could not have been written. Luckily a mountain farmer
will still relate time to nature and refer to a moment of summer
twilight, in a memorable phrase quoted by Dr. James Delargy,
as 'the time when the dew was thinking of falling'. The wonder
178 is that so much lore and so many relics of pre-famine days have
771 survived. Yet the term 'old pishrogues' which is applied to all
varieties of witchcraft and fairy lore—even if sometimes used
in awe rather than contempt—shows that these things are
now regarded objectively and are no longer an accepted part
of social life. Superstitious practices tend to be carried out in
secret and to be resorted to only when more rational methods
have been tried and found wanting. Many of the old customs,
however, have had their life prolonged by children's games,
the seasonal bonfires and May Queens becoming their amuse-
ments.

Most of the pishrogues relate to fairies and to trees, wells
823 and stones; and that these elder faiths have their roots in a very
● 171 remote pre-agricultural phase of human evolution is attested by
their very general observance among primitive people. As an
example we may take the South African Bushmen, one of the
lowliest branches of the human family. In a recent report from
G. P. van der Post's expedition to the Kalahari we read that in
the heart of the Bushman country there are sacred hills which
are regarded as the home of very ancient spirits. Van der Post
was told that 'right on the top of the central hill there was a
spring of water and beside it a tree which bore the fruit of
knowledge, and close by the tree a rock with deep marks where
the greatest spirit of all had knelt to pray'.[1] The sacred hill-
tops, the ancestral spirits, the well of water, the 'gentle' tree
and the cup-marked stone are familiar themes in Irish folk
tradition. Throughout western Europe, from the fifth century
Council of Arles onwards, churchmen denounced those 'who
offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones'. The great religions
have had to come to terms with such cults, in Monsoon Asia as

[1] *The Times* (14th December, 1955).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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in Europe, and the emphasis on different elements of the complex naturally varies with regional circumstances and traditions. In Ireland the trees which the elder faiths had endowed with magic qualities were all small trees and shrubs—especially the rowan, holly, elderberry and whitethorn—and the evidence of archaeology and palaeobotany is that these plants first became common in the prehistoric landscape as weeds of cultivation following forest clearance by early cultivators. Thus they would have become symbols of the farming year, their white blossoms a sign of spring and the end of killing frosts, their red berries a token of the fulfilment of harvest and the promise of renewed life. At first sight one may wonder why the thorn tree should have been singled out for special attention, for it is ubiquitous in the lowland landscapes. The hedgerow thorns, of course, are newcomers, and they may be hacked with impunity, but woe betide the man who damages a fairy thorn, that is one not planted by man but growing on its own in the fields or on some ancient cairn or rath. They are to be found in every part of Ireland, but to see the fairy thorn in full majesty one should go to the naked hillsides where it stands in splendid isolation against the stone dykes and the bare hills (Fig. 89). As with the sacred groves of China, not even fallen dead branches which would serve as firewood should be removed. I have

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FIG. 89. Fairy thorns. A cluster of 'gentle bushes' near Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh: 'If you were in there on the hottest day it would starve you.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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believe that many examples were ground out in much the same way before the sign of the cross replaced that of the circle. Cup-marked stones are commonly found in megalithic graves, on standing stones and Bronze Age cists, both in the British Isles and further afield. Some of the larger bullauns were certainly mortars, and very similar 'knocking stones' were used until recent times for preparing barley meal by pounding the grain with a beetle or maul (Fig. 90). To judge from the frequency with which one finds a knocking stone in the ruins of an old clachan it was one of the communal possessions of such a settlement. Old specimens, more especially when the basins are sunk in an outcrop of rock, are frequently found to hold water, and they are then regarded as 'wells', the water being held efficacious as a cure for warts. That such rock-basins have magic powers is illustrated by the following reference to a site in Scotland. On the Loch Avon side of Cairngorm is a shelving rock bearing hand-made basins about a foot wide and correspondingly deep: 'sitting on them is said to be efficacious in cases of barrenness.'[1]

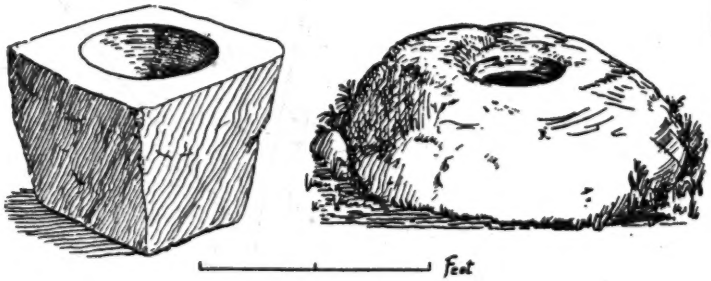

FIG. 90. Knocking stone and bullaun. Both Co. Antrim.

It is an interesting illustration of the pagan associations of cup-marks, and of the success of the symbol of the cross, that their use survived in folk practice only as cursing stones. Smooth pebbles resting in certain stone basins are turned three times against the sun. There are many examples in the west, some

[1]A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 265.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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234 825 newly-calved cow should be milked on to a piece of metal placed in the pail. Offerings of the 'beastlings' were poured in the raths and at the roots of fairy thorns, to appease the fairies. When taking a drink out of doors, the old countryman will casually spill a portion of the draught on the earth as a complimentary libation to the good people. 'When a cow fell sick through fairy malice, it was formerly by no means an uncommon practice, in the west of Ireland, to devote the ailing animal to St. Martin. The ceremony was performed by letting a few drops of blood from the cow in honour of the saint.'[1] Cows which, for no apparent reason, are not thriving are said to be elf-shot. The elf-stones or fairy-darts which are supposed to [172] have caused the mischief are prehistoric flint arrowheads such as can be picked up in the fields. One of the tricks of the cow-doctor who is called in, and who keeps a few arrowheads handy, is to produce one by sleight of hand from the flank of the ailing beast. Or counter-magic can be worked by means of a flint arrowhead which must not be allowed to touch the ground after it has been found. The cow-doctor uses sympathetic magic in curing calves believed to be suffering from intestinal knots by drawing apart over the animal's back the loose ends of a string tied in a complicated witch-knot or 'bat', of the type which comes undone when pulled. But as always he must work the magic correctly, for if the knot is not resolved another one is tied inside the calf.

789 234 Hanging in the byre one sometimes sees a flint pebble suspended on a string through a natural hole. It is a witch-stone, [823] protecting the cows from milk-stealers, and it may owe its virtue to the flint or to its symbolic ever-watching eye. In the Ardenne a holed flint hung in the stable is believed to preserve [171] the horses from nightmares,[2] and nearer home in the Yorkshire dales holed stones known as ring-stones protected the cows from the evil eye. 'Blessings on all that I can see' is the traditional formula to use when one enters a byre. An ill-disposed person could, merely by looking at it, 'blink' a cow so that its milk would yield no butter. The cow could be cured by burning under its nose a portion of the blinker's clothes

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 6.
[2] H. H. Turney-High, *Ch'teau-Gérrad* 53(19), 232.

182 The world at large is not interested in the particular ante-
551 cedents of a man and the islanders recognize this in their use of surnames with the outside world. The old 'family'
611 or clan names placed a man in his wider kinship group in the days when this was important—it no longer matters today. Within the community the naming system described above distinguishes a man from other men and places him in his immediate kin group. It helps to establish his descent. Research in small communities in Western societies may reveal similar systems serving similar ends but based on different diacritical criteria.[8]

Notes

113 [1] J. M. Synge, *Four Plays and The Aran Islands*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 263f.

[2] Brief ethnographical details of Tory Island can be found in J. R. Fox, 'The Vanishing Gael,' *New Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1962.

551 [3] The second and subsequent names, when in Gaelic, are in the genitive. Some English names are Gaelicized and given a genitive form. I make no claims for the correctness of the spelling of the names given here (Irish spelling is pretty fluid), except that they are the forms recognized by literate islanders. I could not have made any headway with the Tory naming system and genealogies with-
[115] out the patient help of Máire Nic Fhlaithbheartaigh bean Aodha Uí Dhubhghain, Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh, and Aodh Ó Dubhghain.

[4] See Synge's comment on the use of the surname and the 'Mac' prefix. In the 'ceremonial' names on Tory both Mac and Ó are used, but when a surname is included in the 'personal' set, these prefixes are not usually used.

[5] This could be Paddy-John Uí Fhlaithbheartaigh—roughly Paddy John O'Flaherty. The pronunciation would be the same.

551 [6] A fuller analysis of the structure and functions of these descent
611 groups is in preparation. They seem to be mainly concerned with landholding—as a consequence of the equal division of land amongst all a man's (or woman's) heirs, and the system of keeping land in trust for migrants. Their other functions lie mainly in the sphere of mutual support amongst members in times of crisis.

[7] This distribution could only occur by chance in one sample out of 20: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4{\cdot}30$: $p = < {\cdot}05$.

551 [8] The Welsh system of stringing ancestral names together with
171 'ap' is obviously similar to the Tory method, but the Welsh, I believe, used only male names. Mr. Andrew Dunsire tells me that in some Scottish coastal villages a man will be known by the boat he owns, his children inheriting this epithet. In some working-class communities which I know in England a system similar to that on Tory operates. A man may be known as 'Mary's Tom' and his son as 'Mary's Tom's Johnnie,' etc. Synge notes the use of occupations as marks of distinction in Wales and comments on the lack of occupational differentiation on the Aran Islands which makes this method impossible. In some rural communities a man is known by the name of his farm. W. M. Williams in *The Sociology of an English Village* (Routledge, 1956) gives examples of this. See also his fascinating discussion of Naming and Family Continuity, pp. 79–82 and 229f. The contrast with the Tory system is marked, however, in that one can, in Gosforth, move from 'side' to 'side' in choice of names—both surnames and Christian names being used.

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size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Pboillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

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291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 434 Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by [501] four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the [298] coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are [438] made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold [657] to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. [437] Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west [171] coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of [174] varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it [178] is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-
501 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single
502 tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom [502] three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the [433] crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at [322] work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, [184] and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

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The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[657] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[178] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[822] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[799] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
171 of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123] to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178] lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764] (see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823] place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175 Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779 VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798 is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 177 being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346] porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778] worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776 will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171] and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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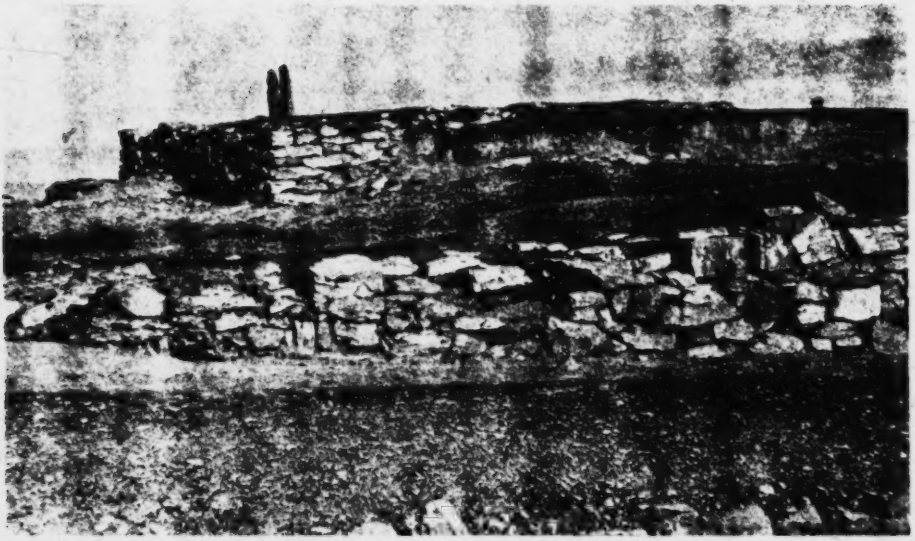

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are "strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[64] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

177
178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
• 171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . ... [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party.

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions
there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side,
where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new
soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle
dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

arose partly out of our desire to alleviate distress and not solely to collect 123
information. We had performed the same role seven years earlier among 831*
primitive Nigerians, and for similar reasons. However, the Africans [171] •
were uninhibited, talked freely with us about sex, and were not offended
by what we subsequently wrote.

Another important source of information on sex was the island 115
nurses, who supplied us with accounts of their own observations over
an eight-year period and gave us access to pertinent medical records.
My wife and I believe that our information is, for the most part, reliable, 128
but that some of it may well be erroneous. This report will, we are 123
afraid, offend and alienate some of our Inis Beag friends, for whom we
hold deep affection; they do not comprehend the aims and values of
anthropology and may regard our reporting of sexual beliefs and behavior as a breach of friendship and trust. Certainly our findings will be
denied by many Irish readers.

More than any other type of research, culture and personality 114
investigations are needed in Ireland today. Social and cultural anthropologists, rural sociologists, folklorists, and geographers in small numbers
have managed to describe and analyze the major sociocultural forms of
the Irish folk, but personality generalizations, by and large, have been
the by-products of research into other areas and have tended to be
impressionistic. Some of the most penetrating studies of Irish character
have been made "at a distance" and through the analysis of projective
systems and narrow units of culture, such as drinking patterns (Bales
1962). Some Irish writers—"intuitive anthropologists" I call them—
also have had insightful things to say about Irish character (usually at a
distance too, from church and state). What is sorely needed is a holistic
community study done by a culture and personality specialist—a person
skilled not only in ethnography, social psychology, and psychiatry (and
able to administer projective tests), but well versed in Irish history,
literature, and contemporary affairs as well.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Both lack of sexual knowledge and misconceptions about sex among 831*
adults combine to brand Inis Beag as one of the most sexually naive of 864
the world's societies.

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] [864]

The stone or earth-

342 en floor may be sprinkled for instance with coral beachsand to help in sweeping it.

[356] In some primitive houses, where the cattle still had their places, in the

[231] low end, I have found a gutter or conduit going across the low end and leading out through the door.

333 *The walls.* There are two main types of wall construction representing very

342 old building traditions.

[172] 1. The dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara* — met with in the prehistoric buildings, *clochàns* etc. — are built of stones (often flattish) without mortar. Dwelling-houses which have been built with dry stone walls have in later times been covered both inside and outside with mortar, pl. XLIII: 1. The space between the bigger stones are often carefully filled up by small stones, *spallaí.*

Especially in Co. Clare I have admired the precision developed in the construction of the walls.

● [172] 2. Of prehistoric origin are also the mud, clod or clay walls, *falla feidín.* A fantastic explanation of the term makes it equal to *falla ar feadh dín,* a wall that endures as long as the roof is kept properly thatched (Dinneen).

The clay was pulverized and made into a thick mortar by wetting it and mixing it with cut rushes or course sprat hay. The well built mud-wall houses form comfortable dwellings and it has happened that people have regretted leaving excellent thatched "mud walls" to live in cold stone-walled slatted dwellings.

342 The foundation of the walls is sometimes a pronunced feature of the house. Whilst the walls usually have a width of 1½, 2 or 3 feet, the foundation is wider, forming a shelf or broad step along the building serving as a pathway to the door. The foundation is sometimes not very dissimilar to some prehistoric house-foundations. In this connection I would like to remark that the pathway and nearest surroundings of the entrance door are sometimes

[191] paved by a mosaic of small cobble-stones from the sea-shore. This I have seen in costal districts in South West, and I suggest that it is the same kind of pavement as appears in Portugal, Madeira, Marocco and elsewhere at the border of the Atlantic And the Mediterranean Sea.

Doors and windows. In many primitive houses of to-day the construction of the door-opening is extremely archaic: flat stones serving as lintel and as threshold. The frame of the door is wooden.

The doors usually have bolts of wood and a hasp to close the door. A thick wooden beam can be placed across inside the door on stormy nights, certain holes in the wall at both sides of the door being made for this beam,

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE. II.

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

341 In the Ireland of today there exist not only buildings of a more developed stage of construction, *i. e.* stone-built or mud houses with roofs resting on wooden couples[1] but also buildings of very archaic or of extremely simplified or primitive construction. The stone beehive huts, roofed by a [172] system of overlapping stones and some oval or oblong houses are identical with or closely linked with prehistoric house-types. The huts of wickerwork, sod and turf, on the other hand, represent very simple house-types, of which not all can with certainty be characterized as archaic, but rather as imitations in a simplified form of advanced house-types, or as simple temporary structures, or solutions of individual building problems often due to poverty or lack of better building material.

These groups of buildings offer possibilities of very wide, but at the same time very vague, comparisons throughout the fields of archæological, historic literary and ethnological facts.

341 Ireland's cultural position is of great interest, whether Ireland be looked
171 upon as a relic-zone where many culture-elements still persist after they have become extinct in Continental Europe, or whether it be supposed to constitute a critical point in the Atlantic intercepting the different streams of culture flowing from North, South, and East.[2]

There are features common to Irish and Scandinavian archaic or primitive buildings, to Irish and Spanish-Portuguese buildings or to Irish and English buildings, but it would be premature to come to any decision about the origin of these features until the whole area of their distribution has been surveyed. Adapting T. J. Westropp's words about the ancient Irish "Forts" I would say: The key to the origin of the Irish house-types lies as much in a comparison with cognate buildings over the rest of Europe as in the native Irish records.

As it is not possible to arrive at any definite conclusions until investigations have been made on a broader basis, I must content myself here with pointing out some types of buildings and some problems which seem to me to be of certain importance.

Folk-Liv 1938 — No. 2

The clochán type with domed roof.

172 342 The clochán, or stone bee-hive hut, no doubt represents a very old stage of house-tradition (pl. 29,a—32), although it can be studied from material still existing and, in some cases, still in use in Ireland today (pl. 33, a, b). As it represents a prehistoric type of building, investigations of the Irish clochán and other types of bee-hive, oval or oblong houses from the Iron Age and later times become of immediate interest for the study of recent Irish house-traditions.

A comparison between the common Irish (developed) houses of today and the clocháns (prehistoric or of later date) may give the impression that there is a gap between them that cannot be bridged. Nevertheless the clochán-type constitutes a very suitable starting point for discussion of the recent Irish peasant houses and their history. There are indeed some significant parallels from various countries and different periods, which help to illuminate the problem here in question. In particular I would like to draw [171] attention to the Scottish bee-hive house but also to the black house *(bothán, aridhean, tigh dubh)*, to the remains of circular and roughly oblong huts of stone in other parts of the Brittish Isles, *e. g.* in Carnarvon, Wales, and to the very similar settlements in Spain and Portugal,[3] and in Italy and Greece. In Scandinavia, such settlements and forts as have been excavated in Denmark, Norway and the Swedish provinces of Öland and Gotland must be considered as parallels to the West European material here mentioned.

Descriptions of Irish clocháns can be found in several archæological works. I quote here some descriptions given by Macalister:[4]

"A clochán was built in this manner. A space of the size and shape intended was marked out on the ground with loose stones. Usually the plan was circular or oval, but sometimes the building is circular outside and square within. Above these stones another course was laid, slightly oversailing the course below. A third course overhung the second, and so on; the walls being made thick enough, as they rose, to secure stability. At last the sides of the building approximated together so that the hole in the top of the chamber could be closed with a single flag-stone or with two or more such stones. No mortar of any kind was needed or used, though the outer surface may have been covered with sods or some protection to keep out the rain. As a rule the stones of which the building was composed were laid not quite horizontal, but were sloped outward, so as to shed off rain-water to the outside of the building."

The most famous remains of clocháns are perhaps the six bee-hive cells at

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 177---Analyst]

PLATE 29.

a. Clochán (beehive hut). Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Note to the left in back-ground a very large clochán which has collapsed. The remains of several other collapsed clocháns are inside same *caiseal*, (circular wall enclosing a group of buildings, huts, etc.).

b. Clocháns inside a cashel. Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry.

3: Campbell B. E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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a

b

[p. 175]
[captions on p. 174]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 30

172
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a

b

[p. 176]
[captions on p. 177]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

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Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry, and the so called "City of Fahan", which probably includes the largest number of buildings of this kind (pl. 29, 30,b).[5] But no investigation has been made — as far as I know — of round stone huts in Ireland built and inhabited in later times. Such investigation has, however, been made on the Scottish Islands by F. L. W. Thomas.[6] It is evident that the bee-hive huts (*both*) of Lewis described by Thomas, are very close to or identical with the Irish clocháns, and represent the same building traditions. This also agrees with the accounts of Irish cabins in the literature.[7] I will confine myself here to two descriptions made by Thomas and published in 1860 and in 1869, both dealing with stone bee-hive huts built in late times and used as dwellings. As these descriptions are inaccessible to most readers I must quote them at some length.

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The normal and, Thomas presumes, most modern form of bee-hive house (in the middle of the 19th century) is "an irregular circle, six or seven feet in diameter, the walls rising perpendicularly for three feet; each successive course of stone then overlaps or projects beyond the one below, and then the roof gradually closes in and takes a beehive form. — — — A hole, called the *Farlos (farleus,* a skylight), is left in the apex of the roof for the escape of the smoke, and is closed with a turf or flat stone as requisite. (See pl. 34,c). There are two doors, 2½ feet high and 2 feet broad, and they are placed so that a line joining them cuts off on one side about two thirds of the enclosed area. The two doors are a decided improvement, for that one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weather door — is closed with a stone or turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the head of the inhabitants and through the Farlos. From door to door a row of flat stones, a few inches in height, forms the bench or seat, *being*, and behind this the area is filled up with hay or rushes for a bed. I had a native estimate of its capacity, and found it calculated to hold three people. In front of the bench, and midway between the two doors, is the fire — of peat of course, and not much needed except for cooking. Above the fire, a longish stone draws in and out of the wall for the purpose of hanging a pot on, and in nearly every ruin did we find this primitive instrument in its place, shoved back into the wall."[8]

With the investigations made by Thomas in 1857 and later, the *clochán* as an inhabited living dwelling is brought within the horizon of the study of today. In the following example which is taken from Thomas' description, this house-type of a prehistoric time is allied with a late innovation, namely the stone-built chimney, which in the course of the 19th century seems to

PLATE 30.

a. Clochán na Carraighe. Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

b. Clochán. Fahan, Co. Kerry.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[19] Mårten Stenberger[20] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boethius[21] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands. 231 349

A glance at the literary material.

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[22] 172 174

In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *fallai fuara*, as in the stone-built *clochàns*, but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin*, and of *fraigh*, *i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[23] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[24] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion. 174

O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that 174 342

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

survivals of the infield-outfield system in the remoter parts of Ireland would seem to suggest that it dates from a time much earlier than that of the Norman invasion.

Lines of Investigation

These questions and theories widen the field for speculation, but it is difficult to see where to turn for further information, largely because of the meager documentary evidence that survives in Ireland from periods earlier than the eighteenth century. Admittedly, relevant material may be discovered among estate papers, but there are three other lines that might be followed with profit.

One possible approach, field investigation, is illustrated by a project now under way, in which archeological techniques are being used to excavate a clachan in County Down, inhabited until the late nineteenth century. The primary aim is to discover how this particular clachan originated. Did it grow out of a single farm, and, if so, at what date? Two seasons' work has now been completed without conclusive answers to these questions, though some details have been added to the local economic history of County Down.[26] At least it has been shown that a clachan settlement stood on this site about 1780 and that the site had been occupied from sometime near the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Buildings were found underlying the nineteenth-century structures. The fact that some of these remains appear to date from a time before the immigration of Scottish and English settlers into the area in the early seventeenth century should prove important in the study of Irish house types, since the lack of evidence on the development of settlement patterns extends also to the history of individual farm buildings.[27]

Whether this particular excavation will yield further information about

[26] J. H. Johnson, V. B. Proudfoot, and R. H. Buchanan: Excavations at Minerstown, Co. Down: Preliminary Report on Work Completed in 1956, *Ulster Journ. of Archaeol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 21, 1958. (In press.)

[27] Pioneer work on surviving house types was carried out by A. Campbell (Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture, *Béaloideas*, Vol. 5, 1935, pp. 57–74; Notes on the Irish House, *Folkliv*, Vol. 1, 1937, pp. 207–234, and Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 173–196). This has been developed in a series of local studies, so that a comprehensive account of the surviving forms of Irish traditional building is becoming increasingly possible. The best and most recent general account is E. E. Evans' "Irish Folk Ways" (London, 1957; with an extensive bibliography), Chapters 4 and 5. Several important articles on house types and related topics have appeared recently; for example, C. Ó Danachair: Irish Farmyard Types, *Arctica: Studia Ethnographia Upsaliensis No. 11*, 1956, pp. 6–15; A. T. Lucas: Wattle and Straw-Mat Doors in Ireland, *ibid.*, pp. 16–35; C. Ó Danachair: Stand und Aufgaben der Hausforschung in Irland, *Bericht über die Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für Deutsche Hausforschung*, Schleswig, 1955, pp. 29–50; R. H. Buchanan: Thatch and Thatching in North-East Ireland, *Gwerin*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 123–142; and C. Ó Danachair: The Bed Out-Shot in Ireland, *Folkliv*, Vols. 19–20, 1955–1956, pp. 26–31.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of
eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the begin-
172 ning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the
clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered.
However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish
peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information
on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There
does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have
surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more
fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of
121 investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the
103 Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and
that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly
undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it
will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of land-
holding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviv-
ing clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further
research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been
121 aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photo-
graphs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been
employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable
photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history
of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air
photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in
178 what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to
311 find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield
361 system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the
earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain
obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

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[113] [28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland, *Antiquity*, Vol. 4, 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 Birch and hazel are the next vegetation recorded, then the pine spread rapidly to give way to oak and alder as the climate grew warmer. The oldest layers of turf in the deep bogs grew round the stumps of this oak forest, following the sinking of the land and the consequent bad drainage accompanying a stormy period which lasted from about 5000 to 2500 years B.C. To this climatic phase the term "Atlantic" is applied. There followed a warm dry period, called the sub-Boreal, which came to an end about the middle of the last millennium B.C.; it was during this phase that the Irish forests reached their greatest development, when oak, birch, alder, hazel and pine spread right to the western coasts and high up the mountain sides. It is estimated that the rainfall in the west was only half its present quantity and that the westerly winds were weak. When the storms returned the climate became cooler and even wetter than it is to-day, and during this "sub-Atlantic" period the western forests were submerged in extensive bogs to give the landscape its familiar barren appearance. Everywhere this dark age of storms, from about 500 B.C. to 100 B.C., was a time of maximum peat formation, layer upon layer of spongy vegetation, cotton grass, bog rush and sphagnum moss, accumulating in the hollows of the plain and on the mountain slopes. Thereafter there have been fluctuations when pine forests spread repeatedly on dried bog surfaces only to be swamped in succeeding wet phases, and in the end the pines disappeared from Ireland, leaving their resinous bog timber as a gift from the past to the treeless present. Not only timber but all organic matter such as bone, leather and even textiles and human bodies are wonderfully preserved by bog acid. Pl. 1.

● 172 Archæology tells us that man[1] first crossed the narrow seas from Scotland when the land stood higher before the "Atlantic" submergence. Hemmed in by the forest he clung to the beaches under the flint-bearing chalk cliffs of

[1] "Mesolithic" man. The term (Middle Stone Age) embraces the period from *c.* 7000-2500 B.C. falling between the Palæolithic (Old Stone) and the Neolithic (New Stone) Ages. Man's first appearance in Ireland is probably to be dated about 5000 B.C.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

● 172 Antrim, and excavation in the beaches at Larne and elsewhere has revealed the tools at depths which show that he remained in the area throughout the beach-forming Atlantic period. Some have conjectured that his flint knives and choppers were used for wood-working and boat-building. When fishing failed he had recourse to shell-fish, for the warm seas which replaced the Arctic waters had brought great quantities of edible molluscs to our shores. From the beginning, then, the north-east, the region of the Loughs, was the bridgehead by which overseas movements reached Ireland.

When at length, perhaps under pressure from further incursions from Scotland, the coast-dwellers moved on, it was in the Bann valley, by Lough Neagh and other rivers and lakes that they settled down; and on coastal sites, near the river mouths that the salmon seek, we find, buried in sand, the relics of their "kitchen middens." In places such as the caves at Ballintoy, Co. Antrim, fisherfolk and shell-gatherers continued to cling to their old life century after century, and there can be little doubt, as anthropological research is beginning to show, that the racial characters of these original Irishmen survive in many a coastal area to this day. Readers are referred to papers by Professor T. Walmsley and J. M. Mogey in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*. The results of a wider survey conducted by the Harvard University Mission to Ireland are awaited.

By low watersheds and lakes the fisherfolk seem to have found their way to the Barrow, to the Shannon and the teeming Corrib of Galway, so that the four provinces of Ireland have a substratum of the oldest stocks in the population. It is tempting to think of the Irish curraghs (Chapter 16) as a relic of this culture: they were covered with hide until recently, and it is noteworthy that even in Lough Neagh, where [396] the curragh has not been recorded in historic times, the fishermen speak of giving their boats a new "hide" when they repair them. Wooden foot traps for catching deer (the so-called otter-traps) which have been found in the bogs and which are figured on some of the Celtic crosses, are presumably

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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another heritage of the Mesolithic. Research will probably show that many details of material culture as well as a substantial element in the racial composition of the Irish people derive from the Mesolithic background, which has been termed "the main vital period in the setting out of the human map of Europe." 172

Left to themselves, however, it is unlikely that these fisherfolk, specialized as they were in the arts and crafts of food-gathering, would have advanced to the full status of civilisation. If our eyes were fixed on Ireland alone we should be unable to account for the origin of Irish agriculture and stock-raising, for the crops and animals that came to be used are not found in the native flora and fauna. It was from distant western Asia, by way of the seas and islands of the Mediterranean and the western peninsulas of Europe that the new ideas found their way to Ireland. And although the food-gatherers and fisherfolk had blazed the trail, it was a revolution in food production that now brought with it the elements of true civilisation. To it the term Neolithic (new stone) Revolution is applied.

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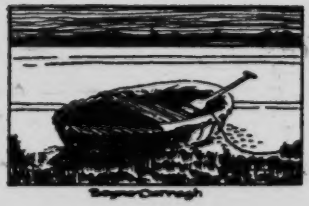

Fig. 4.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER IV.

THE WORK OF MAN: CROPS AND ANIMALS.

● 172 It was probably a century or two before 2000 B.C. that the first farmers reached the Irish shores and began, however slowly, the moulding of the landscape with their tools of cultivation and their hungry animals. They brought with them not only crops and beasts from the sunny south, but new and strange gods endowed with magic powers. It has been conjectured that many of the old food-gatherers were held in subjection and forced to pay tribute in fish to the new masters. Certainly great salmon rivers like the Bann continued to be well settled, and the present eel-weir at Toome, with its wattled lanes, probably had a not very different forerunner on the same site in prehistoric days. Excavation has shown that the tanged flint flakes, of which hundreds of thousands are found along the Bann, were employed as the prongs of fish spears, and the hearths where the catches were smoked and dried have been unearthed.

Two innovations in such excavated sites betray the influence of our newcomers: they are the use of the polished stone axe and the manufacture of pottery. It is the former that gives its name to the New Stone (Neolithic) Age, while the use of pottery is the hallmark of a certain stage of culture and domestic industry. It has been suggested that the art of shaping stone tools by grinding and polishing arose, in the sandy soils of south-western Asia, through observing the wear

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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on stones used as hoes for cultivation. We have direct evidence that some form of agriculture was practised at this time in Ireland, about forty centuries ago, and it is here that the foundations of Ireland's peasant culture must be sought. Some scholars have argued that a simple wooden plough reached Atlantic Europe not long afterwards from the Mediterranean, but the digging stick was probably the main cultivating tool: the digging tradition has remained all-powerful in Ireland, and even to-day the narrow Irish spade or loy (Chapter 13) is little more than an iron-shod digging stick.

B15

Fig. 5.
Fashions in Pots.

Communal tombs of great stones built by these bringers of civilisation—the giants' graves of the countryfolk and the megalithic monuments of the archæologists—tell us a great deal, from their distribution and their contents, of the areas occupied and the beliefs held by the first Irish farmers. Glacial sands and limestone exposures attracted them on account of their easily-worked soils and natural clearings, while the thin soils and therefore light forest-cover of the hill-slopes and plateaux drew them by stages into all the scattered mountains from Wicklow to Kerry and from Antrim to Donegal. The discovery of grains of wheat and of saddle-querns for grinding corn, as well as countless sherds of hand-made pottery, show that they were settled farmers: their large round-bottomed pots, often provided with holes or lugs for suspension over the fire, are plausible forerunners of the common iron "pots" which are indispensible in every farm and cottage to-day. It should be borne in mind that the sub-boreal period (Chapter 3), from which this culture dates, was a time of warm dry climate, so that settlement and cultivation of wheat and probably barley were possible at elevations where they would now be difficult if not impracticable.

Bone-finds tell us that the Irishman's oldest animals were the pig and the ox. By analogy with other parts of northern Europe we should expect the earlier folk of the Mesolithic to have possessed the dog, though there is no clear proof of this. The horse, the goat and the sheep were perhaps

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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introduced in the Bronze Age, while the ass, which one might suppose to be long-established, was in fact hardly known before the 19th century. The wolf was the worst enemy of man's domestic animals: it was not finally exterminated until the end of the 18th century. Neither the Giant Deer nor the wild boar can be proved to have survived so long as to be contemporaneous with man. But there was a rich native fauna which could be hunted for food to supplement the products of crops and livestock. The red deer is still with us and was known in a wild state in the west of Ireland down to a century ago. Charcoal examined from the remains of domestic and ritual fires corroborates the evidence of pollen-analysis as to the forest cover of prehistoric Ireland. The common trees were oak, willow, birch and hazel, with ash, elm, alder and pine less widely distributed.

The beliefs and ritual practices of the megalith-builders were closely bound up with ideas of magic and fertility: the great stone monuments themselves, still standing after 4,000 years, seem to symbolize man's faith in a future life and were the outcome of the revolution of thought which accompanied food-production. No visitor can fail to be deeply moved by the splendour of the great chamber at New Grange on the Boyne, or by the mystery of the windy cairn on Knocknarea above Sligo. The two main entrances used by the megalith builders were the Boyne Valley and Carlingford Lough (whence archæologists speak of the Boyne and Carlingford cultures). These cultures show many interesting differences and no doubt contributed to the enduring distinction between North and South in matters of material folk-culture.

New crops and animals continued to reach Ireland during the 1,500 years of the Bronze Age (1800-300 B.C.), when the islanders engaged in active trade, exporting the gold of the Wicklows in the form of dress-ornaments and elaborating their tools and implements of bronze, using native copper and imported tin. Archæologists and philologists cannot yet agree as to the period when the Celtic language was introduced to Ireland, nor can the Pictish tongue be identified with any clearly recognized culture. All are agreed, however, that

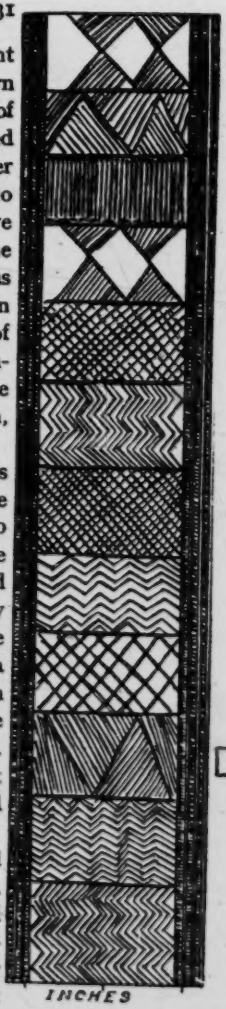

Fig. 6.
Ornament on bronze age pottery vessel from Co. Tyrone, date *c.* 700 B.C.

[184]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

● 172 the Celtic tongue was imported by warlike overlords or "planters" somewhere within the limits of the Bronze Age, and that it was accompanied by the infiltration of ideas and customs that have their ultimate origin in central Europe and therefore represent a culture-pattern differing from the pre-existing "Atlantic" civilisation. But archæology teaches us that the older background was strong enough to survive and mould the new into characteristic Irish forms: even the virile curvilinear "La Tène" art style of the Early Iron Age, which entered Ireland by the north-eastern "bridgehead," was soon changed into new designs which the expert can at once recognize as "Irish" (Fig. 7). In peasant culture the continuity is incontrovertible.

But great changes were meanwhile taking place in the climate and natural landscape, and corresponding adaptations had to be made in Irish life. The onset of a cold stormy period not far from 500 B.C. forced man to move downhill and to concentrate on the drier lowlands, while on plateau and plain alike the old forests went down under layer after layer of wet bogland. When the veil is half lifted in the twilight of the Celtic Annals ten domesticated creatures are mentioned: kine, swine, horses, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, hens, geese and bees. To-day the only important additions would be the ass, the turkey and the duck. There are many signs that during the bad climate of sub-Atlantic times (say 500 B.C.-100 B.C.) cattle assumed the preponderating place in peasant economy which they have since maintained. It was their grazing, and the nibbling of the accompanying goats, which caused the great decline in the indigenous woodlands long before the forest remnants were destroyed by the English. The old custom of putting a goat with a herd of cows is perhaps a [231] survival of former practice, for the goats would have kept down tree-growth and so prepared pasture for the cattle.

But it must be insisted that the theoretical nomadism of the Celtic period finds little support in archæology: the 28,000 surviving earthworks known as "raths"—the sites of villages and cattle-enclosures—testify to the settled life of the dark

[Text Continues Top of P. 34--Analyst]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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172

TWO VIEWS OF LEGANANNY "DOLMEN"

CO. DOWN

[Facing p. 32]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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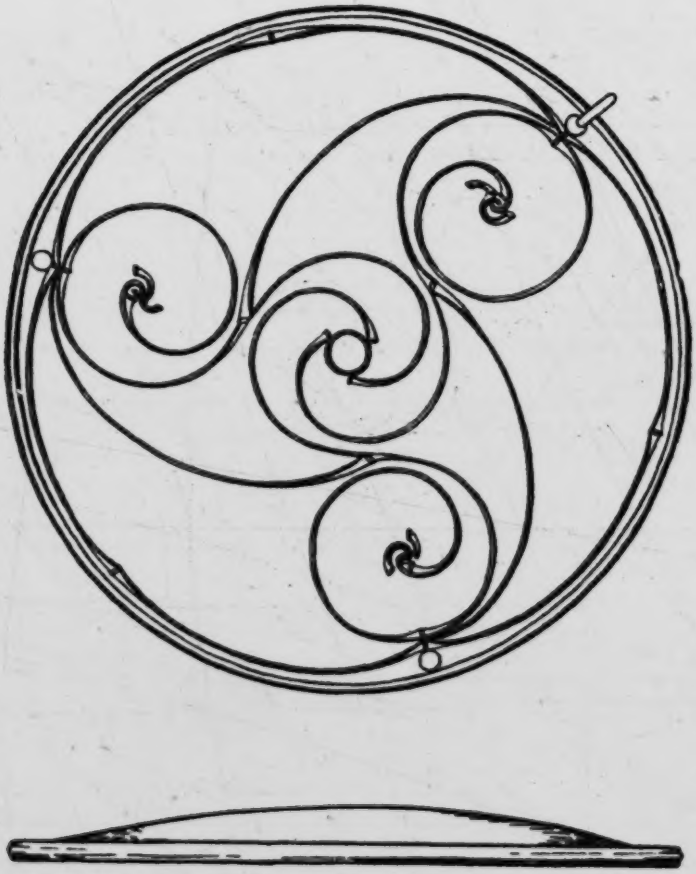

Fig. 7. Bronze disc of the Early Iron Age, from River Bann, date approx. 300 A.D.

[p. 33]

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

172 ages. It was probably in the late Bronze Age that oats, introduced perhaps from Spain, found their place as the leading corn-crop of Ireland and Highland Britain, better adapted than wheat to the damp conditions. The working of " bog iron-ore "—found in concretions in swampy places—is attested from the early Iron Age, and the traditions of the country smith have their origins in this period. Man's attack on the woodlands was accelerated with the possession of iron axes and adzes. We are not able to say how far Roman culture and novelties influenced the pattern of Irish life. Was poultry their contribution, and what of the cabbage, the only common Irish vegetable before the potato came in? Nor must we omit the contributions of the continental contacts maintained throughout the early Christian period, above all in improved architecture and the fine arts as well as in traditions of gardening and orchard-planting. Their influence can be seen, no doubt, in the relatively high standards of living and cultivation around places like Armagh. And it is to the early Christians and the Vikings that Ireland owes its earliest cities. From the Vikings, too, much was borrowed in matters of boat-building and metal-working. Since Norman times the contacts with Britain have steadily increased.

175 244 But we have yet to record the import of most significance for Irish peasant life—the introduction of the potato from the New World. The part that this crop has played in the social history of the island is a subject which calls for full investigation. While it gave bulky yields as food for man and beast, its cultivation brought about a decline in crops such as rye and beans. Thriving on a minimum of attention, its social influence has not been altogether for good: its effects on native habits might be compared with those of another New World crop, maize, in southern Europe and Africa. Ripening underground, potatoes had a great advantage over corn in the wet and windy climate of the west. Moreover the crop was less easy to pillage: "even the soldiers could not extirpate them." By the middle of the 17th century the newcomer was well established in Ireland.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

235 considered that the abundance of wild white clover, on the seeds of which chickens and young turkeys feed, was another contributory factor. Of the goat it can be said that it is often
231 the poor man's milk supply and supplements the cow on many small farms just as the ass replaces or supplements the horse. But the ass is in fact quite rare in many parts of the country, for example in Donegal, and is regarded with contempt, whereas the horse, as befits its important role since prehistoric times, is held in high regard and is kept by small farmers often as much for the sake of prestige as for its use. "If they have three acres," says a Government Report of last century, "they think they must have a horse." The strength and speed of the Irish race horse have been attributed to the bone-building qualities of limestone pastures: the great breeding and training ground is the morainic waste known as the Curragh of Kildare, but throughout the country there are many districts where, for geographical or historical reasons, horses of quality are bred for export and for the delight of the crowds at local race-meetings. Readers are referred to
[113] Dr. Dudley Stamp's *Agricultural Atlas of Ireland* (1931) for further information on agricultural distributions.

• 172

Fig. 9. About 10 ft. high.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

hedgerows. It is hard to realize that the close-set pattern of hedged or walled fields which now distinguishes so much of the countryside is for the most part only a century or so old. In many cases it can be shown that the fields and fences were laid out within the last hundred years, following the break-up of the rundale village system and the re-distribution of the land (Chapter 6). In the eastern lowlands, where English influence has long been at work, the field pattern and hedgerows are no doubt much older, but in general the small cultivated patches were separated by mere balks or waste strips, varying from one to ten feet in width. Stones from the fields, hand-picked or removed with crow-bar and slipe (Chapter 12) were dumped on the balks or, more frequently, piled into "cairns" in the middle of the fields. Such stone-heaps are often found accompanying prehistoric field-systems, for example in Jutland.

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[179]

Fig. 10.

Stone walls or high earthen fences surrounded the house-clusters and enclosed each group of open fields, separating them from the common grazing land which lay outside and stretched away to the "head-ditch" on the mountain. As the rundale holdings gave way to individual farms the land was re-divided, the old ditches planted with whitethorn and new ditches, also set with thorn, were constructed—a process which was being actively carried out during the first half of the 19th century. One result of the scattering of the farms was the appearance of the long strip or "ladder farms," the cross hedges of the strip resembling the rungs of a ladder.

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The oldest fences, then, are the protective banks around farms which occupy old village sites—a survival no doubt of the rings around the ancient raths—and the march-dykes or divisions between townlands. The varied vegetation on these older banks betrays them just as it does the pre-enclosure hedgerows in England: their massive tumbled ruins are overgrown with whins, blackthorn, sally, ash and bramble. There are, however, still older forgotten divisions on the hillsides dating from various prehistoric periods; some have

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

172 been discovered under many feet of peat. Several types can
311 be recognized, for example those with upright stones at
351 intervals, which are sometimes left as "standing stones" after the intervening walls have been removed. Old field fences at Cush, Co. Limerick, claimed to be contemporary with raths of the late Bronze Age and "essentially similar to those built by an Irish farmer of to-day" have been described by Professor O'Riordain. This appears to be a striking example of continuity, for the fences are closely followed by existing field-boundaries. Since they lie some 800 ft. above sea-level they do not invalidate the general picture I shall draw in the following chapter, but it is clear that much more work on the lines followed at Cush is required.

351 Hedges of whins (that is, gorse or furze) about the
314 farmstead are much prized not only for the shelter they afford
137 to stock—they are dense and do not drip—but because they form an admirable clothes line on washing day and a ready
[231] source of kindling wood. Formerly the young whin shoots were crushed and fed to horses. The heavy wooden maul and stone block used in the process may still be seen occasionally. It would require years of enquiry and observation to describe and classify the types of sod ("scraw") earth and stone fences which now parcel out the Irish soil into its patchwork of small fields. One may easily recognize the sod ditches of the rich grazing lands of Meath, with their tall thorn hedges and ash trees giving shelter to the cattle, the well-built dry-stone walls of the granite mountain slopes which vainly seek to stop the black-faced sheep, and the loose lace-like walls precariously constructed out of rough boulders in the morainic hills.

351 In the wind-swept mountains and along the coasts the
311 ditches are hedgeless, carrying only a tangle of heather or whins
137 and an occasional stunted tree, but throughout the lowlands the prevailing type of fence is a stone-faced bank of sods, in the side of which quick-thorn is planted (Fig. 10). These are cut back ruthlessly at longish intervals and are never pleached in the English way, so that the hedge is full of gaps. Occasion-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

kinds of construction are employed. Some districts use strong 343
stone buildings—for example of the bee-hive style to be described below—others roofless rectangles of stone with one end open, and others again timber-posted structures with roofs and walls of many different materials. These supplies are generally supplemented by well-built turf-stacks, and it used to be the custom to build a great stack against the gable of the house, both for shelter and to keep the house warm. Turf-stacks were occasionally built hollow to serve as a pigsty. [23]
In the north of Ireland the pig is by no means universally kept, though most old homesteads have a building which once did duty as a sty, and in some parts of the country these are of bee-hive construction, so strongly built that they have defied the ravages of time.

Just as old practices live on as children's games, so certain ancient types of buildings have descended in the social scale in the course of history. The bee-hive corbelled huts and the corn-drying kilns are examples. Both are circular in plan and built of dry stones or stones and mud. In the Gaeltacht the bee-hive houses are used, from Mayo to Kerry, for storing milk or turf. They are made by overlapping the flat slabs of the walls until they meet at the top in a false dome—a style of building which, in its origin, long precedes the arch and is seen at its best in some of the oldest monuments of human industry in Ireland, the prehistoric chambered tombs of the Boyne [172]
valley. Not far from this metropolis of ancient culture, in the Carlingford Hills of north Louth, Mr. H. G. Tempest has shown me several corbelled huts, some of which are still used as pigsties, while in Lecale in Down there are many examples, both circular and square in plan, which have been used as pigsties and hen houses (Figs. 38 & 39). These are generally grouted on top and whitewashed, but those of Louth and the west may have a covering of earth which, growing a crop of grass and weeds, gives the little houses the appearance of natural hillocks. Similar pigsties are known in south-eastern Wales, and have been described by Dr. I. C. Peate in his book *The Welsh House*. Corbelled huts are also used as pigsties and poultry houses in Caithness and the Orkneys.

G

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

141 (D). *Proportional Measurements.*—The proportional measurements are of some interest, as differing, in some respects, not only from those of the Aran Islanders, but also from the accepted canons, and from the proportions obtained by Quetelet, Gould, and others, in their investigations on several European peoples. The stature is taken as equaling 100.

FACE.

Here, as was observed to be the case last year, the proportion borne by the face to the height is very great, the total face-length being to the stature as 7·48 to 100 (the canon being 6·60).

Nose.—This is not very constant in its relations to the body-height, varying between 2·47 and 3·72, and giving an average of 3·30, nearly exactly that of the French canon. It may be stated that the proportion is less than three in only five instances, and out of the forty measured, one only is below 2·80.

UPPER LIMB.

Span.—This nearly corresponds with the average Irish proportion. In every case it is greater than the stature, but in one instance is very nearly equal to it. The average proportion is 104·95, thus testifying to the length of limb. The extremes were 100·72 and 109·14. The mean span of the Aran series was 101·94, and that of Gould's series of 827 Irish soldiers 104·6.

Hand.—This ranges between 10·76 and 12·08, but as a rule is slightly below the French canon of 11·50, the average being 11·33.

Forearm.—This section of the upper limb is subject to considerable variation. On the whole it is long, but not to so great a degree as in the case of the Aran Islanders, where it was 15·18, while here it is 15·03; this, with the greater proportion of the span to the stature, is probably due to the burlier build of the Bofin men.

(E). *Crania.*—In addition to the observations made on the living
141 subject, the measurements of a series of crania, the first ever put on
764 record from this island,[1] were obtained at St. Colman's Church, in Knock townland. As they could not be removed at the time of my
●172 first visit, I was forced to measure them on the spot, and, as it turned out afterwards, it was well that this precaution had been taken, as, on revisiting the place some time after, in the hope of being able to obtain some of them, I found that they had all disappeared, having in the meantime been removed to some place of concealment.

[1] Since this was written Professor A. C. Haddon has read before the Academy a Paper on some crania obtained by him from Inishbofin: *antea*, p. 311.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

The specimens, about twenty in number, were piled in a heap in a small recess near the east window, and were all in a very bad state of preservation, being much weathered from long exposure, in addition to which they had suffered such extensive mutilations that only eleven, all calvaria, were in a suitable condition to allow of measurement; the others were merely shattered fragments of the cranial bones, presenting no feature of interest except their thinness. 141 764 172

The following description of those examined is extracted from the entries made in my note-book at the time. 141

The specimens examined are very uniform in their characters, which are, in the main, as follows:— 172

Norma verticalis.—The cranial outline is a short but very even oval, sometimes showing an approach to the quadrate in form, as the frontal region is flattened, and the frontal and parietal eminences are well-marked.

Norma lateralis.—The profile rises almost perpendicularly to the culmination of the frontal eminences, as the glabella and superciliary ridges project very slightly, and the frontal sinuses are not large. The upper part of the curve sweeps evenly backwards, and dips down rather suddenly below the lambda, in some cases projecting again below.

Norma facialis.—The forehead is seen to be broad, but not of any great height, and the superior borders of the orbits are nearly level or but slightly curved.

The muscular markings, as the inion superior curved line, and mastoids, are in four cases (Nos. 1, 4, 6, and 11) strong; in all the others they are very slight.

The sutures are rather complex, and by the very considerable amount of obliteration they have undergone, would seem to have belonged to persons of rather advanced age.

Pterion.—In every instance this is of the H type, but in two cases it contains small epactals.

Indices.—The crania are, without exception, mesaticephalic, having a mean cephalic index of 77, with extremes of 75·5 and 79·2. The vertical index can only be obtained in three cases, owing to the extremely shattered state of the specimens. All are tapeino-cephalic, the figures being 70·5, 75·3, and 71·9. The auriculo-vertical height is obtainable only on the same crania as the basi-bregmatic.

Curves.—The longitudinal curves, measurable in five instances, in three of which the frontal arc exceeded the parietal, and, in all, it is greater than the occipital. The parietal arc exceeds the occipital in four cases, and is less than it in one.

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Description of Individual Crania:—

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(1). Calvarium of an adult male; very much weathered; of fair size. Glabella small, but frontal sinuses fairly large. Forehead high and perpendicular. Inion and superior curved line very lightly marked, but mastoid processes very large, and bulged outwards; digastric grooves deep. Sutures complex and much obliterated.

(2). Female (?), much broken and weathered. Sutures very complex, and obliteration advanced. Markings slight. Forehead perpendicular, and frontal sinuses small.

(3). Probably male, small and very much broken. Markings slight.

(4). Male, extensively mutilated, the whole cranial base being broken away. Forehead high and straight. Markings very strong, the inion being immense. Viewed in norma verticalis the outline is almost quadrangular.

(5). Calvarium undoubtedly female, with very slight markings. Straight forehead, and complex much obliterated sutures. Norma verticalis oval, with broadest part anterior.

(6). Male, with strong markings, mastoids being very large, and projecting laterally. Perpendicular but low forehead. Small frontal sinuses and projecting occiput. Norma verticalis almost quadrate. The meningeal vessels have grooved the bone very deeply.

(7). Probably female, small, with a regular oval outline. Glabella very small, and other markings slight, with the exception of the mastoid processes and frontal sinuses, which are rather large.

(8). Probably male. Shape, when viewed in norma verticalis, a blunt oval, approaching the quadrate. Markings slight, and frontal sinuses small. Occiput projects above, but is flattened off below the superior curved line. Sutures simple and unobliterated. Metopic suture persistent. Condition, very much broken.

(9). Female calvarium, very much shattered, the whole base being broken away. Shape, nearly quadrate. Forehead perpendicular, and glabella of medium size.

(10). Probably female. Specimen is very much weathered, and so shattered that two measurements only can be taken. There is a very peculiar pit, about the size of half a walnut, occupying the spot on which the inion ought to be situated. It is probably due to the pressure of a wen or tumour.

(11). Male (?) calvarium of regular oval form, with perpendicular forehead, and large glabella and superciliary ridges. Condition: this specimen consists only of a much weathered and broken cranial vault.

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NUMBER, SEX, AGE,	1. M. AD.	2. F. (?) AD.	3. M. (?) AD.	4. M. AD.	5. F. AD.	6. M. AD.	7. F. (?) AD.	8. M. (?) AD.	9. F. AD.	10. F. (?) AD.	11. M. (?) AD.
Glabello-occipital length,	193	188	178	192	184	192	178	186	178	178	188
Maximum breadth,	148	146	141	146	142	148	136	143	138	138	142
Basi-bregmatic height,	136	140	w	w	w	w	128	w	w	w	w
Auriculo-bregmatic height,	121	120	w	w	w	w	118	w	w	w	w
Minimum frontal breadth,	90	96	82	94	100	102	90	99	w	w	w
Stephanic breadth,	115	w	w	w	109	w	w	w	w	w	w
Asterionic breadth,	w	113	w	w	111	w	w	w	w	w	w
Vertical transverse arc,	322	320	w	w	w	w	308	w	w	w	w
Frontal longitudinal arc,	w	w	130	125	w	w	w	130	118	w	128
Parietal longitudinal arc,	w	w	115	133	w	w	w	129	123	w	120
Occipital longitudinal arc,	w	w	120	123	w	w	w	109	95	w	117
Total longitudinal arc,	w	w	365	381	w	w	w	368	336	w	365
Foramen magnum length,	36	35	w	w	w	w	31	w	w	w	w
Foramen magnum breadth,	30	32	w	w	w	w	27	w	w	w	w
Horizontal circumference,	540	529	w	540	521	w	w	532	w	w	w
INDICES.											
Cephalic,	76·7	77·2	79·2	76	77·2	77·1	76·4	76·9	77·5	77·5	75·5
Altitudinal,	70·5	75·3	w	w	w	w	71·9	w	w	w	w
Auriculo-vertical,	62·7	63·8	w	w	w	w	66·3	w	w	w	w
Foraminal,	83·3	91·4	w	w	w	w	88·0	w	w	w	w

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or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon. *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

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173 began to sink.[1] Suspecting that the bell was the cause of their misfortune, they threw it into the sea, and the ship was saved. Next morning, when some of the islanders were searching for sea-weed on the shore, they found the bell lying broken among the rocks. This [178] relic has long ago disappeared, having been cut up into pieces which were worn as amulets, most of which have been taken to America, but it is said that some are still kept as great treasures by some old people in Inishbofin, who refuse to show them to anyone.

Richard O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, makes mention of this bell ("H-Iar Connaught," p. 117) . . . "Inisark is of the same property with Bofin and the saint therein worshipped, St. Leo; of whose reliques is a bell there extant."

773 *St. Leo's Foot-print.*—There is pointed out an impression in the rock on which Cloghan Leo is built, which is said to be the imprint of 823 the saint's foot, and the people's explanation of how it came there is, that when he had finished building the cloghan Le had to leap down, as he had no ladder, and alighting on the rock he left the print of his foot upon it, where it still remains.

173 There is a tradition on the islands of a large treasure of gold being hidden on Davillaun (a small island of the Bofin group), on which a large vessel of the Spanish Armada was wrecked, and some of the people claim to know exactly where it is. There are also many stories about Lord Nelson, under whom several men from these islands served, and wild tales of the old smugglers; and a very narrow passage between two dangerous rocks through which a daring smuggler once steered his vessel, and thus baffled his pursurers, is pointed out.

Archæology.

178 Though making no pretentions to being an archæologist, yet as an inquiry of this sort would be imperfect without, at least, a partial [172] description of the antiquities of the place, I hope that the notes hereunder given may, in some degree at least, supply the want.

1. *Survivals.*—In these the locality is comparatively rich, a good many old implements and methods of working, which have become extinct in other places, being still common. Such are the continuance of the use of plants and lichens as dyes, and some details of dress, such as the old blue cap, &c., which have been referred to before.

[1] One version of the story states that the ship had got as far as the Bay of Biscay!

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The spinning-wheel and hand-loom are the same as those commonly used on the west coast, the former, as usual, having no treadle. 172 [283]

Querns are still in use, and in connection with them the boran, or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, used for screening the meal. [252] [412]

Grain is still winnowed by shaking it in a sieve in a strong wind. [243]

The method of washing clothes is the same as that customary in Connemara, the clothes being folded, laid in the water of a lake or pool, and beaten with a club or paddle. [296]

The tailor, when making clothes, does not measure his customers with a tape, but takes all his measurements on one sheet of paper, marking the lengths by cutting notches out of the edge. [294]

The curraghs, which are still in use, are of the usual form; they are rapidly going out of fashion, however. [501]

The anchor used for small boats is a stone, not fixed in a wooden clamp, as in Clare and Aran, but having a groove around it for the rope.

As mentioned previously, the apparatus used for the shark-fishing is very rude and primitive.

2. *Antiquities.*—Inishbofin is not very rich in architectural antiquities, and the few that still remain are being rapidly destroyed; some ruins which were standing in the first half of the present century have altogether disappeared, and the others are much shattered. 172

In Inishshark, also, the buildings have sustained a great injury.

It does not lie within my province to enter upon any detailed description of the ruins; but I desire, in the following notes (extracted almost *verbatim* from my Field Note-book), to direct the attention of archæologists to the buildings of interest in these islands which are being rapidly blotted out of existence. The number and nature of these have been described by the late Mr. O'Donovan, Mr. Hardiman, Mr. G. H. Kinahan, and others.

In the account of their present condition given below, they are arranged in the order in which they are described by Mr. Hardiman.[1]

Inishbofin.—(1). St. Colman's church, in Knock townland, built in A.D. 667, is in a very ruinous state, and the interior is filled with rough gravestones and weeds, and in a small recess near the east window is a pile of crania and broken bones. In the enclosure around the church the foundations of the cells (cloghans (?)) of the abbey, or monastic colony, may still be traced, though with difficulty, but the

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

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172 cells themselves, as well as parts of the church walls, have been pulled down to serve as gravestones, or to build the wall of the enclosure. In the immediate neighbourhood of the church, what is supposed to have been a font, has recently been discovered.

(2). Tober Flannain, close to the church, is now surrounded by a wall to keep the cattle away from it.

(3). *Ait tighe Guairim.*—The remains of the building which used to stand on this spot, said by some of the older people to have been of large size, have been cleared away to make room for the parish priest's residence.

(4). *Dun Graine*, which formerly stood on a large table-like rock a short distance from the entrance to the harbour, has entirely disappeared, and hardly even the traces of its foundations can be seen.

(5). *Dun-mor.*—No traces are now left of the earthen fort which formerly stood here.

(6). The castle or fort on Port Island, at the mouth of the harbour, known as Cromwell's, or Bosco's, castle. This was a small fortified barrack, consisting of a strong wall with four small bastions, enclosing a courtyard of no great size, which was bounded on three sides by buildings capable of lodging a small garrison, and containing a draw-well in the centre. It is daily becoming more ruinous from the [339] exertions of the seekers after stones to burn for lime, who have knocked away all the corner-stones of blue limestone, with the exception of those of one angle which overhangs the sea, and have now extended the same work of demolition to the fine arched doorway. The walls of the inner buildings are also being torn down, to get at any limestones that may be in them, the draw-well has been filled up with rubbish, and a cowshed, constructed of stones torn from the walls, has been built up beside the entrance gate. If it were not for the great tenacity and hardness of the mortar it is hardly likely that any of the building would now remain.

Inishshark.—(1). *Teampull Leo.*—This old church is now restored, whitewashed, and slated, and is used as the place of worship on the occasions on which the island is visited by the priest.

(2). The stone cross, *Leac Leo*, is now mounted on the east gable of the church; it is said to have carved on one side of it a chalice, and on the other a human figure, supposed to represent a bishop, with hands extended.

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There is another cross in the church which is of much finer workmanship, and is probably the true *Leac Leo*. In 1870, when Mr. Kinahan visited the island, the church was in ruins, and was used as a cattle pen, and the cross, or a stone coffin lid, he is not at this time able to say which, was set up on its side, leaving a space between it and the wall to form a trough. 172 [231]

(3.) *St Leo's Cave* (*Uaimh Leo*), on the south side of the island.

(4.) *Thobhar Leo.*—St. Leo's Well is situated, not in the cave, but some distance from the top of a deep and almost precipitous cove, called *Fuath Leo*.

(5.) *Cloghan Leo* is a small round cell, now almost completely ruinous, built within an enclosure of very little larger area. The saint's footprint is pointed out in the rock on which the building stands.

VII.—HISTORY.

As a Paper of this nature would be incomplete without some mention of the changes and vicissitudes that the population of the islands has undergone, a slight historical sketch is attempted here. It is not, and does not pretend to be, complete, as unfortunately the material available is very scanty, especially in regard to its earlier history; for, though the Venerable Bede, the Four Masters, and others make several references to the islands, yet these nearly all relate to ecclesiastical events, which have at most only a secondary bearing on the history of the people, and are not within the scope of this Paper. 175

The annalists record that in the second century a tribe of the Firbolgs (Clann Humoir) who occupied that part of the mainland opposite the islands were conquered and enslaved by Tuathal Teachtmar, a Scotic or Milesian monarch, and it is probable, if the islands were inhabited by members of the first-named people, that they shared the same fate as the rest of their tribe. It is not known whether such was the case, as this is "the only mention of this teritory while in the hands of the Belgae," says O'Donovan in his "Letters," except that one of their chiefs named Modh, or Modha, gave his name to Inis Modha, or the Clew Bay islands. After the conquest of the Clann Humoir the territory came into the hands of the Milesians, and the records about it relate, at first, to the deaths of their chiefs, and later on in the 9th century to the incursions of pirates (believed to have been Scandinavians), but make no specific mention of Inishbofin or its inhabitants.

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his death to his interference with this figure. An Inishkea man spoke about the matter with much indignation even after the lapse of years, and said that they had never known misfortune or hunger in the island until after the distruction of this *neewoge*. 778

Many different accounts have been given of the image itself. One writer (C. O.) states that it was a stone figure of rude workmanship, and that it was dressed in a suit of homespun, renewed every year.

The description given by those who have seen it agree in stating that it was not a statue but a small flat stone. One informant believed it to be part of the head of a stone figure. This was enveloped in a small bag of homespun, which was replaced when it got old and soiled, and was kept in a blind window or recess in the wall in one of the houses.

St. Brendan and the Devil.—During my visit to Inishglora some of the Inishkea fishermen, who were camped there at the time, pointed out that no grass grew on a part of the island, and gave the following explanation :—St. Brendan was one day disturbed in his devotions by the devil, who appeared to him in the form of a beautiful girl and tempted him. The saint indignantly repulsed the temptress, and drove her towards the end of the island, blessing the soil as he went, but at the point where the grass ends, Satan changed his form and assumed the shape of a ram, which so astonished the saint that in his excitement he ceased blessing and gave chase to the evil one who ran to the rocks and jumped into the sea. The unblessed land is that on which the grass does not grow. 776

VI. ARCHÆOLOGY.

The few notes made in this section do not purport to be fully descriptive, but merely to indicate the nature of the antiquities of the region, which are of importance in the study of the people as bearing on the history of their past, and to direct the attention of archaeologists to the quantity of material worthy of study and record which is still to be met with in this part of county Mayo. 172 178

1. *Survivals.*—The district is comparatively rich in these, though many articles in use in the localities previously reported on are now quite extinct in Erris. The primitive condition of many of the houses, the absence of chimneys, and the custom of taking cattle into the dwellings have already been referred to. 178

The quern is still in use in several houses, especially on the islands and in the remoter localities, though now only employed for 178 412

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178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen.*

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tin-ware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

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is perfect, that overhanging the sea on the south side. Where the original wall-face shows it is like the forts of Aran, composed of blocks of stone, fitted neatly together without mortar; it is about ten feet high and eight feet in thickness. The ground in front of the wall was originally provided with a fosse and a wide belt of stone-stakes fixed upright in the earth, as in Dun Ængus on Inishmore, Aran; but all of these, with the exception of a few stumps, have now disappeared. A full description of this fort is given by O'Donovan in his MS. letters to the Ordnance Survey. The name of this fort, Dunnamoe, is now believed by the people to be *Dun-na-mbo*, or the fort of the cows, a name, the origin of which is stated in a MS. letter[1] by a Mr. Owen Heenaghan, of Emlybeg, in the Mullet, dated May, 1821. to be explained by the local tradition, that the cattle of the people were kept there at the time of the battle at Cross, to be afterwards referred to. O'Donovan, however, believed it to have been originally named *Den Modha*, after Modha, a chief of the Clann Huamore, Belgae, who also gave his name to Inis Modha, or the Clew Bay Islands.

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The other forts are *Dun Fiachra*, which consists of an earthen wall across the narrowest part of the neck of a long narrow peninsula, with precipitous coast, situated in the townland of Aghadoon; the remains of a stone doon, "Spinkadoon," of somewhat larger area, are situated a short distance to the north of this fort. *Dunadeary*, the fort of the red man, is also situated on the west coast of the Mullet. *Porth*, an earthen dun situated near the rectory, is barely traceable. *Dunavinalla*, a large fort, stands on a rocky height just outside the inlet of Portacloy.

There are several monuments of early date, the most remarkable of which is *Leacht var Erris*, the monument of the slaughter of Erris, near Cross, traditionally said to mark the sepulchre of a King of Munster, who was slain there in a battle with the people of Connaught. It is an irregularly pyramidal cairn, about fifteen feet in height; it lies within the remains of a nearly circular entrenchment; there are several such cairns in the neighbourhood, one of which, on being opened, was found to contain the skeleton of a man buried in the upright position. Leacht var Erris was for a long time buried beneath the sandhills, though its name and situation, and the history of the battle were still remembered by the people; but one night early in the present century a great storm blew off the sand

[1] This letter is pasted inside the cover of a copy of Knight's "Erris" in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy.

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172 and left the monument exposed, as well as a wide space round it, which was strewed with human bones. There are also the remains of an ancient cemetery, containing many graves, or cists of stone flags in the sands of Cross; these tombs are arranged in groups of three, lying parallel to one another. C. O. states that the remains in these had been burnt, as the bones were charred; polished flat stones and fragments of rings of steatite were discovered in these graves. About half a mile to the southward is another stone tomb, known as *Leacht na Calliagh*, or the hag's monument.

Some of the ruins at Inisglora were considered by O'Donovan and others to have originally been the dwellings of the aboriginal inhabitants, the Damnonii, converted in after times to monastic use. These are, three *tor-thighs*, or bee-hive shaped houses, the largest *tor-thigh mor* being 10½ feet in diameter,[1] the other about 10 feet; an artificial cave, or *uaigh*, now closed up, said to communicate with some of the other buildings; and a *caisiol* or circular-walled enclosure containing these. It would appear to have been about fifty yards in diameter. In 1838 the foundations of about fifty-six yards of this *caisiol* were traceable.[2]

The Christian antiquities, though interesting to the archæologist, are of little importance in a survey of this nature, and consequently require but slight mention.[3] They consist of ruins of churches and monasteries, crosses and wells. On the mainland of the Mullet the ruins are not of any very ancient date, the oldest probably being St. Derible's Church at Fallmore, in the immediate neighbourhood of which are her grave and her "keeve" or vat, at which two "patrons" used to be held annually, which were abolished about 1825 owing to some disorders arising out of them.[4] The other remains are the Church of Tarmoncarra, of which only a small portion of the wall remains, and Cross Abbey, a structure of comparatively modern date, having been founded posterior to 1216. "By an inquisition taken, 27th Queen Elizabeth, this monastery was found in possession of three-quarters of land, with the tithes of the same each quarter being valued at 13*s*. 4*d*. sterling annually" (Knight, p. 111).

The ecclesiastical buildings on the islands are of earlier date, the

[1] This is now known to the people as "St. Brendan's Cell."
[2] O'Donovan, MS. letters.
[3] For information as to these, see Lord Dunraven's "Notes on Irish Architecture."
[4] This church is fully described and illustrated in Lord Dunraven's "Notes on Irish Architecture."

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oldest probably being the small oratory of St. Brendan, on Inisglora, of dry stone, and measuring twelve feet by eight internally.[1] This building contains the remains of the wooden statute of St. Brendan, long famed on this coast; it used formerly be kissed by all visitors, and miraculous powers were imputed to it; now from exposure and damp it has been reduced to a shapeless lump of decayed wood; besides this there are two churches, *Teampull na-bfear*, the church of the men, 23 feet by 10 feet, and *Teampull na-mban*, the church of the women. There are also small enclosures, supposed to be the garden of the monastic settlement, in which garlic grows wild. The island was inhabited as late as 1616 by a monk named Walsh. On North Inishkea there is an old church which was dedicated to St. Columbkille; it has a doorway of the wedge shape, and is in fairly good preservation, the islanders being very scrupulous in the care of their antiquities. 172

On South Inishkea the foundations of a similar building may be traced. The holy wells are those of St. Derible on Inishkea and at Fallmore, and the celebrated well of St. Brendan on Inishglora; the belief in the antifeminine qualities of this well seem to have arisen from its being inside the bonds of the monastery. Finally, there are several ancient crosses, the most curious being the incised slabs of Inishkea and Duvillane; the others are the cross of Tarmoncarra referred to in a previous section, and the monumental stone near Fallmore, known as *Leacht Mic Maithin, Ioris*, after a native of that region, whose house was at that time the most western in Connaught; he does not seem to have been distinguished for anything else.

(*b*) There have of late years been many finds of antiquities consisting chiefly of articles of ecclesiastical use, mainly in North Inishkea. Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, has obtained in the shell mounds on Inishkea a considerable number of pins and needles of bone, bronze, and copper; some of these are of curious workmanship. He also possesses the fragments of a bowl of composition with a jet edge, found by some of the islanders, who broke it up as being a "fairy bowl." An antique bell (bronze?) was found some time ago in the ruins of St. Columbkille's Church, North Inishkea, by Phillip Lavelle, king of the island, who preserved it.

Other objects of later date have been found—a chalice of the seventeenth century, on Inishkea, a pectorial cross and pyx of silver, dated 1669, some coins, &c.[2]

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[1] The antiquities of Inishgluair are described in "Notes on Erris."

[2] Since the above was written several querns of smaller size than any now in use have been found in some of the duns.

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VI

POTS AND PANS

323 415 STORIES of 'the crock of gold' remind us of the superstitions which have gathered around the humble unglazed vessels of baked clay used in prehistoric times for domestic and funerary purposes. The novel art of pot-making—the magic transformation of soft clay into indestructible pottery—must have made a deep impression on the native mind when introduced into Atlantic Europe from the Mediterranean region some forty centuries ago. It symbolized, too, a new way of life, for it accompanied the revolutionary arts of food-production and the establishment of settlements which were more or less permanently fixed to the soil. The possession of pottery greatly facilitates cooking and boiling and marks the beginning of the long line of peasant soups, stews and porridges. But primitive pottery does not stand up to hard use and the wastage was great—to the delight of archaeologists. For prolonged stewing metal vessels were preferable, and in Ireland 'the pot', in recent centuries, invariably refers to the three-legged iron cooking pot. Life revolves about the fire and the pot, and it was remarked during famine years that victims 'clung to the pot when all else had gone'.

For the archaeologist potsherds are an invaluable guide to ● 172 changes of culture. Clay vessels had religious as well as domestic significance, and we know that as the Bronze Age advanced through the second millennium B.C. the domestic food vessel was adopted as a cinerary urn, and the deposition of cremated bones in urns continued in Ireland into the Christian era. Earlier, some of the megalithic cults had involved the offering to the dead of enormous quantities of broken pots. In

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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a late Neolithic burial cairn at Lyles Hill near Belfast I found 172 ●
tens of thousands of potsherds which had been collected from domestic refuse and thrown into the cairn during the course of its erection.[1] The broken plates which may be seen exposed on the graves in some old burial-grounds in Co. Mayo are [764] probably placed there in continuation of ancient practice. The breaking of pots is one of the elements in Hallowe'en pranks— [769] one might almost say rites—and again we notice the association with the dead, for All-Hallows is the time when the dead are believed to return to their homes.

It would appear that by breaking a pot you broke its spirit; 772
and by transference the power of the dead to do harm. Readers 775
will recall the significant lines from *Hamlet*, referring to the suicide of Ophelia: 'Her death was doubtful . . . for charitable prayers, shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.'[2] In some places in south-west England potsherds figure in the 'lent crocking' rites at Easter: like Easter eggs they are symbols of fertility. The association of fertility and decay, of life and death, comedy and tragedy, is clearly displayed in the wake games which are described in Chapter XX. This association, we note in passing, is ever-present in the mind of the Irish countryman, and the juxtaposition gives dramatic quality to the work of many Anglo-Irish playwrights.

This is not the place to enlarge on the technology of early 323
pot-making, but it may be observed that the designs, fabric 172
and finish of the Neolithic family of pottery in Ireland were far superior to those of succeeding periods: indeed it was not until wheel-made pots found local markets in the medieval towns that technically superior vessels were made in this country. In late prehistoric and early historic times the wealthy were able to import fine wares in small quantities from the 323
continent, but the peasant homes over most of Ireland apparent- 415
ly did without pottery—the Gaelic word for potter is a loan-word—and vessels of wood, metal or leather did duty for the now universal imported 'delph'. The Dutchman, Gerard Boate, writing in 1645, said that 'the use of earthen vessels hath been very rare among them, and to the most part unknown even

[1] E. E. Evans, *Lyles Hill: a late Neolithic site in Co. Antrim*, H.M.S.O. (1953).
[2] *Hamlet*, Act V, Sc. 1.

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were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the 322
place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have 415
heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants [539]
a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the 323
country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when
bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-
vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the 172
climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more 326
reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits 415
and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly
prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the
special property of the head of the house and they seem to
have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They
were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the
ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his
rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent
place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest pre- 172
historic pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthen- 171
ware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a [323]
pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is
one of the indications of a common substratum in the early
civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels
simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have
continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know
that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in
Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older
custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the
Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a
vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitu-
tion of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent
Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide [437]
should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots,
as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched
on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they
seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set
over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

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171 cooking places, which have been popularly known to Irish-
172 speakers as *fulachta fiadha* (deer roasts), consisting of mounds of burnt stones usually set in marshy places. Excavations have shown that they contain dug-out trunks or plank-lined pits sunk in peat where water was heated by hot stones. Hundreds of these mounds are known in Cos. Cork and Kilkenny and they occur sporadically in other parts of the country, as also in Wales and more rarely in England and Scotland. Some Irish examples have been dated to the Bronze Age, though it is believed that their construction continued into the Middle Ages.[1] They are interpreted as the bivouacs of summer hunting parties, and would represent an archaic tradition preserved by the privileged classes, but they have their humble counterparts in the stone-lined pits filled with hot turf, in which, I have been told, peasants would cook their potatoes when working some distance from home.

[415]

FIG. 23. Cooking pots: round-bottomed suspension vessels through 4,000 years: Neolithic (earthenware); late Bronze Age (bronze); medieval (bronze); and modern (cast iron).

The essential continuity of form and function is strikingly demonstrated by a series of Irish cooking pots such as is illustrated in Fig. 23, from the round-bottomed Neolithic bowl with its suspension holes to the present-day globular iron pot with its twin lugs and its three stubby legs—a concession to a hard uneven floor. The three-legged pot is the countrywife's maid-of-all-work and it is only slowly giving way to flat-bottomed pans and kettles. The oven-pot also, a kind of Dutch
415 oven, is widely utilized, and the pot-roasts which it cooks to perfection have replaced spit-roasted meat. It is said to get its other name, the bastible, from the fact that it was first made at

[1]M. J. O'Kelly, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 84 (1954), 105–55.

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351 the farmyard tends to be a substantial construction. Where the
417 farm is a survivor of a clachan, the small fields near the house, little more than gardens in size, are surrounded by massive winding walls attractive to the eye and always worth examining. Over rough ground they pick their way erratically, incorporating great boulders which could not be moved and which, centuries ago perhaps, became the nuclei of smaller boulders cleared from the fields. Knotted tangles of walls ten or twelve feet thick have resulted, monumental relics of secular toil. Such walls may
351 record by their successive accretions periods of agricultural
417 activity through the ages (Fig. 34). When more stones are
172 removed from the fields they are added as an outer skin, and one can easily recognize the latest additions by the bleached unlichened nakedness of the stones. Archaeological material may be accidentally incorporated in the core of the wall. The wall-builders, too, apparently had a habit of thrusting into the crevices curiosities picked up when working in the fields or bits of abandoned tools, and I have occasionally found prehistoric polished stone axes which their finders had pushed into a wall. The core of the wall is likely to contain similar oddments and bits of pottery, so that the excavation of old walls can be quite profitable to the archaeologist. In Denmark it has been possible to date ancient field-walls to various periods stretching back into prehistory, mainly by means of the stray objects they contain.

In Ireland the clearest evidence for the antiquity of some field boundaries comes from the remains found buried under the bogs. Examples in Co. Londonderry have been described by Dr. Oliver Davies as consisting of irregularly piled stone slabs with standing stones set at intervals.[1] Some of these ancient walls, which country people in Ulster call Danish fences, seem to have enclosed large areas and appear from their contour-alignment to have been head-dykes, enclosing land once arable, but now overgrown with peat, and demarcating it from the rough outfield. I have seen examples both in Ulster and in Munster which are of massive dry-stone work tied to great standing stones set at fairly regular intervals. Often it is only the standing stones, deep-bedded by the builders, that remain to puzzle the archaeologist. A characteristic of these fences is that

[1] O. Davies, *U.J.A.*, 2 (1939), 61–65.

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many of the stones are set vertically or diagonally.[1] Others of the same character, or equally massive earthen banks, may be observed to radiate from some of the raths or 'Danish forts' which we now know to have been farmsteads of the Dark Ages and, since they seem to have been single farms held in severalty, the enclosures which they presuppose are likely to be co-eval with the raths. Indeed Professor O'Riordain has claimed that the existing earthen field fences around the group of raths at Cush in Co. Limerick closely follow those of the late Bronze Age which were 'essentially similar' . . . 'the present-day field system is the direct descendant of the ancient one'.[2] 351 417 172

Much smaller and more irregular are the walls one sees associated with areas of megalithic settlement, though this may be because of their great age. Indeed one example recently discovered during the excavation of a megalithic tomb in Co. Down, which was older than the construction of the cairn and partly preserved by it, was built in coursed dry-stone work.[3] We have as yet little information to draw on but it seems likely that these oldest walls were mainly the result of the casual piling-up of stones cleared from little patches of cultivated ground. Some of the great walls associated with clachans and referred to above may well be built on the foundations of such lines of stones pitched around and between bedded boulders which could not be moved. Yet the size of some of the stones built into these ancient walls is astonishing. I have watched a loose-limbed farmer, who seemed to inherit the physical characters as well as the skills of the megalith builders, handle with superb ease great boulders which one would think it beyond human power to move. A stout timber or iron bar and a sturdy slipe (Chapter XIII) are the tools used. Alternatively boulders may be buried *in situ* if there is sufficient depth of soil, but until recently there was a reluctance, for superstitious reasons, to break up large stones. I have not come across the old miners' practice of cracking stones with fire,[4] and except near towns or quarries the splitting of field stones by means of wedges, 'plug 351 417 [483] [316]

[1] O. Davies, loc. cit., 62.

[2] S. P. O'Riordain, *P.R.I.A.*, 45 (1940), 83–181.

[3] A. E. P. Collins and D. M. Waterman, *Millin Bay, a late Neolithic Cairn in Co. Down*, H.M.S.O. (1955), 8.

[4] But A. Young (*Tour*, 2, 115) describes the process near Killarney in 1778.

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IX

KILNS AND CLOCHAUNS

343 WHILE the timber building has almost entirely disap-
333 peared from the Irish scene, there survives an archaic tradition of building in dry stone which is best illustrated in the humble structures erected for special purposes in or adjacent to the farmyard. Since stonework has a much better chance of survival than timber it is possible, even without excavation, to trace the descent of some of these small buildings through the ages. They include corbelled animal houses (clochauns), corn-drying kilns, sweat-houses and turf-shelters. We shall consider also small outhouses of sods or wattles, including soot-houses and animal shelters. Some of these, reduced in scale and status, are the successors of buildings once erected for higher purposes.

The clochauns of south-western Ireland, corbelled stone struc-
172 tures, nowadays used mainly for keeping pigs or poultry, are indis-
343 tinguishable from the monastic huts such as are found on the precipitous island of Skellig Michael off the coast of Co. Kerry. Similar stone huts accompany monastic settlements in other parts of Ireland—and also in the Hebrides and in islands off the coast of Brittany—and they have been preserved, thanks to their sanctity or their isolation, as examples of a mode of building which was common when Christianity reached the west. Some clochauns in the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, have been erected within living memory, but we also know that this type of construction is far older than Christianity in Ireland, that it was already two millennia old when Christian converts adopted it for their dwellings and their oratories. It is probable that some of the megalith-builders lived in clochauns and that their magnificent corbelled tombs have alone survived because they

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were buried under great cairns such as those at New Grange on the River Boyne. Clusters of ruined clochauns surrounded by old field walls litter the hillslopes of the Dingle peninsula near Fahan; but we can only guess at the age of these 'beehive farms'. Some of the large oval clochauns would give standing room to as many as sixty people. Many of the existing farms in the district have at least one round clochaun, used for keeping pigs or poultry or for storing milk or turf (Fig. 37). 172 343

In the Aran Islands both oval and circular stone-roofed buildings are to be seen, though most of them are ruined. O'Flaherty in the seventeenth century described them as being 'so ancient that nobody knows how long ago any of them was made'.[1] The oval houses measure up to 21 ft. by 12 ft. internally; they are rectangular inside and some have two opposite doors (Pl. 3). Smaller round huts are also known.[2] In north-eastern Ireland, too, in north Louth and south-east Down, both round and square clochauns have been constructed down to recent times for housing pigs and poultry: a few are still in use.[3] The corbelled pigsty is known also in Wales,[4] and has been recorded in Caithness and the Orkney Islands.[5] Very similar corbelled buildings attached to old farms on Dartmoor are said to have been used as ash houses, for holding the embers taken from the fire at night.[6] One example, now used as a chicken house, is described as a winnowing hut.

Other parts of western and southern Europe can show both ancient and recent examples of corbelled constructions, though most of them, in so far as such a timeless style can be dated, were probably erected within the last two or three centuries, and some of them are known to have been built within living memory. They are found, either in ruins or serving as shelters or as animal- and tool-houses, in south France, especially in and around the Central Plateau, in Spain, Portugal and Majorca, in the heel of Italy, in the western Balkans and in Crete, where the mountain dairies appear to be very similar to the stone 171

[1] R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 68.
[2] Å. Campbell, *Folk-Liv*, 1938, 173–96; G. H. Kinahan, *P.R.I.A.*, 10, 25
[3] R. H. Buchanan, *U.J.A.*, 19 (1956), 92–112.
[4] I. C. Peate, *The Welsh House* (1944), 42.
[5] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 71.
[6] *Trans. Plymouth Institute*, XVIII (1944), 34.

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removing the sods over a rectangular area the turf is dug over to a spit's depth and worked into a slush with forks and bare feet, water being added if necessary. The slush is shovelled into box barrows and spread out to dry in a layer about nine inches thick. The process is repeated, a spit at a time, until the bottom of the bog or the water table is reached. After a few days, when the layer of black mud is hard enough to bear a man's weight, it is marked out in criss-cross grooves made with the edges of the hands, the bare-footed 'baker' or 'runner' walking backwards during the process and dipping his hands from time to time in water to clean them (Plate 10). The turf bricks marked out in this way are separated with a sharp spade, much as the Romans are said to have cut out their bricks, and they are then laid on end, footed, clamped and stacked in the ordinary way. Gerald Boate's description of the making of mud turf in the first half of the seventeenth century shows how little the methods have changed. 'They fall to the business, dividing it so among the labourers, that one part of them do dig out the earth, or rather the mud, and by spadesfull cast it on a heap, either by the side of the pit or somewhere within the same, where others stand, who very well work it, turning it to and fro, and then with their shovels fill it into certain wooden trays, amongst the English in Ireland peculiarly called lossels; the which being full, another part of the labourers draw the same, with great cords fastened to them, to some dry place within the bog . . . where having poured out the mud, they go back to fetch more, and so go to and fro all day long. On that dry place . . . sit certain women upon their knees, who mould the mud, using nothing else but their hands . . . the turf is fashioned flat and broad beneath, growing narrower towards the top; which being done, the turf is let lie upon the ground the space of a week or more . . . and being reasonably well dried, it is piled up in little heaps, leaving everywhere empty spaces between, that the air and the wind passing through them, they may dry the sooner.' He adds that two women moulders were sufficient to keep twenty men at work.[1] 314

From time to time the worker in the bogs comes across objects lost or buried there as the bog was growing, and we saw above 314 172

[1]G. Boate, *Ireland's Natural History* (1652), 155.

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314 how these are used by the pollen-specialists to build up a bog
172 chronology. Some, like the magnificent gold ornaments of the Bronze Age, were deposited in the bogs, or in lakes where the bogs later grew, for magical purposes. Other objects were sometimes hidden in the hope of being recovered, and still others were thrown into a bog hole when they were worn out. All have been almost perfectly preserved by the peat, whether made of metal or organic material such as wood, leather or clothing. None of the discoveries which occasionally astonish
314 the turf-cutter and relieve the monotony of his labours is more
172 mysterious than the 'bog butter' which is found in wooden
251 vessels or baskets, occasionally in containers of cloth, bark or skin, in quantities ranging from a few pounds to as much as a hundredweight (Fig. 65). During the first half of last century,

FIG. 65. Methers and wooden cups (Belfast Museum). The first example, from Co. Londonderry, contains bog butter. The cups are from the Aran Islands.

when the pressure of population and industrial needs led to immense inroads on the turf bogs, an astonishing number of finds was made. The 'butter' was a perquisite of the finder, and there are records of its being taken to the fair to be sold as grease for wheel-cars, which, like the 'singing carts' of Spain, were very noisy. In fact it resembles lard rather than butter and analysis shows that its composition has changed, but there can be no doubt that it was originally butter. There are many references to the practice of burying butter in bogs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the explanations offered are also many. Petty thought it was done in order to

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make the butter rancid, since the Irish, he says, preferred strong butter.[1] An eighteenth century writer states that some of the buried butter was 314 172 251

> So strong, a dog with help of wind,
> By scenting out, with ease might find.[2]

Others have claimed that it was buried to mature and purify it, and one writer has seen an explanation in the need to have butter available at Lent. It is reasonable to suppose that the surplus butter of summer would be stored in this way once the preservative properties of peat were known, but the practice is certainly pre-Christian in origin. None of the Irish finds has been securely dated—the majority of the wooden containers have an ageless 'medieval' appearance—but a discovery in Skye was satisfactorily dated to the very beginning of the Christian era (it contained not only cowhairs but some strands from the head of a fair-haired dairymaid).[3] I am inclined to think that a practice which came to be generally adopted for utilitarian reasons had its origin in magic, and that deposits were originally made in the hope of appeasing the powers of evil and inducing an abundant flow of milk from the pastures.[4] The custom may well have originated during the crisis of the climatic deterioration in the last centuries of the pre-Christian era. Surviving folklore is full of the magic properties of butter, and in the west of [234] Ireland it is known that lumps of butter were thrown into loughs and springs through which cattle were driven in order to restore them to health. It seems from the accounts of discoveries in the bogs that some of the butter containers had been thrown into a bog hole rather than buried. Later, no doubt, it became the practice to bury butter in order to preserve it, but if this had always been so I cannot think that there would have been so many unclaimed deposits left to await the slane of the turf-cutter. It should be noticed that the custom of preserving [171] butter in bogs or in moist earth is found also in Scandinavia, Iceland, India and Morocco.[5] It is interesting that bog butter

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*, 82.
[2]W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle*, Canto 2.
[3]J. Ritchie, *P.S.A.S.*, 75, 5–22.
[4]E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 10, 59–65.
[5]ibid., 59.

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[412]

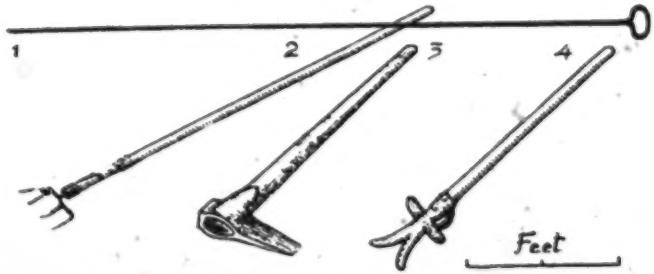

FIG. 66. Some tools used in the bog. (1) Trying iron for locating buried timber, Co. Cork. (2) Turf fork, Co. Armagh. (3) Fir-hatchet or 'finhow', Co. Armagh. (4) Fir-rooter, Co. Galway.

314 contains no salt, but the explanation may be that it was difficult to obtain and that its addition was not necessary when the 172 butter was preserved by burying it. This is confirmed by the 251 following quotation which shows also that the custom of preserving butter in a bog-hole was still remembered a generation ago in Co. Limerick. Lady Carbery writes: 'In their grandfather's time, butter, flavoured with wild garlic and unsalted (salt cost too much to buy except in small quantities) used to be put in a bog-hole and left to ripen.'[1]

[1]M. Carbery, *The Farm by Lough Gur*, 128.

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come across surviving examples of these ancient devices. The 227
iron 'cribs' associated with modern salmon weirs, however, appear to derive from wattled traps. And the long conical 'coghill' nets in which the eels are caught in the weirs of the Bann, the Shannon and (until recently) the Erne, are shaped like weels and indeed they are sometimes built up of a series of cones. The fine meshed 'tail' of the net is made to open and the eels, nowadays, are poured directly into submerged tanks. A detail suggestive of long custom is that the 'skiver' with which the tail is closed in the coghills of the weirs at Portna on the Bann consists of a perforated rib-bone of horse or cow. The pin is attached to a cord, which is wound round the end of the net and secured by thrusting the pin into the windings. The walls of the weirs are often still built of wattles, and the old style of weir on the Erne consists of a base of large stones into which the wattled superstructure is thrust.[1]

The wattles are known on the Bann as *skeaghs*: of the six weirs now fishing there four are of the traditional type and two have been modernized. At Athlone on the Shannon there were twenty-two eel weirs in the early seventeenth century, and nearly all were still working in the nineteenth century: a single weir is now fished there.[2] The eel weirs of the River Erne had been reduced to five when they were abandoned owing to the recent construction of a dam for the Ballyshannon [376] hydro-electric scheme. The Bann silver eel fisheries are probably the largest of their kind in western Europe, and it is significant that the Bann is one of the richest rivers in Europe for archaeological discoveries ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the [172] early medieval period. Both salmon and eels have now become money-crops and the catches are exported. Already in the eighteenth century Irish salt salmon was exported in considerable [439] quantities to America. The ice-house in which salmon used to be preserved is one of the many ruined buildings to be seen [343] about the decaying houses of the gentry, and most country houses also had their fish ponds.

Among the common folk eels are esteemed only by the folk 262
who catch them, legally or otherwise, but they were formerly

[1]A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 213–23.
[2]A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 80 (1950), 146–54.

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543 and purchasing boards, it is still a powerful commercial and social force in the rest of Ireland. In fact the numbers of fairs
443 have increased with the post-famine dominance of the cattle trade, though they have tended to be concentrated in fewer centres as many small fair-towns have been by-passed by improved means of communication. On the other hand the weekly markets have declined or disappeared, their place taken by shops which typically handle drinks as well as groceries, clothing as well as hardware. Thus the fair has retained and even strengthened its magnetic hold on the countryfolk, and though many of its subsidiary functions have been taken over by institutions of more recent origin, the fair itself retains a pagan aura. There is a widespread belief, by no means confined to Ireland,
[821] that fair days are always rainy days. This belief may well be justified by climatic averages, but I have heard it explained as a consequence of the lies and profanity, the fights and pagan ways of the fair. Many an ancient fair has become extinct, no doubt because it no longer fulfilled its economic functions, but the explanation usually given is that it was abandoned 'on account of the fighting'.

In Europe, north of the Alpine mountains, the fair as a means
172 of exchange and social intercourse is an institution older than
543 the town, and older far than Christianity. The periodic assemblies of early Celtic Ireland served as temporary towns, and it was probably these sites which Ptolemy marked as cities on his map of the second century A.D. They were held on hill-tops hallowed by an antiquity which archaeology has in some instances traced back to the Bronze Age, and the regions which they served were, we have suggested, already taking shape in the late Neolithic period. Ireland has a number of large enclosures of Neolithic date analogous to Windmill Hill in Wiltshire, which apparently functioned as seasonal meeting places where stock was rounded-up and sorted. An enclosure of rather different type but of similar age—the Giant's Ring
[541] near Belfast—was the scene of horse-racing down to recent centuries. On the cairn-crowned Cave Hill, too, overlooking
543 Belfast, crowds used to assemble on Easter Monday 'in accordance with immemorial usage'.[1] We may see in the 'parles

[1] J. B. Doyle, *Tours in Ulster* (1855), 102.

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed mar- 163
riages the population would continue to increase were it not
for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, [167]
sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious prac- [842]
tices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be
cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless
marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some 582
evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or
bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway
and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a
means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested.
The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may [114]
be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in
Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living
traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and London-
derry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive 842
the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well-
organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead
and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns
and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation
in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the
spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings
at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary
histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral
spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to [172]
many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a
reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton
in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves
barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed
certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many
ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic
magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman
who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far re- 584
moved from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day
peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1]R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1755*, 103.
[2]H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

234 newly-calved cow should be milked on to a piece of metal
825 placed in the pail. Offerings of the 'beastlings' were poured in the raths and at the roots of fairy thorns, to appease the fairies. When taking a drink out of doors, the old countryman will casually spill a portion of the draught on the earth as a complimentary libation to the good people. 'When a cow fell sick through fairy malice, it was formerly by no means an uncommon practice, in the west of Ireland, to devote the ailing animal to St. Martin. The ceremony was performed by letting a few drops of blood from the cow in honour of the saint.'[1] Cows which, for no apparent reason, are not thriving are said to be elf-shot. The elf-stones or fairy-darts which are supposed to [179] have caused the mischief are prehistoric flint arrowheads such as can be picked up in the fields. One of the tricks of the cow-doctor who is called in, and who keeps a few arrowheads handy, is to produce one by sleight of hand from the flank of the ailing beast. Or counter-magic can be worked by means of a flint arrowhead which must not be allowed to touch the ground after it has been found. The cow-doctor uses sympathetic magic in curing calves believed to be suffering from intestinal knots by drawing apart over the animal's back the loose ends of a string tied in a complicated witch-knot or 'bat', of the type which comes undone when pulled. But as always he must work the magic correctly, for if the knot is not resolved another one is tied
789 inside the calf.

234 Hanging in the byre one sometimes sees a flint pebble sus-
[823] pended on a string through a natural hole. It is a witch-stone, protecting the cows from milk-stealers, and it may owe its virtue to the flint or to its symbolic ever-watching eye. In the Ardenne a holed flint hung in the stable is believed to preserve
[171] the horses from nightmares,[2] and nearer home in the Yorkshire dales holed stones known as ring-stones protected the cows from the evil eye. 'Blessings on all that I can see' is the traditional formula to use when one enters a byre. An ill-disposed person could, merely by looking at it, 'blink' a cow so that its milk would yield no butter. The cow could be cured by burning under its nose a portion of the blinker's clothes

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 6.
[2]H. H. Turney-High, *Ch'teau-Gérrad* 53(19), 232.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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103 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a
"Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas
173 in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another
"seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

173 Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of
776 mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and
133 Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff
of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones
that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends
[172] a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all
776 Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*concluded*).

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XX. *Earthworks and Buildings.*

Fairy forts and mounds have been dealt with in Section iv., haunted houses in Section viii., and foundation sacrifices in Section xi.

Forts.—The ring walls and mounds in County Clare are probably residential, or, more rarely, sepulchral, but certainly not military. They consist of one or more walls (or banks), usually slightly oval, and the earthworks have fosses and traces of stone facing. They are named *dun*, *lis*, *rath*, and even *caher* (*cathair*), but the last name is usually reserved for the dry stone ring walls. *Ooan* (*uamh*) is used both for forts and for artificial caves in them, and also, for a fort-souterain, in 1317 in the *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (History of the Wars of the O'Briens and de Clares). The country people have no limited views as to the makers of the 2400 forts in Clare. Croaghateeaun near Ballinalacken is attributed to the ancient deities, the Danánn, and one should cross oneself in entering its garth.[1] Mohernagartan and Mohernaglasha were made by the smith god Lon,—the latter for the grey "cloud and rain cow," the Glas. Oisin the poet lived in Caherussheen near Corofin, and the great stone fort on Turlough Hill probably belonged to the "Irish Militia" (Finn's warriors). Chonan, one of Finn's men, dwelt in the now levelled fort on Keentlae (*ceann tsleibh*) on Inchiquin Hill.[2] Three contemporaries, Crochaun (lumped hill), Dahlin, and Sall (the brine), made the forts bearing their names at Loop Head, and one at Cahernaheanmná near them for their sister the beloved of the hero Dermot O'Duine.[3] Oircheannaigh "of the golden cap" made the vast triple Moghane for his "fighting ring."[4] A giant dwelt in the promontory fort of Doonaunmore at Ballinahown who lost his magic staff and was

[1] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 345.

[2] "*Fris tighe chonain.*"

[3] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxviii., p. 351.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 281; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxvii., pp. 218 *et seq.*

[p. 260]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran. 172 823 776

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign. 823 173

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman. 823 778

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional, 346 773

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

[P 26]

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173 son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with
273 Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the
823 other side of the "Rine."

XXI. *Miscellanea and Addenda.*

173 *Treasure legends and hunting.*—Many forts have been much
556 defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are few. Caherscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib of 1551),[14] is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*" or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the finest of all drinks").[15] Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially [78] of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost. Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results, in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver) near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka castle,[16] near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told [172] to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

[14] In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrogh, Earl of Thomond.

[15] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvi., p. 368.

[16] See also vol. xxi., p. 344. [P 264]

1

The Island and Its Past

Prehistoric Period (9000 B.C. to 500 A.D.)

133 FORMED SINCE THE RETREAT over 12,000 years ago of the Weichsel glacier, Inis Beag consists of a block of limestone, Carboniferous in age, the geological axis of which is aligned northwest to southeast. The block has a gentle southwest dip, and its massive grey limestone strata are separated by narrow bands of water-bearing shales. There are two physical subdivisions in the island. On the northeast side, differential erosion has formed a series of terraces
133 separated by small cliffs a dozen or so feet in height. The greater share of good
134 arable land is found in this subdivision, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and ice. These soils have been deepened artificially by the islanders through adding sand, seaweed, and compost. On the southwest side of Inis Beag is a more even surface, composed largely of pavement covered here and there by indigenous and manufactured soils, sloping from the 212-feet-high terrace crest almost as the dip of the strata to the Atlantic coast. The bare limestone surfaces are intersected in all directions by deep crevices, and in places the rocks form large slabs or are so fissured as to present a series of
133 vertical ridges. Found in the joints are most of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs
[134]—of the island. The rocky appearance of the "back of the island" (see Fig. 1), as the people call this second subdivision, is accentuated by numerous granite and sandstone erratics dropped by the retreating glacier.

• 172 As yet no evidence of the Paleolithic has come to light in Ireland. The Mesolithic is dated from 6500 to 3000 B.C.; thus early man may have entered Ireland hard on the heels of the disappearing ice, as he did in other parts of Europe, crossing from the Continent on land bridges which then existed where the English Channel and Irish Sea now flow. A Neolithic period lasting only 1000 years existed in Ireland, and its artifacts at particular sites show a merging with earlier Mesolithic and later Copper-Bronze Age forms. Inis Beag contains a profusion of Copper-Bronze Age remnants, created before the coming of the Celts

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

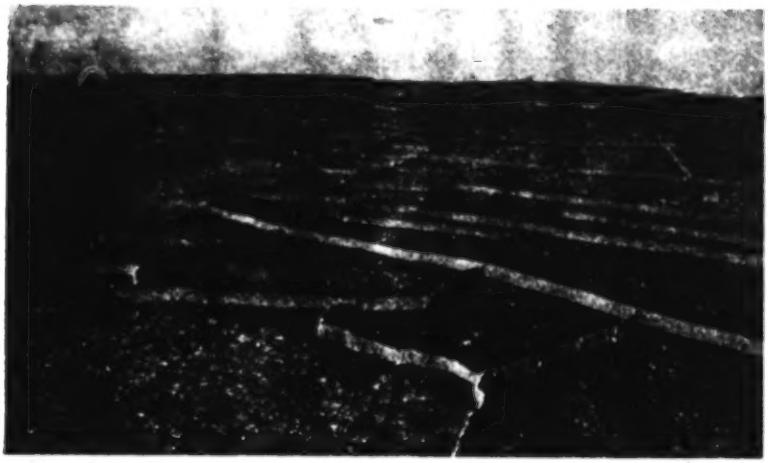

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Figure 1. The back of the island from the lighthouse

with an Iron Age culture about 350 B.C.; but only in 1961 were earlier Neolithic, or possibly Mesolithic, implements discovered. When my wife and I arrived in the island for a seven week visit during the summer of 1962, we were presented with three slate axe heads which had been unearthed by road workers the previous December. It is possible that they are Mesolithic, for the industry never has been dated accurately.

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The principal Copper-Bronze Age monuments of Inis Beag are Megalithic tombs and burial mounds, and possibly kitchen middens and semi-subterranean stone dwellings, called *clochán*. Small gallery graves incorporated into lately built stone walls are common, but it appears that they never have been examined by prehistorians, for there is no record of them in the literature. Archeologists seldom have visited the back of the island where the prehistoric and medieval populations, contrary to present day opinion, may have centered. None of the Inis Beag *clochán* have been dated, but it is known that they were lived in by clerics and ascetics during the Middle Ages, and were still used as living quarters in a nearby island early last century. It is as difficult to ascertain the age of burial mounds and middens in Ireland as it is of stone houses, because they too were formed over several historical periods. Burial mounds of earth and stone, termed respectively tumuli and cairns by archeologists, first were erected during the Copper-Bronze Age and continued to be built into the early modern period (although not for funerary purposes). There are numerous mounds in Inis Beag, but in many instances it is hard to distinguish on sight cairns from *clochán* in their ruinous, overgrown condition. The islanders regard both types of structures as burial sites. Middens can be dated from the Mesolithic to the end of the medieval era. Most of the island middens are associated with dwelling places from the Middle Ages, but those located near the mouths of caves in the limestone cliffs of the terraces

[814]

172 may be much older. I was told that foreign collectors long ago purchased from the folk copper and bronze artifacts which had been exhumed from cave middens.

172 333 The Iron Age in Inis Beag is best represented by a fort constructed of limestone rocks quarried locally and fitted together without mortar, which bears no name other than the Irish word for fort—*Duin* (see Fig. 2). It commands the rim of a promontory, and its oval shape measures 170 by 127 feet. Unfortunately, from the point of view of the prehistorian, its inner wall was greately reduced in height and any outer ramparts and stone *chevaux de frise* completely destroyed to furnish building materials for a medieval tower house which stands at its center. To the south about 500 feet, and on somewhat higher ground, are the remains of what may have been a monastery. According to island historians, it was pulled down by soldiers attacking the "castle" with cannons, and most of its stones were employed later in the construction of a watch tower nearby. Another monastery at the back of the island on the southeast side may indeed be the ruins of a fort, as the oldest of its three names bears the word fort.

Medieval Period (500 to 1500)

17 The end of the Iron Age in Ireland is dated conveniently by historians as 431 (or 462), when St. Patrick arrived from Wales as a missionary to convert the pagan Celts. But, of course, prehistoric cultural elements persisted for many cen-

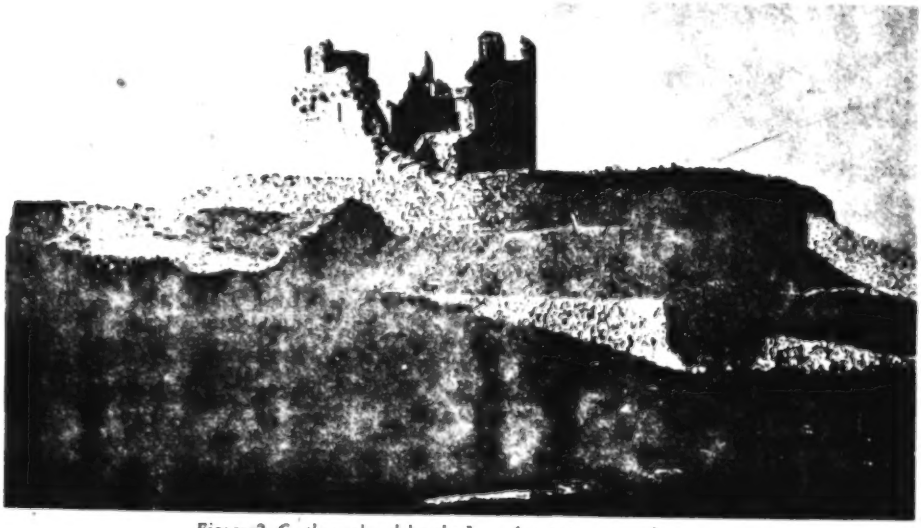

Figure 2. Castle enclosed by the Iron Age promontory fort

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on [796]
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the officiating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it: at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hundreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appearance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island
form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are
situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the
rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are
Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common
land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the
monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common
land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the com-
munity. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 276
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve
the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small
enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop
are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes
purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [143]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an
aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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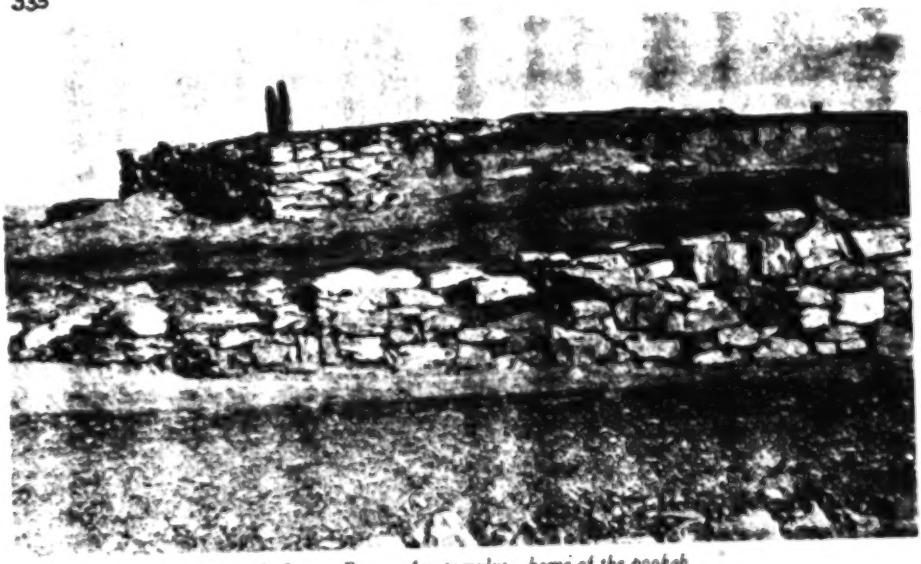

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or press. 231 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible. 361 351 [173] [184]

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farmyard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type. 361 351

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, XVI, 102, 104.

[2] Flatrès, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24. [113]

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778 like a basin; it contains almost a gallon of water; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

527 The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

773 2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could
823 be collected are given below; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

Lough Bofin (The Lake of the White Cow).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.[1] As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

● 173 *Carrig Guairim.*—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the roadside in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act; he was taken over to Rinvyle

[276] [1] Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

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Castle, on the mainland, and tried there; having been convicted, he was put to death, the means of execution being to chain him on a rock, which is left bare at low water, so that when the tide rose again he was drowned. This rock has ever since borne the name of Carrig Guairim or Gorham's rock. The belief is that ever since a curse has rested on the families connected with the murder, and that, in consequence, no Halligan can ever become a priest; and that several who have tried have all failed from one cause or another. 173 [103]

Cromwell's (or Bosco's) Castle.—There are many stories related about the old castle on Port Island, at the entrance to the harbour. Tradition says that it was built by a pirate named Bosco, about whose nationality there seems to be much uncertainty: one account making him a Spaniard, another a Dane. He was an ally of Grania Uaile, who had a fort a little farther up along the opposite side of the harbour, and for whom he kept a fleet of boats. He had a chain boom stretched across the harbour's mouth, from his castle to a place known in Irish as the Cat's Hole, close to the castle of the Guairim mentioned in the last tale, and to the site of the present R. C. Church, and thus prevented ships from entering or leaving the place without paying heavy dues to him. An embrasure or doorway overhanging the sea is said to have been used by him as a means of disposing of his prisoners; and just outside the mouth of the harbour, and close under the walls of the castle, is a small rocky islet, called the Gun Rock, on which Bosco is said to have had a heavy gun planted to defend the entrance.

During the Commonwealth, the castle is said to have been at first used as a prison for priests and monks transported thither from the mainland, and afterwards to have been strengthened, provided with a small boat-harbour, and supplied with a garrison, for whom a market was opened in Middlequarter. A large treasure is reputed to be buried somewhere within the castle; and a story is told of a priest who at one time attempted to dig for it, but was ordered to desist by a voice which spoke to him in Irish out of the ground.

The Bell of Inishshark.—There once was a marvellous brass bell in Inishshark, which was preserved with the greatest care, as it had at one time belonged to St. Leo, the patron saint of the island, about which the following legend is related. A French ship came to the island, the crew of which plundered the place, and took away the bell; but their theft did not prosper with them, for they had not well got it on board before very rough weather came on, and the vessel

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173 began to sink.[1] Suspecting that the bell was the cause of their misfortune, they threw it into the sea, and the ship was saved. Next morning, when some of the islanders were searching for sea-weed on the shore, they found the bell lying broken among the rocks. This [778] relic has long ago disappeared, having been cut up into pieces which were worn as amulets, most of which have been taken to America, but it is said that some are still kept as great treasures by some old people in Inishbofin, who refuse to show them to anyone.

Richard O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, makes mention of this bell ("H-Iar Connaught," p. 117) . . . "Inisark is of the same property with Bofin and the saint therein worshipped, St. Leo; of whose reliques is a bell there extant."

773 *St. Leo's Foot-print.*—There is pointed out an impression in the rock on which Cloghan Leo is built, which is said to be the imprint of 823 the saint's foot, and the people's explanation of how it came there is, that when he had finished building the cloghan he had to leap down, as he had no ladder, and alighting on the rock he left the print of his foot upon it, where it still remains.

173 There is a tradition on the islands of a large treasure of gold being hidden on Davillaun (a small island of the Bofin group), on which a large vessel of the Spanish Armada was wrecked, and some of the people claim to know exactly where it is. There are also many stories about Lord Nelson, under whom several men from these islands served, and wild tales of the old smugglers; and a very narrow passage between two dangerous rocks through which a daring smuggler once steered his vessel, and thus baffled his pursurers, is pointed out.

Archæology.

178 Though making no pretentions to being an archæologist, yet as an inquiry of this sort would be imperfect without, at least, a partial [172] description of the antiquities of the place, I hope that the notes hereunder given may, in some degree at least, supply the want.

1. *Survivals.*—In these the locality is comparatively rich, a good many old implements and methods of working, which have become extinct in other places, being still common. Such are the continuance of the use of plants and lichens as dyes, and some details of dress, such as the old blue cap, &c., which have been referred to before.

[1] One version of the story states that the ship had got as far as the Bay of Biscay!

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is concluded. The burial grounds are kept much better than in many other parts of the West; and on Inishkea, as well as in the Mullet, it it is customary to decorate the graves with large white pebbles, and to place at the head a neatly made wooden cross. A curious custom exists, some instances of which were observed at Tarmoncarra, of placing tobacco pipes on the graves; these are the pipes which were left unused after the wake. What the reason is for so placing them could not be ascertained, but it is considered extremely unlucky to remove them. 764 [777]

Unbaptised infants are interred in separate burying grounds by themselves, several of which are in the district. 766

It is now no longer customary for the people of the Mullet to bury their dead in Inisglora, the last instance of this having occured over thirty years ago. Formerly many families used regularly to make use of this island as a cemetery, always taking a body over from a point of the mainland opposite, which was stated by tradition to have once been connected with the main, but to have got separated afterwards by a channel which has gradually widened. 73 764

Maxwell,[1] writing in 1832, says—"There are no people on earth more punctilious in the interment of their dead than the peasantry of this remote district. A strange and unaccountable custom exists of burying different families resident on the main in island cemeteries, and great difficulty and often great danger attends the conveyance of a corpse to its insulated resting place. No inducement will make these wild people inter a body apart from the tomb of its fathers, and, if a boat will live, the corpse will be transported to the family tomb. At times the weather renders this impracticable, but the deceased is kept for many days unburied in the hope that the storm may subside; and only when frail mortality evinces unequivocal tokens of decay will the relatives consent to unite its dust with the ashes of a stranger." 764

A considerable number of migratory labourers leave this district annually to do harvesting work in England, on the proceeds of which work they in part support themselves during the winter. The number doing thus has decreased somewhat of late years. 167

There is not much to be said about the everyday mode of life. The men fish and attend to their holdings; the women manage household affairs and assist at field work in times of pressure. The people are early risers in the summer months, and, as a rule, retire to bed early, few lights being seen in the hamlets after nine or ten p.m. 512

[1] Maxwell, W. H., "Wild sports of the West," chap. XIX.

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Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), used as an expectorant. 757
Marsh-mallow (*Althæa officinalis*), used as poultice for "sore breast." 278
Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), used as an infusion for coughs.
Parsely (*Petroselinum sativum*), boiled in milk for "gravel."
Belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*), used for palpitation or "heart beat."

It will be seen from this list that several of the remedies used are officinal; and others, though not officially recognised, possess medicinal properties.

3. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many of these current in the district, but only a small number could be collected. Among all these, few bearing on the early history of this region seem to have come down to the present time, except the tradition of a great battle fought at Cross, in the Mullet, between the people of the country, and an invading army under a king of Munster who was slain in the fight, and over whose remains a tumulus was erected. 173 ●

There is, so far as could be ascertained, no tradition as to the origin of the earlier inhabitants, either of the mainland, or of the islands; but the families whose ancestors came from Ulster two centuries ago are well known, and sometimes are called by the name Ultagh, instead of their own surnames. [551]

It would be expected that there would be some tales connected with the duns, of which there are several, but very few seem to be known, even the oldest inhabitants not seeming to have heard any history of them. The story of Dun Donald, related by Knight,[1] the vague tradition that Dunamoa was built by the Burkes, and besieged by the "Danes"; and another concerning Dun Fiachrach, which is believed to have been a favourite resting place for the children of Lir, and the fishermen of the neighbourhood say that the founder of the fort used to ride a "water-horse," on which he could leap across the deep caves on to the cliffs on each side of the dun. Many of the people ascribe these forts to "the Danes."

The favourite tales and poems are either ancient myth, or of a semi-religious character; legends of the saints forming a large portion of the old chroniclers' stock.

Mr Knight says[2]—"It is not from these cairns (Seefins) alone we claim Fingal and Ossian as *peculiarly* ours; we have heard them in *real song*, and many a winter's evening have I heard the old chronicler lying on his back quietly, in the bed beyond the fire, repeat the

[1] P. Knight, Erris, &c., p. 166. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

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173 'deed of old' to delighted listening ears, but in language so ancient as to be now almost unintelligible to most Irish speakers of the modern school." The tradition of St. Brendan's discovery of America is well known, but the statement made by old writers about the supposed anti-putrefactive nature of the soil of Inishglora, does not seem to be recognised by the people of the district, who point to the bones among the ruins in disproof of the story.

O'Flaherty, in his "Ogygia," mentions the island in the following 539 lines:—

> "In Innisglore on Erris shore,
> Should we the bodies of our sires explore
> We'ed find them blooming, fresh and fair,
> No human flesh can rot or perish there."

The Priest's Leap.—Just below the sea face of Dunnamoe, and 173 separated from it by a narrow channel, is a large rock, which, tradition 823 relates, was once part of the cliff on which the fort is built. It is said that once in the old times, some say the time of Cromwell, a priest was saying Mass at Tarmoncarra, when he was surprised by the soldiery. Not knowing whither to fly, he ran towards the cliffs and reached them at this spot, his pursuers coming close behind him. Just when all seemed lost the large mass of rock on which he was broke away from the cliff and settled down in the sea as an islet, bearing down the priest with it, comfortably seated, in a niche, known as the "priest's chair," sheltered from the bullets of his enemies. Thus protected he remained until night, when he was taken off in a curragh by his people. The place has since been known as the "Priest's Leap."

The Namhoge or Neewoge.—There was formerly on Iniskea a small 778 stone figure called the *neewoge* (little saint), which was believed to have great power over the weather, and was accordingly treated with great reverence and used to be invoked for favourable winds. It is said that a pirate landed on the island, and after carrying off all that was portable, set fire to the houses, with the exception of the one in which the *neewoge* was kept, which did not take fire. Search was made for the cause and the image was taken out and broken. The *neewoge* never fully recovered this treatment. His power, though still great, was not the same as it had been.

Some years ago the attention of the parish priest became directed to the existence of this image, and having obtained the stone by a stratagem from the woman who was its custodian he threw it into the sea. As he died not very long after this, some of the islanders ascribe

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since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and 121
not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, 124
where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions."

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would 103
be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of 173●
traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only 776
give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4]

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they 103
occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also 173
premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca-

[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

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103 baiscinn, occupied the Baronies known down to Tudor times (and still as a rural deanery) as Corcavaskin,—now Moyarta and
● 173 Clonderalaw, with the Barony of Ibrickan, (which takes its name from a settlement of fugitives from the Norman conquest in Leinster about 1180).

Burren.—Irghus or Eerish, a Firbolg in the oldest of Clare legends,[6] is commemorated by Caherdoonerish stone fort,[7] on Black Head. Finn MacCumhail gives his name to Seefin, on the same hills. The "silver bells" of Kilmoon church are said to be recalled by Cahercloggaun fort and Owenacluggan brook near Lisdoonvarna. In Kilcorney Parish we have two forts, Lisananima and Caherlisananima, named from ghosts; the first name is older than 1652. Beara, another Firbolg, brother of Irghus, gives his name, (found in a poem dating before 1014), to Finnavarra Point, —but not to Kinvarra, which is akin to Kenmare and Kinsale, "Head of the Sea" or "of the brine." The name Bohernamish, or "way of the dishes," with its legend of the miraculous rapine of King Guaire's Easter banquet, about A.D. 630, is found in the mediæval Life of St. Colman MacDuach.[8]

Corcomroe.—The reef of Kilstiffin, Kilstapheen, or Kilstuitheen has a legend of a sunken church and city, of which the golden domes appear once in seven years. The submerged forests and bogs inside the reef in Liscannor Bay, and the record of the great

Armada on the coast, heard by me down to 1878, have been since confirmed by the publication of long-forgotten letters. So historical tradition, even under the unfavourable conditions of recent centuries, has kept wonderfully accurate versions of events. The continuity of the schools and families of the hereditary bards and *ollamhs* favoured still greater accuracy in early times. Ireland had "books and philosophers" in the fourth century, according to Ethicus of Istria (*Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 403), and, possibly for the same period before Christianity as the Armada lies behind our own time, history was handed down truly, at least in its broad outlines.

[6] "Legend of Carn chonaill," "Dindsenchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), pp. 478-80.

[7] "Fort" in this paper means one of the entrenched residences, (usually circular,) of the early inhabitants. These are called in Irish *rath*, *lisz*, and *dun*; the dry stone equivalent is *caher*.

[8] *Misk* also means an altar in early works. Cf. *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, (ed. W. Stokes).

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earthquake and tidal wave that split into three Inis Fitæ[9] on the same coast (A.D. 799-802), incline one to believe in a basis for the legend. In Nonghaval is a fort called Liskeentha, from "fairy songs" heard there. Not far away, in Kilfenora Parish, we have a Boughil or "petrified boy," and in Carran Parish a Farbreag or "petrified man"; such names, originating in strangely-shaped rocks, are rather common. A third Firbolg brother, Daelach, gives his name to the little river Daelach and the townland Ballydeely. In Carran and Kilmanaheen the belief in the *phooka* or *púca*, a demon horse or goat, is stamped on the Poulaphucas, one of which has a fine dolmen; such monuments all over Ireland are found connected with the malignant prototype of Puck. Lisfarbegnagommaun, "the fort of the little men (playing at) hurling," commemorates fairy sports.

Ibrickan.—Poulaphuca in Kilfarboy is, so far as I know, the only mythic name, but Doolough Lake (Nigricantis) is named in the early "Life of Senan"[10] as the prison of the fearful "Cata" of Iniscatha, while the "Legend of the sons of Thorailbh mac Stairn"[11] locates the cavern whence the ferocious "Faracat" launched itself on the heroes' spears, beside its waters. Dunbeg Bay is the scene of a curious merman story.[12]

Moyarta.—At Loop Head, the south-western extremity of the county, we find a Poulnapeiste and a line of forts,—Cahercrochain, Cahersaul, Dundahlin, and Cahernaheanmna,—connected with the monster killed by Dermod O'Duine and the brothers Crochaun, Sal, and Dahlin, whose sister ("the one (lone) woman") gave her title to the last fort.[13] Iniscatha commemorates its dragon, and Lisnarinka fort the "dances" of its fairy dwellers.

Clonderlaw.—Turning inland, up the Shannon and Fergus

[9] Now Inniscaeragh or Mutton Island, Illaunwattle, Inismatail, or Mattle Island, and Carrickaneelwar. The first two are named Iniskereth and Inismatail in a charter of 1216.

[10] Colgan, *op. cit.* (March 8).

[11] A romance of about 1750, by Michael Comyn.

[12] Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 1825, vol. ii., p. 31, (The Soul Cages).

[13] "Adventures of the sons of Thorailbh"; see also *Ordnance Survey Letters*, Co. Clare, Killballyowen Parish, (MS., R.I. Academy).

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103 173 confluence, Tobersheefra ("elf's well") and Poulaphuca are named from the fairies and *púca*, and Clondegad from two druids who competed in magic, making "two gads" (or withes) to sail up the stream.

Inchiquin.—Passing on to the settlements of the Dalcassians, we find treasure legends at Cloghanairgid ("rock of the silver (money)") and Skeaghvickencrowe ("MacEnchroe's bush"). Cloghaphuca in Kilnaboy and Poulnabruckee in Rath, with Toberatasha ("spectre's well," perhaps recording an apparition akin to that of Avenel), represent various supernatural beings. Seefin, Caherussheen, and Tirmicbrain near Corofin commemorate Finn, his son Oisin, and his dog Bran. The old pre-Norman Fenian tale of *Feis tighe chonain* is located on the high ridge over Inchiquin Lake, and connects Finn with the district and with a "hunting lodge" at Formoyle, but the first name ("seat of Finn") has been lost since 1839.[14] In the weird terraced hills of bare crag behind Kilnaboy legend meets us at every turn. Slievenaglasha, the Glasgeivnagh Hill, Mohernaglasha, Leabanaglasha, and Mohernagartan, "Smith's Fort," commemorate the Irish Vulcan, Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha), and the wonderful "glaucous cow," the *Glas*, whose hoof prints mark the rocks in every direction. Inchiquin Lake has a beautiful swan-maiden tale,[15] but it "names no name." Still in Kilnaboy we find, near the tall brown peel tower of Ballyportry, a Cloughaphuca and the enchanted Lake of Shandangan.[16] Ruan Parish has Cahernanoorane, taking its name from "fairy melody." Lisheenvicknaheeha ("the little fort of the son of the night") seems ghostly, but the constituent is also an ancient personal name, Macnahaidche, in use down to at least 1084. In Dysert, Crush'banola and the basin stone near it are connected with a

[14] *I.e.* lost so far as I know. Many names supposed to be lost prove, however, still to exist, especially amongst old persons, but should never be asked for directly, as the demand usually creates the supply. This precaution is too little heeded by enquirers in Ireland.

[15] Given by Dr. George U. MacNamara in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxi., p. 212.

[16] Its curious and unusual changes of colour give it the reputation of enchantment.

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curious legend which I reserve. Banola or Manawla is really the historic Tola, living about A.D. 637. Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge may commemorate a ghostly "red dog," like the dogs of Cratloe and Ennistymon in this county, and the *Maelchu* of Kerry.

Islands.—This small district, although containing the "capital" of Thomond from about 1220, is of little note in names. Poulnaclug contains the hidden bells of Dromcliff Round Tower. Knocknabohilleen probably had a "Boughil" or "Farbreag" (see *Corcomroe supra*). Fairyhill Fort in Kilmaley, and Music Hill, are connected with the "good people." Knockananima near Clare Castle, though superficially a ghost name, is said to be *Cnoc* (or *Cnock an*) *na h iomána* or "Hurling-field Hill."

Bunratty.—Taking the Upper and Lower Baronies together, both here and in Tulla, we find an oblique allusion to the fairies in Gortnamearacaun ("foxglove field"), called also "Thimbletown,"—the foxglove being the fairies' thimble. Caheraphuca has a fine dolmen and haunted fort. Knocknafearbreaga derives its name and legend from the "seven" (*recte* five) pillar stones, once the seven robbers who ill-treated St. Mochulla's tame bull. It is noteworthy that the life of St. Mochulleus, (sought for vainly by Colgan about 1637 and only recently found in Austria and published), gives the *seven* soldiers and the slaying of the tame bull that ran errands for the saint.[17] In the Lower Barony the fairies are connected with Lissnarinka ("fort of the dance") in Clonloghan, and perhaps Caherfirogue ("young man's fort," 1617), which is now forgotten. Moyeir, Moyross Parks, and Moyri are variants representing the ancient Magh Adhair, the settlement of another Firbolg chief and place of the inauguration of the kings of Thomond from at least A.D. 847 to Tudor times. Slieve suidhe an righ or Slieve oided an righ ("king's seat" or "king's death hill"), in Glennagross, was connected with a legend, probably historical, that King Criomthann died there in A.D. 377 poisoned by his sister, who drank before him to disarm his suspicion and secure the kingship for her son.[18]

Tulla.—In the mass of hills near the Shannon, Carrickeevul, Tobereevul, and Glennagalliach ("hag's glen") commemorate

[17] *Analecta Bollandiana*, xvii., p. 135.
[18] S. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii.

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103 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas
173 in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

173 Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of
776 mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff
133 of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones
[172] that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all
776 Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

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slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran. 172 823 776

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign. 823 173

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman. 823 778

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional, 346 773

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

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346 founder of the building, and is held to explain the rude and
773 inferior work of parts of it. Quin "Abbey" was built by the famous Master Mason Gobbán Saor, who twisted the spiral pillars of its beautiful cloister with his own hands. The builder of the south transept (1433) fell from its gable, and was killed where a tombstone with the scribed figure of an axe marks his grave. The north-west corner of Carran church overhangs, and is destined to fall on the wisest man that shall pass below it.

344 *Castles.*—A belief similar to that about Carran church was
773 attached to Ballymulcassel or Mountcashel castle. It is a peel tower, built by King Conor na Srona, about 1460, on a steep little knoll of rock beside the road from Sixmilebridge to Kilkishen. It was to fall on the handsomest person, and gossip told of a very ugly man who always took a longer road to avoid passing it. The same legend and gossip was attached to Newcastle peel tower, near Limerick and not far from the border of Clare. A wizard who lived in Shalee castle was so pestered by his wife that he flew away with half the tower, which remains as Glen castle near Ennistymon station. A guest praised Dysert castle to its owner,
344 O'Dea, and wished that it were full of gold. "I'd rather have it
173 full of O'Hiumhairs," replied O'Dea,[7] the family so complimented being a small but warlike clan, of which one member fought in the wars of 1313-8 and is reported to have slain Richard de Clare at Dysert in 1318. I heard in 1869 that the castles near Doonass were built by seven brothers, and that six came to an untimely end at the hands of the seventh, but the legend seems now forgotten at Clonlara.

Round Towers.—The peasants seem never to have adopted the
346 various druidic, Cuthite, phallic, and other theories of 1770
776 onwards from the so-called "educated classes." To them, as to
173 our earlier writers, the towers are steeples built by saints. John Lloyd, in 1780,[8] calls that of Scattery "the loftiest old Steeple in the Kingdom." Michael O'Brannan, in 1794,[9] tells how St.

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 157. The tale closely resembles a legend of St. Caimin of Iniscaltra and Guaire Aidhne at Iniscaltra, Lough Derg.

[8] *A Short Tour etc.*, p. 21.

[9] Poem on Shannon, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. ii., pp. 15-8.

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Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

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173 son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with
173 Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the
173 other side of the "Rine."

XXI. *Miscellanea and Addenda.*

173 *Treasure legends and hunting.*—Many forts have been much
556 defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are few. Caherscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib of 1551),[14] is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*" or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the finest of all drinks").[15] Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost. Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results, in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver) near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka castle,[16] near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told [172] to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

[14] In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrogh, Earl of Thomond.

[15] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvi., p. 368.

[16] See also vol. xxi., p. 344. [p. 264]

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MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimneaigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19] 173 556 [574]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan. [778]

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains 764

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe. [554 551]

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777 Leochain, who was slain in 1024. The King of Cashel (over-king, therefore, of North Munster) was forbidden to pass a night at Latteragh in northern Tipperary at the beginning of harvest; to encamp for nine consecutive nights at the river Suir; to hold a border meeting at Gowran; and to listen to the groans of women (in a raid) in southern Tipperary. The King of Connacht was not to go in a speckled cloak,—the prose adds "on a piebald horse," —to the heath of Luchaid in Clare. On the other hand, the ruler of Cashel brought good luck by plundering cattle in Connacht while the cuckoo sings; burning north Leinster; passing over Sliabh Cua,—"on a Tuesday," says the prose,—to pacify south Munster; crossing Magh Aïbhe with a light grey host; and resting six weeks (of Lent) every year at Cashel. It was most unlucky for him to wait for a feast at Killarney Lake for a full week from a Monday. At the present day some families still have their own tabus, lucky and lucky deeds and days, dreams, and omens, which sometimes even run counter to beliefs generally received,—*e.g.* that [787] the Friday falling on the thirteenth of any month, or to dream of a wild cat or other wild animal, is lucky.

741 825 *Witch hare.*[35]—Anthony Bruodin (*Bruodinus* or *Prodinus*), a Franciscan of Quin Abbey, tells in *Corolla Oecodemiæ Minoritica* (Prague, 1664, p. 73) how his uncle (*patruus*), Florence of Moynaeo (Moynoe on Lough Derg) went out at the dawn of the first of May with his eldest son Bonaventura, (who died in Spain in 1643), and with their hounds to hunt hares. At last the servants saw one sucking a cow. The hounds chased it, biting it as it escaped, into a cottage, where an old woman was found torn behind.

776 *Glasgeivnagh cow.*[36]—Vague legends are told of her living at Treanahow, Shallee, and Ballygannon.

Ghosts or fairy men.—Mary (Mescal) Doyle, of Newmarket-on-Fergus, tells how she saw two ghostly men in black walking on a road near that village.

● 173 *Stolen bride.*—A legend of a stolen bride at Querin on the Shannon is told in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends etc. of Ireland* (1887), vol. i., p. 49.

[35] Addendum to vol. xxii. p. 449. [p.270]
[36] Addendum to p. 89 *supra.*

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and [776]
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the offi-
ciating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient
tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured
soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the
church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hun-
dreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173 •
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appear-
ance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter [712] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the [648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

176 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great • 173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de- 731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural 244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough [437] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes [161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when [167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a [161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the [361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to [823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features 133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together 311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Pboillin* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[175] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach
[65] the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear
the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the
Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has
its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able
to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41
sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn
slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls
choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion
dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase
their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into
island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal,
a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although
made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have
heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish
expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by
weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland
shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to
monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
[178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[999] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new
crios if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants
who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 589 581 562 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the [154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 584 173 584 [208] Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 584 584 674 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been
792 created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of
[173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of
[825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

157 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag
771 islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

157 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is
831 sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century.
[174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

157 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in
831 three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the
864 islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in
626 the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice
793 it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves
834 "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and
831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run
203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland
[609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party.

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania,* alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[19] Mårten Stenberger[20] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boëthius[21] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands. 231 349

A glance at the literary material.

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[22] 172 174

In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *fallai fuara*, as in the stone-built *clocháns*, but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin*, and of *fraigh, i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[23] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[24] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion. 174

O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that 174 342

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 342 these two wooden wall types can perhaps be compared with such Danish and Scanian walltypes as the "stakavägg" and the "sprötavägg".[25]) The houses were of two forms, 1) long quadrilateral buildings, built of wood or mud and straw like the existing mud cabins, and covered with thatch, and 2) cylindrical houses made of wicker-work and having a cup-shaped or hemispherical roof. The houses built in duns and in stone *caiseals*, and those surrounded by mounds of earth, were probably in all cases round houses. As has already been mentioned, O'Curry is of the opinion that the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius correspond accurately to the *teeh darach* or oak-house with a *cuach-cleithe* or wicker cup roof described in a tale called the "Intoxication of Ulster".

The round wicker-work house is described by O'Curry as follows: "The round wicker house was built by setting up perpendicularly a number of poles or posts of more or less solidity arranged in a circle of the necessary diameter and at equal distances from each other. The interstices between these poles or posts were then filled up with stout hazel and other rods in the form of wicker or basket work until it reached the required height of the wall. In the meantime there was firmly set up in the centre within a stout post called a *tuireadh* of length commensurate with the required height of the roof; into which were inserted by mortices or otherwise attached a certain number of rafters which descended slantingly all round to the tops of the upright posts of the wall into which they were received by tenon and mortice or otherwise attached. — — —

Across the rafters and ribs thus inserted were then laid bands of laths or narrow slips of wood which were fastened with pegs or with gods, *i. e.* twisted withies forming a regular network from the top of the roof-tree to the walls. On these, again, were laid or fastened, at short distances, what may be called a sheeting of rods and thin branches of trees, stretching from the roof-tree to the wall. And now, the shell of the house being finished, it was thatched with straw, rushes, or sedge and neatly fastened down with scollops. — — — I cannot say how they staunched the walls of the round wicker-house, whether with clay, moss, or skins — — —."

In the Ancient Irish Laws are many references to the wicker-house, *tech fithi*.[26]

The following quotation is a translation of part of a law tract which deals here with the status of an *ócaire*, one of the lesser of the freeholding ranks.[27a]

"The size of his house: it is larger than a house of rentcharge. For the size of the latter is seventeen feet. It is of wickerwork to the lintel. From this to the roof-tree, a *dit* between every two weavings (?). Two doorways

 [Text Continues Top of P. 195----Analyst]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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in it. A door for one of them, a hurdle for the other, and this (the hurdle) without (projecting) wattles, without protuberances (?). A bare fence of boards around it. An oaken plank between every two beds."

The designations in the Laws and in early tales as Fled Bricrend, Suidigud Taigi Midehuarta etc., are still difficult to understand, as their vocabulary has not hitherto been elucidated. It will be possible to draw more definite conclusions from them as soon as a joint study by philologists and ethnologists has been carried out. In many parts of Ireland there still survive remains of old building traditions, which in connection with the dialect words, will help to throw light upon the problems of ancient building culture as they are met with in the old Irish literature.

A consideration of the old upper-class house, however, embraces a field outside the scope of this article, involving a discussion of cultural connections over a very wide area.[38]

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[1] Described in Part I of this article, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 207—234. I repete my thanks expressed in my former article to the Irish Folklore Commission and to my Irish friends. I want to add the names of Professor Eóin Mac Néill, Mr. Thomas Mason and Miss Máire Mac Néill, who have kindly given me information and assistance.

[2] Cyril Fox, The Personality of Britain, Cardiff 1933, p. 34 sq.

[3] Wheeler, Prehistoric and Roman Wales, Oxford 1925, p. 260 sq., and Bosch-Gimpera, Etnologia de la Peninsula Ibèrica, Barcelona 1932, p. 490 sq.

[4] The Archæology of Ireland, p. 242.

[5] Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy XXXI, p. 209 sq. Still other references to beehive houses may be found in archæological literature. Oscar Montelius has previously dealt with beehive houses, *e. g.* in Boning, grav och tempel, Antikvarisk tidskrift, vol. 21.

[6] In Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III, p. 127 sq., and vol. VII, p. 153 sq.

[7] Cf. Analecta Hibernica No. 2, Jan. 1931 p. 53; Arthur Young, A tour in Ireland 1780.

[8] Thomas, op. cit. vol. III, p. 136.

[9] See R. E. M. Wheeler, op. cit. p. 261.

[10] See P. Bosch-Gimpera, op. cit., p. 490 sq.

[11] See *e. g.* S. O. Addy, The Evolution of the English House, London 1933, p. 38 sq.; S. Erixon, Some primitive constructions, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 124 sq.

[12] Norse building customs in the British Isles, Copenhagen 1934.

[12a] Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc., Vol. III., London 1843.

[12b] Caesar Otway, A tour in Connaught: comprising sketches of Clonmacnoise, Joyce County, and Achill, Dublin 1839.

[12c] Folkliv 1937, p. 208.

[12d] See Folkliv 1937, p. 217.

[13] Thomas, op. cit., vol. III, p. 130.

[14] The study of the Scottish material shows that the ancient so-called forts or subterranean or semi-subterranean chambers may also be considered. I shall not, however, enter here on a discussion of this complicated matter.

[14b] I am also grateful to Mr. Mason for having supplied all the photographs of Irish clochàns used by me in this article.

[15] On the manners and customs of the ancient Irish, vol. III, p. 33 and elsewhere.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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gal, Mayo and West Galway, Kerry and (in part) Cork. The Aran Islands represent a fourth western area. West Donegal seems to be characterized by excesses of dark hair and mixed eyes and a very slightly higher mesocephaly than the total Irish series. Mayo is slightly high in stature and in cephalic index, definitely so in proportions of dark hair and mixed eyes. West Galway, on the other hand, is notable for markedly tall stature, lowering of the cephalic index, and lighter hair and eyes. This tendency is still further accentuated in the Aran Islands which are tallest of all of the Irish subgroups, are almost dolichocephalic, and have nearly the highest proportion of light hair shades. Yet eye color in the Aran Islands is predominantly mixed. 142

Kerry is also tall, but the most round-headed of the Irish subgroups and excessive in dark hair, and lowest in light eyes.

The central plain of Ireland and especially the counties of Westmeath and Longford show the strongest concentration of blondness which is accompanied by slightly shortened stature, diminished lightness of eye, and mesocephaly. This blond area is sharply delimited to the east by a coastal band of darker haired and even shorter dolichocephals, notably concentrated in Meath, Louth, and County Dublin, which is the shortest and most dolichocephalic area of Ireland, but ranks high both in darkness of hair and in lightness of eyes.

Now it is quite reckless to attempt definitive racial correlations on the basis of the coincidences and differences in geographical distribution of separately plotted anthropological characters. Actually, racial type distributions can be accurately ascertained only by correlations of morphological and metric features in individuals. From the data presented in this paper, however, a few purely preliminary and tentative suggestions may be made, subject to revision or retraction in the light of an exhaustive study of all of the material and a consideration of historical and prehistorical events.

It may be presumed that the western parts of the island represent to some extent refuge areas occupied by the earlier strata of the population. It is in precisely these areas (West 142 174 [197]

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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142 Donegal, Mayo, West Galway, the Aran Islands and Kerry)
174 that our information gives us the highest predominance of
Gaelic speech. If the anthropological characters plotted sep-
[197] arately actually combine in the populations of these areas we should say that the earliest population stratum of the island consists of tall, subbrachycephals with dark hair and mixed eyes and a second element, even taller, subdolichocephalic with light hair and mixed eyes. Then since the latter type presents the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers we should be inclined to hazard a guess that the tall brunet brachycephals represent the earlier pre-Keltic population and that Gaelic languages were introduced by the tall, long-headed near-blonds.

The blond, long-headed element in the central plain, concentrated in Longford and Westmeath is presumably Nordic and possibly represents a survival in great part from Iron Age Nordic, Viking, and other Scandinavian occupations. The Aran Islanders and the inhabitants of Galway may perhaps owe their comparative blondness and long-headedness to the mixture with these invaders which has gone on throughout the plain, but it is also possible, as previously stated, that the original Goidelic invaders may have been near-Nordics.

Along the east coast the short dark dolichocephals with long heads but very light eyes may also be, for the most part, the survivals of pre-Keltic populations. Some element in the population must have been responsible for the introduction of the Megalithic monuments and I believe it to have been these brunets with blue eyes. The association of light eyes with dark hair was formerly considered by me to be the result of the crossing of a pure brunet Mediterranean stock with a pure blond Nordic stock in which the eye color of one race combined with the hair color of another. However, recent anthropometric studies in Iran and Iraq, especially those of Dr. Henry Field, reveal the presence of many otherwise purely brunet, long-headed stocks of basic Mediterranean affinities which have almost no pure brown eyes, but generally irides of mixed pigmentation—brown in the pupillary zone and blue in the

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
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peripheral zones. Of course, there can be no doubt that the 142
inhabitants of Ireland have undergone extensive mixture with 174
blue-eyed Nordics. However, it seems certain that some Mediterranean stocks have developed what Dr. Carleton Coon calls "incipient eye blondness" without any necessary intermixture with the generally depigmented Nordic race.

One consideration in regard to the county subgroups must 142
be given some space here. The highest percentage of dark hair occurs in Waterford and Wexford and the highest percentage of light hair in Longford and Westmeath. Now blondness in mixed stocks diminishes with age and it happens that the Waterford and Wexford subgroup is the oldest of the nineteen included in the series (38.80 years), whereas the Longford, Westmeath group is the youngest (29.45 years). The latter is, in fact, 3 years below the mean age of any other subgroup. Thus it is possible that the blondness of this subgroup may have been exaggerated by this age factor, but it hardly seems probable that the excess of dark hair in Wexford and Waterford is wholly due to superior age since the increments of age bring excessive graying of hair (at a maximum) in this group. This senile change detracts from the proportion of dark hair.

One of the most striking facts of the anthropometric distri- 142
butions here plotted is the dolichocephalic blond crescent
which swings from the northwest at Sligo Bay through the 174
Central Plain and back westward terminating in West Galway and the Aran Islands. It suggests rather strongly a Nordic penetration by way of these west coast ports. It is tempting to connect it with the Viking period. Ingress to the rich lands of the Central Plain would have been possible by this route, although it must not be forgotten that West Galway—a barren area—has this same blondness and long-headedness associated with tall stature. It is also notable that this blond crescent is not as light-eyed as the areas further east, and, in its central portion, is not characterized by particularly high stature. Further, its dolichocephaly is not so marked as that of the counties to the east of the upper course of the Shannon.

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142 On the basis then of these raw distribution maps on which
174 are plotted uncorrelated anthropometric means and pigmentation percentages we may discern the following three more or less clearly demarcated anthropological and geographical areas.

1. The Western Peninsulas: West Donegal, Mayo and Kerry (including parts of Clare and Cork). This region finds the association of tall stature, sub-brachycephaly, dark hair and mixed eyes. It is strongly Gaelic in speech and possibly includes the largest numbers of the Mesolithic stock which first settled Ireland from Scotland.

2. The Central East Coast: The shortest and most dolichocephalic region with highest concentration of light eyes (especially blue eyes), but very dark hair. Perhaps this may be the area settled by the Megalithic people who sailed up the Irish Channel.

3. The Blond Crescent (with its horns at Sligo and Galway Bays and its convexity at Longford and Westmeath). In its belly it is the blondest area in Ireland, in the southwest horn (West Galway and the Aran Islands) it is the tallest and almost the longest-headed area in Ireland. All of this area is notably characterized by grayish and light mixed eyes rather than pure blue eyes. It seems to be peopled by a majority of Predominantly Nordic and Nordic peoples. It may contain the bulk of the descendants of any or all of the three following putative groups of early populations: Bronze Age peoples coming from Scotland (Goidels?); Iron Age Nordic invaders (if there were such); Viking and other Scandinavian historic colonists, possibly entering by way of Galway and Sligo Bays.

It should be reiterated here that superimposed distribution maps of isolated characters may not represent in any accurate sense the combinations of features in individuals which constitute racial types. Subsequent study of the distribution of racial types by individuals may alter considerably our prediction of the arrangement of racial areas in Ireland.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER VI.

VILLAGE AND BOOLEY.

361 Throughout the Irish countryside the farmhouses and cottages lie scattered as though casually spilt over the surface, forming an even film of population everywhere except in the mountains and bogs. Among students of rural settlement this country is rightly taken as one of the best European examples of the dispersed type of habitation. We very rarely see, except in a few exotic " plantations " which languish here and there, large agricultural villages of the English or European pattern, with their tree-shaded greens, their shops, churches and inns. A cluster of more than a dozen houses is almost sure to be the result of industrial influence—the erection of a mill or factory. Such a scheme of scattered dwellings, each set among its own fields, seems appropriate to a region where there are no inducements such as the needs of defence or the lack of water to encourage agglomeration, and where pastoral interests predominate, the animals needing constant attention.

361 But if we look more carefully at the Irish scene, and if we
●174 turn back to the records of history and prehistory, we shall find proof that the completely isolated farms are a fairly modern feature in most parts, and that house-clusters formerly predominated. Here and there, especially in the west, we see little " clusters " " onsets " or " clachans " of peasant houses, a dozen or so together, which preserve something of the character of the old villages we shall try to describe in this chapter. Over a wider area we find smaller clusters, three or

[p. 47]

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 four houses together, which can almost invariably be shown
174 to have once been larger: even these tiny groupings are referred to as "towns," and the use of this word suggests that such clusters were once the nuclei of the "townlands." It is because of this association with the vital townland unit, and because many rural customs find their explanation in past conditions, that I have thought it worth while to attempt a reconstruction of the chief features of these old communities. This is based largely on records and on surviving examples which I have studied in Co. Donegal and Co. Antrim. Allowance must be made for differences between one region and another, but I believe the following description to be applicable to most parts of Ireland, though the decay of the village-system began earlier in some areas than in others.

Travellers a century or so ago tell us that villages with 50 or 60 houses were not uncommon. In 1802 Donegal is said to have had about 500 villages, with an average perhaps of 20 or 30 families to each, but they were "dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings" (Figs. 13 & 14). One uses the term village for want of a better word, for such clusters lack many of the well-known features of the English village. They were essentially communities of related families bound together in "friendship"—the word "friend" means a blood-relation in Ireland—with one or two surnames predominating in each group. This fact is still true of townland populations even though the holdings are scattered, and it
[55] helps to explain the prevalence of nicknames in rural Ireland, and, for the same reason, in Wales and Scotland. The houses were clustered without plan or order (and never strung together end-to-end) generally in some sheltered hollow in the richest part of the townland, though they might be disposed along a road with some semblance of regularity. Shelter is always the first consideration. I have been told in Donegal that house sites were selected by the simple process of throwing up a hat on a windy day and letting the wind decide by noting its resting place.

174 Made roads were almost unknown in hilly districts—there
491 was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one
361 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 50--ANALYST]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 [491] 361 Donegal parish in 1837—and all the carrying depended upon slide cars and creels (Chapter 12). The village had neither shop nor inn, and required little besides salt and iron from the market town. These self-sufficing communities were held together by blood ties and by the exchange of services under the Irish open-field or "rundale" system of cultivation. Around the house-clusters were small walled gardens and haggards, but the arable land was an unenclosed open field in which each holder had his scattered patches, averaging perhaps a quarter of an acre in area. There are cases on record where [423] 29 partnership-peasants shared 422 plots of ground, where one man held 32 different patches, or again where 26 people had shares in a field of half an acre. In some districts it is known that the plots changed hands periodically. but no memory of this survives in the areas I am acquainted with. Live stock was sometimes subject to joint-ownership, with disastrous results where, for instance, three men claimed shares in a horse and could not agree as to the ownership of the fourth leg. But most of the stories that are told about rundale farming belong to the period of its decline.

174 221 361 Between the cultivated patches, which were dug with the spade or ploughed and devoted almost exclusively to potatoes and oats, ran waste strips or balks ("mearings," "bones" or "ribs") often left as much as three yards wide, apparently from a sort of pride, though they had their uses both as a source of hay and as tracks for the creel ponies when they could not enter the waterlogged plots. In the absence of fences all livestock had to be tethered, spancelled, herded, or sent to the mountain pastures during the crop season, which traditionally began on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) and ended on the last day of October (Hallowe'en), when the animals were free to wander over the whole townland throughout the winter. "Any that had not their potatoes dug, or other crops off the ground, were much injured, neither could any one man venture to grow turnips, clover or other green crops . . . no one would attempt to manure better or otherwise improve his proportion, as his neighbour's cattle only would have the benefit." It is clear that the introduction of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

potato was one of the factors that led to the decline of rundale 174
agriculture, both because of its late harvest and because it 221
resulted in increased populations which brought disastrous 361
subdivision of the holdings. Under the " gavelkind " code of
inheritance a man's property was divided equally among all
his sons, so that the impossibly small fields came to be spoken [428]
of not as the standard " cow's grass," but as a " foot " and
even a half-foot or " cleet."

Much has been written of the drawbacks of the rundale 174
system. It is so easy to condemn it—the " fights, trespasses, 621
confusion, disputes and assaults " to which it gave rise, the
wretched poverty which it bred, the evil consequences of
dwelling in packed house clusters—that it is well to recall the
better side of the system before it fell into decline. A writer
in 1853 has left his " recollections of nights of social converse,
of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined
operations of defence against bailiff or gauger which contrasted mournfully with the solitary grandeur of the new
dwelling." Another apologist wrote : " the closer the rundale
system is followed, the more the unwritten customs and
regulations observed, the more do intelligent tenants regret a
departure from them." Many of its better features, indeed,
have survived the enclosure movement and the separation of
farms ; we may cite co-operation in farm work and the social
fire-side evenings or " caileys." " Gatherings " of many kinds,
for work and pleasure, distinguished the rundale communities.
Every village had its musician, piper or fiddler, who was often
maimed in some way and supported himself by his skill.
Folk songs, occupational airs and epic tales were kept alive in
this way.

It was formerly the task of an appointed leader in a [622]
townland or group of townlands to see that customs were
observed, to arrange the casting of lots in re-allotting strips,
and so on. Probably we should see in the " king " not long
ago recognized as leader in such communities as Rathlin and
Tory a relic of this custom.

To understand the village-system in working order we 174
must see it as part of a wider pattern in which cattle-herding 621
221
231

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 621 221 231 played a dominant part, to which the claims of agriculture were subordinated. It was customary for the young folk, and in some cases the whole family, to leave the village as soon as the crops were sown and migrate to summer pastures among the hills. This custom is still widely followed in various mountain areas in Europe, for instance Switzerland and Spain, where it can be shown to be of great antiquity. To it the name "transhumance" is given, but we shall use the term "booleying," from "booley" (milking place), or summer hill dwelling. It is strange that scarcely any attention has been given or any importance attached to this aspect of the Irish past, despite its direct bearing on the social and cultural as well as the economic development of rural Ireland, on language and literature, music and the arts. From rare memories or survivals of the custom—it is still followed on Achill Island—and by analogy with transhumant societies overseas, we can envisage the part played by booleying in ancient Ireland, where its wide occurrence was facilitated by the presence of scattered mountain masses in all parts of the island (Chapter 2). We shall refer to some survivals below. The illustration (Fig. 15) shows a bullock's "horn" which used to be blown not long ago at a farm in the Torr Head district of Co. Antrim, to summon people together. One is tempted to see in this custom a relic of the pastoral heritage. Traditions of hospitality are a common accompaniment of pastoral life: there is no need to stress the reputation of the country people in this connexion, but it is relevant to add that the lavish hospitality for which the landed aristocracy have been famous may well have been derived from Gaelic custom.

534

Fig. 15.

Wherever it is found, this seasonal nomadism assumes a ritual significance, especially where, as in the old Ireland, cattle are its main concern. Thus the departure of the herds and their attendants in spring is accompanied by festivities and ceremonial; and the return to the homestead in autumn is the occasion for the rejoicings and reunions of Hallowe'en, when the youngsters play seasonal games among themselves and tricks upon their elders. We shall revert to this topic in chapter 17. Here we are concerned rather to describe the life

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, " the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in " booley " or " boley " assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular " town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of " whitemeats " that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This " bog-butter " frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations : it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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ages. He sees the country taking complete possession of the town, blocking its streets, ignoring its traffic: he is in the presence of a force older and more fundamental than the town which has given it hospitality (Fig. 110).

When we inquire into the origins and antiquity of the Irish towns we find that very few go back to pre-Norman times, while it is abundantly clear that periodic gatherings in "temporary towns" are far older. The pre-Christian fortress-palaces such as Tara and Navan did not survive into historic times, and as a rule the church in Celtic lands had no civic interests, though many a confiscated monastic site was revived as the nucleus of a town when occupied by English troops in the 16th century. Some coastal cities such as Dublin and Waterford were founded by Norsemen, but most of the inland towns grew up as castle-market-towns during the Anglo-Norman period or in the plantations of the 16th and 17th centuries. To-day the five chief seaports, none of them strictly "native," contain one quarter of the total population: very few inland towns have more than 10,000 people, and only one of these is outside the industrial Six Counties. Most of the fair centres have a population of from 500 to 5,000: there are 187 towns of this size in Eire. There are 202 "towns" with from 200 to 500 inhabitants and only 25 with more than 5,000 (Fig. 107).

It is to these small towns, scattered at convenient intervals of 10 or 15 miles up and down the country, that the fairs have been attracted, the centre of authority and administration becoming the centre of exchange. Although most of the settlements are of "foreign" origin, they have become thoroughly Irish. The family system and blood-ties link up town and country, and trade follows the personal bond of "friendship," that is, blood relationship, however remote. Over shops and inns it is family names one sees painted up: O'Flynn and Flanagan take the place of the English "General Stores" and "Red Lion." Since the countryman's money comes only at the periodic fairs, he relies on the shopkeeper's credit, and the debt must never be entirely paid off, for that

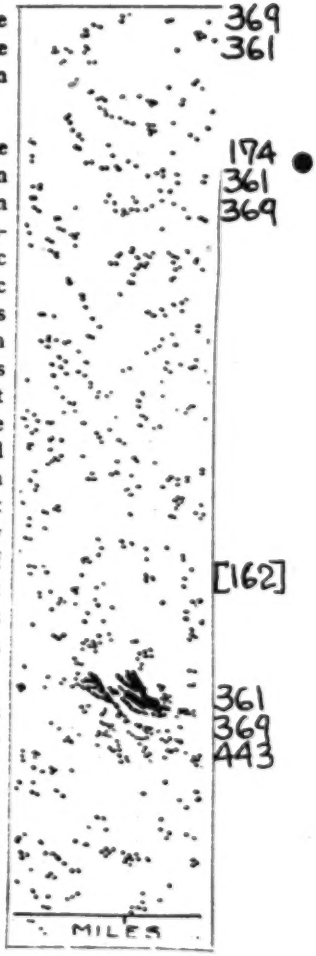

Fig. 107.
A market town with scattered country population. Each dot represents a building.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

175 Books was at that time ten shillings sterling. In neither of these works is Inishshark mentioned.

The islands seem to have remained in the possession of the Clanricarde family until early in the present century, when they passed, by exchange into the hands of the then Marquess of Sligo, from whom they came into the possession of the Wilberforce family, and from them into the hands of the present proprietor, Cyril Allies, Esq. The islands were transferred on 1st February, 1873, from the barony of Murrisk, County of Mayo, to the barony of Ballynahinch, County of Galway, by an Order in Council.

The establishment of the fishery station and the construction of new piers at Knock, and at the landing-place at Inishshark, by the Government in 1892, are the latest occurrences in the history of the islands.

VIII.—Ethnology.

●174 In the present condition of Irish ethnology, it would be vain to attempt to propound any theory or form any exact conclusion as to what race or admixture of races gave origin to the present inhabitants of the islands. Their own traditional history speaks of the intermarriage of some of the islanders with members of the Cromwellian garrison, and of an earlier introduction of a foreign element (some say French, others Danish or Spanish) by a piratical colony; and I am informed by Mr. G. H. Kinahan that he has heard that "a good sprinkling of foreigners remained in Bofin, that went there while the mine was working."

Judging from the list of surnames given on a preceding page, it would appear that the amount of foreign blood introduced must be considerably exaggerated, as an analysis of the list shows that a great majority of the names are those of old Connaught families. If the name of the proprietor of the islands, who is English, be left out, there are just fifty surnames on the islands, and thirty-three of these are distinctively Irish, and most of them are to be found in the account of the tribes of Hy Fiachrach, compiled by Duald Mac Firbis (though nearly all in Anglicized forms), eight are Welsh or Anglo-Norman, but of old standing in Connaught, dating back to the 13th century, two are Scotch (Naughton and M'Kendrick); one, Scuffle, is asserted by the people to be of Scandinavian or other foreign origin, and may probably be a corruption of Scholfield or Scovell; another, Lavelle, seems to be considered locally to be foreign also, but it is

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

stated by some to be an Anglicized form of a well-known Irish tribe name; the seven remaining surnames seem to be modern English. 174●

Of the 212 families now living on the islands 20[1] have surnames of modern English or Scottish origin—29 Anglo-Norman or Welsh, 22 are Scuffles, 17 Lavelles, and the remaining 134 bear more or less Anglicized forms of old Irish names. It may be concluded from this that the population is, on the whole, not much mixed with any element which might not be expected to be found in western Connaught.

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[1] Including the landlord's.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

175 given leases and were accompanied by a clergyman of their own persuasion; the only original inhabitants obtaining leases were the Cormicks. This colony does not appear to have made any extensive change in the composition of the population, as the settlers after a time ceased to be agriculturists to any extent, and took the natives of the district on to their lands as tenants. A curious petition to Sir Henry Bingham, Governor of Connaught, in reference to the revenge taken on these settlers by the natives, shows the names of those in the district in the reign of Queen Anne, and of these but two now remain, all the rest having disappeared, a fate which is ascribed by Mr. Knight to the habits of extravagance induced by the nature of their life. Sir Arthur Shaen began the canal across the neck of the Mullet, but soon abandoned the project, which was not revived until after the foundation of the town of Belmullet. Sir Arthur's two daughters, he had no sons, married, one Henry Boyle Carter of Castlemartin, county Kildare, and the other John Bingham Esq., Newbrook, county Mayo, and the property was divided between these two.

In the year 1793 a fight took place in the Mullet between the local yeomanry and the people of the district, in which thirty-six of the latter were slain. The origin of the fight was the opposition to the enrolment of the militia, then causing a great stir in the west of Ireland. Major Bingham having come to reside in the Mullet in 1796 built Bingham Castle at Eley, and began to make some roads and reclaim some of the land. The first road into the district was made in 1823, and about the same period Major Bingham founded the town in the Mullet known as Binghamstown, which at first was fairly prosperous and had at one time a population of 673.

In 1823 the first vehicle entered the Mullet, and in 1824 Mr. W. H. Carter founded the town of Belmullet at the neck of the peninsula. This town being more favourably situated, has completely destroyed its rival Binghamstown, which, though once containing some fine buildings, is now in ruins, and contains only about a dozen inhabited houses. From the time of the establishment of Belmullet and the construction of good roads into the districts, the condition of the people has [511] shown steady improvement, though it is still extremely primitive and poverty-stricken.

VIII.—Concluding Remarks.

● 174 This report being, like its two predecessors, a record of available facts, as found, in order to form a basis for comparison between different parts of the country, all advocacy of personal theories or opinions

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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has been carefully avoided, it being evident that in the present state of British ethnology there is not sufficient material available from which to draw exact conclusions as to what race or admixture of races forms the bulk of the population of this part of Erris. History when combined with a study of the folk-names gives some slight help in this respect. So far as records go, the population seems to have been until comparately recent times an almost unmixed one, as it does not appear as if the aboriginal inhabitants, though several times subdued and enslaved, had ever been driven out or exterminated. Of the immigrations into the district those having greatest effect upon the population would seem to have been that of the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries, the rule of the Barrets, Burkes, and other Walsh or Anglo-Norman families, whose surnames now bulk largely among the people, and the influx into Erris of the O'Donnells and others from Ulster in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Of these two the former would seem to have entered more largely into the composition of the people than the latter, but it should not be concluded that all those who bore the surnames of Barret, Burke, &c., were of Welsh or Anglo-Norman blood, as the followers of many of the chiefs of these names were in the habit of assuming their leaders' names, though themselves aborigines of Connaught. The descendants of the Ulster people, though to some extent settled in this district, are for the greater part a colony by themselves in the mountainous region of Ballycroy in the south of Erris.

Tne English Protestant colony introduced by Sir Arthur Shane, having almost from the first set up as small landlords or middlemen, subletting their holdings, did not mix to any extent with the original inhabitants who became their tenants, have left but few descendants, most of the families having left this part of the country. It is said that about Portacloy the people are mainly of Ulster origin, but that there has been a slight admixture of French blood from the intermarriage amongst them of some soldiers of Humbert's forces who, escaping after their defeat at Ballinamuck, found refuge in that wild mountainous district.

The inhabitants of Inishkea possess, as has been before stated, quite different characters, physically and otherwise, from those of their mainland neighbours; they have no traditions as to their origin, but may be looked upon as probably the most unmixed representatives of the original inhabitants of the district.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

form the basis of a reconstructed Ireland. One of his proposals, perhaps the most original of all the varied suggestions for solving 'the Irish problem', was to import a further 200,000 English settlers so as to bring the total English population to half a million, and then to remove the 20,000 unmarried Irish girls and marry them off 'one in every English parish', replacing them by 20,000 English girls to be married to Irishmen. In this way the Irish language, food, clothing and customs would be replaced by English modes.[1] Petty's scientific approach was devoid of sentiment and left him without sympathy for the Irish past. Other seventeenth-century writers, however, interested themselves in the ancient forts and towers, and Sir James Ware, who published his *Irish Antiquities* in 1654, also collected Irish manuscripts. This antiquarianism was continued by the brothers Molyneux, whose essays were the first of countless misguided speculations on Danish Mounts and Round Towers. 114

The eighteenth century brought a more rational view of Ireland, thanks especially to Arthur Young, whose *Travels in Ireland* (1776–79) are justly renowned. There followed a spate of travellers throughout the nineteenth century, aided by improved communications and attracted, after 1845, by the grim spectacle of the Great Famine. Unfortunately most of the visitors, finding, in the words of the Earl of Bristol, 'nothing curious to engage admiration and nothing horrid enough to stare at', do not give us details such as contemporary travellers were eagerly gathering from remoter lands. Yet their accounts, vitiated as many of them are by prejudice and an assumption of moral superiority, do give us first-hand descriptions of conditions in rural Ireland before and after the famine. From the first decades of the nineteenth century we have valuable sources of information in the Ordnance Survey maps and letters, in the census returns and in the Statistical Surveys compiled for the Royal Dublin Society, covering nearly all the thirty-two counties of Ireland. [659]

If we ask why so much of the past lives on in Ireland we must first notice the position of the island at the north-western extremity of the old world, the 'last outpost of Eurasia'.[2] Until 174

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), 30.
[2]Grenville Cole, *Ireland the Outpost*, 9.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 the way to the New World was opened up—a route the Irish were fated to follow in their millions—cultures and peoples moving across Europe found their last resting place in this Atlantic island. Here we need only pick out some of the most striking examples of such movements. Archaeologists have shown that the first Irishmen, who entered the island by the short sea-route from Scotland at a time, perhaps 7,000 or 8,000 years ago, when thanks to a lower sea-level it was even shorter than it is today, were the descendants of Old Stone Age man who sought refuge there. For nearly half the period that has since elapsed they were the only occupants of a heavily forested land which they shared with the beasts and the birds. As hunters, fishers and fowlers they spread slowly along the coasts and by tangled lakes and waterways south and south-west across Ireland. Their physical characters may be found in a small proportion of modern Irishmen, and certain of their habits, such as the building of lake-dwellings (crannogs) survived until a few centuries ago, while some of their skills—for example the skin boat or curragh—and their cults—the ancient rituals of fisherfolk and hunters—linger on to this day. The description, in the Irish legendary histories, of the first inhabitants of the land as fishers and fowlers may well be a genuine folk memory. In this oldest stratum, now almost submerged, Ireland preserves a sample of Palaeolithic Europe. Deep
[789] in this layer lie the roots of many superstitious customs, which depend for their efficacy on sympathetic magic such as is believed to have inspired the cave-artists of France and Spain.

The revolution in human economy and thought which is associated with food-production, the Neolithic revolution, began to affect Ireland about 4,000 years ago, carried by refugees and adventurers from Britain and also from France, Spain and the western Mediterranean lands. Thanks to an abundance of alluvial gold and copper the early metal age which followed was a period of increasing prosperity and industrial skill, when the products of Irish craftsmen found distant markets in Britain and on the continent. Throughout the Bronze Age the island was protected from the full force of the continental invasions which spent themselves in Britain: it was able to absorb such influences as trickled across the Irish Sea and to retain many of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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its old habits, as is illustrated by the persistence of cremation rites from the earliest megalithic phase to the end of the Bronze Age, almost on the threshold of the Christian era. 174

At some stage towards the close of the Bronze Age the expanding Celtic culture, carried with the sword across western Europe, was able to gain a foothold in the north-east, whence in time it imposed itself and its language on the whole of Ireland and later, by way of Argyll, on Scotland too. But the price of this conquest was the loss of many elements of Celtic culture or their adaptation to the Irish environment and to long-established native tradition. The art of the Celtic overlords, for example, quickly develops forms and features which are insular and distinctively Irish. In other words there is more continuity of folk ways throughout the prehistoric period in Ireland than in Britain. And this Irish-Celtic civilization of the Early Iron Age was able, during the following period, to maintain itself through the centuries when the Roman Empire embraced nearly all western Europe. The spirit of its art and life was almost untouched by the mass-production and standardization of imperial Rome. It survived long enough to be caught up and revitalized in the late Celtic phase by the fervour of a Christian faith whose adaptation to Celtic tradition is illustrated in Saint Columba's famous phrase: 'Christ is my druid'. It was a time of great missionary enterprise, but at home its greatest achievement was the taming of the damp lowland forests which earlier peoples had shunned. Legendary history, now receiving confirmation from archaeological research, tells of technological advances and increasing population and settlement from about the seventh century onwards. [776]

Irish Christianity grew up within the forms of Irish life: the church claimed no martyrs and there is little evidence of conflict with older beliefs, which clearly were absorbed. The Celtic church was peculiar in that the centres of its life were the great monasteries: there were no cities to form the seats of powerful bishops. Instead, the founders' kin retained the ownership of the monasteries, and the Celtic tradition survived in administration as in art and architecture. It was only after the ravages of the Vikings and the reassertion of pagan cults that the Irish Church was reformed by Saint Malachy, who established 795 175

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133 the extreme north-east, where granites and lavas of Tertiary age are outliers of the Scoto-Icelandic igneous province. In Co. Antrim the basaltic lavas have covered and preserved with their armour-plating both red Triassic sandstone and white Cretaceous limestone (chalk) to give sea cliffs of strangely contrasted colours facing the North Channel. The western mountains are also of great age: the monotony of their bog-strewn schists is relieved only by lines of great quartzite peaks which break into the ocean at Croaghaun and Slievemore in Achill Island. In the south-west the parallel folds of Old Red Sandstone finger out to the Atlantic between Dingle Head and Mizen Head, and here again the highest summits are all in sight of the sea. The granite core of the Wicklow Mountains dominates the south-east in the most massive and continuous high ground in the country, and touches the sea on the outskirts of Dublin. Similarly in the north-east Slieve Donard, the highest summit of the Mourne Mountains, raises its great dome to 2,796 ft. only 1½ miles from the Irish Sea.

●174 Only on the east coast, between the Wicklow Chain and the
133 Carlingford Mountains, is the highland rim broken wide open in a 50-mile gateway giving access to the interior. Floored by well-drained glacial soils and favoured by a low rainfall of less than thirty inches in the year, this strip of coast has been for 1,000 years Ireland's metropolitan region. In fact, long before Dublin was founded by the Vikings, Tara claimed to be the capital of all Ireland, and not far away the island's most spectacular prehistoric monuments—the corbelled chamber tombs of the Boyne Valley—take us back to the early Bronze Age. The dark age Middle Kingdom of Meath, based on Tara and the Boyne Valley, looks backward to the glories of the Bronze Age and forward to the English Pale which was the first conquest and the final refuge of the Anglo-Norman planters. Its landscape and character are distinctive to this day. What the Middle Kingdom and the Pale both lacked was a natural frontier to the west comparable to the Border Hills of Scotland or to the upland edge of the Welsh Marches.

The other four kingdoms, which have survived as the four
174 provinces, broadly correspond to the four areas—north, west, south-west and south-east—which have upland massifs as their

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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nuclei. We may think of the four kingdoms as slowly crystallizing throughout prehistoric times around areas of primary settlement among the hills. The political organization of these areas had to await the coming of Celtic conquerors, but fundamental in their differentiation are the divergencies in megalithic practice. The penetration of megalithic culture to all parts of the island is one of the most striking facts in the prehistory of Ireland. Again and again, in seeking for the origins of persistent customs we find ourselves led back to the megalith builders and their monumental preoccupation with death and the afterworld. The domination of the megalithic cult was much more complete in the western isle than in Britain, where it took root mainly in the uplands facing the Irish Sea. 174

All around the Irish coasts the megalith builders found hill masses where shallow soils and thinning forests gave them a foothold and ice-carried boulders provided the material for their gigantic tombs and ritual circles. It is significant that the megaliths appear to fall into four major regional groups—five if we include the Boyne area—which correspond with the historic provinces. This has been most clearly demonstrated for Ulster where the distribution of 'horned cairns' has been shown to correspond closely with the upland areas north of the Dundalk-Sligo line.[1] Similarly Meath, Dublin and Louth contain the finest passage-graves, of which New Grange on the Boyne is the supreme example. I have no doubt that the ground pattern of regional differentiation in Ireland was established in the megalithic era during the first half of the second millennium B.C.

It remains to say something of the lowland heart of Ireland where the four provinces meet along the line of the middle Shannon north and south of Lough Ree, which is the geometrical centre both of the lowlands and of the whole island. Near-by Athlone, therefore, serves as the centre of Eire's broadcasting [207] system, but in no terrestrial sense is this bog-strewn central lowland a dominant cultural region. Its function has been largely negative, for it has served as a refuge area remote from the contacts of the coastal fringe and the urban forces which radiate

[1] O. Davies and E. E. Evans, 'The Horned Cairns of Ulster', *U.J.A.* 6 (1943), 7–23.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 from it. The Gaelic conquest of the Irish Midlands was not completed until the sixth century A.D., and down to the Anglo-Norman invasions the distinction between free and tributary tribes remained.[1] The counties bordering the middle Shannon—Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and the western parts of Westmeath and Offaly—are probably as full of survivals as any in Ireland. This is the land of the loy and the steeveen (Chapter X) and the last home of many an ancient custom. The lowland [133] of which it is the centre is floored with limestone levelled off at about 200 ft. but diversified by occasional low hills, by intricate solution lakes and by glacial eskers and drifts among which lie countless small lakes and bogs (Fig. 3). It is hard to realize [489] the isolation from which this area suffered before the introduction of improved wheeled vehicles and the coming of the canal and the railway.[2]

311 Let us now look at the cultural landscape which the hand of man has fitted to the physical frame of the island. Although man has been in this country for only a fraction of the time he has occupied South England and the continent, his mark is everywhere. Wander where you will through the length and breadth of the island, and through the dozens of lesser isles around its shores, and you will never fail to see traces of human activity, past or present, even in the most empty and inaccessible spots. Apart from the more or less datable remains of church and rath, castle and cairn, the land is covered with the marks of man's toil. The history of rural Ireland could be read out of doors, had we the skill, from the scrawlings made by men in the field boundaries of successive periods. In them the unlettered countryman wrote his runes on the land. The student of historical geography has been greatly assisted in the task of interpreting this palimpsest by the new tool of air-photography which, given suitable conditions, will pick out all man-made marks on the face of the earth.

311 178 The sturdy field walls and hedged banks which give the countryside its intimate character are by no means as immutable

[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), 204.

[2] Improvements in public transport were initiated by the Italian, Bianconi, who, profiting from the cavalry horses thrown on the market after the Napoleonic wars, began his famous fleet of 'cars' in Tipperary in 1815.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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407 version of the foot-plough. This is an almost unexplored field
241 of rural history. Mr. Aitken is of the opinion, however, that the left-sided plough goes with the use of the right hand as holding hand.

At any rate it is interesting to find that in Ireland the majority
412 of diggers use the right foot, and although in theory the
241 wooden foot-rest of the native one-eared spade can be fitted either to left or right of the narrow blade it is, in the west, almost invariably on the right side. Presumably only habitually left-handed people use the left foot. In eastern Ireland, on the other hand, and particularly in the Protestant districts of the north-east, the left foot is normally the digging-foot, though judging from the proportions of right to left (about one to three in the north-east), the old Irish stocks continue to dig with the right foot. Hence there is a basis of fact in the phrase 'digging
[539] with the wrong foot'. (To say that someone digs with the other
[798] foot is in Ireland an oblique way of referring to his religious faith.) The old Irish spade, we have seen, is a highly specialized tool. It may have been preceded by some kind of hoe or planting stick such as are represented today by the graffan or the steeveen which we describe in the following chapter.

We have no direct evidence of Bronze Age ploughs in Ire-
174 land, though marks of furrows have been observed underneath
407 burial barrows of that period in Jutland and Holland and it has been claimed that the *ard* had reached the west Baltic region
412 before the end of the Neolithic phase. However this may be the sod-cutting spade, which could be supplemented by the wooden shovel, is not likely to have been introduced much before the beginning of the Christian era, since it required an efficient knowledge of iron-working. By facilitating the building of ridges it would have improved crop yields during a climatic period, the sub-Atlantic, which was even wetter than at present. A mould-board plough capable of forming ridges did not reach Ireland on present evidence until about the seventh century, and as we have seen it had not been adopted in parts of the west until the nineteenth century. Thus the narrow spade, coming into use at about the same time as oats, would have been a factor in stabilizing settlement by permitting ridge cultivation on the outfield grazing ground round about. This is speculative,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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but it is at least clear that with the introduction of the potato in the seventeenth century it was the spade that facilitated the breaking-in of rough pasture by means of 'lazy-beds', and so made possible the great expansion of cultivation and population in the century before the Great Famine. To this day the one-eared spade, in endless variety, has kept its medieval simplicity and diversity, though it is fast disappearing in favour of the two-eared spade. It may still be seen in the west and south, and a heavy variety is at home in the upper Shannon basin, in the counties of Leitrim, Sligo, west Cavan, Longford, and Roscommon. This is the loy (Fig. 41) a veritable foot-plough with a massive heavy handle expanding on one side into a foot-ledge and below into a stout heel which acts as a pivot when the undercut sod is being turned over in ridge-making. 'This machine they prefer to ploughs', wrote McParlan.[1] Seasoned old men will tell you that they couldn't make ridges unless they had a loy, and they add, scornful of the rising generation, that 'the young people going nowadays couldn't carry a loy'. There was much opposition to the light two-eared spades when they made their appearance in the early nineteenth century. They were objected to above all because, the diggers not wearing boots—the native shoe was at best a flimsy raw-hide cover—the iron would cut their feet. To this day the Irish two-eared spade is distinguished from the English spade by having iron foot-plates (Fig. 41).

The metal spade probably began its life as a mere cutting edge of iron attached to the mouth of a narrow wooden spade. It is still little more than an attachment to a wooden shaft, consisting of an open iron socket which folds around the end of the shaft and passes at an angle into a strong narrow blade. I regard the loy as the most primitive type because the pivot or 'lift' is largely in the heel of the wooden shaft or 'tree', whereas in the rather lighter Munster spade—variants of which are also found in Kilkenny and Galway—the whole pivot is provided by the bent blade. The Longford-Cavan loy, which is adapted to heavy glacial or peaty soils, is a very clumsy digging tool, though well adapted for sod-turning. In experienced hands the loy 'would go in of itself' thanks to its weight and the expanded

[1] J. McParlan, *Leitrim* (1802), 25.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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501 where curraghs were formerly known. But it is also character-
171 istic of Scottish cobles and the boats of some English lakes. The inshore fishing boats of Co. Antrim also had booled oars,[1] and farther afield the single tholepin is said to typify the rowing boats of Madeira, the sardine boats of Portugal and some vessels of the Upper Nile. These often use a grommet, as do the boats of the north-east coast of England.

Sea-going curraghs are put to many uses, for inshore net
226 fishing, for setting lobster pots or long lines, for gathering kelp and for carrying freight, livestock and passengers. But the most spectacular purpose to which they have been put is for hunting the basking shark or sunfish from whose liver, before
[373] the advent of paraffin, oil for lighting was obtained. A single fish will yield from seven to ten barrels of liver. Measuring up to forty feet in length, the basking shark is one of the world's largest fish and though harmless—its diet is minute copepods—its bulk makes it a formidable adversary. These fish move down the west coast in summer, and in early May they haunt the Sunfish Bank thirty miles off Achill Island, where they come to the surface in the morning and evening. The bank is remarkable for the break of the tide on it, although it lies between seventy and ninety fathoms near the edge of 'soundings'—the continental shelf—and a heavy swell makes conditions difficult for small boats. Here and elsewhere the sunfish used to be harpooned from curraghs, but the advantage lay with decked vessels which could stand by for several days. In the early nineteenth century as many as thirty or forty fish were sometimes killed on the Sunfish Bank in a single day of fine weather. Nowadays the sharks are taken in strong nets fixed to island headlands around which they swim. They are occasionally seen off the other Irish coasts, where they cause great havoc if they get involved in the fishing nets.

Of the small open clinker-built boats of traditional type which
501 takes the place of the curragh on the north, east and south
[174] coasts, no systematic study has been made. Some of them betray their Norse inheritance in their lines or their names, for example the Wicklow skiff and the drontheim (Trondhjem) of the north coast. These boats are double-ended—unlike the cur-

[1] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 276.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and [776]
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the offi-
ciating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient
tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured
soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the
church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hun-
dreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appear-
ance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

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778 on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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721 At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

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175 The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,
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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower.

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade.

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket.

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion.

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [641]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 434 [501] [298] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [438] [659] [437] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 [502] [433] [322] [184] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [178] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, [798] rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [787] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on November 1st.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
776 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
796 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
776 roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[822] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[778] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to
[233] attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century. Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 themselves in a proud segregation, stand the more pretentious houses of a residential area, and the great grey buildings in which local government and justice are housed. But the centre remains the point at which the shop-lined streets that lead from deep within the countryside converge. The life of the country and that of the town meet and mingle along these converging lines.

175 361 That mingling represents the latest stage of an age-old struggle in which the countryside has won out at last. It has been a conquest of assimilation, like the victories of Chinese life over the barbarian invader. The town in Irish history was originally, and often long remained, a foreign growth. In the great age of Celtic civilization, the monastery and the royal seat centred Irish life. Later the Celto-Norman castle scorned an urban fortress wall. The town was first a Danish importation; only Galway, of Irish cities, was not a Norseman's settlement. Throughout the long wars and counter-wars with the English foe and the alien English life, the town was many times alternately absorbed by native life and reconquered for the alien. Even Galway still bore its famous inscription above its city gate not three centuries ago. "O Lord," it read, "deliver us from the fury of the O'Flaherties." Law, at first, forbade even the entrance of the 'Irishry' into the towns and then later decreed that no Irishman should trade with another. The towns were to remain English, and later, Protestant, and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the merchant-burghers who flourished in them must remain of English blood and habit. 175 361

All that, of course, has long since vanished. The Irish have occupied the towns of their own land, their blood and habit hold sway and fashion urban commerce in the towns and cities. The change has been a slow and durable growth, flowing on beneath the surface of political and cultural strife. But like all growth it has been a process of incorporation, too. Today, to a casual eye, the shops, the commerce, the social life of the Irish town is much like that of all modern western Europe.

Such is the history, briefly put, which has provided the scene that interests the social anthropologist. It is in this scene that he can inquire into the bonds this conquest has created. He can appraise through them the factors which make up the countryman's participation in the larger world. Many fields for investigation present themselves in this connection. Townsmen and countrymen are now equally part, each in his own way, of that whole we name Irish society. From his own vantage each acts toward the other and builds up a relationship with him in such a way as to determine in some degree the form of that whole. This relation, an instance of the age-old reciprocity between town and country, invites our examination. 369

In Ireland today, one can see this relation most definitely and most significantly in the ties between shopkeeper and countryman. In the west and south

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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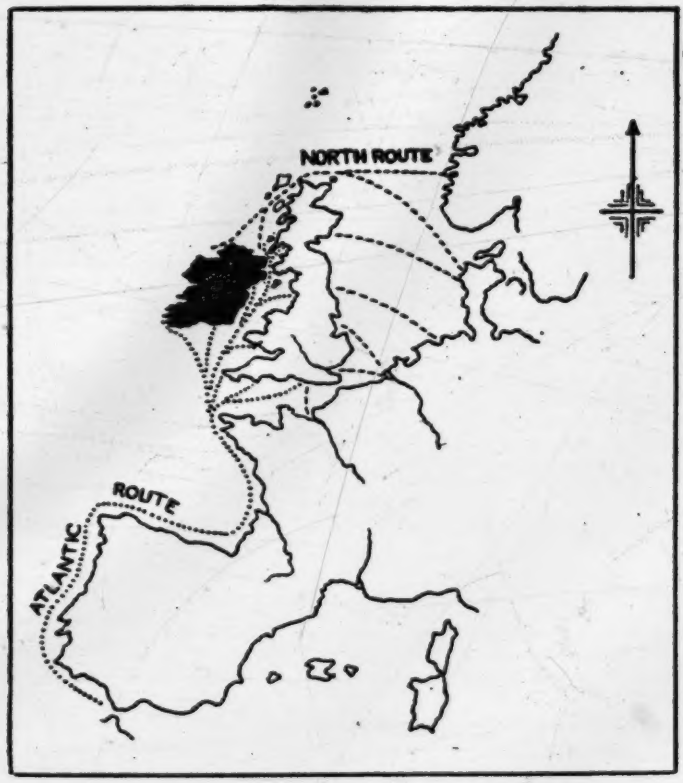

Fig. 1. Ireland and the seaways of "Atlantic" Europe.

The routes from the south brought ancient civilization to the island about 2000 B.C.

[p. 9]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER II.

HOW IRELAND TOOK SHAPE.

101 131 "To comprehend the homestead and its home-folk, from the thatch of the roof to the colour of the children's hair, we must find the locality on the domed surface of the earth, and must realize that this earth is a very large and dominant region round it." So wrote the late Grenville Cole, wisest of Ireland's geographers. This island, then, lies in the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean, midway between the Lofoten Islands and the Straits of Gibraltar, a detached but not isolated fragment of the drowned coast of Eurasia. Throughout the ages, as Europe sank repeatedly under the waters of the ocean, this outer margin, worn down by rains and rivers, received fresh marine deposits over and over again, so that its rocks record all the main features of the history of western Europe.

133 175 Lying in the middle latitudes of the continent, it shares the converging mountain systems of north and south, the older axis of Scandinavia dominating the build of the north of Ireland while the younger axis linked with France and Spain prevails in the south. The lead thus given in the remote ages of geology has been followed, over and over again, by man and his cultures converging on this last outpost of Europe. From across the Atlantic, too, Ireland has received much in recent centuries; here the alien potato was first welcomed; and it was the "praty" which drove masses of Irishmen back along the route it had itself taken. "Ireland lieth aloof in

[p. 15]
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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133 the West Ocean," wrote Campion, but one cannot attempt to
●175 interpret Ireland without reference to its neighbouring lands and seas. The links with Britain are strongest and oldest, alike in geology and history, in the north-east. Here both rocks and men have common roots on both sides of the North Channel: from Carlingford round to Swilly this "Region of the Loughs" looks out towards familiar coasts and islands. In geology as in history, it is as difficult to consider Ireland apart from Britain as the islets of Ireland apart from Ireland. A brief summary will reveal a geological story as troubled as its political history. Fig. 2.

133 The oldest rocks are the gnarled and crumpled sediments of the north and west, running in broken masses from Connemara to north Antrim. Here the resistent hardened sandstones (quartzites) stand up in conspicuous cones (Errigal, Muckish, Croagh Patrick, the Twelve Pins) while the gleaming schists are generally worn down into bog-filled hollows, though they rise to over 2,000 feet in the Sperrins. These rocks, together with great thicknesses of shales and mudstones worn off them, were involved in the great earth-ridgings named, from their presence in Scotland, "Caledonian." Further south, hard quartzites also give the Great Sugarloaf of Co. Wicklow its bold outline, while massive intrusions of molten rock forced up during the Caledonian folding cooled to give wide exposures of moorland granites both in the long chain of the Wicklows and in scattered hills of the north and west.

Next in succession came the Old Red Sandstones, formed under semi-arid conditions out of the débris of sand and pebbles rolled down from the mountains. As the sea flooded back once more, a rich marine life left behind a great thickness of limestone, still to-day, despite its solubility and rapid weathering, the most continuous and widespread of all the Irish rocks. The Great Central Plain, worn down to a uniform level, is floored with limestone, and the seas have cut into it, in Donegal and Galway Bays, so as to separate the three mountain masses of the west coast and leave Connacht projecting like a Wilder Wales from the Irish mainland.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Corrib). Difficulties of communication are such that the 133
Central Plain has never been central in anything more than
name: Athlone has become a national centre only with radio [207]
communication, and the Shannon remains a boundary river
throughout its course. The important part of the plain is the 133
fifty mile stretch which faces the Irish Sea between the bays of 175
Dundalk and Dublin, the heart of the old Kingdom of Meath
and of the English Pale, and the setting of Ireland's capital
sites from the sacred tombs of New Grange through the age
of Celtic Tara to the historic city of Dublin. One factor in the
location of this metropolitan area is suggested by Fig. 8; it [132]
is favoured by the relatively low rainfall of less than 30 ins.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

172 ages. It was probably in the late Bronze Age that oats, introduced perhaps from Spain, found their place as the leading corn-crop of Ireland and Highland Britain, better adapted than wheat to the damp conditions. The working of "bog iron-ore"—found in concretions in swampy places—is attested from the early Iron Age, and the traditions of the country smith have their origins in this period. Man's attack on the woodlands was accelerated with the possession of iron axes and adzes. We are not able to say how far Roman culture and novelties influenced the pattern of Irish life. Was poultry their contribution, and what of the cabbage, the only common Irish vegetable before the potato came in? Nor must we omit the contributions of the continental contacts maintained throughout the early Christian period, above all in improved architecture and the fine arts as well as in traditions of gardening and orchard-planting. Their influence can be seen, no doubt, in the relatively high standards of living and cultivation around places like Armagh. And it is to the early Christians and the Vikings that Ireland owes its earliest cities. From the Vikings, too, much was borrowed in matters of boat-building and metal-working. Since Norman times the contacts with Britain have steadily increased.

● 175
244 But we have yet to record the import of most significance for Irish peasant life—the introduction of the potato from the New World. The part that this crop has played in the social history of the island is a subject which calls for full investigation. While it gave bulky yields as food for man and beast, its cultivation brought about a decline in crops such as rye and beans. Thriving on a minimum of attention, its social influence has not been altogether for good: its effects on native habits might be compared with those of another New World crop, maize, in southern Europe and Africa. Ripening underground, potatoes had a great advantage over corn in the wet and windy climate of the west. Moreover the crop was less easy to pillage: "even the soldiers could not extirpate them." By the middle of the 17th century the newcomer was well established in Ireland.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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It undoubtedly helped the Irish peasants to survive through troubled times, enabled them to live on the hills and waste places to which they were driven, and also to multiply exceedingly in the decades before the great famines of the forties.

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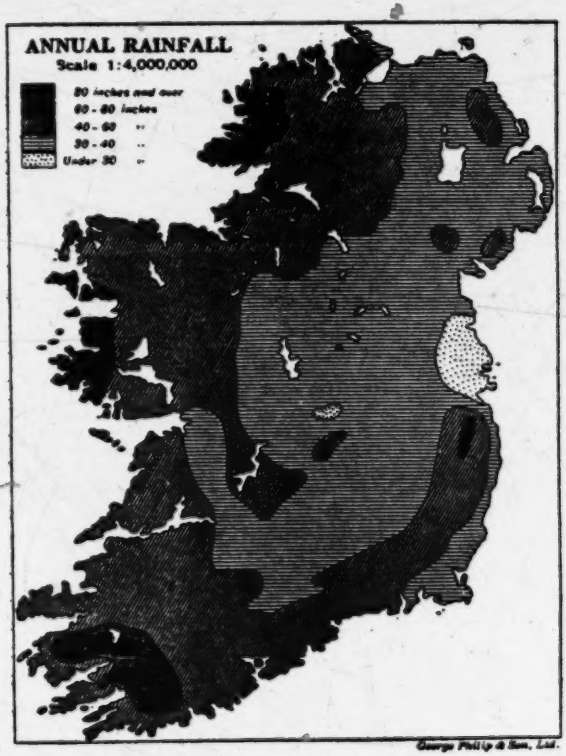

Fig. 8.

It will be well at this stage to say something of the climate and crops of present-day Ireland. The abundant rainfall, the prevailing cloud-cover, the high degree of atmospheric humidity, the strong winds, the cool summers and mild

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

There is another cross in the church which is of much finer workmanship, and is probably the true *Leac Leo*. In 1870, when Mr. Kinahan visited the island, the church was in ruins, and was used as a cattle pen, and the cross, or a stone coffin lid, he is not at this time able to say which, was set up on its side, leaving a space between it and the wall to form a trough. 172 [231]

(3.) *St Leo's Cave* (*Uaimh Leo*), on the south side of the island.

(4.) *Thobhar Leo.*—St. Leo's Well is situated, not in the cave, but some distance from the top of a deep and almost precipitous cove, called *Fuath Leo.*

(5.) *Cloghan Leo* is a small round cell, now almost completely ruinous, built within an enclosure of very little larger area. The saint's footprint is pointed out in the rock on which the building stands.

VII.—HISTORY.

As a Paper of this nature would be incomplete without some mention of the changes and vicissitudes that the population of the islands has undergone, a slight historical sketch is attempted here. It is not, and does not pretend to be, complete, as unfortunately the material available is very scanty, especially in regard to its earlier history; for, though the Venerable Bede, the Four Masters, and others make several references to the islands, yet these nearly all relate to ecclesiastical events, which have at most only a secondary bearing on the history of the people, and are not within the scope of this Paper. 175

The annalists record that in the second century a tribe of the Firbolgs (Clann Humoir) who occupied that part of the mainland opposite the islands were conquered and enslaved by Tuathal Teachtmar, a Scotic or Milesian monarch, and it is probable, if the islands were inhabited by members of the first-named people, that they shared the same fate as the rest of their tribe. It is not known whether such was the case, as this is "the only mention of this teritory while in the hands of the Belgae," says O'Donovan in his "Letters," except that one of their chiefs named Modh, or Modha, gave his name to Inis Modha, or the Clew Bay islands. After the conquest of the Clann Humoir the territory came into the hands of the Milesians, and the records about it relate, at first, to the deaths of their chiefs, and later on in the 9th century to the incursions of pirates (believed to have been Scandinavians), but make no specific mention of Inishbofin or its inhabitants.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

175 In A.D. 667 (according to the Four Masters, the Venerable Bede, and others), St. Colman, having quarrelled with Wilfridus at Lindisfarne, left that place, where he had been bishop for seven-and-twenty years previously, and taking with him all the Scots (Irish) among the monks, and in addition, some thirty English, he sailed away to Inishbofin, where he settled and founded the abbey in Knock-quarter. To quote the words of the Venerable Bede (given in Hardiman's Notes on O'Flaherty's "H-Iar Connaught"), "Secessit ad insulam quondam parvam, quæ ad occidentalem plagam ab Hibernia procul secreta, sermone Scotico *Inisbofinde*, id est, 'Insula Vitulæ Albæ' nuncupatur." When they had got settled on the island a quarrel arose between the Irish monks and their English brethren, who apparently did not get the best of the dispute, for St. Colman founded a monastery for them at Magh-eo on the mainland, but seems himself to have lived mostly in Inishbofin, where he died on the 8th of August, 676.

From this time forth until the tenth century, when all mention of the abbey ceases, there are several references made by the annalists to the island, but these all relate to the deaths of various abbots or bishops, and no mention is made of any other population than the monastic one.

After this there is a large gap in the records. Hardiman says:—"From the seventh century to the seventeenth this island was little known beyond the neighbouring shores of Iar Connaught and Umhall ui Mhaille; but during the latter eventful century it was considered of importance by the then contending parties in Ireland, and was alternately fortified by them."[1] The only break in this long period of silence is the traditional account of the possession, for a time, of the islands by a piratical crew, and of the establishment there, in the sixteenth century, of a fort and station for her fleet by the celebrated Grace O'Malley.

On the 14th February, 1652, the islands surrendered to the Parliamentary forces, and it was at first resolved to repair the fort, which seems to have been done, for it was occupied for three years afterwards, and in 1655, it was recommended to the Council of State that the garrison should be withdrawn, the works abandoned, and that £600, along with the right to "sell the barque Elizabeth, of Galway, which was sent to Buffin to carry limestone[2] there," should be granted to any undertaker who would block up the harbour.

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

[2] The limestone referred to was probably the cut stone doorway and corner stones of the fort.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The recommendation was not carried out, however, for in 1656, the fort was repaired and provided with larger guns, instead of some of those formerly in use, of which there were twenty-two. In the same year it was resolved to appoint an "able pious and orthodox minister of the gospell to be settled in Bofin and paid by the company" also "that Sir Charles Coote do consider of ordering that Colonel John Honnor, the governor there shall suffer no Irish to keepe any boats upon any part of that coast of Ir-conaght the co. of Mayo, or adjacent islands" also to exclude all "ill affected Irish" from the island, and to remove from the same all dangerous persons, to appoint a magistrate and make good highways towards the islands. 175●

During the Commonwealth the island, as well as the Aran Islands, was used as a prison for priests and monks deported thither from the mainland, and allowed sixpence a-day for their maintenance. The garrison is said to have been kept up for protection against the Dutch, who had formerly made use of the fisheries there, and for whose ships the harbour would have offered a safe place of retreat. Richard O'Flaherty, writing in the reign of Charles II. (1684), makes no mention of the history of the islands beyond stating that they had formerly belonged to "this countrey of Conmacny-mara (Connemara) in old times," but had for three hundred years belonged to "the Owles," the Anglicized form of Umhall, or Umhall Ui Maille, the ancient territory of the O'Malleys, which comprised the modern baronies of Murrisk and Burrishoole, in the County Mayo, which were formerly named Umhall uachtrach, and Umhall iochtrach, or Upper and Lower Umhall.

In the reign of James II. the island gave the title of Baron Bophin to John, ninth Earl of Clanricarde.

Whether the garrison was regularly kept up after the restoration is uncertain, but it was so during the war in the reign of James II., for we learn that Colonel O'Riordan, who held the place for that monarch, surrendered to a detachment of the Williamite troops after the capitulation of Galway. The victorious party now garrisoned the place for a while to keep off the French privateers, who would otherwise have made use of Bofin Harbour, as a secure station.

The islands are but seldom mentioned after this, indeed they seem hardly to have been known to the outer world. In Seward's "Topographica Hibernia" (1795), Inishbofin is barely mentioned, and Carlisle's "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland" (1810) speaks of it as supposed to contain 1200 acres, and to be situated at the distance of about a mile and a-half from the mainland; its valuation in the King's

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

175 Books was at that time ten shillings sterling. In neither of these works is Inishshark mentioned.

The islands seem to have remained in the possession of the Clanricarde family until early in the present century, when they passed, by exchange into the hands of the then Marquess of Sligo, from whom they came into the possession of the Wilberforce family, and from them into the hands of the present proprietor, Cyril Allies, Esq. The islands were transferred on 1st February, 1873, from the barony of Murrisk, County of Mayo, to the barony of Ballynahinch, County of Galway, by an Order in Council.

The establishment of the fishery station and the construction of new piers at Knock, and at the landing-place at Inishshark, by the Government in 1892, are the latest occurrences in the history of the islands.

VIII.—Ethnology.

174 In the present condition of Irish ethnology, it would be vain to attempt to propound any theory or form any exact conclusion as to what race or admixture of races gave origin to the present inhabitants of the islands. Their own traditional history speaks of the intermarriage of some of the islanders with members of the Cromwellian garrison, and of an earlier introduction of a foreign element (some say French, others Danish or Spanish) by a piratical colony; and I am informed by Mr. G. H. Kinahan that he has heard that "a good sprinkling of foreigners remained in Bofin, that went there while the mine was working."

Judging from the list of surnames given on a preceding page, it would appear that the amount of foreign blood introduced must be considerably exaggerated, as an analysis of the list shows that a great majority of the names are those of old Connaught families. If the name of the proprietor of the islands, who is English, be left out, there are just fifty surnames on the islands, and thirty-three of these are distinctively Irish, and most of them are to be found in the account of the tribes of Hy Fiachrach, compiled by Duald Mac Firbis (though nearly all in Anglicized forms), eight are Welsh or Anglo-Norman, but of old standing in Connaught, dating back to the 13th century, two are Scotch (Naughton and M'Kendrick); one, Scuffle, is asserted by the people to be of Scandinavian or other foreign origin, and may probably be a corruption of Scholfield or Scovell; another, Lavelle, seems to be considered locally to be foreign also, but it is

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161 The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and outbuildings was as follows in 1891 :—

Locality.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
The Mullet, .	23,333 1 27	3757	1893	1864	600	532
N. Inishkea, .	464 1 32	126	60	66	21	4
S. Inishkea, .	344 3 19	180	92	88	32	33
23 Islets, . .	350 0 17	48	22	26	10	27
Portacloy, .	7845 1 1	299	148	151	54	29
Totals, . . .	32,338 0 6	410	2215	2195	717 ?	625

423 (B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area of the district is that of
311 Kilmore, being 29,492 acres, and the three townlands forming the Portacloy district, 7,845 acres.

The total valuation of Kilmore is £4,055 18*s.*, and of Portacloy
435 £163 7*s.*

There is very little commonage in the Mullet, but about Portacloy there is a good deal.

The holdings are not large, averaging about 4½ or 5 acres at a
427 rental of about £3 10*s.* in the Mullet, and about £2 10*s.* in "the mountains." There is considerable variation, however, as there are some farms of good size, but the majority are small.

In 1891 there were, in Kilmore, 210 holdings of between £4 and £10 valuation, 305 of £2 and under £4, and no less than 252 at, or under, £2 valuation.

The land is mostly held now at judicial rentals (the people having early taken advantage of the Land Act of 1881), but sixty years ago the greater part of the land was held in common, and the mode of tenure is thus described by Knight :—" In the whole of the peninsula there are few farms divided . . . the usual system being commonage both in tillage and pasture. In tillage, lots are cast every third year for the number of ridges each person is entitled to after the usual rotation is over. Potatoes the first year, then barley or oats, after which new lots must be cast for new potato ground. The holdings are by sums or collops, which originally meant the number

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of heads of cattle the farm could rear by *pasture*; but as some tillage became afterwards necessary, they divided the crop-ground into collops also, as well as the pasture, and each farm then had its number of tillage collops and of grazing collops. The tillage collop is supposed to be capable of supporting one family by its produce. In many instances poor families have no pasture to correspond with their tillage collop, and even of this they may have only a half or quarter, called a *geerla*. . . . The prices of these collops vary according to the quality of the farm; the average is about one guinea. The pasture collop is the grass of a horse, or a cow, or two year old heifers, or six or eight sheep. It is evident from this system, that although a man may expend a good deal of labour in digging and manuring his ridge, it is only a chance whether he will enjoy the labour so expended the third year, and hence that he is careless of future benefits, and that, of course, the land will be but imperfectly cultivated. . . . There is a headman or *king* appointed in every village, who is deputed to cast the lots every third year, and to arrange with the community what work is to be done during the year in fencing, &c. . . . The king takes care generally to have the rent collected, applots the proportion of taxes with the other elders of the village, for all is done in a patriarchal way, *coram populo*."

The following table, extracted from Mr. Knight's valuable little book on Erris (p. 58), is given here as illustrating the condition of people sixty years ago.

KNIGHT'S POPULATION TABLE.

Population, &c.			Remarks.
Families,		1723	
Males,	4290	8662	By public census, in the year 1831, 9287; but I believe this to be more correct. The whole Barony, in 1821, was 17,879; in 1831, 22,824.
Females,	4372		
Rental,		£4300	Or about 50*s*. to each family.
Sums or collops,		4469	Green acres as before 6100; collops different in size and quality, more than 2½ to each family.
Amount of Tithes,		£258	There is no composition, the old mode followed in collecting. There is now (1834) a composition for £300.
Boats (sail),		5	These six items show the little attention paid to the fishing, one boat of *every kind* in thirteen families, and one net in every seven. Three or four families frequently join in a boat, and two or three in a herring net, or set of nets.
Boats (row),		88	
Curraghs,		38	
Nets,		256	
Lines,		131	
Spilleta,		8	

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KNIGHT'S POPULATION TABLE—*continued.*

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Population, &c.			Remarks.
Horses,	587	943	Or only one beast of burden nearly, to every two families. Major Bingham and a few others have some good horses. The general breed is small, but hardy.
Asses,	356		
Cows,		1967	This is more than one to each family.
Sheep,		2348	
Pigs,		919	
Ploughs,			At Major Bingham's, Rev. Mr. Dawson's, and Rev. Mr. Lyons's.
Carts,			Same.
Feather beds,		624	Or nearly one to every third family. The substitute—straw, rushes, or bent.
Blankets,		1838	
Men without shoes,		734	
Men, women, and children,		3156	Wanting clothes, or nearly one-third of the whole population.
Buying provisions,		751	In a year of great plenty, but after two of great scarcity.
Sick,		454	
Died (1831),		236	
Carriages (four-wheeled),		2	
Carriages (two-wheeled),		8	

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—I regret to be unable to give here the proportion of people speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, as the census authorities make the return by baronies only. The great majority of the people are bi-lingual, speaking both Irish and English, employing Irish mainly when speaking among themselves, but there is some small proportion, especially among the older people, who speak no English. The inhabitants of Inishkea do not usually speak anything but Irish on their own islands, though having a fair knowledge of English; but many of the women on these islands have no knowledge of the last-named language. About Portacloy there are many who "have no English."

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Illiteracy.—The return for this is given by parishes. In Kilmore, in 1891, there were 3590 persons of five years old and upwards; of these 2135 or 59·5 per. cent. were illiterate.

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	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	3590	1811	1779
Illiterate,	2135	978	1157
Percentage,	59·5	54·0	65·0

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VII.—History.

175 The history of the district forms a necessary portion of a report such as this, to show what changes have occurred in the composition of the population, what elements have been imported, and their effects. Unfortunately the material for a history of Erris is both meagre and much scattered, long periods being left unaccounted for, except by vague tradition or by the fanciful conjectures of some writers.

The following sketch, though not pretending to be complete, gives an outline of what seems to be the recorded history as gathered from the few writers who have dealt with the subject.

Erris was anciently known as *Iorrus Domhnann* from its earliest recorded possessors the *Domhnanns* or Damnonii ("deep diggers"), a party of Firbolgs, who, landing at Broad Haven under the leadership of their chiefs *Genann* and *Rudhraighe*, settled the surrounding country, which they held for some centuries, together with another tribe of the same people, the Gamaradii (*Gamhraidhe Iorris*). They were first subjugated to some extent by the *Danaans*, and in the second century, were, according to the annalists, conquered and enslaved by Tuathal Teachtmar, a Milesian or Scotic monarch; it does not appear, however, that the conquerers in either case drove out or exterminated the original population, who were probably too numerous for that, and it is even doubtful if it was permanently subjugated, as many of the old writers speak of the Belgae as being still in power in the fifth century. From this period until the year 1180, there is no record of the people. Adamnan indeed speaks of the district as Erris of the Damnonii, but does not state whether that people were still in power or no. Respecting this long silence, O'Donovan says (MS. Letters): "I, who have felt deep interest in the history of Erris these seven years, and who have studied a great part of the "*rags and rhymes*" of history, have not yet discovered any notice of it from the period of the Belgae till the year 1180, when the Fiachrian O'Caithniadh[1] is mentioned as the chief of it.

The following are the records in the "Annals of the Four Masters" respecting this family:—

"A.D. 1180.—Aodh O'Caithniadh, lord of Iorris, was treacherously slain by O'Ceallachain at Cill Chomain."

"A.D. 1206.—Caithniadh O'Cathniadh, lord of Iorris, died."

[1] This name is probably modernised O'Kane.

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"A.D. 1274.—Feargal O'Caithniadh, lord of Iorris, died in Hy-Mac Caichaim (near Invermore, in the north of Erris)." 175●

These O'Caithniadhs were thus in power up to the end of the thirteenth century, after which there is no more mention made of them. They were a branch of the descendants of Fiachra, a Milesian chieftain, and Erris, during their sway, formed part of the region known as Hy Fiachrach or the O'Dowda's country. The chief seats of the O'Dowd's in Erris were *Oileach of the King's*, a fort built nearly on the spot where Bingham's Castle now stands, and Dun Caechain (now Dun Keeghan, on Broad Haven), but there is another smaller fort, Dun Fiachra in Aughadoon, north of the Mullet, traditionally said to have been another of their seats. The O'Dowda's reign came to an end, and the Barrets, Burkes, Lynnots, and other Welsh and Anglo-Norman families began to obtain a footing in the country about the beginning of the fourteenth century, and by 1386 seem to have got the sovereignty. They built several castles in the Mullet, of which the remains of only one can now be traced. Their rule was wide-spread, and many of their descendants are to be met with who still nourish the memory of their ancestors glory. The keeping and defence of Erris was given after the battle of Moyne by *William Mor na Maighare* (William the Great of Moyne)[1] the head of the Barrets, to Toimin and to Philpin, the grandson of Toimin (Duald M'Firbis). The Barrets ruled until the reign of Elizabeth, when some of their property was forfeited, as is thought by O'Donovan, who, however, states that he has no documentary proof.

In the reign of James I. one Darby Cormick bought a large part of this territory, and his descendants ruled until the reign of Charles II., when the land was forfeited. It was somewhere at or before this time that an influx of Ulster Celts into the district took place. These were mainly O'Donnels, O'Reillys, and a few others. Other parts of the district were forfeited during the commonwealth, so that when M'Firbis wrote there was neither Bourke, Barret, nor O'Dowd holding property in Erris. In the reign of Charles II. a grant was made of the whole half barony of Erris, the parish of Doonfeeny, in Tyrawley, and the parish of Tarmonbarry in the county of Roscommon to certain London citizens in charge for Sir James Shaen, Knight and Baronet. Sir Arthur Shaen, son of Sir James, introduced into Erris a Protestant colony who were mainly settled in the Mullet; they were

[1] This battle was fought in 1281, between the Barrets and Cusack who was assisted in the fight by two of the native Irish, Faithleach O'Boyle and Faithleach O'Dowd; it resulted in the defeat of the Barrets.

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175 given leases and were accompanied by a clergyman of their own persuasion; the only original inhabitants obtaining leases were the Cormicks. This colony does not appear to have made any extensive change in the composition of the population, as the settlers after a time ceased to be agriculturists to any extent, and took the natives of the district on to their lands as tenants. A curious petition to Sir Henry Bingham, Governor of Connaught, in reference to the revenge taken on these settlers by the natives, shows the names of those in the district in the reign of Queen Anne, and of these but two now remain, all the rest having disappeared, a fate which is ascribed by Mr. Knight to the habits of extravagance induced by the nature of their life. Sir Arthur Shaen began the canal across the neck of the Mullet, but soon abandoned the project, which was not revived until after the foundation of the town of Belmullet. Sir Arthur's two daughters, he had no sons, married, one Henry Boyle Carter of Castlemartin, county Kildare, and the other John Bingham Esq., Newbrook, county Mayo, and the property was divided between these two.

In the year 1793 a fight took place in the Mullet between the local yeomanry and the people of the district, in which thirty-six of the latter were slain. The origin of the fight was the opposition to the enrolment of the militia, then causing a great stir in the west of Ireland. Major Bingham having come to reside in the Mullet in 1796 built Bingham Castle at Eley, and began to make some roads and reclaim some of the land. The first road into the district was made in 1823, and about the same period Major Bingham founded the town in the Mullet known as Binghamstown, which at first was fairly prosperous and had at one time a population of 673.

In 1823 the first vehicle entered the Mullet, and in 1824 Mr. W. H. Carter founded the town of Belmullet at the neck of the peninsula. This town being more favourably situated, has completely destroyed its rival Binghamstown, which, though once containing some fine buildings, is now in ruins, and contains only about a dozen inhabited houses. From the time of the establishment of Belmullet and the construction of good roads into the districts, the condition of the people has [511] shown steady improvement, though it is still extremely primitive and poverty-stricken.

VIII.—Concluding Remarks.

174 This report being, like its two predecessors, a record of available facts, as found, in order to form a basis for comparison between different parts of the country, all advocacy of personal theories or opinions

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its old habits, as is illustrated by the persistence of cremation rites from the earliest megalithic phase to the end of the Bronze Age, almost on the threshold of the Christian era. 174

At some stage towards the close of the Bronze Age the expanding Celtic culture, carried with the sword across western Europe, was able to gain a foothold in the north-east, whence in time it imposed itself and its language on the whole of Ireland and later, by way of Argyll, on Scotland too. But the price of this conquest was the loss of many elements of Celtic culture or their adaptation to the Irish environment and to long-established native tradition. The art of the Celtic overlords, for example, quickly develops forms and features which are insular and distinctively Irish. In other words there is more continuity of folk ways throughout the prehistoric period in Ireland than in Britain. And this Irish-Celtic civilization of the Early Iron Age was able, during the following period, to maintain itself through the centuries when the Roman Empire embraced nearly all western Europe. The spirit of its art and life was almost untouched by the mass-production and standardization of imperial Rome. It survived long enough to be caught up and revitalized in the late Celtic phase by the fervour of a Christian faith whose adaptation to Celtic tradition is illustrated in Saint Columba's famous phrase: 'Christ is my druid'. It was a time of great missionary enterprise, but at home its greatest achievement was the taming of the damp lowland forests which earlier peoples had shunned. Legendary history, now receiving confirmation from archaeological research, tells of technological advances and increasing population and settlement from about the seventh century onwards. [776]

Irish Christianity grew up within the forms of Irish life: the church claimed no martyrs and there is little evidence of conflict with older beliefs, which clearly were absorbed. The Celtic church was peculiar in that the centres of its life were the great monasteries: there were no cities to form the seats of powerful bishops. Instead, the founders' kin retained the ownership of the monasteries, and the Celtic tradition survived in administration as in art and architecture. It was only after the ravages of the Vikings and the reassertion of pagan cults that the Irish Church was reformed by Saint Malachy, who established 795 175

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175 a system of dioceses and raised St. Patrick's Church at Armagh
[195] to the primacy in the eleventh century.

But it was the Norsemen who established the first port-cities
175 of Ireland—Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick—
162 and provided the Anglo-Normans with bases from which to attempt their conquest. It was the fate of these newcomers, as of earlier invaders, to be absorbed, but the towns which they and their successors established became the instruments of Anglicization. Yet outside the nine south-eastern counties where the Anglo-Norman influence was strongest, there are few towns which are older than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as late as 1841 less than 15 per cent of the Irish population was urban. It is significant that even today no inland Irish town has a population reaching 20,000: in the Republic, indeed, only one or two exceed 10,000, and that barely. It is the immemorial peasant tradition which dominates the heart of Ireland. In some inland counties the rural population is still as much as 90 per cent of the total: for the Republic of Ireland as a whole it amounts to 62 per cent, and the figure for the more industrialized counties of Northern Ireland is only slightly under 50 per cent. In Ulster the plantation of English and especially of Scots Presbyterian settlers in the seventeenth century was at last successful in maintaining its identity, though as we shall see the material culture is strongly moulded to its Irish environment. Partly because this region of entry has received through the centuries almost every culture-layer that has been deposited in Ireland, there is perhaps a greater variety of survivals in Ulster than in any other part of Ireland. In some ways this most British part of Ireland is also the most Irish.

Although the tribal nomadism of medieval Ireland has been
311 exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the pastoral tradition
361 has dominated Irish life through the ages. Cultivation was
175 certainly practised from Neolithic times, but the older crops, wheat and barley, were in course of time supplemented and in many parts replaced by oats, which became the corn of Ireland as of Scotland, food for men as well as animals. For half the year the arable land was under stubble, pastured and manured by grazing stock, so that the favoured acres around the settle-

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ment—the infield—might produce grain year after year. The rough grazing beyond—the outfield—was broken up periodically in temporary enclosures, and it may be assumed that such a system had developed from the shifting agriculture of prehistoric times. Relics of outfield cultivation, usually in association with family-communes, can be traced in many regions of difficulty throughout Western Europe, both in the mountains of the centre and along the oceanic fringe from Spain to Norway. 'If we knew medieval England completely', states Sir John Clapham, 'we should find plenty of it.'[1] In most lowland areas of good soil throughout western Europe, however, it was replaced by a system involving large open fields, normally three in number, each of which was used in rotation for autumn sown corn, usually wheat, followed by spring corn and fallow. This scheme called for considerable organization and a large variety of tools and implements: it came to be governed by complex regulations and controlled by the lord of the manor, and it is significant that the feudal system and in due course the nation-state evolved in areas where the openfield economy was practised. There was more freedom and flexibility in the smaller and simpler outfield system, and in Ireland the feudal order was successfully established only in the English Pale, where the three-field system was introduced by Anglo-Norman settlers. Elsewhere the tribal system prevailed, and for the study of folk-customs the important unit within that system was the family commune living in clustered house-groups, hamlets or clachans. The prevailing cattle-economy called for a minimum of equipment, the subordinate cultivation little more than spades or light ploughs and hand-operated tools. Even the lowliest members of society had some interest in the land and its cultivation was not beyond their means. Possession of a cow, a horse, a pig or a few sheep demanded even less in the way of equipment and tools. The simple arts and crafts of prehistoric times proved adequate, and the poorest man was able to play his part in the community and stand on his own feet. A democratic

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[1]H. J. Clapham, *A Concise Economic History of Britain* (1949), 48. Similarly Gilbert Slater, *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields* (1907) regards what he terms the Celtic system 'as influencing to varying degrees the type of village community in England.'

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175 way of life was fostered by the ease with which the humbler
311 members of the community could compete with others in arts
361 demanding not wealth but personal qualities, in poetry, oratory, song and physical prowess. Down to our own day the small size of the average farm has encouraged the survival of simple tools and limited the acquisition of machines. Subdivision of farms and the depressing effects of short leases and absenteeism were contributory factors. Subdivision of holdings was prohibited under an Act of 1881, but like so many other prohibited practices it did not cease.

175 The retention of many of the attributes of a peasant society is the key to the survival of the folk ways with which we are
602 concerned in the following chapters. Even the Great Famine
178 which marks a grim watershed in social and economic history did not entirely obliterate them, though it had such far-reaching effects that it might be regarded as the end of prehistoric times in Ireland. First in importance is the strength of blood-ties in extended family groups, still maintained even in many urban communities. During the air raids on Belfast, for example, the problem of finding billets for evacuated homeless was complicated by the refusal of large groups of related families to be separated from each other. In remote rural areas the blood-tie is a dominant force, governing economic as well as social relationships,[1] its loyalties overriding the impartial administration of justice. A relative is a 'friend', even if 'far-out'—that is, remotely connected—and friendship is a matter of blood relationship. A peasant community is concerned first and foremost with the maintenance and continuity of society: it does not judge—and cannot be judged—purely by economic standards. Immemorially peasant families have been large, and child-bearing is widely regarded as part of the ritual necessary to bring success with the stock and the crops. In rural Ireland
[842] barrenness in a wife still tends to be regarded as an unnatural and disgraceful thing, and many superstitious cures for 'the
178 sterile curse' are recorded. This is but one example of a widespread attitude towards life, to which comparative anthropology
789 offers many parallels. Sympathetic magic, or the performance

[1]C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940), Ch. 13.

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491 when the making and repair of 'cross roads' became a public
493 charge it was done on the basis of baronies, and the Grand Juries—composed largely of landlords—became responsible, under the presentment system, for local road-making and repairing. Thus from about 1760 onwards a fairly close network of roads began to be established in the richer parts of the country—especially about the big demesnes—and the way was open for the more capacious spoke-wheeled cart which held its own until in our own day it is being replaced by the lorry and the tractor-trailer.

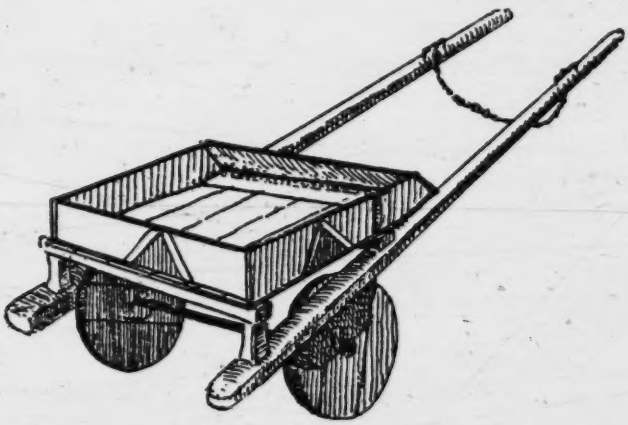

FIG. 55. Wheel-car, Co. Antrim.

175 In the face of abundant evidence as to the backwardness of
493 rural transport and the rarity of wheeled vehicles and made roads until quite recent times, it is startling to read of the prominence of chariotry and of the rapid movement of armies in the Irish legendary histories. In fact, up to date, the archaeological evidence which would clearly establish the use of chariots in early Celtic Ireland is scanty. There can be little doubt, however, that horse-drawn spoke-wheeled vehicles were a significant element in Celtic culture, and it is known that the Romans took into their language nearly a dozen Celtic names for horse-
[492] drawn vehicles.[1] Such fragments of harness as have been re-

[1]E. M. Jope, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 57–60.

covered from early Celtic sites in Ireland suggest that the horse 175
was held in high regard and was perhaps reserved for pageants, 493
combats and ceremonies. The detailed evidence in the legendary [492]
histories of ancient Ireland for the existence of roads, however,
is clear. The fact that the Celtic roads are rarely traceable today [491]
is understandable in view of the physical conditions of the
country, especially the prevalence of obliterating bogs. Moreover the road system must have decayed with the decline of Celtic culture. In any case it is evident that the use of the chariot was confined to the highest castes, and that its humble relation the block-wheeled car was fated to outlast it. The finely-spoked wheeled vehicles of the Celtic invaders were as much out of place in Ireland as the great wagons which later overlords introduced from England. The block-wheeled car, if not previously known in Ireland, may have been the native response to the impressive magic of the Celtic wheel, or it may have reached this country with Celtic camp-followers. We shall see that it could have been developed from the slide-car which almost certainly preceded it in Europe. The term 'wheel-car' as used in Ireland refers to the block-wheeled car and is clearly meant to distinguish it from the wheel-less slide-car. The spoke-wheeled cart is a newcomer in most parts. Nevertheless there is evidence that a light spoke wheeled cart continued to be used in early Christian times: an example drawn chariot-wise by two horses is figured on the eighth century Ahenny Cross in Co. Tipperary. It seems that such light carts were used for personal transport, for example St. Sampson took one with him, according to an eleventh-century account of his travels, to carry his books across Cornwall on his way from Ireland to Brittany.[1] And the spoke-wheeled cart must have been known in the planted areas since the Middle Ages, so that it is very probable that in parts of the country the cart has had a continuous life since early Celtic times.

But we should first examine certain archaic methods of 492
transport which depend on the carrying power of beasts and [482]
men, or rather women, for in simple societies the bearers of
children are also the burden-bearers. The romance of rural

[1] O. G. S. Crawford, 'Western Seaways' in *Custom is King* (1936), 196.

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103 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a
173 "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

173 Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of
776 mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff
133 of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones
[172] that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all
776 Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

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as their war-goddess,[21] so, before the baptism of King Cairthinn, (first Christian Prince of his House, about A.D. 430), the ancestors of the Dalcassians may have worshipped Aibhinn on her holy hill, and her equally lovely sister Aine, crowned with meadowsweet, on the tamer mound of Knockaney. Whether, if so, they found her already enthroned at Craglea on their conquest of the district, or whether the conqueror Lugad consecrated the mountains to his patroness, it is now impossible to guess. Aibhill, as banshee, held her own. We find her even usurping the place of the "Sybil" in a translation of the *Dies Iræ*,[22] in unwonted companionship with King David, and she was a commonplace of local threnodies during the eighteenth, and even the nineteenth, century. In the lake below Rathblamaic in Inchiquin she has down to recent years been seen, with the twenty-five other banshees of Clare that call her their queen, washing clothes before any impending disaster.[2]

The next appearance of a banshee in local history is of a very different spirit three centuries later. The *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* ("Triumphs of Torlough") was written probably about A.D. 1350 by Seean mac Craith, the hereditary historian.[23] It contains accounts of three spirit women,—one, the "Sovereignty of Erin," being of surpassing loveliness, and the two others, (if not the same,—"Dismal" and "Water Dismal"), of loathsome hideousness. The hags, however, probably survive, while the "Sovereignty" has perished. Bronach ("the sorrowful or dismal one") of Ceann Boirne was known as the "Hag of Black Head" from the modern name of the older Ceann (or Rinn) of Burren. She was in full repute in 1839, and I have heard of her vaguely about 1885 or 1887. In August, 1317, she

[21] Cf. *Revue Archéologique*, N.S., vol. xviii. (1868), p. 1; Sir Samuel Ferguson's paper, from the Irish point of view, in *Dublin University Magazine*, Oct. 1834, p. 463; W. M. Hennessy, "The War Goddess of the Ancient Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x., p. 425.

[22] Mss., Royal Irish Academy, 23.M.47.

[23] As yet only in manuscript,—one copy of A.D. 1509, and another probably from one of 1449. For its age see *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxxii., p. 139.

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was able to appear in "the dark before sunrise" and foretell destruction by words and hideous action. The supporters of Prince Murchad O'Brien, (then absent in Dublin), under his brother Dermot invaded the territory of his rival Prince Donchad O'Brien. The latter got together an army, "even the man in a souterrain (*uamh*) of a fort" being summoned, and marched round the site of the modern village of Ballyvaughan, his foe having sheltered in Corcomroe Abbey, in a nook of the bare hills some miles to the north-west. Approaching Lough Rasga, (still known as Rask), "they looked on the shining mere, and there they saw the monstrous and distorted form of a lone, ancient hag, that stooped over the bright Lough shore. She was thatched with elf locks, foxy grey and rough like heather, matted and like long sea-wrack, a bossy, wrinkled, ulcerated brow, the hairs of her eyebrows like fish hooks; bleared, watery eyes peered with malignant fire between red inflamed lids; she had a great blue nose, flattened and wide, livid lips, and a stubbly beard."[24] The writer adds detail on detail (some 90 in all), many too disgusting to copy. The hag was washing human limbs and heads with gory weapons and clothes, till all the lake was defiled with blood, brains, and floating hair. Donchad at last spoke. "What is your name and race, and whose kin are those maltreated dead?" She replied,—"I am Bronach of Burren, of the Tuatha Dé Danann. This slaughter heap is of your army's heads; your own is in the middle." The angry men raised their javelins, but she rose on the wind, yelling more and more words of woe till she vanished. "Heed her not," said Donchad, "she is a friendly *Bodbh* of Clan Torlough" (his opponents). The army hurried on to the ridge of the Abbey, where Donchad and all his kindred, save one brother, were slain before evening.

Not to the Irish alone did the banshee foretell ruin. In May, 1318, Richard de Clare, leader of the Normans, was marching to what he supposed would be an easy victory over the O'Deas of Dysert. The English came to the "glittering, running water of fish-containing Fergus," when they saw a horrible beldam

[24] I have to thank Mr. Standish Hayes O'Grady for this and other extracts from the work, the translations in the library of the Royal Irish Academy being, (it is understood), very crude.

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washing armour and rich robes till the red gore churned and splashed through her hands.[25] Calling an Irish ally to question her, De Clare heard that "the armour and clothes were of the English, and few would escape immolation." "I am the Water Doleful One. I lodge in the green fairy mounds (*sidh*) of the land, but I am of the Tribes of Hell. Thither I invite you. Soon we shall be dwellers in one country." Next day De Clare, his son, and nearly all his English troops lay dead upon the fields near the ford of Dysert for miles over the country in their flight.

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The belief of the early eleventh and fourteenth centuries is still extant, for local legend near Dysert tells how Aibhill and twenty-five banshees washed blood-stained clothes in Rath Lake before "Claraghmore" (De Clare) fell, and that they still do so when mischief is afoot.[26]

For nearly 300 years there is no other Clare banshee tale, till the famous one of 1642 in the *Memoires of Lady Fanshawe*, (published in 1665).[27] It is so well known that a brief abstract will suffice. Her Ladyship, staying with some of the O'Briens, was sleeping in a room, of which the window overhung water at some height, at a castle, perhaps Bunratty or Castle Lake. She was awakened by a horrible scream, and saw a girl outside the window. The apparition was pale, rather handsome, and with her reddish hair hanging dishevelled over her shoulders. After some time the unwelcome visitor vanished, with other ghastly shrieks. In the morning Lady Fanshawe, telling her tale, was told of the death of a relative of the family whose illness had been concealed from her. The spirit was that of the peasant wife of a former owner of the castle, drowned in the moat by her husband and of evil omen to his descendants.

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The next story was told in my own family and, I understand, in that of the Ross Lewins. I have traced it to a daughter of Jane Ross Lewin, one of the girls who saw the banshee. It related to Jane's father, Harrison Ross Lewin of Fortfergus, who probably died in 1776, as his will, dated November, 1775, was proved in

[25] Another "washer of the ford" appears in "Da Choca's Hostel," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi. (1900), p. 157, and she is also a Bodbh.

[26] Told me by Prof. Brian O'Looney in 1890, and I have heard more recently of the existence of the belief.

[27] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 83-6.

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175 March, 1777; but I have hitherto been unable to verify the circumstances or place of his death. Mr. Ross Lewin had gone
763 to Dublin on business, the journey at that time taking five days,
776 and the several stages being Limerick, Nenagh, Mountrath, Kildare, and Dublin. In his absence the "young people" went to a friend's house for the evening. The road passed an old church (Kilchrist), which was unenclosed, standing in an open field. As the party returned under bright moonlight, they were startled by loud keening and wailing from the direction of the ruin. Coming in sight, all clearly saw a little old woman with long white hair and a black cloak running to and fro on the top of the side wall, clapping her hands and wailing. The young men, leaving the girls together on the road, sent some of their number to watch each end of the building, and the remainder entered and climbed up on the wall. The apparition vanished as they approached the church, and, after a careful search, could not be found. The party, thoroughly frightened, hurried home, and found their mother in even greater terror. She had been sitting in the window when a great raven flapped three times at the glass, and, while she told them, the bird again flew against the window. Some days later, news arrived from Dublin that Ross Lewin had died suddenly on the very evening of the apparition and omen.

763 It is curious that an English family, no matter how long settled in Ireland, should have acquired the ministration of a banshee,
776 but, besides the Ross Lewins, both the Stamers and the Westropps were so endowed in Clare.[28] The Westropps had also death warnings in the shape of a white owl and the headless coach. This bird last appeared, it is said, before a death in 1909, but it would be more convincing if it appeared at places where the white owl does *not* nest and fly out every night. The banshee has been conspicuously absent of late years, although on the death of my father, the

[28] Among families with banshees, Thomas Crofton Croker (*op. cit.*, ed. 1862, p. 115,) names old Englishry such as the Burkes, Rices, Hanseys (the Norman, not the Gaelic, name), Trants, and Kestings. The FitzGeralds of Kerry and Limerick had also a banshee. Of the Clare families the Westropps came from Yorkshire, the Stamers from Essex, and the Lewins probably from Durham. Some banshees may have been acquired by marriage, for the three latter families were related to O'Briens, MacNamaras, and O'Gradys, to name only a part of their Celtic connections.

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A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

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In a preceding article I have dealt with place names and legends of names, banshees, the death coach, and fairies, and in the present one I propose to deal mainly with other appearances of a spectral or spiritual character. In doing this it is necessary carefully to avoid attributing to older writers beliefs which they never held. It is more than probable that the writer of the *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, and Seean MacCraith, the author of the *Triumphs of Torlough*, were no more under a delusion when they personified the spirits of Valour, Bloodshed, Terror, and Sovereignty than the modern journalist who writes of "Public Opinion sitting in judgment," or the "Spirit of Loyalty attending King George." The first ancient writer, describing the terrors of the deadly combat of the Irish and the Norse in 1014, tells us that there was "a bird of valour and championship fluttering over Murchad's head and flying on his breath." He also tells how there flew a dark, merciless, (and many more adjective-endowed) *bodbh*, screaming and fluttering over the combatants, while "the satyrs (*bannanaig*), the idiots, the maniacs of the glens, the witches, the goblins, the ancient birds, the destroying demons of the air and sky, and the feeble demonic phantom host" arose to accompany the warriors in the combat. He probably meant little more than "Amazement in the van and Flight combined with Sorrow's faded form and Solitude behind," though possibly the various uncanny "creatures of the wild" were real to him in their proper places in the hills and glens, but not in daylight on the fields beside Dublin. The second writer (*airs*

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1350) describes King Torlough, about 1286, returning from a successful raid, which has left its mark very clearly on the legal rolls of the day, ravaging the English lands round the mountains of eastern County Limerick and northern Tipperary, and marching up the western (Clare) shore of Lough Derg. A lovely maiden appeared, "modest, strange in aspect, glorious in form, rosy-lipped, soft-taper-handed, pliant-wavy-haired, white-bosomed." She was the "Sovereignty of Erin" come to rebuke the chief for letting De Burgh dissuade him from attempting the reconquest of all Ireland, and vanished in a lustrous cloud. The author's intent here is unmistakable. MacCraith has one other passage, so suggestive and remarkable that it can only be regarded as a literal statement of the beliefs of the warriors at the burial of some of whom his father, Ruadri, presided, a few years later, in 1317. Donchad, a prince of the Clan Torlough line, aided by William de Burgh, gave his deadly enemy, Richard de Clare, a severe defeat near Bunratty in 1311. At the moment of victory De Burgh was captured by the foe, and the victors fled in indescribable confusion,—the English to their nearest castles, and the Irish to their stone strongholds, the great terraced mountains of Burren. De Clare and his protegé, Prince Dermot, camped on two ridges at Cruchwill and Tullycommaun, a long ridge capped with tumuli, dolmens, and "forts." Donchad lay across the valley and lake on the spurs of Slieve Carran opposite. The soldiers of Donchad, we are told, "were disturbed by phantoms and delusive dreams, lights shone on the fairy forts," the waves of Erin[1] groaned, "the deep plaint resounded from the woods and streams," shades were seen, and hollow groans were heard. This is evidently a true tale of the reminiscences of the depressed and anxious men who lay looking at the foes' camp fires opposite. I have often heard with wonder on these lonely hills

> "undescribed sounds
> That come a swooning over hollow grounds
> And wither drearily on barren moors,"

the noise of the winds in the rocks and bushes, the strange prattle of streams in crannies deep down in the rocks, the cry of night

[1] Misfortune was foretold by great waves at four spots on the Irish coast, to which later belief added a fifth at Malbay in Clare.

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178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased
the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites con-
[789] nected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed
secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and
then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
527 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted
down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old
175 people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so
much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this
place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the
beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the
native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so
down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (p[illegible]ally
Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but
steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in
1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh
(Tuanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—
"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined
to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound
in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are
numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877
onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh
("Fair or Assembly Crag")[8] on the bare hill over Termon in the
Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter
probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in
1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and
may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with
a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten
assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings")
in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later
under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

823 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their
religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[8] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

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turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and [776]
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the officiating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth, 150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hundreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appearance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand, and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

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Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

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778 on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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721 At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

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712 The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,

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is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

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175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[712] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

176 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

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skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

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2

The Land and the Sea

Standard of Living

THE STANDARD OF LIVING of the folk has improved vastly since the establishment of the Irish Land Commission in 1881 and the Congested Districts Board ten years later, and the islanders are better off today than the inhabitants of some other areas of the Gaeltacht. In 1891, the Congested Districts were delineated as regions in which the population did not possess sufficient land to maintain life except at an extremely low standard. Between that year and 1951, the population in the districts declined 42 percent—from 541,000 to 367,000 persons. The few areas which would rank as congested now, on the 1891 basis, are mainly in Cos. Donegal, Mayo, and Galway (Freeman 1960:121–123). A vigorous and continuing effort to stem the tide of emigration, in part caused by poverty, led the commission, the board, subsequently the Gaeltacht Eireann which replaced the board after 1925, and other government agencies appointed in this century, to improve the standard of living by various actions: the enlargement of land holdings for more effective farming, the encouragement of small factory and domestic industries, the improvement of fishing, the construction of public works, and the introduction of various subsidies. Seasonal laboring in England, often practiced out of necessity by mainland farmers but not by the islanders, and remittances from relatives who have emigrated are income sources which also have served to alleviate poverty; but the major palliative throughout Ireland has been emigration. One of the factors limiting migration from Inis Beag to the mainland until recent decades was the low standard of living which prevailed in the country at large. An islander could not escape local hardships and privations by emigrating to urban centers as he can today; he had to turn his back on Ireland.

Most Inis Beag people believe themselves to be materially poor, although they resent others agreeing publicly with this view. A well-known Dublin newspaper feature writer in 196[illegible] was denounced, and a vow made not to permit him to

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent
434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts
437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils
[311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and
178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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The knit sweater called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is 291 commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage industry [175] by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach [657] the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which [531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked [552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black- [171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and [194] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its 286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the 291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2 46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less [437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri- 294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced [173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as [175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in [196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by 286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in 293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the 462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches 175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped 293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer [178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men [822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many [999] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons, however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet [177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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291 ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for
[177] themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their
294 fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and
281 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to
[437] shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and
[463] when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

128 In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a
434 livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before
434 ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century
502 men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the main-
437 land. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would
[178] race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with
502 modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in
539 the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

421 One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right
422 of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander
[829] along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage.
[176] During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the im-
[722] mense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the
[433] islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

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422 valuable commodities. Vessels which have run aground in the past have been
[175] stripped, and in 1960 a portion of the stricken freighter's cargo—namely Scotch
[722] whiskey, yarn, boiler pipes, toilet fixtures, sacks, shoes, and other goods—was
[432] obtained by the folk under the law of wrack. The importance and tenacity of the law were attested by the fact that "salvaging" was continued in the face of opposition from ship owners, insurance representatives, customs officials, visiting police, and even the imprecations of curate and parish priest.

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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [388]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 562
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[154]

582 589 581 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few 562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the [154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that 584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently 173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love 584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, [208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the 584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his 584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The 574 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175 •
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 177
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346]
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on November 1st.

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
[824] the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[174] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[175] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536
735 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
431 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
776 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
778 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[233] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[831] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
• 175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

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[For information pertaining to the historical background of Irish national character and personality development, the relation to sexual repression and theological dogma, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 20-27.]

831* 155 779 181 182 792

places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland,* by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community." [114]

> Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy. 831* 155 175 178 181 779 795 798

> Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not [874] [648]

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*831 155 175 178 181 779 795 798 [785] enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theologians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 155 178 181 779 798 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish,* edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of [874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 to the Middle and especially East European fireplace traditions, which are
354 dominated by the stonebuilt oven. The built-in oven is unfamiliar and unknown to the Irish fireplace, and the Irish types of bread. For baking,
252 which is done every day in Ireland, special utensils, representing very old
354 and original traditions, are used. For baking the griddle bread, *arán greadaille*, the griddle or grid iron, *greadall*, is used. The griddle rests on the tripod, *teannta* or *crann aráin*. In Northern Ireland, bread irons are used, which are not put on the tripod over the fire, but the cake is placed in an upright position supported by the bread iron which is placed before the fire. Very primitive is the method to lean the cake against the bread-stick, *crothnán* or *maide aráin*, which is only a wooden twig of three branches or a three forked root. In Ancient Ireland according to O'Curry (op. cit. vol. I, p. CCCLXIII) the wheatmeal and barley cakes were baked on a griddle, but the oatmeal cakes called *bkocaire* or *blethach* were always baked in upright position before the fire by means of the threepronged fork or stick called *maide an bkocaire* or the *cranachan*.

There is also another certainly old Irish method of bread baking i. e. in
[177] the bastible, *bácús*. When metal stores however are found in peasant houses, they are definitely a late cultural loan from England.

342 Standing at the back of the hearth is one large, thickish flag or often three
354 or more stones forming the hob, *iarta*. In very primitive dwellings I have seen only a couple of rough stones used as hobstones, *leac iarta*. In districts where mud-houses are common a mass or boss of clay behind the fireplace makes up the hob. The pot, *corcán*, or kettle, *citeal*, rests against the hob or hobstones when on the fire. The hob constitutes a protection even for the wall behind.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland and even elsewhere the hob is built up carefully from stone and mortar. An ash corner will be found at the sides of the hob.

In the very primitive stage there is no chimney at all, the smoke finding its way out through the door or a hole in the roof. As I have already mentioned, there can be two smoke holes, one at each gable end of the roof. This is a stage of the black houses very seldom seen in Ireland to day.

At the next stage a kind of basket or wooden chimney is hung over the fire to create a draught, *tarrac*, and to lead the smoke out through the hole in the roof. When there is no chimney but even later, when the chimney has come, to regulate the circulation of air in the kitchen, is is necessary to open and close one of the doors to allow for the changing winds. In the Irish houses the woman who looks after the fire always takes the "wind door" and

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

hedgerows. It is hard to realize that the close-set pattern of hedged or walled fields which now distinguishes so much of the countryside is for the most part only a century or so old. In many cases it can be shown that the fields and fences were laid out within the last hundred years, following the break-up of the rundale village system and the re-distribution of the land (Chapter 6). In the eastern lowlands, where English influence has long been at work, the field pattern and hedgerows are no doubt much older, but in general the small cultivated patches were separated by mere balks or waste strips, varying from one to ten feet in width. Stones from the fields, hand-picked or removed with crow-bar and slipe (Chapter 12) were dumped on the balks or, more frequently, piled into "cairns" in the middle of the fields. Such stone-heaps are often found accompanying prehistoric field-systems, for example in Jutland.

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Fig. 10.

Stone walls or high earthen fences surrounded the house-clusters and enclosed each group of open fields, separating them from the common grazing land which lay outside and stretched away to the "head-ditch" on the mountain. As the rundale holdings gave way to individual farms the land was re-divided, the old ditches planted with whitethorn and new ditches, also set with thorn, were constructed—a process which was being actively carried out during the first half of the 19th century. One result of the scattering of the farms was the appearance of the long strip or "ladder farms," the cross hedges of the strip resembling the rungs of a ladder.

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The oldest fences, then, are the protective banks around farms which occupy old village sites—a survival no doubt of the rings around the ancient raths—and the march-dykes or divisions between townlands. The varied vegetation on these older banks betrays them just as it does the pre-enclosure hedgerows in England: their massive tumbled ruins are overgrown with whins, blackthorn, sally, ash and bramble. There are, however, still older forgotten divisions on the hillsides dating from various prehistoric periods; some have

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 now of iron but formerly of wood, that rotates with them. The wheels are so small—little more than two feet in diameter—that the floor of the car has to be raised up behind, and it carries such a small load that the number of horses in Ireland is said to have been considerably reduced when the spoke-wheeled cart took its place. In the 18th century "wheel-cars were used throughout the kingdom" in town and country alike: the Dublin "noddies" were of this type, and according to illustrations published in the early 18 hundreds the driver rode on the horse's rump. The low-backed car is now generally fitted with sides to make a "box car," but in former days it carried a kish of the kind used with the slide car. It should be noticed that until roads and tracks were [491] metalled—mostly within the last two centuries—the disc wheel had the advantage over the spoked wheel in soft loose ground. Even "superior farmers" in Donegal had only low-back cars as late as 1821, and we may repeat the statement made in Chapter 6 that there was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one Donegal parish in 1837. The slide [177] car and the creel did all the carrying. In the Glens of Antrim, too, the wheel-car was apparently something of a novelty about that time. An old man told me that his grandmother remembered the first car seen in her valley.

It must not be assumed from this that wheeled vehicles [401] were unknown in ancient Ireland: the literature suggests that they were in regular use but doubtless confined to the wealthier classes and districts. On analogy with other parts of north-western Europe the wheel was already known in Bronze Age Ireland. It is wrong to assume that the wheel was "invented" by the Irish peasants who adapted it to their slide cars. The disc and in turn the spoked wheel are ancient discoveries which came into use gradually as social conditions and road-making improved, and it was natural that the slide car should keep its form though lifted off the ground. Although we cannot accept the theory of local "evolution" for the spoke-wheeled cart, it is none the less clear that local experience controlled the details of its construction when it became

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

272 every meal; it is made extremely strong, and, as elsewhere, is the cause of a good deal of dyspepsia.

273 Alcoholic liquors are not much drunk, as illicit distilling has altogether ceased in this district.

264 An average working day's dietary is as follows:—Breakfast: tea, and home made bread. Dinner: fish, or eggs and potatoes. Supper; the same as breakfast.

291 4. *Clothing.*—The homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics still constitute the bulk of the clothing worn, but are being superseded by
177 imported slop clothes of inferior quality; and the dress on working days is nondescript and often ragged. On Sundays and holidays the proportion of imported clothing seen is greater, and the homespun suits are sometimes very different from the old types, being imitations in cut of the imported goods. The dress of the men consists of a shirt of thick white or chocolate-coloured homespun, with a rather high plain band collar, and large bone buttons, or, in some cases, it is made of imported flannel, purchased in Clifden or Westport. The single or double-breasted waistcoat, with the large collar-flaps buttoned back, is, when worn, generally put on inside the bawneen, or white flannel coat, instead of outside, as was formerly the case.

Trousers are of homespun or corduroy.

A thick comforter is worn about the neck by many, even in very warm weather.

For head-dress, soft felt hats and caps of various shapes, all imported, are now in general use, the old home-made flat, blue bonnet being but little worn, except by the older men. It may be most frequently seen in Westquarter and Inishshark.

291 The men wear thick worsted stockings of dyed or "natural" wool, and very stout boots of native make, as a regular part of their daily attire, but the women and children go bare-footed, except on Sundays and holidays. The dress of the women shows as great changes as that of the men; it is of the well-known Connemara type.

The head is covered by a red kerchief, or small shawl, often a plaid, but so far as seen never by a "mutch" (a cap with white frill). Over the shoulders a small red tartan shawl is folded, half hiding a jacket, or bodice, of homespun, or imported woollen stuff; the petticoat is short, and dyed a bright red with madder, and sometimes trimmed with a few rows of black braid, and a wide check apron is usually worn. Some women, on Sundays, wear the old large blue cloak with hood and double cape.

The small boys wear the kilt-like frock of white, red, or brown

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

of certain acts in the hope of inducing success in similar fields of action, provides an explanation of many of the folk-practices with which we are concerned. 178 [189]

Pushed too far, however, the observance of such antiquated practices in the end defeated its purpose and threatened the extinction of traditional life. A clue to much of the paradox in Irish culture is to be found in the reaction which follows an adherence to custom carried beyond the breaking-point. Spade-labour for example has reluctantly given way to the plough, but once the plough is generally accepted the spade becomes a despised implement so that a vegetable garden is a rare thing, at best a tiny plot left to the care of the women. In another field, the substitution of the vilest American films for the traditional ceilidhe gathering is a sad change. The crisis of the Great Famine was a major turning-point, and there followed a general reaction against everything associated with it. This was particularly true of the Irish peasants who sought refuge across the Atlantic: the American immigrants, driven from the land by extreme poverty, were determined to have nothing more to do with it and became almost invariably town-dwellers. The donkey and the goat, symbols of poverty, are neglected and despised in many parts of Ireland. A Donegal crofter once told me he dare not keep a donkey for fear of being unable to marry off his daughters: instead he kept a horse, though he could ill afford one, for its prestige value. The dangerously monotonous diet of Irish countryfolk, also, can be explained in the light of the famine. So bitter is the folk-memory of these times that useful wild sources of food are now neglected and despised; for example, wild berries of all kinds, the ubiquitous eel, hare and rabbit; the cresses and the edible seaweeds and fungi. It should be added, however, that some of these foods were apparently tabu—the rabbit, an Anglo-Norman invader, was rarely eaten—and that the potato had played its part in debasing diet in the period before the famine.[1] [177] [546] 178 262

Perhaps the most striking example of reaction is to be found in the expressed desire of most country people to have an isolated dwelling-house. The clachan or hamlet, once the centre of communal life and tradition, is despised, a symbol of squabbling 178 361

[1]R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), Ch.15.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Norway and other sub-arctic regions—and from an economy where straw was not available. We have already noticed that cattle-herders in the early seventeenth century built their booley houses of boughs coated with long strips of green turf. The long sods made a portable roof which could be slung on a pole between two pack-horses. 342 [171]

The sods were cut in strips from carefully selected spots where a close-grazed sward gave a thick mat of grass-roots. They measure two to three feet wide and about one and a half inches thick, and as they were cut they were rolled on to a stick and carried like a carpet. Their roofing sods, wrote Thomas Campbell in 1778, 'they call scraws (they are rolled up like scrolls) but they would be better called hides, for they are flayed off the earth.'[1] In the north, where the flachter or breast-plough was used for paring sods (Chapter X), the scraws might be as much as twelve or fourteen feet long, though short turves were also used. They were carried on to the roof up two ladders and laid on grass upwards, overlapping at the ridge on the side away from the wind. They overlapped laterally also, the scraw on the windward side running over its neighbour on the lee (Fig. 14). In many such details careful attention was paid to the wind and the rain, for example the strongest purlins were put on the side whence driving rain was most to be expected. Similarly the stoutest couples were placed at the weather end of the house, and they were sometimes given a slight inclination towards the wind. A seemingly artless cabin may thus be found to show the most careful adaptation to local conditions. 342 314

The first thin layer of thatch was, in some parts of the country, sewn on to the purlins with a thatching needle—the older pattern has a large eye to take hay-rope (Fig. 15)—and the roof might then be finished in one of several regional styles. In the eastern part of Co. Down, and sporadically elsewhere, the straw is laid on in specially prepared bundles or stapples[2] (Gaelic *Stapull*) and the thatch is plastered down at eaves, gable and ridge with clay or mud. A few scollops are added at ridge and eaves. This is probably a very ancient method, 342 [413] [177]

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 146.
[2]K. Danaher, *Béaloideas* (1948), 203–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 designed for temporary habitations, for it results, after repeated
177 additions of straw and mud, in an extremely thick and heavy roof. Yet its distribution on the east coast seems to point to introduction from overseas, and in Co. Down it is known as English thatch. One would like to know more about old thatching techniques in other parts of north-western Europe. In Galway a house with mud-sealed thatch is known as a 'shaken house'.[1]

342 Another way of securing the thatch, which has a limited distribution chiefly along the Antrim coast, we may term the
[283] pegged method. Horizontal two-ply ropes made of sally, heather, or the tough fibres of bog-fir roots are laid along the roof parallel to the eaves at intervals of a foot or so and pegged to the scraw with wooden pins which are pushed in upwards so as not to lead water through the roof. A row of scraws is pegged to the rather sharp ridge (Fig. 9, 4). I have observed this style of thatch in south-west Lancashire. Much more widely distributed is the thatch which is found along the north and west coasts from east Ulster round to Kerry, but comes into its own particularly in Donegal, where it gives some of the most attractive roofs in north-western Europe. In Donegal they are rounded at the ridge to throw off the winds, the supporting couples being designed to this end with short cross-pieces breaking the angle of the ridge (Fig. 10). In some
[284] districts the ropes, formerly of twisted straw or bog fir but now generally ready-made of sisal, run in both directions to make a complete network; in others the horizontal ropes are omitted because of the obstructing gable-ends which, rising above the thatch, protect it from the winds. The ropes are secured to the walls by means of a row of stone-pegs below each eave. This method of tying is found also in north Mayo, most typically in areas known to have been settled from Donegal in the seventeenth century.[2] Here the horizontal ropes are carried over the gable in steps left for the purpose (Fig. 12, 2). Such roofs are said to be 'stitched': a close mesh may require up to a mile's length of roping. The older method of securing the ropes, from Mayo to Kerry, is to fasten the ends to small boulders

[1] C. R. Browne, *Inishbofin and Inishshark*. [Text continues on p. 54]
[2] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ploughs were known in parts of Celtic Ireland, but the light 407
plough or *ard* almost certainly prevailed, and it is unlikely that 412
ploughs of any kind were employed outside the 'few favoured acres' of the infield. A light plough, at any rate, would be unfit to break the tough sod of the outfield, which was allowed to rest for long periods. Even today the answer I have been given when I have asked ridgemakers in old outfield why they were using spades has been: '"Tis too tough for the plough!' Ploughing 'by the tail', similarly, becomes intelligible only if one envisages it as restricted to infield cultivation. The iron plough with curved mould board did not reach the outlying corners of the country until late in the nineteenth century, and down to the time of the famine iron ploughs were used only in progressive areas where there were improving landlords. The prototype of these ploughs was the Scottish two-horse swing [177] plough invented by James Small about the year 1765. By the end of the century it had reached Ireland (and also Norway) and it was a powerful instrument in breaking down the archaic system of openfield husbandry. The Irish were amazed when they first saw a ploughman with a Scots plough both driving the horses and holding the stilts.[1]

Under the traditional system ploughing was 'merely marking 407
the land with furrows'[2]: a spade or mattock was commonly 241
needed to turn back the earth, and to force the share into the ground it was often necessary to have a man walking alongside [412] the plough, pressing down on the beam with a stout stick. No bits or reins were used, and the plough itself required two men or a man and a boy, 'one to hold and one to drive', that is one holding the plough stilts and the other leading the horses by walking backwards before them. Evidently the man at the handles needed to give all his attention to the plough. It was, as a Cavan man described it to me, a process of 'jerking up 407
and down'. Many of these practices were probably taken over 241
from the days of ox-teams. Ploughing with oxen is believed to 231
have died out in late medieval times, though it was reintroduced by some landowners in the late eighteenth century. The small farmer did not use oxen for the plough because unlike horses

[1] R. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 111.
[2] I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 656.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CARS AND CARTS

492 Ireland has so often been symbolized by a bare-footed colleen bashfully hiding behind a creel-carrying donkey that it comes as a shock to discover that the animal is a relative novelty in the Irish scene. There is no evidence of the use of the ass as a beast of burden in Ireland until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Professor Mahaffy, who wrote learnedly 'On the Introduction of the Ass as a Beast of Burden into Ireland',[1] pointed out that the little donkey was conquering Hibernia when the Great Duke was subduing Iberia. In fact asses came in to replace the Irish horses which were being drawn on in large numbers to maintain the British cavalry in the peninsular wars. Although they were apparently introduced, like so many 177 other novelties, by way of Scotland, they proved unsuited to the 492 comparative rigours of the climate of the northern coasts of Ireland, and it was in the west of the country that they fitted best into the physical and social environment. It is strange to reflect that a culture-trait so well adapted to a region which has ancient physical and human relations with Iberia should have been so long in reaching Lusitanian Ireland and should have got there by the back door, through Ulster.

Down to recent times, then, the horse—a pony, not a heavy 492 cart horse—was the universal draught animal and beast of 48 burden save where poverty or environmental difficulties imposed carrying duties on men, women and children. There were places such as soft bogs or slippery seashores where even pack-horses could not find a footing, and there went the women and children with their back-creels to carry the peats and sea-wrack. In spring, when the men were fully occupied with ridge-making, the transport of manure seems to have been the special task of the women, though in time the ass came to relieve them of this duty. The manure creels or pots (pardogs) of a fashion which has been recorded all along the Atlantic coastlands from Spain to Scotland, have a hinged or slip bottom which allows the load to be dropped where required (Fig. *56*). Nowadays the creels are hung in pairs on the donkey's wooden straddle (pack saddle), and in the west it is no uncommon sight to see convoys of asses so laden picking their way from the dung-hill to the fields. I have also seen hay being transported by hanging

[1] *P.R.I.A.*, 33 (1916–17), 530–8.

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rear ends of the shafts, which are, however, left projecting so as to take the weight of the tilted car when it is not in use. It is these projecting shafts or 'trams' which give the wheel-car the appearance of a slide-car on wheels and seem to confirm the suggested evolution (Fig. 55). 493

In eighteenth-century Ireland possession of a wheel-car was a mark of social distinction, and entire districts were without wheeled vehicles of any kind. Down to the middle of the nineteenth century it was considered 'respectable' to go to 'meetings' in a wheel-car in the Presbyterian parts of north Antrim. In the course of the nineteenth century, as the larger spoke-wheeled cart was adopted by prosperous farmers, the little wheel-car sought refuge in the poor mountainous districts where we find it clinging precariously today. As late as the 1914–18 war one was in use on a farm on Black Mountain, within the city boundary of Belfast (Pl. 8, 2). 493 554

The wheel-car has its place in history because it was the ancestor of the nineteenth century jaunting-car which Lloyd Praeger rightly lists as one of the essentially native Irish products.[1] The platform of the wheel-car, to which a box body or a wicker-work creel was secured when goods were being carried, became a seat, covered with a straw mat, when the vehicle was used for social occasions. The passengers sat on each side, back to back, their feet dangling near the ground or resting on a hay-rope slung fore and aft, which could accommodate any length of leg. By the end of the eighteenth century this 'side-car', fitted with wooden foot-rests, had become a standard hiring vehicle, and it needed only the substitution of spoked for solid wheels, the addition of springs and consequent alterations of height to give the Irish jaunting-car which Bianconi adopted in 1815 and later developed into the four-wheeled long-car.[2] There can be no doubt that 'the Bians', traversing the highways and byways of the whole country, made a contribution to the social and economic life of Ireland which was, in its day, as important as that of the railway in the latter part of the century or the motor bus in the twentieth century. 493

The spoked wheel, which throughout the eighteenth century 401 177

[1] R. Ll. Praeger, *The Way that I Went* (1937), Ch. I.
[2] I. J. Herring, *U.J.A.*, 3 (1940), 115–22; *U.J.A.*, 7 (1944), 42–46.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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493 was reserved for coaches and the carriages of the rich, was popu-
177 larized by its adoption for farm carts (Scots carts) under the
[401] improving zeal of landlords towards the end of the century. In Ulster, which has always looked to Scotland for its inspiration, the Scots cart was first used for transporting linen, and one thinks of it spreading along the improved roads and being copied and adapted to local needs and traditions. Around Lough Erne, for instance, one reads of large one-horse carts, adopted by carriers in the early nineteenth century, which had 'trams' or rearshafts four feet long,[1] and these projections, surely a reminiscence of the long slide-car runners, are still characteristic of the 'flat' carts of the west and south-west (Fig. 60).

493 The Scots cart with its four-foot wheels was able to take twice the load of the native wheel-car, and as industry increased and roads were improved through the nineteenth century it drove the block-wheeled cars off the roads. But for rough work in the fields and bogs various types of slipe were preferred: the cart
[554] was little used for harvesting and its possession was to some extent a sign of prestige. (Unlike the native car, the woodwork
[531] of the cart was and is brightly painted, usually in red and blue.) The slipe and slide-car were better adapted to moist ground, to undrained fields and the uneven surface of ridge and furrow. As roads and farm practice were improved it was a new version of Scots cart (Fig. 60) which ultimately drove out the slide-car and the wheel-car in Ulster. It seems that the older varieties of Irish carts were derived from the Leith cart of the eastern lowlands of Scotland.[2] The body consisted of little more than a slatted platform without fixed sides and ends. This 'flat cart', as distinct from the 'box cart', is the usual pattern of farm cart in the west of Ireland and, fitted with springs, is the common hawker's cart. As a farm cart it suits the small farmer because it can be used for a variety of purposes by fitting different kinds of sides, for example tall slatted 'crates' for carrying turf.

493 Towards the middle of the nineteenth century there was
177 evolved, in Lanarkshire and the neighbouring counties, the box
531 cart with upright panelled sides perhaps derived from the

[1] L. Atthill, *Recollections of an Irish Doctor* (1911), 44.
[2] R. L. Edgeworth, *An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages* (1813).

 [Text continues on p. 178]

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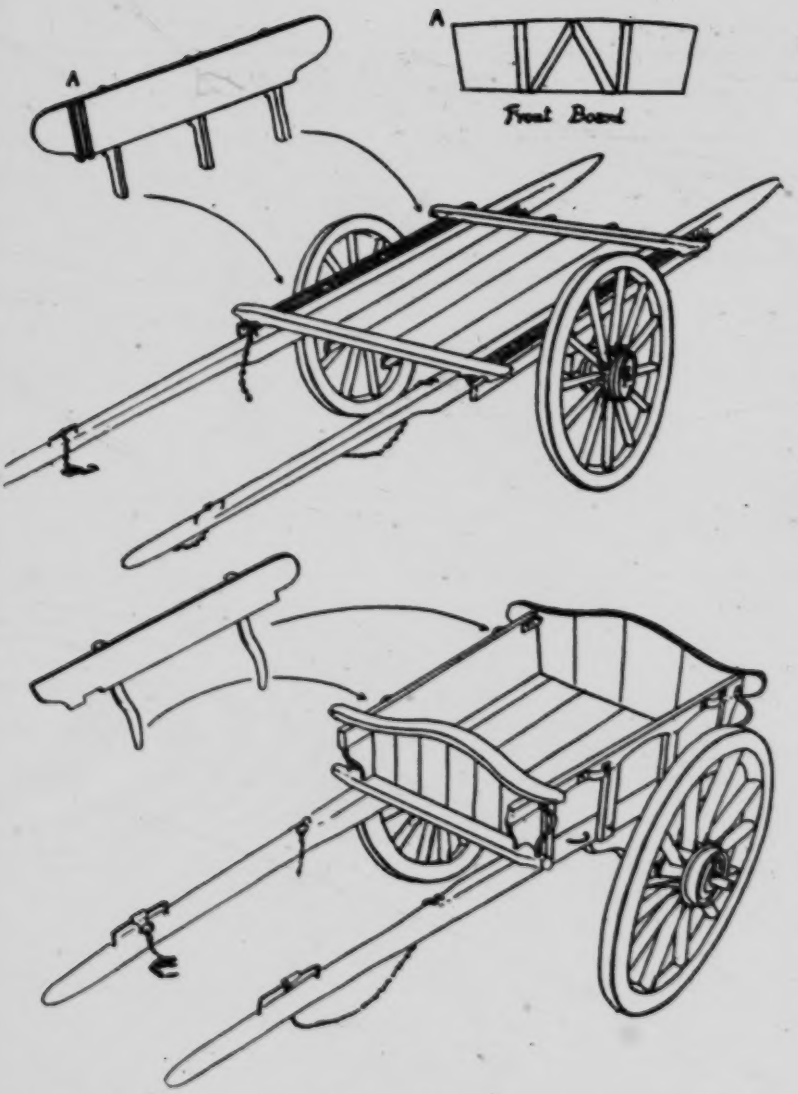

FIG. 60. The Scots cart in Ireland. *Above:* the flat cart with projecting trams, Killarney, Co. Kerry. *Below:* the improved box cart, Cushendall, Co. Antrim (after G. B. Thompson).

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wagon, a sturdy vehicle which was manufactured by large Scottish firms and exported far and wide and also copied locally. Its distribution can be readily traced because it carried an unusual design on the front board—the 'spectacles'—consisting of a pattern of linked circles out cut of an outer layer of horizontal boarding which is applied to the main vertical boarding of the front-board. The design is further emphasized by being painted a contrasting colour, red or blue. The spectacle design became a kind of trade-mark of the Lanarkshire style of cart. It may have evolved simply by the gradual enlargement of two curving strengthening boards at top and bottom, until they met to form a design which became standardized (Fig. 61). C. F. Tebbutt is inclined to seek an origin in the magic *oculi* such as occur in prehistoric pottery and to this day on Mediterranean boats, but it is difficult to see the connecting links.[1] If one looks for a more practical origin it could be argued that when freshly painted front-boards were first fitted to carts they were marked and damaged by the rump and tail of the horse. At any rate I have occasionally noticed a spectacle-like pattern rubbed by the horse on to the paint of Scots carts not fitted with the recessed front-board. On this theory the board was strengthened by means of panelling while at the same time the shaped recess gave the horse's rear a little more space and saved the paint.

In Ireland the Scots cart with 'fiddle' (spectacle) decoration has an interesting distribution corresponding closely with the area of historic Scottish influence, from east Down across Antrim to Londonderry and north Donegal. It has replaced the flat-cart over much of Ulster, but the latter survives in south Fermanagh, in an area where thatched houses with hipped roofs are also found, representing an older culture-layer. In Scotland it is found throughout the Highlands and Islands, in the central lowlands and the south-west. In eastern England the Scots cart has replaced older forms over a wide area extending from Lincolnshire to North Bedfordshire and from Essex to South-east Nottinghamshire. Mr. Tebbutt believes that it was first introduced to the fenlands by improving farmers who, in the second half of last century, looked to the Scottish lowlands as a model of farming methods. In all these areas the original

[1] C. F. Tebbutt, *Man*, 55 (1955), 113–17.

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spectacle design was retained but in time instead of being panelled it was merely painted on the front-board. In Ulster carts of this kind, lacking the tilting device of the Scots prototype, have been made until recent years by many local wheelwrights, and it is interesting to notice how the original panelled design, which is present on old specimens, has been replaced by painted motifs which break up into many varieties, some of which are shown in Fig. 61. Mr. Tebbutt illustrates similar sequences of derived decoration on English carts. 493 177 531

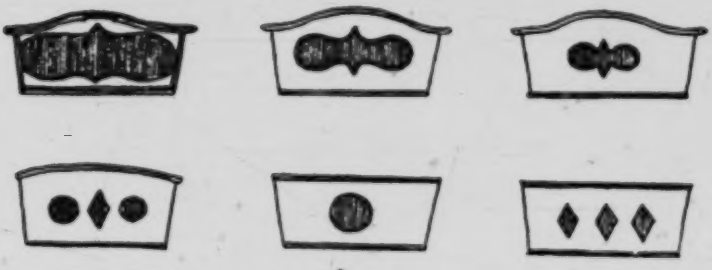

FIG. 61. The 'fiddle' design on the Scots cart in north-eastern Ireland. The front-boards illustrated are all from Co. Antrim and suggest both the derivation and the deterioration of the design. The upper examples are panelled and painted, the lower simply painted. The recess in the 'cape' of the first example is for the horse's tail.

The Scots cart with its box body, ideal for holding sacks of corn or potatoes, is not suited for carrying home crops, and both in Scotland and Ireland it is supplemented by a specialized harvest carrier known as the rick-shifter. This is a large platform with low wheels, fitted with a windlass by which the cock of hay or hut of corn is dragged into position on the platform. It is often dispensed with in moving hay cocks to the haggard, for they can easily be pulled or 'traced' along the ground simply by harnessing a horse to a chain placed around the base of the cock, a method which was used in the eighteenth century (Pl. 12). Six bullocks 'yoked as for ploughing' were employed for this purpose in Co. Meath.[1] The rick-shifter appears to have evolved 493 177 [492]

[1]W. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 217. See also J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, loc. cit.

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493 177 from the platform carts of the East Scottish or Leith type. Edgeworth remarks in 1818 that carts of this kind were common in the Low Countries and many parts of France. What more likely than that this model should have reached Scotland by way of the port of Leith? The district bordering the Firth of Forth was an area of rapid agricultural improvement after 1750, and it was to it that Irish landlords turned for new ideas at the end of the century. The rick-shifter was probably evolved at some period from the same source, for Edgeworth tells us that the platform carts of the Low Countries were fitted with windlasses attached to the shafts. But it is risky to speculate on these matters: for example, a simple horse-drawn hay-rake, now rarely seen, used to be considered characteristically Irish and was popularly known as a 'tumbling paddy'. This rotating sweep is stated to have been introduced from America in 1850.[1]

[1] *Agricultural Implements and Machinery* (Science Museum), 1950.

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watch rock-fishing from the great limestone cliffs of the Aran Islands is a memorable sight, the 300 foot line being flung out weighted with a large grooved stone. 226

Inshore net fishing, which will be considered in the next chapter, has probably taken the place of other methods of catching fish close to the land. In some river estuaries and across the mouths of little streams in many shallow bays curving lines of boulders are all that is left of fishing weirs in which salmon and flatfish were once trapped (Fig. 75). I first noticed an example in Belfast Lough some years ago, and later came across a seventeenth century reference to their occurrence in Strangford Lough. The 'wares and fishyards' are described as being built of loose stones which allowed the tide to flow through, and fish seeking food from the fresh water were carried over the weir at the flood to be trapped as the tide ebbed. They were then netted or speared. The weirs were said to have decayed 'since fish days were neglected',[1] but the remains of many of them can still be seen around the lough. Such 'tidal fishing engines', to judge from their world-wide distribution, are an extremely ancient fishing device. More elaborate are the V-shaped wickerwork weirs of which Dr. A. E. J. Went has made an historical study.[2] One or two are still worked but they became obsolete over a century ago when the Scotch stake net was introduced for salmon fishing, and they were later condemned as obstacles to navigation. In Waterford harbour alone no less than forty-four were destroyed. These head weirs were operated by holding a conical net below a platform which crossed an opening placed at the apex of the V. Large weirs of this kind required considerable capital to keep in repair and were owned by the privileged classes but they have no doubt

[1]E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 14 (1951), 48.

[2]A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 76 (1946), 176–94; 78 (1948), 1–4. Professor C. M. Yonge (*The Times*, 10th November 1955), in an article on the mussel industry of La Rochelle in the Bay of Biscay, attributes it to a resourceful Irishman, Patrick Walton, who is said to have been wrecked there in the year 1235. He is given credit for erecting a tidal head weir which also served as a *bouchot* or mussel bed, and for devising a net for catching sea-birds and a narrow plank-boat pushed by one leg over the soft mud. 'The French naturalist, Quatrefages, writing about 1850, reported that a direct descendant of Walton was then engaged in mussel culture and took a natural pride in the name he bore.' No doubt Patrick Walton derived some of his ingenious ideas from his native land. [177]

227 [Text continues on p. 229]

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527 bones, were formerly considered proper to the occasion. There
[372] were dances round the fires, performed with great dexterity
and precision by youths armed with cudgels. The May-pole,
[177] however, and the May-bush observances seem to go with areas
[824] of strong English influence and do not seem to have been
generally adopted by the Irish, perhaps because May-trees, which are not given this name in Ireland, are likely to be fairy thorns and therefore should not be damaged. The May Eve assemblies are thus described in eighteenth century Kilkenny: 'Bloody battles and much confusion and uproar is the mischief that follows from the barbarous and unheeded custom of collecting *May-balls* among the new-married folks . . . The hedges and fences, in the outlets of our city, are stripped of full-grown hawthorns, whose late blooming pride and fragrancy is now miserably dying away on dunghills before cabin doors, by way of *May-bushes*, no longer, alas! to afford a nuptial bed to the new-married linnet and his mate, but fastened in the ground for the vilest purpose—to hang filthy clouts upon'.[1] The gold and white balls which were hung on maypoles have been regarded as symbols of sun and moon—or it may be of butter and milk. Another May Day custom was the licence allowed
[786] young boys to run about stinging people with nettles, a privilege which in my youth in Shropshire was permitted only on 29th May, the victims being those who did not wear an oak-apple.

527 If the May Day fires are now more in evidence in the back streets
of Belfast than on the high hills, the Midsummer fires still burn
372 strongly in some country districts and their pagan flames have not been so easily quenched. I saw dozens of them in Co. Galway on Midsummer Eve in 1956, mostly at country crossroads. Old men in Donegal have told me that they remembered the time when they had counted from their hilltop fire nearly a hundred others. Young men would show their mettle by jumping to and fro through the flames, and girls by doing so hoped to marry early and have many children. We recall that
[789] leaping is in folk tradition a widely approved method of making the crops grow high, and the fires, it is conjectured, were meant to encourage the sun, now at its turning point, to shine on through the harvest. Midsummer was a time when evil influ-

[1] *Finn's Leinster Journal* (4th May, 1768).

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1966: 1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

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668 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary,
000 and clerical figures.[3] A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

668 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Associa-
197 tion, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the
538 formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage
[204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

> The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasised the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195–196).

• 177 Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on
185 language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since
668 the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the
[648] time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

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[113] [3] The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603–1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

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668 fostered immorality, and created mental illness on a vast scale. Primitive and folk peoples, according to this view, represent man as he once was and could or should be again were civilized society drastically reformed.

000 Most of the ideas held by primitivists are as extreme as those maintained by nativists: primitive and folk societies possess simple, static cultures in which dysfunctional forms are rare; their economies are primarily subsistence ones, approximate the householding type, and lack competitive elements; social control is mostly informal; the family is the core social group and is a highly integrated and cooperative unit; religion is a pervasive force which sanctions most behavior and assures psychological security and social cohesion; and, religious dissent and skepticism are unknown. Primitivists also contend that primitive and folk peoples are content with their conditions of life, are seldom if ever mentally ill, and possess character traits that civilization has perverted. It is probable that primitivists would include all of the traits designated as Irish by nativists and would add many others.

114 12 The antiquarians George Petrie and John T. O'Flaherty during the 1820s were the first scientists to undertake research in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. Since that time, there have been short and sporadic visits to the island by a variety of investigators, among them anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians, philologists, and others. Most of the anthropological research has been conducted by archeologists, anthropometricians, and linguists. Several archeological expeditions have examined thoroughly surface sites in Inis Beag, but no prehistorian has excavated as yet, and the accurate dating of artifacts scarcely has begun. Reconstruction of a number of ancient monuments by the government was made possible through the research findings of archeologists, and today site descriptions on mounted plaques mark the principal monuments. Alfred C. Haddon and C. R. Browne in 1892 and E. A. Hooton and C. W. Dupertius between 1932 and 1934 made anthropometric studies, the latter as part of the Harvard University anthropological survey of Ireland, which also included archeological and ethnographic investigations. The ethnographic study—reported in Conrad M. Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman* and Arensberg's and Solon T. Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*—was made in three communities of Co. Clare by these authors with W. Lloyd Warner; it was the first holistic ethnographic study made in Ireland, and my research in Inis Beag in its initial stages was only the third. (The second, by Rosemary Harris, is reported in a 1954 M.A. thesis in the University of London—see References.)

114 12 197 177 178 [162] Linguists, as well as philologists and those wishing to learn Gaelic, long have visited Inis Beag. There now remain only a few areas along the western seaboard of Europe where Gaelic dialects still are spoken, and the island is located in one of these.[4] One-half the population of Ireland spoke the vernacular at the end of the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the last century the ratio had fallen to one-quarter, or approximately 1,500,000 speakers. Sixty years later the

[4] The Celtic languages are Gaulish, Goidelic, and Brittanic, of which the first became extinct at the beginning of the medieval period, and the last two are represented today by the Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects on the one hand, and the Breton and Welsh on the other. Two other related dialects are now extinct: Manx of the Isle of Man and Cornish, the British dialect of Cornwall (Dillon 1957:207).

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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

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as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers.

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained.

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden.

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and rom the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and youg people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, aninals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [541]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crws from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of he century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Villag, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particulaly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevail, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish o longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 190. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venure which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishin today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the wather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
516 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[175] [65] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach
the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear
the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] [552] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] [196] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the
Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has
its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able
to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41
sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn
slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls
choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion
dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase
their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into
island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal,
a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although
made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have
heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish
expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by
weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland
shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to
monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[198] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[822] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[799] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new
crios if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants
[177] who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for 291
themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their [177]
fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 294
40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to 281
shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and [437]
when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept [463]
moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a 128
livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have 434
touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century 434
men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the main- 502
land. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to 437
scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The [178]
Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in 502
the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humor- 539
ous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right 421
of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person 422
discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander [829]
along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the im- [176]
mense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the [722]
islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other [433]

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

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361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

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The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

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As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

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Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

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Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

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829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [521] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gael receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak • [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

625 There are no police, called *gardai* and "guards," in the island, but three, including a sergeant, are posted in a nearby island and visit Inis Beag at least 674 once a month. Crime is virtually unknown among the folk, the few cases on record [683] being for assault and battery and destruction of property; most cases are civil ones, [684] involving property ownership and inheritance, and are tried intermittently by a 829 visiting magistrate. The guards are subjected to frequent criticism and derision, 626 especially when they come to the island dressed in plain-clothes to search for [673]

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624 875 more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held, because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are [793] apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the [554] headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches. [571] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

875 593 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him 875 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity 876 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in [861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This [123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents [177] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 [829] Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority sentiment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and [123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

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> conditions appraised. . . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191) 573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] 875 [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves", assessed the situation accurately. 628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list. 181 177 • 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it 521 203 571 [574] [512]

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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [189]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177 •
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 [262] [264] [415] [778] [352] The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [516] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

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593 —with a strong agnatic bias. Rights and duties are distributed among cognates,
602 but they are less strong among uterine and affinal kin, as well as among relatives of both lines according to distance from ego. Rights and duties include obligations to assist and defend, and mutual assistance in Inis Beag characterizes farming, fishing, housebuilding, unloading turf, carrying the coffin at a funeral, and many other activities. Reciprocation in some form for services rendered is almost an obsession among both kin and non-kin, and not to reciprocate adequately means to lose face. The matter of mutual defense will be considered in later sections and chapters.

551 Only 13 surnames are represented on the island, and there are 27 families bearing a single one, 11 bearing another, and 8 a third. Most Christian names are those of the Blessed Virgin and of saints, especially from the Irish past. Michael, Patrick, Sean (which often is transformed into John, although Eoin is John in Irish), Thomas, Martin, Peter, Coleman, and Joseph—in that order—are the most popular first names for males, while for females it is Mary, Brigid, Margaret, Ann,
[B44] Catherine, Sarah, Nora, and Teresa. In the past, it was customary for Inis Beag
[177] women to bear their offspring at home attended by nurse, midwife, or skilled female relative; but during the past decade, most infants have been delivered in the mainland hospital serving the island, where mothers have learned of "different" surnames and have assigned them to their own children—such as Gerard, Xavier, Christopher, and Pius for boys, and Rita, Carmel, Veronica, and Jude for girls.

601 Each person in the island has a term of reference which never is employed
551 as a term of address.[2] For a man, it is a nickname or his Christian name followed by that of his father: "The General" or Sean Michael. Women ordinarily are not given nicknames; if single, they append their father's first name to their own, and if married, their husband's. An adult man may bear the Christian name of his mother following his own rather than his father's, if, for instance, his mother was widowed early or unduly dominated her husband. Nicknames relate to such things as occupations, abodes, personality idiosyncracies, stature, color of hair, and events of the past; and many are uncomplimentary to the degree of fomenting disputes if uttered at improper times or to inappropriate persons.

155 Before turning to reciprocal relationships which exist between certain
593 agnatic, uterine, and affinal relatives, it is necessary to examine two phenomena which have a vital bearing on kinship and other behavior: the Oedipus complex and male solidarity. Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys says that there is in Ireland a ". . . centripetal mechanism built into the fabric of rural life. This is the strong, preferential love of the rural mother for her sons. She is a magnetic center of the family and her cohesive power is affection. This love, which leads her 'to slave' for her sons and to demand that her daughters do likewise, cushions the sons' hard lot. It mollifies the constant rub of his subordination to his father . . ."

[2] A term of reference is a name used to refer to a person who is not present, while a term of address is a name used to address a person to his face. In America, one might say in referring to his mother, "That woman walking toward us is my mother.", and then greet her as she joins the group, "Hi, Mom."; in this case, mother is a term of reference and Mom a term of address. Often terms of address in the Western world are Christian names, and some terms of reference and address may be identical. Anthropologists usually collect only terms which are used to designate various kin.

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555
526 struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. A famous writer
181 claimed that he introduced into Inis Beag a feat of agility that he had learned in
[171] France, which consists of holding a stick in both hands at the knees and jumping
back and forth across it without losing grip; the islanders attest that this "trick"
was known locally for at least a century, and one man boasted that his father was
123 able to leap back and forth a dozen times in quick succession. My rapport with
the men was enhanced by the fact that I had been a weight thrower and lifter
and used to entertain them by putting a granite boulder, throwing a discus that
I had brought with me, and performing repetition presses with a barrel of stout.
However, the one time that I was persuaded to compete for Inis Beag against Inis
Thiar in putting the shot (a flat-bottomed store weight of 14 pounds), I fouled
with my foot all three times and thus suffered ignominious defeat. The curate who
officiated at the event appeared pleased, but the islanders who had placed wagers
on me were of opposite disposition.

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 171
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346]
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[164] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

• 177
178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [574] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller 538 561
performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or [868]
too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not
called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time 538
by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and 537
particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were
asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially [177] •
by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" [273]
afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag 537
were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with 538
equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, how- 539
ever, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure 191
prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

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538 539 191 [539] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 539 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 634 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [178] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of • [177] the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

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and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céili* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céili* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céili* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party. 533 534 536 535 [123] [177]

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time: he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region. 114 533 533 184 [538] [171] [173] 533 [539]

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. [124] [539] 533 184

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
• 177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[834] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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178 ble to visit Inis Beag frequently, as the cost and distance are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic.

The many vacationing emigrants who now return to the island at Christmas or Easter or during the summer months often succeed in persuading relatives and acquaintances to return to England with them. Those so persuaded declare that they will return soon with their "fortunes" to settle permanently, but they seldom do once "emancipated." Since the Second World War, several Americans have returned home, and their stories of life in the United States make the youth restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many islanders also sow the seeds of discontent. A favorite subject of talk in the pubs is the relative advantages to be gained from migrating to particular cities in England and America, and anthropologists as well as returned emigrants are called on as consultants in this matter by youths.

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204 Almost every cottage in Inis Beag has a radio, or "wireless," and although the folk seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines
207 and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, because they allow islanders a glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and
• 177 freer world. Television was introduced into Inis Beag in 1963 at the lighthouse,
207 and a second set was procured for the new "dance hall" when it was completed two years later. Few islanders venture to the lighthouse to view television, but I am told by correspondents that many now visit the hall during the several evening hours when transmission from Telefis Eireann takes place. As a result, television has become an acculturative medium to be reckoned with. Both radio and television programs are censored in Ireland, but even so the morality expressed in them—especially in the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A hypothetical censor from Inis Beag most certainly would create more discontinuities with his shears in television performances than would his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin. My wife and I found that viewing television with islanders at the lighthouse on two occasions was a traumatic experience; it gave us a different (and even more disquieting) perspective on programs in the United States and their enculturative effects than can be obtained at home.

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873 Since the Second World War, 28 island youths have pursued secondary education elsewhere in Ireland, either in high schools, called "colleges," or in technical schools, and most have been supported by government scholarships. The usual high school scholarship is for 5 years, and a student must be 14 years of age and qualify by competitive examination to receive one. Only 4 of these 28 students
873 —of which 2 are teachers in the national school—have returned to Inis Beag. One
[562] young man watched 2 girls, either of whom he eventually might have married, go off to the mainland for school and said, "Scholarships are killing the island;" what he was referring to, other than his own disappointment, is the fact that 19 of the 28 students who left for advanced education are girls. The reason for the disproportionate number of girls receiving scholarships is that they are far more moti-
[829] vated academically and have better scholastic records than boys. There is, however, a widespread belief in the island that certain families are favored by priests and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds.

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths.

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school.

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

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JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

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In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

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According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1–2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

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* A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled me to write this chapter.

[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [184]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [165]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [212]
heritance is patrilineal). [611]

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
• 177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] [864]

662 539 571 828 829 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

182 • 177 178 181 *831 795 779 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

*831 181 182 626 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

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Beag, only limited amounts of which have been reported in this chapter. Even though sexual repression and fear of the clergy prevent the folk from being outspoken in this matter, it is constantly broached among themselves.

Paramount among external factors stimulating emigration are prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the impact of the mass media of communication, the increasing number of tourists visiting Inis Beag, the return of former emigrants, and the fact that, with an increase in incomes and scholarship funds, more island children are going to the mainland for their schooling each year. America has been a land of freedom and prosperity to the Irish since before the famine, and, until the Second World War, most islanders migrated there never to return. But the growth of prosperity in England following 1946 shifted the stream of emigration in that direction, for not only were jobs plentiful across the Irish Sea, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in big cities. And it was possible to visit Ireland frequently, as the distance and cost are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic. It is common for youths vacationing in Inis Beag from England to talk others into returning with them. The latter declare that they will soon come back to the island to settle permanently, hopefully with "great riches," but they seldom return. Since the war, a number of "Yanks" have also returned home, and their stories of life in America make the youthful islanders restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many folk also sow the seeds of discontent.

Television was introduced into Inis Beag during 1963, and the two sets now installed always have ready and willing audiences. Almost every cottage has a radio, and, although the islanders seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, as they allow the islanders to glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and freer world. Television and radio programs are censored, but, even so, the morality expressed in them—especially the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A censor from Inis Beag would most certainly create more discontinuities in films with his shears than do his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin.

Most of what I have written in this essay is to be found expressed in the works of such older Irish writers as James Joyce, Sean O'Casey,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of the clothing of the small farmers was made at home by the women. Now, however, it is nearly all shop-bought. Certain vestiges of the former practice remain, however, in knitting sweaters, gloves, socks, and scarfs; and in the country districts, at least of West and North Clare, there is a custom which demands that some woman of the house be always at work. If there is no other task on hand, they must occupy themselves with knitting. In former days, the daughters of the community might gather in a *meitheal*, or coöperative work group, under the supervision of older women for carding and spinning flax and wool. In any event, the younger woman, the girl, is at the older woman's command.

294 461 476 178

Much the same content of emotion and sentiment exists in this relationship, subordinate as the daughter must remain, as in the case of the boy. But in the case of the daughter there is never a readjustment, and there is never a period of community of interest with the father. Nor need the mother fear a competition with an impatient oncoming successor as must the farm father who knows he cannot put off forever his relinquishing his farm to his son. For, eagerly as the daughter may look forward to her own marriage, she knows that marriage will bring in a rivalry over household control with a totally new person in an entirely new scene. It is her husband's mother, not her own, to whom new adjustments must be made. The implication of this fact, and the struggle it entails, will bear examination in the discussion of marriage.

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Still another relationship exists within the household under normal circumstances. The relationship of brother to sister has its reflection in farm work. But it is a relationship with a different history from the relationship between siblings of similar sex. Sexual differences in behavior have made a different habit, beginning very early in the child's experience. And, for each of them, the sexual differences are colored a great deal by the norms which mark the rela-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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167 the great burst of the fifties and has been continuous ever since.

167 Many attempts have been made to find causes for this
178 emigration. Perhaps the most successful have been those
241 dealing with economic factors. Among the most frequently suggested is the change in agriculture since the famine. The assumption advanced is that the change from tillage to livestock production has cut down the rural employment, which in turn has driven the rural population to emigrate. Undoubtedly, there has been a correlation, particularly in the earliest years and at the time of the land clearances after the famine. In fact, from 1847 to 1852 (the famine years) there was a huge decrease in the area under small holdings of 1–30 acres, a decrease of 1,395,000 acres, but since then, in the years from 1852 to 1909 (after which holdings began generally to be increased), the corresponding decrease was only 155,000 acres.

The Report on Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, published by the Free State Department of Agriculture and Commerce, from which the figures are derived, comments that "this comparatively small transference of land from small holdings with high densities to larger holdings with low densities had but little effect upon reducing tillage or increasing livestock," [2] the agricultural changes which are supposed to have affected emigration. The Report demonstrates that between 1854 and 1912 the smaller the holding, the larger the increases in densities of all livestock, except dry cattle two years old and over, and the larger the decrease in density of ploughed land.

In other words, the change in agriculture, whatever may have been its effect upon employment prospects for the small farmer outside his own farm, proceeded more rapidly on the small farms. The tables of the Report show that large farmers decreased their tillage at a more rapid rate than

[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xliii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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small farmers only in the periods of 1917 to 1926 and 1854 to 1874, while continuously over the whole period 1874 to 1926 small farmers "got out of tillage more rapidly than large farmers." Too close appeal accordingly cannot be made to changes in agriculture for an understanding of Irish emigration.

In fact local densities of population do not now and never have shown a great deal of correspondence with densities of tillage. The highest percentage of agricultural land ploughed (29 per cent) was reached in 1851. Since then it has fallen steadily, to 13 per cent in 1926. Sweden comes nearest to this low percentage of tillage, with 52 per cent of her arable land tilled. Consequently, the Irish population was at no time solely dependent upon tillage crops.

Before 1881 a correlation could be drawn with some accuracy between the decrease in tillage and the decrease in rural population. Thus in poor law unions (administrative areas) in which ploughed land decreased population also decreased as shown in Table 1.[3]

TABLE 1

RELATION BETWEEN DECREASE IN PLOUGHED LAND AND DECREASE IN POPULATION

Decrease in Ploughed Land (per cent)	Decrease in Population (per cent)
0–20	13
20–30	26
30–40	28
50 and over	34

But since 1881 similar tables show that there is no correspondence between the decreases, and that even those poor law unions in which tillage has increased show an ordinary loss of population. Consequently, decline in tillage had little effect upon emigration after 1881. This becomes even more evident when it is understood that in both 1854

[3] *Ibid.*, p. lxi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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167 178 241 and 1912 the thirteen counties densest in rural population included only six of the counties densest in ploughed land. "Dense tillage was in the east, dense rural population in the west,"[4] as it still is.

167 178 231 In the same search for economic causes, a better case has been made for the change from milch cattle to beef cattle production. As we have seen, milch cows are characteristically associated with the small farmers. During the period of emigration, the number of dry cattle has risen in proportion to the number of milch cattle almost steadily; the range is from 2,372 total cattle to the 1,000 milch cows in 1854, to 3,334 to the 1,000 in 1926; fluctuations have been very slight. It is true that the number of milch cattle has also risen steadily, if slowly. Such a change in actual numbers of cattle and in proportions of dry to milch cattle, the latter capable of yielding the greater amounts of food for farm consumption, may have had some effect upon the displacement of human beings by cattle, but certainly not a great enough one to determine the emigration. The lack of correspondence between these changes is evident when it is remembered that the change has taken place principally in the former tillage areas, and also that in 1926 the areas of greatest milch cow density were substantially the same as in 1854. The very little direct correspondence there can be is well exemplified in the contrast between County Clare, which fell from a population of 336 to the 1,000 acres of crop and pasture to 129, while milch cows remained practically the same in number (100 to 110 to the 1,000 acres), and County Mayo (a poorer region), where population fell only from 375 to 245 and milch cows also remained practically the same (90 to 100).

From these figures it is evident that the decline in rural population is not directly correlated with decline in tillage or change in cattle production. The failure of employment

[4] *Ibid.*, p. lvi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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 167 [178 231]

coincident upon that change cannot be assigned as the sole cause of emigration.

As the decline in population has been more characteristic of the small farmers, it may be possible to associate it with social conditions pertaining among that class. They have participated in the very agricultural changes which are thought to have caused their dispersal. They enjoyed the high prosperity of the closing decades of the last century, and won the progressive reforms of agrarian tenure. Yet they continued to send forth thousands of emigrants. Fluctuating economic conditions have undoubtedly had their effect, but factors whose greatest demonstrable result is merely to stay or hurry the stream of emigration cannot be evoked as efficient causes. In taking the problem directly to the small farmer, it will become possible to sketch the social setting in which emigration takes its form.

Clearly connected with the decline in population are other demographic statistics, particularly those of marriage. They present features which are unique among civilized peoples. Inasmuch as they are again indications of an underlying uniform social pattern whose occurrences they record, it is necessary to analyze them in terms of the behavior patterns of rural Ireland. Like emigration, they are more characteristic of the country people. Springing from marriage, they are thus directly indicative of social forces within the small farmers' family economy. 162

Briefly stated, they present the following characteristics: In Saorstat Eireann in 1926, according to the census then conducted, there was a larger proportion of unmarried persons of all ages than in any other country for which records are kept. Marriage, furthermore, did not take place until a comparatively late age. Thus 80 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty years of age were unmarried in 1926, 62 per cent of males thirty to thirty-five, 50 per cent of males thirty-five to forty, and 26 per cent of males fifty-five to 162 582 589

FAMILY TRANSITION AT MARRIAGE 131 561

Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 885
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age 886
do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of
their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on
the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which
mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which
betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those dif-
ferentiations of status which are given formal and explicit
recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of
daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers
themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re- 561
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 574
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 576
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the 517
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by
right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit be-
hind them round the room on other chairs or on the window
seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the prin-
cipal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrange-
ment shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old
men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to
sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter
in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the
old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger
men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving
the center of the stage to the old men, and the children
stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men
have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the
divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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369 spection and immediate and frequent confession for girls as
834 their best defense, one sees that the pure young maidens are
208 also not without blame. They bear the taint of Eve. "Sure
522 the boys have no chance," said one woman in this respect, "for the girls always lay the blame on them." Yet these attitudes coexist together with other very hearty, casual, and sometimes ribald attitudes which make their appearance in banter, joke, and repartee even between speakers of different sex. These even take the form of taunts about prowess and mild ridicule for the possession of a greater relish than is meet, or fanciful recitation of past magnificent misdeeds. This is particularly true in the recitations of stories and adventures of persons in the ken of the community, where details of amorous desire and accomplishment are given with considerable gusto, and greeted and reiterated again and again amid hearty laughter.

Certain observers profess to find the puritanical outlook
369 on sexual matters on the increase in the countryside. The
834 country people themselves purport to see a change in their
208 own outlook. And it may be that the last generation has
[178] brought a considerable spread of Catholic moral standards with the spread of education and the opening of the countryside to urban influence.

In any event the laughter and hearty guffaws with which references of nearly any kind to sexual intercourse, sexual attraction, and childbearing are greeted, and the evident interest they evoke, are very much part of the everyday behavior of the small farmers. They do not imply in any sense an approval or acceptance of the deeds described. They are rather expressions of a very definite judgment. They are in the nature of a condemnation in which laughter is itself a sanction upon the forbidden.[1]

[1] The authors accept readily the view of laughter as a response to a situation where socially conditioned values are threatened with upset and yet not so deeply or irrevocably broken as to bring out a full reproval. The view is well developed by Pilkington and agrees with that of Max Eastman. The tabloid reader is not

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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582 in the report of the Registrar-General for 1938 gives the best illustration of the culmination of the trends that mark this struggle. In that year slightly over half of all women who married (and only a negligible number of them were not making first marriages) were between thirty-five and forty-five years of age. The problem of delay in marriages seems to be reaching some sort of climax.

161 It is interesting to speculate what that climax might be
● 178 and what future trend of demography it may inaugurate. It is obvious that the conditions these figures point to, rooted as they are in the social order of the countryside and of the nation, are in any case beyond the reach of ordinary measures. They have marked, as we have seen, every Irish administration since Famine days, whether native or not. They are not matters of "poverty" within the reach of immediate economic policies. If "poverty" refers to hunger and an absolute low level of living, the concept does not apply at all. If it denotes rather relative standing within a community of certain values, it has some meaning. But such meaning waits for its understanding on a realization of the form of family and community these values express.

Yet the old cry about a flight from the land has arisen in Ireland once again. Until the outbreak of war in 1939, the population question, linked now with continuing unemployment in the towns and a shortage of labor in the agricultural districts, had become a football of politics once more. The new small local factories of the regime of industrialization now have their place in the controversy. The opposition in the *Dáil* are bitter against a program they believe subsidizes industry at home out of the farmer's pocket, yet leaves him unable to employ the hands his farm requires. The government finds itself in a quandary. To accept the opposition view would be to admit itself responsible for a condition far beyond its control. To put a stop to the program of industrialization would leave the incoming farm

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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sons and daughters with nothing to do at home. It would mean to give up all hope of absorbing them at home. Yet to build the factories is to send into the country districts the very forces of urbanism, such as wage payment, individual recompense, and a job rather than a part in group life, which wean the farm boys and girls away from a familist self-subsistence. Still the farmer of the familist tradition continues to vote the government in and continues to support the factories he must subsidize. For only by some such provision of occupations at home can he provide well for his children, as he must, by ambition and tradition.

There are farmers and farmers in Ireland. The small farmer is by all marks of social life a different person from the "big fellow." It is to be remembered that it is the little fellow who works the familist economy. Only the big fellow normally hires hands. Yet as sons and daughters leave for the towns and the town continues to make inroads on farm life, hired hands must take the vacant places. The migrant children must find new occupations with good pay and a steady hire. The process is one of continuous change at all points in the social order we are tracing out.

These population figures continue to mark, not any single cause or "factor" in social life, but the gradual, generation-slow transformation of an ancient culture, using that word in the anthropological sense. Its central core of familism is offering strong resistance to slow assault. But it changes, and along with it there changes the structure of the community that has been built upon a familistic base. The next chapters deal with these rural communities at the points of transformation: the nonfarming occupations in the countryside and the farmers' markets.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER XII

Occupation and Status

433 COUNTY CLARE, like other more westerly Irish counties agricultural in outlook, presents a picture in which there is little industrial activity at all, comparatively speaking, other than that involved in agriculture, trading in market towns, and administration and communication. The fact holds pretty generally for the whole of the south of Ireland.[1] Whether the inhabitants like it or not, Ireland has long been peripheral to the huge English industrial centers. It has been little more than a market and a source of foodstuffs. A western region like Clare has been nothing more. Ireland was called not very long ago "England's bread basket." But we have already seen, where economic matters have come up, that such a view of her is a bit astigmatic. Ireland was her own bread basket first, long before she was anything else.

288 In rural Ireland outside the large cities, other industrial activity than that involved in agriculture is merely a matter
178 of supply and service, as far as the country people are concerned. The market towns, with their fairs, their shops, their banks, and their artisans and laborers, fill functions entirely distributive in nature.

This has not always been the situation. In 1810 the economist Wakefield found domestic woolen manufacture

[1] At the time of the authors' study the De Valera government's program of industrialization had hardly begun.

[p. 232]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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a widespread industry among the country people throughout Ireland. There seems even then to have been quite a widespread cottage industry in wool and linen, later to be destroyed everywhere except in Ulster. The peasantry displayed great ingenuity at the craft. The wool of their sheep was made into frieze at home, carded, spun, woven, dyed, and consumed there. Oils essential to the weaving process were extracted from fern roots, and dyes were got from alder, walnut, oak, and elderberry. This craft survives today as a cottage industry only in remote parts of Donegal and Kerry and in the Scottish highlands and isles. Such home-spinning was once widespread, probably universal. It survived here and there down to a very late date. In Ulster and northern England the industry was gradually brought into the factory, where it laid the foundation for the industrial revolution. But in the rest of Ireland industrial production of woolens was confined to Dublin by 1840 and, as a commercial enterprise, the wool trade was dead except in the region of Belfast. A few small factories survived in several towns, for example at Limerick, Clonmel, and Bandon, but there was no life or power of expansion in them.

288 178 [314 386]

Other manufactures originally native to the country repeat the story of wool. A few attempts at cotton manufacture died out. Linen suffered the same fate. At one time flax was grown extensively throughout Ireland, and a home industry of weaving linen was practiced widely in both town and countryside in many parts of the country. O'Brien[2] cites evidence that the older custom in linen making, strongest in Ulster, but not unknown elsewhere, by which weavers occupied plots of land and supplemented their income by farming, was gone by the famine time.

[2] George O'Brien. *The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* (London, New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1921). See also O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin and London: Maunsel & Company, Ltd., 1918).

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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288 Otway[3] describes the weavers of Drogheda in 1840 subsisting on conacre gardens (plots hired without right other than to the current crop) in circumstances of dire poverty.
[427]

433 O'Brien sums up his *Economic History* by concluding that the result of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century was that Ireland abandoned all pretense of being an industrial country and came to rely on agriculture to a greater extent than at any time formerly and even than in the eighteenth century. The accounts of Ireland at the time of the famine and after it bear him out. They show a very great lack of any kind of industrial activity other than agriculture.
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463 The petty crafts of the countryside, which never gave any promise of reaching industrial proportions as those in the town centers might have, suffered a similar decline. But with them the decline seems to have come later and to have been part of the general change brought by the industrial revolution. All the supply crafts of the countryside have now come to be concentrated in the market towns. Nevertheless, through western regions, at least, local craftsmen, often with garden plots to help them eke out a living, seem to have long continued to be part of the local scene. In the novels of Carleton written just before and after the famine, many local shoemakers, cobblers, weavers, carpenters, smiths, coopers, nailers, and other followers of small trades appear. Upon them, the agricultural population depended for much of its tools and goods for local consumption. It is impossible to determine now how many of these were rural, since censuses of occupations before 1926 do not distinguish occupations in towns from those in country districts. But these men were part of the generally greater proportions of country dwellers before the rise of towns and the opening up of the railroads during the last century.
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[3] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (Dublin: W. Curry, Jr., & Company, 1839).

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Another very great occupational change, though it does not show itself in any great numbers in census records, has been connected with the disappearance of the landlord from the western counties. A whole series of occupations clustering around the management of estates or the tastes of the local gentry and their families has gradually disappeared. Even the adoption of many of the conventions and habits, once exclusive marks of the Ascendancy, by other classes of the population has not served to stem the change. 463 427 178

If we fasten our attention directly upon determining what occupations are characteristically found represented in the countryside rather than in the towns in Ireland today, we get a picture of rural economy in which the followers of other occupations than farming are few indeed in the countryside. The occupations predominantly rural in Ireland are nearly exclusively those of farm ownership or farm labor. Only in recent years has there been any further development of rural pursuits to take the place of those going out with the changes brought about by modern communication and distribution of factory-made products. The chief of the new influences is not yet represented in full, even in the census of 1926. It is too recent a development. The introduction of creameries had not yet made its mark in that year. Plans for industrialization, since undertaken by the De Valera regime, had not yet even been drawn up. 463 178

To get a picture of rural life and the view of technological adaptation which it entails, we can look through the figures for a comparison of urban and rural industry in the years of the study. 463 464

Volume VI of the Irish census of population of 1926 entitled "Industrial Status" gives a view of the industries of the whole country and a preliminary view of the chief forms of industrial organization. Though the volume is largely concerned with unemployment, it also contains tables which classify those at work in the Free State accord-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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1. Mowing and harvesting for priest and school teacher.
2. Mowing and harvesting for an old couple without children who could not do it themselves.
3. Hauling and moving where many horses were needed, as a *meitheal* of horses, for bringing sand or seaweed manure from the coast, or moving and re-settling a family.
4. Rebuilding a house and re-settling an evicted family.
5. Collecting a *meitheal* of girls with their spinning wheels from all the community's houses to spin after shearing.
6. Collecting a *meitheal* of men and girls for various processes connected with the conversion of flax to linen.

There were probably many other more extraordinary kinds of coöperative action. But the above list exhausts those which are remembered by the local communities the authors knew in Clare and which are unconnected with the more directly reciprocal and familistic pattern of cooring. The difference between *meitheal* and *comhair* was not a contrast, however, by any means. The term *meitheal*, applied strictly, referred to the band of persons and their tools got together. Yet there was a certain unanimity in the country people's feeling that the word *meitheal* should be reserved specifically for occasions of the local community's communal action. In *meitheal* work no individual or family expected a like return.

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Community action in concert, in which bands of workers are got up for specific purposes, is nowadays very different. Most of the characteristic actions of *meitheal* remembered by the old people are no longer carried out. Just as in the case of cooring, the need of the small farmer for his fellows is no longer so great. Monetary hire is spreading into the country communities. Yet even today the schoolteacher and the priest are donated services at hay harvesting occasionally, though nowadays schoolteacher and priest rely no longer upon bits of land and garden for support but upon fixed monetary salaries from state or church. Such aid is of little importance in their economies. Likewise, old-age

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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pensions and other benefits have removed the necessity of action by *meitheal* for the support of the aged and childless. General prosperity and the spread of machinery and tools have made it unnecessary for such concerted action in other cases, and local self-sufficiency is no longer so complete. 571 178

Nevertheless, the foundation of mutual relations between members of the local community upon which *meitheal* was based still exists. It can be called into play in emergency or under special circumstance still. Not all the townsman's accusation that the spirit of self-help and self-sufficiency has gone out of the country people is true by any means. They still will buckle to a community task, if necessity forces action, quite willingly. But they have learned that they have a voice nowadays in the kind of activity to which public funds and public works shall be put. This awareness is part of the extension inward into the community of the lines of relationship with persons and institutions external to the farm community which is so characteristic of the age. Such relationships are now made use of where before there were none of them beyond appeal to a landlord. 476 571

Some description of the former kind of activity might be of interest here, though it is in the nature of a digression. The techniques of the last century, particularly those of wool and flax, were different from those of today; yet the situation is in other respects quite like that of today as far as the organization of persons in the community is concerned. The age groups of old and young, the sex division of activity between men and women, and the reciprocities between family groups and the direction of the community in the hands of the old men were even more marked than they are today. But nothing fundamental has changed except the techniques. 476 571 286

The following is an account of the older custom in weaving:

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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121 settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of
121 eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the begin-
172 ning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered. However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of
121 investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the
103 Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of land-holding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviving clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been
121 aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photographs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

178 Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in
311 what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to
361 find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

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[113] [28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland. *Antiquity*, Vol. 4. 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74. 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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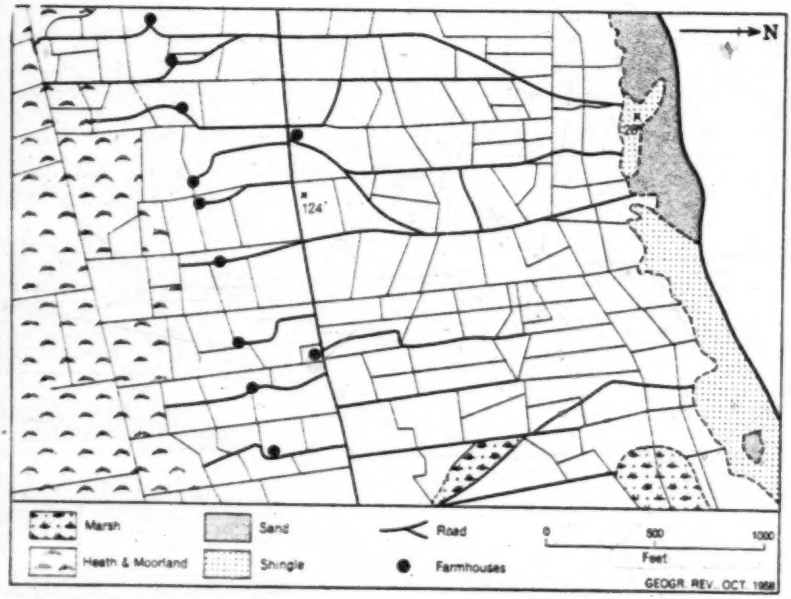

FIG. 4—"Striped" farms and fields in County Kerry. (Based on the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Minister of Finance, Republic of Ireland.)

mentary authorization. Although it is rarely possible to obtain information on the methods and precise date of consolidation, the destruction of the system can be explained, in broad terms, by its growing inefficiency and by the dissemination of new agricultural techniques.

Some of the unsatisfactory aspects of rundale agriculture sprang from the steady growth of the population of Ireland, which continued from sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century until the Great Famine of 1845–1847.[30] This increase led to a constant encroachment on various uncultivated areas, a process in which the general adoption of the potato as a subsistence crop played a major part.[31] But the "waste" lands brought under cultivation had not been completely unused, since often they were grazed by livestock under a well-developed transhumance.[32] This seasonal movement was important to the rural economy, because efficient rundale farming required that the animals be removed from the unfenced cultivated strips during the growing

[30] K. H. Connell: The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845 (Oxford, 1950).

[31] *Idem*: The Colonization of Waste Land in Ireland, 1780–1845, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 3, 1950–1951, pp. 44–71.

[32] J. M. Graham: Transhumance in Ireland, *The Advancement of Sci.*, Vol. 10, 1953–1954, pp. 74–79.

[Text continues on p. 565]

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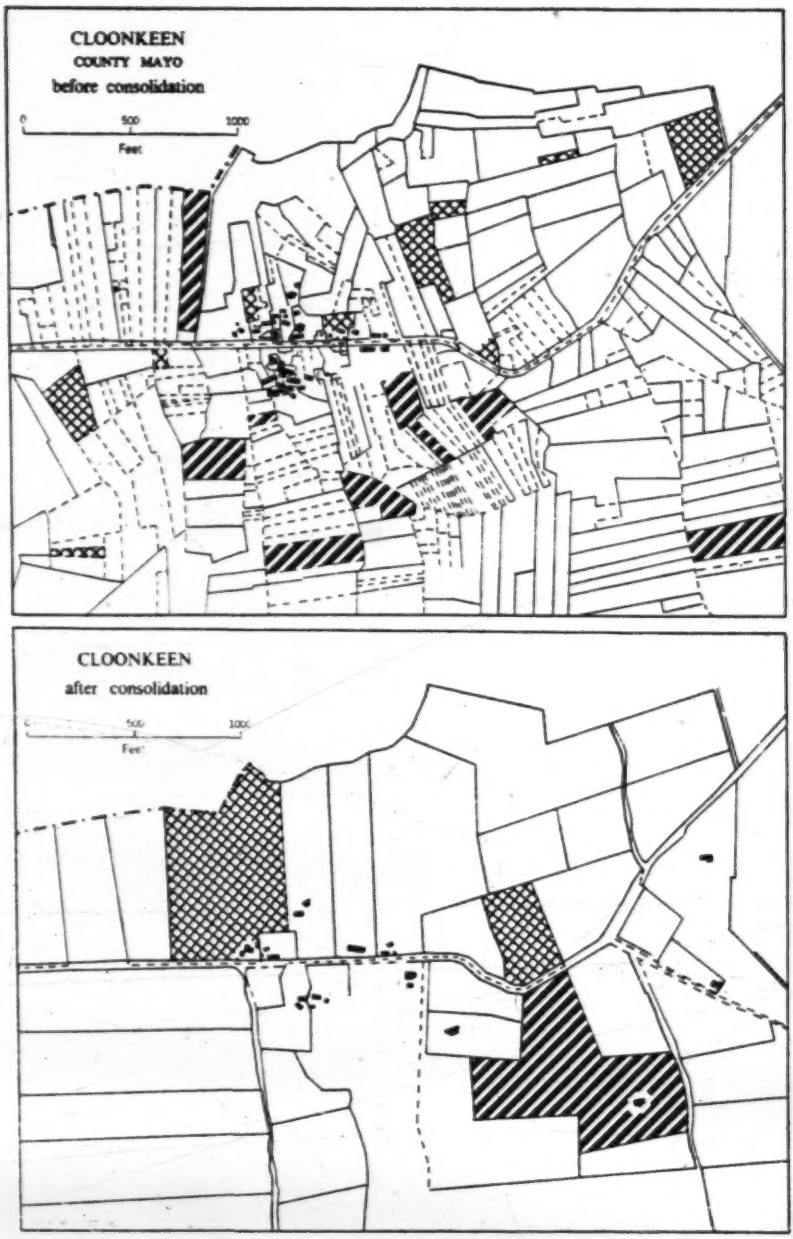

FIG. 5—Cloonkeen, County Mayo, before and after consolidation. The two different shadings (crosshatch and diagonal ruling) represent land held by two typical farmers before and after the consolidation carried out in 1909 by the Congested Districts Board. (Based on information kindly provided by the Irish Land Commission and reproduced by permission.)

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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season; and the end of transhumance made the working of the system more difficult. Similarly, the increase of population led to a remarkable growth in the size of many clachans, which often made life in them increasingly inconvenient. Squabbles over rights of way and other petty affairs were common, and there was a growing awareness that the old methods of farming were becoming unsatisfactory. The introduction of new crops and rotations gave the *coup de grâce* to the efficiency of the system; for they were difficult to integrate into it, and therefore agricultural improvement was retarded. 178 311 361

The impetus behind the changes, however, usually did not come from the farmers themselves but from their landlords. Indeed, it seems possible that peasant resistance to the destruction of rundale was a considerable factor in nineteenth-century opposition to landlordism.[33] Often landlords, intent on improving their estates, would put whole areas of land into the melting pot, consolidating holdings and sometimes evicting the surplus population. Frequently the new holdings were arranged up and down the slope of the land, an arrangement that has resulted in the characteristic striped appearance of much of the modern Irish landscape. Although long, narrow strips were probably not the best possible farm shape (Fig. 4), they represented a compromise between the traditional system of allocating each farmer a share of every quality of land and the landlords' demands for greater efficiency. At the same time the old clachan groups were broken up and new farmhouses were built, each within its own land. In such a way most of the better agricultural land was converted, but at the end of the nineteenth century various areas, particularly in the west of Ireland, still remained under the old system or some modification of it. This hard core has now been largely eliminated by government action. First the British government attempted a general improvement of living conditions in western Ireland by means of the Congested Districts Board, whose work included the reorganization of agricultural holdings (Fig. 5);[34] after 1922 and the establishment of the Irish Free State the task was taken over by the Irish Land Commission.[35]

In some areas, however, the disappearance of clachan settlement was part of a natural process in the late nineteenth century. The population of Ireland started to decrease after the Great Famine of the 1840's, and even in areas where there had been little rearrangement of holdings some clachans became 161 361 178

[33] See, for example, the Devon Commission Report [see footnote 11 above], Part 1, Appendix 14, p. 58. 113

[34] T. W. Freeman: The Congested Districts of Western Ireland, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 33, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[35] On this aspect of the Land Commission's work see "The Consolidation of Fragmented Agricultural Holdings" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Washington, 1950), Chapter 3, "Relief of Rural Congestion in Ireland."

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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161 uninhabited and in others only a single family remained. In these areas, too,
361 partial consolidation was carried out by adding the fields of an emigrating
179 farmer to those of some neighbor or relative who remained at home. The decrease in population had a more general influence as well: throughout Ireland it prevented former conditions from reasserting themselves. Everywhere there was diminished pressure on the land, and the growth of larger farms rather than renewed subdivision.

000 There are still gaps, then, in the story of Irish rural settlement. Until documentary and field evidence slowly yields the missing chapters, the past will remain a subject for speculation rather than for confident explanation. The rural systems of previous centuries are now disappearing, but the surviving remains may hold clues to former conditions, and their interpretation remains a continuing challenge.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the country-people who marry latest. One can range the country in something of a scale in this regard. The more numerous in a county the numbers of small holdings, roughly, the later marriage takes place, and the greater number of bachelors, particularly males, of all ages, there are. Late marriage and bachelorhood are characteristics today of the countryman's way of life.

In the problem presented by these statistics, the structural approach to the countryman's way of life can bring a new illumination. It throws into relief the human setting in which economic and historic changes have run their course.

After the terrible disaster of the Famine, agriculture underwent a change. Canadian and Argentine wheat forced Irish land into cattle production. The great land clearances took place, turning out the population to make way for pasture. Then the small farmer followed the large into pasturage for dry cattle, on a lesser scale, and the milch cow declined. Small towns and crossroads distributing centres and the railroads sprang up all through the country; and abroad, the roaring industrial expansion, first of England and then of America, gave opportunities denied at home. Through all this: through curtailment of employment at home, through substitution of cattle for men upon the land, through denial of local opportunity, the stream of emigration kept its steady flow.

Through all this, too, the figures of Irish mar-

S:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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riage kept pace. Age of marriage was normal in the year of the first census. In 1841 there was a normally low percentage of the unmarried in the population, and men and women married as early as they do in the United States today. At each decennial census afterwards, marriage was a little later and the unmarried a little more numerous. Through all the welter of changes, the figures grew steadily toward wider and wider spread celibacy.

Then when the economic and political tides turned, the human setting still endured. The clearances ceased; land reform won security of tenure; years of prosperity after 1870 brought an income that could be used more and more at home, as lowered rents spread and freehold was assured. Finally, the war brought undreamed-of prosperity and on its heels the strength for revolution and civil war. The milch cow came back to a position from which it had only retreated very little; dairying could be organized and come to vie with beef cattle as a market outlet. Finally, as a last step, industry began to make its call at home.

In all this flow of circumstance who can say what factor determined the numerical count of Irish population? Emigration went on as before, checked this year, hurried the next, until, perhaps from external check, the flow grew less and less.[1]

[1] Preliminary reports of the current (1936) census indicate emigration still continues, though now largely directed toward Great Britain rather than overseas.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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On the other hand, the corollary check on the population—late marriage—did not lag. It still grew. In the census of 1911 it reached its peak and has held it since. It alone shows no sign of falling-off in response to new economics and better days. For a social system is no brittle, changeable thing. Its adjustments to change and circumstance are a lesson, not in economics, but in the tenacity of human sentiment and human habit. Late marriage in Ireland can be associated with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership. It is part of the long struggle to acquire means to portion children. The closed corporation of the family cannot be dispersed until it is possible to establish a new one. The self-sufficiency of the group makes it always difficult to destroy. And now, today, the identification of a single family with a single individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new group upon the land.

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So, when subdivision of holdings ceased after the Famine, Irish familism made its adaptation. The local community could not any longer settle its sons at home; it could no longer divide its land among them. Yet, unless it were to die it must live on. I say must, for a social system is co-extensive with the lives of its members. The Polynesians, in their island paradises, might die out nation by nation when their culture crashed, bled by a malady stronger than foreign germs or foreign guns. The Irish countrymen were tougher.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

In living on, the system could still mould the lives of its members. As prosperity arrived, and land agitation fixed the attention of the farmer, 'land' became more and more a central value. Irish rural familism felt more and more strongly the threefold identification of 'land', 'blood' and local standing. Where land, alliance and prestige all follow the same lines, in marriage, the group finds its coherence in, and centres its tightly woven bonds round, that crucial reorganization of social life.

So, the 'landless' and the 'backward' must die out. In rural Ireland, however, it is not men but families which are so forced to their deaths. "Backward places do not grow big fortunes", we remember. That homely phrase is full of social meaning. The all-too-human drives for social rise, for prestige, leave them behind and marriageless. And in a familistic world, celibacy leads to extinction.

With the homely phrase we enter a new field in social life, yet one just as central to the way of rural Ireland. This is the broad area of social stratification. Under the awkward term are subsumed the judgments man makes among his fellows upon rank, upon prestige, upon inferiority and superiority, and the behaviours that embody them. All societies exhibit them; all organize them in one way or another. Even the animals show analogous behaviours. They practise dominance and submit

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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another guise. They are controls upon the system. 182
They are unconscious patterns of human action 554
whose social function is to ensure conformities and 565
to enforce cohesions against internal disruption and external defection. Much of the fate of human beings, both at their own hands and at those of their fellows, conforms to the controls the community exerts in response to the system of customs and values by which it builds itself and in which it ensures its preservation.

Tragedy, for example, lies in the fate of one 463
romantic human type in rural Ireland. In the last 178
century before the introduction of railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, smiths, followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Open any account of rural Ireland before the last quarter of the last century, such as the tales of William Carleton, and you will be rewarded with a full-blooded picture of this lusty crew. Their crafts were very primitive, but their place was sure. Since then, nearly all of them, except the smith, their peer, have been swept away before the skill of townsmen and factory. These men supplied their neighbours, lived among them, were an integral part of rural life. When poverty struck too deep, they became peripatetics, like the wandering singers, scholars, fiddlers, spalpeen labourers, petty hawkers and beggars who swarmed the roads of Ireland. The world of fairy-tale was

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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178 463 not remote from the farmers who knew these men. Rumpelstiltskin, in a Gaelic dress, was at one's very doors.

In remote communities some few of these survive. Where they do, the community can still make use of them. Commissioning them follows a traditional pattern of gifts and courtesies little resembling conventional monetary commerce. Their skill descends, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; it is 'in the blood'. Their surplus children must disperse to towns and in emigration. For theirs too is a familistic world.

178 463 556 Unless they marry within their own fast-diminishing numbers, they too must have land and fortune. Now and again one of them rises in the world. He acquires land, he sets aside a fortune, he marries sons and daughters on the land. Year by year, his trade goes into the discard, till one fine day he is a full-fledged small farmer.

463 554 But such upward mobility is rare and difficult. Economic change has swept his skill aside. The local artisan is more often a landless man, with nothing but a garden patch. The services he performs, however indispensable, do not give him equality with his neighbours. His standing is low, though his person is welcome. A farmer might 'put a son to a trade', perhaps, and often did not long ago. But it would be the lame son, the one not 'suited to the land'.

So today one finds broken remnants of this local

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
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626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
668 public life who has contributed so much to humour
443 and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the 1916 Rebellion, have other broad social classes 178
of what used to be called the 'Irishry' made a sub- 668
stantial contribution to organized political life, 443
though all of them figured well enough in patriotic rebellion. 1898 is the crucial date, because then the landlords were displaced in the management of local affairs. The older Grand Jury system, based upon large property qualifications, gave way to the elective County Councils.

At about the same time, land war had broken the last remaining ties between the landlords, as a class, and the social order of the countryside. The growth of the towns since the Famine had by then well established the new relation between the market-town and its rural hinterland which I have described. In the new situation, the shopkeeper and the publican could best represent the united interests of the social order of which they were, in their own way, an important part.

All nations infuse political forms with their own genius. The Irish were not slow to do so; they soon made their own infusion. The reciprocities of a familistic order, in which sentiment and habit found effective organization, were the materials they had at hand. The bonds between town and countryside provided channels through which the infusion could flow.

For, as I have tried to show you, the shop- 443
keeper-publican occupied then, and still does, a 661
strategic place in the organization of the country- 626

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 backward and upward toward the dead and the
183 ancestral. The community bestows ever greater
888 status and influence as one progresses further and
776 further toward the age-grade of the old, in whom
775 tradition and precedent are preserved and expressed. In the sphere of credence and emotion the fairy faith acts to the same end and is so designed. The design, in this instance as in all the others, is not conscious; no one has planned it. It is a design drawn from the social order and acting back upon it. Its imagery is traditional, but its efficacy is of the present. And for that reason it lives.

Thus, in the identification between the old, the dead and the influences which affect the goods, the conducts and the values of the countryman's life, the symbolic order is completed. Folk-belief, in the ancient fairy-cult, with its age-old imagery, makes a complete emotional synthesis, overlying and reacting back upon the sentiment and habit out of which it springs again and again with each generation that learns the old way of life. Consequently, each new generation works a change upon it; elements of the synthesis undergo constant re-embellishment and shift of emphasis. Both old and young are controlled by it, but each in a different way. Today the young are sceptical and a little rebellious; they repudiate much of the
[178] older imagery. All that the Church condemns in the 'pisherogues', they also condemn. Today folk-belief is undergoing MARKed change like All else in this world, like All else in Ireland.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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178 181 183 775 776

belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

But that does not mean the death-knell of folklore, as some students of folklore seem to think. Far from that, it means only that a symbolic order like any growth in human life must change and grow onward. New forms and new imagery will grow up to clothe in emotional terms the necessary reformations of habit and sentiment in social life, and new syntheses will fashion new belief, changing the old or supplanting it inch by inch.

178 183

One can see this process at work in rural Ireland today. Those who repudiate the fairies repudiate only the outmoded symbols, the outworn images. They do not deny the necessity of a symbolic order in their own lives. The student of man is coming to think today that they could not do so, because no people can. There must always be some socially efficacious organization of the sentiments of social life in the logic of belief and imagery. Belief provides first of all a conception of life; then, and then only, does it carry on to become a conception of the world. But life among men includes emotional attitudes at once very necessary and very satisfying; one can starve the spirit only so far. And for that reason the logic of a social order is not that of science and prose, it is that of emotion. Consequently, those of the countryside who repudiate the older symbols merely demand that their emphasis be shifted. They do not cry out for bald

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

178 science, nor abandon symbolism. They merely
183 insist upon new symbols.

There are currently two directions in which the shift can be made. And, as usual, the popular mind has room for both movements; for they are related, and both are compatible with the countryman's social order. The first direction leads more deeply into the greater Faith of the countryman. Religion can come more and more to provide the emotional balances necessary in social life. Thus Catholicism is a growing, spreading force in the countryside, overtaking many an area of the mind where the 'pisherogues' still flourished till recently. The second direction leads to a reaffirmation, in ever stronger form, of that part of belief in which the dead and death are related to the disturbances and the securities of social life. After all, this is one of the indispensable cores of faith, and it expresses most forcefully the organization of life upon tradition and continuities. It can be retained even if the more picturesque imagery must go.

It is for that reason that the fairy gives way more
178 and more to the ghost in rural Ireland today. Dead
183 'Tans' now patrol the roads where the banshee may
775 have walked. In stressing the part of the dead in folk-belief, the necessary synthesis between emotional associations and social life can still persist and respond to change and growth. The ghost does his work as well as does the fairy, though he is perhaps less given to poetic dress.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where 248
the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and 244
the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has 311
been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered 231
that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. [178] ●
But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their [273]
importance in the past: one minor factor in the decline is the fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained 235
and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred years. 493

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little " dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long " runners " which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or " trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a " box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a " soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate. [531] [492]

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the " two-wheeled " culture region. 493 178

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but 491

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

412 While it is difficult to estimate the antiquity of the two-eared
184 spade tradition in Ulster and Leinster, its spread into the west has taken place in the last half century. The decline in the use of the loy is symbolic of the disappearance of the old
[178] fashions, and they tend to vanish together because the culture pattern is a closely interwoven web. Thus it was considered in Donegal a century ago that the new iron spades "would be useless," since few workers had shoes: the wooden spade was adapted to the bare feet.

391 The spade-maker is called on to turn out other types of
412 agricultural tools, spades, shovels and forks. There is the very narrow tapered draining spade and the heavy "mountain draining spade" used in the moorland areas of the north and west (Fig. 64): its great "shark's head" blade is 17 inches long and almost as wide. Occasionally he is asked to rough out a flachter (Fig. 85), which the country smith finishes into the required shape, or it may be, in the south-west, a graffan or heavy hoe (Chapter 10). But as the turf-cutting season comes round most of his energies go into the making of turf slanes (Chapter 15). Of shovels there are several different types, generally classified into two shapes, round-pointed and square-pointed: the latter kind is favoured in the west. There is also the tanged shovel of Co. Wexford. The shovels are long-handled, but short handles are used for special purposes. The welding of the socket in the thin hard steel of the shovels is one of the smith's most difficult tasks (Fig. 65).

412 Then there are short and long-handled square-shouldered digging forks with three or with four prongs (Fig. 65), and the round-shouldered manure-forks or graips, the prongs of which may be round, oval, or in old-fashioned work, square. There are drags for unloading manure, for gathering wrack (Fig. 103), for cleaning drains and gathering stones. Hay-forks may be tanged or strap-hafted, with 4-foot or 5-foot handles and so on. Some country-made forks are illustrated in Fig. 66. It may be added that hayforks with wooden prongs cut from the solid have also been used in the past. Some of the loys, like the old Ulster kib, are essentially wooden spades merely shod with iron, and even this was dispensed with in sandy soils. Wooden

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen 582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully 844 watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if 763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their 764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great [762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to [178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin [482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women 764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own 533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

173 began to sink.[1] Suspecting that the bell was the cause of their misfortune, they threw it into the sea, and the ship was saved. Next morning, when some of the islanders were searching for sea-weed on the shore, they found the bell lying broken among the rocks. This [778] relic has long ago disappeared, having been cut up into pieces which were worn as amulets, most of which have been taken to America, but it is said that some are still kept as great treasures by some old people in Inishbofin, who refuse to show them to anyone.

Richard O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, makes mention of this bell ("H-Iar Connaught," p. 117) . . . "Inisark is of the same property with Bofin and the saint therein worshipped, St. Leo; of whose reliques is a bell there extant."

773 *St. Leo's Foot-print.*—There is pointed out an impression in the rock on which Cloghan Leo is built, which is said to be the imprint of 823 the saint's foot, and the people's explanation of how it came there is, that when he had finished building the cloghan Le had to leap down, as he had no ladder, and alighting on the rock he left the print of his foot upon it, where it still remains.

173 There is a tradition on the islands of a large treasure of gold being hidden on Davillaun (a small island of the Bofin group), on which a large vessel of the Spanish Armada was wrecked, and some of the people claim to know exactly where it is. There are also many stories about Lord Nelson, under whom several men from these islands served, and wild tales of the old smugglers; and a very narrow passage between two dangerous rocks through which a daring smuggler once steered his vessel, and thus baffled his pursurers, is pointed out.

Archæology.

● 178 Though making no pretentions to being an archæologist, yet as an inquiry of this sort would be imperfect without, at least, a partial [172] description of the antiquities of the place, I hope that the notes hereunder given may, in some degree at least, supply the want.

1. *Survivals.*—In these the locality is comparatively rich, a good many old implements and methods of working, which have become extinct in other places, being still common. Such are the continuance of the use of plants and lichens as dyes, and some details of dress, such as the old blue cap, &c., which have been referred to before.

[1] One version of the story states that the ship had got as far as the Bay of Biscay!

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 178 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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his death to his interference with this figure. An Inishkea man spoke about the matter with much indignation even after the lapse of years, and said that they had never known misfortune or hunger in the island until after the distruction of this *neewoge*. 778

Many different accounts have been given of the image itself. One writer (C. O.) states that it was a stone figure of rude workmanship, and that it was dressed in a suit of homespun, renewed every year.

The description given by those who have seen it agree in stating that it was not a statue but a small flat stone. One informant believed it to be part of the head of a stone figure. This was enveloped in a small bag of homespun, which was replaced when it got old and soiled, and was kept in a blind window or recess in the wall in one of the houses.

St. Brendan and the Devil.—During my visit to Inishglora some of the Inishkea fishermen, who were camped there at the time, pointed out that no grass grew on a part of the island, and gave the following explanation :—St. Brendan was one day disturbed in his devotions by the devil, who appeared to him in the form of a beautiful girl and tempted him. The saint indignantly repulsed the temptress, and drove her towards the end of the island, blessing the soil as he went, but at the point where the grass ends, Satan changed his form and assumed the shape of a ram, which so astonished the saint that in his excitement he ceased blessing and gave chase to the evil one who ran to the rocks and jumped into the sea. The unblessed land is that on which the grass does not grow. 776

VI. ARCHÆOLOGY.

The few notes made in this section do not purport to be fully descriptive, but merely to indicate the nature of the antiquities of the region, which are of importance in the study of the people as bearing on the history of their past, and to direct the attention of archaeologists to the quantity of material worthy of study and record which is still to be met with in this part of county Mayo. 172 178

1. *Survivals.*—The district is comparatively rich in these, though many articles in use in the localities previously reported on are now quite extinct in Erris. The primitive condition of many of the houses, the absence of chimneys, and the custom of taking cattle into the dwellings have already been referred to. 178

The quern is still in use in several houses, especially on the islands and in the remoter localities, though now only employed for 178 412

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen.*

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tin-ware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

228 to collect one stone in an hour. Kelp
[381] (seaweed) burning for iodine on the beaches was almost extinct by 1894.[17]

Settlement and Population

361 Of the 96 houses counted as inhabited, 53 are in five hamlets and another six in a loose cluster near the harbor. There is no village as the term is commonly understood, though the main center is beside the harbor, where the inn occupies the one-time "big house" of the Allies family, with the church and the Post Office a short distance away. In all there are eight shops, none of which
[444] is recognizable from the outside, as everyone knows them: one is attached to the inn, another to the Post Office, a third occupies a specially built room in a farmyard, and the rest are in front rooms of houses. All the houses except about six have land attached.

Is this nucleated settlement as such?
361 On the first Ordnance Survey map
178 (1838) there were large clusters of houses and on the 1898 map the vast majority
621 of the houses were in clusters. The redistribution of land and building of new houses has broken up many hamlets or made new ones, for example in Knock townland (405 acres) where an old hamlet on a sandy site has been replaced by a new one on drier ground by the shore, with 15 of the townland's 17 houses. In Cloonamore (663 acres)
361 eight houses are placed along the shore
621 and eleven others scattered over the hillside; in Middlequarter (608 acres) there are eleven houses in the main hamlet, six beside the harbor and eleven others at various points beside the shore or on side roads; in Fawnmore (199 acres) six houses out of sixteen are in a loosely defined hamlet; and in West-
361 quarter (523 acres) nine houses out of

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[p.208(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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121 However interesting we may find 'bygones' for their own sake—and most of us take a natural interest in the way our forefathers lived—there is need to know not only how these relics were made and used but also what beliefs were held about them. Wherever possible I have studied the techniques of making and using tools as well as their lore, and by assisting in the processes have learnt more than books can teach. There is a clear relationship between the ways in which men's basic needs are satisfied and the social organization. Nothing less than the whole of the past is needed to explain the present, and in this difficult task we cannot afford to neglect the unrecorded past. The crafts of arable farming, of animal husbandry and the home industries have done more to shape our instincts and thoughts than the trampling of armies or the wranglings of kings which fill the documents from which history is written.

The outstanding interest of Ireland for the student of European origins lies in the fact that in its historic literature, language and social organization, as well as in its folklore and folk customs, it illustrates the marginal survival of archaic elements of the Indo-European world. Myles Dillon has shown how the three classes of ancient Irish society—the learned class, the warriors and the peasantry—are closely paralleled in the three main castes of Hinduism: Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya. The ethnographer may be led even farther afield in discovering a skin boat, a rush charm or a wheel-less cart that will take him on a scientific trail to the ends of the earth. And geologists and botanists find a similar interest in the peripheral survival in Ireland of rock-formations and floras which in their day dominated a wider scene.

178 121 The decades of demographic instability which culminated in the Great Famine of 1845–7 brought radical changes in the economy and landscape of rural Ireland. A correspondent in *The Times* of May 19th, 1853, noted that 'all accounts describe the country and its inhabitants as assuming more of the half-picturesque, half-comfortable aspect, of an English landscape', no doubt because hedges and an orderly husbandry had transformed the naked famine-stricken scene. The famine, as we shall see, was a great social watershed and it marked the end of an era that might well be termed prehistoric. But it is the

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changes which are taking place today, a hundred years later, that are finally extinguishing the prehistoric traditions. Mechanization and mass-production are invading the remotest glens, and things which were the commonplaces of fifty years ago are becoming as remote to the young as the Middle Ages. Knowledge of ways of life that have altered little for centuries is passing away; skills whose loss the practical countryman may have cause to regret are disappearing. The Irish Universities have a unique opportunity of fostering local studies and folklore-research, but only University College, Dublin, has seriously supported this work. The Government of Northern Ireland, however, is to be congratulated on having offered to help to finance an Ulster Folk Museum on the lines of St. Fagans in Wales and those of the Scandinavian countries.

Meanwhile the National Museum in Dublin, the Belfast Municipal Museum and the County Museum, Armagh, have been busy collecting and displaying the portable elements of material culture, and I have drawn freely on their exhibits for sketches of objects which it is now too late to find in everyday use. I wish to thank Mr. A. T. Lucas and Dr. J. Raftery, of the National Museum, Mr. W. A. Seaby of the Belfast Museum, and Mr. T. G. F. Paterson of Armagh for their assistance and encouragement. Among many other friends and colleagues whose help I cannot forget are Kevin Danaher and Sean O'Sullivan of the Irish Folklore Commission, Professor Michael Duignan, Professor M. J. O'Kelly, Professor Sean O'Riordain, H. G. Tempest, and Dr. A. E. J. Went; and among my former students R. H. Buchanan, Rosemary Harris, N. C. Mitchel, Dr. D. McCourt, Dr. J. M. Mogey, V. B. Proudfoot and G. B. Thompson. I have to thank the editors of the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* and of *Ulster Folklife* and Mr. W. A. Seaby for the loan of blocks, and Mr. Seaby also for permission to use several photographs from the collection of the late R. J. Welch. Mr. W. A. Green, Miss H. E. Henry, Mr. Frank Scovell and Mr. C. E. F. Trench have kindly supplied me with photographs. Miss Eileen Duncan has prepared the four maps, and other acknowledgements appear under the text-figures. It is a pleasure also to acknowledge the help received, either orally or in correspondence, from numerous Irishmen in all

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I

IRELAND THE OUTPOST

THE charm of Ireland, north as well as south, lies as much in the colourful speech and old-fashioned ways of her people as in the beauty of her green fields and blue hills, the silver-glint of lake waters and the gold of the scented whins. The observant visitor cannot fail to be attracted by customs and turns of speech, by traditions and tools which are obsolescent if not archaic in England. He will occasionally see in use in field and farmyard implements which went out of fashion so long ago in most parts of Great Britain that one may truly speak of them as medieval. Thus the toothed sickle, the flail, the one-eared spade, the clod-breaking mallet and seed-rake, the upright churn and the three-legged pot can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life (Fig. 1). The boon-work which was an obligation owed by tenants to English landlords in the Middle Ages survives in the flax-pulling boons of Ulster, and the Anglo-Norman word for the lord's part of an estate, the demesne, is universally applied to the parklands of Ireland. The Irish baronies or kingdoms, as they are sometimes called, are similarly relics of the Middle Ages. The prevalence of the Roman Catholic religion, to which 76 per cent of the population of Ireland adheres—the figure is 94 per cent for the Republic of Ireland—reinforces this sense of the past; and the English dialects spoken in many districts, even if shot through with Gaelic-derived turns of phrase, are strikingly Elizabethan. A strong medieval flavour attaches to the feast-day gatherings and patterns, to strawboys, wrenboys and the Christmas mummers. Medieval too is the diversity of folk-customs and of locally-made tools, which will be found to vary from one

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[412]
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FIG. 1. 'The toothed sickle (1), the flail (2), the one-eared spade (4), the clod-breaking mallet (5), and seek-rake (7), the upright churn (6), and the three-legged pot (3), can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life.'

district to another. The interest of these relics is enhanced when one discovers parallels among simple societies in distant parts of the world.

These ancient diversities are being ironed out at an increasing rate, and the opportunity of seeing and, what is more important, placing on record these age-old crafts and rites will soon pass. The wonder is that so many have persisted through the political, economic and social upheavals of the last 150 years. During that period the steady decline of the Gaelic language resulted in the loss of a great deal of information on local and regional life and of a vast store of oral literature, in which the lore of an ancient civilization was enshrined. The scientist must regard this loss as a tragedy comparable to that suffered by the historian in the disastrous burning of the Dublin Four Courts in

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1922. Ireland is one of the last homes of the oral traditions of prehistoric and medieval Europe, which mirror the routine of rural life through the seasons, the contacts of peoples in war and in commerce, and the heroic deeds of half-legendary leaders. Luckily all is not lost: the devoted labours of the Irish Folklore Commission have rescued from the Gaeltacht and catalogued with scientific skill countless stories of the kind which enriched the literature of the medieval world. In Northern Ireland also belated efforts are being made to gather the harvest of lore and legend. 121 178

The study of both the material and spiritual folk-life of Ireland and the oceanic fringes of Europe can throw light on the past and on the evolution of society in Britain and western Europe generally. English anthropologists and ethnographers have searched the farthest continents and enriched scientific literature with their findings, but they have neglected the little island across the Irish Sea. Irish scholars too, perhaps because they find it hard to detach themselves from what is familiar, have shown little interest until recently in the treasure-house of fact and fancy that lies about them. Some writers, indeed, appear to deplore the existence of the folk-customs I am describing in this book: they would conceal or even deny them. It has been learnedly argued, for instance, that the well-authenticated practice of 'ploughing by the tail'[1] was the lying invention of English propagandists, who passed an Act of Parliament prohibiting it, in 1635, merely to demonstrate how degraded the Irish must be! Those features of rural life which cannot be concealed or denied are regarded as due to the repressive hand of England, to penal laws, absenteeism and the poverty imposed by rack-rents and unscrupulous land-agents. Certainly there have been great abuses, and they have left the Irish suspicious and sensitive. It is unfortunate, therefore, that authoritative works recently published in England have needlessly exaggerated the tribal habits and pastoral nomadism of the ancient Irish. A writer in the *Cambridge Economic History*,[2] indeed, goes so far as to describe fifteenth-century Ireland as 'in great part, a 114

[1] *The Irish Book-lover* (May, 1943), 9.
[2] *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*. Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power, I (1941), 161.

175 way of life was fostered by the ease with which the humbler
311 members of the community could compete with others in arts
demanding not wealth but personal qualities, in poetry, oratory,
361 song and physical prowess. Down to our own day the small size of the average farm has encouraged the survival of simple tools and limited the acquisition of machines. Subdivision of farms and the depressing effects of short leases and absenteeism were contributory factors. Subdivision of holdings was prohibited under an Act of 1881, but like so many other prohibited practices it did not cease.

175 The retention of many of the attributes of a peasant society is the key to the survival of the folk ways with which we are
602 concerned in the following chapters. Even the Great Famine
178 which marks a grim watershed in social and economic history did not entirely obliterate them, though it had such far-reaching effects that it might be regarded as the end of prehistoric times in Ireland. First in importance is the strength of blood-ties in extended family groups, still maintained even in many urban communities. During the air raids on Belfast, for example, the problem of finding billets for evacuated homeless was complicated by the refusal of large groups of related families to be separated from each other. In remote rural areas the blood-tie is a dominant force, governing economic as well as social relationships,[1] its loyalties overriding the impartial administration of justice. A relative is a 'friend', even if 'far-out'—that is, remotely connected—and friendship is a matter of blood relationship. A peasant community is concerned first and foremost with the maintenance and continuity of society: it does not judge—and cannot be judged—purely by economic standards. Immemorially peasant families have been large, and child-bearing is widely regarded as part of the ritual necessary to bring success with the stock and the crops. In rural Ireland
[842] barrenness in a wife still tends to be regarded as an unnatural and disgraceful thing, and many superstitious cures for 'the
178 sterile curse' are recorded. This is but one example of a widespread attitude towards life, to which comparative anthropology
789 offers many parallels. Sympathetic magic, or the performance

[1]C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940), Ch. 13.

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of certain acts in the hope of inducing success in similar fields of action, provides an explanation of many of the folk-practices with which we are concerned. 178 [189]

Pushed too far, however, the observance of such antiquated practices in the end defeated its purpose and threatened the extinction of traditional life. A clue to much of the paradox in Irish culture is to be found in the reaction which follows an adherence to custom carried beyond the breaking-point. Spade-labour for example has reluctantly given way to the plough, but once the plough is generally accepted the spade becomes a despised implement so that a vegetable garden is a rare thing, at best a tiny plot left to the care of the women. In another field, the substitution of the vilest American films for the traditional ceilidhe gathering is a sad change. The crisis of the Great Famine was a major turning-point, and there followed a general reaction against everything associated with it. This was particularly true of the Irish peasants who sought refuge across the Atlantic: the American immigrants, driven from the land by extreme poverty, were determined to have nothing more to do with it and became almost invariably town-dwellers. The donkey and the goat, symbols of poverty, are neglected and despised in many parts of Ireland. A Donegal crofter once told me he dare not keep a donkey for fear of being unable to marry off his daughters: instead he kept a horse, though he could ill afford one, for its prestige value. The dangerously monotonous diet of Irish countryfolk, also, can be explained in the light of the famine. So bitter is the folk-memory of these times that useful wild sources of food are now neglected and despised; for example, wild berries of all kinds, the ubiquitous eel, hare and rabbit; the cresses and the edible seaweeds and fungi. It should be added, however, that some of these foods were apparently tabu—the rabbit, an Anglo-Norman invader, was rarely eaten—and that the potato had played its part in debasing diet in the period before the famine.[1] [177] [546] 178 262

Perhaps the most striking example of reaction is to be found in the expressed desire of most country people to have an isolated dwelling-house. The clachan or hamlet, once the centre of communal life and tradition, is despised, a symbol of squabbling 178 361

[1]R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), Ch.15.

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178 poverty, and it is the wish of nearly everyone to have a house
[361] where he cannot be overlooked. What is surprising in the light of these physical changes is the extent to which old customs and habits of mind survive to this day. As the late R. A. S. Macalister wrote in his last book, perhaps not entirely without malice: 'The importance of Ireland is that, thanks to the 'time-lag', it has rendered to Anthropology the unique, inestimable, indispensable service of carrying a primitive European *Precivilization* down into late historic times, and there holding it up for our observation and instruction.'[1]

178 Finally we should notice how the physical diversity of the
country conspired with its remoteness to permit the survival
133 through the centuries of indigenous peoples and customs. 'Mountainy men', in the picturesque Irish phrase, keep their foothold in every corner of the land, for mountain refuges lie all around the coast. Even the broad central lowland is diversified by several isolated ranges, still more by extensive bogs where movement has always been difficult. Before forest clearance and drainage were effected, woods, lakes and bogs were widespread, and the English made every effort to destroy the forest remnants because they sheltered the native 'wood-kernes'. So it had been in Norman England; where the land became difficult, through mountain or forest, or where water filled large spaces, the pikesman or bowman could hold his own against the man on horseback, and a democratic flavour was in the air.

[1]R. A. S. Macalister, *The Archaeology of Ireland* (1949), x.

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174 from it. The Gaelic conquest of the Irish Midlands was not completed until the sixth century A.D., and down to the Anglo-Norman invasions the distinction between free and tributary tribes remained.[1] The counties bordering the middle Shannon—Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and the western parts of Westmeath and Offaly—are probably as full of survivals as any in Ireland. This is the land of the loy and the steeveen (Chapter X) and the last home of many an ancient custom. The lowland [133] of which it is the centre is floored with limestone levelled off at about 200 ft. but diversified by occasional low hills, by intricate solution lakes and by glacial eskers and drifts among which lie countless small lakes and bogs (Fig. 3). It is hard to realize [489] the isolation from which this area suffered before the introduction of improved wheeled vehicles and the coming of the canal and the railway.[2]

311 Let us now look at the cultural landscape which the hand of man has fitted to the physical frame of the island. Although man has been in this country for only a fraction of the time he has occupied South England and the continent, his mark is everywhere. Wander where you will through the length and breadth of the island, and through the dozens of lesser isles around its shores, and you will never fail to see traces of human activity, past or present, even in the most empty and inaccessible spots. Apart from the more or less datable remains of church and rath, castle and cairn, the land is covered with the marks of man's toil. The history of rural Ireland could be read out of doors, had we the skill, from the scrawlings made by men in the field boundaries of successive periods. In them the unlettered countryman wrote his runes on the land. The student of historical geography has been greatly assisted in the task of interpreting this palimpsest by the new tool of air-photography which, given suitable conditions, will pick out all man-made marks on the face of the earth.

311 The sturdy field walls and hedged banks which give the
178 countryside its intimate character are by no means as immutable

[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), 204.

[2] Improvements in public transport were initiated by the Italian, Bianconi, who, profiting from the cavalry horses thrown on the market after the Napoleonic wars, began his famous fleet of 'cars' in Tipperary in 1815.

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FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

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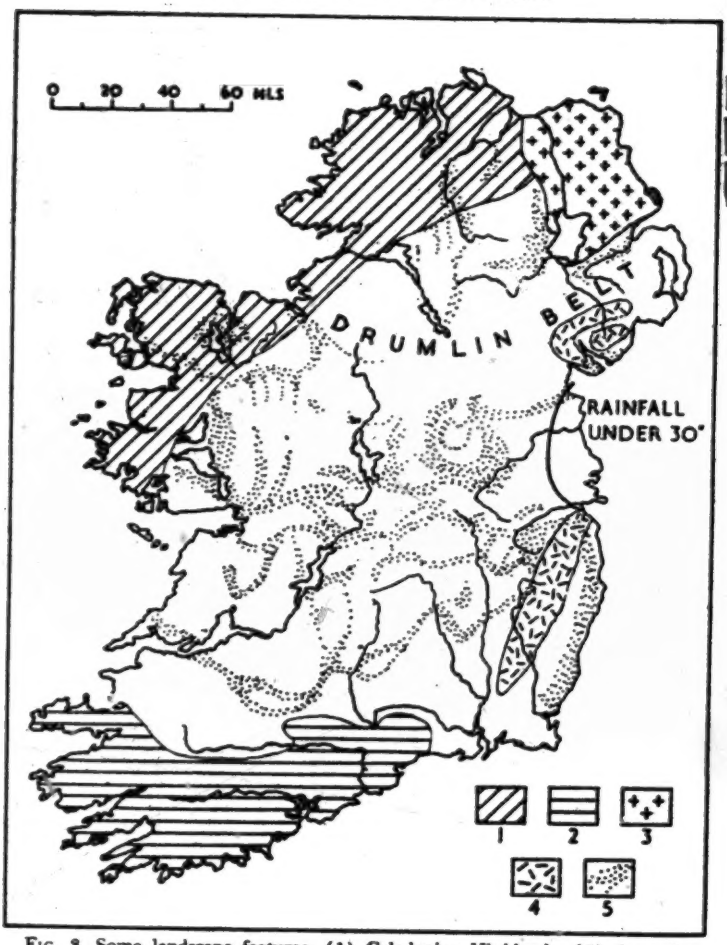

FIG. 3. Some landscape features. (1) Caledonian Highlands, (2) Armorican ridge and valley, (3) North-eastern basalts, (4) Eastern granites, (5) Glacial sands and gravels (eskers) (after J. K. Charlesworth). Drumlins are little hills composed of glacial drift. See Pl. 5, 1.

as they appear. The pattern they make has changed with the centuries in response to new needs and new tools. At present we are in a period of fairly rapid change, for the tractor calls for larger and more regular fields than those made by the spade

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178 311 and the horse-plough, and old hedges are being grubbed up to give the machine elbow-room. This in turn leads to a demand for larger farms, for the small holdings which are characteristic of Ireland (one half of the farms are between fifteen and fifty acres) have customarily just so many fields as will give a proper balance between pasture and plough, and where two or three tiny fields are knocked into one the balance is upset. In the same way earlier technological advances, though on a smaller scale, have changed the cultural landscape at different periods. Demographic crises have had similar effects. Before the Great Famine, for example, 80 per cent of all Irish farms were under fifteen acres.

From the earliest times, it seems, Ireland was a land of small holdings and small field-plots. Yet the actual pattern of small hedged fields as we know it today is of no great antiquity. For the most part it is a consequence of the agrarian revolution which affected the country, at various dates in different parts, between about 1750 and 1850. It was the planting of thorn hedgerows and the building of stone walls that fixed what had previously been ill-defined and temporary field boundaries, associated with the openfield or rundale system of land use. With permanent enclosure went the consolidation of holdings into compact independent blocks, though in some districts independence was achieved without grouping the fields together so that properties consist of scattered hedged fields which reflect the disposition of plots under the earlier openfield system. The hedge in fact has had a hard struggle for survival in the poorer districts. Both the thorns and the gates which enclosure brought with it were frequently hacked down for [417] firewood, and to this day a wooden gate is a rarity in the countryside: the field gates are almost invariably of iron. There are many districts where the thorn hedge itself is almost unknown, where low earthen mounds half overgrown with bramble and whin (gorse) give us a glimpse of a stage between permanent enclosures and the openfields which they replaced. In Donegal gangs of villagers threw down the landlords' fences as quickly as they were erected,[1] and in some parts of the county they are still kept in repair for the summer months only.

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 41.

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IV

THE THATCHED HOUSE

VISITORS to Ireland have not failed to comment on the wide gap which separates the splendid if often dilapidated mansions of the landed gentry from the humble dwellings of the mass of the rural population. This is a characteristic dichotomy which runs through Irish life and goes deep into the Irish past: it was foreshadowed in the distinction between the Gaelic overlords and the tributary tribes who were still in an inferior position at the time of the Anglo-Norman conquest. By English standards the Irish farmer is a small-holder. Substantial farmhouses with some pretensions to architectural dignity are in general restricted to the planted areas and they are few in number compared with the traditional single-storied thatched cabins of the peasantry. These have so frequently been condemned as artless and insanitary that it might be supposed nothing could be said in their favour. Their disadvantages indeed are obvious, and they have given way in many districts to slated houses of cement-blocks or bricks and are doomed to vanish entirely under a wave of thin-walled boxes with garish red roofs. But it is not only sentimentalists who deplore their disappearance. With their passing, writes Robin Flower, something of the old world passes away, 'for the older type of house was in a right harmony with its surroundings, while these high and bare constructions stand in a perpetual contradiction of the whole environment of hill and sea and sky in which they are so violently set down.'[1]

In fact a good deal more could be said in favour of the old styles, at their best providing homes of character, comfort and

[1]Robin Flower, *The Western Isle* (1944), 46.

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POTS AND PANS

Despite certain conservative elements it must be recognized that very great changes have taken place in the Irishman's diet in recent centuries. Tea and the potato, invaders from east and west, have largely replaced whitemeats, although another more recent pair of intruders, maize-meal and rice, distributed by the British government during the famine, have made no such conquest. Dr. Salaman has fully discussed the depressing effects of the potato on diet and culture.[1] Unless one has seen a peasant family sitting down to a meal of boiled potatoes it is hardly possible to credit the consumption figures. It used to be reckoned that a stone a day was the allowance for a labourer, and it was 'by no means uncommon, in times of plenty, for a labourer to eat 14 lb. of potatoes at a meal'.[2] An average consumption of 8 lb. per day for each member of a family is well authenticated. It is not surprising that there was a general craving for 'kitchen', tasty relishes such as strong butter when this bulky, starchy and monotonous food came to dominate the Irish diet. There seems to have been an expansion of sea fishing to keep pace with the demand for 'kitchen'. Down to recent times salt fish were hawked through the autumn countryside by noisy 'cadgers', and the careful housewife would have a barrel or two of salt herrings put by for the winter. One is reminded of the 'relishes' with which many African peoples relieve the monotony of a diet of mealies.

One of the many Irish customs which the English found revolting was the bleeding of cattle. Fynes Moryson wrote: 'they often let their cows' blood, eating the congealed blood with butter'.[3] Arthur Young notes that in Wicklow 'they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food'.[4] In Ulster cattle were bled 'in a smooth place, the coagulating blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed. This was cut up into squares and 'laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year'.[5] Unfortunately few details of the bleeding operation have come down to us though I have been told that it was customary to close the wound with a cloven stick.

[1] R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), chs. 11–18.
[2] I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 429.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[4] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 62.
[5] C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 333.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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bend or 'lift' of the blade and to the lateral bend or 'dish'. The lift may be well distributed or it may be concentrated at one point: it may be curved or cranked. 412 184

The shape of the blade being thus precisely standardized for each area, various sizes are made to suit individual users and also the seasons of the year. Thus four or five spades of different sizes, ranging say from 13 to 17 in. in length, will be seen on sale in the market towns. In addition some longer spades may be offered for old-fashioned folk, for the blade of the spade is now made shorter than it used to be. These shorter spades, [178] required for digging potatoes, retain the often awkward shape of the long spring spade—designed for ridge-making—which is going out of favour with drill cultivation.

The Irish spade differs from the English not only in its narrow bent blade but also in its thickened sides, its foot-plates, its straight handle and the short straight straps or tails to which the handle is attached. Whereas the English spade derives its digging power from the curvature above the blade, in the Irish spade the curvature is all in the blade. Moreover the Irish prefer a long shaft (4 ft.) without hand-grip, though in Ulster the shaft is short (3 ft.) and headed, i.e. fitted with a cross-piece at the end. The headed shaft, however, is replacing the long headless shaft which is better adapted to the process of sod turning than to digging. With the headed shaft the control of the spade is mainly in the hand that grips the head, which thus tends to be the right hand: consequently this type of spade goes with left-footed digging (Fig. 41).

These differences are largely explained by differences of function, for the primary purpose of the Irish two-eared spade, like the loy which it has replaced, is to turn the sod. It is a hand plough rather than a digging tool, and it owes its remarkable development to the expansion of potato cultivation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To the new crop, as we shall see, the old method of burying the seed in prepared beds was quickly adapted, for ridge cultivation was ideally suited to a root-planting culture, and in fact potatoes are grown in ridges on the Andean plateaux. Thus the adoption of the potato helped to perpetuate tools and methods of cultivation which might otherwise have died out. Nowadays, however, 244 412

4/2 [244] drill-cultivation has replaced lazy-beds over most of the country.

Some ridge-making tools have almost entirely disappeared, 4/2 for example the mattock and the breast-plough, which were once [178] characteristic respectively of the south-west and the north-east of the country and which may still be seen occasionally in Cos. Kerry and Antrim. The mattock ('graffan') is a tool of ancient [171] lineage which finds its parallels in Wales, in Spain and Mediterranean lands, and throughout the tropics (Fig. 43). In Kerry and west Cork it has had many uses—for breaking sods and

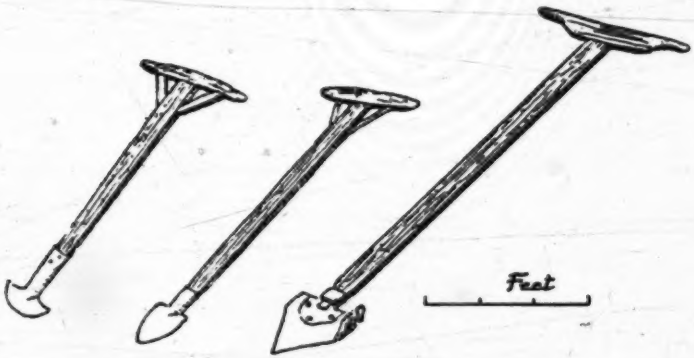

FIG. 45. Flachters or breast-ploughs, north-east Ireland. (1) North Antrim. (2) Co. Tyrone. (3) Mid-Antrim.

clods on the ridges, for loosening the earth of the furrows before shovelling, and also for cutting sods for ridge-making, for 'paring and burning' and for roof-covering. Arthur Young describes the process of graffaning a field by rolling the sod with the foot as it was cut: it was reckoned very heavy work.[1] The breast-plough or flachter (Fig. 45) served the same purpose in Cos. Antrim and Londonderry and earned the same reputation. This instrument is now largely restricted to paring bogland in preparation for turf-cutting. During the second world war I broke in a neglected mountain garden by making lazy-beds with a flachter and I heartily agree with the verdict of an Antrim labourer: 'half a day with it was enough for any ordinary

[1]A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 10.

HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay 243
to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century 412
there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the 178
good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps
of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on
the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that
conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-
growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing
motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such
notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of
the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East.
The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the
rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland
there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened
to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the
blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal
possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with [422]
reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed [426]
directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then
picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects,
may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for
bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should 248
be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so
onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When
grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers
have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the
stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the
roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands
are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to [476]
thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working
together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the
evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the
stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully
put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the
stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the
beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will
separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in
diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist [284]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of
● 178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XX

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

582 THE average age of marriage among Irish countrywomen,
●178 about 28, is said to be higher than in any other country
731 in the world: that of the men is higher still, and in addition there
776 are many who never marry. These are among the demographic consequences of the economic and social changes which followed the Great Famine of 1845–47, for down to that time the mass of the population had nothing to lose and everything to gain by marrying young. Among the economic factors which led to the postponement of marriage may be mentioned the rising standards of living, the prohibition of the subdivision of holdings so that only one son could inherit, and the need for larger farms consequent on the decline of subsistence farming and the increase of pastoral husbandry, which meant that the peasant had to look and plan ahead. Equally important, I believe, was the effect of the crisis of the famine in breaking down patterns of behaviour which had continued with little change since prehistoric times. The elder faiths were rudely shattered so that today we have only the broken remnants left, stray survivals which have lost their meaning in a modern setting. The scattering of the fairy hosts is the constant lament of old people for whose parents they were a reality. Over large parts of the country, down to famine times the fairies (among them the ancestral spirits), and the powers of nature in sun and stone, tree, flower and welling water were ruling forces whose malice must somehow be averted, and whose beneficence must be courted by magical acts. Nature's reproductive surplus on which
[842] human life depended could best be assured by breeding children to capacity.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XXI

OLD PISHROGUES

AMONG the serious nineteenth-century students of Irish folk-life a Dublin surgeon, who is perhaps better known as the father of Oscar Wilde, deserves special mention. Sir William Wilde was not only a frequent contributor to the learned journals but he found time to compile a pioneer catalogue of the Irish antiquities now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. His very active life spanned the Great Famine, and the monumental report on the *Tables of Death* which appeared as Vol. I of Part 5 of the Census of 1851 was largely his work. In it he dwells on the shattering effects of those tragic years, 1845–47, on the immemorial customs and natural poetry of the Irish peasants: 'The closest ties of kinship were dissolved; the most ancient and long-cherished usages of the people were disregarded; the once proverbial gaiety and lightheartedness of the peasant people seemed to have vanished completely, and village merriment or marriage festival was no longer heard or seen throughout the regions desolated by the intensity and extent of the famine.'[1] Another observer noted that the traditions of hospitality were weakened greatly and that padlocks made their first appearance at this time.[2]

Wilde observed that the coming of the railway at about the same period was a contributory factor in the change because it worked to a time-table—more or less—and involved an artificial division of the day instead of an observance of the signs of nature changing with the seasons. Time was related to social activity and had different values at various seasons of the year.

[1] *Census of Ireland* (1851), I, Part 5 (1956), 242.
[2] A. M. Sullivan, *The New Ireland* (1877), 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

OLD PISHROGUES

805 The whistle of the 7.15 now replaced cock-crow. But if it were
178 indeed true that peasant values had perished entirely and that
the rural population was transformed into the moronic cattle-
[496] herders of Filson Young's *Ireland at the Cross-Roads*, then this
book could not have been written. Luckily a mountain farmer
will still relate time to nature and refer to a moment of summer
twilight, in a memorable phrase quoted by Dr. James Delargy,
as 'the time when the dew was thinking of falling'. The wonder
178 is that so much lore and so many relics of pre-famine days have
771 survived. Yet the term 'old pishrogues' which is applied to all
varieties of witchcraft and fairy lore—even if sometimes used
in awe rather than contempt—shows that these things are
now regarded objectively and are no longer an accepted part
of social life. Superstitious practices tend to be carried out in
secret and to be resorted to only when more rational methods
have been tried and found wanting. Many of the old customs,
however, have had their life prolonged by children's games,
the seasonal bonfires and May Queens becoming their amuse-
ments.

Most of the pishrogues relate to fairies and to trees, wells
823 and stones; and that these elder faiths have their roots in a very
171 remote pre-agricultural phase of human evolution is attested by
their very general observance among primitive people. As an
example we may take the South African Bushmen, one of the
lowliest branches of the human family. In a recent report from
G. P. van der Post's expedition to the Kalahari we read that in
the heart of the Bushman country there are sacred hills which
are regarded as the home of very ancient spirits. Van der Post
was told that 'right on the top of the central hill there was a
spring of water and beside it a tree which bore the fruit of
knowledge, and close by the tree a rock with deep marks where
the greatest spirit of all had knelt to pray'.[1] The sacred hill-
tops, the ancestral spirits, the well of water, the 'gentle' tree
and the cup-marked stone are familiar themes in Irish folk
tradition. Throughout western Europe, from the fifth century
Council of Arles onwards, churchmen denounced those 'who
offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones'. The great religions
have had to come to terms with such cults, in Monsoon Asia as

[1]*The Times* (14th December, 1955).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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besom's association with everyday tasks and with the fireside endows it with special power. Thrown after a departing matchmaker or anyone going on an important errand, it brings luck to his mission.

For most people, needless to say, such things are now meaningless superstitions—old pishrogues. True, one still hears occasionally of cows being blinked, of a black cock buried alive as a cure for epilepsy, of a healthy woman pining away because a neighbour was sticking pins into a waxen image. These are stray survivals, doomed to disappear; but in a larger sense the past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds of men and in the landscapes they have fashioned.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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XIV. *Calendar Customs.*

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Most of these customs are so widely spread as to require only brief notice, and were noted, before 1816, by the Rev. James Grahame, the curate of Kilrush. They comprise the eating of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and of eggs at Easter; playing tricks and "fooling" on April 1st; setting May bushes before houses on Old May Day; lighting bonfires on Midsummer Eve, dancing round them, and driving cattle through them; beginning hunting on Michaelmas Day; Hallowe'en practices on October 31st; midnight processions, with music, on certain nights in the week before Christmas, (which had just been discontinued in 1816); and mummers, wren boys, and bull-baiting on St. Stephen's Day.[5] The May bush died out, I believe, during the dark years of the Great Famine; I never heard of any limit, other than the clearance of the crops, for beginning hunting; but, except the bull-baiting and the waits, all the rest still exist.

It is well to have to record the dying out of the custom of killing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, even if it springs from laziness rather than from humanity. "Who cares for the birds but God!" was once retorted when I "put in a word for" the wren. There is probably a very old prejudice against it, for the "droleen" stood confessed as a "little druid" among birds, and the "druid" of Irish tradition was not the majestic white-robed priest of the oak grove, but a sorcerer who injured meanly by spells, a foe of God and of His servants, but a contemptible and impotent one. This feeling was expressed in the contemptuous term *shandruee* ("old druid") for a worthless old man, in use in my boyhood. How far the wren rites have orthodox ritual or etiquette is doubtful. Formerly the youth of a whole district combined as wren boys, but now they go in bands of from two to six,[6] and the wren bush is often a mere branch with a few rags and no wren. A structure of evergreens, in general design like a *crux ansata*, covered with streamers and with the dead bird hung

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[5] Mason's *Parochial Survey* (1816), vol. ii.

[6] See Plate IX., from a photograph taken on December 26th, 1910, by Mrs. O'Callaghan Westropp of Coolreagh.

[P. 227]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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up or in a sort of cage,[7] was till lately carried around. There is still sometimes to be found tolerable dancing and singing, as a break in the weary succession of small begging parties, shuffling and playing stupid buffoonery. The verses usually begin :—

> "The wran, the wran, the king of all birds,
> On Stephen's Day was caught in the furse."

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but the next lines are greatly varied :—

> "Although he is little, his family is great,
> And (*or* So) I pray you all ladies (*or* good Christians) to give him a treat."

I noted the following haunting lines on Stephen's Day in 1909 :—

> "Put your hand in your pocket and take out your purse
> And give us some money to bury the wran."

Equally melodious were lines in vogue some thirty years ago :—

> "We broke his bones with sticks and stones,
> And give us some money to get us a drink."

There was another form, evidently from an "artificial" source, heard by my elder brothers about Carnelly, perhaps sixty years ago or more :—

> "Landlady, Landlady, give us some cheer,
> Landlady, Landlady, give us some beer.
> If you give us of the best,
> We'll pray your soul in Heaven may rest.
> If you give us of the worse,
> We'll pray it will (*or* may) be quite the reverse."

It was generally believed that St. Stephen had hid in a cave, and that his retreat had been betrayed to his enemies by the wren. Mummers are now reappearing, after a long lapse of time, among the wren boys.

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Another practice which my predecessors often saw before the Famine was the carrying of a sort of scarecrow figure, to represent St. Brigit, by women in August about the Clare Castle district. St. Brigit's rites in some places take place on Lady Day (August 15th).

Killing an animal, or a goose, at Martinmas and a goose at Michaelmas are of recent occurrence. On St. John's Eve I have, as a child, leaped over or passed between fires, and been told of cattle being forced to do the same. About 1895 very few bonfires were lighted, and the custom appeared likely to expire, but of late the

[7] A somewhat similar wren's cage has been procured for the National Museum, Dublin.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased
the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites con-
[789] nected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed
secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and
527 then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
175 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted
down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old
people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so
much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this
place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the
beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the
native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so
down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (phonetically
Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but
steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in
1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh
(Tuanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—
"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined
to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound
in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are
numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877
onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh
("Fair or Assembly Crag")[8] on the bare hill over Termon in the
Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter
probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in
1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and
may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with
a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten
assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings")
in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later
under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

823 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their
religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[8] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

[P. 229]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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796 devotees, and merrymakers. A legend was then told how a wild young squire of the Brady family in attempting to carry off a lovely peasant girl from the pattern was overtaken by the vengeance of 796 St. Caimin. The boat was upset by a squall, and the squire and 688 his "understrapper" (a foster-brother) were drowned; the girl and boatman clung to the keel, and floated ashore unharmed. The local horror of the sacrilege was emphasized by the gruesome addition that, when "the young master" was waked in the "big house" and the foster-brother in the barn, all stole away to the better entertainment, and, when the barn was unlocked in the morning, the bare skeleton of the instigator of the outrage was found covered with rats and *keerogues* (black-beetles). The horrible "turf rick legend"[9] says that the Iniscaltra pattern lasted for three days.

796 Other less famous patterns were held on the sandhills near Lehinch in honour of St. MacCreehy. The celebration got shifted to "Garland Sunday" (*Domhnach cruim duibh*, the last in July), and to the honour of St. Brigit of Kildare. It was [178] finally replaced by races, which at Kilnaboy and elsewhere may also represent degenerated patterns.

At St. Lachtin's well, near Miltown Malbay, a few poor old people may be seen, especially on Sundays and Thursdays, making "rounds." These are usually two sets of five each,—the first on the causeway round the well, and the second on a wider circle "sunwise." The devotees take off their shoes, stockings, and hats, (or, if women, their shawls and bonnets), and start for the well repeating the prescribed prayers. They climb to kiss a cross on the branch of one of the weird old weather-bent trees in the hollow, and, lastly, pour water from the well on their faces, hands, and feet.[10]

Patterns were held near the very early church of Termonchronain, near Castletown in the Burren, and, not many miles away, on the last day of summer "rounds" are performed at the two altars of the oratory of St. Colman MacDuach at Kinallia.[11] Stations were held till late years at Kilmoon, and at Tobermogua,

[9] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 348.

[10] *Limerick Field Club Journal*, vol. iii., p. 15.

[11] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate IV. [P. 237]

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, [291] of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first [241] decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag [501] over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most [197] attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 [1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

103 192 [2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process. 114 121 127

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, phorography and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of creative endeavor. Its research implications were unanticipated. 12 [539] [177] [178]

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years, there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood, production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare, the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next. 105 [121] [161] [241] [434] [511] [161] [593] [581] [177] [178] [829] [165] [212] [829]

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the 668

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668 fostered immorality, and created mental illness on a vast scale. Primitive and folk peoples, according to this view, represent man as he once was and could or should be again were civilized society drastically reformed.

000 Most of the ideas held by primitivists are as extreme as those maintained by nativists: primitive and folk societies possess simple, static cultures in which dysfunctional forms are rare; their economies are primarily subsistence ones, approximate the householding type, and lack competitive elements; social control is mostly informal; the family is the core social group and is a highly integrated and cooperative unit; religion is a pervasive force which sanctions most behavior and assures psychological security and social cohesion; and, religious dissent and skepticism are unknown. Primitivists also contend that primitive and folk peoples are content with their conditions of life, are seldom if ever mentally ill, and possess character traits that civilization has perverted. It is probable that primitivists would include all of the traits designated as Irish by nativists and would add many others.

114 12 The antiquarians George Petrie and John T. O'Flaherty during the 1820s were the first scientists to undertake research in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. Since that time, there have been short and sporadic visits to the island by a variety of investigators, among them anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians, philologists, and others. Most of the anthropological research has been conducted by archeologists, anthropometricians, and linguists. Several archeological expeditions have examined thoroughly surface sites in Inis Beag, but no prehistorian has excavated as yet, and the accurate dating of artifacts scarcely has begun. Reconstruction of a number of ancient monuments by the government was made possible through the research findings of archeologists, and today site descriptions on mounted plaques mark the principal monuments. Alfred C. Haddon and C. R. Browne in 1892 and E. A. Hooton and C. W. Dupertius between 1932 and 1934 made anthropometric studies, the latter as part of the Harvard University anthropological survey of Ireland, which also included archeological and ethnographic investigations. The ethnographic study—reported in Conrad M. Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman* and Arensberg's and Solon T. Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*—was made in three communities of Co. Clare by these authors with W. Lloyd Warner; it was the first holistic ethnographic study made in Ireland, and my research in Inis Beag in its initial stages was only the third. (The second, by Rosemary Harris, is reported in a 1954 M.A. thesis in the University of London—see References.)

114 12 197 177 178 [162] Linguists, as well as philologists and those wishing to learn Gaelic, long have visited Inis Beag. There now remain only a few areas along the western seaboard of Europe where Gaelic dialects still are spoken, and the island is located in one of these.[4] One-half the population of Ireland spoke the vernacular at the end of the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the last century the ratio had fallen to one-quarter, or approximately 1,500,000 speakers. Sixty years later the

[4] The Celtic languages are Gaulish, Goidelic, and Brittanic, of which the first became extinct at the beginning of the medieval period, and the last two are represented today by the Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects on the one hand, and the Breton and Welsh on the other. Two other related dialects are now extinct: Manx of the Isle of Man and Cornish, the British dialect of Cornwall (Dillon 1957:207).

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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English. even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent. however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth. the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

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823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

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skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
• 178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

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size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers.

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained.

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden.

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by

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333
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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent
434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts
437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils
[311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and
• 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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231
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kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433
become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of island-
ers. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [231]
and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [226]
eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [311]
became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [654]
fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [241]
expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the [231]
subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy
experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231
more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422]
2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654]
horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses
are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831]
inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breed-
ing of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232]
castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying
excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and
a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis
Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats
on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231
cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437
and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234]
low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between
Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and
bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast.
Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505]
struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled
to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern
transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the
water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435]
forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves
at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50
pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221
land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233
throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234
south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous
plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered
by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462]
and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three
hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of
spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can
feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [541]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [759]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
• 178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting and darning stockings for their husbands and children.

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool, which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and children of all ages go barefooted or put on sandals during the summer and add hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers, bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt, and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing; the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

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291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

443 434 [501] [296] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [438] [657] [437] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 [502] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

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The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[657] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[178] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[822] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[999] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for 291
themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their [177]
fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 294
40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to 281
shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and [437]
when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept [463]
moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a 128
livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have 434
touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century 434
men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the main- 502
land. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to 437
scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The [178] •
Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in 502
the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humor- 539
ous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right 421
of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person 422
discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander [829]
along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the im- [176]
mense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the [722]
islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other [433]

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

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361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

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The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

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The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they were provided with food, given *curach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
536 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement. . . . It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. . . . Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

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> conditions appraised. . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191)

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king.

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178] •
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of
body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them
before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [789]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

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582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. 342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [178] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [516] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 354 593 a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and 178 the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342 placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353 serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788] two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574] floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571 kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602 tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609 strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572] parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835 most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602 genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582 forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602 collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609 are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428 is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611 --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113] in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The [601] Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, dancing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
[171] of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
567 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [655]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

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4

The Supernatural and the Esthetic

Catholicism

BECAUSE OF THE WRITINGS OF NATIVISTS, most visitors to Inis Beag believe 771
that the Catholicism of the folk embodies an ideal unattained even on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for all of Christendom. In fact, however, the worship of the islanders is obsessively oriented [776]
toward salvation in the next world with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a marked tendency toward polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and certain Irish saints; rituals and sacred artifacts, Christian as well as pagan, often are employed by them to serve magical ends; and, finally, many observances that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or to Ireland. Christian morality in its outward [626]
manifestations, as we have seen, is realized to a remarkable degree, but it is less a product of the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation than of the techniques of social control exercised by the priests and an overwhelming fear of damnation.

Coexisting with Catholicism in Inis Beag are pre-Celtic, Celtic, and early 771
medieval Christian retentions of religious beliefs and behavior. It is these which 178
are accentuated in the writings of primitivists, some of whom have ignored altogether Catholicism in the lives of the folk. Nativists and primitivists part company in the matter of religion in peasant Ireland, and writers of nativistic persuasion have exerted the most influence on visitors to Inis Beag, who are preponderantly Irish Catholic. Theologians and scholars in Ireland label as pagan unorthodox religious forms from any historical period, and many of these have become reinterpreted with similar Catholic elements. The pagan array of supernatural beings [776]
includes a variety of spirits and demons, witches, ghosts, and phantom ships; among other retentions are taboos, signs which foretell the future, charms and incantations of a protective nature, folk medicines, and the aforementioned emphasis on natural foods and other products impinging on the human body.

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775 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience, "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

775 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are [178] [182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming,
796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent
[262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people
[273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only,
796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St.
[527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the
[171] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which,
[292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

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796 at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [368] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [574] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

764 Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent. and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

764 When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [554] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

764 The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 178 of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

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• 178 characterized by storytelling, games of various sorts, contests of strength, taunting and mocking, mischief-making, and factional fighting (O Suilleabhain 1967:
764 26–129). It is hard to imagine a wake more somber than that which takes place in Inis Beag. Most of those who attend it do so before midnight and stay two to three hours, coming and going at will, while "only those who own him stay all night." Each visitor on arrival prays briefly at the bedside of the deceased or in the doorway of the room before expressing condolences, and at midnight all who are anywhere in the wake-house kneel and recite the responses of the Rosary intoned
[178] by the curate. Immediate kin express their grief in muffled sobs beside the corpse, but the ancient wailing lament for the dead, known as the "keen," no longer is
[273] heard in Inis Beag. Tables and benches are set up in the kitchen on which the
[276] men sit silently or converse in whispers with their neighbors, as they drink stout or whiskey and pass around clay pipes offered them "to keep the night awake."
[562] Most of the women congregate in the room of the dead, where only very old women smoke pipes. I have counted as many as 18 minutes of absolute silence at a wake and have never heard laughter.

[562] Before the procession to the church forms, men tend to gather in small groups outside the house of the deceased and women gather inside the house. After the corpse is placed in the coffin, close relatives and even friends shake the hand and kiss the face of the dead person before the top is nailed down; then the box is carried to the front street and placed across two chairs for prayers to be said and holy water sprinkled over it by the priest. A white sheet is draped on the casket, and six pallbearers shoulder it and carry it through a gap made in the stone fence to the road which leads to the chapel. The pallbearers are both agnatic and uterine kin of the deceased, excluding his sons, and two of them have the further duty of digging the shallow grave that night or in the morning before the body is interred. Moving slowly behind the coffin bearers, the procession is headed by the spouse and sons of the dead person, followed by his daughters, then women, and finally men in a long, slow moving, silent column; children other than the offspring of the deceased seldom join the procession, and the sexes walk separately.
[793] The curate may or may not lead this procession and the one the next morning, sometimes preferring to go ahead to church and cemetery by himself. A son of the dead person treats the grave diggers to stout in a pub before they set out with spades for the graveyard, as he does the pallbearers after they return from the
[178] church. In the past, the grave was dug as part of the funeral service, but this custom was altered as the cemetery became filled and occasionally diggers by acci-
[538] dent broke into previously interred coffins revealing their contents. A number of grisly legends and anecdotes tell of islanders buried alive by mistake, or whose bodies were partially preserved, as revealed by such accidents.

The procession from the chapel to the graveyard leaves the modern road, as we saw in Chapter 1, to follow an ancient, obliterated trail past a church believed to have been buried beneath the sand centuries ago, and then climbs the long hill of kitchen midden and sand to the gate of the cemetery. Here the column breaks up, some people going to the graves of relatives to pray and others to the newly opened grave. Men and women kneel separately at the graveside for the service (see Fig. 11), and many of the women cry as the casket is lowered into the shallow

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [787] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 171
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346]
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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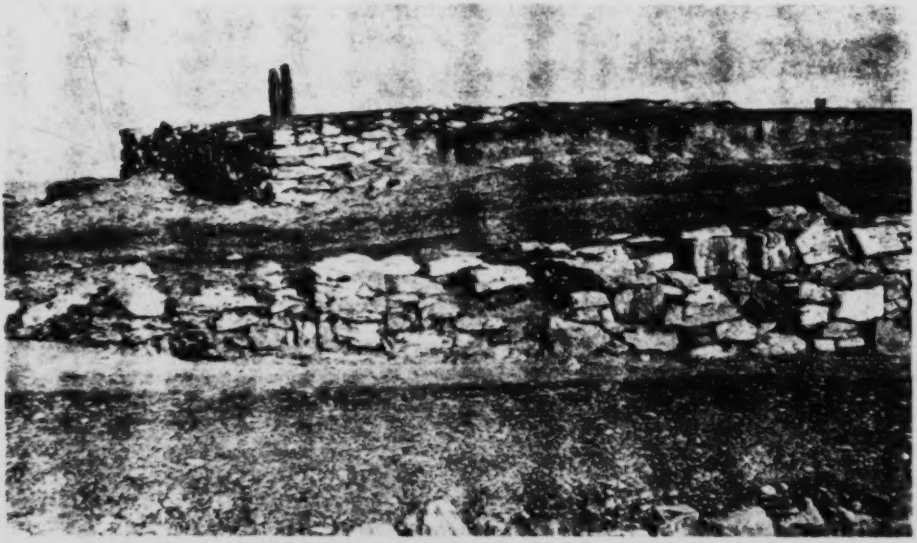

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [771] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [626] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured 754
by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the [576]
calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly 754
arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds 756
after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, [789]
and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those [789]
in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being [827]
captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious 787
practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their accul- [793]
turative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced [798]
techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly [178]
to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills [789]
of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of [74]
magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited 787
specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and 759
do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share 184
a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound 755
the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of [759]
magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting 753
ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on 175
February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on 796
November 1st.

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
• 178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
776 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid	She is deaf and
Dressed in white.	She is dumb.
Give her something	For God's sake,
For the night.	Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[233] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a doth containing a piece of iron which has

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539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [782] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 796 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 796 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck 782 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [234] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [825] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood [237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 796 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 711 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are "strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear. 771 775 [783]

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye. 771 776 754 178 826 [822] [171] 826 828 754 [793]

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter- 775 772

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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primi- [829]
tivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the [668]
age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues [753]
to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and 828
embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and [743]
his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the oppro- 164
brium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for 743
various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none 753
were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are [776]
vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism [787]
provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds [178]
in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable [829]
or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations [827]
to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are [776]
deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one 753
person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from 732
poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family. 827

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their exces- 273
sive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception
to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter [562]
widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

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273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[64] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

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178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [524] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [561] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the [562] storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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538 539 191 [537] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb 539 derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than 534 its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge • [178] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and [177] related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

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and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; 533
music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and 534
figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied 536
by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the
lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance 535
music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for [123]
dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of
fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several [177]
occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home,
to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records
seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I
frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing
music for a night long party.

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a 114
consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, 533
also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and
population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of
the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their 533
music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung 184
publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly
local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to [538]
the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous
product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized)
of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and [171]
motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and
it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders [173]
believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—
were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in 533
the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar
who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in
and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out [539]
of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago,
is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the
pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes [126]
to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, [539]
emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with
the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous 533
songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as 184
ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song
categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of
the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[831] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

536 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
• 178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings. 535 178 [874]

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers. 535 [175] [177] [179] [184]

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality. [874]

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women 574 63 574 342 343 352 574 273 [888] [272] [343] [562]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

574 273 Women [562] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused [514] them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen [535] and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the [562] cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, [857] while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist [123] with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while 574 stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or 273 one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the [533] activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts [535] prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the chil- [576] dren, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [351] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the 574 table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after every- 535 one is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, 123 when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out [572] between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the 574 same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, 579 "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

178 [738]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to 178 houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of [738] stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and [278] factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting [738] "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who 275 purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others 443 who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is 571 composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and [602] give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by [562] children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the 275 only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom [562] is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the [535] audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately. [521]

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. 275 Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his 273 turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to 573 drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in 576 like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island— [123] almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the 275 men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one 273 another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is 576 overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a 571 wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have [167] "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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178 ble to visit Inis Beag frequently, as the cost and distance are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic.

The many vacationing emigrants who now return to the island at Christmas or Easter or during the summer months often succeed in persuading relatives and acquaintances to return to England with them. Those so persuaded declare that they will return soon with their "fortunes" to settle permanently, but they seldom do once "emancipated." Since the Second World War, several Americans have returned home, and their stories of life in the United States make the youth restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many islanders also sow the seeds of discontent. A favorite subject of talk in the pubs is the relative advantages to be gained from migrating to particular cities in England and America, and anthropologists as well as returned emigrants are called on as consultants in this matter by youths.

167 Almost every cottage in Inis Beag has a radio, or "wireless," and although
204 the folk seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines
207 and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, because they allow islanders a glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and
177 freer world. Television was introduced into Inis Beag in 1963 at the lighthouse,
207 and a second set was procured for the new "dance hall" when it was completed two years later. Few islanders venture to the lighthouse to view television, but I am told by correspondents that many now visit the hall during the several evening hours when transmission from Telefis Eireann takes place. As a result, television has become an acculturative medium to be reckoned with. Both radio and television programs are censored in Ireland, but even so the morality expressed in them—especially in the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A hypothetical censor from Inis Beag most certainly would create more discontinuities with his shears in television performances than would his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin. My wife and I found that viewing television with islanders at the lighthouse on two occasions was a traumatic experience; it gave us a different (and even more disquieting) perspective on programs in the United States and their enculturative effects than can be obtained at home.

167 Since the Second World War, 28 island youths have pursued secondary
873 education elsewhere in Ireland, either in high schools, called "colleges," or in technical schools, and most have been supported by government scholarships. The usual high school scholarship is for 5 years, and a student must be 14 years of age and qualify by competitive examination to receive one. Only 4 of these 28 students
873 —of which 2 are teachers in the national school—have returned to Inis Beag. One
[562] young man watched 2 girls, either of whom he eventually might have married, go off to the mainland for school and said, "Scholarships are killing the island;" what he was referring to, other than his own disappointment, is the fact that 19 of the 28 students who left for advanced education are girls. The reason for the disproportionate number of girls receiving scholarships is that they are far more mori-
[829] vated academically and have better scholastic records than boys. There is, however, a widespread belief in the island that certain families are favored by priests and

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

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In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

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According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1–2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

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* A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled me to write this chapter.

[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions
there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311,
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side,
where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new
soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle
dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body. 78 75

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation. 771 178 [184] [182]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit- 114 538

12 cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which characterize ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as an epistemology.

181 195 [178] The use by the folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is a product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can very effectively serve to shield genuine thoughts [538] and feelings and thus protect the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition of verbal skill, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*. (At least one folklorist has collected "Joycean utterances" from Irish peasants.)

123 Most of our information came from observation and unguided interviews. It proved impossible to take field notes openly, except when collecting innocuous data—such as the number of livestock owned by each householder—from a few particular persons. Thus, we were forced to limit our visits to less than two hours, after which we immediately [562] transcribed what our combined memories could resuscitate. Despite frequent explanations of our presence in Inis Beag, which were candid and truthful, it was thought by the islanders that I was interested only in archeological sites and oral literature, and that my wife was not a trained and experienced co-worker; this, obviously, reflects their previous experiences with scientists and their conception of the position of women in society. Their inability to evaluate adequately our intentions proved [609] to be a research boon. For once "accepted" (a relative term, since no outsider is ever accepted) after many months in the island, we were allowed to listen to and participate in conversations and activities from which we would otherwise have been excluded.

123 *831 Our data on sex came from my involvement as a participant-observer in personal and often intimate conversations with men and my wife's counseling of women who were bothered by such matters as explaining and coping with menstruation, menopause, mental illness, the sexual curiosity of their children, and "excessive" sexual demands of their spouses. Our sexual knowledge and sympathy coupled with their needs and inquisitiveness gave rise to a "counselor-client" relationship between many of the folk and ourselves. They came to speak freely, albeit indirectly at times, with each of us about this sphere of behavior which arouses so much anxiety and fear. I must mention that the relationship

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regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

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> Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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> Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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*831 enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theo-
155 logians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the
175 British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister
• 178 William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory
181 strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged
779 in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have
795 long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of
798 the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly
[785] could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges
155 of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one
178 Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism
181 as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the
779 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still
798 very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of
[874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

> Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161-162).

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism:

> Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better it God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105).

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters.

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent con-

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identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [571] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

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539 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers
571 further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the
828 quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their main-
829 spring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

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177 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed
• 178 to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the
181 penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not
*831 exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread
795 throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism,
779 which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

*831 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined
181 in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions,
182 enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control"
626 —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

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HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

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589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
793 doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
582 articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in
[586] Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization 582
for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 per- 161
sons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to
497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when
my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern 168
over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another
generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands.
Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phe- 167
nomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes 182
pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also 582
stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal
causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal 589
factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the [434]
island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and
the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the [657]
increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and
taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for
the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, [434]
despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this
fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past [183]
century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders [178]
in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to [582]
leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise
their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling [831]*
population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secu-
lar "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons 181
for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a 183
suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because 829
it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created
a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate
to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a 167
suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis 182
[181]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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fusion, if we do have it, springs from our associations with the word 'anthropology'. 000

We are prone to think of the anthropologist as a collector of strange facts about savage, and at best, semi-civilized peoples. When analogues to these facts appear from time to time among civilized men we regard them as superstitious survivals at best, worthy of our study only as *curiosa*. Why then an anthropology of modern Ireland? Whatever we may think of her, we cannot include Ireland among the primitive and barbarous peoples. If we go on to relate primitive survivals to the way of life of the Irish country-people, we certainly do not condemn them wholesale as barbarians, nor can we rightfully regard them as primitive. [181]

If this is the case, our associations with the word 'anthropology' must be at fault. So let us set about revising them.

To make the revision is really to explain the development of anthropological science. In common with the rest of us, the anthropologists have gone through something of a mental and moral revolution. The changes in the conceptual basis of science, rapidly spreading in the last thirty years, have not passed them by.

Long ago it was necessary to give up all hope of establishing unilinear evolution. The student of man had very early to admit that the course of humanity's growth was no simple straight path. At first he had thought of the primitive as a backward

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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pologist avoids all explanations except those which 000
arise out of his observations of what men do, and if he accepts them only when he can test them again against observed behaviour, he will be, if only imperfectly, in the main line of scientific development.

Before one makes a frontal attack, it is good tactics to survey one's ground. One likes to know what interest it holds in store.

Ireland, particularly Celtic southern Ireland, has always had a fascination for most of us. The cities, particularly Dublin, the last stronghold of the art of conversation, are as charming as the countryside. But it is the country districts which occupy us here.

Most of us probably know at least four countrysides in Ireland. Like Caesar we divide our Gaul. But the divisions we make are not geographical. Our four Irelands are lands of the spirit.

Perhaps our first Ireland is the mystic land of 538
the past. This is the land of the 'Celtic twilight', 181
the country of Synge and Yeats and Stephens. It is the seat of an age-old tradition, of the remains of a once brilliant Celtic civilization. Literature has taught us to look for this land in the barren moors and rugged mountains of the west, among the tiny white cabins of Connemara and along the misty headlands of Kerry and West Cork. It is the Ireland

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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•181 of Aran and the Blaskets. There a remnant of the
538 sagas and hero-tales can still be heard, a wandering poet sang but yesterday in the lilt of Blind Raferty. There old men and old women sitting by turf fires still spin tales of banshees and the good people; and just the other day in Daniel Corkery's hidden Munster the hedge school-master and the wandering scholar had Ovid and Horace at his tongue's tip. And there too the riders to the sea go down to their deaths amid the keening women, whose language rings to us of simple, old-world poetry long ago passed from our own tongues.

A second Ireland is a gay, full-blooded picture, though some among the nationalists dislike it. It is the Ireland of the merry and happy-go-lucky present. Handled badly, it becomes the land of the 'stage-Irishman', that buffoonish figure which the nation's pride so justly resents. But handled well, by a Lady Gregory, a George Birmingham, and on the stage by the Abbey Players, it is a world of its own. In it, innocent boasting, the excitement of a race-meeting, the hurly-burly of a fair, the flashing wit of a court-room, and the staccato thunder of a political campaign, reveal a talkative, mercurial, witty people, amusing and intelligent, romantic and gallant.

The third Ireland most of us know is a more
181 serious scene. One might even call it a grimmer land. It is a sober, hard-working land of minute towns and small farms upon a soil not always

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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grateful. It is a land of hard realities. This Ireland is subject to hot flashes of anger and dispute which throw into relief deep-lying hatreds and fierce loyalties. We all know something of the Land War and Sinn Fein and the bitter internecine strife of the Trouble. If we know anything of Ireland's history we see these rough upheavals of a tranquil scene as great punctuation marks upon a red page of struggle lasting seven hundred years. This is the Ireland of bitter economic fate and political unrest. Much of this can be laid at England's door, but not all. The Ireland of the Irish is no more free of internal strife than any other land.

Most of us recognize a fourth Ireland as well, especially those who are Catholics. It is the Ireland of the Faith, the Island of Saints and Scholars. It is the land of the devout, where word and deed breathe a religious fervour which most of us have forgotten. This is the land of holy wells and pilgrimages and roadside shrines. Well-filled churches rise above every hamlet now and the black-frocked priest is a familiar friendly figure. To many of us, perhaps a paradox lies here. Fierce love of political liberty goes hand in hand with a deep devotion to the most authoritarian of Christian creeds.

Nor is this the only paradox in a land of surprises where even the sun and sky are inconsistent. The beauty of the Irish landscape lies in the never-ending change of colour. A momentary break of sun

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181 transforms the sky from dull yellow to bright, rain-washed blue. It lights a hillside to brilliant green, or mottles it in brown and green and mauve. A moment later it disappears, dashing the sky back again to mournful purples and misty greys. So it is with the Irish character. What is too harshly called the 'superstition' of Irish folklore coexists with Catholic piety; a puritanical morality goes hand in hand with the hilarity of a race-meeting. The loyalty too harshly named 'clannishness' runs side by side with the personal acquisitiveness of a peasant proprietorship. Small wonder then the Irish feel no foreigner will ever fully understand.

000 This is the terrain in which I hope to campaign. If we are to make an attempt at a whole view, we must see the country whole. I must try to show you all four Irelands.

For the inhabitants of this fourfold land are 'Irishmen All', as George Birmingham once named a book. But unlike his characters they are all the same people. The inhabitants of the countryside dwell in all four of our lands of the spirit. The division we make is only illusive. It marks our interests, not the realities of the Irishman's life.

That life, so various, so capable of being looked at from many angles, affords many fascinating questions to us in pursuance of our study. What are its laws? How does it relate to old custom and belief?

This people preserves an unbroken ancient tradi-

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Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp 361
along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. 621
Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawl- 494
ing village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train runs between the two.

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this re- 185
moteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. 621
Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive 234
through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing machine, out of an English steel works, and some of the houses own a mechanical cream separator, even though next door a wooden hand churn is still in use which looks no different from those found deep in the bogs.

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. 185
They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But 621
in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's attention turns to the life into which these few strays of modernity find their way.

For Luogh is like many another community of 621
small farms over Clare and southern and western 184
Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are 191
even more remote. Many are better off; some few are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language better; others have abandoned it altogether for the brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded in their common folk life.

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181 I did not know this as I came to Luogh. But I was to learn it soon in Luogh and in other communities in County Clare. Later I was to find it so even more widely; in newspapers, in novels, in court records, in statistical reports, in political bombasts. It was a way of life with its own laws which included Luogh and the Blaskets and even the fertile small farms of rich Tipperary.

114 When I first came to Luogh I knew only that in this remote little community of small farmers I should find something of the old tradition still alive. My learning was a piecemeal process — a sketching out of wider and wider ramifications of the observations which came my way.

It is this process to which I wish to devote the remainder of this lecture. It is a process in which you can follow me. Perhaps better than anything else it will prepare us for an anthropological study of Irish rural life.

Let me illustrate this process with two examples. I shall call them the 'west room' and the 'old man's curse'. Both of them are related to old custom and both will serve to show the process by which one lays bare the rural life of which old custom is a part.

592 361 The house to which my road into Luogh finally led was a typical small farmer's cottage. It was one of twenty-six in Luogh. It was the seat of a small farm of sixteen acres (with eight more in the valley), 'the place of four cows and a horse', as the country-

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551 888 Another old fellow, a leader in his village, could be described by a neighbour as follows:

"That old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humour and if he went to town to take a drink he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as harmless as a child. He and his friend Roche are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any advice in farming, you can go to them and they will give as good advice as you can get. It would pay a young man to listen to them."

181 551 888 I have quoted this rural eulogy for a reason. It shows much better than words of mine could how the speaker's mind could flow uninterruptedly, without any sense of transition, from ethical judgment to agricultural advice. For 'saintliness' of this kind is a matter of filling a social role. But it is one's role for the community that counts. That role runs all the way from peaceful and friendly demeanour to directing farm work. There is nothing individual in it; it is the behaviour the community patterns about the old man. It is his *noblesse oblige*. That the word 'saint' should be borrowed from religion should surprise no one. It is merely proof that one society survives in western civilization in which theology and the popular mind have not yet suffered a divorce. The early Puritan and the ancient Roman would have understood such a state of affairs.

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the small farmers as being a 'cut' below them- 776
selves; consequently, his untidiness is a byword 626
among them. One version of the story goes, in synopsis, as follows:

"Many families moved into a herdsman's place, but they were all chased out of it. Finally, one family moved in, cleaned up the house, and a 'paving path' round it. A little old woman visits the wife, borrows a cooking-pot, and is similarly well treated. In gratitude she explains that the woman of the house and her husband will always prosper and never be molested, because they alone of all the families had cleaned up the place where 'they' walk."

In this way the values of daily life are projected [181] ●
into and reinforced by the supernatural world. The 626
same state of affairs holds good even in the con- 576
vention of social intercourse. The vocabulary of the 152
countryman is full of homely pieties. On entering a house the proper greeting is "God bless all here". On coming upon another at work, one says, "God bless the work". Similarly, "God spare you the health" is 'put on' anyone who 'coors' with you. Any praise of person, child, or animal is accompanied with a "God bless it"; any mention of unpleasantness or danger is followed with some such homily as "God bless the mark", and so on. If one omits such pieties, one is sure to rouse resentment in the listeners. For one must remember that emotion supports these conventions. But the

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castor-oil first, for he is a rational man. But if 183
castor-oil is unavailing, then other means can be tried. He seizes upon a symbol of normal associations and habitual undisturbed security. The means he adopts restores not the cow so much as it does the peace of mind of him who uses it.

And the belief he holds makes a logical synthesis between this act and the cause of his disturbance. It fits them both into a symbolic order above and beyond, yet closely bound up with, the order of his own life. Put into words, this synthesis takes causal form. "There is great power in a hazel-stick", he says. "It drives 'them' away." And the statement is perfectly true, in the logic of emotions.

In some such way as this, ever broader areas of 181
his associations with normal social life are given 183
'power'. They are incorporated into belief and wield the same forces of restoring and upsetting that life as do the good people, whose attributes they become. Events, personalities, landmarks, are brought into this order, in one way or another. Nearly everything here below comes to be projected, in imagination traditionally refurbished, into the other world of awe and wonder and mysterious 'power'. The countryman relates himself to the things so projected through their place in his belief; he knows what to do about them and finds his regard for them fashioned in the common folk faith.

The fairy-belief becomes a world-view, a *Welt-*

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181 183 *anschauung*, in which all experience has a place in the logic of emotional associations. Thus one old fellow summed up a discussion of the sea creatures which still haunt the western coasts of Ireland: 181 183 821 "Everything that does be on the land is in the sea, too, if we could see them". This world-view incorporates the world into the life the countryman follows and knows. To the same old fellow, winds along the Clare and Galway border that separates Munster and Connaught provinces could appear as the battles of fairy hosts, for do not men today still remember human battles and still taunt the men of the other province in joke and banter? The rustle of a breeze and the flitting of bats in a ruin where men lived and died is not mere noise; it is still part of human life. One old fellow described to me the experience of 'them' that he got at close quarters, when he lived near the ruin of Ballyvaughan workhouse:

"They were so plentiful there that everybody living round it and myself got so used to them that we wouldn't mind them at all. The place is full of them and everywhere you go there is a door and long windows in the cowl, and you hear them going in and out. There was a great lot of people died in it long ago in the bad times. They are in every room and you hear them on all sides of you. I got so used to it, I never minded them at all, but I heard them every day." 181 183

823 776 The great cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast are

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a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but the tales of it that best survive are those that relate it to the life of the present and express in the fairy-belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillenasearrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a common end. They provide the countryman with a world-view in which his regard for things and scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

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order takes its form. Consequently, we should expect fairy-belief and rite to symbolize the regard he has for his fellows even more strongly than that he holds to the non-human associations of his life.

The expectation is amply borne out. Fairy-belief is first and foremost a symbolism of social life. In the logic of emotional identifications, it organizes, directs, and controls the feelings of human beings for their fellows.

Thus fairy power and dangerous influence are strongest at times when the interest of human beings in their fellows is strongest. With every change overtaking the individual in his course through life among his fellows, the supernatural world steps in. At such times as birth, growing-up, marriage, becoming a parent, growing old and dying, belief catches the countryman in a web of precautions and reminders which signalize forcefully the importance of the change. For example, the birth of a child is not just another event in nature. It is a change of vital importance to the family group, and indirectly to the community. It is cause for rejoicing and congratulation, but it is cause, too, for resolve and determination in the face of new duties. It brings a new orientation in the lives of those who welcome the newcomer. Their relations to one another undergo development; they must henceforth learn new ways which include the newcomer and which prepare a place for him in the life of his fellows.

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Consequently, rural ceremony signalizes the 181
event. Custom brings together those concerned, 183
for rejoicing, for recognition of the place of the 851
newcomer in the group, for an expression of the 776
sentiments that unite them all. The rural 'christening' is no mere idle jollification; it is a secular baptism, as important for social life as is the Sacrament of Baptism for religion. Naturally, then, fairy-belief is represented very strongly. It surrounds the crucial event of birth and its consequences with a hundred necessities of action which carry with them powerful emotional dispositions. Fear, awe, wonder, religious feeling, and plain caution can all be pressed into service to mould the countryman into an acceptance of the new state of affairs; the logic of belief fits these emotions into the countryman's world-view.

The good people are particularly active at such 181
times as this. Every association with birth is infused 183
with power and danger. Even the midwife who 844
attends becomes a magic figure; the aura that sur- 776
rounds the dangerous and crucial event invests her entire personality. She can command the fairies, disperse their attacks, travel through the air, transfer labour pains at will to a truculent or negligent husband. She is in communication with the fairy powers; in tale and story she often finds her ministrations commandeered by them and her person wafted off into the forts and raths to attend a fairy-woman there. She herself may deny all this; but it

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181 is true, none the less, in belief. Like all else at birth,
183 she is linked to the good people, and in the linkage
776 an explanation is given for the identity of the
844 emotional associations which surround both her and them.

181 Similarly, all other crucial changes in social life,
183 as well as those of the religious life, come to fit into
776 the same scheme for many of the country-people
852 who still follow the old tradition. The good people figure in them all.

Thus, First Communion and Confirmation—events of first magnitude in the life of the devout countryman—bring changes in emotional well-being; they bestow a real, if mysterious and holy, strength. This, of course, is first of all a part of religious experience. But the events are also accompanied, in the countryside, by changes in one's relations to one's fellows, in traditional social organization. The child is separated first from others of opposite sex after First Communion; he is introduced to full farm work and, very often, leaves school after Confirmation. His fellows in family and community must henceforward have a new regard for him and treat him differently. So, in these changes, the good people have their role, too. Precautions against their influence reinforce one's dependence upon a symbolic order which incorporates these changes. They make definite and unforgettable the magnitude of the change and the new dispositions which must be learned. Thus,

Again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit

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again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

If we leave aside marriage, where folk-custom and folk-belief are no less important toward the same ends, we can devote our attention to the greatest change of all. Death brings the greatest disturbance in social habit. It shakes emotional equilibrium to its foundation. Yet society must allow for death; it must provide an orderly transition and continuance.

The devout Irishman, of course, finds his greatest consolation in his Catholic Faith. He knows the fate of his loved ones. His religion teaches him how to communicate with them, in the Communion of Saints, through prayer. Faith heals his hurt and it gives him a way of filling the void death creates.

Yet, as I have said, he has room in his heart and mind for the fairy-belief too. Social life must take account of death no less than religion. When death removes one of the human beings to whom he is related as brother, friend or fellow, it leaves behind the traces of sentiment and habit that were once bonds of relationship and association. These must be reformed, and in the reformation a new synthesis between the dead member of the group and the living be found. The countryman resembles us all in this respect; he cannot forget 'the old familiar faces'. He must have an explanation in the world-view of folklore and folk-custom for

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181 the effect they still exert upon him after they are
183 gone.

761 So the dead join 'them'. On the border-line
776 between the mundane world and the mysteries of
[775] Faith, they find a place in the ranks of the good people, as the misnamed fairies are often called. They are the denizens of rath and fort and hill and cave. There is nothing fundamentally incompatible between this and religious belief, however folklore may escape the control of dogma and sometimes, in its humbler vein, run counter to it. The dead do affect the living, in memory and in tradition. Death is the 'other world' to which we are all advancing. As one fellow could say in a burst of poetic imagery growing out of folk-belief: "The old people in the west room are going down with the sun".

Why not indeed, when we remember that the good people are not always by any means evil and forbidding? They exert their power for both good and evil. They bring reward as well as punishment. The countryman has friends among them as he has friends among men in this world. An Aran woman put the belief for Lady Gregory in words which transport earthly loyalties to the other world. "There's often fighting heard about the house when one is sick. That is what we call the fighting of
181 friends, for we believe it is the friends and enemies
183 of the sick person fighting for him."
776
775 Indeed, the same aids that make up habit and

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give base to sentiment in mundane affairs can be projected into the after-world. One must act toward 'them' in death as one acts toward the living; one must do the 'friendly' thing. Thus they can tell a story in Luogh of a man there who they say "was walking along the road and he saw the ghost of his brother. He didn't say anything to it and it walked home with him all in silence. They sat at the fire for a long time, the [living] man waiting for the other to go, so he could go to bed. Finally, the dead man said: 'You have put me to great trouble tonight by not saluting me when we met. I must go now and now I won't be able to defend you in the council in the rath.' And it was true for him, too: the cow that was ailing with the man was taken the next week."

Thus, you see, one can envision 'them' both in mystic terms and in terms sometimes very bald and intimate indeed. The younger people in Luogh still follow the old belief, though they leave its expression to their elders. Yet they could explain the tumour on an old man's head in words which show how near 'the other people' are and how direct is the aid one's friends among them can give:

"Old Seumas was coming along the road drunk and he met a crowd of them on the road and one of them slapped him. If he'd taken the slap he'd be all right but he took off his coat and dared any one of them to stand down to him. They beat him and

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181 gave him a terrible knock over the poll. One of
183 them that was great friends with him saved
753 him."
776

Nor are 'they' always fearsome, even in their
181 most wondrous apparitions. The dead are too
183 much a part of life in rural Ireland for that. For
775 the old people they are too near; too many friends have crossed the line between this world and the next.

Thus the dead may come to cover nearly every association of life; in the eyes of some of the old people, the other world of wonders where the 'other people' reign spreads all about them. To the initiate in such mysteries there is nothing to fear. Let me give you my record of one conversation of mine with a very old man of North Clare, a man of clear mind and great folk-learning. His answers to my naïve questions will show you how well he felt, accepted and expressed the symbolic order of the countryside:

I asked what a 'cowl' was. "They are the houses where the family has died out of them. People would live in them if they wasn't too bad, falling down and dirty. You often see old people sitting in them." "What people?" I asked. "The people that used to be in it," he replied. "Do you mean ghosts?" He answered me scornfully: "You might see lights in the cowl and you going along the road at night and you pass people you don't know and you can't tell if they are ghosts or not. Of all the

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people you pass in the town, how would you know what it is they are?"

Only the young men, like myself, would be frightened by this uncertainty in rural Ireland. For all but the old people, such mysteries are awesome and compelling. Once again, folk-belief fashions itself for a social end. In belief the believers unconsciously agree upon an emotional organization of human relations; folklore expresses once again the organization of the community upon age and upon the past. The old couple who move in among the fairy influences and the symbols of family tradition and sentiment in the west room, the old people in whom rural kinship is centred and through whom sentiment is directed to the mystic past of ancestral blood lineage, the old men and women round whose influence the local community patterns its local life, need not fear greatly the imagery that symbolizes the very place they occupy. Rather they can come to immerse themselves in it. They grow very learned in this lore. They are the ones who sometimes come to manipulate it. They are themselves, sometimes, half fairy. 'Wise men' and 'wise women' are always old. It is no accident that the commonest representation of the fairy power is an old man or woman. They are the initiates in the mysteries of the fairy faith.

In this fact one can see the final synthesis between social habit and belief. Rural kinship organizes men and women in a common orientation

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181 backward and upward toward the dead and the
183 ancestral. The community bestows ever greater
888 status and influence as one progresses further and
776 further toward the age-grade of the old, in whom
775 tradition and precedent are preserved and expressed. In the sphere of credence and emotion the fairy faith acts to the same end and is so designed. The design, in this instance as in all the others, is not conscious; no one has planned it. It is a design drawn from the social order and acting back upon it. Its imagery is traditional, but its efficacy is of the present. And for that reason it lives.

Thus, in the identification between the old, the dead and the influences which affect the goods, the conducts and the values of the countryman's life, the symbolic order is completed. Folk-belief, in the ancient fairy-cult, with its age-old imagery, makes a complete emotional synthesis, overlying and reacting back upon the sentiment and habit out of which it springs again and again with each generation that learns the old way of life. Consequently, each new generation works a change upon it; elements of the synthesis undergo constant re-embellishment and shift of emphasis. Both old and young are controlled by it, but each in a different way. Today the young are sceptical and a little rebellious; they repudiate much of the
[178] older imagery. All that the Church condemns in the 'pisherogues', they also condemn. Today folk-belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

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178
belief is undergoing marked change like all else 181
in this world, like all else in Ireland. 183

But that does not mean the death-knell of folk- 775
lore, as some students of folklore seem to think. 776
Far from that, it means only that a symbolic order like any growth in human life must change and grow onward. New forms and new imagery will grow up to clothe in emotional terms the necessary reformations of habit and sentiment in social life, and new syntheses will fashion new belief, changing the old or supplanting it inch by inch.

One can see this process at work in rural Ireland 178
today. Those who repudiate the fairies repudiate 183
only the outmoded symbols, the outworn images. They do not deny the necessity of a symbolic order in their own lives. The student of man is coming to think today that they could not do so, because no people can. There must always be some socially efficacious organization of the sentiments of social life in the logic of belief and imagery. Belief provides first of all a conception of life; then, and then only, does it carry on to become a conception of the world. But life among men includes emotional attitudes at once very necessary and very satisfying; one can starve the spirit only so far. And for that reason the logic of a social order is not that of science and prose, it is that of emotion. Consequently, those of the countryside who repudiate the older symbols merely demand that their emphasis be shifted. They do not cry out for bald

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other with the keen at the wake-house.

The goods of household and farm suffer incorporation into emotional symbolism once more; precautions must be taken to protect them and prevent their going beyond with the lost one. Time and place of death are clothed with a hundred supernatural associations.

The reciprocities which make up friendship and give status in the community get full play. Every man, in death, can command a multitude. To stay away, to make no recognition of the day, is to give deadly affront. Every 'right Irishman' turns and walks, if only a few steps, along with the procession. In towns, all the blinds upon the street are drawn and shop-fronts are boarded, in recognition. In the Gaelic tongue, indeed, one and the same word does service for both funeral and multitude. And in the fairy-lore "there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind". Many a countryman, steeped in the old lore, sees in a whirlwind or puff of mist a *socraid sidhe* or fairy-funeral.

He knows thereby that somewhere the chief expression of traditional social life is calling the countrymen together through a whole countryside for a re-enactment, both solemn and gay, of their sentiments about their fellows and about their view of life and death and destiny.

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Even the elaborately produced and comprehensive Handbook of the Irish Free State (1927), which includes chapters on folklore and literature, remains silent on folk-culture and its significance for an understanding of Irish problems. 114

Our knowledge of the Irish countryside will advance only through field-study and the mapping of our findings. The time has not yet come when one can prepare maps of cultural distributions, but this is the end in view. Our school-books and atlases still give us maps which are purely political and administrative, for the political outlook has kept scientific interests at bay. We need maps of house-types and styles of furniture, of farm implements and the lay-out of fields and fences, of boat-types, of dialects and superstitions, and so on; and we must study these distributions both against the physical and spiritual environments of Ireland and against the wider background of their overseas connexions.

Viewed in its wider setting Ireland is part of the north-western or "Atlantic" province of European folk-culture. The climatic background of storms and mists makes it one with the coastlands and peninsulas which range from Galicia through Brittany and Highland Britain to the fiords of Norway. Everywhere in this region the sea is close at hand: by it man can both gain a livelihood and escape out into a wider world. On land the cultivation of wheat is near its climatic limits, and the dependence on spring-sown cereals greatly simplified the old schemes of crop-rotation. The folding of stock around the winter homestead was not complicated by the necessity of protecting the corn from their depredations. Animal husbandry and stock products are the pivot of rural economy in this humid fringe of Europe, a fact which, together with the independence nourished by man's association with the sea, helped to keep the north-western province out of the bondage of the feudal system. 101

While the simplicity of stock-raising equipment has limited the development of the arts and crafts as compared with, say, the south-eastern province of Europe, or even lowland England, it brings its compensations. As Professor 181

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●181 Fleure writes of Wales, another section of "The Celtic Fringe": "the isolated rural communities are, of themselves, poor in material resources, and their efforts have, therefore, not until recently gone into great buildings or sculpture or painting or orchestral music, all demanding a large equipment. Rather have they found their scope in poetry and oratory and song, arts in which the poorest labourer can often compete on fairly equal terms with his richer neighbours. In this way, and in others as well, poverty has been a safeguard of an intensely democratic feeling as well as a help towards the survival of the language and its associations." In the field of human export, too, Ireland's products are scholars, doctors and poets as well as spade-workers.

243 262 114 There are, as we shall try to show, many other features of Irish life which can be related to the pastoral tradition. Because of its value as fodder and for reasons of soil and climate, oats is the "corn" crop of Atlantic Europe. Apart from the value of oats as food for livestock, oatmeal in various forms has been and still is largely consumed, and its baking into thin pan bread over an open fire instead of in an oven has helped to preserve the prehistoric open hearth with its varied 114 and interesting gear and traditions. Ignoring the literary and archæological evidence, many writers have assumed that the inhabitants of ancient Ireland were entirely pastoral and nomadic. On this topic much solemn nonsense has been written, and it gained wide currency because it seemed both to condemn the Irish and to corroborate the prevailing view of man's cultural evolution from hunter to agriculturist through a stage of pastoral nomadism. It now seems certain that man learnt the elements of cultivation at least as soon as he learnt how to domesticate animals, and in the diffusion of these ideas through Europe from the Near East, Ireland received the germs of both sources of food-production at about 114 the same period, let us say 4,000 years ago. There are many 221 signs that in Ireland's dark and middle ages cattle played an even greater role in rural life than in earlier prehistory and later history, but at all times the unit of the fixed family

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114 settlement, the baile or townland, kept its significance and its
221 importance. In many cases what has passed for nomadism has been the ancient and normal practice of seasonal movement to the hill pastures, which is still not entirely abandoned and has left many traces in the life and landscape of the country (Chapter 6).

181 In essentials Ireland is and has been a peasant country,
462 and it may be well to examine objectively some of the general characteristics of peasant society. A permanent link with the soil on which man lives and works is the essence of a peasantry; and in this work of the fields woman co-operates with man. For her, however, field work is a secondary task since her main interests must lie in the house and in the milking of the stock. Work with spade and plough and the care of the draught animals is for the men, although carrying—necessarily done by women in primitive communities where the men must have their hands free to use their weapons—often remains an activity of the peasant woman where not entirely superseded by animal transport. Where fishing and shore-collecting engage the men's attention the women's sphere of action and responsibilities are widened.

181 Among tasks in which the women of some peasantries
323 play a leading part is the making of domestic pottery, but this tradition, though strong in Neolithic Ireland, gave way to the use of metal "pots" and vessels of wood, the making of which was the work of the men. Nor have local survivals of hand-made pottery, like the Barvas ware of the Hebrides, been recorded here.

181 Periodic gatherings for exchange and social intercourse
443 are a feature of peasant life which has contributed to the
796 growth of towns. The immemorial meetings in fairs and markets have been weakened by modern means of transport and by government marketing boards; and in some parts of the country the whole fabric of rural society is being undermined in consequence. As in North Africa to-day, the fairs were often held near some ancient burial place, and the assemblies were linked with religious festivals which brought

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major 181
operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of 443
peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair 796
seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the 181
cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures 789
of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic 181
magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, 842
common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years
since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of 181
marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the [582]
highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and 181
duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and 496

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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181 individual ownership they have by no means entirely collapsed.
496 The principle of service, of mutual aid within the local family groups, survives; the element of competition is reduced to a minimum. Though the old social laws have been "abolished" by acts of parliament, such external decrees could destroy only the superficial features and hardly touched the minds in
181 which these customs were rooted. The primary unit of land
631 division—the townland—is still a very real thing; and as the townland retains its Gaelic name even in the districts of Dublin and Belfast, so there survives beyond the city's influence the social fabric of the townland community. Reeves and Joyce have argued that the careful subdivision of Irish land points to the existence of a considerable settled population in remote antiquity, and recent archæological research supports this view. There are no less than 62,205 townlands in the country; their size, which varies from curiosities of less than an acre to large tracts of moorland of 1,000 acres, averages 325 acres.

181 The townlands in turn group themselves into baronies
631 corresponding to the petty kingdoms of old. Writers tell us
291 that even into the 19th century one barony could be easily distinguished from another by the dresses peculiar to each. Thus there were the dark blue and damson of Cork and Waterford, the grey of Kerry and the blue of Galway. A traveller in 1830 remarked wisely that "such peculiarities frequently point out the natural divisions of a country in more important matters than dress": they are an index to regional diversity. The distinctive features of particular districts are well illustrated in the case of "the Irish Flanders," the isolated tract in Co. Wexford comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth; while nothing could reveal the separateness of some island communities better than the heaviest punishment meted out to offenders in Rathlin or Clear I.: it consisted of "banishment to Ireland."

000 Enough has been said to suggest that the traditions of the Irish countryside are of long standing, and that many strains in those traditions are not only of Celtic but of pre-Celtic antiquity. Before we consider some of the relics of the

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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164 very even and white, and seem to last well; even men of over sixty
[142] often have good incisors; but many suffer from toothache. Abscess of the alveolus, unlike what is seen in Aran, is not at all common.

Skin.—Ulcers due to the friction of ropes and of the thick homespun clothing when wet, eczema, "sea-boils," scabies, and acne, are frequently met with, as is anthrax or carbuncle; but, perhaps, the most common of all skin affections, especially among the younger members of the population, is tinea tonsurans. Alopecia areata, whether caused by the last-mentioned affection or not, seems to be common. Uterine troubles are not at all common. Venereal diseases are practically unknown.

164 *Accidents* arising out of the surroundings and occupation of the
752 people are, as might be expected, very numerous. These are burns, severe cuts from reaping hooks, injuries inflicted by domestic animals, and, above all, contusions and fractures due in most cases to falls from rocks and ponies.

4. *Psychology.*—For one who has had only a short experience of
181 the people this very difficult and delicate point is exceedingly hard to deal justly with, but the following description, for the most part obtained from local sources, both on the islands and on the opposite part of the mainland, and to some small degree from personal observation, is believed to be accurate as far as it goes.

To strangers, the people are not, at first, attractive, as their manner
[609] is shy and not unmarked by suspicion; but after this reserve is broken through they reveal themselves in a much more attractive light, and are kindly, courteous, and very communicative.

Among themselves they are cheerful and social, given much to gossip and chaff, though their wit is not of a very sparkling character.
[517] They contrast strongly with the Aran Islanders in their taste for music and dancing, concertinas and melodions being in common use in several houses.

In their dealings with one another they are honest and fair, even
181 a petty theft being an extremely rare occurrence. As to their dealings
674 with the people of the mainland, the usual hostile statements, common with all insular communities, are made by both sides with respect to
[609] each others honesty, but much reliance cannot be put in these vague assertions. Crime is almost unknown, and the administration of justice is seldom called into requisition, and then only for small quarrels among neighbours.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis and struma are stated to be comparatively rare. 164

Malignapt disease is very common in the Mullet, especially in the electoral district of Binghamstown South, which includes all the southern part of the peninsula. The majority of these cases are said to fall into the hands of "cancer curers," who use arsenic paste.

Rheumatism is one of the most prevalent troubles, especially in the elderly and old.

"Gravel" is a common complaint all over the district, and a good many deaths from this cause are registered.

Dietetic diseases.—Digestive troubles are very common everywhere, but more especially in the inland parts where the dietary is less varied; "boxty," or potato-bread and the abuse of strong tea seem to be very largely responsible. 164 292

Along the coast, ento-parasites, due to the large proportion of fish in the dietary, are of very frequent occurence.

Respiratory diseases.—Bronchitis is very prevalent in the winter and spring, and spasmodic asthma is stated to be not an uncommon affection. 164

Local affections are few and not very serious. Conjunctivitis is common, and much aggravated by the peat-smoke of the houses.

As regards dental troubles, the people are by no means free from these, though as a rule the teeth are even and white, and remain sound until late in life. [142]

"Female" troubles seem to be very common.

Venereal diseases are practically non-existant.

Skin.—Skin diseases are very prevalent. Among these the most common are—tinea tonsurans, eczema, sea boils, and scabies.

Accidental injuries.—Owing to the mode of life of the people and their environment, accidents frequently happen, especially fractures and contusions from falls, bites and other injuries from domestic animals, and burns. [752]

4. *Psychology.*—The difficulties of treating this part of the subject justly are, in the case of a stranger, very great, as his acquaintance with the people cannot be of sufficiently long standing to allow of the knowledge of more than the superficial part of their character, while, in the case of a resident, personal likes and antipathies, and local quarrels or friendships, largely influence his opinions. 181

The following description, though to some extent derived from personal observation, is for the most part obtained from several local

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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181 sources, my informants being those who are brought into close contact with the everyday life of the people. So far as it goes it is believed to be accurate. No attempt has been made to do otherwise than describe the actual state of the case, and while the faults of the people are not extenuated, yet any circumstances which may explain these are given as far as possible, and their good qualities are believed to be stated without exaggeration.

181 To the casual visitor the people, on acquaintance, are decidedly attractive; in the outlying parts of the district, it is true, they are at 609 first rather suspicious of strangers, but after a short time are very obliging and communicative, ready to show anything of interest in their neighbourhood, and hospitable to the best of their power. The natives of both the islands at Inishkea, are very hospitable and kindly to strangers, of whom they are, however, rather distrustful, [574] a visitor being welcomed into their houses, and entertained with the best they can give. With each other they seem in all parts of the district to be much given to chaff and joking of a more or less practical nature, and their sense of the ridiculous seems to be rather keen. In times of trouble or distress they are very kind, generous with what they have, and helpful to one another.

181 They are fond of music, dancing, and bright colours, and more than one song-maker in their own tongue, the Irish, has been a native 517 of this district; amongst these was the celebrated Dick Barrett, 53 several of whose productions have been collected and published. In common with most of the people of our rural districts, there do not seem to be many traces of artistic taste, and a native art is conspicious by its absence. One or two instances of attempted decoration were observed in Inishkea, none on the mainland.

181 On the whole, though cases of dishonesty and sharp practice in bargaining occur, they are honest in their dealings with one another. 577 As is often the case in remote districts, the people of one locality are sometimes on strained relations with those of another; thus there exists a certain amount of jealousy and distrust between the natives of the two Inishkeas, while the people of the mainland do not readily amalgamate with those of either island.

181 As regards intelligence, they are extremely sharp and shrewd, and seem rather fond of argumentation. There is but little crime, 691 with the exception of illicit distillation and drunkenness, but the people are very litigious, going to law with each other about slight trespasses and similar matters. This tendency is not by any means of recent origin, but has been remarked on by several writers. Maxwell

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mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last 691 century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather 181 prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273] festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771] religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789] they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848] yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578] one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855] treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461 though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great 181 deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181 in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit 426 to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515 due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577 truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PREFACE

The generous reception given to my *Irish Heritage*, published fifteen years ago, has encouraged me to go on collecting material on Irish folk life and to prepare this more comprehensive book on the subject. The earlier book was written, under difficult conditions, in the years 1939–41; it was an introductory study of an unexplored field, necessarily speculative and undocumented, and its main purpose was to arouse interest among Irish readers in the treasure-house of the past in which they live. It is hoped that IRISH FOLK WAYS will have a wider appeal. It is abundantly illustrated and fortified by references to a fairly full bibliography. Even so, parts of the text must be taken on trust, since some of the information was gathered from personal observation and conversations up and down Ireland. In the 'mountainy' corners of the country the past is ever-present, a ready topic of talk. I have checked the information where possible, for the inquirer must always be on guard against the countryman's facility of speech, his poetic licence and his fatal desire to please.

There is a great fascination in exploring the living past, but one cannot employ the strict methodology of the historical or natural sciences. The historian is handicapped in studying peasant peoples, not only because they leave no documents but also because their sense of time and values are not those of fully literate folk. The geographer, interested primarily in variations in space, makes an easier approach; yet he will miss much unless he has a concern for origins and a sense of the past. Without knowledge of the past he will not fully observe the present: it is the emotional shock which prints in the memory the first sight of some tool or custom which has survived from an earlier culture-layer. For the historian, on the other hand, the fact that it was described in the eighteenth century is more significant than that it occurs, unrecorded, in the twentieth.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *currach*, much as did their grandfathers. [601]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
• 181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[524] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[624] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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 It is not the formal system of local and national governments which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate. 779 67

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly is sought and even expected as an obligation, or "right," of the government by the islanders (especially since nativism engendered by the Gaelic Revival has made Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht" to queer a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders. 829 687 [181] [668]

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes were commanded by politicians who put forth grandiose plans for the betterment of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular—and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide. The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords. Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configuration, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history. [66] [653] [346] 829 181

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail 829 666

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [775] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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> conditions appraised The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191). 573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [895] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately. 628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list. 181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it 521 203 571 [574] [512]

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578 women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip
[662] and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples.
578 One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism
626 of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into
[828] a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first
[123] meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

121 I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an
578 observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants;
• 181 this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

114 Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

> 114 This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every
> 181 book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21). 114 181

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible. [124]

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.). 114 12 181 [538]

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor- 554 [423] [471] [511] 556

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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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526 struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. A famous writer
181 claimed that he introduced into Inis Beag a feat of agility that he had learned in
[177] France, which consists of holding a stick in both hands at the knees and jumping back and forth across it without losing grip; the islanders attest that this "trick" was known locally for at least a century, and one man boasted that his father was
123 able to leap back and forth a dozen times in quick succession. My rapport with the men was enhanced by the fact that I had been a weight thrower and lifter and used to entertain them by putting a granite boulder, throwing a discus that I had brought with me, and performing repetition presses with a barrel of stout. However, the one time that I was persuaded to compete for Inis Beag against Inis Thiar in putting the shot (a flat-bottomed store weight of 14 pounds), I fouled with my foot all three times and thus suffered ignominious defeat. The curate who officiated at the event appeared pleased, but the islanders who had placed wagers on me were of opposite disposition.

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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[For information pertaining to the historical background of Irish national character and personality development, the relation to sexual repression and theological dogma, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 20-27.]

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

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JOHN C. MESSENGER*

SEX AND REPRESSION IN AN IRISH FOLK COMMUNITY

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In this chapter I will discuss sexual repression—its manifestations in behavior and beliefs, its causes, its inculcation, and its broader historical and cultural implications—in a small island community of the Gaeltacht that I will call Inis Beag.[1] My wife and I conducted ethnographic research there for nineteen months, between 1958 and 1966, which included a one-year stay and eight other visits of from one to seven weeks—at Christmas or during the summer. Ours is the only holistic ethnographic study of this community, although archeologists, linguists, philologists, folklorists, geographers, anthropometricians, and other scientists have undertaken research there for over a century. We collected a large body of culture and personality data on three other Irish islands for the purposes of making comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. Inis Beag is ideally suited to ethnographic and folklore research in that its population possesses a tradition which is less acculturated than that of any other local Irish group.

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According to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960: 1–2), the islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect. The community has maintained its stability for at least 200 years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with

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* A grant from the Indiana University Ford International Program enabled me to write this chapter.

[1] For other reports on Inis Beag, consult Messenger 1962, 1968, and 1969.

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

114 tent; they have depended on a limited sample of respondents; and most
538 of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, which does not contain numerous categories of significance to anthropologists.

12 My wife and I devoted most of our research to documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also described formal and informal education and the personality traits formed by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many types and probing the memories of aged island respondents, and recorded cultural change in process over an eight-year period. The standard ethnographic research techniques that we employed include guided and open-ended interviews, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, cross-checking, photography, and phonog-
[161] raphy. The sample for much of our data was the total universe of 350 inhabitants.

It is extremely difficult to obtain information in Inis Beag about such matters as amounts and sources of income, disputes, pagan religious retentions and reinterpretations, and sex. This brief list might be increased by at least threefold and gives rise to a consideration of the problems associated with obtaining reliable data from the Irish in general and the
114 islanders in particular. Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled
12 "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously
• 181 presents one of the shortest, yet most discerning analyses of Irish national character yet written by a novelist and predicts the various reactions that her volume will evoke in Irish readers.[4] She concludes with the following remarks about the difficulties surrounding fact finding in Ireland:

This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged
[521] with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing

[4] These reactions appear to be institutionalized, as my writings and conversational remarks have also evoked them. Two additional responses that I have encountered are: my conclusions are invalidated because I failed to consult certain "source materials" written in Gaelic, and my inferior writing style precludes serious consideration of my findings. I take pains to explain, usually in vain, the many methods of fieldwork utilized by ethnographers to Irish persons who are critical of my data and who invariably use the phrase, "You can't trust what an Irishman tells you." On a rare occasion, one listener to my lengthy explanation said, "Ah, you're cuter than we are"—a compliment indeed!

effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I know. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman, sober, will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress. When he has taken a jar or two . . . he will say whatever he judges will give the greatest offence. In neither case does he reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went round and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake. Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953: 20–21).

I will not concern myself with the various cultural and psychological causes accounting for this state of affairs, which would require an essay equal in length to this one. Suffice it to say, the quotation in considerable measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation, wherever possible. The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before attempting an ethnography, to emphasize various modes of participant observation in order to gain added rapport, to devise ad hoc research methods of an unorthodox nature,[5] to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our research, and to

[5] Departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a ballad that I composed. Islanders read at our request books about Inis Beag, and we recorded and analyzed their responses. The ballad that I wrote, now embedded in the local verbal art tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue that we witnessed, and a series of fascinating events which ensued during the following months. The manner of its composition, the alteration of it by Inis Beag singers after it was written, and the circumstances surrounding its public presentation by various balladiers before differing audiences gave us invaluable ethnographic insights.

12 cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which characterize ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as an epistemology.

• 181 195 [178] The use by the folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is a product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can very effectively serve to shield genuine thoughts [538] and feelings and thus protect the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition of verbal skill, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*. (At least one folklorist has collected "Joycean utterances" from Irish peasants.)

123 Most of our information came from observation and unguided interviews. It proved impossible to take field notes openly, except when collecting innocuous data—such as the number of livestock owned by each householder—from a few particular persons. Thus, we were forced to limit our visits to less than two hours, after which we immediately [562] transcribed what our combined memories could resuscitate. Despite frequent explanations of our presence in Inis Beag, which were candid and truthful, it was thought by the islanders that I was interested only in archeological sites and oral literature, and that my wife was not a trained and experienced co-worker; this, obviously, reflects their previous experiences with scientists and their conception of the position of women in society. Their inability to evaluate adequately our intentions proved [609] to be a research boon. For once "accepted" (a relative term, since no outsider is ever accepted) after many months in the island, we were allowed to listen to and participate in conversations and activities from which we would otherwise have been excluded.

123 *831 Our data on sex came from my involvement as a participant-observer in personal and often intimate conversations with men and my wife's counseling of women who were bothered by such matters as explaining and coping with menstruation, menopause, mental illness, the sexual curiosity of their children, and "excessive" sexual demands of their spouses. Our sexual knowledge and sympathy coupled with their needs and inquisitiveness gave rise to a "counselor-client" relationship between many of the folk and ourselves. They came to speak freely, albeit indirectly at times, with each of us about this sphere of behavior which arouses so much anxiety and fear. I must mention that the relationship

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Ireland was . . . one of the world's most ascetic countries, and the monastic ideal has undoubtedly left a deep mark on the Irish mind. Although Irish priests were permitted to have wives as late as the eighth century, sexual renunciation came to be identified with virtue and distinction in the community, and thousands of the best men and women lived apart from each other. Kevin Devlin in his *Christus Rex* article on "Single and Selfish" . . . says of the ancient Irish that "when they 'fell in love with Christianity' . . . they took to the ideal of virginity with a Pauline enthusiasm unknown elsewhere. St. Patrick himself noted this with an inflection of surprise in the *Confessions* . . ." (Blanshard 1954: 160–161).

Several Irish scholars since 1955 have expressed the opinion in personal conversations that the rapidity of Irish conversion to monasticism in the early medieval period can be attributed, in large measure, to masochism. [53] This ancient character trait is most evident in the projective system of early Irish verbal art, if one discounts the possibility of widespread distortion through the actions of Celtic defense mechanisms and later revisionists.

In a recent book, the impact of Augustinianism at this time and in the centuries to come is examined by Fr. Alexander Humphreys. He says in *New Dubliners:*

The specific doctrinal tradition to which Ireland and the Irish countryman in particular has fallen heir is the Augustinian. . . . [It] lays relatively greater emphasis on the weakness and evil to which human nature is prone as the result of original sin. By the same token, it attributes relatively less efficacy to natural knowledge and human action and relatively more validity to God's revelation and more power to the action of God's grace. . . . [The] Irish countryman has acquired a more than average distrust of native human reason. As a Catholic he cannot and does not deny the validity of rational thought, but he tends to be quite suspicious of the pride of the mind and so wary of ultimate rationalism that he shies away from reasoned discussions of high truths. . . . The tradition he inherits tends toward a certain historical and theological positivism in regard to the major truths and values of life, and, together with other historical factors, has led him to an intensified reliance upon the teaching power of the Church as voiced by the clergy. At the same time, while appreciating the need for positive good works, he is inclined to place relatively greater emphasis on those which are directly concerned with obtaining grace and relatively lesser store by simple ethical behaviour. And finally, although he is certain that man's bodily nature with its emotions is at root good, he is rather more suspicious of it and deals with it somewhat more severely. As a result he inclines to a jaundiced view of sex and a generally ascetic outlook which

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland,* by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

*831 155 175 178 181 779 795 798 [785] enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theologians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 155 178 181 779 798 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of [874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

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chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

> Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161-162). [874]

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

> Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better if God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105). [864]

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters. 844 864

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent con- 114 155

562 539 571 828 829 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

182 177 178 181 831 795 779 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

831 181 182 626 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

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cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, 181•
the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked 182
factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural 626
manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing 831*
the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme 626
methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as em- 793
ploying informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments
to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal [779]
classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as [872]
effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, [155]
since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative
years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and 831*
even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative ex- 626
periences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorgan- 684
ization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and 793
talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis 831*
Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist 797
priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a 626
week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver 771
long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, [796]
even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to [783]
receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation; just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which
are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in [781]

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, 121
and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation;
more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social
control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized [626]
by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, [114]
and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted
a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish
peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble sav- [181]
ages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neu-
roses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense
postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every 831*
opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its 626
victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life,
islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top
of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind [609]
fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close
scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to
discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at [167]
the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous [574]
announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious
order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag,
especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a
visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on
a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her
hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our
part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this 831*
genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case. 626

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities [562]
of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem [167]
the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk,
they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples [584]
who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the
priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through
gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

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[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the [839]
apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among
mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre
of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning
confessional materials.

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization 582
for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 per- 161
sons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to
497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when
my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern 168
over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another
generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands.
Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phe- 167
nomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes 182
pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also 582
stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal 589
causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal
factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the [434]
island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and
the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the [657]
increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and
taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for
the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, [434]
despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this
fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past [183]
century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders [178]
in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to [582]
leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise
their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling [831]*
population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secu-
lar "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons 181 •
for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a 183
suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because 829
it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created
a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate
to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a 167
suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis 182
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167 Beag, only limited amounts of which have been reported in this chapter.
182 Even though sexual repression and fear of the clergy prevent the folk
[181] from being outspoken in this matter, it is constantly broached among
[183] themselves.

167 Paramount among external factors stimulating emigration are pros-
177 perity on the mainland and abroad, the impact of the mass media of
182 communication, the increasing number of tourists visiting Inis Beag, the return of former emigrants, and the fact that, with an increase in incomes and scholarship funds, more island children are going to the mainland for their schooling each year. America has been a land of freedom and prosperity to the Irish since before the famine, and, until the Second World War, most islanders migrated there never to return. But the growth of prosperity in England following 1946 shifted the stream of emigration in that direction, for not only were jobs plentiful across the Irish Sea, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in big cities. And it was possible to visit Ireland frequently, as the distance and cost are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic. It is common for youths vacationing in Inis Beag from England to talk others into returning with them. The latter declare
167 that they will soon come back to the island to settle permanently, hope-
177 fully with "great riches," but they seldom return. Since the war, a number of "Yanks" have also returned home, and their stories of life in America make the youthful islanders restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many folk also sow the seeds of discontent.

167 Television was introduced into Inis Beag during 1963, and the two
207 sets now installed always have ready and willing audiences. Almost
182 every cottage has a radio, and, although the islanders seldom read books,
177 a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, as they allow the islanders to glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a
[656] happier and freer world. Television and radio programs are censored, but, even so, the morality expressed in them—especially the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A censor from Inis Beag would most certainly create more discontinuities in films with his shears than do his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin.

114 Most of what I have written in this essay is to be found expressed in the works of such older Irish writers as James Joyce, Sean O'Casey,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

574 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to
602 town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local com-
[521] munity gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in
[522] Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

574 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of
602 good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market.
273 "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy
594 as a family situation in which economic effort, individual and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative
182 within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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group. Forces within the relations of the members of the 593
group bring it into being. Yet the dispersal is carried out very often in ways which depend also upon familial ties. The whole movement is carried on in the midst of an orderly and organic transformation which comes over the family regularly at marriage and death. Old and new meet at marriage in Ireland. Between them social organization is passed on though a prior group is partially destroyed.

Let us recapitulate, then, for a moment. Statistical state- 182
ment of productive and consumptive behavior in rural
economy revealed a marked difference between small and 593
large farmers. Within that difference the small farmers presented a great statistical uniformity. Consequently, it was necessary to look beyond the numerical count to the actual behavior of the small farmers. In referring the question to the lives of the small farmers themselves, we were led to a new analysis of their behavior and to the discovery of a new uniformity.

The new uniformity, however, is of a different nature. It is itself a coherent and consistent pattern, widely extensive, and responsible to laws of inner development of its own. We are entitled, or rather compelled, to call it a system and to give it the character of other systems, where that word is used with precise meaning and is not warped into a catch-all of common speech.

For, it is evident, the intricate web of human movement and interrelationship involving objects, household and land, which the study of "matchmaking" reveals, is no random movement. It arises in response to definite needs of the family group. It performs a definite function of reorganization and recrystallization in the group. The manifold changes the match brings upon the lives of the family members, the new positions which they take up, and the new behaviors which are theirs are dependent upon its success in this function. We do not need to insist that they are

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593 fully dependent upon it. It is sufficient that they cannot be adequately understood without some assessment of its influence. If we keep this fact in mind, we are ready for an analytic interpretation of our data. The uniform social behaviors of the small farmers begin to form an interrelated whole.

Marriage, property transfer, and the dispersal of the family members derive their character from family relationships. The immediate family of father, mother, and children form a corporate group engaged in agriculture upon a small farm. The roles of the father and mother make them superordinate to the children. Theirs is the direction of the group enterprise. Within the group, technological roles correspond with family status. Economic endeavor, both upon the individual farms and in the form of coöperation between farms, is controlled through the operation of social forces springing from the family. In the testimony of the farmers themselves, that effort is but part of a larger constellation of behavior patterns, obligations, and sentiments governing the individual in other fields by virtue again of his place in the family group. In total, Irish small farm agriculture presents a picture, not of isolated individuals or units pursuing a course of the greatest economic gain, amassing material objects in response wholly to individual desires and selling labor as a commodity, but of a way of life, only a small part of which we have examined, in which the relations between individuals, the soil, productive work, and the material goods of the household constitute a web of social ties, bearing their own incentive and reward and determining the part of the individual in the labor and the goods of the group.

At marriage and at death, as we have seen, this web of relationships is disturbed. New individuals are introduced, old ones lost. The match brings a re-formation of the family involving a dispersal of former members and an introduction

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of a new set of component individuals into the relationships between land, goods, labor, and human beings.

In the light of this system and of the internal changes which are brought about within it, the Irish population statistics now may become interpretable. Late marriage and the high incidence of bachelorhood are associable with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership, the necessity of acquiring sufficient means to portion children, and the delay in dispersing the closed corporation of the family group until it is possible to establish the new one. The practical self-sufficiency of the family group makes it difficult to destroy. The identification of a single immediate family with the individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new such group upon the land. 161 182 593

As we pointed out, subdivision of holdings practically ceased after 1852. Since then the struggle for land and legal reforms in land tenure have prohibited any great further division. The matchmaking system is very old in Ireland. The works of such Gaelic writers as Canon O'Leary describe it explicitly for the pre-famine period. With the cessation of subdivision of holdings came the necessity of providing for children elsewhere than on the land. From that same cessation of subdivision dates the high incidence of bachelorhood. In 1841, at the time of greatest population, age of marriage was normal. Then only 43 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty-five were unmarried, not 72 per cent, as at present. Then only 15 per cent of males between thirty-five and forty-five were celibate, not 29 per cent as today. Figure 13 represents the percentages of unmarried males and females at each age in each subsequent census from 1841 to 1926.

Viewed in the light of this family structure, the decline of population becomes interpretable not as a flight from intolerable conditions, though economic distress had a powerful effect, not as a political gesture, though political

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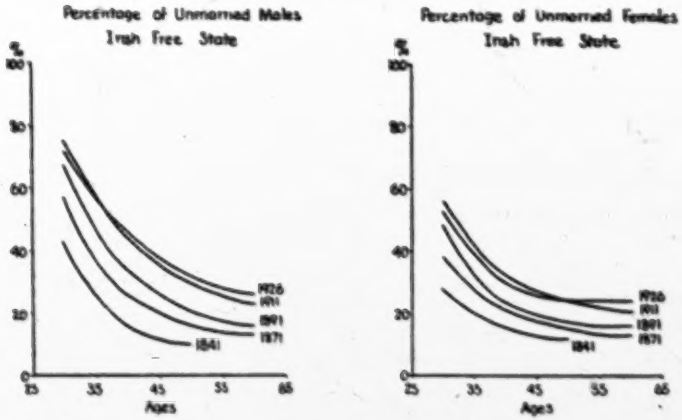
161 disturbance took its toll, but rather as a movement arising
182 from the effect of all these causes upon a family system
593 whose very nature predisposed it to disperse population and which could, therefore, accommodate itself to that dispersal when it occurred. Emigration, no new thing in 1845, ap-

FIGURE 13

PERCENTAGE OF UNMARRIED PERSONS, IRISH FREE STATE



The figures are taken from the censuses from 1841 to 1926.

pears as the logical corollary of this dispersal. It derives much of its character, such as assisted passages and remittances, from the social forces at work in the family. It can become a traditional movement like the movement from country to town without destroying the family structure or the rural culture whose members it takes away.

The authors do not mean to imply that anything within the social forces of the family as it exists in Ireland has had direct causal effect upon the peculiar statistics of Irish population. The authors would rather point out that the forces operative within that structure are of such a nature as to allow the society of which they are a part to continue to

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function in essentially similar fashion through the welter of economic, political, and other events which have impinged upon the human beings who have successively filled the structure. Likewise, the structure is capable of continued and virile existence in the present, governing the lives of its component individuals and modifying itself to take in new influences.

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contests, and playful roles of solemn occasions, such as acting as strawboys (mummers) at weddings. But all these activities, in which the old members of the community do not directly participate, are alike in their playing no great part in organizing other elements in the community than the young people themselves. They serve other functions.

All these activities bind the young men, the young people, together in common interests. They provide them with a scope of action in which they are comparatively free, yet which keeps them divorced from the seats of a power over community life which is denied them. In this sphere they may develop complex norms, valuations, and conducts.

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But such developments do not serve primarily to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. They are associated with the lesser prestige of the young people. Consequently, the old men's house comes to have in contrast a double function. It unites the old men in much the same way as the gamble and the dance unite the young men, in fact even more strongly. But it does so in terms of the old men's common position as recipients of the respect of the community and in terms of their individual positions as integrators of their families. The difference is structural. The activities of young men unite them across family and clique lines even from one community to the next. But those of the old men do more; they unite young and old as well. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive one, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble and dance may be greater.

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In such a system of integrations, that of the old men has the greater prestige. A great gambler or a great dancer wins wide respect. But the distinction is short-lived. It is a nine days' or a nine years' wonder. It bestows great prestige among one's fellows, but it removes one very little, if at all, from one's subordinate, less valued place as "boy" in the community.

Where such is the case, the individual's progression

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182 554 621 888 through rural life under normal circumstances is not toward a greater and greater prominence in the activities of the young men's group. Rather, there comes a time when one must break away altogether. One faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new kind of behavior. Growing old brings many more changes than the physiological.

888 573 885 554 The case of the newcomer, John Quin, already described, shows the necessary changes. In Rynamona it is brought out very clearly in the clique to which he first belonged and to which we have referred at various times, calling it once the "intermediate."

[551] The clique we name so met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, more commonly known as Oscair (the Hercules of Irish saga) for his physical strength. Oscair was a rural carpenter with only a very small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good singer, a jokester, and a repository of folk tale, though he was not much past forty. He lived just at the edge of the slope leading from Kilnaboy Commons down to Rynamona. The townland was what would be called in urban sociology an "interstitial area." It was higher, rougher, and more craggy than Rynamona and Kilnaboy, lying between them. Its inhabitants were descendants of people evicted from round about who had squatted there. Most of them were "died out and left," and the place was always poor. It acted as a sort of outlying fringe of Rynamona.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged thirty-five to sixty. Just as their ages were intermediate between fully old and fully young, so was their habit here. They very seldom played cards. Talk was the order of the day, enlivened by Oscair's humor and ballads. A few of them spoke of the affairs of the village with some weight. The rest did not. Those who came were as follows:

a. Young Mackey, from the village, the man recently married, still too young for the old men's house.

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CHAPTER XIV

Conclusion

ENOUGH has been said already to demonstrate the conclusion to which the study of rural behavior and social organization in the communities of the small farmers leads. The sociological conditions of Irish rural life are those determined in a system of relationships among persons based upon the Irish form of the family, family subsistence, and familistic custom. The demographical indices of population cannot be understood except in such a context. 182

Each topic of local life and custom, and each statistical index, as we have examined it, has led us back into this nucleus of organization among the small farmers. Something in the course of events prescribed there by the habitual arrangement of human lives existing in the small farmers' homes and communities has always lain behind the form of custom and the kind of attitude we have encountered. Something in that course of events has always likewise lain behind the numerical indices demographic count has yielded the census-taker.

This something is of the nature of an interdependent variable. The Irish small farmers of the present day behave as they do in the matters in which we have investigated them because they are members of a social system of a certain kind. A system implies a state of equilibrium in which elements are in mutual dependence. If change is introduced

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182 at one point, change follows at another. If the first change is not too great — that is, if it is not so great that destruction of the system ensues [1]— then subsequent changes do not alter the situation out of recognition. Far from it, since the elements are woven into a common whole, the effect of the change is soon dissipated. The system reverts to its former state. It may be said to have thus an equilibrium which it regains after each disturbance.

The doctrine of mutual dependence within a system helps us far more in understanding the events of life among the country people of Ireland than any ascription of cause and effect. The sorts of behavior we have dealt with do not have a single cause. They must be referred to a setting which must be looked at as a whole. Likewise the historical, economic, or personal events which impinge upon the country people of our communities do not ever succeed in changing very much either the people or what is really coterminous with them, their pattern of life. The traditional custom of life persists and continues to wield its power in essentially similar fashion decade after decade and generation after generation. Change goes on, in plenty, but it is gradual change of outlines already existing. It is no new departure.

Yet that custom operates always within a framework of relations uniting the same persons by various paths in space and having various histories in time. On each farm and among most of the farms of each area one cares to describe, these relations have certain uniformities. They turn up over and over again, and the course of events which they follow repeats itself in essentially similar fashion over and over. Circumstances alter cases, but not very far. Custom is not to be separated from this framework. The fol-

[1] For a discussion of the theory of the equilibrium of a social system, the reader is referred to *The Social Theory of Pareto*, by L. J. Henderson (Harvard University Press, 1936).

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lowers of customary behavior are those related in uniform fashion through the recurrence of similar events. 182

We are now ready, therefore, to make a summary and tentative definition of the communities and families of the Irish countryside. The definition is also an interpretation of the behavior of the persons concerned. It is also, too, an explanation of the events of human life in which they take part. And lastly, it is a social psychology of the country people.

In the discussion of each topic, the outlines of such a summary have become clearer and clearer. New events and new patterns of action fell into place as we drew their connection with old ones. Recapitulating this progress, let us take a step toward putting these connections in an abstract and general form. The sociology of the Irish rural life and small-farm subsistence is largely a matter of the anatomy of two institutions of characteristic form. These are the family and the rural community. The latter, in turn, cannot be described apart from the former. It is a framework of long-term customary relationships uniting persons beyond their family ties. Together these two unite essentially all the persons of the rural areas. With a few other institutions not here described (not, however, autonomous as are family and community), such as the parish (the formal, hierarchic community of religious belief and observance), they make up the entire anatomy of the small-farm class, the largest in the land.

Taking these two alone, however, what can we say of this framework of relationships upon which custom moves? It is a master system articulating five major subsidiary systems. These five comprise:

1. *The relationships of the familistic order.* These are the pattern of family life and subsistence, and its extension in kinship reckoning, obligation, and coöperation. They undergo periodic re-formation at the match and effect the dispersal of

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182 emigrants and the continuity of the pattern of farm subsistence.

2. *The relationships of age grading, or generation.* These are uniform habitual relations of persons of locally subsistent families who are similar and dissimilar in age. For each person we can trace them to specific events of interaction patterned by custom and compatible with the behavior of familism. In the large, they make up a structure of cliques or age groups, usually of persons of similar sex. Such cliques are opposed to one another, yet integrated under the headship of one of them, that of the heads of families, the so-called "old men." They are characterized by activities of discussion, gossip, and recreation, and make for common and long-established values and opinions, and membership in them bestows certain status, limited, however, by family status.

3. *The relationships of sex organization.* These are relations among persons, similarly the growth of habitual conduct, uniting the same persons of locally subsistent families who are similar and dissimilar by sex. They make up an organization of behavior canalizing the sexual drives in the direction of family life and forming a common attitude toward sexual behavior and a common norm of conduct and standard of sexual morality. This organization is compatible with that of familism and that of age grading and may be said to reinforce both. It also is capable of providing a standard for differentiating farmers from others.

4. *The relationships of local division of labor.* These are still other relations, similarly formed among the same persons, uniting those of similar and different occupation and technical skill. These involve action dealing with goods and services of practical value to the farmers and their subsistence. They fit the persons of a locality into two categories of relationship, depending upon those persons' association with other local persons on the one hand and their connections with persons beyond local ken on the other. The customary behavior marking the relations of the first of these categories duplicates that of familism in many ways and affords status similar to that found in age organization. The behavior marking the relations of the second of these categories does not. It is in this latter case only that class difference makes its appearance in the country districts. Those of higher class than the farmer, in his own community, are those who have connections extending beyond the range of his associates.

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5. *The relationships of economic exchange and distribution in fairs and markets.* Finally there are still further relations among these persons, uniting them over space among themselves and with others from outside the local area in effecting the transfer of farm produce outward and the distribution of non-local goods and services inward. These relations are habitual, customary, and in many cases ceremonial, as in the fairs. They represent a form of organization reflecting familism, age, sex, and local technical organization. 182

These five classes of relationships summarize the incidents, biographies, and events that are here observed and described. They are a classification of them that has explanatory force. They do not themselves explain every event. But they point out to us, as does any faithful map, where we must look. All together they make up a configuration of social patterns, set off and different from others in Ireland. All together as a system, they determine events in the countryside. No event can be understood with reference to them. No sociological or demographical index can be interpreted without them.

This master system is the framework of social life in the countryside. It is the form of the social network in which the greater part of the Irish population are points. It is the system of forces in which any doing of the small farmers, or anything done to them, is a movement, a change of direction, an impact either from within or without.

If a view of the conditions which administrators or legislators of any institution, governmental or private, might wish to attack is to be realistic and adequate, it must take this master system into account. It must be wide enough to allow for its existence. It is not enough to plan an attack as a unilateral action from above. One must know and assess the place in the system into which an action might fit. It is not enough to institute an agency of reform or take an economic measure or put into effect regulatory devices on the basis of a single limited purpose or a single

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III

The Family and the Land

Balance, pattern, system, structure, may perhaps 000
seem formidable terms. They may seem too heavy and too prosaic to do justice to the countryman's way of life. Or again, they may strike you as too formal; for what I name with them is compounded of a thousand personal intimacies. Yet no other terms represent so well the fluid realities of social life. I do not mean that there are not others that might not serve as well. I mean only that the anthropologist cannot use the others; for they are infused with the very emotions which he must coldly dissect. The others are sacred to the patriot and the poet; they are tabu to the uninspired.

I traced the Irish countryman at his work in the 182
last lecture. He finds his role in life and farm labour made for him in the groups to which he belongs. His activities, incentives and rewards take shape within the habitual expectancies and mutualities which make up the pattern of his family. A great deal of his activity beyond the farmhouse door derives from the reciprocities of his system of kinship. Looked at externally, as we are looking at him, he is a unit in a balance of human relation-

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182 ships. He may never attain such a view of himself, of course; from his point of vantage, he is a staunch 'friend' and a loyal son and brother. The balance, which we can see objectively, is to him a deep personal intuition.

Now I face the question: How does this balance maintain itself? What does it imply for him? The point round which the balance revolves is marriage. As we have seen, the 'west room' takes its aura from a change which comes over the parental [885] couple; the 'boy' reaches adult status when he marries and inherits the farm. The family and the land are both involved in this crucial reorganization.

584 Country marriage in Ireland follows an ancient and widespread pattern. It is called 'match-making' and it is the sort of *mariage de convenance* involving parental negotiations and a dowry which is nearly universal in Europe. In Ireland its importance is such as to make it the crucial point of rural social organization.

To describe the match one has to sink one's teeth into the countryman's way of life. For the match is made up of many things. It unites transfer of economic control and advance to adult status. It is the only respectable method of marriage and the usual method of inheritance in the Irish countryside. It is embedded in the Gaelic tongue, in joke and story, and in folklore.

A match usually begins when a farmer casts

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584 on them. Then they go to an attorney next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father of the boy to sign over the land." With the writings, the match is made, and the wedding can go forward.

This long statement, in fact, contains the essence of the whole of match-making. It serves very well as a general guide. A great deal is at stake in this elaborate negotiation. To our eyes, such a way of winning a wife seems very unromantic. It savours a little too much of hard-headed business. We should call a man a cynic who put farm and fortune ahead of personal attractions.

584 182 Yet we should be wrong to make such an evaluation of the countryman. The sentiments prompting him, and his expectations, are quite different; they must be understood in their proper setting. In matchmaking, the interests of all the members of both families are deeply involved. The match is a convention by which they are expressed and realized. We are prone to forget that a living convention can be just as jovous, even more so, in fact, than bohemian revolt.

182 556 584 For example, the heated, formal bargaining quickly summarized by the quotation has deep significance. It effects a necessary and balanced equality between the two families. Superficially, it seems merely a nice adjustment between the farm and fortune. But looked at more closely, it assures many things.

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The girl's family know that she will be well provided for. They make sure of it when they 'walk the land'. They make sure their standing in the countryside will not suffer. Fortune and farm must be roughly equivalent. In the scale of rural prestige, each farm is valued against the fortune it can pay out with its daughters and the fortune it can bring in with its inheriting son's wife. In the words of the Inagh countryman quoted: "Backward places do not grow big fortunes". And as the farm is identified socially with the family whose members work it, these dowries measure the family's standing.

On the side of the family receiving the fortune, too, interests are served. The girl's dowry comes to them, to be used for their own purposes. With it, they are assured a competent 'new woman', as they call the new wife and daughter-in-law. She is trained to their position in life and to their own habits and sentiments. Girl and dowry are a fair exchange for prestige and alliance.

But these are not the only values at stake. The 'fortune' in the match is woven into the internal necessities of farm family life.

When agreement is finally reached between the negotiating parties, they go to a solicitor to make up the 'writings', as we saw in the quotation. By this, the countryman means they cast their agreement into legal form. For the 'writings' is a contractual instrument which unites marriage settlement and

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selves again. One daughter is ordinarily married 584
into a near-by farm. The family makes a match for 593
her. With her, of course, goes a fortune equal to that the son's bride brings in. Perhaps, a son may be similarly married into a farm where there are only daughters; even though a *cliamhan isteach*, 'son-in-law going-in', as he is graphically called in Irish, must pay a much larger fortune. He has to overcome the anomaly felt in reversing the usual role of sons and daughters and has to compensate the family for the loss of 'their name on the land'.

But it is a very fortunate farmer indeed who can provide for all his sons and daughters so. Usually, only the heir and one daughter are married and dowered, the one with the farm, the other with the fortune. All the rest, in the words of the Luogh residents, 'must travel'.

Thus, either at the match or in preparation for it comes the inevitable dispersal of the farm family. The unit must break up. Time and change are inevitable in human affairs; only an orderly social mechanism can tame their ravages.

The match provides rural Ireland with this mechanism. It accomplishes the necessary transformation of the family. The balance of interests and duties, of prides and loyalties, hinges upon it.

There are two facets to the change, an external 584
and an internal. The distinction is understandable, 593
it is that between internal constitution and external 182
face. Or better, let us state it in figurative terms.

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182 Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage" was pro-
584 found sociology. Life in organized society is a
593 drama. In the match, even though the marriage of one principal is the theme, the action includes the whole cast. Internally, the action forcibly and finally changes the interrelations of all the characters; externally, the parts they play to the audience alter and grow. The changes must run their course till the action resolves itself in the crystallization of a new situation; and the act is over.

It is this dramatic quality which gives the sociologist and the social anthropologist the right to use such terms as 'structure', 'dynamics' and 'equilibrium'. He has that right in describing the life of the countryman. The match brings changes in dramatic completeness. It forces the relationships of the constituent human beings into a new equilibrium and creates a scaffolding for new behaviours and sentiments.

182 Let us look at the external change first. The sons
593 and daughters who must travel are forced out of
166 the closely knit group in which they once had their being. Yet, unless they emigrate beyond hope of call, they do not drop out of sight. The sentiments of years of close association do not die out. It has been a matter of pride and duty with the farm father to provide well for his children. Wherever he can, he has found them an opening. He has sent them into the towns, into the shops, the professions, the trades, and into the Church. As in nearly

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all modern countries today, there is in Ireland a great and constant flow of population from country to city. Much of this is made up of the farm sons and daughters.

Yet, they do not always go to the towns, of course. The farm father tries to settle them on the land round about him, too, as we have seen. In either case, nevertheless, they are not lost to the new family which supplant them on the farm. They are merely removed a single step. They have become 'friends'. They are part of the extended kinship system which stretches from the farmhouse door. They owe the obligations of kindred which we saw in farm work; they are the uncles and their children the cousins of the new generation in the home farm.

Out of this sort of expansion Irish kinship is built. The point of integration is the farm father and mother, whose relinquishment of command forces dispersal. Projected backward and upward through the generations, to common grandfathers and great-grandfathers, this transferred remembrance of the duty and sentiment between father and son unites ever wider circles of descendants in the ties of brotherhood. It provides a scaffolding for the behaviours of 'friendliness' and 'cooring' between members of contemporaneous generations. In it each man has a place, reckoned upon 'blood' as he calls it. With the word, a social structure of interwoven habit patterns and emotional

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reciprocities gains a mystic force, all the more compelling.

For all its intensity, Irish kinship is no 'clan', as anthropology uses the term. For there are no fast bounds and no rigidities; it is a system of potentialities. It is expansive, rather than restrictive. Both the Gaelic language and the brogue are very chary of kinship terms. One finds no huge vocabulary such as categorizes each Australian blackfellow for his comrades. All the reckonings proceed from the heart of the system; they are appeals to 'blood'. Because of the structural simplicity of the system they are insistent upon membership in a common generation in a common descent. Thus one hears countrymen distinguish between 'my friends' and 'my father's friends', specifying two generational groups. In his own generation, he will make a similar distinction, categorizing with a variety of expressions all those who occupy the same place as he does in descent from a common ancestor. Thus, he embraces ever wider numbers of his contemporaries. For him 'a distant friend' is less to be relied upon than a 'near' one; but the distance he reckons is not that of space. Rather it is that of cousinship.

Though he has no elaborate terminology of kinship in which to enmesh his relatives, the countryman has another weapon, in appeal to common 'blood'. He is no rootless parvenu. Like the medieval Irish annalists, whose kinship system

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he inherits, he is proud to be an able genealogist. 182 602
Genealogy permeates his view of man and the world.

He judges himself and his contemporaries by 182
their 'blood'. Like many another people, he makes 602
a *deus ex machina* of this verbal identification. 578
'Good blood' explains success and high position; 'bad blood' failure and low estate. To insult a man it is enough to suggest he has 'tinker blood' or 'robber blood' in his veins. One damns thus a whole kindred by impugning its descent. Even such a socially undesirable state of affairs as a feud between two angry, warring kindreds can be given a name in accordance with this identification. It is said that 'there is bad blood between them'.

In fairy-tales and folklore the mystic force of 182
common descent is stronger than fate and cir- 602
cumstance. The rightful son and brother, lost or stolen away, is finally restored to the heritage of his blood. For the 'blood' and the 'land' are identified as well. The social mind is not content with half-hearted inclusions. One's blood calls to one's possessions. A particular ancestral line is inseparable from a particular plot of earth. All others are 'strangers to the land'.

But there is, of course, a practical side too. We have seen it already in the account of agricultural co-operation, not, unfortunately, the kind A. E. and Sir Horace Plunkett advocated, but the pattern of centuries of local life. We shall learn more of it

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182 when we discuss shops, pubs and fairs. In either
602 of these cases, the kinsmen, the dispersed children, remain within the confines of local life.

167 The new equilibrium has a place even where
602 emigration removes the dispersed children alto-
182 gether. The behaviours and sentiments of kinship 'travel' with them. They send back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces, brothers and sisters. There is a marked tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself. Sons and daughters of each generation go out to join the members of the last. One little settlement called Cross, on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, is said locally to be supported by the Shanghai police force. The first man to go is now Chief of Police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the Force have gone to men of Cross.

Such services are part of the same 'friendliness' which sums up the kinship system. And naturally, where kinship is based upon extension, bonds are stronger as the original relationship is closer. Thus a brother is more likely to aid one's self and one's children than is a cousin, though the obligation binds them both. An incident from Luogh will show the human setting in which emigration often takes place. The farmer tells the story himself:

"A fellow named O'Dwyer married to a cousin of the old woman's out of Ballyheline (a neighbour-

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ing townland) was home from Australia one 167
summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a great 602
new coat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day 182
when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. (After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship) he asked could he take the boy (my second son) out to Australia with him, and he would put him behind his bar (he had a hotel out there). I said yes, he could have him.

"After this fellow went back to Australia, he sent over £50 for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas' sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. I sent back the £50, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back."

So much for the external change which the 182
match brings. What now can we learn of the 602
internal change and the new internal equilibrium 888
that change brings?

The transfer of the land to the son who marries 182
carries with it a drastic reformation in the relations 593
of the household members who remain. The head- 888
ship of the parental couple is profoundly modified. The 'old people' move into a new status, that of old age. For both the man and the woman it means an abandonment of power; they are no longer the 'man and woman of the house'.

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182 593 888 Where the transition is smooth, father and son continue to work together. One family in Luogh, for example, was regarded as a model of family harmony. It was made up of a young man and his wife and two children and the old couple. But the old man worked by his side, and the son deferred to his judgment. The greatest compliment the neighbours had for them was this: "Look at the Careys; old Johnny gives his boy a hand in everything. You wouldn't know which one has the land."

182 745 593 888 The introduction of the old-age pension has facilitated this transfer. Originally designed for the support of the aged in an industrial population in England, it has speedily woven itself into the fabric of Irish rural life. Nowadays, the farmer can turn over his land at the age of seventy. In doing so, he divests himself of his property which stands in the way of his receiving the pension. One countryman of my acquaintance sang the praises of the pension [434] in no uncertain terms. His words show clearly that, even with this new source of income at his disposal, the old, abdicating farm father still forms part of the family economic unit. "To have old people in the house", he said, "is a great blessing in these times, because if you have one it means ten bob a week and if you have two it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'Donoghue (a neighbour) and every Friday he will go to Corofin to collect his ten bob. He may buy a couple of bottles of porter but he'll spend the

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 182 593 888 [745]

rest on things for the household and then come home with a few shillings to go into the common fund."

For the old couple are still very important within the family. Their years of command do not disappear overnight. The change must be handled smoothly. The happiest compromise is that one farmer of Inagh described: "Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what I should do for the day, and the old man would say it is now time to do this or that, or the cows should have something done for them, or the garden be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty-thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then I would go do my own business."

The solution rural Ireland suggests to this problem is deference and respect. There can be no equality between the generations. In the words of one local sage, who could discuss the matter with the experience of a Dorothy Dix: "When the new woman is brought into the house, she may have modern ideas and be hoity-toity about the way to do things. So the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man wouldn't say anything but he would light his pipe and go out till the squabble is over. It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave, and go live with her daughter some place. She could do this if the daughter's husband's mother were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. 182 578 593 888

"But these squabbles are bad things. If the new

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182 593 888 578 woman would ask the old person her opinion on how to do this and that there never would be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased. Then the old woman would think she was doing it the way that she said. If the daughter-in-law did what she ought, she would do this and treat the old folks nice."

Deference and respect solve the problem, then, but if they do not, it is the older woman who must leave. That this should be the case reflects one great function of farm marriage. The son must cleave to his bride. If the worst comes to the worst, the new family may 'turn the old people out on the side of the road'. Terrible as such an ending would be, it is the necessary one. For the pattern of family and land must continue in the persons of the new man and woman and their children.

182 593 887 602 This desire is the binding force in the relations of all the household. It is as strong in the old people as in the new couple. The new balance of sentiments finds its expression in the inclusion of the children born to the young man and woman. Like so much of their behaviour, the country-people describe the new ties in terms of the 'help' they afford to the family corporation. And once again, naturally, an economic explanation is all too elliptical. A thoughtful farmer of Inagh generalized the matter in words which show the identity between help in farm work and social reciprocities: "When there are children in the house, the old

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people are a great help to the mother, because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see they didn't fall into the fire or something of that nature. The old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. The old woman would help in the house. If there was a squabble between the mother and the daughter, the old woman would be more likely to stand up for the daughter. She would also teach her how to do things and have more patience than the mother. The grandfather would show the boy how to do things and would have more patience than the father." 182 593 887 602

Accordingly, the chief duty of the 'new woman' is to bear children. She succeeds or fails as a supplier of new persons to the family. Only with children can the new balance complete itself and the essential social continuity be assured. 182 593 606 842

The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law upon her success in this role. The first year of the girl's marriage is a time of apprenticeship. Her work is light. Highly ceremonialized custom grants her an occasional escape back to her own people. Her major duty is pregnancy, and the old couple watch her like a hawk for signs of fertility. All during her child-bearing years the old people will help her, praising her in terms of her increase, and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as she does herself.

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●182 593 606 842 One countryman of North Clare put that first year into words: "At first", he said, "the boy's people make much of the new woman. They would hardly let her work at all. This carries on for seven or eight months, and if then the old people don't see evidence of increase of young, they get angry and abuse her. But if they do, they don't let her do any work at all now and are so proud."

In such a situation barrenness is a curse and a disgrace. The husband has every right to express his disappointment and his displeasure. It is a source of shame to him as well. He fails in preserving the continuity of his line upon the land.

One childless woman of Inagh in Clare knew bitterly how much both family and community support these attitudes: "No matter how much money you have," she said, "no matter how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you are no good. But if you are ugly as the worst and have children, you are all right." Then she went on, to perpetrate an Irish bull, perhaps, but to express the matter very forcibly: "The man wants children just as much as the woman. He is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of this country, especially if you haven't any."

182 593 428 Nevertheless, there are other ways of ensuring the continuity. They 'keep the name on the land' too, but they are makeshifts at best. These makeshifts transfer control of the land, as does the match.

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But in each case, they conform to the system of values lying at the centre of the countryman's way of life. They are social detours, ways past the obstacles of adverse circumstance and bad luck. 182 593 428

For instance there used to be, not long ago, what was known as a 'country divorce'. In the old days, they say, a farmer might send a barren wife back to her parents. He could not marry again, of course; Catholic law forbids it. But he could do something just as effective in assuring the family descendants. He could remarry, not in his own person, but in that of his brother. The two men are equivalent in status, why should they not act sociologically as a single individual. Even today this device survives. Thus a farmer of Corofin, in North Clare, could make use of it. Childless after several years, he got a 'country divorce'. Then he gave the land to his brother, in return for a large fortune, on the stipulation that his brother should marry. One brother thus got wife and farm; the other the dowry. The identity of land and family were preserved for another generation. 182 586 593 428

What other devices are possible has already appeared in what I previously called 'incomplete families'. Nephews, nieces, even grandchildren may be brought in. In time, a match is made for them, and normal succession assured. The former owners move to the 'west room'; they become the old people, and the pattern of a complete farm family unit is restored. To the country-people it 182 602 428

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182 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land,
602 and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such con-
428 duct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can
182 arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at
589 all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own
428 person. That does not mean she cannot exercise
593 full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her
[766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

Even if she marries, she and her new husband
182 merely hold the land in trust. The second husband
428 and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The
587 rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the
593 land, may turn them out. So strong is the identifica-
578 tion. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

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182 428 587 593 [578]

may be often quite different and run counter to rural values, breeding strife and forcing the aggrieved to seek redress outside the law.

Here, then, is the new equilibrium in the countryman's social life. The match provides a transition between the generations. Within the family unit, it provides for the establishment of a new nuclear group. It makes room for an essential continuity in which all the members may share and round which all their interests may be centred. Externally, it regathers those whom it must disperse. Round this dispersal, the web of kinship can be built. In the persons of the old people moved one step toward death, and in the identifications round them, 'descent' and 'blood' and 'the name on the land', the emotions of human groups can find their nexus.

182

In this movement, household, land, adult status, economic control, all move together. Marriage is a turning point round which rural life hinges. It is a structural centre. Every tie between human beings is modified. Then, in a new form, they can crystallize again—to give scope for movement, to allow continuities, to habituate human beings to new social places.

The whole of this movement takes place within a frame of human sentiments, ambitions and desires. Emotion lends its force. Convention, habit and the sanctions of public opinion and private anger keep the bounds and punish transgression. Public honour and self-satisfaction reward conformity.

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182 Yet, all this is still a primary social adaptation. It is not reasoned; it is made up of the habitual face-to-face contact of human beings and the folkways of the community. Yet, neither does it shut out reason; there is ample play for wits, for intelligence and for self-interest. For there is certainly nothing remote, esoteric or formal within this frame. There are no rules to learn that the countryman does not feel within himself or his fellows.

This rural familism is based upon psychological and physiological realities. Within it, the drives of the human animal find satisfaction. Hunger, reproduction, love and anger, domination and submission—all have a place. But these satisfactions, as you can see, are far from being haphazard. They are carefully patterned and controlled. The conditioning the countryman receives is personal; it is a conditioning to other human beings. It is part of an intricate web of human relationship. It is a balance of personalities in movement, crystalline at moments, fluid at others, and transformed when necessary in regular and orderly fashion.

167 In the light of a rural life which can be looked upon as a whole system, the peculiarities of Irish population figures take on meaning.

The Free State exhibits a very interesting and peculiar demography. The statistics of population in Ireland are startling, in many ways. Long-

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554 in many ways to separate, to draw distinctions, to
565 repel the nonconformable. Remember that preposition 'within'. For these behaviours do not discriminate between broad groups, like the hauteur of a nobleman toward a lackey.

They operate within a larger inclusion. They are remotely like the ways of a schoolboy of the eighth grade who may scoff at the seventh-grader, look down on him, and bully him half in fun. Yet let the outside world break in, in the person of the teacher or rival schoolboys, and the distinction vanishes in the violence of united opposition. Nevertheless, intimate as they may be, these behaviours are none the less powerful. And like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization at the match, in country marriage.

From this fact springs the seeming paradox of
182 Irish rural life. A social system centring so strongly
554 round marriage and the family condemns a large
565 proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only the words are antithetical. It is through marriage that one's group and oneself attains and retains full stature. Failure in either sphere leaves unrealized the other.

From this fact, too, comes much of the homely comedy and tragedy of rural life. One prefers the human terms. That comedy and that tragedy show themselves to the student of social behaviour in

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another guise. They are controls upon the system. 182
They are unconscious patterns of human action 554
whose social function is to ensure conformities and 565
to enforce cohesions against internal disruption and external defection. Much of the fate of human beings, both at their own hands and at those of their fellows, conforms to the controls the community exerts in response to the system of customs and values by which it builds itself and in which it ensures its preservation.

Tragedy, for example, lies in the fate of one 463
romantic human type in rural Ireland. In the last 178
century before the introduction of railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, smiths, followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Open any account of rural Ireland before the last quarter of the last century, such as the tales of William Carleton, and you will be rewarded with a full-blooded picture of this lusty crew. Their crafts were very primitive, but their place was sure. Since then, nearly all of them, except the smith, their peer, have been swept away before the skill of townsmen and factory. These men supplied their neighbours, lived among them, were an integral part of rural life. When poverty struck too deep, they became peripatetics, like the wandering singers, scholars, fiddlers, spalpeen labourers, petty hawkers and beggars who swarmed the roads of Ireland. The world of fairy-tale was

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over the countryside. At least, O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were 'landless' men; they could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism they were condemned to celibacy; neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place there for them, except as Oscair's behaviour showed, as 'playboys' and entertainers. So they, too, must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

For once again the examination of rural life leads one perforce to concepts of structural balance. The organization of the community takes its form in the social behaviour of cliques among the countrypeople. That behaviour cannot be disassociated from the characteristic alignment of sentiment and interests which at once separates and reintegrates the generations. And the alignment itself in its turn relates the countrymen to one another in the community, upon the basis of relative age, with the familistic nexus in which are balanced prestige, command, the land and the continuities of descent. That to which the countryman is attached is a social order, as Sir Horace Plunkett alone among the commentators on the Irish scene could see. And a social order is an active living growth whose embrace soon gathers in the whole of life.

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369 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives
443 on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he
571 be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must
582 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

This order, one must not forget, is nothing
182 esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than
369 it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire
443 among the constituent human beings, both make
571 it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern
584 into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

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to cook, sew, keep house, and she hasn't a lot of grand ideas in her head that the town girls have. When she comes to town, she feels she's got on in the world; while the town girl will only be wanting more than her husband can give her, or she won't do her share." 182 369 443 571 584

The speaker was a townsman, born and bred, but one can see that he endorsed the system heartily. He was an older man who had made his adaptations to social life successfully.

For others, for those whom the life of the town has caught up and who have acquired 'grand ideas', as the last speaker called them, adaptation is more difficult. The town, as I have said, engenders its own near-urban values. These come to conflict with those which unite the shop world to its countryside. Thus ambition is born, which means a severance of old ties. The ties become thwarting chains, and here and there a young man, caught within the pulls of two incompatible forces, becomes a bitter and scornful rebel.

One such young man, who found himself swept back into the ways of the market-towns after a brief flight into larger horizons in Dublin, fought against the fate that closed him in. He tells his own story: "This town is very dull. I don't understand what brings you here. The trouble with everybody here is that they are all misfits and that they are all in jobs they loathe. Successful men give you good counsel: they tell you to work hard and forget your

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182 369 443 571 584 troubles. But that is because they are in occupations which they like. There is something glamorous about being a solicitor, and everybody comes to you. I would like to have been one. There will be opportunity here when the older men clear out.

"I went off and studied in Dublin for a long while. Then my father died and my mother was stricken with paralysis and I had to come back here and work behind the counter, which I loathe. There's no one else now but my sister. Most shopkeepers make out through their family trade; and the only thing for me to do now is to marry some rich woman in from the country and then all her friends will come in. If you want to get married here there is nothing in it at all but to look out for a country girl. If you don't want to make a fool of yourself and go in for politics, you have to depend on your friends and your wife's friends, and if you can, you've got to marry a girl from the country. Then she'll bring in all her people for miles round, with all their relatives and their married families, and they're the ones that will buy your flour and sugar and tea. You can't get on without them."

182 369 In this rebellious young man's lament, another aspect of the life of the towns appears and takes its proper place. The social order which demands the maintenance of personal bonds between countryman and townsman carries with it the seeds of change as well. The young man I have just quoted is caught within the very wheels of this change. A

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new time and place bring new adaptations in 182 ●
human lives and with them new values which con- 369
flict with and destroy the old.

In that fact, simply, lies the explanation of the movement by which the "country-people flock into the towns and the townspeople all die out of them".

The rebellious young man shows well in his own history the point at which change of habit drives the townsman and the countryman apart. After years of near-urban life the townsman loses touch. He can no longer meet the rural ways; he is trained in a different habit; he develops a different turn of mind. He is no longer fitted socially to meet the countryman on the old terms and to respond to the demands the social bonds connecting him with the rural hinterland put upon him. If he is born in the town, a second-generation migrant, he is all the more alien. Metropolis has won his mind, his heart, his soul. New vistas of advancement and new personal ties grow up which attract him further and further into the town's life. The bonds with the countryside are broken; they fall away before a new orientation.

So the shop dies out. The family of which the shopkeeper is a part moves onward. If it is affluent and ambitious, its members rise into the professions perhaps, or seek larger worlds to conquer. If it is not, then oblivion swallows it. It seeks a new place in the ranks of the town in which the countryside

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182 has no part. New blood fills its old place along the
369 converging lines of shops and pubs which make up the market-town. The new blood succeeds by virtue of the same ties which originally brought success to the first immigrants from the countryside. It brings with it new bonds of friendship and kinship.

This is a continual movement, a flow along definite pathways in which human lives work out their courses. The country family 'on the land', as we know, buds off with each new generation upon the farm. With the dispersed children go those relationships of a familistic order which unite the human beings in time and space. In this movement ever renewed, yet ever the same, the market-town is caught. Its shops, its pubs, its business life, the whole economic function it performs, flows with this movement.

369 I have described this relation between the
571 country and the town as though it had no other content than that of kinship bonds. This, of course, is a much too simple view. There are other pathways of success and there are other ties less intimate in nature. But one cannot understand these others till this first has been fully sketched out. For the bonds round kinship and friendship form the great all-pervading base to which all the others must be referred.

In this fact lies a new consideration. In retaining

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tion is to mistake the issue. To enforce a political morality without emotional conviction would be false conversion indeed. 443 626 661

Thus, the shopkeeper-publican-politician was a very effective instrument, both for the countryside which used him and for himself. He might perhaps exact buying at his shop in return for the performance of his elective duties, as his enemies charge: but he also saw to it that those duties were performed for the very people who wished to see them done. Through him, as through no other possible channel, Ireland reached political maturity and effective national strength. That strength persists today, despite superficial strife and internal growth and change. And it persists by virtue of its connection with the society from which it springs.

For a social order, we can see clearly now, is a thing of very wide inclusions indeed. The same set of dispositions runs right through, from the 'west room' of remote Luogh to the political life of the market-towns and cities of Ireland. In this study, for instance, we began our examination of the countryman's way of life with a discussion of 'old custom'—folklore and folk-belief. By now it is clear to you, I think, that 'old custom' is more than a dying survival of an age-old habit. It is part of a larger whole, a whole which in its total is co-extensive with the total-pattern of the life of which old custom is still a part. Our two original ex- 121 182

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121 amples, the 'west room' and 'the old man's curse',
182 which came up in the first lecture, lead one on to an analysis of the countryman's way of life. In its turn, that way of life yields one clue at least to the understanding of a nation and its people.

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VI

The Good People

In this last lecture we are finally ready to return to 538
'old custom'. Folklore is part of the social order 182
which we have been sketching out. Folk-custom and folk-belief, even though 'survivals' of an ancient day, have an important role in the life of the countryman. Something of that role I have already tried to show you. Ancient belief surrounded and reinforced the conventional division of labour. It gave point and interest to the necessary changes of social and family life. It helped provide sanctions and formulae of agreement in which the local community could pursue and regulate its unconscious organization of human lives. It cropped up again in the synthesis between the life of the town and that of the countryside.

What is it then that gives old custom and belief this power? What does it contain within itself that allows it to persist and outlive the centuries? The anthropologist Marrett said once: "Survivals are no mere wreckage of the past, but are likewise symptomatic of those tendencies of our common nature which have the best chance of surviving in the long run".

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182 538 The anthropologist must take note of such 'tendencies' in folklore. Consequently, rather than devote time to a description of folk-belief as it still exists, I prefer to attack such questions. In attacking them, I hope to proceed as we have done before. I shall try to treat folklore as it occurs in the life of the countryman and find the answers to our queries there.

538 In so doing, I must give warning that I must leave aside a good deal of the most picturesque elements of Irish folklore. Remnants of hero-tales, fragments of the sagas of Oisín and Fionn MacCumhaill and the Fianna are still to be heard sometimes upon the lips of the old people. A popular history, half-legend, commemorates patriots and the enemies they fought, and weaves itself round the monuments of the past which crowd the Irish landscape. Norman barons, Celtic chieftains, noble lines both native and alien throng the unwritten pages of this history and elbow for room with saints and martyrs, Cromwellian soldiers, moonlighters and 'ripparees', minstrel poets and hedge-schoolmasters of learning. A great many religious legends, in fact a whole popular hagiology, still survive, infusing local piety with romantic glamour. International tales, like those Grimm recorded first in Germany, traceable from India and Siberia to the remotest Irish coasts, can still be heard, regarbed in a traditional Gaelic dress. But all these are a popular literature, unwritten perhaps, but

551 611 name continuity of such a group can be maintained, converging on the founder's name as in our example, is some measure of the continuing solidarity of the group. This tends to weaken after about six generations and the disintegration of the group is reflected in the native commentary—*Tá na h-ainmneacha caillte*, 'the names is lost.' [182] The attempt to keep the name continuity often conflicts with the desire to distinguish person from person, hence the existence of alternative name types.

The following formula[1] shows the ideal structure of the Tory name using the following symbols: C = Christian name, S = surname, E = epithet, Fa = father's Christian name, Mo = mother's Christian name. A symbol in the lower case indicates that the item can be omitted from the progression of names.

		Generation 0		Generation +1		Generation +2
Patrilateral	Ce + S	Fa	e es s	+	FaFa	e es s
					FaMo	e es s
		fa				
		mo				
Matrilateral		Mo	e es s	+	MoFa	e es s
					MoMo	e es s

The columns represent the alternative possibilities, the rows the matrilateral and patrilateral 'progression' of names. The formula can be expanded according to the same rules.

To see how this basic choice between matrilateral and patrilateral 'progressions' worked out in practice I tabulated instances of each type of name progression in my collection, distinguishing by sex of nominee (m and f) but ignoring the optional epithets and surnames (Table I). I collected these names separately from the two settlements on the island, East Town (*Baile Thoir*) and West Town (*Baile Thiar*), and they are so listed on the table. It is [184] commonly believed that the East is more traditional than the West, but this does not show up in any differences in the naming system.

What emerges from this table is the overwhelming preference for taking the father's name (and his father's) by both men and women, and the fact that for both sexes one possible combination does not occur—m/f+Mo+MoMo. I am told that this has occurred in the past, but infrequently. The fourth cluster of name types in the table is a group of residual types. The oddities here are the girl who took her father's brother's name and the rest which skip a generation and start with the grandparental names. These cases usually result from an uncle or grandparents bringing up children in the absence of parents. If these relatives are seen as *in loco parentis* then the pattern remains the same as for the majority.

[1 [This formula has been corrected according to the specifications given in Man, vol. 63, article 248, p. 195, Dec. 1963. Author]

[P. 155, A]

TABLE I

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Name type	West Town	East Town	Total
m + Fa	24	25	49
f + Fa	26	16	42
m + Mo	13	4	17
f + Mo	6	4	10
m + Fa + FaFa	15	5	20
f + Fa + FaFa	13	4	17
m + Mo + MoMo	0	0	0
f + Mo + MoMo	0	0	0
m + Fa + FaMo	0	3	3
f + Fa + FaMo	2	1	3
m + Mo + MoFa	0	3	3
f + Mo + MoFa	0	1	1
m + MoMo	2	1	3
m + MoFa	3	1	4
f + MoFa	1	0	1
f + Fa + FaFa + FaFaFa	3	0	3
f + FaFa + FaFaFa	0	1	1
f + FaBro	0	1	1
m + MoMo + MoMoFa + MoMoFaMo	3	0	3
f + MoMo + MoMoFa + MoMoFaMo	1	0	1
	112	70	182

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Table II summarizes the 'laterality preference' as it affects men and women respectively.

TABLE II

	Patrilateral	Matrilateral	Total
m	72 (70·6 *per cent.*)	30 (29·4 *per cent.*)	102
f	67 (83·75 *per cent.*)	13 (16·25 *per cent.*)	80
Total	139 (76·4 *per cent.*)	43 (23·6 *per cent.*)	182

The figures in parenthesis are percentages of the row totals.

The overall preference is, as we have seen, patrilateral, but there is an interesting minority preference amongst males for matrilateral names. Practically a third of the men and less than a sixth of the women have matrilateral names.

[162]

There are several explanations for this trend amongst males. It may stem from the large number of widows with sons, or from the name continuity of the descent system. In a number of cases it follows from the fact that a man is given his father's Christian name as his own and hence takes his mother's name to distinguish him, although this is not all that common.

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Such a highly personalized naming system only works within the particularistic boundaries of a small community.

182 The world at large is not interested in the particular ante-
551 cedents of a man and the islanders recognize this in their
611 use of surnames with the outside world. The old 'family' or clan names placed a man in his wider kinship group in the days when this was important—it no longer matters today. Within the community the naming system described above distinguishes a man from other men and places him in his immediate kin group. It helps to establish his descent. Research in small communities in Western societies may reveal similar systems serving similar ends but based on different diacritical criteria.[8]

Notes

113 [1] J. M. Synge, *Four Plays and The Aran Islands*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 203f.

[2] Brief ethnographical details of Tory Island can be found in J. R. Fox, 'The Vanishing Gael,' *New Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1962.

551 [3] The second and subsequent names, when in Gaelic, are in the genitive. Some English names are Gaelicized and given a genitive form. I make no claims for the correctness of the spelling of the names given here (Irish spelling is pretty fluid), except that they are the forms recognized by literate islanders. I could not have made any headway with the Tory naming system and genealogies with-
[115] out the patient help of Máire Nic Fhlaithbheartaigh bean Aodha Uí Dhubhghain, Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh, and Aodh Ó Dubhghain.

[4] See Synge's comment on the use of the surname and the 'Mac' prefix. In the 'ceremonial' names on Tory both Mac and Ó are used, but when a surname is included in the 'personal' set, these prefixes are not usually used.

[5] This could be Paddy-John Uí Fhlaithbheartaigh—roughly Paddy John O'Flaherty. The pronunciation would be the same.

551 [6] A fuller analysis of the structure and functions of these descent
611 groups is in preparation. They seem to be mainly concerned with landholding—as a consequence of the equal division of land amongst all a man's (or woman's) heirs, and the system of keeping land in trust for migrants. Their other functions lie mainly in the sphere of mutual support amongst members in times of crisis.

[7] This distribution could only occur by chance in one sample out of 20: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4{\cdot}50$: $p = < {\cdot}05$.

551 [8] The Welsh system of stringing ancestral names together with
171 'ap' is obviously similar to the Tory method, but the Welsh, I believe, used only male names. Mr. Andrew Dunsire tells me that in some Scottish coastal villages a man will be known by the boat he owns, his children inheriting this epithet. In some working-class communities which I know in England a system similar to that on Tory operates. A man may be known as 'Mary's Tom' and his son as 'Mary's Tom's Johnnie,' etc. Synge notes the use of occupations as marks of distinction in Wales and comments on the lack of occupational differentiation on the Aran Islands which makes this method impossible. In some rural communities a man is known by the name of his farm. W. M. Williams in *The Sociology of an English Village* (Routedge, 1956) gives examples of this. See also his fascinating discussion of Naming and Family Continuity, pp. 79–82 and 239f. The contrast with the Tory system is marked, however, in that one can, in Gotforth, move from 'side' to 'side' in choice of names—bothnamnes and Christian names being used.

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Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

791 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience,
795 "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

795 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St.
[178] Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are
[182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming,
796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent
[262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people
[273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only,
796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St.
[527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the
[177] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which,
[292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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[For information pertaining to the historical background of Irish national character and personality development, the relation to sexual repression and theological dogma, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 20-27.]

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly on the children descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body. 78 95

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation. 771 178 [184] [182]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermis- 114 538

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

522 831* [123] 834 535 [178] [571] [579] [154]

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

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Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

[152] 831* 155 181 182 792 779

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Ireland was . . . one of the world's most ascetic countries, and the monastic ideal has undoubtedly left a deep mark on the Irish mind. Although Irish priests were permitted to have wives as late as the eighth century, sexual renunciation came to be identified with virtue and distinction in the community, and thousands of the best men and women lived apart from each other. Kevin Devlin in his *Christus Rex* article on "Single and Selfish" . . . says of the ancient Irish that "when they 'fell in love with Christianity' . . . they took to the ideal of virginity with a Pauline enthusiasm unknown elsewhere. St. Patrick himself noted this with an inflection of surprise in the *Confessions* . . ." (Blanshard 1954: 160–161).

Several Irish scholars since 1955 have expressed the opinion in personal conversations that the rapidity of Irish conversion to monasticism in the early medieval period can be attributed, in large measure, to masochism. [53] This ancient character trait is most evident in the projective system of early Irish verbal art, if one discounts the possibility of widespread distortion through the actions of Celtic defense mechanisms and later revisionists.

In a recent book, the impact of Augustinianism at this time and in the centuries to come is examined by Fr. Alexander Humphreys. He says in *New Dubliners:*

The specific doctrinal tradition to which Ireland and the Irish countryman in particular has fallen heir is the Augustinian. . . . [It] lays relatively greater emphasis on the weakness and evil to which human nature is prone as the result of original sin. By the same token, it attributes relatively less efficacy to natural knowledge and human action and relatively more validity to God's revelation and more power to the action of God's grace. . . . [The] Irish countryman has acquired a more than average distrust of native human reason. As a Catholic he cannot and does not deny the validity of rational thought, but he tends to be quite suspicious of the pride of the mind and so wary of ultimate rationalism that he shies away from reasoned discussions of high truths. . . . The tradition he inherits tends toward a certain historical and theological positivism in regard to the major truths and values of life, and, together with other historical factors, has led him to an intensified reliance upon the teaching power of the Church as voiced by the clergy. At the same time, while appreciating the need for positive good works, he is inclined to place relatively greater emphasis on those which are directly concerned with obtaining grace and relatively lesser store by simple ethical behaviour. And finally, although he is certain that man's bodily nature with its emotions is at root good, he is rather more suspicious of it and deals with it somewhat more severely. As a result he inclines to a jaundiced view of sex and a generally ascetic outlook which

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

> Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

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Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

[874 648]

> Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18).

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories.

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present.

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things

662
539 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers
571 further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the
828 quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their main-
829 spring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

• 182
177 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed
178 to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the
181 penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not
*831 exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread
795 throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism,
779 which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

*831 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined
181 in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions,
182 enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control"
626 —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as employing informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative experiences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorganization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in

*831
626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
164 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
• 182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

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HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
• 182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[541] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
582 articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in
[586] Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis

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Beag, only limited amounts of which have been reported in this chapter. Even though sexual repression and fear of the clergy prevent the folk from being outspoken in this matter, it is constantly broached among themselves.

Paramount among external factors stimulating emigration are prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the impact of the mass media of communication, the increasing number of tourists visiting Inis Beag, the return of former emigrants, and the fact that, with an increase in incomes and scholarship funds, more island children are going to the mainland for their schooling each year. America has been a land of freedom and prosperity to the Irish since before the famine, and, until the Second World War, most islanders migrated there never to return. But the growth of prosperity in England following 1946 shifted the stream of emigration in that direction, for not only were jobs plentiful across the Irish Sea, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in big cities. And it was possible to visit Ireland frequently, as the distance and cost are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic. It is common for youths vacationing in Inis Beag from England to talk others into returning with them. The latter declare that they will soon come back to the island to settle permanently, hopefully with "great riches," but they seldom return. Since the war, a number of "Yanks" have also returned home, and their stories of life in America make the youthful islanders restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many folk also sow the seeds of discontent.

Television was introduced into Inis Beag during 1963, and the two sets now installed always have ready and willing audiences. Almost every cottage has a radio, and, although the islanders seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, as they allow the islanders to glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and freer world. Television and radio programs are censored, but, even so, the morality expressed in them—especially the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A censor from Inis Beag would most certainly create more discontinuities in films with his shears than do his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin.

Most of what I have written in this essay is to be found expressed in the works of such older Irish writers as James Joyce, Sean O'Casey,

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593 the best of his ability. Though he can make what disposal
462 he will of the funds earned by the labor of the group, his wife and children can expect as of right that he shall make it for the family as a whole in which each member receives his share. For the work of his wife is complementary to his, and in its own sphere of as great importance to the livelihood and the organization of the family unit. While he may demand and expect of his wife that she fulfill her household duties, so may she demand and expect that he fulfill his in the management and working of the farm and in providing for herself and the children.

593 As regards income, all money derived from the sale of eggs and butter, the chief concern of the women beyond the house itself, belongs to her to dispose of as she sees fit. Yet the fruits of her labors are also subject to the needs of the family unit, husband and children.

462 The division of labor between the sexes arises within a
593 field of larger interests and obligations. It is part of the behavior expected reciprocally of husband and wife. It is a functional element of their relationship within the family.

868 The training each sex receives from childhood in farm work reflects this fact. Each learns his or her part in farm economy, not as a vocational preparation but as a making ready for marriage. The boy acquires his man's skills and techniques for the farm and farm family he may head himself some day; the girl learns the woman's role as an integral part of her future state of wife and mother. Each learns to expect of the other not only the loving consideration of husband or wife but the proper skills in farm economy.

462 Among the small farmers this dichotomy of tasks assigned
626 to the sexes in the economy of the farm family is more even
● 183 than the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, father and mother. It is also an integral part of the personalities of all men and women of the peasant's own kind. One can get many expressions of attitude of this sort. They show that

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the division of labor between males and females is regarded as corresponding to the natural propensities of the two sexes. That a man should concern himself with a woman's work, such as the sale of eggs or the making of butter, is the subject of derisive laughter, while a woman's smaller hands make it "natural" for her to be a better hand at milking the cows.

Even when the communal labor of the family is demanded and women take their place in bog, garden, and meadow, a definite role is assigned them. Usually it is the lighter tasks which are known as women's work. There is no formal taboo confining a woman to women's work. Heavy work is merely felt to be a hardship upon her. At the potato planting the women do the arduous work of planting the sprouts which they have prepared, bending over to put them into the ridges prepared by the men. They do their share, if necessary, of cultivating, but they are not generally accustomed to the spade, which like the plough, the harrow, the mower, scythe, and turf "slan" is regarded as a masculine implement. At the potato lifting they go along behind the man who turns the potatoes out of the ridge with spade and plough, and pick them up. At the haymaking, the pitching, raking, and some of the building of the haycocks are left to them. But the mowing, especially where it involves the horse-drawn mowing machine, and the building of the rick in the haggard, are masculine skills. In all cases of field work of this sort the role of the woman is usually auxiliary. The same holds in turf cutting. The men do the actual cutting in the bog trenches, while the women knead the peat into briquets and pile it for drying.

The many attitudes and beliefs which surround this type of division of labor illustrate again the socially determined character of the distinctions and their genesis in the intersexual relationship. Just as the man's work is the harder, the more various, and the wider in scope, so the attitudes express a greater valuation of the men's work within the

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241 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the
462 authors have heard men admonish a woman for interrup-
626 tion with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we
183 [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laugh-
461 ter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conven-
593 tional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral
183 specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within
626 the farm family. The connection between family status and labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the non-economic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 Within the framework of the division of labor on the
593 basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the
561 basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

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592 342 775 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

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Family and community alike support them in their attitude. A woman could say bitterly, for she was childless: 183 842

> No matter how much money you have and how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you're no good. But if you're ugly as the worst and have children you are all right.

The husband has every right to express his displeasure at his wife's barrenness. To have no children is a source of shame to him and a terrible disappointment in his desire to continue his line upon the farm. One woman put it: 183 593 842

> The man wants children because he is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of the country, especially if you haven't any.

In the country districts they say that he may beat her and in their graphic phrase "bounce a boot off her now and then for it." Country belief still regards the woman as the offending partner in a childless marriage. Near Inagh one farmer, a returned Yankee, was regarded as an anomaly because, though childless, he treated his wife just as well as though she had many and did not get angry when he was twitted on his lack of an heir. They explained it by saying that he "knew it was his own fault." [195]

The day of the "country divorce," as the farmers call it, is rapidly passing. In the old days, they say, a man might send a barren wife back to her parents, though Catholic law forbade him to marry again. There are cases which illustrate that the custom survives in altered form. They are particularly revealing in our analysis of the desire to preserve the family unity and its identification with farm and household through the generations. Here the brothers act, sociologically, as a single individual in order to insure the desired continuity. For instance, in one case, a middling farmer of Corrofin, childless after several years, got a country divorce. He gave the land thereafter to his brother in return for a thousand pounds, which the brother had inherited in lieu 586 842

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Even where matches are made between strangers, some kind of sexual attraction is not to be neglected, and local custom provides for a brief introduction and a setting for courtship. Several cases came to the authors' notice in which advantageous matches were broken off when either boy or girl expressed distaste for his or her prospective partner, usually when confronted with him or her at the preliminary festivities of the country marriage. Other cases again came to their notice in which a shy suitor could be galvanized into a final decision to take matters into his own hands and press a suit, when his family began to cast around for a match for him elsewhere. Matchmaking was, in fact, far from presenting a scene of "loveless" marriages. The match is a convention like any other. For those who are trained in it, it provides occasion for arousing sexual interest and marital aspirations in young couples quite in the manner of "falling in love" in communities where courtship is more immediately a matter of personal initiative. 581 584

And, like any other convention, the match could also come to cloak another situation. The match made by the contracting families is the ideal kind of marriage, for the reasons we have discussed. But it does not necessarily imply any one kind of courtship. In many instances a couple who made their own decision had a match made for them. Even in the case of "runaways," as elopements are called, the boy and girl could often be brought back and a match made for them. And lastly, as a way of establishing respectability and providing for the movement of the re-formation of the family, even those cases of marriage necessitated by premarital pregnancy could be fitted into the dominant convention. [834]

Thus the forms of courtship and the development of pairings among the population of boys and girls of the country communities must all be understood, even in their most unusual forms, in terms of the dominant pattern of the 581 183 577

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581 familistic system and the kind of marriage it entails in rural
183 Ireland. The country people feel this. Their attitudes
577 identify the convention with the whole code of morality and folkways of their own class and kind.

183 They equate any departure from the accepted norm as a
577 sin, a lack of religion. They bring the whole weight of all
673 their sanctions and values to bear upon it. They make the ultimate identification between their own norms and the only right conduct, particularly in this matter so central to the rural familistic system. This final attitude was often addressed to the observers, particularly, but there is reason to believe that it is as often expressed among the country people themselves. In discussions of immorality, illegitimacy, premarital intercourse, the question would arise: Would you believe such a thing could happen in Ireland? In such countries as England and America well it might, for there, the country people hear, the boys and girls just take a liking for one another and go off and marry and "never mind the money." And we remember that in this case the "money" means the re-formation of the entire two families as well.

Even those cases which meet condemnation are likewise often thought to have to do with the dominant pattern. Whether or not the suspicions of the country people are correct, the authors do not know. But they were struck with the fact that so very often in discussions of cases of immorality and unethical sexual conduct the country people made no recourse to concepts of search for pleasure or even of the overpowering force of emotion as explanations of the condemned conduct. Both explanations were to be heard in other classes. Rather, the country people insisted upon looking for a motive in terms of the system of organizing human relations which they understood. The culprits, young "bucks," tried deliberately in such cases to impregnate the girls and force marriages. They were motivated

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by greed for land and dowries. Sex without familism seemed beyond the country people's imagination.

But the last statement must be qualified in a definite direction. It is only for themselves that they seemed to be unable or, better, unwilling to imagine a sexuality without familism. Other patterns of sexual behavior they see and have heard of, but these are immoral and unworthy ways of doing things and acting, departures from the right and normal, sometimes disgusting, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes mysterious. In any event they are marks of standards of a lower class and lesser dignity and respectability than that of the farmers. They are to be repudiated not only for their lack of common sense but for supernatural reasons as well.

183 777 592 577

Thus the authors heard several instances in which bad luck attended the departure from the usual familistic norm. There was a feeling, sometimes overtly expressed, that at any one time there should be only one sexually active procreant couple in a household. Young and old could well be part of the household in any numbers, but there should be only one adult married couple under one roof. Any other arrangement brought its own punishment and ill luck.

183 577 832

But more often there was identification between the expression of sexual impulse outside the familistic pattern and the debased conduct of the lower ranks of the landless and disreputable of the countryside, the laborers of the towns, the runaways, remnants of broken households. Or else the small farmers put the onus of guilt on other regions "more backward" than their own. At the most, wrong conduct might be the result of some occult compelling force strong enough to break through all sense and caution. The authors were struck with the countryside's version of love charms. In accounts of love charms and love magic, proof of their existence and efficacy was always to be found in the

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183 577 832 otherwise unaccountable cases in which a man or woman abondoned farm and fortune and the favor of friends for a sexual attraction. How else to explain, for instance, an old man's senile infatuation, a young boy's indiscourageable devotion to an older woman who could bring him nothing?

583 A word must be said here of the other ways of bringing about marriage than the formal process of family matchmaking. In the last century, to judge from the accounts of the old people, and to follow the testimony of novelists on Irish life, a stage-managed elopement was often resorted to. It was a semi-respectable kind of marriage. The swain and his friends kidnapped the bride out through the window in the night. They took her away from her father's house to the house of an uncle or other relative of the young man's. There dancing and general jollity reigned, and the young couple were feted. Very often all parties seem to have connived at the result. On other occasions, the elopment was obviously designed to bring about a match to which parents objected or to force parents to a decision. Staged elopements of this kind seem now to have died out in Clare, or at least to be rather infrequent. But the difference between this and a true runaway is slight. In the latter case the young couple take matters into their own hands entirely. Throughout the years many couples have eloped, run off to towns and to emigrate without parental blessing. Others have done likewise and returned to get their portions and a delayed parental sanction. Nevertheless one can see that all these forms are mere modifications upon the dominant convention.

583 581 They too must lead into the familistic pattern. A match must be made, or at least fortunes given and provision for family re-formation made. In cases of premarital pregnancy, the match may be forced or hastened, but it is nonetheless the final and respectable resolution.

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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation. 848 183 581

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls. 183 836 562

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. 837 183 [593]

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire. 834 571

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

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That was the way with the girl who married Willie Meaney[3] and he thought to get the money, but the parents said let her go. Now they are in Ennis and she never got anything. The same way with the two who married the Shaughnessy girls. They thought they would get something but they didn't get a thing. Would you believe that? America is not the only place where things like that happen. The people have crosses to bear. Every year we have a talk from the priest about the dances. He says the dances are all right but it is the going home that is bad. There is always a laugh when he says that. Then some of the parents get worried and they won't let their daughters go to a dance for a month or so, and they forget about it after that. 834 571 535

The status of boy and girl involves a "repression" of sexual impulse, virginity, and chastity of thought and expression, but custom and the attitudes of the older people provide a constant stimulation of sexual interest in the direction of the familistic system. The status of boy and girl thus involves a definite kind of sexual organization, based directly upon social relationships. 834 183 554

Nowhere is this better to be seen than in the case of the young woman's "character." Here the Church fathers and the country people seem to have attained quite a unanimity. Sexual orientation is inseparable from social role. Sexual repute and status are identical. The authors do not say this identification is unique. They do not know its historical origins. But they do wish to point out its function in this setting: The young woman's "character" is her full status as a social being because the familistic system is such that sexual activity, no less than economic, is completely integrated with one's role in social life. Consequently her sexual conduct is no concern of hers alone.

In the relationships in family and community in which the young girls of the countryside find their roles, any departure from the norm of conduct on their part is cause for

[3] Names of persons and smaller places in this and subsequent quotations are, of course, fictitious and refer to no actual persons or places of such names.

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834 violent disturbance in the relations uniting others to them-
183 selves and to one another. To "destroy a girl's character"
554 in the countryside is to upset the pattern of family and community life by overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change in farm succession. Much more than a shooting or a fight, a sexual irregularity, which cannot be righted in a match, is capable of destroying the intricate mutual obligations and expectancies of rural familism.

For the family whose "name" is "destroyed" and whose hopes of orderly re-formation are upset, two courses are open. One is to patch up a compromise, to accept the match
[626] forced upon them. The other is to expel the offenders bodily. Community feeling gives full support. In either case the girl concerned can no longer hope for full status. If the match is made or another husband found to father a child, time may right matters and give her full adult status as a farm wife and mother. Her failure as a girl may be forgotten, but it was a failure still. Otherwise there is little further to do but suffer expulsion. Emigration has been the refuge till recently.

836 The country people's attitudes toward illegitimacy and
848 premarital intercourse, one and the same to them, reflect well the disturbances they occasion. In discussing a local
626 case, one woman could voice the community's opinion in the following general terms:

> A young lady with a good fortune even, she couldn't get any man because her character is broken. Unless maybe he is very low. And so she usually goes to America and passes for a maiden. Everyone knows the father of the child but, if he has a good farm of land, no one would say anything, but he would be unlucky and have no family. He would get another woman [a wife, that is] with no bother. The baby might be sent to a home. And after a time they bring it home as a cousin.

836 But it is not always that the boys are treated so leniently,
626 and they, too, must emigrate, driven off by public censure.

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834 laughter is best explained as playful censure. For very real
522 censure often breaks out against such a person. It is particu-
587 larly likely to break out into overt punitive action in cases where old farmers threaten the expectations of their heirs by taking young women as second wives. In fact, the one kind of man or woman of considerable age who does not command respect is this. The countryside finds endless amusement in the theme of May and November. Naturally the matchmaking system does lend itself fairly well to matings between oldish men and young women, since ownership of a farm is the basis for a match.

581 The most interesting point of inquiry, then, may well be
554 the connection between the sexual status of the family mem-
● 183 bers, as we have described it here, and the standing of the family. The sexual status of the members is a reflection of their capacity for carrying alliance among the other families of the countryside. Can we draw, therefore, a connection between rural familistic norms about sexual behavior and the class structure of the rural community?

We know already that marriage in rural Ireland yields us one clue to the connection. At matchmaking the negotiations between the contracting parties concern the relative standing of each. That standing is at stake. The equivalence of dowry and land are arrived at through a careful enumeration of all the past history and the present material substance of the contracting families. The location of the farm, its livestock, its soil, the reputation and ancestry of the family, all these are compared. Backward places, we remember, do not grow big fortunes. Neither do many other kinds of persons and places.

We are dealing here of course only with one broad class, the country people. Yet within the boundaries of rural life there is much to be learned of the country people's treatment of relative prestige and standing among themselves. There are many behaviors in the activity of the countryside

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which express attitudes of social stratification. These do not only express the differences between the country people and outsiders from other classes beyond the confines of the local districts; they have much to do with the intimate details of personal relations in daily life among the small farmers as well. Intimate as they may be, however, these behaviors are nonetheless powerful. Like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization around marriage and matchmaking in country custom. In that they are directly a part of the organization of sexual conduct and attitudes among the small farmers.

From this fact springs the seeming paradox of Irish rural life, already mentioned. A social system centering so strongly round the institution of the family condemns a large proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only through marriage does one attain full stature and one's family take its full place in the interlocking alliances of extended kindreds in the countryside. Failure to make a match is not only failure to fulfill one's own destiny of mating and procreating; it is also, as we have seen, failure to provide for the dispersal and re-formation of one's group. It is also, as we shall see, failure to maintain or establish the alliances making status among one's peers.

Thus it is the identification of sexual behavior with familistic role on the one hand and attainment of status on the other that makes the problems of marriage and sex of such great social and emotional importance.

Their importance is both individual and social. Individually, the powerful dispositions and sentiments concerned give a deep-seated biological and physiological basis to the institutional imperatives and the behavioral norms learned in experience of human relations. Socially, the fact that such a basis can be relied upon gives added strength to the attitudes evoked in support of the social institutions of the

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countryside and an added, automatic sanction to the enforcement, through public and official channels, of the accepted behaviors. In this manner, based upon and reinforced by such deep-rooted automatic reactions of individual conscience, the canons of morality, custom, personal habit, religious teaching, and social sanction form a whole piece all together. To hazard a comparison, let us select other central nexuses of custom, attitude, and emotion, among other peoples. By the process described, sexual morality becomes to Irish society, from the country people with whom we are dealing upward through other classes of society, what respect for law is to English society, what filial piety once was to Chinese society.

Let us now see how this mutual incorporation of sexual, marital, and stratificational standards works out in the experience of the countryside.

In the system of relations we have described, the fate of persons at the hands of their fellows and the repute they bear among them are closely connected. Local standing is, of course, a product of values arising in local experience. Consequently when we come upon the comedies and tragedies of life within a specific community, and hear described by the people themselves the course of events through which these little dramas took place and the impression they made upon the witnesses, we are close to observation of the experience which builds a scale of values and the place of individuals in it. The problem of local repute and public opinion can be reviewed in the light of concrete events and referred to actual relationships built out of behavior.

Thus one can come to see these petty events not merely as personal histories but also as functions of the patterns of organization we have been detailing.

If then we should take up the life of a local community and its inhabitants and search it through for its family histories of recent years, we should lay bare the roots of local

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values. Such a study was made in one community studied. Family histories since the famine times were secured from two hundred families of a Clare parish. The histories included farms owned or rented, worked, subdivided, added or lost, in each generation since pre-famine days; names, numbers, sexes, and life-sketches of family members of each generation; occupations of each person not taking to farming; emigrations and the destination of the emigrants in each generation; marriages made in each generation, according to farms married into, occupations of husbands and fathers-in-law, and size of dowry. Much of this material was statistical in form, but along with it a considerable amount of anecdotal material was gathered, describing in detail many local incidents. This information is out of place here; and it will be reported elsewhere. But certain conclusions of relevance to the problem of understanding the social role of marital alliances in the countryside are of importance for the present discussion.

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The first of these conclusions concerns the mechanism by which families without farms or with very small and "backward" ones were forced to extinction through celibacy. The second of these conclusions illustrates the means by which alliances made through the matchmaking mechanism provided a channel of upward social movement and incidentally a path of recruitment of the successful children of farmers in the "bad" or poorer lands into the ranks of those of the "good" or better lands.

The first conclusion illustrated by the material of this survey of family histories is one we have already met. Failure to make marital alliances led to failure of family reformation and hence either to celibacy for all the children or to emigration on the part of the whole generation. In the words of the countryside, if a family could find no one with whom to marry "they died out of it."

Even so broad a question as the disappearance of the class

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Even so broad a question as the disappearance of the class
183 of artisans in the countryside comes, for its explanation,
581 under this conclusion. It cannot be understood except in
554 terms of responses to values determined in the relations of familism. The social mechanism by which the local artisans have disappeared – whatever the historic and economic occasion of their fate in the industrial revolution and its aftermath – is something specific to the system of social organization we have described.

The few local artisans who survive today were once members of a numerous group. In the days before railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, and smiths followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Their skills descended, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; the trade was "in their blood." Their surplus children have had to disperse to the towns and in emigration. For theirs, too, is a familistic world.

Unless the artisans in the countryside marry within their own fast-diminishing numbers, they, too, must have land and fortune. If they do not get it, they must either marry one of their own kind or stay celibate. Today one finds many survivors of this local class of craftsmen scattered here and there in the countryside. The mere memory of their trade may be all that remains to distinguish them from petty cotters. In the majority of cases they have not married. If they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Thus the family "dies out of it." Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

The mechanism by which this extinction is brought about is clear enough. Occupational names have emotional significance far beyond their reference to skill and economic
183 function. They are symbols evocative of social stratification,
581 among the small farmers as no less elsewhere.
554 In disputes even within a family, angry reference to ties

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outside the family may well be a method of attack. Where, as here, such ties are a matter of one's "blood," the attack is direct and personal. One's status is part of one's person. How close a part it is can well be seen in the quotation of one farmer's account of transition in family relations at the match: 183 581 554

> If the old people don't like the girl, then the mother and the father go to their room and fight with her every day; and if she has low blood in her, they will take her to task for it, if she has weaver, tinker, or tailor blood. If they don't like her they will not work like they used, but go out on *cuaird* and spread the bad news about her.

The familistic outlook gives all this kind of evocation and reference the character of genealogical commentary. Everything one does or is can be referred to one's "blood." Heredity is the explanation of success or failure, high position or low estate. Since one's heredity includes the occupational and other status of one's forbears and the whole gamut of relations which marked their place in the community, a continuity is preserved between the present and the past which defines one fully as a member of one's group.

Consequently, the instances of failure to find wives and husbands, the instances of courtships opposed by parental and other pressures, the instances of elopements ending in emigration, the instances of families of brothers and sisters who stuck together celibate until old age, are far oftener examples of the force of failure to find a mate of acceptable status than of any other cause. The organization of sexual behavior in the countryside is inseparable from that of the stratification of the community itself.

The second interesting point, again one in which the examination of family histories led to an illumination of the connection between the patterns of sexual organization and those of small farmer familism, is in a sense the reverse of the coin.

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183 581 554 In these histories, when a countrywoman explained that she or someone she knew had married from bad land into good, or paid a larger dowry than she might have, had she stayed in her own townland, she referred to a movement that was quite readily discernible in her parish. She had experienced, and took pride in, a natural wedding of desire and ambition, which combined, for her as an individual, the instincts of a woman to be wife and mother and the demands of her group's advancement in the systems of familist alliances that made up her community. This was the individual side of the matter. Many indeed were the farmers and their wives who were careful to specify to us how successful a match had been in carrying a larger-than-might-be dowry to better land. One might grumble perhaps about one's lot, if there were anything to grumble over, but in such a case one might be proud that one had assured one's children of a better farm and a better standing than one's own.

166 581 But there was a social side of the matter which showed that this ambition was not a merely personal thing. For in the parish in which we gathered detailed information an interesting statistical movement could be seen. This movement was reflected in the geography of the district.

Marriages since 1864 in this parish have shown a tendency to move brides from the westward out of the poorer lands eastward toward richer farms. The parish happens to lie between higher, poorer soil to the westward and a more fertile area to the east. One must know the local topography and the fertility of the soil to understand the details of the movement. But its over-all tendency is statistically clear. None of the marriages among small farmers and their fellows have taken place (if they took place in the County at all) beyond a six-mile range of distance between the farm married-out-of and the farm married-into. In all cases the movement is small. Yet, small as it is, it shows a distinct tendency. In general, the higher and more westerly town-

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755 Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well,
776 bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take
[239] anything from hens to men and women. When they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless, he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper and friend of former years. The vitality has gone out of him or her. The country-people can believe that 'they' have spirited away the real person and left in his place "some spent old man that they had with them for a long time". The real person is 'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not
[759] mean that they do not recognize what we might call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too well, from bitter experience. It means only that they have an explanation for it that infuses it with the associations they have about their belief.

776 For the belief in changelings, about which you all have heard a great deal, has its root in the fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die
[761] are taken, except the old people". Only for them is death the natural course of events; all others have fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

776 Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy
183 belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by
82 any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

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of an emotionally charged explanatory scheme. 776
The trouble overtaking them becomes interpret- 183
able for him; he knows what has happened and is 82
in some measure ready to take the necessary steps. The fate of his goods and his fellows affects him vitally, it upsets the attachments he feels. But belief is common property; it is given to him and held for him by that community of his fellows of which he is a part. It is a socially held ideology to which he gives credence and in which he is dependent upon his fellows for ways and means, for corroboration, for solace.

But this ideology is much more than a mere in- 776
terpretative device. Certain anthropologists have 183
tried to see in magic and magic belief a groping, primitive science; but the concept has failed them if pressed very far. For the fairy faith enforces definite behaviour upon the countryman; it lays down rites and practices which he must perform. If he is to recover his goods that have been taken, restore his threatened animals, friends or children, he must follow a definite course. That course is laid down for him again by his community of belief and habit.

If we examine the course he must adopt to com- 776
bat ill-luck and disaster, we see a new incorporation 789
into belief of the things he values. In cures, nostrums, and other means of combating evil, the goods upon which he and his fellows are dependent and to which they are attached are once more

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Here then one can see a new kind of incorpora- 776
tion of the values of the countryman's life into 789
belief. The goods round which his interests are 754
centred come to be either beneficial or dangerous to 183
the group to which he belongs, depending upon their connection with it in the critical situations which threaten disease and disaster. Ordinarily, there is nothing supernatural or dangerous about an egg or a hazel-stick, to the countryman. But in these special situations, in which tradition comes to his rescue, they take on a wholly different character. Thus we have the seemingly paradoxical case that the things of greatest 'power' are not by any means always the wondrous, unusual, and fearsome things, but the homely articles of use and familiar associations. Iron cures, but iron is not mysterious. An egg becomes a sign of witchcraft; a pinch of salt protects one against evil; but neither are fearsome things in themselves. Yet in critical circumstances they have the power to heal, to hurt, to cure, to destroy.

For what the countryman's belief is doing for 183
him is something belief always seems destined to do, wherever it is found. Tradition is bearing upon him to keep alive and organize the regard his group must feel for the codes of conduct and the objects of use by which it lives. Belief focuses his attention and his emotions upon them. It gives sanctity to his conventions, his needs, and his goods. It infuses them with emotional associations far beyond

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183 their normal capacity to carry sentiment. It gives them symbolic form.

In this way it holds before him, in emotion, in ritual act, in hope of cure, and defence against evil, the important place they have in the social life upon which he is dependent in habit and sentiment. It throws him back upon the secure and stable order of ordinary, traditional life.

In this fact lies the strength of folk-belief. But you may ask, how can this be? How does a belief in the curative powers of an object both throw him back upon his social habit in such a way as to secure him emotionally in it, and effect the purpose of the cure?

The answer lies in the part established association plays in psychological balance. The cures restore; they provide a form of action in which the countryman can regain an emotional equilibrium. The hazel-stick is his sure and habitual means of driving cattle; the egg is his tried staple of diet; iron is his old friend in tools and implements. They all figure in his own habit and in that of his group's life; they are all tried and true associations of his normal security. He sees them as more than mere unrelated things; he sees them as vital parts of his normal security.

Then, when disease and death stalk his possessions and his friends, and threaten him in his regard for them, the countryman makes his appeal to the tried and true. If a cow is sick, he may well try

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castor-oil first, for he is a rational man. But if 183 ●
castor-oil is unavailing, then other means can be tried. He seizes upon a symbol of normal associations and habitual undisturbed security. The means he adopts restores not the cow so much as it does the peace of mind of him who uses it.

And the belief he holds makes a logical synthesis between this act and the cause of his disturbance. It fits them both into a symbolic order above and beyond, yet closely bound up with, the order of his own life. Put into words, this synthesis takes causal form. "There is great power in a hazel-stick", he says. "It drives 'them' away." And the statement is perfectly true, in the logic of emotions.

In some such way as this, ever broader areas of 181
his associations with normal social life are given 183
'power'. They are incorporated into belief and wield the same forces of restoring and upsetting that life as do the good people, whose attributes they become. Events, personalities, landmarks, are brought into this order, in one way or another. Nearly everything here below comes to be projected, in imagination traditionally refurbished, into the other world of awe and wonder and mysterious 'power'. The countryman relates himself to the things so projected through their place in his belief; he knows what to do about them and finds his regard for them fashioned in the common folk faith.

The fairy-belief becomes a world-view, a *Welt-*

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anschauung, in which all experience has a place in the logic of emotional associations. Thus one old fellow summed up a discussion of the sea creatures which still haunt the western coasts of Ireland: "Everything that does be on the land is in the sea, too, if we could see them". This world-view incorporates the world into the life the countryman follows and knows. To the same old fellow, winds along the Clare and Galway border that separates Munster and Connaught provinces could appear as the battles of fairy hosts, for do not men today still remember human battles and still taunt the men of the other province in joke and banter? The rustle of a breeze and the flitting of bats in a ruin where men lived and died is not mere noise; it is still part of human life. One old fellow described to me the experience of 'them' that he got at close quarters, when he lived near the ruin of Ballyvaughan workhouse:

"They were so plentiful there that everybody living round it and myself got so used to them that we wouldn't mind them at all. The place is full of them and everywhere you go there is a door and long windows in the cowl, and you hear them going in and out. There was a great lot of people died in it long ago in the bad times. They are in every room and you hear them on all sides of you. I got so used to it, I never minded them at all, but I heard them every day."

The great cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast are

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a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but the tales of it that best survive are those that relate it to the life of the present and express in the fairy-belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillenasearrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a common end. They provide the countryman with a world-view in which his regard for things and scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

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order takes its form. Consequently, we should expect fairy-belief and rite to symbolize the regard he has for his fellows even more strongly than that he holds to the non-human associations of his life.

The expectation is amply borne out. Fairy-belief is first and foremost a symbolism of social life. In the logic of emotional identifications, it organizes, directs, and controls the feelings of human beings for their fellows.

Thus fairy power and dangerous influence are strongest at times when the interest of human beings in their fellows is strongest. With every change overtaking the individual in his course through life among his fellows, the supernatural world steps in. At such times as birth, growing-up, marriage, becoming a parent, growing old and dying, belief catches the countryman in a web of precautions and reminders which signalize forcefully the importance of the change. For example, the birth of a child is not just another event in nature. It is a change of vital importance to the family group, and indirectly to the community. It is cause for rejoicing and congratulation, but it is cause, too, for resolve and determination in the face of new duties. It brings a new orientation in the lives of those who welcome the newcomer. Their relations to one another undergo development; they must henceforth learn new ways which include the newcomer and which prepare a place for him in the life of his fellows.

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Consequently, rural ceremony signalizes the 181
event. Custom brings together those concerned, 183
for rejoicing, for recognition of the place of the 851
newcomer in the group, for an expression of the 776
sentiments that unite them all. The rural 'christening' is no mere idle jollification; it is a secular baptism, as important for social life as is the Sacrament of Baptism for religion. Naturally, then, fairy-belief is represented very strongly. It surrounds the crucial event of birth and its consequences with a hundred necessities of action which carry with them powerful emotional dispositions. Fear, awe, wonder, religious feeling, and plain caution can all be pressed into service to mould the countryman into an acceptance of the new state of affairs; the logic of belief fits these emotions into the countryman's world-view.

The good people are particularly active at such 181
times as this. Every association with birth is infused 183
with power and danger. Even the midwife who 844
attends becomes a magic figure; the aura that sur- 776
rounds the dangerous and crucial event invests her entire personality. She can command the fairies, disperse their attacks, travel through the air, transfer labour pains at will to a truculent or negligent husband. She is in communication with the fairy powers; in tale and story she often finds her ministrations commandeered by them and her person wafted off into the forts and raths to attend a fairy-woman there. She herself may deny all this; but it

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is true, none the less, in belief. Like all else at birth, she is linked to the good people, and in the linkage an explanation is given for the identity of the emotional associations which surround both her and them.

Similarly, all other crucial changes in social life, as well as those of the religious life, come to fit into the same scheme for many of the country-people who still follow the old tradition. The good people figure in them all.

Thus, First Communion and Confirmation—events of first magnitude in the life of the devout countryman—bring changes in emotional well-being; they bestow a real, if mysterious and holy, strength. This, of course, is first of all a part of religious experience. But the events are also accompanied, in the countryside, by changes in one's relations to one's fellows, in traditional social organization. The child is separated first from others of opposite sex after First Communion; he is introduced to full farm work and, very often, leaves school after Confirmation. His fellows in family and community must henceforward have a new regard for him and treat him differently. So, in these changes, the good people have their role, too. Precautions against their influence reinforce one's dependence upon a symbolic order which incorporates these changes. They make definite and unforgettable the magnitude of the change and the new dispositions which must be learned. Thus,

Again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit

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again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

If we leave aside marriage, where folk-custom and folk-belief are no less important toward the same ends, we can devote our attention to the greatest change of all. Death brings the greatest disturbance in social habit. It shakes emotional equilibrium to its foundation. Yet society must allow for death; it must provide an orderly transition and continuance.

The devout Irishman, of course, finds his greatest consolation in his Catholic Faith. He knows the fate of his loved ones. His religion teaches him how to communicate with them, in the Communion of Saints, through prayer. Faith heals his hurt and it gives him a way of filling the void death creates.

Yet, as I have said, he has room in his heart and mind for the fairy-belief too. Social life must take account of death no less than religion. When death removes one of the human beings to whom he is related as brother, friend or fellow, it leaves behind the traces of sentiment and habit that were once bonds of relationship and association. These must be reformed, and in the reformation a new synthesis between the dead member of the group and the living be found. The countryman resembles us all in this respect; he cannot forget 'the old familiar faces'. He must have an explanation in the world-view of folklore and folk-custom for

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181 the effect they still exert upon him after they are
183 gone.

761 So the dead join 'them'. On the border-line
776 between the mundane world and the mysteries of
[775] Faith, they find a place in the ranks of the good people, as the misnamed fairies are often called. They are the denizens of rath and fort and hill and cave. There is nothing fundamentally incompatible between this and religious belief, however folklore may escape the control of dogma and sometimes, in its humbler vein, run counter to it. The dead do affect the living, in memory and in tradition. Death is the 'other world' to which we are all advancing. As one fellow could say in a burst of poetic imagery growing out of folk-belief: "The old people in the west room are going down with the sun".

Why not indeed, when we remember that the good people are not always by any means evil and forbidding? They exert their power for both good and evil. They bring reward as well as punishment. The countryman has friends among them as he has friends among men in this world. An Aran woman put the belief for Lady Gregory in words which transport earthly loyalties to the other world. "There's often fighting heard about the house when one is sick. That is what we call the fighting of
181 friends, for we believe it is the friends and enemies
183 of the sick person fighting for him."
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775 Indeed, the same aids that make up habit and

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give base to sentiment in mundane affairs can be projected into the after-world. One must act toward 'them' in death as one acts toward the living; one must do the 'friendly' thing. Thus they can tell a story in Luogh of a man there who they say "was walking along the road and he saw the ghost of his brother. He didn't say anything to it and it walked home with him all in silence. They sat at the fire for a long time, the [living] man waiting for the other to go, so he could go to bed. Finally, the dead man said: 'You have put me to great trouble tonight by not saluting me when we met. I must go now and now I won't be able to defend you in the council in the rath.' And it was true for him, too: the cow that was ailing with the man was taken the next week."

Thus, you see, one can envision 'them' both in mystic terms and in terms sometimes very bald and intimate indeed. The younger people in Luogh still follow the old belief, though they leave its expression to their elders. Yet they could explain the tumour on an old man's head in words which show how near 'the other people' are and how direct is the aid one's friends among them can give:

"Old Seumas was coming along the road drunk and he met a crowd of them on the road and one of them slapped him. If he'd taken the slap he'd be all right but he took off his coat and dared any one of them to stand down to him. They beat him and

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181 gave him a terrible knock over the poll. One of
183 them that was great friends with him saved
753 him."
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Nor are 'they' always fearsome, even in their
181 most wondrous apparitions. The dead are too
183 much a part of life in rural Ireland for that. For
775 the old people they are too near; too many friends have crossed the line between this world and the next.

Thus the dead may come to cover nearly every association of life; in the eyes of some of the old people, the other world of wonders where the 'other people' reign spreads all about them. To the initiate in such mysteries there is nothing to fear. Let me give you my record of one conversation of mine with a very old man of North Clare, a man of clear mind and great folk-learning. His answers to my naïve questions will show you how well he felt, accepted and expressed the symbolic order of the countryside:

I asked what a 'cowl' was. "They are the houses where the family has died out of them. People would live in them if they wasn't too bad, falling down and dirty. You often see old people sitting in them." "What people?" I asked. "The people that used to be in it," he replied. "Do you mean ghosts?" He answered me scornfully: "You might see lights in the cowl and you going along the road at night and you pass people you don't know and you can't tell if they are ghosts or not. Of all the

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people you pass in the town, how would you know what it is they are?"

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Only the young men, like myself, would be frightened by this uncertainty in rural Ireland. For all but the old people, such mysteries are awesome and compelling. Once again, folk-belief fashions itself for a social end. In belief the believers unconsciously agree upon an emotional organization of human relations; folklore expresses once again the organization of the community upon age and upon the past. The old couple who move in among the fairy influences and the symbols of family tradition and sentiment in the west room, the old people in whom rural kinship is centred and through whom sentiment is directed to the mystic past of ancestral blood lineage, the old men and women round whose influence the local community patterns its local life, need not fear greatly the imagery that symbolizes the very place they occupy. Rather they can come to immerse themselves in it. They grow very learned in this lore. They are the ones who sometimes come to manipulate it. They are themselves, sometimes, half fairy. 'Wise men' and 'wise women' are always old. It is no accident that the commonest representation of the fairy power is an old man or woman. They are the initiates in the mysteries of the fairy faith.

In this fact one can see the final synthesis between social habit and belief. Rural kinship organizes men and women in a common orientation

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181 backward and upward toward the dead and the
183 ancestral. The community bestows ever greater
888 status and influence as one progresses further and
776 further toward the age-grade of the old, in whom
775 tradition and precedent are preserved and expressed. In the sphere of credence and emotion the fairy faith acts to the same end and is so designed. The design, in this instance as in all the others, is not conscious; no one has planned it. It is a design drawn from the social order and acting back upon it. Its imagery is traditional, but its efficacy is of the present. And for that reason it lives.

Thus, in the identification between the old, the dead and the influences which affect the goods, the conducts and the values of the countryman's life, the symbolic order is completed. Folk-belief, in the ancient fairy-cult, with its age-old imagery, makes a complete emotional synthesis, overlying and reacting back upon the sentiment and habit out of which it springs again and again with each generation that learns the old way of life. Consequently, each new generation works a change upon it; elements of the synthesis undergo constant re-embellishment and shift of emphasis. Both old and young are controlled by it, but each in a different way. Today the young are sceptical and a little rebellious; they repudiate much of the
[178] older imagery. All that the Church condemns in the 'pisherogues', they also condemn. Today folk-belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

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belief is undergoing marked change like all else 181
in this world, like all else in Ireland. 183

But that does not mean the death-knell of folk- 775
lore, as some students of folklore seem to think. 776
Far from that, it means only that a symbolic order like any growth in human life must change and grow onward. New forms and new imagery will grow up to clothe in emotional terms the necessary reformations of habit and sentiment in social life, and new syntheses will fashion new belief, changing the old or supplanting it inch by inch.

One can see this process at work in rural Ireland 178
today. Those who repudiate the fairies repudiate 183
only the outmoded symbols, the outworn images. They do not deny the necessity of a symbolic order in their own lives. The student of man is coming to think today that they could not do so, because no people can. There must always be some socially efficacious organization of the sentiments of social life in the logic of belief and imagery. Belief provides first of all a conception of life; then, and then only, does it carry on to become a conception of the world. But life among men includes emotional attitudes at once very necessary and very satisfying; one can starve the spirit only so far. And for that reason the logic of a social order is not that of science and prose, it is that of emotion. Consequently, those of the countryside who repudiate the older symbols merely demand that their emphasis be shifted. They do not cry out for bald

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178 science, nor abandon symbolism. They merely
183 insist upon new symbols.

There are currently two directions in which the shift can be made. And, as usual, the popular mind has room for both movements; for they are related, and both are compatible with the countryman's social order. The first direction leads more deeply into the greater Faith of the countryman. Religion can come more and more to provide the emotional balances necessary in social life. Thus Catholicism is a growing, spreading force in the countryside, overtaking many an area of the mind where the 'pisherogues' still flourished till recently. The second direction leads to a reaffirmation, in ever stronger form, of that part of belief in which the dead and death are related to the disturbances and the securities of social life. After all, this is one of the indispensable cores of faith, and it expresses most forcefully the organization of life upon tradition and continuities. It can be retained even if the more picturesque imagery must go.

It is for that reason that the fairy gives way more
178 and more to the ghost in rural Ireland today. Dead
183 'Tans' now patrol the roads where the banshee may
775 have walked. In stressing the part of the dead in folk-belief, the necessary synthesis between emotional associations and social life can still persist and respond to change and growth. The ghost does his work as well as does the fairy, though he is perhaps less given to poetic dress.

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In the treatment of death, one can see the social system of rural Ireland in the full perspective of its deep-rooted strength. In the flashes of poetic genius which seem so prone to trip from an Irish tongue, death acquires a deeper and more poignant meaning than many another racial tongue could give it. And so it is in the mundane, prosaic world of social life. The most important secular ceremony of rural life is the wake and funeral. In the crowds that come to the wake-house to pay their respects to the dead and condole with the living; in the long lines of marching figures, traps, jaunting cars and motor-cars that make a slow procession over the open roads from wake-house to church and from church to graveside, the observer glimpses an epitome of rural life in which all its values are mingled.

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Kinship bonds are at their strongest. Traditional custom enforces upon the kindred important roles in laying out the dead, in carrying the coffin, in digging the grave, in keening him, in reciting funeral laments that are the last survivals of bardic elegies, in preparing entertainment for all comers, in which the dead man's survivors proudly affirm their place and his in the life of the community.

In all this the fairy-lore takes part. The banshee's cry is merely the funeral keen issued from a fairy voice. It signalizes death in the symbolic world just as the keen of the living signalizes living personal loss. It is the lament over common loss in a common cause, for relatives of the dead must greet each other with the keen at the wake-house.

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other with the keen at the wake-house.

The goods of household and farm suffer incorporation into emotional symbolism once more; precautions must be taken to protect them and prevent their going beyond with the lost one. Time and place of death are clothed with a hundred supernatural associations.

The reciprocities which make up friendship and give status in the community get full play. Every man, in death, can command a multitude. To stay away, to make no recognition of the day, is to give deadly affront. Every 'right Irishman' turns and walks, if only a few steps, along with the procession. In towns, all the blinds upon the street are drawn and shop-fronts are boarded, in recognition. In the Gaelic tongue, indeed, one and the same word does service for both funeral and multitude. And in the fairy-lore "there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind". Many a countryman, steeped in the old lore, sees in a whirlwind or puff of mist a *socraid sidhe* or fairy-funeral.

He knows thereby that somewhere the chief expression of traditional social life is calling the countrymen together through a whole countryside for a re-enactment, both solemn and gay, of their sentiments about their fellows and about their view of life and death and destiny.

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appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis

476 from time immemorial. Old people here remembered the
246 day when, there being no mowing machines, scythes alone were used. Then the coöperating groups would have been larger and a more pronounced rotation of the working groups from meadow to meadow could have been observed. The same custom occurs in other places; in fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work. Given the different techniques, the same coöperation had taken place in Luogh and elsewhere at the turf cutting, the oats harvest, and the potato planting.

[464] Yet there was no monetary wage or payment involved. In the community of Luogh and surrounding townlands, the only hired labor was to be seen in the meadows of the large farmer (a cattleman with over three hundred acres), [184] who had not coöperated with the small farmers and whose entire way of life, as well as the agriculture he practiced, was different from theirs. Except in so far as the agricultural operation the small farmers were undertaking was economic in itself, it was evident that an interpretation of the incentives for this coöperation must include other factors.

476 Driven to social rather than economic explanation, the
246 authors were able to ascertain that in each case of this coöperation there was an extended family relationship in-
602 volved. Thus Carey, who had mowed the meadows of Dennis and Seamus Molony and Brian McMahon, was second cousin to them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively of the two farmers whose meadows he had mowed. The young men or boys who had worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows with the latter's wives and children were also relatives; they were sons of the relatives for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. In no instance, of course, had a man mowed for all his relatives; it was not necessary

342 Windows, as well as chimneys, were taxed, hence the oldfashioned blind
[65] wall and the old fireplace (without chimney) being preserved. The daylight was admitted to the kitchen by the door opening. A pad of straw was placed at the door, *sop i mbéal dorais* (Dinneen) on which tailors and other crafts-
[294] men used to sit to avoid window-tax. When windows came later on, they were placed on the side of the house sheltered from the prevailing wind.

The gables. The stone built gables are higher or lower according to the form of the roof, which is determined by the wind. In some districts of Ireland
[184] especially in the Aran Islands, Connemara, Sligo, Mayo there are often even in very primitive buildings, step gables or serrated gables. In other parts of Ireland the gables are straight up to the top. In Southern and Eastern Ireland the gables are generally of this type. Half thatched or hipped gables are sometimes found in the east, where now and then the thatch is also bent over the gable edge in the same way as in Wales. This is common on mud houses.

How the gables protect the ends of the thatched roof and support the horizontal ribs is shown in pl. XLIV: 2.

The roof. Roof and wall constructions meet one another in the most primitive stages, when the house is only a roof over a foundation wall, of a cavity, or when the roof is constructed similarly to the *clochán*s with the upper course of stones slightly overlapping the lower course. This construction is not known among dwelling houses of to-day, but can be found in outhouses, sweating buths etc.

Roofs made by wide slates or stone flags will be seen in some parts of Ireland when there is a natural access to stones suitable for slates as in Co. Clare where such roofs are found on outhouses with the narrow stone walls carrying the flags.

The Irish house from olden times generally has had not a stone roof, but a thatched roof, *ceann tuighe*. The art of making good thatched roofs is now dying out but in earlier times Irishmen had developed great skill in roofing with thatch.

The thatched roof is supported internally by beams joined in pairs forming
[804] the couples, *cúplaí*. The couples are placed at a certain distance and the space enclosed between two couples must be looked upon as a sort of architectural unit. The length of the house can be measured by the number of couples.
[171] A very similar kind of measuring is well known in Denmark and Skåne. In many old houses the length of the house seems to indicate traditions from the ancient Irish laws (See Addy, p. 84).

The roof-supporting system of beams varies very little. The beams can

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be more or less primitive. The couples can be constructed in two slightly different ways depending on the intended height of the roof. In very windy districts near the sea very low, semi-circular roofs that do not catch much wind are used. The roof is streamlined and there is no comb along the roof, pl. XLV: 2. 342

This roof is made in the following way. Very strong couples rest on the walls and are joined by two crossbeams, the lower called *faradh* and the upper *maide mullaigh*. These joining beams are just as strong as the couples themselves. They are joined to the couples by means of one or two wooden pegs on each side. The couples never meet. Above this arrangement are the purlins, *taobháin*. Transversally across these are slender laths called *cleitheáin*, pl. XLV: 1.

High roofs with combs are supported by couples joined in pairs and held together at the top by a wooden peg, *pionna*. The ridge beam, *maide droma*, rests on the hollows formed at the junctions of the couples, and parallel to it but lying transversally on the couples are purlins, *tobháin*, on each side of which run the whole length of the roof. To brace the couples there are tiebeams, *maidi snaidhm*, pl. XLIV.

On this foundation of roofing, sticks are spread tough sods of grass, the earthen side inwards. The sods cut from the ground can either be made about 5 ft. long and 2 ft. wide or a bit longer than the side of the roof and about 3 ft. broad. In the former case the sods overlap, the higher over the lower. In the latter case the sods stretch from the wall to the ridge and are bent over the ridge. Over the ridge then there are two layers of sods. In both cases the one row of sods overlaps the second row beside it. I have found the short sods used in Southern Ireland, and the long ones in Donegal. [824] [184]

The thatch is put on in two ways. One method of thatching corresponds to the thatched houses of the European continent viz: the scollop-thatching or rod-thatching, pl. XLVI: 2. The other method is the hay-rope or *sugán* thatching known from the border of the North Atlantic and the North Sea. The scollop-thatching is made in such a way that straw, *tuighe*, or mountain grass, *fineán*, is fastened to the sods by means of horizontal rows of rods, *scolb*. The rods are fastened to the underlying sods by twigs, *bannai*. Both *scolb* and *bannai* are of hazel or sally. Oat, wheat, or barley straw is used for thatching but on the western seabord rye straw is used. Rye is considered most durable. According to scollop-thatching the thatching of the ridge is of certain interest. Here and round the chimney-shaft but seldom at the thatch of eaves, *bun tsop*, a kind of ornament can be formed by the twigs and scollops. But this is an ornament caused by the necessity of fastening and 342 824 342

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or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, 342
the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on 354
a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Done- [184]
gal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up
at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in 592
Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted 354
to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All [775]
Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the [171]
fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, [184]
I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot 352
with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district 171
between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh*, where the in-

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352 171 built bed in the hall beside the fireplace has been common. But this custom of bed is also known over a wider area along the North Sea. As to the outshot it is to be remarked that it must be compared with the outshots of English and Northwest European houses. Where the outshot tradition is natural to the house-types, the outshots are used for purposes and not only for beds.

In Donegal I have found *cailleachs* closed with wooden doors, similar to the built in beds of North-West Europe. The *cailleach* is cut off by curtains.

It has been mentioned that the dresser at an early stage of development has formed part of the partition. This and other facts (the dresser has generally a fixed traditional place, different in different parts of Ireland) seems to indicate that the dresser belongs — as in Scandinavia and West-European countries — to a rather old set of furniture.

The table however seems not to have any prominent place in the old-fashioned houses at least in Western and Northern Ireland. It is always put along a wall in primitive houses, and one can never sit round it. It never attracted the social activities of the house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating social and family-centre. In this respect the table in Ireland has never supplanted the fireplace. There are no references, as far as I am told in the early tales to people feasting at the table. I think that the table [184] does not belong to the original set of furniture. In many fishermen's dwellings in North-West of Donegal it is still missing. The people sit in front [264] of the fireplace round the shallow-basket, *ciseog*, when eating, the basket resting upon the knees of the familymembers. This basket will be seen after dinner-time hanging to dry on the south wall of the house, pl. XLVIII: 2. I suppose this is the native and original "table", at least in certain cultural spheres of Western and Northern Ireland.

[113] [1] In a valuable article by Ludwig Mühlhausen, Contributions to the study of the concrete material culture of the Gaoltacht, Cork Arch. Soc. Vls. XXXVIII, p. 67, and XXXIX, p. 41, et sqq., is found a very good description of houses in Dingle Peninsula and Cornamona, Co. Galway. I have not come across any more detailed contribution to the study of the Irish house. From books of travel and novels some information can be picked up. See Béaloideas 1935. p. 57 sqq.

[114] [2] The material here presented has been collected by me during journeys in Ireland in the years 1934 and 1935. For the many facilities afforded me in pursuing my investigations in Ireland I must express my thanks to the Irish Folklore Commission and its Director Mr Séamus O'Duilearga, on whose behalf I undertook these studies. I am also grateful to my Irish friends both scholars and country people who kindly lent me their assistance. Here I can only mention Mr Seán O'Suilleabháin, B. A., and Miss Aine Ní Chróinín, M. A., especially for having supplied the Gaelic terms used by me.

[3] As to the Welsh long-houses the cruck construction seems to be an exception (see Peate p. 452).

[4] Cfr. Sigurd Erixon: Skansens Kulturgeschichtliche Abteilung, Führer. Stockholm 1928, p. 92.

[5] *Pinniuir*, f., a gable, a gable-end; fig. a patron, chief, etc. *pinniuir an tighe*, the house-gable, fig. the "head" of the house. Fr. pignon, Eng. pynum. Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or press. 231 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible. 361 351 [173] [184]

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farmyard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type. 361 351

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, XVI, 102, 104.

[2] Platrès, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24. [113]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp 361
along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. 621
Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawl- 494
ing village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train runs between the two.

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this re- 185
moteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. 621
Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive 234
through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing machine, out of an English steel works, and some of the houses own a mechanical cream separator, even though next door a wooden hand churn is still in use which looks no different from those found deep in the bogs.

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. 185
They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But 621
in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's attention turns to the life into which these few strays of modernity find their way.

For Luogh is like many another community of 621
small farms over Clare and southern and western 184
Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are 181
even more remote. Many are better off; some few are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language better; others have abandoned it altogether for the brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded in their common folk life.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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231 As calves grow up they move from the small farm
241 to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them
434 until they are ready for the English table. Con-
437 sequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

With all this, it is natural that the small farmers
262 should be different consumers from the rest.
184 They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

present the one staple which he must buy off the 262
farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and 184
the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for 184
mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are 241
cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs 412
again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their 184
lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer- 241
owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the 464
owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of 241
peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in 231
a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is 434
that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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light held. They worked with the aid of their sons 246
and of boys from the families who had no machines. 476
At each stage of the process a boy not a member of the family gave his labour; he took his place at meals during the day.

His own mowing done, the farmer paid his debt. He took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed that man's meadow. In one instance, a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others. In another, a farmer mowed for two others. Certain meadows in Luogh were full-handed enough to do without extra hands; but in five cases, though mowing and stacking took a very [184]
long time and they were obviously short of hands, no help was given. Two of these cases were bachelors, who lived alone; two more were 'strangers'.

Here was an important agricultural operation undertaken by the small local community in which provision was made for effective co-operation over and above the usual family economy. It was no isolated instance; it is immemorial practice in Luogh. In fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work.

There was no monetary payment involved in this [464]
work. In the country surrounding Luogh, the only hired labour to be seen worked the meadows of a large farmer, a cattleman with over 300 acres. He did not co-operate; in fact, his whole life was cut out of a different cloth.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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introduced in the Bronze Age, while the ass, which one might suppose to be long-established, was in fact hardly known before the 19th century. The wolf was the worst enemy of man's domestic animals: it was not finally exterminated until the end of the 18th century. Neither the Giant Deer nor the wild boar can be proved to have survived so long as to be contemporaneous with man. But there was a rich native fauna which could be hunted for food to supplement the products of crops and livestock. The red deer is still with us and was known in a wild state in the west of Ireland down to a century ago. Charcoal examined from the remains of domestic and ritual fires corroborates the evidence of pollen-analysis as to the forest cover of prehistoric Ireland. The common trees were oak, willow, birch and hazel, with ash, elm, alder and pine less widely distributed.

The beliefs and ritual practices of the megalith-builders were closely bound up with ideas of magic and fertility: the great stone monuments themselves, still standing after 4,000 years, seem to symbolize man's faith in a future life and were the outcome of the revolution of thought which accompanied food-production. No visitor can fail to be deeply moved by the splendour of the great chamber at New Grange on the Boyne, or by the mystery of the windy cairn on Knocknarea above Sligo. The two main entrances used by the megalith builders were the Boyne Valley and Carlingford Lough (whence archæologists speak of the Boyne and Carlingford cultures). These cultures show many interesting differences and no doubt contributed to the enduring distinction between North and South in matters of material folk-culture.

[184]

New crops and animals continued to reach Ireland during the 1,500 years of the Bronze Age (1800-300 B.C.), when the islanders engaged in active trade, exporting the gold of the Wicklows in the form of dress-ornaments and elaborating their tools and implements of bronze, using native copper and imported tin. Archæologists and philologists cannot yet agree as to the period when the Celtic language was introduced to Ireland, nor can the Pictish tongue be identified with any clearly recognized culture. All are agreed, however, that

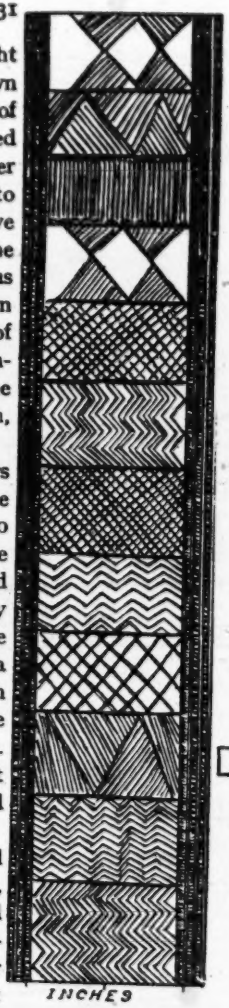

Fig. 6.
Ornament on bronze age pottery vessel from Co. Tyrone, date *c.* 700 B.C.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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We now come to the roof with its timber framework and thatch. It generally consists of couples resting on the side-walls and joined together by tie-beams at the top; and houses are referred to not as measuring so many feet but as being two- three- or four-coupled. The rib-lengths, between the couples, are a kind of architectural unit.[1] In most old cottages the frame of the roof is of bog-fir, but its use has been superseded by imported "fir." There are many different methods of joining the couples, for example in Donegal they do not actually meet but have a short tie at the top which rounds the roof against the wind (Fig. 20). If the walls are of clay, sod or turf, the couples may be supported on internal beams placed upright against the side-walls, but the purlin method is generally adopted to avoid the thrust of the couple ends. Long beams run from gable to gable, and may be seen projecting outside to allow for the possible movement of the end-walls. This method of roofing allows of greater width than the coupled roof and is preserved, for example, in the old weavers' houses around Lough Neagh, where space was needed for the large looms. (Figs. 22c, 27 & 28.)

On the framework of couples or purlins lighter timber was placed at intervals and on these were laid at right angles rows of branches or laths, often made out of split bog timber. Where teasels were cultivated for the home woollen industry their dried stalks were employed for this purpose. Then came a layer of "scraws," peeled from a carefully selected spot where the grass is tough with a spade or flachter (Chapter 15) and placed on the roof in long overlapping strips with the matted roots inwards. The scraws were of standard sizes, for instance 12 ft. long by 2 ft. by 1½ inches thick. but they were shorter than this in the south, where the flachter was not known. The scraws were generally sewn to the roof timbers with loops of sugán or fir-rope (Fig. 21). The sod layer, while universal in old houses throughout the north, is not always found in the south. Professor O'Riordain has described old houses in Co. Limerick, for example, where the thatch is sown directly on to the battens.

[283]

[184]

Fig. 21.

[1] *cf.* the fork-intervals or "bays" of the old English house.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER IX.

FARM BUILDINGS.

First in importance in this pastoral country comes the 343
cow byre, which is often an old dwelling house converted or 234
an extension built on to the end of the kitchen. We have seen that in the west it is not long since the cows were housed in the bottom end of the kitchen, and even now one gets the impression from the proximity of the byre and its smells that there is a reluctance to be separated by any distance from the beasts which play such a large part in the life and traditions of the countryside. Along one side of the byre, above the feeding place, runs the rannel- or revel-tree to which the vertical cow-stakes are secured at intervals: "thin as a ravel-tree" is an expression sometimes heard. Alternatively, in the west, the stakes are held in place by iron staples or perforated stone slabs let into the wall. Iron chains have almost entirely replaced the rush "binnen ropes" (Chapter 14) which were fastened to a plaited ring of sally, hazel or rowan— [184]
called a "woody"—sliding up and down the stake. In Co. Clare the animals were secured by a straw rope tied round the horns, and no doubt different methods could be described from various districts. Milking times also vary from place to place, and there is no topic about which so much lore might be collected as about cows and their products. It is commonly said that there is a right and a wrong side on which to milk a cow. In Ireland, so far as my observation goes, it is the right-hand side.

[p. 79]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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241 toil and grazing, by plough and spade, hoof and muzzle, have
412 Ireland's green fields been "moulded."

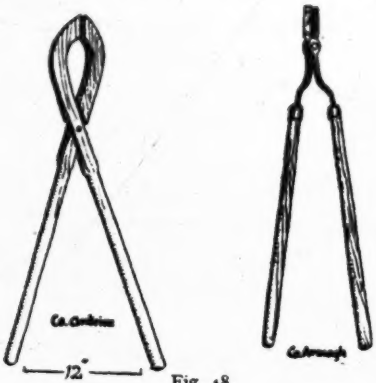

Fig. 48.
Clips

Although we cannot touch on the other crops and have given a very inadequate idea of the bustle, worries and humours of the Irish springtime, when all the crops demand to be put in the ground at the same time, we must end this chapter with a few comments on the growing season. The general practice when thinning root crops is to work on the
[516] knees with the hands: one rarely sees a hoe being used for thinning. Yet paradoxically corn is weeded, if it gets any attention at all, with a pair of wooden pincers or thistle-pullers, called, in Co. Antrim, "clips" (Fig. 48). This tool is already
[184] mentioned in a Tour of Ireland in 1752. The weeders are not so common in the south of the country and are fitted with iron pincers in some counties. Another home-made device once familiar in the north was the crow-scarer or "corn-crake," a noisy instrument made on the principle of the watchman's rattle or—to give a modern instance—the gas rattle of the A.R.P. services.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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246 throughout the north of Ireland the hay is made and "saved"—how eloquent is this word of the desperate struggle with the weather!—almost entirely by hand. The traditional date for commencing the hay harvest is the famous 12th of July, and an even more celebrated day—March 17th—was the time for "closing" the hay-fields. Cut with the scythe, supplemented by the hook and by hand-pulling on steep banks or around trees and bushes, the swathes are shaken and gathered into parallel wind-rows or "coles" and then "lapped," that is folded into small muff-like heaps against the leg (Fig. 49). In lapping, the cut grass is smoothed down on both sides so that the rain will run off, while the inside is [184] left open to allow the air to pass through. The practise of lapping is found as far south as Meath and Galway but I have not seen it further south: it would be interesting to trace its exact distribution and compare it with that of other cultural traits. Even in districts well-equipped with machinery the method of lapping is retained, as an alternative to tying into sheaves, for the crops of seed-hay which are a valuable source of income on the small farms of lowland Ulster. This

Lapping Hay, Glendun, Co. Antrim

Fig. 49.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XIII.

SPADES.

The rich variety of the rural scene is perhaps best illustrated in that most characteristic of Irish implements, the spade. It is worth recalling that the spade-work of immigrant navvies—or "navigators," named after the canal-diggers—was one of Ireland's contributions to England's Industrial Revolution. A visit to city garden-plots will provide a useful introduction to the study of spades, for the countryman insists on his own pattern, and you may play the game of spotting the native heaths of Belfast's or Dublin's retired policemen by identifying the spades of Derry, Fermanagh, Cavan or Clare. Some idea of the variety of tastes catered for can be gained from the output of a Galway spade-factory: including turf spades (Chapter 15) it turns out about 150 shapes of blade.

Obviously it would require prolonged travel and study to record and interpret this fascinating diversity, and to compare the distribution of spade-types with landforms and territorial divisions, with dialects, folk-customs, house-types and other aspects of material culture. But it is possible to give some tentative generalisations which emerge from a preliminary study. The primary division is between the one-eared and the two-eared types (Fig. 61). The former, known as the "loy" or "fack," prevails along the western and southern coasts. It is now unknown in the Six Counties—though the "kib," as it was called, is remembered by a few old men—and is fast disappearing from Donegal and from the Midlands,

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[391]

Fig. 61.

[p. 113]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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where its place has been taken by the two-eared spade; and it seems clear that the latter is the result of English influence, though in its Irish forms it differs considerably from the modern English spade.

These differences are no doubt adaptations to native taste and usage: they include the long straight handle, without hand-grip, the long narrow blade with its thick sides, the foot-plates, and the "lift" in the blade, that is the forward bend below the socket, which makes it enter the ground at an angle. North of the Boyne, however, the handle is shorter and is fitted with a crutch-end (Fig. 62), although there are certain "islands" of Irishry, such as the Mourne Mountains of Down, which cling to the long handle. Within the two-eared spade province there are many regional and even seasonal types of blade, for instance the Sligo-Roscommon area demands a long-bladed spade in spring and a shorter type in autumn, the length varying from 16 to 13 inches. In this spade the blade tapers, say from 5 inches at the shoulders to 3½ at the mouth; the Lurgan spade is a long variety familiar from the phrase: "a face as long as a Lurgan spade." While characterising the east coast and the Midlands the type spreads westwards to Sligo without, however, influencing Leitrim, which uses the loy, or Cavan, where the spade has an expanding edge, half an inch or more wider than the shoulders. A strong "cranked lift" of 6 inches (about 22°) is a feature of the Cavan spade, and of the Leenane spade in Galway. North Monaghan, Donegal and Fermanagh (Fig. 62) also use a spade with expanding edge and cranked lift. The taper spades, on the other hand, generally have a "round lift," that is the blade bends forward in a smooth curve, but both the degree of lift and the dish, that is the curve in the mouth, vary from one locality to another. Tyrone and Armagh have a spade which widens slightly towards the mouth but has a round lift instead of the cranked lift of Cavan and Fermanagh. A spade map would throw light on many aspects of rural history and geography, but these humble motters do not engage the attention of our educationalists.

The Fermanagh Spade.

Fig. 62.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

blade with a slightly fish-tailed edge which is a little wider (5 inches) than the foot end (4½ inches): it has a cranked lift. In east Galway a similar loy is fitted with a curious two-piece haft: the foot-rest or "spade-tree" which goes into the socket of the blade is fastened to the stout ash shaft with iron bands (*cf.* Fig. 88). A similar loy was formerly used in Leix and other counties. In Limerick and Kerry the foot-piece is a small wedge pushed into the socket alongside the handle (Fig. 63). In parts of Galway and Mayo the foot-rest is carved out of a broad handle, and a variant of this is the loy of Cavan and Longford (Fig. 61), where the stout foot-rest is some distance above the socket and the handle is curved forward. In Clare, again, the handle bends backwards towards the user. 412

But loys of all shapes have long handles, about 4 feet in length, with no hand-grip. And they all take the handle in an open socket formed by bending the wings, which may or may not be further secured by nails, over the wood (Fig. 63). This method of hafting goes back to the prehistoric Iron Age in England. In Ireland, bill-hooks, axes and knives from crannogs and forts a thousand years old were hafted in this way, and though I am not aware of any ancient spades having been found in excavations, it is to the La Tène period (Chapter 4) that we should probably look for their origin. But until some attention and support are given to problems of cultural origins and evolution we are merely groping in the dark. Allowance must be made, therefore, for possible inaccuracies in the present account.

Loys of all types can be fitted with the ear or foot-rest on either side according to the practice of the locality or the individual user. Generally speaking, about eleven out of twelve loys are right footed, but towards the east the proportion of left-footed users increases, and as we reach the north-east, where, of course, the two-eared spade is universal, from one-half to two-thirds are left-footed diggers. Hence, presumably, the phrase applied in the north to those of the Roman Catholic faith: "they dig with the wrong foot."

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184

Fig. 64.

[794]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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412 While it is difficult to estimate the antiquity of the two-eared
● 184 spade tradition in Ulster and Leinster, its spread into the west has taken place in the last half century. The decline in the use of the loy is symbolic of the disappearance of the old
[178] fashions, and they tend to vanish together because the culture pattern is a closely interwoven web. Thus it was considered in Donegal a century ago that the new iron spades "would be useless," since few workers had shoes: the wooden spade was adapted to the bare feet.

391 The spade-maker is called on to turn out other types of
412 agricultural tools, spades, shovels and forks. There is the very narrow tapered draining spade and the heavy "mountain draining spade" used in the moorland areas of the north and west (Fig. 64): its great "shark's head" blade is 17 inches long and almost as wide. Occasionally he is asked to rough out a flachter (Fig. 85), which the country smith finishes into the required shape, or it may be, in the south-west, a graffan or heavy hoe (Chapter 10). But as the turf-cutting season comes round most of his energies go into the making of turf slanes (Chapter 15). Of shovels there are several different types, generally classified into two shapes, round-pointed and square-pointed: the latter kind is favoured in the west. There is also the tanged shovel of Co. Wexford. The shovels are long-handled, but short handles are used for special purposes. The welding of the socket in the thin hard steel of the shovels is one of the smith's most difficult tasks (Fig. 65).

412 Then there are short and long-handled square-shouldered digging forks with three or with four prongs (Fig. 65), and the round-shouldered manure-forks or graips, the prongs of which may be round, oval, or in old-fashioned work, square. There are drags for unloading manure, for gathering wrack (Fig. 103), for cleaning drains and gathering stones. Hay-forks may be tanged or strap-hafted, with 4-foot or 5-foot handles and so on. Some country-made forks are illustrated in Fig. 66. It may be added that hayforks with wooden prongs cut from the solid have also been used in the past. Some of the loys, like the old Ulster kib, are essentially wooden spades merely shod with iron, and even this was dispensed with in sandy soils. Wooden

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of "calf basket" (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a "cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

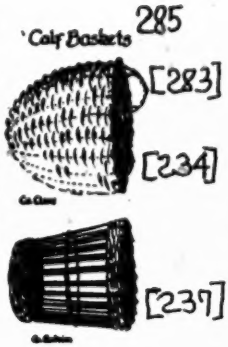

Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or "floats" are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

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415
[482]
[184]
[482]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Line Baskets

Fig. 76. Length *c.* 3 ft.

into a narrow mouth, a feature which is found in all Aran basket-work. Miss Gahan of the Irish Homespun Society regards it as an adaptation to the conditions on the islands, for the contents might easily be spilled owing to the number of loose stone walls which have to be crossed on a journey to the fields. Many of the Aran carrying baskets (" kishauns ") are constructed of coiled straw rope bound together with split bramble (Fig. 77). They no doubt help to keep warm the food carried in them, such as boiled potatoes, boiled in their skins needless to say, in the Irish fashion. Such " lipe-work " was once common in Wales, where seed-baskets, yarn-holders, hassocks and meal containers were made in this way, but in Ireland the only coiled work I have seen outside the Aran Islands is the bee-skep of rye straw, tied with bramble. The illustration shows the small bone pin or awl used by the islanders in threading the brambles. Similar pins, which doubtless had many uses, are frequently found in archæological excavations, particularly on sites where a Mesolithic heritage may be suspected.

[282]

[231]

Coiled Straw Basket

Fig. 77.
Note bone pin.

This brings us to the very large topic of the uses made of straw. There is no need to refer to the value of oat straw as fodder or as thatch, though it does not last long as roofing material, and either wheat or rye straw is preferred. A humble example of the use of thatch is shown in the beehive (Fig. 77*a*) Rope (sugán) made of straw or hay still finds many uses, especially for tying down thatch on houses and stacks. It is twisted on a " thraw-hook " of ash or hazel, with a sally hand-grip, but the old styles are declining with the spread of a simple " twister " of strong bent wire (Fig. 78). This type is found throughout the British Isles in many forms some of which are

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[231]

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Fig. 77*a*.
Height 4 ft.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

151 ***Sight and Hearing.***—Both these senses are very acute, especially the former, which, in the fishermen, is extremely keen, many of these men can see small objects floating on the water at a distance where, even by the aid of a strong glass, most persons would find great difficulty in seeing them at all.

This description being a general one, little mention has been made 142 of the differences which exist between the people of different parts of 184 the district. It appears to be the general opinion on the mainland, that the inhabitants of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island, and, also, that the natives of both islands are fairer than those of the mainland, and personal inspection has corroborated these opinions. The islanders are readily distinguishable from the mainland people, not only by their dress of blue homespun, but also by their fairer hair and complexion, and their different cast of features.

The men of the district round Portacloy are darker in hair and seem to be of a different type; many of them are exceedingly fine well-built fellows.

In no part of the district are the people of small stature, though 142 a large number of them are descendants of dispossessed Ulster people. 114 On the contrary, they appear to be taller and stouter than the inhabitants of the southern part of the country. A statement,[1] originally made by an anonymous writer, has somehow gained currency, and has been repeatedly quoted abroad, noticeably by M. De Quatrefages,[2] and by M. Devay,[3] that the descendants of the Ulster people driven two centuries ago into Sligo and Mayo, had dwindled into dwarfs of five feet two inches high, prognathous and pot-bellied.

This most certainly does not apply to any section of the inhabitants of this part of Mayo, if indeed it were ever true of any part of the counties named, which repeated inquiries and personal observation agree in denying most positively.

The statement is quite unsupported by other writers dealing with this region at the same time. Thus Mr. P. Knight, writing in 1834, says of the people of Erris that "they are generally a good-humoured, good-natured, hospitable, generous race—*of middle size*—active, intelligent, and, when an opportunity offers of showing it, industrious." C. O.[4] describes the people as tall.

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[1] Dublin University Magazine, No. 48, p. 658.
[2] L'Unité de l'Espèce Humain, ii., 316.
[3] Devay Fr. "Du Danger des Mariages consanguins sous le Rapport Sanitaire."
[4] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

423 of different sizes and various origins into which rural Ireland
621 is divided—townland, parish, barony, diocese, rural district and so on—it is the townland which most closely touches the daily life and social relations of the countryman. The townland is his postal address, for individual farms preserve their historic communal anonymity: they still belong to the townland though they have become separate units since the 'town' or cluster has broken up. The farms rarely carry any names other than those of
[103] their owner (Mulligan's place, Thomson's farm or merely O'Brien's) and since there may be a dozen O'Briens in a
[551] particular townland various nicknames[1] and patronymics are used to distinguish between them. Thus one farm may be Kilty O'Brien's (from its left-handed owner), another Patsy Kate O'Brien's (from the owner's mother), and a third Yank O'Brien's (a returned emigrant, this). Similarly, the public house takes its title not from the brewers who supply it or from heraldic beasts such as the Red Lion but from the Mooneys or the Murnaghans who own it. Shops in country towns, too,
[602] carry personal names, and the nucleus of their trade is built up among blood relations.

The townland names, involving so many land holdings, are
423 legal titles, and their Gaelic names, however erroneously spelt
621 on the Ordnance Survey maps, are fossilized in their current
103 forms. Only an Act of Parliament can alter them. A glance at any six-inch Ordnance map will reveal the strange names that Gaelic imagination contrived and English scribes corrupted. Here are a few which I have come across in Ulster: Ballywillwill, Ballymunterhiggin, Aghayeevoge, Treantaghmucklagh. In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of them named Ballybeg (little town). Some 2,000 townlands begin with Knock (a hill); there are sixty called Tully and there are eleven Edens. The degree of repetition shows that these names have come down from a time when life was organized on a local basis. There are between 60,000 and 70,000 townlands in Ireland, averaging 325 acres or
423 ½ sq. mile, and the average townland population in the rural
621 areas is perhaps fifty. In fact their size varies considerably,
184

[1]Writing in 1682 (*West-Meath*, 113), Sir Henry Piers noticed their prevalence in that county '. . . so as no man whatever can escape a nickname.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

since they were based on the fertility of the land rather than its acreage, and it seems that many moorland tracts were not divided until fairly recent times, for they were formerly shared as common summer pasturage by the people of a whole parish or barony, covering 100 sq. miles or more. In such hilly areas the townlands may be as much as 2,000 acres: on the other hand in thickly-settled lowlands they are frequently less than 100 acres, and some anomalous fragments of an acre or two are designated townlands. This diversity also reflects cultural differences both between regions and between various classes from the kings and chiefs down to the humblest of bondmen. The first Ordnance Survey (1830–42) suppressed many of the local names for subdivisions and applied the term townland universally. Though the townland appears to have been equated with an agricultural unit, the ploughland or *seisrach*, it is clear that in many parts of the country 'the cow's grass' was the effective unit of measurement. Of Donegal about 1840 we read: 'The land is never let, sold or devised by the acre, but by 'a cow's grass'. This is a complement of land well understood by the people, being in fact the general standard; and they judge of the dimensions of a holding by its being to the extent, as the case may be, of one, two or three 'cows' grass'. They have divided not only into the fourth part of a cow's grass, called a 'foot', but into the eighth part of a cow's grass, or half a foot, denominated 'a cleet'.'[1] In Bantry, Co. Cork, land was let 'in the wilder parts by what is termed the gneeve, which is the twelfth part of a townland, and therefore of very undefined acreage'.[2]

To judge from surviving examples of clachans and openfields, it was customary for each house in the cluster to have a small enclosure or 'gort' (garden) adjacent to it, their high walls lining a maze of narrow lanes winding haphazard among the houses (Fig. 6). These settlements were characterized by an extreme disorder, as though the houses, in the words of one writer, had fallen 'in a shower from the sky'.[3] Linear villages, it is true, are not uncommon along the western seaboard,

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 26.
[2]*Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1844), s.v. Bantry.
[3]Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (1839), 353.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

usually opposite the fire. The absence, in a country predominantly pastoral and consuming large quantities of milk products, of a building or room set aside as a dairy is at first sight strange. Milk cattle, however, were closely identified with the woman of the house, and as we have seen they commonly shared the kitchen with the family. Owing to the scarcity of winter feeding-stuffs, moreover, the supply of milk must have been, down to a couple of centuries ago, largely confined to the summer months and butter-making was therefore undertaken at the booley houses. It must have been difficult to store the considerable amounts of milk products required for winter food, especially when one remembers that most of the peasant houses were made of wattles, sods or mud, and there is some evidence, as we shall see in Chapter IX, that they were kept underground under the old Celtic economy, in even temperatures and safe from the depredations of animals.

However this may be, the kitchen is the traditional place for keeping the churn, and for churning. The stave-built upright plunge churn, prototype of the metal milk-churn which at first faithfully copied its shape, belongs to a family of wooden vessels which has been diffused across the Old World from Ireland to Tibet and now survives most abundantly towards the limits of its range (Fig. 30). Made by local coopers, Irish churns display a considerable variety in shape and size, the shapes differing regionally, the sizes depending on the number of cows kept on the farm, for they were 'made to measure'. The small barrel-shaped churn of the south-west, with a narrow vertical mouth, would appear to be the older style. The mouth, designed to hold a lid through a hole in which the churn staff passes, is usually a separate unit attached to the body by a join—the crib—skilfully contrived and concealed under one of the encircling hoops. Some old churns have hoops of split rods, hazel or sally, but it was reckoned lucky to have one of the hoops of rowan. The staves are invariably of oak: the circular base is made in three pieces, dowelled together and having the joins sealed with rushes. Small churns which have been dug out of the bogs are generally found to have been cut from the solid, and they often have projecting lugs perforated for ease of transport. Those with holed lids were certainly churns, but others

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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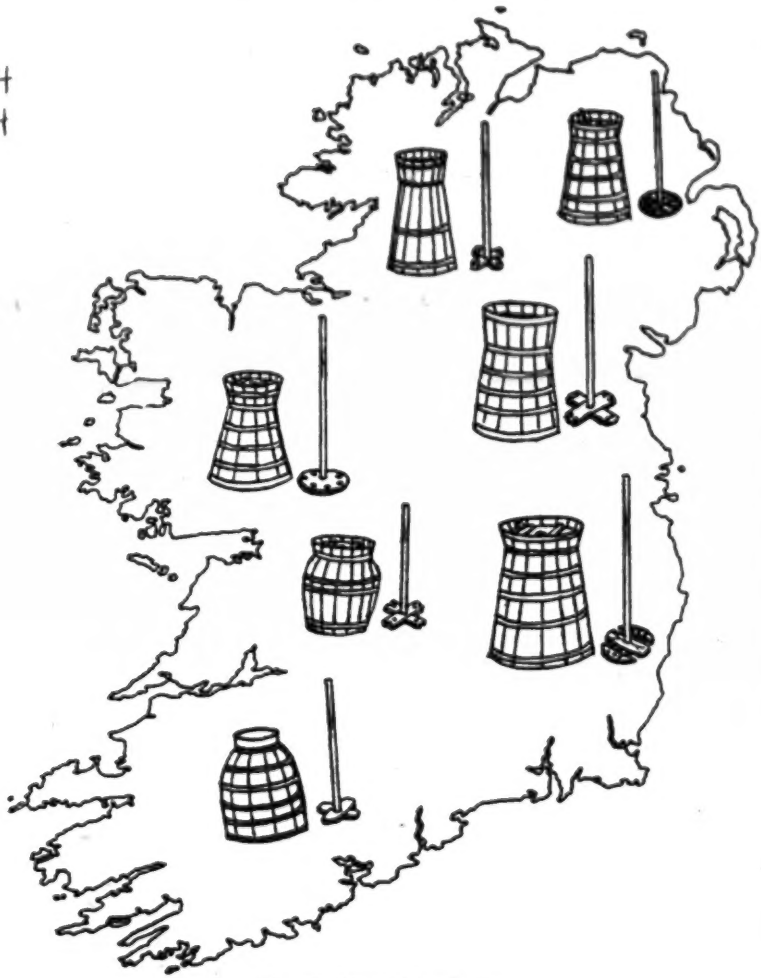

FIG. 30. Map of churn types.

were probably kegs for carrying milk: they have a rim of hoops which would allow a cloth or skin cover to be securely tied on.
234 A most interesting stave-built churn dating from the ninth century was discovered by Gerhard Bersu during the excavation

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

412 mouth which opened a way and prevented the blade from wedging.

It was reckoned that twelve men armed with loys could turn an acre a day.[1] This compares not unfavourably with the estimated rate of 'ploughing' with a caschrom, and is nearly twice the speed of spade digging. In the Munster spade the foot-rest is a separate piece of wood which is wedged into the open socket to one side of the shaft, normally the right. The shape of this wedge, and the dimensions and curve of the iron blade, vary from one district to another. When new the spade mouth has two points resembling a fish-tail, or the blade may taper to the mouth to facilitate digging in light gravelly soils. The old Galway spade has its footpiece cut out of a single piece of wood to which a separate handle is attached. This is considered to lessen the shock when the spade is thrust into the ground, and the device is frequently found on old-fashioned turf spades. A curious forked spade formerly common in Mayo also has this feature. This is the 'gowl-gob', a two-eared wooden spade with twin narrow iron-shod blades, and it was reckoned to be very suitable for making ridges in loose sandy or boggy soils (Fig. 43). This may be the last survival of a prehistoric spade, for 'a two-pointed pronged spade' is said to be an ancient Mediterranean tool,[2] and a 'bidente' is used in parts of Spain.

The two-eared iron spade which is replacing the loy in its last lairs has gradually ousted the one-eared spade in most parts of the country during the course of the nineteenth century. But in doing so it has copied even the minor variations of the spades it replaced, so that the spade remains an index of regionalism, a tool of sociological research as well as an instrument of labour (Fig. 44). Until water-driven tilt-hammers
326 were introduced for the manufacture of spades—perhaps half
412 a dozen of them are still in operation—they were made by
● 184 local blacksmiths for local customers. A good spade-maker occasionally won a reputation which might be compared to that of a medieval sword-forger. The smith needed two helpers to hammer out the metal plates, and the work was very heavy.

[1]Coote, *Cavan* (1802), 31.
[2]*The Cambridge Economic History* (Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power), I (1941), 94.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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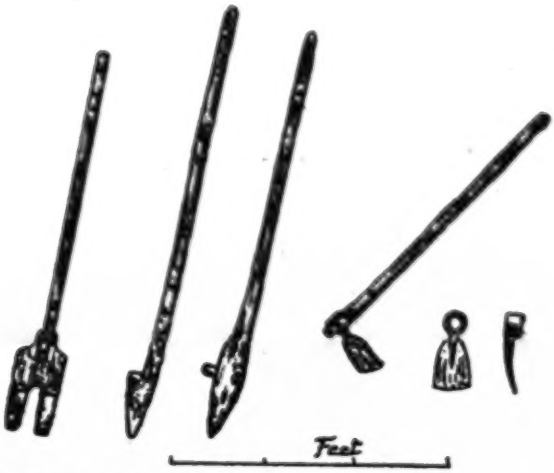

FIG. 43. 'Gowl-gob', Co. Mayo; steeveens, Longford and Cavan; and graffan, Kerry.

The precise requirements of each group of townlands forming a neighbourhood-unit resulted from the balance of many physical, human and economic factors—such as conditions of soil and slope, methods of digging, types of crop, length of arm and leg—cemented by usage and sanctioned by tradition. The 'spade gauge book' of a County Tyrone factory, which has lately closed, lists some 230 different patterns, not counting the special turf spades, and it served only Ulster and the west. I quote the dimensions for the length and breadth, at shoulder and mouth, of the spades of a few districts in Ulster to illustrate the variety and precision of the gauges: Armagh, 18 in. × $5\frac{13}{16}$ × $6\frac{11}{16}$; Omagh, $17\frac{1}{2}$ × $5\frac{1}{2}$ × $6\frac{1}{4}$; Dungannon, $17\frac{1}{2}$ × $5\frac{7}{8}$ × $5\frac{7}{8}$; Portrush, 16 × $6\frac{3}{4}$ × $6\frac{1}{2}$; Kilkeel, 15 × $6\frac{1}{4}$ × $4\frac{1}{2}$; Monaghan, 20 × $4\frac{7}{8}$ × 6. It will be noticed that the spades vary not only in size but also in shape, some having 'broad points', that is expanding at the mouth, some 'narrow points', that is tapering, and others being parallel sided. The blades range in weight from 3 to 6 lb., in length from 13 to 22 in., in width at the shoulder from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 in. and at the mouth from 3 to 8 in. In addition great attention is paid to the longitudinal

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 [Text continues on p. 137]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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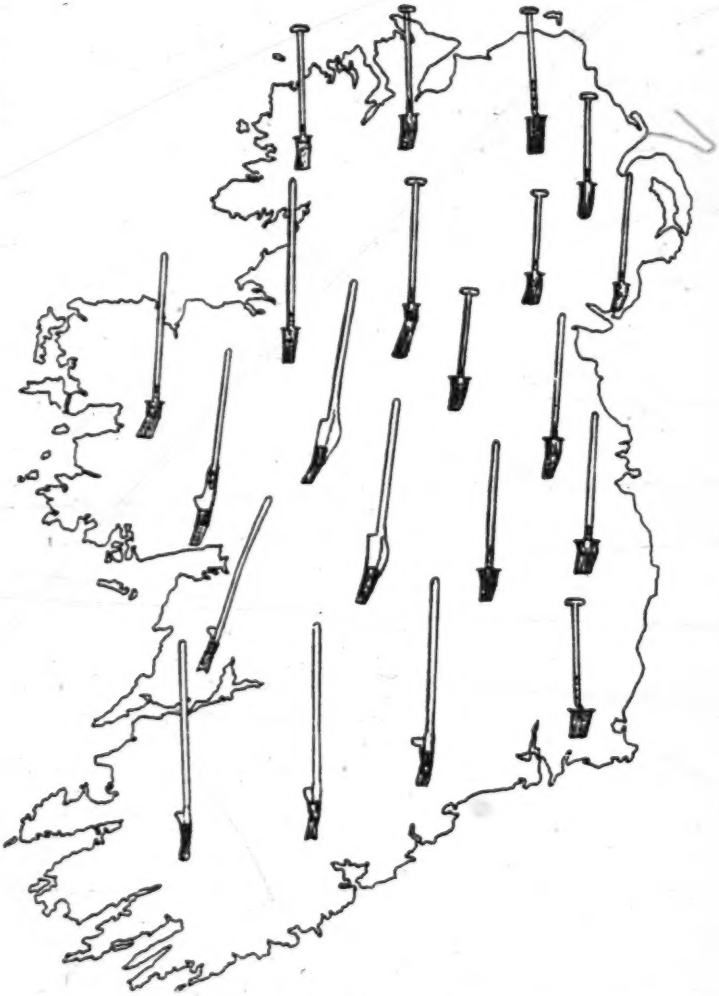

FIG. 44. Map of spade types.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

bend or 'lift' of the blade and to the lateral bend or 'dish'. The lift may be well distributed or it may be concentrated at one point: it may be curved or cranked. 412 184

The shape of the blade being thus precisely standardized for each area, various sizes are made to suit individual users and also the seasons of the year. Thus four or five spades of different sizes, ranging say from 13 to 17 in. in length, will be seen on sale in the market towns. In addition some longer spades may be offered for old-fashioned folk, for the blade of the spade is now made shorter than it used to be. These shorter spades, [178] required for digging potatoes, retain the often awkward shape of the long spring spade—designed for ridge-making—which is going out of favour with drill cultivation.

The Irish spade differs from the English not only in its narrow bent blade but also in its thickened sides, its foot-plates, its straight handle and the short straight straps or tails to which the handle is attached. Whereas the English spade derives its digging power from the curvature above the blade, in the Irish spade the curvature is all in the blade. Moreover the Irish prefer a long shaft (4 ft.) without hand-grip, though in Ulster the shaft is short (3 ft.) and headed, i.e. fitted with a cross-piece at the end. The headed shaft, however, is replacing the long headless shaft which is better adapted to the process of sod turning than to digging. With the headed shaft the control of the spade is mainly in the hand that grips the head, which thus tends to be the right hand: consequently this type of spade goes with left-footed digging (Fig. 41).

These differences are largely explained by differences of function, for the primary purpose of the Irish two-eared spade, like the loy which it has replaced, is to turn the sod. It is a hand plough rather than a digging tool, and it owes its remarkable development to the expansion of potato cultivation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To the new crop, as we shall see, the old method of burying the seed in prepared beds was quickly adapted, for ridge cultivation was ideally suited to a root-planting culture, and in fact potatoes are grown in ridges on the Andean plateaux. Thus the adoption of the potato helped to perpetuate tools and methods of cultivation which might otherwise have died out. Nowadays, however, 244 412

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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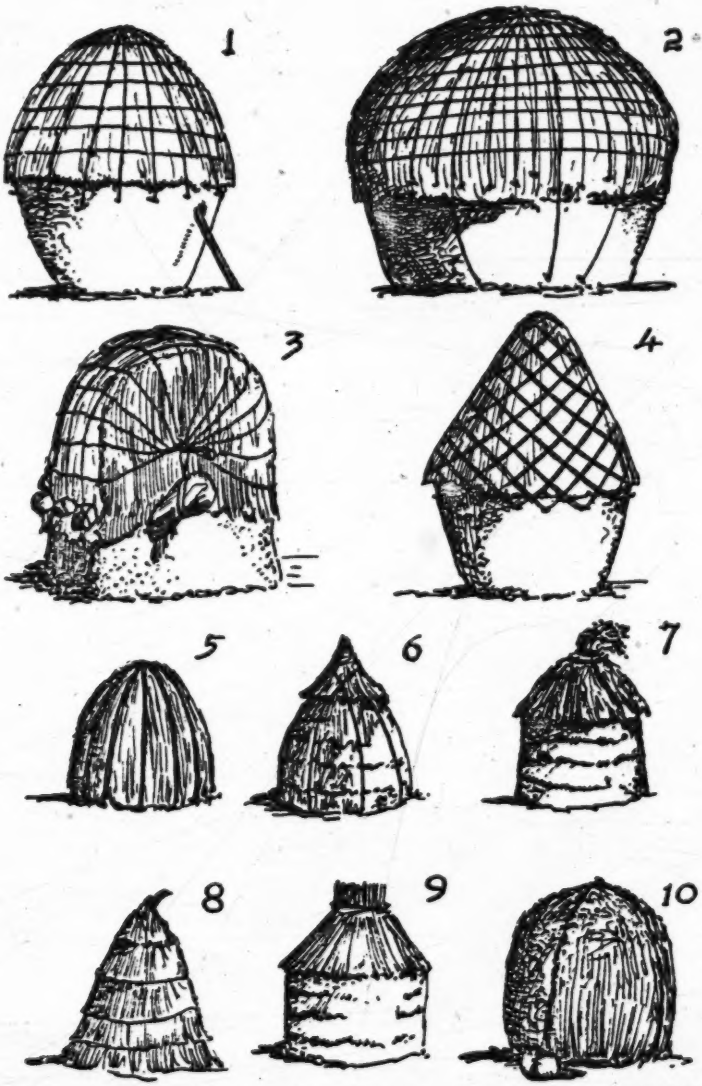

FIG. 52. Stacks and huts roped in many patterns. (1) Cavan (flax). (2) Cork (hay). (3) Mayo (hay). (4) Antrim (oats). (5) Donegal (hay). (6) Donegal (oats). (7) Down (oats). (8) Down (seed hay). (9) Cavan (oats). (10) Down (tramp-cock of hay).

HARVEST

246 412 The Irish prefer the long-handled scythe. The sned, about five-and-a-half feet long, has the lower handgrip offset, and a pointed iron spike is sometimes driven into the end of the sned to anchor it safely when honing (Fig. 53). A test of a well-

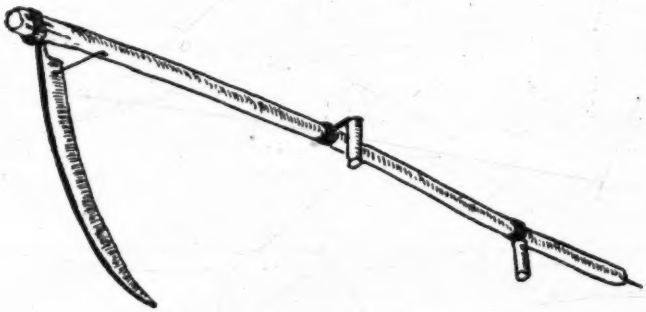

FIG. 53. Long-handled scythe, Donegal.

sharpened scythe is that it should 'cut wool moving downstream', and there was a special charm used in sharpening. The sanded scytheboard (strickle) has now given way to the artifi-
[133] cial stone, though hones of natural stone, including the fossilized wood of Lough Neagh, are used locally. A smith-made scythe-blade is highly prized and long after its legitimate life has ended lengths of it will be utilized for choppers and turnip knives. For full efficiency one must be measured for the fitting and hanging of a scythe. The lower handle should be at arm's length from the bottom of the sned, the upper one distant from the top by the length from elbow to finger-tips. The two handles should also be a cubit apart. The angle of the blade is determined by swinging the left leg and adjusting the blade until its point comes within a nicely determined distance of it when the sned is held upright against the right leg. The scythe cradle, for gathering the swathe as it is cut, is rarely met with
● [184] in Ulster, save for makeshift devices such as a bit of sacking fitted against the 'grass-nail' which joins sned and blade in the angle where they meet. In the south and south-east of the country, where the scythe is an old introduction, quite elaborate cradles both of wood and of finely-wrought iron are to be seen.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

frogs (at Newmarket-on-Fergus) would creep down their throats. The finding of flukes and other parasites in sheep and cattle has helped the belief, and a beast's tongue, if swollen, is supposed to have been "stung by a worm." We have already noted a cure for "worm" in cattle,[24] and the milk of the "Seven Sisters" plant[25] boiled in milk cures similar cases in human beings.[26] 825 [757]

Frog.—Besides jumping down children's throats, the frog cures a cough if held by the legs, put for a moment into the sufferer's mouth, and returned to the water.[27] In a variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, at Bohatey, near Lough Derg, frogs mob and devour a boy who has tortured one of their number.[28] Frogs are said to have been rained on a field in eastern Burren more than once.

Insects etc.—An old woman at Maryfort in 1869 scandalized her neighbours by asserting butterflies to be dwellings of the human soul, and that her own soul would go into a "blessed (tortoise-shell) butterfly." Whence she derived this belief is unknown. I heard about the same time, and, it may be, from the same source, a horrible story of a "spider as big as a *bonnive*" (young pig) sucking the blood of children in the dark, but I forget the details. It is lucky to kill the "daudayle" (*dubh dael*) or "devil's coach-horse," for this hideous but harmless creature has the repute of having guided Judas to Gethsemane.[29] When it "cocks up its hind end," you should crush it, preferably with your bare foot, for you are then spared a day, hour, or week in Purgatory. In Clare I have only found this belief near Tulla, but it is common in other counties. [774]

[24] *Ante*, p. 58. [25] Cf. *ante*, p. 57.

[26] So the late Michael Hazelton, an astrologer and herb doctor near Limerick.

[27] So Mrs. O'Callaghan.

[28] So Capt. Hibbert of Woodpark. A similar tale is told about toads by Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerary in Wales*, cap. ii.

[29] In Ulster the "connach worm" replaces the beetle. The tale says that men were sowing a corn-field when Our Lord and the faithful disciples passed, and that He told the sowers to inform His pursuers that they had last seen Him when they were sowing. The corn at once sprang into ear, and the pursuers, on getting the answer to their enquiry, were turning back when the worm cried out that the seed had only just been sown. The Ulster tale was collected by Mr. W. F. De Vismes Kane, D.L., of Monaghan. In Clare Island (Mayo) Mr. N. Colgan found a similar tale told of St. Patrick and his enemies. [194]

[P. 251]

[P. 153, B]

551 **192** In *The Aran Islands*[1] Synge makes the following observations on the system of personal names then in use (1898–1902):

> When a child begins to wander about the island, the neighbours speak of it by its Christian name, followed by the Christian name of its father. If this is not enough to identify it, the father's epithet—whether it is a nickname or the name of his own father—is added.
>
> Sometimes when the father's name does not lend itself, the mother's Christian name is adopted as epithet for the children.
>
> Occasionally the surname is employed in its Irish form, but I have not heard them using the 'Mac' prefix when speaking Irish among themselves; perhaps the idea of a surname which it gives is too modern for them, perhaps they do use it at times that I have not noticed.
>
> Sometimes a man is named from the colour of his hair. There is thus a Seaghan Ruadh (Red John), and his children are 'Mourteen Seaghan Ruadh,' etc.
>
> The schoolmaster tells me that when he reads out the roll in the morning the children repeat the local name all together in a whisper after each official name and then the child answers. If he calls, for instance, 'Patrick O'Flaharty,' the children murmer, 'Patch Seaghan Dearg' or some such name, and the boy answers.
>
> If an islander's name alone is enough to distinguish him it is used by itself, and I know one man who is spoken of as Eamonn. There may be other Edmunds on the island, but if so they have probably good nicknames or epithets of their own.

[114 184] While on Tory Island (Oileán Thoraighe), Co. Donegal, in 1962, I collected the names of all living adults and found the system to be basically that reported by Synge for the Aran Islands, with enough distinctiveness to be worth a separate analysis.[2]

601 Kinship terms are rarely used among the islanders except between young children and their parents and parents' 551 siblings. Cousinship is indicated by saying of a person something like 'his mother and my father were the children of two brothers' (*Bhí a mháthair agus m'athair clann na beirte dearbhráthar*), or 'we are children of brother and sister' (*Támuid clann dearbhráthar agus deirbhsheathar*). But in a small community where the genealogical links between persons are common knowledge, such descriptive explanations are rarely called for. Personal names are used 551 instead and in themselves help to indicate a person's position in the kinship structure by showing his line of descent for up to four generations.

A person will in fact have three sets of names: a Gaelic 'ceremonial' set; an English 'practical' set; and a Gaelic-English 'personal' set. A man's full Gaelic name will consist of his baptismal name followed perhaps by his 'epithet' such as Óg (young—usually means youngest of several brothers), Bán (fair), Mór (big), Beag (small—wee), followed by his surname. Such a combination might yield, [585] for example, 'Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh.' A woman, strictly speaking, retains her family name on marriage and adds the descriptive phrase 'wife of' (literally 'woman of')

* *With two tables*

551 name continuity of such a group can be maintained, con-
611 verging on the founder's name as in our example, is some measure of the continuing solidarity of the group. This tends to weaken after about six generations and the disintegration of the group is reflected in the native com-
[182] mentary—*Tá na h-ainmneacha caillte*, 'the names is lost.' The attempt to keep the name continuity often conflicts with the desire to distinguish person from person, hence the existence of alternative name types.

The following formula[2] shows the ideal structure of the Tory name using the following symbols: C = Christian name, S = surname, E = epithet, Fa = father's Christian name, Mo = mother's Christian name. A symbol in the lower case indicates that the item can be omitted from the progression of names.

		Generation 0		+1		+2
Patrilateral	Ce	+S	Fa	e es s +	FaFa	e es s
					FaMo	e es s
			fa			
			mo			
Matrilateral			Mo	e es s +	MoFa	e es s
					MoMo	e es s

The columns represent the alternative possibilities, the rows the matrilateral and patrilateral 'progression' of names. The formula can be expanded according to the same rules.

To see how this basic choice between matrilateral and patrilateral 'progressions' worked out in practice I tabulated instances of each type of name progression in my collection, distinguishing by sex of nominee (m and f) but ignoring the optional epithets and surnames (Table I). I collected these names separately from the two settlements on the island, East Town (*Baile Thoir*) and West
[184] Town (*Baile Thiar*), and they are so listed on the table. It is commonly believed that the East is more traditional than the West, but this does not show up in any differences in the naming systems.

What emerges from this table is the overwhelming preference for taking the father's name (and his father's) by both men and women, and the fact that for both sexes one possible combination does not occur—m/f+Mo+MoMo. I am told that this has occurred in the past, but infrequently. The fourth cluster of name types in the table is a group of residual types. The oddities here are the girl who took her father's brother's name and the rest which skip a generation and start with the grandparental names. These cases usually result from an uncle or grandparents bringing up children in the absence of parents. If these relatives are seen as *in loco parentis* then the pattern remains the same as for the majority.

[2] [This formula has been corrected according to the specifications given in Man, vol. 63, article 248, p. 195, Dec. 1963. Anl/151]

[P. 155, A]

TABLE I

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Name type	West Town	East Town	Total
m + *Fa*	24	25	49
f + *Fa*	26	16	42
m + *Mo*	13	4	17
f + *Mo*	6	4	10
m + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	15	5	20
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	13	4	17
m + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
f + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
m + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	0	3	3
f + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	2	1	3
m + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	3	3
f + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*	2	1	3
m + *MoFa*	3	1	4
f + *MoFa*	1	0	1
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	3	0	3
f + *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	0	1	1
f + *FaBro*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	3	0	3
f + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	1	0	1
	112	70	182

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Table II summarizes the 'laterality preference' as it affects men and women respectively.

TABLE II

	Patrilateral	*Matrilateral*	*Total*
m	72 (70·6 *per cent.*)	30 (29·4 *per cent.*)	102
f	67 (83·75 *per cent.*)	13 (16·25 *per cent.*)	80
Total	139 (76·4 *per cent.*)	43 (23·6 *per cent.*)	182

The figures in parenthesis are percentages of the row totals.

The overall preference is, as we have seen, patrilateral, but there is an interesting minority preference amongst males for matrilateral names. Practically a third of the men and less than a sixth of the women have matrilateral names.[7] There are several explanations for this trend amongst [162] males. It may stem from the large number of widows with sons, or from the name continuity of the descent system. In a number of cases it follows from the fact that a man is given his father's Christian name as his own and hence takes his mother's name to distinguish him, although this 182 is not all that common.

551 Such a highly personalized naming system only works 611 within the particularistic boundaries of a small community.

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The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. In 1846, 25 years before Edward Tylor pronounced his famous anthropological definition of culture, William J. Thoms introduced into English the word "folk-lore," which he defined as "the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the olden time." Ethnology, a scientific discipline whose focus is primitive culture in the Tylor tradition, has had for almost a century its parallel in the humanistic discipline of folklore, whose focus is the culture of the folk, or folklore, in the Thoms tradition. During this time, ethnology has evidenced a humanistic current in its concern with primitive religion, ideology, and esthetics. The discipline of folklore, on the other hand, has evidenced a scientific current, mainly in the research of scholars belonging to the "Finnish School," whose approach to cultural dynamics resembles that of the "American Historical School" of ethnology, and of eastern and northern European folklorists (who often call themselves ethnographers as well) who have been making rather broad cultural studies of peasant communities somewhat in the anthropological mold. American ethnologists employ the term folklore to designate only the oral literature of peoples—their myths, legends, folktales, anecdotes, proverbs, riddles, songs, and the like. I will employ the term in this sense when I deal with Inis Beag esthetics in Chapter 4.

Ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the universities and elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland, but folklore in the humanistic tradition is strongly developed (Delargy 1957; Dorson 1966). The deliberate recording of the immense body of folklore in Ireland began in the early part of the last century, was kindled by the Gaelic Revival, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation, first, of the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936. For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the oral literature and material traits, and their associated behavior, of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the people; moreover, their visits have been brief and intermittent, they have depended on a limited sample of respondents, and most of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (the Irish equivalent of the American *Outline of Cultural Materials* and British *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*), which does not include many categories of significance to anthropologists. Since my wife and I were interested primarily in the nonmaterial elements of Inis Beag culture, and since the oral literature of the folk has been well studied by commission and other folklorists, we placed less emphasis on material culture and folklore in our ethnographic work.

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The culture of Inis Beag about to be described is that of 1959 and 1960, and if I intrude data from earlier or later fieldwork I will label them as such. My wife and I also collected a large body of cultural materials in three other Irish islands, for the purposes of making cross-cultural comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. The Inis Beag tradition is shared in large measure by the inhabitants of neighboring islands, especially those of Inis Thiar, and the several cultures together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the Irish system considered as a whole. Many of the peasant customs of Inis Beag are shared with rural peoples on the mainland, where

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as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers. 824 [437] [241]

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained. 222 222 423

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden. 222 [482] 241

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by 241 654 [177] [178] [184]

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 434 [501] [295] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [438] [651] [437] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-501 502 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 [502] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the [433] [322] crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, [184] and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

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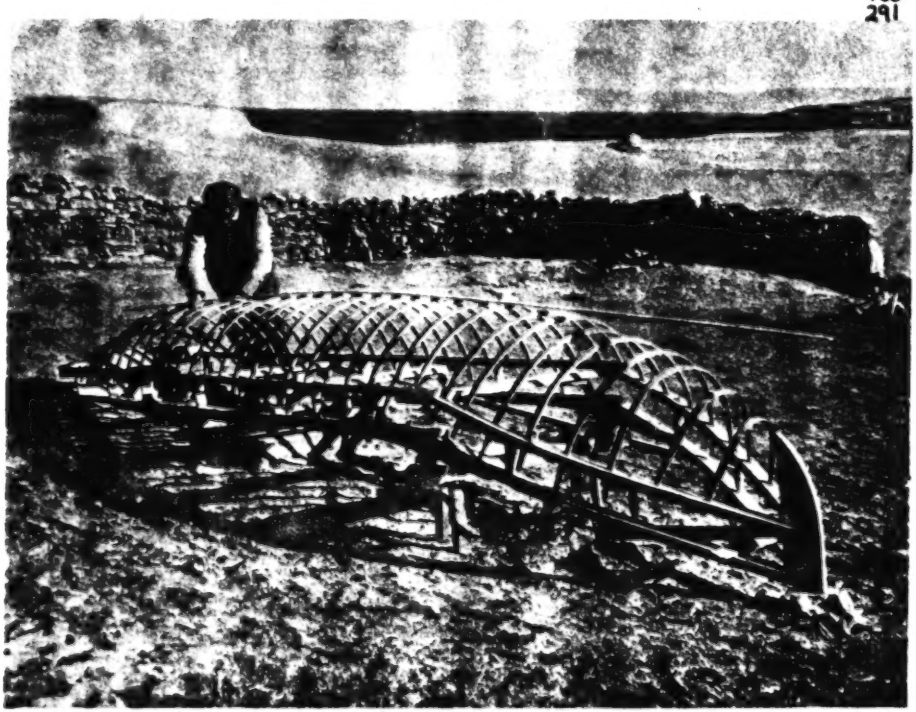

Figure 10. Assembling lashes in the construction of a canoe

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folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

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[177]
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The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is 000

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361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

• 184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement.... It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting.... Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
171 of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [178] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, [798] rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of paganism. [788] Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [775] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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776 787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken [753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until [562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18 [789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan- 776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is 778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged [823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where [123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 776 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call. [428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An [123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last 184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it 763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a 776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those [522] persons considered overly superstitious.

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184 •
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body, one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 171
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346]
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on November 1st.

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539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [782] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 796 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 796 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck 782 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [231] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [828] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood [237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 771 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[889] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[757] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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538 539 191 [537] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb 539 derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than 534 its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [178] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of [177] the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

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and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists 177 to accompany dancing. 178

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; 533 music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and 534 figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied 536 by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance 535 music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for [123] dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several [177] occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party.

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a 114 consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, 533 also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their 533 music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung 184 publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to [538] the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and [171] motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders [173] believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in 533 the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out [539] of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes [126] to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, [539] emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous 533 songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as 184 ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [163]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasans on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experierced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions
there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side,
where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new
soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle
dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body. 78 95

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation. 771 178 [184] • [182]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit- 114 538

the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp 361
along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. 621
Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawl- 494
ing village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train
runs between the two.

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this re- 185
moteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. 621
Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive 234
through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic
liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many
of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing
machine, out of an English steel works, and some
of the houses own a mechanical cream separator,
even though next door a wooden hand churn is still
in use which looks no different from those found
deep in the bogs.

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. 185
They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But 621
in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's
attention turns to the life into which these few
strays of modernity find their way.

For Luogh is like many another community of 621
small farms over Clare and southern and western 184
Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are 181
even more remote. Many are better off; some few
are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language
better; others have abandoned it altogether for the
brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic
still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded
in their common folk life.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

digging or shovelling. For these processes the digging fork 244
and long-handled shovel are the proper tools. (Fig. 65). It 412
should also be remarked that the preparation of lazy-beds
was communal team-work, undertaken by groups of from [462]
8 to 16 men who shared their labour under the system of [476]
voluntary co-operation which distinguished the village
community. The custom is maintained in a few localities.

The loy served in certain districts as a dibber for setting the potatoes "against the back of the spade," but various special dibbers were also used. There was, for instance, the large two-handed "steeveen" found from Co. Leitrim to Co. Clare. As another example of a dibber we illustrate the clumsy-looking "stamp" from Co. Armagh (Fig. 47), employed in sowing turnips. Reference will be made elsewhere (Chapter 16) to the use of seaweed as manure. Old thatch, with its content of soot from the turf fire, is occasionally used as a fertilizer, and I am told that in Achill Island miniature stone, sod or turf buildings used as "soot houses" are roofed with rafters and scraws each autumn. Fires are lit in them, the smoke depositing soot on its passage through the thatch. This is then stripped off and, with the ashes of the fires, spread on the land as manure in spring. The thatch of the Hebridean black houses was utilized in the same way.

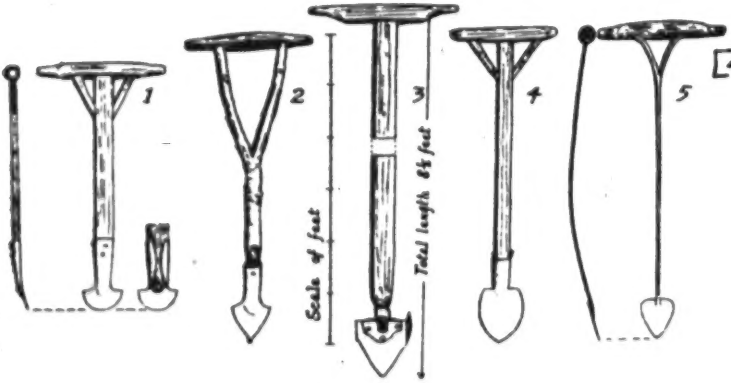
Fig. 47.

A practice which was formerly widespread and attracted a 241
great deal of heated discussion in the period of agricultural 412
development at the end of the 18th century was the preparing of waste ground for cultivation by "paring and burning," or "denshiring." It seems probable that this was a survival of ancient custom, and I believe that old-fashioned tool, the flachter, was probably employed for the purpose, just as its sister-tool, the breast-plough, was in England. Many types of tools were perfected for land reclamation, including a [185]
special skinning-plough. In the south-west a heavy hoe or mattock, known as a graffan—similar to the implement still used in Kerry for breaking clods on potato ridges—was popular as a paring tool, the sod being rolled with the foot as it was cut. By such laborious processes, and by centuries of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuts. It is customary to replace the sod on the floor of the bog as the face is cut back, so that the rough grazing is preserved. If the sub-soil is suitable, lowland bogs are reclaimed and good cropping land secured for hay and potatoes. In Armagh strawberries, raspberries, currants and rhubarb grow excellently on the peaty soils. 314 [311] [185]

In the mountain bogs of the north-east a variety of push plough known as the flachter—a word derived from the same root as "flay"—cuts off a scraw some six inches thick as it is driven by vigorous thrusts of the thighs against the stout cross-bar (Figs. 83, 84). Unlike the English breast-



[413]

Fig. 85. Flachters.

1. Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim. 3. Glenravel, Co. Antrim (English type).
2. Glendun, Co. Antrim. 4. Co. Tyrone (1802).
5. Tirmeel, Co. Derry (iron shaft).

plough, the blade has no side wing. It is fastened to the shaft by the old-fashioned device of folded flanges which we have already come across in the sock of the wooden plough and in the loy. I illustrate in Fig. 85 some varieties of flachter and, for comparison, a breast-plough of English type from mid-Antrim (centre). In connexion with the short-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

668 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary,
000 and clerical figures.[3] A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

668 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Associa-
197 tion, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the
538 formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage
[204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

> The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasised the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195–196).

177 Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on
185 language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since
668 the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the
[648] time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

[113] [3] The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603–1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER XIII

Markets and the Community

621 IN rural Ireland what we have called the "rural community" is no simply defined geographical area. Any one of the recognized divisions of the countryside in Ireland, a townland, a group of townlands, a parish, an old barony, a mountain upland, a portion of a valley floor or plain, except perhaps the newer administrative divisions, is in a sense a community. The lines of relationship among the small farmers are continuous from one of these to another across the land. Geographic barriers serve only to deflect the lines of this continuum, not to divide it.

621 186 We observe of a farmer of Luogh, for example, that he coors largely in Luogh townland. But he has kinsmen scattered around about as far as Mount Elva, four miles to the north, and Liscannor, three miles to the south. He attends the parish church of Killilagh, a two-mile walk from his house, but sends his children to school at Ballycotton, only a mile off. He does most of his shopping in Roadford, a crossroad settlement two miles away. Yet he takes his larger produce for sale and his larger needs of purchase to the market town of Ennistymon, some eight miles off, or the smaller one of Lisdoonvarna, some five miles off. He votes and pays his taxes as a member of a certain electoral district which overlaps exactly none of these regions. He associates himself in tradition with Clare and Munster as a North Clare man, rather than with Galway and Connaught,

[p.282]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

though he may have seen very little of either beyond his 621
market towns. The small farmer of Luogh has allegiances 186
to all these communities. He is quite ready to find his emotion stirred in any one of them. He is ready to back the men of Luogh against the men of the neighboring townland; to back those of the mountain region against those of the valley lands; those of his parish against the rest; those of the countryside against the towns of Lisdoonvarna and Ennistymon; those of North Clare against other sections of the county; those of Clare against all other counties; those of his class against all others; of his religion against all others; of his nation against all others. Each one of these allegiances has a geographical base, though in the last analysis each one of these is built up out of his personal experience of human relations.

A study of the local community among the small farmers 621
must thus be a study of the geographic basis of their relationships. In the course of such study an inquiry into the spatial relationships involved in the distribution of produce and shop goods between the farms and the market towns is a first step.

The chief agencies of distribution in the countryside 438
draw upon well-marked areas. Each crossroad shop, each hamlet, each market town, each fair, has its own hinterland. In recent years creameries have grown up at strategic places. Likewise, in the same years, larger towns have pushed their hinterlands farther back into the country districts, and motor lorries go even into the back roads.

The definition of such market areas and the demarcation of those into which such a rural county as Clare can be divided is a relatively simple task. It can be reached by plotting out on the map lists of customers' names and addresses obtained from each of the myriad crossroad centers and clusters of shops sprinkled over the county, combining them with others obtained from records of tolls paid by

222 674 of the common people and have not been caught in the net of written records, it is still harder to throw light on some of the darker aspects of shore life. Both smuggling and wrecking have almost everywhere at one time or another been regarded as legitimate methods of obtaining food and acquiring goods from the sea. A dread harvest from ships sunk by enemy action was reaped with seeming callousness during two world wars by coastal dwellers who would risk their own lives in the process. Driftwood has always been an acceptable gift, and many a fisherman's cabin is roofed with ship's timbers and its fittings augmented with ship's furniture. Nearly all these varied shore 222 476 activities demand a measure of co-operation, and one finds that communal schemes of one kind and another and old ways and beliefs live long among folk who have to deal with the sea. Collective effort is necessary in hauling boats and handling nets, and while there are traditional rivalries between different coastal settlements each one tends to be a closely knit com- [186] munity displaying a strong spirit of independence. They were often able to resist the repressive hand of landlords and they still remain suspicious of the efforts of government bodies to improve their lot.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality, men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148). Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn main-land attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them, the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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by choice, an old woman said, "City folk are always troubled. They aren't their own bosses, and they get up too early and work too hard. They face the dangers of traffic, and, worst of all, they meet with temptations of the flesh."

In the last chapter, I discussed two facets of the Inis Beag self-image: their seldom admitted poverty and indolence. Other facets have just been revealed in their appraisals of various groups, and still more are apparent when one examines their attitudes toward visitors to the island. During the summer, they enjoy the presence of strangers on the strand at steamer time, in the pubs, and at parties, and when winter comes many conversations dwell on those who were "great gas" —entertaining in song, dance, or repartee. But outsiders fulfill a far deeper need, in that most of them express admiration for the island and its inhabitants. They praise the beauty, antiquities, and history of Inis Beag, but more importantly the friendliness of the people and those customs and personality traits publicized by writers and film producers, which are "discovered" even when nonexistent or considerably "diluted." Departing tourists usually vow that they will return, and they are asked repetitiously what it was that so pleased them and if they will be "lonesome after they leave." Reflected here are the profound feelings of inferiority of the folk and their need for constant reassurance of their worth. Much of the depression among islanders during winter months is related to the absence of outsiders who stimulate them and are subjects of gossip.

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The people of Inis Beag regard themselves as friendly, polite, and hospitable to outsiders—not at all like their Inis Thiar neighbors, who are said not to like tourists and to extort money from them for giving information and allowing themselves to be photographed. Strangers never are derided for behaving in a disapproved fashion but are "treated with dignity," although some men will try to gain free drinks and other favors from outsiders in a calculating and beguiling manner (called "being cute" in Ireland), which is frowned on by the majority of folk. During the summer when tourists are plentiful, many islanders behave according to the nativistic and primitivistic expectations of the strangers: attire becomes more traditional and newer costumes are worn, canoes are rowed with greater vigor, conversations become more boastful, and the like. The sensitivity of the islanders to nativism and primitivism is quite selective, however, in that they extol certain of their indigenous customs and are ashamed of others. Actions which give credence to such character traits as spirituality, strength, and courage are exaggerated, while those which belie such traits as independence, self-reliance, and industriousness are carefully hidden. My wife and I kept a careful record of the responses of Inis Beag folk to questions that we posed concerning their history and culture when we first visited the island in 1958. More than 40 replies turned out to be erroneous, and some of them would have done credit to the most ardent nativist or primitivist.

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Most tourists who visit Inis Beag share a mystique fostered by interpretations of island life in the works of writers and film producers. A similar mystique is found elsewhere in the world among idealized primitive and peasant peoples. In Inis Beag, it often causes visitors to seek acceptance from the folk, to resent the presence of other outsiders, to boast of their intimate knowledge of Inis Beag customs, and, in some cases, to "go native" in so far as circumstances permit.

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

000 Strangers who spend weeks or months in Inis Beag and are able to grasp some of the realities of life there often leave emotionally distraught, knowing that they 609 never will be accepted by the people. Acceptance by the islanders is a problem faced by not only outsiders, but by immigrants. The latter remain strangers for two or three generations, and some people, particularly descendants of fisherfolk, are regarded as outsiders despite the fact that the families of some have resided in [152] Inis Beag for almost a century. Later we will learn that the islanders have difficulty [602] forming affectional bonds among themselves, even among kin; thus, they are able to give even less of themselves to those "who do not belong." Strangers who know Inis Beag well often complain that they must do all of the "giving," as the folk can only "take."

The islanders also share attitudes toward other individuals and groups, which I can mention only in passing. Among the most important are those concerning outsiders who have lived in Inis Beag for long periods of time (the expatriate Dane, lighthouse keepers, Brendan Behan the writer, and Siobhain McKenna the actress); writers who have composed works about the island and have dwelled there or are folk themselves; particular persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands (a policeman, a teacher, a man of great strength, a keeper of a guest house, and a man who provides taxi service between the islands and the mainland in a small boat); peasants from bordering counties; religious groups (Protestants generally, members of the Church of Ireland, Jews, and even Italian Catholics); ethnic and racial groups (Americans, English, Germans, Negroes, tinkers, and foreigners as a class); and, finally, politicians and government bureaucrats and the Irish press.

609 I know of but few cases of discrimination practiced against any of these, 829 but prejudices held against some of them abound, based either on historical • 186 experiences (with the English and the Church of Ireland) or on views inculcated by returned emigrants (concerning Jews and Negroes, who seldom visit Inis Beag). [123] Islanders, as well as most Irish, are ambivalent about "Yanks," as visiting emigrants from the United States are called, but are mostly critical of them; often my wife and I have been asked on first meeting an Irish person whether we are Irish-Americans or "real Americans," and when we have admitted to being the latter we have been well received. Conversely, we have seen Yanks shunned on revealing their pedigree. They are accused of "lording it over" their Irish kin and friends.

Formal Social Control

000 Anthropologists customarily classify social control systems as formal and informal. Formal systems are governments whose controls are based on physical violence or its threat—physical punishment, ostracism, banishment, and extermination; while informal systems include sanctions of a religious or economic nature and those exercised by primary groups—gossip, ridicule, persuasion, and opprobrium. Controls of a negative nature are buttressed by positive rewards, such as services provided by a government or the feeling of security gained from primary group approval. It is not the formal system of local and national governments

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[831] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds.

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths.

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school.

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

551 Aran report there occurs the name Ryder, marked as having originally come from Inishbofin.[1]

SURNAMES OF INISHBOFIN—NO. OF FAMILIES, 186.

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
Allies, ...	1	Lavelle, ...	15
Baker, ...	3	Lacy, ...	5
Barret, ...	4	Mannion, ...	3
Burke, ...	6	Martin, ...	1
Clogherty, ...	9	Moran, ...	6
Cloonane, ...	2	Melia, ...	10
Coyne, ...	1	Madden, ...	1
Corbett, ...	1	Mullen, ...	1
Concannon, ..	8	Mogan, ...	1
Conneely, ...	4	M'Cann, ...	1
Cummins, ...	1	M'Namara, ..	1
Cunnane, ...	7	M'Donagh, ..	4
Davis, ...	1	M'Kendrick, ..	1
Darcy, ...	1	Naughton, ..	4
Davin, ...	1	Price, ...	2
Dimond, ...	1	Powel, ...	2
Grodan, ...	1	Prendergast, ..	2
Halloran, ...	8	Quigley, ...	1
Hart, ...	3	Reilly, ...	1
Hughes, ...	4	Scuffle, ...	22
Joyce, ...	4	Smith, ...	1
King, ...	4	Tierney, ...	11
Kerrigan, ...	2	Toole, ...	4
Kenny, ...	1	Ward, ...	2
Leenane, ...	2	Walsh, ...	1

SURNAMES OF INISHSHARK.—NO. OF FAMILIES, 26.

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
Cloonane, ...	6	Lucy, ...	6
Davis, ...	1	Lavelle, ...	2
Dimond, ...	2	Melia, ...	2
Halloran, ...	2	Murray, ...	3
King, ...	1	Ward, ...	1

19 6. *Language.*—As I am not competent to speak with any authority

[1] One of the women photographed at Westquarter was named Browne, a surname not given in the list. (See Pl. VIII.).

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

on this subject, I shall not attempt the treatment of it myself, but shall quote the opinion of the Rev. Eugene O'Growney, who has an exceptional knowledge of both people and language, and has kindly furnished me with some of his notes relating to them. He says:— "The Irish spoken in Boffin has a very poor vocabulary, as far as I heard it spoken. I must say, however, that it was not easy to get the people to speak it, and many children at first refused point blank to utter a word of Irish. In most of the Irish-speaking districts of the west, the people have preserved a number of old poetic prayers and hymns. Many of these are very beautiful, and some appear to be of great age. I was particularly interested at the time of my visit in these hymns, but was told that the only hymn in use in Boffin and Shark was the *ortha Mhuire*, or prayer of Mary. I could not find any person in Boffin who could recite it, and the only person in Shark who was supposed to have it in full was out at sea. An old man in Boffin recited for me a portion of a quaint old religious composition in English." In another place he states that the people speak neither English nor Irish well, their dialect of the language containing many corrupted English words, and at least one curious word. "I recollect that the cove in which St. Leo's well is situated is called *fuath Leo*. I take the word *fuath*, which is the usual word in Inishshark and Inisboffin for a 'cove,' to be a corruption of *uamh*, which is used by the Four Masters in the year 893 as meaning 'cave.'"[1]

19 [538]

IV. SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Every family combines fishing and farming, and has some share in a boat. The farms are small (see p. 340), about three acres and a-half under potatoes and oats, being about the average amount of tillage per family. All are held direct from the landlord, who resides on Inishbofin, there being no subletting or con-acre. The rents average about £2 per holding, but vary much according to the extent and quality of the land.

241 [226] 427

The holdings are not divided up into small fields, as in Aran, but are often insufficiently fenced, allowing the cattle to stray, which

241 423

[1] The Rev. E. A. Lavelle has, since the above was written, sent a translation of a curious old Irish litany used on both islands, both in Irish and English, which he obtained from an old man, aged 84, whose father, Peter Lavelle, fought under Nelson at Trafalgar. As the litany is in English and of great length, it is not inserted here, but it is to be hoped that the Irish form will be recorded and preserved as it may possess the linguistic value wanting in a translation.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

boots of the bearers or else the type of barrow (of wood or straw) on which the coffin was borne, served to prevent the coffin from touching the soil. Again, in Ireland (at least, in parts of County Wexford), as in some European countries, wooden crosses or other memorials were left behind at such halts; in the Kilmore area of South Wexford, two crosses are carried with each funeral—one is left at the roadside at a halting-place, the other is set up on the grave. Cairns were often associated with funeral resting-places. It was customary in certain European countries for the bearers to partake of food and drink at resting-points; this, I am told, was the practice also in parts of Donegal and Waterford. Having rested for a while, fresh bearers took up the coffin, and the graveyard was ultimately reached. 764 [264]

I have already referred to the practice of laying down the coffin when a boundary-line was reached. My father, who died six years ago, at the age of 86, told me about a funeral-boundary custom in my native parish of Tuosist, in County Kerry, in the extreme southwest corner of Ireland. He was born in 1863 in the townland of Clogherane in Kerry, only a mile distant from the County Cork border. The high range of the Caha Mountains runs for over thirty miles through the peninsula of Béara, and separates at this point the Kerry parish of Tuosist from the Cork parish of Clanlawrence. During the Famine period of 1845–50 the men who lived at either side of the pass, Bealach Scairte, which led from one county (and parish) to the other, were employed, by way of a relief-scheme, in building a road across the pass. When the work ceased, the middle portion—about two miles in length—still remained undone. And so it remained until about twenty-five years ago, when, by the aid of State funds, the road now known as The Healy Pass was built across the mountain and the two ends were joined up. I often crossed by the old path from Kerry to Cork myself, before the new road was built; it was not so difficult in the early stage of the journey, but when the narrow defile (An Céim Cumhang) at the border was reached, one had to clamber as best one could over and between huge boulders which had fallen into the defile, some of them weighing forty or fifty tons, at a rough estimate. 764 491 [794]

Any funeral which now has occasion to pass from Cork to Kerry (or *vice versa*), can do so with the luxury of a hearse and motor-cars. But it was different when my father was a boy, and for long generations before that. He told me that one day, when he was on his way to the school at Glenmore—it was in the 1870's—he saw a large concourse of men, both young and old, passing along the old road at the foot of the mountain and through the fields. They were all carrying weapons or implements of some kind—some had hay-forks, he said, others had scythes, others hatchets, still others heavy sticks. He asked later on where they were going, and was told that they were going to meet a funeral, which was coming into Kerry from Cork, at the boundary-line. He told me that he knew well the Kerryman, who was leader of the large group; I knew him too, as he lived to a great age, and could speak no English. His name was Conchobhar Uaithne Ó Súilleabháin, and he lived at Shinnagh in the parish of Tuosist. My father told me that he heard later from some of those that were present at the boundary-line, that when the Corkmen appeared at the border, carrying the corpse tortuously on their shoulders, Conchobhar stepped in front of the bearers and stood with his stick raised on the large flat stone which marked the border at this point. The stone, by the way, is still known as Leac na gCorp (The Stone of the Corpses), and it is in the middle of the hollow which, avoiding the defile, was used by funerals, or by cattle 764 578 [191]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

114 from the narrow valley lands at Doolin in the ex-
491 treme north-west of County Clare. I was on my
133 way to my first stay in an Irish west-country farm community. My road, no wider than a bridle-path, led up a sharp escarpment out of the tiny valley which empties its stony river into the Atlantic, not three miles away from the southernmost island of Aran. Once the top of the rim is reached
114 the mountainside flattens out into a green and
133 gently sloping table-land. Standing there one can see the whaleback rocks that are the Aran Islands and the masses of Mount Elva on the southern shore of Galway Bay. Far beyond in Connemara, one can catch the glint of the Twelve Pins, if the day is 'hard' and sunny. Off to the left, the table-land breaks off abruptly three hundred feet downward into the Atlantic, for the famed Cliffs of Moher are here, reminders of an Irish mountain that the sea has shorn off clean.

The community toward which I was making my
361 way lies along the table-land between mountain-
191 top of bracken and black bog and the cliffs. It keeps up the old tradition. It calls itself Luogh, and its language, at least that of the old people, is Irish, but the young people are forgetting the old tongue. English is the more common speech today, even here. Yet Mr. Delargy, the editor of the *Irish*
114 *Folklore Journal*, has collected a large number of
538 stories, songs and traditional tales and sayings here, some of them going back to the saga cycles.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at, or under, £2. 423 311 [435]

(C.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inishshark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among themselves, but many of the children and young people have little or no acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark, which is less in communication with the outer world than Inishbofin. 191

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. were illiterate :— 212 162

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160 females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65 females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inishbofin.

(D.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were— 145 162

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
" 80 " 85, 5 males and 14 females,
" 85 " 90, 4 " 0 "

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

KNIGHT'S POPULATION TABLE—*continued.*

175

Population, &c.			Remarks.
Horses,	587	943	Or only one beast of burden nearly, to every two families. Major Bingham and a few others have some good horses. The general breed is small, but hardy.
Asses,	356		
Cows,		1967	This is more than one to each family.
Sheep,		2348	
Pigs,		919	
Ploughs,			At Major Bingham's, Rev. Mr. Dawson's, and Rev. Mr. Lyons's.
Carts,			Same.
Feather beds,		624	Or nearly one to every third family. The substitute—straw, rushes, or bent.
Blankets,		1838	
Men without shoes,		734	
Men, women, and children,		3156	Wanting clothes, or nearly one-third of the whole population.
Buying provisions,		751	In a year of great plenty, but after two of great scarcity.
Sick,		454	
Died (1831),		236	
Carriages (four-wheeled),		2	
Carriages (two-wheeled),		8	

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—I regret to be unable to 191 give here the proportion of people speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, as the census authorities make the return by baronies only. The great majority of the people are bi-lingual, speaking both Irish and English, employing Irish mainly when speaking among themselves, but there is some small proportion, especially among the older people, who speak no English. The inhabitants of Inishkea do not usually speak anything but Irish on their own islands, though having a fair knowledge of English; but many of the women on these islands have no knowledge of the last-named language. About Portacloy there are many who "have no English."

212 *Illiteracy.*—The return for this is given by parishes. In Kilmore, in 1891, there were 3590 persons of five years old and upwards; of these 2135 or 59·5 per. cent. were illiterate.

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	3590	1811	1779
Illiterate,	2135	978	1157
Percentage,	59·5	54·0	65·0

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives, or—in comparatively few instances—
167 by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

Home spinning and weaving of fab-
291 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was
438 noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[8] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[8] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

FIXED FESTIVALS

527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated
[264] by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

[P.153, C]

551 and the names of her husband, *e.g.* 'Máire Ní Dhubhghain
[585] bean Shéamuis Mhic Ruadhraigh'—literally, 'Mary, daughter of Doohan, wife of James the son of Rory.' A number of circumstances will determine whether or not her husband's name will 'stick' as a surname or whether she will go on being known by her maiden name. These names in their full forms are only used on ceremonial occasions such as dances—when a man or woman is called upon to sing or step-dance—, or for prayers in church during a serious illness, or for calling the roll in school, or for putting on a tombstone.

551 The practical names are the rough English equivalents of the Gaelic names, used in dealing with English-speakers
● 191 generally and particularly for use when working in England
167 and Scotland. The Government is usually dealt with in English for several reasons, mainly because although the
464 islanders all speak Gaelic as their native tongue, the language they read and write is English—a situation brought about by the pattern of migrant labouring which forced literacy on them when working in Britain. Also they find 'Dublin' or 'civil service' Irish difficult to follow. Most islanders, then, have an 'English' name. Our examples would be 'Paddy Rogers' and 'Mary Doohan' to the outside world. Sometimes these names stick and are used amongst the islanders rather like nicknames. Usually the English version is a rough phonetic equivalent of the Gaelic—Ó Duibhir becomes Diver, Ó Dubhgain becomes Doogan or Duggan, Mac Fhlaithbheartaigh becomes Mac-Clafferty, etc. Sometimes this is abandoned and an English name taken for its 'likeness' to the Gaelic as with Mac-Ruadhraigh and Rogers—Roger being the English name most like 'Rory.' The name Fíoruisce is sometimes hopefully rendered Whorriskey, but mostly this is not even tried and the simple 'Waters' is substituted. Those going to England for work are particularly inclined to pick an 'English' name, *i.e.* one the foreman will recognize.

551 The third set of names, used for reference, consists of two or more Christian names, either Gaelic or English or both, 'strung' together in the manner described by Synge for Aran. Some people have as many as five or six names and 'epithets' strung together in this fashion. These names are the names of lineal ancestors either on the mother's or the father's side of the family. A person will take as many names as is necessary to distinguish him from all other persons, the surname system being inadequate for this task. (Four surnames cover 80 per cent. of the population.) He does not, however, pick these names arbitrarily but inherits the whole string. He can stop at any point in the string. Thus if a man was called 'Jimmy-Dhonnchadha-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his father must have been 'Donnchadh-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his paternal grandmother 'Máire-Mhicí' or maybe 'Máire-Mhicí-Tom.' Thus if our man wanted to add to his names, he would have to add 'Tom.' Usually one or at most two names are enough to distinguish a person, in

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth, the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, however, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

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538 539 • 191 [537] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb 539 derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than 534 its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [198] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and [177] related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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226 Scallop shells were put to many uses and were often a [415] substitute for the iron oil-pan of the open-wicked crusie. [386] Seashells were also burnt to make lime for whitewashing the houses.

[262] In late summer the sprat come ashore in vast numbers on the west and south coasts, so that in Donegal 'they constituted the chief food of the peasantry during three or four months of the year.'[1] They were taken from the water in buckets and sieves, and the mackerel pursuing their prey close against the rocks might be caught almost as easily. In Waterford harbour there were specially erected wickerwork head weirs to take the sprat; and Dr. Went has described a wattled sprat-weir in working order in the estuary of the Blackwater.[2] Fishing from the rocks, too, is most popular in harvest time and though now little more than a pastime it once provided a reserve of food for the winter. About hay-harvest the ballan wrasse is at its best, 'when the flags (wild iris) are in bloom', they say. Known as bavin, byan, morran and by other names, it is now despised nearly everywhere, as is the coalfish which was salted and dried [192] and which has different names in Gaelic for every stage of its growth to demonstrate its former importance and popularity. 'Glassan' oil was the luminant for the crusie lamps in Rathlin Island. On the north coast you may see anglers 'frassing' for small coalfish, that is attracting them by spitting into the water chewed potatoes or limpets. Formerly ground bait was made [412] by pounding limpets in rock basins of the type known as 'bullauns' (Fig. 90). Occasionally you may come across a fisherman casting a feather lure for pollack with a line made wholly or in part of horsehair. One method of twisting these lines, with quills, will be described in the following chapter. For short lengths next the hook—the fine foot-lines—white hair is preferred, and I have seen it made in County Down by [283] twisting the hair between the bare thigh and a hand dusted with wood ash, a method practised by 'primitives' in many parts of the world. Two strands of from fifteen to twenty hairs are twisted on each other. (The anglers in the Seine at Paris are also said to prefer a 'crop' made from a grey mare's tail.) To

[1] 'Kinnfaela', *The Cliff Scenery of South-Western Donegal*, 19.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *Antiquity*, 25 (1951), 32–35.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

line grows as if by magic as the quills rotate in nimble fingers. 283
A fresh supply of hairs is inserted from time to time by removing the plugs. I illustrate an example of this fascinating apparatus made for me by Mr. T. J. Barron of Knockbride, Co. Cavan (Fig. 81). Mr. A. T. Lucas has described the Cavan

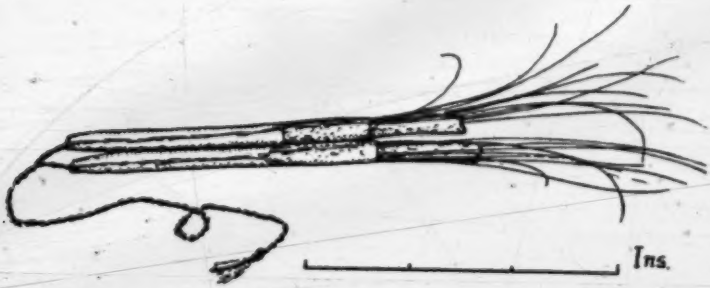

FIG. 81. Quills used for making horsehair fishing lines, Co. Cavan. The quills are rolled between the forefingers.

specimens and others from Co. Mayo.[1] In Cavan the lines were [226]
made for bream fishing: the bream were both split, salted and [251]
dried and stored fresh in little ponds on the lake shores. Around
the coasts—I have seen examples from the Aran Islands and from Co. Down—a more complicated machine was made for twisting long lines of hemp, three spindles being rotated by pulling on an endless cord twisted round each spindle.[2] A very similar device is employed in China for making bamboo ropes [171]
for raising coal in primitive mines. On the shores of Lough Neagh the long lines are manufactured in rustic rope-walks. These night-lines, which have tended to replace draft-nets, are set in lengths of up to four miles. The season of yellow (feeding) 226
eel fishing runs from March to October. It is illegal, as we have mentioned, but shows no signs of being given up. The eel fishermen claim immemorial rights and are not deterred by the fines imposed when they are caught. Their vocabulary, like that of the men who work the eel weirs on the River Bann, has many [192]
words which have come down from Gaelic and perhaps from

[1]A. T. Lucas, *Journal of the Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc.*, 24 (1951), 111–14.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, Fig. 63.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 pre-Gaelic tongues, and there can be little doubt that the eel fishery is prehistoric in origin. The draft nets in which pollan [192] are caught in the lake—the pollan is a fresh-water herring [227] peculiar to some Irish and Scottish lakes—also display old features. The sections, known as webs, are sewn together with a bone needle into long nets, which are weighted with stone sinkers. The draft-net is widely used in the salmon rivers, as described on the Boyne earlier in this chapter, and references to draft-netting go back to the twelfth century. On some rivers [349] tall towers are erected from which a watcher signals the [202] presence of fish.[1]

We are not here concerned with the commercial offshore fisheries, but something must be said of the inshore fishing because it has been characteristically combined with farming all around the coast. This type of fishing was well suited to the Irish crofter economy, so that the comment frequently made by improving visitors and despairing Government officials was that the Irish would not go out to fish, but waited for the fish to come close inshore. The shore-dwelling farmer is knowledgeable about the ways of fish and knows all 'the signs'. He has been accustomed to keep a net to hand and watch for shoals of different fish at the right seasons. There are watching points on the cliffs overlooking many a small bay, and it was from such vantage points on the south and west coasts that the pilchard 'huers' directed the seine boats to the shoals that visit Ireland intermittently.[2] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Irish pilchard fishery grew to large proportions but it has now declined to something like its older local significance. When the industry was capitalized by promoters like Sir William Petty it was the train oil pressed out during the packing of the pilchards for export which found an Irish market. [281] It was used both as a luminant and in the preparation of leather. The seine boats have now turned their attention to herring and mackerel, and Dr. Went has pointed out that the seine is used for catching salmon only in Kenmare Bay, where Petty introduced it for pilchard fishing about the year 1672.

In the Irish Sea the herrings come close inshore in September

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 85 (1955), 22–23, Pl. 3A.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 51 (1946), 137–57.

OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and, we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne 'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour, and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh-water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 52.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

16:Messenger E-4.5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

[291] [241] [501] [197]

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 [1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

103 192 [2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting and darning stockings for their husbands and children.

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool, which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and children of all ages go barefooted or put on sandals during the summer and add hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers, bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt, and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing; the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Family and community alike support them in their attitude. A woman could say bitterly, for she was childless: 183 842

> No matter how much money you have and how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you're no good. But if you're ugly as the worst and have children you are all right.

The husband has every right to express his displeasure at his wife's barrenness. To have no children is a source of shame to him and a terrible disappointment in his desire to continue his line upon the farm. One woman put it: 183 593 842

> The man wants children because he is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of the country, especially if you haven't any.

In the country districts they say that he may beat her and in their graphic phrase "bounce a boot off her now and then for it." Country belief still regards the woman as the offending partner in a childless marriage. Near Inagh one farmer, a returned Yankee, was regarded as an anomaly because, though childless, he treated his wife just as well as though she had many and did not get angry when he was twitted on his lack of an heir. They explained it by saying that he "knew it was his own fault." [195] ●

The day of the "country divorce," as the farmers call it, is rapidly passing. In the old days, they say, a man might send a barren wife back to her parents, though Catholic law forbade him to marry again.. There are cases which illustrate that the custom survives in altered form. They are particularly revealing in our analysis of the desire to preserve the family unity and its identification with farm and household through the generations. Here the brothers act, sociologically, as a single individual in order to insure the desired continuity. For instance, in one case, a middling farmer of Corrofin, childless after several years, got a country divorce. He gave the land thereafter to his brother in return for a thousand pounds, which the brother had inherited in lieu 586 842

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

593 more apparent, balance of emotional forces which it entails.

For this balance is the health of a complete social organism. The countryman who occupies boyhood status so long ordinarily does not revolt. His economic dependence galls him perhaps at times, but he cannot regard it as an injustice. That dependence is itself a product of healthy balance. He has expectancies and prospects; father and mother owe him obligations for which he can and does wait; emotional bonds are fiercely strong, for there is little opportunity to diffuse them. The solidarity of his own family is strengthened through competition with other socio-economic units. The endless petty disputes of the countryside over rights of way, boundaries, cattle trespasses, drainages, are much more than defences of property. "The two grandfathers" of the contestants "began it" is the usual defence in court. That solidarity is a mountain of strength against the outside world. "Defending
• [195] Tim Flanagan's title" is the jocular way of describing armed resistance to eviction in the country districts in Clare. For Tim Flanagan worked a farm with ten strong adult sons; evicting ten armed stalwarts is no small matter for the best of police. Sons and brothers are a better title than the clearest deed.

The controls in farm work, then, are those of a social group—the family. The countryman at work is little concerned with the usual economic cate-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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statement, "country people do be very friendly, they always help one another". 476 602

Now, 'have right' and 'friend' are both expressions in the brogue. Like so much of that rich English dialect, for it is a true dialect with an ancient history, both words translate Gaelic idiom. A 'friend' is a relative. To 'have right' expresses an obligation, a duty and the traditional fitness of an act. It is an anglicization of an Irish *tá cóir orm*, 'the obligation is on me'. The countryman is explaining his acts as part of the traditional reciprocities of sentiment and duty which make up his system of kinship. 476 602 195 [197]

This fact strikes one the more strongly when one finds him describing other traditional acts of obligation to kindred in exactly the same terms. Aid lent and duties performed at wedding and funeral are felt to be in the same category as co-operation in farming. Thus a farmer of my acquaintance could say of a cousin: "He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth £12 to us and didn't want anything for it." And he could go on in more general terms: "Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you; they lend you a horse with the hay, or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to help when somebody dies with you". It is part of the 'friendliness' owed one's kinsmen to make up and serve food at wakes and weddings, to dig the grave, to carry the coffin, to 476 602

243 grasses and flax. The many practical uses of straw will be
[301] described in a later chapter and its employment in fashioning various kinds of dolls, ceremonial dresses and masks, for example on St. Briget's Day. Certain protective charms were
789 also made of oat-straw, for example the Bratóg Brighde (St.
243 Briget's rag or mantle) worn by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection against storms. Here the explanation may lie in the power of wind over bits of loose straw which by association gives the straw the secret of controlling the wind. This is the basis of the phrase used in Co. Cavan to describe something
[195] which circulates quickly: 'going round like the straws'. It was
[821] the custom to ward off storms by running with a handful of straws from one farm to another.

With corn, as with hay and turf, the harvesting proceeds by
243 building up stooks and ricks of increasing size according to the nature of the crop and the weather conditions. Little stooks (footings) of four or six sheaves are the first stage in the construction of the twelve-sheaf stooks (ten standing and two inverted hooding sheaves) which, however, are generally confined to wheat (Fig. 51). It is the general practice to build the little stooks of corn, after one or two weeks' seasoning, into hand-stacks which are of a convenient size to make a load for the rick-shifter, or for the tractor-lifter which is replacing it. The shapes of these miniature stacks, varying from one district to another, are often extremely picturesque, and their serried rows marching up the hillsides give the autumn fields a populated appearance. Their many names (hut, shig, bart, adag, and so on) would indicate that they are no novelty, and these little field stacks are as characteristic of Wales and Scotland as they are of Ireland (Fig. 52). A picturesque variety of hay-stack, commonly seen in Connacht, is the sheep-cock, built around a tall pole which prevents the cock from collapsing when eaten away at the base.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1] 527 527 584

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning. 527 [784] [788] [769] [857] [195] [787]

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 43.

12 cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which characterize ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as an epistemology.

181 The use by the folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition • 195 of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," [178] which often is a product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can very effectively serve to shield genuine thoughts [538] and feelings and thus protect the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition of verbal skill, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*. (At least one folklorist has collected "Joycean utterances" from Irish peasants.)

123 Most of our information came from observation and unguided interviews. It proved impossible to take field notes openly, except when collecting innocuous data—such as the number of livestock owned by each householder—from a few particular persons. Thus, we were forced to limit our visits to less than two hours, after which we immediately [562] transcribed what our combined memories could resuscitate. Despite frequent explanations of our presence in Inis Beag, which were candid and truthful, it was thought by the islanders that I was interested only in archeological sites and oral literature, and that my wife was not a trained and experienced co-worker; this, obviously, reflects their previous experiences with scientists and their conception of the position of women in society. Their inability to evaluate adequately our intentions proved [609] to be a research boon. For once "accepted" (a relative term, since no outsider is ever accepted) after many months in the island, we were allowed to listen to and participate in conversations and activities from which we would otherwise have been excluded.

123 Our data on sex came from my involvement as a participant- *831 observer in personal and often intimate conversations with men and my wife's counseling of women who were bothered by such matters as explaining and coping with menstruation, menopause, mental illness, the sexual curiosity of their children, and "excessive" sexual demands of their spouses. Our sexual knowledge and sympathy coupled with their needs and inquisitiveness gave rise to a "counselor-client" relationship between many of the folk and ourselves. They came to speak freely, albeit indirectly at times, with each of us about this sphere of behavior which arouses so much anxiety and fear. I must mention that the relationship

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

476 to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor 241 who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. 602 Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, [572] of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." [609] One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary 476 coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word 196 is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the 602 added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the 476 farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help 577 friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; 602 they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[657] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[178] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[822] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[999] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

gal, Mayo and West Galway, Kerry and (in part) Cork. The Aran Islands represent a fourth western area. West Donegal seems to be characterized by excesses of dark hair and mixed eyes and a very slightly higher mesocephaly than the total Irish series. Mayo is slightly high in stature and in cephalic index, definitely so in proportions of dark hair and mixed eyes. West Galway, on the other hand, is notable for markedly tall stature, lowering of the cephalic index, and lighter hair and eyes. This tendency is still further accentuated in the Aran Islands which are tallest of all of the Irish subgroups, are almost dolichocephalic, and have nearly the highest proportion of light hair shades. Yet eye color in the Aran Islands is predominantly mixed. 142

Kerry is also tall, but the most round-headed of the Irish subgroups and excessive in dark hair, and lowest in light eyes.

The central plain of Ireland and especially the counties of Westmeath and Longford show the strongest concentration of blondness which is accompanied by slightly shortened stature, diminished lightness of eye, and mesocephaly. This blond area is sharply delimited to the east by a coastal band of darker haired and even shorter dolichocephals, notably concentrated in Meath, Louth, and County Dublin, which is the shortest and most dolichocephalic area of Ireland, but ranks high both in darkness of hair and in lightness of eyes.

Now it is quite reckless to attempt definitive racial correlations on the basis of the coincidences and differences in geographical distribution of separately plotted anthropological characters. Actually, racial type distributions can be accurately ascertained only by correlations of morphological and metric features in individuals. From the data presented in this paper, however, a few purely preliminary and tentative suggestions may be made, subject to revision or retraction in the light of an exhaustive study of all of the material and a consideration of historical and prehistorical events.

It may be presumed that the western parts of the island represent to some extent refuge areas occupied by the earlier strata of the population. It is in precisely these areas (West 142 174 [197]

4:Hooton D-4,5 (1934-1936) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142 174 [197] Donegal, Mayo, West Galway, the Aran Islands and Kerry) that our information gives us the highest predominance of Gaelic speech. If the anthropological characters plotted separately actually combine in the populations of these areas we should say that the earliest population stratum of the island consists of tall, subbrachycephals with dark hair and mixed eyes and a second element, even taller, subdolichocephalic with light hair and mixed eyes. Then since the latter type presents the highest proportion of Gaelic speakers we should be inclined to hazard a guess that the tall brunet brachycephals represent the earlier pre-Keltic population and that Gaelic languages were introduced by the tall, long-headed near-blonds.

The blond, long-headed element in the central plain, concentrated in Longford and Westmeath is presumably Nordic and possibly represents a survival in great part from Iron Age Nordic, Viking, and other Scandinavian occupations. The Aran Islanders and the inhabitants of Galway may perhaps owe their comparative blondness and long-headedness to the mixture with these invaders which has gone on throughout the plain, but it is also possible, as previously stated, that the original Goidelic invaders may have been near-Nordics.

Along the east coast the short dark dolichocephals with long heads but very light eyes may also be, for the most part, the survivals of pre-Keltic populations. Some element in the population must have been responsible for the introduction of the Megalithic monuments and I believe it to have been these brunets with blue eyes. The association of light eyes with dark hair was formerly considered by me to be the result of the crossing of a pure brunet Mediterranean stock with a pure blond Nordic stock in which the eye color of one race combined with the hair color of another. However, recent anthropometric studies in Iran and Iraq, especially those of Dr. Henry Field, reveal the presence of many otherwise purely brunet, long-headed stocks of basic Mediterranean affinities which have almost no pure brown eyes, but generally irides of mixed pigmentation—brown in the pupillary zone and blue in the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

statement, "country people do be very friendly, they always help one another". 476 602

Now, 'have right' and 'friend' are both expressions in the brogue. Like so much of that rich English dialect, for it is a true dialect with an ancient history, both words translate Gaelic idiom. A 'friend' is a relative. To 'have right' expresses an obligation, a duty and the traditional fitness of an act. It is an anglicization of an Irish *tá cóir orm*, 'the obligation is on me'. The countryman is explaining his acts as part of the traditional reciprocities of sentiment and duty which make up his system of kinship. 476 602 195 [197]

This fact strikes one the more strongly when one finds him describing other traditional acts of obligation to kindred in exactly the same terms. Aid lent and duties performed at wedding and funeral are felt to be in the same category as co-operation in farming. Thus a farmer of my acquaintance could say of a cousin: "He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth £12 to us and didn't want anything for it." And he could go on in more general terms: "Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you; they lend you a horse with the hay, or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to help when somebody dies with you". It is part of the 'friendliness' owed one's kinsmen to make up and serve food at wakes and weddings, to dig the grave, to carry the coffin, to 476 602

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

[241] [241] [501] [197]

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 [1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

103 192 [2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

668 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary,
000 and clerical figures.[3] A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

668 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Associa-
• 197 tion, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the
538 formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage
[204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

> The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasised the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195–196).

177 Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on
185 language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since
668 the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the
[648] time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

[113] [3] The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603–1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

choice of cultural elements to be revived and perpetuated. Countless forms of peasant culture, many of which are still widespread, have come to be demeaned and even their existence denied by the more militant nativists. The attitude of these persons toward traditional songs, dances, and sports such as hurling is quite at variance with that toward matchmaking in courtship and the belief in fairies, ghosts, and witches. It is the prevalence of such customs as the latter in rural Ireland which has been largely responsible for bringing the term peasant into such disrepute. 668

Some of the extreme points of view held by Irish nativists are: the Irish today are a "pure" Celtic "race" and possess psychological and behavioral traits which are "racially" rooted, including even a "racial memory;" Celtic civilization developed before and was "superior" to Greek and Roman civilizations, and the Irish branch of European civilization during the Middle Ages was "advanced" over those of other European societies; the Irish literary tradition has been "richer" and of greater esthetic "worth" than other European traditions of the past; the Irish language is a more effective communicator of ideas than other languages (especially English) and mirrors the distinctive Irish or Celtic "personality," "spirit," or "soul;" in order to achieve national identity, unity, and greatness, the Gaelic tongue once again must be spoken universally in the nation; and, Ireland is the "most Catholic" of all countries—in historical tradition, strength of belief, and morality. Inis Beag folk have been singled out for adulation by nativists because they are Gaelic speakers, pious Catholics, and believed to be lineal decendants of Celts who lived in the island two millennia ago. Their character is thought to embody those traits of ancient origin held in highest esteem by the Irish: spirituality, independence, self-reliance, industriousness, strength, courage, imaginativeness, sanity, and emotional stability. [197] [178]

Nativism has had a profound impact both on government policies affecting Inis Beag and other Gaeltacht communities, and on the interpretations of the Inis Beag milieu by writers and film, radio, and television producers. The extensive services and subsidies afforded the islanders reflect, in part, the nativistic outlook of the government; it is hoped that they will halt emigration and preserve the Irish tongue and other valued cultural forms which are preserved here but are disappearing rapidly from the rest of the country. Nativism also has caused artists, who have most observed and publicized the folk, to distort the Inis Beag way of life in their works. Too often they have been unaware of, ignored, exaggerated, or misinterpreted beliefs and behavior so as to present a desired picture of the folk, one in keeping with the nativistic stereotype.

Distortions of Inis Beag culture also have been caused by primitivism—the idealization of past or future cultural estates or of contemporary primitive and folk cultures. Like nativism, it provides psychological compensation for frustrations created by personal or social disorganization. Its origins are manifold and can be traced back to antiquity, but in its modern guise it is an amalgam of utopianism since the sixteenth century, Enlightenment views of "natural man," rural attitudes toward urban life since the industrial revolution, Marxian socialism, late nineteenth-century cultural evolutionism, and early twentieth-century ethnology. Central to the primitivistic position is the belief that civilization has dehumanized man and undermined his valued institutions; it has caused social bonds to disintegrate,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

668 fostered immorality, and created mental illness on a vast scale. Primitive and folk peoples, according to this view, represent man as he once was and could or should be again were civilized society drastically reformed.

000 Most of the ideas held by primitivists are as extreme as those maintained by nativists: primitive and folk societies possess simple, static cultures in which dysfunctional forms are rare; their economies are primarily subsistence ones, approximate the householding type, and lack competitive elements; social control is mostly informal; the family is the core social group and is a highly integrated and cooperative unit; religion is a pervasive force which sanctions most behavior and assures psychological security and social cohesion; and, religious dissent and skepticism are unknown. Primitivists also contend that primitive and folk peoples are content with their conditions of life, are seldom if ever mentally ill, and possess character traits that civilization has perverted. It is probable that primitivists would include all of the traits designated as Irish by nativists and would add many others.

114 12 The antiquarians George Petrie and John T. O'Flaherty during the 1820s were the first scientists to undertake research in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. Since that time, there have been short and sporadic visits to the island by a variety of investigators, among them anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians, philologists, and others. Most of the anthropological research has been conducted by archeologists, anthropometricians, and linguists. Several archeological expeditions have examined thoroughly surface sites in Inis Beag, but no prehistorian has excavated as yet, and the accurate dating of artifacts scarcely has begun. Reconstruction of a number of ancient monuments by the government was made possible through the research findings of archeologists, and today site descriptions on mounted plaques mark the principal monuments. Alfred C. Haddon and C. R. Browne in 1892 and E. A. Hooton and C. W. Dupertius between 1932 and 1934 made anthropometric studies, the latter as part of the Harvard University anthropological survey of Ireland, which also included archeological and ethnographic investigations. The ethnographic study—reported in Conrad M. Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman* and Arensberg's and Solon T. Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*—was made in three communities of Co. Clare by these authors with W. Lloyd Warner; it was the first holistic ethnographic study made in Ireland, and my research in Inis Beag in its initial stages was only the third. (The second, by Rosemary Harris, is reported in a 1954 M.A. thesis in the University of London—see References.)

114 12 197 177 178 [162] Linguists, as well as philologists and those wishing to learn Gaelic, long have visited Inis Beag. There now remain only a few areas along the western seaboard of Europe where Gaelic dialects still are spoken, and the island is located in one of these.[4] One-half the population of Ireland spoke the vernacular at the end of the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the last century the ratio had fallen to one-quarter, or approximately 1,500,000 speakers. Sixty years later the

[4] The Celtic languages are Gaulish, Goidelic, and Brittanic, of which the first became extinct at the beginning of the medieval period, and the last two are represented today by the Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects on the one hand, and the Breton and Welsh on the other. Two other related dialects are now extinct: Manx of the Isle of Man and Cornish, the British dialect of Cornwall (Dillon 1957:207).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

443 One may readily see how this[1] came about, for these were the
437 times when the stock was gathered and sorted, and dues were paid to the overlords in cattle. In the ordinary business of the fair exchange and barter gave way in time to money transactions, but one has only to visit a cattle fair to sense that the noisy ritual of assessing values and the prolonged bargaining have come down from a time before the use of money was general. The vigorous hand-slapping by which bargains
[201] are sealed in tight-lipped silence could derive from the days when different languages were spoken at the fairs. Apart from the difference between English and Gaelic it should be remembered that in many districts pockets of non-Gaelic speech, perhaps even of non-Aryan tongues, survived well into the Christian era. Another interesting accompaniment of the con-
[777] cluded bargain is the piece of money, the luck penny, which the seller hands back to the purchaser as a gesture of independence when a price has finally been agreed on. Many a fight
[578] has begun because a buyer has been dissatisfied with the amount of his luck money. Similar bargaining took place when a servant was being hired for the half year, and he received his earles or earnest money as a sign that the contract was concluded, handing over to his employer his bundle of clothes in return.

543 The countryman will find any excuse for going to the fair, and it is his proud boast that he has seen so many fairs. It
[805] is by the fairs, and not by the calendar, that he measures time and dates important events in the life of the community. 'Their whole thought seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging', it was written of the Mayo peasantry in 1836,[1] and in the seventeenth century we find this comment on 'the inferior rank of husbandmen' in Westmeath: '(they) are very crafty and subtile in all manner of bargaining, especially in their dealings in fairs and markets'.[2] Your luck at the fair might depend
777 on the colour of the hair of the first person you met on the road,
543 and it was unlucky to be passed on the way, so that horsemen riding at full gallop were not merely trying out their paces for the races which followed. For good luck you should carry with

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 104.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 115.

[1 [i.e., the seasons and rent days 260 dating from 1 May and 1 November. — Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 pre-Gaelic tongues, and there can be little doubt that the eel fishery is prehistoric in origin. The draft nets in which pollan [192] are caught in the lake—the pollan is a fresh-water herring [227] peculiar to some Irish and Scottish lakes—also display old features. The sections, known as webs, are sewn together with a bone needle into long nets, which are weighted with stone sinkers. The draft-net is widely used in the salmon rivers, as described on the Boyne earlier in this chapter, and references to draft-netting go back to the twelfth century. On some rivers [349] tall towers are erected from which a watcher signals the presence of fish.[1]

[202] We are not here concerned with the commercial offshore fisheries, but something must be said of the inshore fishing because it has been characteristically combined with farming all around the coast. This type of fishing was well suited to the Irish crofter economy, so that the comment frequently made by improving visitors and despairing Government officials was that the Irish would not go out to fish, but waited for the fish to come close inshore. The shore-dwelling farmer is knowledgeable about the ways of fish and knows all 'the signs'. He has been accustomed to keep a net to hand and watch for shoals of different fish at the right seasons. There are watching points on the cliffs overlooking many a small bay, and it was from such vantage points on the south and west coasts that the pilchard 'huers' directed the seine boats to the shoals that visit Ireland intermittently.[2] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Irish pilchard fishery grew to large proportions but it has now declined to something like its older local significance. When the industry was capitalized by promoters like Sir William Petty it was the train oil pressed out during the packing of the pilchards for export which found an Irish market. [281] It was used both as a luminant and in the preparation of leather. The seine boats have now turned their attention to herring and mackerel, and Dr. Went has pointed out that the seine is used for catching salmon only in Kenmare Bay, where Petty introduced it for pilchard fishing about the year 1672.

In the Irish Sea the herrings come close inshore in September

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 85 (1955), 22–23, Pl. 3A.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 51 (1946), 137–57.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
[521 silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
858] sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
462 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading
231 the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] News.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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country "stations"[5] the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for Communion first. On the road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from "stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners; represent the interests of the community before priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to round out the picture.

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of

[5] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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444 subsists only because she is a part of the local community. Though she charges a bit more, she spares one the longer walk to the village center.

Country shops are often larger than hers. Sometimes where the distance to the village center is greater, they sell nearly everything one could get in town, outside the specialized drapers' or hardware, boot, and shoe shops. They sell all the farm staples, such as groceries, sugar, flour, tea, and tobacco. Here people may come from two or three miles around. The farmers all know they pay more, but the shop is a convenience. It may get the only newspaper in the district, and men drop in to hear the news. In the evenings a local school of cards may flourish here and the boys foregather.

203 571

The country shop reaches its zenith at the crossroad, where a church, a parochial house, a school, and a creamery may stand as well. Here the shop often dates from the days just after the famine and has had a long history of prosperity. In the past generation many such crossroads produced county councillors, and the rewards of public service often meant the acquisition of several rich farms in addition to the shop. The shop serves the surrounding countryside and collects its produce, and it derives its reward from the service it performs.

441 565 571 The position of the country shopkeeper is to be found in his place within the system of relations which make up the community of small farmers behind his shop. His function as economic agent of distribution is only part of his role. He is in a situation which must be described as a perpetual seesaw. If he is drawn too far within the local community, he loses contact with the outside world. If he is drawn too far outward, he loses touch with his customers. He must maintain a balance in a delicate equilibrium.

He is caught within a pattern of mutual obligations to the farmers on the one hand and the social system of the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

After dinner, work begins anew. For the women 462
chores are much the same as in the morning. 512
Should routine duties come to a pause, there is still plenty to do. Washing, mending, knitting must be done; and their hands are never idle.

The great staple, bread, is baked daily, upon the 'griddle' at the hearth. The women may bake at any time, and even late in the evening when the family is gathered round the fire, their last task may be to bake for supper of bread and tea.

At four in the 'evening', as the countryman [805]
divides the day, children arrive from school, to be fed and questioned. For they are important pur- [203]
veyors of news. Later, the men are home from the fields, driving the cattle home, bedding them for the night. The woman must serve supper and milk the cows, bringing the milk in to separate. But though her day is over with the separating, she may not sit idly with the men for long beside the evening's fire. Children, knitting, and baking can still be attended to; tradition and proverb demand that 'one woman in the house be always working'.

Work round house and haggard is continuous; it varies little from season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfils its first needs in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habit. What variation there is, is itself confined to a narrow range. Certain chores are divided among days of the week, but they show nothing of the swift change

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

561 come forward only when called upon. At country 'stations' the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for communion first. On the road to shop, church or fair, the young man must keep pace, and the elder may call him to his side.

521 561 The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 'stopping on the road to pass the time of day'. In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form, in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must 'listen in'.

[203] At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the 'boys' are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

561 571 Then, secondly, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners, represent

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the
406 lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings
349 in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by
[427] islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the
[464] other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

743 Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

344 The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor,
205 just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room
206 with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use
[203] in matters pertaining to the service during the prescribed hours. When the freighter ran aground before dawn, it was discovered by islanders who informed the company; Radio Eireann reported the plight of the vessel, on the basis of S.O.S. messages, in the seven o'clock news, but the company had reached the reef before the telephone was available.

346 Inis Beag has only a small church, known as the "chapel." After the church of the patron saint was abandoned, a house served as the place of worship for a time, then was superseded by the old chapel whose foundations can be discerned

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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> conditions appraised. . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and . . boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191).

573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [895] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

521 203 671 [674] [512]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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203 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk
571 publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a
[574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events
[512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have
[538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took
[539] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on
[123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other
589 Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of
162 the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7
582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been
772 created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of
[173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of
[825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

157 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag
771 islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

157 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is
831 sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century.
[174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

157 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in
831 three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the
864 islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in
626 the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice
793 it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves
834 "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and
831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run
● 203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland
[609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

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668 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary,
000 and clerical figures.[3] A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

668 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Associa-
197 tion, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the
538 formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage
[204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

> The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasised the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195–196).

177 Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on
185 language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since
668 the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the
[648] time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

[113] [3] The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603–1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

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167
178 ble to visit Inis Beag frequently, as the cost and distance are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic.

The many vacationing emigrants who now return to the island at Christmas or Easter or during the summer months often succeed in persuading relatives and acquaintances to return to England with them. Those so persuaded declare that they will return soon with their "fortunes" to settle permanently, but they seldom do once "emancipated." Since the Second World War, several Americans have returned home, and their stories of life in the United States make the youth restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many islanders also sow the seeds of discontent. A favorite subject of talk in the pubs is the relative advantages to be gained from migrating to particular cities in England and America, and anthropologists as well as returned emigrants are called on as consultants in this matter by youths.

167
• 204 Almost every cottage in Inis Beag has a radio, or "wireless," and although the folk seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines
207 and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, because they allow islanders a glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and
177 freer world. Television was introduced into Inis Beag in 1963 at the lighthouse,
207 and a second set was procured for the new "dance hall" when it was completed two years later. Few islanders venture to the lighthouse to view television, but I am told by correspondents that many now visit the hall during the several evening hours when transmission from Telefis Eireann takes place. As a result, television has become an acculturative medium to be reckoned with. Both radio and television programs are censored in Ireland, but even so the morality expressed in them—especially in the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A hypothetical censor from Inis Beag most certainly would create more discontinuities with his shears in television performances than would his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin. My wife and I found that viewing television with islanders at the lighthouse on two occasions was a traumatic experience; it gave us a different (and even more disquieting) perspective on programs in the United States and their enculturative effects than can be obtained at home.

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873 Since the Second World War, 28 island youths have pursued secondary education elsewhere in Ireland, either in high schools, called "colleges," or in technical schools, and most have been supported by government scholarships. The usual high school scholarship is for 5 years, and a student must be 14 years of age and qualify by competitive examination to receive one. Only 4 of these 28 students
873 —of which 2 are teachers in the national school—have returned to Inis Beag. One
[562] young man watched 2 girls, either of whom he eventually might have married, go off to the mainland for school and said, "Scholarships are killing the island;" what he was referring to, other than his own disappointment, is the fact that 19 of the 28 students who left for advanced education are girls. The reason for the disproportionate number of girls receiving scholarships is that they are far more moti-
[829] vated academically and have better scholastic records than boys. There is, however, a widespread belief in the island that certain families are favored by priests and

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 369 men today, overwhelmingly so, though among carpenters quite a few rural ones still survive. Smiths and employers in smithing and other metals businesses, many of whom are presumably smiths employing a few hands, often their sons, are still country dwellers characteristically. Masons and foremen and overlookers of construction and building are still country dwellers, as are contractors' navvies and platelayers. Except for the smith, therefore, there are no characteristically rural artisans left outside the building trades.

Those in the building trades or in construction, in the west at least, are not highly skilled men at all, not even the masons. They are largely laborers and landless cotters who work for local authorities as stone breakers and suppliers of gravel and broken rock for road construction. They are often farmers' sons who get work off the farm whenever they find work is to be had. Yet the local mason who puts up stone houses in the countryside, and the petty contractor ready to get up a crew of local boys for any sort of building, are still characteristically rural dwellers and part of the rural scene.

In transport industries the only occupation which is even nearly rural in complexion is that of postman, for obvious [205] reasons. The local post office is usually a small crossroads shop in the western counties. The post office workers are members of the rural communities they serve.

In commerce, in spite of the two currents at work, no occupation is characteristically rural. Dealers in animal produce, however, come closest to it. Yet most livestock and animal produce dealers are now townsmen, often town shopkeepers as well. The country shop at a crossroad is still important but not characteristic.

Civic guards, clergymen, and schoolteachers make up the only other occupational classes in the country who still live in the rural districts and are part of rural communities.

Three other occupational classes, according to the table,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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market areas are the areas of effective, habitual relationship among farmers. They are definable only in terms of social relations made up of the acts of specific local persons. Such relations differ in duration and the frequency of the events making them up. Change such relations and geography is changed. For a human setting geography is merely the locus of relationship. The system of distribution that orders space in rural Ireland functions to do so within a system of social relations, which we have called familism. 438 484 571

It is not surprising that the relationships existing between the small farmers and their local distributing agencies go farther by far than economic acts of barter, purchase, and sale. The country crossroad shopkeepers, especially, win very special status in rural communities out of these relationships. In Ireland and in Clare shopkeeping is predominantly an urban and small-town trade. Yet shops are numerous and important in the country districts, and a word must be said of them. 444 571

In typical western rural communities the smallest and poorest of the crossroad shops, serving the minutest areas, are ordinary cottages or farmhouses. The slightest alteration has sufficed to turn one of the rooms into an emporium where makeshift till, counter, and shelves carry little more than tobacco, matches, oil, and a few sweets and small sundries. 444

Such a shop is usually run by a woman, who subsists upon it and a plot of land or garden. She is often a widow, or the wife of a local tradesman. In many cases the little shop is the local post office as well, and a salary from the state contributes to the owner's upkeep. Such a shop is sometimes, too, a local gathering place for the boys, in the way the local smithy once was such a gathering place. The boys get their fags here. It is encumbent upon the woman who keeps the shop to make them presents at Christmas time, in recognition of their custom. Everyone agrees that the woman [205] [431]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly 492
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish [609]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the

906 lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings
349 in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by
[421] islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the
[464] other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

743 Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

344 The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor,
205 just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room
206 with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use
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The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p.204(B)]

000
206 railway was closed in 1925. But the Inishbofin postmistress operates a radio-telephone.

THE LANDSCAPE

Three types of landscape are char-
139 acteristic: first, craggy hills of no great altitude, with a maximum of 292 feet in Westquarter, 288 feet in Middlequarter, and 271 feet in Knock; second, the farmed rolling countryside ranging from sea level to about 150 feet, and having some natural drainage; and, third, an area of sand dunes and blown
[311] sand in the extreme east, once settled and farmed but now used only for rough pasture. The larger of the two lakes, Lough Bofin, is held back by a magnificent shingle ridge in a fine bay, partially protected from strong winds and high seas but open to northerly gales. The coast is rocky almost everywhere and there are some splendid cliffs
[504] with outlying stacks: the best harbor is the long inlet on the south side. No recent geological work has been done

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Corrib). Difficulties of communication are such that the 133
Central Plain has never been central in anything more than
name: Athlone has become a national centre only with radio [207]
communication, and the Shannon remains a boundary river
throughout its course. The important part of the plain is the 133
fifty mile stretch which faces the Irish Sea between the bays of 175
Dundalk and Dublin, the heart of the old Kingdom of Meath
and of the English Pale, and the setting of Ireland's capital
sites from the sacred tombs of New Grange through the age
of Celtic Tara to the historic city of Dublin. One factor in the
location of this metropolitan area is suggested by Fig. 8; it [132]
is favoured by the relatively low rainfall of less than 30 ins.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

nuclei. We may think of the four kingdoms as slowly crystallizing throughout prehistoric times around areas of primary settlement among the hills. The political organization of these areas had to await the coming of Celtic conquerors, but fundamental in their differentiation are the divergencies in megalithic practice. The penetration of megalithic culture to all parts of the island is one of the most striking facts in the prehistory of Ireland. Again and again, in seeking for the origins of persistent customs we find ourselves led back to the megalith builders and their monumental preoccupation with death and the afterworld. The domination of the megalithic cult was much more complete in the western isle than in Britain, where it took root mainly in the uplands facing the Irish Sea. 174

All around the Irish coasts the megalith builders found hill masses where shallow soils and thinning forests gave them a foothold and ice-carried boulders provided the material for their gigantic tombs and ritual circles. It is significant that the megaliths appear to fall into four major regional groups—five if we include the Boyne area—which correspond with the historic provinces. This has been most clearly demonstrated for Ulster where the distribution of 'horned cairns' has been shown to correspond closely with the upland areas north of the Dundalk-Sligo line.[1] Similarly Meath, Dublin and Louth contain the finest passage-graves, of which New Grange on the Boyne is the supreme example. I have no doubt that the ground pattern of regional differentiation in Ireland was established in the megalithic era during the first half of the second millennium B.C.

It remains to say something of the lowland heart of Ireland where the four provinces meet along the line of the middle Shannon north and south of Lough Ree, which is the geometrical centre both of the lowlands and of the whole island. Near-by Athlone, therefore, serves as the centre of Eire's broadcasting system, but in no terrestrial sense is this bog-strewn central lowland a dominant cultural region. Its function has been largely negative, for it has served as a refuge area remote from the contacts of the coastal fringe and the urban forces which radiate [207]

[1] O. Davies and E. E. Evans, 'The Horned Cairns of Ulster', *U.J.A.* 6 (1943), 7–23.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and [182] indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the [521] climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently [676] in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, [127] and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of [137] islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, [815] several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own [207] sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

167
178 ble to visit Inis Beag frequently, as the cost and distance are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic.

The many vacationing emigrants who now return to the island at Christmas or Easter or during the summer months often succeed in persuading relatives and acquaintances to return to England with them. Those so persuaded declare that they will return soon with their "fortunes" to settle permanently, but they seldom do once "emancipated." Since the Second World War, several Americans have returned home, and their stories of life in the United States make the youth restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many islanders also sow the seeds of discontent. A favorite subject of talk in the pubs is the relative advantages to be gained from migrating to particular cities in England and America, and anthropologists as well as returned emigrants are called on as consultants in this matter by youths.

167
204 Almost every cottage in Inis Beag has a radio, or "wireless," and although the folk seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines
• 207 and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, because they allow islanders a glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and
177 freer world. Television was introduced into Inis Beag in 1963 at the lighthouse,
207 and a second set was procured for the new "dance hall" when it was completed two years later. Few islanders venture to the lighthouse to view television, but I am told by correspondents that many now visit the hall during the several evening hours when transmission from Telefis Eireann takes place. As a result, television has become an acculturative medium to be reckoned with. Both radio and television programs are censored in Ireland, but even so the morality expressed in them—especially in the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A hypothetical censor from Inis Beag most certainly would create more discontinuities with his shears in television performances than would his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin. My wife and I found that viewing television with islanders at the lighthouse on two occasions was a traumatic experience; it gave us a different (and even more disquieting) perspective on programs in the United States and their enculturative effects than can be obtained at home.

167
873 Since the Second World War, 28 island youths have pursued secondary education elsewhere in Ireland, either in high schools, called "colleges," or in technical schools, and most have been supported by government scholarships. The usual high school scholarship is for 5 years, and a student must be 14 years of age and qualify by competitive examination to receive one. Only 4 of these 28 students
873 —of which 2 are teachers in the national school—have returned to Inis Beag. One
[562] young man watched 2 girls, either of whom he eventually might have married, go off to the mainland for school and said, "Scholarships are killing the island;" what he was referring to, other than his own disappointment, is the fact that 19 of the 28 students who left for advanced education are girls. The reason for the disproportionate number of girls receiving scholarships is that they are far more moti-
[829] vated academically and have better scholastic records than boys. There is, however, a widespread belief in the island that certain families are favored by priests and

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167 Beag, only limited amounts of which have been reported in this chapter.
182 Even though sexual repression and fear of the clergy prevent the folk
[181] from being outspoken in this matter, it is constantly broached among
*[830] themselves.

167 Paramount among external factors stimulating emigration are pros-
177 perity on the mainland and abroad, the impact of the mass media of
182 communication, the increasing number of tourists visiting Inis Beag, the return of former emigrants, and the fact that, with an increase in incomes and scholarship funds, more island children are going to the mainland for their schooling each year. America has been a land of freedom and prosperity to the Irish since before the famine, and, until the Second World War, most islanders migrated there never to return. But the growth of prosperity in England following 1946 shifted the stream of emigration in that direction, for not only were jobs plentiful across the Irish Sea, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in big cities. And it was possible to visit Ireland frequently, as the distance and cost are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic. It is common for youths vacationing in Inis Beag from England to talk others into returning with them. The latter declare
167 that they will soon come back to the island to settle permanently, hope-
177 fully with "great riches," but they seldom return. Since the war, a number of "Yanks" have also returned home, and their stories of life in America make the youthful islanders restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many folk also sow the seeds of discontent.

167 Television was introduced into Inis Beag during 1963, and the two sets now installed always have ready and willing audiences. Almost
• 207 every cottage has a radio, and, although the islanders seldom read books,
182 a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers
177 find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, as they allow the islanders to glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a
[656] happier and freer world. Television and radio programs are censored, but, even so, the morality expressed in them—especially the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A censor from Inis Beag would most certainly create more discontinuities in films with his shears than do his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin.

114 Most of what I have written in this essay is to be found expressed in the works of such older Irish writers as James Joyce, Sean O'Casey,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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of the house is only a few years married. His brother is as yet unprovided for and still lives with him. Both frequent young men's meetings. 573

The old men's house includes all the adult farm fathers of complete families whose children have just succeeded or are nearly ready to succeed them, with two exceptions. It brings in, too, two others, O'Loughlin, the silent old bachelor, and John Quin, whose status among the old age group is still provisional. The interviews already quoted have given an insight into the function this meeting performs for the community. The behavior of the group points again to the same function. This is the seat of judgment in the community. It is the clearing house of information and the court of opinion in which the decisions of the community are reached and the traditional knowledge of the peasantry applied and disseminated. From these meetings the men return home to their wives and sons, and the formulations they have reached spread thus through the community of individuals who share life in Rynamona. 573 621 208 887

Let us examine the type of topic that comes up in the old men's meetings. If we want to assure ourselves that the meeting has the influence its members ascribe to it, a glance at the conversation that takes place there should bear them out.

The old men's meeting is an informal gathering. It arises in response to the community's interests and its immemorial custom. Naturally, different personalities and personal idiosyncrasies make the gathering slightly different in each rural community. Occasionally it may be absent altogether for various causes, such as the dying-off of a central member of the group. Often there is a sort of interregnum between one generation of old men and the next. This was the case in one Clare community studied by the authors. There the old men had lost the central figure of their group and, diminished in number, spent most of their time in enfeebled 573 887

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

573 887 loneliness at home. Two new cliques of slightly younger "old men" were competing for central position in the community.

573 521 208 626 887 But despite such variation from community to community, the old men's *cuairds* act very similarly. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. First in importance, however, are those concerning agriculture. Times of sowing, reaping, harvesting are debated; the merits of various seeds are disputed; shop and fair prices are compared; and the community's trade often affected thus. The "old men" are conservative farmers, as are most peasants, and an innovation must be thoroughly tested before it wins, here in the evening *cuaird*, the approval of the community. Traditional methods of farming receive their strongest support here in the web of legend, proverb, and reference to the past that the speakers weave around them.

Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and determined by the old men's agreement. In late years, this has come to be called "politics." It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for example, it was felt that it was in the interest of all that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. The old men's *cuaird* debated the matter and agreed upon support of Fianna Fail, the De Valera party, an allegiance it held for the years 1927 to the time of the authors' visits. Even O'Halloran, whose private views leaned in another direction, begged the authors that no word of his political heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of his neighbors. "I wouldn't want them to think I wasn't with them," he said.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of 573
its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And 521
that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the com- 208
munity will adopt toward the person or condition appraised. 626
Even the priest finds each of his acts and even his sermons 887
discussed and debated in the evening *cuaird*, and he "gets a name" according to the decision reached. In Rynamona an incident occurred which shows the type of slow appraisal the community makes and the speed with which, once its judgment is formed, it puts its decision into action. Not far away in the same general region, a gentlewoman moved back after years of absence to a small manor house which the family had had for many years. She was unknown to the farmers and, despite her friendly interest in them, seemed to be unable to establish contact with them. This distressed [674]
her, the more that her kindness seemed ineffectual in putting an end to the inevitable petty pilfering which she knew she must expect. One day, about a year later, her horse bolted on the country road. An expert horsewoman, she soon brought him into control. Thereafter her luck with the country people changed. Her exploit had made the rounds of the local community and had won approval for her. The old men agreed she was a grand lady and had a great hand with horses. And the petty pilfering sank to manageable proportions.

The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and in action the power which in the critical days of the land agitation won itself an international name: the boycott.

In a later section the sanctions the local community 573
exercises will be discussed. It is sufficient here to point out 626
208
887

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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573 626 208 887 this role of the *cuaird*. An example from another community than Rynamona will throw the type of action it can take into relief.

An "incomplete family" affords the example. It was made up of an old woman and her thirty-year-old son. Theirs was a poor farm, and ordinarily they would have been an object of commiseration. But they were not. In fact, they were a constant annoyance. The son was generally regarded as bad and lazy. He neglected his farm and exhibited an obstinate disregard of village opinion in which his mother abetted him. The result was, naturally, that their house was shunned and he went nowhere to *cuaird*.

But no crisis arose till the episode of the pig. One autumn the son brought home a large Irish white sow. The sow was more nimble than most of her kind, and neither the mother nor the son took any pains to keep her at home. She wandered through the village at will and soon devastated many a cabbage patch. The village took alarm, and the more so that the sow might well prove dangerous to young children. There were angry words among the women, and the men for once backed them up. In the *cuaird* it was hinted that the sow might be found dead one morning. But before such an event could take place, the son took warning and sold the pig. "Public pressure," if you will, forced his decision and resolved the conflict, but it left him as low as ever in the village's esteem.

573 887 538 And lastly, the *cuaird* is the seat of traditional lore and entertainment. Its members are the repositories of folklore and legend. And the official belief of the countryside finds its expression and its reaffirmation in the discussion of events and the recounting of histories and incidents. In communities still at least partly Irish-speaking, such as Luogh, most of its members are *seanachaidhthe*, storytellers in the traditional vein. And it is among them that traditional repertories of a saga, folk tale, song, and legend still get an

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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562 561 terms are summaries of status in farm economy, family life, and the cliques of the community.

834 208 Consequently the comment and attitude of the small farmers toward sexual behavior cannot be divorced from their appreciation of status in family and community. For them sexual behavior is merely one aspect, not of individual personality, but of sociological role. If one turns to any record of the sort of commentary and discussion the small farmers carry on among themselves, both in the semi-public discussion of the *cuaird* and in the more private talk of conversation among friends of a common age and status, one encounters a characteristic set of remarks and evaluations. These are for the most part discussions of specific persons in specific events. The attitudes expressed are directed now toward persons, now toward general conditions, now toward moral or ethical imperatives, now toward cosmological principle. Yet always, if sex is the subject, the status of the actors and the interests of the familist farm economy are the themes.

562 842 Women are valued and praised for their fecundity. All this is part of generally accepted convention among the small farmers, and such conversations as the following are not in the least unusual, despite the very great modesty and reticence of the farmers. A small farmer is praising an old woman, the head of the household, to one of the authors and contrasting her to her son's wife, both being listeners:

> Here is a woman that has no more milk of her own. They shouldn't allow a woman like that to breed because a man should always keep his wife in the milk. The old woman, God bless her, raised every child with the didi [breast].

369 831 The country-bred boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of constant reference to sex and breeding. There seems to be little of the ignorance about such matters which the townsman delights so in attributing to country people. In Ireland, no less than elsewhere in the world, the antagonism between town and country often expresses itself in such

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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joking ascription of ignorance and stupidity. In Ireland, however, there is another side of the expression of town and country distrust. The countryside points to prostitution and immorality in the towns and finds something to back up its condemnations. The town returns its dislike with double measure and accuses the countryside of primitive lack of all sensitivity of feeling or restraint of impulse. But these antagonistic attitudes and ways of regarding other groups than one's own are not our concern here. They are of interest here because such ascriptions of ignorance are part of a common misapprehension of the complexity of the peasant attitudes. 369 831

For instance, to an outsider the countrymen will seem often to give a mere lip service to the attitudes of the townsman, for one is always apt to mistake the function of hearty laughter. The country people have strict moral and ethical attitudes around the question of sex, as rigid as those of any other class if not more so. Yet they have conventional licenses and conventional niceties which do not coincide with those of the other classes and are thus open to misunderstanding. And, like all classes and peoples, they have two sets of attitudes, not one, and these are "ambivalent," to adopt the Freudian term. 369 834 208

But these attitudes and their "ambivalent" nature, the kind of alternation they seem to present, must be understood in terms of the social relationships of the countryside. The greatest single cause of misapprehension lies here. In different contexts, toward different persons, in connection with different events, one and the same person regards the same subjects quite differently.

For example, in discussions of the peccadillos of young people and the censurable events of the district the farmers and their wives were full of animus against the "crabbit" great "bucks" of lads who led girls astray and from whom the innocent were not safe. Yet even then, in discussing the fault of such amorous lads and the necessity of circum- 369 834 208 522

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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369 spection and immediate and frequent confession for girls as
834 their best defense, one sees that the pure young maidens are
208 also not without blame. They bear the taint of Eve. "Sure
522 the boys have no chance," said one woman in this respect, "for the girls always lay the blame on them." Yet these attitudes coexist together with other very hearty, casual, and sometimes ribald attitudes which make their appearance in banter, joke, and repartee even between speakers of different sex. These even take the form of taunts about prowess and mild ridicule for the possession of a greater relish than is meet, or fanciful recitation of past magnificent misdeeds. This is particularly true in the recitations of stories and adventures of persons in the ken of the community, where details of amorous desire and accomplishment are given with considerable gusto, and greeted and reiterated again and again amid hearty laughter.

369 Certain observers profess to find the puritanical outlook
834 on sexual matters on the increase in the countryside. The
208 country people themselves purport to see a change in their
[178] own outlook. And it may be that the last generation has brought a considerable spread of Catholic moral standards with the spread of education and the opening of the countryside to urban influence.

In any event the laughter and hearty guffaws with which references of nearly any kind to sexual intercourse, sexual attraction, and childbearing are greeted, and the evident interest they evoke, are very much part of the everyday behavior of the small farmers. They do not imply in any sense an approval or acceptance of the deeds described. They are rather expressions of a very definite judgment. They are in the nature of a condemnation in which laughter is itself a sanction upon the forbidden.[1]

[1] The authors accept readily the view of laughter as a response to a situation where socially conditioned values are threatened with upset and yet not so deeply or irrevocably broken as to bring out a full reproval. The view is well developed by Pilkington and agrees with that of Max Eastman. The tabloid reader is not

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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The "earthiness" and the ribaldry of the country people is not an antithesis to their strict moral code. Rather it reinforces it. It gives its pietistic and too-respectable, churchly and town-bourgeois aspects an authentic, indigenous touch. Even more important, it makes for a modification of the conventional attitudes which fit them for the country people's social life. 369 834 208

In this ambivalence of attitude one can see the identifications between status in human relations and norms about sexual behavior more clearly. The one view, that "holiness" denies sex, can be reserved to suit the non-procreant statuses of family life. The other, the hearty and open view embodying animal analogy, frank interest, overt desire, can be reserved for the persons whose roles in social life allow free rein to the amatory and procreative urges.

For the small farmers marriages are for the purpose of producing children and assuring continuity of descent and ownership. They are "forever." They are indissoluble. Sexual relations are part of marriage, its pleasure and its duty. They lead to children if one is fortunate and strong and potent. It is the will of God. One may regret that one's childbearing came so early. There might have been more time for free enjoyment. But it is a regret to which one resigns oneself easily. 581 833

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weakening his horror of murder or his distaste for adulterous behavior, however familiar his tabloid-viewing may make them. Similarly the Englishman reading his detective stories and the Frenchman listening to his *chanteuses* are merely indulging vicarious "thrills." All of them are going through a playful rehearsal of the conditioned reflexes of social sanction, indignation, rage, and punitive action in the same way a dog growls and bares his fangs at his play fighting. The idea may seem a bit ludicrous in itself, and it will offend the moralists. But let them remember that in most persons moral and ethical activity is absolutely unreasoned, spontaneous, and without any kind of intellectual support at all. It is pure reflex. Like any other reflex, it must be kept alive by a constant restimulation. Only overzealous priests, reformers, teachers, "nice people," and prudes miss this point. They fail to understand that vulgarity often hides far stricter morality than hypocritic cant. This laughter represents a constant and not unpleasurable reiteration of the accepted canons of morality upon so important a matter.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 589 581 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few 562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the [154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that 584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently 173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love 584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, [208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the 584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his 584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The 574 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

*831
626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
154 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
• [208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Wayside cairns in the form of memorial monuments 824
line the roads to the graveyards of Aran. On thorns at cross roads it is the custom in Co. Wexford to hang small crosses, [211] made of coffin wood, as the funeral procession passes by. [764]

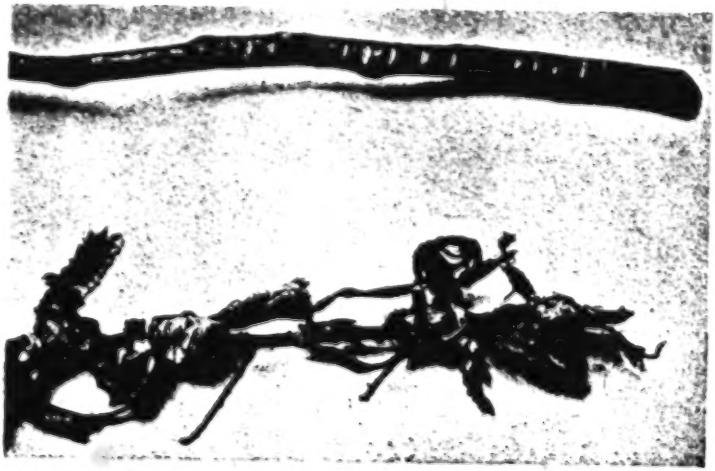
We cannot deal at any length with the superstitious practices which cling so tenaciously to death and burial: 764 they recall the customs of many other regions, such as Brittany, where the old megalithic cult was strong and seems to have lived on in obsessions about death and accompanying notions of re-birth. The anxiety to be buried with relatives reminds us of the strength of the blood-tie, and "bestows even on death a feeling of social interest." It is an Irish belief that the dead live on in the graveyard, and that the last person buried acts as servant to the others, a belief which not long ago led to disputes as to which of two bodies to be buried should be interred first. There are certain old graveyards where women only are said to be buried, and no living woman will enter them. On Innishmurray there are separate graveyards for men and women. [766] Unbaptised infants were generally interred in special burial grounds, some of which appear to be prehistoric cairns. There is no need to add to the many accounts that have been written of the keening of the dead and of wakes. In connexion with wakes we need only refer to the tricks, pastimes and games which were their accompaniment. The dramatic games were known under such titles as "The Walls of Troy," "Short Castle," "Building the Ship," "Turning the Spit," "Selling the Pig," "Building the Fort," "The Horse Fair," "The Mock Marriage" and "Shuffle the Brogue." While some seem to have been for amusement only, in others it is difficult not to see sex-symbolism and fertility-rites. In recent times the wake-games [786] have often degenerated into licence and drinking. Maria Edgeworth tells us that "more matches were made at wakes than at weddings."

When going to a funeral it was customary, in parts of the west until the beginning of the present century, to carry some salt in the pocket in order to avert evil influences. Arensberg quotes the belief that "there is never a funeral but the other

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

778

1. Holestone "altar", Inishkeel, Co. Donegal.



788
778
[211]

2. *Above*, Pilgrim's prayer-tally, Gouganebarra, Co. Cork.
Below, Rags on bramble at a wart-well.

[facing p.208]

·16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

764
291
142
516

Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

764

grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated. [211]

796

Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families involved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them [793] [356] [783] [674] [777] [776]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

275 The best singers will be
293 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[157] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
293 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[578] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
293 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
293 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
• 211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the
[576] free stout brought me in."

JOHN C. MESSENGER

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

609 It finds a formula for them that gives them a
123 familiar ring. So, the anthropologist gradually found acceptance. Even his formidable title grew easier as its translation spread. The Irish today
[212] are a very literate people. And a sudden increase in the circulation of books on anthropology
[217] from the county library helped very quickly to establish the anthropologist as 'looking for old customs'.

Once, perhaps, the translation would have been
121 adequate. But anthropology today is much more than a search for ancient custom. Even in Ireland, where the traditional Celtic life still lingers on, the anthropologist must conceive his purpose in broader terms. I want to devote this first lecture to the new purpose and its application to the Irish scene. In the remaining five lectures I shall try to present to you certain of the factors of custom and belief in the countryside of the south and west of Ireland and to analyse them in terms of the purpose we discuss here.

000 First of all we must clear up the matter of presumption. It may seem presumptuous that an anthropologist should profess to discuss the life of a modern nation. To some of us it may seem something like an engineer or a physicist, who deserts his field for metaphysics and morals. To others it may seem to betray a rather derogatory attitude toward the nation discussed. But neither desertion nor derogation can rightfully be charged. Our con-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1394
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at, or under, £2. 423 311 [435]

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inishshark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among themselves, but many of the children and young people have little or no acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark, which is less in communication with the outer world than Inishbofin. 191

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. were illiterate :— 212 162

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160 females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65 females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inishbofin.

(D.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were— 145 162

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
,, 80 ,, 85, 5 males and 14 females,
,, 85 ,, 90, 4 ,, 0 ,,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

KNIGHT'S POPULATION TABLE—*continued.*

175

Population, &c.			Remarks.
Horses,	587	943	Or only one beast of burden nearly, to every two families. Major Bingham and a few others have some good horses. The general breed is small, but hardy.
Asses,	356		
Cows,		1967	This is more than one to each family.
Sheep,		2348	
Pigs,		919	
Ploughs,			At Major Bingham's, Rev. Mr. Dawson's, and Rev. Mr. Lyons's.
Carts,			Same.
Feather beds,		624	Or nearly one to every third family. The substitute—straw, rushes, or hunt.
Blankets,		1838	
Men without shoes,		734	
Men, women, and children,		3156	Wanting clothes, or nearly one-third of the whole population.
Buying provisions,		751	In a year of great plenty, but after two of great scarcity.
Sick,		454	
Died (1831),		236	
Carriages (four-wheeled),		2	
Carriages (two-wheeled),		8	

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—I regret to be unable to 191 give here the proportion of people speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, as the census authorities make the return by baronies only. The great majority of the people are bi-lingual, speaking both Irish and English, employing Irish mainly when speaking among themselves, but there is some small proportion, especially among the older people, who speak no English. The inhabitants of Inishkea do not usually speak anything but Irish on their own islands, though having a fair knowledge of English; but many of the women on these islands have no knowledge of the last-named language. About Portacloy there are many who "have no English."

212 *Illiteracy.*—The return for this is given by parishes. In Kilmore, in 1891, there were 3590 persons of five years old and upwards; of these 2135 or 59·5 per. cent. were illiterate.

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	3590	1811	1779
Illiterate,	2135	978	1157
Percentage,	59·5	54·0	65·0

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe, the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high, the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

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continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SEASHORE.

The seashore, where the first Irishmen picked up a living 22
some thousands of years ago, still plays a significant role in the islands and around the coasts and is laid under contribution for seaweed and drift weed (wrack), for sand and gravel, and for accessory supplies of food. On many an Irish strand too, seasonal festivals, horse-racing and country games have only slowly given way to holiday makers from the city. Communal rights in the seashore were jealously guarded, and one constantly comes across ancient customs that have survived in this most changeless of environments. I recall the country-
man " on the brew " (bureau ; that is, on the dole) whom I [283]
watched in County Down twisting on his bare thigh, his palm dried with a dusting of wood-ash from the hearth, the two-ply " crop " of horse-hair for his fishing line—each ply consisting of twenty-one strands taken from the tail of a white mare.
This method of twisting is found amongst almost all primitive 227
peoples, and can be paralleled, for instance, from the remote 226
Andaman Islands. His outfit for codling fishing is illustrated in Fig. 94, which shows two hair crops attached to a home-made sinker of lead—called from its shape a " frog " ; the use of horse-hair has survived in this case because it is stiffer than
gut and serves to keep the hooks from fouling each other. [237]
Rock-fishing lines in Co. Antrim are sometimes made of black horse-hair, but for the part next the hook, called the foot-line, white hair is used. Well-made lines of carefully selected hair

[Text continues top of p. 144--Analyst]

512 activity over the farm and over the round of the year. Coupled with such greater variety, there is also a greater freedom of choice among necessary tasks. The necessities imposed by soil and climate permit a wider range of action and a less narrowly repetitious routine than do the ordered regularities of a household.

512 Yet within the greater range of activity there is still a
● 221 constant and nearly invariant pattern of work. The progression of the seasons brings a recurrent demand upon the farmer in the care of beasts, crops, and the land itself. Each season brings a task which must be performed, begun, or ended if the farmer is to raise his produce successfully.
512 Similarly, the custom and rivalry of the community exert
626 a further restriction upon his activity. He works within the influence of a long-established tradition of ancestral experience which has established for him the best dates for planting, for reaping, for breeding cattle, and for most of the tasks of his yearly round. The community holds that tradition in common, and the farmer is caught in the midst of a mesh of rivalries, competitions, and gossip in praise and condemnation, which binds him the more strongly to the accepted patterning of his yearly activity.

512 The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its lowest pitch
221 in winter. Activity is confined to house and haggard. On bitter wet days little can be done beyond the haggard wall,
462 but within it there is always a variety of necessary tasks involving care of farm machinery, implements, and buildings, and the housing and feeding of the cattle who cannot be driven to graze in the open field. In the house there is much that can be done. Harness can be patched, boots fitted with new soles, plates, and spikes, furniture repaired and occasionally new pieces made.

These tasks fall to the males of the household, the farmer father and his grown or adolescent sons. Any discussion of the annual round of farm work necessarily describes their

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents. 512 221 462

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year. 132 527 221

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew. 221 527 574 621

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with 221 132 241 221 521

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

221 521 types, varieties, growth cycles, yields, and care of seeds and cattle passes round by word of mouth.

[805] 221 132 241 The first of February, St. Brigid's Day, marks the beginning of spring. For the countryman the return of the "hard" days of wind and clear weather herald the season of the land's drying off. Through February and March the gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted, and the fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each hard day is a welcome opportunity, for only then can work in the fields go on. With favorable weather, the work of preparation is over in the beginning of March, and the actual planting begins. By St. Patrick's Day, with its promise of continuous hard weather, the gardens are ready for a second planting.

221 241 The potatoes demand the greatest attention. A fortnight after they are planted, they must be manured well with manure brought from the pile near the cattle cabins, and the ground must be leveled so that the plant will not go to stalk and thus fail to produce tubers. A fortnight more and the ground must be "softened" and the earth round the plant, which now shows its first leaves, must be "stirred." By the time May is reached, the potatoes must be "landed." Earth must be taken from between the long ridges in which the potatoes are planted and heaped up over them from each side. Thereafter nothing remains until the harvest but a summer spraying against blight.

221 231 438 Throughout the spring the cattle have demanded attention. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the milk season and intensified butter-making. The great spring cattle fairs take place. The farmer must devote himself to the all-important business of buying and selling his milch and store cattle and his calves. At home the cattle demand constant care against hunger, disease, and cold as he mixes their diet of fast diminishing hay with the slowly returning pasture grass.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the "landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and whatever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over.

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to allow turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabáiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June.

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up.

The first true harvest and the most important one of the year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

221 With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
241 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it
[492] has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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he was in the spring, for the autumn fairs bring him an important market. 231

If he has been fortunate and industrious, nothing remains for him to do but to prepare his fields for the next year. The soil he has used for root crops must be turned, and the gardens which he intends for grain are ploughed. As he follows the furrows, he can look back upon a year ended, and forward to another to begin. By the time his ploughing is finished, the dead of winter and the holiday season of Christmas is upon him and the yearly round is over. 221 241

Yet it is over only to repeat itself. For within the range of the seasonal variation and the demands of growing and maturing crops and animals the pattern of farm work in haggard, garden, meadow, and field is a constant one. Much the same progression of labor flows along year after year, and follows the farmer from boyhood till death. Yet there is much less restriction in choice of operation to be performed, in movement over space, in the possibility of day-to-day variation than in the case of the work of the household. 221

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 tive builder has replaced the doomed roof by the thatched roof if, naturally, timber and material for thatching were at hand.

A great number of houses of this type have been in use as late as the 19th century in remote parts of Ireland. Many references are given in the travel sketches and other literature of that time.

Particular attention may be called to the houses in Achill, Co. Galway, which belong to booleying settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, describing the island of Achill[12a] tell us about a certain kind of booleying (the cattle were brought down towards the coast when the season for fishing was on). They sketch the houses in a picture, pl. 34,a, and in words:

"The habitations of the islanders are very singular. Their houses are heaps of rude stones moulded by the tide, procured from the beach, uncemented; they are rounded at the gables, and roofed with fern, heath, and shingles, fastened on by straw bands. In the village of Dooagha, consisting of about forty cabins, there is not a single chimney. Some of the wealthier graziers, however, have an odd custom of residing in such houses, or in houses of a still more simple construction, only during the summer months, when the season for fishing is "on", and their cattle are brought down towards the coast to feed on the young herbage. These hovels, they call 'Builly houses'."

[356] [221] [231]

From another traveller, Caesar Otway, who made a short excursion in Achill in the summer 1838, can be collected some valuable informations.[12b] Otway mentions (p. 353, 356) a certain type of wall construction, viz, the pilledpin double wall: two dry stone walls with the interspace filled in with sand. This is the same archaic construction, which Thomas describes from Lewis. It is also known from archaeological excavations in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

342 361

"An Achill village consisted of congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky, and their construction was as follows: — a dry stone wall was built of a form like an obtuse oval, for they had not arrived at the art of making a square quoin, or erecting a gable end. Outside this wall, and at about a foot distance, another loose wall was run up, and the space between the two filled with sea sand, and then this was roofed, generally with timber washed on shore from wrecks, and covered with heath, which covering did not reach over the outside wall, and form an eave, but rested on the middle between the walls, and the moisture from above passed, as it should, through the intervening sand."

"— — — we entered the village of Dugurth. Just such a village as I

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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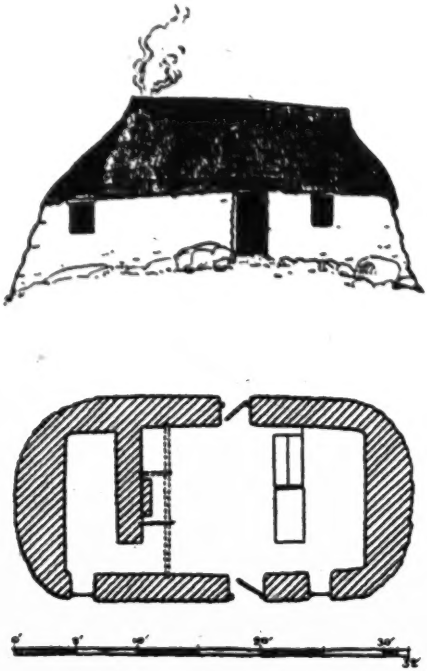

Fig. 4. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

have above described, but certainly containing some houses that *had* gable-ends; but for the most part of the construction I have alluded to, a dirty, dreary, uncouth place — — —."

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Later on (p. 401) Otway has learnt to know the summerherding (booleying) and the difference between winterhouses and summerhouses, and he compares the Irish summerhouses with the Swiss *chalets*.

"Keem, I said, was a singular village; it is only inhabited in summer — who would suppose that the Achillians had such a superfluity of houses, that they had both their winter and summer residences. The Greenlanders and Esquimaux are so changeful, from their excessive vicissitudes of heat and cold — but here I was surprised to find empty every house but two (and these were the residences of the coast-guard), all with their doors fastened

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 and untenanted; and certainly such miserable wigwams, I had never be-
361 fore seen — all built, as I have already described, without gable-ends. It
221 seems the owners of the village of Keem, and the renters of the adjoining district, have other houses in a distant part of the island, where they spend the winter and spring; thence they come when their oats and potatoes are planted and spend the summer months, herding their cattle on these heights, and leading a pastoral life. Thus in Switzerland they have their chalets on the hills, and in old times in Ireland the creaghts (as they were called) had their boolies on the mountains; but I don't think I ever saw a summer-herding village before."

342 What is said to have been the last oval house in Achill (pl. 33,a), was destroyed in the last two years. An old man (he is seen in the doorway) had lived in it and would not change to any other kind of residence. When he died, the house was pulled down.

This house had dry stone walls. In the middle of the floor stood a beam of bog fir from the top of which beams and branches, also of bog fir, spread out like the ribs of an umbrella, to carry the thatched roof. (This central beam may have been a temporary structure? Cf. p. 192 about the *tuireadh* of the wicke work house described by O'Curry). The house had no windows and no chimney. The smoke came out through a hole in the roof.

In the year 1936, I measured an inhabited oval house in Inveran, Co. Galway, fig. 4 and pl. 34, b, 35, a, b. This house embodies many interesting features known from prehistoric times. It is built upon very uneven ground and runs from east to west. The several feet thick walls slope as the walls of the oval clochán from the ground upwards. In later times these, built as dry stone walls, have been plastered from outside and whitelimed and the windows added.

The interior is made up by one room, which, however, is divided up to the west by the hob and a protecting wall behind it. Here is the bedroom, in harmony with the wide-spread old tradition mentioned in my former article.[12c] To the east, a dresser and a table cut off the lower part to form another bed-alcove.

The house has no outside chimney, but a basket resting on beams leads the smoke out through a hole in the roof. This basket is wattled from osiers and covered with plaster. As the wall behind the fireplace does not go up as far as the roof, canvas is hung to complete the wall.

There are the usual two doors, central and opposite to each other.[12d] The roof of straw, scollop-thatched, rests on couples of beams, supported on the

 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 189 ---- ANALYST]

PLATE 33.

a. Oval house. Keel, Achill, Co. Mayo. Photographed in 1903.
b. Clochán, used for storage purpose. Blasket Island.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 171 These are formed of wooden posts, interlaced with branches of trees, like wicker-work, and covered on the outside with turf."

Robertson" describes a type of tenant's house, the construction of which must be like the wicker-work houses above-mentioned. "When such a house is to be built, the first thing done is to construct a coarse frame of wood, corresponding to the dimensions of the house, in length and breadth; then upon this frame to fix standards inclining inward, at proper distances, which rise to the height of the intended wall, and are kept in a firm position by being morticed in a tree above of the same dimensions with the tree below. These standards are closely woven with wicker work, to keep the sods from falling in; which, being built on the outside, finish the side walls of a creel-house."

342 221 As the Irish booleying custom, *buaile*, doubtless preserved many primitive and archaic building traditions, it should form an important subject of study also with regard to wicker-work huts. However, the summer huts which are mentioned in the Welsh laws are not referred to in the Irish lawtracts. Professor Mac Néill has kindly informed me that this does not mean that the *buaile* custom did not exist in ancient Ireland. "It was probably practised by the less opulent class who had a limited supply of pasture land. The laws have little to say about these, as in general they were under the jurisdiction of a noble."

342 343 The huts erected in later times of sods or turf and used as shelters for donkeys, pigs, etc., which can be met with in various parts of Ireland, would also well repay study. In the literature of the 19th and the early 20th centuries can be found travellers' accounts of such houses, although they seldom go into details about the construction. I refer, *e. g.*, to a description of Caesar Otway's from his "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly", an account of his travels in Northwestern Ireland in 1840:

"The dwellers here were bog troglodytes — the foundations of their dwellings are sunk eight feet or more below the surface of the surrounding black bog, the walls are constructed of wet sods, cut off from the surface of that bog; there is no door or door-case, no chimney; the orifices by which the people enter, and through which the smoke *should* issue, are filled up as suits the wind, with bundles of heath or turf-kreels, filled with potato-stalks; a drain comes out from under the floor of the dwelling, from which the superabundant moisture escapes, or else it would be a common boghole: but, by its means, the water that springs abundantly from the sides and bottom, flows away, and the people sitting or standing within, are free from actual overflow."

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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462 of a Solomon Grundy. A farmer's wife of Clare
512 divided her week more rigidly in describing it than she did in practice. "On Monday", she said, "I do the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday I make butter, on Friday to market, on Saturday I get ready for Sunday, and on Sunday I go to mass and do as little as I can." Really it is only on Sunday that any change seriously alters the daily round; for the country-people are strict sabbatarians, at least regarding work.

241 Work on the 'land' beyond the haggard and the
462 house is less restricted. It has a greater range over
221 the farm and offers a wider variety of tasks round the year. There is a wider freedom of choice among tasks as well. Soil and climate are just as insistent as is the household, but they do not force such narrow regularities.

Yet each season brings a task the farmer must perform. Custom and rivalry in the community restrict him as well. He is in fact less free to choose the date of sowing than his wife the hour of dinner. Long-established tradition and ancestral experience imprint upon his mind the best dates for planting, for reaping, for harrowing, for breeding cattle, and so forth. The farmer is caught, willingly of course, in a mesh of rivalries, competitions, condemnations, which binds him the more strongly to the community's patterning of his yearly round.

The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its low in winter. On bitter wet days little can be done

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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beyond the haggard wall, as we have noted. All the 241
many tasks of patching and repair are men's work, 221
they fall to the farmer-father and his sons. The 462
annual round is theirs, as the daily one belongs to the women.

For the countryman, the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to the Epiphany or 'Little Christmas', is the dead of winter. All farm work is at a standstill. The farmer is free to devote the season to holiday. Outside the weather is unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. For him the year has stopped and is waiting to renew its forces.

With the Epiphany, the succession of bitter wet days does not end, but holiday does. One's mind turns to the earnest work of the year to come. The farmer plans his spring planting. On drier days he can clean ditches and drains; he can lay in seed and repair machines. In the evenings, conversation on [521]
visits and at home revolves round the coming planting and calving, and traditional experience goes from mouth to mouth. In fact, it is the time for all new plans, for it is Shrovetide, the season of match-making and marriage.

St. Bridget's Day, February 1, marks the begin- [805]
ning of spring. For St. Bridget promised every [776]
second day thereafter would be 'hard'. The return of the 'hard' days of wind and clear weather herald the land's drying-off. Through February and March, gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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221 241 462 fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each 'hard' day is more than welcome, for then work in the fields can go on. By St. Patrick's day, they say in Clare, the potatoes should all be 'down'; after that there still remains much to do, [776] though the worst is over. St. Patrick promised that after his day *every* day would 'come hard'.

Through the rest of the spring, work is at its most intense. Potatoes must be 'stirred' and 'landed'; other root crops 'put down'. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the season of greater milk yields and intensified butter-making. Before that in February and March [443] the 'great spring fairs' take place, and the year's buying and selling of cattle must be done.

Then, gradually, with the return of warm weather and the drying-off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is often the first summer month. Soon the bogs are dry enough for cutting the year's supply of turf and for stacking it to dry under the summer warmth at the bog's edge.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the first fruits of the farmer's labour begin to appear. The first crop is cabbage, which was planted at odd times very early. It is practically the only green of the [261] diet and old people remember June or July *an chabáiste*, 'the hungry month', when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semi-starvation upon cabbage. Today new varieties of potatoes mature as early as June. But

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the mature potatoes mark no harvest; they are turned out of the ridges with spade and plough as they are needed.

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The first true harvest, and the most important one of the year, is the haymaking. Mowing begins in late July or early August. The haymaking is a race against time and rainy weather. Every effort must be bent to mow, rake, dry and stack the grasses, first in small haycocks, then in the great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers speak of it aptly when they call it 'saving the hay'.

Corn crops, oats and rye, come in next, and then through September, October and November the other roots, mangels and turnips, must be 'pulled'. Turf must be brought down to the haggard from the bog-ricks; and everything made ready for man and cattle for the coming winter. Autumn fairs bring a new high in buying and selling cattle; and with the last of them, winter sets in again and Advent has returned. In late November the farmer may turn over his gardens with the plough, to prepare them for the spring. As he follows the furrow, he can look back upon a year ended and forward upon a new one to begin.

Yet, unvarying as this yearly round is, and much as the recurrent patterns of work in garden, meadow and field follow the farmer year after year, from boyhood to death, this work—man's round—is freer and more various, even perhaps

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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221 more arduous, than woman's. We must remember
241 this difference. It reflects an important dichotomy
462 between the sexes in the organization of labour.

We can see this dichotomy even when the group
462 works as a unit. At various crucial points in the annual round we have just followed, the whole family bends to the tasks at hand together. At potato planting, turf-cutting and haymaking, one can see them working in unison. Even the young children contribute their share to the common rhythm of the task. Yet the woman's role is separate. It is auxiliary; the simpler, less arduous tasks fall to her. The heavier work and command of the enterprise rests with the men. The plough, the harrow, the mower, the scythe, the spade and the turf-cutting *slán* are regarded as masculine implements. The attitudes of the countryside forbid a woman's using them. In the same way, they heap ridicule upon the thought of a man's interesting himself in the feminine sphere, in poultry, or in the churning.

Immemorial folklore bolsters this division. The
[777] woman is unlucky to masculine enterprises, for instance: it is dangerous to see a woman on the road to the fair. Likewise, man is dangerous to the woman's work. If he so much as takes his lighted pipe out of the house while she is churning, he may 'take the butter', through fairy magic.

In this dichotomy, of course, the male sphere bears higher value. But dichotomy implies no de-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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181 Fleure writes of Wales, another section of "The Celtic Fringe": "the isolated rural communities are, of themselves, poor in material resources, and their efforts have, therefore, not until recently gone into great buildings or sculpture or painting or orchestral music, all demanding a large equipment. Rather have they found their scope in poetry and oratory and song, arts in which the poorest labourer can often compete on fairly equal terms with his richer neighbours. In this way, and in others as well, poverty has been a safeguard of an intensely democratic feeling as well as a help towards the survival of the language and its associations." In the field of human export, too, Ireland's products are scholars, doctors and poets as well as spade-workers.

243 There are, as we shall try to show, many other features
262 of Irish life which can be related to the pastoral tradition.
114 Because of its value as fodder and for reasons of soil and climate, oats is the "corn" crop of Atlantic Europe. Apart from the value of oats as food for livestock, oatmeal in various forms has been and still is largely consumed, and its baking into thin pan bread over an open fire instead of in an oven has helped to preserve the prehistoric open hearth with its varied
114 and interesting gear and traditions. Ignoring the literary and archæological evidence, many writers have assumed that the inhabitants of ancient Ireland were entirely pastoral and nomadic. On this topic much solemn nonsense has been written, and it gained wide currency because it seemed both to condemn the Irish and to corroborate the prevailing view of man's cultural evolution from hunter to agriculturist through a stage of pastoral nomadism. It now seems certain that man learnt the elements of cultivation at least as soon as he learnt how to domesticate animals, and in the diffusion of these ideas through Europe from the Near East, Ireland received the germs of both sources of food-production at about
114 the same period, let us say 4,000 years ago. There are many
● 221 signs that in Ireland's dark and middle ages cattle played an even greater role in rural life than in earlier prehistory and later history, but at all times the unit of the fixed family

[Text Continues Top of P. 10]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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114 settlement, the baile or townland, kept its significance and its
221 importance. In many cases what has passed for nomadism has been the ancient and normal practice of seasonal movement to the hill pastures, which is still not entirely abandoned and has left many traces in the life and landscape of the country (Chapter 6).

181 In essentials Ireland is and has been a peasant country,
462 and it may be well to examine objectively some of the general characteristics of peasant society. A permanent link with the soil on which man lives and works is the essence of a peasantry; and in this work of the fields woman co-operates with man. For her, however, field work is a secondary task since her main interests must lie in the house and in the milking of the stock. Work with spade and plough and the care of the draught animals is for the men, although carrying—necessarily done by women in primitive communities where the men must have their hands free to use their weapons—often remains an activity of the peasant woman where not entirely superseded by animal transport. Where fishing and shore-collecting engage the men's attention the women's sphere of action and responsibilities are widened.

181 Among tasks in which the women of some peasantries
323 play a leading part is the making of domestic pottery, but this tradition, though strong in Neolithic Ireland, gave way to the use of metal "pots" and vessels of wood, the making of which was the work of the men. Nor have local survivals of hand-made pottery, like the Barvas ware of the Hebrides, been recorded here.

181 Periodic gatherings for exchange and social intercourse
443 are a feature of peasant life which has contributed to the
796 growth of towns. The immemorial meetings in fairs and markets have been weakened by modern means of transport and by government marketing boards; and in some parts of the country the whole fabric of rural society is being undermined in consequence. As in North Africa to-day, the fairs were often held near some ancient burial place, and the assemblies were linked with religious festivals which brought

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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174 Donegal parish in 1837—and all the carrying depended upon
[491] slide cars and creels (Chapter 12). The village had neither
361 shop nor inn, and required little besides salt and iron from the market town. These self-sufficing communities were held together by blood ties and by the exchange of services under the Irish open-field or "rundale" system of cultivation. Around the house-clusters were small walled gardens and haggards, but the arable land was an unenclosed open field in which each holder had his scattered patches, averaging perhaps a quarter of an acre in area. There are cases on record where
[423] 29 partnership-peasants shared 422 plots of ground, where one man held 32 different patches, or again where 26 people had shares in a field of half an acre. In some districts it is known that the plots changed hands periodically. but no memory of this survives in the areas I am acquainted with. Live stock was sometimes subject to joint-ownership, with disastrous results where, for instance, three men claimed shares in a horse and could not agree as to the ownership of the fourth leg. But most of the stories that are told about rundale farming belong to the period of its decline.

174 Between the cultivated patches, which were dug with the
● 221 spade or ploughed and devoted almost exclusively to potatoes
361 and oats, ran waste strips or balks ("mearings," "bones" or "ribs") often left as much as three yards wide, apparently from a sort of pride, though they had their uses both as a source of hay and as tracks for the creel ponies when they could not enter the waterlogged plots. In the absence of fences all livestock had to be tethered, spancelled, herded, or sent to the mountain pastures during the crop season, which traditionally began on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) and ended on the last day of October (Hallowe'en), when the animals were free to wander over the whole townland throughout the winter. "Any that had not their potatoes dug, or other crops off the ground, were much injured, neither could any one man venture to grow turnips, clover or other green crops . . . no one would attempt to manure better or otherwise improve his proportion, as his neighbour's cattle only would have the benefit." It is clear that the introduction of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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potato was one of the factors that led to the decline of rundale agriculture, both because of its late harvest and because it resulted in increased populations which brought disastrous subdivision of the holdings. Under the " gavelkind " code of inheritance a man's property was divided equally among all his sons, so that the impossibly small fields came to be spoken of not as the standard " cow's grass," but as a " foot " and even a half-foot or " cleet." 174 221 361 [428]

Much has been written of the drawbacks of the rundale system. It is so easy to condemn it—the " fights, trespasses, confusion, disputes and assaults " to which it gave rise, the wretched poverty which it bred, the evil consequences of dwelling in packed house clusters—that it is well to recall the better side of the system before it fell into decline. A writer in 1853 has left his " recollections of nights of social converse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of defence against bailiff or gauger which contrasted mournfully with the solitary grandeur of the new dwelling." Another apologist wrote : " the closer the rundale system is followed, the more the unwritten customs and regulations observed, the more do intelligent tenants regret a departure from them." Many of its better features, indeed, have survived the enclosure movement and the separation of farms ; we may cite co-operation in farm work and the social fire-side evenings or " caileys." " Gatherings " of many kinds, for work and pleasure, distinguished the rundale communities. Every village had its musician, piper or fiddler, who was often maimed in some way and supported himself by his skill. Folk songs, occupational airs and epic tales were kept alive in this way. 174 621

It was formerly the task of an appointed leader in a townland or group of townlands to see that customs were observed, to arrange the casting of lots in re-allotting strips, and so on. Probably we should see in the " king " not long ago recognized as leader in such communities as Rathlin and Tory a relic of this custom. [622]

To understand the village-system in working order we must see it as part of a wider pattern in which cattle-herding 174 621 221 231

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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played a dominant part, to which the claims of agriculture were subordinated. It was customary for the young folk, and in some cases the whole family, to leave the village as soon as the crops were sown and migrate to summer pastures among the hills. This custom is still widely followed in various mountain areas in Europe, for instance Switzerland and Spain, where it can be shown to be of great antiquity. To it the name "transhumance" is given, but we shall use the term "booleying," from "booley" (milking place), or summer hill dwelling. It is strange that scarcely any attention has been given or any importance attached to this aspect of the Irish past, despite its direct bearing on the social and cultural as well as the economic development of rural Ireland, on language and literature, music and the arts. From rare memories or survivals of the custom—it is still followed on Achill Island—and by analogy with transhumant societies overseas, we can envisage the part played by booleying in ancient Ireland, where its wide occurrence was facilitated by the presence of scattered mountain masses in all parts of the island (Chapter 2). We shall refer to some survivals below. The illustration (Fig. 15) shows a bullock's "horn" which used to be blown not long ago at a farm in the Torr Head district of Co. Antrim, to summon people together. One is tempted to see in this custom a relic of the pastoral heritage. Traditions of hospitality are a common accompaniment of pastoral life: there is no need to stress the reputation of the country people in this connexion, but it is relevant to add that the lavish hospitality for which the landed aristocracy have been famous may well have been derived from Gaelic custom.

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Fig. 15.

Wherever it is found, this seasonal nomadism assumes a ritual significance, especially where, as in the old Ireland, cattle are its main concern. Thus the departure of the herds and their attendants in spring is accompanied by festivities and ceremonial; and the return to the homestead in autumn is the occasion for the rejoicings and reunions of Hallowe'en, when the youngsters play seasonal games among themselves and tricks upon their elders. We shall revert to this topic in chapter 17. Here we are concerned rather to describe the life

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among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the 174
cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of 621
the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, 221
together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the 231
hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, "the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in "booley" or "boley" 221
assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the 342
actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were 343
generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were
circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had 221
two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed 234
in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular "town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of "whitemeats" that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter [25]
appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This "bog-butter" frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations: it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

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the 17th century, the natives withdrew themselves to the mountains, where they lived a life that some historians have mistaken for aboriginal nomadism. 221

The booleying tradition, finally, throws light on many of the customs connected with cattle and sheep, and helps to explain the absence of the dairy in permanent dwellings which formerly had to serve as winter houses only, most of the dairy work being done in summer. It also helps us to attribute to custom rather than solely to laziness and neglect the Irish farmer's traditional indifference to the fate of his crops during the summer months. "Spring and harvest time," we quote a typical 19th century observer, "are the only periods at which the peasants exert themselves, and then they work very hard; for the rest of the year they are idle."

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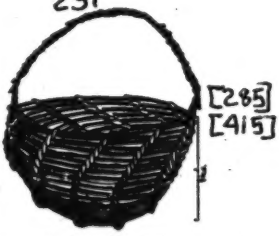

Fig. 18. Co. Antrim.

The old customs of tending ("herding") the cattle and tethering or spancelling them also derive from the rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. "Cattle, sheep, pigs and goats," wrote Arthur Young, "are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw . . . . cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom." Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used: even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. Where animals still run in common under the system of "sums" it is necessary to give them distinguishing marks. Apart from the well-known methods of branding or colouring the sheep's wool it is the custom in parts of Ireland, as in Wales, to ear-mark sheep by cutting or notching the ear with proprietary shapes. In Clare Island the geese are "tokened" by having holes punched in their webbed feet. Incidentally it is worth noticing that, so far as I am aware, the iron-tipped shepherd's crook is unknown in Ireland, a bent ash stick taking its place. "Gatherings" and co-operation are of course a feature of sheep-shearing and dipping. Sheep-pens of dry stone construction are often associated with ancient settlements among the hills: they are of various shapes and would repay study.

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[413]
[343]

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CHAPTER X.

SEEDTIME.

Except in a few districts where winter wheat is grown the 241
farmer's year may be said to begin in spring when, from 221
February on, the land is ploughed or dug for the new crops. Several arguments are advanced against autumn ploughing—that the land is too wet and that the winter destroys the seed-bed—but as with many other things the preference is best explained by deep-rooted custom. So long as the land was held in rundale autumn ploughing was out of the question since the stock had the run of the whole townland after Hallowe'en.

We have very little information about old Irish ploughs. 241
Owing to the fact that they were made almost entirely of wood 407
archæology cannot help us much, but shaped stones that may have been shares and coulters have been found, and plough-irons do sometimes turn up. The discovery by Dr. O'Neill Hencken of a large iron coulter in the Ballinderry crannog shows that a heavy plough necessitating a big team had reached Co. Westmeath by the 10th century A.D. Pipe-rolls of the 13th century refer to plough teams of 8 oxen in Co. Meath: this was the normal complement under the English three-field system. At the other end of the scale, as it were, there survived into living memory along the west coast the [492]
custom of attaching the horse to the plough or harrows by the tail, and although the practice was severely condemned it had the advantage that the horse would stop if the plough

[p.87]

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CHAPTER XVII

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS: THE COUNTRY TOWN.

Although the Celtic year began with All Hallows Day (November 1st), for our purpose we may regard it as starting on February 1st, or St. Bridget's Day. This was the first day of Spring, and of field work, for the Saint promised that every second day thereafter would be hard and dry. The circle of the year ran its course through the seasons, punctuated by certain fixed festivals and by the uncertain advent of births, marriages, illness and death. It is with the fixed festivals that we are concerned in this chapter. The four seasons have their opening days on the first of February, May, August and November, and the celebration of these days and the preceding Eves is a pagan survival breaking through the Christian calendar. The festivals of February and of November have been taken under the special protection of the Church through their association with St. Bridget and All Saints, but many traces of the "elder faiths" of nature worship live on, sanctified by tradition if not always by the Church. 221 796 805 [821] [996]

On St. Bridget's Eve (January 31st) it is customary for country children to pull rushes—they must not be cut with a knife—and take them home to be made into crosses by the family gathered round the fire. A fixed ritual, varying from one district to another, determines the procedure, and it traditionally included the St. Bridget's supper of pancakes or sowens taken from a plate laid on top of a rush cross. The 221 796 788 285

[p.153]

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796 crosses, of various patterns, are hung up over doors and The beds
788 and in the byre to bring good luck. Some of them are very
285 elaborate, but the oldest style, to judge from its Celtic form,
is the three-legged cross (Fig. 106) which is specially associated
[777] with cattle and is not, like the other shapes, taken to church to be blessed, a ceremony which is kept up even in parts of Belfast. In the Glens of Antrim a small bed is fashioned out of rushes and placed by the fire on St. Bridget's Eve: the door is left unlatched so that the Saint may come in and rest.

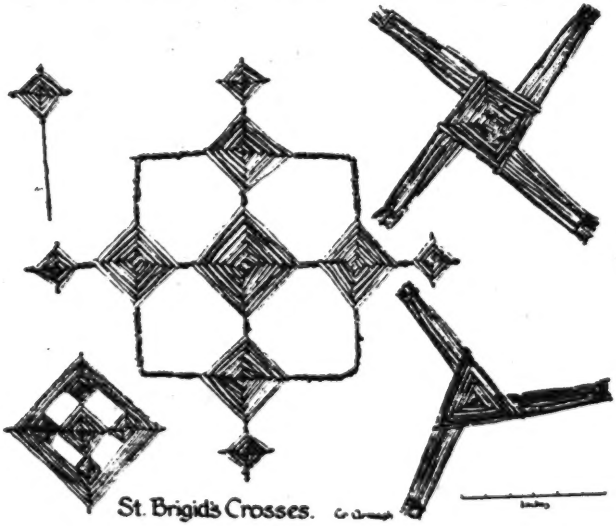

Fig. 106.

In Co. Kerry young lads called "Biddy Boys" wear hats of straw on the first of February, and in other parts of the west, I am told, "Bridget Belts" of plaited straw are worn.

796 The next important day in the calendar comes about the
221 middle of the three months of Spring, that is at the time now kept as a national holiday in North and South alike—St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. This is regarded as the proper time to commence sowing, and the countryman counts on

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planting his first potatoes on that day, when St. Patrick 796
"turned the warm side of the stone uppermost." In the 221
Antrim Glens the hay meadows are closed on St. Patrick's Day, and under the rundale system the animals which had run through the townland from Hallowe'en were now carefully herded or driven to the rough grazing grounds so that they could not trespass on the unfenced cropland. A little later come the many memories of seed-time ritual and the spring sacrifice now represented in Easter egg-rolling games.

The May festival ranked next in importance to that of November: these are the major turning points of the year, where Nature decks herself in fresh green or in "rich Autumn's golden quittance." On the first days of these months the cattle were numbered, and it is a commonplace that these are still the rent or "gale days" in Ireland. On May Day the young crops were visited with torches and the cattle blessed before being driven to the mountain booleys, and hill-top fires played a large part in the rites. These Beltane fires were originally [372]
need-fires, that is they were produced by the friction of two pieces of wood. All hearth fires were extinguished on May Eve, and re-lit from the sacred fire. It is still a common [777]
superstition that it is unlucky to give away fire, even as light for a pipe, on May Day, for that would be to give away your luck for the year. In Donegal it is considered unlucky to be the first house to show smoke on May morn: the cattle are milked and the byres cleaned before the fire is made up. The Beltane ritual included the eating of oatcakes "which must not touch iron," and dancing three times clockwise round the fire. Many volumes could be written on the customs and superstitions connected with this festival, touching fire and food, salt and butter, the rowan and the flowers of the field, especially the marsh-marigold or May-flower. The city urchins have turned the celebrations into a prolonged parading of May Queens and collecting of pennies. See Chapter 19.

It is probable that fires continue to be lit on May eve in 372
some parts. Certainly the mid-Summer festival which 221
follows on St. John's Eve (June 23rd) still keeps its hold, for 796
then fires will be seen blazing on hilltops in almost every Irish

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372 county. Originally they were intended, it is thought, to keep
796 the sun, now about to decline, on its course, but they also
221 played a part in the blessing of crops and animals. In Donegal until lately a burning turf was flung into each patch of growing corn. These and the other relics recorded are of course, not peculiar to Ireland: they are part of the common heritage of the ancient civilization of Eurasia. There is evidence that this festival was important also in fishing communities. The inhabitants of the Galway Claddagh, for instance, marched through the town in procession on St. John's Eve, "gaily dressed and miming, to the accompaniment of music; they collected money for merrymaking from the townspeople, and spent the evening dancing, drinking, and lighting bonfires in their own quarters."

796 The Lammas festival is nowadays particularly associated
221 with fairs, and the first of August, is referred to in Gaelic as "Lewy's Fair." But other traces of old custom survive. My colleague Dr. O'Brien tells me that in mid-Down, on the first Sunday in August, crowds of countryfolk assemble, accompanied by fiddlers, at the great prehistoric hill-top cairn on Slieve Croob. The "Criocan Thorn," in the heart of Slieve Bloom, is the scene of similar assemblies on the last Sunday in July. Here they dance to the pipes, and bilberries are eaten: the day is called "Fraochán (bilberry) Sunday."

So the year goes on its course to the culminating festival of All Hallows. We have touched on one of its former functions, the reunion of the family after the summer booleying, in Chapter 6. It is an occasion of reunion still: all Irish
[574] folk like to be at home on this date, which is in some ways the most significant of the year, for it corresponds with what was once the New Year. Fires were lighted to mark the end of the
[372] period of growth and to herald the new year. (In England the ceremonies have become assimilated to the Guy Fawkes celebrations on November 5th). As at Beltane, the Halloween fire used long ago to supply light to rekindle the domestic fire, which now serves as a substitute in the many games of divination played by the young at this time. Hazel-nuts, apples and other fruits of the autumn take an important place

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in the combined pastimes of feasting and foretelling the future, 796
and cabbages figure in many an old game, for they are of 221
ancient lineage: the potato, barely three centuries introduced, has not displaced them in traditional ceremony. It is the young folks' day. Many of the games played turn upon the theme of identifying the future husband, and we shall see in the following chapters that match-making and marriage were among the functions of the great festivals, closely linked up with the magic of the earth's increase and the prosperity of crops and animals.

In parts of Ireland curious traditions attach to St. Martin's Eve (November 10th) and the feast on the following day. A sheep or a fowl is ceremonially killed and its blood [782] sprinkled in the corners of the house. No wheel must turn on the day of the festival. Finally there are the mid-winter celebrations, now marked by Christmas and New Year, which carry the year round towards St. Bridget's Eve. On St. Stephen's Day (December 26th) the hunting of the wren was formerly an occasion for general revel: it is now little more than a children's game.

We must conclude this chapter with some suggestions, 443
necessarily brief and tentative, as to the importance of these 527
seasonal gatherings in the social and commercial life of peasant Ireland. From very early times the major ritual assemblies of the year provided opportunity for exchange of goods, of livestock and of news, and for the maintenance of folk tradition and bardic skill. In ancient Ireland it is recorded that there were two kinds of assemblies, the "aonach" for pleasure and the "aireacht" for business, but it seems probable that, like the great fairs of recent times, they served both purposes. It is suggestive of the ritual and religious element in the old assemblies that they generally met upon hill-tops—often the sites of prehistoric burials—and that they took place at the fixed times marking the beginning of the Celtic seasons. May and November remain the favourite periods for country fairs, and the hiring fairs were always held at these times. A century ago the February and August fairs were also of considerable importance. The Old Lammas Fair

231 is said to be due to the expense of im-
porting feedstuffs. Donkeys and Con-
[492] nemara ponies are kept as draft ani-
mals, and almost everything is conveyed
in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was
made in 1907 by a local carpenter from
one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required,
including lobster pots, fishing nets, fur-
niture, doors, windows, and hand bar-
rows, which consist of two shafts joined
by slats and a single wheel in the rear,
all of wood.

Digging and manuring of the land
221 begins in late February, and seaweed is
brought from the shore as needed. The
potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's
Day (March 17); oats, two to three
weeks later; barley and mangolds at the
end of April or in May. Most calves
are born from March to May. In dry
years peat is cut from May onwards,
laid out to dry, and eventually stacked
in ricks six feet high secured by large
stones, or placed against a stone wall.
Apart from routine work, there is little
to do until the hay harvest, generally in
August or September, though sometimes
a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with
the hope of a second crop in the autumn.
Oats and barley are harvested in Sep-
tember, after which the main potato
digging takes place, though some are
dug earlier for the household. From
October to late February, there is little
to do except tend the stock, though
some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under gov-
ernment schemes. Few farmers make
the ricks of peat beside their houses so
commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch
it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major
aim of the Congested Districts Board,
and from the eighteen-nineties to the

[p.207(A)]

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the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

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III

BALLY AND BOOLEY

BAILE (bally) is the Gaelic word for the home-place or townland,[1] Ireland's smallest administrative unit; buaile (booley) the name of the summer milking-place or shieling where in times past the flocks and their tenders spent the summer months. I believe that seasonal nomadism (transhumance) between bally and booley is an important and neglected aspect of Irish social history, and one which goes far to explain many features of traditional life. It is significant that the Irish word for a boy (buachaill) originally meant a herdsman. The charge of nomadism, using the word in its worst connotation, which English writers made against the Irish, finds some justification in the prevalence of a pastoral economy which was, in fact, more comparable to that of the Swiss peasants or the Norwegian milk-girls. Wherever transhumance is or has been practised, it is associated with difficult environments and marginal conditions, where it has provided opportunities for escape from authority and served as a means of preserving and transmitting ancient traditions. This is well illustrated in the example of the Carpathian shepherds of Roumania.

It is clear from the Irish laws and from the findings of archaeology that farming practice had permitted some degree of permanent settlement long before the dawn of the Middle Ages, probably by early Celtic times. Of all the administrative units

[1] I have discussed the townland unit in my *Mourne Country*, Ch. 11. My colleague Mr. J. B. Arthurs thinks that the word *baile* may be a very old pre-Goidelic word, and that where 'ballys' are numerous the indigenous peoples had been left mainly undisturbed by Goidelic expansion.

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evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean, even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat. Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable. Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter. And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at that season, when food for livestock is scarce.

Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen

[1]Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 349.

[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.

[3]ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.

[4]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.

[5]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

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tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year!'[1] Sea wrack and shell sand were carted up to thirty miles inland from the coast.[2] In the absence of permanent fences the majority of the cattle must be moved away during the summer and those remaining carefully herded or tethered on the outfield, or put in temporary enclosures to manure that part of the outfield which was due for cultivation.[3] In its origins and full development the rundale system depended on the movement of most of the livestock to summer booleys situated some distance away. Here the widely distributed uplands and boglands played their part in the traditional economy. Although late survivals of the booleying system are hard to find, little of it managing to outlive the crisis of the Great Famine, we are beginning to track down its history and significance. The Irish texts are as disappointing and vague as they are in many matters touching the common people, but folk-memory comes to our aid. There are stories, and place-name evidence, from most parts of the country, and regional variants of the practice are being studied and mapped.[4]

We give first some quotations from the few discerning observers who drew attention to the practice. Edmund Spenser's enlightened spirit of inquiry is shown in his remark: 'Have you ever heard what was the occasion and first beginning of this custom? for it is good to know the same.' He writes, in 1595, 'There is one use amongst them, to keep their cattle and to live themselves the most part of the year in boolies, pasturing upon the mountain and waste wild places.'[5] His objections to the system, however, reveal his Englishry: the booleys hid outlaws and loose people, and the wandering life made the Irish barbarous. The following brief reference comes from O'Flaherty's famous account of West Connacht: 'In summertime they drive their cattle to the mountains, where such as look to the cattle live in small cabins for that season.'[6] In the eighteenth

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country* (1951), 141.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 131.
[4]J. M. Graham, 'Transhumance in Ireland', in *The Advancement of Science*, 37 (1953), 74–9.
[5]Quoted in H. Morley, *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James I* (1890), 67.
[6]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 17.

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century we find a description from Ulster: 'In the bosom of the Mourne Mountains there is a place called the Deers' Meadow to which great numbers of poor people resort in the summer months to graze their cattle. They bring with them their wives, children and little wretched furniture, erect huts, and there live . . . and often cut their turf.'[1] A century later a fuller account of a more complicated transhumance, reminiscent of the Norwegian seaboard, comes from Donegal: 'It often happens that a man has three dwellings—one in the mountains, another upon the shore, and the third upon an island, he and his family flitting from one to another of these habitations . . . This change usually takes place upon a fixed day, the junior branches of the family generally perform the land journey on the top of the household goods with which the pony may often be seen so loaded, and at the same time so obscured, that little more than the head can be observed; and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected et cetera . . . creep along the roads.'[2] The author goes on to comment on the restrictions imposed on the comfort and possessions of the peasants by their 'Arab mode of life'. In Achill Island too the movements were complicated, involving the entire population which, having moved to the summer pastures and sowed their corn, returned to the permanent coastal village for the high summer to fish and went back to gather the harvest at the booley in the autumn.[3]

221 ● 234

For the most part we are dependent on folk tradition for details of booleying. The Ordnance Survey Letters written in the 1830s contain valuable material from Counties Antrim and Londonderry, and the following extract relates to the parish of Dunaghy: 'Some of the very old men of the country recollect seeing the boliehouses inhabited. They were built of sods upon a foundation of earth and stones and were thatched with heath. Many of the poorer sort lived here in summer grazing the cattle upon land that nobody appears to have claimed and supporting themselves upon their milk and blood which they took from

[342] [262] [511]

[1]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 125.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.
[3]An account by Sir William Wilde, written in 1836, is contained in Wood-Martin, *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (1888), 238.

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221 them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they
234 are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

[262] In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their
[511] cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is
[804] known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the
[361] booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted
[342] so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily
342 recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rec-
361 tangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

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XII

HARVEST

THANKS to the necessity of 'winning' (seasoning) hay and 241
corn in the fields before the crops are carried home, harvest 221
time drags on from late summer to the edge of winter, and the
word 'harvest' as we have seen is a synonym for autumn. In [805]
this pastoral Irish country the hay harvest is nowadays of vital
importance in farm economy, yet I cannot find any evidence
that hay played a significant part in the traditional Gaelic
system of farming. It is the sickle, not the scythe, which
figures in folk-lore and in place-names, and the scythe seems to [412]
be a relative newcomer in most parts of the country. It requires
a stone-free sward which would be hard to seek on hill farms.
The business of hay-making was, I believe, of little importance
until the economic changes of the agrarian revolution and the
introduction of rotation grass. In the North the date of the first
hay-cutting is fixed by a celebrated but relatively new festival,
the Orangeman's day on the 12th of July. After hay comes flax,
which is pulled from late July to mid-August, followed by wheat
and barley in the areas where they are grown, by the corn
harvest in September and the potato-lifting in October. In bad
years hay may still be uncut in late August, the mountain corn
is green even at the end of September, and late-cut corn some-
times stays stacked in the fields up to Christmas—indeed there
are records of the grain being reaped after Christmas[1]—but
traditionally all harvest work was completed by All-Hallows.

In Scandinavia it has been claimed that hay-making began in 246
pre-historic times as a result of the climatic deterioration which
took place during the last millennium B.C. In Ireland with its

[1]For example in 1817. J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 25.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XIX

FIXED FESTIVALS

THE great fairs, patterns and pilgrimages were attended by people who travelled considerable distances and included strange folk from the outside world, 'beyond the mountain men'. It was partly for this reason that they earned a reputation for lawlessness, especially where 'the gatherings' had outlived their original purpose and their real business had become subordinate to pleasure. A Nottingham Goose Fair or a Marlborough Mop Fair may still be conducted with propriety, but in Ireland they would probably have become Donnybrooks. Having little opportunity for regular social contacts as compared with the villagers of the ploughlands, a pastoral people makes the most of the periodic pauses in the cycle of the seasons.

For climatic reasons these great gatherings have been largely confined to the summer half-year between May and November. The winter festivals have been more local, involving the family and the townland rather than rival groups from different parishes and baronies. The feast days of both St. Briget and St. Patrick fall in early spring and their associations are more intimate and have more local colour than those of the saints of high summer such as St. John the Baptist. But the entire round of the year is liberally sprinkled with days of festival, and if we begin with St. Briget it is not merely because she was Irish-born but because her feast marks the beginning of the pastoral year. The blessed Bridie was a cowherd and is therefore associated with cattle and with such flowers as the dandelion—the Plant of Bride—yielding a milky juice which was believed to nourish the young lambs in spring. St. Briget's Feast was very popular and many superstitious practices, more or less

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit
[264] gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

• 221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

• 221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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246
133
333
291

Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted. 246 221

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a "reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder. 246 [293] [461] [343]

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kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [231] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [226] eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [311] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [654] fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [241] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the [231] subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 • land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

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221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. [232] These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were [224] low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [641]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [894]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

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175 796 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes, while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
• 221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility. The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[233] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960). Inis Beag

538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [574] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semicircle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

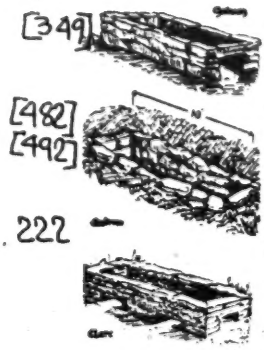
538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

Fig. 100.
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.



Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222

cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

[413]
[244]

Fig. 102.

[439]

231
222
262

Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

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[439]

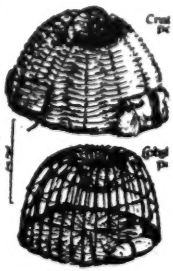


Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

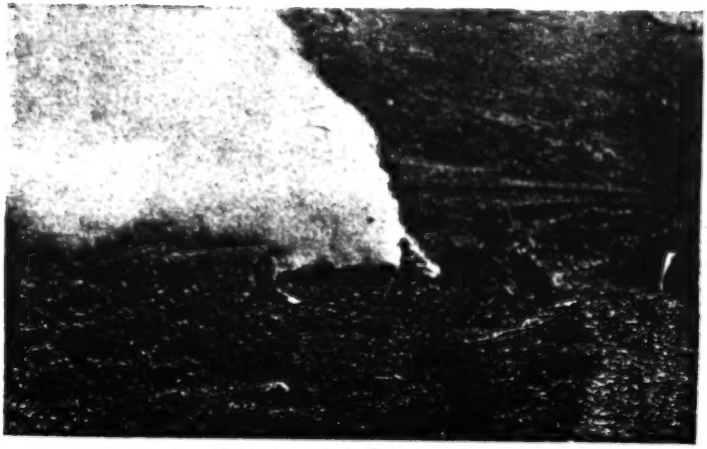
Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE II

222
133

Kelp gatherers near Fair Head, Co. Antrim.



222
387

Kelp-burning, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 160]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

301 and others were ceremonial; some may be no more than simple
524 pastimes prompted by fancy. Rush baskets were in fact made
until recently in some of the Hebridean islands for carrying the
285 fishermen's bait and for holding fish. Baskets of birch twigs, dock stems, ragwort and thistles have also been recorded, and it should be recalled that several examples of grass, sedge, and even moss, made in a similar cross-twisted technique have been recorded from Bronze Age burials in Scotland. The cone-shaped hat of rushes or straw made by children (Fig. 86) recalls in shape at least the traditional headdress of the leprechauns, and it may be noticed that tall steeple hats and helmets seem to have been popular among the Irish down to the seventeenth century.[1] In Co. Kerry the rush hats are worn in mock fights and seem to be regarded as helmets.

Of all these rush toys, none is stranger than the butterfly
524 cage (Fig. 70) which is deftly made by bending long rushes,
● 222 held upright between the fingers, over others placed transversely. One side of the cage may be left open and a dock leaf inserted as a door. The ends of the rushes are bound together to make a handle. This pastoral plaything can be paralleled in many parts of the world: in the cages in which Spanish shepherd boys carry insects, in the little baskets of dried grass which the Indian herd children make for grasshoppers, in the locust traps which Greek boys, Theocritus tells us, used to weave out of asphodel stalks, and even among the nomads of the Gobi Desert, where, when the cicada begins to call in the great heat, 'every child cuts the desert grass to make a tiny cage to hold one of the fascinating tree-hoppers . . . The Gobi baby's rattle, too, is a hollow ball of twisted grass enclosing a large bead.'[2] The Irish rush rattle is provided with two hazel nuts. Some of the leaves and bracelets are plaited with four, six, nine, or even twelve strands, and a nine strand plait is also seen in one variety of three-cornered Briget's Cross (Fig. 85, 3; Pl. 13, 7).

The conical straw masks and the capes worn by strawboys
524 (Chapter XX, Fig. 88) stripped of their gay ribbons, have been
285 compared with the straw dresses of peasants in Spain or China,
292 and, no doubt, they had their practical prototypes in Ireland.

[1] H. F. McClintock, *Old Irish and Highland Dress*, 88.
[2] M. Cable and F. French, *The Gobi Desert*, 100.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 is worth noticing that symbols in the form of a swastika, but
789 including also circles, pentagrams and horses, were formerly cut as protective devices in the beams of barns in Scandinavia. Some of the designs are reminiscent of the art of the Bronze Age.

243 An Irish verse giving the four essentials of a good thrashing, collected in Co. Armagh, runs in translation:

[539]

A hand-staff of holly,
A souple of hazel,
A single sheaf,
And a clean floor.

This is where the besom of heather or bent comes in: it is still preferred to the sweeping-broom for a clay floor or to get into the joins of boards or cobbles. Thrashing was a daily job, carried out on well-run farms night and morning before the cattle were fed. It was held that the cattle throve best on freshly thrashed oats, and the storage of grain would anyhow have been difficult where there were no barns.[1] For this reason, too, the level 'street' in front of the house, or even the public road was often the most suitable floor available. The thrashing was usually done on a strong linen sheet. Publicity as well as a steady echoing beat seem to have been the desired aims. Every-
[555] where prestige has attached to a noisy thrashing, and partly no doubt for self-aggrandisement a solitary thrasher would beat with his feet to make the noise of two. Everywhere too the
[533] sound of the flail has been turned into jingles and rustic rhymes. They did not accompany the work itself because it was too noisy and too exhausting to allow talking or singing. The flails' beaters made their own merry music; was it, one wonders, originally intended to drive away evil spirits from the precious food supply?

● 222 In this chapter we have confined ourselves to some of the
824 things that were made at home out of materials that lay to hand. To describe the utilization of all the lesser plants that have

[343] [1]Mr. A. T. Lucas, however, has described traditional outdoor granaries, now restricted to west Cork, constructed of thick straw ropes, which when completed resemble round stacks (*Gwerin*, I (1956), 2–20). Mr. V. B. Proudfoot calls my attention to the similar 'corn bykes' of Caithness (*P.S.A.S.* (1932), 136–7).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

figured in the economy of the farm or in medicinal and magical lore would be an almost endless task. One recalls that a group of Californian Indians practising a food-gathering economy is said to have made use of 176 species of wild plants for satisfying almost all their needs. A few examples of the survival of a collecting culture in Ireland may be given, taken from various sources such as Wood-Martin's pioneer work, but also from folk-memory. From the roots of ferns were extracted oils used in weaving, from those of the water lily, a cherished red dye, a substance for tanning from tormentil roots, and ink from the roots of flags (saggins). Bracken and wood ash were kept for making soap, and the ashes of thistles were the perquisite of the herdsmen. Large lake rushes provided materials for caulking boats and churns, and phragmites stems for winding yarn in the shuttle. Lady's bedstraw besides being rubbed on bee-skeps to attract a swarm, produced both dye and rennet. For cures we have the carrageen or Irish moss as well as the moss growing on crosses and other special stones, and a great number of flowers and herbs. Yarrow, in Irish, is called 'the herb of the seven cures'. But the sovereign remedy was the essence of all wild flowers contained in what was euphemistically known as 'all-flower water', i.e., cow's urine.[1] We shall return to these topics in Chapter XXI.

222 824 [278] [237]

[1]W. G. Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 183.

Note. Mr. A. T. Lucas has recently published accounts of hurling balls made of cowhair (see *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 57, 99–104; 59, 78–81). [526] [237]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XVI

WRACK AND WRECK

000 NO part of Ireland is more than sixty miles from the sea and its most populous districts have for ages been strung along the shore. This is as true today for Co. Donegal as it is for Co. Dublin. Yet we think of the seashore as the most natural part of our scenic heritage, the zone least affected by the hand of man which, inland, has wrought massive changes and turned forests into bogs and farmlands. True the great headlands must have presented to ancient man much the same majestic outlines as we admire today, but the lowlying stretches of coast, unstable in the face of erosion and deposition, have been considerably modified also by human interference. Deep in the ancient beach deposits and layer upon layer in the sand-hills where we picnic and play lie the relics of ancient shore dwellers. It was here of necessity that man found his first foothold on the island, to it he has clung and to it inlanders have returned to satisfy a variety of needs. Here by the shore man has gathered cockles and mussels, dug for bait and reaped the harvests of wreck and wrack, here he has built weirs and traps for fish, slips and shelters for boats, racks for drying nets and kilns for burning seaweed. Here too he was wont to hold festival with rites and games in seasonal gatherings long before port cities blocked the estuaries and holiday crowds thronged the open beaches. Easter and Harvest were the old times of festival, when the moon was full and the tides ran low.

● 222 231 A teeming population of shellfish was the shore's first attraction, a steady supply of food supplemented at the nesting season by seabirds and their eggs and in summer by the anadromous fish seeking fresh water. In hard winters and late

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

springs when fodder was scarce cattle, sheep and horses found 222
edible seaweed on the shore. Scottish planters in Co. Down 231
found that their sheep 'kept fat and wholesome all winter and spring by feeding on the oare.'[1] This is nowadays one of nature's neglected resources partly, no doubt, owing to enclosure and the loss of grazing rights. It has been claimed as the result of experiments that the feeding value of *Ascophyllum nodosum* (knob wrack), which grows towards high tide mark, is almost equal to that of meadow hay. Certain species of seaweed are still, 222
however, gathered for human consumption—carrageen or Irish 262
moss (*Chondrus crispus*) sloke or laver (*Porphyra*), dulse (*Rhodymenia*) and dulaman (probably chanelled weed)—whether as medicine or 'kitchen', that is a tasty morsel to be chewed between meals, or boiled to be eaten with potatoes. In lean times the kitchen might become the staple, and a writer in the 1830's stated that when the potatoes gave out 'hundreds of the people may be seen going to the seaside to gather dulaman.'[2] Carrageen, besides being made into a jelly possessing many virtues, was used as a thickener for milk.

The most profitable way of exploiting seaweed down to 222
recent times was for the burning of kelp, which became a considerable business among shore-dwellers in the eighteenth century as the growth of industry stimulated the production of soap, bleaching materials and glass: more recently kelp was chiefly in demand for the preparation of iodine. But there are dimly remembered ways of utilizing seaweed ashes in the home which would make kelp-burning a traditional occupation. In the Western Isles of Scotland kelp-burning is said to have been introduced from Ireland about 1735, but there too it must have been an ancient custom, for Martin Martin tells us at the end of the seventeenth century that seals, seafowl and fish were [251]
preserved in 'the ashes of burnt seaware'.[3] (Cheese, we learn, was preserved in the same way, or 'lapped in tang'). Kelp was made by burning the thick stems of tangle (*Laminaria*) or other coarse weeds—to which, as well as to the ashes, the name kelp is applied—which are thrown up in the winter storms or

[1]W. Montgomery, *Description of Ardes Barony* (1683), 139.
[2]J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 50.
[3]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 135, 159.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

● 222 cut at low tide. The weeds were dried on low stone walls and ricked and thatched until ready for the kiln on summer days. Rain rots the weeds, so that in wet weather the heavy kelp had to be shaken and turned repeatedly until it could be safely ricked. The half obliterated ruins of drying-walls and kilns made of sea-boulders can be seen on stormy beaches all around the coast (Fig. 73). In the early decades of the century the

[417]

[413]

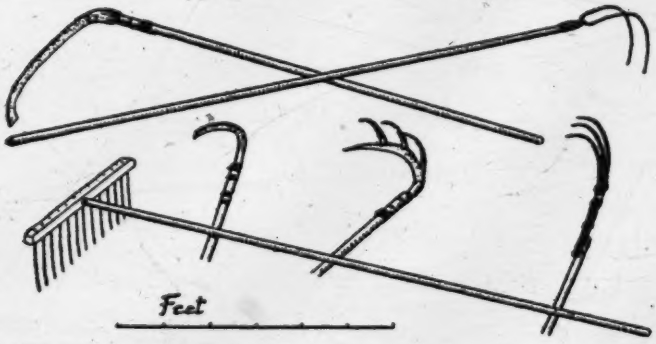


FIG. 73. Kelp harvest. Kelp kiln and stack. Co. Galway. Hooks, knives and drags, west and south coasts (See Pl. 11).

dense oily smoke from the kilns drifting far inland was a familiar sight, each kiln burning for many hours and consuming several tons of weed, which was fed in a little at a time. It is said that 60 tons of weed are required to provide 1 ton of kelp, and the work was both arduous and filthy. If the supply of drift-weed failed the heavy tangles were laboriously dragged ashore or
[413] cut with knives mounted on handles up to twenty feet long to reach the best weeds, free of sand, growing in deep water. A

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

combined knife and drag found in Connacht has three heavy hooks attached to a strong sickle-shaped blade mounted on a 12-ft. pole (Fig. 73). Powerful long-handled scythes and great hand-rakes with teeth a foot long were used on the south coast. In Donegal the men would wield their long knives from curraghs while the women dragged the weed ashore. 222 413

In the Rosses of west Donegal around 1750 the rents were paid in kelp: any surplus was bartered for 'the two luxuries, spirits and tobacco, enjoyed by men and women alike.'[1] For the lesser weeds growing in shallow water ordinary sickles were employed when the tide was low, but these species made inferior kelp. Yet in some areas, for example Strangford Lough, stones were planted on the shore to grow wrack for kelp burning: Arthur Young commented on this practice in 1776.[2] Old seaweed beds may be seen also in Lough Swilly, Clew Bay, Achill Sound and probably elsewhere. 222 [427] [437]

Today the most remarkable area of cultivated weed is near the mouth of Carlingford Lough in County Down, where at low tide a wide stretch of mud and sand is exposed in Mill Bay. It is grown solely to supply fertilizer for the potato crop. Wrack rights are mentioned in grants of land in County Down as far back as 1506, but the earliest reference I have found to the cultivated weed in Carlingford Lough is in a guidebook of 1846. As we have seen, however, Arthur Young refers to the growing of wrack for kelp-burning in Strangford Lough, and since the best species for kelp grow in deeper water the planting of seaweed beds is not likely to have originated with the kelp industry. Through the second half of last century some 1,100 beds, covering well over a square mile in area, were maintained in Mill Bay, and it was not until the depression between the two world wars that they began to be neglected. Today the use of wrack has almost entirely given way to artificial fertilizers, with a great easement of labour but a loss of annually renewed organic matter in the soil. The wrackbeds, or 'plans', are half-acre rectangles set with rows of boulders a foot or so in diameter, but many beds are subdivided into small 'cuts' for sub-letting, and the Estate Map showing the beds has the 222 387 423

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.
[2] A. Young, *Tour*, 1, 194.

222 minutely fragmented appearance of land held in rundale. Rights
387 of access, by narrow lanes between the beds, were often dis-
423 puted, and there were occasions for fights when as many as a
[578] hundred carts from forty townlands might converge on Mill Bay
at low tide. I first heard of the seaweed beds from an Air Force pilot who brought me air photographs of what he thought was submerged farmland: the little rectangular fields of Mourne seemed to march out beneath the sea.[1] In fact they were necessary adjuncts to the arable land, and the rents of up to twenty pounds an acre were often higher than those paid for the fields of coarse sand and gravel which the wrack enriched. An auctioneer told me he had sold a wrackbed of one Irish acre for
[435] £145 not many years ago. Nearly all of the several hundred farmers who had wrack rights here held two or three beds, and each man's plans were scattered so that he had different kinds of weed growing on them: 'knob wrack' close inshore, then 'bladder wrack' and farther out still the 'lazy wrack' whose fronds are submerged at high water even at neaps and which therefore grows faster than the other species.

222 The crop was harvested with knives and sickles between March and June, the bare-footed reapers at the same time lifting, turning and re-setting the heavy boulders which tend to get buried in the sand. Carts too are liable to sink, and when the going is too soft the weed is rafted ashore. It is allowed to float on the incoming tide and a boat dragging a rope pulls the
[501] load together and tows it ashore. Very large rafts, secured by a rope of seaweed, used to be floated ashore on the tide in Mayo. Patrick Knight, describing Ballycroy about 1830, observed that the steersman, armed with a pole, might be seen 'sitting on the heap, roasting his potatoes and shellfish'.[2]

222 The great bulk of the wrack taken all round the coast for
423 manure was driftweed thrown up during storms, but the supply was often supplemented by cutting or pulling weed from the rocks, and in some places there were complicated methods of regulating and distributing the harvest. On a stretch of coast familiar to me in south Down one can pick out strips running out into the sea, demarcated by marked boulders. They were

[1] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 15.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 99.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

formerly allotted to tenants in proportion to the acreages of 222 423
their farm holdings. The weed had to be carried away among the slippery boulders in back-creels and hand-barrows and stacked on the beach ready for the carts and creel-asses. The driftweed cast up by the storms of winter was more accessible but its division gave rise to endless disputes and was often regulated by careful procedure and the casting of lots, though some beaches were subdivided by standing stones. In Donegal I was told how at low tide, by the light of lanterns, men would dash into the sea up to their necks to drag out the floating weed. It is an interesting example of manorial privilege that on one beach, below the Norman castle at Greencastle, County Down, all the wrack blown in after 17th March goes to the farm which occupies the ruined castle. Every little bay where the weed collects has its wrack road leading down (Fig. 4), and fields near the shore may have a seaweed gate giving direct access. From Christmas onwards a careful watch was kept on the weather, and a spirit of excitement spread inland from the 222
shore as the wind rose. Every bay has its own particular wind, [821]
blowing from 'the right art', for a good yield of wrack. (For kelp, however, an offshore wind was needed, because it is the returning undertow which brings the deeper weeds ashore). There are many accounts of the extraordinary zeal of the wrack 222
gatherers and their feats of endurance. Even English visitors 461
were forced to admit that 'it would be impossible to witness a scene of greater industry than was being enacted by these lazy Irish'.[1]

As on other occasions when men left their lonely farms and gathered together there was much merry-making and noisy recollection of past wrack harvests. One cannot doubt that the harvest of the fields, its 'luck' as well as its bounty, was felt to depend on success in this first step in the farming year. The desire to be first and the intense rivalry were prompted by motives stronger than the wish for material gain. In Scotland one reads of the great anxiety that was shown to secure the first load of wrack on New Year's Day, and on that day a portion of seaweed was laid at the doors of the farmstead and in each of the fields.[2] In Jersey the *vraic* (wrack) harvest is

[1] J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught*, 54.
[2] M. Banks, *British Calendar Customs: Scotland*, 2, 97.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222 461 described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful [482] on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the 226 sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland [492] and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed [241] lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable [517] gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters, [462] when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2]T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[4]A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of 225 seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes in- [481] volving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed. The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with [292] charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The [251] meat was salted down.

Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now 226 neglected and even despised, though there are commercial [228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he [481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular, [227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned [578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

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[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

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222 674 of the common people and have not been caught in the net of written records, it is still harder to throw light on some of the darker aspects of shore life. Both smuggling and wrecking have almost everywhere at one time or another been regarded as legitimate methods of obtaining food and acquiring goods from the sea. A dread harvest from ships sunk by enemy action was reaped with seeming callousness during two world wars by coastal dwellers who would risk their own lives in the process. Driftwood has always been an acceptable gift, and many a fisherman's cabin is roofed with ship's timbers and its fittings augmented with ship's furniture. Nearly all these varied shore 222 476 activities demand a measure of co-operation, and one finds that communal schemes of one kind and another and old ways and beliefs live long among folk who have to deal with the sea. Collective effort is necessary in hauling boats and handling nets, and while there are traditional rivalries between different coastal settlements each one tends to be a closely knit com- [186] munity displaying a strong spirit of independence. They were often able to resist the repressive hand of landlords and they still remain suspicious of the efforts of government bodies to improve their lot.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
• 222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

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as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers.

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained.

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden.

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were poor and there were no wheeled vehicles, or where there 283
was no horse for a slide-car, the burden rope was all that was [482]
required to carry home the harvest; distances were mercifully
small on the tiny farms. Rushes for rope making were cut when
fully grown, beetled with a mell and broken by hand to rid
them of pith. They were then spread to dry and afterwards tied in
bundles ready to be fashioned into ropes when wintry weather
brought indoor leisure. Ropes made of cowhair as well as 283
horsehair, sometimes mixed with seasoned sedge (sprit) once 237
found many uses about the farm. Horsehair fishing lines and 223
snares for seabirds are described elsewhere, but we may refer
here to snares for small birds which in south Armagh, for
example, are laid on the grass in hard wintry weather over a
scattering of grain or breadcrumbs. Inside the frame of a pegged
string or a bent sally rod are tied a dozen or more snares made
of single or double horsehair. By this means blackbirds, thrushes,
sparrows, and finches are caught by the feet, nowadays for
sport but, no doubt, once as a welcome addition to the food
supply. Similar horsehair snares for catching small birds are
known from England and, further afield, from the Sudan. Reins
of horsehair are said to have been common quite recently in
Donegal, and I would hazard a guess that horsehair nets, such
as were made in Harris (Martin Martin tells us) for catching
seals, were formerly made there.

Mats and baskets of many kinds were fashioned from straw 285
and other materials such as marram grass. This tough grass is [314]
harvested in places all around the coast and put to many uses,
including thatching. It is cut below the surface of the sandy
dunes, and in Donegal I have seen a toothed sickle used for the
purpose. The techniques of constructing mats and baskets of
these materials are closely related and seem to fall into three
classes, sown plaits, built-up plaits and coiled work. Coiled
basketry is best represented in the once universal bee-skep, in
the seed-baskets of the south, the seats and armchairs of the
west, and in the food-carrying baskets of the Aran Islands
(Fig. 69). It is an interesting detail of their construction that a
bone pin is used to insert the ties, which are usually made of
split briar. The conical hens' nests hung on pegs on the kitchen
walls (Fig. 16) are also constructed in a coil technique, but

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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developed from wicker constructions which, like the stone weirs, were once built by shore dwellers for their own needs. But weirs were not the only structure built in tidal waters. The inquiring visitor will observe along many stretches of coast straight lines of stones running out to sea which are the remains of little piers alongside which small boats could lie. Back of them beyond the reach of the tide there may be the ruins of a boat shelter which might never have been more than a rectangular pen of stone walls or earth banks. Such pens are still used to protect the curraghs of the west coast from the wind which is their worst enemy.[1] The vessels are in addition weighted down with stones (Fig. 75), and to this end the gunwales often project at the rear of the curraghs to give purchase for the boulders (Fig. 78).

On the lonely and now abandoned island of St. Kilda the portion which a woman took to her husband on marriage is said to have been 'a pound of horsehair to make a gin to catch fowls'.[2] Martin Martin in his account of the island also tells us that the 200 inhabitants yearly killed and preserved above 20,000 birds, and in addition prodigious numbers of seabirds' eggs were consumed. The killing of seabirds and the taking of eggs for export to England during the worst period of food shortage in the second world war brought about a temporary revival of old skills on many parts of the Irish coast. Down to times still remembered fowling was a seasonal activity on most of the islands where seabirds assemble to nest. Birds of the auk family were caught in horsehair 'dulls' (snares) pegged to the ground. For other birds such as rock pigeons the snares were baited. July was the busy month, and the birds not eaten in this 'hungry month' were salted down for the winter. On Rathlin Island the cliffs and sea-slopes were apportioned in strips and demarcated by spikes driven into the rocks. It is remembered that single men in search of eggs would let themselves alone down ropes attached to iron pins in the cliff edge. Traditions of other ways of catching the birds have been lost but one may be fairly sure that the various methods described by Martin Martin and more recently by Kenneth Williamson for the

[1] S. Piggott, *Antiquity*, 28 (1954), 19–24.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 317.

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221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. [232] These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they [224] also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XVI.

THE SEASHORE.

The seashore, where the first Irishmen picked up a living 22
some thousands of years ago, still plays a significant role in the islands and around the coasts and is laid under contribution for seaweed and drift weed (wrack), for sand and gravel, and for accessory supplies of food. On many an Irish strand too, seasonal festivals, horse-racing and country games have only slowly given way to holiday makers from the city. Communal rights in the seashore were jealously guarded, and one constantly comes across ancient customs that have survived in this most changeless of environments. I recall the country-
man " on the brew " (bureau ; that is, on the dole) whom I [283]
watched in County Down twisting on his bare thigh, his palm dried with a dusting of wood-ash from the hearth, the two-ply " crop " of horse-hair for his fishing line—each ply consisting of twenty-one strands taken from the tail of a white mare.
This method of twisting is found amongst almost all primitive 227
peoples, and can be paralleled, for instance, from the remote 226
Andaman Islands. His outfit for codling fishing is illustrated in Fig. 94, which shows two hair crops attached to a home-made sinker of lead—called from its shape a " frog " ; the use of horse-hair has survived in this case because it is stiffer than
gut and serves to keep the hooks from fouling each other. [237]
Rock-fishing lines in Co. Antrim are sometimes made of black horse-hair, but for the part next the hook, called the foot-line, white hair is used. Well-made lines of carefully selected hair

[Text Continues Top of P. 144—Analyst]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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226 227 are said to last a lifetime. I have seen such lines twisted between the palms of the hand and also made by spinning round a cap to which the two loose ends are pinned. In County Galway similar foot-lines are made of mixed horse and

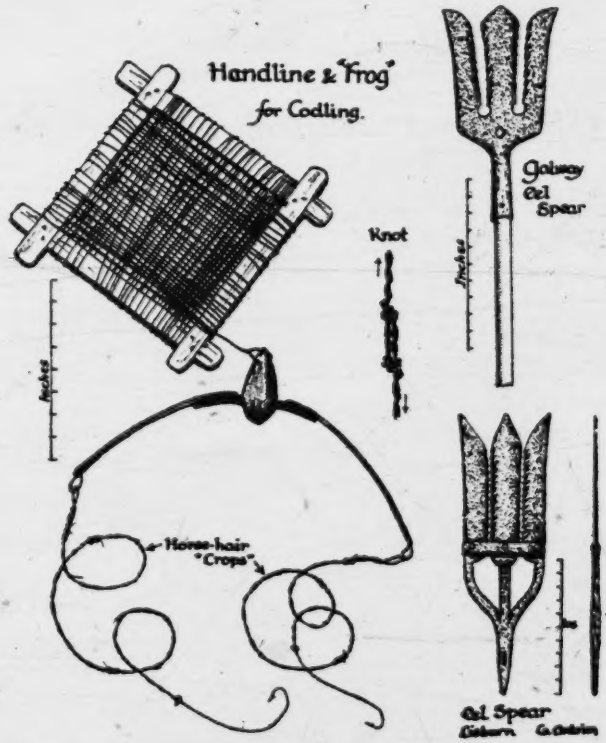

Fig. 94.

[284] cow hair. The short lengths of hair cord are tied with a special knot (Fig. 94) which is " set " with saliva. Horse-hair [827] cords were formerly used to fasten together the curragh framework in Donegal.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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226 Hazel sticks are often used as fishing rods, but the sea itself may cast up gifts in the shape of bamboo poles. In a general way each species of fish must be tempted with its appropriate bait or lure in its proper season, and when the varied traditions and fish of different stretches of coast are recalled it will be realized that a vast amount of information could be collected on this topic. The bait necessary for bottom fishing—mussels, limpets, "slaters," "buckies," crab, lug-worm and so on—is different from that used in "streaming"—young eels, small fish, or artificial lures in the form of white feathers or hair.

Then there are the different methods employed in attaching the bait, in throwing the lines or using the rod both in rock and boat fishing. In Strangford Lough, County Down, for example, the rod is plunged deep into the water from the stern of the rowing-boat, the swirl of the current helping to agitate the streaming bait. An ingenious device found on the west coast is the "protected hook" used for fishing amongst sea-weeds: to prevent the fouling of the hook a shield made of the carapace of a crab is attached to the line. The stone sinker is made from a pebble by chipping out two notches to hold the line. Nor should we fail to mention that "the best hooks in the world" were formerly made at Limerick: the name is still attached to the graded hooks one buys in seaside towns.

In the north of Ireland the fish most commonly caught from the rocks or from small boats inshore is the dark coal-fish, variously called, according to its age and size, cudden or gelpin, pickock or pickies, glashan or blockan, grey lord, [251] stanlock, black jack, and so on. Lightly salted, the split blockan may be seen drying on the thatched roofs of houses along many a stretch of coast. A close rival in popularity and abundance is the pollack or "lythe." Ling, one of our oldest foods, is still, like the salted herring which go so well [251] with potatoes, a favourite in rural Ireland. They used to be dried beside the kelp kilns down the west coast. These

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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226 larger fish, including cod and skate, are generally caught on "long lines," hung with hundreds of hooks, in deeper water. The antiquity of some such method of fishing is suggested by the discovery of cod bones with the remains of our raised beach cultures. Old fashioned devices are found in long-line fishing, too: floats of inflated dog skin ("stookies") and sinkers of grooved stone (Fig. 95) are in daily use.

[227]

Fig. 95.

804 The illustration also shows a grooved stone resembling the type well known to archæologists as grooved hammer-stones. This example was employed as a 10 lb. weight for weighing wool. I have seen similar stones kept for weighing butter and kelp.

227 The line baskets present interesting variations of shape: I illustrate (Fig. 76) examples from Co. Antrim and from Co. Galway. The long Aran basket has a raised end, while the Waterford pattern is a short shallow basket. Types of net

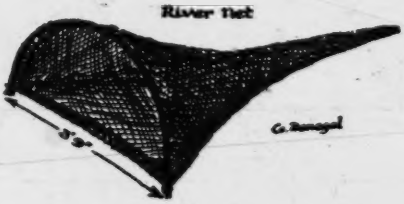

Fig. 96.

for inshore fishing, including salmon nets, differ considerably from place to place and need study. Mention should also be made of the "otter," better known from its adoption in mine-sweeping as the paravane, which is widely used for

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

317 We referred in the first paragraph to sand and gravel: the white shell sand is taken for manure and is also strewn on the kitchen floor, while beach stones and gravel find many uses as cobble stones, pebble-dashing and so on. Among other 226 by-products of the sea we must not forget fish-oil, manu- 373 factured not only as a medicine for cattle but also as an illuminant. The iron crusie lamp (Fig. 105) was not long since the chief source of light in the islands, and until half a century ago large sea-shells are said to have been employed for the purpose in Co. Kerry. The wick of the crusie was a peeled rush or a twist of cotton: because of the strong smell the lamp was hung under the chimney so that the draught carried away the fumes. The abundant sea shells are also utilized for lime on some islands, for example Tory, by burning them in a kiln made of turf.

317 228

Fig. 105.
Length 15"

Finally, we must not omit the dread harvest of the sea cast up after storms—the timber and food-stuffs and wreckage—always welcome and perhaps in olden days not uninvited. Many an islandman's cabin is roofed with couples of ships' masts, and a visit to treeless Tory or Rathlin will reveal the many uses to which drift timber is put. Mysterious objects brought by the currents from the West Indies occasionally turn up: pumice, perhaps from this source, has been found, treasured no doubt as a magic stone, in sandhill settlements of 4,000 years ago.

162 It is not to be wondered at, when we consider the ancient 226 and varied, if often toilsome and dangerous life of the Irish shores, that the coasts carry a much denser population than districts inland. It should be stressed that these various activities are carried on not as a rule by specialized fishermen but by farmers and peasants to whom the sea offers an accessory source of life and interest, and who often perpetuate the old communal schemes by taking shares in a boat and nets. Old ways die hardest by the sea; prohibitions and super- [162] stitions are rife, and fishing is one of the few occupations in which women take no active part.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

on this subject, I shall not attempt the treatment of it myself, but shall quote the opinion of the Rev. Eugene O'Growney, who has an exceptional knowledge of both people and language, and has kindly furnished me with some of his notes relating to them. He says:— "The Irish spoken in Boffin has a very poor vocabulary, as far as I heard it spoken. I must say, however, that it was not easy to get the people to speak it, and many children at first refused point blank to utter a word of Irish. In most of the Irish-speaking districts of the west, the people have preserved a number of old poetic prayers and hymns. Many of these are very beautiful, and some appear to be of great age. I was particularly interested at the time of my visit in these hymns, but was told that the only hymn in use in Boffin and Shark was the *ortha Mhuire*, or prayer of Mary. I could not find any person in Boffin who could recite it, and the only person in Shark who was supposed to have it in full was out at sea. An old man in Boffin recited for me a portion of a quaint old religious composition in English." In another place he states that the people speak neither English nor Irish well, their dialect of the language containing many corrupted English words, and at least one curious word. "I recollect that the cove in which St. Leo's well is situated is called *fuath Leo*. I take the word *fuath*, which is the usual word in Inishshark and Inisboffin for a 'cove,' to be a corruption of *uamh*, which is used by the Four Masters in the year 893 as meaning 'cave.'"[1] 19 [538]

IV. SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Every family combines fishing and farming, and has some share in a boat. The farms are small (see p. 340), about three acres and a-half under potatoes and oats, being about the average amount of tillage per family. All are held direct from the landlord, who resides on Inishbofin, there being no subletting or con-acre. The rents average about £2 per holding, but vary much according to the extent and quality of the land. 241 [226] 427

The holdings are not divided up into small fields, as in Aran, but are often insufficiently fenced, allowing the cattle to stray, which 241 423

[1] The Rev. E. A. Lavelle has, since the above was written, sent a translation of a curious old Irish litany used on both islands, both in Irish and English, which he obtained from an old man, aged 84, whose father, Peter Lavelle, fought under Nelson at Trafalgar. As the litany is in English and of great length, it is not inserted here, but it is to be hoped that the Irish form will be recorded and preserved as it may possess the linguistic value wanting in a translation.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

but a few years ago the ordinary means of lighting the houses was a rude open lamp, filled with oil extracted from the livers of fish, and having a piece of peeled rush for a wick. 373

Kelp-burning was formerly one of the industries of the islands, but of late years it declined rapidly, and is now practically extinct. As to the cause of this decay of a formerly profitable source of income, very different accounts are given, some alleging the poor quality of the weed; others that they were not fairly treated in selling; and others again that it does not pay as well as the fish-curing. 381

The fish most taken are sea-bream, glassan (a sort of pollock), mackerel, turbot, and plaice, used mostly for home consumption; cod and ling, which are cured at the fish-curing station for exportation, and oil extracted from their livers; also large quantities of crabs and lobsters, which are taken to Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, from which they are forwarded to the English market. The boat used for conveying them is of peculiar construction, and has a large salt-water tank amidships, in which the lobsters are kept alive. The lobster-pots are of the usual type. There is nothing unusual about their ordinary method of fishing, except that the Inishbofin men, as mentioned in a footnote to the account of that island in the Memoir of the Geological Survey, already alluded to, do not follow the shoals of fish around the western headland, but carry their boats across the narrow isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated. 226 439 [501] [502]

The pursuit of the "sun-fish," or basking-shark (*Selache maxima*), was formerly a source of considerable profit to the islanders, but has been almost altogether abandoned of late years owing to the decline in the price of the oil, and partly, it is said, to the loss of several lives on one occasion when a boat was charged and overturned by a wounded fish, also to the partial disappearance for some years of the sharks. 226

The season for this enterprise is from April until the end of June, and in that time large numbers of these fish were taken formerly, and some are still killed from time to time. Mr. G. H. Kinahan, to whom I am indebted for several notes relative to the condition of the islands some years ago, says:—"The sun-fish fishing was considerable in my time (1870). I have seen strings of seven and nine fish; when caught, they towed them into the harbour, cut out the liver, and left the carcass to rot, or be eaten by the pigs; the stench in the harbour was something to remember." A very full description of the fishing is given by Sir H. W. Gore-Booth in a recent article. He states that the value of the oil (from eight to twelve petroleum barrels full) obtained from the liver of one of these fish has been variously estimated

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

226 to him by old fishermen at from £30 to £100, so that the loss of this industry must have told considerably on a poor community such as this. The primitive method which he found in use on his visit to the islands he describes in full as it was explained by Michael Halloran, the 'king'[1] of Inishshark, a veteran harpooner, who had just killed his nineteenth fish a few days before.

"I had been told that these sun-fish generally took from sixteen to eighteen hours, and frequently longer, to kill; in fact, I have heard it sometimes took two days, so naturally felt considerable interest in the gear used for the purpose. The king brought with him his trusty harpoon, which, to my mind, looked a most antiquated arrangement, especially designed to cut out of a fish, instead of holding it. I could not see a whale-boat or anything like one, so inquired where the boat was, and was shown an ordinary square-sterned boat, about 16 feet in the keel, which had nailed on her starboard bow a piece of wood about 1 foot long, with three small notches, or scores, barely half an inch deep, cut in it. I found out that these notches or scores were all they had to run the line through, and that when a boat fastened a fish, it was a pulling match between our friend the shark on one hand, and sixteen men on the other, a regular case of 'pull devil, pull baker'! Such a thing as a bollard head to take a turn of the line round seems never to have entered their heads."

226 501

In addition to fishing and farming, the other occupations are fish-
463 curing at the station recently established by the landlord, Cyril Allies, Esq., J.P., who resides on the island, and personally superintends it, and the trades, represented by a boat-builder, a blacksmith, a shoemaker who imports his leather from the mainland, a tailor, who still adheres to the old method of measuring his clients without a tape, using instead a sheet of paper, on which the several lengths are recorded by "snips," or notches cut with the scissors; there is one weaver who makes use of a rather archaic form of hand-loom, four men who, on occasion, act as sawyers, extemporising a saw-pit in the nearest convenient spot by the aid of trestles, and using to mark their lines a cord blackened with the ashes of straw or shavings, and finally, a fiddler.

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[622] [1] In answer to an inquiry of mine relative to the position of king, Mr. Myles Joyce, National Teacher of Bofin, writes:—"The title of king is not hereditary in the island. There is at present a man removed something beyond his neighbours in the way of education and position, who is, *par excellence*, the king; and to whom all persons who want any information about the island or its history must apply."

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

372 The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive, except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
[435] and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222 461 described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful [482] on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

● 226 Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland [492] and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed [241] lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable [517] gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters, [462] when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2]T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[4]A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 Scallop shells were put to many uses and were often a
[415] substitute for the iron oil-pan of the open-wicked crusie.
[386] Seashells were also burnt to make lime for whitewashing the houses.

[262] In late summer the sprat come ashore in vast numbers on the west and south coasts, so that in Donegal 'they constituted the chief food of the peasantry during three or four months of the year.'[1] They were taken from the water in buckets and sieves, and the mackerel pursuing their prey close against the rocks might be caught almost as easily. In Waterford harbour there were specially erected wickerwork head weirs to take the sprat; and Dr. Went has described a wattled sprat-weir in working order in the estuary of the Blackwater.[2] Fishing from the rocks, too, is most popular in harvest time and though now little more than a pastime it once provided a reserve of food for the winter. About hay-harvest the ballan wrasse is at its best, 'when the flags (wild iris) are in bloom', they say. Known as bavin, byan, morran and by other names, it is now despised nearly everywhere, as is the coalfish which was salted and dried
[192] and which has different names in Gaelic for every stage of its growth to demonstrate its former importance and popularity. 'Glassan' oil was the luminant for the crusie lamps in Rathlin Island. On the north coast you may see anglers 'frassing' for small coalfish, that is attracting them by spitting into the water chewed potatoes or limpets. Formerly ground bait was made
[412] by pounding limpets in rock basins of the type known as 'bullauns' (Fig. 90). Occasionally you may come across a fisherman casting a feather lure for pollack with a line made wholly or in part of horsehair. One method of twisting these lines, with quills, will be described in the following chapter. For short lengths next the hook—the fine foot-lines—white hair is preferred, and I have seen it made in County Down by
[283] twisting the hair between the bare thigh and a hand dusted with wood ash, a method practised by 'primitives' in many parts of the world. Two strands of from fifteen to twenty hairs are twisted on each other. (The anglers in the Seine at Paris are also said to prefer a 'crop' made from a grey mare's tail.) To

[1] 'Kinnfaela', *The Cliff Scenery of South-Western Donegal*, 19.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *Antiquity*, 25 (1951), 32–35.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

watch rock-fishing from the great limestone cliffs of the Aran Islands is a memorable sight, the 300 foot line being flung out weighted with a large grooved stone. 226

Inshore net fishing, which will be considered in the next chapter, has probably taken the place of other methods of catching fish close to the land. In some river estuaries and across the mouths of little streams in many shallow bays curving lines of boulders are all that is left of fishing weirs in which salmon and flatfish were once trapped (Fig. 75). I first noticed an example in Belfast Lough some years ago, and later came across a seventeenth century reference to their occurrence in Strangford Lough. The 'wares and fishyards' are described as being built of loose stones which allowed the tide to flow through, and fish seeking food from the fresh water were carried over the weir at the flood to be trapped as the tide ebbed. They were then netted or speared. The weirs were said to have decayed 'since fish days were neglected',[1] but the remains of many of them can still be seen around the lough. Such 'tidal fishing engines', to judge from their world-wide distribution, are an extremely ancient fishing device. More elaborate are the V-shaped wickerwork weirs of which Dr. A. E. J. Went has made an historical study.[2] One or two are still worked but they became obsolete over a century ago when the Scotch stake net was introduced for salmon fishing, and they were later condemned as obstacles to navigation. In Waterford harbour alone no less than forty-four were destroyed. These head weirs were operated by holding a conical net below a platform which crossed an opening placed at the apex of the V. Large weirs of this kind required considerable capital to keep in repair and were owned by the privileged classes but they have no doubt

[1]E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 14 (1951), 48.

[2]A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 76 (1946), 176–94; 78 (1948), 1–4. Professor C. M. Yonge (*The Times*, 10th November 1955), in an article on the mussel industry of La Rochelle in the Bay of Biscay, attributes it to a resourceful Irishman, Patrick Walton, who is said to have been wrecked there in the year 1235. He is given credit for erecting a tidal head weir which also served as a *bouchot* or mussel bed, and for devising a net for catching sea-birds and a narrow plank-boat pushed by one leg over the soft mud. 'The French naturalist, Quatrefages, writing about 1850, reported that a direct descendant of Walton was then engaged in mussel culture and took a natural pride in the name he bore.' No doubt Patrick Walton derived some of his ingenious ideas from his native land. [177]

227 [Text continues on p. 229]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

developed from wicker constructions which, like the stone weirs, were once built by shore dwellers for their own needs. 226 ●
But weirs were not the only structure built in tidal waters. The inquiring visitor will observe along many stretches of coast straight lines of stones running out to sea which are the 504
remains of little piers alongside which small boats could lie. Back of them beyond the reach of the tide there may be the ruins of a boat shelter which might never have been more than a rectangular pen of stone walls or earth banks. Such pens are still used to protect the curraghs of the west coast from the wind which is their worst enemy.[1] The vessels are in addition weighted down with stones (Fig. 75), and to this end the gunwales often project at the rear of the curraghs to give purchase for the boulders (Fig. 78).

On the lonely and now abandoned island of St. Kilda the 223
portion which a woman took to her husband on marriage is said to have been 'a pound of horsehair to make a gin to catch fowls'.[2] [583]
Martin Martin in his account of the island also tells us that the 200 inhabitants yearly killed and preserved above 20,000 birds, and in addition prodigious numbers of seabirds' eggs were consumed. The killing of seabirds and the taking of eggs for export to England during the worst period of food shortage in the second world war brought about a temporary revival of old skills on many parts of the Irish coast. Down to times still remembered fowling was a seasonal activity on most of the islands where seabirds assemble to nest. Birds of the auk family were caught in horsehair 'dulls' (snares) pegged to the ground. For other birds such as rock pigeons the snares were baited. July was the busy month, and the birds not eaten in this 'hungry month' were salted down for the winter. On Rathlin Island the cliffs and sea-slopes were apportioned in strips and demarcated by spikes driven into the rocks. It is remembered that single men in search of eggs would let themselves alone [481]
down ropes attached to iron pins in the cliff edge. Traditions of other ways of catching the birds have been lost but one may be fairly sure that the various methods described by Martin Martin and more recently by Kenneth Williamson for the

[1] S. Piggott, *Antiquity*, 28 (1954), 19–24.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 317.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

223 Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of 225 seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes in- [481] volving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed. The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with [292] charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The [251] meat was salted down.

Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now ● 226 neglected and even despised, though there are commercial [228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he [481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular, [227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned [578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

222 674 If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [Text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 99.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XVII

BOATS AND FISHING

THE lower reaches of the River Boyne, celebrated among archaeologists as the setting of one of the most remarkable groups of chamber tombs in western Europe, have another claim on our interests as the last refuge of a venerable craft. This is perhaps the only place in Europe where the phrase 'the skin of a boat' preserves its literal meaning. The lath or wicker-work coracle is known on several of the Welsh rivers, but only in the Boyne curragh (Ir. *currach*) is the covering still made of hide. The ox-hides now used are imported: the one I examined during a recent visit to the salmon fisheries near Drogheda had been tanned by a specialist in the dressing of beaver skins. Each hide may outlast several 'baskets' or boat-frames, for these quickly rot with repeated wettings and dryings, and on the average two frames of doubled hazel wands are required each season, which lasts from 12th February to 12th August. A few other Irish rivers kept their curraghs into recent centuries—the curragh was certainly known on the Shannon and the Erne and possibly on the Bann—but on most of the inland waters dug-outs seem to have been traditional, and if we knew more about the two distributions important cultural inferences might be drawn. Dug-outs have been found, however, in nearly every part of the country, including the River Boyne.

The curragh is not likely to survive much longer and its lore should be fully recorded. Netting salmon in fresh water on all Irish rivers has been illegal since 1st January 1948, so that the curragh's last legal refuge is the tidal portion of the Boyne. But it has been long a-dying. I was told that no more would be made after the death of that fine craftsman Michael O'Brien

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

396 net. Sitting on the thwart, the boat-builder now drives in the projecting rod-ends to tighten the skin, and trims them to within an inch of the gunwale. Finally he weaves on a protecting mouth of hazel rods which he binds to the gunwale and covers, behind the thwart, with canvas to save the net from damage as it is played out.

The curragh was well adapted to the draft-net salmon fishery 501 at the Oldbridge weir on the Boyne. The following account is 226 based on notes made at Oldbridge in 1947: 'Every half hour of daylight during the season, the curragh makes its brief trip with a draft-net around the pool of water where the salmon lie below the weir. Its virtue lies in its lightness and ease of handling—though not for the novice—in the method of paddling over the bows which allows it to keep close to the banks, and especially in the shallow draught which enables it to pass right under the weir without being swept down by the under-current. The paddler kneels in the deep bows and draws the boat along with rapid strokes alternately to left and right. The net-man sits on the thwart facing backwards and plays out the net, the end of which is held by a third man on the bank. Having reached the far end of the weir the paddler races downstream and returns across the current to join the third man and close the net. The salmon are dispatched with a heavy 'priest' here called the killing-stick.' The fishermen still operate two rectangular fishtraps below the weir, one near each bank, composed of iron gratings which have probably replaced wicker traps since they are known as 'hurdles'. The salmon are taken out with a landing net. A weir has probably been worked continuously at this spot since the Middle Ages, for the monks of Mellifont Abbey operated a weir here.[1]

It comes as a shock, after seeing the little basket-curragh of 501 the Boyne, to recall that the legendary histories tell of much trafficking across the seas in splendid curraghs which carried sails. *The Voyage of Teigue* was made in a curragh constructed of forty oxhides and fitted with twenty-five thwarts.[2] Allowance must be made for picturesque exaggeration, but there is no doubt that the monks of the Irish Church went far afield in

[1]A. E. J. Went, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1953), 18–33.
[2]Standish O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica* (1892), 386.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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501 where curraghs were formerly known. But it is also character-
(171) istic of Scottish cobles and the boats of some English lakes. The inshore fishing boats of Co. Antrim also had booled oars,[1] and farther afield the single tholepin is said to typify the rowing boats of Madeira, the sardine boats of Portugal and some vessels of the Upper Nile. These often use a grommet, as do the boats of the north-east coast of England.

Sea-going curraghs are put to many uses, for inshore net
226 fishing, for setting lobster pots or long lines, for gathering kelp and for carrying freight, livestock and passengers. But the most spectacular purpose to which they have been put is for hunting the basking shark or sunfish from whose liver, before
[373] the advent of paraffin, oil for lighting was obtained. A single fish will yield from seven to ten barrels of liver. Measuring up to forty feet in length, the basking shark is one of the world's largest fish and though harmless—its diet is minute copepods—its bulk makes it a formidable adversary. These fish move down the west coast in summer, and in early May they haunt the Sunfish Bank thirty miles off Achill Island, where they come to the surface in the morning and evening. The bank is remarkable for the break of the tide on it, although it lies between seventy and ninety fathoms near the edge of 'soundings'—the continental shelf—and a heavy swell makes conditions difficult for small boats. Here and elsewhere the sunfish used to be harpooned from curraghs, but the advantage lay with decked vessels which could stand by for several days. In the early nineteenth century as many as thirty or forty fish were sometimes killed on the Sunfish Bank in a single day of fine weather. Nowadays the sharks are taken in strong nets fixed to island headlands around which they swim. They are occasionally seen off the other Irish coasts, where they cause great havoc if they get involved in the fishing nets.

Of the small open clinker-built boats of traditional type which
501 takes the place of the curragh on the north, east and south
[174] coasts, no systematic study has been made. Some of them betray their Norse inheritance in their lines or their names, for example the Wicklow skiff and the drontheim (Trondhjem) of the north coast. These boats are double-ended—unlike the cur-

[1] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 276.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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501 of the River Nure were described as 'flat narrow boats equal at both ends and propelled by paddles'.[1] Earlier, about 1645, Gerard Boate described the cots as 'things like boats, but very unshapely, being nothing but square pieces of timber made hollow.' 'They are very common throughout all Ireland . . . even upon the great rivers and loughs'.[2]

To judge from the numerous discoveries of small dug-outs at [491] river crossings their last surviving use was for ferrying purposes. They were replaced locally by flat-bottomed cots built with wide planks laid edge to edge, such as serve the eel-fishers of the River Bann. These are propelled with a pole. The punt-like cot is also the old craft of the River Shannon. A number of dug-outs are found to have been adapted for propulsion with oars, using the single thole-pin of the rowing-curragh. The large rowing boats of Lough Neagh also use the single thole-pin: to give greater leverage for the heavy oars the iron thole-pin is set out from the gunwale on an outrigger or 'bolster'. In the cots of Lough Erne the oar is worked between double thole-pins (Fig. 78). The maze of lakes which make up the Lough Erne group have yielded many ancient dug-outs of varied types, some of them spoon-shaped, others rectangular and provided with carrying lugs. Others again seem to be both boat and sledge, an alternative to the portable curragh in a land strewn with little lakes. But the strangest vessel, apparently misnamed a curragh, was a kind of raft which is said to have survived until a hundred years ago, 'composed of wreaths of bull-rushes tied upon a frame or raft made of rough branches of trees'.[3]

● 226 Methods of fishing in river and lake include not only legitimate forms of angling and netting, but many ways of killing fish which game laws and other vested interests have made illegal, but have not extinguished. The spearing of salmon, prohibited since 1714, is now left to poachers, but well into the last century it was openly practised in the city of Galway.[4] On [423] Lough Neagh yellow (feeding) eels are caught illicitly on long lines by fisherfolk whose claims to ancient rights have not been recognized by the courts.

[1] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 150.
[2] G. Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 64, 136.
[3] W. F. Wakeman, loc. cit.
[4] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 82 (1952), 110

been recognized by the courts. 'Bobbing' for eels with a ball of worms attached to a string is practised on dark stormy nights, and on the River Bann a vicious-looking eel-rake is used to jab among the river weeds. Its teeth of sharp steel, often discarded hackle-pins, are set an inch apart in the end of a long pole. Bone pins of prehistoric date recovered in quantities from the bed of the river may have been put to a similar use, and this method of catching fish, probably of ancient origin, is widely distributed. There are specimens of eel-rakes in the Danish museums (Fig. 79). A very similar eel-comb is known in China, and a herring rake, used by the native fishermen of north-western America and mounted with sharp bone teeth, was first described by Captain Cook in 1778.[1] For taking salmon, poachers in the River Barrow use a staked net fashioned into a conical trap, and trout are taken in the north of Ireland in home-made 'loop nets' large enough to bridge small streams (Fig. 80). Salmon are also 'strokehauled' with naked hooks, and gaffed when within reach of the river banks. Trout are taken not only by 'ginling' (tickling) but also with a 'dull' or horsehair noose.

Dr. Went has made a careful study of Irish fish spears and the interested reader may be referred to his paper.[2] It may be mentioned that two of the three classes of eel-spears which he describes have been recovered from crannogs of the Dark Ages: they are the barbed spears known as rock- or sun-spears, so named from the conditions which are required for the eels to be impaled, and the more common mud-spears, which are within the law and of which excellent specimens can still be seen in parts of the country. They have flat tines, notched at the sides to prevent the enmeshed eels escaping. Spears of this type are plunged blindly into the mud. Consequently they are often very large and heavy, a seven-pronged example from the River Bann weighing over nine pounds and having a handle 30 feet long. Old specimens have a circular aperture at the junction of each pair of tines which facilitated the removal of the eels. The advantage of the mud-spear, which has a much wider distribution than the primitive looking rock-spear (which is apparently

[1] *Captain Cook's Third Voyage*, Ed. C. R. Low (N.D.), 395.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 82 (1952), 109–34.

 [Text continues on 246]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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227 confined to Co. Westmeath) is that the eel was undamaged and its skin could therefore be utilized. Apart from their use as [237] thongs and flail-hangings eel-skins were worn as charms against rheumatic pains. Eel fat, too, is esteemed as a cure for rheuma- [751] tism. The third type of eel-spear is quite different in form and [757] methods of use. It is confined to Wexford Harbour and would appear to be a relic of Scandinavian influence in that half-foreign south-eastern corner of Ireland comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth. It consists of two splayed prongs between which is ingeniously mounted a single barbed prong on to which 227 the eel is guided by the outer members (Fig. 79). When the ● 226 tide covers the mudflats the fisherman lies in a punt with his head over the prow, and with a spear in each hand propels the boat until he spies an eel in the mud, when his punting pole becomes a weapon. At low tide the eel fishers wear yard-long [481] 'scooches' or mud-shoes, wooden boards turned up at the front like miniature skis. We note in passing that boards were formerly worn by both men and horses in working on soft bogs in Co. Mayo.[1]

The salmon spear or leister, being illegal, is normally a light three-pronged instrument, but large specimens weighing up to eight pounds and made after the fashion of the Westmeath eel-spears are found on the River Suir (Fig. 80). The fish were attracted at night by 'burning the river' with resinous splits of bog-fir or lumps of peat soaked in oil.

Riverine weirs of many kinds have been the privilege of religious houses and landed properties through the ages, and many examples specially designed for the capture of migratory fish, salmon and eels are maintained. There are traditions of temporary weirs of heather stems weighted down with stones, into which trout were driven to be extracted when the bundles of heather were pitched on to the bank. Gerard Boate describes the weirs in his day as consisting of 'big stones set close together from the one side of the river to the other, leaving only one hole . . . before which hole a basket being laid, they take 227 therein a great quantity of fish'.[2] 'Fish baskets' and 'weels' are referred to in many ancient fishing grants, but I have not

[1] J. McParlan, *Mayo*, 94.
[2] Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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262 sold fresh in the markets of the Bann Valley, and were salted down for winter use in place of herrings.[1] They have gone the way of most of the pre-famine 'relishes' which came to be despised as the threat of famine faded after the middle of last century. The elvers, too, used to be taken out of the teeming rivers in spring with sieves and pressed into cakes or boiled in milk and made into a kind of eel-cheese. In the River Bann the 226 elvers are now trapped at the first weir, at the tidal limit, and transported upstream, up to 30 million a year being given an easy passage in this way. A marked reduction in the size of the silver eels netted on their return to the sea some ten years later has been interpreted as a result of this interference with nature. The bulk of the eels taken are sold live in the London markets. [231] In addition to elvers salmon fry also was in former times taken for food and fed to pigs, and by an Act of Elizabeth's reign swine were prohibited from feeding on the shores of tidal rivers 'where they destroy a great quantity of salmon and eel fry'.[2]

Many traditional methods of fishing survive on the lakes of the Irish midlands. The otter board, now more often seen along the coast where fishermen trawl for flat fish in sandy bays, was formerly widely used in lake fishing and is considered to be 'an implement of very ancient origin in Ireland'.[3] Related to it is the 'pooka', a board fitted with mast and sail which carried out the baited long lines.[4] Fishing lines were until recently 283 sometimes made of horsehair by an interesting and undoubtedly ancient method. The instruments employed are goose or swan quills, cut down to make open-ended tubes some three inches long, two or three being needed according to whether a two- or three-strand line is being prepared. From ten to twenty long hairs taken from a horse's tail are threaded through each quill and knotted together at one end, the other ends of the quills being plugged with short pieces of quill which grip the hairs yet allow them to slide through. The quills are now rolled one against the other in the fingers, and as the strands twist on one another they pull down the hairs which feed them. The

[1] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 243.

[2] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 103.

[3] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*. See also R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 53 (1954).

[4] W. H. Maxwell, *Wild Sports of the West*, 77.

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line grows as if by magic as the quills rotate in nimble fingers. 283
A fresh supply of hairs is inserted from time to time by removing the plugs. I illustrate an example of this fascinating apparatus made for me by Mr. T. J. Barron of Knockbride, Co. Cavan (Fig. 81). Mr. A. T. Lucas has described the Cavan

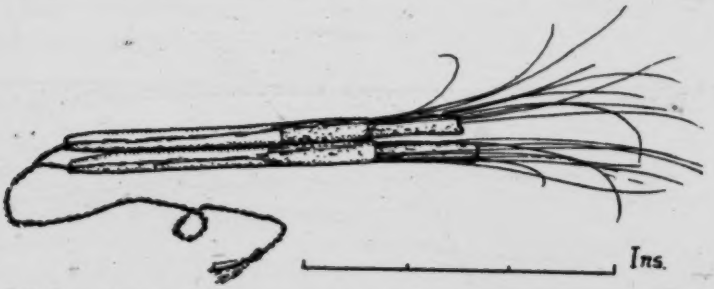

FIG. 81. Quills used for making horsehair fishing lines, Co. Cavan. The quills are rolled between the forefingers.

specimens and others from Co. Mayo.[1] In Cavan the lines were [226]
made for bream fishing: the bream were both split, salted and [251]
dried and stored fresh in little ponds on the lake shores. Around
the coasts—I have seen examples from the Aran Islands and from Co. Down—a more complicated machine was made for twisting long lines of hemp, three spindles being rotated by pulling on an endless cord twisted round each spindle.[2] A very similar device is employed in China for making bamboo ropes [171]
for raising coal in primitive mines. On the shores of Lough Neagh the long lines are manufactured in rustic rope-walks. These night-lines, which have tended to replace draft-nets, are set in lengths of up to four miles. The season of yellow (feeding) 226
eel fishing runs from March to October. It is illegal, as we have mentioned, but shows no signs of being given up. The eel fishermen claim immemorial rights and are not deterred by the fines imposed when they are caught. Their vocabulary, like that of the men who work the eel weirs on the River Bann, has many [192]
words which have come down from Gaelic and perhaps from

[1]A. T. Lucas, *Journal of the Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc.*, 24 (1951), 111–14.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, Fig. 63.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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226 pre-Gaelic tongues, and there can be little doubt that the eel fishery is prehistoric in origin. The draft nets in which pollan [192] are caught in the lake—the pollan is a fresh-water herring [227] peculiar to some Irish and Scottish lakes—also display old features. The sections, known as webs, are sewn together with a bone needle into long nets, which are weighted with stone sinkers. The draft-net is widely used in the salmon rivers, as described on the Boyne earlier in this chapter, and references to draft-netting go back to the twelfth century. On some rivers [349] tall towers are erected from which a watcher signals the [202] presence of fish.[1]

We are not here concerned with the commercial offshore fisheries, but something must be said of the inshore fishing because it has been characteristically combined with farming all around the coast. This type of fishing was well suited to the Irish crofter economy, so that the comment frequently made by improving visitors and despairing Government officials was that the Irish would not go out to fish, but waited for the fish to come close inshore. The shore-dwelling farmer is knowledgeable about the ways of fish and knows all 'the signs'. He has been accustomed to keep a net to hand and watch for shoals of different fish at the right seasons. There are watching points on the cliffs overlooking many a small bay, and it was from such vantage points on the south and west coasts that the pilchard 'huers' directed the seine boats to the shoals that visit Ireland intermittently.[2] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Irish pilchard fishery grew to large proportions but it has now declined to something like its older local significance. When the industry was capitalized by promoters like Sir William Petty it was the train oil pressed out during the packing of the pilchards for export which found an Irish market. [281] It was used both as a luminant and in the preparation of leather. The seine boats have now turned their attention to herring and mackerel, and Dr. Went has pointed out that the seine is used for catching salmon only in Kenmare Bay, where Petty introduced it for pilchard fishing about the year 1672.

In the Irish Sea the herrings come close inshore in September

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 85 (1955), 22–23, Pl. 3A.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 51 (1946), 137–57.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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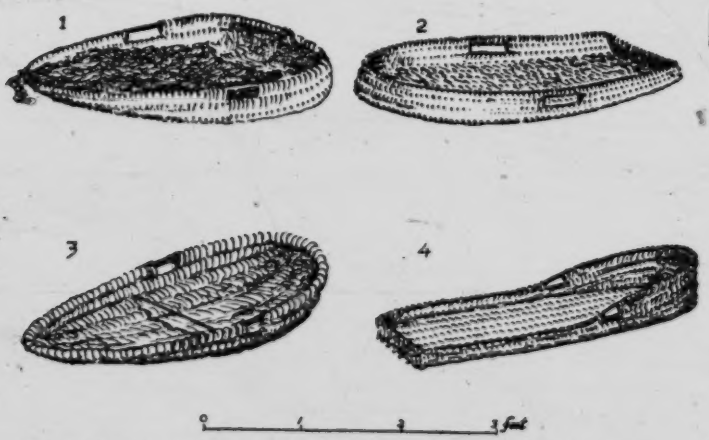
and are therefore known as 'harvest herrings'. It is then that the yawls or skiffs which lie half hidden for most of the year have their brief spell of activity, and the farmers who jointly own them find on moonlight nights a cool relief from the hot pressure of harvest. The fish are caught in trammel nets, and they were formerly in great demand not only locally but for many miles inland for salting down as winter 'kitchen'.[1] A more varied diet has lessened the demand, for the great days of the salt herring were the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when a potato diet cried out for a tasty accompaniment. On the north-west coast the herring fishery extends through the winter, with consequent serious risks which the Donegal men have none the less been willing to take. Here, perhaps, is one explanation for the survival of the light rowing curragh down to the coming of powered vessels, for a small sail boat brings many hazards on this stormy Atlantic coast.

226 [501]



[285] [415]

FIG. 82. Long-line baskets. (1) Co. Antrim. (2) Co. Galway. (3) Co. Down. (4) Aran Islands.

Long line fishing for cod, skate, ling and other big fish is almost certainly far older than the herring fishery, and it has preserved down to our own day many ancient practices and

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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226 types of gear. It used to be said that you should never risk taking a dog into some of the fishing villages on the north coast: [281] their skins were in great demand for making the line floats or 'stookies'. Very probably seal skins were formerly used for this purpose, as among the Eskimo. The sinkers of grooved stones from the beach might well pass for prehistoric implements (Fig. 74). The beautifully made line-baskets of unpeeled [285] willow have the graceful curves that one associates with the work of untouched 'primitives' (Fig. 82). And the division of [462] labour was on a primitive level, for to the womenfolk fell the tedious labour of baiting and preparing the hooks. The long-line fishermen were exceptionally hardy and were regarded with awe and respect by the inshore fishermen-farmers. No doubt the timid and the weakly had been weeded out by continual stress. Their knowledge of the sea and of the fishing [429] marks was a guarded secret, and the best banks were some- [777] times allotted, no doubt to avoid fights, by casting lots. In the Hebrides this was done on Bride's Day. There also, and possibly in Ireland, the banks were held in rotation in a kind of marine rundale.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and, we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne 'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour, and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh-water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 52.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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Upper Bunratty, the fields being covered with them, but, when it broke up, the "troops" dispersed, and no bands were seen at any distance from the rendezvous. A rat was "heard talking with the Devil" in the grave of an unpopular person before 1875, but how the holders of this curious conversation were identified was never stated. I have met a belief in speaking rats in eastern Clare and among fishermen at Kilkee. 825 776

Hedgehog.—This animal is reputed to steal apples and suck cows and eggs, so that it is persecuted and called *grainoge* (little ugly thing).

Birds.—A pair of ravens roosted in a top window of the round tower of Iniscatha (Scattery) early in the last century. The birds were said to escort their young, when fully fledged, across the Shannon to Carrigfoile Castle in Kerry, and not to let them return to the island.[15] Scaldcrows (roystons) are considered unlucky, and much feared. The old Irish regarded them as incarnations of the war-goddess Bodbh.[16] Birds as omens have already been noted.[17] The bat is looked on as a sort of bird, and it is ominous of death for it to fly at one's face. The entry of a robin into a house is a death omen near Tulla, but elsewhere a sign of good fortune. Although swans are so plentiful that I have often seen more than forty together in Inchiquin and other lakes, the only folklore associated with them seems to be a tale of swan-maidens at Inchiquin. The hunting of the wren has been described in Section XIV.[18] [777] [763]

Fishes.—It was regarded as a custom among the fishermen of Kilrush and Scattery that no one should go fishing for three days after the arrival of the herring shoals, but, when the first day dawned, a crowd of boats was always discovered, and much quarrelling resulted.[19] As the shoals arrived, a mass used to be celebrated on the shore at Kilmurry, Ibrickan, to secure good 226 825

[15] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 546.

[16] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x.; *Revue Celtique*, vol. i.; Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 267.

[17] Vol. xxi., p. 190.

[18] *Ante*, pp. 206-7, and Plate IX.

[19] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare* (1808), pp. 228, 259.

[P. 249]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

226 825 fishing and to keep off dogfishes and small sharks.[20] The reputed giant lake pikes and eels have already been mentioned.[21]

"*Worms.*"—Newts, lizards, and large caterpillars are included by the peasantry under this term. They are supposed to be very dangerous to both men and cattle, and are relentlessly destroyed. 825 Of late years I have even had difficulty in saving the pretty little grey lizards, now much rarer than when, over thirty years ago, they swarmed in Clare Abbey and other sunny and sheltered ruins. A colony of unfortunate little lizards in a hollow tree was reported to me as "a nest of adders." My informant[22] about the sacrifice on the dolmen of Maryfort,—the daughter of an old Peninsular veteran, living near Clonlara,—told me a circumstantial tale which was faintly remembered at Clonlara many years later. A "worm with legs" ran down a man's throat as he slept in a field, and he pined away, with an ever-increasing appetite, until he was persuaded to consult a "wise person." He was kept from drinking for two days by the expert, and then fed on bacon and taken to a stream. The patient's mouth was fastened open, and a freshly-toasted piece of bacon put near it. The thirsty "worm" heard the running water, and came out into the man's mouth, where it smelt the meat and sprang on it, fixing its claws in it. The "wise man" then threw the bacon into the water, and the man rapidly recovered. A similar story from near Tulla ended in the "worm" drinking and trying to jump back into the patient's mouth, but being killed by the doctor.[23] Children were told that, if they slept with their mouths open, "worms" (apparently caterpillars of the death's head or the puss moth in Inchiquin and central Clare) or

[20] Canon Dwyer, *Diocese of Killaloe*, p. 503, writes unsympathetically about this touching faith of the poor fishers.

[21] Vol. xxi., p. 480. [22] Mrs. Eliza Egan; see *ante*, p. 51.

[23] I have heard an almost identical story told among my mother's relatives as happening in Lancashire. [The belief in "animals in people's insides" is almost universal in the British Isles; for examples see *N. & Q.*, 1st S., vol. vi., pp. 221, 338, 466, vol. ix., pp. 29, 84, 276, 523; 6th S., vol. i., pp. 311, 392; 9th S., vol. vii., pp. 222, 332, 390, vol. viii., pp. 89, 346, vol. xi., p. 467, vol. xii., pp. 414, 471; *Folk-Lore*, vol. x., p. 251; *British Medical Journal*, 1906; and many newspaper paragraphs, such as one in *Morning Leader*, June 3, 1908. I have heard the tale told in London with a large community of cockroaches as the tenants.—Ed.] [P. 250]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young chil-
dren. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring
groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend
less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them
more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men
of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school,
at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and
their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the house-
hold. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the
other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [178]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [222]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often de-
manded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially [482]
when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about
being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer
hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in
America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent
434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts
437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils
[311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and
178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [231] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [226] eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [311] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [654] fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [241] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the [231] subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [541]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654 islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228 boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178] Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501] The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874] in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262 and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226 fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178 those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825 and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241] fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751] festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757] of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312] assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226 varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 229 with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221] times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476] ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226 misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181 they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[82] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[402] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[312] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

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• 226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip, ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
674 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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285 baskets, and of creels and other objects of wickerwork. To do the subject justice would require a large volume, and we must confine ourselves to some broad aspects. We have referred to creels and kishes of various kinds in Chapter 12. These are objects which the countryman makes for himself, as distinct from the "fancy" basket work which is generally in the hands of special families. To take the creels first, they are constructed bottom-upwards in the same way as the framework of the Boyne curragh, by sticking the stout standards in the earth as though to make wattles and bending them over [824] to form the foundation of the bottom. Strong black sally, hazel or rowan are employed instead of the soft basket willows. The standards are left projecting above the rim of the creel when it is finished, so that the sides do not lift off. But a well woven "mouth" is also necessary to prevent slipping: it may be made single or double. Both creels and kishes may have windows in the sides (Chapter 12 and Fig. 58), an ornamental feature also found in the old wicker cradles. Creels and kishes may be loosely or tightly woven according to whether they are intended for turf or manure. Openwork creels are made in Co. Antrim by pegging the side rods into the two corner standards at intervals of about 4 inches. The old custom in Donegal is to repair two old creels and make two new ones each year. (*See Plate V.*)

285 227 Lobster-pots (Chapter 16), stock-pots, fruit and fish hampers, are made on a perforated wooden frame which may be regarded as a substitute for the earth, but most of the

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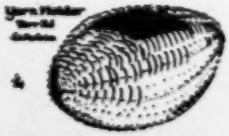

Fig. 73. Length 19".

285 "fancy work" is undertaken by specialized basket makers, and we can do no more than indicate the variety and skill of their products. There are certain localities where the tradition of basket-making is strong, for instance the shores of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XVI.

THE SEASHORE.

The seashore, where the first Irishmen picked up a living 22
some thousands of years ago, still plays a significant role in the islands and around the coasts and is laid under contribution for seaweed and drift weed (wrack), for sand and gravel, and for accessory supplies of food. On many an Irish strand too, seasonal festivals, horse-racing and country games have only slowly given way to holiday makers from the city. Communal rights in the seashore were jealously guarded, and one constantly comes across ancient customs that have survived in this most changeless of environments. I recall the country-
man " on the brew " (bureau ; that is, on the dole) whom I [283]
watched in County Down twisting on his bare thigh, his palm dried with a dusting of wood-ash from the hearth, the two-ply " crop " of horse-hair for his fishing line—each ply consisting of twenty-one strands taken from the tail of a white mare.
This method of twisting is found amongst almost all primitive 227
peoples, and can be paralleled, for instance, from the remote 226
Andaman Islands. His outfit for codling fishing is illustrated in Fig. 94, which shows two hair crops attached to a home-made sinker of lead—called from its shape a " frog " ; the use of horse-hair has survived in this case because it is stiffer than
gut and serves to keep the hooks from fouling each other. [237]
Rock-fishing lines in Co. Antrim are sometimes made of black horse-hair, but for the part next the hook, called the foot-line, white hair is used. Well-made lines of carefully selected hair
[Text Continues Top of P. 144—Analyst]

[p. 143]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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226 are said to last a lifetime. I have seen such lines twisted
227 between the palms of the hand and also made by spinning round a cap to which the two loose ends are pinned. In County Galway similar foot-lines are made of mixed horse and

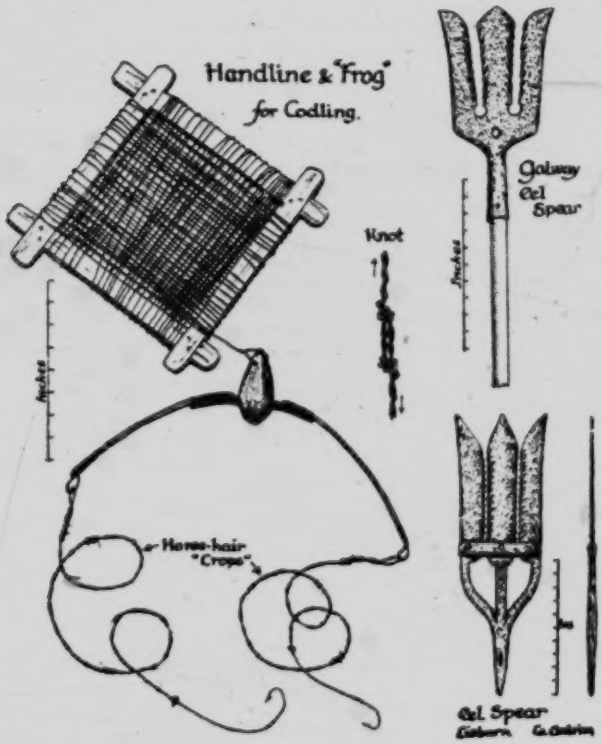

Fig. 94.

[284] cow hair. The short lengths of hair cord are tied with a
[827] special knot (Fig. 94) which is " set " with saliva. Horse-hair cords were formerly used to fasten together the curragh framework in Donegal.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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226 larger fish, including cod and skate, are generally caught on "long lines," hung with hundreds of hooks, in deeper water. The antiquity of some such method of fishing is suggested by the discovery of cod bones with the remains of our raised beach cultures. Old fashioned devices are found in long-line fishing, too: floats of inflated dog skin ("stookies") and sinkers of grooved stone (Fig. 95) are in daily use.

[227]

Fig. 95.

804 The illustration also shows a grooved stone resembling the type well known to archæologists as grooved hammer-stones. This example was employed as a 10 lb. weight for weighing wool. I have seen similar stones kept for weighing butter and kelp.

227 The line baskets present interesting variations of shape: I illustrate (Fig. 76) examples from Co. Antrim and from Co. Galway. The long Aran basket has a raised end, while the Waterford pattern is a short shallow basket. Types of net

Fig. 96.

for inshore fishing, including salmon nets, differ considerably from place to place and need study. Mention should also be made of the "otter," better known from its adoption in mine-sweeping as the paravane, which is widely used for

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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netting in sea and lake and for poaching. And in this connexion one may whisper that the illegal eel-spear (Fig. 94), the leister or salmon spear, and the trout net (Fig. 96)[1] will sometimes be shown to the discreet inquirer. Old garden forks and shovels are often fashioned into spears by the smith. Resinous bog-fir sometimes provided the torches for "burning the river" in salmon-poaching. Much might be said of these dark practices, but this is not the place to give away all the secrets of the countryside. We may properly refer to the huge "legitimate" catches of eels in weirs such as those of "the fishy fruitful Bann."

The well-known curraghs of the Boyne and the west coast have recently been described in James Hornell's book, "British Coracles and Irish Curraghs," but details of rowing and sailing craft of all kinds should be recorded and sketched before regional types give way, as they are slowly doing, to standardised boats. It is probably not too much to say that every coastal county, every large river and lake, has its own traditional styles of vessels, and their comparative study would be an important contribution to science. Some of the small oval curraghs of the Boyne are still covered with cow-hide, but tarred canvas has taken its place in the larger sea-going curraghs of the west coast. These display many interesting variations according to local conditions and custom, but all, with the exception of the paddle curraghs of Tory Island, are fitted with single thole pins on which the oars swivel, the wooden pin passing through a hole in the heavy "bool" of the oar (Fig. 99). This curious device is employed also on some river and lake boats (e.g., the Corrib, the Shannon and Lough Neagh) and was until recent years found on the fishing boats of the Scotch Quarter at Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. I have no information on the distribution of the single thole-pin oar outside Ireland, except that Mr. Hornell has reported (in a letter) that the method is used in the Sudan on the Nile. It is true of such ethnographical studies

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 150--ANALYST]

[416]

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Fig. 99.

[824]

[1] Similar poaching nets were made in the Hebrides—and probably also in Ireland—of heather stems and even sedge roots (*Carex flacca*).

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Fig. 100.
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.

Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

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[413]
[244]

Fig. 102.

[439]

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Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

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[439]

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

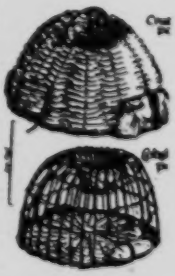

Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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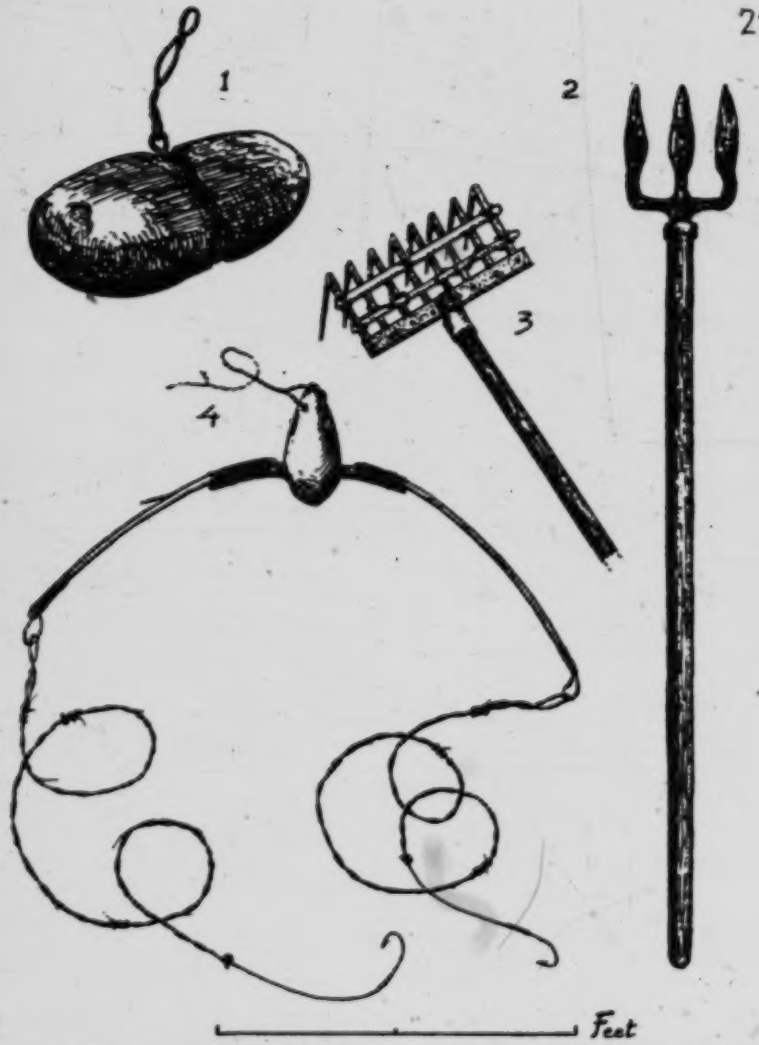

FIG. 74. Fishing gear. (1) Stone sinker for long lines, Co. Antrim (scale ×3). (2) Fork for digging lug worms, Co. Down. (3) Mussel rake, Co. Louth. Handle 15 ft. (after H. G. Tempest). (4) 'Frog' with horsehair crops for codling fishing, Co. Down (scale ×3).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIG. 75. Fishing weirs and curragh pens. *Above:* wattled head weir in River Bride, Co. Waterford (after Went). *Centre:* old stone fishing weirs at Newcastle, Co. Down. *Below:* curragh pens, Achill Island, Co. Mayo (after Piggott).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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223 Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of 225 seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes in- [481] volving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed. The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with [292] charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The [251] meat was salted down.

Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now 226 neglected and even despised, though there are commercial [228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he [481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular, [227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned [578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

222 If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of 674 such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [Text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 89.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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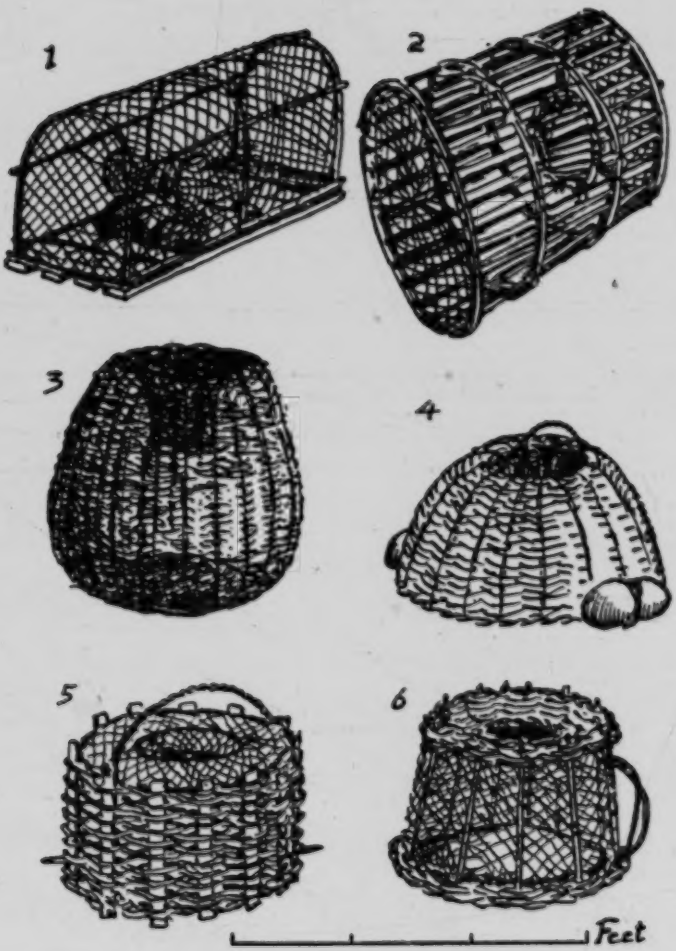

FIG. 76. Creels and pots. (1) Lobster, Co. Antrim. (2) Crayfish, French pattern south and west coasts. (3) Lobster, Co. Mayo. (4) Crab, Co. Antrim. (5) Buckies Co. Down. (6) Crab, Co. Down.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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been recognized by the courts. 'Bobbing' for eels with a ball of worms attached to a string is practised on dark stormy nights, and on the River Bann a vicious-looking eel-rake is used to jab among the river weeds. Its teeth of sharp steel, often discarded hackle-pins, are set an inch apart in the end of a long pole. Bone pins of prehistoric date recovered in quantities from the bed of the river may have been put to a similar use, and this method of catching fish, probably of ancient origin, is widely distributed. There are specimens of eel-rakes in the Danish museums (Fig. 79). A very similar eel-comb is known in China, and a herring rake, used by the native fishermen of north-western America and mounted with sharp bone teeth, was first described by Captain Cook in 1778.[1] For taking salmon, poachers in the River Barrow use a staked net fashioned into a conical trap, and trout are taken in the north of Ireland in home-made 'loop nets' large enough to bridge small streams (Fig. 80). Salmon are also 'strokehauled' with naked hooks, and gaffed when within reach of the river banks. Trout are taken not only by 'ginling' (tickling) but also with a 'dull' or horsehair noose.

Dr. Went has made a careful study of Irish fish spears and the interested reader may be referred to his paper.[2] It may be mentioned that two of the three classes of eel-spears which he describes have been recovered from crannogs of the Dark Ages: they are the barbed spears known as rock- or sun-spears, so named from the conditions which are required for the eels to be impaled, and the more common mud-spears, which are within the law and of which excellent specimens can still be seen in parts of the country. They have flat tines, notched at the sides to prevent the enmeshed eels escaping. Spears of this type are plunged blindly into the mud. Consequently they are often very large and heavy, a seven-pronged example from the River Bann weighing over nine pounds and having a handle 30 feet long. Old specimens have a circular aperture at the junction of each pair of tines which facilitated the removal of the eels. The advantage of the mud-spear, which has a much wider distribution than the primitive looking rock-spear (which is apparently

[1] *Captain Cook's Third Voyage*, Ed. C. R. Low (N.D.), 395.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 82 (1952), 109–34.

 [Text continues on 246]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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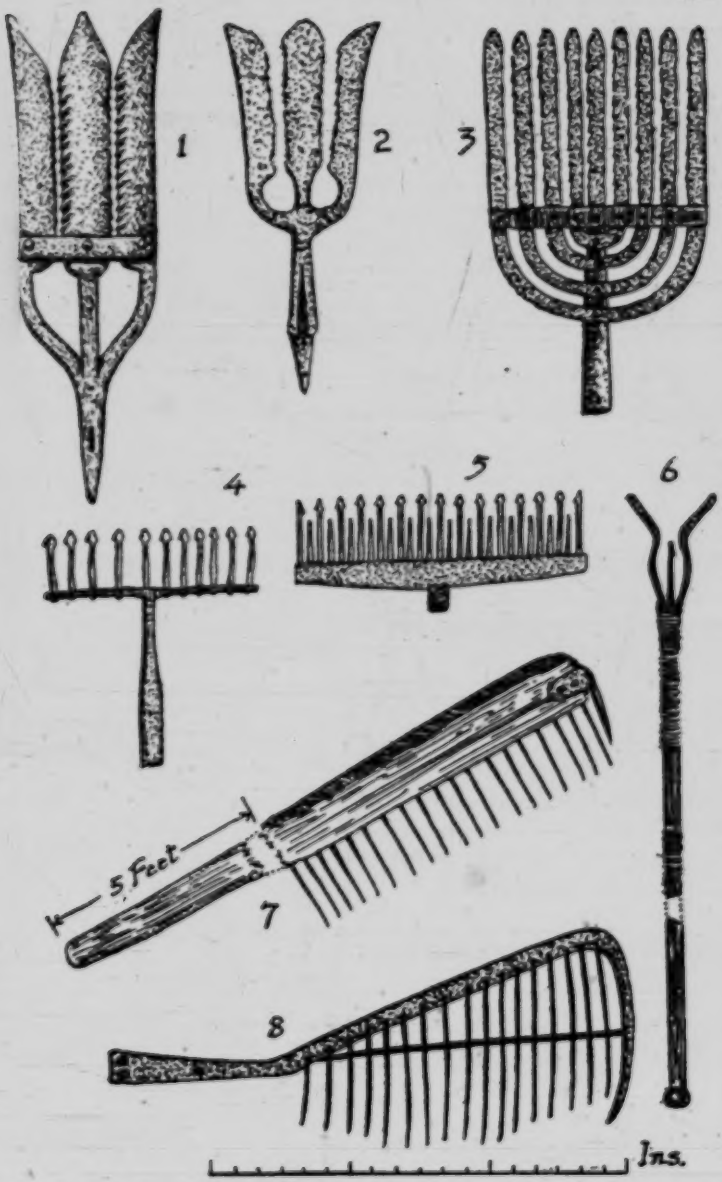

FIG. 79. Eel spears and rakes. (1) Mud-spear, Co. Antrim. (2, 3) Mud-spears, Co. Westmeath (after Went). (4, 5) Rock- or sun-spears, Co. Westmeath (after Went). (6) Wexford harbour eel-spear (after Went). (7) Eel-rake, River Bann (after N. C. Mitchel). (8) Eel-rake, Denmark (National Museum, Copenhagen).

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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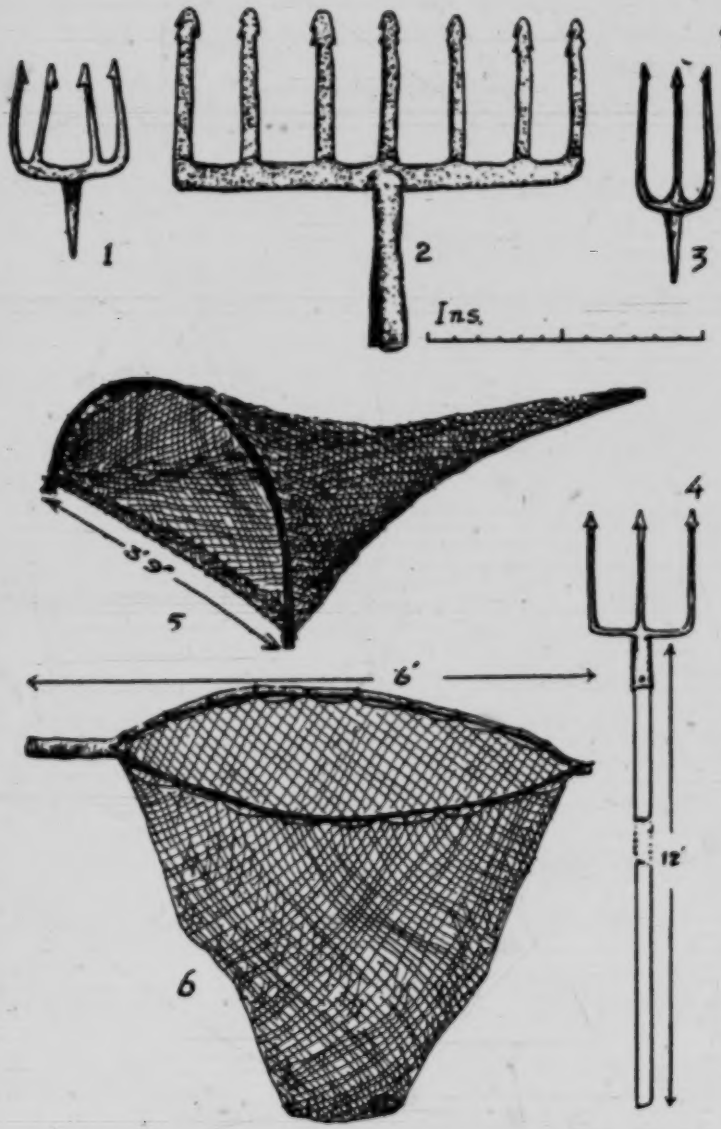

FIG. 80. Salmon spears and river nets. (1) River Mulcaire (after Went). (2) River Suir (after Went). (3) Co. Down. (4) Co. Antrim. (5) Co. Donegal. (6) Co. Tyrone (after E. N. Carrothers).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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227 confined to Co. Westmeath) is that the eel was undamaged and its skin could therefore be utilized. Apart from their use as [237] thongs and flail-hangings eel-skins were worn as charms against [751] rheumatic pains. Eel fat, too, is esteemed as a cure for rheuma- [757] tism. The third type of eel-spear is quite different in form and methods of use. It is confined to Wexford Harbour and would appear to be a relic of Scandinavian influence in that half-foreign south-eastern corner of Ireland comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth. It consists of two splayed prongs between which is ingeniously mounted a single barbed prong on to which 227 the eel is guided by the outer members (Fig. 79). When the 226 tide covers the mudflats the fisherman lies in a punt with his head over the prow, and with a spear in each hand propels the boat until he spies an eel in the mud, when his punting pole becomes a weapon. At low tide the eel fishers wear yard-long [481] 'scooches' or mud-shoes, wooden boards turned up at the front like miniature skis. We note in passing that boards were formerly worn by both men and horses in working on soft bogs in Co. Mayo.[1]

The salmon spear or leister, being illegal, is normally a light three-pronged instrument, but large specimens weighing up to eight pounds and made after the fashion of the Westmeath eel-spears are found on the River Suir (Fig. 80). The fish were attracted at night by 'burning the river' with resinous splits of bog-fir or lumps of peat soaked in oil.

Riverine weirs of many kinds have been the privilege of religious houses and landed properties through the ages, and many examples specially designed for the capture of migratory fish, salmon and eels are maintained. There are traditions of temporary weirs of heather stems weighted down with stones, into which trout were driven to be extracted when the bundles of heather were pitched on to the bank. Gerard Boate describes the weirs in his day as consisting of 'big stones set close together from the one side of the river to the other, leaving only one hole . . . before which hole a basket being laid, they take 227 therein a great quantity of fish'.[2] 'Fish baskets' and 'weels' are referred to in many ancient fishing grants, but I have not

[1] J. McParlan, *Mayo*, 94.
[2] Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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come across surviving examples of these ancient devices. The iron 'cribs' associated with modern salmon weirs, however, appear to derive from wattled traps. And the long conical 'coghill' nets in which the eels are caught in the weirs of the Bann, the Shannon and (until recently) the Erne, are shaped like weels and indeed they are sometimes built up of a series of cones. The fine meshed 'tail' of the net is made to open and the eels, nowadays, are poured directly into submerged tanks. A detail suggestive of long custom is that the 'skiver' with which the tail is closed in the coghills of the weirs at Portna on the Bann consists of a perforated rib-bone of horse or cow. The pin is attached to a cord, which is wound round the end of the net and secured by thrusting the pin into the windings. The walls of the weirs are often still built of wattles, and the old style of weir on the Erne consists of a base of large stones into which the wattled superstructure is thrust.[1] 227

The wattles are known on the Bann as *skeaghs*: of the six weirs now fishing there four are of the traditional type and two have been modernized. At Athlone on the Shannon there were twenty-two eel weirs in the early seventeenth century, and nearly all were still working in the nineteenth century: a single weir is now fished there.[2] The eel weirs of the River Erne had been reduced to five when they were abandoned owing to the recent construction of a dam for the Ballyshannon hydro-electric scheme. The Bann silver eel fisheries are probably the largest of their kind in western Europe, and it is significant that the Bann is one of the richest rivers in Europe for archaeological discoveries ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the early medieval period. Both salmon and eels have now become money-crops and the catches are exported. Already in the eighteenth century Irish salt salmon was exported in considerable quantities to America. The ice-house in which salmon used to be preserved is one of the many ruined buildings to be seen about the decaying houses of the gentry, and most country houses also had their fish ponds. [376] [172] [439] [343]

Among the common folk eels are esteemed only by the folk who catch them, legally or otherwise, but they were formerly 262

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 213–23.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 80 (1950), 146–54.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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226 pre-Gaelic tongues, and there can be little doubt that the eel
[192] fishery is prehistoric in origin. The draft nets in which pollan
are caught in the lake—the pollan is a fresh-water herring
[227] peculiar to some Irish and Scottish lakes—also display old
features. The sections, known as webs, are sewn together with a bone needle into long nets, which are weighted with stone sinkers. The draft-net is widely used in the salmon rivers, as described on the Boyne earlier in this chapter, and references to draft-netting go back to the twelfth century. On some rivers
[349] tall towers are erected from which a watcher signals the
[202] presence of fish.[1]

We are not here concerned with the commercial offshore fisheries, but something must be said of the inshore fishing because it has been characteristically combined with farming all around the coast. This type of fishing was well suited to the Irish crofter economy, so that the comment frequently made by improving visitors and despairing Government officials was that the Irish would not go out to fish, but waited for the fish to come close inshore. The shore-dwelling farmer is knowledgeable about the ways of fish and knows all 'the signs'. He has been accustomed to keep a net to hand and watch for shoals of different fish at the right seasons. There are watching points on the cliffs overlooking many a small bay, and it was from such vantage points on the south and west coasts that the pilchard 'huers' directed the seine boats to the shoals that visit Ireland intermittently.[2] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Irish pilchard fishery grew to large proportions but it has now declined to something like its older local significance. When the industry was capitalized by promoters like Sir William Petty it was the train oil pressed out during the packing of the pilchards for export which found an Irish market.
[281] It was used both as a luminant and in the preparation of leather. The seine boats have now turned their attention to herring and mackerel, and Dr. Went has pointed out that the seine is used for catching salmon only in Kenmare Bay, where Petty introduced it for pilchard fishing about the year 1672.

In the Irish Sea the herrings come close inshore in September

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 85 (1955), 22–23, Pl. 3A.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 51 (1946), 137–57.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [541]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [801]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [894]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 229
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

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[413]
[244]

Fig. 102.

[439]

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Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

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228 ●
[439]

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

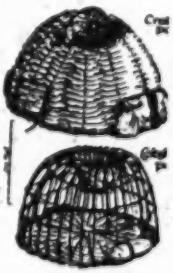

Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

317 We referred in the first paragraph to sand and gravel: the white shell sand is taken for manure and is also strewn on the kitchen floor, while beach stones and gravel find many uses as cobble stones, pebble-dashing and so on. Among other 226 by-products of the sea we must not forget fish-oil, manu- 373 factured not only as a medicine for cattle but also as an illuminant. The iron crusie lamp (Fig. 105) was not long since the chief source of light in the islands, and until half a century ago large sea-shells are said to have been employed for the purpose in Co. Kerry. The wick of the crusie was a peeled rush or a twist of cotton: because of the strong smell the lamp was hung under the chimney so that the draught carried away the fumes. The abundant sea shells are also utilized for lime on some islands, for example Tory, by burning them in a kiln made of turf.

317

228
Fig. 105.
Length 15"

Finally, we must not omit the dread harvest of the sea cast up after storms—the timber and food-stuffs and wreckage—always welcome and perhaps in olden days not uninvited. Many an islandman's cabin is roofed with couples of ships' masts, and a visit to treeless Tory or Rathlin will reveal the many uses to which drift timber is put. Mysterious objects brought by the currents from the West Indies occasionally turn up: pumice, perhaps from this source, has been found, treasured no doubt as a magic stone, in sandhill settlements of 4,000 years ago.

162 It is not to be wondered at, when we consider the ancient 226 and varied, if often toilsome and dangerous life of the Irish shores, that the coasts carry a much denser population than districts inland. It should be stressed that these various activities are carried on not as a rule by specialized fishermen but by farmers and peasants to whom the sea offers an accessory source of life and interest, and who often perpetuate the old communal schemes by taking shares in a boat and nets. Old ways die hardest by the sea; prohibitions and super- [462] stitions are rife, and fishing is one of the few occupations in which women take no active part.

231 is said to be due to the expense of im-
porting feedstuffs. Donkeys and Con-
[492] nemara ponies are kept as draft ani-
mals, and almost everything is conveyed
in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was
made in 1907 by a local carpenter from
one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required,
including lobster pots, fishing nets, fur-
niture, doors, windows, and hand bar-
rows, which consist of two shafts joined
by slats and a single wheel in the rear,
all of wood.

Digging and manuring of the land
221 begins in late February, and seaweed is
brought from the shore as needed. The
potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's
Day (March 17); oats, two to three
weeks later; barley and mangolds at the
end of April or in May. Most calves
are born from March to May. In dry
years peat is cut from May onwards,
laid out to dry, and eventually stacked
in ricks six feet high secured by large
stones, or placed against a stone wall.
Apart from routine work, there is little
to do until the hay harvest, generally in
August or September, though sometimes
a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with
the hope of a second crop in the autumn.
Oats and barley are harvested in Sep-
tember, after which the main potato
digging takes place, though some are
dug earlier for the household. From
October to late February, there is little
to do except tend the stock, though
some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under gov-
ernment schemes. Few farmers make
the ricks of peat beside their houses so
commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch
it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major
aim of the Congested Districts Board,
and from the eighteen-nineties to the

[p.207(A)]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

228 1914–1918 war both the curing stations were used. The first of these was built by Mr. Allies about 1892 and the second by the Board in 1897.[13] In 1898 during the mackerel fishing season, as many as 75 carts a day passed along the hilly road from Cleggan to Clifden with some 1000 boxes of fish to be sold in Dublin[14]; and in 1912, 8754 cwts. of mackerel, valued at £2211, were landed at Cleggan.[15] The fishermen were "the best and most practical . . . on the west coast" in 1892;[16] today, a large number of men have a curragh (made for £30) and fish for the family, but only four hookers, each manned by five men, are now used in the white fish trade. In good years a man may make £50 or more by trapping lobsters and crayfish, which are stored in tanks in the harbor and in Bofin Bay, then taken for a month's feeding in a vast tank near Cleggan, and finally conveyed over a hundred miles by lorry to the Shannon airport for air transport to Paris. The fishermen receive £3 5s. a (baker's) dozen for crayfish, weighing 5–6 lbs., or £1 15s. for a dozen lobsters, weighing up to 3 lbs. From May to September pots are set round the coasts—a long basket is set for crayfish and a smaller one for lobsters. Some of the dozen or so men in this trade make their own with osiers specially grown, but pots are also supplied by the merchant or made by carpenters. Other marine resources are negligible, though carrageen moss is sold to an agent at 5/– a stone. This naturally gelatinous product, used to make a kind of blancmange, is collected from the rocks between February and August. It is possible

[113] [13] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 7th Report, 1898, H.M.S.O., Dublin, Cmd. 9003, p. 23.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[15] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 20th Report, 1912, Cmd. 6553, p. 80.

[16] C. R. Browne: *op. cit.*, p. 350.

[p. 207(B)]

228 to collect one stone in an hour. Kelp
[381] (seaweed) burning for iodine on the beaches was almost extinct by 1894.[17]

Settlement and Population

361 Of the 96 houses counted as inhabited, 53 are in five hamlets and another six in a loose cluster near the harbor. There is no village as the term is commonly understood, though the main center is beside the harbor, where the inn occupies the one-time "big house" of the Allies family, with the church and the Post Office a short distance away. In all there are eight shops, none of which
[444] is recognizable from the outside, as everyone knows them: one is attached to the inn, another to the Post Office, a third occupies a specially built room in a farmyard, and the rest are in front rooms of houses. All the houses except about six have land attached.

Is this nucleated settlement as such?
361 On the first Ordnance Survey map (1838) there were large clusters of houses
178 and on the 1898 map the vast majority
621 of the houses were in clusters. The redistribution of land and building of new houses has broken up many hamlets or made new ones, for example in Knock townland (405 acres) where an old hamlet on a sandy site has been replaced by a new one on drier ground by the shore, with 15 of the townland's 17 houses. In Cloonamore (663 acres)
361 eight houses are placed along the shore
621 and eleven others scattered over the hillside; in Middlequarter (608 acres) there are eleven houses in the main hamlet, six beside the harbor and eleven others at various points beside the shore or on side roads; in Fawnmore (199 acres) six houses out of sixteen are in a loosely defined hamlet; and in West-
361 quarter (523 acres) nine houses out of

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[p.208(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

223 Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of
225 seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-
[481] climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes involving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed.
[292] The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The
[251] meat was salted down.

Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now
226 neglected and even despised, though there are commercial
● [228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he
[481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular,
[227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned
[578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

222 If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of
674 such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [Text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 99.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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501
133
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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

226
177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
• 228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [157]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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241 463 much of the land is useless. Again, a farm small in area might be exclusively devoted to the sort of economy which is usually found on very large farms. In any single case, statistical generalities do not hold, of course. But in the large kind of correlation which a count of varying factors affords, bulk correspondences turn up with complete regularity.

241 463 162 The course by which this conclusion is reached takes one through the devious labyrinth of Free State Government statistical abstracts. In 1926, the last census year before the authors' field work was undertaken, the numbers living in country districts, "outside villages and towns with 200 or more population," made up 63 per cent of the Free State's population of almost 3,000,000. They were 1,815,496. Of the 1,307,662 classed as "occupied persons 12 years of age and over" for the whole Free State, 672,129, or 51 per cent, were engaged in agriculture. Any attempt, then, to understand the human setting of Irish farming involves an inquiry into the forces motivating the lives of well over half the country's people.

241 433 In 1926 this agricultural population produced a total output valued at £64,757,000. Industry in Ireland produced goods to the value of only a little over half that figure (£34,000,000 net output).

231 433 In the agricultural output of that year, the proportions of the various products indicate the character of the agriculture. Foodstuffs, with livestock products among them, made up the bulk of the output. Milk products accounted for £13,600,000; cattle, exported alive or slaughtered within the country, accounted for another £13,800,000. Pigs and eggs made up £9,800,000 and £6,690,000 respectively. Other livestock such as poultry, sheep, and horses accounted for the rest, in that order of importance. Wool and sundry items such as honey brought in a mere £700,000. All of these, the total output of livestock, reached a value of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

£50,555,000. The figures illustrate the preponderant importance of livestock and particularly cattle and pigs in Irish economy.

The remaining £14,000,000 was made up of crops and turf, the latter alone accounting for £5,938,000. Among the crops, potatoes came first, with a value for the year of £3,786,000. Oats, cabbage, and barley accounted for about £900,000 each; and there were a few other items of smaller values, the largest of which was fruit at £466,000.

These figures of the agricultural products rather underestimate the amount of tillage products raised. In the words of the Census Report, they "do not include any part of the produce which was used for further agricultural production in the Saorstat whether that part was used on the farm on which produced or sold by one farmer to another – e.g. milk fed to calves, potatoes fed to pigs, hay, turnips, mangels fed to cattle, corn used for seed, horses used for farm work." [1]

Within this generality of the monetary value of the goods produced, one can begin to take account of the wide difference of the sizes of the holdings engaged in this agricultural production. A glance at the figure illustrating this kind of economy by relative size of acreage (Fig. 1) will bring the matter out.

The agricultural community carried on this production upon farms of very widely different character. Holdings range in size from one acre or less to 500 or more. Those under 30 acres comprise 23 per cent of the total acreage of agricultural land in the Saorstat, those of 30–50, 17 per cent; those of 50–100, 24 per cent; and those of 100–200, 19 per cent. Farms larger than 200 acres cover only 16 per cent of agricultural land.

In general, the smaller ones practice the more generalized economy, their production being markedly different from

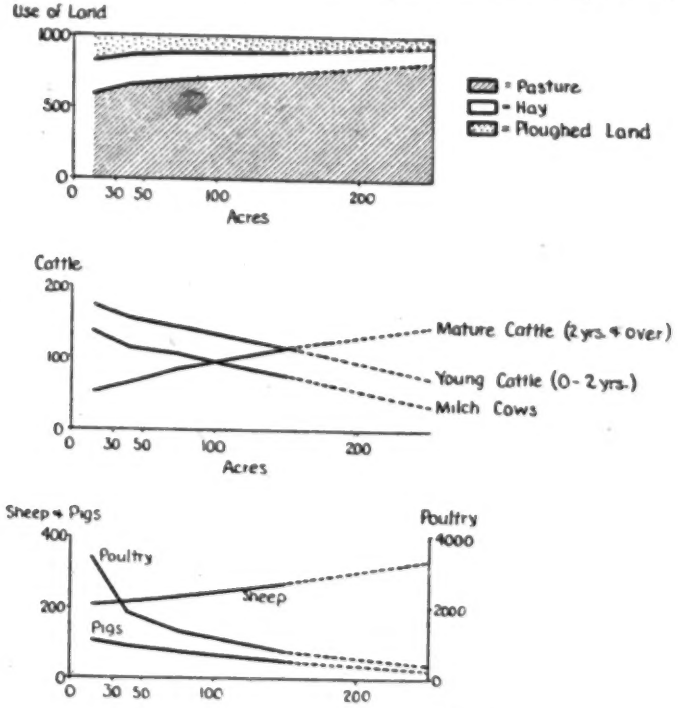
[1] *Agricultural Output of Saorstat Eireann, 1926–27* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

231 that of the large farms. The latter, especially in the mid-
241 land counties, where they are most numerous, raise little
311 more than beef cattle. Their owners are the graziers or
471

FIGURE 1

PRODUCTION ON LARGE AND SMALL HOLDINGS, ALL IRELAND, 1926 CENSUS



(date 1926)

"ranchers" of current political controversy in Ireland. The different economies express themselves in the census as follows:

The numbers of acres ploughed and the numbers under hay per 1000 acres of agricultural land decrease continuously as the size of the holdings increases; the numbers of milch cows, of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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young cattle, of pigs, and of poultry also decrease but the number of dry older cattle and of sheep per 1000 acres increase as the size of the holdings increases. The contrast between the smallest and the largest holdings is exceedingly great and is very great even between the second smallest and second largest. Contrasting the holdings 30–50 acres with holdings 100–200 acres the table shows that on equal areas of agricultural land, the smaller holdings have 32% more ploughed land, 29% more hay, 54% more milch cows, 53% more cattle under one year, 16% more cattle one to two years old, and 9% more cattle of all kinds, 80% more pigs, and 139% more poultry than the holdings 100–200 acres, but the latter have 24% more sheep, 52% more dry cattle, 2 to 3 years old, and 209% more dry cattle 3 years old or over than do holdings 30–50 acres.[2]

In County Clare, the area of our investigation, agriculture presents much the same character and the same difference between small and large farmers as does the whole of Ireland. Clare occupies a middle place among the counties; neither the large nor the small farm predominates. Almost always the small farmer has a garden in potatoes and cabbage with a few oats and turnips and perhaps some rye. The rest of his land will be under several meadows in hay, grazed during the winter months and in fields (pasture land) grazed during both summer and winter, if sheltered. In rough mountain areas sheep are common, particularly in the Broadford and Tubber districts. In addition to cattle, the smaller holder generally has a large flock of ducks, geese, and hens, and he keeps several pigs. These are also fed upon the oats, potatoes, cabbage, and milk left over after the other livestock have been fed. Specialization in poultry raising is still rare, though poultry stations are being established here and there under the supervision of agents of the Department of Agriculture. Certain areas, of course, show minor specializations, such as Miltown Malbay, a seacoast region known for its cabbage, and Newquay, known

[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, Report and Tables* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. xxi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

231 241 311 for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted to one crop.

234 With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

234 246 The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

233 The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he [244] cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

These figures coupled with those giving the number of livestock in the county at that date illustrate the greatly preponderant interest in animal products, particularly cattle, pigs, and eggs. The figures for cattle show that Clare is not primarily a ranching county, but that there is, nevertheless, a respectable number of dry, store cattle. In June 1932 there were 786 bulls, 60,149 milch cows, and 1,696 heifers in calf; and besides such breeding stock there were 5,780 dry three-year-olds or over, 23,266 two-year-olds, and 47,918 yearlings. There were also 58,708 under a year old. 231

Returning again to the conditions for all Ireland, it will be seen in how many respects Clare duplicates the various types of agriculture for all Ireland. The Report of Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, describes statistically the difference in farming between large and small holders over the whole country. It finds that for the whole country

> milch cows were densest (in 1926) in the Southwestern Counties [Clare is one], a region of medium sized holdings, next densest in the Northwest with its numerous small holdings and least dense in the Central Eastern Counties. . . . the 13 latter counties included 11 of the counties of the largest percentage of land under holdings of 200 acres or over, 11 of the 13 densest in dry cattle 3 years or over, 10 of the 13 densest in dry cattle 2 to 3 years old and 10 of the 13 densest in sheep. . . . the counties densest in the older dry cattle coincide closely with these densest in large holdings.[5]

Of tillage the Report states that 241

> small farmers adopt a crop rotation very different to that of the large farmers, putting much more of their ploughed land under roots and green crops and much less under corn. . . . Farmers with 1 to 30 acres devote to potatoes nearly three times as large a proportion of their ploughed land as farmers with over 200 acres, and the latter put twice as much . . . under barley and under turnips as the small farmer and a much larger proportion under oats and mangels.

[5] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xxiii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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241 As regards the smaller crops "the small farmers show a distinct preference for cabbage and rye. . . ."[6]

"Poultry are influenced more than any other class of livestock by size of the farm. . . . They are nine times as dense on holdings of 1 to 30 acres as on holdings over 200 acres. . . . counties densest in poultry coincide with the counties densest in small holdings. . . ."[7]

● 231 Pigs, however, "seem to be influenced more by densities of tillage and of milch cows than by size of holdings. . . . The Southwestern Counties [Clare is one of them] have dense pig herds and the largest bacon factories."[8]

241 407 The difference reflects itself likewise in the distribution of agricultural implements and machinery over the two types of farm. The figures, dating from 1917,[9] are two decades old, but, in spite of the subsequent increase in mechanization, Irish farming is little given to abundant use of machines, and proportions hold much as at that time. In the words of the Report in discussing the tables it presents, giving numbers of farm implements and machines, enumerating ploughs, harrows, turnip and mangel sowers, corn binders, mowers and reapers, horse-drawn hayforks, and potato diggers per thousand acres of ploughed land or specific crop, on various sized holdings:

> The figures rise regularly to a maximum (in the column representing holdings of 50 to 100 acres) and then fall away regularly. Small figures for the small holdings presumably mean that the less efficient implements are used, (the spade in place of the plough, the scythe instead of the mower), not that co-operation . . . exists to any appreciable extent.[10]

That large holders do not proportionately increase their use of such implements and machines after the 50 to 100 acre maximum is reached lies in the fact that "the small

[6] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, pp. xxvi, xxvii.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*, p. lv.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. lvi. We shall see that this statement is not entirely accurate, though there is no large-scale village coöperation as in Balkan and Slavic lands.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 262 511 the cities and larger towns that is unknown on the small farms. The fact is evident when it is observed that Dublin, Cork, and Waterford counties (each dominated numerically by the city of the name) count an average meat consumption taken on the same scale of 69, 40, and 37 pounds per capita respectively.

231 241 439 The difference between the two kinds of farm shows itself again strongly in the export trade from Ireland and in the roles of each in the transfer of farm produce to its ultimate market. The two kinds of farm make a totally different disposal of their produce, particularly their cattle. In this fact we see for the first time that in some regard they have a complementary role. Between them Irish cattle trade is carried on.

231 438 The huge internal Irish cattle trade is thus significant. It reveals itself in the figures as a movement from small farm to large, an interchange between the two kinds of farmers which shows once again their distinctness. The trade is both geographical and social, in the sense that it flows between two sections of Ireland and between her two great agricultural classes.

To get at the facts which show the case demands looking at the statistics of cattle in the Free State. These illustrate clearly how far the internal cattle trade shows up the great difference between the two types of farm. It is necessary to take into consideration the age groups of cattle in the various areas and in the possession of holders of various acreages in those areas. This roundabout course of determining the outlines of internal cattle trade is necessary because there are no barriers or *octrois* at which count might be made as the cattle move from dealer to dealer across the country.

231 The seven southwestern counties are the areas predominant in milch cattle production; they are the areas of the calf-producing cow. Clare is one of these. A chart of birth dates of cattle in various parts of Ireland demonstrates that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the majority of the calves in the seven southwestern counties are born in March. A large majority of the calves in the eastern part of the country, the thirteen central eastern counties, are born in April, and a majority of the calves born in the northern tier of counties in the area of the Free State, a region we shall call the six northwestern counties, are born in May. This sort of progression of the birth dates of cattle through the spring months is, of course, related to climatic conditions. 231

Because such a progression exists, an annual count of cattle taken on the basis of age, undertaken each June first, the beginning of the butter export season, when cows are in full milk, would lead to the strong presumption that cattle recorded as under one year of age at that date would, in fact, nearly all be under three months of age; yearlings so recorded would, in fact, be under fifteen months, and so on. When an actual count was taken in 1926 of the cattle in Ireland, this presumption was borne out. On it is based the following picture of internal cattle trade to be derived from the Report on Agricultural Statistics already quoted.

Following the reasoning of the Report we learn that since "exceedingly few calves are either exported from or slaughtered in the Saorstat and . . . on June 1st, 1926, there were 78 cattle under one year per 100 milch cows, it follows that any district or group of holdings . . . with much less than 78 must have exported them." [21] Then, transferring this device to the annual count of cattle by age, it becomes readily apparent that all of the central eastern counties who count many over 78 cattle under one year of age per 100 milch cows on June first 1926 must have been importing, while the northern counties, Donegal and Leitrim, and the southern counties, Cork, Kerry, and Limerick, with figures much less than 78, must have been exporting. The last three 231 438

[21] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xvi.

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231 438 counties named are the principal members of the group of seven southwestern dairying counties.

A great cattle trade thus takes place between the southwestern dairying area and the "ranching" counties of the central eastern area. When yearlings are taken into account by the same statistics, a fuller picture of this trade emerges. All but one of the central eastern counties has considerably more than 100 yearlings for every 100 calves under a year old, showing that the area is continuing to import the cattle as they grow older. The other sections of the country have considerably fewer than 100 yearlings for every 100 younger cattle, and have been continuing their exports. The principal dairying counties again have the fewest yearlings and are again the leaders in export.

Likewise in counting two-year-olds, the same proportions hold, and in counting cattle over three years old they hold again. In the last two cases, however, northern counties show a greater export than do the dairying counties of the southwest, the latter presumably having got rid of a larger proportion of all cattle not designed for milk production at an earlier age.

[439] The importing central eastern counties are devoted largely to raising and fattening dry store cattle for the British market. And since this is the case, it can be seen that the statistics given above reflect a continuous movement of cattle, calves, yearlings, and two-year-olds to the rich grazing lands of the central plain. Yet to regard this trade as exclusively geographical would be misleading and obscuring, for the profound differences between small and large holders which we have been examining are involved here as well.

Further statistical inquiry demonstrates that the trade takes place as much between the different sized farms as between the regions of different soil and climate. If we correlate proportions of cattle of various ages with the size of the holdings in the various county groups we have already

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named, rather than with the counties as a whole, this great internal cattle trade takes on the new aspect we mention. For example, figures for calves under one year reach 78 and over per 100 milch cows on holdings of all sizes in the thirteen central eastern counties, holdings of all sizes above 30 acres (the average size) in the northern counties, but only on holdings above 100 acres in the calf-producing dairying southwestern counties. That means that, though holdings of all sizes are importing calves in the "ranching" areas, in the other areas only large farms are importing them.

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Taking yearlings next, figures on the table showing more than 100 yearlings per 100 calves under one year old appear on all holdings in the thirteen county midland areas except on the very smallest farms, but in the northern and southwestern areas such figures appear only on the very largest holdings. The midlands import yearlings, particularly in the large farms, and in the rest of the country large farms do likewise, but small farmers get rid of them. Thus in the southwestern counties, holders of 200 acres and over, with a count of 118 yearlings per 100 calves, are importers of cattle produced on other farms, as are holders of 100 acres and over in the northern counties, where the counts of yearlings are 132 for the 100–200 acre group and 154 for the 200 and over group. But small farmers in all counties, regardless of the section of the country in which they live, are exporters, not only in dairying Kerry but even in the flatlands of Meath.

Taking a similar count of dry two-year-old cattle, we find that all small holdings in all areas are still exporting, though the size of holding at which exporting ceases is lower in the central eastern area (the 50–100 acre group), and all large holdings in all areas are still importing, though, conversely, the size of holding at which importing begins is higher in the dairying county region.

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For a graphic representation of this argument and its conclusions, let the reader turn to Figures 6 and 7. Figure 6 gives the numbers for various kinds of cattle by various size holdings separated out for the three groups of counties.[22] It shows the characteristic increase of the numbers of store or dry cattle, for export upon holdings as one goes from small to large and from the northern and southern areas of intensive small farm production of different kinds, based upon different soil and climate, to the rich grazing country of the central plain. It shows that one is really dealing with two kinds of increase of holding of dry cattle; the first, the difference of area, and the second, the difference of size of holding. The last seems to be the more important since it has a characteristic influence in each of the areas.

Figure 7 completes the picture. In *A* one sees the characteristic relative absence of milch cows upon large holdings. In *B* one sees that calf production is fairly uniform everywhere. In *C*, however, one begins to see the movement of cattle from small farm to large as the calves grow older. Small holdings have dropped out as possessors of older dry cattle, and through *D* and *E* continue to do so. As the dry cattle mature they become more and more concentrated upon the large holdings. The figure demonstrates at a glance that it is not a geographical trade that is involved so much as it is a trade between the two kinds of economy, between the two rural classes in the Free State.

Numerical statement of the movement of cattle thus shows us that the internal cattle trade in Ireland is in reality a trade between two types of farmers. It reflects again the great difference in the economies of large farmer and small, and shows that this difference extends to their participation in the business, commerce, and export trade of the country. The large farmers are directly concerned with preparation

[22] The figures are based on tables given in *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, pp. xvii, xix.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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FIGURE 6

PROPORTIONS OF STORE CATTLE TO MILCH CATTLE ON VARIOUS SIZE HOLDINGS IN THE AREAS OF DISTINCTIVE ECONOMY IN THE IRISH FREE STATE

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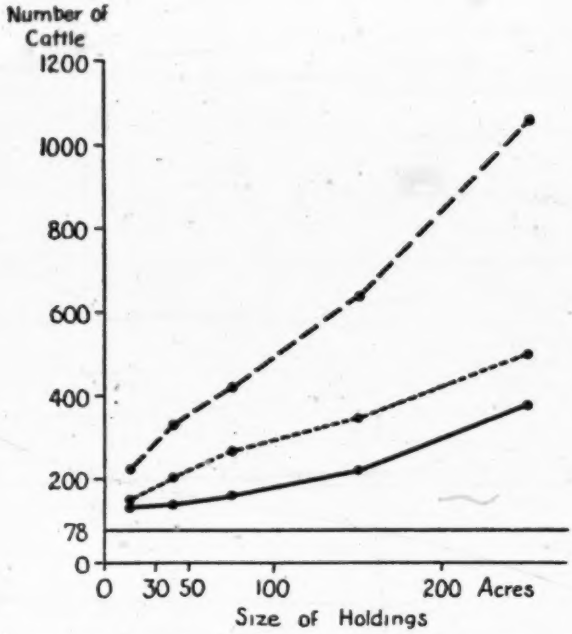
All cattle except milch cows on 1st. June, 1926, per 100 milch cows on that date



—— Munster Province and Kilkenny (7 S.W. Co.)
—— 3 Ulster Counties, Mayo, Sligo, and Leitrim (6 N.W. Co.)
--- Galway, Roscommon and all Leinster Province except Kilkenny (13 C.E. Counties)

The three areas are those of distinctive climatic and soil conditions. The northern and southern areas are alike in being suppliers of young cattle, the central area in retaining herds of dry cattle. Yet one can see at a glance that the difference among the broad areas reflects real differences in cattle-holding on small and large acreages. Points on the graph express for each size holding the number of non-milk-producing cattle per 100 cattle. The number of non-milk-producing cattle then ranges from a proportion of 78 to 100, to over 1,000 to 100.

[p.27]

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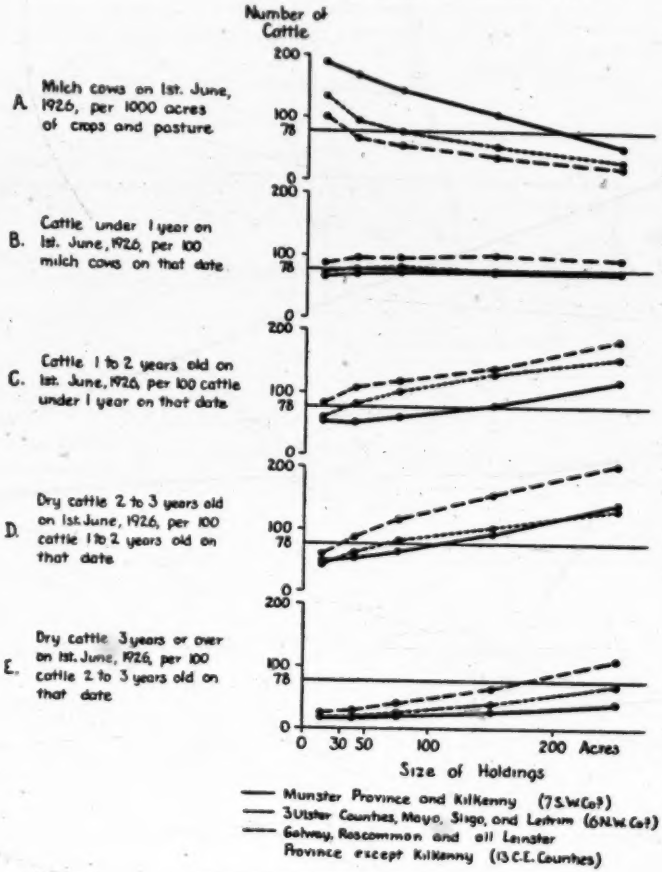
FIGURE 7

CATTLE TRADE BETWEEN CLASSES OF IRISH FARMERS, 1926



For explanation see the text.

[p. 28]

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of cattle for direct shipment to the English market; the small farmers are concerned only remotely, for the large farmer himself is their immediate market. They deal in much younger cattle and prepare them for sale to the middlemen and the big farmers. 231 438

Consequently, the small farmers are much less immediately affected by disturbances in the cattle trade with Great Britain. The fact has been evident throughout the years of the De Valera regime. It has blasted the prognostications of those who argued that a restriction and interruption of the trade with England, such as grew up in the "economic war" which followed De Valera's retention of the land annuity payments and the English retaliation in the form of import duties on cattle, would alienate the farmers' support of De Valera's government. It certainly alienated the large farmers, who were immediately affected, but the "farmer" of the politician is not always the whole population of that name. It left the small farmer relatively undisturbed. He was at one or two points removed from the actual trade with England and saw it only as a sale to big farmers. With the small farmers, the economic argument of De Valera's opponents failed. 231 439 648

However this may be, the conclusions as to the great division among farmers that statistics and the cattle trade have yielded us are borne out equally well within the separate counties. County Clare, for instance, shares fully in the internal cattle trade. And in Clare, the trade flows from small farmers to large. There are no statistics on the matter, but the generalities hold. Clare occupies a middle place within the system of exchanges. It is one of the seven southwestern dairying counties we have dealt with. But it does not always follow them statistically. As we have seen, Clare is a county of mixed holdings. Both the midland type of big farmer and the small farmer of the west and south are present. The cattle trade within Clare is a miniature of 231 438

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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that of Ireland. Clare buys in as many cattle in certain sections as it exports in others. Those who do the bulk of the buying are big farmers from the flatlands along the Fergus estuary or the hills of Burren. The small farmers of the remaining sections do the selling.

All this tedious statistical inquiry has not been without its purpose. It has established for us through the medium of economic inquiry the existence of two distinct kinds of orientation and adaptation to the soil and two kinds of agricultural activity. In doing so, in marking the first distinctions and differences to be observed among the dwellers of the countryside and showing us something of the relations between them, it has introduced us to the first great group with which we must deal: the small farmers.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER II

Small Farm Economy

THE small farmers' family groups inhabit the holdings or plots of land from which they make the livelihood we have described numerically. Except in a few and special cases, there is no physical separation of house plot from fields; the individual family's plot is usually a continuous one, and the other forms of settlement present in Ireland are rapidly being reshaped with that condition as the ideal. Consequently, the farmhouse is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. In it the farm family group spends its entire life, sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work upon the fields. 361 592

The farm family lives and performs almost all of its work within this spatial unit of land and house. And the unit is identified with the family in the eyes of its community in name and ownership. Outside this range, the farmer has little participation in affairs in comparison with others of the population. His wife and children have even less. Within this range most of the activity marking the relations of the human beings who make up the group takes place. 592

The "land," as we have seen, is usually divided into "field," "meadow," "garden," "bog," and "mountain," according to its character and agricultural use. These divisions make up the holding and represent the productive 231 241 311

[p. 31]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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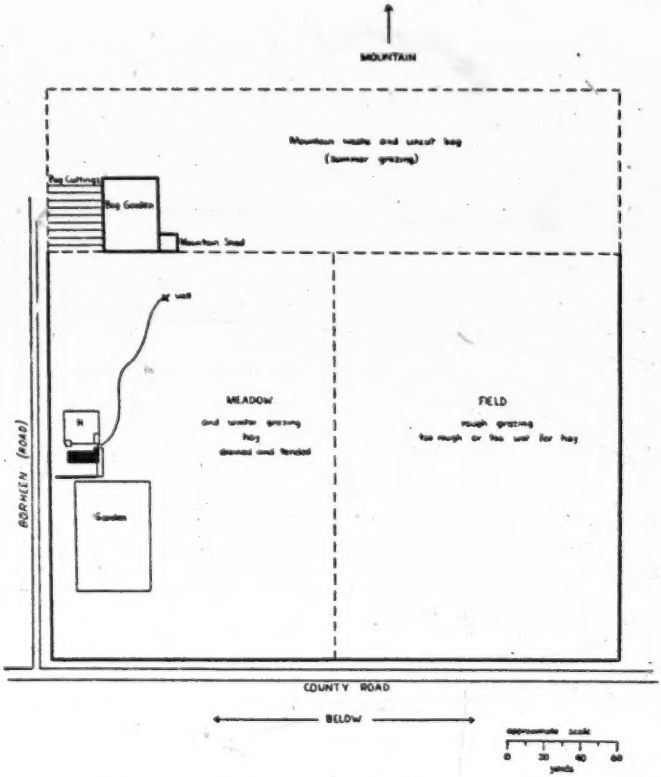
FIGURE 8

Diagrammatic Scheme
of Small Farm
LUOGH
16 ACRES



Schematic representation (not to scale) of composite Clare farm of about five to fifty acres.

[p. 32]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use. 231 241 311

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later. 231 343 351

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called "all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area. 231 241 311

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is carefully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general plan for all such houses of small farmers. 342 343 351

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various 512

[text continues on p. 35]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 children. If they are of school age, she must dress them,
462 feed them, and get them off to school. She does all the cook-
356 ing and washing up after meals and keeps the teapot always ready. Each morning she sweeps the house, makes the beds, and so on. The clothes of the household are her care as well, and the indispensable and constant mending of them which rough wear makes necessary all falls to her lot.

This household work is familiar to us; the point of itemizing it is merely to make clear the confined sphere in which the woman's recurrent and indispensable duties fall.

512 But her work stretches beyond the house door. In the
462 morning after breakfast she takes the milk buckets and milks
356 the cows in the sheds in the haggard. This is merely one of
● 231 the many trips she makes in and out of the kitchen doors for fuel, for water, to feed and tend the animals and the fowl.
234 Her milking finished, she must bring the milk in and separate it. In recent years, more prosperous farms have been able to make use of the separator. If there is none, she must set the milk in large pans and allow the cream to rise. The whole process of the conversion of milk to butter is her charge.

512 After the morning milking and the feeding of her human
462 charges, she must turn her attention to the feeding of the
231 farm animals, especially the young ones. The cows and horses are not her province, but all the care of the calves, pigs, and fowl falls to her lot. She prepares a mixture of warm milk and grain for the calves, feeding them from a bucket. They must not be allowed to suck, as the milk is meant for human consumption. Then she boils a large kettle of potatoes over the fire for the chickens and the pigs, or takes them the leavings of the previous day.

512 Before noon she hangs another kettle over the fire filled
462 with potatoes for the use of the family. In season she adds
[251] white cabbage and nearly always includes a portion or two of bacon, some of it home cured in brine to resemble salt
PORK.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

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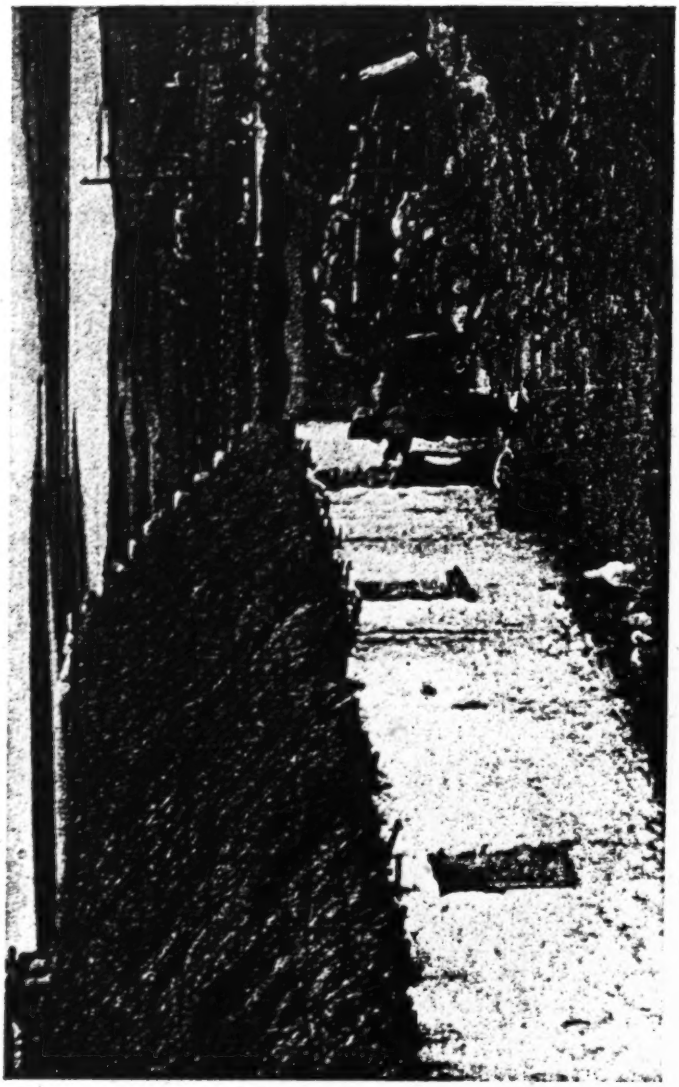

THE WOMAN OF THE HOUSE DRIVES HOME A COW

[facing p.36]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
[521 silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
858] sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
462 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading
231 the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] News.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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news. An hour or so later[1] the man brings the cattle in from 512
the fields, if they have been grazing during the day. He is 462
ready for evening tea. [231]

At that hour the work of the men is over for the day, but that of the woman goes on. She must prepare, serve, and clean up after the tea, and then go milk the cows brought in from the fields. Her work ends only with the separating that takes place when she brings her milk into the house. Even then, while the men may sit round the fire talking over the day's work or the affairs of the community, she is not idle. If the children need help in lessons, it is she who gives it to them. She puts them to bed, and, if she returns then to join the men at the fire, she continues with knitting and baking. When the whole family has finally gone off to bed, it is she who must close up the house at night and slake the fire in the hearth.

Work round and inside the house is continuous and varies very little from day to day and season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfills its needs of nourishment and shelter in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habitual behaviors. What variation there is in the accepted pattern is itself confined to narrow range. Certain chores indispensable in the day-to-day habits of the people are divided among days of the week. One woman informant, a small farmer's wife in Inagh, gave as her weekly round a much more rigid daily division of tasks than is actually to be observed. On Monday she did the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday she made butter, on Friday she went to market, on Saturday she got ready for Sunday, and on [527]
Sunday she went to mass and did as little as she could. Really, however, it is only on Sunday that there comes any serious alteration in the daily round.

Work in the land beyond the haggard and the house is 512
less restricted and more varied. It has a greater range of

[1] [about 5 P.M. - Analyst]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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221 types, varieties, growth cycles, yields, and care of seeds and
521 cattle passes round by word of mouth.

[805] The first of February, St. Brigid's Day, marks the begin-
221 ning of spring. For the countryman the return of the
132 "hard" days of wind and clear weather herald the season of
241 the land's drying off. Through February and March the gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted, and the fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each hard day is a welcome opportunity, for only then can work in the fields go on. With favorable weather, the work of preparation is over in the beginning of March, and the actual planting begins. By St. Patrick's Day, with its promise of continuous hard weather, the gardens are ready for a second planting.

221 The potatoes demand the greatest attention. A fortnight
241 after they are planted, they must be manured well with manure brought from the pile near the cattle cabins, and the ground must be leveled so that the plant will not go to stalk and thus fail to produce tubers. A fortnight more and the ground must be "softened" and the earth round the plant, which now shows its first leaves, must be "stirred." By the time May is reached, the potatoes must be "landed." Earth must be taken from between the long ridges in which the potatoes are planted and heaped up over them from each side. Thereafter nothing remains until the harvest but a summer spraying against blight.

221 Throughout the spring the cattle have demanded atten-
231 tion. March and April see the birth of calves and the
438 beginning of the milk season and intensified butter-making. The great spring cattle fairs take place. The farmer must devote himself to the all-important business of buying and selling his milch and store cattle and his calves. At home the cattle demand constant care against hunger, disease, and cold as he mixes their diet of fast diminishing hay with the slowly returning pasture grass.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

221 With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
241 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it
[492] has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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he was in the spring, for the autumn fairs bring him an 231
important market.

If he has been fortunate and industrious, nothing remains 221
for him to do but to prepare his fields for the next year. The 241
soil he has used for root crops must be turned, and the gardens which he intends for grain are ploughed. As he follows the furrows, he can look back upon a year ended, and forward to another to begin. By the time his ploughing is finished, the dead of winter and the holiday season of Christmas is upon him and the yearly round is over.

Yet it is over only to repeat itself. For within the range 221
of the seasonal variation and the demands of growing and maturing crops and animals the pattern of farm work in haggard, garden, meadow, and field is a constant one. Much the same progression of labor flows along year after year, and follows the farmer from boyhood till death. Yet there is much less restriction in choice of operation to be performed, in movement over space, in the possibility of day-to-day variation than in the case of the work of the household.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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167 178 241 and 1912 the thirteen counties densest in rural population included only six of the counties densest in ploughed land. "Dense tillage was in the east, dense rural population in the west,"[4] as it still is.

167 178 231 In the same search for economic causes, a better case has been made for the change from milch cattle to beef cattle production. As we have seen, milch cows are characteristically associated with the small farmers. During the period of emigration, the number of dry cattle has risen in proportion to the number of milch cattle almost steadily; the range is from 2,372 total cattle to the 1,000 milch cows in 1854, to 3,334 to the 1,000 in 1926; fluctuations have been very slight. It is true that the number of milch cattle has also risen steadily, if slowly. Such a change in actual numbers of cattle and in proportions of dry to milch cattle, the latter capable of yielding the greater amounts of food for farm consumption, may have had some effect upon the displacement of human beings by cattle, but certainly not a great enough one to determine the emigration. The lack of correspondence between these changes is evident when it is remembered that the change has taken place principally in the former tillage areas, and also that in 1926 the areas of greatest milch cow density were substantially the same as in 1854. The very little direct correspondence there can be is well exemplified in the contrast between County Clare, which fell from a population of 336 to the 1,000 acres of crop and pasture to 129, while milch cows remained practically the same in number (100 to 110 to the 1,000 acres), and County Mayo (a poorer region), where population fell only from 375 to 245 and milch cows also remained practically the same (90 to 100).

From these figures it is evident that the decline in rural population is not directly correlated with decline in tillage or change in cattle production. The failure of employment

[4] *Ibid.*, p. lvi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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 167 [178 231]

coincident upon that change cannot be assigned as the sole cause of emigration.

As the decline in population has been more characteristic of the small farmers, it may be possible to associate it with social conditions pertaining among that class. They have participated in the very agricultural changes which are thought to have caused their dispersal. They enjoyed the high prosperity of the closing decades of the last century, and won the progressive reforms of agrarian tenure. Yet they continued to send forth thousands of emigrants. Fluctuating economic conditions have undoubtedly had their effect, but factors whose greatest demonstrable result is merely to stay or hurry the stream of emigration cannot be evoked as efficient causes. In taking the problem directly to the small farmer, it will become possible to sketch the social setting in which emigration takes its form.

Clearly connected with the decline in population are other demographic statistics, particularly those of marriage. They present features which are unique among civilized peoples. Inasmuch as they are again indications of an underlying uniform social pattern whose occurrences they record, it is necessary to analyze them in terms of the behavior patterns of rural Ireland. Like emigration, they are more characteristic of the country people. Springing from marriage, they are thus directly indicative of social forces within the small farmers' family economy. 162

Briefly stated, they present the following characteristics: In Saorstat Eireann in 1926, according to the census then conducted, there was a larger proportion of unmarried persons of all ages than in any other country for which records are kept. Marriage, furthermore, did not take place until a comparatively late age. Thus 80 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty years of age were unmarried in 1926, 62 per cent of males thirty to thirty-five, 50 per cent of males thirty-five to forty, and 26 per cent of males fifty-five to 162 582 589

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

habitual utilization of persons specially skilled in them. 463
They are the ones to whom the small farmers habitually resort. Thus legal sanction might become necessary for matchmaking as soon as land reform made the farmers legal owners of the farms they transfer in the match. But a long experience of court tangles and reprimands by judges was necessary to establish the licensed solicitor as the channel for negotiation. The handy man who was a legal expert and had a fine copyist's hand in the country districts flourished quite a while longer, and flourishes occasionally even now. In the country districts, down to the present, these local specializations were acquired through personal association of one kind or another with former specialists. Very often skills are deemed hereditary in the eyes of the country people. But actually they are acquired as often through gradual development of habit begun out of interest and imitation as by inheritance and parental instruction. They are passed on quite often to others than sons. The following extract from field notes illustrates the development of such skills:

The local man who cuts hair here is a handy man; the man 463
Donnolly, who goes about and kills pigs for his neighbors is a 874
handy man. When we asked, we were told by Flanagan that 231
Donnolly was the butcher and handy man. They butcher only sheep, goats, and pigs. Cattle would be killed by the town butcher. Flanagan said Donnolly was not a true butcher, for he did not serve his time. If they want a boy to be a butcher, they send him to town and pay a fee and he would be trained there. Then they take out papers binding him. Donnolly said he learned it when he was a young man, but now that he was getting old he was not doing it any more. It takes several men to hold the pig, put a hook through the mouth, and kill it with a heavy blow on the head. They take it home, lay it on a table, and take a knife and cut it up. Then it is hung up, salted, and cured. Afterwards the butcher is given a bottle of stout for his work, as well as some fresh meat, while the husbands who helped get nothing.

341 called the first type *the central-chimney house*, because the chimney will be erected over the fire-place somewhere about the middle of the roof, (fig. 1 and pl. XLI: 1, 2, 3; the second *the gable chimney house* because here the chimney will be close to the gable often being built as a part of the stone-built gable (fig. 2 and pl. XLI: 2). The outside chimney then not seldom forms a pronounced gabletop or gable-finial.

The Central-chimney house.

342 Some of the most primitive houses I found in Ireland belong to the central chimney house type. To illustrate I choose a house from Spiddle, Co. Galway (fig. 3 and pl. XLI: 1). The house is said to have been built before 1839 and to have withstood the "big wind" of that year. How old it actually is I had no means of discovering. The walls are of stone with the mortar put on afterwards on the inside and outside, but not used in the actual construction of the walls. Some outhouses belonging to this farm are all of dry wall construction. The roof of straw rests on couples of beams, supported on the inner edge of the walls, so that the thatch does not quite reach as far as the outside edge of the wall, but leaves a narrow space uncovered. [171] This is an archaic feature found now in very old buildings in Ireland, as always in the black houses of Scotland.

The house is built on a slope, so that the fireplace end of the house lies higher than the entrance door. There is only one room, but a low partition wall at the back of the fire cuts off a section which is used as a bedroom. [352] In the lower end of the house a dresser is placed so that it together with a small table cuts off another section that nowadays is also used as a bedroom. Some stools, a cradle and a churn are the other contents. There are two doors opposite of each other, both provided with half-doors. The fireplace consists of some flat stones on the floor. Over the fireplace there is a [354] wattled chimney resting on two beams, supported by a cross beam. The chimney is adapted to a hole in the thatched roof, so there is no outside chimney. On one side of the house, the sheltered side, there are two windows.

About other houses of the same kind, I have heard from the inhabitants [231] that in olden times the lower end of the house was used for the cattle. In late times the cattle have been removed to an outhouse and this part of the house has been adopted as a living room.

342 171 The division of the house into three sections, which is characteristic of the central-chimney house type, is quite clear in the Scottish houses, namely the black houses, the bedroom being at the upper end of the house behind the

[Text continues top of p. 211]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 fire, and the byre at the lower end of the house. In the Welsh long-house
171 the hearth generally seems to face the living room and bedroom part of the house, and cuts these sections from the byre part. The two doors, opposite to each other, very typical of the Irish house (see p. 217), are also found in the Welsh long-houses, but here the space between the two doors has a more pronounced feeding-walk character, than we find common in Ireland, at least to-day when the cattle are generally removed from the dwelling house. For the three sections of some South Scandinavian houses see p. 222.

The gable-chimney house.

342 In various parts of Ireland I have found numbers of primitive houses with stone-built gables. These houses are always rectangular in form, never oval. Externally the type varies greatly depending mostly on the prevailing wind. On the coast, in very windy districts, the roof will not be built very high, but in more sheltered parts, it will be more lofty.

The gable finial, the gable top often consitutes a very characteristic feature of this house-type, pl. XLII: 2. Only where the low roof is used, the gable top is not especially accentuated. The outside chimney constitutes the gable
[341] top of the chimney-gable. On the opposite gable the gable-finial may be formed in a corresponding way, as a chimneyshaft without any flue. The chimney-shafts at the gables form perhaps the single example in the Irish peasant house of intentional architecture conforming with a wide-spread custom in Western Europe. As regards the serrated gable-ends see p. 226.

342 In small dwellings of this type there is only one room, the fireplace is si-
354 tuated against one gable-wall. The most convenient place for the beds is be-
352 side the fire, and at least one bed is to be found here. This is a very original feature of this house-type which is confirmed by Scottish material, old Irish descriptions, and even drawings. In the middle-west and north of Ireland, the bed is built in a projection outwards, *cailleach,* or at least in a niche in the side wall close to the fireplace, pl. XLII: 2, as in the Scottish *tig dubh.*

342 As in the central-chimney house, there are sometimes two doors opposite each other, but even a single door is common in small old houses.

Windows have come at a later period here also. In old-fashioned houses there is generally only one window, sometimes none at all.

342 At the lower end of the house, there was in more remote times place for
● 231 domestic animals. The division of the room by means of the dresser may have been adopted at an early stage, the dresser being especially suitable as

342 a kind of partition. When the domestic animals were removed, often to an
● 231 additional building at the gablewall, this part of the house would be used as a living room, just as in the former type of house, fig. 4. In a few very pri-
342 mitive houses of this as well as of the foregoing type I have found firepla-
354 ces with no chimney at all, the smoke leaving the house through a hole in the roof above the fireplace. Sometimes I have found two smoke holes, one in each end of the roof. The doors and half doors constitute together with the smokeholes a complicated machinery, providing the current of air to regulate the turf-fire and the smoke.

Dwelling houses without chimneys were found by me in 1935 at Belmullet, Co. Mayo and in Co. Sligo.

342 The houses with thatched gables sometimes have rounded corners so that the base foundation may have an almost oval shape on the outside, while the inside room may be rectangular in form, pl. XLIII: 2. It is evident that the oval house form and the thatched gables complement each other. They could have existed together from a very early stage in building traditions. In a windy district the rounded and thatched gables are suitable, as the house will be more stream lined.

The roof with a thatched gable can easily have replaced the stone, or cyclopic roof, in cabins and huts (both, bothán). This fact and certain similarities would seem to indicate that the oval house form in the abovementioned houses with thatched gables, may have developed from the round
[171] or beehive house type. Parallels may be found among the stone-built huts with similar roofs in Estremadura and elsewhere.

On the other hand, houses with stone-built gables represent quite clearly the rectangular house type, as in such constructions the gables are never rounded.

342 The stone-built gable constitutes a very practical way of solving the pro-
346 blem of how to protect the gable ends of the roof of an oblong house against the wind, pl. XLIV: 3. But there is another point to be considered. In mediæval houses in villages and cities, the gables have often developed according to the use and importance of the gable wall; when the house faces the street or main road the gable wall would be far more important than the side walls. Other features point to ecclesiastical architecture. In the early churches, in Ireland and elsewhere, the gable wall constituted the front wall. In Ireland the early primitive churches were often furnished with pronounced gable finials. Furthermore it has been suggested that the introduction of the rectangular form of house is due to the first propagators of Christianity

The stone or earth-

342 en floor may be sprinkled for instance with coral beachsand to help in sweeping it.

[356] In some primitive houses, where the cattle still had their places, in the low end, I have found a gutter or conduit going across the low end and leading out through the door. [231]

333 342 *The walls.* There are two main types of wall construction representing very old building traditions.

[172] 1. The dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara* — met with in the prehistoric buildings, *clocháns* etc. — are built of stones (often flattish) without mortar. Dwelling-houses which have been built with dry stone walls have in later times been covered both inside and outside with mortar, pl. XLIII: 1. The space between the bigger stones are often carefully filled up by small stones, *spallaí.*

Especially in Co. Clare I have admired the precision developed in the construction of the walls.

[172] 2. Of prehistoric origin are also the mud, clod or clay walls, *falla feidín.* A fantastic explanation of the term makes it equal to *falla ar feadh dín,* a wall that endures as long as the roof is kept properly thatched (Dinneen).

The clay was pulverized and made into a thick mortar by wetting it and mixing it with cut rushes or course sprat hay. The well built mud-wall houses form comfortable dwellings and it has happened that people have regretted leaving excellent thatched "mud walls" to live in cold stone-walled slatted dwellings.

342 The foundation of the walls is sometimes a pronunced feature of the house. Whilst the walls usually have a width of 1½, 2 or 3 feet, the foundation is wider, forming a shelf or broad step along the building serving as a pathway to the door. The foundation is sometimes not very dissimilar to some prehistoric house-foundations. In this connection I would like to remark that the pathway and nearest surroundings of the entrance door are sometimes paved by a mosaic of small cobble-stones from the sea-shore. This I have seen in costal districts in South West, and I suggest that it is the same kind of pavement as appears in Portugal, Madeira, Marocco and elsewhere at the border of the Atlantic And the Mediterranean Sea. [171]

Doors and windows. In many primitive houses of to-day the construction of the door-opening is extremely archaic: flat stones serving as lintel and as threshold. The frame of the door is wooden.

The doors usually have bolts of wood and a hasp to close the door. A thick wooden beam can be placed across inside the door on stormy nights, certain holes in the wall at both sides of the door being made for this beam,

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

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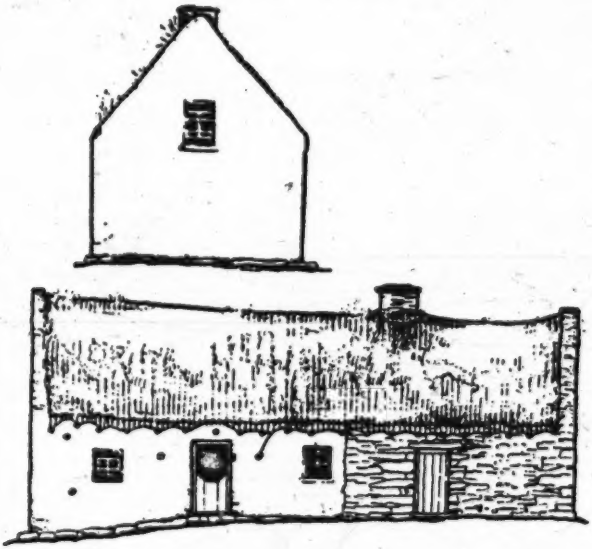

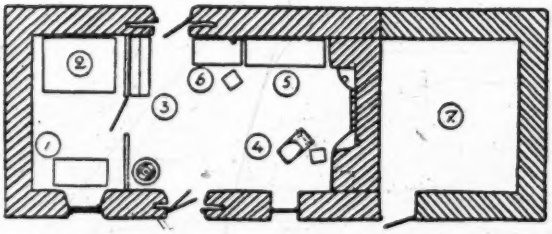

[231]

Fig. 4. Gable-chimney house. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry. The cattle once in the lower end of the house. Now removed to a house added to the upper gable wall. 1 table, 2 bed, 3 dresser, 4 cradle, 5 bench, 6 table, 7 sowhouse.

fig. 4. In Co. Kerry, Co. Galway and other parts of Ireland, I have been told of rough strong doors of wattles bound together with ropes of *sugáin*. Such a door, the hurdle door, *sgálán fraoigh* or *scalpán*, was more commonly used as a door for cattle sheds. It is found also in Scotland (see e. g. an illustration showing sheilings in Jura (S. W. Scotland) in Pinkertons Voyages and Travels, vol. III, p. 278, London 1809) and it is mentioned in the Ancient Irish laws. About the two opposite doors and the half-doors see p. 217. [171]

In older times a hole in the wall, a looplight, served as window. It was closed at night with a hay-wisp or a wooden shutter, *cómhla*, which was removed by day and secured at night by a stick placed across or by a latch. [284, 414]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 tive builder has replaced the doomed roof by the thatched roof if, naturally, timber and material for thatching were at hand.

A great number of houses of this type have been in use as late as the 19th century in remote parts of Ireland. Many references are given in the travel sketches and other literature of that time.

Particular attention may be called to the houses in Achill, Co. Galway, which belong to booleying settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, describing the island of Achill[12a] tell us about a certain kind of booleying (the cattle were brought down towards the coast when the season for fishing was on). They sketch the houses in a picture, pl. 34,a, and in words:

"The habitations of the islanders are very singular. Their houses are heaps of rude stones moulded by the tide, procured from the beach, uncemented; they are rounded at the gables, and roofed with fern, heath, and shingles, fastened on by straw bands. In the village of Dooagha, consisting of about forty cabins, there is not a single chimney. Some of the wealthier graziers, however, have an odd custom of residing in such houses, or in houses of a still more simple construction, only during the summer months, when the season for fishing is "on", and their cattle are brought down towards the coast to feed on the young herbage. These hovels, they call 'Builly houses'."

[556] [221] [231]

From another traveller, Caesar Otway, who made a short excursion in Achill in the summer 1838, can be collected some valuable informations.[12b] Otway mentions (p. 353, 356) a certain type of wall construction, viz, the pilledpin double wall: two dry stone walls with the interspace filled in with sand. This is the same archaic construction, which Thomas describes from Lewis. It is also known from archaeological excavations in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

342 361 "An Achill village consisted of congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky, and their construction was as follows: — a dry stone wall was built of a form like an obtuse oval, for they had not arrived at the art of making a square quoin, or erecting a gable end. Outside this wall, and at about a foot distance, another loose wall was run up, and the space between the two filled with sea sand, and then this was roofed, generally with timber washed on shore from wrecks, and covered with heath, which covering did not reach over the outside wall, and form an eave, but rested on the middle between the walls, and the moisture from above passed, as it should, through the intervening sand."

"— — — we entered the village of Dugurth. Just such a village as I

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[19] Mårten Stenberger[20] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boëthius[21] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands. 231 349

A glance at the literary material.

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[22] 172 174

In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara*, as in the stone-built *clocháns*, but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin*, and of *fraigh, i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[23] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[24] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion. 174

O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that 174 342

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 36

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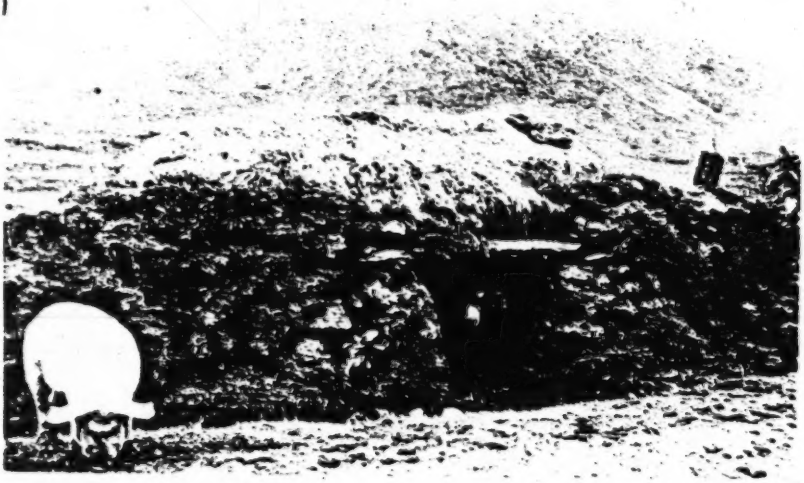

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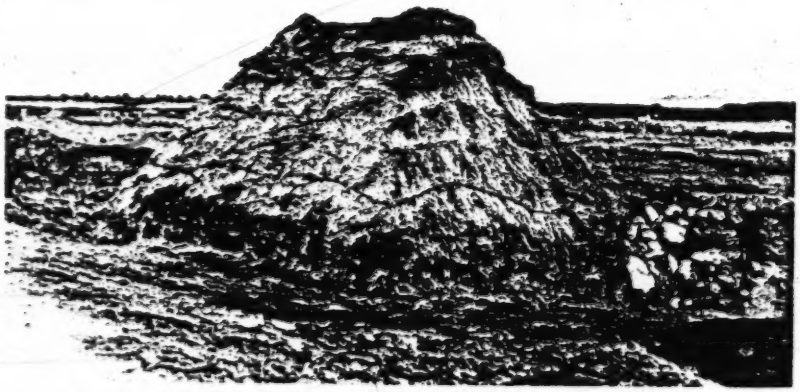


a. Sod house, Conamara, Co. Galway.
b. Sod house, Glin, Co. Limerick.

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to
132 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual
251 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on
231 which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume
234 or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten cows" is still a familiar term.

311 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less
241

35/ four feet high, with gates suitably placed. A door in the back of the dwelling house leads into a
36/ garden and orchard. In both these examples the front of the dwelling house is towards the yard, but in very many examples the back of the dwelling house is towards the yard, which is reached by a back door, while the front of the house faces a small garden with flowers and fruit trees through which a path leads to the front door. This is especially common in east Munster. Figure 3 shows the buildings on a smaller farm in the south-eastern part of Co. Galway. Here again we have a courtyard formed by buildings on three sides and a stone wall with a gate on the fourth, but the courtyard is divided into two parts by another wall which protects the portion in front of the dwelling house, which is a little garden with flowers and shrubs, from the animals which pass through the yard.

In the smaller farms of the north and west there usually are fewer buildings, and these are often joined together in one continuous row, as in the example shown in figure 4, on a small farm in Co. Tyrone, where dwelling house, stable, byre and a store form one long block of buildings. Here, the elements are clearly distinguished from each other—the byre and stable are more roughly built, with poorer roof timbers and thinner walls, than the dwelling house, while the store at the other end is narrower than the dwelling house and has a lower roof. Indeed most examples of this well-known and widespread type have the dwelling house clearly distinguishable from the outhouses; thus they must not be confused with the "long-house" of Wales, of which the distinctive feature is internal communication between the byre and the dwelling.[1] In contrast to this, there is no such internal communication in this Irish type, as each house, stable, byre, store and so on has its own entrance door, and very often the dwelling house and byre do not adjoin, but have a stable, store or dairy between them. But, as we shall see below, there is—or was until recently—a primitive form of the "long house" or combined dwelling house and cattle byre to be found in certain parts of Ireland.

Another farmyard form to be found in parts of the north and west, and especially in the hill districts and peninsulas of west Munster, is shown in fig. 5. Here the outhouses are built in one continuous row, and placed a short distance away from, and parallel to, the dwelling house; the space between the dwelling house and the outhouses serving not only as a yard but also as a passage between the public road and the farmer's fields; this yard or passage is, in many districts, called the "street".

In addition to these various farmyard types, there may be found farms in which the buildings are not arranged in any set plan, but are scattered about in a haphazard fashion, sometimes without any yard; these occur but rarely in fertile lowlands but are not infrequent in mountain and moorland localities, such as parts of the Kerry mountains.

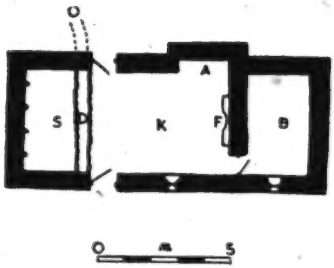
23/ It cannot be doubted that the system of having separate compartments or buildings for the dif-
35/ ferent kinds of animals and stores is of considerable antiquity in Ireland. The law tract *Críth Gabh-*
36/ *lach*, written about A.D. 700, states that the *bó-aire febhsa* (a certain grade of land owner) must have, in addition to his dwelling house and a share in a corn-mill, a kiln, a barn, a sheep-fold, a pigsty and a calf-pen.[2] Another ancient law tract[3] refers to five "houses", namely, dwelling house, cow-

[113]

[1] PEATE, I. C.: The Welsh House, 1940, chapter IV.
[2] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. IV, Dublin, 1879, 309.
[3] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. V, Dublin, 1901, 515.

house, pigsty, calf-pen and sheepfold, and there are several other references in the ancient law tracts to cow-houses and pigstyes.

But, notwithstanding this old and varied farmyard tradition, it is also quite clear that there was, up to the beginning of the present century, a widespread custom of keeping the livestock, or part of it, in the dwelling house. There are very many references to this in descriptions of life and conditions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Few, however, give any description of the internal arrangement of the houses, or the reason for the custom, and usually the accounts refer to small houses and a few poor animals. Some observers have mentioned the fear of wild beasts or robbers. "They are brought in by night for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves."[1] Here the writer refers to the bawns attached to the castles, but of course the same risk existed for the small farmer also. Another traveller writes of a night spent in a house in west Co. Galway: "I had just compos'd myselfe to sleepe when I was strangely surprised to heare the cows and sheep all comeing into my bed chamber. I enquired the meaneing and was told it was to preserve them from the wolfe which everie night was rambling about for prey."[2] Another and much later writer describes a night spent in a small house in the Kerry mountains, near Kenmare: "In the house where I slept—as indeed in every house of the same character in the county—the whole stock of the family, consisting chiefly of cows and sheep, were locked in at night. Such was the extreme poverty of the people that they would not otherwise be safe. ... There was a slight partition between the room where my bed was and the kitchen where there were three cows, a man, his wife and four children."[3]



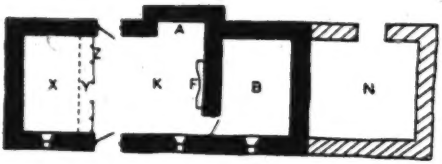


Fig. 10 House at Doolough, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; D, drain; O, drain outlet; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; S, byre.

Fig. 11. House at Srahataggle, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; X, former byre; Y, filled-in drain; Z, screen of canvas on wooden frame; N, present byre.

In many dwelling houses fowl, especially hatching hens, were kept in special coops or boxes, and it was quite usual to have weak or sickly young animals, or calves or lambs which for some reason were separated from their dams, in the kitchen where they had warmth and attention until strong enough to be put with the other animals. In many parts of Ireland the poorest people—

[1] Fynes Moryson: Itinerary, 1617.
[2] Dunton, John: Letter no. 2 (1699), in MacLysaght, E.: Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1939, 339.
[3] Doheny, M.: The Felon's Track.

231 351 361 those who had little or no land—commonly kept their animals in the dwelling house (which often had only one room) at night, a cow or two, or perhaps a donkey or pony, a pig or a goat and a few hens, the larger animals tied to pegs or rings set in the walls, the smaller in coops or boxes. In many houses, even large farmhouses, a special coop or perch was provided for the cock, whose crowing served to call the people of the house in the morning. A vivid description of the housing conditions of a remote and isolated community in the second half of the nineteenth century is given by Tomás Ó Crohan, writing about the Blasket Islands off the coast of Co. Kerry in the extreme south west: "There was a coop beside the partition with hens in it, and a hatching hen in an old pot nearby. At night a cow or two, a calf or two, an ass, two dogs tied to the wall or loose about the house. ... the two or three dogs would lie at the foot of the bed, the cow or two cows below them, tethered to the wall, the calf or two with the run of the kitchen and their muzzles in the fire. The ass was tied on the side of the house opposite the cows, and a cat with a couple of kittens in the fireplace niche ... And as well as all the other animals you might find a pet lamb or two about the house."[1] The custom of bringing the cattle into the dwelling house for milking during the period of the year when they are kept outdoors, as well as keeping them in the dwelling house during the winter period is recorded from Co. Kerry.[2] Indeed it is quite clear that, throughout the west and north of Ireland, the keeping of livestock in their small dwelling houses by the poorer people was quite a common practice up to the last years of the nineteenth century, and in houses from which the animals have long been ejected we may still see the rings or pegs to which they used to be tied.

342 351 361 231 There was, however, one type of house which was built and arranged as a dwelling for both people and animals, and which was still in use in the early years of the present century in parts of Connaught and Ulster, that is, in west Co. Galway, Co. Mayo, west Co. Sligo and west and north Co. Donegal. Figure 10 shows the plan of a typical specimen, at Doolough, Co. Mayo. This house is 12 m long and 5.5 m wide, built of stone and mortar and roofed with straw or grass thatch. It consists of two apartments, the smaller being a bedroom and the larger a kitchen-livingroom-cattle byre; the two apartments separated by the wall of the hearth. On one side of the hearth is a bed alcove. Two windows, one in each room and both on one side—the front—of the house, give light, and there are two doors, one in the front of the house and one in the back, placed directly opposite each other. On the farther side of these doors from the fire an open drain extends from side to side of the house; this drain is about 50 cm wide and 25 cm deep and is lined with flat stones. The space between this drain and the end wall of the house is the byre, and here, during the winter, three or four cows were kept tethered to the wall. The drain passed under the wall and led to the manure heap outside.

Figure 11 shows the manner in which many of these houses were changed during the last fifty years or so. A byre was built, attached to the house, as here, or quite apart from it. The drain was filled in, and a partition of wood, or, as here of canvas stretched on a wooden frame, erected to enclose the former byre which now became a bedroom. In many houses the partition was formed

[113] [1] Ó Crohan, Tomás: An tOileánach, chapter III.

[2] Campbell, Åke: "Irish Fields and Houses", Béaloideas, v, 68–70.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or press. 231 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible. 361 351 [173] [184]

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farmyard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type. 361 351

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, xvi, 102, 104.

[2] Platrès, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24. [113]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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241 also send one upon many false scents. One must use them with proper care. In such a case as this, care consists in discovering correlations and fitting them into wholes. For example, one learns little or nothing of various kinds of human beings if one counts only single characteristics. On the other hand, if one counts a wide variety of numerable features and finds one human group distinguishing itself again and again within this wide variety, one is justified in thinking one is dealing with a class of which the individuals are instances.

So it is with the economic data in the Irish records. The small farmers do appear as a true category. They reveal themselves in the cold figures as a class with habits of life of its own, different in kind and in quantitative expression from all others.

Rather than delay over the reasoning which leads to this conclusion, I should prefer to recite the distinguishing marks in the economic sphere.

231 First, it is clear that the small farmers practise
241 a type of agriculture all their own. Their products
434 differ widely from those of the large farmers, some-
437 times in kind, sometimes in proportion. The large farmer is a cattleman, a stockman. The small farmer is typically what we have come to call in this country 'a subsistence farmer'. Both depend primarily upon livestock, for Ireland is a country of grass and pasturage, depending less upon tillage than any other European land. But their economies

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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are quite distinct. The small farmer cultivates a 231
'garden' of oats, rye, potatoes, cabbage and tur- 241
nips, and devotes his pasture and the hay of his 434
fields to milch cattle. He sells his cows' increase 437
each year. He keeps large numbers of hens and a few pigs. But the milch cow is the centre round which this economy revolves. Nearly all he raises he consumes at home; his family and his farm animals take the greater part of his produce. It is only his surplus and his annual crop of calves which break out of the circle of subsistence and in so doing bring him the only monetary income he receives.

In all this he differs considerably from the big farmer, particularly the so-called 'rancher' of Irish agriculture. The big farmer is primarily a producer of beef. He concentrates upon the production of fat cattle; he depends upon a monetary market in which to dispose of his fattened stock. Upon this market he relies for the supplies which feed himself and his labourers. If he is wealthier and much more of a man of business, he is also nearly entirely dependent upon the whims of price and demand.

Naturally, then, the small farmer and big farmer play quite distinct roles in the economics of exchange, distribution and commerce. The small farmer disposes of his cattle, usually calves of his own breeding, quite differently. He sells this surplus to the dealer, the middleman, the big farmer.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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231 241 434 437 As calves grow up they move from the small farm to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them until they are ready for the English table. Consequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

With all this, it is natural that the small farmers 262 should be different consumers from the rest. 184 They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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present the one staple which he must buy off the 262
farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and 184
the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for 184
mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are 241
cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs 412
again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their 184
lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer- 241
owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the 464
owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of 241
peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in 231
a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is 434
that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

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231 241 434 which beasts feed him in their turn. He need go to town only for clothing and sundries, for flour and tea, and to sell at the fairs the calves and yearlings which bring in his principal monetary income and provide thus for whatever he cannot produce at home. These cattle go to big farmers, ranchers and shippers; and with the sale his participation in trade and commerce, in 'business', is finished except for his account with the shopkeeper (and in late years, the creamery). As you can well imagine, it is a livelihood little connected with the outside world, and now that agrarian reform has made him full owner of his holding, it is little open to disturbance from the outside.

This is the external view of the small farm. It is the view that usually satisfies the economist. But if one probes deeper and looks at the small farmer's livelihood from within, a fuller picture appears.

241 593 [461] That the small farmer is a family man even at work is important for the study of human behaviour. Eight out of ten people working in agriculture in Ireland work not for wages and salaries but by virtue of their family relationship. The work a man does and the directions he gives and receives take form within a social group. That fact yields an opportunity for the anthropologist. Here, in a modern country, is an economy in which there are other controls on labour than those we know—money, contracts, individual profit. To under-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus of the countryman's way of life.

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the small farmer's family lives upon the holding it works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them.

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, it is natural that this unit should be known and judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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311 tain', and wherever possible, it includes a 'bit of
231 bog' for 'turf' for the year's fuel. When a small
592 farmer tells you he 'has the place of four cows' he sums up this sort of farm, judging it for its ability to support himself and his family in the country manner and to give pasture to four milch cows. In the phrase he epitomizes rural economy.

592 Ordinarily the house opens directly into the
361 'haggard', as the farmyard is called. There in the haggard are the cabins in which cattle are housed and the various sheds and stalls, often built into the masonry of the house itself. In them, farm machines, tools and carts are kept and crops and seed are stored. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are housed there, and in one of the sheds pig or pigs find their quarters. The winter's supply of fodder stands there in the form of the great hayrick. The straw-covered pit of turnips and mangels, not far away, will serve for men and cattle; and the turf-rick is near at hand. As for the house itself we have already looked inside, in our search for the 'west room'.

592 The family with which this unit is associated centres its activity round house and haggard. Even for the men, whose work lies primarily in field, garden and meadow, work centres round the house for a good part of the year. If I give you a sketch of this activity as my co-workers and I saw it day after day in several rural communities in Clare, I hope to throw its general features into relief.

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Where is the woman today who
could shoulder a creel of turf a hundred yards out 521 561 888
through the bog mud to the famine road, before
the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunna- [482]
gore?

Often the expressions take a different turn. They 517
become that universal complaint — the younger 521
generation. "Young people aren't what they used 561
to be," said one old farmer in the course of a 888
general discussion of the golden age that was his youth. "They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else to a dance, and if they happen to win a turkey they will nearly shake the house down [in their triumph]. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. Now you can't get them to do anything unless you pay them."

Here he paused for an illustration, chose one 561
from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on. 521
"Wasn't old Keane out every night with his cattle 888
and he putting them in small fields and late in the [291]
night? Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept at it till he had cattle all the way up by Ballyvaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no controlling them."

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. The past, for the older members of the community,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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172 the Celtic tongue was imported by warlike overlords or "planters" somewhere within the limits of the Bronze Age, and that it was accompanied by the infiltration of ideas and customs that have their ultimate origin in central Europe and therefore represent a culture-pattern differing from the pre-existing "Atlantic" civilisation. But archæology teaches us that the older background was strong enough to survive and mould the new into characteristic Irish forms: even the virile curvilinear "La Tène" art style of the Early Iron Age, which entered Ireland by the north-eastern "bridgehead," was soon changed into new designs which the expert can at once recognize as "Irish" (Fig. 7). In peasant culture the continuity is incontrovertible.

But great changes were meanwhile taking place in the climate and natural landscape, and corresponding adaptations had to be made in Irish life. The onset of a cold stormy period not far from 500 B.C. forced man to move downhill and to concentrate on the drier lowlands, while on plateau and plain alike the old forests went down under layer after layer of wet bogland. When the veil is half lifted in the twilight of the Celtic Annals ten domesticated creatures are mentioned: kine, swine, horses, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, hens, geese and bees. To-day the only important additions would be the ass, the turkey and the duck. There are many signs that during the bad climate of sub-Atlantic times (say 500 B.C.-100 B.C.) cattle assumed the preponderating place in peasant economy which they have since maintained. It was their grazing, and the nibbling of the accompanying goats, which caused the great decline in the indigenous woodlands long before the forest remnants were destroyed by the English. The old custom of putting a goat with a herd of cows is perhaps a survival of former practice, for the goats would have kept down tree-growth and so prepared pasture for the cattle. [23]

But it must be insisted that the theoretical nomadism of the Celtic period finds little support in archæology: the 28,000 surviving earthworks known as "raths"—the sites of villages and cattle-enclosures—testify to the settled life of the dark

[Text Continues Top of P. 34~Analyst]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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132 winters—all these characteristics are related to the eastward moving stream of cyclones coming off the warm North Atlantic drift. Rain is heaviest wherever mountain masses place obstacles in the path of the moisture-bearing winds, and the peninsulas of Donegal, Connemara and Kerry have from 60 to 100 inches of rain each year (Fig. 8). By contrast the east coast gets about half this amount, while the low-lying tract between Dublin and Drogheda is favoured by a fall of under 30 ins. Everywhere the mildness and the damp encourage grasses and moisture-loving plants, but too often waterlogging has caused green pastures and woodlands to deteriorate into brown bogland. The prolonged autumns, another gift of the Atlantic, are important because they give man a sporting chance of saving his harvests: the heaviest rains are delayed until November and December. Similarly the relatively dry springs (March-May) are conducive to work in field and turf-bog at that season. (Chapter 15).

311 231 2A1 Reviewing the distribution of the chief crops and animals to-day, the following facts may be noted. Nearly one half the land devoted to crops, excluding hay, is occupied by oats and perhaps three-quarters of the yield is fed to livestock. Only in the wettest peninsulas of Connemara and Kerry does another crop (potatoes) occupy more land. It is estimated that the "consumption" of potatoes amounts to about ¾ ton per head of the population each year, but the greater part of this goes to pigs and other livestock. The greatest concentration of wheat production is in the comparatively sunny corner of Wexford, with secondary areas along the dry east coast in Cos. Dublin and Down. Recent years have witnessed an increase in wheat growing but there is still far less than in the record years of a century ago. when wheat was being exported to England. Barley, which is more intolerant of damp than wheat, is found on the well-drained soils of Co. Louth but particularly of Wexford and the sheltered valleys of the Nore, Suir and Barrow. It has declined less than wheat [273] because of the demand of the breweries and distilleries, but the drop in the illicit making of poteen has reduced its production in many a secluded spot along the west coast.

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Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where 248
the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and 244
the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has 311
been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered 231
that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the [178]
pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their [273]
importance in the past: one minor factor in the decline is the fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained 235
and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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235 considered that the abundance of wild white clover, on the seeds of which chickens and young turkeys feed, was another contributory factor. Of the goat it can be said that it is often
● 231 the poor man's milk supply and supplements the cow on many small farms just as the ass replaces or supplements the horse. But the ass is in fact quite rare in many parts of the country, for example in Donegal, and is regarded with contempt, whereas the horse, as befits its important role since prehistoric times, is held in high regard and is kept by small farmers often as much for the sake of prestige as for its use. "If they have three acres," says a Government Report of last century, "they think they must have a horse." The strength and speed of the Irish race horse have been attributed to the bone-building qualities of limestone pastures: the great breeding and training ground is the morainic waste known as the Curragh of Kildare, but throughout the country there are many districts where, for geographical or historical reasons, horses of quality are bred for export and for the delight of the crowds at local race-meetings. Readers are referred to
[113] Dr. Dudley Stamp's *Agricultural Atlas of Ireland* (1931) for further information on agricultural distributions.

172

Fig. 9. About 10 ft. high.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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172 been discovered under many feet of peat. Several types can
311 be recognized, for example those with upright stones at
351 intervals, which are sometimes left as "standing stones" after the intervening walls have been removed. Old field fences at Cush, Co. Limerick, claimed to be contemporary with raths of the late Bronze Age and "essentially similar to those built by an Irish farmer of to-day" have been described by Professor O'Riordain. This appears to be a striking example of continuity, for the fences are closely followed by existing field-boundaries. Since they lie some 800 ft. above sea-level they do not invalidate the general picture I shall draw in the following chapter, but it is clear that much more work on the lines followed at Cush is required.

351 Hedges of whins (that is, gorse or furze) about the
314 farmstead are much prized not only for the shelter they afford
137 to stock—they are dense and do not drip—but because they form an admirable clothes line on washing day and a ready
● [231] source of kindling wood. Formerly the young whin shoots were crushed and fed to horses. The heavy wooden maul and stone block used in the process may still be seen occasionally. It would require years of enquiry and observation to describe and classify the types of sod ("scraw") earth and stone fences which now parcel out the Irish soil into its patchwork of small fields. One may easily recognize the sod ditches of the rich grazing lands of Meath, with their tall thorn hedges and ash trees giving shelter to the cattle, the well-built dry-stone walls of the granite mountain slopes which vainly seek to stop the black-faced sheep, and the loose lace-like walls precariously constructed out of rough boulders in the morainic hills.

351 In the wind-swept mountains and along the coasts the
311 ditches are hedgeless, carrying only a tangle of heather or whins
137 and an occasional stunted tree, but throughout the lowlands the prevailing type of fence is a stone-faced bank of sods, in the side of which quick-thorn is planted (Fig. 10). These are cut back ruthlessly at longish intervals and are never pleached in the English way, so that the hedge is full of gaps. Occasion-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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potato was one of the factors that led to the decline of rundale 174
agriculture, both because of its late harvest and because it 221
resulted in increased populations which brought disastrous 361
subdivision of the holdings. Under the " gavelkind " code of
inheritance a man's property was divided equally among all [428]
his sons, so that the impossibly small fields came to be spoken
of not as the standard " cow's grass," but as a " foot " and
even a half-foot or " cleet."

Much has been written of the drawbacks of the rundale 174
system. It is so easy to condemn it—the " fights, trespasses, 621
confusion, disputes and assaults " to which it gave rise, the
wretched poverty which it bred, the evil consequences of
dwelling in packed house clusters—that it is well to recall the
better side of the system before it fell into decline. A writer
in 1853 has left his " recollections of nights of social converse,
of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined
operations of defence against bailiff or gauger which contrasted mournfully with the solitary grandeur of the new
dwelling." Another apologist wrote : " the closer the rundale
system is followed, the more the unwritten customs and
regulations observed, the more do intelligent tenants regret a
departure from them." Many of its better features, indeed,
have survived the enclosure movement and the separation of
farms ; we may cite co-operation in farm work and the social
fire-side evenings or " caileys." " Gatherings " of many kinds,
for work and pleasure, distinguished the rundale communities.
Every village had its musician, piper or fiddler, who was often
maimed in some way and supported himself by his skill.
Folk songs, occupational airs and epic tales were kept alive in
this way.

It was formerly the task of an appointed leader in a [622]
townland or group of townlands to see that customs were
observed, to arrange the casting of lots in re-allotting strips,
and so on. Probably we should see in the " king " not long
ago recognized as leader in such communities as Rathlin and
Tory a relic of this custom.

To understand the village-system in working order we 174
must see it as part of a wider pattern in which cattle-herding 621
221
231

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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174 621 221 231 played a dominant part, to which the claims of agriculture were subordinated. It was customary for the young folk, and in some cases the whole family, to leave the village as soon as the crops were sown and migrate to summer pastures among the hills. This custom is still widely followed in various mountain areas in Europe, for instance Switzerland and Spain, where it can be shown to be of great antiquity. To it the name "transhumance" is given, but we shall use the term "booleying," from "booley" (milking place), or summer hill dwelling. It is strange that scarcely any attention has been given or any importance attached to this aspect of the Irish past, despite its direct bearing on the social and cultural as well as the economic development of rural Ireland, on language and literature, music and the arts. From rare memories or survivals of the custom—it is still followed on Achill Island—and by analogy with transhumant societies overseas, we can envisage the part played by booleying in ancient Ireland, where its wide occurrence was facilitated by the presence of scattered mountain masses in all parts of the island (Chapter 2). We shall refer to some survivals below. The illustration (Fig. 15) shows a bullock's "horn" which used to be blown not long ago at a farm in the Torr Head district of Co. Antrim, to summon people together. One is tempted to see in this custom a relic of the pastoral heritage. Traditions of hospitality are a common accompaniment of pastoral life: there is no need to stress the reputation of the country people in this connexion, but it is relevant to add that the lavish hospitality for which the landed aristocracy have been famous may well have been derived from Gaelic custom.

534

Bullock's Horn
Weybridge, Antrim

Fig. 15.

Wherever it is found, this seasonal nomadism assumes a ritual significance, especially where, as in the old Ireland, cattle are its main concern. Thus the departure of the herds and their attendants in spring is accompanied by festivities and ceremonial; and the return to the homestead in autumn is the occasion for the rejoicings and reunions of Hallowe'en, when the youngsters play seasonal games among themselves and tricks upon their elders. We shall revert to this topic in chapter 17. Here we are concerned rather to describe the life

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among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the 174
cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of 621
the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, 221
together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the 231
hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, " the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in " booley " or " boley " 221
assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the 342
actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were 343
generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had 221
two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed 234
in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular " town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of " whitemeats " that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter [251]
appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This " bog-butter " frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations : it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

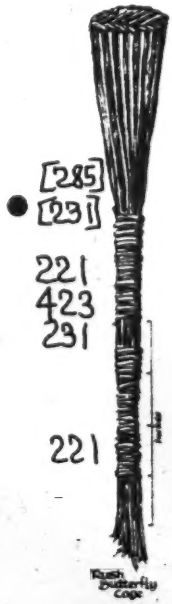

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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the 17th century, the natives withdrew themselves to the 221
mountains, where they lived a life that some historians have mistaken for aboriginal nomadism.

The booleying tradition, finally, throws light on many of the customs connected with cattle and sheep, and helps to explain the absence of the dairy in permanent dwellings which formerly had to serve as winter houses only, most of the dairy work being done in summer. It also helps us to attribute to custom rather than solely to laziness and neglect the Irish farmer's traditional indifference to the fate of his crops during the summer months. "Spring and harvest time," we quote a typical 19th century observer, "are the only periods at which the peasants exert themselves, and then they work very hard; for the rest of the year they are idle."

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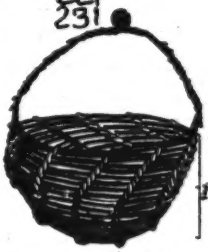

[285]
[415]

Fig. 18. Co. Antrim.

The old customs of tending ("herding") the cattle and tethering or spancelling them also derive from the rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. "Cattle, sheep, pigs and goats," wrote Arthur Young, "are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw . . . . cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom." Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used: even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. Where animals still run in common under the system of "sums" it is necessary to give them distinguishing marks. Apart from the well-known methods of branding or colouring [422]
the sheep's wool it is the custom in parts of Ireland, as in Wales, to ear-mark sheep by cutting or notching the ear with proprietary shapes. In Clare Island the geese are "tokened" by having holes punched in their webbed feet. Incidentally [413]
it is worth noticing that, so far as I am aware, the iron-tipped shepherd's crook is unknown in Ireland, a bent ash stick taking its place. "Gatherings" and co-operation are of course a feature of sheep-shearing and dipping. Sheep-pens [343]
of dry stone construction are often associated with ancient settlements among the hills: they are of various shapes and would repay study.

[p. 56 is blank]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 oval in plan: the problem of the origin of the hipped roof is discussed in Chapter 9. It should be realized that there are many transition types, and of course slated houses are rapidly replacing the old styles, but the division into upright gables and hipped roofs is fundamental. Dr. Campbell's pioneer work in this field has met with a hostile reception in some quarters: [113] see for example Mr. Colm Ó Lochlainn's review in *The Irish Book Lover*, January, 1940.

Within these broad divisions there is endless variety of construction, internal lay-out and roofing technique. Of special interest is the projecting bed-wing, the "outshot" or "cailleach" (Fig. 19), which is attached to gabled houses throughout the north-west from Co. Derry to Co. Galway. It may be compared with the "half-neuk" beds of the Orkneys and Faroes, and has its parallels too in the wall-beds of the Hebridean black-houses. The device allows the large bed (6 ft. by 4) to take its traditional place at the fire-end of the house without unduly narrowing the all-important space around the hearth. The bed recess is cut off from the room by curtains or, formerly, by hanging straw mats.

342 ●231 Single-roomed kitchen byres, where the family occupies the top or hearth-end and cattle the other, are now a thing of the past, but a few examples have survived in their original state, with an open drain crossing the floor and emptying at the side of the door. The custom of taking the animals under the family roof was once prevalent over north-western Europe in regions of difficulty where access to the cattle in all weathers was a determining factor. Tenacious usage rather than poverty ensured its survival into recent times, where the mutual advantage of the custom is summed up in the phrases, "the cow keeps the house warm," and "warmth increases the yield of milk." Two other points should be borne in mind, its relation to the system of booleying described in Chapter 5, and the necessity in former times of protecting the precious animals from wild beasts.

342 As a rule the bottom or byre-end was later converted into a dairy, store or spare bedroom, but the principal bedroom,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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352 bee-hive were common in some districts, but in parts of Mayo one rarely sees chairs of any kind. Step or ladder backed chairs with rush or straw seats are widespread: in the north-east chairs with wooden seats and upright-barred backs are [372] perhaps more usual. The turf fire is never allowed to go out: the glowing turves are heaped with ash at night and can be readily blown into a flame in the morning.

342 If the house has kept its brace and wattled chimney we shall be sitting under a canopy which tapers upwards to the smoke hole. The brace is a great beam extending from wall to wall, or resting at one end on a post some 5 feet out from the end-wall: between post and wall there may be a side partition or curtain-wall (Fig. 27) known in the Armagh-Meath area as the jamb-wall or the "hollan."[1] In some districts the front door is placed opposite this wall, but not, I fancy, in really old houses. In that case there may be a small window—the "spy-hole" "entry," or "jamb-window"—in the partition, allowing the sitter at the fireside to keep an eye on the open door. I have seen several houses in Co. Armagh where one has to stoop under the projecting brace to enter the house (Fig. 27). A further development is to hang a door on the brace-post, thus making a kind of internal porch or small hall. The jamb-wall is found from Co. Down to Co. Limerick but I have not seen it in the north-western province of the outshot.

342 The canopy is constructed of wattles or of sugán, plastered
352 with mud and cow-dung and white-washed outside. Canvas or boards are recent substitutes. At the sides of the chimney, above the ends of the brace, are small lofts or storeplaces, and there may be a larger "half-loft" over the other end of the kitchen—a relic of the time when corn and hay were kept here for feeding the animals below. A usual feature, under the stone seat to one side of the fire, is the ash or rubbish pit, another survival from far prehistory; and balancing it on the other side of the fire there may be a warm stone recess for the [23] sitting hen. At the back of the fire is a thick flag—the backstone—or a mass of clay forming the hob, but this is carefully built up of stones or bricks in eastern and southern

[1] This word is also used in N. England and Scotland for the curtain-wall. In Lancashire it is termed the "speer."

[Text continues top of p. 70 -- Analyst]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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kinds of construction are employed. Some districts use strong 343
stone buildings—for example of the bee-hive style to be described below—others roofless rectangles of stone with one end open, and others again timber-posted structures with roofs and walls of many different materials. These supplies are generally supplemented by well-built turf-stacks, and it used to be the custom to build a great stack against the gable of the house, both for shelter and to keep the house warm. Turf-stacks were occasionally built hollow to serve as a pigsty. [231]
In the north of Ireland the pig is by no means universally kept, though most old homesteads have a building which once did duty as a sty, and in some parts of the country these are of bee-hive construction, so strongly built that they have defied the ravages of time.

Just as old practices live on as children's games, so certain ancient types of buildings have descended in the social scale in the course of history. The bee-hive corbelled huts and the corn-drying kilns are examples. Both are circular in plan and built of dry stones or stones and mud. In the Gaeltacht the bee-hive houses are used, from Mayo to Kerry, for storing milk or turf. They are made by overlapping the flat slabs of the walls until they meet at the top in a false dome—a style of building which, in its origin, long precedes the arch and is seen at its best in some of the oldest monuments of human industry in Ireland, the prehistoric chambered tombs of the Boyne [172]
valley. Not far from this metropolis of ancient culture, in the Carlingford Hills of north Louth, Mr. H. G. Tempest has shown me several corbelled huts, some of which are still used as pigsties, while in Lecale in Down there are many examples, both circular and square in plan, which have been used as pigsties and hen houses (Figs. 38 & 39). These are generally grouted on top and whitewashed, but those of Louth and the west may have a covering of earth which, growing a crop of grass and weeds, gives the little houses the appearance of natural hillocks. Similar pigsties are known in south-eastern Wales, and have been described by Dr. I. C. Peate in his book *The Welsh House*. Corbelled huts are also used as pigsties and poultry houses in Caithness and the Orkneys.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XI.

HARVEST.

In this chapter we shall give an account of some harvesting 241
customs which depend on a minimum of mechanical appliances. 246
We begin with the hay harvest, the first of the season. The new agriculture represented by turnips and rotation grasses has, in its diffusion from England during the last two centuries, still barely touched the remoter parts of Ireland, where hay until lately had no place in the scheme of cultivation. Successive crops of corn and potatoes were taken so long as the land would yield anything, when it was allowed to grow wild grasses and weeds until the time came to break it up once more. Oat straw, which is never chaffed, to some extent took the place of hay, which, apart from a limited amount of meadow hay and " sprit," was chiefly gathered from waste places and [231] mearings and reserved for horses and milk cows. It should be noticed that the old customs of herding, tethering and spancelling permitted the stock to graze in places where hay could not be made. Moreover natural hay, ripened but left uncut, was utilized to a great extent along the mild coasts.

Scandinavian archæologists have shown that the practice 246
of preserving grass as hay for winter use began in that region during the cold wet phase of climate known as the Sub-Atlantic (Chapter 4). So it may have been in Ireland, too: the scythe and the iron hook have their origin in the Early Iron Age, and some of the methods of securing the crop can have changed little in two thousand years. On small farms

[p. 95]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Line Baskets

Fig. 76. Length *c.* 3 ft.

into a narrow mouth, a feature which is found in all Aran basket-work. Miss Gahan of the Irish Homespun Society regards it as an adaptation to the conditions on the islands, for the contents might easily be spilled owing to the number of loose stone walls which have to be crossed on a journey to the fields. Many of the Aran carrying baskets (" kishauns ") are constructed of coiled straw rope bound together with split bramble (Fig. 77). They no doubt help to keep warm the food carried in them, such as boiled potatoes, boiled in their skins needless to say, in the Irish fashion. Such " lipe-work " was once common in Wales, where seed-baskets, yarn-holders, hassocks and meal containers were made in this way, but in Ireland the only coiled work I have seen outside the Aran Islands is the bee-skep of rye straw, tied with bramble. The illustration shows the small bone pin or awl used by the islanders in threading the brambles. Similar pins, which doubtless had many uses, are frequently found in archæological excavations, particularly on sites where a Mesolithic heritage may be suspected.

[282]

[231]

Coiled Straw Basket

Fig. 77.
Note bone pin.

This brings us to the very large topic of the uses made of straw. There is no need to refer to the value of oat straw as fodder or as thatch, though it does not last long as roofing material, and either wheat or rye straw is preferred. A humble example of the use of thatch is shown in the beehive (Fig. 77*a*) Rope (sugán) made of straw or hay still finds many uses, especially for tying down thatch on houses and stacks. It is twisted on a " thraw-hook " of ash or hazel, with a sally hand-grip, but the old styles are declining with the spread of a simple " twister " of strong bent wire (Fig. 78). This type is found throughout the British Isles in many forms some of which are

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Fig. 77*a*.
Height 4 ft.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Fig. 80.

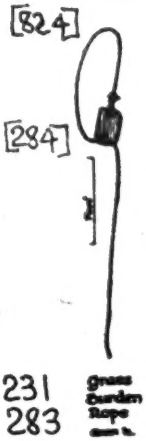

Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugán and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a "tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way: some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or "mell"), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply: finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. "Langles" and "burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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and similarly the cattle were fastened in the byre by ropes 231
of straw, as in Clare, or of horse-hair, as in Kerry. Of the 283
two burden ropes illustrated (Figs. 80, 81) the Donegal example is a two-ply rush rope with an eye made of a peeled stick bent into a loop: the Aran specimen is of grass (Manilla) rope [284]
passing through a hole in a wooden runner. Similar blocks of wood serve as a swivel to prevent kinks in tethering ropes, separate lengths of rope passing through each hole.

Reference has been made to the fir-ropes used in securing 283
roofing scraws and thatch. Thin splits of straight-grained bog-fir about four feet long and an inch wide are twisted by hand into hollow cylinders, joined end to end to make a coil of about 50 feet. Two or three of these are twisted together to give the finished product, which combines great strength and elasticity with the capacity to stand up to all weathers. Fir-rope was often stretched across the wooden bed-frame to [352]
make a springy mattress. A short "tie" of fir-rope is shown in Fig. 21, p. 63.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

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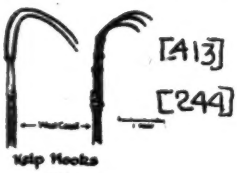

Fig. 102.

[439]

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222
262
Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

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228
[439]

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

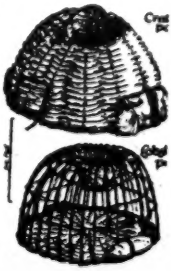
Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

241 sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone
[423] walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.
[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be to some extent neglected. A family keeps a couple of pigs, some
[231] sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on
[237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de vâche*) are used as fuel.

373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, 415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of [491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a side-ways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies [243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

For water transport there are a good many boats of various 501 descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

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[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

There is another cross in the church which is of much finer workmanship, and is probably the true *Leac Leo*. In 1870, when Mr. Kinahan visited the island, the church was in ruins, and was used as a cattle pen, and the cross, or a stone coffin lid, he is not at this time able to say which, was set up on its side, leaving a space between it and the wall to form a trough. 172 [231]

(3.) *St Leo's Cave* (*Uaimh Leo*), on the south side of the island.

(4.) *Thobhar Leo.*—St. Leo's Well is situated, not in the cave, but some distance from the top of a deep and almost precipitous cove, called *Fuath Leo*.

(5.) *Cloghan Leo* is a small round cell, now almost completely ruinous, built within an enclosure of very little larger area. The saint's footprint is pointed out in the rock on which the building stands.

VII.—HISTORY.

As a Paper of this nature would be incomplete without some mention of the changes and vicissitudes that the population of the islands has undergone, a slight historical sketch is attempted here. It is not, and does not pretend to be, complete, as unfortunately the material available is very scanty, especially in regard to its earlier history; for, though the Venerable Bede, the Four Masters, and others make several references to the islands, yet these nearly all relate to ecclesiastical events, which have at most only a secondary bearing on the history of the people, and are not within the scope of this Paper. 175

The annalists record that in the second century a tribe of the Firbolgs (Clann Humoir) who occupied that part of the mainland opposite the islands were conquered and enslaved by Tuathal Teachtmar, a Scotic or Milesian monarch, and it is probable, if the islands were inhabited by members of the first-named people, that they shared the same fate as the rest of their tribe. It is not known whether such was the case, as this is "the only mention of this teritory while in the hands of the Belgae," says O'Donovan in his "Letters," except that one of their chiefs named Modh, or Modha, gave his name to Inis Modha, or the Clew Bay islands. After the conquest of the Clann Humoir the territory came into the hands of the Milesians, and the records about it relate, at first, to the deaths of their chiefs, and later on in the 9th century to the incursions of pirates (believed to have been Scandinavians), but make no specific mention of Inishbofin or its inhabitants.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior, 231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive, 972 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the 381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish 226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much [251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this [342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen, [435] and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet 459 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought 235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the [234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district, 273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow
●231 fastened to the horses tail.

The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed
513 in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and is *regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the
[834] strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but
262 fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more
[272] extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal)
264 stirabout, buttermilk.

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[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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cemented by "dobe" or tempered clay, or sometimes mortar. It 342
generally consists of two apartments, the kitchen and the "room." The kitchen, which is usually of pretty large size, is used as the living room; it has a floor of beaten clay. This room has one, or perhaps, two windows of small size, and seldom made to open. These are always glazed now-a-days, but in the last century they were covered with oiled sheepskin. The house has two doors, both of which open directly into the kitchen, and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the partition wall of the two apartments.

The end of the kitchen farthest from the fire is used as a pen for the cattle and pigs. The fowl roost where they can, often on the [231] backs of the cattle.

Above the beams or couples in this part of the kitchen boards are sometimes placed, making a sort of loft, in which fishing and boat tackle, agricultural implements, and other articles are stored.

The fireplace is built against the partition wall between the kitchen and the room. It consists of a stone hearth backed by a [354] "hob," also of stone, built out slantwise behind it to make the fire draw well. This class of house has no chimney, the smoke escaping through a circular hole in the roof immediately above the hearth.

"The room" is a smaller apartment than the kitchen, (measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet) it has one or two small windows, and the floor is sometimes boarded.

The furniture of the house is poor and scanty, that of the kitchen 352
consisting of a bedstead, rudely made up of drift-wood, two posts being driven into the floor, a longitudinal piece uniting these and two cross-beams at head and foot resting by one end on the posts, and having the other built into the wall. Sometimes it is built up into four-poster shape and has curtains. The bedding is composed either of feather ticks, or, with the poorer people, of straw, covered with coarse sacking. The bedclothes are often very dirty. There is a dresser covered with earthenware plates, cups, and jugs of a poor and cheap description, a table, two or three chairs, and a couple of forms or settles. A long straw rope is usually stretched across the apartment to hang clothes to dry on. Worsted when spun, nets, &c., are hung from the couples.

"The room" contains one or two beds of the sort described, a chair or two, a table (in some cases), and a large chest.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual three-legged pot, a 415
griddle, a gridiron, and sometimes a pot oven, a few staved wooden piggins, a boran or sheepskin sieve, and, in the mountains and islands, a quern, now only used usually for grinding barley for cattle food,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 178 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
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Inishbofin

[p. 202(B)]

121 IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the
[167] availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated dis-
[434] tricts of the country, an island off the west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly col-
114 lected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of
124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
[578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer
[231] told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

[p.205(B)]

314 year the feed of a dozen sheep is burnt in the homes."

Agricultural life depends on the use
311 of the "commonage," or rough pasture,
231 and the improved land, which is almost
632 entirely drift fertilized by seaweed and farmyard manure. Two-thirds of the island's 2480 acres is rough pasture, used for the sheep, cattle, ponies, and donkeys, as well as for peat collection. Figure 1 shows that the island is divided into five townlands, in each of which the commonage is shared, with the result that a farmer may take his animals not to the rough pasture near his holding but to ground as much as a mile away. There is a band of farm lands
311 stretching from lough Bofin to the har-

342 been built for almost the entire popula-
511 tion. In 1893 it was said that there
were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds,
[657] so that peat was stacked in a corner of the cottage with the fowls roosting on it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace, the cattle in a pen at the other end of the room, and the farm implements and fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] Now the
[343] old houses are the outbuildings, still thatched, with oat straw (not rye as formerly) laid on sods and tied down with home-made straw ropes weighted with large stones. Only five thatched houses were still inhabited in 1954. Some of the thatch has sprouting oats and some of it is rotten, but, when a roof is beyond further repair, it is all stripped off and the sodding and thatching begins again. Happily, corrugated iron is not used as it cannot stand the weather.

Farming

Agricultural practice is almost uni-
241 form: an acre or so is divided between oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—barley, and there is generally a small patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions, carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen. The ground used for crops is called the "garden," and its fertility is maintained by using animal manure and seaweed, and also by rotating the crops. Strange (or "foreign") seed is favored, and
[657] bought at a cheap rate under a government scheme. The remainder of the farmstead consists of a varying amount of meadow, generally 1–3 acres, and some pasture. The precious crops are
[231] carefully walled, but some of the farmers open their fields to the cattle and sheep after the harvest, partly as a means of natural fertilizing.

231 Each farmer has one or two cows and
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[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[p. 206(A)]

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult
654 route described on p. 203. The policy of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[12] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever bought. As one of the islanders put it,
437 "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [12] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p. 206(B)]

231 is said to be due to the expense of im-
[492] porting feedstuffs. Donkeys and Con-
nemara ponies are kept as draft ani-
mals, and almost everything is conveyed
in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was
made in 1907 by a local carpenter from
one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required,
including lobster pots, fishing nets, fur-
niture, doors, windows, and hand bar-
rows, which consist of two shafts joined
by slats and a single wheel in the rear,
all of wood.

Digging and manuring of the land
221 begins in late February, and seaweed is
brought from the shore as needed. The
potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's
Day (March 17); oats, two to three
weeks later; barley and mangolds at the
end of April or in May. Most calves
are born from March to May. In dry
years peat is cut from May onwards,
laid out to dry, and eventually stacked
in ricks six feet high secured by large
stones, or placed against a stone wall.
Apart from routine work, there is little
to do until the hay harvest, generally in
August or September, though sometimes
a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with
the hope of a second crop in the autumn.
Oats and barley are harvested in Sep-
tember, after which the main potato
digging takes place, though some are
dug earlier for the household. From
October to late February, there is little
to do except tend the stock, though
some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under gov-
ernment schemes. Few farmers make
the ricks of peat beside their houses so
commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch
it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major
aim of the Congested Districts Board,
and from the eighteen-nineties to the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow— and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean, even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat. Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable. Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter. And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at that season, when food for livestock is scarce.

Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen

[1]Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 349.

[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.

[3]ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.

[4]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.

[5]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 beauty which vary subtly from one region to another in response to local climates, conditions and contacts. The use of local building materials meant that they fitted into landscapes of which they were literally a part, their clay or stone walls gathered from the earth on the spot, their timbers dug from the bogs, their thatch harvested from the fields. A Swedish ethnographer writes that 'the best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe.'[1] The result of an unbroken tradition was a fine simplicity of style and proportions, with nothing of the vulgar obtrusiveness of the new fashions in country houses, based too often on urban styles and red-brick respectability. Before the famine, houses in the market towns also were very largely of traditional local style save in the central square. Isaac Weld, describing Roscommon in 1832, states that out of its 517 houses no less than 462 were thatched.[2]

Our concern is with the old-style house as a shelter for man
342 and beast and as the vehicle of family lore and regional tradition.
362 In the crowded clachans limitations of space and the fact that
231 diarying was mainly practised in the summer booleys go far to explain the absence of separate byres or dairies. Sanitation was of the crudest and closets unknown. It is these aspects of Irish rural life that have most readily aroused the amused indignation of the critics and the defensive wrath of Irish patriots. As we read in an earlier description of the Western Isle:[3]

> At one of th' ends he kept his cows,
> At th'other end he kept his spouse.

The custom of housing man and beast together has been very general among pastoral peoples in regions of difficult climate, whether in Highland Britain or the European mountain zone. Parts of Ireland, however, have long had a different type of house giving more family privacy: in the lowland parts of Leinster, East Munster and South Ulster the house with central chimney and fireside partition did not easily allow of the keeping of livestock in the house, and one is inclined to regard

[1] Åke Campbell, *Folk-Liv.* (1937), 228.
[2] Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 307.
[3] W(illiam) M(offatt), *A Description of the Western Isle*, Dublin (1724), Canto 2.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

this style as an improvement introduced by English settlers. This central-chimney house with its 'jamb-wall' hearth will be described in the following chapter. In any event, although stray hens, a pet lamb or a farrowing pig may occasionally join the cats and dogs in an Irish kitchen, the keeping of cattle in the house is a thing of the past. Yet it was so recently practised, especially along the Atlantic seaboard, that many existing houses are not far removed from kitchen-byres, a cross partition conveniently converting the byre into a bedroom, store or dairy.

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Moreover the shape and internal arrangements of the prevailing pattern of traditional rural dwelling are conditioned by these antecedents. The long rectangular shape was sanctioned by custom and preserved by superstition; a house, to be 'lucky', must not be more than one room wide (Fig. 8). 'Widen the house', I have heard it said in Donegal, 'and the family will get smaller'. The hearth gable of the house was, where possible, dug into the slope of rising ground, so that it would have been difficult to enlarge the house by widening it: it could grow more easily in length. The long shape is also characteristic of humble dwellings in the small straggling Irish towns. Their streets are lined by whitewashed cabins strung end to end interminably; in the 'cabin suburbs' one rarely sees a house that is not aligned along the road. Describing Ballymoney in Co. Antrim about 1830 the Ordnance Survey Letters state that many houses facing the main street had no access to the byres and stables behind, so that cows and horses had to be taken in and out through the house. In parts of western Ireland cows were brought into single-roomed houses within living memory. In Clare Island, Co. Mayo, there were at the turn of the century only five or six houses out of the total of 120 into which the cattle and pigs were not taken at night.[1] Writing of the village of Kilgever near Westport in 1880 an observer states: 'It is a terrible thought that these huge heaps (of manure about the doorsteps) had all been taken from the single rooms, each of which formed a common stye for men, women, children, horses, cows, pigs and poultry.[2]' It is still characteristic of many small farms that the manure heap is not far from the

[1]C. R. Browne, *Clare Island and Inishturk.*
[2]J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught in the Spring of 1880* (1888), 54

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 front door, for the cows are kept in a byre which is a continua-
362 tion of the dwelling house, an obvious convenience though there
231 is not, as in the longhouse of Wales and Dartmoor, direct access from kitchen to feeding-walk.

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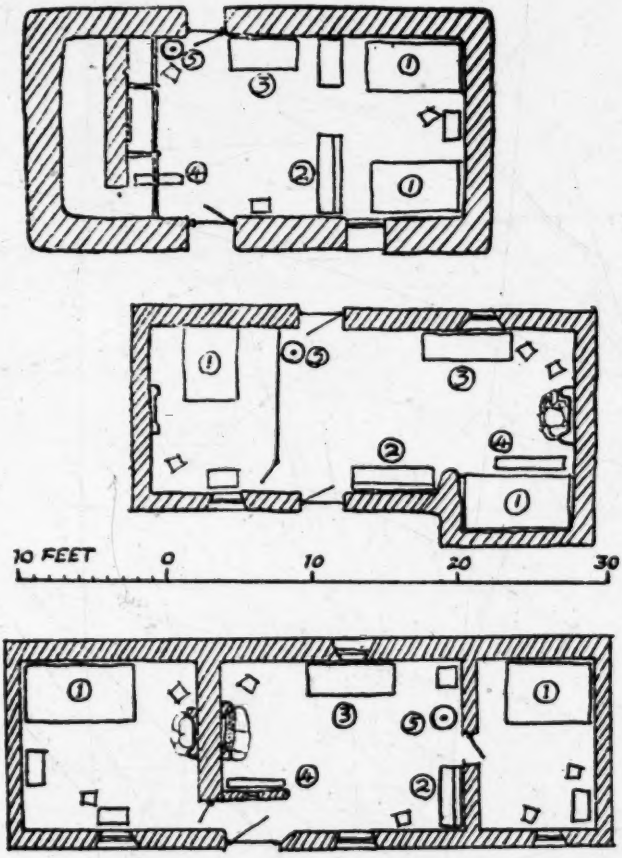

FIG. 8. House plans. *Above:* hipped-roof house, Co. Galway (compare Fig. 13, 2). *Centre:* house with outshot, Co. Donegal (compare Fig. 12, 3). *Below:* house with jamb-wall, Co. Down. (1) bed, (2) dresser, (3) table, (4) bench, (5) churn.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

THE THATCHED HOUSE

Poverty and rack-renting undoubtedly contributed to the long survival of such conditions, but they ultimately derive from cultural forces of wide distribution and high antiquity. It used to be said in defence of the custom of sharing the house with the cow that she helped to keep the house warm and that in turn the cow yielded more milk. Inquire further and you will find that it was thought to be unlucky if the cow was not able to get a glimpse of the fire. Behind this belief there lies faith in the power of the fire to dispel evil spirits. The end of the house farthest from the hearth is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-end', a relic of the time when it housed the cattle, for it was obviously wise to have the floor sloping down towards the byre. Many cabins and huts were constructed as lean-tos against a bog-face or an old fence (ditch). Hence the saying applied, for example, to the Cappagh district of Co. Armagh, that 'you can't cross a ditch or you'll fall down a chimney'. It should be recalled that in Ireland the tenants built and repaired their own houses with, normally, no assistance from the landlord, and there was little inducement to build houses to last longer than the lease of say twenty-one years. Only in Ulster under the custom of tenant right could outgoing tenants claim recompense from the new tenants for improvements made.

The simple rectangular shape is a feature of west European house-types from prehistoric times and has characterized some houses of Neolithic age excavated in Ireland. Such houses were usually built of timber, clay or sods (scraws). Circular or oval houses are of similar antiquity, whether made of stone or of wattles, but although a few round-ended rectangular houses survive, the round hut of corbelled stone slabs is used today only as a store place or animal house (Chapter IX). The houses of Achill Island are described by several writers about 1840 as circular or oval in shape, built of boulders without mortar and having the thatched roof continuous with the walls. They had neither chimneys nor windows, and the single door was sometimes not more than four feet high. None of these houses is now inhabited though their ruins can be seen. The round or oval house, however, has probably contributed to certain features of the traditional rectangular-house in some areas, for example the central hearth and the hipped roof which is proper

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied 342
"'twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the
fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the [763]
west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the [777]
luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was always carried out to the graveyard through the back door, [764]
and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the [354]
room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the [231]
flagged passage between the doors served as a path for livestock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh, [777]
in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

[1]C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2]A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands*.
[3]'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

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342 kitchen is generally floored with puddled clay which takes a surprisingly well-wearing surface. The housewife will tell you that such a floor raises less dust than one of concrete, and if it tends to wear unevenly this matters little since the cooking pots [415] and some of the furniture which is not built-in has three legs [352] instead of four and will therefore stand firmly on an uneven floor. The rocking chair, despite New England's claim to have invented it, was surely first devised for such a floor. Lime, cowdung or ashes were sometimes added to the floor when it was being prepared, and mud scraped off the road, already well puddled, was considered an excellent floor material.[1] In Armagh, we are told, floors were made by simply digging up the ground and trampling it: 'They sometimes have a dance for that purpose, and many a match comes out of a thing of the sort.'[2] Another method was to keep a flock of sheep moving about the newly spread floor for some hours until it was well puddled. The bottom byre-end of the old-style one-roomed farm house was cobbled, and a flagged walk led from door to door. Devices ● 231 for tying up the cows were secured to or built into the bottom 353 gable: a variety of stone and wooden fasteners may still be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island. One writer humorously observes of Co. Galway that the cow had to be tethered lest she should eat the bed-straw, but that pigs and poultry were free to roam.[3] The hens spent the night on a rope or pole hung across the kitchen from eave to eave, and laid their eggs in handsome nesting-baskets of woven straw (Fig. 16). Here we may notice a curious bit of folklore which suggests that hens were carefully looked after for superstitious reasons, as well as for their economic value and for the cockerels' time-keeping. It is said that every night the hens, when they argue among themselves before settling down, are plotting to leave Ireland and fly back to Norway, but in the end they decide to postpone the trip for another day! In Co. Limerick elaborate three-tier wooden hen-coops are sometimes seen in the kitchen, and in Co. Down I have found the sitting

[1] J. Binns, *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland* (1857), 1, 112.
[2] Ibid., 186.
[3] T. A. Finlay, 'The Economics of Carna', in *The New Ireland Review* (April, 1898).

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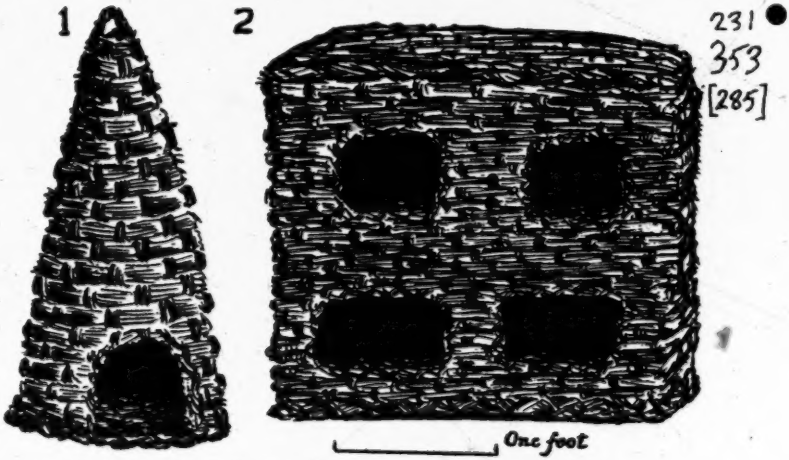

231
353
[285]

FIG. 16. Straw hens' nests. (1) Co. Clare. (2) Co. Leitrim.

hen warmly ensconced in a stone-box alongside the fire. In the mud floor one may sometimes see large 'pot-holes', hollows in which the heavy iron pot is placed when the boiled potatoes are pounded for pig-food (Fig. 19). The wooden or iron 'beetles' with which the pounding is done are as varied in shape and size as they are indispensable (Fig. 17). Sometimes

353
[415]
[413]

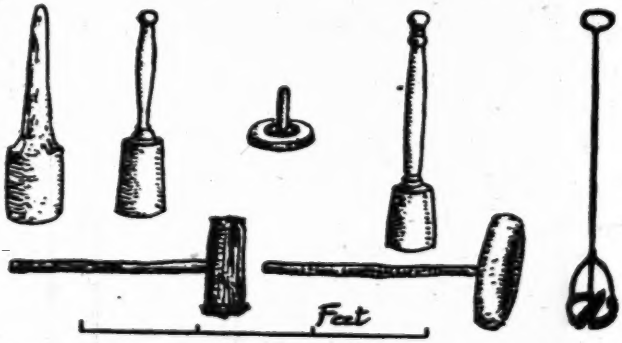

FIG. 17. Beetles, for pounding potatoes and, below, mells for 'knocking whins', Co. Antrim. Beetles similar to the first example were formerly used also for washing clothes and for breaking flax before hand-scutching.

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353 a wooden plank is set in the floor as a footing for the pot, or to give the spinning wheel a firm base. The upright churn also needs a firm footing and in the Mourne Mountains a movable granite flag was kept for this purpose. I have seen a mud floor in Co. Down with several round holes in which milk was poured [231] for each member of a family of cats. In the Bronze-Age Orkney village of Skara Brae every hut had stone-lined holes sunk in the floor, which were thought to have been used to store limpets.[1] In archaeological excavations near Belfast I have found holes which were presumably used for storing milk-products sunk in the clay floor of an 'earth-house' (souterrain) of the Dark Ages.[2] In some old houses there is a hole near the fire, either in front or let into the wall alongside, which is used to store the ashes.

354 In nearly every example of prehistoric and early historic houses which have been excavated, the hearth occupies a central position, and cooking pots would have been suspended either from the roof timbers or from specially constructed supports. We know from English travellers that this continued into recent centuries. Thus Fynes Moryson: 'the chief men in their houses make fires in the midst of the room, the smoke whereof goeth out at a hole in the top thereof.'[3] He goes on to say that the humbler clay or wattled cabins also had their fires in the middle, and in the early nineteenth century we read of houses in West Antrim where the fire, though not in the centre of the room, was 'advanced some feet from the gable wall so that the persons of the family can readily sit round it.'[4] The description given by Charles Lever of the little cabin of Owen Joyce on one of the Brannocks Islands off the west coast, even if fictional, is worth quoting because Lever was probably drawing on tradition. It reads: 'It was built in a circular form, the chimney in the middle. Certain low partitions sub-divided the space into different chambers, making the centre the common apartment of the family, where they cooked, and ate, and chatted.'[5] In the course of time, however, the fire has come to

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 17.
[2] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 5–27.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 231.
[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 275.
[5] Charles Lever, *The Martins of Cro' Martin* (1864), 2, ch. 31

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canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354
shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373] were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse-collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made [492] partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342
is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the 353
chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231] ● to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513] the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352
the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

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POTS AND PANS

Despite certain conservative elements it must be recognized that very great changes have taken place in the Irishman's diet in recent centuries. Tea and the potato, invaders from east and west, have largely replaced whitemeats, although another more recent pair of intruders, maize-meal and rice, distributed by the British government during the famine, have made no such conquest. Dr. Salaman has fully discussed the depressing effects of the potato on diet and culture.[1] Unless one has seen a peasant family sitting down to a meal of boiled potatoes it is hardly possible to credit the consumption figures. It used to be reckoned that a stone a day was the allowance for a labourer, and it was 'by no means uncommon, in times of plenty, for a labourer to eat 14 lb. of potatoes at a meal'.[2] An average consumption of 8 lb. per day for each member of a family is well authenticated. It is not surprising that there was a general craving for 'kitchen', tasty relishes such as strong butter when this bulky, starchy and monotonous food came to dominate the Irish diet. There seems to have been an expansion of sea fishing to keep pace with the demand for 'kitchen'. Down to recent times salt fish were hawked through the autumn countryside by noisy 'cadgers', and the careful housewife would have a barrel or two of salt herrings put by for the winter. One is reminded of the 'relishes' with which many African peoples relieve the monotony of a diet of mealies.

One of the many Irish customs which the English found revolting was the bleeding of cattle. Fynes Moryson wrote: 'they often let their cows' blood, eating the congealed blood with butter'.[3] Arthur Young notes that in Wicklow 'they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food'.[4] In Ulster cattle were bled 'in a smooth place, the coagulating blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed. This was cut up into squares and 'laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year'.[5] Unfortunately few details of the bleeding operation have come down to us though I have been told that it was customary to close the wound with a cloven stick.

[1] R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), chs. 11–18.
[2] I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 429.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[4] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 62.
[5] C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 333.

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262 In some parts of the country the blood was made into puddings.
231 Sheep's blood, in this case caught at the slaughtering, is used for making blood puddings in parts of the south, and black puddings made from pig's blood are popular in other parts of the country. I believe one might divide Ireland into two regions according to the popularity of black and white puddings, but I would hesitate to demarcate the border!

264 A great deal of information could be collected on local and festive foods and on food substitutes which were resorted to in famine years. The traditional times and names of meals also offer a fruitful field of investigation and they should be listed before new fashions entirely replace them. In many parts of the country only two meals were taken, at morning and evening, a fact to be remembered when considering the colossal quantities of food that were consumed at a meal, but it should be added that there were times when little food of any kind was available to the poorer people.

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FARMYARDS AND FENCES

Throughout the lowland farming country the commonest ditch is an earthen bank faced on one side with stones and planted with quicks slipped in near the base among the stones (Fig. 36). This was the 'approved mode' of enclosing the land 351 417

FIG. 36. The hedged ditch, cross-section.

advocated by the reformers from the late eighteenth century onwards, but it was noted that 'the planting of hedgerows was repugnant to the practice of the country' and in many districts the hedges were neglected and the livestock still had to be tethered in the fields.[1] The tradition of temporary fences died hard. 'A year's ditch passeth for a very strong fence', wrote Sir John Davies to the Earl of Salisbury in 1606. These sod fences were deliberately thrown down after harvest, and the decayed sods enriched the soil. The *Advertisements for Ireland* published in 1623 state: 'Their fields lie open and unclosed. Where wood is plentiful they hedge in all their corn with stakes and bushes and pull them down in the winter and burn them.'[2] When fixed field-divisions were adopted, the hedgeless earthen bank was preferred in many parts of the country, usually growing a luxuriant crop of brambles and gorse (whins). These were a useful source of firewood and provided both shelter and food for the livestock, the 'pounded whins' being fed to horses. The knocking stones, flat slabs or stone basins where the whins [231] [246]

[1] *Report on the Estates of the Drapers' Company in Ireland*, 1829.
[2] *Advertisements for Ireland* (1623), Ed. G. O'Brien (1923), 33.

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Co. Kerry, which is believed to date from the sixth or seventh 171
century. Whether or not the origin of this style of building in western Europe should be placed, as I am inclined to believe, in the megalithic period, there can be no doubt that it represents, in various parts of the Mediterranean-Atlantic route, the survival of an ancient method of building. It has had a long life in exposed hilly districts where suitable materials lay to hand, especially where the interests of simple shepherds and cattlemen were dominant. Villages of houses with domed or conical stone or mud-brick roofs are a feature of south-east Italy and Syria, and of the dry belt stretching eastwards to India.

Some of the Co. Kerry farmyard clochauns are still used for 343
storing milk; their thick walls are admirable for maintaining 291
even temperatures. Their association with the pig may also be an archaic feature, for the pig was perhaps the first domesticated animal to be brought to Ireland, and although much altered in breed, it still thrives best in warm, draught-proof surroundings recalling the sultry jungles of its original south-east Asiatic home. The well-worn phrase about 'the gentleman that pays the rent' not only summarizes the role of the pig in recent historic times but carries a humorous hint of the veneration in which the pig was once held in southern and western Europe. Here archaeologists have postulated an early Neolithic matriarchal 'swine-culture', vestiges of which would explain the fact that the pig was the only cult animal of the oldest of the Greek mysteries, the Eleusinian.[1] Later pork became the favourite food of both the Roman and Celtic worlds. In parts of Ireland the pig is driven into the house for luck on May morning, and the [755]
pigsty figures in a strange ritual for certain cures, e.g., a sufferer from mumps should be led with an ass-halter three times round the sty! Further, there is surely a supernatural quality in an animal which is reputed to be able to see the wind! In many parts of the British Isles, especially in Scotland, it is unlucky to speak of a pig when fishing at sea. Superstitions about the pig are numerous in Scotland, and in the Highlands there was formerly a tabu against keeping pigs and eating pork. This was apparently true also of those parts of the north of Ireland which have had close connections with the Western Isles.

[1]C. O. Sauer, *Agricultural Origins and Dispersals*, 57.

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343 lightly meddled with, and if the water is not as good as usual
312 you will be told, in the phrase used for an ailing human being, that the well is 'not *at* itself at all'.

FIG. 40. Well-covers, Co. Cavan and Co. Down.

Finally we come to a miscellaneous assortment of outbuild-
343 ings and shelters built to house various animals and birds.
235 Elaborate pigeon houses (ducats) designed to house hundreds of birds seem to be confined to the east and south coasts and to areas planted by English or Scots. They are no doubt manorial in origin but some existing examples were built in the early nineteenth century, though they are no longer in use. In these areas the smaller farms may have little pigeon houses made for a dozen birds, and the humblest stable is likely to have a pigeon hole or two in the gable. The birds formerly nested in hanging nests of plaited straw.

Cavities in the thick walls about many old farms were built
343 as dog-kennels or duck-houses, and simple shelter holes ('boles'
231 in Ulster) were intended to house assorted three-legged iron pots (Fig. 32). An interesting variant is the bee-bole, a shelter for the bee-skep, a few examples of which have been observed in eastern Ireland.[1]

[1]R. M. Duruz and E. E. Crane, *English Bee Boles* (1953). (National Beekeeping Museum Pamphlet No. 1.)

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ploughs were known in parts of Celtic Ireland, but the light plough or *ard* almost certainly prevailed, and it is unlikely that ploughs of any kind were employed outside the 'few favoured acres' of the infield. A light plough, at any rate, would be unfit to break the tough sod of the outfield, which was allowed to rest for long periods. Even today the answer I have been given when I have asked ridgemakers in old outfield why they were using spades has been: '"Tis too tough for the plough!' Ploughing 'by the tail', similarly, becomes intelligible only if one envisages it as restricted to infield cultivation. The iron plough with curved mould board did not reach the outlying corners of the country until late in the nineteenth century, and down to the time of the famine iron ploughs were used only in progressive areas where there were improving landlords. The prototype of these ploughs was the Scottish two-horse swing plough invented by James Small about the year 1765. By the end of the century it had reached Ireland (and also Norway) and it was a powerful instrument in breaking down the archaic system of openfield husbandry. The Irish were amazed when they first saw a ploughman with a Scots plough both driving the horses and holding the stilts.[1]

Under the traditional system ploughing was 'merely marking the land with furrows'[2]: a spade or mattock was commonly needed to turn back the earth, and to force the share into the ground it was often necessary to have a man walking alongside the plough, pressing down on the beam with a stout stick. No bits or reins were used, and the plough itself required two men or a man and a boy, 'one to hold and one to drive', that is one holding the plough stilts and the other leading the horses by walking backwards before them. Evidently the man at the handles needed to give all his attention to the plough. It was, as a Cavan man described it to me, a process of 'jerking up and down'. Many of these practices were probably taken over from the days of ox-teams. Ploughing with oxen is believed to have died out in late medieval times, though it was reintroduced by some landowners in the late eighteenth century. The small farmer did not use oxen for the plough because unlike horses

[1]R. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 111.
[2]I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 656.

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407 they could not be put to other purposes such as going to the
241 fair.

[231] The wooden plough has now been almost entirely replaced by the iron plough, but in many districts a wooden plough, often converted from a lea plough, is preferred for opening drills (Fig. 42). The potato growers of the kingdom of Mourne in Co. Down, for example, find that it suits their stony soils and is less likely to be damaged by boulders. The rough wooden mould-boards carry the earth with them and distribute it more evenly than the iron drill-plough, which tends, moreover, to 'put a skin' on the soil and to pile up pointed ridges which would require to have their tops flattened later.

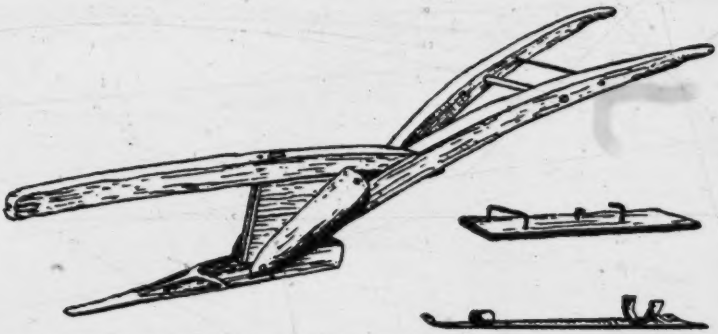

FIG. 42. Wooden drill plough and plough slides, Co. Down: the lower slide is of iron.

The improved wooden plough did not reach remote hill regions until roads were built after the middle of the eighteenth century. Even in the nineteenth century it is described as a newcomer in Co. Donegal, where spade labour had previously
[412] been supplemented only by 'a crooked stick armed with a bit of iron, with a second stick grafted to it to give two handles'.[1] This archaic implement must have resembled the wooden 'ard' (araire) of Mediterranean lands. It was so light that when the improved wooden plough with mould-board was introduced into Donegal the ponies were not equal to the task of pulling it. In west Cork the new wooden ploughs were not to be

[1]John Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience as an Irish Landlord*, 47.

246 milder winters there seems to have been no such response. Although there has been hay-making on the rich meadows of Co. Meath, for example, since medieval times, when the English openfield system was introduced, I have found no literary or archaeological evidence for it anywhere in early Ireland. Indeed Giraldus Cambrensis expressed surprise in the [114] twelfth century that the Irish neither made hay nor built stalls for cattle, and despite his untrustworthiness I believe his witness may be accepted in this instance. Hay-making would have begun on the river bottoms (callows, holms) which, being liable to floods, were not available for winter grazing: this meadow hay is today much less important than 'upland' hay, the significant term used for rotation grass. The hay-making season is nowadays a time of toil for all members of the family, but I suspect that the period from midsummer to late July was under the old order a slack season, the time for raiding and fighting, and catching the English bending in the hayfields. For the Irish it was the 'blue month', when food was scarce (July is also called 'the hungry month') and the meal bins empty. In Ulster at any rate, for reasons which may be older than King William III, July is the holiday month and the time for faction fights. Sir John Myres used to say that in the Mediterranean world, where there is little grass to make hay, the month of May was the slackest time of the summer, the [721] favourite time for fighting instead of hay-making. In Ireland as in classical Greece the winter climate made it difficult and unsportsmanlike to go to war at that season.

To judge from present practice on the tiny farms of the west of Ireland, grass was cut as required from field-banks and odd [462] corners, a creelful at a time to give to the cow as a 'bribe' at milking time, and it was woman's work. The hook used for [412] this purpose, the grass or scythe hook, is smooth-edged, unlike the saw-toothed corn sickle, and what hay was made in former times was probably cut for the most part with the hook. The [231] livestock would be fed in winter mainly on oatstraw, and grazed on the infield stubble, supplemented by the outfield grasses which had been allowed to mature while the bulk of the stock was at the summer booley-grounds. We may be sure that what little hay was saved was treated much as it is on mountainy

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XV

HOME-MADE THINGS

UNTIL the agrarian and industrial revolutions broke up economic self-sufficiency nearly every material need on the small farms was satisfied by the work of the family and the local community. Houses, furniture, food, clothing, simple implements and tools were home made or home produced. The most important specialist was the maker of edged tools, the blacksmith who thus occupied a special position in the community. His forge, customarily placed at a cross roads near running water, was never locked and became a rallying centre for idle men on wet days and for dancing in the evenings. His strength and skill were proverbial and magic powers were attributed to him and to the forge water. The smith was the first person to be invited to social functions. Not being a food producer he was, like the seers and later the priests, entitled to tribute of corn and first fruits. When a beast was slain the head was the perquisite of the smith. The ancient laws prescribe in detail the allotment of the various parts of the carcase to different offices, and the smith's right was maintained down to recent times. George Petrie, the nineteenth century antiquarian, is reported to have said that he remembered the time when a smith might have 50 or 100 heads of cows and pigs pickled in his kitchen.[1] Other craftsmen were itinerant because they could not be supported by the work available in any one district, and the last

[1]See Stephen Gwynn, *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906), 219. The method of dividing a carcase is thus described about the year 1600: the head, tongue and feet to the smith, the neck to the butcher, two small ribs that go with the hindquarters to the tailor, the kidneys to the physician, the udder to the harper, the liver to the carpenter and sweetbread to her that is with child. *C.S.P.* (*I*) (1601–3), 684. Dr. Johnson refers to the custom in the account of his journey to the Western Isles: cf. Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 171.

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HOME-MADE THINGS

By far the most versatile of home-produced rope-making 283
materials is straw. Rye straw is longer, softer and more flexible than any other, but very little rye is now grown save along the west coast where it is still the most popular thatching material. Wheat straw is the best substitute, but in fact most farmers must now depend on oat straw, thus 'tying up' some of their fodder. Straw rope (súgán) not only had many direct uses but served as the basis for such crafts as the making of mats, baskets, bee-skeps, mattresses, hen roosts, pigeons' nests and horse harness. It was used for seating chairs and making arm-chairs, and for a great variety of hobbles and tethers for animals and ties for holding down thatch. The fondness of the Irish for tethering and hobbling their livestock must be seen [231] in the light of inadequate fences and the conditions of partnership farming in open fields. Not only the larger animals, but hens, turkeys, and geese were commonly restrained in this way. 'All livestock of the poorer man is in this sort of thraldom' wrote Arthur Young.[1] One may still see a tethered hen with her chickens that might have stepped out of the illuminated pages of the fourteenth century Luttrell Psalter. A straw rope stretched across the kitchen made a serviceable clothes-line. Torches were sometimes made from twisted straw; on the other hand, when [373] suitably coated with mud, straw ropes made a fireproof smoke-canopy. Chopped straw or layers of straw ropes were also used in constructing mud walls, and it is possible that, as in Sweden, [333] stakes wrapped in straw rope daubed in clay were once an alternative to 'wattle and daub' for wall building. It has been stated that the fowlers of the Mayo coast would let themselves down the cliffs on straw ropes,[2] which must have been exceptionally well made; ropes made from the fibres of bog fir were more reliable. In Co. Antrim fowling ropes were of horse hide, but bent ropes are also recorded.[3] I have seen countrymen on a windy fair day wearing an improvised belt over their long coats in the form of a straw rope, and in the early nineteenth century children in Co. Cork were described as 'clad in nothing except a coarse woollen shirt that came half way down the thighs and

[1]Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 37.
[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 55.
[3]R. Dobbs, *County Antrim in 1683*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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[231]
[492]

FIG. 69. Coiled food-basket, Aran Islands; calf muzzle, Co. Clare; beehive and horse-collar, Co. Antrim; all of straw except the calf muzzle.

some large rectangular examples seem to be made of built-up plait as described below. The distribution of coiled basketry in western Europe suggests that it is an extension northwards from south European and African regions where it is a richly developed art. A straw underthatch from Co. Down—the only one of its kind I have seen in the north—was made in a simple weaving technique, using straw ropes. But the commonest method of making mats was by what I have called built-up plaiting; beginning with a straw rope twisted on itself, wisps of straw are inserted in every third twist and their ends worked into plait in combination with the combined ends of the previous wisp. Fresh handfuls of straw are regularly inserted into the plaits. They are given different names in various parts of the country; for example, tates in Antrim, kets in Down, and gleogs in Meath.

Such mats can be made of any desired size, and in the past they served many purposes, as hangings to mark off bedrooms or bed alcoves, as linings for the wattled doors of houses, and as mattresses. Their long-continued use with wattled doors on houses of mud or stone carries the suggestion that wattled [342] houses of the better class may once have been lined with straw mats serving as draught screens and taking the place of the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XVI

WRACK AND WRECK

000 NO part of Ireland is more than sixty miles from the sea and its most populous districts have for ages been strung along the shore. This is as true today for Co. Donegal as it is for Co. Dublin. Yet we think of the seashore as the most natural part of our scenic heritage, the zone least affected by the hand of man which, inland, has wrought massive changes and turned forests into bogs and farmlands. True the great headlands must have presented to ancient man much the same majestic outlines as we admire today, but the lowlying stretches of coast, unstable in the face of erosion and deposition, have been considerably modified also by human interference. Deep in the ancient beach deposits and layer upon layer in the sand-hills where we picnic and play lie the relics of ancient shore dwellers. It was here of necessity that man found his first foothold on the island, to it he has clung and to it inlanders have returned to satisfy a variety of needs. Here by the shore man has gathered cockles and mussels, dug for bait and reaped the harvests of wreck and wrack, here he has built weirs and traps for fish, slips and shelters for boats, racks for drying nets and kilns for burning seaweed. Here too he was wont to hold festival with rites and games in seasonal gatherings long before port cities blocked the estuaries and holiday crowds thronged the open beaches. Easter and Harvest were the old times of festival, when the moon was full and the tides ran low.

222 A teeming population of shellfish was the shore's first
● 231 attraction, a steady supply of food supplemented at the nesting season by seabirds and their eggs and in summer by the anadromous fish seeking fresh water. In hard winters and late

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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springs when fodder was scarce cattle, sheep and horses found 222
edible seaweed on the shore. Scottish planters in Co. Down 231
found that their sheep 'kept fat and wholesome all winter and spring by feeding on the oare.'[1] This is nowadays one of nature's neglected resources partly, no doubt, owing to enclosure and the loss of grazing rights. It has been claimed as the result of experiments that the feeding value of *Ascophyllum nodosum* (knob wrack), which grows towards high tide mark, is almost equal to that of meadow hay. Certain species of seaweed are still, 222
however, gathered for human consumption—carrageen or Irish 262
moss (*Chondrus crispus*) sloke or laver (*Porphyra*), dulse (*Rhodymenia*) and dulaman (probably chanelled weed)—whether as medicine or 'kitchen', that is a tasty morsel to be chewed between meals, or boiled to be eaten with potatoes. In lean times the kitchen might become the staple, and a writer in the 1830's stated that when the potatoes gave out 'hundreds of the people may be seen going to the seaside to gather dulaman.'[2] Carrageen, besides being made into a jelly possessing many virtues, was used as a thickener for milk.

The most profitable way of exploiting seaweed down to 222
recent times was for the burning of kelp, which became a considerable business among shore-dwellers in the eighteenth century as the growth of industry stimulated the production of soap, bleaching materials and glass: more recently kelp was chiefly in demand for the preparation of iodine. But there are dimly remembered ways of utilizing seaweed ashes in the home which would make kelp-burning a traditional occupation. In the Western Isles of Scotland kelp-burning is said to have been introduced from Ireland about 1735, but there too it must have been an ancient custom, for Martin Martin tells us at the end of the seventeenth century that seals, seafowl and fish were [251]
preserved in 'the ashes of burnt seaware'.[3] (Cheese, we learn, was preserved in the same way, or 'lapped in tang'). Kelp was made by burning the thick stems of tangle (*Laminaria*) or other coarse weeds—to which, as well as to the ashes, the name kelp is applied—which are thrown up in the winter storms or

[1]W. Montgomery, *Description of Ardes Barony* (1683), 139.
[2]J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 50.
[3]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 135, 159.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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262 sold fresh in the markets of the Bann Valley, and were salted down for winter use in place of herrings.[1] They have gone the way of most of the pre-famine 'relishes' which came to be despised as the threat of famine faded after the middle of last century. The elvers, too, used to be taken out of the teeming rivers in spring with sieves and pressed into cakes or boiled in milk and made into a kind of eel-cheese. In the River Bann the 226 elvers are now trapped at the first weir, at the tidal limit, and transported upstream, up to 30 million a year being given an easy passage in this way. A marked reduction in the size of the silver eels netted on their return to the sea some ten years later has been interpreted as a result of this interference with nature. The bulk of the eels taken are sold live in the London markets. [231] In addition to elvers salmon fry also was in former times taken for food and fed to pigs, and by an Act of Elizabeth's reign swine were prohibited from feeding on the shores of tidal rivers 'where they destroy a great quantity of salmon and eel fry'.[2]

Many traditional methods of fishing survive on the lakes of the Irish midlands. The otter board, now more often seen along the coast where fishermen trawl for flat fish in sandy bays, was formerly widely used in lake fishing and is considered to be 'an implement of very ancient origin in Ireland'.[3] Related to it is the 'pooka', a board fitted with mast and sail which carried out the baited long lines.[4] Fishing lines were until recently 283 sometimes made of horsehair by an interesting and undoubtedly ancient method. The instruments employed are goose or swan quills, cut down to make open-ended tubes some three inches long, two or three being needed according to whether a two- or three-strand line is being prepared. From ten to twenty long hairs taken from a horse's tail are threaded through each quill and knotted together at one end, the other ends of the quills being plugged with short pieces of quill which grip the hairs yet allow them to slide through. The quills are now rolled one against the other in the fingers, and as the strands twist on one another they pull down the hairs which feed them. The

[1] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 248.
[2] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 183.
[3] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*. See also R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 53 (1954).
[4] W. H. Maxwell, *Wild Sports of the West*, 77.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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ences affecting human beings and the animals and crops were usually potent. It is remembered that 'the oldest woman in the town' would go round the fire three times on her knees, reciting prayers. To walk three times sunwise round the fire was to ensure a year without sickness, and as the flames died down the cattle were driven through the embers and their backs were singed with a lighted hazel wand: the sticks were preserved and utilized for driving the cows. By tradition everyone carried home a burning stick from the fire, and whoever was first to take it into the house brought the good luck of the year with him. A glowing turf from the fire was carried three times sunwise round the dwelling house, and others were thrown into the growing crops. Yarrow was hung in the house to ward off illness. Fernseed was gathered for its magic powers and divinations made from the roots of bracken and lilies. We have already noticed the custom of retaining some of the ashes from the Midsummer fires to mix with the following season's seed corn.

The third fire-festival of the year is associated with St. Peter's Eve on 28th June, but I have not come across many traditions of St. Peter's bonfires except in Armagh and Wexford: it may thus be mainly restricted to areas where English influence was strong. More widespread and better known, because they have been caught up in many patterns and in such popular pilgrimages as that to Croagh Patrick, are the celebrations of Lammas, originally 1st August, now held on Lammas Sunday, the last in July, which is also known as Garland, Bilberry or Height Sunday. This marked the end of summer and the beginning of harvest: it was a first-fruits festival into which the alien potato has been fitted, and no potatoes were dug before this time. Offerings of flowers and fruits were made at holy wells, and in some places cattle were made to swim through streams and loughs into which lumps of fresh butter had been cast:[1] 'They think no beast will live the whole year through unless they be thus drenched'.[2] In hilly districts Height Sunday is observed by climbing to a recognized picnic place where bilberries are gathered and games and dancing were formerly enjoyed. In Co. Down a large prehistoric

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 1, 282.
[2]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.

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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young chil-
dren. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring
groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend
less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them
more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men
of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school,
at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and
their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the house-
hold. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the
other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often de-
manded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially
when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about
being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer
hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in
America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

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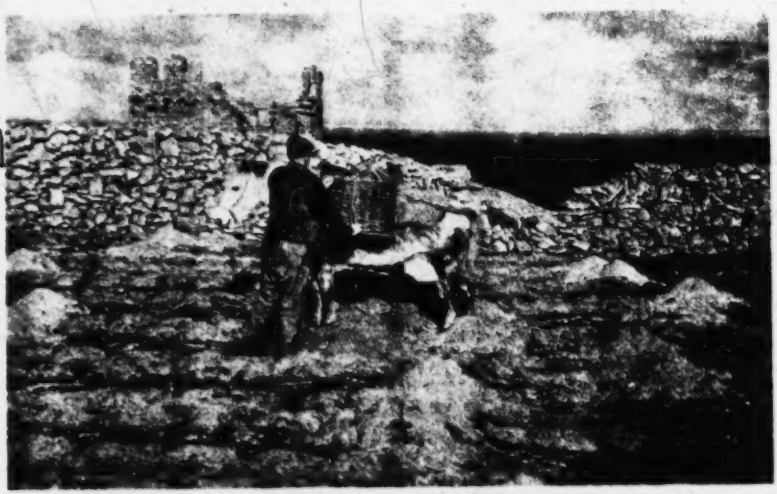

Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[435] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce,
[433] under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[437] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent 434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts 437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 118 433
become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of island- [231]
ers. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [226]
and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [311]
eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [654]
became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [241]
fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [231]
expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the
subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy
experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231
more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422]
2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654]
horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses
are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831]
inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breed-
ing of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232]
castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying
excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and
a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis
Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats
on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231
cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437
and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234]
low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between
Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and
bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast.
Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505]
struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled
to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern
transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the
water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435]
forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves
at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50
pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221
land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233
throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234
south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous
plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered
by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462]
and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three
hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of
spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can
feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 [232] [224] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference.

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight.

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves.

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the action of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
516 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

16:Messenger E-4.5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [464] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

539 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November
796 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with
[178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main
[782] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous
[252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter.
796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during
796 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few
798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil
796 and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is
796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be
782 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck
[234] during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes
[828] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying
[237] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to
825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to
417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following
53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed
[184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with
776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld.
771 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies;
775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

17; Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in 831* Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of 832 this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only [291] infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; [514] children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their 291 faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my 515 wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a 834 man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once [854] when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Cloth- [513] ing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea 481 in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. 834 Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that 526 nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and 761 weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is 777 best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean [501] rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The 291 truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in 834 order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back [526] of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity [231] of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popu- 123 lar folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American 291 Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only 834 two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had 291 they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of 834 nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it [165] might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when [759] finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.[9]

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

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The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

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Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

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[9] Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
326 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken,
232 is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exer-
431 cise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
754 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[12] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever
437 bought. As one of the islanders put it, "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [12] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p. 206(B)]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433
become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of island- [231]
ers. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [226]
and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [311]
eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [654]
became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [241]
fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [231]
expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the
subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy
experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231
more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422]
2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654]
horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses
are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831]
inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breed-
ing of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232]
castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying
excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and
a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis
Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats
on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231
cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437
and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234]
low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between
Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and
bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast.
Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505]
struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled
to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern
transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the
water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435]
forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves
at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50
pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221
land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233
throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234
south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous
plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered
by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462]
and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three
hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of
spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can
feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [431] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 [232] [224] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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231 241 311 for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted to one crop.

234 With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

234 246 The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

● 233 The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he [244] cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

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them with holdings in other parts of the country when in the latter much mountain land is included. The valuations, however, are exceedingly high, the full valuation of the Ennis district (which includes the Fergus plain) being £67,000 for 112,000 acres compared with the neighboring Killadysert district at £25,000 for 62,000 acres. 233

The second of the "ranching districts" or areas of large holdings practicing this type of agriculture is the region in the northern part of the county called "the hills of Burren" (the Ballyvaughan area). This is a limestone country which provides rich winterage for cattle. Consequently land there is very valuable to the rancher who has to winter his store cattle. Grass grows there fairly richly throughout the winter among the limestone crags, and the cattle are allowed to forage for themselves. In several cases, farmers own large holdings of 200 acres and over in each of the two areas. They drive their cattle down from the winterages in April and back again in November.

Certain other farms of large size, and especially in rich alluvial areas such as Clarecastle and Newmarket-on-Fergus, make extensive use of tillage, primarily of oats. In other areas such as Tubber, Broadford, and Feakle, mountain land is given over to sheep. 233 243

County Clare, in fact, shows a fourfold division into sections differentiated partly geographically, partly by the different utilization of the soil. "West Clare" includes all the peninsula west and south of the ridge culminating in Mount Callan and cutting off the Fergus drainage from the Atlantic. Here the holdings are predominantly small, and the more generalized economy is common. "North Clare" covers the country of the "hills of Burren." "East Clare" contains both the rough country of Feakle and Broadford, where small mountain holdings approximate the conditions of West Clare, and the Tulla and Quin districts, which with "Mid-Clare" and "South Clare" cover the alluvial plain of the 311 471

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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about such a visitation upon another does so un- 776
intentionally, innocent of evil intent. A person can 789
be either lucky or unlucky; he may tap a fairy [777]
power without meaning to. Thus one humorous story, a favourite yarn of the fairy-lore, found widely over Ireland, relates the misadventures of one rash fellow:

"A man that was usually drunk was going by a 789
fort one night and he heard 'them' talking in it, and 776
saying, 'I'll take half of it and let you have the 539
other.' 'I'll have all of it', shouted my boy-o, never thinking. When he got home, his wife was making butter, but she couldn't get any to come. But now she tried again, and it came in and filled the churn twice over and ran over the floor. There was a big farmer near by, and it was all his butter she was getting. She was an honest woman and knew the butter wasn't hers and she wanted to make it known she hadn't anything to do with it, so she told the priest about it."

Other things than butter are so taken, of course. 776
Cattle figure prominently in folk belief. Cattle, as 789
we know, are very important to the countryman. 233
The time of calving is a crucial event in farm-family life. Consequently, precautions must be taken; danger is abroad, and rites must be performed. If cattle fall sick, other rites drive off the threatening good people and restore the cow to health. Fairy-tales are full of the taking of cattle by the people of the raths.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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755 Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well,
776 bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take
[233] anything from hens to men and women. When they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless, he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper and friend of former years. The vitality has gone out of him or her. The country-people can believe that 'they' have spirited away the real person and left in his place "some spent old man that they had with them for a long time". The real person is 'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not
[753] mean that they do not recognize what we might call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too well, from bitter experience. It means only that they have an explanation for it that infuses it with the associations they have about their belief.

776 For the belief in changelings, about which you all have heard a great deal, has its root in the fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die
[761] are taken, except the old people". Only for them is death the natural course of events; all others have fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

776 Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy
183 belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by
82 any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

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XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 825 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date, for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle.*—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

778 825 233 823 [776] The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St. Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Booltydoolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaunk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1. [P 241]

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buttons, and broken crockery. Patients sit in the "chair" to cure lumbago. It is believed that the water of this lake cannot be boiled and that no one can be drowned by it, and sixty or seventy years ago cattle were cured by it. The beasts were brought in herds to the lake to drink, and were driven into it. If they turned to the right hand they would recover, but not if they swam to the left. It is said that on one occasion a cow sank, but was found next day grazing in a field beside the lake, completely cured. In consequence of drainage works, the water level has fallen, and the mud round the shore is too deep to allow the cattle to be driven through it, so on May Day every year, before sunrise, a little crowd gathers, of perhaps over 100 persons, to fill bottles with the water for curing cattle, especially of "the worm." The water keeps good till the next anniversary, and is also used to give a "good churning" and to clear a "garden" of caterpillars.[22]

In 1839 Lough Iona (now Eenagh) was reputed to cure sick cattle on Mondays and Thursdays.[23] In 1808 the smiths were in some districts employed to kill the cattle,—or rather to fell them for slaying,—and their perquisites were the animals' heads.[24]

Persons over sixty years of age are often firm believers in the charming away, or "taking," of milk and butter. The younger folk usually deny that they hold this belief, and, where they take part in quarrels caused by it, avowedly only do so to support their elders. Two families living in the south-east corner of the county had about 1890 a quarrel resulting in a serious feud, hardly as yet appeased. It seems that for about three years the cows of the first household gave but little milk, and that little so bad and unwholesome for pigs and calves that several died. Ordinary veterinary practitioners, and even the local "knowing men," did no good, so the farmer sought a "wise man" of renown in another parish. This sage directed his client to watch the local well all May Eve, and to let no one come near it till after midnight. The farmer and his sons hid near it, saw a man and a woman of the

[22] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. ii.

[23] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 161.

[24] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 359. The smith was a magician amongst the Irish, and the ancient *St. Patrick's Lorica* prays against the spells of "smiths, women, and druids."

778 825 233 823 627 233 823 [P.242]

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627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
● 233 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and
823 sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26] In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
789 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district,
826 but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the
789 victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale. [P. 243]

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511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *currach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

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kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433
become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of island-
ers. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [231]
and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [226]
eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [311]
became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [654]
fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [241]
expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the [231]
subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy
experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231
more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422]
2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654]
horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses
are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831]
inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breed-
ing of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232]
castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying
excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and
a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis
Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats
on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231
cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437
and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234]
low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between
Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and
bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast.
Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505]
struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled
to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern
transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the
water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435]
forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves
at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50
pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221
land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233
throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234
south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous
plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered
by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462]
and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three
hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of
spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can
feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were [232] low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they [224] also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
198 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
[824] the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[174] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[175] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid	She is deaf and
Dressed in white.	She is dumb.
Give her something	For God's sake,
For the night.	Give her some.

534 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[233] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 796 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of [778]
wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to [233]
"give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of 796
the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time [784]
garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. [782]
Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the [777]
Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is [769]
tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for [784]
future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a [538]
small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of 123
the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night 796
when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of 787
cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed
by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whit- 796
sunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as 776
the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually [821]
the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend
to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does
anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a [513]
danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children
and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground
unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the
demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or [461]
decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter [777]
are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then
may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern
day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer [857]
celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather [313]
wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of [372]
Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for [789]
protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A [842]
man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the
failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the
folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the
hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven
between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry
leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish [114]
life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the
plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British
anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns
jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin 539
(O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 796

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted to one crop.

With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

Of these exports, of course, cattle were the most valuable item and represented the great export staple. They were likewise the crop to which most other produce could be devoted when not used as human food. That this kind of conversion of other stuffs into cattle could take place is to be seen in the figures for milk. Though the Free State produced in the year in question a total of 589,000,000 gallons of milk, including both whole milk and butter, comparing favorably with such an output as Switzerland's yearly 528,000,000 in 1923, only 43 per cent of it was exported, while in Switzerland the export was 67 per cent of the Swiss total.

The figures for exports introduce a new factor of difference between the holdings of large and small size and their populations. Small holdings do not share equally with large holdings either in the consumption of agricultural produce or in its export. In both consumption and export commerce in the Free State, small holders and large holders play distinct roles.

Taking the first of these considerations, the figures for consumption reveal the difference. The estimated human consumption of whole milk (as milk) was some 90,000,000 gallons, according to the statistical record of the year 1928,[17] of which 70,000,000 gallons were consumed by agriculturalists and 20,000,000 by the remainder of the population. It was estimated that on the farms 38 gallons were consumed yearly per person. But that is the figure for all farms. There is a considerable difference here between types of farms.

Thus, in this case, on farms less than 50 acres only 36 gallons per person per annum were consumed, it was estimated, while on farms of over 50 acres, the consumption was 42 gallons. In Munster, the chief milk-producing province,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

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512 children. If they are of school age, she must dress them,
462 feed them, and get them off to school. She does all the cook-
356 ing and washing up after meals and keeps the teapot always ready. Each morning she sweeps the house, makes the beds, and so on. The clothes of the household are her care as well, and the indispensable and constant mending of them which rough wear makes necessary all falls to her lot.

This household work is familiar to us; the point of itemizing it is merely to make clear the confined sphere in which the woman's recurrent and indispensable duties fall.

512 But her work stretches beyond the house door. In the
462 morning after breakfast she takes the milk buckets and milks
356 the cows in the sheds in the haggard. This is merely one of
231 the many trips she makes in and out of the kitchen doors for fuel, for water, to feed and tend the animals and the fowl.
● 234 Her milking finished, she must bring the milk in and separate it. In recent years, more prosperous farms have been able to make use of the separator. If there is none, she must set the milk in large pans and allow the cream to rise. The whole process of the conversion of milk to butter is her charge.

512 After the morning milking and the feeding of her human
462 charges, she must turn her attention to the feeding of the
231 farm animals, especially the young ones. The cows and horses are not her province, but all the care of the calves, pigs, and fowl falls to her lot. She prepares a mixture of warm milk and grain for the calves, feeding them from a bucket. They must not be allowed to suck, as the milk is meant for human consumption. Then she boils a large kettle of potatoes over the fire for the chickens and the pigs, or takes them the leavings of the previous day.

512 Before noon she hangs another kettle over the fire filled
462 with potatoes for the use of the family. In season she adds
[251] white cabbage and nearly always includes a portion or two of bacon, some of it home cured in brine to resemble salt
PORK.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The methods of transport in the countryside are related
489 to the distances to be traveled and the errands to be run. These things are matters of the organization and relationships of family and community. It is not only the means of transport which can be related to the constituent relationships of country social life. Each kind of farm product exported and farm need purchased involves a different distance of travel, a holder of a different status in family and community, and a different relation with the outsider.

489 The goods the farmer produces travel to the centers at
443 which they are exchanged over distances which are com-
438 mensurate with their value, their importance in farm economy, and their association with the status of the persons in the rural communities under whose charge they are produced. Horses take most care, are most valuable, and are the very special charge of the man of the house. The horse fair accordingly draws from the largest area. Cattle are the great money crop, the export staple. Accordingly the cattle fairs are among the chief lodestones of the larger centers, drawing from the deepest hinterlands of the major market areas. They are masculine affairs. Likewise potatoes and corn crops, oats, come to market only in the major centers. Farm fathers bring them down by horse and car from the deepest hinterlands.

Pigs represent a much shorter period of work and care. They are often in woman's province. The pig fairs are smaller gatherings, held in small centers, drawing from small hinterlands. Lesser vegetables, principally cabbage, travel no such distance as potatoes, and women often sell them. Finally, butter and eggs travel the shortest distance of all. They are often bartered at the crossroad centers. Before creameries were introduced, salted firkins or tubs of butter, representing a longer accumulation, went longer distances to the village centers.

234 Creamery associations were not established until the
438 middle of the time of research in County Clare. They are

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

part of a new economics which brings distributing agencies 234
to the farmer's door. Consequently they do not fit this pic- 438
ture and are among the great forces of gradual change. They have made dairying the pursuit of the farm father, as it was not before. Like motor lorries, they represent the new geographic order that is gradually overcoming the old.

The goods that reach the farmer cover distances between 438
their ultimate distributing center and consumer in the farm 462
families in the same proportion as they are bound in with 484
the statuses and relationships in work and life of the familistically organized groups. The men go to the larger towns with or without their wives for the larger annual purchases of boots and cloth goods or furniture or tools and implements. The boys may go for the more ordinary purchases of flour and foodstuffs and feeds and so on, to be bought in their fathers' names, to the local centers and villages. The household needs from day to day are the women's province. Tallow, candles, oil, sugar, tea, are to be had either in the villages or in the crossroad centers. The only need the men may fill so close to home is the recurrent hunger for tobacco and drink.

If we turn this view of travel and distribution and personal relationship into generality, we see that the pattern is such that it fits those of community life we have described. In the masculine sphere of life the disposal of produce means masculine travel and masculine building of relationship with the outside world of greatest geographical range. Taking each item of masculine produce in the descending order of its importance to the farm families, the area out of which the product is brought to a center is progressively smaller. The same fact is true of the feminine produce, with the difference, of course, that the range is smaller to begin with. The area of widest contacts established by women and the areas drawn upon by women and the areas

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

132 The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to
251 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual
231 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

234 Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten cows" is still a familiar term.

311 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less
241

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp 361
along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. 621
Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawl- 494
ing village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train runs between the two.

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this re- 185
moteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. 621
Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive 234
through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing machine, out of an English steel works, and some of the houses own a mechanical cream separator, even though next door a wooden hand churn is still in use which looks no different from those found deep in the bogs.

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. 185
They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But 621
in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's attention turns to the life into which these few strays of modernity find their way.

For Luogh is like many another community of 621
small farms over Clare and southern and western 184
Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are 181
even more remote. Many are better off; some few are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language better; others have abandoned it altogether for the brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded in their common folk life.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Lady Gregory: "They have cows, and sheep, and 776
chickens out in the raths just the way we have them with us. For it is they that take them when the bad luck is on us and then whatever we do won't stop them." The 'other people', as they are also called, are not very different in this regard from ordinary mortals; they surround themselves with much the same materials of life.

So, then, when ill-luck descends upon him, the 234
countryman knows something at least of its nature, 776
enough to allow him to cope with it. Take the 789
example of butter. Butter is an important staple of farm diet; it is of great interest to all the family group. Yet the making of butter, especially with a hand-churn, is a notoriously tricky process. Should it fail to come in the churning, the matter is one of grave concern. One woman of North Clare put the matter very clearly when she said: "And queer things do happen to butter, and it's a fact it often wouldn't come and you don't know why. You'd be trying every way you could and still you'd be without it but for what your friends would give you."

But in that event, the countryman is not left helpless. His belief provides him with a sure knowledge of what the trouble is, and of what may be done about it. The fairies have 'taken' the butter and must be induced to bring it back. Many of the tales he has heard year after year attest to this taking. For instance, here is the synopsis of a story

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

234 776 789 told by a Clare farmer of friends of his, whose house he named:

"Two men return from a fair to the house of one
234 of them to have breakfast. There the woman was
776 churning, but no butter would come. The first of
789 the men suggested maybe they [the men] were
539 holding it up, and they left the house, but with no result, for when they returned there was still no butter. Upon finding out that an old woman, a stranger, had borrowed a bit of milk the day before, the first man closed the doors, took a ploughshare and held it in the turf fire. Soon there came a knock at the door, and after the third knock the woman of the house went to it. Then an old woman's hand passed a jug of milk through the crack of the door and a voice said: 'put this back in the churn'. She did so, and immediately all the milk turned to good butter."

But the farmer knows, too, that the fairies do not
776 always work alone. There is often a human agency
754 involved along with theirs. Here one enters the really dangerous 'pisherogues', the practices of wicked magic. A human being may perform a rite or omit a precaution in such a way as to bring about a visitation of ill-luck and disaster. He may transfer disease and sickness from his own farm to the next, he may steal the butter of another's churn, he may destroy, steal, maim and kill by inducing the supernatural powers to commit the havoc.

776 789 But sometimes the human being who brings

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the 174
cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of 621
the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, 221
together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the 231
hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, "the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in "booley" or "boley" 221
assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the 342
actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were 343
generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had 221
two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed 234
in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular "town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of "whitemeats" that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter [251]
appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This "bog-butter" frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations: it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

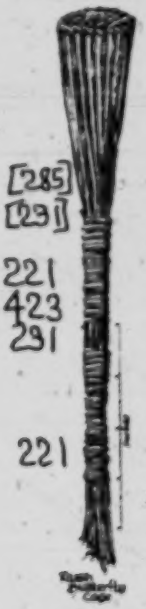

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER IX.

FARM BUILDINGS.

First in importance in this pastoral country comes the 343
cow byre, which is often an old dwelling house converted or 234
an extension built on to the end of the kitchen. We have seen that in the west it is not long since the cows were housed in the bottom end of the kitchen, and even now one gets the impression from the proximity of the byre and its smells that there is a reluctance to be separated by any distance from the beasts which play such a large part in the life and traditions of the countryside. Along one side of the byre, above the feeding place, runs the rannel- or revel-tree to which the vertical cow-stakes are secured at intervals: "thin as a ravel-tree" is an expression sometimes heard. Alternatively, in the west, the stakes are held in place by iron staples or perforated stone slabs let into the wall. Iron chains have almost entirely replaced the rush "binnen ropes" (Chapter 14) which were fastened to a plaited ring of sally, hazel or rowan— [184]
called a "woody"—sliding up and down the stake. In Co. Clare the animals were secured by a straw rope tied round the horns, and no doubt different methods could be described from various districts. Milking times also vary from place to place, and there is no topic about which so much lore might be collected as about cows and their products. It is commonly said that there is a right and a wrong side on which to milk a cow. In Ireland, so far as my observation goes, it is the right-hand side.

[p. 79]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343
234 Behind the cows there runs a slab-lined drain or groop, which carries the refuse through the "groop hole" in the wall to the midden. Hanging from the rannel-tree you may perchance see a charm in the shape of a perforated flint [176] pebble, while over the door, decaying Brigid's Crosses dating [751] back for several successive years show that the cattle are under the special protection of the Irish saint. In the byre gable it is not uncommon to see a dove-cote, at any rate along [235] the east coast where English influence has been strong since Norman times. Pigeons are fond of heat and thrive near farm animals. In Lecale, Co. Down, I have seen nests made of straw rope hung above the horses in the stable.

343
251 The barn is not infrequently built above the byre. When the dwelling house alongside remains, in the Irish tradition, single-storied, the effect of the towering barn is rather incongruous. This arrangement makes it simple to feed the animals, provides a springy wooden floor for thrashing, and also gives a better draught for the purpose. Moreover, the raised position helps to make the corn secure from damp and rats. The barn has opposite doors and half doors to regulate the through draught and to keep out stray animals while work goes on inside. Access to the barn is obtained by external stone steps or a sloping ramp, under which the stone dog kennel is often built in. Some of the activities and appurtenances of the barn are described in Chapter 14.

343 Little need be said about the stable, since small farms have as a rule only one mare. In the old-time single-roomed kitchen-byres, the mare had her stall alongside the cows, and you will sometimes see the keeping-hole above the back door where the brush and curry comb were stored. The stable, like the byre, may be attached to the house or may be separate, but for convenience and economy it tends to be built as part of a range of buildings. In decayed rundale clusters now occupied by only one or two holders there were, ready to hand, many old dwelling houses which could be put to different uses as "offices."

Before we turn to the housing of other livestock, mention should be made of the turf-house, for which many different

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XIV

WOOD, SKIN, STRAW AND RUSH WORK.

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322 Many old-fashioned tools will be found lying around an old farmstead, some of them still used and others discarded but hoarded as is the way of the countryman. With some of these, generally dismissed in farm auction bills as "other objects too numerous to mention," we shall deal briefly in this chapter. Upright butter churns of oak are to be found in every county: they are made by the cooper and their construction is a specialized craft. I illustrate (Fig. 67) some varieties of churn and staff ("dasher" or "lonny"). They differ in size because the churns are "made to measure" according to the number of milking cows kept. One of the drawings shows the dash churn in cross-section: it should be added that the joins between the staves of the bottom are sealed with rushes. Ancient churns discovered in the bogs are generally cut out of the solid. They have a narrow neck and are provided with lugs for transport. Old accounts tell us that the dairymaid used to plunge in her arm to make the butter, and thus the dasher may be regarded as an implement developed directly from the human arm and hand. The staff was often worked by an arrangement of levers known as "glaiks," but this is rarely seen nowadays.

The full equipment of stave-built vessels supplied by the cooper included, besides the churn, the buttermilk butt and the cream butt or "keeler," the butter tub, the milk "can," into which the fresh milk was poured, and the piggin. Many

[p. 121]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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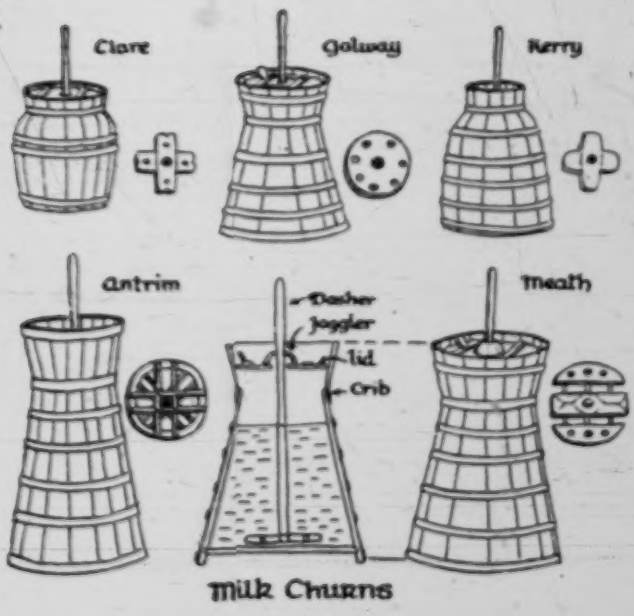

Fig. 67.

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[281]

Fig. 68.

of these are in regular use: I illustrate a piggin or milking vessel (Fig. 68), a butter tub, and an old-fashioned tub of bog-fir, bound, as were the other stave-vessels before the adoption of iron hoops, with split sally rods, and covered with a stone lid. Two smaller stave-built noggins for holding water, milk or porridge are also shown (Fig. 69), the Tyrone example being of oak with an ash wrapping, the Donegal specimen of bog-fir and sally bands. Passing mention must be made of wooden spoons and the handsomely carved butter stamps (Fig. 70). Wooden dishes, ladles (Fig. 70) skimmers and jogglers (Fig. 67) are made of sycamore and turned on the pole-lathe.

Sieves of various kinds found a use in the dairy as well as in kitchen and barn. Among the exports from Ireland in

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

former centuries animal hides and skins figured prominently, and it is not uncommon in the west to see cured skins of wild and domestic animals used as floor-coverings. No doubt in earlier days skins and furs were worn, but in modern times raw-hide has been employed only for shoes such as the "pampooties" worn by the Aran Islanders. These have the advantage that they do not damage the frail curraghs, just as the Islandman's headgear is the knitted Tam o' Shanter which the wind cannot blow off. A century ago one might have seen a dried sheep-skin serving as a window, or even a cowhide used as a door-hanging. Sheep- and goat-skins still find their uses as back-protectors (Chapter 16), in the making

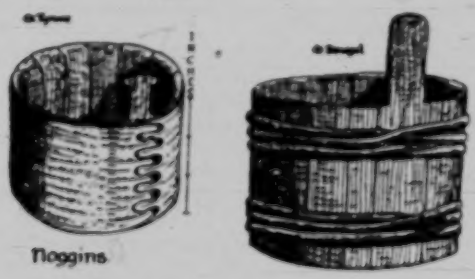

Fig. 69.

of thongs for flails, and especially in providing bottoms for various trays and sieves, the only difference between them being that the sieve-skin is perforated.

Fig. 70.

The skin, scraped and dried, is wrapped or sewn on to a rim of ash or bog-fir (Fig. 71), and a good deal of skill is required to stretch it on without a wrinkle. These trays are called wights or wechts in the north-east: the peat wight is for carrying turf to the house and the corn wight for pouring corn into a sack. The winnowing tray sometimes has small perforations to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken on to a cloth. A windy spot was selected for the purpose, and numerous "Shelling Hills" get their name from this operation. The perforations, about one-eighth of an inch

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of " calf basket " (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a " cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

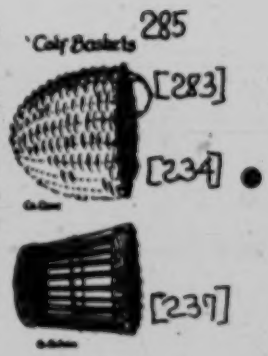

Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or " floats " are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

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[482]
[184]
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11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive,
372 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
[435] and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[12] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever
437 bought. As one of the islanders put it, "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [12] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p. 206(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Down

PLATE I

Traditional farm kitchen, Co. Down. Note baking-board on table (*left*) and meal ark to left of dresser, with beetle hanging above.

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[facing p. 32]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 2

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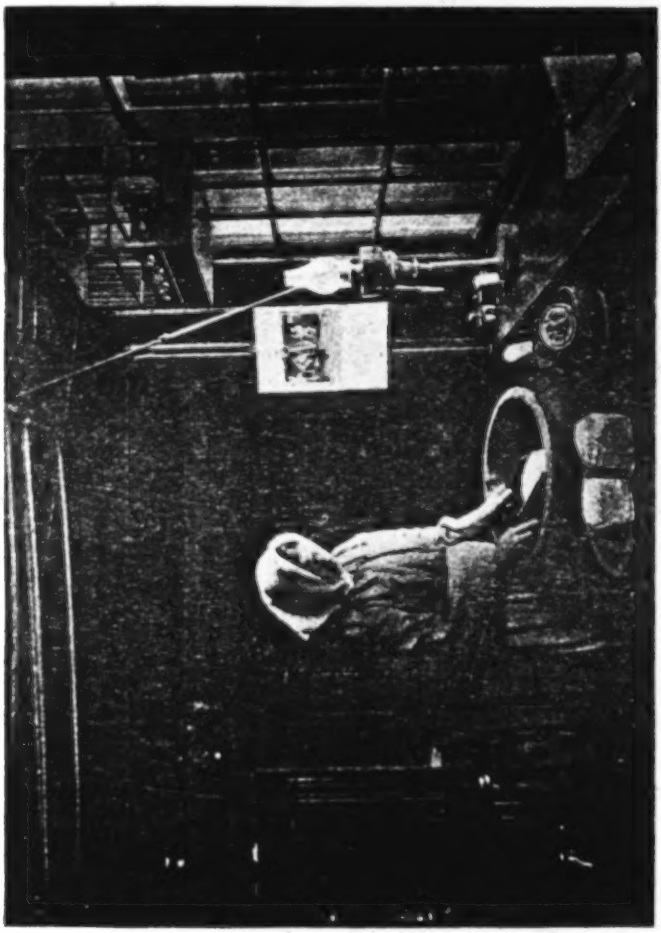

Butter-making in a Co. Antrim farm kitchen.

[facing p. 33]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year!'[1] Sea
221 wrack and shell sand were carted up to thirty miles inland from
[241] the coast.[2] In the absence of permanent fences the majority of
[237] the cattle must be moved away during the summer and those remaining carefully herded or tethered on the outfield, or put in temporary enclosures to manure that part of the outfield which was due for cultivation.[3] In its origins and full development the rundale system depended on the movement of most of the livestock to summer booleys situated some distance away. Here the widely distributed uplands and boglands played their part in the traditional economy. Although late survivals of the booleying system are hard to find, little of it managing to outlive the crisis of the Great Famine, we are beginning to track down its history and significance. The Irish texts are as disappointing and vague as they are in many matters touching the common people, but folk-memory comes to our aid. There are stories, and place-name evidence, from most parts of the country, and regional variants of the practice are being studied and mapped.[4]

We give first some quotations from the few discerning observers who drew attention to the practice. Edmund Spenser's enlightened spirit of inquiry is shown in his remark: 'Have you ever heard what was the occasion and first beginning of this custom? for it is good to know the same.' He writes, in 1595,
221 'There is one use amongst them, to keep their cattle and to
234 live themselves the most part of the year in boolies, pasturing upon the mountain and waste wild places.'[5] His objections to the system, however, reveal his Englishry: the booleys hid outlaws and loose people, and the wandering life made the Irish barbarous. The following brief reference comes from O'Flaherty's famous account of West Connacht: 'In summertime they drive their cattle to the mountains, where such as look to the cattle live in small cabins for that season.'[6] In the eighteenth

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country* (1951), 141.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 131.
[4]J. M. Graham, 'Transhumance in Ireland', in *The Advancement of Science*, 37 (1953), 74–9.
[5]Quoted in H. Morley, *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James I* (1890), 67.
[6]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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century we find a description from Ulster: 'In the bosom of the Mourne Mountains there is a place called the Deers' Meadow to which great numbers of poor people resort in the summer months to graze their cattle. They bring with them their wives, children and little wretched furniture, erect huts, and there live . . . and often cut their turf.'[1] A century later a fuller account of a more complicated transhumance, reminiscent of the Norwegian seaboard, comes from Donegal: 'It often happens that a man has three dwellings—one in the mountains, another upon the shore, and the third upon an island, he and his family flitting from one to another of these habitations . . . This change usually takes place upon a fixed day, the junior branches of the family generally perform the land journey on the top of the household goods with which the pony may often be seen so loaded, and at the same time so obscured, that little more than the head can be observed; and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected et cetera . . . creep along the roads.'[2] The author goes on to comment on the restrictions imposed on the comfort and possessions of the peasants by their 'Arab mode of life'. In Achill Island too the movements were complicated, involving the entire population which, having moved to the summer pastures and sowed their corn, returned to the permanent coastal village for the high summer to fish and went back to gather the harvest at the booley in the autumn.[3]

For the most part we are dependent on folk tradition for details of booleying. The Ordnance Survey Letters written in the 1830s contain valuable material from Counties Antrim and Londonderry, and the following extract relates to the parish of Dunaghy: 'Some of the very old men of the country recollect seeing the boliehouses inhabited. They were built of sods upon a foundation of earth and stones and were thatched with heath. Many of the poorer sort lived here in summer grazing the cattle upon land that nobody appears to have claimed and supporting themselves upon their milk and blood which they took from

[1]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 125.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.
[3]An account by Sir William Wilde, written in 1836, is contained in Wood-Martin, *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (1888), 238.

them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rectangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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262 the staple was butter and oatcake rather than oatcake and butter. When bread was made from gritty quern-ground flour the butter would have served as a lubricant to assist the swallowing process. 'They swallow lumps of butter mixed with oatmeal', wrote Fynes Moryson about the year 1600, 'and love no meat more than sour milk curdled.'[1] When food was left out for the fairies it was generally oatmeal and butter: needless to say, particularly when accompanied by whiskey, it disappeared during the night. In the very high present-day Irish consumption of milk products we notice once more the survival of ancient custom, for milk products were the staple food of medieval times in all parts of the British Isles.[2] The Irish laws distinguish between summer and winter food, and the consumption of meat was almost confined to the winter months. Pork was the most highly esteemed meat, but no doubt deer and other products of the chase augmented the fare for the upper classes. Surplus cattle were presumably killed off at
251 Martinmas and salted as 'marts', but among the peasantry the emphasis was on milch cows, and cow's meat was fit only for stews. Butter—and whiskey also—was preserved in bogs to be available in the lean days of spring (Chapter XIV). On the other
234 hand there is little evidence of cheese-making apart from soft cheese, including that made from sheep's milk, and the Irish consumption of cheese is today probably the lowest in Europe. The making of hard cheese is a comparatively late development everywhere, so that Ireland may be said once more to have remained faithful to ancient practice. With a *per capita* consumption of 2·7 lb. in 1954, the Irish republic comes last in the fifteen countries for which figures are given in the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Circular quoted above; the highest is Norway with 19 lb. per head. I may add that I have found no record or tradition of the milking of sows which occurs in parts of Spain and which, it is suggested, may have been a Celtic custom.[3] It is said in Ireland that if a man drinks sow's milk he can see the wind for ever after.

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[2]J. C. Drummond and A. Wilbraham, *The Englishman's Food* (1939), 51.
[3]R. U. Sayce, 'Milking and Dairying', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 51 (1951–52), 120–54.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

Low stools and benches seem to have been the traditional form of seating, and no doubt the floor served for the children. 352 Travellers noted that this was the best way to avoid the smoke:

> By sitting low, on rushes spread,
> The smoke still hover'd overhead;
> And did more good than real harm,
> Because it kept the long house warm.[1]

Fireside seats, more or less fixed, were often of stone, a solid block of wood or a large lump of turf. In the 'round about' hearths which were common in parts of Co. Antrim, and which people who remember them have described to me, the seat behind the fire, a log of wood, was known as the dais, a dialect word for a bench or seat which appears to be of north English origin. Solid seats of coiled straw or rushes were also common (Fig. 29) but the favourite fireside stool was the three-legged creepie, resembling a milking stool and like it finding a firm hold no matter how uneven the floor. There is little evidence of chairs of any antiquity. A three-legged type found in parts of the west, with a triangular seat and a narrow one-piece back has probably evolved from the creepie but looks Germanic. The nearest approach to a distinctive Irish style is the straw or rush-seated chair, which finds its best-known homes in Co. Down and Co. Limerick. High-backed armchairs made entirely of coiled straw rope after the manner of a beehive used to be found in the west, and since they can be paralleled in many parts of western Europe from the Orkneys to Spain it is probable that their manufacture is a peasant craft of some antiquity (Fig. 29). Cradles, too, were made of straw as well as of wood [854] and basketwork, and they were sometimes suspended from the roof. I have heard of a cradle being improvised by laying a horse-collar on the floor. The phrase 'rocked in a pot' applied to [848] an illegitimate child is said to derive from the use of a large fireside cooking pot as cradle and hiding place: round-shouldered infants were therefore suspect.

Down to recent times it was the custom to keep most of the 234 dairying equipment in the kitchen, and in the traditional peasant 353 house the upright churn still occupies a place against the wall,

[1] W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle* (1724). Canto 2. [Text continues on p 95]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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usually opposite the fire. The absence, in a country predominantly pastoral and consuming large quantities of milk products, of a building or room set aside as a dairy is at first sight strange. Milk cattle, however, were closely identified with the woman of the house, and as we have seen they commonly shared the kitchen with the family. Owing to the scarcity of winter feeding-stuffs, moreover, the supply of milk must have been, down to a couple of centuries ago, largely confined to the summer months and butter-making was therefore undertaken at the booley houses. It must have been difficult to store the considerable amounts of milk products required for winter food, especially when one remembers that most of the peasant houses were made of wattles, sods or mud, and there is some evidence, as we shall see in Chapter IX, that they were kept underground under the old Celtic economy, in even temperatures and safe from the depredations of animals.

However this may be, the kitchen is the traditional place for keeping the churn, and for churning. The stave-built upright plunge churn, prototype of the metal milk-churn which at first faithfully copied its shape, belongs to a family of wooden vessels which has been diffused across the Old World from Ireland to Tibet and now survives most abundantly towards the limits of its range (Fig. 30). Made by local coopers, Irish churns display a considerable variety in shape and size, the shapes differing regionally, the sizes depending on the number of cows kept on the farm, for they were 'made to measure'. The small barrel-shaped churn of the south-west, with a narrow vertical mouth, would appear to be the older style. The mouth, designed to hold a lid through a hole in which the churn staff passes, is usually a separate unit attached to the body by a join—the crib—skilfully contrived and concealed under one of the encircling hoops. Some old churns have hoops of split rods, hazel or sally, but it was reckoned lucky to have one of the hoops of rowan. The staves are invariably of oak: the circular base is made in three pieces, dowelled together and having the joins sealed with rushes. Small churns which have been dug out of the bogs are generally found to have been cut from the solid, and they often have projecting lugs perforated for ease of transport. Those with holed lids were certainly churns, but others

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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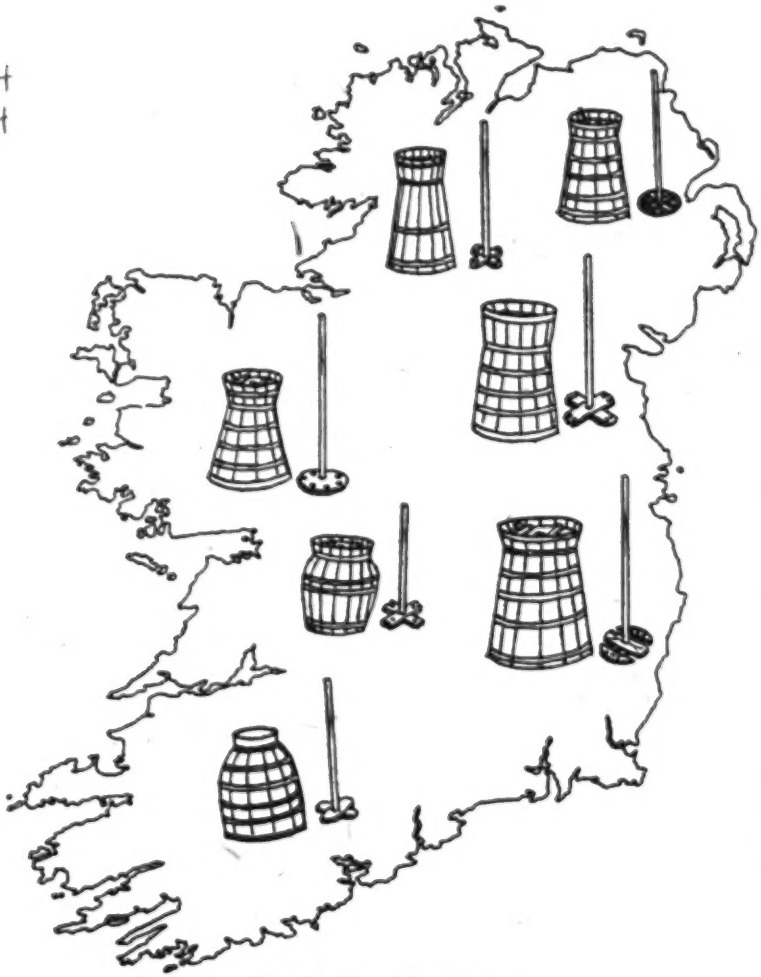

FIG. 30. Map of churn types.

were probably kegs for carrying milk: they have a rim of hoops which would allow a cloth or skin cover to be securely tied on.
234 A most interesting stave-built churn dating from the ninth century was discovered by Gerhard Bersu during the excavation

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

of a rath (farmstead) at Lissue, Co. Antrim, in 1946.[1] Its barrel- 234
shaped body has the unusual refinement of an oval mouth, designed for pouring, with an iron rim-mount over which a cloth could be tied. A central iron band has two rings attached, evidently for suspension. A century ago, that is a thousand years after the Lissue churn was in use, we know that butter was made not far away on the shores of Lough Neagh by swinging the churn to and fro, suspended from the roof timbers. The Lissue churn could also have been used to carry milk from the summer pastures to the homestead. There are stories in the Mourne Mountains of milk transported in this way which would turn to butter by the automatic churning of the rough journey home from the hills. Evidently the lidless churn is the older type, and I have seen large specimens in Donegal. It was pre- [492]
sumably from a churn of this kind, slung from a pony's back, that the Donegal child was observed 'peeping and screeching' as the pastoral cavalcade moved up to the summer booleys in the days before the Great Famine.[2]

The simplest form of churn dash, found along the west coast, 234
terminates in a wooden cross. A similar Norwegian dasher has 777
the ends of the cross joined with a sally ring, and a rope of cowhair is said to have been used for the purpose in Scotland. It was considered lucky to have the cross-pieces made of two different woods; indeed everything about the churn had to be made 'right'. In the whole business of handling milk luck was more important than labour, and butter-making in particular was a task fraught with unseen dangers. Often the butter would mysteriously refuse to break, and many were the precautions taken and the remedies sought. It seems that the old Irish method was to churn from the whole milk, and it was customary until recently to pour the skim milk into the churn along with the risen cream. It should be remembered, too, that the butterfat content was low, and that since many peasant farmers had no more than one cow at a time in milk, its quality would be more variable than the milk of a large herd. The unaccountable variations in the success of churning were widely attributed to the intervention of witches or fairies.

[1]G. Berry, *U.J.A.*, X (1947), 30–58.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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234 407 Bad luck could not always be avoided, but at least it was desirable to make the toil less wearisome, and to this end a number of ingenious fittings were applied to the churn staff. Most of the examples I have seen, in the north-east, depend on the recoil of a strong spring to lift the staff, and they may well have been evolved from a spring pole, such as is used for the pole lathe, attached to the roof timbers.[1] Other devices enabled the staff to be moved in both directions by an arrangement of levers hinged to a couple-baulk. These engines, which have almost entirely gone out of use, were known as glaiks (Fig. 31).

[415]

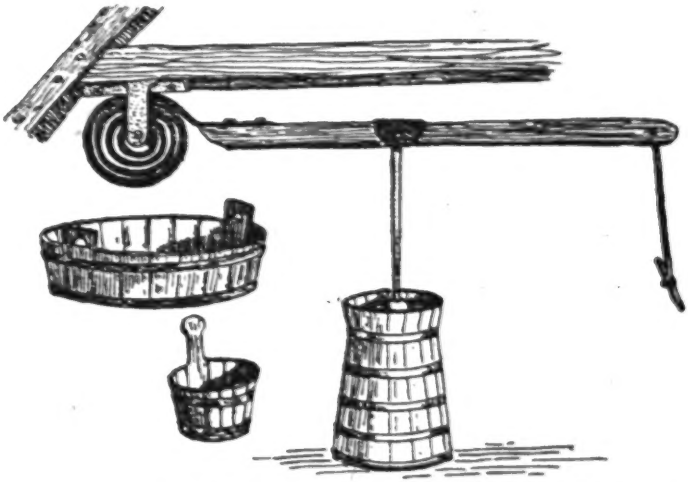

FIG. 31. Glaiks for churning, Co. Down, with milk 'keeler' and piggin, Co. Donegal.

353 788 Here we may mention other things which were hung from the roof timbers: in the more prosperous homes sides of bacon and portions of the autumn-killed ox, the mart; in poorer houses the salted ling or other 'kitchen'. And there was a strange custom of keeping in the roof, to bring luck to the livestock, part of a carcase, such as an animal's leg. This undoubtedly had its origin in the days when living-room and byre were under

[1]For another device, fitted to the churn, see my *Mourne Country*, Fig. 84.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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one roof. A relic of this practice may perhaps be seen in the 353
sheep's bones that one occasionally finds tucked away in the 788
keeping-holes of old-fashioned houses. Above the door the Bridget's Cross gives protection from fire and other dangers.

Besides the churn the old-time farm will have a wide range of 415
other wooden dairying utensils, some stave-built, others carved
or turned from the solid. They will include milking-piggins 234
(Fig. 31), cream-skimmers, ladles, butter-scoops, and -prints, butter tubs and buttermilk butts. A shallow stave-built 'keeler' or a large turned bowl is kept for setting milk (Fig. 31). The solid and often shapely carved cups and methers (literally mead bowls) are already archaeological specimens (Fig. 65), and many of the other wooden containers are going the same way, including the little stave noggins described in an earlier chapter.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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make the butter rancid, since the Irish, he says, preferred strong butter.[1] An eighteenth century writer states that some of the buried butter was

> So strong, a dog with help of wind,
> By scenting out, with ease might find.[2]

Others have claimed that it was buried to mature and purify it, and one writer has seen an explanation in the need to have butter available at Lent. It is reasonable to suppose that the surplus butter of summer would be stored in this way once the preservative properties of peat were known, but the practice is certainly pre-Christian in origin. None of the Irish finds has been securely dated—the majority of the wooden containers have an ageless 'medieval' appearance—but a discovery in Skye was satisfactorily dated to the very beginning of the Christian era (it contained not only cowhairs but some strands from the head of a fair-haired dairymaid).[3] I am inclined to think that a practice which came to be generally adopted for utilitarian reasons had its origin in magic, and that deposits were originally made in the hope of appeasing the powers of evil and inducing an abundant flow of milk from the pastures.[4] The custom may well have originated during the crisis of the climatic deterioration in the last centuries of the pre-Christian era. Surviving folklore is full of the magic properties of butter, and in the west of Ireland it is known that lumps of butter were thrown into loughs and springs through which cattle were driven in order to restore them to health. It seems from the accounts of discoveries in the bogs that some of the butter containers had been thrown into a bog hole rather than buried. Later, no doubt, it became the practice to bury butter in order to preserve it, but if this had always been so I cannot think that there would have been so many unclaimed deposits left to await the slane of the turf-cutter. It should be noticed that the custom of preserving butter in bogs or in moist earth is found also in Scandinavia, Iceland, India and Morocco.[5] It is interesting that bog butter

[1] Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*, 82.
[2] W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle*, Canto 2.
[3] J. Ritchie, *P.S.A.S.*, 75, 5–22.
[4] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 10, 59–65.
[5] ibid., 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and, we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne 'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour, and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh-water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 52.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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newly-calved cow should be milked on to a piece of metal placed in the pail. Offerings of the 'beastlings' were poured in the raths and at the roots of fairy thorns, to appease the fairies. When taking a drink out of doors, the old countryman will casually spill a portion of the draught on the earth as a complimentary libation to the good people. 'When a cow fell sick through fairy malice, it was formerly by no means an uncommon practice, in the west of Ireland, to devote the ailing animal to St. Martin. The ceremony was performed by letting a few drops of blood from the cow in honour of the saint.'[1] Cows which, for no apparent reason, are not thriving are said to be elf-shot. The elf-stones or fairy-darts which are supposed to have caused the mischief are prehistoric flint arrowheads such as can be picked up in the fields. One of the tricks of the cow-doctor who is called in, and who keeps a few arrowheads handy, is to produce one by sleight of hand from the flank of the ailing beast. Or counter-magic can be worked by means of a flint arrowhead which must not be allowed to touch the ground after it has been found. The cow-doctor uses sympathetic magic in curing calves believed to be suffering from intestinal knots by drawing apart over the animal's back the loose ends of a string tied in a complicated witch-knot or 'bat', of the type which comes undone when pulled. But as always he must work the magic correctly, for if the knot is not resolved another one is tied inside the calf.

Hanging in the byre one sometimes sees a flint pebble suspended on a string through a natural hole. It is a witch-stone, protecting the cows from milk-stealers, and it may owe its virtue to the flint or to its symbolic ever-watching eye. In the Ardenne a holed flint hung in the stable is believed to preserve the horses from nightmares,[2] and nearer home in the Yorkshire dales holed stones known as ring-stones protected the cows from the evil eye. 'Blessings on all that I can see' is the traditional formula to use when one enters a byre. An ill-disposed person could, merely by looking at it, 'blink' a cow so that its milk would yield no butter. The cow could be cured by burning under its nose a portion of the blinker's clothes

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 6.
[2] H. H. Turney-High, *Ch'trau-Gérrad* 53(19), 232.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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and a handful of thatch taken from above the door of his house. 234
Butter-making must have been a chancy and critical business 789
when each family had only one or two cows, ill-fed for a large
part of the year, and there were fairies, witches and blinkers to
contend with. The protective charms and prognostications
connected with churning are legion. If you should enter an
old-style mountain kitchen when churning is in progress you
may well be invited to lend a hand, or at least to 'leave your
weight on the staff,' just to show that your intentions are not
evil. There must be no bad words during churning, no quarrels,
no singing or drinking: to drink anything is presumably to
dilute the milk. If the milk splashes the churner is fated to
marry a drunken mate. When the butter at last breaks a small
ball of it is traditionally taken and smeared on the wall or tossed
on top of the dresser to bring luck to the house, perhaps
originally as an offering to the fairies. And when the churning
is finished the staff should be twisted round three times and
placed across the mouth of the churn. There are many other
precautions that may be taken: a horseshoe—preferably 'a shoe
of one heating'—tied to the churn or nailed to the bottom; a
nail from a horseshoe or from a coffin driven into churn or
staff; a ring of salt placed on the lid; a twig of rowan tied round
the churn. Or the plough coulter should be heated in the fire,
and the churnstaff tied with a straw rope to the fire-crane: if
the staff is made of rowan-wood so much the better. If despite
all precautions the butter does not come there are ways of
catching the thief. For instance, a cake is baked and stuck with
pins and a bunch of yarrow placed in the churn. The thief will
come crying to the door in pain, and he must not be allowed in
but turned away.

Special precautions should also be taken to make the house 512
safe at night from unwanted visitations. Before the fire is raked
and 'smoored' (buried in peat-ash) a spark should be dropped 352
into the foot-water, the water in which feet have been washed
and to which many superstitions are attached. The carded flax [515]
should be placed under a weight, the band taken off the spinning
wheel and the quern dismantled. Many stories are told of the
risks involved in letting the fairies have access to these things.
Finally the besom should be placed against the door: the

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the
233 newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
823 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26]
789 In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
826 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to
789 the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale.

[P. 243]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

with the churn "dash," and if you are smoking you should finish the pipe in the house, or you may "take" the butter. There is still living to the south of Ennis a man who is afraid to touch a churn lest the butter should "go away," and he get the discredit of "butter-taking." (I may boast myself of the repute of having "the lucky hand" that "brings" the butter quickly.) Long ago the O'Briens of Kells near Corofin told the late Dr. G. U. MacNamara of the latter place how one "Donogho buidhe" (yellow Donal), a local "fairy man," being offended one day about getting a glass of whiskey, left the house angrily. After his exit no amount of churning would bring the butter. He was pursued and appeased, and took a bit of paper from under the churn, when the butter came at once. In a case in the Tulla district in which a farmer's butter was "taken," he consulted the priest, by whose direction he searched in the corner of his corn-field, and found a small sheaf with a hazel rod in it. After destroying this the butter "came" in great abundance.[29]

234 789 [791]

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[29] Cf. *ante*, p. 58.

(*To be continued.*)

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of island- [231] ers. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [226] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [311] eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [654] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [241] fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [231] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breed- ing of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 [232] [224] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

262
264
with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. 262
Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat 272
biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals. [561]

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the 252
open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread
which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring [443]
must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a
family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally 252
made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in 262
a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and [234]
also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the
fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial
product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are
eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking [273]
their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread gener-
ously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained
of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on
the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their [561]
bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing
six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days
will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, [443]
mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the
shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from
mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy
are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other
shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or
cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and [824]
are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled
but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which
when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed [751]
to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard
them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even 262
when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking 252
pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than 415
its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat
them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. 262
They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed 264
only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is 415
thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the [829]
folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor
did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which
the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes
when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where 248
the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and 244
the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has 311
been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered 231
that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the
pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. [178]
But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their
importance in the past: one minor factor in the decline is the [273]
fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained 235 ●
and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

235 considered that the abundance of wild white clover, on the seeds of which chickens and young turkeys feed, was another contributory factor. Of the goat it can be said that it is often 231 the poor man's milk supply and supplements the cow on many small farms just as the ass replaces or supplements the horse. But the ass is in fact quite rare in many parts of the country, for example in Donegal, and is regarded with contempt, whereas the horse, as befits its important role since prehistoric times, is held in high regard and is kept by small farmers often as much for the sake of prestige as for its use. "If they have three acres," says a Government Report of last century, "they think they must have a horse." The strength and speed of the Irish race horse have been attributed to the bone-building qualities of limestone pastures: the great breeding and training ground is the morainic waste known as the Curragh of Kildare, but throughout the country there are many districts where, for geographical or historical reasons, horses of quality are bred for export and for the delight of the crowds at local race-meetings. Readers are referred to [113] Dr. Dudley Stamp's *Agricultural Atlas of Ireland* (1931) for further information on agricultural distributions.

172

Fig. 9. About 10 ft. high.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 234 Behind the cows there runs a slab-lined drain or groop, which carries the refuse through the "groop hole" in the wall to the midden. Hanging from the rannel-tree you may perchance see a charm in the shape of a perforated flint [176] pebble, while over the door, decaying Brigid's Crosses dating [751] back for several successive years show that the cattle are under the special protection of the Irish saint. In the byre gable it is not uncommon to see a dove-cote, at any rate along ● [235] the east coast where English influence has been strong since Norman times. Pigeons are fond of heat and thrive near farm animals. In Lecale, Co. Down, I have seen nests made of straw rope hung above the horses in the stable.

343 251 The barn is not infrequently built above the byre. When the dwelling house alongside remains, in the Irish tradition, single-storied, the effect of the towering barn is rather incongruous. This arrangement makes it simple to feed the animals, provides a springy wooden floor for thrashing, and also gives a better draught for the purpose. Moreover, the raised position helps to make the corn secure from damp and rats. The barn has opposite doors and half doors to regulate the through draught and to keep out stray animals while work goes on inside. Access to the barn is obtained by external stone steps or a sloping ramp, under which the stone dog kennel is often built in. Some of the activities and appurtenances of the barn are described in Chapter 14.

343 Little need be said about the stable, since small farms have as a rule only one mare. In the old-time single-roomed kitchen-byres, the mare had her stall alongside the cows, and you will sometimes see the keeping-hole above the back door where the brush and curry comb were stored. The stable, like the byre, may be attached to the house or may be separate, but for convenience and economy it tends to be built as part of a range of buildings. In decayed rundale clusters now occupied by only one or two holders there were, ready to hand, many old dwelling houses which could be put to different uses as "offices."

Before we turn to the housing of other livestock, mention should be made of the turf-house, for which many different

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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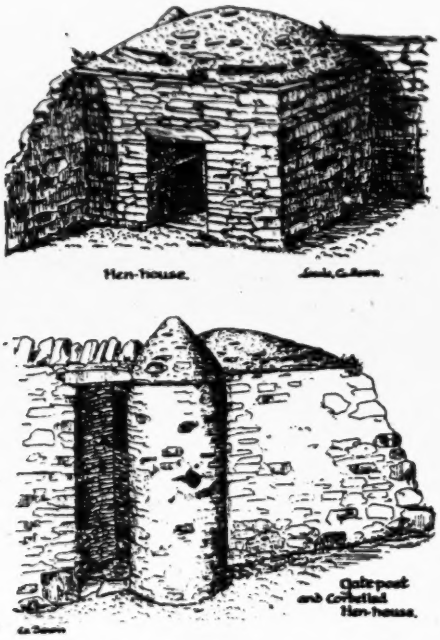
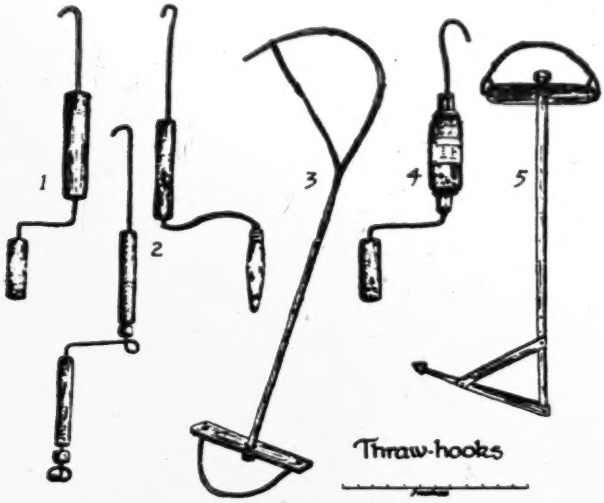


Fig. 38. Two views of hen-house.

515
343 Some of the holy wells visited throughout Ireland for their reputed curative powers are protected by corbelled coverings of some antiquity: one may cite the wells at Struell near Downpatrick and Ronogue's Well near Cork. Domestic wells also frequently show some degree of corbelling, but free standing well-covers like that shown in Fig. 41 are rare. To the same class of construction belong most of the surviving [757] sweat-houses which were resorted to by rheumatic cases, profuse sweating being induced by heating the interior with turf fires beforehand. In certain counties, for example Cavan, these structures are quite common and were used into living memory. In Rathlin Island I was told that girls would go to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

known to be of mediæval descent. The method of manufacture is shown in Fig. 50, and the tying down of a hay pike in Fig. 51. Sugán was sometimes employed instead of wattle 283



[413]

Fig. 78.

Sugán twisters 1. Co. Antrim. 2. Both Donegal. 3. Lecale, Down. 4. Leitrim. 5. Dingle, Kerry.

in the chimney canopies. It was used for the seats of chairs and for the clothes-line which stretched across the kitchen. A short length was sometimes worn as a girdle around a child's dress. From it were made tethering ropes, spancels and langles, traces and tail-ropes; and on the Donegal seaboard I have heard of cabbages being tethered "against the wind" by three hay-ropes! It is on record that the men of Mayo would descend the seacliffs suspended by a straw-rope.

A length of sugán is also the foundation course of many more complex objects of straw such as mats, mattresses, screens, beehives, nesting boxes, stools, arm-chairs, baskets and hampers. I illustrate (Fig. 79) one of the conical hen-nests which are hung on pegs in the kitchen: large

[244]

[481]

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Fig. 79.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 80.

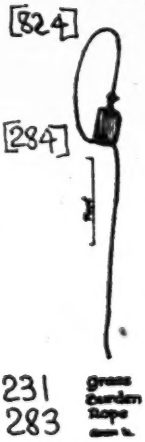

Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugán and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a "tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way: some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or "mell"), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply: finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. "Langles" and "burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

372 The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive, except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
[435] and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[12] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever bought. As one of the islanders put it,
437 "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [12] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p.206(B)]

343 lightly meddled with, and if the water is not as good as usual
312 you will be told, in the phrase used for an ailing human being, that the well is 'not *at* itself at all'.

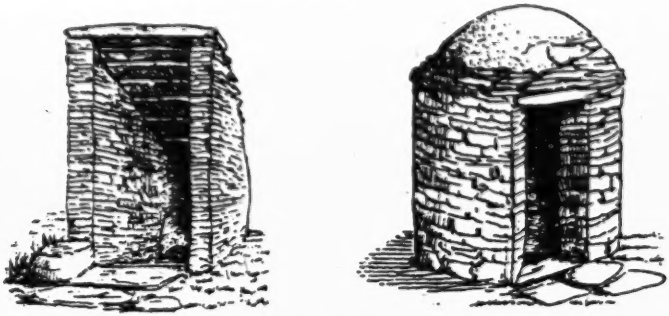

FIG. 40. Well-covers, Co. Cavan and Co. Down.

Finally we come to a miscellaneous assortment of outbuild-
343 ings and shelters built to house various animals and birds.
235 Elaborate pigeon houses (ducats) designed to house hundreds of birds seem to be confined to the east and south coasts and to areas planted by English or Scots. They are no doubt manorial in origin but some existing examples were built in the early nineteenth century, though they are no longer in use. In these areas the smaller farms may have little pigeon houses made for a dozen birds, and the humblest stable is likely to have a pigeon hole or two in the gable. The birds formerly nested in hanging nests of plaited straw.

Cavities in the thick walls about many old farms were built
343 as dog-kennels or duck-houses, and simple shelter holes ('boles'
231 in Ulster) were intended to house assorted three-legged iron pots (Fig. 32). An interesting variant is the bee-bole, a shelter for the bee-skep, a few examples of which have been observed in eastern Ireland.[1]

[1]R. M. Duruz and E. E. Crane, *English Bee Boles* (1953). (National Beekeeping Museum Pamphlet No. 1.)

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439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
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[113] [13] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p.206(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

feet in diameter. (Small, carefully made clews of hay rope, with 283
a centre of rags or corks, are occasionally used as footballs; similar coils of rope in England seem to be oval in shape and would serve rather as balls for Rugby football.) Laying by a stock of clews was a useful occupation for a wet day. The man of the house chose the sedentary end of the rope, sitting under cover in the barn among the thrashed straw and feeding it evenly into the rope as the other end was twisted by a retreating youth armed with a thraw-hook. As the rope grew, the boy had to withdraw into the rain away from the shelter and the sociability of the barn, and this simple scene is the theme of one of Douglas Hyde's Irish plays, *Casadh an tSugáin* (The Twisting [538]
of the Rope). A rival suitor makes love to a girl in the barn while the unfortunate twister is forced by his unco-operative employer to watch the proceedings from the end of a lengthening and apparently endless rope.

Hay ropes are both softer and stronger than straw and were used, for example, for parts of the harness where straw ropes would have chafed and broken. They were naturally employed for securing large cocks of hay (tramp cocks, Fig. 52) against the wind; and tethers for young animals were often made of hay rope. A Donegal landlord writing of the early nineteenth century tells of cabbages tethered against the wind with three hay ropes.[1] The shearing rope, four or five feet long, by which the legs of sheep were tied together when clipping the wool, was also made of hay or marram grass. Here we may take note of the curious practice of piecemeal shearing, recorded from [236]
Mayo[2] and Donegal[3] and possibly to be attributed to ancient usage rather than to indolence. It seems that the women were in the habit of clipping bits off the sheep at any season, as they needed the wool. Stronger than ropes of straw or hay are those made of rushes or sedges, and stronger still those of fir, heather, birch twigs, willow bark, horsehair or rawhide. Bog fir ropes were still being twisted in north Antrim, a few years ago, for securing thatch and making bed-frames. Ropes were made even from seaweed, as we shall see in the following chapter. Many

[1]J. Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience*, 19.
[2]C. R. Browne, *Garumna and Lettermullen*.
[3]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 [232] [224] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Wicklow

342
354
[352]

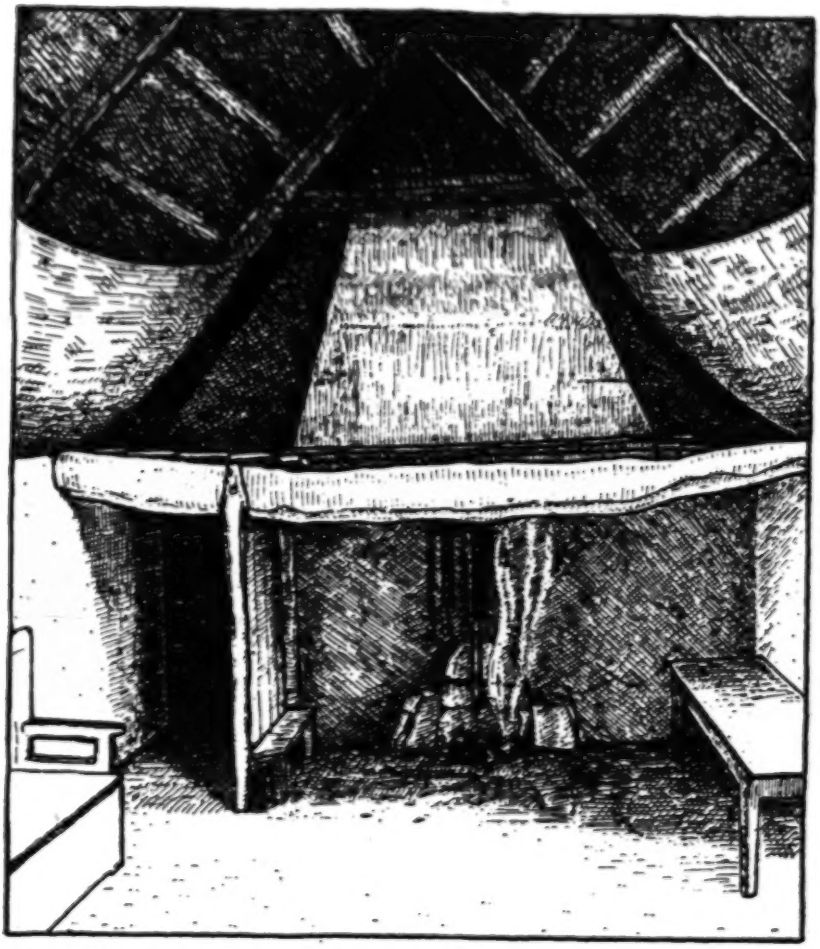

Fig. 6. Wooden side-wall of the fireplace. The kitchen corner. Kyle, Ballinglen, Co. Wicklow.

the "shelter door" into consideration, the whole kitchen being of importance with regard to the fire.

The basket chimney, *síneán*, is plastered with clay inside and outside to resist sparks from the fire. A plaster mixture of clay and calfmanure is said to be very useful. The older chimneys were straight i. e. on looking up from the fireplace the sky was visible above. In later ones the flue, *poll an deataigh*, [237]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

262 make a long list of the plants and herbs which are gathered and dried for use as simples. In some areas, for example Tyrone and Derry, it is recorded that the cattle used to be 237 bled in summer, " in a smooth place, each layer of coagulating 262 blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed, which was cut up in squares and laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year." In Wicklow (1780) " they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food." 273 In the days before sugar was known honey played a considerable part in domestic economy and mead or metheglin, made from honey, was once a popular beverage. We have no knowledge of the period when whiskey distillation was first practised but stills and worms of some antiquity have been found in the bogs, and it is natural to correlate the popularity of whiskey and poteen with the dampness of the climate. A fact worth recording is that until recently illicit stills were made and kept in repair by travelling tinkers in whom it is perhaps not extravagant to see shades of the skilled craftsmen of the later Bronze Age who made cauldrons out of sheet bronze (*cf.* Fig. 5).

252 Far into the historic period heated stones were employed in cooking and it may be that memories of this old method linger on. The nearest thing I have seen is the custom of plunging a hot poker into cow's milk to " singe it " when it is given to lambs. The explanation offered was that this made its taste resemble that of sheep's milk.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of " calf basket " (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a " cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

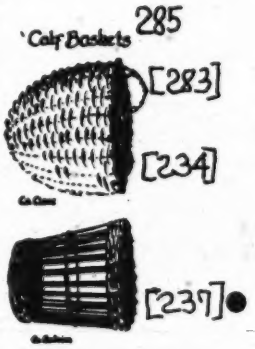

Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or " floats " are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

285 415 [482] [184] [482]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XV.

THE BOG.

314 I have called this chapter " the Bog " rather than " Turf " because fuel is not the only product of the Irish turf bogs. The rough grazings once so important in mountain economy (Chapter 6) are commonly located on thin peat, while " buried treasure " is obtained in the form of bog-timber and also, it may be, in objects of wood or metal lost or deposited in the turf in ancient times. Measured by the time and labour of cutting, footing, stacking, and carrying, turf is an expensive fuel. At best, work in the bogs involves a constant struggle against water-logging underfoot and mists and rain overhead: at the worst there comes an occasional season wetter than usual when little or no turf can be won, and the bare countryside must be searched for sticks and rotting timber to burn. ●[237] In these circumstances dried cowdung is often used as fuel. [372] Moreover, the heavy drain upon all available hands comes in early summer, and the growing crops and livestock are liable to be neglected. " A great impediment to good husbandry," is the verdict of one writer.

The turf is cut in a normal year from the beginning of May onwards, or as soon as the potatoes and corn are in the ground, but the great thing is to begin as early as possible in [132] order to profit from the dry weather of spring. In districts where few crops are grown April, the driest month of the year, is the chosen time. A current of excitement runs through

[p. 133]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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in many different ways, for instance around Ballymoney it is 3|4
hooked and the slanesman uses it to pull the turf-barrow into 4|3
position. A foot-rest is provided on the foot-slane, on the side opposite the wing. There are left and right-footed workers, but it is not always necessary to use the foot, the strength of the arm sufficing. As with some of the loys (Chapter 13), there is a type of slane in the Midlands which has a separate spade-tree to which the handle is attached by two iron bands (Fig. 88). The spade-tree is of light wood, elm, or larch. Lightness is an essential quality in the slane: the blade is thin and sharp and weighs about 1½ pounds. The old type of

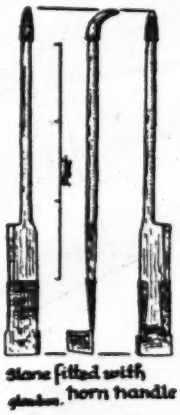

Fig. 87.

slane, like the loy, is straight handled, but it is customary to affix a cow's horn as hand-grip (Fig. 87.) Another type of handle is shown in Fig. 86.

Where the bogs are soft, especially in the area from Galway to Meath, a broad flat breast spade is employed in place of the winged slane. Its blade measures some 13 inches by 5 and it is sharpened at the sides as well as the mouth (Fig. 88). A Co. Derry variety has the edge expanded to 5¾ inches: its blade is slightly dished and has a gentle rounded lift. Details of this kind assist in the penetration and with-

Fig. 88.

[237]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SEASHORE.

The seashore, where the first Irishmen picked up a living 22
some thousands of years ago, still plays a significant role in the islands and around the coasts and is laid under contribution for seaweed and drift weed (wrack), for sand and gravel, and for accessory supplies of food. On many an Irish strand too, seasonal festivals, horse-racing and country games have only slowly given way to holiday makers from the city. Communal rights in the seashore were jealously guarded, and one constantly comes across ancient customs that have survived in this most changeless of environments. I recall the country-
man " on the brew " (bureau ; that is, on the dole) whom I [283]
watched in County Down twisting on his bare thigh, his palm dried with a dusting of wood-ash from the hearth, the two-ply " crop " of horse-hair for his fishing line—each ply consisting of twenty-one strands taken from the tail of a white mare. This method of twisting is found amongst almost all primitive 227
peoples, and can be paralleled, for instance, from the remote 226
Andaman Islands. His outfit for codling fishing is illustrated in Fig. 94, which shows two hair crops attached to a home-made sinker of lead—called from its shape a " frog " ; the use of horse-hair has survived in this case because it is stiffer than
gut and serves to keep the hooks from fouling each other. [237]
Rock-fishing lines in Co. Antrim are sometimes made of black horse-hair, but for the part next the hook, called the foot-line, white hair is used. Well-made lines of carefully selected hair

[Text continues top of p. 144—Analyst]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

241 sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone
[423] walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.
[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be to some extent neglected. A family keeps a couple of pigs, some
[231] sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on
[237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de vâche*) are used as fuel.

373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean, even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat. Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable. Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter. And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at that season, when food for livestock is scarce.

Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen

[1]Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 349.

[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.

[3]ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.

[4]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.

[5]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year!'[1] Sea wrack and shell sand were carted up to thirty miles inland from the coast.[2] In the absence of permanent fences the majority of the cattle must be moved away during the summer and those remaining carefully herded or tethered on the outfield, or put in temporary enclosures to manure that part of the outfield which was due for cultivation.[3] In its origins and full development the rundale system depended on the movement of most of the livestock to summer booleys situated some distance away. Here the widely distributed uplands and boglands played their part in the traditional economy. Although late survivals of the booleying system are hard to find, little of it managing to outlive the crisis of the Great Famine, we are beginning to track down its history and significance. The Irish texts are as disappointing and vague as they are in many matters touching the common people, but folk-memory comes to our aid. There are stories, and place-name evidence, from most parts of the country, and regional variants of the practice are being studied and mapped.[4]

We give first some quotations from the few discerning observers who drew attention to the practice. Edmund Spenser's enlightened spirit of inquiry is shown in his remark: 'Have you ever heard what was the occasion and first beginning of this custom? for it is good to know the same.' He writes, in 1595, 'There is one use amongst them, to keep their cattle and to live themselves the most part of the year in boolies, pasturing upon the mountain and waste wild places.'[5] His objections to the system, however, reveal his Englishry: the booleys hid outlaws and loose people, and the wandering life made the Irish barbarous. The following brief reference comes from O'Flaherty's famous account of West Connacht: 'In summertime they drive their cattle to the mountains, where such as look to the cattle live in small cabins for that season.'[6] In the eighteenth

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country* (1951), 141.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 131.
[4]J. M. Graham, 'Transhumance in Ireland', in *The Advancement of Science*, 37 (1953), 74–9.
[5]Quoted in H. Morley, *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James I* (1890), 67.
[6]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the door'. A wattle frame, a handful of straw or a dried sheep-skin served as a substitute for glass, and it is remembered in Co. Fermanagh that a mare's cleanings (the placenta) best served the purpose. My informant added significantly: 'No bayonet would go through it'! In one Donegal parish in 1837, according to a petition sent by the school teacher to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, there was 'not more than ten square feet of glass in windows in the whole (some 1,500 houses) with the exception of the chapel, the school house, the priest's house, Mr. Dombrain's house and the constabulary barrack'.[1] 342 [237]

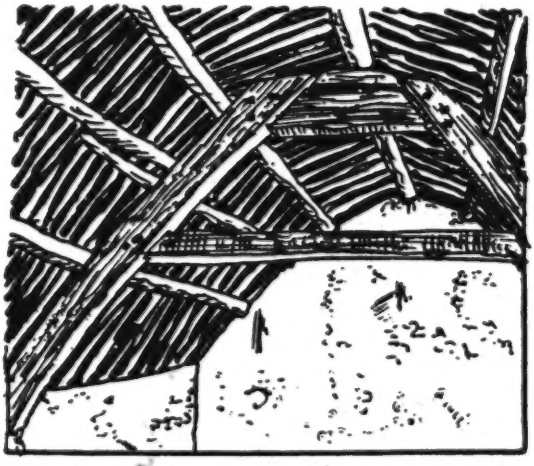

FIG. 10. A coupled roof of bog-oak, Co. Donegal, the ridge rounded against the wind (compare Fig. 12, 3).

Details of the roof-frame of the long house show many minor variations from place to place, but as a general rule it is composed of coupled rafters traditionally of bog-oak chosen for its strength as well as from the scarcity of live oak trees (Fig. 10). A house is measured, not in feet, but by the number of bays it contains, a bay being the distance between the couples, which is standard in any one district. There is some evidence that the

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 16.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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laths and wattles (willow, hazel or briar), plastered with a 354
mixture of clay and cowdung or ashes and coated with limewash. 342
In parts of the south hay or straw ropes soaked in mud (putogs) were used, twisted between a frame of horizontal rungs and plastered over with mud or limewash. In Co. Armagh one occasionally sees a heron's wing hung on the brace: it is used [237] for dusting the hearth. The jamb-walls—and internal walls in general—were traditionally constructed of wattle and daub, or of mud or wood. The wattle and daub construction is undoubtedly an old technique which, in the days of plentiful timber, was much more generally used in house-building. Internal partitions carried up to the roof, however, probably followed the adoption of the chimney flue, and if so this innovation must be reckoned as a contribution to privacy as well as to comfort. We note in passing that wattlework found its last traditional 342
use in house construction in the wicker doors of the west, and in the windbreaks of the north, bundles of hazel or birch branches (wassocks) set up on the windward side of the door. The stone-built external porch must be regarded as a relatively novel addition to the traditional house style.

Wooden or stone seats are often built in near the hearth, 352
and the wall behind the fire, protected by a flagstone or a built-up hob, usually has a keeping hole on each side of the fire (Fig. 19). Known as boles in Antrim and coves in Cavan, these may be elaborated in Achill Island, for example, into two- or three-tier wall-dressers whose ancestry lies in the stone house tradition of the mountain country. There is an old belief that the left-hand keeping hole belongs to the woman and the right-hand one to the man of the house. Here you may see in safe keeping, on one side the woman's knitting, on the other the man's clay pipe. Stone dressers were a characteristic feature of [171] the huts at Skara Brae,[1] where also Professor Childe found evidence that the women occupied the left side of the fire and the men the right. In the Hebridean black-houses the left-hand side of the fire was the woman's quarter.[2] Similarly in the old turf houses of the Highlands, 'the women were invariably ranged around the central fire on one side, the men on the

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 15.
[2] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 52.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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VIII

FARMYARDS AND FENCES

351 THE paved area in front of the traditional Irish farmhouse is known as 'the street', a word here used in its original sense of a pavement. The old style street is usually cobbled, and occasionally, especially along the coast where the materials lay to hand, neat arrangements of waterworn pebbles made a pretty pattern at the door. This is a technique of prehistoric origin which is found along the Atlantic coasts and in the Mediterranean region. The area around the hearth also may be pebbled, but I have not seen in Ireland the entire kitchen floor so treated, as in parts of Wales. There may be a stone bench against the front of the house near the door, and here, or in specially constructed wall coves across the cobbled street, pots and buckets are put out to dry (Fig. 32).

Immediately in front of the house is the traditional location of
● 237 the dungheap. 'The dunghill before each door' was commented
351 on by nearly every nineteenth-century traveller. The apologists, it is true, remind us that tenants would not move the dunghill for fear of having their rents raised because of 'improvements'. But its proximity to the dwelling house need occasion no surprise when we recall that down to a century or two ago, in remote parts, the dung was allowed to accumulate at the end of the living-room. We recall that in 1837 a school teacher wrote that some houses in Donegal had 'within their walls from ten to fifteen tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year'.[1] Nowadays, however, from hygienic motives, the manure is removed to a less conspicuous part of the farmyard, though if possible still in sight of the door, for the farmer likes

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

to keep an eye on his wealth. The muck-heap is the source of 237
good crops and good luck, a potent symbol of well-being: 351
'where there is muck there is luck'. It was the custom, recorded [177]
for instance in the Glens of Antrim, to stick a sprig of rowan
tree upright in the midden on May Eve to protect the farm [188]
from mischievous fairies. The muck symbolizes the fertility of
the farm.

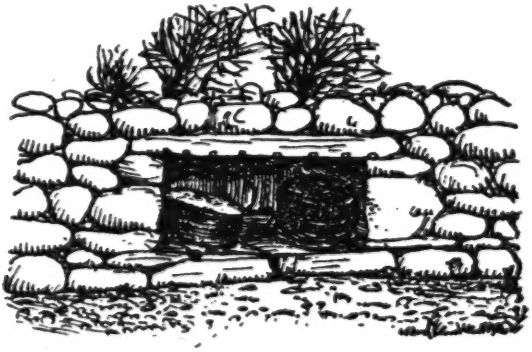

FIG. 32. Keeping-hole for pots, Co. Down.

In many parts of the country, especially in the northern 351
counties and in Co. Wexford, the entrance to the farmyard is 417
dignified by a pair of massive stone gate piers, generally built-up from field-stones in the form of a conical topped cylinder and kept whitewashed. There are many modern variants in concrete, and the old style piers are steadily disappearing and are often hastened to their end by carelessly driven tractors or lorries. They seem far too massive for the gates they carry, resembling twin bastions defending the entrance to a fortified enclosure (Figs. 5, 33). In some areas, probably under the influence of improving landlords or land agents, field entrances are also dignified by built-up stone piers, and it is possible to explain the fashion as part of the agrarian revolution which resulted in enclosure. In the virtual absence of well-grown oak trees they provided an Irish alternative to the oak gate-post of the English farm, sturdy enough to carry the iron gate which for the same reason took the place of the five-barred oaken gate.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

314 time: his finger marks can still be seen when the dried turves
are burning in the fire. In deep bogs the lifter may use a long-
493 handled fork (Fig. 66, 2) or shovel, pitching the turves for the barrowman to load. A barrow load is anything from ten to twenty peats. Apparently crude and artless, the turf barrow is well designed for its purpose, and it shows many adaptations to local conditions and traditions (Fig. 63). It is slatted for lightness and is made almost entirely of wood, yet it must be strong enough to take heavy loads over rough ground: it should be low and flat for convenience in loading and unloading, yet it needs a large broad wheel for pushing over an uneven surface. Legs may be dispensed with, reduced to lugs or swept back to serve as runners. Again the shape of the handles and the slope of the front board depend on the method of loading and tipping, over the side or over the front. Every detail of the design is in answer to a general or local problem. If the ground is very rough or soft the barrow must be pulled, not pushed, and in extreme cases its place is taken by a slipe. In Antrim alone there are several varieties of turf slipe. All are slatted lengthwise—because the peats are loaded transversely—and are fitted with short corner posts and tipping handles. An interesting variant—the roller slipe—has been recorded but is no longer seen: it had two rollers fitted under the body of the sledge.[1] The dried peats also may be transported, if the bog is soft, on a slipe (Fig. 58, 5) or in a carrying basket (Fig. 57).

Despite ingenious shifts towards greater speed the spreading
314 and drying of turf are inefficient because of the time taken in
372 wheeling and handling and the great difficulty of drying turf which is spread on almost saturated surfaces. In exceptionally wet summers the peats do not dry out, and tragedy may follow if the winter is severe. It is then that the countryside is stripped of what little timber it can provide, and before coal was obtainable anything from furniture to fishbones and cowdung was
● 237 utilized to boil the pot. In bogless districts dung was quite
372 regularly used: there are several accounts of it in travel records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed in the treeless islands dung was until recently carefully harvested, gathered in piles in the fields in spring, and sometimes worked with the

[1] E. E. Evans in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), plate 2A.

 [Text continues on p. 194]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

372 hands into cakes and piled against a wall until dry enough to
237 carry home.[1]

After lying spread on the ground for a week or two the turves
314 are footed, that is a dozen or so are put to lean together in the shape of a pitched roof, to catch the wind (Fig. 64). This is
[462] work for women and for children, who are, in some districts,
[857] given a week's holiday from school. Through the months of June and July and often into August there is constant coming and going as the peats are turned and built into larger and larger piles, turn-foots, castles, rickles, lumps and clamps—the names and the shapes show considerable regional variation—until they can be ricked or stacked on the bog ready to be carried to the farms as opportunity offers. The wind is the main drying agent, and once dried the peats acquire a waterproof skin. A well-built stack will throw off the rain, but it is usual in the west to thatch with rushes and add a coping of sods or
[343] stones against the wind. Open-sided turfsheds specially built of wood or stone are the exception rather than the rule. A favourite place for the stack is against the house gable, where it provides a protective warmth even before the turf is burnt. The fuel is taken into the house in baskets, creels or wights, and a small supply is kept handy by the fireside or stored, as in the Aran Islands, on the kitchen loft (Pl. 9, 2).

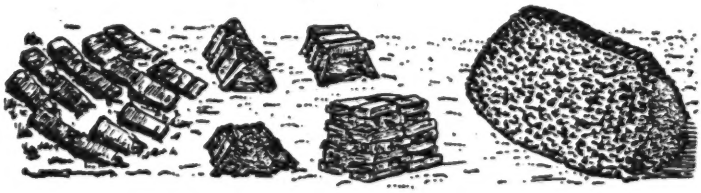

FIG. 64. Stages in the drying and stacking of turf (not to scale; the stack, right, is about 9 feet high).

Some lowland bogs are too waterlogged to be cut into turves, and if no slane-turf is available the black turf-mud is moulded by hand into bricks or balls which are stacked to dry. In some counties, for instance Meath and Cavan, mud turf is highly prized and its preparation follows a well-ordered routine. After

[1]C. R. Browne and A. C. Haddon, *The Aran Islands*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were poor and there were no wheeled vehicles, or where there 283
was no horse for a slide-car, the burden rope was all that was [482]
required to carry home the harvest; distances were mercifully
small on the tiny farms. Rushes for rope making were cut when
fully grown, beetled with a mell and broken by hand to rid
them of pith. They were then spread to dry and afterwards tied in
bundles ready to be fashioned into ropes when wintry weather
brought indoor leisure. Ropes made of cowhair as well as 283
horsehair, sometimes mixed with seasoned sedge (sprit) once
found many uses about the farm. Horsehair fishing lines and 237
snares for seabirds are described elsewhere, but we may refer 223
here to snares for small birds which in south Armagh, for
example, are laid on the grass in hard wintry weather over a
scattering of grain or breadcrumbs. Inside the frame of a pegged
string or a bent sally rod are tied a dozen or more snares made
of single or double horsehair. By this means blackbirds, thrushes,
sparrows, and finches are caught by the feet, nowadays for
sport but, no doubt, once as a welcome addition to the food
supply. Similar horsehair snares for catching small birds are
known from England and, further afield, from the Sudan. Reins
of horsehair are said to have been common quite recently in
Donegal, and I would hazard a guess that horsehair nets, such
as were made in Harris (Martin Martin tells us) for catching
seals, were formerly made there.

Mats and baskets of many kinds were fashioned from straw 285
and other materials such as marram grass. This tough grass is
harvested in places all around the coast and put to many uses, [314]
including thatching. It is cut below the surface of the sandy
dunes, and in Donegal I have seen a toothed sickle used for the
purpose. The techniques of constructing mats and baskets of
these materials are closely related and seem to fall into three
classes, sown plaits, built-up plaits and coiled work. Coiled
basketry is best represented in the once universal bee-skep, in
the seed-baskets of the south, the seats and armchairs of the
west, and in the food-carrying baskets of the Aran Islands
(Fig. 69). It is an interesting detail of their construction that a
bone pin is used to insert the ties, which are usually made of
split briar. The conical hens' nests hung on pegs on the kitchen
walls (Fig. 16) are also constructed in a coil technique, but

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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figured in the economy of the farm or in medicinal and magical 222
lore would be an almost endless task. One recalls that a group 824
of Californian Indians practising a food-gathering economy is said to have made use of 176 species of wild plants for satisfying almost all their needs. A few examples of the survival of a collecting culture in Ireland may be given, taken from various sources such as Wood-Martin's pioneer work, but also from folk-memory. From the roots of ferns were extracted oils used in weaving, from those of the water lily, a cherished red dye, a substance for tanning from tormentil roots, and ink from the roots of flags (saggins). Bracken and wood ash were kept for making soap, and the ashes of thistles were the perquisite of the herdsmen. Large lake rushes provided materials for caulking boats and churns, and phragmites stems for winding yarn in the shuttle. Lady's bedstraw besides being rubbed on bee-skeps to attract a swarm, produced both dye and rennet. For cures we [278]
have the carrageen or Irish moss as well as the moss growing on crosses and other special stones, and a great number of flowers and herbs. Yarrow, in Irish, is called 'the herb of the seven cures'. But the sovereign remedy was the essence of all wild flowers contained in what was euphemistically known as [237]
'all-flower water', i.e., cow's urine.[1] We shall return to these topics in Chapter XXI.

[1]W. G. Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 183.

Note. Mr. A. T. Lucas has recently published accounts of hurling balls made of [526]
cowhair (see *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 57, 99–104; 59, 78–81). [237]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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227 confined to Co. Westmeath) is that the eel was undamaged and its skin could therefore be utilized. Apart from their use as [237] thongs and flail-hangings eel-skins were worn as charms against rheumatic pains. Eel fat, too, is esteemed as a cure for rheuma- [751] tism. The third type of eel-spear is quite different in form and [757] methods of use. It is confined to Wexford Harbour and would appear to be a relic of Scandinavian influence in that half-foreign south-eastern corner of Ireland comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth. It consists of two splayed prongs between which is ingeniously mounted a single barbed prong on to which 227 the eel is guided by the outer members (Fig. 79). When the 226 tide covers the mudflats the fisherman lies in a punt with his head over the prow, and with a spear in each hand propels the boat until he spies an eel in the mud, when his punting pole becomes a weapon. At low tide the eel fishers wear yard-long [481] 'scooches' or mud-shoes, wooden boards turned up at the front like miniature skis. We note in passing that boards were formerly worn by both men and horses in working on soft bogs in Co. Mayo.[1]

The salmon spear or leister, being illegal, is normally a light three-pronged instrument, but large specimens weighing up to eight pounds and made after the fashion of the Westmeath eel-spears are found on the River Suir (Fig. 80). The fish were attracted at night by 'burning the river' with resinous splits of bog-fir or lumps of peat soaked in oil.

Riverine weirs of many kinds have been the privilege of religious houses and landed properties through the ages, and many examples specially designed for the capture of migratory fish, salmon and eels are maintained. There are traditions of temporary weirs of heather stems weighted down with stones, into which trout were driven to be extracted when the bundles of heather were pitched on to the bank. Gerard Boate describes the weirs in his day as consisting of 'big stones set close together from the one side of the river to the other, leaving only one hole . . . before which hole a basket being laid, they take 227 therein a great quantity of fish'.[2] 'Fish baskets' and 'weels' are referred to in many ancient fishing grants, but I have not

[1] J. McParlan, *Mayo*, 94.
[2] Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 70.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [182] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 776 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 776 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck 182 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [234] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [825] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood [237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 771 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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834 bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and
[759 sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)
[155]

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health"
158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria.
751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with
[291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear
[834 of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism
[753 and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac-
827 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and
[863] animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha-
[825] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten.
Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at
[562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting
[273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most
[241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed
• 237 feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main-
372 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is
514 burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another
283 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the
[462] secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

* 831 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are
522 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood
[154] by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore
[123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER I

The Small Farmers

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CENSUSES have laid bare the existence of two widely different types of agricultural activity in the Irish countryside. There are two widely different groups of persons whom we can tentatively designate as large and small farmers. Indeed, the statistics, if used correctly, give factual base to the divisions the Irish reckon in the countryside themselves. They remind one continually that the large and small farmers are different beings and belong to ways of life which are quite opposed.

In general, the differences are such as to present two groups of persons defined by two different ways of adapting themselves to nature and carrying on the business of agricultural production. Large farmers differ from small farmers in their techniques, in their products, in the use of the soil and the land. They differ in the way in which numbers derive support from their farms. They differ significantly in the organization of labor upon those farms and presumably in consequence in their relations with other elements of the community. Family labor characterizes the small man, hired labor the big fellow.

No one, of course, expects this to be an exact correspondence in which one gets perfect correlations in each instance between the size of the acreage and other factors. A typical small farm economy might well exist on a farm very large in area, and often does so in mountainous areas, where

[p.3, p.2 is blank]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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241 463 much of the land is useless. Again, a farm small in area might be exclusively devoted to the sort of economy which is usually found on very large farms. In any single case, statistical generalities do not hold, of course. But in the large kind of correlation which a count of varying factors affords, bulk correspondences turn up with complete regularity.

241 463 162 The course by which this conclusion is reached takes one through the devious labyrinth of Free State Government statistical abstracts. In 1926, the last census year before the authors' field work was undertaken, the numbers living in country districts, "outside villages and towns with 200 or more population," made up 63 per cent of the Free State's population of almost 3,000,000. They were 1,815,496. Of the 1,307,662 classed as "occupied persons 12 years of age and over" for the whole Free State, 672,129, or 51 per cent, were engaged in agriculture. Any attempt, then, to understand the human setting of Irish farming involves an inquiry into the forces motivating the lives of well over half the country's people.

241 433 In 1926 this agricultural population produced a total output valued at £64,757,000. Industry in Ireland produced goods to the value of only a little over half that figure (£34,000,000 net output).

231 433 In the agricultural output of that year, the proportions of the various products indicate the character of the agriculture. Foodstuffs, with livestock products among them, made up the bulk of the output. Milk products accounted for £13,600,000; cattle, exported alive or slaughtered within the country, accounted for another £13,800,000. Pigs and eggs made up £9,800,000 and £6,690,000 respectively. Other livestock such as poultry, sheep, and horses accounted for the rest, in that order of importance. Wool and sundry items such as honey brought in a mere £700,000. All of these, the total output of livestock, reached a value of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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£50,555,000. The figures illustrate the preponderant importance of livestock and particularly cattle and pigs in Irish economy.

The remaining £14,000,000 was made up of crops and turf, the latter alone accounting for £5,938,000. Among the crops, potatoes came first, with a value for the year of £3,786,000. Oats, cabbage, and barley accounted for about £900,000 each; and there were a few other items of smaller values, the largest of which was fruit at £466,000.

These figures of the agricultural products rather underestimate the amount of tillage products raised. In the words of the Census Report, they "do not include any part of the produce which was used for further agricultural production in the Saorstat whether that part was used on the farm on which produced or sold by one farmer to another – e.g. milk fed to calves, potatoes fed to pigs, hay, turnips, mangels fed to cattle, corn used for seed, horses used for farm work." [1]

Within this generality of the monetary value of the goods produced, one can begin to take account of the wide difference of the sizes of the holdings engaged in this agricultural production. A glance at the figure illustrating this kind of economy by relative size of acreage (Fig. 1) will bring the matter out.

The agricultural community carried on this production upon farms of very widely different character. Holdings range in size from one acre or less to 500 or more. Those under 30 acres comprise 23 per cent of the total acreage of agricultural land in the Saorstat, those of 30–50, 17 per cent; those of 50–100, 24 per cent; and those of 100–200, 19 per cent. Farms larger than 200 acres cover only 16 per cent of agricultural land.

In general, the smaller ones practice the more generalized economy, their production being markedly different from

[1] *Agricultural Output of Saorstat Eireann, 1926–27* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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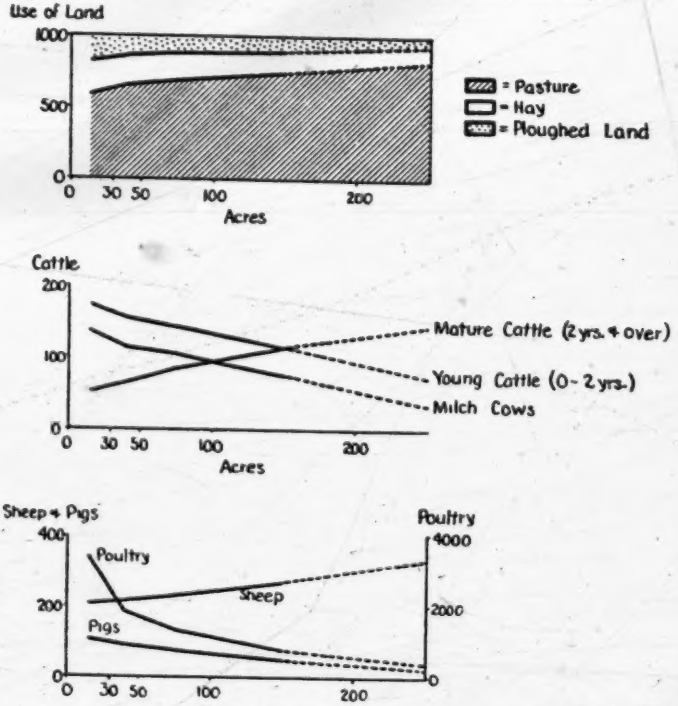
231 that of the large farms. The latter, especially in the mid-
241 land counties, where they are most numerous, raise little
311 more than beef cattle. Their owners are the graziers or
471

FIGURE 1

PRODUCTION ON LARGE AND SMALL HOLDINGS, ALL IRELAND, 1926 CENSUS



(date 1926)

"ranchers" of current political controversy in Ireland. The different economies express themselves in the census as follows:

The numbers of acres ploughed and the numbers under hay per 1000 acres of agricultural land decrease continuously as the size of the holdings increases; the numbers of milch cows, of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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young cattle, of pigs, and of poultry also decrease but the number of dry older cattle and of sheep per 1000 acres increase as the size of the holdings increases. The contrast between the smallest and the largest holdings is exceedingly great and is very great even between the second smallest and second largest. Contrasting the holdings 30–50 acres with holdings 100–200 acres the table shows that on equal areas of agricultural land, the smaller holdings have 32% more ploughed land, 29% more hay, 54% more milch cows, 53% more cattle under one year, 16% more cattle one to two years old, and 9% more cattle of all kinds, 80% more pigs, and 139% more poultry than the holdings 100–200 acres, but the latter have 24% more sheep, 52% more dry cattle, 2 to 3 years old, and 209% more dry cattle 3 years old or over than do holdings 30–50 acres.[2]

In County Clare, the area of our investigation, agriculture presents much the same character and the same difference between small and large farmers as does the whole of Ireland. Clare occupies a middle place among the counties; neither the large nor the small farm predominates. Almost always the small farmer has a garden in potatoes and cabbage with a few oats and turnips and perhaps some rye. The rest of his land will be under several meadows in hay, grazed during the winter months and in fields (pasture land) grazed during both summer and winter, if sheltered. In rough mountain areas sheep are common, particularly in the Broadford and Tubber districts. In addition to cattle, the smaller holder generally has a large flock of ducks, geese, and hens, and he keeps several pigs. These are also fed upon the oats, potatoes, cabbage, and milk left over after the other livestock have been fed. Specialization in poultry raising is still rare, though poultry stations are being established here and there under the supervision of agents of the Department of Agriculture. Certain areas, of course, show minor specializations, such as Miltown Malbay, a seacoast region known for its cabbage, and Newquay, known

[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, Report and Tables* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. xxi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted to one crop.

With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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311 471 Fergus River, where there are many "ranches" and, in parts, extensive oats tillage.

162 471 Statistics are available only for the whole of Clare; they give a comprehensive view of the county's farming.[3] All but 21.6 per cent of the population of 95,064 lived in country districts. The area they worked, 787,768 acres, was divided into 15,857 holdings, of which 1,179 did not exceed one acre, 909 contained from 1 to 5, 841 from 5 to 10, 1,108 from 10 to 15, and 3,767 from 15 to 30, 3,617 from 30 to 50, and 3,135 from 50 to 100. The farms larger than 100 acres numbered 997 in the 100 to 200 acre group, and 394 exceeding 200 acres. Clare thus fell into a category among counties in which medium-sized holdings were normal, but both the small farms and the large rancher type were present.

241 311 We have no separate statistics for Clare's produce, but we know that in June 1932 the land was being utilized in the following manner. There were only 465 acres of wheat, 335 acres of barley, 207 acres of rye, 1 acre of beans and peas, 147 acres of fruit, 3 acres of sugar beet, 57 acres of experimental ensilage for cattle, and 151 acres of miscellaneous root and green crops. The figures[4] show the small part played by vegetable products other than cabbage and potatoes used for human food. Bread, the great staple, was of course, made from imported flour or wheat. Potatoes and oats, however, made a better showing, with 13,518 and 8,199 acres respectively devoted to them. Turnips and mangels accounted for 3,897 and 306 acres respectively; like potatoes and oats, they are used for both human and animal consumption. This was the extent of ploughed land.

The great bulk of the area was, of course, in hay and pasture. There were 2,791 acres of first-year hay, 131,429 acres of other hay, and 394,791 acres of pasture.

[3] Figures taken from Annual Report, County Clare Council Agricultural Committee, June 1932.

[4] Report of the County Clare Agricultural Committee, 1932.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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These figures coupled with those giving the number of livestock in the county at that date illustrate the greatly preponderant interest in animal products, particularly cattle, pigs, and eggs. The figures for cattle show that Clare is not primarily a ranching county, but that there is, nevertheless, a respectable number of dry, store cattle. In June 1932 there were 786 bulls, 60,149 milch cows, and 1,696 heifers in calf; and besides such breeding stock there were 5,780 dry three-year-olds or over, 23,266 two-year-olds, and 47,918 yearlings. There were also 58,708 under a year old. 231

Returning again to the conditions for all Ireland, it will be seen in how many respects Clare duplicates the various types of agriculture for all Ireland. The Report of Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, describes statistically the difference in farming between large and small holders over the whole country. It finds that for the whole country

> milch cows were densest (in 1926) in the Southwestern Counties [Clare is one], a region of medium sized holdings, next densest in the Northwest with its numerous small holdings and least dense in the Central Eastern Counties. . . . the 13 latter counties included 11 of the counties of the largest percentage of land under holdings of 200 acres or over, 11 of the 13 densest in dry cattle 3 years or over, 10 of the 13 densest in dry cattle 2 to 3 years old and 10 of the 13 densest in sheep. . . . the counties densest in the older dry cattle coincide closely with these densest in large holdings.[5]

Of tillage the Report states that 241

> small farmers adopt a crop rotation very different to that of the large farmers, putting much more of their ploughed land under roots and green crops and much less under corn. . . . Farmers with 1 to 30 acres devote to potatoes nearly three times as large a proportion of their ploughed land as farmers with over 200 acres, and the latter put twice as much . . . under barley and under turnips as the small farmer and a much larger proportion under oats and mangels.

[5] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xxiii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 As regards the smaller crops "the small farmers show a distinct preference for cabbage and rye. . . ."[6]

"Poultry are influenced more than any other class of livestock by size of the farm. . . . They are nine times as dense on holdings of 1 to 30 acres as on holdings over 200 acres. . . . counties densest in poultry coincide with the counties densest in small holdings. . . ."[7]

231 Pigs, however, "seem to be influenced more by densities of tillage and of milch cows than by size of holdings. . . . The Southwestern Counties [Clare is one of them] have dense pig herds and the largest bacon factories."[8]

241 407 The difference reflects itself likewise in the distribution of agricultural implements and machinery over the two types of farm. The figures, dating from 1917,[9] are two decades old, but, in spite of the subsequent increase in mechanization, Irish farming is little given to abundant use of machines, and proportions hold much as at that time. In the words of the Report in discussing the tables it presents, giving numbers of farm implements and machines, enumerating ploughs, harrows, turnip and mangel sowers, corn binders, mowers and reapers, horse-drawn hayforks, and potato diggers per thousand acres of ploughed land or specific crop, on various sized holdings:

> The figures rise regularly to a maximum (in the column representing holdings of 50 to 100 acres) and then fall away regularly. Small figures for the small holdings presumably mean that the less efficient implements are used, (the spade in place of the plough, the scythe instead of the mower), not that cooperation . . . exists to any appreciable extent.[10]

That large holders do not proportionately increase their use of such implements and machines after the 50 to 100 acre maximum is reached lies in the fact that "the small

[6] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, pp. xxvi, xxvii.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*, p. lv.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. lvi. We shall see that this statement is not entirely accurate, though there is no large-scale village coöperation as in Balkan and Slavic lands.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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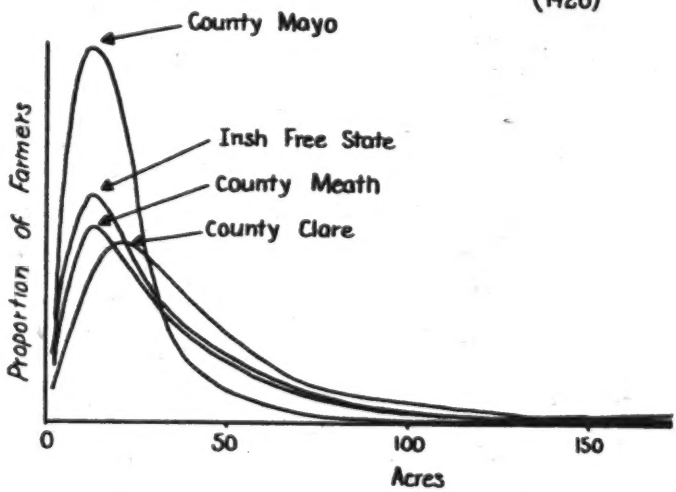
figures for the largest size holdings show that the machines on the smaller farms were more than sufficient for the type of agriculture carried on."[11] For instance, on farms of 30–50 acres there were 137 ploughs to every 1,000 acres of ploughed land. But much less than half that number were

241 407

FIGURE 2

Proportion of Farmers on each size holdings (1926)

[162]



sufficient for the same acreage of ploughed land on holdings over 500 acres. The difference reflects itself statistically not only in the goods produced but in the tools and techniques used.

More important, however, for an understanding of the social behavior involved, is a further great difference to be seen in the numbers of persons living upon the various sized farms. The numbers of persons supporting themselves upon the small holdings are much greater than those upon

241 162

[11] *Ibid.*

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large farms. Figure 2 shows this graphically. County Mayo there represents one extreme of "congestion" and County Meath another. County Clare is of such mixed character that its position looks anomalous. The figure deals only with farmers and does not, as we shall see, represent the real situation, for it leaves out of account those who work the farm along with its farmer owner.

In 1926 there were 268,930 farmers in the Irish Free State, the largest block of which supported themselves upon farms of from 15 to 30 acres, that is, upon small farms. Their number was 75,225. Farmers numbering 51,196 worked farms of from 30 to 50 acres, and 41,052 farms of from 50 to 100. On smaller farms than the 15–30 acre norm there were 11,608 farmers on 1–5 acre farms and 29,180 on 5–10 acre ones. On larger farms than 100 acres there were, however, only 22,660 farmers.

The counties, of course, differed widely in this respect, but in general the counties where large holdings were numerous supported a much smaller farm population than those where smaller holdings prevailed. Thus Meath, a ranching county of 577,000 acres, supported only 4,403 farmers, while Clare, with an area only about one and one-half times as large, supported 10,320 farmers in a much less rich and more mountainous soil. Indeed, it is one of the anomalies most regretted by the present De Valera government (among others) that Ireland's population is concentrated in the poorer and more mountainous parts of the island. Clare, of course, does not present such an extreme case as the so-called "congested" counties of Mayo, Kerry, and Galway.

In County Clare small farmers are, of course, definitely in the majority. The number of true "ranchers" is few. In 1926 the proportions were 3,020 male farmers on farms 15–30 acres (the largest group), 2,280 on farms 30–50, 2,033 on farms 50–100. In the groups smaller than 15 acres

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there were 828 farmers on farms 10–15 acres and 486 on farms 5–10. Farmers living on farms under 5 acres are few (180). Those on farms up to 200 number 597 and above 200, 218.

When the total population engaged in agriculture is considered rather than merely the farmers (owners), the greater numbers living upon small holdings become even more apparent. A full report based upon the 1926 census had not yet appeared, but a report was published upon the 1912 figures at the time the 1926 figures were released.[12] From that report it is at once apparent that the difference between large and small farms extends to the population engaged upon them and the type of labor employed. This new difference demonstrates a marked contrast, still apparent today, in the way in which large and small farmers carry on their economies.

In 1926 the number of farmers and relatives assisting them in the Saorstat was 533,025 and those otherwise engaged in agriculture numbered only 139,104. The figures of the Report, based upon the 1912 census, show higher numbers, but the proportion of hired to family labor had not materially changed. From the tables of the Report, it is established that "only 26% were wage earners," that is, were not farmers and their relatives, working without periodic monetary recompense on an employee basis. Relating this to size of farms, it was discovered that not only were "5 times as many persons working on farms of 15 to 30 acres and 3½ times as many on farms of 30–50 acres as on farms of over 200 acres,"[13] but that also "family labor accounted for 89% of the total on farms 1–15 acres but only 24% for farms of over 200 acres. . . . Taking all holdings into account, 74% of the persons working on farms consisted of farmers, their wives, sons, daughters, and other relatives," and only "15% were permanent wage earners and 11%

[12] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. liv. [13] *Ibid.*, p. li.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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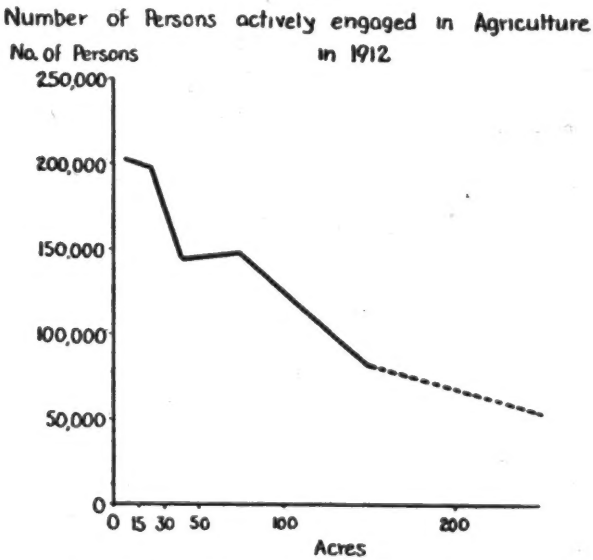
were temporary employees."[14] In other words, the small farm is generally worked by the family of the owner, while the large farm, particularly the ranch, is worked by agricultural laborers employed by the owner.

FIGURE 3



These are the actual numbers arranged proportionately, in true descending scale, with the size of the holding. Figures for all Ireland. The figures are quite comparable with those of County Clare for 1932, where in records published in the local newspaper by the County Council Committee on Agriculture it was stated that on farms of 15–30 acres, the median-sized holding,' on which the plurality of the farm population live, there were 10 acres to each person. But on farms of 200 acres and over, more than 35 acres were required for each person the farms supported.

In Figure 3 the tables are reduced to a graphic representation which shows well how much truth there is in the Irish assertion that "the smaller the farm, the larger the number of people it supports." One has only to look at it to understand much of Irish political currents.

[14] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. lii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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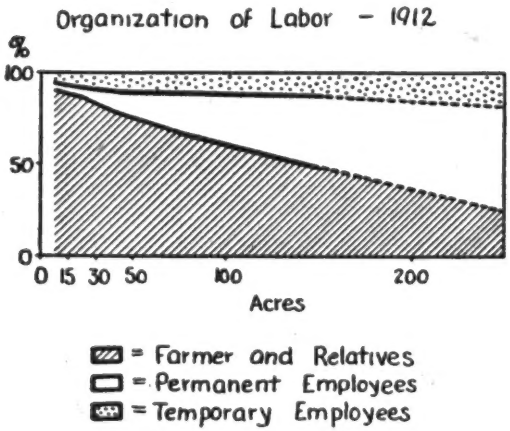
In Clare the same situation is present. Most, if not nearly all, of the work of the small farmers is done by the family relatives. And for the whole county in 1926, 83.5% of all males engaged in agricultural pursuits were farmers or farmers' relatives (and 99 per cent of the rather small number of females). Only in the two districts which we have

FIGURE 4



The chart again shows a constant progression. The larger the farm, the less the dependence upon other members of the family and the more often hired hands are present. The chart begins on the left with a figure of 89 per cent of farmers of 1–15 acres depending upon family help and ends at the right with 24 per cent of farmers of over 200 acres depending upon such help.

already mentioned as regions of large holdings and ranches, Ballyvaughan and Ennis, did the percentage fall appreciably below that figure (to 73 per cent and 75 per cent).

Figure 4 presents this difference in organization of labor for all Ireland in 1912.

Small farmers and large farmers make a different disposal of their products. At the same time there is an exchange of products between the two groups.

These facts are to be got from the many statistics reflect-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

Of these exports, of course, cattle were the most valuable item and represented the great export staple. They were likewise the crop to which most other produce could be devoted when not used as human food. That this kind of conversion of other stuffs into cattle could take place is to be seen in the figures for milk. Though the Free State produced in the year in question a total of 589,000,000 gallons of milk, including both whole milk and butter, comparing favorably with such an output as Switzerland's yearly 528,000,000 in 1923, only 43 per cent of it was exported, while in Switzerland the export was 67 per cent of the Swiss total.

The figures for exports introduce a new factor of difference between the holdings of large and small size and their populations. Small holdings do not share equally with large holdings either in the consumption of agricultural produce or in its export. In both consumption and export commerce in the Free State, small holders and large holders play distinct roles.

Taking the first of these considerations, the figures for consumption reveal the difference. The estimated human consumption of whole milk (as milk) was some 90,000,000 gallons, according to the statistical record of the year 1928,[17] of which 70,000,000 gallons were consumed by agriculturalists and 20,000,000 by the remainder of the population. It was estimated that on the farms 38 gallons were consumed yearly per person. But that is the figure for all farms. There is a considerable difference here between types of farms.

Thus, in this case, on farms less than 50 acres only 36 gallons per person per annum were consumed, it was estimated, while on farms of over 50 acres, the consumption was 42 gallons. In Munster, the chief milk-producing province,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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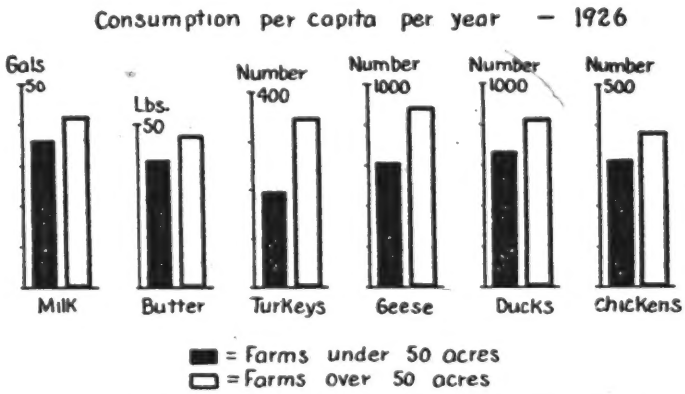
the difference is even more marked, the indices being 35 gallons and 44 gallons.

Similar differences hold as well for the consumption of milk as butter, a commodity of which the Irish consume more than any other civilized country. The difference between farms under and farms over 50 acres can be expressed in the spread between 40 and 48 pounds annual consumption per person. For poultry and for eggs, great farm diet staples, similar differences hold. On farms less than 50 acres, 197 turkeys, 601 geese, 672 ducks, and 3,177 ordinary

FIGURE 5



Notice that in each instance the smaller farms produce more, consume less. The great "money crop," cattle, which neither party consumes to any great degree, tells another story.

fowls, we are told, were consumed in the year in question, for every 1,000 persons living on such farms; while on farms over 50 acres, 325, 884, 873, and 3,823 are the respective figures. "As might be expected, the difference between average consumption on large and small farms of valuable fowl like turkeys is very marked." [18]

In the case of eggs, of those consumed per 100 persons on

[18] *Agricultural Output . . . , 1926–27*, p. 37.

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farms in January 1929,[18] the figures are for small farms 530, for large farms 582. All of these figures reflect a difference of diet the more marked because the small farmer population is so much the larger.

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In Figure 5 this difference of consumption is represented in the form of blocks depicting the contrast between small and large farms. One could conclude quite rightly from this kind of picture that in each instance the smaller farms produce more per person at work and eat less. In terms of production, then, the small farm is the more productive. In terms of monetary return, it is a different story. Cattle, of course, are the Irish "money crop," much like cotton and wheat in parts of the United States.

Observation makes it clear that this difference of diet is more marked than even these figures reveal. But figures for other items of diet appearing in agricultural production are not available in correlation with farm size. The home consumption of meats from the farm animals, except pigs, is negligible among both kinds of farmers. Nevertheless, we can gain a substantial insight into the difference in meat-eating between large and small farmers when we realize that, out of the comparatively small total of 123,000 cattle and 504,000 sheep and lambs slaughtered for consumption in the Free State in 1926, a per capita count of average consumption by dressed weight gives such a predominantly large-holding county as Westmeath a weight of 34 pounds per consuming person, counties with large urban population rising higher, while the same count gives such a predominantly small-holding county as Mayo a weight of only 13 pounds. Clare, where small and medium farmers are predominant in the population, shows a similar small consumption of meat, a similar count giving only 19 pounds per person.[20]

In fact, the large farm population shares a meat diet with

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 49.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 262 511 the cities and larger towns that is unknown on the small farms. The fact is evident when it is observed that Dublin, Cork, and Waterford counties (each dominated numerically by the city of the name) count an average meat consumption taken on the same scale of 69, 40, and 37 pounds per capita respectively.

231 241 439 The difference between the two kinds of farm shows itself again strongly in the export trade from Ireland and in the roles of each in the transfer of farm produce to its ultimate market. The two kinds of farm make a totally different disposal of their produce, particularly their cattle. In this fact we see for the first time that in some regard they have a complementary role. Between them Irish cattle trade is carried on.

231 438 The huge internal Irish cattle trade is thus significant. It reveals itself in the figures as a movement from small farm to large, an interchange between the two kinds of farmers which shows once again their distinctness. The trade is both geographical and social, in the sense that it flows between two sections of Ireland and between her two great agricultural classes.

To get at the facts which show the case demands looking at the statistics of cattle in the Free State. These illustrate clearly how far the internal cattle trade shows up the great difference between the two types of farm. It is necessary to take into consideration the age groups of cattle in the various areas and in the possession of holders of various acreages in those areas. This roundabout course of determining the outlines of internal cattle trade is necessary because there are no barriers or *octrois* at which count might be made as the cattle move from dealer to dealer across the country.

231 The seven southwestern counties are the areas predominant in milch cattle production; they are the areas of the calf-producing cow. Clare is one of these. A chart of birth dates of cattle in various parts of Ireland demonstrates that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER II

Small Farm Economy

THE small farmers' family groups inhabit the holdings or plots of land from which they make the livelihood we have described numerically. Except in a few and special cases, there is no physical separation of house plot from fields; the individual family's plot is usually a continuous one, and the other forms of settlement present in Ireland are rapidly being reshaped with that condition as the ideal. Consequently, the farmhouse is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. In it the farm family group spends its entire life, sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work upon the fields. 361 592

The farm family lives and performs almost all of its work within this spatial unit of land and house. And the unit is identified with the family in the eyes of its community in name and ownership. Outside this range, the farmer has little participation in affairs in comparison with others of the population. His wife and children have even less. Within this range most of the activity marking the relations of the human beings who make up the group takes place. 592

The "land," as we have seen, is usually divided into "field," "meadow," "garden," "bog," and "mountain," according to its character and agricultural use. These divisions make up the holding and represent the productive 231 241 311

[p. 31]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

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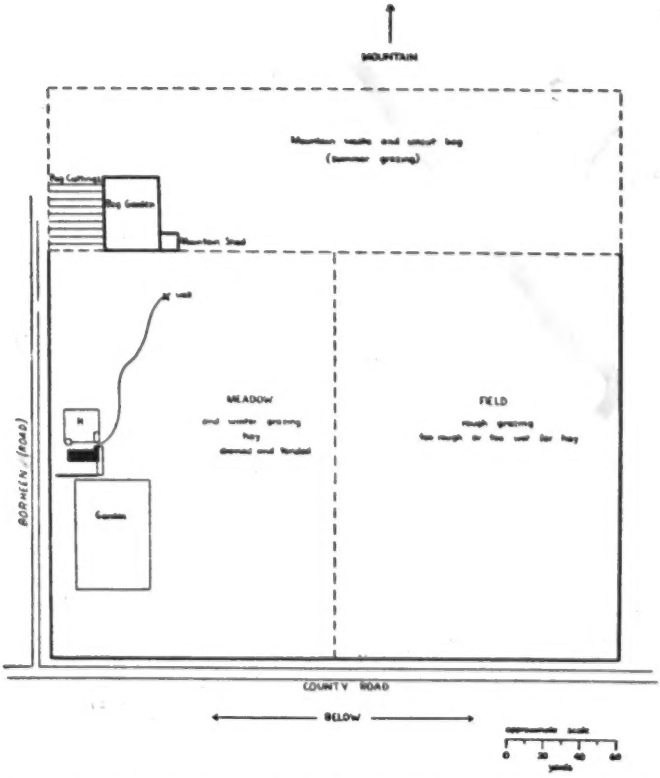
FIGURE 8

Diagrammatic Scheme
of Small Farm
LUOGH
20 ACRES



Schematic representation (not to scale) of composite Clare farm of about five to fifty acres.

[p. 32]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use.

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later.

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called "all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area.

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is carefully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general plan for all such houses of small farmers.

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various

[text continues on p. 35]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents. 512 221 462

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year. 132 527 221

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew. 221 527 574 621

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with 221 132 241 221 521

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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221 types, varieties, growth cycles, yields, and care of seeds and
521 cattle passes round by word of mouth.

[805] The first of February, St. Brigid's Day, marks the begin-
221 ning of spring. For the countryman the return of the
132 "hard" days of wind and clear weather herald the season of
241 the land's drying off. Through February and March the gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted, and the fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each hard day is a welcome opportunity, for only then can work in the fields go on. With favorable weather, the work of preparation is over in the beginning of March, and the actual planting begins. By St. Patrick's Day, with its promise of continuous hard weather, the gardens are ready for a second planting.

221 The potatoes demand the greatest attention. A fortnight
241 after they are planted, they must be manured well with manure brought from the pile near the cattle cabins, and the ground must be leveled so that the plant will not go to stalk and thus fail to produce tubers. A fortnight more and the ground must be "softened" and the earth round the plant, which now shows its first leaves, must be "stirred." By the time May is reached, the potatoes must be "landed." Earth must be taken from between the long ridges in which the potatoes are planted and heaped up over them from each side. Thereafter nothing remains until the harvest but a summer spraying against blight.

221 Throughout the spring the cattle have demanded atten-
231 tion. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the milk season and intensified butter-making.
438 The great spring cattle fairs take place. The farmer must devote himself to the all-important business of buying and selling his milch and store cattle and his calves. At home the cattle demand constant care against hunger, disease, and cold as he mixes their diet of fast diminishing hay with the slowly returning pasture grass.

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The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the "landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and whatever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over. 221 241 314

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to allow turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round. 221 372 [805]

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabáiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June. 221 241 262

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up. 221 241

The first true harvest and the most important one of the year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is 246 221

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
●241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
221 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips
241 and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it
[492] has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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 22|

he was in the spring, for the autumn fairs bring him an 23|
important market.

If he has been fortunate and industrious, nothing remains 22|
for him to do but to prepare his fields for the next year. The 24|
soil he has used for root crops must be turned, and the
gardens which he intends for grain are ploughed. As he
follows the furrows, he can look back upon a year ended,
and forward to another to begin. By the time his ploughing
is finished, the dead of winter and the holiday season of
Christmas is upon him and the yearly round is over.

Yet it is over only to repeat itself. For within the range 22|
of the seasonal variation and the demands of growing and
maturing crops and animals the pattern of farm work in
haggard, garden, meadow, and field is a constant one. Much
the same progression of labor flows along year after year,
and follows the farmer from boyhood till death. Yet there
is much less restriction in choice of operation to be performed, in movement over space, in the possibility of day-to-day variation than in the case of the work of the household.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the division of labor between males and females is regarded 462
as corresponding to the natural propensities of the two sexes. 626
That a man should concern himself with a woman's work, 183
such as the sale of eggs or the making of butter, is the subject of derisive laughter, while a woman's smaller hands make it "natural" for her to be a better hand at milking the cows.

Even when the communal labor of the family is demanded 241 ●
and women take their place in bog, garden, and meadow, 462
a definite role is assigned them. Usually it is the lighter tasks which are known as women's work. There is no formal [562]
taboo confining a woman to women's work. Heavy work is merely felt to be a hardship upon her. At the potato planting the women do the arduous work of planting the sprouts which they have prepared, bending over to put them into the ridges prepared by the men. They do their share, if necessary, of cultivating, but they are not generally accustomed to the spade, which like the plough, the harrow, the mower, scythe, and turf "slan" is regarded as a masculine implement. At the potato lifting they go along behind the man who turns the potatoes out of the ridge with spade and plough, and pick them up. At the haymaking, the pitching, raking, and some of the building of the haycocks are left to them. But the mowing, especially where it involves the horse-drawn mowing machine, and the building of the rick in the haggard, are masculine skills. In all cases of field work of this sort the role of the woman is usually auxiliary. The same holds in turf cutting. The men do the actual [314]
cutting in the bog trenches, while the women knead the peat into briquets and pile it for drying.

The many attitudes and beliefs which surround this type 241
of division of labor illustrate again the socially determined 462
character of the distinctions and their genesis in the intersexual relationship. Just as the man's work is the harder, 626
the more various, and the wider in scope, so the attitudes 183
express a greater valuation of the men's work within the 461

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241 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the
462 authors have heard men admonish a woman for interrup-
626 tion with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we
183 [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laugh-
461 ter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conven-
593 tional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral
183 specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within
626 the farm family. The connection between family status and labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the non-economic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 Within the framework of the division of labor on the
593 basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the
561 basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

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574 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to
602 town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local com-
[521] munity gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in
[522] Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

574 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of
602 good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market.
273 "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy
594 as a family situation in which economic effort, individual
182 and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

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167 the great burst of the fifties and has been continuous ever since.

167 Many attempts have been made to find causes for this emigration. Perhaps the most successful have been those 178 dealing with economic factors. Among the most frequently 241 suggested is the change in agriculture since the famine. The assumption advanced is that the change from tillage to livestock production has cut down the rural employment, which in turn has driven the rural population to emigrate. Undoubtedly, there has been a correlation, particularly in the earliest years and at the time of the land clearances after the famine. In fact, from 1847 to 1852 (the famine years) there was a huge decrease in the area under small holdings of 1–30 acres, a decrease of 1,395,000 acres, but since then, in the years from 1852 to 1909 (after which holdings began generally to be increased), the corresponding decrease was only 155,000 acres.

The Report on Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, published by the Free State Department of Agriculture and Commerce, from which the figures are derived, comments that "this comparatively small transference of land from small holdings with high densities to larger holdings with low densities had but little effect upon reducing tillage or increasing livestock," [2] the agricultural changes which are supposed to have affected emigration. The Report demonstrates that between 1854 and 1912 the smaller the holding, the larger the increases in densities of all livestock, except dry cattle two years old and over, and the larger the decrease in density of ploughed land.

In other words, the change in agriculture, whatever may have been its effect upon employment prospects for the small farmer outside his own farm, proceeded more rapidly on the small farms. The tables of the Report show that large farmers decreased their tillage at a more rapid rate than

[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xliii.

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small farmers only in the periods of 1917 to 1926 and 1854 to 1874, while continuously over the whole period 1874 to 1926 small farmers "got out of tillage more rapidly than large farmers." Too close appeal accordingly cannot be made to changes in agriculture for an understanding of Irish emigration.

In fact local densities of population do not now and never have shown a great deal of correspondence with densities of tillage. The highest percentage of agricultural land ploughed (29 per cent) was reached in 1851. Since then it has fallen steadily, to 13 per cent in 1926. Sweden comes nearest to this low percentage of tillage, with 52 per cent of her arable land tilled. Consequently, the Irish population was at no time solely dependent upon tillage crops.

Before 1881 a correlation could be drawn with some accuracy between the decrease in tillage and the decrease in rural population. Thus in poor law unions (administrative areas) in which ploughed land decreased population also decreased as shown in Table 1.[3]

TABLE 1

RELATION BETWEEN DECREASE IN PLOUGHED LAND AND DECREASE IN POPULATION

Decrease in Ploughed Land (per cent)	Decrease in Population (per cent)
0–20	13
20–30	26
30–40	28
50 and over	34

But since 1881 similar tables show that there is no correspondence between the decreases, and that even those poor law unions in which tillage has increased show an ordinary loss of population. Consequently, decline in tillage had little effect upon emigration after 1881. This becomes even more evident when it is understood that in both 1854

[3] *Ibid.*, p. lxi.

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167 178 241 and 1912 the thirteen counties densest in rural population included only six of the counties densest in ploughed land. "Dense tillage was in the east, dense rural population in the west,"[4] as it still is.

167 178 231 In the same search for economic causes, a better case has been made for the change from milch cattle to beef cattle production. As we have seen, milch cows are characteristically associated with the small farmers. During the period of emigration, the number of dry cattle has risen in proportion to the number of milch cattle almost steadily; the range is from 2,372 total cattle to the 1,000 milch cows in 1854, to 3,334 to the 1,000 in 1926; fluctuations have been very slight. It is true that the number of milch cattle has also risen steadily, if slowly. Such a change in actual numbers of cattle and in proportions of dry to milch cattle, the latter capable of yielding the greater amounts of food for farm consumption, may have had some effect upon the displacement of human beings by cattle, but certainly not a great enough one to determine the emigration. The lack of correspondence between these changes is evident when it is remembered that the change has taken place principally in the former tillage areas, and also that in 1926 the areas of greatest milch cow density were substantially the same as in 1854. The very little direct correspondence there can be is well exemplified in the contrast between County Clare, which fell from a population of 336 to the 1,000 acres of crop and pasture to 129, while milch cows remained practically the same in number (100 to 110 to the 1,000 acres), and County Mayo (a poorer region), where population fell only from 375 to 245 and milch cows also remained practically the same (90 to 100).

From these figures it is evident that the decline in rural population is not directly correlated with decline in tillage or change in cattle production. The failure of employment

[4] *Ibid.*, p. lvi.

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to
132 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual
251 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on
231 which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume
234 or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten
311 cows" is still a familiar term.

Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less
241

than 30 statute acres is regarded as small, one of from 30 to 100 acres as of medium size and one of over 100 acres as large. Small, medium and large farms may be found in all parts of Ireland, but in the provinces of Leinster and Munster and in parts of south east Connaught there is a preponderance of medium sized farms with, especially in north Leinster, a considerable proportion of large farms.[1] All this area practises mixed farming, but the south western province, Munster, is completely dominated by the milking cow, while in Leinster the northern half is mainly devoted to the raising of beef cattle, and the southern half produces considerable quantities of wheat, oats and barley.[2] In most areas of Connaught and Ulster, the western and northern provinces, the average farm is of small size, and the number of cows kept by each farmer correspondingly small; the value and productivity of these small farms, however, vary greatly from the intensive cultivation of many farms in east and south Ulster to the fisher-farmer economy of the west coastal districts.[3]

Throughout the provinces of Leinster and Munster, and in parts of east Connaught, that is to say, generally in the area of medium and large farms, the predominant, and in many districts exclusive, farmyard type is the courtyard, in which the dwelling house and outhouses are arranged about a rectangular space which is the farmyard proper. Most usually the buildings form three sides of the yard, with the dwelling house forming one side and the outhouses forming two more, the fourth side being closed by a wall with a gate. Usually the building is not continuous, the elements being separate and connected by walls, or having gateways or passages between them. The size and arrangement of the yard and the various buildings vary from one farm to another, and also from district to district; the general type is, however, well established, and conforms to a pattern which is clearly distinguished from the other types to be described later. In many districts the front of the dwelling house faces the farmyard, thus, in Co. Kildare in 1807: "The farmhouses in general consist of a long thatched building of one storey, consisting of a large kitchen and fireplace in the centre, and lodging rooms at either end; the front door looks to the barns and stables on the right, behind which is the haggard, and on the left are placed the cow and bullock houses." This, written a century and a half ago,[4] exactly describes many of the farmyards of to-day, for example that shown in fig. 1, which has the dwelling house in the middle, the cowhouse, calfhouse and a small store (formerly a dairy) on the left, with the manure heap behind them, while on the right are the stable, another store and the pigstye, with the haggard, where the hay and corn stacks are made, behind them. The fourth side is formed by a stone wall, with a gate; this wall fronts on the public roadway. This farmyard is at Duncormick, Co. Wexford, in the south east corner of Ireland, but similar examples may be found in almost every part of the east and south. Figure 2 shows the buildings on a larger farm, also in Co. Wexford. Here the entrance gate leads in between a cart shed on the right and the dairy on the left, with the pump close by. Facing the dwelling house across the yard are the stable and byre and a store, while the corn barn opens into the haggard. The pigsty and manure heap are in the part of the yard most distant from the dwelling house. The openings between the various buildings are closed by stone walls about

[Text continues on p. 12]

[1] Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1930.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Freeman, T. W.: Ireland, Its Physical, Historical, Social and Economic Geography, 1950, chapters viii and xviii to xxiii.

[4] Rawson, T. J.: Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare, 1807, 14–15.

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II

Countrymen at Work

To bring you closer to the way of life we glimpsed 000
through the window of old custom, I must try to clothe it in flesh and blood. It will not do to make the mistake of etherealizing it. Men everywhere face the same first necessities; they must live; they must feed, clothe and shelter themselves.

My subject, then, is the countryman at work. How does he make his livelihood in the Irish countryside? What is the work he does, and what are his incentives and rewards? Economic interpretations of history, sociology, anthropology are the fashion. What understanding can an economic inquiry yield us?

The first task in such an inquiry is to clear away 369
the ground one is to examine. To look at the work 241
of the countryman of rural Ireland demands dipping into the economics of the whole Free State. The countryman occupies an important place which must be recognized. It should not be discouraging that the task involves recourse to cold statistics. After all, the greatest array of numbers is a mere count of some sort of human activity; one can remember the living beings behind them.

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369 In the search for the countryman, one can break
241 through census records and production figures to find him pursuing his daily and annual round.

The task is simplified immensely by the fact that in 1926 the Free State Government undertook a complete census of the country. In the tables prepared there, the countrymen distinguish themselves
[162] in a variety of ways. They are the most numerous group in the country. Out of nearly three million inhabitants, one million eight hundred thousand, or 63 per cent, live in rural areas, outside cities and towns. Not all these country-dwellers are farmers,
241 of course, but the vast majority are. Fifty-one per cent of all occupied persons, male and female, in southern Ireland work at agriculture.

But these agriculturalists are not all alike, of course. Distinctions appear among them which are important to an understanding of the countryman. For example, the farms on which they work differ widely in size. Relative proportions of small and large farms vary with different parts of the country, but nevertheless small farms predominate in all Ireland. A farm over 200 acres is a rarity, comparatively speaking; most of them do not reach 100 acres. Thirty or fifty acres is the average size.

When one looks at the numbers of people these farms support, however, the small holdings come forward much more strongly. There are many more persons supported upon farms under thirty acres

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than there are on farms over fifty. In fact, one could almost say 'the smaller the farm the greater number of persons it supports'. The plurality of Irish farmers support themselves upon farms averaging from fifteen to thirty acres in area. Almost eight of every ten persons working in agriculture live by small-farm production. 241

By our standards, a farm under thirty acres or even under fifty acres is very small. So it is regarded in Ireland. When I call the Irish countryman a small farmer, I am following standards the Irish use themselves. Yet, to deal with the life of the small farmers is to deal with that of the single largest group on the land.

Furthermore, that group is concentrated in the west and south of Ireland. Historical and economic currents have massed the population in the more rugged 'mountainy' regions of south and west. A county of the rich central plain, such as Meath, where large farms are most numerous, has a density of about fifty persons per square mile. But a poorer, mountainous county such as Mayo, where small farms are very numerous indeed, supports seventy-five persons per square mile or an almost 50 per cent greater density. 241 161

But do those who support themselves by small farms form a true category? Are they a group unto themselves, or are they a numeration meaningless for the student of human behaviour? Statistics have a way of revealing real categories in life, but they 241

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241 also send one upon many false scents. One must use them with proper care. In such a case as this, care consists in discovering correlations and fitting them into wholes. For example, one learns little or nothing of various kinds of human beings if one counts only single characteristics. On the other hand, if one counts a wide variety of numerable features and finds one human group distinguishing itself again and again within this wide variety, one is justified in thinking one is dealing with a class of which the individuals are instances.

So it is with the economic data in the Irish records. The small farmers do appear as a true category. They reveal themselves in the cold figures as a class with habits of life of its own, different in kind and in quantitative expression from all others.

Rather than delay over the reasoning which leads to this conclusion, I should prefer to recite the distinguishing marks in the economic sphere.

231 First, it is clear that the small farmers practise
241 a type of agriculture all their own. Their products
434 differ widely from those of the large farmers, some-
437 times in kind, sometimes in proportion. The large farmer is a cattleman, a stockman. The small farmer is typically what we have come to call in this country 'a subsistence farmer'. Both depend primarily upon livestock, for Ireland is a country of grass and pasturage, depending less upon tillage than any other European land. But their economies

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are quite distinct. The small farmer cultivates a 231
'garden' of oats, rye, potatoes, cabbage and tur- 241
nips, and devotes his pasture and the hay of his 434
fields to milch cattle. He sells his cows' increase 437
each year. He keeps large numbers of hens and a few pigs. But the milch cow is the centre round which this economy revolves. Nearly all he raises he consumes at home; his family and his farm animals take the greater part of his produce. It is only his surplus and his annual crop of calves which break out of the circle of subsistence and in so doing bring him the only monetary income he receives.

In all this he differs considerably from the big farmer, particularly the so-called 'rancher' of Irish agriculture. The big farmer is primarily a producer of beef. He concentrates upon the production of fat cattle; he depends upon a monetary market in which to dispose of his fattened stock. Upon this market he relies for the supplies which feed himself and his labourers. If he is wealthier and much more of a man of business, he is also nearly entirely dependent upon the whims of price and demand.

Naturally, then, the small farmer and big farmer play quite distinct roles in the economics of exchange, distribution and commerce. The small farmer disposes of his cattle, usually calves of his own breeding, quite differently. He sells this surplus to the dealer, the middleman, the big farmer.

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231 As calves grow up they move from the small farm
241 to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them
434 until they are ready for the English table. Con-
437 sequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

With all this, it is natural that the small farmers
262 should be different consumers from the rest.
184 They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

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present the one staple which he must buy off the 262
farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and 184
the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for 184
mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are 241
cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs 412
again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their 184
lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer- 241
owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the 464
owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of 241
peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in 231
a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is 434
that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

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231 which beasts feed him in their turn. He need go
241 to town only for clothing and sundries, for flour
434 and tea, and to sell at the fairs the calves and yearlings which bring in his principal monetary income and provide thus for whatever he cannot produce at home. These cattle go to big farmers, ranchers and shippers; and with the sale his participation in trade and commerce, in 'business', is finished except for his account with the shopkeeper (and in late years, the creamery). As you can well imagine, it is a livelihood little connected with the outside world, and now that agrarian reform has made him full owner of his holding, it is little open to disturbance from the outside.

This is the external view of the small farm. It is the view that usually satisfies the economist. But if one probes deeper and looks at the small farmer's livelihood from within, a fuller picture appears.

241 That the small farmer is a family man even at
593 work is important for the study of human be-
[461] haviour. Eight out of ten people working in agriculture in Ireland work not for wages and salaries but by virtue of their family relationship. The work a man does and the directions he gives and receives take form within a social group. That fact yields an opportunity for the anthropologist. Here, in a modern country, is an economy in which there are other controls on labour than those we know—money, contracts, individual profit. To under-

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stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus of the countryman's way of life.

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the small farmer's family lives upon the holding it works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them.

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, it is natural that this unit should be known and judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun-

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462 of a Solomon Grundy. A farmer's wife of Clare
512 divided her week more rigidly in describing it than she did in practice. "On Monday", she said, "I do the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday I make butter, on Friday to market, on Saturday I get ready for Sunday, and on Sunday I go to mass and do as little as I can." Really it is only on Sunday that any change seriously alters the daily round; for the country-people are strict sabbatarians, at least regarding work.

241 Work on the 'land' beyond the haggard and the
462 house is less restricted. It has a greater range over
221 the farm and offers a wider variety of tasks round the year. There is a wider freedom of choice among tasks as well. Soil and climate are just as insistent as is the household, but they do not force such narrow regularities.

Yet each season brings a task the farmer must perform. Custom and rivalry in the community restrict him as well. He is in fact less free to choose the date of sowing than his wife the hour of dinner. Long-established tradition and ancestral experience imprint upon his mind the best dates for planting, for reaping, for harrowing, for breeding cattle, and so forth. The farmer is caught, willingly of course, in a mesh of rivalries, competitions, condemnations, which binds him the more strongly to the community's patterning of his yearly round.

The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its low in winter. On bitter wet days little can be done

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beyond the haggard wall, as we have noted. All the 241
many tasks of patching and repair are men's work, 221
they fall to the farmer-father and his sons. The 462
annual round is theirs, as the daily one belongs to the women.

For the countryman, the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to the Epiphany or 'Little Christmas', is the dead of winter. All farm work is at a standstill. The farmer is free to devote the season to holiday. Outside the weather is unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. For him the year has stopped and is waiting to renew its forces.

With the Epiphany, the succession of bitter wet days does not end, but holiday does. One's mind turns to the earnest work of the year to come. The farmer plans his spring planting. On drier days he can clean ditches and drains; he can lay in seed and repair machines. In the evenings, conversation on [521]
visits and at home revolves round the coming planting and calving, and traditional experience goes from mouth to mouth. In fact, it is the time for all new plans, for it is Shrovetide, the season of match-making and marriage.

St. Bridget's Day, February 1, marks the begin- [805]
ning of spring. For St. Bridget promised every [776]
second day thereafter would be 'hard'. The return of the 'hard' days of wind and clear weather herald the land's drying-off. Through February and March, gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted,

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221 241 462 fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each 'hard' day is more than welcome, for then work in the fields can go on. By St. Patrick's day, they say in Clare, the potatoes should all be 'down'; after that there still remains much to do, [776] though the worst is over. St. Patrick promised that after his day *every* day would 'come hard'.

Through the rest of the spring, work is at its most intense. Potatoes must be 'stirred' and 'landed'; other root crops 'put down'. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the season of greater milk yields and intensified butter-making. Before that in February and March [443] the 'great spring fairs' take place, and the year's buying and selling of cattle must be done.

Then, gradually, with the return of warm weather and the drying-off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is often the first summer month. Soon the bogs are dry enough for cutting the year's supply of turf and for stacking it to dry under the summer warmth at the bog's edge.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the first fruits of the farmer's labour begin to appear. The first crop is cabbage, which was planted at odd times very early. It is practically the only green of the diet and old people remember June or July *an* [261] *chabdiste*, 'the hungry month', when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semi-starvation upon cabbage. Today new varieties of potatoes mature as early as June. But

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the mature potatoes mark no harvest; they are turned out of the ridges with spade and plough as they are needed.

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241
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The first true harvest, and the most important one of the year, is the haymaking. Mowing begins in late July or early August. The haymaking is a race against time and rainy weather. Every effort must be bent to mow, rake, dry and stack the grasses, first in small haycocks, then in the great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers speak of it aptly when they call it 'saving the hay'.

Corn crops, oats and rye, come in next, and then through September, October and November the other roots, mangels and turnips, must be 'pulled'. Turf must be brought down to the haggard from the bog-ricks; and everything made ready for man and cattle for the coming winter. Autumn fairs bring a new high in buying and selling cattle; and with the last of them, winter sets in again and Advent has returned. In late November the farmer may turn over his gardens with the plough, to prepare them for the spring. As he follows the furrow, he can look back upon a year ended and forward upon a new one to begin.

Yet, unvarying as this yearly round is, and much as the recurrent patterns of work in garden, meadow and field follow the farmer year after year, from boyhood to death, this work—man's round—is freer and more various, even perhaps

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

more arduous, than woman's. We must remember this difference. It reflects an important dichotomy between the sexes in the organization of labour.

We can see this dichotomy even when the group works as a unit. At various crucial points in the annual round we have just followed, the whole family bends to the tasks at hand together. At potato planting, turf-cutting and haymaking, one can see them working in unison. Even the young children contribute their share to the common rhythm of the task. Yet the woman's role is separate. It is auxiliary; the simpler, less arduous tasks fall to her. The heavier work and command of the enterprise rests with the men. The plough, the harrow, the mower, the scythe, the spade and the turf-cutting *slán* are regarded as masculine implements. The attitudes of the countryside forbid a woman's using them. In the same way, they heap ridicule upon the thought of a man's interesting himself in the feminine sphere, in poultry, or in the churning.

Immemorial folklore bolsters this division. The woman is unlucky to masculine enterprises, for instance: it is dangerous to see a woman on the road to the fair. Likewise, man is dangerous to the woman's work. If he so much as takes his lighted pipe out of the house while she is churning, he may 'take the butter', through fairy magic.

In this dichotomy, of course, the male sphere bears higher value. But dichotomy implies no de-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

132 winters—all these characteristics are related to the eastward moving stream of cyclones coming off the warm North Atlantic drift. Rain is heaviest wherever mountain masses place obstacles in the path of the moisture-bearing winds, and the peninsulas of Donegal, Connemara and Kerry have from 60 to 100 inches of rain each year (Fig. 8). By contrast the east coast gets about half this amount, while the low-lying tract between Dublin and Drogheda is favoured by a fall of under 30 ins. Everywhere the mildness and the damp encourage grasses and moisture-loving plants, but too often waterlogging has caused green pastures and woodlands to deteriorate into brown bogland. The prolonged autumns, another gift of the Atlantic, are important because they give man a sporting chance of saving his harvests: the heaviest rains are delayed until November and December. Similarly the relatively dry springs (March-May) are conducive to work in field and turf-bog at that season. (Chapter 15).

311 231 241 Reviewing the distribution of the chief crops and animals to-day, the following facts may be noted. Nearly one half the land devoted to crops, excluding hay, is occupied by oats and perhaps three-quarters of the yield is fed to livestock. Only in the wettest peninsulas of Connemara and Kerry does another crop (potatoes) occupy more land. It is estimated that the "consumption" of potatoes amounts to about ¾ ton per head of the population each year, but the greater part of this goes to pigs and other livestock. The greatest concentration of wheat production is in the comparatively sunny corner of Wexford, with secondary areas along the dry east coast in Cos. Dublin and Down. Recent years have witnessed an increase in wheat growing but there is still far less than in the record years of a century ago. when wheat was being exported to England. Barley, which is more intolerant of damp than wheat, is found on the well-drained soils of Co. Louth but particularly of Wexford and the sheltered valleys of the Nore, Suir and Barrow. It has declined less than wheat because of the demand of the breweries and distilleries, but [273] the drop in the illicit making of poteen has reduced its production in many a secluded spot along the west coast.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER X.

SEEDTIME.

Except in a few districts where winter wheat is grown the 241 ●
farmer's year may be said to begin in spring when, from 221
February on, the land is ploughed or dug for the new crops. Several arguments are advanced against autumn ploughing—that the land is too wet and that the winter destroys the seed-bed—but as with many other things the preference is best explained by deep-rooted custom. So long as the land was held in rundale autumn ploughing was out of the question since the stock had the run of the whole townland after Hallowe'en.

We have very little information about old Irish ploughs. 241
Owing to the fact that they were made almost entirely of wood 407
archæology cannot help us much, but shaped stones that may have been shares and coulters have been found, and plough-irons do sometimes turn up. The discovery by Dr. O'Neill Hencken of a large iron coulter in the Ballinderry crannog shows that a heavy plough necessitating a big team had reached Co. Westmeath by the 10th century A.D. Pipe-rolls of the 13th century refer to plough teams of 8 oxen in Co. Meath: this was the normal complement under the English three-field system. At the other end of the scale, as it were, there survived into living memory along the west coast the custom of attaching the horse to the plough or harrows by [492]
the tail, and although the practice was severely condemned it had the advantage that the horse would stop if the plough

[p.87]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 407 [492] struck a rock, thus saving the share, the traces and the ploughman from injury. The tying of the tail-hair to the traces, which were commonly of sugán or fir rope, required a difficult knot known in later days to very few. This undoubtedly ancient practice seems to have been linked with other customs such as walking backwards before the plough horses, burning the corn in the straw, and plucking or clipping wool from the sheep whenever it was required. It appears that we have in this group of survivals an older culture-laver overlaid by newer methods some of which are themselves of high antiquity. There is some evidence that the original simpler wooden plough mentioned below, together with the clod-breaker and the winnowing tray (Chapter 14) belong to the older layer, whereas the improved wooden plough, the harrow and the flail are later arrivals.

English visitors of the 18th century and the writers of the Statistical Accounts published by the Royal Dublin Society have given many particulars of the varying practices of a century and a half ago. From them we select a few observations. The method of ploughing in Co. Clare was to use four horses abreast, the driver walking backwards between the two middle horses. This is also described as "the old method" in Co. Roscommon. Four oxen were employed in Co. Dublin and Co. Tipperary, "never less than four oxen or four horses" in Kilkenny, six in Meath, three in Fermanagh and two in King's County. The large teams of some regions may imply that co-aration had at one time been practised. [476 171] The four horses of the north Antrim plough-team were contributed or "pooled" by four farmers under the system of "morrowing" or "neighbour dealing" which finds ready parallels in Scotland. In Co. Clare this pooling custom is known as "cooring," and in other parts as "milling." The Irish farm horse, it should be remembered, is a small light breed: except near large towns heavy cart horses are rarely seen.

Nevertheless in the more backward parts the two horse plough seems to have been general, as it is to-day, and it has been supposed that the two-ox plough was standard in early

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Celtic times. I have never seen the wooden plough in use, but I have attempted to reconstruct a drawing (Fig. 43) with the help of discarded specimens and descriptions given by men who have worked with them, and I find that my sketch closely resembles an example in the National Museum of Ireland which I have since examined. It consists of a short " head " fitted with an iron share or sock attached by means of folded flanges like the turf spade or the loy, and also shod with an iron sole-shoe. Into the head is morticed the main handle, in such a way that its left side forms a straight line with the head and with the straight side of the sock. To the main handle are fastened both the " wee handle " and the long " beam " which in turn is keyed to the head and carries the coulter. Finally a block of wood known as the rest is secured to the right side of the head and has above it a nine-inch mould board. The plough horses had no bits or reins, and the outfit needed two men, one to hold and one to drive. It was often necessary for a third hand to walk alongside " with a strong stick bearing on the beam to keep the plough in the ground."

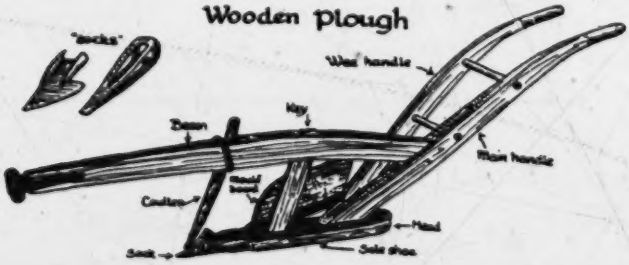

Fig. 43.

The wooden plough was lighter than the all-iron plough, and was considered to break the earth better than the smooth share and curved breast of the swing plough which took its place, but it did not effectively turn the sods: the so-called mould-board did little more than prevent some of the soil from falling back into the furrow. Yet this is the " new wooden plough " which in Donegal replaced only a century

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 ago a still simpler plough described as a " crooked stick armed
407 with a bit of iron," which must have been in no way different, apart from " the bit of iron," from the plough of the Bronze Age. In fact there were wide areas where a plough of any
[412] kind was practically unknown, and it must be admitted that in the small stoney fields of the west the spade is much more serviceable. It is still the only implement used on hundreds of small farms, and at best the spade had to supplement the old types of plough around the headlands and among the stones and rocks. Moreover the wooden plough left the ground so uneven that lumps had to be broken with a maul
[412] or " mell " (Fig. 44) and holes filled in with the spade to prevent the seed being " lost." This process was known in Co. Antrim as " mannering." Cross-ploughing seems to be an old Irish custom and helps to explain why the field system is rectangular in contrast to the long strips of ploughland associated with the heavy English wheeled plough.

Fig. 44.

In preparing ground whether for corn or potatoes the practice was to plough the land in narrow ridges varying in width from about 4 to 12 sods (say 3½ to 10 feet) according to the depth and nature of the soil. The furrow or " sheugh " between the ridges would be some two feet wide. This was scraped with the plough but not turned, and it provided the earth for shovelling on the ridges after the seed had been sown. " An old ridge in the ground," runs an Irish saying, " outlives three yews " ; and indeed ancient cultivation ridges can be seen at all but the highest levels and have been observed underneath bogs when they are cut away. The plough ridges

Fig. 45.

Old cultivation ridges and remains of rath, Scrabo, Co. Down.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

are nowadays much wider: the narrow ridges and deep 241
furrows are quite unsuited to the use of machinery (Fig. 45).

February, March and April are the busy ploughing months. Corn was generally sown directly "on the furrow," but the seed-bed often required careful preparation either by breaking the clods and dragging along a strong thorn bush weighted with stones or by harrowing. The time is remembered when the old "six bull" wooden harrow was fitted with wooden tines or cows' horns, arranged in consecutive order and not "staggered." These were frequently dragged by the horse's tail. Oats were sown with a one-hand cast from a linen sheet hung round the neck. This is the method still employed on small farms, although the practice of covering the seed with the shovel is almost abandoned. An alternative method, which is perhaps of fairly recent introduction, is to sow with the "fiddle and bow"—the silent fiddler making a striking picture as he strides firmly up and down the field. The seed drill, it goes without saying, is gradually replacing hand sowing, but the older generation is convinced that much better crops resulted from burying the seed, and it is claimed that the land was better drained by the deep furrows between the ridges.

Potatoes are still planted in the old ridge-and-furrow way 244
on small farms. We need not describe the drill method which is universally adopted on larger farms, except to notice that different methods and many types of simple implements are used to prepare and level the drills. My colleague, Mr. O. Davies, tells me that a common practice in Co. Wexford is to break the lumps in the drills with a "drag," a heavy block of granite on which the farmer stands as he drives the horse along the drill. When old grassland is broken up for potatoes, set-rigs or "lazy-beds" are made with the spade (Fig. 46), as in the Scottish Highlands. In the north the push plough or "flachter" (Chapter 15 and Figs. 83-85) was formerly used for this purpose.

The finished lazy-bed closely resembles the ploughed potato ridge, but it is all spade-work and gets its name from the fact that the sod under the ridge is not dug. The width of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

digging or shovelling. For these processes the digging fork 244
and long-handled shovel are the proper tools. (Fig. 65). It 412
should also be remarked that the preparation of lazy-beds
was communal team-work, undertaken by groups of from [462]
8 to 16 men who shared their labour under the system of
voluntary co-operation which distinguished the village [476]
community. The custom is maintained in a few localities.

The loy served in certain districts as a dibber for setting the potatoes "against the back of the spade." but various special dibbers were also used. There was, for instance, the large two-handed "steeveen" found from Co. Leitrim to Co. Clare. As another example of a dibber we illustrate the clumsy-looking "stamp" from Co. Armagh (Fig. 47), employed in sowing turnips. Reference will be made elsewhere (Chapter 16) to the use of seaweed as manure. Old thatch, with its content of soot from the turf fire, is occasionally used as a fertilizer, and I am told that in Achill Island miniature stone, sod or turf buildings used as "soot houses" are roofed with rafters and scraws each autumn. Fires are lit in them, the smoke depositing soot on its passage through the thatch. This is then stripped off and, with the ashes of the fires, spread on the land as manure in spring. The thatch of the Hebridean black houses was utilized in the same way.

Fig. 47.

A practice which was formerly widespread and attracted a 241 ●
great deal of heated discussion in the period of agricultural 412
development at the end of the 18th century was the preparing of waste ground for cultivation by "paring and burning," or "denshiring." It seems probable that this was a survival of ancient custom, and I believe that old-fashioned tool, the flachter, was probably employed for the purpose, just as its sister-tool, the breast-plough, was in England. Many types of tools were perfected for land reclamation, including a [185]
special skinning-plough. In the south-west a heavy hoe or mattock, known as a graffan—similar to the implement still used in Kerry for breaking clods on potato ridges—was popular as a paring tool, the sod being rolled with the foot as it was cut. By such laborious processes, and by centuries of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 toil and grazing, by plough and spade, hoof and muzzle, have
412 Ireland's green fields been "moulded."

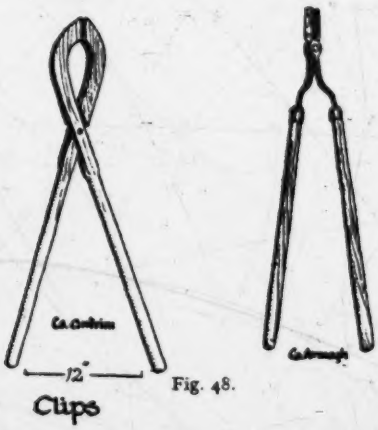

Fig. 48.

Although we cannot touch on the other crops and have given a very inadequate idea of the bustle, worries and humours of the Irish springtime, when all the crops demand to be put in the ground at the same time, we must end this chapter with a few comments on the growing season. The
[516] general practice when thinning root crops is to work on the knees with the hands: one rarely sees a hoe being used for thinning. Yet paradoxically corn is weeded, if it gets any attention at all, with a pair of wooden pincers or thistle-pullers, called, in Co. Antrim, "clips" (Fig. 48). This tool is already
[184] mentioned in a Tour of Ireland in 1752. The weeders are not so common in the south of the country and are fitted with iron pincers in some counties. Another home-made device once familiar in the north was the crow-scarer or "corn-crake," a noisy instrument made on the principle of the watchman's rattle or—to give a modern instance—the gas rattle of the A.R.P. services.

CHAPTER XI.

HARVEST.

In this chapter we shall give an account of some harvesting 241
customs which depend on a minimum of mechanical appliances. 246
We begin with the hay harvest, the first of the season. The new agriculture represented by turnips and rotation grasses has, in its diffusion from England during the last two centuries, still barely touched the remoter parts of Ireland, where hay until lately had no place in the scheme of cultivation. Successive crops of corn and potatoes were taken so long as the land would yield anything, when it was allowed to grow wild grasses and weeds until the time came to break it up once more. Oat straw, which is never chaffed, to some extent took the place of hay, which, apart from a limited amount of meadow hay and "sprit," was chiefly gathered from waste places and [231]
mearings and reserved for horses and milk cows. It should be noticed that the old customs of herding, tethering and spancelling permitted the stock to graze in places where hay could not be made. Moreover natural hay, ripened but left uncut, was utilized to a great extent along the mild coasts.

Scandinavian archæologists have shown that the practice 246
of preserving grass as hay for winter use began in that region during the cold wet phase of climate known as the Sub-Atlantic (Chapter 4). So it may have been in Ireland, too: the scythe and the iron hook have their origin in the Early Iron Age, and some of the methods of securing the crop can have changed little in two thousand years. On small farms

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 survivals, associated with the cutting of the last sheaf—the "churn" or the "Cailleach" (Chapter 19).

Corn stacks are more varied in shape than haystacks and need better protection from weather and from vermin. [824] Sprigs of apple-mint (*M. arvensis*) may be thrown through the sheaves to keep away mice. The stone stack-stands or staddels, called "hovels," are a picturesque feature of the stackyard in some districts. With their steep tops rising above the house clusters, the golden corn stacks turn the little Irish villages into African kraals, or in the fields one may count as many as 30 round stacks in a row, rising against the sky up the hillside. Then the whole countryside seems fuller than usual. New colours and odours meet one on all sides, and the horses as they pass give off the sharp smell which comes from crunching the fresh oats. The country smiths used to make a small light fork or "pike," fitted with a long handle, for throwing the last sheaves high up (Fig. 66). The stacks are thatched with rushes, twisted into bundles known as "stapples" which are pushed into the straw.

[285]
[415]

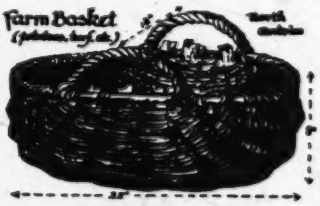

Fig. 54.

241 We cannot touch on the methods of harvesting and stacking the other cereal crops, wheat, barley and rye, but a word must be said in conclusion on the last harvest of the year—the root crops. Although turnips and the new sugar beet are important in some areas, it is the potato crop which means most to the peasant. All available hands are in the fields, gathering the precious food-supply into wicker baskets or boxes (Figs. 54 and 55); and the school children are given

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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special holidays. The potatoes are sorted, the small and faulty roots being put aside for the stock and poultry. The crop is then "pitted," that is piled in long heaps in the field and covered with straw and earth. October is the potato month, and under the old system the limiting date was Hallowe'en, for after that the animals were allowed to roam freely over the village or townland. It should be noticed that early potatoes are little esteemed in Ireland apart from commercial cultivation in a few coastal districts. A curious example of specialized potato-growing is cited in Chapter 16. 241 ●

[415]

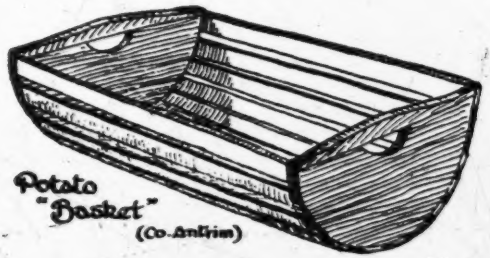

Fig. 55. (22" by 16")

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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171 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a
524 circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

857 Many examples could be given of children's games and
524 rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.
754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance
789 of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love
821 charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

241 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting
289 of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

A good deal of skill was required and "the contestants were hindered by the unkind jokes of their friends. When the cailleach was eventually "stretched" or "cut and dead," she was "waked," carried into the house or barn, and generally kept until the following year." To quote Mr. Paterson once more, "Sometimes a party followed the ceremony, at which it was usual for the boys and girls to wear harvest knots." I illustrate two examples of knots, one with the ears left on, which is done in three plait, and the other the more common two-straw pattern (Fig. 114). It has been claimed that the

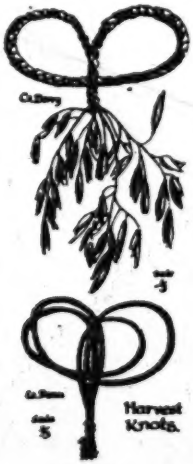

Fig. 114.

latter form is a late introduction from England, but it is known that the first type was worn by girls, in their hair, and the second by boys. They were often made before the actual cutting of the corn and are not necessarily associated with the ceremony of the last sheaf. Mr. Paterson tells me that in Armagh they used to be exchanged between the sexes as a token of admiration or love.

Finally we must not forget the countless superstitious beliefs connected with birds and trees, with water beasts, and

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

on this subject, I shall not attempt the treatment of it myself, but shall quote the opinion of the Rev. Eugene O'Growney, who has an exceptional knowledge of both people and language, and has kindly furnished me with some of his notes relating to them. He says:— "The Irish spoken in Boffin has a very poor vocabulary, as far as I heard it spoken. I must say, however, that it was not easy to get the people to speak it, and many children at first refused point blank to utter a word of Irish. In most of the Irish-speaking districts of the west, the people have preserved a number of old poetic prayers and hymns. Many of these are very beautiful, and some appear to be of great age. I was particularly interested at the time of my visit in these hymns, but was told that the only hymn in use in Boffin and Shark was the *ortha Mhuire*, or prayer of Mary. I could not find any person in Boffin who could recite it, and the only person in Shark who was supposed to have it in full was out at sea. An old man in Boffin recited for me a portion of a quaint old religious composition in English." In another place he states that the people speak neither English nor Irish well, their dialect of the language containing many corrupted English words, and at least one curious word. "I recollect that the cove in which St. Leo's well is situated is called *fuath Leo*. I take the word *fuath*, which is the usual word in Inishshark and Inisboffin for a 'cove,' to be a corruption of *uamh*, which is used by the Four Masters in the year 893 as meaning 'cave.'"[1] 19 [538]

IV. SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Every family combines fishing and farming, and has some share in a boat. The farms are small (see p. 340), about three acres and a-half under potatoes and oats, being about the average amount of tillage per family. All are held direct from the landlord, who resides on Inishbofin, there being no subletting or con-acre. The rents average about £2 per holding, but vary much according to the extent and quality of the land. 241 [226] 427

The holdings are not divided up into small fields, as in Aran, but are often insufficiently fenced, allowing the cattle to stray, which 241 423

[1] The Rev. E. A. Lavelle has, since the above was written, sent a translation of a curious old Irish litany used on both islands, both in Irish and English, which he obtained from an old man, aged 84, whose father, Peter Lavelle, fought under Nelson at Trafalgar. As the litany is in English and of great length, it is not inserted here, but it is to be hoped that the Irish form will be recorded and preserved as it may possess the linguistic value wanting in a translation.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

241 sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone
[423] walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.
[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be to some extent neglected. A family keeps a couple of pigs, some
[231] sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on
[237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de râche*) are used as fuel.

373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant. 291 [386] [824]

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bedrooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar, though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors, front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen; and the windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones, until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood, washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few 342 [354] [284] [241] 352

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe cruithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(C.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Doghertys, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(D.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(E.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dennistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct. 463 241 [351] [412]

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [407] [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive,
372 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time.
[435] The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen, and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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241 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one
231 time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow fastened to the horses tail.

The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed
513 in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and *is regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the
[834] strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but
262 fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more
[272] extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal)
264 stirabout, buttermilk.

[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

342 been built for almost the entire popula-
511 tion. In 1893 it was said that there
were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds,
[657] so that peat was stacked in a corner of
the cottage with the fowls roosting on
it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace,
the cattle in a pen at the other end of
the room, and the farm implements and
fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] Now the
[343] old houses are the outbuildings, still
thatched, with oat straw (not rye as
formerly) laid on sods and tied down
with home-made straw ropes weighted
with large stones. Only five thatched
houses were still inhabited in 1954.
Some of the thatch has sprouting oats
and some of it is rotten, but, when a
roof is beyond further repair, it is all
stripped off and the sodding and thatch-
ing begins again. Happily, corrugated
iron is not used as it cannot stand the
weather.

Farming

● 241 Agricultural practice is almost uni-
form: an acre or so is divided between
oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—
barley, and there is generally a small
patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less
frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions,
carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen.
The ground used for crops is called the
"garden," and its fertility is maintained
by using animal manure and seaweed,
and also by rotating the crops. Strange
(or "foreign") seed is favored, and
[657] bought at a cheap rate under a govern-
ment scheme. The remainder of the
farmstead consists of a varying amount
of meadow, generally 1–3 acres, and
some pasture. The precious crops are
carefully walled, but some of the farm-
[231] ers open their fields to the cattle and
sheep after the harvest, partly as a
means of natural fertilizing.

231 Each farmer has one or two cows and
439

[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[p. 206(A)]

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the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

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evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. 311
It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, 423
for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the [777]
occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we 311
should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean, even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat. Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable. Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed [231]
pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter. And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at that season, when food for livestock is scarce.

311
Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep 221
were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken 241
from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen 237

[1]Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 349.

[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.

[3]ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.

[4]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.

[5]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

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311 tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year!'[1] Sea
221 wrack and shell sand were carted up to thirty miles inland from
[241] the coast.[2] In the absence of permanent fences the majority of
[237] the cattle must be moved away during the summer and those remaining carefully herded or tethered on the outfield, or put in temporary enclosures to manure that part of the outfield which was due for cultivation.[3] In its origins and full development the rundale system depended on the movement of most of the livestock to summer booleys situated some distance away. Here the widely distributed uplands and boglands played their part in the traditional economy. Although late survivals of the booleying system are hard to find, little of it managing to outlive the crisis of the Great Famine, we are beginning to track down its history and significance. The Irish texts are as disappointing and vague as they are in many matters touching the common people, but folk-memory comes to our aid. There are stories, and place-name evidence, from most parts of the country, and regional variants of the practice are being studied and mapped.[4]

We give first some quotations from the few discerning observers who drew attention to the practice. Edmund Spenser's enlightened spirit of inquiry is shown in his remark: 'Have you ever heard what was the occasion and first beginning of this custom? for it is good to know the same.' He writes, in 1595,
221 'There is one use amongst them, to keep their cattle and to
234 live themselves the most part of the year in boolies, pasturing upon the mountain and waste wild places.'[5] His objections to the system, however, reveal his Englishry: the booleys hid outlaws and loose people, and the wandering life made the Irish barbarous. The following brief reference comes from O'Flaherty's famous account of West Connacht: 'In summertime they drive their cattle to the mountains, where such as look to the cattle live in small cabins for that season.'[6] In the eighteenth

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country* (1951), 141.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 131.
[4]J. M. Graham, 'Transhumance in Ireland', in *The Advancement of Science*, 37 (1953), 74–9.
[5]Quoted in H. Morley, *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James I* (1890), 67.
[6]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 17.

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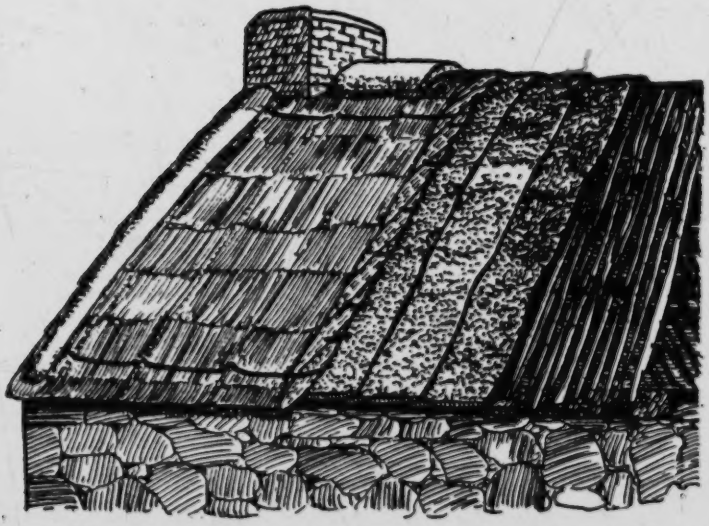

FIG. 14. Detail of scollop thatch, Co. Armagh, showing roof construction, sods and mud coping (after R. H. Buchanan).

hipped. The best work is seen on houses of the jamb-wall type.

824 Oat-straw, despite its poor lasting qualities, is employed for thatching in some districts, because it is the only available
342 material. Being pliable it is widely used for patching. In the old days outfield straw was preferred for thatching because it was tougher than that grown on the infield. Wheat or rye is much
● [241] more durable than oat straw and rye is specially grown for its straw in parts of Donegal, where I have known flax also cultivated to provide thatching material. Reeds are fairly commonly employed in the south-west and locally elsewhere if no straw is available. I have seen heather used in north Donegal, and in other areas marram grass, rushes and 'mountain grass' (probably *molinea*). The expert thatcher prefers his straw to be cut with a sickle and thrashed by hand and he scorns machine-thrashed straw. Best of all is straw from which the corn has been removed by hand-scutching or 'lashing' over a stick or stone, the 'barrel' of the straw being thus unbroken (Chapter XV).
342 Nowadays a thatched roof is becoming a mark of sophistication,

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X

PLOUGH AND SPADE

STRONG arms have been the Irish labourer's passport to labouring jobs overseas, and it may be recalled that the word 'navvy' derives from the canal-diggers or navigators, many of them Irish, who opened the waterways of industrial England. Later it was Irish labourers who built the first railroad tracks of North America. Those arms were toughened by spade-work in field and bog, for the Irish spade is much more than a gardening tool: it was, and still is in backward areas and in the boglands, an implement for field cultivation and for cutting turf. The small field pattern of all except the most fertile regions is in part a reflection of this historic fact. An acre or two and often less in area, the tiny hillside fields are a measure of spade work just as the wide prairie wheatlands mirror the multiple plough or the mounded garden plots of an African village are the mark of women's work with mattock and digging-stick. Even in the deep-soiled lowlands where the plough is now universal the observant eye, still more the viewer from the air, will pick out the narrow ridges made by the spade faintly showing, as in a palimpsest, through the more regular pattern of wide plough ridges. In hilly country, especially in the west, the spade is still in common use in the fields, and the traveller moving about Ireland in spring, when the potatoes are being planted, will notice an astonishing variety of spades in use. Even in districts where the plough is universal the spade may still be pressed into service to deal with stony patches or awkward corners, and I have seen it supplementing the plough in another way by being tied on to a lea plough to convert it into a double-sided drill plough.

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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ploughs were known in parts of Celtic Ireland, but the light 407
plough or *ard* almost certainly prevailed, and it is unlikely that
ploughs of any kind were employed outside the 'few favoured 412
acres' of the infield. A light plough, at any rate, would be unfit to break the tough sod of the outfield, which was allowed to rest for long periods. Even today the answer I have been given when I have asked ridgemakers in old outfield why they were using spades has been: 'Tis too tough for the plough!' Ploughing 'by the tail', similarly, becomes intelligible only if one envisages it as restricted to infield cultivation. The iron plough with curved mould board did not reach the outlying corners of the country until late in the nineteenth century, and down to the time of the famine iron ploughs were used only in progressive areas where there were improving landlords. The prototype of these ploughs was the Scottish two-horse swing [177]
plough invented by James Small about the year 1765. By the end of the century it had reached Ireland (and also Norway) and it was a powerful instrument in breaking down the archaic system of openfield husbandry. The Irish were amazed when they first saw a ploughman with a Scots plough both driving the horses and holding the stilts.[1]

Under the traditional system ploughing was 'merely marking 407
the land with furrows'[2]: a spade or mattock was commonly
needed to turn back the earth, and to force the share into the 241
ground it was often necessary to have a man walking alongside [412]
the plough, pressing down on the beam with a stout stick. No bits or reins were used, and the plough itself required two men or a man and a boy, 'one to hold and one to drive', that is one holding the plough stilts and the other leading the horses by walking backwards before them. Evidently the man at the handles needed to give all his attention to the plough. It was, as a Cavan man described it to me, a process of 'jerking up 407
and down'. Many of these practices were probably taken over
from the days of ox-teams. Ploughing with oxen is believed to 241 231
have died out in late medieval times, though it was reintroduced by some landowners in the late eighteenth century. The small farmer did not use oxen for the plough because unlike horses

[1]R. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 111.
[2]I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 656.

407 they could not be put to other purposes such as going to the
241 fair.

[231] The wooden plough has now been almost entirely replaced by the iron plough, but in many districts a wooden plough, often converted from a lea plough, is preferred for opening drills (Fig. 42). The potato growers of the kingdom of Mourne in Co. Down, for example, find that it suits their stony soils and is less likely to be damaged by boulders. The rough wooden mould-boards carry the earth with them and distribute it more evenly than the iron drill-plough, which tends, moreover, to 'put a skin' on the soil and to pile up pointed ridges which would require to have their tops flattened later.

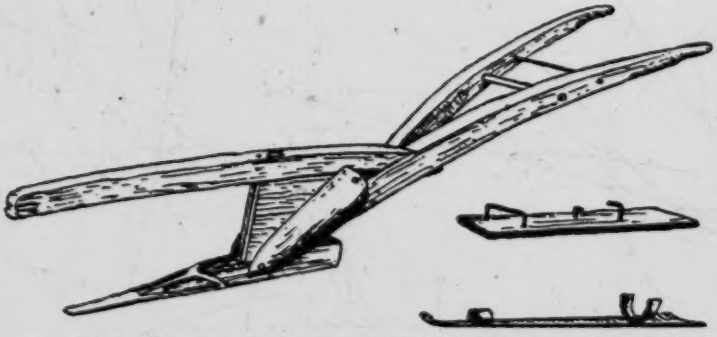

FIG. 42. Wooden drill plough and plough slides, Co. Down: the lower slide is of iron.

The improved wooden plough did not reach remote hill regions until roads were built after the middle of the eighteenth century. Even in the nineteenth century it is described as a newcomer in Co. Donegal, where spade labour had previously
[412] been supplemented only by 'a crooked stick armed with a bit of iron, with a second stick grafted to it to give two handles'.[1] This archaic implement must have resembled the wooden 'ard' (araire) of Mediterranean lands. It was so light that when the improved wooden plough with mould-board was introduced into Donegal the ponies were not equal to the task of pulling it. In west Cork the new wooden ploughs were not to be

[1]John Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience as an Irish Landlord*, 47.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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seen on the small farms until after the Great Famine: 'the things called ploughs would only scratch the surface, a log of wood sharpened and shod with iron'.[1] This 'poorer sort of plough' was made of alder in Co. Londonderry.[2] Observers attributed the Irish addiction to cross-ploughing to the fact that the ribs of unploughed land could only be broken by this means. Small squarish cultivation plots and fields are a natural consequence of cross-ploughing. 407 241

It seems that even these light ploughs, quite incapable of penetrating lea ground, were pulled by three or four horses abreast, 'so weak and small are the horses'.[3] Thus 'coaring' (coaration) was necessary, though one suspects that tradition rather than need lay behind the large teams. In the seventeenth century four horses abreast pulled the plough by the tails in Co. Clare, 'which was the custom all over Ireland. The tackle and traces being made of gadds or withies of twigs twisted, would be broken to pieces otherwise . . . But the horses being sensible stop until the ploughman lifts the plough over the rock.'[4] At the same time we find complaints from the midland counties that the native plough was 'heavy and unmanageable, distressing to men and horses.[5] Here we probably have to deal with the descendant of the heavy Anglo-Norman plough. 407 241 492

Unfortunately we have no details of the Irish *ard*. One would like to know, for instance, whether it turned the furrow or rather threw the earth—for it merely scratched the soil—to the left or to the right. It has been found that in certain parts of western Europe left-sided ploughs are traditional whereas, of course, the common plough is almost universally right-sided. Mr. Robert Aitken has traced the left-sided plough in a clearly defined area of south France and north-east Spain.[6] The explanation may be that in these areas cultivation was originally done with a foot plough, for which the right foot was used, so that the soil, as with the Scottish caschrom, was turned to the left, and that the plough when adopted became a traction- 407 241

[1] W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland* (1880), 20.
[2] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir* (1814), 290.
[3] W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. Sligo.
[4] *Dineley's Tour in Ireland* (1681), Ed. J. Graves, (1870), 162.
[5] W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. King's Co. and Queen's Co.
[6] R. Aitken, *Man*, 1953, 286.

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407 version of the foot-plough. This is an almost unexplored field
241 of rural history. Mr. Aitken is of the opinion, however, that the left-sided plough goes with the use of the right hand as holding hand.

At any rate it is interesting to find that in Ireland the majority
412 of diggers use the right foot, and although in theory the
241 wooden foot-rest of the native one-eared spade can be fitted either to left or right of the narrow blade it is, in the west, almost invariably on the right side. Presumably only habitually left-handed people use the left foot. In eastern Ireland, on the other hand, and particularly in the Protestant districts of the north-east, the left foot is normally the digging-foot, though judging from the proportions of right to left (about one to three in the north-east), the old Irish stocks continue to dig with the right foot. Hence there is a basis of fact in the phrase 'digging
[539] with the wrong foot'. (To say that someone digs with the other
[798] foot is in Ireland an oblique way of referring to his religious faith.) The old Irish spade, we have seen, is a highly specialized tool. It may have been preceded by some kind of hoe or planting stick such as are represented today by the graffan or the steeveen which we describe in the following chapter.

We have no direct evidence of Bronze Age ploughs in Ire-
174 land, though marks of furrows have been observed underneath
407 burial barrows of that period in Jutland and Holland and it has been claimed that the *ard* had reached the west Baltic region
412 before the end of the Neolithic phase. However this may be the sod-cutting spade, which could be supplemented by the wooden shovel, is not likely to have been introduced much before the beginning of the Christian era, since it required an efficient knowledge of iron-working. By facilitating the building of ridges it would have improved crop yields during a climatic period, the sub-Atlantic, which was even wetter than at present. A mould-board plough capable of forming ridges did not reach Ireland on present evidence until about the seventh century, and as we have seen it had not been adopted in parts of the west until the nineteenth century. Thus the narrow spade, coming into use at about the same time as oats, would have been a factor in stabilizing settlement by permitting ridge cultivation on the outfield grazing ground round about. This is speculative,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XI

LAZY-BEDS

241 IN the Western Isle, as throughout Highland Britain, climate and custom have conspired to limit the farmer's work in the fields to little more than half the year, from March to October. It is geared to a régime of spring-sown crops, supplemented since the agrarian revolution by intensive hay-farming. Wheat-growing is now encouraged under the Republican drive towards economic self-sufficiency, but it is a risky crop except in the drier eastern lowlands, and though it was the chief cereal in early prehistoric times there is some evidence to suggest that it was then a spring-sown crop. Barley has been grown in small amounts since early times and was especially popular in remote places during the great days of poteen-making, but it is now insignificant as a crop in comparison with oats and potatoes. Before the coming of the potato the oats (corn) crop was all-important, and the routine of its cultivation set the pattern of the farming year and was closely integrated with pastoral needs. In bad seasons even the oats may not ripen properly, and their safe harvesting is at best a gamble in the oceanic climate of the west where autumn is the wettest season of the year. Thus great toil was endured and every care taken in the preparations for sowing, rites of propitiation were performed during the growing season, and every chance of harvesting the crop was quickly seized. It was in the nature of a rescue operation, and indeed the Irish farmer always speaks of 'saving' his harvest. The normal worries of a cereal farmer are here accentuated, and the harvest period is so vital that autumn in rural Ireland is
241 always referred to as 'harvest'.

461 Spells of fine weather in spring and harvest were times of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

intense effort, when the toilers were spurred on by rivalries in 241
their efforts to avoid the bad luck which tradition wisely bes- 461
towed on the laggards. The seasonal festivals which marked the end of these periods of strain—at the beginning of May and November—were not merely celebrations of work completed and a new season begun, but also the occasion for the release of emotional stresses. The Irishman's capacity for bouts of strenuous work, and his more notorious addiction to spells of complete idleness, are surely related to the experience accumulated through countless springs, harvests, and winters. Winter was a dead season for man as for the world around him. It was no time for fairs, fighting or raiding, for selling or even stealing animals which were not worth the trouble of stealing: the problem was to maintain life in them.

Long tradition explains the neglect of winter ploughing 241
which is still characteristic of the greater part of Ireland. The 311
infield stubble was required to augment the very poor and limited outfield grazing available for the wintering stock. There are some townlands, in the west, where to this day all the fields become common grazing during the winter, and only the strongly-enclosed 'gardens' are safe places to grow cabbages, for instance, or a little rye for the thatch. Moreover even with improved ploughs the grass tends to grow in the furrows of ploughed land during a mild winter. And when it is recalled that much of the old infield land was on sloping ground, if only for the sake of the natural drainage thus provided, it can be conceded that there was wisdom in not breaking the earth in winter and opening the way to soil erosion. Moreover the loss of fertility by the leaching of exposed soils can be serious.

Preparing the land for seed had thus to await the spring, and 241
pressure of time as well as the uncertainties of weather strength- 476
ened the tradition of co-operative labour in the form of pooled plough-teams in the infield and gangs of ridgemakers in the outfield. The plough-team, normally of four horses or oxen supplied by as many neighbours, had to be supplemented by spade and mell, for the furrows were badly turned, and after the seed-bed had been prepared and the corn sown the seed was covered with shovelled soil. In order to facilitate drainage,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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LAZY-BEDS

241 476 in the days before field drains, the land was ploughed in ridges or 'lands' some ten or twelve feet wide, separated by trenches which provided the soil for burying the corn. Lazy-beds, that is spade-ridges for potatoes, made even heavier demands on many hands (Fig. 46). A writer in the 1830s describing the scene in the fields as neighbours worked together in teams, remarks that 'these congregations give vivacity to the labour . . . and occasionally an animated shout is set up by the whole body'.[1] The pooling of labour resources, 'sharing' or 'morrowing'—there are several terms for this co-operative system—is still by no means uncommon even if there is nowadays less need for it. It not only cements social relationships but provides the [461] stimulus of competitive effort. In the north of Ireland Protestant and Roman Catholic neighbours frequently share their labour in this way.

FIG. 46. Ploughed ridges, Co. Cavan, and spade ridges (lazy-beds), Co. Mayo.

241 By tradition the vital spring-time preparations are hedged around with tabus and omens. The ploughman should turn his horses with the sun, from left to right, to invoke its blessing on the work, and when yoking or unyoking his team his horses' heads should be facing south. Friday—which is regarded as a lucky day to begin all operations not needing iron—is the best day to begin sowing, and Good Friday is best of all. The sower going forth should begin his labours with the solemn words 'In the name of God', and he should give the horses a handful of corn from the seed-bag and throw a handful of earth over each horse's rump. Ashes from the turf fire were sometimes mixed with the seed for luck and there are traditions of the ashes of the midsummer bonfires being kept for this purpose.

In some parts of the country, chiefly in the south and east, the sower carried a straw seed-basket, and this is presumably

[1] Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 660.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

an English introduction since 'sowing baskets' are listed in the 241
medieval pipe-rolls of the Pale. In parts of the west, for example Mayo, a skin tray was used for sowing. But the usual Irish method is to sow from a linen sheet, kept specially for the purpose, which is tied round the sower. The seed is thrown with a one-handed cast, and it is not everyone's privilege to be allowed to undertake this important task. It calls for skill and concentrated care, for 'a missed bit' is a bad omen, foretelling death [787]
The seed should all be safely 'buried' by the beginning of May, and in Co. Armagh the first cuckoo's call was taken as a sign. [825]
To be found sowing corn after this was a mark of deep disgrace: the laggard was labelled 'a cuckoo farmer'.

With modern ploughs and improved drainage it is not often, save in the tiny fields of the west, that one comes across cereal crops sown in ridges, but the lazy-bed method is very generally employed for potatoes and other crops where the spade is used, though the great bulk of the potato crop is sown in drills. The potato ridge presumably derives its name, lazy-bed, from the fact that the sod under the ridge is not dug: the bed is built up on top of the grass with sods and soil dug from the trenches between the ridges. Not only does this method make full use of the humus and decaying grass but it prevents the sets from becoming waterlogged and rotting, for the whole bed is raised above the water-table. And the unbroken sod checks the downwash of plant nutrients. The trenches or furrows between the ridges provide open drains, and the lazy-beds are always carefully aligned with the slope of the land. Moreover, when the trenches are dug a second time for earthing the potatoes, they often go deep enough to penetrate the hard layer of iron pan which tends to form under heavily leached soils by the washing down of iron salts. This the old-fashioned plough could not do. Breaking the impermeable pan not only improves the drainage but provides minerals which are returned to the topsoil when the potatoes are earthed. The ridges in which potatoes are grown in their Andean homeland appear to be similar to the Irish lazy-beds, and tuber crops throughout the tropics are planted in ridges or mounds, but the ridge-technique is certainly older than the potato in Ireland. Clearly an efficient 241
shovel is a requirement in the construction of ridges of any 412

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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241 412 width, and it is here that the long-handled shovel comes into its own. In Britain such a shovel, which remains characteristic of south-west England, is of at least Roman antiquity. Specimens from the Roman period are, however, made entirely of wood, and several similar shovels of unknown age have been found in the Irish bogs (Fig. 47). In the west, down to famine times, the common shovel was made of a single piece of wood, usually willow, shod with a narrow strip of iron along the edge.[1]

FIG. 47. Long-handled shovels used for finishing the ridges. The wooden one was found at Glenoe, Co. Antrim.

241 [407] In some districts potato ridges are made with the plough, either with an ordinary lea-plough or else with a special paring-plough, fitted with a wide sock, which reproduces the special feature of the lazy-bed, that is, it does not break the grass of the bed but inverts a wide sod on to it from either side. In both instances the trench is then broken up by a plough with the mould board removed to provide earth for shovelling on to the ridges. The much wider corn ridges were normally made with the plough, except in those retarded mountainy districts where the plough seems never to have been adopted. Wheat was grown on narrower ridges, some five to seven feet wide. In Co. Londonderry it was customary to plough a 'rid-hint', that is, to take a second furrow out of the subsoil of the trench to facilitate drainage.[2] We can readily picture the arable land as eighteenth century observers saw it, with 'the strips piled high and the furrows scraped bare'. Lazy-beds vary in width according to local conditions and conventions and may be as little as

[1] W. R. Wilde, *Catalogue* (1857), 207.
[2] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir* (1814), 282.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

two feet or as much as eight feet wide, the furrows between them being from one to three feet in width. These dimensions and the different methods of building the ridges are intimately related to the depth and quality of the soil and to the types of spade used in each locality. Both the breadth and length of the ridges are commonly measured by the spade, and the term score-ground, applied in Co. Kerry to potato land let in conacre, that is from year to year, refers to twenty spade-lengths. When the crop is lifted the ridges are roughly levelled, and the following year they are split, that is the new furrow is dug in the middle of the old ridge. 241

It is not easy to describe the process of ridge-making with the spade and impossible to portray all the varieties of technique employed. It is back-breaking work, yet it is performed with an easy rhythm and a seemingly effortless and almost mechanical efficiency. In its simplest form the grassy strip which is to become the furrow is notched centrally down its length and the sods on each side are each undercut by two spade-thrusts and levered over on to the beds, where they lie flat, grass to grass, like closed hinges (Fig. 48). Normally the manure has already

FIG. 48. Lazy-beds.

been spread on the beds, and if the potato sets have also been planted all that is needed to complete the ridge is to break the earth of the furrow and shovel it on to the ridge. More commonly, however, the beds are fully prepared before the sets are planted, and it is the task of the women and children to follow the ridgemakers and thrust the potatoes into the sandwich of sods and manure. This is the method appropriate to the wetter [462] [857]

● 241 west, for it means that the ridges can be prepared beforehand as opportunity offers. What is known as the Munster mode of planting 'with the back of the spade' is to thrust the narrow spade through the inverted top sod and drop the set behind the blade as it is levered forward. On the average three rows of potatoes go to each bed, but there are also one- two- and four-set ridges.

A special wooden dibber known as the steeveen, kibbin (little-
241 spade) or gugger is employed for planting in Cavan, Leitrim
412 and Longford and may perhaps be correlated with the heavy loy as another archaic tool which has kept its hold in that area. The steeveen with its conical head (Fig. 48) will break through the toughest sod and open a way for the young sprouts. Typi-
[462] cally 'guggering' is woman's work, the children following,
[857] dropping in the sets and closing the hole with a fork or a mell. I like to think that the steeveen is descended from that universal tool of the women of humble cultivating societies, the digging or planting stick, remote ancestor of the spade. It is a plausible theory that the crops of wheat and barley sown by the first Irish cultivators were planted in this way in the ashes of burnt woodland on the mountainsides. Larger dibbers or 'stamps' with several teeth for planting corn were used until quite recently in some counties, for example Armagh (Fig. 49).

[407]

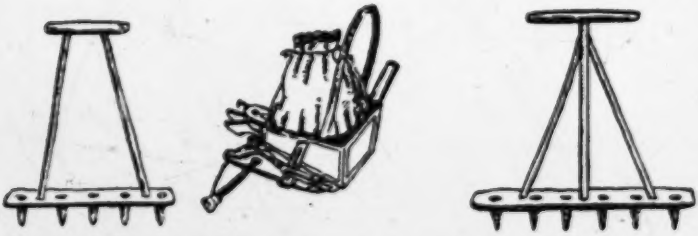

FIG. 49. Dibbers and (*centre*) sowing fiddle, Co. Armagh.

They are probably the descendents of specimens introduced by English 'planters' of the early seventeenth century. It is the
[539] dibberhole which is referred to in the rhyme which has outlived the action it once accompanied:

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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LAZY-BEDS

241 [539]

Four seeds in a hole,
One for the rook
One for the crow
One to rot
And one to grow.

The sowing fiddle which scatters seed broadcast and which may frequently be seen in use in some districts, for example Co. Down, is another introduction from England which has survived here longer than in its presumed home (Fig. 49). The fiddler makes a striking figure, seen from a distance, as he strides steadily up and down the field with his silent instrument; he must beware of changing his pace whether going uphill or downhill or the crop will grow in uneven strips. [407]

In many parts of the world burning of the vegetation is a necessary preliminary to shifting cultivation, and the use of fire in the preparation of the outfield for ridge cultivation therefore raises some interesting questions. We know that the burning of sods pared from rough pasture, sometimes called 'denshiring' from its reputed Devonshire home, was widely practised in Ireland down to the time of the famine. In the early nineteenth century nine-tenths of the potatoes grown in Co. Clare were planted on burnt land,[1] and a special skinning plough was used to pare off the sod. Elsewhere the graffan and flachter were put to a like purpose. From a description of Donegal in 1880 it seems that the drying and warming of the soil were regarded as more important than the fertilizing ashes: 'There is on the fresh bogs a process of heating resorted to in the Spring, i.e., the end of April and the first half of May: the piles of earth are never allowed to burn out into a fire but combustion is kept stopped up within the mass . . . the heated earth, not ashes, is scattered and the first crop put in.'[2] Where the land was of fairly good quality only the furrow sods were burnt. They were stood on edge to dry and then burnt in piles on the ridges, after which the ashes were spread and the potato sets planted in them, to be covered with earth dug from the trenches in the usual way.[3] The process of paring and burning seems to

[1] H. Dutton, *Clare* (1808), 36.

[2] *Report of the Royal Commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881* (1887), Appendix B, 137.

[3] R. Thompson, *Meath*, 272.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 have been greatly accelerated in the eighteenth century, thanks no doubt to the stimulus of contemporary English practice, but it may well be that the custom perpetuates the prehistoric method of clearing the land for cultivation. The fact that burning the land was prohibited by various Acts of Parliament in Ireland would point to its being another abominable native custom, like ploughing by the tail. We have referred to the graffan as a [412] skinning tool of ancient lineage, and may add that in Devon and Cornwall the implement used 'in the infancy of the art of paring'[1] was a mattock or adze which also served as a clod-breaker. The 'hack' of the Pennine country comes to mind here. The flachter, the Highland equivalent of the breast-plough which became the standard English paring instrument, may well be, in fact, the ancestor of the breast-plough, and I suggest that it came into use for skinning the outfield before burning and planting. We know that outfield cultivation of burnt-over forest lasted in France, in the Vosges country, into the eighteenth century, and the custom probably survived long enough in Ireland to be replaced by 'paring and burning'. This view is certainly in line with the other evidences of cultural continuity from prehistoric times. The customs of throwing the ashes of May Day and Midsummer bonfires into the fields and the mixing of peat ash from the hearth with the seed corn may be magical residues of the ancient practice of firing the land before sowing.

We shall describe in a later chapter the various methods of 241 carrying manure to the fields: here we may refer to another 412 simple implement which serves in the preparation of the ridges. This is the clod-breaking wooden mallet or mell, resembling a croquet mallet (Fig. 1). The subject of our drawing might have been taken straight from the Luttrell Psalter of the fourteenth century, but it is a mell which I saw in use in Co. 241 Armagh a few years ago. Hurling sticks served the same pur- 526 pose in some southern counties,[2] and one wonders whether the Gaelic game of hurling evolved in this way by playfully knocking a rounded stone among the rigs. Patrick Geddes amusingly, if erroneously, traced the origin of the game of golf back to the

[1] *Loudan's Encyclopaedia of Agriculture* (1831).
[2] W. Tighe, *Kilkenny* (1802), 182.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

idle Scots shepherd who with his crook knocked a white sea pebble into a rabbit hole among the dunes. And one recalls the theory that the game of cricket, with its 22-yard pitch, had its beginnings in the English openfields among ploughboys (players) and landlords' sons (gentlemen) who threw clods at the ploughman's marking sticks across the chain-wide acre strips completed at the end of a day's work. At any rate cricket has not strayed far from the English openfields and village greens, and in Ireland it clings to the larger towns and to the English-settled areas along the east coast. 241 526

Among other implements for preparing the soil the roller is probably of no great antiquity, though examples of wood or stone are of considerable interest. Alternatively, flat boulders or specially-built clod-slipes are driven over the ploughed ground, the driver being carried along on the platform thus provided and adding to its weight. I have seen the former in Co. Wexford and the latter in Co. Down. In the west the breaking of clods on the ridges is done by hand with a heavy rake (Fig. 1), and the 'harrows' which were formerly pulled by the horse's tail was a similar implement, a block of wood armed with a few wooden teeth. Even the larger harrows were a source of amusement to visiting farmers like Arthur Young, 'more fit to raise laughter than soil', as one observer put it. 241 412

The weeding and protection of the young corn were serious matters in the days when a patch of oats provided a family with its only cereal food. The tethering and herding of livestock were universal habits, and hand-weeding was another task for the young folk. O'Flaherty writes of Connacht: 'They go and lie prostrate or sit upon the corn, to weed it with their bare hands, leaving nothing behind but pure corn'.[1] Swedes are almost invariably weeded and thinned by hand. Thistles growing in corn or flax are pulled with special pincers or 'clips' made either of iron or more usually of wood, of a type which is illustrated in the Luttrell Psalter. The very similar French weeders known as Havre pincers were also used for catching eels. Docks were removed with a heavy forked spud (Fig. 50). There were other less arduous ways of inducing a bounteous crop. The custom of placing a sickle in the corn-field at the 241 [857] 241 412

[1]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241
[412]

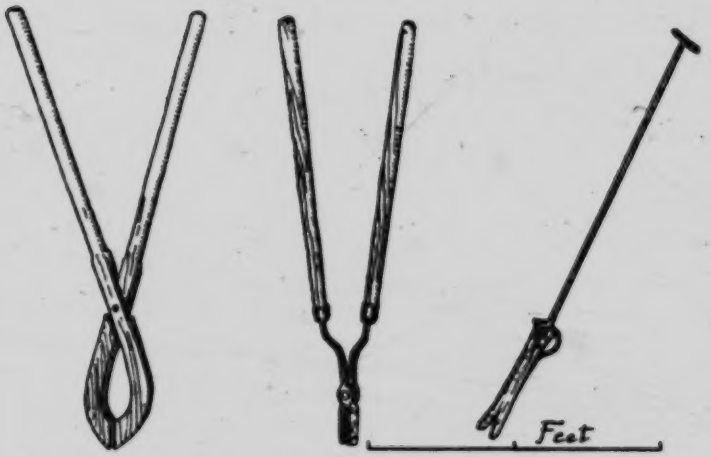

FIG. 50. Weeding 'clips', Antrim and Armagh, and iron dock-lifter, Antrim.

Midsummer festival was an easy way of showing the spirits of the corn what was expected of them. You might also hope to transfer ill-luck to someone else's crop by burying a dead animal,
[787] a piece of meat, or even an egg on his land. It would be worth while listening for the call of the cuckoo on the first day of July, for to hear it was a sign of a good harvest. Prognostications were so many and so easily procured that they apparently provided a fatalistic society with a ready means of avoiding steady work. In some parts of the country, docks, thistles and
[824] couch grass were apparently regarded as a good sign, because they kept the crop warm.[1]

[1] W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland*, 87.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XII

HARVEST

THANKS to the necessity of 'winning' (seasoning) hay and 241 corn in the fields before the crops are carried home, harvest 221 time drags on from late summer to the edge of winter, and the word 'harvest' as we have seen is a synonym for autumn. In [805] this pastoral Irish country the hay harvest is nowadays of vital importance in farm economy, yet I cannot find any evidence that hay played a significant part in the traditional Gaelic system of farming. It is the sickle, not the scythe, which figures in folk-lore and in place-names, and the scythe seems to [412] be a relative newcomer in most parts of the country. It requires a stone-free sward which would be hard to seek on hill farms. The business of hay-making was, I believe, of little importance until the economic changes of the agrarian revolution and the introduction of rotation grass. In the North the date of the first hay-cutting is fixed by a celebrated but relatively new festival, the Orangeman's day on the 12th of July. After hay comes flax, which is pulled from late July to mid-August, followed by wheat and barley in the areas where they are grown, by the corn harvest in September and the potato-lifting in October. In bad years hay may still be uncut in late August, the mountain corn is green even at the end of September, and late-cut corn sometimes stays stacked in the fields up to Christmas—indeed there are records of the grain being reaped after Christmas[1]—but traditionally all harvest work was completed by All-Hallows.

In Scandinavia it has been claimed that hay-making began in 246 pre-historic times as a result of the climatic deterioration which took place during the last millennium B.C. In Ireland with its

[1]For example in 1817. J. Donaldson, *Upper Frews*, 25.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222 461 described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful [482] on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

226 Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland [492] and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed [241] lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable [517] gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters, [462] when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2]T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[4]A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

[241] [241] [501] [197]

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 103 192

[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it; reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a six-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

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823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241 •
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *currach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [427] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

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size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

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as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers.

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained.

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden.

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by

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Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[436] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce,
[433] under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[439] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

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ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the mainland and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [601]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional subcultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241 •
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

158 751 It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with [291] [834] [753] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 827 [863] [825] Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. [562] [273] Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most [241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed 237 feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and 372 burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is 514 burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another 283 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the [462] secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

* 831 522 [154] Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore [123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

them with holdings in other parts of the country when in the latter much mountain land is included. The valuations, however, are exceedingly high, the full valuation of the Ennis district (which includes the Fergus plain) being £67,000 for 112,000 acres compared with the neighboring Killadysert district at £25,000 for 62,000 acres. 233

The second of the "ranching districts" or areas of large holdings practicing this type of agriculture is the region in the northern part of the county called "the hills of Burren" (the Ballyvaughan area). This is a limestone country which provides rich winterage for cattle. Consequently land there is very valuable to the rancher who has to winter his store cattle. Grass grows there fairly richly throughout the winter among the limestone crags, and the cattle are allowed to forage for themselves. In several cases, farmers own large holdings of 200 acres and over in each of the two areas. They drive their cattle down from the winterages in April and back again in November.

Certain other farms of large size, and especially in rich alluvial areas such as Clarecastle and Newmarket-on-Fergus, make extensive use of tillage, primarily of oats. In other areas such as Tubber, Broadford, and Feakle, mountain land is given over to sheep. 233 243

County Clare, in fact, shows a fourfold division into sections differentiated partly geographically, partly by the different utilization of the soil. "West Clare" includes all the peninsula west and south of the ridge culminating in Mount Callan and cutting off the Fergus drainage from the Atlantic. Here the holdings are predominantly small, and the more generalized economy is common. "North Clare" covers the country of the "hills of Burren." "East Clare" contains both the rough country of Feakle and Broadford, where small mountain holdings approximate the conditions of West Clare, and the Tulla and Quin districts, which with "Mid-Clare" and "South Clare" cover the alluvial plain of the 311 471

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142
291
243

CORN HARVEST

[frontispiece]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 Fleure writes of Wales, another section of "The Celtic Fringe": "the isolated rural communities are, of themselves, poor in material resources, and their efforts have, therefore, not until recently gone into great buildings or sculpture or painting or orchestral music, all demanding a large equipment. Rather have they found their scope in poetry and oratory and song, arts in which the poorest labourer can often compete on fairly equal terms with his richer neighbours. In this way, and in others as well, poverty has been a safeguard of an intensely democratic feeling as well as a help towards the survival of the language and its associations." In the field of human export, too, Ireland's products are scholars, doctors and poets as well as spade-workers.

243 262 114 There are, as we shall try to show, many other features of Irish life which can be related to the pastoral tradition. Because of its value as fodder and for reasons of soil and climate, oats is the "corn" crop of Atlantic Europe. Apart from the value of oats as food for livestock, oatmeal in various forms has been and still is largely consumed, and its baking into thin pan bread over an open fire instead of in an oven has helped to preserve the prehistoric open hearth with its varied 114 and interesting gear and traditions. Ignoring the literary and archæological evidence, many writers have assumed that the inhabitants of ancient Ireland were entirely pastoral and nomadic. On this topic much solemn nonsense has been written, and it gained wide currency because it seemed both to condemn the Irish and to corroborate the prevailing view of man's cultural evolution from hunter to agriculturist through a stage of pastoral nomadism. It now seems certain that man learnt the elements of cultivation at least as soon as he learnt how to domesticate animals, and in the diffusion of these ideas through Europe from the Near East, Ireland received the germs of both sources of food-production at about 114 the same period, let us say 4,000 years ago. There are many 221 signs that in Ireland's dark and middle ages cattle played an even greater role in rural life than in earlier prehistory and later history, but at all times the unit of the fixed family

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 10]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

248 the purest of linen—the story has often been told—and though the scutching mill with its busy waterwheel is an intimate part of the wintry countryside, the flax and tow soon pass into the factories. But we cannot omit a reference to the picturesque oblong stacks "sleighs" or "rays" in which the flax is built after being taken from the dam and dried. And we have referred in another place (Chapter 7), to the "shows" or waste which comes from the scutching mill.

243 But the most important crop throughout Ireland, and as a rule the most difficult to save because it comes late in the season, is oats. September is the harvest month, but in the hills October frequently sees the corn uncarried and even uncut. It is on record that in 1817—in Co. Armagh—"the grain was not reaped in many places until after Christmas." [422] Often the equinoctial gales play havoc with the stooks, and in the days of small scattered rundale plots it was customary for each holder to tie his sheaves with a proprietary knot so that he might claim his own.

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412

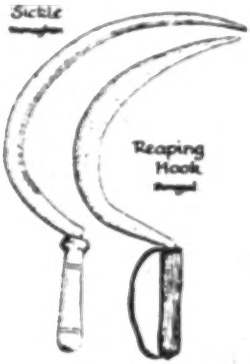

Fig. 53.

Both the toothed hook or sickle (Fig. 53) and the smooth "scythe hook" are used in reaping: the reaping machine and the self-binder have not reached many parts. Sickles are of several varieties, classified in the catalogues as round,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

square, crane and "Sligo." The steel edge of its narrow blade is notched on the underside, the notches radiating so that they all cut at an angle of about 70 degrees. 243 412

It is much more difficult to use than the smooth hook; the straw must be held firmly in one hand and sawn through with a pulling motion. Some writers have indulged in idealized pictures of hand reaping which bear little relation to the cruel toil and "terrible strain" more faithfully and unforgettably portrayed by Richard Jefferies in his "Field and Hedgerow." There was no respite for reapers or binders: "Down with the head and up with the tail" was the descriptive phrase which I was given in the Glens of Antrim. In some parts, however, the reaper knelt down on one knee. Women and children generally did the binding. The corn was cut before it was fully ripe, "between green and gold," and as an illustration of the interdependence of the old ways it is worth noting that such straw was much more suitable for good thatching than the dry straw from the reaper. The old-fashioned scythe (see Frontispiece), not yet entirely displaced by the new style, was straight-handled. A short bladed tool, known in Co. Antrim as the "bramble scythe," is used for cutting coarse vegetation or mowing hay around bushes.

Corn stooks vary greatly in the number of sheaves they contain and in the methods of construction. They are often tied at the top with a straw band, and cap-sheaves are frequently seen. In wet districts the sheaves are later built into small round stacks, "barts" or "huts," until the time comes to carry them home. On small farms this is still done on the back, using a burden rope (Chapter 14), but the rick-lifter is also employed. Or the sheaves are piled high on ponies so that they resemble walking stacks. At harvest time two-ply twists of straw are worn in the button-hole (Fig. 114): they are part of the ceremonial of harvest time. The custom is general in north-eastern Ireland but I am not aware of it from other parts: it may be a feature of the Plantation. More widespread and fundamental are the practices, now mere 243 [482]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 survivals, associated with the cutting of the last sheaf—the "churn" or the "Cailleach" (Chapter 19).

Corn stacks are more varied in shape than haystacks and need better protection from weather and from vermin. [824] Sprigs of apple-mint (*M. arvensis*) may be thrown through the sheaves to keep away mice. The stone stack-stands or staddels, called "hovels," are a picturesque feature of the stackyard in some districts. With their steep tops rising above the house clusters, the golden corn stacks turn the little Irish villages into African kraals, or in the fields one may count as many as 30 round stacks in a row, rising against the sky up the hillside. Then the whole countryside seems fuller than usual. New colours and odours meet one on all sides, and the horses as they pass give off the sharp smell which comes from crunching the fresh oats. The country smiths used to make a small light fork or "pike," fitted with a long handle, for throwing the last sheaves high up (Fig. 66). The stacks are thatched with rushes, twisted into bundles known as "stapples" which are pushed into the straw.

[285]
[415]

Fig. 54.

241 We cannot touch on the methods of harvesting and stacking the other cereal crops, wheat, barley and rye, but a word must be said in conclusion on the last harvest of the year—the root crops. Although turnips and the new sugar beet are important in some areas, it is the potato crop which means most to the peasant. All available hands are in the fields, gathering the precious food-supply into wicker baskets or boxes (Figs. 54 and 55); and the school children are given

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

281 across, are commonly arranged in patterns having, for example,
415 the maker's initials and the date left unpierced. A deeper tray used for carrying corn or for fruit-picking is known as a "dallan." Then there is the meal sieve, which has fine perforations, for sifting the coarse skins (meal seeds) from the oatmeal. Similar to this is the buttermilk sieve with which,
285 before the adoption of the hair-sieve, the small particles of
415 butter were strained from the buttermilk. A milk-strainer made of birch bark folded into a cone and filled with straw is referred to in a 17th century account quoted by Mr. E. MacLysaght. In Tory, according to Mr. T. Mason, the wight is "composed simply of sheepskin with a twisted straw rope forming the rim."

The corn sieve, for getting out dust and dirt, and the corn riddle (Fig. 71), for separating bits of straw and "hairy

[281]

Fig. 71.

tails," consist of interwoven splits of ash or bog-fir attached to a rim of the same material. The only difference between them is that the mesh of the former is one-eighth of an inch, of the latter perhaps ¼ inch, though it may vary for different kinds of grain. Efficient riddling is a difficult and nowadays rather rare art. I have not come across sieves of rushes or split willow, but it is very likely that they may be found.

243 The corn riddle and the winnowing tray lead us back to
412 the thrashing floor in the barn. Here we will probably see a flail hanging on the wall. The sound of the flail is by no means rare in Ireland, for in outlying districts the small farmer has no other means of thrashing. The three parts of the flail are the helve or "hand-stave," a straight stick of any light wood such as ash or larch, the shorter and heavier swingel or beater, called in Ireland the "souple" (generally made of hazel, occasionally of holly or birch) and the flail-joint, hanging or
[284] "mid-kipple," which may be a sheep- or goat-skin thong, a

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

 243 412

length of flax, or an eel skin. The methods of attaching the hanging to the hand-stave and souple vary, as will be seen [284] from a random selection of drawings (Fig. 72). The joint

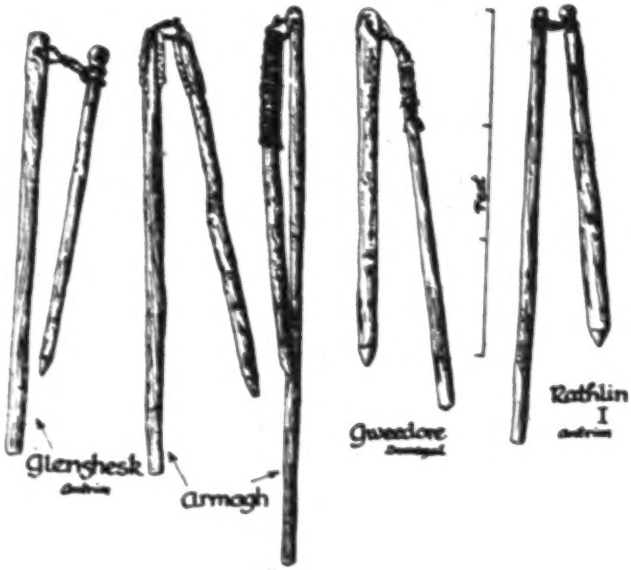

Fig. 72.

shown in the Armagh flail (left), resembles a common English style, but it occurs as far west as Galway. Varied too, are the proportions between the component parts and the methods of swinging the flail. Thus in Antrim the souple is flung round the head while in Donegal it is kept to the side of the body. On fine days the thrashing may take place out of doors, but the usual place is " between doors " in the barn or even in the kitchen, for the opposite doors create a draught which carries away the dust. A besom of heather or of dried kale flower-stalks keeps the barn floor clean. [824]

One of the most interesting and varied and probably one 285 of the oldest crafts practised by countryfolk is the making of

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, 415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of [491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a side-ways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies [243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

For water transport there are a good many boats of various 501 descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

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[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The spinning-wheel and hand-loom are the same as those commonly used on the west coast, the former, as usual, having no treadle. 172 [283]

Querns are still in use, and in connection with them the boran, or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, used for screening the meal. [252] [412]

Grain is still winnowed by shaking it in a sieve in a strong wind. [243]

The method of washing clothes is the same as that customary in Connemara, the clothes being folded, laid in the water of a lake or pool, and beaten with a club or paddle. [296]

The tailor, when making clothes, does not measure his customers with a tape, but takes all his measurements on one sheet of paper, marking the lengths by cutting notches out of the edge. [294]

The curraghs, which are still in use, are of the usual form; they are rapidly going out of fashion, however. [501]

The anchor used for small boats is a stone, not fixed in a wooden clamp, as in Clare and Aran, but having a groove around it for the rope.

As mentioned previously, the apparatus used for the shark-fishing is very rude and primitive.

2. *Antiquities.*—Inishbofin is not very rich in architectural antiquities, and the few that still remain are being rapidly destroyed; some ruins which were standing in the first half of the present century have altogether disappeared, and the others are much shattered. 172

In Inishshark, also, the buildings have sustained a great injury.

It does not lie within my province to enter upon any detailed description of the ruins; but I desire, in the following notes (extracted almost *verbatim* from my Field Note-book), to direct the attention of archæologists to the buildings of interest in these islands which are being rapidly blotted out of existence. The number and nature of these have been described by the late Mr. O'Donovan, Mr. Hardiman, Mr. G. H. Kinahan, and others.

In the account of their present condition given below, they are arranged in the order in which they are described by Mr. Hardiman.[1]

Inishbofin.—(1). St. Colman's church, in Knock townland, built in A.D. 667, is in a very ruinous state, and the interior is filled with rough gravestones and weeds, and in a small recess near the east window is a pile of crania and broken bones. In the enclosure around the church the foundations of the cells (cloghans (?)) of the abbey, or monastic colony, may still be traced, though with difficulty, but the

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLATE 4

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243

"Lashing" rye, Aran Islands. Note the woven belt (criss) supporting the hand-woven tweed trousers.

[facing p.49]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 6

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516
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41.

1. Shearing oats with the toothed sickle, Co. Antrim.

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342
351
243
412

2. Thrashing oats with flails, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 97]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Donegal

PLATE 7

243
133

Winnowing oats with a skin wight, Co. Donegal.

[facing p. 112]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

farms today. The scythed grass is shaken out by hand and 246
spread thinly over the field. When partly dry it is gathered into windrows and lapped or coiled, that is folded against the leg over the forearm into small 'lap-cocks' resembling a lady's muff, the hole permitting the wind to pass through and the smooth rounded top allowing the rain to run off. Like all practised hand-work it is a job carried through with apparently mechanical indifference, but the old hands will take care to ensure that the laps are properly made and laid down so that they are aligned with the prevailing wind. Even on rich lowland farms the hay will be 'lapped' if it is first season's grass grown, as in Ulster, for the seed, which is a valuable export. Alter- [439]
natively seed grass is tied in sheaves and 'gaited' like flax or stooked like a cereal crop (Fig. 51).

[248]
[243]

FIG. 51. Laps of hay, gaits of flax and stook of wheat, with 'hudders'.

When dry the laps are shaken open and built into small cocks or lumps which are later enlarged into hand cocks. Or if the hay is in good condition it is made, chiefly in the drier parts of the country, into larger ricks or tramp cocks which are trodden down firmly and secured with a hay-rope (Fig. 52, 10). The process of hay-making is thus, like the winning of turf (Chapter XIV), one of gradually increasing the size of the pile as the material is dried by sun and wind. The cocked hay is left standing for some weeks in the fields to season, so that it seems to the English visitor, as Arthur Young remarked, that the Irish are generally two months 'making or marring their hay'.[1] The explanation given is the necessity of avoiding overheating, but English critics say that it is the farmers who dislike getting overheated! A more charitable view is that by the

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 246.

 [Text continues on p. 155]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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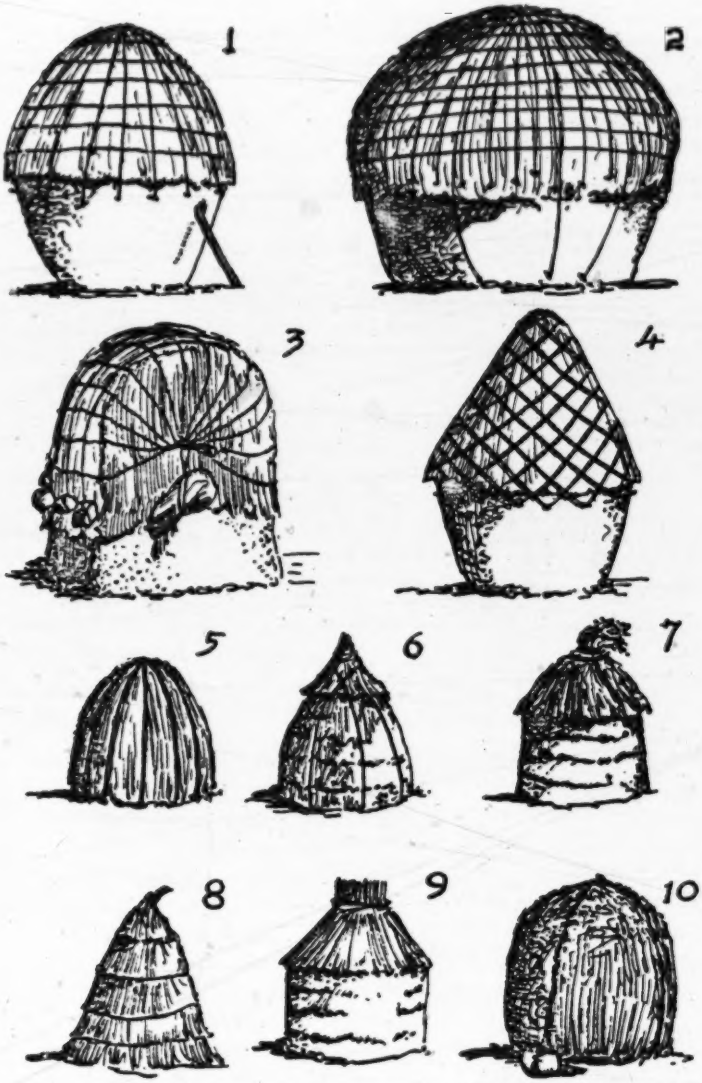

FIG. 52. Stacks and huts roped in many patterns. (1) Cavan (flax). (2) Cork (hay). (3) Mayo (hay). (4) Antrim (oats). (5) Donegal (hay). (6) Donegal (oats). (7) Down (oats). (8) Down (seed hay). (9) Cavan (oats). (10) Down (tramp-cock of hay).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay 243
to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century 412
there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the 178
good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps
of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on
the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that
conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-
growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing
motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such
notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of
the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East.
The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the
rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland
there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened
to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the
blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal
possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with [422]
reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed [426]
directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then
picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects,
may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for
bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should 248
be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so
onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When
grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers
have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the
stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the
roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands
are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to [476]
thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working
together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the
evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the
stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully
put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the
stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the
beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will
separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in
diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist [284]

HARVEST

243 Corn harvest did not begin until a certain set day which differed in various parts of the country, and the appointed day was a time of much excitement. The following description of [171] the Reaping Blessing in the Scottish Highlands would probably apply to Ulster, though I have not found a record of it in Ireland. 'The day the reaping began was one of commotion and ceremonial. The whole family repaired to the field dressed in their best . . . the father of the family took his sickle and, facing the sun, cut a handful of corn. Putting it three times sunwise round his head, the Reaping Blessing was sung'.[1] We know that in Ireland it was the custom for the first sheaves cut to be scutched or lashed, that is the grain was beaten out without using the flail. The winnowed grain was parched over the fire, ground in a quern and boiled in time to make a breakfast for the reapers.[2] This ceremonial breakfast undoubtedly preserves archaic practices.

Reaping with hook or sickle is by no means uncommon on little hill farms where fields are small and uneven, but the days of the great 'gatherings' are no more, when down to late in the last century as many as seventy men might have been seen at work. Most of the lore of these reaping boons has passed away unrecorded, and we get only glimpses of the terrible strain imposed on the toilers and the compensating gaieties. The [558] pressure was most severe when to the rivalry between workers was added the drive of a pace-setter, for it was a mark of disgrace not to keep pace. In Ulster the leader of the boon was 'stubble hook', so called because his ridge was the first of the 'set', next the stubble. (A set was the number of ridges equal to the number of reapers in the boon). The driver, called 'corn-land', took the rig or land next to the standing corn, and between the two the other reapers on their ridges would strive to keep a straight line. 'A bad shearer', runs the Ulster saying, [539] 'always gets a big rig and a blunt hook'. But a spirited reaper, I have been told, 'would die upon the rig before he would suffer "corn-land" to pass him'. Between each set a rest was taken at the 'land-end' and it was an interlude of 'crack and courting'. If we may judge from a Scottish custom, any visiting

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928).
[2] *Béaloideas*, 10, 295.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

stranger was accosted and held down on the ground, a woman 243
would lie on top of him and another woman would tumble them over.[1] Such horse-play was more than a consequence of the high spirits of harvest, the 'rural saturnalia' described by Richard Jefferies in *The Toilers of the Field*. Displays of the rites and symbols of fertility were closely bound up with the bounty of harvest.

There were many variations in the methods of reaping, or shearing—to use the old term—depending on the type of hook, which might be smooth or notched, on the width of the ridges, [412] the condition of the crop and so on. The toothed sickle is probably the older implement, going back to the time when iron was a new metal and could not be given a sharp steel edge. Whereas the smooth or scythe hook is wielded with a slashing cut which may spill the grain, especially of rye, if the crop is ripe and the edge not kept very keen, the sickle is pulled towards the shearer, who holds each bunch as it is cut, pressing it back into the standing corn. As a rule three handfuls or 'loghters' go to each sheaf, the bands of which are prepared beforehand and laid out for the reaper to place the loghters on them straight from the hook (Pl. 6, 1).

The term shearing implies that the crop was cut close to the ground as wool is clipped from a sheep, and indeed urban officials have been known to confuse the operations. Pride was taken in a stubble-field that looked as if it had been shaved. 'Low and clean' was the injunction, 'cut it down to the living earth!' 'Down with the head and up with the tail' were my instructions when I lent a hand at harvest in the Glens of [516] Antrim. Mercifully one worked uphill: where the land was level the reaper would go down on one knee, wearing a knee-pad. If the ridges were wide there might be two shearers and one binder to each ridge, the shearers working from the furrows on each side, the depth of which minimized the amount of stooping required. A 'crack hooksman' could reap and tie fifty twelve-sheaf stooks a day, or say an Irish acre (= 1⅔ English acres). It is necessary to have worked with a gang of reapers to appreciate the relentless pace of the work and at the same time the care with which every operation is carried out. There must be no

[1] M. Banks, *British Calendar Customs*, Scotland, I (1937).

243 heads of corn at the wrong end, or they would be missed in thrashing with the flail, and for the same reason the ears of the straw band-knot should lie towards the top of the sheaf. The sheaves should be laid with their butts to the wind, for these need most drying. The bands should be tied with nice judgement, tight but not over-tight: one should not be able to put the toe of one's boot under the band when one stands on the butt of the sheaf.

[461] As in all farming operations conducted in traditional ways, music and magic to ease the labour were part of the scene. There were shearing songs to match the rhythm of the sickle, [825] and its efficiency was improved by keeping a fly or other insect imprisoned in the handle; perhaps its incessant activity was meant to speed up the work. Another strange belief was that [777] luck followed the reaper who carried a child on his back. The world of magic and fairy was close by at harvest time: it was believed that the top grain (pickle) of every stalk of corn was empty because it had been taken by the fairies and was their due. The sheaf had its share of lore, too, related possibly to its [754] semblance of human shape. A curse could be worked by sticking pins into the joints of the straw, and the sheaf might be properly waked and buried so that as it withered the object of the curse would decline. Stooks with their 'hudders' (Fig. 51) (hooding sheaves) also take on human forms, and I have known various terms for these large stooks applied as nicknames to broad-based country women. 'The last sheaf' also is known as the cailleach or hag.

Beliefs and customs connected with the last sheaf are legion and find their counterparts in many parts of the world. 'Winning the churn' was an incentive to the reaper, for good luck attended those who had their rigs sheared quickly if only because they avoided the ill-luck of being last. Stories are told of rigs being left unclaimed and uncut because their owners feared to incur 'the famine of the farm', of having the hag to feed until next harvest. The basis of this belief was that the last sheaf was sometimes hidden overnight in the corn of lazy farmers, who would watch at nights and reap by moonlight to avoid what was an omen of misfortune or death.

[787] The last handful of standing corn, selected for the purpose,

was twisted into a three-stranded plait. Standing back at a 243
mark, the reapers threw their spinning hooks at it in turn until
it was severed and 'stretched'. At this a triumphant shout was 787
raised. The cailleach was sometimes 'waked' before it was lifted: the 'corpse' was hung round the neck of the triumphant slayer, who was guest at the subsequent 'churn' (the harvest feast and dance) and who was fated to be the reaper who would be first married. It was, perhaps, more usual for the cailleach
to be put around the neck of the master or mistress of the house. 243
From the threat of being hanged by it they would purchase their freedom by providing the churn supper, for which special food was prepared. There are many variant practices but it is clear that they all turn on the same themes, the spirit of the corn and the luck of a speedy harvest. In some districts the cailleach was known as the hare, and the cry which kept the toiling shearers to their task was; 'We'll put the hare out of it today!'

It was customary to hang the churn in the kitchen, either over the door, on the dresser, or about the chimney hearth, and to keep it until the following harvest, when it was given to the cows. Or it might be fed to the horses on the first day of ploughing. In some houses the last sheaf was preserved year after year, and I have seen specimens half a century old. One of these was dressed with coloured papers, hinting that there was formerly more ceremony connected with the last sheaf than has survived. These dressed cailleachs figure in the harvest festival decoration in some churches in Co. Armagh, where also miniature corn ricks surmounted by a harvest knot are displayed, the Church thus having won over and preserved the pagan symbols of harvest (See Tailpiece).

Harvest knots or bows are decorative twists of straw which 243
were worn by the harvesters, and are still quite commonly 301
carried by young men at harvest time in some districts (Plate 13, 1). Girls would wear them in their hair, boys in their coats,
and in former times they were exchanged by the sexes as a sign [584]
of mutual attachment. They are made in a fine plait of two straws tied into loops or interlaced, those worn by the girls having the ears of the corn left on. The best examples are made from wheat, and some exceptionally fine specimens are made from

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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243 grasses and flax. The many practical uses of straw will be
[301] described in a later chapter and its employment in fashioning various kinds of dolls, ceremonial dresses and masks, for example on St. Briget's Day. Certain protective charms were also made of oat-straw, for example the Bratóg Brighde (St.
789 Briget's rag or mantle) worn by the fishermen of Tory Island
243 as a protection against storms. Here the explanation may lie in the power of wind over bits of loose straw which by association gives the straw the secret of controlling the wind. This is the basis of the phrase used in Co. Cavan to describe something
[195] which circulates quickly: 'going round like the straws'. It was
[821] the custom to ward off storms by running with a handful of straws from one farm to another.

With corn, as with hay and turf, the harvesting proceeds by
243 building up stooks and ricks of increasing size according to the nature of the crop and the weather conditions. Little stooks (footings) of four or six sheaves are the first stage in the construction of the twelve-sheaf stooks (ten standing and two inverted hooding sheaves) which, however, are generally confined to wheat (Fig. 51). It is the general practice to build the little stooks of corn, after one or two weeks' seasoning, into hand-stacks which are of a convenient size to make a load for the rick-shifter, or for the tractor-lifter which is replacing it. The shapes of these miniature stacks, varying from one district to another, are often extremely picturesque, and their serried rows marching up the hillsides give the autumn fields a populated appearance. Their many names (hut, shig, bart, adag, and so on) would indicate that they are no novelty, and these little field stacks are as characteristic of Wales and Scotland as they are of Ireland (Fig. 52). A picturesque variety of hay-stack, commonly seen in Connacht, is the sheep-cock, built around a tall pole which prevents the cock from collapsing when eaten away at the base.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Armagh

PLATE 13

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301
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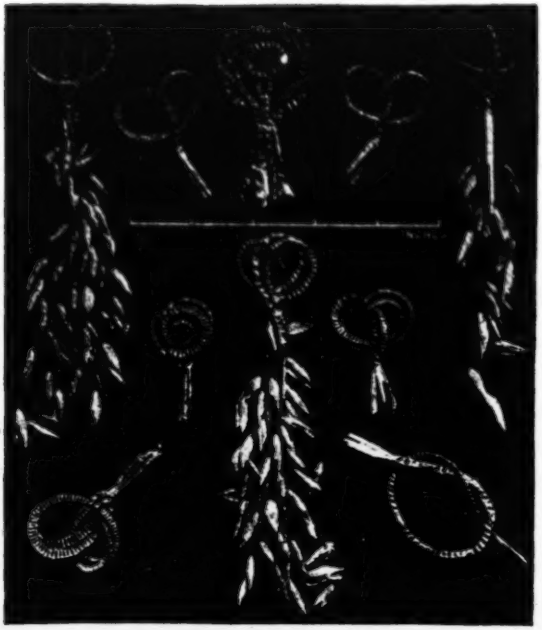

1. Harvest knots, Co. Armagh.

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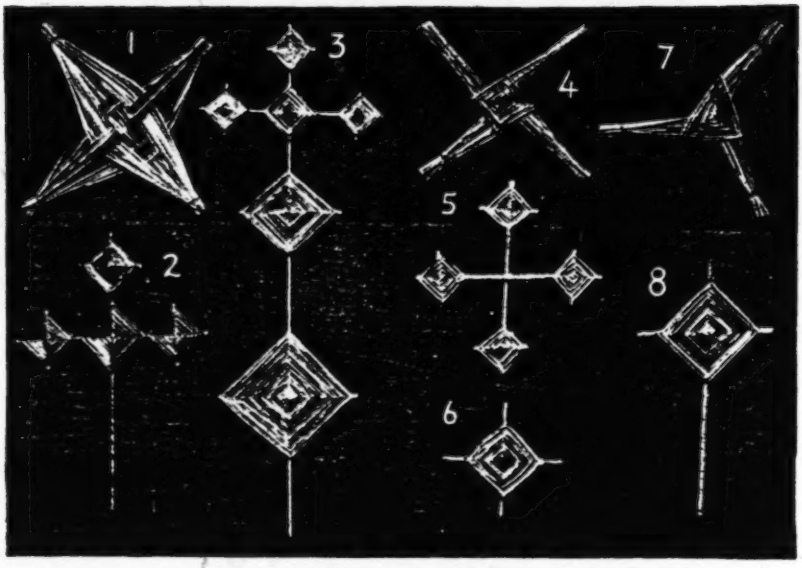

2. Bridget's Crosses, Co. Armagh.

[facing p. 192]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

as the work of specialists (Fig. 71). The pampooties of the Aran Islands deserve mention here. Made of calfskin, but formerly of sealskin,[1] these one-piece shoes were once doubtless widely worn and have kept their hold in Aran because of their suitability for wet rocks and frail curraghs. The rivlins of Scotland and the Highland *bròganan* were very similar and I have seen rawhide shoes of the same type from Norway and the Pyrenees. They all have the hair outside and are secured by lacing back and front.

The wight serves both to hold corn, in filling a sack for instance, and to convey peats from the stack to the fireside: perforated it becomes a meal-sieve (boran) for sifting the skins (seeds) from oatmeal, or a buttermilk sieve for taking out the last grains of butter from the churn. The winnowing tray or dallan is a larger version, and it, too, may be perforated to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken out on to a spread cloth. There are, up and down Ireland, many bold windy Shilling Hills where the 'shellings' (husks) were, in past times, separated from the grain in this way (Pl. 7).

This brings us to the flail and its 'hanging' (the mid-kipple, hooden, gad, middling, or tug) which was commonly a thong of cow-, horse-, sheep, or goat-skin, though sometimes of rabbit- or eel-skin or a cord of flax. The flail, the proverbial 'stick-and-a-half', consists of a three to four feet long helve or hand-staff, usually made of ash, and a shorter beater, swingle or souple of hazel or holly. There are two principal methods of 'hanging' the parts together. In one variety, the tie passes through two leather caps lashed over the ends (Fig. 72, 1). This appears to be a variant of the common English flail-hanging, where, however, the cap is made of steamed ash or yew and there is no linking piece. Its distribution in Ireland, down the east coast, points to derivation from England. Modifications, occurring as far west as Donegal (Fig. 72, 1*a*, *b*), have the linking thong passing through a hole made either in the helve or in the beater. Kevin Danaher states that the capped flail is characteristic of central Europe: it is believed to have first appeared in north France in the early Middle Ages.[2] The

[1] O'Flaherty, *H'Ier Connaught*, 59 (footnote).
[2] *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 60 (1955), 6–14.

412 other method of hanging has a somewhat peripheral distribu-
171 tion in Europe (Scandinavia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Switzerland,
284 the Pyrenees) and also in Ireland, and as its simplicity as well as its distribution suggest, it is the older type. The tie passes around grooves cut in both hand-staff and souple (Fig. 72, 2) though again there are variants, one end of the tie, for example, being passed through a hole (Fig. 72, 2*a*). The grooved hanging, it is claimed by its users, is superior to the capped because the join is almost universal and there is no need to turn the halve in the hand when flailing. The holed fastening may be the most ancient method of all: it is found in parts of Atlantic Europe and the Baltic lands, but in Ireland is apparently restricted to Ulster (Pl. 6, 2).

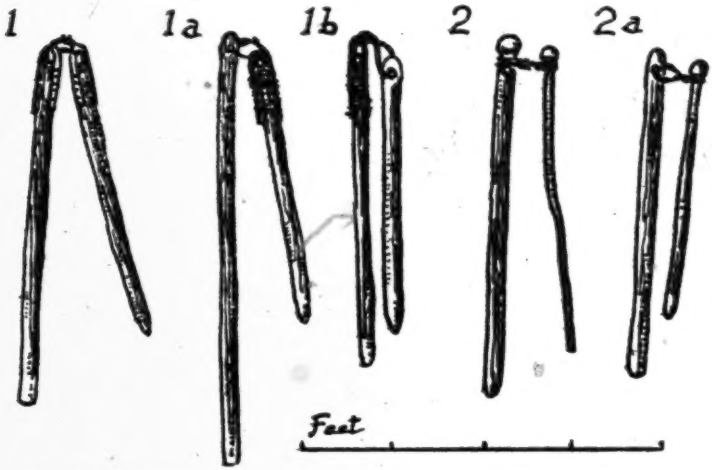

FIG. 72. Flails. (1) Co. Meath. (1*a*) Co. Armagh. (1*b*) Co. Donegal. (2) Co. Cavan. (2*a*) Co. Antrim.

243 Ancient and rudimentary as the flail is, requiring for its
412 making no tool save a sharp knife, there are some thrashers
171 who dispense with it, 'scutching' the corn instead with a stick or 'lashing' it over a barrel, a stone or a board (Plate 4). Many a small farmer in the north of Ireland harvests his seed grass in this way. The scutching method is used also in the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Pyrenees and in Africa, but the flail, apparently spreading 243 ●
through western Europe in post-Roman times, in time replaced 412
it almost everywhere, to be in turn displaced by the mechanical 171
thrasher. Thus the sound of the flail has almost gone from the countryside. The best thrashing place is the floor of the barn above the byre, with its opposite doors to draw the wind and 343
advertise the flailer's industry. Such barns, however, were not 243
built outside the planted districts before agrarian changes and 171
improvements spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ireland knows nothing of the carefully built thrashing floors of England and Scandinavia. At best on the farms lacking a barn a thrashing board was sometimes kept, a square wooden platform raised a few inches off the ground. A good thrashing floor should bend to meet the flail, and in Scandinavia, for instance, great pains were taken in the old days to construct floors which would make the flails sing. They were occasionally strung with wires, and to magnify the echo of clay floors a horse's skull was buried under each corner.[1] It has been thought that this purpose was secondary to the luck it was hoped would follow from what was originally a foundation sacrifice. In Ireland [777]
traditions of the burying of horses' skulls under the floors of dwelling houses are both widespread and well authenticated. The usual explanation again is that this gives the house an echo, but it is also said to be lucky, and Sean O'Sullivan concludes that the custom of burying skulls began as a substitute for foundation sacrifices.[2] In Armagh 'the frontal bones of a [825]
horse's head are regarded as being peculiarly sonsie; they were often buried in barn floors and under the thresholds of dwelling houses for that reason.'[3]

In time, the expressed object came to be to magnify the music 243
of the singing flails as well as that of the ballad-singing and 789
dancing before the fire. The space between the doors of the old style kitchen-byre, it will be recalled, was a favourite thrashing place in times past. The Briget's Crosses above the door would have blessed the thrashing as well as the cattle. It

[1]Albert Sandkelf, *Singing Flails* (Folklore Fellows Communications, Helsinki, No. 136), (1949).
[2]Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 45–52.
[3]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 77.

243 789 is worth noticing that symbols in the form of a swastika, but including also circles, pentagrams and horses, were formerly cut as protective devices in the beams of barns in Scandinavia. Some of the designs are reminiscent of the art of the Bronze Age.

243 An Irish verse giving the four essentials of a good thrashing, collected in Co. Armagh, runs in translation:

[539]

A hand-staff of holly,
A souple of hazel,
A single sheaf,
And a clean floor.

This is where the besom of heather or bent comes in: it is still preferred to the sweeping-broom for a clay floor or to get into the joins of boards or cobbles. Thrashing was a daily job, carried out on well-run farms night and morning before the cattle were fed. It was held that the cattle throve best on freshly thrashed oats, and the storage of grain would anyhow have been difficult where there were no barns.[1] For this reason, too, the level 'street' in front of the house, or even the public road was often the most suitable floor available. The thrashing was usually done on a strong linen sheet. Publicity as well as a steady echoing beat seem to have been the desired aims. Every-
[555] where prestige has attached to a noisy thrashing, and partly no doubt for self-aggrandisement a solitary thrasher would beat with his feet to make the noise of two. Everywhere too the
[533] sound of the flail has been turned into jingles and rustic rhymes. They did not accompany the work itself because it was too noisy and too exhausting to allow talking or singing. The flails' beaters made their own merry music; was it, one wonders, originally intended to drive away evil spirits from the precious food supply?

222 824 In this chapter we have confined ourselves to some of the things that were made at home out of materials that lay to hand. To describe the utilization of all the lesser plants that have

[343] [1]Mr. A. T. Lucas, however, has described traditional outdoor granaries, now restricted to west Cork, constructed of thick straw ropes, which when completed resemble round stacks (*Gaverin*, I (1956), 2–20). Mr. V. B. Proudfoot calls my attention to the similar 'corn bykes' of Caithness (*P.S.A.S.* (1932), 136–7).

241 for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted
311 to one crop.

With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the
234 small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

234 The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with
246 those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

233 The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he
[244] cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

172 ages. It was probably in the late Bronze Age that oats, introduced perhaps from Spain, found their place as the leading corn-crop of Ireland and Highland Britain, better adapted than wheat to the damp conditions. The working of "bog iron-ore"—found in concretions in swampy places—is attested from the early Iron Age, and the traditions of the country smith have their origins in this period. Man's attack on the woodlands was accelerated with the possession of iron axes and adzes. We are not able to say how far Roman culture and novelties influenced the pattern of Irish life. Was poultry their contribution, and what of the cabbage, the only common Irish vegetable before the potato came in? Nor must we omit the contributions of the continental contacts maintained throughout the early Christian period, above all in improved architecture and the fine arts as well as in traditions of gardening and orchard-planting. Their influence can be seen, no doubt, in the relatively high standards of living and cultivation around places like Armagh. And it is to the early Christians and the Vikings that Ireland owes its earliest cities. From the Vikings, too, much was borrowed in matters of boat-building and metal-working. Since Norman times the contacts with Britain have steadily increased.

175 ●244 But we have yet to record the import of most significance for Irish peasant life—the introduction of the potato from the New World. The part that this crop has played in the social history of the island is a subject which calls for full investigation. While it gave bulky yields as food for man and beast, its cultivation brought about a decline in crops such as rye and beans. Thriving on a minimum of attention, its social influence has not been altogether for good: its effects on native habits might be compared with those of another New World crop, maize, in southern Europe and Africa. Ripening underground, potatoes had a great advantage over corn in the wet and windy climate of the west. Moreover the crop was less easy to pillage: "even the soldiers could not extirpate them." By the middle of the 17th century the newcomer was well established in Ireland.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

It undoubtedly helped the Irish peasants to survive through 175
troubled times, enabled them to live on the hills and waste 244
places to which they were driven, and also to multiply exceedingly in the decades before the great famines of the forties.

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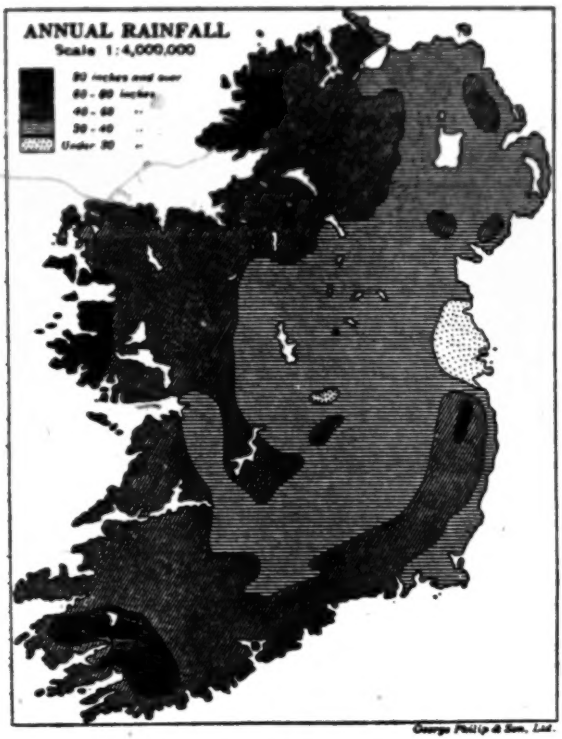

Fig. 8.

It will be well at this stage to say something of the climate and crops of present-day Ireland. The abundant rainfall, the prevailing cloud-cover, the high degree of atmospheric humidity, the strong winds, the cool summers and mild

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where 248
the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and 244
the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has 311
been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered 231
that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the [178]
pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their [273]
importance in the past: one minor factor in the decline is the fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained 235
and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

are nowadays much wider: the narrow ridges and deep 241
furrows are quite unsuited to the use of machinery (Fig. 45).

February, March and April are the busy ploughing months. Corn was generally sown directly "on the furrow," but the seed-bed often required careful preparation either by breaking the clods and dragging along a strong thorn bush weighted with stones or by harrowing. The time is remembered when the old "six bull" wooden harrow was fitted with wooden tines or cows' horns, arranged in consecutive order and not "staggered." These were frequently dragged by the horse's tail. Oats were sown with a one-hand cast from a linen sheet hung round the neck. This is the method still employed on small farms, although the practice of covering the seed with the shovel is almost abandoned. An alternative method, which is perhaps of fairly recent introduction, is to sow with the "fiddle and bow"—the silent fiddler making a striking picture as he strides firmly up and down the field. The seed drill, it goes without saying, is gradually replacing hand sowing, but the older generation is convinced that much better crops resulted from burying the seed, and it is claimed that the land was better drained by the deep furrows between the ridges.

Potatoes are still planted in the old ridge-and-furrow way 244 ●
on small farms. We need not describe the drill method which is universally adopted on larger farms, except to notice that different methods and many types of simple implements are used to prepare and level the drills. My colleague, Mr. O. Davies, tells me that a common practice in Co. Wexford is to break the lumps in the drills with a "drag," a heavy block of granite on which the farmer stands as he drives the horse along the drill. When old grassland is broken up for potatoes, set-rigs or "lazy-beds" are made with the spade (Fig. 46), as in the Scottish Highlands. In the north the push plough or "flachter" (Chapter 15 and Figs. 83-85) was formerly used for this purpose.

The finished lazy-bed closely resembles the ploughed potato ridge, but it is all spade-work and gets its name from the fact that the sod under the ridge is not dug. The width of

9: Evans K-5 (ca.?1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[462]

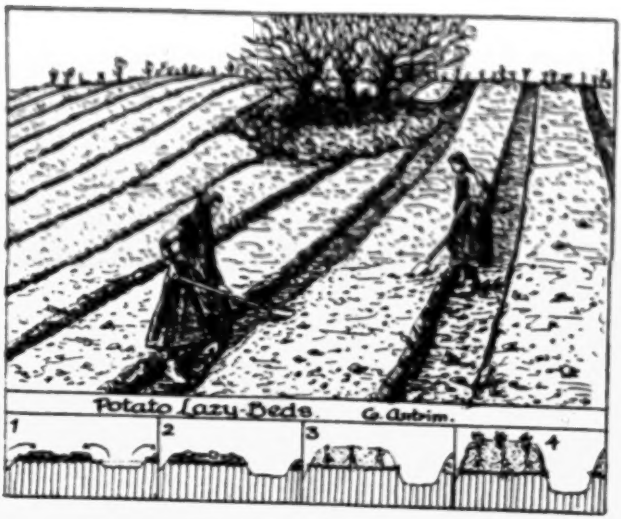

Fig. 46.

the bed and the furrow varies considerably from one locality to another. The latter may be as much as three feet on shallow soils, for it is essential to have sufficient earth both to cover the seeds and to mould the young plants, generally in two stages, later on, but an average width is 1½ feet. Similarly the ridges, while about 4 feet wide as a rule, may be as narrow as two feet. The first step is to turn over the sods from the furrow, one sod on each side, and place them face down, that is grass against grass, on the ridges, so that when they are buried the grass rots and helps to feed the growing crop. With the many methods of turning the soil, of preparing the seed-bed, manuring, setting and covering the potatoes it is impossible to deal here, for the customs differ from one district to another, the manure being spread, for example, sometimes under and sometimes over the seeds. But it is relevant to notice that the old Irish spade or loy (Chapter 13) is a specialized implement adapted for sod cutting and turning and not for

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

digging or shovelling. For these processes the digging fork and long-handled shovel are the proper tools. (Fig. 65). It should also be remarked that the preparation of lazy-beds was communal team-work, undertaken by groups of from 8 to 16 men who shared their labour under the system of voluntary co-operation which distinguished the village community. The custom is maintained in a few localities. 244 412 [462] [476]

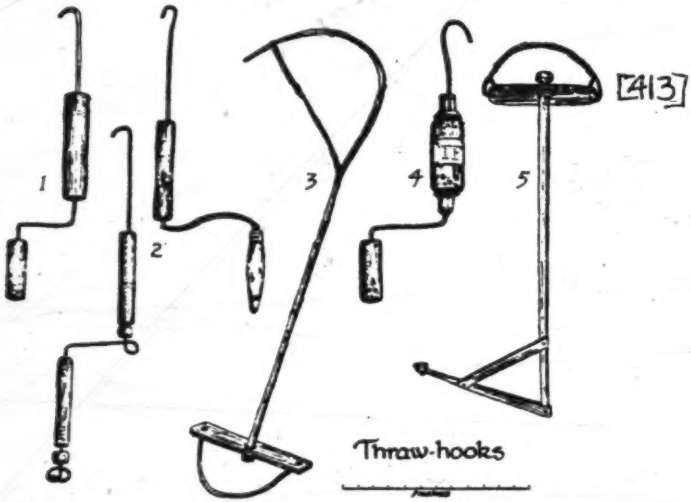
The loy served in certain districts as a dibber for setting *the potatoes "against the back of the spade."* but various special dibbers were also used. There was, for instance, the large two-handed "steeveen" found from Co. Leitrim to Co. Clare. As another example of a dibber we illustrate the clumsy-looking "stamp" from Co. Armagh (Fig. 47), employed in sowing turnips. Reference will be made elsewhere (Chapter 16) to the use of seaweed as manure. Old thatch, with its content of soot from the turf fire, is occasionally used as a fertilizer, and I am told that in Achill Island miniature stone, sod or turf buildings used as "soot houses" are roofed with rafters and scraws each autumn. Fires are lit in them, the smoke depositing soot on its passage through the thatch. This is then stripped off and, with the ashes of the fires, spread on the land as manure in spring. The thatch of the Hebridean black houses was utilized in the same way.

Fig. 47.

A practice which was formerly widespread and attracted a great deal of heated discussion in the period of agricultural development at the end of the 18th century was the preparing of waste ground for cultivation by "paring and burning," or "denshiring." It seems probable that this was a survival of ancient custom, and I believe that old-fashioned tool, the flachter, was probably employed for the purpose, just as its sister-tool, the breast-plough, was in England. Many types of tools were perfected for land reclamation, including a special skinning-plough. In the south-west a heavy hoe or mattock, known as a graffan—similar to the implement still used in Kerry for breaking clods on potato ridges—was popular as a paring tool, the sod being rolled with the foot as it was cut. By such laborious processes, and by centuries of 241 412 [185]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

known to be of mediæval descent. The method of manufacture is shown in Fig. 50, and the tying down of a hay pike in Fig. 51. Sugán was sometimes employed instead of wattle 283



[413]

Fig. 78.

Sugán twisters 1. Co. Antrim. 2. Both Donegal. 3. Lecale, Down. 4. Leitrim. 5. Dingle, Kerry.

in the chimney canopies. It was used for the seats of chairs and for the clothes-line which stretched across the kitchen. A short length was sometimes worn as a girdle around a child's dress. From it were made tethering ropes, spancels and langles, traces and tail-ropes; and on the Donegal seaboard I have heard of cabbages being tethered "against the wind" by three hay-ropes! It is on record that the men of Mayo would descend the seacliffs suspended by a straw-rope.

A length of sugán is also the foundation course of many more complex objects of straw such as mats, mattresses, screens, beehives, nesting boxes, stools, arm-chairs, baskets and hampers. I illustrate (Fig. 79) one of the conical hen-nests which are hung on pegs in the kitchen: large

[244]

[481]

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Fig. 79.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

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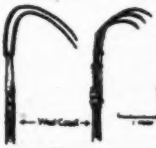

[413]
[244]
Fig. 102.
[439]

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Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

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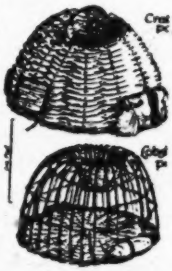

Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

bend or 'lift' of the blade and to the lateral bend or 'dish'. The lift may be well distributed or it may be concentrated at one point: it may be curved or cranked. 412 184

The shape of the blade being thus precisely standardized for each area, various sizes are made to suit individual users and also the seasons of the year. Thus four or five spades of different sizes, ranging say from 13 to 17 in. in length, will be seen on sale in the market towns. In addition some longer spades may be offered for old-fashioned folk, for the blade of the spade is now made shorter than it used to be. These shorter spades, [178] required for digging potatoes, retain the often awkward shape of the long spring spade—designed for ridge-making—which is going out of favour with drill cultivation.

The Irish spade differs from the English not only in its narrow bent blade but also in its thickened sides, its foot-plates, its straight handle and the short straight straps or tails to which the handle is attached. Whereas the English spade derives its digging power from the curvature above the blade, in the Irish spade the curvature is all in the blade. Moreover the Irish prefer a long shaft (4 ft.) without hand-grip, though in Ulster the shaft is short (3 ft.) and headed, i.e. fitted with a cross-piece at the end. The headed shaft, however, is replacing the long headless shaft which is better adapted to the process of sod turning than to digging. With the headed shaft the control of the spade is mainly in the hand that grips the head, which thus tends to be the right hand: consequently this type of spade goes with left-footed digging (Fig. 41).

These differences are largely explained by differences of function, for the primary purpose of the Irish two-eared spade, like the loy which it has replaced, is to turn the sod. It is a hand plough rather than a digging tool, and it owes its remarkable development to the expansion of potato cultivation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To the new crop, as we shall see, the old method of burying the seed in prepared beds was quickly adapted, for ridge cultivation was ideally suited to a root-planting culture, and in fact potatoes are grown in ridges on the Andean plateaux. Thus the adoption of the potato helped to perpetuate tools and methods of cultivation which might otherwise have died out. Nowadays, however, 244 412

4/2 [244] drill-cultivation has replaced lazy-beds over most of the country.

Some ridge-making tools have almost entirely disappeared, 4/2 for example the mattock and the breast-plough, which were once [178] characteristic respectively of the south-west and the north-east of the country and which may still be seen occasionally in Cos. Kerry and Antrim. The mattock ('graffan') is a tool of ancient [171] lineage which finds its parallels in Wales, in Spain and Mediterranean lands, and throughout the tropics (Fig. 48). In Kerry and west Cork it has had many uses—for breaking sods and

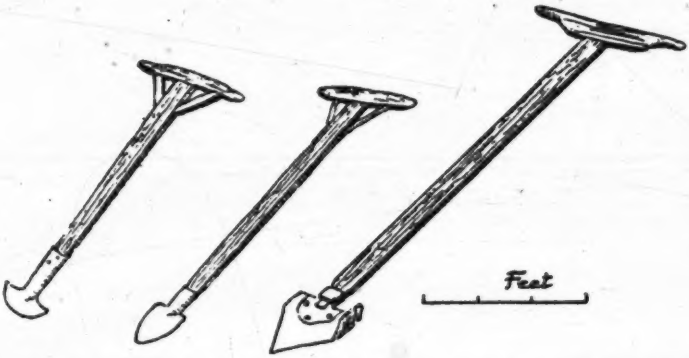

FIG. 45. Flachters or breast-ploughs, north-east Ireland. (1) North Antrim. (2) Co. Tyrone. (3) Mid-Antrim.

clods on the ridges, for loosening the earth of the furrows before shovelling, and also for cutting sods for ridge-making, for 'paring and burning' and for roof-covering. Arthur Young describes the process of graffaning a field by rolling the sod with the foot as it was cut: it was reckoned very heavy work.[1] The breast-plough or flachter (Fig. 45) served the same purpose in Cos. Antrim and Londonderry and earned the same reputation. This instrument is now largely restricted to paring bogland in preparation for turf-cutting. During the second world war I broke in a neglected mountain garden by making lazy-beds with a flachter and I heartily agree with the verdict of an Antrim labourer: 'half a day with it was enough for any ordinary

[1]A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 10.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[192] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[437] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [778] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with [352] "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [516] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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231 241 311 for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted to one crop.

With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the 234 small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

234 The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described 246 among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

233 The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he [244] cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the "landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and whatever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over. 221 241 314

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to allow turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round. 221 372 [805]

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabáiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June. 221 241 262

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up. 221 241

The first true harvest and the most important one of the year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is 246 221

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

221 With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
241 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it
[492] has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

476 The commonest form of coöperation is that which involves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed. ●246 In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings, [471] none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners; they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land [737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest 246 began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh 621 people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral 589 association to the land and to each other. There were three lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter present, if they were old, and many growing children if they [167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so that a smaller number of young people were present than is 476 perhaps usual.

246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 lies began to save the hay, mowing it, letting it dry, and
246 stacking it as soon as possible, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six to eight foot haycocks. After several weeks it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. There was a great deal of interest and much comment back and forth over the progress of the various families, the probable weather, and the yield of the various meadows. The men seemed to feel a general rivalry to do their work
[407] well and quickly. About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows as quickly as possible, working from earliest morning as long as light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and with that of boys from the families who had no machines of their own. At each subsequent stage of the harvesting, a boy or young man not a member of the family whose meadow was being worked could be seen giving his labor in aid; he took his place at meals during the day.

The mowing done, the farmer then took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed the meadows belonging to his friend. In one instance a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others; in another, of two. Certain meadows were full-handed enough not to require extra hands, and in five cases no help was given, though the mowing and stacking took a very long time with them
[589 in comparison to the others, and they were obviously short-
609] handed. Two of these were bachelors who lived alone, and two more were the "strangers." Two other families had insufficient meadow of their own and were forced to buy
[437] hay on the so-called "conacre" system (buying the hay as it stands and reaping it oneself within a stipulated time).

Here then was an example of an important agricultural operation undertaken by the local community in which provision was made (except in five or six cases) for effective coöperation over and above the usual family economy. This is not an isolated instance; in Luogh it has been the practice

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 from time immemorial. Old people here remembered the
● 246 day when, there being no mowing machines, scythes alone were used. Then the coöperating groups would have been larger and a more pronounced rotation of the working groups from meadow to meadow could have been observed. The same custom occurs in other places; in fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work. Given the different techniques, the same coöperation had taken place in Luogh and elsewhere at the turf cutting, the oats harvest, and the potato planting.

[H64] Yet there was no monetary wage or payment involved. In the community of Luogh and surrounding townlands, the only hired labor was to be seen in the meadows of the large farmer (a cattleman with over three hundred acres), [184] who had not coöperated with the small farmers and whose entire way of life, as well as the agriculture he practiced, was different from theirs. Except in so far as the agricultural operation the small farmers were undertaking was economic in itself, it was evident that an interpretation of the incentives for this coöperation must include other factors.

476 Driven to social rather than economic explanation, the authors were able to ascertain that in each case of this
246 coöperation there was an extended family relationship in-
602 volved. Thus Carey, who had mowed the meadows of Dennis and Seamus Molony and Brian McMahon, was second cousin to them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively of the two farmers whose meadows he had mowed. The young men or boys who had worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows with the latter's wives and children were also relatives; they were sons of the relatives for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. In no instance, of course, had a man mowed for all his relatives; it was not necessary

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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476 co-operating groups are smaller; tools are more modern and better distributed; resources are fuller.

Lending a 'boy' is the commonest form of co-
246 476 operation. It goes on constantly, but can best be described in a scene of great activity, such as hay-making. I met it first there, in Luogh, the townland in which we found the 'west room'. The hay was early in Luogh in 1933. Harvest began in mid-July. The weather was just right. Warm dry days had brought the grasses to maturity, and gave promise of continuing. The families of Luogh set to work to 'save the hay': mowing it, letting it dry as it lay, and then stacking it, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six- to eight-foot hay-cocks. Later, after several weeks, it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. Now it was a question of mowing, drying and stacking it before rains caught the farmers in mid-course.

There was much interest in every family's pro-
[521] gress. The weather and the yields of the meadows drove all other subjects out of conversation. The men felt spurred to work well and quickly; there was a general rivalry in the air. The women were as eager, and brought their children to the meadow's edge, while they worked with their rakes behind the mowers.

About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows, working from earliest morning as long as

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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light held. They worked with the aid of their sons 246 ●
and of boys from the families who had no machines. 476
At each stage of the process a boy not a member of the family gave his labour; he took his place at meals during the day.

His own mowing done, the farmer paid his debt. He took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed that man's meadow. In one instance, a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others. In another, a farmer mowed for two others. Certain meadows in Luogh were full-handed enough to do without extra hands; but in five cases, though mowing and stacking took a very [184]
long time and they were obviously short of hands, no help was given. Two of these cases were bachelors, who lived alone; two more were 'strangers'.

Here was an important agricultural operation undertaken by the small local community in which provision was made for effective co-operation over and above the usual family economy. It was no isolated instance; it is immemorial practice in Luogh. In fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work.

There was no monetary payment involved in this
work. In the country surrounding Luogh, the only [464]
hired labour to be seen worked the meadows of a large farmer, a cattleman with over 300 acres. He did not co-operate; in fact, his whole life was cut out of a different cloth.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XI.

HARVEST.

In this chapter we shall give an account of some harvesting 241
customs which depend on a minimum of mechanical appliances. 246
We begin with the hay harvest, the first of the season. The new agriculture represented by turnips and rotation grasses has, in its diffusion from England during the last two centuries, still barely touched the remoter parts of Ireland, where hay until lately had no place in the scheme of cultivation. Successive crops of corn and potatoes were taken so long as the land would yield anything, when it was allowed to grow wild grasses and weeds until the time came to break it up once [illegible]
Oat straw, which is never chaffed, to some extent took the place of hay, which, apart from a limited amount of meadow hay and "sprit," was chiefly gathered from waste places and [231]
mearings and reserved for horses and milk cows. It should be noticed that the old customs of herding, tethering and spancelling permitted the stock to graze in places where hay could not be made. Moreover natural hay, ripened but left uncut, was utilized to a great extent along the mild coasts.

Scandinavian archæologists have shown that the practice 246
of preserving grass as hay for winter use began in that region during the cold wet phase of climate known as the Sub-Atlantic (Chapter 4). So it may have been in Ireland, too: the scythe and the iron hook have their origin in the Early Iron Age, and some of the methods of securing the crop can have changed little in two thousand years. On small farms

[p. 95]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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246 throughout the north of Ireland the hay is made and "saved"—how eloquent is this word of the desperate struggle with the weather!—almost entirely by hand. The traditional date for commencing the hay harvest is the famous 12th of July, and an even more celebrated day—March 17th—was the time for "closing" the hay-fields. Cut with the scythe, supplemented by the hook and by hand-pulling on steep banks or around trees and bushes, the swathes are shaken and gathered into parallel wind-rows or "coles" and then "lapped," that is folded into small muff-like heaps against the leg (Fig. 49). In lapping, the cut grass is smoothed down on both sides so that the rain will run off, while the inside is [184] left open to allow the air to pass through. The practise of lapping is found as far south as Meath and Galway but I have not seen it further south: it would be interesting to trace its exact distribution and compare it with that of other cultural traits. Even in districts well-equipped with machinery the method of lapping is retained, as an alternative to tying into sheaves, for the crops of seed-hay which are a valuable source of income on the small farms of lowland Ulster. This

Lapping Hay, Glendun, Co. Antrim

Fig. 49.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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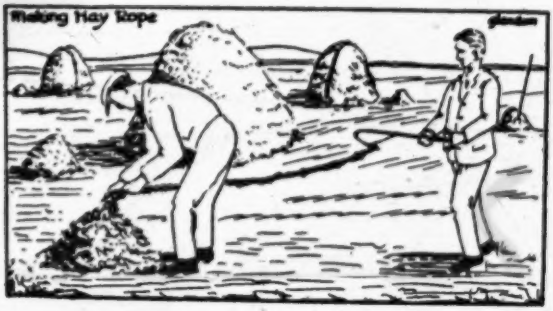
rotation grass is referred to as upland hay to distinguish it from meadow hay, although in fact it often grows at lower levels. Sometimes at this stage the hay is hung on bushes and fences something after the Scandinavian manner. 246

When sufficiently dry the laps are opened and the hay piled into small cocks (ricks or lumps), and this process is repeated a number of times if the weather is bad until the stage of large hand-cocks is reached, or, if the hay is in good condition, even larger "tramp-cocks," trodden down firmly. The cocks are tied down with a hay-rope made on the spot (Fig. 50) and left "to season" for a period which may be only a week or two but which, to the stranger, seems generally an unconscionable time. In this matter the Irish



[283]

Fig. 50.

are confirmed in what the English call their lazy ways. Admittedly there are dry years when it would do no harm to the hay to stack it at once, but the Irish method is adapted to the average season, and rooted in a firmly-fixed rota of farm work. In August the turf must be carried home while the bogs are firm enough to take the carts, and in many parts the busy time of flax-pulling and retting is come. Although these alternative demands on the farmer's time are not always present, they may have helped in the past to standardize the rotation of work. Moreover, when the opportunity of carry- 492 246

[314]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 246 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart [493] is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently [407] old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

246 In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built [171] around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to [476] hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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248
[246]
[284]

Fig. 51.

Fig. 52.

or "swapped" between neighbouring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing. The flax is harvested in August, after the fleeting pale blue flower has gone. Prepared beforehand and lying ready to hand in bundles of 60 or so (enough for a certain number of stooks) are the lint bands of green rushes for tying the sheaves or "beets." The bands consist of two lengths of rushes, placed with the flowering ends together and tied in a reef-knot with a single movement involving a quick manipulation of thumbs and fingers (Fig. 52). The beets are stooked heads down, in which position also they are drowned or "dubbed," as soon as may be, in the "lint hole" or flax dam, where soft water has been warming up ready for the steeping. A horizontal layer of beets and a covering of bracken weighted with large stones completes the filling of the dam, and the process of retting, which takes on the average 10 or 12 days, is soon advertized by a smell of foul yet fascinating intensity. We need not follow the flax on its career from the rank pit to

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FARMYARDS AND FENCES

Throughout the lowland farming country the commonest ditch is an earthen bank faced on one side with stones and planted with quicks slipped in near the base among the stones (Fig. 36). This was the 'approved mode' of enclosing the land 351 417

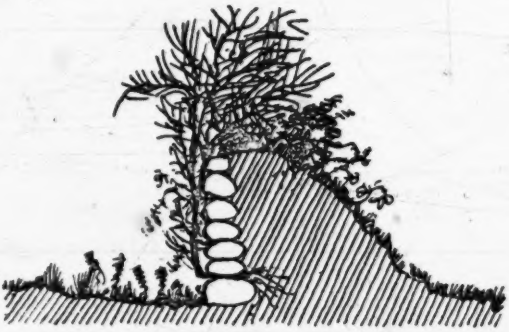

FIG. 36. The hedged ditch, cross-section.

advocated by the reformers from the late eighteenth century onwards, but it was noted that 'the planting of hedgerows was repugnant to the practice of the country' and in many districts the hedges were neglected and the livestock still had to be tethered in the fields.[1] The tradition of temporary fences died hard. 'A year's ditch passeth for a very strong fence', wrote Sir John Davies to the Earl of Salisbury in 1606. These sod fences were deliberately thrown down after harvest, and the decayed sods enriched the soil. The *Advertisements for Ireland* published in 1623 state: 'Their fields lie open and unclosed. Where wood is plentiful they hedge in all their corn with stakes and bushes and pull them down in the winter and burn them.'[2] When fixed field-divisions were adopted, the hedgeless earthen bank was preferred in many parts of the country, usually growing a luxuriant crop of brambles and gorse (whins). These were a useful source of firewood and provided both shelter and food for the livestock, the 'pounded whins' being fed to horses. The knocking stones, flat slabs or stone basins where the whins [231] [246]

[1] *Report on the Estates of the Drapers' Company in Ireland*, 1829.
[2] *Advertisements for Ireland* (1623), Ed. G. O'Brien (1923), 33.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

were 'melled' with a wooden maul, are sometimes to be seen in the farmyard, and there were a few water-driven 'whin-mills'. Their use is almost forgotten as is the custom of growing a field of whins to provide fodder. This was done in Co. Cavan and it is a recognized method of land utilization in the poorer parts of Brittany. A gorse hedge near the homestead is still popular as a place for drying clothes on washing day. 'Firing being scarce', wrote Gabriel Beranger of the barony of Bargy and Forth, 'they plant all their ditches with furze, which serves them for firing, and is reckoned equal in value with the produce of the land.'[1] Small farmers in Co. Down preferred wide earthen ditches because, as Binns was told: 'we have both sides of the ditch for feeding the cattle, and whins to bruise for the horses'.[2] The economy of the grass-grown ditch becomes clearer when we realize that on boulder-strewn hillsides where wide stone ditches separate the tiny fields a high proportion of the land is sterilized. Such wide earth banks often serve as footpaths where the land is wet, and in Co. Limerick I have seen cart tracks on top of them. This habit may go back to the wide balks between some of the openfield patches, which were used as access ways where the boggy fields were too soft to take a cart. Such double ditches, when faced with stones on both sides, are undoubtedly an old type of fence, for they are characteristic of many raths or Dark Age farmsteads. These 'dry fences' are common in Co. Kerry and also in north Antrim, and they occur in Brittany, and in parts of Anglesey and north Pembrokeshire. In stony country the filling of a double ditch may be of loose stones gathered from the fields, and here again we have ancient examples in the enclosing walls of small cashels which are the equivalent in thin-soiled areas of the raths of the lowlands.

What nearly all these many types of field fences have in common is their untidy appearance. Dry stone walls tend to be cyclopean, lacking the precision of those of north England or the Cotswold country. Rough glacial boulders are a poor substitute for oolite, and one recalls the comment of Sir John Russell that Irish architecture suffered because of the virtual absence of Jurassic rocks in the geological series. Rarely does

[1]Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 132.
[2]J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XII

HARVEST

THANKS to the necessity of 'winning' (seasoning) hay and 241 corn in the fields before the crops are carried home, harvest 221 time drags on from late summer to the edge of winter, and the word 'harvest' as we have seen is a synonym for autumn. In [805] this pastoral Irish country the hay harvest is nowadays of vital importance in farm economy, yet I cannot find any evidence that hay played a significant part in the traditional Gaelic system of farming. It is the sickle, not the scythe, which figures in folk-lore and in place-names, and the scythe seems to [412] be a relative newcomer in most parts of the country. It requires a stone-free sward which would be hard to seek on hill farms. The business of hay-making was, I believe, of little importance until the economic changes of the agrarian revolution and the introduction of rotation grass. In the North the date of the first hay-cutting is fixed by a celebrated but relatively new festival, the Orangeman's day on the 12th of July. After hay comes flax, which is pulled from late July to mid-August, followed by wheat and barley in the areas where they are grown, by the corn harvest in September and the potato-lifting in October. In bad years hay may still be uncut in late August, the mountain corn is green even at the end of September, and late-cut corn sometimes stays stacked in the fields up to Christmas—indeed there are records of the grain being reaped after Christmas[1]—but traditionally all harvest work was completed by All-Hallows.

In Scandinavia it has been claimed that hay-making began in 246 pre-historic times as a result of the climatic deterioration which took place during the last millennium B.C. In Ireland with its

[1]For example in 1817. J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 25.

246 milder winters there seems to have been no such response. Although there has been hay-making on the rich meadows of Co. Meath, for example, since medieval times, when the English openfield system was introduced, I have found no literary or archaeological evidence for it anywhere in early Ireland. Indeed Giraldus Cambrensis expressed surprise in the [114] twelfth century that the Irish neither made hay nor built stalls for cattle, and despite his untrustworthiness I believe his witness may be accepted in this instance. Hay-making would have begun on the river bottoms (callows, holms) which, being liable to floods, were not available for winter grazing: this meadow hay is today much less important than 'upland' hay, the significant term used for rotation grass. The hay-making season is nowadays a time of toil for all members of the family, but I suspect that the period from midsummer to late July was under the old order a slack season, the time for raiding and fighting, and catching the English bending in the hayfields. For the Irish it was the 'blue month', when food was scarce (July is also called 'the hungry month') and the meal bins empty. In Ulster at any rate, for reasons which may be older than King William III, July is the holiday month and the time for faction fights. Sir John Myres used to say that in the Mediterranean world, where there is little grass to make hay, the month of May was the slackest time of the summer, the [721] favourite time for fighting instead of hay-making. In Ireland as in classical Greece the winter climate made it difficult and unsportsmanlike to go to war at that season.

To judge from present practice on the tiny farms of the west of Ireland, grass was cut as required from field-banks and odd [462] corners, a creelful at a time to give to the cow as a 'bribe' at milking time, and it was woman's work. The hook used for [412] this purpose, the grass or scythe hook, is smooth-edged, unlike the saw-toothed corn sickle, and what hay was made in former times was probably cut for the most part with the hook. The [231] livestock would be fed in winter mainly on oatstraw, and grazed on the infield stubble, supplemented by the outfield grasses which had been allowed to mature while the bulk of the stock was at the summer booley-grounds. We may be sure that what little hay was saved was treated much as it is on mountainy

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

farms today. The scythed grass is shaken out by hand and 246
spread thinly over the field. When partly dry it is gathered into windrows and lapped or coiled, that is folded against the leg over the forearm into small 'lap-cocks' resembling a lady's muff, the hole permitting the wind to pass through and the smooth rounded top allowing the rain to run off. Like all practised hand-work it is a job carried through with apparently mechanical indifference, but the old hands will take care to ensure that the laps are properly made and laid down so that they are aligned with the prevailing wind. Even on rich lowland farms the hay will be 'lapped' if it is first season's grass grown, as in Ulster, for the seed, which is a valuable export. Alter- [439]
natively seed grass is tied in sheaves and 'gaited' like flax or stooked like a cereal crop (Fig. 51).

[248]
[243]

FIG. 51. Laps of hay, gaits of flax and stook of wheat, with 'hudders'.

When dry the laps are shaken open and built into small cocks or lumps which are later enlarged into hand cocks. Or if the hay is in good condition it is made, chiefly in the drier parts of the country, into larger ricks or tramp cocks which are trodden down firmly and secured with a hay-rope (Fig. 52, 10). The process of hay-making is thus, like the winning of turf (Chapter XIV), one of gradually increasing the size of the pile as the material is dried by sun and wind. The cocked hay is left standing for some weeks in the fields to season, so that it seems to the English visitor, as Arthur Young remarked, that the Irish are generally two months 'making or marring their hay'.[1] The explanation given is the necessity of avoiding overheating, but English critics say that it is the farmers who dislike getting overheated! A more charitable view is that by the

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 246.

 [Text continues on p. 155]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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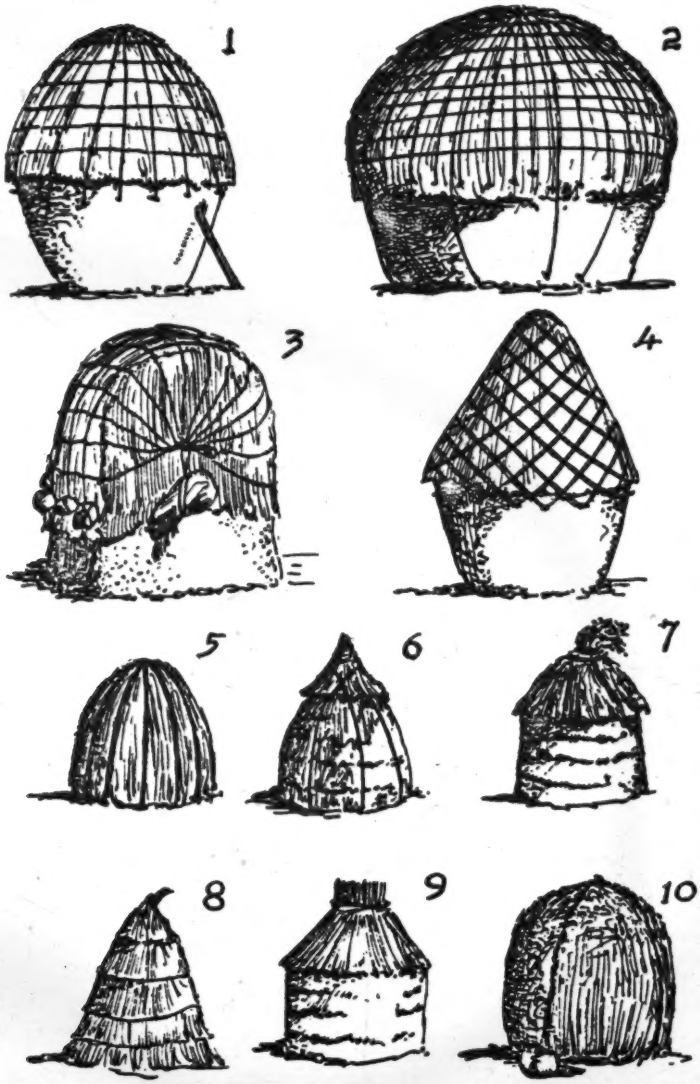

FIG. 52. Stacks and huts roped in many patterns. (1) Cavan (flax). (2) Cork (hay). (3) Mayo (hay). (4) Antrim (oats). (5) Donegal (hay). (6) Donegal (oats). (7) Down (oats). (8) Down (seed hay). (9) Cavan (oats). (10) Down (tramp-cock of hay).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

time large-scale hay-making developed it had to fit into a fixed rota of farm work which kept men busy in late July and August at flax-pulling and turf-carrying, so that the cocked hay had to wait. Today the baling machine is speeding up the process, but the bales, whether from the need of seasoning or from force of habit, are left piled in angular cocks scattered over the hayfield. 246

Carried at last to the haggard on rick-shifters or slipes— [493] formerly on slide-cars or the backs of men and ponies—the hay [492] is built into small circular stacks (pikes). As a protection against [482] wind and rain they are thatched with rushes forthwith and roped (Fig. 52). Since the stacks are thatched before they have 246 had time to settle, the pegged or scolloped thatch found in 284 England is not used. Not only do ropes hold the thatch more securely but it is a simple matter to tighten them as the stack sinks. In the simplest form of roping, hanging stones are attached to the rope ends so that the adjustment is automatic. But where the roof of the stack is not rounded but conical a straw-rope is wrapped round in a spiral which can later be tightened by vertical ropes pegged into the lower part of the stack. One sees this spiral roping also in parts of western Britain. Several other patterns of roping are found, some making a complete network; and the shape of the stack also shows many regional variations (Fig. 52). The size and shape depend not only on local custom but to some extent on the weather and the condition of the hay. Small rounded stacks are most usual, for they are wind-resistant. They are characteristic too of much of Highland Britain from Caithness to Cornwall.

The scythe has not entirely given way to the mowing machine 246 on small farms in whose tiny fields it would anyhow be difficult to turn a machine. The Irish scythesmen, though not so well known as the spalpeens or reapers, had their brief day in the English harvest-fields, and those who remember working 'across the water' in the nineteenth century tell of great feats of piece-work. I was told of one heroic figure who could scythe seven acres in the day, 'and four lifters wouldn't lift after him'. Henry Stephens, in 1855, reckoned that the English labourer would scythe four acres of oats or barley in a ten-hour working day.[1]

[1]Quoted in E. C. Curwen, *Plough and Pasture* (1946), 98.

HARVEST

246 412 The Irish prefer the long-handled scythe. The sned, about five-and-a-half feet long, has the lower handgrip offset, and a pointed iron spike is sometimes driven into the end of the sned to anchor it safely when honing (Fig. 58). A test of a well-

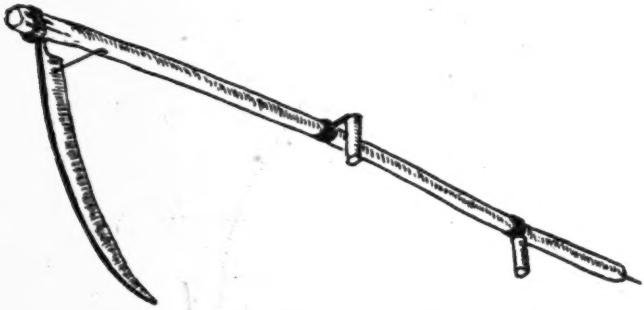

FIG. 58. Long-handled scythe, Donegal.

sharpened scythe is that it should 'cut wool moving downstream', and there was a special charm used in sharpening. The sanded scytheboard (strickle) has now given way to the artifi-
[133] cial stone, though hones of natural stone, including the fossilized wood of Lough Neagh, are used locally. A smith-made scythe-blade is highly prized and long after its legitimate life has ended lengths of it will be utilized for choppers and turnip knives. For full efficiency one must be measured for the fitting and hanging of a scythe. The lower handle should be at arm's length from the bottom of the sned, the upper one distant from the top by the length from elbow to finger-tips. The two handles should also be a cubit apart. The angle of the blade is determined by swinging the left leg and adjusting the blade until its point comes within a nicely determined distance of it when the sned is held upright against the right leg. The scythe cradle, for gathering the swathe as it is cut, is rarely met with
[184] in Ulster, save for makeshift devices such as a bit of sacking fitted against the 'grass-nail' which joins sned and blade in the angle where they meet. In the south and south-east of the country, where the scythe is an old introduction, quite elaborate cradles both of wood and of finely-wrought iron are to be seen.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 12

501

1. Curraghs, the Aran Islands.

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2. Dragging home the hay in the west of Ireland.

[Facing p. 161]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a 246
task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot 221
only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted.

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a 246
"reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The [293]
farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most [461]
strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to [343]
transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent
434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts
437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils
[311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and
178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

476 A man would go to town and buy two or more pottles of flax
571 to sow. Then on the first of May he would go to the garden and plant it. In August he would pull it up by the roots and
●248 lay it in small bundles to be made into stooks. Then they would take it and put it into a bog and leave it there fifteen or twenty days, after which they could dry it in the house by hanging it from the rafters. About the first of November you would take it down and some men would come in and help break it. They would then put it back and later take it down and scutch it with a pronged tool, drawing the flax over it and breaking it.

476 Some time about Christmas time you would have a *meitheal*
571 of girls come in and they would sit in a semicircle round the fire and clove the flax. It would take several days depending on how much you had. The girls would stay with you all that
283 time. At seven in the evening they would be through and within half an hour you could hear them in the hills leaping and shouting. About eight or eight-thirty the boys would begin
[535] to arrive and there would be a dance and be no more good out of them for that night. They might have a dance every two or three days. You fed them good.

The next thing was the hackling, and this might be done by men or women. You had a box with iron prongs sticking up and you would hit the stalk against the irons and the small particles would fall into the box below. It might take several nights. Old man Roughan was a great man at the hackling, but he was always great for nothing else to do with flax. It was fine if you got him to come and help you and he would be glad to do it. Then you might be good at something else and you would go and help him with that. Some men were good at one thing and others at something else and they would help each other.

After this the next thing was the spinning, and this was done by the woman. She would sit in this corner by the fire and she might be there every night, or whenever she had the time, spinning the flax fiber into thread. She had no one to help her and it was a hard job. After it was made into thread, it would be taken out and bleached and re-wound and then taken to the
[266] weaver. The weaver made it into cloth and you would use it for sheets and shirts and other things. Flax was a hard thing and there was a lot of hard work about it.

248 They have been out of growing it for thirty or forty years

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

and now they would never think of growing it but must be running to town and buying what they want. 248

The process of conversion of wool to yarn and thence into cloth was equally difficult. It demanded the concerted efforts of most of the rural community. It gave scope for the development of specialists who could give their skills back and forth even though, as before, their skills were part of the equipment of all the young people in the community. Two other old fellows of Inagh combined in the following account: 476 571 283

> With the wool it was sheared on May 15 and, if that fell on a Monday or Tuesday and the following was Saturday in town (market day) you would see the men there with wool to sell while others would be there to buy it with large baskets in which to put it. The first thing was to card the wool. About the first of June you would get ready to spin it. For that you go around to all the neighbors and ask for a loan of a girl to spin the wool, and if you got eight or ten you must get the loan of that many spinning wheels. Then they come to the house on a certain day and I have seen eight wheels in this room and two in the other, all the girls spinning and talking away. It might take several days before they were through and they would have a dance and the boys would come around. You want to be sure to get the girls early for there is a great demand for them. After the yarn is spun, it is placed on the wall to be taken to the weaver later on. [535]

All this was part of the pattern of work in which the members of the community were accustomed to work in close association. The behavior described here is that which we have already looked at in the discussion of the obligations of cooring. The *meitheal* referred to the working gang rather than the system in which the local habits were set. That setting was a constant play of habitual work relations between the "friends" and neighbors of the local community in which the characteristic organization of the community aligned sex and age groups and associated the 476 571

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where 248 ●
the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and 244
the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has 311
been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered 231
that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. [178] But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their importance in the past: one minor factor in the decline is the [273] fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained 235
and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 246 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, [493] which is thus "sliped" home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose: its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently [407] old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or "sweep" with its long ash teeth.

246 In the haggard ("hay-guard") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which "draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built [171] around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular ("pikes" in Co. Antrim) or oblong ("havels"): there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to [476] hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[246]
[284]

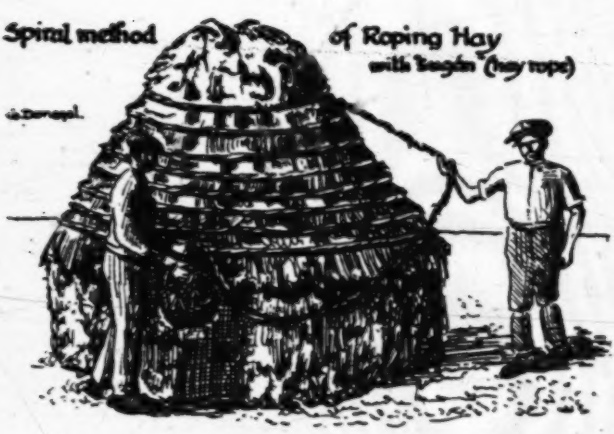

Fig. 51.

Fig. 52.

or "swapped" between neighbouring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing. The flax is harvested in August, after the fleeting pale blue flower has gone. Prepared beforehand and lying ready to hand in bundles of 60 or so (enough for a certain number of stooks) are the lint bands of green rushes for tying the sheaves or "beets." The bands consist of two lengths of rushes, placed with the flowering ends together and tied in a reef-knot with a single movement involving a quick manipulation of thumbs and fingers (Fig. 52). The beets are stooked heads down, in which position also they are drowned or "dubbed," as soon as may be, in the "lint hole" or flax dam, where soft water has been warming up ready for the steeping. A horizontal layer of beets and a covering of bracken weighted with large stones completes the filling of the dam, and the process of retting, which takes on the average 10 or 12 days, is soon advertized by a smell of foul yet fascinating intensity. We need not follow the flax on its career from the rank pit to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

248 the purest of linen—the story has often been told—and though the scutching mill with its busy waterwheel is an intimate part of the wintry countryside, the flax and tow soon pass into the factories. But we cannot omit a reference to the picturesque oblong stacks "sleighs" or "rays" in which the flax is built after being taken from the dam and dried. And we have referred in another place (Chapter 7), to the "shows" or waste which comes from the scutching mill.

243 But the most important crop throughout Ireland, and as a rule the most difficult to save because it comes late in the season, is oats. September is the harvest month, but in the hills October frequently sees the corn uncarried and even uncut. It is on record that in 1817—in Co. Armagh—"the grain was not reaped in many places until after Christmas." [422] Often the equinoctial gales play havoc with the stooks, and in the days of small scattered rundale plots it was customary for each holder to tie his sheaves with a proprietary knot so that he might claim his own.

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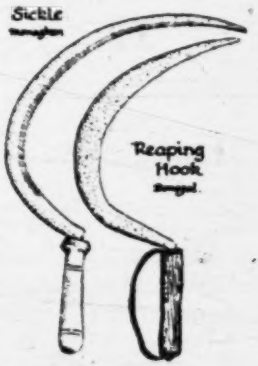

Fig. 53.

Both the toothed hook or sickle (Fig. 53) and the smooth "scythe hook" are used in reaping: the reaping machine and the self-binder have not reached many parts. Sickles are of several varieties, classified in the catalogues as round,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Down

PLATE 5

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1. Flax in stook in drumlin country, Co. Down. Flax-dam on right.

2. Spreading flax from the dam, Co. Down.

[facing p. 96]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

resting on a well-prepared bed of drawn straw spread on a hurdle, and he recalled the phrase 'soft as kiln bedding' to illustrate the care devoted to the operation. The Gaelic language has quite an extensive vocabulary describing every detail of the floor and the bedding of a corn-kiln. Because of the risk of fire, the Laws stipulated that the kiln must not be placed within so many paces of the dwelling house. 343 251

Lint-kilns, for drying flax after it had been taken from the retting dams, were in general use in Ulster in the days of hand-scutching, and a few half-ruined specimens are still in existence. As with corn-kilns—and lime-kilns—they were of two kinds, which may be termed pot-kilns and pipe-kilns. The former are described in Co. Armagh as 'small sod buildings, left open at the top . . . built by the sides of fences near the cabins: they are four or five feet in diameter, and have a hurdle of sticks placed across them at a convenient height (about four feet) on which a small quantity of flax is spread to dry over a turf fire'.[1] The stone-built kilns, known in Co. Tyrone as 'farrows' were similar in construction to the 'tobacco pipe' corn-kilns. The flax, well shaken and loose, was placed on end on a wattled platform set across the bowl of the pipe. When dried it was beaten on a melling-stone with a heavy wooden mell until every stalk was flattened and it then passed to the hand-scutcher. 343 248

As the corn-drying kiln has been superseded by the kiln attached to the country grist-mill, so the small lime-kiln has given way, over most of the country, to the large quarry-kiln. At the same time coal has replaced turf as a fuel. The little circular pot-kiln of sods or stones filled with alternate layers of turf and limestone may be met with in the west, but in general the home-burning of lime did not long survive the Great Famine. Down to that time, wherever limestone could be obtained, almost every farm or farm cluster had a lime-kiln. It was the importation of guano and later of artificial manure that put an end to a most advantageous practice. The application of lime to acid soils is a comparatively recent practice, but one likes to think that the little pot-kiln was in use long ago to burn lime or sea-shells for the whitewash with which the mud houses were lightened and brightened. Kelp-kilns, similarly (see Chapter 343 381

[1] I. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties* (1837), I, 178.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

farms today. The scythed grass is shaken out by hand and 246
spread thinly over the field. When partly dry it is gathered into windrows and lapped or coiled, that is folded against the leg over the forearm into small 'lap-cocks' resembling a lady's muff, the hole permitting the wind to pass through and the smooth rounded top allowing the rain to run off. Like all practised hand-work it is a job carried through with apparently mechanical indifference, but the old hands will take care to ensure that the laps are properly made and laid down so that they are aligned with the prevailing wind. Even on rich lowland farms the hay will be 'lapped' if it is first season's grass grown, as in Ulster, for the seed, which is a valuable export. Alter- [439]
natively seed grass is tied in sheaves and 'gaited' like flax or stooked like a cereal crop (Fig. 51).

[248] ●
[243]

FIG. 51. Laps of hay, gaits of flax and stook of wheat, with 'hudders'.

When dry the laps are shaken open and built into small cocks or lumps which are later enlarged into hand cocks. Or if the hay is in good condition it is made, chiefly in the drier parts of the country, into larger ricks or tramp cocks which are trodden down firmly and secured with a hay-rope (Fig. 52, 10). The process of hay-making is thus, like the winning of turf (Chapter XIV), one of gradually increasing the size of the pile as the material is dried by sun and wind. The cocked hay is left standing for some weeks in the fields to season, so that it seems to the English visitor, as Arthur Young remarked, that the Irish are generally two months 'making or marring their hay'.[1] The explanation given is the necessity of avoiding overheating, but English critics say that it is the farmers who dislike getting overheated! A more charitable view is that by the

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 246.

 [Text continues on p. 155]

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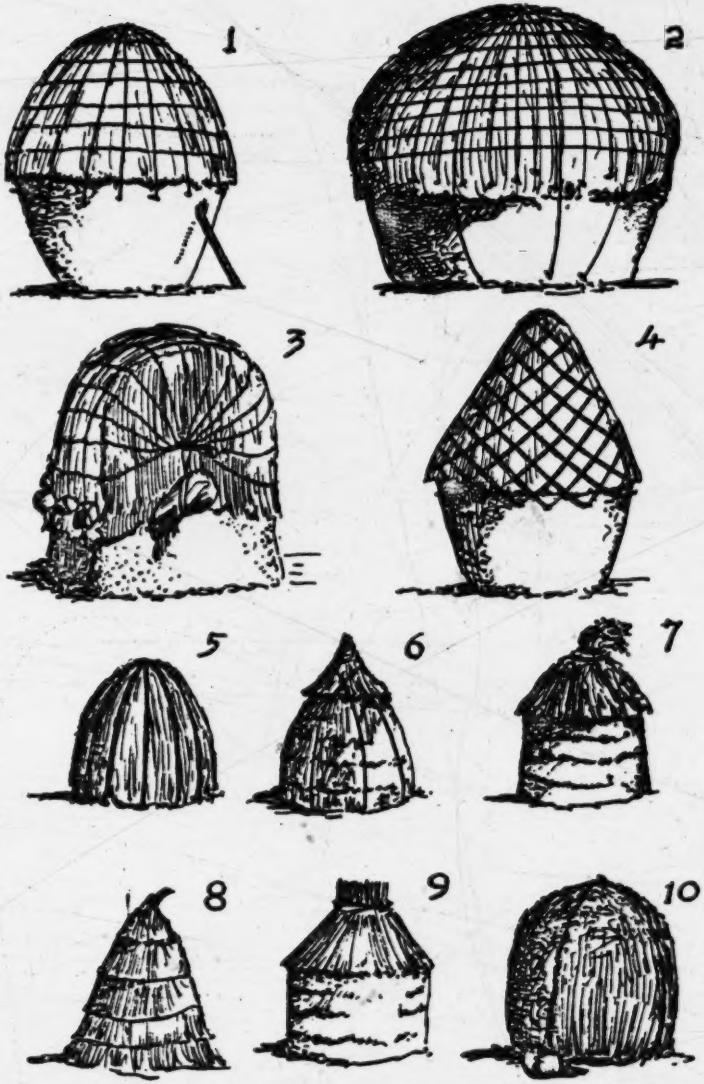

FIG. 52. Stacks and huts roped in many patterns. (1) Cavan (flax). (2) Cork (hay). (3) Mayo (hay). (4) Antrim (oats). (5) Donegal (hay). (6) Donegal (oats). (7) Down (oats). (8) Down (seed hay). (9) Cavan (oats). (10) Down (tramp-cock of hay).

HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay 243
to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century 412
there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the 178
good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East. The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal
possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with [422]
reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed [426]
directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects, may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should 248
be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands
are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to [476]
thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in
diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist [284]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

248 [284] of two lengths of green rushes knotted at the flowering end. When tied, the end of the band is thrust under towards the head of the beet, that is 'with the grain' of the flax. The beets are carried as soon as possible to be steeped (drowned or dubbed) in the flax dam or 'lint hole' where soft peaty water has been standing for some days to warm up. If they cannot be steeped forthwith the beets are built into stooks, for they are damaged if left lying on the ground. The beets are placed upright in the dam, with a slight inclination to facilitate their later removal, and when well packed may be covered, if the water is deep enough, with a horizontal layer or 'sheeting row' on which large boulders are placed to keep the flax under water. The process of retting (rotting) takes from seven to twelve days and is soon advertised by a foul and penetrating odour as the core or 'bone' of the stalk decays. Then the slimy, stinking beets are taken out of the dam and 'grassed', that is spread on grass, usually a new-mown hayfield. This is a skilled but dirty (Pl. 5, 2) job. To ensure that the stalks do not stick together the beets are shaken loose over the left forearm so that the flax lies evenly in ordered rows. After a couple of days it is once more tied into beets, but if the weather is bad it is first 'gaited' for a day or so to complete the drying (Fig. 51). This provides one of the more picturesque scenes of flax harvest, for the gaits look like the skirts of invisible dancers or the tents of a fairy host. The drying stalks of each beet are gathered and spread around the leg to make a hollow broad-based cone which will stand upright. It seems probable that gaiting was at one time a method of drying cereal crops as well as flax in these difficult Highland regions. The 'gaitner' was a recognized member of the harvest gang in Northumberland in the early nineteenth century. 'He follows close on the reapers and, the corn being laid in the band near the tops of the corn, he . . . brings the sheaf up to the left knee, gives the band a peculiar twist and sets the sheaf upright, giving it a half turn so that the skirts fly out to look like the cover of a beehive'.[1] Gaited corn was said to 'win' well and it was carried to the stack without stooking.

Ideally the flax after gaiting is ready for breaking and scutching, and in the old days when the farmer was also a

[1] *Loudan's Encyclopaedia of Agriculture* (1831).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

weaver it would be hung in the rafters to be used as required. 248 ●
Nowadays the scutching-mills cannot store all the flax they handle, so that the farmer stacks it in the fields until the mill can take it. It is built into large oblong stooks variously known as barts, sleighs, hovels or rays, containing as many as a hundred beets or more. The barts are two-storied. On top of the first storey, which consists of three rows of beets on each side, a row of sheaves is placed along each eave like wall-plates, and others are laid transversely between them. On these, in turn, a central row is placed lengthwise to act as a support for the upper storey, and against this row two or three layers of sheaves are laid like rafters on each side. The hipped roof is then thatched with grass or rushes roped on (Fig. 54). The bart[1] is thus kept

FIG. 54. Flax dam, stooks and bart.

dry while its open structure allows the wind to blow through, drying the beets and also lessening the risk of its being blown down. The farmer-weaver, needing the fibre, might have to dry the flax in a kiln after it had lain spread for a few days (Chapter IX). The whole sequence of breaking (melling) the flax, scutching, cloving, hackling, spinning, weaving, and bleaching was then carried out by hand. The water-driven scutching mill was 288
introduced in the eighteenth century though hand-scutching continued in some districts into the present century. All processes are now mechanized apart from a little high-quality hand-loom weaving in Ulster, and very little flax is home-grown even in the traditional linen districts.

[1]'Bearts' of oats are referred to in medieval documents. See W. R. Wilde in *Census of Ireland 1851*, Part 5, Vol. 1, 98.

•249

[For data on the gathering and cultivation of seaweed as a crop, see category 222.]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent
434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts
437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils
[311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and
178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
433
231
226

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

512 children. If they are of school age, she must dress them,
462 feed them, and get them off to school. She does all the cook-
356 ing and washing up after meals and keeps the teapot always ready. Each morning she sweeps the house, makes the beds, and so on. The clothes of the household are her care as well, and the indispensable and constant mending of them which rough wear makes necessary all falls to her lot.

This household work is familiar to us; the point of itemizing it is merely to make clear the confined sphere in which the woman's recurrent and indispensable duties fall.

512 But her work stretches beyond the house door. In the
462 morning after breakfast she takes the milk buckets and milks
356 the cows in the sheds in the haggard. This is merely one of
231 the many trips she makes in and out of the kitchen doors for
234 fuel, for water, to feed and tend the animals and the fowl. Her milking finished, she must bring the milk in and separate it. In recent years, more prosperous farms have been able to make use of the separator. If there is none, she must set the milk in large pans and allow the cream to rise. The whole process of the conversion of milk to butter is her charge.

512 After the morning milking and the feeding of her human
462 charges, she must turn her attention to the feeding of the
231 farm animals, especially the young ones. The cows and horses are not her province, but all the care of the calves, pigs, and fowl falls to her lot. She prepares a mixture of warm milk and grain for the calves, feeding them from a bucket. They must not be allowed to suck, as the milk is meant for human consumption. Then she boils a large kettle of potatoes over the fire for the chickens and the pigs, or takes them the leavings of the previous day.

512 Before noon she hangs another kettle over the fire filled
462 with potatoes for the use of the family. In season she adds
[251] white cabbage and nearly always includes a portion or two of bacon, some of it home cured in brine to resemble salt
PORK.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

221 With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
241 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
● 251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to
[492] the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to
132 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual
251 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on
231 which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume
234 or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten
311 cows" is still a familiar term.

241 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the 174
cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of 621
the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, 221
together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the 231
hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, " the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in " booley " or " boley " 221
assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the 342
actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were 343
generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had 221
two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed 234
in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular " town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of " whitemeats " that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter [25] ●
appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This " bog-butter " frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations : it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-holes (" boles ") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes or the knitting : they are usually reserved for special purposes and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these
[805] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for drying clothes.

251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or " ark,"
352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now
[857] almost dead, is the " tramping " of the meal, the children being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead immediately behind the chimney, in the " room," where it would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other fireside gear later in the chapter.

354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west, that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its cailleach or not, lies at one side of the fire : alternatively there may be a large settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 72 -- Analyst]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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rush-light holders with attached candle-sockets. The dipped 373
rushes were sometimes plaited together to make the light last 416
longer. It is of interest to note that the war-time shortage of oil and candles has led to a revival of the use of rush-lights in some country districts.

A great amount of interesting information might be 262
collected about the food of the Irish peasantry, the methods of cooking, times of meals and the many customs and superstititions connected with food and drink. We may close this chapter with a few remarks about some foods other than bread It is curious to reflect that the diet of some western districts, "potatoes for 10 months and Indian meal for two," is so largely dependent on crops of New World origin! Potatoes were made tasty with "kitchen" or "point," that is a bit of relish such as a salted herring; and in difficult times they were [25] only half boiled so that the hard core, called the "moon" or "bone," might prolong the processes of digestion. In Ulster the name given to July was "the blue month" because it was a time of scarcity between the old potatoes and the new crop, but generally speaking milk products were consumed during the summer months. Meat, by which the countryman means beef, was often salted down and reserved for winter use, but [25] meat eating tended to be restricted to certain seasons or festivals such as Christmas, Shrove and Easter.

Another seasonal food was the "sowens" or porridge made from soured "meal-seeds" sifted from the oatmeal. It was traditionally eaten at Hallowe'en; and the Irish name for the 1st of November is Samhain, or "Sowin." I have heard this dish nicknamed "water bewitched." The thin liquid resulting from steeping the fine meal-dust was also drunk and called "thewin," a substitute for buttermilk. A kind of whey ("troander") was made by mixing sweet milk and buttermilk, and "drammock" was a harvest drink consisting of raw oatmeal and water. Then there is the boxty bread made from potato flour and cooked on the griddle. Many traditional foods and drinks are now little more than memories and of some, for instance "heather beer," the country folk say that "the secret has been lost." But one might still

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 234 Behind the cows there runs a slab-lined drain or groop, which carries the refuse through the "groop hole" in the wall to the midden. Hanging from the rannel-tree you may perchance see a charm in the shape of a perforated flint [176] pebble, while over the door, decaying Brigid's Crosses dating [751] back for several successive years show that the cattle are under the special protection of the Irish saint. In the byre gable it is not uncommon to see a dove-cote, at any rate along [235] the east coast where English influence has been strong since Norman times. Pigeons are fond of heat and thrive near farm animals. In Lecale, Co. Down, I have seen nests made of straw rope hung above the horses in the stable.

343 251 The barn is not infrequently built above the byre. When the dwelling house alongside remains, in the Irish tradition, single-storied, the effect of the towering barn is rather incongruous. This arrangement makes it simple to feed the animals, provides a springy wooden floor for thrashing, and also gives a better draught for the purpose. Moreover, the raised position helps to make the corn secure from damp and rats. The barn has opposite doors and half doors to regulate the through draught and to keep out stray animals while work goes on inside. Access to the barn is obtained by external stone steps or a sloping ramp, under which the stone dog kennel is often built in. Some of the activities and appurtenances of the barn are described in Chapter 14.

343 Little need be said about the stable, since small farms have as a rule only one mare. In the old-time single-roomed kitchen-byres, the mare had her stall alongside the cows, and you will sometimes see the keeping-hole above the back door where the brush and curry comb were stored. The stable, like the byre, may be attached to the house or may be separate, but for convenience and economy it tends to be built as part of a range of buildings. In decayed rundale clusters now occupied by only one or two holders there were, ready to hand, many old dwelling houses which could be put to different uses as "offices."

Before we turn to the housing of other livestock, mention should be made of the turf-house, for which many different

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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similar farm rubbish, which is roughly thatched with rushes. 343
In building up loose material of this kind, as in making a turf-stack or a potato clamp, the hipped form is naturally adopted (Fig. 42) and *cf.* the turf stack or rick (Fig. 93). I have often seen old houses or outbuildings with upright gables the triangular tops of which, above the level of the eaves, are built of sods or turf. While other explanations may be offered, it seems to me that this carries on the tradition of the "flat" roof and hints that it was more generally found in former times.

Fig. 42.

Corn-drying kilns were mentioned above as an example of 343
structures which have descended in the social scale. It seems 251
likely that constructionally they are miniature replicas of circular houses, and it is certainly true that they are now put to uses which cannot be called legitimate. They are used surreptitiously in preparing grain for making poteen, and I have seen examples built not long ago for drying a cargo of corn recovered from a wreck. A few generations ago every little village had its corn kiln, but the large kilns attached to corn mills have done away with them. So far as I have been able to find out the Irish kilns were all circular or semicircular and they were often built into a sloping hill. Some were open on top like a lime-kiln but others had a conical thatch. Again, one variety had the fire underneath while in another the heat was drawn along a flue from a fireplace some distance away. The corn was laid on a linen sheet resting on a carefully prepared bed of straw; hence the phrase "soft as kiln bedding." The dried corn was ground forthwith in a hand quern.

Although underground refuges or "souterrains"—called 343
"caves" by country folk—come into the category of ancient monuments they deserve mention here for two reasons. The first is because they often show in their roofs the technique of corbelling described above. The second fact which gives them interest is that, though some are known to have been built in the Bronze Age, they have been used as hiding places at many periods. I have found in them "ammunition" of 1,000 years ago side by side with explosives dating from the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 Hazel sticks are often used as fishing rods, but the sea itself may cast up gifts in the shape of bamboo poles. In a general way each species of fish must be tempted with its appropriate bait or lure in its proper season, and when the varied traditions and fish of different stretches of coast are recalled it will be realized that a vast amount of information could be collected on this topic. The bait necessary for bottom fishing—mussels, limpets, "slaters," "buckies," crab, lug-worm and so on—is different from that used in "streaming"—young eels, small fish, or artificial lures in the form of white feathers or hair.

Then there are the different methods employed in attaching the bait, in throwing the lines or using the rod both in rock and boat fishing. In Strangford Lough, County Down, for example, the rod is plunged deep into the water from the stern of the rowing-boat, the swirl of the current helping to agitate the streaming bait. An ingenious device found on the west coast is the "protected hook" used for fishing amongst sea-weeds: to prevent the fouling of the hook a shield made of the carapace of a crab is attached to the line. The stone sinker is made from a pebble by chipping out two notches to hold the line. Nor should we fail to mention that "the best hooks in the world" were formerly made at Limerick: the name is still attached to the graded hooks one buys in seaside towns.

In the north of Ireland the fish most commonly caught from the rocks or from small boats inshore is the dark coal-fish, variously called, according to its age and size, cudden or gelpin, pickock or pickies, glashan or blockan, grey lord, [251] stanlock, black jack, and so on. Lightly salted, the split blockan may be seen drying on the thatched roofs of houses along many a stretch of coast. A close rival in popularity and abundance is the pollack or "lythe." Ling, one of our oldest foods, is still, like the salted herring which go so well [251] with potatoes, a favourite in rural Ireland. They used to be dried beside the kelp kilns down the west coast. These

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the gravestones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

372 The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive, except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
[435] and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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252 As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the
262 price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America,
that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline
171 in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial
baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly
recent development virtually confined to the large towns, especially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural
areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads.
We should probably make an exception of the English-settled
parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargy. Dublin
and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks
to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried
before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by
providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as
standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some
[256] seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed
over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, similarly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow
factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost
unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life:
[493] its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping
horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
262 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully
252 inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater
gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled
water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a
large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On
balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave
of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale
quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have
fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to
work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread.
The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
[857] and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children,
they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden
chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the
air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

chest was considered to be the best place to store a well-dried ham. 251 ●

Originally the flat round oatcakes were baked on a flat stone, and such flagstone griddles continued to be used in the nineteenth century in parts of Co. Kerry. A late seventeenth-century traveller wrote: 'Their general food is a thin oatcake which they bake upon a broad flat stone made hot, a little sheep's milk cheese, or goat's milk, boiled leeks and some roots.'[1] In Yorkshire the flagstone was built-in over a separate fire and gave way slowly to the iron 'bakestone'. The bread was hardened in front of the fire, resting against a three-legged 'bread-stick' of the type shown in Fig. 25. Representations of bread on the sculptured high crosses of the Early Middle Ages show just such round discs. The traditional form of thin bread, however, is the farl (fardel), shaped like a quarter-circle. The large circular cake is marked with a cross so that it can be readily broken into quarters (farls) after baking and hardening. The 'harning' is done on a wrought iron 'harnen stand' or toaster which has taken the place of the simple bread-stick. It is worth noticing that the Beltane cakes, formerly eaten at the fires which were lit on hill-tops on May Eve, were baked, in Scotland at any rate, before the fire without touching iron.[2] I have seen a few examples of carved stone breadstands which were designed to bake the bread in front of the fire, and no doubt rough stones were originally used for this purpose. The baking stones are elaborately carved and often carry dates ranging, in Scottish examples, from 1674 to 1791.[3] Irish examples seem to be confined to Ulster and they probably represent one of the many culture traits introduced from Scotland (Fig. 25, 6). The wrought iron toasters are tastefully designed and exhibit a great variety of ornament. Specimens from north Ulster and from Scotland display an almost Spanish exuberance in the intricacies of their spiral terminals, and one would like to know if they have their counterparts along the Atlantic coasts of Europe. They are now for the most part museum pieces, for one rarely sees them in use and great numbers have found their way to the scrap heap in the last half century.

252 354 171 [262]

[1] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.* x (1904), 96.
[2] J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-east of Scotland* (1929).
[3] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 239.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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262 the staple was butter and oatcake rather than oatcake and butter. When bread was made from gritty quern-ground flour the butter would have served as a lubricant to assist the swallowing process. 'They swallow lumps of butter mixed with oatmeal', wrote Fynes Moryson about the year 1600, 'and love no meat more than sour milk curdled.'[1] When food was left out for the fairies it was generally oatmeal and butter: needless to say, particularly when accompanied by whiskey, it disappeared during the night. In the very high present-day Irish consumption of milk products we notice once more the survival of ancient custom, for milk products were the staple food of medieval times in all parts of the British Isles.[2] The Irish laws distinguish between summer and winter food, and the consumption of meat was almost confined to the winter months. Pork was the most highly esteemed meat, but no doubt deer and other products of the chase augmented the fare for the upper classes. Surplus cattle were presumably killed off at
251 Martinmas and salted as 'marts', but among the peasantry the emphasis was on milch cows, and cow's meat was fit only for stews. Butter—and whiskey also—was preserved in bogs to be available in the lean days of spring (Chapter XIV). On the other
234 hand there is little evidence of cheese-making apart from soft cheese, including that made from sheep's milk, and the Irish consumption of cheese is today probably the lowest in Europe. The making of hard cheese is a comparatively late development everywhere, so that Ireland may be said once more to have remained faithful to ancient practice. With a *per capita* consumption of 2·7 lb. in 1954, the Irish republic comes last in the fifteen countries for which figures are given in the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Circular quoted above; the highest is Norway with 19 lb. per head. I may add that I have found no record or tradition of the milking of sows which occurs in parts of Spain and which, it is suggested, may have been a Celtic custom.[3] It is said in Ireland that if a man drinks sow's milk he can see the wind for ever after.

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[2]J. C. Drummond and A. Wilbraham, *The Englishman's Food* (1939), 51.
[3]R. U. Sayce, 'Milking and Dairying', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 51 (1951–52), 120–54.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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usually opposite the fire. The absence, in a country predominantly pastoral and consuming large quantities of milk products, of a building or room set aside as a dairy is at first sight strange. Milk cattle, however, were closely identified with the woman of the house, and as we have seen they commonly shared the kitchen with the family. Owing to the scarcity of winter feeding-stuffs, moreover, the supply of milk must have been, down to a couple of centuries ago, largely confined to the summer months and butter-making was therefore undertaken at the booley houses. It must have been difficult to store the considerable amounts of milk products required for winter food, especially when one remembers that most of the peasant houses were made of wattles, sods or mud, and there is some evidence, as we shall see in Chapter IX, that they were kept underground under the old Celtic economy, in even temperatures and safe from the depredations of animals. 234 353 [251]

However this may be, the kitchen is the traditional place for keeping the churn, and for churning. The stave-built upright plunge churn, prototype of the metal milk-churn which at first faithfully copied its shape, belongs to a family of wooden vessels which has been diffused across the Old World from Ireland to Tibet and now survives most abundantly towards the limits of its range (Fig. 30). Made by local coopers, Irish churns display a considerable variety in shape and size, the shapes differing regionally, the sizes depending on the number of cows kept on the farm, for they were 'made to measure'. The small barrel-shaped churn of the south-west, with a narrow vertical mouth, would appear to be the older style. The mouth, designed to hold a lid through a hole in which the churn staff passes, is usually a separate unit attached to the body by a join—the crib—skilfully contrived and concealed under one of the encircling hoops. Some old churns have hoops of split rods, hazel or sally, but it was reckoned lucky to have one of the hoops of rowan. The staves are invariably of oak: the circular base is made in three pieces, dowelled together and having the joins sealed with rushes. Small churns which have been dug out of the bogs are generally found to have been cut from the solid, and they often have projecting lugs perforated for ease of transport. Those with holed lids were certainly churns, but others 234 184

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

KILNS AND CLOCHAUNS

343 In discussing the association of pigs and clochauns, which may well have reached Ireland together, reference must be made to a curious variety of underground 'outhouse', the stone-built souterrain, which is frequently found attached to ancient farmsteads of the Dark Ages. Many thousands have been recorded from all parts of the country, and they have their counterparts in Scotland, Cornwall and western France. Stripped of their cover of earth, the chambers which are incorporated in many souterrains would resemble free-standing clochauns. The long galleries which are perhaps the most characteristic element in souterrains could have originated as passages into the buried chambers. Some of the chambers may have served as pigsties, but it is a more plausible theory that these structures, long regarded as refuge places, were primarily storage places, designed to maintain an even temperature for keeping food and especially milk products. The custom of building souterrains, which must have called for considerable labour and skill, seems to have stopped, after a long life, before the early Middle Ages. We do not know what cultural factors were responsible for this change of custom, or what forms of storage took the place of the 'coves', but the change marks one aspect of the decline of the old Gaelic world of rath and tuath which had passed its zenith by the tenth century. The practice of building underground storage places, however, did not entirely die out. K. Danaher has recorded stone-lined structures in Donegal, associated with still remembered booley-sites, which are said to have [251] been used for storing butter.[1] One wonders whether the custom of burying butter in the bogs (Chapter XIV) was generally adopted when souterrains were no longer built.

The souterrains, whatever their original purpose, have occasionally been pressed into service as hiding places for outlaws, for illegal possessions or small livestock. It is known that the Irish, in the worst days of landlordism, were in the habit of hiding their stock to avoid confiscation when they were in arrears of rent. Some examples, which had not been opened within living memory, were found, when entered, to reek strongly of animals. And I know one souterrain in Co. Antrim which is littered with the remains of home-made bombs dating

[1] K. Danaher, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 204–12.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

are repaired and re-roofed with sods, and turf fires lit inside 343
are kept smouldering with wet sods until the spring, when the 387
huts are half-full of ashes and the soot-laden roof-sods are ready to collapse. The roof is then broken up and the soot and ashes spread on the ridges as potato manure (Fig. 39).

Although I know of no parallel in other parts of Ireland it 342
seems likely that the custom of removing the roof-covering of the winter-house was once fairly general, at any rate in houses of the old Achill type, which in many details closely resembled the Hebridean black-house. I should be inclined to correlate the custom with the roped style of thatching, which betrays little of the care of other styles and in the old form where the ropes were weighted by hanging stones had a distinctly ephemeral appearance. Where sods were used for walls as well as roofs the whole house would have become a convenient source of fertilizers for the infield. This may be the explanation of the remark made by Dr. Madden that in the south of Ireland 'cottar houses of dirt, sticks and straw were generally removed once a year'.[1] There are indications met with in excavations of houses in Dark Age raths that reconstructions were more frequent than would be justified by ordinary wear and tear. In Sutherland, down to the early nineteenth century, sod-houses were abandoned periodically and pulled down to be utilized as manure, a new hut being erected near by. In this instance the cause was said to be that the accumulation of filth had rendered the place uninhabitable,[2] but this underestimates the tolerance of the Gael. The soot-houses, at any rate, seem to perpetuate old custom, and one thinks back to the earliest days of agriculture when crops were sown in the highly productive soils of newly burnt woodland. Faith in the use of fire persisted longer than the woods. Burning the land, we shall see in Chapter XI, was a very general practice down to the famine years when rough pasture was being reclaimed for potato-growing.

We come now to a group of stone structures built to serve as 343
kilns for drying or burning. The drying-kilns were principally 251
needed for drying corn before it was ground, though flax-drying kilns were also required in the days when the fibre was extracted

[1]Dr. Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions* (1738).
[2]Quoted in F. T. Smith, *The Land of Britain*, Part 3, Sutherland.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 by hand. The corn-drying kiln is a culture-trait clearly adapted
251 to the climatic conditions of the Atlantic coasts of Europe. In extreme cases, as in the Faroe Islands—where even barley does not ripen fully—the ears are kiln-dried before thrashing, but the purpose of the Irish kilns was to harden the thrashed grain before grinding. They can be traced back archaeologically to the last centuries B.C. and on present evidence their introduction may be linked chronologically with grain-storage pits and with the rotary quern. Thus the custom of parching the grain in the straw would be a survival of an older culture layer associated with the saddle-quern and the mortar and possibly with harvesting by pulling the corn by the roots.

One early type of kiln was made of wattles plastered with clay, and was perhaps used like an oven, being heated before the corn was put in it to dry, but those which have come down into recent times were stone-lined pits into which a long flue was led. The fuel used was peat. It is stated that down to famine times every townland in some parts of the country had its kiln, though in other parts they went out of use long ago when landlords, following Anglo-Norman custom, insisted that all corn should be ground at the mill. In Co. Cavan for example, 'every estate has its cornmill and the tenantry is bound under severe penalty to grind their corn thereat and pay toll'.[1] These watermills should be distinguished from the native clackmills,
[376] built over little streams and driven by small horizontal wheels. They were characteristically held in joint ownership, as were the kilns. The Mayo kiln is described as resembling a large tobacco pipe, the circular stone-lined bowl being dug into a sloping bank and the horizontal stem or flue emerging lower down the slope. A bee-hive cap of timber and thatch was the only part visible. In it a straw-covered wattled hatch gave access to the kiln floor, a wooden frame half-way down the bowl of the pipe, on which thrashed sheaves were spread, heads to centre. The grain, laid on this, took about twenty-four hours to dry. The taste of the oatmeal made from grain so dried was said to be delicious.[2] A man who had seen a similar kiln working in Co. Antrim told me that the corn was laid on a linen sheet

[1]C. Coote, *Cavan* (1802), 251.
[2]H. T. Knox, *P.R.I.A.*, 26 (1906–7), 265.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

resting on a well-prepared bed of drawn straw spread on a hurdle, and he recalled the phrase 'soft as kiln bedding' to illustrate the care devoted to the operation. The Gaelic language has quite an extensive vocabulary describing every detail of the floor and the bedding of a corn-kiln. Because of the risk of fire, the Laws stipulated that the kiln must not be placed within so many paces of the dwelling house.

Lint-kilns, for drying flax after it had been taken from the retting dams, were in general use in Ulster in the days of hand-scutching, and a few half-ruined specimens are still in existence. As with corn-kilns—and lime-kilns—they were of two kinds, which may be termed pot-kilns and pipe-kilns. The former are described in Co. Armagh as 'small sod buildings, left open at the top . . . built by the sides of fences near the cabins: they are four or five feet in diameter, and have a hurdle of sticks placed across them at a convenient height (about four feet) on which a small quantity of flax is spread to dry over a turf fire'.[1] The stone-built kilns, known in Co. Tyrone as 'farrows' were similar in construction to the 'tobacco pipe' corn-kilns. The flax, well shaken and loose, was placed on end on a wattled platform set across the bowl of the pipe. When dried it was beaten on a melling-stone with a heavy wooden mell until every stalk was flattened and it then passed to the hand-scutcher.

As the corn-drying kiln has been superseded by the kiln attached to the country grist-mill, so the small lime-kiln has given way, over most of the country, to the large quarry-kiln. At the same time coal has replaced turf as a fuel. The little circular pot-kiln of sods or stones filled with alternate layers of turf and limestone may be met with in the west, but in general the home-burning of lime did not long survive the Great Famine. Down to that time, wherever limestone could be obtained, almost every farm or farm cluster had a lime-kiln. It was the importation of guano and later of artificial manure that put an end to a most advantageous practice. The application of lime to acid soils is a comparatively recent practice, but one likes to think that the little pot-kiln was in use long ago to burn lime or sea-shells for the whitewash with which the mud houses were lightened and brightened. Kelp-kilns, similarly (see Chapter

[1] I. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties* (1837), I, 178.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

314 how these are used by the pollen-specialists to build up a bog
172 chronology. Some, like the magnificent gold ornaments of the Bronze Age, were deposited in the bogs, or in lakes where the bogs later grew, for magical purposes. Other objects were sometimes hidden in the hope of being recovered, and still others were thrown into a bog hole when they were worn out. All have been almost perfectly preserved by the peat, whether made of metal or organic material such as wood, leather or clothing. None of the discoveries which occasionally astonish
314 the turf-cutter and relieve the monotony of his labours is more
172 mysterious than the 'bog butter' which is found in wooden
● 251 vessels or baskets, occasionally in containers of cloth, bark or skin, in quantities ranging from a few pounds to as much as a hundredweight (Fig. 65). During the first half of last century,

FIG. 65. Methers and wooden cups (Belfast Museum). The first example, from Co. Londonderry, contains bog butter. The cups are from the Aran Islands.

when the pressure of population and industrial needs led to immense inroads on the turf bogs, an astonishing number of finds was made. The 'butter' was a perquisite of the finder, and there are records of its being taken to the fair to be sold as grease for wheel-cars, which, like the 'singing carts' of Spain, were very noisy. In fact it resembles lard rather than butter and analysis shows that its composition has changed, but there can be no doubt that it was originally butter. There are many references to the practice of burying butter in bogs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the explanations offered are also many. Petty thought it was done in order to

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

make the butter rancid, since the Irish, he says, preferred strong butter.[1] An eighteenth century writer states that some of the buried butter was 314 172 251

> So strong, a dog with help of wind,
> By scenting out, with ease might find.[2]

Others have claimed that it was buried to mature and purify it, and one writer has seen an explanation in the need to have butter available at Lent. It is reasonable to suppose that the surplus butter of summer would be stored in this way once the preservative properties of peat were known, but the practice is certainly pre-Christian in origin. None of the Irish finds has been securely dated—the majority of the wooden containers have an ageless 'medieval' appearance—but a discovery in Skye was satisfactorily dated to the very beginning of the Christian era (it contained not only cowhairs but some strands from the head of a fair-haired dairymaid).[3] I am inclined to think that a practice which came to be generally adopted for utilitarian reasons had its origin in magic, and that deposits were originally made in the hope of appeasing the powers of evil and inducing an abundant flow of milk from the pastures.[4] The custom may well have originated during the crisis of the climatic deterioration in the last centuries of the pre-Christian era. Surviving folklore is full of the magic properties of butter, and in the west of [234] Ireland it is known that lumps of butter were thrown into loughs and springs through which cattle were driven in order to restore them to health. It seems from the accounts of discoveries in the bogs that some of the butter containers had been thrown into a bog hole rather than buried. Later, no doubt, it became the practice to bury butter in order to preserve it, but if this had always been so I cannot think that there would have been so many unclaimed deposits left to await the slane of the turf-cutter. It should be noticed that the custom of preserving [171] butter in bogs or in moist earth is found also in Scandinavia, Iceland, India and Morocco.[5] It is interesting that bog butter

[1] Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*, 82.
[2] W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle*, Canto 2.
[3] J. Ritchie, *P.S.A.S.*, 75, 5–22.
[4] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 10, 59–65.
[5] ibid., 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[412]

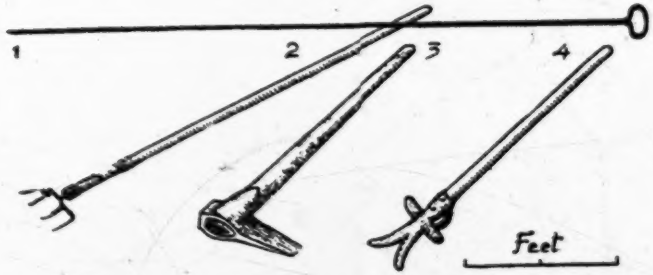

FIG. 66. Some tools used in the bog. (1) Trying iron for locating buried timber, Co. Cork. (2) Turf fork, Co. Armagh. (3) Fir-hatchet or 'finhow', Co. Armagh. (4) Fir-rooter, Co. Galway.

314
172
251

contains no salt, but the explanation may be that it was difficult to obtain and that its addition was not necessary when the butter was preserved by burying it. This is confirmed by the following quotation which shows also that the custom of preserving butter in a bog-hole was still remembered a generation ago in Co. Limerick. Lady Carbery writes: 'In their grandfather's time, butter, flavoured with wild garlic and unsalted (salt cost too much to buy except in small quantities) used to be put in a bog-hole and left to ripen.'[1]

[1]M. Carbery, *The Farm by Lough Gur*, 128.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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springs when fodder was scarce cattle, sheep and horses found 222
edible seaweed on the shore. Scottish planters in Co. Down 231
found that their sheep 'kept fat and wholesome all winter and spring by feeding on the oare.'[1] This is nowadays one of nature's neglected resources partly, no doubt, owing to enclosure and the loss of grazing rights. It has been claimed as the result of experiments that the feeding value of *Ascophyllum nodosum* (knob wrack), which grows towards high tide mark, is almost equal to that of meadow hay. Certain species of seaweed are still, 222
however, gathered for human consumption—carrageen or Irish 262
moss (*Chondrus crispus*) sloke or laver (*Porphyra*), dulse (*Rhodymenia*) and dulaman (probably chanelled weed)—whether as medicine or 'kitchen', that is a tasty morsel to be chewed between meals, or boiled to be eaten with potatoes. In lean times the kitchen might become the staple, and a writer in the 1830's stated that when the potatoes gave out 'hundreds of the people may be seen going to the seaside to gather dulaman.'[2] Carrageen, besides being made into a jelly possessing many virtues, was used as a thickener for milk.

The most profitable way of exploiting seaweed down to 222
recent times was for the burning of kelp, which became a considerable business among shore-dwellers in the eighteenth century as the growth of industry stimulated the production of soap, bleaching materials and glass: more recently kelp was chiefly in demand for the preparation of iodine. But there are dimly remembered ways of utilizing seaweed ashes in the home which would make kelp-burning a traditional occupation. In the Western Isles of Scotland kelp-burning is said to have been introduced from Ireland about 1735, but there too it must have been an ancient custom, for Martin Martin tells us at the end of the seventeenth century that seals, seafowl and fish were [251] preserved in 'the ashes of burnt seaware'.[3] (Cheese, we learn, was preserved in the same way, or 'lapped in tang'). Kelp was made by burning the thick stems of tangle (*Laminaria*) or other coarse weeds—to which, as well as to the ashes, the name kelp is applied—which are thrown up in the winter storms or

[1] W. Montgomery, *Description of Ardes Barony* (1683), 139.
[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 50.
[3] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 135, 159.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

223 Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

225 Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes in-[481] volving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed. The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with [292] charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The [251] meat was salted down.

226 Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now neglected and even despised, though there are commercial [228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he [481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular, [227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned [578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

222 674 If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [Text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 99.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

line grows as if by magic as the quills rotate in nimble fingers. 283
A fresh supply of hairs is inserted from time to time by removing the plugs. I illustrate an example of this fascinating apparatus made for me by Mr. T. J. Barron of Knockbride, Co. Cavan (Fig. 81). Mr. A. T. Lucas has described the Cavan

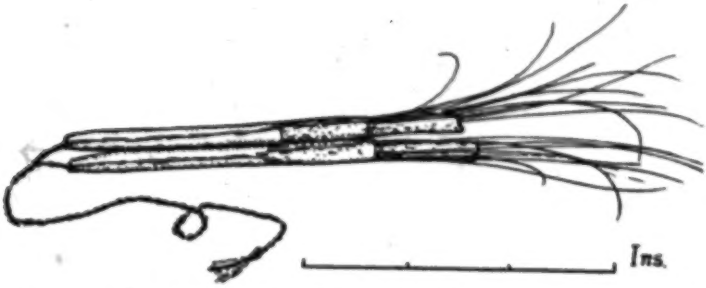

FIG. 81. Quills used for making horsehair fishing lines, Co. Cavan. The quills are rolled between the forefingers.

specimens and others from Co. Mayo.[1] In Cavan the lines were [226]
made for bream fishing: the bream were both split, salted and [251]
dried and stored fresh in little ponds on the lake shores. Around
the coasts—I have seen examples from the Aran Islands and from Co. Down—a more complicated machine was made for twisting long lines of hemp, three spindles being rotated by pulling on an endless cord twisted round each spindle.[2] A very [171]
similar device is employed in China for making bamboo ropes for raising coal in primitive mines. On the shores of Lough Neagh the long lines are manufactured in rustic rope-walks. These night-lines, which have tended to replace draft-nets, are set in lengths of up to four miles. The season of yellow (feeding) 226
eel fishing runs from March to October. It is illegal, as we have mentioned, but shows no signs of being given up. The eel fishermen claim immemorial rights and are not deterred by the fines imposed when they are caught. Their vocabulary, like that of the men who work the eel weirs on the River Bann, has many [192]
words which have come down from Gaelic and perhaps from

[1] A. T. Lucas, *Journal of the Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc.*, 24 (1951), 111–14.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, Fig. 63.

244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

512 264 [521 858] dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them. The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very silent children. They take little part in the family discussion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 462 231 After dinner the men return to their work. The women begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 462 252 354 There is another important daily activity within the house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 462 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed. [521 203 858] The woman sits down with them, talking over the happenings of the day, for children are important purveyors of News.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 to the Middle and especially East European fireplace traditions, which are
354 dominated by the stonebuilt oven. The built-in oven is unfamiliar and unknown to the Irish fireplace, and the Irish types of bread. For baking,
252 which is done every day in Ireland, special utensils, representing very old
354 and original traditions, are used. For baking the griddle bread, *arán greadaille*, the griddle or grid iron, *greadall*, is used. The griddle rests on the tripod, *teannta* or *crann aráin*. In Northern Ireland, bread irons are used, which are not put on the tripod over the fire, but the cake is placed in an upright position supported by the bread iron which is placed before the fire. Very primitive is the method to lean the cake against the bread-stick, *crothnán* or *maide aráin*, which is only a wooden twig of three branches or a three forked root. In Ancient Ireland according to O'Curry (op. cit. vol. I, p. CCCLXIII) the wheatmeal and barley cakes were baked on a griddle, but the oatmeal cakes called *bkocaire* or *blethach* were always baked in upright position before the fire by means of the threepronged fork or stick called *maide an bkocaire* or the *cranachan*.

There is also another certainly old Irish method of bread baking i. e. in
[177] the bastible, *bácús*. When metal stores however are found in peasant houses, they are definitely a late cultural loan from England.

342 Standing at the back of the hearth is one large, thickish flag or often three
354 or more stones forming the hob, *iarta*. In very primitive dwellings I have seen only a couple of rough stones used as hobstones, *leac iarta*. In districts where mud-houses are common a mass or boss of clay behind the fireplace makes up the hob. The pot, *corcán*, or kettle, *citeal*, rests against the hob or hobstones when on the fire. The hob constitutes a protection even for the wall behind.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland and even elsewhere the hob is built up carefully from stone and mortar. An ash corner will be found at the sides of the hob.

In the very primitive stage there is no chimney at all, the smoke finding its way out through the door or a hole in the roof. As I have already mentioned, there can be two smoke holes, one at each gable end of the roof. This is a stage of the black houses very seldom seen in Ireland to day.

At the next stage a kind of basket or wooden chimney is hung over the fire to create a draught, *tarrac*, and to lead the smoke out through the hole in the roof. When there is no chimney but even later, when the chimney has come, to regulate the circulation of air in the kitchen, is is necessary to open and close one of the doors to allow for the changing winds. In the Irish houses the woman who looks after the fire always takes the "wind door" and

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the side walls so that it is impossible to sit round it. The 352
table is not a centre of social activities and has nothing like the same importance as in an English farmhouse. There are crofters' dwellings in Donegal where no table is used; instead, [264]
at meal times, the shallow potato basket or skeehogue (Fig. 31) is taken on the knees of the members of the family as they sit in front of the fire, or an upturned creel may serve instead. Very low oblong tables or trays cut from the solid were formerly used and are occasionally dug up from the bogs. They have holes by which they could be suspended from the wall when not in use, and it may be for convenience of transport during the summer migrations. The potato basket will be seen after meals hanging to dry on the south wall of the house.

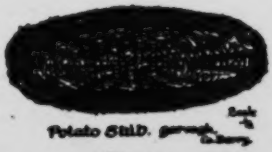

Fig. 31.

To understand the fireside appliances and methods of 354
cooking certain facts should be borne in mind—the absence 252
of the brick oven, the use of turf, a slow-burning fuel admirable for stewing and for things requiring a steady heat, and the universal preference for "thin-bread," or "bread in cakes," as English observers called it. Once more we have to remind 252
ourselves that parallels to surviving habits can be found 40 centuries back, for pottery baking slabs are known from Neolithic western Europe and of course oatcakes are best baked in this way. Flagstone griddles were apparently common down to a few centuries ago, and a dated specimen of a bakestone is illustrated in Fig. 33. Though oatcakes are now baked on the griddle, it is not long since they were set upright before the fire after drying a little, and turned frequently. The simple "bread-stick" (Fig. 32) or even a lump of turf may serve the purpose, but in the north of Ireland, where bread seems to have been relatively more important than in

Fig. 32. Co. Galway. Height 1 ft.

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 75--ANALYST]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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Oatcake Toasters (Harnen Stands)

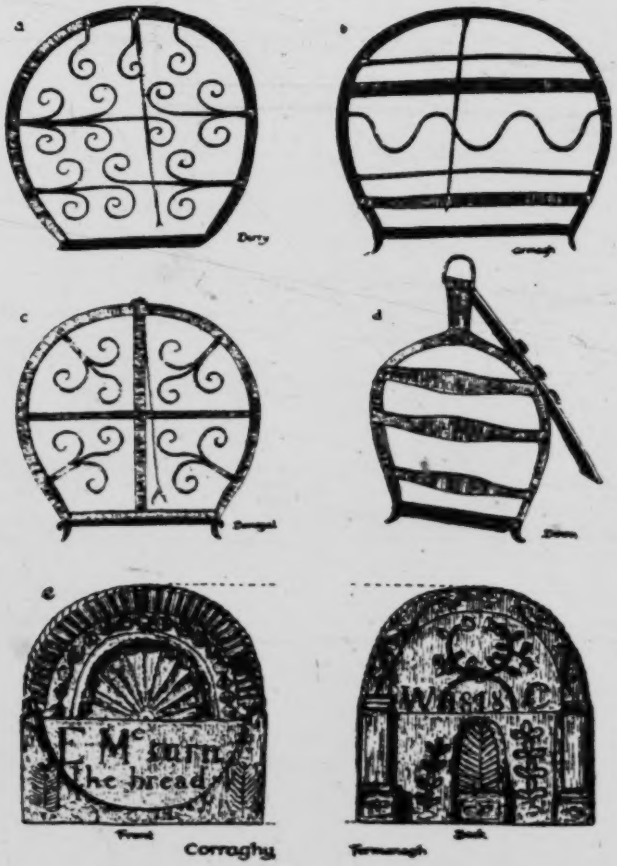

Fig. 33. Scale ½. a, b, c, d, iron; e, stone.

[p. 74]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the south, local smiths vied with each other in producing elaborately-made toasters, or "harnen stands," which are of many different styles and deserve study before they all find their way to the scrap-heap (Fig. 33). When grates became fashionable, toasting "fenders" were hung on the bars. The large flat oatcake is cut into four quarters or "farls."

252

[415]

[417]

Fig. 34.

Fig. 35.

Nowadays the oatcakes have been superseded by wheaten bread of various kinds: the flour is often mixed with a bit of maize or barley flour and the baking is done either on the griddle (Fig. 34), in a deep "fry pan," or in the pot-oven or "bastible" (Fig. 34). Meat roasted in the pot-oven can be delicious and I have a taste for rice puddings done in this way. Others may tell of the virtues of the "bap" and of potato "slim bread," and it is not for me to repeat the strictures of Young and Cobbett on the strong tea which they said would ruin the peasantry. It should be added that the thin-bread tradition has been developed by the town bakeries into a bewildering variety of breads and scones.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

262 make a long list of the plants and herbs which are gathered and dried for use as simples. In some areas, for example Tyrone and Derry, it is recorded that the cattle used to be 237 bled in summer, " in a smooth place, each layer of coagulating 262 blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed, which was cut up in squares and laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year." In Wicklow (1780) " they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food." 273 In the days before sugar was known honey played a considerable part in domestic economy and mead or metheglin, made from honey, was once a popular beverage. We have no knowledge of the period when whiskey distillation was first practised but stills and worms of some antiquity have been found in the bogs, and it is natural to correlate the popularity of whiskey and poteen with the dampness of the climate. A fact worth recording is that until recently illicit stills were made and kept in repair by travelling tinkers in whom it is perhaps not extravagant to see shades of the skilled craftsmen of the later Bronze Age who made cauldrons out of sheet bronze (*cf.* Fig. 5).

●252 Far into the historic period heated stones were employed in cooking and it may be that memories of this old method linger on. The nearest thing I have seen is the custom of plunging a hot poker into cow's milk to " singe it " when it is given to lambs. The explanation offered was that this made its taste resemble that of sheep's milk.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The spinning-wheel and hand-loom are the same as those commonly used on the west coast, the former, as usual, having no treadle. 172 [283]

Querns are still in use, and in connection with them the boran, or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, used for screening the meal. [252] [412]

Grain is still winnowed by shaking it in a sieve in a strong wind. [243]

The method of washing clothes is the same as that customary in Connemara, the clothes being folded, laid in the water of a lake or pool, and beaten with a club or paddle. [296]

The tailor, when making clothes, does not measure his customers with a tape, but takes all his measurements on one sheet of paper, marking the lengths by cutting notches out of the edge. [294]

The curraghs, which are still in use, are of the usual form; they are rapidly going out of fashion, however. [501]

The anchor used for small boats is a stone, not fixed in a wooden clamp, as in Clare and Aran, but having a groove around it for the rope.

As mentioned previously, the apparatus used for the shark-fishing is very rude and primitive.

2. *Antiquities.*— Inishbofin is not very rich in architectural antiquities, and the few that still remain are being rapidly destroyed; some ruins which were standing in the first half of the present century have altogether disappeared, and the others are much shattered. 172

In Inishshark, also, the buildings have sustained a great injury.

It does not lie within my province to enter upon any detailed description of the ruins; but I desire, in the following notes (extracted almost *verbatim* from my Field Note-book), to direct the attention of archæologists to the buildings of interest in these islands which are being rapidly blotted out of existence. The number and nature of these have been described by the late Mr. O'Donovan, Mr. Hardiman, Mr. G. H. Kinahan, and others.

In the account of their present condition given below, they are arranged in the order in which they are described by Mr. Hardiman.[1]

Inishbofin.—(1). St. Colman's church, in Knock townland, built in A.D. 667, is in a very ruinous state, and the interior is filled with rough gravestones and weeds, and in a small recess near the east window is a pile of crania and broken bones. In the enclosure around the church the foundations of the cells (cloghans (?)) of the abbey, or monastic colony, may still be traced, though with difficulty, but the

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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361 narrow strip between the boundary and the wall. 'Fights, tres-
578 passes, confusion, disputes and assaults, were the natural and
311 unavoidable consequences of the rundale system.'[1] On the other
423 hand we must recall the extreme reluctance with which the system was at last abandoned, the social benefits it conferred on members of the kin. The reforming landlord, Lord George Hill, comments that 'the pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together, made them consider the removal of the houses, from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built to the separate farms, a great grievance.'[2] Another writer gives as the basis of the tenants' grievance, 'the recollection of nights of social concourse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of
[517] defence against bailiff or gauger'.[3] There were ceilidhes and spinning parties, and many a clachan had its shanachie (story-teller) and its fiddler or piper—usually a maimed or simple person—who accompanied with folk-tunes. Folk-songs, occupational airs and legendary tales were kept alive in this way. Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there
[252] would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some
[343] districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains.

The openfield which lay around the cluster, normally on the
311 down-hill side so that the vital manure could be 'sliped' down-
423 slope (see Chapter XIII), seems to have been kept in cultivation in some areas at least year after year. This was the infield, in contrast to the outfield, the outlying rough pasture bits of which were temporarily reclaimed and then left to rest for long periods. We shall return to the plough and spade and methods of cultivation in another place but may refer here to the allotment of the holdings in the common fields. Although in many parts of the country the holdings, by the end of the eighteenth century, had become fixed in their scattered parcels on the several qualities of land in the openfield, there is abundant

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.
[2]Ibid., 42.
[3]W. R. Wilde, *Dublin University Magazine*, 41 (1853), 20.

Barnstaple in Devon. The oven-pot may be suspended over the fire but in the south rests on a trivet: the lid is dished so that live turves may be placed on top. It is used also for bread-baking, though the griddle is most commonly employed for this purpose (Fig. 24). 415

FIG. 24. Oven-pot, griddle and trivet

Here we come to a fundamental fact in the geography of the Irish hearth—the absence of the built-in oven. The one exception which proves the rule is its occurrence in the extreme south-east, where, in Co. Wexford, the baronies of Bargy and Forth have retained many features dating from their English settlement in medieval times. Over most of Ireland even when a cooking-range is installed in the hearth, the oven is not used for bread-baking, for oven-bread is not a native food. In central Europe on the other hand the bread-oven, originally of clay, is of great antiquity and the stone or metal oven has come to dominate the fireplace. The difference in bread-types is related on the one hand to environment and economic organization and on the other hand to a whole set of eating habits and ethical values. 354 [262] [171]

Thin bread, or bread in cakes, made without yeast, has been from early times the common bread in most parts of Atlantic Europe, from North Scandinavia to the Basque Country, including Highland Britain and Ireland. Farther afield it is typical of many Mediterranean areas and parts of Asia. In north-western Europe it is closely linked with the cultivation of oats, though home-baked wheaten bread is made in the same way and mixtures with maize and with potatoes are similarly prepared. Potato bread (fadge), a mixture of wheat flour and boiled potatoes, is a popular food which surely had its origins in difficult times. 262 252 171

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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252 As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the
262 price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America,
171 that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly recent development virtually confined to the large towns, especially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads. We should probably make an exception of the English-settled parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargy. Dublin and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as
[256] standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, similarly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost
[493] unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life: its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
262 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully
252 inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread. The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
[857] and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children, they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

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chest was considered to be the best place to store a well-dried ham. 251

Originally the flat round oatcakes were baked on a flat stone, and such flagstone griddles continued to be used in the nineteenth century in parts of Co. Kerry. A late seventeenth-century traveller wrote: 'Their general food is a thin oatcake which they bake upon a broad flat stone made hot, a little sheep's milk cheese, or goat's milk, boiled leeks and some roots.'[1] In Yorkshire the flagstone was built-in over a separate fire and gave way slowly to the iron 'bakestone'. The bread was hardened in front of the fire, resting against a three-legged 'bread-stick' of the type shown in Fig. 25. Representations of bread on the sculptured high crosses of the Early Middle Ages show just such round discs. The traditional form of thin bread, however, is the farl (fardel), shaped like a quarter-circle. The large circular cake is marked with a cross so that it can be readily broken into quarters (farls) after baking and hardening. The 'harning' is done on a wrought iron 'harnen stand' or toaster which has taken the place of the simple bread-stick. It is worth noticing that the Beltane cakes, formerly eaten at the fires which were lit on hill-tops on May Eve, were baked, in Scotland at any rate, before the fire without touching iron.[2] I have seen a few examples of carved stone breadstands which were designed to bake the bread in front of the fire, and no doubt rough stones were originally used for this purpose. The baking stones are elaborately carved and often carry dates ranging, in Scottish examples, from 1674 to 1791.[3] Irish examples seem to be confined to Ulster and they probably represent one of the many culture traits introduced from Scotland (Fig. 25, 6). The wrought iron toasters are tastefully designed and exhibit a great variety of ornament. Specimens from north Ulster and from Scotland display an almost Spanish exuberance in the intricacies of their spiral terminals, and one would like to know if they have their counterparts along the Atlantic coasts of Europe. They are now for the most part museum pieces, for one rarely sees them in use and great numbers have found their way to the scrap heap in the last half century.

252 354 171 [262]

[1] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.* x (1904), 96.
[2] J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-east of Scotland* (1929).
[3] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 239.

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FIG. 25. Oatcake toasters (harnen stands). The first three 'bread-sticks' make an evolutionary series. They are from Armagh, Galway and Clare. Nos. 4 and 5 are bread-irons from Derry and Down; the latter is fitted with a spit-rack. No. 6 (from Fermanagh) is in stone. No. 7 is an unusual type from Armagh. No. 8 is a toasting fender from Antrim.

252 Among food gatherers such as the Californian Indians we find that wild oats are parched before they are ground in a mortar. A similar custom, known as 'burning the corn in the ear', survived until recent times in Ireland and met with as

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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much scorn from English observers as did 'ploughing by the tail' and other archaic customs. In fact it seems to have been associated with tail-ploughing and certain other practices and would thus represent a very ancient cultural substratum which it was once fashionable to call Pictish. It was sufficiently prevalent in the seventeenth century to justify the passing of an Act of Parliament forbidding it, in 1635. 'The wild Irish', writes Fynes Moryson, 'do not thresh their oats, but burn them from the straw and so make cakes thereof.'[1] A fuller description comes from Martin Martin's famous account of the Western Isles: 'The ancient way of dressing corn . . . is called Graddan, from the Irish word Grad, which signifies quick. A woman sitting down, takes a handful of corn, holding it by the stalks in her left hand, and then sets fire to the ears, which are presently in a flame; she has a stick in her right hand . . . beating off the grain at the very instant when the husk is quite burnt, for if she miss of that, she must use the kiln. The corn may be so dressed, winnowed, ground, and baked within an hour after reaping from the ground.'[2] Graddan bread was esteemed for its sweetness. Burstin is the Shetland name for corn dried in this way, or by rolling hot stones among it, or sometimes by deliberately roasting the grain in a kettle.

The taste for butter which makes the Irish consumption per head one of the highest in the world recalls the traditional place of 'whitemeats' in the diet. The Foreign Agricultural Circular of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (October 1955) giving the *per capita* consumption of dairy products for various countries in 1954, shows that the Republic of Ireland is second only to New Zealand in butter consumption, but on the basis of milk and milk products Ireland comes first, with a *per capita* consumption of 1,425 lb. The explanation is to be found not in a large consumption of milk—here Ireland ranks eighth—but in the low average fat content of Irish milk. Nevertheless the *per capita* consumption of butter is extremely high, 41 lb. per annum, as compared with 14 lb. in the United Kingdom and 9 lb. in the U.S.A. Butter spread thickly on fresh bread is a tasty if simple food, and one suspects that in pre-famine times

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 229.
[2]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles* (1703), (1934 ed., 244).

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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[82] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[602] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
• 252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[312] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. 262
Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat 272
biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals. [561]

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the 252
open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread
which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring [443]
must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a
family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally 252
made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in 262
a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and [234]
also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the
fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial
product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are
eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking [273]
their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread gener-
ously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained
of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on
the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their [561]
bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing
six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days
will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, [443]
mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the
shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from
mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy
are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other
shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or
cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and [824]
are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled
but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which
when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed [751]
to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard
them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even 262
when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking 252
pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than 415
its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat
them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. 262
They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed 264
only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is 415
thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the [829]
folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor
did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which
the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes
when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 796 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [198] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [798] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [362] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [516] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

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539 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
262 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully
252 inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread. The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
[857] and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children, they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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221 fields made ready for the return of the cattle to
241 them. Each 'hard' day is more than welcome, for
462 then work in the fields can go on. By St. Patrick's day, they say in Clare, the potatoes should all be 'down'; after that there still remains much to do,
[776] though the worst is over. St. Patrick promised that after his day *every* day would 'come hard'.

Through the rest of the spring, work is at its most intense. Potatoes must be 'stirred' and 'landed'; other root crops 'put down'. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the season of greater milk yields and intensified butter-making. Before that in February and March
[443] the 'great spring fairs' take place, and the year's buying and selling of cattle must be done.

Then, gradually, with the return of warm weather and the drying-off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is often the first summer month. Soon the bogs are dry enough for cutting the year's supply of turf and for stacking it to dry under the summer warmth at the bog's edge.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the first fruits of the farmer's labour begin to appear. The first crop is cabbage, which was planted at odd times very early. It is practically the only green of the diet and old people remember June or July *an*
[261] *chabáiste*, 'the hungry month', when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semi-starvation upon cabbage. Today new varieties of potatoes mature as early as June. But

167 landscape combined with financial help
657 of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is sep-
[131] arated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring
311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs
132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[3] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

Isolation is a major problem, but on
505 four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost
[261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport
Problems
[137] [3] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

Of these exports, of course, cattle were the most valuable item and represented the great export staple. They were likewise the crop to which most other produce could be devoted when not used as human food. That this kind of conversion of other stuffs into cattle could take place is to be seen in the figures for milk. Though the Free State produced in the year in question a total of 589,000,000 gallons of milk, including both whole milk and butter, comparing favorably with such an output as Switzerland's yearly 528,000,000 in 1923, only 43 per cent of it was exported, while in Switzerland the export was 67 per cent of the Swiss total.

The figures for exports introduce a new factor of difference between the holdings of large and small size and their populations. Small holdings do not share equally with large holdings either in the consumption of agricultural produce or in its export. In both consumption and export commerce in the Free State, small holders and large holders play distinct roles.

Taking the first of these considerations, the figures for consumption reveal the difference. The estimated human consumption of whole milk (as milk) was some 90,000,000 gallons, according to the statistical record of the year 1928,[17] of which 70,000,000 gallons were consumed by agriculturalists and 20,000,000 by the remainder of the population. It was estimated that on the farms 38 gallons were consumed yearly per person. But that is the figure for all farms. There is a considerable difference here between types of farms.

Thus, in this case, on farms less than 50 acres only 36 gallons per person per annum were consumed, it was estimated, while on farms of over 50 acres, the consumption was 42 gallons. In Munster, the chief milk-producing province,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 the difference is even more marked, the indices being 35 gallons and 44 gallons.

262 Similar differences hold as well for the consumption of milk as butter, a commodity of which the Irish consume more than any other civilized country. The difference between farms under and farms over 50 acres can be expressed in the spread between 40 and 48 pounds annual consumption per person. For poultry and for eggs, great farm diet staples, similar differences hold. On farms less than 50 acres, 197 turkeys, 601 geese, 672 ducks, and 3,177 ordinary

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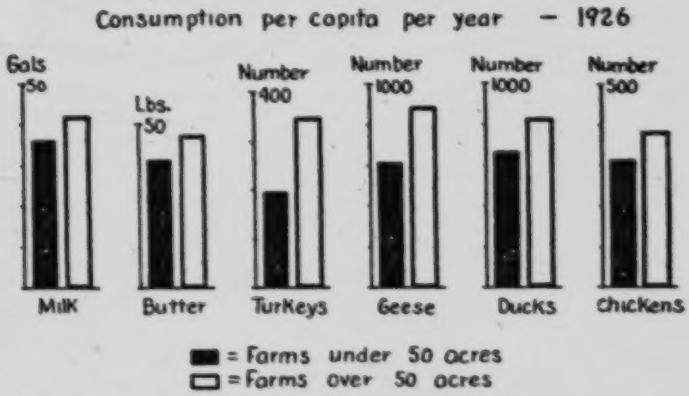
FIGURE 5



Notice that in each instance the smaller farms produce more, consume less. The great "money crop," cattle, which neither party consumes to any great degree, tells another story.

fowls, we are told, were consumed in the year in question, for every 1,000 persons living on such farms; while on farms over 50 acres, 325, 884, 873, and 3,823 are the respective figures. "As might be expected, the difference between average consumption on large and small farms of valuable fowl like turkeys is very marked." [18]

In the case of eggs, of those consumed per 100 persons on

[18] *Agricultural Output . . . . 1926–27*, p. 37.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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farms in January 1929,[19] the figures are for small farms 530, for large farms 582. All of these figures reflect a difference of diet the more marked because the small farmer population is so much the larger.

241
262
511

In Figure 5 this difference of consumption is represented in the form of blocks depicting the contrast between small and large farms. One could conclude quite rightly from this kind of picture that in each instance the smaller farms produce more per person at work and eat less. In terms of production, then, the small farm is the more productive. In terms of monetary return, it is a different story. Cattle, of course, are the Irish "money crop," much like cotton and wheat in parts of the United States.

Observation makes it clear that this difference of diet is more marked than even these figures reveal. But figures for other items of diet appearing in agricultural production are not available in correlation with farm size. The home consumption of meats from the farm animals, except pigs, is negligible among both kinds of farmers. Nevertheless, we can gain a substantial insight into the difference in meat-eating between large and small farmers when we realize that, out of the comparatively small total of 123,000 cattle and 504,000 sheep and lambs slaughtered for consumption in the Free State in 1926, a per capita count of average consumption by dressed weight gives such a predominantly large-holding county as Westmeath a weight of 34 pounds per consuming person, counties with large urban population rising higher, while the same count gives such a predominantly small-holding county as Mayo a weight of only 13 pounds. Clare, where small and medium farmers are predominant in the population, shows a similar small consumption of meat, a similar count giving only 19 pounds per person.[20]

In fact, the large farm population shares a meat diet with

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 49.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 the cities and larger towns that is unknown on the small
262 farms. The fact is evident when it is observed that Dublin,
511 Cork, and Waterford counties (each dominated numerically by the city of the name) count an average meat consumption taken on the same scale of 69, 40, and 37 pounds per capita respectively.

231 The difference between the two kinds of farm shows itself
241 again strongly in the export trade from Ireland and in the
439 roles of each in the transfer of farm produce to its ultimate market. The two kinds of farm make a totally different disposal of their produce, particularly their cattle. In this fact we see for the first time that in some regard they have a complementary role. Between them Irish cattle trade is carried on.

231 The huge internal Irish cattle trade is thus significant.
438 It reveals itself in the figures as a movement from small farm to large, an interchange between the two kinds of farmers which shows once again their distinctness. The trade is both geographical and social, in the sense that it flows between two sections of Ireland and between her two great agricultural classes.

To get at the facts which show the case demands looking at the statistics of cattle in the Free State. These illustrate clearly how far the internal cattle trade shows up the great difference between the two types of farm. It is necessary to take into consideration the age groups of cattle in the various areas and in the possession of holders of various acreages in those areas. This roundabout course of determining the outlines of internal cattle trade is necessary because there are no barriers or *octrois* at which count might be made as the cattle move from dealer to dealer across the country.

231 The seven southwestern counties are the areas predominant in milch cattle production; they are the areas of the calf-producing cow. Clare is one of these. A chart of birth dates of cattle in various parts of Ireland demonstrates that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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members and the organization of effort involved. It is to be expected, of course, that there is a great deal of variation at different seasons of the year, a fact which makes it impossible to describe farm activities without reference to seasonal change and the requirements of various crops. Nevertheless, the work round the house is constant and less variant than that outside on the "land," and for that reason it is significant to begin with it. 512

A typical winter day begins for the farm family about seven-thirty in the morning. At other seasons the family rises earlier, but the long wet days have reduced outside work to a bare minimum and confine the work of the family members within doors. To the woman falls the first duty of the day. She must rake together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire in the hearth, put down new sods for the fire, and rekindle the blaze. This done, she hangs the kettle on the hook, making ready for the first tea of the day. For the rest of the day she must keep the hanging kettle ready, for at any moment of the day she may be called upon to serve a cup of tea to her husband, children, and all visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast, usually of bread, eggs, and milk. By the time breakfast is finished, the household is ready for its workaday existence. The farmer father and husband is dressed and ready for his daily tasks, in which he relies upon the aid of whatever grown sons may still be at home, and who now take their breakfasts beside him. Similarly, the farm wife and mother who serves her men, husband and sons, and stands by unwilling to take her place at the deal table before the window at one side of the kitchen hearth until they have eaten their fill, is ready to begin her daily round with the help of the daughters and young children of both sexes who wait their turns with her. 512 462 264 [272] [262]

In the household the responsibility of day-to-day housekeeping belongs to the woman. Hers, too, is the care of the 512 462 356

462 pork. By the time this is ready, the men are in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

In the meantime the men have been engaged upon work of their own. The farmer rises when he hears his wife busy herself in rekindling the turf on the hearth. If there are sons, he wakes them. After that he goes to the cow barns in the haggard to inspect the cattle housed there overnight and tend to their wants in water and hay. After breakfast, if the day is fine, neither too bitterly cold nor too soakingly wet, he sallies forth into the fields to whatever work the time of the year demands. If he finds himself confined to the house, he still has plenty to do in house and haggard.

512 462 264 [153] If he and his sons go to the fields, he probably returns about eleven-thirty for the noon meal, the heavy meal of the day. Long habit calls forth his hunger and identifies it with the house. Several countrymen have remarked that they never feel hungry away from the house but are ready to eat when they get inside. The dinner unites most of the family for the first time during the day since breakfast. Only the small children of school age are absent. Their share of the meal is often saved for them until they return about four o'clock.

[262] [521] As at breakfast, the men sit down together immediately, falling to the steaming plates of cabbage, bacon, and potatoes the woman sets before them. As they eat, she stands ready to refill their plates, talking with them about the morning's work and the news of the neighborhood. It is the chief time of family conversation. During the meal the woman has boiled tea and, when the men finish with their plates, she clears away and lays bread and tea before them. Sometimes there is a longer interval between tea and dinner, devoted to smoking and talk.

512 264 [273] As before, the women and children do not eat until the men have finished. They take their places together when the men have left or have moved off to smoke an after-dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.

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The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the "landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and whatever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over. 221 241 314

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to allow turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round. 221 372 [805]

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabáiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June. 221 241 262

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up. 221 241

The first true harvest and the most important one of the year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is 246 221

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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388 521 He or she takes little warming to the task. They were hard times, even "bad times" of famine and death, but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. Even the mention of the lack of tools, draft animals, shoes, and many other amenities of present existence evokes comments such as "Weren't they the poor old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" Phrases of murmured commiseration and headshaking regret or pity are not without a tinge of pride for listener and teller alike. Remembered necessities in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale are now feats of endurance and strength to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young man today to walk from Corrofin to Ballinasloe in his bare feet forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who could shoulder a [482] creel turf and carry it a hundred yards out through the bog mud to the famine road before the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunnagore?

388 521 262 Even the meager diet of the old times is remembered with a certain nostalgic pride. An old man, called upon one winter evening, began his remarks upon the theme characteristically:

> In the old days people used to have a maize gruel "stirabout" for breakfast, but you couldn't get any of the young people to eat it now. There was a potato bread, *stampaí*, and it was very good too. The people in the old times had great teeth and, when they died, they would have every one left in their heads. Their teeth would be stronger than a horse's. When the people ate potatoes and bread three times a day, they were healthier and lived to a ripe old age. Now with all the better food, they are not as well.

888 521 Such a belief rises very frequently to the lips of the old people who remember the days of the past either in their own or their parents' experience. The implication is clear. The young people, the new generation, are not so strong

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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231 241 434 437 As calves grow up they move from the small farm to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them until they are ready for the English table. Consequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

262 184 With all this, it is natural that the small farmers should be different consumers from the rest. They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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present the one staple which he must buy off the 262
farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and 184
the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for 184
mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are 241
cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs 412
again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their 184
lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer- 241
owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the 464
owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of 241
peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in 231
a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is 434
that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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462 to butter is her charge. She is an expert at the
512 churn.

Her human charges fed, she must feed the animals in their turn. The full-grown cattle and the horse are not her charge, but she must tend calves and pigs and fowl. Milk and potatoes must be prepared for them all.

Before noon, she hangs a second kettle from the hook. This time she fills it with potatoes for the
[262] family. In season, she will add white cabbage, and a portion or two of bacon or salt pork. By the time this is ready the men will be in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

For the men have not been idle. The farmer-father and husband wakes his sons, inspects the cattle and horse, if there is one, and gives them hay and water. If the day is fine, he sallies forth to the fields; if not, and the weather confines him to house and haggard, he has still plenty to do, in building walls, repairing and making machine parts, harness and tools.

Dinner unites the family for the first time since breakfast. Only children of school age are absent and their share of the meal is saved till later. As before, the women and children do not eat till the men have finished. But as the women serve, they
[521] all talk about the experiences of the day. It is the chief time of general family conversation. Only the children are silent, for in rural Ireland a well-
[858] behaved child is a silent one.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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181 Fleure writes of Wales, another section of "The Celtic Fringe": "the isolated rural communities are, of themselves, poor in material resources, and their efforts have, therefore, not until recently gone into great buildings or sculpture or painting or orchestral music, all demanding a large equipment. Rather have they found their scope in poetry and oratory and song, arts in which the poorest labourer can often compete on fairly equal terms with his richer neighbours. In this way, and in others as well, poverty has been a safeguard of an intensely democratic feeling as well as a help towards the survival of the language and its associations." In the field of human export, too, Ireland's products are scholars, doctors and poets as well as spade-workers.

243 262 114 There are, as we shall try to show, many other features of Irish life which can be related to the pastoral tradition. Because of its value as fodder and for reasons of soil and climate, oats is the "corn" crop of Atlantic Europe. Apart from the value of oats as food for livestock, oatmeal in various forms has been and still is largely consumed, and its baking into thin pan bread over an open fire instead of in an oven has helped to preserve the prehistoric open hearth with its varied 114 and interesting gear and traditions. Ignoring the literary and archæological evidence, many writers have assumed that the inhabitants of ancient Ireland were entirely pastoral and nomadic. On this topic much solemn nonsense has been written, and it gained wide currency because it seemed both to condemn the Irish and to corroborate the prevailing view of man's cultural evolution from hunter to agriculturist through a stage of pastoral nomadism. It now seems certain that man learnt the elements of cultivation at least as soon as he learnt how to domesticate animals, and in the diffusion of these ideas through Europe from the Near East, Ireland received the germs of both sources of food-production at about 114 the same period, let us say 4,000 years ago. There are many 221 signs that in Ireland's dark and middle ages cattle played an even greater role in rural life than in earlier prehistory and later history, but at all times the unit of the fixed family

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CHAPTER V.

WOODLANDS, FIELDS, FENCES AND GATES.

We have seen that the Irish landscape, in ancient times 137
very well wooded, is now one of the most treeless in Europe, and we have shown how changes of climate as well as the depredations of livestock made great inroads into the forests. In later centuries many woodlands were destroyed by the English for strategic reasons, while the demands of shipbuilders, of charcoal burners, tanners and stave-makers reduced the oakwoods to insignificant proportions. Poor scrub growth was in many areas all that was left. "An oak, an ash, or an elm," wrote Arthur Young of Mitchelstown in Co. Cork, "is almost as great a rarity as an olive, an orange or a mulberry." Ash remains the commonest tree, especially on the limestone of the Central Plain, despite the fondness of cattle for its leaves. We know that its valuable wood was used from the Bronze Age for handles and spear-shafts, and in the Pale it was insisted that "every husbandman having a plough shall set by the year twelve ashes in the ditches and closes of his farm." In the words of Evelyn: "It serves the soldier, the carpenter, the wheelwright, cartwright, cooper, turner and thatcher . . . from the pike, spear and bow to the plough."

Acorns and hazel nuts were often used as a source of food [262] ●
before the coming of the potato, and almost every tree had its particular uses in a society living on its own resources and

[p. 39]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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137 bound by innumerable ties to a countryside richer and fuller
[262] than that of to-day. Thus birch, rowan, hazel, thorn, sally and holly all had their special purposes, and yew was in great demand for croziers and shrines. So we might go on down to the humblest lichen (for crottle dye) and the seaweed (Chapter 16). Bog timber, oak and "fir," had many uses—for furniture and implements, for roofs, gates, slide-cars and boat-timber as well as for fir ropes and lighting "splits." Superstitious customs are associated with several of the native trees, especially the rowan, the ash, hazel and whitethorn (Chap. 18).

Sycamore and beech, neither of them native to Ireland, have been extensively planted in recent centuries and grow so well that many have assumed them to be indigenous. The beech loves the well-drained moraines, while the sycamore, one of the few trees which will stand up to the full force of
[351] the salt-laden winds, is planted in coastal districts for the shelter it provides: behind its dense summer foliage many a
313 low cabin lies hidden. Its white easily-worked timber is
137 sought by the wood-turner. Formerly the beetling engines of the linen country made a demand for beech and sycamore—the former for the beaters and the latter for the great beam. On steep hillsides which man has been unable to utilize one may still see patches of what may be regarded as wild scrub, a tangle of hazel, ash, black and white thorn, or birch, rowan and alder; but apart from the high-walled demesnes where giant trees are allowed to grow old and rot, the Irish landscape
137 is singularly bare of timber. Visitors from England will notice the poor development of hedgerow trees except for the ash of Co. Meath. This must be attributed largely to the fact that hedge trees have to grow in raised banks or "ditches," as they are called. Hedges and trees are very rarely planted on the level, for the ditch-tradition is older than the hedge. To quote Young once more: "I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks." But there is some compensation, in autumn, in the wealth of blackberries which they produce (Fig. 10).

137 Travellers of the early 19th century constantly refer to
311 landscapes without a single tree or shrub or any trace of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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rush-light holders with attached candle-sockets. The dipped 373
rushes were sometimes plaited together to make the light last 416
longer. It is of interest to note that the war-time shortage of oil and candles has led to a revival of the use of rush-lights in some country districts.

A great amount of interesting information might be 262
collected about the food of the Irish peasantry, the methods of cooking, times of meals and the many customs and superstitions connected with food and drink. We may close this chapter with a few remarks about some foods other than bread It is curious to reflect that the diet of some western districts, "potatoes for 10 months and Indian meal for two," is so largely dependent on crops of New World origin! Potatoes were made tasty with "kitchen" or "point," that is a bit of [25]
relish such as a salted herring; and in difficult times they were only half boiled so that the hard core, called the "moon" or "bone," might prolong the processes of digestion. In Ulster the name given to July was "the blue month" because it was a time of scarcity between the old potatoes and the new crop, but generally speaking milk products were consumed during the summer months. Meat, by which the countryman means [25]
beef, was often salted down and reserved for winter use, but meat eating tended to be restricted to certain seasons or festivals such as Christmas, Shrove and Easter.

Another seasonal food was the "sowens" or porridge made from soured "meal-seeds" sifted from the oatmeal. It was traditionally eaten at Hallowe'en; and the Irish name for the 1st of November is Samhain, or "Sowin." I have heard this dish nicknamed "water bewitched." The thin liquid resulting from steeping the fine meal-dust was also drunk and called "thewin," a substitute for buttermilk. A kind of whey ("troander") was made by mixing sweet milk and buttermilk, and "drammock" was a harvest drink consisting of raw oatmeal and water. Then there is the boxty bread made from potato flour and cooked on the griddle. Many traditional foods and drinks are now little more than memories and of some, for instance "heather beer," the country folk say that "the secret has been lost." But one might still

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262 make a long list of the plants and herbs which are gathered and dried for use as simples. In some areas, for example Tyrone and Derry, it is recorded that the cattle used to be 237 bled in summer, " in a smooth place, each layer of coagulating 262 blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed, which was cut up in squares and laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year." In Wicklow (1780) " they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food." 273 In the days before sugar was known honey played a considerable part in domestic economy and mead or metheglin, made from honey, was once a popular beverage. We have no knowledge of the period when whiskey distillation was first practised but stills and worms of some antiquity have been found in the bogs, and it is natural to correlate the popularity of whiskey and poteen with the dampness of the climate. A fact worth recording is that until recently illicit stills were made and kept in repair by travelling tinkers in whom it is perhaps not extravagant to see shades of the skilled craftsmen of the later Bronze Age who made cauldrons out of sheet bronze (*cf.* Fig. 5).

252 Far into the historic period heated stones were employed in cooking and it may be that memories of this old method linger on. The nearest thing I have seen is the custom of plunging a hot poker into cow's milk to " singe it " when it is given to lambs. The explanation offered was that this made its taste resemble that of sheep's milk.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

222

[413]
[244]

Fig. 102.

[439]

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222
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Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

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[439]

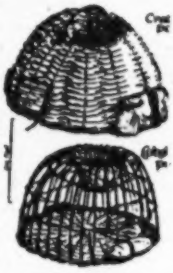

Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the grave-stones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one
231 time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow fastened to the horses tail.

The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed
513 in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and *is regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the
[334] strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but
262 fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more
[272] extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal)
264 stirabout, buttermilk.

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[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or stirabout and milk. 264

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small [439] dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money. [437]

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit distilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent. 273

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character. 291

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all [439] shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local [444] shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel.

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares [443] by a sort of Dutch auction.

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [262]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. [823] A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be buried alive with its wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of certain acts in the hope of inducing success in similar fields of action, provides an explanation of many of the folk-practices with which we are concerned. 178 [189]

Pushed too far, however, the observance of such antiquated practices in the end defeated its purpose and threatened the extinction of traditional life. A clue to much of the paradox in Irish culture is to be found in the reaction which follows an adherence to custom carried beyond the breaking-point. Spade-labour for example has reluctantly given way to the plough, but once the plough is generally accepted the spade becomes a despised implement so that a vegetable garden is a rare thing, at best a tiny plot left to the care of the women. In another field, the substitution of the vilest American films for the traditional ceilidhe gathering is a sad change. The crisis of the Great Famine was a major turning-point, and there followed a general reaction against everything associated with it. This was particularly true of the Irish peasants who sought refuge across the Atlantic: the American immigrants, driven from the land by extreme poverty, were determined to have nothing more to do with it and became almost invariably town-dwellers. The donkey and the goat, symbols of poverty, are neglected and despised in many parts of Ireland. A Donegal crofter once told me he dare not keep a donkey for fear of being unable to marry off his daughters: instead he kept a horse, though he could ill afford one, for its prestige value. The dangerously monotonous diet of Irish countryfolk, also, can be explained in the light of the famine. So bitter is the folk-memory of these times that useful wild sources of food are now neglected and despised; for example, wild berries of all kinds, the ubiquitous eel, hare and rabbit; the cresses and the edible seaweeds and fungi. It should be added, however, that some of these foods were apparently tabu—the rabbit, an Anglo-Norman invader, was rarely eaten—and that the potato had played its part in debasing diet in the period before the famine.[1] [177] [546] 178 262

Perhaps the most striking example of reaction is to be found in the expressed desire of most country people to have an isolated dwelling-house. The clachan or hamlet, once the centre of communal life and tradition, is despised, a symbol of squabbling 178 361

[1]R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), Ch.15.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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century we find a description from Ulster: 'In the bosom of the Mourne Mountains there is a place called the Deers' Meadow to which great numbers of poor people resort in the summer months to graze their cattle. They bring with them their wives, children and little wretched furniture, erect huts, and there live . . . and often cut their turf.'[1] A century later a fuller account of a more complicated transhumance, reminiscent of the Norwegian seaboard, comes from Donegal: 'It often happens that a man has three dwellings—one in the mountains, another upon the shore, and the third upon an island, he and his family flitting from one to another of these habitations . . . This change usually takes place upon a fixed day, the junior branches of the family generally perform the land journey on the top of the household goods with which the pony may often be seen so loaded, and at the same time so obscured, that little more than the head can be observed; and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected et cetera . . . creep along the roads.'[2] The author goes on to comment on the restrictions imposed on the comfort and possessions of the peasants by their 'Arab mode of life'. In Achill Island too the movements were complicated, involving the entire population which, having moved to the summer pastures and sowed their corn, returned to the permanent coastal village for the high summer to fish and went back to gather the harvest at the booley in the autumn.[3]

For the most part we are dependent on folk tradition for details of booleying. The Ordnance Survey Letters written in the 1830s contain valuable material from Counties Antrim and Londonderry, and the following extract relates to the parish of Dunaghy: 'Some of the very old men of the country recollect seeing the boliehouses inhabited. They were built of sods upon a foundation of earth and stones and were thatched with heath. Many of the poorer sort lived here in summer grazing the cattle upon land that nobody appears to have claimed and supporting themselves upon their milk and blood which they took from

[1]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 125.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.
[3]An account by Sir William Wilde, written in 1836, is contained in Wood-Martin, *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (1888), 238.

them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rectangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Barnstaple in Devon. The oven-pot may be suspended over the fire but in the south rests on a trivet: the lid is dished so that live turves may be placed on top. It is used also for bread-baking, though the griddle is most commonly employed for this purpose (Fig. 24). 415

FIG. 24. Oven-pot, griddle and trivet

Here we come to a fundamental fact in the geography of the Irish hearth—the absence of the built-in oven. The one exception which proves the rule is its occurrence in the extreme south-east, where, in Co. Wexford, the baronies of Bargy and Forth have retained many features dating from their English settlement in medieval times. Over most of Ireland even when a cooking-range is installed in the hearth, the oven is not used for bread-baking, for oven-bread is not a native food. In central Europe on the other hand the bread-oven, originally of clay, is of great antiquity and the stone or metal oven has come to dominate the fireplace. The difference in bread-types is related on the one hand to environment and economic organization and on the other hand to a whole set of eating habits and ethical values. 354 [262] [171]

Thin bread, or bread in cakes, made without yeast, has been from early times the common bread in most parts of Atlantic Europe, from North Scandinavia to the Basque Country, including Highland Britain and Ireland. Farther afield it is typical of many Mediterranean areas and parts of Asia. In north-western Europe it is closely linked with the cultivation of oats, though home-baked wheaten bread is made in the same way and mixtures with maize and with potatoes are similarly prepared. Potato bread (fadge), a mixture of wheat flour and boiled potatoes, is a popular food which surely had its origins in difficult times. 262 252 171

POTS AND PANS

252 As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the
262 price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America,
that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline
171 in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial
baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly
recent development virtually confined to the large towns, especially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads. We should probably make an exception of the English-settled parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargy. Dublin and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as
[256] standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some
seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, similarly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost
[493] unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life:
its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
262 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully
252 inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread. The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
[857] and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children,
they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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chest was considered to be the best place to store a well-dried ham. 251

Originally the flat round oatcakes were baked on a flat stone, and such flagstone griddles continued to be used in the nineteenth century in parts of Co. Kerry. A late seventeenth-century traveller wrote: 'Their general food is a thin oatcake which they bake upon a broad flat stone made hot, a little sheep's milk cheese, or goat's milk, boiled leeks and some roots.'[1] In Yorkshire the flagstone was built-in over a separate fire and gave way slowly to the iron 'bakestone'. The bread was hardened in front of the fire, resting against a three-legged 'bread-stick' of the type shown in Fig. 25. Representations of bread on the sculptured high crosses of the Early Middle Ages show just such round discs. The traditional form of thin bread, however, is the farl (fardel), shaped like a quarter-circle. The large circular cake is marked with a cross so that it can be readily broken into quarters (farls) after baking and hardening. The 'harning' is done on a wrought iron 'harnen stand' or toaster which has taken the place of the simple bread-stick. It is worth noticing that the Beltane cakes, formerly eaten at the fires which were lit on hill-tops on May Eve, were baked, in Scotland at any rate, before the fire without touching iron.[2] I have seen a few examples of carved stone breadstands which were designed to bake the bread in front of the fire, and no doubt rough stones were originally used for this purpose. The baking stones are elaborately carved and often carry dates ranging, in Scottish examples, from 1674 to 1791.[3] Irish examples seem to be confined to Ulster and they probably represent one of the many culture traits introduced from Scotland (Fig. 25, 6). The wrought iron toasters are tastefully designed and exhibit a great variety of ornament. Specimens from north Ulster and from Scotland display an almost Spanish exuberance in the intricacies of their spiral terminals, and one would like to know if they have their counterparts along the Atlantic coasts of Europe. They are now for the most part museum pieces, for one rarely sees them in use and great numbers have found their way to the scrap heap in the last half century.

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[262]

[1] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.* x (1904), 96.
[2] J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-east of Scotland* (1929).
[3] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 239.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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much scorn from English observers as did 'ploughing by the tail' and other archaic customs. In fact it seems to have been associated with tail-ploughing and certain other practices and would thus represent a very ancient cultural substratum which it was once fashionable to call Pictish. It was sufficiently prevalent in the seventeenth century to justify the passing of an Act of Parliament forbidding it, in 1635. 'The wild Irish', writes Fynes Moryson, 'do not thresh their oats, but burn them from the straw and so make cakes thereof.'[1] A fuller description comes from Martin Martin's famous account of the Western Isles: 'The ancient way of dressing corn . . . is called Graddan, from the Irish word Grad, which signifies quick. A woman sitting down, takes a handful of corn, holding it by the stalks in her left hand, and then sets fire to the ears, which are presently in a flame; she has a stick in her right hand . . . beating off the grain at the very instant when the husk is quite burnt, for if she miss of that, she must use the kiln. The corn may be so dressed, winnowed, ground, and baked within an hour after reaping from the ground.'[2] Graddan bread was esteemed for its sweetness. Burstin is the Shetland name for corn dried in this way, or by rolling hot stones among it, or sometimes by deliberately roasting the grain in a kettle.

The taste for butter which makes the Irish consumption per head, one of the highest in the world recalls the traditional place of 'whitemeats' in the diet. The Foreign Agricultural Circular of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (October 1955) giving the *per capita* consumption of dairy products for various countries in 1954, shows that the Republic of Ireland is second only to New Zealand in butter consumption, but on the basis of milk and milk products Ireland comes first, with a *per capita* consumption of 1,425 lb. The explanation is to be found not in a large consumption of milk—here Ireland ranks eighth—but in the low average fat content of Irish milk. Nevertheless the *per capita* consumption of butter is extremely high, 41 lb. per annum, as compared with 14 lb. in the United Kingdom and 9 lb. in the U.S.A. Butter spread thickly on fresh bread is a tasty if simple food, and one suspects that in pre-famine times

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 229.
[2]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles* (1703), (1934 ed., 244).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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262 the staple was butter and oatcake rather than oatcake and butter. When bread was made from gritty quern-ground flour the butter would have served as a lubricant to assist the swallowing process. 'They swallow lumps of butter mixed with oatmeal', wrote Fynes Moryson about the year 1600, 'and love no meat more than sour milk curdled.'[1] When food was left out for the fairies it was generally oatmeal and butter: needless to say, particularly when accompanied by whiskey, it disappeared during the night. In the very high present-day Irish consumption of milk products we notice once more the survival of ancient custom, for milk products were the staple food of medieval times in all parts of the British Isles.[2] The Irish laws distinguish between summer and winter food, and the consumption of meat was almost confined to the winter months. Pork was the most highly esteemed meat, but no doubt deer and other products of the chase augmented the fare for the upper classes. Surplus cattle were presumably killed off at
251 Martinmas and salted as 'marts', but among the peasantry the emphasis was on milch cows, and cow's meat was fit only for stews. Butter—and whiskey also—was preserved in bogs to be available in the lean days of spring (Chapter XIV). On the other
234 hand there is little evidence of cheese-making apart from soft cheese, including that made from sheep's milk, and the Irish consumption of cheese is today probably the lowest in Europe. The making of hard cheese is a comparatively late development everywhere, so that Ireland may be said once more to have remained faithful to ancient practice. With a *per capita* consumption of 2·7 lb. in 1954, the Irish republic comes last in the fifteen countries for which figures are given in the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Circular quoted above; the highest is Norway with 19 lb. per head. I may add that I have found no record or tradition of the milking of sows which occurs in parts of Spain and which, it is suggested, may have been a Celtic custom.[3] It is said in Ireland that if a man drinks sow's milk he can see the wind for ever after.

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[2]J. C. Drummond and A. Wilbraham, *The Englishman's Food* (1939), 51.
[3]R. U. Sayce, 'Milking and Dairying', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 51 (1951–52), 120–54.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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POTS AND PANS

Despite certain conservative elements it must be recognized that very great changes have taken place in the Irishman's diet in recent centuries. Tea and the potato, invaders from east and west, have largely replaced whitemeats, although another more recent pair of intruders, maize-meal and rice, distributed by the British government during the famine, have made no such conquest. Dr. Salaman has fully discussed the depressing effects of the potato on diet and culture.[1] Unless one has seen a peasant family sitting down to a meal of boiled potatoes it is hardly possible to credit the consumption figures. It used to be reckoned that a stone a day was the allowance for a labourer, and it was 'by no means uncommon, in times of plenty, for a labourer to eat 14 lb. of potatoes at a meal'.[2] An average consumption of 8 lb. per day for each member of a family is well authenticated. It is not surprising that there was a general craving for 'kitchen', tasty relishes such as strong butter when this bulky, starchy and monotonous food came to dominate the Irish diet. There seems to have been an expansion of sea fishing to keep pace with the demand for 'kitchen'. Down to recent times salt fish were hawked through the autumn countryside by noisy 'cadgers', and the careful housewife would have a barrel or two of salt herrings put by for the winter. One is reminded of the 'relishes' with which many African peoples relieve the monotony of a diet of mealies.

One of the many Irish customs which the English found revolting was the bleeding of cattle. Fynes Moryson wrote: 'they often let their cows' blood, eating the congealed blood with butter'.[3] Arthur Young notes that in Wicklow 'they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food'.[4] In Ulster cattle were bled 'in a smooth place, the coagulating blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed. This was cut up into squares and 'laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year'.[5] Unfortunately few details of the bleeding operation have come down to us though I have been told that it was customary to close the wound with a cloven stick.

[1]R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), chs. 11–18.
[2]I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 429.
[3]Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[4]A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 62.
[5]C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 333.

POTS AND PANS

262 231 In some parts of the country the blood was made into puddings. Sheep's blood, in this case caught at the slaughtering, is used for making blood puddings in parts of the south, and black puddings made from pig's blood are popular in other parts of the country. I believe one might divide Ireland into two regions according to the popularity of black and white puddings, but I would hesitate to demarcate the border!

264 A great deal of information could be collected on local and festive foods and on food substitutes which were resorted to in famine years. The traditional times and names of meals also offer a fruitful field of investigation and they should be listed before new fashions entirely replace them. In many parts of the country only two meals were taken, at morning and evening, a fact to be remembered when considering the colossal quantities of food that were consumed at a meal, but it should be added that there were times when little food of any kind was available to the poorer people.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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springs when fodder was scarce cattle, sheep and horses found 222
edible seaweed on the shore. Scottish planters in Co. Down 231
found that their sheep 'kept fat and wholesome all winter and spring by feeding on the oare.'[1] This is nowadays one of nature's neglected resources partly, no doubt, owing to enclosure and the loss of grazing rights. It has been claimed as the result of experiments that the feeding value of *Ascophyllum nodosum* (knob wrack), which grows towards high tide mark, is almost equal to that of meadow hay. Certain species of seaweed are still, 222
however, gathered for human consumption—carrageen or Irish 262
moss (*Chondrus crispus*) sloke or laver (*Porphyra*), dulse (*Rhodymenia*) and dulaman (probably chanelled weed)—whether as medicine or 'kitchen', that is a tasty morsel to be chewed between meals, or boiled to be eaten with potatoes. In lean times the kitchen might become the staple, and a writer in the 1830's stated that when the potatoes gave out 'hundreds of the people may be seen going to the seaside to gather dulaman.'[2] Carrageen, besides being made into a jelly possessing many virtues, was used as a thickener for milk.

The most profitable way of exploiting seaweed down to 222
recent times was for the burning of kelp, which became a considerable business among shore-dwellers in the eighteenth century as the growth of industry stimulated the production of soap, bleaching materials and glass: more recently kelp was chiefly in demand for the preparation of iodine. But there are dimly remembered ways of utilizing seaweed ashes in the home which would make kelp-burning a traditional occupation. In the Western Isles of Scotland kelp-burning is said to have been introduced from Ireland about 1735, but there too it must have been an ancient custom, for Martin Martin tells us at the end of the seventeenth century that seals, seafowl and fish were [251] preserved in 'the ashes of burnt seaware'.[3] (Cheese, we learn, was preserved in the same way, or 'lapped in tang'). Kelp was made by burning the thick stems of tangle (*Laminaria*) or other coarse weeds—to which, as well as to the ashes, the name kelp is applied—which are thrown up in the winter storms or

[1]W. Montgomery, *Description of Ardes Barony* (1683), 139.
[2]J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 50.
[3]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 135, 159.

226 Scallop shells were put to many uses and were often a
[415] substitute for the iron oil-pan of the open-wicked crusie.
Seashells were also burnt to make lime for whitewashing the
[386] houses.

[262] In late summer the sprat come ashore in vast numbers on the west and south coasts, so that in Donegal 'they constituted the chief food of the peasantry during three or four months of the year.'[1] They were taken from the water in buckets and sieves, and the mackerel pursuing their prey close against the rocks might be caught almost as easily. In Waterford harbour there were specially erected wickerwork head weirs to take the sprat; and Dr. Went has described a wattled sprat-weir in working order in the estuary of the Blackwater.[2] Fishing from the rocks, too, is most popular in harvest time and though now little more than a pastime it once provided a reserve of food for the winter. About hay-harvest the ballan wrasse is at its best, 'when the flags (wild iris) are in bloom', they say. Known as bavin, byan, morran and by other names, it is now despised nearly everywhere, as is the coalfish which was salted and dried
[192] and which has different names in Gaelic for every stage of its growth to demonstrate its former importance and popularity. 'Glassan' oil was the luminant for the crusie lamps in Rathlin Island. On the north coast you may see anglers 'frassing' for small coalfish, that is attracting them by spitting into the water chewed potatoes or limpets. Formerly ground bait was made
[412] by pounding limpets in rock basins of the type known as 'bullauns' (Fig. 90). Occasionally you may come across a fisherman casting a feather lure for pollack with a line made wholly or in part of horsehair. One method of twisting these lines, with quills, will be described in the following chapter. For short lengths next the hook—the fine foot-lines—white hair is preferred, and I have seen it made in County Down by
[283] twisting the hair between the bare thigh and a hand dusted with wood ash, a method practised by 'primitives' in many parts of the world. Two strands of from fifteen to twenty hairs are twisted on each other. (The anglers in the Seine at Paris are also said to prefer a 'crop' made from a grey mare's tail.) To

[1] 'Kinnfaela', *The Cliff Scenery of South-Western Donegal*, 19.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *Antiquity*, 25 (1951), 32–35.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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come across surviving examples of these ancient devices. The iron 'cribs' associated with modern salmon weirs, however, appear to derive from wattled traps. And the long conical 'coghill' nets in which the eels are caught in the weirs of the Bann, the Shannon and (until recently) the Erne, are shaped like weels and indeed they are sometimes built up of a series of cones. The fine meshed 'tail' of the net is made to open and the eels, nowadays, are poured directly into submerged tanks. A detail suggestive of long custom is that the 'skiver' with which the tail is closed in the coghills of the weirs at Portna on the Bann consists of a perforated rib-bone of horse or cow. The pin is attached to a cord, which is wound round the end of the net and secured by thrusting the pin into the windings. The walls of the weirs are often still built of wattles, and the old style of weir on the Erne consists of a base of large stones into which the wattled superstructure is thrust.[1] 227

The wattles are known on the Bann as *sheaghs*: of the six weirs now fishing there four are of the traditional type and two have been modernized. At Athlone on the Shannon there were twenty-two eel weirs in the early seventeenth century, and nearly all were still working in the nineteenth century: a single weir is now fished there.[2] The eel weirs of the River Erne had been reduced to five when they were abandoned owing to the recent construction of a dam for the Ballyshannon hydro-electric scheme. The Bann silver eel fisheries are probably the largest of their kind in western Europe, and it is significant that the Bann is one of the richest rivers in Europe for archaeological discoveries ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the early medieval period. Both salmon and eels have now become money-crops and the catches are exported. Already in the eighteenth century Irish salt salmon was exported in considerable quantities to America. The ice-house in which salmon used to be preserved is one of the many ruined buildings to be seen about the decaying houses of the gentry, and most country houses also had their fish ponds. [376] [172] [439] [343]

Among the common folk eels are esteemed only by the folk who catch them, legally or otherwise, but they were formerly 262

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 213–23.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 80 (1950), 146–54.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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262 sold fresh in the markets of the Bann Valley, and were salted down for winter use in place of herrings.[1] They have gone the way of most of the pre-famine 'relishes' which came to be despised as the threat of famine faded after the middle of last century. The elvers, too, used to be taken out of the teeming rivers in spring with sieves and pressed into cakes or boiled in milk and made into a kind of eel-cheese. In the River Bann the 226 elvers are now trapped at the first weir, at the tidal limit, and transported upstream, up to 30 million a year being given an easy passage in this way. A marked reduction in the size of the silver eels netted on their return to the sea some ten years later has been interpreted as a result of this interference with nature. The bulk of the eels taken are sold live in the London markets. [231] In addition to elvers salmon fry also was in former times taken for food and fed to pigs, and by an Act of Elizabeth's reign swine were prohibited from feeding on the shores of tidal rivers 'where they destroy a great quantity of salmon and eel fry'.[2]

Many traditional methods of fishing survive on the lakes of the Irish midlands. The otter board, now more often seen along the coast where fishermen trawl for flat fish in sandy bays, was formerly widely used in lake fishing and is considered to be 'an implement of very ancient origin in Ireland'.[3] Related to it is the 'pooka', a board fitted with mast and sail which carried out the baited long lines.[4] Fishing lines were until recently 283 sometimes made of horsehair by an interesting and undoubtedly ancient method. The instruments employed are goose or swan quills, cut down to make open-ended tubes some three inches long, two or three being needed according to whether a two- or three-strand line is being prepared. From ten to twenty long hairs taken from a horse's tail are threaded through each quill and knotted together at one end, the other ends of the quills being plugged with short pieces of quill which grip the hairs yet allow them to slide through. The quills are now rolled one against the other in the fingers, and as the strands twist on one another they pull down the hairs which feed them. The

[1] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 248.
[2] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 103.
[3] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*. See also R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 53 (1954).
[4] W. H. Maxwell, *Wild Sports of the West*, 77.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

The wild cat is believed to have a spike or hook at the end of its tail which it can stick into a pursuer, but I found no such fine legend in Clare on this point as I did near Kenry in Limerick, where the cats pursued, and anchored themselves on, a farmer and his dog, after chasing them from Clorane to Old Kildimo! 825 776

Elk.—The Irish elk is known among the turf cutters of Clooney and Tulla as the "Fiaghmore" (so pronounced, but really *fiadh mor*, big deer),—"it might be one of the deer Finn hunted." Its numerous remains have given to one townland the name "Fiaghmore, Fiah,"[8] in 1655. The "Agallamh"[9] has an interesting allusion. Diarmaid kills a huge deer, and its antler, when resting on his foot, reaches above his head, despite his great height. Caoilte produces this horn from a lake to convince St. Patrick of the truth of his stories of the heroes.

Badger, Squirrel, and Marten.—It is asserted that there are two kinds of badgers,—the "dog-badger," which eats carrion and digs into graves, and the "pig-badger," which is a strict vegetarian and is eatable. In the *Boroma* tract from the *Book of Leinster*,[10] and the "Agallamh," badger bacon and squirrels are mentioned as fit to set before a king or hero. It is doubtful whether the *togmal*, (kept as a pet by Queen Maeve and killed on her shoulder by Cuchullin's slingstone), was a squirrel or a bird, but squirrel skins, along with marten skins, formed a considerable export from Ireland at least from 1230 to 1580, and in 1686 Roderic O'Flaherty names the squirrel amongst the animals of Connaught.[11] The true marten was until recently common in east Clare, and, like the supposed "marten-cat" (a large red domestic cat that has gone wild), was reputed uncanny in my boyhood. I have seen martens at play in the Clare woods in 1869, and had one stuffed in 1876, but they seem now to be extinct. [262]

Hybrids.—Besides the "dog-badger," there were said to be uneatable hybrids of the cat and the rabbit, and of the rook and [262]

[8] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv., p. 94.

[9] *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 176. Antlers over six feet long have been found in Clare, and there is a fine single antler 6 ft. 2 in. long at Violet Hill, Broadford.

[10] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiii., p. 47.

[11] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xl., p. 245.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

825 the domestic hen. The "soft egg laid by the cock" was looked on
776 with suspicion, and so was the egg of the bat, which was even
[262] unlucky to find, and could be used for malignant charms.

Stoat.—In Clare the stoat is always called "weazel." A corruption of the strange Irish name *Feasóg* (the little beard) is as often used, even by English speakers, as the *whishshoge* or *whushshoge*. The creature was equally disliked and respected. It is wished "Good morning, ma'am," by some, and generally saluted by raising the hat on meeting; but others spit and cross themselves. It is regarded as peevish and persistent; "as cross as a bag of weazels" is a proverb in east Clare, while Finn is compared to a weazel in the pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne. I have heard many stories about its revengefulness "when its nest is killed," and of one of its persistent attempts to get at a corpse in a house in south-east Clare, rather, it was thought, for magical purposes than from hunger. Old belief ascribed to the animal the power of poisoning. At Carnelly a labourer told that when cutting a meadow near the "Druids' Altar"[12] he killed a young weazel. Soon afterwards his wife brought him his dinner and a can of sour milk. While they talked, she cried out that a weazel was spitting into the can, but the man laughed and drank the milk. Soon afterwards he got violent gripes, and gave himself up for lost. The doctor had great difficulty in persuading him to try any remedy, and his wife was almost scandalized by his recovery. A similar tale was told at my old home, Attyflin, in which young weazels were not killed but put on a wisp of grass safely in a bush. The parents were seen spitting into the milk, but, on finding the young ones safe, they returned and upset the can.[13] So "even the weazel has justice." Both stories probably originated in the animal's love for milk.

Rat.—A Clare woman told me that a man whose love was
[775] rejected by a girl living in Limerick city died, and his soul went into a rat and used to bite her throat until she had to emigrate.[14] The rat tried to follow her and was drowned, and so the persecution ended. A curious "parliament of rats" was held near Durra in

[12] Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort and others.
[13] Late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[14] Mrs. M. MacCormick.

[P.248]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

611 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [427] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old. and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 [232] [224] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned [312]
foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

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Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

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Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

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The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[153] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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775 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience, "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

775 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St.
[178] Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are
[182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming,
796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent
[262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people
[273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only,
796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St.
[527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the
[177] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which,
[292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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796 527 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is [574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [368] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [574] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

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Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

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When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [654] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

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The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 178 of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

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members and the organization of effort involved. It is to be expected, of course, that there is a great deal of variation at different seasons of the year, a fact which makes it impossible to describe farm activities without reference to seasonal change and the requirements of various crops. Nevertheless, the work round the house is constant and less variant than that outside on the "land," and for that reason it is significant to begin with it. 512

A typical winter day begins for the farm family about seven-thirty in the morning. At other seasons the family rises earlier, but the long wet days have reduced outside work to a bare minimum and confine the work of the family members within doors. To the woman falls the first duty of the day. She must rake together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire in the hearth, put down new sods for the fire, and rekindle the blaze. This done, she hangs the kettle on the hook, making ready for the first tea of the day. For the rest of the day she must keep the hanging kettle ready, for at any moment of the day she may be called upon to serve a cup of tea to her husband, children, and all visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast, usually of bread, eggs, and milk. By the time breakfast is finished, the household is ready for its workaday existence. The farmer father and husband is dressed and ready for his daily tasks, in which he relies upon the aid of whatever grown sons may still be at home, and who now take their breakfasts beside him. Similarly, the farm wife and mother who serves her men, husband and sons, and stands by unwilling to take her place at the deal table before the window at one side of the kitchen hearth until they have eaten their fill, is ready to begin her daily round with the help of the daughters and young children of both sexes who wait their turns with her. 512 462 264 [272] [262]

In the household the responsibility of day-to-day housekeeping belongs to the woman. Hers, too, is the care of the 512 462 356

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512 462 pork. By the time this is ready, the men are in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

In the meantime the men have been engaged upon work of their own. The farmer rises when he hears his wife busy herself in rekindling the turf on the hearth. If there are sons, he wakes them. After that he goes to the cow barns in the haggard to inspect the cattle housed there overnight and tend to their wants in water and hay. After breakfast, if the day is fine, neither too bitterly cold nor too soakingly wet, he sallies forth into the fields to whatever work the time of the year demands. If he finds himself confined to the house, he still has plenty to do in house and haggard.

512 462 264 [153] If he and his sons go to the fields, he probably returns about eleven-thirty for the noon meal, the heavy meal of the day. Long habit calls forth his hunger and identifies it with the house. Several countrymen have remarked that they never feel hungry away from the house but are ready to eat when they get inside. The dinner unites most of the family for the first time during the day since breakfast. Only the small children of school age are absent. Their share of the meal is often saved for them until they return about four o'clock.

[262] [521] As at breakfast, the men sit down together immediately, falling to the steaming plates of cabbage, bacon, and potatoes the woman sets before them. As they eat, she stands ready to refill their plates, talking with them about the morning's work and the news of the neighborhood. It is the chief time of family conversation. During the meal the woman has boiled tea and, when the men finish with their plates, she clears away and lays bread and tea before them. Sometimes there is a longer interval between tea and dinner, devoted to smoking and talk.

512 264 [273] As before, the women and children do not eat until the men have finished. They take their places together when the men have left or have moved off to smoke an after-dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
[521 silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
858] sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women
462 begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
231 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] News.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 171 built bed in the hall beside the fireplace has been common. But this custom of bed is also known over a wider area along the North Sea. As to the outshot it is to be remarked that it must be compared with the outshots of English and Northwest European houses. Where the outshot tradition is natural to the house-types, the outshots are used for purposes and not only for beds.

In Donegal I have found *cailleachs* closed with wooden doors, similar to the built in beds of North-West Europe. The *cailleach* is cut off by curtains.

It has been mentioned that the dresser at an early stage of development has formed part of the partition. This and other facts (the dresser has generally a fixed traditional place, different in different parts of Ireland) seems to indicate that the dresser belongs — as in Scandinavia and West-European countries — to a rather old set of furniture.

The table however seems not to have any prominent place in the old-fashioned houses at least in Western and Northern Ireland. It is always put along a wall in primitive houses, and one can never sit round it. It never attracted the social activities of the house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating social and family-centre. In this respect the table in Ireland has never supplanted the fireplace. There are no references, as far as I am told in the early tales to people feasting at the table. I think that the table [184] does not belong to the original set of furniture. In many fishermen's dwellings in North-West of Donegal it is still missing. The people sit in front [264] of the fireplace round the shallow-basket, *ciseog*, when eating, the basket resting upon the knees of the familymembers. This basket will be seen after dinner-time hanging to dry on the south wall of the house, pl. XLVIII: 2. I suppose this is the native and original "table", at least in certain cultural spheres of Western and Northern Ireland.

[113] [1] In a valuable article by Ludwig Mühlhausen, Contributions to the study of the concrete material culture of the Gaoltacht, Cork Arch. Soc. Vls. XXXVIII, p. 67, and XXXIX, p. 41, et sqq., is found a very good description of houses in Dingle Peninsula and Cornamona, Co. Galway. I have not come across any more detailed contribution to the study of the Irish house. From books of travel and novels some information can be picked up. See Béaloideas 1935. p. 57 sqq.

[114] [2] The material here presented has been collected by me during journeys in Ireland in the years 1934 and 1935. For the many facilities afforded me in pursuing my investigations in Ireland I must express my thanks to the Irish Folklore Commission and its Director Mr Séamus O'Duilearga, on whose behalf I undertook these studies. I am also grateful to my Irish friends both scholars and country people who kindly lent me their assistance. Here I can only mention Mr Seán O'Suilleabháin, B. A., and Miss Aine Ní Chróinín, M. A., especially for having supplied the Gaelic terms used by me.

[3] As to the Welsh long-houses the cruck construction seems to be an exception (see Peate p. 452).

[4] Cfr. Sigurd Erixon: Skansens Kulturgeschichtliche Abteilung, Führer. Stockholm 1928, p. 92.

[5] *Pinniuir*. f., a gable, a gable-end; fig. a patron, chief, etc. *pinniuir an tighe*, the house-gable, fig. the "head" of the house. Fr. pignon, Eng. pynum. Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary.

boots of the bearers or else the type of barrow (of wood or straw) on which the coffin was borne, served to prevent the coffin from touching the soil. Again, in Ireland (at least, in parts of County Wexford), as in some European countries, wooden crosses or other memorials were left behind at such halts; in the Kilmore area of South Wexford, two crosses are carried with each funeral—one is left at the roadside at a halting-place, the other is set up on the grave. Cairns were often associated with funeral resting-places. It was customary in certain European countries for the bearers to partake of food and drink at resting-points; this, I am told, was the practice also in parts of Donegal and Waterford. Having rested for a while, fresh bearers took up the coffin, and the graveyard was ultimately reached. 764 [264]

I have already referred to the practice of laying down the coffin when a boundary-line was reached. My father, who died six years ago, at the age of 86, told me about a funeral-boundary custom in my native parish of Tuosist, in County Kerry, in the extreme southwest corner of Ireland. He was born in 1863 in the townland of Clogherane in Kerry, only a mile distant from the County Cork border. The high range of the Caha Mountains runs for over thirty miles through the peninsula of Béara, and separates at this point the Kerry parish of Tuosist from the Cork parish of Clanlawrence. During the Famine period of 1845–50 the men who lived at either side of the pass, Bealach Scairte, which led from one county (and parish) to the other, were employed, by way of a relief-scheme, in building a road across the pass. When the work ceased, the middle portion—about two miles in length—still remained undone. And so it remained until about twenty-five years ago, when, by the aid of State funds, the road now known as The Healy Pass was built across the mountain and the two ends were joined up. I often crossed by the old path from Kerry to Cork myself, before the new road was built; it was not so difficult in the early stage of the journey, but when the narrow defile (An Céim Cumhang) at the border was reached, one had to clamber as best one could over and between huge boulders which had fallen into the defile, some of them weighing forty or fifty tons, at a rough estimate. 764 491 [794]

Any funeral which now has occasion to pass from Cork to Kerry (or *vice versa*), can do so with the luxury of a hearse and motor-cars. But it was different when my father was a boy, and for long generations before that. He told me that one day, when he was on his way to the school at Glenmore—it was in the 1870's—he saw a large concourse of men, both young and old, passing along the old road at the foot of the mountain and through the fields. They were all carrying weapons or implements of some kind—some had hay-forks, he said, others had scythes, others hatchets, still others heavy sticks. He asked later on where they were going, and was told that they were going to meet a funeral, which was coming into Kerry from Cork, at the boundary-line. He told me that he knew well the Kerryman, who was leader of the large group; I knew him too, as he lived to a great age, and could speak no English. His name was Conchobhar Uaithne Ó Súilleabháin, and he lived at Shinnagh in the parish of Tuosist. My father told me that he heard later from some of those that were present at the boundary-line, that when the Corkmen appeared at the border, carrying the corpse tortuously on their shoulders, Conchobhar stepped in front of the bearers and stood with his stick raised on the large flat stone which marked the border at this point. The stone, by the way, is still known as Leac na gCorp (The Stone of the Corpses), and it is in the middle of the hollow which, avoiding the defile, was used by funerals, or by cattle 764 578 [191]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Following the countryman at his work, we can 592
learn what his role is, what determines it, and what
keeps him to it; we can see its controls and the
organization of labour it entails.

The first duty of the farm family's day falls to 462
'the woman of the house'. Before the others are up, 512
she rakes together such live ashes as remain in the
slaked turf fire, puts down new sods, and rekindles
the blaze. Then she hangs the kettle on the hook
over the hearth, making ready for the first tea of
the day. All day long the kettle will hang there, for [272]
at any moment she must be ready to serve a cup of
tea to husband, children and visitors. With the first
tea comes breakfast: bread, eggs and milk.

By the time breakfast is over, the household is
ready for its workaday life. The men are up and
dressed for the day's tasks, and the farm wife and [264]
mother who serves them and stands by unwilling
to sit down till they have had their fill, has begun
her daily round. She takes her place later with
her daughters and young children who help her
throughout the day.

But familiar housework is not the whole of the
woman's duty. Her work takes her beyond the
house door. After breakfast she takes the milk
buckets and goes to milk the cows in the sheds.
This is merely one of many trips she makes out
into the haggard, for fuel, for water, and to feed
the animals and poultry. Milking over, she must
not rest, for the whole process of converting milk

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the side walls so that it is impossible to sit round it. The 352
table is not a centre of social activities and has nothing like the same importance as in an English farmhouse. There are crofters' dwellings in Donegal where no table is used; instead, [264] ●
at meal times, the shallow potato basket or skeehogue (Fig. 31) is taken on the knees of the members of the family as they sit in front of the fire, or an upturned creel may serve instead. Very low oblong tables or trays cut from the solid were formerly used and are occasionally dug up from the bogs. They have holes by which they could be suspended from the wall when not in use, and it may be for convenience of transport during the summer migrations. The potato basket will be seen after meals hanging to dry on the south wall of the house.

Fig. 31.

To understand the fireside appliances and methods of 354
cooking certain facts should be borne in mind—the absence 252
of the brick oven, the use of turf, a slow-burning fuel admirable for stewing and for things requiring a steady heat, and the universal preference for "thin-bread," or "bread in cakes," as English observers called it. Once more we have to remind 252
ourselves that parallels to surviving habits can be found 40 centuries back, for pottery baking slabs are known from Neolithic western Europe and of course oatcakes are best baked in this way. Flagstone griddles were apparently common down to a few centuries ago, and a dated specimen of a bakestone is illustrated in Fig. 33. Though oatcakes are now baked on the griddle, it is not long since they were set upright before the fire after drying a little, and turned frequently. The simple "bread-stick" (Fig. 32) or even a lump of turf may serve the purpose, but in the north of Ireland, where bread seems to have been relatively more important than in

Fig. 32. Co. Galway. Height 1 ft.

[TEXT Continues TOP of P. 75--ANALYST]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

272 every meal; it is made extremely strong, and, as elsewhere, is the cause of a good deal of dyspepsia.

273 Alcoholic liquors are not much drunk, as illicit distilling has altogether ceased in this district.

264 An average working day's dietary is as follows:—Breakfast: tea, and home made bread. Dinner: fish, or eggs and potatoes. Supper; the same as breakfast.

291 177 4. *Clothing.*—The homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics still constitute the bulk of the clothing worn, but are being superseded by imported slop clothes of inferior quality; and the dress on working days is nondescript and often ragged. On Sundays and holidays the proportion of imported clothing seen is greater, and the homespun suits are sometimes very different from the old types, being imitations in cut of the imported goods. The dress of the men consists of a shirt of thick white or chocolate-coloured homespun, with a rather high plain band collar, and large bone buttons, or, in some cases, it is made of imported flannel, purchased in Clifden or Westport. The single or double-breasted waistcoat, with the large collar-flaps buttoned back, is, when worn, generally put on inside the bawneen, or white flannel coat, instead of outside, as was formerly the case.

Trousers are of homespun or corduroy.

A thick comforter is worn about the neck by many, even in very warm weather.

For head-dress, soft felt hats and caps of various shapes, all imported, are now in general use, the old home-made flat, blue bonnet being but little worn, except by the older men. It may be most frequently seen in Westquarter and Inishshark.

291 The men wear thick worsted stockings of dyed or "natural" wool, and very stout boots of native make, as a regular part of their daily attire, but the women and children go bare-footed, except on Sundays and holidays. The dress of the women shows as great changes as that of the men; it is of the well-known Connemara type.

The head is covered by a red kerchief, or small shawl, often a plaid, but so far as seen never by a "mutch" (a cap with white frill). Over the shoulders a small red tartan shawl is folded, half hiding a jacket, or bodice, of homespun, or imported woollen stuff; the petticoat is short, and dyed a bright red with madder, and sometimes trimmed with a few rows of black braid, and a wide check apron is usually worn. Some women, on Sundays, wear the old large blue cloak with hood and double cape.

The small boys wear the kilt-like frock of white, red, or brown

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one
231 time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow fastened to the horses tail.

The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed
513 in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and *is regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the
[834] strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but
262 fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more
[272] extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal)
264 stirabout, buttermilk.

[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or stirabout and milk. 264

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money. [439] [437]

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit distilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent. 273

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character. 291

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel. [439] [444]

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction. [443]

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

POTS AND PANS

262 In some parts of the country the blood was made into puddings.
231 Sheep's blood, in this case caught at the slaughtering, is used for making blood puddings in parts of the south, and black puddings made from pig's blood are popular in other parts of the country. I believe one might divide Ireland into two regions according to the popularity of black and white puddings, but I would hesitate to demarcate the border!

264 A great deal of information could be collected on local and festive foods and on food substitutes which were resorted to in famine years. The traditional times and names of meals also offer a fruitful field of investigation and they should be listed before new fashions entirely replace them. In many parts of the country only two meals were taken, at morning and evening, a fact to be remembered when considering the colossal quantities of food that were consumed at a meal, but it should be added that there were times when little food of any kind was available to the poorer people.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 admirably illustrates the economy of space and function characteristic of Irish kitchen fittings, but I doubt whether this rather complicated piece of furniture is of any great antiquity: it was probably introduced by planters or adapted from a settle fitted with a coffer seat.

The black-houses, as described in the nineteenth century, had no table, and there are still to be seen, in Donegal for instance, houses where there is no kitchen table. At meal-times [264] the family sit around a shallow potato basket resting on the circle of knees. The origin of the tripod tray-table of south-eastern Europe and south-western Asia is surely to be sought in a similar custom. In fact the Blasket Island table was described as a tripod to which was fitted a board which hung on the wall when not in use.[1] The little round table is known from many parts of western Europe. There is, for example, the three-legged 'cricket' table of Wales, which has a special place in the affections of the family. Placed near the fire, it is reserved at meal-times for the father and mother while the children and servants eat at the big table. In Ireland the kitchen table is a flimsy construction, and its place is against the side wall, under a window. Not infrequently it is hinged to the wall as a 'falling leaf table' which drops when not in use, thus enlarging the open space in front of the fire.

Bishop Pococke describes the Tirawley (Mayo) table as 'a long sort of stool about 20 inches high and broad and two yards long',[2] clearly designed to be stowed away along a wall. Small tables which have been found in the bogs are little more than small boards, their four short legs being cut from the solid. They are provided with holes by which they could be transported or hung up when not in use (Fig. 26). It follows that table-chairs were unnecessary: long, low, narrow stools or three [516] legged 'creepies' would serve, and the children would have squatted eastern-fashion on the floor.

The table, therefore, in the words of a Swedish student of 352 Irish ethnology, 'never attracted the social activities of the 592 house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating

[1] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman* (1934), 40.
[2] *Pococke's Tour*, 1752 (1891), 87.

FIXED FESTIVALS

527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit
[264] gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[312] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

262
264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual
621 economic and emotional support.
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591 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction
428 passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west
342 room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in
822 Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are
776 aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs
[178] (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been reno-
[177] vated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the
[657] traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder
[372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings
[343] surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter
[244] often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening
[262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the
[264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking
[415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around
[718] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser,"
[352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs,
[352] or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and
[616] sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This
[593]
[178]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

574 273 Women [562] [514] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 [535] [562] [857] The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 [123] 574 273 [533] [535] Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 [576] Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [351] 574 535 Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 123 [577] 574 579 178 [738] My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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members and the organization of effort involved. It is to be expected, of course, that there is a great deal of variation at different seasons of the year, a fact which makes it impossible to describe farm activities without reference to seasonal change and the requirements of various crops. Nevertheless, the work round the house is constant and less variant than that outside on the "land," and for that reason it is significant to begin with it. 512

A typical winter day begins for the farm family about seven-thirty in the morning. At other seasons the family rises earlier, but the long wet days have reduced outside work to a bare minimum and confine the work of the family members within doors. To the woman falls the first duty of the day. She must rake together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire in the hearth, put down new sods for the fire, and rekindle the blaze. This done, she hangs the kettle on the hook, making ready for the first tea of the day. For the rest of the day she must keep the hanging kettle ready, for at any moment of the day she may be called upon to serve a cup of tea to her husband, children, and all visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast, usually of bread, eggs, and milk. By the time breakfast is finished, the household is ready for its workaday existence. The farmer father and husband is dressed and ready for his daily tasks, in which he relies upon the aid of whatever grown sons may still be at home, and who now take their breakfasts beside him. Similarly, the farm wife and mother who serves her men, husband and sons, and stands by unwilling to take her place at the deal table before the window at one side of the kitchen hearth until they have eaten their fill, is ready to begin her daily round with the help of the daughters and young children of both sexes who wait their turns with her. 512 462 264 [272] [262]

In the household the responsibility of day-to-day housekeeping belongs to the woman. Hers, too, is the care of the 512 462 356

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Following the countryman at his work, we can 592
learn what his role is, what determines it, and what
keeps him to it; we can see its controls and the
organization of labour it entails.

The first duty of the farm family's day falls to 462
'the woman of the house'. Before the others are up, 512
she rakes together such live ashes as remain in the
slaked turf fire, puts down new sods, and rekindles
the blaze. Then she hangs the kettle on the hook
over the hearth, making ready for the first tea of
the day. All day long the kettle will hang there, for [272]
at any moment she must be ready to serve a cup of
tea to husband, children and visitors. With the first
tea comes breakfast: bread, eggs and milk.

By the time breakfast is over, the household is
ready for its workaday life. The men are up and
dressed for the day's tasks, and the farm wife and [264]
mother who serves them and stands by unwilling
to sit down till they have had their fill, has begun
her daily round. She takes her place later with
her daughters and young children who help her
throughout the day.

But familiar housework is not the whole of the
woman's duty. Her work takes her beyond the
house door. After breakfast she takes the milk
buckets and goes to milk the cows in the sheds.
This is merely one of many trips she makes out
into the haggard, for fuel, for water, and to feed
the animals and poultry. Milking over, she must
not rest, for the whole process of converting milk

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the gravestones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual ha[illegible]ccurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

272 every meal; it is made extremely strong, and, as elsewhere, is the cause of a good deal of dyspepsia.

273 Alcoholic liquors are not much drunk, as illicit distilling has altogether ceased in this district.

264 An average working day's dietary is as follows:—Breakfast: tea, and home made bread. Dinner: fish, or eggs and potatoes. Supper; the same as breakfast.

291 177 4. *Clothing.*—The homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics still constitute the bulk of the clothing worn, but are being superseded by imported slop clothes of inferior quality; and the dress on working days is nondescript and often ragged. On Sundays and holidays the proportion of imported clothing seen is greater, and the homespun suits are sometimes very different from the old types, being imitations in cut of the imported goods. The dress of the men consists of a shirt of thick white or chocolate-coloured homespun, with a rather high plain band collar, and large bone buttons, or, in some cases, it is made of imported flannel, purchased in Clifden or Westport. The single or double-breasted waistcoat, with the large collar-flaps buttoned back, is, when worn, generally put on inside the bawneen, or white flannel coat, instead of outside, as was formerly the case.

Trousers are of homespun or corduroy.

A thick comforter is worn about the neck by many, even in very warm weather.

For head-dress, soft felt hats and caps of various shapes, all imported, are now in general use, the old home-made flat, blue bonnet being but little worn, except by the older men. It may be most frequently seen in Westquarter and Inishshark.

291 The men wear thick worsted stockings of dyed or "natural" wool, and very stout boots of native make, as a regular part of their daily attire, but the women and children go bare-footed, except on Sundays and holidays. The dress of the women shows as great changes as that of the men; it is of the well-known Connemara type.

The head is covered by a red kerchief, or small shawl, often a plaid, but so far as seen never by a "mutch" (a cap with white frill). Over the shoulders a small red tartan shawl is folded, half hiding a jacket, or bodice, of homespun, or imported woollen stuff; the petticoat is short, and dyed a bright red with madder, and sometimes trimmed with a few rows of black braid, and a wide check apron is usually worn. Some women, on Sundays, wear the old large blue cloak with hood and double cape.

The small boys wear the kilt-like frock of white, red, or brown

1: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one
231 time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow fastened to the horses tail.

The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed
513 in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and *is regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the
[834] strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but
262 fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more
[272] extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal)
264 stirabout, buttermilk.

[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[82] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[602] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
• 212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

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Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

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Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

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The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 462 pork. By the time this is ready, the men are in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

In the meantime the men have been engaged upon work of their own. The farmer rises when he hears his wife busy herself in rekindling the turf on the hearth. If there are sons, he wakes them. After that he goes to the cow barns in the haggard to inspect the cattle housed there overnight and tend to their wants in water and hay. After breakfast, if the day is fine, neither too bitterly cold nor too soakingly wet, he sallies forth into the fields to whatever work the time of the year demands. If he finds himself confined to the house, he still has plenty to do in house and haggard.

512 462 264 If he and his sons go to the fields, he probably returns about eleven-thirty for the noon meal, the heavy meal of the day. Long habit calls forth his hunger and identifies it with the house. Several countrymen have remarked that [153] they never feel hungry away from the house but are ready to eat when they get inside. The dinner unites most of the family for the first time during the day since breakfast. Only the small children of school age are absent. Their share of the meal is often saved for them until they return about four o'clock.

[262] As at breakfast, the men sit down together immediately, falling to the steaming plates of cabbage, bacon, and potatoes the woman sets before them. As they eat, she stands [521] ready to refill their plates, talking with them about the morning's work and the news of the neighborhood. It is the chief time of family conversation. During the meal the woman has boiled tea and, when the men finish with their plates, she clears away and lays bread and tea before them. Sometimes there is a longer interval between tea and dinner, devoted to smoking and talk.

512 264 As before, the women and children do not eat until the men have finished. They take their places together when the men have left or have moved off to smoke an after- [273] dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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574 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to
602 town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird,* or visit, at which the older men of the local com-
[521] munity gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in
[522] Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

574 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of
602 good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market. "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on
●273 meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy
594 as a family situation in which economic effort, individual and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative
182 within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

8:Arensberg E.-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 The Inagh farmer goes on: "The speaker goes with the young man and his father that night, and they meet the father of the girl and his friends or maybe his son and son-in-law. The first drink is [273] called by the young man; the second by the young lady's father.

"The young lady's father asks the speaker what fortune do he want. He asks him the place of how many cows, sheep, and horses is it? He asks what makings of a garden are in it; is there plenty of water or spring wells? Is it far in from the road, or on it? What kind of house is in it, slate or thatch? Are the cabins good, are they slate or thatch? If it is too far in from the road, he won't take it. Backward places don't grow big fortunes. And he asks, too, is it near a chapel and the school, or near town?"

The Inagh countryman could pause here; he had summarized a very long and important negotiation.

583 "Well," he went on, getting to the heart of the
584 matter, "if it is a nice place, near the road, and the place of eight cows, they are sure to ask £350 fortune. Then the young lady's father offers £250. Then maybe the boy's father throws off £50. If the young lady's father still has £250 on it, the speaker divides the £50 between them. So now it's £275. Then the young man says he is not willing to marry without £300—but if she's a nice girl and a good
273 housekeeper, he'll think of it. So, there's another
584 drink by the young man, and then another by the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

young lady's father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day." 584 [273]

The farmer paused here again; for the match is developing marvellously. "All this is one day's work," he continued. "After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, maybe another girl, and her brother and her father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker.

"If they suit one another, then they will appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong.

"The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one." He said this last slyly, for to pretend to own more stock than one really has, is an unfair trick in the bargaining.

"Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points.

"If the girl's father likes the land he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

132 winters—all these characteristics are related to the eastward moving stream of cyclones coming off the warm North Atlantic drift. Rain is heaviest wherever mountain masses place obstacles in the path of the moisture-bearing winds, and the peninsulas of Donegal, Connemara and Kerry have from 60 to 100 inches of rain each year (Fig. 8). By contrast the east coast gets about half this amount, while the low-lying tract between Dublin and Drogheda is favoured by a fall of under 30 ins. Everywhere the mildness and the damp encourage grasses and moisture-loving plants, but too often waterlogging has caused green pastures and woodlands to deteriorate into brown bogland. The prolonged autumns, another gift of the Atlantic, are important because they give man a sporting chance of saving his harvests: the heaviest rains are delayed until November and December. Similarly the relatively dry springs (March-May) are conducive to work in field and turf-bog at that season. (Chapter 15).

311 231 241 Reviewing the distribution of the chief crops and animals to-day, the following facts may be noted. Nearly one half the land devoted to crops, excluding hay, is occupied by oats and perhaps three-quarters of the yield is fed to livestock. Only in the wettest peninsulas of Connemara and Kerry does another crop (potatoes) occupy more land. It is estimated that the "consumption" of potatoes amounts to about ¾ ton per head of the population each year, but the greater part of this goes to pigs and other livestock. The greatest concentration of wheat production is in the comparatively sunny corner of Wexford, with secondary areas along the dry east coast in Cos. Dublin and Down. Recent years have witnessed an increase in wheat growing but there is still far less than in the record years of a century ago. when wheat was being exported to England. Barley, which is more intolerant of damp than wheat, is found on the well-drained soils of Co. Louth but particularly of Wexford and the sheltered valleys of the Nore, Suir and Barrow. It has declined less than wheat because of the demand of the breweries and distilleries, but the drop in the illicit making of poteen has reduced its production in many a secluded spot along the west coast.

[273]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where 248
the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and 244
the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has 311
been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered 231
that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the
pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. [178]
But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of
archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their
importance in the past : one minor factor in the decline is the [273] ●
fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained 235
and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

262 make a long list of the plants and herbs which are gathered and dried for use as simples. In some areas, for example Tyrone and Derry, it is recorded that the cattle used to be 237 bled in summer, " in a smooth place, each layer of coagulating 262 blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed, which was cut up in squares and laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year." In Wicklow (1780) " they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food." 273 In the days before sugar was known honey played a considerable part in domestic economy and mead or metheglin, made from honey, was once a popular beverage. We have no knowledge of the period when whiskey distillation was first practised but stills and worms of some antiquity have been found in the bogs, and it is natural to correlate the popularity of whiskey and poteen with the dampness of the climate. A fact worth recording is that until recently illicit stills were made and kept in repair by travelling tinkers in whom it is perhaps not extravagant to see shades of the skilled craftsmen of the later Bronze Age who made cauldrons out of sheet bronze (*cf.* Fig. 5).

252 Far into the historic period heated stones were employed in cooking and it may be that memories of this old method linger on. The nearest thing I have seen is the custom of plunging a hot poker into cow's milk to " singe it " when it is given to lambs. The explanation offered was that this made its taste resemble that of sheep's milk.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

272 every meal; it is made extremely strong, and, as elsewhere, is the cause of a good deal of dyspepsia.

● 273 Alcoholic liquors are not much drunk, as illicit distilling has altogether ceased in this district.

An average working day's dietary is as follows:—Breakfast: tea, 264 and home made bread. Dinner: fish, or eggs and potatoes. Supper; the same as breakfast.

4. *Clothing.*—The homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics still 291 constitute the bulk of the clothing worn, but are being superseded by 177 imported slop clothes of inferior quality; and the dress on working days is nondescript and often ragged. On Sundays and holidays the proportion of imported clothing seen is greater, and the homespun suits are sometimes very different from the old types, being imitations in cut of the imported goods. The dress of the men consists of a shirt of thick white or chocolate-coloured homespun, with a rather high plain band collar, and large bone buttons, or, in some cases, it is made of imported flannel, purchased in Clifden or Westport. The single or double-breasted waistcoat, with the large collar-flaps buttoned back, is, when worn, generally put on inside the bawneen, or white flannel coat, instead of outside, as was formerly the case.

Trousers are of homespun or corduroy.

A thick comforter is worn about the neck by many, even in very warm weather.

For head-dress, soft felt hats and caps of various shapes, all imported, are now in general use, the old home-made flat, blue bonnet being but little worn, except by the older men. It may be most frequently seen in Westquarter and Inishshark.

The men wear thick worsted stockings of dyed or "natural" wool, 291 and very stout boots of native make, as a regular part of their daily attire, but the women and children go bare-footed, except on Sundays and holidays. The dress of the women shows as great changes as that of the men; it is of the well-known Connemara type.

The head is covered by a red kerchief, or small shawl, often a plaid, but so far as seen never by a "mutch" (a cap with white frill). Over the shoulders a small red tartan shawl is folded, half hiding a jacket, or bodice, of homespun, or imported woollen stuff; the petticoat is short, and dyed a bright red with madder, and sometimes trimmed with a few rows of black braid, and a wide check apron is usually worn. Some women, on Sundays, wear the old large blue cloak with hood and double cape.

The small boys wear the kilt-like frock of white, red, or brown

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

Insanity.—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly
[158] in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
● [273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

164 *Fevers.*—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last
century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather
prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it
among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771]
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice
of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is
so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but
disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at
another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great
deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady 181
occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit
to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment 426
of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577
truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive,
372 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time.
[435] The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen, and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or stirabout and milk. 264

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money. [439] [437]

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit distilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent. 273

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character. 291

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel. [439] [444]

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction. [443]

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen.*

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tin-ware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
● 273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[30]

Second, emigration has been of vast 167 benefit to the community; money comes 434 in to most of the homes from America[31] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

Third, it is regrettable that the lack 443 of commercial facilities means that eggs, 489 poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [30] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only three barrels a week in winter. The standard [304] content of a barrel is 256 pints.

[291] [31] Many of the children are dressed in American clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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from 'the troubles' of the early nineteen-twenties. Souterrains have also been used for other illegal activities which were enjoyed irrespective of political party, such as the making of illicit whiskey—poteen—an activity which is not yet entirely suppressed and which called for secrecy. I have more than once been shown specially-made underground hiding-holes where the poteen-makers went to earth when the gaugers were scented.

In the category of temporary shelters we place the wretched 'fever-huts' erected to isolate victims of infectious diseases in the famine years. We cannot wonder that no detailed descriptions are to be found, but the account of a structure of 'turf built up in the form of a cone, with an entrance scarcely large enough for a dog to crawl through'[1] hints that some of these huts presented features of interest to the ethnographer. Temporary windbreaks erected by turf-cutters are also of considerable interest. One which I saw in Co. Fermanagh (Fig. 38)

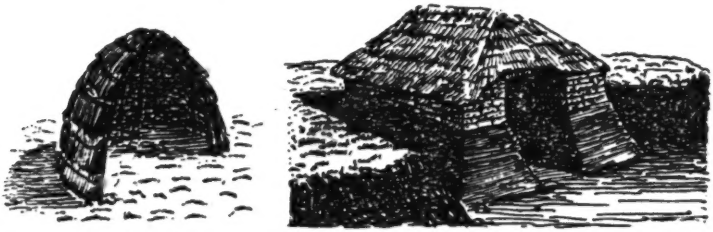

FIG. 38. Bog shelters, Co. Fermanagh. Left, for turf-cutters; right, partly dug out of the bog, for calves.

was built of birch rods bent over and neatly thatched with branches and rushes. The construction of animal shelters in great variety, too, built of sods or wattles, doubtless perpetuates skills once devoted to human habitations. I illustrate in Fig. 39 an outhouse with a solid hipped roof, known as a flat roof.

Unusual, because so far as I know confined to Achill Island, are little soot-houses erected for the special purpose of manufacturing supplies of soot and ashes as fertilizers. It is probable that we have to deal with a custom which has died out elsewhere and has maintained itself here in insular isolation. It will

[1] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 143.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of
178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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at that time and that the ceremony presumably took place in the 585
priest's house.)

'Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the nuptial benediction, will, it is considered, live longest . . .; after this scene is over they again adjourn to the public house . . ., after which the company again mount their horses, the bride being then changed behind the bridegroom's man, and scamper away towards the bride's house, whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold the race for the bottle. The winning of the bottle is frequently contended for between the bridegroom's and the bride's parties; the first person that arrives at the bride's house is victorious. The victor then receives the bottle and again returns to the main body of the wedding, where he hands it to the bridegroom, who [273] first drinks of it and hands it to his bride, who also partakes, it then goes the round until nearly finished, when . . . the bridegroom flings it with the remaining contents away. On their arrival at the bride's house a cake of oatmeal or flour, which is called the bride's cake is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young people of both sexes for [787] the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow, in order that they may dream of their future partners in life. Another scene of noisy festivity and drunkenness then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties; there being frequently a kind of rivalry between them in supporting the dignity of the bridegroom and bride, particularly if they do not happen to be of one line of ancestors.'[1]

No doubt where land and livestock were involved such 581
marriages were not so uninhibited as it might appear. Physical 583
attraction was not a prime consideration. The normal course was for a peasant to marry a girl whose capabilities were known or could be fairly judged, preferably 'a far-out friend', who lived close enough for family visits and exchanges of labour to be made. We know from other accounts of marriage customs in the early nineteenth century that the order of events as described above was sometimes reversed: 'The marriage is agreed upon by bargain, and the theft or abduction follows as a concerted

[1] J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 64–66.

585 The good luck of the bottle race referred to above may be [777] associated with the 'agreement bottle' of whiskey which was [273] drunk, according to a seventeenth-century account, when the parents and relations of the young couple had reached a marriage agreement.[1] To this day in parts of Co. Down 'running for the broth' is a feature of country marriages, a bowl of broth being the reward given to the person who reaches the bride's house first after the wedding. Until recently, also, the young couple were expected to appear at the Bride's Show on the first Sunday after their marriage: they were accompanied to a special sloping field where they ran hand-in-hand to a stone near the bottom of the field, followed by pairs of linked boys and girls, each boy kissing the stone. Games and what was described to us as 'general carrying on' followed the Bride's Show.[2]

584 In more remote parts of the country match-making is still a recognized procedure. The professional match-maker is a well-known figure, usually a shrewd elderly person well versed in the arts of rural diplomacy, and his role has been fully described by Arensberg. He acts for the farmer who is ready for his son to marry—the son being often well into middle age—by negotiating with the parents of the girl whom the farmer has selected. In the prolonged bargaining as to the amount of the 'fortune' which the girl is to bring with her the values of peasant living stand clearly revealed.[3] Marriage is not so much a personal relationship as a union between groups, reinforcing relations which extend far beyond individuals.

There was a popular belief that the curse of sterility could be placed on the bride by any ill-disposed person who tied knots in a string during the marriage ceremony. A more obvious example of magic was the custom of tying a hen which was about to lay an egg to the bed-post on the marriage night. [585] There are widespread traditions of the days when landlords exercised the *jus primae noctis* over their tenants' wives, and one hears of leases which contained clauses governing the right. 844 During pregnancy it was lucky to do certain things and to avoid

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 1, 122.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 193
[3] C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, ch. 5.

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. 262
Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat 272
biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals. [561]

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the 252
open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread
which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring [443]
must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a
family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally 252
made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in 262
a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and [234]
also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the
fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial
product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are
eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking [273]
their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread gener-
ously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained
of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on
the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their [561]
bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing
six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days
will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, [443]
mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the
shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from
mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy
are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other
shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or
cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and [824]
are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled
but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which
when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed [751]
to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard
them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even 262
when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking 252
pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than 415
its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat
them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. 262
They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed 264
only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is 415
thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the [829]
folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor
did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which
the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes
when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality, men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148). Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn mainland attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them, the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [189]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

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771 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience,
775 "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

775 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St.
[178] Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are
[182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming,
796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent
[262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people
[273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only,
796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St.
[527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the
[177] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which,
[292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

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764 178 characterized by storytelling, games of various sorts, contests of strength, taunting and mocking, mischief-making, and factional fighting (O Suilleabhain 1967: 764 26–129). It is hard to imagine a wake more somber than that which takes place in Inis Beag. Most of those who attend it do so before midnight and stay two to three hours, coming and going at will, while "only those who own him stay all night." Each visitor on arrival prays briefly at the bedside of the deceased or in the doorway of the room before expressing condolences, and at midnight all who are anywhere in the wake-house kneel and recite the responses of the Rosary intoned [178] by the curate. Immediate kin express their grief in muffled sobs beside the corpse, but the ancient wailing lament for the dead, known as the "keen," no longer is [273] heard in Inis Beag. Tables and benches are set up in the kitchen on which the [276] men sit silently or converse in whispers with their neighbors, as they drink stout [562] or whiskey and pass around clay pipes offered them "to keep the night awake." Most of the women congregate in the room of the dead, where only very old women smoke pipes. I have counted as many as 18 minutes of absolute silence at a wake and have never heard laughter.

[562] Before the procession to the church forms, men tend to gather in small groups outside the house of the deceased and women gather inside the house. After the corpse is placed in the coffin, close relatives and even friends shake the hand and kiss the face of the dead person before the top is nailed down; then the box is carried to the front street and placed across two chairs for prayers to be said and holy water sprinkled over it by the priest. A white sheet is draped on the casket, and six pallbearers shoulder it and carry it through a gap made in the stone fence to the road which leads to the chapel. The pallbearers are both agnatic and uterine kin of the deceased, excluding his sons, and two of them have the further duty of digging the shallow grave that night or in the morning before the body is interred. Moving slowly behind the coffin bearers, the procession is headed by the spouse and sons of the dead person, followed by his daughters, then women, and finally men in a long, slow moving, silent column; children other than the offspring of the deceased seldom join the procession, and the sexes walk separately. [793] The curate may or may not lead this procession and the one the next morning, sometimes preferring to go ahead to church and cemetery by himself. A son of the dead person treats the grave diggers to stout in a pub before they set out with spades for the graveyard, as he does the pallbearers after they return from the [178] church. In the past, the grave was dug as part of the funeral service, but this custom was altered as the cemetery became filled and occasionally diggers by acci- [538] dent broke into previously interred coffins revealing their contents. A number of grisly legends and anecdotes tell of islanders buried alive by mistake, or whose bodies were partially preserved, as revealed by such accidents.

The procession from the chapel to the graveyard leaves the modern road, as we saw in Chapter 1, to follow an ancient, obliterated trail past a church believed to have been buried beneath the sand centuries ago, and then climbs the long hill of kitchen midden and sand to the gate of the cemetery. Here the column breaks up, some people going to the graves of relatives to pray and others to the newly opened grave. Men and women kneel separately at the graveside for the service (see Fig. 11), and many of the women cry as the casket is lowered into the shallow

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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

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to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case) in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

"Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of oral[illegible] tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag [illegible] share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6). In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, however, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

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tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

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275 The best singers will be
• 273 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[167] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
273 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[678] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
273 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
273 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk
[576] who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the free stout brought me in."

*831
562 recess play and movement to and from school. During church services,
834 there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys
[858] and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The
[864] pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is
[443] more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be
[484] found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male
[526] tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers
[291] "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—
[832] a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual
[184] catharsis.

154 It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustra-
[839] tion among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggres-
[272] sion theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism,
[733] disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be
[578] linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed
83 that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the
584 manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur,
832 but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their
[771] "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience
[626] pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the con-
[783] fessional because of their fear of the priest.

833 We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated
[291] by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is
[12] achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

000 Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" 158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. 751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with [291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear [834] of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism [753] and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac- 827 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and [863] animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha- [825] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at [562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting [273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most [241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed 237 feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main- 372 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is 514 burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another 283 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the [462] secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

* 831 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are 522 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood [154] by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore [123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the community. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 275
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [443]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

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361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
• 275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement.... It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting.... Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case) in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

"Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6). In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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275 The best singers will be
293 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[167] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
293 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[678] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
295 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
293 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
293 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk
[576] who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the free stout brought me in."

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[275] [524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
177 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with
462 men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

 561

country "stations"[5] the elder men and women file in for 554
confession and come forward for Communion first. On the 888
road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant 561
discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. 554
No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 888
"stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural 521
community such personal communion is an indispensable [461]
bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men [203]
must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the commu- 561
nity with the outside world. The elder men, these same 554
father-owners; represent the interests of the community be- 888
fore priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to 561
round out the picture. 554

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The 888
better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of 276

[5] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland. [194]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

561 554 888 276 whiskey, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of tobacco, go to the elder men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe around among one's intimates and guests for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man. He must content himself with an occasional "fag." When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells:

> During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door, I said to her she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. "Let the young bucks go," said I; "they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly." She looked at me and says, "Frank, are you serious?" "I am, faith," says I; "call the old man back." He was just a few paces down the road. She did and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough.

561 554 888 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among the small farmers. Without them, the flavor of country life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the never-varying annual round of social activity in the country districts nor any inkling of the importance of those informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. It is here that social patterns of behavior upon age difference assume importance as controls of human activity. It is here that the roles the age grades play in the organization of the community reveal themselves most clearly.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the interests of the community, before priest, 561
schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman and govern- 571
ment official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel.

The relation extends in fact to very small matters 276
indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of 561
bread, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of 576
tobacco, go to the older men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe round among one's ~~intimates~~ and guests, for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man; he must content himself with an occasional 'fag'. When there is little, the young man can go without.

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276 561 576 I; call back the old man. He was just a few paces down the road. She did, and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough."

561 517 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among small farmers. Without them the flavour of rural life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the continual round of informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. For the country-people have their entertainments, like their more sophisticated urban contemporaries. The student of society cannot afford to dismiss them as inconsequential. They are often important controls of human activity.

When my colleagues and I first made our way into the rural communities we were to come to know best, we were plunged into a mass of observations which seemed to have no interpretation. Night after night, their day's work done, our new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, gambles, sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive gatherings were age-old customs like the bonfires of St. John's Eve; others celebrated crucial events, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occa-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

778 like a basin; it contains almost a gallon of water; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

527 The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

773 2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could
823 be collected are given below; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

Lough Bofin (*The Lake of the White Cow*).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.[1] As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

Carrig Guairim.—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or
173 Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the roadside in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act; he was taken over to Rinvyle

[276] [1] Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

764 178 characterized by storytelling, games of various sorts, contests of strength, taunting and mocking, mischief-making, and factional fighting (O Suilleabhain 1967: 764 26–129). It is hard to imagine a wake more somber than that which takes place in Inis Beag. Most of those who attend it do so before midnight and stay two to three hours, coming and going at will, while "only those who own him stay all night." Each visitor on arrival prays briefly at the bedside of the deceased or in the doorway of the room before expressing condolences, and at midnight all who are anywhere in the wake-house kneel and recite the responses of the Rosary intoned [178] by the curate. Immediate kin express their grief in muffled sobs beside the corpse, but the ancient wailing lament for the dead, known as the "keen," no longer is [273] heard in Inis Beag. Tables and benches are set up in the kitchen on which the [276] men sit silently or converse in whispers with their neighbors, as they drink stout or whiskey and pass around clay pipes offered them "to keep the night awake." [562] Most of the women congregate in the room of the dead, where only very old women smoke pipes. I have counted as many as 18 minutes of absolute silence at a wake and have never heard laughter.

[562] Before the procession to the church forms, men tend to gather in small groups outside the house of the deceased and women gather inside the house. After the corpse is placed in the coffin, close relatives and even friends shake the hand and kiss the face of the dead person before the top is nailed down; then the box is carried to the front street and placed across two chairs for prayers to be said and holy water sprinkled over it by the priest. A white sheet is draped on the casket, and six pallbearers shoulder it and carry it through a gap made in the stone fence to the road which leads to the chapel. The pallbearers are both agnatic and uterine kin of the deceased, excluding his sons, and two of them have the further duty of digging the shallow grave that night or in the morning before the body is interred. Moving slowly behind the coffin bearers, the procession is headed by the spouse and sons of the dead person, followed by his daughters, then women, and finally men in a long, slow moving, silent column; children other than the offspring of the deceased seldom join the procession, and the sexes walk separately. [793] The curate may or may not lead this procession and the one the next morning, sometimes preferring to go ahead to church and cemetery by himself. A son of the dead person treats the grave diggers to stout in a pub before they set out with spades for the graveyard, as he does the pallbearers after they return from the [178] church. In the past, the grave was dug as part of the funeral service, but this custom was altered as the cemetery became filled and occasionally diggers by acci- [538] dent broke into previously interred coffins revealing their contents. A number of grisly legends and anecdotes tell of islanders buried alive by mistake, or whose bodies were partially preserved, as revealed by such accidents.

The procession from the chapel to the graveyard leaves the modern road, as we saw in Chapter 1, to follow an ancient, obliterated trail past a church believed to have been buried beneath the sand centuries ago, and then climbs the long hill of kitchen midden and sand to the gate of the cemetery. Here the column breaks up, some people going to the graves of relatives to pray and others to the newly opened grave. Men and women kneel separately at the graveside for the service (see Fig. 11), and many of the women cry as the casket is lowered into the shallow

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

845 In cases of difficult labour a ploughman may be called in to lift and shake the woman gently, which it is thought will produce the desired effect. The reason given is that as he shakes and scatters the seed on the earth, so also he ought to produce a good effect here.

[752] A nail which has got into the foot is always thrown into the fire.

757 *Leechcraft.*—Though regular medical assistance is usually sought for serious complaints, yet, the more common ailments are often ● 278 treated by the people themselves, several of the older men and women enjoying some local celebrity for this.

The following list of substances used medicinally was collected; it is believed to be but a small fraction of the local pharmacopœia.

(A.) Animal substances.—Saliva is used for many purposes; thus button scurvy is treated by spitting on the floor and rubbing on the mixed saliva and dust with the right thumb.

Seal oil is rubbed in for sprains and rheumatism, for which it has a great reputation locally; it is sold in Belmullet at a pretty high price.

The tongue of a fox is used as a poultice to extract thorns, &c.

(B.) Herbs.—Mr. Nolan kindly provided the following list of plants in use in the district, most of which he has seen used. The qualities of many of these were alsodescribed to me by several of the country people.

Dandelion (*Leontodon taraxacum*), used for "liver troubles."

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), used as a styptic.

Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*), used, boiled in milk, for heart-burn.

Self-heal (locally called Heartsease) (*Brunella vulgaris*), used for palpitations.

Mountain sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), used "for the heart" and in cough mixtures.

Ground-wood, or log-bark (not identified), used for gravel (boiled in milk).

Bugloss (*Echium* or *Lycopsis*), used, in poultices with oat-meal, for abscesses, &c.

Ground-ivy (*Nepetaglechoma*), used, as a "tea," for "heart beat," or mixed with other herbs for a cough.

Nettles (*Urtica dioica*), used, with ginger, for "wind on the stomach."

Ivy (*Hedera helix*) leaves used as a cap for a "scabby head."

Burdock root (*Arctium lappa*),
Furze tops (*Ulex*),
Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*),
Carageen moss (*Sphærococcus europæus*),
} usually combined and boiled with sugar-stick to form a cough-syrup.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), used as an expectorant. 757
Marsh-mallow (*Althæa officinalis*), used as poultice for "sore breast." 278
Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), used as an infusion for coughs.
Parsely (*Petroselinum sativum*), boiled in milk for "gravel."
Belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*), used for palpitation or "heart beat."

It will be seen from this list that several of the remedies used are officinal; and others, though not officially recognised, possess medicinal properties.

3. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many of these current in the district, but only a small number could be collected. Among all these, few bearing on the early history of this region seem to have come down to the present time, except the tradition of a great battle fought at Cross, in the Mullet, between the people of the country, and an invading army under a king of Munster who was slain in the fight, and over whose remains a tumulus was erected. 173

There is, so far as could be ascertained, no tradition as to the origin of the earlier inhabitants, either of the mainland, or of the islands; but the families whose ancestors came from Ulster two centuries ago are well known, and sometimes are called by the name Ultagh, instead of their own surnames. [551]

It would be expected that there would be some tales connected with the duns, of which there are several, but very few seem to be known, even the oldest inhabitants not seeming to have heard any history of them. The story of Dun Donald, related by Knight,[1] the vague tradition that Dunamoa was built by the Burkes, and besieged by the "Danes"; and another concerning Dun Fiachrach, which is believed to have been a favourite resting place for the children of Lir, and the fishermen of the neighbourhood say that the founder of the fort used to ride a "water-horse," on which he could leap across the deep caves on to the cliffs on each side of the dun. Many of the people ascribe these forts to "the Danes."

The favourite tales and poems are either ancient myth, or of a semi-religious character; legends of the saints forming a large portion of the old chroniclers' stock.

Mr Knight says[2]—"It is not from these cairns (Seefins) alone we claim Fingal and Ossian as *peculiarly* ours; we have heard them in *real song*, and many a winter's evening have I heard the old chronicler lying on his back quietly, in the bed beyond the fire, repeat the

[1] P. Knight, Erris, &c., p. 166. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

figured in the economy of the farm or in medicinal and magical lore would be an almost endless task. One recalls that a group of Californian Indians practising a food-gathering economy is said to have made use of 176 species of wild plants for satisfying almost all their needs. A few examples of the survival of a collecting culture in Ireland may be given, taken from various sources such as Wood-Martin's pioneer work, but also from folk-memory. From the roots of ferns were extracted oils used in weaving, from those of the water lily, a cherished red dye, a substance for tanning from tormentil roots, and ink from the roots of flags (saggins). Bracken and wood ash were kept for making soap, and the ashes of thistles were the perquisite of the herdsmen. Large lake rushes provided materials for caulking boats and churns, and phragmites stems for winding yarn in the shuttle. Lady's bedstraw besides being rubbed on bee-skeps to attract a swarm, produced both dye and rennet. For cures we have the carrageen or Irish moss as well as the moss growing on crosses and other special stones, and a great number of flowers and herbs. Yarrow, in Irish, is called 'the herb of the seven cures'. But the sovereign remedy was the essence of all wild flowers contained in what was euphemistically known as 'all-flower water', i.e., cow's urine.[1] We shall return to these topics in Chapter XXI.

222 824 [278] [237]

[1]W. G. Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 183.

Note. Mr. A. T. Lucas has recently published accounts of hurling balls made of cowhair (see *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 57, 99–104; 59, 78–81).

[526] [237]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, • 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *currach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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342 instance the stranger must not be allowed to leave the house that way lest he take the luck of the house with him. In the [764] Aran Islands it was the custom to carry out the corpse through the back door.

The deal door has not long since replaced, in remote spots, the wickerwork frame, lined with straw, or the hanging straw mat, and I have been told of houses where a creel offered the only protection. There may be only one small window, towards the hearth-end, for the open door provides light. ●[281] A dried sheepskin was a substitute for glass, and I have come across windows where a sheet of glass was sealed with clay without any frame. Where the hole was open, a handful of hay or a wicker shutter closed it at nights. These conditions help us to understand why the window or windows, even now, tend to be restricted to the side sheltered from the prevailing winds.

Fig. 20.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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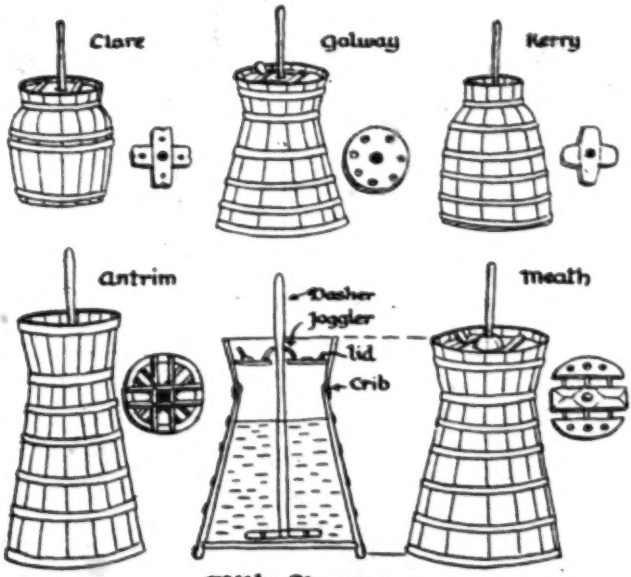

Milk Churns

Fig. 67.

Fig. 68.

[415] of these are in regular use: I illustrate a piggin or milking vessel (Fig. 68), a butter tub, and an old-fashioned tub of bog-fir, bound, as were the other stave-vessels before the adoption of iron hoops, with split sally rods, and covered with a stone lid. Two smaller stave-built noggins for holding water, milk or porridge are also shown (Fig. 69), the Tyrone example being of oak with an ash wrapping, the Donegal specimen of bog-fir and sally bands. Passing mention must be made of wooden spoons and the handsomely carved butter stamps (Fig. 70). Wooden dishes, ladles (Fig. 70) skimmers and jogglers (Fig. 67) are made of sycamore and turned on the pole-lathe.

[281] Sieves of various kinds found a use in the dairy as well as in kitchen and barn. Among the exports from Ireland in

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

former centuries animal hides and skins figured prominently, and it is not uncommon in the west to see cured skins of wild and domestic animals used as floor-coverings. No doubt in earlier days skins and furs were worn, but in modern times raw-hide has been employed only for shoes such as the "pampooties" worn by the Aran Islanders. These have the advantage that they do not damage the frail curraghs, just as the Islandman's headgear is the knitted Tam o' Shanter which the wind cannot blow off. A century ago one might have seen a dried sheep-skin serving as a window, or even a cowhide used as a door-hanging. Sheep- and goat-skins still find their uses as back-protectors (Chapter 16), in the making

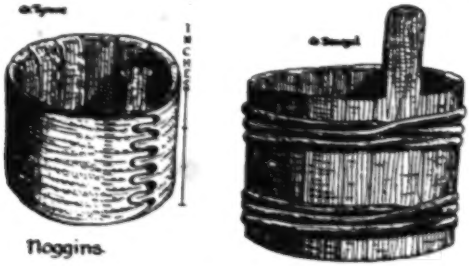

Fig. 69.

of thongs for flails, and especially in providing bottoms for various trays and sieves, the only difference between them being that the sieve-skin is perforated.

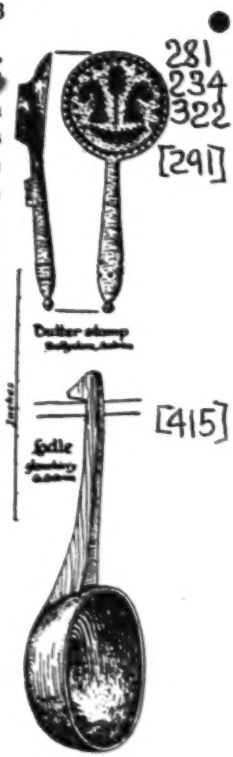

Fig. 70.

The skin, scraped and dried, is wrapped or sewn on to a rim of ash or bog-fir (Fig. 71), and a good deal of skill is required to stretch it on without a wrinkle. These trays are called wights or wechts in the north-east: the peat wight is for carrying turf to the house and the corn wight for pouring corn into a sack. The winnowing tray sometimes has small perforations to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken on to a cloth. A windy spot was selected for the purpose, and numerous "Shelling Hills" get their name from this operation. The perforations, about one-eighth of an inch

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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281 across, are commonly arranged in patterns having, for example,
415 the maker's initials and the date left unpierced. A deeper tray used for carrying corn or for fruit-picking is known as a "dallan." Then there is the meal sieve, which has fine perforations, for sifting the coarse skins (meal seeds) from the oatmeal. Similar to this is the buttermilk sieve with which,
285 before the adoption of the hair sieve, the small particles of
415 butter were strained from the buttermilk. A milk-strainer made of birch bark folded into a cone and filled with straw is referred to in a 17th century account quoted by Mr. E. MacLysaght. In Tory, according to Mr. T. Mason, the wight is "composed simply of sheepskin with a twisted straw rope forming the rim."

The corn sieve, for getting out dust and dirt, and the corn riddle (Fig. 71), for separating bits of straw and "hairy

[281]

Fig. 71.

tails," consist of interwoven splits of ash or bog-fir attached to a rim of the same material. The only difference between them is that the mesh of the former is one-eighth of an inch, of the latter perhaps ¼ inch, though it may vary for different kinds of grain. Efficient riddling is a difficult and nowadays rather rare art. I have not come across sieves of rushes or split willow, but it is very likely that they may be found.

243 The corn riddle and the winnowing tray lead us back to
412 the thrashing floor in the barn. Here we will probably see a flail hanging on the wall. The sound of the flail is by no means rare in Ireland, for in outlying districts the small farmer has no other means of thrashing. The three parts of the flail are the helve or "hand-stave," a straight stick of any light wood such as ash or larch, the shorter and heavier swingel or beater, called in Ireland the "souple" (generally made of hazel, occasionally of holly or birch) and the flail-joint, hanging or
[284] "mid-kipple," which may be a sheep- or goat-skin thong, a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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The straw cape placed over the bee-skep (Fig. 69) is a humble 524
relation. Straw masks are worn also by Biddy Boys on St. 285
Briget's Eve, and by the Christmas Rhymers. On St. Briget's [292]
Eve, too, a small straw doll (Brideóg) was dressed up and
carried from door to door in the south-west of Ireland. A charm
of plaited straw known as Bratóg Brighde (literally, Briget's [789]
Rag) is carried by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection
against storms (Fig. 70, 5). There was also Briget's Girdle, a
two-strand straw rope, a circle with crosses attached, which was
passed over the body as a protective charm, by inserting one
leg and then pushing the head through on the Saints' Feast
Day (Fig. 85).

Before the Irish live-cattle trade developed there had been 281●
for some centuries a great export of hides and skins, and if one
goes back earlier it becomes clear that these products must
have found a multitude of uses about the farm. For a number of
purposes where toughness and durability are specially needed
animal skin has remained a traditional material, and in old-
fashioned mountainy areas the countryman makes a habit of
curing the skins of wild and domesticated animals on the
principle that 'you never know but what they'll come in useful'.
On analogy with the Hebrides, with which Donegal in particular
shows close cultural affinities, skin mealbags should have had a
place in cottage economy in north Ireland. When grinding corn,
a skin was laid on the floor under the quern to catch the meal.
Seal skin served many purposes, from plough traces, in Harris,
to the covers of curraghs in Donegal. We have descriptions of
cured sheepskins serving as windows,[1] and (from St. Kilda)
of fowling ropes bound with strips of salted cowhide to prevent
them from being cut by the rocks.[2] But it is in the skin tray, the 281
wecht or wight, that one is most likely to see tradition main- 415
tained (Fig. 71). The well-scraped skin of sheep, or sometimes
of goat, is stitched on to a rim of ash, bog fir or, in the naked
islands which have exhausted even their bog timber, a ring of
sugan. To secure the skin free of wrinkles is skilled work, and
the finished product is not unlike a tambourine: in fact, it
closely resembles the Eskimo caribou drum. Irish wrenboys

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 25.
[2]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 315.

HOME-MADE THINGS

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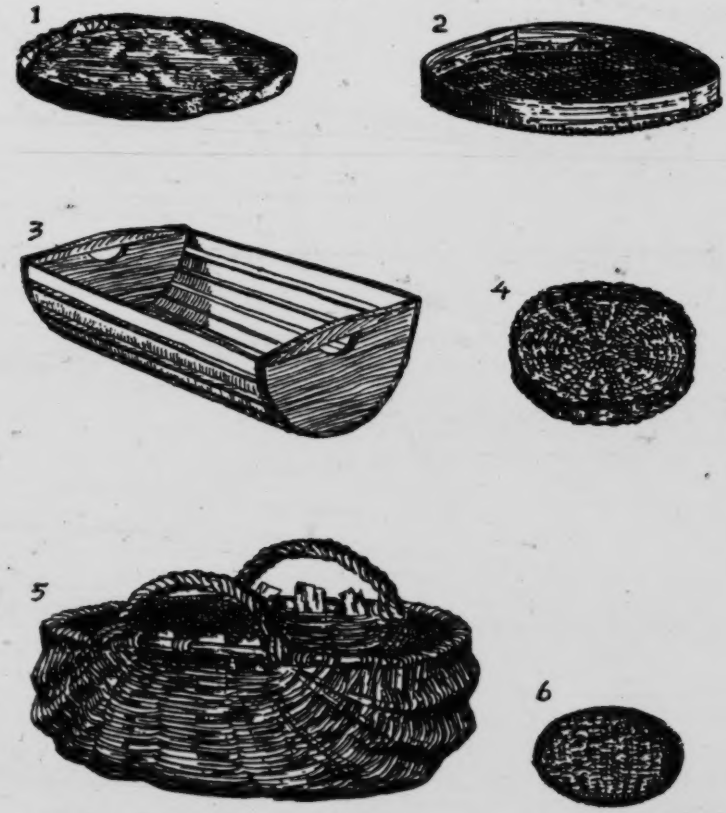

[322]
[285]
[285]

FIG. 71. Skin-tray, split-ash riddle and potato baskets. Approximate scale 1/9 (No. 5, 1/6). (1) Sheep-skin tray or wight. (2) Split-ash riddle. (3) Potato 'basket'. (4) Potato skib. (5) Potato basket. (6) Potato skib. (All Co. Antrim.)

Irish wren boys

[534] carried a skin tambourine which they beat when hunting the wren on St. Stephen's Day, and one wonders whether the drummers from whom the Orange performers on King William's Day inherit their wild rhythms were trained on ceremonial wights. (There are also sieves, riddles and shallow baskets of split ash or sally, but these, for example the flat round potato skib—a communal self-service plate—should properly be classed as the work of specialists. 212 (Fig. 71).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

as the work of specialists (Fig. 71). The pampooties of the Aran Islands deserve mention here. Made of calfskin, but formerly of sealskin,[1] these one-piece shoes were once doubtless widely worn and have kept their hold in Aran because of their suitability for wet rocks and frail curraghs. The rivlins of Scotland and the Highland *bròg*an were very similar and I have seen rawhide shoes of the same type from Norway and the Pyrenees. They all have the hair outside and are secured by lacing back and front.

The wight serves both to hold corn, in filling a sack for instance, and to convey peats from the stack to the fireside: perforated it becomes a meal-sieve (boran) for sifting the skins (seeds) from oatmeal, or a buttermilk sieve for taking out the last grains of butter from the churn. The winnowing tray or dallan is a larger version, and it, too, may be perforated to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken out on to a spread cloth. There are, up and down Ireland, many bold windy Shilling Hills where the 'shellings' (husks) were, in past times, separated from the grain in this way (Pl. 7).

This brings us to the flail and its 'hanging' (the mid-kipple, hooden, gad, middling, or tug) which was commonly a thong of cow-, horse-, sheep, or goat-skin, though sometimes of rabbit- or eel-skin or a cord of flax. The flail, the proverbial 'stick-and-a-half', consists of a three to four feet long helve or hand-staff, usually made of ash, and a shorter beater, swingle or souple of hazel or holly. There are two principal methods of 'hanging' the parts together. In one variety, the tie passes through two leather caps lashed over the ends (Fig. 72, 1). This appears to be a variant of the common English flail-hanging, where, however, the cap is made of steamed ash or yew and there is no linking piece. Its distribution in Ireland, down the east coast, points to derivation from England. Modifications, occurring as far west as Donegal (Fig. 72, 1*a*, *b*), have the linking thong passing through a hole made either in the helve or in the beater. Kevin Danaher states that the capped flail is characteristic of central Europe: it is believed to have first appeared in north France in the early Middle Ages.[2] The

[1] O'Flaherty, *H'Ier Connaught*, 59 (footnote).
[2] *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 60 (1955), 6–14.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XVII

BOATS AND FISHING

THE lower reaches of the River Boyne, celebrated among archaeologists as the setting of one of the most remarkable groups of chamber tombs in western Europe, have another claim on our interests as the last refuge of a venerable craft. This is perhaps the only place in Europe where the phrase 'the skin of a boat' preserves its literal meaning. The lath or wicker-work coracle is known on several of the Welsh rivers, but only in the Boyne curragh (Ir. *currach*) is the covering still made of hide. The ox-hides now used are imported: the one I examined during a recent visit to the salmon fisheries near Drogheda had been tanned by a specialist in the dressing of beaver skins. Each hide may outlast several 'baskets' or boat-frames, for these quickly rot with repeated wettings and dryings, and on the average two frames of doubled hazel wands are required each season, which lasts from 12th February to 12th August. A few other Irish rivers kept their curraghs into recent centuries—the curragh was certainly known on the Shannon and the Erne and possibly on the Bann—but on most of the inland waters dug-outs seem to have been traditional, and if we knew more about the two distributions important cultural inferences might be drawn. Dug-outs have been found, however, in nearly every part of the country, including the River Boyne. 281 501

The curragh is not likely to survive much longer and its lore should be fully recorded. Netting salmon in fresh water on all Irish rivers has been illegal since 1st January 1948, so that the curragh's last legal refuge is the tidal portion of the Boyne. But it has been long a-dying. I was told that no more would be made after the death of that fine craftsman Michael O'Brien 501 [226]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

their skin boats and almost certainly reached Iceland before the Norsemen. An account of the legendary voyagings of St. Brendan speaks of the hides of his curragh as dressed with butter. Port-na-Curaich, on the island of Iona, commemorates the landing of another Irish saint, St. Columba, though one hesitates to accept the tradition that the long mound which may be seen there is the place where he buried his curragh so that he could not return to Ireland. The sea-going curraghs were ideal craft for the Irish raiders who plundered west Britain during and after the Roman occupation: light in weight, of shallow draught and capable of flying over the waves. Probably the plank-built longboats of the Vikings drove the curraghs from the Irish Sea, but its descendants are still to be found in the rowing curraghs of the west coast from Donegal to Kerry. The Boyne curragh is a fossilized relic of an earlier form, if indeed it is not, as Hornell thought, a degeneration product. 501

But besides the rowing curraghs up to twenty-five feet in length there are also, in Donegal, smaller paddling curraghs eight or ten feet long which seem to stand between the oval river baskets and the sharp-pointed rowing curraghs. In an account of the Rosses in the 1750s we read of the funeral processions to the island of Aranmore in Donegal which comprised as many as sixty or eighty curraghs covered with seal skins.[1] We learn from a description of their construction written nearly 100 years later that the frame of sallies and laths, at that time 'skinned with a hide or tarred canvas' was lashed together with cords of horsehair.[2] The same writer tells us that cattle were transported in them by lifting an animal into the curragh on its back, with its legs tied, and carrying the loaded vessel into the water. He gives the following example of 'the reckless daring of these islanders. A man and his wife coming out of the island of Aranmore, in a little boat filled with turf, had a horse standing on top of it; with the roll of the sea, the animal was thrown out, and as they were a long way from land, must have been drowned, had not the man cleverly succeeded in getting him into the boat again!' It seems from what records are available that the hides used for covering the vessels, [505] [281]

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 202.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 31.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

501 whether seal-skin or the hide of a cow or horse, were untanned. I can add little to the historical account given by Hornell, but [281] it should be noticed that the paddle curragh, covered with horsehide, was common in Erris, Co. Mayo, around 1850[1] and that, to judge from an entry in a Rathlin Island account book of 1760—'paid for one mare's hide for the boat, 1s. and 6d.'—the paddle curragh was used there also.

501 The long rowing curragh with its high pointed nose is widely distributed on the west coast from Donegal to Kerry, 3% and its seaworthy qualities are known to many from its dramatic participation in such films as *Man of Aran* and *Shark Island*. This vessel too is built bottom upwards, but the frame is pegged, not into the ground but into a strong wooden gunwale frame, single or double, which Hornell believes was borrowed, along with the fixed thwarts which give lateral rigidity, from plank-built boats. Yet the method of pivoting the oar on a single tholepin, originally perhaps a strong projecting rib of the curragh frame, rather than in a rowlock, suggests that the rowing curragh has native forerunners. There are many variations in constructional details from one district to another but nearly all the vessels are now built of laths and all are covered with tarred canvas. An emergency repair is contrived by an operation which, if you are a timid passenger, looks like 'burning your boats': the curragh is inverted, the tar around the hole is set alight and a calico patch stuck on when the tar has run. The curraghs are rowed by two, three or four men, and the largest are said to have a carrying capacity of two tons. In Kerry they are masted to carry a small lug sail. A feature of [777] many curraghs is a small bottle of holy water, a protection against misfortune, suspended on a string in the bows.

501 The looms of the long narrow oars overlap so that the oarsman pulls cross-handed. A heavy wooded counterweight, the bool, is attached near the loom, and the oar pivots by means of a round hole in the bool on a single wooden peg, the tholepin, driven into the gunwale (Fig. 78). This method of rowing is found on many lake and river boats in Ireland, perhaps es- [171] pecially in those areas, such as the Shannon and Lough Neagh,

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 56. See also *Pococke's Tour* 1752, 64.

 [Text continues on p. 240]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 pre-Gaelic tongues, and there can be little doubt that the eel fishery is prehistoric in origin. The draft nets in which pollan [192] are caught in the lake—the pollan is a fresh-water herring [227] peculiar to some Irish and Scottish lakes—also display old features. The sections, known as webs, are sewn together with a bone needle into long nets, which are weighted with stone sinkers. The draft-net is widely used in the salmon rivers, as described on the Boyne earlier in this chapter, and references to draft-netting go back to the twelfth century. On some rivers [349] tall towers are erected from which a watcher signals the [202] presence of fish.[1]

We are not here concerned with the commercial offshore fisheries, but something must be said of the inshore fishing because it has been characteristically combined with farming all around the coast. This type of fishing was well suited to the Irish crofter economy, so that the comment frequently made by improving visitors and despairing Government officials was that the Irish would not go out to fish, but waited for the fish to come close inshore. The shore-dwelling farmer is knowledgeable about the ways of fish and knows all 'the signs'. He has been accustomed to keep a net to hand and watch for shoals of different fish at the right seasons. There are watching points on the cliffs overlooking many a small bay, and it was from such vantage points on the south and west coasts that the pilchard 'huers' directed the seine boats to the shoals that visit Ireland intermittently.[2] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Irish pilchard fishery grew to large proportions but it has now declined to something like its older local significance. When the industry was capitalized by promoters like Sir William Petty it was the train oil pressed out during the packing of the pilchards for export which found an Irish market. [281] It was used both as a luminant and in the preparation of leather. The seine boats have now turned their attention to herring and mackerel, and Dr. Went has pointed out that the seine is used for catching salmon only in Kenmare Bay, where Petty introduced it for pilchard fishing about the year 1672.

In the Irish Sea the herrings come close inshore in September

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 85 (1955), 22–23, Pl. 3A.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 51 (1946), 157–57.

226 types of gear. It used to be said that you should never risk taking a dog into some of the fishing villages on the north coast: [281] their skins were in great demand for making the line floats or 'stookies'. Very probably seal skins were formerly used for this purpose, as among the Eskimo. The sinkers of grooved stones from the beach might well pass for prehistoric implements (Fig. 74). The beautifully made line-baskets of unpeeled [285] willow have the graceful curves that one associates with the work of untouched 'primitives' (Fig. 82). And the division of [462] labour was on a primitive level, for to the womenfolk fell the tedious labour of baiting and preparing the hooks. The long-line fishermen were exceptionally hardy and were regarded with awe and respect by the inshore fishermen-farmers. No doubt the timid and the weakly had been weeded out by continual stress. Their knowledge of the sea and of the fishing [428] marks was a guarded secret, and the best banks were some- [777] times allotted, no doubt to avoid fights, by casting lots. In the Hebrides this was done on Bride's Day. There also, and possibly in Ireland, the banks were held in rotation in a kind of marine rundale.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for 291
themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their [177]
fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 294
40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to 281
shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and [437]
when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept [463]
moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a 128
livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have 434
touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century 434
men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the main- 502
land. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to 437
scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The [178]
Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in 502
the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humor- 539
ous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right 421
of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person 422
discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander [829]
along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the im- [176]
mense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the [722]
islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other [433]

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Line Baskets

Fig. 76. Length *c.* 3 ft.

into a narrow mouth, a feature which is found in all Aran basket-work. Miss Gahan of the Irish Homespun Society regards it as an adaptation to the conditions on the islands, for the contents might easily be spilled owing to the number of loose stone walls which have to be crossed on a journey to the fields. Many of the Aran carrying baskets (" kishauns ") are constructed of coiled straw rope bound together with split bramble (Fig. 77). They no doubt help to keep warm the food carried in them, such as boiled potatoes, boiled in their skins needless to say, in the Irish fashion. Such " lipe-work " was once common in Wales, where seed-baskets, yarn-holders, hassocks and meal containers were made in this way, but in Ireland the only coiled work I have seen outside the Aran Islands is the bee-skep of rye straw, tied with bramble. The illustration shows the small bone pin or awl used by the islanders in threading the brambles. Similar pins, which doubtless had many uses, are frequently found in archæological excavations, particularly on sites where a Mesolithic heritage may be suspected.

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Fig. 77.
Note bone pin.

This brings us to the very large topic of the uses made of straw. There is no need to refer to the value of oat straw as fodder or as thatch, though it does not last long as roofing material, and either wheat or rye straw is preferred. A humble example of the use of thatch is shown in the beehive (Fig. 77*a*) Rope (sugán) made of straw or hay still finds many uses, especially for tying down thatch on houses and stacks. It is twisted on a " thraw-hook " of ash or hazel, with a sally hand-grip, but the old styles are declining with the spread of a simple " twister " of strong bent wire (Fig. 78). This type is found throughout the British Isles in many forms some of which are

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[231]

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Fig. 77*a*.
Height 4 ft.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 326 554 Of these local specialists only the smith survives in any strength today. He shares with the mason the admiration the country people feel for physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this that made the more sedentary occupations of weaver, shoemaker, and tailor of less prestige. Thus the crippled son, as the quotation says, might be put to one of them.

463 294 The tailor was often a peripatetic. He moved around from house to house and community to community where he was known, living and eating among the family. He was made welcome, not only as a maker of clothes but also as a carrier of gossip. Today the few tailors who survive in the country districts are petty cotters with only a memory of their trade. The few still active ones have retreated to the towns. Most of the farmers' clothing is now shop-bought and factory-made.

463 286 [283] The weaver was perhaps the most sedentary of the local craftsmen. He is the one who has failed to survive even in the towns. The women of the farm families carded and spun the wool into yarn until home spinning died out, and broke and scutched the flax for linen, but the weaver made it into cloth. He spent all his days indoors, moving from one side of his loom to the other in a small room heavy-laden with fluff and lint. The farmers seem to remember most strongly the unhealthiness of the life, but they tell one also of the weavers' arrogance when their skill was in great demand. The following is the kind of description one can still get, the first part of it discoursing on weavers in general and the second relating the history of the local man:

> In the old days the weaver might have enough work to keep him busy for four months and, when you went to see him, he would put you off and tell you to come back in a fortnight for your goods. It would be no good for you, none in the world, if you didn't take a bowl of butter and a few dozen eggs to him

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

476 A man would go to town and buy two or more pottles of flax
571 to sow. Then on the first of May he would go to the garden
and plant it. In August he would pull it up by the roots and
248 lay it in small bundles to be made into stooks. Then they would
take it and put it into a bog and leave it there fifteen or twenty
days, after which they could dry it in the house by hanging it
from the rafters. About the first of November you would take
it down and some men would come in and help break it. They
would then put it back and later take it down and scutch it with
a pronged tool, drawing the flax over it and breaking it.

476 Some time about Christmas time you would have a *meitheal*
571 of girls come in and they would sit in a semicircle round the
fire and clove the flax. It would take several days depending
on how much you had. The girls would stay with you all that
● 283 time. At seven in the evening they would be through and
within half an hour you could hear them in the hills leaping
and shouting. About eight or eight-thirty the boys would begin
[535] to arrive and there would be a dance and be no more good out
of them for that night. They might have a dance every two or
three days. You fed them good.

The next thing was the hackling, and this might be done by men or women. You had a box with iron prongs sticking up and you would hit the stalk against the irons and the small particles would fall into the box below. It might take several nights. Old man Roughan was a great man at the hackling, but he was always great for nothing else to do with flax. It was fine if you got him to come and help you and he would be glad to do it. Then you might be good at something else and you would go and help him with that. Some men were good at one thing and others at something else and they would help each other.

After this the next thing was the spinning, and this was done by the woman. She would sit in this corner by the fire and she might be there every night, or whenever she had the time, spinning the flax fiber into thread. She had no one to help her and it was a hard job. After it was made into thread, it would
be taken out and bleached and re-wound and then taken to the
[286] weaver. The weaver made it into cloth and you would use it
for sheets and shirts and other things. Flax was a hard thing
and there was a lot of hard work about it.

248 They have been out of growing it for thirty or forty years

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

and now they would never think of growing it but must be running to town and buying what they want. 248

The process of conversion of wool to yarn and thence into cloth was equally difficult. It demanded the concerted efforts of most of the rural community. It gave scope for the development of specialists who could give their skills back and forth even though, as before, their skills were part of the equipment of all the young people in the community. Two other old fellows of Inagh combined in the following account: 476 571 283

With the wool it was sheared on May 15 and, if that fell on a Monday or Tuesday and the following was Saturday in town (market day) you would see the men there with wool to sell while others would be there to buy it with large baskets in which to put it. The first thing was to card the wool. About the first of June you would get ready to spin it. For that you go around to all the neighbors and ask for a loan of a girl to spin the wool, and if you got eight or ten you must get the loan of that many spinning wheels. Then they come to the house on a certain day and I have seen eight wheels in this room and two in the other, all the girls spinning and talking away. It might take several days before they were through and they would have a dance and the boys would come around. You want to be sure to get the girls early for there is a great demand for them. After the yarn is spun, it is placed on the wall to be taken to the weaver later on. [535]

All this was part of the pattern of work in which the members of the community were accustomed to work in close association. The behavior described here is that which we have already looked at in the discussion of the obligations of cooring. The *meitheal* referred to the working gang rather than the system in which the local habits were set. That setting was a constant play of habitual work relations between the "friends" and neighbors of the local community in which the characteristic organization of the community aligned sex and age groups and associated the 476 571

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE XLVII

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1. Thatched-chimney. Co. Clare.
2. Making hay-ropes. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
3. Hobwalls carrying the chimney. Toormakeady, Co. Galway.

1.

2.

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3.

[p. 219]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342

We now come to the roof with its timber framework and thatch. It generally consists of couples resting on the side-walls and joined together by tie-beams at the top; and houses are referred to not as measuring so many feet but as being two- three- or four-coupled. The rib-lengths, between the couples, are a kind of architectural unit.[1] In most old cottages the frame of the roof is of bog-fir, but its use has been superseded by imported "fir." There are many different methods of joining the couples, for example in Donegal they do not actually meet but have a short tie at the top which rounds the roof against the wind (Fig. 20). If the walls are of clay, sod or turf, the couples may be supported on internal beams placed upright against the side-walls, but the purlin method is generally adopted to avoid the thrust of the couple ends. Long beams run from gable to gable, and may be seen projecting outside to allow for the possible movement of the end-walls. This method of roofing allows of greater width than the coupled roof and is preserved, for example, in the old weavers' houses around Lough Neagh, where space was needed for the large looms. (Figs. 22c, 27 & 28.)

On the framework of couples or purlins lighter timber was placed at intervals and on these were laid at right angles rows of branches or laths, often made out of split bog timber. Where teasels were cultivated for the home woollen industry their dried stalks were employed for this purpose. Then came a layer of "scraws," peeled from a carefully selected spot where the grass is tough with a spade or flachter (Chapter 15) and placed on the roof in long overlapping strips with the matted roots inwards. The scraws were of standard sizes, for instance 12 ft. long by 2 ft. by 1½ inches thick. but they were shorter than this in the south, where the flachter was not known. The scraws were generally sewn to the roof timbers with loops of sugán or fir-rope (Fig. 21). The sod layer, while universal in old houses throughout the north, is not always found in the south. Professor O'Riordain has described old houses in Co. Limerick, for example, where the thatch is sown directly on to the battens.

[283] ●

[184]

Fig. 21.

[1] *cf.* the fork-intervals or "bays" of the old English house.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

rotation grass is referred to as upland hay to distinguish it 246
from meadow hay, although in fact it often grows at lower levels. Sometimes at this stage the hay is hung on bushes and fences something after the Scandinavian manner.

When sufficiently dry the laps are opened and the hay piled into small cocks (ricks or lumps), and this process is repeated a number of times if the weather is bad until the stage of large hand-cocks is reached, or, if the hay is in good condition, even larger "tramp-cocks," trodden down firmly. The cocks are tied down with a hay-rope made on the spot (Fig. 50) and left "to season" for a period which may be only a week or two but which, to the stranger, seems generally an unconscionable time. In this matter the Irish

[283]

Fig. 50.

are confirmed in what the English call their lazy ways. Admittedly there are dry years when it would do no harm to the hay to stack it at once, but the Irish method is adapted to the average season, and rooted in a firmly-fixed rota of farm work. In August the turf must be carried home while the [314]
bogs are firm enough to take the carts, and in many parts the busy time of flax-pulling and retting is come. Although these alternative demands on the farmer's time are not always present, they may have helped in the past to standardize the 492
rotation of work. Moreover, when the opportunity of carry- 246

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

482 burden in Ireland as among other peasantries. The burden-rope, constructed of rushes, horse-hair or grass-rope (Chap. [283] 14 and Figs. 79 & 80), was employed for carrying surprisingly large loads of hay, corn or bushes—" as much as a pony could draw," I have been told—while the burden-creel, slung over one shoulder or worn like a rucksack by women who would thus have their hands free for knitting, was mainly used for carrying turf. Nor should we omit the wheel-barrow, both [493] box and turf types (Chapter 15 and Fig. 90), the hand barrow (for loads of stones and also for fish and nets) and the two-man turf creel (Fig. 91).

493 492 Side-creels are the panniers attached to an ass or small pony. Most of them are constructed with a hinged bottom so that the contents of turf, wrack, gravel or manure are automatically unloaded (Fig. 58). The sides are broken by ornamental " windows " which give a handhold for lifting and help to lighten the creel. Comparative study would reveal several regional and specialized forms of creel, and I have observed different methods of attachment even in neighbouring valleys. They are generally slung on wooden pegs driven into a roof-shaped crutch or straddle (Fig. 56) which rests on two straw mats. In the example figured from Tuam (Fig. 57) the straw mats are pegged together, and the straddle is strengthened by two osier ties, to one of which the tail-sugán is fastened. When hay or corn is being carried the creels may be dispensed with and the " bottles " or sheaves hung on the straddle pegs with an osier ring. Alternatively the creels are tied together with ropes which pass over a thick straw pad laid along the animal's spine, and the straddle is not used. The creels are D-shaped and can be made of openwork, for turf or wrack, or of closely-woven sides for manure. We shall have something more to say about their construction in Chapter 14.

Fig. 56.

493 Among horse-drawn vehicles the sledge or slipe is very generally employed for transporting stones, manure, or turf and also for conveying the plough and harrows from one field to another. I illustrate the common slipe of Co. Antrim

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

285 baskets, and of creels and other objects of wickerwork. To do the subject justice would require a large volume, and we must confine ourselves to some broad aspects. We have referred to creels and kishes of various kinds in Chapter 12. These are objects which the countryman makes for himself, as distinct from the "fancy" basket work which is generally in the hands of special families. To take the creels first, they are constructed bottom-upwards in the same way as the framework of the Boyne curragh, by sticking the stout standards in the earth as though to make wattles and bending them over [824] to form the foundation of the bottom. Strong black sally, hazel or rowan are employed instead of the soft basket willows. The standards are left projecting above the rim of the creel when it is finished, so that the sides do not lift off. But a well woven "mouth" is also necessary to prevent slipping: it may be made single or double. Both creels and kishes may have windows in the sides (Chapter 12 and Fig. 58), an ornamental feature also found in the old wicker cradles. Creels and kishes may be loosely or tightly woven according to whether they are intended for turf or manure. Openwork creels are made in Co. Antrim by pegging the side rods into the two corner standards at intervals of about 4 inches. The old custom in Donegal is to repair two old creels and make two new ones each year. (*See Plate V.*)

285 227 Lobster-pots (Chapter 16), stock-pots, fruit and fish hampers, are made on a perforated wooden frame which may be regarded as a substitute for the earth, but most of the

[283]

Fig. 73. Length 19".

285 "fancy work" is undertaken by specialized basket makers, and we can do no more than indicate the variety and skill of their products. There are certain localities where the tradition of basket-making is strong, for instance the shores of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of " calf basket " (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a " cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or " floats " are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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Fig. 76. Length *c.* 3 ft.

into a narrow mouth, a feature which is found in all Aran basket-work. Miss Gahan of the Irish Homespun Society regards it as an adaptation to the conditions on the islands, for the contents might easily be spilled owing to the number of loose stone walls which have to be crossed on a journey to the fields. Many of the Aran carrying baskets (" kishauns ") are constructed of coiled straw rope bound together with split bramble (Fig. 77). They no doubt help to keep warm the food carried in them, such as boiled potatoes, boiled in their skins needless to say, in the Irish fashion. Such " lipe-work " was once common in Wales, where seed-baskets, yarn-holders, hassocks and meal containers were made in this way, but in Ireland the only coiled work I have seen outside the Aran Islands is the bee-skep of rye straw, tied with bramble. The illustration shows the small bone pin or awl used by the islanders in threading the brambles. Similar pins, which doubtless had many uses, are frequently found in archæological excavations, particularly on sites where a Mesolithic heritage may be suspected.

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[231]

Fig. 77.
Note bone pin.

This brings us to the very large topic of the uses made of straw. There is no need to refer to the value of oat straw as fodder or as thatch, though it does not last long as roofing material, and either wheat or rye straw is preferred. A humble example of the use of thatch is shown in the beehive (Fig. 77*a*) Rope (sugán) made of straw or hay still finds many uses, especially for tying down thatch on houses and stacks. It is twisted on a " thraw-hook " of ash or hazel, with a sally hand-grip, but the old styles are declining with the spread of a simple " twister " of strong bent wire (Fig. 78). This type is found throughout the British Isles in many forms some of which are

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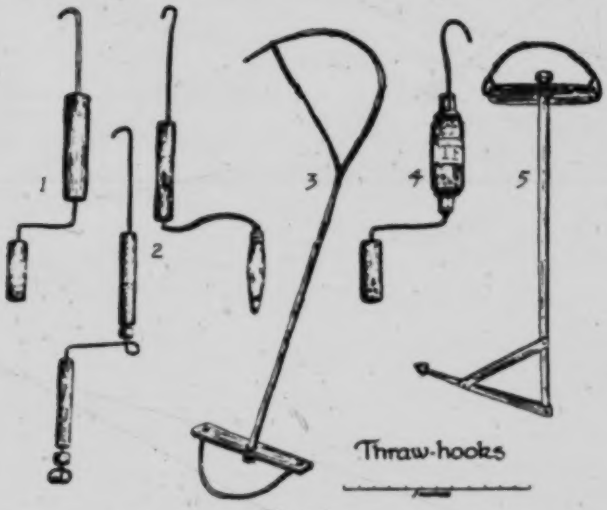
Fig. 77*a*.
Height 4 ft.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

known to be of mediæval descent. The method of manufacture is shown in Fig. 50, and the tying down of a hay pike in Fig. 51. Sugán was sometimes employed instead of wattle 283



[413]

Fig. 78.

Sugán twisters 1. Co. Antrim. 2. Both Donegal. 3. Lecale, Down. 4. Leitrim. 5. Dingle, Kerry.

in the chimney canopies. It was used for the seats of chairs and for the clothes-line which stretched across the kitchen. A short length was sometimes worn as a girdle around a child's dress. From it were made tethering ropes, spancels and langles, traces and tail-ropes; and on the Donegal seaboard I have heard of cabbages being tethered "against the wind" by three hay-ropes! It is on record that the men of Mayo would descend the seacliffs suspended by a straw-rope.

A length of sugán is also the foundation course of many more complex objects of straw such as mats, mattresses, screens, beehives, nesting boxes, stools, arm-chairs, baskets and hampers. I illustrate (Fig. 79) one of the conical hen-nests which are hung on pegs in the kitchen: large

[244]
[481]
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Fig. 79.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 80.

Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugán and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a "tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way: some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or "mell"), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply: finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. "Langles" and "burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and similarly the cattle were fastened in the byre by ropes 231
of straw, as in Clare, or of horse-hair, as in Kerry. Of the 283
two burden ropes illustrated (Figs. 80, 81) the Donegal example is a two-ply rush rope with an eye made of a peeled stick bent into a loop: the Aran specimen is of grass (Manilla) rope [284]
passing through a hole in a wooden runner. Similar blocks of wood serve as a swivel to prevent kinks in tethering ropes, separate lengths of rope passing through each hole.

Reference has been made to the fir-ropes used in securing 283
roofing scraws and thatch. Thin splits of straight-grained bog-fir about four feet long and an inch wide are twisted by hand into hollow cylinders, joined end to end to make a coil of about 50 feet. Two or three of these are twisted together to give the finished product, which combines great strength and elasticity with the capacity to stand up to all weathers. Fir-rope was often stretched across the wooden bed-frame to [352]
make a springy mattress. A short "tie" of fir-rope is shown in Fig. 21, p. 63.

[p. 132 is blank]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SEASHORE.

The seashore, where the first Irishmen picked up a living 22
some thousands of years ago, still plays a significant role in the islands and around the coasts and is laid under contribution for seaweed and drift weed (wrack), for sand and gravel, and for accessory supplies of food. On many an Irish strand too, seasonal festivals, horse-racing and country games have only slowly given way to holiday makers from the city. Communal rights in the seashore were jealously guarded, and one constantly comes across ancient customs that have survived in this most changeless of environments. I recall the country-
man " on the brew " (bureau ; that is, on the dole) whom I [283]
watched in County Down twisting on his bare thigh, his palm dried with a dusting of wood-ash from the hearth, the two-ply " crop " of horse-hair for his fishing line—each ply consisting of twenty-one strands taken from the tail of a white mare.
This method of twisting is found amongst almost all primitive 227
peoples, and can be paralleled, for instance, from the remote 226
Andaman Islands. His outfit for codling fishing is illustrated in Fig. 94, which shows two hair crops attached to a home-made sinker of lead—called from its shape a " frog " ; the use of horse-hair has survived in this case because it is stiffer than
gut and serves to keep the hooks from fouling each other. [237]
Rock-fishing lines in Co. Antrim are sometimes made of black horse-hair, but for the part next the hook, called the foot-line, white hair is used. Well-made lines of carefully selected hair

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 144--ANALYST]

1C: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The spinning-wheel and hand-loom are the same as those commonly used on the west coast, the former, as usual, having no treadle. 172 [283]

Querns are still in use, and in connection with them the boran, or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, used for screening the meal. [252] [412]

Grain is still winnowed by shaking it in a sieve in a strong wind. [243]

The method of washing clothes is the same as that customary in Connemara, the clothes being folded, laid in the water of a lake or pool, and beaten with a club or paddle. [296]

The tailor, when making clothes, does not measure his customers with a tape, but takes all his measurements on one sheet of paper, marking the lengths by cutting notches out of the edge. [294]

The curraghs, which are still in use, are of the usual form; they are rapidly going out of fashion, however. [501]

The anchor used for small boats is a stone, not fixed in a wooden clamp as in Clare and Aran, but having a groove around it for the rope.

As mentioned previously, the apparatus used for the shark-fishing is very rude and primitive.

2. *Antiquities.*—Inishbofin is not very rich in architectural antiquities, and the few that still remain are being rapidly destroyed; some ruins which were standing in the first half of the present century have altogether disappeared, and the others are much shattered. 172

In Inishshark, also, the buildings have sustained a great injury.

It does not lie within my province to enter upon any detailed description of the ruins; but I desire, in the following notes (extracted almost *verbatim* from my Field Note-book), to direct the attention of archæologists to the buildings of interest in these islands which are being rapidly blotted out of existence. The number and nature of these have been described by the late Mr. O'Donovan, Mr. Hardiman, Mr. G. H. Kinahan, and others.

In the account of their present condition given below, they are arranged in the order in which they are described by Mr. Hardiman.[1]

Inishbofin.—(1). St. Colman's church, in Knock townland, built in A.D. 667, is in a very ruinous state, and the interior is filled with rough gravestones and weeds, and in a small recess near the east window is a pile of crania and broken bones. In the enclosure around the church the foundations of the cells (cloghans (?)) of the abbey, or monastic colony, may still be traced, though with difficulty, but the

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

113 Official:

"Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland."—Dublin, 1846.

"Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Ireland. Explanatory Memoir of Sheets 73, 74, 83, 84."—Dublin, 1876.

Wilde, Lady Francesca:

"Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland. with Sketches of the Irish Past."—London, 1887.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES VIII. AND IX.

Plate VIII.

142 Fig. 1.—James Joyce, aged 48 years, No. 5, Middlequarter.

291 Figs. 2 and 3.—Anthony Lavelle, aged 35 years, No. 2, Knock.

Fig. 4.—Group of men, Inishbofin.

Taken in order from left to right, the names are, respectively:—

Back row.—John Burke, boatwright; Michael Halloran, king of Shark; John Tierney, postman; Mick Kerrigan, weaver; Redmond Toole, fisherman.

Front row.—Martin Baker, John Malia (or Malley), Ned Burke, Redmond Toole, all fishermen.

Fig. 5.—Group of women, Westquarter, Inishbofin.

Taken in the same order as the other group, the names are—Margaret Ward, Nancy Browne (first cousins), Nelly Holloran, Mary Holloran (daughter of last), Brigid Concannon.

Plate IX.

412 Fig. 1.—Quern still in use in Middlequarter, Inishbofin.

283 Fig. 2.—Spinning wheel in Middlequarter.

296 Fig. 3.—Method of washing clothes, Church Lough, Knock.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin.

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[End Plate B]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen.*

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tin-ware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 designed for temporary habitations, for it results, after repeated
177 additions of straw and mud, in an extremely thick and heavy roof. Yet its distribution on the east coast seems to point to introduction from overseas, and in Co. Down it is known as English thatch. One would like to know more about old thatching techniques in other parts of north-western Europe. In Galway a house with mud-sealed thatch is known as a 'shaken house'.[1]

Another way of securing the thatch, which has a limited
342 distribution chiefly along the Antrim coast, we may term the
[283] pegged method. Horizontal two-ply ropes made of sally, heather, or the tough fibres of bog-fir roots are laid along the roof parallel to the eaves at intervals of a foot or so and pegged to the scraw with wooden pins which are pushed in upwards so as not to lead water through the roof. A row of scraws is pegged to the rather sharp ridge (Fig. 9, 4). I have observed this style of thatch in south-west Lancashire. Much more widely distributed is the thatch which is found along the north and west coasts from east Ulster round to Kerry, but comes into its own particularly in Donegal, where it gives some of the most attractive roofs in north-western Europe. In Donegal they are rounded at the ridge to throw off the winds, the supporting couples being designed to this end with short cross-pieces breaking the angle of the ridge (Fig. 10). In some
[284] districts the ropes, formerly of twisted straw or bog fir but now generally ready-made of sisal, run in both directions to make a complete network; in others the horizontal ropes are omitted because of the obstructing gable-ends which, rising above the thatch, protect it from the winds. The ropes are secured to the walls by means of a row of stone-pegs below each eave. This method of tying is found also in north Mayo, most typically in areas known to have been settled from Donegal in the seventeenth century.[2] Here the horizontal ropes are carried over the gable in steps left for the purpose (Fig. 12, 2). Such roofs are said to be 'stitched': a close mesh may require up to a mile's length of roping. The older method of securing the ropes, from Mayo to Kerry, is to fasten the ends to small boulders

[1] C. R. Browne, *Inishbofin and Inishshark*. [Text continues on p. 54]
[2] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

HOME-MADE THINGS

By far the most versatile of home-produced rope-making 283
materials is straw. Rye straw is longer, softer and more flexible than any other, but very little rye is now grown save along the west coast where it is still the most popular thatching material. Wheat straw is the best substitute, but in fact most farmers must now depend on oat straw, thus 'tying up' some of their fodder. Straw rope (súgán) not only had many direct uses but served as the basis for such crafts as the making of mats, baskets, bee-skeps, mattresses, hen roosts, pigeons' nests and horse harness. It was used for seating chairs and making arm-chairs, and for a great variety of hobbles and tethers for animals and ties for holding down thatch. The fondness of the Irish for tethering and hobbling their livestock must be seen [231] in the light of inadequate fences and the conditions of partnership farming in open fields. Not only the larger animals, but hens, turkeys, and geese were commonly restrained in this way. 'All livestock of the poorer man is in this sort of thraldom' wrote Arthur Young.[1] One may still see a tethered hen with her chickens that might have stepped out of the illuminated pages of the fourteenth century Luttrell Psalter. A straw rope stretched across the kitchen made a serviceable clothes-line. Torches were sometimes made from twisted straw; on the other hand, when [373] suitably coated with mud, straw ropes made a fireproof smoke-canopy. Chopped straw or layers of straw ropes were also used in constructing mud walls, and it is possible that, as in Sweden, [333] stakes wrapped in straw rope daubed in clay were once an alternative to 'wattle and daub' for wall building. It has been stated that the fowlers of the Mayo coast would let themselves down the cliffs on straw ropes,[2] which must have been exceptionally well made; ropes made from the fibres of bog fir were more reliable. In Co. Antrim fowling ropes were of horse hide, but bent ropes are also recorded.[3] I have seen countrymen on a windy fair day wearing an improvised belt over their long coats in the form of a straw rope, and in the early nineteenth century children in Co. Cork were described as 'clad in nothing except a coarse woollen shirt that came half way down the thighs and

[1] Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 37.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 55.
[3] R. Dobbs, *County Antrim in 1683*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

283 was bound about the waist with a suggan of straw.' The Rev. Philip Skelton was said by his biographer 'in cold weather, to go through Pettigo with a straw rope about him, to keep his large coat on.'[1]

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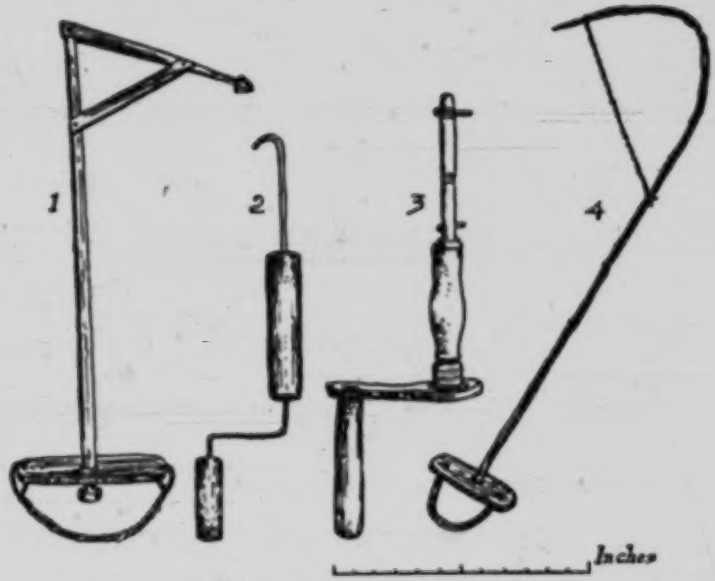

FIG. 67. Rope-twisters. (1) Co. Kerry. (2) Co. Antrim. (3) Co. Armagh. (4) Co. Down. Nos. 1 and 4 are the old-style 'thraw-hooks'.

Short lengths of rope ('thumb-ropes' of hay or straw) are skilfully twisted by hand or, if the material is fine, made by wrapping it round a stick and pulling it out, but a simple tool of ancient lineage, the throw-crook or thraw-hook, is employed when long ropes are needed: it is known also in England and in Scandinavia. A twister of cranked wire resembling a carpenter's brace has, however, largely replaced the wooden hook; it is more tiring but requires less skill (Fig. 67). I have seen a wooden hayrake serving as an improvised thraw-hook. The
283 prepared ropes are wound into golden balls (clews) up to two

[1] S. Burdy, *The Life of Philip Skelton*, 131.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

feet in diameter. (Small, carefully made clews of hay rope, with a centre of rags or corks, are occasionally used as footballs; similar coils of rope in England seem to be oval in shape and would serve rather as balls for Rugby football.) Laying by a stock of clews was a useful occupation for a wet day. The man of the house chose the sedentary end of the rope, sitting under cover in the barn among the thrashed straw and feeding it evenly into the rope as the other end was twisted by a retreating youth armed with a thraw-hook. As the rope grew, the boy had to withdraw into the rain away from the shelter and the sociability of the barn, and this simple scene is the theme of one of Douglas Hyde's Irish plays, *Casadh an tSugáin* (The Twisting of the Rope). A rival suitor makes love to a girl in the barn while the unfortunate twister is forced by his unco-operative employer to watch the proceedings from the end of a lengthening and apparently endless rope. 283 [538]

Hay ropes are both softer and stronger than straw and were used, for example, for parts of the harness where straw ropes would have chafed and broken. They were naturally employed for securing large cocks of hay (tramp cocks, Fig. 52) against the wind; and tethers for young animals were often made of hay rope. A Donegal landlord writing of the early nineteenth century tells of cabbages tethered against the wind with three hay ropes.[1] The shearing rope, four or five feet long, by which the legs of sheep were tied together when clipping the wool, was also made of hay or marram grass. Here we may take note of the curious practice of piecemeal shearing, recorded from Mayo[2] and Donegal[3] and possibly to be attributed to ancient usage rather than to indolence. It seems that the women were in the habit of clipping bits off the sheep at any season, as they needed the wool. Stronger than ropes of straw or hay are those made of rushes or sedges, and stronger still those of fir, heather, birch twigs, willow bark, horsehair or rawhide. Bog fir ropes were still being twisted in north Antrim, a few years ago, for securing thatch and making bed-frames. Ropes were made even from seaweed, as we shall see in the following chapter. Many [236]

[1] J. Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience*, 19.
[2] C. R. Browne, *Garumna and Letterfullen*.
[3] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

283 of these rope-making materials had other uses as well, not forgetting their functions in ceremony and magic as represented by Briget's crosses, harvest knots, the blaeberry baskets of Lammas and the rush ladders of Hallowe'en. Better known, [373] though no longer made, are the rushlights whose feeble glow, in the words of Gilbert White, made 'darkness visible'.

[284] [285]

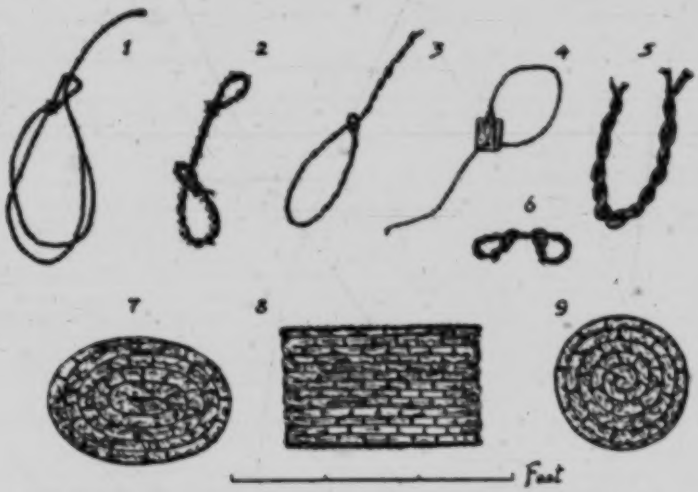

FIG. 68. Ropes and mats. (1) Rush burden rope, Co. Donegal. (2) Tie of cow-hair, Co. Kerry. (3) Willow bark burden rope, Co. Roscommon. (4) Grass burden rope, Aran Islands. (5) Tie of fir-rope, from roof, Co. Down. (6) Sheep's langle of oat straw, Co. Down. (7) Plaited mat of marram grass, Co. Wexford. (8) Coiled mat of rye straw, Aran Islands. (9) Coiled mat of oat straw, Co. Donegal.

283 Examples of ropes and mats of various kinds are shown in Fig. 68. The burden ropes, carefully made in two or three ply, 482 enabled quite heavy loads to be carried from inaccessible places. A correspondent in Co. Cork has sent me the following account of one method of lifting the burden, in this case of furze (gorse, whin) which was harvested both for bedding and for fodder. 'Passing his rope round the bundle, the carrier would throw himself on his back on top of the bundle, kick his heels in the air and jerk himself to the vertical, walking away completely concealed beneath a moving mountain of furze.' Where tracks

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

were poor and there were no wheeled vehicles, or where there 283
was no horse for a slide-car, the burden rope was all that was [482]
required to carry home the harvest; distances were mercifully small on the tiny farms. Rushes for rope making were cut when fully grown, beetled with a mell and broken by hand to rid them of pith. They were then spread to dry and afterwards tied in bundles ready to be fashioned into ropes when wintry weather brought indoor leisure. Ropes made of cowhair as well as 283
horsehair, sometimes mixed with seasoned sedge (sprit) once 237
found many uses about the farm. Horsehair fishing lines and 223
snares for seabirds are described elsewhere, but we may refer here to snares for small birds which in south Armagh, for example, are laid on the grass in hard wintry weather over a scattering of grain or breadcrumbs. Inside the frame of a pegged string or a bent sally rod are tied a dozen or more snares made of single or double horsehair. By this means blackbirds, thrushes, sparrows, and finches are caught by the feet, nowadays for sport but, no doubt, once as a welcome addition to the food supply. Similar horsehair snares for catching small birds are known from England and, further afield, from the Sudan. Reins of horsehair are said to have been common quite recently in Donegal, and I would hazard a guess that horsehair nets, such as were made in Harris (Martin Martin tells us) for catching seals, were formerly made there.

Mats and baskets of many kinds were fashioned from straw 285
and other materials such as marram grass. This tough grass is [314]
harvested in places all around the coast and put to many uses, including thatching. It is cut below the surface of the sandy dunes, and in Donegal I have seen a toothed sickle used for the purpose. The techniques of constructing mats and baskets of these materials are closely related and seem to fall into three classes, sown plaits, built-up plaits and coiled work. Coiled basketry is best represented in the once universal bee-skep, in the seed-baskets of the south, the seats and armchairs of the west, and in the food-carrying baskets of the Aran Islands (Fig. 69). It is an interesting detail of their construction that a bone pin is used to insert the ties, which are usually made of split briar. The conical hens' nests hung on pegs on the kitchen walls (Fig. 16) are also constructed in a coil technique, but

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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FIG. 70. Rush, grass and straw-work. (1) Cuckoo pint made of rushes, Co. Armagh. (2) Butterfly cage of rushes, Co. Down. (3) Rush bracelet in nine-strand plait, Co. Armagh. (4) 'Hen's claw' of grass, Co. Mayo. (5) 'Briget's rag' of oat straw. Tory Island charm. (6) 'Harvest star' of flax, Co. Antrim. (7) Rush rattle, Co. Mayo. (8) Blaeberry basket of rushes, Co. Down. (9) Harvest knot of flax, Co. Armagh.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 Scallop shells were put to many uses and were often a [415] substitute for the iron oil-pan of the open-wicked crusie. Seashells were also burnt to make lime for whitewashing the [386] houses.

[262] In late summer the sprat come ashore in vast numbers on the west and south coasts, so that in Donegal 'they constituted the chief food of the peasantry during three or four months of the year.'[1] They were taken from the water in buckets and sieves, and the mackerel pursuing their prey close against the rocks might be caught almost as easily. In Waterford harbour there were specially erected wickerwork head weirs to take the sprat; and Dr. Went has described a wattled sprat-weir in working order in the estuary of the Blackwater.[2] Fishing from the rocks, too, is most popular in harvest time and though now little more than a pastime it once provided a reserve of food for the winter. About hay-harvest the ballan wrasse is at its best, 'when the flags (wild iris) are in bloom', they say. Known as bavin, byan, morran and by other names, it is now despised nearly everywhere, as is the coalfish which was salted and dried [192] and which has different names in Gaelic for every stage of its growth to demonstrate its former importance and popularity. 'Glassan' oil was the luminant for the crusie lamps in Rathlin Island. On the north coast you may see anglers 'frassing' for small coalfish, that is attracting them by spitting into the water chewed potatoes or limpets. Formerly ground bait was made [412] by pounding limpets in rock basins of the type known as 'bullauns' (Fig. 90). Occasionally you may come across a fisherman casting a feather lure for pollack with a line made wholly or in part of horsehair. One method of twisting these lines, with quills, will be described in the following chapter. For short lengths next the hook—the fine foot-lines—white hair is preferred, and I have seen it made in County Down by ● [283] twisting the hair between the bare thigh and a hand dusted with wood ash, a method practised by 'primitives' in many parts of the world. Two strands of from fifteen to twenty hairs are twisted on each other. (The anglers in the Seine at Paris are also said to prefer a 'crop' made from a grey mare's tail.) To

[1] 'Kinnfaela', *The Cliff Scenery of South-Western Donegal*, 19.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *Antiquity*, 25 (1951), 32–35.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

262 sold fresh in the markets of the Bann Valley, and were salted down for winter use in place of herrings.[1] They have gone the way of most of the pre-famine 'relishes' which came to be despised as the threat of famine faded after the middle of last century. The elvers, too, used to be taken out of the teeming rivers in spring with sieves and pressed into cakes or boiled in milk and made into a kind of eel-cheese. In the River Bann the 286 elvers are now trapped at the first weir, at the tidal limit, and transported upstream, up to 30 million a year being given an easy passage in this way. A marked reduction in the size of the silver eels netted on their return to the sea some ten years later has been interpreted as a result of this interference with nature. The bulk of the eels taken are sold live in the London markets. [231] In addition to elvers salmon fry also was in former times taken for food and fed to pigs, and by an Act of Elizabeth's reign swine were prohibited from feeding on the shores of tidal rivers 'where they destroy a great quantity of salmon and eel fry'.[2]

Many traditional methods of fishing survive on the lakes of the Irish midlands. The otter board, now more often seen along the coast where fishermen trawl for flat fish in sandy bays, was formerly widely used in lake fishing and is considered to be 'an implement of very ancient origin in Ireland'.[3] Related to it is the 'pooka', a board fitted with mast and sail which carried out the baited long lines.[4] Fishing lines were until recently 283 sometimes made of horsehair by an interesting and undoubtedly ancient method. The instruments employed are goose or swan quills, cut down to make open-ended tubes some three inches long, two or three being needed according to whether a two- or three-strand line is being prepared. From ten to twenty long hairs taken from a horse's tail are threaded through each quill and knotted together at one end, the other ends of the quills being plugged with short pieces of quill which grip the hairs yet allow them to slide through. The quills are now rolled one against the other in the fingers, and as the strands twist on one another they pull down the hairs which feed them. The

[1] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 243.

[2] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 103.

[3] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*. See also R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 53 (1954).

[4] W. H. Maxwell, *Wild Sports of the West*, 77.

line grows as if by magic as the quills rotate in nimble fingers. 283
A fresh supply of hairs is inserted from time to time by removing the plugs. I illustrate an example of this fascinating apparatus made for me by Mr. T. J. Barron of Knockbride, Co. Cavan (Fig. 81). Mr. A. T. Lucas has described the Cavan

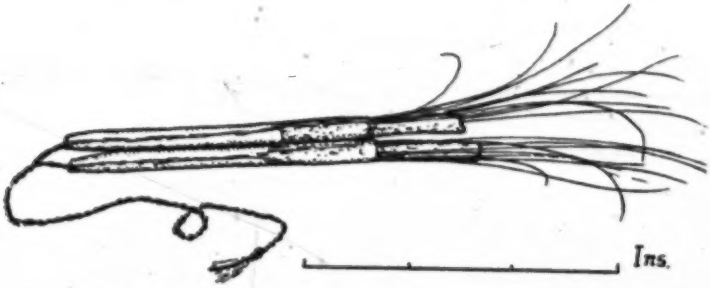

FIG. 81. Quills used for making horsehair fishing lines, Co. Cavan. The quills are rolled between the forefingers.

specimens and others from Co. Mayo.[1] In Cavan the lines were [226]
made for bream fishing: the bream were both split, salted and [251]
dried and stored fresh in little ponds on the lake shores. Around the coasts—I have seen examples from the Aran Islands and from Co. Down—a more complicated machine was made for twisting long lines of hemp, three spindles being rotated by pulling on an endless cord twisted round each spindle.[2] A very similar device is employed in China for making bamboo ropes [171]
for raising coal in primitive mines. On the shores of Lough Neagh the long lines are manufactured in rustic rope-walks. These night-lines, which have tended to replace draft-nets, are set in lengths of up to four miles. The season of yellow (feeding) 226
eel fishing runs from March to October. It is illegal, as we have mentioned, but shows no signs of being given up. The eel fishermen claim immemorial rights and are not deterred by the fines imposed when they are caught. Their vocabulary, like that of the men who work the eel weirs on the River Bann, has many [192]
words which have come down from Gaelic and perhaps from

[1]A. T. Lucas, *Journal of the Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc.*, 24 (1951), 111–14.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, Fig. 63.

291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" 158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. 751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with [291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear [834] of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism [753] and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac- 514 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and 827 animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha- [863] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. [825] Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at [562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting [273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most [241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main- 237 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and 372 burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another 514 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the • 283 secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are re- [462] quired to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

* 831 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are 522 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood [154] by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore [123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

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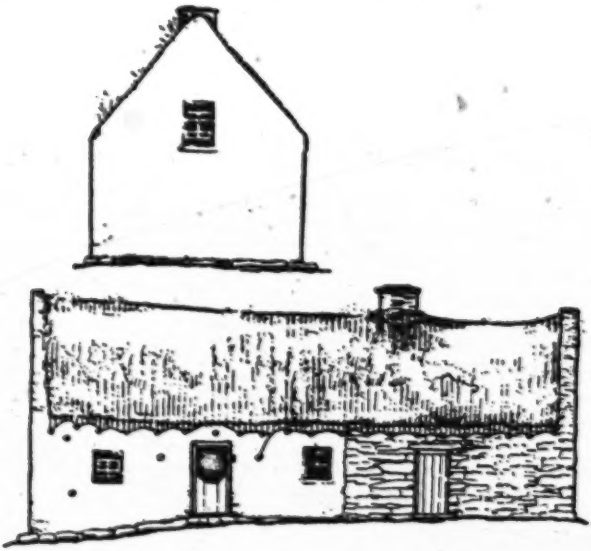

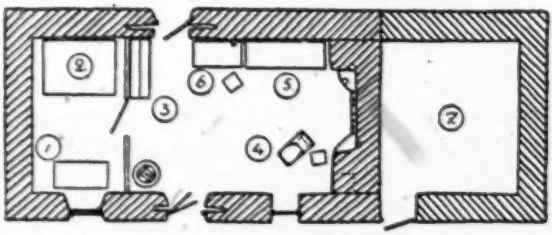

[231]

Fig. 4. Gable-chimney house. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry. The cattle once in the lower end of the house. Now removed to a house added to the upper gable wall. 1 table, 2 bed, 3 dresser, 4 cradle, 5 bench, 6 table, 7 sowhouse.

fig. 4. In Co. Kerry, Co. Galway and other parts of Ireland, I have been told [171] of rough strong doors of wattles bound together with ropes of *sugán*. Such a door, the hurdle door, *sgálán fraoigh* or *scalpán*, was more commonly used as a door for cattle sheds. It is found also in Scotland (see e. g. an illustration showing sheilings in Jura (S. W. Scotland) in Pinkertons Voyages and Travels, vol. III, p. 278, London 1809) and it is mentioned in the Ancient Irish laws. About the two opposite doors and the half-doors see p. 217.

In older times a hole in the wall, a looplight, served as window. It was closed [284, 414] at night with a hay-wisp or a wooden shutter, *cómhla*, which was removed by day and secured at night by a stick placed across or by a latch.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 trimming the thatch. When using the *sugán* or hay-rope method the straw, bound in large bunches, is placed on the roof in rows, each 'set' about 18" wide. The thatcher beginning from below takes a handful of straw and puts the top part of the straw against the roof. He then puts another handful slightly above the last, so that the handfuls lie on top of each other. The bottom part of the handful is spread and flattened out with hands. Then the 342 ropes are put on. A man stays on a ladder at each gable of the house, pl. 284 XLVI: 1. Another man carries the rope along the roof by means of a hay-fork while another walks beside him loosening the ball of ropes. The first rope is put on along the eave, the next above until the top of the house is reached. The ropes are fastened along the gables by means of stone plugs. Then the vertical ropes are put on, and fixed to the front and back walls of the house, also by stone plugs. The two systems of ropes can also be intertwined with each other, so that the ropes form a kind of unintentional ornamentation. Other means of fastening the ropes are by weighting the vertical ropes with stones attached to the ends. The stones are placed in two different ways, (1) hanging below the eave of the house, this is the most primitive way, (2) laying the stones on the roof just above the eave to press down the thatch at the same time as they hold the ropes. The rows of stones when finally laid give a good finish. This is also an example of unintentional ornamentation. It is worth noticing that the hay cocks too may be fastened in nearly the same three ways by means of hay ropes.

342 In order to produce hay-ropes used for binding the thatch and the hay cocks etc. a multitude of simple tools has been invented, pl. XLVII: 2.

To sum up some conclusions about thatching and roof, it seems clear to me that two, perhaps related, but nevertheless unlike traditions have been at work here, namely the scollop thatching, with the highly elevated roof resting on couples that meet each other, on the one hand, and on the other hand hay rope thatching, with the hay ropes fastened to stones, and often a low roof without perceptible ridge resting on a couple construction, where the couples do not join. Parallels to the former tradition are to be found on the European continent and the latter are mainly found, as far as I know, along the coast of the Atlantic and the North Sea.

I must add that the well-built thatched roof is at the same time a masterpiece of technical ability and a feat of artistic skill. The best Irish thatching give the finest peasant roof in Europe. It is unfortunately, however, very expensive and demands constant attention to keep it in good repair so it is very often replaced by a cheap, shoddy roof of foreign origin.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[246]
[284]

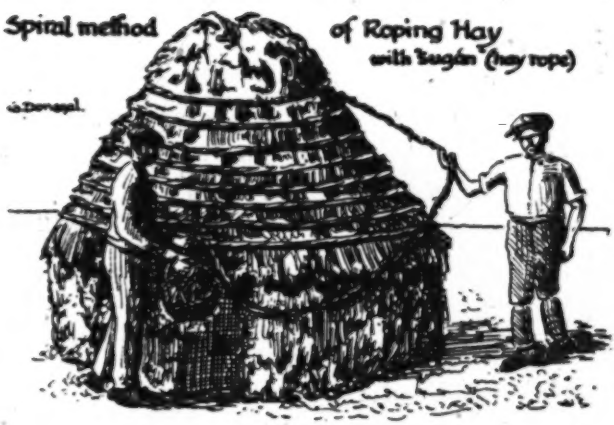

Fig. 51.

Fig. 52.

or "swapped" between neighbouring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing. The flax is harvested in August, after the fleeting pale blue flower has gone. Prepared beforehand and lying ready to hand in bundles of 60 or so (enough for a certain number of stooks) are the lint bands of green rushes for tying the sheaves or "beets." The bands consist of two lengths of rushes, placed with the flowering ends together and tied in a reef-knot with a single movement involving a quick manipulation of thumbs and fingers (Fig. 52). The beets are stooked heads down, in which position also they are drowned or "dubbed," as soon as may be, in the "lint hole" or flax dam, where soft water has been warming up ready for the steeping. A horizontal layer of beets and a covering of bracken weighted with large stones completes the filling of the dam, and the process of retting, which takes on the average 10 or 12 days, is soon advertized by a smell of foul yet fascinating intensity. We need not follow the flax on its career from the rank pit to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

These two-eared spades are always attached to the haft by means of straps about 6 inches long, generally with two rivets: the foot-plates are fastened to the blade by mortice and tenon and to the handle by a drawn-down tongue bent up and nailed between the straps (Fig. 62). A visit to one of the 9 or 10 Irish spade "factories"—there were many more a few decades ago—provides a thrilling illustration of craftsmanship and co-ordination of labour. The five hundredweight tilt-hammer, driven by a water wheel, beats out the red steel in a series of operations under the skilled hand and eye of the spade-maker: between each process the steel must be re-heated, and the interchange of the "moulds" and "plates" between furnace-man and hammer-man goes on without pause, for the "bit" of the hammer must not be allowed to strike without having the hot metal ready on the anvil. In addition to supplying his mate, the furnace-man has to bend over the "fullered mould" and weld and shape it on a small anvil: he must also apply sand and water to the plates if they get overheated, and dip the folded end in dust so that the two straps do not weld together under the hammer. After a period of ceaseless labour and watchfulness a pile of blue-grey drawn plates, their hammer grooves throwing back the glow of the furnace, lies ready for the finishing smith.

He shears them to the desired dimensions—all the measuring is done by eye although there are dozens of different sizes—cuts out the tenons and punches the rivet holes. The points of the straps separate when the ends are clipped, and the socket is now opened up and shaped on a mandrel. Then comes the finishing: the plate is heated once more, hammered into the correct lift and dish, and tempered. Meanwhile lengths of rivets have been cut and the foot-plates drawn down: the ash handle is inserted and riveted, the straps hammered tight against the wood and the foot-plates morticed and nailed on. Four generations of experience lay behind the smith whom I watched recently in a Co. Antrim spade factory; the result was a product of exquisite proportions and economy of structure, the essentials of the country craft.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

281 across, are commonly arranged in patterns having, for example,
415 the maker's initials and the date left unpierced. A deeper tray used for carrying corn or for fruit-picking is known as a "dallan." Then there is the meal sieve, which has fine perforations, for sifting the coarse skins (meal seeds) from the oatmeal. Similar to this is the buttermilk sieve with which,
285 before the adoption of the hair sieve, the small particles of
415 butter were strained from the buttermilk. A milk-strainer made of birch bark folded into a cone and filled with straw is referred to in a 17th century account quoted by Mr. E. MacLysaght. In Tory, according to Mr. T. Mason, the wight is "composed simply of sheepskin with a twisted straw rope forming the rim."

The corn sieve, for getting out dust and dirt, and the corn riddle (Fig. 71), for separating bits of straw and "hairy

[281]

Fig. 71.

tails," consist of interwoven splits of ash or bog-fir attached to a rim of the same material. The only difference between them is that the mesh of the former is one-eighth of an inch, of the latter perhaps ¼ inch, though it may vary for different kinds of grain. Efficient riddling is a difficult and nowadays rather rare art. I have not come across sieves of rushes or split willow, but it is very likely that they may be found.

243 The corn riddle and the winnowing tray lead us back to
412 the thrashing floor in the barn. Here we will probably see a flail hanging on the wall. The sound of the flail is by no means rare in Ireland, for in outlying districts the small farmer has no other means of thrashing. The three parts of the flail are the helve or "hand-stave," a straight stick of any light wood such as ash or larch, the shorter and heavier swingel or beater, called in Ireland the "souple" (generally made of hazel, occasionally of holly or birch) and the flail-joint, hanging or
[284] "mid-kipple," which may be a sheep- or goat-skin thong, a

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

 243 412

length of flax, or an eel skin. The methods of attaching the hanging to the hand-stave and souple vary, as will be seen [284] from a random selection of drawings (Fig. 72). The joint

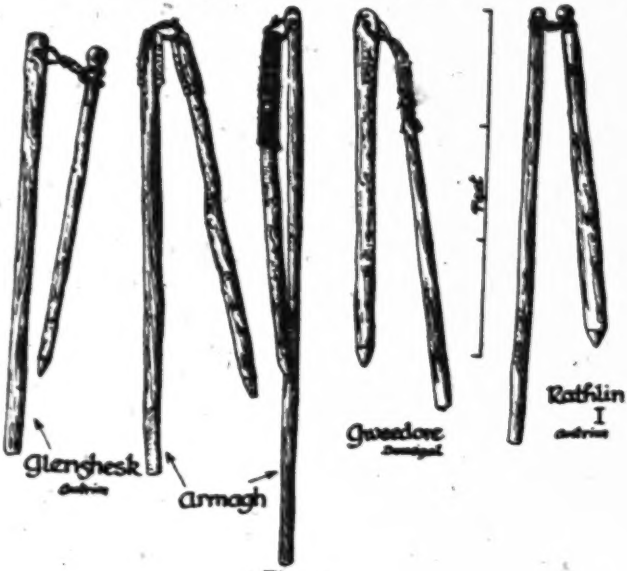

Fig. 72.

shown in the Armagh flail (left), resembles a common English style, but it occurs as far west as Galway. Varied too, are the proportions between the component parts and the methods of swinging the flail. Thus in Antrim the souple is flung round the head while in Donegal it is kept to the side of the body. On fine days the thrashing may take place out of doors, but the usual place is " between doors " in the barn or even in the kitchen, for the opposite doors create a draught which carries away the dust. A besom of heather or of dried [824] kale flower-stalks keeps the barn floor clean.

One of the most interesting and varied and probably one 285 of the oldest crafts practised by countryfolk is the making of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 80.

Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugan and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a "tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way: some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or "mell"), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply: finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. "Langles" and "burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and similarly the cattle were fastened in the byre by ropes 231
of straw, as in Clare, or of horse-hair, as in Kerry. Of the 283
two burden ropes illustrated (Figs. 80, 81) the Donegal example is a two-ply rush rope with an eye made of a peeled stick bent into a loop: the Aran specimen is of grass (Manilla) rope [284] passing through a hole in a wooden runner. Similar blocks of wood serve as a swivel to prevent kinks in tethering ropes, separate lengths of rope passing through each hole.

Reference has been made to the fir-ropes used in securing 283
roofing scraws and thatch. Thin splits of straight-grained bog-fir about four feet long and an inch wide are twisted by hand into hollow cylinders, joined end to end to make a coil of about 50 feet. Two or three of these are twisted together to give the finished product, which combines great strength and elasticity with the capacity to stand up to all weathers. Fir-rope was often stretched across the wooden bed-frame to [352] make a springy mattress. A short "tie" of fir-rope is shown in Fig. 21, p. 63.

[p. 132 is blank]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 227 are said to last a lifetime. I have seen such lines twisted between the palms of the hand and also made by spinning round a cap to which the two loose ends are pinned. In County Galway similar foot-lines are made of mixed horse and

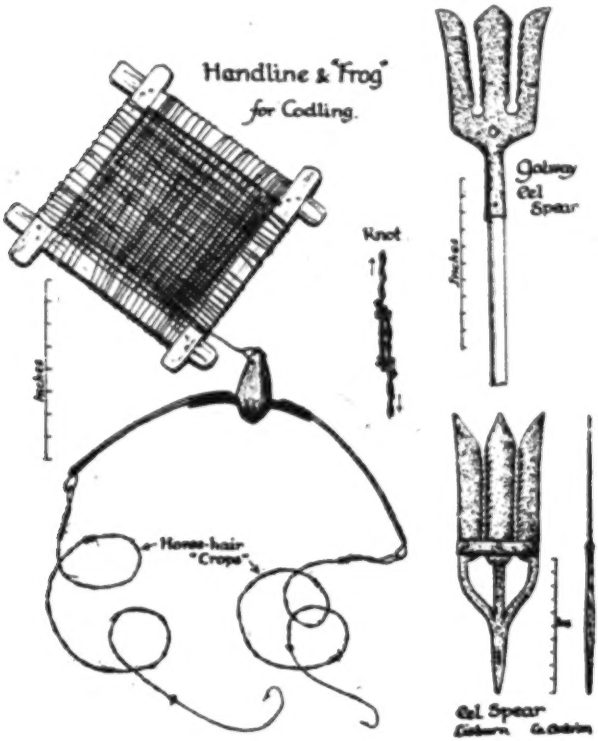

Fig. 94.

[284] [827] cow hair. The short lengths of hair cord are tied with a special knot (Fig. 94) which is " set " with saliva. Horse-hair cords were formerly used to fasten together the curragh framework in Donegal.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, 291
until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the
homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange [386]
used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black
and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a [824]
small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but
sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant.

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bed- 342
rooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar,
though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the
walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the
exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses
are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors,
front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen; and the
windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very
small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they
are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot
square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the
usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that [354]
in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the
top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the
gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass
turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the
ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The [284]
gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does
not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water
getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is
put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones,
until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and
quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The [241]
floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes
boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is
wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood,
washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the
islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people
having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings
or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The 352
furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe cruithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

415 though it may be put to the less innocent purpose of preparing malt for poteen, and a spinning-wheel of the usual type. For light at night
373 modern lamps are coming into use, but in many houses the "flare" is used. It consists of a rude sconce, in which is fastened a cylindrical reservoir for oil, closed at the top by a lid, and having a spout like that of a coffee-pot, through which the wick is drawn. Rush lights are still used by some.

The house is often whitewashed outside; the roof is thatch, of
342 straw in most localities, but on the islands, and some places in the peninsula, bent is use instead. This is laid on over "scraws" of grass-turf and fastened down by sougans (straw ropes), the ends of which may be attached to pegs driven into the walls, or have long pieces of
[284] wood or heavy stones fastened to them. These ropes are often arranged in a net work so as to hold the thatch more securely. Coir rope, bought in Belmullet, is now used by some instead of sougans. The gable is stepped or cut away so that the thatch does not project over the end wall.

There are several other types of houses, though the style just described is the most common. Most of the newer houses and those building have chimneys, pig-styes of turf or stone, and in some cases byres. Few of the old one-roomed dwellings, built partly or altogether of turf, are still to be seen, but there are a number of one-roomed huts of stone, many of which have no windows.

The most primitive habitations in the district, and perhaps in Ireland, are the rude huts (*boolies*) on Inishglora, inhabited during the lobster fishing season by the men of Inishkea; they are about a dozen in number, rudely built of dry stone and thatched with "scraws." There is not room to stand upright in them, the height from floor to roof being about 5 feet. Internally they contain a rude bunk filled with straw for sleeping in and a few large stones to sit upon. Cooking appears to be done out of doors. Successive batches of men live in these huts for about three months of the year. Some of the poorest houses on the mainland are in the isolated and primitive village of Fallmore, where few of the dwellings have windows and few or none chimneys. The houses on the islands are decidedly among the best in the district. Many are whitewashed inside, and the furniture is of a superior class, abundant material being thrown up as drift wood. The beds are four-posted structures, with flat board tops, and some of them have bright-coloured curtains, and the bedding is clean and tidy-looking.

6. *Transport.*—Lying as it does far from towns of any size, and
489 separated from the nearest by a wide stretch of wild and thinly-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 designed for temporary habitations, for it results, after repeated
177 additions of straw and mud, in an extremely thick and heavy roof. Yet its distribution on the east coast seems to point to introduction from overseas, and in Co. Down it is known as English thatch. One would like to know more about old thatching techniques in other parts of north-western Europe. In Galway a house with mud-sealed thatch is known as a 'shaken house'.[1]

342 Another way of securing the thatch, which has a limited distribution chiefly along the Antrim coast, we may term the
[283] pegged method. Horizontal two-ply ropes made of sally, heather, or the tough fibres of bog-fir roots are laid along the roof parallel to the eaves at intervals of a foot or so and pegged to the scraw with wooden pins which are pushed in upwards so as not to lead water through the roof. A row of scraws is pegged to the rather sharp ridge (Fig. 9, 4). I have observed this style of thatch in south-west Lancashire. Much more widely distributed is the thatch which is found along the north and west coasts from east Ulster round to Kerry, but comes into its own particularly in Donegal, where it gives some of the most attractive roofs in north-western Europe. In Donegal they are rounded at the ridge to throw off the winds, the supporting couples being designed to this end with short cross-pieces breaking the angle of the ridge (Fig. 10). In some
[284] districts the ropes, formerly of twisted straw or bog fir but now generally ready-made of sisal, run in both directions to make a complete network; in others the horizontal ropes are omitted because of the obstructing gable-ends which, rising above the thatch, protect it from the winds. The ropes are secured to the walls by means of a row of stone-pegs below each eave. This method of tying is found also in north Mayo, most typically in areas known to have been settled from Donegal in the seventeenth century.[2] Here the horizontal ropes are carried over the gable in steps left for the purpose (Fig. 12, 2). Such roofs are said to be 'stitched': a close mesh may require up to a mile's length of roping. The older method of securing the ropes, from Mayo to Kerry, is to fasten the ends to small boulders

[1] C. R. Browne, *Inishbofin and Inishshark*. [Text continues on p. 54]
[2] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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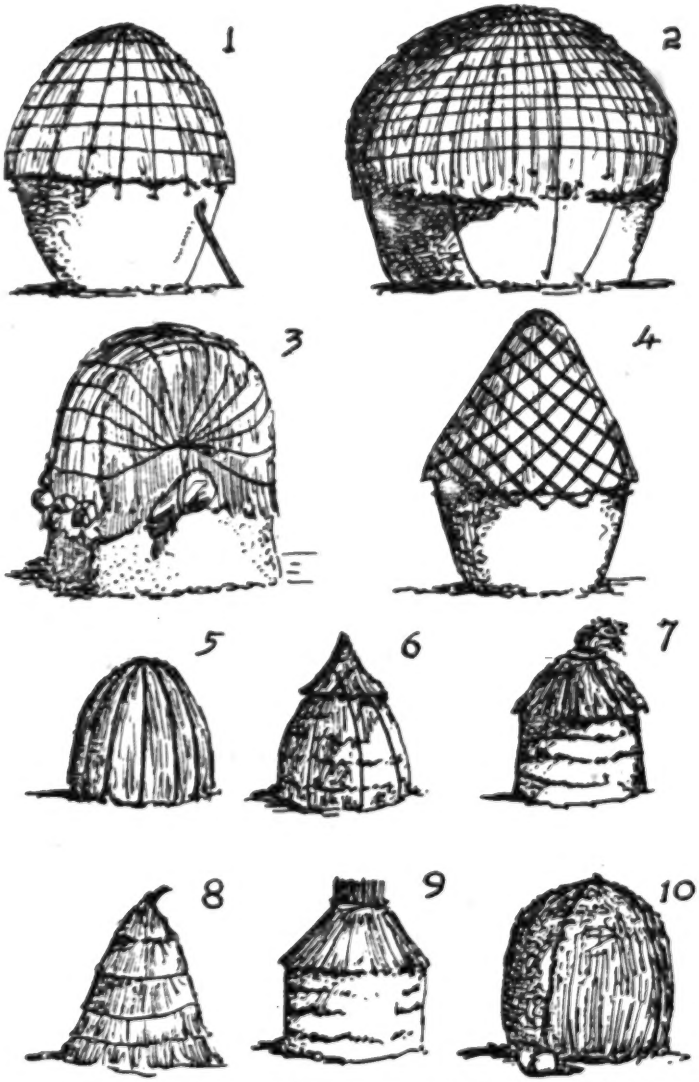

FIG. 52. Stacks and huts roped in many patterns. (1) Cavan (flax). (2) Cork (hay). (3) Mayo (hay). (4) Antrim (oats). (5) Donegal (hay). (6) Donegal (oats). (7) Down (oats). (8) Down (seed hay). (9) Cavan (oats). (10) Down (tramp-cock of hay).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

time large-scale hay-making developed it had to fit into a fixed rota of farm work which kept men busy in late July and August at flax-pulling and turf-carrying, so that the cocked hay had to wait. Today the baling machine is speeding up the process, but the bales, whether from the need of seasoning or from force of habit, are left piled in angular cocks scattered over the hayfield. 246

Carried at last to the haggard on rick-shifters or slipes— [493] formerly on slide-cars or the backs of men and ponies—the hay [492] is built into small circular stacks (pikes). As a protection against [482] wind and rain they are thatched with rushes forthwith and roped (Fig. 52). Since the stacks are thatched before they have 246 had time to settle, the pegged or scolloped thatch found in England is not used. Not only do ropes hold the thatch more 284 securely but it is a simple matter to tighten them as the stack sinks. In the simplest form of roping, hanging stones are attached to the rope ends so that the adjustment is automatic. But where the roof of the stack is not rounded but conical a straw-rope is wrapped round in a spiral which can later be tightened by vertical ropes pegged into the lower part of the stack. One sees this spiral roping also in parts of western Britain. Several other patterns of roping are found, some making a complete network; and the shape of the stack also shows many regional variations (Fig. 52). The size and shape depend not only on local custom but to some extent on the weather and the condition of the hay. Small rounded stacks are most usual, for they are wind-resistant. They are characteristic too of much of Highland Britain from Caithness to Cornwall.

The scythe has not entirely given way to the mowing machine 246 on small farms in whose tiny fields it would anyhow be difficult to turn a machine. The Irish scythesmen, though not so well known as the spalpeens or reapers, had their brief day in the English harvest-fields, and those who remember working 'across the water' in the nineteenth century tell of great feats of piece-work. I was told of one heroic figure who could scythe seven acres in the day, 'and four lifters wouldn't lift after him'. Henry Stephens, in 1855, reckoned that the English labourer would scythe four acres of oats or barley in a ten-hour working day.[1]

[1]Quoted in E. C. Curwen, *Plough and Pasture* (1946), 98.

HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay 243
to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century 412
there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the 178
good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps
of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on
the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that
conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-
growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing
motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such
notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of
the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East.
The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the
rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland
there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened
to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the
blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal
possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with [422]
reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed [426]
directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then
picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects,
may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for
bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should 248
be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so
onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When
grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers
have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the
stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the
roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands
are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to [476]
thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working
together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the
evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the
stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully
put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the
stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the
beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will
separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in
diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist [284]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

248 of two lengths of green rushes knotted at the flowering end. When tied, the end of the band is thrust under towards the head [284] of the beet, that is 'with the grain' of the flax. The beets are carried as soon as possible to be steeped (drowned or dubbed) in the flax dam or 'lint hole' where soft peaty water has been standing for some days to warm up. If they cannot be steeped forthwith the beets are built into stooks, for they are damaged if left lying on the ground. The beets are placed upright in the dam, with a slight inclination to facilitate their later removal, and when well packed may be covered, if the water is deep enough, with a horizontal layer or 'sheeting row' on which large boulders are placed to keep the flax under water. The process of retting (rotting) takes from seven to twelve days and is soon advertised by a foul and penetrating odour as the core or 'bone' of the stalk decays. Then the slimy, stinking beets are taken out of the dam and 'grassed', that is spread on grass, usually a new-mown hayfield. This is a skilled but dirty (Pl. 5, 2) job. To ensure that the stalks do not stick together the beets are shaken loose over the left forearm so that the flax lies evenly in ordered rows. After a couple of days it is once more tied into beets, but if the weather is bad it is first 'gaited' for a day or so to complete the drying (Fig. 51). This provides one of the more picturesque scenes of flax harvest, for the gaits look like the skirts of invisible dancers or the tents of a fairy host. The drying stalks of each beet are gathered and spread around the leg to make a hollow broad-based cone which will stand upright. It seems probable that gaiting was at one time a method of drying cereal crops as well as flax in these difficult Highland regions. The 'gaitner' was a recognized member of the harvest gang in Northumberland in the early nineteenth century. 'He follows close on the reapers and, the corn being laid in the band near the tops of the corn, he . . . brings the sheaf up to the left knee, gives the band a peculiar twist and sets the sheaf upright, giving it a half turn so that the skirts fly out to look like the cover of a beehive'.[1] Gaited corn was said to 'win' well and it was carried to the stack without stooking.

Ideally the flax after gaiting is ready for breaking and scutching, and in the old days when the farmer was also a

[1] Loudon's *Encyclopædia of Agriculture* (1831).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Armagh

PLATE 13

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1. Harvest knots, Co. Armagh.

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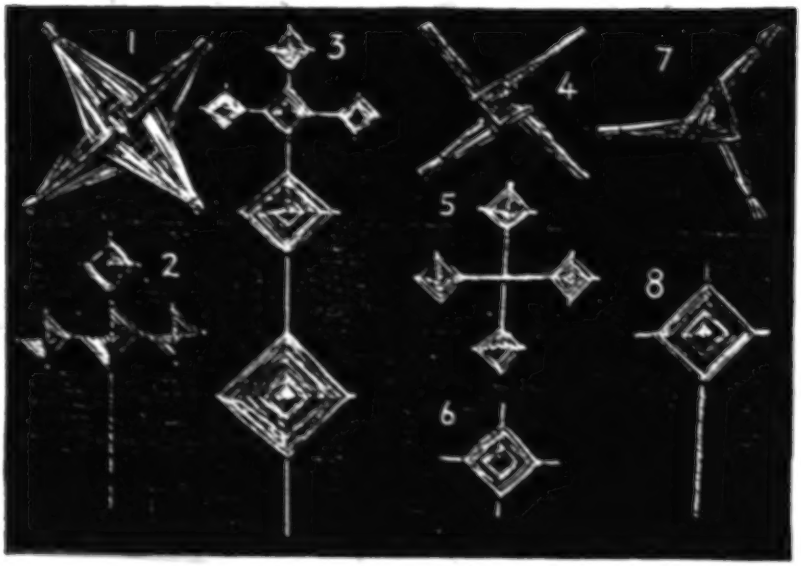

2. Bridget's Crosses, Co. Armagh.

[facing p. 191]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

283 of these rope-making materials had other uses as well, not forgetting their functions in ceremony and magic as represented by Briget's crosses, harvest knots, the blaeberry baskets of Lammas and the rush ladders of Hallowe'en. Better known, [373] though no longer made, are the rushlights whose feeble glow, in the words of Gilbert White, made 'darkness visible'.

[284]
[285]

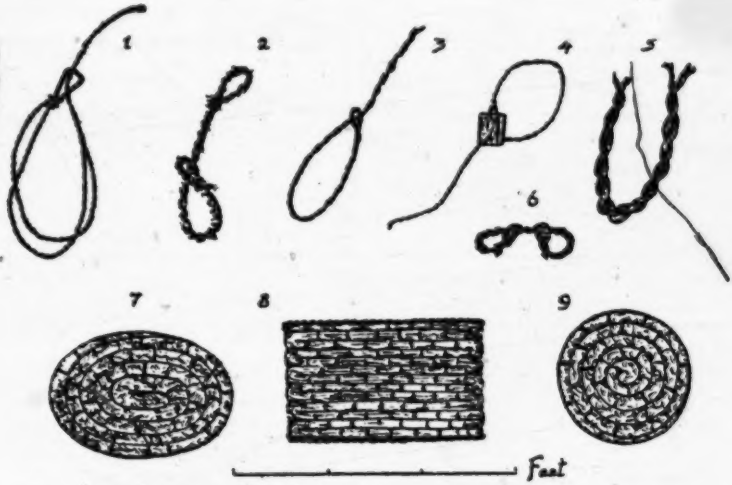

FIG. 68. Ropes and mats. (1) Rush burden rope, Co. Donegal. (2) Tie of cow-hair, Co. Kerry. (3) Willow bark burden rope, Co. Roscommon. (4) Grass burden rope, Aran Islands. (5) Tie of fir-rope, from roof, Co. Down. (6) Sheep's langle of oat straw, Co. Down. (7) Plaited mat of marram grass, Co. Wexford. (8) Coiled mat of rye straw, Aran Islands. (9) Coiled mat of oat straw, Co. Donegal.

283 Examples of ropes and mats of various kinds are shown in Fig. 68. The burden ropes, carefully made in two or three ply, 482 enabled quite heavy loads to be carried from inaccessible places. A correspondent in Co. Cork has sent me the following account of one method of lifting the burden, in this case of furze (gorse, whin) which was harvested both for bedding and for fodder. 'Passing his rope round the bundle, the carrier would throw himself on his back on top of the bundle, kick his heels in the air and jerk himself to the vertical, walking away completely concealed beneath a moving mountain of furze.' Where tracks

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

as the work of specialists (Fig. 71). The pampooties of the Aran Islands deserve mention here. Made of calfskin, but formerly of sealskin,[1] these one-piece shoes were once doubtless widely worn and have kept their hold in Aran because of their suitability for wet rocks and frail curraghs. The rivlins of Scotland and the Highland *bròganan* were very similar and I have seen rawhide shoes of the same type from Norway and the Pyrenees. They all have the hair outside and are secured by lacing back and front.

The wight serves both to hold corn, in filling a sack for instance, and to convey peats from the stack to the fireside: perforated it becomes a meal-sieve (boran) for sifting the skins (seeds) from oatmeal, or a buttermilk sieve for taking out the last grains of butter from the churn. The winnowing tray or dallan is a larger version, and it, too, may be perforated to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken out on to a spread cloth. There are, up and down Ireland, many bold windy Shilling Hills where the 'shellings' (husks) were, in past times, separated from the grain in this way (Pl. 7).

This brings us to the flail and its 'hanging' (the mid-kipple, hooden, gad, middling, or tug) which was commonly a thong of cow-, horse-, sheep, or goat-skin, though sometimes of rabbit- or eel-skin or a cord of flax. The flail, the proverbial 'stick-and-a-half', consists of a three to four feet long helve or hand-staff, usually made of ash, and a shorter beater, swingle or souple of hazel or holly. There are two principal methods of 'hanging' the parts together. In one variety, the tie passes through two leather caps lashed over the ends (Fig. 72, 1). This appears to be a variant of the common English flail-hanging, where, however, the cap is made of steamed ash or yew and there is no linking piece. Its distribution in Ireland, down the east coast, points to derivation from England. Modifications, occurring as far west as Donegal (Fig. 72, 1*a*, *b*), have the linking thong passing through a hole made either in the helve or in the beater. Kevin Danaher states that the capped flail is characteristic of central Europe: it is believed to have first appeared in north France in the early Middle Ages.[2] The

[1] O'Flaherty, *H'Ier Connaught*, 59 (footnote).
[2] *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 60 (1955), 6–14.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

412 other method of hanging has a somewhat peripheral distribu-
171 tion in Europe (Scandinavia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Switzerland,
the Pyrenees) and also in Ireland, and as its simplicity as well
●284 as its distribution suggest, it is the older type. The tie passes around grooves cut in both hand-staff and souple (Fig. 72, 2) though again there are variants, one end of the tie, for example, being passed through a hole (Fig. 72, 2*a*). The grooved hanging, it is claimed by its users, is superior to the capped because the join is almost universal and there is no need to turn the halve in the hand when flailing. The holed fastening may be the most ancient method of all: it is found in parts of Atlantic Europe and the Baltic lands, but in Ireland is apparently restricted to Ulster (Pl. 6, 2).

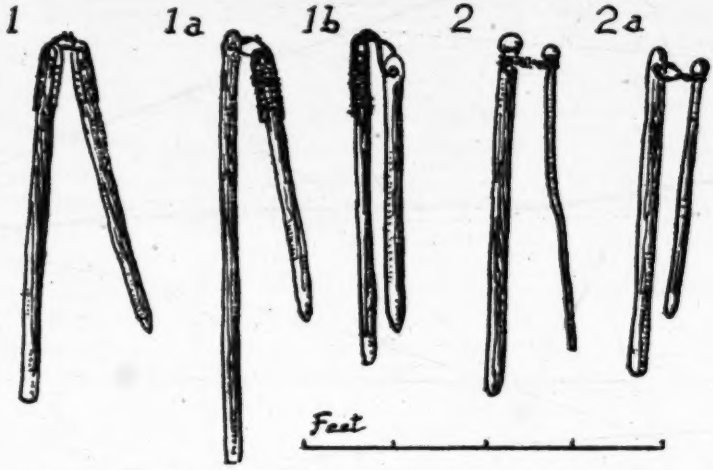

FIG. 72. Flails. (1) Co. Meath. (1*a*) Co. Armagh. (1*b*) Co. Donegal. (2) Co. Cavan. (2*a*) Co. Antrim.

243 Ancient and rudimentary as the flail is, requiring for its
412 making no tool save a sharp knife, there are some thrashers
171 who dispense with it, 'scutching' the corn instead with a stick
or 'lashing' it over a barrel, a stone or a board (Plate 4).
Many a small farmer in the north of Ireland harvests his seed grass in this way. The scutching method is used also in the

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Donegal

PLATE XLVIII

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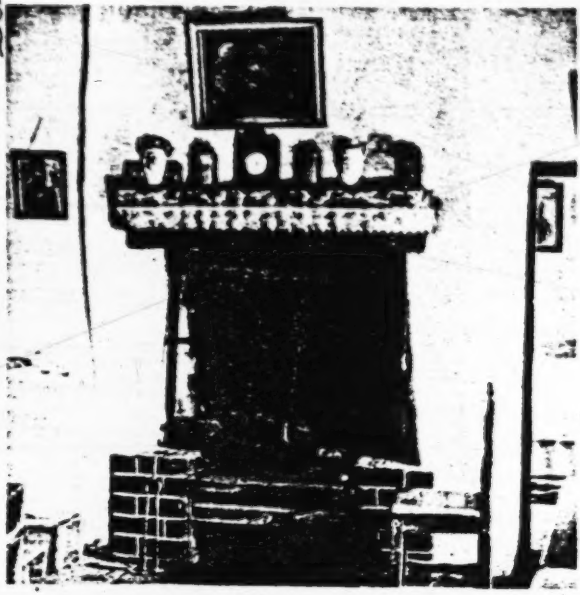

1.

1. Fire-place with iron-grate. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. The basket hanging to dry on the southwall of the house. Lough Eske, Co. Donegal.

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2.

[p. 220]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the 17th century, the natives withdrew themselves to the 221
mountains, where they lived a life that some historians have mistaken for aboriginal nomadism.

The booleying tradition, finally, throws light on many of the customs connected with cattle and sheep, and helps to explain the absence of the dairy in permanent dwellings which formerly had to serve as winter houses only, most of the dairy work being done in summer. It also helps us to attribute to custom rather than solely to laziness and neglect the Irish farmer's traditional indifference to the fate of his crops during the summer months. "Spring and harvest time," we quote a typical 19th century observer, "are the only periods at which the peasants exert themselves, and then they work very hard; for the rest of the year they are idle."

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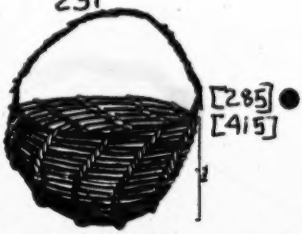

Rush "Frung" Basket
Fig. 18. Co. Antrim.

The old customs of tending ("herding") the cattle and tethering or spancelling them also derive from the rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. "Cattle, sheep, pigs and goats," wrote Arthur Young, "are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw . . . . cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom." Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used: even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. Where animals still run in common under the system of "sums" it is necessary to give them distinguishing marks. Apart from the well-known methods of branding or colouring [422]
the sheep's wool it is the custom in parts of Ireland, as in Wales, to ear-mark sheep by cutting or notching the ear with proprietary shapes. In Clare Island the geese are "tokened" by having holes punched in their webbed feet. Incidentally [413]
it is worth noticing that, so far as I am aware, the iron-tipped shepherd's crook is unknown in Ireland, a bent ash stick taking its place. "Gatherings" and co-operation are of course a feature of sheep-shearing and dipping. Sheep-pens [343]
of dry stone construction are often associated with ancient settlements among the hills: they are of various shapes and would repay study.

[p. 56 is blank]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 survivals, associated with the cutting of the last sheaf—the "churn" or the "Cailleach" (Chapter 19).

Corn stacks are more varied in shape than haystacks and need better protection from weather and from vermin. [824] Sprigs of apple-mint (*M. arvensis*) may be thrown through the sheaves to keep away mice. The stone stack-stands or staddels, called "hovels," are a picturesque feature of the stackyard in some districts. With their steep tops rising above the house clusters, the golden corn stacks turn the little Irish villages into African kraals, or in the fields one may count as many as 30 round stacks in a row, rising against the sky up the hillside. Then the whole countryside seems fuller than usual. New colours and odours meet one on all sides, and the horses as they pass give off the sharp smell which comes from crunching the fresh oats. The country smiths used to make a small light fork or "pike," fitted with a long handle, for throwing the last sheaves high up (Fig. 66). The stacks are thatched with rushes, twisted into bundles known as "stapples" which are pushed into the straw.

[285]
[415]

Fig. 54.

241 We cannot touch on the methods of harvesting and stacking the other cereal crops, wheat, barley and rye, but a word must be said in conclusion on the last harvest of the year—the root crops. Although turnips and the new sugar beet are important in some areas, it is the potato crop which means most to the peasant. All available hands are in the fields, gathering the precious food-supply into wicker baskets or boxes (Figs. 54 and 55); and the school children are given

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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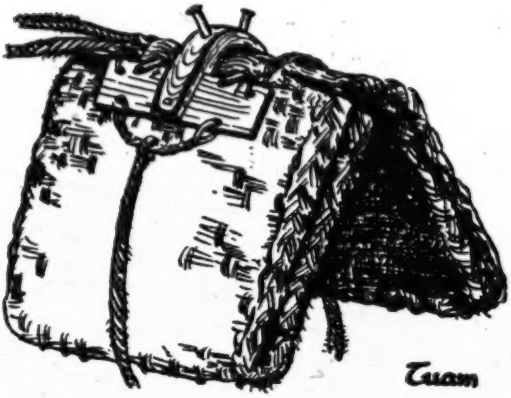

Straw pads & straddle for Creels

Fig. 57.

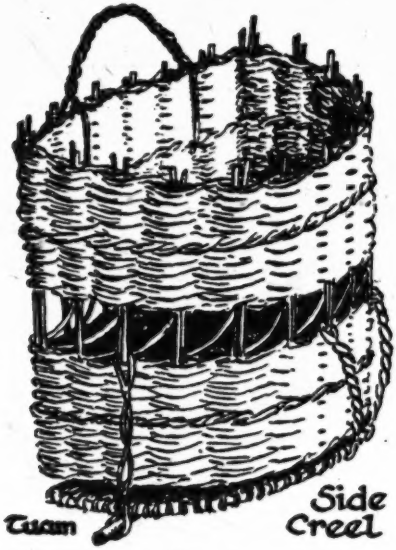

Fig. 58.

[p. 107]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Aran Islands

Plate V.

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MAKING A SKIB
INISHERE, ARAN
CREEL IN GROUND BEHIND

[facing p. 121]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

281 across, are commonly arranged in patterns having, for example,
415 the maker's initials and the date left unpierced. A deeper tray used for carrying corn or for fruit-picking is known as a "dallan." Then there is the meal sieve, which has fine perforations, for sifting the coarse skins (meal seeds) from the oatmeal. Similar to this is the buttermilk sieve with which,
285 before the adoption of the hair sieve, the small particles of
415 butter were strained from the buttermilk. A milk-strainer made of birch bark folded into a cone and filled with straw is referred to in a 17th century account quoted by Mr. E. MacLysaght. In Tory, according to Mr. T. Mason, the wight is "composed simply of sheepskin with a twisted straw rope forming the rim."

The corn sieve, for getting out dust and dirt, and the corn riddle (Fig. 71), for separating bits of straw and "hairy

[281]

Fig. 71.

tails," consist of interwoven splits of ash or bog-fir attached to a rim of the same material. The only difference between them is that the mesh of the former is one-eighth of an inch, of the latter perhaps ¼ inch, though it may vary for different kinds of grain. Efficient riddling is a difficult and nowadays rather rare art. I have not come across sieves of rushes or split willow, but it is very likely that they may be found.

243 The corn riddle and the winnowing tray lead us back to
412 the thrashing floor in the barn. Here we will probably see a flail hanging on the wall. The sound of the flail is by no means rare in Ireland, for in outlying districts the small farmer has no other means of thrashing. The three parts of the flail are the helve or "hand-stave," a straight stick of any light wood such as ash or larch, the shorter and heavier swingel or beater, called in Ireland the "souple" (generally made of hazel, occasionally of holly or birch) and the flail-joint, hanging or
[284] "mid-kipple," which may be a sheep- or goat-skin thong, a

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

 243 412

length of flax, or an eel skin. The methods of attaching the hanging to the hand-stave and souple vary, as will be seen [284] from a random selection of drawings (Fig. 72). The joint

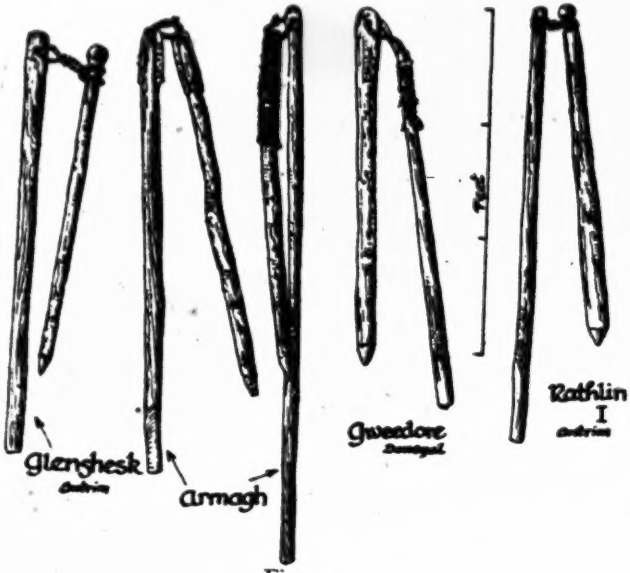

Fig. 72.

shown in the Armagh flail (left), resembles a common English style, but it occurs as far west as Galway. Varied too, are the proportions between the component parts and the methods of swinging the flail. Thus in Antrim the souple is flung round the head while in Donegal it is kept to the side of the body. On fine days the thrashing may take place out of doors, but the usual place is " between doors " in the barn or even in the kitchen, for the opposite doors create a draught which carries away the dust. A besom of heather or of dried [824] kale flower-stalks keeps the barn floor clean.

One of the most interesting and varied and probably one 285 of the oldest crafts practised by countryfolk is the making of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

285 baskets, and of creels and other objects of wickerwork. To do the subject justice would require a large volume, and we must confine ourselves to some broad aspects. We have referred to creels and kishes of various kinds in Chapter 12. These are objects which the countryman makes for himself, as distinct from the "fancy" basket work which is generally in the hands of special families. To take the creels first, they are constructed bottom-upwards in the same way as the framework of the Boyne curragh, by sticking the stout standards in the earth as though to make wattles and bending them over [824] to form the foundation of the bottom. Strong black sally, hazel or rowan are employed instead of the soft basket willows. The standards are left projecting above the rim of the creel when it is finished, so that the sides do not lift off. But a well woven "mouth" is also necessary to prevent slipping: it may be made single or double. Both creels and kishes may have windows in the sides (Chapter 12 and Fig. 58), an ornamental feature also found in the old wicker cradles. Creels and kishes may be loosely or tightly woven according to whether they are intended for turf or manure. Openwork creels are made in Co. Antrim by pegging the side rods into the two corner standards at intervals of about 4 inches. The old custom in Donegal is to repair two old creels and make two new ones each year. (*See Plate V.*)

285 227 Lobster-pots (Chapter 16), stock-pots, fruit and fish hampers, are made on a perforated wooden frame which may be regarded as a substitute for the earth, but most of the

[283]

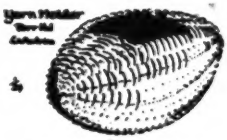

Fig. 73. Length 19".

285 "fancy work" is undertaken by specialized basket makers, and we can do no more than indicate the variety and skill of their products. There are certain localities where the tradition of basket-making is strong, for instance the shores of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of " calf basket " (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a " cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

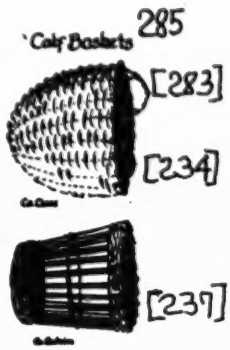

Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or " floats " are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

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415
[482]
[184]
[482]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

184
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482

Line Baskets

Fig. 76. Length *c.* 3 ft.

into a narrow mouth, a feature which is found in all Aran basket-work. Miss Gahan of the Irish Homespun Society regards it as an adaptation to the conditions on the islands, for the contents might easily be spilled owing to the number of loose stone walls which have to be crossed on a journey to the fields. Many of the Aran carrying baskets ("kishauns") are constructed of coiled straw rope bound together with split bramble (Fig. 77). They no doubt help to keep warm the food carried in them, such as boiled potatoes, boiled in their skins needless to say, in the Irish fashion. Such "lipe-work" was once common in Wales, where seed-baskets, yarn-holders, hassocks and meal containers were made in this way, but in Ireland the only coiled work I have seen outside the Aran Islands is the bee-skep of rye straw, tied with bramble. The illustration shows the small bone pin or awl used by the islanders in threading the brambles. Similar pins, which doubtless had many uses, are frequently found in archæological excavations, particularly on sites where a Mesolithic heritage may be suspected.

[282]

[231]

Coiled Straw Basket

Fig. 77.
Note bone pin.

This brings us to the very large topic of the uses made of straw. There is no need to refer to the value of oat straw as fodder or as thatch, though it does not last long as roofing material, and either wheat or rye straw is preferred. A humble example of the use of thatch is shown in the beehive (Fig. 77*a*) Rope (sugán) made of straw or hay still finds many uses, especially for tying down thatch on houses and stacks. It is twisted on a "thraw-hook" of ash or hazel, with a sally hand-grip, but the old styles are declining with the spread of a simple "twister" of strong bent wire (Fig. 78). This type is found throughout the British Isles in many forms some of which are

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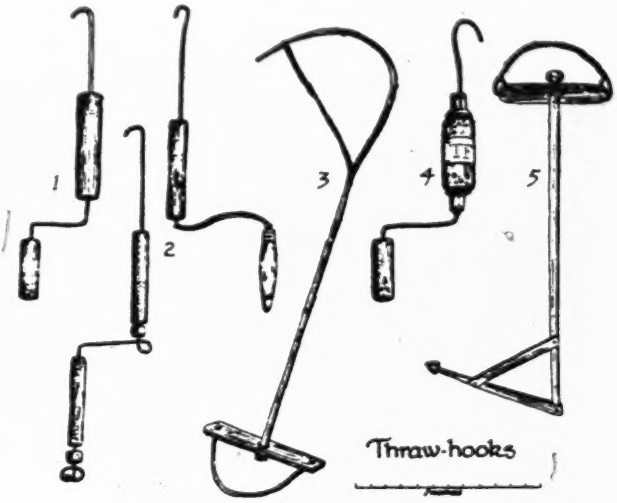
[231]

283

Fig. 77*a*.
Height 4 ft.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

known to be of mediæval descent. The method of manufacture is shown in Fig. 50, and the tying down of a hay pike in Fig. 51. Sugán was sometimes employed instead of wattle 283



[413]

Fig. 78.

Sugán twisters 1. Co. Antrim. 2. Both Donegal. 3. Lecale, Down. 4. Leitrim. 5. Dingle, Kerry.

in the chimney canopies. It was used for the seats of chairs and for the clothes-line which stretched across the kitchen. A short length was sometimes worn as a girdle around a child's dress. From it were made tethering ropes, spancels and langles, traces and tail-ropes; and on the Donegal seaboard I have heard of cabbages being tethered "against the wind" by three hay-ropes! It is on record that the men of Mayo would descend the seacliffs suspended by a straw-rope.

A length of sugán is also the foundation course of many more complex objects of straw such as mats, mattresses, screens, beehives, nesting boxes, stools, arm-chairs, baskets and hampers. I illustrate (Fig. 79) one of the conical hen-nests which are hung on pegs in the kitchen: large

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Fig. 79.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Fig. 80.

Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugán and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a "tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way: some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or "mell"), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply: finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. "Langles" and "burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

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3/4 the fuel is built differ from one area to another, and I give as a sample the list prepared by Mr. J. M. Mogey for Co. Antrim. After about a fortnight the spread turf is stacked in small "foots" formed by leaning a number of turves together, and later in "turn-foots" and "castles" which are built up in storeys. These are then combined into larger "rickles" or

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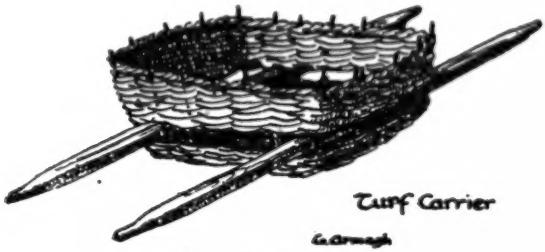

Fig. 91.

"clamps" and finally stored in "hand-stacks" erected alongside a bog road or in larger stacks built at the homestead (Fig. 93).

[413]

Fig. 92.

In many parts of the country the low-lying bogs are too wet to cut with the spade, and other methods of "winning" the turf must be adopted. Making "hand-turf" by moulding or "kneading" the black mud into balls is the simplest solution of the problem, but systematic methods have been evolved in some districts, and we give an account of the process as observed in Co. Meath, where mud turf is highly prized and considered to burn better and last longer than cut peat. It is dug in pits, broken down with short-handled shovels and graips and well mixed with water until the slushy mixture is ready to shovel into a box barrow, that is an ordinary manure barrow or a turf barrow fitted with sides, It is wheeled on to a smooth place and spread in a layer some 9 inches thick. When dry enough to take a man's weight the layer is notched in deep parallel grooves made with the edges of the hands, with cross grooves at intervals. The worker

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XVII

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS: THE COUNTRY TOWN.

Although the Celtic year began with All Hallows Day 221
(November 1st), for our purpose we may regard it as starting 796
on February 1st, or St. Bridget's Day. This was the first day 805
of Spring, and of field work, for the Saint promised that every [821]
second day thereafter would be hard and dry. The circle of [996]
the year ran its course through the seasons, punctuated by certain fixed festivals and by the uncertain advent of births, marriages, illness and death. It is with the fixed festivals that we are concerned in this chapter. The four seasons have their opening days on the first of February, May, August and November, and the celebration of these days and the preceding Eves is a pagan survival breaking through the Christian calendar. The festivals of February and of November have been taken under the special protection of the Church through their association with St. Bridget and All Saints, but many traces of the "elder faiths" of nature worship live on, sanctified by tradition if not always by the Church.

On St. Bridget's Eve (January 31st) it is customary for 221
country children to pull rushes—they must not be cut with a 796
knife—and take them home to be made into crosses by the 788
family gathered round the fire. A fixed ritual, varying from 285
one district to another, determines the procedure, and it traditionally included the St. Bridget's supper of pancakes or sowens taken from a plate laid on top of a rush cross. The

[p.153]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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796 crosses, of various patterns, are hung up over doors and beds
988 and in the byre to bring good luck. Some of them are very
285 elaborate, but the oldest style, to judge from its Celtic form,
[799] is the three-legged cross (Fig. 106) which is specially associated with cattle and is not, like the other shapes, taken to church to be blessed, a ceremony which is kept up even in parts of Belfast. In the Glens of Antrim a small bed is fashioned out of rushes and placed by the fire on St. Bridget's Eve: the door is left unlatched so that the Saint may come in and rest.

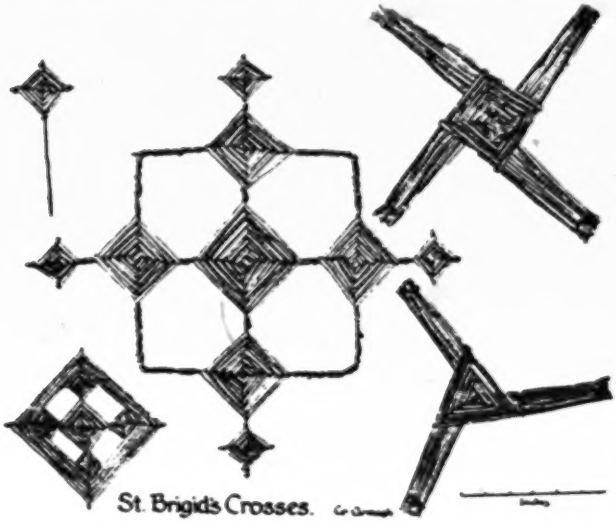

Fig. 106.

In Co. Kerry young lads called "Biddy Boys" wear hats of straw on the first of February, and in other parts of the west, I am told, "Bridget Belts" of plaited straw are worn.

796 . The next important day in the calendar comes about the
221 middle of the three months of Spring, that is at the time now kept as a national holiday in North and South alike—St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. This is regarded as the proper time to commence sowing, and the countryman counts on

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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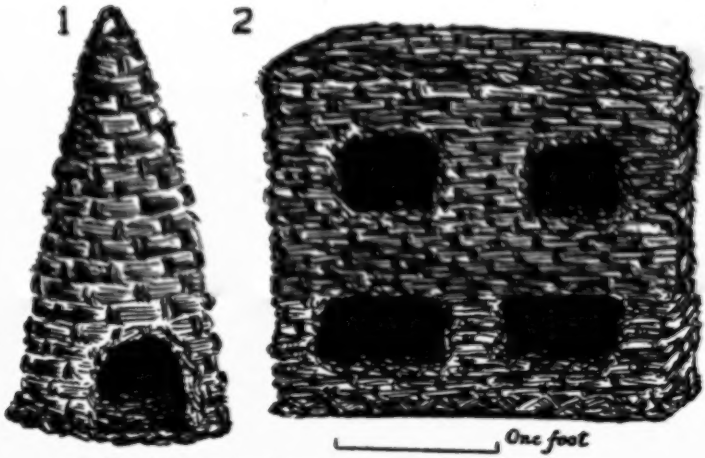

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FIG. 16. Straw hens' nests. (1) Co. Clare. (2) Co. Leitrim.

hen warmly ensconced in a stone-box alongside the fire. In the mud floor one may sometimes see large 'pot-holes', hollows in which the heavy iron pot is placed when the boiled potatoes are pounded for pig-food (Fig. 19). The wooden or iron 'beetles' with which the pounding is done are as varied in shape and size as they are indispensable (Fig. 17). Sometimes

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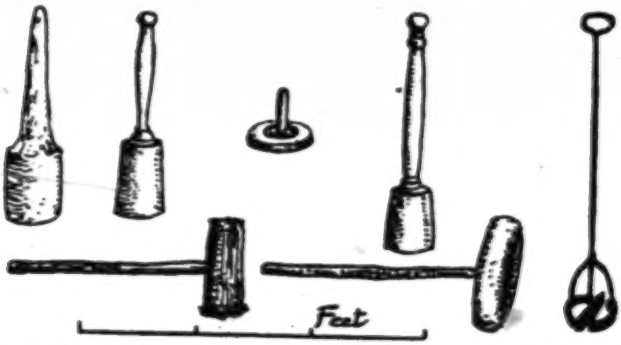

FIG. 17. Beetles, for pounding potatoes and, below, mells for 'knocking whins', Co. Antrim. Beetles similar to the first example were formerly used also for washing clothes and for breaking flax before hand-scutching.

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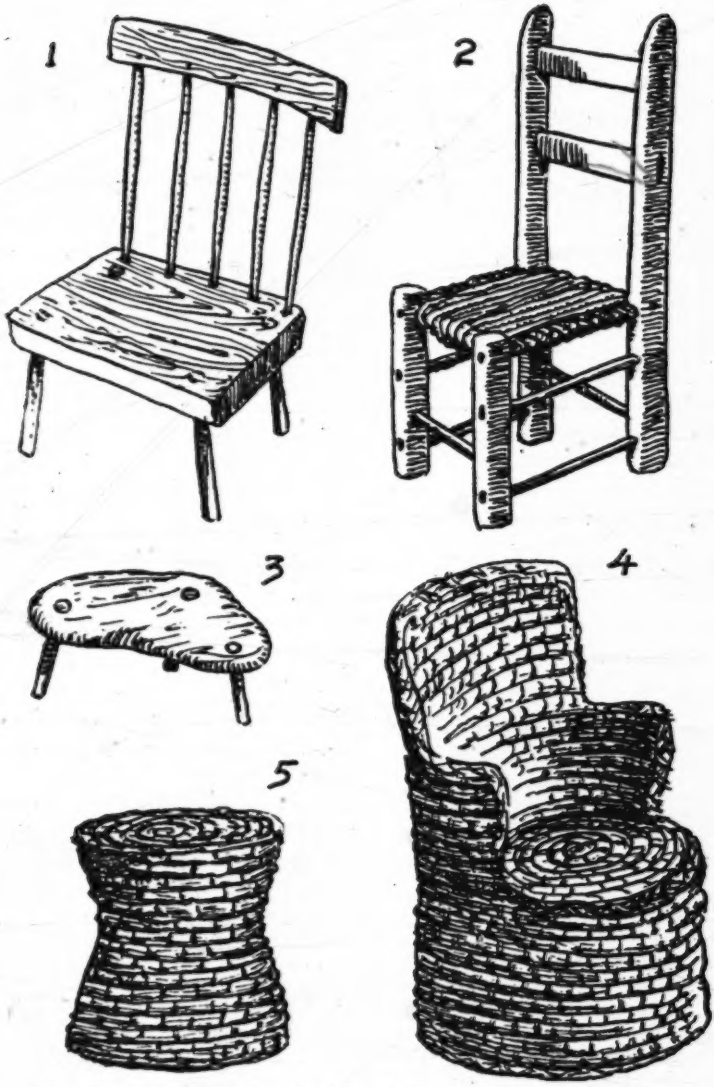

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Fig. 29. (1) Co. Antrim chair. (2) Co. Down straw-seated chair. (3) Creepie. (4) Armchair of coiled straw-rope, Co. Cork. (5) Straw seat, Co. Clare.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 8

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1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

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2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[Facing p. 113]

283 of these rope-making materials had other uses as well, not forgetting their functions in ceremony and magic as represented by Briget's crosses, harvest knots, the blaeberry baskets of Lammas and the rush ladders of Hallowe'en. Better known, [373] though no longer made, are the rushlights whose feeble glow, in the words of Gilbert White, made 'darkness visible'.

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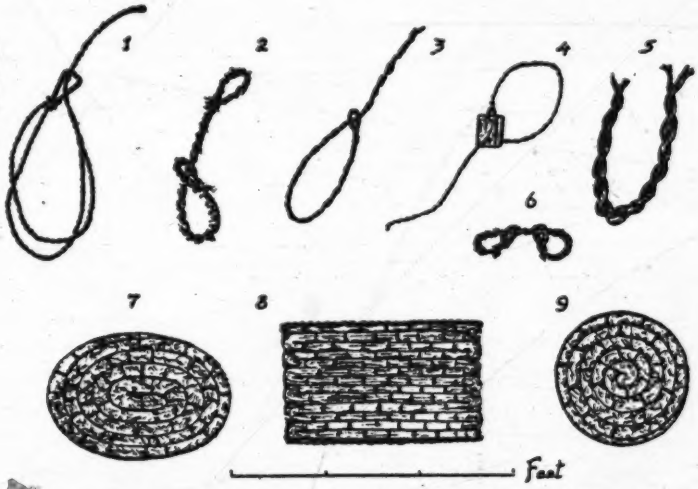

FIG. 68. Ropes and mats. (1) Rush burden rope, Co. Donegal. (2) Tie of cow-hair, Co. Kerry. (3) Willow bark burden rope, Co. Roscommon. (4) Grass burden rope, Aran Islands. (5) Tie of fir-rope, from roof, Co. Down. (6) Sheep's langle of oat straw, Co. Down. (7) Plaited mat of marram grass, Co. Wexford. (8) Coiled mat of rye straw, Aran Islands. (9) Coiled mat of oat straw, Co. Donegal.

283 Examples of ropes and mats of various kinds are shown in Fig. 68. The burden ropes, carefully made in two or three ply, 482 enabled quite heavy loads to be carried from inaccessible places. A correspondent in Co. Cork has sent me the following account of one method of lifting the burden, in this case of furze (gorse, whin) which was harvested both for bedding and for fodder. 'Passing his rope round the bundle, the carrier would throw himself on his back on top of the bundle, kick his heels in the air and jerk himself to the vertical, walking away completely concealed beneath a moving mountain of furze.' Where tracks

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were poor and there were no wheeled vehicles, or where there was no horse for a slide-car, the burden rope was all that was required to carry home the harvest; distances were mercifully small on the tiny farms. Rushes for rope making were cut when fully grown, beetled with a mell and broken by hand to rid them of pith. They were then spread to dry and afterwards tied in bundles ready to be fashioned into ropes when wintry weather brought indoor leisure. Ropes made of cowhair as well as horsehair, sometimes mixed with seasoned sedge (sprit) once found many uses about the farm. Horsehair fishing lines and snares for seabirds are described elsewhere, but we may refer here to snares for small birds which in south Armagh, for example, are laid on the grass in hard wintry weather over a scattering of grain or breadcrumbs. Inside the frame of a pegged string or a bent sally rod are tied a dozen or more snares made of single or double horsehair. By this means blackbirds, thrushes, sparrows, and finches are caught by the feet, nowadays for sport but, no doubt, once as a welcome addition to the food supply. Similar horsehair snares for catching small birds are known from England and, further afield, from the Sudan. Reins of horsehair are said to have been common quite recently in Donegal, and I would hazard a guess that horsehair nets, such as were made in Harris (Martin Martin tells us) for catching seals, were formerly made there.

283 [482] 283 237 223

Mats and baskets of many kinds were fashioned from straw and other materials such as marram grass. This tough grass is harvested in places all around the coast and put to many uses, including thatching. It is cut below the surface of the sandy dunes, and in Donegal I have seen a toothed sickle used for the purpose. The techniques of constructing mats and baskets of these materials are closely related and seem to fall into three classes, sown plaits, built-up plaits and coiled work. Coiled basketry is best represented in the once universal bee-skep, in the seed-baskets of the south, the seats and armchairs of the west, and in the food-carrying baskets of the Aran Islands (Fig. 69). It is an interesting detail of their construction that a bone pin is used to insert the ties, which are usually made of split briar. The conical hens' nests hung on pegs on the kitchen walls (Fig. 16) are also constructed in a coil technique, but

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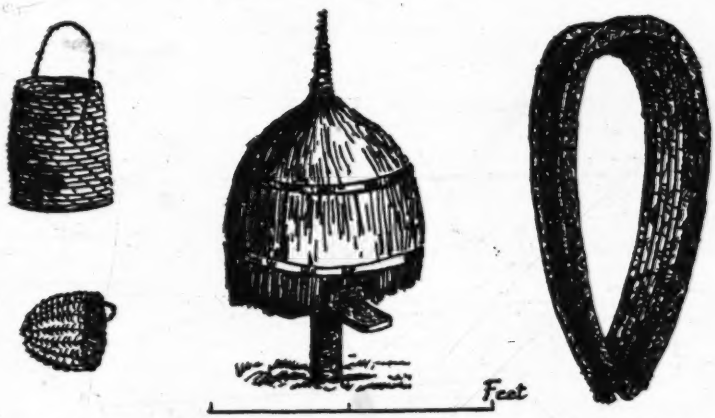

FIG. 69. Coiled food-basket, Aran Islands; calf muzzle, Co. Clare; beehive and horse-collar, Co. Antrim; all of straw except the calf muzzle.

some large rectangular examples seem to be made of built-up plait as described below. The distribution of coiled basketry in western Europe suggests that it is an extension northwards from south European and African regions where it is a richly developed art. A straw underthatch from Co. Down—the only one of its kind I have seen in the north—was made in a simple weaving technique, using straw ropes. But the commonest method of making mats was by what I have called built-up plaiting; beginning with a straw rope twisted on itself, wisps of straw are inserted in every third twist and their ends worked into plait in combination with the combined ends of the previous wisp. Fresh handfuls of straw are regularly inserted into the plaits. They are given different names in various parts of the country; for example, tates in Antrim, kets in Down, and gleogs in Meath.

Such mats can be made of any desired size, and in the past they served many purposes, as hangings to mark off bedrooms or bed alcoves, as linings for the wattled doors of houses, and as mattresses. Their long-continued use with wattled doors on houses of mud or stone carries the suggestion that wattled [342] houses of the better class may once have been lined with straw mats serving as draught screens and taking the place of the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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hanging skins, carpets or tapestries of other cultures. Today 285 ●
the most familiar use of the plaited mats is as creel mats on the [342]
backs of asses (Fig. 56). When creels are dispensed with and
the load is placed directly on the ass a simple 'sugan' is some- 285
times made—a ring of straw some fifteen inches in diameter 492
bound with a fine straw rope. This is a variant of the head-wreath once widely worn in western Europe as a carrying pad. Straw collars—made entirely of straw and not merely straw-stuffed—have so recently gone out of use that I have seen several decayed specimens on hill farms in the north, and the art of making them is not forgotten. In their construction several oval rings of three-strand straw plait are stitched together (Fig. 69). Unlike the ordinary Irish horse collar, they are, of course, not made to open; they were carefully shaped to hold flattish wooden hames.

Many varieties of baskets of straw rushes and other pliant 285
materials which were once made in the homes are now known
only by name: for example, the puckan of built-up plaiting which 415
held seed potatoes in Co. Down, or, hung in the stable, served as a nest for pigeons. They had short lives, and few specimens have survived, so that we shall never know the full range of such domestic skills. On the other hand fancy basket work, using both whole and split fine sally rods, has probably long been a specialized craft, and has clung to certain districts such as the shores of Lough Neagh and the Suir Valley. As in these areas so all around the coasts of the island it is a craft which accompanies fishing skills. The long-line fishermen of the sea coasts have traditionally made their own line and fish baskets, but it is only inland communities such as those mentioned who have become commercial basket-makers, possibly because their fishing was more seasonal than that of the sea folk. Their products are now mainly baskets for carrying potatoes or turf (Fig. 71). In a special class are the large creels and carrying baskets made of hazel or black sally which were generally employed for farm transport before wheeled carts were adopted. In many districts these were made by itinerant creel-makers who were held in very low esteem, next above the hackler and the tinker. The method of construction, in which the standard rods are stuck upright in the ground, stamps the craft as being of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

285 ancient origin. We shall see that it is the way the Boyne
415 curraghs are built, and it is said that the African pygmies make their carrying baskets in similar fashion. For lightness and to facilitate lifting one or more rows of open 'windows' are left in the sides of the creels. Those used for seaweed were sometimes quite open in construction, and like the manure pots they were generally fitted with hinged bottoms for unloading (Fig. 56).

301 Besides their utilitarian uses, rushes, grasses and straw have
524 long been playthings for young folk who fashion out of them, for love or for luck, many varieties of decorations and emblems.
285 We describe the Briget's Crosses elsewhere (Fig. 85). Harvest
[832] knots, twisted out of the ripe straw of harvest, seem formerly to have been in truth love tokens, though now worn merely as buttonholes for the harvest fair (Plate 13). As one might expect, the girls' knots were the more ornate and they differed from those worn by the boys in having the ears left attached. Some exceptionally fine specimens are fashioned out of flax or fine wild grasses. Star-shaped emblems in these materials are also made (Fig. 70). More complicated knots have four or six strand work, but the ordinary knots are in two ply, made by bending the straws sharply over each other at right angles. Before being knotted they make tolerably strong cords: I have experimented with these on unbaked clay pots and find that when impressed in the soft clay they make very good imitations of the 'cord impressions' seen on Bronze Age pottery. I have heard that in Nigeria the same two-ply technique is employed in making roulettes, from the fibres of the wine palm, for decorating the native pottery. Among the many toys and playthings made of rushes we find baskets for wild strawberries and blaeberries, rattles, butterfly cages, fishing nets, caps, bracelets, belts, hatbands, mock-ceremonial whips, canes and swords and imitation birds' feet and flowers, some of which are shown in Fig. 70. Many of them are associated with particular
[517] occasions of the year, for example the imitation flowers with Easter and the blaeberry baskets with Garland Sunday (Chapter XIX) but in general they are the products of the infinite leisure of long summer days of cattle-tending in field, bog or mountain. Probably a number of these objects once had a practical value

 [text continues on p. 210]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIG. 70. Rush, grass and straw-work. (1) Cuckoo pint made of rushes, Co. Armagh. (2) Butterfly cage of rushes, Co. Down. (3) Rush bracelet in nine-strand plait, Co. Armagh. (4) 'Hen's claw' of grass, Co. Mayo. (5) 'Briget's rag' of oat straw. Tory Island charm. (6) 'Harvest star' of flax, Co. Antrim. (7) Rush rattle, Co. Mayo. (8) Blaeberry basket of rushes, Co. Down. (9) Harvest knot of flax, Co. Armagh.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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301 and others were ceremonial; some may be no more than simple
524 pastimes prompted by fancy. Rush baskets were in fact made
until recently in some of the Hebridean islands for carrying the
285 fishermen's bait and for holding fish. Baskets of birch twigs, dock stems, ragwort and thistles have also been recorded, and it should be recalled that several examples of grass, sedge, and even moss, made in a similar cross-twisted technique have been recorded from Bronze Age burials in Scotland. The cone-shaped hat of rushes or straw made by children (Fig. 86) recalls in shape at least the traditional headdress of the leprechauns, and it may be noticed that tall steeple hats and helmets seem to have been popular among the Irish down to the seventeenth century.[1] In Co. Kerry the rush hats are worn in mock fights and seem to be regarded as helmets.

Of all these rush toys, none is stranger than the butterfly
524 cage (Fig. 70) which is deftly made by bending long rushes,
222 held upright between the fingers, over others placed transversely. One side of the cage may be left open and a dock leaf inserted as a door. The ends of the rushes are bound together to make a handle. This pastoral plaything can be paralleled in many parts of the world: in the cages in which Spanish shepherd boys carry insects, in the little baskets of dried grass which the Indian herd children make for grasshoppers, in the locust traps which Greek boys, Theocritus tells us, used to weave out of asphodel stalks, and even among the nomads of the Gobi Desert, where, when the cicada begins to call in the great heat, 'every child cuts the desert grass to make a tiny cage to hold one of the fascinating tree-hoppers . . . The Gobi baby's rattle, too, is a hollow ball of twisted grass enclosing a large bead.'[2] The Irish rush rattle is provided with two hazel nuts. Some of the leaves and bracelets are plaited with four, six, nine, or even twelve strands, and a nine strand plait is also seen in one variety of three-cornered Briget's Cross (Fig. 85, 3; Pl. 13, 7).

The conical straw masks and the capes worn by strawboys
524 (Chapter XX, Fig. 88) stripped of their gay ribbons, have been
285 compared with the straw dresses of peasants in Spain or China,
292 and, no doubt, they had their practical prototypes in Ireland.

[1] H. F. McClintock, *Old Irish and Highland Dress*, 88.
[2] M. Cable and F. French, *The Gobi Desert*, 100.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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HOME-MADE THINGS

The straw cape placed over the bee-skep (Fig. 69) is a humble relation. Straw masks are worn also by Biddy Boys on St. Briget's Eve, and by the Christmas Rhymers. On St. Briget's Eve, too, a small straw doll (Brideóg) was dressed up and carried from door to door in the south-west of Ireland. A charm of plaited straw known as Bratóg Brighde (literally, Briget's Rag) is carried by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection against storms (Fig. 70, 5). There was also Briget's Girdle, a two-strand straw rope, a circle with crosses attached, which was passed over the body as a protective charm, by inserting one leg and then pushing the head through on the Saints' Feast Day (Fig. 85). 524 285 [292] [789]

Before the Irish live-cattle trade developed there had been for some centuries a great export of hides and skins, and if one goes back earlier it becomes clear that these products must have found a multitude of uses about the farm. For a number of purposes where toughness and durability are specially needed animal skin has remained a traditional material, and in old-fashioned mountainy areas the countryman makes a habit of curing the skins of wild and domesticated animals on the principle that 'you never know but what they'll come in useful'. On analogy with the Hebrides, with which Donegal in particular shows close cultural affinities, skin mealbags should have had a place in cottage economy in north Ireland. When grinding corn, a skin was laid on the floor under the quern to catch the meal. Seal skin served many purposes, from plough traces, in Harris, to the covers of curraghs in Donegal. We have descriptions of cured sheepskins serving as windows,[1] and (from St. Kilda) of fowling ropes bound with strips of salted cowhide to prevent them from being cut by the rocks.[2] But it is in the skin tray, the wecht or wight, that one is most likely to see tradition maintained (Fig. 71). The well-scraped skin of sheep, or sometimes of goat, is stitched on to a rim of ash, bog fir or, in the naked islands which have exhausted even their bog timber, a ring of sugan. To secure the skin free of wrinkles is skilled work, and the finished product is not unlike a tambourine: in fact, it closely resembles the Eskimo caribou drum. Irish wrenboys 281 281 415

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 25.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 315.

HOME-MADE THINGS

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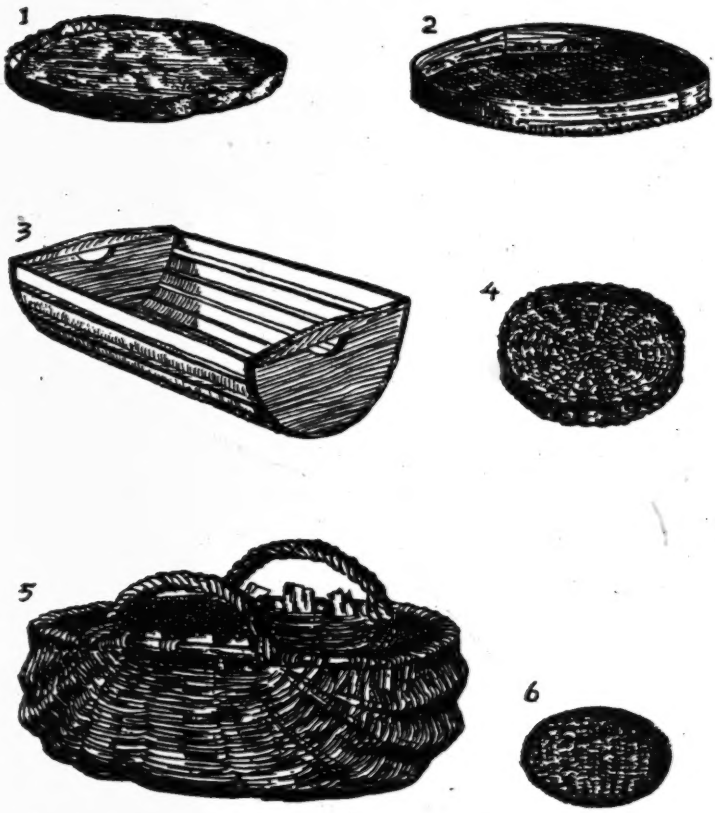

FIG. 71. Skin-tray, split-ash riddle and potato baskets. Approximate scale 1/9 (No. 5, 1/6). (1) Sheep-skin tray or wight. (2) Split-ash riddle. (3) Potato 'basket'. (4) Potato skib. (5) Potato basket. (6) Potato skib. (All Co. Antrim.)

Irish wren boys

[534] carried a skin tambourine which they beat when hunting the wren on St. Stephen's Day, and one wonders whether the drummers from whom the Orange performers on King William's Day inherit their wild rhythms were trained on ceremonial wights. (There are also sieves, riddles and shallow baskets of split ash or sally, but these, for example the flat round potato skib—a communal self-service plate—should properly be classed as the work of specialists. 212 (Fig. 71).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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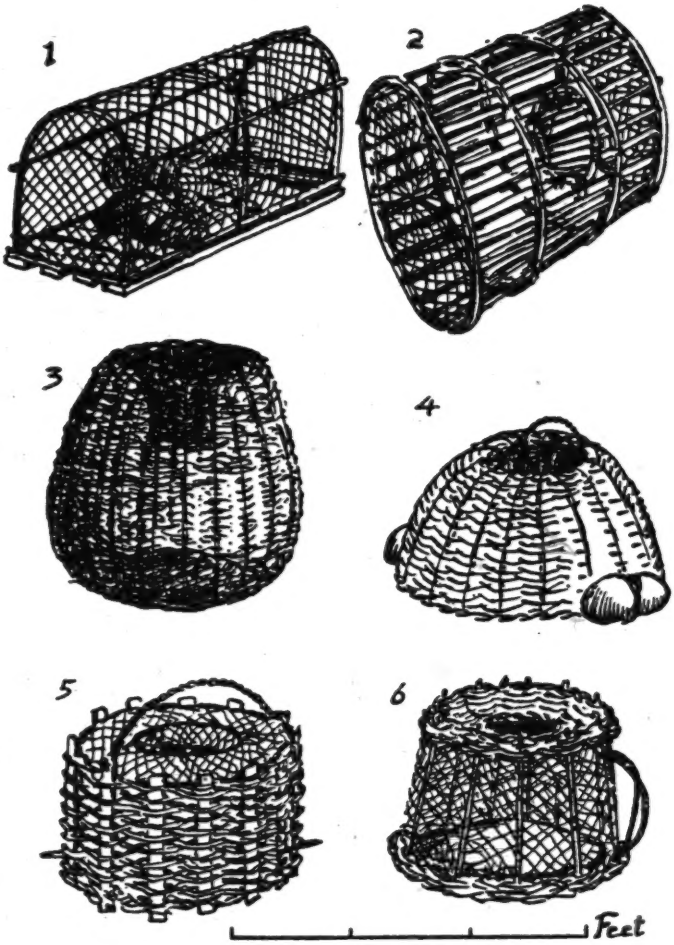

FIG. 76. Creels and pots. (1) Lobster, Co. Antrim. (2) Crayfish, French pattern south and west coasts. (3) Lobster, Co. Mayo. (4) Crab, Co. Antrim. (5) Buckies Co. Down. (6) Crab, Co. Down.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and are therefore known as 'harvest herrings'. It is then that the yawls or skiffs which lie half hidden for most of the year have their brief spell of activity, and the farmers who jointly own them find on moonlight nights a cool relief from the hot pressure of harvest. The fish are caught in trammel nets, and they were formerly in great demand not only locally but for many miles inland for salting down as winter 'kitchen'.[1] A more varied diet has lessened the demand, for the great days of the salt herring were the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when a potato diet cried out for a tasty accompaniment. On the north-west coast the herring fishery extends through the winter, with consequent serious risks which the Donegal men have none the less been willing to take. Here, perhaps, is one explanation for the survival of the light rowing curragh down to the coming of powered vessels, for a small sail boat brings many hazards on this stormy Atlantic coast.

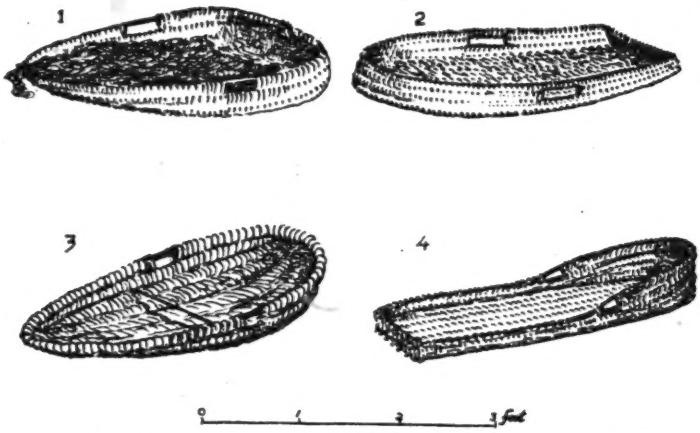

FIG. 82. Long-line baskets. (1) Co. Antrim. (2) Co. Galway. (3) Co. Down. (4) Aran Islands.

Long line fishing for cod, skate, ling and other big fish is almost certainly far older than the herring fishery, and it has preserved down to our own day many ancient practices and

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 types of gear. It used to be said that you should never risk taking a dog into some of the fishing villages on the north coast: [281] their skins were in great demand for making the line floats or 'stookies'. Very probably seal skins were formerly used for this purpose, as among the Eskimo. The sinkers of grooved stones from the beach might well pass for prehistoric implements (Fig. 74). The beautifully made line-baskets of unpeeled [285] willow have the graceful curves that one associates with the work of untouched 'primitives' (Fig. 82). And the division of [462] labour was on a primitive level, for to the womenfolk fell the tedious labour of baiting and preparing the hooks. The long-line fishermen were exceptionally hardy and were regarded with awe and respect by the inshore fishermen-farmers. No doubt the timid and the weakly had been weeded out by continual stress. Their knowledge of the sea and of the fishing [423] marks was a guarded secret, and the best banks were some- [777] times allotted, no doubt to avoid fights, by casting lots. In the Hebrides this was done on Bride's Day. There also, and possibly in Ireland, the banks were held in rotation in a kind of marine rundale.

527 782 the Feast of St. Martín on 11th November. On St. Martin's Eve the blood of a farm animal or fowl was spilled and sprinkled in the corners of the house, on the door-posts and windows, and in the byre and stable. In some areas the blood was also used to make the mark of a cross on the forehead of each member of the household. The flesh was eaten on St. Martin's Day, which is by tradition one of the feast days on which flesh meat is taken.

[292] [285] [769]

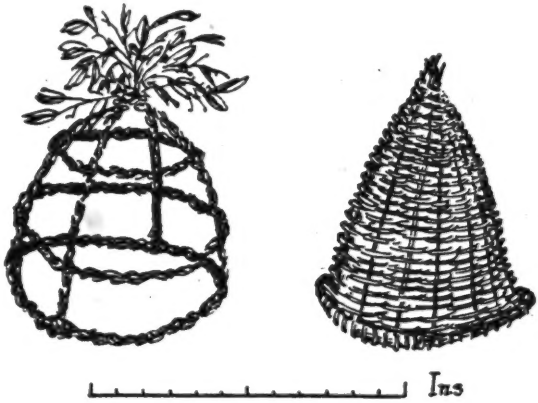

FIG. 86. Hallowe'en caps. *Left:* of plaited straw, Co. Down. *Right:* of woven rushes, Co. Kerry.

We recall that in Scotland a mart was an animal killed at Martinmas to be salted down as winter food, and it may well be that this very practical custom grew out of the cult, which was intended 'to exclude evil spirits for the year'.[1] It seems that seabirds were sometimes killed for the occasion, and there are many superstitions relating to the ill luck which attended anyone who went fishing at Martinmas. Wheel-turning of any kind, whether on cart, mill or spinning wheel, was prohibited. These sacrificial offerings and tabus must be of great antiquity and relate to the preparations for winter. St. Martin's Summer was regarded as the last spell of fine weather before the gales began in earnest. There are hints in folklore that ailing children were

[1] I. Weld, *Roscommon*, 553.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 326 554 Of these local specialists only the smith survives in any strength today. He shares with the mason the admiration the country people feel for physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this that made the more sedentary occupations of weaver, shoemaker, and tailor of less prestige. Thus the crippled son, as the quotation says, might be put to one of them.

463 294 The tailor was often a peripatetic. He moved around from house to house and community to community where he was known, living and eating among the family. He was made welcome, not only as a maker of clothes but also as a carrier of gossip. Today the few tailors who survive in the country districts are petty cotters with only a memory of their trade. The few still active ones have retreated to the towns. Most of the farmers' clothing is now shop-bought and factory-made.

463 286 [283] The weaver was perhaps the most sedentary of the local craftsmen. He is the one who has failed to survive even in the towns. The women of the farm families carded and spun the wool into yarn until home spinning died out, and broke and scutched the flax for linen, but the weaver made it into cloth. He spent all his days indoors, moving from one side of his loom to the other in a small room heavy-laden with fluff and lint. The farmers seem to remember most strongly the unhealthiness of the life, but they tell one also of the weavers' arrogance when their skill was in great demand. The following is the kind of description one can still get, the first part of it discoursing on weavers in general and the second relating the history of the local man:

> In the old days the weaver might have enough work to keep him busy for four months and, when you went to see him, he would put you off and tell you to come back in a fortnight for your goods. It would be no good for you, none in the world, if you didn't take a bowl of butter and a few dozen eggs to him

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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as a way of getting him to start on your yarn in a hurry. If you 463
didn't, he would not do it until he got ready. They were independent, all right, and then when they were finished, you had 286
to reach down into your pocket and pay for what he did. There used to be a lot of weavers here, but they are all gone now. The women have got out of weaving the wool.

A weaver here, Paddy Seán R—, was a very fine fellow 463
though he drank a lot. You cannot blame him for that because his job was a mean one and bad on the health. He worked to 286
keep his mother out of the workhouse and till the day she died 735
he would not let her go there. Wasn't that a decent thing for him to do? Afterwards he went to Galway and then he came back here and as an old man he died in the workhouse. But wasn't it a decent thing he would not let his poor old mother go [386
and her going up the streets of the town every morning collecting the urine from the people who lived in the house [to use 514]
for bleaching].

These three occupations were the meaner ones in the eyes 463
of the country people. It was not that they degraded their followers. Rather it was that they were intrinsically of less 554
value than the more robust crafts of outdoor life. Something of the sexual dichotomization of labor was involved in this attitude equating sedentary, house-bound pursuits with the feminine spheres of activity.

The chief exponents of the robuster, more masculine crafts within local ken were the carpenter, the mason, the house builder, and the smith. But there were many others. Between the landless or "backward" cotters and laborers, who might turn their hand to anything, and the small farmers, who were themselves occasionally forced to turn to harvesting abroad or to road-mending and stone-breaking at home, there were as many specialists as there were activities in which special renown and skill could be attained. In fact, the development of local skills seems restricted only by the limits of the *matériel* which peasant life requires.

Other local experts were the thatcher, the cattle doctor 463
or "vet," often a herdsmen with a lifelong experience of

 476

pensions and other benefits have removed the necessity of action by *meitheal* for the support of the aged and childless. General prosperity and the spread of machinery and tools have made it unnecessary for such concerted action in other cases, and local self-sufficiency is no longer so complete. 571 178

Nevertheless, the foundation of mutual relations between members of the local community upon which *meitheal* was based still exists. It can be called into play in emergency or under special circumstance still. Not all the townsman's accusation that the spirit of self-help and self-sufficiency has gone out of the country people is true by any means. They still will buckle to a community task, if necessity forces action, quite willingly. But they have learned that they have a voice nowadays in the kind of activity to which public funds and public works shall be put. This awareness is part of the extension inward into the community of the lines of relationship with persons and institutions external to the farm community which is so characteristic of the age. Such relationships are now made use of where before there were none of them beyond appeal to a landlord. 476 571

Some description of the former kind of activity might be of interest here, though it is in the nature of a digression. The techniques of the last century, particularly those of wool and flax, were different from those of today; yet the situation is in other respects quite like that of today as far as the organization of persons in the community is concerned. The age groups of old and young, the sex division of activity between men and women, and the reciprocities between family groups and the direction of the community in the hands of the old men were even more marked than they are today. But nothing fundamental has changed except the techniques. 476 571 286

The following is an account of the older custom in weaving:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 A man would go to town and buy two or more pottles of flax
571 to sow. Then on the first of May he would go to the garden
and plant it. In August he would pull it up by the roots and
248 lay it in small bundles to be made into stooks. Then they would
take it and put it into a bog and leave it there fifteen or twenty
days, after which they could dry it in the house by hanging it
from the rafters. About the first of November you would take
it down and some men would come in and help break it. They
would then put it back and later take it down and scutch it with
a pronged tool, drawing the flax over it and breaking it.

476 Some time about Christmas time you would have a *meitheal*
571 of girls come in and they would sit in a semicircle round the
fire and clove the flax. It would take several days depending
on how much you had. The girls would stay with you all that
283 time. At seven in the evening they would be through and
within half an hour you could hear them in the hills leaping
and shouting. About eight or eight-thirty the boys would begin
[535] to arrive and there would be a dance and be no more good out
of them for that night. They might have a dance every two or
three days. You fed them good.

The next thing was the hackling, and this might be done by men or women. You had a box with iron prongs sticking up and you would hit the stalk against the irons and the small particles would fall into the box below. It might take several nights. Old man Roughan was a great man at the hackling, but he was always great for nothing else to do with flax. It was fine if you got him to come and help you and he would be glad to do it. Then you might be good at something else and you would go and help him with that. Some men were good at one thing and others at something else and they would help each other.

After this the next thing was the spinning, and this was done by the woman. She would sit in this corner by the fire and she might be there every night, or whenever she had the time, spinning the flax fiber into thread. She had no one to help her and it was a hard job. After it was made into thread, it would be taken out and bleached and re-wound and then taken to the
● [266] weaver. The weaver made it into cloth and you would use it for sheets and shirts and other things. Flax was a hard thing and there was a lot of hard work about it.

248 They have been out of growing it for thirty or forty years

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

972 The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive, except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
[435] and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

● 286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

291 the town, where they sit down by the roadside, and put on their boots and stockings, taking them off again when starting for home.

The old-fashioned frock or kilt-shaped garment, made of red or grey homespun, and buttoned up the back, is still worn by boys up to twelve years of age.

The dress of the women is on the whole less changed than that of the men. Many of the elderly women wear the white-frilled cap, others have a small red kerchief tied under the chin. Over the shoulders a shawl of tartan or other striking pattern is folded, but this is not so frequently of a bright red, as in other districts, as the darker colours seem to be more in favour; beneath the shawl is a boddice of some dark material. The petticoat is short, but is only occasionally the typical red homespun of the western peasant. It is often grey, or dyed purple, blue, or some other bright colour, and is sometimes ornamented by a few rows of black braid. Aprons of check are much worn. Many of the older women wear the heavy blue cloak with cape and hood on Sundays and holidays. The younger women to a large extent copy modern fashions on festive occasions, but the result is not happy, as their taste in colours is curious, and they certainly look better in native costume.

286 A great variety of homespuns are made in the district, there being several weavers who turn out coarse flannel, tweeds, and friezes, some of which are very good specimens of hand-loom work. The dyes 386 are nearly all imported, indigo and the made-up aniline dyes being [824] most used. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), which was at one time pretty generally employed for this purpose, is now only used for dying stockings.

5. *Dwellings.*—The habitations of the people present considerable 342 variety, some being extremely poor, others of a fairly good class. The description given below applies solely to the houses of the people of the rural parts, and not to Belmullet (which is a cleanly and well-built little town, composed almost entirely of good-slated houses of two stories) nor to the houses of the proprietors or large holders.

Of late years there has been much improvement in the style of dwelling, but few indeed of the old turf cabins remain; while the semi-subterranean huts, some of which were inhabited in 1841, have become altogether extinct.

The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1846) describes the majority of dwellings as being built partly of stone and partly of turf, and consisting of only one or at most two rooms.

An average dwelling now is built of stone, sometimes dry, at others

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
167 or—in comparatively few instances—by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[8] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[8] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

church festivals and at wakes, and though they are now bought they are made by hand in a few towns by chandlers who carry on a medieval tradition. One Dublin firm, established in 1488, manufactures large church candles of beeswax by methods which can have changed little with the centuries. In the home the candles were supported in wrought-iron holders or stuck into a turf by the fireside. Tall standard holders, often with adjustable fittings, were designed to give light to the weaver at the loom, and they are most typically found in Ulster (Fig. 28). The fine embroidery which occupied the women in the linen districts must have imposed a great strain on the eyes: there are stories of a single candle serving as a central source of light for a ring of seamstresses, each of whom held her work against a bottle full of water which acted as a magnifier.

In Ireland, as throughout Atlantic Europe, the dresser ranks as the most important and elaborate piece of furniture in the kitchen, and its position is prescribed by custom. It stands either against the side wall or against the partition between kitchen and bedroom. Since this partition is of no great antiquity we can be sure that the original place of the dresser was against the side-wall and that it has developed from, and taken the place of, shelves built into or attached to the side-wall. In part of Ulster it is referred to as 'the shelf'. I have already mentioned the tiers of stone shelves set in the wall which are preserved in the deserted houses of the Slievemore cluster on Achill Island. It is believed that the fashion of open crockery shelves was diffused from the court sideboards of the later Middle Ages in France and England, and it may be surmised that the wooden dresser was readily accepted in Celtic lands to replace wall shelves, from Elizabethan times on. The adoption of delph and tea-drinking in the eighteenth century no doubt accelerated the spread of the dresser, which had become, by that time, an essential part of Irish kitchen furniture (Plate 1). The corner-cupboard, evolving in much the same way from corner-shelves, is another article of furniture with a north-west European distribution. Similarly the coffer or store-chest spread through western Europe from the later Middle Ages onwards, replacing skin, straw, hollowed wood, or basket-work containers.

 [Text continues on p. 93]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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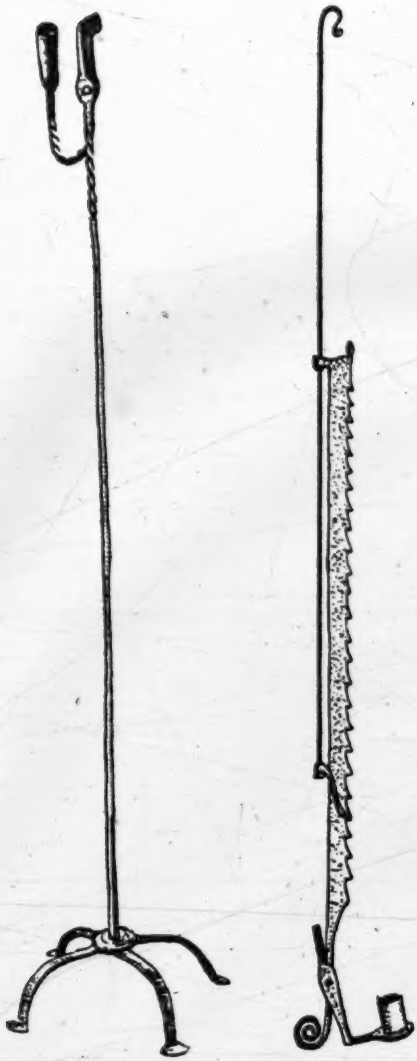

FIG. 28. Weavers' light-holders, Co. Armagh. Height, 3 ft.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

262
264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
516 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

The knit sweater

291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[657] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[194] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[178] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[822] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[799] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen*.

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tin-ware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER XII

Occupation and Status

433 COUNTY CLARE, like other more westerly Irish counties agricultural in outlook, presents a picture in which there is little industrial activity at all, comparatively speaking, other than that involved in agriculture, trading in market towns, and administration and communication. The fact holds pretty generally for the whole of the south of Ireland.[1] Whether the inhabitants like it or not, Ireland has long been peripheral to the huge English industrial centers. It has been little more than a market and a source of foodstuffs. A western region like Clare has been nothing more. Ireland was called not very long ago "England's bread basket." But we have already seen, where economic matters have come up, that such a view of her is a bit astigmatic. Ireland was her own bread basket first, long before she was anything else.

288 178 In rural Ireland outside the large cities, other industrial activity than that involved in agriculture is merely a matter of supply and service, as far as the country people are concerned. The market towns, with their fairs, their shops, their banks, and their artisans and laborers, fill functions entirely distributive in nature.

This has not always been the situation. In 1810 the economist Wakefield found domestic woolen manufacture

[1] At the time of the authors' study the De Valera government's program of industrialization had hardly begun.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

a widespread industry among the country people throughout Ireland. There seems even then to have been quite a widespread cottage industry in wool and linen, later to be destroyed everywhere except in Ulster. The peasantry displayed great ingenuity at the craft. The wool of their sheep was made into frieze at home, carded, spun, woven, dyed, and consumed there. Oils essential to the weaving process were extracted from fern roots, and dyes were got from alder, walnut, oak, and elderberry. This craft survives today as a cottage industry only in remote parts of Donegal and Kerry and in the Scottish highlands and isles. Such home-spinning was once widespread, probably universal. It survived here and there down to a very late date. In Ulster and northern England the industry was gradually brought into the factory, where it laid the foundation for the industrial revolution. But in the rest of Ireland industrial production of woolens was confined to Dublin by 1840 and, as a commercial enterprise, the wool trade was dead except in the region of Belfast. A few small factories survived in several towns, for example at Limerick, Clonmel, and Bandon, but there was no life or power of expansion in them.

Other manufactures originally native to the country repeat the story of wool. A few attempts at cotton manufacture died out. Linen suffered the same fate. At one time flax was grown extensively throughout Ireland, and a home industry of weaving linen was practiced widely in both town and countryside in many parts of the country. O'Brien[2] cites evidence that the older custom in linen making, strongest in Ulster, but not unknown elsewhere, by which weavers occupied plots of land and supplemented their income by farming, was gone by the famine time.

[2] George O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* (London, New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1921). See also O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin and London: Maunsel & Company, Ltd., 1918).

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

288 Otway[3] describes the weavers of Drogheda in 1840 subsisting on conacre gardens (plots hired without right other than to the current crop) in circumstances of dire poverty. [427]

433 178 O'Brien sums up his *Economic History* by concluding that the result of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century was that Ireland abandoned all pretense of being an industrial country and came to rely on agriculture to a greater extent than at any time formerly and even than in the eighteenth century. The accounts of Ireland at the time of the famine and after it bear him out. They show a very great lack of any kind of industrial activity other than agriculture.

463 178 The petty crafts of the countryside, which never gave any promise of reaching industrial proportions as those in the town centers might have, suffered a similar decline. But with them the decline seems to have come later and to have been part of the general change brought by the industrial revolution. All the supply crafts of the countryside have now come to be concentrated in the market towns. Nevertheless, through western regions, at least, local craftsmen, often with garden plots to help them eke out a living, seem to have long continued to be part of the local scene. In the novels of Carleton written just before and after the famine, many local shoemakers, cobblers, weavers, carpenters, smiths, coopers, nailers, and other followers of small trades appear. Upon them, the agricultural population depended for much of its tools and goods for local consumption. It is impossible to determine now how many of these were rural, since censuses of occupations before 1926 do not distinguish occupations in towns from those in country districts. But these men were part of the generally greater proportions of country dwellers before the rise of towns and the opening up of the railroads during the last century.

[3] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (Dublin: W. Curry, Jr., & Company, 1839).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

weaver it would be hung in the rafters to be used as required. 248
Nowadays the scutching-mills cannot store all the flax they handle, so that the farmer stacks it in the fields until the mill can take it. It is built into large oblong stooks variously known as barts, sleighs, hovels or rays, containing as many as a hundred beets or more. The barts are two-storied. On top of the first storey, which consists of three rows of beets on each side, a row of sheaves is placed along each eave like wall-plates, and others are laid transversely between them. On these, in turn, a central row is placed lengthwise to act as a support for the upper storey, and against this row two or three layers of sheaves are laid like rafters on each side. The hipped roof is then thatched with grass or rushes roped on (Fig. 54). The bart[1] is thus kept

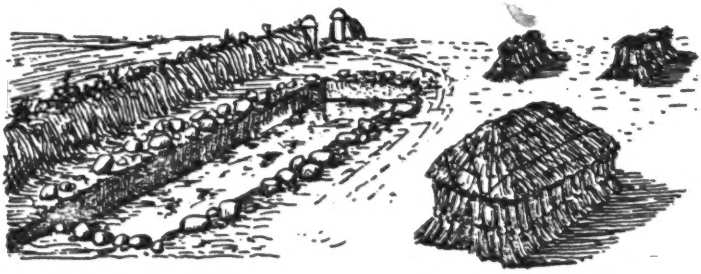

FIG. 54. Flax dam, stooks and bart.

dry while its open structure allows the wind to blow through, drying the beets and also lessening the risk of its being blown down. The farmer-weaver, needing the fibre, might have to dry the flax in a kiln after it had lain spread for a few days (Chapter IX). The whole sequence of breaking (melling) the flax, scutching, cloving, hackling, spinning, weaving, and bleaching was then carried out by hand. The water-driven scutching mill was 288
introduced in the eighteenth century though hand-scutching continued in some districts into the present century. All processes are now mechanized apart from a little high-quality hand-loom weaving in Ulster, and very little flax is home-grown even in the traditional linen districts.

[1]'Bearts' of oats are referred to in medieval documents. See W. R. Wilde in *Census of Ireland 1851*, Part 5, Vol. 1, 98.

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

171 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a
524 circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

857 Many examples could be given of children's games and
524 rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.
754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance
789 of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love
821 charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

241 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting
289 of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

A good deal of skill was required and " the contestants were hindered by the unkind jokes of their friends. When the cailleach was eventually " stretched " or " cut and dead," she was " waked," carried into the house or barn, and generally kept until the following year." To quote Mr. Paterson once more, " Sometimes a party followed the ceremony, at which it was usual for the boys and girls to wear harvest knots." I illustrate two examples of knots, one with the ears left on, which is done in three plait, and the other the more common two-straw pattern (Fig. 114). It has been claimed that the

Fig. 114.

latter form is a late introduction from England, but it is known that the first type was worn by girls, in their hair, and the second by boys. They were often made before the actual cutting of the corn and are not necessarily associated with the ceremony of the last sheaf. Mr. Paterson tells me that in Armagh they used to be exchanged between the sexes as a token of admiration or love.

Finally we must not forget the countless superstitious beliefs connected with birds and trees, with water beasts, and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

443 morning. To dress, snatch a cup of tea, and bless himself
484 takes only a moment. Usually he has arranged for companionship, and he and his neighbors drive their beasts along the roads together. Company makes the night less lonely and the handling of the animals easier. Driving them is a skilled task against the dangers of the road, both natural and eerie. The men hope to reach the site of the fair before daybreak. They want to arrive in time to find a "good pitch," as they call it. They want to take their stand in the drawn-up lines of men and beasts where buyers are most likely to notice them. His pitch taken, each man stands over his beasts, ready for the inspection of buyers, careful that his beasts do not wander off or get mixed up with the others.

443 As dawn breaks, the buyers arrive. They are nearly always
438 cattle dealers and big farmers. Only occasionally are they local men. One can recognize them as they hurry about, [291] businesslike, wearing trench coat, bowler, and leggings. The costume is practically a uniform with them, quite different from the drab coats and boots of the countrymen. They carry chalk or scissors and pencils and a notebook to mark the beasts of their choice and record their purchases.

In the good days of high prices, as during the World War, the buyers arrive even before dawn and buy by lantern light. All the good beasts of the fair may be gone by the time the sun comes up. On occasions of little demand, however, the buyers have time to look about carefully and make the exhaustive tests of quality that long experience has convinced them are the secret of commercial success.

443 The procedure of choice, bargaining, and sale is as un-
437 changing a ritual as any church provides. The buyer — dealer or farmer — strolls unconcernedly along the lines of farmers and their beasts. Here and there he greets an acquaintance. But he is appraising the animals all the while. Rigid custom forbids his breaking in on a bargain already

PLATE XLII

142
291

1. The caillesch built close to the fireplace. Fallmore, Co. Mayo.

2. Gable-chimney house. Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

342

[p.206]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

462 tional social life. The boy's first duties, as soon as
593 he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands
857 to neighbours and near-by friends. Until he is seven and passes through first communion, his place is in the house with the women, and he shares the same bed with his sisters. After that year, he leaves his mother's apron strings, and is slowly drawn into men's ways; he is thrown more and more with his elder brothers and sleeps with them henceforward. In remote regions he takes off girl's clothing for [291] the first time; for girl's clothing has protected [789] him from the fairies, they say. Both socially and economically he is becoming a male, but his male status is still very little. By the time he is ten or eleven, he is brought home from school when needed to take part in the important agricultural work of the year. But not until he passes confirmation and leaves school, usually at the same time, does he take on full men's work and assume men's clothing. Even then, as he reaches maturity, and takes on more and more the heavy tasks of the farm, he never escapes his father's direction. Only when his father makes over the farm to him, at death or at his own marriage, can he assume command, and with it full adult status.

Economic apprenticeship is thus a process of conditioning within the family. But there is no separation of economic and non-economic spheres. The father's direction of the enterprise coincides with his dominant, controlling role as parent and

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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243

CORN HARVEST

[Frontispiece]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

individual ownership they have by no means entirely collapsed. The principle of service, of mutual aid within the local family groups, survives; the element of competition is reduced to a minimum. Though the old social laws have been "abolished" by acts of parliament, such external decrees could destroy only the superficial features and hardly touched the minds in which these customs were rooted. The primary unit of land division—the townland—is still a very real thing; and as the townland retains its Gaelic name even in the districts of Dublin and Belfast, so there survives beyond the city's influence the social fabric of the townland community. Reeves and Joyce have argued that the careful subdivision of Irish land points to the existence of a considerable settled population in remote antiquity, and recent archæological research supports this view. There are no less than 62,205 townlands in the country; their size, which varies from curiosities of less than an acre to large tracts of moorland of 1,000 acres, averages 325 acres.

The townlands in turn group themselves into baronies corresponding to the petty kingdoms of old. Writers tell us that even into the 19th century one barony could be easily distinguished from another by the dresses peculiar to each. Thus there were the dark blue and damson of Cork and Waterford, the grey of Kerry and the blue of Galway. A traveller in 1830 remarked wisely that "such peculiarities frequently point out the natural divisions of a country in more important matters than dress": they are an index to regional diversity. The distinctive features of particular districts are well illustrated in the case of "the Irish Flanders," the isolated tract in Co. Wexford comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth; while nothing could reveal the separateness of some island communities better than the heaviest punishment meted out to offenders in Rathlin or Clear I.: it consisted of "banishment to Ireland."

Enough has been said to suggest that the traditions of the Irish countryside are of long standing, and that many strains in those traditions are not only of Celtic but of pre-Celtic antiquity. Before we consider some of the relics of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Aran Islands

Plate V.

285
516
291
351

MAKING A SKIB
INISHERE, ARAN
CREEL IN GROUND BEHIND

[facing p. 12]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

former centuries animal hides and skins figured prominently, and it is not uncommon in the west to see cured skins of wild and domestic animals used as floor-coverings. No doubt in earlier days skins and furs were worn, but in modern times raw-hide has been employed only for shoes such as the "pampooties" worn by the Aran Islanders. These have the advantage that they do not damage the frail curraghs, just as the Islandman's headgear is the knitted Tam o' Shanter which the wind cannot blow off. A century ago one might have seen a dried sheep-skin serving as a window, or even a cowhide used as a door-hanging. Sheep- and goat-skins still find their uses as back-protectors (Chapter 16), in the making

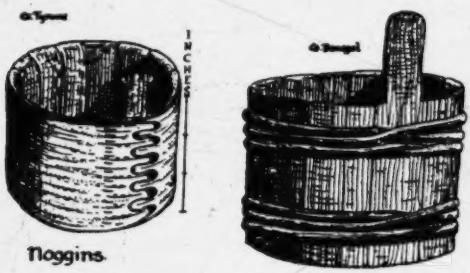

Fig. 69.

of thongs for flails, and especially in providing bottoms for various trays and sieves, the only difference between them being that the sieve-skin is perforated.

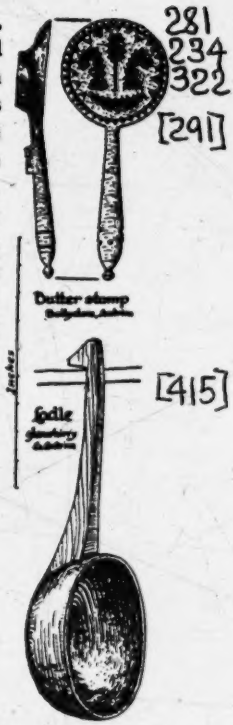

Fig. 70.

The skin, scraped and dried, is wrapped or sewn on to a rim of ash or bog-fir (Fig. 71), and a good deal of skill is required to stretch it on without a wrinkle. These trays are called wights or wechts in the north-east: the peat wight is for carrying turf to the house and the corn wight for pouring corn into a sack. The winnowing tray sometimes has small perforations to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken on to a cloth. A windy spot was selected for the purpose, and numerous "Shelling Hills" get their name from this operation. The perforations, about one-eighth of an inch

281
415

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

portance when there are several persons to be examined, for, if kept waiting, they will most probably either slip off or refuse to be measured. 125

(A). *Hair and Eye Colour.*—In the obtaining of these data the methods, cards, and tables were precisely the same as those used in the expedition to Aran, to the report of which the reader is referred for particulars.

(B). *Measurements.*—These were, with the exceptions hereafter mentioned, the same as previously. The head circumference and external binocular breadth, not having proved satisfactory, were omitted, and for them were substituted:—(1). The upper face length measured from the naso-frontal suture to the separation between the central incisors at the gum. (2). The height sitting. This, though it is certainly a most valuable measurement, for which reason it was inserted in the observation schedule, was found to be altogether unsuited for field work, as it could only be taken in a few exceptional cases, so I had reluctantly to abandon it. (3). Auriculo-mental radius, measured with the Dublin craniometer, from the centre of the ear-hole to the point of the chin.

(C). *Instruments used.*—These consisted of Garson's anthropometer, a sliding measure for the limbs, Broca's compas d'épaisseur and compas glissière and a Chesterman steel tape. Instead of the fixed metallic Cunningham craniometer, the new portable pattern of the same instrument (made specially for field work by Messrs. Robinson, of Grafton-street, Dublin) was taken, and stood the test well, being quite as rigid as the older pattern when set up, and, as it is made of boxwood, much lighter. Its portability is a great advantage, as by the removal of one screw-bolt the whole instrument may be disjointed and carried in the coat-pocket. A set of Snellen test-types for accurately estimating the keenness of eyesight was also taken, and proved to be very useful. 126

The whole, with note-books and observation forms, were carried, fitted in a canvas knapsack, and, as they weighed under ten pounds, were light enough to be easily carried even in long walks over very rough ground.

(D). *Remarks on the Methods employed.*—There were several difficulties experienced in the making of the observations this year, due partly to the visit being made at harvest time when most of the people were engaged in the fields, partly to local causes, the principal of which were the shyness of the people, the manner in which the hair of most of the women was covered by the shawl which was drawn more closely on the approach of a stranger, and the closeness with 124 [609] [291] [302]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

272 every meal; it is made extremely strong, and, as elsewhere, is the cause of a good deal of dyspepsia.

273 Alcoholic liquors are not much drunk, as illicit distilling has altogether ceased in this district.

264 An average working day's dietary is as follows:—Breakfast: tea, and home made bread. Dinner: fish, or eggs and potatoes. Supper; the same as breakfast.

291 177 4. *Clothing.*—The homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics still constitute the bulk of the clothing worn, but are being superseded by imported slop clothes of inferior quality; and the dress on working days is nondescript and often ragged. On Sundays and holidays the proportion of imported clothing seen is greater, and the homespun suits are sometimes very different from the old types, being imitations in cut of the imported goods. The dress of the men consists of a shirt of thick white or chocolate-coloured homespun, with a rather high plain band collar, and large bone buttons, or, in some cases, it is made of imported flannel, purchased in Clifden or Westport. The single or double-breasted waistcoat, with the large collar-flaps buttoned back, is, when worn, generally put on inside the bawneen, or white flannel coat, instead of outside, as was formerly the case.

Trousers are of homespun or corduroy.

A thick comforter is worn about the neck by many, even in very warm weather.

For head-dress, soft felt hats and caps of various shapes, all imported, are now in general use, the old home-made flat, blue bonnet being but little worn, except by the older men. It may be most frequently seen in Westquarter and Inishshark.

291 The men wear thick worsted stockings of dyed or "natural" wool, and very stout boots of native make, as a regular part of their daily attire, but the women and children go bare-footed, except on Sundays and holidays. The dress of the women shows as great changes as that of the men; it is of the well-known Connemara type.

The head is covered by a red kerchief, or small shawl, often a plaid, but so far as seen never by a "mutch" (a cap with white frill). Over the shoulders a small red tartan shawl is folded, half hiding a jacket, or bodice, of homespun, or imported woollen stuff; the petticoat is short, and dyed a bright red with madder, and sometimes trimmed with a few rows of black braid, and a wide check apron is usually worn. Some women, on Sundays, wear the old large blue cloak with hood and double cape.

The small boys wear the kilt-like frock of white, red, or brown

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant. 291 [386] [824]

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bedrooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar, though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors, front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen; and the windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones, until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood, washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few 342 [354] [284] [241] 352

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe croithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

113 OFFICIAL:

"Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland."—Dublin, 1846.

"Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Ireland. Explanatory Memoir of Sheets 73, 74, 83, 84."—Dublin, 1876.

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"Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland. with Sketches of the Irish Past."—London, 1887.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES VIII. AND IX.

PLATE VIII.

142 FIG. 1.—James Joyce, aged 48 years, No. 5, Middlequarter.

●291 FIGS. 2 AND 3.—Anthony Lavelle, aged 35 years, No. 2, Knock.

FIG. 4.—Group of men, Inishbofin.

Taken in order from left to right, the names are, respectively:—

Back row.—John Burke, boatwright; Michael Halloran, king of Shark; John Tierney, postman; Mick Kerrigan, weaver; Redmond Toole, fisherman.

Front row.—Martin Baker, John Malia (or Malley), Ned Burke, Redmond Toole, all fishermen.

FIG. 5.—Group of women, Westquarter, Inishbofin.

Taken in the same order as the other group, the names are—Margaret Ward, Nancy Browne (first cousins), Nelly Holloran, Mary Holloran (daughter of last), Brigid Concannon.

PLATE IX.

412 FIG. 1.—Quern still in use in Middlequarter, Inishbofin.

283 FIG. 2.—Spinning wheel in Middlequarter.

296 FIG. 3.—Method of washing clothes, Church Lough, Knock.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

142
291

[End Plate A]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or stirabout and milk. 264

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money. [439] [437]

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit distilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent. 273

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very nondescript, not to say ragged, character. 291

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel. [439] [444]

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction. [443]

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

291 the town, where they sit down by the roadside, and put on their boots and stockings, taking them off again when starting for home.

The old-fashioned frock or kilt-shaped garment, made of red or grey homespun, and buttoned up the back, is still worn by boys up to twelve years of age.

The dress of the women is on the whole less changed than that of the men. Many of the elderly women wear the white-frilled cap, others have a small red kerchief tied under the chin. Over the shoulders a shawl of tartan or other striking pattern is folded, but this is not so frequently of a bright red, as in other districts, as the darker colours seem to be more in favour; beneath the shawl is a boddice of some dark material. The petticoat is short, but is only occasionally the typical red homespun of the western peasant. It is often grey, or dyed purple, blue, or some other bright colour, and is sometimes ornamented by a few rows of black braid. Aprons of check are much worn. Many of the older women wear the heavy blue cloak with cape and hood on Sundays and holidays. The younger women to a large extent copy modern fashions on festive occasions, but the result is not happy, as their taste in colours is curious, and they certainly look better in native costume.

286 A great variety of homespuns are made in the district, there being several weavers who turn out coarse flannel, tweeds, and friezes, some of which are very good specimens of hand-loom work. The dyes 386 are nearly all imported, indigo and the made-up aniline dyes being [824] most used. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), which was at one time pretty generally employed for this purpose, is now only used for dying stockings.

5. *Dwellings.*—The habitations of the people present considerable 342 variety, some being extremely poor, others of a fairly good class. The description given below applies solely to the houses of the people of the rural parts, and not to Belmullet (which is a cleanly and well-built little town, composed almost entirely of good-slated houses of two stories) nor to the houses of the proprietors or large holders.

Of late years there has been much improvement in the style of dwelling, but few indeed of the old turf cabins remain; while the semi-subterranean huts, some of which were inhabited in 1841, have become altogether extinct.

The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1846) describes the majority of dwellings as being built partly of stone and partly of turf, and consisting of only one or at most two rooms.

An average dwelling now is built of stone, sometimes dry, at others

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

BROWNE—*Ethnography of the Mullet, Inishkea, & Portacloy.* 649

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE:
"ᴏᴉᴅᴅ ᴄᴏᴉᴎᴎᴎ ᴌᴉᴒ. The Fate of the Children of Lir." 113
(Dublin, 1883.)

TROTTER.—"Walks through Ireland."

WARREN, R.—"Birds observed breeding on the coasts of Sligo and Mayo." "The Irish Naturalist," vol. iv. p. 180. (Dublin, 1895.)

NOTE.—The late Dean Lyons, of Kilmore, the well-known archæologist, had written the history of Erris, but died without publishing it. The MS. is now missing, but was until lately in the possession of the Rev. James Duncan of Bangor, Erris.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

(*From Photographs, by* C. R. & J. M. BROWNE.)

PLATE XV.

1. Group of men at Muingcrena, Mullet. Taken in order from, left to right, the names are:— 142
   Back row—Patrick Toole, James M'Cormack, Patrick Padden 291
   James Dixon, No. 50; J. Lavelle.
   Front row—Francis Coyle, No. 47; Hugh Cafferky, No. 46; Anthony Lavelle, No. 51; H. Joyce.

2, 3. Anthony Dunleavy, aged 60 years, Emlybeg, No. 13.

4. William Gaughan, aged 28 years, Emlybeg, No. 12.

5. —— ——, ——, No. 41; Richard Cane, No. 40. Both from Fallmore, a small village at the southern extremity of the peninsula of the Mullet.

PLATE XVI.

6. Group of men from Iniskea.

7, 7*a*. Michael Cawley, aged 41 years; South Iniskea, No. 4.

8. Philip Lavelle, aged 33 years; North Iniskea, No. 1.

9, 9*a*. Patrick Cawley, aged 40 years; South Iniskea, No. 3.

PLATE XVII.

10. Group of men and boys at Portacloy. The figure on the extreme right shows the dress of the younger boys.

11, 12. William Bourne, aged 33 years, No. 34, and —— Bourne, both from Portacloy.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

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[End. Plate A]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

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9 (a)

7 (a)

[End Plate B]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

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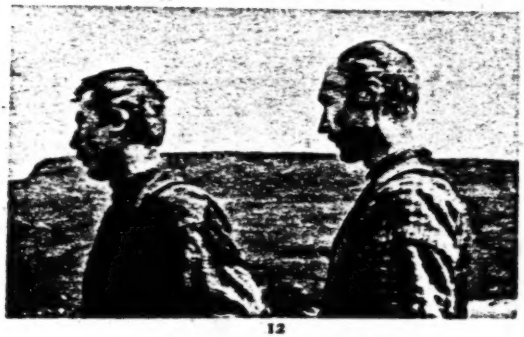

12

[End Plate C]

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
or—in comparatively few instances—
167 by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[8] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[8] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[20]

Second, emigration has been of vast
167 benefit to the community; money comes
434 in to most of the homes from America[21] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

Third, it is regrettable that the lack
443 of commercial facilities means that eggs,
489 poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [20] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only
[804] three barrels a week in winter. The standard content of a barrel is 256 pints.
[21] Many of the children are dressed in Amer-
[291] ican clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 4

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"Lashing" rye, Aran Islands. Note the woven belt (criss) supporting the hand-woven tweed trousers.

[facing p.49]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 6

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1. Shearing oats with the toothed sickle, Co. Antrim.

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2. Thrashing oats with flails, Co. Antrim.

[Facing p. 97]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 8

492
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1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

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493
417

2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[Facing p. 113]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Fermanagh
County Antrim

PLATE 9

314
516
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291 ●
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1. Cutting turf (underfooting) in a Co. Fermanagh bog.

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2. Building a peat stack, Co. Antrim.

[facing p.144]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Meath

PLATE 10

314
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[412]

1. Spreading mud turf with long-handled shovel, Co. Meath.

[516]

2. "Running" the spread turf.

[Facing p. 145]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

as the work of specialists (Fig. 71). The pampooties of the Aran Islands deserve mention here. Made of calfskin, but formerly of sealskin,[1] these one-piece shoes were once doubtless widely worn and have kept their hold in Aran because of their suitability for wet rocks and frail curraghs. The rivlins of Scotland and the Highland *bròganan* were very similar and I have seen rawhide shoes of the same type from Norway and the Pyrenees. They all have the hair outside and are secured by lacing back and front.

The wight serves both to hold corn, in filling a sack for instance, and to convey peats from the stack to the fireside: perforated it becomes a meal-sieve (boran) for sifting the skins (seeds) from oatmeal, or a buttermilk sieve for taking out the last grains of butter from the churn. The winnowing tray or dallan is a larger version, and it, too, may be perforated to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken out on to a spread cloth. There are, up and down Ireland, many bold windy Shilling Hills where the 'shellings' (husks) were, in past times, separated from the grain in this way (Pl. 7).

This brings us to the flail and its 'hanging' (the mid-kipple, hooden, gad, middling, or tug) which was commonly a thong of cow-, horse-, sheep, or goat-skin, though sometimes of rabbit- or eel-skin or a cord of flax. The flail, the proverbial 'stick-and-a-half', consists of a three to four feet long helve or hand-staff, usually made of ash, and a shorter beater, swingle or souple of hazel or holly. There are two principal methods of 'hanging' the parts together. In one variety, the tie passes through two leather caps lashed over the ends (Fig. 72, 1). This appears to be a variant of the common English flail-hanging, where, however, the cap is made of steamed ash or yew and there is no linking piece. Its distribution in Ireland, down the east coast, points to derivation from England. Modifications, occurring as far west as Donegal (Fig. 72, 1*a*, *b*), have the linking thong passing through a hole made either in the helve or in the beater. Kevin Danaher states that the capped flail is characteristic of central Europe: it is believed to have first appeared in north France in the early Middle Ages.[2] The

[1] O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught*, 59 (footnote).
[2] *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 60 (1955), 6–14.

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

[241] [241] [501] [197]

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 103 192

[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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[482]

Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[435] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce, under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the
[133] agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[437] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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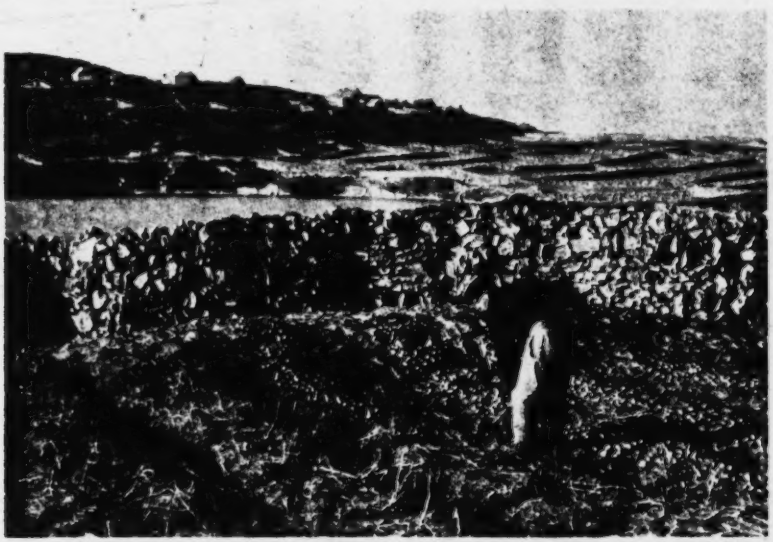

Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted. 246 221

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a "reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder. 246 [293] [461] [343]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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333
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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent 434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts 437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
516 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting and darning stockings for their husbands and children.

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool, which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and children of all ages go barefoot or put on sandals during the summer and add hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers, bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt, and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing; the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

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291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 434 [501] [295] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [138] [659] [437] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 [502] [433] [322] [184] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

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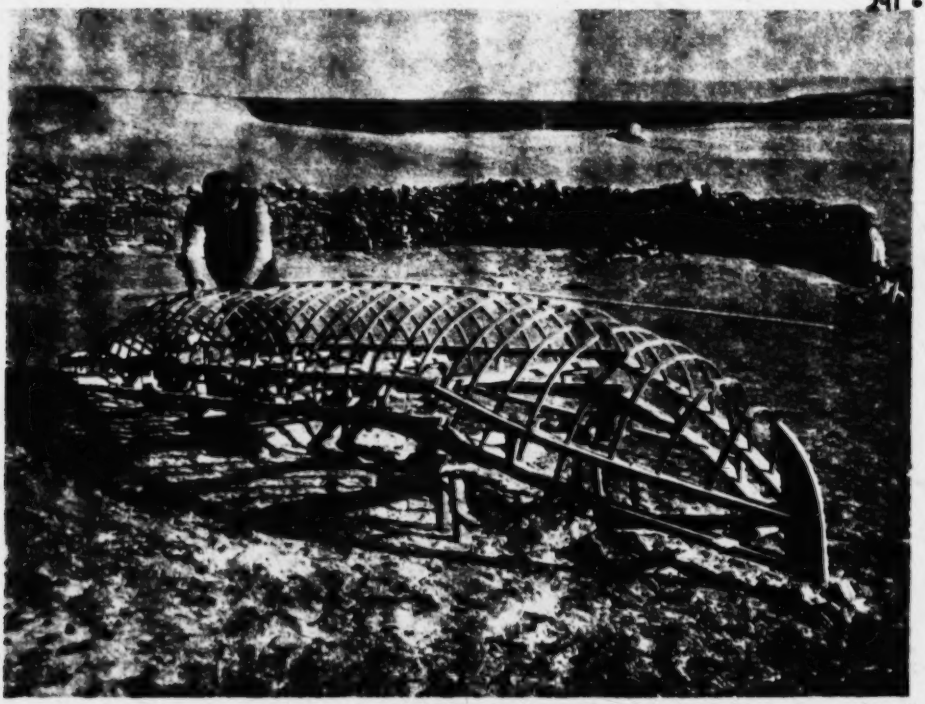

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

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folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A [184] *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds [434] for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of 501 holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen 789 seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the [178] cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter [177] hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens [387] known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is 000

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The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[65] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach
the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear
the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the
Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has
its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able
to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41
sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn
slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls
choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion
dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase
their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into
island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal,
a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although
made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have
heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish
expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by
weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland
shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to
monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
[178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[799] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new
crios if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants
who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality, men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148). Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn mainland attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them, the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families involved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291 •
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

In Tuosist the reason given to me by my father and some other old people was that ill-luck would fall upon Kerry and especially on the parish of Tuosist, if the Corkmen succeeded in forcing the coffin across Leac na gCorp and laid it down on Kerry soil. Sickness, bad crops, and misfortunes of many kinds would follow the corpse, if it were laid beyond the boundary-stone. This is undoubtedly the original reason for the defence of the border on funeral days. A corpse has in many lands for long been regarded as having evil magical power (known scientifically as *orenda* or *mana*) of an impersonal kind latent in itself. In Ireland, for example, fishermen regarded it as unlucky to take the corpse of a drowned person into a boat. Also, *an féar gorta* ("the hungry grass"), which grew wherever a corpse touched the earth, had the power of causing all those who walked over the spot to be stricken with abnormal hunger. Many other instances of the evil power of a corpse might be cited. Just two hundred years ago, Morty Óg O'Sullivan, a native chieftain of Béara in West Cork, who had fought against the British both in Ireland and in many European countries as a member of the "Wild Geese", was slain outside his own house near Eyeries in Béara. The British took his body to a warship at Bere Island and dragged it through the sea in the wake of the ship about sixty miles to Cork. A poet who described this happening wrote the couplet: 764 578 778 [539]

Ní raibh aon rath ar an uisce ó Chorcaigh go Béara
Ó tairngeadh tríd an bradán gléigeal.[1]

No fish were said to have since been caught in the sea-route through which the corpse was dragged.

In Sweden, Miss Louise Hagberg tells us, if a corpse were carried over cultivated ground or over lakes, they became thereby unfruitful, and crop-growing fields lost their vegetation. She also says that during the Middle Ages those persons over whose lands a corpse was carried unlawfully had the right to compensation; in Västergötland anybody who carried a corpse across the land of another, without the permission of the owner, rendered himself liable to a prescribed fine. 171

Thus, the funeral-boundary customs in the Cork-Kerry area, which have died out only in comparatively recent times, seem to fit into the wider pattern of custom and superstition devised to give protection against the magical evil power associated with corpses.

2. Wearing Clothes for the Dead

In the year 1918 or so, an uncle of mine died in the townland of Fehanagh, in the parish of Tuosist, in southwest Kerry. This is my native parish. Jerry Sullivan was my uncle's name; he died at the age of sixty-four. I was fifteen years old at the time, and was spending some weeks of my summer holidays at my uncle's when he became ill and died. I was allowed to remain in the house during the illness, wake, and funeral. 764 294 292

It is still the immemorial custom in that parish to get a suit of clothes specially made by a local tailor when a person dies. The suit is not worn by the corpse in the coffin. Still, it is intended

[1] There has been no luck on the water from Cork to Béara
Since the gleaming salmon was dragged through it.

764 294 292 specifically for the dead person; I will describe in a moment the use to which it is put. Even though the dead person had a new suit of clothes at the time of his death, which he had never worn, but which he had ordered and got made for himself, this suit will not serve the purpose I mention, after his death. Still another new suit must be ordered immediately the person dies, and must be ready for wear on the Sunday following his death. There are certain rules which are *de rigeur* as far as the suit is concerned: (a) it must not be made to measure—the tailor would know most of the people of the parish and would have made clothes for many of them from time to time; when, therefore, a suit is ordered by the relatives of the man who has died, the tailor knows fairly well what the measurements of the deceased were, and makes the suit accordingly; (b) the material used in making the suit must be of good quality—otherwise the dead man will not be properly clad in the next world; (c) the suit must be complete in every detail; (d) it must not be tried on to see if it fits. Stories about events which followed a disregard for these rules will be referred to later.

764 292 When the clothes for my deceased uncle reached the house from the tailor on the Saturday evening after the burial, an interesting ritual was carried out, according to local custom. I remember the evening quite well; it was a very fine summer, and the mountains all around the valley were bathed by the rays of the setting sun. A neighbouring woman, named Mrs. Healy, who lived next door, came to the house of my late uncle at dusk, and asked his wife, children, and myself, to leave. We went some distance away from the house into a field. I heard afterwards from my aunt and from her children that Mrs. Healy then carried out the following rites: She was alone in the house, as I have said, and she first laid out the clothes, garment by garment, on the back of a kitchen chair, which was in the middle of the floor; the underclothes were on top of the pile of clothes, then came the shirt, then the trousers, then the waistcoat, then the coat, then the socks and shoes, and finally the hat and walking-stick underneath. Having thus arranged them, she then called on my deceased uncle three times by name, using the following words: "Here are your clothes, Jerry Sullivan! Come for them, and may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this!" She then sat down by the fire for short time. She then arose, took the chair and the garments to the threshold of the kitchen, leading to the yard, and repeated the same call and words three times. Having sat at the fireside again for a while, she took the chair and clothes out into the yard, again called three times on the dead man, and returned to the house alone, closing the door behind her. Having allowed some little time to elapse, she went out into the yard, brought the chair and clothes into the kitchen, and put them as they were, in the room at the bottom of the kitchen until next morning.

When she had finished her task, which occupied about a half-hour, as far as I can remember, she called us back to the house, and we all had our evening meal, as if nothing unusual had happened.

Early next morning, at the dawn of day, before anyone else in the house was up, my cousin, the dead man's son, arose, and Mrs. Healy again arrived to complete her task. My cousin went out through the kitchen door, turned round, and knelt on the threshold. Mrs. Healy then placed the suit, still arranged on the chair, inside the open door. My cousin then asked her for each garment in turn, in the name of the dead person, and she handed them to him as he asked for them.

He later put on the suit for Mass, and wore it at the Divine Service and afterwards, until he returned home. Although there was a disparity of over thirty years in the ages of my cousin and that of his father, the resemblance caused by the unusual dress was striking. 764 292

This custom of wearing clothes for the dead is still quite strong in Tuosist. It is also practised either fully, or in varying degrees of decadence, in some of the surrounding parishes, as well as in the south-western part of the adjoining county of Cork. In the Dingle peninsula, further north, in West Kerry, the custom now is to bring a suit of clothes for the dead person in a parcel to Mass on the three prescribed Sundays. A suit of clothes which had already belonged to the deceased suffices for the fulfilment of the practice in some districts in the southwest of Ireland, where, as far as can be judged by the vigour of its survival, the custom had its stronghold. It is difficult to say whether the accounts of the wearing of clothes for the dead in Counties Cavan and Wexford, which I have been given, point to a country-wide distribution in olden times or to the practice having taken hold in these two widely separated counties through some other cause.

The elaborate ceremony carried out by Mrs. Healy after the death of my uncle, which I have described above, was confined to the first Saturday evening and Sunday morning. My cousin took off the suit on his return from Mass on that day, and wore it at Mass again on the two succeeding Sundays, without any preliminary ceremony. Even when a neighbour wears the clothes instead of some member of the household, he must return them to the house on each of the first two Sundays; he may retain them altogether after the third Sunday, if the immediate relatives so arrange. Otherwise they are given to some poor person to wear in the normal way. A neighbour is called upon to wear the clothes only when there is no relative of the deceased who can fulfil the custom, e.g., when the sons of the dead man have emigrated or are too young for the purpose. [602] [621]

Almost everybody in the parish of Tuosist, where, as I have said, the practice of wearing clothes for the dead at Mass on three consecutive Sundays after the interment is still faithfully carried out, is a Catholic, and a large congregation attends Mass every Sunday. After Mass, it is customary for the people to spend some time chatting near the church when Mass is over. They all notice that a certain young man from the parish, as the case may be, is dressed like an old man on three particular Sundays, but, knowing well that he is fulfilling the age-old custom referred to, they pass no comment on it. While the custom of wearing the clothes for adults is still strong in the parish, the Saturday evening and Sunday morning rituals have, however, now died out.

It is evident from the words used by Mrs. Healy in the Saturday evening ritual ("may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this") that the traditional and original intention of the making of a special suit of clothes in this manner was to provide the dead person with raiment in the afterworld. That the dead were believed to have some kind of continuing existence after passing from this life is also indicated by, among other things, the variety of goods which were buried in coffins with the dead: in Ireland, we have references to such things as food, pipes, tobacco, defensive weapons, tools or implements, watches and other jewellery, as well as money, being placed in coffins in former times. The practice was well-known in other countries also. Prior to the introduction of the special cerements for the bodies of the dead, which have come to be known in Catholic lands as habits, it was customary to fit out the dead for burial in their best clothes. Young unmarried girls were often dressed as brides in Northern Europe, 764 775 292

764 perhaps to indicate that they had become the spouses of Death itself. It is probable, therefore, that
775 the Irish practice of providing, as well as the habit, a normal type of new suit for the dead, is but
292 an extension of the burial of clothes with the corpse itself. The fact that it is pagan in its origin, yet is still carried out by devout Catholics in a parish like Tuosist, who wear the clothes for the dead at Mass on three Sundays after the death has taken place, shows both the tenacity of pre-Christian ideas concerning the afterworld and the easy way in which Pagan ideas and practices were in this, as in many other cases, clothed over with Christian raiment. Indeed, it is possible that the Church itself, may have been instrumental in getting the Catholics under their care to wear the clothes to Mass for a certain number of Sundays with the intention of reminding the congregation of the person who had died and of getting them to pray for his soul.

764 Stories about the displeasure and even the sufferings of the dead whenever the custom of wear-
292 ing special clothes for them was not properly carried out are legion in the areas where the practice was known. I have already mentioned some of the traditional rules which had to be observed in the making and the wearing of the suit. Disregard of any or all of these was believed to give offence to the dead, and the reaction of the deceased to such indifference or carelessness on the part of the living relatives forms the basis of most of the stories. A few examples will illustrate their trend.

764 A man whom I knew well died in Tuosist about thirty years ago. A cousin of his was asked to
787 wear the clothes for the dead man on the three Sundays after his burial, and he agreed to do so.
292 During the week after the first Sunday (on which day the suit was first worn to Mass), a friend of mine, a shoemaker in the district, told me that he had a very vivid dream. He dreamt that he was making his way home along a lonely by-road late at night, and at a certain place, where the dead man had often stacked turf, he saw the dead man sitting with his back to the fence at the roadside. The moon shone down on his face and the shoemaker had no difficulty in recognising him in the dream. Plucking up courage, he saluted the dead man.

"Good night, Dan," said the shoemaker.

"Good night, Tim," was the reply.

"How are you?" asked the shoemaker, knowing that he was dead.

"I'm all right, except for one thing," said the dead man. "They gave me a fine suit and a fine shirt and a fine hat"—and he indicated each garment in turn—"but look at the boots they gave me!" And he pointed at the tattered boots on his feet.

"I'll attend to that, Dan," said the shoemaker, and he bade the other good night and made his way home, very much frightened.

Next morning he awoke with vivid recollections of the strange dream he had had during the night. It was Sunday morning, so he knew that the dead man's cousin would be wearing the clothes for the deceased at Mass for the second time that day. The church was four miles from his home, and having walked the mountainous road to Mass, he joined the congregation at the cross-roads afterwards. Without saying anything to anybody concerning his dream, he kept on the look-out for the dead man's cousin, and when he saw him, the shoemaker went over to join the group of men who were chatting with him. The shoemaker quietly concentrated his attention on the boots which the cousin was wearing, and it did not take long to establish that they

were not new, but had, in fact, been made by the shoemaker himself for the dead man, who had worn them only once before his death. The dead man's wife had apparently thought that it was not necessary to order a new pair of boots to be made. The shoemaker had, however, promised the dead man to have the matter set right, so he quietly sent a message to the dead man's wife next day about his dream. She immediately ordered a new pair of shoes to be procured, and these were worn at Mass, along with the rest of the outfit, until the traditional rule had been fully observed. 764 787 292

A friend of mine in the parish of Clanlawrence in County Cork told me the following story to illustrate how carefully the details of the practice must be observed. A woman in that parish had a son who died. She got a new suit made for him, to be worn at Mass on the three Sundays after his burial, and on the Saturday evening prior to the first Sunday she laid the suit (as Mrs. Healy had done when my uncle had died) on the back of a chair in the kitchen, sprinkled it with holy water, and called on the dead son to come for them. Having next placed them at the threshold of the kitchen, she finally left them for a short while in the yard, and sat by the fire for a moment, presumably to allow the dead son to come for the suit. Suddenly she heard something being thrown against the door and, on investigating, she found that it was the new waistcoat. She then remembered that she had deliberately refrained from putting her dead son's watch in the pocket, intending to keep it as a memento. Needless to say, she immediately put the watch in the waistcoat pocket and replaced the garment on the chair in the yard. There was no further disturbance.[1] 764 294 293

[1] For general references to the custom mentioned in 1, see: När Döden Gästar, Louise Hagberg, Stockholm, 1937, pp. 331–379. Also, Über Krankheit, Tod und Jenseitsvorstellungen in Irland, Hans Hartmann, Halle, 1942, pp. 11–115; and Der Totenkult in Irland, by the same author, Heidelberg, 1952, pp. 15–17, 183. [113]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis and struma are stated to be comparatively rare. 164

Malignant disease is very common in the Mullet, especially in the electoral district of Binghamstown South, which includes all the southern part of the peninsula. The majority of these cases are said to fall into the hands of "cancer curers," who use arsenic paste.

Rheumatism is one of the most prevalent troubles, especially in the elderly and old.

"Gravel" is a common complaint all over the district, and a good many deaths from this cause are registered.

Dietetic diseases.—Digestive troubles are very common everywhere, but more especially in the inland parts where the dietary is less varied; "boxty," or potato-bread and the abuse of strong tea seem to be very largely responsible. 164 292

Along the coast, ento-parasites, due to the large proportion of fish in the dietary, are of very frequent occurence.

Respiratory diseases.—Bronchitis is very prevalent in the winter and spring, and spasmodic asthma is stated to be not an uncommon affection. 164

Local affections are few and not very serious. Conjunctivitis is common, and much aggravated by the peat-smoke of the houses.

As regards dental troubles, the people are by no means free from these, though as a rule the teeth are even and white, and remain sound until late in life. [142]

"Female" troubles seem to be very common.

Venereal diseases are practically non-existant.

Skin.—Skin diseases are very prevalent. Among these the most common are—tinea tonsurans, eczema, sea boils, and scabies.

Accidental injuries.—Owing to the mode of life of the people and their environment, accidents frequently happen, especially fractures and contusions from falls, bites and other injuries from domestic animals, and burns. [752]

4. *Psychology.*—The difficulties of treating this part of the subject justly are, in the case of a stranger, very great, as his acquaintance with the people cannot be of sufficiently long standing to allow of the knowledge of more than the superficial part of their character, while, in the case of a resident, personal likes and antipathies, and local quarrels or friendships, largely influence his opinions. 181

The following description, though to some extent derived from personal observation, is for the most part obtained from several local

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

58 not, like an Inishbofin man, consider himself disgraced, nor is he inconsolable.

Engaged couples or newly married people often come in for an amount of attention from the children of the neighbourhood, which, however flattering it may be, is decidedly embarrassing; they are followed about and cheered whenever they appear together. Weddings
585 are occasions of family festivities, and are usually followed by a dance.
533 "Straw-boys" go round to the house on these occasions and take part in the dancing. They are disguised in tall conical-shaped straw
292 masks, adorned with strips of red and green cloth, white shirts decorated with coloured ribbons, and white or red petticoats. The band is headed by a captain and a mate, who enter the house first and declare that they are shipwrecked sailors, and that they have come to dance at the wedding; the captain then dances with the bride, the mate with the bridesmaid, and the rest of the band with the other girls. It is usual to treat the straw-boys to drink, but they often refuse it, and never demand money, or indulge in any rowdy conduct.

The young couple usually set up house on their own account,
591 except in the case of the youngest son, who inherits his parents' house and property, in which case the bride goes to live with her people-in-law.

When a person is dying, windows and doors are thrown open, and
763 the clock (if there be one) stopped; it is considered unlucky or im-
777 proper for any of those in the house to cry until after the death has actually occured.

Wakes are still held in this district, and many of the old obser-
764 vances and games are kept up; but owing to the discouragement of these by the clergy, the people show a great reluctance to give any information on the matter. A good deal of drinking usually takes place on these occasions.

The funeral customs have undergone some change during the past thirty years, but much still remains that is worthy of notice. A grave is not usually dug until the coffin reaches the graveyard, if begun before hand it is never dug on a Monday, or commenced at least, but a start is made, if necessity compels, by raising a few sods on Sunday. It is believed to be unlucky to bury a corpse on New Year's Day, an act
[777] which is thought to bring misfortune to the whole neighbourhood.

The coffin is usually taken out the back door of the house, and conveyed to the cemetery by the longest route. At the graveyard the *caoine* is raised by the women immediately after the religious ceremony

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

301 and others were ceremonial; some may be no more than simple
524 pastimes prompted by fancy. Rush baskets were in fact made
until recently in some of the Hebridean islands for carrying the
285 fishermen's bait and for holding fish. Baskets of birch twigs, dock stems, ragwort and thistles have also been recorded, and it should be recalled that several examples of grass, sedge, and even moss, made in a similar cross-twisted technique have been recorded from Bronze Age burials in Scotland. The cone-shaped hat of rushes or straw made by children (Fig. 86) recalls in shape at least the traditional headdress of the leprechauns, and it may be noticed that tall steeple hats and helmets seem to have been popular among the Irish down to the seventeenth century.[1] In Co. Kerry the rush hats are worn in mock fights and seem to be regarded as helmets.

Of all these rush toys, none is stranger than the butterfly
524 cage (Fig. 70) which is deftly made by bending long rushes,
222 held upright between the fingers, over others placed transversely. One side of the cage may be left open and a dock leaf inserted as a door. The ends of the rushes are bound together to make a handle. This pastoral plaything can be paralleled in many parts of the world: in the cages in which Spanish shepherd boys carry insects, in the little baskets of dried grass which the Indian herd children make for grasshoppers, in the locust traps which Greek boys, Theocritus tells us, used to weave out of asphodel stalks, and even among the nomads of the Gobi Desert, where, when the cicada begins to call in the great heat, 'every child cuts the desert grass to make a tiny cage to hold one of the fascinating tree-hoppers . . . The Gobi baby's rattle, too, is a hollow ball of twisted grass enclosing a large bead.'[2] The Irish rush rattle is provided with two hazel nuts. Some of the leaves and bracelets are plaited with four, six, nine, or even twelve strands, and a nine strand plait is also seen in one variety of three-cornered Briget's Cross (Fig. 85, 3; Pl. 13, 7).

The conical straw masks and the capes worn by strawboys
524 (Chapter XX, Fig. 88) stripped of their gay ribbons, have been
285 compared with the straw dresses of peasants in Spain or China,
● 292 and, no doubt, they had their practical prototypes in Ireland.

[1] H. F. McClintock, *Old Irish and Highland Dress*, 88.
[2] M. Cable and F. French, *The Gobi Desert*, 100.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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HOME-MADE THINGS

The straw cape placed over the bee-skep (Fig. 69) is a humble 524
relation. Straw masks are worn also by Biddy Boys on St. 285
Briget's Eve, and by the Christmas Rhymers. On St. Briget's [292]
Eve, too, a small straw doll (Brideóg) was dressed up and
carried from door to door in the south-west of Ireland. A charm
of plaited straw known as Bratóg Brighde (literally, Briget's [789]
Rag) is carried by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection
against storms (Fig. 70, 5). There was also Briget's Girdle, a
two-strand straw rope, a circle with crosses attached, which was
passed over the body as a protective charm, by inserting one
leg and then pushing the head through on the Saints' Feast
Day (Fig. 85).

Before the Irish live-cattle trade developed there had been 281
for some centuries a great export of hides and skins, and if one
goes back earlier it becomes clear that these products must
have found a multitude of uses about the farm. For a number of
purposes where toughness and durability are specially needed
animal skin has remained a traditional material, and in old-
fashioned mountainy areas the countryman makes a habit of
curing the skins of wild and domesticated animals on the
principle that 'you never know but what they'll come in useful'.
On analogy with the Hebrides, with which Donegal in particular
shows close cultural affinities, skin mealbags should have had a
place in cottage economy in north Ireland. When grinding corn,
a skin was laid on the floor under the quern to catch the meal.
Seal skin served many purposes, from plough traces, in Harris,
to the covers of curraghs in Donegal. We have descriptions of
cured sheepskins serving as windows,[1] and (from St. Kilda)
of fowling ropes bound with strips of salted cowhide to prevent
them from being cut by the rocks.[2] But it is in the skin tray, the 281
wecht or wight, that one is most likely to see tradition main- 415
tained (Fig. 71). The well-scraped skin of sheep, or sometimes
of goat, is stitched on to a rim of ash, bog fir or, in the naked
islands which have exhausted even their bog timber, a ring of
sugan. To secure the skin free of wrinkles is skilled work, and
the finished product is not unlike a tambourine: in fact, it
closely resembles the Eskimo caribou drum. Irish wrenboys

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 25.
[2]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 515.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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223 Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

225 Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes in- [481] volving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed. The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with [292] charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The [251] meat was salted down.

226 Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now neglected and even despised, though there are commercial [228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he [481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular, [227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned [578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

222 674 If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [Text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 99.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

FIXED FESTIVALS

527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit
[264] gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 782 the Feast of St. Martin on 11th November. On St. Martin's Eve the blood of a farm animal or fowl was spilled and sprinkled in the corners of the house, on the door-posts and windows, and in the byre and stable. In some areas the blood was also used to make the mark of a cross on the forehead of each member of the household. The flesh was eaten on St. Martin's Day, which is by tradition one of the feast days on which flesh meat is taken.

[292] [285] [769]

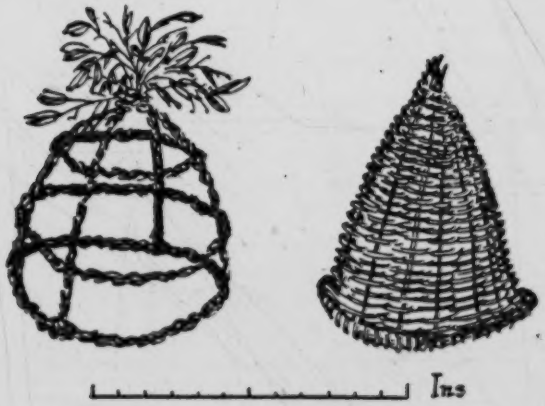

FIG. 86. Hallowe'en caps. *Left:* of plaited straw, Co. Down. *Right:* of woven rushes, Co. Kerry.

We recall that in Scotland a mart was an animal killed at Martinmas to be salted down as winter food, and it may well be that this very practical custom grew out of the cult, which was intended 'to exclude evil spirits for the year'.[1] It seems that seabirds were sometimes killed for the occasion, and there are many superstitions relating to the ill luck which attended anyone who went fishing at Martinmas. Wheel-turning of any kind, whether on cart, mill or spinning wheel, was prohibited. These sacrificial offerings and tabus must be of great antiquity and relate to the preparations for winter. St. Martin's Summer was regarded as the last spell of fine weather before the gales began in earnest. There are hints in folklore that ailing children were

[1] I. Weld, *Roscommon*, 555.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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583 matter of form to make valid the marriage.'[1] After the famine, at least, the mutual attraction of the suitors themselves was a [581] secondary consideration. An ill-favoured girl could be made pretty with a dowry of cows or its equivalent in cash, known in the west as 'dry-money'. A marriage between near relatives was not unknown if it meant keeping the name on the land or enlarging the patrimony: 'a blanket is the better of being doubled,' it was said. 'We are all related one way or another' is a comment one hears in isolated mountain districts. In general romantic love was the luxury of the landless, but whatever the motives of marriage there were many charms and omens to be taken into account in winning a person's affections, and some of the magic devices to which a girl might resort are listed in one of Bryan Merryman's poems of the late eighteenth century:

[539]

> Up the chimney stuck the flail
> Slept with a spade without avail,
> Hid my wool in the limekiln late
> And my distaff behind the churchyard gate;
> Flax in the road to halt coach and carriage,
> And haycocks stuffed with heads of cabbage.[2]

582 To this day the marriage or remarriage of old men to young women is regarded as unnatural and wrong, perhaps because it complicates the question of succession. In Co. Wexford, and probably elsewhere, unpopular marriages of this kind are marked by noisy gatherings of young men who serenade the married couple with horn-blowing. A similar custom, the *vito*, is well-known in Andalusia, where it includes the ringing of cow-bells and the singing of scurrilous songs. One of the strangest 585 traditional features of Irish weddings is the visitation of 'straw-boys', that is youths wearing straw masks who attend as un- [292] invited guests and disport themselves at the dance which normally follows a wedding (Fig. 88). I am told that they may still be seen occasionally in Co. Cavan and parts of the west. Formerly the visitors also wore straw suits or white shirts and red petticoats decorated with coloured ribbons. The leader

[1] Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 82.
[2] *The Midnight Court*, translated by Frank O'Connor (1945).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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[292]

FIG. 88. Straw hats and dress. (1) Strawboys' wedding mask, Co. Mayo. (2) Strawboys' straw suit, Co. Kerry (National Museum, Dublin). (3) Biddyboys' straw hat, Co. Londonderry. (4) Mummers' straw hat, Co. Fermanagh. (5) Estonian straw hat, worn at Christmas games.

of the strawboys claimed the right to dance with the bride, and they were all well entertained. It seems that they would sometimes claim to be shipwrecked sailors, and whatever the origin of the custom it is evident that disguise was an important element in it.[1]

[1]C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.

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are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters 294
are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn 291
lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white [192]
woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting [462] and darning stockings for their husbands and children. [286] [296]

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, [286] made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, [301] somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool, which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets [178] are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always [292] is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and children of all ages go barefooted or put on sandals during the summer and add hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers, bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes [296] that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt, and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing; the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer [513] attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the
decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one
reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to
furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging
parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed
by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's
relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations
of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness
or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of
the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited
only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity
to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of
body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It
is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be
attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too
many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's
house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities com-
mence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles
in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then
accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them
before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [789]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with
the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close
behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in
order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests;
the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate
in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month follow-
ing the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grand-
child was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven
shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

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771 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience, "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

775 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St. [178] Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are [182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming, 796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent [262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people [273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only, 796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St. [527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the [171] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which, [292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

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796 627 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is [574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [521] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

• [292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

were not new, but had, in fact, been made by the shoemaker himself for the dead man, who had worn them only once before his death. The dead man's wife had apparently thought that it was not necessary to order a new pair of boots to be made. The shoemaker had, however, promised the dead man to have the matter set right, so he quietly sent a message to the dead man's wife next day about his dream. She immediately ordered a new pair of shoes to be procured, and these were worn at Mass, along with the rest of the outfit, until the traditional rule had been fully observed. 764 787 292

A friend of mine in the parish of Clanlawrence in County Cork told me the following story to illustrate how carefully the details of the practice must be observed. A woman in that parish had a son who died. She got a new suit made for him, to be worn at Mass on the three Sundays after his burial, and on the Saturday evening prior to the first Sunday she laid the suit (as Mrs. Healy had done when my uncle had died) on the back of a chair in the kitchen, sprinkled it with holy water, and called on the dead son to come for them. Having next placed them at the threshold of the kitchen, she finally left them for a short while in the yard, and sat by the fire for a moment, presumably to allow the dead son to come for the suit. Suddenly she heard something being thrown against the door and, on investigating, she found that it was the new waistcoat. She then remembered that she had deliberately refrained from putting her dead son's watch in the pocket, intending to keep it as a memento. Needless to say, she immediately put the watch in the waistcoat pocket and replaced the garment on the chair in the yard. There was no further disturbance.[1] 764 294 293

[1] For general references to the custom mentioned in 1, see: När Döden Gästar, Louise Hagberg, Stockholm, 1937, pp. 331–379. Also, Über Krankheit, Tod und Jenseitsvorstellungen in Irland, Hans Hartmann, Halle, 1942, pp. 11–115; and Der Totenkult in Irland, by the same author, Heidelberg, 1952, pp. 15–17, 183. [113]

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527 825 was pulled out and the bird's life spared: 'In severe winters a robin with a tail was rarely seen.'[1] Another popular Boxing-Day pastime was bull-baiting, though in Kilkenny, where it was officially supported by the town officials and was presumably an English introduction, it was held on the following day, St. John's. In several parts of the country bull-baiting continued well into last century, in Kilkenny down to 1837.[2]

[293] [534]

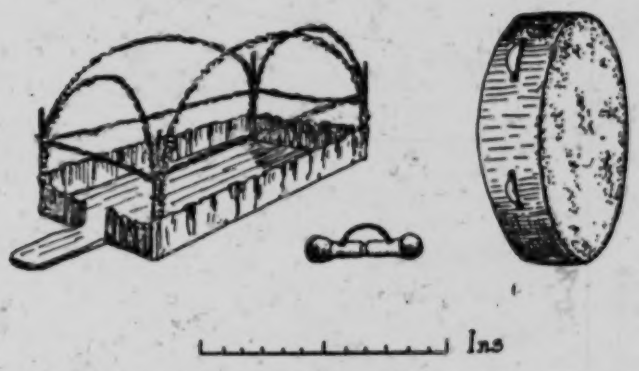

FIG. 87. Hunting the wren. Wren Box for carrying dead wren, and wrenboys' tambourine and stick, Co. Clare. (National Museum, Dublin.)

527 New Year's Day similarly has attracted to itself some of the portents proper to the older year's beginning on 1st November. The prosperity of the individual and the household is felt to depend on the events of New Year's Day. The fairies are active on New Year's Eve and it is well for people to stay indoors that night. First-footing ceremonies appear to be confined to families of recent Scots origin, but the idea behind them is widespread. In parts of Co. Down it is customary for youths to prepare little 'wisps' of straw or dry grass and go from house to house distributing them together with New Year's greetings in the expectation of a gift. In the west on the last night of the year (or alternatively on the eve of Twelfth Night) a large 'Christmas Loaf' specially prepared for the occasion was taken

[1] W. R. Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, 41.
[2] J. G. R. Prim, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 326.

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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a 246
task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot 221
only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted.

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a 246
"reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The [293] •
farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most [461]
strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to [343]
transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[175] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach
[657] the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear
the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the
Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has
its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able
to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41
sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn
slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls
choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion
dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase
their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into
island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal,
a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although
made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have
heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish
expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by
weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland
shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to
monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
[178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[999] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new
crios if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants
who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of the clothing of the small farmers was made at home by the women. Now, however, it is nearly all shop-bought. Certain vestiges of the former practice remain, however, in knitting sweaters, gloves, socks, and scarfs; and in the country districts, at least of West and North Clare, there is a custom which demands that some woman of the house be always at work. If there is no other task on hand, they must occupy themselves with knitting. In former days, the daughters of the community might gather in a *meitheal*, or coöperative work group, under the supervision of older women for carding and spinning flax and wool. In any event, the younger woman, the girl, is at the older woman's command. 294 461 476 178

Much the same content of emotion and sentiment exists in this relationship, subordinate as the daughter must remain, as in the case of the boy. But in the case of the daughter there is never a readjustment, and there is never a period of community of interest with the father. Nor need the mother fear a competition with an impatient oncoming successor as must the farm father who knows he cannot put off forever his relinquishing his farm to his son. For, eagerly as the daughter may look forward to her own marriage, she knows that marriage will bring in a rivalry over household control with a totally new person in an entirely new scene. It is her husband's mother, not her own, to whom new adjustments must be made. The implication of this fact, and the struggle it entails, will bear examination in the discussion of marriage. 593

Still another relationship exists within the household under normal circumstances. The relationship of brother to sister has its reflection in farm work. But it is a relationship with a different history from the relationship between siblings of similar sex. Sexual differences in behavior have made a different habit, beginning very early in the child's experience. And, for each of them, the sexual differences are colored a great deal by the norms which mark the rela-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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at least of those of the better recognized trades, are direct 467
and intimate. The following words illustrate something of 874
the character of apprenticeship. A small farmer is speaking of his own knowledge of local conditions:

Before the war there used to be about twenty shoemakers in 463
the neighborhood, but now they've mostly gone away or are in 467
the towns. One of them went into Ennistymon. Whenever a 874
farmer wants a strong pair of boots even yet, he will not go to
a shop but he would go to the shoemaker. It wasn't always the 294
case the son of a shoemaker would follow the trade because there was good money in it. With it they would buy a farm and so for his sons, and they would go to farming. If a farmer had a crippled son, he might send him to the shoemaker to teach him the trade. Papers were signed that bound the boy for three years to the tradesman, and then the boy would go live with the shoemaker. At first he would be taught to tap, then to stick, then to sew, and the last thing would be to cut. If a boy left before the three years were up, no one would give him a job, and no other tradesman would take him on to teach him a trade. The father had to give twenty pounds to twenty-five pounds to teach him. At the end of three years the boy was given his indenture papers which meant he could set himself up any place in the country or, if he had not enough money to do that, he would work as a journeyman for someone else and his papers would give him the right to do it.

There were a great many tailors and smiths too. The time of work was three years. A boy who was a cripple might be sent to tailoring. He was taught three years and then he could set himself up. It was the easiest of them all to get along with because it required no money to start with. In the old days the tailor used to come to the house and stay for a week or so and make clothes for all the men of the house and go to the next house after.

The smiths trained boys also. When I was small, a cousin of 463
mine had a forge below on the road and any wet day all the 874
boys used to gather there and watch and talk. I started out by
blowing the bellows and then doing other things until finally 326
I was as good as anyone. If I had the material I could make shoes, and I always shoe my own horses.

463 Of these local specialists only the smith survives in any
326 strength today. He shares with the mason the admiration
554 the country people feel for physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this that made the more sedentary occupations of weaver, shoemaker, and tailor of less prestige. Thus the crippled son, as the quotation says, might be put to one of them.

463 The tailor was often a peripatetic. He moved around
294 from house to house and community to community where he was known, living and eating among the family. He was made welcome, not only as a maker of clothes but also as a carrier of gossip. Today the few tailors who survive in the country districts are petty cotters with only a memory of their trade. The few still active ones have retreated to the towns. Most of the farmers' clothing is now shop-bought and factory-made.

463 The weaver was perhaps the most sedentary of the local
286 craftsmen. He is the one who has failed to survive even in the towns. The women of the farm families carded and
[283] spun the wool into yarn until home spinning died out, and broke and scutched the flax for linen, but the weaver made it into cloth. He spent all his days indoors, moving from one side of his loom to the other in a small room heavy-laden with fluff and lint. The farmers seem to remember most strongly the unhealthiness of the life, but they tell one also of the weavers' arrogance when their skill was in great demand. The following is the kind of description one can still get, the first part of it discoursing on weavers in general and the second relating the history of the local man:

> In the old days the weaver might have enough work to keep him busy for four months and, when you went to see him, he would put you off and tell you to come back in a fortnight for your goods. It would be no good for you, none in the world, if you didn't take a bowl of butter and a few dozen eggs to him

342 Windows, as well as chimneys, were taxed, hence the oldfashioned blind [65] wall and the old fireplace (without chimney) being preserved. The daylight was admitted to the kitchen by the door opening. A pad of straw was placed at the door, *sop i mbéal dorais* (Dinneen) on which tailors and other crafts- ● [294] men used to sit to avoid window-tax. When windows came later on, they were placed on the side of the house sheltered from the prevailing wind.

The gables. The stone built gables are higher or lower according to the form of the roof, which is determined by the wind. In some districts of Ireland [184] especially in the Aran Islands, Connemara, Sligo, Mayo there are often even in very primitive buildings, step gables or serrated gables. In other parts of Ireland the gables are straight up to the top. In Southern and Eastern Ireland the gables are generally of this type. Half thatched or hipped gables are sometimes found in the east, where now and then the thatch is also bent over the gable edge in the same way as in Wales. This is common on mud houses.

How the gables protect the ends of the thatched roof and support the horizontal ribs is shown in pl. XLIV: 2.

The roof. Roof and wall constructions meet one another in the most primitive stages, when the house is only a roof over a foundation wall, of a cavity, or when the roof is constructed similarly to the *clochán*s with the upper course of stones slightly overlapping the lower course. This construction is not known among dwelling houses of to-day, but can be found in outhouses, sweating buths etc.

Roofs made by wide slates or stone flags will be seen in some parts of Ireland when there is a natural access to stones suitable for slates as in Co. Clare where such roofs are found on outhouses with the narrow stone walls carrying the flags.

The Irish house from olden times generally has had not a stone roof, but a thatched roof, *ceann tuighe*. The art of making good thatched roofs is now dying out but in earlier times Irishmen had developed great skill in roofing with thatch.

The thatched roof is supported internally by beams joined in pairs forming [804] the couples, *cúplaí*. The couples are placed at a certain distance and the space enclosed between two couples must be looked upon as a sort of architectural unit. The length of the house can be measured by the number of couples. [171] A very similar kind of measuring is well known in Denmark and Skåne. In many old houses the length of the house seems to indicate traditions from the ancient Irish laws (See Addy, p. 84).

The roof-supporting system of beams varies very little. The beams can

In Tuosist the reason given to me by my father and some other old people was that ill-luck would fall upon Kerry and especially on the parish of Tuosist, if the Corkmen succeeded in forcing the coffin across Leac na gCorp and laid it down on Kerry soil. Sickness, bad crops, and misfortunes of many kinds would follow the corpse, if it were laid beyond the boundary-stone. This is undoubtedly the original reason for the defence of the border on funeral days. A corpse has in many lands for long been regarded as having evil magical power (known scientifically as *orenda* or *mana*) of an impersonal kind latent in itself. In Ireland, for example, fishermen regarded it as unlucky to take the corpse of a drowned person into a boat. Also, *an féar gorta* ("the hungry grass"), which grew wherever a corpse touched the earth, had the power of causing all those who walked over the spot to be stricken with abnormal hunger. Many other instances of the evil power of a corpse might be cited. Just two hundred years ago, Morty Óg O'Sullivan, a native chieftain of Béara in West Cork, who had fought against the British both in Ireland and in many European countries as a member of the "Wild Geese", was slain outside his own house near Eyeries in Béara. The British took his body to a warship at Bere Island and dragged it through the sea in the wake of the ship about sixty miles to Cork. A poet who described this happening wrote the couplet:

Ní raibh aon rath ar an uisce ó Chorcaigh go Béara
Ó tairngeadh tríd an bradán gléigeal.[1]

No fish were said to have since been caught in the sea-route through which the corpse was dragged.

In Sweden, Miss Louise Hagberg tells us, if a corpse were carried over cultivated ground or over lakes, they became thereby unfruitful, and crop-growing fields lost their vegetation. She also says that during the Middle Ages those persons over whose lands a corpse was carried unlawfully had the right to compensation; in Västergötland anybody who carried a corpse across the land of another, without the permission of the owner, rendered himself liable to a prescribed fine.

Thus, the funeral-boundary customs in the Cork-Kerry area, which have died out only in comparatively recent times, seem to fit into the wider pattern of custom and superstition devised to give protection against the magical evil power associated with corpses.

2. Wearing Clothes for the Dead

In the year 1918 or so, an uncle of mine died in the townland of Fehanagh, in the parish of Tuosist, in southwest Kerry. This is my native parish. Jerry Sullivan was my uncle's name; he died at the age of sixty-four. I was fifteen years old at the time, and was spending some weeks of my summer holidays at my uncle's when he became ill and died. I was allowed to remain in the house during the illness, wake, and funeral.

It is still the immemorial custom in that parish to get a suit of clothes specially made by a local tailor when a person dies. The suit is not worn by the corpse in the coffin. Still, it is intended

[1] There has been no luck on the water from Cork to Béara
Since the gleaming salmon was dragged through it.

764 294 292 specifically for the dead person; I will describe in a moment the use to which it is put. Even though the dead person had a new suit of clothes at the time of his death, which he had never worn, but which he had ordered and got made for himself, this suit will not serve the purpose I mention, after his death. Still another new suit must be ordered immediately the person dies, and must be ready for wear on the Sunday following his death. There are certain rules which are *de rigeur* as far as the suit is concerned: (a) it must not be made to measure—the tailor would know most of the people of the parish and would have made clothes for many of them from time to time; when, therefore, a suit is ordered by the relatives of the man who has died, the tailor knows fairly well what the measurements of the deceased were, and makes the suit accordingly; (b) the material used in making the suit must be of good quality—otherwise the dead man will not be properly clad in the next world; (c) the suit must be complete in every detail; (d) it must not be tried on to see if it fits. Stories about events which followed a disregard for these rules will be referred to later.

764 292 When the clothes for my deceased uncle reached the house from the tailor on the Saturday evening after the burial, an interesting ritual was carried out, according to local custom. I remember the evening quite well; it was a very fine summer, and the mountains all around the valley were bathed by the rays of the setting sun. A neighbouring woman, named Mrs. Healy, who lived next door, came to the house of my late uncle at dusk, and asked his wife, children, and myself, to leave. We went some distance away from the house into a field. I heard afterwards from my aunt and from her children that Mrs. Healy then carried out the following rites: She was alone in the house, as I have said, and she first laid out the clothes, garment by garment, on the back of a kitchen chair, which was in the middle of the floor; the underclothes were on top of the pile of clothes, then came the shirt, then the trousers, then the waistcoat, then the coat, then the socks and shoes, and finally the hat and walking-stick underneath. Having thus arranged them, she then called on my deceased uncle three times by name, using the following words: "Here are your clothes, Jerry Sullivan! Come for them, and may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this!" She then sat down by the fire for short time. She then arose, took the chair and the garments to the threshold of the kitchen, leading to the yard, and repeated the same call and words three times. Having sat at the fireside again for a while, she took the chair and clothes out into the yard, again called three times on the dead man, and returned to the house alone, closing the door behind her. Having allowed some little time to elapse, she went out into the yard, brought the chair and clothes into the kitchen, and put them as they were, in the room at the bottom of the kitchen until next morning.

When she had finished her task, which occupied about a half-hour, as far as I can remember, she called us back to the house, and we all had our evening meal, as if nothing unusual had happened.

Early next morning, at the dawn of day, before anyone else in the house was up, my cousin, the dead man's son, arose, and Mrs. Healy again arrived to complete her task. My cousin went out through the kitchen door, turned round, and knelt on the threshold. Mrs. Healy then placed the suit, still arranged on the chair, inside the open door. My cousin then asked her for each garment in turn, in the name of the dead person, and she handed them to him as he asked for them.

were not new, but had, in fact, been made by the shoemaker himself for the dead man, who had worn them only once before his death. The dead man's wife had apparently thought that it was not necessary to order a new pair of boots to be made. The shoemaker had, however, promised the dead man to have the matter set right, so he quietly sent a message to the dead man's wife next day about his dream. She immediately ordered a new pair of shoes to be procured, and these were worn at Mass, along with the rest of the outfit, until the traditional rule had been fully observed. 764 787 292

A friend of mine in the parish of Clanlawrence in County Cork told me the following story to illustrate how carefully the details of the practice must be observed. A woman in that parish had a son who died. She got a new suit made for him, to be worn at Mass on the three Sundays after his burial, and on the Saturday evening prior to the first Sunday she laid the suit (as Mrs. Healy had done when my uncle had died) on the back of a chair in the kitchen, sprinkled it with holy water, and called on the dead son to come for them. Having next placed them at the threshold of the kitchen, she finally left them for a short while in the yard, and sat by the fire for a moment, presumably to allow the dead son to come for the suit. Suddenly she heard something being thrown against the door and, on investigating, she found that it was the new waistcoat. She then remembered that she had deliberately refrained from putting her dead son's watch in the pocket, intending to keep it as a memento. Needless to say, she immediately put the watch in the waistcoat pocket and replaced the garment on the chair in the yard. There was no further disturbance.[1] 764 794 293

[1] For general references to the custom mentioned in 1, see: När Döden Gästar, LOUISE HAGBERG, Stockholm, 1937, pp. 331–379. Also, Über Krankheit, Tod und Jenseitsvorstellungen in Irland, HANS HARTMANN, Halle, 1942, pp. 11–115; and Der Totenkult in Irland, by the same author, Heidelberg, 1952, pp. 15–17, 183. [113]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The spinning-wheel and hand-loom are the same as those commonly used on the west coast, the former, as usual, having no treadle. 172 [283]

Querns are still in use, and in connection with them the boran, or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, used for screening the meal. [252] [412]

Grain is still winnowed by shaking it in a sieve in a strong wind. [243]

The method of washing clothes is the same as that customary in Connemara, the clothes being folded, laid in the water of a lake or pool, and beaten with a club or paddle. [296]

The tailor, when making clothes, does not measure his customers with a tape, but takes all his measurements on one sheet of paper, marking the lengths by cutting notches out of the edge. [294]

The curraghs, which are still in use, are of the usual form; they are rapidly going out of fashion, however. [501]

The anchor used for small boats is a stone, not fixed in a wooden clamp, as in Clare and Aran, but having a groove around it for the rope.

As mentioned previously, the apparatus used for the shark-fishing is very rude and primitive.

2. *Antiquities.*—Inishbofin is not very rich in architectural antiquities, and the few that still remain are being rapidly destroyed; some ruins which were standing in the first half of the present century have altogether disappeared, and the others are much shattered. 172

In Inishshark, also, the buildings have sustained a great injury.

It does not lie within my province to enter upon any detailed description of the ruins; but I desire, in the following notes (extracted almost *verbatim* from my Field Note-book), to direct the attention of archæologists to the buildings of interest in these islands which are being rapidly blotted out of existence. The number and nature of these have been described by the late Mr. O'Donovan, Mr. Hardiman, Mr. G. H. Kinahan, and others.

In the account of their present condition given below, they are arranged in the order in which they are described by Mr. Hardiman.[1]

Inishbofin.—(1). St. Colman's church, in Knock townland, built in A.D. 667, is in a very ruinous state, and the interior is filled with rough gravestones and weeds, and in a small recess near the east window is a pile of crania and broken bones. In the enclosure around the church the foundations of the cells (cloghans (?)) of the abbey, or monastic colony, may still be traced, though with difficulty, but the

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young chil-
dren. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring
groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend
less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them
more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men
of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school,
at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and
their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the house- [294]
hold. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the
other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often de-
manded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially
when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about
being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer
hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in
America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

262 264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
516 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

• 294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

291
are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters 294 •
are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are
sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn 291
lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white [192]
woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and [462]
shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting [286]
and darning stockings for their husbands and children. [296]

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, [286]
made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, [301]
somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool, which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets [178]
are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always [292]
is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and children of all ages go barefooted or put on sandals during the summer and add hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers, bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes [296]
that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt, and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing; the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer [513]
attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

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The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[65] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach
the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear
the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the
Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has
its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able
to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41
sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn
slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls
choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion
dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase
their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into
island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal,
a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although
made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have
heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish
expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by
weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland
shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to
monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
[178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[919] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new
crios if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants
who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

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10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The spinning-wheel and hand-loom are the same as those commonly used on the west coast, the former, as usual, having no treadle. 172 [283]

Querns are still in use, and in connection with them the boran, or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, used for screening the meal. [252] [412]

Grain is still winnowed by shaking it in a sieve in a strong wind. [243]

The method of washing clothes is the same as that customary in Connemara, the clothes being folded, laid in the water of a lake or pool, and beaten with a club or paddle. [296]

The tailor, when making clothes, does not measure his customers with a tape, but takes all his measurements on one sheet of paper, marking the lengths by cutting notches out of the edge. [294]

The curraghs, which are still in use, are of the usual form; they are rapidly going out of fashion, however. [501]

The anchor used for small boats is a stone, not fixed in a wooden clamp, as in Clare and Aran, but having a groove around it for the rope.

As mentioned previously, the apparatus used for the shark-fishing is very rude and primitive.

2. *Antiquities.*—Inishbofin is not very rich in architectural antiquities, and the few that still remain are being rapidly destroyed; some ruins which were standing in the first half of the present century have altogether disappeared, and the others are much shattered. 172

In Inishshark, also, the buildings have sustained a great injury.

It does not lie within my province to enter upon any detailed description of the ruins; but I desire, in the following notes (extracted almost *verbatim* from my Field Note-book), to direct the attention of archæologists to the buildings of interest in these islands which are being rapidly blotted out of existence. The number and nature of these have been described by the late Mr. O'Donovan, Mr. Hardiman, Mr. G. H. Kinahan, and others.

In the account of their present condition given below, they are arranged in the order in which they are described by Mr. Hardiman.[1]

Inishbofin.—(1). St. Colman's church, in Knock townland, built in A.D. 667, is in a very ruinous state, and the interior is filled with rough gravestones and weeds, and in a small recess near the east window is a pile of crania and broken bones. In the enclosure around the church the foundations of the cells (cloghans (?)) of the abbey, or monastic colony, may still be traced, though with difficulty, but the

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

113 OFFICIAL:

"Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland."—Dublin, 1846.

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"Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland. with Sketches of the Irish Past."—London, 1887.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES VIII. AND IX.

PLATE VIII.

142 FIG. 1.—James Joyce, aged 48 years, No. 5, Middlequarter.

291 FIGS. 2 AND 3.—Anthony Lavelle, aged 35 years, No. 2, Knock.

FIG. 4.—Group of men, Inishbofin.

Taken in order from left to right, the names are, respectively:—

Back row.—John Burke, boatwright; Michael Halloran, king of Shark; John Tierney, postman; Mick Kerrigan, weaver; Redmond Toole, fisherman.

Front row.—Martin Baker, John Malia (or Malley), Ned Burke, Redmond Toole, all fishermen.

FIG. 5.—Group of women, Westquarter, Inishbofin.

Taken in the same order as the other group, the names are—Margaret Ward, Nancy Browne (first cousins), Nelly Holloran, Mary Holloran (daughter of last), Brigid Concannon.

PLATE IX.

412 FIG. 1.—Quern still in use in Middlequarter, Inishbofin.

283 FIG. 2.—Spinning wheel in Middlequarter.

296 FIG. 3.—Method of washing clothes, Church Lough, Knock.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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[End Plate B]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters 294
are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are
sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn 291
lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white [192]
woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and [462]
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was twisted into a three-stranded plait. Standing back at a mark, the reapers threw their spinning hooks at it in turn until it was severed and 'stretched'. At this a triumphant shout was raised. The cailleach was sometimes 'waked' before it was lifted: the 'corpse' was hung round the neck of the triumphant slayer, who was guest at the subsequent 'churn' (the harvest feast and dance) and who was fated to be the reaper who would be first married. It was, perhaps, more usual for the cailleach to be put around the neck of the master or mistress of the house. From the threat of being hanged by it they would purchase their freedom by providing the churn supper, for which special food was prepared. There are many variant practices but it is clear that they all turn on the same themes, the spirit of the corn and the luck of a speedy harvest. In some districts the cailleach was known as the hare, and the cry which kept the toiling shearers to their task was; 'We'll put the hare out of it today!'

It was customary to hang the churn in the kitchen, either over the door, on the dresser, or about the chimney hearth, and to keep it until the following harvest, when it was given to the cows. Or it might be fed to the horses on the first day of ploughing. In some houses the last sheaf was preserved year after year, and I have seen specimens half a century old. One of these was dressed with coloured papers, hinting that there was formerly more ceremony connected with the last sheaf than has survived. These dressed cailleachs figure in the harvest festival decoration in some churches in Co. Armagh, where also miniature corn ricks surmounted by a harvest knot are displayed, the Church thus having won over and preserved the pagan symbols of harvest (See Tailpiece).

Harvest knots or bows are decorative twists of straw which were worn by the harvesters, and are still quite commonly carried by young men at harvest time in some districts (Plate 13, 1). Girls would wear them in their hair, boys in their coats, and in former times they were exchanged by the sexes as a sign of mutual attachment. They are made in a fine plait of two straws tied into loops or interlaced, those worn by the girls having the ears of the corn left on. The best examples are made from wheat, and some exceptionally fine specimens are made from

243 grasses and flax. The many practical uses of straw will be
[301] described in a later chapter and its employment in fashioning various kinds of dolls, ceremonial dresses and masks, for example on St. Briget's Day. Certain protective charms were
789 also made of oat-straw, for example the Bratóg Brighde (St.
243 Briget's rag or mantle) worn by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection against storms. Here the explanation may lie in the power of wind over bits of loose straw which by association gives the straw the secret of controlling the wind. This is the basis of the phrase used in Co. Cavan to describe something
[195] which circulates quickly: 'going round like the straws'. It was
[821] the custom to ward off storms by running with a handful of straws from one farm to another.

With corn, as with hay and turf, the harvesting proceeds by
243 building up stooks and ricks of increasing size according to the nature of the crop and the weather conditions. Little stooks (footings) of four or six sheaves are the first stage in the construction of the twelve-sheaf stooks (ten standing and two inverted hooding sheaves) which, however, are generally confined to wheat (Fig. 51). It is the general practice to build the little stooks of corn, after one or two weeks' seasoning, into hand-stacks which are of a convenient size to make a load for the rick-shifter, or for the tractor-lifter which is replacing it. The shapes of these miniature stacks, varying from one district to another, are often extremely picturesque, and their serried rows marching up the hillsides give the autumn fields a populated appearance. Their many names (hut, shig, bart, adag, and so on) would indicate that they are no novelty, and these little field stacks are as characteristic of Wales and Scotland as they are of Ireland (Fig. 52). A picturesque variety of hay-stack, commonly seen in Connacht, is the sheep-cock, built around a tall pole which prevents the cock from collapsing when eaten away at the base.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Armagh

PLATE 13

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1. Harvest knots, Co. Armagh.

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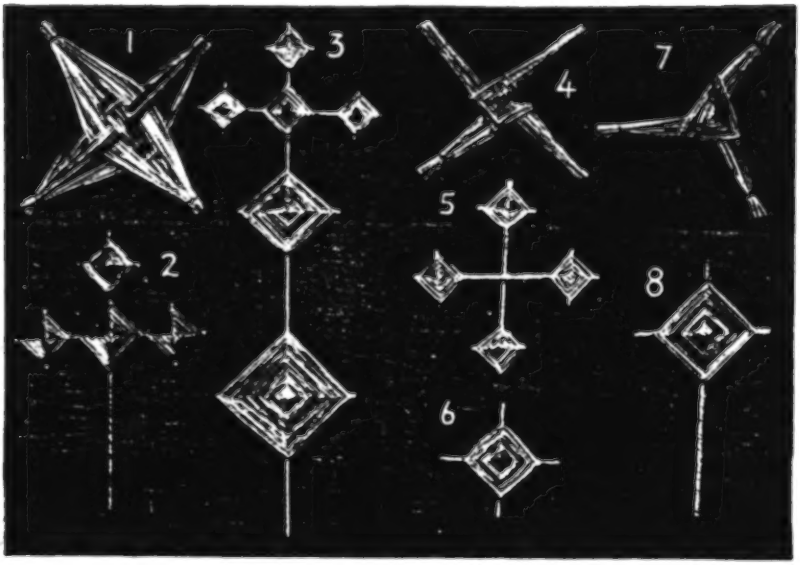

2. Bridget's Crosses, Co. Armagh.

[facing p. 192]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

285 ancient origin. We shall see that it is the way the Boyne
415 curraghs are built, and it is said that the African pygmies make their carrying baskets in similar fashion. For lightness and to facilitate lifting one or more rows of open 'windows' are left in the sides of the creels. Those used for seaweed were sometimes quite open in construction, and like the manure pots they were generally fitted with hinged bottoms for unloading (Fig. 56).

301 Besides their utilitarian uses, rushes, grasses and straw have
524 long been playthings for young folk who fashion out of them,
285 for love or for luck, many varieties of decorations and emblems. We describe the Briget's Crosses elsewhere (Fig. 85). Harvest
[832] knots, twisted out of the ripe straw of harvest, seem formerly to have been in truth love tokens, though now worn merely as buttonholes for the harvest fair (Plate 13). As one might expect, the girls' knots were the more ornate and they differed from those worn by the boys in having the ears left attached. Some exceptionally fine specimens are fashioned out of flax or fine wild grasses. Star-shaped emblems in these materials are also made (Fig. 70). More complicated knots have four or six strand work, but the ordinary knots are in two ply, made by bending the straws sharply over each other at right angles. Before being knotted they make tolerably strong cords: I have experimented with these on unbaked clay pots and find that when impressed in the soft clay they make very good imitations of the 'cord impressions' seen on Bronze Age pottery. I have heard that in Nigeria the same two-ply technique is employed in making roulettes, from the fibres of the wine palm, for decorating the native pottery. Among the many toys and playthings made of rushes we find baskets for wild strawberries and blaeberries, rattles, butterfly cages, fishing nets, caps, bracelets, belts, hatbands, mock-ceremonial whips, canes and swords and imitation birds' feet and flowers, some of which are shown in Fig. 70. Many of them are associated with particular
[517] occasions of the year, for example the imitation flowers with Easter and the blaeberry baskets with Garland Sunday (Chapter XIX) but in general they are the products of the infinite leisure of long summer days of cattle-tending in field, bog or mountain. Probably a number of these objects once had a practical value

 [text continues on p. 210]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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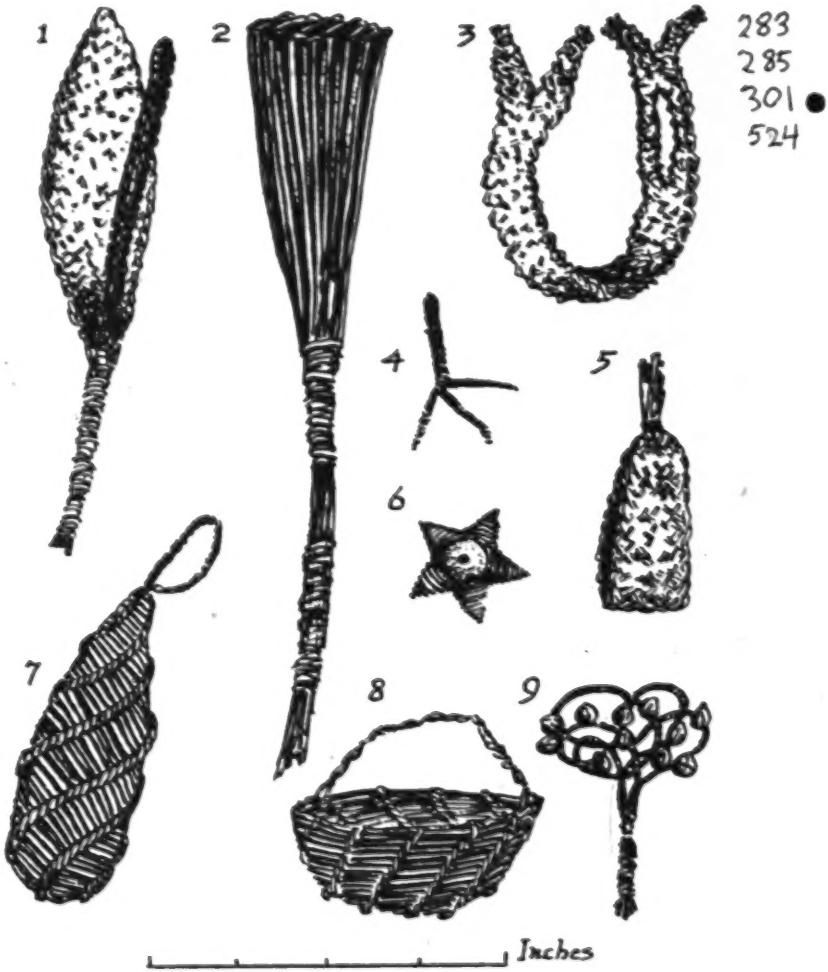

FIG. 70. Rush, grass and straw-work. (1) Cuckoo pint made of rushes, Co. Armagh. (2) Butterfly cage of rushes, Co. Down. (3) Rush bracelet in nine-strand plait, Co. Armagh. (4) 'Hen's claw' of grass, Co. Mayo. (5) 'Briget's rag' of oat straw. Tory Island charm. (6) 'Harvest star' of flax, Co. Antrim. (7) Rush rattle, Co. Mayo. (8) Blaeberry basket of rushes, Co. Down. (9) Harvest knot of flax, Co. Armagh.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

301 and others were ceremonial; some may be no more than simple
524 pastimes prompted by fancy. Rush baskets were in fact made
until recently in some of the Hebridean islands for carrying the
285 fishermen's bait and for holding fish. Baskets of birch twigs, dock stems, ragwort and thistles have also been recorded, and it should be recalled that several examples of grass, sedge, and even moss, made in a similar cross-twisted technique have been recorded from Bronze Age burials in Scotland. The cone-shaped hat of rushes or straw made by children (Fig. 86) recalls in shape at least the traditional headdress of the leprechauns, and it may be noticed that tall steeple hats and helmets seem to have been popular among the Irish down to the seventeenth century.[1] In Co. Kerry the rush hats are worn in mock fights and seem to be regarded as helmets.

Of all these rush toys, none is stranger than the butterfly
524 cage (Fig. 70) which is deftly made by bending long rushes,
222 held upright between the fingers, over others placed transversely. One side of the cage may be left open and a dock leaf inserted as a door. The ends of the rushes are bound together to make a handle. This pastoral plaything can be paralleled in many parts of the world: in the cages in which Spanish shepherd boys carry insects, in the little baskets of dried grass which the Indian herd children make for grasshoppers, in the locust traps which Greek boys, Theocritus tells us, used to weave out of asphodel stalks, and even among the nomads of the Gobi Desert, where, when the cicada begins to call in the great heat, 'every child cuts the desert grass to make a tiny cage to hold one of the fascinating tree-hoppers . . . The Gobi baby's rattle, too, is a hollow ball of twisted grass enclosing a large bead.'[2] The Irish rush rattle is provided with two hazel nuts. Some of the leaves and bracelets are plaited with four, six, nine, or even twelve strands, and a nine strand plait is also seen in one variety of three-cornered Briget's Cross (Fig. 85, 3; Pl. 13, 7).

The conical straw masks and the capes worn by strawboys
524 (Chapter XX, Fig. 88) stripped of their gay ribbons, have been
285 compared with the straw dresses of peasants in Spain or China,
292 and, no doubt, they had their practical prototypes in Ireland.

[1] H. F. McClintock, *Old Irish and Highland Dress*, 88.
[2] M. Cable and F. French, *The Gobi Desert*, 100.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

527 Christianized, cling to the preparations made on St. Briget's Eve, the last day of January. On that day rushes are fashioned into protective charms known as Briget's Crosses, a name 527 which illustrates how the church has won over pagan symbols, 778 for the 'crosses' take the form of either swastikas or lozenges, and comparative evidence suggests that they are magic symbols 301 of suns or eyes (Fig. 85). A three-legged swastika, presumably an old form, is reserved for use in the byre: its shape may be compared with the Celtic triskele. The lozenge-shaped charms have their counterparts in many parts of the world. The Huichols of Mexico make similar charms of wool mounted on a bamboo frame: known as a 'god-eyes', they bring good health and [171] long life to children.[1] A Californian Indian charm made of grass or rushes is very similar. In the Old World similar magic 'squares' have a wide distribution, in Europe, Africa, Tibet, Burma, Assam and Indonesia, and farther afield in Melanesia, Polynesia and Australia. Among the Nagas of Assam the squares, made of coloured thread, are placed on the graves of women and protect them against evil spirits.[2] In Sweden and Estonia straw squares are strung up as Christmas decorations and tied to the straw masks worn during Christmas games (Fig. 85).

Briget's Crosses are believed to protect the house and the livestock from harm and from fire. No evil spirit could pass the charm, which was therefore hung above the door of house and byre. The rushes must be pulled, not cut, on St. Briget's Eve, and care must be taken to fashion the crosses from left to right, with the sun. As a rule they are left in position until replaced the following year, though I have seen byres with many crosses thrust into the underthatch, the decaying accumulation of annual offerings. In Co. Galway similar crosses made of wood or straw were also placed in the rafters at Hallowe'en, and the discovery of a partly burnt rush cross which had been deposited in a megalith in Co. Limerick points to a more general cult of the 'cross'.[3] A 'love-knot' of similar shape, fashioned out of sedge leaves, is known from South Wales.

[1] F. Toor, *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* (1947), 72.
[2] H. E. Kauffmann, *J.R.A.I.*, 73 (1948), 101, 106.
[3] S. P. O'Riordain, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 1 (1936), 36. For a study of Briget's Crosses in Co. Armagh, see T. G. F. Paterson, *U.J.A.*, 8 (1945), 43–48.

 [Text continues on p. 270]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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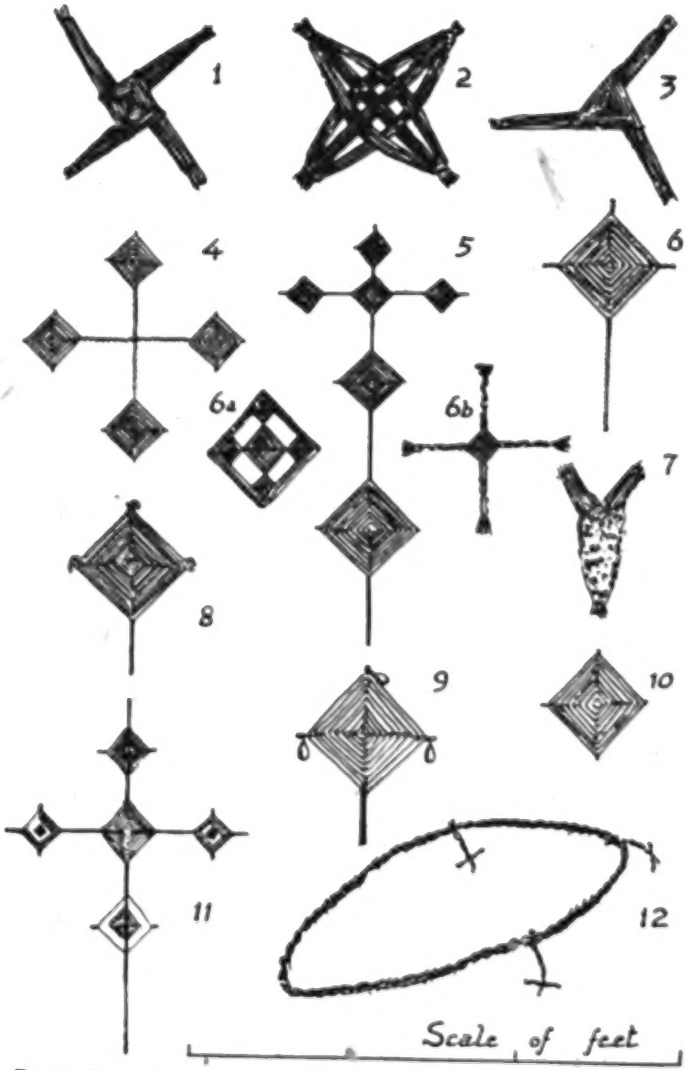

FIG 85. Briget's Crosses and charms. (1–7) all made of rushes, are from Co. Armagh (in County Museum, Armagh). (8) is a Naga thread-square (after Kauffmann). (9) is a Wailaki charm of rushes (after Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*). (10) is an Estonian straw-square, worn as decoration on straw hats at Christmas (see Fig. 88, 5). (11) is a Mexican 'God-eyes' made of woven wool (after Toor). (12) is a Briget's Girdle (in National Museum, Dublin).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn 291 lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white [192] woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and [462] shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting [286] and darning stockings for their husbands and children. [296]

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, [286] made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, [301] somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool, which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets [178] are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always [292] is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and children of all ages go barefooted or put on sandals during the summer and add hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers, bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes [296] that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt, and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing; the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer [513] attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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portance when there are several persons to be examined, for, if kept waiting, they will most probably either slip off or refuse to be measured. 125

(A). *Hair and Eye Colour.*—In the obtaining of these data the methods, cards, and tables were precisely the same as those used in the expedition to Aran, to the report of which the reader is referred for particulars.

(B). *Measurements.*—These were, with the exceptions hereafter mentioned, the same as previously. The head circumference and external binocular breadth, not having proved satisfactory, were omitted, and for them were substituted:—(1). The upper face length measured from the naso-frontal suture to the separation between the central incisors at the gum. (2). The height sitting. This, though it is certainly a most valuable measurement, for which reason it was inserted in the observation schedule, was found to be altogether unsuited for field work, as it could only be taken in a few exceptional cases, so I had reluctantly to abandon it. (3). Auriculo-mental radius, measured with the Dublin craniometer, from the centre of the ear-hole to the point of the chin.

(C). *Instruments used.*—These consisted of Garson's anthropometer, a sliding measure for the limbs, Broca's compas d'épaisseur and compas glissière and a Chesterman steel tape. Instead of the fixed metallic Cunningham craniometer, the new portable pattern of the same instrument (made specially for field work by Messrs. Robinson, of Grafton-street, Dublin) was taken, and stood the test well, being quite as rigid as the older pattern when set up, and, as it is made of boxwood, much lighter. Its portability is a great advantage, as by the removal of one screw-bolt the whole instrument may be disjointed and carried in the coat-pocket. A set of Snellen test-types for accurately estimating the keenness of eyesight was also taken, and proved to be very useful. 126

The whole, with note-books and observation forms, were carried, fitted in a canvas knapsack, and, as they weighed under ten pounds, were light enough to be easily carried even in long walks over very rough ground.

(D). *Remarks on the Methods employed.*—There were several difficulties experienced in the making of the observations this year, due partly to the visit being made at harvest time when most of the people were engaged in the fields, partly to local causes, the principal of which were the shyness of the people, the manner in which the hair of most of the women was covered by the shawl which was drawn more closely on the approach of a stranger, and the closeness with 124 [609] [291] [302]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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124 which the hair of many of the men was cut, which often rendered dis-
[302] tinction of shade very difficult. Owing to the season most of the observations had to be made in the morning when the people were going to their work, or early in the evening when they were returning, or gathered around their cottage doors; in many cases, however, they were followed to the harvest field and measured there.

The taking of photographs did not, as elsewhere, cause the assembly
126 of the knot of spectators which usually affords so good an opportunity
[123] for the collection of eye and hair colours; it had rather the opposite effect, as the people have a strong dislike to having their portraits taken.

In spite of these difficulties, however, I succeeded in noting the eye and hair colours of 241 individuals, on 40 of whom (being about one-fifth of the adult males of the islands) measurements and other observations were taken.

Care was exercised that none of those measured should be entered in the ordinary nigrescence cards, as well as to avoid recording the same individual twice or the noting of persons who were not natives.

(E). *Photography.*—For the reasons already mentioned there could not be as much done in this department as had been hoped; but, in spite of the strong aversion shown by many of the people to having their portraits taken, and the strong winds prevailing during our stay, my brother, J. M. Browne, who accompanied me to do the necessary photography, succeeded in obtaining a considerable number of typical groups, as well as some single portraits in full face and profile, and a series of views illustrative of the modes of life and environment of the people.

2.—Physical Characters.

142 (A). The people, on the whole, much resemble the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Connemara, and their appearance testifies to a mixed origin. The following is believed to be a correct description of their average physical characters:—

Stature and bulk.—The men, as a rule, are stoutly built, and of medium height; very few can fairly be termed tall, and there is a very considerable proportion of men of low stature. The average height is
[141] 1633 mm., or about 5 feet 6½ inches, which falls short of the Irish mean stature as found by Gould, the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association, and others, by about two inches.

142 The women are of a slighter build than the men, and, apparently,
143 more even in height; they also show more strikingly that great simi-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [189]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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£50,555,000. The figures illustrate the preponderant importance of livestock and particularly cattle and pigs in Irish economy.

The remaining £14,000,000 was made up of crops and turf, the latter alone accounting for £5,938,000. Among the crops, potatoes came first, with a value for the year of £3,786,000. Oats, cabbage, and barley accounted for about £900,000 each; and there were a few other items of smaller values, the largest of which was fruit at £466,000.

These figures of the agricultural products rather underestimate the amount of tillage products raised. In the words of the Census Report, they "do not include any part of the produce which was used for further agricultural production in the Saorstat whether that part was used on the farm on which produced or sold by one farmer to another — e.g. milk fed to calves, potatoes fed to pigs, hay, turnips, mangels fed to cattle, corn used for seed, horses used for farm work." [1]

Within this generality of the monetary value of the goods produced, one can begin to take account of the wide difference of the sizes of the holdings engaged in this agricultural production. A glance at the figure illustrating this kind of economy by relative size of acreage (Fig. 1) will bring the matter out.

The agricultural community carried on this production upon farms of very widely different character. Holdings range in size from one acre or less to 500 or more. Those under 30 acres comprise 23 per cent of the total acreage of agricultural land in the Saorstat, those of 30–50, 17 per cent; those of 50–100, 24 per cent; and those of 100–200, 19 per cent. Farms larger than 200 acres cover only 16 per cent of agricultural land.

In general, the smaller ones practice the more generalized economy, their production being markedly different from

[1] *Agricultural Output of Saorstat Eireann, 1926–27* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

231 that of the large farms. The latter, especially in the mid-
241 land counties, where they are most numerous, raise little
● 311 more than beef cattle. Their owners are the graziers or
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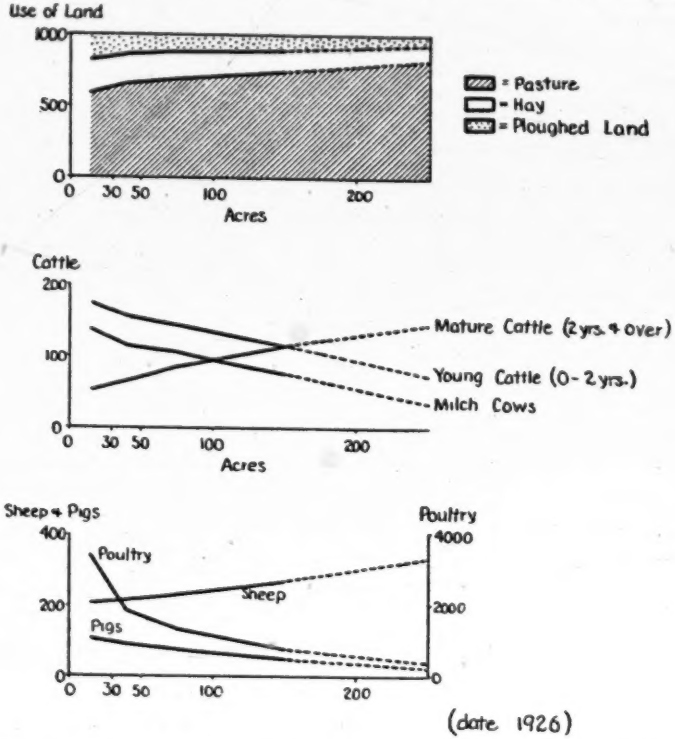
FIGURE 1

PRODUCTION ON LARGE AND SMALL HOLDINGS, ALL IRELAND, 1926 CENSUS



(date 1926)

"ranchers" of current political controversy in Ireland. The different economies express themselves in the census as follows:

The numbers of acres ploughed and the numbers under hay per 1000 acres of agricultural land decrease continuously as the size of the holdings increases; the numbers of milch cows, of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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young cattle, of pigs, and of poultry also decrease but the number of dry older cattle and of sheep per 1000 acres increase as the size of the holdings increases. The contrast between the smallest and the largest holdings is exceedingly great and is very great even between the second smallest and second largest. Contrasting the holdings 30–50 acres with holdings 100–200 acres the table shows that on equal areas of agricultural land, the smaller holdings have 32% more ploughed land, 29% more hay, 54% more milch cows, 53% more cattle under one year, 16% more cattle one to two years old, and 9% more cattle of all kinds, 80% more pigs, and 139% more poultry than the holdings 100–200 acres, but the latter have 24% more sheep, 52% more dry cattle, 2 to 3 years old, and 209% more dry cattle 3 years old or over than do holdings 30–50 acres.[2]

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In County Clare, the area of our investigation, agriculture presents much the same character and the same difference between small and large farmers as does the whole of Ireland. Clare occupies a middle place among the counties; neither the large nor the small farm predominates. Almost always the small farmer has a garden in potatoes and cabbage with a few oats and turnips and perhaps some rye. The rest of his land will be under several meadows in hay, grazed during the winter months and in fields (pasture land) grazed during both summer and winter, if sheltered. In rough mountain areas sheep are common, particularly in the Broadford and Tubber districts. In addition to cattle, the smaller holder generally has a large flock of ducks, geese, and hens, and he keeps several pigs. These are also fed upon the oats, potatoes, cabbage, and milk left over after the other livestock have been fed. Specialization in poultry raising is still rare, though poultry stations are being established here and there under the supervision of agents of the Department of Agriculture. Certain areas, of course, show minor specializations, such as Miltown Malbay, a seacoast region known for its cabbage, and Newquay, known

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[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, Report and Tables* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. xxi.

231 241 311 for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted to one crop.

234 With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

234 246 The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

233 [244] The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

them with holdings in other parts of the country when in the latter much mountain land is included. The valuations, however, are exceedingly high, the full valuation of the Ennis district (which includes the Fergus plain) being £67,000 for 112,000 acres compared with the neighboring Killadysert district at £25,000 for 62,000 acres. 233

The second of the "ranching districts" or areas of large holdings practicing this type of agriculture is the region in the northern part of the county called "the hills of Burren" (the Ballyvaughan area). This is a limestone country which provides rich winterage for cattle. Consequently land there is very valuable to the rancher who has to winter his store cattle. Grass grows there fairly richly throughout the winter among the limestone crags, and the cattle are allowed to forage for themselves. In several cases, farmers own large holdings of 200 acres and over in each of the two areas. They drive their cattle down from the winterages in April and back again in November.

Certain other farms of large size, and especially in rich alluvial areas such as Clarecastle and Newmarket-on-Fergus, make extensive use of tillage, primarily of oats. In other areas such as Tubber, Broadford, and Feakle, mountain land is given over to sheep. 233 243

County Clare, in fact, shows a fourfold division into sections differentiated partly geographically, partly by the different utilization of the soil. "West Clare" includes all the peninsula west and south of the ridge culminating in Mount Callan and cutting off the Fergus drainage from the Atlantic. Here the holdings are predominantly small, and the more generalized economy is common. "North Clare" covers the country of the "hills of Burren." "East Clare" contains both the rough country of Feakle and Broadford, where small mountain holdings approximate the conditions of West Clare, and the Tulla and Quin districts, which with "Mid-Clare" and "South Clare" cover the alluvial plain of the 311 471

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

471 Fergus River, where there are many "ranches" and, in parts, extensive oats tillage.

162 Statistics are available only for the whole of Clare; they
471 give a comprehensive view of the county's farming.[3] All but 21.6 per cent of the population of 95,064 lived in country districts. The area they worked, 787,768 acres, was divided into 15,857 holdings, of which 1,179 did not exceed one acre, 909 contained from 1 to 5, 841 from 5 to 10, 1,108 from 10 to 15, and 3,767 from 15 to 30, 3,617 from 30 to 50, and 3,135 from 50 to 100. The farms larger than 100 acres numbered 997 in the 100 to 200 acre group, and 394 exceeding 200 acres. Clare thus fell into a category among counties in which medium-sized holdings were normal, but both the small farms and the large rancher type were present.

241 We have no separate statistics for Clare's produce, but we
311 know that in June 1932 the land was being utilized in the following manner. There were only 465 acres of wheat, 335 acres of barley, 207 acres of rye, 1 acre of beans and peas, 147 acres of fruit, 3 acres of sugar beet, 57 acres of experimental ensilage for cattle, and 151 acres of miscellaneous root and green crops. The figures[4] show the small part played by vegetable products other than cabbage and potatoes used for human food. Bread, the great staple, was of course, made from imported flour or wheat. Potatoes and oats, however, made a better showing, with 13,518 and 8,199 acres respectively devoted to them. Turnips and mangels accounted for 3,897 and 306 acres respectively; like potatoes and oats, they are used for both human and animal consumption. This was the extent of ploughed land.

The great bulk of the area was, of course, in hay and pasture. There were 2,791 acres of first-year hay, 131,429 acres of other hay, and 394,791 acres of pasture.

[3] Figures taken from Annual Report, County Clare Council Agricultural Committee. June 1932.

[4] Report of the County Clare Agricultural Committee, 1932.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER II

Small Farm Economy

THE small farmers' family groups inhabit the holdings or plots of land from which they make the livelihood we have described numerically. Except in a few and special cases, there is no physical separation of house plot from fields; the individual family's plot is usually a continuous one, and the other forms of settlement present in Ireland are rapidly being reshaped with that condition as the ideal. Consequently, the farmhouse is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. In it the farm family group spends its entire life, sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work upon the fields. 361 592

The farm family lives and performs almost all of its work within this spatial unit of land and house. And the unit is identified with the family in the eyes of its community in name and ownership. Outside this range, the farmer has little participation in affairs in comparison with others of the population. His wife and children have even less. Within this range most of the activity marking the relations of the human beings who make up the group takes place. 592

The "land," as we have seen, is usually divided into "field," "meadow," "garden," "bog," and "mountain," according to its character and agricultural use. These divisions make up the holding and represent the productive 231 241 311

[p. 31]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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241
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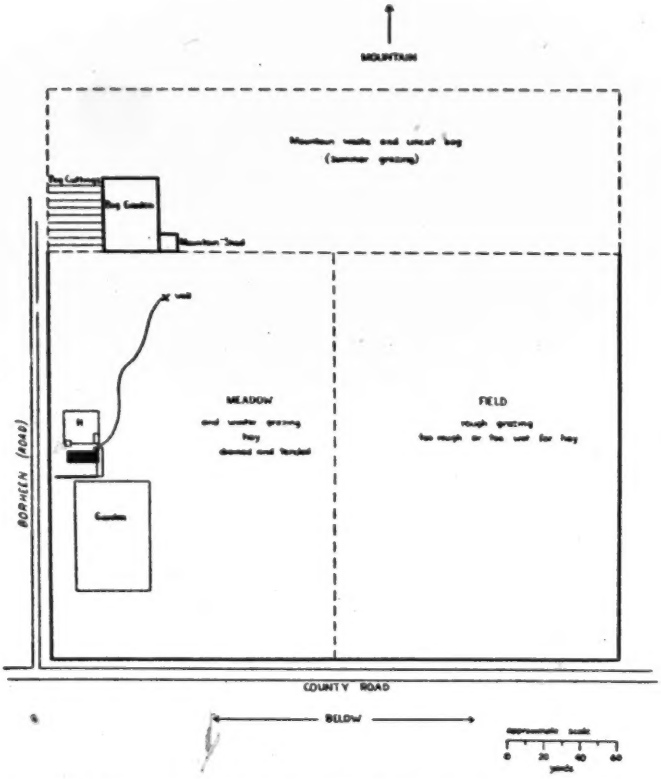
FIGURE 8

Diagrammatic Scheme
of Small Farm
LUOGH
10 ACRES



Schematic representation (not to scale) of composite Clare farm of about five to fifty acres.

[p.32]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated 231
are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops 241
for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and 311
rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use.

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are 231
the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various 343
sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the 351
house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later.

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called 231
"all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view 241
is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken 311
from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area.

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard 342
also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of 343
the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is carefully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general 351
plan for all such houses of small farmers.

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work 512
which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various

[text continues on p. 35]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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361 Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along
491 it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear
[311] witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously
cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives
rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward
into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round
the lake.

311 The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with
limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the
crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

361 Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the
621 lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are
471 scattered through the fields and across the lake. These
households and a few more a little further off make up the
community. These are small farms of the kind we met in
Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has
fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the
village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard
gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement
is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and
behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to
these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for
them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles
off.

621 Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated
476 bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all re-
653 lated one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the
491 usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds
itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the
borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the
towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who
break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the
621 village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder.
487 Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to
132 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual
251 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on
231 which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume
234 or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten
● 311 cows" is still a familiar term.

241 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less

than 30 statute acres is regarded as small, one of from 30 to 100 acres as of medium size and one of over 100 acres as large. Small, medium and large farms may be found in all parts of Ireland, but in the provinces of Leinster and Munster and in parts of south east Connaught there is a preponderance of medium sized farms with, especially in north Leinster, a considerable proportion of large farms.[1] All this area practises mixed farming, but the south western province, Munster, is completely dominated by the milking cow, while in Leinster the northern half is mainly devoted to the raising of beef cattle, and the southern half produces considerable quantities of wheat, oats and barley.[2] In most areas of Connaught and Ulster, the western and northern provinces, the average farm is of small size, and the number of cows kept by each farmer correspondingly small; the value and productivity of these small farms, however, vary greatly from the intensive cultivation of many farms in east and south Ulster to the fisher-farmer economy of the west coastal districts.[3] 311 241

Throughout the provinces of Leinster and Munster, and in parts of east Connaught, that is to say, generally in the area of medium and large farms, the predominant, and in many districts exclusive, farmyard type is the courtyard, in which the dwelling house and outhouses are arranged about a rectangular space which is the farmyard proper. Most usually the buildings form three sides of the yard, with the dwelling house forming one side and the outhouses forming two more, the fourth side being closed by a wall with a gate. Usually the building is not continuous, the elements being separate and connected by walls, or having gateways or passages between them. The size and arrangement of the yard and the various buildings vary from one farm to another, and also from district to district; the general type is, however, well established, and conforms to a pattern which is clearly distinguished from the other types to be described later. In many districts the front of the dwelling house faces the farmyard, thus, in Co. Kildare in 1807: "The farmhouses in general consist of a long thatched building of one storey, consisting of a large kitchen and fireplace in the centre, and lodging rooms at either end; the front door looks to the barns and stables on the right, behind which is the haggard, and on the left are placed the cow and bullock houses." This, written a century and a half ago,[4] exactly describes many of the farmyards of to-day, for example that shown in fig. 1, which has the dwelling house in the middle, the cowhouse, calfhouse and a small store (formerly a dairy) on the left, with the manure heap behind them, while on the right are the stable, another store and the pigstye, with the haggard, where the hay and corn stacks are made, behind them. The fourth side is formed by a stone wall, with a gate; this wall fronts on the public roadway. This farmyard is at Duncormick, Co. Wexford, in the south east corner of Ireland, but similar examples may be found in almost every part of the east and south. Figure 2 shows the buildings on a larger farm, also in Co. Wexford. Here the entrance gate leads in between a cart shed on the right and the dairy on the left, with the pump close by. Facing the dwelling house across the yard are the stable and byre and a store, while the corn barn opens into the haggard. The pigsty and manure heap are in the part of the yard most distant from the dwelling house. The openings between the various buildings are closed by stone walls about 361 351

[Text continues on p. 12]

[1] Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1930.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] FREEMAN, T. W.: Ireland, Its Physical, Historical, Social and Economic Geography, 1950, chapters VIII and XVIII to XXIII.

[4] RAWSON, T. J.: Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare, 1807, 14–15.

[113]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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FIG. 1—Panoramic view of dispersed farmsteads near Carrinure, County Armagh, looking west along the drumlin belt of north Ireland. (Photograph by J. K. St. Joseph, from Cambridge University Collection. British Crown Copyright Reserved.)

361 McCourt[5] has been able to map the distribution of relicts of clachan settlement as they were to be found in the 1830's. He has shown that this was a widespread form of settlement in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century, and that it did not disappear in the remoter parts of the country until late in the nineteenth.[6] Indeed, occasional clachans that are still actively functioning can be found today on the Atlantic seaboard (Figs. 2 and 3[7]).

311 Associated with clachan settlement was a form of open-field cultivation,
361 comparable to the Scottish infield-outfield system and generally known in

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[5] D. McCourt: The Rundale System in Ireland: A Study of Its Geographical Distribution and Social Relations (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1950).

[6] D. McCourt: Traditions of Rundale in and around the Sperrin Mountains, *Ulster Journ. of Archæol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 16, 1953, pp. 69–84; *idem*: The Rundale System in Donegal: Its Distribution and Decline, *Journ. County Donegal Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1955, pp. 47–60.

[7] The author thanks Captain C. Ó Danachair of the Irish Folklore Commission for drawing his attention to the photograph presented as Figure 3.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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311 361 Ireland as "rundale" or "runrig."[8] Under rundale the land surrounding a settlement was worked as a joint farm, with individual plots and strips scattered through the arable land, some on the constantly tilled infield and some on shifting outfield patches reclaimed periodically from the waste.[9] By the early nineteenth century this form of agriculture had become extremely [428] complicated, as a result of the rapidly increasing population and of the Irish practice of subdividing a restricted amount of arable land among all the male heirs of the household. In modern surviving examples the clachan and cultivation in rundale are closely interrelated, and it is generally assumed that they do not function independently. But a complication to this interpretation has emerged in a small area of County Down that has been examined by R. H. Buchanan[10] within the limits set by the available manuscript material. Here a set of estate maps shows clachans apparently developed in association with compact holdings. Although this work, which refers to a small area and uses a narrow range of information, may not weaken the great body of evidence that suggests a direct relationship between rundale agriculture and clachan settlement, at least it indicates that the relationship needs to be carefully appraised in each individual case.

Two Nineteenth-Century Investigators

114 361 311 Although changes in the pattern of Irish rural settlement have only recently been uncovered by research, the periodic reports of the various Royal Commissions concerned with nineteenth-century Ireland make it clear that the inhabitants of the country were not unaware of the changes taking place around them.[11] Hence it is not surprising that at least two nineteenth-century scholars, Frederic Seebohm and August Meitzen, knew of clachan settlement.

Seebohm's attention was focused on the manorial and tribal systems and on the open-field system of cultivation.[12] It was this latter interest in particular

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113 [8] D. McCourt: Infield and Outfield in Ireland, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 7, 1954–1955, pp. 369–376.

[9] Flatrès believes that the outfield was not widely found in Ireland but was a late introduction, brought in the early seventeenth century by Scottish settlers (Pierre Flatrès: Géographie rurale de quatre contrées celtiques—Irlande, Galles, Cornwall & Man [Rennes, 1957]). No attempt has been made here to evaluate Flatrès' ambitious study; of particular interest, however, is his map of the modern field systems of Ireland (Fig. 1). [Reviewed in this number of the *Geographical Review*, p. 599.—Edit. Note.]

[10] The author is grateful to Mr. Buchanan for this information in advance of its publication.

[11] In particular see the evidence presented to the Devon Commission (Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry [Lord Devon, Chairman] into . . . the Occupation of Land in Ireland [6 parts (in 5 vols.), London, 1845; British Parliamentary Papers 1845, XIX–XXIII]).

[12] Frederic Seebohm: The English Village Community, Examined in Its Relations to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry (2nd edit., London, 1883).

[Text continues on p. 558]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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FIG. 2—Ballyhillin, a present-day clachan near Malin Head, County Donegal.

FIG. 3—Kiltullagh, a hamlet of a form common in County Galway. The regularity in the arrangement of the houses is possibly the result of the activity of a former landlord, though it is noticeable that the houses are not perfectly oriented to the road. (Photograph from Irish Press.)

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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114 that led him to pay some attention to the arrangement of settlement on the land. At first sight he does not seem to have been aware of the existence of 311 clachans in Ireland, since he states that under the tribal system homesteads 361 "were scattered over the country and not grouped together in villages and towns," and he seems to suggest that the dispersed settlement of nineteenth-century Ireland was a product of this heritage.[13] But elsewhere in the same work he points out that homesteads were in fact grouped in "arithmetical clusters" which were "the natural method by which the frequent redistributions of the land were made easy; while the runrig form of open-field system was the natural mode of conducting a cooperative and shifting agriculture"[14] —a recognizable description of settlement in clachans. This apparent contradiction must have been produced merely by the lack of a definition of what is meant by the term "village." A clachan was just a group of farm buildings, usually without any other function and without any plan, and hence it would not have appeared "village-like" to an Englishman's eyes, though its total population could have approached that of a village in lowland Britain. Unfortunately, Seebohm's conclusions on Irish settlement cannot be accepted at their face value. Although the form of settlement he describes may have been found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the period from which he drew his information—it does not follow that these conditions represented the form of settlement associated with the original tribal system, as he suggests. However, at least he was aware that the clachan existed in early-nineteenth-century Ireland.

To geographers Meitzen's work is perhaps better known.[15] His assertion that settlement in isolated farms (*Einzelhöfe*) could be traced back to the mode of a Celtic ethnic group has been criticized on the broad European evidence, but in spite of this he was not unaware of the presence of clachans in Ireland. In the atlas that forms part of his great work (perhaps its most valuable part for modern geographers) several plates derived from nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps illustrate clachans and the open fields associated with them.[16] Although he drew much of his information from Seebohm, Meitzen could not accept the theory that clachans originated in Celtic or pre-Celtic time; however, his alternative explanations are unconvincing. It is hard to believe that this settlement form was introduced into Scotland by Scandinavian influence or that in Ireland it was transitional between pastoral

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 223–244.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[15] Meitzen, *op. cit.* [see footnote 2 above].
[16] *Ibid.*, Atlas to Vol. 3, maps 23 and 25–27.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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and arable use of land.[17] Further, Meitzen does not seem to have been aware of the widespread distribution of the clachan and its associated field system. In fairness, however, it should be pointed out that Meitzen was not entirely wrong. Recent work suggests that Celtic freemen in Ireland lived in dispersed farmsteads (known to archeologists as "raths"),[18] though this does not establish that modern dispersed settlement was directly derived from such a heritage, particularly in view of the unsettled history of Ireland during the intervening period.

A Problem in Origins

Moreover, the two forms of settlement—*Einzelhöfe* and clachans—are not necessarily incompatible. Both McCourt and Evans have commented on the way in which clachans wax and wane,[19] largely because of fluctuations in population numbers. Indeed, McCourt cites at least one example from County Antrim in which an individual farm grew into a clachan between 1782 and 1832, and two of the clachans Evans studied in Donegal dissolved into isolated farms sometime between 1834 and 1902.[20]

The problem here seems to be one of origin. Did the clachan bring the infield-outfield system with it, or were the two separate at this earliest stage? If they were separate, it would suggest that their modern survival together on the Atlantic fringe of Ireland may be the result of the independent preservation of ancient practices in a difficult region. For that matter, was the clachan introduced? Examples have already been given of the growth of nucleated settlements from dispersed farmsteads, often in a very short time, and in view of the clachan's lack of plan this manner of origin seems entirely reasonable.

On the other hand, merely to say that the settlement pattern and the field system grew out of the subdivision of a larger enclosed farm is to oversimplify the problem. Meitzen postulated a Celtic people with a tradition of compact farms; but if subdivision took place, surely it would have been a break with that tradition to produce small farms with scattered strips rather

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[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 207–218.

[18] V. B. Proudfoot: The People of the Forths, *Ulster Folklife*, Vol. 1, 1955, pp. 19–26. See also his "Settlement and Economy in Co. Down from the Late Bronze Age to the Anglo-Norman Invasion" (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1957).

[19] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 28.

[20] McCourt, The Rundale System in Ireland [see footnote 5 above], diagram 27; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 29; E. E. Evans: The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe, *in* Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, edited by W. L. Thomas, Jr. (Chicago, 1956), pp. 217–239, reference on p. 231.

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114 than small compact holdings. A further indication that there may have been
a fundamental distinction between the systems which is not apparent at first
361 sight lies in the fact that, wherever the historical record goes back continuously into the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, both settlement forms are found to have existed side by side in the same areas and over the whole period.[21] No case is yet known in which an area with nothing but dispersed farms was converted into an area where clachans were completely dominant. Hence, drawing an analogy from Wales, where G. R. J. Jones[22] has carefully examined more plentiful medieval documents than have survived in Ireland, Evans has been led to suggest that the dispersed Iron Age farms (the "raths" referred to above) were the homes of freemen; and bondmen, the descendants of pre-Celtic inhabitants, lived in clachans. Later, in historical time, both groups fell under the control of landlords, but remnants of the former situation survived in the settlement pattern.[23] Some confirmation of this theory has come from Proudfoot's work in County Down, where he has been able to show that raths were not the only form of settlement during the Dark Ages; there were also groups of farms without an enclosing bank, which could be dated to the same period.[24] Such an interpretation regards clachan settlement as being of great antiquity, and indeed it is hard to believe that the cooperative kinship unit (which life in a clachan implies) is other than of considerable age. Further, it suggests that the fundamental antithesis was between systems of landholding, rather than between settlement patterns.

114 The infield-outfield system also seems to have been an early introduction.
It could be suggested, of course, that the system represented an adaptation of
● 311 the medieval three-field system to the small amount of good arable land
361 available in many parts of Ireland. Medieval agriculture on an English pattern had been introduced into southeastern Ireland by the Normans; and a medieval origin has been suggested for some villages in Wexford, formed of groups of strip farms, which were still functioning in the nineteenth century.[25] But even if this can be firmly established, the Norman influence on agriculture was limited to the southeastern part of the country. In any case, the modern

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113 [21] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376.

[22] G. R. J. Jones: Some Medieval Rural Settlements in North Wales, *Inst. of British Geogrs. Publ. No. 19: Trans. and Papers 1953*, London, 1954, pp. 51–72.

[23] Evans, The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe [see footnote 20 above], p. 231. Earlier, Duignan had tentatively suggested a similar idea but did not relate it to the development of settlement patterns (M. Duignan: Irish Agriculture in Early Historic Times, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 124–145; reference on p. 129).

[24] Proudfoot, Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above].

[25] J. Otway-Ruthven: The Origin of Anglo-Irish Agriculture in the Middle Ages, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 81, 1951, pp. 1–13; reference on p. 6.

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survivals of the infield-outfield system in the remoter parts of Ireland would seem to suggest that it dates from a time much earlier than that of the Norman invasion.

Lines of Investigation

These questions and theories widen the field for speculation, but it is difficult to see where to turn for further information, largely because of the meager documentary evidence that survives in Ireland from periods earlier than the eighteenth century. Admittedly, relevant material may be discovered among estate papers, but there are three other lines that might be followed with profit.

One possible approach, field investigation, is illustrated by a project now under way, in which archeological techniques are being used to excavate a clachan in County Down, inhabited until the late nineteenth century. The primary aim is to discover how this particular clachan originated. Did it grow out of a single farm, and, if so, at what date? Two seasons' work has now been completed without conclusive answers to these questions, though some details have been added to the local economic history of County Down.[26] At least it has been shown that a clachan settlement stood on this site about 1780 and that the site had been occupied from sometime near the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Buildings were found underlying the nineteenth-century structures. The fact that some of these remains appear to date from a time before the immigration of Scottish and English settlers into the area in the early seventeenth century should prove important in the study of Irish house types, since the lack of evidence on the development of settlement patterns extends also to the history of individual farm buildings.[27]

Whether this particular excavation will yield further information about

[26] J. H. Johnson, V. B. Proudfoot, and R. H. Buchanan: Excavations at Minerstown, Co. Down: Preliminary Report on Work Completed in 1956, *Ulster Journ. of Archæol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 21, 1958. (In press.)

[27] Pioneer work on surviving house types was carried out by A. Campbell (Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture, *Béaloideas*, Vol. 5, 1935, pp. 57–74; Notes on the Irish House, *Folkliv*, Vol. 1, 1937, pp. 207–234, and Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 173–196). This has been developed in a series of local studies, so that a comprehensive account of the surviving forms of Irish traditional building is becoming increasingly possible. The best and most recent general account is E. E. Evans' "Irish Folk Ways" (London, 1957; with an extensive bibliography), Chapters 4 and 5. Several important articles on house types and related topics have appeared recently; for example, C. Ó Danachair: Irish Farmyard Types, *Arctica: Studia Ethnographia Upsaliensis No. 11*, 1956, pp. 6–15; A. T. Lucas: Wattle and Straw-Mat Doors in Ireland, *ibid.*, pp. 16–35; C. Ó Danachair: Stand und Aufgaben der Hausforschung in Irland, *Bericht über die Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für Deutsche Hausforschung*, Schleswig, 1955, pp. 29–50; R. H. Buchanan: Thatch and Thatching in North-East Ireland, *Gwerin*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 123–142; and C. Ó Danachair: The Bed Out-Shot in Ireland, *Folkliv*, Vols. 19–20, 1955–1956, pp. 26–31.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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121 settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of
eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the begin-
172 ning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered. However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of
121 investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the
103 Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of land-holding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviving clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been
121 aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photographs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in
178 what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to
● 311 find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield
361 system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

[113]

[28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland, *Antiquity*, Vol. 4, 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

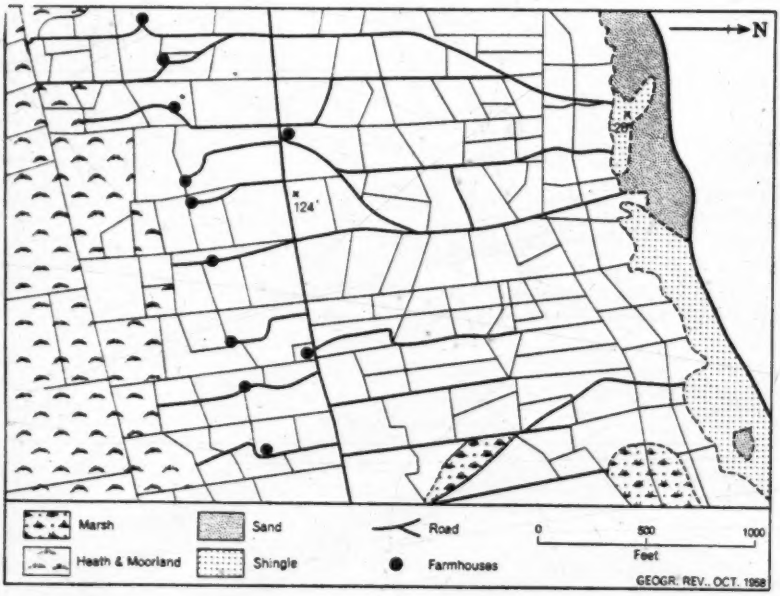

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FIG. 4—"Striped" farms and fields in County Kerry. (Based on the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Minister of Finance, Republic of Ireland.)

mentary authorization. Although it is rarely possible to obtain information on the methods and precise date of consolidation, the destruction of the system can be explained, in broad terms, by its growing inefficiency and by the dissemination of new agricultural techniques. 178 361 311

Some of the unsatisfactory aspects of rundale agriculture sprang from the steady growth of the population of Ireland, which continued from sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century until the Great Famine of 1845–1847.[30] This increase led to a constant encroachment on various uncultivated areas, a process in which the general adoption of the potato as a subsistence crop played a major part.[31] But the "waste" lands brought under cultivation had not been completely unused, since often they were grazed by livestock under a well-developed transhumance.[32] This seasonal movement was important to the rural economy, because efficient rundale farming required that the animals be removed from the unfenced cultivated strips during the growing

[30] K. H. Connell: The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845 (Oxford, 1950). 113

[31] *Idem:* The Colonization of Waste Land in Ireland, 1780–1845, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 3, 1950–1951, pp. 44–71.

[32] J. M. Graham: Transhumance in Ireland, *The Advancement of Sci.*, Vol. 10, 1953–1954, pp. 74–79.

[Text continues on p. 565]

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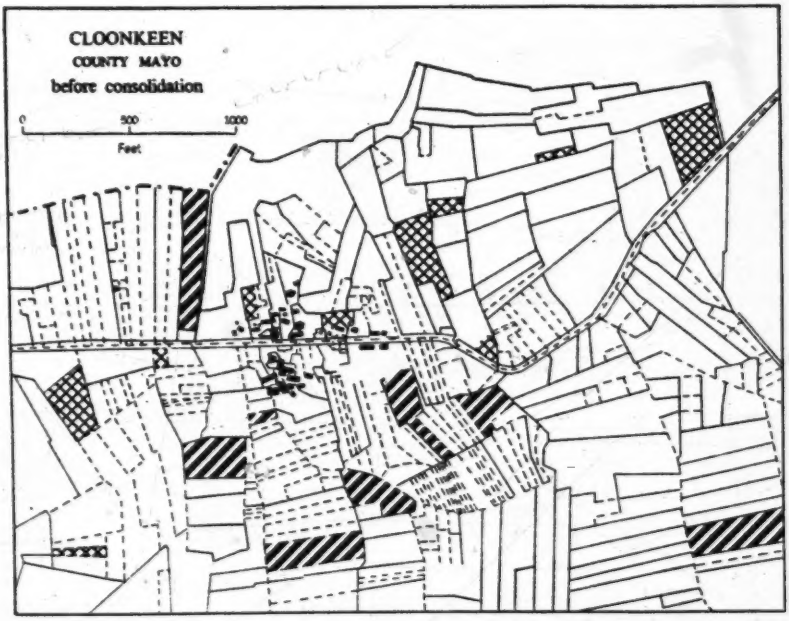

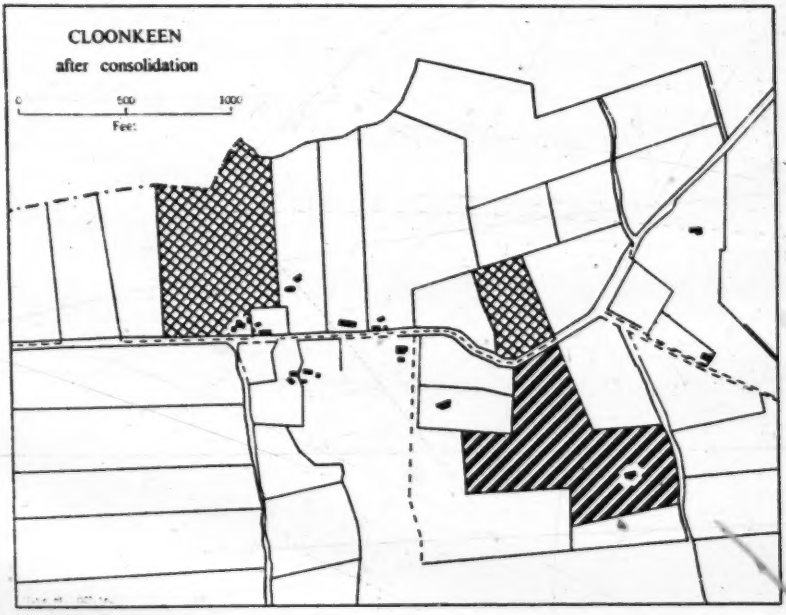

FIG. 5—Cloonkeen, County Mayo, before and after consolidation. The two different shadings (crosshatch and diagonal ruling) represent land held by two typical farmers before and after the consolidation carried out in 1909 by the Congested Districts Board. (Based on information kindly provided by the Irish Land Commission and reproduced by permission.)

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

season; and the end of transhumance made the working of the system more difficult. Similarly, the increase of population led to a remarkable growth in the size of many clachans, which often made life in them increasingly inconvenient. Squabbles over rights of way and other petty affairs were common, and there was a growing awareness that the old methods of farming were becoming unsatisfactory. The introduction of new crops and rotations gave the *coup de grâce* to the efficiency of the system; for they were difficult to integrate into it, and therefore agricultural improvement was retarded. 178 311 361

The impetus behind the changes, however, usually did not come from the farmers themselves but from their landlords. Indeed, it seems possible that peasant resistance to the destruction of rundale was a considerable factor in nineteenth-century opposition to landlordism.[33] Often landlords, intent on improving their estates, would put whole areas of land into the melting pot, consolidating holdings and sometimes evicting the surplus population. Frequently the new holdings were arranged up and down the slope of the land, an arrangement that has resulted in the characteristic striped appearance of much of the modern Irish landscape. Although long, narrow strips were probably not the best possible farm shape (Fig. 4), they represented a compromise between the traditional system of allocating each farmer a share of every quality of land and the landlords' demands for greater efficiency. At the same time the old clachan groups were broken up and new farmhouses were built, each within its own land. In such a way most of the better agricultural land was converted, but at the end of the nineteenth century various areas, particularly in the west of Ireland, still remained under the old system or some modification of it. This hard core has now been largely eliminated by government action. First the British government attempted a general improvement of living conditions in western Ireland by means of the Congested Districts Board, whose work included the reorganization of agricultural holdings (Fig. 5);[34] after 1922 and the establishment of the Irish Free State the task was taken over by the Irish Land Commission.[35]

In some areas, however, the disappearance of clachan settlement was part of a natural process in the late nineteenth century. The population of Ireland started to decrease after the Great Famine of the 1840's, and even in areas where there had been little rearrangement of holdings some clachans became 161 361 178

[33] See, for example, the Devon Commission Report [see footnote 11 above], Part 1, Appendix 14, p. 58. 113

[34] T. W. Freeman: The Congested Districts of Western Ireland. *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 33, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[35] On this aspect of the Land Commission's work see "The Consolidation of Fragmented Agricultural Holdings" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Washington, 1950), Chapter 3, "Relief of Rural Congestion in Ireland."

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus of the countryman's way of life.

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the small farmer's family lives upon the holding it works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them.

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, it is natural that this unit should be known and judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 tain', and wherever possible, it includes a 'bit of
231 bog' for 'turf' for the year's fuel. When a small
592 farmer tells you he 'has the place of four cows' he sums up this sort of farm, judging it for its ability to support himself and his family in the country manner and to give pasture to four milch cows. In the phrase he epitomizes rural economy.

592 Ordinarily the house opens directly into the
361 'haggard', as the farmyard is called. There in the haggard are the cabins in which cattle are housed and the various sheds and stalls, often built into the masonry of the house itself. In them, farm machines, tools and carts are kept and crops and seed are stored. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are housed there, and in one of the sheds pig or pigs find their quarters. The winter's supply of fodder stands there in the form of the great hayrick. The straw-covered pit of turnips and mangels, not far away, will serve for men and cattle; and the turf-rick is near at hand. As for the house itself we have already looked inside, in our search for the 'west room'.

592 The family with which this unit is associated centres its activity round house and haggard. Even for the men, whose work lies primarily in field, garden and meadow, work centres round the house for a good part of the year. If I give you a sketch of this activity as my co-workers and I saw it day after day in several rural communities in Clare, I hope to throw its general features into relief.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER III.

THE LANDSCAPE.

THE BEGINNINGS.

133 The landscape of a long inhabited country like Ireland is
137 in large measure the work of man, whose farms, fields and
● 311 fences are the result of many centuries of sustained effort. One might think of the wild thorn hedges and the piled stone "ditches" as mere sample remnants of woods and stones that once covered the face of the land. The extent of the change brought about may be judged by the fact that from being a land clothed with forest from the sea-coasts high up into the mountains, Ireland to-day is the least wooded country in Europe. In this work of forest destruction man has been assisted by his domestic animals and by changes of climate which have resulted in the accumulation of bogland. It is one of the paradoxes of Ireland that while the main lines of her mountains took shape in the remote ages of geological time, wide areas are dominated by the peat deposits which have been formed in the few thousand years that have elapsed since the ice age. The contrast of age is accentuated by those of colour and relief, for far across the level brown bogs rise blue in the distance some of the oldest mountains in Europe. In the middle distance, completing the picture, will be the green hills of the eskers.

137 The heart of the island, the Irish midlands, is a veritable Black Country, black with peat, not with the grime of coal-fields. Here in the boglands there are twelve contiguous

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

winters—all these characteristics are related to the eastward moving stream of cyclones coming off the warm North Atlantic drift. Rain is heaviest wherever mountain masses place obstacles in the path of the moisture-bearing winds, and the peninsulas of Donegal, Connemara and Kerry have from 60 to 100 inches of rain each year (Fig. 8). By contrast the east coast gets about half this amount, while the low-lying tract between Dublin and Drogheda is favoured by a fall of under 30 ins. Everywhere the mildness and the damp encourage grasses and moisture-loving plants, but too often waterlogging has caused green pastures and woodlands to deteriorate into brown bogland. The prolonged autumns, another gift of the Atlantic, are important because they give man a sporting chance of saving his harvests: the heaviest rains are delayed until November and December. Similarly the relatively dry springs (March-May) are conducive to work in field and turf-bog at that season. (Chapter 15).

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Reviewing the distribution of the chief crops and animals to-day, the following facts may be noted. Nearly one half the land devoted to crops, excluding hay, is occupied by oats and perhaps three-quarters of the yield is fed to livestock. Only in the wettest peninsulas of Connemara and Kerry does another crop (potatoes) occupy more land. It is estimated that the "consumption" of potatoes amounts to about ¾ ton per head of the population each year, but the greater part of this goes to pigs and other livestock. The greatest concentration of wheat production is in the comparatively sunny corner of Wexford, with secondary areas along the dry east coast in Cos. Dublin and Down. Recent years have witnessed an increase in wheat growing but there is still far less than in the record years of a century ago. when wheat was being exported to England. Barley, which is more intolerant of damp than wheat, is found on the well-drained soils of Co. Louth but particularly of Wexford and the sheltered valleys of the Nore, Suir and Barrow. It has declined less than wheat because of the demand of the breweries and distilleries, but the drop in the illicit making of poteen has reduced its production in many a secluded spot along the west coast.

[273]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Flax is virtually confined to Northern Ireland, where 248
the bulk of it is produced on the rich soils of the Bann and 244
the Main. Turnips and mangels are pretty widely distributed but sugar-beet is mainly grown in the valley of the Barrow.

In recent years about 60 % of the surface of Ireland has 311
been devoted to stock-raising, and when it is remembered 231
that a large proportion of the corn and root crops also goes to feed stock it will be seen that the pastoral industries predominate. Dairy cows, an essential part of the equipment of the peasant farm, are widely distributed, but in the commercial production of butter there is a strong concentration around the foci of Cork and Limerick, where co-operative creameries are favoured by the relative ease of transport, for example in the fertile "Golden Vale." These dairying regions also stand out as beef-producing areas, for Irish cattle are dual purpose animals bred for meat as well as milk. But the best fattening lands run round the northern and eastern sides of the Central Plain, and County Meath is justly famed in this connexion.

The dry limestone pastures of east Galway and hilly tracts such as the Wicklows and the Sperrins are outstanding as areas of sheep-rearing, and surprising numbers are kept on the slopes of the western mountains, the wool going to make the homespuns of the Gaeltacht. Pig-breeding is heaviest in the south-west, where the dairying industry supplies skimmed milk. As a domestic animal attached to the small farms, the [178]
pig is by no means so typically Irish as is often assumed. But one often comes across empty pigsties, some of them of archaic construction (Chapter 9) which testify to their [273]
importance in the past: one minor factor in the decline is the fact that in the days of active poteen-making pigs were conveniently fed on the waste products.

On the other hand poultry of all kinds have maintained 235
and even increased their popularity. The old breed of hen still favoured in the west is a small black bird, active, intelligent and extremely domesticated. The potato has encouraged the keeping of poultry, and Arthur Young

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 bound by innumerable ties to a countryside richer and fuller
[262] than that of to-day. Thus birch, rowan, hazel, thorn, sally and holly all had their special purposes, and yew was in great demand for croziers and shrines. So we might go on down to the humblest lichen (for crottle dye) and the seaweed (Chapter 16). Bog timber, oak and "fir," had many uses—for furniture and implements, for roofs, gates, slide-cars and boat-timber as well as for fir ropes and lighting "splits." Superstitious customs are associated with several of the native trees, especially the rowan, the ash, hazel and whitethorn (Chap. 18).

Sycamore and beech, neither of them native to Ireland, have been extensively planted in recent centuries and grow so well that many have assumed them to be indigenous. The beech loves the well-drained moraines, while the sycamore, one of the few trees which will stand up to the full force of
[351] the salt-laden winds, is planted in coastal districts for the shelter it provides: behind its dense summer foliage many a
313 low cabin lies hidden. Its white easily-worked timber is
137 sought by the wood-turner. Formerly the beetling engines of the linen country made a demand for beech and sycamore—the former for the beaters and the latter for the great beam. On steep hillsides which man has been unable to utilize one may still see patches of what may be regarded as wild scrub, a tangle of hazel, ash, black and white thorn, or birch, rowan and alder; but apart from the high-walled demesnes where giant trees are allowed to grow old and rot, the Irish landscape
137 is singularly bare of timber. Visitors from England will notice the poor development of hedgerow trees except for the ash of Co. Meath. This must be attributed largely to the fact that hedge trees have to grow in raised banks or "ditches," as they are called. Hedges and trees are very rarely planted on the level, for the ditch-tradition is older than the hedge. To quote Young once more: "I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks." But there is some compensation, in autumn, in the wealth of blackberries which they produce (Fig. 10).

137 Travellers of the early 19th century constantly refer to
311 landscapes without a single tree or shrub or any trace of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

hedgerows. It is hard to realize that the close-set pattern of hedged or walled fields which now distinguishes so much of the countryside is for the most part only a century or so old. In many cases it can be shown that the fields and fences were laid out within the last hundred years, following the break-up of the rundale village system and the re-distribution of the land (Chapter 6). In the eastern lowlands, where English influence has long been at work, the field pattern and hedgerows are no doubt much older, but in general the small cultivated patches were separated by mere balks or waste strips, varying from one to ten feet in width. Stones from the fields, hand-picked or removed with crow-bar and slipe (Chapter 12) were dumped on the balks or, more frequently, piled into "cairns" in the middle of the fields. Such stone-heaps are often found accompanying prehistoric field-systems, for example in Jutland.

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Fig. 10.

Stone walls or high earthen fences surrounded the house-clusters and enclosed each group of open fields, separating them from the common grazing land which lay outside and stretched away to the "head-ditch" on the mountain. As the rundale holdings gave way to individual farms the land was re-divided, the old ditches planted with whitethorn and new ditches, also set with thorn, were constructed—a process which was being actively carried out during the first half of the 19th century. One result of the scattering of the farms was the appearance of the long strip or "ladder farms," the cross hedges of the strip resembling the rungs of a ladder. 351 361 311

The oldest fences, then, are the protective banks around farms which occupy old village sites—a survival no doubt of the rings around the ancient raths—and the march-dykes or divisions between townlands. The varied vegetation on these older banks betrays them just as it does the pre-enclosure hedgerows in England: their massive tumbled ruins are overgrown with whins, blackthorn, sally, ash and bramble. There are, however, still older forgotten divisions on the hillsides dating from various prehistoric periods; some have 172 311 351

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

172 been discovered under many feet of peat. Several types can
311 be recognized, for example those with upright stones at
351 intervals, which are sometimes left as "standing stones" after the intervening walls have been removed. Old field fences at Cush, Co. Limerick, claimed to be contemporary with raths of the late Bronze Age and "essentially similar to those built by an Irish farmer of to-day" have been described by Professor O'Riordain. This appears to be a striking example of continuity, for the fences are closely followed by existing field-boundaries. Since they lie some 800 ft. above sea-level they do not invalidate the general picture I shall draw in the following chapter, but it is clear that much more work on the lines followed at Cush is required.

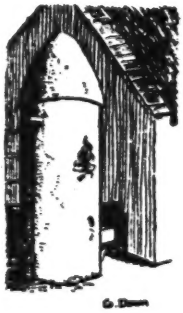
351 Hedges of whins (that is, gorse or furze) about the
314 farmstead are much prized not only for the shelter they afford
137 to stock—they are dense and do not drip—but because they form an admirable clothes line on washing day and a ready
[231] source of kindling wood. Formerly the young whin shoots were crushed and fed to horses. The heavy wooden maul and stone block used in the process may still be seen occasionally. It would require years of enquiry and observation to describe and classify the types of sod ("scraw") earth and stone fences which now parcel out the Irish soil into its patchwork of small fields. One may easily recognize the sod ditches of the rich grazing lands of Meath, with their tall thorn hedges and ash trees giving shelter to the cattle, the well-built dry-stone walls of the granite mountain slopes which vainly seek to stop the black-faced sheep, and the loose lace-like walls precariously constructed out of rough boulders in the morainic hills.

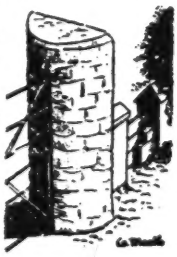
351 In the wind-swept mountains and along the coasts the
311 ditches are hedgeless, carrying only a tangle of heather or whins
137 and an occasional stunted tree, but throughout the lowlands the prevailing type of fence is a stone-faced bank of sods, in the side of which quick-thorn is planted (Fig. 10). These are cut back ruthlessly at longish intervals and are never pleached in the English way, so that the hedge is full of gaps. Occasion-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ally one comes across very wide ditches of this type with a double hedge and paths or even cart-tracks in between, for example in Co. Limerick. In Rathlin Island the only hedge material that seems to escape the ravages of goats is the balsam poplar. Another plant of New World origin, born in Scotland of South American parents, is the Fuchsia, which runs riot along the coasts. Basket willows and wild "black sallies" for creels are sometimes grown—the latter has the advantage that it is not cropped by cattle. 351 311 137

The scarcity of good oak timber in a country once famed for its oaks—notice the frequency of the element "derry" in townland names—goes far to explain the prevalence of iron field-gates, which are hung on stout pillars of built stone. The newcomer to Ireland cannot fail to be struck by the massive gateposts along the roadsides and about the farm premises. In many districts they are whitewashed annually, and since they often assume proportions out of all relation to their function they are unnaturally conspicuous in a landscape bare of heavy timber. In parts of Ulster, for instance, they are such a characteristic feature of the countryside that it is difficult to imagine it without their cheering twinned greeting. Yet most of them must have been erected within the last century or so: writers of Irish travels before that time frequently comment on the absence of gates, for which in fact there was very limited need so long as the rundale system of farming persisted (Chapter 6). In the small village-communities of the west where the old scheme still prevails the gaps in the fences that surround the open field are closed with jagged root-stumps dragged from the bogs, or with a few thorn bushes. Sampson, writing of Co. Derry in 1814, states that gates were almost unknown except near towns, and that a common substitute was a hay-rope strung with thorns—an interesting rustic forerunner of the hated barbed wire. 351 417





Gate pillars and stiles

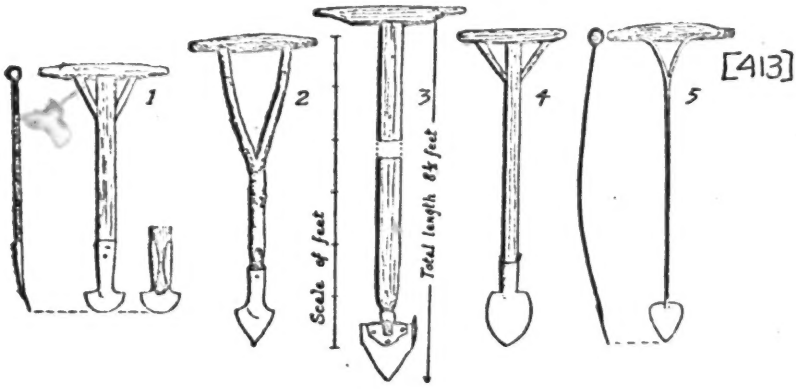
Fig. 11.

It might appear from the association of built piers with landlords' residences in Donegal that settlers introduced them to Ireland, but I am far from convinced that this is the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuts. It is customary to replace the sod on the floor of the bog as the face is cut back, so that the rough grazing is preserved. If the sub-soil is suitable, lowland bogs are reclaimed and good cropping land secured for hay and potatoes. In Armagh strawberries, raspberries, currants and rhubarb grow excellently on the peaty soils. 314 [311] [85]

In the mountain bogs of the north-east a variety of push plough known as the flachter—a word derived from the same root as "flay"—cuts off a scraw some six inches thick as it is driven by vigorous thrusts of the thighs against the stout cross-bar (Figs. 83, 84). Unlike the English breast-



[413]

Fig. 85. Flachters.

1. Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim. 3. Glenravel, Co. Antrim (English type).
2. Glendun, Co. Antrim. 4. Co. Tyrone (1802).
5. Tirmeel, Co. Derry (iron shaft).

plough, the blade has no side wing. It is fastened to the shaft by the old-fashioned device of folded flanges which we have already come across in the sock of the wooden plough and in the loy. I illustrate in Fig. 85 some varieties of flachter and, for comparison, a breast-plough of English type from mid-Antrim (centre). In connexion with the short-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:— 162 592

Islands.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
Inishbofin, .	2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark, .	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, . .	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males. 162 167

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons. [142]

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6*s.* 423 311 A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled [495]

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

423 311 to give by the kindness of the proprietor, Cyril Allies, Esq., J. P. :—

Townland.	Area.	Commonage.
	A. R. P.	A. R. P.
Westquarter, ...	493 3 32	349 2 8
Fawnmore, ...	194 1 14	116 1 15
Middlequarter, ...	612 2 0	375 3 9
Knock, ...	366 1 9	161 3 39
Cloonamore, ...	645 1 1	424 3 29
Inishshark, ...	581 1 12	435 3 12
Islets, ...	257 3 35	—
Total, ...	3151 3 1	1864 1 32

Taking the available area at 930 acres, and the number of families at 215, the average size of a holding per house is 4·3 acres, with a [435] corresponding average valuation of £2 13*s*. The size of a holding, [427] however, varies from 1A. 3R., at a rent of 14*s*. 6*d*., to 56 acres, at £7. Out of 127, the particulars of which were furnished me by Mr. Allies, there were :—

3	holdings of	1	acre and under	2	acres.
21	,,	2	,,	3	,,
17	,,	3	,,	4	,,
8	,,	4	,,	5	,,
23	,,	5	,,	6	,,
15	,,	6	,,	7	,,
12	,,	7	,,	8	,,
17	,,	8	,,	10	,,
5	,,	10	,,	13	,,
4	,,	13	,,	18	,,
1	holding of	25	acres		
1	,,	56	,,		

It will be observed that most of the holdings in this list are of very small size, only eleven being more than ten acres in extent, and 59 or 46·5 per cent. being under 5 acres.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at, or under, £2. 423 311 [435]

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inishshark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among themselves, but many of the children and young people have little or no acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark, which is less in communication with the outer world than Inishbofin. 191

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. were illiterate :— 212 162

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160 females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65 females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inishbofin.

(D.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were— 145 162

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
,, 80 ,, 85, 5 males and 14 females,
,, 85 ,, 90, 4 ,, 0 ,,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

161 The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and outbuildings was as follows in 1891 :—

Locality.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
The Mullet, .	23,333 1 27	3757	1893	1864	600	532
N. Inishkea, .	464 1 32	126	60	66	21	4
S. Inishkea, .	344 3 19	180	92	88	32	33
23 Islets, . .	350 0 17	48	22	26	10	27
Portacloy, .	7845 1 1	299	148	151	54	29
Totals, . . .	32,338 0 6	410	2215	2195	717	625

423 (B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area of the district is that of Kilmore, being 29,492 acres, and the three townlands forming the
●311 Portacloy district, 7,845 acres.

The total valuation of Kilmore is £4,055 18*s.*, and of Portacloy
[435] £163 7*s.*

There is very little commonage in the Mullet, but about Portacloy there is a good deal.

The holdings are not large, averaging about 4½ or 5 acres at a
[427] rental of about £3 10*s.* in the Mullet, and about £2 10*s.* in "the mountains." There is considerable variation, however, as there are some farms of good size, but the majority are small.

In 1891 there were, in Kilmore, 210 holdings of between £4 and £10 valuation, 305 of £2 and under £4, and no less than 252 at, or under, £2 valuation.

The land is mostly held now at judicial rentals (the people having early taken advantage of the Land Act of 1881), but sixty years ago the greater part of the land was held in common, and the mode of tenure is thus described by Knight :—" In the whole of the peninsula
175 there are few farms divided . . . the usual system being commonage both in tillage and pasture. In tillage, lots are cast every third year for the number of ridges each person is entitled to after the usual rotation is over. Potatoes the first year, then barley or oats, after which new lots must be cast for new potato ground. The holdings are by sums or collops, which originally meant the number

167 landscape combined with financial help
657 of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is sep-
[131] arated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring
311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs
132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[5] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

505 Isolation is a major problem, but on four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost
[261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport problems

[137] [5] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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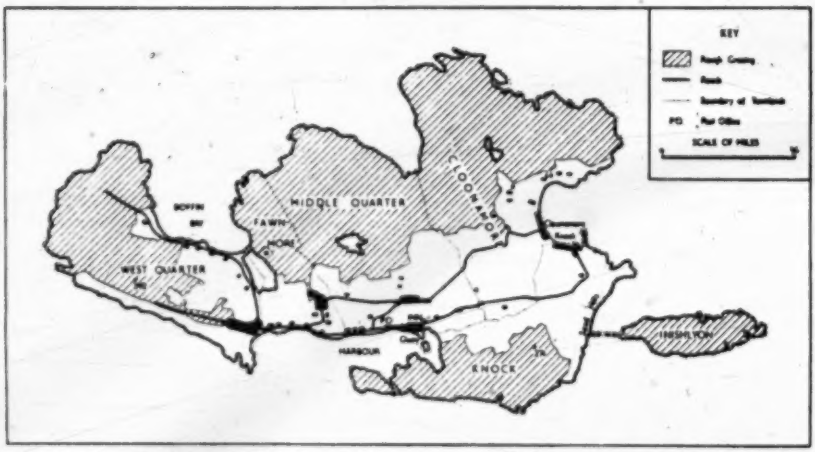

FIG. 1. The townlands of Inishbofin. Inishlyon has no inhabitants, but is used as sheep pasture. Cloonamore and Knock appear as a single line of houses on the shore but are in different townlands. The boundaries of the rough pasture and the distribution of houses were mapped in July, 1954. (Based on Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to 1 mile, Co. Galway, sheet 9, 1898, by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.)

[p. 204(A)]

[p.204(B)]

000 railway was closed in 1925. But the
206 Inishbofin postmistress operates a radio-telephone.

THE LANDSCAPE

Three types of landscape are char-
133 acteristic: first, craggy hills of no great altitude, with a maximum of 292 feet in Westquarter, 288 feet in Middlequarter, and 271 feet in Knock; second, the farmed rolling countryside ranging from sea level to about 150 feet, and having some natural drainage; and, third, an area of sand dunes and blown
[311] sand in the extreme east, once settled and farmed but now used only for rough pasture. The larger of the two lakes, Lough Bofin, is held back by a magnificent shingle ridge in a fine bay, partially protected from strong winds and high seas but open to northerly gales. The coast is rocky almost every. where and there are some splendid cliffs
[504] with outlying stacks: the best harbor is the long inlet on the south side. No recent geological work has been done

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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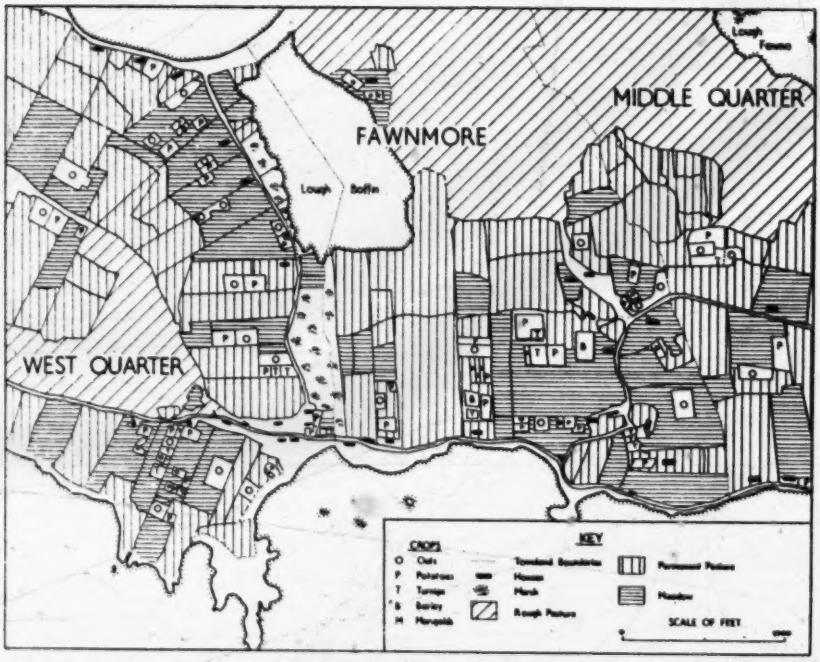

FIG. 2. Land use in part of Inishbofin. The rectangular pattern is characteristic of many areas "striped" by the Congested Districts Board. Small crop "gardens," fields of meadow and improved pasture, exist beside each farmhouse, and roads lead to the "commonage." (Field mapping done by Mr. Clifford Hargreaves, B.A., of the Department of Geography, University of Manchester, in July 1954, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made.)

[p. 205(A)]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 205 (B)]

314 year the feed of a dozen sheep is burnt in the homes."

Agricultural life depends on the use
311 of the "commonage," or rough pasture,
231 and the improved land, which is almost entirely drift fertilized by seaweed and
632 farmyard manure. Two-thirds of the island's 2480 acres is rough pasture, used for the sheep, cattle, ponies, and donkeys, as well as for peat collection. Figure 1 shows that the island is divided into five townlands, in each of which the commonage is shared, with the result that a farmer may take his animals not to the rough pasture near his holding but to ground as much as a mile away. There is a band of farm lands
311 stretching from lough Bofin to the har-

[p.205(c)]

311 bor, and then with no break to Cloonamore on the east side.

This island has a planned landscape. 311 The roads of the commonage pastures 657 and peat bogs have been built under relief schemes and the farms include seven acres of improved land, "striped" or defined by the Congested Districts Board after the land was acquired from its owner, Mr. C. Allies, in 1907.[10] 342 Since then new houses of concrete, with 511 a concrete floor, roofed with asbestos 657 slate or, rarely, ordinary slates, have

[10] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 18th report for the year ending March 31, 1909, Cmd. 4927, p. 139. The price paid was £8301, including £401 for tenants' interests. Up to March 31, 1915, £7047 was spent on the island, 23rd report, 1915, Cmd. 8076.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

175 a system of dioceses and raised St. Patrick's Church at Armagh
[795] to the primacy in the eleventh century.

But it was the Norsemen who established the first port-cities
175 of Ireland—Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick—
162 and provided the Anglo-Normans with bases from which to attempt their conquest. It was the fate of these newcomers, as of earlier invaders, to be absorbed, but the towns which they and their successors established became the instruments of Anglicization. Yet outside the nine south-eastern counties where the Anglo-Norman influence was strongest, there are few towns which are older than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as late as 1841 less than 15 per cent of the Irish population was urban. It is significant that even today no inland Irish town has a population reaching 20,000: in the Republic, indeed, only one or two exceed 10,000, and that barely. It is the immemorial peasant tradition which dominates the heart of Ireland. In some inland counties the rural population is still as much as 90 per cent of the total: for the Republic of Ireland as a whole it amounts to 62 per cent, and the figure for the more industrialized counties of Northern Ireland is only slightly under 50 per cent. In Ulster the plantation of English and especially of Scots Presbyterian settlers in the seventeenth century was at last successful in maintaining its identity, though as we shall see the material culture is strongly moulded to its Irish environment. Partly because this region of entry has received through the centuries almost every culture-layer that has been deposited in Ireland, there is perhaps a greater variety of survivals in Ulster than in any other part of Ireland. In some ways this most British part of Ireland is also the most Irish.

Although the tribal nomadism of medieval Ireland has been
●311 exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the pastoral tradition
361 has dominated Irish life through the ages. Cultivation was
175 certainly practised from Neolithic times, but the older crops, wheat and barley, were in course of time supplemented and in many parts replaced by oats, which became the corn of Ireland as of Scotland, food for men as well as animals. For half the year the arable land was under stubble, pastured and manured by grazing stock, so that the favoured acres around the settle-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ment—the infield—might produce grain year after year. The rough grazing beyond—the outfield—was broken up periodically in temporary enclosures, and it may be assumed that such a system had developed from the shifting agriculture of prehistoric times. Relics of outfield cultivation, usually in association with family-communes, can be traced in many regions of difficulty throughout Western Europe, both in the mountains of the centre and along the oceanic fringe from Spain to Norway. 'If we knew medieval England completely', states Sir John Clapham, 'we should find plenty of it.'[1] In most lowland areas of good soil throughout western Europe, however, it was replaced by a system involving large open fields, normally three in number, each of which was used in rotation for autumn sown corn, usually wheat, followed by spring corn and fallow. This scheme called for considerable organization and a large variety of tools and implements: it came to be governed by complex regulations and controlled by the lord of the manor, and it is significant that the feudal system and in due course the nation-state evolved in areas where the openfield economy was practised. There was more freedom and flexibility in the smaller and simpler outfield system, and in Ireland the feudal order was successfully established only in the English Pale, where the three-field system was introduced by Anglo-Norman settlers. Elsewhere the tribal system prevailed, and for the study of folk-customs the important unit within that system was the family commune living in clustered house-groups, hamlets or clachans. The prevailing cattle-economy called for a minimum of equipment, the subordinate cultivation little more than spades or light ploughs and hand-operated tools. Even the lowliest members of society had some interest in the land and its cultivation was not beyond their means. Possession of a cow, a horse, a pig or a few sheep demanded even less in the way of equipment and tools. The simple arts and crafts of prehistoric times proved adequate, and the poorest man was able to play his part in the community and stand on his own feet. A democratic

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175

[1]H. J. Clapham, *A Concise Economic History of Britain* (1949), 48. Similarly Gilbert Slater, *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields* (1907) regards what he terms the Celtic system 'as influencing to varying degrees the type of village community in England.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

175 way of life was fostered by the ease with which the humbler
● 311 members of the community could compete with others in arts
361 demanding not wealth but personal qualities, in poetry, oratory, song and physical prowess. Down to our own day the small size of the average farm has encouraged the survival of simple tools and limited the acquisition of machines. Subdivision of farms and the depressing effects of short leases and absenteeism were contributory factors. Subdivision of holdings was prohibited under an Act of 1881, but like so many other prohibited practices it did not cease.

175 The retention of many of the attributes of a peasant society is the key to the survival of the folk ways with which we are
602 concerned in the following chapters. Even the Great Famine
178 which marks a grim watershed in social and economic history did not entirely obliterate them, though it had such far-reaching effects that it might be regarded as the end of prehistoric times in Ireland. First in importance is the strength of blood-ties in extended family groups, still maintained even in many urban communities. During the air raids on Belfast, for example, the problem of finding billets for evacuated homeless was complicated by the refusal of large groups of related families to be separated from each other. In remote rural areas the blood-tie is a dominant force, governing economic as well as social relationships,[1] its loyalties overriding the impartial administration of justice. A relative is a 'friend', even if 'far-out'—that is, remotely connected—and friendship is a matter of blood relationship. A peasant community is concerned first and foremost with the maintenance and continuity of society: it does not judge—and cannot be judged—purely by economic standards. Immemorially peasant families have been large, and childbearing is widely regarded as part of the ritual necessary to bring success with the stock and the crops. In rural Ireland
[842] barrenness in a wife still tends to be regarded as an unnatural and disgraceful thing, and many superstitious cures for 'the
178 sterile curse' are recorded. This is but one example of a widespread attitude towards life, to which comparative anthropology
789 offers many parallels. Sympathetic magic, or the performance

[1]C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940), Ch. 13.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 from it. The Gaelic conquest of the Irish Midlands was not completed until the sixth century A.D., and down to the Anglo-Norman invasions the distinction between free and tributary tribes remained.[1] The counties bordering the middle Shannon—Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and the western parts of Westmeath and Offaly—are probably as full of survivals as any in Ireland. This is the land of the loy and the steeveen (Chapter X) and the last home of many an ancient custom. The lowland [133] of which it is the centre is floored with limestone levelled off at about 200 ft. but diversified by occasional low hills, by intricate solution lakes and by glacial eskers and drifts among which lie countless small lakes and bogs (Fig. 3). It is hard to realize [489] the isolation from which this area suffered before the introduction of improved wheeled vehicles and the coming of the canal and the railway.[2]

311 Let us now look at the cultural landscape which the hand of man has fitted to the physical frame of the island. Although man has been in this country for only a fraction of the time he has occupied South England and the continent, his mark is everywhere. Wander where you will through the length and breadth of the island, and through the dozens of lesser isles around its shores, and you will never fail to see traces of human activity, past or present, even in the most empty and inaccessible spots. Apart from the more or less datable remains of church and rath, castle and cairn, the land is covered with the marks of man's toil. The history of rural Ireland could be read out of doors, had we the skill, from the scrawlings made by men in the field boundaries of successive periods. In them the unlettered countryman wrote his runes on the land. The student of historical geography has been greatly assisted in the task of interpreting this palimpsest by the new tool of air-photography which, given suitable conditions, will pick out all man-made marks on the face of the earth.

311 178 The sturdy field walls and hedged banks which give the countryside its intimate character are by no means as immutable

[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), 204.

[2] Improvements in public transport were initiated by the Italian, Bianconi, who, profiting from the cavalry horses thrown on the market after the Napoleonic wars, began his famous fleet of 'cars' in Tipperary in 1815.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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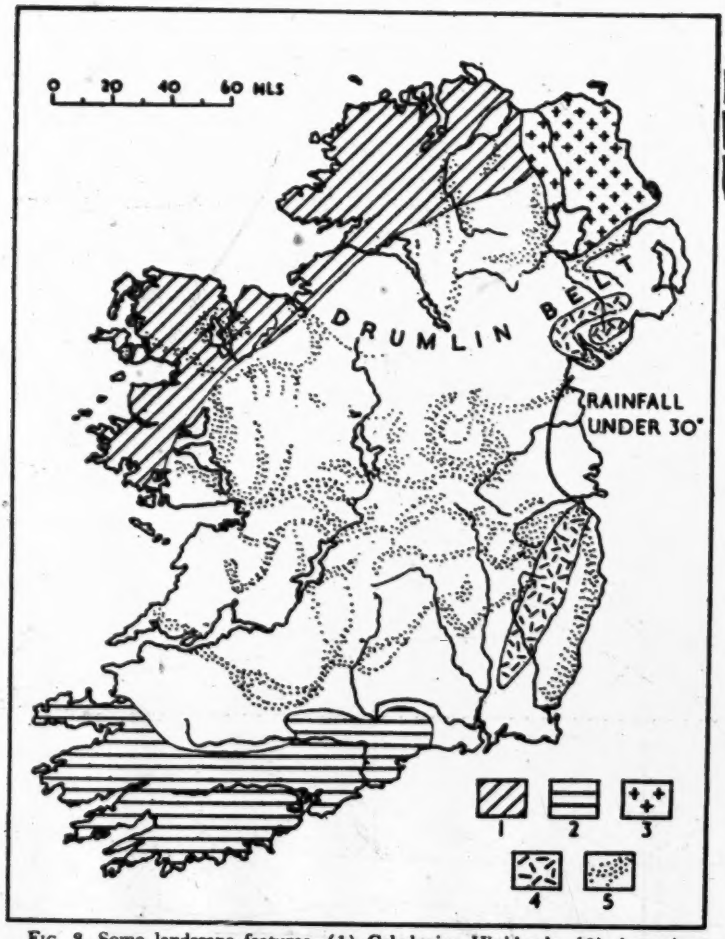

FIG. 3. Some landscape features. (1) Caledonian Highlands, (2) Armorican ridge and valley, (3) North-eastern basalts, (4) Eastern granites, (5) Glacial sands and gravels (eskers) (after J. K. Charlesworth). Drumlins are little hills composed of glacial drift. See Pl. 5, 1.

as they appear. The pattern they make has changed with the centuries in response to new needs and new tools. At present we are in a period of fairly rapid change, for the tractor calls for larger and more regular fields than those made by the spade

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

178 and the horse-plough, and old hedges are being grubbed up to
311 give the machine elbow-room. This in turn leads to a demand for larger farms, for the small holdings which are characteristic of Ireland (one half of the farms are between fifteen and fifty acres) have customarily just so many fields as will give a proper balance between pasture and plough, and where two or three tiny fields are knocked into one the balance is upset. In the same way earlier technological advances, though on a smaller scale, have changed the cultural landscape at different periods. Demographic crises have had similar effects. Before the Great Famine, for example, 80 per cent of all Irish farms were under fifteen acres.

From the earliest times, it seems, Ireland was a land of small holdings and small field-plots. Yet the actual pattern of small hedged fields as we know it today is of no great antiquity. For the most part it is a consequence of the agrarian revolution which affected the country, at various dates in different parts, between about 1750 and 1850. It was the planting of thorn hedgerows and the building of stone walls that fixed what had previously been ill-defined and temporary field boundaries, associated with the openfield or rundale system of land use. With permanent enclosure went the consolidation of holdings into compact independent blocks, though in some districts independence was achieved without grouping the fields together so that properties consist of scattered hedged fields which reflect the disposition of plots under the earlier openfield system. The hedge in fact has had a hard struggle for survival in the poorer districts. Both the thorns and the gates which enclosure brought with it were frequently hacked down for
[417] firewood, and to this day a wooden gate is a rarity in the countryside: the field gates are almost invariably of iron. There are many districts where the thorn hedge itself is almost unknown, where low earthen mounds half overgrown with bramble and whin (gorse) give us a glimpse of a stage between permanent enclosures and the openfields which they replaced. In Donegal gangs of villagers threw down the landlords' fences as quickly as they were erected,[1] and in some parts of the county they are still kept in repair for the summer months only.

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 41.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

Little attention has been given to the Irish openfield system.[1] It has escaped the notice of historians because the revolution which broke it down was a prolonged and silent one, involving no Enclosure Acts such as those which record the disappearance of the English openfields. Under the Irish system it was the practice, in some areas at least, for the plots to change hands periodically among co-partners by the casting of lots. Thus the transition to consolidated holdings was easier than under the English system, where the scattered plough strips were apparently permanently held. It is important to examine the openfield system more closely than might seem to be warranted by its almost complete disappearance from the modern scene, because it was against this background that many of the tools and customs we shall discuss were evolved. Just as in lowland England the English village was inseparable from its openfields, so in Ireland hamlets or 'clachans' accompanied the old form of land utilization. They will crop up again and again in the chapters which follow. But today and for the last century o. so the isolated farm has characterized the Irish rural scene (Fig. 4). From some elevated viewpoint in the mountainy parts one may count hundreds of small whitewashed homesteads dotted among the fields, each nestling behind a handful of wind-bent trees and approached by its own access-road—the loaning or borheen beloved of the sentimental song writers. Every farmstead has the air of a fortress, an independent unit within its jealously guarded boundary fences, defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars (Fig. 5) and claiming rights of way whose protection keeps the town solicitors profitably engaged. The degree of independence has been notably strengthened by the Land Acts (1869–1925) under which former tenants have become their own landlords. Peasant-proprietorship is an established fact throughout the country, though it has by no means solved Ireland's problems as some politician-prophets claimed it would.

The truth is that, taking the country as a whole, most of the farms are too small to be truly independent of their neighbours. Bitter experience and the traditional land-hunger of a community

[1]E. E. Evans, *Geography*, 24 (1939), 24–36; D. McCourt, *Economic History Review*, 7, 369–76.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 where the land has been almost the sole available re-
[578] source go far to explain the jealousy with which established rights are maintained, but there are deeper needs and bonds in the rural community.

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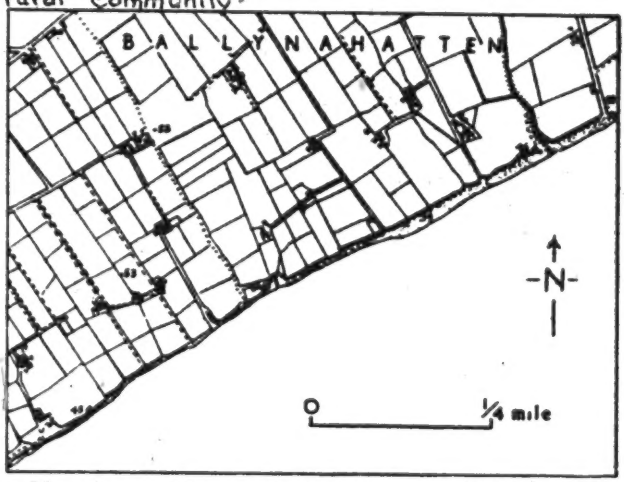

FIG. 4. Map of scattered farms on the Co. Down coast, showing seaweed-roads. (Based upon the Ordnance map with the sanction of the Controller, H.M.S.O.)

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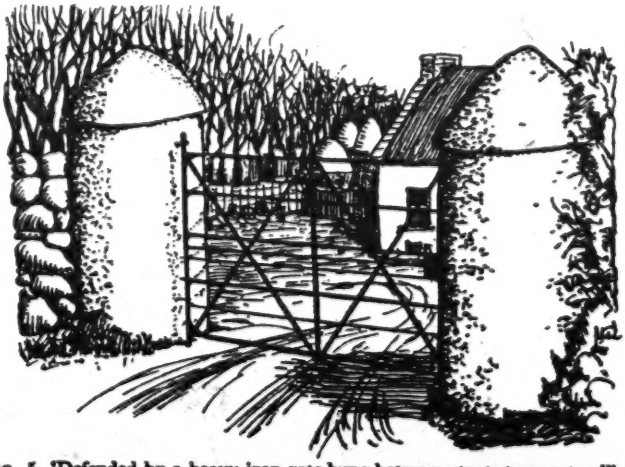

FIG. 5. 'Defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars:' an Ulster farm.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 361 continuous tradition of partnership. Rundale, as we find it in decay in the nineteenth century, was a diseased system that had outlived its purpose. A few examples will serve to illustrate the appalling conditions to which it led when the removal of traditional checks and the adoption of the potato had allowed the population to expand recklessly within the framework of an inherited system of land use and settlement.

311 361 659 Our first example comes from the present century, and from Co. Mayo. The clachan of Rathlackan, when the Congested Districts Board tried to disperse it in 1918, was occupied by fifty-six families whose land was scattered in 1,500 fragments, some of them no more than a dozen square yards in area (Fig. 6). A two-acre holding was split into eighteen tiny plots, and on the average twenty-seven lots were held by each farm. Such was the confusion that it was not until 1942 that the process of redistribution and consolidation of holdings was completed, with the result that 'fairly compact holdings' were provided for thirty-two families.[1]

311 361 The following quotations are from the pamphlets of an 'improving landlord' in Donegal, and refer to a period about a hundred years earlier, in the 1840s.

'We suppose it would not be believed that in this district, until very lately, fences were altogether unknown. In some instances a tenant having any part of a townland (no matter how small), had his proportion in thirty or forty different places, and without fences between them. One poor man who had his inheritance in thirty-two different places, abandoned them in utter despair of ever being able to make them out . . . The rundale system was a complete bar to any attempt at improvement; as, on a certain day, all the cattle belonging to the townland were brought from the mountains and allowed to run indiscriminately over the arable land. And in spring no individual occupier would set or sow, or labour in the fields, before a certain day, when the cattle were again sent to the hills, until after harvest. In one instance a small field of about half an acre was held by twenty-six people.'[2]

[1] *The Irish Times* (12th Jan., 1948). This was achieved only at the cost of the physical collapse of one land-officer and the mental breakdown of another.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22, 46.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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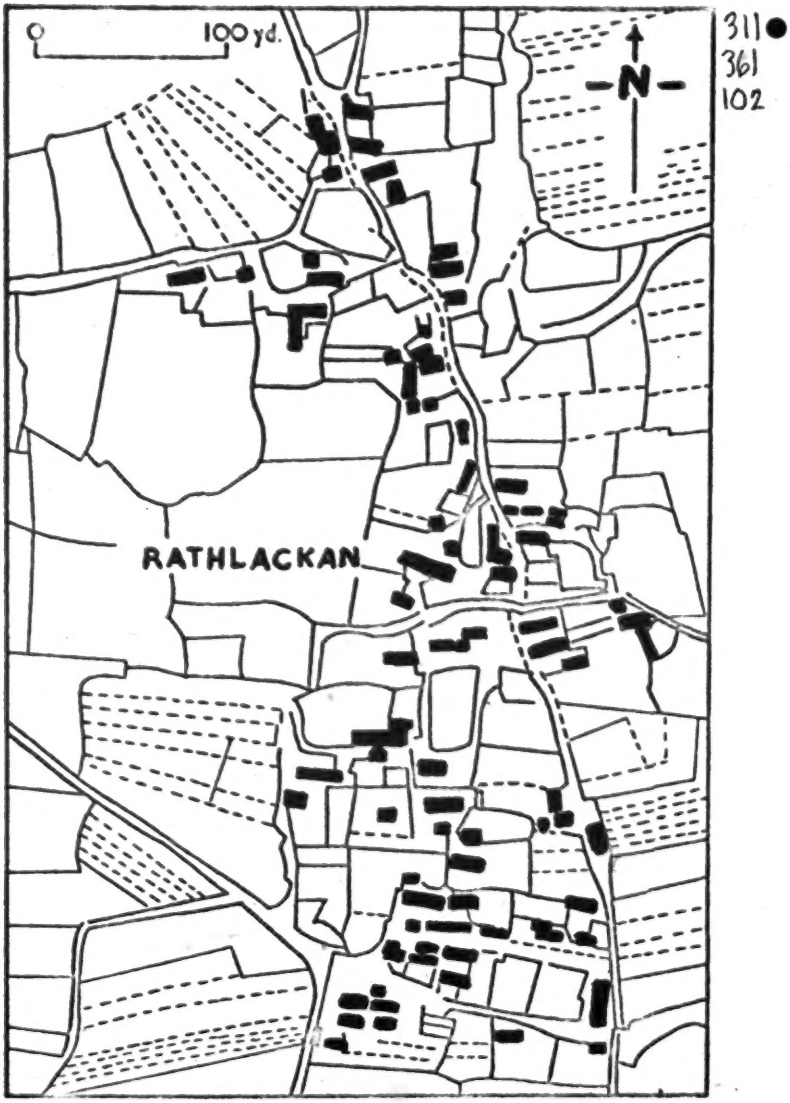

FIG. 6. Rathlackan, Co. Mayo: the rundale cluster with some of the openfield strips as they were before reorganization began in 1918.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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311 361 In Connacht conditions were even worse, as may be judged by the persistence of the Rathlackan cluster down to 1942. So swollen were some of these settlements that one of them, Menlough near Galway, now consisting of a dozen farms set among the ruins of others, is said to have had 2,000 inhabitants in 1845, while lacking 'head or centre, market, church, chapel or school'.[1]

In Ulster there are many examples of small clusters which have persisted because they did not become swollen to disastrous proportions. They were characteristic, for instance, of flax-growing areas and were occupied by farmer-weavers who depended on each others' services at harvest-time, and they survived the crisis of the great famine although many decayed with the decline of hand-loom weaving soon afterwards. Despite all the disadvantages of life in these clachans, their inhabitants were reluctant to leave them. It was stated in evidence before the Devon Commission that even if they were moving only half a mile away 'they were crying as if they were going to America'. It was in fact from such decaying house-clusters that a great number of the emigrants to the United States set out across the seas in the second half of last century.

[1]T. C. Foster, *Letters*, 293.

BALLY AND BOOLEY

These clachans, while some had their speciality such as weaving or thatching, were concerned primarily and almost exclusively with agriculture and attracted none of the elements of the true village, whether church, inn or shops. Itinerant 'tinkers and tailors' paid periodic visits and with the pedlars and beggars brought news of other districts, but the economic and social needs of the hamlet were met by periodic visits to the fairs and by seasonal gatherings of various kinds. Within the group the bonds of kinship were close and strong, and ties of marriage carrying reciprocal responsibilities linked one clachan with another within small neighbourhood units consisting of perhaps half a dozen townlands. With the close kinship bonds went corresponding rivalries with adjacent neighbourhoods which provided social motive force by acting as incentives. These rivalries broke out characteristically into feuds and blood-letting at fairs and gatherings. But in later days, at any rate, internal rivalries and squabbles were more conspicuous and found more opportunities within overgrown kinship groups which had become too complicated to function smoothly. A few illustrations will suffice. 361 621

One visitor explained the presence of the back-doors on clustered houses, for which we shall offer other explanations in the following chapter, by the fact that the women needed an escape when too hotly engaged in rows with neighbours.[1] Joint ownership sometimes extended to single animals with strange results. For example: 'three men were concerned in one horse; but the poor brute was rendered useless, as the unfortunate foot of the supernumerary leg remained unshod . . . and accordingly it became quite lame.[2] We are reminded of the difficulties arising from the joint ownership of fruit trees in some Mediterranean countries. It was in Donegal too that I heard of a ram which died of exposure when it was part-shorn by one of its joint owners. In the same district a man wishing to build a wall around one of his fields but unable to get his neighbour to agree, deliberately erected it a yard or two on his own side of the boundary so that the neighbour would still be forced to herd or tether his cow to prevent it trespassing on the 361 578 311 423 [422]

[1]Isaac Weld, *Statistical Survey of Roscommon* (1832), 475.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 23.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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361 narrow strip between the boundary and the wall. 'Fights, tres-
578 passes, confusion, disputes and assaults, were the natural and
311 unavoidable consequences of the rundale system.'[1] On the other
423 hand we must recall the extreme reluctance with which the system was at last abandoned, the social benefits it conferred on members of the kin. The reforming landlord, Lord George Hill, comments that 'the pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together, made them consider the removal of the houses, from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built to the separate farms, a great grievance.'[2] Another writer gives as the basis of the tenants' grievance, 'the recollection of nights of social concourse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of
[517] defence against bailiff or gauger'.[3] There were ceilidhes and spinning parties, and many a clachan had its shanachie (story-teller) and its fiddler or piper—usually a maimed or simple person—who accompanied with folk-tunes. Folk-songs, occupational airs and legendary tales were kept alive in this way. Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there
[252] would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some
[343] districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains.

The openfield which lay around the cluster, normally on the
311 down-hill side so that the vital manure could be 'sliped' down-
423 slope (see Chapter XIII), seems to have been kept in cultivation in some areas at least year after year. This was the infield, in contrast to the outfield, the outlying rough pasture bits of which were temporarily reclaimed and then left to rest for long periods. We shall return to the plough and spade and methods of cultivation in another place but may refer here to the allotment of the holdings in the common fields. Although in many parts of the country the holdings, by the end of the eighteenth century, had become fixed in their scattered parcels on the several qualities of land in the openfield, there is abundant

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.
[2] ibid., 42.
[3] W. R. Wilde, *Dublin University Magazine*, 41 (1853), 20.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. 311 ●
It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, 423
for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the [777]
occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we 311
should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean, even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat. Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable. Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed [231]
pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter. And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at that season, when food for livestock is scarce.

Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep 311 221
were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken 241
from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen 237

[1]Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 340.
[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.
[3]ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.
[4]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.
[5]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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311 tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year!'[1] Sea
221 wrack and shell sand were carted up to thirty miles inland from
[241] the coast.[2] In the absence of permanent fences the majority of
[237] the cattle must be moved away during the summer and those remaining carefully herded or tethered on the outfield, or put in temporary enclosures to manure that part of the outfield which was due for cultivation.[3] In its origins and full development the rundale system depended on the movement of most of the livestock to summer booleys situated some distance away. Here the widely distributed uplands and boglands played their part in the traditional economy. Although late survivals of the booleying system are hard to find, little of it managing to outlive the crisis of the Great Famine, we are beginning to track down its history and significance. The Irish texts are as disappointing and vague as they are in many matters touching the common people, but folk-memory comes to our aid. There are stories, and place-name evidence, from most parts of the country, and regional variants of the practice are being studied and mapped.[4]

We give first some quotations from the few discerning observers who drew attention to the practice. Edmund Spenser's enlightened spirit of inquiry is shown in his remark: 'Have you ever heard what was the occasion and first beginning of this custom? for it is good to know the same.' He writes, in 1595,
221 'There is one use amongst them, to keep their cattle and to
234 live themselves the most part of the year in boolies, pasturing upon the mountain and waste wild places.'[5] His objections to the system, however, reveal his Englishry: the booleys hid outlaws and loose people, and the wandering life made the Irish barbarous. The following brief reference comes from O'Flaherty's famous account of West Connacht: 'In summertime they drive their cattle to the mountains, where such as look to the cattle live in small cabins for that season.'[6] In the eighteenth

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country* (1951), 141.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 131.
[4]J. M. Graham, 'Transhumance in Ireland', in *The Advancement of Science*, 37 (1953), 74–8.
[5]Quoted in H. Morley, *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James I* (1890), 67.
[6]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 17.

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intense effort, when the toilers were spurred on by rivalries in 241
their efforts to avoid the bad luck which tradition wisely bes- 461
towed on the laggards. The seasonal festivals which marked the end of these periods of strain—at the beginning of May and November—were not merely celebrations of work completed and a new season begun, but also the occasion for the release of emotional stresses. The Irishman's capacity for bouts of strenuous work, and his more notorious addiction to spells of complete idleness, are surely related to the experience accumulated through countless springs, harvests, and winters. Winter was a dead season for man as for the world around him. It was no time for fairs, fighting or raiding, for selling or even stealing animals which were not worth the trouble of stealing: the problem was to maintain life in them.

Long tradition explains the neglect of winter ploughing 241
which is still characteristic of the greater part of Ireland. The 311
infield stubble was required to augment the very poor and limited outfield grazing available for the wintering stock. There are some townlands, in the west, where to this day all the fields become common grazing during the winter, and only the strongly-enclosed 'gardens' are safe places to grow cabbages, for instance, or a little rye for the thatch. Moreover even with improved ploughs the grass tends to grow in the furrows of ploughed land during a mild winter. And when it is recalled that much of the old infield land was on sloping ground, if only for the sake of the natural drainage thus provided, it can be conceded that there was wisdom in not breaking the earth in winter and opening the way to soil erosion. Moreover the loss of fertility by the leaching of exposed soils can be serious.

Preparing the land for seed had thus to await the spring, and 241
pressure of time as well as the uncertainties of weather strength- 476
ened the tradition of co-operative labour in the form of pooled plough-teams in the infield and gangs of ridgemakers in the outfield. The plough-team, normally of four horses or oxen supplied by as many neighbours, had to be supplemented by spade and mell, for the furrows were badly turned, and after the seed-bed had been prepared and the corn sown the seed was covered with shovelled soil. In order to facilitate drainage,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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averaging some twenty feet, and they have had a far longer life. In their natural condition their surface is slightly convex, and they may come to stand, perversely, above the level of the surrounding countryside, though they began life in ill-drained hollows where reeds grew to make fen-peat. These lower layers tend to be alkaline in nature and when the upper layers are cut away the bogs may be turned into productive cropland if adequate drainage can be provided. Small areas of this type occur to the south of Lough Neagh, but Ireland has nothing to compare with the English fenlands. Yet the Irish bogs take their place in the agricultural economy as summer grazing grounds, formerly for mixed stock and for cattle in particular, latterly mainly for sheep. In the past, too, considerable use was made of buried timber dug from the bogs,[1] of oak for roofing beams and of pine for kindling and resinous 'splits' to give light. The long 'trying iron' with which buried timber was located is shown in Fig. 66, together with the massive 'fir hatchet' and 'fir rooter'.

To the ecologist the bogs provide a unique field of research into the history of the occupation of the country by plants, animals and man. In the waterlogged depths of the peats everything is preserved, even the tiniest seeds and insects. Centuries of successive summers are chronicled in countless pollens of trees and grasses which the botanist can identify and thereby reconstruct the changes of vegetation from prehistoric times down to the recent past. When man appeared on the scene not only did he leave his pathways and possessions in the bogs, but, as we have seen, he was an agent in their growth. His tools of stone and copper, bronze and iron, evolving in that order, are found lying at levels which can be correlated with the vegetation-history by analysing the pollens that cling to them. Thanks to the labours of Knud Jessen and Frank Mitchell we now have an approximate chronological sequence of landscapes and human cultures in Ireland going back several thousand years.

The pollen grains from the lowest layers of the upland bogs include those of shrubs such as hazel, birch, rowan and thorn, as well as, occasionally, those of cereals and the weeds of cultivation. Evidently the clearings soon became threatened with forest and field weeds, and these companions of the earliest

[1] E. E. Evans, *Irish Heritage*, 142; A. T. Lucas, *Béaloideas*, 23, 71–134.

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[702] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

176 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
• 311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the
[361] lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as "shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the community. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

• 311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[434] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent
434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts
437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils
• [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and
178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration. 178 433 [231] [226] [311] [654] [241] [231]

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage. 231 [422] [654] [831] [232]

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5. 231 437 [234] [505] [435]

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the mainland and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and 221 233 234 [462]

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub- 178
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

STUDIES OF IRISH RURAL SETTLEMENT

JAMES H. JOHNSON

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UNTIL recently it was generally thought that isolated farms, dispersed over the cultivated land (Fig. 1), formed a settlement pattern of great antiquity in Ireland. Without investigating the matter deeply, academic geographers explained this pattern in several ways. Some saw it as a product of the pastoral emphasis of Irish agriculture, which necessitated a close relationship between a farmer's residence and his fields.[1] Others, especially Meitzen, regarded the dispersed farms as a direct result of the Celtic heritage of the country.[2] And although professional geographers preferred a cultural explanation, school textbooks tended to seize on an environmental factor, seeing dispersed settlement as a product of the moist Irish climate, which required no concentration on wet-point sites and presumably allowed the cultural factors free play.[3]

Contemporary Studies

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Work by modern geographers on the critical study of Irish rural settlement began in County Donegal. Here E. E. Evans[4] showed that, in parts of the county at least, the single isolated farm is a relatively recent form of settlement, which dates from the nineteenth century rather than survives from any great antiquity. Modern dispersed settlement in Donegal was in fact preceded by "clachans"—clusters of farm dwellings and their associated outbuildings, usually grouped without any formal plan and in the early nineteenth century often consisting of as many as 30–40 houses. Although these clachans normally lacked both inn and church, communal life and the exchange of services were characteristic, and as a rule their inhabitants were related by blood.

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[113] [1] A. Demangeon: La géographie de l'habitat rural (International Geographical Congress, London and Cambridge, 1928: Report of the Commission on Types of Rural Settlement, pp. 41–80), p. 59.

[2] August Meitzen: Siedelung und Agrarwesen der Westgermanen und Ostgermanen, der Kelten, Römer, Finnen und Slawen (3 vols. and atlas, Berlin, 1895), Vol. 1, pp. 174–182.

[312] [3] The advantage of universal water supplies in Ireland is more apparent than real. In parts of County Fermanagh, for example, farmers must carry drinking water hundreds of yards to their dispersed farms (cf. J. M. Mogey: Rural Life in Northern Ireland [Oxford, 1947], pp. 35–36), when nucleation around the most satisfactory supply would seem to be a logical arrangement. Personal observation suggests that this is a not uncommon situation on many Irish farms.

[113] [4] Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System, *Geography*, Vol. 24, 1939, pp. 24–36; Donegal Survivals, *Antiquity*, Vol. 13, 1939, pp. 207–222.

➤ Mr. Johnson is Lecturer in Geography at University College, London.

[p.554]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. I.

With the many material survivals from the past which we have mentioned in earlier chapters there lives on an imposing body of customs and superstitious beliefs of which we can attempt to give no more than a summary description. They concern not only the visible world with its common elements and events—water, fire, stones, salt, iron, trees, cattle, crops, harvest, food and drink, birth, marriage and death—and the relics of former ages—raths or "forths," great stone monuments, stone axes, flint arrowheads, spinning whorls and "crocks of gold"—but also the unseen or rarely glimpsed world of giants, fairies and other beings. All the major processes of the farmer's year had their appropriate magic rites which clung to them from the beginning. Many of these superstitions are so deep-rooted that centuries of opposition from the Christian Church have failed to suppress them, and while it has driven some practices into secrecy it has been forced to take others under its protection. 771

This applies, for instance, to the cult of holy wells, which is, like the worship of stones and the veneration of thorn trees, probably megalithic in origin and seems to carry us back to the sunnier lands of the Mediterranean where the megalithic religion took its rise. It has been calculated that there are some 3,000 holy wells in Ireland: many of them are still visited, generally at the festival seasons which we described in the last chapter, and it is customary for the devotees to tie 312 ● 788 755 778

[p. 163]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

312 strings of beads, rags or bits of clothing in the holy tree which
788 often overhangs the well, so that it may bear their ailments.
755 I happened to come across a well near Cork just after mid-
778 summer this year. Alongside were the smouldering remains of a great bonfire which had been lit on St. John's Eve. The visitors to the well, having drunk the water, walked three times sunwise around the corbelled stone well-cover, and taking up pebbles kept ready to hand in crevices, they made the sign of the cross on certain stones which were marked with deep grooves which generations of patrons had cut by the same process. Some wells have old "cup-marks" instead of crosses, and it seems probable that these pagan symbols were made long ago in the same way as the crosses which have replaced them. Their round completed, the visitors
[825] looked into the well, for if they were to recover from their ailments they would see the trout which is reputed to live there and to show itself only to the cured.

The virtues of these wells are many: they are believed to be efficacious in such varied complaints as eye-disease, lameness, toothache and in some cases barrenness The first Sunday of each quarter of the Celtic year is generally the visiting time, but perhaps on account of the weather the summer festivals, and especially midsummer, are most popular. Pins and other bits of metal are sometimes deposited in wells. Offerings are also made to certain trees in the form of pins stuck in the bark, each pin representing a wish. Special gatherings known as patterns or pardons were held at such sites on the anniversary of the patron saint of the district. Devotions were followed by dancing and games which often degenerated into fights. It is possible to see relics of paganism in the sanctity of such sites, and it is worth recalling that some of the more celebrated centres of pilgrimage in western Europe, like Santiago da Compostella, seem to have megalithic connexions.

788 The mention of cup-marks brings us to the superstitions
823 concerning the great stone monuments with which they are
778 often associated. A recent article in the *Ulster Journal of*

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

832 believed in, or at least spoken of, though not practised. It is called the spancel, and is thus described by C. O.[1]:—"This spancel, called in Irish 'stheioul dhrum agus tharragh,' signifying the skin of the back and of the belly, consists of a continuous band of skin taken from round the length of the body, viz. from the side of one foot up the outside of that leg and side, over the head and down the other side to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the stripe meets where it first set out; it is used as a love charm, and its power is believed to be irresistible, it being only necessary in order to secure the affections of the victim, to tie the spancel round him while asleep; if he does not awake during the operation all *must* turn out to the wish of the operator; if he does awake, he dies before the end of the year, so the poor desired one has no escape." The same author mentions several instances of this, which were said to have occurred shortly before he wrote (1841), one of which, the discovery of three young women taking the spancel off a corpse, is still remembered by some of the older inhabitants. There
312 are several holy wells in the district, but the most famous is the well
778 of St. Brendan, on Inishglora, the water of which is said to remain sweet and pure if drawn by a man, but to turn bloody and become
823 full of worms if a woman has the temerity to take it. Many tales are told of the misfortunes which have happened to women who persisted in drawing water from this well after being warned. There is now resident in Belmullet an old man who lived for some years on Inishglora. This man solemnly declared to the Rev. P. O'Reilly and the writer that he had three times cleared out the well after women had taken water from it, and that on each occasion it was "full of blood and corruption"; he also said that from the time he began to clean out the well until the job was completed no water flowed in, though it began to come as soon as the cleansing was finished. He added that if a woman were left alone on the island with only a male child of a month old, and she wanted to get water, the vessel would have to be held by the child's hand to prevent the water from becoming bloody.

2. *Charms and Leechcraft.*—Disease is often ascribed to superna-
[753] tural agencies, and for this reason is often treated by charms or incantations. There are several local "wise" men and women who
755 treat disorders partly by means of charms, partly by herbal and animal remedies. In some cases the idea underlying the treatment

[1] "Erris and Tyrawley," p. 90.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

of water. I was told on Rathlin Island that eligible girls would 343
take a sweating bath to clear their complexions before the annual 757
visit to the Lammas Fair at Ballycastle on the mainland. They [815]
were in demand also during kelp-burning operations—a notoriously filthy occupation. Not all sweat-houses were built of stone. Wood-Martin quotes accounts of some which were dug into an earth bank and 'finished with sods', while others were excavated in turf banks.[1] He also records that water was sometimes poured on stones inside the sweat-house, 'thus converting it into a vapour- as well as a sweat-bath'.[2]

More intimately linked with the house is the turf-shelter, the 343
Irish equivalent of the English coal-shed. In the drier eastern 372
part of the country a built shelter is not necessary, and the peats, skilfully built into a huge turf-stack protected from the driving rains by a wall or gable, perhaps improve by exposure to the winds, but in the wetter west unless the turf is under cover it must be dried in small quantities in the loft or by the fire before burning. In parts of Kerry the turf is stored in large clochauns: elsewhere narrow oblong or oval stone enclosures are erected, their walls loosely built to allow the wind to blow through. The peat-store or cleit of St. Kilda was similar—an oblong corbelled stone building with open joints.

The well is another essential item of equipment of farm or 312
clachan, and it is often provided with a corbelled stone cover. 343
Since springs are abundant, except in bare limestone country, the wells are not deep and few are fitted with windlasses. In their absence quite elaborate ramps with stone steps are sometimes needed to obtain access to the water, and the whole structure being roofed, some examples (for instance in the south-east of Co. Down) are considerable architectural feats (Fig. 40). In the limestone districts the woman of the house may have to walk as much as half a mile to carry drinking water from a dip-well. It is now carried in buckets but was formerly transported in stave-built piggins balanced on the head. The peasant makes a virtue of necessity by asserting that almost every spring well yields 'the finest water in all Ireland, and never runs dry'. Wells are regarded as chancy things, not to be

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, II (1902), 166.
[2]Ibid., 165.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 lightly meddled with, and if the water is not as good as usual
312 you will be told, in the phrase used for an ailing human being, that the well is 'not *at* itself at all'.

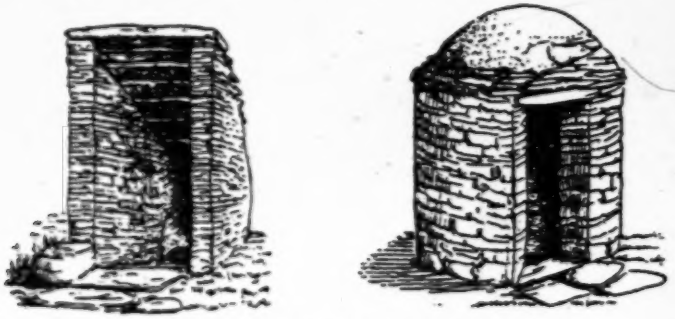

FIG. 40. Well-covers, Co. Cavan and Co. Down.

Finally we come to a miscellaneous assortment of outbuild-
343 ings and shelters built to house various animals and birds.
235 Elaborate pigeon houses (ducats) designed to house hundreds of birds seem to be confined to the east and south coasts and to areas planted by English or Scots. They are no doubt manorial in origin but some existing examples were built in the early nineteenth century, though they are no longer in use. In these areas the smaller farms may have little pigeon houses made for a dozen birds, and the humblest stable is likely to have a pigeon hole or two in the gable. The birds formerly nested in hanging nests of plaited straw.

Cavities in the thick walls about many old farms were built
343 as dog-kennels or duck-houses, and simple shelter holes ('boles'
231 in Ulster) were intended to house assorted three-legged iron pots (Fig. 32). An interesting variant is the bee-bole, a shelter for the bee-skep, a few examples of which have been observed in eastern Ireland.[1]

[1]R. M. Duruz and E. E. Crane, *English Bee Boles* (1955). (National Beekeeping Museum Pamphlet No. 1.)

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 16

778
312

Holy well at Doon, Co. Donegal. Crutches and bushes (*behind*) swathed in rags.

[facing p. 209]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

824 known instances when a branch accidentally broken from a fairy thorn was carefully tied back in position.

The policy of the Church was to attach new myths to old 797 rites, but only occasionally has the thorn tree been nominally 312 won over to Christianity by dedication to local saints or by its 778 association with sacred sites, with wells or Lammas celebrations, as for example the Criocan Thorn in the heart of Slieve Bloom.[1] On the other hand well-worship has had less stubborn roots, and 'holy water' has been more readily absorbed into Christian ritual. Nearly all the holy wells have close associations with the saints. Over 3,000 examples have been listed, most of them now half forgotten, others visited in secret and a declining number openly resorted to for cures. It is not difficult to understand the universal attraction of a spring of pure water. In the eyes of countryfolk a sense of mystery attaches to the upwelling of a spring well: it is considered lucky to have access to such a source of domestic water—a true 'well', not a hole bored in the ground—and one is invariably told that the local well yields the purest water for miles around, or even 'in all Ireland'. The attributes of purification, healing and fertility are natural concomitants of the magic welling of spring water, but besides possessing supernatural powers of this kind the holy wells are regarded as having had miraculous origins. The most famous sites where patterns are held have already been mentioned: the local holy well is rather an ever-present source of healing resorted to in need. One cannot but think of an ancient cult of waters springing from deep sources in primitive religion which was reinforced and adapted by successive intrusive cultures from the megalithic to the Christian (Pl. 16).

The ritual of 'paying rounds' at a well frequently involves 312 associated stones and trees. A sunwise circuit of the well is 778 made and the pilgrim, after taking a drink from the well, 788 hangs a rag or a rosary on an adjacent bush. The ritual commonly includes also tracing with a pebble on a stone of the well-covering the mark of a cross which has been incised by countless other pebbles. This practice has a bearing on the mysterious cup-marked stones and basin-stones (bullauns) which are associated with numerous ritual sites, including wells, for I

[1] V. Cornish, *Historic Thorn Trees in the British Isles*, 58.

believe that many examples were ground out in much the same way before the sign of the cross replaced that of the circle. Cup-marked stones are commonly found in megalithic graves, on standing stones and Bronze Age cists, both in the British Isles and further afield. Some of the larger bullauns were certainly mortars, and very similar 'knocking stones' were used until recent times for preparing barley meal by pounding the grain with a beetle or maul (Fig. 90). To judge from the frequency with which one finds a knocking stone in the ruins of an old clachan it was one of the communal possessions of such a settlement. Old specimens, more especially when the basins are sunk in an outcrop of rock, are frequently found to hold water, and they are then regarded as 'wells', the water being held efficacious as a cure for warts. That such rock-basins have magic powers is illustrated by the following reference to a site in Scotland. On the Loch Avon side of Cairngorm is a shelving rock bearing hand-made basins about a foot wide and correspondingly deep: 'sitting on them is said to be efficacious in cases of barrenness.'[1]

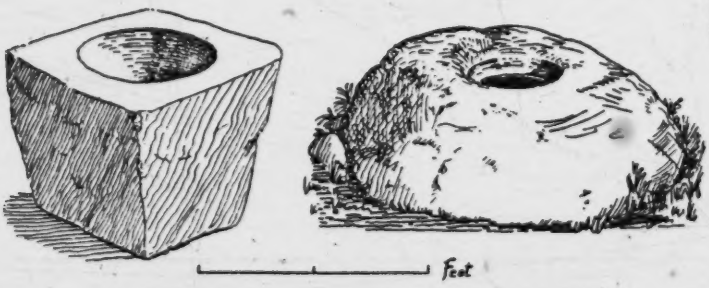

FIG. 90. Knocking stone and bullaun. Both Co. Antrim.

It is an interesting illustration of the pagan associations of cup-marks, and of the success of the symbol of the cross, that their use survived in folk practice only as cursing stones. Smooth pebbles resting in certain stone basins are turned three times against the sun. There are many examples in the west, some

[1]A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 265.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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526 perfect sphere the rounded igneous pebbles which are selected for the purpose. One wonders whether some of the many cup-marked stones which turn up in the fields in certain districts—I have seen many in Inishowen in Donegal—were used for shaping stones, such as the sling-stones with which champion slingers, of whom the legendary Cuchulainn was one, performed [411] their feats. The sling and the sling-rod were originally hunting weapons and probably instruments of war, and one of the last refuges of slinging as a pastime was the now vanished Claddagh, the fishing suburb of Galway, where a man was not reckoned a good shot until he could strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen.[1]

● 312 Where a holy well has dried up—the usual explanation is that it was desecrated and moved its position—the sanctity of the 824 site may be transferred to a tree. The so-called pin-well at 778 Arboe in Co. Tyrone is a beech tree, hirsute with pins and nails, growing in the burying ground on a Celtic monastic site. A rag-well at Clonmel is visited by mountain farmers who hang rag offerings on briars at lambing and calving times, and afterwards place more rags appropriate in number to the increase obtained.[2] There is on the island of Inishmurray a wind- [821] well which has the power of controlling the wind, the ritual being to empty the well to produce a calm. Sticks and stones also 789 figure in wind-raising ceremonies, and 'the rude stone image of 778 Inniskea' (Inishkea in Co. Mayo), which was dressed up in flannel each New Year's Day, had powers of producing either storm or calm.[3] Powerful magic was worked by a wooden statue of St. Macdara, formerly kept in his chapel—an oratory of early type with projecting *antae*—on an island dedicated to the saint in the extreme south-western corner of Co. Galway. Sailors passing the island dipped their sails three times in honour of the image, but we are left to guess what superstitions were involved from the statement that about the year 1640 'the bishop of Tuam caused it to be buried for weighty reasons'.[4]

[1] *U.J.A.*, 2 (1854), 164.
[2] *Béaloideas*, 15 (1945), 284.
[3] C. Otway, *Erris and Tyrawly*, 107.
[4] C. R. Browne, *Carna and Mweenish*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness 277 226 of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar [192] tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and, we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always [502] be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne 'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour, and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made [431] they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh- 825 water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most 312 part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, 234 and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are 825 peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 52.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3]S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

823 which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and
[121] philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several
[653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

• 312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small
312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells,
663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have
312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet
[333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches
[241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen
333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across
[653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but
[178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

221 233 234 fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than [462] the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and [233] outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. [232] These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were [224] low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [759]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 229
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well ..... seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [775] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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137 bound by innumerable ties to a countryside richer and fuller
[262] than that of to-day. Thus birch, rowan, hazel, thorn, sally and holly all had their special purposes, and yew was in great demand for croziers and shrines. So we might go on down to the humblest lichen (for crottle dye) and the seaweed (Chapter 16). Bog timber, oak and "fir," had many uses—for furniture and implements, for roofs, gates, slide-cars and boat-timber as well as for fir ropes and lighting "splits." Superstitious customs are associated with several of the native trees, especially the rowan, the ash, hazel and whitethorn (Chap. 18).

Sycamore and beech, neither of them native to Ireland, have been extensively planted in recent centuries and grow so well that many have assumed them to be indigenous. The beech loves the well-drained moraines, while the sycamore, one of the few trees which will stand up to the full force of
[351] the salt-laden winds, is planted in coastal districts for the
● 313 shelter it provides: behind its dense summer foliage many a
137 low cabin lies hidden. Its white easily-worked timber is sought by the wood-turner. Formerly the beetling engines of the linen country made a demand for beech and sycamore—the former for the beaters and the latter for the great beam. On steep hillsides which man has been unable to utilize one may still see patches of what may be regarded as wild scrub, a tangle of hazel, ash, black and white thorn, or birch, rowan and alder; but apart from the high-walled demesnes where giant trees are allowed to grow old and rot, the Irish landscape
137 is singularly bare of timber. Visitors from England will notice the poor development of hedgerow trees except for the ash of Co. Meath. This must be attributed largely to the fact that hedge trees have to grow in raised banks or "ditches," as they are called. Hedges and trees are very rarely planted on the level, for the ditch-tradition is older than the hedge. To quote Young once more: "I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks." But there is some compensation, in autumn, in the wealth of blackberries which they produce (Fig. 10).

137 Travellers of the early 19th century constantly refer to
311 landscapes without a single tree or shrub or any trace of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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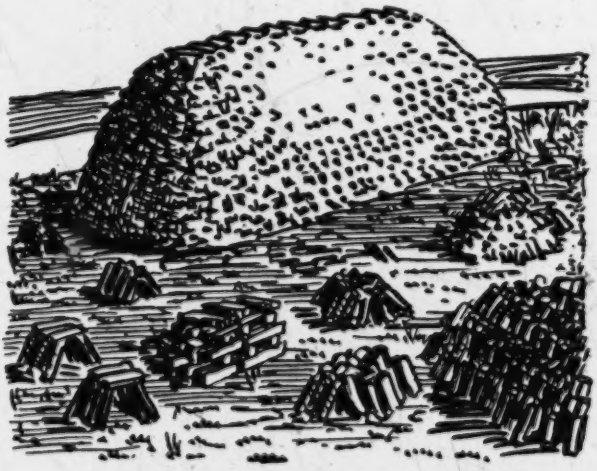
walks backwards, bare-footed, during this process of "running," dipping his hands from time to time in a bucket of water to clean them. The great slab of notched turf then resembles a huge tray of treacle toffee. The brick-like slabs, some 12 inches by 4, are later cut out with a sharp flat turf spade or a hay-knife, and go through the usual processes of footing, clamping and stacking. 314



Turf stack, footings, castles, spread turf, etc. Co. Antrim.

Fig. 93.

We must now consider briefly the uses made of bog timber, chiefly "fir" (Scots pine), oak and birch. The great fir stumps are cleaved with a heavy fir-hatchet, from 5 to as much as 14 pounds in weight (Fig. 92). A "lifter" of rather unusual type is also illustrated. The resinous wood makes excellent firing and kindling, but the toughest stumps defy the axe and their twisted roots make a convenient substitute for a gate or a stop-gap. Straight-grained fir was much in demand for making "splits," that is thin strips used for lighting purposes and for making the rims and bottoms of sieves. 313 [413]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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313 In the north long splits were twisted into fir-rope, a craft which is almost dead (Fig. 21 and Chapter 14). Both fir and oak were employed for constructional work of all kinds: old cabins will be found to be roofed with bog timber in most districts, and many implements, dressers, settles, stools, churns, tubs, slide-cars and even boats were fashioned from it. The buried trunks are located in winter by seeking frost-free patches on the bog-surface, or on summer mornings by noting where the dew lies thinnest. Their size and soundness are tested with an iron probing rod or "bog auger" and if satisfactory the trunks are then dug out.

491 Much might be said about the bog roads and means of access to the turf. In Armagh and Monaghan, to quote Mr. T. G. F. Paterson, the track or "car-path" by which the turf is carted home is called the "rampar" or "turf-pad," the rampar being the standing strip of bog preserved between cuttings. The various methods of tenure and rights of turbary are an interesting topic but a notorious source of trouble, and the Irish peasant finds ample opportunity for [691] indulging his litigious tastes in disputes over drainage and rights of way.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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one see a well-kept or neatly trimmed field-hedge and never a 351
staked and pleached hedgerow to compare with those of the English lowlands. The whole art of hedging is poorly developed, and the craft of laying a hedge almost unknown. The thorns are allowed to grow freely—as though they were the true fairy thorns which must never be damaged—and cut back ruthlessly at long intervals, when the many gaps are stuffed with dead thorns. The truth is that it is the bank rather than the hedge which makes the fence, and the thorns do little more than provide some shelter for livestock. But while the earthen banks grow tall hedges they will not support good hedgerow timber. The few starved ashes, sycamores or stunted beeches compare very unfavourably with the great oaks and elms of the English Midlands. Arthur Young brought his English common sense and prejudices to bear on the subject: 'To permit a hedge to grow too long without cutting not only ruins it for a fence but spoils the trees that are planted with it . . . I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks.' And consequently, 'the greatest part of the kingdom presents a naked bleak dreary view for want of wood.'[1] Elsewhere he writes, of Mitchelstown [137]
in Co. Cork, 'An oak, an ash, or an elm is almost as great a rarity as an olive, an orange or a mulberry.'[2]

The planting of hedges and hedgerow timber had been ad- 351
vocated by improvers since the sixteenth century. The Or- 313
dinances for the Government of Ireland (1534) lay down that 'every husbandman having a plough within the English Pale shall set by the year twelve ashes in the ditches and closes of his farm'. The ditch-bank was evidently already a feature of the farms in the Pale, and it is interesting that there, as generally through the east and north of the country, the ash—providing the most useful timber for general farm use—is the favourite hedgerow tree. But it is in the closes (the farmyards) that one sees most trees today, chief among them the sycamore whose dense foliage gives protection from the winds and from the prying eyes of neighbours. Next to the sycamore in popularity, and similarly providing a thick cover, come the beech and the conifers, and it is noteworthy that none of these species is

[1]Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 66
[2]ibid, 2, 272.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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351 native to the country. Around the coasts the sycamore is almost
●313 the only tree that persists, for it will stand up to the salt-laden gales everywhere save on the most exposed parts of the west coast. R. U. Sayce has recorded the belief, from Montgomeryshire, that 'sycamore trees keep the fairies away and stop them spoiling the milk',[1] but this bit of lore cannot be of any great antiquity since the tree did not reach Britain from its home in the mountain belt of southern Europe until the sixteenth century. It presumably arose from the association of the tree with the farmyard. In Ireland the sycamore probably came in with the early seventeenth century planters, though the beech may be a medieval or even older introduction. Both trees had many economic uses, especially for dry-coopering, that is the
[322] manufacture of provision casks and butter firkins, and the sycamore is an excellent wood for turnery. Later, as the linen industry became mechanized, the beetling mills demanded sycamore for the great beam of the engine and beech for the vertical beetles.

The lay-out of farm buildings seems to have been, in the
351 native single-farms, as haphazard and formless as was that of
361 the houses themselves in an old clachan. As separate farms with outbuildings ('offices') became fashionable improvements after the middle of the eighteenth century, the latter were built for convenience of access and they were put close to the farmhouse, either attached to one end or lying parallel to provide a windbreak. Only in the planted areas does one find old examples of planned 'courtyard farms' where the house and offices enclose a square or rectangular yard. I fancy the stone or wooden 'hovel-stands' with their picturesque mushroom-like staddle-stones are also confined to planted districts. In the west a favourite method of making stacks is to build them about a central pole. (See p. 164.)

The wayside style is another absentee in the native Irish
487 countryside, as is the footpath which is its companion. Short-
[417] cuts are rarely worth while in a land of tiny fields, and if there is a right of way there is sure to be a tolerable road. In fact there are so many farm lanes and access ways to mountain, seashore or bog that an economist might regard the amount of land so taken out of cultivation as excessive. It has been

[1] R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 45 (1938).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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averaging some twenty feet, and they have had a far longer life. 137
In their natural condition their surface is slightly convex, and
they may come to stand, perversely, above the level of the 314
surrounding countryside, though they began life in ill-drained hollows where reeds grew to make fen-peat. These lower layers tend to be alkaline in nature and when the upper layers are cut away the bogs may be turned into productive cropland if adequate drainage can be provided. Small areas of this type occur to the south of Lough Neagh, but Ireland has nothing to compare with the English fenlands. Yet the Irish bogs take their place in the agricultural economy as summer grazing grounds, [311] formerly for mixed stock and for cattle in particular, latterly mainly for sheep. In the past, too, considerable use was made of buried timber dug from the bogs,[1] of oak for roofing beams and [313] of pine for kindling and resinous 'splits' to give light. The long 'trying iron' with which buried timber was located is shown in Fig. 66, together with the massive 'fir hatchet' and 'fir rooter'.

To the ecologist the bogs provide a unique field of research into the history of the occupation of the country by plants, animals and man. In the waterlogged depths of the peats everything is preserved, even the tiniest seeds and insects. Centuries of successive summers are chronicled in countless pollens of trees and grasses which the botanist can identify and thereby reconstruct the changes of vegetation from prehistoric times down to the recent past. When man appeared on the scene not only did he leave his pathways and possessions in the bogs, but, as we have seen, he was an agent in their growth. His tools of stone and copper, bronze and iron, evolving in that order, are found lying at levels which can be correlated with the vegetation-history by analysing the pollens that cling to them. Thanks to the labours of Knud Jessen and Frank Mitchell we now have an approximate chronological sequence of landscapes and human cultures in Ireland going back several thousand years.

The pollen grains from the lowest layers of the upland bogs include those of shrubs such as hazel, birch, rowan and thorn, as well as, occasionally, those of cereals and the weeds of cultivation. Evidently the clearings soon became threatened with forest and field weeds, and these companions of the earliest

[1] E. E. Evans, *Irish Heritage*, 142; A. T. Lucas, *Béaloideas*, 23, 71–134.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 796 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of [778]
wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to [233]
"give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of 796
the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time
garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. [784]
Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the [782]
Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is [777]
tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for [769]
future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a [784]
small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of [638]
the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night
when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of 123
cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed 796
by the quick hardening metal. 787

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whit- 796
sunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as 776
the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually [821]
the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend
to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does
anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a [613]
danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children
and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground
unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the
demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or [461]
decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter [777]
are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then
may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern
day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer [857]
celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather 313
wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of
Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for [372]
protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A [789]
man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the [842]
failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the
folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the
hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven
between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry
leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish [114]
life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the
plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British
anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns
jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin 539
(O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 796

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the "landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and whatever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over. 221 241 314

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to allow turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round. 221 372 [805]

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabdiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June. 221 241 262

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up. 221 241

The first true harvest and the most important one of the year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is 246 221

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the division of labor between males and females is regarded as corresponding to the natural propensities of the two sexes. That a man should concern himself with a woman's work, such as the sale of eggs or the making of butter, is the subject of derisive laughter, while a woman's smaller hands make it "natural" for her to be a better hand at milking the cows. 462 626 183

Even when the communal labor of the family is demanded and women take their place in bog, garden, and meadow, a definite role is assigned them. Usually it is the lighter tasks which are known as women's work. There is no formal taboo confining a woman to women's work. Heavy work is merely felt to be a hardship upon her. At the potato planting the women do the arduous work of planting the sprouts which they have prepared, bending over to put them into the ridges prepared by the men. They do their share, if necessary, of cultivating, but they are not generally accustomed to the spade, which like the plough, the harrow, the mower, scythe, and turf "slan" is regarded as a masculine implement. At the potato lifting they go along behind the man who turns the potatoes out of the ridge with spade and plough, and pick them up. At the haymaking, the pitching, raking, and some of the building of the haycocks are left to them. But the mowing, especially where it involves the horse-drawn mowing machine, and the building of the rick in the haggard, are masculine skills. In all cases of field work of this sort the role of the woman is usually auxiliary. The same holds in turf cutting. The men do the actual cutting in the bog trenches, while the women knead the peat into briquets and pile it for drying. 241 462 [562] [314]

The many attitudes and beliefs which surround this type of division of labor illustrate again the socially determined character of the distinctions and their genesis in the intersexual relationship. Just as the man's work is the harder, the more various, and the wider in scope, so the attitudes express a greater valuation of the men's work within the 241 462 626 183 461

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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CUTTING TURF WITH THE SLÁN

[Facing p 73]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

a widespread industry among the country people throughout Ireland. There seems even then to have been quite a widespread cottage industry in wool and linen, later to be destroyed everywhere except in Ulster. The peasantry displayed great ingenuity at the craft. The wool of their sheep was made into frieze at home, carded, spun, woven, dyed, and consumed there.[1] Oils essential to the weaving process were extracted from fern roots, and dyes were got from alder, walnut, oak, and elderberry. This craft survives today as a cottage industry only in remote parts of Donegal and Kerry and in the Scottish highlands and isles. Such home-spinning was once widespread, probably universal. It survived here and there down to a very late date. In Ulster and northern England the industry was gradually brought into the factory, where it laid the foundation for the industrial revolution. But in the rest of Ireland industrial production of woolens was confined to Dublin by 1840 and, as a commercial enterprise, the wool trade was dead except in the region of Belfast. A few small factories survived in several towns, for example at Limerick, Clonmel, and Bandon, but there was no life or power of expansion in them.

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[314
386]

Other manufactures originally native to the country repeat the story of wool. A few attempts at cotton manufacture died out. Linen suffered the same fate. At one time flax was grown extensively throughout Ireland, and a home industry of weaving linen was practiced widely in both town and countryside in many parts of the country. O'Brien[2] cites evidence that the older custom in linen making, strongest in Ulster, but not unknown elsewhere, by which weavers occupied plots of land and supplemented their income by farming, was gone by the famine time.

[2] George O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* (London, New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1921). See also O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin and London: Maunsel & Company, Ltd., 1918).

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

172 311 351 been discovered under many feet of peat. Several types can be recognized, for example those with upright stones at intervals, which are sometimes left as "standing stones" after the intervening walls have been removed. Old field fences at Cush, Co. Limerick, claimed to be contemporary with raths of the late Bronze Age and "essentially similar to those built by an Irish farmer of to-day" have been described by Professor O'Riordain. This appears to be a striking example of continuity, for the fences are closely followed by existing field-boundaries. Since they lie some 800 ft. above sea-level they do not invalidate the general picture I shall draw in the following chapter, but it is clear that much more work on the lines followed at Cush is required.

351 314 137 [231] Hedges of whins (that is, gorse or furze) about the farmstead are much prized not only for the shelter they afford to stock—they are dense and do not drip—but because they form an admirable clothes line on washing day and a ready source of kindling wood. Formerly the young whin shoots were crushed and fed to horses. The heavy wooden maul and stone block used in the process may still be seen occasionally. It would require years of enquiry and observation to describe and classify the types of sod ("scraw") earth and stone fences which now parcel out the Irish soil into its patchwork of small fields. One may easily recognize the sod ditches of the rich grazing lands of Meath, with their tall thorn hedges and ash trees giving shelter to the cattle, the well-built dry-stone walls of the granite mountain slopes which vainly seek to stop the black-faced sheep, and the loose lace-like walls precariously constructed out of rough boulders in the morainic hills.

351 311 137 In the wind-swept mountains and along the coasts the ditches are hedgeless, carrying only a tangle of heather or whins and an occasional stunted tree, but throughout the lowlands the prevailing type of fence is a stone-faced bank of sods, in the side of which quick-thorn is planted (Fig. 10). These are cut back ruthlessly at longish intervals and are never pleached in the English way, so that the hedge is full of gaps. Occasion-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

rotation grass is referred to as upland hay to distinguish it from meadow hay, although in fact it often grows at lower levels. Sometimes at this stage the hay is hung on bushes and fences something after the Scandinavian manner. 246

When sufficiently dry the laps are opened and the hay piled into small cocks (ricks or lumps), and this process is repeated a number of times if the weather is bad until the stage of large hand-cocks is reached, or, if the hay is in good condition, even larger "tramp-cocks," trodden down firmly. The cocks are tied down with a hay-rope made on the spot (Fig. 50) and left "to season" for a period which may be only a week or two but which, to the stranger, seems generally an unconscionable time. In this matter the Irish

[283]

Fig. 50.

are confirmed in what the English call their lazy ways. Admittedly there are dry years when it would do no harm to the hay to stack it at once, but the Irish method is adapted to the average season, and rooted in a firmly-fixed rota of farm work. In August the turf must be carried home while the bogs are firm enough to take the carts, and in many parts the busy time of flax-pulling and retting is come. Although these alternative demands on the farmer's time are not always present, they may have helped in the past to standardize the rotation of work. Moreover, when the opportunity of carry- 492 246

[314]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XV.

THE BOG.

314 I have called this chapter " the Bog " rather than " Turf " because fuel is not the only product of the Irish turf bogs. The rough grazings once so important in mountain economy (Chapter 6) are commonly located on thin peat, while " buried treasure " is obtained in the form of bog-timber and also, it may be, in objects of wood or metal lost or deposited in the turf in ancient times. Measured by the time and labour of cutting, footing, stacking, and carrying, turf is an expensive fuel. At best, work in the bogs involves a constant struggle against water-logging underfoot and mists and rain overhead: at the worst there comes an occasional season wetter than usual when little or no turf can be won, and the bare countryside must be searched for sticks and rotting timber to burn. [237] In these circumstances dried cowdung is often used as fuel. [372] Moreover, the heavy drain upon all available hands comes in early summer, and the growing crops and livestock are liable to be neglected. " A great impediment to good husbandry," is the verdict of one writer.

The turf is cut in a normal year from the beginning of May onwards, or as soon as the potatoes and corn are in the ground, but the great thing is to begin as early as possible in [132] order to profit from the dry weather of spring. In districts where few crops are grown April, the driest month of the year, is the chosen time. A current of excitement runs through

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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314 the homestead as preparations are made to visit the bog, which may lie at any distance up to some miles away. I fancy turf-cutting was one of the tasks undertaken in the old days by the young people who took the cattle to the booleys. It used to be a communal task, for instance in Donegal until lately [476] six or eight men with their women and child helpers would pool their labour, receiving their meals for the day from the owner of each successive bank to be cut. Similarly each man would take his burden-creel to assist in the communal gathering and stacking in July or August.

Fig. 83. The flachter in use, Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim.

Fig. 84. Flachter in "at rest" position.

The first process in turf-cutting is the removal of the surface "parings"—the scraw—consisting of tough matted roots, coarse grass and moss, to a depth of anything from three or four inches to as much as 18 inches. The scraw is not taken as fuel except in areas where turf is scarce, but in some localities where the bogs have all been cut out, as in Rathlin and Tory, thin scraw scraped off the rock is the only fuel, and a very dirty and inefficient fire it makes. A broad spade is employed for paring, supplemented by some sharp cutting tool such as a hay-knife (Fig. 82), or an old scythe blade hafted and fitted with a foot-spur, for notching the vertical

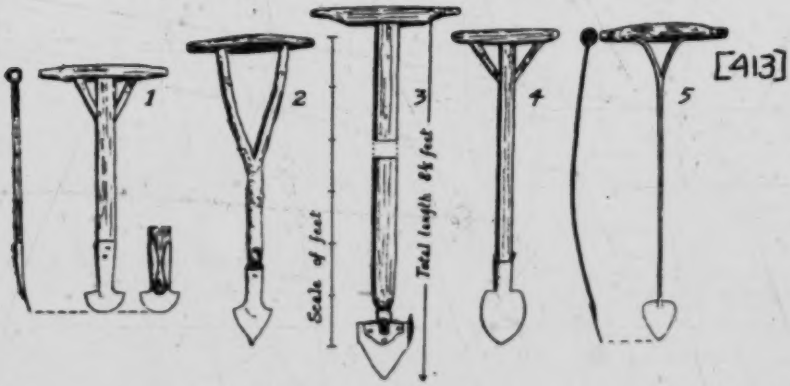
[413]

Fig. 82.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuts. It is customary to replace the sod on the floor of the 314
bog as the face is cut back, so that the rough grazing is
preserved. If the sub-soil is suitable, lowland bogs are [311]
reclaimed and good cropping land secured for hay and potatoes. [185]
In Armagh strawberries, raspberries, currants and rhubarb grow excellently on the peaty soils.

In the mountain bogs of the north-east a variety of push plough known as the flachter—a word derived from the same root as "flay"—cuts off a scraw some six inches thick as it is driven by vigorous thrusts of the thighs against the stout cross-bar (Figs. 83, 84). Unlike the English breast-



[413]

Fig. 85. Flachters.

1. Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim. 3. Glenravel, Co. Antrim (English type).
2. Glendun, Co. Antrim. 4. Co. Tyrone (1802).
5. Tirmeel, Co. Derry (iron shaft).

plough, the blade has no side wing. It is fastened to the shaft by the old-fashioned device of folded flanges which we have already come across in the sock of the wooden plough and in the loy. I illustrate in Fig. 85 some varieties of flachter and, for comparison, a breast-plough of English type from mid-Antrim (centre). In connexion with the short-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

314 handled variety the story is told that on old turf-cutter at Coolnagoppoge, on seeing his first aeroplane pass overhead, reported that he had seen "the devil riding a flachter!"

314 413 The prepared turf bank may now be cut in one of two ways, either by "breasting" or by digging "underfoot." Different types of spade or "slane" are required according to which method is adopted, and within these two groups of slanes there is a multitude of regional styles and shapes. In breast-work the digger stands facing the turf bank, and thrusts in his spade horizontally, whereas in underfooting he stands on the bank and cuts vertically. Many factors enter into the distribution of these two digging-modes: the nature and grain of the peat, the depth of the face, and the local tradition. I have seen both methods used side by side on the same mountain, but I have also met foot-slanesmen who had never seen a breast-slane and vice-versa. In the thin mountain bogs the underfoot method is customary, while breasting is favoured in the deep lowland mosses. The turf slane is clearly a specialized version of the narrow loy, with the addition of a side wing to cut out the turf at one stroke. The old styles take the handle in bent-over flanges like the loy, but the new fashions of "factory" spade have borrowed the straps of the "English" digging spade (Fig. 86). Slanes were formerly made by the country smith, and the spade-factories which now forge them must cater for the demands and tastes of innumerable provinces of local culture which correspond, if one may hazard a guess, with old territorial units such as the baronies.

[391] Co. Derry Underfoot Turf Spade

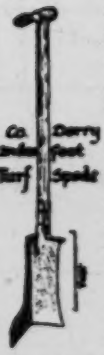


Fig. 86.

One factor in the varying shapes is the angle made by the cutting edge of the wing with the mouth of the blade: it may be at right-angles but is more likely to be set backward or forward at an angle which may be as much as 23°. In the breast-slane it tends to be set back (Fig. 89), while in the foot-slane it may be set forward at a sharp angle (Fig. 86). The edge of the wing measures anything from 4½ to 7 inches: the mouth of the spade averages 4½ inches but I have seen them up to 6 inches. Details vary so much, in fact, that to generalize is dangerous. The top or back of the wing is treated

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

in many different ways, for instance around Ballymoney it is hooked and the slanesman uses it to pull the turf-barrow into position. A foot-rest is provided on the foot-slane, on the side opposite the wing. There are left and right-footed workers, but it is not always necessary to use the foot, the strength of the arm sufficing. As with some of the loys (Chapter 13), there is a type of slane in the Midlands which has a separate spade-tree to which the handle is attached by two iron bands (Fig. 88). The spade-tree is of light wood, elm, or larch. Lightness is an essential quality in the slane: the blade is thin and sharp and weighs about 1½ pounds. The old type of

Fig. 87.

slane, like the loy, is straight handled, but it is customary to affix a cow's horn as hand-grip (Fig. 87.) Another type of handle is shown in Fig. 86.

Where the bogs are soft, especially in the area from Galway to Meath, a broad flat breast spade is employed in place of the winged slane. Its blade measures some 13 inches by 5 and it is sharpened at the sides as well as the mouth (Fig. 88). A Co. Derry variety has the edge expanded to 5¾ inches: its blade is slightly dished and has a gentle rounded lift. Details of this kind assist in the penetration and with-

Fig. 88.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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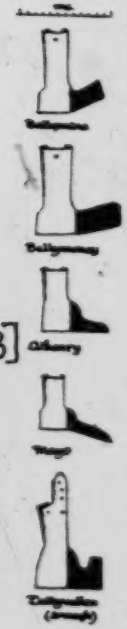
413

drawal of the blade, and the expanded socket acts in the same way. An interesting method of hafting is found in the "diamond" breast spade of East Galway (Fig. 88) in which the handle is fitted by soaking it to expand and grip the diamond-shaped perforations in the socket. The flat breast spade has to make two separate cuts before a turf is detached from the face. It has a short handle the length of which, about 2 ft., is adjusted to the length of the user's arm.

An experienced slanesman works with astonishing precision which recalls the steady ticking of a clock, his



[493]

Fig. 89.
Top two are breast slanes.

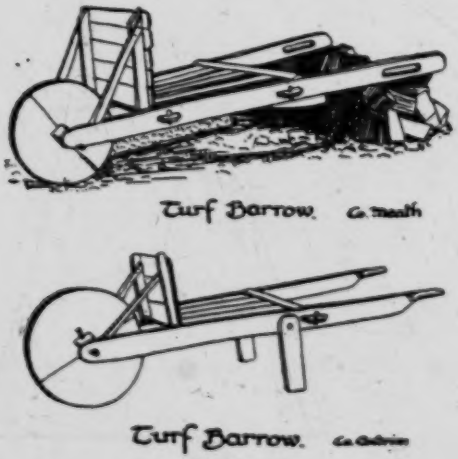


Fig. 90.

strong thrusts alternating with little jabs, designed to clean the edge of the spade, which remind the onlooker of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the smith's hammer between his blows. Similarly the co-operation between slanesman, pitcher and spreader, or "holer," is a delightful thing to watch. But the work is hard and relentless. The severed turves may be placed directly on the barrow from the spade, or lifted off by hand two at a time and either loaded or pitched to a third hand who places them on the barrow. On deep

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuttings a long-handled graip is sometimes used, and the 314
smiths turned out special two-pronged pitching forks for the 413
purpose (Fig. 66). If the peat is soft a long-handled shovel is employed instead. A barrow-load varies in capacity, for instance it is 10 turves in parts of Antrim and 14 in Armagh. [493]
The difference depends on the dimensions of the turves as well as the size of the barrow and the state of the bog surface: turves range from about 22 inches by 4 by 5 to 10 inches by 4 by 3, but they shrink considerably as they dry.

The turf barrow is a low solid-wheeled archaic-looking 314
vehicle (Fig. 90) the details of its construction showing as 493
many adaptations to local conditions and traditions as the slane itself. It is a compromise between two opposing needs—a large wheel for ease of pushing over the rough bog surface and a low chassis to facilitate loading and emptying, for the barrow is merely tilted on one side by the spreader, the turves slipping off and standing on end in serried rows to dry. The barrow must be as light as possible: hence no iron is used in its construction except for the axle-ends, and, perhaps, a light tyre for the solid wheel or "trundle." In soft bogs the trundle must be wide—as much as 5 inches—but three inches is more usual. Its diameter ranges from 12 to 18 inches. The legs of the barrow are always short and may be mere lugs, or they may be absent, in which case there must be some arrangement for enabling the handles to be gripped: they are either perforated or upturned (Fig. 90). An interesting variant which I have noticed around Athenry has the legs bent [492]
backwards in a curve to act as slides or runners. A curious adaptation to soft bogland is recorded a century ago from Co. [481]
Mayo, where both horses and men were "shod with boards" when working in the moss. Box-barrows are something used to transport dried turf, or a "kish" may be placed on the flat barrow. In Armagh "carrying baskets" are employed (Fig. 91).

Little can be said here about the methods adopted to dry 314
the turf: the shapes and names of the various piles into which

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

3/4 the fuel is built differ from one area to another, and I give as a sample the list prepared by Mr. J. M. Mogey for Co. Antrim. After about a fortnight the spread turf is stacked in small "foots" formed by leaning a number of turves together, and later in "turn-foots" and "castles" which are built up in storeys. These are then combined into larger "rickles" or

[482]
[285]

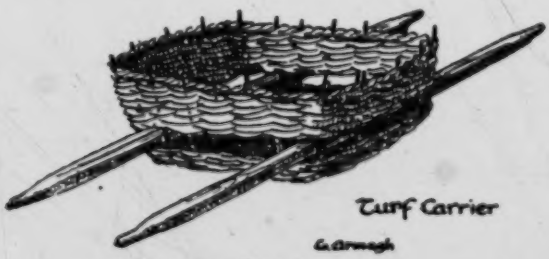


Fig. 91.

"clamps" and finally stored in "hand-stacks" erected alongside a bog road or in larger stacks built at the homestead (Fig. 93).

[413]

Fig. 92.

In many parts of the country the low-lying bogs are too wet to cut with the spade, and other methods of "winning" the turf must be adopted. Making "hand-turf" by moulding or "kneading" the black mud into balls is the simplest solution of the problem, but systematic methods have been evolved in some districts, and we give an account of the process as observed in Co. Meath, where mud turf is highly prized and considered to burn better and last longer than cut peat. It is dug in pits, broken down with short-handled shovels and graips and well mixed with water until the slushy mixture is ready to shovel into a box barrow, that is an ordinary manure barrow or a turf barrow fitted with sides, It is wheeled on to a smooth place and spread in a layer some 9 inches thick. When dry enough to take a man's weight the layer is notched in deep parallel grooves made with the edges of the hands, with cross grooves at intervals. The worker

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

walks backwards, bare-footed, during this process of "running," dipping his hands from time to time in a bucket of water to clean them. The great slab of notched turf then resembles a huge tray of treacle toffee. The brick-like slabs, some 12 inches by 4, are later cut out with a sharp flat turf spade or a hay-knife, and go through the usual processes of footing, clamping and stacking. 314

Turf stack, footings, castles, spread turf, etc. Co. Antrim.

Fig. 93.

We must now consider briefly the uses made of bog timber, chiefly "fir" (Scots pine), oak and birch. The great fir stumps are cleaved with a heavy fir-hatchet, from 5 to as much as 14 pounds in weight (Fig. 92). A "lifter" of rather unusual type is also illustrated. The resinous wood makes excellent firing and kindling, but the toughest stumps defy the axe and their twisted roots make a convenient substitute for a gate or a stop-gap. Straight-grained fir was much in demand for making "splits," that is thin strips used for lighting purposes and for making the rims and bottoms of sieves. 313 [413]

[p.204(c)]

133 here, but the original memoir[7] states that the rocks are mainly schists and gneisses, dipping at sharp angles of 30°–89°, much broken by faults and seared by sills and dikes. In short, it is a characteristic pre-Cambrian area. Peat several feet deep is found in the ● 314 basins between the numerous small hills. Many people cut "scraws," that is, the surface layers of the rough pasture. This time-hallowed practice, noted with disapproval by the Congested Districts Board inspectors 60 years ago,[8] increases year by year the area of exposed rock; it may well be that throughout the peat-consuming areas of Ireland—and of Scotland also—this has happened.[9] As one observer put it, "every

[113] [7] Memoirs of the Geological Survey, Explanatory Memoir . . . sheets 73 and 74 (in part), 83 and 84, Dublin 1876, pp. 39–42.

[8] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891 (and many more such comments in other reports).

[9] F. Fraser Darling: West Highland Survey, London, 1955, pp. 43, 67, 272–276. See especially an interesting survey of what (in Scotland) is called "skinned land" in Lewis by M. Macdonald.

[Text continues on p. 205(B)]

[p.205(B)]

314 year the feed of a dozen sheep is burnt in the homes."

Agricultural life depends on the use
311 of the "commonage," or rough pasture,
231 and the improved land, which is almost entirely drift fertilized by seaweed and
632 farmyard manure. Two-thirds of the island's 2480 acres is rough pasture, used for the sheep, cattle, ponies, and donkeys, as well as for peat collection. Figure 1 shows that the island is divided into five townlands, in each of which the commonage is shared, with the result that a farmer may take his animals not to the rough pasture near his holding but to ground as much as a mile away. There is a band of farm lands
311 stretching from lough Bofin to the har-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Norway and other sub-arctic regions—and from an economy where straw was not available. We have already noticed that cattle-herders in the early seventeenth century built their booley houses of boughs coated with long strips of green turf. The long sods made a portable roof which could be slung on a pole between two pack-horses. 342 [171]

The sods were cut in strips from carefully selected spots where a close-grazed sward gave a thick mat of grass-roots. They measure two to three feet wide and about one and a half inches thick, and as they were cut they were rolled on to a stick and carried like a carpet. Their roofing sods, wrote Thomas Campbell in 1778, 'they call scraws (they are rolled up like scrolls) but they would be better called hides, for they are flayed off the earth.'[1] In the north, where the flachter or breast-plough was used for paring sods (Chapter X), the scraws might be as much as twelve or fourteen feet long, though short turves were also used. They were carried on to the roof up two ladders and laid on grass upwards, overlapping at the ridge on the side away from the wind. They overlapped laterally also, the scraw on the windward side running over its neighbour on the lee (Fig. 14). In many such details careful attention was paid to the wind and the rain, for example the strongest purlins were put on the side whence driving rain was most to be expected. Similarly the stoutest couples were placed at the weather end of the house, and they were sometimes given a slight inclination towards the wind. A seemingly artless cabin may thus be found to show the most careful adaptation to local conditions. 342 314

The first thin layer of thatch was, in some parts of the country, sewn on to the purlins with a thatching needle—the older pattern has a large eye to take hay-rope (Fig. 15)—and the roof might then be finished in one of several regional styles. In the eastern part of Co. Down, and sporadically elsewhere, the straw is laid on in specially prepared bundles or stapples[2] (Gaelic *Stapull*) and the thatch is plastered down at eaves, gable and ridge with clay or mud. A few scollops are added at ridge and eaves. This is probably a very ancient method, 342 [413] [177]

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 146.
[2]K. Danaher, *Béaloideas* (1948), 203–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Fermanagh
County Antrim

PLATE 9

314
516
493
291
412

1. Cutting turf (underfooting) in a Co. Fermanagh bog.

314
417
493
291

2. Building a peat stack, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 144]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Meath

PLATE 10

314
291
[412]

1. Spreading mud turf with long-handled shovel, Co. Meath.

[516]

2. "Running" the spread turf.

[Facing p.145]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XIV

TURF AND SLANE

IT should perhaps be explained that this chapter has nothing to do with horses, for the word *turf* in Ireland keeps its old meaning—as in German *torf* and French *tourbe*—and is the equivalent of the English word *peat*. Only in the extreme north-east of the country, in districts settled by Scots planters, does one hear turves cut from the bog referred to as peats. The cutting-spade, a highly specialized tool, is known as a turf-spade or sleán, a Gaelic word which may be anglicized as slane. 314

Moving about the Irish countryside one is never long out of sight or scent of turf. The scent arises not from the bogs themselves, which for all their accumulated decay are free of the odours of putrifaction, but from the surprisingly sweet smell of burning turf which announces their proximity. For the returning exile nothing so surely tugs at the trigger of memory: the faintest whiff of turf smoke hanging in the damp air is enough to recall the whole scene, the glowing fire on the hearth, the half-light of the kitchen, the great turf stack at the gable and all the toil that went to its making. And in the background is the bog itself, save at the cutting season a quiet empty place, holding a stillness which deepens when the curlew's cry fades away or the startled pipit drops back into the heather. Green and gold in spring, it beckons with waving bog-cotton in summer and glows with reds and russets as of a great peat fire in autumn. These are scents and scenes not readily forgotten.

The use of turf as fuel is nowadays an index of isolation and economic self-sufficiency. Mechanical excavation of fuel for power plants is being successfully applied by Bord na Mona (the Irish Turf Board) but for domestic fuel nothing can replace 372 314

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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314 372 [439]

the costly hand-cutting, -wheeling, and -turning. The calorific value of peat is less than half that of coal, and its bulk makes transport costs high. Small coal-boats put in at harbours all round the coast, and in the larger towns, whose adjacent supplies were early exhausted, coal has been the chief fuel since the days when Dean Swift vainly advised the Irish to burn everything English except their coal. During the second world war, however, even Dublin had to depend on turf brought from the west and stacked in immense piles in Phoenix Park. Some peat is still burnt in the towns, especially in the interior of the country, but it is in the small farms that the bulk of the annual turf harvest is consumed. So necessary was a supply of peat in former times that proximity to a turf bog was a factor in land values. As to the antiquity of its use as fuel in Ireland we have little evidence, though Pliny describes its preparation in ancient Germany. Petty tells us in the second half of the seventeenth century that 'their fuel is turf in most places',[1] although Professor O'Brien, writing of the same century states that 'until the woods began to sink to very small proportions, turf was not at all employed for heating.'[2] The difficulty is that such a lowly pursuit as peat-cutting is not likely to be mentioned in the Irish law texts, and if we rely on documentary evidence alone we might suppose that all sorts of ancient practices were introduced by the English who first described them. To judge from the bright red ashes one frequently sees in the excavated hearths of Dark Age habitations peat was used as firing before history begins in upland areas and along the wind-swept coasts. But we may accept the view that over most of the country turf-cutting on its historic scale developed, probably under the stimulus of improved techniques brought in by English settlers, after the major forest clearances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is evidence from some parts of the country, for the eighteenth century, that the cutting of peat for winter use was one of the occupations of transhumant herders who took their livestock to the bog pastures in summer.[3] But it is unreasonable to suppose that the great labour involved

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), 82.
[2]G. O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century*, 44.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down*, 125.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

would have been undertaken so long as supplies of timber were available, though Petty observed that 'the cutting and carriage of turf was easier than that of wood.'[1] We may think of turf as supplementing and then coming to replace wood fuel, though in fact some wood is still very desirable to supplement the slow-burning turf, especially the quick-burning gorse and bog-fir which are the most readily available sources in treeless areas. 314 372

It is calculated that at least one fifth of the country is coated with bog, but a small proportion of this could be classed as reclaimed bog. It occurs not only in all the mountain areas but also, and more conspicuously, in the ill-drained hollows of the lowlands where glacial deposits had blocked the natural flow of waters or human occupation had brought about environmental changes. It is estimated that in recent years over 5 million tons of dried domestic fuel have been cut annually, representing a weight as cut of some 40 million tons. At this rate the supply is reckoned to last for 500 years, but this makes no allowance for the increasing exploitation of peat for the thermal generation of electricity and for the extraction of by-products. There is, however, a slow accretion of peat in many areas, though this consists mostly of sphagnum peat and the good-quality fen and forest peats of the deeper bogs are not being replaced. In fact these deeper layers tend to remain untapped either because the water cannot be drained away, or because layers of tree-stumps defy the attacks of both spade and mechanical digger. 314 [133] [375]

The main causative factor in bog-formation is waterlogged soil, which checks the decomposition of vegetable remains. It therefore depends to a considerable extent on climate and on the balance between precipitation and evaporation. It is generally held that past phases of bog-growth can be correlated with periods of climatic deterioration, and horizons which are believed to mark the changed conditions can be traced in most of the deep bogs. In Scandinavia the most important of such 'recurrence horizons' has been dated by pollen-analysts and archaeologists to about 400 B.C.: the stormy sub-Atlantic climate whose beginning is thus chronicled is believed to have improved somewhat early in the Christian era, but to have suffered two further periods of worsening about A.D. 400 and 137 314

[1]Sir W. Petty, op. cit., 82.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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314
137

A.D. 1300. Attempts to extend this chronological scheme to cover Ireland have not been successful, and the current view is that some at least of the recurrence horizons should be attributed to ecologic changes brought about by human action which led to the redistribution of water and the blocking of drainage. Admittedly the basal Boreal peats of lowland bogs, and the Atlantic peats which succeeded them, must have been formed without any appreciable human interference, for in those periods traces of man are either absent or few and limited in distribution, but from sub-Boreal times onwards, after 2500 B.C., we have to reckon with human societies equipped with tools and domestic animals capable of working far-reaching changes in environmental conditions. The blanket bogs which cover the mountain slopes and in the west spread indiscriminately over hundreds of square miles of upland and lowland alike are admittedly associated with areas of heavy precipitation and high humidity, but the significant fact is that some of them can be shown to have been initiated in sub-Boreal times following extensive clearance of the woodlands which previously grew there. Walking over the upland bogs, I have stepped on to the roofing slab of a great stone monument which once stood seven feet clear of the ground: it had been completely engulfed in peat formed since its erection. Study of the bottom layer of this bog showed that it contained pollen grains of cereal type and of weeds of cultivation such as ribwort plantain.[1] Leaching of soils exposed by shallow cultivation and the formation of iron-pan seem to have followed human occupation of the sandy moraines and residual soils to which early man was attracted by their dryness and by the lightness of their forest cover. The extensive areas affected, despite the presumably small population, may be explained if we suppose that cultivation was temporary and that settlements were moved every few years.

These blanket bogs are rarely more than six or eight feet thick and many stretches have been reduced by turf cutting and erosion to a mere skin with occasional residual hags betraying their former depth. The so-called raised bogs of the lowlands, in contrast, are not easily cut-out: they are often very deep,

[1] G. F. Mitchell, *P.R.I.A.*, 53B (1951), 159.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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averaging some twenty feet, and they have had a far longer life. In their natural condition their surface is slightly convex, and they may come to stand, perversely, above the level of the surrounding countryside, though they began life in ill-drained hollows where reeds grew to make fen-peat. These lower layers tend to be alkaline in nature and when the upper layers are cut away the bogs may be turned into productive cropland if adequate drainage can be provided. Small areas of this type occur to the south of Lough Neagh, but Ireland has nothing to compare with the English fenlands. Yet the Irish bogs take their place in the agricultural economy as summer grazing grounds, formerly for mixed stock and for cattle in particular, latterly mainly for sheep. In the past, too, considerable use was made of buried timber dug from the bogs,[1] of oak for roofing beams and of pine for kindling and resinous 'splits' to give light. The long 'trying iron' with which buried timber was located is shown in Fig. 66, together with the massive 'fir hatchet' and 'fir rooter'.

To the ecologist the bogs provide a unique field of research into the history of the occupation of the country by plants, animals and man. In the waterlogged depths of the peats everything is preserved, even the tiniest seeds and insects. Centuries of successive summers are chronicled in countless pollens of trees and grasses which the botanist can identify and thereby reconstruct the changes of vegetation from prehistoric times down to the recent past. When man appeared on the scene not only did he leave his pathways and possessions in the bogs, but, as we have seen, he was an agent in their growth. His tools of stone and copper, bronze and iron, evolving in that order, are found lying at levels which can be correlated with the vegetation-history by analysing the pollens that cling to them. Thanks to the labours of Knud Jessen and Frank Mitchell we now have an approximate chronological sequence of landscapes and human cultures in Ireland going back several thousand years.

The pollen grains from the lowest layers of the upland bogs include those of shrubs such as hazel, birch, rowan and thorn, as well as, occasionally, those of cereals and the weeds of cultivation. Evidently the clearings soon became threatened with forest and field weeds, and these companions of the earliest

[1] E. E. Evans, *Irish Heritage*, 142; A. T. Lucas, *Béaloideas*, 23, 71–134.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 farmers, both the flowers of the fields and the shrubs of the
forest edge, took on a special significance which they have
314 retained in the peasant mind to the present day. There is powerful magic in the flowers of May, in the hazel twig, the fairy birch, the rowan branch and above all in the flowering hawthorn. This most beautiful of trees first became common in the Neolithic period. In a later chapter we shall consider some of the enduring spiritual aspects of man's association with this environment of his own making. At about this time, too, when the Neolithic economy was both absorbing the older population and being supplemented by metal tools, pollen studies reveal a marked decline of the elm tree which has been explained by the use of its bark and branches as cattle fodder. The oak forests, however, persisted in strength, and were presumably treasured for their supply of pig-fattening mast. Alder also was abundant, occupying soils which were too damp to be cultivated.

The onset of the sub-Atlantic climatic deterioration in the last millennium B.C. seems to have accelerated the peat-forming processes. Both oak and elm decline, but the birch tree spreads widely. In County Antrim, for instance, extensive oak forests growing up to heights of 1,000 feet were overwhelmed in the spreading bogs. The pine had become rare by the end of prehistoric times, though it may have lingered into the historic period on sandy eskers and on the dried surfaces of some of the raised bogs. Despite climatic change and human interference, considerable oak and alder forests survived here and there into the seventeenth century, but these last remnants of the Irish forests were almost all destroyed by the military and economic demands of that troubled century. Among the many consequences was the almost universal exploitation of the peat bogs for fuel. In addition great quantities of turf were consumed by the linen bleachers from the late eighteenth century, and kilns for burning lime and bricks and for drying agricultural produce made considerable demands on the bogs. A minor traditional
[372] use which may be mentioned in passing was for the preparation of charcoal for smith's work. The peat was charred in pits.

For all its toil turf-cutting provides a welcome break from
314 the routine of farmwork, a time when friends and neighbours
786 come together away from the familiar surroundings of fields

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this 314
time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals [786]
and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf-
cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the
lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a
stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out
of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades
and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on
fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an
exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers
that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the differ-
ence between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere [132]
the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an
early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the
planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month,
so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There
is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when [821]
the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the
tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it
is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but
once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep
cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a [521]
'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the [423]
decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when
banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally
has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or [476]
three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in
turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the
helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient
fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required
depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf.
Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown
top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a
proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist
humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like
coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is [804]
the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that
a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading, [461]

314 could account for twenty-five loads in a day, but, my in-
[461] formant added, 'they would need to be strong in the back and weak in the head'; as at corn harvest competitive cutting and 'striving' brought intense excitement and severe strain.

'Opening up' a bank involves first of all the removal of the top layer of tough fibrous peat—'flow' or 'fum'—to a depth of a foot or so. It grows heather, tough grasses or mosses and makes poor firing, though there are districts, especially on the islands, which have exhausted their turf and burn nothing but the even more fibrous sods or 'rough-heads' skinned off the rocks. The common spade is usually employed for opening a face, supplemented often by a sharp nicking tool, a hay-knife
[412] or a portion of an old scythe-blade hafted for the purpose. In parts of north Ulster the thin top-layer of the mountain bogs is removed with a small variant of the breast-plough known as a flachter or flaying-spade, one of the tools which this region shares with western Scotland (Fig. 45). The term breast-plough is a euphemism, for it is really a groin-plough, pushed forward by thrusts of the thighs and groin.

The bog parings are generally spread on the cut-over bog below the bank, where they give a dry footing for the barrow-men wheeling away the turves. The pared sods in time consolidate, so that the rough grazing of the bog is preserved at a lower level. Conditions vary considerably from one bog to another, and so do the methods of working and the shapes of the tools. The minutiae of the craft are so perfected that a team of diggers works with the rhythm of a machine. Strong arms are required—a single turf may weigh up to 20 lb. when cut—but experience and a good eye are necessary for speed, and skilled 'slanesmen' are becoming scarce. Great importance was attached to 'keeping a straight face', that is keeping the cutting face vertical, and a poor digger was referred to as a 'clod-cutter'. To break a turf was almost a crime: in the old days 'they'd have thrown you out of the bog'. Not only do broken turves double the handling each time they are lifted or turned, but they tend to break adjacent turves when stacked, and the stack will show by its shape if the turf has been badly cut. At the end of the bank it is customary, in the north, to leave three steps of turf uncut. They enable one to scramble out on to the

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uncut bog above, but one suspects that behind the custom there lies the widespread notion that a task should never be completely finished and that a small portion of anything taken by man should be left for luck or the fairies. You will be told that the steps are cut to avoid the curse of Columbkille, for it is said that the saint was once trapped in a bog hole and laid a curse on all who did not cut the three steps.

There are two methods of cutting, vertically or 'underfooting' and horizontally or 'breasting', and they tend to be used respectively on thin upland and deep lowland bogs, though these have to be cut underfoot if badly drained unless a platform or 'footgo' of flow turf can be built up for the breaster to stand on. Also, the upper layers of brown turf which preserve some of the tough plant fibres are easier to cut vertically. Breasting not only imposes less strain on the back but speeds up the work, since the turves can be retained on the slane and placed directly on the barrow. (The vertical digger can do this only if his spade has a lift, that is bends forward.) In consequence the breast-cutter's turf-barrow will be designed for his convenience, for example it commonly has no legs so that he can swing it into position laterally by hooking the wing of his spade over the handle. Slanes, as well as barrows, will be found to vary in some slight degree from one bog to another, and a seemingly trivial difference can generally be explained in terms of differences of local conditions and techniques: the human ecology of the bogs is no less interesting than the plant ecology. In essentials the turf slane is a narrow straight-shafted steel blade with a wing set at right-angles after the manner of a cheese-knife, which is said, indeed, to owe its origin to 'an ingenious cutler of Dublin' who borrowed the idea from the slane.[1] The purpose of the wing is to detach a complete turf at a single stroke of the spade. The breadth and length of blade and wing are variables depending on many factors, but mainly on the size of turf required, and this in turn is determined to a considerable extent by the nature of the bog. If it is a very wet bog, for example, the turves must be cut larger than normal to allow for greater shrinkage on drying. When absolutely dry peat will shrink to less than one-eighth its original volume, and though air-dried peat still contains

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*, 96

●314 412 about 25 per cent water, when cut it may have 90 per cent or more. Again, some kinds of peat come away easily so that the turves can be cut somewhat larger than the dimensions of the slane, which for ease of working is naturally made as small and light as possible.

Increasingly in this as in every other department of rural labour, standardized implements are gaining ground, but the Irish spade factories still cater for scores of different tastes. When slanes were smith-forged almost every turf-cutter had his individual tool, made to measure. The factory-made slane weighs about 3¾ lb., but the old-style slane was merely a thin sheath of steel wrapped around a wooden blade and weighing about 1½ lb. It comprised four parts, blade, spade-tree, shaft and hilt, though shaft and spade-tree were sometimes in one piece, the shaft flattening out to enter the blade in a long 'web' (Fig. 62, 1). The thick round shaft, which had to be truly centred in the blade, was polished smooth as a piston with peaty sweat rubbed in. The two-piece haft, with separate spade-tree (No. 2), gave a certain springiness which eased the work. In the same

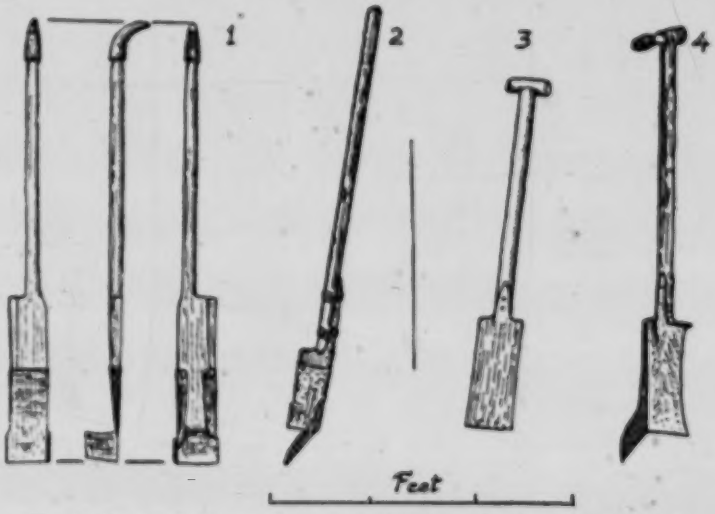

Fig. 62. Slanes old and new. Nos. 1 (Co. Antrim) and 3 (Co. Down) are breast spades; Nos. 2 (Co. Galway) and 4 (Co. Londonderry) are underfoot.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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way a separate hilt, frequently a cow's horn well polished by use, saved the strain on the palm of the hand, but many slanesmen preferred a handle shaped to their own taste and to the needs of the cutting technique required. In the Antrim Glens I have seen a bent piece of black sally carefully spliced on: this wood is said to have the virtue of absorbing sweat. The blade itself widens towards the cutting edge which is from four to six inches in width, the splay preventing the spade from sticking in the wet peat. The cutting edge of the wing is anything from four to seven inches long, and the top edge is finished in a variety of pleasing shapes and is often notched with the proprietary marks of the owner. 314 412

A breast slane can as a rule be distinguished from the underfoot by the upward slant of the cutting edge of the wing as viewed from the side with the spade held vertically, whereas the wing of the underfoot slane slopes down. This ensures that the face of the bog which is left after cutting shall be vertical when breasting and horizontal when underfooting, for the strokes are naturally made with a slight downward slope in the former case and a forward slope in the latter. Another difference is that the underfoot slane is normally provided with a foot-step on one side or the other, depending on whether the user is left or right handed. In practice the foot is not used, however, unless the peat is very tough and little humified. Bits of fibrous matter (called fog, cat or 'old wife's tow') clogging the cutting edge are troublesome, but it is kept clean by a quick preliminary jab into the peat, which reminds one of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the blacksmith. Modern slanes tend to have the blade made all in one piece, riveted to the haft with straps and fitted with a narrow foot-plate on the side away from the wing. (Fig. 62, 4.) The breast slane has been partly replaced, especially in wet bogs, by a short-handled flat spade which cuts larger peats (Fig. 62, 3). They are of a good shape for stacking and for transport on the canal-boats and, latterly, the lorries which supply Dublin with turf.

For taking the cut peats to the spread-field two wheelers and turf barrows are the minimum needs. The severed turves may be placed directly from the spade on to the waiting barrow, but a loader is more often required, lifting two turves at a 314 493

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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314 time: his finger marks can still be seen when the dried turves are burning in the fire. In deep bogs the lifter may use a long-
493 handled fork (Fig. 66, 2) or shovel, pitching the turves for the barrowman to load. A barrow load is anything from ten to twenty peats. Apparently crude and artless, the turf barrow is well designed for its purpose, and it shows many adaptations to local conditions and traditions (Fig. 63). It is slatted for lightness and is made almost entirely of wood, yet it must be strong enough to take heavy loads over rough ground: it should be low and flat for convenience in loading and unloading, yet it needs a large broad wheel for pushing over an uneven surface. Legs may be dispensed with, reduced to lugs or swept back to serve as runners. Again the shape of the handles and the slope of the front board depend on the method of loading and tipping, over the side or over the front. Every detail of the design is in answer to a general or local problem. If the ground is very rough or soft the barrow must be pulled, not pushed, and in extreme cases its place is taken by a slipe. In Antrim alone there are several varieties of turf slipe. All are slatted lengthwise—because the peats are loaded transversely—and are fitted with short corner posts and tipping handles. An interesting variant—the roller slipe—has been recorded but is no longer seen: it had two rollers fitted under the body of the sledge.[1] The dried peats also may be transported, if the bog is soft, on a slipe (Fig. 58, 5) or in a carrying basket (Fig. 57).

Despite ingenious shifts towards greater speed the spreading
314 and drying of turf are inefficient because of the time taken in
372 wheeling and handling and the great difficulty of drying turf which is spread on almost saturated surfaces. In exceptionally wet summers the peats do not dry out, and tragedy may follow if the winter is severe. It is then that the countryside is stripped of what little timber it can provide, and before coal was obtainable anything from furniture to fishbones and cowdung was
237 utilized to boil the pot. In bogless districts dung was quite
372 regularly used: there are several accounts of it in travel records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed in the treeless islands dung was until recently carefully harvested, gathered in piles in the fields in spring, and sometimes worked with the

[1] E. E. Evans in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), plate 2A.

 [Text continues on p. 194]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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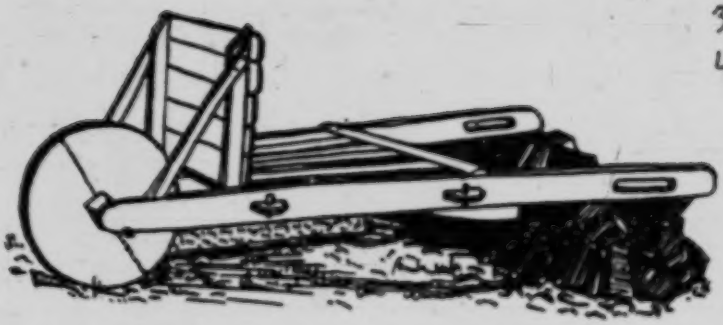

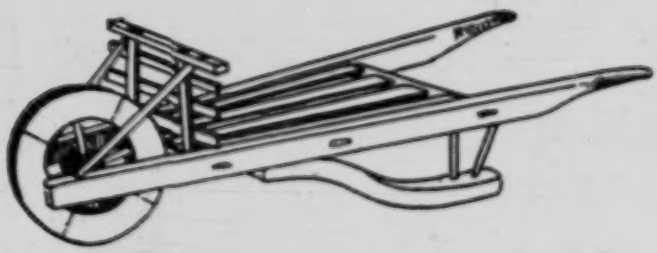

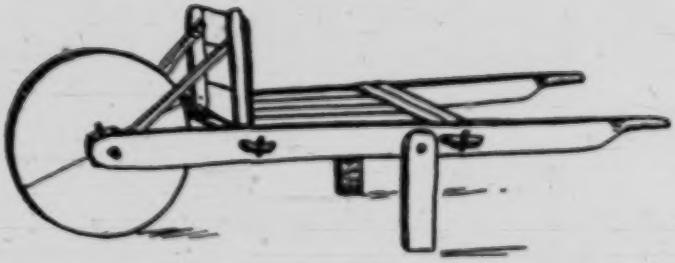

FIG. 63. Turf barrows from Cos. Meath, Donegal and Antrim

372 hands into cakes and piled against a wall until dry enough to
237 carry home.[1]

After lying spread on the ground for a week or two the turves
314 are footed, that is a dozen or so are put to lean together in the shape of a pitched roof, to catch the wind (Fig. 64). This is
[462] work for women and for children, who are, in some districts,
[857] given a week's holiday from school. Through the months of June and July and often into August there is constant coming and going as the peats are turned and built into larger and larger piles, turn-foots, castles, rickles, lumps and clamps—the names and the shapes show considerable regional variation—until they can be ricked or stacked on the bog ready to be carried to the farms as opportunity offers. The wind is the main drying agent, and once dried the peats acquire a waterproof skin. A well-built stack will throw off the rain, but it is usual in the west to thatch with rushes and add a coping of sods or
[343] stones against the wind. Open-sided turfsheds specially built of wood or stone are the exception rather than the rule. A favourite place for the stack is against the house gable, where it provides a protective warmth even before the turf is burnt. The fuel is taken into the house in baskets, creels or wights, and a small supply is kept handy by the fireside or stored, as in the Aran Islands, on the kitchen loft (Pl. 9, 2).

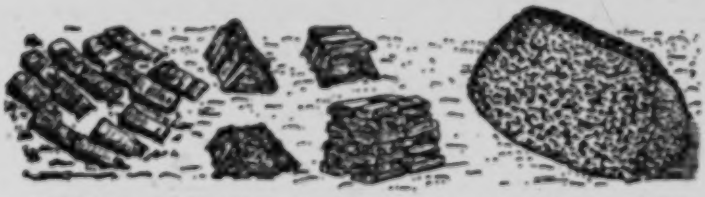

FIG. 64. Stages in the drying and stacking of turf (not to scale; the stack, right, is about 9 feet high).

Some lowland bogs are too waterlogged to be cut into turves, and if no slane-turf is available the black turf-mud is moulded by hand into bricks or balls which are stacked to dry. In some counties, for instance Meath and Cavan, mud turf is highly prized and its preparation follows a well-ordered routine. After

[1]C. R. Browne and A. C. Haddon, *The Aran Islands*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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removing the sods over a rectangular area the turf is dug over to a spit's depth and worked into a slush with forks and bare feet, water being added if necessary. The slush is shovelled into box barrows and spread out to dry in a layer about nine inches thick. The process is repeated, a spit at a time, until the bottom of the bog or the water table is reached. After a few days, when the layer of black mud is hard enough to bear a man's weight, it is marked out in criss-cross grooves made with the edges of the hands, the bare-footed 'baker' or 'runner' walking backwards during the process and dipping his hands from time to time in water to clean them (Plate 10). The turf bricks marked out in this way are separated with a sharp spade, much as the Romans are said to have cut out their bricks, and they are then laid on end, footed, clamped and stacked in the ordinary way. Gerald Boate's description of the making of mud turf in the first half of the seventeenth century shows how little the methods have changed. 'They fall to the business, dividing it so among the labourers, that one part of them do dig out the earth, or rather the mud, and by spadesfull cast it on a heap, either by the side of the pit or somewhere within the same, where others stand, who very well work it, turning it to and fro, and then with their shovels fill it into certain wooden trays, amongst the English in Ireland peculiarly called lossels; the which being full, another part of the labourers draw the same, with great cords fastened to them, to some dry place within the bog . . . where having poured out the mud, they go back to fetch more, and so go to and fro all day long. On that dry place . . . sit certain women upon their knees, who mould the mud, using nothing else but their hands . . . the turf is fashioned flat and broad beneath, growing narrower towards the top; which being done, the turf is let lie upon the ground the space of a week or more . . . and being reasonably well dried, it is piled up in little heaps, leaving everywhere empty spaces between, that the air and the wind passing through them, they may dry the sooner.' He adds that two women moulders were sufficient to keep twenty men at work.[1]

From time to time the worker in the bogs comes across objects lost or buried there as the bog was growing, and we saw above

[1]G. Boate, *Ireland's Natural History* (1652), 155.

314 how these are used by the pollen-specialists to build up a bog
172 chronology. Some, like the magnificent gold ornaments of the Bronze Age, were deposited in the bogs, or in lakes where the bogs later grew, for magical purposes. Other objects were sometimes hidden in the hope of being recovered, and still others were thrown into a bog hole when they were worn out. All have been almost perfectly preserved by the peat, whether made of metal or organic material such as wood, leather or clothing. None of the discoveries which occasionally astonish
314 the turf-cutter and relieve the monotony of his labours is more
172 mysterious than the 'bog butter' which is found in wooden
251 vessels or baskets, occasionally in containers of cloth, bark or skin, in quantities ranging from a few pounds to as much as a hundredweight (Fig. 65). During the first half of last century,

FIG. 65. Methers and wooden cups (Belfast Museum). The first example, from Co. Londonderry, contains bog butter. The cups are from the Aran Islands.

when the pressure of population and industrial needs led to immense inroads on the turf bogs, an astonishing number of finds was made. The 'butter' was a perquisite of the finder, and there are records of its being taken to the fair to be sold as grease for wheel-cars, which, like the 'singing carts' of Spain, were very noisy. In fact it resembles lard rather than butter and analysis shows that its composition has changed, but there can be no doubt that it was originally butter. There are many references to the practice of burying butter in bogs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the explanations offered are also many. Petty thought it was done in order to

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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make the butter rancid, since the Irish, he says, preferred strong butter.[1] An eighteenth century writer states that some of the buried butter was 314 172 251

> So strong, a dog with help of wind,
> By scenting out, with ease might find.[2]

Others have claimed that it was buried to mature and purify it, and one writer has seen an explanation in the need to have butter available at Lent. It is reasonable to suppose that the surplus butter of summer would be stored in this way once the preservative properties of peat were known, but the practice is certainly pre-Christian in origin. None of the Irish finds has been securely dated—the majority of the wooden containers have an ageless 'medieval' appearance—but a discovery in Skye was satisfactorily dated to the very beginning of the Christian era (it contained not only cowhairs but some strands from the head of a fair-haired dairymaid).[3] I am inclined to think that a practice which came to be generally adopted for utilitarian reasons had its origin in magic, and that deposits were originally made in the hope of appeasing the powers of evil and inducing an abundant flow of milk from the pastures.[4] The custom may well have originated during the crisis of the climatic deterioration in the last centuries of the pre-Christian era. Surviving folklore is full of the magic properties of butter, and in the west of [234] Ireland it is known that lumps of butter were thrown into loughs and springs through which cattle were driven in order to restore them to health. It seems from the accounts of discoveries in the bogs that some of the butter containers had been thrown into a bog hole rather than buried. Later, no doubt, it became the practice to bury butter in order to preserve it, but if this had always been so I cannot think that there would have been so many unclaimed deposits left to await the slane of the turf-cutter. It should be noticed that the custom of preserving [171] butter in bogs or in moist earth is found also in Scandinavia, Iceland, India and Morocco.[5] It is interesting that bog butter

[1] Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*, 82.
[2] W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle*, Canto 2.
[3] J. Ritchie, *P.S.A.S.*, 75, 5–22.
[4] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 10, 59–65.
[5] ibid., 59.

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FIG. 66. Some tools used in the bog. (1) Trying iron for locating buried timber, Co. Cork. (2) Turf fork, Co. Armagh. (3) Fir-hatchet or 'finhow', Co. Armagh. (4) Fir-rooter, Co. Galway.

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172
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contains no salt, but the explanation may be that it was difficult to obtain and that its addition was not necessary when the butter was preserved by burying it. This is confirmed by the following quotation which shows also that the custom of preserving butter in a bog-hole was still remembered a generation ago in Co. Limerick. Lady Carbery writes: 'In their grandfather's time, butter, flavoured with wild garlic and unsalted (salt cost too much to buy except in small quantities) used to be put in a bog-hole and left to ripen.'[1]

[1]M. Carbery, *The Farm by Lough Gur*, 198.

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were poor and there were no wheeled vehicles, or where there 283
was no horse for a slide-car, the burden rope was all that was
required to carry home the harvest; distances were mercifully [482]
small on the tiny farms. Rushes for rope making were cut when fully grown, beetled with a mell and broken by hand to rid them of pith. They were then spread to dry and afterwards tied in bundles ready to be fashioned into ropes when wintry weather brought indoor leisure. Ropes made of cowhair as well as 283
horsehair, sometimes mixed with seasoned sedge (sprit) once 237
found many uses about the farm. Horsehair fishing lines and 223
snares for seabirds are described elsewhere, but we may refer here to snares for small birds which in south Armagh, for example, are laid on the grass in hard wintry weather over a scattering of grain or breadcrumbs. Inside the frame of a pegged string or a bent sally rod are tied a dozen or more snares made of single or double horsehair. By this means blackbirds, thrushes, sparrows, and finches are caught by the feet, nowadays for sport but, no doubt, once as a welcome addition to the food supply. Similar horsehair snares for catching small birds are known from England and, further afield, from the Sudan. Reins of horsehair are said to have been common quite recently in Donegal, and I would hazard a guess that horsehair nets, such as were made in Harris (Martin Martin tells us) for catching seals, were formerly made there.

Mats and baskets of many kinds were fashioned from straw 285
and other materials such as marram grass. This tough grass is
harvested in places all around the coast and put to many uses, [314]
including thatching. It is cut below the surface of the sandy dunes, and in Donegal I have seen a toothed sickle used for the purpose. The techniques of constructing mats and baskets of these materials are closely related and seem to fall into three classes, sown plaits, built-up plaits and coiled work. Coiled basketry is best represented in the once universal bee-skep, in the seed-baskets of the south, the seats and armchairs of the west, and in the food-carrying baskets of the Aran Islands (Fig. 69). It is an interesting detail of their construction that a bone pin is used to insert the ties, which are usually made of split briar. The conical hens' nests hung on pegs on the kitchen walls (Fig. 16) are also constructed in a coil technique, but

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many of the stones are set vertically or diagonally.[1] Others of the same character, or equally massive earthen banks, may be observed to radiate from some of the raths or 'Danish forts' which we now know to have been farmsteads of the Dark Ages and, since they seem to have been single farms held in severalty, the enclosures which they presuppose are likely to be co-eval with the raths. Indeed Professor O'Riordain has claimed that the existing earthen field fences around the group of raths at Cush in Co. Limerick closely follow those of the late Bronze Age which were 'essentially similar' . . . 'the present-day field system is the direct descendant of the ancient one'.[2]

Much smaller and more irregular are the walls one sees associated with areas of megalithic settlement, though this may be because of their great age. Indeed one example recently discovered during the excavation of a megalithic tomb in Co. Down, which was older than the construction of the cairn and partly preserved by it, was built in coursed dry-stone work.[3] We have as yet little information to draw on but it seems likely that these oldest walls were mainly the result of the casual piling-up of stones cleared from little patches of cultivated ground. Some of the great walls associated with clachans and referred to above may well be built on the foundations of such lines of stones pitched around and between bedded boulders which could not be moved. Yet the size of some of the stones built into these ancient walls is astonishing. I have watched a loose-limbed farmer, who seemed to inherit the physical characters as well as the skills of the megalith builders, handle with superb ease great boulders which one would think it beyond human power to move. A stout timber or iron bar and a sturdy slipe (Chapter XIII) are the tools used. Alternatively boulders may be buried *in situ* if there is sufficient depth of soil, but until recently there was a reluctance, for superstitious reasons, to break up large stones. I have not come across the old miners' practice of cracking stones with fire,[4] and except near towns or quarries the splitting of field stones by means of wedges, 'plug

[1]O. Davies, loc. cit., 62.

[2]S. P. O'Riordain, *P.R.I.A.*, 45 (1940), 83–181.

[3]A. E. P. Collins and D. M. Waterman, *Millin Bay, a late Neolithic Cairn in Co. Down*, H.M.S.O. (1955), 8.

[4]But A. Young (*Tour*, 2, 115) describes the process near Killarney in 1778.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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351 and feathers', or explosives is a comparatively recent develop-
417 ment. These methods took a heavy toll of the megalithic
[316] monuments of granite-quarrying districts such as the Mourne Mountains in the nineteenth century, though superstitious tales are still told of the misfortunes which befell the stone-workers.

Another type of stone ditch popular in the limestone plain of east Galway is curiously similar to the Scots Galloway dyke and may well have been introduced by improving landlords or their agents. The lower portion of the ditch is a dry wall of small stones about two feet high carefully levelled on top, and on this rests a wall of boulders of lace-work type two or three feet high. The heavy superstructure not only secures the lower part with its weight but, perhaps because of its slight overhang and tottering appearance, is said to deter cattle and sheep from approaching the wall (Fig. 35). The low walls of loosely piled

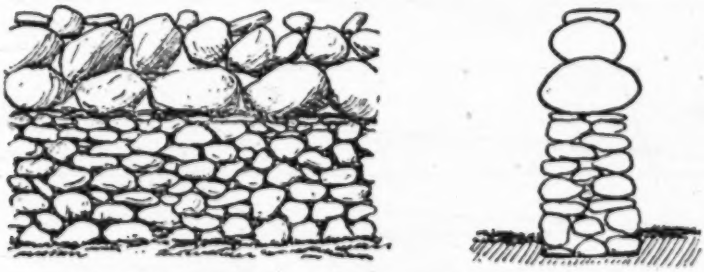

FIG. 35. East Galway ditch of Galloway type, and cross-section.

stones on Rathlin Island are said to act as a deterrent on the principle of the modern electric fence: I was told that animals give them a wide berth once having learnt that they collapse almost at a touch. At the other extreme are the ten-foot walls which run for miles around many demesnes, isolating them physically from the surrounding country so that only at the entrances or the now numerous gaps does one get a glimpse of the decayed grandeur inside. A good many of them are 'famine
[731] walls' built to relieve distress during famine years, in return for a meagre allowance of food and a wage of perhaps a few pence per day.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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317 We referred in the first paragraph to sand and gravel: the white shell sand is taken for manure and is also strewn on the kitchen floor, while beach stones and gravel find many uses as cobble stones, pebble-dashing and so on. Among other 226 by-products of the sea we must not forget fish-oil, manu- 373 factured not only as a medicine for cattle but also as an illuminant. The iron crusie lamp (Fig. 105) was not long since the chief source of light in the islands, and until half a century ago large sea-shells are said to have been employed for the purpose in Co. Kerry. The wick of the crusie was a peeled rush or a twist of cotton: because of the strong smell the lamp was hung under the chimney so that the draught carried away the fumes. The abundant sea shells are also utilized for lime on some islands, for example Tory, by burning them in a kiln made of turf.

317 228

Fig. 105.
Length 15"

Finally, we must not omit the dread harvest of the sea cast up after storms—the timber and food-stuffs and wreckage—always welcome and perhaps in olden days not uninvited. Many an islandman's cabin is roofed with couples of ships' masts, and a visit to treeless Tory or Rathlin will reveal the many uses to which drift timber is put. Mysterious objects brought by the currents from the West Indies occasionally turn up: pumice, perhaps from this source, has been found, treasured no doubt as a magic stone, in sandhill settlements of 4,000 years ago.

162 It is not to be wondered at, when we consider the ancient 226 and varied, if often toilsome and dangerous life of the Irish shores, that the coasts carry a much denser population than districts inland. It should be stressed that these various activities are carried on not as a rule by specialized fishermen but by farmers and peasants to whom the sea offers an accessory source of life and interest, and who often perpetuate the old communal schemes by taking shares in a boat and nets. Old ways die hardest by the sea; prohibitions and super- [462] stitions are rife, and fishing is one of the few occupations in which women take no active part.

13: Evans ER6 Rural Irish ER6

135, 317, 372

[For information on peat deposits and their exploitation as a source of fuel, see category 314.]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XIV

WOOD, SKIN, STRAW AND RUSH WORK.

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322 Many old-fashioned tools will be found lying around an old farmstead, some of them still used and others discarded but hoarded as is the way of the countryman. With some of these, generally dismissed in farm auction bills as "other objects too numerous to mention," we shall deal briefly in this chapter. Upright butter churns of oak are to be found in every county: they are made by the cooper and their construction is a specialized craft. I illustrate (Fig. 67) some varieties of churn and staff ("dasher" or "lonny"). They differ in size because the churns are "made to measure" according to the number of milking cows kept. One of the drawings shows the dash churn in cross-section: it should be added that the joins between the staves of the bottom are sealed with rushes. Ancient churns discovered in the bogs are generally cut out of the solid. They have a narrow neck and are provided with lugs for transport. Old accounts tell us that the dairymaid used to plunge in her arm to make the butter, and thus the dasher may be regarded as an implement developed directly from the human arm and hand. The staff was often worked by an arrangement of levers known as "glaiks," but this is rarely seen nowadays.

The full equipment of stave-built vessels supplied by the cooper included, besides the churn, the buttermilk butt and the cream butt or "keeler," the butter tub, the milk "can," into which the fresh milk was poured, and the piggin. Many

[p. 121]

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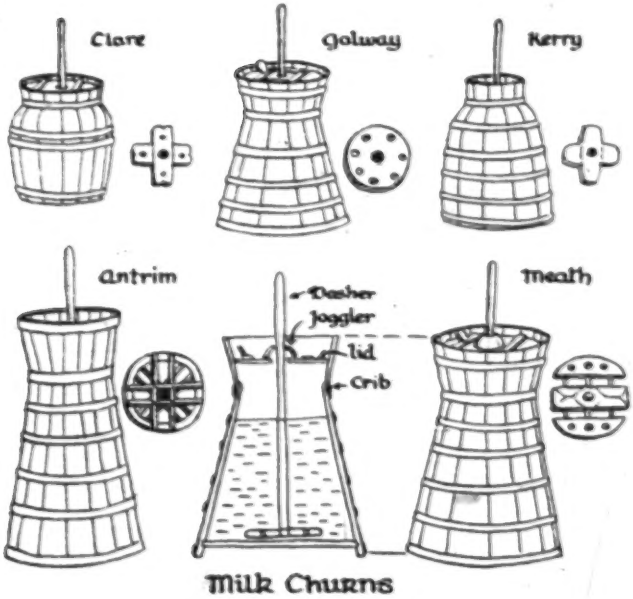

Fig. 67.

Fig. 68.

[415] [281]

of these are in regular use: I illustrate a piggin or milking vessel (Fig. 68), a butter tub, and an old-fashioned tub of bog-fir, bound, as were the other stave-vessels before the adoption of iron hoops, with split sally rods, and covered with a stone lid. Two smaller stave-built noggins for holding water, milk or porridge are also shown (Fig. 69), the Tyrone example being of oak with an ash wrapping, the Donegal specimen of bog-fir and sally bands. Passing mention must be made of wooden spoons and the handsomely carved butter stamps (Fig. 70). Wooden dishes, ladles (Fig. 70) skimmers and jogglers (Fig. 67) are made of sycamore and turned on the pole-lathe.

Sieves of various kinds found a use in the dairy as well as in kitchen and barn. Among the exports from Ireland in

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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former centuries animal hides and skins figured prominently, and it is not uncommon in the west to see cured skins of wild and domestic animals used as floor-coverings. No doubt in earlier days skins and furs were worn, but in modern times raw-hide has been employed only for shoes such as the "pampooties" worn by the Aran Islanders. These have the advantage that they do not damage the frail curraghs, just as the Islandman's headgear is the knitted Tam o' Shanter which the wind cannot blow off. A century ago one might have seen a dried sheep-skin serving as a window, or even a cowhide used as a door-hanging. Sheep- and goat-skins still find their uses as back-protectors (Chapter 16), in the making

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Fig. 70.

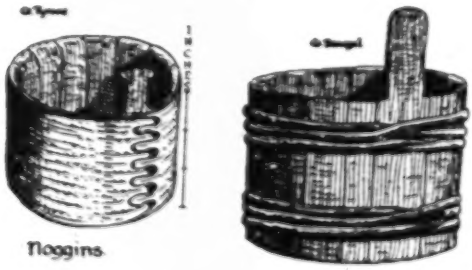

Fig. 69.

of thongs for flails, and especially in providing bottoms for various trays and sieves, the only difference between them being that the sieve-skin is perforated.

The skin, scraped and dried, is wrapped or sewn on to a rim of ash or bog-fir (Fig. 71), and a good deal of skill is required to stretch it on without a wrinkle. These trays are called wights or wechts in the north-east: the peat wight is for carrying turf to the house and the corn wight for pouring corn into a sack. The winnowing tray sometimes has small perforations to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken on to a cloth. A windy spot was selected for the purpose, and numerous "Shelling Hills" get their name from this operation. The perforations, about one-eighth of an inch

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323 until these very last times, although a great number of English
415 potters have set up their trade'.[1] No tradition of hand-made pottery survived in Ireland as it did in the Barvas ware of Lewis in the Hebrides. On the other hand another ancient craft
415 of prehistoric origins persisted into living memory in the making of wooden noggins in which milk and porridge were taken. They
322 are small stave-built vessels of oak, having one stave projecting

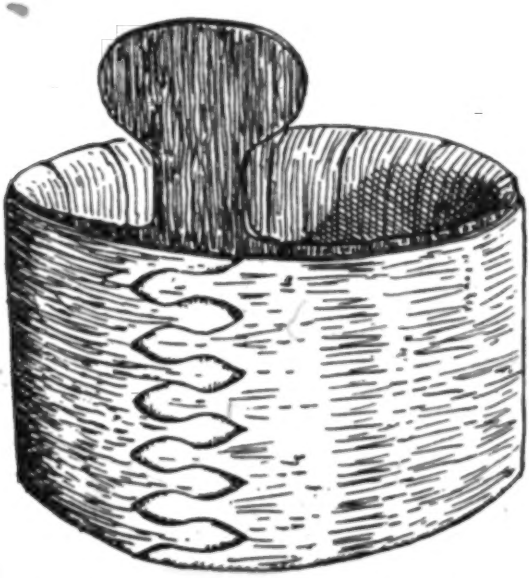

FIG. 22. Wooden noggin, Co. Down. Height of rim, 3 in.

to serve as a handle. The staves are held together and the single-piece base kept in place by a thin band of ash joined by inter-
[171] locking tongues (Fig. 22). This method of fastening the wooden band is found on the similar 'piggins' of parts of Britain, also in Scandinavia and throughout the Asiatic Arctic region, and it may well derive in these islands from an ancient circumpolar culture. The noggins were made by skilled craftsmen who

[1]Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History* (1652), 159.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the 322 place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have 415 heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants [539] a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the 323 country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the 172 climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more 326 reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits 415 and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the special property of the head of the house and they seem to have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest pre- 172 historic pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthen- 171 ware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a [323] pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is one of the indications of a common substratum in the early civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitution of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide [487] should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots, as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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VII

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

GOOD craftsmanship in wood is so rarely seen in the Irish peasant house that one easily notices a piece of quality furniture. The chances are that it has come out of 'the big house' or, near the coast, from a wrecked ship. Very little oak furniture has survived from the days before the famine, and what there is is likely to be of bog-oak, that is timber dug out of the bogs. The truth seems to be that by the time improved styles of furniture and settled conditions of life had come about, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the native oak-woods had been almost everywhere destroyed, and the common furniture came to be made of bog wood or imported soft woods. The gentry favoured mahogany. Already in the early seventeenth century Ireland was importing pine wood from western Scotland,[1] and during the eighteenth century it was the returning timber ships from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia that initiated Southern Irish emigration to the New World.

No doubt this lack of good quality peasant furniture may be partly attributed to poverty, and to the recurrent famines, of fuel as well as food, which brought despair and led to the burning of furniture. But it also reflects the weak tradition of built-up furniture among a people predominantly pastoral and to some extent nomadic. Certainly degrading poverty and insecure tenancies did not provide the means of support for skilled craftsmen: yet in Wales, where conditions under an

[1]H. G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the 18th Century*, 4th ed. (1937), 196. On bog timber see A. T. Lucas in *Béaloideas*, 33, 71–134.

322 often oppressive landlordism were not dissimilar, a strong
352 tradition of good quality oak furniture was standardized in the eighteenth century and has remained a source of inspiration and pride ever since. The destruction of the native oak woods and the stronger pastoral strain in Ireland were perhaps the dominant factors, but once more we note the exceptional position of the barony of Bargy and Forth, where Gabriel Beranger commented in 1780 on the good-quality, well-kept furniture: 'I have seen in these cabins bureaus of oak so clean that they shone like polished mahogany.'[1]

Sturdiness rather than elegance was the characteristic feature of Irish peasant furniture, and many small household and dairy fittings were hand-cut from the solid or lathe-turned. Yet there
353 was no lack of care taken in the proper arrangement of the furniture in the house. Its disposition was fixed by long custom and varied little throughout the country. One is reminded of the careful division of the limited floor-space of the nomads' tent among the Lapps or Mongols. In fact only by adhering to a strict formula could the family and all their belongings be fitted into a single room which was traditionally also a byre. Invariably the centre of the room, and the whole space in front of the fire, was kept open. This was, for the bulk of the peasant population down to the eighteenth century, the family sleeping-place. According to an account of Mayo in 1799, they slept
513 naked with their feet to the fire, lying on rushes, with a covering of blankets or day-clothes.[2] An earlier account of the Rosses of Donegal, relating to the middle of the eighteenth century, gives us more details: 'All the family lay together in one bed, and, if any visitors came in the evening, they too slept with them; for they set no bounds to their hospitality . . . heath or bent bushes were spread across the floor, to a length sufficient for the number present, and in breadth about six feet; over this litter, the mistress of the house laid part of a long plaid or blanket, on which the others, having stripped off their clothes, lay down as fast as they could; men and women together, all naked: then the mistress having drawn the rest of the blanket over them, lay down herself, naked also. This they call a

[1] Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 132.
[2] In C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 28, 32.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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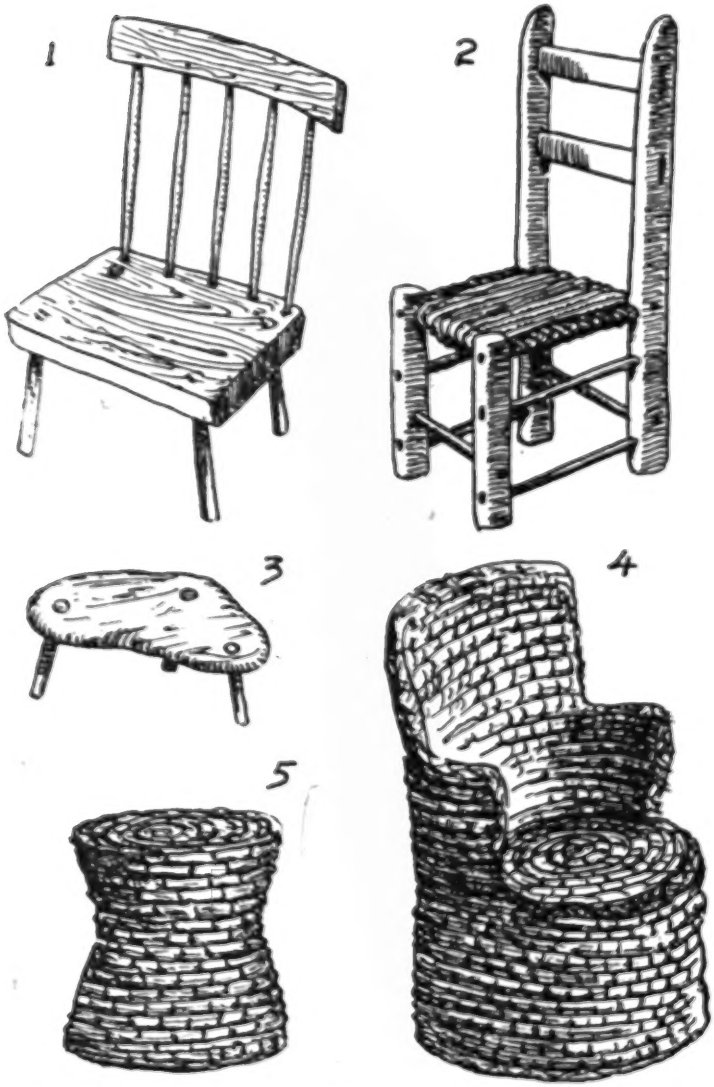

[285]

FIG. 29. (1) Co. Antrim chair. (2) Co. Down straw-seated chair. (3) Creepie. (4) Armchair of coiled straw-rope, Co. Cork. (5) Straw seat, Co. Clare.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 native to the country. Around the coasts the sycamore is almost
313 the only tree that persists, for it will stand up to the salt-laden gales everywhere save on the most exposed parts of the west coast. R. U. Sayce has recorded the belief, from Montgomeryshire, that 'sycamore trees keep the fairies away and stop them spoiling the milk',[1] but this bit of lore cannot be of any great antiquity since the tree did not reach Britain from its home in the mountain belt of southern Europe until the sixteenth century. It presumably arose from the association of the tree with the farmyard. In Ireland the sycamore probably came in with the early seventeenth century planters, though the beech may be a medieval or even older introduction. Both trees had many economic uses, especially for dry-coopering, that is the
[322] manufacture of provision casks and butter firkins, and the sycamore is an excellent wood for turnery. Later, as the linen industry became mechanized, the beetling mills demanded sycamore for the great beam of the engine and beech for the vertical beetles.

The lay-out of farm buildings seems to have been, in the
351 native single-farms, as haphazard and formless as was that of
361 the houses themselves in an old clachan. As separate farms with outbuildings ('offices') became fashionable improvements after the middle of the eighteenth century, the latter were built for convenience of access and they were put close to the farmhouse, either attached to one end or lying parallel to provide a windbreak. Only in the planted areas does one find old examples of planned 'courtyard farms' where the house and offices enclose a square or rectangular yard. I fancy the stone or wooden 'hovel-stands' with their picturesque mushroom-like staddle-stones are also confined to planted districts. In the west a favourite method of making stacks is to build them about a central pole. (See p. 164.)

The wayside style is another absentee in the native Irish
487 countryside, as is the footpath which is its companion. Short-
[417] cuts are rarely worth while in a land of tiny fields, and if there is a right of way there is sure to be a tolerable road. In fact there are so many farm lanes and access ways to mountain, seashore or bog that an economist might regard the amount of land so taken out of cultivation as excessive. It has been

[1] R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 45 (1938).

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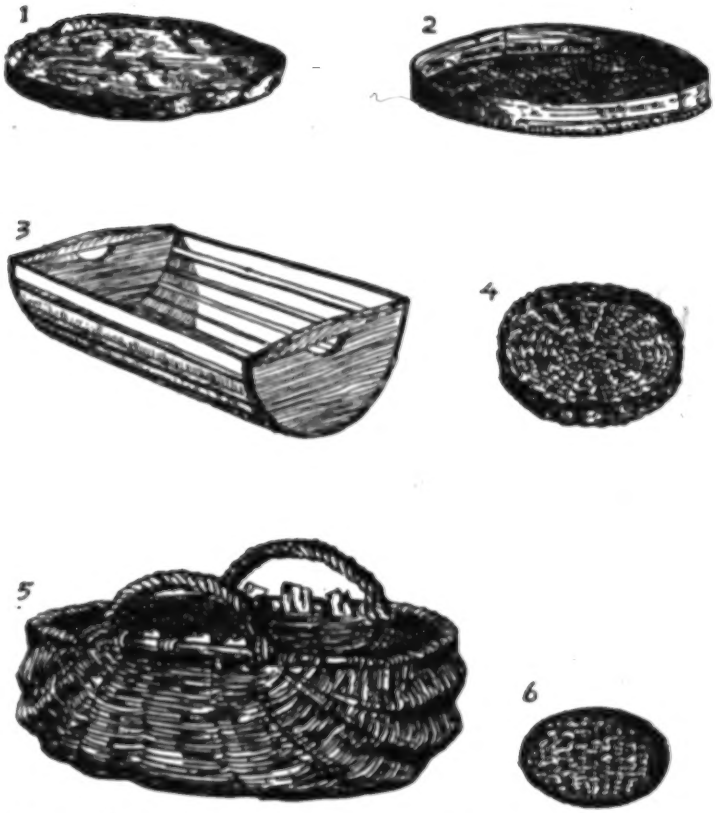

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FIG. 71. Skin-tray, split-ash riddle and potato baskets. Approximate scale 1/9 (No. 5, 1/6). (1) Sheep-skin tray or wight. (2) Split-ash riddle. (3) Potato 'basket'. (4) Potato skib. (5) Potato basket. (6) Potato skib. (All Co. Antrim.)

Irish wren boys

[534] carried a skin tambourine which they beat when hunting the wren on St. Stephen's Day, and one wonders whether the drummers from whom the Orange performers on King William's Day inherit their wild rhythms were trained on ceremonial wights. (There are also sieves, riddles and shallow baskets of split ash or sally, but these, for example the flat round potato skib—a communal self-service plate—should properly be classed as the work of specialists. 212 (Fig. 71).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-
322 lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples
443 are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

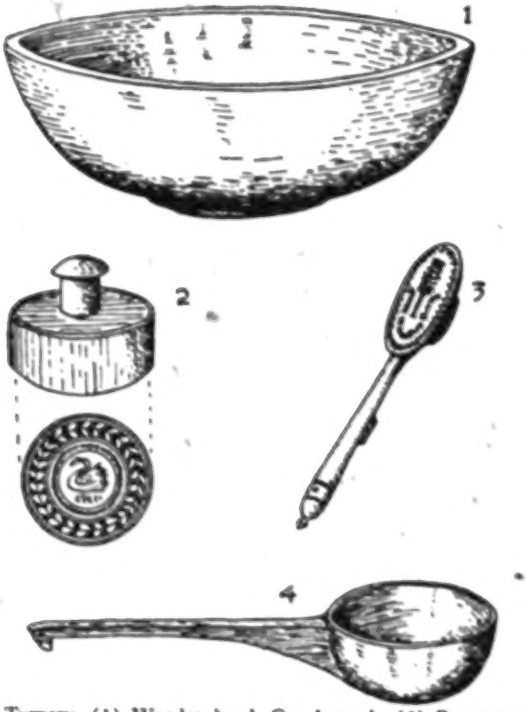
The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there
543 were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of
443 ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 83), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for
[584] a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts,
[582] binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints'
796 days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1]See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland, 1796–97*, 250.
[2]R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 253.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

them have had to be suppressed: they became occasions of law- 796
lessness and bloodshed. Like the fairs they drew their adherents
from several rival neighbourhoods and therefore brought 796
feuding clans together. The following is a typical comment of 579
the early nineteenth century: 'On these patron days, which [786]



[322] ●
[415]

FIG. 83. Turnery. (1) Wooden bowl, Co. Armagh. (2) Butter stamp, Co Fermanagh. (3) Butter stamp, Co. Antrim. (4) Ladle, Co. Antrim.

generally fall out on Sundays, great numbers of young persons of both sexes assemble, tents are erected, music, dancing, drinking and every kind of excess takes place, and the revel not infrequently terminates in battery and bloodshed, from the contention of adverse factions'.[1] Sir William Wilde's description

[1]W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 3, 245 (of Listerling, Co. Kilkenny).

291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathrubs.

Crafts

463 434 [501] [295] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [438] [659] [435] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-
501 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single
502 tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

601 [502] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the [433] crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at [322] work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, [184] and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [368] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [674] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

764

Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

764

When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [654] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

764

The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for 178 the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

114 221 settlement, the baile or townland, kept its significance and its importance. In many cases what has passed for nomadism has been the ancient and normal practice of seasonal movement to the hill pastures, which is still not entirely abandoned and has left many traces in the life and landscape of the country (Chapter 6).

181 462 In essentials Ireland is and has been a peasant country, and it may be well to examine objectively some of the general characteristics of peasant society. A permanent link with the soil on which man lives and works is the essence of a peasantry; and in this work of the fields woman co-operates with man. For her, however, field work is a secondary task since her main interests must lie in the house and in the milking of the stock. Work with spade and plough and the care of the draught animals is for the men, although carrying—necessarily done by women in primitive communities where the men must have their hands free to use their weapons—often remains an activity of the peasant woman where not entirely superseded by animal transport. Where fishing and shore-collecting engage the men's attention the women's sphere of action and responsibilities are widened.

181 323 Among tasks in which the women of some peasantries play a leading part is the making of domestic pottery, but this tradition, though strong in Neolithic Ireland, gave way to the use of metal " pots " and vessels of wood, the making of which was the work of the men. Nor have local survivals of hand-made pottery, like the Barvas ware of the Hebrides, been recorded here.

181 443 796 Periodic gatherings for exchange and social intercourse are a feature of peasant life which has contributed to the growth of towns. The immemorial meetings in fairs and markets have been weakened by modern means of transport and by government marketing boards; and in some parts of the country the whole fabric of rural society is being undermined in consequence. As in North Africa to-day, the fairs were often held near some ancient burial place, and the assemblies were linked with religious festivals which brought

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

VI

POTS AND PANS

323 415 STORIES of 'the crock of gold' remind us of the superstitions which have gathered around the humble unglazed vessels of baked clay used in prehistoric times for domestic and funerary purposes. The novel art of pot-making—the magic transformation of soft clay into indestructible pottery—must have made a deep impression on the native mind when introduced into Atlantic Europe from the Mediterranean region some forty centuries ago. It symbolized, too, a new way of life, for it accompanied the revolutionary arts of food-production and the establishment of settlements which were more or less permanently fixed to the soil. The possession of pottery greatly facilitates cooking and boiling and marks the beginning of the long line of peasant soups, stews and porridges. But primitive pottery does not stand up to hard use and the wastage was great—to the delight of archaeologists. For prolonged stewing metal vessels were preferable, and in Ireland 'the pot', in recent centuries, invariably refers to the three-legged iron cooking pot. Life revolves about the fire and the pot, and it was remarked during famine years that victims 'clung to the pot when all else had gone'.

For the archaeologist potsherds are an invaluable guide to 172 changes of culture. Clay vessels had religious as well as domestic significance, and we know that as the Bronze Age advanced through the second millennium B.C. the domestic food vessel was adopted as a cinerary urn, and the deposition of cremated bones in urns continued in Ireland into the Christian era. Earlier, some of the megalithic cults had involved the offering to the dead of enormous quantities of broken pots. In

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a late Neolithic burial cairn at Lyles Hill near Belfast I found 172
tens of thousands of potsherds which had been collected from domestic refuse and thrown into the cairn during the course of its erection.[1] The broken plates which may be seen exposed on the graves in some old burial-grounds in Co. Mayo are [764] probably placed there in continuation of ancient practice. The breaking of pots is one of the elements in Hallowe'en pranks— [769] one might almost say rites—and again we notice the association with the dead, for All-Hallows is the time when the dead are believed to return to their homes.

It would appear that by breaking a pot you broke its spirit; 772
and by transference the power of the dead to do harm. Readers 775
will recall the significant lines from *Hamlet*, referring to the suicide of Ophelia: 'Her death was doubtful . . . for charitable prayers, shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.'[2] In some places in south-west England potsherds figure in the 'lent crocking' rites at Easter: like Easter eggs they are symbols of fertility. The association of fertility and decay, of life and death, comedy and tragedy, is clearly displayed in the wake games which are described in Chapter XX. This association, we note in passing, is ever-present in the mind of the Irish countryman, and the juxtaposition gives dramatic quality to the work of many Anglo-Irish playwrights.

This is not the place to enlarge on the technology of early 323 ●
pot-making, but it may be observed that the designs, fabric 172
and finish of the Neolithic family of pottery in Ireland were far superior to those of succeeding periods: indeed it was not until wheel-made pots found local markets in the medieval towns that technically superior vessels were made in this country. In late prehistoric and early historic times the wealthy were able to import fine wares in small quantities from the 323
continent, but the peasant homes over most of Ireland apparent- 415
ly did without pottery—the Gaelic word for potter is a loan-word—and vessels of wood, metal or leather did duty for the now universal imported 'delph'. The Dutchman, Gerard Boate, writing in 1645, said that 'the use of earthen vessels hath been very rare among them, and to the most part unknown even

[1] E. E. Evans, *Lyles Hill: a late Neolithic site in Co. Antrim*, H.M.S.O. (1953).
[2] *Hamlet*, Act V, Sc. 1.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

323 until these very last times, although a great number of English
415 potters have set up their trade'.[1] No tradition of hand-made pottery survived in Ireland as it did in the Barvas ware of Lewis in the Hebrides. On the other hand another ancient craft
415 of prehistoric origins persisted into living memory in the making of wooden noggins in which milk and porridge were taken. They
322 are small stave-built vessels of oak, having one stave projecting

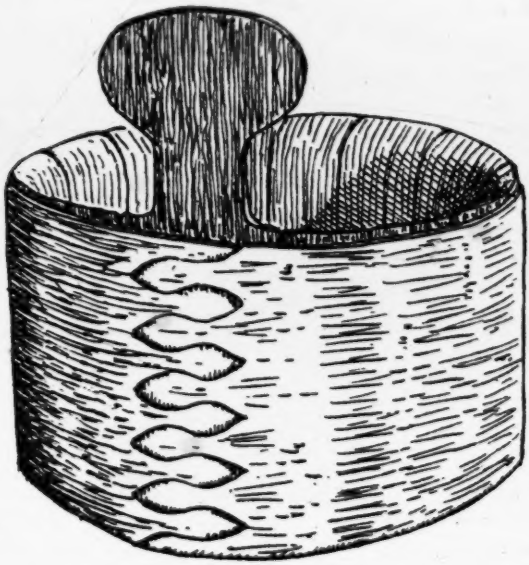

FIG. 22. Wooden noggin, Co. Down. Height of rim, 3 in.

to serve as a handle. The staves are held together and the single-piece base kept in place by a thin band of ash joined by inter-
[171] locking tongues (Fig. 22). This method of fastening the wooden band is found on the similar 'piggins' of parts of Britain, also in Scandinavia and throughout the Asiatic Arctic region, and it may well derive in these islands from an ancient circumpolar culture. The noggins were made by skilled craftsmen who

[1]Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History* (1652), 159.

were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the 322
place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have 415
heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants [539]
a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the 323
country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when
bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-
vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the 172
climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more 326
reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits 415
and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly
prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the
special property of the head of the house and they seem to
have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They
were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the
ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his
rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent
place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest pre- 172
historic pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthen- 171
ware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a [323]
pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is
one of the indications of a common substratum in the early
civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels
simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have
continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know
that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in
Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older
custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the
Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a
vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitu-
tion of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent
Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide [437]
should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots,
as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched
on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they
seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set
over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the gravestones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

of labor of a non-agricultural character as still persists in the country communities is very simple. Yet it is an interesting part of community life. It affords status to local artisans in the lives of the small farmers. 463 369

The families upon the separate farms are not, of course, entirely self-dependent units. We have already had occasion to examine the kind of coöperation called cooring, often based upon the extended family which flourishes in the country districts. Such reciprocal aids in ordinary farm work are only one part of the fabric of services which one meets among the country people. Another part can be distinguished. It takes account of what elementary specialization in local techniques and handicrafts exists. The man or woman skilled in some particular branch of work is called the "handy man." The handy man is an important person at the times when his or her special skill comes into use. The local reputation of such a specialist is sufficient to keep the recognition of his skill alive between periods of use and to afford him a definite status. In the country districts of Clare even full-fledged artisans, appearing in census records as full-time carpenters, smiths, and the like, sons of fathers and grandfathers who followed the same trade, are not much more than local specialists. 476 463

Many a farmer is still a jack-of-all-trades, ready if need be to turn his hand to shoeing his horse or resoling a boot or building himself a house. Only where the products of factory and foundry have become deeply entrenched in farm life, embodying skills of distant workers abroad, do local goods and services represent techniques the small farmer cannot come close to emulating. For example, the smelting of iron is a process completely unknown, and neither the local blacksmith nor the farmer can do more than rework the iron they have at hand. But the blacksmith and the farmer both can do it, though it is the blacksmith who has the greater skill. In the countryside the techniques and the 463 [326]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

 463

at least of those of the better recognized trades, are direct 467
and intimate. The following words illustrate something of 874
the character of apprenticeship. A small farmer is speaking of his own knowledge of local conditions:

Before the war there used to be about twenty shoemakers in 463
the neighborhood, but now they've mostly gone away or are in 467
the towns. One of them went into Ennistymon. Whenever a 874
farmer wants a strong pair of boots even yet, he will not go to
a shop but he would go to the shoemaker. It wasn't always the 294
case the son of a shoemaker would follow the trade because there was good money in it. With it they would buy a farm and so for his sons, and they would go to farming. If a farmer had a crippled son, he might send him to the shoemaker to teach him the trade. Papers were signed that bound the boy for three years to the tradesman, and then the boy would go live with the shoemaker. At first he would be taught to tap, then to stick, then to sew, and the last thing would be to cut. If a boy left before the three years were up, no one would give him a job, and no other tradesman would take him on to teach him a trade. The father had to give twenty pounds to twenty-five pounds to teach him. At the end of three years the boy was given his indenture papers which meant he could set himself up any place in the country or, if he had not enough money to do that, he would work as a journeyman for someone else and his papers would give him the right to do it.

There were a great many tailors and smiths too. The time of work was three years. A boy who was a cripple might be sent to tailoring. He was taught three years and then he could set himself up. It was the easiest of them all to get along with because it required no money to start with. In the old days the tailor used to come to the house and stay for a week or so and make clothes for all the men of the house and go to the next house after.

The smiths trained boys also. When I was small, a cousin of 463
mine had a forge below on the road and any wet day all the 874
boys used to gather there and watch and talk. I started out by
blowing the bellows and then doing other things until finally 326
I was as good as anyone. If I had the material I could make shoes, and I always shoe my own horses.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 Of these local specialists only the smith survives in any
326 strength today. He shares with the mason the admiration
554 the country people feel for physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this that made the more sedentary occupations of weaver, shoemaker, and tailor of less prestige. Thus the crippled son, as the quotation says, might be put to one of them.

463 The tailor was often a peripatetic. He moved around
294 from house to house and community to community where he was known, living and eating among the family. He was made welcome, not only as a maker of clothes but also as a carrier of gossip. Today the few tailors who survive in the country districts are petty cotters with only a memory of their trade. The few still active ones have retreated to the towns. Most of the farmers' clothing is now shop-bought and factory-made.

463 The weaver was perhaps the most sedentary of the local
286 craftsmen. He is the one who has failed to survive even
[283] in the towns. The women of the farm families carded and spun the wool into yarn until home spinning died out, and broke and scutched the flax for linen, but the weaver made it into cloth. He spent all his days indoors, moving from one side of his loom to the other in a small room heavy-laden with fluff and lint. The farmers seem to remember most strongly the unhealthiness of the life, but they tell one also of the weavers' arrogance when their skill was in great demand. The following is the kind of description one can still get, the first part of it discoursing on weavers in general and the second relating the history of the local man:

> In the old days the weaver might have enough work to keep him busy for four months and, when you went to see him, he would put you off and tell you to come back in a fortnight for your goods. It would be no good for you, none in the world, if you didn't take a bowl of butter and a few dozen eggs to him

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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.*

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

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The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

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Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

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* Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
326 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken,
232 is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exer-
431 cise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
754 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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explanation. It is true that they occur in Anglesea and in parts of the Scottish lowlands, but in both cases they are likely to be due to Irish influence. It seems to me more probable that an indigenous custom was taken up and diffused by improving landlords. I like to think of the Irish rath defended and glorified by two white stone pillars at the entrance, though I confess that this finds no support in reports of archæological excavations. The only dated piers I know bear the date 1839, but there is an eight-foot pair in Inishowen which, tradition says, had already lost their gates in 1709. The variety of styles and the superstitious beliefs connected with the pillars do strongly suggest that their origin is to be sought far back.

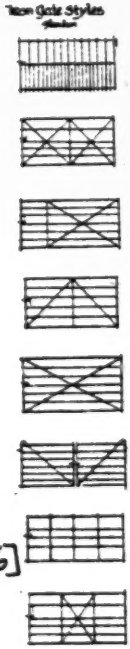

Fig. 12.

I imagine they were used, before the general adoption of fences, to shut off the farmyard from the surrounding open field. Mr. T. G. F. Paterson tells me that in Co. Armagh the gateposts are sometimes referred to as " husband and wife." The most popular shape is cylindrical (Fig. 11), and the average dimensions about three feet in diameter and six feet high. Pretentious specimens may be as high as ten feet. The top is generally finished in a low cone but varies considerably from one district to another: in some parts they are flat-topped " so that the fairies can dance on them." In Co. Meath the usual shape is semi-circular and may have originated in the common practice of building the pillars against a wall at the entrance to the farmyard. In some counties they are square, with a pyramidical roof or a coping of large stones.

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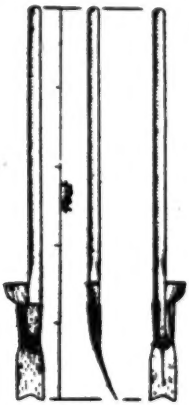
The gates, whether of iron or wood fitted with iron straps, are generally hung in an old-fashioned way: they pivot in a stone socket or " spud-stone," while the top of the heel turns in a perforated stone, nowadays replaced by an iron eye. The gates are not seldom made by the smith, who fashions them out of worn wheel hoops, for instance; and this helps to explain the pleasing absence of standardisation. Fastenings, too, are of many different kinds. Only in a few wooded areas are home-made wooden gates popular: they are light

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

391 326 412 We must visit a factory in the south if we wish to see the single-eared "Irish" spade being made. The country smith may still forge or repair an occasional loy, but the trip-hammer does away with so much heavy sledging that most of the work is concentrated in the "factories." Yet, as the amazing variety of patterns demonstrates, there is no tendency towards specialization: the factory has merely taken over the work of dozens of rural smiths. Thus at least five different types of loy are used in Co. Galway alone. The blade may be straight sided, it may taper slightly or it may expand towards the mouth, and like the two-eared spade it may have a cranked or a round lift; but it is always narrow, ranging in width from 3½ to 5 inches. The loy is in fact a specialized implement, adapted for sod-cutting and ridge-making (Chapter 10); it is not designed to turn over dug soil, and like the two-eared spade which has taken over its functions in the north and east, it enters the ground at an angle and not vertically.



The Kerry "fack"

Fig. 63.

412 In the south-west, from Clare round to Kilkenny, the "fack" ends in a fish-tail, presumably to facilitate penetration (Fig. 63). In central Galway the loy has a 14 inch

were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the 322
place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have 415
heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants [539]
a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the 323
country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when
bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-
vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the 172
climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more 326
reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits 415
and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly
prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the
special property of the head of the house and they seem to
have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They
were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the
ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his
rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent
place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest pre- 172
historic pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthen- 171
ware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a [323]
pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is
one of the indications of a common substratum in the early
civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels
simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have
continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know
that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in
Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older
custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the
Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a
vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitu-
tion of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent
Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide [437]
should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots,
as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched
on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they
seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set
over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

412 mouth which opened a way and prevented the blade from wedging.

It was reckoned that twelve men armed with loys could turn an acre a day.[1] This compares not unfavourably with the estimated rate of 'ploughing' with a caschrom, and is nearly twice the speed of spade digging. In the Munster spade the foot-rest is a separate piece of wood which is wedged into the open socket to one side of the shaft, normally the right. The shape of this wedge, and the dimensions and curve of the iron blade, vary from one district to another. When new the spade mouth has two points resembling a fish-tail, or the blade may taper to the mouth to facilitate digging in light gravelly soils. The old Galway spade has its footpiece cut out of a single piece of wood to which a separate handle is attached. This is considered to lessen the shock when the spade is thrust into the ground, and the device is frequently found on old-fashioned turf spades. A curious forked spade formerly common in Mayo also has this feature. This is the 'gowl-gob', a two-eared wooden spade with twin narrow iron-shod blades, and it was reckoned to be very suitable for making ridges in loose sandy or boggy soils (Fig. 43). This may be the last survival of a prehistoric spade, for 'a two-pointed pronged spade' is said to be an ancient Mediterranean tool,[2] and a 'bidente' is used in parts of Spain.

The two-eared iron spade which is replacing the loy in its last lairs has gradually ousted the one-eared spade in most parts of the country during the course of the nineteenth century. But in doing so it has copied even the minor variations of the spades it replaced, so that the spade remains an index of regionalism, a tool of sociological research as well as an instrument of labour (Fig. 44). Until water-driven tilt-hammers
●326 were introduced for the manufacture of spades—perhaps half
412 a dozen of them are still in operation—they were made by
184 local blacksmiths for local customers. A good spade-maker occasionally won a reputation which might be compared to that of a medieval sword-forger. The smith needed two helpers to hammer out the metal plates, and the work was very heavy.

[1]Coote, *Cavan* (1802), 31.
[2]*The Cambridge Economic History* (Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power), I (1941), 94.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XV

HOME-MADE THINGS

UNTIL the agrarian and industrial revolutions broke up economic self-sufficiency nearly every material need on the small farms was satisfied by the work of the family and the local community. Houses, furniture, food, clothing, simple implements and tools were home made or home produced. The most important specialist was the maker of edged tools, the blacksmith who thus occupied a special position in the community. His forge, customarily placed at a cross roads near running water, was never locked and became a rallying centre for idle men on wet days and for dancing in the evenings. His strength and skill were proverbial and magic powers were attributed to him and to the forge water. The smith was the first person to be invited to social functions. Not being a food producer he was, like the seers and later the priests, entitled to tribute of corn and first fruits. When a beast was slain the head was the perquisite of the smith. The ancient laws prescribe in detail the allotment of the various parts of the carcase to different offices, and the smith's right was maintained down to recent times. George Petrie, the nineteenth century antiquarian, is reported to have said that he remembered the time when a smith might have 50 or 100 heads of cows and pigs pickled in his kitchen.[1] Other craftsmen were itinerant because they could not be supported by the work available in any one district, and the last

[1]See Stephen Gwynn, *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906), 219. The method of dividing a carcase is thus described about the year 1600: the head, tongue and feet to the smith, the neck to the butcher, two small ribs that go with the hindquarters to the tailor, the kidneys to the physician, the udder to the harper, the liver to the carpenter and sweetbread to her that is with child. *C.S.P.* (*I*) (1601–3), 684. Dr. Johnson refers to the custom in the account of his journey to the Western Isles: cf. Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 171.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 *plant products, natural, or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of*
178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

The stone or earth-

342 en floor may be sprinkled for instance with coral beachsand to help in sweeping it.

[356] In some primitive houses, where the cattle still had their places, in the

[231] low end, I have found a gutter or conduit going across the low end and leading out through the door.

●333 *The walls.* There are two main types of wall construction representing very

342 old building traditions.

[172] 1. The dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara* — met with in the prehistoric buildings, *clochán*s etc. — are built of stones (often flattish) without mortar. Dwelling-houses which have been built with dry stone walls have in later times been covered both inside and outside with mortar, pl. XLIII: 1. The space between the bigger stones are often carefully filled up by small stones, *spallaí*.

Especially in Co. Clare I have admired the precision developed in the construction of the walls.

[172] 2. Of prehistoric origin are also the mud, clod or clay walls, *falla feidín*. A fantastic explanation of the term makes it equal to *falla ar feadh dín*, a wall that endures as long as the roof is kept properly thatched (Dinneen).

The clay was pulverized and made into a thick mortar by wetting it and mixing it with cut rushes or course sprat hay. The well built mud-wall houses form comfortable dwellings and it has happened that people have regretted leaving excellent thatched "mud walls" to live in cold stone-walled slatted dwellings.

342 The foundation of the walls is sometimes a pronunced feature of the house. Whilst the walls usually have a width of 1½, 2 or 3 feet, the foundation is wider, forming a shelf or broad step along the building serving as a pathway to the door. The foundation is sometimes not very dissimilar to some prehistoric house-foundations. In this connection I would like to remark that the pathway and nearest surroundings of the entrance door are sometimes

[171] paved by a mosaic of small cobble-stones from the sea-shore. This I have seen in costal districts in South West, and I suggest that it is the same kind of pavement as appears in Portugal, Madeira, Marocco and elsewhere at the border of the Atlantic And the Mediterranean Sea.

Doors and windows. In many primitive houses of to-day the construction of the door-opening is extremely archaic: flat stones serving as lintel and as threshold. The frame of the door is wooden.

The doors usually have bolts of wood and a hasp to close the door. A thick wooden beam can be placed across inside the door on stormy nights, certain holes in the wall at both sides of the door being made for this beam,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

IX

KILNS AND CLOCHAUNS

343 WHILE the timber building has almost entirely disappeared from the Irish scene, there survives an archaic
● 333 tradition of building in dry stone which is best illustrated in the humble structures erected for special purposes in or adjacent to the farmyard. Since stonework has a much better chance of survival than timber it is possible, even without excavation, to trace the descent of some of these small buildings through the ages. They include corbelled animal houses (clochauns), corn-drying kilns, sweat-houses and turf-shelters. We shall consider also small outhouses of sods or wattles, including soot-houses and animal shelters. Some of these, reduced in scale and status, are the successors of buildings once erected for higher purposes.

The clochauns of south-western Ireland, corbelled stone struc-
172 tures, nowadays used mainly for keeping pigs or poultry, are indis-
343 tinguishable from the monastic huts such as are found on the precipitous island of Skellig Michael off the coast of Co. Kerry. Similar stone huts accompany monastic settlements in other parts of Ireland—and also in the Hebrides and in islands off the coast of Brittany—and they have been preserved, thanks to their sanctity or their isolation, as examples of a mode of building which was common when Christianity reached the west. Some clochauns in the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, have been erected within living memory, but we also know that this type of construction is far older than Christianity in Ireland, that it was already two millennia old when Christian converts adopted it for their dwellings and their oratories. It is probable that some of the megalith-builders lived in clochauns and that their magnificent corbelled tombs have alone survived because they

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

By far the most versatile of home-produced rope-making 283
materials is straw. Rye straw is longer, softer and more flexible than any other, but very little rye is now grown save along the west coast where it is still the most popular thatching material. Wheat straw is the best substitute, but in fact most farmers must now depend on oat straw, thus 'tying up' some of their fodder. Straw rope (súgán) not only had many direct uses but served as the basis for such crafts as the making of mats, baskets, bee-skeps, mattresses, hen roosts, pigeons' nests and horse harness. It was used for seating chairs and making arm-chairs, and for a great variety of hobbles and tethers for animals and ties for holding down thatch. The fondness of the Irish for tethering and hobbling their livestock must be seen [231] in the light of inadequate fences and the conditions of partnership farming in open fields. Not only the larger animals, but hens, turkeys, and geese were commonly restrained in this way. 'All livestock of the poorer man is in this sort of thraldom' wrote Arthur Young.[1] One may still see a tethered hen with her chickens that might have stepped out of the illuminated pages of the fourteenth century Luttrell Psalter. A straw rope stretched across the kitchen made a serviceable clothes-line. Torches were sometimes made from twisted straw; on the other hand, when [373] suitably coated with mud, straw ropes made a fireproof smoke-canopy. Chopped straw or layers of straw ropes were also used in constructing mud walls, and it is possible that, as in Sweden, [333] stakes wrapped in straw rope daubed in clay were once an alternative to 'wattle and daub' for wall building. It has been stated that the fowlers of the Mayo coast would let themselves down the cliffs on straw ropes,[2] which must have been exceptionally well made; ropes made from the fibres of bog fir were more reliable. In Co. Antrim fowling ropes were of horse hide, but bent ropes are also recorded.[3] I have seen countrymen on a windy fair day wearing an improvised belt over their long coats in the form of a straw rope, and in the early nineteenth century children in Co. Cork were described as 'clad in nothing except a coarse woollen shirt that came half way down the thighs and

[1]Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 37.
[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 55.
[3]R. Dobbs, *County Antrim in 1683*.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

172 may be much older. I was told that foreign collectors long ago purchased from the folk copper and bronze artifacts which had been exhumed from cave middens.

172 333 The Iron Age in Inis Beag is best represented by a fort constructed of limestone rocks quarried locally and fitted together without mortar, which bears no name other than the Irish word for fort—*Dún* (see Fig. 2). It commands the rim of a promontory, and its oval shape measures 170 by 127 feet. Unfortunately, from the point of view of the prehistorian, its inner wall was greatly reduced in height and any outer ramparts and stone *chevaux de frise* completely destroyed to furnish building materials for a medieval tower house which stands at its center. To the south about 500 feet, and on somewhat higher ground, are the remains of what may have been a monastery. According to island historians, it was pulled down by soldiers attacking the "castle" with cannons, and most of its stones were employed later in the construction of a watch tower nearby. Another monastery at the back of the island on the southeast side may indeed be the ruins of a fort, as the oldest of its three names bears the word fort.

Medieval Period (500 to 1500)

17 The end of the Iron Age in Ireland is dated conveniently by historians as 431 (or 462), when St. Patrick arrived from Wales as a missionary to convert the pagan Celts. But, of course, prehistoric cultural elements persisted for many cen-

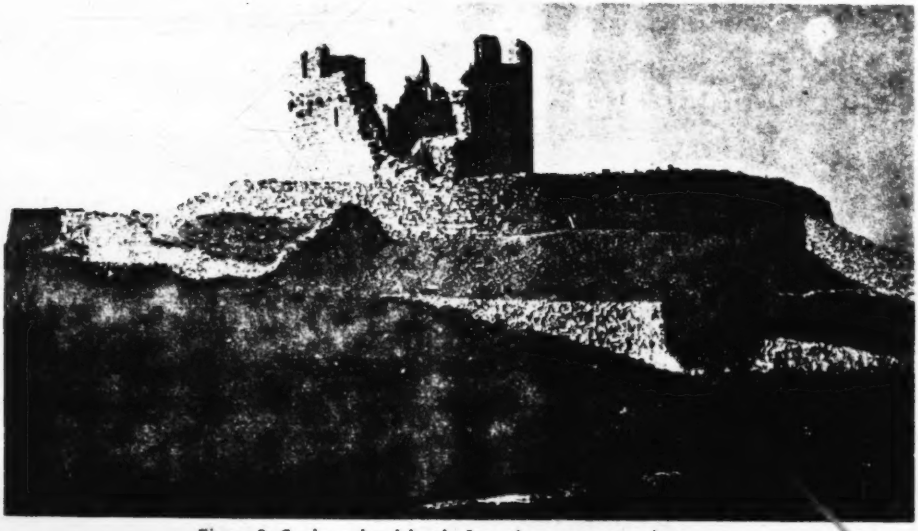


Figure 2. Castle enclosed by the Iron Age promontory fort

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet • [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333 •
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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[482]

Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[435] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce,
[438] under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[439] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

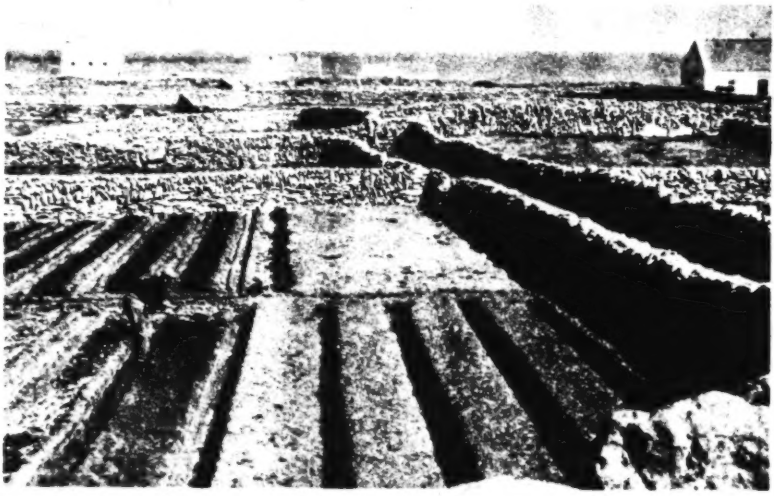

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a 246
task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot 221
only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted.

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a 246
"reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The [293]
farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most [461]
strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to [343]
transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent 434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts 437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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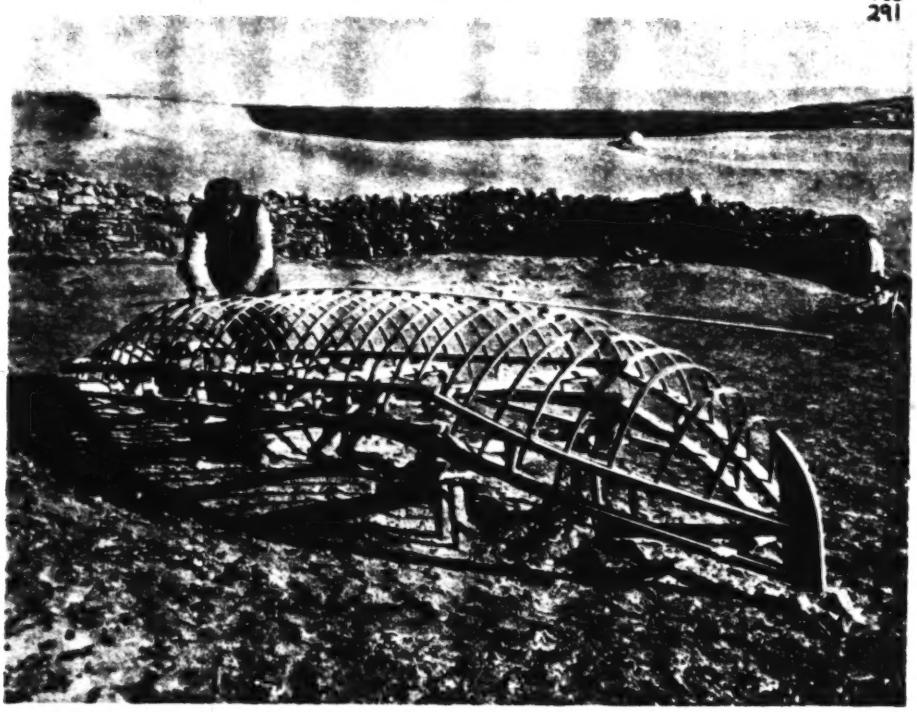

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

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folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

[184]
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The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

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The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [626] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

231 is said to be due to the expense of importing feedstuffs. Donkeys and Con-
[492] nemara ponies are kept as draft animals, and almost everything is conveyed in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was made in 1907 by a local carpenter from one he had seen on the mainland. The
●335 two carpenters make anything required, including lobster pots, fishing nets, furniture, doors, windows, and hand barrows, which consist of two shafts joined by slats and a single wheel in the rear, all of wood.

221 Digging and manuring of the land begins in late February, and seaweed is brought from the shore as needed. The potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's Day (March 17); oats, two to three weeks later; barley and mangolds at the end of April or in May. Most calves are born from March to May. In dry years peat is cut from May onwards, laid out to dry, and eventually stacked in ricks six feet high secured by large stones, or placed against a stone wall. Apart from routine work, there is little to do until the hay harvest, generally in August or September, though sometimes a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with the hope of a second crop in the autumn. Oats and barley are harvested in September, after which the main potato digging takes place, though some are dug earlier for the household. From October to late February, there is little to do except tend the stock, though some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under government schemes. Few farmers make the ricks of peat beside their houses so commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major aim of the Congested Districts Board, and from the eighteen-nineties to the

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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172 cells themselves, as well as parts of the church walls, have been pulled down to serve as gravestones, or to build the wall of the enclosure. In the immediate neighbourhood of the church, what is supposed to have been a font, has recently been discovered.

(2). Tober Flannain, close to the church, is now surrounded by a wall to keep the cattle away from it.

(3). *Ait tighe Guairim.*—The remains of the building which used to stand on this spot, said by some of the older people to have been of large size, have been cleared away to make room for the parish priest's residence.

(4). *Dun Graine*, which formerly stood on a large table-like rock a short distance from the entrance to the harbour, has entirely disappeared, and hardly even the traces of its foundations can be seen.

(5). *Dun-mor.*—No traces are now left of the earthen fort which formerly stood here.

(6). The castle or fort on Port Island, at the mouth of the harbour, known as Cromwell's, or Bosco's, castle. This was a small fortified barrack, consisting of a strong wall with four small bastions, enclosing a courtyard of no great size, which was bounded on three sides by buildings capable of lodging a small garrison, and containing a draw-well in the centre. It is daily becoming more ruinous from the [339] exertions of the seekers after stones to burn for lime, who have knocked away all the corner-stones of blue limestone, with the exception of those of one angle which overhangs the sea, and have now extended the same work of demolition to the fine arched doorway. The walls of the inner buildings are also being torn down, to get at any limestones that may be in them, the draw-well has been filled up with rubbish, and a cowshed, constructed of stones torn from the walls, has been built up beside the entrance gate. If it were not for the great tenacity and hardness of the mortar it is hardly likely that any of the building would now remain.

Inishshark.—(1). *Teampull Leo.*—This old church is now restored, whitewashed, and slated, and is used as the place of worship on the occasions on which the island is visited by the priest.

(2). The stone cross, *Leac Leo*, is now mounted on the east gable of the church; it is said to have carved on one side of it a chalice, and on the other a human figure, supposed to represent a bishop, with hands extended.

343 XVI), had their great days in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but small-scale wrack-burning is far older than this. 381 In the later eighteenth century, when framed windows and brick chimneys became fashionable in the more prosperous [339] lowland farms, the bricks were locally burnt in circular kilns plastered with clay.

Another class of outbuilding, allied to the clochaun in con- 343 struction, is the stone sweat-house, the Irish version of the 357 Turkish bath, which the Germans, indeed, call the Irish bath. There is a theory that the idea reached Ireland with Christian missionaries who were accustomed to Roman practices, but heat-treatment as a cure is so widespread throughout the world (cf. the sweat-houses of Finland and pre-Columbian California) that one thinks of remoter origins. What is certain is that they were visited for cures within living memory in several parts of Ireland. In west Cavan twenty-five sweat-houses have been listed in one district, and many more are known to have been destroyed. A French traveller of the late eighteenth century observed that 'wherever there are four or five cabins near each other there is sure to be a sweating-house'.[1] And old people in Cavan confirm that every four or five families once shared a sweat-house, in which sweating cures were taken in summer and autumn (Fig. 37, 6).

The sweat-house is a dry-stone corbelled structure, measuring internally from four to seven feet in diameter and rather less in height. A low lintelled doorway is the only means of access though some specimens have a roughly constructed chimney flue to allow the smoke to escape. This was closed with sods during the treatment, as was the door. The fire of turf—straw and bracken seem also to have been used—had been kept burning inside for a day or two previously. The floor, normally an earthen floor though some examples were cobbled or paved, was then swept clean and strewn with green rushes. On these, or on grass sods or low stools which they took in with them, from two to as many as six or seven persons would sit, naked and sweating profusely. After half an hour or so they would emerge and cool themselves either in a near-by stream or with a bucket

[1]De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland* (1796–97). Ed. J. Stevenson (1917), 193.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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311

Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island
form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are
situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the
rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are
Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common
land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the
monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common
land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the com-
munity. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 275
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve
the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small
enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop
are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes
purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [443]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an
aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

121 In the discussions on the complicated problems of the European house traditions, the peasant Irish house has hitherto been almost ignored, in spite of the fact that the Irish house could certainly yield some important information. Ireland constitutes a reservoir of Celtic and other traditions of great antiquity and of special importance for the moulding of European folk-culture.[1]

To study the Irish peasant house, it is first of all necessary to make detailed field surveys for all parts of Ireland and then to compare these with the results of similar investigations in all related countries. But not less important is it to consider these conclusions in the light of the information we get in the Ancient Irish Laws (the culture here described dates from pagan times i. e. prior to the middle of the 5th century A. D.) the literature (particularly the Heroic tales of the Ulster cycle), and the vocabulary of the older language as well as that of the modern Irish dialects.

128 Postponing for further discussion (in part II of this article) the buildings of very archaic constructions, viz. the stone beehive huts or rectangular huts roofed by a system of overlapping stones and the most primitive or simplified house types (huts of wickerwork, sod, turf), I will here firstly consider Irish houses, stone-built and mudhouses with roof resting on wooden couples. These houses represent a slightly more developed stage of construction than the above mentioned types. They are all inhabited in modern times.[2]

341 It is a remarkable fact that even the most primitive Irish houses still inhabited — houses with only one room showing traces of its original task to shelter both the human family and the cattle, walls built without mortar, fireplace without any chimney etc. — are already divided into two principal types, namely (1) the house with the fire-place placed somewhere near the centre of the house or at least not just at the gablewall, so there are bedplaces behind the fire-place in the upper end of the house, often thatched gables, and (2) the house with stone-built gables and the fireplace close to the gable wall. In a former article (Béaloideas 1935 p. 57 et sq.) I have

341 called the first type *the central-chimney house,* because the chimney will be erected over the fire-place somewhere about the middle of the roof, (fig. 1 and pl. XLI: 1, 2, 3 ; the second *the gable chimney house* because here the chimney will be close to the gable often being built as a part of the stone-built gable (fig. 2 and pl. XLI: 2). The outside chimney then not seldom forms a pronounced gabletop or gable-finial.

The Central-chimney house.

342 Some of the most primitive houses I found in Ireland belong to the central chimney house type. To illustrate I choose a house from Spiddle, Co. Galway (fig. 3 and pl. XLI: 1). The house is said to have been built before 1839 and to have withstood the "big wind" of that year. How old it actually is I had no means of discovering. The walls are of stone with the mortar put on afterwards on the inside and outside, but not used in the actual construction of the walls. Some outhouses belonging to this farm are all of dry wall construction. The roof of straw rests on couples of beams, supported on the inner edge of the walls, so that the thatch does not quite reach as far as the outside edge of the wall, but leaves a narrow space uncovered. [171] This is an archaic feature found now in very old buildings in Ireland, as always in the black houses of Scotland.

The house is built on a slope, so that the fireplace end of the house lies higher than the entrance door. There is only one room, but a low partition wall at the back of the fire cuts off a section which is used as a bedroom. [352] In the lower end of the house a dresser is placed so that it together with a small table cuts off another section that nowadays is also used as a bedroom. Some stools, a cradle and a churn are the other contents. There are two doors opposite of each other, both provided with half-doors. The fireplace consists of some flat stones on the floor. Over the fireplace there is a [354] wattled chimney resting on two beams, supported by a cross beam. The chimney is adapted to a hole in the thatched roof, so there is no outside chimney. On one side of the house, the sheltered side, there are two windows.

About other houses of the same kind, I have heard from the inhabitants [231] that in olden times the lower end of the house was used for the cattle. In late times the cattle have been removed to an outhouse and this part of the house has been adopted as a living room.

342 171 The division of the house into three sections, which is characteristic of the central-chimney house type, is quite clear in the Scottish houses, namely the black houses, the bedroom being at the upper end of the house behind the

[Text continues top of P. 211]

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The gable finial, the gable top often consitutes a very characteristic feature of this house-type, pl. XLII: 2. Only where the low roof is used, the gable top is not especially accentuated. The outside chimney constitutes the gable top of the chimney-gable. On the opposite gable the gable-finial may be form-
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Windows have come at a later period here also. In old-fashioned houses there is generally only one window, sometimes none at all.

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3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE. II.

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

341 In the Ireland of today there exist not only buildings of a more developed stage of construction, *i. e.* stone-built or mud houses with roofs resting on wooden couples[1] but also buildings of very archaic or of extremely simplified or primitive construction. The stone beehive huts, roofed by a [172] system of overlapping stones and some oval or oblong houses are identical with or closely linked with prehistoric house-types. The huts of wickerwork, sod and turf, on the other hand, represent very simple house-types, of which not all can with certainty be characterized as archaic, but rather as imitations in a simplified form of advanced house-types, or as simple temporary structures, or solutions of individual building problems often due to poverty or lack of better building material.

These groups of buildings offer possibilities of very wide, but at the same time very vague, comparisons throughout the fields of archæological, historic literary and ethnological facts.

341 Ireland's cultural position is of great interest, whether Ireland be looked
171 upon as a relic-zone where many culture-elements still persist after they have become extinct in Continental Europe, or whether it be supposed to constitute a critical point in the Atlantic intercepting the different streams of culture flowing from North, South, and East.[2]

There are features common to Irish and Scandinavian archaic or primitive buildings, to Irish and Spanish-Portuguese buildings or to Irish and English buildings, but it would be premature to come to any decision about the origin of these features until the whole area of their distribution has been surveyed. Adapting T. J. Westropp's words about the ancient Irish "Forts" I would say: The key to the origin of the Irish house-types lies as much in a comparison with cognate buildings over the rest of Europe as in the native Irish records.

As it is not possible to arrive at any definite conclusions until investigations have been made on a broader basis, I must content myself here with pointing out some types of buildings and some problems which seem to me to be of certain importance.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 a smokehole which I have found, was an ancient sweating bath, *teach allais*, in Co. Mayo. This building is square in form.

171 Thomas's material is however interesting from a certain point of view. From prehistoric times are found agglomerations of round, oblong and square houses in Ireland (*e. g.* Skellig-Michael), in Wales[9] and in other parts of the 341 British Isles. The same mixture of round and square or oblong buildings can be observed in Portugal,[10] Spain and elsewhere in Western and Southern Europe.

From Thomas's material we now learn what an *inhabited* settlement of this kind looks like. In Lewis, for example, the stone-roofed circular houses, *bothan*, have been erected in the same *gearraidhean, i. e.* place for booleying, as the timber-roofed huts, *aridhean*.[12] We are forced to infer that round, oval, oblong, square buildings must be studied with regard to each other and with regard to different constructions in timber, branches, sods, stone etc.

The *oblong form* of building can obviously have developed or been invented in a number of ways, as there are varying antecedent conditions in different cases.[11] There is however *one* oval or oblong form of building which may have its origin in the stone-built domed-roofed bee-hive house.

The construction with a domed roof does not permit of much widening of the space between the walls. Even if very long and suitable flag-stones are at hand, the limits for the cyclopean arch will make it impossible for the primitive builder to enlarge the circumference of his house to any great degree. To get more room he must put two or more circular bee-hive buildings together, or he must go over to the oval or oblong form. Thomas himself touches upon the problem in these words: "It is evident that in this style of architecture (domed roofed buildings) the size of the rooms is limited by the nature of the stone; and although a tolerably safe roof may be made in this manner with rough moor-stones to cover an area of six feet it would have a most uncomfortable and suspicious appearance if extended over twice those dimensions (six or seven feet in diameter). Even in the Orkneys where is abundance of flag stone, although there are chambers there forty-five feet long the breadth was only five feet."

342 To elucidate this important problem the Irish oval *clochán* offers us the most valuable material. I refer to the series of photographs, kindly placed at my disposal by the distinguished author of The Islands of Ireland, Thomas Mason.[14] This *clochán* (Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore Island, Aran, Co. Galway, pl. 30 a, 31, and 32) is of oval shape, the entrance door being at the long sidewall. The roof is made of overlapping stones, one row of large slabs covering the space between the two long sides of the roof, which are

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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FIG. 2—Ballyhillin, a present-day clachan near Malin Head, County Donegal.

FIG. 3—Kiltullagh, a hamlet of a form common in County Galway. The regularity in the arrangement of the houses is possibly the result of the activity of a former landlord, though it is noticeable that the houses are not perfectly oriented to the road. (Photograph from Irish Press.)

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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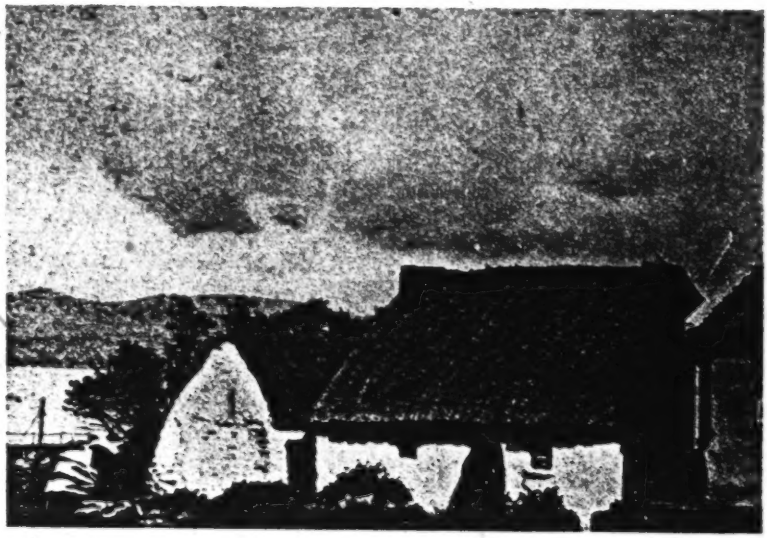

An Irish Cottage

[facing p. iii]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated 231
are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops 241
for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and 311
rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use.

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are 231
the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various 343
sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the 351
house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later.

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called 231
"all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view 241
is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken 311
from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area.

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard 342
also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of 343
the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is carefully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general 351
plan for all such houses of small farmers.

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work 512
which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various

[text continues on p. 35]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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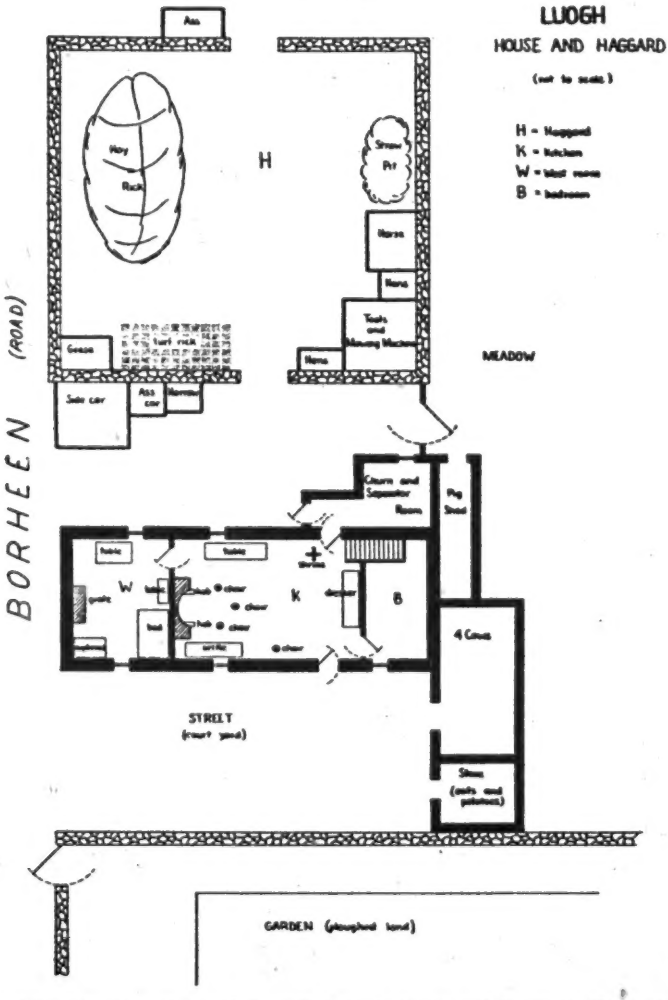
FIGURE 9



Schematic plan of a typical small farmer's house and farmyard, illustrating his familist economy and functional division of his household.

[p.34]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

561 When the whole population of a country district is on
571 the move on Sunday, the groupings are especially note-
794 worthy. There are occasional family groups driving in the jaunty car, but generally the older men walk in a group of their own, the older women in another. The young men walk together by themselves and the young women by themselves. On Sunday afternoons the young men can be seen at the nearest crossroad standing together in groups of ten to thirty, while the older men keep more to their houses or visit one another. Before mass, when the weather permits, the men congregate outside the church and do not move in until all the women have entered and the priest has arrived. As the groups stand outside waiting for the mass to begin and gossiping back and forth, the older men stand off together and the younger men keep to themselves. In wakes, weddings, christenings, the same age groupings are observed.

561 There is, of course, no formal prescription of such be-
571 havior nor formal taboo against its infringement; the conduct rather springs from the divisions of the family and the solidarity of the individuals occupying similar status as these forces operate in everyday life. It is evident how close a connection exists between age grading and marital status.

[561] If behavior of this type reflects the age grading within the family and the transitions between age grades which are part
● 342 of the transformation of the family at marriage, so does the arrangement of the house interior. For a graphic representation of this characteristic arrangement, let the reader return to Figure 9. ! The houses of the small farmers show a remark-
[565] able uniformity over great areas; it becomes at once apparent that the variations in house types and forms are more associable with differences of class than of locality. But as we are dealing only with the small farmer or peasant class, we need concern ourselves only with the implications of the striking uniformity in house form among the country people. Throughout West and North Clare the house is rectangular

! [see p. 34. -Analyst]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater 342
part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen. There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of house is common, but there is also a squarer type which may have a second story.

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled, rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the [362]
governmental agencies and patterned after those built first by the Congested Districts Board (1893–1923) are slated and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statistical statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families, but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's population live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings, which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence between the proportion of small farm population to total population.

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is 592
the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking 352
is done, the table around which the family — first the adult 353
males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and [778]
the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the "Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled [415]
with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festivals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

must. They descend from father to son with the house and 600
the farm on which it stands.

It is into this room that the old couple move upon the 592
son's marriage. They move in among the symbols of family 888
unity, among the religious symbols of the house, into surroundings of a certain religious or sacred character. If we can discover certain other indications of the nature of this room, we shall feel warranted in drawing conclusions as to the nature of the change which takes place in the status of the old couple and the attitudes which surround them.

This room we have described is the "west room" mentioned in the "writings." It is so literally. With remarkable 592
uniformity the small farmers' houses in West and North 342
Clare face east and west, the room behind the hearth being 775
generally at the west end of the house. Now the west room 888
and the western end of the house are associated in folklore with the "fairies" which still flourish in the countrymen's minds, especially among the older generation.

The Irish "fairies" include the spirits of the dead. In fact, the identity between the two is explicitly recognized. It was so at Luogh, where older men could name the "good people" with whom they had had encounters.

It is the west room and the western end of the house that the fairies frequent. Where a fairy path is believed to pass the house, it passes invariably along the western end of the house. The country people of Luogh and other parts of West Clare give this as the reason why no extensions, outhouses, sheds, or other structures are built on that side; bad luck would result. In Luogh none of the twenty-five houses of the townland had any structure of any sort built there. And it is often in this room that the fairies spend the night when they visit a house on their nocturnal travels. If we remember that the old people, relinquishing their adult status and preparing for death, move into this room amid heirlooms, religious pictures, and photographs of dead

542 342 775 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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A VILLAGE ON A HILLTOP WITH ITS GARDENS AND PASTURES

[facing p. 182]

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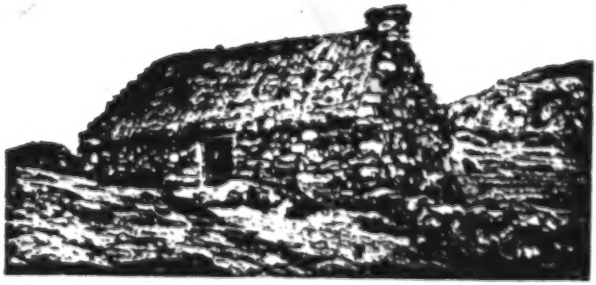

2.

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1. Central-chimney house. Spiddle, Co. Galway.

2. Gable-chimney house. The weaver's house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

3. Central-chimney house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

[p. 205]

2. Campbell B.E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Mayo

PLATE XLII

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1. The cailleach built close to the fireplace. Fallmore, Co. Mayo.

2. Gable-chimney house. Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

342

[p. 206]

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[Text continues top of P.211]

PLATE XLIII

342 1. Dry stone walls. Cilirialaig, Co. Kerry.

2. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

1.

2.

[p. 209]

PLATE XLIV

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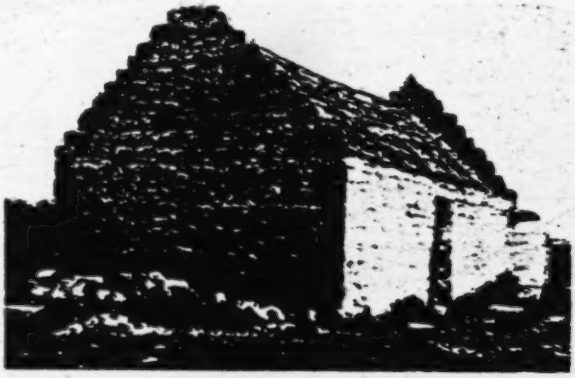
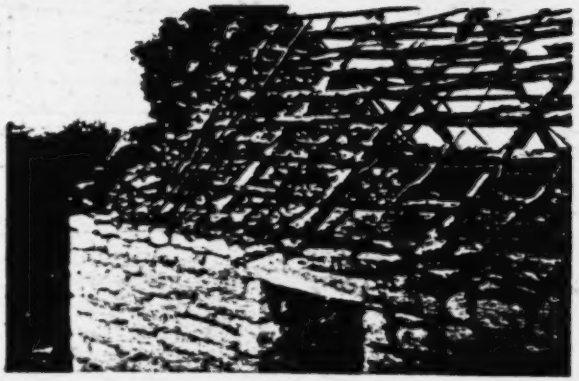


1.



2.

3.

1. House with stepgables. The small stones interlaying the bigger stones. Annaghdown, Co. Galway.

2. Roof-construction. Annaghdown, Co. Galway.

3. The gables facing the sea. Cillrislaig, Co. Kerry.

[p.210]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 171 fire, and the byre at the lower end of the house. In the Welsh long-house the hearth generally seems to face the living room and bedroom part of the house, and cuts these sections from the byre part. The two doors, opposite to each other, very typical of the Irish house (see p. 217), are also found in the Welsh long-houses, but here the space between the two doors has a more pronounced feeding-walk character, than we find common in Ireland, at least to-day when the cattle are generally removed from the dwelling house. For the three sections of some South Scandinavian houses see p. 222.

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[341]

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2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 231 a kind of partition. When the domestic animals were removed, often to an additional building at the gablewall, this part of the house would be used as a living room, just as in the former type of house, fig. 4. In a few very pri-
342 354 mitive houses of this as well as of the foregoing type I have found firepla-ces with no chimney at all, the smoke leaving the house through a hole in the roof above the fireplace. Sometimes I have found two smoke holes, one in each end of the roof. The doors and half doors constitute together with the smokeholes a complicated machinery, providing the current of air to regulate the turf-fire and the smoke.

Dwelling houses without chimneys were found by me in 1935 at Belmullet, Co. Mayo and in Co. Sligo.

342 The houses with thatched gables sometimes have rounded corners so that the base foundation may have an almost oval shape on the outside, while the inside room may be rectangular in form, pl. XLIII: 2. It is evident that the oval house form and the thatched gables complement each other. They could have existed together from a very early stage in building traditions. In a windy district the rounded and thatched gables are suitable, as the house will be more stream lined.

The roof with a thatched gable can easily have replaced the stone, or cyclopic roof, in cabins and huts (both, bothán). This fact and certain similarities would seem to indicate that the oval house form in the abovementioned houses with thatched gables, may have developed from the round
[171] or beehive house type. Parallels may be found among the stone-built huts with similar roofs in Estremadura and elsewhere.

On the other hand, houses with stone-built gables represent quite clearly the rectangular house type, as in such constructions the gables are never rounded.

342 346 The stone-built gable constitutes a very practical way of solving the problem of how to protect the gable ends of the roof of an oblong house against the wind, pl. XLIV: 3. But there is another point to be considered. In mediæval houses in villages and cities, the gables have often developed according to the use and importance of the gable wall; when the house faces the street or main road the gable wall would be far more important than the side walls. Other features point to ecclesiastical architecture. In the early churches, in Ireland and elsewhere, the gable wall constituted the front wall. In Ireland the early primitive churches were often furnished with pronounced gable finials. Furthermore it has been suggested that the introduction of the rectangular form of house is due to the first propagators of Christianity

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in Ireland, as we find in an early Irish stanza predicting this and other Christian innovations (Life of St. Patrick, translated by Colgan, p. 123). 342 346

It seems to me to be very likely that the above mentioned architecture of villages, towns and churches in Western Europe, giving prominence to the gable-wall, may have played an important role in the development of rectangular houses with stone-built gables in Ireland and elsewhere in Western Europe. As to Irish conditions, I would observe that the very small primitive rectangular churches, hardly bigger than an ordinary house, known from the Aran Islands and other places, have surely been built by no other builders than those who built the peasant houses. The clergy instructed them and planned the architecture. Then the people learned that the stone built gable was very useful both as protection for the ends of the thatched roof and as an arrangement for the fire, readily forming a chimney or stone-built venthole for the smoke. 346

But the early Christian churches cannot have constituted the original primitive form for every kind of rectangular house in Western Europe. As Addy (Addy: Evolution of the English House, p. 38 sq.) has mentioned, very primitive huts built in "bays" formed by "crucks" are known from the Welsh Laws as "Summer Houses". These houses consisted of a pair of "crucks" and a ridge-tree, and were completed by wattles. This form of house can be shown to be of great antiquity and can be studied over a large area. Material from Africa, the Mediterranean countries, the countries on the shores of the Atlantic, show that the square form is of greater antiquity than Christianity, so it does not follow that the rectangular house in Western Europe must necessarily owe its origin to Christian innovations, it can very well go back to a much earlier form of culture. 171

Regarding the higher development of the cruck-construction (or crutch) as discussed by S. O. Addy with examples from England, I would observe that the small stone-built one-storeyed Irish houses, the primitive Welsh long-house, the black houses of Scotland, as well as the small houses of Scandinavia and elsewhere have been sufficiently roofed by a very primitive small roof of pairs of beams, similar to that of the above mentioned huts, summerhouses etc. Even circular huts may have been roofed by a thatched roof, resting on a radial framework of branches without any central pole as in the Sudan circular hut, *tukl*, mentioned by A. E. Robinson, who has suggested that some prehistoric huts in Ancient Britain were of the *tukl* type (Antiquity 1930, p. 230). In Lewis (Scotland) according to Thomas (Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Vol. III, p. 130) circu- 342 171

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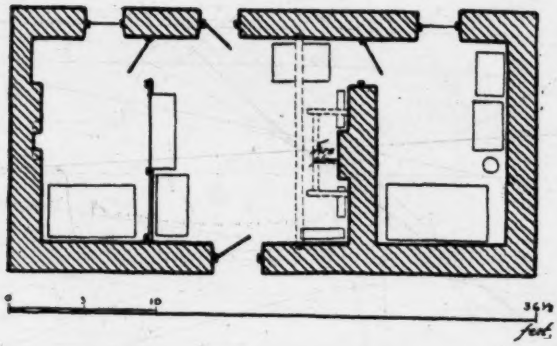


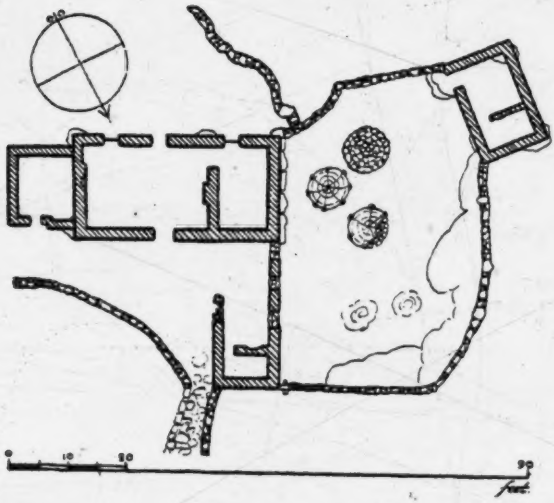


Fig. 1. Central-chimney house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

lar stone roofed houses *bothan,* existed side by side with timber proofed oblong houses called *aridhean* (p. 138).

The highly developed roof-constructions of the English crucktype, as well as those of the Saxon and other West European houses, have been of little or no importance for the development of Spanish, Welsh[3], Scottish and Scandinavian houses in early or in later times. The cruck construction as well as the roof construction with supporting poles seems to belong to a more limited sphere of building traditions. This fact however does not exclude the possibility that these traditions could have been in some way —

[Text continues top of p. 217---Analyst]

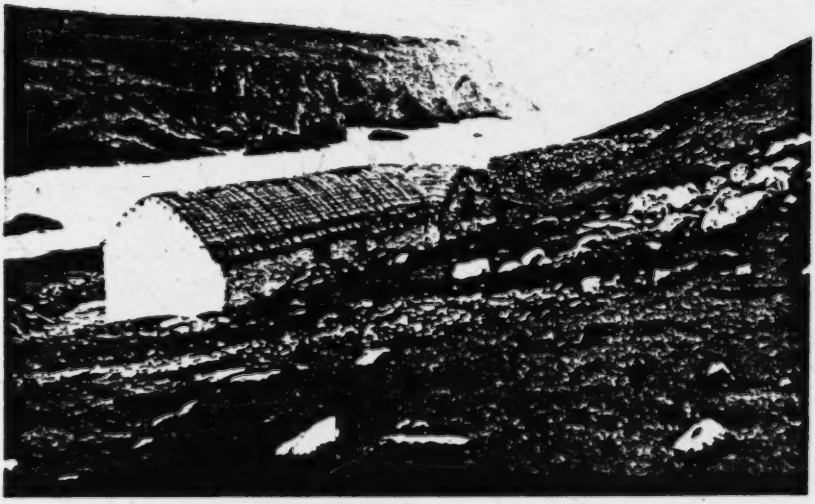
PLATE XLV

342 1. Roof with couples joined by two crossbeams. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. Stream-lined roof. Port, Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

1.

[133]



2.

[p. 215]

PLATE XLVI

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1.

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2.

[p. 216] [captions on P. 217, bottom]

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342 as a result of certain circumstances, such as social organisation, the dem-
171 ands and standard of the aristocracy, the clan, and the family etc. — introduced in Ireland, Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. This appears from some prehistoric materials as for example the Gall Arus near Dingle, Co. Kerry, and the so-called "kämpagravshuset" and the Viking Hall in Scandinavia.

Some of the features mentioned above in the descriptions of the central chimney-house and the gable-chimney house are common to nearly all primitive recent Irish houses.

342 It is especially interesting to notice the practice of providing two door-
354 ways, central and opposite, fig. 1, 3 and 4. In recent Irish houses the front door is called *doras tosaigh*, and the backdoor *doras cúl*. In Donegal however, I was told that the front door was called *doras an fhosgaidh*, door of the shelter, and the back door, *doras nagaoithe*. The opening and the closing of these two doors is determined by theprevailing wind, and its effect on the draught through the smokeholes. Thus the two doors were very often in Ireland made up of halfdoors, *leath dhoras*, constituting in co-operation with the smoke holes a machinery regulating the fire. In Ireland this is generally a turf-fire which needs special attention in its making, lighting and maintenance. The drawing off the smoke is also of importance.

342 Some superstitions connected with these two doors suggest that very old
777 traditions lie behind them. There is a belief in Co. Kerry that it is very unlucky to go in one door and out the other. You must always go out of the door you entered by, otherwise you are supposed to take the luck of the house with you.

342 How the two doorways could be used with regard to the cattle I have shown by an example from Co. Kerry in my article in Béaloideas (op. cit. p. 70).

The two doorways are well-known from the Ancient Irish Laws and the old literature. The inches house and even larger houses had two doorways, a door in one and a hurdle (wattle) in the other (see Ancient Irish laws, Vol. IV, p. 305). O'Carry says that the principal house, even of kings, had but one room to which when the house was of an oblong form there were generally two doors, one opening east and one west. In the round houses on the other hand there seems to have been but one door, which faced south, west or east, and sometimes though rarely north. (O'Curry, Manners and customs of the ancient Irish. Vol. I). In Scottish beehive houses inhabited about
342 1850 however, there are often two opposite doors, about which Thomas says:
171 "The two doors are a decided improvement, for the one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weater door — is closed with a stone or

PLATE XLVI

1. Fastening the hay-ropes, when thatching. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. Scollop-thatching. Connemara, Co. Galway.

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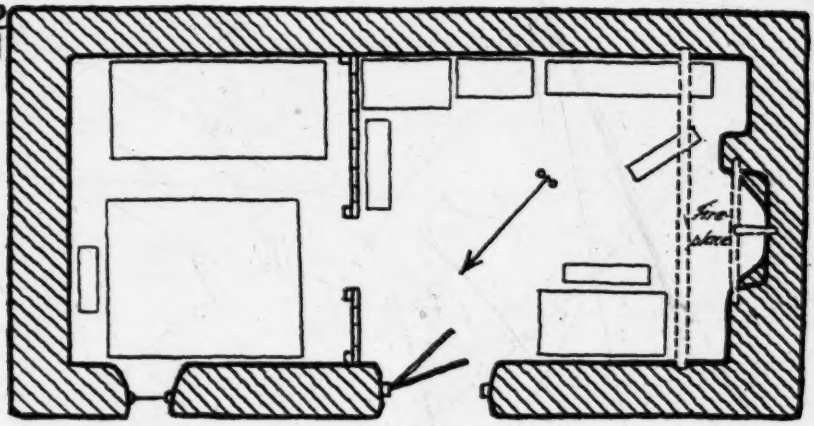

Fig. 2. Gable-chimney house. The weaver's house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the heads of the inhabitants and through the Farlos (the smoke-hole in the apex of the roof)" F. L. W. Thomas, in Proceedings of the Soc. of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III and vol. VII.

Also in Wales the two opposite doors have been known from prehistoric times to recent days. The Welsh long-house generally has these doors (see I. C. Peate, Welsh houses, Antiquity, 1936). They have also been found in prehistoric Welsh farm buildings excavated by Cyril and Aileen Fox (see Cyril and Ailen Fox, Forts and Farms on Margam Mountain, Glamorgan, Antiquity, 1934, p. 395 sq.).

The use of two opposite doors is however widespread. In Denmark and Southern Sweden (the plainlands in Skåne) the turf-fire was common until 1900, and the inside chimney is not so very old. In the 18th century, houses without any chimney were common, the two opposite doors and even the halfdoors being used for the regulation of the fire in the same way as in Ireland (see Åke Campbell, Skånska bygder under förra hälften av 1700-talet, Uppsala 1928, p. 208 sqq.). The complete stone-built chimney was introduced earlier in the woodlands of Scandinavia, where the wood-fire was common and the fire was not regulated by any two-door system.

In Spain and Italy I have seen the two doors, and Sigurd Erixon (in Den romerska Campagnans herdehyddor och deras konstruktiva karaktär, Arkeologiska studier tillägnade H. K. H. Kronprins Gustaf Adolf, Stockholm 1932, p. 255, p. 261 and p. 124 sqq. in this number) has mentioned them when

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 221 ----- ANALYST]

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1. Thatched-chimney. Co. Clare.
2. Making hay-ropes. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
3. Hobwalls carrying the chimney. Toormakeady, Co. Galway.

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2.

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3.

[p. 219]

PLATE XLVIII

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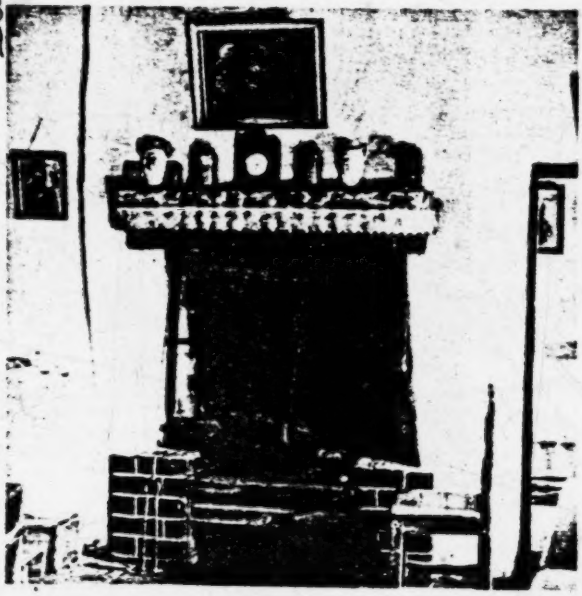

1.

1. Fire-place with iron-grate. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. The basket hanging to dry on the southwall of the house. Lough Eske, Co. Donegal.

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2

[p. 220]

342 171 discussing the herdsmen's oval and square straw-built houses in the Roman Campagna. He indicates two different systems (1) the smoke leaving through the door and (2) the smoke leaving through a hole in the roof.

In English and especially in Saxon and other West European houses, the two opposite doors sometimes are placed in the same way as in the Welsh longhouses, or in the Irish houses, but the broad plan of these extremely large buildings makes the comparisons very vague.

Besides the types now mentioned which form the basis for the development of native house types, we find in Ireland of the present day many house types which are likely of foreign origin mostly introduced by government and landlord activities.

Belonging to this group I must also reckon a feature of housebuilding which is found particularly in Leinster and Eastern Connaught but also scattered here and there in other parts of the country. This distribution more [412] or less coincides with the distribution of the two-eared English spade, while the native type of house coincides with the single-eared Irish spade.

A partition of stone, mud or wood and lath is built on the side of the fireplace adjacent to the door, so that a person sitting at the fire cannot be seen through the open door. In the partition is a spyhole, through which one can see who is entering by the door, fig. 5.

This adjacence of fire and door with intervening partition is wellknown in England. As far as my knowledge goes I cannot look upon this as being an independent or original Irish type. Everything points to its being a late innovation. Such houses usually have a porch built at the entrance door and the arrangements of the rooms are not at all primitive.

The developed stone built house.

342 It is evident that as soon the primitive one-roomed stage is left, it will be difficult or impossible to decide whether the house represents the traditions of the central-chimney house or the traditions of the gable-chimney house.

In two ways the one-roomed stage has been left (1) by dividing up the one-roomed house by partition walls, (2) by building additions to it at the gables.

Usually it seems that the room at the lower end of the house has been made by building a thin partition wall, *sileail,* which separates it from the other part of the house, fig. 2 and 4. It is as far as I know, very unusual to build an addition to this part of the house. When new rooms are made by building additions, these are usually made to the chimney or fireplace gable.

342 This custom should be compared with the proverb which I have heard in different parts of Western Ireland: "Only a man stronger than God can [539] build back (westward) of his house" *(Is treise ná Dia an fear a chuireann siar le na theach")*. Additions made at the fireplace end of the house are always used as bedrooms. Therefore it will be very difficult to decide whether the bedroom behind the fireplace has originated as an addition to a gable-chimney house or as a partition of a central chimney house. When the wall behind the fire-place does not reach the roof the house must be regarded as a central-chimney house. Now and then it is also possible to discover in another way whether the bedroom belongs to the original house, or is built as an addition to a gable-chimney house.

In both house types the partition walls at the lower end of the house very often were made by very thin wooden partitions, *síleála*. As already mentioned, furniture especially the dresser may be used instead of a partition wall, fig. 1.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland you will find the fireplace cut off to a certain degree from the living room and forming a special kitchen corner by stone-built breasts or piers at both or at one side of the fire-place. This side wall of the fire-place can also be built of wood, fig. 6, and can go a good way into the room, so that the kitchen corner will be more like a closed room.

342 171 Such houses with fireplace partition apparently have their parallels in Welsh houses. The Irish house, then, closely resembles to the living room of the Welsh long-house. This type of Irish house can be called "house with fireplace partition".

Another way of arranging accommodation in the house is to build lofts, *lochta*, and rooms on an upper floor. This upper floor will be arranged at both ends of the living room or kitchen. Then the arrangement with the house divided into three sections and with lofts at both ends is very similar to a house type in southern Sweden, the socalled Sydgötiska huset.[4] which has the kitchen or "stugan" in the centre of the house without any loft and at both ends additional chambers with lofts. Another likeness between the Irish and South Swedish houses is that there are bedplaces in the same way in the additional rooms.

[417] In the Irish house the loft can be reached by a ladder from the kitchen.

The construction of the different elements of the house.

342 Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building-material, the Irish peasant house never

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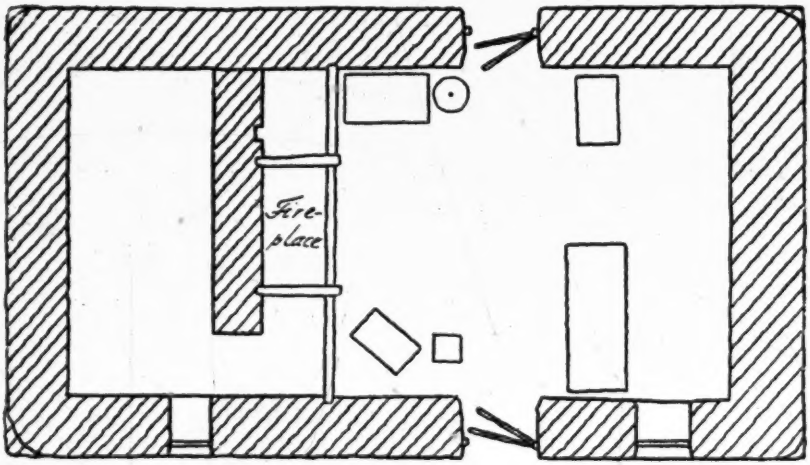

Fig. 3. Central-chimney house. Spiddle, Co. Galway.

stands out in bold relief against its background, but melts into it even as a tree or a rock. Built of stone, clay, sods, grass and straw brought from the vicinity, the house harmonizes with the landscape to which it belongs. Whenever the old building traditions are faithfully maintained its features are of a fine simplicity.

Here I shall not describe how the house has been determined by the different types of landscape, and by the social structure of the human community, to which it belongs. I only observe that the settlements and houses often are scattered but sometimes can be found built in groups or rows. 361 342

Very archaic dwelling houses generally are erected on a slope, the difference in level between the high end and the low end of the house being one, two or three feet. In houses where the farm animals have been under the same roof as the family, the places for the animals always were at the low end and the fireplace and bedplaces at the high end. This is the same arrangement as in the Scottish black houses.

The floor. The floor is commonly earthen, but generally paved at the fireplace. Now and then the upper end of the house is totally paved, or the whole floor is flagged. Very often the place round the fire is distinctly separated from the rest of the floor by its special paving. In modern times the floor is very often concrete. A covering with wooden boards at the upper end of the house and in the bedroom is often to be seen now-a-days. The stone or earth- 342

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The stone or earth-

342 en floor may be sprinkled for instance with coral beachsand to help in sweeping it.

[356] In some primitive houses, where the cattle still had their places, in the low end, I have found a gutter or conduit going across the low end and leading out through the door.

[231]

333 *The walls.* There are two main types of wall construction representing very
342 old building traditions.

[172] 1. The dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara* — met with in the prehistoric buildings, *clocháns* etc. — are built of stones (often flattish) without mortar. Dwelling-houses which have been built with dry stone walls have in later times been covered both inside and outside with mortar, pl. XLIII: 1. The space between the bigger stones are often carefully filled up by small stones, *spallaí.*

Especially in Co. Clare I have admired the precision developed in the construction of the walls.

[172] 2. Of prehistoric origin are also the mud, clod or clay walls, *falla feidín.* A fantastic explanation of the term makes it equal to *falla ar feadh dín,* a wall that endures as long as the roof is kept properly thatched (Dinneen).

The clay was pulverized and made into a thick mortar by wetting it and mixing it with cut rushes or course sprat hay. The well built mud-wall houses form comfortable dwellings and it has happened that people have regretted leaving excellent thatched "mud walls" to live in cold stone-walled slatted dwellings.

342 The foundation of the walls is sometimes a pronunced feature of the house. Whilst the walls usually have a width of 1½, 2 or 3 feet, the foundation is wider, forming a shelf or broad step along the building serving as a pathway to the door. The foundation is sometimes not very dissimilar to some prehistoric house-foundations. In this connection I would like to remark that the pathway and nearest surroundings of the entrance door are sometimes
[191] paved by a mosaic of small cobble-stones from the sea-shore. This I have seen in costal districts in South West, and I suggest that it is the same kind of pavement as appears in Portugal, Madeira, Marocco and elsewhere at the border of the Atlantic And the Mediterranean Sea.

Doors and windows. In many primitive houses of to-day the construction of the door-opening is extremely archaic: flat stones serving as lintel and as threshold. The frame of the door is wooden.

The doors usually have bolts of wood and a hasp to close the door. A thick wooden beam can be placed across inside the door on stormy nights, certain holes in the wall at both sides of the door being made for this beam,

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

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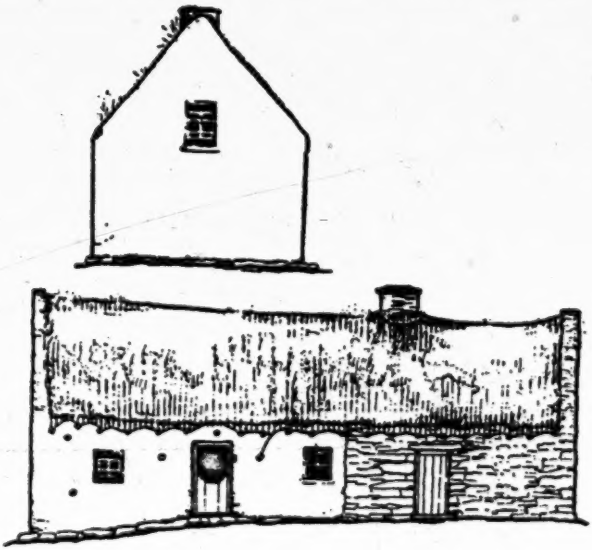

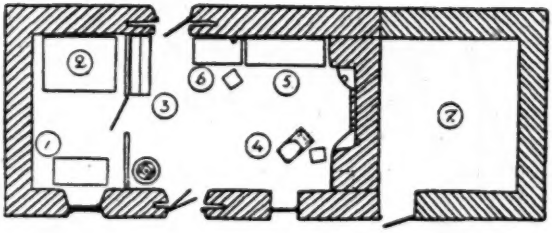

[231]

Fig. 4. Gable-chimney house. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry. The cattle once in the lower end of the house. Now removed to a house added to the upper gable wall. 1 table, 2 bed, 3 dresser, 4 cradle, 5 bench, 6 table, 7 sowhouse.

Fig. 4. In Co. Kerry, Co. Galway and other parts of Ireland, I have been told [171] of rough strong doors of wattles bound together with ropes of *sugáin*. Such a door, the hurdle door, *sgálán fraoigh* or *scalpán*, was more commonly used as a door for cattle sheds. It is found also in Scotland (see e. g. an illustration showing sheilings in Jura (S. W. Scotland) in Pinkertons Voyages and Travels, vol. III, p. 278, London 1809) and it is mentioned in the Ancient Irish laws. About the two opposite doors and the half-doors see p. 217.

In older times a hole in the wall, a looplight, served as window. It was closed [284, 414] at night with a hay-wisp or a wooden shutter, *cómhla*, which was removed by day and secured at night by a stick placed across or by a latch.

342 Windows, as well as chimneys, were taxed, hence the oldfashioned blind [65] wall and the old fireplace (without chimney) being preserved. The daylight was admitted to the kitchen by the door opening. A pad of straw was placed at the door, *sop i mbéal dorais* (Dinneen) on which tailors and other crafts- [294] men used to sit to avoid window-tax. When windows came later on, they were placed on the side of the house sheltered from the prevailing wind.

The gables. The stone built gables are higher or lower according to the form of the roof, which is determined by the wind. In some districts of Ireland [184] especially in the Aran Islands, Connemara, Sligo, Mayo there are often even in very primitive buildings, step gables or serrated gables. In other parts of Ireland the gables are straight up to the top. In Southern and Eastern Ireland the gables are generally of this type. Half thatched or hipped gables are sometimes found in the east, where now and then the thatch is also bent over the gable edge in the same way as in Wales. This is common on mud houses.

How the gables protect the ends of the thatched roof and support the horizontal ribs is shown in pl. XLIV: 2.

The roof. Roof and wall constructions meet one another in the most primitive stages, when the house is only a roof over a foundation wall, of a cavity, or when the roof is constructed similarly to the *clochán*s with the upper course of stones slightly overlapping the lower course. This construction is not known among dwelling houses of to-day, but can be found in outhouses, sweating buths etc.

Roofs made by wide slates or stone flags will be seen in some parts of Ireland when there is a natural access to stones suitable for slates as in Co. Clare where such roofs are found on outhouses with the narrow stone walls carrying the flags.

The Irish house from olden times generally has had not a stone roof, but a thatched roof, *ceann tuighe*. The art of making good thatched roofs is now dying out but in earlier times Irishmen had developed great skill in roofing with thatch.

The thatched roof is supported internally by beams joined in pairs forming [804] the couples, *cúplaí*. The couples are placed at a certain distance and the space enclosed between two couples must be looked upon as a sort of architectural unit. The length of the house can be measured by the number of couples. [171] A very similar kind of measuring is well known in Denmark and Skåne. In many old houses the length of the house seems to indicate traditions from the ancient Irish laws (See Addy, p. 84).

The roof-supporting system of beams varies very little. The beams can

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be more or less primitive. The couples can be constructed in two slightly different ways depending on the intended height of the roof. In very windy districts near the sea very low, semi-circular roofs that do not catch much wind are used. The roof is streamlined and there is no comb along the roof, pl. XLV: 2. 342

This roof is made in the following way. Very strong couples rest on the walls and are joined by two crossbeams, the lower called *faradh* and the upper *maide mullaigh*. These joining beams are just as strong as the couples themselves. They are joined to the couples by means of one or two wooden pegs on each side. The couples never meet. Above this arrangement are the purlins, *taobháin*. Transversally across these are slender laths called *cleithedin*, pl. XLV: 1.

High roofs with combs are supported by couples joined in pairs and held together at the top by a wooden peg, *pionna*. The ridge beam, *maide droma*, rests on the hollows formed at the junctions of the couples, and parallel to it but lying transversally on the couples are purlins, *tobháin*, on each side of which run the whole length of the roof. To brace the couples there are tiebeams, *maidi snaidhm*, pl. XLIV.

On this foundation of roofing, sticks are spread tough sods of grass, the earthen side inwards. The sods cut from the ground can either be made about 5 ft. long and 2 ft. wide or a bit longer than the side of the roof and about 3 ft. broad. In the former case the sods overlap, the higher over the lower. In the latter case the sods stretch from the wall to the ridge and are bent over the ridge. Over the ridge then there are two layers of sods. In both cases the one row of sods overlaps the second row beside it. I have found the short sods used in Southern Ireland, and the long ones in Donegal. [824] [784]

The thatch is put on in two ways. One method of thatching corresponds to the thatched houses of the European continent viz: the scollop-thatching or rod-thatching, pl. XLVI: 2. The other method is the hay-rope or *sugán* thatching known from the border of the North Atlantic and the North Sea. The scollop-thatching is made in such a way that straw, *tuighe*, or mountain grass, *fineán*, is fastened to the sods by means of horizontal rows of rods, *scolb*. The rods are fastened to the underlying sods by twigs, *bannai*. Both *scolb* and *bannai* are of hazel or sally. Oat, wheat, or barley straw is used for thatching but on the western seabord rye straw is used. Rye is considered most durable. According to scollop-thatching the thatching of the ridge is of certain interest. Here and round the chimney-shaft but seldom at the thatch of eaves, *bun tsop*, a kind of ornament can be formed by the twigs and scollops. But this is an ornament caused by the necessity of fastening and 342 824 342

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 trimming the thatch. When using the *sugán* or hay-rope method the straw, bound in large bunches, is placed on the roof in rows, each 'set' about 18" wide. The thatcher beginning from below takes a handful of straw and puts the top part of the straw against the roof. He then puts another handful slightly above the last, so that the handfuls lie on top of each other. The bottom part of the handful is spread and flattened out with hands. Then the
342 ropes are put on. A man stays on a ladder at each gable of the house, pl.
284 XLVI: 1. Another man carries the rope along the roof by means of a hay-fork while another walks beside him loosening the ball of ropes. The first rope is put on along the eave, the next above until the top of the house is reached. The ropes are fastened along the gables by means of stone plugs. Then the vertical ropes are put on, and fixed to the front and back walls of the house, also by stone plugs. The two systems of ropes can also be intertwined with each other, so that the ropes form a kind of unintentional ornamentation. Other means of fastening the ropes are by weighting the vertical ropes with stones attached to the ends. The stones are placed in two different ways, (1) hanging below the eave of the house, this is the most primitive way, (2) laying the stones on the roof just above the eave to press down the thatch at the same time as they hold the ropes. The rows of stones when finally laid give a good finish. This is also an example of unintentional ornamentation. It is worth noticing that the hay cocks too may be fastened in nearly the same three ways by means of hay ropes.

342 In order to produce hay-ropes used for binding the thatch and the hay cocks etc. a multitude of simple tools has been invented, pl. XLVII: 2.

To sum up some conclusions about thatching and roof, it seems clear to me that two, perhaps related, but nevertheless unlike traditions have been at work here, namely the scollop thatching, with the highly elevated roof resting on couples that meet each other, on the one hand, and on the other hand hay rope thatching, with the hay ropes fastened to stones, and often a low roof without perceptible ridge resting on a couple construction, where the couples do not join. Parallels to the former tradition are to be found on the European continent and the latter are mainly found, as far as I know, along the coast of the Atlantic and the North Sea.

I must add that the well-built thatched roof is at the same time a masterpiece of technical ability and a feat of artistic skill. The best Irish thatching give the finest peasant roof in Europe. It is unfortunately, however, very expensive and demands constant attention to keep it in good repair so it is very often replaced by a cheap, shoddy roof of foreign origin.

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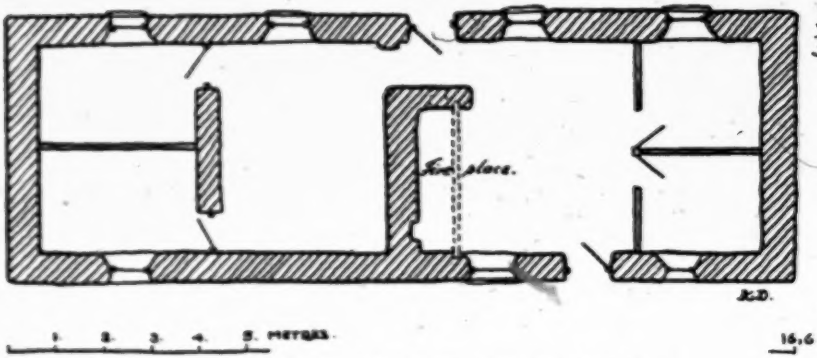

Fig. 5. Entrance-door and fireplace. Cush, Co. Limerick.

The fireplace and the chimney.

Slowly, step by step, or suddenly, by an abrupt innovation the fireplace has developed from its simplest original form, i. e. the placing of the fire directly on the flagstones of the floor. I have never found a fire lying quite free on the floor in Ireland, although I have heard of such fires where one could go round the fire. From Tousist, Co. Kerry, I have heard of houses which had the fire in the centre of the floor, and a casing, *simné,* of woven twigs, *slata fighe,* over it to convey the smoke out through the opening in the centre of the roof. This arrangement has been obsolete here for upwards of 80 years.

In both central-chimney houses and gable-chimney houses of recent time there is always a wall at the back of the firehob. This wall constitutes the endwall, *pinniuir,*[8] of the kitchen in gable-chimney houses. In more newly built central-chimney houses this wall reaches the top of the roof as the stonebuilt chimney is joined to it, but in old central chimney houses it only reaches the same height as the side walls.

The hearth, *teinteán,* is usually at floor level in many parts of Ireland. There is a great variety of hearth-stones: large flags of stone, small cobblestones from the seashore etc. Even round the hearth or fire-place there is a pavement owing to the oldfashioned way of using the fire for cooking. Bits of fire are taken from the fire, and put on the floor round the fire-place, for instance when they are baking in the bastible, and at the same time cooking, or when they wish to leave the tea drawing. Sometimes there can be two or three small fires at the same time round the hearth.

The fireplace thus represents the pure hearth-type, being in direct contrast

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 to the Middle and especially East European fireplace traditions, which are
354 dominated by the stonebuilt oven. The built-in oven is unfamiliar and unknown to the Irish fireplace, and the Irish types of bread. For baking,
252 which is done every day in Ireland, special utensils, representing very old
354 and original traditions, are used. For baking the griddle bread, *arán greadaille*, the griddle or grid iron, *greadall*, is used. The griddle rests on the tripod, *teannta* or *crann aráin*. In Northern Ireland, bread irons are used, which are not put on the tripod over the fire, but the cake is placed in an upright position supported by the bread iron which is placed before the fire. Very primitive is the method to lean the cake against the bread-stick, *crothnán* or *maide aráin*, which is only a wooden twig of three branches or a three forked root. In Ancient Ireland according to O'Curry (op. cit. vol. I, p. CCCLXIII) the wheatmeal and barley cakes were baked on a griddle, but the oatmeal cakes called *bkocaire* or *blethach* were always baked in upright position before the fire by means of the threepronged fork or stick called *maide an bkocaire* or the *cranachan*.

There is also another certainly old Irish method of bread baking i. e. in
[177] the bastible, *bácús*. When metal stores however are found in peasant houses, they are definitely a late cultural loan from England.

342 Standing at the back of the hearth is one large, thickish flag or often three
354 or more stones forming the hob, *iarta*. In very primitive dwellings I have seen only a couple of rough stones used as hobstones, *leac iarta*. In districts where mud-houses are common a mass or boss of clay behind the fireplace makes up the hob. The pot, *corcán*, or kettle, *citeal*, rests against the hob or hobstones when on the fire. The hob constitutes a protection even for the wall behind.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland and even elsewhere the hob is built up carefully from stone and mortar. An ash corner will be found at the sides of the hob.

In the very primitive stage there is no chimney at all, the smoke finding its way out through the door or a hole in the roof. As I have already mentioned, there can be two smoke holes, one at each gable end of the roof. This is a stage of the black houses very seldom seen in Ireland to day.

At the next stage a kind of basket or wooden chimney is hung over the fire to create a draught, *tarrac*, and to lead the smoke out through the hole in the roof. When there is no chimney but even later, when the chimney has come, to regulate the circulation of air in the kitchen, is is necessary to open and close one of the doors to allow for the changing winds. In the Irish houses the woman who looks after the fire always takes the "wind door" and

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Wicklow

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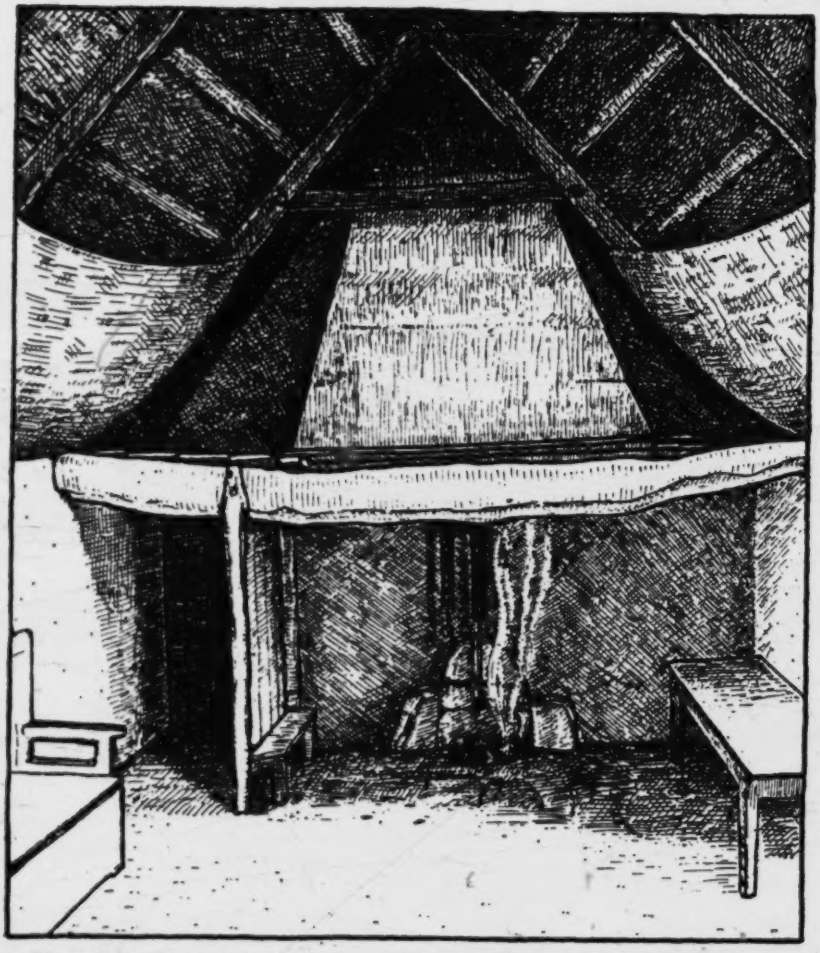

Fig. 6. Wooden side-wall of the fireplace. The kitchen corner. Kyle, Ballinglen, Co. Wicklow.

the "shelter door" into consideration, the whole kitchen being of importance with regard to the fire.

The basket chimney, *sineán,* is plastered with clay inside and outside to resist sparks from the fire. A plaster mixture of clay and calfmanure is said [237] to be very useful. The older chimneys were straight i. e. on looking up from the fireplace the sky was visible above. In later ones the flue, *poll an deataigh,*

342 is bent from side to side to create more draught. The chimney narrowed gra-
354 dually upwards until the basket, *cis,* on top was reached. In old houses the chimney was not always capped by the basket-like contraption on the outside, for instance not in coastal districts in the North, pl. XLV: 2. The external chimney however is a noteworthy detail. It was now and then of woven rods of twig or willow and it was thatched in some parts of Ireland, pl. XLVII: 1. In other old houses pieces of board were placed on edge in square formation.

The external chimney is sometimes lacking even if there is an inside chimney. In Donegal in places exposed to the wind, I have seen this even in houses with a stonebuilt chimney.

The basket or wooden chimney is supported by two wooden beams resting on the side walls, sometimes however projecting from the gable wall, pl. XLVII: 3. In a later stage there are two pillar walls or hobwalls carrying the basket chimney.

Across the chimney (inside) halfway up or more, a stick of cut tree-branch projects across the chimney. This stick is supporting the chimneyrack or pot-rack, hanger, *drol,* which is an iron bar and hangs down to the fire-level. Another way of hanging pots over the fire is to use the crane, *croch,* a hooked bar of wood (in older times) or iron. Usually the hangers and the crane are combined and in fact there are many hangers hanging at the same time from the crane. Now and then a chain is used as a hanger.

[352] At the side of the fireplace there is a stool, *stól,* or a number of stools, often varying a little in size, but usually very low. Primitive is the block of wood, *bloc,* a section of a tree, used as a stool. This I have seen in chimney-corners in Co. Kerry. There the round stool of coiled hay-ropes, *suidhistín,* also will be found.

The hob or protection wall behind the fire can develop in such a way that it incorporates the two stools at both sides of the fire, so that there will be two stone-built seats.

Also the pier of the fireplace will be built by pilasters on both sides forming a stonebreast, *piléar an teinteáin,* on which the wattled or wooden chimney rests.

[352] In the pier, as well as in the stone wall behind the fireplace, in the hob, and underneath the stone-seats, there are small closets or holes used to keep utensils. In Donegal, I have seen a hole in the wall at each side of the fire, the one hole for the woman's snuffbox and knitting, the other exclusively for the man's pipe.

In later times the chimney is often built of stone and when at last the pier

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, 342
the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on 354
a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Done- [184]
gal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in 592
Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted 354
to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All [775]
Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the [171]
fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, [184]
I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot 352
with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district 171
between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh*, where the in-

The clochán type with domed roof.

172 342 The clochán, or stone bee-hive hut, no doubt represents a very old stage of house-tradition (pl. 29,a—32), although it can be studied from material still existing and, in some cases, still in use in Ireland today (pl. 33, a, b). As it represents a prehistoric type of building, investigations of the Irish clochán and other types of bee-hive, oval or oblong houses from the Iron Age and later times become of immediate interest for the study of recent Irish house-traditions.

A comparison between the common Irish (developed) houses of today and the clocháns (prehistoric or of later date) may give the impression that there is a gap between them that cannot be bridged. Nevertheless the clochán-type constitutes a very suitable starting point for discussion of the recent Irish peasant houses and their history. There are indeed some significant parallels from various countries and different periods, which help to illuminate the problem here in question. In particular I would like to draw [171] attention to the Scottish bee-hive house but also to the black house *(bothán, aridhean, tigh dubh)*, to the remains of circular and roughly oblong huts of stone in other parts of the Brittish Isles, *e. g.* in Carnarvon, Wales, and to the very similar settlements in Spain and Portugal,[3] and in Italy and Greece. In Scandinavia, such settlements and forts as have been excavated in Denmark, Norway and the Swedish provinces of Öland and Gotland must be considered as parallels to the West European material here mentioned.

Descriptions of Irish clocháns can be found in several archæological works. I quote here some descriptions given by Macalister:[4]

"A clochán was built in this manner. A space of the size and shape intended was marked out on the ground with loose stones. Usually the plan was circular or oval, but sometimes the building is circular outside and square within. Above these stones another course was laid, slightly oversailing the course below. A third course overhung the second, and so on; the walls being made thick enough, as they rose, to secure stability. At last the sides of the building approximated together so that the hole in the top of the chamber could be closed with a single flag-stone or with two or more such stones. No mortar of any kind was needed or used, though the outer surface may have been covered with sods or some protection to keep out the rain. As a rule the stones of which the building was composed were laid not quite horizontal, but were sloped outward, so as to shed off rain-water to the outside of the building."

The most famous remains of clocháns are perhaps the six bee-hive cells at

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 177---ANALYST]

PLATE 29.

a. Clochán (beehive hut). Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Note to the left in back-ground a very large clochán which has collapsed. The remains of several other collapsed clocháns are inside same *caiseal*, (circular wall enclosing a group of buildings, huts, etc.).

b. Clocháns inside a cashel. Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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a

b

[p. 175]
[captions on p. 174]

PLATE 30

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[p. 176]
[captions on p. 177]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

172 342 Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry, and the so called "City of Fahan", which probably includes the largest number of buildings of this kind (pl. 29, 30,b).[5] But no investigation has been made — as far as I know — of round stone huts in Ireland built and inhabited in later times. Such investigation has, however, been made on the Scottish Islands by F. L. W. Thomas.[6] It is evident that the bee-hive huts (*both*) of Lewis described by Thomas, are very close to or identical with the Irish clocháns, and represent the same building traditions. This also agrees with the accounts of Irish cabins in the literature.[7] I will confine myself here to two descriptions made by Thomas and published in 1860 and in 1869, both dealing with stone bee-hive huts built in late times and used as dwellings. As these descriptions are inaccessible to most readers I must quote them at some length.

342 171 The normal and, Thomas presumes, most modern form of bee-hive house (in the middle of the 19th century) is "an irregular circle, six or seven feet in diameter, the walls rising perpendicularly for three feet; each successive course of stone then overlaps or projects beyond the one below, and then the roof gradually closes in and takes a beehive form. — — — A hole, called the *Farlos (farleus*, a skylight), is left in the apex of the roof for the escape of the smoke, and is closed with a turf or flat stone as requisite. (See pl. 34,c). There are two doors, 2½ feet high and 2 feet broad, and they are placed so that a line joining them cuts off on one side about two thirds of the enclosed area. The two doors are a decided improvement, for that one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weather door — is closed with a stone or turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the head of the inhabitants and through the Farlos. From door to door a row of flat stones, a few inches in height, forms the bench or seat, *being*, and behind this the area is filled up with hay or rushes for a bed. I had a native estimate of its capacity, and found it calculated to hold three people. In front of the bench, and midway between the two doors, is the fire — of peat of course, and not much needed except for cooking. Above the fire, a longish stone draws in and out of the wall for the purpose of hanging a pot on, and in nearly every ruin did we find this primitive instrument in its place, shoved back into the wall."[8]

With the investigations made by Thomas in 1857 and later, the *clochán* as an inhabited living dwelling is brought within the horizon of the study of today. In the following example which is taken from Thomas' description, this house-type of a prehistoric time is allied with a late innovation, namely the stone-built chimney, which in the course of the 19th century seems to

PLATE 30.

a. Clochán na Carraighe. Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

b. Clochán. Fahan, Co. Kerry.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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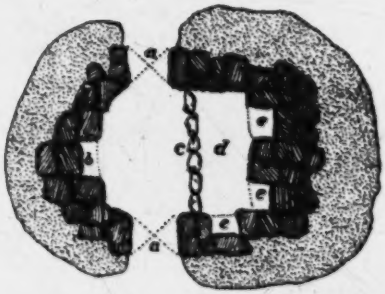

Fig. 1. A both or clochán on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, a, doors; b, fire-place; c, a row of stones in front of the bed place; d, the bed; e, e, e, small recesses in the wall to serve for cupboards.

become more and more common even in the dwellings of this remote district, thus heralding the total replacement of the black-houses by the white-houses with stone-built chimneys at the gable walls. With regard to the arrangement for the fire, this clochán stands on the same level of development as the many houses or huts of this and later times, the roof of which has been broken through by the stone-built chimney.

The *bo'h (both)* or *clochán* on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis, fig. 1, is the most modern that Thomas has seen — "and at the same time the last, in all probability, that will be constructed in this manner." It is of bee-hive form, about 18 feet in diameter, 9 feet high, and roofed by the horizontal or cyclopean arch, *i. e.* by a system of overlapping stones. The outside is covered with green turf. There are two doors (fig. 1 a,a) opposite to each other, higher (3 feet) and better formed than is usual. Within, the chamber is dome-shaped and is between 7 and 8 feet square on the floor. A row of stones (c), half a foot in height, cuts off one half of the floor for a bed (d). There are several small recesses (e, e, e) in the wall to serve for cupboards. But what distinguishes this *bo'h* from all others is the presence of a chimney over the fireplace (b). Thomas concludes, from what he heard from the woman who was living in it in 1867, and from va-

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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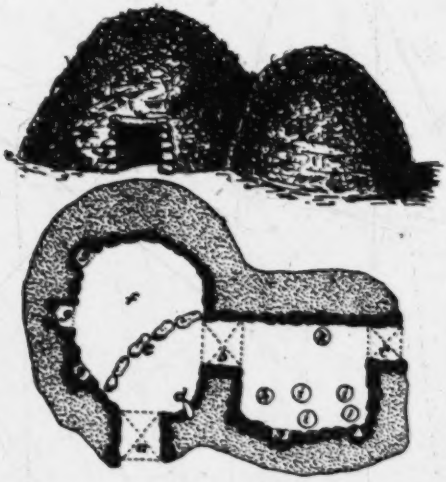

Fig. 2. A double both, the garry or summer pasturage of the tenants of Corlista, Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, b, c, doorways; d, fire-place; e, row of stones in front of the bed-place; f, the bed; g, g, niches; h, cream tub; i, i, i, three milk or cheese tubs, covered by slaty stones; j, a churn; k, a stoup for carrying water.

rious circumstances, that this *bo'h* was made about ninety years ago (from 1867).

With regard to Thomas's own comparisons, I will only add here that he has made a rather daring comparison between the *both* of Lewis and the Eskimo domed-shaped hut of Greenland. But perhaps a comparison of the grouping of the houses would be more effective than a comparison of the house construction of each type.[14] The Greenland hypothesis, however, seems to me to be worth studying. But at the same time we must not lose sight of stone-built huts and huts of straw, sods, mud and wickerwork, round or oval in form, used especially by cattle-breeding peoples in the Iberian Peninsula (*e. g.* in Estremadura, Andalusia, Granada), Italy and elsewhere.

Bee-hive houses of the *clochán* type in Ireland of today are to be found in some parts of the Gaeltacht (the Gaelic-speaking districts of Ireland), as on the coast and islands from Kerry to Mayo. There the stone-built bee-hive houses are used — not as dwellings, so far as I know — but as milk-houses or for storing turf etc. In the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, bee-hive houses are still being built as outhouses. There are also modernised clocháns with wooden doors — they can even have a glass ball to decorate the top.

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The only stone-built and stone-roofed houses equipped with a fireplace and

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 a smokehole which I have found, was an ancient sweating bath, ***teach allais,*** in Co. Mayo. This building is square in form.

171 Thomas's material is however interesting from a certain point of view. From prehistoric times are found agglomerations of round, oblong and square houses in Ireland (*e. g.* Skellig-Michael), in Wales[9] and in other parts of the 341 British Isles. The same mixture of round and square or oblong buildings can be observed in Portugal,[10] Spain and elsewhere in Western and Southern Europe.

From Thomas's material we now learn what an ***inhabited*** settlement of this kind looks like. In Lewis, for example, the stone-roofed circular houses, *bothan*, have been erected in the same *gearraidhean, i. e.* place for booleying, as the timber-roofed huts, ***aridhean.***[11] We are forced to infer that round, oval, oblong, square buildings must be studied with regard to each other and with regard to different constructions in timber, branches, sods, stone etc.

The *oblong form* of building can obviously have developed or been invented in a number of ways, as there are varying antecedent conditions in different cases.[12] There is however *one* oval or oblong form of building which may have its origin in the stone-built domed-roofed bee-hive house.

The construction with a domed roof does not permit of much widening of the space between the walls. Even if very long and suitable flag-stones are at hand, the limits for the cyclopean arch will make it impossible for the primitive builder to enlarge the circumference of his house to any great degree. To get more room he must put two or more circular bee-hive buildings together, or he must go over to the oval or oblong form. Thomas himself touches upon the problem in these words: "It is evident that in this style of architecture (domed roofed buildings) the size of the rooms is limited by the nature of the stone; and although a tolerably safe roof may be made in this manner with rough moor-stones to cover an area of six feet it would have a most uncomfortable and suspicious appearance if extended over twice those dimensions (six or seven feet in diameter). Even in the Orkneys where is abundance of flag stone, although there are chambers there forty-five feet long the breadth was only five feet."

342 To elucidate this important problem the Irish oval *clochán* offers us the most valuabe material. I refer to the series of photographs, kindly placed at my disposal by the distinguished author of The Islands of Ireland, Thomas Mason.[14] This *clochán* (Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore Island, Aran, Co. Galway, pl 30 a, 31, and 32) is of oval shape, the entrance door being at the long sidewall. The roof is made of overlapping stones, one row of large slabs covering the space between the two long sides of the roof, which are

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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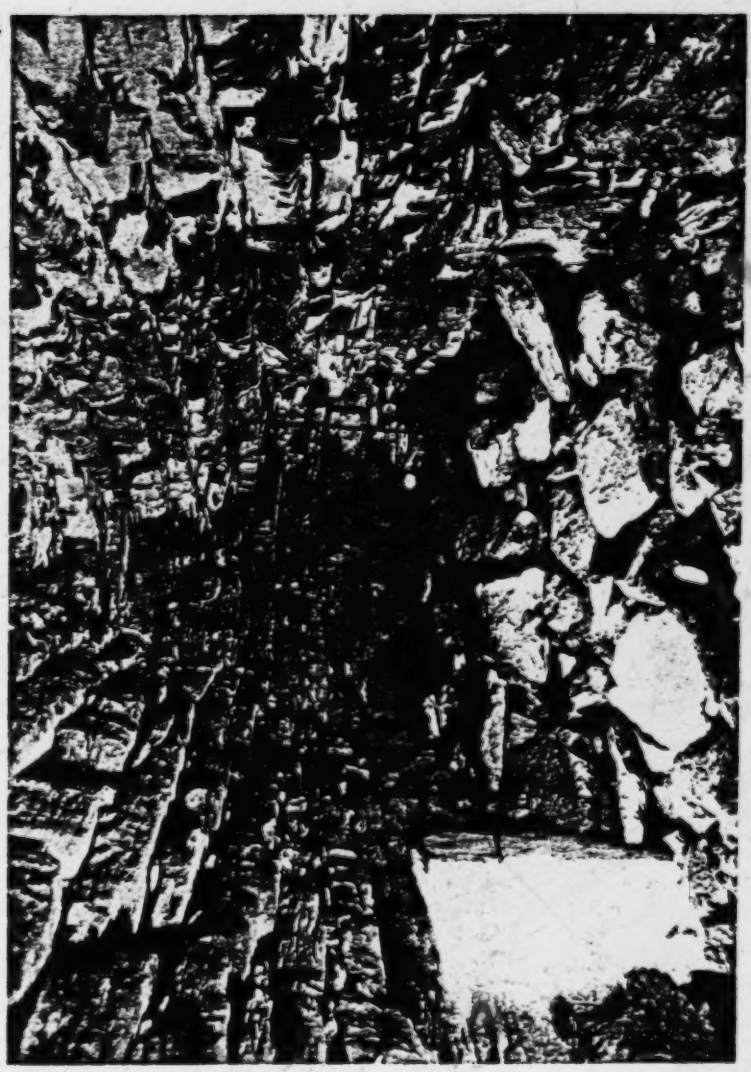

Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

3: Campbell B. E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

PLATE 32

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Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

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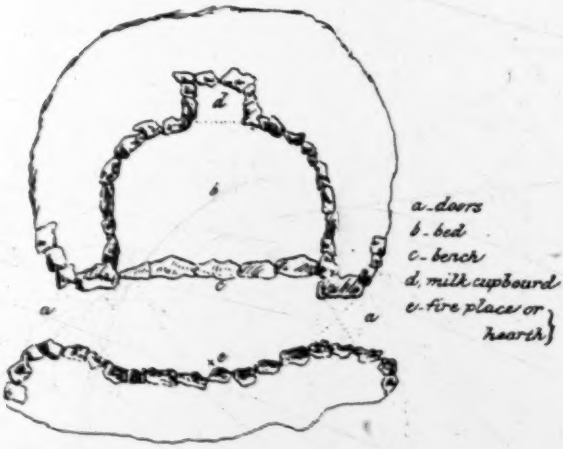

Fig. 3. Both, on West side of Loch an ath Ruadh. Uig, Lewis. From Thomas.

joined together in this manner (pl. 32, an interior showing roof formation. Camera was placed on the ground pointing upwards).

Primitive dwellings and hypogea of the Scottish isles also show the same arrangements. Thus it seems to be evident that the study of the oblong houses there (black-houses, *tigh dubh)* cannot be separated from the study of the *clochán* type. In consequence, it also will be necessary to compare the so-
[12] called Norse building customs in the Scottish Isles, which have been put forward by Aage Roussell,[12] not only with Thomas's black-house material — as Roussell does — but also with Thomas's other material including the stone-roofed houses.

Stone built timber-roofed oval houses.

If my working hypothesis holds, a thorough study of the oval houses will throw much light on Irish building traditions. At least in some parts of Ireland the oval houses formed the basis for the development of native houses of today, *e. g.* the one-roomed central-chimney houses with thatched gables.

It is evident that oval house-types can easily have been reached in places where the round or oval clochán as well as the hut with thatched roof resting on timber are known. When suitable large slabs were scarce, the primi-

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 tive builder has replaced the doomed roof by the thatched roof if, naturally, timber and material for thatching were at hand.

A great number of houses of this type have been in use as late as the 19th century in remote parts of Ireland. Many references are given in the travel sketches and other literature of that time.

Particular attention may be called to the houses in Achill, Co. Galway, which belong to booleying settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, describing the island of Achill[125] tell us about a certain kind of booleying (the cattle were brought down towards the coast when the season for fishing was on). They sketch the houses in a picture, pl. 34,a, and in words:

"The habitations of the islanders are very singular. Their houses are heaps of rude stones moulded by the tide, procured from the beach, uncemented; they are rounded at the gables, and roofed with fern, heath, and shingles, fastened on by straw bands. In the village of Dooagha, consisting of about forty cabins, there is not a single chimney. Some of the wealthier graziers, however, have an odd custom of residing in such houses, or in houses of a still more simple construction, only during the summer months, when the season for fishing is "on", and their cattle are brought down towards the coast to feed on the young herbage. These hovels, they call 'Builly houses'."

[556] [221] [231]

From another traveller, Caesar Otway, who made a short excursion in Achill in the summer 1838, can be collected some valuable informations.[126] Otway mentions (p. 353, 356) a certain type of wall construction, viz, the pilledpin double wall: two dry stone walls with the interspace filled in with sand. This is the same archaic construction, which Thomas describes from Lewis. It is also known from archaeological excavations in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

342 361 "An Achill village consisted of congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky, and their construction was as follows: — a dry stone wall was built of a form like an obtuse oval, for they had not arrived at the art of making a square quoin, or erecting a gable end. Outside this wall, and at about a foot distance, another loose wall was run up, and the space between the two filled with sea sand, and then this was roofed, generally with timber washed on shore from wrecks, and covered with heath, which covering did not reach over the outside wall, and form an eave, but rested on the middle between the walls, and the moisture from above passed, as it should, through the intervening sand."

"— — — we entered the village of Dugurth. Just such a village as I

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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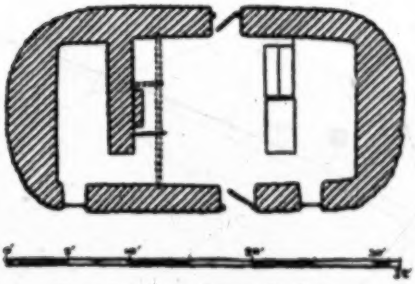

Fig. 4. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

have above described, but certainly containing some houses that *had* gable-ends; but for the most part of the construction I have alluded to, a dirty, dreary, uncouth place — — —."

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Later on (p. 401) Otway has learnt to know the summerherding (booleying) and the difference between winterhouses and summerhouses, and he compares the Irish summerhouses with the Swiss *chalets*.

"Keem, I said, was a singular village; it is only inhabited in summer — who would suppose that the Achillians had such a superfluity of houses, that they had both their winter and summer residences. The Greenlanders and Esquimaux are so changeful, from their excessive vicissitudes of heat and cold — but here I was surprised to find empty every house but two (and these were the residences of the coast-guard), all with their doors fastened

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 361 221 and untenanted; and certainly such miserable wigwams, I had never before seen — all built, as I have already described, without gable-ends. It seems the owners of the village of Keem, and the renters of the adjoining district, have other houses in a distant part of the island, where they spend the winter and spring; thence they come when their oats and potatoes are planted and spend the summer months, herding their cattle on these heights, and leading a pastoral life. Thus in Switzerland they have their chalets on the hills, and in old times in Ireland the creaghts (as they were called) had their boolies on the mountains; but I don't think I ever saw a summer-herding village before."

342 What is said to have been the last oval house in Achill (pl. 33,a), was destroyed in the last two years. An old man (he is seen in the doorway) had lived in it and would not change to any other kind of residence. When he died, the house was pulled down.

This house had dry stone walls. In the middle of the floor stood a beam of bog fir from the top of which beams and branches, also of bog fir, spread out like the ribs of an umbrella, to carry the thatched roof. (This central beam may have been a temporary structure? Cf. p. 192 about the *tuireadh* of the wickerwork house described by O'Curry). The house had no windows and no chimney. The smoke came out through a hole in the roof.

In the year 1936, I measured an inhabited oval house in Inveran, Co. Galway, fig. 4 and pl. 34, b, 35, a, b. This house embodies many interesting features known from prehistoric times. It is built upon very uneven ground and runs from east to west. The several feet thick walls slope as the walls of the oval clochán from the ground upwards. In later times these, built as dry stone walls, have been plastered from outside and whitelimed and the windows added.

The interior is made up by one room, which, however, is divided up to the west by the hob and a protecting wall behind it. Here is the bedroom, in harmony with the wide-spread old tradition mentioned in my former article.[186] To the east, a dresser and a table cut off the lower part to form another bed-alcove.

The house has no outside chimney, but a basket resting on beams leads the smoke out through a hole in the roof. This basket is wattled from osiers and covered with plaster. As the wall behind the fireplace does not go up as far as the roof, canvas is hung to complete the wall.

There are the usual two doors, central and opposite to each other.[184] The roof of straw, scollop-thatched, rests on couples of beams, supported on the

186 [TEXT CONTINUES TO P. OF P. 189 ---- ANALYST]

PLATE 33.

a. Oval house. Keel, Achill, Co. Mayo. Photographed in 1903.
b. Clochán, used for storage purpose. Blasket Island.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Mayo

PLATE 33

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[Captions on p. 186]

PLATE 34

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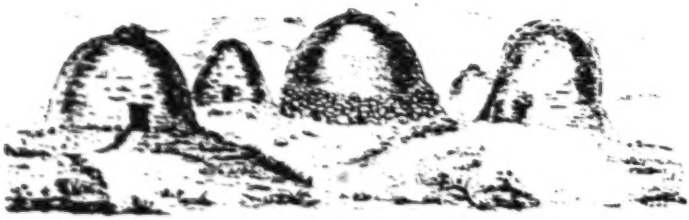
a

b



c

[Captions on p. 189]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 inner edge of the walls. As the oval house form does not permit any stone-built gables the roof has rounded and thatched gables.

The house as it now stands as a still inhabited homestead constitutes a good example of the stone-built, timber-roofed, oval house, wellknown from the early part of the 19th century. This house can, no doubt, be classified as a link or a cross between the prehistoric oval clochán and the primitive central-chimney house of later times. Thus, if my theory holds, there is no gap, from the point of view of classification, in the Irish house-tradition, as far as the central-chimney house is concerned.

Huts of wicker-work; sods, turf.

Although the material here concerned may often seem to be of a very indefinite character, from which only a few certain conclusions can be drawn (see p. 173), it is nevertheless necessary to study thoroughly every kind of primitive hut. The many references to Irish building-culture given in the old literature, indicate the very interesting fact that it was the wickerwork huts and other houses built of various materials, and not the stone-built *clochans* that may have been very common as small dwellings in olden times.

342 171 During my rather short visits to Ireland, I have not come across any huts of such a kind as wicker-houses, oak-houses, *tech darach* etc., as are described by Eugene O'Curry[15] and by him compared with the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius. But inquiries along this line may show that such houses did exist in Ireland not so long ago. Certainly I have got some reports about booleying practised *e. g.* in Donegal up to ninety years ago. The people took their cattle to the mountains in the summer and there they erected huts, *bothogai*, for themselves. But how were these huts constructed? It is probable that they, at least somewhere in Ireland, have been made in a fashion similar to the creel houses in the Scottish Highlands of the same period. I will give some references from Scottish authors, mentioned by Thomas.[16]

According to Walker's Economical History of the Hebrides,[17] the farmers in most Highlands had their homesteads on the arable land, where they dwelt in what are called the winter houses. Soon after the middle of June, when the arable land was sown, they moved with their cattle to a mountainous place belonging to the farm. There they quickly erected or repaired their summer houses which were composed chiefly of sods and branches of trees. "Where wood is at hand, they erect what are called creel houses.

PLATE 34.

a. Houses in Achill, Co. Galway. From Ireland, its Scenery, Character etc., by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall.

b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

c. Beehive houses. Uig, Lewis, Hebrides. Inhabited 1859. After F.W.L. Thomas.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 171 These are formed of wooden posts, interlaced with branches of trees, like wicker-work, and covered on the outside with turf."

Robertson" describes a type of tenant's house, the construction of which must be like the wicker-work houses above-mentioned. "When such a house is to be built, the first thing done is to construct a coarse frame of wood, corresponding to the dimensions of the house, in length and breadth; then upon this frame to fix standards inclining inward, at proper distances, which rise to the height of the intended wall, and are kept in a firm position by being morticed in a tree above of the same dimensions with the tree below. These standards are closely woven with wicker work, to keep the sods from falling in; which, being built on the outside, finish the side walls of a creel-house."

342 221 As the Irish booleying custom, *buaile*, doubtless preserved many primitive and archaic building traditions, it should form an important subject of study also with regard to wicker-work huts. However, the summer huts which are mentioned in the Welsh laws are not referred to in the Irish lawtracts. Professor Mac Néill has kindly informed me that this does not mean that the *buaile* custom did not exist in ancient Ireland. "It was probably practised by the less opulent class who had a limited supply of pasture land. The laws have little to say about these, as in general they were under the jurisdiction of a noble."

342 343 The huts erected in later times of sods or turf and used as shelters for donkeys, pigs, etc., which can be met with in various parts of Ireland, would also well repay study. In the literature of the 19th and the early 20th centuries can be found travellers' accounts of such houses, although they seldom go into details about the construction. I refer, *e. g.*, to a description of Caesar Otway's from his "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly", an account of his travels in Northwestern Ireland in 1840:

"The dwellers here were bog troglodytes — the foundations of their dwellings are sunk eight feet or more below the surface of the surrounding black bog, the walls are constructed of wet sods, cut off from the surface of that bog; there is no door or door-case, no chimney; the orifices by which the people enter, and through which the smoke *should* issue, are filled up as suits the wind, with bundles of heath or turf-kreels, filled with potato-stalks; a drain comes out from under the floor of the dwelling, from which the superabundant moisture escapes, or else it would be a common boghole: but, by its means, the water that springs abundantly from the sides and bottom, flows away, and the people sitting or standing within, are free from actual overflow."

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[19] Mårten Stenberger[20] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boëthius[21] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands. 231 349

A glance at the literary material.

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[22] 172 174

In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *fallai fuara*, as in the stone-built *clocháns*, but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin*, and of *fraigh, i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[23] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[24] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion. 174

O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that 174 342

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 342 these two wooden wall types can perhaps be compared with such Danish and Scanian walltypes as the "stakavägg" and the "sprötavägg".[25]) The houses were of two forms, 1) long quadrilateral buildings, built of wood or mud and straw like the existing mud cabins, and covered with thatch, and 2) cylindrical houses made of wicker-work and having a cup-shaped or hemispherical roof. The houses built in duns and in stone *caiseals*, and those surrounded by mounds of earth, were probably in all cases round houses. As has already been mentioned, O'Curry is of the opinion that the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius correspond accurately to the *tech darach* or oak-house with a *cuach-cleithe* or wicker cup roof described in a tale called the "Intoxication of Ulster".

The round wicker-work house is described by O'Curry as follows: "The round wicker house was built by setting up perpendicularly a number of poles or posts of more or less solidity arranged in a circle of the necessary diameter and at equal distances from each other. The interstices between these poles or posts were then filled up with stout hazel and other rods in the form of wicker or basket work until it reached the required height of the wall. In the meantime there was firmly set up in the centre within a stout post called a *tuireadh* of length commensurate with the required height of the roof; into which were inserted by mortices or otherwise attached a certain number of rafters which descended slantingly all round to the tops of the upright posts of the wall into which they were received by tenon and mortice or otherwise attached. — — —

Across the rafters and ribs thus inserted were then laid bands of laths or narrow slips of wood which were fastened with pegs or with gods, *i. e.* twisted withies forming a regular network from the top of the roof-tree to the walls. On these, again, were laid or fastened, at short distances, what may be called a sheeting of rods and thin branches of trees, stretching from the roof-tree to the wall. And now, the shell of the house being finished, it was thatched with straw, rushes, or sedge and neatly fastened down with scollops. — — — I cannot say how they staunched the walls of the round wicker-house, whether with clay, moss, or skins — — —."

In the Ancient Irish Laws are many references to the wicker-house, *tech fithi*.[26]

The following quotation is a translation of part of a law tract which deals here with the status of an *ócaire*, one of the lesser of the freeholding ranks.[27a]

"The size of his house: it is larger than a house of rentcharge. For the size of the latter is seventeen feet. It is of wickerwork to the lintel. From this to the roof-tree, a *dit* between every two weavings (?). Two doorways

 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 195 ---- ANALYST]

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a. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

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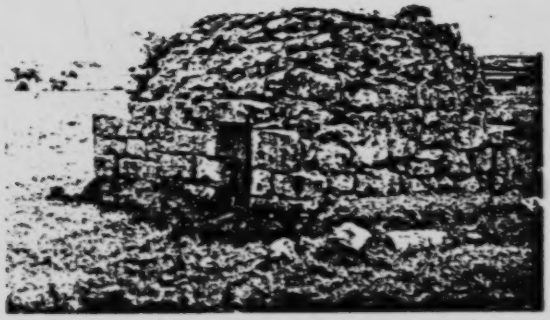

c. Sweating bath. Tuan, Co. Galway.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 36

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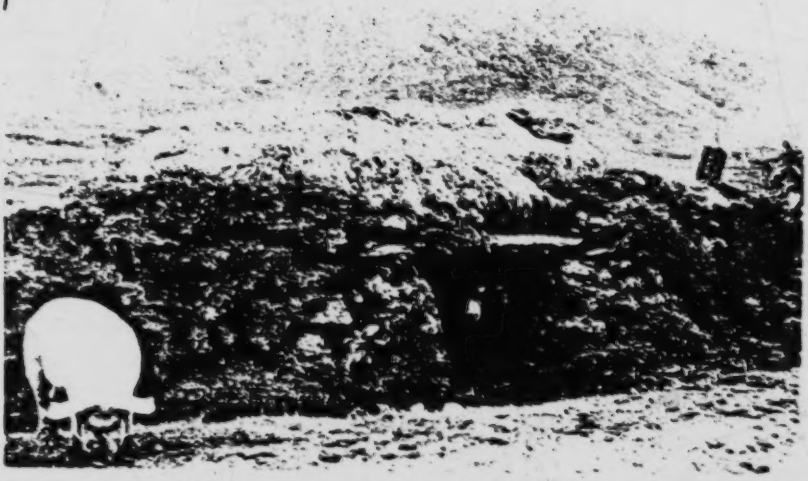

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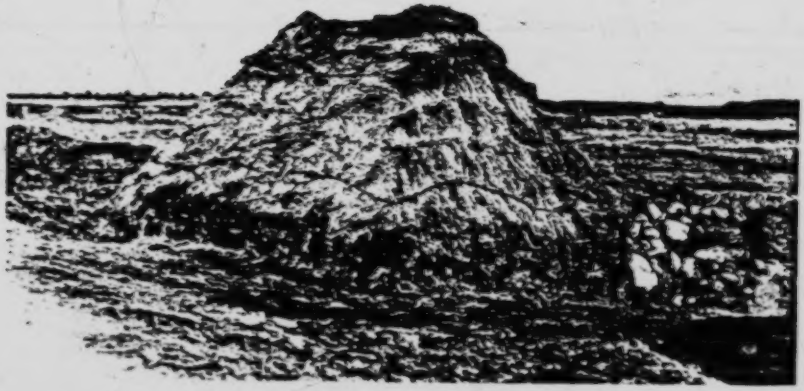

b

a. Sod house. Connemara, Co. Galway.
b. Sod house. Glin, Co. Limerick.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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in it. A door for one of them, a hurdle for the other, and this (the hurdle) without (projecting) wattles, without protuberances (?). A bare fence of boards around it. An oaken plank between every two beds."

The designations in the Laws and in early tales as Fled Bricrend, Suidigud Taigi Midehuarta etc., are still difficult to understand, as their vocabulary has not hitherto been elucidated. It will be possible to draw more definite conclusions from them as soon as a joint study by philologists and ethnologists has been carried out. In many parts of Ireland there still survive remains of old building traditions, which in connection with the dialect words, will help to throw light upon the problems of ancient building culture as they are met with in the old Irish literature.

A consideration of the old upper-class house, however, embraces a field outside the scope of this article, involving a discussion of cultural connections over a very wide area.[18]

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[1] Described in Part I of this article, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 207—234. I repete my thanks expressed in my former article to the Irish Folklore Commission and to my Irish friends. I want to add the names of Professor Eóin Mac Néill, Mr. Thomas Mason and Miss Máire Mac Néill, who have kindly given me information and assistance.

[2] Cyril Fox, The Personality of Britain, Cardiff 1933, p. 34 sq.

[3] Wheeler, Prehistoric and Roman Wales, Oxford 1925, p. 260 sq., and Bosch-Gimpera, Etnologia de la Peninsula Ibèrica, Barcelona 1932, p. 490 sq.

[4] The Archæology of Ireland, p. 242.

[5] Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy XXXI, p. 209 sq. Still other references to beehive houses may be found in archæological literature. Oscar Montelius has previously dealt with beehive houses, *e. g.* in Boning, grav och tempel, Antikvarisk tidskrift, vol. 21.

[6] In Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III, p. 127 sq., and vol. VII, p. 153 sq.

[7] Cf. Analecta Hibernica No. 2, Jan. 1931 p. 53; Arthur Young, A tour in Ireland 1780.

[8] Thomas, op. cit. vol. III, p. 136.

[9] See R. E. M. Wheeler, op. cit. p. 261.

[10] See P. Bosch-Gimpera, op. cit., p. 490 sq.

[11] See *e. g.* S. O. Addy, The Evolution of the English House, London 1933, p. 38 sq.; S. Erixon, Some primitive constructions, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 124 sq.

[12] Norse building customs, in the British Isles, Copenhagen 1934.

[12a] Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc., Vol. III., London 1843.

[12b] Caesar Otway, A tour in Connaught: comprising sketches of Clonmacnoise, Joyce County, and Achill, Dublin 1839.

[12c] Folkliv 1937, p. 208.

[12d] See Folkliv 1937, p. 217.

[13] Thomas, op. cit., vol. III, p. 130.

[14] The study of the Scottish material shows that the ancient so-called forts or subterranean or semi-subterranean chambers may also be considered. I shall not, however, enter here on a discussion of this complicated matter.

[14b] I am also grateful to Mr. Mason for having supplied all the photographs of Irish clochàns used by me in this article.

[15] On the manners and customs of the ancient Irish, vol. III, p. 33 and elsewhere.

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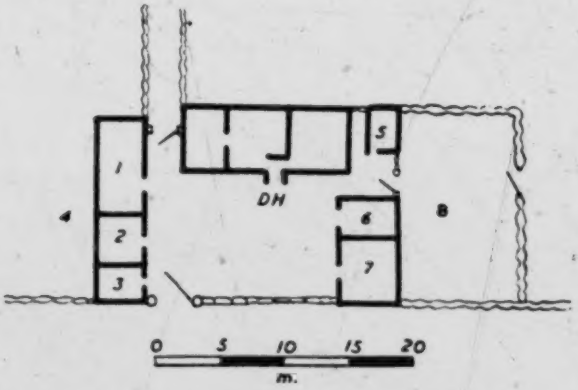

Fig. 1. Farmyard at Duncormick, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, calf house; 3, store; 4, manure heap; 5, pigsty; 6, cart house; 7, stable; 8, haggard.

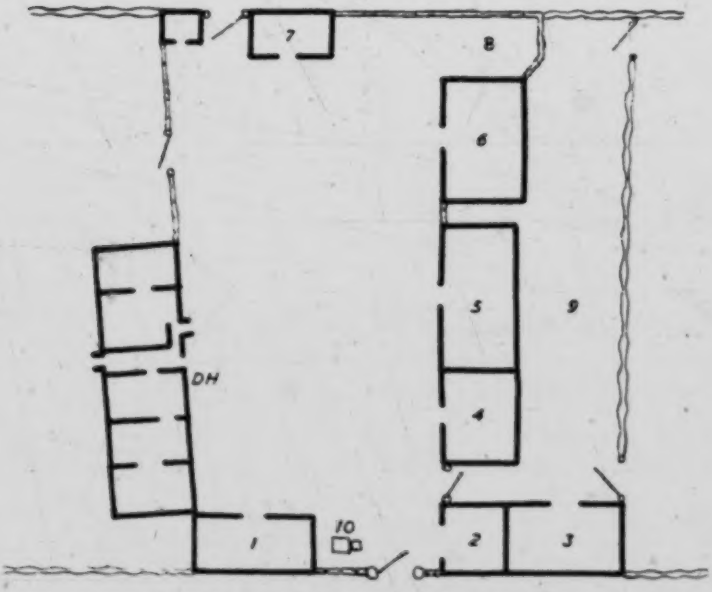

Fig. 2. Farmyard at Kilmore, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, cart house; 3, corn barn; 4, stable; 5, byre; 6, store; 7, pigsty; 8, manure heap; 9, haggard; 10, pump.

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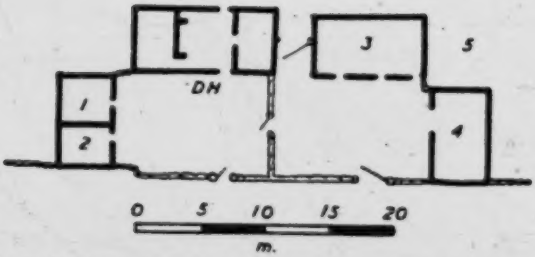

Fig. 3. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, store; 3, byre, 4, stable and carts; 5, manure heap.

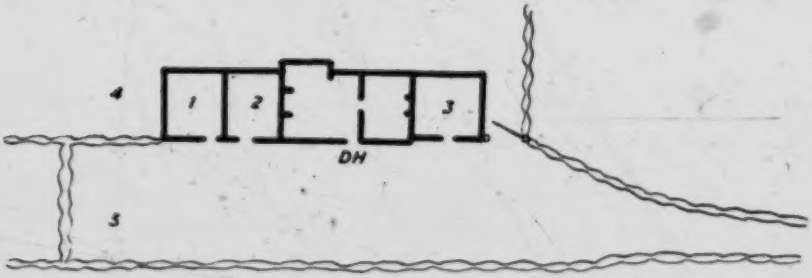

Fig. 4. Farmyard at Glenhull, Co. Tyrone. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, stable; 3, store; 4, haggard; 5, manure heap.

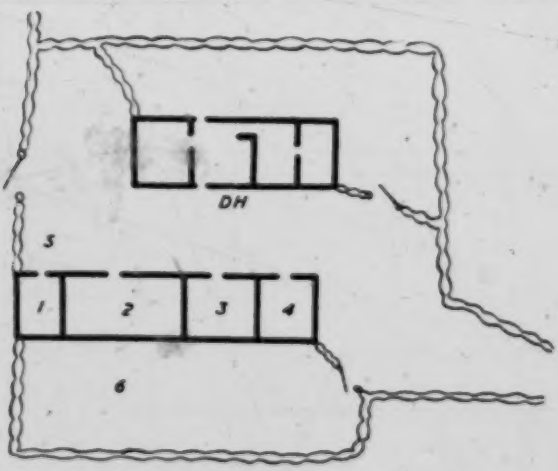

Fig. 5. Farmyard, Athea, Co. Limerick. DH, dwelling house; 1, pigs; 2, byre; 3, stable; 4, store; 5, manure heap; 6, haggard.

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Fig. 6. Farmhouse and yard, Kilmore, Co. Wexford (fig. 2).

Fig. 7. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway (fig. 3).

[p.10]

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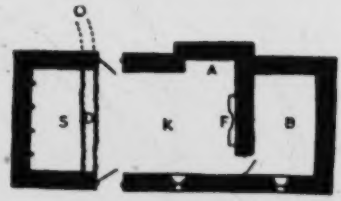
Fig. 8. Farm buildings, Glenhull, Co. Tyrone (fig. 4).
Fig. 9. Farm buildings, parallel lay-out, Lohar, Co. Kerry.

[p. 11]

house, pigsty, calf-pen and sheepfold, and there are several other references in the ancient law tracts to cow-houses and pigstyes.

But, notwithstanding this old and varied farmyard tradition, it is also quite clear that there was, up to the beginning of the present century, a widespread custom of keeping the livestock, or part of it, in the dwelling house. There are very many references to this in descriptions of life and conditions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Few, however, give any description of the internal arrangement of the houses, or the reason for the custom, and usually the accounts refer to small houses and a few poor animals. Some observers have mentioned the fear of wild beasts or robbers. "They are brought in by night for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves."[1] Here the writer refers to the bawns attached to the castles, but of course the same risk existed for the small farmer also. Another traveller writes of a night spent in a house in west Co. Galway: "I had just compos'd myselfe to sleepe when I was strangely surprised to heare the cows and sheep all comeing into my bed chamber. I enquired the meaneing and was told it was to preserve them from the wolfe which everie night was rambling about for prey."[2] Another and much later writer describes a night spent in a small house in the Kerry mountains, near Kenmare: "In the house where I slept—as indeed in every house of the same character in the county—the whole stock of the family, consisting chiefly of cows and sheep, were locked in at night. Such was the extreme poverty of the people that they would not otherwise be safe. ... There was a slight partition between the room where my bed was and the kitchen where there were three cows, a man, his wife and four children."[3]



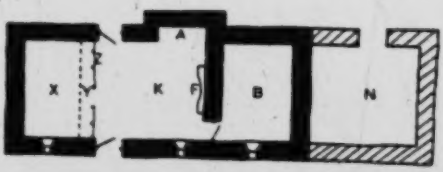


Fig. 10 House at Doolough, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; D, drain; O, drain outlet; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; S, byre.

Fig. 11. House at Srahataggle, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; X, former byre; Y, filled-in drain; Z, screen of canvas on wooden frame; N, present byre.

In many dwelling houses fowl, especially hatching hens, were kept in special coops or boxes, and it was quite usual to have weak or sickly young animals, or calves or lambs which for some reason were separated from their dams, in the kitchen where they had warmth and attention until strong enough to be put with the other animals. In many parts of Ireland the poorest people—

[1] Fynes Moryson: Itinerary, 1617.

[2] Dunton, John: Letter no. 2 (1699), in MacLysaght, E.: Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1939, 339.

[3] Doheny, M.: The Felon's Track.

231 those who had little or no land—commonly kept their animals in the dwelling house (which often
351 had only one room) at night, a cow or two, or perhaps a donkey or pony, a pig or a goat and a
few hens, the larger animals tied to pegs or rings set in the walls, the smaller in coops or boxes.
361 In many houses, even large farmhouses, a special coop or perch was provided for the cock, whose crowing served to call the people of the house in the morning. A vivid description of the housing conditions of a remote and isolated community in the second half of the nineteenth century is given by Tomás Ó Crohan, writing about the Blasket Islands off the coast of Co. Kerry in the extreme south west: "There was a coop beside the partition with hens in it, and a hatching hen in an old pot nearby. At night a cow or two, a calf or two, an ass, two dogs tied to the wall or loose about the house. ... the two or three dogs would lie at the foot of the bed, the cow or two cows below them, tethered to the wall, the calf or two with the run of the kitchen and their muzzles in the fire. The ass was tied on the side of the house opposite the cows, and a cat with a couple of kittens in the fireplace niche ... And as well as all the other animals you might find a pet lamb or two about the house."[1] The custom of bringing the cattle into the dwelling house for milking during the period of the year when they are kept outdoors, as well as keeping them in the dwelling house during the winter period is recorded from Co. Kerry.[2] Indeed it is quite clear that, throughout the west and north of Ireland, the keeping of livestock in their small dwelling houses by the poorer people was quite a common practice up to the last years of the nineteenth century, and in houses from which the animals have long been ejected we may still see the rings or pegs to which they used to be tied.

● 342 There was, however, one type of house which was built and arranged as a dwelling for both
351 people and animals, and which was still in use in the early years of the present century in parts of
Connaught and Ulster, that is, in west Co. Galway, Co. Mayo, west Co. Sligo and west and north
361 Co. Donegal. Figure 10 shows the plan of a typical specimen, at Doolough, Co. Mayo. This house
is 12 m long and 5.5 m wide, built of stone and mortar and roofed with straw or grass thatch.
231 It consists of two apartments, the smaller being a bedroom and the larger a kitchen-livingroom-cattle byre; the two apartments separated by the wall of the hearth. On one side of the hearth is a bed alcove. Two windows, one in each room and both on one side—the front—of the house, give light, and there are two doors, one in the front of the house and one in the back, placed directly opposite each other. On the farther side of these doors from the fire an open drain extends from side to side of the house; this drain is about 50 cm wide and 25 cm deep and is lined with flat stones. The space between this drain and the end wall of the house is the byre, and here, during the winter, three or four cows were kept tethered to the wall. The drain passed under the wall and led to the manure heap outside.

Figure 11 shows the manner in which many of these houses were changed during the last fifty years or so. A byre was built, attached to the house, as here, or quite apart from it. The drain was filled in, and a partition of wood, or, as here of canvas stretched on a wooden frame, erected to enclose the former byre which now became a bedroom. In many houses the partition was formed

[113]

[1] Ó Crohan, Tomás: An tOileánach, chapter III.

[2] Campbell, Áed: "Irish Fields and Houses", Béaloideas, v, 68–70.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or press. 231 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible. 361 351 [173] [184]

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farmyard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type. 361 351

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, XVI, 102, 104.

[2] Plateau, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24. [113]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

people describe it. Much of it was rough, wet 592
mountain land, but the phrase implies that it was 361
good enough at least to provide grass for animals. All farms are described in this way, for by the cows and the small 'gardens' of potatoes, cabbage, oats and turnips, the small farmers live. We shall have more to say of agriculture in another context; I think the explanation is sufficient here.

My host's house in Luogh, as I have said, was 342
like the others. It was a bit 'stronger', that is, neater, better built and kept, than many of the others, but it was like the others in all essentials. It was a white-washed stone cottage, rectangular, roofed with slate (though it was only a few years ago that they gave up thatch). Its long sides faced roughly north and south, each with a door opening directly out into the yards. In the gable of the roof was a loft for sleeping; otherwise it was confined to a single story. The central room, the largest by far, was the kitchen. There the family passed their lives and prepared and ate the food cooked on the hearth. The hearth was an open turf fire, built in a chimney large enough to have two hobs or seats deep within on either side. It had, too, an iron hook which swung the cooking-pots out into the room from off the fire.

Behind this hearth was another room. It was 342
called, for its position in the house, the 'west room'. 353
This is the 'west room' which is to provide my first example.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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342 In most countrymen's houses, especially in
353 poorer regions, the 'west room', that behind the hearth, is the only room except for the kitchen and the loft. In some houses, however, there is another room too. This is usually a bedroom, at the opposite end of the kitchen. This was the case at my host's.

353 But in either case it soon becomes apparent that there is something special about the west room. At Luogh this struck one's eye immediately. At my host's the room was a sort of parlour into which none but distinguished guests were admitted. In it were kept pictures of the dead and emigrated members of the family, all 'fine' pieces of furniture, symbolic brass objects brought in by the bride at marriage; the rubrics used when mass was celebrated in the house, in fact all religious objects, crucifixes, and so forth, except the 'blessed lamp' and a 'holy picture' in the kitchen. Nor were my hosts alone in keeping objects of sentimental and religious value in this special room. Other houses did likewise. The general feeling was that such objects 'belonged' there.

353 But these facts had little significance until others
776 began to appear. Here we enter the realm which we ordinarily call 'old custom'. The 'west room' had still another association, of a supernatural cast. This appeared only gradually. The 'west room' was of central importance in fairy lore.

In this all Luogh concurred, though few could

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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be found to give it expression. The cult of the 353
fairies, these days, is branded as 'superstition'. It 776
is under fire from townsman, school-teacher, and priest. But even those who could express no views could be seen to act as if they too were believers.

Where fairy paths were remembered to pass the house, they went by the west room. Where food and water was left out at night, it was left there. No outhouse, shed, or other building could be built on this side of the house. That would bring bad [777]
luck. Very few could or would tell why; they left it to a common inference. The building would be 'in the way'. Nevertheless, reluctant as they might be to express belief, my hosts none the less practised it. No house of Luogh's twenty-six had any shed or [342]
outhouse at its western end.

Here were two very definite associations with the west room. What did they mean? The attitudes they represented were respect, and perhaps a little fear; but it was respect that was dominant. What was this respect and why should it show itself in fairy-lore and in household furnishing?

Faced with such a problem the anthropologist's 353
usual recourse is to history. Traditionally the west 773
is the land of the dead. In the ancient sun-cult, in 776
which early man has likened his own progress to that of the sun's daily and yearly course, the west is the sacred abode of the dead. Even today, we speak of dying, half jocularly, as 'going west'. In ancient Celtic mythology, the heaven at life's end,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 of the Free State, at least, the landlord is gone and the true big farmer is rare. The town's hinterland is the world of the small farmers. And the town lives by its connection with the social order to which the countryman is attached. One need probe only a little way beneath the surface of conventionalities to learn that the connection is much more than the economics of distribution and exchange.

366 In the first place, the shop is also the seat of a
347 familistic identification, very like that of land and
369 farm. Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least
342 in number, than any comparable European nation. A very large proportion of her population lives by retail trade. But one must not think of these shops, so numerous in every Irish town, as great department stores, or as units in a country-wide chain. The former, of course, do exist in cities, and the latter, called multiple-shops, are a new invasion. They have little place as yet in the smaller towns. The typical shop is a less imposing affair. It supports, normally, only the family which works it.

Such a shop is most often a small two-story building. The ground floor is evenly divided between the business premises and the household kitchen. In front, a single step in from the street, a single deep room, whose width is that of the building's front, houses counter, shelves, shop-stock and money-till. The business of a lifetime goes forward in this room. In back, a flagstone-floored kitchen with an open hearth duplicates, on

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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a more elaborate scale perhaps, the country farm 366
house kitchen. Like its country counterpart it is the 347
seat of family life. 369
342

Upstairs, a front room facing the street is transformed, by family portraits, an ornamental mantle and a piece or two of good mahogany, into a ceremonial parlour. Behind this, range the bedrooms of the family. Perhaps, in affluence and refinement there is an upstairs sitting-room as well. For the shop is no mere place of business. It is first of all a household, of which one section and one only is devoted to the world of affairs.

The family which this household houses and 443
supports, in the majority of cases, works the shop 369
in much the same way that the family of the farmer 593
works the land. It conducts its business as a united corporation in which all members may take a hand and each have his place. Husband and wife tend the counter together and between them shopkeeping is divided; sons and daughters work as shop-assistants, as long as they remain at home. Only when affluence lifts the shop to importance and dignifies the shopkeeper with the title and station of merchant, expanding his business to wholesaling, is this arrangement greatly modified.

Yet, self-sufficient as this familistic shop-world 369
is, the countryman has many a connection with it. 443
It lives its own quiet life and plies its own trade so different from the farmer's work upon the farm. Town life breeds its own sentiment and weaves its

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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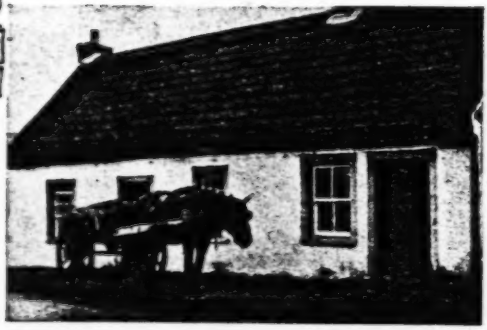
among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the 174
cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of 621
the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, 221
together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the 231
hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, " the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in " booley " or " boley " 221
assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the 342 ●
actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were 343
generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had 221
two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed 234
in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular " town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of " whitemeats " that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter [251]
appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This " bog-butter " frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations : it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Plate III

342
[492]
[493]



THATCHED ROOF SECURED WITH PEGGED FIR-ROPES

N. ANTRIM

SCOLLOP THATCH OF MARROM GRASS

MAGILLIGAN CO. DERRY

ROPED THATCH OF RYE STRAW

ARTICLAVE, CO. DERRY

[Facing p. 57]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER VII.

THE IRISH PEASANT HOUSE.

342 The Irish peasant house consists of a low single-storied rectangle, some 12 to 15 feet wide internally but of varying length, customarily thatched and whitewashed; but this generalised description embraces a surprising range of styles. So much abuse has been levelled at the Irish cabin that it is well to recall the opinion of a Swedish scientist who writes as follows :—" Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building material, the Irish peasant house never stands out in bold relief against its background but melts into it even as a tree or rock. Whenever the old building traditions are faithfully maintained its features are of a fine simplicity. The best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe."

342 362 511 The other side of the picture is the dirt and smells inseparable from the long habits of close association with livestock, so that within living memory, " cows and calves, men, women and children, horse and poultry were herded together in one apartment." Poverty and the rack-rent system have been blamed for this, but behind it lie facts of ethnology which are rooted in the remote past. Local authorities are striving to wipe away the stigma of the old order, and are spreading a " rash " of red-roofed cottages over the fair face of the country, but there is still a great mass of material for study.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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342 It has often been asserted that the Irish lived, until a few centuries ago, in wattled circular huts. Archæology tells us, however, that well-built stone structures were used from the very dawn of civilisation: the dry walling of the megalith builders is of superb construction and the stone foundations of houses of the period, both round and rectangular in plan, have been unearthed. It seems probable that stone, timber, wattle, clay and sods were all employed from very early times and that Ireland shared the traditions of the "timber province" of northern Europe and the "stone province" of the Mediterranean. Although it is well-nigh impossible to discuss present house forms without reference to the past we shall confine ourselves to the last half-century in this necessarily brief review. But reference must be made to the lay-out of some old cabins which have been described, for it throws light on surviving customs and nomenclature. These were built on a slope at right-angles to the contours—more recent houses are placed along the slope—so that the top end was excavated into the hill-side and profited from the semi-subterranean warmth, while the lower end housed the animals, the slope allowing the refuse to drain away. The terms "top" and "bottom" gable are still applied to houses of the gable-chimney type.

This brings us to the fundamental division of present-day Irish cabins into gable-hearth and central-hearth types. Owing to the practice of extending gabled houses behind the chimney it is not always possible to say at a glance whether the presence of a chimney near the centre of the roof denotes a central-hearth house. And even when the hearth is situated against the gable it can sometimes be shown that it has been moved to that position within the last century or so. For our present purpose it is simpler to classify the cabins into gabled and hip-roofed types (Fig. 19). The former is universal in the north, but as one travels south one sees the tops of the gables rounding into a half-hip until, at the Boyne, the hipped style is established, though the gabled form is found side by side with it throughout the south. Some examples in the west have rounded corners, making them an elongated

[Text continues top of p. 60 --- Analyst]

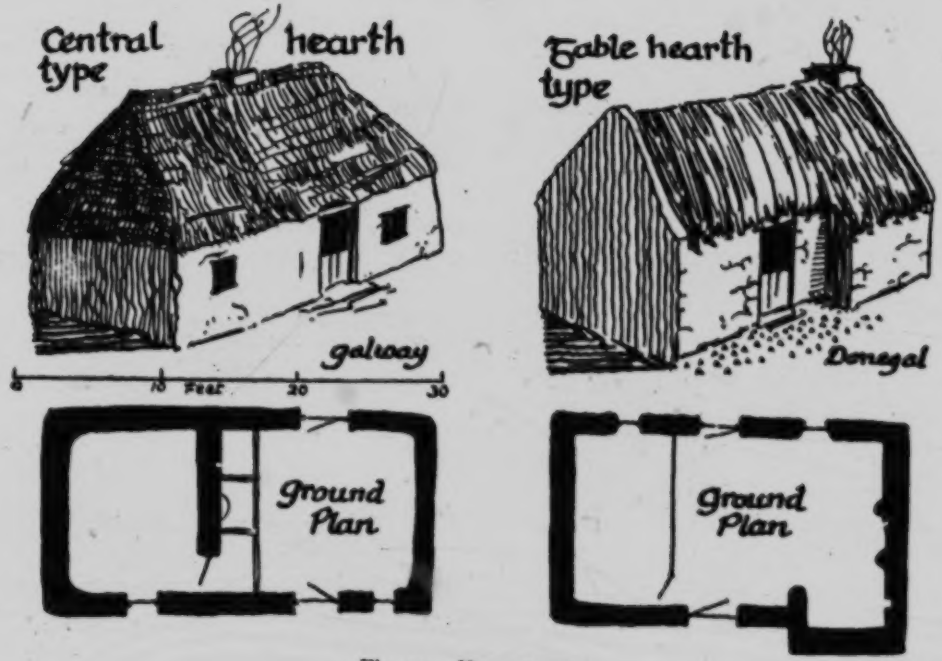

Fig. 19. House types.

[p. 59]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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342 oval in plan: the problem of the origin of the hipped roof is discussed in Chapter 9. It should be realized that there are many transition types, and of course slated houses are rapidly replacing the old styles, but the division into upright gables and hipped roofs is fundamental. Dr. Campbell's pioneer work in this field has met with a hostile reception in some quarters: [113] see for example Mr. Colm Ó Lochlainn's review in *The Irish Book Lover*, January, 1940.

Within these broad divisions there is endless variety of construction, internal lay-out and roofing technique. Of special interest is the projecting bed-wing, the "outshot" or "cailleach" (Fig. 19), which is attached to gabled houses throughout the north-west from Co. Derry to Co. Galway. It may be compared with the "half-neuk" beds of the Orkneys and Faroes, and has its parallels too in the wall-beds of the Hebridean black-houses. The device allows the large bed (6 ft. by 4) to take its traditional place at the fire-end of the house without unduly narrowing the all-important space around the hearth. The bed recess is cut off from the room by curtains or, formerly, by hanging straw mats.

342 231 Single-roomed kitchen byres, where the family occupies the top or hearth-end and cattle the other, are now a thing of the past, but a few examples have survived in their original state, with an open drain crossing the floor and emptying at the side of the door. The custom of taking the animals under the family roof was once prevalent over north-western Europe in regions of difficulty where access to the cattle in all weathers was a determining factor. Tenacious usage rather than poverty ensured its survival into recent times, where the mutual advantage of the custom is summed up in the phrases, "the cow keeps the house warm," and "warmth increases the yield of milk." Two other points should be borne in mind, its relation to the system of booleying described in Chapter 5, and the necessity in former times of protecting the precious animals from wild beasts.

342 As a rule the bottom or byre-end was later converted into a dairy, store or spare bedroom, but the principal bedroom,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342

called simply "the room" or—in the Gaeltacht—the "west room," though not always at the west end, extends behind the chimney which helps to warm it. A wealth of customs and superstitions centres in the West Room; they have been described by Dr. Arensberg in his book, "The Irish Countryman." It is considered unlucky to build on to the other end of the house, that is the bottom gable. Similarly it is unlucky to widen a house. The "developed" Irish house thus consists of three compartments and is never more than a single room in width. The older houses are for the most part of stone, either dry-built or with mud laid as mortar. But mud-walled structures are common in areas where stone is not convenient: they by no means denote extreme poverty because from the absence of stones they are often situated in the richest alluvial valleys. A Dublin daily paper recently asked its readers, in a column headed "Believe it or not," to marvel at the fact that certain African tribes actually lived in houses built of mud! Here and there a few sod houses survive, and there is still standing in Co. Antrim a roomy dwelling occupied by a healthy and intelligent family, cut out of solid turf to the height of the eaves, the surrounding peat-bottom, now the farmland, having had several feet of turf removed from it. The stone and mud houses are almost invariably whitewashed both inside and out. Walls vary greatly in thickness but average from 20 to 30 inches.

[777]

A feature of many of these older houses is the two opposite doors at back and front, the latter always supplemented by a half-door which keeps animals and children in or out, forms an arm-rest for conversational interludes, and helps to regulate the fire draught. Back or front door could be used according to the wind, and this is the reason commonly advanced to explain the opposite doors. We have seen in the previous chapter, however, its relation to the pastoral tradition, and it should be added that parallels can be adduced from a wide province extending from southern Europe to Scandinavia. We may mention the feeding walk found in the old Welsh "long houses." As with many other parts of the house, superstition attaches to the use of the back door, for

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 instance the stranger must not be allowed to leave the house that way lest he take the luck of the house with him. In the [764] Aran Islands it was the custom to carry out the corpse through the back door.

The deal door has not long since replaced, in remote spots, the wickerwork frame, lined with straw, or the hanging straw mat, and I have been told of houses where a creel offered the only protection. There may be only one small window, towards the hearth-end, for the open door provides light. [281] A dried sheepskin was a substitute for glass, and I have come across windows where a sheet of glass was sealed with clay without any frame. Where the hole was open, a handful of hay or a wicker shutter closed it at nights. These conditions help us to understand why the window or windows, even now, tend to be restricted to the side sheltered from the prevailing winds.

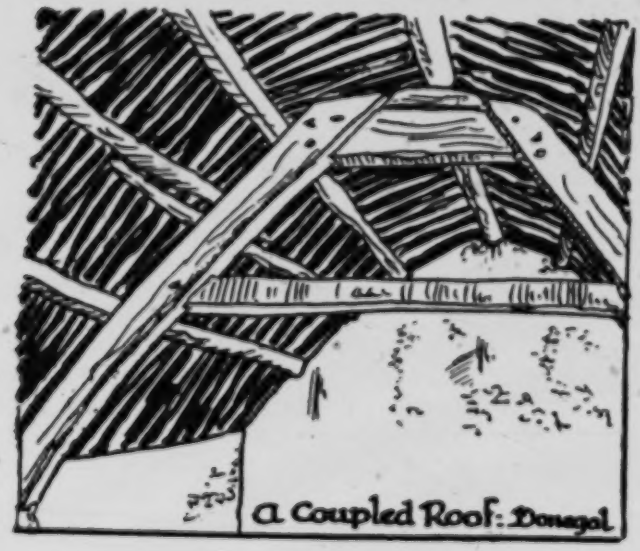

Fig. 20.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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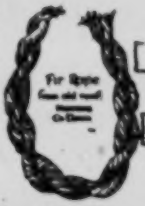
342

We now come to the roof with its timber framework and thatch. It generally consists of couples resting on the side-walls and joined together by tie-beams at the top; and houses are referred to not as measuring so many feet but as being two- three- or four-coupled. The rib-lengths, between the couples, are a kind of architectural unit.[1] In most old cottages the frame of the roof is of bog-fir, but its use has been superseded by imported "fir." There are many different methods of joining the couples, for example in Donegal they do not actually meet but have a short tie at the top which rounds the roof against the wind (Fig. 20). If the walls are of clay, sod or turf, the couples may be supported on internal beams placed upright against the side-walls, but the purlin method is generally adopted to avoid the thrust of the couple ends. Long beams run from gable to gable, and may be seen projecting outside to allow for the possible movement of the end-walls. This method of roofing allows of greater width than the coupled roof and is preserved, for example, in the old weavers' houses around Lough Neagh, where space was needed for the large looms. (Figs. 22c, 27 & 28.)

On the framework of couples or purlins lighter timber was placed at intervals and on these were laid at right angles rows of branches or laths, often made out of split bog timber. Where teasels were cultivated for the home woollen industry their dried stalks were employed for this purpose. Then came a layer of "scraws," peeled from a carefully selected spot where the grass is tough with a spade or flachter (Chapter 15) and placed on the roof in long overlapping strips with the matted roots inwards. The scraws were of standard sizes, for instance 12 ft. long by 2 ft. by 1½ inches thick. but they were shorter than this in the south, where the flachter was not known. The scraws were generally sewn to the roof timbers with loops of sugán or fir-rope (Fig. 21). The sod layer, while universal in old houses throughout the north, is not always found in the south. Professor O'Riordain has described old houses in Co. Limerick, for example, where the thatch is sown directly on to the battens.



[283]

[184]

Fig. 21.

[1] *cf.* the fork-intervals or "bays" of the old English house.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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● 342

Then comes the thatch itself, which, while customarily of straw—rye is considered the best—may consist of tough mountain grass, rushes, marrom grass, flax, reeds, and not long ago, heather or even potato haulms. Old houses in the north-east sometimes have a thick layer of flax waste or "shows" under the thatch. With the many ways of shaping and securing the thatch it is not possible to deal at length. One of the oldest devices is the sugán or rope method (Fig. 22), common in the west and in coastal or exposed situations elsewhere. A network of ropes is secured to stone pegs at the eaves or weighted down with stones that may either hang loose or rest on the roof above the eaves. Where the gable end rises above the thatch the ropes run over the roof-ridge and are supplemented only by a single eave-rope or lath, but in Mayo the gable is stepped so that horizontal ropes may be carried through the angles and secured in the gable ends. Another coastal method, found for example in north Antrim and in Connemara, consists of horizontal bands or ropes of bog-fir, sally or heather, pegged into the thatch at intervals (Fig. 22). A common way of securing the thatch is to plaster the ridge and, in mud-walled houses, the strips above the gable-tops, with mud, or latterly with cement. In the latter case the thatch protects the mud walls by projecting over the ends (Fig. 22). Dwellings roofed in this way are known in Inishturk, off the Mayo coast, as "shaken houses," in contrast to the "stitched houses" of tied ropes. Finally there is the scollop or scobe thatch, secured by bent rods which are hidden (Fig. 23) except at the ridge and along the eaves, where they may be worked into lozenge patterns. The tools of a scollop thatcher are illustrated in Fig. 24. This method, it has been claimed, is due to English influence, but it would be instructive to compare its distribution with known culture borrowals. It occurs as far west as Kerry and even Connemara and is the usual method on the steep-roofed houses of Galway city. (*cf.* Pl. III.)

Fig. 22 Methods of securing thatch. Note projecting purlin-ends in gable "c"

Two protruding elements of the house remain to be mentioned—the porch and the chimney. Neither was common a century ago, and where they are present on an old house they

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Fig. 23. Scollop thatch

[413]

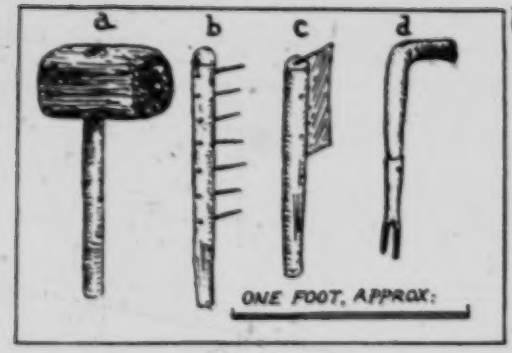

Fig. 24. Tools of a scollop-thatcher.

[p. 65]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 can be shown or assumed to be additions. A wicker windbreak of birch or hazel (called the wassock or corrag in Co. Antrim), was occasionally erected at one side of the door. Here, too, there was often a stone bench or "stile." The chimney generally betrays its modernity by being built of brick, but wooden or wattled chimneys, neatly thatched and bound with sugán, are not uncommon, and there are a few chimneyless dwellings still inhabited in the west. Old houses frequently have no more than a few inches of chimney projecting, and it is recorded that when efficient chimneys were built by improving landlords they were promptly covered with a sod, "because the smoke keeps them warm." It remains to be said that in former days house-building, like so many tasks demanding much labour, was a communal affair. "The custom on such occasions"—the scene is Donegal a century ago—"is for the person who has the work to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and working while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day."

[476]
[482]
[535]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE: FIRESIDE AND FOOD.

As we step inside an old Irish cottage, over a threshold of stone slabs or a pattern of small cobble-stones, we tread on a hard mud floor in which we may see, towards the hearth, the "pot hole" where the large iron pot rests when it is lifted off the fire. I have noticed similar holes in the mud floor, with the remains of the round-bottomed pottery vessel inside, near the excavated hearths of Irish houses nearly 40 centuries old. In paved kitchens a block of wood set flush with the flags answers the same purpose or there may be an iron pot rest (Fig. 25). The area surrounding the hearth is always paved, and the fire itself, in the old style, is at floor level. We shall be invited to take a seat at the fire, for this is the place of honour given to strangers: the fireside is both the focus of family life and the symbol of hospitality. The seat may be a stone slab built into the fireplace, so that the social tradition is incorporated in the architecture of the hearth, or it may be a roughly made but sturdy chair, bench or "creepie" (Fig. 26). The low stool not only brings one near fire-level, but keeps one's head out of the peat smoke hanging in the open rafters, while its three legs find firm footing on the uneven floor. Other low stools are made of solid turf or wood—a section of a tree-trunk—or again of coiled straw-rope, while chairs are often made with seats of sugán or of rush. Comfortable high-backed chairs fashioned out of straw in the manner of a

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[354]

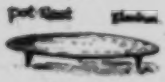

Fig. 25.

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[574]

Fig. 26.

[p. 67]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 bee-hive were common in some districts, but in parts of Mayo one rarely sees chairs of any kind. Step or ladder backed chairs with rush or straw seats are widespread: in the north-east chairs with wooden seats and upright-barred backs are [372] perhaps more usual. The turf fire is never allowed to go out: the glowing turves are heaped with ash at night and can be readily blown into a flame in the morning.

● 342 If the house has kept its brace and wattled chimney we shall be sitting under a canopy which tapers upwards to the smoke hole. The brace is a great beam extending from wall to wall, or resting at one end on a post some 5 feet out from the end-wall: between post and wall there may be a side partition or curtain-wall (Fig. 27) known in the Armagh-Meath area as the jamb-wall or the "hollan."[1] In some districts the front door is placed opposite this wall, but not, I fancy, in really old houses. In that case there may be a small window—the "spy-hole" "entry," or "jamb-window"—in the partition, allowing the sitter at the fireside to keep an eye on the open door. I have seen several houses in Co. Armagh where one has to stoop under the projecting brace to enter the house (Fig. 27). A further development is to hang a door on the brace-post, thus making a kind of internal porch or small hall. The jamb-wall is found from Co. Down to Co. Limerick but I have not seen it in the north-western province of the outshot.

342 The canopy is constructed of wattles or of sugán, plastered 352 with mud and cow-dung and white-washed outside. Canvas or boards are recent substitutes. At the sides of the chimney, above the ends of the brace, are small lofts or storeplaces, and there may be a larger "half-loft" over the other end of the kitchen—a relic of the time when corn and hay were kept here for feeding the animals below. A usual feature, under the stone seat to one side of the fire, is the ash or rubbish pit, another survival from far prehistory; and balancing it on the other side of the fire there may be a warm stone recess for the [231] sitting hen. At the back of the fire is a thick flag—the backstone—or a mass of clay forming the hob, but this is carefully built up of stones or bricks in eastern and southern

[1] This word is also used in N. England and Scotland for the curtain-wall. In Lancashire it is termed the "speer."

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 70 -- ANALYST]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Armagh

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Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth with Brace. Derryinver T.L.

Fig. 27. Note wheel-bellows.

Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth, Jambwall & window. Derrytrasna.

Fig. 28. Note "jamb-window."

[p. 69]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-holes ("boles") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes or the knitting: they are usually reserved for special purposes and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these
[805] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for drying clothes.

251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or "ark,"
352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now almost dead, is the "tramping" of the meal, the children
[857] being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead immediately behind the chimney, in the "room," where it would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other fireside gear later in the chapter.

354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west, that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its cailleach or not, lies at one side of the fire: alternatively there may be a large settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 72 -- ANALYST]

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Antrim

SLIDE CAR WITH KISH ; STRAW HARNESS

LOW-BACK CAR

BOX-CAR WITH DISC WHEELS

Plate IV.
ALL FROM GLENS OF ANTRIM

SPOKE-WHEELED CAR

[Facing p. 105]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, 291
until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the
homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange [386]
used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black
and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a [824]
small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but
sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant.

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bed- 342
rooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar,
though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the
walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the
exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses
are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors,
front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen; and the
windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very
small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they
are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot
square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the
usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that [354]
in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the
top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the
gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass
turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the
ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The [284]
gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does
not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water
getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is
put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones,
until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and
quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The [241]
floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes
boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is
wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood,
washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the
islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people
having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings
or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The 352
furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe cruithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

372 The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive, except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
[435] and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

291 the town, where they sit down by the roadside, and put on their boots and stockings, taking them off again when starting for home.

The old-fashioned frock or kilt-shaped garment, made of red or grey homespun, and buttoned up the back, is still worn by boys up to twelve years of age.

The dress of the women is on the whole less changed than that of the men. Many of the elderly women wear the white-frilled cap, others have a small red kerchief tied under the chin. Over the shoulders a shawl of tartan or other striking pattern is folded, but this is not so frequently of a bright red, as in other districts, as the darker colours seem to be more in favour; beneath the shawl is a boddice of some dark material. The petticoat is short, but is only occasionally the typical red homespun of the western peasant. It is often grey, or dyed purple, blue, or some other bright colour, and is sometimes ornamented by a few rows of black braid. Aprons of check are much worn. Many of the older women wear the heavy blue cloak with cape and hood on Sundays and holidays. The younger women to a large extent copy modern fashions on festive occasions, but the result is not happy, as their taste in colours is curious, and they certainly look better in native costume.

286 A great variety of homespuns are made in the district, there being several weavers who turn out coarse flannel, tweeds, and friezes, some of which are very good specimens of hand-loom work. The dyes 386 are nearly all imported, indigo and the made-up aniline dyes being [824] most used. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), which was at one time pretty generally employed for this purpose, is now only used for dying stockings.

5. *Dwellings.*—The habitations of the people present considerable ● 342 variety, some being extremely poor, others of a fairly good class. The description given below applies solely to the houses of the people of the rural parts, and not to Belmullet (which is a cleanly and well-built little town, composed almost entirely of good-slated houses of two stories) nor to the houses of the proprietors or large holders.

Of late years there has been much improvement in the style of dwelling, but few indeed of the old turf cabins remain; while the semi-subterranean huts, some of which were inhabited in 1841, have become altogether extinct.

The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1846) describes the majority of dwellings as being built partly of stone and partly of turf, and consisting of only one or at most two rooms.

An average dwelling now is built of stone, sometimes dry, at others

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

cemented by "dobe" or tempered clay, or sometimes mortar. It generally consists of two apartments, the kitchen and the "room." The kitchen, which is usually of pretty large size, is used as the living room; it has a floor of beaten clay. This room has one, or perhaps, two windows of small size, and seldom made to open. These are always glazed now-a-days, but in the last century they were covered with oiled sheepskin. The house has two doors, both of which open directly into the kitchen, and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the partition wall of the two apartments. 342

The end of the kitchen farthest from the fire is used as a pen for the cattle and pigs. The fowl roost where they can, often on the backs of the cattle. [231]

Above the beams or couples in this part of the kitchen boards are sometimes placed, making a sort of loft, in which fishing and boat tackle, agricultural implements, and other articles are stored.

The fireplace is built against the partition wall between the kitchen and the room. It consists of a stone hearth backed by a "hob," also of stone, built out slantwise behind it to make the fire draw well. This class of house has no chimney, the smoke escaping through a circular hole in the roof immediately above the hearth. [354]

"The room" is a smaller apartment than the kitchen, (measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet) it has one or two small windows, and the floor is sometimes boarded.

The furniture of the house is poor and scanty, that of the kitchen consisting of a bedstead, rudely made up of drift-wood, two posts being driven into the floor, a longitudinal piece uniting these and two cross-beams at head and foot resting by one end on the posts, and having the other built into the wall. Sometimes it is built up into four-poster shape and has curtains. The bedding is composed either of feather ticks, or, with the poorer people, of straw, covered with coarse sacking. The bedclothes are often very dirty. There is a dresser covered with earthenware plates, cups, and jugs of a poor and cheap description, a table, two or three chairs, and a couple of forms or settles. A long straw rope is usually stretched across the apartment to hang clothes to dry on. Worsted when spun, nets, &c., are hung from the couples. 352

"The room" contains one or two beds of the sort described, a chair or two, a table (in some cases), and a large chest.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual three-legged pot, a griddle, a gridiron, and sometimes a pot oven, a few staved wooden piggins, a boran or sheepskin sieve, and, in the mountains and islands, a quern, now only used usually for grinding barley for cattle food, 415

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

415 though it may be put to the less innocent purpose of preparing malt for poteen, and a spinning-wheel of the usual type. For light at night
373 modern lamps are coming into use, but in many houses the "flare" is used. It consists of a rude sconce, in which is fastened a cylindrical reservoir for oil, closed at the top by a lid, and having a spout like that of a coffee-pot, through which the wick is drawn. Rush lights are still used by some.

342 The house is often whitewashed outside; the roof is thatch, of straw in most localities, but on the islands, and some places in the peninsula, bent is use instead. This is laid on over "scraws" of grass-turf and fastened down by sougans (straw ropes), the ends of which may be attached to pegs driven into the walls, or have long pieces of
[284] wood or heavy stones fastened to them. These ropes are often arranged in a net work so as to hold the thatch more securely. Coir rope, bought in Belmullet, is now used by some instead of sougans. The gable is stepped or cut away so that the thatch does not project over the end wall.

There are several other types of houses, though the style just described is the most common. Most of the newer houses and those building have chimneys, pig-styes of turf or stone, and in some cases byres. Few of the old one-roomed dwellings, built partly or altogether of turf, are still to be seen, but there are a number of one-roomed huts of stone, many of which have no windows.

The most primitive habitations in the district, and perhaps in Ireland, are the rude huts (*boolies*) on Inishglora, inhabited during the lobster fishing season by the men of Inishkea; they are about a dozen in number, rudely built of dry stone and thatched with "scraws." There is not room to stand upright in them, the height from floor to roof being about 5 feet. Internally they contain a rude bunk filled with straw for sleeping in and a few large stones to sit upon. Cooking appears to be done out of doors. Successive batches of men live in these huts for about three months of the year. Some of the poorest houses on the mainland are in the isolated and primitive village of Fallmore, where few of the dwellings have windows and few or none chimneys. The houses on the islands are decidedly among the best in the district. Many are whitewashed inside, and the furniture is of a superior class, abundant material being thrown up as drift wood. The beds are four-posted structures, with flat board tops, and some of them have bright-coloured curtains, and the bedding is clean and tidy-looking.

489 6. *Transport.*—Lying as it does far from towns of any size, and separated from the nearest by a wide stretch of wild and thinly-

[p.205(c)]

311 bor, and then with no break to Cloon-
amore on the east side.

This island has a planned landscape.
311 The roads of the commonage pastures
657 and peat bogs have been built under relief schemes and the farms include seven acres of improved land, "striped" or defined by the Congested Districts Board after the land was acquired from its owner, Mr. C. Allies, in 1907.[10]
● 342 Since then new houses of concrete, with
511 a concrete floor, roofed with asbestos
657 slate or, rarely, ordinary slates, have

[10] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 18th report for the year ending March 31, 1909, Cmd. 4927, p. 139. The price paid was £8301, including £401 for tenants' interests. Up to March 31, 1915, £7047 was spent on the island, 23rd report, 1915, Cmd. 8076.

342 been built for almost the entire population. In 1893 it was said that there
511 were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds,
[657] so that peat was stacked in a corner of the cottage with the fowls roosting on it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace, the cattle in a pen at the other end of the room, and the farm implements and fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] Now the
[343] old houses are the outbuildings, still thatched, with oat straw (not rye as formerly) laid on sods and tied down with home-made straw ropes weighted with large stones. Only five thatched houses were still inhabited in 1954. Some of the thatch has sprouting oats and some of it is rotten, but, when a roof is beyond further repair, it is all stripped off and the sodding and thatching begins again. Happily, corrugated iron is not used as it cannot stand the weather.

Farming

241 Agricultural practice is almost uniform: an acre or so is divided between oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—barley, and there is generally a small patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions, carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen. The ground used for crops is called the "garden," and its fertility is maintained by using animal manure and seaweed, and also by rotating the crops. Strange (or "foreign") seed is favored, and
[657] bought at a cheap rate under a government scheme. The remainder of the farmstead consists of a varying amount of meadow, generally 1–3 acres, and some pasture. The precious crops are
[231] carefully walled, but some of the farmers open their fields to the cattle and sheep after the harvest, partly as a
231 means of natural fertilizing.
439 Each farmer has one or two cows and

[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[p. 206(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 arranged in some semblance of order along a road, but they are likely to be late colonies or the result of land re-distribution. As a visitor during the famine years wrote: 'The villages in which the greater portion of the people (of western Ireland) reside . . . consist of collections of hovels . . . grouped without regularity, formed of clay, or loose stone with green sods stuffed into the interstices'.[1] A little earlier, in 1839, the people of Achill Island are described as 'living in little cabins built in loose clusters varying from twenty to eighty in a cluster: these clusters or villages are sixteen in number'.[2] Still earlier, in 1802, Donegal is said to have had about 500 'villages', which were, however, 'dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings'.[3]

361 The absence of any discernible plan as compared with many English or German villages has led visiting critics to regard
342 the clachan as a reflection of the disordered Irish mentality. The word that best fits the untidy house cluster is one often heard in Ireland—'throughother'—which is properly applied and probably owes its origin to the scattered plots of the openfield (Fig. 6). Despite this apparently casual disorder the selection of a house-site was a matter for the most careful deliberation. Shelter from the prevailing winds was a prime need, so that the houses seem to snuggle together, generally located in a hollow or on a lee slope. To this end a man might throw his hat into the air on a day of wild winds and mark its falling place. But it seems it was at all costs necessary to avoid giving offence to the fairies by building across one of their 'pads'. In Tyrone it is said that 'no man would build a house till he had stuck a new spade into the earth'. If the fairies had not removed it overnight the site was safe.[4] In Cavan I was told that a small line of stones was first built on the site: if it was intact next morning the fairies were not displeased. The ill-luck which dogged the person who had inadvertently built his house across a fairy pad is one of the many themes which crop up in the stories one hears throughout the country.

[1] J. Pim, *The Condition and Prospects of Ireland* (1848), 116.
[2] Edward Newman in *The Magazine of Natural History* (1839), 569–77.
[3] James McParlan, *Statistical Survey of the County of Donegal* (1802), 64.
[4] Rose Shaw, *Carleton's Country* (1930), 15.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

century we find a description from Ulster: 'In the bosom of the Mourne Mountains there is a place called the Deers' Meadow to which great numbers of poor people resort in the summer months to graze their cattle. They bring with them their wives, children and little wretched furniture, erect huts, and there live . . . and often cut their turf.'[1] A century later a fuller account of a more complicated transhumance, reminiscent of the Norwegian seaboard, comes from Donegal: 'It often happens that a man has three dwellings—one in the mountains, another upon the shore, and the third upon an island, he and his family flitting from one to another of these habitations . . . This change usually takes place upon a fixed day, the junior branches of the family generally perform the land journey on the top of the household goods with which the pony may often be seen so loaded, and at the same time so obscured, that little more than the head can be observed; and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected et cetera . . . creep along the roads.'[2] The author goes on to comment on the restrictions imposed on the comfort and possessions of the peasants by their 'Arab mode of life'. In Achill Island too the movements were complicated, involving the entire population which, having moved to the summer pastures and sowed their corn, returned to the permanent coastal village for the high summer to fish and went back to gather the harvest at the booley in the autumn.[3]

For the most part we are dependent on folk tradition for details of booleying. The Ordnance Survey Letters written in the 1830s contain valuable material from Counties Antrim and Londonderry, and the following extract relates to the parish of Dunaghy: 'Some of the very old men of the country recollect seeing the boliehouses inhabited. They were built of sods upon a foundation of earth and stones and were thatched with heath. Many of the poorer sort lived here in summer grazing the cattle upon land that nobody appears to have claimed and supporting themselves upon their milk and blood which they took from

[1]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 125.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.
[3]An account by Sir William Wilde, written in 1836, is contained in Wood-Martin, *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (1888), 238.

them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rectangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of booleying there are no discernible traces, for the flimsy constructions in such sites, built without stones, have been buried under the peat. Frequently the huts were built into a sloping bank of peat or gravel, and the roofs were constructed of bog timbers covered by long strips of sod and thatched with heather secured with ropes. We shall see that long roofing-sods are typical of traditional peasant dwellings to this day, and their use may go back to pastoral origins. It was observed

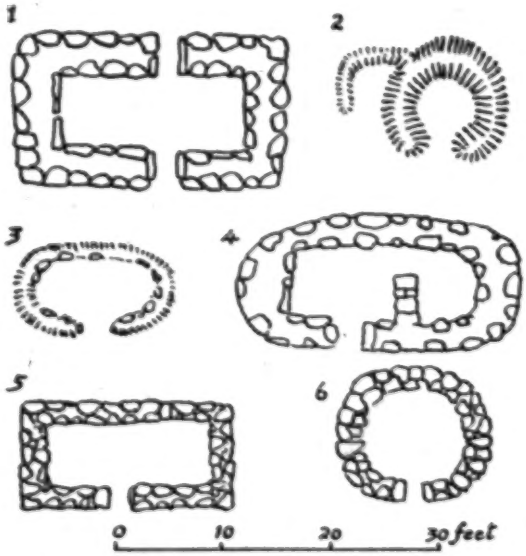

FIG. 7. Plans of booley houses. Nos. 1, 4, 5, Achill Island; Nos. 2 and 3, Mourne Mountains, Co. Down; No. 6, Co. Mayo.

near Newry in 1690 that the cabins were built so conveniently of hurdles and long turf 'that they can remove them in summer towards the mountains, and bring them down to the valleys in winter.'[1] Circular hut-foundations are also found, some built of stones, others of sods, and the former may well have had corbelled stone roofs. The huts are generally in groups of

[1]George Story, *An Impartial History of the Wars of Ireland* (1691), 2nd ed. (1693), 16.

342 361 from five to twenty, either clustered or spaced within calling distance of each other. They are nearly always located near running water, usually near the headwaters of mountain streams, where patches of bright green grass and such characteristic flowers as tormentil may reveal their sites even when almost all trace has gone (Fig. 7).

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IV

THE THATCHED HOUSE

VISITORS to Ireland have not failed to comment on the wide gap which separates the splendid if often dilapidated 342 mansions of the landed gentry from the humble dwellings of the mass of the rural population. This is a characteristic dichotomy which runs through Irish life and goes deep into the Irish past: it was foreshadowed in the distinction between the Gaelic overlords and the tributary tribes who were still in an inferior position at the time of the Anglo-Norman conquest. By English standards the Irish farmer is a small-holder. Substantial farmhouses with some pretensions to architectural dignity are in general restricted to the planted areas and they are few in number compared with the traditional single-storied thatched cabins of the peasantry. These have so frequently been condemned as artless and insanitary that it might be supposed nothing could be said in their favour. Their disadvantages indeed are obvious, and they have given way in many districts to slated houses of cement-blocks or bricks and are [178] doomed to vanish entirely under a wave of thin-walled boxes with garish red roofs. But it is not only sentimentalists who deplore their disappearance. With their passing, writes Robin Flower, something of the old world passes away, 'for the older type of house was in a right harmony with its surroundings, while these high and bare constructions stand in a perpetual contradiction of the whole environment of hill and sea and sky in which they are so violently set down.'[1]

In fact a good deal more could be said in favour of the old styles, at their best providing homes of character, comfort and

[1]Robin Flower, *The Western Isle* (1944), 46.

342 beauty which vary subtly from one region to another in response to local climates, conditions and contacts. The use of local building materials meant that they fitted into landscapes of which they were literally a part, their clay or stone walls gathered from the earth on the spot, their timbers dug from the bogs, their thatch harvested from the fields. A Swedish ethnographer writes that 'the best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe.'[1] The result of an unbroken tradition was a fine simplicity of style and proportions, with nothing of the vulgar obtrusiveness of the new fashions in country houses, based too often on urban styles and red-brick respectability. Before the famine, houses in the market towns also were very largely of traditional local style save in the central square. Isaac Weld, describing Roscommon in 1832, states that out of its 517 houses no less than 462 were thatched.[2]

Our concern is with the old-style house as a shelter for man
342 and beast and as the vehicle of family lore and regional tradition.
362 In the crowded clachans limitations of space and the fact that
231 diarying was mainly practised in the summer booleys go far to explain the absence of separate byres or dairies. Sanitation was of the crudest and closets unknown. It is these aspects of Irish rural life that have most readily aroused the amused indignation of the critics and the defensive wrath of Irish patriots. As we read in an earlier description of the Western Isle:[3]

> At one of th' ends he kept his cows,
> At th'other end he kept his spouse.

The custom of housing man and beast together has been very general among pastoral peoples in regions of difficult climate, whether in Highland Britain or the European mountain zone. Parts of Ireland, however, have long had a different type of house giving more family privacy: in the lowland parts of Leinster, East Munster and South Ulster the house with central chimney and fireside partition did not easily allow of the keeping of livestock in the house, and one is inclined to regard

[1] Åke Campbell, *Folk-Liv*. (1937), 228.
[2] Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 307.
[3] W(illiam) M(offatt), *A Description of the Western Isle*, Dublin (1724), Canto 2.

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this style as an improvement introduced by English settlers. This central-chimney house with its 'jamb-wall' hearth will be described in the following chapter. In any event, although stray hens, a pet lamb or a farrowing pig may occasionally join the cats and dogs in an Irish kitchen, the keeping of cattle in the house is a thing of the past. Yet it was so recently practised, especially along the Atlantic seaboard, that many existing houses are not far removed from kitchen-byres, a cross partition conveniently converting the byre into a bedroom, store or dairy.

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Moreover the shape and internal arrangements of the prevailing pattern of traditional rural dwelling are conditioned by these antecedents. The long rectangular shape was sanctioned by custom and preserved by superstition; a house, to be 'lucky', must not be more than one room wide (Fig. 8). 'Widen the house', I have heard it said in Donegal, 'and the family will get smaller'. The hearth gable of the house was, where possible, dug into the slope of rising ground, so that it would have been difficult to enlarge the house by widening it: it could grow more easily in length. The long shape is also characteristic of humble dwellings in the small straggling Irish towns. Their streets are lined by whitewashed cabins strung end to end interminably; in the 'cabin suburbs' one rarely sees a house that is not aligned along the road. Describing Ballymoney in Co. Antrim about 1830 the Ordnance Survey Letters state that many houses facing the main street had no access to the byres and stables behind, so that cows and horses had to be taken in and out through the house. In parts of western Ireland cows were brought into single-roomed houses within living memory. In Clare Island, Co. Mayo, there were at the turn of the century only five or six houses out of the total of 120 into which the cattle and pigs were not taken at night.[1] Writing of the village of Kilgever near Westport in 1880 an observer states: 'It is a terrible thought that these huge heaps (of manure about the doorsteps) had all been taken from the single rooms, each of which formed a common stye for men, women, children, horses, cows, pigs and poultry.[2]' It is still characteristic of many small farms that the manure heap is not far from the

[1]C. R. Browne, *Clare Island and Inishturk.*
[2]J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught in the Spring of 1880* (1888), 54

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 front door, for the cows are kept in a byre which is a continua-
362 tion of the dwelling house, an obvious convenience though there
231 is not, as in the longhouse of Wales and Dartmoor, direct access from kitchen to feeding-walk.

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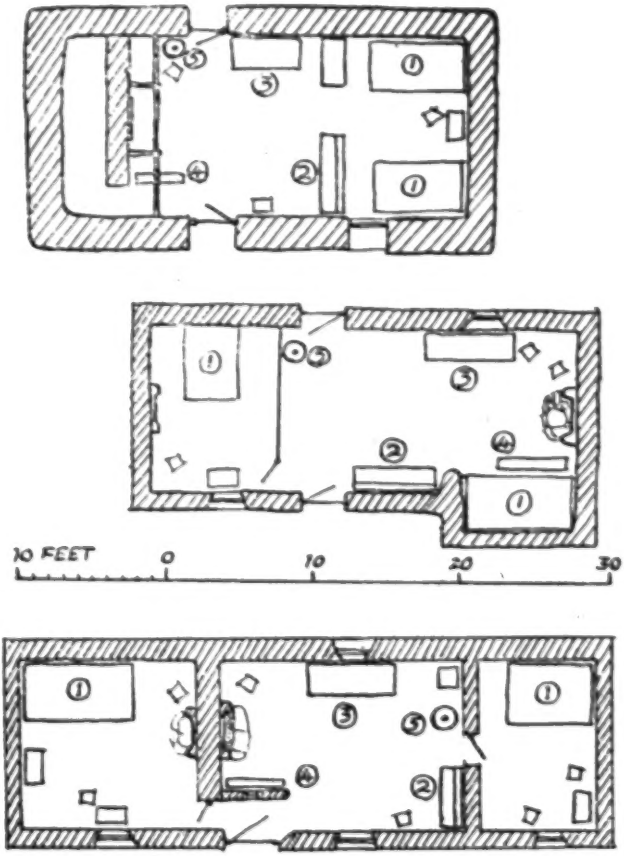

FIG. 8. House plans. *Above:* hipped-roof house, Co. Galway (compare Fig. 13, 2). *Centre:* house with outshot, Co. Donegal (compare Fig. 12, 3). *Below:* house with jamb-wall, Co. Down. (1) bed, (2) dresser, (3) table, (4) bench, (5) churn.

THE THATCHED HOUSE

Poverty and rack-renting undoubtedly contributed to the long survival of such conditions, but they ultimately derive from cultural forces of wide distribution and high antiquity. It used to be said in defence of the custom of sharing the house with the cow that she helped to keep the house warm and that in turn the cow yielded more milk. Inquire further and you will find that it was thought to be unlucky if the cow was not able to get a glimpse of the fire. Behind this belief there lies faith in the power of the fire to dispel evil spirits. The end of the house farthest from the hearth is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-end', a relic of the time when it housed the cattle, for it was obviously wise to have the floor sloping down towards the byre. Many cabins and huts were constructed as lean-tos against a bog-face or an old fence (ditch). Hence the saying applied, for example, to the Cappagh district of Co. Armagh, that 'you can't cross a ditch or you'll fall down a chimney'. It should be recalled that in Ireland the tenants built and repaired their own houses with, normally, no assistance from the landlord, and there was little inducement to build houses to last longer than the lease of say twenty-one years. Only in Ulster under the custom of tenant right could outgoing tenants claim recompense from the new tenants for improvements made.

342 362 231 [372] [361] [539]

The simple rectangular shape is a feature of west European house-types from prehistoric times and has characterized some houses of Neolithic age excavated in Ireland. Such houses were usually built of timber, clay or sods (scraws). Circular or oval houses are of similar antiquity, whether made of stone or of wattles, but although a few round-ended rectangular houses survive, the round hut of corbelled stone slabs is used today only as a store place or animal house (Chapter IX). The houses of Achill Island are described by several writers about 1840 as circular or oval in shape, built of boulders without mortar and having the thatched roof continuous with the walls. They had neither chimneys nor windows, and the single door was sometimes not more than four feet high. None of these houses is now inhabited though their ruins can be seen. The round or oval house, however, has probably contributed to certain features of the traditional rectangular-house in some areas, for example the central hearth and the hipped roof which is proper

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 to a round-ended house. But there are many missing links in the evolution of the Irish house, which archaeological excavation will hope to find some day. Interpretative studies of Dark-Age texts are also needed.[1]

342 Clues to old methods of house building may also be found in
524 forms of construction used for outbuildings or in children's
787 games. There is, for example, a Hallowe'en spell or divination game known as 'building the house' in which twelve couples of holly twigs are arranged in a circle, pushed into the ground and tied together at the apex. A live turf representing the fire is placed in the centre. The coupled twigs are named after the boys and girls present, and the pair which first catches fire indicates which boy and girl will first be coupled in marriage.[2] Compare with this a description of Irish houses in the early seventeenth century: 'the baser cottages are built of underwood, called wattles, and covered with thatch . . . of a round form and without chimneys, and in my imagination resemble so many hives of bees about a country farm.'[3]

342 Today nearly all Irish farm-houses are a simple rectangle in ground plan, anything from ten to twenty feet in width and of varying length according to the number of rooms they comprise, each room being the full width of the house. The normal developed house has three rooms, consisting of a central kitchen with a bedroom at the bottom end and another—the best room, called simply 'the room'—behind the chimney, which helps to warm it (Fig. 8). This, in the Gaeltacht, is the 'west room', reserved for family mementoes, for the old people and especially for the dead. Here the body is placed during wakes, and a wealth of superstition gathers around this room.[4] Arensberg may have been mistaken in translating the Gaelic *iarthar* as 'west', for the word also means 'back', but there are old beliefs about the orientation of the dwelling house, and it is possible that there was an association between death and the direction of the setting sun. The confusion between 'west' and 'back' is amusingly illustrated in the story of the Irish boy who,

[1] Angus Graham, 'Archaeological Gleanings from Dark Age Records', *P.S.A. Scot.* (1950–51), c. 1–21.

[2] Lady Wilde, *Ancient Legends of Ireland* (1888), 111.

[3] Luke Gernon, *A Discourse of Ireland, Anno 1620.*

[4] C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman* (1937), Ch. 1.

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when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied 342
"twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the
fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the [763]
west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the [777]
luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was
always carried out to the graveyard through the back door [764]
and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor
to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the [354]
room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the
flagged passage between the doors served as a path for live- [231]
stock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh,
in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals [777]
purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands*.
[3] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 morning—and evening—milking of the cows', each animal being driven in turn, in at the front door and out at the back door.[1]

The Census of 1841 estimated that nearly half the families of the rural population of Ireland, then some 85 per cent of the total, were living in the lowest state, in one-roomed mud cabins. In Co. Kerry the percentage was as high as 67 per cent, and in Bear barony in Co. Cork it reached 81 per cent. Although mud houses are now in a minority, many substantial examples remain as well as innumerable decayed specimens. Over many parts of the bog-strewn Central Lowland, where stone is not readily available and transport of materials is difficult, the clay-walled house remains typical. Formerly many single-roomed cabins were made of sods (scraws), especially in boggy country. In Tipperary they were said to be the commonest type about 1780.[2] A few survive. I have seen one in Co. Antrim partly cut out of a bog-bank, housing a large healthy family; and they have been described from other parts of Ireland. Booley houses, we have seen, were frequently built of sods. At its best the mud-walled house can be both durable and comfortable, and many observers warn us not to assume the poverty of their builders. As Arthur Young remarks: 'Before we can attribute such deficiencies to absolute poverty we must take into account the customs and inclinations of the people.'[3]

Mud walls were built up with a fork in layers twelve to eighteen inches deep of a mixture of damp clay and cut rushes which had been left to sour. A stone foundation layer sunk into the ground was usually built first, and sometimes the gable ends, especially if a chimney flue was to be included, were built entirely of stone. They were afterwards trimmed with a sharp spade to a thickness which averages about twenty inches but may be as much as thirty. They had to be of massive construction for stability, and the doors which were cut out subsequently were kept narrow. Similarly the window openings were narrow and placed high in the walls, coming directly under the thatch, so that they resemble eyes glinting below shaggy eye-

[1] Åke Campbell, 'Irish Fields and Houses', *Béaloideas*, 5 (1935), 57–74, 70.
[2] (Thomas Campbell), *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland* (1778), 146.
[3] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 57.

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brows. Thick coats of limewash renewed annually gave protection from the weather and it was essential that the thatch should overhang at the eaves. The roof is typically thatched at the gable, that is, hipped, for it was difficult to build the walls above about six feet high. Alternatively the gables above this height were often finished with turf or sods (Fig. 9). The overhang of the thatch makes the mud-walled house unsuited to the windy coasts of the north and west where the thatch is securely tied down with ropes and trimmed flush with the eaves. Close observation will show the most intimate relationship 342

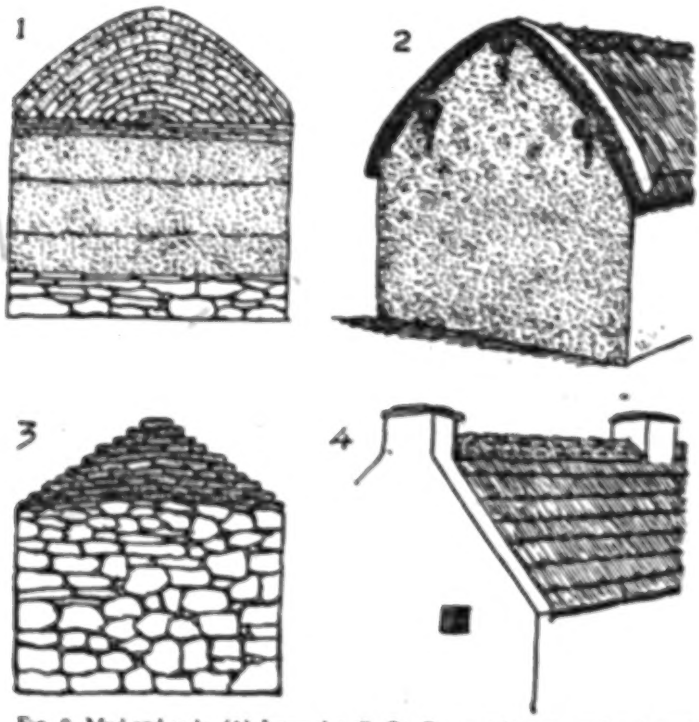

FIG. 9. Mud and sods. (1) Internal wall, Co. Down, of stone, mud and mud bricks, (2) projecting purlin ends of mud house, Co. Armagh: mud coping, (3) internal wall, Co. Meath, with sod top, (4) thatch secured with pegged fir-ropes and ridge of pegged sods, north Antrim.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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392 between building materials and techniques and types of thatch, and when slates or tiles are adopted for roofing it will be found that old roof patterns are faithfully followed by local builders. An interesting variant of the mud house occurs around Lough Neagh, where the main weight of the roof is carried on three massive purlins the ends of which can be seen projecting outside the upright gables (Fig. 9). I suspect these houses were built to take tall looms, for the use of purlins means that there are no couple-ties crossing the room, but the distinction between the purlin and the coupled-rafter roof may be fundamental. The purlin-roof may go back to the log house with which it is associated, for example, in Scandinavia. One advantage of the upright gable over the hipped roof is that it made the extension of the house by the addition of further rooms much simpler. It could have been copied from medieval churches or planters' houses.

For constructional reasons, and also because window glass was long a luxury, the windows of the traditional cabin were few and small and placed for preference on the side away from the prevailing winds. Many of the surviving houses, moreover, were built in the early nineteenth century, when tax was levied on the number of windows. The ever-open door, its lower part closed with the additional half-door, admitted most of the light. The half-door is often regarded as peculiarly Irish, but in fact it is an old-fashioned feature which has lived on longer in the [171] western isle than in Great Britain. It is found in parts of the north of England, for example in miners' cottages in Co. Durham, and it is said to be characteristic of Chinese houses. In Ireland the half-door serves to let in the light while keeping out unwanted animals, and it makes a convenient arm-rest for purposes of conversation or contemplation. This is how a countryman justified it to me: 'A man standing at the open door would be wasting time, but leaning on the half-door he is just passing time'. To give maximum efficiency, the window openings widen internally, an arrangement behind which there may be a lingering tradition of defence against unwelcome strangers. At any rate most of the light came from the doorway, and thus one sees the force of the picturesque phrase referring to the unwanted visitor as one who 'darkens

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PLATE 3

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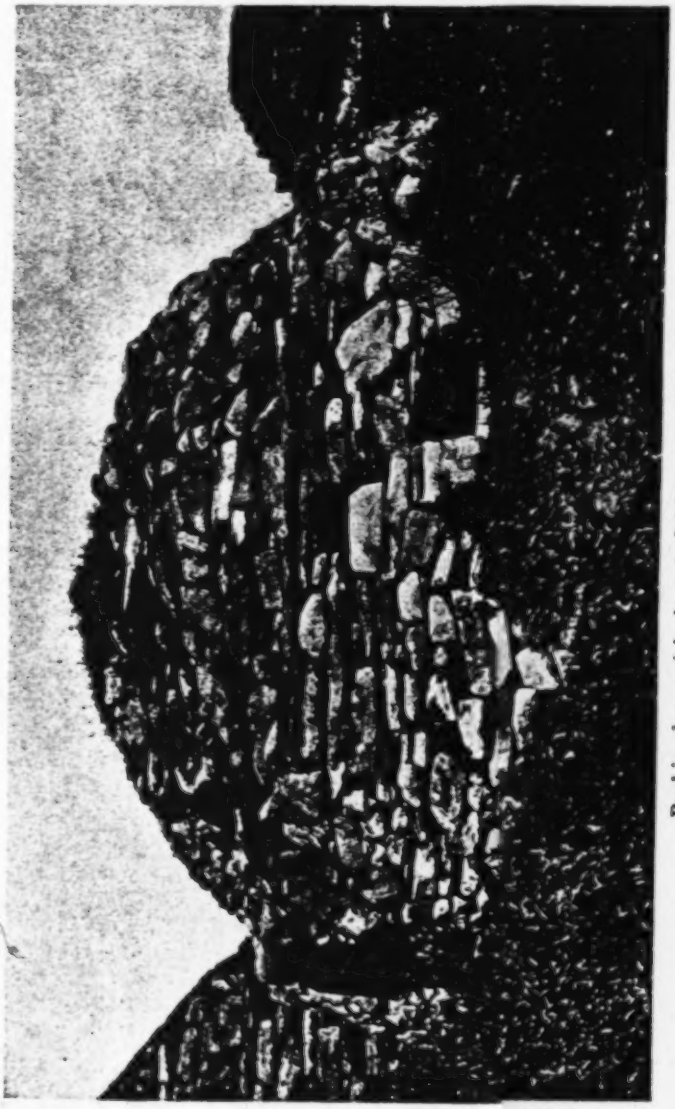

Beehive house (clochaun), Irishmurray, Co. Sligo.

[facing p. 48]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the door'. A wattle frame, a handful of straw or a dried sheep-skin served as a substitute for glass, and it is remembered in Co. Fermanagh that a mare's cleanings (the placenta) best served the purpose. My informant added significantly: 'No bayonet would go through it'! In one Donegal parish in 1837, according to a petition sent by the school teacher to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, there was 'not more than ten square feet of glass in windows in the whole (some 1,500 houses) with the exception of the chapel, the school house, the priest's house, Mr. Dombrain's house and the constabulary barrack'.[1]

342 [237]

FIG. 10. A coupled roof of bog-oak, Co. Donegal, the ridge rounded against the wind (compare Fig. 12, 3).

Details of the roof-frame of the long house show many minor variations from place to place, but as a general rule it is composed of coupled rafters traditionally of bog-oak chosen for its strength as well as from the scarcity of live oak trees (Fig. 10). A house is measured, not in feet, but by the number of bays it contains, a bay being the distance between the couples, which is standard in any one district. There is some evidence that the

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 16.

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342 coupled roof was borrowed from the frame-house introduced by English planters: it may, however, have evolved from the wattled house if this was supported, as seems likely, by crucks. The coupled rafters are joined by one or two cross-ties secured by wooden pins, and pegs driven into the rafters hold in place the long purlins which support a layer of branches or thin laths of bog-fir. On these rests a warm blanket of carefully fitted sods (scraws), an essential element of the traditional roof, keeping out cold and damp and serving as a hold for the rods (scollops) with which the thatch, over the greater part of
342 the country, is secured (Fig. 11). The sod undercoat is an
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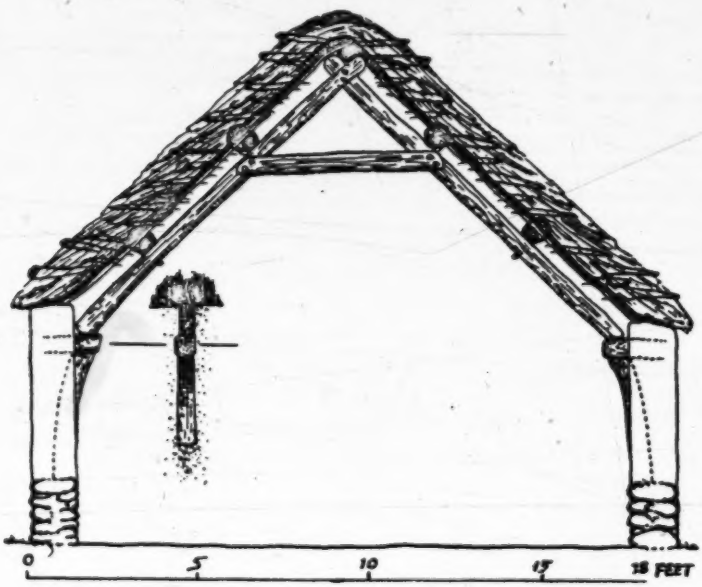

FIG. 11. Cross-section through old house, Maghery, Co. Armagh. The coupled rafters are supported on uprights set in the mud walls. The scraws are sewn to the purlins with fir-ropes. Successive layers of thatch are secured with rods pinned down with hair-pin scollops.

archaic element which overrides all differences in house and roof construction and must be of high antiquity. It has been taken over from an old culture-layer—it finds parallels in

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Norway and other sub-arctic regions—and from an economy where straw was not available. We have already noticed that cattle-herders in the early seventeenth century built their booley houses of boughs coated with long strips of green turf. The long sods made a portable roof which could be slung on a pole between two pack-horses. 342 [171]

The sods were cut in strips from carefully selected spots where a close-grazed sward gave a thick mat of grass-roots. They measure two to three feet wide and about one and a half inches thick, and as they were cut they were rolled on to a stick and carried like a carpet. Their roofing sods, wrote Thomas Campbell in 1778, 'they call scraws (they are rolled up like scrolls) but they would be better called hides, for they are flayed off the earth.'[1] In the north, where the flachter or breast-plough was used for paring sods (Chapter X), the scraws might be as much as twelve or fourteen feet long, though short turves were also used. They were carried on to the roof up two ladders and laid on grass upwards, overlapping at the ridge on the side away from the wind. They overlapped laterally also, the scraw on the windward side running over its neighbour on the lee (Fig. 14). In many such details careful attention was paid to the wind and the rain, for example the strongest purlins were put on the side whence driving rain was most to be expected. Similarly the stoutest couples were placed at the weather end of the house, and they were sometimes given a slight inclination towards the wind. A seemingly artless cabin may thus be found to show the most careful adaptation to local conditions. 342 314

The first thin layer of thatch was, in some parts of the country, sewn on to the purlins with a thatching needle—the older pattern has a large eye to take hay-rope (Fig. 15)—and the roof might then be finished in one of several regional styles. In the eastern part of Co. Down, and sporadically elsewhere, the straw is laid on in specially prepared bundles or stapples[2] (Gaelic *Stapull*) and the thatch is plastered down at eaves, gable and ridge with clay or mud. A few scollops are added at ridge and eaves. This is probably a very ancient method, 342 [413] [177]

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 146.
[2]K. Danaher, *Béaloideas* (1948), 203–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

●342 designed for temporary habitations, for it results, after repeated
177 additions of straw and mud, in an extremely thick and heavy roof. Yet its distribution on the east coast seems to point to introduction from overseas, and in Co. Down it is known as English thatch. One would like to know more about old thatching techniques in other parts of north-western Europe. In Galway a house with mud-sealed thatch is known as a 'shaken house'.[1]

Another way of securing the thatch, which has a limited
342 distribution chiefly along the Antrim coast, we may term the
[283] pegged method. Horizontal two-ply ropes made of sally, heather, or the tough fibres of bog-fir roots are laid along the roof parallel to the eaves at intervals of a foot or so and pegged to the scraw with wooden pins which are pushed in upwards so as not to lead water through the roof. A row of scraws is pegged to the rather sharp ridge (Fig. 9, 4). I have observed this style of thatch in south-west Lancashire. Much more widely distributed is the thatch which is found along the north and west coasts from east Ulster round to Kerry, but comes into its own particularly in Donegal, where it gives some of the most attractive roofs in north-western Europe. In Donegal they are rounded at the ridge to throw off the winds, the supporting couples being designed to this end with short cross-pieces breaking the angle of the ridge (Fig. 10). In some
[284] districts the ropes, formerly of twisted straw or bog fir but now generally ready-made of sisal, run in both directions to make a complete network; in others the horizontal ropes are omitted because of the obstructing gable-ends which, rising above the thatch, protect it from the winds. The ropes are secured to the walls by means of a row of stone-pegs below each eave. This method of tying is found also in north Mayo, most typically in areas known to have been settled from Donegal in the seventeenth century.[2] Here the horizontal ropes are carried over the gable in steps left for the purpose (Fig. 12, 2). Such roofs are said to be 'stitched': a close mesh may require up to a mile's length of roping. The older method of securing the ropes, from Mayo to Kerry, is to fasten the ends to small boulders

[1]C. R. Browne, *Inishbofin and Inishshark*. [Text continues on p. 54]
[2]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342

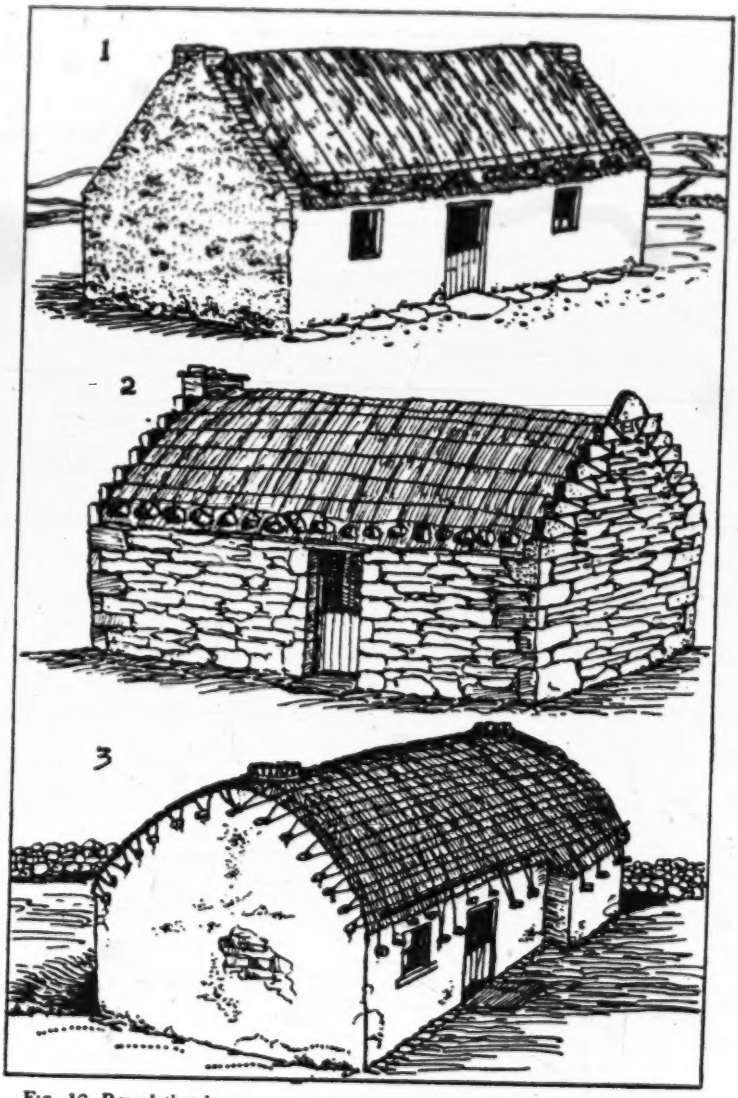

FIG. 12. Roped thatch, western seaboard. (1) Dingle, Co. Kerry. (2) Achill Island, Co. Mayo. (3) Teelin, Co. Donegal.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 which rest on the thatch directly over the eaves (Fig. 12, 1). This method has an extremely primitive air but it has the advantage over the pinned ropes in that it is simpler to keep the ropes taut. A still older method, frequently seen on thatched stacks and rarely on buildings, is to let the weighted ropes hang from the eaves. In Donegal a century ago boulders weighing fifty or sixty pounds are stated to have been suspended on hay ropes.[1] This very primitive mode is found also in the Inner Hebrides.[2] Roped thatch in general seems to be characteristic [171] of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe and areas around the North Sea.

The most widely distributed mode of thatching is by means of scollops, or sally rods (sometimes hazel, briar or bog-fir), which pin down the thatch. In well-finished work the rods are hidden, for if exposed they tend to let water seep through the scraw, but it is customary to leave a row exposed at the eaves and ridge and against the gables, where the outer layer of straw should lie snugly. The exposed scollops are often arranged [531] in lattice patterns, and the expert thatcher delights in showing his skill and leaving his grace-mark in finishes of various designs which are practical as well as decorative, serving for example to distribute the rain and prevent 'guttering'. Thus twists of straw (bobbins) at the gables carry the drips evenly to the ground. When the ridge—and sometimes the eaves as well—is also adorned with a row of bobbins the scollop-thatched roof can be most attractive (Fig. 13, 1). A thatched chimney occasionally adds the last finishing touch. The word scollop is derived from the Gaelic, and it is natural to assume that this most widely distributed of all styles—from north Antrim through the heart of the Irish midlands to south Cork—is [171] indigenous. But rod-thatching is widespread in England and on the continent, and it may have reached Ireland with the Celts. There are various ways of pushing in the scollops: they may be thrust in at each end (Fig. 14) or bent into wooden staples resembling large hairpins, which secure the ends of horizontal rods (Fig. 13, 1). The scolloped thatch is perhaps best suited to, and is almost universal on, roofs which are

[1] *Dub. Univ. Mag.* 41 (1853), 715.
[2] Colin Sinclair, *Thatched Houses* (1953), 36. [Text continues on p. 56]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIG. 13. Scollop thatch. *Above:* Co. Cavan, with ridge of bobbins. *Centre:* Co. Galway, with thatched chimney. *Below:* Co. Tipperary (after R. H. Buchanan).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342

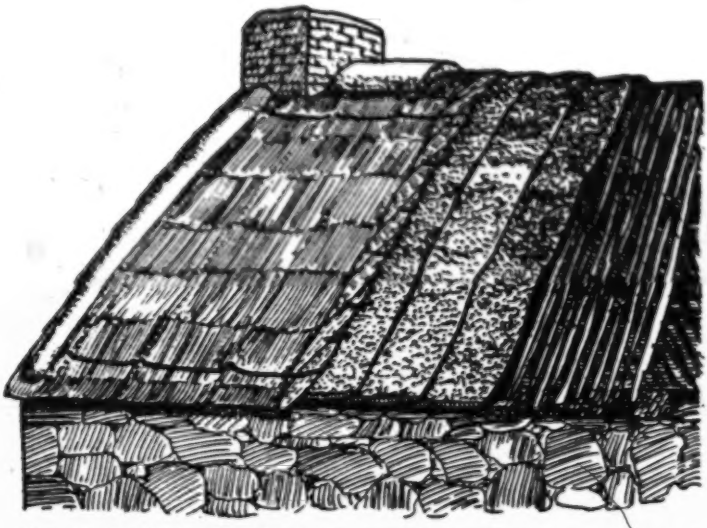

FIG. 14. Detail of scollop thatch, Co. Armagh, showing roof construction, sods and mud coping (after R. H. Buchanan).

hipped. The best work is seen on houses of the jamb-wall type.

824 Oat-straw, despite its poor lasting qualities, is employed for thatching in some districts, because it is the only available 342 material. Being pliable it is widely used for patching. In the old days outfield straw was preferred for thatching because it was tougher than that grown on the infield. Wheat or rye is much [241] more durable than oat straw and rye is specially grown for its straw in parts of Donegal, where I have known flax also cultivated to provide thatching material. Reeds are fairly commonly employed in the south-west and locally elsewhere if no straw is available. I have seen heather used in north Donegal, and in other areas marram grass, rushes and 'mountain grass' (probably *molinea*). The expert thatcher prefers his straw to be cut with a sickle and thrashed by hand and he scorns machine-thrashed straw. Best of all is straw from which the corn has been removed by hand-scutching or 'lashing' over a stick or stone, the 'barrel' of the straw being thus unbroken (Chapter XV).

342 Nowadays a thatched roof is becoming a mark of sophistication,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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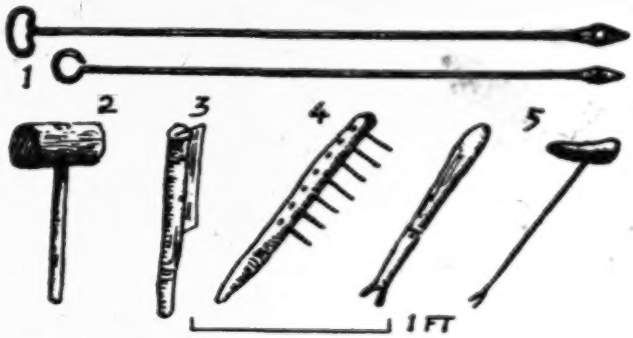
and among the farming population a new roof is hardly ever covered with thatch. The country thatcher finds employment in patching, not thatching. 342 [463]

The erection of such simple houses as I have described did not call for the services of specialists. When the need arose the collective skills of a whole community were available, and one can readily see how prescribed methods were handed down in any particular area. 'The custom on such occasions', wrote Lord George Hill[1]—he is speaking of Donegal in the years before the Great Famine—'is for the person who has the work 342 476 527



[413]

FIG. 15. Thatching tools. (1) Needles, the upper one for hay or fir ropes. (2) Mallet. (3) Trimming knife. (4) Rake. (5) Spurtles for stappling and patching. All from Co. Down except the last, from Co. Meath.

to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and singing while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day'. Like all work done in common, the thatching too was regarded as a sort of festival. In the Aran Islands 'from the moment a roof is taken in hand there is a whirl of laughter and talk till it is ended, and, as the man whose house is being covered is a host instead of an employer, he lays himself out to please the men who work with

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 40.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 476 527 him'.[1] Synge goes on to remark that much of the intelligence and charm of the islanders is due to the absence of a division of labour and to the wide development of each individual. Truly it may be said that with the disappearance of the thatched house something more than a picturesque archaism passes from the land.

[1]J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*, 156.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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V

HEARTH AND HOME

THE kitchen and the hearth are the very core of the Irish house, and the turf fire burning continuously day and night, throughout the year, is the symbol both of family continuity and of hospitality towards the stranger. When it goes out, it has been said, the soul goes out of the people of the house. The fire serves not only to prepare food and dry clothes, to bring warmth and comfort to the family and to ailing animals, but also to keep the thatch dry and preserve the roof timbers, so that 'when the smoke dies out of a house, it does soon be falling down'. This is one reason for the persistence of single-storey houses open to the roof, where the turf smoke could circulate among the rafters and keep the scraws and under-thatch dry. A 'smoke', in the seventeenth century inventories and to this day among country folk, means a house. In the days before chimneys were adopted the cabins were described as oozing smoke through the thatch so that they resembled 'reeking dunghills'. It should be remembered that the brick or stone chimney flue is a relative newcomer and, as we are constantly being reminded in these days of fuel shortage, a great waster of heat. The chimneyless open fire was much more effective as a house-warmer. The turf smoke, it is true, despite the draught-regulating mechanism of the double doors, must often have been troublesome, but as we shall see the furniture was designed to keep heads low.

Dry peat burns too quickly if the draught is strong, and the fire does best at floor level, glowing on a great stone slab or on a cobbled hearth set in the mud floor. The area immediately around the fire is also paved, but the rest of the old-style

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 kitchen is generally floored with puddled clay which takes a surprisingly well-wearing surface. The housewife will tell you that such a floor raises less dust than one of concrete, and if it tends to wear unevenly this matters little since the cooking pots [415] and some of the furniture which is not built-in has three legs [352] instead of four and will therefore stand firmly on an uneven floor. The rocking chair, despite New England's claim to have invented it, was surely first devised for such a floor. Lime, cowdung or ashes were sometimes added to the floor when it was being prepared, and mud scraped off the road, already well puddled, was considered an excellent floor material.[1] In Armagh, we are told, floors were made by simply digging up the ground and trampling it: 'They sometimes have a dance for that purpose, and many a match comes out of a thing of the sort.'[2] Another method was to keep a flock of sheep moving about the newly spread floor for some hours until it was well puddled. The bottom byre-end of the old-style one-roomed farm house was cobbled, and a flagged walk led from door to door. Devices 231 for tying up the cows were secured to or built into the bottom 353 gable: a variety of stone and wooden fasteners may still be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island. One writer humorously observes of Co. Galway that the cow had to be tethered lest she should eat the bed-straw, but that pigs and poultry were free to roam.[3] The hens spent the night on a rope or pole hung across the kitchen from eave to eave, and laid their eggs in handsome nesting-baskets of woven straw (Fig. 16). Here we may notice a curious bit of folklore which suggests that hens were carefully looked after for superstitious reasons, as well as for their economic value and for the cockerels' time-keeping. It is said that every night the hens, when they argue among themselves before settling down, are plotting to leave Ireland and fly back to Norway, but in the end they decide to postpone the trip for another day! In Co. Limerick elaborate three-tier wooden hen-coops are sometimes seen in the kitchen, and in Co. Down I have found the sitting

[1] J. Binns, *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland* (1857), 1, 112.
[2] Ibid., 186.
[3] T. A. Finlay, 'The Economics of Carna', in *The New Ireland Review* (April, 1898).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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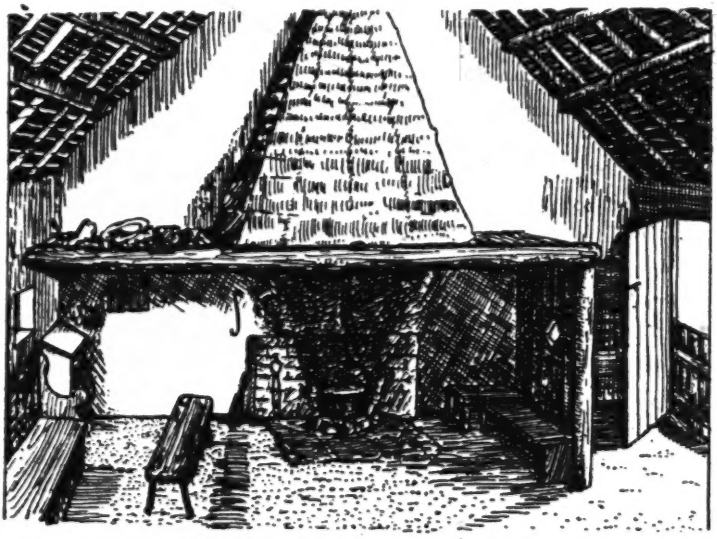
be placed against the gable or, in the central chimney house, 354
against a partition-wall, and one cannot doubt that the general adoption of chimney flues has been the deciding factor. This innovation, slowly adopted from about the sixteenth century onwards, gave rise in time to many regional styles of chimney breast in brick and stone. I suspect that the wattled smoke canopy (Fig. 18) was the native response to the novelty of chimney flues, but I cannot find that it was adopted outside the areas of strong English influence. The substitution of peat for



[352]

FIG. 18. Hearth with jamb-wall and wattled smoke-canopy, Co. Armagh. Meal-bin and settle-bed on left.

wood seems to have made little difference to the architecture of the hearth. When coal came to be burnt, however, the fire had to be lifted off the floor, or the hearth fire given a stronger draught by installing a built-in 'fan bellows' which forced air through a tube into the floor of the fire.

The wattled smoke canopy or brace (? breast) is still fairly 354
common in houses with central chimney and fireside partitions, 342
mainly in the south and east. The front of the canopy rests on a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

strong horizontal beam, the brace-tree, which may extend right across the kitchen from wall to wall, four or five feet out from the fire and five or six feet from the ground. Or one end of the beam may rest on a supporting jamb set under one corner of the canopy. In that case—and invariably where the front door is adjacent—there may be a draught screen of wood mud or stone —the jamb-wall—built out from the fireside and terminating in the jamb, so as to partition off the fireside. This curtain-wall is pierced by a small window known as the entry or spy-hole, through which an approaching visitor can be spied from the fireside through the open door (Fig. 18). I have seen a few jamb-wall houses of this type in Co. Armagh where the brace-tree nevertheless continued to the side-wall, so that the visitor had to stoop under it on entering the house. If a door is swung on the jamb-post a small hall or internal porch is readily provided. This is characteristic of developed houses of traditional style in the Lagan Valley near Belfast, and a further refinement is to hang a mirror over the jamb-window, a looking glass replacing the plain glass of the peep hole and reflecting changing fashions. The jamb-wall, called also in Ulster the hollan-wall, is well-known under that name in the south of Scotland and the north of England and may thence have reached eastern Ireland in plantation times. In Cumberland it was termed the sconce and in Lancashire the speer, which was the name of the screen which crossed the end of the halls in the Oxford colleges. James Walton tells me that in north Yorkshire the jamb post, called the witch post, is occasionally found to be covered with designs intended to protect the hearth from evil spirits. Sprigs of rowan are tied to its top for the same purpose. The partitioned hearth is characteristic of eastern and southern Ireland: it extends into the Central Lowlands but it is almost entirely lacking in the west and in the north-western province of the outshot-house to be described below. Dr. Desmond McCourt tells me that he knows of two or three hybrids—having both the outshot and the partitioned hearth—in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains, where two cultural provinces meet.

The smoke canopy varies in shape and method of construction from one region to another. The commonest type is made of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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laths and wattles (willow, hazel or briar), plastered with a 354
mixture of clay and cowdung or ashes and coated with limewash. 342
In parts of the south hay or straw ropes soaked in mud (putogs) were used, twisted between a frame of horizontal rungs and plastered over with mud or limewash. In Co. Armagh one [237]
occasionally sees a heron's wing hung on the brace: it is used for dusting the hearth. The jamb-walls—and internal walls in general—were traditionally constructed of wattle and daub, or of mud or wood. The wattle and daub construction is undoubtedly an old technique which, in the days of plentiful timber, was much more generally used in house-building. Internal partitions carried up to the roof, however, probably followed the adoption of the chimney flue, and if so this innovation must be reckoned as a contribution to privacy as well as to comfort. We note in passing that wattlework found its last traditional 342
use in house construction in the wicker doors of the west, and in the windbreaks of the north, bundles of hazel or birch branches (wassocks) set up on the windward side of the door. The stone-built external porch must be regarded as a relatively novel addition to the traditional house style.

Wooden or stone seats are often built in near the hearth, 352
and the wall behind the fire, protected by a flagstone or a built-up hob, usually has a keeping hole on each side of the fire (Fig. 19). Known as boles in Antrim and coves in Cavan, these may be elaborated in Achill Island, for example, into two- or three-tier wall-dressers whose ancestry lies in the stone house tradition of the mountain country. There is an old belief that the left-hand keeping hole belongs to the woman and the right-hand one to the man of the house. Here you may see in safe keeping, on one side the woman's knitting, on the other the man's clay pipe. Stone dressers were a characteristic feature of [171]
the huts at Skara Brae,[1] where also Professor Childe found evidence that the women occupied the left side of the fire and the men the right. In the Hebridean black-houses the left-hand side of the fire was the woman's quarter.[2] Similarly in the old turf houses of the Highlands, 'the women were invariably ranged around the central fire on one side, the men on the

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 15.
[2] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 52.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354
shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373] were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse-collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made [492] partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342
is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the 353
chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231] to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513] the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352
the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Antrim

PLATE 6

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412

1. Shearing oats with the toothed sickle, Co. Antrim.

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412

2. Thrashing oats with flails, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 97]

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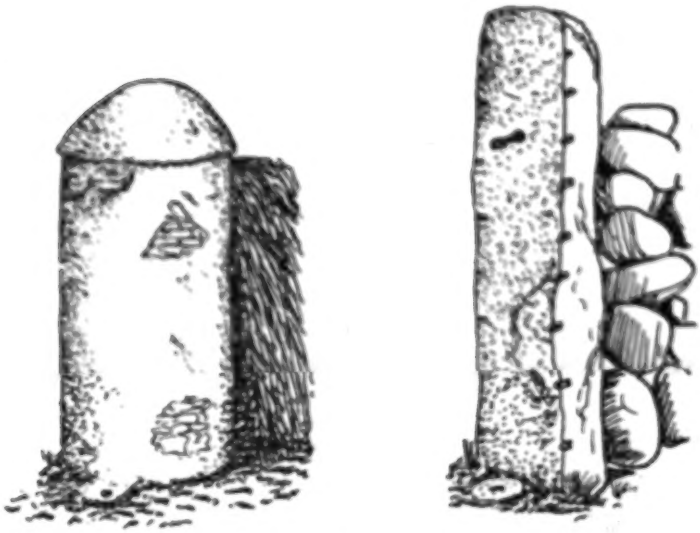

FIG. 33. Gateposts, Co. Down. *Left:* built-up pier with stone hinge and spud-stone. *Right:* granite slab with iron hinge and spud-stone.

[342] The shortage of suitable timber also led to the disappearance of the native wattled house and of the introduced timber-framed house, and the fact that such houses were more combustible (and that wooden gates, as one observer remarked, would have been stolen for firewood) was of less importance. The prototype of the stone piers of the farmyard may perhaps be seen in the great entrance pillars of the fortified 'bawns' erected by the seventeenth-century planters. Yet the style is quaintly archaic, and they have often been compared to miniature round towers. Very stout examples do indeed resemble the stone beehive 'clochauns' which we describe later, except that they are solid. In their construction the method of marking out the circumference and maintaining a vertical line by means of a string attached to a central post which is later removed is primitive enough. Moreover the method of hanging the gate is archaic. It is the harr-hanging which is found also in Scotland, the Lake District, Cornwall and Brittany and has survived in these stony

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 8

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1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

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493
417

2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[Facing p. 113]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

are repaired and re-roofed with sods, and turf fires lit inside 343
are kept smouldering with wet sods until the spring, when the 387
huts are half-full of ashes and the soot-laden roof-sods are ready to collapse. The roof is then broken up and the soot and ashes spread on the ridges as potato manure (Fig. 39).

Although I know of no parallel in other parts of Ireland it 342
seems likely that the custom of removing the roof-covering of the winter-house was once fairly general, at any rate in houses of the old Achill type, which in many details closely resembled the Hebridean black-house. I should be inclined to correlate the custom with the roped style of thatching, which betrays little of the care of other styles and in the old form where the ropes were weighted by hanging stones had a distinctly ephemeral appearance. Where sods were used for walls as well as roofs the whole house would have become a convenient source of fertilizers for the infield. This may be the explanation of the remark made by Dr. Madden that in the south of Ireland 'cottar houses of dirt, sticks and straw were generally removed once a year'.[1] There are indications met with in excavations of houses in Dark Age raths that reconstructions were more frequent than would be justified by ordinary wear and tear. In Sutherland, down to the early nineteenth century, sod-houses were abandoned periodically and pulled down to be utilized as manure, a new hut being erected near by. In this instance the cause was said to be that the accumulation of filth had rendered the place uninhabitable,[2] but this underestimates the tolerance of the Gael. The soot-houses, at any rate, seem to perpetuate old custom, and one thinks back to the earliest days of agriculture when crops were sown in the highly productive soils of newly burnt woodland. Faith in the use of fire persisted longer than the woods. Burning the land, we shall see in Chapter XI, was a very general practice down to the famine years when rough pasture was being reclaimed for potato-growing.

We come now to a group of stone structures built to serve as 343
kilns for drying or burning. The drying-kilns were principally 251
needed for drying corn before it was ground, though flax-drying kilns were also required in the days when the fibre was extracted

[1]Dr. Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions* (1738).
[2]Quoted in F. T. Smith, *The Land of Britain*, Part 3, Sutherland.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLATE 12

501

1. Curraghs, the Aran Islands.

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2. Dragging home the hay in the west of Ireland.

[Facing p. 161]

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[231]
[492]

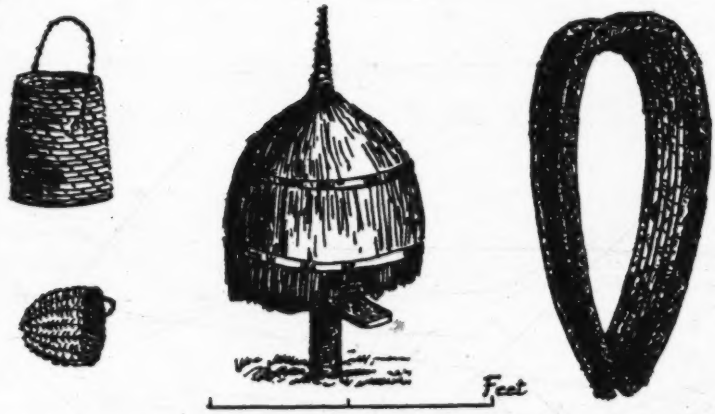

FIG. 69. Coiled food-basket, Aran Islands; calf muzzle, Co. Clare; beehive and horse-collar, Co. Antrim; all of straw except the calf muzzle.

some large rectangular examples seem to be made of built-up plait as described below. The distribution of coiled basketry in western Europe suggests that it is an extension northwards from south European and African regions where it is a richly developed art. A straw underthatch from Co. Down—the only one of its kind I have seen in the north—was made in a simple weaving technique, using straw ropes. But the commonest method of making mats was by what I have called built-up plaiting; beginning with a straw rope twisted on itself, wisps of straw are inserted in every third twist and their ends worked into plait in combination with the combined ends of the previous wisp. Fresh handfuls of straw are regularly inserted into the plaits. They are given different names in various parts of the country; for example, tates in Antrim, kets in Down, and gleogs in Meath.

Such mats can be made of any desired size, and in the past they served many purposes, as hangings to mark off bedrooms or bed alcoves, as linings for the wattled doors of houses, and as mattresses. Their long-continued use with wattled doors on houses of mud or stone carries the suggestion that wattled houses of the better class may once have been lined with straw mats serving as draught screens and taking the place of the

[342]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

hanging skins, carpets or tapestries of other cultures. Today the most familiar use of the plaited mats is as creel mats on the backs of asses (Fig. 56). When creels are dispensed with and the load is placed directly on the ass a simple 'sugan' is sometimes made—a ring of straw some fifteen inches in diameter bound with a fine straw rope. This is a variant of the head-wreath once widely worn in western Europe as a carrying pad. Straw collars—made entirely of straw and not merely straw-stuffed—have so recently gone out of use that I have seen several decayed specimens on hill farms in the north, and the art of making them is not forgotten. In their construction several oval rings of three-strand straw plait are stitched together (Fig. 69). Unlike the ordinary Irish horse collar, they are, of course, not made to open; they were carefully shaped to hold flattish wooden hames.

Many varieties of baskets of straw rushes and other pliant materials which were once made in the homes are now known only by name: for example, the puckan of built-up plaiting which held seed potatoes in Co. Down, or, hung in the stable, served as a nest for pigeons. They had short lives, and few specimens have survived, so that we shall never know the full range of such domestic skills. On the other hand fancy basket work, using both whole and split fine sally rods, has probably long been a specialized craft, and has clung to certain districts such as the shores of Lough Neagh and the Suir Valley. As in these areas so all around the coasts of the island it is a craft which accompanies fishing skills. The long-line fishermen of the sea coasts have traditionally made their own line and fish baskets, but it is only inland communities such as those mentioned who have become commercial basket-makers, possibly because their fishing was more seasonal than that of the sea folk. Their products are now mainly baskets for carrying potatoes or turf (Fig. 71). In a special class are the large creels and carrying baskets made of hazel or black sally which were generally employed for farm transport before wheeled carts were adopted. In many districts these were made by itinerant creel-makers who were held in very low esteem, next above the hackler and the tinker. The method of construction, in which the standard rods are stuck upright in the ground, stamps the craft as being of

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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773 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she
776 wailed :—

> "As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> "As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer.
[823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of
● [342] long, low, cross vaults. In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their
[103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[8] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

[8] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soal Cages").

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [667] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent 434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts 437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of
343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of
621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

592 162

Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [65] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. 342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [998] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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354 fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 593 a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178 from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342 • placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353 serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788] two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574] floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571 kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602 tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609 strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572] parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835 most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602 genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582 forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602 collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609 are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428 is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611 --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113] in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The [601] Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated 231
are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops 241
for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and 311
rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use.

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are 231
the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various 343
sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the 351
house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later.

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called 231
"all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view 241
is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken 311
from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area.

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard 342
also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of 343
the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is carefully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general 351
plan for all such houses of small farmers.

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work 512
which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various

[text continues on p. 35]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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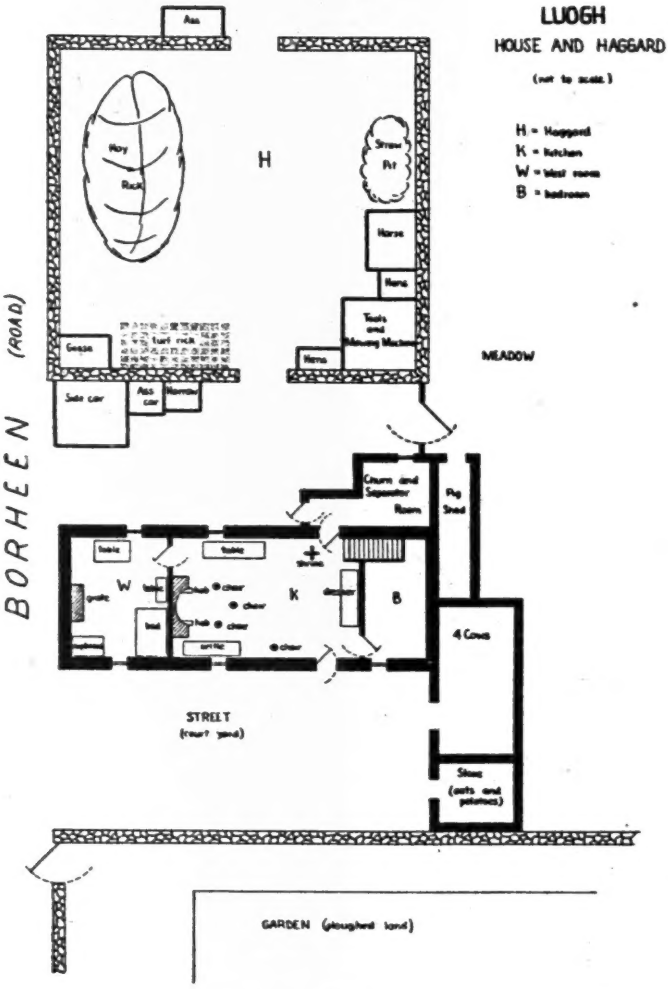
FIGURE 9



Schematic plan of a typical small farmer's house and farmyard, illustrating his familist economy and functional division of his household.

[p.34]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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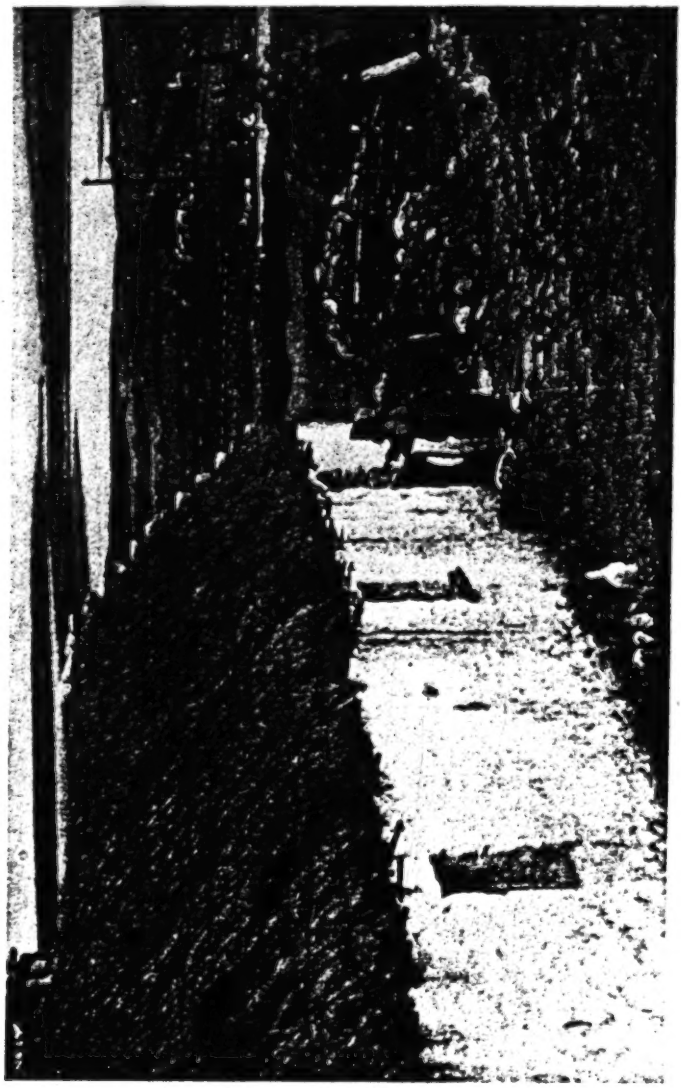

THE WOMAN OF THE HOUSE DRIVES HOME A COW

[facing p.36]

592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is
512 of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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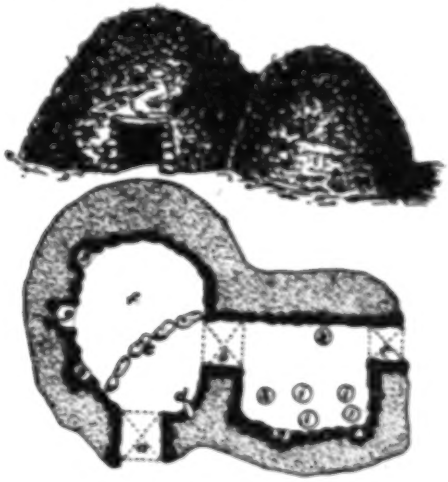

Fig. 2. A double both, the garry or summer pasturage of the tenants of Carloin. Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, b, c, doorways; d, fire-place; e, row of stones in front of the bed-place; f, the bed; g, g, niches; h, cream tub; i, i, i, three milk or cheese tubs, covered by slaty stones; j, a churn; k, a stoup for carrying water.

rious circumstances, that this *bo'h* was made about ninety years ago (from 1867).

With regard to Thomas's own comparisons, I will only add here that he has made a rather daring comparison between the *both* of Lewis and the Eskimo domed-shaped hut of Greenland. But perhaps a comparison of the grouping of the houses would be more effective than a comparison of the house construction of each type.[14] The Greenland hypothesis, however, seems to me to be worth studying. But at the same time we must not lose sight of stone-built huts and huts of straw, sods, mud and wickerwork, round or oval in form, used especially by cattle-breeding peoples in the Iberian Peninsula (*e. g.* in Estremadura, Andalusia, Granada), Italy and elsewhere.

Bee-hive houses of the *clochán* type in Ireland of today are to be found in some parts of the Gaeltacht (the Gaelic-speaking districts of Ireland), as on the coast and islands from Kerry to Mayo. There the stone-built bee-hive houses are used — not as dwellings, so far as I know — but as milk-houses or for storing turf etc. In the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, bee-hive houses are still being built as outhouses. There are also modernised clochán with wooden doors — they can even have a glass ball to decorate the top.

343

The only stone-built and stone-roofed houses equipped with a fireplace and

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 a smokehole which I have found, was an ancient sweating bath, *teach allais*, in Co. Mayo. This building is square in form.

171 Thomas's material is however interesting from a certain point of view. From prehistoric times are found agglomerations of round, oblong and square houses in Ireland (*e. g.* Skellig-Michael), in Wales[9] and in other parts of the 341 British Isles. The same mixture of round and square or oblong buildings can be observed in Portugal,[10] Spain and elsewhere in Western and Southern Europe.

From Thomas's material we now learn what an *inhabited* settlement of this kind looks like. In Lewis, for example, the stone-roofed circular houses, *bothan*, have been erected in the same *gearradhean*, *i. e.* place for booleying, as the timber-roofed huts, *aridhean*.[11] We are forced to infer that round, oval, oblong, square buildings must be studied with regard to each other and with regard to different constructions in timber, branches, sods, stone etc.

The *oblong form* of building can obviously have developed or been invented in a number of ways, as there are varying antecedent conditions in different cases.[12] There is however *one* oval or oblong form of building which may have its origin in the stone-built domed-roofed bee-hive house.

The construction with a domed roof does not permit of much widening of the space between the walls. Even if very long and suitable flag-stones are at hand, the limits for the cyclopean arch will make it impossible for the primitive builder to enlarge the circumference of his house to any great degree. To get more room he must put two or more circular bee-hive buildings together, or he must go over to the oval or oblong form. Thomas himself touches upon the problem in these words: "It is evident that in this style of architecture (domed roofed buildings) the size of the rooms is limited by the nature of the stone; and although a tolerably safe roof may be made in this manner with rough moor-stones to cover an area of six feet it would have a most uncomfortable and suspicious appearance if extended over twice those dimensions (six or seven feet in diameter). Even in the Orkneys where is abundance of flag stone, although there are chambers there forty-five feet long the breadth was only five feet."

342 To elucidate this important problem the Irish oval *clochán* offers us the most valuable material. I refer to the series of photographs, kindly placed at my disposal by the distinguished author of The Islands of Ireland, Thomas Mason.[13] This *clochán* (Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore Island, Aran, Co. Galway, pl. 30 a, 31, and 32) is of oval shape, the entrance door being at the long sidewall. The roof is made of overlapping stones, one row of large slabs covering the space between the two long sides of the roof, which are

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Mayo

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[Captions on p. 186]

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 171 These are formed of wooden posts, interlaced with branches of trees, like wicker-work, and covered on the outside with turf."

Robertson" describes a type of tenant's house, the construction of which must be like the wicker-work houses above-mentioned. "When such a house is to be built, the first thing done is to construct a coarse frame of wood, corresponding to the dimensions of the house, in length and breadth; then upon this frame to fix standards inclining inward, at proper distances, which rise to the height of the intended wall, and are kept in a firm position by being morticed in a tree above of the same dimensions with the tree below. These standards are closely woven with wicker work, to keep the sods from falling in; which, being built on the outside, finish the side walls of a creel-house."

342 221 As the Irish booleying custom, *buaile*, doubtless preserved many primitive and archaic building traditions, it should form an important subject of study also with regard to wicker-work huts. However, the summer huts which are mentioned in the Welsh laws are not referred to in the Irish lawtracts. Professor Mac Néill has kindly informed me that this does not mean that the *buaile* custom did not exist in ancient Ireland. "It was probably practised by the less opulent class who had a limited supply of pasture land. The laws have little to say about these, as in general they were under the jurisdiction of a noble."

342 343 The huts erected in later times of sods or turf and used as shelters for donkeys, pigs, etc., which can be met with in various parts of Ireland, would also well repay study. In the literature of the 19th and the early 20th centuries can be found travellers' accounts of such houses, although they seldom go into details about the construction. I refer, *e. g.*, to a description of Caesar Otway's from his "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly", an account of his travels in Northwestern Ireland in 1840:

"The dwellers here were bog troglodytes — the foundations of their dwellings are sunk eight feet or more below the surface of the surrounding black bog, the walls are constructed of wet sods, cut off from the surface of that bog; there is no door or door-case, no chimney; the orifices by which the people enter, and through which the smoke *should* issue, are filled up as suits the wind, with bundles of heath or turf-kreels, filled with potato-stalks; a drain comes out from under the floor of the dwelling, from which the superabundant moisture escapes, or else it would be a common boghole: but, by its means, the water that springs abundantly from the sides and bottom, flows away, and the people sitting or standing within, are free from actual overflow."

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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a. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

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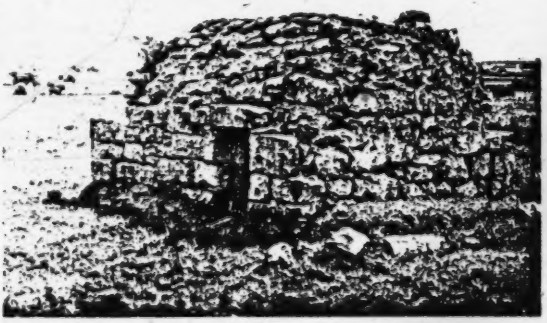

c. Sweating bath. Tuan, Co. Galway.

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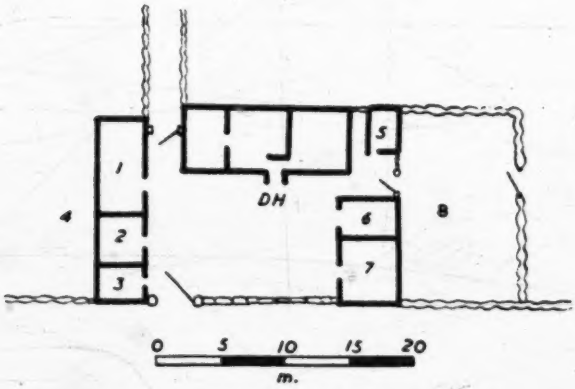

Fig. 1. Farmyard at Duncormick, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, calf house; 3, store; 4, manure heap; 5, pigsty; 6, cart house; 7, stable; 8, haggard.

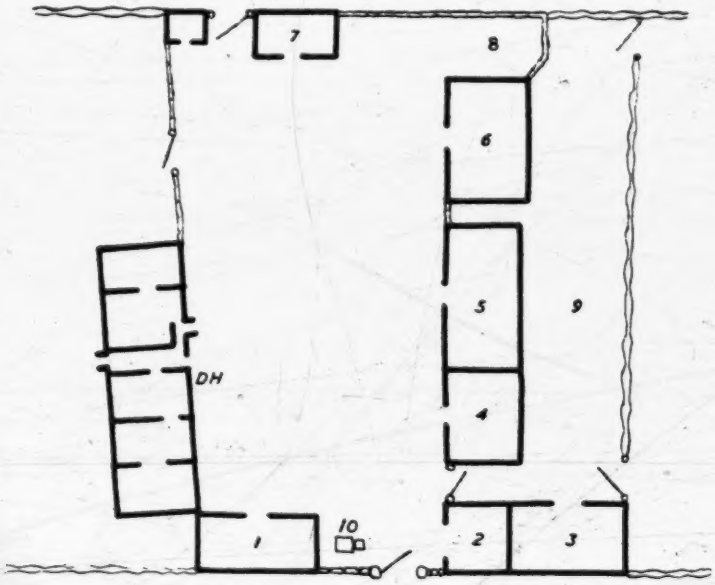

Fig. 2. Farmyard at Kilmore, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, cart house; 3, corn barn; 4, stable; 5, byre; 6, store; 7, pigsty; 8, manure heap; 9, haggard; 10, pump.

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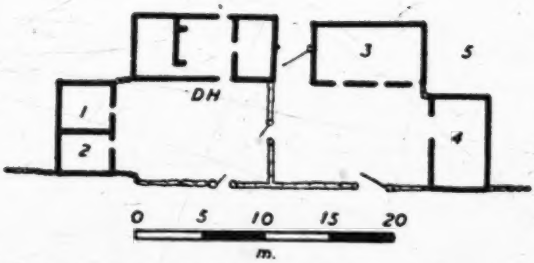

Fig. 3. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, store; 3, byre, 4, stable and carts; 5, manure heap.

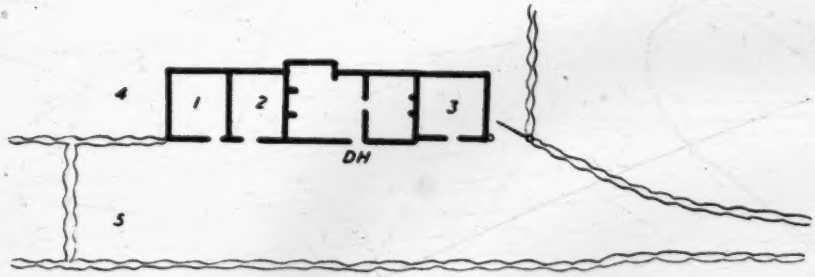

Fig. 4. Farmyard at Glenhull, Co. Tyrone. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, stable; 3, store; 4, haggard; 5, manure heap.

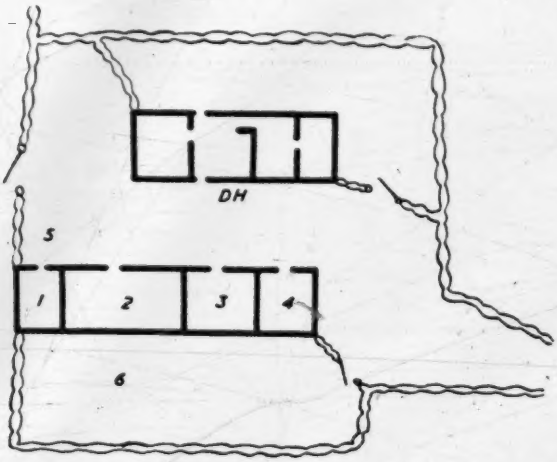

Fig. 5. Farmyard, Athea, Co. Limerick. DH, dwelling house; 1, pigs; 2, byre; 3, stable; 4, store; 5, manure heap; 6, haggard.

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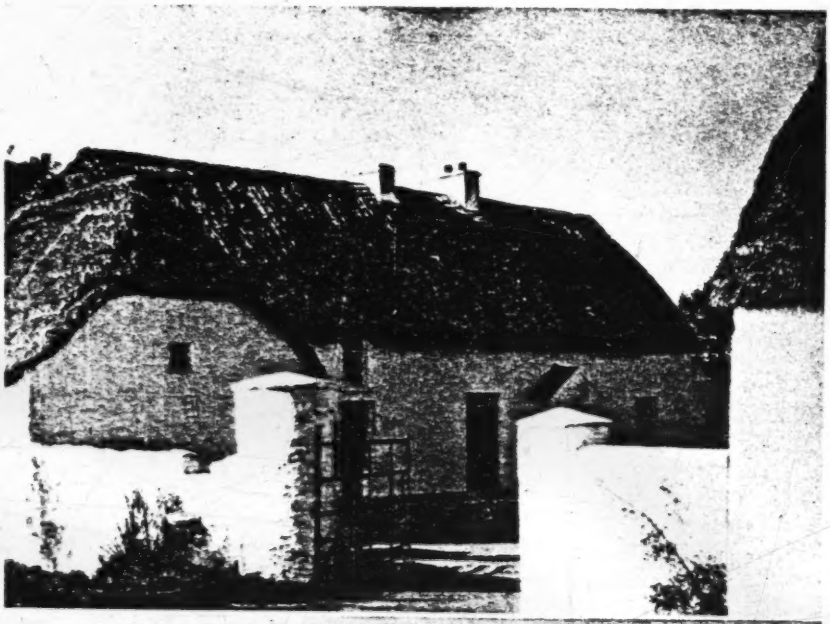

Fig. 6. Farmhouse and yard, Kilmore, Co. Wexford (fig. 2).

Fig. 7. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway (fig. 3).

[p.10]

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Fig. 8. Farm buildings, Glenhull, Co. Tyrone (fig. 4).
Fig. 9. Farm buildings, parallel lay-out, Lohar, Co. Kerry.

[p. 11]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the 174
cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of 621
the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, 221
together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the 231
hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, "the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in "booley" or "boley" 221
assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the 342
actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were 343
generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had 221
two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed 234
in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular "town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of "whitemeats" that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter [251]
appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This "bog-butter" frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations: it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the 17th century, the natives withdrew themselves to the 221
mountains, where they lived a life that some historians have mistaken for aboriginal nomadism.

The booleying tradition, finally, throws light on 221 231
many of the customs connected with cattle and sheep, and helps to explain the absence of the dairy in permanent dwellings which formerly had to serve as winter houses only, most of the dairy work being done in summer. It also helps us to attribute to custom rather than solely to laziness and neglect the Irish farmer's traditional indifference to the fate of his crops during the summer months. "Spring and harvest time," we quote a typical 19th century observer, "are the only periods at which the peasants exert themselves, and then they work very hard; for the rest of the year they are idle."

Fig. 18. Co. Antrim.

The old customs of tending ("herding") the cattle and tethering or spancelling them also derive from the rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. "Cattle, sheep, pigs and goats," wrote Arthur Young, "are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw . . . . cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom." Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used: even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. Where animals still run in common under the system of "sums" it is necessary to give them distinguishing marks. Apart from the well-known methods of branding or colouring [422]
the sheep's wool it is the custom in parts of Ireland, as in Wales, to ear-mark sheep by cutting or notching the ear with proprietary shapes. In Clare Island the geese are "tokened" by having holes punched in their webbed feet. Incidentally [413]
it is worth noticing that, so far as I am aware, the iron-tipped shepherd's crook is unknown in Ireland, a bent ash stick taking its place. "Gatherings" and co-operation are of course a feature of sheep-shearing and dipping. Sheep-pens of dry stone construction are often associated with ancient [343] settlements among the hills: they are of various shapes and would repay study.

[p. 56 is blank]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER IX.

FARM BUILDINGS.

First in importance in this pastoral country comes the cow byre, which is often an old dwelling house converted or an extension built on to the end of the kitchen. We have seen that in the west it is not long since the cows were housed in the bottom end of the kitchen, and even now one gets the impression from the proximity of the byre and its smells that there is a reluctance to be separated by any distance from the beasts which play such a large part in the life and traditions of the countryside. Along one side of the byre, above the feeding place, runs the rannel- or revel-tree to which the vertical cow-stakes are secured at intervals: "thin as a ravel-tree" is an expression sometimes heard. Alternatively, in the west, the stakes are held in place by iron staples or perforated stone slabs let into the wall. Iron chains have almost entirely replaced the rush "binnen ropes" (Chapter 14) which were fastened to a plaited ring of sally, hazel or rowan—called a "woody"—sliding up and down the stake. In Co. Clare the animals were secured by a straw rope tied round the horns, and no doubt different methods could be described from various districts. Milking times also vary from place to place, and there is no topic about which so much lore might be collected as about cows and their products. It is commonly said that there is a right and a wrong side on which to milk a cow. In Ireland, so far as my observation goes, it is the right-hand side.

343 234 [184]

[p. 79]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 234 Behind the cows there runs a slab-lined drain or groop, which carries the refuse through the "groop hole" in the wall to the midden. Hanging from the rannel-tree you may perchance see a charm in the shape of a perforated flint [176] pebble, while over the door, decaying Brigid's Crosses dating [751] back for several successive years show that the cattle are under the special protection of the Irish saint. In the byre gable it is not uncommon to see a dove-cote, at any rate along [235] the east coast where English influence has been strong since Norman times. Pigeons are fond of heat and thrive near farm animals. In Lecale, Co. Down, I have seen nests made of straw rope hung above the horses in the stable.

343 251 The barn is not infrequently built above the byre. When the dwelling house alongside remains, in the Irish tradition, single-storied, the effect of the towering barn is rather incongruous. This arrangement makes it simple to feed the animals, provides a springy wooden floor for thrashing, and also gives a better draught for the purpose. Moreover, the raised position helps to make the corn secure from damp and rats. The barn has opposite doors and half doors to regulate the through draught and to keep out stray animals while work goes on inside. Access to the barn is obtained by external stone steps or a sloping ramp, under which the stone dog kennel is often built in. Some of the activities and appurtenances of the barn are described in Chapter 14.

343 Little need be said about the stable, since small farms have as a rule only one mare. In the old-time single-roomed kitchen-byres, the mare had her stall alongside the cows, and you will sometimes see the keeping-hole above the back door where the brush and curry comb were stored. The stable, like the byre, may be attached to the house or may be separate, but for convenience and economy it tends to be built as part of a range of buildings. In decayed rundale clusters now occupied by only one or two holders there were, ready to hand, many old dwelling houses which could be put to different uses as "offices."

Before we turn to the housing of other livestock, mention should be made of the turf-house, for which many different

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

kinds of construction are employed. Some districts use strong 343
stone buildings—for example of the bee-hive style to be described below—others roofless rectangles of stone with one end open, and others again timber-posted structures with roofs and walls of many different materials. These supplies are generally supplemented by well-built turf-stacks, and it used to be the custom to build a great stack against the gable of the house, both for shelter and to keep the house warm. Turf-stacks were occasionally built hollow to serve as a pigsty. [23]
In the north of Ireland the pig is by no means universally kept, though most old homesteads have a building which once did duty as a sty, and in some parts of the country these are of bee-hive construction, so strongly built that they have defied the ravages of time.

Just as old practices live on as children's games, so certain ancient types of buildings have descended in the social scale in the course of history. The bee-hive corbelled huts and the corn-drying kilns are examples. Both are circular in plan and built of dry stones or stones and mud. In the Gaeltacht the bee-hive houses are used, from Mayo to Kerry, for storing milk or turf. They are made by overlapping the flat slabs of the walls until they meet at the top in a false dome—a style of building which, in its origin, long precedes the arch and is seen at its best in some of the oldest monuments of human industry in Ireland, the prehistoric chambered tombs of the Boyne [172]
valley. Not far from this metropolis of ancient culture, in the Carlingford Hills of north Louth, Mr. H. G. Tempest has shown me several corbelled huts, some of which are still used as pigsties, while in Lecale in Down there are many examples, both circular and square in plan, which have been used as pigsties and hen houses (Figs. 38 & 39). These are generally grouted on top and whitewashed, but those of Louth and the west may have a covering of earth which, growing a crop of grass and weeds, gives the little houses the appearance of natural hillocks. Similar pigsties are known in south-eastern Wales, and have been described by Dr. I. C. Peate in his book *The Welsh House*. Corbelled huts are also used as pigsties and poultry houses in Caithness and the Orkneys.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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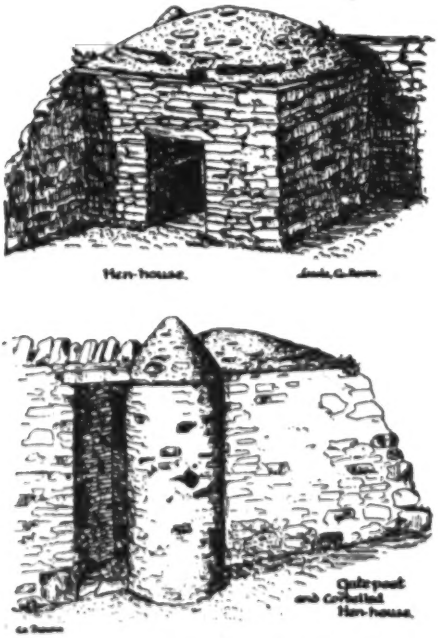

Fig. 38. Two views of hen-house.

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343 Some of the holy wells visited throughout Ireland for their reputed curative powers are protected by corbelled coverings of some antiquity: one may cite the wells at Struell near Downpatrick and Ronogue's Well near Cork. Domestic wells also frequently show some degree of corbelling, but free standing well-covers like that shown in Fig. 41 are rare. To the same class of construction belong most of the surviving [757] sweat-houses which were resorted to by rheumatic cases, profuse sweating being induced by heating the interior with turf fires beforehand. In certain counties, for example Cavan, these structures are quite common and were used into living memory. In Rathlin Island I was told that girls would go to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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Corbelled Pig sty

Fig. 39.

the sweathouses in order to improve their complexions before paying a visit to the Lammas fair at Ballycastle. It should be added that the treatment is said to have included a final plunge into cold water: running water is generally found alongside the sweat-houses (Fig. 40).

Such buildings are, from the simplicity of their construction, undateable: there is nothing to show, in many cases, whether they were erected a hundred, a thousand or even four thousand years ago, and though one suspects that many examples are no more than a century or two old—indeed the Gaeltacht turf-houses are still being built—they are in truth ageless. But the functions of the stone-roofed houses have changed. Once tombs of the dead and homes of the

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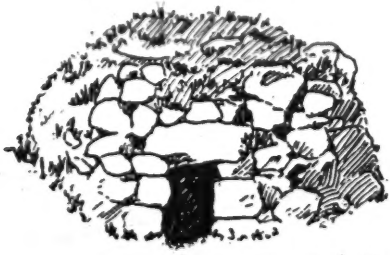

Sweathouse.

Fig. 40.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 living, they have been relegated to lesser positions in the economy of peasant life. Apart from the well-known monastic cells of Skellig Michael and other early Christian sites, there is good evidence that oval "clocháns," as they are termed, were built as peasant houses in stoney districts such as the Aran Islands. They have been described as having two opposite doors and measuring as much as 21 ft. by 12 ft., with the walls three feet thick. Dr. Campbell has suggested that the sloping hipped roofs of thatched houses derive from the corbelled ends of such oval clocháns, and has pointed out that

Fig. 41.

some of the oldest surviving thatched cabins of the west are somewhat oval in plan.

While a full discussion of this interesting thesis would be out of place here, there are other possibilities in the shape of surviving structures. I have in mind the simple device known as the "flat roof," which is of widespread occurrence in Ireland, and which, from the ease of its construction, was probably common in very early times. It is employed on cart-houses and other outbuildings where the width is not too great to bear the weight of the solid roof. Horizontal beams and branches span the breadth from wall to wall and carry a superstructure of potato haulms, whins, old straw or turf and

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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similar farm rubbish, which is roughly thatched with rushes. In building up loose material of this kind, as in making a turf-stack or a potato clamp, the hipped form is naturally adopted (Fig. 42) and *cf.* the turf stack or rick (Fig. 93). I have often seen old houses or outbuildings with upright gables the triangular tops of which, above the level of the eaves, are built of sods or turf. While other explanations may be offered, it seems to me that this carries on the tradition of the "flat" roof and hints that it was more generally found in former times.

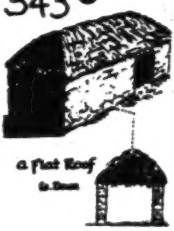

Fig. 42.

Corn-drying kilns were mentioned above as an example of structures which have descended in the social scale. It seems likely that constructionally they are miniature replicas of circular houses, and it is certainly true that they are now put to uses which cannot be called legitimate. They are used surreptitiously in preparing grain for making poteen, and I have seen examples built not long ago for drying a cargo of corn recovered from a wreck. A few generations ago every little village had its corn kiln, but the large kilns attached to corn mills have done away with them. So far as I have been able to find out the Irish kilns were all circular or semicircular and they were often built into a sloping hill. Some were open on top like a lime-kiln but others had a conical thatch. Again, one variety had the fire underneath while in another the heat was drawn along a flue from a fireplace some distance away. The corn was laid on a linen sheet resting on a carefully prepared bed of straw; hence the phrase "soft as kiln bedding." The dried corn was ground forthwith in a hand quern.

343
251

Although underground refuges or "souterrains"—called "caves" by country folk—come into the category of ancient monuments they deserve mention here for two reasons. The first is because they often show in their roofs the technique of corbelling described above. The second fact which gives them interest is that, though some are known to have been built in the Bronze Age, they have been used as hiding places at many periods. I have found in them "ammunition" of 1,000 years ago side by side with explosives dating from the

343

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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343 "troubles" of 25 years ago. Moreover underground "hides" have been constructed in recent times by poteen-makers. A description of a Donegal example said to have been made about 150 years ago will be found in *Antiquity*, June, 1939, p. 220.

351 361 Finally, something should be said about the disposition of the farm buildings, but this is a subject which calls for research. Broadly speaking the arrangement native to the country is some kind of long house, with the offices under the same roof as the kitchen and room. I use the word "native" because in areas of strong English influence such as Wexford what seems to be an introduced type of lay-out is the courtyard style where the buildings are grouped round the sides of a square. There are many approximations to this arrangement in various parts of the east and south of Ireland, and I do not think, as my friend Colonel R. G. Berry has suggested, that the type is native. Where the Old Irish homestead has a number of outbuildings these tend to be placed in front of and parallel to the dwelling house. Efforts to persuade the peasant to put his manure heap and his animals behind the house have, until recently, failed, for he likes to keep an eye on his wealth!

342 been built for almost the entire population. In 1893 it was said that there
511 were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds,
[657] so that peat was stacked in a corner of the cottage with the fowls roosting on it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace, the cattle in a pen at the other end of the room, and the farm implements and fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] Now the
[343] old houses are the outbuildings, still thatched, with oat straw (not rye as formerly) laid on sods and tied down with home-made straw ropes weighted with large stones. Only five thatched houses were still inhabited in 1954. Some of the thatch has sprouting oats and some of it is rotten, but, when a roof is beyond further repair, it is all stripped off and the sodding and thatching begins again. Happily, corrugated iron is not used as it cannot stand the weather.

Farming

241 Agricultural practice is almost uniform: an acre or so is divided between oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—barley, and there is generally a small patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions, carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen. The ground used for crops is called the "garden," and its fertility is maintained by using animal manure and seaweed, and also by rotating the crops. Strange (or "foreign") seed is favored, and
[657] bought at a cheap rate under a government scheme. The remainder of the farmstead consists of a varying amount of meadow, generally 1–3 acres, and some pasture. The precious crops are
[231] carefully walled, but some of the farmers open their fields to the cattle and sheep after the harvest, partly as a means of natural fertilizing.

231 Each farmer has one or two cows and
439

[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[p. 206(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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361 narrow strip between the boundary and the wall. 'Fights, tres-
578 passes, confusion, disputes and assaults, were the natural and
311 unavoidable consequences of the rundale system.'[1] On the other
423 hand we must recall the extreme reluctance with which the system was at last abandoned, the social benefits it conferred on members of the kin. The reforming landlord, Lord George Hill, comments that 'the pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together, made them consider the removal of the houses, from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built to the separate farms, a great grievance.'[2] Another writer gives as the basis of the tenants' grievance, 'the recollection of nights of social concourse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of
[517] defence against bailiff or gauger'.[3] There were ceilidhes and spinning parties, and many a clachan had its shanachie (story-teller) and its fiddler or piper—usually a maimed or simple person—who accompanied with folk-tunes. Folk-songs, occupational airs and legendary tales were kept alive in this way. Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there
[252] would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some
● [343] districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains.

The openfield which lay around the cluster, normally on the
311 down-hill side so that the vital manure could be 'sliped' down-
423 slope (see Chapter XIII), seems to have been kept in cultivation in some areas at least year after year. This was the infield, in contrast to the outfield, the outlying rough pasture bits of which were temporarily reclaimed and then left to rest for long periods. We shall return to the plough and spade and methods of cultivation in another place but may refer here to the allotment of the holdings in the common fields. Although in many parts of the country the holdings, by the end of the eighteenth century, had become fixed in their scattered parcels on the several qualities of land in the openfield, there is abundant

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.
[2]Ibid., 42.
[3]W. R. Wilde, *Dublin University Magazine*, 41 (1853), 20.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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IX

KILNS AND CLOCHAUNS

343 WHILE the timber building has almost entirely disappeared from the Irish scene, there survives an archaic
333 tradition of building in dry stone which is best illustrated in the humble structures erected for special purposes in or adjacent to the farmyard. Since stonework has a much better chance of survival than timber it is possible, even without excavation, to trace the descent of some of these small buildings through the ages. They include corbelled animal houses (clochauns), corn-drying kilns, sweat-houses and turf-shelters. We shall consider also small outhouses of sods or wattles, including soot-houses and animal shelters. Some of these, reduced in scale and status, are the successors of buildings once erected for higher purposes.

The clochauns of south-western Ireland, corbelled stone struc-
172 tures, nowadays used mainly for keeping pigs or poultry, are indis-
343 tinguishable from the monastic huts such as are found on the precipitous island of Skellig Michael off the coast of Co. Kerry. Similar stone huts accompany monastic settlements in other parts of Ireland—and also in the Hebrides and in islands off the coast of Brittany—and they have been preserved, thanks to their sanctity or their isolation, as examples of a mode of building which was common when Christianity reached the west. Some clochauns in the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, have been erected within living memory, but we also know that this type of construction is far older than Christianity in Ireland, that it was already two millennia old when Christian converts adopted it for their dwellings and their oratories. It is probable that some of the megalith-builders lived in clochauns and that their magnificent corbelled tombs have alone survived because they

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were buried under great cairns such as those at New Grange on the River Boyne. Clusters of ruined clochauns surrounded by old field walls litter the hillslopes of the Dingle peninsula near Fahan; but we can only guess at the age of these 'beehive farms'. Some of the large oval clochauns would give standing room to as many as sixty people. Many of the existing farms in the district have at least one round clochaun, used for keeping pigs or poultry or for storing milk or turf (Fig. 37). 172 343

In the Aran Islands both oval and circular stone-roofed buildings are to be seen, though most of them are ruined. O'Flaherty in the seventeenth century described them as being 'so ancient that nobody knows how long ago any of them was made'.[1] The oval houses measure up to 21 ft. by 12 ft. internally; they are rectangular inside and some have two opposite doors (Pl. 3). Smaller round huts are also known.[2] In north-eastern Ireland, too, in north Louth and south-east Down, both round and square clochauns have been constructed down to recent times for housing pigs and poultry: a few are still in use.[3] The corbelled pigsty is known also in Wales,[4] and has been recorded in Caithness and the Orkney Islands.[5] Very similar corbelled buildings attached to old farms on Dartmoor are said to have been used as ash houses, for holding the embers taken from the fire at night.[6] One example, now used as a chicken house, is described as a winnowing hut.

Other parts of western and southern Europe can show both ancient and recent examples of corbelled constructions, though most of them, in so far as such a timeless style can be dated, were probably erected within the last two or three centuries, and some of them are known to have been built within living memory. They are found, either in ruins or serving as shelters or as animal and tool houses, in south France, especially in and around the Central Plateau, in Spain, Portugal and Majorca, in the heel of Italy, in the western Balkans and in Crete, where the mountain dairies appear to be very similar to the stone 171

[1] R. O'Flaherty, *H'Ier Connaught* (1684), 68.
[2] Å. Campbell, *Folk-Liv*, 1938, 173–96; G. H. Kinahan, *P.R.I.A.*, 10, 25
[3] R. H. Buchanan, *U.J.A.*, 19 (1956), 92–112.
[4] I. C. Peate, *The Welsh House* (1944), 42.
[5] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 71.
[6] *Trans. Plymouth Institute*, XVIII (1944), 34.

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FIG. 37. Clochauns. (1) Oval house, Aran Island. (2) Hut, Skellig Michael. (3) Poultry house, Dingle. (4, 5) Pigsties, Co. Down. (6) Sweat-house, Co. Leitrim.

171 booley huts and shielings of Ireland and the Hebrides. The corbelled buildings of Vaucluse, in the mountains behind Avignon, are both round and rectangular, the latter bearing a striking resemblance to Irish oratories of the type of Gallarus,

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Co. Kerry, which is believed to date from the sixth or seventh 171
century. Whether or not the origin of this style of building in western Europe should be placed, as I am inclined to believe, in the megalithic period, there can be no doubt that it represents, in various parts of the Mediterranean-Atlantic route, the survival of an ancient method of building. It has had a long life in exposed hilly districts where suitable materials lay to hand, especially where the interests of simple shepherds and cattlemen were dominant. Villages of houses with domed or conical stone or mud-brick roofs are a feature of south-east Italy and Syria, and of the dry belt stretching eastwards to India.

Some of the Co. Kerry farmyard clochauns are still used for 343
storing milk; their thick walls are admirable for maintaining 291
even temperatures. Their association with the pig may also be an archaic feature, for the pig was perhaps the first domesticated animal to be brought to Ireland, and although much altered in breed, it still thrives best in warm, draught-proof surroundings recalling the sultry jungles of its original south-east Asiatic home. The well-worn phrase about 'the gentleman that pays the rent' not only summarizes the role of the pig in recent historic times but carries a humorous hint of the veneration in which the pig was once held in southern and western Europe. Here archaeologists have postulated an early Neolithic matriarchal 'swine-culture', vestiges of which would explain the fact that the pig was the only cult animal of the oldest of the Greek mysteries, the Eleusinian.[1] Later pork became the favourite food of both the Roman and Celtic worlds. In parts of Ireland the pig is driven into the house for luck on May morning, and the [155]
pigsty figures in a strange ritual for certain cures, e.g., a sufferer from mumps should be led with an ass-halter three times round the sty! Further, there is surely a supernatural quality in an animal which is reputed to be able to see the wind! In many parts of the British Isles, especially in Scotland, it is unlucky to speak of a pig when fishing at sea. Superstitions about the pig are numerous in Scotland, and in the Highlands there was formerly a tabu against keeping pigs and eating pork. This was apparently true also of those parts of the north of Ireland which have had close connections with the Western Isles.

[1] C. O. Sauer, *Agricultural Origins and Dispersals*, 57.

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KILNS AND CLOCHAUNS

343 In discussing the association of pigs and clochauns, which may well have reached Ireland together, reference must be made to a curious variety of underground 'outhouse', the stone-built souterrain, which is frequently found attached to ancient farmsteads of the Dark Ages. Many thousands have been recorded from all parts of the country, and they have their counterparts in Scotland, Cornwall and western France. Stripped of their cover of earth, the chambers which are incorporated in many souterrains would resemble free-standing clochauns. The long galleries which are perhaps the most characteristic element in souterrains could have originated as passages into the buried chambers. Some of the chambers may have served as pigsties, but it is a more plausible theory that these structures, long regarded as refuge places, were primarily storage places, designed to maintain an even temperature for keeping food and especially milk products. The custom of building souterrains, which must have called for considerable labour and skill, seems to have stopped, after a long life, before the early Middle Ages. We do not know what cultural factors were responsible for this change of custom, or what forms of storage took the place of the 'coves', but the change marks one aspect of the decline of the old Gaelic world of rath and tuath which had passed its zenith by the tenth century. The practice of building underground storage places, however, did not entirely die out. K. Danaher has recorded stone-lined structures in Donegal, associated with still remembered booley-sites, which are said to have [251] been used for storing butter.[1] One wonders whether the custom of burying butter in the bogs (Chapter XIV) was generally adopted when souterrains were no longer built.

The souterrains, whatever their original purpose, have occasionally been pressed into service as hiding places for outlaws, for illegal possessions or small livestock. It is known that the Irish, in the worst days of landlordism, were in the habit of hiding their stock to avoid confiscation when they were in arrears of rent. Some examples, which had not been opened within living memory, were found, when entered, to reek strongly of animals. And I know one souterrain in Co. Antrim which is littered with the remains of home-made bombs dating

[1] K. Danaher, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 204–12.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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from 'the troubles' of the early nineteen-twenties. Souterrains have also been used for other illegal activities which were enjoyed irrespective of political party, such as the making of illicit whiskey—poteen—an activity which is not yet entirely suppressed and which called for secrecy. I have more than once been shown specially-made underground hiding-holes where the poteen-makers went to earth when the gaugers were scented. 343 [273] [674]

In the category of temporary shelters we place the wretched 'fever-huts' erected to isolate victims of infectious diseases in the famine years. We cannot wonder that no detailed descriptions are to be found, but the account of a structure of 'turf built up in the form of a cone, with an entrance scarcely large enough for a dog to crawl through'[1] hints that some of these huts presented features of interest to the ethnographer. Temporary windbreaks erected by turf-cutters are also of considerable interest. One which I saw in Co. Fermanagh (Fig. 38) [758]

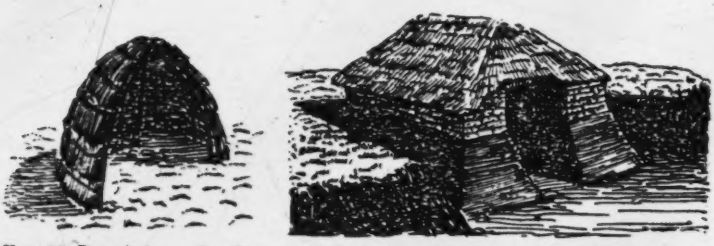

FIG. 38. Bog shelters, Co. Fermanagh. Left, for turf-cutters; right, partly dug out of the bog, for calves.

was built of birch rods bent over and neatly thatched with branches and rushes. The construction of animal shelters in great variety, too, built of sods or wattles, doubtless perpetuates skills once devoted to human habitations. I illustrate in Fig. 39 an outhouse with a solid hipped roof, known as a flat roof.

Unusual, because so far as I know confined to Achill Island, are little soot-houses erected for the special purpose of manufacturing supplies of soot and ashes as fertilizers. It is probable that we have to deal with a custom which has died out elsewhere and has maintained itself here in insular isolation. It will 343 387

[1] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 143.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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343 387 be recalled that Achill was the last Irish home of booleying, and there may be some connection between the two practices, the soot-houses being the diminutive descendants of the winter dwellings whose roofs, on this theory, were stripped in spring in the days when the whole family migrated to the summer pastures. At any rate the soot-house season runs from October to May, that is the winter half-year. In the Hebrides it was customary to strip the soot-laden thatch of the black-houses annually for use as manure, and the roof was left without a smoke-hole to encourage the deposit of soot. The smoke 'oozes out over the whole roof, giving the house, when seen from a distance, the general appearance of a dung-heap in warm wet weather. The object of the roof is . . . to accumulate soot.'[1]

FIG. 39. Soot house, Achill Island; animal shelter with walls of whins and 'flat roof', Co. Cavan.

The soot-huts are rectangular gabled structures, measuring some ten by five feet externally and about eight feet high. They are built either out in the fields, where peat and sods are at hand, or near the farms, in which case they often serve in summer as hen-houses. The low side-walls are of dry-stone construction though when built in the fields they are more usually of sods: the entrance, in the gable, is only some two-and-a-half to three feet high. The roof structure is of the simplest, consisting of a ridge pole against which bits of driftwood serving as rafters rest without ties of any kind, the whole being kept in place by a great thickness of sods laid horizontally, the lowest layer resting on the thick wall-tops. At the end of harvest the huts

[1]A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 53.

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are repaired and re-roofed with sods, and turf fires lit inside 343
are kept smouldering with wet sods until the spring, when the 387
huts are half-full of ashes and the soot-laden roof-sods are ready to collapse. The roof is then broken up and the soot and ashes spread on the ridges as potato manure (Fig. 39).

Although I know of no parallel in other parts of Ireland it 342
seems likely that the custom of removing the roof-covering of the winter-house was once fairly general, at any rate in houses of the old Achill type, which in many details closely resembled the Hebridean black-house. I should be inclined to correlate the custom with the roped style of thatching, which betrays little of the care of other styles and in the old form where the ropes were weighted by hanging stones had a distinctly ephemeral appearance. Where sods were used for walls as well as roofs the whole house would have become a convenient source of fertilizers for the infield. This may be the explanation of the remark made by Dr. Madden that in the south of Ireland 'cottar houses of dirt, sticks and straw were generally removed once a year'.[1] There are indications met with in excavations of houses in Dark Age raths that reconstructions were more frequent than would be justified by ordinary wear and tear. In Sutherland, down to the early nineteenth century, sod-houses were abandoned periodically and pulled down to be utilized as manure, a new hut being erected near by. In this instance the cause was said to be that the accumulation of filth had rendered the place uninhabitable,[2] but this underestimates the tolerance of the Gael. The soot-houses, at any rate, seem to perpetuate old custom, and one thinks back to the earliest days of agriculture when crops were sown in the highly productive soils of newly burnt woodland. Faith in the use of fire persisted longer than the woods. Burning the land, we shall see in Chapter XI, was a very general practice down to the famine years when rough pasture was being reclaimed for potato-growing.

We come now to a group of stone structures built to serve as 343
kilns for drying or burning. The drying-kilns were principally 251
needed for drying corn before it was ground, though flax-drying kilns were also required in the days when the fibre was extracted

[1]Dr. Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions* (1738).
[2]Quoted in F. T. Smith, *The Land of Britain*, Part 3, Sutherland.

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343 by hand. The corn-drying kiln is a culture-trait clearly adapted
251 to the climatic conditions of the Atlantic coasts of Europe. In extreme cases, as in the Faroe Islands—where even barley does not ripen fully—the ears are kiln-dried before thrashing, but the purpose of the Irish kilns was to harden the thrashed grain before grinding. They can be traced back archaeologically to the last centuries B.C. and on present evidence their introduction may be linked chronologically with grain-storage pits and with the rotary quern. Thus the custom of parching the grain in the straw would be a survival of an older culture layer associated with the saddle-quern and the mortar and possibly with harvesting by pulling the corn by the roots.

One early type of kiln was made of wattles plastered with clay, and was perhaps used like an oven, being heated before the corn was put in it to dry, but those which have come down into recent times were stone-lined pits into which a long flue was led. The fuel used was peat. It is stated that down to famine times every townland in some parts of the country had its kiln, though in other parts they went out of use long ago when landlords, following Anglo-Norman custom, insisted that all corn should be ground at the mill. In Co. Cavan for example, 'every estate has its cornmill and the tenantry is bound under severe penalty to grind their corn thereat and pay toll'.[1] These watermills should be distinguished from the native clackmills,
[376] built over little streams and driven by small horizontal wheels. They were characteristically held in joint ownership, as were the kilns. The Mayo kiln is described as resembling a large tobacco pipe, the circular stone-lined bowl being dug into a sloping bank and the horizontal stem or flue emerging lower down the slope. A bee-hive cap of timber and thatch was the only part visible. In it a straw-covered wattled hatch gave access to the kiln floor, a wooden frame half-way down the bowl of the pipe, on which thrashed sheaves were spread, heads to centre. The grain, laid on this, took about twenty-four hours to dry. The taste of the oatmeal made from grain so dried was said to be delicious.[2] A man who had seen a similar kiln working in Co. Antrim told me that the corn was laid on a linen sheet

[1] C. Coote, *Cavan* (1802), 251.
[2] H. T. Knox, *P.R.I.A.*, *26* (1906–7), 265.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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resting on a well-prepared bed of drawn straw spread on a hurdle, and he recalled the phrase 'soft as kiln bedding' to illustrate the care devoted to the operation. The Gaelic language has quite an extensive vocabulary describing every detail of the floor and the bedding of a corn-kiln. Because of the risk of fire, the Laws stipulated that the kiln must not be placed within so many paces of the dwelling house. 343 251

Lint-kilns, for drying flax after it had been taken from the retting dams, were in general use in Ulster in the days of hand-scutching, and a few half-ruined specimens are still in existence. As with corn-kilns—and lime-kilns—they were of two kinds, which may be termed pot-kilns and pipe-kilns. The former are described in Co. Armagh as 'small sod buildings, left open at the top . . . built by the sides of fences near the cabins: they are four or five feet in diameter, and have a hurdle of sticks placed across them at a convenient height (about four feet) on which a small quantity of flax is spread to dry over a turf fire'.[1] The stone-built kilns, known in Co. Tyrone as 'farrows' were similar in construction to the 'tobacco pipe' corn-kilns. The flax, well shaken and loose, was placed on end on a wattled platform set across the bowl of the pipe. When dried it was beaten on a melling-stone with a heavy wooden mell until every stalk was flattened and it then passed to the hand-scutcher. 343 248

As the corn-drying kiln has been superseded by the kiln attached to the country grist-mill, so the small lime-kiln has given way, over most of the country, to the large quarry-kiln. At the same time coal has replaced turf as a fuel. The little circular pot-kiln of sods or stones filled with alternate layers of turf and limestone may be met with in the west, but in general the home-burning of lime did not long survive the Great Famine. Down to that time, wherever limestone could be obtained, almost every farm or farm cluster had a lime-kiln. It was the importation of guano and later of artificial manure that put an end to a most advantageous practice. The application of lime to acid soils is a comparatively recent practice, but one likes to think that the little pot-kiln was in use long ago to burn lime or sea-shells for the whitewash with which the mud houses were lightened and brightened. Kelp-kilns, similarly (see Chapter 343 381

[1] I. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties* (1837), I, 178.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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343 XVI), had their great days in the eighteenth and nineteenth
381 centuries, but small-scale wrack-burning is far older than this. In the later eighteenth century, when framed windows and brick chimneys became fashionable in the more prosperous
[339] lowland farms, the bricks were locally burnt in circular kilns plastered with clay.

Another class of outbuilding, allied to the clochaun in con-
343 struction, is the stone sweat-house, the Irish version of the
757 Turkish bath, which the Germans, indeed, call the Irish bath. There is a theory that the idea reached Ireland with Christian missionaries who were accustomed to Roman practices, but heat-treatment as a cure is so widespread throughout the world (cf. the sweat-houses of Finland and pre-Columbian California) that one thinks of remoter origins. What is certain is that they were visited for cures within living memory in several parts of Ireland. In west Cavan twenty-five sweat-houses have been listed in one district, and many more are known to have been destroyed. A French traveller of the late eighteenth century observed that 'wherever there are four or five cabins near each other there is sure to be a sweating-house'.[1] And old people in Cavan confirm that every four or five families once shared a sweat-house, in which sweating cures were taken in summer and autumn (Fig. 37, 6).

The sweat-house is a dry-stone corbelled structure, measuring internally from four to seven feet in diameter and rather less in height. A low lintelled doorway is the only means of access though some specimens have a roughly constructed chimney flue to allow the smoke to escape. This was closed with sods during the treatment, as was the door. The fire of turf—straw and bracken seem also to have been used—had been kept burning inside for a day or two previously. The floor, normally an earthen floor though some examples were cobbled or paved, was then swept clean and strewn with green rushes. On these, or on grass sods or low stools which they took in with them, from two to as many as six or seven persons would sit, naked and sweating profusely. After half an hour or so they would emerge and cool themselves either in a near-by stream or with a bucket

[1]De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland* (1796–97). Ed. J. Stevenson (1917), 193.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of water. I was told on Rathlin Island that eligible girls would take a sweating bath to clear their complexions before the annual visit to the Lammas Fair at Ballycastle on the mainland. They were in demand also during kelp-burning operations—a notoriously filthy occupation. Not all sweat-houses were built of stone. Wood-Martin quotes accounts of some which were dug into an earth bank and 'finished with sods', while others were excavated in turf banks.[1] He also records that water was sometimes poured on stones inside the sweat-house, 'thus converting it into a vapour- as well as a sweat-bath'.[2]

More intimately linked with the house is the turf-shelter, the Irish equivalent of the English coal-shed. In the drier eastern part of the country a built shelter is not necessary, and the peats, skilfully built into a huge turf-stack protected from the driving rains by a wall or gable, perhaps improve by exposure to the winds, but in the wetter west unless the turf is under cover it must be dried in small quantities in the loft or by the fire before burning. In parts of Kerry the turf is stored in large clochauns: elsewhere narrow oblong or oval stone enclosures are erected, their walls loosely built to allow the wind to blow through. The peat-store or cleit of St. Kilda was similar—an oblong corbelled stone building with open joints.

The well is another essential item of equipment of farm or clachan, and it is often provided with a corbelled stone cover. Since springs are abundant, except in bare limestone country, the wells are not deep and few are fitted with windlasses. In their absence quite elaborate ramps with stone steps are sometimes needed to obtain access to the water, and the whole structure being roofed, some examples (for instance in the south-east of Co. Down) are considerable architectural feats (Fig. 40). In the limestone districts the woman of the house may have to walk as much as half a mile to carry drinking water from a dip-well. It is now carried in buckets but was formerly transported in stave-built piggins balanced on the head. The peasant makes a virtue of necessity by asserting that almost every spring well yields 'the finest water in all Ireland, and never runs dry'. Wells are regarded as chancy things, not to be

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, II (1902), 166.
[2]ibid., 165.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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343 lightly meddled with, and if the water is not as good as usual
312 you will be told, in the phrase used for an ailing human being, that the well is 'not *at* itself at all'.

FIG. 40. Well-covers, Co. Cavan and Co. Down.

Finally we come to a miscellaneous assortment of outbuild-
343 ings and shelters built to house various animals and birds.
235 Elaborate pigeon houses (ducats) designed to house hundreds of birds seem to be confined to the east and south coasts and to areas planted by English or Scots. They are no doubt manorial in origin but some existing examples were built in the early nineteenth century, though they are no longer in use. In these areas the smaller farms may have little pigeon houses made for a dozen birds, and the humblest stable is likely to have a pigeon hole or two in the gable. The birds formerly nested in hanging nests of plaited straw.

Cavities in the thick walls about many old farms were built
343 as dog-kennels or duck-houses, and simple shelter holes ('boles'
231 in Ulster) were intended to house assorted three-legged iron pots (Fig. 32). An interesting variant is the bee-bole, a shelter for the bee-skep, a few examples of which have been observed in eastern Ireland.[1]

[1]R. M. Duruz and E. E. Crane, *English Bee Boles* (1953). (National Beekeeping Museum Pamphlet No. 1.)

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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372 hands into cakes and piled against a wall until dry enough to
237 carry home.[1]

After lying spread on the ground for a week or two the turves
314 are footed, that is a dozen or so are put to lean together in the shape of a pitched roof, to catch the wind (Fig. 64). This is
[462] work for women and for children, who are, in some districts,
[857] given a week's holiday from school. Through the months of June and July and often into August there is constant coming and going as the peats are turned and built into larger and larger piles, turn-foots, castles, rickles, lumps and clamps—the names and the shapes show considerable regional variation—until they can be ricked or stacked on the bog ready to be carried to the farms as opportunity offers. The wind is the main drying agent, and once dried the peats acquire a waterproof skin. A well-built stack will throw off the rain, but it is usual in the west to thatch with rushes and add a coping of sods or
[343] stones against the wind. Open-sided turfsheds specially built of wood or stone are the exception rather than the rule. A favourite place for the stack is against the house gable, where it provides a protective warmth even before the turf is burnt. The fuel is taken into the house in baskets, creels or wights, and a small supply is kept handy by the fireside or stored, as in the Aran Islands, on the kitchen loft (Pl. 9, 2).

FIG. 64. Stages in the drying and stacking of turf (not to scale; the stack, right, is about 9 feet high).

Some lowland bogs are too waterlogged to be cut into turves, and if no slane-turf is available the black turf-mud is moulded by hand into bricks or balls which are stacked to dry. In some counties, for instance Meath and Cavan, mud turf is highly prized and its preparation follows a well-ordered routine. After

[1]C. R. Browne and A. C. Haddon, *The Aran Islands.*

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Pyrenees and in Africa, but the flail, apparently spreading 243
through western Europe in post-Roman times, in time replaced 412
it almost everywhere, to be in turn displaced by the mechanical 171
thrasher. Thus the sound of the flail has almost gone from the countryside. The best thrashing place is the floor of the barn above the byre, with its opposite doors to draw the wind and 343
advertise the flailer's industry. Such barns, however, were not 243
built outside the planted districts before agrarian changes and 171
improvements spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ireland knows nothing of the carefully built thrashing floors of England and Scandinavia. At best on the farms lacking a barn a thrashing board was sometimes kept, a square wooden platform raised a few inches off the ground. A good thrashing floor should bend to meet the flail, and in Scandinavia, for instance, great pains were taken in the old days to construct floors which would make the flails sing. They were occasionally strung with wires, and to magnify the echo of clay floors a horse's skull was buried under each corner.[1] It has been thought that this purpose was secondary to the luck it was hoped would follow from what was originally a foundation sacrifice. In Ireland [777]
traditions of the burying of horses' skulls under the floors of dwelling houses are both widespread and well authenticated. The usual explanation again is that this gives the house an echo, but it is also said to be lucky, and Sean O'Sullivan concludes that the custom of burying skulls began as a substitute for foundation sacrifices.[2] In Armagh 'the frontal bones of a [825]
horse's head are regarded as being peculiarly sonsie; they were often buried in barn floors and under the thresholds of dwelling houses for that reason.'[3]

In time, the expressed object came to be to magnify the music 243
of the singing flails as well as that of the ballad-singing and 789
dancing before the fire. The space between the doors of the old style kitchen-byre, it will be recalled, was a favourite thrashing place in times past. The Briget's Crosses above the door would have blessed the thrashing as well as the cattle. It

[1]Albert Sandkelf, *Singing Flails* (Folklore Fellows Communications, Helsinki, No. 136), (1949).
[2]Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 45–52.
[3]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 77.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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243 is worth noticing that symbols in the form of a swastika, but
789 including also circles, pentagrams and horses, were formerly cut as protective devices in the beams of barns in Scandinavia. Some of the designs are reminiscent of the art of the Bronze Age.

243 An Irish verse giving the four essentials of a good thrashing, collected in Co. Armagh, runs in translation:

[539]

A hand-staff of holly,
A souple of hazel,
A single sheaf,
And a clean floor.

This is where the besom of heather or bent comes in: it is still preferred to the sweeping-broom for a clay floor or to get into the joins of boards or cobbles. Thrashing was a daily job, carried out on well-run farms night and morning before the cattle were fed. It was held that the cattle throve best on freshly thrashed oats, and the storage of grain would anyhow have been difficult where there were no barns.[1] For this reason, too, the level 'street' in front of the house, or even the public road was often the most suitable floor available. The thrashing was usually done on a strong linen sheet. Publicity as well as a steady echoing beat seem to have been the desired aims. Every-
[555] where prestige has attached to a noisy thrashing, and partly no doubt for self-aggrandisement a solitary thrasher would beat with his feet to make the noise of two. Everywhere too the
[533] sound of the flail has been turned into jingles and rustic rhymes. They did not accompany the work itself because it was too noisy and too exhausting to allow talking or singing. The flails' beaters made their own merry music; was it, one wonders, originally intended to drive away evil spirits from the precious food supply?

222 In this chapter we have confined ourselves to some of the
824 things that were made at home out of materials that lay to hand. To describe the utilization of all the lesser plants that have

[343] [1]Mr. A. T. Lucas, however, has described traditional outdoor granaries, now restricted to west Cork, constructed of thick straw ropes, which when completed resemble round stacks (*Gwerin*, I (1956), 2–20). Mr. V. B. Proudfoot calls my attention to the similar 'corn bykes' of Caithness (*P.S.A.S.* (1932), 136–7).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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come across surviving examples of these ancient devices. The 227
iron 'cribs' associated with modern salmon weirs, however, appear to derive from wattled traps. And the long conical 'coghill' nets in which the eels are caught in the weirs of the Bann, the Shannon and (until recently) the Erne, are shaped like weels and indeed they are sometimes built up of a series of cones. The fine meshed 'tail' of the net is made to open and the eels, nowadays, are poured directly into submerged tanks. A detail suggestive of long custom is that the 'skiver' with which the tail is closed in the coghills of the weirs at Portna on the Bann consists of a perforated rib-bone of horse or cow. The pin is attached to a cord, which is wound round the end of the net and secured by thrusting the pin into the windings. The walls of the weirs are often still built of wattles, and the old style of weir on the Erne consists of a base of large stones into which the wattled superstructure is thrust.[1]

The wattles are known on the Bann as *skeaghs*: of the six weirs now fishing there four are of the traditional type and two have been modernized. At Athlone on the Shannon there were twenty-two eel weirs in the early seventeenth century, and nearly all were still working in the nineteenth century: a single weir is now fished there.[2] The eel weirs of the River Erne had been reduced to five when they were abandoned owing to the recent construction of a dam for the Ballyshannon [376] hydro-electric scheme. The Bann silver eel fisheries are probably the largest of their kind in western Europe, and it is significant that the Bann is one of the richest rivers in Europe for archaeological discoveries ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the [172] early medieval period. Both salmon and eels have now become money-crops and the catches are exported. Already in the eighteenth century Irish salt salmon was exported in considerable [439] quantities to America. The ice-house in which salmon used to be preserved is one of the many ruined buildings to be seen [343] about the decaying houses of the gentry, and most country houses also had their fish ponds.

Among the common folk eels are esteemed only by the folk 262
who catch them, legally or otherwise, but they were formerly

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 213–23.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 80 (1950), 146–54.

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611 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [667] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [427] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted. 246 221

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a "reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder. 246 [293] [461] [343]

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent
434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts
437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils
[341] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and
178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occasional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [242] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [439] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. [232] These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were [224] low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[771] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [434] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleamhnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of • 343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of 621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

592 162

Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

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582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [198] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

361 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. 342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] [264] [415] [118] [362] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [362] [516] [393] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings. 535 178 [874]

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers. 535 [175] [177] [179] [184]

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality. [874]

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women 574 63 574 342 343 352 674 273 [888] [272] [348] [562]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 would "spoil" social relations. Even in the larger towns the
[369] shopkeeper is reluctant to have his bills completely settled by
[443] his customers. These personal ties readily give rise to cliques and municipal corruption: it must be admitted that the

[162]

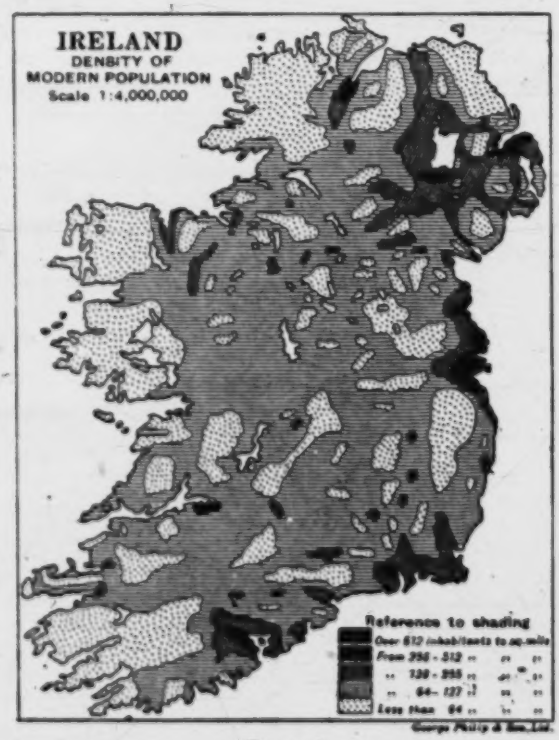

Fig. 108.

corporate spirit is poorly developed. Similarly the Irish country town is generally lacking in any native traditions of
[344] civic architecture, and even the splendid buildings of Dublin and Galway together with the distinctive court-houses of smaller towns owe much to outside influence. The small

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

346 773 founder of the building, and is held to explain the rude and inferior work of parts of it. Quin "Abbey" was built by the famous Master Mason Gobbán Saor, who twisted the spiral pillars of its beautiful cloister with his own hands. The builder of the south transept (1433) fell from its gable, and was killed where a tombstone with the scribed figure of an axe marks his grave. The north-west corner of Carran church overhangs, and is destined to fall on the wisest man that shall pass below it.

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346 776 173 *Round Towers.*—The peasants seem never to have adopted the various druidic, Cuthite, phallic, and other theories of 1770 onwards from the so-called "educated classes." To them, as to our earlier writers, the towers are steeples built by saints. John Lloyd, in 1780,[8] calls that of Scattery "the loftiest old Steeple in the Kingdom." Michael O'Brannan, in 1794,[9] tells how St.

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 157. The tale closely resembles a legend of St. Caimin of Iniscaltra and Guaire Aidhne at Iniscaltra, Lough Derg.

[8] *A Short Tour etc.*, p. 21.

[9] Poem on Shannon, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. ii., pp. 15-8.

[p. 262]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the

406 lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings
349 in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by [427] islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the [464] other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

743 Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

• 344 The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor,
205 just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room
206 with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use [203] in matters pertaining to the service during the prescribed hours. When the freighter ran aground before dawn, it was discovered by islanders who informed the company; Radio Eireann reported the plight of the vessel, on the basis of S.O.S. messages, in the seven o'clock news, but the company had reached the reef before the telephone was available.

346 Inis Beag has only a small church, known as the "chapel." After the church of the patron saint was abandoned, a house served as the place of worship for a time, then was superseded by the old chapel whose foundations can be discerned

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds.

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths.

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school.

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there

342 a kind of partition. When the domestic animals were removed, often to an
231 additional building at the gablewall, this part of the house would be used as a living room, just as in the former type of house, fig. 4. In a few very pri-
342 mitive houses of this as well as of the foregoing type I have found firepla-
354 ces with no chimney at all, the smoke leaving the house through a hole in the roof above the fireplace. Sometimes I have found two smoke holes, one in each end of the roof. The doors and half doors constitute together with the smokeholes a complicated machinery, providing the current of air to regulate the turf-fire and the smoke.

Dwelling houses without chimneys were found by me in 1935 at Belmullet, Co. Mayo and in Co. Sligo.

342 The houses with thatched gables sometimes have rounded corners so that the base foundation may have an almost oval shape on the outside, while the inside room may be rectangular in form, pl. XLIII: 2. It is evident that the oval house form and the thatched gables complement each other. They could have existed together from a very early stage in building traditions. In a windy district the rounded and thatched gables are suitable, as the house will be more stream lined.

The roof with a thatched gable can easily have replaced the stone, or cyclopic roof, in cabins and huts (both, bothán). This fact and certain similarities would seem to indicate that the oval house form in the abovementioned houses with thatched gables, may have developed from the round
[171] or beehive house type. Parallels may be found among the stone-built huts with similar roofs in Estremadura and elsewhere.

On the other hand, houses with stone-built gables represent quite clearly the rectangular house type, as in such constructions the gables are never rounded.

342 The stone-built gable constitutes a very practical way of solving the pro-
● 346 blem of how to protect the gable ends of the roof of an oblong house against the wind, pl. XLIV: 3. But there is another point to be considered. In mediæval houses in villages and cities, the gables have often developed according to the use and importance of the gable wall; when the house faces the street or main road the gable wall would be far more important than the side walls. Other features point to ecclesiastical architecture. In the early churches, in Ireland and elsewhere, the gable wall constituted the front wall. In Ireland the early primitive churches were often furnished with pronounced gable finials. Furthermore it has been suggested that the introduction of the rectangular form of house is due to the first propagators of Christianity

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

in Ireland, as we find in an early Irish stanza predicting this and other Christian innovations (Life of St. Patrick, translated by Colgan, p. 123). 342 346

It seems to me to be very likely that the above mentioned architecture of villages, towns and churches in Western Europe, giving prominence to the gable-wall, may have played an important role in the development of rectangular houses with stone-built gables in Ireland and elsewhere in Western Europe. As to Irish conditions, I would observe that the very small primitive rectangular churches, hardly bigger than an ordinary house, known from the Aran Islands and other places, have surely been built by no other builders than those who built the peasant houses. The clergy instructed them and planned the architecture. Then the people learned that the stone built gable was very useful both as protection for the ends of the thatched roof and as an arrangement for the fire, readily forming a chimney or stone-built venthole for the smoke. 346

But the early Christian churches cannot have constituted the original primitive form for every kind of rectangular house in Western Europe. As Addy (Addy: Evolution of the English House, p. 38 sq.) has mentioned, very primitive huts built in "bays" formed by "crucks" are known from the Welsh Laws as "Summer Houses". These houses consisted of a pair of "crucks" and a ridge-tree, and were completed by wattles. This form of house can be shown to be of great antiquity and can be studied over a large area. Material from Africa, the Mediterranean countries, the countries on the shores of the Atlantic, show that the square form is of greater antiquity than Christianity, so it does not follow that the rectangular house in Western Europe must necessarily owe its origin to Christian innovations, it can very well go back to a much earlier form of culture. 171

Regarding the higher development of the cruck-construction (or crutch) as discussed by S. O. Addy with examples from England, I would observe that the small stone-built one-storeyed Irish houses, the primitive Welsh long-house, the black houses of Scotland, as well as the small houses of Scandinavia and elsewhere have been sufficiently roofed by a very primitive small roof of pairs of beams, similar to that of the above mentioned huts, summerhouses etc. Even circular huts may have been roofed by a thatched roof, resting on a radial framework of branches without any central pole as in the Sudan circular hut, *tukl*, mentioned by A. E. Robinson, who has suggested that some prehistoric huts in Ancient Britain were of the *tukl* type (Antiquity 1930, p. 230). In Lewis (Scotland) according to Thomas (Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Vol. III, p. 130) circu- 342 171

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran.

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign.

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman.

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional,

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

172 823 776 823 173 823 778 346 773 [P 261]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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346 773 founder of the building, and is held to explain the rude and inferior work of parts of it. Quin "Abbey" was built by the famous Master Mason Gobbán Saor, who twisted the spiral pillars of its beautiful cloister with his own hands. The builder of the south transept (1433) fell from its gable, and was killed where a tombstone with the scribed figure of an axe marks his grave. The north-west corner of Carran church overhangs, and is destined to fall on the wisest man that shall pass below it.

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[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 157. The tale closely resembles a legend of St. Caimin of Inisculture and Guaire Aidhne at Inisculture, Lough Derg.

[8] *A Short Tour etc.*, p. 21.

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[P. 262]

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Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

346 776 173 778 173 763 173 773 823 [p. 263]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and [796]
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the officiating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth, 150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hundreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appearance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [164]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand, and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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764
133

Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

174
778 on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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648
721 At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

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712 The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the
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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346 •
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [674]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

 It is not the formal system of local and national governments which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate. 779 67

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly is sought and even expected as an obligation, or "right," of the government by the islanders (especially since nativism engendered by the Gaelic Revival has made Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht," to quote a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gaël, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders. 829 687 [181] [668]

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes were commanded by politicians who put forth grandiose plans for the betterment of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular—and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide. The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords. Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configuration, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history. [64] [653] [94] • 829 181

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail 829 666

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 118
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 716
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 718
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *currach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age cumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [825]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 718
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 171
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incorporating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [916] [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the cumulus," as this demon is called, will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, 776
and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 of the Free State, at least, the landlord is gone and the true big farmer is rare. The town's hinterland is the world of the small farmers. And the town lives by its connection with the social order to which the countryman is attached. One need probe only a little way beneath the surface of conventionalities to learn that the connection is much more than the economics of distribution and exchange.

366 In the first place, the shop is also the seat of a
347 familistic identification, very like that of land and
369 farm. Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least
342 in number, than any comparable European nation. A very large proportion of her population lives by retail trade. But one must not think of these shops, so numerous in every Irish town, as great department stores, or as units in a country-wide chain. The former, of course, do exist in cities, and the latter, called multiple-shops, are a new invasion. They have little place as yet in the smaller towns. The typical shop is a less imposing affair. It supports, normally, only the family which works it.

Such a shop is most often a small two-story building. The ground floor is evenly divided between the business premises and the household kitchen. In front, a single step in from the street, a single deep room, whose width is that of the building's front, houses counter, shelves, shop-stock and money-till. The business of a lifetime goes forward in this room. In back, a flagstone-floored kitchen with an open hearth duplicates, on

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a more elaborate scale perhaps, the country farm 366
house kitchen. Like its country counterpart it is the 347
seat of family life. 369
342

Upstairs, a front room facing the street is transformed, by family portraits, an ornamental mantle and a piece or two of good mahogany, into a ceremonial parlour. Behind this, range the bedrooms of the family. Perhaps, in affluence and refinement there is an upstairs sitting-room as well. For the shop is no mere place of business. It is first of all a household, of which one section and one only is devoted to the world of affairs.

The family which this household houses and 443
supports, in the majority of cases, works the shop 369
in much the same way that the family of the farmer 593
works the land. It conducts its business as a united corporation in which all members may take a hand and each have his place. Husband and wife tend the counter together and between them shopkeeping is divided; sons and daughters work as shop-assistants, as long as they remain at home. Only when affluence lifts the shop to importance and dignifies the shopkeeper with the title and station of merchant, expanding his business to wholesaling, is this arrangement greatly modified.

Yet, self-sufficient as this familistic shop-world 369
is, the countryman has many a connection with it. 443
It lives its own quiet life and plies its own trade so different from the farmer's work upon the farm. Town life breeds its own sentiment and weaves its

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[18] Mårten Stenberger[19] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boëthius[20] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands. 231 349

A glance at the literary material.

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[21] 172 174

In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *fallai fuara*, as in the stone-built *clochàns*, but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin*, and of *fraigh, i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[22] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[23] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion. 174

O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that 174 342

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 100.
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.

Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 pre-Gaelic tongues, and there can be little doubt that the eel fishery is prehistoric in origin. The draft nets in which pollan [192] are caught in the lake—the pollan is a fresh-water herring [227] peculiar to some Irish and Scottish lakes—also display old features. The sections, known as webs, are sewn together with a bone needle into long nets, which are weighted with stone sinkers. The draft-net is widely used in the salmon rivers, as described on the Boyne earlier in this chapter, and references to draft-netting go back to the twelfth century. On some rivers [349] tall towers are erected from which a watcher signals the [202] presence of fish.[1]

We are not here concerned with the commercial offshore fisheries, but something must be said of the inshore fishing because it has been characteristically combined with farming all around the coast. This type of fishing was well suited to the Irish crofter economy, so that the comment frequently made by improving visitors and despairing Government officials was that the Irish would not go out to fish, but waited for the fish to come close inshore. The shore-dwelling farmer is knowledgeable about the ways of fish and knows all 'the signs'. He has been accustomed to keep a net to hand and watch for shoals of different fish at the right seasons. There are watching points on the cliffs overlooking many a small bay, and it was from such vantage points on the south and west coasts that the pilchard 'huers' directed the seine boats to the shoals that visit Ireland intermittently.[2] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Irish pilchard fishery grew to large proportions but it has now declined to something like its older local significance. When the industry was capitalized by promoters like Sir William Petty it was the train oil pressed out during the packing of the pilchards for export which found an Irish market. [281] It was used both as a luminant and in the preparation of leather. The seine boats have now turned their attention to herring and mackerel, and Dr. Went has pointed out that the seine is used for catching salmon only in Kenmare Bay, where Petty introduced it for pilchard fishing about the year 1672.

In the Irish Sea the herrings come close inshore in September

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 86 (1956), 29–33, Pl. 5a.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 51 (1946), 157–67.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the
906 lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings
349 in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by
[427] islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the
[461] other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

● 35
[412]

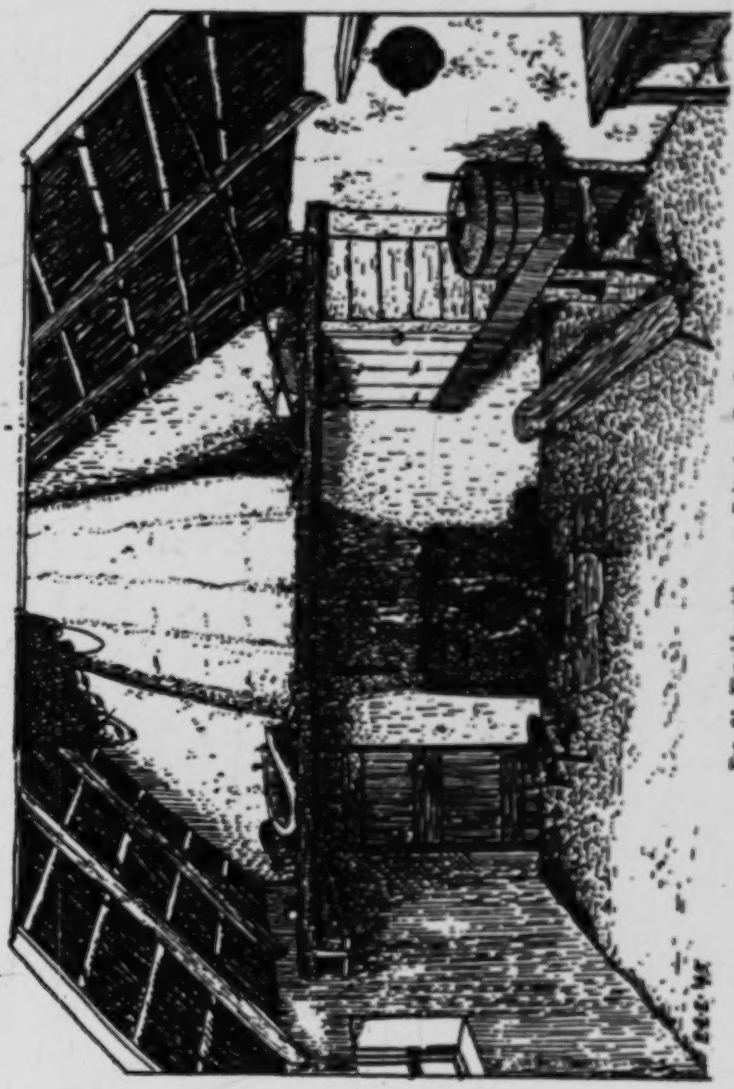


FIG. 21. Fireside with quern, Belturbet, Co. Cavan.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use. 231 241 311

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later. 231 343 351

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called "all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area. 231 241 311

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is carefully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general plan for all such houses of small farmers. 342 343 351

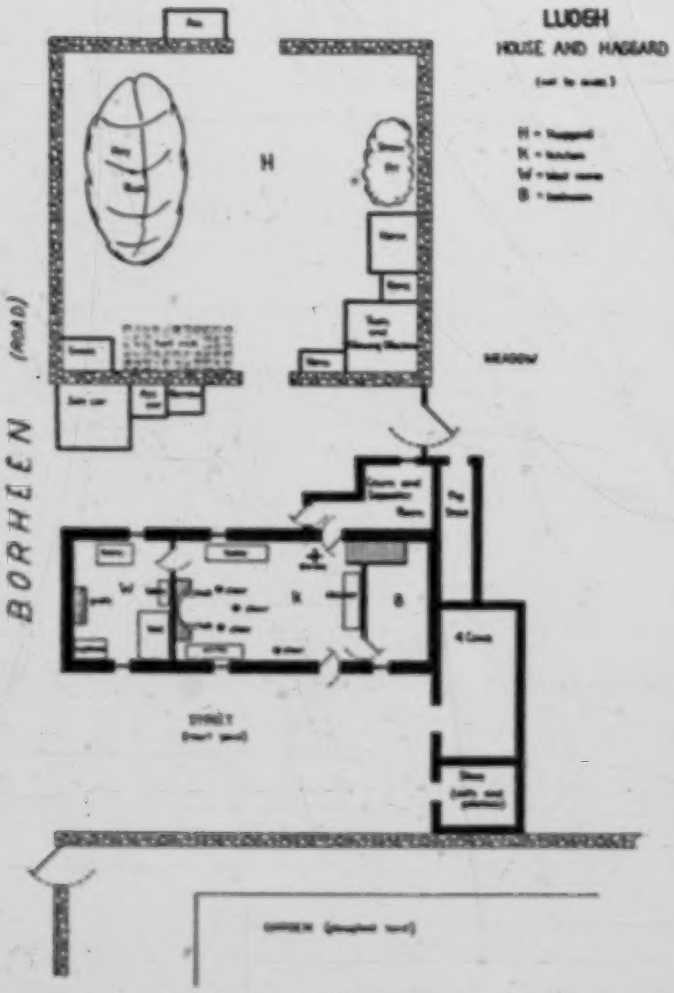
The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various 512

[text continues on p. 35]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

342
343
351

FIGURE 9



Schematic plan of a typical small farmer's house and farmyard, illustrating his familiar economy and functional division of his household.

[p.34]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

491
492
●351

A JAUNTING CAR "FACES THE ROAD"

[facing p. 148]

than 30 statute acres is regarded as small, one of from 30 to 100 acres as of medium size and one of over 100 acres as large. Small, medium and large farms may be found in all parts of Ireland, but in the provinces of Leinster and Munster and in parts of south east Connaught there is a preponderance of medium sized farms with, especially in north Leinster, a considerable proportion of large farms.[1] All this area practises mixed farming, but the south western province, Munster, is completely dominated by the milking cow, while in Leinster the northern half is mainly devoted to the raising of beef cattle, and the southern half produces considerable quantities of wheat, oats and barley.[2] In most areas of Connaught and Ulster, the western and northern provinces, the average farm is of small size, and the number of cows kept by each farmer correspondingly small; the value and productivity of these small farms, however, vary greatly from the intensive cultivation of many farms in east and south Ulster to the fisher-farmer economy of the west coastal districts.[3] 311 241

Throughout the provinces of Leinster and Munster, and in parts of east Connaught, that is to say, generally in the area of medium and large farms, the predominant, and in many districts exclusive, farmyard type is the courtyard, in which the dwelling house and outhouses are arranged about a rectangular space which is the farmyard proper. Most usually the buildings form three sides of the yard, with the dwelling house forming one side and the outhouses forming two more, the fourth side being closed by a wall with a gate. Usually the building is not continuous, the elements being separate and connected by walls, or having gateways or passages between them. The size and arrangement of the yard and the various buildings vary from one farm to another, and also from district to district; the general type is, however, well established, and conforms to a pattern which is clearly distinguished from the other types to be described later. In many districts the front of the dwelling house faces the farmyard, thus, in Co. Kildare in 1807: "The farmhouses in general consist of a long thatched building of one storey, consisting of a large kitchen and fireplace in the centre, and lodging rooms at either end; the front door looks to the barns and stables on the right, behind which is the haggard, and on the left are placed the cow and bullock houses." This, written a century and a half ago,[4] exactly describes many of the farmyards of to-day, for example that shown in fig. 1, which has the dwelling house in the middle, the cowhouse, calfhouse and a small store (formerly a dairy) on the left, with the manure heap behind them, while on the right are the stable, another store and the pigsye, with the haggard, where the hay and corn stacks are made, behind them. The fourth side is formed by a stone wall, with a gate; this wall fronts on the public roadway. This farmyard is at Duncormick, Co. Wexford, in the south east corner of Ireland, but similar examples may be found in almost every part of the east and south. Figure 2 shows the buildings on a larger farm, also in Co. Wexford. Here the entrance gate leads in between a cart shed on the right and the dairy on the left, with the pump close by. Facing the dwelling house across the yard are the stable and byre and a store, while the corn barn opens into the haggard. The pigsty and manure heap are in the part of the yard most distant from the dwelling house. The openings between the various buildings are closed by stone walls about 361 351

[Text continues on p. 12]

[1] Agricultural Statistics, 1847-1926. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1930.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Passmore, T. W.: Ireland, its Physical, Historical, Social and Economic Geography, 1950, chapters viii and xviii to xxiii.

[4] Rawson, T. J.: Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare, 1807, 14-15.

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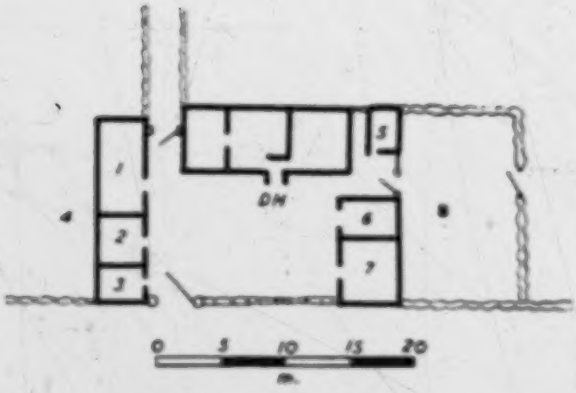

Fig. 1. Farmyard at Dunormack, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, calf house; 3, store; 4, manure heap; 5, pigsty; 6, cart house; 7, stable; 8, haggard.

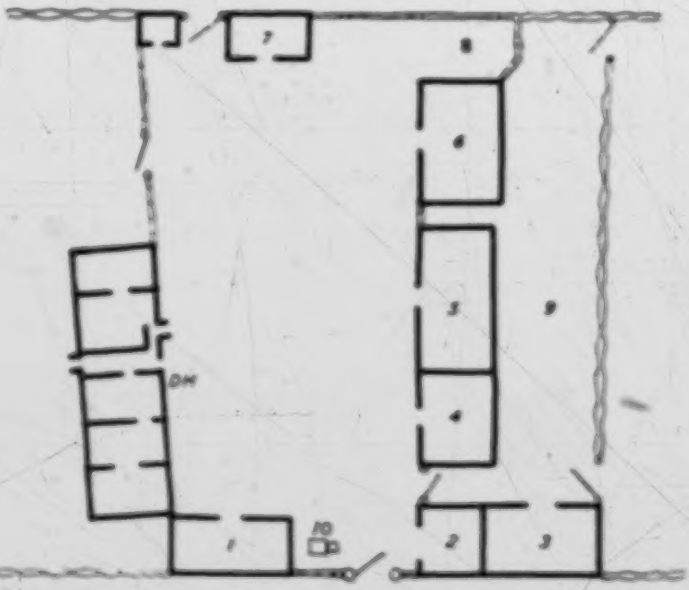

Fig. 2. Farmyard at Kilmore, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, cart house; 3, corn barn; 4, stable; 5, byre; 6, store; 7, pigsty; 8, manure heap; 9, haggard; 10, pump.

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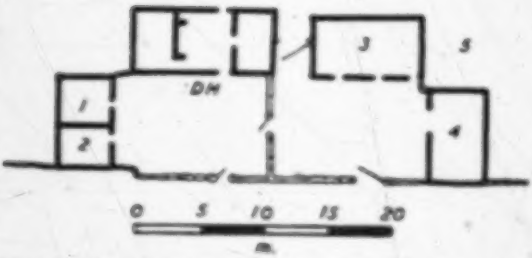

Fig. 3. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, store; 3, byre; 4, stable and carts; 5, manure heap.

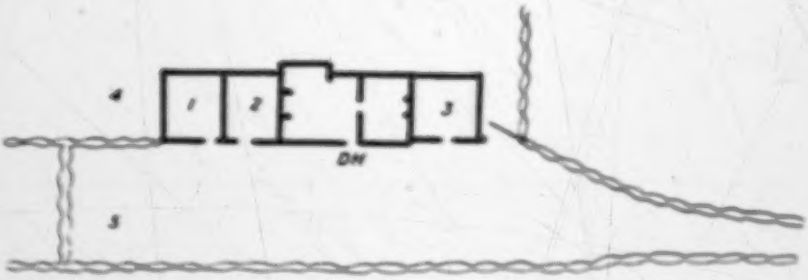

Fig. 4. Farmyard at Glenhull, Co. Tyrone. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, stable; 3, store; 4, haggard; 5, manure heap.

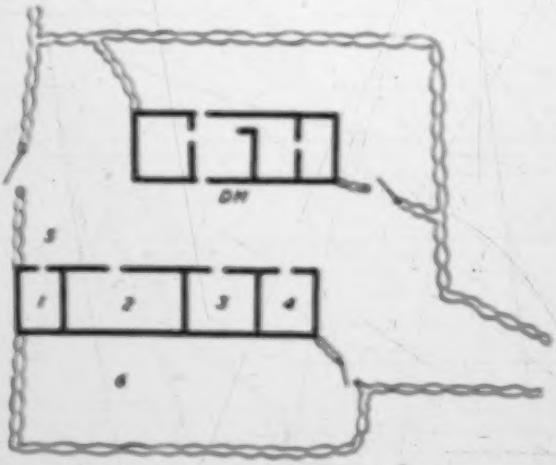

Fig. 5. Farmyard, Aden, Co. Limerick. DH, dwelling house; 1, pigs; 2, byre; 3, stable; 4, store; 5, manure heap; 6, haggard.

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Fig. 6. Farmhouse and yard, Kilmore, Co. Wexford (fig. 6).

Fig. 7. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway (fig. 5).

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Fig. 8. Farm buildings, Glenbeill, Co. Tyrone (fig. 4).
Fig. 9. Farm buildings, parallel lay-out, Lohar, Co. Kerry.

[p. 11]

●35/ four feet high, with gates suitably placed. A door in the back of the dwelling house leads into a
36/ garden and orchard. In both these examples the front of the dwelling house is towards the yard, but in very many examples the back of the dwelling house is towards the yard, which is reached by a back door, while the front of the house faces a small garden with flowers and fruit trees through which a path leads to the front door. This is especially common in east Munster. Figure 3 shows the buildings on a smaller farm in the south-eastern part of Co. Galway. Here again we have a courtyard formed by buildings on three sides and a stone wall with a gate on the fourth, but the courtyard is divided into two parts by another wall which protects the portion in front of the dwelling house, which is a little garden with flowers and shrubs, from the animals which pass through the yard.

In the smaller farms of the north and west there usually are fewer buildings, and these are often joined together in one continuous row, as in the example shown in figure 4, on a small farm in Co. Tyrone, where dwelling house, stable, byre and a store form one long block of buildings. Here, the elements are clearly distinguished from each other—the byre and stable are more roughly built, with poorer roof timbers and thinner walls, than the dwelling house, while the store at the other end is narrower than the dwelling house and has a lower roof. Indeed most examples of this well-known and widespread type have the dwelling house clearly distinguishable from the outhouses; thus they must not be confused with the "long-house" of Wales, of which the distinctive feature is internal communication between the byre and the dwelling.[1] In contrast to this, there is no such internal communication in this Irish type, as each house, stable, byre, store and so on has its own entrance door, and very often the dwelling house and byre do not adjoin, but have a stable, store or dairy between them. But, as we shall see below, there is—or was until recently—a primitive form of the "long house" or combined dwelling house and cattle byre to be found in certain parts of Ireland.

Another farmyard form to be found in parts of the north and west, and especially in the hill districts and peninsulas of west Munster, is shown in fig. 5. Here the outhouses are built in one continuous row, and placed a short distance away from, and parallel to, the dwelling house; the space between the dwelling house and the outhouses serving not only as a yard but also as a passage between the public road and the farmer's fields; this yard or passage is, in many districts, called the "street".

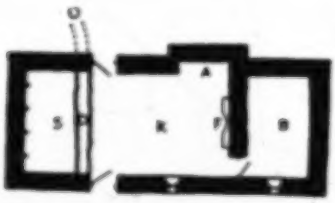
In addition to these various farmyard types, there may be found farms in which the buildings are not arranged in any set plan, but are scattered about in a haphazard fashion, sometimes without any yard; these occur but rarely in fertile lowlands but are not infrequent in mountain and moorland localities, such as parts of the Kerry mountains.

23/ It cannot be doubted that the system of having separate compartments or buildings for the dif-
35/ ferent kinds of animals and stores is of considerable antiquity in Ireland. The law tract *Crith Gablach*, written about A.D. 700, states that the *bó-aire fóhna* (a certain grade of land owner) must have,
36/ in addition to his dwelling house and a share in a corn-mill, a kiln, a barn, a sheep-fold, a pigsty and a calf-pen.[2] Another ancient law tract[3] refers to five "houses", namely, dwelling house, cow-

[119] [1] Peate, I. C., The Welsh House, 1940, chapter 10.
[2] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. iv, Dublin, 1879, 339.
[3] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. v, Dublin, 1901, 315.

house, pigsty, call-pen and sheepfold, and there are several other references in the ancient law tracts to cow-houses and pigsties.

But, notwithstanding this old and varied farmyard tradition, it is also quite clear that there was, up to the beginning of the present century, a widespread custom of keeping the livestock, or part of it, in the dwelling house. There are very many references to this in descriptions of life and conditions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Few, however, give any description of the internal arrangement of the houses, or the reason for the custom, and usually the accounts refer to small houses and a few poor animals. Some observers have mentioned the fear of wild beasts or robbers. "They are brought in by night for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves."[7] Here the writer refers to the bawns attached to the castles, but of course the same risk existed for the small farmer also. Another traveller writes of a night spent in a house in west Co. Galway: "I had just compos'd myselfe to sleepe when I was strangely surprised to heare the cows and sheep all comeing into my bed chamber. I enquired the meaneing and was told it was to preserve them from the wolfe which everie night was ramblingg about for prey."[8] Another and much later writer describes a night spent in a small house in the Kerry mountains, near Kenmare: "In the house where I slept—as indeed in every house of the same character in the country—the whole stock of the family, consisting chiefly of cows and sheep, were locked in at night. Such was the extreme poverty of the people that they would not otherwise be safe. ... There was a slight partition between the room where my bed was and the kitchen where there were three cows, a man, his wife and four children."[9]



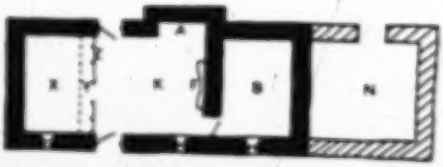


Fig. 10. House at Doohough, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; D, drain; O, drain outlet; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; S, byre.

Fig. 11. House at Srahnaggle, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; X, former byre; Y, filled-in drain; Z, screen of canvas on wooden frame; N, present byre.

In many dwelling houses fowl, especially hatching hens, were kept in special coops or boxes, and it was quite usual to have weak or sickly young animals, or calves or lambs which for some reason were separated from their dams, in the kitchen where they had warmth and attention until strong enough to be put with the other animals. In many parts of Ireland the poorest people—

[7] Petty, Marquess: Itinerary, 1677.

[8] Dunton, John: Letter no. 2 (1698), in MacLysaght, E.: Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1939, 339.

[9] Dinneen, M.: The Priest's Track.

those who had little or no land—commonly kept their animals in the dwelling house (which often had only one room) at night, a cow or two, or perhaps a donkey or pony, a pig or a goat and a few hens, the larger animals tied to pegs or rings set in the walls, the smaller in coops or boxes. In many houses, even large farmhouses, a special coop or perch was provided for the cock, whose crowing served to call the people of the house in the morning. A vivid description of the housing conditions of a remote and isolated community in the second half of the nineteenth century is given by Tomás Ó Crohan, writing about the Blasket Islands off the coast of Co. Kerry in the extreme south west: "There was a coop beside the partition with hens in it, and a hatching hen in an old pot nearby. At night a cow or two, a calf or two, an ass, two dogs tied to the wall or loose about the house. ... the two or three dogs would lie at the foot of the bed, the cow or two cows below them, tethered to the wall, the calf or two with the run of the kitchen and their muzzles in the fire. The ass was tied on the side of the house opposite the cows, and a cat with a couple of kittens in the fireplace niche ... And as well as all the other animals you might find a pet lamb or two about the house."[1] The custom of bringing the cattle into the dwelling house for milking during the period of the year when they are kept outdoors, as well as keeping them in the dwelling house during the winter period is recorded from Co. Kerry.[2] Indeed it is quite clear that, throughout the west and north of Ireland, the keeping of livestock in their small dwelling houses by the poorer people was quite a common practice up to the last years of the nineteenth century, and in houses from which the animals have long been ejected we may still see the rings or pegs to which they used to be tied.

There was, however, one type of house which was built and arranged as a dwelling for both people and animals, and which was still in use in the early years of the present century in parts of Connaught and Ulster, that is, in west Co. Galway, Co. Mayo, west Co. Sligo and west and north Co. Donegal. Figure 10 shows the plan of a typical specimen, at Doolough, Co. Mayo. This house is 12 m long and 5.5 m wide, built of stone and mortar and roofed with straw or grass thatch. It consists of two apartments, the smaller being a bedroom and the larger a kitchen-livingroom-cattle byre; the two apartments separated by the wall of the hearth. On one side of the hearth is a bed alcove. Two windows, one in each room and both on one side—the front—of the house, give light, and there are two doors, one in the front of the house and one in the back, placed directly opposite each other. On the farther side of these doors from the fire an open drain extends from side to side of the house; this drain is about 50 cm wide and 25 cm deep and is lined with flat stones. The space between this drain and the end wall of the house is the byre, and here, during the winter, three or four cows were kept tethered to the wall. The drain passed under the wall and led to the manure heap outside.

Figure 11 shows the manner in which many of these houses were changed during the last fifty years or so. A byre was built, attached to the house, as here, or quite apart from it. The drain was filled in, and a partition of wood, or, as here of canvas stretched on a wooden frame, erected to enclose the former byre which now became a bedroom. In many houses the partition was formed

[1] Ó Crohan, Tomás: An tOiléanach, chapter III.

[2] Campbell, Åke: "Irish Fields and Houses", Béaloideas, V, 68–70.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or press. 231 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible. 361 351 [173] [184]

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farmyard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type. 361 351

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, XVI, 102, 104.

[2] Flatrès, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Agglomeré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24. [113]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 bound by innumerable ties to a countryside richer and fuller
[262] than that of to-day. Thus birch, rowan, hazel, thorn, sally and holly all had their special purposes, and yew was in great demand for croziers and shrines. So we might go on down to the humblest lichen (for crottle dye) and the seaweed (Chapter 26). Bog timber, oak and "fir," had many uses—for furniture and implements, for roofs, gates, slide-cars and boat-timber as well as for fir ropes and lighting "splits." Superstitious customs are associated with several of the native trees, especially the rowan, the ash, hazel and whitethorn (Chap. 28).

Sycamore and beech, neither of them native to Ireland, have been extensively planted in recent centuries and grow so well that many have assumed them to be indigenous. The beech loves the well-drained moraines, while the sycamore, one of the few trees which will stand up to the full force of
● [351] the salt-laden winds, is planted in coastal districts for the shelter it provides: behind its dense summer foliage many a
313 low cabin lies hidden. Its white easily-worked timber is
139 sought by the wood-turner. Formerly the beetling engines of the linen country made a demand for beech and sycamore—the former for the beaters and the latter for the great beam. On steep hillsides which man has been unable to utilise one may still see patches of what may be regarded as wild scrub, a tangle of hazel, ash, black and white thorn, or birch, rowan and alder; but apart from the high-walled demesnes where giant trees are allowed to grow old and rot, the Irish landscape
137 is singularly bare of timber. Visitors from England will notice the poor development of hedgerow trees except for the ash of Co. Meath. This must be attributed largely to the fact that hedge trees have to grow in raised banks or "ditches," as they are called. Hedges and trees are very rarely planted on the level, for the ditch-tradition is older than the hedge. To quote Young once more: "I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks." But there is some compensation, in autumn, in the wealth of blackberries which they produce (Fig. 10).

137 Travellers of the early 19th century constantly refer to
311 landscapes without a single tree or shrub or any trace of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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hedgerows. It is hard to realise that the close-set pattern of hedged or walled fields which now distinguishes so much of the countryside is for the most part only a century or so old. In many cases it can be shown that the fields and fences were laid out within the last hundred years, following the break-up of the rundale village system and the re-distribution of the land (Chapter 6). In the eastern lowlands, where English influence has long been at work, the field pattern and hedgerows are no doubt much older, but in general the small cultivated patches were separated by mere balks or waste strips, varying from one to ten feet in width. Stones from the fields, hand-picked or removed with crow-bar and slipe (Chapter 22) were dumped on the balks or, more frequently, piled into "cairns" in the middle of the fields. Such stone-heaps are often found accompanying prehistoric field-systems, for example in Jutland.

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Fig. 10.

Stone walls or high earthen fences surrounded the house-clusters and enclosed each group of open fields, separating them from the common grazing land which lay outside and stretched away to the "head-ditch" on the mountain. As the rundale holdings gave way to individual farms the land was re-divided, the old ditches planted with whitethorn and new ditches, also set with thorn, were constructed—a process which was being actively carried out during the first half of the 19th century. One result of the scattering of the farms was the appearance of the long strip or "ladder farms," the cross hedges of the strip resembling the rungs of a ladder. 351 361 311

The oldest fences, then, are the protective banks around farms which occupy old village sites—a survival no doubt of the rings around the ancient raths—and the march-dykes or divisions between townlands. The varied vegetation on these older banks betrays them just as it does the pre-enclosure hedgerows in England: their massive tumbled ruins are overgrown with whins, blackthorn, sally, ash and bramble. There are, however, still older forgotten divisions on the hillsides dating from various prehistoric periods; some have 172 311 351

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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172 been discovered under many feet of peat. Several types can
311 be recognized, for example those with upright stones at
351 intervals, which are sometimes left as "standing stones" after the intervening walls have been removed. Old field fences at Cush, Co. Limerick, claimed to be contemporary with raths of the late Bronze Age and "essentially similar to those built by an Irish farmer of to-day" have been described by Professor O'Riordain. This appears to be a striking example of continuity, for the fences are closely followed by existing field-boundaries. Since they lie some 800 ft. above sea-level they do not invalidate the general picture I shall draw in the following chapter, but it is clear that much more work on the lines followed at Cush is required.

351 Hedges of whins (that is, gorse or furse) about the
314 farmstead are much prized not only for the shelter they afford
137 to stock—they are dense and do not drip—but because they form an admirable clothes line on washing day and a ready
[231] source of kindling wood. Formerly the young whin shoots were crushed and fed to horses. The heavy wooden maul and stone block used in the process may still be seen occasionally. It would require years of enquiry and observation to describe and classify the types of sod ("scraw") earth and stone fences which now parcel out the Irish soil into its patchwork of small fields. One may easily recognise the sod ditches of the rich grazing lands of Meath, with their tall thorn hedges and ash trees giving shelter to the cattle, the well-built dry-stone walls of the granite mountain slopes which vainly seek to stop the black-faced sheep, and the loose lace-like walls precariously constructed out of rough boulders in the morainic hills.

351 In the wind-swept mountains and along the coasts the
311 ditches are hedgeless, carrying only a tangle of heather or whins
137 and an occasional stunted tree, but throughout the lowlands the prevailing type of fence is a stone-faced bank of sods, in the side of which quick-thorn is planted (Fig. 10). These are cut back ruthlessly at longish intervals and are never pleached in the English way, so that the hedge is full of gaps. Occasion-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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ally one comes across very wide ditches of this type with a double hedge and paths or even cart-tracks in between, for example in Co. Limerick. In Rathlin Island the only hedge material that seems to escape the ravages of goats is the balsam poplar. Another plant of New World origin, born in Scotland of South American parents, is the Fuchsia, which runs riot along the coasts. Basket willows and wild "black sallies" for creels are sometimes grown—the latter has the advantage that it is not cropped by cattle. 351 311 137

The scarcity of good oak timber in a country once famed for its oaks—notice the frequency of the element "derry" in townland names—goes far to explain the prevalence of iron field-gates, which are hung on stout pillars of built stone. The newcomer to Ireland cannot fail to be struck by the massive gateposts along the roadsides and about the farm premises. In many districts they are whitewashed annually, and since they often assume proportions out of all relation to their function they are unnaturally conspicuous in a landscape bare of heavy timber. In parts of Ulster, for instance, they are such a characteristic feature of the countryside that it is difficult to imagine it without their cheering twinned greeting. Yet most of them must have been erected within the last century or so: writers of Irish travels before that time frequently comment on the absence of gates, for which in fact there was very limited need so long as the rundale system of farming persisted (Chapter 6). In the small village-communities of the west where the old scheme still prevails the gaps in the fences that surround the open field are closed with jagged root-stumps dragged from the bogs, or with a few thorn bushes. Sampson, writing of Co. Derry in 1814, states that gates were almost unknown except near towns, and that a common substitute was a hay-rope strung with thorns—an interesting rustic forerunner of the hated barbed wire. 351 417

Gate pillars and stiles

Fig. 11.

It might appear from the association of built piers with landlords' residences in Donegal that settlers introduced them to Ireland, but I am far from convinced that this is the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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explanation. It is true that they occur in Anglesea and in parts of the Scottish lowlands, but in both cases they are likely to be due to Irish influence. It seems to me more probable that an indigenous custom was taken up and diffused by improving landlords. I like to think of the Irish rath defended and glorified by two white stone pillars at the entrance, though I confess that this finds no support in reports of archæological excavations. The only dated piers I know bear the date 1839, but there is an eight-foot pair in Inishowen which, tradition says, had already lost their gates in 1709. The variety of styles and the superstitious beliefs connected with the pillars do strongly suggest that their origin is to be sought far back.

I imagine they were used, before the general adoption of fences, to shut off the farmyard from the surrounding open field. Mr. T. G. F. Paterson tells me that in Co. Armagh the gateposts are sometimes referred to as "husband and wife." The most popular shape is cylindrical (Fig. 11), and the average dimensions about three feet in diameter and six feet high. Pretentious specimens may be as high as ten feet. The top is generally finished in a low cone but varies considerably from one district to another: in some parts they are flat-topped "so that the fairies can dance on them." In Co. Meath the usual shape is semi-circular and may have originated in the common practice of building the pillars against a wall at the entrance to the farmyard. In some counties they are square, with a pyramidical roof or a coping of large stones.

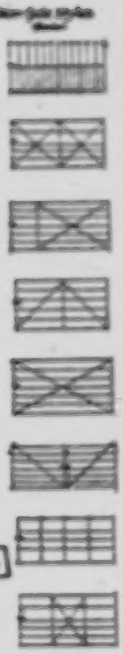

Fig. 11

The gates, whether of iron or wood fitted with iron straps, are generally hung in an old-fashioned way: they pivot in a stone socket or "spud-stone," while the top of the heel turns in a perforated stone, nowadays replaced by an iron eye. The gates are not seldom made by the smith, who fashions them out of worn wheel hoops, for instance; and this helps to explain the pleasing absence of standardisation. Fastenings, too, are of many different kinds. Only in a few wooded areas are home-made wooden gates popular: they are light

[326]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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constructions of pegged branches, interwoven it may be with willow or hazel and turning in hoops of wire or cord on a wooden post. But as often as not, even where there are built gate-pillars, the gap is closed with an old cart or a few thorn bushes. The Irishman does not take the same pride as the English farmer in having a well-hung gate. It would appear that more importance is attached to the gateposts than to the gate!

351
417

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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343 "troubles" of 25 years ago. Moreover underground "hides" have been constructed in recent times by poteen-makers. A description of a Donegal example said to have been made about 150 years ago will be found in *Antiquity*, June, 1939, p. 220.

351 361 Finally, something should be said about the disposition of the farm buildings, but this is a subject which calls for research. Broadly speaking the arrangement native to the country is some kind of long house, with the offices under the same roof as the kitchen and room. I use the word "native" because in areas of strong English influence such as Wexford what seems to be an introduced type of lay-out is the courtyard style where the buildings are grouped round the sides of a square. There are many approximations to this arrangement in various parts of the east and south of Ireland, and I do not think, as my friend Colonel R. G. Berry has suggested, that the type is native. Where the Old Irish homestead has a number of outbuildings these tend to be placed in front of and parallel to the dwelling house. Efforts to persuade the peasant to put his manure heap and his animals behind the house have, until recently, failed, for he likes to keep an eye on his wealth!

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Aran Islands

Plate V.

285
516
291
351

MAKING A SKIB
INISHERE, ARAN
CREEL IN GROUND BEHIND

[facing p. 121]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(c.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Dugherty's, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(D.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(E.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dunistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct. 463 241 [351] [412]

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [407] [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 where the land has been almost the sole available re-
[578] source go far to explain the jealousy with which established rights are maintained, but there are deeper needs and bonds in the rural community.

[491]
[102]

FIG. 4. Map of scattered farms on the Co. Down coast, showing seaweed-roads. (Based upon the Ordnance map with the sanction of the Controller, H.M.S.O.)

[417]
[351]

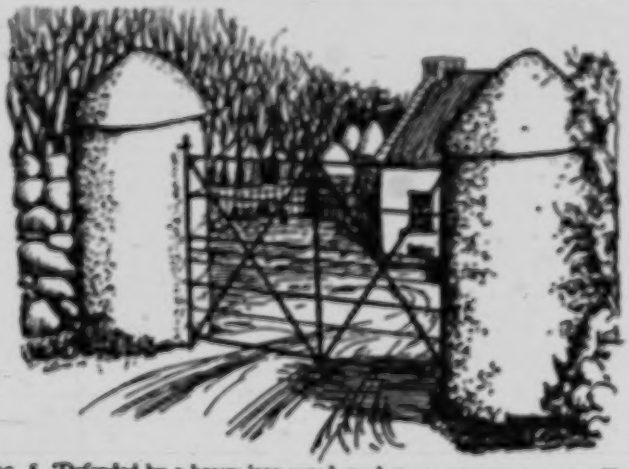

FIG. 5. 'Defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars:' an Ulster farm.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 6

243
516
291
41.

1. Shearing oats with the toothed sickle, Co. Antrim.

291
342
351
243
412

2. Thrashing oats with flails, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 97]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

VIII

FARMYARDS AND FENCES

351 THE paved area in front of the traditional Irish farmhouse is known as 'the street', a word here used in its original sense of a pavement. The old style street is usually cobbled, and occasionally, especially along the coast where the materials lay to hand, neat arrangements of waterworn pebbles made a pretty pattern at the door. This is a technique of prehistoric origin which is found along the Atlantic coasts and in the Mediterranean region. The area around the hearth also may be pebbled, but I have not seen in Ireland the entire kitchen floor so treated, as in parts of Wales. There may be a stone bench against the front of the house near the door, and here, or in specially constructed wall coves across the cobbled street, pots and buckets are put out to dry (Fig. 32).

Immediately in front of the house is the traditional location of
237 the dungheap. 'The dunghill before each door' was commented
351 on by nearly every nineteenth-century traveller. The apologists, it is true, remind us that tenants would not move the dunghill for fear of having their rents raised because of 'improvements'. But its proximity to the dwelling house need occasion no surprise when we recall that down to a century or two ago, in remote parts, the dung was allowed to accumulate at the end of the living-room. We recall that in 1857 a school teacher wrote that some houses in Donegal had 'within their walls from ten to fifteen tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year'.[1] Nowadays, however, from hygienic motives, the manure is removed to a less conspicuous part of the farmyard, though if possible still in sight of the door, for the farmer likes

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

to keep an eye on his wealth. The muck-heap is the source of 237
good crops and good luck, a potent symbol of well-being: 351
'where there is muck there is luck'. It was the custom, recorded [177]
for instance in the Glens of Antrim, to stick a sprig of rowan tree upright in the midden on May Eve to protect the farm [188]
from mischievous fairies. The muck symbolizes the fertility of the farm.

FIG. 38. Keeping-hole for pets, Co. Down.

In many parts of the country, especially in the northern 351
counties and in Co. Wexford, the entrance to the farmyard is 417
dignified by a pair of massive stone gate piers, generally built-up from field-stones in the form of a conical topped cylinder and kept whitewashed. There are many modern variants in concrete, and the old style piers are steadily disappearing and are often hastened to their end by carelessly driven tractors or lorries. They seem far too massive for the gates they carry, resembling twin bastions defending the entrance to a fortified enclosure (Figs. 5, 35). In some areas, probably under the influence of improving landlords or land agents, field entrances are also dignified by built-up stone piers, and it is possible to explain the fashion as part of the agrarian revolution which resulted in enclosure. In the virtual absence of well-grown oak trees they provided an Irish alternative to the oak gate-post of the English farm, sturdy enough to carry the iron gate which for the same reason took the place of the five-barred oaken gate.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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417

FIG. 33. Gateposts, Co. Down. *Left:* built-up pier with stone hinge and spud-stone. *Right:* granite slab with iron hinge and spud-stone.

[342] The shortage of suitable timber also led to the disappearance of the native wattled house and of the introduced timber-framed house, and the fact that such houses were more combustible (and that wooden gates, as one observer remarked, would have been stolen for firewood) was of less importance. The prototype of the stone piers of the farmyard may perhaps be seen in the great entrance pillars of the fortified 'bawns' erected by the seventeenth-century planters. Yet the style is quaintly archaic, and they have often been compared to miniature round towers. Very stout examples do indeed resemble the stone beehive 'clochauns' which we describe later, except that they are solid. In their construction the method of marking out the circumference and maintaining a vertical line by means of a string attached to a central post which is later removed is primitive enough. Moreover the method of hanging the gate is archaic. It is the harr-hanging which is found also in Scotland, the Lake District, Cornwall and Brittany and has survived in these stony

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

refuge corners of Europe. The gate swings like a fire-crane, not on hinges or rings-and-hooks, but directly on its heel, on a projecting iron spud which swivels in a stone socket. These stone sockets or spud-stones are frequently seen around old farm sites, and very similar stones in Mesopotamia go back into the fifth millennium B.C. In the days before the iron gate was introduced wooden gates were hung in the same way, and we know from Scotland that they were sometimes tipped with stone.[1] A projecting stone perforated to hold the top of the gate-post (Fig. 35) has now been replaced, as a rule, by an iron eye. 351 417

In Co. Armagh I have heard the farm gate-piers referred to as the man and wife of the house, and one of the pair may have a flat top whereon, it is said, the fairies like to dance. The old people used to place the two first plates of champ—the Hallowe'en festival dish of mashed potatoes—on the top of the pier.[2] While all this may be nothing more than an exuberant play of fancy we cannot overlook the megalithic practice of selecting alternating pointed and flat-topped monoliths for some of their ritual erections, symbolizing, it is thought, male and female. The twin portal stones of many megalithic chamber graves come to mind, and pairs of such stones now standing in isolation, as at Lisdivin in Co. Tyrone,[3] may well have been a symbolic entrance to some vanished ceremonial enclosure. The tradition of large entrance piers dies hard. Not infrequently today the first thought of an improving farmer is to erect imposing concrete pillars at the entrance to his property. They are as a rule garishly painted and pebble-dashed, a poor substitute for their simple whitewashed forerunners. [769]

In the early nineteenth century field gates were almost unknown except near towns, and we read of the rustic forerunner of the iniquitous barbed wire—a hay-rope strung with thorns.[4] In boggy areas one commonly sees the gnarled root stumps of bog trees doing service as a gate, much as the Canadian pioneer will make a temporary fence with grubbed-up stumps. The huge

[1] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 127.
[2] Michael Murphy, *At Slieve Gullion's Foot* (1940), 64.
[3] O. Davies, *U.J.A.*, 2 (1939), 169.
[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 288.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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defensive horns of the long-extinct Irish elk, dug from the bogs, have been utilized for this purpose! That the gate-piers are more significant than the gate is evident when one sees a bundle of thorns or a collection of decaying farm implements doing service as a stop-gap between a pair of magnificent pillars. Where stones of suitable dimensions are available, in granite or limestone country, for example, single uprights take the place of the built-up piers (Fig. 33). In the Aran Islands the field-walls, a single stone in width, have no permanent openings, but phantom gates—a portion of wall which is knocked down and rebuilt as required—are defined by upright slabs (Fig. 34).

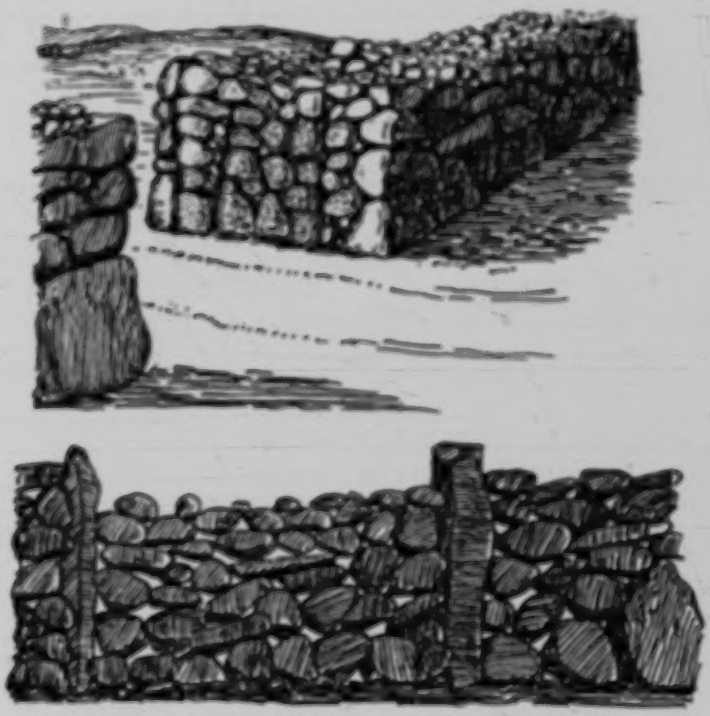

FIG. 34. *Above:* a 9-ft. wide wall in the Mourne Mountains. 'Monumental relics of secular toil, such walls may record by their successive accretions periods of agricultural activity through the ages.' *Below:* stone gateway, Aran Islands.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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This was formerly the custom also in Connemara and Co. Clare, and it finds an explanation not so much in the scarcity of wood or iron for gates as in the desirability of giving the wind no way into the fields. Such stone walls, seemingly artless constructions of rough boulders, are characteristic of the thin-soiled hillsides throughout Ireland. Most of them are of no great age, for permanent enclosure on this scale is comparatively recent, yet dry-stone walls were built by the men of the megaliths, and there was a lingering tradition of wall-building among the stony hills, which blossomed with intricate garlands of dry-stone walls when enclosure came. What distinguishes these boulder walls is their flimsy lace-like appearance when seen against the sky. Herein lies their strength, for they are full of holes and offer less resistance to the wind than a solid wall. They are most characteristic of hillsides where stony moraines and drift-boulders occur: other types of stone call for different treatment, and taking into account those fences which are partly or entirely made of sods or earth there is an endless variety in the tens of thousands of miles of ditches which mark out this now much-enclosed land.

To speak of a ditch without defining the Irish meaning of the word is to mislead the English reader. It is used in the sense of dyke, a raised bank, and it is not difficult to see why, since the positive and negative earth-ditch usually accompany each other, the word should change meaning. The older meaning of 'ditch' in the north of England was a bank. Similarly in Normandy the word 'fosse' is applied to a raised bank dividing the fields. An Ulster M.P. is said to have caused much amusement at Westminster in a debate on fox-hunting when describing how Irish horses jumped a ditch by changing feet on top! In the north of Ireland as in Scotland the open drain alongside the ditch is known as the sheugh.

We know from archaeological evidence that many existing types of ditch are of prehistoric antiquity. The dry-stone walls of the circular enclosures known as cashels and the earthen ditches of the countless raths of the Dark Ages were, by and large, little more than farmyard fences. Scores of existing farmsteads occupy the old sites and even when, as is more usual, the farms are on sites of fairly recent choice the ditch surrounding

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 417 the farmyard tends to be a substantial construction. Where the farm is a survivor of a clachan, the small fields near the house, little more than gardens in size, are surrounded by massive winding walls attractive to the eye and always worth examining. Over rough ground they pick their way erratically, incorporating great boulders which could not be moved and which, centuries ago perhaps, became the nuclei of smaller boulders cleared from the fields. Knotted tangles of walls ten or twelve feet thick have resulted, monumental relics of secular toil. Such walls may 351 record by their successive accretions periods of agricultural 417 activity through the ages (Fig. 34). When more stones are 172 removed from the fields they are added as an outer skin, and one can easily recognize the latest additions by the bleached unlichened nakedness of the stones. Archaeological material may be accidentally incorporated in the core of the wall. The wall-builders, too, apparently had a habit of thrusting into the crevices curiosities picked up when working in the fields or bits of abandoned tools, and I have occasionally found prehistoric polished stone axes which their finders had pushed into a wall. The core of the wall is likely to contain similar oddments and bits of pottery, so that the excavation of old walls can be quite profitable to the archaeologist. In Denmark it has been possible to date ancient field-walls to various periods stretching back into prehistory, mainly by means of the stray objects they contain.

In Ireland the clearest evidence for the antiquity of some field boundaries comes from the remains found buried under the bogs. Examples in Co. Londonderry have been described by Dr. Oliver Davies as consisting of irregularly piled stone slabs with standing stones set at intervals.[1] Some of these ancient walls, which country people in Ulster call Danish fences, seem to have enclosed large areas and appear from their contour-alignment to have been head-dykes, enclosing land once arable, but now overgrown with peat, and demarcating it from the rough outfield. I have seen examples both in Ulster and in Munster which are of massive dry-stone work tied to great standing stones set at fairly regular intervals. Often it is only the standing stones, deep-bedded by the builders, that remain to puzzle the archaeologist. A characteristic of these fences is that

[1] O. Davies, *U.J.A.*, 2 (1939), 61–65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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many of the stones are set vertically or diagonally.[1] Others of the same character, or equally massive earthen banks, may be observed to radiate from some of the raths or 'Danish forts' which we now know to have been farmsteads of the Dark Ages and, since they seem to have been single farms held in severalty, the enclosures which they presuppose are likely to be co-eval with the raths. Indeed Professor O'Riordain has claimed that the existing earthen field fences around the group of raths at Cush in Co. Limerick closely follow those of the late Bronze Age which were 'essentially similar' . . . 'the present-day field system is the direct descendant of the ancient one'.[2]

Much smaller and more irregular are the walls one sees associated with areas of megalithic settlement, though this may be because of their great age. Indeed one example recently discovered during the excavation of a megalithic tomb in Co. Down, which was older than the construction of the cairn and partly preserved by it, was built in coursed dry-stone work.[3] We have as yet little information to draw on but it seems likely that these oldest walls were mainly the result of the casual piling-up of stones cleared from little patches of cultivated ground. Some of the great walls associated with clachans and referred to above may well be built on the foundations of such lines of stones pitched around and between bedded boulders which could not be moved. Yet the size of some of the stones built into these ancient walls is astonishing. I have watched a loose-limbed farmer, who seemed to inherit the physical characters as well as the skills of the megalith builders, handle with superb ease great boulders which one would think it beyond human power to move. A stout timber or iron bar and a sturdy slipe (Chapter XIII) are the tools used. Alternatively boulders may be buried *in situ* if there is sufficient depth of soil, but until recently there was a reluctance, for superstitious reasons, to break up large stones. I have not come across the old miners' practice of cracking stones with fire,[4] and except near towns or quarries the splitting of field stones by means of wedges, 'plug

[1] O. Davies, loc. cit., 62.

[2] S. P. O'Riordain, *P.R.I.A.*, 45 (1940), 83–181.

[3] A. E. P. Collins and D. M. Waterman, *Millin Bay, a late Neolithic Cairn in Co. Down*, H.M.S.O. (1955), 8.

[4] But A. Young (*Tour*, 2, 115) describes the process near Killarney in 1778.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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351 417 [316] and feathers', or explosives is a comparatively recent development. These methods took a heavy toll of the megalithic monuments of granite-quarrying districts such as the Mourne Mountains in the nineteenth century, though superstitious tales are still told of the misfortunes which befell the stone-workers.

Another type of stone ditch popular in the limestone plain of east Galway is curiously similar to the Scots Galloway dyke and may well have been introduced by improving landlords or their agents. The lower portion of the ditch is a dry wall of small stones about two feet high carefully levelled on top, and on this rests a wall of boulders of lace-work type two or three feet high. The heavy superstructure not only secures the lower part with its weight but, perhaps because of its slight overhang and tottering appearance, is said to deter cattle and sheep from approaching the wall (Fig. 35). The low walls of loosely piled

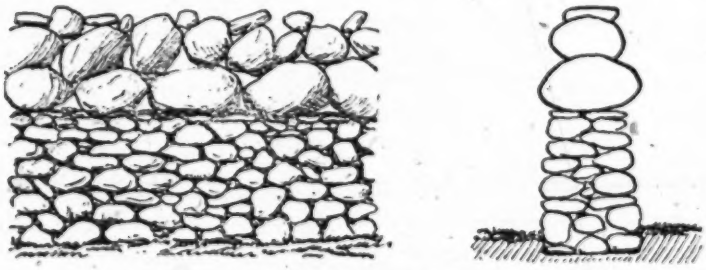

FIG. 35. East Galway ditch of Galloway type, and cross-section.

stones on Rathlin Island are said to act as a deterrent on the principle of the modern electric fence: I was told that animals give them a wide berth once having learnt that they collapse almost at a touch. At the other extreme are the ten-foot walls which run for miles around many demesnes, isolating them physically from the surrounding country so that only at the entrances or the now numerous gaps does one get a glimpse of the decayed grandeur inside. A good many of them are 'famine walls' built to relieve distress during famine years, in return for a meagre allowance of food and a wage of perhaps a few pence per day. [731]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FARMYARDS AND FENCES

Throughout the lowland farming country the commonest ditch is an earthen bank faced on one side with stones and planted with quicks slipped in near the base among the stones (Fig. 36). This was the 'approved mode' of enclosing the land 351 417

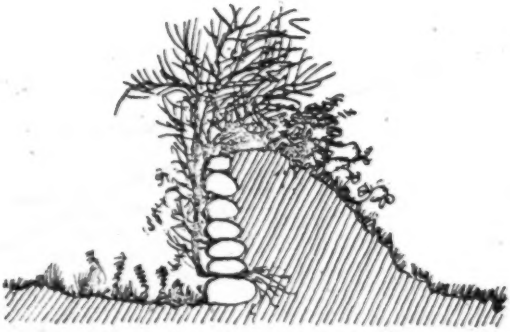

FIG. 36. The hedged ditch, cross-section.

advocated by the reformers from the late eighteenth century onwards, but it was noted that 'the planting of hedgerows was repugnant to the practice of the country' and in many districts the hedges were neglected and the livestock still had to be tethered in the fields.[1] The tradition of temporary fences died hard. 'A year's ditch passeth for a very strong fence', wrote Sir John Davies to the Earl of Salisbury in 1606. These sod fences were deliberately thrown down after harvest, and the decayed sods enriched the soil. The *Advertisements for Ireland* published in 1623 state: 'Their fields lie open and unclosed. Where wood is plentiful they hedge in all their corn with stakes and bushes and pull them down in the winter and burn them.'[2] When fixed field-divisions were adopted, the hedgeless earthen bank was preferred in many parts of the country, usually growing a luxuriant crop of brambles and gorse (whins). These were a useful source of firewood and provided both shelter and food for the livestock, the 'pounded whins' being fed to horses. The knocking stones, flat slabs or stone basins where the whins [231] [246]

[1] *Report on the Estates of the Drapers' Company in Ireland*, 1829.
[2] *Advertisements for Ireland* (1623), Ed. G. O'Brien (1923), 33.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 were 'melled' with a wooden maul, are sometimes to be seen in the farmyard, and there were a few water-driven 'whin-mills'. 417 Their use is almost forgotten as is the custom of growing a [246] field of whins to provide fodder. This was done in Co. Cavan and it is a recognized method of land utilization in the poorer parts of Brittany. A gorse hedge near the homestead is still popular as a place for drying clothes on washing day. 'Firing being scarce', wrote Gabriel Beranger of the barony of Bargy and Forth, 'they plant all their ditches with furze, which serves them for firing, and is reckoned equal in value with the produce of the land.'[1] Small farmers in Co. Down preferred wide earthen ditches because, as Binns was told: 'we have both sides of the ditch for feeding the cattle, and whins to bruise for the horses'.[2] The economy of the grass-grown ditch becomes clearer when we realize that on boulder-strewn hillsides where wide stone ditches separate the tiny fields a high proportion of the land is sterilized. Such wide earth banks often serve as footpaths where [487] the land is wet, and in Co. Limerick I have seen cart tracks on top of them. This habit may go back to the wide balks between some of the openfield patches, which were used as access ways where the boggy fields were too soft to take a cart. Such double ditches, when faced with stones on both sides, are undoubtedly an old type of fence, for they are characteristic of many raths or Dark Age farmsteads. These 'dry fences' are common in Co. Kerry and also in north Antrim, and they occur in Brittany, and in parts of Anglesey and north Pembrokeshire. In stony country the filling of a double ditch may be of loose stones gathered from the fields, and here again we have ancient examples in the enclosing walls of small cashels which are the equivalent in thin-soiled areas of the raths of the lowlands.

351 What nearly all these many types of field fences have in common is their untidy appearance. Dry stone walls tend to be cyclopean, lacking the precision of those of north England or the Cotswold country. Rough glacial boulders are a poor substitute for oolite, and one recalls the comment of Sir John Russell that Irish architecture suffered because of the virtual absence of Jurassic rocks in the geological series. Rarely does

[1] Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 132.
[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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one see a well-kept or neatly trimmed field-hedge and never a staked and pleached hedgerow to compare with those of the English lowlands. The whole art of hedging is poorly developed, and the craft of laying a hedge almost unknown. The thorns are allowed to grow freely—as though they were the true fairy thorns which must never be damaged—and cut back ruthlessly at long intervals, when the many gaps are stuffed with dead thorns. The truth is that it is the bank rather than the hedge which makes the fence, and the thorns do little more than provide some shelter for livestock. But while the earthen banks grow tall hedges they will not support good hedgerow timber. The few starved ashes, sycamores or stunted beeches compare very unfavourably with the great oaks and elms of the English Midlands. Arthur Young brought his English common sense and prejudices to bear on the subject: 'To permit a hedge to grow too long without cutting not only ruins it for a fence but spoils the trees that are planted with it . . . I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks.' And consequently, 'the greatest part of the kingdom presents a naked bleak dreary view for want of wood.'[1] Elsewhere he writes, of Mitchelstown in Co. Cork, 'An oak, an ash, or an elm is almost as great a rarity as an olive, an orange or a mulberry.'[2]

The planting of hedges and hedgerow timber had been advocated by improvers since the sixteenth century. The Ordinances for the Government of Ireland (1534) lay down that 'every husbandman having a plough within the English Pale shall set by the year twelve ashes in the ditches and closes of his farm'. The ditch-bank was evidently already a feature of the farms in the Pale, and it is interesting that there, as generally through the east and north of the country, the ash—providing the most useful timber for general farm use—is the favourite hedgerow tree. But it is in the closes (the farmyards) that one sees most trees today, chief among them the sycamore whose dense foliage gives protection from the winds and from the prying eyes of neighbours. Next to the sycamore in popularity, and similarly providing a thick cover, come the beech and the conifers, and it is noteworthy that none of these species is

[1]Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 66
[2]ibid, 2, 272.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 native to the country. Around the coasts the sycamore is almost
313 the only tree that persists, for it will stand up to the salt-laden gales everywhere save on the most exposed parts of the west coast. R. U. Sayce has recorded the belief, from Montgomeryshire, that 'sycamore trees keep the fairies away and stop them spoiling the milk',[1] but this bit of lore cannot be of any great antiquity since the tree did not reach Britain from its home in the mountain belt of southern Europe until the sixteenth century. It presumably arose from the association of the tree with the farmyard. In Ireland the sycamore probably came in with the early seventeenth century planters, though the beech may be a medieval or even older introduction. Both trees had many economic uses, especially for dry-coopering, that is the
[322] manufacture of provision casks and butter firkins, and the sycamore is an excellent wood for turnery. Later, as the linen industry became mechanized, the beetling mills demanded sycamore for the great beam of the engine and beech for the vertical beetles.

The lay-out of farm buildings seems to have been, in the
351 native single-farms, as haphazard and formless as was that of
361 the houses themselves in an old clachan. As separate farms with outbuildings ('offices') became fashionable improvements after the middle of the eighteenth century, the latter were built for convenience of access and they were put close to the farmhouse, either attached to one end or lying parallel to provide a windbreak. Only in the planted areas does one find old examples of planned 'courtyard farms' where the house and offices enclose a square or rectangular yard. I fancy the stone or wooden 'hovel-stands' with their picturesque mushroom-like staddle-stones are also confined to planted districts. In the west a favourite method of making stacks is to build them about a central pole. (See p. 164.)

The wayside style is another absentee in the native Irish
487 countryside, as is the footpath which is its companion. Short-
[417] cuts are rarely worth while in a land of tiny fields, and if there is a right of way there is sure to be a tolerable road. In fact there are so many farm lanes and access ways to mountain, seashore or bog that an economist might regard the amount of land so taken out of cultivation as excessive. It has been

[1] R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 45 (1938).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [659] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. 342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [998] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 627 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is [574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater 342
part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen. There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of house is common, but there is also a squarer type which may have a second story.

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled, rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the [362]
governmental agencies and patterned after those built first by the Congested Districts Board (1893–1923) are slated and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statistical statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families, but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's population live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings, which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence between the proportion of small farm population to total population.

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is 592
the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking 352
is done, the table around which the family — first the adult 353
males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen [778]
utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the "Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled [415]
with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festivals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part

592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is
512 of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must, They descend from father to son with the house ~~and~~ the farm on which it stands.

341 called the first type *the central-chimney house,* because the chimney will be erected over the fire-place somewhere about the middle of the roof, (fig. 1 and pl. XLI: 1, 2, 3 ; the second *the gable chimney house* because here the chimney will be close to the gable often being built as a part of the stone-built gable (fig. 2 and pl. XLI: 2). The outside chimney then not seldom forms a pronounced gabletop or gable-finial.

The Central-chimney house.

342 Some of the most primitive houses I found in Ireland belong to the central chimney house type. To illustrate I choose a house from Spiddle, Co. Galway (fig. 3 and pl. XLI: 1). The house is said to have been built before 1839 and to have withstood the "big wind" of that year. How old it actually is I had no means of discovering. The walls are of stone with the mortar put on afterwards on the inside and outside, but not used in the actual construction of the walls. Some outhouses belonging to this farm are all of dry wall construction. The roof of straw rests on couples of beams, supported on the inner edge of the walls, so that the thatch does not quite reach as far as the outside edge of the wall, but leaves a narrow space uncovered. [171] This is an archaic feature found now in very old buildings in Ireland, as always in the black houses of Scotland.

The house is built on a slope, so that the fireplace end of the house lies higher than the entrance door. There is only one room, but a low partition wall at the back of the fire cuts off a section which is used as a bedroom. [352] In the lower end of the house a dresser is placed so that it together with a small table cuts off another section that nowadays is also used as a bedroom. Some stools, a cradle and a churn are the other contents. There are two doors opposite of each other, both provided with half-doors. The fireplace consists of some flat stones on the floor. Over the fireplace there is a [354] wattled chimney resting on two beams, supported by a cross beam. The chimney is adapted to a hole in the thatched roof, so there is no outside chimney. On one side of the house, the sheltered side, there are two windows.

About other houses of the same kind, I have heard from the inhabitants [231] that in olden times the lower end of the house was used for the cattle. In late times the cattle have been removed to an outhouse and this part of the house has been adopted as a living room.

342 171 The division of the house into three sections, which is characteristic of the central-chimney house type, is quite clear in the Scottish houses, namely the black houses, the bedroom being at the upper end of the house behind the

[Text continues top of p. 211]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 fire, and the byre at the lower end of the house. In the Welsh long-house
171 the hearth generally seems to face the living room and bedroom part of the house, and cuts these sections from the byre part. The two doors, opposite to each other, very typical of the Irish house (see p. 217), are also found in the Welsh long-houses, but here the space between the two doors has a more pronounced feeding-walk character, than we find common in Ireland, at least to-day when the cattle are generally removed from the dwelling house. For the three sections of some South Scandinavian houses see p. 222.

The gable-chimney house.

342 In various parts of Ireland I have found numbers of primitive houses with stone-built gables. These houses are always rectangular in form, never oval. Externally the type varies greatly depending mostly on the prevailing wind. On the coast, in very windy districts, the roof will not be built very high, but in more sheltered parts, it will be more lofty.

The gable finial, the gable top often consitutes a very characteristic feature of this house-type, pl. XLII: 2. Only where the low roof is used, the gable top is not especially accentuated. The outside chimney constitutes the gable top of the chimney-gable. On the opposite gable the gable-finial may be form-
[341] ed in a corresponding way, as a chimneyshaft without any flue. The chimney-shafts at the gables form perhaps the single example in the Irish peasant house of intentional architecture conforming with a wide-spread custom in Western Europe. As regards the serrated gable-ends see p. 226.

342 In small dwellings of this type there is only one room, the fireplace is si-
354 tuated against one gable-wall. The most convenient place for the beds is be-
352 side the fire, and at least one bed is to be found here. This is a very original feature of this house-type which is confirmed by Scottish material, old Irish descriptions, and even drawings. In the middle-west and north of Ireland, the bed is built in a projection outwards, *cailleach,* or at least in a niche in the side wall close to the fireplace, pl. XLII: 2, as in the Scottish *tig dubh.*

342 As in the central-chimney house, there are sometimes two doors opposite each other, but even a single door is common in small oid houses.

Windows have come at a later period here also. In old-fashioned houses there is generally only one window, sometimes none at all.

342 At the lower end of the house, there was in more remote times place for
231 domestic animals. The division of the room by means of the dresser may have been adopted at an early stage, the dresser being especially suitable as

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Wicklow

342
354
[352]

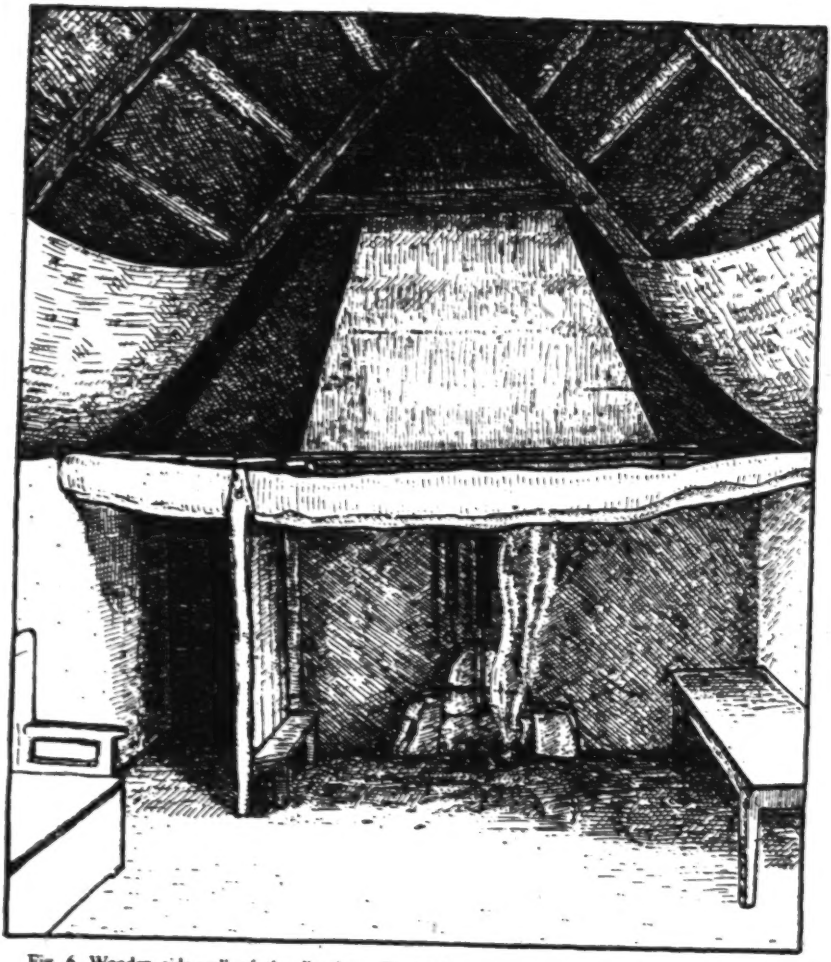


Fig. 6. Wooden side-wall of the fireplace. The kitchen corner. Kyle, Ballinglen, Co. Wicklow.

the "shelter door" into consideration, the whole kitchen being of importance with regard to the fire.

The basket chimney, *síneán,* is plastered with clay inside and outside to resist sparks from the fire. A plaster mixture of clay and calfmanure is said to be very useful. The older chimneys were straight i. e. on looking up from the fireplace the sky was visible above. In later ones the flue, *poll an deataigh,* [237]

342 is bent from side to side to create more draught. The chimney narrowed gra-
354 dually upwards until the basket, *cis*, on top was reached. In old houses the chimney was not always capped by the basket-like contraption on the outside, for instance not in coastal districts in the North, pl. XLV: 2. The external chimney however is a noteworthy detail. It was now and then of woven rods of twig or willow and it was thatched in some parts of Ireland, pl. XLVII: 1. In other old houses pieces of board were placed on edge in square formation.

The external chimney is sometimes lacking even if there is an inside chimney. In Donegal in places exposed to the wind, I have seen this even in houses with a stonebuilt chimney.

The basket or wooden chimney is supported by two wooden beams resting on the side walls, sometimes however projecting from the gable wall, pl. XLVII: 3. In a later stage there are two pillar walls or hobwalls carrying the basket chimney.

Across the chimney (inside) halfway up or more, a stick of cut tree-branch projects across the chimney. This stick is supporting the chimneyrack or pot-rack, hanger, *drol*, which is an iron bar and hangs down to the fire-level. Another way of hanging pots over the fire is to use the crane, *croch*, a hooked bar of wood (in older times) or iron. Usually the hangers and the crane are combined and in fact there are many hangers hanging at the same time from the crane. Now and then a chain is used as a hanger.

[352] At the side of the fireplace there is a stool, *stól*, or a number of stools, often varying a little in size, but usually very low. Primitive is the block of wood, *bloc*, a section of a tree, used as a stool. This I have seen in chimney-corners in Co. Kerry. There the round stool of coiled hay-ropes, *suidhistín*, also will be found.

The hob or protection wall behind the fire can develop in such a way that it incorporates the two stools at both sides of the fire, so that there will be two stone-built seats.

Also the pier of the fireplace will be built by pilasters on both sides forming a stonebreast, *piléar an teinteáin*, on which the wattled or wooden chimney rests.

[352] In the pier, as well as in the stone wall behind the fireplace, in the hob, and underneath the stone-seats, there are small closets or holes used to keep utensils. In Donegal, I have seen a hole in the wall at each side of the fire, the one hole for the woman's snuffbox and knitting, the other exclusively for the man's pipe.

In later times the chimney is often built of stone and when at last the pier

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, 342
the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on 354
a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Done- [184]
gal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in 592
Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted 354
to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All [775]
Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the [171]
fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, [184]
I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot 352
with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district 171
between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh*, where the in-

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352
171

built bed in the hall beside the fireplace has been common. But this custom of bed is also known over a wider area along the North Sea. As to the outshot it is to be remarked that it must be compared with the outshots of English and Northwest European houses. Where the outshot tradition is natural to the house-types, the outshots are used for purposes and not only for beds.

In Donegal I have found *cailleachs* closed with wooden doors, similar to the built in beds of North-West Europe. The *cailleach* is cut off by curtains.

It has been mentioned that the dresser at an early stage of development has formed part of the partition. This and other facts (the dresser has generally a fixed traditional place, different in different parts of Ireland) seems to indicate that the dresser belongs — as in Scandinavia and West-European countries — to a rather old set of furniture.

The table however seems not to have any prominent place in the old-fashioned houses at least in Western and Northern Ireland. It is always put along a wall in primitive houses, and one can never sit round it. It never attracted the social activities of the house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating social and family-centre. In this respect the table in Ireland has never supplanted the fireplace. There are no references, as far as I am told in the early tales to people feasting at the table. I think that the table [184] does not belong to the original set of furniture. In many fishermen's dwellings in North-West of Donegal it is still missing. The people sit in front [264] of the fireplace round the shallow-basket, *ciseog*, when eating, the basket resting upon the knees of the familymembers. This basket will be seen after dinner-time hanging to dry on the south wall of the house, pl. XLVIII: 2. I suppose this is the native and original "table", at least in certain cultural spheres of Western and Northern Ireland.

[113] [1] In a valuable article by Ludwig Mühlhausen, Contributions to the study of the concrete material culture of the Gaoltacht, Cork Arch. Soc. Vls. XXXVIII, p. 67, and XXXIX, p. 41, et sqq., is found a very good description of houses in Dingle Peninsula and Cornamona, Co. Galway. I have not come across any more detailed contribution to the study of the Irish house. From books of travel and novels some information can be picked up. See Béaloideas 1935. p. 57 sqq.

[114] [2] The material here presented has been collected by me during journeys in Ireland in the years 1934 and 1935. For the many facilities afforded me in pursuing my investigations in Ireland I must express my thanks to the Irish Folklore Commission and its Director Mr Séamus O'Duilearga, on whose behalf I undertook these studies. I am also grateful to my Irish friends both scholars and country people who kindly lent me their assistance. Here I can only mention Mr Seán O'Suilleabháin, B. A., and Miss Áine Ni Chróinin, M. A., especially for having supplied the Gaelic terms used by me.

[3] As to the Welsh long-houses the cruck construction seems to be an exception (see Peate p. 452).

[4] Cfr. Sigurd Erixon: Skansens Kulturgeschichtliche Abteilung, Führer. Stockholm 1928, p. 92.

[5] *Pinnúir*. f., a gable, a gable-end; fig. a patron, chief, etc. *pinnúir an tighe*, the house-gable, fig. the "head" of the house. Fr. pignon, Eng. pynum. Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE: FIRESIDE AND FOOD.

As we step inside an old Irish cottage, over a threshold of 352 stone slabs or a pattern of small cobble-stones, we tread on a 342 hard mud floor in which we may see, towards the hearth, the "pot hole" where the large iron pot rests when it is lifted off the fire. I have noticed similar holes in the mud floor, with the remains of the round-bottomed pottery vessel inside, near the excavated hearths of Irish houses nearly 40 centuries old. In paved kitchens a block of wood set flush with the flags [354] answers the same purpose or there may be an iron pot rest (Fig. 25). The area surrounding the hearth is always paved, and the fire itself, in the old style, is at floor level. We shall be invited to take a seat at the fire, for this is the place of honour given to strangers: the fireside is both the focus of 352 family life and the symbol of hospitality. The seat may be a [574] stone slab built into the fireplace, so that the social tradition is incorporated in the architecture of the hearth, or it may be a roughly made but sturdy chair, bench or "creepie" (Fig. 26). The low stool not only brings one near fire-level, but keeps one's head out of the peat smoke hanging in the open rafters, while its three legs find firm footing on the uneven floor. Other low stools are made of solid turf or wood—a section of a tree-trunk —or again of coiled straw-rope, while chairs are often made with seats of sugán or of rush. Comfortable high-backed chairs fashioned out of straw in the manner of a

Fig. 25.

Fig. 26.

[p. 67]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 bee-hive were common in some districts, but in parts of Mayo one rarely sees chairs of any kind. Step or ladder backed chairs with rush or straw seats are widespread: in the north-east chairs with wooden seats and upright-barred backs are [372] perhaps more usual. The turf fire is never allowed to go out: the glowing turves are heaped with ash at night and can be readily blown into a flame in the morning.

342 If the house has kept its brace and wattled chimney we shall be sitting under a canopy which tapers upwards to the smoke hole. The brace is a great beam extending from wall to wall, or resting at one end on a post some 5 feet out from the end-wall: between post and wall there may be a side partition or curtain-wall (Fig. 27) known in the Armagh-Meath area as the jamb-wall or the "hollan."[1] In some districts the front door is placed opposite this wall, but not, I fancy, in really old houses. In that case there may be a small window—the "spy-hole" "entry," or "jamb-window"—in the partition, allowing the sitter at the fireside to keep an eye on the open door. I have seen several houses in Co. Armagh where one has to stoop under the projecting brace to enter the house (Fig. 27). A further development is to hang a door on the brace-post, thus making a kind of internal porch or small hall. The jamb-wall is found from Co. Down to Co. Limerick but I have not seen it in the north-western province of the outshot.

342 The canopy is constructed of wattles or of sugán, plastered
352 with mud and cow-dung and white-washed outside. Canvas or boards are recent substitutes. At the sides of the chimney, above the ends of the brace, are small lofts or storeplaces, and there may be a larger "half-loft" over the other end of the kitchen—a relic of the time when corn and hay were kept here for feeding the animals below. A usual feature, under the stone seat to one side of the fire, is the ash or rubbish pit, another survival from far prehistory; and balancing it on the other side of the fire there may be a warm stone recess for the [23] sitting hen. At the back of the fire is a thick flag—the backstone—or a mass of clay forming the hob, but this is carefully built up of stones or bricks in eastern and southern

[1] This word is also used in N. England and Scotland for the curtain-wall. In Lancashire it is termed the "speer."

[Text continues top of p. 70 -- Analyst]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Armagh

342
352
354

Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth with Brace. Derryinver T.L.

Fig. 27. Note wheel-bellows.

Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth, Jambwall & window. Derrytrasna.

Fig. 28. Note "jamb-window."

[p. 69]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-holes (" boles ") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes or the knitting : they are usually reserved for special purposes and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these [805] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for drying clothes.

251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or " ark,"
352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now almost dead, is the " tramping " of the meal, the children [857] being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead immediately behind the chimney, in the " room," where it would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other fireside gear later in the chapter.

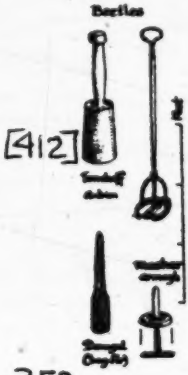
354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west, that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its cailleach or not, lies at one side of the fire : alternatively there may be a large settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 72 -- ANALYST]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 workmanship of the Welsh oak dressers, is an essential part of the kitchen and, like the keeping-holes mentioned above, has its prototype in the stone shelves of some of our oldest prehistoric dwellings. The dresser belongs, like so many of the other elements we are discussing, to the "Atlantic" province of European folk-culture. It accompanies the open hearth tradition as distinct from the "oven tradition" of central Europe, and may be thought of (compare the absence of the large table mentioned below) as providing storage while taking up a minimum of the valuable floor space in small single-roomed houses. The dresser has its fixed place in the layout of the kitchen, the position varying, however, according to the district, the type of house, disposition of the doors, and so on. In the outshot houses it stands against the side wall alongside the bed, whereas in the central-hearth type it lies
352 across the kitchen opposite the fire and helps to partition off
415 the end room. The bottom of the dresser is open. Here the hen-coops, of straw, wattle or wood, were sometimes kept, but one is more likely to see a collection of iron pots and the crocks, buckets or wooden stave-built vessels (piggins) for holding water or milk. The latter I have seen covered with roughly trimmed stone slabs (Fig. 68), a prehistoric device which has the advantage of coolness and gives protection from the cats. On the dresser are a few bits of "delph" and the tin mugs which have displaced the wooden noggins. Delph, as kitchen-ware is called, has not long since become general in remote parts. Of Mayo in the last century we read that "all their vessels were of wood, most of them cut out of solid timber." These included not only platters, spoons and ladles, but also methers or drinking cups of various sizes. Where the crockery tradition is of old standing, plates, jugs and long rows or nests of bowls "whammeled," that is tumbled on their sides, line the dresser shelves. Here, too, are the beetles of different shapes (Fig. 30) used for pounding or mashing the potatoes. The upright milk churn commonly finds its place alongside the dresser.



352 Fig. 30.

One very rarely sees a table of any antiquity in an Irish kitchen: it is generally of deal and it is placed against one of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the side walls so that it is impossible to sit round it. The 352 ●
table is not a centre of social activities and has nothing like the same importance as in an English farmhouse. There are crofters' dwellings in Donegal where no table is used; instead, [264]
at meal times, the shallow potato basket or skeehogue (Fig. 31) is taken on the knees of the members of the family as they sit in front of the fire, or an upturned creel may serve instead. Very low oblong tables or trays cut from the solid were formerly used and are occasionally dug up from the bogs. They have holes by which they could be suspended from the wall when not in use, and it may be for convenience of transport during the summer migrations. The potato basket will be seen after meals hanging to dry on the south wall of the house.

Fig. 31.

To understand the fireside appliances and methods of 354
cooking certain facts should be borne in mind—the absence 252
of the brick oven, the use of turf, a slow-burning fuel admirable for stewing and for things requiring a steady heat, and the universal preference for "thin-bread," or "bread in cakes," as English observers called it. Once more we have to remind 252
ourselves that parallels to surviving habits can be found 40 centuries back, for pottery baking slabs are known from Neolithic western Europe and of course oatcakes are best baked in this way. Flagstone griddles were apparently common down to a few centuries ago, and a dated specimen of a bakestone is illustrated in Fig. 33. Though oatcakes are now baked on the griddle, it is not long since they were set upright before the fire after drying a little, and turned frequently. The simple "bread-stick" (Fig. 32) or even a lump of turf may serve the purpose, but in the north of Ireland, where bread seems to have been relatively more important than in

Fig. 32. Co. Galway. Height 1 ft.

[TEXT Continues TOP of P. 75--Analyst]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and similarly the cattle were fastened in the byre by ropes 231
of straw, as in Clare, or of horse-hair, as in Kerry. Of the 283
two burden ropes illustrated (Figs. 80, 81) the Donegal example is a two-ply rush rope with an eye made of a peeled stick bent into a loop: the Aran specimen is of grass (Manilla) rope [284]
passing through a hole in a wooden runner. Similar blocks of wood serve as a swivel to prevent kinks in tethering ropes, separate lengths of rope passing through each hole.

Reference has been made to the fir-ropes used in securing 283
roofing scraws and thatch. Thin splits of straight-grained bog-fir about four feet long and an inch wide are twisted by hand into hollow cylinders, joined end to end to make a coil of about 50 feet. Two or three of these are twisted together to give the finished product, which combines great strength and elasticity with the capacity to stand up to all weathers. Fir-rope was often stretched across the wooden bed-frame to [352]
make a springy mattress. A short "tie" of fir-rope is shown in Fig. 21, p. 63.

[p. 132 is blank]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, 291
until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the
homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange [386]
used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black
and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a [824]
small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but
sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant.

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bed- 342
rooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar,
though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the
walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the
exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses
are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors,
front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen; and the
windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very
small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they
are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot
square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the
usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that [354]
in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the
top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the
gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass
turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the
ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The [284]
gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does
not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water
getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is
put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones,
until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and
quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The [241]
floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes
boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is
wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood,
washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the
islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people
having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings
or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The 352
furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe croithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fwaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, 415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of [491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a side-ways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies [243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

501 For water transport there are a good many boats of various descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

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[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

cemented by "dobe" or tempered clay, or sometimes mortar. It 342
generally consists of two apartments, the kitchen and the "room." The kitchen, which is usually of pretty large size, is used as the living room; it has a floor of beaten clay. This room has one, or perhaps, two windows of small size, and seldom made to open. These are always glazed now-a-days, but in the last century they were covered with oiled sheepskin. The house has two doors, both of which open directly into the kitchen, and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the partition wall of the two apartments.

The end of the kitchen farthest from the fire is used as a pen for [231]
the cattle and pigs. The fowl roost where they can, often on the backs of the cattle.

Above the beams or couples in this part of the kitchen boards are sometimes placed, making a sort of loft, in which fishing and boat tackle, agricultural implements, and other articles are stored.

The fireplace is built against the partition wall between the [354]
kitchen and the room. It consists of a stone hearth backed by a "hob," also of stone, built out slantwise behind it to make the fire draw well. This class of house has no chimney, the smoke escaping through a circular hole in the roof immediately above the hearth.

"The room" is a smaller apartment than the kitchen, (measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet) it has one or two small windows, and the floor is sometimes boarded.

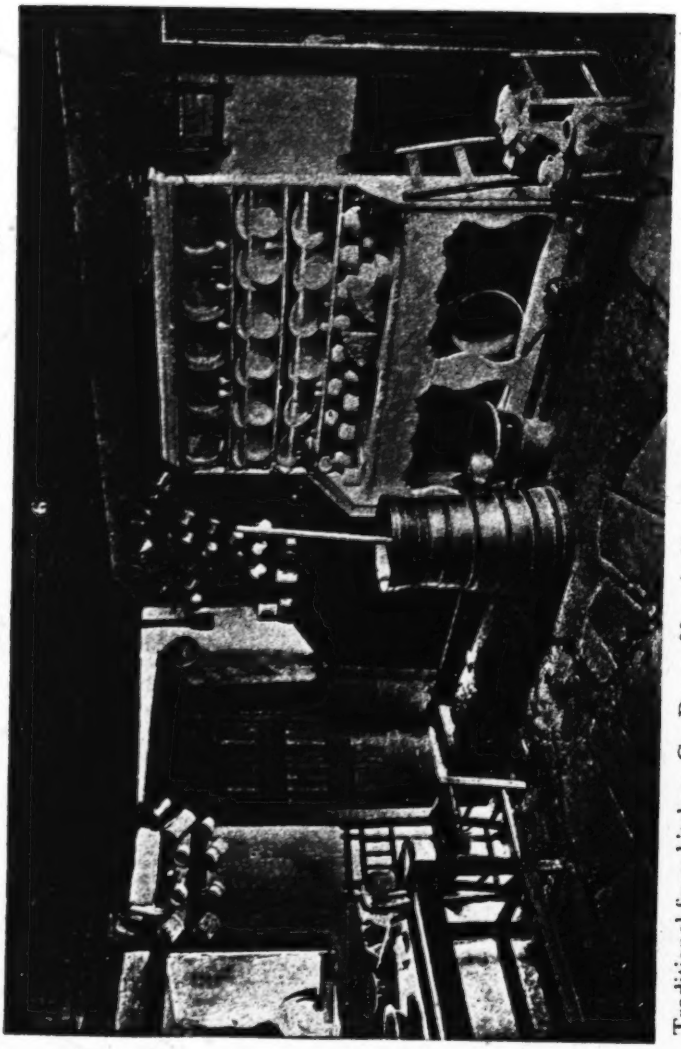
The furniture of the house is poor and scanty, that of the kitchen 352 ●
consisting of a bedstead, rudely made up of drift-wood, two posts being driven into the floor, a longitudinal piece uniting these and two cross-beams at head and foot resting by one end on the posts, and having the other built into the wall. Sometimes it is built up into four-poster shape and has curtains. The bedding is composed either of feather ticks, or, with the poorer people, of straw, covered with coarse sacking. The bedclothes are often very dirty. There is a dresser covered with earthenware plates, cups, and jugs of a poor and cheap description, a table, two or three chairs, and a couple of forms or settles. A long straw rope is usually stretched across the apartment to hang clothes to dry on. Worsted when spun, nets, &c., are hung from the couples.

"The room" contains one or two beds of the sort described, a chair or two, a table (in some cases), and a large chest.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual three-legged pot, a 415
griddle, a gridiron, and sometimes a pot oven, a few staved wooden piggins, a boran or sheepskin sieve, and, in the mountains and islands, a quern, now only used usually for grinding barley for cattle food,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Down

PLATE I



Traditional farm kitchen, Co. Down. Note baking-board on table (*left*) and meal ark to left of dresser, with beetle hanging above.

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353

[facing p. 32]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 kitchen is generally floored with puddled clay which takes a surprisingly well-wearing surface. The housewife will tell you that such a floor raises less dust than one of concrete, and if it tends to wear unevenly this matters little since the cooking pots [415] and some of the furniture which is not built-in has three legs [352] instead of four and will therefore stand firmly on an uneven floor. The rocking chair, despite New England's claim to have invented it, was surely first devised for such a floor. Lime, cowdung or ashes were sometimes added to the floor when it was being prepared, and mud scraped off the road, already well puddled, was considered an excellent floor material.[1] In Armagh, we are told, floors were made by simply digging up the ground and trampling it: 'They sometimes have a dance for that purpose, and many a match comes out of a thing of the sort.'[2] Another method was to keep a flock of sheep moving about the newly spread floor for some hours until it was well puddled. The bottom byre-end of the old-style one-roomed farm house was cobbled, and a flagged walk led from door to door. Devices 231 for tying up the cows were secured to or built into the bottom 353 gable: a variety of stone and wooden fasteners may still be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island. One writer humorously observes of Co. Galway that the cow had to be tethered lest she should eat the bed-straw, but that pigs and poultry were free to roam.[3] The hens spent the night on a rope or pole hung across the kitchen from eave to eave, and laid their eggs in handsome nesting-baskets of woven straw (Fig. 16). Here we may notice a curious bit of folklore which suggests that hens were carefully looked after for superstitious reasons, as well as for their economic value and for the cockerels' time-keeping. It is said that every night the hens, when they argue among themselves before settling down, are plotting to leave Ireland and fly back to Norway, but in the end they decide to postpone the trip for another day! In Co. Limerick elaborate three-tier wooden hen-coops are sometimes seen in the kitchen, and in Co. Down I have found the sitting

[1] J. Binns, *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland* (1837), 1, 112.
[2] Ibid., 186.
[3] T. A. Finlay, 'The Economics of Carna', in *The New Ireland Review* (April, 1898).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

be placed against the gable or, in the central chimney house, 354
against a partition-wall, and one cannot doubt that the general adoption of chimney flues has been the deciding factor. This innovation, slowly adopted from about the sixteenth century onwards, gave rise in time to many regional styles of chimney breast in brick and stone. I suspect that the wattled smoke canopy (Fig. 18) was the native response to the novelty of chimney flues, but I cannot find that it was adopted outside the areas of strong English influence. The substitution of peat for

[352]

FIG. 18. Hearth with jamb-wall and wattled smoke-canopy, Co. Armagh. Meal-bin and settle-bed on left.

wood seems to have made little difference to the architecture of the hearth. When coal came to be burnt, however, the fire had to be lifted off the floor, or the hearth fire given a stronger draught by installing a built-in 'fan bellows' which forced air through a tube into the floor of the fire.

The wattled smoke canopy or brace (? breast) is still fairly 354
common in houses with central chimney and fireside partitions, 342
mainly in the south and east. The front of the canopy rests on a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

laths and wattles (willow, hazel or briar), plastered with a 354
mixture of clay and cowdung or ashes and coated with limewash. 342
In parts of the south hay or straw ropes soaked in mud (putogs) were used, twisted between a frame of horizontal rungs and plastered over with mud or limewash. In Co. Armagh one occasionally sees a heron's wing hung on the brace: it is used [237] for dusting the hearth. The jamb-walls—and internal walls in general—were traditionally constructed of wattle and daub, or of mud or wood. The wattle and daub construction is undoubtedly an old technique which, in the days of plentiful timber, was much more generally used in house-building. Internal partitions carried up to the roof, however, probably followed the adoption of the chimney flue, and if so this innovation must be reckoned as a contribution to privacy as well as to comfort. We note in passing that wattlework found its last traditional 342
use in house construction in the wicker doors of the west, and in the windbreaks of the north, bundles of hazel or birch branches (wassocks) set up on the windward side of the door. The stone-built external porch must be regarded as a relatively novel addition to the traditional house style.

Wooden or stone seats are often built in near the hearth, 352
and the wall behind the fire, protected by a flagstone or a built-up hob, usually has a keeping hole on each side of the fire (Fig. 19). Known as boles in Antrim and coves in Cavan, these may be elaborated in Achill Island, for example, into two- or three-tier wall-dressers whose ancestry lies in the stone house tradition of the mountain country. There is an old belief that the left-hand keeping hole belongs to the woman and the right-hand one to the man of the house. Here you may see in safe keeping, on one side the woman's knitting, on the other the man's clay pipe. Stone dressers were a characteristic feature of [171] the huts at Skara Brae,[1] where also Professor Childe found evidence that the women occupied the left side of the fire and the men the right. In the Hebridean black-houses the left-hand side of the fire was the woman's quarter.[2] Similarly in the old turf houses of the Highlands, 'the women were invariably ranged around the central fire on one side, the men on the

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 15.
[2] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 52.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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352
[354]

FIG. 19. A Donegal hearth, with crane, creepie and bread-iron. Pot and pot-hole on right.

other'.[1] It is interesting to notice that it is the Mongol usage to allot the right side of the yurt to men and the left side to women.[2] We are surely dealing with a very ancient tradition related perhaps to the ordered routine of a pastoral nomadic life. For the Mongols the right and left sides were symbolized respectively by horse and cow. In the humblest Irish farms, [514] which lack sanitary conveniences of any kind, it is customary for the women to use the byre and the men the stable.

If we now turn to the methods of suspending cooking pots 354 over the fire we shall see how the woman's functions are best 821 carried out on the left side. Besides the convenience of this for a normal right-handed person, there lies behind it the notion that for good luck significant actions involving the food supply—such as ploughing, casting a net or taking a pot off the fire—should follow the direction of the sun's movement in the sky. Thus the crane on which the pots are hung is almost

[1]Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (1857), 96
[2]E. D. Chapple and C. S. Coon, *Anthropology* (1946), 539.

canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354
shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373]
were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse- [492]
collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342
is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the 353
chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231]
to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513]
the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352
the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional 352
width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed—the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the [171] Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart 462
and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, 372
the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' [539] The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is [574] invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can [787] give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which ancestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1] [769]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

VII

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

GOOD craftsmanship in wood is so rarely seen in the Irish peasant house that one easily notices a piece of quality furniture. The chances are that it has come out of 'the big house' or, near the coast, from a wrecked ship. Very little oak furniture has survived from the days before the famine, and what there is is likely to be of bog-oak, that is timber dug out of the bogs. The truth seems to be that by the time improved styles of furniture and settled conditions of life had come about, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the native oak-woods had been almost everywhere destroyed, and the common furniture came to be made of bog wood or imported soft woods. The gentry favoured mahogany. Already in the early seventeenth century Ireland was importing pine wood from western Scotland,[1] and during the eighteenth century it was the returning timber ships from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia that initiated Southern Irish emigration to the New World.

No doubt this lack of good quality peasant furniture may be partly attributed to poverty, and to the recurrent famines, of fuel as well as food, which brought despair and led to the burning of furniture. But it also reflects the weak tradition of built-up furniture among a people predominantly pastoral and to some extent nomadic. Certainly degrading poverty and insecure tenancies did not provide the means of support for skilled craftsmen: yet in Wales, where conditions under an

[1]H. G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the 18th Century*, 4th ed. (1937), 196. On bog timber see A. T. Lucas in *Béaloideas*, 33, 71–134.

322 often oppressive landlordism were not dissimilar, a strong
352 tradition of good quality oak furniture was standardized in the eighteenth century and has remained a source of inspiration and pride ever since. The destruction of the native oak woods and the stronger pastoral strain in Ireland were perhaps the dominant factors, but once more we note the exceptional position of the barony of Bargy and Forth, where Gabriel Beranger commented in 1780 on the good-quality, well-kept furniture: 'I have seen in these cabins bureaus of oak so clean that they shone like polished mahogany.'[1]

Sturdiness rather than elegance was the characteristic feature of Irish peasant furniture, and many small household and dairy fittings were hand-cut from the solid or lathe-turned. Yet there
353 was no lack of care taken in the proper arrangement of the furniture in the house. Its disposition was fixed by long custom and varied little throughout the country. One is reminded of the careful division of the limited floor-space of the nomads' tent among the Lapps or Mongols. In fact only by adhering to a strict formula could the family and all their belongings be fitted into a single room which was traditionally also a byre. Invariably the centre of the room, and the whole space in front of the fire, was kept open. This was, for the bulk of the peasant population down to the eighteenth century, the family sleeping-place. According to an account of Mayo in 1799, they slept
513 naked with their feet to the fire, lying on rushes, with a covering of blankets or day-clothes.[2] An earlier account of the Rosses of Donegal, relating to the middle of the eighteenth century, gives us more details: 'All the family lay together in one bed, and, if any visitors came in the evening, they too slept with them; for they set no bounds to their hospitality . . . heath or bent bushes were spread across the floor, to a length sufficient for the number present, and in breadth about six feet; over this litter, the mistress of the house laid part of a long plaid or blanket, on which the others, having stripped off their clothes, lay down as fast as they could; men and women together, all naked: then the mistress having drawn the rest of the blanket over them, lay down herself, naked also. This they call a

[1]Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 132.
[2]In C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 28, 32.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Thorough-bed.'[1] The Poor Law Commissioners reported in 1836 that nearly three-quarters of the 10,000 inhabitants of one parish were sleeping on the floor, though they add that this was because the bedsteads had been burnt to boil potatoes. Even after 1850 the custom of sleeping 'in stradogue' as it was called, was not unknown in the west.[2] In Ulster, too, though the master and mistress of the house would have slept in their wall-bed, the young children, where there was only one room, must have slept on the floor. Long custom as well as wretched poverty explains the statement made by Patrick McKye of a Donegal parish in 1837: 'Nor can many of them afford a second bed, but whole families of sons and daughters of mature age indiscriminately lie together . . . and all in the bare buff.'[3] The wall-bed was a wooden frame built into the outshot which has been described earlier. It had its own wooden covering or tester to give protection from roof drips, and originally, to judge by the Hebridean black-houses, the covering was of sods. In Donegal, bog timber supplied the bed frame, and the mattress was made of wattles or of ropes twisted from the root fibres of bog-fir. That fir-rope mattresses were once standard fittings is shown by the specification for the beds to be supplied to the Belfast Charitable Association in 1774.[4] But some of the wall-beds in parts of Connacht were until recently mere stone benches covered with dried bracken. Half-ruined examples may be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island.

In the house with fireside partition the kitchen bed often takes the form of a settle-bed, a seat by day and a bed by night. The front and seat are in one piece, hinged at the bottom so that the whole can be folded down to make a low bed (Fig. 18). In bachelor homes, where the settle-bed has been retained, I have been offered a seat on one which had been closed a moment before by bundling in the mattress and bedclothes. Placed against one of the side walls near the fire, the settle-bed

[1] J. C. Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, 2nd ed. (1818), Appendix 1, 196–204.
[2] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 192.
[3] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 16.
[4] R. W. M. Strain, *The Ulster Medical Journal*, 22 (1953), 37.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 admirably illustrates the economy of space and function characteristic of Irish kitchen fittings, but I doubt whether this rather complicated piece of furniture is of any great antiquity: it was probably introduced by planters or adapted from a settle fitted with a coffer seat.

The black-houses, as described in the nineteenth century, had no table, and there are still to be seen, in Donegal for instance, houses where there is no kitchen table. At meal-times [264] the family sit around a shallow potato basket resting on the circle of knees. The origin of the tripod tray-table of south-eastern Europe and south-western Asia is surely to be sought in a similar custom. In fact the Blasket Island table was described as a tripod to which was fitted a board which hung on the wall when not in use.[1] The little round table is known from many parts of western Europe. There is, for example, the three-legged 'cricket' table of Wales, which has a special place in the affections of the family. Placed near the fire, it is reserved at meal-times for the father and mother while the children and servants eat at the big table. In Ireland the kitchen table is a flimsy construction, and its place is against the side wall, under a window. Not infrequently it is hinged to the wall as a 'falling leaf table' which drops when not in use, thus enlarging the open space in front of the fire.

Bishop Pococke describes the Tirawley (Mayo) table as 'a long sort of stool about 20 inches high and broad and two yards long',[2] clearly designed to be stowed away along a wall. Small tables which have been found in the bogs are little more than small boards, their four short legs being cut from the solid. They are provided with holes by which they could be transported or hung up when not in use (Fig. 26). It follows that table-chairs were unnecessary: long, low, narrow stools or three [516] legged 'creepies' would serve, and the children would have squatted eastern-fashion on the floor.

The table, therefore, in the words of a Swedish student of 352 Irish ethnology, 'never attracted the social activities of the 592 house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating

[1] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman* (1934), 40.
[2] *Pococke's Tour, 1752* (1891), 87.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in the English language gave its name to a committee, has not replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged around the fire.

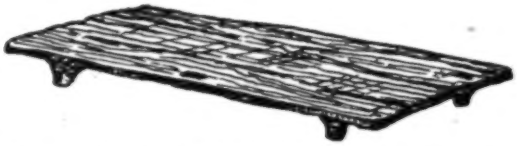

FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke. The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said, that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

[1] Å. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

church festivals and at wakes, and though they are now bought they are made by hand in a few towns by chandlers who carry on a medieval tradition. One Dublin firm, established in 1488, manufactures large church candles of beeswax by methods which can have changed little with the centuries. In the home the candles were supported in wrought-iron holders or stuck into a turf by the fireside. Tall standard holders, often with adjustable fittings, were designed to give light to the weaver at the loom, and they are most typically found in Ulster (Fig. 28). The fine embroidery which occupied the women in the linen districts must have imposed a great strain on the eyes: there are stories of a single candle serving as a central source of light for a ring of seamstresses, each of whom held her work against a bottle full of water which acted as a magnifier.

In Ireland, as throughout Atlantic Europe, the dresser ranks as the most important and elaborate piece of furniture in the kitchen, and its position is prescribed by custom. It stands either against the side wall or against the partition between kitchen and bedroom. Since this partition is of no great antiquity we can be sure that the original place of the dresser was against the side-wall and that it has developed from, and taken the place of, shelves built into or attached to the side-wall. In part of Ulster it is referred to as 'the shelf'. I have already mentioned the tiers of stone shelves set in the wall which are preserved in the deserted houses of the Slievemore cluster on Achill Island. It is believed that the fashion of open crockery shelves was diffused from the court sideboards of the later Middle Ages in France and England, and it may be surmised that the wooden dresser was readily accepted in Celtic lands to replace wall shelves, from Elizabethan times on. The adoption of delph and tea-drinking in the eighteenth century no doubt accelerated the spread of the dresser, which had become, by that time, an essential part of Irish kitchen furniture (Plate 1). The corner-cupboard, evolving in much the same way from corner-shelves, is another article of furniture with a north-west European distribution. Similarly the coffer or store-chest spread through western Europe from the later Middle Ages onwards, replacing skin, straw, hollowed wood, or basket-work containers.

 [Text continues on p. 93]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

Low stools and benches seem to have been the traditional form of seating, and no doubt the floor served for the children. Travellers noted that this was the best way to avoid the smoke: 352

> By sitting low, on rushes spread,
> The smoke still hover'd overhead;
> And did more good than real harm,
> Because it kept the long house warm.[1]

Fireside seats, more or less fixed, were often of stone, a solid block of wood or a large lump of turf. In the 'round about' hearths which were common in parts of Co. Antrim, and which people who remember them have described to me, the seat behind the fire, a log of wood, was known as the dais, a dialect word for a bench or seat which appears to be of north English origin. Solid seats of coiled straw or rushes were also common (Fig. 29) but the favourite fireside stool was the three-legged creepie, resembling a milking stool and like it finding a firm hold no matter how uneven the floor. There is little evidence of chairs of any antiquity. A three-legged type found in parts of the west, with a triangular seat and a narrow one-piece back has probably evolved from the creepie but looks Germanic. The nearest approach to a distinctive Irish style is the straw or rush-seated chair, which finds its best-known homes in Co. Down and Co. Limerick. High-backed armchairs made entirely of coiled straw rope after the manner of a beehive used to be found in the west, and since they can be paralleled in many parts of western Europe from the Orkneys to Spain it is probable that their manufacture is a peasant craft of some antiquity (Fig. 29). Cradles, too, were made of straw as well as of wood [854] and basketwork, and they were sometimes suspended from the roof. I have heard of a cradle being improvised by laying a horse-collar on the floor. The phrase 'rocked in a pot' applied to [848] an illegitimate child is said to derive from the use of a large fireside cooking pot as cradle and hiding place: round-shouldered infants were therefore suspect.

Down to recent times it was the custom to keep most of the 234 dairying equipment in the kitchen, and in the traditional peasant 353 house the upright churn still occupies a place against the wall,

[1] W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle* (1724). Canto 2. [Text continues on p. 95]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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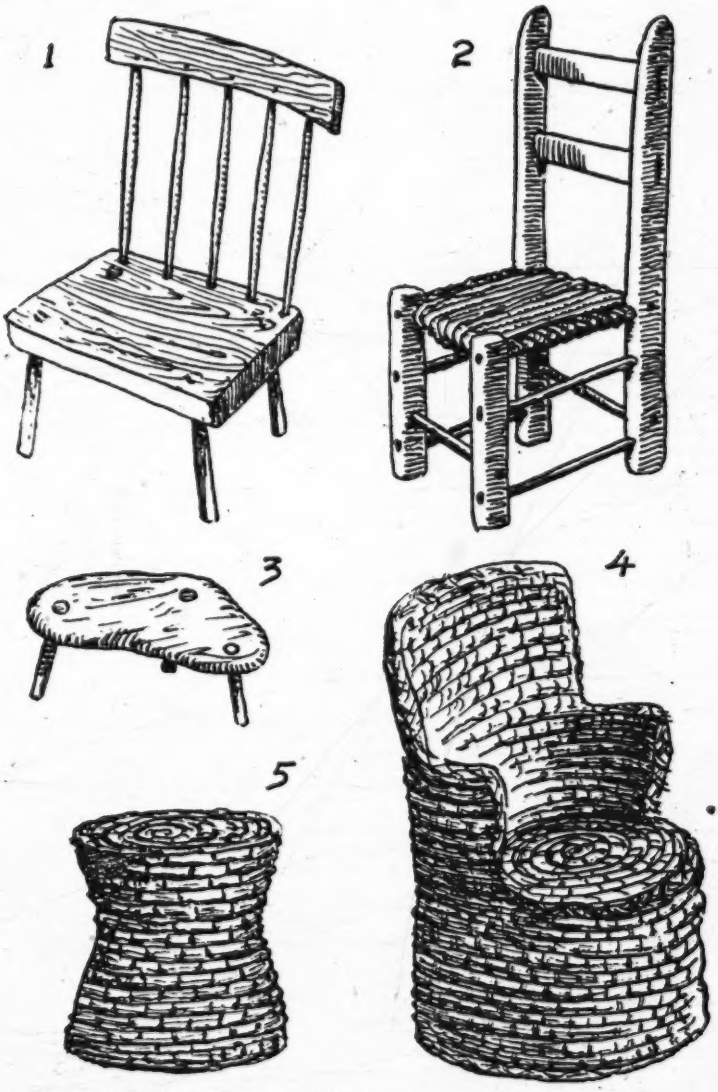

[285]

Fig. 29. (1) Co. Antrim chair. (2) Co. Down straw-seated chair. (3) Creepie. (4) Armchair of coiled straw-rope, Co. Cork. (5) Straw seat, Co. Clare.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and a handful of thatch taken from above the door of his house. 234
Butter-making must have been a chancy and critical business
when each family had only one or two cows, ill-fed for a large 789
part of the year, and there were fairies, witches and blinkers to contend with. The protective charms and prognostications connected with churning are legion. If you should enter an old-style mountain kitchen when churning is in progress you may well be invited to lend a hand, or at least to 'leave your weight on the staff,' just to show that your intentions are not evil. There must be no bad words during churning, no quarrels, no singing or drinking: to drink anything is presumably to dilute the milk. If the milk splashes the churner is fated to marry a drunken mate. When the butter at last breaks a small ball of it is traditionally taken and smeared on the wall or tossed on top of the dresser to bring luck to the house, perhaps originally as an offering to the fairies. And when the churning is finished the staff should be twisted round three times and placed across the mouth of the churn. There are many other precautions that may be taken: a horseshoe—preferably 'a shoe of one heating'—tied to the churn or nailed to the bottom; a nail from a horseshoe or from a coffin driven into churn or staff; a ring of salt placed on the lid; a twig of rowan tied round the churn. Or the plough coulter should be heated in the fire, and the churnstaff tied with a straw rope to the fire-crane: if the staff is made of rowan-wood so much the better. If despite all precautions the butter does not come there are ways of catching the thief. For instance, a cake is baked and stuck with pins and a bunch of yarrow placed in the churn. The thief will come crying to the door in pain, and he must not be allowed in but turned away.

Special precautions should also be taken to make the house 512
safe at night from unwanted visitations. Before the fire is raked
and 'smoored' (buried in peat-ash) a spark should be dropped 352 ●
into the foot-water, the water in which feet have been washed
and to which many superstitions are attached. The carded flax [515]
should be placed under a weight, the band taken off the spinning wheel and the quern dismantled. Many stories are told of the risks involved in letting the fairies have access to these things. Finally the besom should be placed against the door: the

512 besom's association with everyday tasks and with the fireside
352 endows it with special power. Thrown after a departing match-
[777] maker or anyone going on an important errand, it brings luck to his mission.

For most people, needless to say, such things are now mean-
771 ingless superstitions—old pishrogues. True, one still hears
789 occasionally of cows being blinked, of a black cock buried alive
178 as a cure for epilepsy, of a healthy woman pining away because a neighbour was sticking pins into a waxen image. These are stray survivals, doomed to disappear; but in a larger sense the past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds of men and in the landscapes they have fashioned.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 [262] [264] [415] [178] [362] The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater 342
part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen. There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of house is common, but there is also a squarer type which may have a second story.

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled, rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the [362]
governmental agencies and patterned after those built first by the Congested Districts Board (1893–1923) are slated and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statistical statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families, but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's population live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings, which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence between the proportion of small farm population to total population.

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is 592
the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking 352
is done, the table around which the family — first the adult 353
males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and [778]
the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the "Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled [415]
with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festivals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part

592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying
592 the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

PLATE XLVIII

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1.

1. Fire-place with iron-grate. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. The basket hanging to dry on the southwall of the house. Lough Eske, Co. Donegal.

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2

[p. 220]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

people describe it. Much of it was rough, wet 592
mountain land, but the phrase implies that it was 361
good enough at least to provide grass for animals. All farms are described in this way, for by the cows and the small 'gardens' of potatoes, cabbage, oats and turnips, the small farmers live. We shall have more to say of agriculture in another context; I think the explanation is sufficient here.

My host's house in Luogh, as I have said, was 342
like the others. It was a bit 'stronger', that is, neater, better built and kept, than many of the others, but it was like the others in all essentials. It was a white-washed stone cottage, rectangular, roofed with slate (though it was only a few years ago that they gave up thatch). Its long sides faced roughly north and south, each with a door opening directly out into the yards. In the gable of the roof was a loft for sleeping; otherwise it was confined to a single story. The central room, the largest by far, was the kitchen. There the family passed their lives and prepared and ate the food cooked on the hearth. The hearth was an open turf fire, built in a chimney large enough to have two hobs or seats deep within on either side. It had, too, an iron hook which swung the cooking-pots out into the room from off the fire.

Behind this hearth was another room. It was 342
called, for its position in the house, the 'west room'. 353
This is the 'west room' which is to provide my first example.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 In most countrymen's houses, especially in
353 poorer regions, the 'west room', that behind the hearth, is the only room except for the kitchen and the loft. In some houses, however, there is another room too. This is usually a bedroom, at the opposite end of the kitchen. This was the case at my host's.

353 But in either case it soon becomes apparent that there is something special about the west room. At Luogh this struck one's eye immediately. At my host's the room was a sort of parlour into which none but distinguished guests were admitted. In it were kept pictures of the dead and emigrated members of the family, all 'fine' pieces of furniture, symbolic brass objects brought in by the bride at marriage; the rubrics used when mass was celebrated in the house, in fact all religious objects, crucifixes, and so forth, except the 'blessed lamp' and a 'holy picture' in the kitchen. Nor were my hosts alone in keeping objects of sentimental and religious value in this special room. Other houses did likewise. The general feeling was that such objects 'belonged' there.

353 But these facts had little significance until others
776 began to appear. Here we enter the realm which we ordinarily call 'old custom'. The 'west room' had still another association, of a supernatural cast. This appeared only gradually. The 'west room' was of central importance in fairy lore.

In this all Luogh concurred, though few could

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

be found to give it expression. The cult of the 353
fairies, these days, is branded as 'superstition'. It 776
is under fire from townsman, school-teacher, and priest. But even those who could express no views could be seen to act as if they too were believers.

Where fairy paths were remembered to pass the house, they went by the west room. Where food and water was left out at night, it was left there. No outhouse, shed, or other building could be built on this side of the house. That would bring bad [777]
luck. Very few could or would tell why; they left it to a common inference. The building would be 'in the way'. Nevertheless, reluctant as they might be to express belief, my hosts none the less practised it. No house of Luogh's twenty-six had any shed or [342]
outhouse at its western end.

Here were two very definite associations with the west room. What did they mean? The attitudes they represented were respect, and perhaps a little fear; but it was respect that was dominant. What was this respect and why should it show itself in fairy-lore and in household furnishing?

Faced with such a problem the anthropologist's 353
usual recourse is to history. Traditionally the west 773
is the land of the dead. In the ancient sun-cult, in 776
which early man has likened his own progress to that of the sun's daily and yearly course, the west is the sacred abode of the dead. Even today, we speak of dying, half jocularly, as 'going west'. In ancient Celtic mythology, the heaven at life's end,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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353 *Tír na nÓg*, and Avalon, the island of apple trees
773 which the Greeks knew as the Garden of the
776 Hesperides, and which in a Christian rendering the blessed Saint Brendan may have reached, lies to the west in the setting sun. It is very likely that in this folk practice there survives nearly all that remains of an elaborate early mythology.

Alas for our questioning, no one remembers Avalon in Luogh, *Tír na nÓg* is a dying legend. If you ask the old men about the west, tales of sunken cities and strange sea-creatures greet your ears; ask about the fairies and fairy paths and you get, first, indignant denials of such degrading belief, and then anecdotes, tales, incidents, which illustrate their character and their power for good and evil. Ask about the furniture of this room, and you learn only that it is the right and fitting thing that the objects fill this room and no other. No one can trace the continuity; tradition is felt in the mass rather than in the particular.

We are left then with what we can hear and observe about the present. To question upon anything else is to get nowhere; it merely starts a chain of obscuring generalities more inspired by the question than by what Luogh feels and thinks and does.

But the case is not hopeless. If one casts one's
353 reliance upon observations and questions in the
888 present, new facts appear. The west room figures in marriage. In the contracts drawn up it is often

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

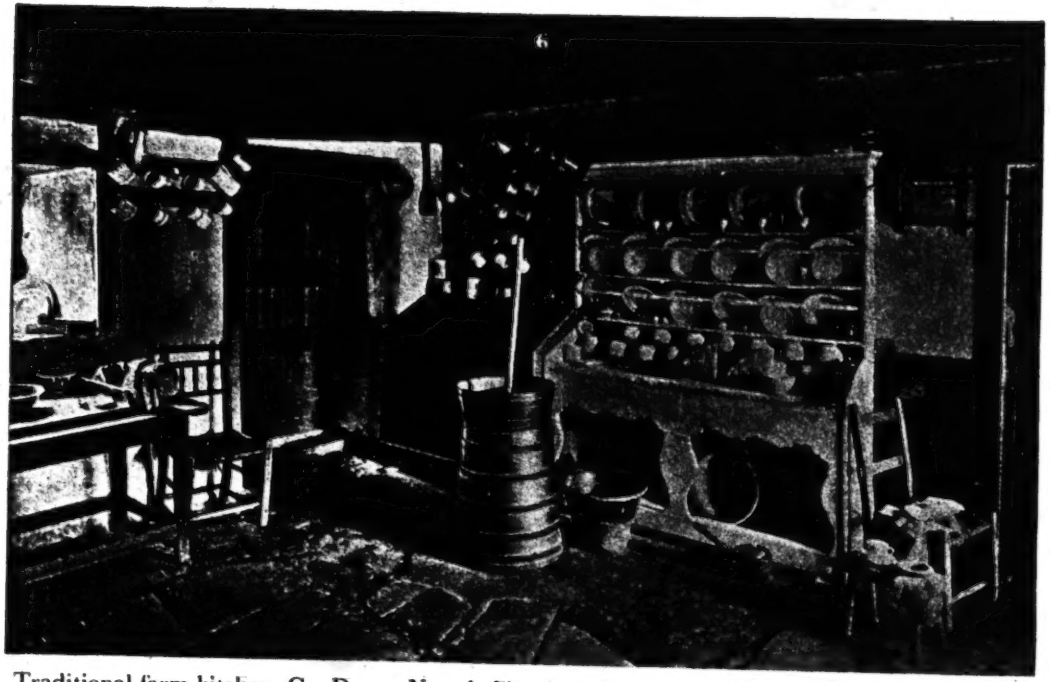
mentioned by name. It is the room reserved for themselves by the old people, the father and mother of the groom; they reserve it for their own use after they turn over the farm to their sons at marriage.

Ask about this and more information comes to you. It is into this room that the old couple move. The room is theirs. Younger members of the household dare not enter it except with permission. Indeed, it is the old couple who throw their aura around the room; the respect owed them is very like that felt toward the room they occupy. Here one enters a new field of behaviour and attitude in human relations. The honour and command of the old couple do not leave them altogether when they retire from active ownership of the farm. They enter a new status of which the associations round the west room are one reflexion.

So it goes, the new questions and new observations lead not to a prehistory or a chain of continuities, but to an ever-widening number of living associations which colour the relations of men and women, old and young. They lead to a realization of the laws and custom by which the small farmers find their lives ordered. In this instance, the west room of Luogh is a dim survival, perhaps, of Avalon and *Tír na nÓg*. But more certainly it is a focal point in a system of values some little of which we have begun to glimpse. Old custom in the west room thus gives

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Down

PLATE I



Traditional farm kitchen, Co. Down. Note baking-board on table (*left*) and meal ark to left of dresser, with beetle hanging above.

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[Facing p. 32]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 2

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353
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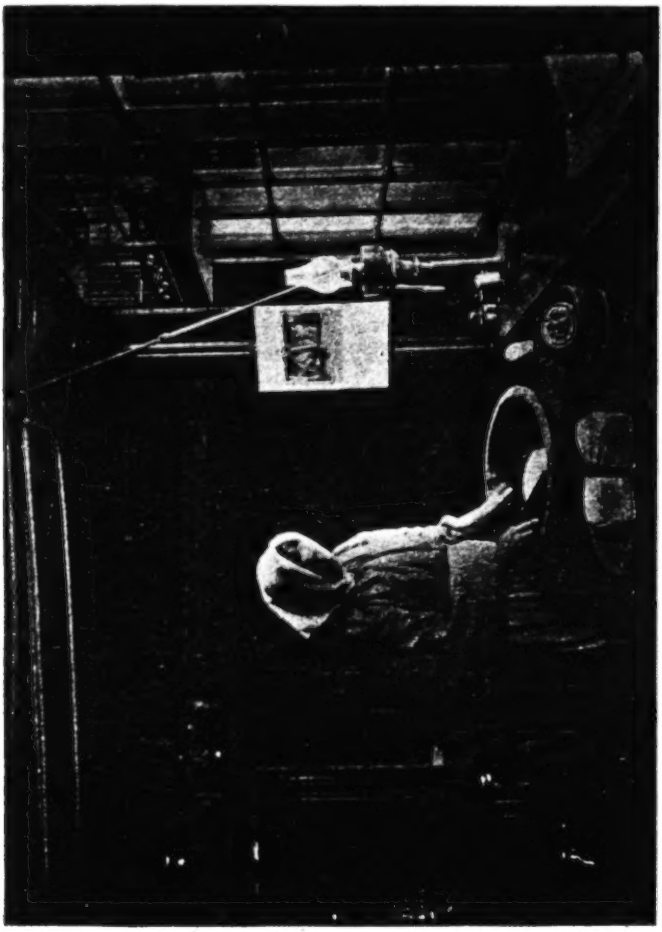

Butter-making in a Co. Antrim farm kitchen.

[facing p. 33]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 front door, for the cows are kept in a byre which is a continua-
362 tion of the dwelling house, an obvious convenience though there
231 is not, as in the longhouse of Wales and Dartmoor, direct access from kitchen to feeding-walk.

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353

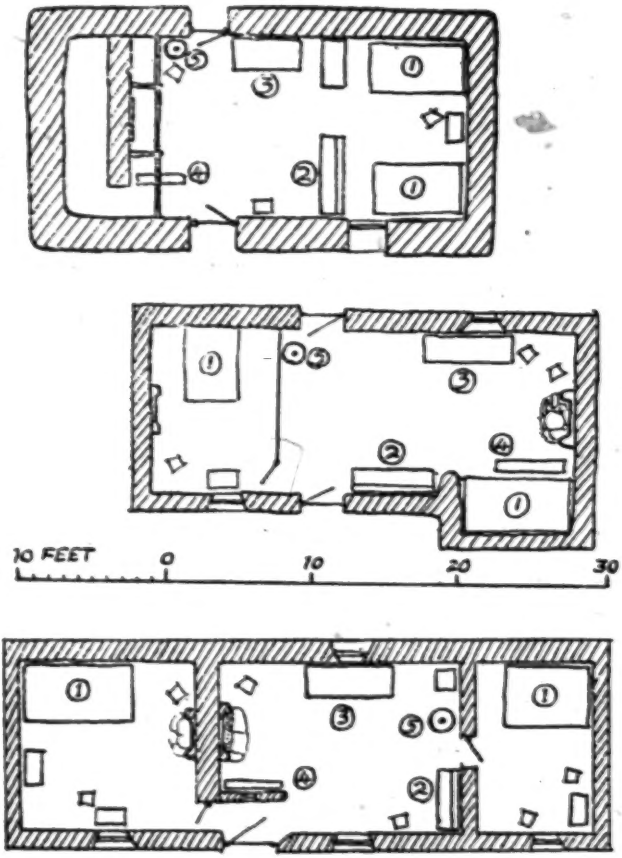

FIG. 8. House plans. *Above:* hipped-roof house, Co. Galway (compare Fig. 13, 2). *Centre:* house with outshot, Co. Donegal (compare Fig. 12, 3). *Below:* house with jamb-wall, Co. Down. (1) bed, (2) dresser, (3) table, (4) bench, (5) churn.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 kitchen is generally floored with puddled clay which takes a surprisingly well-wearing surface. The housewife will tell you that such a floor raises less dust than one of concrete, and if it tends to wear unevenly this matters little since the cooking pots [415] and some of the furniture which is not built-in has three legs [352] instead of four and will therefore stand firmly on an uneven floor. The rocking chair, despite New England's claim to have invented it, was surely first devised for such a floor. Lime, cowdung or ashes were sometimes added to the floor when it was being prepared, and mud scraped off the road, already well puddled, was considered an excellent floor material.[1] In Armagh, we are told, floors were made by simply digging up the ground and trampling it: 'They sometimes have a dance for that purpose, and many a match comes out of a thing of the sort.'[2] Another method was to keep a flock of sheep moving about the newly spread floor for some hours until it was well puddled. The bottom byre-end of the old-style one-roomed farm house was cobbled, and a flagged walk led from door to door. Devices 231 for tying up the cows were secured to or built into the bottom 353 gable: a variety of stone and wooden fasteners may still be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island. One writer humorously observes of Co. Galway that the cow had to be tethered lest she should eat the bed-straw, but that pigs and poultry were free to roam.[3] The hens spent the night on a rope or pole hung across the kitchen from eave to eave, and laid their eggs in handsome nesting-baskets of woven straw (Fig. 16). Here we may notice a curious bit of folklore which suggests that hens were carefully looked after for superstitious reasons, as well as for their economic value and for the cockerels' time-keeping. It is said that every night the hens, when they argue among themselves before settling down, are plotting to leave Ireland and fly back to Norway, but in the end they decide to postpone the trip for another day! In Co. Limerick elaborate three-tier wooden hen-coops are sometimes seen in the kitchen, and in Co. Down I have found the sitting

[1] J. Binns, *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland* (1857), 1, 112.
[2] Ibid., 186.
[3] T. A. Finlay, 'The Economics of Carna', in *The New Ireland Review* (April, 1898).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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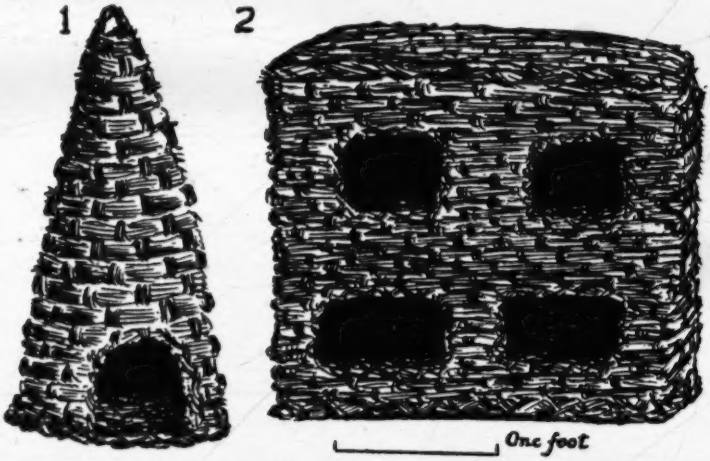

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FIG. 16. Straw hens' nests. (1) Co. Clare. (2) Co. Leitrim.

hen warmly ensconced in a stone-box alongside the fire. In the mud floor one may sometimes see large 'pot-holes', hollows in which the heavy iron pot is placed when the boiled potatoes are pounded for pig-food (Fig. 19). The wooden or iron 'beetles' with which the pounding is done are as varied in shape and size as they are indispensable (Fig. 17). Sometimes

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[415]
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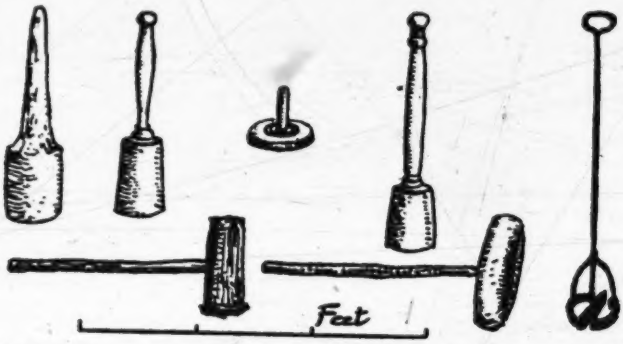

FIG. 17. Beetles, for pounding potatoes and, below, mells for 'knocking whins', Co. Antrim. Beetles similar to the first example were formerly used also for washing clothes and for breaking flax before hand-scutching.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

353 a wooden plank is set in the floor as a footing for the pot, or to give the spinning wheel a firm base. The upright churn also needs a firm footing and in the Mourne Mountains a movable granite flag was kept for this purpose. I have seen a mud floor in Co. Down with several round holes in which milk was poured [231] for each member of a family of cats. In the Bronze-Age Orkney village of Skara Brae every hut had stone-lined holes sunk in the floor, which were thought to have been used to store limpets.[1] In archaeological excavations near Belfast I have found holes which were presumably used for storing milk-products sunk in the clay floor of an 'earth-house' (souterrain) of the Dark Ages.[2] In some old houses there is a hole near the fire, either in front or let into the wall alongside, which is used to store the ashes.

354 In nearly every example of prehistoric and early historic houses which have been excavated, the hearth occupies a central position, and cooking pots would have been suspended either from the roof timbers or from specially constructed supports. We know from English travellers that this continued into recent centuries. Thus Fynes Moryson: 'the chief men in their houses make fires in the midst of the room, the smoke whereof goeth out at a hole in the top thereof.'[3] He goes on to say that the humbler clay or wattled cabins also had their fires in the middle, and in the early nineteenth century we read of houses in West Antrim where the fire, though not in the centre of the room, was 'advanced some feet from the gable wall so that the persons of the family can readily sit round it.'[4] The description given by Charles Lever of the little cabin of Owen Joyce on one of the Brannocks Islands off the west coast, even if fictional, is worth quoting because Lever was probably drawing on tradition. It reads: 'It was built in a circular form, the chimney in the middle. Certain low partitions sub-divided the space into different chambers, making the centre the common apartment of the family, where they cooked, and ate, and chatted.'[5] In the course of time, however, the fire has come to

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 17.
[2] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 5–27.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 231.
[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 275.
[5] Charles Lever, *The Martins of Cro' Martin* (1864), 2, ch. 31

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

354 strong horizontal beam, the brace-tree, which may extend right
342 across the kitchen from wall to wall, four or five feet out from the fire and five or six feet from the ground. Or one end of the beam may rest on a supporting jamb set under one corner of the
342 canopy. In that case—and invariably where the front door is
353 adjacent—there may be a draught screen of wood mud or stone —the jamb-wall—built out from the fireside and terminating in the jamb, so as to partition off the fireside. This curtain-wall is pierced by a small window known as the entry or spy-hole, through which an approaching visitor can be spied from the fireside through the open door (Fig. 18). I have seen a few jamb-wall houses of this type in Co. Armagh where the brace-tree nevertheless continued to the side-wall, so that the visitor had to stoop under it on entering the house. If a door is swung on the jamb-post a small hall or internal porch is readily provided. This is characteristic of developed houses of traditional style in the Lagan Valley near Belfast, and a further refinement is to hang a mirror over the jamb-window, a looking glass replacing the plain glass of the peep hole and reflecting changing fashions. The jamb-wall, called also in Ulster the hollan-
[171] wall, is well-known under that name in the south of Scotland and the north of England and may thence have reached eastern Ireland in plantation times. In Cumberland it was termed the sconce and in Lancashire the speer, which was the name of the screen which crossed the end of the halls in the Oxford colleges. James Walton tells me that in north Yorkshire the jamb post, called the witch post, is occasionally found to be covered with designs intended to protect the hearth from evil spirits. Sprigs of rowan are tied to its top for the same purpose. The partitioned hearth is characteristic of eastern and southern Ireland: it extends into the Central Lowlands but it is almost entirely lacking in the west and in the north-western province of the outshot-house to be described below. Dr. Desmond McCourt tells me that he knows of two or three hybrids—having both the outshot and the partitioned hearth—in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains, where two cultural pro-
342 vinces meet.

The smoke canopy varies in shape and method of construction
354 from one region to another. The commonest type is made of

canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354
shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373]
were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse- [492]
collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342
is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the 353
chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231]
to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513]
the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352
the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

often oppressive landlordism were not dissimilar, a strong tradition of good quality oak furniture was standardized in the eighteenth century and has remained a source of inspiration and pride ever since. The destruction of the native oak woods and the stronger pastoral strain in Ireland were perhaps the dominant factors, but once more we note the exceptional position of the barony of Bargy and Forth, where Gabriel Beranger commented in 1780 on the good-quality, well-kept furniture: 'I have seen in these cabins bureaus of oak so clean that they shone like polished mahogany.'[1]

Sturdiness rather than elegance was the characteristic feature of Irish peasant furniture, and many small household and dairy fittings were hand-cut from the solid or lathe-turned. Yet there was no lack of care taken in the proper arrangement of the furniture in the house. Its disposition was fixed by long custom and varied little throughout the country. One is reminded of the careful division of the limited floor-space of the nomads' tent among the Lapps or Mongols. In fact only by adhering to a strict formula could the family and all their belongings be fitted into a single room which was traditionally also a byre. Invariably the centre of the room, and the whole space in front of the fire, was kept open. This was, for the bulk of the peasant population down to the eighteenth century, the family sleeping-place. According to an account of Mayo in 1799, they slept naked with their feet to the fire, lying on rushes, with a covering of blankets or day-clothes.[2] An earlier account of the Rosses of Donegal, relating to the middle of the eighteenth century, gives us more details: 'All the family lay together in one bed, and, if any visitors came in the evening, they too slept with them; for they set no bounds to their hospitality . . . heath or bent bushes were spread across the floor, to a length sufficient for the number present, and in breadth about six feet; over this litter, the mistress of the house laid part of a long plaid or blanket, on which the others, having stripped off their clothes, lay down as fast as they could; men and women together, all naked: then the mistress having drawn the rest of the blanket over them, lay down herself, naked also. This they call a

[1] Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 132.
[2] In C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 28, 32.

church festivals and at wakes, and though they are now bought they are made by hand in a few towns by chandlers who carry on a medieval tradition. One Dublin firm, established in 1488, manufactures large church candles of beeswax by methods which can have changed little with the centuries. In the home the candles were supported in wrought-iron holders or stuck into a turf by the fireside. Tall standard holders, often with adjustable fittings, were designed to give light to the weaver at the loom, and they are most typically found in Ulster (Fig. 28). The fine embroidery which occupied the women in the linen districts must have imposed a great strain on the eyes: there are stories of a single candle serving as a central source of light for a ring of seamstresses, each of whom held her work against a bottle full of water which acted as a magnifier.

In Ireland, as throughout Atlantic Europe, the dresser ranks as the most important and elaborate piece of furniture in the kitchen, and its position is prescribed by custom. It stands either against the side wall or against the partition between kitchen and bedroom. Since this partition is of no great antiquity we can be sure that the original place of the dresser was against the side-wall and that it has developed from, and taken the place of, shelves built into or attached to the side-wall. In part of Ulster it is referred to as 'the shelf'. I have already mentioned the tiers of stone shelves set in the wall which are preserved in the deserted houses of the Slievemore cluster on Achill Island. It is believed that the fashion of open crockery shelves was diffused from the court sideboards of the later Middle Ages in France and England, and it may be surmised that the wooden dresser was readily accepted in Celtic lands to replace wall shelves, from Elizabethan times on. The adoption of delph and tea-drinking in the eighteenth century no doubt accelerated the spread of the dresser, which had become, by that time, an essential part of Irish kitchen furniture (Plate 1). The corner-cupboard, evolving in much the same way from corner-shelves, is another article of furniture with a north-west European distribution. Similarly the coffer or store-chest spread through western Europe from the later Middle Ages onwards, replacing skin, straw, hollowed wood, or basket-work containers.

 [text continues on p. 93]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

Low stools and benches seem to have been the traditional form of seating, and no doubt the floor served for the children. 352 Travellers noted that this was the best way to avoid the smoke:

> By sitting low, on rushes spread,
> The smoke still hover'd overhead;
> And did more good than real harm,
> Because it kept the long house warm.[1]

Fireside seats, more or less fixed, were often of stone, a solid block of wood or a large lump of turf. In the 'round about' hearths which were common in parts of Co. Antrim, and which people who remember them have described to me, the seat behind the fire, a log of wood, was known as the dais, a dialect word for a bench or seat which appears to be of north English origin. Solid seats of coiled straw or rushes were also common (Fig. 29) but the favourite fireside stool was the three-legged creepie, resembling a milking stool and like it finding a firm hold no matter how uneven the floor. There is little evidence of chairs of any antiquity. A three-legged type found in parts of the west, with a triangular seat and a narrow one-piece back has probably evolved from the creepie but looks Germanic. The nearest approach to a distinctive Irish style is the straw or rush-seated chair, which finds its best-known homes in Co. Down and Co. Limerick. High-backed armchairs made entirely of coiled straw rope after the manner of a beehive used to be found in the west, and since they can be paralleled in many parts of western Europe from the Orkneys to Spain it is probable that their manufacture is a peasant craft of some antiquity (Fig. 29). Cradles, too, were made of straw as well as of wood [854] and basketwork, and they were sometimes suspended from the roof. I have heard of a cradle being improvised by laying a horse-collar on the floor. The phrase 'rocked in a pot' applied to [848] an illegitimate child is said to derive from the use of a large fireside cooking pot as cradle and hiding place: round-shouldered infants were therefore suspect.

Down to recent times it was the custom to keep most of the 234 dairying equipment in the kitchen, and in the traditional peasant house the upright churn still occupies a place against the wall, 353

[1] W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle* (1724), Canto 2. [Text continues on p 95]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

usually opposite the fire. The absence, in a country predominantly pastoral and consuming large quantities of milk products, of a building or room set aside as a dairy is at first sight strange. Milk cattle, however, were closely identified with the woman of the house, and as we have seen they commonly shared the kitchen with the family. Owing to the scarcity of winter feeding-stuffs, moreover, the supply of milk must have been, down to a couple of centuries ago, largely confined to the summer months and butter-making was therefore undertaken at the booley houses. It must have been difficult to store the considerable amounts of milk products required for winter food, especially when one remembers that most of the peasant houses were made of wattles, sods or mud, and there is some evidence, as we shall see in Chapter IX, that they were kept underground under the old Celtic economy, in even temperatures and safe from the depredations of animals.

However this may be, the kitchen is the traditional place for keeping the churn, and for churning. The stave-built upright plunge churn, prototype of the metal milk-churn which at first faithfully copied its shape, belongs to a family of wooden vessels which has been diffused across the Old World from Ireland to Tibet and now survives most abundantly towards the limits of its range (Fig. 30). Made by local coopers, Irish churns display a considerable variety in shape and size, the shapes differing regionally, the sizes depending on the number of cows kept on the farm, for they were 'made to measure'. The small barrel-shaped churn of the south-west, with a narrow vertical mouth, would appear to be the older style. The mouth, designed to hold a lid through a hole in which the churn staff passes, is usually a separate unit attached to the body by a join—the crib—skilfully contrived and concealed under one of the encircling hoops. Some old churns have hoops of split rods, hazel or sally, but it was reckoned lucky to have one of the hoops of rowan. The staves are invariably of oak: the circular base is made in three pieces, dowelled together and having the joins sealed with rushes. Small churns which have been dug out of the bogs are generally found to have been cut from the solid, and they often have projecting lugs perforated for ease of transport. Those with holed lids were certainly churns, but others

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

234 Bad luck could not always be avoided, but at least it was desirable to make the toil less wearisome, and to this end a 407 number of ingenious fittings were applied to the churn staff. Most of the examples I have seen, in the north-east, depend on the recoil of a strong spring to lift the staff, and they may well have been evolved from a spring pole, such as is used for the pole lathe, attached to the roof timbers.[1] Other devices enabled the staff to be moved in both directions by an arrangement of levers hinged to a couple-baulk. These engines, which have almost entirely gone out of use, were known as glaiks (Fig. 31).

[415]

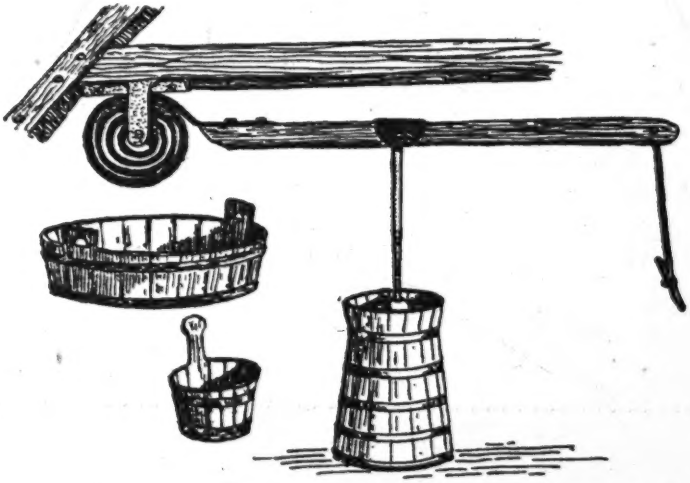

FIG. 31. Glaiks for churning, Co. Down, with milk 'keeler' and piggin, Co. Donegal.

353 Here we may mention other things which were hung from the roof timbers: in the more prosperous homes sides of bacon 788 and portions of the autumn-killed ox, the mart; in poorer houses the salted ling or other 'kitchen'. And there was a strange custom of keeping in the roof, to bring luck to the livestock, part of a carcase, such as an animal's leg. This undoubtedly had its origin in the days when living-room and byre were under

[1]For another device, fitted to the churn, see my *Mourne Country*, Fig. 84.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

one roof. A relic of this practice may perhaps be seen in the 353
sheep's bones that one occasionally finds tucked away in the 788
keeping-holes of old-fashioned houses. Above the door the Bridget's Cross gives protection from fire and other dangers.

Besides the churn the old-time farm will have a wide range of 415
other wooden dairying utensils, some stave-built, others carved 234
or turned from the solid. They will include milking-piggins (Fig. 31), cream-skimmers, ladles, butter-scoops, and -prints, butter tubs and buttermilk butts. A shallow stave-built 'keeler' or a large turned bowl is kept for setting milk (Fig. 31). The solid and often shapely carved cups and methers (literally mead bowls) are already archaeological specimens (Fig. 65), and many of the other wooden containers are going the same way, including the little stave noggins described in an earlier chapter.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 593
a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178
from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342
placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353
serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788]
two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574]
floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571
kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602
tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609
strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572]
parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835
most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602
genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582
forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602
collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609
are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428
is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611
--with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag. [113] [601]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796

at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor. [262] [363] [674]

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Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. [761]

765

The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

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When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning. [602] [654] [322] [463]

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The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding, 198

512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
[521 silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
858] sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women
begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
462 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading
231 the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] News.

341 called the first type *the central-chimney house,* because the chimney will be erected over the fire-place somewhere about the middle of the roof, (fig. 1 and pl. XLI: 1, 2, 3 ; the second *the gable chimney house* because here the chimney will be close to the gable often being built as a part of the stone-built gable (fig. 2 and pl. XLI: 2). The outside chimney then not seldom forms a pronounced gabletop or gable-finial.

The Central-chimney house.

342 Some of the most primitive houses I found in Ireland belong to the central chimney house type. To illustrate I choose a house from Spiddle, Co. Galway (fig. 3 and pl. XLI: 1). The house is said to have been built before 1839 and to have withstood the "big wind" of that year. How old it actually is I had no means of discovering. The walls are of stone with the mortar put on afterwards on the inside and outside, but not used in the actual construction of the walls. Some outhouses belonging to this farm are all of dry wall construction. The roof of straw rests on couples of beams, supported on the inner edge of the walls, so that the thatch does not quite reach as far as the outside edge of the wall, but leaves a narrow space uncovered. [171] This is an archaic feature found now in very old buildings in Ireland, as always in the black houses of Scotland.

The house is built on a slope, so that the fireplace end of the house lies higher than the entrance door. There is only one room, but a low partition wall at the back of the fire cuts off a section which is used as a bedroom. [352] In the lower end of the house a dresser is placed so that it together with a small table cuts off another section that nowadays is also used as a bedroom. Some stools, a cradle and a churn are the other contents. There are two doors opposite of each other, both provided with half-doors. The fireplace consists of some flat stones on the floor. Over the fireplace there is a [354] wattled chimney resting on two beams, supported by a cross beam. The chimney is adapted to a hole in the thatched roof, so there is no outside chimney. On one side of the house, the sheltered side, there are two windows.

About other houses of the same kind, I have heard from the inhabitants [231] that in olden times the lower end of the house was used for the cattle. In late times the cattle have been removed to an outhouse and this part of the house has been adopted as a living room.

342 171 The division of the house into three sections, which is characteristic of the central-chimney house type, is quite clear in the Scottish houses, namely the black houses, the bedroom being at the upper end of the house behind the

[Text continues top of p. 211]

342 fire, and the byre at the lower end of the house. In the Welsh long-house
171 the hearth generally seems to face the living room and bedroom part of the house, and cuts these sections from the byre part. The two doors, opposite to each other, very typical of the Irish house (see p. 217), are also found in the Welsh long-houses, but here the space between the two doors has a more pronounced feeding-walk character, than we find common in Ireland, at least to-day when the cattle are generally removed from the dwelling house. For the three sections of some South Scandinavian houses see p. 222.

The gable-chimney house.

342 In various parts of Ireland I have found numbers of primitive houses with stone-built gables. These houses are always rectangular in form, never oval. Externally the type varies greatly depending mostly on the prevailing wind. On the coast, in very windy districts, the roof will not be built very high, but in more sheltered parts, it will be more lofty.

The gable finial, the gable top often consitutes a very characteristic feature of this house-type, pl. XLII: 2. Only where the low roof is used, the gable top is not especially accentuated. The outside chimney constitutes the gable
[341] top of the chimney-gable. On the opposite gable the gable-finial may be formed in a corresponding way, as a chimneyshaft without any flue. The chimney-shafts at the gables form perhaps the single example in the Irish peasant house of intentional architecture conforming with a wide-spread custom in Western Europe. As regards the serrated gable-ends see p. 226.

342 In small dwellings of this type there is only one room, the fireplace is si-
● 354 tuated against one gable-wall. The most convenient place for the beds is be-
352 side the fire, and at least one bed is to be found here. This is a very original feature of this house-type which is confirmed by Scottish material, old Irish descriptions, and even drawings. In the middle-west and north of Ireland, the bed is built in a projection outwards, *cailleach,* or at least in a niche in the side wall close to the fireplace, pl. XLII: 2, as in the Scottish *tig dubh.*

342 As in the central-chimney house, there are sometimes two doors opposite each other, but even a single door is common in small old houses.

Windows have come at a later period here also. In old-fashioned houses there is generally only one window, sometimes none at all.

342 At the lower end of the house, there was in more remote times place for
231 domestic animals. The division of the room by means of the dresser may have been adopted at an early stage, the dresser being especially suitable as

342 a kind of partition. When the domestic animals were removed, often to an
231 additional building at the gablewall, this part of the house would be used as a living room, just as in the former type of house, fig. 4. In a few very pri-
342 mitive houses of this as well as of the foregoing type I have found firepla-
354 ces with no chimney at all, the smoke leaving the house through a hole in the roof above the fireplace. Sometimes I have found two smoke holes, one in each end of the roof. The doors and half doors constitute together with the smokeholes a complicated machinery, providing the current of air to regulate the turf-fire and the smoke.

Dwelling houses without chimneys were found by me in 1935 at Belmullet, Co. Mayo and in Co. Sligo.

342 The houses with thatched gables sometimes have rounded corners so that the base foundation may have an almost oval shape on the outside, while the inside room may be rectangular in form, pl. XLIII: 2. It is evident that the oval house form and the thatched gables complement each other. They could have existed together from a very early stage in building traditions. In a windy district the rounded and thatched gables are suitable, as the house will be more stream lined.

The roof with a thatched gable can easily have replaced the stone, or cyclopic roof, in cabins and huts (both, bothán). This fact and certain similarities would seem to indicate that the oval house form in the abovementioned houses with thatched gables, may have developed from the round
[171] or beehive house type. Parallels may be found among the stone-built huts with similar roofs in Estremadura and elsewhere.

On the other hand, houses with stone-built gables represent quite clearly the rectangular house type, as in such constructions the gables are never rounded.

342 The stone-built gable constitutes a very practical way of solving the pro-
346 blem of how to protect the gable ends of the roof of an oblong house against the wind, pl. XLIV: 3. But there is another point to be considered. In mediæval houses in villages and cities, the gables have often developed according to the use and importance of the gable wall; when the house faces the street or main road the gable wall would be far more important than the side walls. Other features point to ecclesiastical architecture. In the early churches, in Ireland and elsewhere, the gable wall constituted the front wall. In Ireland the early primitive churches were often furnished with pronounced gable finials. Furthermore it has been suggested that the introduction of the rectangular form of house is due to the first propagators of Christianity

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 771 as a result of certain circumstances, such as social organisation, the demands and standard of the aristocracy, the clan, and the family etc. — introduced in Ireland, Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. This appears from some prehistoric materials as for example the Gall Arus near Dingle, Co. Kerry, and the so-called "kämpagravshuset" and the Viking Hall in Scandinavia.

Some of the features mentioned above in the descriptions of the central chimney-house and the gable-chimney house are common to nearly all primitive recent Irish houses.

342 354 It is especially interesting to notice the practice of providing two doorways, central and opposite, fig. 1, 3 and 4. In recent Irish houses the front door is called *doras tosaigh*, and the backdoor *doras cúl*. In Donegal however, I was told that the front door was called *doras an fhosgaidh*, door of the shelter, and the back door, *doras nagaoithe*. The opening and the closing of these two doors is determined by theprevailing wind, and its effect on the draught through the smokeholes. Thus the two doors were very often in Ireland made up of halfdoors, *leath dhoras*, constituting in co-operation with the smoke holes a machinery regulating the fire. In Ireland this is generally a turf-fire which needs special attention in its making, lighting and maintenance. The drawing off the smoke is also of importance.

342 777 Some superstitions connected with these two doors suggest that very old traditions lie behind them. There is a belief in Co. Kerry that it is very unlucky to go in one door and out the other. You must always go out of the door you entered by, otherwise you are supposed to take the luck of the house with you.

342 How the two doorways could be used with regard to the cattle I have shown by an example from Co. Kerry in my article in Béaloideas (op. cit. p. 70).

The two doorways are well-known from the Ancient Irish Laws and the old literature. The inches house and even larger houses had two doorways, a door in one and a hurdle (wattle) in the other (see Ancient Irish laws, Vol. IV, p. 305). O'Carry says that the principal house, even of kings, had but one room to which when the house was of an oblong form there were generally two doors, one opening east and one west. In the round houses on the other hand there seems to have been but one door, which faced south, west or east, and sometimes though rarely north. (O'Curry, Manners and customs of the ancient Irish. Vol. I). In Scottish beehive houses inhabited about 342 171 1850 however, there are often two opposite doors, about which Thomas says: "The two doors are a decided improvement, for the one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weater door — is closed with a stone or

PLATE XLVI

1. Fastening the hay-ropes, when thatching. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
2. Scollop-thatching. Connemara, Co. Galway.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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1. Thatched-chimney. Co. Clare.
2. Making hay-ropes. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
3. Hobwalls carrying the chimney. Toormakeady, Co. Galway.

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[p. 219]

PLATE XLVIII

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1.

1. Fire-place with iron-grate. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. The basket hanging to dry on the southwall of the house. Lough Eske, Co. Donegal.

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2.

[p. 220]

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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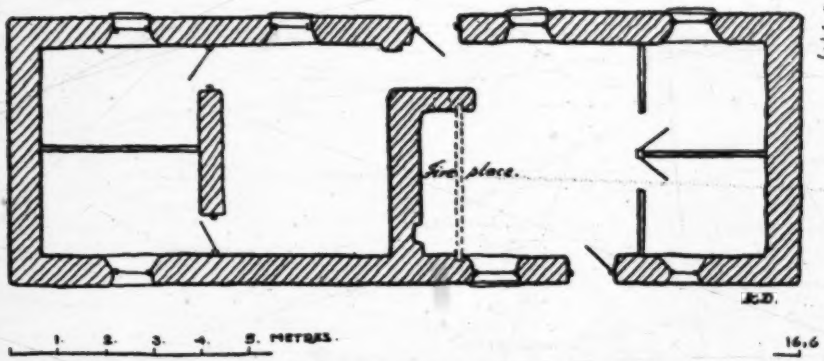

Fig. 5. Entrance-door and fireplace. Cush, Co. Limerick.

The fireplace and the chimney.

Slowly, step by step, or suddenly, by an abrupt innovation the fireplace has developed from its simplest original form, i. e. the placing of the fire directly on the flagstones of the floor. I have never found a fire lying quite free on the floor in Ireland, although I have heard of such fires where one could go round the fire. From Tousist, Co. Kerry, I have heard of houses which had the fire in the centre of the floor, and a casing, *simné,* of woven twigs, *slata fighe,* over it to convey the smoke out through the opening in the centre of the roof. This arrangement has been obsolete here for upwards of 80 years.

In both central-chimney houses and gable-chimney houses of recent time there is always a wall at the back of the firehob. This wall constitutes the endwall, *pinniuir,*[8] of the kitchen in gable-chimney houses. In more newly built central-chimney houses this wall reaches the top of the roof as the stonebuilt chimney is joined to it, but in old central chimney houses it only reaches the same height as the side walls.

The hearth, *teinteán,* is usually at floor level in many parts of Ireland. There is a great variety of hearth-stones: large flags of stone, small cobblestones from the seashore etc. Even round the hearth or fire-place there is a pavement owing to the oldfashioned way of using the fire for cooking. Bits of fire are taken from the fire, and put on the floor round the fire-place, for instance when they are baking in the bastible, and at the same time cooking, or when they wish to leave the tea drawing. Sometimes there can be two or three small fires at the same time round the hearth.

The fireplace thus represents the pure hearth-type, being in direct contrast

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 to the Middle and especially East European fireplace traditions, which are
354 dominated by the stonebuilt oven. The built-in oven is unfamiliar and unknown to the Irish fireplace, and the Irish types of bread. For baking,
252 which is done every day in Ireland, special utensils, representing very old
354 and original traditions, are used. For baking the griddle bread, *arán greadaille*, the griddle or grid iron, *greadall*, is used. The griddle rests on the tripod, *teannta* or *crann aráin*. In Northern Ireland, bread irons are used, which are not put on the tripod over the fire, but the cake is placed in an upright position supported by the bread iron which is placed before the fire. Very primitive is the method to lean the cake against the bread-stick, *crothnán* or *maide aráin*, which is only a wooden twig of three branches or a three forked root. In Ancient Ireland according to O'Curry (op. cit. vol. I, p. CCCLXIII) the wheatmeal and barley cakes were baked on a griddle, but the oatmeal cakes called *bkocaire* or *blethach* were always baked in upright position before the fire by means of the threepronged fork or stick called *maide an bkocaire* or the *cranachan*.

There is also another certainly old Irish method of bread baking i. e. in
[177] the bastible, *bácús*. When metal stores however are found in peasant houses, they are definitely a late cultural loan from England.

342 Standing at the back of the hearth is one large, thickish flag or often three
354 or more stones forming the hob, *iarta*. In very primitive dwellings I have seen only a couple of rough stones used as hobstones, *leac iarta*. In districts where mud-houses are common a mass or boss of clay behind the fireplace makes up the hob. The pot, *corcán*, or kettle, *citeal*, rests against the hob or hobstones when on the fire. The hob constitutes a protection even for the wall behind.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland and even elsewhere the hob is built up carefully from stone and mortar. An ash corner will be found at the sides of the hob.

In the very primitive stage there is no chimney at all, the smoke finding its way out through the door or a hole in the roof. As I have already mentioned, there can be two smoke holes, one at each gable end of the roof. This is a stage of the black houses very seldom seen in Ireland to day.

At the next stage a kind of basket or wooden chimney is hung over the fire to create a draught, *tarrac*, and to lead the smoke out through the hole in the roof. When there is no chimney but even later, when the chimney has come, to regulate the circulation of air in the kitchen, is is necessary to open and close one of the doors to allow for the changing winds. In the Irish houses the woman who looks after the fire always takes the "wind door" and

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Wicklow

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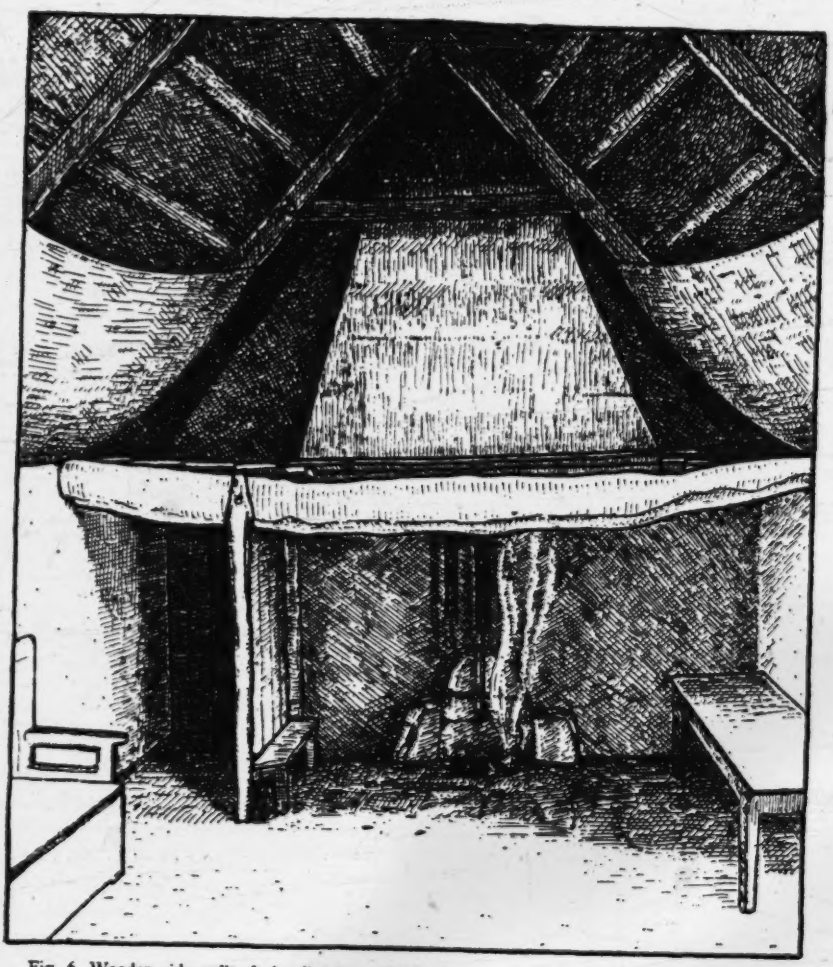

Fig. 6. Wooden side-wall of the fireplace. The kitchen corner. Kyle, Ballinglen, Co. Wicklow.

the "shelter door" into consideration, the whole kitchen being of importance with regard to the fire.

The basket chimney, *sineán,* is plastered with clay inside and outside to resist sparks from the fire. A plaster mixture of clay and calfmanure is said to be very useful. The older chimneys were straight i. e. on looking up from the fireplace the sky was visible above. In later ones the flue, *poll an deataigh,* [237]

342 is bent from side to side to create more draught. The chimney narrowed gra-
●354 dually upwards until the basket, *cis,* on top was reached. In old houses the chimney was not always capped by the basket-like contraption on the outside, for instance not in coastal districts in the North, pl. XLV: 2. The external chimney however is a noteworthy detail. It was now and then of woven rods of twig or willow and it was thatched in some parts of Ireland, pl. XLVII: 1. In other old houses pieces of board were placed on edge in square formation.

The external chimney is sometimes lacking even if there is an inside chimney. In Donegal in places exposed to the wind, I have seen this even in houses with a stonebuilt chimney.

The basket or wooden chimney is supported by two wooden beams resting on the side walls, sometimes however projecting from the gable wall, pl. XLVII: 3. In a later stage there are two pillar walls or hobwalls carrying the basket chimney.

Across the chimney (inside) halfway up or more, a stick of cut tree-branch projects across the chimney. This stick is supporting the chimneyrack or pot-rack, hanger, *drol,* which is an iron bar and hangs down to the fire-level. Another way of hanging pots over the fire is to use the crane, *croch,* a hooked bar of wood (in older times) or iron. Usually the hangers and the crane are combined and in fact there are many hangers hanging at the same time from the crane. Now and then a chain is used as a hanger.

[352] At the side of the fireplace there is a stool, *stól,* or a number of stools, often varying a little in size, but usually very low. Primitive is the block of wood, *bloc,* a section of a tree, used as a stool. This I have seen in chimney-corners in Co. Kerry. There the round stool of coiled hay-ropes, *suidhistín,* also will be found.

The hob or protection wall behind the fire can develop in such a way that it incorporates the two stools at both sides of the fire, so that there will be two stone-built seats.

Also the pier of the fireplace will be built by pilasters on both sides forming a stonebreast, *piléar an teinteáin,* on which the wattled or wooden chimney rests.

[352] In the pier, as well as in the stone wall behind the fireplace, in the hob, and underneath the stone-seats, there are small closets or holes used to keep utensils. In Donegal, I have seen a hole in the wall at each side of the fire, the one hole for the woman's snuffbox and knitting, the other exclusively for the man's pipe.

In later times the chimney is often built of stone and when at last the pier

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Donegal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor. 342 354 [184]

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table. 592 354 [775] [171]

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh*, where the in- [184] 352 171

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE: FIRESIDE AND FOOD.

As we step inside an old Irish cottage, over a threshold of 352 stone slabs or a pattern of small cobble-stones, we tread on a 342 hard mud floor in which we may see, towards the hearth, the "pot hole" where the large iron pot rests when it is lifted off the fire. I have noticed similar holes in the mud floor, with the remains of the round-bottomed pottery vessel inside, near the excavated hearths of Irish houses nearly 40 centuries old. In paved kitchens a block of wood set flush with the flags [354] answers the same purpose or there may be an iron pot rest (Fig. 25). The area surrounding the hearth is always paved, and the fire itself, in the old style, is at floor level. We shall be invited to take a seat at the fire, for this is the place of honour given to strangers: the fireside is both the focus of 352 family life and the symbol of hospitality. The seat may be a [574] stone slab built into the fireplace, so that the social tradition is incorporated in the architecture of the hearth, or it may be a roughly made but sturdy chair, bench or "creepie" (Fig. 26). The low stool not only brings one near fire-level, but keeps one's head out of the peat smoke hanging in the open rafters, while its three legs find firm footing on the uneven floor. Other low stools are made of solid turf or wood—a section of a tree-trunk —or again of coiled straw-rope, while chairs are often made with seats of sugán or of rush. Comfortable high-backed chairs fashioned out of straw in the manner of a

Fig. 25.

Fig. 26.

[p. 67]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Armagh

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Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth with Brace. Derryinver T.L.

Fig. 27. Note wheel-bellows.

Co. Armagh. Cottage Hearth, Jambwall & window. Derrytrasna.

Fig. 28. Note "jamb-window."

[p. 69]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-holes (" boles ") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes or the knitting : they are usually reserved for special purposes and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these
[805] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for drying clothes.

251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or " ark,"
352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now almost dead, is the " tramping " of the meal, the children
[857] being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead immediately behind the chimney, in the " room," where it would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other fireside gear later in the chapter.

● 354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west, that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its cailleach or not, lies at one side of the fire : alternatively there may be a large settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Donegal

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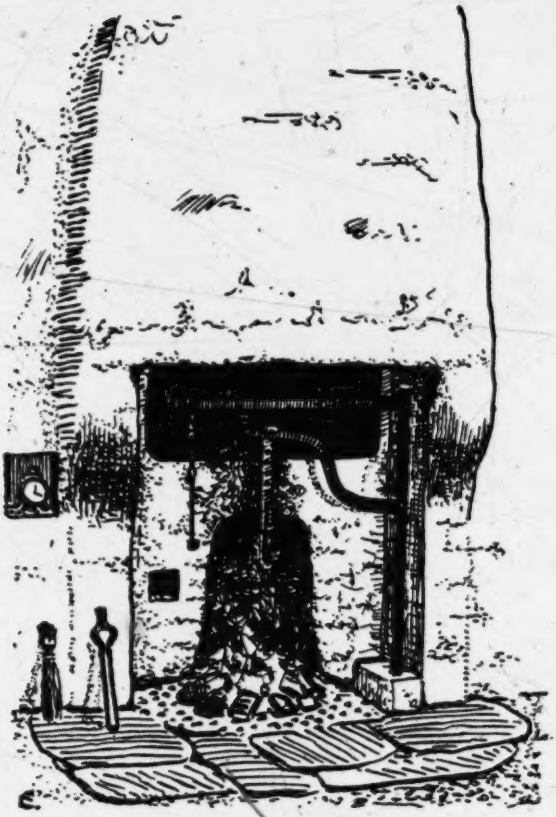

a Donegal Hearth

Fig. 29.—Note keeping-holes, besom, tongs, crane and pot-hanger (crook).

[p. 71]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the side walls so that it is impossible to sit round it. The 352
table is not a centre of social activities and has nothing like the same importance as in an English farmhouse. There are crofters' dwellings in Donegal where no table is used; instead, [264]
at meal times, the shallow potato basket or skeehogue (Fig. 31) is taken on the knees of the members of the family as they sit in front of the fire, or an upturned creel may serve instead. Very low oblong tables or trays cut from the solid were formerly used and are occasionally dug up from the bogs. They have holes by which they could be suspended from the wall when not in use, and it may be for convenience of transport during the summer migrations. The potato basket will be seen after meals hanging to dry on the south wall of the house.

Fig. 31.

To understand the fireside appliances and methods of 354 ●
cooking certain facts should be borne in mind—the absence 252
of the brick oven, the use of turf, a slow-burning fuel admirable for stewing and for things requiring a steady heat, and the universal preference for "thin-bread," or "bread in cakes," as English observers called it. Once more we have to remind 252
ourselves that parallels to surviving habits can be found 40 centuries back, for pottery baking slabs are known from Neolithic western Europe and of course oatcakes are best baked in this way. Flagstone griddles were apparently common down to a few centuries ago, and a dated specimen of a bakestone is illustrated in Fig. 33. Though oatcakes are now baked on the griddle, it is not long since they were set upright before the fire after drying a little, and turned frequently. The simple "bread-stick" (Fig. 32) or even a lump of turf may serve the purpose, but in the north of Ireland, where bread seems to have been relatively more important than in

Fig. 32. Co. Galway. Height 1 ft.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

415 The round-bottomed three-legged iron pots (Figs. 5 and 34), of various sizes from the small porridge pot to the giant 18 gallon potato pot, are descended from the bronze cauldrons of which there are many specimens in the museums ranging in date from 700 B.C. to 1700 A.D. The cauldron was in old times the special property of the head of the house and figures prominently in Celtic mythology and folklore. The pot has been described as the "maid of all work," but boiling potatoes for man and beast is now its main task. The heaviest pots are going out of use with the introduction of raised grates.

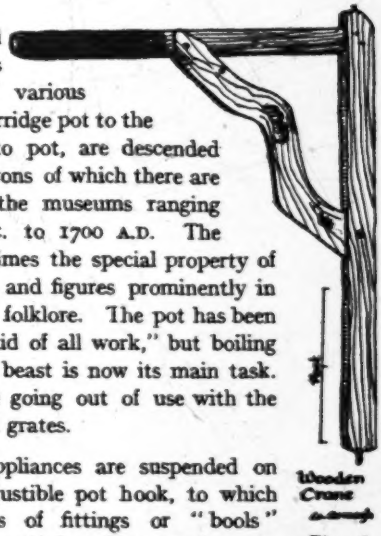

Fig. 36.

These various appliances are suspended on the iron crook or adjustible pot hook, to which many different kinds of fittings or "bools" (Fig. 35) can be attached. The crook may simply hang from a bar placed across the chimney, but more commonly from a crane (Fig. 29) which swivels at the side of the fire. A few examples of the wooden crane survive (Fig. 36) By the fireside, too, are kept the short iron tongs or "mudyees" and the heather besom (Fig. 29) which is more efficient than any broom in cleaning among the hearthstones. A goose-wing serves to dust the pots and clean the griddle when baking. Here by the fireside was hung the crusie oil lamp (Chapter 16, Fig. 105) which is another element of the north-western province of European folk-culture and may have its prototype in the famous "hanging bowls" of over 1,000 years ago. A selection of old-fashioned smith-made iron light-holders of different kinds is shown in Fig. 37. There are more elaborate styles, but the charm of these homely appliances lies in their simplicity. The upper figures from Co. Armagh (a and b) show weavers' candlesticks, made for suspension from the loom. Figure (e) is for holding a "split" or thin strip of resinous bog-fir. The others (c and d) are

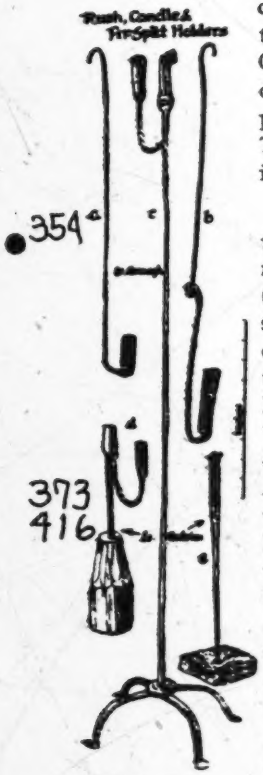

Fig. 37.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894.
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homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, 291
until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the
homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange [386]
used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black
and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a [824]
small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but
sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant.

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bed- 342
rooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar,
though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the
walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the
exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses
are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors,
front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen; and the
windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very
small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they
are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot
square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the [354]
usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that
in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the
top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the
gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass
turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the [284]
ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The
gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does
not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water
getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is
put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones,
until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and
quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The [241]
floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes
boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is
wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood,
washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the
islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people
having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings
or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The 352
furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe croithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

cemented by "dobe" or tempered clay, or sometimes mortar. It 342
generally consists of two apartments, the kitchen and the "room." The kitchen, which is usually of pretty large size, is used as the living room; it has a floor of beaten clay. This room has one, or perhaps, two windows of small size, and seldom made to open. These are always glazed now-a-days, but in the last century they were covered with oiled sheepskin. The house has two doors, both of which open directly into the kitchen, and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the partition wall of the two apartments.

The end of the kitchen farthest from the fire is used as a pen for the cattle and pigs. The fowl roost where they can, often on the [231] backs of the cattle.

Above the beams or couples in this part of the kitchen boards are sometimes placed, making a sort of loft, in which fishing and boat tackle, agricultural implements, and other articles are stored.

The fireplace is built against the partition wall between the [354] ● kitchen and the room. It consists of a stone hearth backed by a "hob," also of stone, built out slantwise behind it to make the fire draw well. This class of house has no chimney, the smoke escaping through a circular hole in the roof immediately above the hearth.

"The room" is a smaller apartment than the kitchen, (measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet) it has one or two small windows, and the floor is sometimes boarded.

The furniture of the house is poor and scanty, that of the kitchen 352
consisting of a bedstead, rudely made up of drift-wood, two posts being driven into the floor, a longitudinal piece uniting these and two cross-beams at head and foot resting by one end on the posts, and having the other built into the wall. Sometimes it is built up into four-poster shape and has curtains. The bedding is composed either of feather ticks, or, with the poorer people, of straw, covered with coarse sacking. The bedclothes are often very dirty. There is a dresser covered with earthenware plates, cups, and jugs of a poor and cheap description, a table, two or three chairs, and a couple of forms or settles. A long straw rope is usually stretched across the apartment to hang clothes to dry on. Worsted when spun, nets, &c., are hung from the couples.

"The room" contains one or two beds of the sort described, a chair or two, a table (in some cases), and a large chest.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual three-legged pot, a 415
griddle, a gridiron, and sometimes a pot oven, a few staved wooden piggins, a boran or sheepskin sieve, and, in the mountains and islands, a quern, now only used usually for grinding barley for cattle food,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied 342
"'twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the
fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the [763]
west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the [777]
luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was always carried out to the graveyard through the back door, [764]
and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the [354]
room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the [231]
flagged passage between the doors served as a path for livestock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh, [777]
in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands*.
[3] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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V

HEARTH AND HOME

THE kitchen and the hearth are the very core of the Irish house, and the turf fire burning continuously day and night, throughout the year, is the symbol both of family continuity and of hospitality towards the stranger. When it goes out, it has been said, the soul goes out of the people of the house. The fire serves not only to prepare food and dry clothes, to bring warmth and comfort to the family and to ailing animals, but also to keep the thatch dry and preserve the roof timbers, so that 'when the smoke dies out of a house, it does soon be falling down'. This is one reason for the persistence of single-storey houses open to the roof, where the turf smoke could circulate among the rafters and keep the scraws and under-thatch dry. A 'smoke', in the seventeenth century inventories and to this day among country folk, means a house. In the days before chimneys were adopted the cabins were described as oozing smoke through the thatch so that they resembled 'reeking dunghills'. It should be remembered that the brick or stone chimney flue is a relative newcomer and, as we are constantly being reminded in these days of fuel shortage, a great waster of heat. The chimneyless open fire was much more effective as a house-warmer. The turf smoke, it is true, despite the draught-regulating mechanism of the double doors, must often have been troublesome, but as we shall see the furniture was designed to keep heads low.

Dry peat burns too quickly if the draught is strong, and the fire does best at floor level, glowing on a great stone slab or on a cobbled hearth set in the mud floor. The area immediately around the fire is also paved, but the rest of the old-style

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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353 a wooden plank is set in the floor as a footing for the pot, or to give the spinning wheel a firm base. The upright churn also needs a firm footing and in the Mourne Mountains a movable granite flag was kept for this purpose. I have seen a mud floor in Co. Down with several round holes in which milk was poured [231] for each member of a family of cats. In the Bronze-Age Orkney village of Skara Brae every hut had stone-lined holes sunk in the floor, which were thought to have been used to store limpets.[1] In archaeological excavations near Belfast I have found holes which were presumably used for storing milk-products sunk in the clay floor of an 'earth-house' (souterrain) of the Dark Ages.[2] In some old houses there is a hole near the fire, either in front or let into the wall alongside, which is used to store the ashes.

In nearly every example of prehistoric and early historic ●354 houses which have been excavated, the hearth occupies a central position, and cooking pots would have been suspended either from the roof timbers or from specially constructed supports. We know from English travellers that this continued into recent centuries. Thus Fynes Moryson: 'the chief men in their houses make fires in the midst of the room, the smoke whereof goeth out at a hole in the top thereof.'[3] He goes on to say that the humbler clay or wattled cabins also had their fires in the middle, and in the early nineteenth century we read of houses in West Antrim where the fire, though not in the centre of the room, was 'advanced some feet from the gable wall so that the persons of the family can readily sit round it.'[4] The description given by Charles Lever of the little cabin of Owen Joyce on one of the Brannocks Islands off the west coast, even if fictional, is worth quoting because Lever was probably drawing on tradition. It reads: 'It was built in a circular form, the chimney in the middle. Certain low partitions sub-divided the space into different chambers, making the centre the common apartment of the family, where they cooked, and ate, and chatted.'[5] In the course of time, however, the fire has come to

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 17.
[2] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 5–27.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 231.
[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 275.
[5] Charles Lever, *The Martins of Cro' Martin* (1864), 2, ch. 31

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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be placed against the gable or, in the central chimney house, 354
against a partition-wall, and one cannot doubt that the general adoption of chimney flues has been the deciding factor. This innovation, slowly adopted from about the sixteenth century onwards, gave rise in time to many regional styles of chimney breast in brick and stone. I suspect that the wattled smoke canopy (Fig. 18) was the native response to the novelty of chimney flues, but I cannot find that it was adopted outside the areas of strong English influence. The substitution of peat for

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FIG. 18. Hearth with jamb-wall and wattled smoke-canopy, Co. Armagh. Meal-bin and settle-bed on left.

wood seems to have made little difference to the architecture of the hearth. When coal came to be burnt, however, the fire had to be lifted off the floor, or the hearth fire given a stronger draught by installing a built-in 'fan bellows' which forced air through a tube into the floor of the fire.

The wattled smoke canopy or brace (? breast) is still fairly 354
common in houses with central chimney and fireside partitions, 342
mainly in the south and east. The front of the canopy rests on a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

354 strong horizontal beam, the brace-tree, which may extend right
342 across the kitchen from wall to wall, four or five feet out from the fire and five or six feet from the ground. Or one end of the
342 beam may rest on a supporting jamb set under one corner of the canopy. In that case—and invariably where the front door is
353 adjacent—there may be a draught screen of wood mud or stone —the jamb-wall—built out from the fireside and terminating in the jamb, so as to partition off the fireside. This curtain-wall is pierced by a small window known as the entry or spy-hole, through which an approaching visitor can be spied from the fireside through the open door (Fig. 18). I have seen a few jamb-wall houses of this type in Co. Armagh where the brace-tree nevertheless continued to the side-wall, so that the visitor had to stoop under it on entering the house. If a door is swung on the jamb-post a small hall or internal porch is readily provided. This is characteristic of developed houses of traditional style in the Lagan Valley near Belfast, and a further refinement is to hang a mirror over the jamb-window, a looking glass replacing the plain glass of the peep hole and reflecting changing fashions. The jamb-wall, called also in Ulster the hollan-
[171] wall, is well-known under that name in the south of Scotland and the north of England and may thence have reached eastern Ireland in plantation times. In Cumberland it was termed the sconce and in Lancashire the speer, which was the name of the screen which crossed the end of the halls in the Oxford colleges. James Walton tells me that in north Yorkshire the jamb post, called the witch post, is occasionally found to be covered with designs intended to protect the hearth from evil spirits. Sprigs of rowan are tied to its top for the same purpose. The partitioned hearth is characteristic of eastern and southern Ireland: it extends into the Central Lowlands but it is almost entirely lacking in the west and in the north-western province of the outshot-house to be described below. Dr. Desmond McCourt tells me that he knows of two or three hybrids—having both the outshot and the partitioned hearth—in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains, where two cultural pro-
342 vinces meet.

354 The smoke canopy varies in shape and method of construction from one region to another. The commonest type is made of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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laths and wattles (willow, hazel or briar), plastered with a 354
mixture of clay and cowdung or ashes and coated with limewash. 342
In parts of the south hay or straw ropes soaked in mud (putogs) were used, twisted between a frame of horizontal rungs and plastered over with mud or limewash. In Co. Armagh one [237]
occasionally sees a heron's wing hung on the brace: it is used for dusting the hearth. The jamb-walls—and internal walls in general—were traditionally constructed of wattle and daub, or of mud or wood. The wattle and daub construction is undoubtedly an old technique which, in the days of plentiful timber, was much more generally used in house-building. Internal partitions carried up to the roof, however, probably followed the adoption of the chimney flue, and if so this innovation must be reckoned as a contribution to privacy as well as to comfort. We note in passing that wattlework found its last traditional 342
use in house construction in the wicker doors of the west, and in the windbreaks of the north, bundles of hazel or birch branches (wassocks) set up on the windward side of the door. The stone-built external porch must be regarded as a relatively novel addition to the traditional house style.

Wooden or stone seats are often built in near the hearth, 352
and the wall behind the fire, protected by a flagstone or a built-up hob, usually has a keeping hole on each side of the fire (Fig. 19). Known as boles in Antrim and coves in Cavan, these may be elaborated in Achill Island, for example, into two- or three-tier wall-dressers whose ancestry lies in the stone house tradition of the mountain country. There is an old belief that the left-hand keeping hole belongs to the woman and the right-hand one to the man of the house. Here you may see in safe keeping, on one side the woman's knitting, on the other the man's clay pipe. Stone dressers were a characteristic feature of [171]
the huts at Skara Brae,[1] where also Professor Childe found evidence that the women occupied the left side of the fire and the men the right. In the Hebridean black-houses the left-hand side of the fire was the woman's quarter.[2] Similarly in the old turf houses of the Highlands, 'the women were invariably ranged around the central fire on one side, the men on the

[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 15.
[2] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 52.

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[354]

FIG. 19. A Donegal hearth, with crane, creepie and bread-iron. Pot and pot-hole on right.

other'.[1] It is interesting to notice that it is the Mongol usage to allot the right side of the yurt to men and the left side to women.[2] We are surely dealing with a very ancient tradition related perhaps to the ordered routine of a pastoral nomadic life. For the Mongols the right and left sides were symbolized respectively by horse and cow. In the humblest Irish farms, [514] which lack sanitary conveniences of any kind, it is customary for the women to use the byre and the men the stable.

If we now turn to the methods of suspending cooking pots 354 over the fire we shall see how the woman's functions are best 821 carried out on the left side. Besides the convenience of this for a normal right-handed person, there lies behind it the notion that for good luck significant actions involving the food supply—such as ploughing, casting a net or taking a pot off the fire—should follow the direction of the sun's movement in the sky. Thus the crane on which the pots are hung is almost

[1]Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (1857), 96
[2]E. D. Chapple and C. S. Coon, *Anthropology* (1946), 539.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

invariably pivoted on the left side of the fire so that it swings out with the sun. The iron crane is more characteristic of stone fireplaces than of those with wattled braces, which tend to preserve older methods of hanging. Some of them, indeed, have a large crane or 'gallows' of bog-oak with a long arm pivoting on a massive heel six feet high: I have come across several in Co. Armagh (Fig. 20). One may guess that well-appointed houses of the central-hearth style had some such appliance in early times, turning, perhaps, as do similar hanging-devices in the Roumanian shepherds' wooden *stanas*, on an upright post pivoted in the tie beam of the rafters. Framed within the white- 354 [821]

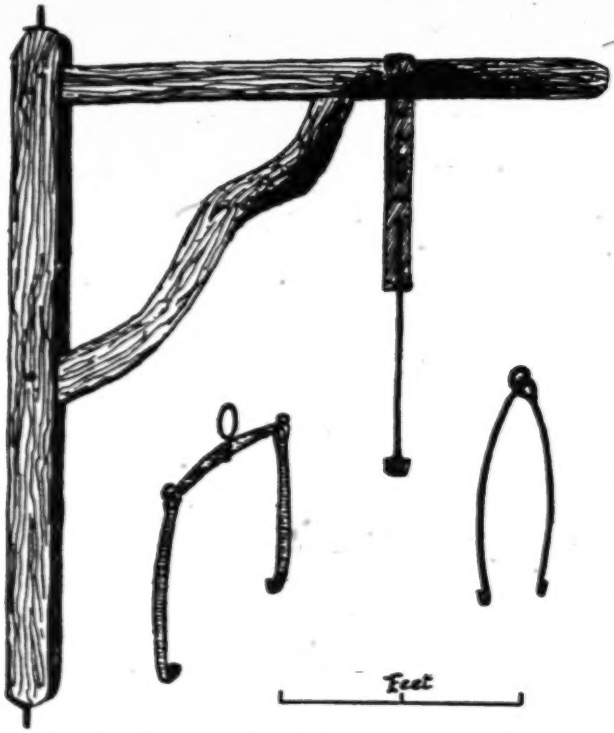

FIG. 20. Bog-oak crane and adjustable pot-hanger, Co. Armagh, with fittings for hanging griddle and pots.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

● 354 washed jambs of a stone chimney (Fig. 19) the simple wrought-iron crane has the simple beauty of fitness to purpose which most hand-made things possess. The smith rarely attempted the decorative scrolls which were more suited to light objects such as oatcake toasters. From the cranes must hang the mighty iron pots, some with a capacity of 25 gallons, to hold food for man and beast. One hears of examples which were [406] literally 'cranes', fitted with a windlass and chain to lift pots on and off the fire. Such capacious vessels could not have come into use had the fire not been at floor level.

The adjustable pot-hanger which hooks on to the arm of the crane is a simple but effective device for adjusting the height of the hanging pot (Fig. 20). Like so many of the culture-elements we are describing in this book, it apparently belongs to the Atlantic fringes of Europe. While it could be a medieval or later introduction to Ireland, research may show that it is a Celtic trait (fire-irons are a ritual feature of early Celtic cultures) which has found its last refuge in the open hearths of the west. The crane and other fire-irons and the very soot that [372] clings to them have been regarded with superstitious reverence by virtue of their association with fire. Soot carried in the pocket, [484] for example, gave protection on a journey. More ancient in origin than the crane is the hanging chain suspended from a crook-stick and terminating in a movable pot-hook (crook). From existing examples one could work out a plausible evolutionary sequence of hangings from the roof-suspension which can still be seen in the black-houses of the Hebrides. The sequence begins with a wooden peg stuck high in the back wall of the fire, giving way to a transverse bar set parallel to the wall in the smoke canopy, which might in turn become the arm of the crane. These crook-sticks are said to have been made of holly. The long chain of the first example certainly gives more 'play' than the short suspension from a chimney bar, but the peg is more inaccessible and this supports the contention that it is a survival of the long hanging from the roof-timbers over a chimneyless central hearth.

Pots and pans and other hearth-gear we shall discuss in the next chapter, but here we should notice some further architectural fittings of the partitioned fireside. On one side of the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354
shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373]
were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse- [492]
collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342
is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft 353
is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231]
to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513]
the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352
the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

Barnstaple in Devon. The oven-pot may be suspended over the fire but in the south rests on a trivet: the lid is dished so that live turves may be placed on top. It is used also for bread-baking, though the griddle is most commonly employed for this purpose (Fig. 24). 415

FIG. 24. Oven-pot, griddle and trivet

Here we come to a fundamental fact in the geography of the Irish hearth—the absence of the built-in oven. The one exception which proves the rule is its occurrence in the extreme south-east, where, in Co. Wexford, the baronies of Bargy and Forth have retained many features dating from their English settlement in medieval times. Over most of Ireland even when a cooking-range is installed in the hearth, the oven is not used for bread-baking, for oven-bread is not a native food. In central Europe on the other hand the bread-oven, originally of clay, is of great antiquity and the stone or metal oven has come to dominate the fireplace. The difference in bread-types is related on the one hand to environment and economic organization and on the other hand to a whole set of eating habits and ethical values. 354 [262] [171]

Thin bread, or bread in cakes, made without yeast, has been from early times the common bread in most parts of Atlantic Europe, from North Scandinavia to the Basque Country, including Highland Britain and Ireland. Farther afield it is typical of many Mediterranean areas and parts of Asia. In north-western Europe it is closely linked with the cultivation of oats, though home-baked wheaten bread is made in the same way and mixtures with maize and with potatoes are similarly prepared. Potato bread (fadge), a mixture of wheat flour and boiled potatoes, is a popular food which surely had its origins in difficult times. 262 252 171

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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chest was considered to be the best place to store a well-dried ham. 251

Originally the flat round oatcakes were baked on a flat stone, and such flagstone griddles continued to be used in the nineteenth century in parts of Co. Kerry. A late seventeenth-century traveller wrote: 'Their general food is a thin oatcake which they bake upon a broad flat stone made hot, a little sheep's milk cheese, or goat's milk, boiled leeks and some roots.'[1] In Yorkshire the flagstone was built-in over a separate fire and gave way slowly to the iron 'bakestone'. The bread was hardened in front of the fire, resting against a three-legged 'bread-stick' of the type shown in Fig. 25. Representations of bread on the sculptured high crosses of the Early Middle Ages show just such round discs. The traditional form of thin bread, however, is the farl (fardel), shaped like a quarter-circle. The large circular cake is marked with a cross so that it can be readily broken into quarters (farls) after baking and hardening. The 'harning' is done on a wrought iron 'harnen stand' or toaster which has taken the place of the simple bread-stick. It is worth noticing that the Beltane cakes, formerly eaten at the fires which were lit on hill-tops on May Eve, were baked, in Scotland at any rate, before the fire without touching iron.[2] I have seen a few examples of carved stone breadstands which were designed to bake the bread in front of the fire, and no doubt rough stones were originally used for this purpose. The baking stones are elaborately carved and often carry dates ranging, in Scottish examples, from 1674 to 1791.[3] Irish examples seem to be confined to Ulster and they probably represent one of the many culture traits introduced from Scotland (Fig. 25, 6). The wrought iron toasters are tastefully designed and exhibit a great variety of ornament. Specimens from north Ulster and from Scotland display an almost Spanish exuberance in the intricacies of their spiral terminals, and one would like to know if they have their counterparts along the Atlantic coasts of Europe. They are now for the most part museum pieces, for one rarely sees them in use and great numbers have found their way to the scrap heap in the last half century.

[1] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.* x (1904), 96.
[2] J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-east of Scotland* (1929).
[3] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 239.

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415

FIG. 25. Oatcake toasters (harnen stands). The first three 'bread-sticks' make an evolutionary series. They are from Armagh, Galway and Clare. Nos. 4 and 5 are bread-irons from Derry and Down; the latter is fitted with a spit-rack. No. 6 (from Fermanagh) is in stone. No. 7 is an unusual type from Armagh. No. 8 is a toasting fender from Antrim.

252 Among food gatherers such as the Californian Indians we find that wild oats are parched before they are ground in a mortar. A similar custom, known as 'burning the corn in the ear', survived until recent times in Ireland and met with as

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the 352
fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served 592
since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in the English language gave its name to a committee, has not replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies [776]
or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged [769]
around the fire.

FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means 354
of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the 373
table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke. The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from [171]
Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said, that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

[1] A. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

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● 354
373
[416]

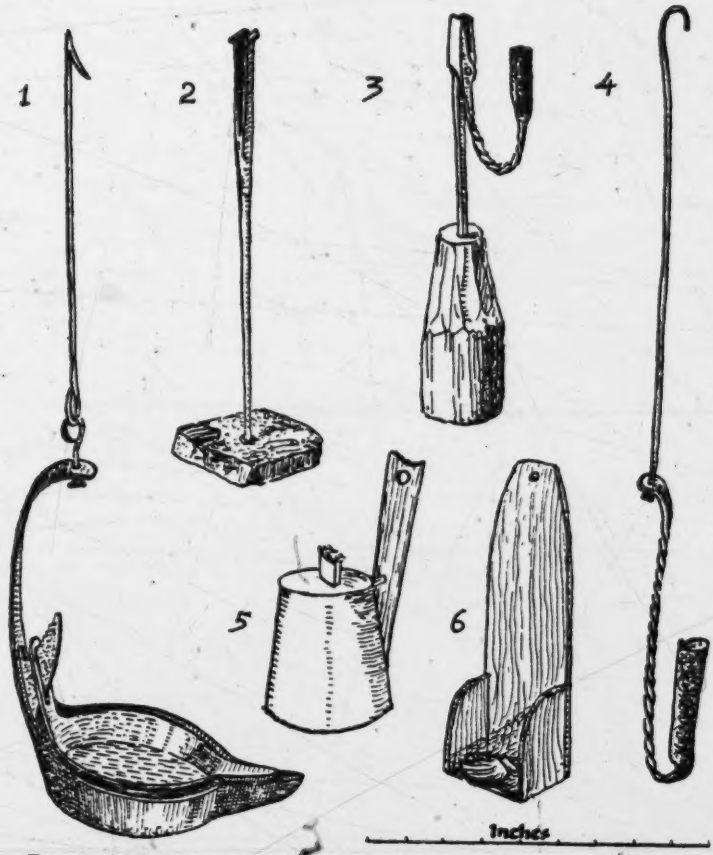

FIG. 27. Light-holders. (1) Crusie, Co. Antrim (scale × 2). (2) Fir-split holder, Co. Antrim. (3) Rush and candle-holder, Co. Antrim. (4) Weavers' candle-holder, Co. Armagh. (5) Hob lamp, Co. Cavan. (6) Scollop shell lamp, Aran Islands.

and by rush-lights held in iron pincers mounted on wooden or wrought-iron stands (Fig. 27). Candles of resin, tallow and beeswax were also made at home by dipping prepared strips of cloth repeatedly in an iron grisset and rolling out the candles on a board. Such candles played an important part in various

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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church festivals and at wakes, and though they are now bought 354
they are made by hand in a few towns by chandlers who carry 373
on a medieval tradition. One Dublin firm, established in 1488,
manufactures large church candles of beeswax by methods which [394]
can have changed little with the centuries. In the home the
candles were supported in wrought-iron holders or stuck into a
turf by the fireside. Tall standard holders, often with adjustable
fittings, were designed to give light to the weaver at the loom, [286]
and they are most typically found in Ulster (Fig. 28). The fine
embroidery which occupied the women in the linen districts
must have imposed a great strain on the eyes: there are stories
of a single candle serving as a central source of light for a
ring of seamstresses, each of whom held her work against a [416]
bottle full of water which acted as a magnifier.

In Ireland, as throughout Atlantic Europe, the dresser ranks 352
as the most important and elaborate piece of furniture in the 353
kitchen, and its position is prescribed by custom. It stands
either against the side wall or against the partition between
kitchen and bedroom. Since this partition is of no great anti-
quity we can be sure that the original place of the dresser was
against the side-wall and that it has developed from, and taken
the place of, shelves built into or attached to the side-wall. In
part of Ulster it is referred to as 'the shelf'. I have already
mentioned the tiers of stone shelves set in the wall which are
preserved in the deserted houses of the Slievemore cluster on
Achill Island. It is believed that the fashion of open crockery
shelves was diffused from the court sideboards of the later
Middle Ages in France and England, and it may be surmised
that the wooden dresser was readily accepted in Celtic lands to
replace wall shelves, from Elizabethan times on. The adoption
of delph and tea-drinking in the eighteenth century no doubt
accelerated the spread of the dresser, which had become, by
that time, an essential part of Irish kitchen furniture (Plate
1). The corner-cupboard, evolving in much the same way
from corner-shelves, is another article of furniture with a
north-west European distribution. Similarly the coffer or
store-chest spread through western Europe from the later
Middle Ages onwards, replacing skin, straw, hollowed wood,
or basket-work containers.

 [Text continues on p. 93]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both; and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [918] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

• 354 [352] [516] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 527 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is [574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [521] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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members and the organization of effort involved. It is to be expected, of course, that there is a great deal of variation at different seasons of the year, a fact which makes it impossible to describe farm activities without reference to seasonal change and the requirements of various crops. Nevertheless, the work round the house is constant and less variant than that outside on the "land," and for that reason it is significant to begin with it. 512

A typical winter day begins for the farm family about seven-thirty in the morning. At other seasons the family rises earlier, but the long wet days have reduced outside work to a bare minimum and confine the work of the family members within doors. To the woman falls the first duty of the day. She must rake together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire in the hearth, put down new sods for the fire, and rekindle the blaze. This done, she hangs the kettle on the hook, making ready for the first tea of the day. For the rest of the day she must keep the hanging kettle ready, for at any moment of the day she may be called upon to serve a cup of tea to her husband, children, and all visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast, usually of bread, eggs, and milk. By the time breakfast is finished, the household is ready for its workaday existence. The farmer father and husband is dressed and ready for his daily tasks, in which he relies upon the aid of whatever grown sons may still be at home, and who now take their breakfasts beside him. Similarly, the farm wife and mother who serves her men, husband and sons, and stands by unwilling to take her place at the deal table before the window at one side of the kitchen hearth until they have eaten their fill, is ready to begin her daily round with the help of the daughters and young children of both sexes who wait their turns with her. 512 462 264 [272] [262]

In the household the responsibility of day-to-day housekeeping belongs to the woman. Hers, too, is the care of the 512 462 356

512 children. If they are of school age, she must dress them,
462 feed them, and get them off to school. She does all the cook-
ing and washing up after meals and keeps the teapot always
356 ready. Each morning she sweeps the house, makes the beds, and so on. The clothes of the household are her care as well, and the indispensable and constant mending of them which rough wear makes necessary all falls to her lot.

This household work is familiar to us; the point of itemizing it is merely to make clear the confined sphere in which the woman's recurrent and indispensable duties fall.

512 But her work stretches beyond the house door. In the
462 morning after breakfast she takes the milk buckets and milks
356 the cows in the sheds in the haggard. This is merely one of
231 the many trips she makes in and out of the kitchen doors for fuel, for water, to feed and tend the animals and the fowl.
234 Her milking finished, she must bring the milk in and separate it. In recent years, more prosperous farms have been able to make use of the separator. If there is none, she must set the milk in large pans and allow the cream to rise. The whole process of the conversion of milk to butter is her charge.

512 After the morning milking and the feeding of her human
462 charges, she must turn her attention to the feeding of the
231 farm animals, especially the young ones. The cows and horses are not her province, but all the care of the calves, pigs, and fowl falls to her lot. She prepares a mixture of warm milk and grain for the calves, feeding them from a bucket. They must not be allowed to suck, as the milk is meant for human consumption. Then she boils a large kettle of potatoes over the fire for the chickens and the pigs, or takes them the leavings of the previous day.

512 Before noon she hangs another kettle over the fire filled
462 with potatoes for the use of the family. In season she adds
[251] white cabbage and nearly always includes a portion or two of bacon, some of it home cured in brine to resemble salt
PORK.

The stone or earth-

342 en floor may be sprinkled for instance with coral beachsand to help in sweeping it.

[356] In some primitive houses, where the cattle still had their places, in the low end, I have found a gutter or conduit going across the low end and leading out through the door. [231]

333 342 *The walls.* There are two main types of wall construction representing very old building traditions.

[172] 1. The dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara* — met with in the prehistoric buildings, *clocháns* etc. — are built of stones (often flattish) without mortar. Dwelling-houses which have been built with dry stone walls have in later times been covered both inside and outside with mortar, pl. XLIII: 1. The space between the bigger stones are often carefully filled up by small stones, *spallaí.*

Especially in Co. Clare I have admired the precision developed in the construction of the walls.

[172] 2. Of prehistoric origin are also the mud, clod or clay walls, *falla feidín.* A fantastic explanation of the term makes it equal to *falla ar feadh dín,* a wall that endures as long as the roof is kept properly thatched (Dinneen).

The clay was pulverized and made into a thick mortar by wetting it and mixing it with cut rushes or course sprat hay. The well built mud-wall houses form comfortable dwellings and it has happened that people have regretted leaving excellent thatched "mud walls" to live in cold stone-walled slatted dwellings.

342 The foundation of the walls is sometimes a pronunced feature of the house. Whilst the walls usually have a width of 1½, 2 or 3 feet, the foundation is wider, forming a shelf or broad step along the building serving as a pathway to the door. The foundation is sometimes not very dissimilar to some prehistoric house-foundations. In this connection I would like to remark that the pathway and nearest surroundings of the entrance door are sometimes paved by a mosaic of small cobble-stones from the sea-shore. This I have seen in costal districts in South West, and I suggest that it is the same kind of pavement as appears in Portugal, Madeira, Marocco and elsewhere at the border of the Atlantic And the Mediterranean Sea. [171]

Doors and windows. In many primitive houses of to-day the construction of the door-opening is extremely archaic: flat stones serving as lintel and as threshold. The frame of the door is wooden.

The doors usually have bolts of wood and a hasp to close the door. A thick wooden beam can be placed across inside the door on stormy nights, certain holes in the wall at both sides of the door being made for this beam,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
[171] of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
567 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[565]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 527 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is [574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [521] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of [211] local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

796

Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the [793] confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the [356] • stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water [783] is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the [674] priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families in- [777] volved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring [776] them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

574 273 Women

[562] [514] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 [535] [562] [857] 574 834 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 [123] 574 273 [533] [535] Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 [576] Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [356] 574 535 Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 123 [577] 574 579 178 [738] My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *e* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the grave-stones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER II

Small Farm Economy

THE small farmers' family groups inhabit the holdings or plots of land from which they make the livelihood we have described numerically. Except in a few and special cases, there is no physical separation of house plot from fields; the individual family's plot is usually a continuous one, and the other forms of settlement present in Ireland are rapidly being reshaped with that condition as the ideal. Consequently, the farmhouse is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. In it the farm family group spends its entire life, sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work upon the fields. 361 592

The farm family lives and performs almost all of its work within this spatial unit of land and house. And the unit is identified with the family in the eyes of its community in name and ownership. Outside this range, the farmer has little participation in affairs in comparison with others of the population. His wife and children have even less. Within this range most of the activity marking the relations of the human beings who make up the group takes place. 592

The "land," as we have seen, is usually divided into "field," "meadow," "garden," "bog," and "mountain," according to its character and agricultural use. These divisions make up the holding and represent the productive 231 241 311

[p. 31]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER X

The Old in the Community[1]

LET us examine the life of a local community in the rural "West of Ireland" and put to the test of observation the claim that the clique of evening visitors among the old men of the community plays a decisive role in its social life. Perhaps Rynamona already mentioned affords the best example. Yet any other community the authors knew well would afford as good a one. In all of them the old men met in much the same way and, in spite of different names and persons, acted in much the same way to form a similar old men's clique. By taking the example of Rynamona, we can throw the generalities of this conduct into relief. 573 887

Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another in the "good land" of rough limestone outcrops stretching back from the sea into the glaciated lakes strewn north in County Clare. To reach Rynamona is no easy task, even for horse and car. The main road north out of Corrofin to Kilfenora passes through Kilnaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel, and a post office are all that remains of an antiquity preserved to the eye only in the ninth-century church and graveyard. 361 491

There, beside the graveyard, a side road leads off toward

[1] Much of the material in this chapter is taken from *The Irish Countryman* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1936), by Conrad M. Arensberg. It is used here by permission of the publishers.

[p. 181]

361 Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along
491 it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear
[311] witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously
cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives
rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward
into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round
the lake.

311 The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with
limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the
crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

361 Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the
621 lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are
471 scattered through the fields and across the lake. These
households and a few more a little further off make up the
community. These are small farms of the kind we met in
Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has
fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the
village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard
gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement
is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and
behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to
these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for
them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles
off.

621 Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated
476 bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all re-
653 lated one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the
491 usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds
itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the
borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the
towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who
break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the
621 village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder.
487 Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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A VILLAGE ON A HILLTOP WITH ITS GARDENS AND PASTURES

[facing p. 182]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

farmers converge upon Ennis. In each case a center, 438
whether a larger market town or one of the smaller villages, serves a natural area demarcated by the configuration of the land and the course of the roads.

In such natural regions, particularly in more remote and 491
mountainous country, the roads determine the intercourse 361
of the communities with one another. Today each focal 438
point is joined with another by a motor road. As the roads wind out from the larger centers, shops come to be placed at the strategic crossroad; a public house springs up; perhaps a schoolhouse, a parochial house, a chapel of the parish, rise beside them. Nowadays creameries are put up at these or still other points along the roads, where they are most conveniently accessible to small and medium farms producing milk. Even more recently lorries have begun to come direct to the crossroad to pick up produce that once, before motor [494] traffic, had to be carried by the farmers themselves all the way to town.

Plotting out the market areas of the towns and villages 438
of the countryside reveals a characteristic of social and economic space even here where the deepest hinterlands are never more than a half-day's leisurely trip by horse and cart. Any list of customers plotted by residence around a minor center gives an area which extends considerably farther in the direction away from the nearest larger center than it does in the direction leading to it. The minor centers draw principally from the hinterlands behind them and their areas extend only a little way along the roads in the direction of the next larger center. Ennistymon in North Clare draws custom twelve miles to the north, but to the south its influence reaches only three miles up the valley of the Inagh River, where the region of the larger center, Ennis, begins. Ennis itself serves all Clare, and its own immediate area extends, to judge from the residences of the farmers who come to buy and sell in her markets, beyond Ennistymon

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction.

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics.

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler.

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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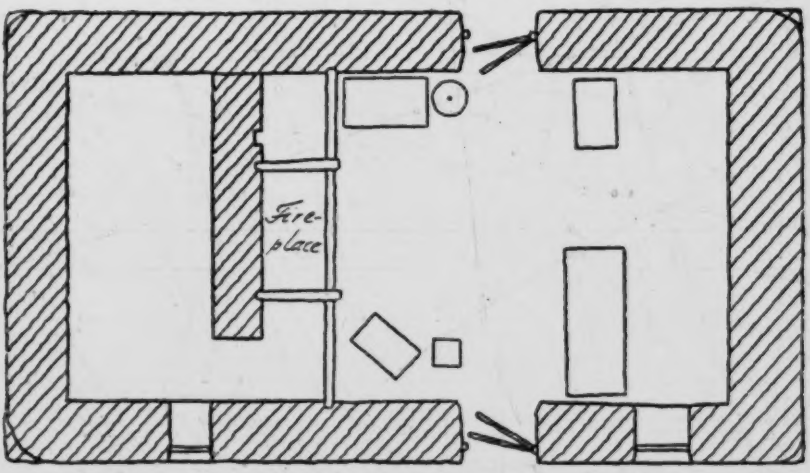

Fig. 3. Central-chimney house. Spiddle, Co. Galway.

stands out in bold relief against its background, but melts into it even as a tree or a rock. Built of stone, clay, sods, grass and straw brought from the vicinity, the house harmonizes with the landscape to which it belongs. Whenever the old building traditions are faithfully maintained its features are of a fine simplicity.

Here I shall not describe how the house has been determined by the different types of landscape, and by the social structure of the human community, to which it belongs. I only observe that the settlements and houses often are scattered but sometimes can be found built in groups or rows. 361 342

Very archaic dwelling houses generally are erected on a slope, the difference in level between the high end and the low end of the house being one, two or three feet. In houses where the farm animals have been under the same roof as the family, the places for the animals always were at the low end and the fireplace and bedplaces at the high end. This is the same arrangement as in the Scottish black houses.

The floor. The floor is commonly earthen, but generally paved at the fireplace. Now and then the upper end of the house is totally paved, or the whole floor is flagged. Very often the place round the fire is distinctly separated from the rest of the floor by its special paving. In modern times the floor is very often concrete. A covering with wooden boards at the upper end of the house and in the bedroom is often to be seen now-a-days. The stone or earth- 342

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 tive builder has replaced the doomed roof by the thatched roof if, naturally, timber and material for thatching were at hand.

A great number of houses of this type have been in use as late as the 19th century in remote parts of Ireland. Many references are given in the travel sketches and other literature of that time.

Particular attention may be called to the houses in Achill, Co. Galway, which belong to booleying settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, describing the island of Achill[12a] tell us about a certain kind of booleying (the cattle were brought down towards the coast when the season for fishing was on). They sketch the houses in a picture, pl. 34,a, and in words:

"The habitations of the islanders are very singular. Their houses are heaps of rude stones moulded by the tide, procured from the beach, uncemented; they are rounded at the gables, and roofed with fern, heath, and shingles, fastened on by straw bands. In the village of Dooagha, consisting of about forty cabins, there is not a single chimney. Some of the wealthier graziers, however, have an odd custom of residing in such houses, or in houses of a still more simple construction, only during the summer months, when the season for fishing is "on", and their cattle are brought down towards the coast to feed on the young herbage. These hovels, they call 'Builly houses'."

[556] [221] [231]

From another traveller, Caesar Otway, who made a short excursion in Achill in the summer 1838, can be collected some valuable informations.[12b] Otway mentions (p. 353, 356) a certain type of wall construction, viz, the pilledpin double wall: two dry stone walls with the interspace filled in with sand. This is the same archaic construction, which Thomas describes from Lewis. It is also known from archaeological excavations in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

342 361 "An Achill village consisted of congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky, and their construction was as follows: — a dry stone wall was built of a form like an obtuse oval, for they had not arrived at the art of making a square quoin, or erecting a gable end. Outside this wall, and at about a foot distance, another loose wall was run up, and the space between the two filled with sea sand, and then this was roofed, generally with timber washed on shore from wrecks, and covered with heath, which covering did not reach over the outside wall, and form an eave, but rested on the middle between the walls, and the moisture from above passed, as it should, through the intervening sand."

"— — — we entered the village of Dugurth. Just such a village as I

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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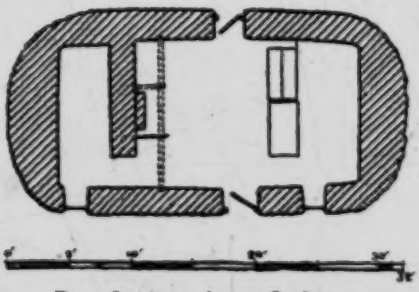

Fig. 4. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

have above described, but certainly containing some houses that *had* gable-ends; but for the most part of the construction I have alluded to, a dirty, dreary, uncouth place — — —."

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Later on (p. 401) Otway has learnt to know the summerherding (booleying) and the difference between winterhouses and summerhouses, and he compares the Irish summerhouses with the Swiss *chalets*.

"Keem, I said, was a singular village; it is only inhabited in summer — who would suppose that the Achillians had such a superfluity of houses, that they had both their winter and summer residences. The Greenlanders and Esquimaux are so changeful, from their excessive vicissitudes of heat and cold — but here I was surprised to find empty every house but two (and these were the residences of the coast-guard), all with their doors fastened

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 and untenanted; and certainly such miserable wigwams, I had never be-
361 fore seen — all built, as I have already described, without gable-ends. It
221 seems the owners of the village of Keem, and the renters of the adjoining district, have other houses in a distant part of the island, where they spend the winter and spring; thence they come when their oats and potatoes are planted and spend the summer months, herding their cattle on these heights, and leading a pastoral life. Thus in Switzerland they have their chalets on the hills, and in old times in Ireland the creaghts (as they were called) had their boolies on the mountains; but I don't think I ever saw a summer-herding village before."

342 What is said to have been the last oval house in Achill (pl. 33,a), was destroyed in the last two years. An old man (he is seen in the doorway) had lived in it and would not change to any other kind of residence. When he died, the house was pulled down.

This house had dry stone walls. In the middle of the floor stood a beam of bog fir from the top of which beams and branches, also of bog fir, spread out like the ribs of an umbrella, to carry the thatched roof. (This central beam may have been a temporary structure? Cf. p. 192 about the *tuireadh* of the wickerwork house described by O'Curry). The house had no windows and no chimney. The smoke came out through a hole in the roof.

In the year 1936, I measured an inhabited oval house in Inveran, Co. Galway, fig. 4 and pl. 34, b, 35, a, b. This house embodies many interesting features known from prehistoric times. It is built upon very uneven ground and runs from east to west. The several feet thick walls slope as the walls of the oval clochán from the ground upwards. In later times these, built as dry stone walls, have been plastered from outside and whitelimed and the windows added.

The interior is made up by one room, which, however, is divided up to the west by the hob and a protecting wall behind it. Here is the bedroom, in harmony with the wide-spread old tradition mentioned in my former article.[12c] To the east, a dresser and a table cut off the lower part to form another bed-alcove.

The house has no outside chimney, but a basket resting on beams leads the smoke out through a hole in the roof. This basket is wattled from osiers and covered with plaster. As the wall behind the fireplace does not go up as far as the roof, canvas is hung to complete the wall.

There are the usual two doors, central and opposite to each other.[12d] The roof of straw, scollop-thatched, rests on couples of beams, supported on the

186 [Text continues top of p. 189 ---- Analyst]

PLATE 33.

a. Oval house. Keel, Achill, Co. Mayo. Photographed in 1903.

b. Clochán, used for storage purpose. Blasket Island.

PLATE 34

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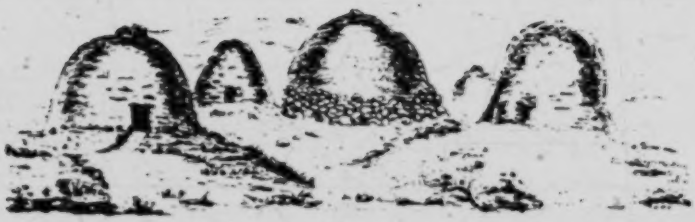

c

[Captions on p. 189]

than 30 statute acres is regarded as small, one of from 30 to 100 acres as of medium size and one of over 100 acres as large. Small, medium and large farms may be found in all parts of Ireland, but in the provinces of Leinster and Munster and in parts of south east Connaught there is a preponderance of medium sized farms with, especially in north Leinster, a considerable proportion of large farms.[1] All this area practises mixed farming, but the south western province, Munster, is completely dominated by the milking cow, while in Leinster the northern half is mainly devoted to the raising of beef cattle, and the southern half produces considerable quantities of wheat, oats and barley.[2] In most areas of Connaught and Ulster, the western and northern provinces, the average farm is of small size, and the number of cows kept by each farmer correspondingly small; the value and productivity of these small farms, however, vary greatly from the intensive cultivation of many farms in east and south Ulster to the fisher-farmer economy of the west coastal districts.[3]

Throughout the provinces of Leinster and Munster, and in parts of east Connaught, that is to say, generally in the area of medium and large farms, the predominant, and in many districts exclusive, farmyard type is the courtyard, in which the dwelling house and outhouses are arranged about a rectangular space which is the farmyard proper. Most usually the buildings form three sides of the yard, with the dwelling house forming one side and the outhouses forming two more, the fourth side being closed by a wall with a gate. Usually the building is not continuous, the elements being separate and connected by walls, or having gateways or passages between them. The size and arrangement of the yard and the various buildings vary from one farm to another, and also from district to district; the general type is, however, well established, and conforms to a pattern which is clearly distinguished from the other types to be described later. In many districts the front of the dwelling house faces the farmyard, thus, in Co. Kildare in 1807: "The farmhouses in general consist of a long thatched building of one storey, consisting of a large kitchen and fireplace in the centre, and lodging rooms at either end; the front door looks to the barns and stables on the right, behind which is the haggard, and on the left are placed the cow and bullock houses." This, written a century and a half ago,[4] exactly describes many of the farmyards of to-day, for example that shown in fig. 1, which has the dwelling house in the middle, the cowhouse, calfhouse and a small store (formerly a dairy) on the left, with the manure heap behind them, while on the right are the stable, another store and the pigstye, with the haggard, where the hay and corn stacks are made, behind them. The fourth side is formed by a stone wall, with a gate; this wall fronts on the public roadway. This farmyard is at Duncormick, Co. Wexford, in the south east corner of Ireland, but similar examples may be found in almost every part of the east and south. Figure 2 shows the buildings on a larger farm, also in Co. Wexford. Here the entrance gate leads in between a cart shed on the right and the dairy on the left, with the pump close by. Facing the dwelling house across the yard are the stable and byre and a store, while the corn barn opens into the haggard. The pigsty and manure heap are in the part of the yard most distant from the dwelling house. The openings between the various buildings are closed by stone walls about

[Text continues on p. 12]

[1] Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926. Stationery Office, Dublin, 1930.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Freeman, T. W.: Ireland, Its Physical, Historical, Social and Economic Geography, 1950, chapters VIII and XVIII to XXIII.

[4] Rawson, T. J.: Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare, 1807, 14–15.

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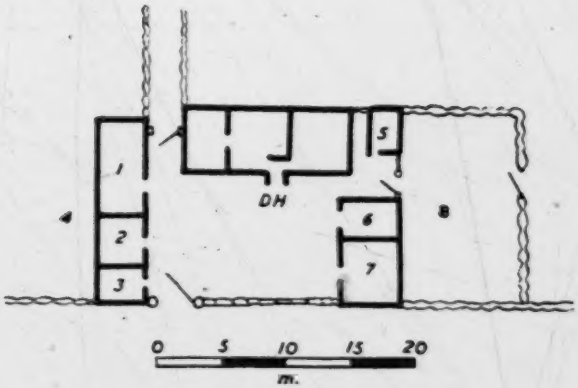

Fig. 1. Farmyard at Duncormick, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, calf house; 3, store; 4, manure heap; 5, pigsty; 6, cart house; 7, stable; 8, haggard.

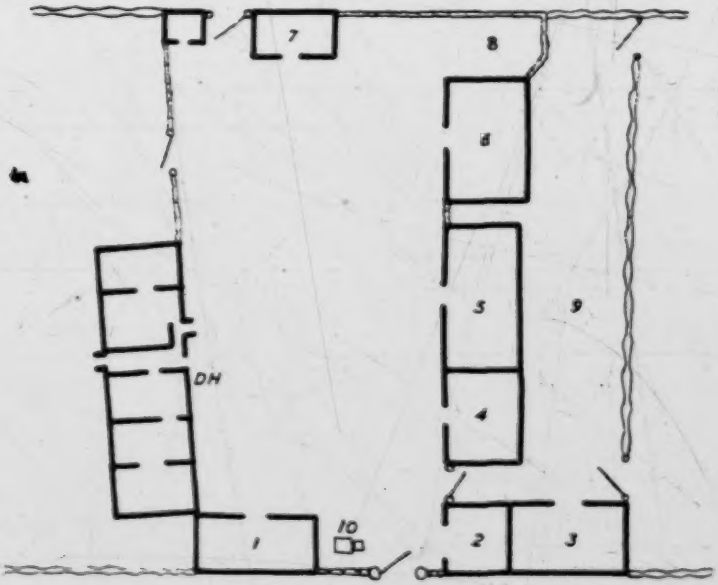

Fig. 2. Farmyard at Kilmore, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, cart house; 3, corn barn; 4, stable; 5, byre; 6, store; 7, pigsty; 8, manure heap; 9, haggard; 10, pump.

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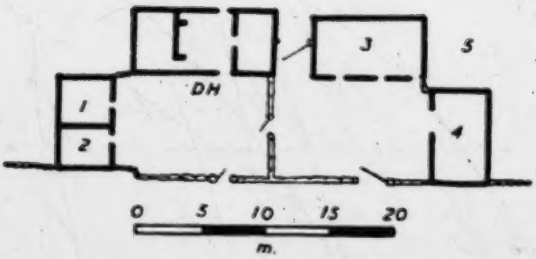

Fig. 3. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, store; 3, byre, 4, stable and carts; 5, manure heap.

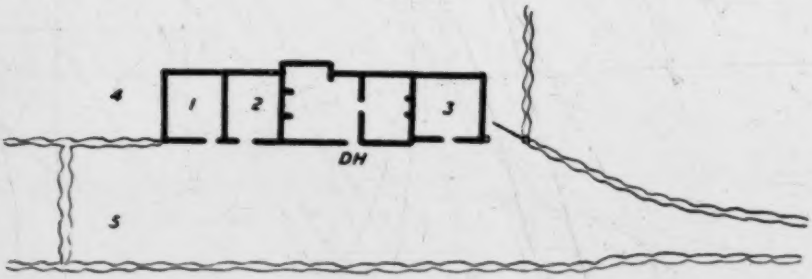

Fig. 4. Farmyard at Glenbull, Co. Tyrone. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, stable; 3, store; 4, haggard; 5, manure heap.

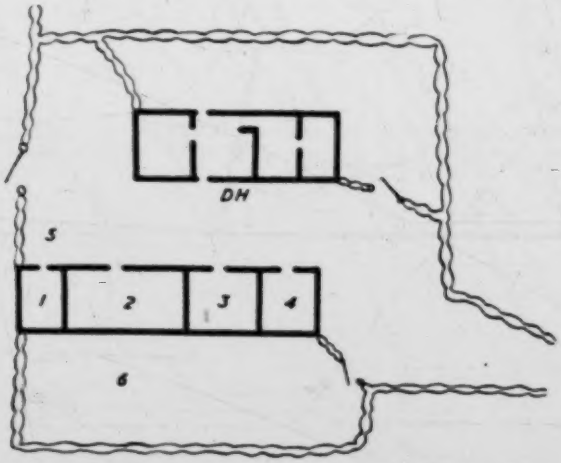

Fig. 5. Farmyard, Athea, Co. Limerick. DH, dwelling house; 1, pigs; 2, byre; 3, stable; 4, store; 5, manure heap; 6, haggard.

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Fig. 6. Farmhouse and yard, Kilmore, Co. Wexford (fig. 2).

Fig. 7. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway (fig. 3).

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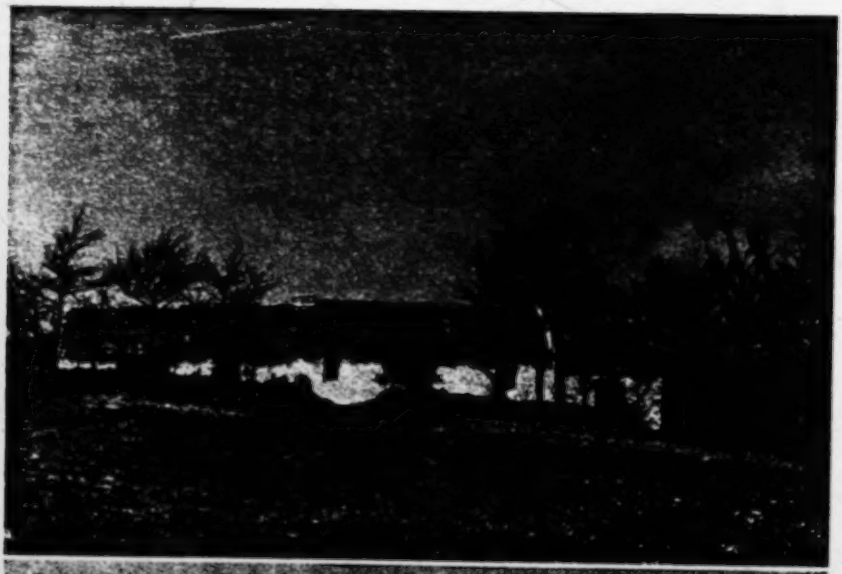

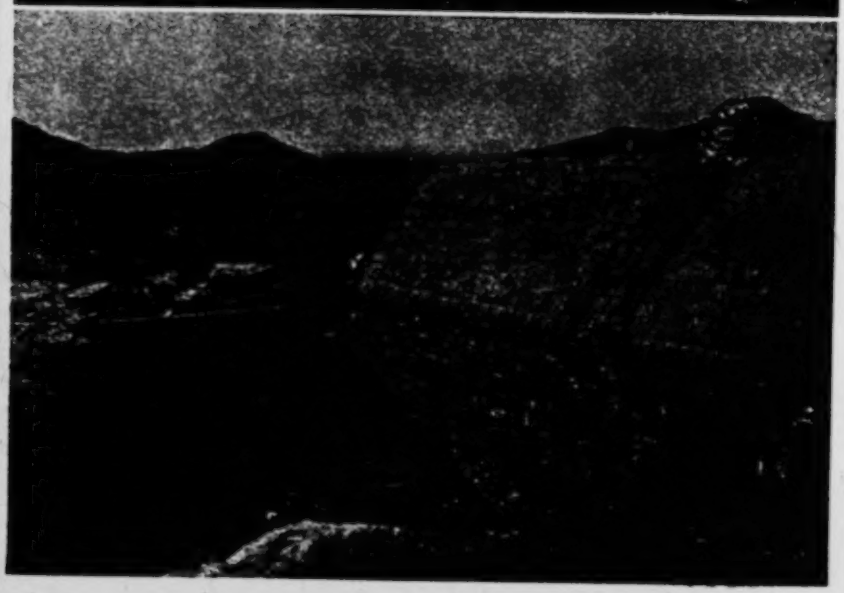

Fig. 8. Farm buildings, Glenhull, Co. Tyrone (fig. 4).
Fig. 9. Farm buildings, parallel lay-out, Lohar, Co. Kerry.

[p. 11]

351 four feet high, with gates suitably placed. A door in the back of the dwelling house leads into a
361 garden and orchard. In both these examples the front of the dwelling house is towards the yard, but in very many examples the back of the dwelling house is towards the yard, which is reached by a back door, while the front of the house faces a small garden with flowers and fruit trees through which a path leads to the front door. This is especially common in east Munster. Figure 3 shows the buildings on a smaller farm in the south-eastern part of Co. Galway. Here again we have a courtyard formed by buildings on three sides and a stone wall with a gate on the fourth, but the courtyard is divided into two parts by another wall which protects the portion in front of the dwelling house, which is a little garden with flowers and shrubs, from the animals which pass through the yard.

In the smaller farms of the north and west there usually are fewer buildings, and these are often joined together in one continuous row, as in the example shown in figure 4, on a small farm in Co. Tyrone, where dwelling house, stable, byre and a store form one long block of buildings. Here, the elements are clearly distinguished from each other—the byre and stable are more roughly built, with poorer roof timbers and thinner walls, than the dwelling house, while the store at the other end is narrower than the dwelling house and has a lower roof. Indeed most examples of this well-known and widespread type have the dwelling house clearly distinguishable from the outhouses; thus they must not be confused with the "long-house" of Wales, of which the distinctive feature is internal communication between the byre and the dwelling.[1] In contrast to this, there is no such internal communication in this Irish type, as each house, stable, byre, store and so on has its own entrance door, and very often the dwelling house and byre do not adjoin, but have a stable, store or dairy between them. But, as we shall see below, there is—or was until recently—a primitive form of the "long house" or combined dwelling house and cattle byre to be found in certain parts of Ireland.

Another farmyard form to be found in parts of the north and west, and especially in the hill districts and peninsulas of west Munster, is shown in fig. 5. Here the outhouses are built in one continuous row, and placed a short distance away from, and parallel to, the dwelling house; the space between the dwelling house and the outhouses serving not only as a yard but also as a passage between the public road and the farmer's fields; this yard or passage is, in many districts, called the "street".

In addition to these various farmyard types, there may be found farms in which the buildings are not arranged in any set plan, but are scattered about in a haphazard fashion, sometimes without any yard; these occur but rarely in fertile lowlands but are not infrequent in mountain and moorland localities, such as parts of the Kerry mountains.

231 It cannot be doubted that the system of having separate compartments or buildings for the dif-
351 ferent kinds of animals and stores is of considerable antiquity in Ireland. The law tract *Críth Gabh-*
361 *lach*, written about A.D. 700, states that the *bó-aire febhsa* (a certain grade of land owner) must have, in addition to his dwelling house and a share in a corn-mill, a kiln, a barn, a sheep-fold, a pigsty and a calf-pen.[2] Another ancient law tract[3] refers to five "houses", namely, dwelling house, cow-

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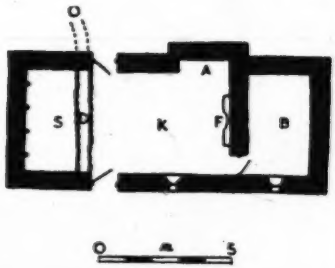
[1] Peate, I. C. The Welsh House, 1940, chapter iv.
[2] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. iv, Dublin, 1879, 309.
[3] Ancient Laws of Ireland, vol. v, Dublin, 1901, 515.

house, pigsty, calf-pen and sheepfold, and there are several other references in the ancient law tracts to cow-houses and pigstyes.

But, notwithstanding this old and varied farmyard tradition, it is also quite clear that there was, up to the beginning of the present century, a widespread custom of keeping the livestock, or part of it, in the dwelling house. There are very many references to this in descriptions of life and conditions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Few, however, give any description of the internal arrangement of the houses, or the reason for the custom, and usually the accounts refer to small houses and a few poor animals. Some observers have mentioned the fear of wild beasts or robbers. "They are brought in by night for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves."[1] Here the writer refers to the bawns attached to the castles, but of course the same risk existed for the small farmer also. Another traveller writes of a night spent in a house in west Co. Galway: "I had just compos'd myselfe to sleepe when I was strangely surprised to heare the cows and sheep all comeing into my bed chamber. I enquired the meaneing and was told it was to preserve them from the wolfe which everie night was rambling about for prey."[2] Another and much later writer describes a night spent in a small house in the Kerry mountains, near Kenmare: "In the house where I slept—as indeed in every house of the same character in the county—the whole stock of the family, consisting chiefly of cows and sheep, were locked in at night. Such was the extreme poverty of the people that they would not otherwise be safe. ... There was a slight partition between the room where my bed was and the kitchen where there were three cows, a man, his wife and four children."[3]



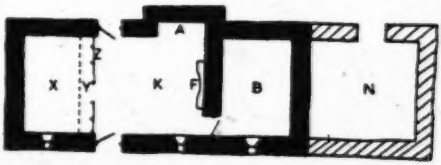


Fig. 10 House at Doolough, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; D, drain; O, drain outlet; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; S, byre.

Fig. 11. House at Srahataggle, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; X, former byre; Y, filled-in drain; Z, screen of canvas on wooden frame; N, present byre.

In many dwelling houses fowl, especially hatching hens, were kept in special coops or boxes, and it was quite usual to have weak or sickly young animals, or calves or lambs which for some reason were separated from their dams, in the kitchen where they had warmth and attention until strong enough to be put with the other animals. In many parts of Ireland the poorest people—

[1] Fynes Moryson: Itinerary, 1617.

[2] Dunton, John: Letter no. 2 (1699), in MacLysaght, E.: Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1939, 339.

[3] Doheny, M.: The Felon's Track.

231 those who had little or no land—commonly kept their animals in the dwelling house (which often
351 had only one room) at night, a cow or two, or perhaps a donkey or pony, a pig or a goat and a
361 few hens, the larger animals tied to pegs or rings set in the walls, the smaller in coops or boxes. In many houses, even large farmhouses, a special coop or perch was provided for the cock, whose crowing served to call the people of the house in the morning. A vivid description of the housing conditions of a remote and isolated community in the second half of the nineteenth century is given by Tomás Ó Crohan, writing about the Blasket Islands off the coast of Co. Kerry in the extreme south west: "There was a coop beside the partition with hens in it, and a hatching hen in an old pot nearby. At night a cow or two, a calf or two, an ass, two dogs tied to the wall or loose about the house. ... the two or three dogs would lie at the foot of the bed, the cow or two cows below them, tethered to the wall, the calf or two with the run of the kitchen and their muzzles in the fire. The ass was tied on the side of the house opposite the cows, and a cat with a couple of kittens in the fireplace niche ... And as well as all the other animals you might find a pet lamb or two about the house."[1] The custom of bringing the cattle into the dwelling house for milking during the period of the year when they are kept outdoors, as well as keeping them in the dwelling house during the winter period is recorded from Co. Kerry.[2] Indeed it is quite clear that, throughout the west and north of Ireland, the keeping of livestock in their small dwelling houses by the poorer people was quite a common practice up to the last years of the nineteenth century, and in houses from which the animals have long been ejected we may still see the rings or pegs to which they used to be tied.

There was, however, one type of house which was built and arranged as a dwelling for both
342 people and animals, and which was still in use in the early years of the present century in parts of
351 Connaught and Ulster, that is, in west Co. Galway, Co. Mayo, west Co. Sligo and west and north
361 Co. Donegal. Figure 10 shows the plan of a typical specimen, at Doolough, Co. Mayo. This house
231 is 12 m long and 5.5 m wide, built of stone and mortar and roofed with straw or grass thatch. It consists of two apartments, the smaller being a bedroom and the larger a kitchen-livingroom-cattle byre; the two apartments separated by the wall of the hearth. On one side of the hearth is a bed alcove. Two windows, one in each room and both on one side—the front—of the house, give light, and there are two doors, one in the front of the house and one in the back, placed directly opposite each other. On the farther side of these doors from the fire an open drain extends from side to side of the house; this drain is about 50 cm wide and 25 cm deep and is lined with flat stones. The space between this drain and the end wall of the house is the byre, and here, during the winter, three or four cows were kept tethered to the wall. The drain passed under the wall and led to the manure heap outside.

Figure 11 shows the manner in which many of these houses were changed during the last fifty years or so. A byre was built, attached to the house, as here, or quite apart from it. The drain was filled in, and a partition of wood, or, as here of canvas stretched on a wooden frame, erected to enclose the former byre which now became a bedroom. In many houses the partition was formed

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[1] Ó Crohan, Tomás: An tOiléanach, chapter III.

[2] Campbell, Arr: "Irish Fields and Houses", Béaloideas, v, 68–70.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or press. 231 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible. 361 351 [173] [184]

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farmyard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type. 361 351

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, XVI, 102, 104.

[2] Platrès, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24. [113]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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STUDIES OF IRISH RURAL SETTLEMENT

JAMES H. JOHNSON

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UNTIL recently it was generally thought that isolated farms, dispersed over the cultivated land (Fig. 1), formed a settlement pattern of great antiquity in Ireland. Without investigating the matter deeply, academic geographers explained this pattern in several ways. Some saw it as a product of the pastoral emphasis of Irish agriculture, which necessitated a close relationship between a farmer's residence and his fields.[1] Others, especially Meitzen, regarded the dispersed farms as a direct result of the Celtic heritage of the country.[2] And although professional geographers preferred a cultural explanation, school textbooks tended to seize on an environmental factor, seeing dispersed settlement as a product of the moist Irish climate, which required no concentration on wet-point sites and presumably allowed the cultural factors free play.[3]

Contemporary Studies

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Work by modern geographers on the critical study of Irish rural settlement began in County Donegal. Here E. E. Evans[4] showed that, in parts of the county at least, the single isolated farm is a relatively recent form of settlement, which dates from the nineteenth century rather than survives from any great antiquity. Modern dispersed settlement in Donegal was in fact preceded by "clachans"—clusters of farm dwellings and their associated outbuildings, usually grouped without any formal plan and in the early nineteenth century often consisting of as many as 30–40 houses. Although these clachans normally lacked both inn and church, communal life and the exchange of services were characteristic, and as a rule their inhabitants were related by blood.

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[113] [1] A. Demangeon: La géographie de l'habitat rural (International Geographical Congress, London and Cambridge, 1928: Report of the Commission on Types of Rural Settlement, pp. 41–80), p. 59.

[2] August Meitzen: Siedelung und Agrarwesen der Westgermanen und Ostgermanen, der Kelten, Römer, Finnen und Slawen (3 vols. and atlas, Berlin, 1895), Vol. 1, pp. 174–182.

[312] [3] The advantage of universal water supplies in Ireland is more apparent than real. In parts of County Fermanagh, for example, farmers must carry drinking water hundreds of yards to their dispersed farms (cf. J. M. Mogey: Rural Life in Northern Ireland [Oxford, 1947], pp. 35–36), when nucleation around the most satisfactory supply would seem to be a logical arrangement. Personal observation suggests that this is a not uncommon situation on many Irish farms.

[113] [4] Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System, *Geography*, Vol. 24, 1939, pp. 24–36; Donegal Survivals, *Antiquity*, Vol. 13, 1939, pp. 207–222.

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[p. 554]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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FIG. 1—Panoramic view of dispersed farmsteads near Carrmore, County Armagh, looking west along the drumlin belt of north Ireland. (Photograph by J. K. St. Joseph, from Cambridge University Collection. British Crown Copyright Reserved.)

361 McCourt[5] has been able to map the distribution of relicts of clachan settlement as they were to be found in the 1830's. He has shown that this was a widespread form of settlement in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century, and that it did not disappear in the remoter parts of the country until late in the nineteenth.[6] Indeed, occasional clachans that are still actively functioning can be found today on the Atlantic seaboard (Figs. 2 and 3[7]).

311 361 Associated with clachan settlement was a form of open-field cultivation, comparable to the Scottish infield-outfield system and generally known in

[5] D. McCourt: The Rundale System in Ireland: A Study of Its Geographical Distribution and Social Relations (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1950).

[6] D. McCourt: Traditions of Rundale in and around the Sperrin Mountains, *Ulster Journ. of Archæol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 16, 1953, pp. 69–84; *idem*: The Rundale System in Donegal: Its Distribution and Decline, *Journ. County Donegal Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1955, pp. 47–60.

[7] The author thanks Captain C. Ó Danachair of the Irish Folklore Commission for drawing his attention to the photograph presented as Figure 3.

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
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311 Ireland as "rundale" or "runrig."[8] Under rundale the land surrounding a
361 settlement was worked as a joint farm, with individual plots and strips scattered through the arable land, some on the constantly tilled infield and some on shifting outfield patches reclaimed periodically from the waste.[9] By the early nineteenth century this form of agriculture had become extremely [428] complicated, as a result of the rapidly increasing population and of the Irish practice of subdividing a restricted amount of arable land among all the male heirs of the household. In modern surviving examples the clachan and cultivation in rundale are closely interrelated, and it is generally assumed that they do not function independently. But a complication to this interpretation has emerged in a small area of County Down that has been examined by R. H. Buchanan[10] within the limits set by the available manuscript material. Here a set of estate maps shows clachans apparently developed in association with compact holdings. Although this work, which refers to a small area and uses a narrow range of information, may not weaken the great body of evidence that suggests a direct relationship between rundale agriculture and clachan settlement, at least it indicates that the relationship needs to be carefully appraised in each individual case.

Two Nineteenth-Century Investigators

114 Although changes in the pattern of Irish rural settlement have only
361 recently been uncovered by research, the periodic reports of the various
311 Royal Commissions concerned with nineteenth-century Ireland make it clear that the inhabitants of the country were not unaware of the changes taking place around them.[11] Hence it is not surprising that at least two nineteenth-century scholars, Frederic Seebohm and August Meitzen, knew of clachan settlement.

Seebohm's attention was focused on the manorial and tribal systems and on the open-field system of cultivation.[12] It was this latter interest in particular

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113 [8] D. McCourt: Infield and Outfield in Ireland, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 7, 1954–1955, pp. 369–376.

[9] Flatrès believes that the outfield was not widely found in Ireland but was a late introduction, brought in the early seventeenth century by Scottish settlers (Pierre Flatrès: Géographie rurale de quatre contrées celtiques—Irlande, Galles, Cornwall & Man [Rennes, 1957]). No attempt has been made here to evaluate Flatrès' ambitious study, of particular interest, however, is his map of the modern field systems of Ireland (Fig. 1) [Reviewed in this number of the *Geographical Review*, p. 599.—Edit. Note.]

[10] The author is grateful to Mr. Buchanan for this information in advance of its publication.

[11] In particular see the evidence presented to the Devon Commission (Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry [Lord Devon, Chairman] into . . . the Occupation of Land in Ireland [6 parts (in 5 vols.), London, 1845; British Parliamentary Papers 1845, XIX–XXIII]).

[12] Frederic Seebohm: The English Village Community, Examined in Its Relations to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry (2nd edit., London, 1883).

[Text continues on p. 558]

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FIG. 2—Ballyhillin, a present-day clachan near Malin Head, County Donegal.

FIG. 3—Kiltullagh, a hamlet of a form common in County Galway. The regularity in the arrangement of the houses is possibly the result of the activity of a former landlord, though it is noticeable that the houses are not perfectly oriented to the road. (Photograph from Irish Press.)

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114 that led him to pay some attention to the arrangement of settlement on the
311 land. At first sight he does not seem to have been aware of the existence of
361 clachans in Ireland, since he states that under the tribal system homesteads "were scattered over the country and not grouped together in villages and towns," and he seems to suggest that the dispersed settlement of nineteenth-century Ireland was a product of this heritage.[13] But elsewhere in the same work he points out that homesteads were in fact grouped in "arithmetical clusters" which were "the natural method by which the frequent redistributions of the land were made easy; while the runrig form of open-field system was the natural mode of conducting a cooperative and shifting agriculture"[14] —a recognizable description of settlement in clachans. This apparent contradiction must have been produced merely by the lack of a definition of what is meant by the term "village." A clachan was just a group of farm buildings, usually without any other function and without any plan, and hence it would not have appeared "village-like" to an Englishman's eyes, though its total population could have approached that of a village in lowland Britain. Unfortunately, Seebohm's conclusions on Irish settlement cannot be accepted at their face value. Although the form of settlement he describes may have been found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the period from which he drew his information—it does not follow that these conditions represented the form of settlement associated with the original tribal system, as he suggests. However, at least he was aware that the clachan existed in early-nineteenth-century Ireland.

To geographers Meitzen's work is perhaps better known.[15] His assertion that settlement in isolated farms (*Einzelhöfe*) could be traced back to the mode of a Celtic ethnic group has been criticized on the broad European evidence, but in spite of this he was not unaware of the presence of clachans in Ireland. In the atlas that forms part of his great work (perhaps its most valuable part for modern geographers) several plates derived from nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps illustrate clachans and the open fields associated with them.[16] Although he drew much of his information from Seebohm, Meitzen could not accept the theory that clachans originated in Celtic or pre-Celtic time; however, his alternative explanations are unconvincing. It is hard to believe that this settlement form was introduced into Scotland by Scandinavian influence or that in Ireland it was transitional between pastoral

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 223–244.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[15] Meitzen, *op. cit.* [see footnote 2 above].
[16] *Ibid.*, Atlas to Vol. 3, maps 23 and 25–27.

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and arable use of land.[17] Further, Meitzen does not seem to have been aware of the widespread distribution of the clachan and its associated field system. In fairness, however, it should be pointed out that Meitzen was not entirely wrong. Recent work suggests that Celtic freemen in Ireland lived in dispersed farmsteads (known to archeologists as "raths"),[18] though this does not establish that modern dispersed settlement was directly derived from such a heritage, particularly in view of the unsettled history of Ireland during the intervening period.

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A Problem in Origins

Moreover, the two forms of settlement—*Einzelhöfe* and clachans—are not necessarily incompatible. Both McCourt and Evans have commented on the way in which clachans wax and wane,[19] largely because of fluctuations in population numbers. Indeed, McCourt cites at least one example from County Antrim in which an individual farm grew into a clachan between 1782 and 1832, and two of the clachans Evans studied in Donegal dissolved into isolated farms sometime between 1834 and 1902.[20]

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The problem here seems to be one of origin. Did the clachan bring the infield-outfield system with it, or were the two separate at this earliest stage? If they were separate, it would suggest that their modern survival together on the Atlantic fringe of Ireland may be the result of the independent preservation of ancient practices in a difficult region. For that matter, was the clachan introduced? Examples have already been given of the growth of nucleated settlements from dispersed farmsteads, often in a very short time, and in view of the clachan's lack of plan this manner of origin seems entirely reasonable.

On the other hand, merely to say that the settlement pattern and the field system grew out of the subdivision of a larger enclosed farm is to oversimplify the problem. Meitzen postulated a Celtic people with a tradition of compact farms; but if subdivision took place, surely it would have been a break with that tradition to produce small farms with scattered strips rather

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[17] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 207–218.

[18] V. B. Proudfoot: The People of the Forths, *Ulster Folklife*, Vol. 1, 1955, pp. 19–26. See also his "Settlement and Economy in Co. Down from the Late Bronze Age to the Anglo-Norman Invasion" (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1957).

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[19] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 28.

[20] McCourt, The Rundale System in Ireland [see footnote 5 above], diagram 27; Evans, Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System [see footnote 4 above], p. 29; E. E. Evans: The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe, *in* Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, edited by W. L. Thomas, Jr. (Chicago, 1956), pp. 217–239, reference on p. 231.

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than small compact holdings. A further indication that there may have been a fundamental distinction between the systems which is not apparent at first sight lies in the fact that, wherever the historical record goes back continuously into the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, both settlement forms are found to have existed side by side in the same areas and over the whole period.[21] No case is yet known in which an area with nothing but dispersed farms was converted into an area where clachans were completely dominant. Hence, drawing an analogy from Wales, where G. R. J. Jones[22] has carefully examined more plentiful medieval documents than have survived in Ireland, Evans has been led to suggest that the dispersed Iron Age farms (the "raths" referred to above) were the homes of freemen; and bondmen, the descendants of pre-Celtic inhabitants, lived in clachans. Later, in historical time, both groups fell under the control of landlords, but remnants of the former situation survived in the settlement pattern.[23] Some confirmation of this theory has come from Proudfoot's work in County Down, where he has been able to show that raths were not the only form of settlement during the Dark Ages; there were also groups of farms without an enclosing bank, which could be dated to the same period.[24] Such an interpretation regards clachan settlement as being of great antiquity, and indeed it is hard to believe that the cooperative kinship unit (which life in a clachan implies) is other than of considerable age. Further, it suggests that the fundamental antithesis was between systems of landholding, rather than between settlement patterns.

The infield-outfield system also seems to have been an early introduction. It could be suggested, of course, that the system represented an adaptation of the medieval three-field system to the small amount of good arable land available in many parts of Ireland. Medieval agriculture on an English pattern had been introduced into southeastern Ireland by the Normans; and a medieval origin has been suggested for some villages in Wexford, formed of groups of strip farms, which were still functioning in the nineteenth century.[25] But even if this can be firmly established, the Norman influence on agriculture was limited to the southeastern part of the country. In any case, the modern

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[21] McCourt, Infield and Outfield in Ireland [see footnote 8 above], p. 376.

[22] G. R. J. Jones: Some Medieval Rural Settlements in North Wales, *Inst. of British Geogrs. Publ. No. 19: Trans. and Papers 1953*, London, 1954, pp. 51–72.

[23] Evans, The Ecology of Peasant Life in Western Europe [see footnote 20 above], p. 231. Earlier, Duignan had tentatively suggested a similar idea but did not relate it to the development of settlement patterns (M. Duignan: Irish Agriculture in Early Historic Times, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 124–145; reference on p. 129).

[24] Proudfoot, Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above].

[25] J. Otway-Ruthven: The Origin of Anglo-Irish Agriculture in the Middle Ages, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 81, 1951, pp. 1–13; reference on p. 6.

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survivals of the infield-outfield system in the remoter parts of Ireland would seem to suggest that it dates from a time much earlier than that of the Norman invasion.

Lines of Investigation

These questions and theories widen the field for speculation, but it is difficult to see where to turn for further information, largely because of the meager documentary evidence that survives in Ireland from periods earlier than the eighteenth century. Admittedly, relevant material may be discovered among estate papers, but there are three other lines that might be followed with profit.

One possible approach, field investigation, is illustrated by a project now under way, in which archeological techniques are being used to excavate a clachan in County Down, inhabited until the late nineteenth century. The primary aim is to discover how this particular clachan originated. Did it grow out of a single farm, and, if so, at what date? Two seasons' work has now been completed without conclusive answers to these questions, though some details have been added to the local economic history of County Down.[26] At least it has been shown that a clachan settlement stood on this site about 1780 and that the site had been occupied from sometime near the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Buildings were found underlying the nineteenth-century structures. The fact that some of these remains appear to date from a time before the immigration of Scottish and English settlers into the area in the early seventeenth century should prove important in the study of Irish house types, since the lack of evidence on the development of settlement patterns extends also to the history of individual farm buildings.[27]

Whether this particular excavation will yield further information about

[26] J. H. Johnson, V. B. Proudfoot, and R. H. Buchanan: Excavations at Minerstown, Co. Down: Preliminary Report on Work Completed in 1956, *Ulster Journ. of Archaeol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 21, 1958. (In press.)

[27] Pioneer work on surviving house types was carried out by A. Campbell (Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture, *Béaloideas*, Vol. 5, 1935, pp. 57–74; Notes on the Irish House, *Folklív*, Vol. 1, 1937, pp. 207–234, and Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 173–196). This has been developed in a series of local studies so that a comprehensive account of the surviving forms of Irish traditional building is becoming increasingly possible. The best and most recent general account is E. E. Evans' "Irish Folk Ways" (London, 1957; with an extensive bibliography), Chapters 4 and 5. Several important articles on house types and related topics have appeared recently; for example, C. Ó Danachair: Irish Farmyard Types, *Arctica: Studia Ethnographia Upsaliensis No. 11*, 1956, pp. 6–15; A. T. Lucas: Wattle and Straw-Mat Doors in Ireland, *ibid.*, pp. 16–35; C. Ó Danachair: Stand und Aufgaben der Hausforschung in Irland, *Bericht über die Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für Deutsche Hausforschung*, Schleswig, 1955, pp. 29–50; R. H. Buchanan: Thatch and Thatching in North-East Ireland, *Gwerin*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 123–142; and C. Ó Danachair: The Bed Out-Shot in Ireland, *Folklív*, Vols. 19–20, 1955–1956, pp. 26–31.

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121 settlement patterns is somewhat doubtful. There is a reasonable chance of
eventual discovery of the origin of settlement on this site, but from the begin-
172 ning it was realized that only by good fortune would the relation of the
clachan to other settlement forms, in particular the Irish raths, be uncovered.
However, since relatively little of a substantive nature is known about Irish
peasant life until as late as the end of the eighteenth century, any information
on the material culture of the inhabitants of this site will be of value. There
does not seem to be great hope of uncovering any field systems that may have
surrounded the settlement, but similar work elsewhere might be more
fortunate.

Place-name evidence provides a second, if somewhat tentative, line of
121 investigation. For instance, J. B. Arthurs has suggested that *baile* (bally), the
103 Gaelic word for home place or townland, may be of pre-Goidelic origin, and
that where "ballys" are numerous, indigenous people had been left mainly
undisturbed by the Goidelic expansion.[28] If this can be firmly established, it
will immediately suggest a parallel with the possible dual system of land-
holding previously mentioned, particularly since the names of many surviv-
ing clachans contain the element "bally." Certainly there is need for further
research on this topic.

Aerial photography offers a third line. Irish archeologists have long been
121 aware of its importance[29] and have illustrated excavation reports with photo-
graphs taken from the air; but, except locally, this method has not yet been
employed systematically in the study of Irish rural settlement. If suitable
photographs were available, it is likely that they would illuminate the history
of fields and farms in Ireland. At the least a detailed study of the available air
photographs would guide further field work on the ground.

Disappearance of the Old System

Such methods of investigation can only hope to produce a few clues in
178 what must be an exercise in detection; and, in a sense, it is some relief to
31 find that the factors involved in the final disappearance of the infield-outfield
● 361 system and its associated settlement pattern are somewhat clearer than the
earlier history of these features. The regional details, however, still remain
obscure, since the enclosure of the open fields in Ireland required no parlia-

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[113] [28] Quoted in Evans, Irish Folk Ways [see preceding footnote], p. 27.

[29] D. A. Chart: Air-Photography in Northern Ireland. *Antiquity*, Vol. 4, 1930, pp. 453–459; J. Raftery: Air-Photography and Archaeology, *Journ. Royal Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 74, 1944, pp. 119–123. Proudfoot (Settlement and Economy in Co. Down [see footnote 18 above]) used air photographs in his study of County Down, as did the government-sponsored archeological survey of the same county.

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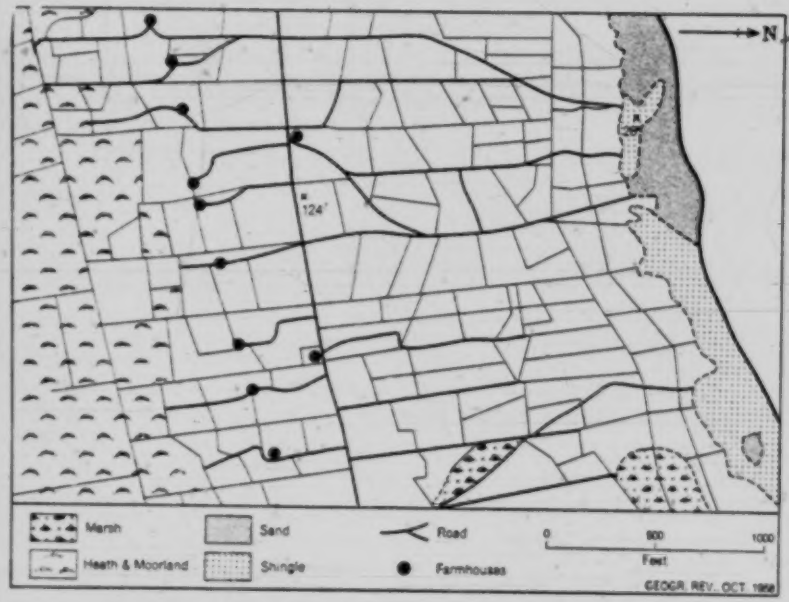

FIG. 4—"Striped" farms and fields in County Kerry. (Based on the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Minister of Finance, Republic of Ireland.)

mentary authorization. Although it is rarely possible to obtain information on the methods and precise date of consolidation, the destruction of the system can be explained, in broad terms, by its growing inefficiency and by the dissemination of new agricultural techniques.

Some of the unsatisfactory aspects of rundale agriculture sprang from the steady growth of the population of Ireland, which continued from sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century until the Great Famine of 1845–1847.[30] This increase led to a constant encroachment on various uncultivated areas, a process in which the general adoption of the potato as a subsistence crop played a major part.[31] But the "waste" lands brought under cultivation had not been completely unused, since often they were grazed by livestock under a well-developed transhumance.[32] This seasonal movement was important to the rural economy, because efficient rundale farming required that the animals be removed from the unfenced cultivated strips during the growing

[30] K. H. Connell: The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845 (Oxford, 1950).

[31] *Idem*: The Colonization of Waste Land in Ireland, 1780–1845. *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 3, 1950–1951, pp. 44–71.

[32] J. M. Graham: Transhumance in Ireland, *The Advancement of Sci.*, Vol. 10, 1953–1954, pp. 74–79.

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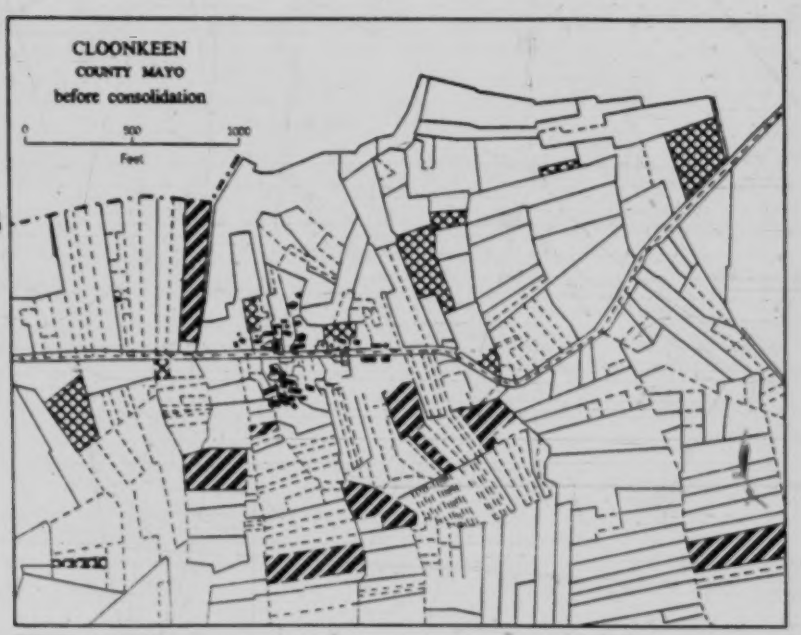

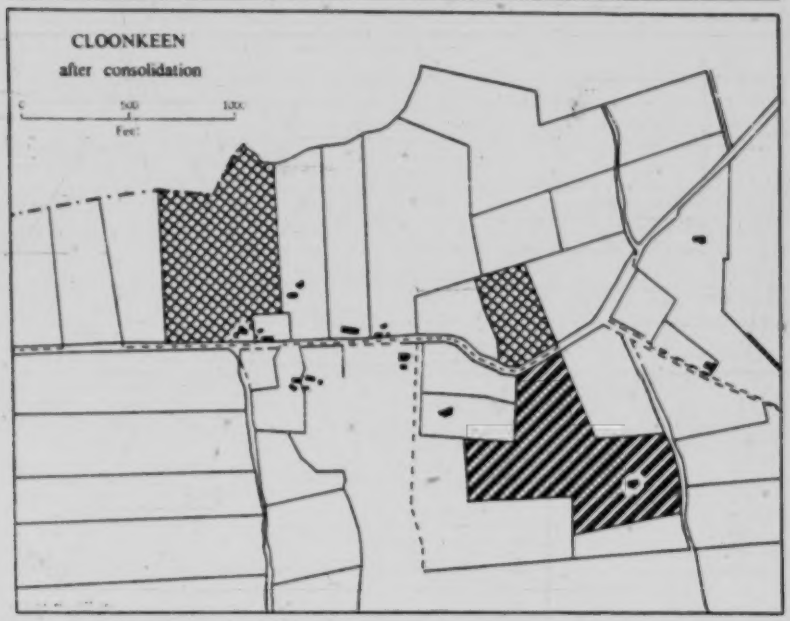

FIG. 5—Cloonkeen, County Mayo, before and after consolidation. The two different shadings (crosshatch and diagonal ruling) represent land held by two typical farmers before and after the consolidation carried out in 1909 by the Congested Districts Board. (Based on information kindly provided by the Irish Land Commission and reproduced by permission.)

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season; and the end of transhumance made the working of the system more difficult. Similarly, the increase of population led to a remarkable growth in the size of many clachans, which often made life in them increasingly inconvenient. Squabbles over rights of way and other petty affairs were common, and there was a growing awareness that the old methods of farming were becoming unsatisfactory. The introduction of new crops and rotations gave the *coup de grâce* to the efficiency of the system; for they were difficult to integrate into it, and therefore agricultural improvement was retarded.

The impetus behind the changes, however, usually did not come from the farmers themselves but from their landlords. Indeed, it seems possible that peasant resistance to the destruction of rundale was a considerable factor in nineteenth-century opposition to landlordism.[33] Often landlords, intent on improving their estates, would put whole areas of land into the melting pot, consolidating holdings and sometimes evicting the surplus population. Frequently the new holdings were arranged up and down the slope of the land, an arrangement that has resulted in the characteristic striped appearance of much of the modern Irish landscape. Although long, narrow strips were probably not the best possible farm shape (Fig. 4), they represented a compromise between the traditional system of allocating each farmer a share of every quality of land and the landlords' demands for greater efficiency. At the same time the old clachan groups were broken up and new farmhouses were built, each within its own land. In such a way most of the better agricultural land was converted, but at the end of the nineteenth century various areas, particularly in the west of Ireland, still remained under the old system or some modification of it. This hard core has now been largely eliminated by government action. First the British government attempted a general improvement of living conditions in western Ireland by means of the Congested Districts Board, whose work included the reorganization of agricultural holdings (Fig. 5);[34] after 1922 and the establishment of the Irish Free State the task was taken over by the Irish Land Commission.[35]

In some areas, however, the disappearance of clachan settlement was part of a natural process in the late nineteenth century. The population of Ireland started to decrease after the Great Famine of the 1840's, and even in areas where there had been little rearrangement of holdings some clachans became

[33] See, for example, the Devon Commission Report [see footnote 11 above], Part 1, Appendix 14, p. 58.

[34] T. W. Freeman: The Congested Districts of Western Ireland. *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 33, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[35] On this aspect of the Land Commission's work see "The Consolidation of Fragmented Agricultural Holdings" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Washington, 1950), Chapter 3, "Relief of Rural Congestion in Ireland."

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uninhabited and in others only a single family remained. In these areas, too, partial consolidation was carried out by adding the fields of an emigrating farmer to those of some neighbor or relative who remained at home. The decrease in population had a more general influence as well: throughout Ireland it prevented former conditions from reasserting themselves. Everywhere there was diminished pressure on the land, and the growth of larger farms rather than renewed subdivision.

There are still gaps, then, in the story of Irish rural settlement. Until documentary and field evidence slowly yields the missing chapters, the past will remain a subject for speculation rather than for confident explanation. The rural systems of previous centuries are now disappearing, but the surviving remains may hold clues to former conditions, and their interpretation remains a continuing challenge.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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114 from the narrow valley lands at Doolin in the ex-
491 treme north-west of County Clare. I was on my
133 way to my first stay in an Irish west-country farm community. My road, no wider than a bridle-path, led up a sharp escarpment out of the tiny valley which empties its stony river into the Atlantic, not three miles away from the southernmost island of Aran. Once the top of the rim is reached
114 the mountainside flattens out into a green and
133 gently sloping table-land. Standing there one can see the whaleback rocks that are the Aran Islands and the masses of Mount Elva on the southern shore of Galway Bay. Far beyond in Connemara, one can catch the glint of the Twelve Pins, if the day is 'hard' and sunny. Off to the left, the table-land breaks off abruptly three hundred feet downward into the Atlantic, for the famed Cliffs of Moher are here, reminders of an Irish mountain that the sea has shorn off clean.

• 361 The community toward which I was making my
191 way lies along the table-land between mountain-top of bracken and black bog and the cliffs. It keeps up the old tradition. It calls itself Luogh, and its language, at least that of the old people, is Irish, but the young people are forgetting the old tongue. English is the more common speech today, even here. Yet Mr. Delargy, the editor of the *Irish*
114 *Folklore Journal*, has collected a large number of
538 stories, songs and traditional tales and sayings here, some of them going back to the saga cycles.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp 361
along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. 621
Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawl- 494
ing village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train runs between the two.

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this re- 185
moteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. 621
Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive 234
through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing machine, out of an English steel works, and some of the houses own a mechanical cream separator, even though next door a wooden hand churn is still in use which looks no different from those found deep in the bogs.

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. 185
They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But 621
in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's attention turns to the life into which these few strays of modernity find their way.

For Luogh is like many another community of 621
small farms over Clare and southern and western 184
Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are 191
even more remote. Many are better off; some few are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language better; others have abandoned it altogether for the brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded in their common folk life.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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181 I did not know this as I came to Luogh. But I was to learn it soon in Luogh and in other communities in County Clare. Later I was to find it so even more widely; in newspapers, in novels, in court records, in statistical reports, in political bombasts. It was a way of life with its own laws which included Luogh and the Blaskets and even the fertile small farms of rich Tipperary.

When I first came to Luogh I knew only that in 114 this remote little community of small farmers I should find something of the old tradition still alive. My learning was a piecemeal process — a sketching out of wider and wider ramifications of the observations which came my way.

It is this process to which I wish to devote the remainder of this lecture. It is a process in which you can follow me. Perhaps better than anything else it will prepare us for an anthropological study of Irish rural life.

Let me illustrate this process with two examples. I shall call them the 'west room' and the 'old man's curse'. Both of them are related to old custom and both will serve to show the process by which one lays bare the rural life of which old custom is a part.

The house to which my road into Luogh finally 592 led was a typical small farmer's cottage. It was one 361 of twenty-six in Luogh. It was the seat of a small farm of sixteen acres (with eight more in the valley), 'the place of four cows and a horse', as the country-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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people describe it. Much of it was rough, wet 592
mountain land, but the phrase implies that it was 361
good enough at least to provide grass for animals. All farms are described in this way, for by the cows and the small 'gardens' of potatoes, cabbage, oats and turnips, the small farmers live. We shall have more to say of agriculture in another context; I think the explanation is sufficient here.

My host's house in Luogh, as I have said, was 342
like the others. It was a bit 'stronger', that is, neater, better built and kept, than many of the others, but it was like the others in all essentials. It was a white-washed stone cottage, rectangular, roofed with slate (though it was only a few years ago that they gave up thatch). Its long sides faced roughly north and south, each with a door opening directly out into the yards. In the gable of the roof was a loft for sleeping; otherwise it was confined to a single story. The central room, the largest by far, was the kitchen. There the family passed their lives and prepared and ate the food cooked on the hearth. The hearth was an open turf fire, built in a chimney large enough to have two hobs or seats deep within on either side. It had, too, an iron hook which swung the cooking-pots out into the room from off the fire.

Behind this hearth was another room. It was 342
called, for its position in the house, the 'west room'. 353
This is the 'west room' which is to provide my first example.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus of the countryman's way of life.

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the small farmer's family lives upon the holding it works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them.

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, it is natural that this unit should be known and judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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311 tain', and wherever possible, it includes a 'bit of
231 bog' for 'turf' for the year's fuel. When a small
592 farmer tells you he 'has the place of four cows' he sums up this sort of farm, judging it for its ability to support himself and his family in the country manner and to give pasture to four milch cows. In the phrase he epitomizes rural economy.

592 Ordinarily the house opens directly into the
361 'haggard', as the farmyard is called. There in the haggard are the cabins in which cattle are housed and the various sheds and stalls, often built into the masonry of the house itself. In them, farm machines, tools and carts are kept and crops and seed are stored. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are housed there, and in one of the sheds pig or pigs find their quarters. The winter's supply of fodder stands there in the form of the great hayrick. The straw-covered pit of turnips and mangels, not far away, will serve for men and cattle; and the turf-rick is near at hand. As for the house itself we have already looked inside, in our search for the 'west room'.

592 The family with which this unit is associated centres its activity round house and haggard. Even for the men, whose work lies primarily in field, garden and meadow, work centres round the house for a good part of the year. If I give you a sketch of this activity as my co-workers and I saw it day after day in several rural communities in Clare, I hope to throw its general features into relief.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

In such a clique, the student of social behaviour can see fairly closely the interplay of social dispositions and individual character. Concrete cases have a way of disposing of controversies by transporting the issue to a new plane. In the study of such a case as this, as we shall see, the old question whether the individual affects the society or the society moulds the individual—a long-standing scholastic debate among sociologists—can be pushed into well-merited oblivion. For the answer is that both interpretations are correct; and that neither is at all penetrating. The issue is free to move to a new plane: the relations between behaviours and the patterning of sentiment and conduct.

In the old men's clique of Rynamona we have our concrete instance. Similar old men's gatherings from any other of the rural communities my colleagues and I knew would serve as well. They are remarkably similar even to duplicating nicknames. For as our informant explains: "That is the way it always was and that is the way it always will be". A social system endures in past and future and exists in space, its changes are changes of this spatial and temporal world, its constancies are likewise bound to earth and time.

Rynamona, then, shall be our present instant in time and space. Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another of the 'good land'

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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361 of rough limestone outcrops that stretch back from the sea into the glaciated lake-stream North Clare country. To reach Rynamona is no easy
361 task, even for horse and car. The main road north
491 out of Corofin to Kilfenora passes through Killinaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel and a post-office mark an ancient settlement. Only a ruined ninth-century church and graveyard attest to its great antiquity.

There, beside the graveyard, a side-road leads off toward Glanquin mountain, and the hills of Burren beyond. One follows this road along through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
361 This is Killinaboy Commons, and its many small fields, laboriously cleared of stones, bear witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted. The upland is not high. It merely gives rise enough to start a half-mile of gentle slope into a basin whose bottom is filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round the lake, at the end of a rough borheen.

The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with limestone ridges. Yet the grass grows richly among the crags, and the farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the lake shore. This is 'Rynamona village'. Five others are scattered through the fields and across the lake. These households, with a few more a little farther off, make up the community.

The farms are all small; they are of the kind we

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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have met in Luogh. None has ten cows, and only 361
one has a single beast. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard wall. In the case of the villagers, the fields are scattered about and behind the haggards in irregular patterns. Besides these home fields, most of Rynamona has two or three acres in additions carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Re- 621
duplicated bonds of kinship unite all the house- 602
holds. "We are all related one way or another", they say. 'Cooring' is the usual form of co-operation. The village holds itself responsible amid grumbles for maintaining the borheen which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays, the County Council pays the sons who break [499]
stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of paths criss-crosses the fields in all directions.

Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the 573
village, is the 'old men's house'. Mrs. Ruin, a neighbour, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village. "The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?"

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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V

Shops, Pubs and Fairs

369 In many ways the town is an alien world, even a hostile one, to the countryman. He feels its scorn of his rusticity and distrusts its urbane way. Yet the town has an attraction for him no less strong in rural Ireland than elsewhere in the world. It weans away his sons and daughters. It brings him the breath of the outer world. After all, metropolis is a relative term. Metropolitan prestige is an infinite gradation in which the smallest hamlet may have a share with Megalopolis. Metropolitan prejudice is no less capable of minute division, and country towns engender little cockneys as quickly as might London produce a great one. They, too, would feel with Dr. Johnson that the fairest prospect in all Scotland was the road to London Town.

For if Megalopolis is the crossroads of the world, the country town is no less so. The difference is merely one of scale. Broadway, Piccadilly, and the Place de l'Opéra have counterparts in any country town.

361 In Ireland the parallel is more apt than one might credit at first thought. Irish towns have always been little more than crossroad centres.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

They are market-towns and administrative seats. 361
Their economics is that of distribution, not production. The industrial revolution has passed southern Ireland by. The shop, the pub, the fair bring the towns their life-blood and link them to their hinterlands and to the outside world. Many of them still collect market tolls on rural produce, as if they still had a ring of stone-wall fortification about them. Many of them have no fair green but throw open all their streets to shouting, bargaining men and milling cattle, on the day of the fair, surrendering themselves entirely to the countryside upon which they live.

One still approaches many of them today as one approached them in the sixteenth century, although now perhaps an automobile road breaks [491] a new entrance into them or the railroad halts a [496] jaunting car's distance away. The roads that radiate inward toward the heart of the town are still lined with labourers' and artisans' thatched cottages long before one reaches the town itself. As one proceeds along them, the cottages give way to shops and public houses which rise higher and more stately as one nears the centre, in the market-place or in the central square. There, quite often, that emporium of the most valuable commodity of all—the local bank—now dominates the scene.

Between the shop-fronts, back lanes lead off to the recesses in which the labourers live; and, off by

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 themselves in a proud segregation, stand the more pretentious houses of a residential area, and the great grey buildings in which local government and justice are housed. But the centre remains the point at which the shop-lined streets that lead from deep within the countryside converge. The life of the country and that of the town meet and mingle along these converging lines.

175 361 That mingling represents the latest stage of an age-old struggle in which the countryside has won out at last. It has been a conquest of assimilation, like the victories of Chinese life over the barbarian invader. The town in Irish history was originally, and often long remained, a foreign growth. In the great age of Celtic civilization, the monastery and the royal seat centred Irish life. Later the Celto-Norman castle scorned an urban fortress wall. The town was first a Danish importation; only Galway, of Irish cities, was not a Norseman's settlement. Throughout the long wars and counter-wars with the English foe and the alien English life, the town was many times alternately absorbed by native life and reconquered for the alien. Even Galway still bore its famous inscription above its city gate not three centuries ago. "O Lord," it read, "deliver us from the fury of the O'Flaherties." Law, at first, forbade even the entrance of the 'Irishry' into the towns and then later decreed that no Irishman should trade with another. The towns were to remain English, and later, Protestant, and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the merchant-burghers who flourished in them must remain of English blood and habit.

All that, of course, has long since vanished. The Irish have occupied the towns of their own land, their blood and habit hold sway and fashion urban commerce in the towns and cities. The change has been a slow and durable growth, flowing on beneath the surface of political and cultural strife. But like all growth it has been a process of incorporation, too. Today, to a casual eye, the shops, the commerce, the social life of the Irish town is much like that of all modern western Europe.

Such is the history, briefly put, which has provided the scene that interests the social anthropologist. It is in this scene that he can inquire into the bonds this conquest has created. He can appraise through them the factors which make up the countryman's participation in the larger world. Many fields for investigation present themselves in this connection. Townsmen and countrymen are now equally part, each in his own way, of that whole we name Irish society. From his own vantage each acts toward the other and builds up a relationship with him in such a way as to determine in some degree the form of that whole. This relation, an instance of the age-old reciprocity between town and country, invites our examination.

In Ireland today, one can see this relation most definitely and most significantly in the ties between shopkeeper and countryman. In the west and south

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

hedgerows. It is hard to realize that the close-set pattern of hedged or walled fields which now distinguishes so much of the countryside is for the most part only a century or so old. In many cases it can be shown that the fields and fences were laid out within the last hundred years, following the break-up of the rundale village system and the re-distribution of the land (Chapter 6). In the eastern lowlands, where English influence has long been at work, the field pattern and hedgerows are no doubt much older, but in general the small cultivated patches were separated by mere balks or waste strips, varying from one to ten feet in width. Stones from the fields, hand-picked or removed with crow-bar and slipe (Chapter 12) were dumped on the balks or, more frequently, piled into " cairns " in the middle of the fields. Such stone-heaps are often found accompanying prehistoric field-systems, for example in Jutland.

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[179]

Fig. 10.

Stone walls or high earthen fences surrounded the house-clusters and enclosed each group of open fields, separating them from the common grazing land which lay outside and stretched away to the " head-ditch " on the mountain. As the rundale holdings gave way to individual farms the land was re-divided, the old ditches planted with whitethorn and new ditches, also set with thorn, were constructed—a process which was being actively carried out during the first half of the 19th century. One result of the scattering of the farms was the appearance of the long strip or " ladder farms," the cross hedges of the strip resembling the rungs of a ladder.

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The oldest fences, then, are the protective banks around farms which occupy old village sites—a survival no doubt of the rings around the ancient raths—and the march-dykes or divisions between townlands. The varied vegetation on these older banks betrays them just as it does the pre-enclosure hedgerows in England: their massive tumbled ruins are overgrown with whins, blackthorn, sally, ash and bramble. There are, however, still older forgotten divisions on the hillsides dating from various prehistoric periods; some have

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER VI.

VILLAGE AND BOOLEY.

•361 Throughout the Irish countryside the farmhouses and cottages lie scattered as though casually spilt over the surface, forming an even film of population everywhere except in the mountains and bogs. Among students of rural settlement this country is rightly taken as one of the best European examples of the dispersed type of habitation. We very rarely see, except in a few exotic " plantations " which languish here and there, large agricultural villages of the English or European pattern, with their tree-shaded greens, their shops, churches and inns. A cluster of more than a dozen houses is almost sure to be the result of industrial influence—the erection of a mill or factory. Such a scheme of scattered dwellings, each set among its own fields, seems appropriate to a region where there are no inducements such as the needs of defence or the lack of water to encourage agglomeration, and where pastoral interests predominate, the animals needing constant attention.

361 174 But if we look more carefully at the Irish scene, and if we turn back to the records of history and prehistory, we shall find proof that the completely isolated farms are a fairly modern feature in most parts, and that house-clusters formerly predominated. Here and there, especially in the west, we see little " clusters " " onsets " or " clachans " of peasant houses, a dozen or so together, which preserve something of the character of the old villages we shall try to describe in this chapter. Over a wider area we find smaller clusters, three or

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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361 174 four houses together, which can almost invariably be shown to have once been larger: even these tiny groupings are referred to as "towns," and the use of this word suggests that such clusters were once the nuclei of the "townlands." It is because of this association with the vital townland unit, and because many rural customs find their explanation in past conditions, that I have thought it worth while to attempt a reconstruction of the chief features of these old communities. This is based largely on records and on surviving examples which I have studied in Co. Donegal and Co. Antrim. Allowance must be made for differences between one region and another, but I believe the following description to be applicable to most parts of Ireland, though the decay of the village-system began earlier in some areas than in others.

Travellers a century or so ago tell us that villages with 50 or 60 houses were not uncommon. In 1802 Donegal is said to have had about 500 villages, with an average perhaps of 20 or 30 families to each, but they were "dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings" (Figs. 13 & 14). One uses the term village for want of a better word, for such clusters lack many of the well-known features of the English village. They were essentially communities of related families bound together in "friendship"—the word "friend" means a blood-relation in Ireland—with one or two surnames predominating in each group. This fact is still true of townland populations even though the holdings are scattered, and it [55] helps to explain the prevalence of nicknames in rural Ireland, and, for the same reason, in Wales and Scotland. The houses were clustered without plan or order (and never strung together end-to-end) generally in some sheltered hollow in the richest part of the townland, though they might be disposed along a road with some semblance of regularity. Shelter is always the first consideration. I have been told in Donegal that house sites were selected by the simple process of throwing up a hat on a windy day and letting the wind decide by noting its resting place.

174 Made roads were almost unknown in hilly districts—there
491 was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one
361 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 50--ANALYST]

Fig. 13. Two Donegal townlands in 1834; showing village clusters.

Fig. 14. The same, showing scattered dwellings and separate holdings (Einzelhöfe) in 1902/3.

Based on the Ordnance Survey by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.

[p.49]

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 Donegal parish in 1837—and all the carrying depended upon
[491] slide cars and creels (Chapter 12). The village had neither
361 shop nor inn, and required little besides salt and iron from the market town. These self-sufficing communities were held together by blood ties and by the exchange of services under the Irish open-field or "rundale" system of cultivation. Around the house-clusters were small walled gardens and haggards, but the arable land was an unenclosed open field in which each holder had his scattered patches, averaging perhaps a quarter of an acre in area. There are cases on record where
[423] 29 partnership-peasants shared 422 plots of ground, where one man held 32 different patches, or again where 26 people had shares in a field of half an acre. In some districts it is known that the plots changed hands periodically. but no memory of this survives in the areas I am acquainted with. Live stock was sometimes subject to joint-ownership, with disastrous results where, for instance, three men claimed shares in a horse and could not agree as to the ownership of the fourth leg. But most of the stories that are told about rundale farming belong to the period of its decline.

174 Between the cultivated patches, which were dug with the
221 spade or ploughed and devoted almost exclusively to potatoes
361 and oats, ran waste strips or balks ("mearings," "bones" or "ribs") often left as much as three yards wide, apparently from a sort of pride, though they had their uses both as a source of hay and as tracks for the creel ponies when they could not enter the waterlogged plots. In the absence of fences all livestock had to be tethered, spancelled, herded, or sent to the mountain pastures during the crop season, which traditionally began on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) and ended on the last day of October (Hallowe'en), when the animals were free to wander over the whole townland throughout the winter. "Any that had not their potatoes dug, or other crops off the ground, were much injured, neither could any one man venture to grow turnips, clover or other green crops . . . no one would attempt to manure better or otherwise improve his proportion, as his neighbour's cattle only would have the benefit." It is clear that the introduction of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

potato was one of the factors that led to the decline of rundale agriculture, both because of its late harvest and because it resulted in increased populations which brought disastrous subdivision of the holdings. Under the " gavelkind " code of inheritance a man's property was divided equally among all his sons, so that the impossibly small fields came to be spoken of not as the standard " cow's grass," but as a " foot " and even a half-foot or " cleet." 174 221 361 [428]

Much has been written of the drawbacks of the rundale system. It is so easy to condemn it—the " fights, trespasses, confusion, disputes and assaults " to which it gave rise, the wretched poverty which it bred, the evil consequences of dwelling in packed house clusters—that it is well to recall the better side of the system before it fell into decline. A writer in 1853 has left his " recollections of nights of social converse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of defence against bailiff or gauger which contrasted mournfully with the solitary grandeur of the new dwelling." Another apologist wrote : " the closer the rundale system is followed, the more the unwritten customs and regulations observed, the more do intelligent tenants regret a departure from them." Many of its better features, indeed, have survived the enclosure movement and the separation of farms ; we may cite co-operation in farm work and the social fire-side evenings or " caileys." " Gatherings " of many kinds, for work and pleasure, distinguished the rundale communities. Every village had its musician, piper or fiddler, who was often maimed in some way and supported himself by his skill. Folk songs, occupational airs and epic tales were kept alive in this way. 174 621

It was formerly the task of an appointed leader in a townland or group of townlands to see that customs were observed, to arrange the casting of lots in re-allotting strips, and so on. Probably we should see in the " king " not long ago recognized as leader in such communities as Rathlin and Tory a relic of this custom. [622]

To understand the village-system in working order we must see it as part of a wider pattern in which cattle-herding 174 621 221 231

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 "troubles" of 25 years ago. Moreover underground "hides" have been constructed in recent times by poteen-makers. A description of a Donegal example said to have been made about 150 years ago will be found in *Antiquity*, June, 1939, p. 220.

351 Finally, something should be said about the disposition
361 of the farm buildings, but this is a subject which calls for research. Broadly speaking the arrangement native to the country is some kind of long house, with the offices under the same roof as the kitchen and room. I use the word "native" because in areas of strong English influence such as Wexford what seems to be an introduced type of lay-out is the courtyard style where the buildings are grouped round the sides of a square. There are many approximations to this arrangement in various parts of the east and south of Ireland, and I do not think, as my friend Colonel R. G. Berry has suggested, that the type is native. Where the Old Irish homestead has a number of outbuildings these tend to be placed in front of and parallel to the dwelling house. Efforts to persuade the peasant to put his manure heap and his animals behind the house have, until recently, failed, for he likes to keep an eye on his wealth!

9. Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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443 527 at Ballycastle, for instance, lasted a full week and though now limited to a single day is still the great event of the year in north Antrim. August and perhaps February were closely associated with the sale of sheep, the May and November fairs with cattle. In the early 19th century the great fair of Ballinasloe in Co. Galway handled as many as 20,000 cattle and 90,000 sheep. "Their whole thought," wrote Knight of the Mayo peasantry about that time, "seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging." "A yard of linen or a couple of chickens," says Arthur Young, "will carry an unemployed hand ten miles."

443 366 It is by the fairs and not by the calendar that the countryman dates events. It may be observed that the popularity of fairs, with their emphasis on livestock, illustrates the strength of the pastoral tradition. They have been something of an obstacle to good husbandry because they occur at the changes of the seasons and thus interfere with field work, particularly with harvest. Nowadays most of the fairs are associated with urban settlements, but the name "Fair *Hill*" still clings to the streets where they are held, and many a town has its fair hill just outside. On such sites tents were formerly erected for refreshment, and there are certain old fair grounds now abandoned where you may see the grassy foundations of the huts and the fire holes where the giant cauldrons were boiled. In the ancient aireachts streets of booths were set up for the fair period, so that they might be described as temporary towns. Professor MacNeill has put forward the thesis that these were the "cities" named by Ptolemy in his description of Ireland.

369 361 This brings us to the problem of urban origins. It is perhaps true to say that the fair used to be regarded as the product of the town, but recent research supports the view that the fair precedes the town and was one factor in its rise. Apart from comparative evidence drawn from certain north African communities, for instance, anyone who has watched a small town on fair day must get the impression that he is looking at something which has been going on throughout the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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ages. He sees the country taking complete possession of the town, blocking its streets, ignoring its traffic: he is in the presence of a force older and more fundamental than the town which has given it hospitality (Fig. 110).

When we inquire into the origins and antiquity of the Irish towns we find that very few go back to pre-Norman times, while it is abundantly clear that periodic gatherings in "temporary towns" are far older. The pre-Christian fortress-palaces such as Tara and Navan did not survive into historic times, and as a rule the church in Celtic lands had no civic interests, though many a confiscated monastic site was revived as the nucleus of a town when occupied by English troops in the 16th century. Some coastal cities such as Dublin and Waterford were founded by Norsemen, but most of the inland towns grew up as castle-market-towns during the Anglo-Norman period or in the plantations of the 16th and 17th centuries. To-day the five chief seaports, none of them strictly "native," contain one quarter of the total population: very few inland towns have more than 10,000 people, and only one of these is outside the industrial Six Counties. Most of the fair centres have a population of from 500 to 5,000: there are 187 towns of this size in Eire. There are 202 "towns" with from 200 to 500 inhabitants and only 25 with more than 5,000 (Fig. 107).

It is to these small towns, scattered at convenient intervals of 10 or 15 miles up and down the country, that the fairs have been attracted, the centre of authority and administration becoming the centre of exchange. Although most of the settlements are of "foreign" origin, they have become thoroughly Irish. The family system and blood-ties link up town and country, and trade follows the personal bond of "friendship," that is, blood relationship, however remote. Over shops and inns it is family names one sees painted up: O'Flynn and Flanagan take the place of the English "General Stores" and "Red Lion." Since the countryman's money comes only at the periodic fairs, he relies on the shopkeeper's credit, and the debt must never be entirely paid off, for that

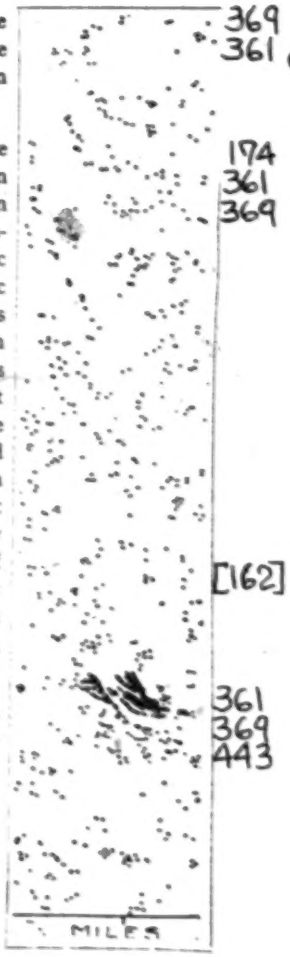

Fig. 107.
A market town with scattered country population. Each dot represents a building.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 would "spoil" social relations. Even in the larger towns the
[369] shopkeeper is reluctant to have his bills completely settled by
[443] his customers. These personal ties readily give rise to cliques and municipal corruption: it must be admitted that the

[162]

Fig. 108.

corporate spirit is poorly developed. Similarly the Irish country town is generally lacking in any native traditions of
[344] civic architecture, and even the splendid buildings of Dublin and Galway together with the distinctive court-houses of smaller towns owe much to outside influence. The small

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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town consists of streets of houses of peasant style strung The Small 361 end to end, picturesque with their washes of many colours, but [364] perpetuating and even accentuating the filth which can be tolerated in a village setting of streams and fields but which becomes highly objectionable under urban conditions. On the other hand there are some spaciously-planned country towns which have an air of quiet opulence reminding one of the English heritage to which they owe their foundation. I am aware that in saying this I am ignoring the "inner flame" of the Irish towns, but it cannot be denied that externally they have much to learn from the older civic traditions of the sister isle. Dr. Arensberg has analysed the pattern of the country town and described it as "an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order." He shows that, until recent times, its economy has been that of distribution, not production. Banks and pubs and shops do most of the business and owing to the family system "Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation." If we exclude the Lough Neagh basin, [162] all the denser areas of population are coastal and most of the country's manufacturing industries are concentrated in the ports (Fig. 108).

To return to the fair, we have tried to show how the 443 periodic gatherings in which they originated were associated 786 with ritual and emotional experiences connected with the 578 celebration of recurring events such as seed-time and harvest. Breaking the routine of toil, it is characteristic that much licence was permitted on these occasions. Until recent times a strong spirit of revelry and a temporary slackening of the moral code distinguished the great Irish fairs. Even to-day the police or civic guards make allowances for fair day and turn a blind eye to many offences against the law: it is recognized as a time of special licence. Games, dancing and faction fights were the order of the day once the buying and selling were over. Until a generation ago cruel "knuckle-dusters" (Fig. 109) were carried in readiness, and the countryman's heavy felt hat was worn as a defence against the blackthorn shillelagh.

Fig. 109.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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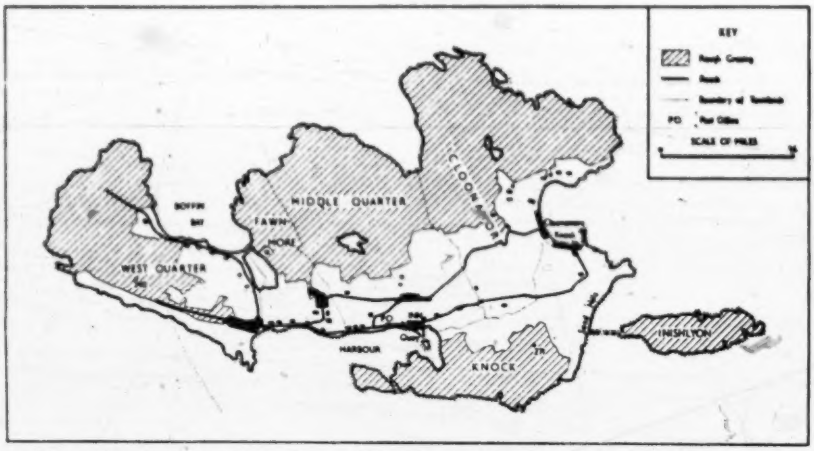

FIG. 1. The townlands of Inishbofin. Inishlyon has no inhabitants, but is used as sheep pasture. Cloonamore and Knock appear as a single line of houses on the shore but are in different townlands. The boundaries of the rough pasture and the distribution of houses were mapped in July, 1954. (Based on Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to 1 mile, Co. Galway, sheet 9, 1898, by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.)

[p. 204(A)]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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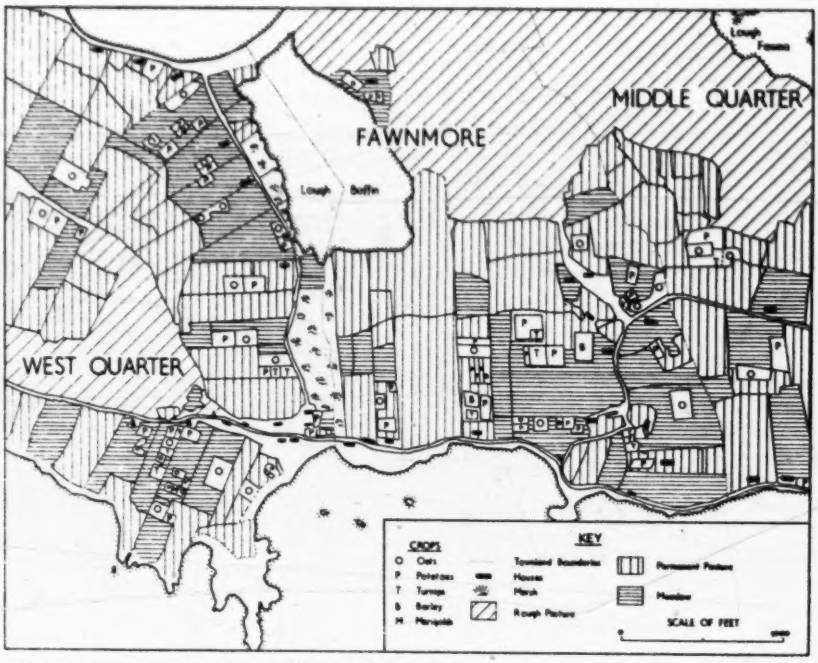

FIG. 2. Land use in part of Inishbofin. The rectangular pattern is characteristic of many areas "striped" by the Congested Districts Board. Small crop "gardens," fields of meadow and improved pasture, exist beside each farmhouse, and roads lead to the "commonage." (Field mapping done by Mr. Clifford Hargreaves, B.A., of the Department of Geography, University of Manchester, in July 1954, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made.)

[p. 205(A)]

228 to collect one stone in an hour. Kelp
[381] (seaweed) burning for iodine on the beaches was almost extinct by 1894.[17]

Settlement and Population

361 Of the 96 houses counted as inhabited, 53 are in five hamlets and another six in a loose cluster near the harbor. There is no village as the term is commonly understood, though the main center is beside the harbor, where the inn occupies the one-time "big house" of the Allies family, with the church and the Post Office a short distance away. In
[444] all there are eight shops, none of which is recognizable from the outside, as everyone knows them: one is attached to the inn, another to the Post Office, a third occupies a specially built room in a farmyard, and the rest are in front rooms of houses. All the houses except about six have land attached.

Is this nucleated settlement as such?
361 On the first Ordnance Survey map (1838) there were large clusters of houses
178 and on the 1898 map the vast majority
621 of the houses were in clusters. The redistribution of land and building of new houses has broken up many hamlets or made new ones, for example in Knock townland (405 acres) where an old hamlet on a sandy site has been replaced by a new one on drier ground by the shore, with 15 of the townland's 17 houses. In Cloonamore (663 acres)
361 eight houses are placed along the shore
621 and eleven others scattered over the hillside; in Middlequarter (608 acres) there are eleven houses in the main hamlet, six beside the harbor and eleven others at various points beside the shore or on side roads; in Fawnmore (199 acres) six houses out of sixteen are in a loosely defined hamlet; and in West-
361 quarter (523 acres) nine houses out of

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[p.208(A)]

[361] sixteen are in a similarly formless cluster.

Emigration has entered deeply into the fabric of life: in 1841, Inishbofin with Inishark had 1612 people, but ten years later there were only 1047. A rise to 1236 in 1861 and 1262 in 1871 was followed by a drop to 997 in 1891, when there were 215 families of whom one-quarter were said to be "very poor."[18] Steadily the population declined, to 510 in 1936, 406 in 1946, and 341 in 1951, and now less than 300 (including 40 in Inishark). One-quarter of the families were interviewed in 1954; of these only one-third were "normal families" of parents with children. In the school there were only 29 children aged 5–14, whereas the normal figure would be 48. On Inishark there are now only nine able-bodied men, six of whom are needed to man a boat seaworthy in winter, with the result that an epidemic might be disastrous. Permanent emigration to Britain, or, if possible, to America, is favored by the young and adventurous. Even in 1893 seasonal emigration to Britain as harvesters or domestics was declining,[19] though a number of people went to America for several years, saved money, and returned to the islands. A large proportion of the people have spent several years in the United States. In many cases a family has its older relatives in America, its younger ones in Britain.

Conclusion

Having reviewed the economic geography of this island certain conclusions emerge. First, the present relative comfort of the population has been made possible only by past and present government assistance bestowed with lib-

[18] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891.
[19] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

[113]

[p.208(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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175 a system of dioceses and raised St. Patrick's Church at Armagh
[195] to the primacy in the eleventh century.

But it was the Norsemen who established the first port-cities
175 of Ireland—Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick—
162 and provided the Anglo-Normans with bases from which to attempt their conquest. It was the fate of these newcomers, as of earlier invaders, to be absorbed, but the towns which they and their successors established became the instruments of Anglicization. Yet outside the nine south-eastern counties where the Anglo-Norman influence was strongest, there are few towns which are older than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as late as 1841 less than 15 per cent of the Irish population was urban. It is significant that even today no inland Irish town has a population reaching 20,000: in the Republic, indeed, only one or two exceed 10,000, and that barely. It is the immemorial peasant tradition which dominates the heart of Ireland. In some inland counties the rural population is still as much as 90 per cent of the total: for the Republic of Ireland as a whole it amounts to 62 per cent, and the figure for the more industrialized counties of Northern Ireland is only slightly under 50 per cent. In Ulster the plantation of English and especially of Scots Presbyterian settlers in the seventeenth century was at last successful in maintaining its identity, though as we shall see the material culture is strongly moulded to its Irish environment. Partly because this region of entry has received through the centuries almost every culture-layer that has been deposited in Ireland, there is perhaps a greater variety of survivals in Ulster than in any other part of Ireland. In some ways this most British part of Ireland is also the most Irish.

Although the tribal nomadism of medieval Ireland has been
311 exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the pastoral tradition
● 361 has dominated Irish life through the ages. Cultivation was
175 certainly practised from Neolithic times, but the older crops, wheat and barley, were in course of time supplemented and in many parts replaced by oats, which became the corn of Ireland as of Scotland, food for men as well as animals. For half the year the arable land was under stubble, pastured and manured by grazing stock, so that the favoured acres around the settle-

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ment—the infield—might produce grain year after year. The rough grazing beyond—the outfield—was broken up periodically in temporary enclosures, and it may be assumed that such a system had developed from the shifting agriculture of prehistoric times. Relics of outfield cultivation, usually in association with family-communes, can be traced in many regions of difficulty throughout Western Europe, both in the mountains of the centre and along the oceanic fringe from Spain to Norway. 'If we knew medieval England completely', states Sir John Clapham, 'we should find plenty of it.'[1] In most lowland areas of good soil throughout western Europe, however, it was replaced by a system involving large open fields, normally three in number, each of which was used in rotation for autumn sown corn, usually wheat, followed by spring corn and fallow. This scheme called for considerable organization and a large variety of tools and implements: it came to be governed by complex regulations and controlled by the lord of the manor, and it is significant that the feudal system and in due course the nation-state evolved in areas where the openfield economy was practised. There was more freedom and flexibility in the smaller and simpler outfield system, and in Ireland the feudal order was successfully established only in the English Pale, where the three-field system was introduced by Anglo-Norman settlers. Elsewhere the tribal system prevailed, and for the study of folk-customs the important unit within that system was the family commune living in clustered house-groups, hamlets or clachans. The prevailing cattle-economy called for a minimum of equipment, the subordinate cultivation little more than spades or light ploughs and hand-operated tools. Even the lowliest members of society had some interest in the land and its cultivation was not beyond their means. Possession of a cow, a horse, a pig or a few sheep demanded even less in the way of equipment and tools. The simple arts and crafts of prehistoric times proved adequate, and the poorest man was able to play his part in the community and stand on his own feet. A democratic

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961
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[1]H. J. Clapham, *A Concise Economic History of Britain* (1949), 48, Similarly Gilbert Slater, *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields* (1907) regards what he terms the Celtic system 'as influencing to varying degrees the type of village community in England.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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175 way of life was fostered by the ease with which the humbler
311 members of the community could compete with others in arts
361 demanding not wealth but personal qualities, in poetry, oratory, song and physical prowess. Down to our own day the small size of the average farm has encouraged the survival of simple tools and limited the acquisition of machines. Subdivision of farms and the depressing effects of short leases and absenteeism were contributory factors. Subdivision of holdings was prohibited under an Act of 1881, but like so many other prohibited practices it did not cease.

175 The retention of many of the attributes of a peasant society is the key to the survival of the folk ways with which we are
602 concerned in the following chapters. Even the Great Famine
178 which marks a grim watershed in social and economic history did not entirely obliterate them, though it had such far-reaching effects that it might be regarded as the end of prehistoric times in Ireland. First in importance is the strength of blood-ties in extended family groups, still maintained even in many urban communities. During the air raids on Belfast, for example, the problem of finding billets for evacuated homeless was complicated by the refusal of large groups of related families to be separated from each other. In remote rural areas the blood-tie is a dominant force, governing economic as well as social relationships,[1] its loyalties overriding the impartial administration of justice. A relative is a 'friend', even if 'far-out'—that is, remotely connected—and friendship is a matter of blood relationship. A peasant community is concerned first and foremost with the maintenance and continuity of society: it does not judge—and cannot be judged—purely by economic standards. Immemorially peasant families have been large, and child-bearing is widely regarded as part of the ritual necessary to bring success with the stock and the crops. In rural Ireland
[842] barrenness in a wife still tends to be regarded as an unnatural and disgraceful thing, and many superstitious cures for 'the
178 sterile curse' are recorded. This is but one example of a widespread attitude towards life, to which comparative anthropology
789 offers many parallels. Sympathetic magic, or the performance

[1]C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940), Ch. 13.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of certain acts in the hope of inducing success in similar fields of action, provides an explanation of many of the folk-practices with which we are concerned.

Pushed too far, however, the observance of such antiquated practices in the end defeated its purpose and threatened the extinction of traditional life. A clue to much of the paradox in Irish culture is to be found in the reaction which follows an adherence to custom carried beyond the breaking-point. Spade-labour for example has reluctantly given way to the plough, but once the plough is generally accepted the spade becomes a despised implement so that a vegetable garden is a rare thing, at best a tiny plot left to the care of the women. In another field, the substitution of the vilest American films for the traditional ceilidhe gathering is a sad change. The crisis of the Great Famine was a major turning-point, and there followed a general reaction against everything associated with it. This was particularly true of the Irish peasants who sought refuge across the Atlantic: the American immigrants, driven from the land by extreme poverty, were determined to have nothing more to do with it and became almost invariably town-dwellers. The donkey and the goat, symbols of poverty, are neglected and despised in many parts of Ireland. A Donegal crofter once told me he dare not keep a donkey for fear of being unable to marry off his daughters: instead he kept a horse, though he could ill afford one, for its prestige value. The dangerously monotonous diet of Irish countryfolk, also, can be explained in the light of the famine. So bitter is the folk-memory of these times that useful wild sources of food are now neglected and despised; for example, wild berries of all kinds, the ubiquitous eel, hare and rabbit; the cresses and the edible seaweeds and fungi. It should be added, however, that some of these foods were apparently tabu—the rabbit, an Anglo-Norman invader, was rarely eaten—and that the potato had played its part in debasing diet in the period before the famine.[1]

Perhaps the most striking example of reaction is to be found in the expressed desire of most country people to have an isolated dwelling-house. The clachan or hamlet, once the centre of communal life and tradition, is despised, a symbol of squabbling

[1]R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), Ch.15.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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178 poverty, and it is the wish of nearly everyone to have a house where he cannot be overlooked. What is surprising in the light [361] of these physical changes is the extent to which old customs and habits of mind survive to this day. As the late R. A. S. Macalister wrote in his last book, perhaps not entirely without malice: 'The importance of Ireland is that, thanks to the 'time-lag', it has rendered to Anthropology the unique, inestimable, indispensable service of carrying a primitive European *Precivilization* down into late historic times, and there holding it up for our observation and instruction.'[1]

178 Finally we should notice how the physical diversity of the country conspired with its remoteness to permit the survival 133 through the centuries of indigenous peoples and customs. 'Mountainy men', in the picturesque Irish phrase, keep their foothold in every corner of the land, for mountain refuges lie all around the coast. Even the broad central lowland is diversified by several isolated ranges, still more by extensive bogs where movement has always been difficult. Before forest clearance and drainage were effected, woods, lakes and bogs were widespread, and the English made every effort to destroy the forest remnants because they sheltered the native 'wood-kernes'. So it had been in Norman England; where the land became difficult, through mountain or forest, or where water filled large spaces, the pikesman or bowman could hold his own against the man on horseback, and a democratic flavour was in the air.

[1]R. A. S. Macalister, *The Archaeology of Ireland* (1949), x.

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FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

Little attention has been given to the Irish openfield system.[1] It has escaped the notice of historians because the revolution which broke it down was a prolonged and silent one, involving no Enclosure Acts such as those which record the disappearance of the English openfields. Under the Irish system it was the practice, in some areas at least, for the plots to change hands periodically among co-partners by the casting of lots. Thus the transition to consolidated holdings was easier than under the English system, where the scattered plough strips were apparently permanently held. It is important to examine the openfield system more closely than might seem to be warranted by its almost complete disappearance from the modern scene, because it was against this background that many of the tools and customs we shall discuss were evolved. Just as in lowland England the English village was inseparable from its openfields, so in Ireland hamlets or 'clachans' accompanied the old form of land utilization. They will crop up again and again in the chapters which follow. But today and for the last century or so the isolated farm has characterized the Irish rural scene (Fig. 4). From some elevated viewpoint in the mountainy parts one may count hundreds of small whitewashed homesteads dotted among the fields, each nestling behind a handful of wind-bent trees and approached by its own access-road—the loaning or borheen beloved of the sentimental song writers. Every farmstead has the air of a fortress, an independent unit within its jealously guarded boundary fences, defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars (Fig. 5) and claiming rights of way whose protection keeps the town solicitors profitably engaged. The degree of independence has been notably strengthened by the Land Acts (1869–1925) under which former tenants have become their own landlords. Peasant-proprietorship is an established fact throughout the country, though it has by no means solved Ireland's problems as some politician-prophets claimed it would.

The truth is that, taking the country as a whole, most of the farms are too small to be truly independent of their neighbours. Bitter experience and the traditional land-hunger of a community

[1] E. E. Evans, *Geography*, 24 (1939), 24–36; D. McCourt, *Economic History Review*, 7, 369–76.

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the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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311 continuous tradition of partnership. Rundale, as we find it in
361 decay in the nineteenth century, was a diseased system that had outlived its purpose. A few examples will serve to illustrate the appalling conditions to which it led when the removal of traditional checks and the adoption of the potato had allowed the population to expand recklessly within the framework of an inherited system of land use and settlement.

311 Our first example comes from the present century, and from
361 Co. Mayo. The clachan of Rathlackan, when the Congested
659 Districts Board tried to disperse it in 1918, was occupied by fifty-six families whose land was scattered in 1,500 fragments, some of them no more than a dozen square yards in area (Fig. 6). A two-acre holding was split into eighteen tiny plots, and on the average twenty-seven lots were held by each farm. Such was the confusion that it was not until 1942 that the process of redistribution and consolidation of holdings was completed, with the result that 'fairly compact holdings' were provided for thirty-two families.[1]

The following quotations are from the pamphlets of an 'improv-
311 ing landlord' in Donegal, and refer to a period about a hundred
361 years earlier, in the 1840s.

'We suppose it would not be believed that in this district, until very lately, fences were altogether unknown. In some instances a tenant having any part of a townland (no matter how small), had his proportion in thirty or forty different places, and without fences between them. One poor man who had his inheritance in thirty-two different places, abandoned them in utter despair of ever being able to make them out . . . The rundale system was a complete bar to any attempt at improvement; as, on a certain day, all the cattle belonging to the townland were brought from the mountains and allowed to run indiscriminately over the arable land. And in spring no individual occupier would set or sow, or labour in the fields, before a certain day, when the cattle were again sent to the hills, until after harvest. In one instance a small field of about half an acre was held by twenty-six people.'[2]

[1] *The Irish Times* (12th Jan., 1948). This was achieved only at the cost of the physical collapse of one land-officer and the mental breakdown of another.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22, 46.

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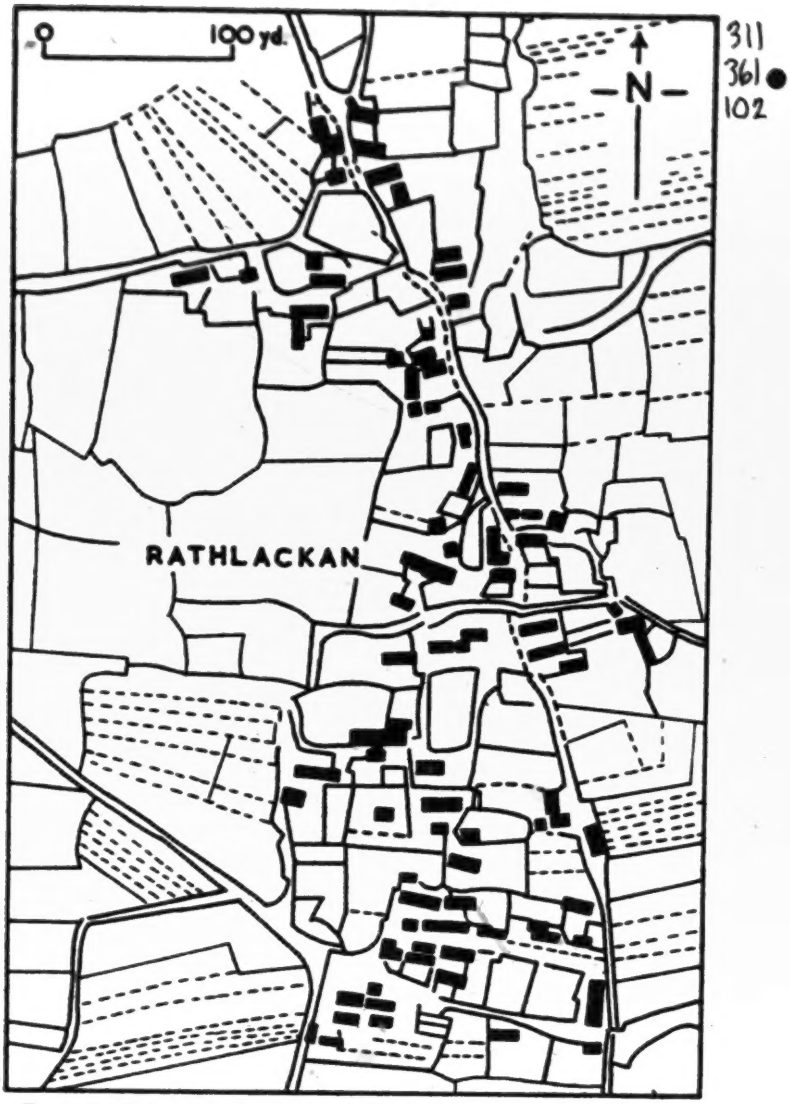

FIG. 6. Rathlackan, Co. Mayo: the rundale cluster with some of the openfield strips as they were before reorganization began in 1918.

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311 In Connacht conditions were even worse, as may be judged
361 by the persistence of the Rathlackan cluster down to 1942. So swollen were some of these settlements that one of them, Menlough near Galway, now consisting of a dozen farms set among the ruins of others, is said to have had 2,000 inhabitants in 1845, while lacking 'head or centre, market, church, chapel or school'.[1]

In Ulster there are many examples of small clusters which have persisted because they did not become swollen to disastrous proportions. They were characteristic, for instance, of flax-growing areas and were occupied by farmer-weavers who depended on each others' services at harvest-time, and they survived the crisis of the great famine although many decayed with the decline of hand-loom weaving soon afterwards. Despite all the disadvantages of life in these clachans, their inhabitants were reluctant to leave them. It was stated in evidence before the Devon Commission that even if they were moving only half a mile away 'they were crying as if they were going to America'. It was in fact from such decaying house-clusters that a great number of the emigrants to the United States set out across the seas in the second half of last century.

[1]T. C. Foster, *Letters*, 293.

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since they were based on the fertility of the land rather than its acreage, and it seems that many moorland tracts were not divided until fairly recent times, for they were formerly shared as common summer pasturage by the people of a whole parish or barony, covering 100 sq. miles or more. In such hilly areas the townlands may be as much as 2,000 acres: on the other hand in thickly-settled lowlands they are frequently less than 100 acres, and some anomalous fragments of an acre or two are designated townlands. This diversity also reflects cultural differences both between regions and between various classes from the kings and chiefs down to the humblest of bondmen. The first Ordnance Survey (1830–42) suppressed many of the local names for subdivisions and applied the term townland universally. Though the townland appears to have been equated with an agricultural unit, the ploughland or *seisrach*, it is clear that in many parts of the country 'the cow's grass' was the effective unit of measurement. Of Donegal about 1840 we read: 'The land is never let, sold or devised by the acre, but by 'a cow's grass'. This is a complement of land well understood by the people, being in fact the general standard; and they judge of the dimensions of a holding by its being to the extent, as the case may be, of one, two or three 'cows' grass'. They have divided not only into the fourth part of a cow's grass, called a 'foot', but into the eighth part of a cow's grass, or half a foot, denominated 'a cleet'.'[1] In Bantry, Co. Cork, land was let 'in the wilder parts by what is termed the gneeve, which is the twelfth part of a townland, and therefore of very undefined acreage'.[2]

To judge from surviving examples of clachans and openfields, it was customary for each house in the cluster to have a small enclosure or 'gort' (garden) adjacent to it, their high walls lining a maze of narrow lanes winding haphazard among the houses (Fig. 6). These settlements were characterized by an extreme disorder, as though the houses, in the words of one writer, had fallen 'in a shower from the sky'.[3] Linear villages, it is true, are not uncommon along the western seaboard,

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 26.
[2] *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1844), s.v. Bantry.
[3] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (1839), 353.

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361 arranged in some semblance of order along a road, but they are likely to be late colonies or the result of land re-distribution. As a visitor during the famine years wrote: 'The villages in which the greater portion of the people (of western Ireland) reside . . . consist of collections of hovels . . . grouped without regularity, formed of clay, or loose stone with green sods stuffed into the interstices'.[1] A little earlier, in 1839, the people of Achill Island are described as 'living in little cabins built in loose clusters varying from twenty to eighty in a cluster: these clusters or villages are sixteen in number'.[2] Still earlier, in 1802, Donegal is said to have had about 500 'villages', which were, however, 'dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings'.[3]

361 The absence of any discernible plan as compared with many
342 English or German villages has led visiting critics to regard the clachan as a reflection of the disordered Irish mentality. The word that best fits the untidy house cluster is one often heard in Ireland—'throughother'—which is properly applied and probably owes its origin to the scattered plots of the openfield (Fig. 6). Despite this apparently casual disorder the selection of a house-site was a matter for the most careful deliberation. Shelter from the prevailing winds was a prime need, so that the houses seem to snuggle together, generally located in a hollow or on a lee slope. To this end a man might throw his hat into the air on a day of wild winds and mark its falling place. But it seems it was at all costs necessary to avoid giving offence to the fairies by building across one of their 'pads'. In Tyrone it is said that 'no man would build a house till he had stuck a new spade into the earth'. If the fairies had not removed it overnight the site was safe.[4] In Cavan I was told that a small line of stones was first built on the site: if it was intact next morning the fairies were not displeased. The ill-luck which dogged the person who had inadvertently built his house across a fairy pad is one of the many themes which crop up in the stories one hears throughout the country.

[1] J. Pim, *The Condition and Prospects of Ireland* (1848), 116.
[2] Edward Newman in *The Magazine of Natural History* (1839), 569–77.
[3] James McParlan, *Statistical Survey of the County of Donegal* (1802), 64.
[4] Rose Shaw, *Carleton's Country* (1930), 15.

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BALLY AND BOOLEY

These clachans, while some had their speciality such as weaving or thatching, were concerned primarily and almost exclusively with agriculture and attracted none of the elements of the true village, whether church, inn or shops. Itinerant 'tinkers and tailors' paid periodic visits and with the pedlars and beggars brought news of other districts, but the economic and social needs of the hamlet were met by periodic visits to the fairs and by seasonal gatherings of various kinds. Within the group the bonds of kinship were close and strong, and ties of marriage carrying reciprocal responsibilities linked one clachan with another within small neighbourhood units consisting of perhaps half a dozen townlands. With the close kinship bonds went corresponding rivalries with adjacent neighbourhoods which provided social motive force by acting as incentives. These rivalries broke out characteristically into feuds and blood-letting at fairs and gatherings. But in later days, at any rate, internal rivalries and squabbles were more conspicuous and found more opportunities within overgrown kinship groups which had become too complicated to function smoothly. A few illustrations will suffice. 361 621

One visitor explained the presence of the back-doors on clustered houses, for which we shall offer other explanations in the following chapter, by the fact that the women needed an escape when too hotly engaged in rows with neighbours.[1] Joint ownership sometimes extended to single animals with strange results. For example: 'three men were concerned in one horse; but the poor brute was rendered useless, as the unfortunate foot of the supernumerary leg remained unshod . . . and accordingly it became quite lame.[2] We are reminded of the difficulties arising from the joint ownership of fruit trees in some Mediterranean countries. It was in Donegal too that I heard of a ram which died of exposure when it was part-shorn by one of its joint owners. In the same district a man wishing to build a wall around one of his fields but unable to get his neighbour to agree, deliberately erected it a yard or two on his own side of the boundary so that the neighbour would still be forced to herd or tether his cow to prevent it trespassing on the 361 578 311 423 [422]

[1]Isaac Weld, *Statistical Survey of Roscommon* (1832), 475.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 23.

361 narrow strip between the boundary and the wall. 'Fights, tres-
578 passes, confusion, disputes and assaults, were the natural and
311 unavoidable consequences of the rundale system.'[1] On the other
423 hand we must recall the extreme reluctance with which the system was at last abandoned, the social benefits it conferred on members of the kin. The reforming landlord, Lord George Hill, comments that 'the pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together, made them consider the removal of the houses, from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built to the separate farms, a great grievance.'[2] Another writer gives as the basis of the tenants' grievance, 'the recollection of nights of social concourse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of
[517] defence against bailiff or gauger'.[3] There were ceilidhes and spinning parties, and many a clachan had its shanachie (story-teller) and its fiddler or piper—usually a maimed or simple person—who accompanied with folk-tunes. Folk-songs, occupational airs and legendary tales were kept alive in this way. Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there
[252] would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some
[343] districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains.

The openfield which lay around the cluster, normally on the
311 down-hill side so that the vital manure could be 'sliped' down-
423 slope (see Chapter XIII), seems to have been kept in cultivation in some areas at least year after year. This was the infield, in contrast to the outfield, the outlying rough pasture bits of which were temporarily reclaimed and then left to rest for long periods. We shall return to the plough and spade and methods of cultivation in another place but may refer here to the allotment of the holdings in the common fields. Although in many parts of the country the holdings, by the end of the eighteenth century, had become fixed in their scattered parcels on the several qualities of land in the openfield, there is abundant

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.
[2]ibid., 42.
[3]W. R. Wilde, *Dublin University Magazine*, 41 (1853), 20.

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them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rectangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of booleying there are no discernible traces, for the flimsy constructions in such sites, built without stones, have been buried under the peat. Frequently the huts were built into a sloping bank of peat or gravel, and the roofs were constructed of bog timbers covered by long strips of sod and thatched with heather secured with ropes. We shall see that long roofing-sods are typical of traditional peasant dwellings to this day, and their use may go back to pastoral origins. It was observed

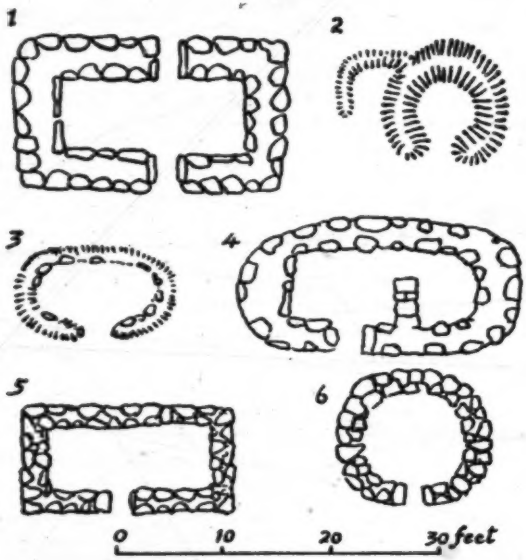

FIG. 7. Plans of booley houses. Nos. 1, 4, 5, Achill Island; Nos. 2 and 3, Mourne Mountains, Co. Down; No. 6, Co. Mayo.

near Newry in 1690 that the cabins were built so conveniently of hurdles and long turf 'that they can remove them in summer towards the mountains, and bring them down to the valleys in winter.'[1] Circular hut-foundations are also found, some built of stones, others of sods, and the former may well have had corbelled stone roofs. The huts are generally in groups of

[1]George Story, *An Impartial History of the Wars of Ireland* (1691), 2nd ed. (1693), 16.

342 from five to twenty, either clustered or spaced within calling distance of each other. They are nearly always located near
361 running water, usually near the headwaters of mountain streams, where patches of bright green grass and such characteristic flowers as tormentil may reveal their sites even when almost all trace has gone (Fig. 7).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

THE THATCHED HOUSE

Poverty and rack-renting undoubtedly contributed to the long survival of such conditions, but they ultimately derive from cultural forces of wide distribution and high antiquity. It used to be said in defence of the custom of sharing the house with the cow that she helped to keep the house warm and that in turn the cow yielded more milk. Inquire further and you will find that it was thought to be unlucky if the cow was not able to get a glimpse of the fire. Behind this belief there lies faith in the power of the fire to dispel evil spirits. The end of the house farthest from the hearth is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-end', a relic of the time when it housed the cattle, for it was obviously wise to have the floor sloping down towards the byre. Many cabins and huts were constructed as lean-tos against a bog-face or an old fence (ditch). Hence the saying applied, for example, to the Cappagh district of Co. Armagh, that 'you can't cross a ditch or you'll fall down a chimney'. It should be recalled that in Ireland the tenants built and repaired their own houses with, normally, no assistance from the landlord, and there was little inducement to build houses to last longer than the lease of say twenty-one years. Only in Ulster under the custom of tenant right could outgoing tenants claim recompense from the new tenants for improvements made.

The simple rectangular shape is a feature of west European house-types from prehistoric times and has characterized some houses of Neolithic age excavated in Ireland. Such houses were usually built of timber, clay or sods (scraws). Circular or oval houses are of similar antiquity, whether made of stone or of wattles, but although a few round-ended rectangular houses survive, the round hut of corbelled stone slabs is used today only as a store place or animal house (Chapter IX). The houses of Achill Island are described by several writers about 1840 as circular or oval in shape, built of boulders without mortar and having the thatched roof continuous with the walls. They had neither chimneys nor windows, and the single door was sometimes not more than four feet high. None of these houses is now inhabited though their ruins can be seen. The round or oval house, however, has probably contributed to certain features of the traditional rectangular-house in some areas, for example the central hearth and the hipped roof which is proper

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 native to the country. Around the coasts the sycamore is almost
313 the only tree that persists, for it will stand up to the salt-laden gales everywhere save on the most exposed parts of the west coast. R. U. Sayce has recorded the belief, from Montgomeryshire, that 'sycamore trees keep the fairies away and stop them spoiling the milk',[1] but this bit of lore cannot be of any great antiquity since the tree did not reach Britain from its home in the mountain belt of southern Europe until the sixteenth century. It presumably arose from the association of the tree with the farmyard. In Ireland the sycamore probably came in with the early seventeenth century planters, though the beech may be a medieval or even older introduction. Both trees had many economic uses, especially for dry-coopering, that is the
[322] manufacture of provision casks and butter firkins, and the sycamore is an excellent wood for turnery. Later, as the linen industry became mechanized, the beetling mills demanded sycamore for the great beam of the engine and beech for the vertical beetles.

The lay-out of farm buildings seems to have been, in the
351 native single-farms, as haphazard and formless as was that of
361 the houses themselves in an old clachan. As separate farms with outbuildings ('offices') became fashionable improvements after the middle of the eighteenth century, the latter were built for convenience of access and they were put close to the farmhouse, either attached to one end or lying parallel to provide a windbreak. Only in the planted areas does one find old examples of planned 'courtyard farms' where the house and offices enclose a square or rectangular yard. I fancy the stone or wooden 'hovel-stands' with their picturesque mushroom-like staddle-stones are also confined to planted districts. In the west a favourite method of making stacks is to build them about a central pole. (See p. 164.)

The wayside style is another absentee in the native Irish
487 countryside, as is the footpath which is its companion. Short-
[417] cuts are rarely worth while in a land of tiny fields, and if there is a right of way there is sure to be a tolerable road. In fact there are so many farm lanes and access ways to mountain, seashore or bog that an economist might regard the amount of land so taken out of cultivation as excessive. It has been

[1] R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 45 (1938).

443 the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous
527 gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone
543 grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon
[361] and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry
[487] footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those
489 of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement
439 of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-
441 dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These
439 dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 1. The back of the island from the lighthouse

with an Iron Age culture about 350 B.C.; but only in 1961 were earlier Neolithic, 172
or possibly Mesolithic, implements discovered. When my wife and I arrived in
the island for a seven week visit during the summer of 1962, we were presented [114]
with three slate axe heads which had been unearthed by road workers the previous December. It is possible that they are Mesolithic, for the industry never has been dated accurately.

The principal Copper-Bronze Age monuments of Inis Beag are Megalithic tombs and burial mounds, and possibly kitchen middens and semi-subterranean stone dwellings, called *clochán*. Small gallery graves incorporated into lately built stone walls are common, but it appears that they never have been examined by prehistorians, for there is no record of them in the literature. Archeologists seldom have visited the back of the island where the prehistoric and medieval populations, contrary to present day opinion, may have centered. None of the Inis Beag *clochán* have been dated, but it is known that they were lived in by clerics and ascetics during the Middle Ages, and were still used as living quarters in a nearby island early last century. It is as difficult to ascertain the age of burial mounds and middens in Ireland as it is of stone houses, because they too were formed over several historical periods. Burial mounds of earth and stone, termed respectively tumuli and cairns by archeologists, first were erected during the Copper-Bronze Age and continued to be built into the early modern period (although not for funerary purposes). There are numerous mounds in Inis Beag, but in many instances it is hard to distinguish on sight cairns from *clochán* in their ruinous, overgrown condition. The islanders regard both types of structures as burial sites. [814]
Middens can be dated from the Mesolithic to the end of the medieval era. Most of the island middens are associated with dwelling places from the Middle Ages, but those located near the mouths of caves in the limestone cliffs of the terraces

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[712] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[437] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island
form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are
situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the
rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are
Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common
land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the
monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common
land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the com-
munity. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 275
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve
the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small
enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop
are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes
purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [443]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an
aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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The Village and the Family

Village Differences

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103 LOW VILLAGE RECEIVES ITS NAME from its position on the lowest terrace of Inis Beag (see Fig. 4). It borders the ocean and strand, while High Village to the east is located in a wide expanse south of the common land formed by a concavity in the upper terraces. On the western of the two promontories high above the beach, separated from Low and Terrace by rift valleys, is Castle Village. Below it are the cemetery enclosing the church of the patron saint and the new school, and above it are the castle, the ruined monastery, the Napoleonic watch [138] tower, and what remains of the old school next to the tower. The Ordnance Survey [823] Maps place the highest elevation of Inis Beag in the vicinity of the tower, but the folk claim that the most elevated portion of the crest is above High. Terrace Village, on the promontory to the east, presents a breath-taking view of the lake (see Fig. 7), the sound, and towering mountains and cliffs along the mainland coast. Low merges with High, but Castle and Terrace, because they are located on high terraces and bounded by rift valleys, are isolated units. Terrace is aligned north and south, but the other three settlements are aligned roughly east and west. The southernmost house of Terrace and the westernmost one of Low are approximately 1500 yards apart, and the intervening distance can be walked comfortably in less than 12 minutes.

Below are the number of inhabited houses and the population of each village:

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	Houses	*Population*
Low Village	24	119
High Village	16	59
Castle Village	17	99
Terrace Village	14	73

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions
there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side,
where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new
soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle
dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen. There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of house is common, but there is also a squarer type which may have a second story. 342

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled, rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the governmental agencies and patterned after those built first by the Congested Districts Board (1893–1923) are slated and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statistical statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families, but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's population live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings, which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence between the proportion of small farm population to total population. [362]

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking is done, the table around which the family — first the adult males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the "Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festivals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part 592 352 353 [778] [415]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER VII.

THE IRISH PEASANT HOUSE.

342 The Irish peasant house consists of a low single-storied rectangle, some 12 to 15 feet wide internally but of varying length, customarily thatched and whitewashed; but this generalised description embraces a surprising range of styles. So much abuse has been levelled at the Irish cabin that it is well to recall the opinion of a Swedish scientist who writes as follows:—" Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building material, the Irish peasant house never stands out in bold relief against its background but melts into it even as a tree or rock. Whenever the old building traditions are faithfully maintained its features are of a fine simplicity. The best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe."

342 362 511 The other side of the picture is the dirt and smells inseparable from the long habits of close association with livestock, so that within living memory, " cows and calves, men, women and children, horse and poultry were herded together in one apartment." Poverty and the rack-rent system have been blamed for this, but behind it lie facts of ethnology which are rooted in the remote past. Local authorities are striving to wipe away the stigma of the old order, and are spreading a " rash " of red-roofed cottages over the fair face of the country, but there is still a great mass of material for study.

[p. 57]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 beauty which vary subtly from one region to another in response to local climates, conditions and contacts. The use of local building materials meant that they fitted into landscapes of which they were literally a part, their clay or stone walls gathered from the earth on the spot, their timbers dug from the bogs, their thatch harvested from the fields. A Swedish ethnographer writes that 'the best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe.'[1] The result of an unbroken tradition was a fine simplicity of style and proportions, with nothing of the vulgar obtrusiveness of the new fashions in country houses, based too often on urban styles and red-brick respectability. Before the famine, houses in the market towns also were very largely of traditional local style save in the central square. Isaac Weld, describing Roscommon in 1832, states that out of its 517 houses no less than 462 were thatched.[2]

Our concern is with the old-style house as a shelter for man
342 and beast and as the vehicle of family lore and regional tradition.
362 In the crowded clachans limitations of space and the fact that
231 diarying was mainly practised in the summer booleys go far to explain the absence of separate byres or dairies. Sanitation was of the crudest and closets unknown. It is these aspects of Irish rural life that have most readily aroused the amused indignation of the critics and the defensive wrath of Irish patriots. As we read in an earlier description of the Western Isle:[3]

> At one of th' ends he kept his cows,
> At th'other end he kept his spouse.

The custom of housing man and beast together has been very general among pastoral peoples in regions of difficult climate, whether in Highland Britain or the European mountain zone. Parts of Ireland, however, have long had a different type of house giving more family privacy: in the lowland parts of Leinster, East Munster and South Ulster the house with central chimney and fireside partition did not easily allow of the keeping of livestock in the house, and one is inclined to regard

[1]Åke Campbell, *Folk-Liv*. (1937), 228.
[2]Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 307.
[3]W(illiam) M(offatt), *A Description of the Western Isle*, Dublin (1724), Canto 2.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

this style as an improvement introduced by English settlers. This central-chimney house with its 'jamb-wall' hearth will be described in the following chapter. In any event, although stray hens, a pet lamb or a farrowing pig may occasionally join the cats and dogs in an Irish kitchen, the keeping of cattle in the house is a thing of the past. Yet it was so recently practised, especially along the Atlantic seaboard, that many existing houses are not far removed from kitchen-byres, a cross partition conveniently converting the byre into a bedroom, store or dairy.

Moreover the shape and internal arrangements of the prevailing pattern of traditional rural dwelling are conditioned by these antecedents. The long rectangular shape was sanctioned by custom and preserved by superstition; a house, to be 'lucky', must not be more than one room wide (Fig. 8). 'Widen the house', I have heard it said in Donegal, 'and the family will get smaller'. The hearth gable of the house was, where possible, dug into the slope of rising ground, so that it would have been difficult to enlarge the house by widening it: it could grow more easily in length. The long shape is also characteristic of humble dwellings in the small straggling Irish towns. Their streets are lined by whitewashed cabins strung end to end interminably; in the 'cabin suburbs' one rarely sees a house that is not aligned along the road. Describing Ballymoney in Co. Antrim about 1830 the Ordnance Survey Letters state that many houses facing the main street had no access to the byres and stables behind, so that cows and horses had to be taken in and out through the house. In parts of western Ireland cows were brought into single-roomed houses within living memory. In Clare Island, Co. Mayo, there were at the turn of the century only five or six houses out of the total of 120 into which the cattle and pigs were not taken at night.[1] Writing of the village of Kilgever near Westport in 1880 an observer states: 'It is a terrible thought that these huge heaps (of manure about the doorsteps) had all been taken from the single rooms, each of which formed a common stye for men, women, children, horses, cows, pigs and poultry.[2]' It is still characteristic of many small farms that the manure heap is not far from the

[1]C. R. Browne, *Clare Island and Inishturk*.
[2]J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught in the Spring of 1880* (1888), 54

342 front door, for the cows are kept in a byre which is a continuation of the dwelling house, an obvious convenience though there
362 is not, as in the longhouse of Wales and Dartmoor, direct
231 access from kitchen to feeding-walk.

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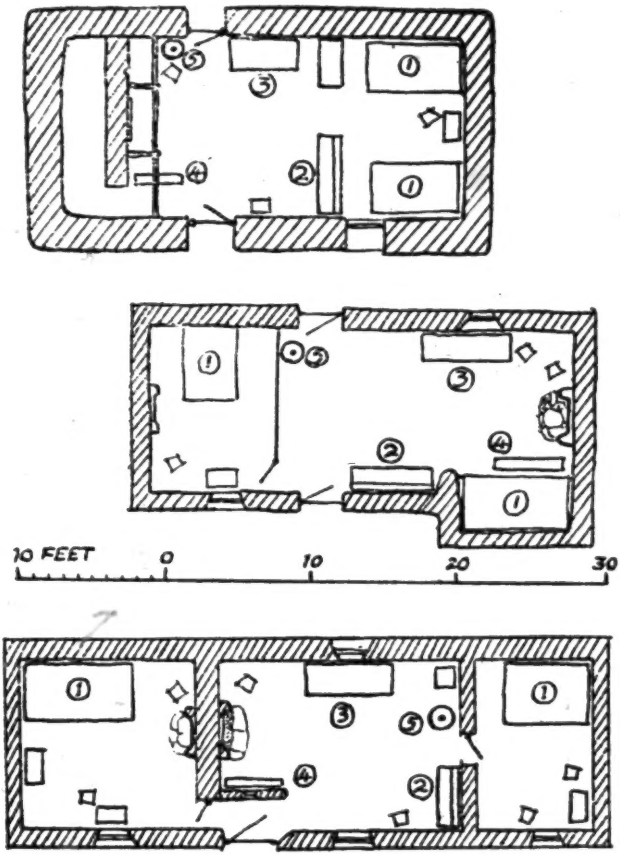

FIG. 8. House plans. *Above:* hipped-roof house, Co. Galway (compare Fig. 13, 2). *Centre:* house with outshot, Co. Donegal (compare Fig. 12, 3). *Below:* house with jamb-wall, Co. Down. (1) bed, (2) dresser, (3) table, (4) bench, (5) churn.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

THE THATCHED HOUSE

Poverty and rack-renting undoubtedly contributed to the long survival of such conditions, but they ultimately derive from cultural forces of wide distribution and high antiquity. It used to be said in defence of the custom of sharing the house with the cow that she helped to keep the house warm and that in turn the cow yielded more milk. Inquire further and you will find that it was thought to be unlucky if the cow was not able to get a glimpse of the fire. Behind this belief there lies faith in the power of the fire to dispel evil spirits. The end of the house farthest from the hearth is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-end', a relic of the time when it housed the cattle, for it was obviously wise to have the floor sloping down towards the byre. Many cabins and huts were constructed as lean-tos against a bog-face or an old fence (ditch). Hence the saying applied, for example, to the Cappagh district of Co. Armagh, that 'you can't cross a ditch or you'll fall down a chimney'. It should be recalled that in Ireland the tenants built and repaired their own houses with, normally, no assistance from the landlord, and there was little inducement to build houses to last longer than the lease of say twenty-one years. Only in Ulster under the custom of tenant right could outgoing tenants claim recompense from the new tenants for improvements made.

342 362 231 [372] [361] [539]

The simple rectangular shape is a feature of west European house-types from prehistoric times and has characterized some houses of Neolithic age excavated in Ireland. Such houses were usually built of timber, clay or sods (scraws). Circular or oval houses are of similar antiquity, whether made of stone or of wattles, but although a few round-ended rectangular houses survive, the round hut of corbelled stone slabs is used today only as a store place or animal house (Chapter IX). The houses of Achill Island are described by several writers about 1840 as circular or oval in shape, built of boulders without mortar and having the thatched roof continuous with the walls. They had neither chimneys nor windows, and the single door was sometimes not more than four feet high. None of these houses is now inhabited though their ruins can be seen. The round or oval house, however, has probably contributed to certain features of the traditional rectangular-house in some areas, for example the central hearth and the hipped roof which is proper

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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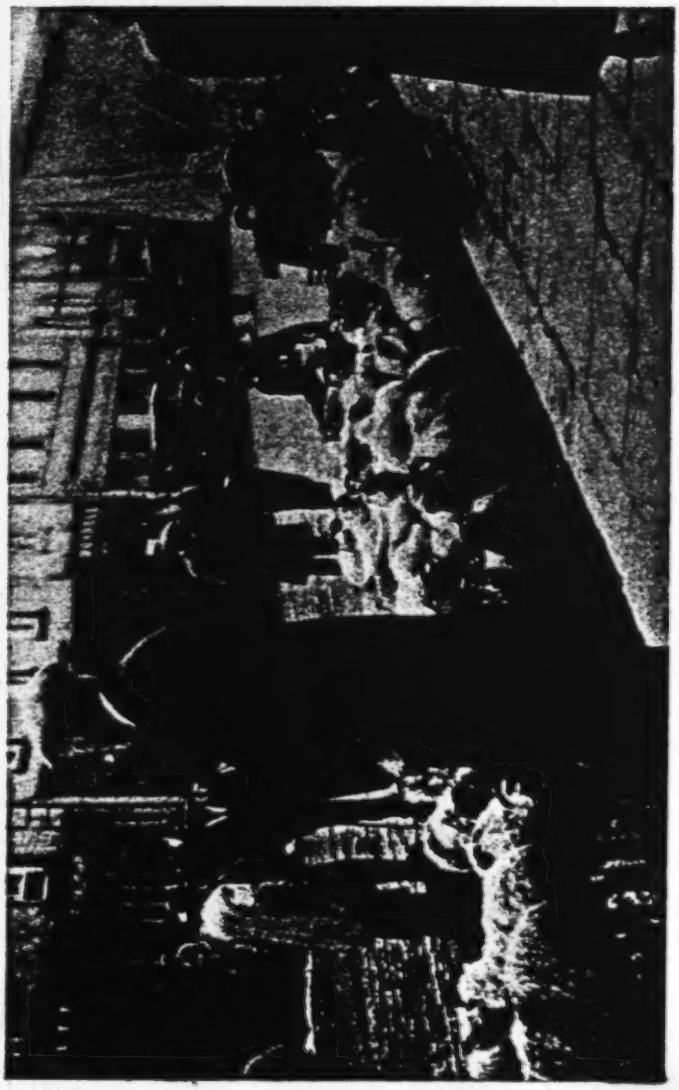

SHEEP FAIR IN A MARKET TOWN

[facing p. 300]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

town consists of streets of houses of peasant style strung end to end, picturesque with their washes of many colours, but perpetuating and even accentuating the filth which can be tolerated in a village setting of streams and fields but which becomes highly objectionable under urban conditions. On the other hand there are some spaciously-planned country towns which have an air of quiet opulence reminding one of the English heritage to which they owe their foundation. I am aware that in saying this I am ignoring the "inner flame" of the Irish towns, but it cannot be denied that externally they have much to learn from the older civic traditions of the sister isle. Dr. Arensberg has analysed the pattern of the country town and described it as "an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order." He shows that, until recent times, its economy has been that of distribution, not production. Banks and pubs and shops do most of the business and owing to the family system "Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation." If we exclude the Lough Neagh basin, all the denser areas of population are coastal and most of the country's manufacturing industries are concentrated in the ports (Fig. 108).

The Small 361 [364] [162]

To return to the fair, we have tried to show how the periodic gatherings in which they originated were associated with ritual and emotional experiences connected with the celebration of recurring events such as seed-time and harvest. Breaking the routine of toil, it is characteristic that much licence was permitted on these occasions. Until recent times a strong spirit of revelry and a temporary slackening of the moral code distinguished the great Irish fairs. Even to-day the police or civic guards make allowances for fair day and turn a blind eye to many offences against the law: it is recognized as a time of special licence. Games, dancing and faction fights were the order of the day once the buying and selling were over. Until a generation ago cruel "knuckle-dusters" (Fig. 109) were carried in readiness, and the countryman's heavy felt hat was worn as a defence against the blackthorn shillelagh.

443 786 578

[411]
Fig. 109.

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10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 of the Free State, at least, the landlord is gone and the true big farmer is rare. The town's hinterland is the world of the small farmers. And the town lives by its connection with the social order to which the countryman is attached. One need probe only a little way beneath the surface of conventionalities to learn that the connection is much more than the economics of distribution and exchange.

366 347 369 342 In the first place, the shop is also the seat of a familistic identification, very like that of land and farm. Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation. A very large proportion of her population lives by retail trade. But one must not think of these shops, so numerous in every Irish town, as great department stores, or as units in a country-wide chain. The former, of course, do exist in cities, and the latter, called multiple-shops, are a new invasion. They have little place as yet in the smaller towns. The typical shop is a less imposing affair. It supports, normally, only the family which works it.

Such a shop is most often a small two-story building. The ground floor is evenly divided between the business premises and the household kitchen. In front, a single step in from the street, a single deep room, whose width is that of the building's front, houses counter, shelves, shop-stock and money-till. The business of a lifetime goes forward in this room. In back, a flagstone-floored kitchen with an open hearth duplicates, on

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a more elaborate scale perhaps, the country farm 366 ●
house kitchen. Like its country counterpart it is the 347
seat of family life. 369
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Upstairs, a front room facing the street is transformed, by family portraits, an ornamental mantle and a piece or two of good mahogany, into a ceremonial parlour. Behind this, range the bedrooms of the family. Perhaps, in affluence and refinement there is an upstairs sitting-room as well. For the shop is no mere place of business. It is first of all a household, of which one section and one only is devoted to the world of affairs.

The family which this household houses and 443
supports, in the majority of cases, works the shop 369
in much the same way that the family of the farmer 593
works the land. It conducts its business as a united corporation in which all members may take a hand and each have his place. Husband and wife tend the counter together and between them shopkeeping is divided; sons and daughters work as shop-assistants, as long as they remain at home. Only when affluence lifts the shop to importance and dignifies the shopkeeper with the title and station of merchant, expanding his business to wholesaling, is this arrangement greatly modified.

Yet, self-sufficient as this familistic shop-world 369
is, the countryman has many a connection with it. 443
It lives its own quiet life and plies its own trade so different from the farmer's work upon the farm. Town life breeds its own sentiment and weaves its

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 527 at Ballycastle, for instance, lasted a full week and though now limited to a single day is still the great event of the year in north Antrim. August and perhaps February were closely associated with the sale of sheep, the May and November fairs with cattle. In the early 19th century the great fair of Ballinasloe in Co. Galway handled as many as 20,000 cattle and 90,000 sheep. "Their whole thought," wrote Knight of the Mayo peasantry about that time, "seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging." "A yard of linen or a couple of chickens," says Arthur Young, "will carry an unemployed hand ten miles."

443 366 It is by the fairs and not by the calendar that the countryman dates events. It may be observed that the popularity of fairs, with their emphasis on livestock, illustrates the strength of the pastoral tradition. They have been something of an obstacle to good husbandry because they occur at the changes of the seasons and thus interfere with field work, particularly with harvest. Nowadays most of the fairs are associated with urban settlements, but the name "Fair *Hill*" still clings to the streets where they are held, and many a town has its fair hill just outside. On such sites tents were formerly erected for refreshment, and there are certain old fair grounds now abandoned where you may see the grassy foundations of the huts and the fire holes where the giant cauldrons were boiled. In the ancient aireachts streets of booths were set up for the fair period, so that they might be described as temporary towns. Professor MacNeill has put forward the thesis that these were the "cities" named by Ptolemy in his description of Ireland.

369 361 This brings us to the problem of urban origins. It is perhaps true to say that the fair used to be regarded as the product of the town, but recent research supports the view that the fair precedes the town and was one factor in its rise. Apart from comparative evidence drawn from certain north African communities, for instance, anyone who has watched a small town-on fair day must get the impression that he is looking at something which has been going on throughout the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island
form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are
situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the
rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are
Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common
land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the
monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366 •
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common
land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the com-
munity. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 276
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve
the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small
enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop
are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes
purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [443]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an
aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

562 561 terms are summaries of status in farm economy, family life, and the cliques of the community.

834 208 Consequently the comment and attitude of the small farmers toward sexual behavior cannot be divorced from their appreciation of status in family and community. For them sexual behavior is merely one aspect, not of individual personality, but of sociological role. If one turns to any record of the sort of commentary and discussion the small farmers carry on among themselves, both in the semi-public discussion of the *cuaird* and in the more private talk of conversation among friends of a common age and status, one encounters a characteristic set of remarks and evaluations. These are for the most part discussions of specific persons in specific events. The attitudes expressed are directed now toward persons, now toward general conditions, now toward moral or ethical imperatives, now toward cosmological principle. Yet always, if sex is the subject, the status of the actors and the interests of the familist farm economy are the themes.

562 842 Women are valued and praised for their fecundity. All this is part of generally accepted convention among the small farmers, and such conversations as the following are not in the least unusual, despite the very great modesty and reticence of the farmers. A small farmer is praising an old woman, the head of the household, to one of the authors and contrasting her to her son's wife, both being listeners:

> Here is a woman that has no more milk of her own. They shouldn't allow a woman like that to breed because a man should always keep his wife in the milk. The old woman, God bless her, raised every child with the didi [breast].

369 831 The country-bred boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of constant reference to sex and breeding. There seems to be little of the ignorance about such matters which the townsman delights so in attributing to country people. In Ireland, no less than elsewhere in the world, the antagonism between town and country often expresses itself in such

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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joking ascription of ignorance and stupidity. In Ireland, however, there is another side of the expression of town and country distrust. The countryside points to prostitution and immorality in the towns and finds something to back up its condemnations. The town returns its dislike with double measure and accuses the countryside of primitive lack of all sensitivity of feeling or restraint of impulse. But these antagonistic attitudes and ways of regarding other groups than one's own are not our concern here. They are of interest here because such ascriptions of ignorance are part of a common misapprehension of the complexity of the peasant attitudes. 369 831

For instance, to an outsider the countrymen will seem often to give a mere lip service to the attitudes of the townsman, for one is always apt to mistake the function of hearty laughter. The country people have strict moral and ethical attitudes around the question of sex, as rigid as those of any other class if not more so. Yet they have conventional licenses and conventional niceties which do not coincide with those of the other classes and are thus open to misunderstanding. And, like all classes and peoples, they have two sets of attitudes, not one, and these are "ambivalent," to adopt the Freudian term. 369 834 208

But these attitudes and their "ambivalent" nature, the kind of alternation they seem to present, must be understood in terms of the social relationships of the countryside. The greatest single cause of misapprehension lies here. In different contexts, toward different persons, in connection with different events, one and the same person regards the same subjects quite differently.

For example, in discussions of the peccadillos of young people and the censurable events of the district the farmers and their wives were full of animus against the "crabbit" great "bucks" of lads who led girls astray and from whom the innocent were not safe. Yet even then, in discussing the fault of such amorous lads and the necessity of circum- 369 834 208 522

369 spection and immediate and frequent confession for girls as
834 their best defense, one sees that the pure young maidens are
208 also not without blame. They bear the taint of Eve. "Sure
522 the boys have no chance," said one woman in this respect, "for the girls always lay the blame on them." Yet these attitudes coexist together with other very hearty, casual, and sometimes ribald attitudes which make their appearance in banter, joke, and repartee even between speakers of different sex. These even take the form of taunts about prowess and mild ridicule for the possession of a greater relish than is meet, or fanciful recitation of past magnificent misdeeds. This is particularly true in the recitations of stories and adventures of persons in the ken of the community, where details of amorous desire and accomplishment are given with considerable gusto, and greeted and reiterated again and again amid hearty laughter.

Certain observers profess to find the puritanical outlook
369 on sexual matters on the increase in the countryside. The
834 country people themselves purport to see a change in their
208 own outlook. And it may be that the last generation has
[178] brought a considerable spread of Catholic moral standards with the spread of education and the opening of the countryside to urban influence.

In any event the laughter and hearty guffaws with which references of nearly any kind to sexual intercourse, sexual attraction, and childbearing are greeted, and the evident interest they evoke, are very much part of the everyday behavior of the small farmers. They do not imply in any sense an approval or acceptance of the deeds described. They are rather expressions of a very definite judgment. They are in the nature of a condemnation in which laughter is itself a sanction upon the forbidden.[1]

[1] The authors accept readily the view of laughter as a response to a situation where socially conditioned values are threatened with upset and yet not so deeply or irrevocably broken as to bring out a full reproval. The view is well developed by Pilkington and agrees with that of Max Eastman. The tabloid reader is not

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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The "earthiness" and the ribaldry of the country people 369
is not an antithesis to their strict moral code. Rather it 834
reinforces it. It gives its pietistic and too-respectable, 208
churchly and town-bourgeois aspects an authentic, indigenous touch. Even more important, it makes for a modification of the conventional attitudes which fit them for the country people's social life.

In this ambivalence of attitude one can see the identifications between status in human relations and norms about sexual behavior more clearly. The one view, that "holiness" denies sex, can be reserved to suit the non-procreant statuses of family life. The other, the hearty and open view embodying animal analogy, frank interest, overt desire, can be reserved for the persons whose roles in social life allow free rein to the amatory and procreative urges.

For the small farmers marriages are for the purpose of 581
producing children and assuring continuity of descent and 833
ownership. They are "forever." They are indissoluble. Sexual relations are part of marriage, its pleasure and its duty. They lead to children if one is fortunate and strong and potent. It is the will of God. One may regret that one's childbearing came so early. There might have been more time for free enjoyment. But it is a regret to which one resigns oneself easily.

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weakening his horror of murder or his distaste for adulterous behavior, however familiar his tabloid-viewing may make them. Similarly the Englishman reading his detective stories and the Frenchman listening to his *chanteuses* are merely indulging vicarious "thrills." All of them are going through a playful rehearsal of the conditioned reflexes of social sanction, indignation, rage, and punitive action in the same way a dog growls and bares his fangs at his play fighting. The idea may seem a bit ludicrous in itself, and it will offend the moralists. But let them remember that in most persons moral and ethical activity is absolutely unreasoned, spontaneous, and without any kind of intellectual support at all. It is pure reflex. Like any other reflex, it must be kept alive by a constant restimulation. Only overzealous priests, reformers, teachers, "nice people," and prudes miss this point. They fail to understand that vulgarity often hides far stricter morality than hypocritic cant. This laughter represents a constant and not unpleasurable reiteration of the accepted canons of morality upon so important a matter.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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464 try at all) is included. At the time, 1926, the census recorded 6.9 per cent of men and 3.4 per cent women as unemployed, figures to be added to make industrial totals. The percentages were very low, and by the advent of the De Valera regime in 1931 had increased considerably. However numerous they are, they do not change the industrial pic-
471 ture very much in Ireland. Small enterprises predominate, and very little of the great developments of the machine age is present. The supply and service industries are in a definite preponderance, and in that fact reflect the country's dependence upon its agriculture and agriculturalists.

463 The Census of Occupations is quite different in purpose from that of industries and industrial status and proceeds by different counts. To quote the notes:

> The difference between statistics of occupation and industries must be kept clearly in view. . . . A person's occupation is defined by the operations he performs in earning his living: grainmiller, jamboiler, tramdriver, packer, clerk. A person follows his occupation within a certain industry or service. Some occupations are peculiar to a single industry or service, . . . others are found in very many industries and services. . . .[7]

The Census of Occupations is obviously in many ways an elaboration of that of industries. The two overlap frequently. Yet they are distinct enough to give us an alternate view of Irish industrial activity of great detail. If now we examine this view for what it will tell us of the survival of rural industry, we see again that occupations other than those of farming are very few indeed in the country districts.

463 Table 5 records the occupations of the whole country
● 369 classed within industries. It lists followers of occupations living in rural districts in the left-hand column and followers of those living in urban districts in the right-hand column. Weighting the figures for all occupied persons properly between towns and country districts, we find that

[7] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. II, p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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TABLE 5

Comparison of Rural and Urban Occupations, 1926
Irish Free State [1]

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The table lists in the left-hand column, under the heading "Rural Occupation," those occupations 67 per cent or more of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. It lists in the right-hand column, under the heading "Urban Occupations," those less than 67 per cent of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. Percentage figures near 67 per cent are usually given; those greatly divergent are omitted. Industrial categories grouping occupations are listed at the head of the occupations. Figures for females of each occupation, and sometimes for males, are omitted if very small.

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
I. Agriculture and Fishing	
Farmers, male	Gardeners and nurserymen, 62%
Farmers, female	Gardeners' laborers, 62%
Sons assisting farmers	
Daughters assisting farmers	
Other relatives assisting, male	
Other relatives assisting, female	
Farm managers	
Agricultural laborers living in	
Agricultural laborers living away	
Woodmen	
Other agricultural labor	
Fishermen	
II. Mining and Quarrying	
Coal-mining	
Quarrying and other mining	
III. Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
a. Makers of Food	
Creamery workers, 80%	Employers, managers, 62%
	Bakers, pastry cooks, biscuit makers
	Sugar, sweet, jam makers
	Grain millers
	Other skilled food makers, including foremen
	Other unskilled food makers
b. Makers of Drink and Tobacco	
	Employers, managers, foremen
	Maltsters
	Other skilled workers
	Other makers of drink
	Makers of tobacco and snuff

[1] Based on Irish Free State Census, 1926, vol. II, Occupations. Categories are sometimes not exactly those of the census but are occasionally grouped together for convenience.

[p. 239]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
c. Textile Workers	
Breakers and scutchers, 89%	Employers, managers, foremen
Knitters, female, 67%	Spinners, piecers, carders, winders
	Winders, female
	Weavers, 49%
	Weavers, female, 30%
	Knitters, male
	Hand-lace workers, female, 65%
	Other skilled textile workers
	Other textile workers
d. Makers of Apparel and Textile Goods	
	Employers, managers
	Boot and shoe makers, 40%
	Cutters
	Tailors, tailors' machinists, 50%
	Dressmakers, female, 50%
	Sewers and sewing machinists, female
	Embroidering, female
	Other skilled workers
	Other workers
e. Workers in Hides, Skins, Leather, not Boots or Shoes	
	Workers in hides, skins
	Saddlers, 50%
	Other makers of leather goods
f. Workers in Wood and Furniture	
	Employers and managers
	Carpenters, 57%
	Cartwrights, wheelwrights, 28%
	Sawyers and wood machinists, 28%
	Coopers, 20%
	Basket makers
	Boat and barge builders
	Cabinetmakers
	Upholsterers, coach trimmers
	Other skilled workers
	Other workers
g. Metal Workers	
Employers, managers, 67%	Foundry workers
Smiths, 67%	Motor mechanics, 30%
	Cycle mechanics
	Mechanics
	Fitters
	Plumbers
	Tinsmiths, sheet-metal workers
	Machine-tool workers
	Boilermakers, shipwrights
	Other skilled metal workers
	Other metal workers

[p. 240]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

TABLE 5 (*continued*)

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Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
h. Electrical Workers	
	Electrical fitters and wiremen
i. Workers in Chemical Processes, Makers of Fertilizers, Soaps, Paints, and Workers in and Makers of Paper and Cardboard	
	Skilled workers
	Other workers
j. Printers, Bookbinders, Photographers	
	Employers, managers, foremen
	Compositors
	Printers
	Bookbinders
	Photographers
	Printing-machine setters and minders
	Machine assistants
	Others
k. Builders, Bricklayers, Stone and Slate Workers and Contractors	
Foremen and overlookers, 75%	Employers and managers
Masons, 75%	Bricklayers
Platelayers, 75 %	Plasterers
Contractors' laborers and navvies, 74%	Slaters, tilers
	Other skilled workers
	Builders' laborers, 25%
	Other workers
l. Painters and Decorators	
	Employers, managers, and foremen
	House, ship, general painters
	Painters of vehicles
	Other workers
m. Other Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
	Watch and clock makers and repairers
	Workers in precious metals
	Electroplate workers
	Makers of bricks and earthenware
	Makers of glass and glassware
	Brushmakers
	Other skilled workers
	Workers in gas works
IV. Transport and Communication	
a. Railway Workers	
	Station masters and railway officials, 50%
	Locomotive engine drivers
	Firemen

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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Cleaners
	Guards
	Signalmen, 58%
	Shunters, level-crossing keepers, 40%
	Ticket collectors, checkers
	Railway porters
	Other special railway occupations
	b. Road Transport Workers
	Proprietors, managers of motor car garages
	Drivers of motor vehicles, 40%
	Drivers of horse vehicles for passengers
	Drivers of horse lorries, carts, vans, 25%
	Tramdrivers
	Tram and bus conductors
	Grooms, 53%
	Other road transport workers
	c. Water Transport Workers
	Ship owners
	Harbor officials and stevedores
	Navigating and engineering officers
	Petty officers, seamen, deck hands
	Firemen, donkeymen
	Barge- and boatmen, 40%
	Dock laborers
	Other water transport workers
	d. Other Transport Workers
	Post office sorters
	Postmen, 61%
	Telegraph operators
	Telephone operators
	Telephone operators, female
	Messengers
	Porters
	Other workers
V. Commercial, Insurance, Finance	
	Cattle, sheep, pig, horse dealers, 53%
	Shopkeepers, male, 43%
	Shopkeepers, female, 39%
	Shop assistants and salesmen, male, 30%
	Shop assistants and salesmen, female, 30%
	Buyers
	Agents and factors (coal, drapery, etc.)

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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Commercial travelers
	Van salesmen and canvassers
	Hawkers of coal, vegetables, etc.
	Newspaper sellers
	Bank officials not clerks
	Insurance officials and agents
	Auctioneers and valuers
	Other commercial, insurance, finance occupations
VI. Public Administration and Defense, excluding Professional Men and Typists	
	Civil service officials and clerks
	Local authority officials and clerks
	Civic guards, 60%
	Army, commissioned officers
	Army, others
	Others in defense
VII. Professional Occupations	
Catholic clergymen, 65%	Other clergymen, 60%
Schoolteachers, male, 65%	Nuns and postulants, female, 34%
Schoolteachers, female, 67%	Christian brothers and monks
	Religious lay brothers
	Theological students, 54%
	Church officials, 50%
	Barristers
	Solicitors
	Medical doctors
	Dentists
	Veterinarians
	Midwives, female, 40%
	Sick nurses, female, 40%
	Music teachers
	Civil engineers and surveyors
	Chartered accountants
	Analytical chemists
	Professional students and articled clerks
	Journalists and authors
	Other professions
VIII. Personal Service	
Gamekeepers, 87%	Domestic servants living in, male, 60%
	Domestic servants living in, female, 58%
	Domestic servants away, male, 40%
	Domestic servants away, female, 45%
	Hotel and restaurant keepers, male and female, 25%

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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Publicans, male, 56%
	Publicans, female, 53%
	Bar attendants, male, 46%
	Bar attendants, female, 54%
	Waiters
	Laundry workers
	Hairdressers
	Caretakers
	Charwomen, office cleaners, female
	Others in personal service
IX. Clerks and Draughtsmen and All Typists, but not in Civil Service or Local Authority	
	Heads of commercial sections of business
	Clerks, 14%
	Typists, male
	Typists, female
	Clerks, female
X. Other Gainful Occupations — Entertainment	
Race horse trainers and jockeys, 78%	Proprietors, managers
	Actors
	Musicians
	Other occupations, sport, entertainment
XI. Warehouses, Stores, Packing	
	Warehousemen and storekeepers
	Packers and other warehouse assistants
XII. Other and Undefined Gainful Occupations	
	Stationary engine drivers
	Timekeepers, gatekeepers
	Watchmen
	General and unclassified laborers, 25%
	Other and unclassified occupations
XIII. Persons Twelve Years Old and Over not Gainfully Occupied	
At school, 12–18, male, 69%	Retired from active occupation, not army or navy, 57%
At school, 12–18, female, 69%	Retired from active occupation, female, 50%
	Ex-officers of army and navy not described, 39%
	Students over 18, male, 50%
	Students over 18, female, 50%

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on the basis of chance expectancy any occupational class should have about two-thirds of its members in the country districts and one-third in the towns. It follows then that any occupation two-thirds or more of whose followers are still recorded as country dwellers can safely be called a rural occupation. Any occupation whose followers are less than two-thirds country dwellers can be called urban.

In the table, therefore, occupations 67 per cent or more of whose followers are rural are listed in the left-hand column. They are called rural occupations for our purposes. Those occupations which have less than 67 per cent of their followers residing in the country districts are listed in the right-hand column. They are called, for our purposes, urban occupations. In some cases the percentage of the followers of an occupation who are country dwellers is given for reference, particularly where it is near the critical percentage, 67 per cent, but in most cases, where it is not close to 67 per cent, it is omitted.

In actual number the followers of non-agricultural occupations in the countryside are not a small army. They are 249, 930 persons, to compare with 658,800 agriculturalists of one sort or another. Of this army the largest single total is to be found among the "other producers," that is, those not listed in the recognized census industries, such as transport, communications, trade and commerce, the professions, or "personal service." There are 194,969 "other producers" in the country districts today.

A glance at the left-hand column of the table shows that there are practically no characteristically rural occupations left other than agriculture and the small occupations of fishing, coal mining, quarrying, creamery working. Breaking and scutching and hand knitting are still country occupations, but their followers are few. The rest of the textile workers are characteristically townsmen today. Tailors and shoemakers and woodworkers, even carpenters, are towns-

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men today, overwhelmingly so, though among carpenters quite a few rural ones still survive. Smiths and employers in smithing and other metals businesses, many of whom are presumably smiths employing a few hands, often their sons, are still country dwellers characteristically. Masons and foremen and overlookers of construction and building are still country dwellers, as are contractors' navvies and platelayers. Except for the smith, therefore, there are no characteristically rural artisans left outside the building trades.

Those in the building trades or in construction, in the west at least, are not highly skilled men at all, not even the masons. They are largely laborers and landless cotters who work for local authorities as stone breakers and suppliers of gravel and broken rock for road construction. They are often farmers' sons who get work off the farm whenever they find work is to be had. Yet the local mason who puts up stone houses in the countryside, and the petty contractor ready to get up a crew of local boys for any sort of building, are still characteristically rural dwellers and part of the rural scene.

In transport industries the only occupation which is even nearly rural in complexion is that of postman, for obvious reasons. The local post office is usually a small crossroads shop in the western counties. The post office workers are members of the rural communities they serve.

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In commerce, in spite of the two currents at work, no occupation is characteristically rural. Dealers in animal produce, however, come closest to it. Yet most livestock and animal produce dealers are now townsmen, often town shopkeepers as well. The country shop at a crossroad is still important but not characteristic.

Civic guards, clergymen, and schoolteachers make up the only other occupational classes in the country who still live in the rural districts and are part of rural communities.

Three other occupational classes, according to the table,

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are also characteristically rural still today. These are game- 463
keepers, race-horse trainers, and jockeys. These are, of 369
course, employees of the landed gentry who follow the cult of the horse. They are more often to be found now in the eastern midland counties than elsewhere today.

In County Clare rural occupations other than agricultural are equally rare. There the figures necessitate a slightly different definition of rural districts, since certain towns smaller than 1500 possessing local self-government are included in the town areas. But, by the same procedure as before, we can divide the proportions of total population into rural population in the county and then classify the occupations in Clare according to their rural or urban character.

In Clare, of course, there are no very large cities. The 162
county counts 5,023 males and 5,522 females in town dis- 464
tricts, and the overwhelming majority are country dwell- 369
ers as one would expect in the agricultural west. The total rural districts in 1926 numbered 45,048 male inhabitants and 39,471 female. As befits a largely agricultural area such as the county, occupations and industries show a little different distribution. The population is for males 89 per cent rural and for females 88 per cent rural. Those gainfully occupied in rural districts number for males well over two-thirds of the total population, for females only one-fifth of the total, so that for men, at least, the numbers recorded as unoccupied are negligible. The low figure for occupied females is due to the inclusion of housewives among the unoccupied. The rural-urban ratio upon which we can build expectancies of proportions of followers of occupations to be found in towns or countryside is 92 per cent for males and 84 per cent for females. As for the whole country, female occupations are found only in the towns.

The table for Clare (Table 6) repeats practically exactly 463
the same story as that for Ireland as a whole. In fact, the 369

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TABLE 6

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Comparison of Rural and Urban Occupations, 1926, County Clare[1]

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The table lists in the left-hand column, under the heading "Rural Occupations," those occupations 89 per cent or more of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population or in places having local self-government (a special case). It lists in the right-hand column, under the heading "Urban Occupations," those occupations less than 89 per cent of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. Percentages near 89 per cent are given; those greatly divergent are omitted. Industrial categories grouping occupations are listed at the head of occupations. Occupations represented in Table 5 which are not listed here have so small a following in County Clare that they are included among "Others." Figures in parentheses following occupations give the total numbers for County Clare.

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
I. Agriculture and Fishing	
Agricultural occupations, male, 99% (23,572)	Fishermen, 84% (199)
Agricultural occupations, female, 99% (5,307)	
II. Mining and Quarrying	
Mining and quarrying, 92% (21)	
III. Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
a. Makers of Food	
	Employers, managers, 60% (21)
	Bakers, 50% (82)
	Makers of foods, female, 61% (13)
	Others, 20% (80)
b. Makers of Drink and Tobacco	
	Makers of drink, 99% (12)
	Makers of tobacco (0)
c. Textile Workers	
Textile workers, male, 95% (43)	
Textile workers, female, 87% (15)	
d. Makers of Apparel and Textile Goods	
	Employers, managers, 70% (48)
	Tailors, 67% (180)
	Bootmakers, 65% (141)
	Employers and managers, female, 70% (14)
	Dressmakers, female, 71% (304)
	Milliners, female, 50% (43)
	Others, female, 50% (13)

[1] Based on Irish Free State Census, 1926, vol. II, Occupations. The Census does not divide occupations within this category between rural and urban districts for Clare. It gives merely the total for the category of occupational classifications.

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TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
e. Workers in Hides, Skins, Leather, not Boots or Shoes	
	Saddlers, 67% (45)
f. Workers in Wood and Furniture	
	Employers, managers, foremen, 71% (38)
	Carpenters, 84% (491)
	Cartwrights, 40% (27)
	Others, 60% (66)
g. Metal Workers	
	Employers, managers, 84% (56)
	Smiths, 85% (199)
	Fitters, 67% (31)
	Plumbers, 50% (11)
	Motor mechanics, 40% (91)
	Other mechanics, 80% (69)
	Others, 80% (112)
h. Electrical Workers	
	Electrical apparatus makers and fitters, 80% (87)
i. Workers in Chemical Processes, Makers of Fertilizers, Soaps, Paints, and Workers in and Makers of Paper and Cardboard	
j. Printers, Bookbinders, Photographers	
	Compositors and printers, 0% (16)
k. Builders, Bricklayers, Stone and Slate Workers, and Contractors	
Contractors' laborers and navvies, 91% (2,054)	Employers, managers, foremen, 88% (136)
	Bricklayers, 40% (5)
	Plasterers, 42% (28)
	Masons, 87% (114)
	Builders' laborers, 43% (121)
	Others, 78% (88)
l. Painters and Decorators	
	Painters and decorators, 43% (65)
m. Other Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
	Others, 50% (50)
IV. Transport and Communication	
a. Railway Workers	
	Railway officials not clerks, 84% (21)
	Locomotive engine drivers, 67% (34)
	Firemen, 33% (16)
	Porters, 60% (45)
	Others not clerks, 60% (41)

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TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
b. Road Transport Workers	
	Proprietors, managers, foremen, 50% (21)
	Motor drivers, 50% (231)
	Drivers, horse vehicles for passengers, 60% (13)
	Drivers for goods, 50% (96)
	Others, 50% (6)
c. Water Transport Workers	
	Dock laborers, 9% (54)
	Boatmen, 88% (116)
d. Other Transport Workers	
Postmen and post-office sorters, 89% (190)	Messengers, 50% (39)
	Porters, 13% (63)
	Others, 80% (5)
V. Commerce, Insurance, Finance	
	Cattle, sheep, horse, pig dealers, 65% (69)
	Shopkeepers, 62% (574)
	Shopkeepers, female, 55% (341)
	Shopkeepers' assistants and salesmen, 50% (378)
	Shop assistants, female, 54% (263)
	Commercial travelers, 40% (25)
	Van salesmen and canvassers, 50% (15)
	Insurance canvassers and agents, 50% (19)
	Others not clerks and typists, 47% (83)
	Others not clerks, female, 80% (10)
VI. Public Administration and Defense, excluding Professional Men and Typists	
	Civil service officers and clerks, 68% (102)
	Local authority officers and clerks, 59% (78)
	Civic guards, 82% (260)
	Army officers, 5% (42)
	Civil service officers and clerks, female, 86% (93)
	Local authority officers and clerks, female, 30% (15)
VII. Professional Occupations	
Catholic clergymen, 90% (120)	Other clergymen, 69% (13)
Theological students, 90% (32)	Christian brothers and monks, 35% (14)
Mental attendants, female, 91% (37)	Nuns and postulants, 50% (227)
Schoolteachers, male, 86% (200)	Solicitors, 40% (10)
Schoolteachers, female, 91% (322)	Medical doctors, 77% (46)

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TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Dentists, 13% (8)
	Civil engineers and surveyors, 79% (28)
	Other professional, 63% (90)
	Other professional, female, 75% (23)
	Mental attendants, 50% (33)
	Registered midwives, 75% (4)
	Sick nurses, female, 77% (121)
VIII. Personal Service	
	Domestic servants, male, 83% (63)
	Domestic servants living in, female, 78% (1,312)
	Domestic servants living out, female, 75% (451)
	Hotel and boarding-house keepers, male, 78% (45)
	Hotel keepers, female, 50% (157)
	Publicans, 70% (229)
	Publicans, female, 75% (145)
	Bar men, 75% (76)
	Barmaids, 76% (113)
	Waitresses, 67% (15)
	Laundry women, 60% (27)
	Charwomen, 30% (24)
	Others, female, 40% (11)
	Hairdressers, 30% (19)
	Others, 57% (57)
IX. Clerks and Draughtsmen and All Typists, but not in Civil Service or Local Authority	
	Clerks, all typists, male, 45% (153)
	Clerks, all typists, female, 57% (82)
X. Other Gainful Occupations — Entertainment	
	Entertainment and sports, male, 59% (42)
XI. Warehouses, Stores, Packing	
	Warehousemen and assistants, 75%, (23)
XII. Other and Undefined Gainful Occupations	
	Stationary engine drivers, 80% (45)
	All others, 50% (33)
	All others, female, 60% (41)
	General laborers, 48% (387)
XIII. Persons Twelve Years Old and Over not Gainfully Occupied	
Retired, 87% (637)	Ex-officers, ex-soldiers, etc., 69% (137)
At school, male, 87% (3,504)	Students over 18 not elsewhere recorded, 83% (92)
At school, female, 86% (3,482)	Not yet at work, male, 77% (281)
Others, male, 90% (1,620)	Not yet at work, female, 75% (336)
Engaged in home duties, female, 88% (17,657)	Others, female, 83% (3,602)

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463 dropping away of rural occupations other than agricultural
369 is even more marked. Yet the smith, carpenter, mason, building-contractor, employer, and foreman, and their navvies and laborers are characteristically rural producers. Only they of all the occupations and crafts survive in rural districts, with the exception of the very few textile workers. But the figures for the weavers of Clare are somewhat deceptive, since one of Clare's few industries was a tweed factory in Sixmilebridge, a town just too small to be excluded from the rural districts. Actually except for them the rural weaver is nearly entirely gone.

In Clare, as in the whole country, two professional occupations are still rural. Priests and schoolteachers are country dwellers. And theological students, characteristically "strong" farmers' sons destined for the priesthood, are rural too. That female mental hospital attendants should be
[743] characteristically rural in Clare is a statistical accident due entirely to the fact that the County Mental Hospital happens to be just outside an urban boundary.

The statistical record restates the fact that today in Ireland no less than elsewhere social differentiation on the basis of occupation and technique is an urban matter. The countryside has been relegated entirely to the agriculturalist. Only very few others occupy the countryside with him in the face of the extreme division of labor of modern industrial civilization. The Irish countryside is an extreme example of the relegation of the rural districts to agriculture. Nevertheless the statistical record shows us that a few of the rural artisans survive. It demonstrates too that a few men of professional status still serve the rural community. Even the crossroad shopkeeper is an important rural figure still, though he does not count a sufficiently large number to distinguish himself statistically as a rural occupation.

Occupational and technological differentiation is thus not entirely lacking in the country districts. Such division

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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of labor of a non-agricultural character as still persists in the country communities is very simple. Yet it is an interesting part of community life. It affords status to local artisans in the lives of the small farmers.

The families upon the separate farms are not, of course, entirely self-dependent units. We have already had occasion to examine the kind of coöperation called cooring, often based upon the extended family which flourishes in the country districts. Such reciprocal aids in ordinary farm work are only one part of the fabric of services which one meets among the country people. Another part can be distinguished. It takes account of what elementary specialization in local techniques and handicrafts exists. The man or woman skilled in some particular branch of work is called the "handy man." The handy man is an important person at the times when his or her special skill comes into use. The local reputation of such a specialist is sufficient to keep the recognition of his skill alive between periods of use and to afford him a definite status. In the country districts of Clare even full-fledged artisans, appearing in census records as full-time carpenters, smiths, and the like, sons of fathers and grandfathers who followed the same trade, are not much more than local specialists.

Many a farmer is still a jack-of-all-trades, ready if need be to turn his hand to shoeing his horse or resoling a boot or building himself a house. Only where the products of factory and foundry have become deeply entrenched in farm life, embodying skills of distant workers abroad, do local goods and services represent techniques the small farmer cannot come close to emulating. For example, the smelting of iron is a process completely unknown, and neither the local blacksmith nor the farmer can do more than rework the iron they have at hand. But the blacksmith and the farmer both can do it, though it is the blacksmith who has the greater skill. In the countryside the techniques and the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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II

Countrymen at Work

To bring you closer to the way of life we glimpsed 000 through the window of old custom, I must try to clothe it in flesh and blood. It will not do to make the mistake of etherealizing it. Men everywhere face the same first necessities; they must live; they must feed, clothe and shelter themselves.

My subject, then, is the countryman at work. How does he make his livelihood in the Irish countryside? What is the work he does, and what are his incentives and rewards? Economic interpretations of history, sociology, anthropology are the fashion. What understanding can an economic inquiry yield us?

The first task in such an inquiry is to clear away 369 the ground one is to examine. To look at the work 241 of the countryman of rural Ireland demands dipping into the economics of the whole Free State. The countryman occupies an important place which must be recognized. It should not be discouraging that the task involves recourse to cold statistics. After all, the greatest array of numbers is a mere count of some sort of human activity; one can remember the living beings behind them.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 In the search for the countryman, one can break
241 through census records and production figures to find him pursuing his daily and annual round.

The task is simplified immensely by the fact that in 1926 the Free State Government undertook a complete census of the country. In the tables prepared there, the countrymen distinguish themselves
[162] in a variety of ways. They are the most numerous group in the country. Out of nearly three million inhabitants, one million eight hundred thousand, or 63 per cent, live in rural areas, outside cities and towns. Not all these country-dwellers are farmers,
241 of course, but the vast majority are. Fifty-one per cent of all occupied persons, male and female, in southern Ireland work at agriculture.

But these agriculturalists are not all alike, of course. Distinctions appear among them which are important to an understanding of the countryman. For example, the farms on which they work differ widely in size. Relative proportions of small and large farms vary with different parts of the country, but nevertheless small farms predominate in all Ireland. A farm over 200 acres is a rarity, comparatively speaking; most of them do not reach 100 acres. Thirty or fifty acres is the average size.

When one looks at the numbers of people these farms support, however, the small holdings come forward much more strongly. There are many more persons supported upon farms under thirty acres

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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V

Shops, Pubs and Fairs

369 In many ways the town is an alien world, even a hostile one, to the countryman. He feels its scorn of his rusticity and distrusts its urbane way. Yet the town has an attraction for him no less strong in rural Ireland than elsewhere in the world. It weans away his sons and daughters. It brings him the breath of the outer world. After all, metropolis is a relative term. Metropolitan prestige is an infinite gradation in which the smallest hamlet may have a share with Megalopolis. Metropolitan prejudice is no less capable of minute division, and country towns engender little cockneys as quickly as might London produce a great one. They, too, would feel with Dr. Johnson that the fairest prospect in all Scotland was the road to London Town.

For if Megalopolis is the crossroads of the world, the country town is no less so. The difference is merely one of scale. Broadway, Piccadilly, and the Place de l'Opéra have counterparts in any country town.

361 In Ireland the parallel is more apt than one might credit at first thought. Irish towns have always been little more than crossroad centres.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the merchant-burghers who flourished in them must remain of English blood and habit. 175 361

All that, of course, has long since vanished. The Irish have occupied the towns of their own land, their blood and habit hold sway and fashion urban commerce in the towns and cities. The change has been a slow and durable growth, flowing on beneath the surface of political and cultural strife. But like all growth it has been a process of incorporation, too. Today, to a casual eye, the shops, the commerce, the social life of the Irish town is much like that of all modern western Europe.

Such is the history, briefly put, which has provided the scene that interests the social anthropologist. It is in this scene that he can inquire into the bonds this conquest has created. He can appraise through them the factors which make up the countryman's participation in the larger world. Many fields for investigation present themselves in this connection. Townsmen and countrymen are now equally part, each in his own way, of that whole we name Irish society. From his own vantage each acts toward the other and builds up a relationship with him in such a way as to determine in some degree the form of that whole. This relation, an instance of the age-old reciprocity between town and country, invites our examination. 369

In Ireland today, one can see this relation most definitely and most significantly in the ties between shopkeeper and countryman. In the west and south

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 of the Free State, at least, the landlord is gone and the true big farmer is rare. The town's hinterland is the world of the small farmers. And the town lives by its connection with the social order to which the countryman is attached. One need probe only a little way beneath the surface of conventionalities to learn that the connection is much more than the economics of distribution and exchange.

366 In the first place, the shop is also the seat of a
347 familistic identification, very like that of land and
369 farm. Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least
342 in number, than any comparable European nation. A very large proportion of her population lives by retail trade. But one must not think of these shops, so numerous in every Irish town, as great department stores, or as units in a country-wide chain. The former, of course, do exist in cities, and the latter, called multiple-shops, are a new invasion. They have little place as yet in the smaller towns. The typical shop is a less imposing affair. It supports, normally, only the family which works it.

Such a shop is most often a small two-story building. The ground floor is evenly divided between the business premises and the household kitchen. In front, a single step in from the street, a single deep room, whose width is that of the building's front, houses counter, shelves, shop-stock and money-till. The business of a lifetime goes forward in this room. In back, a flagstone-floored kitchen with an open hearth duplicates, on

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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a more elaborate scale perhaps, the country farm 366
house kitchen. Like its country counterpart it is the 347
seat of family life. 369 342

Upstairs, a front room facing the street is transformed, by family portraits, an ornamental mantle and a piece or two of good mahogany, into a ceremonial parlour. Behind this, range the bedrooms of the family. Perhaps, in affluence and refinement there is an upstairs sitting-room as well. For the shop is no mere place of business. It is first of all a household, of which one section and one only is devoted to the world of affairs.

The family which this household houses and 443
supports, in the majority of cases, works the shop 369
in much the same way that the family of the farmer 593
works the land. It conducts its business as a united corporation in which all members may take a hand and each have his place. Husband and wife tend the counter together and between them shopkeeping is divided; sons and daughters work as shop-assistants, as long as they remain at home. Only when affluence lifts the shop to importance and dignifies the shopkeeper with the title and station of merchant, expanding his business to wholesaling, is this arrangement greatly modified.

Yet, self-sufficient as this familistic shop-world 369
is, the countryman has many a connection with it. 443
It lives its own quiet life and plies its own trade so different from the farmer's work upon the farm. Town life breeds its own sentiment and weaves its

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369 443 own bonds, making of the townsmen a community of conduct, feeling and values. But, nevertheless, despite this isolating process which shuts the countryman out, he is not at all remote. The first great tie, and the obvious one, is the economic. The country-dwellers buy the shop goods which move across the townsmen's counters and bring in the moneys realized in fair and market in exchange for retail goods.

But the economic tie is not sufficient, in Irish life, for permanence. Time and assimilation have woven a full social pattern round it. The pattern is really an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order. The market town fills its role as a metropolis of native sentiment in that extension.

There is a saying in the towns of Ireland that summarizes well the movements of town life. "The country-people flock into the towns," they say, "and the townspeople all die out of them." A moment's investigation bears out the fact. Though the town, too, is a familistic world, like the countryside, it differs in that it is a world in slow movement. Generation after generation, a new family sets up shop or public-house, flourishes or fails and then passes on out of the town's life; pressed from behind by the vigour of new country blood or graduated upward economically and socially into the professions. Some families withstand the movement a long time; here and there one can point to

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a century or more of burgher succession. Others have known a more rapid change of station downward or upward in a single generation. But all of them together can feel the compelling sweep of movement which is part of town life. 369 443

Is it really the countryman's vigour that sweeps thus through the Irish towns? I know that is the usual explanation, where such a situation in town and urban life exists. Much has been written in Ireland and in all modern countries about the debilitating effect of urban and near-urban life. It is the fashion to lament the onward sweep which fills the towns and cities with fresh blood, names and faces and pushes out the old. Landmarks change out of recognition; the old families disappear mysteriously, and one can cry out that a new barbarian flood is sweeping away the life's blood of the educated urban classes.

But such a view is very blind. It is astigmatic from a too close looking upon the immediate, instant case. It neglects entirely the organization of human behaviour and sentiment, unreasoned and unplanned though it be, that makes our human societies. It confounds the force of ordered change with weakness and decay.

Nowhere would the view fail worse than in southern Ireland. The countryman who presses in upon the townsman does not drive him out through superior vigour, nor does the townsman fade away in weak decay. Each is caught in a social

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369 pattern which fashions many lifetimes and their desires, ambitions, achievements and failures. History and habit have wrought a series of pathways almost as definite as those of a termite's nest; but history and habit care little which termite follows them. Vigour, if it exists, can only be measured in the ease with which the path-follower travels along his course, and the change which his passing makes upon it.

I am sure I shall be accused of a thorough-going, even mystical determinism in human affairs. But let us follow the countryman and the towns-dweller and see wherein my heresy is justifiable and wherein we may temper it.

369 443 571 In the communities my colleagues and I came to know, the country customer who brings his trade into the shop does so in response to the ties of kinship and friendliness. He 'goes with' a shopkeeper or publican, most often, as he 'coors' with his country friends. This is not his only incentive but it is his principal one. The social order of which he is a part embraces the town-dwelling shopkeeper; trade follows friendship. Many indeed are the shops which rely almost entirely upon this 'family trade'. Others know it to be the base upon which they must build.

But, we remember, the relation of kinship and friendship is reciprocal. The shopkeeper is bound in his turn to his 'family trade'. He owes obligation to the 'country cousins' who buy from him. In

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this way, a durable bond is created which exists 369
over and above the economics of retail trade. It is 443
of the kind that the countryman understands best; 571
it charges the relationship with interest for him; it infuses it with sentiment, habit and reciprocal force. The shopkeeper, too, can rely upon it. Even though he be caught in the demands it makes upon him, he, nevertheless, can rely heavily upon its expectancies.

The ordinary modest retail shop or pub lives upon this tie. In many cases the tie infuses business with a social content which becomes co-extensive with the distributive function the shop performs in economic exchange. If the tie is weakened, if it dies, the shop weakens and dies too. And with it dies the family which derives livelihood, status and much of its corporate existence from that shop. For possession of the shop gives status and prestige and marks one's social place for the family, as much as does the 'farm of land' in the countryside. The family's 'name is on the shop' in much the same way as the country family's name is 'on the land'. In fact, almost symbolically, that name is literally [551] on the shop, for in Ireland most often a single word —the family name—rather than any announcement of the type of retail trade carried on—hangs over the door to proclaim the shop's existence to the buying public. And when the 'family trade' dies, that name dies out of the shop world with it.

Business, then, in the market-towns is no frantic

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369 search for better qualities at lower prices. It is first
443 of all a technique in social relations. It demands an
571 orientation to a social order, that of the country-man-customer. Customer and retailer are brought together, not primarily through a cheap price nor an eye-compelling package, but through personalities and through blood and marriage bonds.

In this social context, the interests of shopkeeper and farmer coincide. If the shop is to live it must renew its ties with the rural hinterland; if the farm on the land is to grow in status and strength it must ally itself in a higher and wider social sphere, and in so doing, provide well for its dispersed children. This coincidence of interest determines much of the shopkeeper's life; through it the countryman has assimilated the town to his own way of life.

The town represents that higher and wider sphere for the countryman. Its life is that of a higher station in life; it is a centre of metropolitan prestige. So the farmer can come to send his son into a shop, as he sends a daughter 'into the land' in match-making, to provide him with a better place in life, to make a gentleman of him. The shopkeeper may need a young and pliable assistant in his business. He must have one upon whose kindred he can depend for extension of his trade. He takes in the farmer's son.

In this way, the first of the social bonds that unite the shop and the pub to the rural hinterland

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is created. A pathway is created along which human 369
lives can move and play out their roles in social 443
life. One of the farmer's sons can hope, with luck 571
and affluence, to become a shop-assistant in the market-town. The portion he receives upon the dispersal of the farm family may well take the form of such a start in life. The farmer-father pays the 467
boy's apprentice bond. 443

Formal apprenticeships still flourish in Irish 369
country towns and nowhere better than in the shop 571
or pub. The country boy is bound in custom and in law to his new employer and learns the alien way of business and social habit under a master's eye. Eventually he may succeed to a shop of his own, but first he 'must serve his time'. In this, rural Ireland has preserved an older form and charged it with its own peculiar content. The town-bred lad is seldom hired; he brings no rural kindred with him. Then, too, he is neither so impressionable nor so easy to control. The country lad, at first, is both. The shopkeeper taps the social order of the countryside in the person of his fledgling 'prentice boy.

But time brings ordered change in social life, in 369
the town no less than in the countryside. The boy 443
grows up; he serves his time. He acquires the 571
experience and the technique which fit him for 166
the role for which his parents paid his apprentice bond. Unless he is to retain a subordinate and unimportant place as shop-assistant for a lifetime, he must move on. He must acquire a shop himself.

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369 And so he does, if he humanly can, and to that end
443 his savings go.

571 So much for the farmer's son. In his person, he
166 represents a rough one-half of the countryside's invasion of the town. Yet he has sisters, too, at home upon the farm. The attraction of metropolis is no less great for them; they, too, must be provided for in the dispersal of the family upon the land. And with them goes the rural social order and the ties of kinship and community.

In this fact one can see another rough half of the
369 rural tide that sweeps into the ranks of business in
443 the towns. The shop-world taps its country hinter-
571 land again in the persons of the daughters of the
584 farms. The farmer must, if he can, marry his daughter off well; prestige and alliance go with her and the dowry which she carries as her portion. The shopkeeper must renew his ties with the countryside with each new generation, if the shop is to survive. In this coincidence of interest, again, a great deal of the marriage custom of the town revolves. The world of shops and pubs is caught within the ordered mechanism of change called *match-making*, in the same way as is the 'farm of land'.

Currently in country towns, the 'match' is the accepted type of marriage for publican and shopkeeper as much as it is for the farmer. The more sophisticated and more affluent shopkeepers, those who are close, or would like to be, to the higher

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status of merchant, would repudiate the rustic word. They would tell you that they make instead 'proper marriage settlements'. But their humbler fellow-tradesmen, whose shops have not such pretensions, are closer to the soil. They would admit what is for both of them the fact.

Consequently, one can find in the town, round the shop and pub, the same reorganization of human relationships that goes forward when the country match transfers land and household command to a marrying son. But there is one great difference. In the town one must bring a country-woman in.

If one analyses the census of marriage, age and occupation in the Free State made in 1926, one can see how general this reorganization is. It lies behind the statistics of a great part of the country. Without it, one cannot explain the striking uniformity that gives a roughly similar grouping of individuals by age, by sex, by marital conditions, in all the towns, except the large cities, of southern Ireland. For instance, shop-assistants everywhere are young unmarried men and women. Entrance into the ownership of shop and public-house takes place at the same age as does entrance into married state. Though the towns show no such marked extremes as do the country districts, marriage is long delayed and bachelorhood and spinsterhood are very frequent by world standards. One need not be a demographer or statistician to be struck with the parallel, and to wonder at such coincidence between

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369 443 571 584

the lives of the followers of occupations so dissimilar as agriculture and retail commerce.

For this statistical correspondence overlies the facts of social life. It merely expresses numerically the community of custom between country and town. If one cares to probe deeper, among the lives whose events the census records, one finds the custom at the root of human behaviour and human sentiment. One lays bare the outline of the balance in which the lives of townsmen and countrymen co-mingle in a larger whole.

For setting up a shop means setting up a family; it means marriage and the bringing-in of a country girl. There are exceptions, of course; custom is only a general imperative. Nevertheless, the country match is the generality.

Most often, the shopkeeper-father turns over the shop to the son who is to succeed him when that son marries. The daughter-in-law is the daughter of a farmer of the countryside. Her people 'walk the shop' as they would 'walk the land' in a country match. Long negotiation equates the dowry they give with the shop, its stock, its debts and its prospects. The two families cast the agreement into proper legal form. The shopkeeper transfers his control and his ownership to the son and the son's wife. The other shop children are dispersed and are provided for, where possible. The older generation retires; and a new family is established in business in the town.

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This is a smooth and orderly transition. The shop keeps its identification with human ties unbroken, from parents to children. It renews them once again, outward into the rural hinterland, in the persons of kindred the young wife brings 'into the shop'. The shop's life blood is renewed: literally, in the persons of the new master and mistress; socially, in the extensions of kinship and alliance; and economically, because trade follows personal ties.

369 443 571 584

The erstwhile apprentice boy, the farmer's son, who sets up 'on his own', follows the same course and makes a comparable transition. His marriage and his setting up his own shop most often coincide. His savings and the bride's fortune make possible, together, many a start in the life of the market-towns. Money buys the shop, credit may stock its shelves, but it is the social alliance, contracted in a country marriage, which supplies the trade upon which business rests.

One might ask here if the role of the sexes is not reversible. Might not the young man marry-in into the shop, and the girl rise from assistantship to full-fledged ownership? Naturally, such a course might well be taken; a social order allows many channels. It has not the rigidity of formal law. Or the girl may inherit a shop, or receive one, in the towns, as her particular portion. For to set up a daughter in a small shop is to provide well for her and to assure her station for her lifetime; even

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369 443 571 584 though little wealth will come to her through that shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases, these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 369 443 571 582 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly universal occurrence where a society preserves some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic order. In India, for instance, it is immediately recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

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 [171]

gain a foothold in the world of shops. For that, the countryman is willing, currently, to pay about twice the usual dowry-price. 369 443 571 582

And in his willing adherence to custom, stability is achieved. The relationship between class and class, like that in the countryside between kindred and kindred, attains some permanence of form. The bride carries social bonds with her; in this case she carries them upward and townward into the shops and pubs of metropolis.

Her brother, on the other hand, carries with him another social function, in his capacity of male. His place is that of a potential fatherhood in a line of patrilineal descent. He carries on a corporate name upon the land or shop. Where he cannot inherit, in such descent, a sure place among his fellows, he must win it. The man is the bread-winner who carves out a place for his line; round him the family must be grouped. The woman, on the other hand, is the uniting force within the grouping. In this dichotomization of social role between the sexes, the Irish town and the Irish countryside, like the Church to which they both subscribe, are agreed. Hypergamy takes its form in the agreement. Along the lines laid down by the social bonds of apprenticeship and hypergamous marriage, the world of the market-town and the rural hinterland are united; along the same lines the flow of the country-people townward moves.

Once again, then, we see how complete the in-

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369 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives
443 on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he
571 be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must
582 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

This order, one must not forget, is nothing
182 esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than
369 it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire
443 among the constituent human beings, both make
571 it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern
584 into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

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to cook, sew, keep house, and she hasn't a lot of grand ideas in her head that the town girls have. When she comes to town, she feels she's got on in the world; while the town girl will only be wanting more than her husband can give her, or she won't do her share."

The speaker was a townsman, born and bred, but one can see that he endorsed the system heartily. He was an older man who had made his adaptations to social life successfully.

For others, for those whom the life of the town has caught up and who have acquired 'grand ideas', as the last speaker called them, adaptation is more difficult. The town, as I have said, engenders its own near-urban values. These come to conflict with those which unite the shop world to its countryside. Thus ambition is born, which means a severance of old ties. The ties become thwarting chains, and here and there a young man, caught within the pulls of two incompatible forces, becomes a bitter and scornful rebel.

One such young man, who found himself swept back into the ways of the market-towns after a brief flight into larger horizons in Dublin, fought against the fate that closed him in. He tells his own story: "This town is very dull. I don't understand what brings you here. The trouble with everybody here is that they are all misfits and that they are all in jobs they loathe. Successful men give you good counsel: they tell you to work hard and forget your

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182 troubles. But that is because they are in occupations
369 which they like. There is something glamorous
443 about being a solicitor, and everybody comes to
571 you. I would like to have been one. There will be
584 opportunity here when the older men clear out.

"I went off and studied in Dublin for a long while. Then my father died and my mother was stricken with paralysis and I had to come back here and work behind the counter, which I loathe. There's no one else now but my sister. Most shopkeepers make out through their family trade; and the only thing for me to do now is to marry some rich woman in from the country and then all her friends will come in. If you want to get married here there is nothing in it at all but to look out for a country girl. If you don't want to make a fool of yourself and go in for politics, you have to depend on your friends and your wife's friends, and if you can, you've got to marry a girl from the country. Then she'll bring in all her people for miles round, with all their relatives and their married families, and they're the ones that will buy your flour and sugar and tea. You can't get on without them."

182 In this rebellious young man's lament, another
369 aspect of the life of the towns appears and takes its proper place. The social order which demands the maintenance of personal bonds between countryman and townsman carries with it the seeds of change as well. The young man I have just quoted is caught within the very wheels of this change. A

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new time and place bring new adaptations in 182
human lives and with them new values which con- 369
flict with and destroy the old.

In that fact, simply lies the explanation of the movement by which the "country-people flock into the towns and the townspeople all die out of them".

The rebellious young man shows well in his own history the point at which change of habit drives the townsman and the courtryman apart. After years of near-urban life the townsman loses touch. He can no longer meet the rural ways; he is trained in a different habit; he develops a different turn of mind. He is no longer fitted socially to meet the countryman on the old terms and to respond to the demands the social bonds connecting him with the rural hinterland put upon him. If he is born in the town, a second-generation migrant, he is all the more alien. Metropolis has won his mind, his heart, his soul. New vistas of advancement and new personal ties grow up which attract him further and further into the town's life. The bonds with the countryside are broken; they fall away before a new orientation.

So the shop dies out. The family of which the shopkeeper is a part moves onward. If it is affluent and ambitious, its members rise into the professions perhaps, or seek larger worlds to conquer. If it is not, then oblivion swallows it. It seeks a new place in the ranks of the town in which the countryside

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182 has no part. New blood fills its old place along the
369 converging lines of shops and pubs which make up the market-town. The new blood succeeds by virtue of the same ties which originally brought success to the first immigrants from the countryside. It brings with it new bonds of friendship and kinship.

This is a continual movement, a flow along definite pathways in which human lives work out their courses. The country family 'on the land', as we know, buds off with each new generation upon the farm. With the dispersed children go those relationships of a familistic order which unite the human beings in time and space. In this movement ever renewed, yet ever the same, the market-town is caught. Its shops, its pubs, its business life, the whole economic function it performs, flows with this movement.

369 571 I have described this relation between the country and the town as though it had no other content than that of kinship bonds. This, of course, is a much too simple view. There are other pathways of success and there are other ties less intimate in nature. But one cannot understand these others till this first has been fully sketched out. For the bonds round kinship and friendship form the great all-pervading base to which all the others must be referred.

In this fact lies a new consideration. In retaining

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older custom and a more intense emotional and 369
purely social organization of life, Ireland may well 571
have preserved better than most nations of western civilization that unity of spirit which, underneath the surface of superficial strife, welds a nation into a single crucible. If the rationale of economic and social individualism with its attempted divorce between sentiment and logical self-interest seems lacking, the matter is no cause for lamentation or disdain. Who knows ultimately which is the better way? Each people seeks its own better union; unconsciously in social habit, consciously through religion, through politics, through detached and enlightened social thought. Either the conscious or the unconscious may be the more congenial, to nations as well as to individuals.

But danger lies in neglecting one entirely for the other. In the so-called Anglo-Saxon lands one feels that the unconscious organization of social habit has been neglected for the conscious. The logical has been too often mistaken for the ultimate. The all-powerful force of human sentiment has been neglected and too lightly regarded. We are prone to forget, with many an economist, that man not only does not, but cannot and will not, live by bread alone.

The social habit of rural Ireland entertains no such fallacy. In the light of this consideration, the rest of the adaptation of the countryman to his market-town acquires a depth of meaning which

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369 lifts it far beyond the plane of the mere economics
571 of the exchange of goods and the distribution of rural and urban products.

369 For example, a great deal has been said and
571 written about the so-called 'credit system' of rural
452 Ireland. Much indignation has been wasted pro and con upon it. The term refers to the economics of retail distribution in the market-towns. The farmer is often chronically in debt to his shopkeeper. He must live upon credit from fair to fair, paying off a little of his debt from year to year with the price his cattle bring him, but seldom working himself entirely clear. Such a system of chronic indebtedness has analogues in other countries. In Ireland, many commissions have investigated it and many attempts to break its hold have been made. The shopkeeper has been called, sometimes, alas, with cause, a usurer, a 'gombeen-man'. His power as creditor is very great. Where, as here, the farmer-debtor is dependent for his shop-bought foods and farm materials upon the shop, and where no other source of credit exists, that power is, of course, well open to abuse. This is the old problem of equity, the rights of creditor and debtor, and the controls each may put upon the other. It interests us here because in it the countryman's way of life is deeply involved. Let us see what peculiar content his social order gives it.

Any credit system exists, the economist will tell

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you, upon a peculiar state of mind in which expectancies are roughly balanced. He calls it, sometimes, 'confidence'. Should all the debts be called in and all outstanding obligations mature at a single blow, the system would perforce come to an end. If 'confidence' fails, he will tell you, and a movement to dissolve the fiscal ties grows swift and strong, a crash results. The world has had bitter experience of this fact in recent years. 369 571 452

Yet how little we know even today of that brittle and momentous thing we name 'confidence'! We have the word, but we have not yet decided to what factors it refers. Today we grope toward it in this way and that and wrangle endlessly about the means of creating and restoring it.

In the credit system of the market-towns of rural Ireland, the problem of confidence is a simpler one. Townsmen and countrymen have not yet reached the sophistication of using the word; but they are immediately concerned with the factors to which it refers in their special case. Those factors lie immediately before them, in the social habit which they both follow.

Thus, once the shop has established trade in the creation of the bonds uniting it to the countryside: through the 'family trade' of brothers, fathers, cousins, country wives and country 'prentice boys, that trade must be retained.

The shop must have a permanent expectancy of clientele; the farmer a permanent expectancy of

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369 571 452 receiving goods and shop articles necessary in the economy by which the farm family lives. The farmer cannot shop about, paying cash; his monetary income comes only periodically: largely in the spring and autumn fairs, to a lesser extent in weekly produce markets. Nor can the shopkeeper depend upon the casual passers-by, for their number is infinitely small. The needs of countryside and town are thus coincident.

In the countryside, I must repeat it once again, kinship and friendship, practically synonymous, provide the base for this coincidence. They make the same provision for the life of the town. They are reciprocal in nature; a favour given is a favour received. A good turn done, the 'friendly thing', creates the expectancy of reciprocity. On such a base a social relationship, reciprocal and permanent, is built.

So the permanence that each party demands is the permanence of social obligation. The credit system of the market-towns rests upon this base. In such a situation, the debt the farmer owes, like the fortune he gives in marriage, is a tangible monetary symbol of alliance and mutual obligation. To owe money is not merely to accept a convenience, for either townsman or countryman. To owe money is to accept a social obligation.

One can call this disposition the 'confidence' upon which the credit system of rural Ireland rests. Naturally, the relationship is not perfectly sym-

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metrical. The shopkeeper, as creditor, has the 369
whip-hand. As an urbanite, he has the superior 571
status. Yet he is no less under obligation to his 452
debtor.

Habit and sentiment weave amusing identifica- 369
tions round this social pattern. For example, to pay 571
off a debt entirely is perforce to dissolve the rela- 452
tionship. It is to destroy the mutuality of expecta- 626
tions. If one's debt is paid off one loses, not only a 578
customer, but a friend, quite literally. The ordinary small farmer would pay off all his debt only in a fit of anger. By so doing he would mean to break the tie completely and irrevocably. Consequently, he remains upon the shopkeeper's books indefinitely, paying off periodically bit by bit, but never working himself entirely clear. Should he do so, the shopkeeper would be fully warned. He would know his customer was about to carry his trade elsewhere, and to enter a new tie better suited to his desires.

But the shopkeeper is obligated, too, in his turn. He may not dun his customer heedlessly. To do so is to cast doubt upon the customer's ability or willingness, not to pay a money debt but to meet his obligation. It is in fact to call into question the social status which is his. If the shopkeeper errs in this nice tact, the debt is paid forthwith perhaps, but the relationship is broken.

Nor can he press even a just claim too far. He may often have to carry credit endlessly, in hope of better days. This is part of his obligation, and

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369 boycott awaits the offender or the usurper. To
571 carry the claim to court is of no avail; one cannot
452 these days foreclose on land in rural Ireland. Per-
626 haps eventually he might win the farmer's holding
578 from him, in satisfaction of his claim. But one must remember the farmer's 'name is on the land'. A whole kindred and the whole community with which the kindred is related become his bitter and dangerous enemies. In a familistic world that enmity endures for life and longer, even into the next generation.

If even then, in spite of this, the shopkeeper persists and grinds his debtor down, still another sanction closes in upon him. The countryman will make his last resort to age-old folk-belief. He will tell you, for instance, that the shopkeeper or publican dies out because the curses of men and women and the tears and prayers of broken families have wreaked a sure retribution. What better way indeed to express, in traditional mystical and quasi-religious terms, the force of social censure? The countryside can bring its whole traditional scheme of attitudes to bear upon the offender; it can justify the forces of social and personal action in the realm of the awesome mysteries of belief before which all must bow.

369 Thus one can see why, in folk-belief, money it-
571 self is evil. It is one of those mysterious powers
452 which can bring, as though of its own awful and
626 incomprehensible efficacy, both good and evil in its

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

train. The finder of the 'crock of gold' is stricken 369 ●
down in the flush of discovery; the townsman who 571
rises too high and waxes too arrogant in his wealth 452
may soon be stricken, too, and his family and its 626
shop or public-house seems mysteriously to melt away.

Nor is this the only instance in which the social order overlies the economic form of debt and shapes it to its purposes. The debt, like the dowry, can and does become a measure of status, too. It is a sign of one's ability to support that network of social obligation which gives one's self and one's family a place in social life. In this fact, too, lies 'confidence'. The debt descends with the land or the shop from father to son. It moves onward with the progression of the generations. Many a small farmer pays off bit by bit the family debt of a parent or relative. Social obligation, in which pride and sentiment are involved, long outlives the statute of limitations. In this disposition, religion, sentiment and custom coincide. Many a shopkeeper till [167]
recently has assisted a boy or girl to emigrate, in the sure knowledge that his or her remittances would eventually reach his money-till.

In the days of the British, a Royal Commission found itself mystified by this so-called 'honesty'. The debt to the landlord, in the form of rent, seemed to them an honest debt. Yet the countryman, often as not, scorned honesty in that direction; though he might bend his last efforts in what

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
452
626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
668 public life who has contributed so much to humour
443 and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

INTRODUCTION.

The cleavage between town and country has grown steadily sharper in Britain since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, and has recently been emphasised by the partial failure of evacuation schemes. As a result, closer attention is being given to the problems of the countryside, and, reflecting this interest, stories of Farmer Giles have given way to a flood of books recording the details of his daily and seasonal tools and tasks. 369

Outside the capital cities of Dublin and Belfast the cleavage between town and country has not gone very deep in Ireland; and even in Belfast business men and doctors are rarely more than a generation or two "off the land." In Eire 63% of the population is "rural dwelling," that is living outside "towns" with over 200 inhabitants. The corresponding figure for Britain would be well below 20%. Even in Northern Ireland, despite its great manufacturing industries, farming remains the most important industry, and 50% of the population lives in rural areas. Yet the younger people, at least, are often ignorant of the affairs of the countryside, and what is worse find no interest in them. I was recently approached in Co. Antrim by evacuated boys in their teens who wanted to know if a bunch of acorns they carried were hazel nuts!

This book does not pretend to be more than an introduction to a vast subject of inexhaustible interest, and I am fully conscious of the risks involved in venturing into an unexplored field and attempting to summarise its varied 121

[p. 1]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 527 at Ballycastle, for instance, lasted a full week and though now limited to a single day is still the great event of the year in north Antrim. August and perhaps February were closely associated with the sale of sheep, the May and November fairs with cattle. In the early 19th century the great fair of Ballinasloe in Co. Galway handled as many as 20,000 cattle and 90,000 sheep. "Their whole thought," wrote Knight of the Mayo peasantry about that time, "seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging." "A yard of linen or a couple of chickens," says Arthur Young, "will carry an unemployed hand ten miles."

443 366 It is by the fairs and not by the calendar that the countryman dates events. It may be observed that the popularity of fairs, with their emphasis on livestock, illustrates the strength of the pastoral tradition. They have been something of an obstacle to good husbandry because they occur at the changes of the seasons and thus interfere with field work, particularly with harvest. Nowadays most of the fairs are associated with urban settlements, but the name "Fair *Hill*" still clings to the streets where they are held, and many a town has its fair hill just outside. On such sites tents were formerly erected for refreshment, and there are certain old fair grounds now abandoned where you may see the grassy foundations of the huts and the fire holes where the giant cauldrons were boiled. In the ancient aireachts streets of booths were set up for the fair period, so that they might be described as temporary towns. Professor MacNeill has put forward the thesis that these were the "cities" named by Ptolemy in his description of Ireland.

369 361 This brings us to the problem of urban origins. It is perhaps true to say that the fair used to be regarded as the product of the town, but recent research supports the view that the fair precedes the town and was one factor in its rise. Apart from comparative evidence drawn from certain north African communities, for instance, anyone who has watched a small town on fair day must get the impression that he is looking at something which has been going on throughout the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ages. He sees the country taking complete possession of the town, blocking its streets, ignoring its traffic: he is in the presence of a force older and more fundamental than the town which has given it hospitality (Fig. 110).

When we inquire into the origins and antiquity of the Irish towns we find that very few go back to pre-Norman times, while it is abundantly clear that periodic gatherings in "temporary towns" are far older. The pre-Christian fortress-palaces such as Tara and Navan did not survive into historic times, and as a rule the church in Celtic lands had no civic interests, though many a confiscated monastic site was revived as the nucleus of a town when occupied by English troops in the 16th century. Some coastal cities such as Dublin and Waterford were founded by Norsemen, but most of the inland towns grew up as castle-market-towns during the Anglo-Norman period or in the plantations of the 16th and 17th centuries. To-day the five chief seaports, none of them strictly "native," contain one quarter of the total population: very few inland towns have more than 10,000 people, and only one of these is outside the industrial Six Counties. Most of the fair centres have a population of from 500 to 5,000: there are 187 towns of this size in Eire. There are 202 "towns" with from 200 to 500 inhabitants and only 25 with more than 5,000 (Fig. 107).

It is to these small towns, scattered at convenient intervals of 10 or 15 miles up and down the country, that the fairs have been attracted, the centre of authority and administration becoming the centre of exchange. Although most of the settlements are of "foreign" origin, they have become thoroughly Irish. The family system and blood-ties link up town and country, and trade follows the personal bond of "friendship," that is, blood relationship, however remote. Over shops and inns it is family names one sees painted up: O'Flynn and Flanagan take the place of the English "General Stores" and "Red Lion." Since the countryman's money comes only at the periodic fairs, he relies on the shopkeeper's credit, and the debt must never be entirely paid off, for that

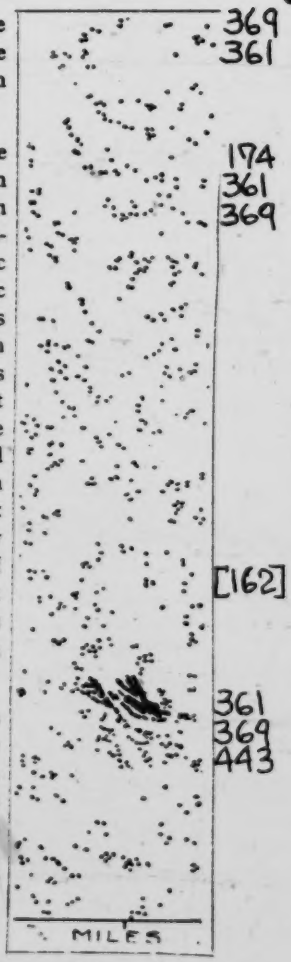

Fig. 107.
A market town with scattered country population. Each dot represents a building.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 would "spoil" social relations. Even in the larger towns the
[369] shopkeeper is reluctant to have his bills completely settled by
[443] his customers. These personal ties readily give rise to cliques and municipal corruption: it must be admitted that the

[162]

Fig. 108.

corporate spirit is poorly developed. Similarly the Irish country town is generally lacking in any native traditions of
[344] civic architecture, and even the splendid buildings of Dublin and Galway together with the distinctive court-houses of smaller towns owe much to outside influence. The small

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the "landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and whatever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over. 221 241 314

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to allow turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round. 221 372 [805]

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabáiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June. 221 241 262

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up. 221 241

The first true harvest and the most important one of the year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is 246 221

137 counties, none of which has any settlement of 5,000 people. Irish peat, or turf as it is properly called, covers an area of some 3 million acres and has an average depth, in the central plain, of 19 feet. Shallower deposits are very extensive in the mountains, particularly along the western seaboard from Kerry round to Inishowen. Apart from their economic [372] importance—it is estimated that they form the sole fuel supply of two-thirds of the farming population (see Chapter 15)—the peats are of great interest to scientists, and during recent years an intensive investigation, under Danish leadership, has solved many problems concerning their origin and growth.

While bogs accumulate most readily in imperfectly drained lowlands, the heavy precipitation of the mountains is the main factor in their wide distribution. The south coast, with its excellent drainage, and the dry east coast, with the exception of the Wicklows, are largely peat-free. So are many areas of limestone which, with its cracks and joints, swallows the heaviest rains. And the eskers, though they may pond the drainage and thus cause water-logging and bog formation, are themselves free of peat. Regions favourable for human settlement are thus closely related to the distribution of peat, but the control is not merely negative since access to supplies of turf is often an important consideration.

For the scientist the value of turf-bogs lies in the fact that they preserve not only wood, twigs and the seeds and fruits of plants but even the minute grains of pollen, so that as they accumulate they write their own record, a record which the pollen-analyst can read. Moreover the phases of vegetation and climate thus chronicled can be correlated with the story of Irishmen who, careless or forgetful, have left behind at different levels objects of stone, metal or wood which the archæologist can use as clues in his detective work. In this way a sequence of climate, vegetation and human industries has been worked out, and we now have an outline of the whole story from the time when the first layers of lake clay were laid down in hollows of the surface while the ice still lingered in the mountain corries: they contain remains of arctic willow and the bones of the giant deer.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 bee-hive were common in some districts, but in parts of Mayo one rarely sees chairs of any kind. Step or ladder backed chairs with rush or straw seats are widespread: in the north-east chairs with wooden seats and upright-barred backs are [372] perhaps more usual. The turf fire is never allowed to go out: the glowing turves are heaped with ash at night and can be readily blown into a flame in the morning.

342 If the house has kept its brace and wattled chimney we shall be sitting under a canopy which tapers upwards to the smoke hole. The brace is a great beam extending from wall to wall, or resting at one end on a post some 5 feet out from the end-wall: between post and wall there may be a side partition or curtain-wall (Fig. 27) known in the Armagh-Meath area as the jamb-wall or the "hollan."[1] In some districts the front door is placed opposite this wall, but not, I fancy, in really old houses. In that case there may be a small window—the "spy-hole" "entry," or "jamb-window"—in the partition, allowing the sitter at the fireside to keep an eye on the open door. I have seen several houses in Co. Armagh where one has to stoop under the projecting brace to enter the house (Fig. 27). A further development is to hang a door on the brace-post, thus making a kind of internal porch or small hall. The jamb-wall is found from Co. Down to Co. Limerick but I have not seen it in the north-western province of the outshot.

342 The canopy is constructed of wattles or of sugán, plastered
352 with mud and cow-dung and white-washed outside. Canvas or boards are recent substitutes. At the sides of the chimney, above the ends of the brace, are small lofts or storeplaces, and there may be a larger "half-loft" over the other end of the kitchen—a relic of the time when corn and hay were kept here for feeding the animals below. A usual feature, under the stone seat to one side of the fire, is the ash or rubbish pit, another survival from far prehistory; and balancing it on the other side of the fire there may be a warm stone recess for the sitting hen. At the back of the fire is a thick flag—the [23] backstone—or a mass of clay forming the hob, but this is carefully built up of stones or bricks in eastern and southern

[1] This word is also used in N. England and Scotland for the curtain-wall. In Lancashire it is termed the "speer."

[Text continues top of p. 70 -- Analyst]

CHAPTER XV.

THE BOG.

3|4 I have called this chapter " the Bog " rather than " Turf " because fuel is not the only product of the Irish turf bogs. The rough grazings once so important in mountain economy (Chapter 6) are commonly located on thin peat, while " buried treasure " is obtained in the form of bog-timber and also, it may be, in objects of wood or metal lost or deposited in the turf in ancient times. Measured by the time and labour of cutting, footing, stacking, and carrying, turf is an expensive fuel. At best, work in the bogs involves a constant struggle against water-logging underfoot and mists and rain overhead: at the worst there comes an occasional season wetter than usual when little or no turf can be won, and the bare countryside must be searched for sticks and rotting timber to burn. [237] In these circumstances dried cowdung is often used as fuel. [372] Moreover, the heavy drain upon all available hands comes in early summer, and the growing crops and livestock are liable to be neglected. " A great impediment to good husbandry," is the verdict of one writer.

The turf is cut in a normal year from the beginning of May onwards, or as soon as the potatoes and corn are in the ground, but the great thing is to begin as early as possible in [132] order to profit from the dry weather of spring. In districts where few crops are grown April, the driest month of the year, is the chosen time. A current of excitement runs through

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

planting his first potatoes on that day, when St. Patrick 796
"turned the warm side of the stone uppermost." In the 221
Antrim Glens the hay meadows are closed on St. Patrick's Day, and under the rundale system the animals which had run through the townland from Hallowe'en were now carefully herded or driven to the rough grazing grounds so that they could not trespass on the unfenced cropland. A little later come the many memories of seed-time ritual and the spring sacrifice now represented in Easter egg-rolling games.

The May festival ranked next in importance to that of November: these are the major turning points of the year, where Nature decks herself in fresh green or in "rich Autumn's golden quittance." On the first days of these months the cattle were numbered, and it is a commonplace that these are still the rent or "gale days" in Ireland. On May Day the young crops were visited with torches and the cattle blessed before being driven to the mountain booleys, and hill-top fires played a large part in the rites. These Beltane fires were originally [372] need-fires, that is they were produced by the friction of two pieces of wood. All hearth fires were extinguished on May Eve, and re-lit from the sacred fire. It is still a common [177] superstition that it is unlucky to give away fire, even as light for a pipe, on May Day, for that would be to give away your luck for the year. In Donegal it is considered unlucky to be the first house to show smoke on May morn: the cattle are milked and the byres cleaned before the fire is made up. The Beltane ritual included the eating of oatcakes "which must not touch iron," and dancing three times clockwise round the fire. Many volumes could be written on the customs and superstitions connected with this festival, touching fire and food, salt and butter, the rowan and the flowers of the field, especially the marsh-marigold or May-flower. The city urchins have turned the celebrations into a prolonged parading of May Queens and collecting of pennies. See Chapter 19.

It is probable that fires continue to be lit on May eve in 372
some parts. Certainly the mid-Summer festival which 221
follows on St. John's Eve (June 23rd) still keeps its hold, for 796
then fires will be seen blazing on hilltops in almost every Irish

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

372 county. Originally they were intended, it is thought, to keep
796 the sun, now about to decline, on its course, but they also
221 played a part in the blessing of crops and animals. In Donegal until lately a burning turf was flung into each patch of growing corn. These and the other relics recorded are of course, not peculiar to Ireland: they are part of the common heritage of the ancient civilization of Eurasia. There is evidence that this festival was important also in fishing communities. The inhabitants of the Galway Claddagh, for instance, marched through the town in procession on St. John's Eve, "gaily dressed and miming, to the accompaniment of music; they collected money for merrymaking from the townspeople, and spent the evening dancing, drinking, and lighting bonfires in their own quarters."

796 The Lammas festival is nowadays particularly associated
221 with fairs, and the first of August, is referred to in Gaelic as "Lewy's Fair." But other traces of old custom survive. My colleague Dr. O'Brien tells me that in mid-Down, on the first Sunday in August, crowds of countryfolk assemble, accompanied by fiddlers, at the great prehistoric hill-top cairn on Slieve Croob. The "Criocan Thorn," in the heart of Slieve Bloom, is the scene of similar assemblies on the last Sunday in July. Here they dance to the pipes, and bilberries are eaten: the day is called "Fraochán (bilberry) Sunday."

So the year goes on its course to the culminating festival of All Hallows. We have touched on one of its former functions, the reunion of the family after the summer booleying, in Chapter 6. It is an occasion of reunion still: all Irish
[574] folk like to be at home on this date, which is in some ways the most significant of the year, for it corresponds with what was once the New Year. Fires were lighted to mark the end of the
[372] period of growth and to herald the new year. (In England the ceremonies have become assimilated to the Guy Fawkes celebrations on November 5th). As at Beltane, the Halloween fire used long ago to supply light to rekindle the domestic fire, which now serves as a substitute in the many games of divination played by the young at this time. Hazel-nuts, apples and other fruits of the autumn take an important place

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

241 sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone
[423] walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.

[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be to some extent neglected. A family keeps a couple of pigs, some
[231] sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on
[237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de vâche*) are used as fuel.

373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon. *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

372 The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive, except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
[435] and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

775 bank by the roadside; after a time it rises, walks across the road to the mound, and then vanishes.

The ghost of Major —— is reported to be sometimes seen riding a phantom horse at a spot near Carn, and circles on the grass are pointed out as marking the scene of his equestrian feats; he is also said to ride at times to Bingham Castle.

776 There is a strong belief in fairies, and many people are to be found who say that they have seen them. They are said to dance at night and cause fairy rings; they dwell in grassy mounds and travel from place to place, using stems of the ragweed as horses.

The mirage which is sometimes seen off the coast is ascribed to [822] the fairies if it assumes the appearance of boats or ships; they are believed to have been seen to land on the shore, haul up their boats, and vanish. Many stories are told respecting the impudent pranks of these beings, and to their revenge for some injury, disease in man and cattle is sometimes ascribed. A man may become paralysed or waste away and die from fairy influence as well as from the evil eye, but their malice may have a less serious ending, and may only produce some disfigurement. Some time ago a man was one day walking homewards, when he saw lying on the road a bright new razor; he picked it up and took it home with him, but after shaving [828] with it got *sycosis menti*, and the implement was then declared to be a "fairy razor."

Women dying in puerperal fever are believed to have been taken [775] by the fairies to act as wet-nurses, and infants may be "taken away," and changelings put in their places. The changeling may be got rid of by putting on a roaring fire and throwing him behind it, when he [372] at once vanishes in the smoke. The *ignus fatuus* is believed to be caused by the fairies to lead people astray.

The attentions of these creatures are not expended on human beings alone, for they may revenge themselves on those who vex them by attacking domestic animals. Cattle becoming ill suddenly are supposed to be "shot" by the fairies, and the owners will often go to a great deal of trouble to find a person who possess a "fairy [823] stone," which is the only remedy. These stones are treasured very carefully and are kept wrapped up in a piece of cloth; they are used by rubbing them on the afflicted animal, and repeating a charm or prayer. Unfortunately no specimen of these stones was seen, so it cannot be stated positively whether they are flint arrow-heads or not.

A farm-house at a place called Illaunglass, in the Mullet, has a tale connected with it, illustrating the causing of disease in cattle by

13: Evans ER6 Rural Irish ER6
135, 317, 372

[For information on peat deposits and their exploitation as a source of fuel, see category 314.]

THE THATCHED HOUSE

Poverty and rack-renting undoubtedly contributed to the long survival of such conditions, but they ultimately derive from cultural forces of wide distribution and high antiquity. It used to be said in defence of the custom of sharing the house with the cow that she helped to keep the house warm and that in turn the cow yielded more milk. Inquire further and you will find that it was thought to be unlucky if the cow was not able to get a glimpse of the fire. Behind this belief there lies faith in the power of the fire to dispel evil spirits. The end of the house farthest from the hearth is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-end', a relic of the time when it housed the cattle, for it was obviously wise to have the floor sloping down towards the byre. Many cabins and huts were constructed as lean-tos against a bog-face or an old fence (ditch). Hence the saying applied, for example, to the Cappagh district of Co. Armagh, that 'you can't cross a ditch or you'll fall down a chimney'. It should be recalled that in Ireland the tenants built and repaired their own houses with, normally, no assistance from the landlord, and there was little inducement to build houses to last longer than the lease of say twenty-one years. Only in Ulster under the custom of tenant right could outgoing tenants claim recompense from the new tenants for improvements made.

The simple rectangular shape is a feature of west European house-types from prehistoric times and has characterized some houses of Neolithic age excavated in Ireland. Such houses were usually built of timber, clay or sods (scraws). Circular or oval houses are of similar antiquity, whether made of stone or of wattles, but although a few round-ended rectangular houses survive, the round hut of corbelled stone slabs is used today only as a store place or animal house (Chapter IX). The houses of Achill Island are described by several writers about 1840 as circular or oval in shape, built of boulders without mortar and having the thatched roof continuous with the walls. They had neither chimneys nor windows, and the single door was sometimes not more than four feet high. None of these houses is now inhabited though their ruins can be seen. The round or oval house, however, has probably contributed to certain features of the traditional rectangular-house in some areas, for example the central hearth and the hipped roof which is proper

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V

HEARTH AND HOME

THE kitchen and the hearth are the very core of the Irish house, and the turf fire burning continuously day and night, throughout the year, is the symbol both of family continuity and of hospitality towards the stranger. When it goes out, it has been said, the soul goes out of the people of the house. The fire serves not only to prepare food and dry clothes, to bring warmth and comfort to the family and to ailing animals, but also to keep the thatch dry and preserve the roof timbers, so that 'when the smoke dies out of a house, it does soon be falling down'. This is one reason for the persistence of single-storey houses open to the roof, where the turf smoke could circulate among the rafters and keep the scraws and under-thatch dry. A 'smoke', in the seventeenth century inventories and to this day among country folk, means a house. In the days before chimneys were adopted the cabins were described as oozing smoke through the thatch so that they resembled 'reeking dunghills'. It should be remembered that the brick or stone chimney flue is a relative newcomer and, as we are constantly being reminded in these days of fuel shortage, a great waster of heat. The chimneyless open fire was much more effective as a house-warmer. The turf smoke, it is true, despite the draught-regulating mechanism of the double doors, must often have been troublesome, but as we shall see the furniture was designed to keep heads low.

Dry peat burns too quickly if the draught is strong, and the fire does best at floor level, glowing on a great stone slab or on a cobbled hearth set in the mud floor. The area immediately around the fire is also paved, but the rest of the old-style

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354 washed jambs of a stone chimney (Fig. 19) the simple wrought-iron crane has the simple beauty of fitness to purpose which most hand-made things possess. The smith rarely attempted the decorative scrolls which were more suited to light objects such as oatcake toasters. From the cranes must hang the mighty iron pots, some with a capacity of 25 gallons, to hold food for man and beast. One hears of examples which were [406] literally 'cranes', fitted with a windlass and chain to lift pots on and off the fire. Such capacious vessels could not have come into use had the fire not been at floor level.

The adjustable pot-hanger which hooks on to the arm of the crane is a simple but effective device for adjusting the height of the hanging pot (Fig. 20). Like so many of the culture-elements we are describing in this book, it apparently belongs to the Atlantic fringes of Europe. While it could be a medieval or later introduction to Ireland, research may show that it is a Celtic trait (fire-irons are a ritual feature of early Celtic cultures) which has found its last refuge in the open hearths of the west. The crane and other fire-irons and the very soot that [372] clings to them have been regarded with superstitious reverence by virtue of their association with fire. Soot carried in the pocket, [484] for example, gave protection on a journey. More ancient in origin than the crane is the hanging chain suspended from a crook-stick and terminating in a movable pot-hook (crook). From existing examples one could work out a plausible evolutionary sequence of hangings from the roof-suspension which can still be seen in the black-houses of the Hebrides. The sequence begins with a wooden peg stuck high in the back wall of the fire, giving way to a transverse bar set parallel to the wall in the smoke canopy, which might in turn become the arm of the crane. These crook-sticks are said to have been made of holly. The long chain of the first example certainly gives more 'play' than the short suspension from a chimney bar, but the peg is more inaccessible and this supports the contention that it is a survival of the long hanging from the roof-timbers over a chimneyless central hearth.

Pots and pans and other hearth-gear we shall discuss in the next chapter, but here we should notice some further architectural fittings of the partitioned fireside. On one side of the

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quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional 352
width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed—the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the [171] Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart 462
and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to 372
the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' [534] The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire [574] that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can [787] give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which ancestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1] [769]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

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of water. I was told on Rathlin Island that eligible girls would take a sweating bath to clear their complexions before the annual visit to the Lammas Fair at Ballycastle on the mainland. They were in demand also during kelp-burning operations—a notoriously filthy occupation. Not all sweat-houses were built of stone. Wood-Martin quotes accounts of some which were dug into an earth bank and 'finished with sods', while others were excavated in turf banks.[1] He also records that water was sometimes poured on stones inside the sweat-house, 'thus converting it into a vapour- as well as a sweat-bath'.[2]

More intimately linked with the house is the turf-shelter, the Irish equivalent of the English coal-shed. In the drier eastern part of the country a built shelter is not necessary, and the peats, skilfully built into a huge turf-stack protected from the driving rains by a wall or gable, perhaps improve by exposure to the winds, but in the wetter west unless the turf is under cover it must be dried in small quantities in the loft or by the fire before burning. In parts of Kerry the turf is stored in large clochauns: elsewhere narrow oblong or oval stone enclosures are erected, their walls loosely built to allow the wind to blow through. The peat-store or cleit of St. Kilda was similar—an oblong corbelled stone building with open joints.

The well is another essential item of equipment of farm or clachan, and it is often provided with a corbelled stone cover. Since springs are abundant, except in bare limestone country, the wells are not deep and few are fitted with windlasses. In their absence quite elaborate ramps with stone steps are sometimes needed to obtain access to the water, and the whole structure being roofed, some examples (for instance in the south-east of Co. Down) are considerable architectural feats (Fig. 40). In the limestone districts the woman of the house may have to walk as much as half a mile to carry drinking water from a dip-well. It is now carried in buckets but was formerly transported in stave-built piggins balanced on the head. The peasant makes a virtue of necessity by asserting that almost every spring well yields 'the finest water in all Ireland, and never runs dry'. Wells are regarded as chancy things, not to be

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, II (1902), 166.
[2]Ibid., 165.

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XIV

TURF AND SLANE

IT should perhaps be explained that this chapter has nothing to do with horses, for the word *turf* in Ireland keeps its old meaning—as in German *torf* and French *tourbe*—and is the equivalent of the English word *peat*. Only in the extreme north-east of the country, in districts settled by Scots planters, does one hear turves cut from the bog referred to as peats. The cutting-spade, a highly specialized tool, is known as a turf-spade or sleán, a Gaelic word which may be anglicized as slane. 314

Moving about the Irish countryside one is never long out of sight or scent of turf. The scent arises not from the bogs themselves, which for all their accumulated decay are free of the odours of putrifaction, but from the surprisingly sweet smell of burning turf which announces their proximity. For the returning exile nothing so surely tugs at the trigger of memory: the faintest whiff of turf smoke hanging in the damp air is enough to recall the whole scene, the glowing fire on the hearth, the half-light of the kitchen, the great turf stack at the gable and all the toil that went to its making. And in the background is the bog itself, save at the cutting season a quiet empty place, holding a stillness which deepens when the curlew's cry fades away or the startled pipit drops back into the heather. Green and gold in spring, it beckons with waving bog-cotton in summer and glows with reds and russets as of a great peat fire in autumn. These are scents and scenes not readily forgotten.

The use of turf as fuel is nowadays an index of isolation and economic self-sufficiency. Mechanical excavation of fuel for power plants is being successfully applied by Bord na Mona (the Irish Turf Board) but for domestic fuel nothing can replace 372 314

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314 the costly hand-cutting, -wheeling, and -turning. The calorific value of peat is less than half that of coal, and its bulk makes
● 372 transport costs high. Small coal-boats put in at harbours all round the coast, and in the larger towns, whose adjacent supplies
[439] were early exhausted, coal has been the chief fuel since the days when Dean Swift vainly advised the Irish to burn everything English except their coal. During the second world war, however, even Dublin had to depend on turf brought from the west and stacked in immense piles in Phoenix Park. Some peat is still burnt in the towns, especially in the interior of the country, but it is in the small farms that the bulk of the annual turf harvest is consumed. So necessary was a supply of peat in former times that proximity to a turf bog was a factor in land values. As to the antiquity of its use as fuel in Ireland we have little evidence, though Pliny describes its preparation in ancient Germany. Petty tells us in the second half of the seventeenth century that 'their fuel is turf in most places',[1] although Professor O'Brien, writing of the same century states that 'until the woods began to sink to very small proportions, turf was not at all employed for heating.'[2] The difficulty is that such a lowly pursuit as peat-cutting is not likely to be mentioned in the Irish law texts, and if we rely on documentary evidence alone we might suppose that all sorts of ancient practices were introduced by the English who first described them. To judge from the bright red ashes one frequently sees in the excavated hearths of Dark Age habitations peat was used as firing before history begins in upland areas and along the wind-swept coasts. But we may accept the view that over most of the country turf-cutting on its historic scale developed, probably under the stimulus of improved techniques brought in by English settlers, after the major forest clearances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is evidence from some parts of the country, for the eighteenth century, that the cutting of peat for winter use was one of the occupations of transhumant herders who took their livestock to the bog pastures in summer.[3] But it is unreasonable to suppose that the great labour involved

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), 82.
[2]G. O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century*, 44.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down*, 125.

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would have been undertaken so long as supplies of timber were available, though Petty observed that 'the cutting and carriage of turf was easier than that of wood.'[1] We may think of turf as supplementing and then coming to replace wood fuel, though in fact some wood is still very desirable to supplement the slow-burning turf, especially the quick-burning gorse and bog-fir which are the most readily available sources in treeless areas. 314 372

It is calculated that at least one fifth of the country is coated with bog, but a small proportion of this could be classed as reclaimed bog. It occurs not only in all the mountain areas but also, and more conspicuously, in the ill-drained hollows of the lowlands where glacial deposits had blocked the natural flow of waters or human occupation had brought about environmental changes. It is estimated that in recent years over 5 million tons of dried domestic fuel have been cut annually, representing a weight as cut of some 40 million tons. At this rate the supply is reckoned to last for 500 years, but this makes no allowance for the increasing exploitation of peat for the thermal generation of electricity and for the extraction of by-products. There is, however, a slow accretion of peat in many areas, though this consists mostly of sphagnum peat and the good-quality fen and forest peats of the deeper bogs are not being replaced. In fact these deeper layers tend to remain untapped either because the water cannot be drained away, or because layers of tree-stumps defy the attacks of both spade and mechanical digger. 314 [133] [375]

The main causative factor in bog-formation is waterlogged soil, which checks the decomposition of vegetable remains. It therefore depends to a considerable extent on climate and on the balance between precipitation and evaporation. It is generally held that past phases of bog-growth can be correlated with periods of climatic deterioration, and horizons which are believed to mark the changed conditions can be traced in most of the deep bogs. In Scandinavia the most important of such 'recurrence horizons' has been dated by pollen-analysts and archaeologists to about 400 B.C.: the stormy sub-Atlantic climate whose beginning is thus chronicled is believed to have improved somewhat early in the Christian era, but to have suffered two further periods of worsening about A.D. 400 and 137 314

[1]Sir W. Petty, op. cit., 82.

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137 farmers, both the flowers of the fields and the shrubs of the
314 forest edge, took on a special significance which they have retained in the peasant mind to the present day. There is powerful magic in the flowers of May, in the hazel twig, the fairy birch, the rowan branch and above all in the flowering hawthorn. This most beautiful of trees first became common in the Neolithic period. In a later chapter we shall consider some of the enduring spiritual aspects of man's association with this environment of his own making. At about this time, too, when the Neolithic economy was both absorbing the older population and being supplemented by metal tools, pollen studies reveal a marked decline of the elm tree which has been explained by the use of its bark and branches as cattle fodder. The oak forests, however, persisted in strength, and were presumably treasured for their supply of pig-fattening mast. Alder also was abundant, occupying soils which were too damp to be cultivated.

The onset of the sub-Atlantic climatic deterioration in the last millennium B.C. seems to have accelerated the peat-forming processes. Both oak and elm decline, but the birch tree spreads widely. In County Antrim, for instance, extensive oak forests growing up to heights of 1,000 feet were overwhelmed in the spreading bogs. The pine had become rare by the end of prehistoric times, though it may have lingered into the historic period on sandy eskers and on the dried surfaces of some of the raised bogs. Despite climatic change and human interference, considerable oak and alder forests survived here and there into the seventeenth century, but these last remnants of the Irish forests were almost all destroyed by the military and economic demands of that troubled century. Among the many consequences was the almost universal exploitation of the peat bogs for fuel. In addition great quantities of turf were consumed by the linen bleachers from the late eighteenth century, and kilns for burning lime and bricks and for drying agricultural produce made considerable demands on the bogs. A minor traditional
[372] use which may be mentioned in passing was for the preparation of charcoal for smith's work. The peat was charred in pits.

9

For all its toil turf-cutting provides a welcome break from
314 the routine of farmwork, a time when friends and neighbours
786 come together away from the familiar surroundings of fields

314 time: his finger marks can still be seen when the dried turves
are burning in the fire. In deep bogs the lifter may use a long-
493 handled fork (Fig. 66, 2) or shovel, pitching the turves for the barrowman to load. A barrow load is anything from ten to twenty peats. Apparently crude and artless, the turf barrow is well designed for its purpose, and it shows many adaptations to local conditions and traditions (Fig. 63). It is slatted for lightness and is made almost entirely of wood, yet it must be strong enough to take heavy loads over rough ground: it should be low and flat for convenience in loading and unloading, yet it needs a large broad wheel for pushing over an uneven surface. Legs may be dispensed with, reduced to lugs or swept back to serve as runners. Again the shape of the handles and the slope of the front board depend on the method of loading and tipping, over the side or over the front. Every detail of the design is in answer to a general or local problem. If the ground is very rough or soft the barrow must be pulled, not pushed, and in extreme cases its place is taken by a slipe. In Antrim alone there are several varieties of turf slipe. All are slatted lengthwise—because the peats are loaded transversely—and are fitted with short corner posts and tipping handles. An interesting variant—the roller slipe—has been recorded but is no longer seen: it had two rollers fitted under the body of the sledge.[1] The dried peats also may be transported, if the bog is soft, on a slipe (Fig. 58, 5) or in a carrying basket (Fig. 57).

Despite ingenious shifts towards greater speed the spreading
314 and drying of turf are inefficient because of the time taken in
372 wheeling and handling and the great difficulty of drying turf which is spread on almost saturated surfaces. In exceptionally wet summers the peats do not dry out, and tragedy may follow if the winter is severe. It is then that the countryside is stripped of what little timber it can provide, and before coal was obtainable anything from furniture to fishbones and cowdung was
237 utilized to boil the pot. In bogless districts dung was quite
372 regularly used: there are several accounts of it in travel records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed in the treeless islands dung was until recently carefully harvested, gathered in piles in the fields in spring, and sometimes worked with the

[1] E. E. Evans in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), plate 2A.

 [Text continues on p. 194]

392 hands into cakes and piled against a wall until dry enough to
237 carry home.[1]

After lying spread on the ground for a week or two the turves
314 are footed, that is a dozen or so are put to lean together in the shape of a pitched roof, to catch the wind (Fig. 64). This is
[462] work for women and for children, who are, in some districts,
[857] given a week's holiday from school. Through the months of June and July and often into August there is constant coming and going as the peats are turned and built into larger and larger piles, turn-foots, castles, rickles, lumps and clamps—the names and the shapes show considerable regional variation—until they can be ricked or stacked on the bog ready to be carried to the farms as opportunity offers. The wind is the main drying agent, and once dried the peats acquire a waterproof skin. A well-built stack will throw off the rain, but it is usual in the west to thatch with rushes and add a coping of sods or
[343] stones against the wind. Open-sided turfsheds specially built of wood or stone are the exception rather than the rule. A favourite place for the stack is against the house gable, where it provides a protective warmth even before the turf is burnt. The fuel is taken into the house in baskets, creels or wights, and a small supply is kept handy by the fireside or stored, as in the Aran Islands, on the kitchen loft (Pl. 9, 2).

FIG. 64. Stages in the drying and stacking of turf (not to scale; the stack, right, is about 9 feet high).

Some lowland bogs are too waterlogged to be cut into turves, and if no slane-turf is available the black turf-mud is moulded by hand into bricks or balls which are stacked to dry. In some counties, for instance Meath and Cavan, mud turf is highly prized and its preparation follows a well-ordered routine. After

[1]C. R. Browne and A. C. Haddon, *The Aran Islands.*

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the belief that it contained the essence of the flowers of the 527
fields. Sprigs of rowan were stuck in the midden, placed over 824
the door of the byre and hung on the cows' horns. Flowers were
also put around the well, for it was supposed that a milk-thief 751
could steal your summer's milk and butter by skimming the water at this time, or by dragging a rope across a field to collect the dew. Boundary streams were also potent in this connexion, and I was told in Donegal that the milk churn had to be washed on May Day in 'three landlords' waters', that is the meeting place of three properties.

Besides these family rites there were public ceremonies, the 527
lighting of bonfires and parades of May Babies, of May Boys and the May Queen. One of the rhymes sung by May Boys in the west of Ireland runs, in translation:

> Summer! Summer! the milk of the heifers, [539]
> And ourselves brought the summer with us,
> The yellow summer, and the white daisy,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us.[1]

The May Baby parades link the festival with the fertility of the 527
family as well as the fields. I give an account of the ceremonies 842
as described in Co. Louth in the early nineteenth century: 'On 831
May Day, the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby' . . . Around this figure a man and woman (generally his wife) of the humble class, dressed also fantastically with straw, etc., dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures . . . These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children to their husbands also attend to see this figure and performance, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children.'[2]

The May Day bonfires and the May Queens are now little 527
more than children's games and excuses for begging. The 372
burning of bones—whence the word bonfire, which in Ireland keeps its original pronunciation—and in particular of horses'

[1] Lady Wilde, *The Dublin University Magazine* (1849), 541–60.
[2] J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 bones, were formerly considered proper to the occasion. There
[372] were dances round the fires, performed with great dexterity and precision by youths armed with cudgels. The May-pole,
[177] however, and the May-bush observances seem to go with areas
[824] of strong English influence and do not seem to have been generally adopted by the Irish, perhaps because May-trees, which are not given this name in Ireland, are likely to be fairy thorns and therefore should not be damaged. The May Eve assemblies are thus described in eighteenth century Kilkenny: 'Bloody battles and much confusion and uproar is the mischief that follows from the barbarous and unheeded custom of collecting *May-balls* among the new-married folks . . . The hedges and fences, in the outlets of our city, are stripped of full-grown hawthorns, whose late blooming pride and fragrancy is now miserably dying away on dunghills before cabin doors, by way of *May-bushes*, no longer, alas! to afford a nuptial bed to the new-married linnet and his mate, but fastened in the ground for the vilest purpose—to hang filthy clouts upon'.[1] The gold and white balls which were hung on maypoles have been regarded as symbols of sun and moon—or it may be of butter and milk. Another May Day custom was the licence allowed
[786] young boys to run about stinging people with nettles, a privilege which in my youth in Shropshire was permitted only on 29th May, the victims being those who did not wear an oak-apple.

527 If the May Day fires are now more in evidence in the back streets of Belfast than on the high hills, the Midsummer fires still burn
372 strongly in some country districts and their pagan flames have not been so easily quenched. I saw dozens of them in Co. Galway on Midsummer Eve in 1956, mostly at country crossroads. Old men in Donegal have told me that they remembered the time when they had counted from their hilltop fire nearly a hundred others. Young men would show their mettle by jumping to and fro through the flames, and girls by doing so hoped to marry early and have many children. We recall that
[789] leaping is in folk tradition a widely approved method of making the crops grow high, and the fires, it is conjectured, were meant to encourage the sun, now at its turning point, to shine on through the harvest. Midsummer was a time when evil influ-

[1] *Finn's Leinster Journal* (4th May, 1768).

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ences affecting human beings and the animals and crops were usually potent. It is remembered that 'the oldest woman in the town' would go round the fire three times on her knees, reciting prayers. To walk three times sunwise round the fire was to ensure a year without sickness, and as the flames died down the cattle were driven through the embers and their backs were singed with a lighted hazel wand: the sticks were preserved and utilized for driving the cows. By tradition everyone carried home a burning stick from the fire, and whoever was first to take it into the house brought the good luck of the year with him. A glowing turf from the fire was carried three times sunwise round the dwelling house, and others were thrown into the growing crops. Yarrow was hung in the house to ward off illness. Fernseed was gathered for its magic powers and divinations made from the roots of bracken and lilies. We have already noticed the custom of retaining some of the ashes from the Midsummer fires to mix with the following season's seed corn.

The third fire-festival of the year is associated with St. Peter's Eve on 28th June, but I have not come across many traditions of St. Peter's bonfires except in Armagh and Wexford: it may thus be mainly restricted to areas where English influence was strong. More widespread and better known, because they have been caught up in many patterns and in such popular pilgrimages as that to Croagh Patrick, are the celebrations of Lammas, originally 1st August, now held on Lammas Sunday, the last in July, which is also known as Garland, Bilberry or Height Sunday. This marked the end of summer and the beginning of harvest: it was a first-fruits festival into which the alien potato has been fitted, and no potatoes were dug before this time. Offerings of flowers and fruits were made at holy wells, and in some places cattle were made to swim through streams and loughs into which lumps of fresh butter had been cast:[1] 'They think no beast will live the whole year through unless they be thus drenched'.[2] In hilly districts Height Sunday is observed by climbing to a recognized picnic place where bilberries are gathered and games and dancing were formerly enjoyed. In Co. Down a large prehistoric

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 1, 282.
[2]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.

527 cairn on the summit of Slieve Croob was until recent years the
● 372 scene of a great gathering on the first Sunday in August. The fiddling and dancing are no more, though numbers of young people still assemble there and frolic in the heather. Blaeberries (bilberries) were picked into little rush baskets made on the spot (Fig. 70) and that the occasion was recognized as a
[584] legitimate time of courting is shown by the comment that 'many a lad met his wife on Blaeberry Sunday'. The name Garland Sunday derives from the hoops decorated with ribbons and flowers which were made by unmarried girls and, latterly, carried to church before being set up in the graveyard to preside over the dancing with which the day terminated. Rites in
[769] honour of the dead seem to have marked the old Lammas festival, so that again we notice the association of ancestral spirits with the fertility of farm and family.

527 By St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, harvest is well under way and the first-saved corn is ready to be thrashed. By tradition the flails were made ready on this day, and if the high harvest winds are blowing it is said that the saint is testing his flails. Next comes Michaelmas, 29th September, linked closely with the sea, with horses, and, strangely, with the ceremony of killing a cock or a goose, originally as a sacrifice in honour of the saint. In some parts Michaelmas was regarded as one of the most important feasts of the year, but I have not found any districts where it was, as in Uist, 'much the most imposing pageant and most popular demonstration of the Celtic year': nor have I come across any tradition of the rites of digging up and making presents of wild carrots which was associated, in the Hebrides, with the eating of cakes made of mixed flour baked before a stone flag, with the killing of a lamb, visits to graveyards, and a night of 'dance, song and love-making'.[1]

527 Throughout Ireland these lesser feast days pale in comparison
769 with the culminating festival which marks the end of the dying year on All-Hallows Eve. An astonishing amount of lore still clings to Hallowe'en, and we must restrict ourselves to picking out some of the main elements of this crowded occasion. The crops should now be all gathered in and no fruit should be picked

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928), 198.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[626] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[82] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [778] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [362] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

158 751 [291] [834] [753] It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 827 [863] [825] [562] [273] [241] Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

237 • 372 514 283 [462]

* 831 522 [154] [123] Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

415 The round-bottomed three-legged iron pots (Figs. 5 and 34), of various sizes from the small porridge pot to the giant 18 gallon potato pot, are descended from the bronze cauldrons of which there are many specimens in the museums ranging in date from 700 B.C. to 1700 A.D. The cauldron was in old times the special property of the head of the house and figures prominently in Celtic mythology and folklore. The pot has been described as the "maid of all work," but boiling potatoes for man and beast is now its main task. The heaviest pots are going out of use with the introduction of raised grates.

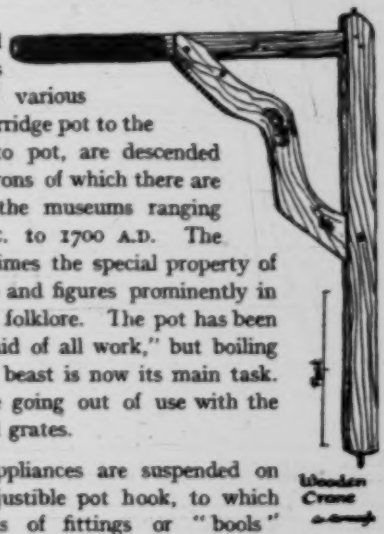

Fig. 36.

These various appliances are suspended on the iron crook or adjustible pot hook, to which many different kinds of fittings or "bools" (Fig. 35) can be attached. The crook may simply hang from a bar placed across the chimney, but more commonly from a crane (Fig. 29) which swivels at the side of the fire. A few examples of the wooden crane survive (Fig. 36) By the fireside, too, are kept the short iron tongs or "mudyees" and the heather besom (Fig. 29) which is more efficient than any broom in cleaning among the hearthstones. A goose-wing serves to dust the pots and clean the griddle when baking. Here by the fireside was hung the crusie oil lamp (Chapter 16, Fig. 105) which is another element of the north-western province of European folk-culture and may have its prototype in the famous "hanging bowls" of over 1,000 years ago. A selection of old-fashioned smith-made iron light-holders of different kinds is shown in Fig. 37. There are more elaborate styles, but the charm of these homely appliances lies in their simplicity. The upper figures from Co. Armagh (a and b) show weavers' candlesticks, made for suspension from the loom. Figure (e) is for holding a "split" or thin strip of resinous bog-fir. The others (c and d) are

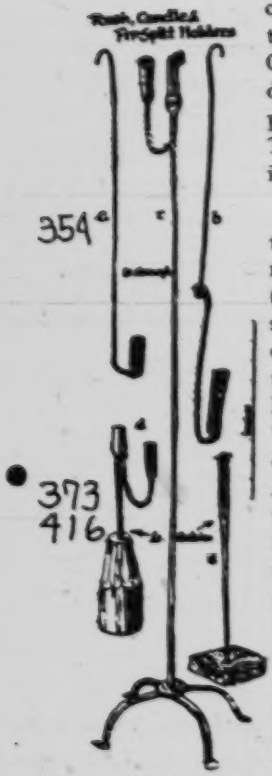

Fig. 37

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

rush-light holders with attached candle-sockets. The dipped 373 ●
rushes were sometimes plaited together to make the light last 416
longer. It is of interest to note that the war-time shortage of oil and candles has led to a revival of the use of rush-lights in some country districts.

A great amount of interesting information might be 262
collected about the food of the Irish peasantry, the methods of cooking, times of meals and the many customs and superstitions connected with food and drink. We may close this chapter with a few remarks about some foods other than bread It is curious to reflect that the diet of some western districts, "potatoes for 10 months and Indian meal for two," is so largely dependent on crops of New World origin! Potatoes were made tasty with "kitchen" or "point," that is a bit of [25]
relish such as a salted herring; and in difficult times they were only half boiled so that the hard core, called the "moon" or "bone," might prolong the processes of digestion. In Ulster the name given to July was "the blue month" because it was a time of scarcity between the old potatoes and the new crop, but generally speaking milk products were consumed during the summer months. Meat, by which the countryman means [25]
beef, was often salted down and reserved for winter use, but meat eating tended to be restricted to certain seasons or festivals such as Christmas, Shrove and Easter.

Another seasonal food was the "sowens" or porridge made from soured "meal-seeds" sifted from the oatmeal. It was traditionally eaten at Hallowe'en; and the Irish name for the 1st of November is Samhain, or "Sowin." I have heard this dish nicknamed "water bewitched." The thin liquid resulting from steeping the fine meal-dust was also drunk and called "thewin," a substitute for buttermilk. A kind of whey ("troander") was made by mixing sweet milk and buttermilk, and "drammock" was a harvest drink consisting of raw oatmeal and water. Then there is the boxty bread made from potato flour and cooked on the griddle. Many traditional foods and drinks are now little more than memories and of some, for instance "heather beer," the country folk say that "the secret has been lost." But one might still

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

317 We referred in the first paragraph to sand and gravel: the white shell sand is taken for manure and is also strewn on the kitchen floor, while beach stones and gravel find many uses as cobble stones, pebble-dashing and so on. Among other 226 by-products of the sea we must not forget fish-oil, manu- 373 factured not only as a medicine for cattle but also as an illuminant. The iron crusie lamp (Fig. 105) was not long since the chief source of light in the islands, and until half a century ago large sea-shells are said to have been employed for the purpose in Co. Kerry. The wick of the crusie was a peeled rush or a twist of cotton: because of the strong smell the lamp was hung under the chimney so that the draught carried away the fumes. The abundant sea shells are also utilized for lime on some islands, for example Tory, by burning them in a kiln made of turf.

317 228

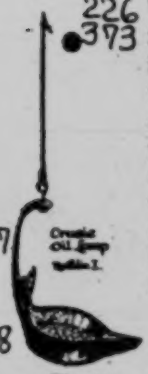

Fig. 105.
Length 15"

Finally, we must not omit the dread harvest of the sea cast up after storms—the timber and food-stuffs and wreckage—always welcome and perhaps in olden days not uninvited. Many an islandman's cabin is roofed with couples of ships' masts, and a visit to treeless Tory or Rathlin will reveal the many uses to which drift timber is put. Mysterious objects brought by the currents from the West Indies occasionally turn up: pumice, perhaps from this source, has been found, treasured no doubt as a magic stone, in sandhill settlements of 4,000 years ago.

162 It is not to be wondered at, when we consider the ancient 226 and varied, if often toilsome and dangerous life of the Irish shores, that the coasts carry a much denser population than districts inland. It should be stressed that these various activities are carried on not as a rule by specialized fishermen but by farmers and peasants to whom the sea offers an accessory source of life and interest, and who often perpetuate the old communal schemes by taking shares in a boat and nets. Old ways die hardest by the sea; prohibitions and super- [462] stitions are rife, and fishing is one of the few occupations in which women take no active part.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

241 sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone
[423] walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.
[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be to some extent neglected. A family keeps a couple of pigs, some
[231] sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on
[237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de râche*) are used as fuel.

●373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

but a few years ago the ordinary means of lighting the houses was a rude open lamp, filled with oil extracted from the livers of fish, and having a piece of peeled rush for a wick. 373

Kelp-burning was formerly one of the industries of the islands, but of late years it declined rapidly, and is now practically extinct. As to the cause of this decay of a formerly profitable source of income, very different accounts are given, some alleging the poor quality of the weed; others that they were not fairly treated in selling; and others again that it does not pay as well as the fish-curing. 381

The fish most taken are sea-bream, glassan (a sort of pollock), mackerel, turbot, and plaice, used mostly for home consumption; cod and ling, which are cured at the fish-curing station for exportation, and oil extracted from their livers; also large quantities of crabs and lobsters, which are taken to Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, from which they are forwarded to the English market. The boat used for conveying them is of peculiar construction, and has a large salt-water tank amidships, in which the lobsters are kept alive. The lobster-pots are of the usual type. There is nothing unusual about their ordinary method of fishing, except that the Inishbofin men, as mentioned in a footnote to the account of that island in the Memoir of the Geological Survey, already alluded to, do not follow the shoals of fish around the western headland, but carry their boats across the narrow isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated. 226 439 [501] [502]

The pursuit of the "sun-fish," or basking-shark (*Selache maxima*), was formerly a source of considerable profit to the islanders, but has been almost altogether abandoned of late years owing to the decline in the price of the oil, and partly, it is said, to the loss of several lives on one occasion when a boat was charged and overturned by a wounded fish, also to the partial disappearance for some years of the sharks. 226

The season for this enterprise is from April until the end of June, and in that time large numbers of these fish were taken formerly, and some are still killed from time to time. Mr. G. H. Kinahan, to whom I am indebted for several notes relative to the condition of the islands some years ago, says:—"The sun-fish fishing was considerable in my time (1870). I have seen strings of seven and nine fish; when caught, they towed them into the harbour, cut out the liver, and left the carcass to rot, or be eaten by the pigs; the stench in the harbour was something to remember." A very full description of the fishing is given by Sir H. W. Gore-Booth in a recent article. He states that the value of the oil (from eight to twelve petroleum barrels full) obtained from the liver of one of these fish has been variously estimated

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

415 though it may be put to the less innocent purpose of preparing malt for poteen, and a spinning-wheel of the usual type. For light at night
● 373 modern lamps are coming into use, but in many houses the "flare" is used. It consists of a rude sconce, in which is fastened a cylindrical reservoir for oil, closed at the top by a lid, and having a spout like that of a coffee-pot, through which the wick is drawn. Rush lights are still used by some.

The house is often whitewashed outside; the roof is thatch, of
342 straw in most localities, but on the islands, and some places in the peninsula, bent is use instead. This is laid on over "scraws" of grass-turf and fastened down by sougans (straw ropes), the ends of which may be attached to pegs driven into the walls, or have long pieces of
[284] wood or heavy stones fastened to them. These ropes are often arranged in a net work so as to hold the thatch more securely. Coir rope, bought in Belmullet, is now used by some instead of sougans. The gable is stepped or cut away so that the thatch does not project over the end wall.

There are several other types of houses, though the style just described is the most common. Most of the newer houses and those building have chimneys, pig-styes of turf or stone, and in some cases byres. Few of the old one-roomed dwellings, built partly or altogether of turf, are still to be seen, but there are a number of one-roomed huts of stone, many of which have no windows.

The most primitive habitations in the district, and perhaps in Ireland, are the rude huts (*boolies*) on Inishglora, inhabited during the lobster fishing-season by the men of Inishkea; they are about a dozen in number, rudely built of dry stone and thatched with "scraws." There is not room to stand upright in them, the height from floor to roof being about 5 feet. Internally they contain a rude bunk filled with straw for sleeping in and a few large stones to sit upon. Cooking appears to be done out of doors. Successive batches of men live in these huts for about three months of the year. Some of the poorest houses on the mainland are in the isolated and primitive village of Fallmore, where few of the dwellings have windows and few or none chimneys. The houses on the islands are decidedly among the best in the district. Many are whitewashed inside, and the furniture is of a superior class, abundant material being thrown up as drift wood. The beds are four-posted structures, with flat board tops, and some of them have bright-coloured curtains, and the bedding is clean and tidy-looking.

489 6. *Transport.*—Lying as it does far from towns of any size, and separated from the nearest by a wide stretch of wild and thinly-

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen.*

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tin-ware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 2

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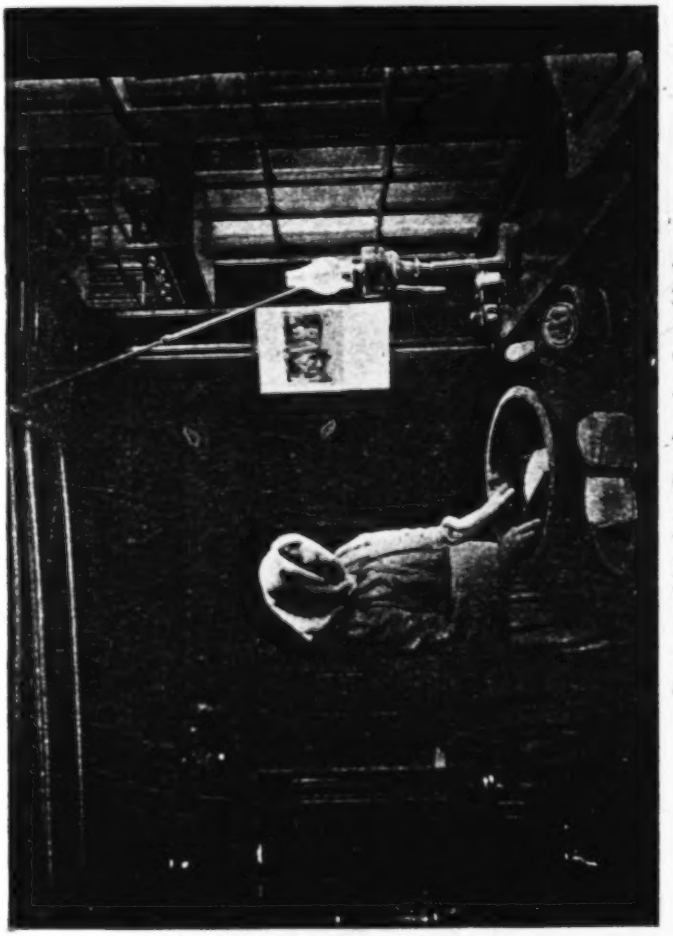
373
353
415



Butter-making in a Co. Antrim farm kitchen.

[facing p. 33]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354
shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373]
were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse- [492]
collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342
is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the 353
chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231]
to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513]
the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352
the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the 352
fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served 592
since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in the English language gave its name to a committee, has not replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies [776]
or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged [769]
around the fire.

FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means 354
of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the 373
table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke. The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from [171]
Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said, that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

[1] Å. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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354
378
[416]

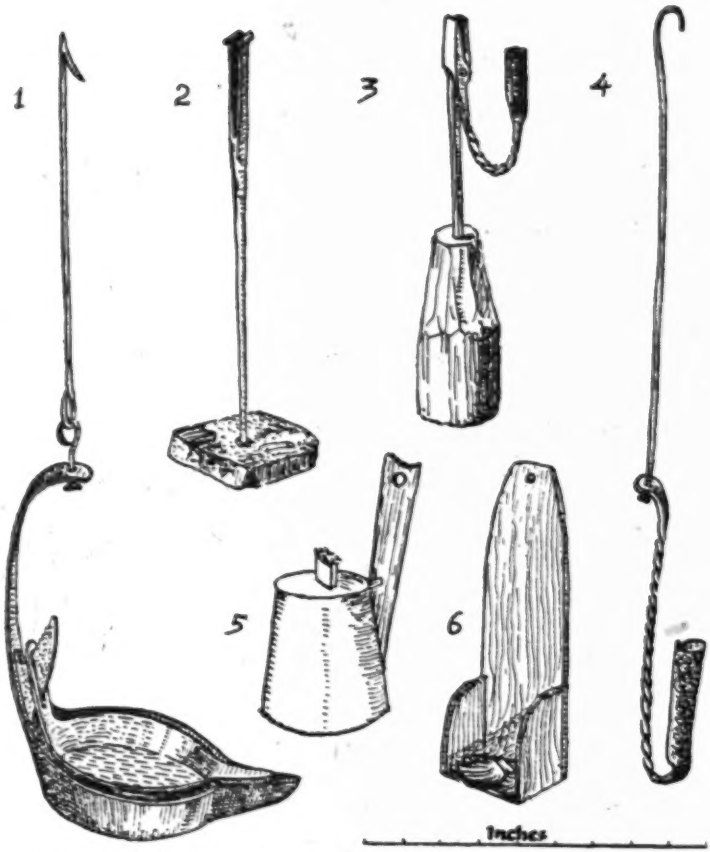

FIG. 27. Light-holders. (1) Crusie, Co. Antrim (scale × 2). (2) Fir-split holder, Co. Antrim. (3) Rush and candle-holder, Co. Antrim. (4) Weavers' candle-holder, Co. Armagh. (5) Hob lamp, Co. Cavan. (6) Scollop shell lamp, Aran Islands.

and by rush-lights held in iron pincers mounted on wooden or wrought-iron stands (Fig. 27). Candles of resin, tallow and beeswax were also made at home by dipping prepared strips of cloth repeatedly in an iron grisset and rolling out the candles on a board. Such candles played an important part in various

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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church festivals and at wakes, and though they are now bought they are made by hand in a few towns by chandlers who carry on a medieval tradition. One Dublin firm, established in 1488, manufactures large church candles of beeswax by methods which can have changed little with the centuries. In the home the candles were supported in wrought-iron holders or stuck into a turf by the fireside. Tall standard holders, often with adjustable fittings, were designed to give light to the weaver at the loom, and they are most typically found in Ulster (Fig. 28). The fine embroidery which occupied the women in the linen districts must have imposed a great strain on the eyes: there are stories of a single candle serving as a central source of light for a ring of seamstresses, each of whom held her work against a bottle full of water which acted as a magnifier.

In Ireland, as throughout Atlantic Europe, the dresser ranks as the most important and elaborate piece of furniture in the kitchen, and its position is prescribed by custom. It stands either against the side wall or against the partition between kitchen and bedroom. Since this partition is of no great antiquity we can be sure that the original place of the dresser was against the side-wall and that it has developed from, and taken the place of, shelves built into or attached to the side-wall. In part of Ulster it is referred to as 'the shelf'. I have already mentioned the tiers of stone shelves set in the wall which are preserved in the deserted houses of the Slievemore cluster on Achill Island. It is believed that the fashion of open crockery shelves was diffused from the court sideboards of the later Middle Ages in France and England, and it may be surmised that the wooden dresser was readily accepted in Celtic lands to replace wall shelves, from Elizabethan times on. The adoption of delph and tea-drinking in the eighteenth century no doubt accelerated the spread of the dresser, which had become, by that time, an essential part of Irish kitchen furniture (Plate 1). The corner-cupboard, evolving in much the same way from corner-shelves, is another article of furniture with a north-west European distribution. Similarly the coffer or store-chest spread through western Europe from the later Middle Ages onwards, replacing skin, straw, hollowed wood, or basket-work containers.

 [text continues on p. 93]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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HOME-MADE THINGS

By far the most versatile of home-produced rope-making 283
materials is straw. Rye straw is longer, softer and more flexible than any other, but very little rye is now grown save along the west coast where it is still the most popular thatching material. Wheat straw is the best substitute, but in fact most farmers must now depend on oat straw, thus 'tying up' some of their fodder. Straw rope (súgán) not only had many direct uses but served as the basis for such crafts as the making of mats, baskets, bee-skeps, mattresses, hen roosts, pigeons' nests and horse harness. It was used for seating chairs and making arm-chairs, and for a great variety of hobbles and tethers for animals and ties for holding down thatch. The fondness of the Irish for tethering and hobbling their livestock must be seen [231] in the light of inadequate fences and the conditions of partnership farming in open fields. Not only the larger animals, but hens, turkeys, and geese were commonly restrained in this way. 'All livestock of the poorer man is in this sort of thraldom' wrote Arthur Young.[1] One may still see a tethered hen with her chickens that might have stepped out of the illuminated pages of the fourteenth century Luttrell Psalter. A straw rope stretched across the kitchen made a serviceable clothes-line. Torches were sometimes made from twisted straw; on the other hand, when [373] suitably coated with mud, straw ropes made a fireproof smoke-canopy. Chopped straw or layers of straw ropes were also used in constructing mud walls, and it is possible that, as in Sweden, [333] stakes wrapped in straw rope daubed in clay were once an alternative to 'wattle and daub' for wall building. It has been stated that the fowlers of the Mayo coast would let themselves down the cliffs on straw ropes,[2] which must have been exceptionally well made; ropes made from the fibres of bog fir were more reliable. In Co. Antrim fowling ropes were of horse hide, but bent ropes are also recorded.[3] I have seen countrymen on a windy fair day wearing an improvised belt over their long coats in the form of a straw rope, and in the early nineteenth century children in Co. Cork were described as 'clad in nothing except a coarse woollen shirt that came half way down the thighs and

[1] Arthur Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 37.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 55.
[3] R. Dobbs, *County Antrim in 1683*.

283 of these rope-making materials had other uses as well, not forgetting their functions in ceremony and magic as represented by Briget's crosses, harvest knots, the blaeberry baskets of Lammas and the rush ladders of Hallowe'en. Better known, [373] though no longer made, are the rushlights whose feeble glow, in the words of Gilbert White, made 'darkness visible'.

[284]
[285]

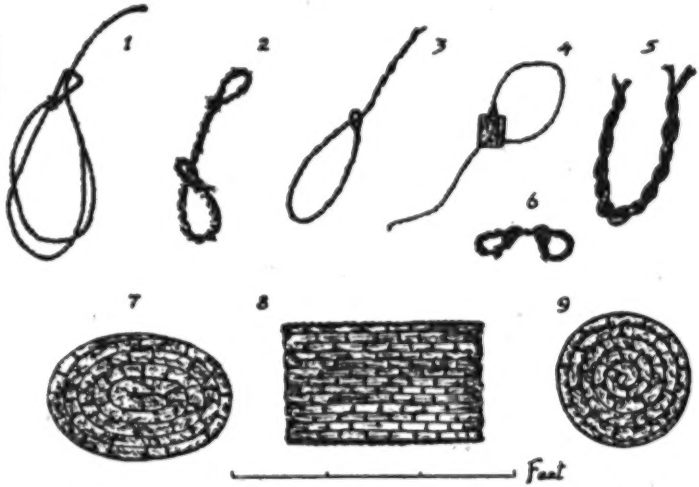


FIG. 68. Ropes and mats. (1) Rush burden rope, Co. Donegal. (2) Tie of cow-hair, Co. Kerry. (3) Willow bark burden rope, Co. Roscommon. (4) Grass burden rope, Aran Islands. (5) Tie of fir-rope, from roof, Co. Down. (6) Sheep's langle of oat straw, Co. Down. (7) Plaited mat of marram grass, Co. Wexford. (8) Coiled mat of rye straw, Aran Islands. (9) Coiled mat of oat straw, Co. Donegal.

283 Examples of ropes and mats of various kinds are shown in Fig. 68. The burden ropes, carefully made in two or three ply,
482 enabled quite heavy loads to be carried from inaccessible places. A correspondent in Co. Cork has sent me the following account of one method of lifting the burden, in this case of furze (gorse, whin) which was harvested both for bedding and for fodder. 'Passing his rope round the bundle, the carrier would throw himself on his back on top of the bundle, kick his heels in the air and jerk himself to the vertical, walking away completely concealed beneath a moving mountain of furze.' Where tracks

501 where curraghs were formerly known. But it is also character-
171 istic of Scottish cobles and the boats of some English lakes. The inshore fishing boats of Co. Antrim also had booled oars,[1] and farther afield the single tholepin is said to typify the rowing boats of Madeira, the sardine boats of Portugal and some vessels of the Upper Nile. These often use a grommet, as do the boats of the north-east coast of England.

Sea-going curraghs are put to many uses, for inshore net
226 fishing, for setting lobster pots or long lines, for gathering kelp and for carrying freight, livestock and passengers. But the most spectacular purpose to which they have been put is for hunting the basking shark or sunfish from whose liver, before
[373] the advent of paraffin, oil for lighting was obtained. A single fish will yield from seven to ten barrels of liver. Measuring up to forty feet in length, the basking shark is one of the world's largest fish and though harmless—its diet is minute copepods—its bulk makes it a formidable adversary. These fish move down the west coast in summer, and in early May they haunt the Sunfish Bank thirty miles off Achill Island, where they come to the surface in the morning and evening. The bank is remarkable for the break of the tide on it, although it lies between seventy and ninety fathoms near the edge of 'soundings' —the continental shelf—and a heavy swell makes conditions difficult for small boats. Here and elsewhere the sunfish used to be harpooned from curraghs, but the advantage lay with decked vessels which could stand by for several days. In the early nineteenth century as many as thirty or forty fish were sometimes killed on the Sunfish Bank in a single day of fine weather. Nowadays the sharks are taken in strong nets fixed to island headlands around which they swim. They are occasionally seen off the other Irish coasts, where they cause great havoc if they get involved in the fishing nets.

Of the small open clinker-built boats of traditional type which
501 takes the place of the curragh on the north, east and south
[174] coasts, no systematic study has been made. Some of them betray their Norse inheritance in their lines or their names, for example the Wicklow skiff and the drontheim (Trondhjem) of the north coast. These boats are double-ended—unlike the cur-

[1] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 276.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

would have been undertaken so long as supplies of timber were 314
available, though Petty observed that 'the cutting and carriage
of turf was easier than that of wood.'[1] We may think of turf 372
as supplementing and then coming to replace wood fuel, though in fact some wood is still very desirable to supplement the slow-burning turf, especially the quick-burning gorse and bog-fir which are the most readily available sources in treeless areas.

It is calculated that at least one fifth of the country is coated 314
with bog, but a small proportion of this could be classed as
reclaimed bog. It occurs not only in all the mountain areas but [133]
also, and more conspicuously, in the ill-drained hollows of the lowlands where glacial deposits had blocked the natural flow of waters or human occupation had brought about environmental changes. It is estimated that in recent years over 5 million tons of dried domestic fuel have been cut annually, representing a weight as cut of some 40 million tons. At this rate the supply is reckoned to last for 500 years, but this makes no allowance for
the increasing exploitation of peat for the thermal generation of [375]
electricity and for the extraction of by-products. There is, however, a slow accretion of peat in many areas, though this consists mostly of sphagnum peat and the good-quality fen and forest peats of the deeper bogs are not being replaced. In fact these deeper layers tend to remain untapped either because the water cannot be drained away, or because layers of tree-stumps defy the attacks of both spade and mechanical digger.

The main causative factor in bog-formation is waterlogged 137
soil, which checks the decomposition of vegetable remains. It
therefore depends to a considerable extent on climate and on the 314
balance between precipitation and evaporation. It is generally held that past phases of bog-growth can be correlated with periods of climatic deterioration, and horizons which are believed to mark the changed conditions can be traced in most of the deep bogs. In Scandinavia the most important of such 'recurrence horizons' has been dated by pollen-analysts and archaeologists to about 400 B.C.: the stormy sub-Atlantic climate whose beginning is thus chronicled is believed to have improved somewhat early in the Christian era, but to have suffered two further periods of worsening about A.D. 400 and

[1]Sir W. Petty, op. cit., 82.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 by hand. The corn-drying kiln is a culture-trait clearly adapted
251 to the climatic conditions of the Atlantic coasts of Europe. In extreme cases, as in the Faroe Islands—where even barley does not ripen fully—the ears are kiln-dried before thrashing, but the purpose of the Irish kilns was to harden the thrashed grain before grinding. They can be traced back archaeologically to the last centuries B.C. and on present evidence their introduction may be linked chronologically with grain-storage pits and with the rotary quern. Thus the custom of parching the grain in the straw would be a survival of an older culture layer associated with the saddle-quern and the mortar and possibly with harvesting by pulling the corn by the roots.

One early type of kiln was made of wattles plastered with clay, and was perhaps used like an oven, being heated before the corn was put in it to dry, but those which have come down into recent times were stone-lined pits into which a long flue was led. The fuel used was peat. It is stated that down to famine times every townland in some parts of the country had its kiln, though in other parts they went out of use long ago when landlords, following Anglo-Norman custom, insisted that all corn should be ground at the mill. In Co. Cavan for example, 'every estate has its cornmill and the tenantry is bound under severe penalty to grind their corn thereat and pay toll'.[1] These watermills should be distinguished from the native clackmills,
[376] built over little streams and driven by small horizontal wheels. They were characteristically held in joint ownership, as were the kilns. The Mayo kiln is described as resembling a large tobacco pipe, the circular stone-lined bowl being dug into a sloping bank and the horizontal stem or flue emerging lower down the slope. A bee-hive cap of timber and thatch was the only part visible. In it a straw-covered wattled hatch gave access to the kiln floor, a wooden frame half-way down the bowl of the pipe, on which thrashed sheaves were spread, heads to centre. The grain, laid on this, took about twenty-four hours to dry. The taste of the oatmeal made from grain so dried was said to be delicious.[2] A man who had seen a similar kiln working in Co. Antrim told me that the corn was laid on a linen sheet

[1] C. Coote, *Cavan* (1802), 251.
[2] H. T. Knox, *P.R.I.A.*, 26 (1906–7), 265.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

come across surviving examples of these ancient devices. The iron 'cribs' associated with modern salmon weirs, however, appear to derive from wattled traps. And the long conical 'coghill' nets in which the eels are caught in the weirs of the Bann, the Shannon and (until recently) the Erne, are shaped like weels and indeed they are sometimes built up of a series of cones. The fine meshed 'tail' of the net is made to open and the eels, nowadays, are poured directly into submerged tanks. A detail suggestive of long custom is that the 'skiver' with which the tail is closed in the coghills of the weirs at Portna on the Bann consists of a perforated rib-bone of horse or cow. The pin is attached to a cord, which is wound round the end of the net and secured by thrusting the pin into the windings. The walls of the weirs are often still built of wattles, and the old style of weir on the Erne consists of a base of large stones into which the wattled superstructure is thrust.[1] 227

The wattles are known on the Bann as *skeaghs*: of the six weirs now fishing there four are of the traditional type and two have been modernized. At Athlone on the Shannon there were twenty-two eel weirs in the early seventeenth century, and nearly all were still working in the nineteenth century: a single weir is now fished there.[2] The eel weirs of the River Erne had been reduced to five when they were abandoned owing to the recent construction of a dam for the Ballyshannon hydro-electric scheme. The Bann silver eel fisheries are probably the largest of their kind in western Europe, and it is significant that the Bann is one of the richest rivers in Europe for archaeological discoveries ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the early medieval period. Both salmon and eels have now become money-crops and the catches are exported. Already in the eighteenth century Irish salt salmon was exported in considerable quantities to America. The ice-house in which salmon used to be preserved is one of the many ruined buildings to be seen about the decaying houses of the gentry, and most country houses also had their fish ponds. [376] [172] [439] [343]

Among the common folk eels are esteemed only by the folk who catch them, legally or otherwise, but they were formerly 262

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 213–23.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 80 (1950), 146–54.

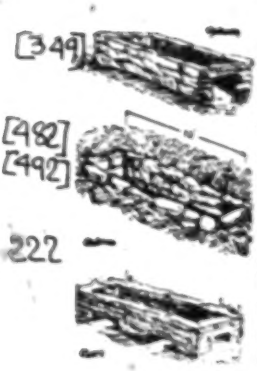
9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 100
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.



Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

but a few years ago the ordinary means of lighting the houses was a rude open lamp, filled with oil extracted from the livers of fish, and having a piece of peeled rush for a wick. 373

Kelp-burning was formerly one of the industries of the islands, but of late years it declined rapidly, and is now practically extinct. As to the cause of this decay of a formerly profitable source of income, very different accounts are given, some alleging the poor quality of the weed; others that they were not fairly treated in selling; and others again that it does not pay as well as the fish-curing. 381

The fish most taken are sea-bream, glassan (a sort of pollock), mackerel, turbot, and plaice, used mostly for home consumption; cod and ling, which are cured at the fish-curing station for exportation, and oil extracted from their livers; also large quantities of crabs and lobsters, which are taken to Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, from which they are forwarded to the English market. The boat used for conveying them is of peculiar construction, and has a large salt-water tank amidships, in which the lobsters are kept alive. The lobster-pots are of the usual type. There is nothing unusual about their ordinary method of fishing, except that the Inishbofin men, as mentioned in a footnote to the account of that island in the Memoir of the Geological Survey, already alluded to, do not follow the shoals of fish around the western headland, but carry their boats across the narrow isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated. 226 439 [501] [502]

The pursuit of the "sun-fish," or basking-shark (*Selache maxima*), was formerly a source of considerable profit to the islanders, but has been almost altogether abandoned of late years owing to the decline in the price of the oil, and partly, it is said, to the loss of several lives on one occasion when a boat was charged and overturned by a wounded fish, also to the partial disappearance for some years of the sharks. 226

The season for this enterprise is from April until the end of June, and in that time large numbers of these fish were taken formerly, and some are still killed from time to time. Mr. G. H. Kinahan, to whom I am indebted for several notes relative to the condition of the islands some years ago, says:—"The sun-fish fishing was considerable in my time (1870). I have seen strings of seven and nine fish; when caught, they towed them into the harbour, cut out the liver, and left the carcass to rot, or be eaten by the pigs; the stench in the harbour was something to remember." A very full description of the fishing is given by Sir H. W. Gore-Booth in a recent article. He states that the value of the oil (from eight to twelve petroleum barrels full) obtained from the liver of one of these fish has been variously estimated

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive,
372 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time.
[435] The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen, and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

228 to collect one stone in an hour. Kelp
[381] (seaweed) burning for iodine on the beaches was almost extinct by 1894.[17]

Settlement and Population

361 Of the 96 houses counted as inhabited, 53 are in five hamlets and another six in a loose cluster near the harbor. There is no village as the term is commonly understood, though the main center is beside the harbor, where the inn occupies the one-time "big house" of the Allies family, with the church and the Post Office a short distance away. In
[444] all there are eight shops, none of which is recognizable from the outside, as everyone knows them: one is attached to the inn, another to the Post Office, a third occupies a specially built room in a farmyard, and the rest are in front rooms of houses. All the houses except about six have land attached.

Is this nucleated settlement as such?
361 On the first Ordnance Survey map (1838) there were large clusters of houses
178 and on the 1898 map the vast majority
621 of the houses were in clusters. The redistribution of land and building of new houses has broken up many hamlets or made new ones, for example in Knock townland (405 acres) where an old hamlet on a sandy site has been replaced by a new one on drier ground by the shore, with 15 of the townland's 17 houses. In Cloonamore (663 acres)
361 eight houses are placed along the shore
621 and eleven others scattered over the hillside; in Middlequarter (608 acres) there are eleven houses in the main hamlet, six beside the harbor and eleven others at various points beside the shore or on side roads; in Fawnmore (199 acres) six houses out of sixteen are in a loosely defined hamlet; and in West-
361 quarter (523 acres) nine houses out of

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[p.208(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

resting on a well-prepared bed of drawn straw spread on a hurdle, and he recalled the phrase 'soft as kiln bedding' to illustrate the care devoted to the operation. The Gaelic language has quite an extensive vocabulary describing every detail of the floor and the bedding of a corn-kiln. Because of the risk of fire, the Laws stipulated that the kiln must not be placed within so many paces of the dwelling house. 343 251

Lint-kilns, for drying flax after it had been taken from the retting dams, were in general use in Ulster in the days of hand-scutching, and a few half-ruined specimens are still in existence. As with corn-kilns—and lime-kilns—they were of two kinds, which may be termed pot-kilns and pipe-kilns. The former are described in Co. Armagh as 'small sod buildings, left open at the top . . . built by the sides of fences near the cabins: they are four or five feet in diameter, and have a hurdle of sticks placed across them at a convenient height (about four feet) on which a small quantity of flax is spread to dry over a turf fire'.[1] The stone-built kilns, known in Co. Tyrone as 'farrows' were similar in construction to the 'tobacco pipe' corn-kilns. The flax, well shaken and loose, was placed on end on a wattled platform set across the bowl of the pipe. When dried it was beaten on a melling-stone with a heavy wooden mell until every stalk was flattened and it then passed to the hand-scutcher. 343 248

As the corn-drying kiln has been superseded by the kiln attached to the country grist-mill, so the small lime-kiln has given way, over most of the country, to the large quarry-kiln. At the same time coal has replaced turf as a fuel. The little circular pot-kiln of sods or stones filled with alternate layers of turf and limestone may be met with in the west, but in general the home-burning of lime did not long survive the Great Famine. Down to that time, wherever limestone could be obtained, almost every farm or farm cluster had a lime-kiln. It was the importation of guano and later of artificial manure that put an end to a most advantageous practice. The application of lime to acid soils is a comparatively recent practice, but one likes to think that the little pot-kiln was in use long ago to burn lime or sea-shells for the whitewash with which the mud houses were lightened and brightened. Kelp-kilns, similarly (see Chapter 343 381

[1] I. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties* (1837), I, 178.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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343 XVI), had their great days in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but small-scale wrack-burning is far older than this. 381 In the later eighteenth century, when framed windows and brick chimneys became fashionable in the more prosperous [339] lowland farms, the bricks were locally burnt in circular kilns plastered with clay.

Another class of outbuilding, allied to the clochaun in con- 343 struction, is the stone sweat-house, the Irish version of the 357 Turkish bath, which the Germans, indeed, call the Irish bath. There is a theory that the idea reached Ireland with Christian missionaries who were accustomed to Roman practices, but heat-treatment as a cure is so widespread throughout the world (cf. the sweat-houses of Finland and pre-Columbian California) that one thinks of remoter origins. What is certain is that they were visited for cures within living memory in several parts of Ireland. In west Cavan twenty-five sweat-houses have been listed in one district, and many more are known to have been destroyed. A French traveller of the late eighteenth century observed that 'wherever there are four or five cabins near each other there is sure to be a sweating-house'.[1] And old people in Cavan confirm that every four or five families once shared a sweat-house, in which sweating cures were taken in summer and autumn (Fig. 37, 6).

The sweat-house is a dry-stone corbelled structure, measuring internally from four to seven feet in diameter and rather less in height. A low lintelled doorway is the only means of access though some specimens have a roughly constructed chimney flue to allow the smoke to escape. This was closed with sods during the treatment, as was the door. The fire of turf—straw and bracken seem also to have been used—had been kept burning inside for a day or two previously. The floor, normally an earthen floor though some examples were cobbled or paved, was then swept clean and strewn with green rushes. On these, or on grass sods or low stools which they took in with them, from two to as many as six or seven persons would sit, naked and sweating profusely. After half an hour or so they would emerge and cool themselves either in a near-by stream or with a bucket

[1]De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland* (1796–97). Ed. J. Stevenson (1917), 198.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

a widespread industry among the country people throughout Ireland. There seems even then to have been quite a widespread cottage industry in wool and linen, later to be destroyed everywhere except in Ulster. The peasantry displayed great ingenuity at the craft. The wool of their sheep was made into frieze at home, carded, spun, woven, dyed, and consumed there. Oils essential to the weaving process were extracted from fern roots, and dyes were got from alder, walnut, oak, and elderberry. This craft survives today as a cottage industry only in remote parts of Donegal and Kerry and in the Scottish highlands and isles. Such home-spinning was once widespread, probably universal. It survived here and there down to a very late date. In Ulster and northern England the industry was gradually brought into the factory, where it laid the foundation for the industrial revolution. But in the rest of Ireland industrial production of woolens was confined to Dublin by 1840 and, as a commercial enterprise, the wool trade was dead except in the region of Belfast. A few small factories survived in several towns, for example at Limerick, Clonmel, and Bandon, but there was no life or power of expansion in them.

Other manufactures originally native to the country repeat the story of wool. A few attempts at cotton manufacture died out. Linen suffered the same fate. At one time flax was grown extensively throughout Ireland, and a home industry of weaving linen was practiced widely in both town and countryside in many parts of the country. O'Brien[2] cites evidence that the older custom in linen making, strongest in Ulster, but not unknown elsewhere, by which weavers occupied plots of land and supplemented their income by farming, was gone by the famine time.

[2] George O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* (London, New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1921). See also O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin and London: Maunsel & Company, Ltd., 1918).

as a way of getting him to start on your yarn in a hurry. If you 463
didn't, he would not do it until he got ready. They were inde- 286
pendent, all right, and then when they were finished, you had to reach down into your pocket and pay for what he did. There used to be a lot of weavers here, but they are all gone now. The women have got out of weaving the wool.

A weaver here, Paddy Seán R—, was a very fine fellow 463
though he drank a lot. You cannot blame him for that because his job was a mean one and bad on the health. He worked to 286
keep his mother out of the workhouse and till the day she died 735
he would not let her go there. Wasn't that a decent thing for him to do? Afterwards he went to Galway and then he came back here and as an old man he died in the workhouse. But wasn't it a decent thing he would not let his poor old mother go [386
and her going up the streets of the town every morning collect- 514]
ing the urine from the people who lived in the house [to use for bleaching].

These three occupations were the meaner ones in the eyes 463
of the country people. It was not that they degraded their followers. Rather it was that they were intrinsically of less 554
value than the more robust crafts of outdoor life. Something of the sexual dichotomization of labor was involved in this attitude equating sedentary, house-bound pursuits with the feminine spheres of activity.

The chief exponents of the robuster, more masculine crafts within local ken were the carpenter, the mason, the house builder, and the smith. But there were many others. Between the landless or "backward" cotters and laborers, who might turn their hand to anything, and the small farmers, who were themselves occasionally forced to turn to harvesting abroad or to road-mending and stone-breaking at home, there were as many specialists as there were activities in which special renown and skill could be attained. In fact, the development of local skills seems restricted only by the limits of the *matériel* which peasant life requires.

Other local experts were the thatcher, the cattle doctor 463
or "vet," often a herdsmen with a lifelong experience of

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, 291
until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the
homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange [386]
used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black
and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a [824]
small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but
sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant.

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bed- 342
rooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar,
though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the
walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the
exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses
are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors,
front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen: and the
windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very
small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they
are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot
square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the [354]
usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that
in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the
top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the
gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass
turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the
ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The [284]
gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does
not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water
getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is
put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones,
until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and
quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The [241]
floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes
boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is
wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood,
washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the
islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people
having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings
or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The 352
furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe croithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

291 the town, where they sit down by the roadside, and put on their boots and stockings, taking them off again when starting for home.

The old-fashioned frock or kilt-shaped garment, made of red or grey homespun, and buttoned up the back, is still worn by boys up to twelve years of age.

The dress of the women is on the whole less changed than that of the men. Many of the elderly women wear the white-frilled cap, others have a small red kerchief tied under the chin. Over the shoulders a shawl of tartan or other striking pattern is folded, but this is not so frequently of a bright red, as in other districts, as the darker colours seem to be more in favour; beneath the shawl is a boddice of some dark material. The petticoat is short, but is only occasionally the typical red homespun of the western peasant. It is often grey, or dyed purple, blue, or some other bright colour, and is sometimes ornamented by a few rows of black braid. Aprons of check are much worn. Many of the older women wear the heavy blue cloak with cape and hood on Sundays and holidays. The younger women to a large extent copy modern fashions on festive occasions, but the result is not happy, as their taste in colours is curious, and they certainly look better in native costume.

286 A great variety of homespuns are made in the district, there being several weavers who turn out coarse flannel, tweeds, and friezes, some of which are very good specimens of hand-loom work. The dyes 386 are nearly all imported, indigo and the made-up aniline dyes being [824] most used. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), which was at one time pretty generally employed for this purpose, is now only used for dying stockings.

5. *Dwellings.*—The habitations of the people present considerable 342 variety, some being extremely poor, others of a fairly good class. The description given below applies solely to the houses of the people of the rural parts, and not to Belmullet (which is a cleanly and well-built little town, composed almost entirely of good-slated houses of two stories) nor to the houses of the proprietors or large holders.

Of late years there has been much improvement in the style of dwelling, but few indeed of the old turf cabins remain; while the semi-subterranean huts, some of which were inhabited in 1841, have become altogether extinct.

The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1846) describes the majority of dwellings as being built partly of stone and partly of turf, and consisting of only one or at most two rooms.

An average dwelling now is built of stone, sometimes dry, at others

WRACK AND WRECK

226 Scallop shells were put to many uses and were often a
[415] substitute for the iron oil-pan of the open-wicked crusie.
● [386] Seashells were also burnt to make lime for whitewashing the houses.

[262] In late summer the sprat come ashore in vast numbers on the west and south coasts, so that in Donegal 'they constituted the chief food of the peasantry during three or four months of the year.'[1] They were taken from the water in buckets and sieves, and the mackerel pursuing their prey close against the rocks might be caught almost as easily. In Waterford harbour there were specially erected wickerwork head weirs to take the sprat; and Dr. Went has described a wattled sprat-weir in working order in the estuary of the Blackwater.[2] Fishing from the rocks, too, is most popular in harvest time and though now little more than a pastime it once provided a reserve of food for the winter. About hay-harvest the ballan wrasse is at its best, 'when the flags (wild iris) are in bloom', they say. Known as bavin, byan, morran and by other names, it is now despised nearly everywhere, as is the coalfish which was salted and dried
[192] and which has different names in Gaelic for every stage of its growth to demonstrate its former importance and popularity. 'Glassan' oil was the luminant for the crusie lamps in Rathlin Island. On the north coast you may see anglers 'frassing' for small coalfish, that is attracting them by spitting into the water chewed potatoes or limpets. Formerly ground bait was made
[412] by pounding limpets in rock basins of the type known as 'bullauns' (Fig. 90). Occasionally you may come across a fisherman casting a feather lure for pollack with a line made wholly or in part of horsehair. One method of twisting these lines, with quills, will be described in the following chapter. For short lengths next the hook—the fine foot-lines—white hair is preferred, and I have seen it made in County Down by
[283] twisting the hair between the bare thigh and a hand dusted with wood ash, a method practised by 'primitives' in many parts of the world. Two strands of from fifteen to twenty hairs are twisted on each other. (The anglers in the Seine at Paris are also said to prefer a 'crop' made from a grey mare's tail.) To

[1] 'Kinnfaela', *The Cliff Scenery of South-Western Donegal*, 19.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *Antiquity*, 25 (1951), 32–35.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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from 'the troubles' of the early nineteen-twenties. Souterrains have also been used for other illegal activities which were 343 enjoyed irrespective of political party, such as the making of illicit whiskey—poteen—an activity which is not yet entirely [273] suppressed and which called for secrecy. I have more than once been shown specially-made underground hiding-holes where the [674] poteen-makers went to earth when the gaugers were scented.

In the category of temporary shelters we place the wretched 'fever-huts' erected to isolate victims of infectious diseases in [758] the famine years. We cannot wonder that no detailed descriptions are to be found, but the account of a structure of 'turf built up in the form of a cone, with an entrance scarcely large enough for a dog to crawl through'[1] hints that some of these huts presented features of interest to the ethnographer. Temporary windbreaks erected by turf-cutters are also of considerable interest. One which I saw in Co. Fermanagh (Fig. 38)

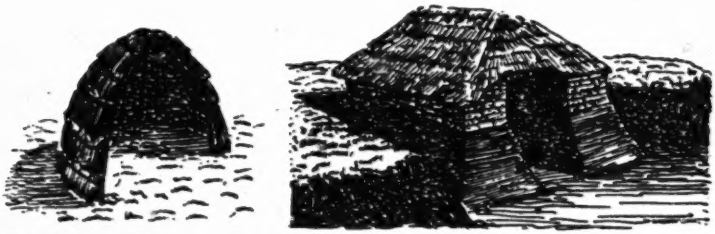


FIG. 38. Bog shelters, Co. Fermanagh. Left, for turf-cutters; right, partly dug out of the bog, for calves.

was built of birch rods bent over and neatly thatched with branches and rushes. The construction of animal shelters in great variety, too, built of sods or wattles, doubtless perpetuates skills once devoted to human habitations. I illustrate in Fig. 39 an outhouse with a solid hipped roof, known as a flat roof.

Unusual, because so far as I know confined to Achill Island, 343 are little soot-houses erected for the special purpose of manu- 387 facturing supplies of soot and ashes as fertilizers. It is probable that we have to deal with a custom which has died out elsewhere and has maintained itself here in insular isolation. It will

[1] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 143.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 387 be recalled that Achill was the last Irish home of booleying, and there may be some connection between the two practices, the soot-houses being the diminutive descendants of the winter dwellings whose roofs, on this theory, were stripped in spring in the days when the whole family migrated to the summer pastures. At any rate the soot-house season runs from October to May, that is the winter half-year. In the Hebrides it was customary to strip the soot-laden thatch of the black-houses annually for use as manure, and the roof was left without a smoke-hole to encourage the deposit of soot. The smoke 'oozes out over the whole roof, giving the house, when seen from a distance, the general appearance of a dung-heap in warm wet weather. The object of the roof is . . . to accumulate soot.'[1]

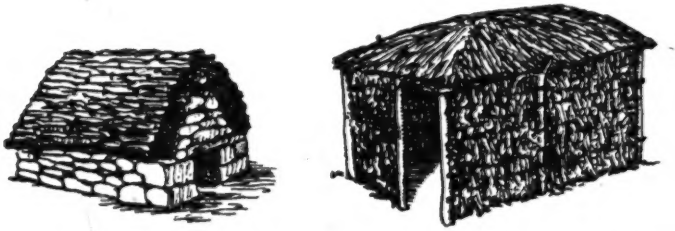


FIG. 39. Soot house, Achill Island; animal shelter with walls of whins and 'flat roof', Co. Cavan.

The soot-huts are rectangular gabled structures, measuring some ten by five feet externally and about eight feet high. They are built either out in the fields, where peat and sods are at hand, or near the farms, in which case they often serve in summer as hen-houses. The low side-walls are of dry-stone construction though when built in the fields they are more usually of sods: the entrance, in the gable, is only some two-and-a-half to three feet high. The roof structure is of the simplest, consisting of a ridge pole against which bits of driftwood serving as rafters rest without ties of any kind, the whole being kept in place by a great thickness of sods laid horizontally, the lowest layer resting on the thick wall-tops. At the end of harvest the huts

[1]A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 53.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

are repaired and re-roofed with sods, and turf fires lit inside 343
are kept smouldering with wet sods until the spring, when the 387
huts are half-full of ashes and the soot-laden roof-sods are ready to collapse. The roof is then broken up and the soot and ashes spread on the ridges as potato manure (Fig. 39).

Although I know of no parallel in other parts of Ireland it 342
seems likely that the custom of removing the roof-covering of the winter-house was once fairly general, at any rate in houses of the old Achill type, which in many details closely resembled the Hebridean black-house. I should be inclined to correlate the custom with the roped style of thatching, which betrays little of the care of other styles and in the old form where the ropes were weighted by hanging stones had a distinctly ephemeral appearance. Where sods were used for walls as well as roofs the whole house would have become a convenient source of fertilizers for the infield. This may be the explanation of the remark made by Dr. Madden that in the south of Ireland 'cottar houses of dirt, sticks and straw were generally removed once a year'.[1] There are indications met with in excavations of houses in Dark Age raths that reconstructions were more frequent than would be justified by ordinary wear and tear. In Sutherland, down to the early nineteenth century, sod-houses were abandoned periodically and pulled down to be utilized as manure, a new hut being erected near by. In this instance the cause was said to be that the accumulation of filth had rendered the place uninhabitable,[2] but this underestimates the tolerance of the Gael. The soot-houses, at any rate, seem to perpetuate old custom, and one thinks back to the earliest days of agriculture when crops were sown in the highly productive soils of newly burnt woodland. Faith in the use of fire persisted longer than the woods. Burning the land, we shall see in Chapter XI, was a very general practice down to the famine years when rough pasture was being reclaimed for potato-growing.

We come now to a group of stone structures built to serve as 343
kilns for drying or burning. The drying-kilns were principally 251
needed for drying corn before it was ground, though flax-drying kilns were also required in the days when the fibre was extracted

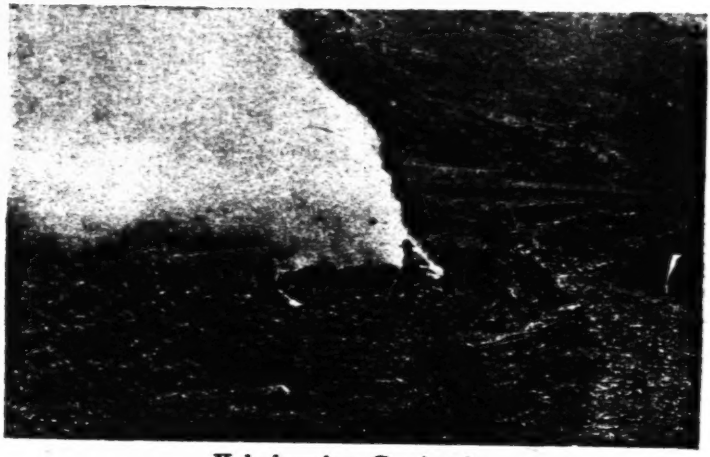
[1]Dr. Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions* (1738).
[2]Quoted in F. T. Smith, *The Land of Britain*, Part 3, Sutherland.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE II

222
133

Kelp gatherers near Fair Head, Co. Antrim.



222
387

Kelp-burning, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 160]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

combined knife and drag found in Connacht has three heavy hooks attached to a strong sickle-shaped blade mounted on a 12-ft. pole (Fig. 73). Powerful long-handled scythes and great hand-rakes with teeth a foot long were used on the south coast. In Donegal the men would wield their long knives from curraghs while the women dragged the weed ashore. 222 413

In the Rosses of west Donegal around 1750 the rents were paid in kelp: any surplus was bartered for 'the two luxuries, spirits and tobacco, enjoyed by men and women alike.'[1] For the lesser weeds growing in shallow water ordinary sickles were employed when the tide was low, but these species made inferior kelp. Yet in some areas, for example Strangford Lough, stones were planted on the shore to grow wrack for kelp burning: Arthur Young commented on this practice in 1776.[2] Old seaweed beds may be seen also in Lough Swilly, Clew Bay, Achill Sound and probably elsewhere. 222 [427] [437]

Today the most remarkable area of cultivated weed is near the mouth of Carlingford Lough in County Down, where at low tide a wide stretch of mud and sand is exposed in Mill Bay. It is grown solely to supply fertilizer for the potato crop. Wrack rights are mentioned in grants of land in County Down as far back as 1506, but the earliest reference I have found to the cultivated weed in Carlingford Lough is in a guidebook of 1846. As we have seen, however, Arthur Young refers to the growing of wrack for kelp-burning in Strangford Lough, and since the best species for kelp grow in deeper water the planting of seaweed beds is not likely to have originated with the kelp industry. Through the second half of last century some 1,100 beds, covering well over a square mile in area, were maintained in Mill Bay, and it was not until the depression between the two world wars that they began to be neglected. Today the use of wrack has almost entirely given way to artificial fertilizers, with a great easement of labour but a loss of annually renewed organic matter in the soil. The wrackbeds, or 'plans', are half-acre rectangles set with rows of boulders a foot or so in diameter, but many beds are subdivided into small 'cuts' for sub-letting, and the Estate Map showing the beds has the 222 387 423

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.
[2] A. Young, *Tour*, 1, 194.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222 minutely fragmented appearance of land held in rundale. Rights
387 of access, by narrow lanes between the beds, were often dis-
423 puted, and there were occasions for fights when as many as a
[578] hundred carts from forty townlands might converge on Mill Bay at low tide. I first heard of the seaweed beds from an Air Force pilot who brought me air photographs of what he thought was submerged farmland: the little rectangular fields of Mourne seemed to march out beneath the sea.[1] In fact they were necessary adjuncts to the arable land, and the rents of up to twenty pounds an acre were often higher than those paid for the fields of coarse sand and gravel which the wrack enriched. An auctioneer told me he had sold a wrackbed of one Irish acre for
[495] £145 not many years ago. Nearly all of the several hundred farmers who had wrack rights here held two or three beds, and each man's plans were scattered so that he had different kinds of weed growing on them: 'knob wrack' close inshore, then 'bladder wrack' and farther out still the 'lazy wrack' whose fronds are submerged at high water even at neaps and which therefore grows faster than the other species.

222 The crop was harvested with knives and sickles between March and June, the bare-footed reapers at the same time lifting, turning and re-setting the heavy boulders which tend to get buried in the sand. Carts too are liable to sink, and when the going is too soft the weed is rafted ashore. It is allowed to float on the incoming tide and a boat dragging a rope pulls the
[501] load together and tows it ashore. Very large rafts, secured by a rope of seaweed, used to be floated ashore on the tide in Mayo. Patrick Knight, describing Ballycroy about 1830, observed that the steersman, armed with a pole, might be seen 'sitting on the heap, roasting his potatoes and shellfish'.[2]

222 The great bulk of the wrack taken all round the coast for
423 manure was driftweed thrown up during storms, but the supply was often supplemented by cutting or pulling weed from the rocks, and in some places there were complicated methods of regulating and distributing the harvest. On a stretch of coast familiar to me in south Down one can pick out strips running out into the sea, demarcated by marked boulders. They were

[1] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 15.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 99.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XIII.

SPADES.

The rich variety of the rural scene is perhaps best illustrated in that most characteristic of Irish implements, the spade. It is worth recalling that the spade-work of immigrant navvies—or "navigators," named after the canal-diggers—was one of Ireland's contributions to England's Industrial Revolution. A visit to city garden-plots will provide a useful introduction to the study of spades, for the countryman insists on his own pattern, and you may play the game of spotting the native heaths of Belfast's or Dublin's retired policemen by identifying the spades of Derry, Fermanagh, Cavan or Clare. Some idea of the variety of tastes catered for can be gained from the output of a Galway spade-factory: including turf spades (Chapter 15) it turns out about 150 shapes of blade.

Obviously it would require prolonged travel and study to record and interpret this fascinating diversity, and to compare the distribution of spade-types with landforms and territorial divisions, with dialects, folk-customs, house-types and other aspects of material culture. But it is possible to give some tentative generalisations which emerge from a preliminary study. The primary division is between the one-eared and the two-eared types (Fig. 61). The former, known as the "loy" or "fack," prevails along the western and southern coasts. It is now unknown in the Six Counties—though the "kib," as it was called, is remembered by a few old men—and is fast disappearing from Donegal and from the Midlands,

Fig. 61.

[p. 113]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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These two-eared spades are always attached to the haft by means of straps about 6 inches long, generally with two rivets: the foot-plates are fastened to the blade by mortice and tenon and to the handle by a drawn-down tongue bent up and nailed between the straps (Fig. 62). A visit to one of the 9 or 10 Irish spade "factories"—there were many more a few decades ago—provides a thrilling illustration of craftsmanship and co-ordination of labour. The five hundredweight tilt-hammer, driven by a water wheel, beats out the red steel in a series of operations under the skilled hand and eye of the spade-maker: between each process the steel must be re-heated, and the interchange of the "moulds" and "plates" between furnace-man and hammer-man goes on without pause, for the "bit" of the hammer must not be allowed to strike without having the hot metal ready on the anvil. In addition to supplying his mate, the furnace-man has to bend over the "fullered mould" and weld and shape it on a small anvil: he must also apply sand and water to the plates if they get overheated, and dip the folded end in dust so that the two straps do not weld together under the hammer. After a period of ceaseless labour and watchfulness a pile of blue-grey drawn plates, their hammer grooves throwing back the glow of the furnace, lies ready for the finishing smith. 412 284 391

He shears them to the desired dimensions—all the measuring is done by eye although there are dozens of different sizes—cuts out the tenons and punches the rivet holes. The points of the straps separate when the ends are clipped, and the socket is now opened up and shaped on a mandrel. Then comes the finishing: the plate is heated once more, hammered into the correct lift and dish, and tempered. Meanwhile lengths of rivets have been cut and the foot-plates drawn down: the ash handle is inserted and riveted, the straps hammered tight against the wood and the foot-plates morticed and nailed on. Four generations of experience lay behind the smith whom I watched recently in a Co. Antrim spade factory; the result was a product of exquisite proportions and economy of structure, the essentials of the country craft. [804]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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We must visit a factory in the south if we wish to see the single-eared "Irish" spade being made. The country smith may still forge or repair an occasional loy, but the trip-hammer does away with so much heavy sledging that most of the work is concentrated in the "factories." Yet, as the amazing variety of patterns demonstrates, there is no tendency towards specialization: the factory has merely taken over the work of dozens of rural smiths. Thus at least five different types of loy are used in Co. Galway alone. The blade may be straight sided, it may taper slightly or it may expand towards the mouth, and like the two-eared spade it may have a cranked or a round lift; but it is always narrow, ranging in width from 3½ to 5 inches. The loy is in fact a specialized implement, adapted for sod-cutting and ridge-making (Chapter 10); it is not designed to turn over dug soil, and like the two-eared spade which has taken over its functions in the north and east, it enters the ground at an angle and not vertically.

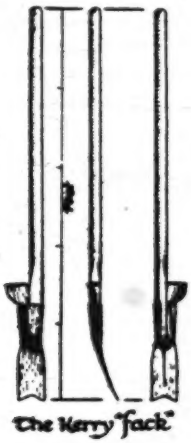

Fig. 63.

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In the south-west, from Clare round to Kilkenny, the "fack" ends in a fish-tail, presumably to facilitate penetration (Fig. 63). In central Galway the loy has a 14 inch

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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412 While it is difficult to estimate the antiquity of the two-eared
184 spade tradition in Ulster and Leinster, its spread into the west has taken place in the last half century. The decline in the use of the loy is symbolic of the disappearance of the old
[178] fashions, and they tend to vanish together because the culture pattern is a closely interwoven web. Thus it was considered in Donegal a century ago that the new iron spades "would be useless," since few workers had shoes: the wooden spade was adapted to the bare feet.

391 The spade-maker is called on to turn out other types of
412 agricultural tools, spades, shovels and forks. There is the very narrow tapered draining spade and the heavy "mountain draining spade" used in the moorland areas of the north and west (Fig. 64): its great "shark's head" blade is 17 inches long and almost as wide. Occasionally he is asked to rough out a flachter (Fig. 85), which the country smith finishes into the required shape, or it may be, in the south-west, a graffan or heavy hoe (Chapter 10). But as the turf-cutting season comes round most of his energies go into the making of turf slanes (Chapter 15). Of shovels there are several different types, generally classified into two shapes, round-pointed and square-pointed: the latter kind is favoured in the west. There is also the tanged shovel of Co. Wexford. The shovels are long-handled, but short handles are used for special purposes. The welding of the socket in the thin hard steel of the shovels is one of the smith's most difficult tasks (Fig. 65).

412 Then there are short and long-handled square-shouldered digging forks with three or with four prongs (Fig. 65), and the round-shouldered manure-forks or graips, the prongs of which may be round, oval, or in old-fashioned work, square. There are drags for unloading manure, for gathering wrack (Fig. 103), for cleaning drains and gathering stones. Hay-forks may be tanged or strap-hafted, with 4-foot or 5-foot handles and so on. Some country-made forks are illustrated in Fig. 66. It may be added that hayforks with wooden prongs cut from the solid have also been used in the past. Some of the loys, like the old Ulster kib, are essentially wooden spades merely shod with iron, and even this was dispensed with in sandy soils. Wooden

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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314 handled variety the story is told that on old turf-cutter at Coolnagoppoge, on seeing his first aeroplane pass overhead, reported that he had seen "the devil riding a flachter!"

314 413 The prepared turf bank may now be cut in one of two ways, either by "breasting" or by digging "underfoot." Different types of spade or "slane" are required according to which method is adopted, and within these two groups of slanes there is a multitude of regional styles and shapes. In breast-work the digger stands facing the turf bank, and thrusts in his spade horizontally, whereas in underfooting he stands on the bank and cuts vertically. Many factors enter into the distribution of these two digging-modes: the nature and grain of the peat, the depth of the face, and the local tradition. I have seen both methods used side by side on the same mountain, but I have also met foot-slanesmen who had never seen a breast-slane and vice-versa. In the thin mountain bogs the underfoot method is customary, while breasting is favoured in the deep lowland mosses. The turf slane is clearly a specialized version of the narrow loy, with the addition of a side wing to cut out the turf at one stroke. The old styles take the handle in bent-over flanges like the loy, but the new fashions of "factory" spade have borrowed the straps of the "English" digging spade (Fig. 86). Slanes were formerly made by the country smith, and the spade-factories which now forge them must cater for the demands and tastes of innumerable provinces of local culture which correspond, if one may hazard a guess, with old territorial units such as the baronies.

Fig. 86.

One factor in the varying shapes is the angle made by the cutting edge of the wing with the mouth of the blade: it may be at right-angles but is more likely to be set backward or forward at an angle which may be as much as 23°. In the breast-slane it tends to be set back (Fig. 89), while in the foot-slane it may be set forward at a sharp angle (Fig. 86). The edge of the wing measures anything from 4½ to 7 inches: the mouth of the spade averages 4½ inches but I have seen them up to 6 inches. Details vary so much, in fact, that to generalize is dangerous. The top or back of the wing is treated

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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church festivals and at wakes, and though they are now bought 354
they are made by hand in a few towns by chandlers who carry 373
on a medieval tradition. One Dublin firm, established in 1488,
manufactures large church candles of beeswax by methods which [394]
can have changed little with the centuries. In the home the
candles were supported in wrought-iron holders or stuck into a
turf by the fireside. Tall standard holders, often with adjustable
fittings, were designed to give light to the weaver at the loom, [286]
and they are most typically found in Ulster (Fig. 28). The fine
embroidery which occupied the women in the linen districts
must have imposed a great strain on the eyes: there are stories
of a single candle serving as a central source of light for a
ring of seamstresses, each of whom held her work against a [416]
bottle full of water which acted as a magnifier.

In Ireland, as throughout Atlantic Europe, the dresser ranks 352
as the most important and elaborate piece of furniture in the
kitchen, and its position is prescribed by custom. It stands 353
either against the side wall or against the partition between
kitchen and bedroom. Since this partition is of no great antiquity we can be sure that the original place of the dresser was against the side-wall and that it has developed from, and taken the place of, shelves built into or attached to the side-wall. In part of Ulster it is referred to as 'the shelf'. I have already mentioned the tiers of stone shelves set in the wall which are preserved in the deserted houses of the Slievemore cluster on Achill Island. It is believed that the fashion of open crockery shelves was diffused from the court sideboards of the later Middle Ages in France and England, and it may be surmised that the wooden dresser was readily accepted in Celtic lands to replace wall shelves, from Elizabethan times on. The adoption of delph and tea-drinking in the eighteenth century no doubt accelerated the spread of the dresser, which had become, by that time, an essential part of Irish kitchen furniture (Plate 1). The corner-cupboard, evolving in much the same way from corner-shelves, is another article of furniture with a north-west European distribution. Similarly the coffer or store-chest spread through western Europe from the later Middle Ages onwards, replacing skin, straw, hollowed wood, or basket-work containers.

 [Text continues on p. 93]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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172 Antrim, and excavation in the beaches at Larne and elsewhere has revealed the tools at depths which show that he remained in the area throughout the beach-forming Atlantic period. Some have conjectured that his flint knives and choppers were used for wood-working and boat-building. When fishing failed he had recourse to shell-fish, for the warm seas which replaced the Arctic waters had brought great quantities of edible molluscs to our shores. From the beginning, then, the north-east, the region of the Loughs, was the bridgehead by which overseas movements reached Ireland.

When at length, perhaps under pressure from further incursions from Scotland, the coast-dwellers moved on, it was in the Bann valley, by Lough Neagh and other rivers and lakes that they settled down; and on coastal sites, near the river mouths that the salmon seek, we find, buried in sand, the relics of their "kitchen middens." In places such as the caves at Ballintoy, Co. Antrim, fisherfolk and shell-gatherers continued to cling to their old life century after century, and there can be little doubt, as anthropological research is beginning to show, that the racial characters of these original Irishmen survive in many a coastal area to this day. Readers are referred to papers by Professor T. Walmsley and J. M. Mogey in the *Ulster Journal of Archæology*. The results of a wider survey conducted by the Harvard University Mission to Ireland are awaited.

By low watersheds and lakes the fisherfolk seem to have found their way to the Barrow, to the Shannon and the teeming Corrib of Galway, so that the four provinces of Ireland have a substratum of the oldest stocks in the population. It is tempting to think of the Irish curraghs (Chapter 16) as a relic of this culture: they were covered with hide until
● [396] recently, and it is noteworthy that even in Lough Neagh, where the curragh has not been recorded in historic times, the fishermen speak of giving their boats a new "hide" when they repair them. Wooden foot traps for catching deer (the so-called otter-traps) which have been found in the bogs and which are figured on some of the Celtic crosses, are presumably

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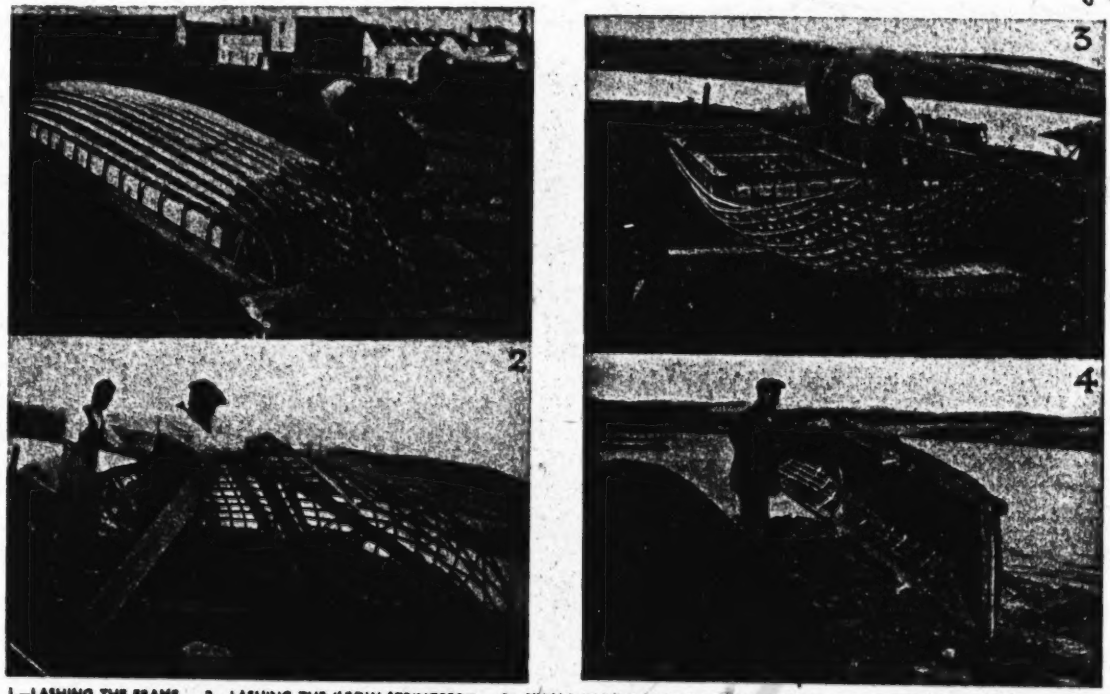

1.—LASHING THE FRAME 2.—LASHING THE "BOW STRINGERS" 3.—FIXING COUPLE-ENDS TO THE GUNWALE 4.—COVERED AND READY FOR USE

Plate VI STAGES IN THE MAKING OF A SHEEPHAVEN CURRAGH, Co. Donegal.

[Facing p.144]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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501 some twenty years ago, but it was not so. I find that W. F. Wakeman was informed that the two curraghs which he sketched on the Boyne in 1848 were 'probably the last which would be constructed for use on those waters'.[1]

Fortunately James Hornell has published a careful study of
● 396 *British Coracles and Irish Curraghs*,[2] and the following account is based on his book, supplemented by personal observation. On the level sward—his rustic shipyard—the boat-builder first marks out, with string and pegs, two semicircles of 2 ft. radius, their centres being about twenty inches apart. This will give the basket a mouth measuring 6 ft. by 4 ft., a size determined by the average size of a hide. Joining the two circles into an ellipse, he thrusts into the ground along this line, at intervals of about nine inches, long pointed hazel rods which have been cut the previous autumn after the leaf-fall and allowed to season (Fig. 77). They are pushed about six inches into the ground, at an angle so that they slope outwards somewhat. At one end, the bow-to-be, an extra rod is inserted on either side to give strength where the weight of the kneeling paddleman will fall. Against the ground a strong gunwale of withies is woven on to the rods, and above it a skirting of lighter withies. Opposite rods on each side are now bent over and their thin ends pushed into the ground to secure them temporarily. The fore-and-aft rods are similarly bent over and heavy stones placed on the basket, their weight distributed so as to make a symmetrical frame with the top (that is the bottom of the curragh) as nearly flat as possible. At this stage two or three days are allowed for the frame to set. Then the crossings of the rods are lashed with a continuous twine and again the frame is left weighted. The thin ends of the rods are now broken off at the last lashings in such a way as to leave the bark projecting to prevent the ends from damaging the hide. This, which has meanwhile been softening in the river, is sewn on to the gunwale with twine, the basket having been pulled out of the ground and inverted. The thwart is fixed in position amidship, its ends suspended from the gunwale with withy ties, and withy braces are laced across the stern portion to form a rest for the

[1] W. F. Wakeman, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1872), 76.
[2] J. Hornell, *British Coracles and Irish Curraghs* (1938).

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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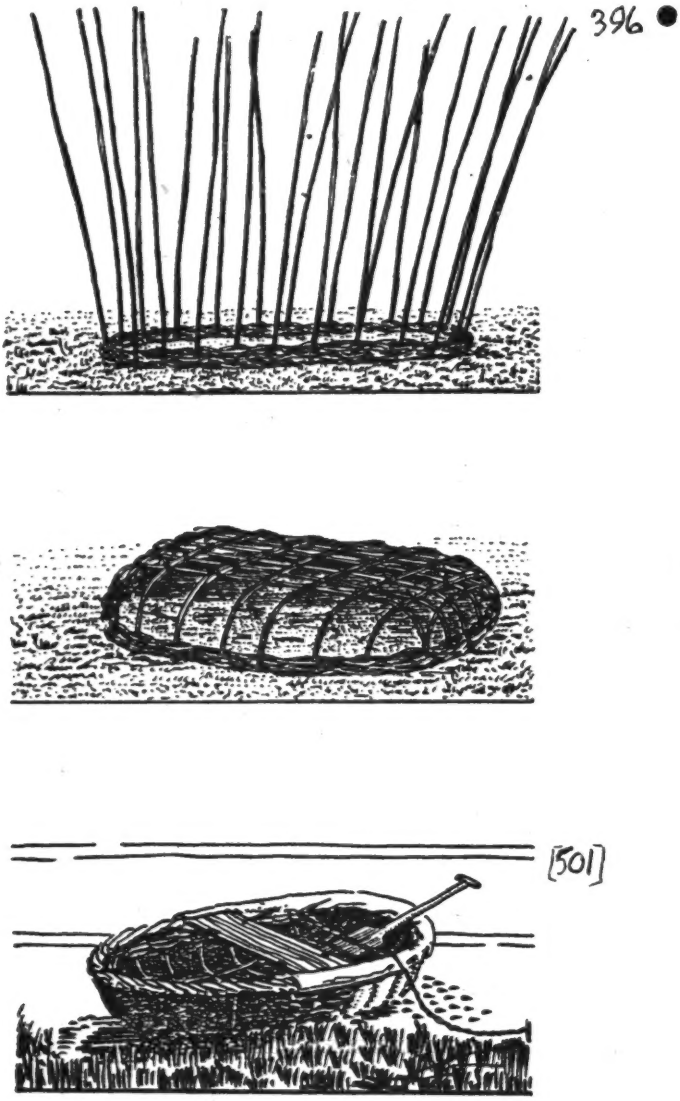

FIG. 77. The Boyne curragh: construction of basket.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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396 net. Sitting on the thwart, the boat-builder now drives in the projecting rod-ends to tighten the skin, and trims them to within an inch of the gunwale. Finally he weaves on a protecting mouth of hazel rods which he binds to the gunwale and covers, behind the thwart, with canvas to save the net from damage as it is played out.

The curragh was well adapted to the draft-net salmon fishery
501 at the Oldbridge weir on the Boyne. The following account is
226 based on notes made at Oldbridge in 1947: 'Every half hour of daylight during the season, the curragh makes its brief trip with a draft-net around the pool of water where the salmon lie below the weir. Its virtue lies in its lightness and ease of handling—though not for the novice—in the method of paddling over the bows which allows it to keep close to the banks, and especially in the shallow draught which enables it to pass right under the weir without being swept down by the under-current. The paddler kneels in the deep bows and draws the boat along with rapid strokes alternately to left and right. The net-man sits on the thwart facing backwards and plays out the net, the end of which is held by a third man on the bank. Having reached the far end of the weir the paddler races downstream and returns across the current to join the third man and close the net. The salmon are dispatched with a heavy 'priest' here called the killing-stick.' The fishermen still operate two rectangular fishtraps below the weir, one near each bank, composed of iron gratings which have probably replaced wicker traps since they are known as 'hurdles'. The salmon are taken out with a landing net. A weir has probably been worked continuously at this spot since the Middle Ages, for the monks of Mellifont Abbey operated a weir here.[1]

It comes as a shock, after seeing the little basket-curragh of
501 the Boyne, to recall that the legendary histories tell of much trafficking across the seas in splendid curraghs which carried sails. *The Voyage of Teigue* was made in a curragh constructed of forty oxhides and fitted with twenty-five thwarts.[2] Allowance must be made for picturesque exaggeration, but there is no doubt that the monks of the Irish Church went far afield in

[1]A. E. J. Went, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1953), 18–33.
[2]Standish O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica* (1892), 386.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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501 whether seal-skin or the hide of a cow or horse, were untanned. I can add little to the historical account given by Hornell, but [281] it should be noticed that the paddle curragh, covered with horsehide, was common in Erris, Co. Mayo, around 1830[1] and that, to judge from an entry in a Rathlin Island account book of 1760—'paid for one mare's hide for the boat, 1s. and 6d.'—the paddle curragh was used there also.

501 The long rowing curragh with its high pointed nose is widely distributed on the west coast from Donegal to Kerry, 39% and its seaworthy qualities are known to many from its dramatic participation in such films as *Man of Aran* and *Shark Island*. This vessel too is built bottom upwards, but the frame is pegged, not into the ground but into a strong wooden gunwale frame, single or double, which Hornell believes was borrowed, along with the fixed thwarts which give lateral rigidity, from plank-built boats. Yet the method of pivoting the oar on a single tholepin, originally perhaps a strong projecting rib of the curragh frame, rather than in a rowlock, suggests that the rowing curragh has native forerunners. There are many variations in constructional details from one district to another but nearly all the vessels are now built of laths and all are covered with tarred canvas. An emergency repair is contrived by an operation which, if you are a timid passenger, looks like 'burning your boats': the curragh is inverted, the tar around the hole is set alight and a calico patch stuck on when the tar has run. The curraghs are rowed by two, three or four men, and the largest are said to have a carrying capacity of two tons. In Kerry they are masted to carry a small lug sail. A feature of [777] many curraghs is a small bottle of holy water, a protection against misfortune, suspended on a string in the bows.

The looms of the long narrow oars overlap so that the oars-501 man pulls cross-handed. A heavy wooded counterweight, the bool, is attached near the loom, and the oar pivots by means of a round hole in the bool on a single wooden peg, the tholepin, driven into the gunwale (Fig. 78). This method of rowing is found on many lake and river boats in Ireland, perhaps es-[171] pecially in those areas, such as the Shannon and Lough Neagh,

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 56. See also *Pococke's Tour* 1752, 64.

 [Text continues on p. 240]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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raghs—and would not be out of place in the fiords. In fact 501
during the nineteenth century, and perhaps from earlier times,
many yawls were imported unfinished from Norway, carrying [439]
only the bottom (garboard) strakes hollowed from a thick
plank. Local materials, always scarce in Ireland in recent [396]
centuries, were utilized where possible, holly for the keel (it
wears smooth and slides well on beach gravel) ropes of bog fir,
and a 'whin root' for the tiller. In Kerry the entire vessel was
sometimes built from bog fir: for this purpose as for making
roof-frames it had the advantage of impermeability.[1] For off-
shore fishing in the Irish Sea the lugger—a name now applied
to the motor drifter which has taken its place—developed in
the nineteenth century under the influence of visiting 'nickies',
the Manx name for Cornish lug-sailed herring boats, said to
have been given because so many of their crews were named
Nicholas. On the west coast the Galway hookers are now, des-
pite their name, used almost entirely for carrying turf and live-
stock. The lug-sailed pookhauns used for fishing are a variant
of the Irish Sea yawl, of clumsy construction thanks to limited
resources and unsuitable building materials.

On many inland loughs and larger rivers dug-out boats not
much different from those of the Bronze Age seem to have
continued to be made into the seventeenth century and probably
even later in places. The most serious problem to be solved in 396
hollowing out a solid log is how to keep the sides and bottom
of the vessel of even thickness. Some of the ancient dug-outs
recovered from the Irish lakes and rivers show that their makers
had availed themselves of a method which is practised today
in parts of Indonesia. The method is to bore holes through the
shell and plug the holes with pegs of the right length to serve
as gauges. The plugged holes observed in the bottom of many
an Irish dug-out have been explained as drainage holes, but
the pegs would in that case have been left protruding, and one
hole would surely have sufficed. As the country lost its forests it
must have become difficult to obtain trees of the right size and
kind, especially oak, for boat making, and by the eighteenth
century, it seems, plank boats retaining some features of the
dug-out were substituted. Around 1800 the salmon-fishing cots 501

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 89.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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493 now of iron but formerly of wood, that rotates with them. The wheels are so small—little more than two feet in diameter—that the floor of the car has to be raised up behind, and it carries such a small load that the number of horses in Ireland is said to have been considerably reduced when the spoke-wheeled cart took its place. In the 18th century "wheel-cars were used throughout the kingdom" in town and country alike: the Dublin "noddies" were of this type, and according to illustrations published in the early 18 hundreds the driver rode on the horse's rump. The low-backed car is now generally fitted with sides to make a "box car," but in former days it carried a kish of the kind used with the slide car. It should be noticed that until roads and tracks were [491] metalled—mostly within the last two centuries—the disc wheel had the advantage over the spoked wheel in soft loose ground. Even "superior farmers" in Donegal had only low-back cars as late as 1821, and we may repeat the statement made in Chapter 6 that there was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one Donegal parish in 1837. The slide [177] car and the creel did all the carrying. In the Glens of Antrim, too, the wheel-car was apparently something of a novelty about that time. An old man told me that his grandmother remembered the first car seen in her valley.

It must not be assumed from this that wheeled vehicles [401] were unknown in ancient Ireland: the literature suggests that they were in regular use but doubtless confined to the wealthier classes and districts. On analogy with other parts of north-western Europe the wheel was already known in Bronze Age Ireland. It is wrong to assume that the wheel was "invented" by the Irish peasants who adapted it to their slide cars. The disc and in turn the spoked wheel are ancient discoveries which came into use gradually as social conditions and road-making improved, and it was natural that the slide car should keep its form though lifted off the ground. Although we cannot accept the theory of local "evolution" for the spoke-wheeled cart, it is none the less clear that local experience controlled the details of its construction when it became

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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rear ends of the shafts, which are, however, left projecting so as to take the weight of the tilted car when it is not in use. It is these projecting shafts or 'trams' which give the wheel-car the appearance of a slide-car on wheels and seem to confirm the suggested evolution (Fig. 55). 493

In eighteenth-century Ireland possession of a wheel-car was a mark of social distinction, and entire districts were without wheeled vehicles of any kind. Down to the middle of the nineteenth century it was considered 'respectable' to go to 'meetings' in a wheel-car in the Presbyterian parts of north Antrim. In the course of the nineteenth century, as the larger spoke-wheeled cart was adopted by prosperous farmers, the little wheel-car sought refuge in the poor mountainous districts where we find it clinging precariously today. As late as the 1914–18 war one was in use on a farm on Black Mountain, within the city boundary of Belfast (Pl. 8, 2). 493 554

The wheel-car has its place in history because it was the ancestor of the nineteenth century jaunting-car which Lloyd Praeger rightly lists as one of the essentially native Irish products.[1] The platform of the wheel-car, to which a box body or a wicker-work creel was secured when goods were being carried, became a seat, covered with a straw mat, when the vehicle was used for social occasions. The passengers sat on each side, back to back, their feet dangling near the ground or resting on a hay-rope slung fore and aft, which could accommodate any length of leg. By the end of the eighteenth century this 'side-car', fitted with wooden foot-rests, had become a standard hiring vehicle, and it needed only the substitution of spoked for solid wheels, the addition of springs and consequent alterations of height to give the Irish jaunting-car which Bianconi adopted in 1815 and later developed into the four-wheeled long-car.[2] There can be no doubt that 'the Bians', traversing the highways and byways of the whole country, made a contribution to the social and economic life of Ireland which was, in its day, as important as that of the railway in the latter part of the century or the motor bus in the twentieth century. 493

The spoked wheel, which throughout the eighteenth century 401 177

[1]R. Ll. Praeger, *The Way that I Went* (1937), Ch. I.
[2]I. J. Herring, *U.J.A.*, 3 (1940), 115–22; *U.J.A.*, 7 (1944), 42–46.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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493 was reserved for coaches and the carriages of the rich, was popu-
177 larized by its adoption for farm carts (Scots carts) under the
[401] improving zeal of landlords towards the end of the century. In Ulster, which has always looked to Scotland for its inspiration, the Scots cart was first used for transporting linen, and one thinks of it spreading along the improved roads and being copied and adapted to local needs and traditions. Around Lough Erne, for instance, one reads of large one-horse carts, adopted by carriers in the early nineteenth century, which had 'trams' or rearshafts four feet long,[1] and these projections, surely a reminiscence of the long slide-car runners, are still characteristic of the 'flat' carts of the west and south-west (Fig. 60).

493 The Scots cart with its four-foot wheels was able to take twice the load of the native wheel-car, and as industry increased and roads were improved through the nineteenth century it drove the block-wheeled cars off the roads. But for rough work in the fields and bogs various types of slipe were preferred: the cart
[554] was little used for harvesting and its possession was to some extent a sign of prestige. (Unlike the native car, the woodwork
[531] of the cart was and is brightly painted, usually in red and blue.) The slipe and slide-car were better adapted to moist ground, to undrained fields and the uneven surface of ridge and furrow. As roads and farm practice were improved it was a new version of Scots cart (Fig. 60) which ultimately drove out the slide-car and the wheel-car in Ulster. It seems that the older varieties of Irish carts were derived from the Leith cart of the eastern lowlands of Scotland.[2] The body consisted of little more than a slatted platform without fixed sides and ends. This 'flat cart', as distinct from the 'box cart', is the usual pattern of farm cart in the west of Ireland and, fitted with springs, is the common hawker's cart. As a farm cart it suits the small farmer because it can be used for a variety of purposes by fitting different kinds of sides, for example tall slatted 'crates' for carrying turf.

493 Towards the middle of the nineteenth century there was evolved, in Lanarkshire and the neighbouring counties, the box
177 cart with upright panelled sides perhaps derived from the
531

[1] L. Atthill, *Recollections of an Irish Doctor* (1911), 44.
[2] R. L. Edgeworth, *An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages* (1813).

 [Text continues on p. 178]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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354 washed jambs of a stone chimney (Fig. 19) the simple wrought-iron crane has the simple beauty of fitness to purpose which most hand-made things possess. The smith rarely attempted the decorative scrolls which were more suited to light objects such as oatcake toasters. From the cranes must hang the mighty iron pots, some with a capacity of 25 gallons, to hold food for man and beast. One hears of examples which were [406] literally 'cranes', fitted with a windlass and chain to lift pots on and off the fire. Such capacious vessels could not have come into use had the fire not been at floor level.

The adjustable pot-hanger which hooks on to the arm of the crane is a simple but effective device for adjusting the height of the hanging pot (Fig. 20). Like so many of the culture-elements we are describing in this book, it apparently belongs to the Atlantic fringes of Europe. While it could be a medieval or later introduction to Ireland, research may show that it is a Celtic trait (fire-irons are a ritual feature of early Celtic cultures) which has found its last refuge in the open hearths of the west. The crane and other fire-irons and the very soot that [372] clings to them have been regarded with superstitious reverence by virtue of their association with fire. Soot carried in the pocket, [484] for example, gave protection on a journey. More ancient in origin than the crane is the hanging chain suspended from a crook-stick and terminating in a movable pot-hook (crook). From existing examples one could work out a plausible evolutionary sequence of hangings from the roof-suspension which can still be seen in the black-houses of the Hebrides. The sequence begins with a wooden peg stuck high in the back wall of the fire, giving way to a transverse bar set parallel to the wall in the smoke canopy, which might in turn become the arm of the crane. These crook-sticks are said to have been made of holly. The long chain of the first example certainly gives more 'play' than the short suspension from a chimney bar, but the peg is more inaccessible and this supports the contention that it is a survival of the long hanging from the roof-timbers over a chimneyless central hearth.

Pots and pans and other hearth-gear we shall discuss in the next chapter, but here we should notice some further architectural fittings of the partitioned fireside. On one side of the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 As regards the smaller crops "the small farmers show a distinct preference for cabbage and rye. . . ."[6]

"Poultry are influenced more than any other class of livestock by size of the farm. . . . They are nine times as dense on holdings of 1 to 30 acres as on holdings over 200 acres. . . . counties densest in poultry coincide with the counties densest in small holdings. . . ."[7]

231 Pigs, however, "seem to be influenced more by densities of tillage and of milch cows than by size of holdings. . . . The Southwestern Counties [Clare is one of them] have dense pig herds and the largest bacon factories."[8]

241 407 The difference reflects itself likewise in the distribution of agricultural implements and machinery over the two types of farm. The figures, dating from 1917,[9] are two decades old, but, in spite of the subsequent increase in mechanization, Irish farming is little given to abundant use of machines, and proportions hold much as at that time. In the words of the Report in discussing the tables it presents, giving numbers of farm implements and machines, enumerating ploughs, harrows, turnip and mangel sowers, corn binders, mowers and reapers, horse-drawn hayforks, and potato diggers per thousand acres of ploughed land or specific crop, on various sized holdings:

> The figures rise regularly to a maximum (in the column representing holdings of 50 to 100 acres) and then fall away regularly. Small figures for the small holdings presumably mean that the less efficient implements are used, (the spade in place of the plough, the scythe instead of the mower), not that co-operation . . . exists to any appreciable extent.[10]

That large holders do not proportionately increase their use of such implements and machines after the 50 to 100 acre maximum is reached lies in the fact that "the small

[6] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, pp. xxvi, xxvii.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*, p. lv.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. lvi. We shall see that this statement is not entirely accurate, though there is no large-scale village coöperation as in Balkan and Slavic lands.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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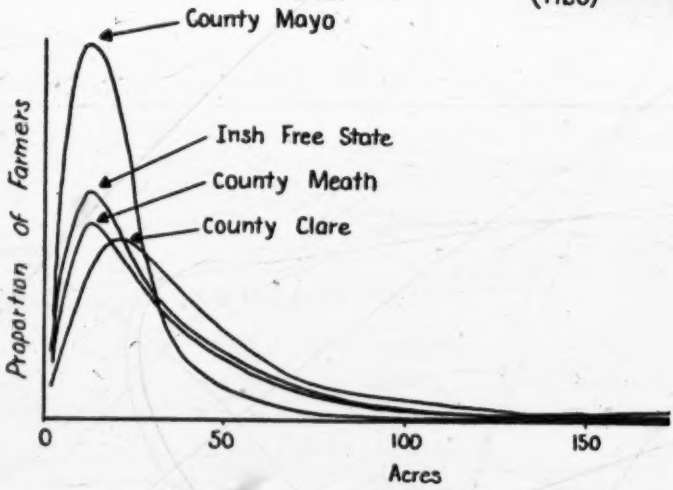
figures for the largest size holdings show that the machines on the smaller farms were more than sufficient for the type of agriculture carried on."[11] For instance, on farms of 30–50 acres there were 137 ploughs to every 1,000 acres of ploughed land. But much less than half that number were 241 407

FIGURE 2

Proportion of Farmers on each size holdings (1926) [162]



sufficient for the same acreage of ploughed land on holdings over 500 acres. The difference reflects itself statistically not only in the goods produced but in the tools and techniques used.

More important, however, for an understanding of the social behavior involved, is a further great difference to be seen in the numbers of persons living upon the various sized farms. The numbers of persons supporting themselves upon the small holdings are much greater than those upon 241 162

[11] *Ibid.*

221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
221 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips
241 and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it
[492] has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

476 lies began to save the hay, mowing it, letting it dry, and
246 stacking it as soon as possible, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six to eight foot haycocks. After several weeks it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. There was a great deal of interest and much comment back and forth over the progress of the various families, the probable weather, and the yield of the various meadows. The men seemed to feel a general rivalry to do their work
[407] well and quickly. About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows as quickly as possible, working from earliest morning as long as light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and with that of boys from the families who had no machines of their own. At each subsequent stage of the harvesting, a boy or young man not a member of the family whose meadow was being worked could be seen giving his labor in aid; he took his place at meals during the day.

The mowing done, the farmer then took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed the meadows belonging to his friend. In one instance a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others; in another, of two. Certain meadows were full-handed enough not to require extra hands, and in five cases no help was given, though the mowing and stacking took a very long time with them
[589 in comparison to the others, and they were obviously short-
609] handed. Two of these were bachelors who lived alone, and two more were the "strangers." Two other families had insufficient meadow of their own and were forced to buy
[437] hay on the so-called "conacre" system (buying the hay as it stands and reaping it oneself within a stipulated time).

Here then was an example of an important agricultural operation undertaken by the local community in which provision was made (except in five or six cases) for effective coöperation over and above the usual family economy. This is not an isolated instance; in Luogh it has been the practice

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER X.

SEEDTIME.

Except in a few districts where winter wheat is grown the 241
farmer's year may be said to begin in spring when, from 221
February on, the land is ploughed or dug for the new crops. Several arguments are advanced against autumn ploughing—that the land is too wet and that the winter destroys the seed-bed—but as with many other things the preference is best explained by deep-rooted custom. So long as the land was held in rundale autumn ploughing was out of the question since the stock had the run of the whole townland after Hallowe'en.

We have very little information about old Irish ploughs. 241
Owing to the fact that they were made almost entirely of wood 407
archæology cannot help us much, but shaped stones that may have been shares and coulters have been found, and plough-irons do sometimes turn up. The discovery by Dr. O'Neill Hencken of a large iron coulter in the Ballinderry crannog shows that a heavy plough necessitating a big team had reached Co. Westmeath by the 10th century A.D. Pipe-rolls of the 13th century refer to plough teams of 8 oxen in Co. Meath: this was the normal complement under the English three-field system. At the other end of the scale, as it were, there survived into living memory along the west coast the custom of attaching the horse to the plough or harrows by [492] the tail, and although the practice was severely condemned it had the advantage that the horse would stop if the plough

[p.87]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 407 [492] struck a rock, thus saving the share, the traces and the ploughman from injury. The tying of the tail-hair to the traces, which were commonly of sugán or fir rope, required a difficult knot known in later days to very few. This undoubtedly ancient practice seems to have been linked with other customs such as walking backwards before the plough horses, burning the corn in the straw, and plucking or clipping wool from the sheep whenever it was required. It appears that we have in this group of survivals an older culture-laver overlaid by newer methods some of which are themselves of high antiquity. There is some evidence that the original simpler wooden plough mentioned below, together with the clod-breaker and the winnowing tray (Chapter 14) belong to the older layer, whereas the improved wooden plough, the harrow and the flail are later arrivals.

English visitors of the 18th century and the writers of the Statistical Accounts published by the Royal Dublin Society have given many particulars of the varying practices of a century and a half ago. From them we select a few observations. The method of ploughing in Co. Clare was to use four horses abreast, the driver walking backwards between the two middle horses. This is also described as "the old method" in Co. Roscommon. Four oxen were employed in Co. Dublin and Co. Tipperary, "never less than four oxen or four horses" in Kilkenny, six in Meath, three in Fermanagh and two in King's County. The large teams of some regions may imply that co-aration had at one time been practised. [476 171] The four horses of the north Antrim plough-team were contributed or "pooled" by four farmers under the system of "morrowing" or "neighbour dealing," which finds ready parallels in Scotland. In Co. Clare this pooling custom is known as "cooring," and in other parts as "milling." The Irish farm horse, it should be remembered, is a small light breed: except near large towns heavy cart horses are rarely seen.

Nevertheless in the more backward parts the two horse plough seems to have been general, as it is to-day, and it has been supposed that the two-ox plough was standard in early

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Celtic times. I have never seen the wooden plough in use, but I have attempted to reconstruct a drawing (Fig. 43) with the help of discarded specimens and descriptions given by men who have worked with them, and I find that my sketch closely resembles an example in the National Museum of Ireland which I have since examined. It consists of a short "head" fitted with an iron share or sock attached by means of folded flanges like the turf spade or the loy, and also shod with an iron sole-shoe. Into the head is morticed the main handle, in such a way that its left side forms a straight line with the head and with the straight side of the sock. To the main handle are fastened both the "wee handle" and the long "beam" which in turn is keyed to the head and carries the coulter. Finally a block of wood known as the rest is secured to the right side of the head and has above it a nine-inch mould board. The plough horses had no bits or reins, and the outfit needed two men, one to hold and one to drive. It was often necessary for a third hand to walk alongside "with a strong stick bearing on the beam to keep the plough in the ground."

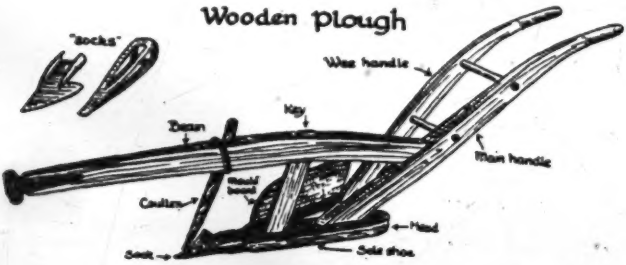

Fig. 43.

The wooden plough was lighter than the all-iron plough, and was considered to break the earth better than the smooth share and curved breast of the swing plough which took its place, but it did not effectively turn the sods: the so-called mould-board did little more than prevent some of the soil from falling back into the furrow. Yet this is the "new wooden plough" which in Donegal replaced only a century

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 ago a still simpler plough described as a " crooked stick armed
●407 with a bit of iron," which must have been in no way different, apart from " the bit of iron," from the plough of the Bronze Age. In fact there were wide areas where a plough of any
[412] kind was practically unknown, and it must be admitted that in the small stoney fields of the west the spade is much more serviceable. It is still the only implement used on hundreds of small farms, and at best the spade had to supplement the old types of plough around the headlands and among the stones and rocks. Moreover the wooden plough left the ground so uneven that lumps had to be broken with a maul or " mell " (Fig. 44) and holes filled in with the spade to prevent the seed being " lost." This process was known in Co. Antrim as " mannering." Cross-ploughing seems to be an old Irish custom and helps to explain why the field system is rectangular in contrast to the long strips of ploughland associated with the heavy English wheeled plough.

Fig. 44.

In preparing ground whether for corn or potatoes the practice was to plough the land in narrow ridges varying in width from about 4 to 12 sods (say 3½ to 10 feet) according to the depth and nature of the soil. The furrow or " sheugh " between the ridges would be some two feet wide. This was scraped with the plough but not turned, and it provided the earth for shovelling on the ridges after the seed had been sown. " An old ridge in the ground," runs an Irish saying, " outlives three yews " ; and indeed ancient cultivation ridges can be seen at all but the highest levels and have been observed underneath bogs when they are cut away. The plough ridges

Fig. 45.

Old cultivation ridges and remains of rath, Scrabo, Co. Down.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 246 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, [493] which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently [407] old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

246 In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. [171] The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to [476] hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(C.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Doghertys, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(D.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(E.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dennistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. 463 241 There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on [351] the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a [412] two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct.

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts [407] in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121
178
[412]
[415]
[407]

FIG. 1. 'The toothed sickle (1), the flail (2), the one-eared spade (4), the clod-breaking mallet (5), and seek-rake (7), the upright churn (6), and the three-legged pot (3), can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life.'

district to another. The interest of these relics is enhanced when one discovers parallels among simple societies in distant parts of the world.

These ancient diversities are being ironed out at an increasing rate, and the opportunity of seeing and, what is more important, placing on record these age-old crafts and rites will soon pass. The wonder is that so many have persisted through the political, economic and social upheavals of the last 150 years. During that period the steady decline of the Gaelic language resulted in the loss of a great deal of information on local and regional life and of a vast store of oral literature, in which the lore of an ancient civilization was enshrined. The scientist must regard this loss as a tragedy comparable to that suffered by the historian in the disastrous burning of the Dublin Four Courts in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

234 407 Bad luck could not always be avoided, but at least it was desirable to make the toil less wearisome, and to this end a number of ingenious fittings were applied to the churn staff. Most of the examples I have seen, in the north-east, depend on the recoil of a strong spring to lift the staff, and they may well have been evolved from a spring pole, such as is used for the pole lathe, attached to the roof timbers.[1] Other devices enabled the staff to be moved in both directions by an arrangement of levers hinged to a couple-baulk. These engines, which have almost entirely gone out of use, were known as glaiks (Fig. 31).

[415]

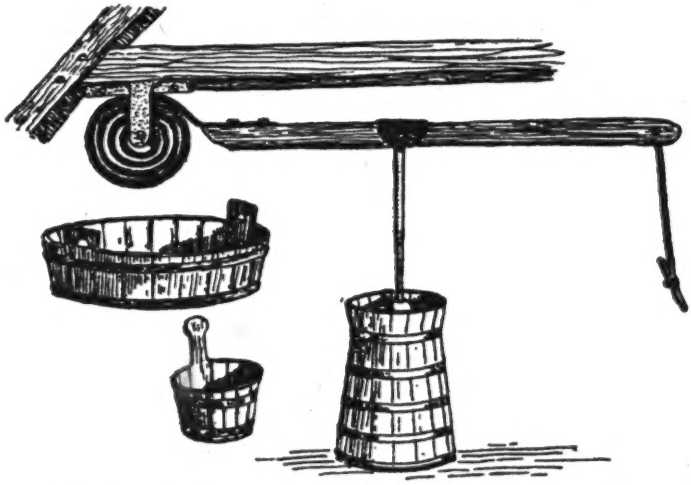

FIG. 31. Glaiks for churning, Co. Down, with milk 'keeler' and piggin, Co. Donegal.

353 788 Here we may mention other things which were hung from the roof timbers: in the more prosperous homes sides of bacon and portions of the autumn-killed ox, the mart; in poorer houses the salted ling or other 'kitchen'. And there was a strange custom of keeping in the roof, to bring luck to the livestock, part of a carcase, such as an animal's leg. This undoubtedly had its origin in the days when living-room and byre were under

[1]For another device, fitted to the churn, see my *Mourne Country*, Fig. 84.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLOUGH AND SPADE

412 The Irish spade is not a digging implement: it is essentially a ridge-maker or hand-plough, adapted to the business of undercutting and turning the sod. Its narrow bent blade is ill fitted to the lifting of soil, and for this purpose the long-handled shovel is used, an efficient implement for lifting loose earth and placing it with precision where required, for example to fill holes on the ridges. The Irish spade is more specialized and more primitive than the 'common or garden' English spade (Fig. 41).

● 407 412 The evidence of the Irish Law Texts and the discovery of plough coulters on sites of pre-Norman date show that heavy

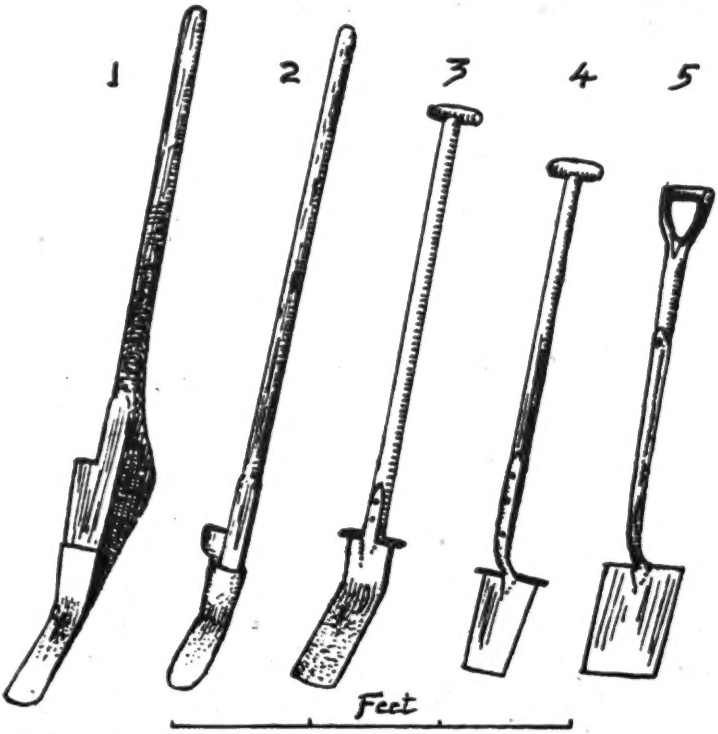

FIG. 41. Spades. The five examples form an approximate evolutionary series. (1) Loy, Co. Leitrim. (2) One-eared spade, Kerry. (3) Two-eared bent ridging spade, Fermanagh. (4) Treaded garden spade, Wexford. (5) English spade

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ploughs were known in parts of Celtic Ireland, but the light plough or *ard* almost certainly prevailed, and it is unlikely that ploughs of any kind were employed outside the 'few favoured acres' of the infield. A light plough, at any rate, would be unfit to break the tough sod of the outfield, which was allowed to rest for long periods. Even today the answer I have been given when I have asked ridgemakers in old outfield why they were using spades has been: 'Tis too tough for the plough!' Ploughing 'by the tail', similarly, becomes intelligible only if one envisages it as restricted to infield cultivation. The iron plough with curved mould board did not reach the outlying corners of the country until late in the nineteenth century, and down to the time of the famine iron ploughs were used only in progressive areas where there were improving landlords. The prototype of these ploughs was the Scottish two-horse swing plough invented by James Small about the year 1765. By the end of the century it had reached Ireland (and also Norway) and it was a powerful instrument in breaking down the archaic system of openfield husbandry. The Irish were amazed when they first saw a ploughman with a Scots plough both driving the horses and holding the stilts.[1]

Under the traditional system ploughing was 'merely marking the land with furrows'[2]: a spade or mattock was commonly needed to turn back the earth, and to force the share into the ground it was often necessary to have a man walking alongside the plough, pressing down on the beam with a stout stick. No bits or reins were used, and the plough itself required two men or a man and a boy, 'one to hold and one to drive', that is one holding the plough stilts and the other leading the horses by walking backwards before them. Evidently the man at the handles needed to give all his attention to the plough. It was, as a Cavan man described it to me, a process of 'jerking up and down'. Many of these practices were probably taken over from the days of ox-teams. Ploughing with oxen is believed to have died out in late medieval times, though it was reintroduced by some landowners in the late eighteenth century. The small farmer did not use oxen for the plough because unlike horses

[1]R. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 111.
[2]I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 656.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

407 they could not be put to other purposes such as going to the
241 fair.

[231] The wooden plough has now been almost entirely replaced by the iron plough, but in many districts a wooden plough, often converted from a lea plough, is preferred for opening drills (Fig. 42). The potato growers of the kingdom of Mourne in Co. Down, for example, find that it suits their stony soils and is less likely to be damaged by boulders. The rough wooden mould-boards carry the earth with them and distribute it more evenly than the iron drill-plough, which tends, moreover, to 'put a skin' on the soil and to pile up pointed ridges which would require to have their tops flattened later.

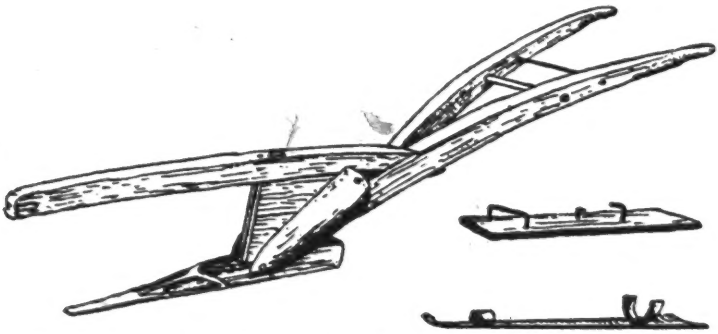

FIG. 42. Wooden drill plough and plough slides, Co. Down: the lower slide is of iron.

The improved wooden plough did not reach remote hill regions until roads were built after the middle of the eighteenth century. Even in the nineteenth century it is described as a newcomer in Co. Donegal, where spade labour had previously
[412] been supplemented only by 'a crooked stick armed with a bit of iron, with a second stick grafted to it to give two handles'.[1] This archaic implement must have resembled the wooden 'ard' (araire) of Mediterranean lands. It was so light that when the improved wooden plough with mould-board was introduced into Donegal the ponies were not equal to the task of pulling it. In west Cork the new wooden ploughs were not to be

[1]John Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience as an Irish Landlord*, 47.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

seen on the small farms until after the Great Famine: 'the things called ploughs would only scratch the surface, a log of wood sharpened and shod with iron'.[1] This 'poorer sort of plough' was made of alder in Co. Londonderry.[2] Observers attributed the Irish addiction to cross-ploughing to the fact that the ribs of unploughed land could only be broken by this means. Small squarish cultivation plots and fields are a natural consequence of cross-ploughing. 407 241

It seems that even these light ploughs, quite incapable of penetrating lea ground, were pulled by three or four horses abreast, 'so weak and small are the horses'.[3] Thus 'coaring' (coaration) was necessary, though one suspects that tradition rather than need lay behind the large teams. In the seventeenth century four horses abreast pulled the plough by the tails in Co. Clare, 'which was the custom all over Ireland. The tackle and traces being made of gadds or withies of twigs twisted, would be broken to pieces otherwise . . . But the horses being sensible stop until the ploughman lifts the plough over the rock.'[4] At the same time we find complaints from the midland counties that the native plough was 'heavy and unmanageable, distressing to men and horses.[5] Here we probably have to deal with the descendant of the heavy Anglo-Norman plough. 407 241 492

Unfortunately we have no details of the Irish *ard*. One would like to know, for instance, whether it turned the furrow or rather threw the earth—for it merely scratched the soil—to the left or to the right. It has been found that in certain parts of western Europe left-sided ploughs are traditional whereas, of course, the common plough is almost universally right-sided. Mr. Robert Aitken has traced the left-sided plough in a clearly defined area of south France and north-east Spain.[6] The explanation may be that in these areas cultivation was originally done with a foot plough, for which the right foot was used, so that the soil, as with the Scottish caschrom, was turned to the left, and that the plough when adopted became a traction- 407 241

[1]W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland* (1880), 20.
[2]G. V. Sampson, *Memoir* (1814), 290.
[3]W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. Sligo.
[4]*Dineley's Tour in Ireland* (1661), Ed. J. Graves, (1870), 162.
[5]W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. King's Co. and Queen's Co.
[6]R. Aitken, *Man*, 1953, 286.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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407 version of the foot-plough. This is an almost unexplored field
241 of rural history. Mr. Aitken is of the opinion, however, that the left-sided plough goes with the use of the right hand as holding hand.

At any rate it is interesting to find that in Ireland the majority
412 of diggers use the right foot, and although in theory the
241 wooden foot-rest of the native one-eared spade can be fitted either to left or right of the narrow blade it is, in the west, almost invariably on the right side. Presumably only habitually left-handed people use the left foot. In eastern Ireland, on the other hand, and particularly in the Protestant districts of the north-east, the left foot is normally the digging-foot, though judging from the proportions of right to left (about one to three in the north-east), the old Irish stocks continue to dig with the right foot. Hence there is a basis of fact in the phrase 'digging
[539] with the wrong foot'. (To say that someone digs with the other
[798] foot is in Ireland an oblique way of referring to his religious faith.) The old Irish spade, we have seen, is a highly specialized tool. It may have been preceded by some kind of hoe or planting stick such as are represented today by the graffan or the steeveen which we describe in the following chapter.

We have no direct evidence of Bronze Age ploughs in Ire-
174 land, though marks of furrows have been observed underneath
407 burial barrows of that period in Jutland and Holland and it has been claimed that the *ard* had reached the west Baltic region
412 before the end of the Neolithic phase. However this may be the sod-cutting spade, which could be supplemented by the wooden shovel, is not likely to have been introduced much before the beginning of the Christian era, since it required an efficient knowledge of iron-working. By facilitating the building of ridges it would have improved crop yields during a climatic period, the sub-Atlantic, which was even wetter than at present. A mould-board plough capable of forming ridges did not reach Ireland on present evidence until about the seventh century, and as we have seen it had not been adopted in parts of the west until the nineteenth century. Thus the narrow spade, coming into use at about the same time as oats, would have been a factor in stabilizing settlement by permitting ridge cultivation on the outfield grazing ground round about. This is speculative,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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but it is at least clear that with the introduction of the potato in the seventeenth century it was the spade that facilitated the breaking-in of rough pasture by means of 'lazy-beds', and so made possible the great expansion of cultivation and population in the century before the Great Famine. To this day the one-eared spade, in endless variety, has kept its medieval simplicity and diversity, though it is fast disappearing in favour of the two-eared spade. It may still be seen in the west and south, and a heavy variety is at home in the upper Shannon basin, in the counties of Leitrim, Sligo, west Cavan, Longford, and Roscommon. This is the loy (Fig. 41) a veritable foot-plough with a massive heavy handle expanding on one side into a foot-ledge and below into a stout heel which acts as a pivot when the undercut sod is being turned over in ridge-making. 'This machine they prefer to ploughs', wrote McParlan.[1] Seasoned old men will tell you that they couldn't make ridges unless they had a loy, and they add, scornful of the rising generation, that 'the young people going nowadays couldn't carry a loy'. There was much opposition to the light two-eared spades when they made their appearance in the early nineteenth century. They were objected to above all because, the diggers not wearing boots—the native shoe was at best a flimsy raw-hide cover—the iron would cut their feet. To this day the Irish two-eared spade is distinguished from the English spade by having iron foot-plates (Fig. 41).

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The metal spade probably began its life as a mere cutting edge of iron attached to the mouth of a narrow wooden spade. It is still little more than an attachment to a wooden shaft, consisting of an open iron socket which folds around the end of the shaft and passes at an angle into a strong narrow blade. I regard the loy as the most primitive type because the pivot or 'lift' is largely in the heel of the wooden shaft or 'tree', whereas in the rather lighter Munster spade—variants of which are also found in Kilkenny and Galway—the whole pivot is provided by the bent blade. The Longford-Cavan loy, which is adapted to heavy glacial or peaty soils, is a very clumsy digging tool, though well adapted for sod-turning. In experienced hands the loy 'would go in of itself' thanks to its weight and the expanded

[1] J. McParlan, *Leitrim* (1802), 25.

241 412 width, and it is here that the long-handled shovel comes into its own. In Britain such a shovel, which remains characteristic of south-west England, is of at least Roman antiquity. Specimens from the Roman period are, however, made entirely of wood, and several similar shovels of unknown age have been found in the Irish bogs (Fig. 47). In the west, down to famine times, the common shovel was made of a single piece of wood, usually willow, shod with a narrow strip of iron along the edge.[1]

FIG. 47. Long-handled shovels used for finishing the ridges. The wooden one was found at Glenoe, Co. Antrim.

241 [407] In some districts potato ridges are made with the plough, either with an ordinary lea-plough or else with a special paring-plough, fitted with a wide sock, which reproduces the special feature of the lazy-bed, that is, it does not break the grass of the bed but inverts a wide sod on to it from either side. In both instances the trench is then broken up by a plough with the mould board removed to provide earth for shovelling on to the ridges. The much wider corn ridges were normally made with the plough, except in those retarded mountainy districts where the plough seems never to have been adopted. Wheat was grown on narrower ridges, some five to seven feet wide. In Co. Londonderry it was customary to plough a 'rid-hint', that is, to take a second furrow out of the subsoil of the trench to facilitate drainage.[2] We can readily picture the arable land as eighteenth century observers saw it, with 'the strips piled high and the furrows scraped bare'. Lazy-beds vary in width according to local conditions and conventions and may be as little as

[1]W. R. Wilde, *Catalogue* (1857), 207.
[2]G. V. Sampson, *Memoir* (1814), 282.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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241 west, for it means that the ridges can be prepared beforehand as opportunity offers. What is known as the Munster mode of planting 'with the back of the spade' is to thrust the narrow spade through the inverted top sod and drop the set behind the blade as it is levered forward. On the average three rows of potatoes go to each bed, but there are also one- two- and four-set ridges.

A special wooden dibber known as the steeveen, kibbin (little 241 spade) or gugger is employed for planting in Cavan, Leitrim 412 and Longford and may perhaps be correlated with the heavy loy as another archaic tool which has kept its hold in that area. The steeveen with its conical head (Fig. 48) will break through the toughest sod and open a way for the young sprouts. Typi- [462] cally 'guggering' is woman's work, the children following, [857] dropping in the sets and closing the hole with a fork or a mell. I like to think that the steeveen is descended from that universal tool of the women of humble cultivating societies, the digging or planting stick, remote ancestor of the spade. It is a plausible theory that the crops of wheat and barley sown by the first Irish cultivators were planted in this way in the ashes of burnt woodland on the mountainsides. Larger dibbers or 'stamps' with several teeth for planting corn were used until quite recently in some counties, for example Armagh (Fig. 49).

[407]

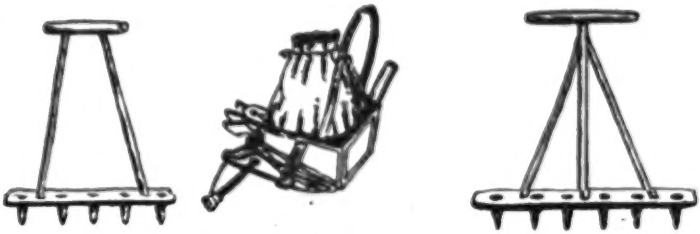

FIG. 49. Dibbers and (*centre*) sowing fiddle, Co. Armagh.

They are probably the descendents of specimens introduced by English 'planters' of the early seventeenth century. It is the [539] dibberhole which is referred to in the rhyme which has outlived the action it once accompanied:

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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[539]

LAZY-BEDS

Four seeds in a hole,
One for the rook
One for the crow
One to rot
And one to grow.

The sowing fiddle which scatters seed broadcast and which may frequently be seen in use in some districts, for example Co. Down, is another introduction from England which has survived here longer than in its presumed home (Fig. 49). The fiddler makes a striking figure, seen from a distance, as he strides steadily up and down the field with his silent instrument; he must beware of changing his pace whether going uphill or downhill or the crop will grow in uneven strips. [407]

In many parts of the world burning of the vegetation is a necessary preliminary to shifting cultivation, and the use of fire in the preparation of the outfield for ridge cultivation therefore raises some interesting questions. We know that the burning of sods pared from rough pasture, sometimes called 'denshiring' from its reputed Devonshire home, was widely practised in Ireland down to the time of the famine. In the early nineteenth century nine-tenths of the potatoes grown in Co. Clare were planted on burnt land,[1] and a special skinning plough was used to pare off the sod. Elsewhere the graffan and flachter were put to a like purpose. From a description of Donegal in 1880 it seems that the drying and warming of the soil were regarded as more important than the fertilizing ashes: 'There is on the fresh bogs a process of heating resorted to in the Spring, i.e., the end of April and the first half of May: the piles of earth are never allowed to burn out into a fire but combustion is kept stopped up within the mass . . . the heated earth, not ashes, is scattered and the first crop put in.'[2] Where the land was of fairly good quality only the furrow sods were burnt. They were stood on edge to dry and then burnt in piles on the ridges, after which the ashes were spread and the potato sets planted in them, to be covered with earth dug from the trenches in the usual way.[3] The process of paring and burning seems to

[1] H. Dutton, *Clare* (1808), 36.

[2] *Report of the Royal Commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881* (1887), Appendix B, 137.

[3] R. Thompson, *Meath*, 272.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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town consists of streets of houses of peasant style strung The Small 361 end to end, picturesque with their washes of many colours, but [364] perpetuating and even accentuating the filth which can be tolerated in a village setting of streams and fields but which becomes highly objectionable under urban conditions. On the other hand there are some spaciously-planned country towns which have an air of quiet opulence reminding one of the English heritage to which they owe their foundation. I am aware that in saying this I am ignoring the "inner flame" of the Irish towns, but it cannot be denied that externally they have much to learn from the older civic traditions of the sister isle. Dr. Arensberg has analysed the pattern of the country town and described it as "an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order." He shows that, until recent times, its economy has been that of distribution, not production. Banks and pubs and shops do most of the business and owing to the family system "Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation." If we exclude the Lough Neagh basin, [162] all the denser areas of population are coastal and most of the country's manufacturing industries are concentrated in the ports (Fig. 108).

To return to the fair, we have tried to show how the 443 periodic gatherings in which they originated were associated 786 with ritual and emotional experiences connected with the 578 celebration of recurring events such as seed-time and harvest. Breaking the routine of toil, it is characteristic that much licence was permitted on these occasions. Until recent times a strong spirit of revelry and a temporary slackening of the moral code distinguished the great Irish fairs. Even to-day the police or civic guards make allowances for fair day and turn a blind eye to many offences against the law: it is recognized as a time of special licence. Games, dancing and faction fights were the order of the day once the buying and selling were over. Until a generation ago cruel "knuckle-dusters" (Fig. 109) were carried in readiness, and the countryman's heavy felt hat was worn as a defence against the blackthorn Shillelagh.

[411]
Fig. 109.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

produce a buzzing noise. The toy is known in Co. Carlow as a "whee-doodle" and in Co. Down, where it seems formerly to have been regarded as a "sacred" thing, as a "boomer." Professor Haddon has described specimens from Co. Antrim and Co. Cork. About the Co. Carlow example in the Dublin Museum Dr. Raftery provides me with the following note. "A boy was whirling it around and an old man who saw him was very angry and told him to take the thing home and burn it, as otherwise he would bring bad luck on the countryside." This was in 1921. I illustrate a "bull-roarer" from Cape Clear, Co. Cork (Fig. 113). Its Irish name is Cláirín Búirthe.

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Fig. 113.

It is, of course, possible that some Irish localities may have learnt the use of this toy from stray specimens brought home from regions where it is still in regular ceremonial use, but when we remember all the other Irish survivals we cannot doubt that the bull-roarer is a relic of the past that has lost, or nearly lost, its sacred character. The bull-roarer has an almost world-wide distribution. It is said to have been employed in ancient Greece in connexion with the Dionysiac mysteries. We can imagine its employment in the initiation rites and magical practices of pagan times so picturesquely reconstructed by Professor Macalister in his book "Ancient Ireland." In various parts of the modern world the bull-roarer is used as a rain charm, in raising a wind or producing thunder, in driving game, herding cattle (*cf.* Chapter 6) or preparing for fishing, in rites of initiation and circumcision, in funeral festivities and mask dances: it is a general rule that the instrument must not be seen by women or children on pain of death. In the words of Haddon: "This insignificant toy is perhaps the most ancient, widely spread and sacred religious symbol in the world."

Of great antiquity and wide distribution, the spear-thrower is another instrument which appears to have survived in Ireland as a toy, used as a throwing stick in boys' games. And another toy "not yet connected with any ceremonial usage" but paralleled among the Chinese and the North

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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526 perfect sphere the rounded igneous pebbles which are selected for the purpose. One wonders whether some of the many cup-marked stones which turn up in the fields in certain districts—I have seen many in Inishowen in Donegal—were used for shaping stones, such as the sling-stones with which champion slingers, of whom the legendary Cuchulainn was one, performed [411] their feats. The sling and the sling-rod were originally hunting weapons and probably instruments of war, and one of the last refuges of slinging as a pastime was the now vanished Claddagh, the fishing suburb of Galway, where a man was not reckoned a good shot until he could strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen.[1]

312 Where a holy well has dried up—the usual explanation is that it was desecrated and moved its position—the sanctity of the 824 site may be transferred to a tree. The so-called pin-well at 778 Arboe in Co. Tyrone is a beech tree, hirsute with pins and nails, growing in the burying ground on a Celtic monastic site. A rag-well at Clonmel is visited by mountain farmers who hang rag offerings on briars at lambing and calving times, and afterwards place more rags appropriate in number to the increase obtained.[2] There is on the island of Inishmurray a wind- [821] well which has the power of controlling the wind, the ritual being to empty the well to produce a calm. Sticks and stones also 789 figure in wind-raising ceremonies, and 'the rude stone image of 778 Inniskea' (Inishkea in Co. Mayo), which was dressed up in flannel each New Year's Day, had powers of producing either storm or calm.[3] Powerful magic was worked by a wooden statue of St. Macdara, formerly kept in his chapel—an oratory of early type with projecting *antae*—on an island dedicated to the saint in the extreme south-western corner of Co. Galway. Sailors passing the island dipped their sails three times in honour of the image, but we are left to guess what superstitions were involved from the statement that about the year 1640 'the bishop of Tuam caused it to be buried for weighty reasons'.[4]

[1] *U.J.A.*, 2 (1854), 164.
[2] *Béaloideas*, 15 (1945), 284.
[3] C. Otway, *Erris and Tyrawly*, 107.
[4] C. R. Browne, *Carna and Mweenish*.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940.
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County Clare

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CUTTING TURF WITH THE SLÁN

[facing p. 72]

342 171 discussing the herdsmen's oval and square straw-built houses in the Roman Campagna. He indicates two different systems (1) the smoke leaving through the door and (2) the smoke leaving through a hole in the roof.

In English and especially in Saxon and other West European houses, the two opposite doors sometimes are placed in the same way as in the Welsh longhouses, or in the Irish houses, but the broad plan of these extremely large buildings makes the comparisons very vague.

Besides the types now mentioned which form the basis for the development of native house types, we find in Ireland of the present day many house types which are likely of foreign origin mostly introduced by government and landlord activities.

Belonging to this group I must also reckon a feature of housebuilding which is found particularly in Leinster and Eastern Connaught but also scattered here and there in other parts of the country. This distribution more [412] or less coincides with the distribution of the two-eared English spade, while the native type of house coincides with the single-eared Irish spade.

A partition of stone, mud or wood and lath is built on the side of the fireplace adjacent to the door, so that a person sitting at the fire cannot be seen through the open door. In the partition is a spyhole, through which one can see who is entering by the door, fig. 5.

This adjacence of fire and door with intervening partition is wellknown in England. As far as my knowledge goes I cannot look upon this as being an independent or original Irish type. Everything points to its being a late innovation. Such houses usually have a porch built at the entrance door and the arrangements of the rooms are not at all primitive.

The developed stone built house.

342 It is evident that as soon the primitive one-roomed stage is left, it will be difficult or impossible to decide whether the house represents the traditions of the central-chimney house or the traditions of the gable-chimney house.

In two ways the one-roomed stage has been left (1) by dividing up the one-roomed house by partition walls, (2) by building additions to it at the gables.

Usually it seems that the room at the lower end of the house has been made by building a thin partition wall, *síleail,* which separates it from the other part of the house, fig. 2 and 4. It is as far as I know, very unusual to build an addition to this part of the house. When new rooms are made by building additions, these are usually made to the chimney or fireplace gable.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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present the one staple which he must buy off the 262
farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and 184
the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for 184
mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are 241
cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs 412
again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their 184
lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer- 241
owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the 464
owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of 241
peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in 231
a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is 434
that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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352 workmanship of the Welsh oak dressers, is an essential part of the kitchen and, like the keeping-holes mentioned above, has its prototype in the stone shelves of some of our oldest prehistoric dwellings. The dresser belongs, like so many of the other elements we are discussing, to the "Atlantic" province of European folk-culture. It accompanies the open hearth tradition as distinct from the "oven tradition" of central Europe, and may be thought of (compare the absence of the large table mentioned below) as providing storage while taking up a minimum of the valuable floor space in small single-roomed houses. The dresser has its fixed place in the layout of the kitchen, the position varying, however, according to the district, the type of house, disposition of the doors, and so on. In the outshot houses it stands against the side wall alongside the bed, whereas in the central-hearth type it lies
352 across the kitchen opposite the fire and helps to partition off
415 the end room. The bottom of the dresser is open. Here the hen-coops, of straw, wattle or wood, were sometimes kept, but one is more likely to see a collection of iron pots and the crocks, buckets or wooden stave-built vessels (piggins) for holding water or milk. The latter I have seen covered with roughly trimmed stone slabs (Fig. 68), a prehistoric device which has the advantage of coolness and gives protection from the cats. On the dresser are a few bits of "delph" and the tin mugs which have displaced the wooden noggins. Delph, as kitchen-ware is called, has not long since become general in remote parts. Of Mayo in the last century we read that "all their vessels were of wood, most of them cut out of solid timber." These included not only platters, spoons and ladles, but also methers or drinking cups of various sizes. Where the crockery tradition is of old standing, plates, jugs and long rows or nests of bowls "whammeled," that is tumbled on their sides, line the dresser shelves. Here, too, are the beetles of different shapes (Fig. 30) used for pounding or mashing the potatoes. The upright milk churn commonly finds its place alongside the dresser.

352 Fig. 30.

One very rarely sees a table of any antiquity in an Irish kitchen: it is generally of deal and it is placed against one of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 407 ago a still simpler plough described as a " crooked stick armed with a bit of iron," which must have been in no way different, apart from " the bit of iron," from the plough of the Bronze Age. In fact there were wide areas where a plough of any [412] kind was practically unknown, and it must be admitted that in the small stoney fields of the west the spade is much more serviceable. It is still the only implement used on hundreds of small farms, and at best the spade had to supplement the old types of plough around the headlands and among the stones and rocks. Moreover the wooden plough left the ground so uneven that lumps had to be broken with a maul [412] or " mell " (Fig. 44) and holes filled in with the spade to prevent the seed being " lost." This process was known in Co. Antrim as " mannering." Cross-ploughing seems to be an old Irish custom and helps to explain why the field system is rectangular in contrast to the long strips of ploughland associated with the heavy English wheeled plough.

Fig. 44.

In preparing ground whether for corn or potatoes the practice was to plough the land in narrow ridges varying in width from about 4 to 12 sods (say 3½ to 10 feet) according to the depth and nature of the soil. The furrow or " sheugh " between the ridges would be some two feet wide. This was scraped with the plough but not turned, and it provided the earth for shovelling on the ridges after the seed had been sown. " An old ridge in the ground," runs an Irish saying, " outlives three yews " ; and indeed ancient cultivation ridges can be seen at all but the highest levels and have been observed underneath bogs when they are cut away. The plough ridges

Fig. 45.

Old cultivation ridges and remains of rath, Scrabo, Co. Down.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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[462]

Fig. 46.

the bed and the furrow varies considerably from one locality to another. The latter may be as much as three feet on shallow soils, for it is essential to have sufficient earth both to cover the seeds and to mould the young plants, generally in two stages, later on, but an average width is 1½ feet. Similarly the ridges, while about 4 feet wide as a rule, may be as narrow as two feet. The first step is to turn over the sods from the furrow, one sod on each side, and place them face down, that is grass against grass, on the ridges, so that when they are buried the grass rots and helps to feed the growing crop. With the many methods of turning the sod, of preparing the seed-bed, manuring, setting and covering the potatoes it is impossible to deal here, for the customs differ from one district to another, the manure being spread, for example, sometimes under and sometimes over the seeds. But it is relevant to notice that the old Irish spade or loy (Chapter 13) is a specialized implement adapted for sod cutting and turning and not for

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

digging or shovelling. For these processes the digging fork 244
and long-handled shovel are the proper tools. (Fig. 65). It 412
should also be remarked that the preparation of lazy-beds
was communal team-work, undertaken by groups of from [462]
8 to 16 men who shared their labour under the system of [476]
voluntary co-operation which distinguished the village
community. The custom is maintained in a few localities.

The loy served in certain districts as a dibber for setting the potatoes "against the back of the spade." but various special dibbers were also used. There was, for instance, the large two-handed "steeveen" found from Co. Leitrim to Co. Clare. As another example of a dibber we illustrate the clumsy-looking "stamp" from Co. Armagh (Fig. 47), employed in sowing turnips. Reference will be made elsewhere (Chapter 16) to the use of seaweed as manure. Old thatch, with its content of soot from the turf fire, is occasionally used as a fertilizer, and I am told that in Achill Island miniature stone, sod or turf buildings used as "soot houses" are roofed with rafters and scraws each autumn. Fires are lit in them, the smoke depositing soot on its passage through the thatch. This is then stripped off and, with the ashes of the fires, spread on the land as manure in spring. The thatch of the Hebridean black houses was utilized in the same way.

Fig. 47.

A practice which was formerly widespread and attracted a 241
great deal of heated discussion in the period of agricultural 412
development at the end of the 18th century was the preparing of waste ground for cultivation by "paring and burning," or "denshiring." It seems probable that this was a survival of ancient custom, and I believe that old-fashioned tool, the flachter, was probably employed for the purpose, just as its sister-tool, the breast-plough, was in England. Many types
of tools were perfected for land reclamation, including a [185]
special skinning-plough. In the south-west a heavy hoe or mattock, known as a graffan—similar to the implement still used in Kerry for breaking clods on potato ridges—was popular as a paring tool, the sod being rolled with the foot as it was cut. By such laborious processes, and by centuries of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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241 toil and grazing, by plough and spade, hoof and muzzle, have
412 Ireland's green fields been "moulded."

Fig. 48.
Clips

Although we cannot touch on the other crops and have given a very inadequate idea of the bustle, worries and humours of the Irish springtime, when all the crops demand to be put in the ground at the same time, we must end this chapter with a few comments on the growing season. The general practice when thinning root crops is to work on the
[516] knees with the hands: one rarely sees a hoe being used for thinning. Yet paradoxically corn is weeded, if it gets any attention at all, with a pair of wooden pincers or thistle-pullers, called, in Co. Antrim, "clips" (Fig. 48). This tool is already
[184] mentioned in a Tour of Ireland in 1752. The weeders are not so common in the south of the country and are fitted with iron pincers in some counties. Another home-made device once familiar in the north was the crow-scarer or "corn-crake," a noisy instrument made on the principle of the watchman's rattle or—to give a modern instance—the gas rattle of the A.R.P. services.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

248 the purest of linen—the story has often been told—and though the scutching mill with its busy waterwheel is an intimate part of the wintry countryside, the flax and tow soon pass into the factories. But we cannot omit a reference to the picturesque oblong stacks "sleighs" or "rays" in which the flax is built after being taken from the dam and dried. And we have referred in another place (Chapter 7), to the "shows" or waste which comes from the scutching mill.

243 But the most important crop throughout Ireland, and as a rule the most difficult to save because it comes late in the season, is oats. September is the harvest month, but in the hills October frequently sees the corn uncarried and even uncut. It is on record that in 1817—in Co. Armagh—"the grain was not reaped in many places until after Christmas." Often the equinoctial gales play havoc with the stooks, and [422] in the days of small scattered rundale plots it was customary for each holder to tie his sheaves with a proprietary knot so that he might claim his own.

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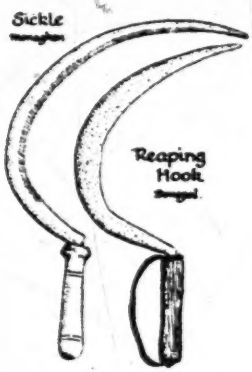

Fig. 53.

Both the toothed hook or sickle (Fig. 53) and the smooth "scythe hook" are used in reaping: the reaping machine and the self-binder have not reached many parts. Sickles are of several varieties, classified in the catalogues as round,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

square, crane and "Sligo." The steel edge of its narrow blade is notched on the underside, the notches radiating so that they all cut at an angle of about 70 degrees. 243 412

It is much more difficult to use than the smooth hook; the straw must be held firmly in one hand and sawn through with a pulling motion. Some writers have indulged in idealized pictures of hand reaping which bear little relation to the cruel toil and "terrible strain" more faithfully and unforgettably portrayed by Richard Jefferies in his "Field and Hedgerow." There was no respite for reapers or binders: "Down with the head and up with the tail" was the descriptive phrase which I was given in the Glens of Antrim. In some parts, however, the reaper knelt down on one knee. Women and children generally did the binding. The corn was cut before it was fully ripe, "between green and gold," and as an illustration of the interdependence of the old ways it is worth noting that such straw was much more suitable for good thatching than the dry straw from the reaper. The old-fashioned scythe (see Frontispiece), not yet entirely displaced by the new style, was straight-handled. A short bladed tool, known in Co. Antrim as the "bramble scythe," is used for cutting coarse vegetation or mowing hay around bushes.

Corn stooks vary greatly in the number of sheaves they contain and in the methods of construction. They are often tied at the top with a straw band, and cap-sheaves are frequently seen. In wet districts the sheaves are later built into small round stacks, "barts" or "huts," until the time comes to carry them home. On small farms this is still done on the back, using a burden rope (Chapter 14), but the rick-lifter is also employed. Or the sheaves are piled high on ponies so that they resemble walking stacks. At harvest time two-ply twists of straw are worn in the button-hole (Fig. 114): they are part of the ceremonial of harvest time. The custom is general in north-eastern Ireland but I am not aware of it from other parts: it may be a feature of the Plantation. More widespread and fundamental are the practices, now mere 243 [482]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XIII.

SPADES.

The rich variety of the rural scene is perhaps best illustrated in that most characteristic of Irish implements, the spade. It is worth recalling that the spade-work of immigrant navvies—or "navigators," named after the canal-diggers—was one of Ireland's contributions to England's Industrial Revolution. A visit to city garden-plots will provide a useful introduction to the study of spades, for the countryman insists on his own pattern, and you may play the game of spotting the native heaths of Belfast's or Dublin's retired policemen by identifying the spades of Derry, Fermanagh, Cavan or Clare. Some idea of the variety of tastes catered for can be gained from the output of a Galway spade-factory: including turf spades (Chapter 15) it turns out about 150 shapes of blade.

Obviously it would require prolonged travel and study to record and interpret this fascinating diversity, and to compare the distribution of spade-types with landforms and territorial divisions, with dialects, folk-customs, house-types and other aspects of material culture. But it is possible to give some tentative generalisations which emerge from a preliminary study. The primary division is between the one-eared and the two-eared types (Fig. 61). The former, known as the "loy" or "fack," prevails along the western and southern coasts. It is now unknown in the Six Counties—though the "kib," as it was called, is remembered by a few old men—and is fast disappearing from Donegal and from the Midlands,

Fig. 61.

[p.113]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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where its place has been taken by the two-eared spade; and it seems clear that the latter is the result of English influence, though in its Irish forms it differs considerably from the modern English spade.

These differences are no doubt adaptations to native taste and usage: they include the long straight handle, without hand-grip, the long narrow blade with its thick sides, the foot-plates, and the "lift" in the blade, that is the forward bend below the socket, which makes it enter the ground at an angle. North of the Boyne, however, the handle is shorter and is fitted with a crutch-end (Fig. 62), although there are certain "islands" of Irishry, such as the Mourne Mountains of Down, which cling to the long handle. Within the two-eared spade province there are many regional and even seasonal types of blade, for instance the Sligo-Roscommon area demands a long-bladed spade in spring and a shorter type in autumn, the length varying from 16 to 13 inches. In this spade the blade tapers, say from 5 inches at the shoulders to 3½ at the mouth; the Lurgan spade is a long variety familiar from the phrase: "a face as long as a Lurgan spade." While characterising the east coast and the Midlands the type spreads westwards to Sligo without, however, influencing Leitrim, which uses the loy, or Cavan, where the spade has an expanding edge, half an inch or more wider than the shoulders. A strong "cranked lift" of 6 inches (about 22°) is a feature of the Cavan spade, and of the Leenane spade in Galway. North Monaghan, Donegal and Fermanagh (Fig. 62) also use a spade with expanding edge and cranked lift. The taper spades, on the other hand, generally have a "round lift," that is the blade bends forward in a smooth curve, but both the degree of lift and the dish, that is the curve in the mouth, vary from one locality to another. Tyrone and Armagh have a spade which widens slightly towards the mouth but has a round lift instead of the cranked lift of Cavan and Fermanagh. A spade map would throw light on many aspects of rural history and geography, but these humble motters do not engage the attention of our educationalists.

The Fermanagh Spade.

Fig. 62.

. 9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

These two-eared spades are always attached to the haft by means of straps about 6 inches long, generally with two rivets: the foot-plates are fastened to the blade by mortice and tenon and to the handle by a drawn-down tongue bent up and nailed between the straps (Fig. 62). A visit to one of the 9 or 10 Irish spade "factories"—there were many more a few decades ago—provides a thrilling illustration of craftsmanship and co-ordination of labour. The five hundredweight tilt-hammer, driven by a water wheel, beats out the red steel in a series of operations under the skilled hand and eye of the spade-maker: between each process the steel must be re-heated, and the interchange of the "moulds" and "plates" between furnace-man and hammer-man goes on without pause, for the "bit" of the hammer must not be allowed to strike without having the hot metal ready on the anvil. In addition to supplying his mate, the furnace-man has to bend over the "fullered mould" and weld and shape it on a small anvil: he must also apply sand and water to the plates if they get overheated, and dip the folded end in dust so that the two straps do not weld together under the hammer. After a period of ceaseless labour and watchfulness a pile of blue-grey drawn plates, their hammer grooves throwing back the glow of the furnace, lies ready for the finishing smith. 412 284 391

He shears them to the desired dimensions—all the measuring is done by eye although there are dozens of different sizes—cuts out the tenons and punches the rivet holes. The points of the straps separate when the ends are clipped, and the socket is now opened up and shaped on a mandrel. Then comes the finishing: the plate is heated once more, hammered into the correct lift and dish, and tempered. Meanwhile lengths of rivets have been cut and the foot-plates drawn down: the ash handle is inserted and riveted, the straps hammered tight against the wood and the foot-plates morticed and nailed on. Four generations of experience lay behind the smith whom I watched recently in a Co. Antrim spade factory; the result was a product of exquisite proportions and economy of structure, the essentials of the country craft. [804]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

391 326 412 We must visit a factory in the south if we wish to see the single-eared "Irish" spade being made. The country smith may still forge or repair an occasional loy, but the trip-hammer does away with so much heavy sledging that most of the work is concentrated in the "factories." Yet, as the amazing variety of patterns demonstrates, there is no tendency towards specialization: the factory has merely taken over the work of dozens of rural smiths. Thus at least five different types of loy are used in Co. Galway alone. The blade may be straight sided, it may taper slightly or it may expand towards the mouth, and like the two-eared spade it may have a cranked or a round lift; but it is always narrow, ranging in width from 3½ to 5 inches. The loy is in fact a specialized implement, adapted for sod-cutting and ridge-making (Chapter 10); it is not designed to turn over dug soil, and like the two-eared spade which has taken over its functions in the north and east, it enters the ground at an angle and not vertically.

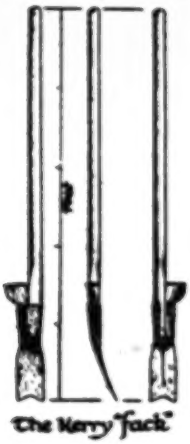

Fig. 63.

412 In the south-west, from Clare round to Kilkenny, the "fack" ends in a fish-tail, presumably to facilitate penetration (Fig. 63). In central Galway the loy has a 14 inch

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

blade with a slightly fish-tailed edge which is a little wider (5 inches) than the foot end (4½ inches): it has a cranked lift. In east Galway a similar loy is fitted with a curious two-piece haft: the foot-rest or "spade-tree" which goes into the socket of the blade is fastened to the stout ash shaft with iron bands (*cf.* Fig. 88). A similar loy was formerly used in Leix and other counties. In Limerick and Kerry the foot-piece is a small wedge pushed into the socket alongside the handle (Fig. 63). In parts of Galway and Mayo the foot-rest is carved out of a broad handle, and a variant of this is the loy of Cavan and Longford (Fig. 61), where the stout foot-rest is some distance above the socket and the handle is curved forward. In Clare, again, the handle bends backwards towards the user. 412

But loys of all shapes have long handles, about 4 feet in length, with no hand-grip. And they all take the handle in an open socket formed by bending the wings, which may or may not be further secured by nails, over the wood (Fig. 63). This method of hafting goes back to the prehistoric Iron Age in England. In Ireland, bill-hooks, axes and knives from crannogs and forts a thousand years old were hafted in this way, and though I am not aware of any ancient spades having been found in excavations, it is to the La Tène period (Chapter 4) that we should probably look for their origin. But until some attention and support are given to problems of cultural origins and evolution we are merely groping in the dark. Allowance must be made, therefore, for possible inaccuracies in the present account.

Loys of all types can be fitted with the ear or foot-rest on either side according to the practice of the locality or the individual user. Generally speaking, about eleven out of twelve loys are right footed, but towards the east the proportion of left-footed users increases, and as we reach the north-east, where, of course, the two-eared spade is universal, from one-half to two-thirds are left-footed diggers. Hence, presumably, the phrase applied in the north to those of the Roman Catholic faith: "they dig with the wrong foot."

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Fig. 64. [794]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

412 While it is difficult to estimate the antiquity of the two-eared
184 spade tradition in Ulster and Leinster, its spread into the west has taken place in the last half century. The decline in the use of the loy is symbolic of the disappearance of the old
[178] fashions, and they tend to vanish together because the culture pattern is a closely interwoven web. Thus it was considered in Donegal a century ago that the new iron spades "would be useless," since few workers had shoes: the wooden spade was adapted to the bare feet.

391 The spade-maker is called on to turn out other types of
412 agricultural tools, spades, shovels and forks. There is the very narrow tapered draining spade and the heavy "mountain draining spade" used in the moorland areas of the north and west (Fig. 64): its great "shark's head" blade is 17 inches long and almost as wide. Occasionally he is asked to rough out a flachter (Fig. 85), which the country smith finishes into the required shape, or it may be, in the south-west, a graffan or heavy hoe (Chapter 10). But as the turf-cutting season comes round most of his energies go into the making of turf slanes (Chapter 15). Of shovels there are several different types, generally classified into two shapes, round-pointed and square-pointed: the latter kind is favoured in the west. There is also the tanged shovel of Co. Wexford. The shovels are long-handled, but short handles are used for special purposes. The welding of the socket in the thin hard steel of the shovels is one of the smith's most difficult tasks (Fig. 65).

412 Then there are short and long-handled square-shouldered digging forks with three or with four prongs (Fig. 65), and the round-shouldered manure-forks or graips, the prongs of which may be round, oval, or in old-fashioned work, square. There are drags for unloading manure, for gathering wrack (Fig. 103), for cleaning drains and gathering stones. Hay-forks may be tanged or strap-hafted, with 4-foot or 5-foot handles and so on. Some country-made forks are illustrated in Fig. 66. It may be added that hayforks with wooden prongs cut from the solid have also been used in the past. Some of the loys, like the old Ulster kib, are essentially wooden spades merely shod with iron, and even this was dispensed with in sandy soils. Wooden

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

spades are said to have been used in Magilligan, Co. Derry, and 412●
in Mayo the forked-spade or "gowl-gob" is perhaps not entirely forgotten. It consisted of a wooden blade, with

Fig. 65.

Fig. 66.

two prongs each some three inches wide shod with iron, and was employed for potato-digging in sandy or loose bog soils.

[p. 120 is blank]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

281 across, are commonly arranged in patterns having, for example,
415 the maker's initials and the date left unpierced. A deeper tray used for carrying corn or for fruit-picking is known as a "dallan." Then there is the meal sieve, which has fine perforations, for sifting the coarse skins (meal seeds) from the oatmeal. Similar to this is the buttermilk sieve with which,
285 before the adoption of the hair sieve, the small particles of
415 butter were strained from the buttermilk. A milk-strainer made of birch bark folded into a cone and filled with straw is referred to in a 17th century account quoted by Mr. E. MacLysaght. In Tory, according to Mr. T. Mason, the wight is "composed simply of sheepskin with a twisted straw rope forming the rim."

The corn sieve, for getting out dust and dirt, and the corn riddle (Fig. 71), for separating bits of straw and "hairy

[281]

Fig. 71.

tails," consist of interwoven splits of ash or bog-fir attached to a rim of the same material. The only difference between them is that the mesh of the former is one-eighth of an inch, of the latter perhaps ¼ inch, though it may vary for different kinds of grain. Efficient riddling is a difficult and nowadays rather rare art. I have not come across sieves of rushes or split willow, but it is very likely that they may be found.

243 The corn riddle and the winnowing tray lead us back to
412 the thrashing floor in the barn. Here we will probably see a flail hanging on the wall. The sound of the flail is by no means rare in Ireland, for in outlying districts the small farmer has no other means of thrashing. The three parts of the flail are the helve or "hand-stave," a straight stick of any light wood such as ash or larch, the shorter and heavier swingel or beater, called in Ireland the "souple" (generally made of hazel, occasionally of holly or birch) and the flail-joint, hanging or
[284] "mid-kipple," which may be a sheep- or goat-skin thong, a

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

 243 412

length of flax, or an eel skin. The methods of attaching the hanging to the hand-stave and souple vary, as will be seen [284] from a random selection of drawings (Fig. 72). The joint

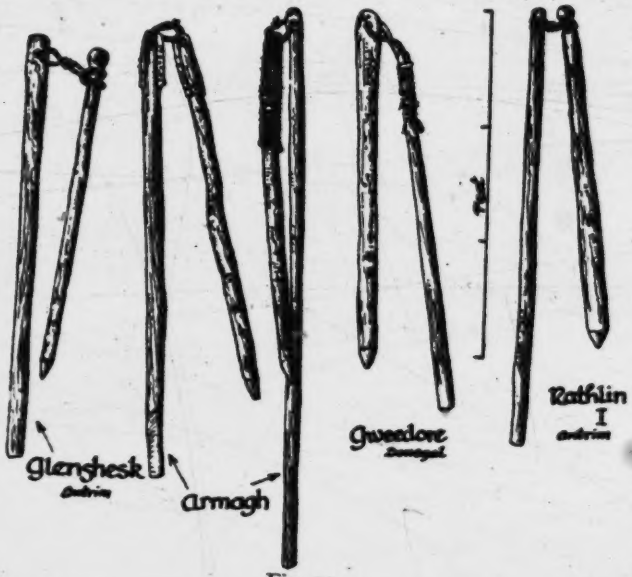

Fig. 72.

shown in the Armagh flail (left), resembles a common English style, but it occurs as far west as Galway. Varied too, are the proportions between the component parts and the methods of swinging the flail. Thus in Antrim the souple is flung round the head while in Donegal it is kept to the side of the body. On fine days the thrashing may take place out of doors, but the usual place is " between doors " in the barn or even in the kitchen, for the opposite doors create a draught which carries away the dust. A besom of heather or of dried [824] kale flower-stalks keeps the barn floor clean.

One of the most interesting and varied and probably one 285 of the oldest crafts practised by countryfolk is the making of

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The spinning-wheel and hand-loom are the same as those commonly used on the west coast, the former, as usual, having no treadle. 172 [283]

Querns are still in use, and in connection with them the boran, or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, used for screening the meal. [252] [412]

Grain is still winnowed by shaking it in a sieve in a strong wind. [243]

The method of washing clothes is the same as that customary in Connemara, the clothes being folded, laid in the water of a lake or pool, and beaten with a club or paddle. [296]

The tailor, when making clothes, does not measure his customers with a tape, but takes all his measurements on one sheet of paper, marking the lengths by cutting notches out of the edge. [294]

The curraghs, which are still in use, are of the usual form; they are rapidly going out of fashion, however. [501]

The anchor used for small boats is a stone, not fixed in a wooden clamp, as in Clare and Aran, but having a groove around it for the rope.

As mentioned previously, the apparatus used for the shark-fishing is very rude and primitive.

2. *Antiquities.*—Inishbofin is not very rich in architectural antiquities, and the few that still remain are being rapidly destroyed; some ruins which were standing in the first half of the present century have altogether disappeared, and the others are much shattered. 172

In Inishshark, also, the buildings have sustained a great injury.

It does not lie within my province to enter upon any detailed description of the ruins; but I desire, in the following notes (extracted almost *verbatim* from my Field Note-book), to direct the attention of archæologists to the buildings of interest in these islands which are being rapidly blotted out of existence. The number and nature of these have been described by the late Mr. O'Donovan, Mr. Hardiman, Mr. G. H. Kinahan, and others.

In the account of their present condition given below, they are arranged in the order in which they are described by Mr. Hardiman.[1]

Inishbofin.—(1). St. Colman's church, in Knock townland, built in A.D. 667, is in a very ruinous state, and the interior is filled with rough gravestones and weeds, and in a small recess near the east window is a pile of crania and broken bones. In the enclosure around the church the foundations of the cells (cloghans (?)) of the abbey, or monastic colony, may still be traced, though with difficulty, but the

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

113 Official:

"Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland."—Dublin, 1846.

"Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Ireland. Explanatory Memoir of Sheets 73, 74, 83, 84."—Dublin, 1876.

Wilde, Lady Francesca:

"Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland. with Sketches of the Irish Past."—London, 1887.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES VIII. AND IX.

Plate VIII.

142 Fig. 1.—James Joyce, aged 48 years, No. 5, Middlequarter.

291 Figs. 2 and 3.—Anthony Lavelle, aged 35 years, No. 2, Knock.

Fig. 4.—Group of men, Inishbofin.

Taken in order from left to right, the names are, respectively:—

Back row.—John Burke, boatwright; Michael Halloran, king of Shark; John Tierney, postman; Mick Kerrigan, weaver; Redmond Toole, fisherman.

Front row.—Martin Baker, John Malia (or Malley), Ned Burke, Redmond Toole, all fishermen.

Fig. 5.—Group of women, Westquarter, Inishbofin.

Taken in the same order as the other group, the names are—Margaret Ward, Nancy Browne (first cousins), Nelly Holloran, Mary Holloran (daughter of last), Brigid Concannon.

Plate IX.

412 Fig. 1.—Quern still in use in Middlequarter, Inishbofin.

283 Fig. 2.—Spinning wheel in Middlequarter.

296 Fig. 3.—Method of washing clothes, Church Lough, Knock.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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283

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[End Plate B]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(C.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Doghertys, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(D.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(E.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dennistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. 463 241 There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on [351] the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a [412] two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct.

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts [407] in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

his death to his interference with this figure. An Inishkea man spoke about the matter with much indignation even after the lapse of years, and said that they had never known misfortune or hunger in the island until after the distruction of this *neewogs*. 778

Many different accounts have been given of the image itself. One writer (C. O.) states that it was a stone figure of rude workmanship, and that it was dressed in a suit of homespun, renewed every year.

The description given by those who have seen it agree in stating that it was not a statue but a small flat stone. One informant believed it to be part of the head of a stone figure. This was enveloped in a small bag of homespun, which was replaced when it got old and soiled, and was kept in a blind window or recess in the wall in one of the houses.

St. Brendan and the Devil.—During my visit to Inishglora some of the Inishkea fishermen, who were camped there at the time, pointed out that no grass grew on a part of the island, and gave the following explanation :—St. Brendan was one day disturbed in his devotions by the devil, who appeared to him in the form of a beautiful girl and tempted him. The saint indignantly repulsed the temptress, and drove her towards the end of the island, blessing the soil as he went, but at the point where the grass ends, Satan changed his form and assumed the shape of a ram, which so astonished the saint that in his excitement he ceased blessing and gave chase to the evil one who ran to the rocks and jumped into the sea. The unblessed land is that on which the grass does not grow. 776

VI. ARCHÆOLOGY.

The few notes made in this section do not purport to be fully descriptive, but merely to indicate the nature of the antiquities of the region, which are of importance in the study of the people as bearing on the history of their past, and to direct the attention of archaeologists to the quantity of material worthy of study and record which is still to be met with in this part of county Mayo. 172 178

1. *Survivals.*—The district is comparatively rich in these, though many articles in use in the localities previously reported on are now quite extinct in Erris. The primitive condition of many of the houses, the absence of chimneys, and the custom of taking cattle into the dwellings have already been referred to. 178

The quern is still in use in several houses, especially on the islands and in the remoter localities, though now only employed for 178 412

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen.*

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tin-ware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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[412]
[415]
[407]

FIG. 1. 'The toothed sickle (1), the flail (2), the one-eared spade (4), the clod-breaking mallet (5), and seek-rake (7), the upright churn (6), and the three-legged pot (3), can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life.'

district to another. The interest of these relics is enhanced when one discovers parallels among simple societies in distant parts of the world.

These ancient diversities are being ironed out at an increasing rate, and the opportunity of seeing and, what is more important, placing on record these age-old crafts and rites will soon pass. The wonder is that so many have persisted through the political, economic and social upheavals of the last 150 years. During that period the steady decline of the Gaelic language resulted in the loss of a great deal of information on local and regional life and of a vast store of oral literature, in which the lore of an ancient civilization was enshrined. The scientist must regard this loss as a tragedy comparable to that suffered by the historian in the disastrous burning of the Dublin Four Courts in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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[412]

FIG. 21. Fireside with quern, Belturbet, Co. Cavan.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 6

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516
291
412

1. Shearing oats with the toothed sickle, Co. Antrim.

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351
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412

2. Thrashing oats with flails, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 97]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

X

PLOUGH AND SPADE

STRONG arms have been the Irish labourer's passport to labouring jobs overseas, and it may be recalled that the word 'navvy' derives from the canal-diggers or navigators, many of them Irish, who opened the waterways of industrial England. Later it was Irish labourers who built the first railroad tracks of North America. Those arms were toughened by spade-work in field and bog, for the Irish spade is much more than a gardening tool: it was, and still is in backward areas and in the boglands, an implement for field cultivation and for cutting turf. The small field pattern of all except the most fertile regions is in part a reflection of this historic fact. An acre or two and often less in area, the tiny hillside fields are a measure of spade work just as the wide prairie wheatlands mirror the multiple plough or the mounded garden plots of an African village are the mark of women's work with mattock and digging-stick. Even in the deep-soiled lowlands where the plough is now universal the observant eye, still more the viewer from the air, will pick out the narrow ridges made by the spade faintly showing, as in a palimpsest, through the more regular pattern of wide plough ridges. In hilly country, especially in the west, the spade is still in common use in the fields, and the traveller moving about Ireland in spring, when the potatoes are being planted, will notice an astonishing variety of spades in use. Even in districts where the plough is universal the spade may still be pressed into service to deal with stony patches or awkward corners, and I have seen it supplementing the plough in another way by being tied on to a lea plough to convert it into a double-sided drill plough.

412 241 463

PLOUGH AND SPADE

412 The Irish spade is not a digging implement: it is essentially a ridge-maker or hand-plough, adapted to the business of undercutting and turning the sod. Its narrow bent blade is ill fitted to the lifting of soil, and for this purpose the long-handled shovel is used, an efficient implement for lifting loose earth and placing it with precision where required, for example to fill holes on the ridges. The Irish spade is more specialized and more primitive than the 'common or garden' English spade (Fig. 41).

407 412 The evidence of the Irish Law Texts and the discovery of plough coulters on sites of pre-Norman date show that heavy

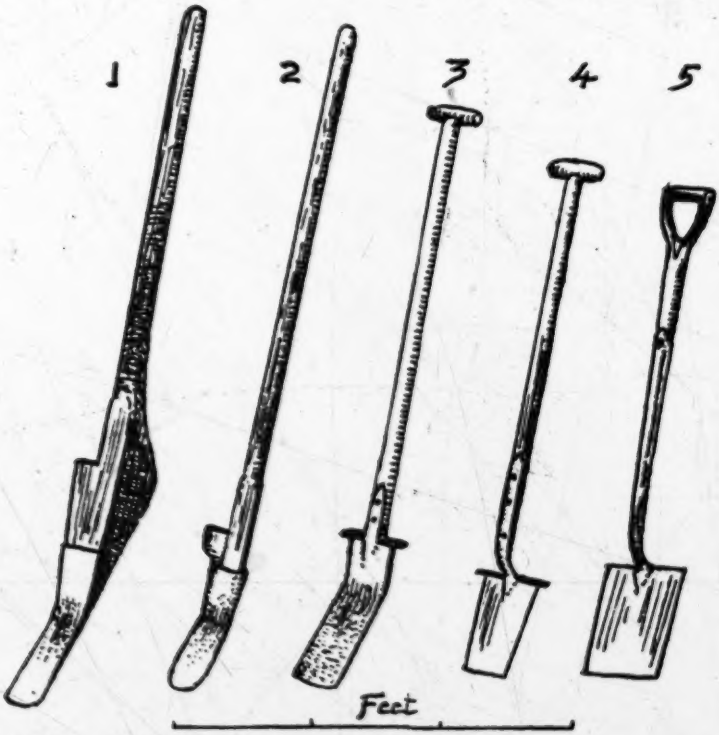

FIG. 41. Spades. The five examples form an approximate evolutionary series. (1) Loy, Co. Leitrim. (2) One-eared spade, Kerry. (3) Two-eared bent ridging spade, Fermanagh. (4) Treaded garden spade, Wexford. (5) English spade

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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ploughs were known in parts of Celtic Ireland, but the light 407
plough or *ard* almost certainly prevailed, and it is unlikely that
ploughs of any kind were employed outside the 'few favoured 412
acres' of the infield. A light plough, at any rate, would be unfit to break the tough sod of the outfield, which was allowed to rest for long periods. Even today the answer I have been given when I have asked ridgemakers in old outfield why they were using spades has been: '"Tis too tough for the plough!' Ploughing 'by the tail', similarly, becomes intelligible only if one envisages it as restricted to infield cultivation. The iron plough with curved mould board did not reach the outlying corners of the country until late in the nineteenth century, and down to the time of the famine iron ploughs were used only in progressive areas where there were improving landlords. The prototype of these ploughs was the Scottish two-horse swing [177] plough invented by James Small about the year 1765. By the end of the century it had reached Ireland (and also Norway) and it was a powerful instrument in breaking down the archaic system of openfield husbandry. The Irish were amazed when they first saw a ploughman with a Scots plough both driving the horses and holding the stilts.[1]

Under the traditional system ploughing was 'merely marking 407
the land with furrows'[2]: a spade or mattock was commonly 241
needed to turn back the earth, and to force the share into the ground it was often necessary to have a man walking alongside [412] the plough, pressing down on the beam with a stout stick. No bits or reins were used, and the plough itself required two men or a man and a boy, 'one to hold and one to drive', that is one holding the plough stilts and the other leading the horses by walking backwards before them. Evidently the man at the handles needed to give all his attention to the plough. It was, as a Cavan man described it to me, a process of 'jerking up 407
and down'. Many of these practices were probably taken over 241
from the days of ox-teams. Ploughing with oxen is believed to 231
have died out in late medieval times, though it was reintroduced by some landowners in the late eighteenth century. The small farmer did not use oxen for the plough because unlike horses

[1]R. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 111.
[2]I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 656.

407 they could not be put to other purposes such as going to the
241 fair.

[231] The wooden plough has now been almost entirely replaced by the iron plough, but in many districts a wooden plough, often converted from a lea plough, is preferred for opening drills (Fig. 42). The potato growers of the kingdom of Mourne in Co. Down, for example, find that it suits their stony soils and is less likely to be damaged by boulders. The rough wooden mould-boards carry the earth with them and distribute it more evenly than the iron drill-plough, which tends, moreover, to 'put a skin' on the soil and to pile up pointed ridges which would require to have their tops flattened later.

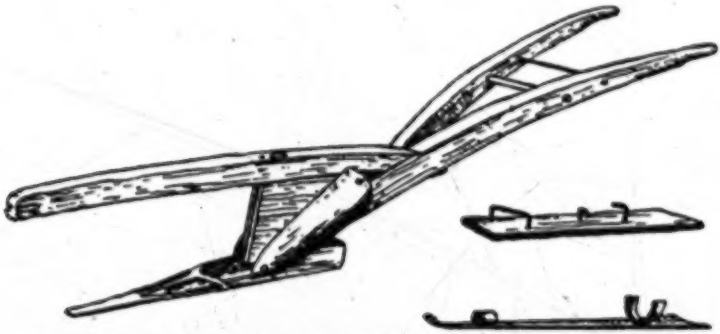

FIG. 42. Wooden drill plough and plough slides, Co. Down: the lower slide is of iron.

The improved wooden plough did not reach remote hill regions until roads were built after the middle of the eighteenth century. Even in the nineteenth century it is described as a newcomer in Co. Donegal, where spade labour had previously
[412] been supplemented only by 'a crooked stick armed with a bit of iron, with a second stick grafted to it to give two handles'.[1] This archaic implement must have resembled the wooden 'ard' (araire) of Mediterranean lands. It was so light that when the improved wooden plough with mould-board was introduced into Donegal the ponies were not equal to the task of pulling it. In west Cork the new wooden ploughs were not to be

[1] John Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience as an Irish Landlord*, 47.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

407 version of the foot-plough. This is an almost unexplored field
241 of rural history. Mr. Aitken is of the opinion, however, that the left-sided plough goes with the use of the right hand as holding hand.

412 At any rate it is interesting to find that in Ireland the majority
241 of diggers use the right foot, and although in theory the wooden foot-rest of the native one-eared spade can be fitted either to left or right of the narrow blade it is, in the west, almost invariably on the right side. Presumably only habitually left-handed people use the left foot. In eastern Ireland, on the other hand, and particularly in the Protestant districts of the north-east, the left foot is normally the digging-foot, though judging from the proportions of right to left (about one to three in the north-east), the old Irish stocks continue to dig with the right foot. Hence there is a basis of fact in the phrase 'digging
[539] with the wrong foot'. (To say that someone digs with the other
[798] foot is in Ireland an oblique way of referring to his religious faith.) The old Irish spade, we have seen, is a highly specialized tool. It may have been preceded by some kind of hoe or planting stick such as are represented today by the graffan or the steeveen which we describe in the following chapter.

We have no direct evidence of Bronze Age ploughs in Ire-
174 land, though marks of furrows have been observed underneath
407 burial barrows of that period in Jutland and Holland and it has been claimed that the *ard* had reached the west Baltic region
412 before the end of the Neolithic phase. However this may be the sod-cutting spade, which could be supplemented by the wooden shovel, is not likely to have been introduced much before the beginning of the Christian era, since it required an efficient knowledge of iron-working. By facilitating the building of ridges it would have improved crop yields during a climatic period, the sub-Atlantic, which was even wetter than at present. A mould-board plough capable of forming ridges did not reach Ireland on present evidence until about the seventh century, and as we have seen it had not been adopted in parts of the west until the nineteenth century. Thus the narrow spade, coming into use at about the same time as oats, would have been a factor in stabilizing settlement by permitting ridge cultivation on the outfield grazing ground round about. This is speculative,

but it is at least clear that with the introduction of the potato in the seventeenth century it was the spade that facilitated the breaking-in of rough pasture by means of 'lazy-beds', and so made possible the great expansion of cultivation and population in the century before the Great Famine. To this day the one-eared spade, in endless variety, has kept its medieval simplicity and diversity, though it is fast disappearing in favour of the two-eared spade. It may still be seen in the west and south, and a heavy variety is at home in the upper Shannon basin, in the counties of Leitrim, Sligo, west Cavan, Longford, and Roscommon. This is the loy (Fig. 41) a veritable foot-plough with a massive heavy handle expanding on one side into a foot-ledge and below into a stout heel which acts as a pivot when the undercut sod is being turned over in ridge-making. 'This machine they prefer to ploughs', wrote McParlan.[1] Seasoned old men will tell you that they couldn't make ridges unless they had a loy, and they add, scornful of the rising generation, that 'the young people going nowadays couldn't carry a loy'. There was much opposition to the light two-eared spades when they made their appearance in the early nineteenth century. They were objected to above all because, the diggers not wearing boots—the native shoe was at best a flimsy raw-hide cover—the iron would cut their feet. To this day the Irish two-eared spade is distinguished from the English spade by having iron foot-plates (Fig. 41).

The metal spade probably began its life as a mere cutting edge of iron attached to the mouth of a narrow wooden spade. It is still little more than an attachment to a wooden shaft, consisting of an open iron socket which folds around the end of the shaft and passes at an angle into a strong narrow blade. I regard the loy as the most primitive type because the pivot or 'lift' is largely in the heel of the wooden shaft or 'tree', whereas in the rather lighter Munster spade—variants of which are also found in Kilkenny and Galway—the whole pivot is provided by the bent blade. The Longford-Cavan loy, which is adapted to heavy glacial or peaty soils, is a very clumsy digging tool, though well adapted for sod-turning. In experienced hands the loy 'would go in of itself' thanks to its weight and the expanded

[1] J. McParlan, *Leitrim* (1802), 25.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

●412 mouth which opened a way and prevented the blade from wedging.

It was reckoned that twelve men armed with loys could turn an acre a day.[1] This compares not unfavourably with the estimated rate of 'ploughing' with a caschrom, and is nearly twice the speed of spade digging. In the Munster spade the foot-rest is a separate piece of wood which is wedged into the open socket to one side of the shaft, normally the right. The shape of this wedge, and the dimensions and curve of the iron blade, vary from one district to another. When new the spade mouth has two points resembling a fish-tail, or the blade may taper to the mouth to facilitate digging in light gravelly soils. The old Galway spade has its footpiece cut out of a single piece of wood to which a separate handle is attached. This is considered to lessen the shock when the spade is thrust into the ground, and the device is frequently found on old-fashioned turf spades. A curious forked spade formerly common in Mayo also has this feature. This is the 'gowl-gob', a two-eared wooden spade with twin narrow iron-shod blades, and it was reckoned to be very suitable for making ridges in loose sandy or boggy soils (Fig. 43). This may be the last survival of a prehistoric spade, for 'a two-pointed pronged spade' is said to be an ancient Mediterranean tool,[2] and a 'bidente' is used in parts of Spain.

The two-eared iron spade which is replacing the loy in its last lairs has gradually ousted the one-eared spade in most parts of the country during the course of the nineteenth century. But in doing so it has copied even the minor variations of the spades it replaced, so that the spade remains an index of regionalism, a tool of sociological research as well as an instrument of labour (Fig. 44). Until water-driven tilt-hammers
326 were introduced for the manufacture of spades—perhaps half
412 a dozen of them are still in operation—they were made by
184 local blacksmiths for local customers. A good spade-maker occasionally won a reputation which might be compared to that of a medieval sword-forger. The smith needed two helpers to hammer out the metal plates, and the work was very heavy.

[1]Coote, *Cavan* (1802), 31.
[2]*The Cambridge Economic History* (Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power), I (1941), 94.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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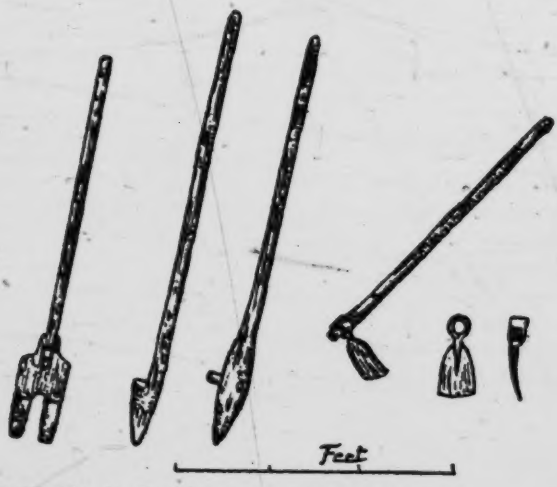

FIG. 48. 'Gowl-gob', Co. Mayo; steeveens, Longford and Cavan; and graffan, Kerry.

The precise requirements of each group of townlands forming a neighbourhood-unit resulted from the balance of many physical, human and economic factors—such as conditions of soil and slope, methods of digging, types of crop, length of arm and leg—cemented by usage and sanctioned by tradition. The 'spade gauge book' of a County Tyrone factory, which has lately closed, lists some 230 different patterns, not counting the special turf spades, and it served only Ulster and the west. I quote the dimensions for the length and breadth, at shoulder and mouth, of the spades of a few districts in Ulster to illustrate the variety and precision of the gauges: Armagh, 18 in. × $5\frac{13}{16}$ × $6\frac{11}{16}$; Omagh, $17\frac{1}{2}$ × $5\frac{1}{2}$ × $6\frac{1}{4}$; Dungannon, $17\frac{1}{2}$ × $5\frac{7}{8}$ × $5\frac{7}{8}$; Portrush, 16 × $6\frac{3}{4}$ × $6\frac{1}{2}$; Kilkeel, 15 × $6\frac{1}{4}$ × $4\frac{1}{8}$; Monaghan, 20 × $4\frac{7}{8}$ × 6. It will be noticed that the spades vary not only in size but also in shape, some having 'broad points', that is expanding at the mouth, some 'narrow points', that is tapering, and others being parallel sided. The blades range in weight from 3 to 6 lb., in length from 13 to 22 in., in width at the shoulder from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 in. and at the mouth from 3 to 8 in. In addition great attention is paid to the longitudinal

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 [Text continues on p. 137]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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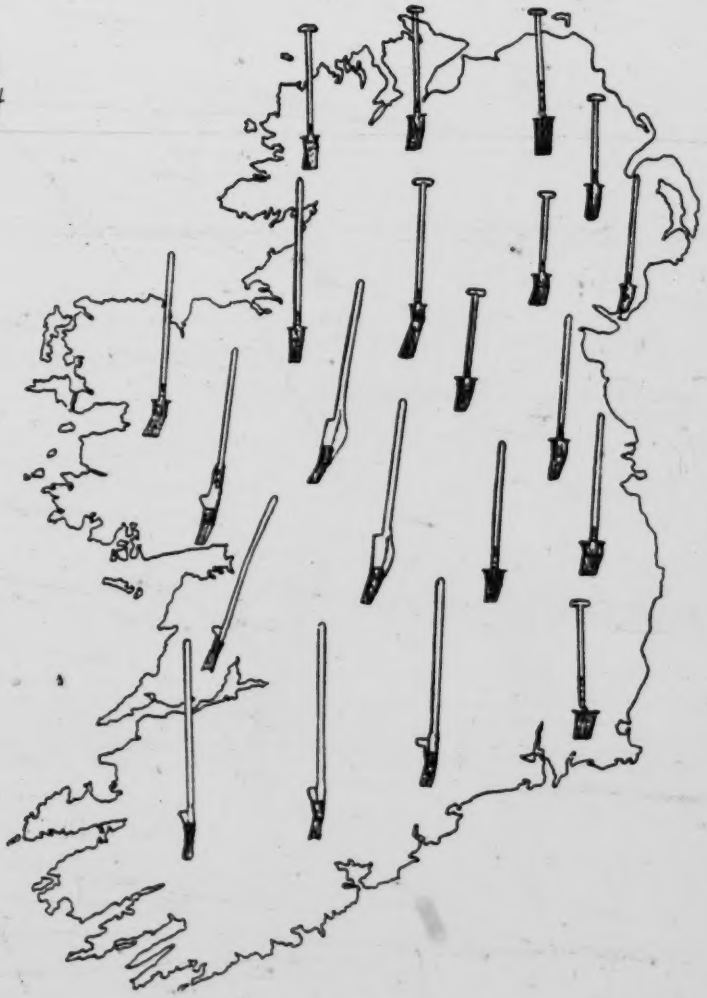

FIG. 44. Map of spade types.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

bend or 'lift' of the blade and to the lateral bend or 'dish'. The 412 lift may be well distributed or it may be concentrated at one 184 point: it may be curved or cranked.

The shape of the blade being thus precisely standardized for each area, various sizes are made to suit individual users and also the seasons of the year. Thus four or five spades of different sizes, ranging say from 13 to 17 in. in length, will be seen on sale in the market towns. In addition some longer spades may be offered for old-fashioned folk, for the blade of the spade is now made shorter than it used to be. These shorter spades, [178] required for digging potatoes, retain the often awkward shape of the long spring spade—designed for ridge-making—which is going out of favour with drill cultivation.

The Irish spade differs from the English not only in its narrow bent blade but also in its thickened sides, its foot-plates, its straight handle and the short straight straps or tails to which the handle is attached. Whereas the English spade derives its digging power from the curvature above the blade, in the Irish spade the curvature is all in the blade. Moreover the Irish prefer a long shaft (4 ft.) without hand-grip, though in Ulster the shaft is short (3 ft.) and headed, i.e. fitted with a cross-piece at the end. The headed shaft, however, is replacing the long headless shaft which is better adapted to the process of sod turning than to digging. With the headed shaft the control of the spade is mainly in the hand that grips the head, which thus tends to be the right hand: consequently this type of spade goes with left-footed digging (Fig. 41).

These differences are largely explained by differences of 244 function, for the primary purpose of the Irish two-eared spade, like the loy which it has replaced, is to turn the sod. It is a 412 hand plough rather than a digging tool, and it owes its remarkable development to the expansion of potato cultivation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To the new crop, as we shall see, the old method of burying the seed in prepared beds was quickly adapted, for ridge cultivation was ideally suited to a root-planting culture, and in fact potatoes are grown in ridges on the Andean plateaux. Thus the adoption of the potato helped to perpetuate tools and methods of cultivation which might otherwise have died out. Nowadays, however,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

4/2 [244] drill-cultivation has replaced lazy-beds over most of the country.

Some ridge-making tools have almost entirely disappeared, 4/2 for example the mattock and the breast-plough, which were once characteristic respectively of the south-west and the north-east [178] of the country and which may still be seen occasionally in Cos. Kerry and Antrim. The mattock ('graffan') is a tool of ancient [171] lineage which finds its parallels in Wales, in Spain and Mediterranean lands, and throughout the tropics (Fig. 48). In Kerry and west Cork it has had many uses—for breaking sods and

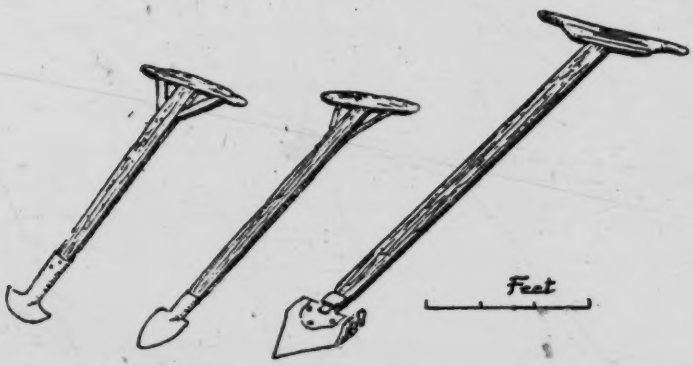

FIG. 45. Flachters or breast-ploughs, north-east Ireland. (1) North Antrim. (2) Co. Tyrone. (3) Mid-Antrim.

clods on the ridges, for loosening the earth of the furrows before shovelling, and also for cutting sods for ridge-making, for 'paring and burning' and for roof-covering. Arthur Young describes the process of graffaning a field by rolling the sod with the foot as it was cut: it was reckoned very heavy work.[1] The breast-plough or flachter (Fig. 45) served the same purpose in Cos. Antrim and Londonderry and earned the same reputation. This instrument is now largely restricted to paring bogland in preparation for turf-cutting. During the second world war I broke in a neglected mountain garden by making lazy-beds with a flachter and I heartily agree with the verdict of an Antrim labourer: 'half a day with it was enough for any ordinary

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 10.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

mortal, but there was ones made a profession of it and could 4/2 ● keep on most of a day.' The normal flachter is wingless after the Scots pattern: the winged blade of English type, curiously restricted to mid-Antrim (Fig. 45), is probably a landlord's introduction.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

an English introduction since 'sowing baskets' are listed in the 241
medieval pipe-rolls of the Pale. In parts of the west, for example Mayo, a skin tray was used for sowing. But the usual Irish method is to sow from a linen sheet, kept specially for the purpose, which is tied round the sower. The seed is thrown with a one-handed cast, and it is not everyone's privilege to be allowed to undertake this important task. It calls for skill and concentrated care, for 'a missed bit' is a bad omen, foretelling death [787]
The seed should all be safely 'buried' by the beginning of May, and in Co. Armagh the first cuckoo's call was taken as a sign. [825]
To be found sowing corn after this was a mark of deep disgrace: the laggard was labelled 'a cuckoo farmer'.

With modern ploughs and improved drainage it is not often, save in the tiny fields of the west, that one comes across cereal crops sown in ridges, but the lazy-bed method is very generally employed for potatoes and other crops where the spade is used, though the great bulk of the potato crop is sown in drills. The potato ridge presumably derives its name, lazy-bed, from the fact that the sod under the ridge is not dug: the bed is built up on top of the grass with sods and soil dug from the trenches between the ridges. Not only does this method make full use of the humus and decaying grass but it prevents the sets from becoming waterlogged and rotting, for the whole bed is raised above the water-table. And the unbroken sod checks the downwash of plant nutrients. The trenches or furrows between the ridges provide open drains, and the lazy-beds are always carefully aligned with the slope of the land. Moreover, when the trenches are dug a second time for earthing the potatoes, they often go deep enough to penetrate the hard layer of iron pan which tends to form under heavily leached soils by the washing down of iron salts. This the old-fashioned plough could not do. Breaking the impermeable pan not only improves the drainage but provides minerals which are returned to the topsoil when the potatoes are earthed. The ridges in which potatoes are grown in their Andean homeland appear to be similar to the Irish lazy-beds, and tuber crops throughout the tropics are planted in ridges or mounds, but the ridge-technique is certainly older than the potato in Ireland. Clearly an efficient 241
slovel is a requirement in the construction of ridges of any 412

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 412 width, and it is here that the long-handled shovel comes into its own. In Britain such a shovel, which remains characteristic of south-west England, is of at least Roman antiquity. Specimens from the Roman period are, however, made entirely of wood, and several similar shovels of unknown age have been found in the Irish bogs (Fig. 47). In the west, down to famine times, the common shovel was made of a single piece of wood, usually willow, shod with a narrow strip of iron along the edge.[1]

FIG. 47. Long-handled shovels used for finishing the ridges. The wooden one was found at Glenoe, Co. Antrim.

241 [407] In some districts potato ridges are made with the plough, either with an ordinary lea-plough or else with a special paring-plough, fitted with a wide sock, which reproduces the special feature of the lazy-bed, that is, it does not break the grass of the bed but inverts a wide sod on to it from either side. In both instances the trench is then broken up by a plough with the mould board removed to provide earth for shovelling on to the ridges. The much wider corn ridges were normally made with the plough, except in those retarded mountainy districts where the plough seems never to have been adopted. Wheat was grown on narrower ridges, some five to seven feet wide. In Co. Londonderry it was customary to plough a 'rid-hint', that is, to take a second furrow out of the subsoil of the trench to facilitate drainage.[2] We can readily picture the arable land as eighteenth century observers saw it, with 'the strips piled high and the furrows scraped bare'. Lazy-beds vary in width according to local conditions and conventions and may be as little as

[1]W. R. Wilde, *Catalogue* (1857), 207.
[2]G. V. Sampson, *Memoir* (1814), 282.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Fermanagh
County Antrim

PLATE 9

314
516
493
291
412

1. Cutting turf (underfooting) in a Co. Fermanagh bog.

314
417
493
291

2. Building a peat stack, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 144]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Meath

PLATE 10

314
291
[412]

1. Spreading mud turf with long-handled shovel, Co. Meath.

[516]

2. "Running" the spread turf.

[Facing p. 145]

241 west, for it means that the ridges can be prepared beforehand as opportunity offers. What is known as the Munster mode of planting 'with the back of the spade' is to thrust the narrow spade through the inverted top sod and drop the set behind the blade as it is levered forward. On the average three rows of potatoes go to each bed, but there are also one- two- and four-set ridges.

A special wooden dibber known as the steeveen, kibbin (little 241 spade) or gugger is employed for planting in Cavan, Leitrim •412 and Longford and may perhaps be correlated with the heavy loy as another archaic tool which has kept its hold in that area. The steeveen with its conical head (Fig. 48) will break through the toughest sod and open a way for the young sprouts. Typi- [462] cally 'guggering' is woman's work, the children following, [857] dropping in the sets and closing the hole with a fork or a mell. I like to think that the steeveen is descended from that universal tool of the women of humble cultivating societies, the digging or planting stick, remote ancestor of the spade. It is a plausible theory that the crops of wheat and barley sown by the first Irish cultivators were planted in this way in the ashes of burnt woodland on the mountainsides. Larger dibbers or 'stamps' with several teeth for planting corn were used until quite recently in some counties, for example Armagh (Fig. 49).

[407]

FIG. 49. Dibbers and (*centre*) sowing fiddle, Co. Armagh.

They are probably the descendents of specimens introduced by English 'planters' of the early seventeenth century. It is the [539] dibberhole which is referred to in the rhyme which has outlived the action it once accompanied:

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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have been greatly accelerated in the eighteenth century, thanks no doubt to the stimulus of contemporary English practice, but it may well be that the custom perpetuates the prehistoric method of clearing the land for cultivation. The fact that burning the land was prohibited by various Acts of Parliament in Ireland would point to its being another abominable native custom, like ploughing by the tail. We have referred to the graffan as a skinning tool of ancient lineage, and may add that in Devon and Cornwall the implement used 'in the infancy of the art of paring'[1] was a mattock or adze which also served as a clod-breaker. The 'hack' of the Pennine country comes to mind here. The flachter, the Highland equivalent of the breast-plough which became the standard English paring instrument, may well be, in fact, the ancestor of the breast-plough, and I suggest that it came into use for skinning the outfield before burning and planting. We know that outfield cultivation of burnt-over forest lasted in France, in the Vosges country, into the eighteenth century, and the custom probably survived long enough in Ireland to be replaced by 'paring and burning'. This view is certainly in line with the other evidences of cultural continuity from prehistoric times. The customs of throwing the ashes of May Day and Midsummer bonfires into the fields and the mixing of peat ash from the hearth with the seed corn may be magical residues of the ancient practice of firing the land before sowing.

We shall describe in a later chapter the various methods of carrying manure to the fields: here we may refer to another simple implement which serves in the preparation of the ridges. This is the clod-breaking wooden mallet or mell, resembling a croquet mallet (Fig. 1). The subject of our drawing might have been taken straight from the Luttrell Psalter of the fourteenth century, but it is a mell which I saw in use in Co. Armagh a few years ago. Hurling sticks served the same purpose in some southern counties,[2] and one wonders whether the Gaelic game of hurling evolved in this way by playfully knocking a rounded stone among the rigs. Patrick Geddes amusingly, if erroneously, traced the origin of the game of golf back to the

[1] *Loudan's Encyclopædia of Agriculture* (1831).
[2] W. Tighe, *Kilkenny* (1802), 182.

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idle Scots shepherd who with his crook knocked a white sea pebble into a rabbit hole among the dunes. And one recalls the theory that the game of cricket, with its 22-yard pitch, had its beginnings in the English openfields among ploughboys (players) and landlords' sons (gentlemen) who threw clods at the ploughman's marking sticks across the chain-wide acre strips completed at the end of a day's work. At any rate cricket has not strayed far from the English openfields and village greens, and in Ireland it clings to the larger towns and to the English-settled areas along the east coast. 241 526

Among other implements for preparing the soil the roller is probably of no great antiquity, though examples of wood or stone are of considerable interest. Alternatively, flat boulders or specially-built clod-slipes are driven over the ploughed ground, the driver being carried along on the platform thus provided and adding to its weight. I have seen the former in Co. Wexford and the latter in Co. Down. In the west the breaking of clods on the ridges is done by hand with a heavy rake (Fig. 1), and the 'harrows' which were formerly pulled by the horse's tail was a similar implement, a block of wood armed with a few wooden teeth. Even the larger harrows were a source of amusement to visiting farmers like Arthur Young, 'more fit to raise laughter than soil', as one observer put it. 241 412

The weeding and protection of the young corn were serious matters in the days when a patch of oats provided a family with its only cereal food. The tethering and herding of livestock were universal habits, and hand-weeding was another task for the young folk. O'Flaherty writes of Connacht: 'They go and lie prostrate or sit upon the corn, to weed it with their bare hands, leaving nothing behind but pure corn'.[1] Swedes are almost invariably weeded and thinned by hand. Thistles growing in corn or flax are pulled with special pincers or 'clips' made either of iron or more usually of wood, of a type which is illustrated in the Luttrell Psalter. The very similar French weeders known as Havre pincers were also used for catching eels. Docks were removed with a heavy forked spud (Fig. 50). There were other less arduous ways of inducing a bounteous crop. The custom of placing a sickle in the corn-field at the 241 [857] 241 412

[1]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 59.

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LAZY-BEDS

241
[412]

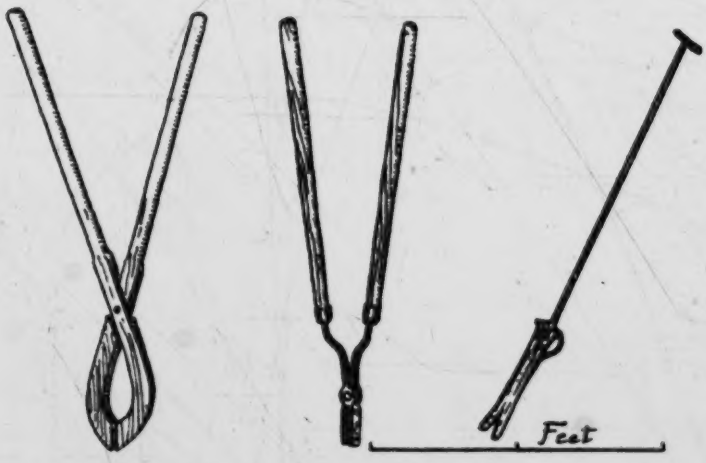

FIG. 50. Weeding 'clips', Antrim and Armagh, and iron dock-lifter, Antrim.

Midsummer festival was an easy way of showing the spirits of the corn what was expected of them. You might also hope to transfer ill-luck to someone else's crop by burying a dead animal, [787] a piece of meat, or even an egg on his land. It would be worth while listening for the call of the cuckoo on the first day of July, for to hear it was a sign of a good harvest. Prognostications were so many and so easily procured that they apparently provided a fatalistic society with a ready means of avoiding steady work. In some parts of the country, docks, thistles and [824] couch grass were apparently regarded as a good sign, because they kept the crop warm.[1]

[1] W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland*, 87.

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XII

HARVEST

THANKS to the necessity of 'winning' (seasoning) hay and 241
corn in the fields before the crops are carried home, harvest 221
time drags on from late summer to the edge of winter, and the
word 'harvest' as we have seen is a synonym for autumn. In [805]
this pastoral Irish country the hay harvest is nowadays of vital
importance in farm economy, yet I cannot find any evidence
that hay played a significant part in the traditional Gaelic
system of farming. It is the sickle, not the scythe, which
figures in folk-lore and in place-names, and the scythe seems to [412]
be a relative newcomer in most parts of the country. It requires
a stone-free sward which would be hard to seek on hill farms.
The business of hay-making was, I believe, of little importance
until the economic changes of the agrarian revolution and the
introduction of rotation grass. In the North the date of the first
hay-cutting is fixed by a celebrated but relatively new festival,
the Orangeman's day on the 12th of July. After hay comes flax,
which is pulled from late July to mid-August, followed by wheat
and barley in the areas where they are grown, by the corn
harvest in September and the potato-lifting in October. In bad
years hay may still be uncut in late August, the mountain corn
is green even at the end of September, and late-cut corn some-
times stays stacked in the fields up to Christmas—indeed there
are records of the grain being reaped after Christmas[1]—but
traditionally all harvest work was completed by All-Hallows.

In Scandinavia it has been claimed that hay-making began in 246
pre-historic times as a result of the climatic deterioration which
took place during the last millennium B.C. In Ireland with its

[1]For example in 1817. J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 25.

246 milder winters there seems to have been no such response. Although there has been hay-making on the rich meadows of Co. Meath, for example, since medieval times, when the English openfield system was introduced, I have found no literary or archaeological evidence for it anywhere in early Ireland. Indeed Giraldus Cambrensis expressed surprise in the [114] twelfth century that the Irish neither made hay nor built stalls for cattle, and despite his untrustworthiness I believe his witness may be accepted in this instance. Hay-making would have begun on the river bottoms (callows, holms) which, being liable to floods, were not available for winter grazing: this meadow hay is today much less important than 'upland' hay, the significant term used for rotation grass. The hay-making season is nowadays a time of toil for all members of the family, but I suspect that the period from midsummer to late July was under the old order a slack season, the time for raiding and fighting, and catching the English bending in the hayfields. For the Irish it was the 'blue month', when food was scarce (July is also called 'the hungry month') and the meal bins empty. In Ulster at any rate, for reasons which may be older than King William III, July is the holiday month and the time for faction fights. Sir John Myres used to say that in the Mediterranean world, where there is little grass to make hay, the month of May was the slackest time of the summer, the [721] favourite time for fighting instead of hay-making. In Ireland as in classical Greece the winter climate made it difficult and unsportsmanlike to go to war at that season.

To judge from present practice on the tiny farms of the west of Ireland, grass was cut as required from field-banks and odd [462] corners, a creelful at a time to give to the cow as a 'bribe' at milking time, and it was woman's work. The hook used for [412] this purpose, the grass or scythe hook, is smooth-edged, unlike the saw-toothed corn sickle, and what hay was made in former times was probably cut for the most part with the hook. The [231] livestock would be fed in winter mainly on oatstraw, and grazed on the infield stubble, supplemented by the outfield grasses which had been allowed to mature while the bulk of the stock was at the summer booley-grounds. We may be sure that what little hay was saved was treated much as it is on mountainy

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246 The Irish prefer the long-handled scythe. The sned, about five-
412 and-a-half feet long, has the lower handgrip offset, and a pointed iron spike is sometimes driven into the end of the sned to anchor it safely when honing (Fig. 53). A test of a well-

FIG. 53. Long-handled scythe, Donegal.

sharpened scythe is that it should 'cut wool moving downstream', and there was a special charm used in sharpening. The sanded scytheboard (strickle) has now given way to the artifi-
[133] cial stone, though hones of natural stone, including the fossilized wood of Lough Neagh, are used locally. A smith-made scythe-blade is highly prized and long after its legitimate life has ended lengths of it will be utilized for choppers and turnip knives. For full efficiency one must be measured for the fitting and hanging of a scythe. The lower handle should be at arm's length from the bottom of the sned, the upper one distant from the top by the length from elbow to finger-tips. The two handles should also be a cubit apart. The angle of the blade is determined by swinging the left leg and adjusting the blade until its point comes within a nicely determined distance of it when the sned is held upright against the right leg. The scythe cradle, for gathering the swathe as it is cut, is rarely met with
[184] in Ulster, save for makeshift devices such as a bit of sacking fitted against the 'grass-nail' which joins sned and blade in the angle where they meet. In the south and south-east of the country, where the scythe is an old introduction, quite elaborate cradles both of wood and of finely-wrought iron are to be seen.

HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay 243
to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century 412
there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the
good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps 178
of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East. The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal
possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with [422]
reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed [426]
directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects, may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should 248
be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands
are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to [476]
thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in
diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist [284]

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stranger was accosted and held down on the ground, a woman 243
would lie on top of him and another woman would tumble them over.[1] Such horse-play was more than a consequence of the high spirits of harvest, the 'rural saturnalia' described by Richard Jefferies in *The Toilers of the Field*. Displays of the rites and symbols of fertility were closely bound up with the bounty of harvest.

There were many variations in the methods of reaping, or shearing—to use the old term—depending on the type of hook, which might be smooth or notched, on the width of the ridges, [412] the condition of the crop and so on. The toothed sickle is probably the older implement, going back to the time when iron was a new metal and could not be given a sharp steel edge. Whereas the smooth or scythe hook is wielded with a slashing cut which may spill the grain, especially of rye, if the crop is ripe and the edge not kept very keen, the sickle is pulled towards the shearer, who holds each bunch as it is cut, pressing it back into the standing corn. As a rule three handfuls or 'loghters' go to each sheaf, the bands of which are prepared beforehand and laid out for the reaper to place the loghters on them straight from the hook (Pl. 6, 1).

The term shearing implies that the crop was cut close to the ground as wool is clipped from a sheep, and indeed urban officials have been known to confuse the operations. Pride was taken in a stubble-field that looked as if it had been shaved. 'Low and clean' was the injunction, 'cut it down to the living earth!' 'Down with the head and up with the tail' were my instructions when I lent a hand at harvest in the Glens of [516] Antrim. Mercifully one worked uphill: where the land was level the reaper would go down on one knee, wearing a knee-pad. If the ridges were wide there might be two shearers and one binder to each ridge, the shearers working from the furrows on each side, the depth of which minimized the amount of stooping required. A 'crack hooksman' could reap and tie fifty twelve-sheaf stooks a day, or say an Irish acre (= 1⅔ English acres). It is necessary to have worked with a gang of reapers to appreciate the relentless pace of the work and at the same time the care with which every operation is carried out. There must be no

[1] M. Banks, *British Calendar Customs*, Scotland, I (1937).

314 could account for twenty-five loads in a day, but, my in-
[461] formant added, 'they would need to be strong in the back and weak in the head'; as at corn harvest competitive cutting and 'striving' brought intense excitement and severe strain.

'Opening up' a bank involves first of all the removal of the top layer of tough fibrous peat—'flow' or 'fum'—to a depth of a foot or so. It grows heather, tough grasses or mosses and makes poor firing, though there are districts, especially on the islands, which have exhausted their turf and burn nothing but the even more fibrous sods or 'rough-heads' skinned off the rocks. The common spade is usually employed for opening a face, supplemented often by a sharp nicking tool, a hay-knife
● [412] or a portion of an old scythe-blade hafted for the purpose. In parts of north Ulster the thin top-layer of the mountain bogs is removed with a small variant of the breast-plough known as a flachter or flaying-spade, one of the tools which this region shares with western Scotland (Fig. 45). The term breast-plough is a euphemism, for it is really a groin-plough, pushed forward by thrusts of the thighs and groin.

The bog parings are generally spread on the cut-over bog below the bank, where they give a dry footing for the barrow-men wheeling away the turves. The pared sods in time consolidate, so that the rough grazing of the bog is preserved at a lower level. Conditions vary considerably from one bog to another, and so do the methods of working and the shapes of the tools. The minutiae of the craft are so perfected that a team of diggers works with the rhythm of a machine. Strong arms are required—a single turf may weigh up to 20 lb. when cut—but experience and a good eye are necessary for speed, and skilled 'slanesmen' are becoming scarce. Great importance was attached to 'keeping a straight face', that is keeping the cutting face vertical, and a poor digger was referred to as a 'clod-cutter'. To break a turf was almost a crime: in the old days 'they'd have thrown you out of the bog'. Not only do broken turves double the handling each time they are lifted or turned, but they tend to break adjacent turves when stacked, and the stack will show by its shape if the turf has been badly cut. At the end of the bank it is customary, in the north, to leave three steps of turf uncut. They enable one to scramble out on to the

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uncut bog above, but one suspects that behind the custom there lies the widespread notion that a task should never be completely finished and that a small portion of anything taken by man should be left for luck or the fairies. You will be told that the steps are cut to avoid the curse of Columbkille, for it is said that the saint was once trapped in a bog hole and laid a curse on all who did not cut the three steps.

There are two methods of cutting, vertically or 'underfooting' and horizontally or 'breasting', and they tend to be used respectively on thin upland and deep lowland bogs, though these have to be cut underfoot if badly drained unless a platform or 'footgo' of flow turf can be built up for the breaster to stand on. Also, the upper layers of brown turf which preserve some of the tough plant fibres are easier to cut vertically. Breasting not only imposes less strain on the back but speeds up the work, since the turves can be retained on the slane and placed directly on the barrow. (The vertical digger can do this only if his spade has a lift, that is bends forward.) In consequence the breast-cutter's turf-barrow will be designed for his convenience, for example it commonly has no legs so that he can swing it into position laterally by hooking the wing of his spade over the handle. Slanes, as well as barrows, will be found to vary in some slight degree from one bog to another, and a seemingly trivial difference can generally be explained in terms of differences of local conditions and techniques: the human ecology of the bogs is no less interesting than the plant ecology. In essentials the turf slane is a narrow straight-shafted steel blade with a wing set at right-angles after the manner of a cheese-knife, which is said, indeed, to owe its origin to 'an ingenious cutler of Dublin' who borrowed the idea from the slane.[1] The purpose of the wing is to detach a complete turf at a single stroke of the spade. The breadth and length of blade and wing are variables depending on many factors, but mainly on the size of turf required, and this in turn is determined to a considerable extent by the nature of the bog. If it is a very wet bog, for example, the turves must be cut larger than normal to allow for greater shrinkage on drying. When absolutely dry peat will shrink to less than one-eighth its original volume, and though air-dried peat still contains

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*, 96

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about 25 per cent water, when cut it may have 90 per cent or more. Again, some kinds of peat come away easily so that the turves can be cut somewhat larger than the dimensions of the slane, which for ease of working is naturally made as small and light as possible.

Increasingly in this as in every other department of rural labour, standardized implements are gaining ground, but the Irish spade factories still cater for scores of different tastes. When slanes were smith-forged almost every turf-cutter had his individual tool, made to measure. The factory-made slane weighs about 3¾ lb., but the old-style slane was merely a thin sheath of steel wrapped around a wooden blade and weighing about 1½ lb. It comprised four parts, blade, spade-tree, shaft and hilt, though shaft and spade-tree were sometimes in one piece, the shaft flattening out to enter the blade in a long 'web' (Fig. 62, 1). The thick round shaft, which had to be truly centred in the blade, was polished smooth as a piston with peaty sweat rubbed in. The two-piece haft, with separate spade-tree (No. 2), gave a certain springiness which eased the work. In the same

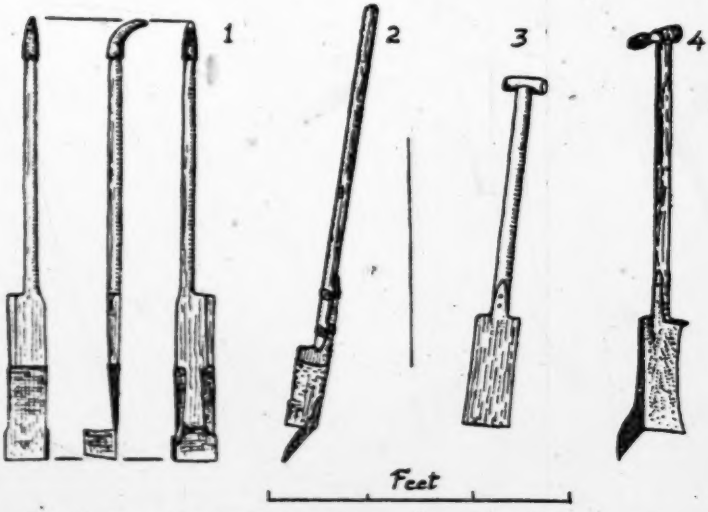

FIG. 62. Slanes old and new. Nos. 1 (Co. Antrim) and 3 (Co. Down) are breast spades; Nos. 2 (Co. Galway) and 4 (Co. Londonderry) are underfoot.

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way a separate hilt, frequently a cow's horn well polished by use, saved the strain on the palm of the hand, but many slanesmen preferred a handle shaped to their own taste and to the needs of the cutting technique required. In the Antrim Glens I have seen a bent piece of black sally carefully spliced on: this wood is said to have the virtue of absorbing sweat. The blade itself widens towards the cutting edge which is from four to six inches in width, the splay preventing the spade from sticking in the wet peat. The cutting edge of the wing is anything from four to seven inches long, and the top edge is finished in a variety of pleasing shapes and is often notched with the proprietary marks of the owner. 314 412

A breast slane can as a rule be distinguished from the underfoot by the upward slant of the cutting edge of the wing as viewed from the side with the spade held vertically, whereas the wing of the underfoot slane slopes down. This ensures that the face of the bog which is left after cutting shall be vertical when breasting and horizontal when underfooting, for the strokes are naturally made with a slight downward slope in the former case and a forward slope in the latter. Another difference is that the underfoot slane is normally provided with a foot-step on one side or the other, depending on whether the user is left or right handed. In practice the foot is not used, however, unless the peat is very tough and little humified. Bits of fibrous matter (called fog, cat or 'old wife's tow') clogging the cutting edge are troublesome, but it is kept clean by a quick preliminary jab into the peat, which reminds one of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the blacksmith. Modern slanes tend to have the blade made all in one piece, riveted to the haft with straps and fitted with a narrow foot-plate on the side away from the wing. (Fig. 62, 4.) The breast slane has been partly replaced, especially in wet bogs, by a short-handled flat spade which cuts larger peats (Fig. 62, 3). They are of a good shape for stacking and for transport on the canal-boats and, latterly, the lorries which supply Dublin with turf.

For taking the cut peats to the spread-field two wheelers and turf barrows are the minimum needs. The severed turves may be placed directly from the spade on to the waiting barrow, but a loader is more often required, lifting two turves at a 314 493

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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TURF AND SLANE

314

[412]

FIG. 66. Some tools used in the bog. (1) Trying iron for locating buried timber, Co. Cork. (2) Turf fork, Co. Armagh. (3) Fir-hatchet or 'finhow', Co. Armagh. (4) Fir-rooter, Co. Galway.

314 contains no salt, but the explanation may be that it was difficult to obtain and that its addition was not necessary when the
172 butter was preserved by burying it. This is confirmed by the
251 following quotation which shows also that the custom of preserving butter in a bog-hole was still remembered a generation ago in Co. Limerick. Lady Carbery writes: 'In their grandfather's time, butter, flavoured with wild garlic and unsalted (salt cost too much to buy except in small quantities) used to be put in a bog-hole and left to ripen.'[1]

[1]M. Carbery, *The Farm by Lough Gur*, 128.

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as the work of specialists (Fig. 71). The pampooties of the Aran Islands deserve mention here. Made of calfskin, but formerly of sealskin,[1] these one-piece shoes were once doubtless widely worn and have kept their hold in Aran because of their suitability for wet rocks and frail curraghs. The rivlins of Scotland and the Highland *bròganx* were very similar and I have seen rawhide shoes of the same type from Norway and the Pyrenees. They all have the hair outside and are secured by lacing back and front.

The wight serves both to hold corn, in filling a sack for instance, and to convey peats from the stack to the fireside: perforated it becomes a meal-sieve (boran) for sifting the skins (seeds) from oatmeal, or a buttermilk sieve for taking out the last grains of butter from the churn. The winnowing tray or dallan is a larger version, and it, too, may be perforated to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken out on to a spread cloth. There are, up and down Ireland, many bold windy Shilling Hills where the 'shellings' (husks) were, in past times, separated from the grain in this way (Pl. 7).

This brings us to the flail and its 'hanging' (the mid-kipple, hooden, gad, middling, or tug) which was commonly a thong of cow-, horse-, sheep, or goat-skin, though sometimes of rabbit- or eel-skin or a cord of flax. The flail, the proverbial 'stick-and-a-half', consists of a three to four feet long helve or hand-staff, usually made of ash, and a shorter beater, swingle or souple of hazel or holly. There are two principal methods of 'hanging' the parts together. In one variety, the tie passes through two leather caps lashed over the ends (Fig. 72, 1). This appears to be a variant of the common English flail-hanging, where, however, the cap is made of steamed ash or yew and there is no linking piece. Its distribution in Ireland, down the east coast, points to derivation from England. Modifications, occurring as far west as Donegal (Fig. 72, 1*a*, *b*), have the linking thong passing through a hole made either in the helve or in the beater. Kevin Danaher states that the capped flail is characteristic of central Europe: it is believed to have first appeared in north France in the early Middle Ages.[2] The

[1] O'Flaherty, *H'Ier Connaught*, 59 (footnote).
[2] *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 60 (1955), 6–14.

412 other method of hanging has a somewhat peripheral distribu-
171 tion in Europe (Scandinavia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Switzerland,
284 the Pyrenees) and also in Ireland, and as its simplicity as well as its distribution suggest, it is the older type. The tie passes around grooves cut in both hand-staff and souple (Fig. 72, 2) though again there are variants, one end of the tie, for example, being passed through a hole (Fig. 72, 2*a*). The grooved hanging, it is claimed by its users, is superior to the capped because the join is almost universal and there is no need to turn the halve in the hand when flailing. The holed fastening may be the most ancient method of all: it is found in parts of Atlantic Europe and the Baltic lands, but in Ireland is apparently restricted to Ulster (Pl. 6, 2).

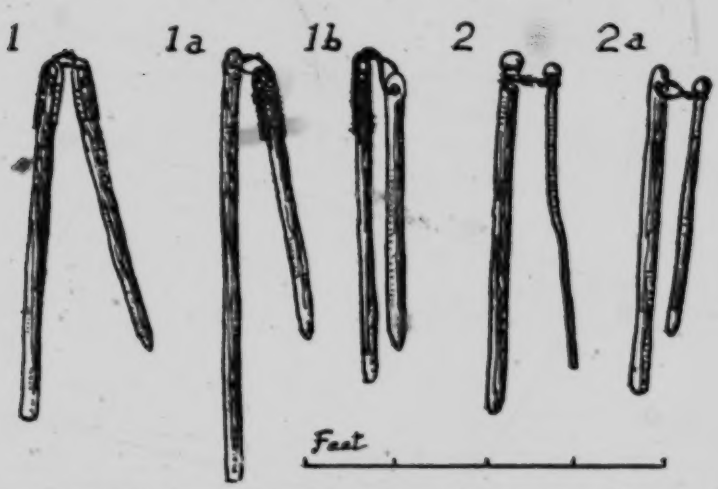

FIG. 72. Flails. (1) Co. Meath. (1*a*) Co. Armagh. (1*b*) Co. Donegal. (2) Co. Cavan. (2*a*) Co. Antrim.

243 Ancient and rudimentary as the flail is, requiring for its
412 making no tool save a sharp knife, there are some thrashers
171 who dispense with it, 'scutching' the corn instead with a stick or 'lashing' it over a barrel, a stone or a board (Plate 4). Many a small farmer in the north of Ireland harvests his seed grass in this way. The scutching method is used also in the

Pyrenees and in Africa, but the flail, apparently spreading 243
through western Europe in post-Roman times, in time replaced 412
it almost everywhere, to be in turn displaced by the mechanical 171
thrasher. Thus the sound of the flail has almost gone from the countryside. The best thrashing place is the floor of the barn above the byre, with its opposite doors to draw the wind and 343
advertise the flailer's industry. Such barns, however, were not 243
built outside the planted districts before agrarian changes and 171
improvements spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ireland knows nothing of the carefully built thrashing floors of England and Scandinavia. At best on the farms lacking a barn a thrashing board was sometimes kept, a square wooden platform raised a few inches off the ground. A good thrashing floor should bend to meet the flail, and in Scandinavia, for instance, great pains were taken in the old days to construct floors which would make the flails sing. They were occasionally strung with wires, and to magnify the echo of clay floors a horse's skull was buried under each corner.[1] It has been thought that this purpose was secondary to the luck it was hoped would follow from what was originally a foundation sacrifice. In Ireland [777]
traditions of the burying of horses' skulls under the floors of dwelling houses are both widespread and well authenticated. The usual explanation again is that this gives the house an echo, but it is also said to be lucky, and Sean O'Sullivan concludes that the custom of burying skulls began as a substitute for foundation sacrifices.[2] In Armagh 'the frontal bones of a [825]
horse's head are regarded as being peculiarly sonsie; they were often buried in barn floors and under the thresholds of dwelling houses for that reason.'[3]

In time, the expressed object came to be to magnify the music 243
of the singing flails as well as that of the ballad-singing and 789
dancing before the fire. The space between the doors of the old style kitchen-byre, it will be recalled, was a favourite thrashing place in times past. The Briget's Crosses above the door would have blessed the thrashing as well as the cattle. It

[1]Albert Sandkelf, *Singing Flails* (Folklore Fellows Communications, Helsinki, No. 136), (1949).
[2]Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 45–52.
[3]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fenn in 1838*, 77.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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226 Scallop shells were put to many uses and were often a
[415] substitute for the iron oil-pan of the open-wicked crusie.
[386] Seashells were also burnt to make lime for whitewashing the houses.

[262] In late summer the sprat come ashore in vast numbers on the west and south coasts, so that in Donegal 'they constituted the chief food of the peasantry during three or four months of the year.'[1] They were taken from the water in buckets and sieves, and the mackerel pursuing their prey close against the rocks might be caught almost as easily. In Waterford harbour there were specially erected wickerwork head weirs to take the sprat; and Dr. Went has described a wattled sprat-weir in working order in the estuary of the Blackwater.[2] Fishing from the rocks, too, is most popular in harvest time and though now little more than a pastime it once provided a reserve of food for the winter. About hay-harvest the ballan wrasse is at its best, 'when the flags (wild iris) are in bloom', they say. Known as bavin, byan, morran and by other names, it is now despised nearly everywhere, as is the coalfish which was salted and dried
[192] and which has different names in Gaelic for every stage of its growth to demonstrate its former importance and popularity. 'Glassan' oil was the luminant for the crusie lamps in Rathlin Island. On the north coast you may see anglers 'frassing' for small coalfish, that is attracting them by spitting into the water chewed potatoes or limpets. Formerly ground bait was made
● [412] by pounding limpets in rock basins of the type known as 'bullauns' (Fig. 90). Occasionally you may come across a fisherman casting a feather lure for pollack with a line made wholly or in part of horsehair. One method of twisting these lines, with quills, will be described in the following chapter. For short lengths next the hook—the fine foot-lines—white hair is preferred, and I have seen it made in County Down by
[283] twisting the hair between the bare thigh and a hand dusted with wood ash, a method practised by 'primitives' in many parts of the world. Two strands of from fifteen to twenty hairs are twisted on each other. (The anglers in the Seine at Paris are also said to prefer a 'crop' made from a grey mare's tail.) To

[1] 'Kinnfaela', *The Cliff Scenery of South-Western Donegal*, 19.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *Antiquity*, 25 (1951), 32–35.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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believe that many examples were ground out in much the same way before the sign of the cross replaced that of the circle. Cup-marked stones are commonly found in megalithic graves, on standing stones and Bronze Age cists, both in the British Isles and further afield. Some of the larger bullauns were certainly mortars, and very similar 'knocking stones' were used until recent times for preparing barley meal by pounding the grain with a beetle or maul (Fig. 90). To judge from the frequency with which one finds a knocking stone in the ruins of an old clachan it was one of the communal possessions of such a settlement. Old specimens, more especially when the basins are sunk in an outcrop of rock, are frequently found to hold water, and they are then regarded as 'wells', the water being held efficacious as a cure for warts. That such rock-basins have magic powers is illustrated by the following reference to a site in Scotland. On the Loch Avon side of Cairngorm is a shelving rock bearing hand-made basins about a foot wide and correspondingly deep: 'sitting on them is said to be efficacious in cases of barrenness.'[1]

FIG. 90. Knocking stone and bullaun. Both Co. Antrim.

It is an interesting illustration of the pagan associations of cup-marks, and of the success of the symbol of the cross, that their use survived in folk practice only as cursing stones. Smooth pebbles resting in certain stone basins are turned three times against the sun. There are many examples in the west, some

[1]A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 265.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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the 17th century, the natives withdrew themselves to the mountains, where they lived a life that some historians have mistaken for aboriginal nomadism. 221

The booleying tradition, finally, throws light on many of the customs connected with cattle and sheep, and helps to explain the absence of the dairy in permanent dwellings which formerly had to serve as winter houses only, most of the dairy work being done in summer. It also helps us to attribute to custom rather than solely to laziness and neglect the Irish farmer's traditional indifference to the fate of his crops during the summer months. "Spring and harvest time," we quote a typical 19th century observer, "are the only periods at which the peasants exert themselves, and then they work very hard; for the rest of the year they are idle."

221
231

Rush "Frung" Basket
Fig. 18. Co. Antrim.

The old customs of tending ("herding") the cattle and tethering or spancelling them also derive from the rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. "Cattle, sheep, pigs and goats," wrote Arthur Young, "are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw . . . . cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom." Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used: even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. Where animals still run in common under the system of "sums" it is necessary to give them distinguishing marks. Apart from the well-known methods of branding or colouring the sheep's wool it is the custom in parts of Ireland, as in Wales, to ear-mark sheep by cutting or notching the ear with proprietary shapes. In Clare Island the geese are "tokened" by having holes punched in their webbed feet. Incidentally it is worth noticing that, so far as I am aware, the iron-tipped shepherd's crook is unknown in Ireland, a bent ash stick taking its place. "Gatherings" and co-operation are of course a feature of sheep-shearing and dipping. Sheep-pens of dry stone construction are often associated with ancient settlements among the hills: they are of various shapes and would repay study.

[422]
[413]
[343]

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Fig. 23. Scollop thatch

[413]

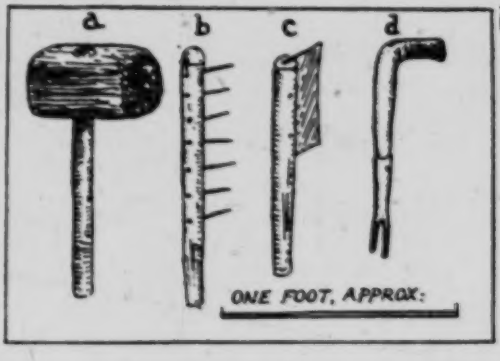

Fig. 24. Tools of a scollop-thatcher.

[p. 65]

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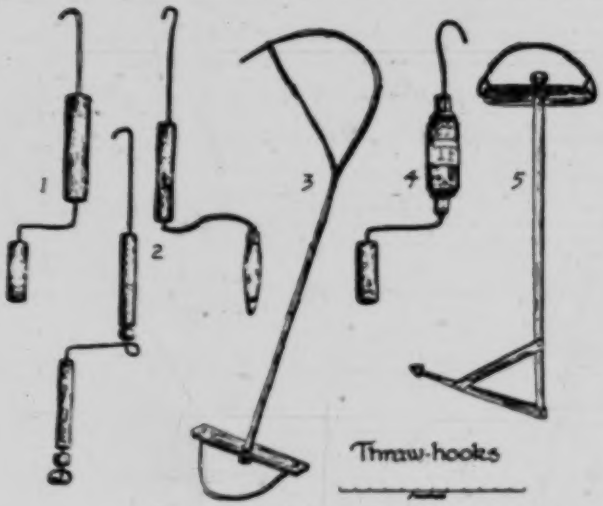
known to be of mediæval descent. The method of manufacture is shown in Fig. 50, and the tying down of a hay pike in Fig. 51. Sugán was sometimes employed instead of wattle 283



[413]

Fig. 78.

Sugán twisters 1. Co. Antrim. 2. Both Donegal. 3. Lecale, Down. 4. Leitrim. 5. Dingle, Kerry.

in the chimney canopies. It was used for the seats of chairs and for the clothes-line which stretched across the kitchen. A short length was sometimes worn as a girdle around a child's dress. From it were made tethering ropes, spancels and langles, traces and tail-ropes; and on the Donegal seaboard I have heard of cabbages being tethered "against the wind" by three hay-ropes! It is on record that the men of Mayo would descend the seacliffs suspended by a straw-rope.

A length of sugán is also the foundation course of many more complex objects of straw such as mats, mattresses, screens, beehives, nesting boxes, stools, arm-chairs, baskets and hampers. I illustrate (Fig. 79) one of the conical hen-nests which are hung on pegs in the kitchen: large

[244]
[481]
285
235

Fig. 79.

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314 the homestead as preparations are made to visit the bog, which may lie at any distance up to some miles away. I fancy turf-cutting was one of the tasks undertaken in the old days by the young people who took the cattle to the booleys. It used to be a communal task, for instance in Donegal until lately [476] six or eight men with their women and child helpers would pool their labour, receiving their meals for the day from the owner of each successive bank to be cut. Similarly each man would take his burden-creel to assist in the communal gathering and stacking in July or August.

Fig. 83. The flachter in use, Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim.

Fig. 84. Flachter in "at rest" position.

The first process in turf-cutting is the removal of the surface "parings"—the scraw—consisting of tough matted roots, coarse grass and moss, to a depth of anything from three or four inches to as much as 18 inches. The scraw is not taken as fuel except in areas where turf is scarce, but in some localities where the bogs have all been cut out, as in Rathlin and Tory, thin scraw scraped off the rock is the only fuel, and a very dirty and inefficient fire it makes. A broad spade is employed for paring, supplemented by some sharp cutting tool such as a hay-knife (Fig. 82), or an old scythe blade hafted and fitted with a foot-spur, for notching the vertical

[413]

Fig. 82.

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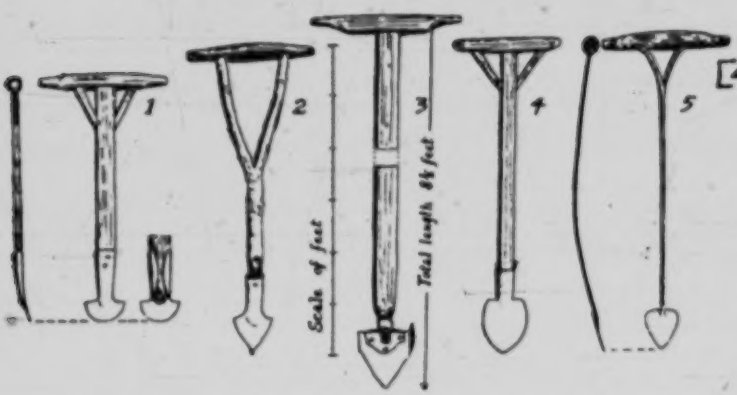
cuts. It is customary to replace the sod on the floor of the bog as the face is cut back, so that the rough grazing is preserved. If the sub-soil is suitable, lowland bogs are reclaimed and good cropping land secured for hay and potatoes. In Armagh strawberries, raspberries, currants and rhubarb grow excellently on the peaty soils. 314 [311] [185]

In the mountain bogs of the north-east a variety of push plough known as the flachter—a word derived from the same root as "flay"—cuts off a scraw some six inches thick as it is driven by vigorous thrusts of the thighs against the stout cross-bar (Figs. 83, 84). Unlike the English breast-



[413]

Fig. 85. Flachters.

1. Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim. 3. Glenravel, Co. Antrim (English type).
2. Glendun, Co. Antrim. 4. Co. Tyrone (1802).
5. Tirmeel, Co. Derry (iron shaft).

plough, the blade has no side wing. It is fastened to the shaft by the old-fashioned device of folded flanges which we have already come across in the sock of the wooden plough and in the loy. I illustrate in Fig. 85 some varieties of flachter and, for comparison, a breast-plough of English type from mid-Antrim (centre). In connexion with the short-

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314 handled variety the story is told that on old turf-cutter at Coolnagoppoge, on seeing his first aeroplane pass overhead, reported that he had seen "the devil riding a flachter!"

314 413 The prepared turf bank may now be cut in one of two ways, either by "breasting" or by digging "underfoot." Different types of spade or "slane" are required according to which method is adopted, and within these two groups of slanes there is a multitude of regional styles and shapes. In breast-work the digger stands facing the turf bank, and thrusts in his spade horizontally, whereas in underfooting he stands on the bank and cuts vertically. Many factors enter into the distribution of these two digging-modes: the nature and grain of the peat, the depth of the face, and the local tradition. I have seen both methods used side by side on the same mountain, but I have also met foot-slanesmen who had never seen a breast-slane and vice-versa. In the thin mountain bogs the underfoot method is customary, while breasting is favoured in the deep lowland mosses. The turf slane is clearly a specialized version of the narrow loy, with the addition of a side wing to cut out the turf at one stroke. The old styles take the handle in bent-over flanges like the loy, but the new fashions of "factory" spade have borrowed the straps of the "English" digging spade (Fig. 86). Slanes were formerly made by the country smith, and the spade-factories which now forge them must cater for the demands and tastes of innumerable provinces of local culture which correspond, if one may hazard a guess, with old territorial units such as the baronies.

[391] Co. Derry Turf Spade

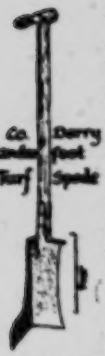

Fig. 86.

One factor in the varying shapes is the angle made by the cutting edge of the wing with the mouth of the blade: it may be at right-angles but is more likely to be set backward or forward at an angle which may be as much as 23°. In the breast-slane it tends to be set back (Fig. 89), while in the foot-slane it may be set forward at a sharp angle (Fig. 86). The edge of the wing measures anything from 4½ to 7 inches: the mouth of the spade averages 4½ inches but I have seen them up to 6 inches. Details vary so much, in fact, that to generalize is dangerous. The top or back of the wing is treated

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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in many different ways, for instance around Ballymoney it is 314
hooked and the slanesman uses it to pull the turf-barrow into 413
position. A foot-rest is provided on the foot-slane, on the side opposite the wing. There are left and right-footed workers, but it is not always necessary to use the foot, the strength of the arm sufficing. As with some of the loys (Chapter 13), there is a type of slane in the Midlands which has a separate spade-tree to which the handle is attached by two iron bands (Fig. 88). The spade-tree is of light wood, elm, or larch. Lightness is an essential quality in the slane: the blade is thin and sharp and weighs about 1½ pounds. The old type of

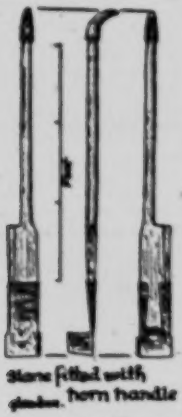

Fig. 87.

slane, like the loy, is straight handled, but it is customary to affix a cow's horn as hand-grip (Fig. 87.) Another type of handle is shown in Fig. 86.

Where the bogs are soft, especially in the area from Galway to Meath, a broad flat breast spade is employed in place of the winged slane. Its blade measures some 13 inches by 5 and it is sharpened at the sides as well as the mouth (Fig. 88). A Co. Derry variety has the edge expanded to 5½ inches: its blade is slightly dished and has a gentle rounded lift. Details of this kind assist in the penetration and with-

Fig. 88.

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413

drawal of the blade, and the expanded socket acts in the same way. An interesting method of halting is found in the "diamond" breast spade of East Galway (Fig. 88) in which the handle is fitted by soaking it to expand and grip the diamond-shaped perforations in the socket. The flat breast spade has to make two separate cuts before a turf is detached from the face. It has a short handle the length of which, about 2 ft., is adjusted to the length of the user's arm.

An experienced slanesman works with astonishing precision which recalls the steady ticking of a clock, his

[493]

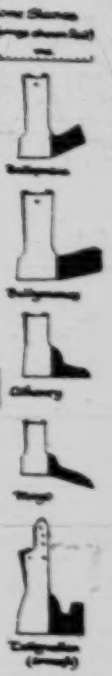
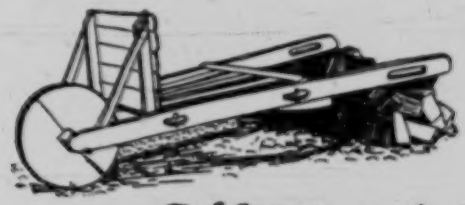
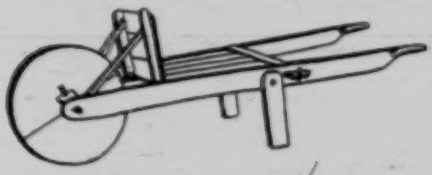


Fig. 89.
Top two are breast slanes.



Turf Barrow.



Turf Barrow.

Fig. 90.

strong thrusts alternating with little jabs, designed to clean the edge of the spade, which remind the onlooker of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the smith's hammer between his blows. Similarly the co-operation between slanesman, pitcher and spreader, or "holer," is a delightful thing to watch. But the work is hard and relentless. The severed turves may be placed directly on the barrow from the spade, or lifted off by hand two at a time and either loaded or pitched to a third hand who places them on the barrow. On deep

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cuttings a long-handled graip is sometimes used, and the 314
smiths turned out special two-pronged pitching forks for the 413
purpose (Fig. 66). If the peat is soft a long-handled shovel is
employed instead. A barrow-load varies in capacity, for
instance it is 10 turves in parts of Antrim and 14 in Armagh. [493]
The difference depends on the dimensions of the turves as well
as the size of the barrow and the state of the bog surface:
turves range from about 22 inches by 4 by 5 to 10 inches by 4
by 3, but they shrink considerably as they dry.

The turf barrow is a low solid-wheeled archaic-looking 314
vehicle (Fig. 90) the details of its construction showing as 493
many adaptations to local conditions and traditions as the
slane itself. It is a compromise between two opposing needs—
a large wheel for ease of pushing over the rough bog surface
and a low chassis to facilitate loading and emptying, for the
barrow is merely tilted on one side by the spreader, the turves
slipping off and standing on end in serried rows to dry. The
barrow must be as light as possible: hence no iron is used in
its construction except for the axle-ends, and, perhaps, a
light tyre for the solid wheel or "trundle." In soft bogs the
trundle must be wide—as much as 5 inches—but three inches
is more usual. Its diameter ranges from 12 to 18 inches.
The legs of the barrow are always short and may be mere
lugs, or they may be absent, in which case there must be some
arrangement for enabling the handles to be gripped: they
are either perforated or upturned (Fig. 90). An interesting
variant which I have noticed around Athenry has the legs bent [492]
backwards in a curve to act as slides or runners. A curious
adaptation to soft bogland is recorded a century ago from Co. [481]
Mayo, where both horses and men were "shod with boards"
when working in the moss. Box-barrows are something used
to transport dried turf, or a "kish" may be placed on the
flat barrow. In Armagh "carrying baskets" are employed
(Fig. 91).

Little can be said here about the methods adopted to dry 314
the turf: the shapes and names of the various piles into which

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3/4 the fuel is built differ from one area to another, and I give as a sample the list prepared by Mr. J. M. Mogey for Co. Antrim. After about a fortnight the spread turf is stacked in small "foots" formed by leaning a number of turves together, and later in "turn-foots" and "castles" which are built up in storeys. These are then combined into larger "rickles" or

[482]
[285]

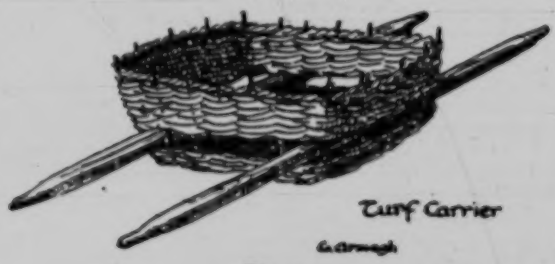

Fig. 91.

"clamps" and finally stored in "hand-stacks" erected alongside a bog road or in larger stacks built at the homestead (Fig. 93).

[413]

Fig. 92.

In many parts of the country the low-lying bogs are too wet to cut with the spade, and other methods of "winning" the turf must be adopted. Making "hand-turf" by moulding or "kneading" the black mud into balls is the simplest solution of the problem, but systematic methods have been evolved in some districts, and we give an account of the process as observed in Co. Meath, where mud turf is highly prized and considered to burn better and last longer than cut peat. It is dug in pits, broken down with short-handled shovels and graips and well mixed with water until the slushy mixture is ready to shovel into a box barrow, that is an ordinary manure barrow or a turf barrow fitted with sides, It is wheeled on to a smooth place and spread in a layer some 9 inches thick. When dry enough to take a man's weight the layer is notched in deep parallel grooves made with the edges of the hands, with cross grooves at intervals. The worker

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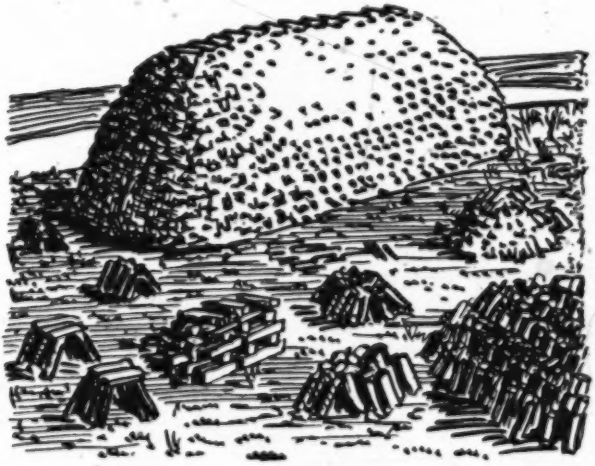
walks backwards, bare-footed, during this process of "running," dipping his hands from time to time in a bucket of water to clean them. The great slab of notched turf then resembles a huge tray of treacle toffee. The brick-like slabs, some 12 inches by 4, are later cut out with a sharp flat turf spade or a hay-knife, and go through the usual processes of footing, clamping and stacking. 314



Turf stack, footings, castles, spread turf, etc. Co. Antrim.

Fig. 93.

We must now consider briefly the uses made of bog timber, chiefly "fir" (Scots pine), oak and birch. The great fir stumps are cleaved with a heavy fir-hatchet, from 5 to as much as 14 pounds in weight (Fig. 92). A "lifter" of rather unusual type is also illustrated. The resinous wood makes excellent firing and kindling, but the toughest stumps defy the axe and their twisted roots make a convenient substitute for a gate or a stop-gap. Straight-grained fir was much in demand for making "splits," that is thin strips used for lighting purposes and for making the rims and bottoms of sieves. 313 [413]

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cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

222

Fig. 102.

[439]

Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

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228
[439]

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

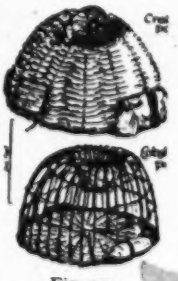
Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

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Norway and other sub-arctic regions—and from an economy where straw was not available. We have already noticed that cattle-herders in the early seventeenth century built their booley houses of boughs coated with long strips of green turf. The long sods made a portable roof which could be slung on a pole between two pack-horses. 342 [171]

The sods were cut in strips from carefully selected spots where a close-grazed sward gave a thick mat of grass-roots. They measure two to three feet wide and about one and a half inches thick, and as they were cut they were rolled on to a stick and carried like a carpet. Their roofing sods, wrote Thomas Campbell in 1778, 'they call scraws (they are rolled up like scrolls) but they would be better called hides, for they are flayed off the earth.'[1] In the north, where the flachter or breast-plough was used for paring sods (Chapter X), the scraws might be as much as twelve or fourteen feet long, though short turves were also used. They were carried on to the roof up two ladders and laid on grass upwards, overlapping at the ridge on the side away from the wind. They overlapped laterally also, the scraw on the windward side running over its neighbour on the lee (Fig. 14). In many such details careful attention was paid to the wind and the rain, for example the strongest purlins were put on the side whence driving rain was most to be expected. Similarly the stoutest couples were placed at the weather end of the house, and they were sometimes given a slight inclination towards the wind. A seemingly artless cabin may thus be found to show the most careful adaptation to local conditions. 342 314

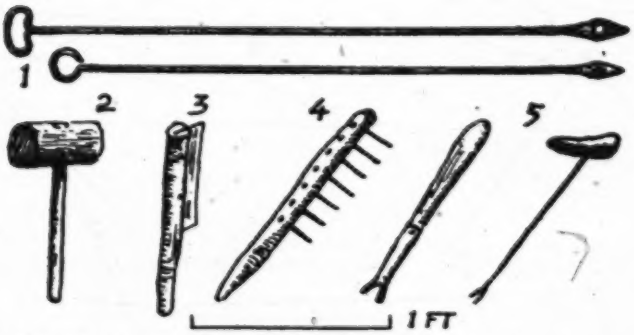
The first thin layer of thatch was, in some parts of the country, sewn on to the purlins with a thatching needle—the older pattern has a large eye to take hay-rope (Fig. 15)—and the roof might then be finished in one of several regional styles. In the eastern part of Co. Down, and sporadically elsewhere, the straw is laid on in specially prepared bundles or stapples[2] (Gaelic *Stapull*) and the thatch is plastered down at eaves, gable and ridge with clay or mud. A few scollops are added at ridge and eaves. This is probably a very ancient method, 342 [413] [177]

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 146.
[2]K. Danaher, *Béaloideas* (1948), 203–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and among the farming population a new roof is hardly ever covered with thatch. The country thatcher finds employment in patching, not thatching. 342 [463]

The erection of such simple houses as I have described did not call for the services of specialists. When the need arose the collective skills of a whole community were available, and one can readily see how prescribed methods were handed down in any particular area. 'The custom on such occasions', wrote Lord George Hill[1]—he is speaking of Donegal in the years before the Great Famine—'is for the person who has the work 342 476 527



[413]

FIG. 15. Thatching tools. (1) Needles, the upper one for hay or fir ropes. (2) Mallet. (3) Trimming knife. (4) Rake. (5) Spurtles for stappling and patching. All from Co. Down except the last, from Co. Meath.

to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and singing while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day'. Like all work done in common, the thatching too was regarded as a sort of festival. In the Aran Islands 'from the moment a roof is taken in hand there is a whirl of laughter and talk till it is ended, and, as the man whose house is being covered is a host instead of an employer, he lays himself out to please the men who work with

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 40.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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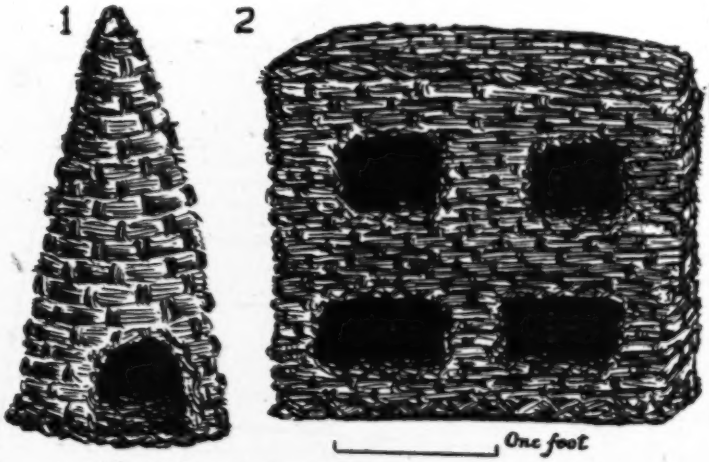

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FIG. 16. Straw hens' nests. (1) Co. Clare. (2) Co. Leitrim.

hen warmly ensconced in a stone-box alongside the fire. In the mud floor one may sometimes see large 'pot-holes', hollows in which the heavy iron pot is placed when the boiled potatoes are pounded for pig-food (Fig. 19). The wooden or iron 'beetles' with which the pounding is done are as varied in shape and size as they are indispensable (Fig. 17). Sometimes

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[415]
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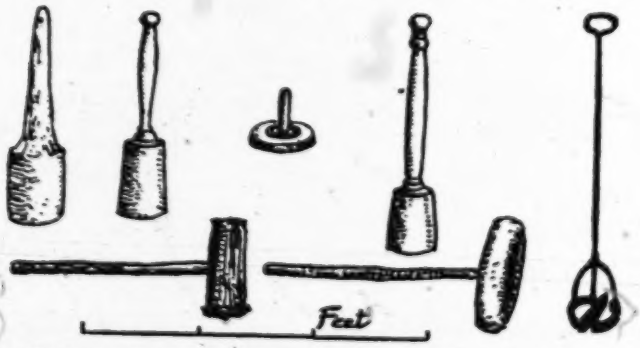

FIG. 17. Beetles, for pounding potatoes and, below, mells for 'knocking whins', Co. Antrim. Beetles similar to the first example were formerly used also for washing clothes and for breaking flax before hand-scutching.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

283 was bound about the waist with a suggan of straw.' The Rev. Philip Skelton was said by his biographer 'in cold weather, to go through Pettigo with a straw rope about him, to keep his large coat on.'[1]

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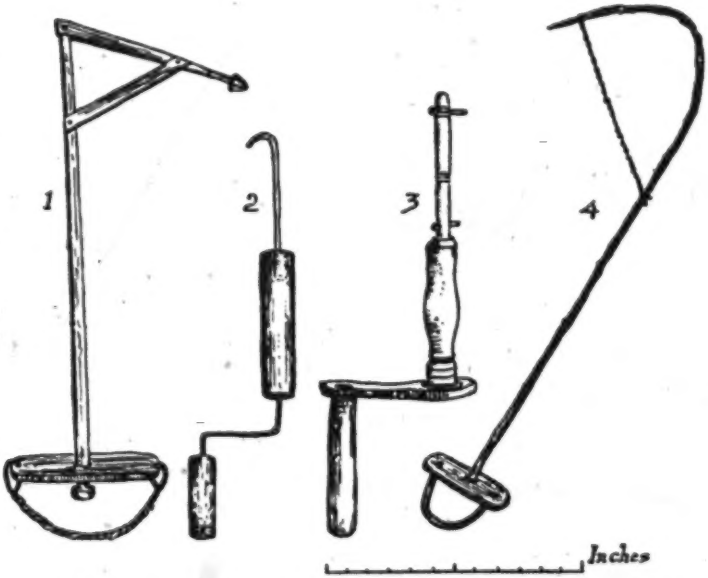

FIG. 67. Rope-twisters. (1) Co. Kerry. (2) Co. Antrim. (3) Co. Armagh. (4) Co. Down. Nos. 1 and 4 are the old-style 'thraw-hooks'.

Short lengths of rope ('thumb-ropes' of hay or straw) are skilfully twisted by hand or, if the material is fine, made by wrapping it round a stick and pulling it out, but a simple tool of ancient lineage, the throw-crook or thraw-hook, is employed when long ropes are needed: it is known also in England and in Scandinavia. A twister of cranked wire resembling a carpenter's brace has, however, largely replaced the wooden hook; it is more tiring but requires less skill (Fig. 67). I have seen a wooden hayrake serving as an improvised thraw-hook. The
283 prepared ropes are wound into golden balls (clews) up to two

[1]S. Burdy, *The Life of Philip Skelton*, 131.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222 cut at low tide. The weeds were dried on low stone walls and ricked and thatched until ready for the kiln on summer days. Rain rots the weeds, so that in wet weather the heavy kelp had to be shaken and turned repeatedly until it could be safely ricked. The half obliterated ruins of drying-walls and kilns made of sea-boulders can be seen on stormy beaches all around the coast (Fig. 78). In the early decades of the century the

[417]

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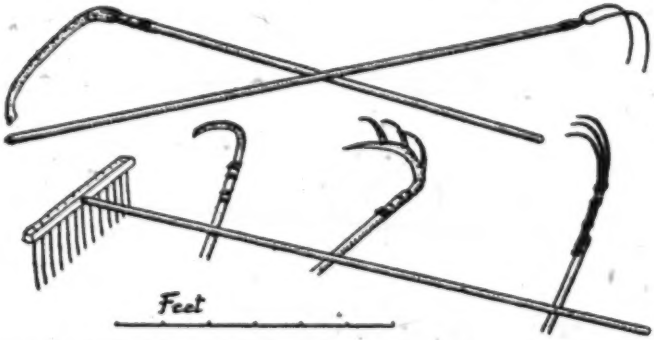

FIG. 78. Kelp harvest. Kelp kiln and stack. Co. Galway. Hooks, knives and drags, west and south coasts (See Pl. 11).

dense oily smoke from the kilns drifting far inland was a familiar sight, each kiln burning for many hours and consuming several tons of weed, which was fed in a little at a time. It is said that 60 tons of weed are required to provide 1 ton of kelp, and the work was both arduous and filthy. If the supply of drift-weed failed the heavy tangles were laboriously dragged ashore or cut with knives mounted on handles up to twenty feet long to [413] reach the best weeds, free of sand, growing in deep water. A

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

combined knife and drag found in Connacht has three heavy hooks attached to a strong sickle-shaped blade mounted on a 12-ft. pole (Fig. 73). Powerful long-handled scythes and great hand-rakes with teeth a foot long were used on the south coast. In Donegal the men would wield their long knives from curraghs while the women dragged the weed ashore. 222 413

In the Rosses of west Donegal around 1750 the rents were paid in kelp: any surplus was bartered for 'the two luxuries, spirits and tobacco, enjoyed by men and women alike.'[1] For the lesser weeds growing in shallow water ordinary sickles were employed when the tide was low, but these species made inferior kelp. Yet in some areas, for example Strangford Lough, stones were planted on the shore to grow wrack for kelp burning: Arthur Young commented on this practice in 1776.[2] Old seaweed beds may be seen also in Lough Swilly, Clew Bay, Achill Sound and probably elsewhere. 222 [427] [437]

Today the most remarkable area of cultivated weed is near the mouth of Carlingford Lough in County Down, where at low tide a wide stretch of mud and sand is exposed in Mill Bay. It is grown solely to supply fertilizer for the potato crop. Wrack rights are mentioned in grants of land in County Down as far back as 1506, but the earliest reference I have found to the cultivated weed in Carlingford Lough is in a guidebook of 1846. As we have seen, however, Arthur Young refers to the growing of wrack for kelp-burning in Strangford Lough, and since the best species for kelp grow in deeper water the planting of seaweed beds is not likely to have originated with the kelp industry. Through the second half of last century some 1,100 beds, covering well over a square mile in area, were maintained in Mill Bay, and it was not until the depression between the two world wars that they began to be neglected. Today the use of wrack has almost entirely given way to artificial fertilizers, with a great easement of labour but a loss of annually renewed organic matter in the soil. The wrackbeds, or 'plans', are half-acre rectangles set with rows of boulders a foot or so in diameter, but many beds are subdivided into small 'cuts' for sub-letting, and the Estate Map showing the beds has the 222 387 423

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.
[2] A. Young, *Tour*, 1, 194.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Kerry

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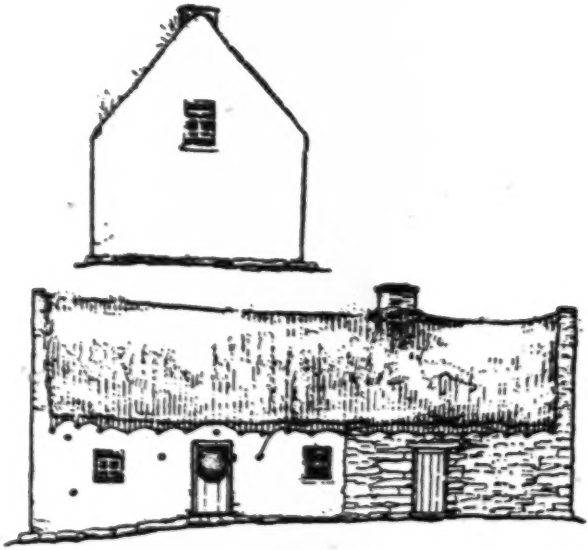

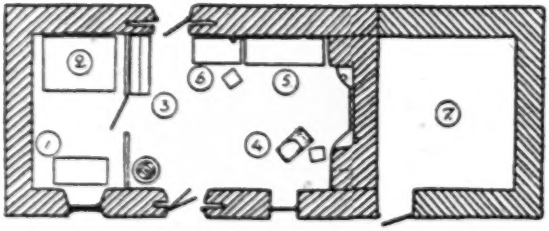

[231]

Fig. 4. Gable-chimney house. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry. The cattle once in the lower end of the house. Now removed to a house added to the upper gable wall. 1 table, 2 bed, 3 dresser, 4 cradle, 5 bench, 6 table, 7 sowhouse.

fig. 4. In Co. Kerry, Co. Galway and other parts of Ireland, I have been told [171] of rough strong doors of wattles bound together with ropes of *sugán*. Such a door, the hurdle door, *sgálán fraoigh* or *scalpán*, was more commonly used as a door for cattle sheds. It is found also in Scotland (see e. g. an illustration showing sheilings in Jura (S. W. Scotland) in Pinkertons Voyages and Travels, vol. III, p. 278, London 1809) and it is mentioned in the Ancient Irish laws. About the two opposite doors and the half-doors see p. 217.

In older times a hole in the wall, a looplight, served as window. It was closed [284, at night with a hay-wisp or a wooden shutter, *cómhla*, which was removed 414] by day and secured at night by a stick placed across or by a latch.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater 342
part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen. There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of house is common, but there is also a squarer type which may have a second story.

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled, rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the [362]
governmental agencies and patterned after those built first by the Congested Districts Board (1893–1923) are slated and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statistical statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families, but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's population live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings, which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence between the proportion of small farm population to total population.

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is 592
the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking 352
is done, the table around which the family — first the adult 353
males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and [778]
the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the "Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled [415]
with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festivals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part

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342

1. Thatched-chimney. Co. Clare.
2. Making hay-ropes. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
3. Hobwalls carrying the chimney. Toormakeady, Co. Galway.

1.

2.

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3.

[p. 219]

PLATE XLVIII

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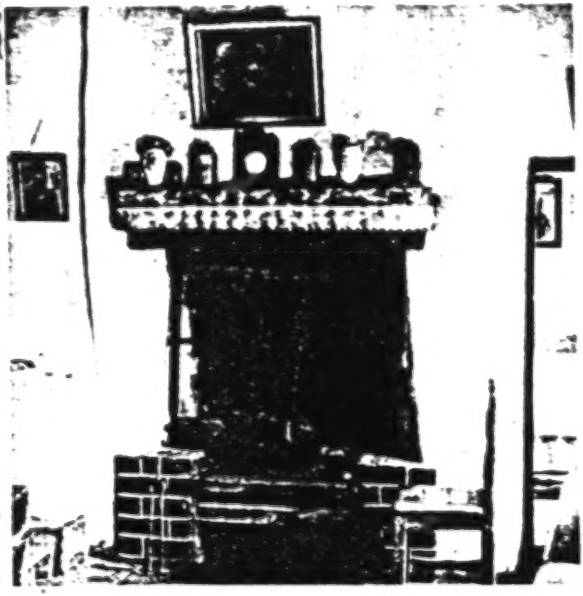

1.

1. Fire-place with iron-grate. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. The basket hanging to dry on the southwall of the house. Lough Eske, Co. Donegal.

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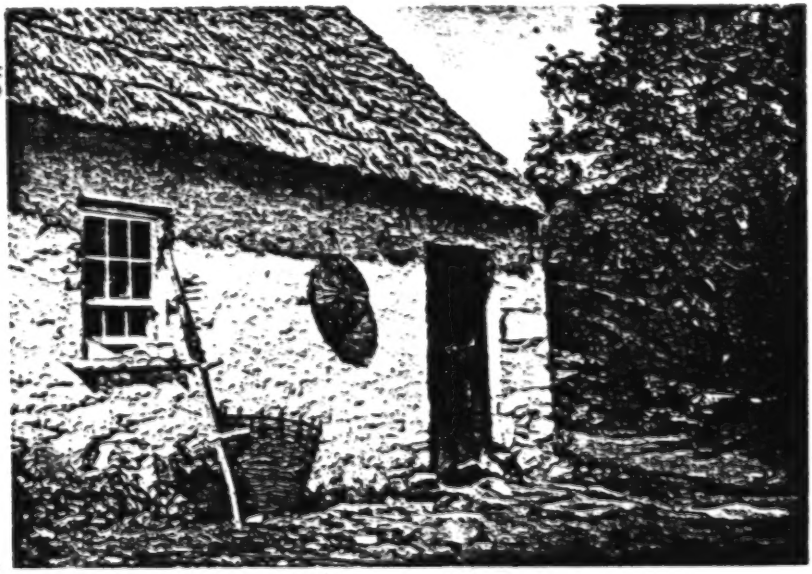

2.

[p. 220]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

172 on stones used as hoes for cultivation. We have direct evidence that some form of agriculture was practised at this time in Ireland, about forty centuries ago, and it is here that the foundations of Ireland's peasant culture must be sought. Some scholars have argued that a simple wooden plough reached Atlantic Europe not long afterwards from the Mediterranean, but the digging stick was probably the main cultivating tool: the digging tradition has remained all-powerful in Ireland, and even to-day the narrow Irish spade or loy (Chapter 13) is little more than an iron-shod digging stick.

Fig 5
Fashions in Pots.

Communal tombs of great stones built by these bringers of civilisation—the giants' graves of the countryfolk and the megalithic monuments of the archæologists—tell us a great deal, from their distribution and their contents, of the areas occupied and the beliefs held by the first Irish farmers. Glacial sands and limestone exposures attracted them on account of their easily-worked soils and natural clearings, while the thin soils and therefore light forest-cover of the hill-slopes and plateaux drew them by stages into all the scattered mountains from Wicklow to Kerry and from Antrim to Donegal. The discovery of grains of wheat and of saddle-querns for grinding corn, as well as countless sherds of hand-made pottery, show that they were settled farmers: their large round-bottomed pots, often provided with holes or lugs for suspension over the fire, are plausible forerunners of the common iron "pots" which are indispensible in every farm and cottage to-day. It should be borne in mind that the sub-boreal period (Chapter 3), from which this culture dates, was a time of warm dry climate, so that settlement and cultivation of wheat and probably barley were possible at elevations where they would now be difficult if not impracticable.

Bone-finds tell us that the Irishman's oldest animals were the pig and the ox. By analogy with other parts of northern Europe we should expect the earlier folk of the Mesolithic to have possessed the dog, though there is no clear proof of this. The horse, the goat and the sheep were perhaps

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the 17th century, the natives withdrew themselves to the mountains, where they lived a life that some historians have mistaken for aboriginal nomadism. 221

The booleying tradition, finally, throws light on many of the customs connected with cattle and sheep, and helps to explain the absence of the dairy in permanent dwellings which formerly had to serve as winter houses only, most of the dairy work being done in summer. It also helps us to attribute to custom rather than solely to laziness and neglect the Irish farmer's traditional indifference to the fate of his crops during the summer months. "Spring and harvest time," we quote a typical 19th century observer, "are the only periods at which the peasants exert themselves, and then they work very hard; for the rest of the year they are idle."

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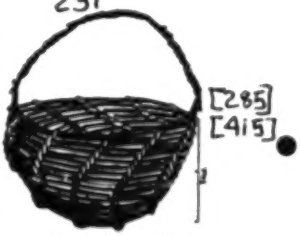

Rush "Frung" Basket
Fig. 18. Co. Antrim.

The old customs of tending ("herding") the cattle and tethering or spancelling them also derive from the rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. "Cattle, sheep, pigs and goats," wrote Arthur Young, "are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw . . . . cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom." Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used: even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. Where animals still run in common under the system of "sums" it is necessary to give them distinguishing marks. Apart from the well-known methods of branding or colouring the sheep's wool it is the custom in parts of Ireland, as in Wales, to ear-mark sheep by cutting or notching the ear with proprietary shapes. In Clare Island the geese are "tokened" by having holes punched in their webbed feet. Incidentally it is worth noticing that, so far as I am aware, the iron-tipped shepherd's crook is unknown in Ireland, a bent ash stick taking its place. "Gatherings" and co-operation are of course a feature of sheep-shearing and dipping. Sheep-pens of dry stone construction are often associated with ancient settlements among the hills: they are of various shapes and would repay study.

[422]
[413]
[343]

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 workmanship of the Welsh oak dressers, is an essential part of the kitchen and, like the keeping-holes mentioned above, has its prototype in the stone shelves of some of our oldest prehistoric dwellings. The dresser belongs, like so many of the other elements we are discussing, to the "Atlantic" province of European folk-culture. It accompanies the open hearth tradition as distinct from the "oven tradition" of central Europe, and may be thought of (compare the absence of the large table mentioned below) as providing storage while taking up a minimum of the valuable floor space in small single-roomed houses. The dresser has its fixed place in the layout of the kitchen, the position varying, however, according to the district, the type of house, disposition of the doors, and so on. In the outshot houses it stands against the side wall alongside the bed, whereas in the central-hearth type it lies 352 across the kitchen opposite the fire and helps to partition off 415 the end room. The bottom of the dresser is open. Here the hen-coops, of straw, wattle or wood, were sometimes kept, but one is more likely to see a collection of iron pots and the crocks, buckets or wooden stave-built vessels (piggins) for holding water or milk. The latter I have seen covered with roughly trimmed stone slabs (Fig. 68), a prehistoric device which has the advantage of coolness and gives protection from the cats. On the dresser are a few bits of "delph" and the tin mugs which have displaced the wooden noggins. Delph, as kitchen-ware is called, has not long since become general in remote parts. Of Mayo in the last century we read that "all their vessels were of wood, most of them cut out of solid timber." These included not only platters, spoons and ladles, but also methers or drinking cups of various sizes. Where the crockery tradition is of old standing, plates, jugs and long rows or nests of bowls "whammeled," that is tumbled on their sides, line the dresser shelves. Here, too, are the beetles of different shapes (Fig. 30) used for pounding or mashing the potatoes. The upright milk churn commonly finds its place alongside the dresser.

[412]

352 Fig. 30.

One very rarely sees a table of any antiquity in an Irish kitchen: it is generally of deal and it is placed against one of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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Oatcake Toasters (Harnen Stands)

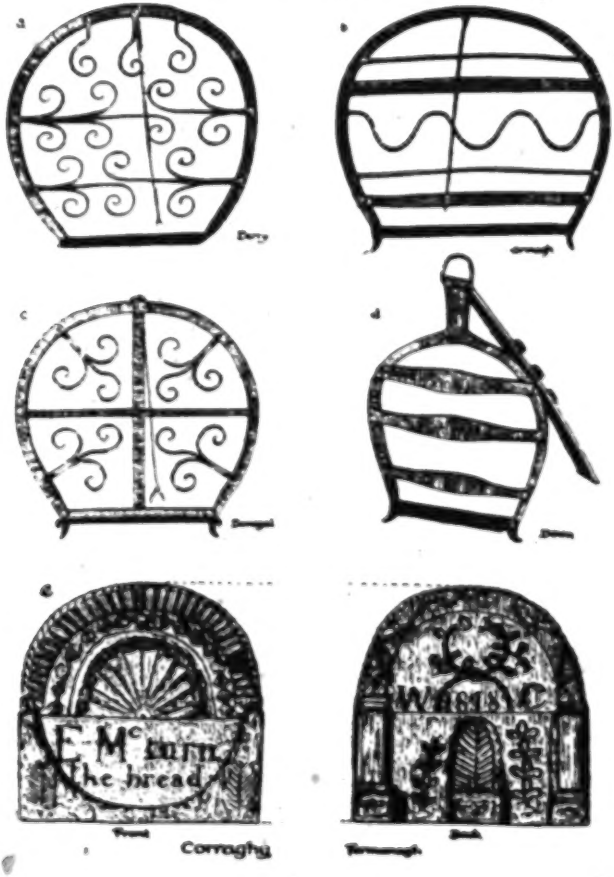

Fig. 33. Scale ¼. a, b, c, d, iron; e, stone.

[p. 74]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the south, local smiths vied with each other in producing elaborately-made toasters, or "harnen stands," which are of many different styles and deserve study before they all find their way to the scrap-heap (Fig. 33). When grates became fashionable, toasting "fenders" were hung on the bars. The large flat oatcake is cut into four quarters or "farls." 252

[415]

[417]

Fig. 34.

Fig. 35.

Nowadays the oatcakes have been superseded by wheaten bread of various kinds: the flour is often mixed with a bit of maize or barley flour and the baking is done either on the griddle (Fig. 34), in a deep "fry pan," or in the pot-oven or "bastible" (Fig. 34). Meat roasted in the pot-oven can be delicious and I have a taste for rice puddings done in this way. Others may tell of the virtues of the "bap" and of potato "slim bread," and it is not for me to repeat the strictures of Young and Cobbett on the strong tea which they said would ruin the peasantry. It should be added that the thin-bread tradition has been developed by the town bakeries into a bewildering variety of breads and scones.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

●415 The round-bottomed three-legged iron pots (Figs. 5 and 34), of various sizes from the small porridge pot to the giant 18 gallon potato pot, are descended from the bronze cauldrons of which there are many specimens in the museums ranging in date from 700 B.C. to 1700 A.D. The cauldron was in old times the special property of the head of the house and figures prominently in Celtic mythology and folklore. The pot has been described as the "maid of all work," but boiling potatoes for man and beast is now its main task. The heaviest pots are going out of use with the introduction of raised grates.

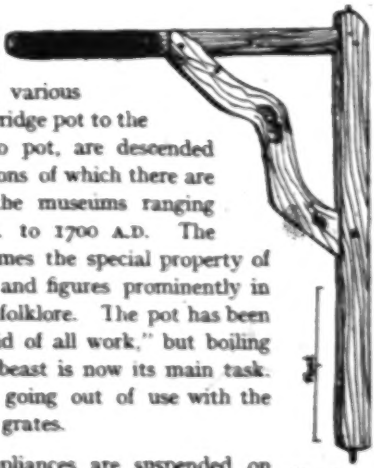

Fig. 36.

These various appliances are suspended on the iron crook or adjustible pot hook, to which many different kinds of fittings or "bools" (Fig. 35) can be attached. The crook may simply hang from a bar placed across the chimney, but more commonly from a crane (Fig. 29) which swivels at the side of the fire. A few examples of the wooden crane survive (Fig. 36) By the fireside, too, are kept the short iron tongs or "mudyees" and the heather besom (Fig. 29) which is more efficient than any broom in cleaning among the hearthstones. A goose-wing serves to dust the pots and clean the griddle when baking. Here by the fireside was hung the crusie oil lamp (Chapter 16, Fig. 105) which is another element of the north-western province of European folk-culture and may have its prototype in the famous "hanging bowls" of over 1,000 years ago. A selection of old-fashioned smith-made iron light-holders of different kinds is shown in Fig. 37. There are more elaborate styles, but the charm of these homely appliances lies in their simplicity. The upper figures from Co. Armagh (a and b) show weavers' candlesticks, made for suspension from the loom. Figure (e) is for holding a "split" or thin strip of resinous bog-fir. The others (c and d) are

Fig 37

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 survivals, associated with the cutting of the last sheaf—the "churn" or the "Cailleach" (Chapter 19).

Corn stacks are more varied in shape than haystacks and need better protection from weather and from vermin. [824] Sprigs of apple-mint (*M. arvensis*) may be thrown through the sheaves to keep away mice. The stone stack-stands or staddels, called "hovels," are a picturesque feature of the stackyard in some districts. With their steep tops rising above the house clusters, the golden corn stacks turn the little Irish villages into African kraals, or in the fields one may count as many as 30 round stacks in a row, rising against the sky up the hillside. Then the whole countryside seems fuller than usual. New colours and odours meet one on all sides, and the horses as they pass give off the sharp smell which comes from crunching the fresh oats. The country smiths used to make a small light fork or "pike," fitted with a long handle, for throwing the last sheaves high up (Fig. 66). The stacks are thatched with rushes, twisted into bundles known as "stapples" which are pushed into the straw.

[285]
[415]

Fig. 54.

241 We cannot touch on the methods of harvesting and stacking the other cereal crops, wheat, barley and rye, but a word must be said in conclusion on the last harvest of the year—the root crops. Although turnips and the new sugar beet are important in some areas, it is the potato crop which means most to the peasant. All available hands are in the fields, gathering the precious food-supply into wicker baskets or boxes (Figs. 54 and 55); and the school children are given

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

special holidays. The potatoes are sorted, the small and faulty roots being put aside for the stock and poultry. The crop is then "pitted," that is piled in long heaps in the field and covered with straw and earth. October is the potato month, and under the old system the limiting date was Hallowe'en, for after that the animals were allowed to roam freely over the village or townland. It should be noticed that early potatoes are little esteemed in Ireland apart from commercial cultivation in a few coastal districts. A curious example of specialized potato-growing is cited in Chapter 16. 241

[415]

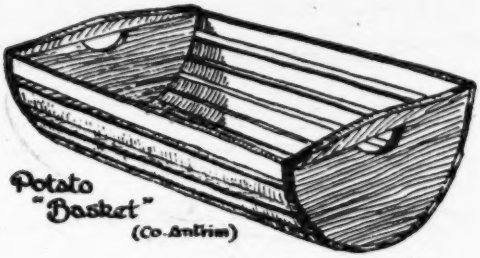

Fig. 55. (22" by 16")

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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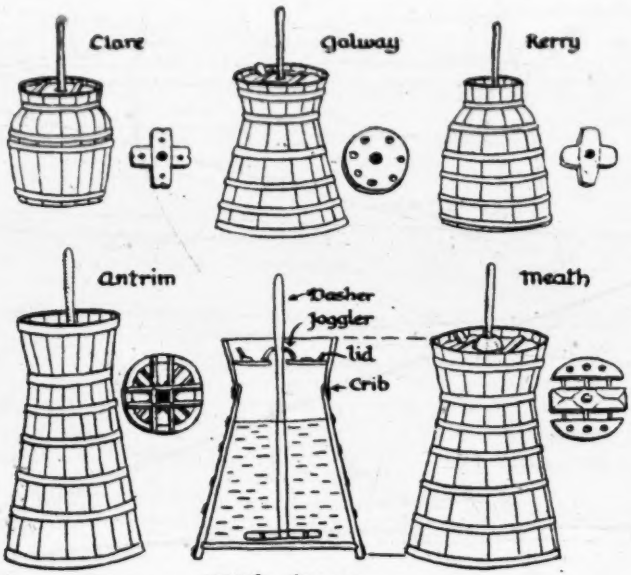

Milk Churns

Fig. 67.

Fig. 68.

[415]

of these are in regular use: I illustrate a piggin or milking vessel (Fig. 68), a butter tub, and an old-fashioned tub of bog-fir, bound, as were the other stave-vessels before the adoption of iron hoops, with split sally rods, and covered with a stone lid. Two smaller stave-built noggins for holding water, milk or porridge are also shown (Fig. 69), the Tyrone example being of oak with an ash wrapping, the Donegal specimen of bog-fir and sally bands. Passing mention must be made of wooden spoons and the handsomely carved butter stamps (Fig. 70). Wooden dishes, ladles (Fig. 70) skimmers and jogglers (Fig. 67) are made of sycamore and turned on the pole-lathe.

[281]

Sieves of various kinds found a use in the dairy as well as in kitchen and barn. Among the exports from Ireland in

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

former centuries animal hides and skins figured prominently, and it is not uncommon in the west to see cured skins of wild and domestic animals used as floor-coverings. No doubt in earlier days skins and furs were worn, but in modern times raw-hide has been employed only for shoes such as the "pampooties" worn by the Aran Islanders. These have the advantage that they do not damage the frail curraghs, just as the Islandman's headgear is the knitted Tam o' Shanter which the wind cannot blow off. A century ago one might have seen a dried sheep-skin serving as a window, or even a cowhide used as a door-hanging. Sheep- and goat-skins still find their uses as back-protectors (Chapter 16), in the making

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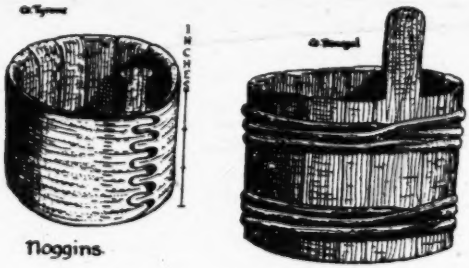

Fig. 69.

[415]

Fig. 70.

of thongs for flails, and especially in providing bottoms for various trays and sieves, the only difference between them being that the sieve-skin is perforated.

The skin, scraped and dried, is wrapped or sewn on to a rim of ash or bog-fir (Fig. 71), and a good deal of skill is required to stretch it on without a wrinkle. These trays are called wights or wechts in the north-east: the peat wight is for carrying turf to the house and the corn wight for pouring corn into a sack. The winnowing tray sometimes has small perforations to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken on to a cloth. A windy spot was selected for the purpose, and numerous "Shelling Hills" get their name from this operation. The perforations, about one-eighth of an inch

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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281 across, are commonly arranged in patterns having, for example,
415 the maker's initials and the date left unpierced. A deeper tray used for carrying corn or for fruit-picking is known as a "dallan." Then there is the meal sieve, which has fine perforations, for sifting the coarse skins (meal seeds) from the oatmeal. Similar to this is the buttermilk sieve with which,
285 before the adoption of the hair sieve, the small particles of
415 butter were strained from the buttermilk. A milk-strainer made of birch bark folded into a cone and filled with straw is referred to in a 17th century account quoted by Mr. E. MacLysaght. In Tory, according to Mr. T. Mason, the wight is "composed simply of sheepskin with a twisted straw rope forming the rim."

The corn sieve, for getting out dust and dirt, and the corn riddle (Fig. 71), for separating bits of straw and "hairy

[281]

Fig. 71.

tails," consist of interwoven splits of ash or bog-fir attached to a rim of the same material. The only difference between them is that the mesh of the former is one-eighth of an inch, of the latter perhaps ¼ inch, though it may vary for different kinds of grain. Efficient riddling is a difficult and nowadays rather rare art. I have not come across sieves of rushes or split willow, but it is very likely that they may be found.

243 The corn riddle and the winnowing tray lead us back to
412 the thrashing floor in the barn. Here we will probably see a flail hanging on the wall. The sound of the flail is by no means rare in Ireland, for in outlying districts the small farmer has no other means of thrashing. The three parts of the flail are the helve or "hand-stave," a straight stick of any light wood such as ash or larch, the shorter and heavier swingel or beater, called in Ireland the "souple" (generally made of hazel, occasionally of holly or birch) and the flail-joint, hanging or
[284] "mid-kipple," which may be a sheep- or goat-skin thong, a

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of " calf basket " (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a " cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or " floats " are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

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10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

415 The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 331 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

[491] 6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a side-ways posture, the men not riding astride.

[243] The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

501 For water transport there are a good many boats of various descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

cemented by "dobe" or tempered clay, or sometimes mortar. It 342
generally consists of two apartments, the kitchen and the "room." The kitchen, which is usually of pretty large size, is used as the living room; it has a floor of beaten clay. This room has one, or perhaps, two windows of small size, and seldom made to open. These are always glazed now-a-days, but in the last century they were covered with oiled sheepskin. The house has two doors, both of which open directly into the kitchen, and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the partition wall of the two apartments.

The end of the kitchen farthest from the fire is used as a pen for [231]
the cattle and pigs. The fowl roost where they can, often on the backs of the cattle.

Above the beams or couples in this part of the kitchen boards are sometimes placed, making a sort of loft, in which fishing and boat tackle, agricultural implements, and other articles are stored.

The fireplace is built against the partition wall between the [354]
kitchen and the room. It consists of a stone hearth backed by a "hob," also of stone, built out slantwise behind it to make the fire draw well. This class of house has no chimney, the smoke escaping through a circular hole in the roof immediately above the hearth.

"The room" is a smaller apartment than the kitchen, (measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet) it has one or two small windows, and the floor is sometimes boarded.

The furniture of the house is poor and scanty, that of the kitchen 352
consisting of a bedstead, rudely made up of drift-wood, two posts being driven into the floor, a longitudinal piece uniting these and two cross-beams at head and foot resting by one end on the posts, and having the other built into the wall. Sometimes it is built up into four-poster shape and has curtains. The bedding is composed either of feather ticks, or, with the poorer people, of straw, covered with coarse sacking. The bedclothes are often very dirty. There is a dresser covered with earthenware plates, cups, and jugs of a poor and cheap description, a table, two or three chairs, and a couple of forms or settles. A long straw rope is usually stretched across the apartment to hang clothes to dry on. Worsted when spun, nets, &c., are hung from the couples.

"The room" contains one or two beds of the sort described, a chair or two, a table (in some cases), and a large chest.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual three-legged pot, a 415
griddle, a gridiron, and sometimes a pot oven, a few staved wooden piggins, a boran or sheepskin sieve, and, in the mountains and islands, a quern, now only used usually for grinding barley for cattle food,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

415 though it may be put to the less innocent purpose of preparing malt for poteen, and a spinning-wheel of the usual type. For light at night
373 modern lamps are coming into use, but in many houses the "flare" is used. It consists of a rude sconce, in which is fastened a cylindrical reservoir for oil, closed at the top by a lid, and having a spout like that of a coffee-pot, through which the wick is drawn. Rush lights are still used by some.

The house is often whitewashed outside; the roof is thatch, of
342 straw in most localities, but on the islands, and some places in the peninsula, bent is use instead. This is laid on over "scraws" of grass-turf and fastened down by sougans (straw ropes), the ends of which may be attached to pegs driven into the walls, or have long pieces of
[284] wood or heavy stones fastened to them. These ropes are often arranged in a net work so as to hold the thatch more securely. Coir rope, bought in Belmullet, is now used by some instead of sougans. The gable is stepped or cut away so that the thatch does not project over the end wall.

There are several other types of houses, though the style just described is the most common. Most of the newer houses and those building have chimneys, pig-styes of turf or stone, and in some cases byres. Few of the old one-roomed dwellings, built partly or altogether of turf, are still to be seen, but there are a number of one-roomed huts of stone, many of which have no windows.

The most primitive habitations in the district, and perhaps in Ireland, are the rude huts (*boolies*) on Inishglora, inhabited during the lobster fishing season by the men of Inishkea; they are about a dozen in number, rudely built of dry stone and thatched with "scraws." There is not room to stand upright in them, the height from floor to roof being about 5 feet. Internally they contain a rude bunk filled with straw for sleeping in and a few large stones to sit upon. Cooking appears to be done out of doors. Successive batches of men live in these huts for about three months of the year. Some of the poorest houses on the mainland are in the isolated and primitive village of Fallmore, where few of the dwellings have windows and few or none chimneys. The houses on the islands are decidedly among the best in the district. Many are whitewashed inside, and the furniture is of a superior class, abundant material being thrown up as drift wood. The beds are four-posted structures, with flat board tops, and some of them have bright-coloured curtains, and the bedding is clean and tidy-looking.

489 6. *Transport.*—Lying as it does far from towns of any size, and separated from the nearest by a wide stretch of wild and thinly-

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen.*

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tinware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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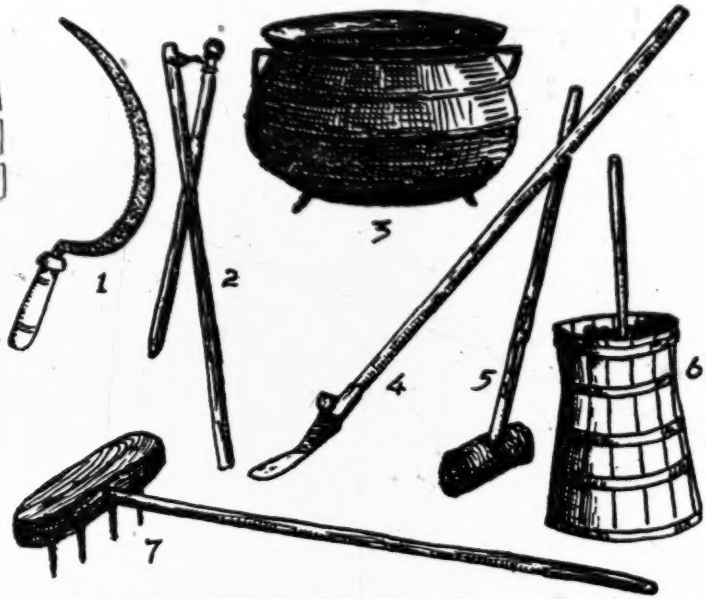

FIG. 1. 'The toothed sickle (1), the flail (2), the one-eared spade (4), the clod-breaking mallet (5), and seek-rake (7), the upright churn (6), and the three-legged pot (3), can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life.'

district to another. The interest of these relics is enhanced when one discovers parallels among simple societies in distant parts of the world.

These ancient diversities are being ironed out at an increasing rate, and the opportunity of seeing and, what is more important, placing on record these age-old crafts and rites will soon pass. The wonder is that so many have persisted through the political, economic and social upheavals of the last 150 years. During that period the steady decline of the Gaelic language resulted in the loss of a great deal of information on local and regional life and of a vast store of oral literature, in which the lore of an ancient civilization was enshrined. The scientist must regard this loss as a tragedy comparable to that suffered by the historian in the disastrous burning of the Dublin Four Courts in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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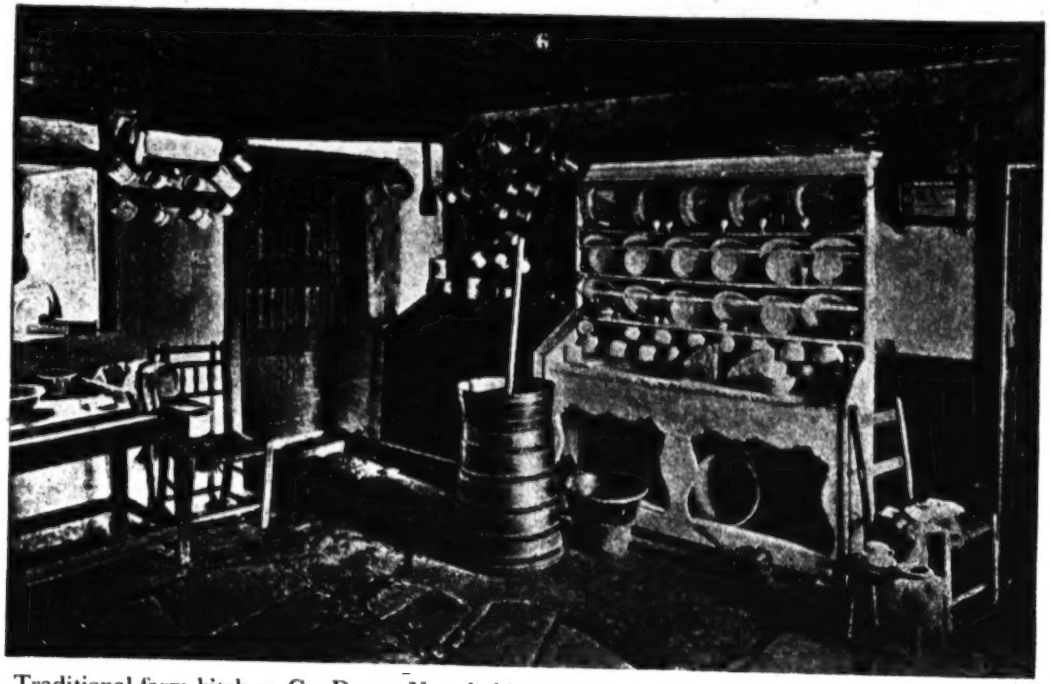
County Down

PLATE I



Traditional farm kitchen, Co. Down. Note baking-board on table (*left*) and meal ark to left of dresser, with beetle hanging above.

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[Facing p. 32]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 2

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Butter-making in a Co. Antrim farm kitchen.

[facing p. 33]

342 kitchen is generally floored with puddled clay which takes a surprisingly well-wearing surface. The housewife will tell you that such a floor raises less dust than one of concrete, and if it tends to wear unevenly this matters little since the cooking pots [415] and some of the furniture which is not built-in has three legs [352] instead of four and will therefore stand firmly on an uneven floor. The rocking chair, despite New England's claim to have invented it, was surely first devised for such a floor. Lime, cowdung or ashes were sometimes added to the floor when it was being prepared, and mud scraped off the road, already well puddled, was considered an excellent floor material.[1] In Armagh, we are told, floors were made by simply digging up the ground and trampling it: 'They sometimes have a dance for that purpose, and many a match comes out of a thing of the sort.'[2] Another method was to keep a flock of sheep moving about the newly spread floor for some hours until it was well puddled. The bottom byre-end of the old-style one-roomed farm house was cobbled, and a flagged walk led from door to door. Devices 231 for tying up the cows were secured to or built into the bottom 353 gable: a variety of stone and wooden fasteners may still be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island. One writer humorously observes of Co. Galway that the cow had to be tethered lest she should eat the bed-straw, but that pigs and poultry were free to roam.[3] The hens spent the night on a rope or pole hung across the kitchen from eave to eave, and laid their eggs in handsome nesting-baskets of woven straw (Fig. 16). Here we may notice a curious bit of folklore which suggests that hens were carefully looked after for superstitious reasons, as well as for their economic value and for the cockerels' time-keeping. It is said that every night the hens, when they argue among themselves before settling down, are plotting to leave Ireland and fly back to Norway, but in the end they decide to postpone the trip for another day! In Co. Limerick elaborate three-tier wooden hen-coops are sometimes seen in the kitchen, and in Co. Down I have found the sitting

[1] J. Binns, *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland* (1837), 1, 112.
[2] Ibid., 186.
[3] T. A. Finlay, 'The Economics of Carna', in *The New Ireland Review* (April, 1898).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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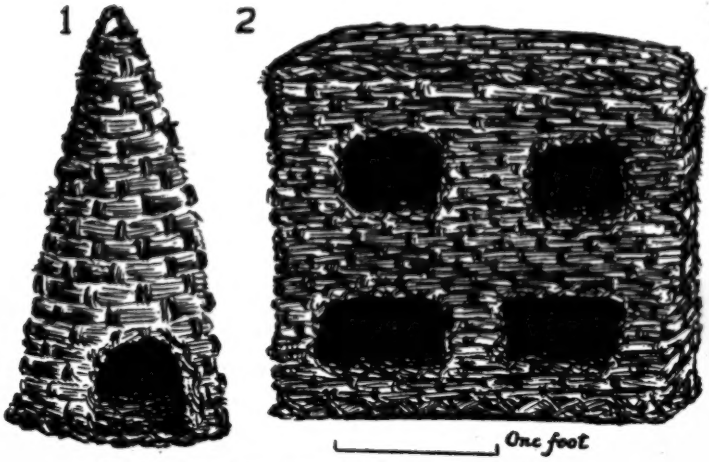

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FIG. 16. Straw hens' nests. (1) Co. Clare. (2) Co. Leitrim.

hen warmly ensconced in a stone-box alongside the fire. In the mud floor one may sometimes see large 'pot-holes', hollows in which the heavy iron pot is placed when the boiled potatoes are pounded for pig-food (Fig. 19). The wooden or iron 'beetles' with which the pounding is done are as varied in shape and size as they are indispensable (Fig. 17). Sometimes

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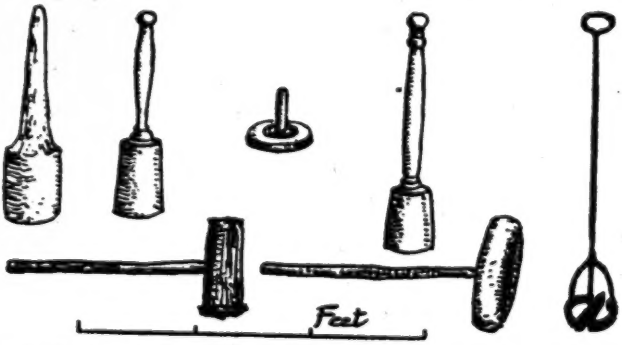

FIG. 17. Beetles, for pounding potatoes and, below, mells for 'knocking whins', Co. Antrim. Beetles similar to the first example were formerly used also for washing clothes and for breaking flax before hand-scutching.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

VI

POTS AND PANS

323 STORIES of 'the crock of gold' remind us of the superstitions which have gathered around the humble unglazed vessels of
415 baked clay used in prehistoric times for domestic and funerary purposes. The novel art of pot-making—the magic transformation of soft clay into indestructible pottery—must have made a deep impression on the native mind when introduced into Atlantic Europe from the Mediterranean region some forty centuries ago. It symbolized, too, a new way of life, for it accompanied the revolutionary arts of food-production and the establishment of settlements which were more or less permanently fixed to the soil. The possession of pottery greatly facilitates cooking and boiling and marks the beginning of the long line of peasant soups, stews and porridges. But primitive pottery does not stand up to hard use and the wastage was great—to the delight of archaeologists. For prolonged stewing metal vessels were preferable, and in Ireland 'the pot', in recent centuries, invariably refers to the three-legged iron cooking pot. Life revolves about the fire and the pot, and it was remarked during famine years that victims 'clung to the pot when all else had gone'.

For the archaeologist potsherds are an invaluable guide to
172 changes of culture. Clay vessels had religious as well as domestic significance, and we know that as the Bronze Age advanced through the second millennium B.C. the domestic food vessel was adopted as a cinerary urn, and the deposition of cremated bones in urns continued in Ireland into the Christian era. Earlier, some of the megalithic cults had involved the offering to the dead of enormous quantities of broken pots. In

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a late Neolithic burial cairn at Lyles Hill near Belfast I found 172
tens of thousands of potsherds which had been collected from domestic refuse and thrown into the cairn during the course of its erection.[1] The broken plates which may be seen exposed on the graves in some old burial-grounds in Co. Mayo are [764] probably placed there in continuation of ancient practice. The breaking of pots is one of the elements in Hallowe'en pranks— [769] one might almost say rites—and again we notice the association with the dead, for All-Hallows is the time when the dead are believed to return to their homes.

It would appear that by breaking a pot you broke its spirit; 772
and by transference the power of the dead to do harm. Readers 775
will recall the significant lines from *Hamlet*, referring to the suicide of Ophelia: 'Her death was doubtful . . . for charitable prayers, shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.'[2] In some places in south-west England potsherds figure in the 'lent crocking' rites at Easter: like Easter eggs they are symbols of fertility. The association of fertility and decay, of life and death, comedy and tragedy, is clearly displayed in the wake games which are described in Chapter XX. This association, we note in passing, is ever-present in the mind of the Irish countryman, and the juxtaposition gives dramatic quality to the work of many Anglo-Irish playwrights.

This is not the place to enlarge on the technology of early 323
pot-making, but it may be observed that the designs, fabric 172
and finish of the Neolithic family of pottery in Ireland were far superior to those of succeeding periods: indeed it was not until wheel-made pots found local markets in the medieval towns that technically superior vessels were made in this country. In late prehistoric and early historic times the wealthy were able to import fine wares in small quantities from the 323
continent, but the peasant homes over most of Ireland apparent- 415
ly did without pottery—the Gaelic word for potter is a loan-word—and vessels of wood, metal or leather did duty for the now universal imported 'delph'. The Dutchman, Gerard Boate, writing in 1645, said that 'the use of earthen vessels hath been very rare among them, and to the most part unknown even

[1] E. E. Evans, *Lyles Hill: a late Neolithic site in Co. Antrim*, H.M.S.O. (1953).
[2] *Hamlet*, Act V, Sc. 1.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

323 until these very last times, although a great number of English
415 potters have set up their trade'.[1] No tradition of hand-made pottery survived in Ireland as it did in the Barvas ware of Lewis in the Hebrides. On the other hand another ancient craft
415 of prehistoric origins persisted into living memory in the making
322 of wooden noggins in which milk and porridge were taken. They are small stave-built vessels of oak, having one stave projecting

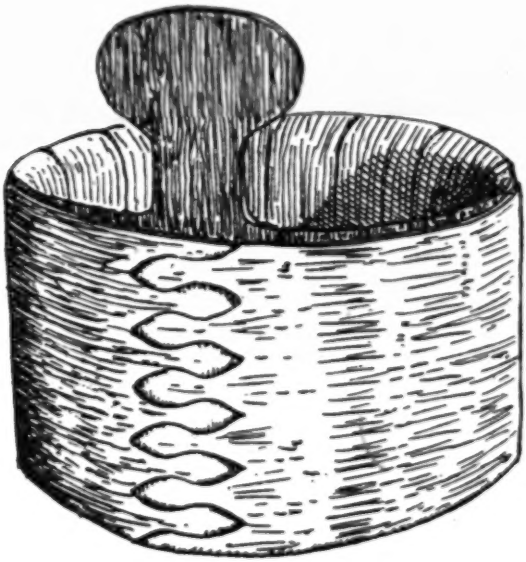

FIG. 22. Wooden noggin, Co. Down. Height of rim, 3 in.

to serve as a handle. The staves are held together and the single-piece base kept in place by a thin band of ash joined by inter-
[171] locking tongues (Fig. 22). This method of fastening the wooden band is found on the similar 'piggins' of parts of Britain, also in Scandinavia and throughout the Asiatic Arctic region, and it may well derive in these islands from an ancient circumpolar culture. The noggins were made by skilled craftsmen who

[1]Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History* (1652), 159.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the 322
place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have 415
heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants [539]
a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the 323
country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when
bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-
vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the 172
climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more
reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits 326
and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly 415
prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the
special property of the head of the house and they seem to
have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They
were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the
ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his
rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent
place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest pre- 172
historic pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthen- 171
ware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a
pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is [323]
one of the indications of a common substratum in the early
civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels
simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have
continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know
that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in
Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older
custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the
Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a
vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitu-
tion of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent
Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide [437]
should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots,
as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched
on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they
seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set
over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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171 cooking places, which have been popularly known to Irish-
172 speakers as *fulachta fiadha* (deer roasts), consisting of mounds of burnt stones usually set in marshy places. Excavations have shown that they contain dug-out trunks or plank-lined pits sunk in peat where water was heated by hot stones. Hundreds of these mounds are known in Cos. Cork and Kilkenny and they occur sporadically in other parts of the country, as also in Wales and more rarely in England and Scotland. Some Irish examples have been dated to the Bronze Age, though it is believed that their construction continued into the Middle Ages.[1] They are interpreted as the bivouacs of summer hunting parties, and would represent an archaic tradition preserved by the privileged classes, but they have their humble counterparts in the stone-lined pits filled with hot turf, in which, I have been told, peasants would cook their potatoes when working some distance from home.

[415]

FIG. 23. Cooking pots: round-bottomed suspension vessels through 4,000 years: Neolithic (earthenware); late Bronze Age (bronze); medieval (bronze); and modern (cast iron).

The essential continuity of form and function is strikingly demonstrated by a series of Irish cooking pots such as is illustrated in Fig. 23, from the round-bottomed Neolithic bowl with its suspension holes to the present-day globular iron pot with its twin lugs and its three stubby legs—a concession to a hard uneven floor. The three-legged pot is the countrywife's maid-of-all-work and it is only slowly giving way to flat-bottomed pans and kettles. The oven-pot also, a kind of Dutch
415 oven, is widely utilized, and the pot-roasts which it cooks to perfection have replaced spit-roasted meat. It is said to get its other name, the bastible, from the fact that it was first made at

[1]M. J. O'Kelly, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 84 (1954), 105–55.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Barnstaple in Devon. The oven-pot may be suspended over the fire but in the south rests on a trivet: the lid is dished so that live turves may be placed on top. It is used also for bread-baking, though the griddle is most commonly employed for this purpose (Fig. 24). 415

FIG. 24. Oven-pot, griddle and trivet.

Here we come to a fundamental fact in the geography of the Irish hearth—the absence of the built-in oven. The one exception which proves the rule is its occurrence in the extreme south-east, where, in Co. Wexford, the baronies of Bargy and Forth have retained many features dating from their English settlement in medieval times. Over most of Ireland even when a cooking-range is installed in the hearth, the oven is not used for bread-baking, for oven-bread is not a native food. In central Europe on the other hand the bread-oven, originally of clay, is of great antiquity and the stone or metal oven has come to dominate the fireplace. The difference in bread-types is related on the one hand to environment and economic organization and on the other hand to a whole set of eating habits and ethical values. 354 [262] [171]

Thin bread, or bread in cakes, made without yeast, has been from early times the common bread in most parts of Atlantic Europe, from North Scandinavia to the Basque Country, including Highland Britain and Ireland. Farther afield it is typical of many Mediterranean areas and parts of Asia. In north-western Europe it is closely linked with the cultivation of oats, though home-baked wheaten bread is made in the same way and mixtures with maize and with potatoes are similarly prepared. Potato bread (fadge), a mixture of wheat flour and boiled potatoes, is a popular food which surely had its origins in difficult times. 262 252 171

POTS AND PANS

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FIG. 25. Oatcake toasters (harnen stands). The first three 'bread-sticks' make an evolutionary series. They are from Armagh, Galway and Clare. Nos. 4 and 5 are bread-irons from Derry and Down; the latter is fitted with a spit-rack. No. 6 (from Fermanagh) is in stone. No. 7 is an unusual type from Armagh. No. 8 is a toasting fender from Antrim.

252 Among food gatherers such as the Californian Indians we find that wild oats are parched before they are ground in a mortar. A similar custom, known as 'burning the corn in the ear', survived until recent times in Ireland and met with as

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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234 Bad luck could not always be avoided, but at least it was desirable to make the toil less wearisome, and to this end a
407 number of ingenious fittings were applied to the churn staff. Most of the examples I have seen, in the north-east, depend on the recoil of a strong spring to lift the staff, and they may well have been evolved from a spring pole, such as is used for the pole lathe, attached to the roof timbers.[1] Other devices enabled the staff to be moved in both directions by an arrangement of levers hinged to a couple-baulk. These engines, which have almost entirely gone out of use, were known as glaiks (Fig. 31).

• [415]

FIG. 31. Glaiks for churning, Co. Down, with milk 'keeler' and piggin, Co. Donegal.

353 Here we may mention other things which were hung from the roof timbers: in the more prosperous homes sides of bacon
788 and portions of the autumn-killed ox, the mart; in poorer houses the salted ling or other 'kitchen'. And there was a strange custom of keeping in the roof, to bring luck to the livestock, part of a carcase, such as an animal's leg. This undoubtedly had its origin in the days when living-room and byre were under

[1]For another device, fitted to the churn, see my *Mourne Country*, Fig. 84.

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one roof. A relic of this practice may perhaps be seen in the 353
sheep's bones that one occasionally finds tucked away in the 788
keeping-holes of old-fashioned houses. Above the door the Bridget's Cross gives protection from fire and other dangers.

Besides the churn the old-time farm will have a wide range of 415
other wooden dairying utensils, some stave-built, others carved
or turned from the solid. They will include milking-piggins 234
(Fig. 31), cream-skimmers, ladles, butter-scoops, and -prints, butter tubs and buttermilk butts. A shallow stave-built 'keeler' or a large turned bowl is kept for setting milk (Fig. 31). The solid and often shapely carved cups and methers (literally mead bowls) are already archaeological specimens (Fig. 65), and many of the other wooden containers are going the same way, including the little stave noggins described in an earlier chapter.

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hanging skins, carpets or tapestries of other cultures. Today 285
the most familiar use of the plaited mats is as creel mats on the [342]
backs of asses (Fig. 56). When creels are dispensed with and
the load is placed directly on the ass a simple 'sugan' is some- 285
times made—a ring of straw some fifteen inches in diameter 492
bound with a fine straw rope. This is a variant of the head-wreath once widely worn in western Europe as a carrying pad. Straw collars—made entirely of straw and not merely straw-stuffed—have so recently gone out of use that I have seen several decayed specimens on hill farms in the north, and the art of making them is not forgotten. In their construction several oval rings of three-strand straw plait are stitched together (Fig. 69). Unlike the ordinary Irish horse collar, they are, of course, not made to open; they were carefully shaped to hold flattish wooden hames.

Many varieties of baskets of straw rushes and other pliant 285
materials which were once made in the homes are now known
only by name: for example, the puckan of built-up plaiting which 415 ●
held seed potatoes in Co. Down, or, hung in the stable, served as a nest for pigeons. They had short lives, and few specimens have survived, so that we shall never know the full range of such domestic skills. On the other hand fancy basket work, using both whole and split fine sally rods, has probably long been a specialized craft, and has clung to certain districts such as the shores of Lough Neagh and the Suir Valley. As in these areas so all around the coasts of the island it is a craft which accompanies fishing skills. The long-line fishermen of the sea coasts have traditionally made their own line and fish baskets, but it is only inland communities such as those mentioned who have become commercial basket-makers, possibly because their fishing was more seasonal than that of the sea folk. Their products are now mainly baskets for carrying potatoes or turf (Fig. 71). In a special class are the large creels and carrying baskets made of hazel or black sally which were generally employed for farm transport before wheeled carts were adopted. In many districts these were made by itinerant creel-makers who were held in very low esteem, next above the hackler and the tinker. The method of construction, in which the standard rods are stuck upright in the ground, stamps the craft as being of

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285 ancient origin. We shall see that it is the way the Boyne curraghs are built, and it is said that the African pygmies make
● 415 their carrying baskets in similar fashion. For lightness and to facilitate lifting one or more rows of open 'windows' are left in the sides of the creels. Those used for seaweed were sometimes quite open in construction, and like the manure pots they were generally fitted with hinged bottoms for unloading (Fig. 56).

301 Besides their utilitarian uses, rushes, grasses and straw have long been playthings for young folk who fashion out of them,
524 for love or for luck, many varieties of decorations and emblems.
285 We describe the Briget's Crosses elsewhere (Fig. 85). Harvest knots, twisted out of the ripe straw of harvest, seem formerly
[832] to have been in truth love tokens, though now worn merely as buttonholes for the harvest fair (Plate 13). As one might expect, the girls' knots were the more ornate and they differed from those worn by the boys in having the ears left attached. Some exceptionally fine specimens are fashioned out of flax or fine wild grasses. Star-shaped emblems in these materials are also made (Fig. 70). More complicated knots have four or six strand work, but the ordinary knots are in two ply, made by bending the straws sharply over each other at right angles. Before being knotted they make tolerably strong cords: I have experimented with these on unbaked clay pots and find that when impressed in the soft clay they make very good imitations of the 'cord impressions' seen on Bronze Age pottery. I have heard that in Nigeria the same two-ply technique is employed in making roulettes, from the fibres of the wine palm, for decorating the native pottery. Among the many toys and playthings made of rushes we find baskets for wild strawberries and blaeberries, rattles, butterfly cages, fishing nets, caps, bracelets, belts, hatbands, mock-ceremonial whips, canes and swords and imitation birds' feet and flowers, some of which are shown in Fig. 70. Many of them are associated with particular
[517] occasions of the year, for example the imitation flowers with Easter and the blaeberry baskets with Garland Sunday (Chapter XIX) but in general they are the products of the infinite leisure of long summer days of cattle-tending in field, bog or mountain. Probably a number of these objects once had a practical value

 [text continues on p. 210]

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HOME-MADE THINGS

The straw cape placed over the bee-skep (Fig. 69) is a humble 524
relation. Straw masks are worn also by Biddy Boys on St. 285
Briget's Eve, and by the Christmas Rhymers. On St. Briget's [292]
Eve, too, a small straw doll (Brideóg) was dressed up and
carried from door to door in the south-west of Ireland. A charm
of plaited straw known as Bratóg Brighde (literally, Briget's [789]
Rag) is carried by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection
against storms (Fig. 70, 5). There was also Briget's Girdle, a
two-strand straw rope, a circle with crosses attached, which was
passed over the body as a protective charm, by inserting one
leg and then pushing the head through on the Saints' Feast
Day (Fig. 85).

Before the Irish live-cattle trade developed there had been 281
for some centuries a great export of hides and skins, and if one
goes back earlier it becomes clear that these products must
have found a multitude of uses about the farm. For a number of
purposes where toughness and durability are specially needed
animal skin has remained a traditional material, and in old-
fashioned mountainy areas the countryman makes a habit of
curing the skins of wild and domesticated animals on the
principle that 'you never know but what they'll come in useful'.
On analogy with the Hebrides, with which Donegal in particular
shows close cultural affinities, skin mealbags should have had a
place in cottage economy in north Ireland. When grinding corn,
a skin was laid on the floor under the quern to catch the meal.
Seal skin served many purposes, from plough traces, in Harris,
to the covers of curraghs in Donegal. We have descriptions of
cured sheepskins serving as windows,[1] and (from St. Kilda)
of fowling ropes bound with strips of salted cowhide to prevent
them from being cut by the rocks.[2] But it is in the skin tray, the 281
wecht or wight, that one is most likely to see tradition main- 415
tained (Fig. 71). The well-scraped skin of sheep, or sometimes
of goat, is stitched on to a rim of ash, bog fir or, in the naked
islands which have exhausted even their bog timber, a ring of
sugan. To secure the skin free of wrinkles is skilled work, and
the finished product is not unlike a tambourine: in fact, it
closely resembles the Eskimo caribou drum. Irish wrenboys

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 25.
[2]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 315.

HOME-MADE THINGS

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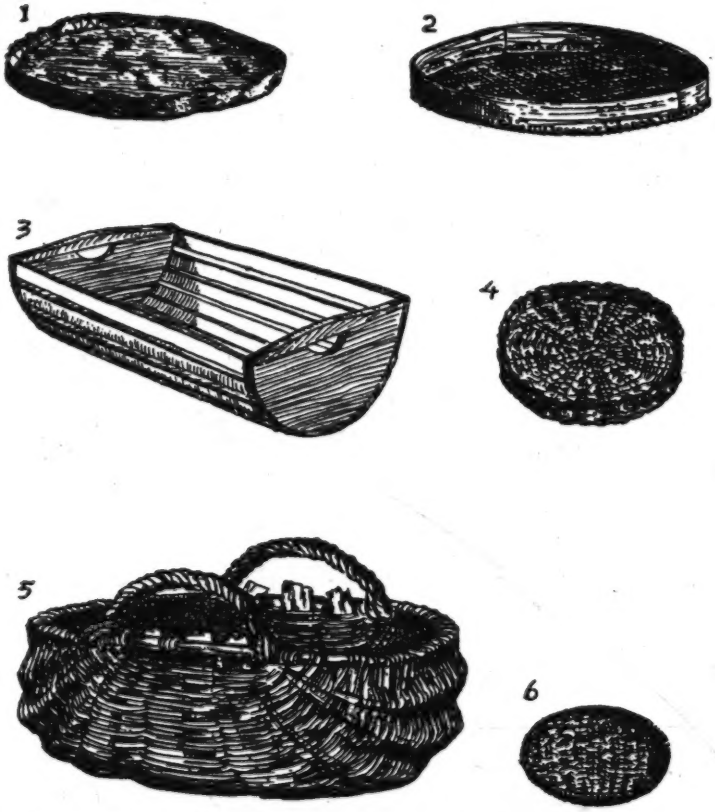

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FIG. 71. Skin-tray, split-ash riddle and potato baskets. Approximate scale 1/9 (No. 5, 1/6). (1) Sheep-skin tray or wight. (2) Split-ash riddle. (3) Potato 'basket'. (4) Potato skib. (5) Potato basket. (6) Potato skib. (All Co. Antrim.)

Irish wren boys

[534] carried a skin tambourine which they beat when hunting the wren on St. Stephen's Day, and one wonders whether the drummers from whom the Orange performers on King William's Day inherit their wild rhythms were trained on ceremonial wights. (There are also sieves, riddles and shallow baskets of split ash or sally, but these, for example the flat round potato skib—a communal self-service plate—should properly be classed as the work of specialists. 212 (Fig. 71).

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as the work of specialists (Fig. 71). The pampooties of the Aran Islands deserve mention here. Made of calfskin, but formerly of sealskin,[1] these one-piece shoes were once doubtless widely worn and have kept their hold in Aran because of their suitability for wet rocks and frail curraghs. The rivlins of Scotland and the Highland *bròganan* were very similar and I have seen rawhide shoes of the same type from Norway and the Pyrenees. They all have the hair outside and are secured by lacing back and front.

The wight serves both to hold corn, in filling a sack for instance, and to convey peats from the stack to the fireside: perforated it becomes a meal-sieve (boran) for sifting the skins (seeds) from oatmeal, or a buttermilk sieve for taking out the last grains of butter from the churn. The winnowing tray or dallan is a larger version, and it, too, may be perforated to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken out on to a spread cloth. There are, up and down Ireland, many bold windy Shilling Hills where the 'shellings' (husks) were, in past times, separated from the grain in this way (Pl. 7).

This brings us to the flail and its 'hanging' (the mid-kipple, hooden, gad, middling, or tug) which was commonly a thong of cow-, horse-, sheep, or goat-skin, though sometimes of rabbit- or eel-skin or a cord of flax. The flail, the proverbial 'stick-and-a-half', consists of a three to four feet long helve or hand-staff, usually made of ash, and a shorter beater, swingle or souple of hazel or holly. There are two principal methods of 'hanging' the parts together. In one variety, the tie passes through two leather caps lashed over the ends (Fig. 72, 1). This appears to be a variant of the common English flail-hanging, where, however, the cap is made of steamed ash or yew and there is no linking piece. Its distribution in Ireland, down the east coast, points to derivation from England. Modifications, occurring as far west as Donegal (Fig. 72, 1*a*, *b*), have the linking thong passing through a hole made either in the helve or in the beater. Kevin Danaher states that the capped flail is characteristic of central Europe: it is believed to have first appeared in north France in the early Middle Ages.[2] The

[1] O'Flaherty, *H'Ior Connaught*, 59 (footnote).
[2] *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 60 (1955), 6–14.

WRACK AND WRECK

226 Scallop shells were put to many uses and were often a
[415] substitute for the iron oil-pan of the open-wicked crusie.
[386] Seashells were also burnt to make lime for whitewashing the houses.

[262] In late summer the sprat come ashore in vast numbers on the west and south coasts, so that in Donegal 'they constituted the chief food of the peasantry during three or four months of the year.'[1] They were taken from the water in buckets and sieves, and the mackerel pursuing their prey close against the rocks might be caught almost as easily. In Waterford harbour there were specially erected wickerwork head weirs to take the sprat; and Dr. Went has described a wattled sprat-weir in working order in the estuary of the Blackwater.[2] Fishing from the rocks, too, is most popular in harvest time and though now little more than a pastime it once provided a reserve of food for the winter. About hay-harvest the ballan wrasse is at its best, 'when the flags (wild iris) are in bloom', they say. Known as bavin, byan, morran and by other names, it is now despised nearly everywhere, as is the coalfish which was salted and dried
[192] and which has different names in Gaelic for every stage of its growth to demonstrate its former importance and popularity. 'Glassan' oil was the luminant for the crusie lamps in Rathlin Island. On the north coast you may see anglers 'frassing' for small coalfish, that is attracting them by spitting into the water chewed potatoes or limpets. Formerly ground bait was made
[412] by pounding limpets in rock basins of the type known as 'bullauns' (Fig. 90). Occasionally you may come across a fisherman casting a feather lure for pollack with a line made wholly or in part of horsehair. One method of twisting these lines, with quills, will be described in the following chapter. For short lengths next the hook—the fine foot-lines—white hair is preferred, and I have seen it made in County Down by
[283] twisting the hair between the bare thigh and a hand dusted with wood ash, a method practised by 'primitives' in many parts of the world. Two strands of from fifteen to twenty hairs are twisted on each other. (The anglers in the Seine at Paris are also said to prefer a 'crop' made from a grey mare's tail.) To

[1] 'Kinnfaela', *The Cliff Scenery of South-Western Donegal*, 19.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *Antiquity*, 25 (1951), 32–35.

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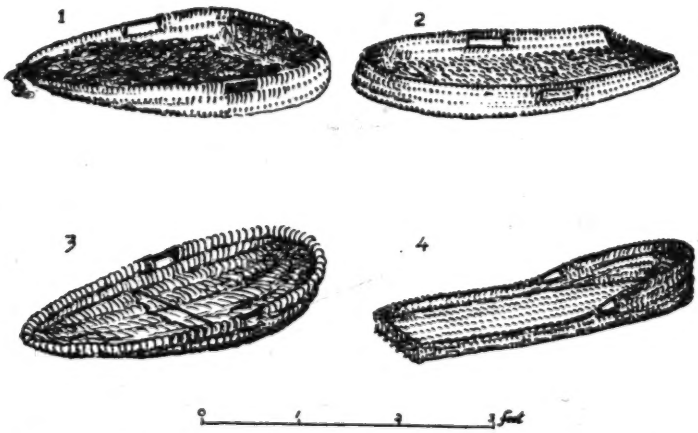
and are therefore known as 'harvest herrings'. It is then that the yawls or skiffs which lie half hidden for most of the year have their brief spell of activity, and the farmers who jointly own them find on moonlight nights a cool relief from the hot pressure of harvest. The fish are caught in trammel nets, and they were formerly in great demand not only locally but for many miles inland for salting down as winter 'kitchen'.[1] A more varied diet has lessened the demand, for the great days of the salt herring were the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when a potato diet cried out for a tasty accompaniment. On the north-west coast the herring fishery extends through the winter, with consequent serious risks which the Donegal men have none the less been willing to take. Here, perhaps, is one explanation for the survival of the light rowing curragh down to the coming of powered vessels, for a small sail boat brings many hazards on this stormy Atlantic coast. 226 [501]



[285] [415]

FIG. 82. Long-line baskets. (1) Co. Antrim. (2) Co. Galway. (3) Co. Down. (4) Aran Islands.

Long line fishing for cod, skate, ling and other big fish is almost certainly far older than the herring fishery, and it has preserved down to our own day many ancient practices and

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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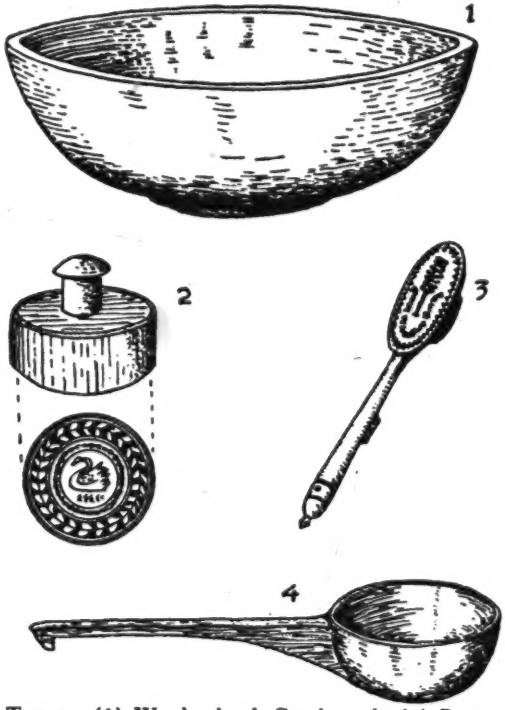
them have had to be suppressed: they became occasions of law- 796
lessness and bloodshed. Like the fairs they drew their adherents
from several rival neighbourhoods and therefore brought 796
feuding clans together. The following is a typical comment of 579
the early nineteenth century: 'On these patron days, which [786]



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[415]

FIG. 83. Turnery. (1) Wooden bowl, Co. Armagh. (2) Butter stamp, Co Fermanagh. (3) Butter stamp, Co. Antrim. (4) Ladle, Co. Antrim.

generally fall out on Sundays, great numbers of young persons of both sexes assemble, tents are erected, music, dancing, drinking and every kind of excess takes place, and the revel not infrequently terminates in battery and bloodshed, from the contention of adverse factions'.[1] Sir William Wilde's description

[1]W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 3, 245 (of Listerling, Co. Kilkenny).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

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Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

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Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

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The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
• 415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
516 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. 342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [178] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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415 The round-bottomed three-legged iron pots (Figs. 5 and 34), of various sizes from the small porridge pot to the giant 18 gallon potato pot, are descended from the bronze cauldrons of which there are many specimens in the museums ranging in date from 700 B.C. to 1700 A.D. The cauldron was in old times the special property of the head of the house and figures prominently in Celtic mythology and folklore. The pot has been described as the "maid of all work," but boiling potatoes for man and beast is now its main task. The heaviest pots are going out of use with the introduction of raised grates.

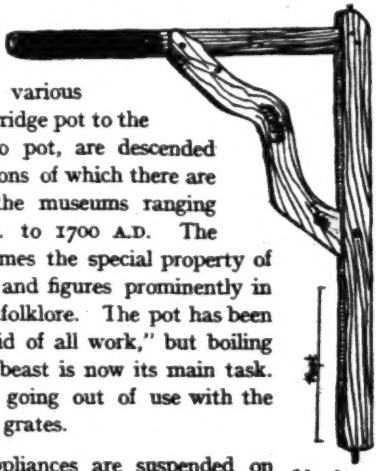

Fig. 36.

These various appliances are suspended on the iron crook or adjustible pot hook, to which many different kinds of fittings or "bools" (Fig. 35) can be attached. The crook may simply hang from a bar placed across the chimney, but more commonly from a crane (Fig. 29) which swivels at the side of the fire. A few examples of the wooden crane survive (Fig. 36) By the fireside, too, are kept the short iron tongs or "mudyees" and the heather besom (Fig. 29) which is more efficient than any broom in cleaning among the hearthstones. A goose-wing serves to dust the pots and clean the griddle when baking. Here by the fireside was hung the crusie oil lamp (Chapter 16, Fig. 105) which is another element of the north-western province of European folk-culture and may have its prototype in the famous "hanging bowls" of over 1,000 years ago. A selection of old-fashioned smith-made iron light-holders of different kinds is shown in Fig. 37. There are more elaborate styles, but the charm of these homely appliances lies in their simplicity. The upper figures from Co. Armagh (a and b) show weavers' candlesticks, made for suspension from the loom. Figure (e) is for holding a "split" or thin strip of resinous bog-fir. The others (c and d) are

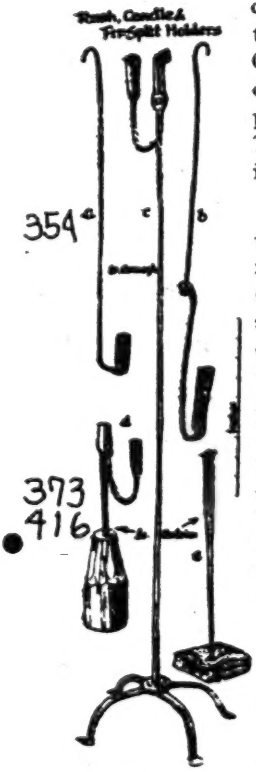

Fig. 37.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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rush-light holders with attached candle-sockets. The dipped 373
rushes were sometimes plaited together to make the light last 416
longer. It is of interest to note that the war-time shortage of oil and candles has led to a revival of the use of rush-lights in some country districts.

A great amount of interesting information might be 262
collected about the food of the Irish peasantry, the methods of cooking, times of meals and the many customs and superstitions connected with food and drink. We may close this chapter with a few remarks about some foods other than bread It is curious to reflect that the diet of some western districts, "potatoes for 10 months and Indian meal for two," is so largely dependent on crops of New World origin! Potatoes were made tasty with "kitchen" or "point," that is a bit of [25]
relish such as a salted herring; and in difficult times they were only half boiled so that the hard core, called the "moon" or "bone," might prolong the processes of digestion. In Ulster the name given to July was "the blue month" because it was a time of scarcity between the old potatoes and the new crop, but generally speaking milk products were consumed during the summer months. Meat, by which the countryman means [25]
beef, was often salted down and reserved for winter use, but meat eating tended to be restricted to certain seasons or festivals such as Christmas, Shrove and Easter.

Another seasonal food was the "sowens" or porridge made from soured "meal-seeds" sifted from the oatmeal. It was traditionally eaten at Hallowe'en; and the Irish name for the 1st of November is Samhain, or "Sowin." I have heard this dish nicknamed "water bewitched." The thin liquid resulting from steeping the fine meal-dust was also drunk and called "thewin," a substitute for buttermilk. A kind of whey ("troander") was made by mixing sweet milk and buttermilk, and "drammock" was a harvest drink consisting of raw oatmeal and water. Then there is the boxty bread made from potato flour and cooked on the griddle. Many traditional foods and drinks are now little more than memories and of some, for instance "heather beer," the country folk say that "the secret has been lost." But one might still

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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netting in sea and lake and for poaching. And in this connexion one may whisper that the illegal eel-spear (Fig. 94), the leister or salmon spear, and the trout net (Fig. 96)[1] will sometimes be shown to the discreet inquirer. Old garden forks and shovels are often fashioned into spears by the smith. Resinous bog-fir sometimes provided the torches for "burning the river" in salmon-poaching. Much might be said of these dark practices, but this is not the place to give away all the secrets of the countryside. We may properly refer to the huge "legitimate" catches of eels in weirs such as those of "the fishy fruitful Bann."

The well-known curraghs of the Boyne and the west coast have recently been described in James Hornell's book, "British Coracles and Irish Curraghs," but details of rowing and sailing craft of all kinds should be recorded and sketched before regional types give way, as they are slowly doing, to standardised boats. It is probably not too much to say that every coastal county, every large river and lake, has its own traditional styles of vessels, and their comparative study would be an important contribution to science. Some of the small oval curraghs of the Boyne are still covered with cow-hide, but tarred canvas has taken its place in the larger sea-going curraghs of the west coast. These display many interesting variations according to local conditions and custom, but all, with the exception of the paddle curraghs of Tory Island, are fitted with single thole pins on which the oars swivel, the wooden pin passing through a hole in the heavy "bool" of the oar (Fig. 99). This curious device is employed also on some river and lake boats (e.g., the Corrib, the Shannon and Lough Neagh) and was until recent years found on the fishing boats of the Scotch Quarter at Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. I have no information on the distribution of the single thole-pin oar outside Ireland, except that Mr. Hornell has reported (in a letter) that the method is used in the Sudan on the Nile. It is true of such ethnographical studies

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 150--ANALYST]

[416] ●

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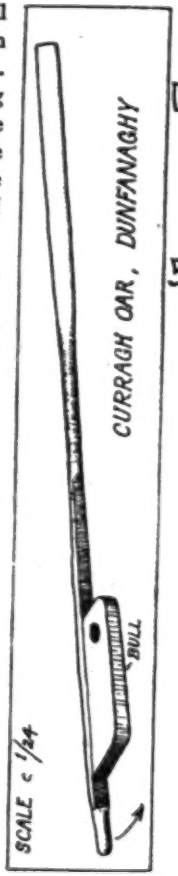

Fig. 99.

[824]

[1] Similar poaching nets were made in the Hebrides—and probably also in Ireland—of heather stems and even sedge roots (*Carex flacca*).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIG. 27. Light-holders. (1) Crusie, Co. Antrim (scale × 2). (2) Fir-split holder, Co. Antrim. (3) Rush and candle-holder, Co. Antrim. (4) Weavers' candle-holder, Co. Armagh. (5) Hob lamp, Co. Cavan. (6) Scollop shell lamp, Aran Islands.

and by rush-lights held in iron pincers mounted on wooden or wrought-iron stands (Fig. 27). Candles of resin, tallow and beeswax were also made at home by dipping prepared strips of cloth repeatedly in an iron grisset and rolling out the candles on a board. Such candles played an important part in various

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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church festivals and at wakes, and though they are now bought 354
they are made by hand in a few towns by chandlers who carry 373
on a medieval tradition. One Dublin firm, established in 1488,
manufactures large church candles of beeswax by methods which
can have changed little with the centuries. In the home the [394]
candles were supported in wrought-iron holders or stuck into a
turf by the fireside. Tall standard holders, often with adjustable
fittings, were designed to give light to the weaver at the loom, [286]
and they are most typically found in Ulster (Fig. 28). The fine
embroidery which occupied the women in the linen districts
must have imposed a great strain on the eyes: there are stories
of a single candle serving as a central source of light for a
ring of seamstresses, each of whom held her work against a [416]
bottle full of water which acted as a magnifier.

In Ireland, as throughout Atlantic Europe, the dresser ranks 352
as the most important and elaborate piece of furniture in the 353
kitchen, and its position is prescribed by custom. It stands
either against the side wall or against the partition between
kitchen and bedroom. Since this partition is of no great anti-
quity we can be sure that the original place of the dresser was
against the side-wall and that it has developed from, and taken
the place of, shelves built into or attached to the side-wall. In
part of Ulster it is referred to as 'the shelf'. I have already
mentioned the tiers of stone shelves set in the wall which are
preserved in the deserted houses of the Slievemore cluster on
Achill Island. It is believed that the fashion of open crockery
shelves was diffused from the court sideboards of the later
Middle Ages in France and England, and it may be surmised
that the wooden dresser was readily accepted in Celtic lands to
replace wall shelves, from Elizabethan times on. The adoption
of delph and tea-drinking in the eighteenth century no doubt
accelerated the spread of the dresser, which had become, by
that time, an essential part of Irish kitchen furniture (Plate
1). The corner-cupboard, evolving in much the same way
from corner-shelves, is another article of furniture with a
north-west European distribution. Similarly the coffer or
store-chest spread through western Europe from the later
Middle Ages onwards, replacing skin, straw, hollowed wood,
or basket-work containers.

 [Text continues on p. 93]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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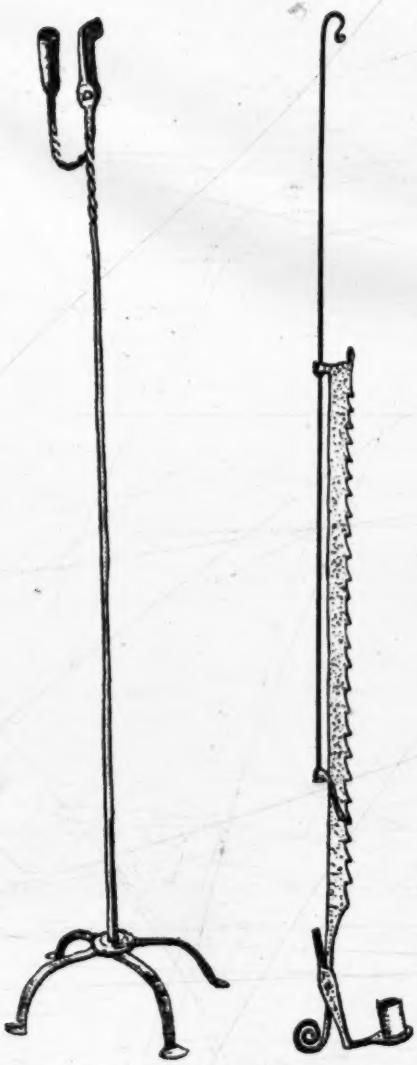

FIG. 28. Weavers' light-holders, Co. Armagh. Height, 3 ft.

PLATE XLVI

342
417

1.

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2.

[p. 216] [captions on P. 219, bottom]

342 This custom should be compared with the proverb which I have heard in different parts of Western Ireland: "Only a man stronger than God can [539] build back (westward) of his house" *(Is treise ná Dia an fear a chuireann siar le na theach")*. Additions made at the fireplace end of the house are always used as bedrooms. Therefore it will be very difficult to decide whether the bedroom behind the fireplace has originated as an addition to a gable-chimney house or as a partition of a central chimney house. When the wall behind the fire-place does not reach the roof the house must be regarded as a central-chimney house. Now and then it is also possible to discover in another way whether the bedroom belongs to the original house, or is built as an addition to a gable-chimney house.

In both house types the partition walls at the lower end of the house very often were made by very thin wooden partitions, *síleála*. As already mentioned, furniture especially the dresser may be used instead of a partition wall, fig. 1.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland you will find the fireplace cut off to a certain degree from the living room and forming a special kitchen corner by stone-built breasts or piers at both or at one side of the fire-place. This side wall of the fire-place can also be built of wood, fig. 6, and can go a good way into the room, so that the kitchen corner will be more like a closed room.

342 171 Such houses with fireplace partition apparently have their parallels in Welsh houses. The Irish house, then, closely resembles to the living room of the Welsh long-house. This type of Irish house can be called "house with fireplace partition".

Another way of arranging accommodation in the house is to build lofts, *lochta*, and rooms on an upper floor. This upper floor will be arranged at both ends of the living room or kitchen. Then the arrangement with the house divided into three sections and with lofts at both ends is very similar to a house type in southern Sweden, the socalled Sydgötiska huset.[4] which has the kitchen or "stugan" in the centre of the house without any loft and at both ends additional chambers with lofts. Another likeness between the Irish and South Swedish houses is that there are bedplaces in the same way in the additional rooms.

[417] In the Irish house the loft can be reached by a ladder from the kitchen.

The construction of the different elements of the house.

342 Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building-material, the Irish peasant house never

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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ally one comes across very wide ditches of this type with a 351
double hedge and paths or even cart-tracks in between, for 311
example in Co. Limerick. In Rathlin Island the only hedge 137
material that seems to escape the ravages of goats is the balsam poplar. Another plant of New World origin, born in Scotland of South American parents, is the Fuchsia, which runs riot along the coasts. Basket willows and wild "black sallies" for creels are sometimes grown—the latter has the advantage that it is not cropped by cattle.

The scarcity of good oak timber in a country once famed 351
for its oaks—notice the frequency of the element "derry" 417
in townland names—goes far to explain the prevalence of iron field-gates, which are hung on stout pillars of built stone. The newcomer to Ireland cannot fail to be struck by the massive gateposts along the roadsides and about the farm premises. In many districts they are whitewashed annually, and since they often assume proportions out of all relation to their function they are unnaturally conspicuous in a landscape bare of heavy timber. In parts of Ulster, for instance, they are such a characteristic feature of the countryside that it is difficult to imagine it without their cheering twinned greeting. Yet most of them must have been erected within the last century or so: writers of Irish travels before that time frequently comment on the absence of gates, for which in fact there was very limited need so long as the rundale system of farming persisted (Chapter 6). In the small village-communities of the west where the old scheme still prevails the gaps in the fences that surround the open field are closed with jagged root-stumps dragged from the bogs, or with a few thorn bushes. Sampson, writing of Co. Derry in 1814, states that gates were almost unknown except near towns, and that a common substitute was a hay-rope strung with thorns—an interesting rustic forerunner of the hated barbed wire.

Gate pillars and stiles

Fig. 11.

It might appear from the association of built piers with landlords' residences in Donegal that settlers introduced them to Ireland, but I am far from convinced that this is the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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explanation. It is true that they occur in Anglesea and in parts of the Scottish lowlands, but in both cases they are likely to be due to Irish influence. It seems to me more probable that an indigenous custom was taken up and diffused by improving landlords. I like to think of the Irish rath defended and glorified by two white stone pillars at the entrance, though I confess that this finds no support in reports of archæological excavations. The only dated piers I know bear the date 1839, but there is an eight-foot pair in Inishowen which, tradition says, had already lost their gates in 1709. The variety of styles and the superstitious beliefs connected with the pillars do strongly suggest that their origin is to be sought far back.

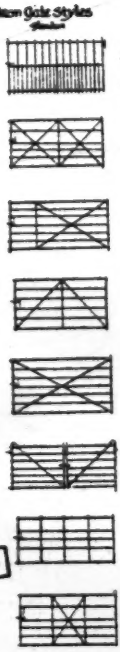

Fig. 12.

I imagine they were used, before the general adoption of fences, to shut off the farmyard from the surrounding open field. Mr. T. G. F. Paterson tells me that in Co. Armagh the gateposts are sometimes referred to as "husband and wife." The most popular shape is cylindrical (Fig. 11), and the average dimensions about three feet in diameter and six feet high. Pretentious specimens may be as high as ten feet. The top is generally finished in a low cone but varies considerably from one district to another: in some parts they are flat-topped "so that the fairies can dance on them." In Co. Meath the usual shape is semi-circular and may have originated in the common practice of building the pillars against a wall at the entrance to the farmyard. In some counties they are square, with a pyramidical roof or a coping of large stones.

[326]

The gates, whether of iron or wood fitted with iron straps, are generally hung in an old-fashioned way: they pivot in a stone socket or "spud-stone," while the top of the heel turns in a perforated stone, nowadays replaced by an iron eye. The gates are not seldom made by the smith, who fashions them out of worn wheel hoops, for instance; and this helps to explain the pleasing absence of standardisation. Fastenings, too, are of many different kinds. Only in a few wooded areas are home-made wooden gates popular: they are light

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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constructions of pegged branches, interwoven it may be with willow or hazel and turning in hoops of wire or cord on a wooden post. But as often as not, even where there are built gate-pillars, the gap is closed with an old cart or a few thorn bushes. The Irishman does not take the same pride as the English farmer in having a well-hung gate. It would appear that more importance is attached to the gateposts than to the gate!

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417

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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the south, local smiths vied with each other in producing elaborately-made toasters, or "harnen stands," which are of many different styles and deserve study before they all find their way to the scrap-heap (Fig. 33). When grates became fashionable, toasting "fenders" were hung on the bars. The large flat oatcake is cut into four quarters or "farls." 252

[415]

[417]

Fig. 34.

Fig. 35.

Nowadays the oatcakes have been superseded by wheaten bread of various kinds: the flour is often mixed with a bit of maize or barley flour and the baking is done either on the griddle (Fig. 34), in a deep "fry pan," or in the pot-oven or "bastible" (Fig. 34). Meat roasted in the pot-oven can be delicious and I have a taste for rice puddings done in this way. Others may tell of the virtues of the "bap" and of potato "slim bread," and it is not for me to repeat the strictures of Young and Cobbett on the strong tea which they said would ruin the peasantry. It should be added that the thin-bread tradition has been developed by the town bakeries into a bewildering variety of breads and scones.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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241 sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone
[423] walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.

[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be to some extent neglected. A family keeps a couple of pigs, some
[231] sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on
[237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de vâche*) are used as fuel.

373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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178 and the horse-plough, and old hedges are being grubbed up to
311 give the machine elbow-room. This in turn leads to a demand for larger farms, for the small holdings which are characteristic of Ireland (one half of the farms are between fifteen and fifty acres) have customarily just so many fields as will give a proper balance between pasture and plough, and where two or three tiny fields are knocked into one the balance is upset. In the same way earlier technological advances, though on a smaller scale, have changed the cultural landscape at different periods. Demographic crises have had similar effects. Before the Great Famine, for example, 80 per cent of all Irish farms were under fifteen acres.

From the earliest times, it seems, Ireland was a land of small holdings and small field-plots. Yet the actual pattern of small hedged fields as we know it today is of no great antiquity. For the most part it is a consequence of the agrarian revolution which affected the country, at various dates in different parts, between about 1750 and 1850. It was the planting of thorn hedgerows and the building of stone walls that fixed what had previously been ill-defined and temporary field boundaries, associated with the openfield or rundale system of land use. With permanent enclosure went the consolidation of holdings into compact independent blocks, though in some districts independence was achieved without grouping the fields together so that properties consist of scattered hedged fields which reflect the disposition of plots under the earlier openfield system. The hedge in fact has had a hard struggle for survival in the poorer districts. Both the thorns and the gates which enclosure brought with it were frequently hacked down for
[417] firewood, and to this day a wooden gate is a rarity in the countryside: the field gates are almost invariably of iron. There are many districts where the thorn hedge itself is almost unknown, where low earthen mounds half overgrown with bramble and whin (gorse) give us a glimpse of a stage between permanent enclosures and the openfields which they replaced. In Donegal gangs of villagers threw down the landlords' fences as quickly as they were erected,[1] and in some parts of the county they are still kept in repair for the summer months only.

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 41.

311 where the land has been almost the sole available re-
[578] source go far to explain the jealousy with which established rights are maintained, but there are deeper needs and bonds in the rural community.

[491]
[102]

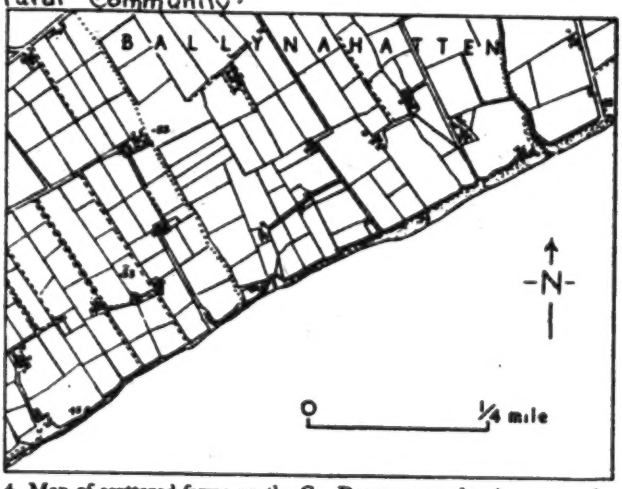

FIG. 4. Map of scattered farms on the Co. Down coast, showing seaweed-roads. (Based upon the Ordnance map with the sanction of the Controller, H.M.S.O.)

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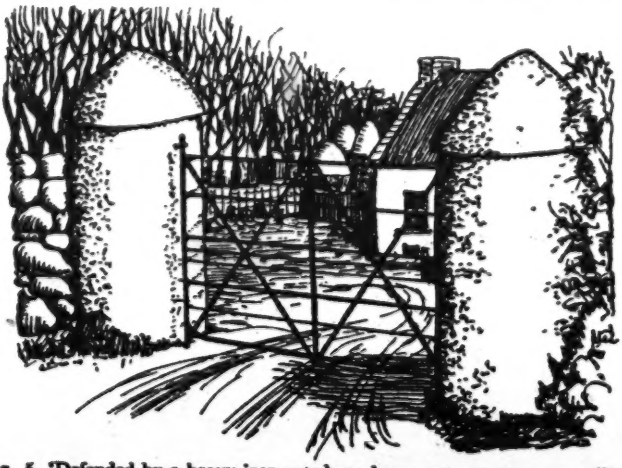

FIG. 5. 'Defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars:' an Ulster farm.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

to keep an eye on his wealth. The muck-heap is the source of 237
good crops and good luck, a potent symbol of well-being: 351
'where there is muck there is luck'. It was the custom, recorded [177]
for instance in the Glens of Antrim, to stick a sprig of rowan
tree upright in the midden on May Eve to protect the farm [188]
from mischievous fairies. The muck symbolizes the fertility of
the farm.

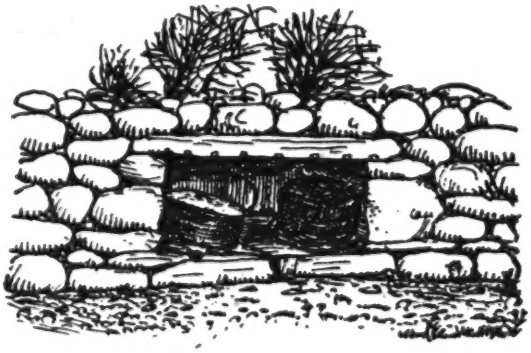

FIG. 32. Keeping-hole for pots, Co. Down.

In many parts of the country, especially in the northern 351
counties and in Co. Wexford, the entrance to the farmyard is 417
dignified by a pair of massive stone gate piers, generally built-up from field-stones in the form of a conical topped cylinder and kept whitewashed. There are many modern variants in concrete, and the old style piers are steadily disappearing and are often hastened to their end by carelessly driven tractors or lorries. They seem far too massive for the gates they carry, resembling twin bastions defending the entrance to a fortified enclosure (Figs. 5, 33). In some areas, probably under the influence of improving landlords or land agents, field entrances are also dignified by built-up stone piers, and it is possible to explain the fashion as part of the agrarian revolution which resulted in enclosure. In the virtual absence of well-grown oak trees they provided an Irish alternative to the oak gate-post of the English farm, sturdy enough to carry the iron gate which for the same reason took the place of the five-barred oaken gate.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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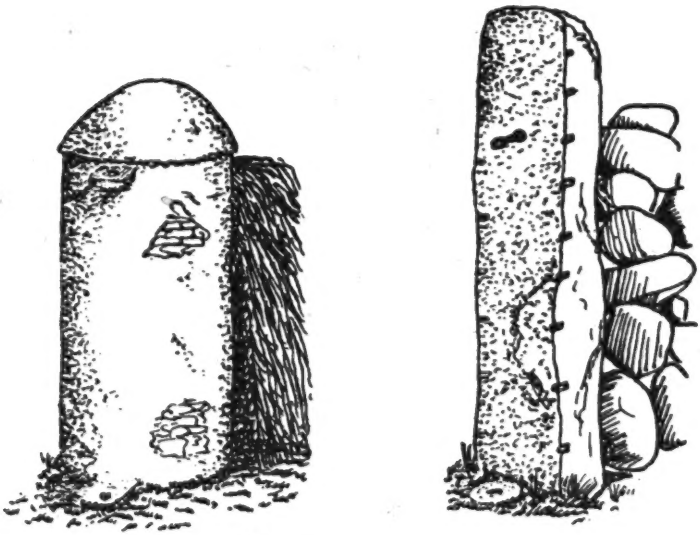

FIG. 38. Gateposts, Co. Down. *Left:* built-up pier with stone hinge and spud-stone. *Right:* granite slab with iron hinge and spud-stone.

[342] The shortage of suitable timber also led to the disappearance of the native wattled house and of the introduced timber-framed house, and the fact that such houses were more combustible (and that wooden gates, as one observer remarked, would have been stolen for firewood) was of less importance. The prototype of the stone piers of the farmyard may perhaps be seen in the great entrance pillars of the fortified 'bawns' erected by the seventeenth-century planters. Yet the style is quaintly archaic, and they have often been compared to miniature round towers. Very stout examples do indeed resemble the stone beehive 'clochauns' which we describe later, except that they are solid. In their construction the method of marking out the circumference and maintaining a vertical line by means of a string attached to a central post which is later removed is primitive enough. Moreover the method of hanging the gate is archaic. It is the harr-hanging which is found also in Scotland, the Lake District, Cornwall and Brittany and has survived in these stony

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

refuge corners of Europe. The gate swings like a fire-crane, not on hinges or rings-and-hooks, but directly on its heel, on a projecting iron spud which swivels in a stone socket. These stone sockets or spud-stones are frequently seen around old farm sites, and very similar stones in Mesopotamia go back into the fifth millennium B.C. In the days before the iron gate was introduced wooden gates were hung in the same way, and we know from Scotland that they were sometimes tipped with stone.[1] A projecting stone perforated to hold the top of the gate-post (Fig. 33) has now been replaced, as a rule, by an iron eye. 351 417

In Co. Armagh I have heard the farm gate-piers referred to as the man and wife of the house, and one of the pair may have a flat top whereon, it is said, the fairies like to dance. The old people used to place the two first plates of champ—the Hallowe'en festival dish of mashed potatoes—on the top of the pier.[2] While all this may be nothing more than an exuberant play of fancy we cannot overlook the megalithic practice of selecting alternating pointed and flat-topped monoliths for some of their ritual erections, symbolizing, it is thought, male and female. The twin portal stones of many megalithic chamber graves come to mind, and pairs of such stones now standing in isolation, as at Lisdivin in Co. Tyrone,[3] may well have been a symbolic entrance to some vanished ceremonial enclosure. The tradition of large entrance piers dies hard. Not infrequently today the first thought of an improving farmer is to erect imposing concrete pillars at the entrance to his property. They are as a rule garishly painted and pebble-dashed, a poor substitute for their simple whitewashed forerunners. [769]

In the early nineteenth century field gates were almost unknown except near towns, and we read of the rustic forerunner of the iniquitous barbed wire—a hay-rope strung with thorns.[4] In boggy areas one commonly sees the gnarled root stumps of bog trees doing service as a gate, much as the Canadian pioneer will make a temporary fence with grubbed-up stumps. The huge

[1] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 127.
[2] Michael Murphy, *At Slieve Gullion's Foot* (1940), 64.
[3] O. Davies, *U.J.A.*, 2 (1939), 169.
[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 288.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 defensive horns of the long-extinct Irish elk, dug from the bogs,
417 have been utilized for this purpose! That the gate-piers are more significant than the gate is evident when one sees a bundle of thorns or a collection of decaying farm implements doing service as a stop-gap between a pair of magnificent pillars. Where stones of suitable dimensions are available, in granite or limestone country, for example, single uprights take the place of the built-up piers (Fig. 33). In the Aran Islands the field-walls, a single stone in width, have no permanent openings, but phantom gates—a portion of wall which is knocked down and rebuilt as required—are defined by upright slabs (Fig. 34).

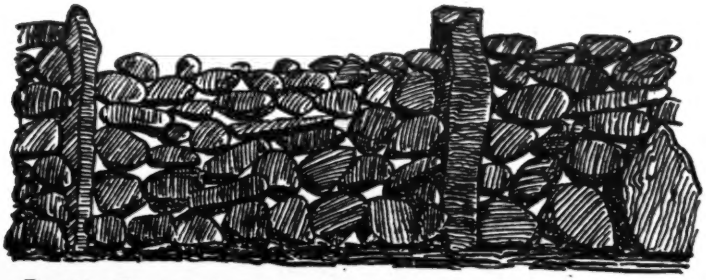

FIG. 34. *Above:* a 9-ft. wide wall in the Mourne Mountains. 'Monumental relics of secular toil, such walls may record by their successive accretions periods of agricultural activity through the ages.' *Below:* stone gateway, Aran Islands.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FARMYARDS AND FENCES

This was formerly the custom also in Connemara and Co. Clare, and it finds an explanation not so much in the scarcity of wood or iron for gates as in the desirability of giving the wind no way into the fields. Such stone walls, seemingly artless constructions of rough boulders, are characteristic of the thin-soiled hillsides throughout Ireland. Most of them are of no great age, for permanent enclosure on this scale is comparatively recent, yet dry-stone walls were built by the men of the megaliths, and there was a lingering tradition of wall-building among the stony hills, which blossomed with intricate garlands of dry-stone walls when enclosure came. What distinguishes these boulder walls is their flimsy lace-like appearance when seen against the sky. Herein lies their strength, for they are full of holes and offer less resistance to the wind than a solid wall. They are most characteristic of hillsides where stony moraines and drift-boulders occur: other types of stone call for different treatment, and taking into account those fences which are partly or entirely made of sods or earth there is an endless variety in the tens of thousands of miles of ditches which mark out this now much-enclosed land.

To speak of a ditch without defining the Irish meaning of the word is to mislead the English reader. It is used in the sense of dyke, a raised bank, and it is not difficult to see why, since the positive and negative earth-ditch usually accompany each other, the word should change meaning. The older meaning of 'ditch' in the north of England was a bank. Similarly in Normandy the word 'fosse' is applied to a raised bank dividing the fields. An Ulster M.P. is said to have caused much amusement at Westminster in a debate on fox-hunting when describing how Irish horses jumped a ditch by changing feet on top! In the north of Ireland as in Scotland the open drain alongside the ditch is known as the sheugh.

We know from archaeological evidence that many existing types of ditch are of prehistoric antiquity. The dry-stone walls of the circular enclosures known as cashels and the earthen ditches of the countless raths of the Dark Ages were, by and large, little more than farmyard fences. Scores of existing farmsteads occupy the old sites and even when, as is more usual, the farms are on sites of fairly recent choice the ditch surrounding

351 the farmyard tends to be a substantial construction. Where the
417 farm is a survivor of a clachan, the small fields near the house, little more than gardens in size, are surrounded by massive winding walls attractive to the eye and always worth examining. Over rough ground they pick their way erratically, incorporating great boulders which could not be moved and which, centuries ago perhaps, became the nuclei of smaller boulders cleared from the fields. Knotted tangles of walls ten or twelve feet thick have resulted, monumental relics of secular toil. Such walls may
351 record by their successive accretions periods of agricultural
417 activity through the ages (Fig. 34). When more stones are
172 removed from the fields they are added as an outer skin, and one can easily recognize the latest additions by the bleached unlichened nakedness of the stones. Archaeological material may be accidentally incorporated in the core of the wall. The wall-builders, too, apparently had a habit of thrusting into the crevices curiosities picked up when working in the fields or bits of abandoned tools, and I have occasionally found prehistoric polished stone axes which their finders had pushed into a wall. The core of the wall is likely to contain similar oddments and bits of pottery, so that the excavation of old walls can be quite profitable to the archaeologist. In Denmark it has been possible to date ancient field-walls to various periods stretching back into prehistory, mainly by means of the stray objects they contain.

In Ireland the clearest evidence for the antiquity of some field boundaries comes from the remains found buried under the bogs. Examples in Co. Londonderry have been described by Dr. Oliver Davies as consisting of irregularly piled stone slabs with standing stones set at intervals.[1] Some of these ancient walls, which country people in Ulster call Danish fences, seem to have enclosed large areas and appear from their contour-alignment to have been head-dykes, enclosing land once arable, but now overgrown with peat, and demarcating it from the rough outfield. I have seen examples both in Ulster and in Munster which are of massive dry-stone work tied to great standing stones set at fairly regular intervals. Often it is only the standing stones, deep-bedded by the builders, that remain to puzzle the archaeologist. A characteristic of these fences is that

[1] O. Davies, *U.J.A.*, 2 (1939), 61–65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

many of the stones are set vertically or diagonally.[1] Others of the same character, or equally massive earthen banks, may be observed to radiate from some of the raths or 'Danish forts' which we now know to have been farmsteads of the Dark Ages and, since they seem to have been single farms held in severalty, the enclosures which they presuppose are likely to be co-eval with the raths. Indeed Professor O'Riordain has claimed that the existing earthen field fences around the group of raths at Cush in Co. Limerick closely follow those of the late Bronze Age which were 'essentially similar' . . . 'the present-day field system is the direct descendant of the ancient one'.[2]

Much smaller and more irregular are the walls one sees associated with areas of megalithic settlement, though this may be because of their great age. Indeed one example recently discovered during the excavation of a megalithic tomb in Co. Down, which was older than the construction of the cairn and partly preserved by it, was built in coursed dry-stone work.[3] We have as yet little information to draw on but it seems likely that these oldest walls were mainly the result of the casual piling-up of stones cleared from little patches of cultivated ground. Some of the great walls associated with clachans and referred to above may well be built on the foundations of such lines of stones pitched around and between bedded boulders which could not be moved. Yet the size of some of the stones built into these ancient walls is astonishing. I have watched a loose-limbed farmer, who seemed to inherit the physical characters as well as the skills of the megalith builders, handle with superb ease great boulders which one would think it beyond human power to move. A stout timber or iron bar and a sturdy slipe (Chapter XIII) are the tools used. Alternatively boulders may be buried *in situ* if there is sufficient depth of soil, but until recently there was a reluctance, for superstitious reasons, to break up large stones. I have not come across the old miners' practice of cracking stones with fire,[4] and except near towns or quarries the splitting of field stones by means of wedges, 'plug

[1] O. Davies, loc. cit., 62.

[2] S. P. O'Riordain, *P.R.I.A.*, 45 (1940), 85–181.

[3] A. E. P. Collins and D. M. Waterman, *Millin Bay, a late Neolithic Cairn in Co. Down*, H.M.S.O. (1955), 8.

[4] But A. Young (*Tour*, 2, 115) describes the process near Killarney in 1778.

351 and feathers', or explosives is a comparatively recent develop-
417 ment. These methods took a heavy toll of the megalithic
[316] monuments of granite-quarrying districts such as the Mourne Mountains in the nineteenth century, though superstitious tales are still told of the misfortunes which befell the stone-workers.

Another type of stone ditch popular in the limestone plain of east Galway is curiously similar to the Scots Galloway dyke and may well have been introduced by improving landlords or their agents. The lower portion of the ditch is a dry wall of small stones about two feet high carefully levelled on top, and on this rests a wall of boulders of lace-work type two or three feet high. The heavy superstructure not only secures the lower part with its weight but, perhaps because of its slight overhang and tottering appearance, is said to deter cattle and sheep from approaching the wall (Fig. 35). The low walls of loosely piled

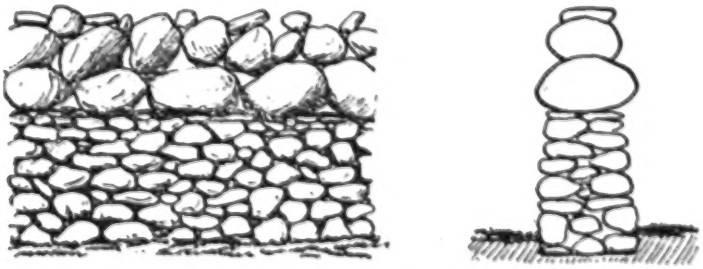

FIG. 35. East Galway ditch of Galloway type, and cross-section.

stones on Rathlin Island are said to act as a deterrent on the principle of the modern electric fence: I was told that animals give them a wide berth once having learnt that they collapse almost at a touch. At the other extreme are the ten-foot walls which run for miles around many demesnes, isolating them physically from the surrounding country so that only at the entrances or the now numerous gaps does one get a glimpse of the decayed grandeur inside. A good many of them are 'famine
[731] walls' built to relieve distress during famine years, in return for a meagre allowance of food and a wage of perhaps a few pence per day.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FARMYARDS AND FENCES

Throughout the lowland farming country the commonest ditch is an earthen bank faced on one side with stones and planted with quicks slipped in near the base among the stones (Fig. 36). This was the 'approved mode' of enclosing the land 351 417

FIG. 36. The hedged ditch, cross-section.

advocated by the reformers from the late eighteenth century onwards, but it was noted that 'the planting of hedgerows was repugnant to the practice of the country' and in many districts the hedges were neglected and the livestock still had to be tethered in the fields.[1] The tradition of temporary fences died hard. 'A year's ditch passeth for a very strong fence', wrote Sir John Davies to the Earl of Salisbury in 1606. These sod fences were deliberately thrown down after harvest, and the decayed sods enriched the soil. The *Advertisements for Ireland* published in 1623 state: 'Their fields lie open and unclosed. Where wood is plentiful they hedge in all their corn with stakes and bushes and pull them down in the winter and burn them.'[2] When fixed field-divisions were adopted, the hedgeless earthen bank was preferred in many parts of the country, usually growing a luxuriant crop of brambles and gorse (whins). These were a useful source of firewood and provided both shelter and food for the livestock, the 'pounded whins' being fed to horses. The knocking stones, flat slabs or stone basins where the whins [231] [246]

[1] *Report on the Estates of the Drapers' Company in Ireland*, 1829.
[2] *Advertisements for Ireland* (1623), Ed. G. O'Brien (1923), 33.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 were 'melled' with a wooden maul, are sometimes to be seen in the farmyard, and there were a few water-driven 'whin-mills'. ● 417 Their use is almost forgotten as is the custom of growing a [246] field of whins to provide fodder. This was done in Co. Cavan and it is a recognized method of land utilization in the poorer parts of Brittany. A gorse hedge near the homestead is still popular as a place for drying clothes on washing day. 'Firing being scarce', wrote Gabriel Beranger of the barony of Bargy and Forth, 'they plant all their ditches with furze, which serves them for firing, and is reckoned equal in value with the produce of the land.'[1] Small farmers in Co. Down preferred wide earthen ditches because, as Binns was told: 'we have both sides of the ditch for feeding the cattle, and whins to bruise for the horses'.[2] The economy of the grass-grown ditch becomes clearer when we realize that on boulder-strewn hillsides where wide stone ditches separate the tiny fields a high proportion of the land is sterilized. Such wide earth banks often serve as footpaths where [487] the land is wet, and in Co. Limerick I have seen cart tracks on top of them. This habit may go back to the wide balks between some of the openfield patches, which were used as access ways where the boggy fields were too soft to take a cart. Such double ditches, when faced with stones on both sides, are undoubtedly an old type of fence, for they are characteristic of many raths or Dark Age farmsteads. These 'dry fences' are common in Co. Kerry and also in north Antrim, and they occur in Brittany, and in parts of Anglesey and north Pembrokeshire. In stony country the filling of a double ditch may be of loose stones gathered from the fields, and here again we have ancient examples in the enclosing walls of small cashels which are the equivalent in thin-soiled areas of the raths of the lowlands.

351 What nearly all these many types of field fences have in common is their untidy appearance. Dry stone walls tend to be cyclopean, lacking the precision of those of north England or the Cotswold country. Rough glacial boulders are a poor substitute for oolite, and one recalls the comment of Sir John Russell that Irish architecture suffered because of the virtual absence of Jurassic rocks in the geological series. Rarely does

[1] Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 132.
[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 native to the country. Around the coasts the sycamore is almost
313 the only tree that persists, for it will stand up to the salt-laden gales everywhere save on the most exposed parts of the west coast. R. U. Sayce has recorded the belief, from Montgomeryshire, that 'sycamore trees keep the fairies away and stop them spoiling the milk',[1] but this bit of lore cannot be of any great antiquity since the tree did not reach Britain from its home in the mountain belt of southern Europe until the sixteenth century. It presumably arose from the association of the tree with the farmyard. In Ireland the sycamore probably came in with the early seventeenth century planters, though the beech may be a medieval or even older introduction. Both trees had many economic uses, especially for dry-coopering, that is the
[322] manufacture of provision casks and butter firkins, and the sycamore is an excellent wood for turnery. Later, as the linen industry became mechanized, the beetling mills demanded sycamore for the great beam of the engine and beech for the vertical beetles.

The lay-out of farm buildings seems to have been, in the
351 native single-farms, as haphazard and formless as was that of
361 the houses themselves in an old clachan. As separate farms with outbuildings ('offices') became fashionable improvements after the middle of the eighteenth century, the latter were built for convenience of access and they were put close to the farmhouse, either attached to one end or lying parallel to provide a windbreak. Only in the planted areas does one find old examples of planned 'courtyard farms' where the house and offices enclose a square or rectangular yard. I fancy the stone or wooden 'hovel-stands' with their picturesque mushroom-like staddle-stones are also confined to planted districts. In the west a favourite method of making stacks is to build them about a central pole. (See p. 164.)

The wayside style is another absentee in the native Irish
487 countryside, as is the footpath which is its companion. Short-
[417] cuts are rarely worth while in a land of tiny fields, and if there is a right of way there is sure to be a tolerable road. In fact there are so many farm lanes and access ways to mountain, seashore or bog that an economist might regard the amount of land so taken out of cultivation as excessive. It has been

[1] R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 45 (1938).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 8

492
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1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

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2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[facing p. 113]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Fermanagh
County Antrim

PLATE 9

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516
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1. Cutting turf (underfooting) in a Co. Fermanagh bog.

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2. Building a peat stack, Co. Antrim.

[facing p.144]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222 cut at low tide. The weeds were dried on low stone walls and ricked and thatched until ready for the kiln on summer days. Rain rots the weeds, so that in wet weather the heavy kelp had to be shaken and turned repeatedly until it could be safely ricked. The half obliterated ruins of drying-walls and kilns made of sea-boulders can be seen on stormy beaches all around the coast (Fig. 73). In the early decades of the century the

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[413]

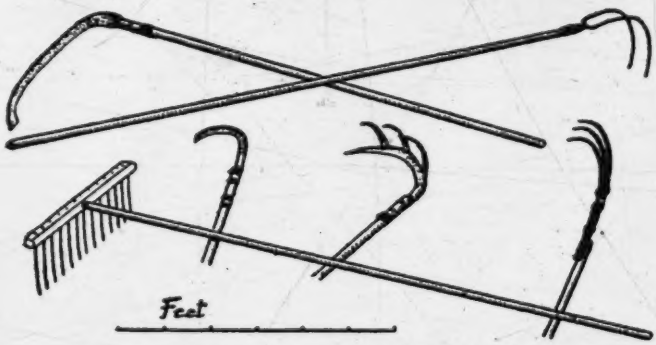

FIG. 73. Kelp harvest. Kelp kiln and stack. Co. Galway. Hooks, knives and drags, west and south coasts (See Pl. 11).

dense oily smoke from the kilns drifting far inland was a familiar sight, each kiln burning for many hours and consuming several tons of weed, which was fed in a little at a time. It is said that 60 tons of weed are required to provide 1 ton of kelp, and the work was both arduous and filthy. If the supply of drift-weed failed the heavy tangles were laboriously dragged ashore or cut with knives mounted on handles up to twenty feet long to [413] reach the best weeds, free of sand, growing in deep water. A

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [182] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 776 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 776 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck 782 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [234] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [825] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood [237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to • 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 711 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 715 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

JOHN C. MESSENGER

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their [177]
fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 294
40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to 281
shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and [437]
when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept [465]
moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a 128
livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have 434
touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century 434
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One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right 421 •
of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person 422
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[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966),1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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the 17th century, the natives withdrew themselves to the mountains, where they lived a life that some historians have mistaken for aboriginal nomadism. 221

The booleying tradition, finally, throws light on many of the customs connected with cattle and sheep, and helps to explain the absence of the dairy in permanent dwellings which formerly had to serve as winter houses only, most of the dairy work being done in summer. It also helps us to attribute to custom rather than solely to laziness and neglect the Irish farmer's traditional indifference to the fate of his crops during the summer months. "Spring and harvest time," we quote a typical 19th century observer, "are the only periods at which the peasants exert themselves, and then they work very hard; for the rest of the year they are idle."

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Fig. 18. Co. Antrim.

The old customs of tending ("herding") the cattle and tethering or spancelling them also derive from the rundale phase with its lack of field-divisions and fences. "Cattle, sheep, pigs and goats," wrote Arthur Young, "are all in bondage, their forelegs tied together with straw . . . . cocks, hens, turkeys and geese all have their legs in thraldom." Various devices for limiting the freedom of farm animals are still widely used: even the hen with her chickens around her will be seen tethered by the leg to a stone or iron weight. Where animals still run in common under the system of "sums" it is necessary to give them distinguishing marks. Apart from the well-known methods of branding or colouring the sheep's wool it is the custom in parts of Ireland, as in Wales, to ear-mark sheep by cutting or notching the ear with proprietary shapes. In Clare Island the geese are "tokened" by having holes punched in their webbed feet. Incidentally it is worth noticing that, so far as I am aware, the iron-tipped shepherd's crook is unknown in Ireland, a bent ash stick taking its place. "Gatherings" and co-operation are of course a feature of sheep-shearing and dipping. Sheep-pens of dry stone construction are often associated with ancient settlements among the hills: they are of various shapes and would repay study.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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248 the purest of linen—the story has often been told—and though the scutching mill with its busy waterwheel is an intimate part of the wintry countryside, the flax and tow soon pass into the factories. But we cannot omit a reference to the picturesque oblong stacks " sleighs " or " rays " in which the flax is built after being taken from the dam and dried. And we have referred in another place (Chapter 7), to the " shows " or waste which comes from the scutching mill.

243 But the most important crop throughout Ireland, and as a rule the most difficult to save because it comes late in the season, is oats. September is the harvest month, but in the hills October frequently sees the corn uncarried and even uncut. It is on record that in 1817—in Co. Armagh—" the grain was not reaped in many places until after Christmas." Often the equinoctial gales play havoc with the stooks, and [422] in the days of small scattered rundale plots it was customary for each holder to tie his sheaves with a proprietary knot so that he might claim his own.

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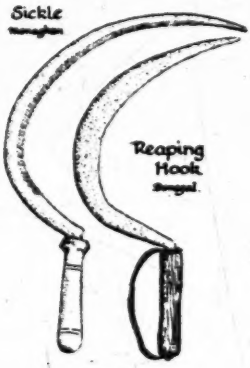

Fig. 53.

Both the toothed hook or sickle (Fig. 53) and the smooth " scythe hook " are used in reaping: the reaping machine and the self-binder have not reached many parts. Sickles are of several varieties, classified in the catalogues as round,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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BALLY AND BOOLEY

These clachans, while some had their speciality such as weaving or thatching, were concerned primarily and almost exclusively with agriculture and attracted none of the elements of the true village, whether church, inn or shops. Itinerant 'tinkers and tailors' paid periodic visits and with the pedlars and beggars brought news of other districts, but the economic and social needs of the hamlet were met by periodic visits to the fairs and by seasonal gatherings of various kinds. Within the group the bonds of kinship were close and strong, and ties of marriage carrying reciprocal responsibilities linked one clachan with another within small neighbourhood units consisting of perhaps half a dozen townlands. With the close kinship bonds went corresponding rivalries with adjacent neighbourhoods which provided social motive force by acting as incentives. These rivalries broke out characteristically into feuds and blood-letting at fairs and gatherings. But in later days, at any rate, internal rivalries and squabbles were more conspicuous and found more opportunities within overgrown kinship groups which had become too complicated to function smoothly. A few illustrations will suffice.

One visitor explained the presence of the back-doors on clustered houses, for which we shall offer other explanations in the following chapter, by the fact that the women needed an escape when too hotly engaged in rows with neighbours.[1] Joint ownership sometimes extended to single animals with strange results. For example: 'three men were concerned in one horse; but the poor brute was rendered useless, as the unfortunate foot of the supernumerary leg remained unshod . . . and accordingly it became quite lame.[2] We are reminded of the difficulties arising from the joint ownership of fruit trees in some Mediterranean countries. It was in Donegal too that I heard of a ram which died of exposure when it was part-shorn by one of its joint owners. In the same district a man wishing to build a wall around one of his fields but unable to get his neighbour to agree, deliberately erected it a yard or two on his own side of the boundary so that the neighbour would still be forced to herd or tether his cow to prevent it trespassing on the

[1] Isaac Weld, *Statistical Survey of Roscommon* (1832), 475.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 23.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay 243
to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century 412
there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the 178
good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East. The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with [422] reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed [426] directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects, may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should 248
be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to [476] thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist [284]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 118 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of island- [231] ers. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [226] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the 311 eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [654] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [241] fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [231] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breed- ing of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

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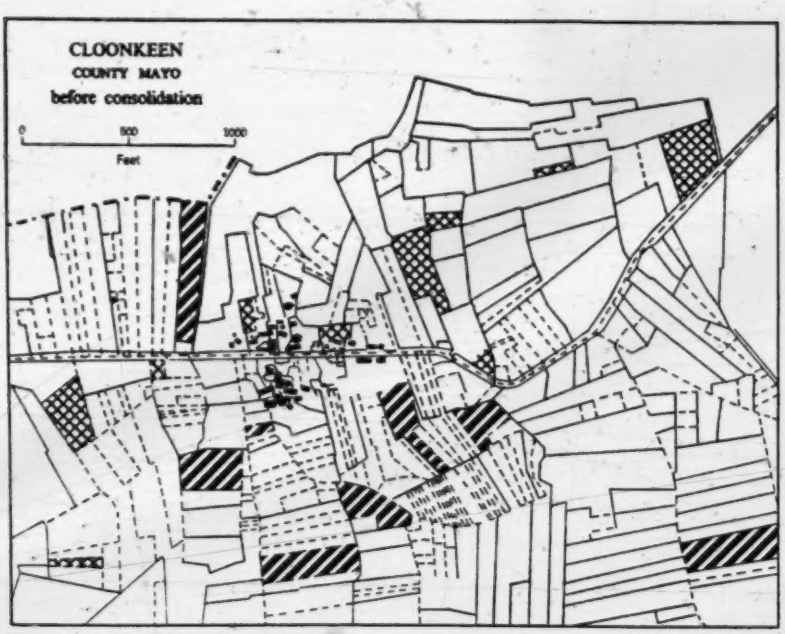

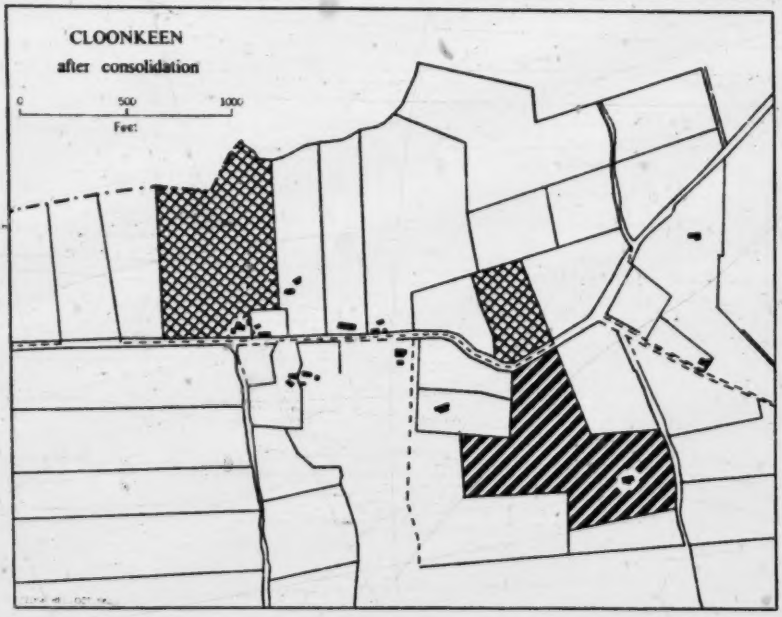

FIG. 5—Cloonkeen, County Mayo, before and after consolidation. The two different shadings (crosshatch and diagonal ruling) represent land held by two typical farmers before and after the consolidation carried out in 1909 by the Congested Districts Board. (Based on information kindly provided by the Irish Land Commission and reproduced by permission.)

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a powerful factor in the history of human culture, and that it needs spiritual as well as economic force to bring about new growth. But I am no supporter of those who, indulging in sentimental regrets for a Celtic twilight of doubtful authenticity, find in the past a Golden Age to which they would have us return. Our view should be forward. There is in Ireland, thanks to the astonishing virility of peasant tradition, a great opportunity to save and transform rural life, as happened in Denmark, before it has declined too far. In that revival education must play its part. A geographer may be forgiven for attributing the general ignorance about the foundations of rural culture to the very backward position of geography teaching in Ireland, where none of the Universities has given the subject full recognition—a state of affairs perhaps unparalleled in any part of Europe. Moreover, except for a few well-equipped and well-staffed schools, the standard of geography teaching in the schools is half a century behind the times.

Peasant ownership, for good or ill—it has not so far provided the answer to Ireland's problems—is now established. In Northern Ireland 38% of the farm holdings are under 15 acres in extent and only 4% exceed 100 acres: 27½% are between 15 and 30 acres (the corresponding figure in Eire is 27%). Cheap electricity may provide a basis for restoring rural industries as an essential and intimate part of the life of the countryside. The undoubted virtues of the Ulster character were surely related to the traditions of peasant weavers before that tradition was submerged in the Industrial Revolution. The essentials of the country craft—simplicity of form, soundness of construction and fitness to purpose—must somehow be restored. The traditional skill in wood working can be revived: re-afforestation should be undertaken on bold lines, and every effort made to save the native flora and fauna from further destruction. The difficulties of the present time are forcing on our attention the view expressed by many leading thinkers, that the rural tradition is of special importance for the maintenance of society, and that there are

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 Donegal parish in 1837—and all the carrying depended upon
[491] slide cars and creels (Chapter 12). The village had neither
361 shop nor inn, and required little besides salt and iron from the market town. These self-sufficing communities were held together by blood ties and by the exchange of services under the Irish open-field or "rundale" system of cultivation. Around the house-clusters were small walled gardens and haggards, but the arable land was an unenclosed open field in which each holder had his scattered patches, averaging perhaps a quarter of an acre in area. There are cases on record where
[423] 29 partnership-peasants shared 422 plots of ground, where one man held 32 different patches, or again where 26 people had shares in a field of half an acre. In some districts it is known that the plots changed hands periodically. but no memory of this survives in the areas I am acquainted with. Live stock was sometimes subject to joint-ownership, with disastrous results where, for instance, three men claimed shares in a horse and could not agree as to the ownership of the fourth leg. But most of the stories that are told about rundale farming belong to the period of its decline.

174 Between the cultivated patches, which were dug with the
221 spade or ploughed and devoted almost exclusively to potatoes
361 and oats, ran waste strips or balks ("mearings," "bones" or "ribs") often left as much as three yards wide, apparently from a sort of pride, though they had their uses both as a source of hay and as tracks for the creel ponies when they could not enter the waterlogged plots. In the absence of fences all livestock had to be tethered, spancelled, herded, or sent to the mountain pastures during the crop season, which traditionally began on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) and ended on the last day of October (Hallowe'en), when the animals were free to wander over the whole townland throughout the winter. "Any that had not their potatoes dug, or other crops off the ground, were much injured, neither could any one man venture to grow turnips, clover or other green crops . . . no one would attempt to manure better or otherwise improve his proportion, as his neighbour's cattle only would have the benefit." It is clear that the introduction of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

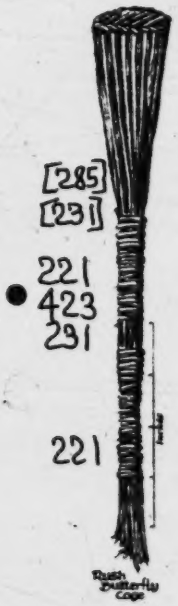

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:— 162 592

Islands.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
Inishbofin, .	2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark, .	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, . .	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males. 162 167

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons. [142]

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6s. A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled 423 311 [495]

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

423 311 to give by the kindness of the proprietor, Cyril Allies, Esq., J. P. :—

Townland.	Area.	Commonage.
	A. R. P.	A. R. P.
Westquarter, ...	493 3 32	349 2 8
Fawnmore, ...	194 1 14	116 1 15
Middlequarter, ...	612 2 0	375 3 9
Knock, ...	366 1 9	161 3 39
Cloonamore, ...	645 1 1	424 3 29
Inishshark, ...	581 1 12	435 3 12
Islets, ...	257 3 35	—
Total, ...	3151 3 1	1864 1 32

Taking the available area at 930 acres, and the number of families at 215, the average size of a holding per house is 4·3 acres, with a [435] corresponding average valuation of £2 13*s*. The size of a holding, [427] however, varies from 1A. 3R., at a rent of 14*s*. 6*d*., to 56 acres, at £7. Out of 127, the particulars of which were furnished me by Mr. Allies, there were :—

3	holdings of	1	acre and under	2	acres.
21	,,	2	,,	3	,,
17	,,	3	,,	4	,,
8	,,	4	,,	5	,,
23	,,	5	,,	6	,,
15	,,	6	,,	7	,,
12	,,	7	,,	8	,,
17	,,	8	,,	10	,,
5	,,	10	,,	13	,,
4	,,	13	,,	18	,,
1	holding of	25	acres		
1	,,	56	,,		

It will be observed that most of the holdings in this list are of very small size, only eleven being more than ten acres in extent, and 59 or 46·5 per cent. being under 5 acres.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at or under, £2. 4423 311 [435]

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inishshark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among themselves, but many of the children and young people have little or no acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark, which is less in communication with the outer world than Inishbofin. 191

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. were illiterate :— 212 162

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160 females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65 females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inishbofin.

(D.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were— 145 162

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
" 80 " 85, 5 males and 14 females,
" 85 " 90, 4 " 0 "

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

on this subject, I shall not attempt the treatment of it myself, but shall quote the opinion of the Rev. Eugene O'Growney, who has an exceptional knowledge of both people and language, and has kindly furnished me with some of his notes relating to them. He says:— "The Irish spoken in Boffin has a very poor vocabulary, as far as I heard it spoken. I must say, however, that it was not easy to get the people to speak it, and many children at first refused point blank to utter a word of Irish. In most of the Irish-speaking districts of the west, the people have preserved a number of old poetic prayers and hymns. Many of these are very beautiful, and some appear to be of great age. I was particularly interested at the time of my visit in these hymns, but was told that the only hymn in use in Boffin and Shark was the *ortha Mhuire*, or prayer of Mary. I could not find any person in Boffin who could recite it, and the only person in Shark who was supposed to have it in full was out at sea. An old man in Boffin recited for me a portion of a quaint old religious composition in English." In another place he states that the people speak neither English nor Irish well, their dialect of the language containing many corrupted English words, and at least one curious word. "I recollect that the cove in which St. Leo's well is situated is called *fuath Leo*. I take the word *fuath*, which is the usual word in Inishshark and Inisboffin for a 'cove,' to be a corruption of *uamh*, which is used by the Four Masters in the year 893 as meaning 'cave.'"[1]

19 [538]

IV. SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Every family combines fishing and farming, and has some share in a boat. The farms are small (see p. 340), about three acres and a-half under potatoes and oats, being about the average amount of tillage per family. All are held direct from the landlord, who resides on Inishbofin, there being no subletting or con-acre. The rents average about £2 per holding, but vary much according to the extent and quality of the land.

241 [226] 427

The holdings are not divided up into small fields, as in Aran, but are often insufficiently fenced, allowing the cattle to stray, which

241 423

[1] The Rev. E. A. Lavelle has, since the above was written, sent a translation of a curious old Irish litany used on both islands, both in Irish and English, which he obtained from an old man, aged 84, whose father, Peter Lavelle, fought under Nelson at Trafalgar. As the litany is in English and of great length, it is not inserted here, but it is to be hoped that the Irish form will be recorded and preserved as it may possess the linguistic value wanting in a translation.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

241 sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone
[423] walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.
[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be
[231] to some extent neglected. A family keeps a couple of pigs, some sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on
[237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de vâche*) are used as fuel.

373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

161 The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and outbuildings was as follows in 1891 :—

Locality.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
The Mullet, .	23,333 1 27	3757	1893	1864	600	532
N. Inishkea, .	464 1 32	126	60	66	21	4
S. Inishkea, .	344 3 19	180	92	88	32	33
23 Islets, . .	350 0 17	48	22	26	10	27
Portacloy, .	7845 1 1	299	148	151	54	29
Totals, . . .	32,338 0 6	410	2215	2195	717	625

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area of the district is that of Kilmore, being 29,492 acres, and the three townlands forming the Portacloy district, 7,845 acres.

The total valuation of Kilmore is £4,055 18*s.*, and of Portacloy £163 7*s.*

There is very little commonage in the Mullet, but about Portacloy there is a good deal.

The holdings are not large, averaging about 4½ or 5 acres at a rental of about £3 10*s.* in the Mullet, and about £2 10*s.* in "the mountains." There is considerable variation, however, as there are some farms of good size, but the majority are small.

In 1891 there were, in Kilmore, 210 holdings of between £4 and £10 valuation, 305 of £2 and under £4, and no less than 252 at, or under, £2 valuation.

The land is mostly held now at judicial rentals (the people having early taken advantage of the Land Act of 1881), but sixty years ago the greater part of the land was held in common, and the mode of tenure is thus described by Knight :—" In the whole of the peninsula there are few farms divided . . . the usual system being commonage both in tillage and pasture. In tillage, lots are cast every third year for the number of ridges each person is entitled to after the usual rotation is over. Potatoes the first year, then barley or oats, after which new lots must be cast for new potato ground. The holdings are by sums or collops, which originally meant the number

13: Evans ER6 Rural Irish ER6
●423

[For data on the size of farming plots and the Rundale system of land holdings, see category 311.]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

Little attention has been given to the Irish openfield system.[1] It has escaped the notice of historians because the revolution which broke it down was a prolonged and silent one, involving no Enclosure Acts such as those which record the disappearance of the English openfields. Under the Irish system it was the practice, in some areas at least, for the plots to change hands periodically among co-partners by the casting of lots. Thus the transition to consolidated holdings was easier than under the English system, where the scattered plough strips were apparently permanently held. It is important to examine the openfield system more closely than might seem to be warranted by its almost complete disappearance from the modern scene, because it was against this background that many of the tools and customs we shall discuss were evolved. Just as in lowland England the English village was inseparable from its openfields, so in Ireland hamlets or 'clachans' accompanied the old form of land utilization. They will crop up again and again in the chapters which follow. But today and for the last century o. so the isolated farm has characterized the Irish rural scene (Fig. 4). From some elevated viewpoint in the mountainy parts one may count hundreds of small whitewashed homesteads dotted among the fields, each nestling behind a handful of windbent trees and approached by its own access-road—the loaning or borheen beloved of the sentimental song writers. Every farmstead has the air of a fortress, an independent unit within its jealously guarded boundary fences, defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars (Fig. 5) and claiming rights of way whose protection keeps the town solicitors profitably engaged. The degree of independence has been notably strengthened by the Land Acts (1869–1925) under which former tenants have become their own landlords. Peasant-proprietorship is an established fact throughout the country, though it has by no means solved Ireland's problems as some politician-prophets claimed it would.

The truth is that, taking the country as a whole, most of the farms are too small to be truly independent of their neighbours. Bitter experience and the traditional land-hunger of a community

[1]E. E. Evans, *Geography*, 24 (1939), 24–36; D. McCourt, *Economic History Review*, 7, 369–76.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

III

BALLY AND BOOLEY

BAILE (bally) is the Gaelic word for the home-place or townland,[1] Ireland's smallest administrative unit; buaile (booley) the name of the summer milking-place or shieling where in times past the flocks and their tenders spent the summer months. I believe that seasonal nomadism (transhumance) between bally and booley is an important and neglected aspect of Irish social history, and one which goes far to explain many features of traditional life. It is significant that the Irish word for a boy (buachaill) originally meant a herdsman. The charge of nomadism, using the word in its worst connotation, which English writers made against the Irish, finds some justification in the prevalence of a pastoral economy which was, in fact, more comparable to that of the Swiss peasants or the Norwegian milk-girls. Wherever transhumance is or has been practised, it is associated with difficult environments and marginal conditions, where it has provided opportunities for escape from authority and served as a means of preserving and transmitting ancient traditions. This is well illustrated in the example of the Carpathian shepherds of Roumania.

It is clear from the Irish laws and from the findings of archaeology that farming practice had permitted some degree of permanent settlement long before the dawn of the Middle Ages, probably by early Celtic times. Of all the administrative units

[1] I have discussed the townland unit in my *Mourne Country*, Ch. 11. My colleague Mr. J. B. Arthurs thinks that the word *baile* may be a very old pre-Goidelic word, and that where 'ballys' are numerous the indigenous peoples had been left mainly undisturbed by Goidelic expansion.

423 621 of different sizes and various origins into which rural Ireland is divided—townland, parish, barony, diocese, rural district and so on—it is the townland which most closely touches the daily life and social relations of the countryman. The townland is his postal address, for individual farms preserve their historic communal anonymity: they still belong to the townland though they have become separate units since the 'town' or cluster has broken up. The farms rarely carry any names other than those of [103] their owner (Mulligan's place, Thomson's farm or merely O'Brien's) and since there may be a dozen O'Briens in a [551] particular townland various nicknames[1] and patronymics are used to distinguish between them. Thus one farm may be Kilty O'Brien's (from its left-handed owner), another Patsy Kate O'Brien's (from the owner's mother), and a third Yank O'Brien's (a returned emigrant, this). Similarly, the public house takes its title not from the brewers who supply it or from heraldic beasts such as the Red Lion but from the Mooneys or the Murnaghans who own it. Shops in country towns, too, [602] carry personal names, and the nucleus of their trade is built up among blood relations.

423 621 103 The townland names, involving so many land holdings, are legal titles, and their Gaelic names, however erroneously spelt on the Ordnance Survey maps, are fossilized in their current forms. Only an Act of Parliament can alter them. A glance at any six-inch Ordnance map will reveal the strange names that Gaelic imagination contrived and English scribes corrupted. Here are a few which I have come across in Ulster: Ballywillwill, Ballymunterhiggin, Aghayeevoge, Treantaghmucklagh. In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of them named Ballybeg (little town). Some 2,000 townlands begin with Knock (a hill); there are sixty called Tully and there are eleven Edens. The degree of repetition shows that these names have come down from a time when life was organized on a local basis. There are between 60,000 and 70,000 townlands in Ireland, averaging 325 acres or 423 621 184 ½ sq. mile, and the average townland population in the rural areas is perhaps fifty. In fact their size varies considerably,

[1]Writing in 1682 (*West-Meath*, 113), Sir Henry Piers noticed their prevalence in that county '. . . so as no man whatever can escape a nickname.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

since they were based on the fertility of the land rather than its acreage, and it seems that many moorland tracts were not divided until fairly recent times, for they were formerly shared as common summer pasturage by the people of a whole parish or barony, covering 100 sq. miles or more. In such hilly areas the townlands may be as much as 2,000 acres: on the other hand in thickly-settled lowlands they are frequently less than 100 acres, and some anomalous fragments of an acre or two are designated townlands. This diversity also reflects cultural differences both between regions and between various classes from the kings and chiefs down to the humblest of bondmen. The first Ordnance Survey (1830–42) suppressed many of the local names for subdivisions and applied the term townland universally. Though the townland appears to have been equated with an agricultural unit, the ploughland or *seisrach*, it is clear that in many parts of the country 'the cow's grass' was the effective unit of measurement. Of Donegal about 1840 we read: 'The land is never let, sold or devised by the acre, but by 'a cow's grass'. This is a complement of land well understood by the people, being in fact the general standard; and they judge of the dimensions of a holding by its being to the extent, as the case may be, of one, two or three 'cows' grass'. They have divided not only into the fourth part of a cow's grass, called a 'foot', but into the eighth part of a cow's grass, or half a foot, denominated 'a cleet'.'[1] In Bantry, Co. Cork, land was let 'in the wilder parts by what is termed the gneeve, which is the twelfth part of a townland, and therefore of very undefined acreage'.[2]

To judge from surviving examples of clachans and openfields, it was customary for each house in the cluster to have a small enclosure or 'gort' (garden) adjacent to it, their high walls lining a maze of narrow lanes winding haphazard among the houses (Fig. 6). These settlements were characterized by an extreme disorder, as though the houses, in the words of one writer, had fallen 'in a shower from the sky'.[3] Linear villages, it is true, are not uncommon along the western seaboard,

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 26.
[2] *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1844), s.v. Bantry.
[3] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (1839), 353.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

BALLY AND BOOLEY

These clachans, while some had their speciality such as weaving or thatching, were concerned primarily and almost exclusively with agriculture and attracted none of the elements of the true village, whether church, inn or shops. Itinerant 'tinkers and tailors' paid periodic visits and with the pedlars and beggars brought news of other districts, but the economic and social needs of the hamlet were met by periodic visits to the fairs and by seasonal gatherings of various kinds. Within the group the bonds of kinship were close and strong, and ties of marriage carrying reciprocal responsibilities linked one clachan with another within small neighbourhood units consisting of perhaps half a dozen townlands. With the close kinship bonds went corresponding rivalries with adjacent neighbourhoods which provided social motive force by acting as incentives. These rivalries broke out characteristically into feuds and blood-letting at fairs and gatherings. But in later days, at any rate, internal rivalries and squabbles were more conspicuous and found more opportunities within overgrown kinship groups which had become too complicated to function smoothly. A few illustrations will suffice. 361 621

One visitor explained the presence of the back-doors on clustered houses, for which we shall offer other explanations in the following chapter, by the fact that the women needed an escape when too hotly engaged in rows with neighbours.[1] Joint ownership sometimes extended to single animals with strange results. For example: 'three men were concerned in one horse; but the poor brute was rendered useless, as the unfortunate foot of the supernumerary leg remained unshod . . . and accordingly it became quite lame.[2] We are reminded of the difficulties arising from the joint ownership of fruit trees in some Mediterranean countries. It was in Donegal too that I heard of a ram which died of exposure when it was part-shorn by one of its joint owners. In the same district a man wishing to build a wall around one of his fields but unable to get his neighbour to agree, deliberately erected it a yard or two on his own side of the boundary so that the neighbour would still be forced to herd or tether his cow to prevent it trespassing on the 361 578 311 423 [422]

[1]Isaac Weld, *Statistical Survey of Roscommon* (1832), 475.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 23.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 narrow strip between the boundary and the wall. 'Fights, tres-
578 passes, confusion, disputes and assaults, were the natural and
311 unavoidable consequences of the rundale system.'[1] On the other
423 hand we must recall the extreme reluctance with which the system was at last abandoned, the social benefits it conferred on members of the kin. The reforming landlord, Lord George Hill, comments that 'the pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together, made them consider the removal of the houses, from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built to the separate farms, a great grievance.'[2] Another writer gives as the basis of the tenants' grievance, 'the recollection of nights of social concourse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of
[517] defence against bailiff or gauger'.[3] There were ceilidhes and spinning parties, and many a clachan had its shanachie (story-teller) and its fiddler or piper—usually a maimed or simple person—who accompanied with folk-tunes. Folk-songs, occupational airs and legendary tales were kept alive in this way. Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there
[252] would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some
[343] districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains.

The openfield which lay around the cluster, normally on the
311 down-hill side so that the vital manure could be 'sliped' down-
423 slope (see Chapter XIII), seems to have been kept in cultivation in some areas at least year after year. This was the infield, in contrast to the outfield, the outlying rough pasture bits of which were temporarily reclaimed and then left to rest for long periods. We shall return to the plough and spade and methods of cultivation in another place but may refer here to the allotment of the holdings in the common fields. Although in many parts of the country the holdings, by the end of the eighteenth century, had become fixed in their scattered parcels on the several qualities of land in the openfield, there is abundant

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.
[2] Ibid., 42.
[3] W. R. Wilde, *Dublin University Magazine*, 41 (1853), 20.

evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean, even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat. Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable. Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter. And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at that season, when food for livestock is scarce.

Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen

[1]Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 349.

[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.

[3]ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.

[4]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.

[5]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

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and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this 314
time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals
and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf- [786]
cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the
lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a
stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out
of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades
and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on
fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an
exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers
that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the differ-
ence between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere
the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an [132]
early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the
planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month,
so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There
is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when [821]
the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the
tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it
is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but
once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep
cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a [521]
'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the [423]
decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when
banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally
has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or [476]
three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in
turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the
helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient
fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required
depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf.
Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown
top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a
proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist
humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like
coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is
the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that [804]
a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading, [461]

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combined knife and drag found in Connacht has three heavy hooks attached to a strong sickle-shaped blade mounted on a 12-ft. pole (Fig. 73). Powerful long-handled scythes and great hand-rakes with teeth a foot long were used on the south coast. In Donegal the men would wield their long knives from curraghs while the women dragged the weed ashore. 222 413

In the Rosses of west Donegal around 1750 the rents were paid in kelp: any surplus was bartered for 'the two luxuries, spirits and tobacco, enjoyed by men and women alike.'[1] For the lesser weeds growing in shallow water ordinary sickles were employed when the tide was low, but these species made inferior kelp. Yet in some areas, for example Strangford Lough, stones were planted on the shore to grow wrack for kelp burning: Arthur Young commented on this practice in 1776.[2] Old seaweed beds may be seen also in Lough Swilly, Clew Bay, Achill Sound and probably elsewhere. 222 [427] [437]

Today the most remarkable area of cultivated weed is near the mouth of Carlingford Lough in County Down, where at low tide a wide stretch of mud and sand is exposed in Mill Bay. It is grown solely to supply fertilizer for the potato crop. Wrack rights are mentioned in grants of land in County Down as far back as 1506, but the earliest reference I have found to the cultivated weed in Carlingford Lough is in a guidebook of 1846. As we have seen, however, Arthur Young refers to the growing of wrack for kelp-burning in Strangford Lough, and since the best species for kelp grow in deeper water the planting of seaweed beds is not likely to have originated with the kelp industry. Through the second half of last century some 1,100 beds, covering well over a square mile in area, were maintained in Mill Bay, and it was not until the depression between the two world wars that they began to be neglected. Today the use of wrack has almost entirely given way to artificial fertilizers, with a great easement of labour but a loss of annually renewed organic matter in the soil. The wrackbeds, or 'plans', are half-acre rectangles set with rows of boulders a foot or so in diameter, but many beds are subdivided into small 'cuts' for sub-letting, and the Estate Map showing the beds has the 222 387 423

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.
[2] A. Young, *Tour*, 1, 194.

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222 minutely fragmented appearance of land held in rundale. Rights
387 of access, by narrow lanes between the beds, were often dis-
423 puted, and there were occasions for fights when as many as a hundred carts from forty townlands might converge on Mill Bay
[578] at low tide. I first heard of the seaweed beds from an Air Force pilot who brought me air photographs of what he thought was submerged farmland: the little rectangular fields of Mourne seemed to march out beneath the sea.[1] In fact they were necessary adjuncts to the arable land, and the rents of up to twenty pounds an acre were often higher than those paid for the fields of coarse sand and gravel which the wrack enriched. An auctioneer told me he had sold a wrackbed of one Irish acre for
[435] £145 not many years ago. Nearly all of the several hundred farmers who had wrack rights here held two or three beds, and each man's plans were scattered so that he had different kinds of weed growing on them: 'knob wrack' close inshore, then 'bladder wrack' and farther out still the 'lazy wrack' whose fronds are submerged at high water even at neaps and which therefore grows faster than the other species.

222 The crop was harvested with knives and sickles between March and June, the bare-footed reapers at the same time lifting, turning and re-setting the heavy boulders which tend to get buried in the sand. Carts too are liable to sink, and when the going is too soft the weed is rafted ashore. It is allowed to float on the incoming tide and a boat dragging a rope pulls the
[501] load together and tows it ashore. Very large rafts, secured by a rope of seaweed, used to be floated ashore on the tide in Mayo. Patrick Knight, describing Ballycroy about 1830, observed that the steersman, armed with a pole, might be seen 'sitting on the heap, roasting his potatoes and shellfish'.[2]

222 The great bulk of the wrack taken all round the coast for
423 manure was driftweed thrown up during storms, but the supply was often supplemented by cutting or pulling weed from the rocks, and in some places there were complicated methods of regulating and distributing the harvest. On a stretch of coast familiar to me in south Down one can pick out strips running out into the sea, demarcated by marked boulders. They were

[1] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 15.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 99.

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formerly allotted to tenants in proportion to the acreages of their farm holdings. The weed had to be carried away among the slippery boulders in back-creels and hand-barrows and stacked on the beach ready for the carts and creel-asses. The driftweed cast up by the storms of winter was more accessible but its division gave rise to endless disputes and was often regulated by careful procedure and the casting of lots, though some beaches were subdivided by standing stones. In Donegal I was told how at low tide, by the light of lanterns, men would dash into the sea up to their necks to drag out the floating weed. It is an interesting example of manorial privilege that on one beach, below the Norman castle at Greencastle, County Down, all the wrack blown in after 17th March goes to the farm which occupies the ruined castle. Every little bay where the weed collects has its wrack road leading down (Fig. 4), and fields near the shore may have a seaweed gate giving direct access. From Christmas onwards a careful watch was kept on the weather, and a spirit of excitement spread inland from the shore as the wind rose. Every bay has its own particular wind, blowing from 'the right art', for a good yield of wrack. (For kelp, however, an offshore wind was needed, because it is the returning undertow which brings the deeper weeds ashore). There are many accounts of the extraordinary zeal of the wrack gatherers and their feats of endurance. Even English visitors were forced to admit that 'it would be impossible to witness a scene of greater industry than was being enacted by these lazy Irish'.[1]

As on other occasions when men left their lonely farms and gathered together there was much merry-making and noisy recollection of past wrack harvests. One cannot doubt that the harvest of the fields, its 'luck' as well as its bounty, was felt to depend on success in this first step in the farming year. The desire to be first and the intense rivalry were prompted by motives stronger than the wish for material gain. In Scotland one reads of the great anxiety that was shown to secure the first load of wrack on New Year's Day, and on that day a portion of seaweed was laid at the doors of the farmstead and in each of the fields.[2] In Jersey the *vraic* (wrack) harvest is

[1] J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught*, 54.
[2] M. Banks, *British Calendar Customs: Scotland*, 2, 97.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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501 of the River Nure were described as 'flat narrow boats equal at both ends and propelled by paddles'.[1] Earlier, about 1645, Gerard Boate described the cots as 'things like boats, but very unshapely, being nothing but square pieces of timber made hollow.' 'They are very common throughout all Ireland . . . even upon the great rivers and loughs'.[2]

To judge from the numerous discoveries of small dug-outs at [491] river crossings their last surviving use was for ferrying purposes. They were replaced locally by flat-bottomed cots built with wide planks laid edge to edge, such as serve the eel-fishers of the River Bann. These are propelled with a pole. The punt-like cot is also the old craft of the River Shannon. A number of dug-outs are found to have been adapted for propulsion with oars, using the single thole-pin of the rowing-curragh. The large rowing boats of Lough Neagh also use the single thole-pin: to give greater leverage for the heavy oars the iron thole-pin is set out from the gunwale on an outrigger or 'bolster'. In the cots of Lough Erne the oar is worked between double thole-pins (Fig. 78). The maze of lakes which make up the Lough Erne group have yielded many ancient dug-outs of varied types, some of them spoon-shaped, others rectangular and provided with carrying lugs. Others again seem to be both boat and sledge, an alternative to the portable curragh in a land strewn with little lakes. But the strangest vessel, apparently misnamed a curragh, was a kind of raft which is said to have survived until a hundred years ago, 'composed of wreaths of bull-rushes tied upon a frame or raft made of rough branches of trees'.[3]

Methods of fishing in river and lake include not only legiti- 226 mate forms of angling and netting, but many ways of killing fish which game laws and other vested interests have made illegal, but have not extinguished. The spearing of salmon, prohibited since 1714, is now left to poachers, but well into the last century it was openly practised in the city of Galway.[4] On [423] Lough Neagh yellow (feeding) eels are caught illicitly on long lines by fisherfolk whose claims to ancient rights have not been recognized by the courts.

[1]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 150.
[2]G. Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 64, 186.
[3]W. F. Wakeman, loc. cit.
[4]A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 82 (1952), 110

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226 types of gear. It used to be said that you should never risk taking a dog into some of the fishing villages on the north coast: [281] their skins were in great demand for making the line floats or 'stookies'. Very probably seal skins were formerly used for this purpose, as among the Eskimo. The sinkers of grooved stones from the beach might well pass for prehistoric implements (Fig. 74). The beautifully made line-baskets of unpeeled [285] willow have the graceful curves that one associates with the work of untouched 'primitives' (Fig. 82). And the division of [462] labour was on a primitive level, for to the womenfolk fell the tedious labour of baiting and preparing the hooks. The long-line fishermen were exceptionally hardy and were regarded with awe and respect by the inshore fishermen-farmers. No doubt the timid and the weakly had been weeded out by continual stress. Their knowledge of the sea and of the fishing [423] marks was a guarded secret, and the best banks were some- [777] times allotted, no doubt to avoid fights, by casting lots. In the Hebrides this was done on Bride's Day. There also, and possibly in Ireland, the banks were held in rotation in a kind of marine rundale.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [439] [648] [712] [726]

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561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

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size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

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as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers. 824 [437] [241]

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained. 222 222 423

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden. 222 [482] 241

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by 241 654 [177] [178] [184]

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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.' "

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21). 114 181

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible. [124]

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.). 114 12 181 [538]

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor- 554 [423] [471] [511] 556

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
• 423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
[171] of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

443 conventional. How much, if anything, survives of medieval commerce in them and how much comes down from the days of the medieval Irish *aonach* is a matter for the historian. In ancient times the fair was a gathering for purposes much more widely embracing than exchange of produce. The *aonach* was often the occasion of a royal or chieftainly court, a bardic contest, and local games. Nothing of this remains today.

443 Cattle, horse, sheep, and pig fairs are fixed, habitual occasions. Their dates and places of meeting are universal
● 424 knowledge in the countryside. An extension of medieval English law has made most of them proprietary, making of the right to hold a fair a legal title to be bought and sold and charged for in the shape of tolls. But they are public occasions none the less.

443 The lore of fairs is an inexhaustible fund of information among the small farmers. Among them, indeed, the size of the local fairs is a matter of local pride. It is an index of the industry and wealth of the region. The state of prices is as much a clue to the fate of the local universe as the financial vagaries of Wall Street or the City reveal the destinies of the world.

443 All this is natural enough where fairs and local markets
462 represent the chief outlets for produce and the chief source of monetary income. As cattle are the chief concern of the
562 males of the family and source of ultimate success or failure for the family, so the cattle fair is the great testing ground for male prowess, skill, and intelligence. In the market place of the cattle fair, the male command of the family corporation and masculine representation of that corporation in the community makes public display of its stewardship. On this stage, the farmer can meet the outsider on his own terms and with his own weapons of shrewdness and experience.

437 The farmers criticize bitterly any departure from cus-
443 tomary procedure. Even though they complain that the fair

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

cattle, the farmer must usually drive the beasts he has sold to the station himself. In the case of horses, the buyer exercises a greater care. A deal is closed not only by the usual handclasps but by the change of halters as well. Horses are put through their paces very carefully, sometimes in secrecy off in a side field or down a dark street. The majority of horses are sold between farmers and destined for farm work, but there is always a strong atmosphere of riches and brilliant chance about the proceedings. Many are the tales of half-bred horses, picked up for a song, that have come to win all before them.

Since most of the fairs are legally proprietary, they are protected by law. In many cases the towns have bought out the rights to tolls from private families, finding them a welcome source of revenue. To safeguard these rights, action may be brought against illicit buyers and sellers. In practice, however, it is only in horse-dealing that the owners of the tolls exercise vigilance, since there the tolls are so great. All this contributes to the atmosphere of importance that surrounds the horse fairs.

Pigs are sold more frequently, especially as they represent a great deal shorter period of development. Every town has its bonham and pig market. Every Saturday may witness a few transactions complete with the same rituals of inspection, repartee, and bargaining, but there are times of greater activity as well. It is generally only in pig markets that women are to be seen at fairs.

The second chief occasions of economic exchange, which afford further examples of the ceremonial surrounding the small farmer's mechanisms of contact with the outside world, are the produce markets of the towns. In them similar enactments of family and community relations are to be seen.

Each market town has its weekly market day. The day is fixed so as not to conflict with that of any other near-by

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is
512 of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771]
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great 181
deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit 426
to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577
truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay 243
to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century 412
there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the 178
good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East. The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal [422]
possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed [426] ●
directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects, may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should 248
be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands
are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to [476]
thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in
diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist [284]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to [793]
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

288 Otway[3] describes the weavers of Drogheda in 1840 subsisting on conacre gardens (plots hired without right other than to the current crop) in circumstances of dire poverty.

[427]

433 178 O'Brien sums up his *Economic History* by concluding that the result of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century was that Ireland abandoned all pretense of being an industrial country and came to rely on agriculture to a greater extent than at any time formerly and even than in the eighteenth century. The accounts of Ireland at the time of the famine and after it bear him out. They show a very great lack of any kind of industrial activity other than agriculture.

463 178 The petty crafts of the countryside, which never gave any promise of reaching industrial proportions as those in the town centers might have, suffered a similar decline. But with them the decline seems to have come later and to have been part of the general change brought by the industrial revolution. All the supply crafts of the countryside have now come to be concentrated in the market towns. Nevertheless, through western regions, at least, local craftsmen, often with garden plots to help them eke out a living, seem to have long continued to be part of the local scene. In the novels of Carleton written just before and after the famine, many local shoemakers, cobblers, weavers, carpenters, smiths, coopers, nailers, and other followers of small trades appear. Upon them, the agricultural population depended for much of its tools and goods for local consumption. It is impossible to determine now how many of these were rural, since censuses of occupations before 1926 do not distinguish occupations in towns from those in country districts. But these men were part of the generally greater proportions of country dwellers before the rise of towns and the opening up of the railroads during the last century.

[3] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (Dublin: W. Curry, Jr., & Company, 1839).

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Another very great occupational change, though it does not show itself in any great numbers in census records, has been connected with the disappearance of the landlord from the western counties. A whole series of occupations clustering around the management of estates or the tastes of the local gentry and their families has gradually disappeared. Even the adoption of many of the conventions and habits, once exclusive marks of the Ascendancy, by other classes of the population has not served to stem the change. 463 427 178

If we fasten our attention directly upon determining what occupations are characteristically found represented in the countryside rather than in the towns in Ireland today, we get a picture of rural economy in which the followers of other occupations than farming are few indeed in the countryside. The occupations predominantly rural in Ireland are nearly exclusively those of farm ownership or farm labor. Only in recent years has there been any further development of rural pursuits to take the place of those going out with the changes brought about by modern communication and distribution of factory-made products. The chief of the new influences is not yet represented in full, even in the census of 1926. It is too recent a development. The introduction of creameries had not yet made its mark in that year. Plans for industrialization, since undertaken by the De Valera regime, had not yet even been drawn up. 463 178

To get a picture of rural life and the view of technological adaptation which it entails, we can look through the figures for a comparison of urban and rural industry in the years of the study. 463 464

Volume VI of the Irish census of population of 1926 entitled "Industrial Status" gives a view of the industries of the whole country and a preliminary view of the chief forms of industrial organization. Though the volume is largely concerned with unemployment, it also contains tables which classify those at work in the Free State accord-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

423 311 to give by the kindness of the proprietor, Cyril Allies, Esq., J. P. :—

Townland.	Area.	Commonage.
	A. R. P.	A. R. P.
Westquarter, ...	493 3 32	349 2 8
Fawnmore, ...	194 1 14	116 1 15
Middlequarter, ...	612 2 0	375 3 9
Knock, ...	366 1 9	161 3 39
Cloonamore, ...	645 1 1	424 3 29
Inishshark, ...	581 1 12	435 3 12
Islets, ...	257 3 35	—
Total, ...	3151 3 1	1864 1 32

Taking the available area at 930 acres, and the number of families at 215, the average size of a holding per house is 4·3 acres, with a [435] corresponding average valuation of £2 13*s*. The size of a holding, [427] however, varies from 1A. 3R., at a rent of 14*s*. 6*d*., to 56 acres, at £7. Out of 127, the particulars of which were furnished me by Mr. Allies, there were :—

3	holdings of	1	acre and under	2	acres.
21	,,	2	,,	3	,,
17	,,	3	,,	4	,,
8	,,	4	,,	5	,,
23	,,	5	,,	6	,,
15	,,	6	,,	7	,,
12	,,	7	,,	8	,,
17	,,	8	,,	10	,,
5	,,	10	,,	13	,,
4	,,	13	,,	18	,,
1	holding of	25	acres		
1	,,	56	,,		

It will be observed that most of the holdings in this list are of very small size, only eleven being more than ten acres in extent, and 59 or 46·5 per cent. being under 5 acres.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

on this subject, I shall not attempt the treatment of it myself, but shall quote the opinion of the Rev. Eugene O'Growney, who has an exceptional knowledge of both people and language, and has kindly furnished me with some of his notes relating to them. He says:— "The Irish spoken in Boffin has a very poor vocabulary, as far as I heard it spoken. I must say, however, that it was not easy to get the people to speak it, and many children at first refused point blank to utter a word of Irish. In most of the Irish-speaking districts of the west, the people have preserved a number of old poetic prayers and hymns. Many of these are very beautiful, and some appear to be of great age. I was particularly interested at the time of my visit in these hymns, but was told that the only hymn in use in Boffin and Shark was the *ortha Mhuire*, or prayer of Mary. I could not find any person in Boffin who could recite it, and the only person in Shark who was supposed to have it in full was out at sea. An old man in Boffin recited for me a portion of a quaint old religious composition in English." In another place he states that the people speak neither English nor Irish well, their dialect of the language containing many corrupted English words, and at least one curious word. "I recollect that the cove in which St. Leo's well is situated is called *fuath Leo*. I take the word *fuath*, which is the usual word in Inishshark and Inisboffin for a 'cove,' to be a corruption of *uamh*, which is used by the Four Masters in the year 893 as meaning 'cave.'"[1] 19 [538]

IV. SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Every family combines fishing and farming, and has some share in a boat. The farms are small (see p. 340), about three acres and a-half under potatoes and oats, being about the average amount of tillage per family. All are held direct from the landlord, who resides on Inishbofin, there being no subletting or con-acre. The rents average about £2 per holding, but vary much according to the extent and quality of the land. 241 [226] 427

The holdings are not divided up into small fields, as in Aran, but are often insufficiently fenced, allowing the cattle to stray, which 241 423

[1] The Rev. E. A. Lavelle has, since the above was written, sent a translation of a curious old Irish litany used on both islands, both in Irish and English, which he obtained from an old man, aged 84, whose father, Peter Lavelle, fought under Nelson at Trafalgar. As the litany is in English and of great length, it is not inserted here, but it is to be hoped that the Irish form will be recorded and preserved as it may possess the linguistic value wanting in a translation.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

161 The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and outbuildings was as follows in 1891 :—

Locality.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
The Mullet, .	23,333 1 27	3757	1893	1864	600	532
N. Inishkea, .	464 1 32	126	60	66	21	4
S. Inishkea, . .	344 3 19	180	92	88	32	33
23 Islets, . .	350 0 17	48	22	26	10	27
Portacloy, .	7845 1 1	299	148	151	54	29
Totals, . . .	32,338 0 6	410	2215	2195	717	625

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area of the district is that of Kilmore, being 29,492 acres, and the three townlands forming the Portacloy district, 7,845 acres.

The total valuation of Kilmore is £4,055 18*s.*, and of Portacloy £163 7*s.*

There is very little commonage in the Mullet, but about Portacloy there is a good deal.

The holdings are not large, averaging about 4½ or 5 acres at a rental of about £3 10*s.* in the Mullet, and about £2 10*s.* in "the mountains." There is considerable variation, however, as there are some farms of good size, but the majority are small.

In 1891 there were, in Kilmore, 210 holdings of between £4 and £10 valuation, 305 of £2 and under £4, and no less than 252 at, or under, £2 valuation.

The land is mostly held now at judicial rentals (the people having early taken advantage of the Land Act of 1881), but sixty years ago the greater part of the land was held in common, and the mode of tenure is thus described by Knight :—" In the whole of the peninsula there are few farms divided . . . the usual system being commonage both in tillage and pasture. In tillage, lots are cast every third year for the number of ridges each person is entitled to after the usual rotation is over. Potatoes the first year, then barley or oats, after which new lots must be cast for new potato ground. The holdings are by sums or collops, which originally meant the number

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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combined knife and drag found in Connacht has three heavy hooks attached to a strong sickle-shaped blade mounted on a 12-ft. pole (Fig. 73). Powerful long-handled scythes and great hand-rakes with teeth a foot long were used on the south coast. In Donegal the men would wield their long knives from curraghs while the women dragged the weed ashore.

In the Rosses of west Donegal around 1750 the rents were paid in kelp: any surplus was bartered for 'the two luxuries, spirits and tobacco, enjoyed by men and women alike.'[1] For the lesser weeds growing in shallow water ordinary sickles were employed when the tide was low, but these species made inferior kelp. Yet in some areas, for example Strangford Lough, stones were planted on the shore to grow wrack for kelp burning: Arthur Young commented on this practice in 1776.[2] Old seaweed beds may be seen also in Lough Swilly, Clew Bay, Achill Sound and probably elsewhere.

Today the most remarkable area of cultivated weed is near the mouth of Carlingford Lough in County Down, where at low tide a wide stretch of mud and sand is exposed in Mill Bay. It is grown solely to supply fertilizer for the potato crop. Wrack rights are mentioned in grants of land in County Down as far back as 1506, but the earliest reference I have found to the cultivated weed in Carlingford Lough is in a guidebook of 1846. As we have seen, however, Arthur Young refers to the growing of wrack for kelp-burning in Strangford Lough, and since the best species for kelp grow in deeper water the planting of seaweed beds is not likely to have originated with the kelp industry. Through the second half of last century some 1,100 beds, covering well over a square mile in area, were maintained in Mill Bay, and it was not until the depression between the two world wars that they began to be neglected. Today the use of wrack has almost entirely given way to artificial fertilizers, with a great easement of labour but a loss of annually renewed organic matter in the soil. The wrackbeds, or 'plans', are half-acre rectangles set with rows of boulders a foot or so in diameter, but many beds are subdivided into small 'cuts' for sub-letting, and the Estate Map showing the beds has the

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.
[2] A. Young, *Tour*, 1, 194.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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as they are called, were born in the mountain country of Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, adjoining the rich plains of the Pale where their ancestors sharpened their wits on the English settlers. Many stories are told of the tricks by which 'the goatmen' disposed of their animals before they reached their goal at Barnet Fair, of billy-goats sold to the innocent English as good milkers or as an infallible means of keeping a garden free of weeds. 'Every guy who comes here selling cloth', said a Canadian rancher, 'tells me he is from Slieve Gullion. It must be some city.'

Although the export of live cattle from Ireland was prohibited, in the interests of British farming, through most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the short sea-crossings from north-east Ireland enabled dealers to ship them to southern Scotland. The embargo was lifted in 1765, and by the early nineteenth century many thousands of cattle were reaching Portpatrick and being driven to the fairs at Dumfries and Carlisle, and farther afield to Barnet in Hertfordshire and St. Faith's near Norwich. Many Irish harvesters and other summer migrants followed the trails trodden by Irish cattle and their drovers, but after 1830, with the coming of the steamship, Glasgow, the Mersey and Holyhead became, as they remain, the chief points of entry for both animals and men.

Before the agrarian revolution and the import of feeding stuffs made it possible to keep stock through the winter, the months of October and November were critical for the farmer, who had to dispose of many of his animals at this time. The trade is now better distributed through the year, but although monthly fairs have become general since the famine, the sales vary a good deal from month to month, and the important fairs still fall at the turning points of the pastoral year, particularly in May and November. The spring fairs of February and March and the Lammas fairs of July and August were to a large extent concerned respectively with horses and with sheep and wool, but those of May and November were the great cattle fairs and also the hiring fairs. We are reminded that the Celtic year in pre-Christian times had only two seasons, winter and summer, and that the first days of November and May are still the Irish gale-days, the times when rents fall due.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the
106 lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings
349 in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by
[427] islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the
[464] other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

743 Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

344 The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor,
205 just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room
206 with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use
[203] in matters pertaining to the service during the prescribed hours. When the freighter ran aground before dawn, it was discovered by islanders who informed the company; Radio Eireann reported the plight of the vessel, on the basis of S.O.S. messages, in the seven o'clock news, but the company had reached the reef before the telephone was available.

346 Inis Beag has only a small church, known as the "chapel." After the church of the patron saint was abandoned, a house served as the place of worship for a time, then was superseded by the old chapel whose foundations can be discerned

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 28 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 [437] A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [667] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [42] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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be divorced from the patterns of relationships which they 593
symbolize, and their role cannot be understood except in the fact.

If then we turn back to the common life of the families of the small farmers, it is these very terms which give us the clue to the relationships which that life builds up.

In the Irish family, the sons and the daughters are equally 593
subordinate; there is no formal distinction made between 601
them. The kinship terms of both the English and the Irish languages reflect this equivalence of siblings. In either case, one term, son or *mac*, reflects the unity of the position of all male children, the procreated generation, from the point of view of the elder or procreant pair, the mother and father. Similarly, a single term in both languages, brother and *dearbhráthair*, expresses for the siblings their common occupancy of that position. Rural Ireland knows neither primogeniture nor junior right. Except as age differences separate them informally, the brothers occupy the same status both within and outside the family group. Thus neighbors and other outsiders refer to them all alike as "the boys" of the farmer's family.

Accordingly, their equality reflects itself in farm activity. 593
All are on an equal footing there. The brothers are all 628
alike under the father's direction and control as long as they remain on the farm. They work together, and the years of common effort and common dependence create a strong solidarity between them. Though only one of them may [428] ●
ordinarily expect to inherit land and cattle, the others renounce their rights as it were in the interests of the identification of the family group with the land they work. The bloody faction fights which used to disfigure Irish country life have practically passed away, but the forces which brought them into existence still continue. Many a country fight involving a dispute over rights of way and water courses brings in the adherents of all the brothers of either

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 house, and, though the cases nowadays find their way into
628 the courts, a very common defense is that the feud is very long-standing and that "the two grandfathers" began it. The tales written in the last century by William Carleton, who wrote of a life he himself knew intimately, describe faction fights in which whole parishes became involved, but the center of disturbance was invariably a family dispute in which the brothers of a family ranged with their friends against those of another. So fierce is the solidarity which the identification of brothers and their land calls forth that even today in Clare the name "defending Tim Flanagan's title" is jocularly given to forcible resistance to eviction, after a famous stalwart of the last century whose ten sons fought valiantly for their father's farm.

593 In fact, this emotional attachment is strong enough some-
589 times to preclude the breaking up of the family. Two instances of this sort came under the authors' special notice out of the many which occur. It is difficult to get the exact figures, since census materials deal only with the marital status of farm owners, but many of the bachelor-owned farms of Clare may be of this type. In the first case, two brothers and four sisters occupied a small holding of twenty-three acres and a four-room house for over fifty years. Several of them at various times had tried to break away; in fact, two brothers did, but the ones who stayed gave as their reason first that they hadn't wanted to leave the old people and afterwards that none of them had wanted "to be the first to leave." The second case was very similar. Two brothers and a sister had stayed on to work a small farm for their old parents, but, when the old couple died, none of them wanted to leave and each felt too old for marriage.

593 Whatever differences make a rift in this fraternal front
428 are matters more of preparation for leaving the farm family than of internal differentiation in status and behavior. On most small farms only one son can be kept at home as suc-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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cessor to land and chattels. The family property, house, stock, and land, descend to him intact. The other sons must be provided for elsewhere. 428

In choosing the son to remain upon the farm, the father has full power of decision. His interest lies in choosing among his sons the one he thinks will carry on most successfully. There is no rule or norm in the matter; and the brothers are united in expecting an adequate return for their years of service. But none of them may claim more than the other, and they are all dependent upon the father's sense of their fair deserts. In many cases there may be an early difference among them in the inclinations they show in adolescence. But the special position a brother occupies in this regard is a matter of agreement among them all and easy enough of adjustment.

Turning now to the other relationships neither fraternal nor parental within the family, it is obvious that those among the females and between females and males build up in the same way as the ones we have already discussed. 593

The family makes a formal distinction between the female members and their male fellow members in terminology, just as it builds a dichotomy of behavior upon the sexual difference. Thus in the procreated generation daughter and sister, *inghean* and *deirbhshiúr*, correspond to son and brother; for the daughters occupy equivalent positions in a common subordination to the parents. 593 601

These terms express merely a classification of the female individuals and their positions in the complex of reciprocal relationships between family members. What has been said of the conditioning of the boy can be repeated of the girl, with, of course, a difference in the techniques acquired. And no less than in the boy's case, farm work is merely a part of the total adaptation the girl makes toward her fellows and toward the environment in which they live. 593 861

The work of the women is as important in farm economy

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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permit her to marry into local farms, in two of the cases on 583
a somewhat better scale than the farms which they had left. The case of the South African shows how the man also may return with his fortune to establish himself in his native district after several years or even a decade or two of exile.

The dowry or marriage portion is, of course, a phenomenon universal in European peasant life. What gives it special interest here is its intimate connection with the farm family and with the land. That connection is evidenced particularly in the "writings."

After the "walking of the land" and the making of the 583
bargain, the two parties to marry go to a solicitor. There 584
the agreements reached are cast into proper legal form. The 428
"writings" is a legal instrument conveying the ownership
of the holding to the son. It is usually both marriage 888
settlement and will. On the event of the stipulated marriage, the father conveys the farm and all appurtenances to his son in return for the portion brought in by the girl. The father makes also definite provisions for his own maintenance and that of his wife. Generally, these include the right to the "grass of a cow," to food and the use of the hearth, perhaps the yield of one patch of potatoes, and the use of a room in the house. The room is nearly always, at least in West and North Clare, the one known as the "west room" for reasons we shall examine later. To take care of possible disputes arising out of the failure of these provisions to work smoothly, certain very hard-headed stipulations are often included, allowing for the conversion of these rights into cash support or a lump sum.

In return for the farm, the father receives the fortune 583
brought in by the girl and paid to him by her father. Fur- 428
thermore, the provisions which must be made for other
children are often transferred with the land. The father is now expected to give (if he has not given them already) portions to those of his children who are not to be settled

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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583 428 at home on the land. Where the will and marriage settlement are one and the same document, these obligations are passed on to the inheriting son.

The following description of several "writings" (which we examined) given by an Ennis solicitor specializing in this lucrative practice illustrates the type and the possibilities of variation. The solicitor is describing certain marriage settlements, the originals of which he held in his hand:

> In this settlement John F— of C— had one son and two daughters at home. He left the farm, you see, all that goes with it, to his son on condition of his marrying the girl named here in the deed. He also made the transfer subject to the son's providing for the two daughters by giving them rights of residence and keep in the house as long as they remain unmarried, and by making them special money gifts when they should marry. He then reserved a right for his wife, leaving her a small sum, and the right to the potato patch and her bedroom free of all charge as long as she lived. In the event of her not liking the new arrangements, she was to get a monthly stipend in lieu of her keep and room until she died.

We shall go on to give this interview in some detail to illustrate the full character of the arrangements made. The solicitor continues:

> If there are two sons . . . one of them gets the farm, and when the old people find a girl with a suitable fortune, and the son marries her, they give the money over to the next son, or they provide with it for the other children who haven't yet gone off. It's a pernicious system. [An upper-class person is speaking, not a farmer.] You'll go out to a small holding and see several able-bodied men and women waiting around doing nothing. They are waiting for the eldest son to get married and for their share of the fortune the wife brings in.

674 What may happen when such an arrangement fails to work smoothly for one reason or another may be seen from the following examples. The first is the description (recorded in the course of a general conversation, not elicited in any

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying
512 the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

586 842 of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

428 592 Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

602 Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

582 836 At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

592 562 428 There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be brought into the house, and matches made for them. In this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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right of a woman to hold property. The patrilineal identification of family and land is incompatible with it. Whatever farm a woman works or controls is regarded as a trust for a son or brother of her husband or father. 562 428

The conflict is naturally never so phrased, nor is it ever debated. Yet there are many instances which show behavior, accepted fully as right and just by the local community, which reveal the patrilineal identification. A widow, for instance, remains upon the farm only if the children are beginning to grow up. If they are very young, she returns to her parents and a husband's brother may take the farm. Even if she marries, she and her new husband merely hold the land in trust. The new husband is, graphically, a "stranger to the land." 562 768 428 587

As a "stranger" he has no right to it. In a village in mid-Clare, to give an example, a "Yank" returned after many years in the United States to his father's farm, from which he and all his brothers had emigrated. His mother, now dead, had married again, and her two children by her second husband still worked the farm. D——, the "Yank," threw the husband out into the road, told him to go home, and took up the land. Later when he gave fortunes to both of the children, the village felt he had made ample amends for the stepfather's years of toil. 587 428

Whether or not there is a legally executed will, it is much the same. In Luogh, a son, inheriting a farm upon the death of his mother, allowed her old second husband to stay on with him. He was said to be "very kind to the old man." In Inagh again, though a small farmer, dying, willed the family's farm to his wife and children, a brother on a neighboring farm got most of the land. "He paid her nothing for it. He took bits of it here and there until it was all gone." Whatever protest there is must come from the growing nephews. Inagh makes none.

In matchmaking, too, legal form may be subordinated to

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583
602 but ones in which brothers-in-law flared up to strike one another even though after a week or so the two connections became reconciled.

428 583 Up to this point we have failed to distinguish between wills and marriage settlements in the statement of matchmaking and transfer of farms. The confusion is justified because in so many cases they are one and the same. Nevertheless, the subject of wills made apart from the son's marriage needs discussion. If our conclusions as to the nature of farm marriage are valid, something of the same play of changes, obligations, and goods must be present.

Money in the dowry functions to recompense the farmer for his relinquishment of the farm and the break-up of the family which he headed. Similarly, in the cases where inheritance proceeds without marriage, money plays the same role. There are many instances in which the old farmer has demanded payment for the property his heir is to receive. Let an Ennis solicitor describe his experience with one of them:

428 763 I remember an old fellow, Jimmy B — of K — who was taken off dying to the County Home. He called for me to go out there and make a will for him. Seven wills I made for that old codger before he was through. He hadn't any idea of dying. He had only ten or fifteen acres of a farm, but he said he would give it to his son [only] if the son paid him ten pounds a year for it. They often do that, make the son pay from ten pounds to fifty pounds a year for the land. Then [when the solicitor pointed out that the son would inherit the money anyway as the old fellow had no other heirs], old Jimmy made me make another will leaving the money itself to the son.

Another case the authors knew involved no son. The old fellow left a small farm to his cousin and even though he was on the verge of dying, he forced the cousin to pay for it.

In still another instance, an old fellow had some land and about two hundred and fifty pounds to give away. He gave

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the money in a will, but insisted the son pay for the land. 428
After that, there was a cow and a calf left over, which he 763
reserved for himself. When he called in a solicitor to make another will disposing of the cow and calf, this time, as he lay dying in the County Home, the nun in charge said he had been awake all night mumbling to himself about the cow and calf. The solicitor and the nun finally got him to leave the money for masses.

These cases show the hold of the pattern of receiving 428
money for the transfer of family property. It must be understood that under ordinary circumstances the payment the son had to make would be devoted to the other children, as is the dowry. But in these cases the pattern persisted though there were no other children.

Another case occurred in which a farmer named Patrick [429]
N— left money, farm, and everything he had to his nephew Michael in trusteeship to be given to him upon his marriage with the trustee's approval. Here no money was demanded, but another common feature of countrymen's wills was involved which throws light on the general family situation. The old man had other nephews who had given him a hand from time to time in fulfillment of the agricultural pattern. By mischance they discovered the content of the will, called their uncle an "old fraud" and a "robber," and stopped working for him. A generous move on the part of Michael prevented further bad blood.

English law of property gives the owner full right to dispose at will of farm and other real property as personal chattels. That right is, of course, embodied in Irish legal practice. But the situation underlying the Irish farm life is otherwise. In the first cases cited, we see a tendency to enforce payment for the farm, analogous to the dowry. In the last case, the basis for that tendency is the expectation of provision on the part of the family members. With the transfer of the farm and the break of the family at either

428 the match or death, the other members of the family must be provided for.

(It may be for this reason, the conflict between legal right and social obligation, that so many countrymen's wills are drawn up in elaborate secrecy, the solicitor creeping out in the dead of night to a lightless cottage in the bogs somewhere to make a will for an old fellow who for one reason or another refuses to fulfill obligations, real or fancied, to his kindred and neighbors. The authors had frequent descriptions of this from solicitors and townsmen to whom the piquancy of the situation appealed, but obtained none, unfortunately, from the countryman's point of view. They did receive accounts from countrymen of their attempts to conceal their visits to solicitors in town.)

Even in these cases in which the usual sequence of events is upset or changed through special circumstances, the same concern for rebuilding and changing the family relationships in a certain definite manner appears. The dowry, like the rest of the behavior at the match, is understandable only in such terms. Even, as in the case of wills of the kind just reported, where transfer of land alone is involved, the same concern is present. That is, the match is here by implication, if nothing else, and the mechanism of social change it provides is at work even *in absentia*.

CHAPTER VIII

Dispersal and Emigration

THE internal reorganization of the family consequent on the marriage of one of their number produces a marked change in the situation of the as yet unprovided-for brothers and sisters. The other members of the family broken up by the marriage of one of their number on the home farm must be provided for elsewhere. They feel themselves entitled to portions, either in the form of dowries to marry into another farm or of some other means of establishing themselves. If such provisions in fact are not made, conflict arises, as we saw in the case of the McDermott murder. A classical case in the Ennis region of Clare was that of an old farmer of substance who married a nineteen-year-old girl when he was eighty. When the birth of a son precipitated a crisis, he had to be protected from his scandalized relatives, sons, and daughters by the police. When he died the following year, he gave a hundred pounds each to the constable who protected him and the priest "plucky enough to marry me." His sons refused to attend his funeral.

Normally, however, the transfer of land and the break-up of the family which worked it is made with the fullest possible provision for the other children. The dowry brought in is utilized to that end, and the savings of a lifetime on the farm have been used. The following observations made by a Land Commission official, himself a small farmer's son

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 and a man with many years' experience in Irish rural affairs,
428 attempt to give a statement of the generalities. They express, however, an ideal rather than an actuality.

The average household consists of six persons [and the parents]. Of necessity not more than one could be provided for on the holding and assuming, for example, that the family consisted of two girls and four boys, the position would be somewhat as follows:

593 The eldest son would in the course of years assume ownership of the holding. A second son might be provided with a second-
428 ary education and might possibly win a County Council scholar-
874 ship . . . enabling him to pursue a course of engineering or medicine practically free. In the event, however, of his not being so fortunate, the thrift of the family may enable him to pursue a similar course at the university, the intervals between terms and the long vacation being spent on the farm.

Some years ago medicine was the profession usually pursued provided the boy had no vocation for the priesthood. At that time the cost of his board was appreciably reduced by an arrangement through which neighbors' sons lodged together and brought with them supplies of potatoes, oatmeal, home-cured pork, in fact, provided for almost all their own food. When the boy is qualified to his own particular calling, to his credit it may be said that he denies himself many little luxuries in order to pay back the cost of his training and thus assist the other members of his family.

593 The third son either got trained in business and in due course started one of his own, or emigrated where he could also refund
428 the cost to his parents. The fourth son might possibly become a primary school teacher, a civic guard, a tradesman [artisan] apprenticed by his father in the near-by town, or again his family might give him enough to marry into another small holding.

One of the girls received a dowry or, as they say here, she was "fortuned off" into another small holding of similar status. The second girl possibly favored nursing, teaching, business, or domestic service, or again possibly religion, or even a clerical position of some sort either here or abroad.

166 The above quotation states the generalities in terms of
463 upward social mobility. The influx of the country people
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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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into the towns, into governmental, professional positions, and into the ranks of urban occupations must wait for special analysis in itself. It is not possible here to determine how great the effect of this movement from the small farms is upon the current much lamented overcrowding of the professions in Ireland. The point of interest for us is the dispersal of the farm group. 463 593

Naturally enough, this dispersal does not always occur so happily as in the above statement of the ideal. Yet the portioning off of the children and the success with which it is done is the pride as well as the duty of every farm family. A few examples will give the variations. They are more matters of success or failure to advance beyond the level of small farm life, but they show the genesis of the movement in the farm family. In a later section this subject will be dealt with in more detail. These examples, however, are typical, though the names are fictitious.

Leary of F —, a farmer with sixty acres, has a daughter married near-by with a four hundred pound fortune, and another, a nun in Mercy Convent, Ennis. Four sons have entered the priesthood, an expensive training from his point of view. A fifth is at home working, not yet thirty. Leary is a "strong" farmer, highly prosperous.

Tom Casey, K —, is a very poor holder with thirty acres of mountain and bog. Two sons and a daughter are still at home, and a bachelor brother works with him. Another daughter works for herself as a domestic servant in Ennis. One son Tom is apprenticed to a carpenter in Ennis. A daughter emigrated through the good graces of her aunt.

Michael Dunn of T — has twenty acres, but has not prospered. His two sons left at eighteen and twenty respectively to drive hackney automobiles in Ennis, an uncle there giving them a start. Another son now thirty and a daughter are still at home working the farm.

In a mountain townland, Pat Looney's father prospered, won the good graces of the landlord's agent, amassed four farms, the largest fifty acres, the smallest eighteen. He married off two 593 578 428

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

593 daughters with two hundred pound fortunes, settled three sons
578 and a daughter with her husband in each of the farms. Pat him-
428 self, the eldest, now about eighty, got the largest farm but not the one he wanted. He has been warring with his brothers and his neighbors ever since. He held out against his father for five years, refusing to marry and take his farm. In Pat's youth, land agitation and reform had not yet prevented subdivision and acquiring of new farms by a successful tenant. Pat on his fifty-acre mountain farm has married off a daughter locally at three hundred pounds and sent two sons out to America. Another daughter works in England. Two sons, aged forty-three and thirty-six, are at home and Pat hasn't made up his mind yet which one shall get the land.

593 The examples, various as they are, need not be multiplied.
167 The sons and daughter who are not to be portioned at home, in the words of the Luogh residents, "must travel." To that end both the savings of the family, created through their united efforts under the headship of father and mother, and
[583] the incoming dowry, are devoted. In Luogh there had been only four marriages in ten years; two of them were the usual farm-transferring matches, one a returned emigrant who married a boyhood sweetheart and bought a farm, and one a widower who took a second wife and a second fortune. An old woman described the situation: "There aren't any matches nowadays. Nobody has a fortune to give his daugh-
[454] ter and the young men must travel." Yet the woman who lamented this state of affairs was carefully husbanding half crowns for her baby granddaughter's fortune.

593' Nevertheless this necessary dispersal of the members of
167 the family at its reorganization does not ordinarily destroy
457 the family ties. The bonds of affection and family obligation still hold. If they have emigrated, the family members send
434 back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces and brothers and sisters left at home. A great many farms, especially in West and North Clare, are partially supported by Christmas gifts from Americans and other exiles. It is

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 Ireland as "rundale" or "runrig."[8] Under rundale the land surrounding a
361 settlement was worked as a joint farm, with individual plots and strips scattered through the arable land, some on the constantly tilled infield and some on shifting outfield patches reclaimed periodically from the waste.[9] By the early nineteenth century this form of agriculture had become extremely
[428] complicated, as a result of the rapidly increasing population and of the Irish practice of subdividing a restricted amount of arable land among all the male heirs of the household. In modern surviving examples the clachan and cultivation in rundale are closely interrelated, and it is generally assumed that they do not function independently. But a complication to this interpretation has emerged in a small area of County Down that has been examined by R. H. Buchanan[10] within the limits set by the available manuscript material. Here a set of estate maps shows clachans apparently developed in association with compact holdings. Although this work, which refers to a small area and uses a narrow range of information, may not weaken the great body of evidence that suggests a direct relationship between rundale agriculture and clachan settlement, at least it indicates that the relationship needs to be carefully appraised in each individual case.

Two Nineteenth-Century Investigators

114 Although changes in the pattern of Irish rural settlement have only
361 recently been uncovered by research, the periodic reports of the various Royal Commissions concerned with nineteenth-century Ireland make it clear
311 that the inhabitants of the country were not unaware of the changes taking place around them.[11] Hence it is not surprising that at least two nineteenth-century scholars, Frederic Seebohm and August Meitzen, knew of clachan settlement.

Seebohm's attention was focused on the manorial and tribal systems and on the open-field system of cultivation.[12] It was this latter interest in particular

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113 [8] D. McCourt: Infield and Outfield in Ireland, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 7, 1954–1955, pp. 369–376.

[9] Flatrès believes that the outfield was not widely found in Ireland but was a late introduction, brought in the early seventeenth century by Scottish settlers (Pierre Flatrès: Géographie rurale de quatre contrées celtiques—Irlande, Galles, Cornwall & Man [Rennes, 1957]). No attempt has been made here to evaluate Flatrès' ambitious study, of particular interest, however, is his map of the modern field systems of Ireland (Fig. 1). [Reviewed in this number of the *Geographical Review*, p. 599.—Edit. Note.]

[10] The author is grateful to Mr. Buchanan for this information in advance of its publication.

[11] In particular see the evidence presented to the Devon Commission (Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry [Lord Devon, Chairman] into . . . the Occupation of Land in Ireland [6 parts (in 5 vols.), London, 1845: British Parliamentary Papers 1845, XIX–XXIII]).

[12] Frederic Seebohm: The English Village Community, Examined in Its Relations to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry (2nd edit., London, 1883).

[Text continues on p. 558]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 One countryman of North Clare put that first
593 year into words: "At first", he said, "the boy's
606 people make much of the new woman. They would
842 hardly let her work at all. This carries on for seven or eight months, and if then the old people don't see evidence of increase of young, they get angry and abuse her. But if they do, they don't let her do any work at all now and are so proud."

In such a situation barrenness is a curse and a disgrace. The husband has every right to express his disappointment and his displeasure. It is a source of shame to him as well. He fails in preserving the continuity of his line upon the land.

One childless woman of Inagh in Clare knew bitterly how much both family and community support these attitudes: "No matter how much money you have," she said, "no matter how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you are no good. But if you are ugly as the worst and have children, you are all right." Then she went on, to perpetrate an Irish bull, perhaps, but to express the matter very forcibly: "The man wants children just as much as the woman. He is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of this country, especially if you haven't any."

182 Nevertheless, there are other ways of ensuring
593 the continuity. They 'keep the name on the land'
428 too, but they are makeshifts at best. These makeshifts transfer control of the land, as does the match.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

But in each case, they conform to the system 182
of values lying at the centre of the countryman's 593
way of life. They are social detours, ways past the 428
obstacles of adverse circumstance and bad luck.

For instance there used to be, not long ago, 182
what was known as a 'country divorce'. In the old 586
days, they say, a farmer might send a barren wife 593
back to her parents. He could not marry again, of 428
course; Catholic law forbids it. But he could do something just as effective in assuring the family descendants. He could remarry, not in his own person, but in that of his brother. The two men are equivalent in status, why should they not act sociologically as a single individual. Even today this device survives. Thus a farmer of Corofin, in North Clare, could make use of it. Childless after several years, he got a 'country divorce'. Then he gave the land to his brother, in return for a large fortune, on the stipulation that his brother should marry. One brother thus got wife and farm; the other the dowry. The identity of land and family were preserved for another generation.

What other devices are possible has already 182
appeared in what I previously called 'incomplete 602
families'. Nephews, nieces, even grandchildren 428
may be brought in. In time, a match is made for them, and normal succession assured. The former owners move to the 'west room'; they become the old people, and the pattern of a complete farm family unit is restored. To the country-people it

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land,
602 and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such con-
428 duct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can
182 arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at
589 all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own
428 person. That does not mean she cannot exercise
593 full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her
[766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

Even if she marries, she and her new husband
182 merely hold the land in trust. The second husband
428 and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The
587 rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the
593 land, may turn them out. So strong is the identifica-
578 tion. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

may be often quite different and run counter to rural values, breeding strife and forcing the aggrieved to seek redress outside the law.

Here, then, is the new equilibrium in the countryman's social life. The match provides a transition between the generations. Within the family unit, it provides for the establishment of a new nuclear group. It makes room for an essential continuity in which all the members may share and round which all their interests may be centred. Externally, it regathers those whom it must disperse. Round this dispersal, the web of kinship can be built. In the persons of the old people moved one step toward death, and in the identifications round them, 'descent' and 'blood' and 'the name on the land', the emotions of human groups can find their nexus.

In this movement, household, land, adult status, economic control, all move together. Marriage is a turning point round which rural life hinges. It is a structural centre. Every tie between human beings is modified. Then, in a new form, they can crystallize again—to give scope for movement, to allow continuities, to habituate human beings to new social places.

The whole of this movement takes place within a frame of human sentiments, ambitions and desires. Emotion lends its force. Convention, habit and the sanctions of public opinion and private anger keep the bounds and punish transgression. Public honour and self-satisfaction reward conformity.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

potato was one of the factors that led to the decline of rundale agriculture, both because of its late harvest and because it resulted in increased populations which brought disastrous subdivision of the holdings. Under the " gavelkind " code of inheritance a man's property was divided equally among all his sons, so that the impossibly small fields came to be spoken of not as the standard " cow's grass," but as a " foot " and even a half-foot or " cleet." 174 221 361 [428]

Much has been written of the drawbacks of the rundale system. It is so easy to condemn it—the " fights, trespasses, confusion, disputes and assaults " to which it gave rise, the wretched poverty which it bred, the evil consequences of dwelling in packed house clusters—that it is well to recall the better side of the system before it fell into decline. A writer in 1853 has left his " recollections of nights of social converse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of defence against bailiff or gauger which contrasted mournfully with the solitary grandeur of the new dwelling." Another apologist wrote : " the closer the rundale system is followed, the more the unwritten customs and regulations observed, the more do intelligent tenants regret a departure from them." Many of its better features, indeed, have survived the enclosure movement and the separation of farms ; we may cite co-operation in farm work and the social fire-side evenings or " caileys." " Gatherings " of many kinds, for work and pleasure, distinguished the rundale communities. Every village had its musician, piper or fiddler, who was often maimed in some way and supported himself by his skill. Folk songs, occupational airs and epic tales were kept alive in this way. 174 621

It was formerly the task of an appointed leader in a townland or group of townlands to see that customs were observed, to arrange the casting of lots in re-allotting strips, and so on. Probably we should see in the " king " not long ago recognized as leader in such communities as Rathlin and Tory a relic of this custom. [622]

To understand the village-system in working order we must see it as part of a wider pattern in which cattle-herding 174 621 221 231

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [388]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 562
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[164]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:154–156). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [651] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. 342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [918] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [516] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented. 354 593 178

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street. 342 353 [788] [574]

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists). 571 602 609 [572] 835 602 582 602 609

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias. 428 611

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag. [113] [601]

16:Messenger E-4.5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference.

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin.

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families.

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[783] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[662] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping
776 fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered everly superstitious.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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[For information pertaining to emigration and its relation to sexual repression, late marriage, celibacy, and family relations in Ireland, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 32-36.]

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the money in a will, but insisted the son pay for the land. 428
After that, there was a cow and a calf left over, which he 763
reserved for himself. When he called in a solicitor to make another will disposing of the cow and calf, this time, as he lay dying in the County Home, the nun in charge said he had been awake all night mumbling to himself about the cow and calf. The solicitor and the nun finally got him to leave the money for masses.

These cases show the hold of the pattern of receiving 428
money for the transfer of family property. It must be understood that under ordinary circumstances the payment the son had to make would be devoted to the other children, as is the dowry. But in these cases the pattern persisted though there were no other children.

Another case occurred in which a farmer named Patrick [429]
N— left money, farm, and everything he had to his nephew Michael in trusteeship to be given to him upon his marriage with the trustee's approval. Here no money was demanded, but another common feature of countrymen's wills was involved which throws light on the general family situation. The old man had other nephews who had given him a hand from time to time in fulfillment of the agricultural pattern. By mischance they discovered the content of the will, called their uncle an "old fraud" and a "robber," and stopped working for him. A generous move on the part of Michael prevented further bad blood.

English law of property gives the owner full right to dispose at will of farm and other real property as personal chattels. That right is, of course, embodied in Irish legal practice. But the situation underlying the Irish farm life is otherwise. In the first cases cited, we see a tendency to enforce payment for the farm, analogous to the dowry. In the last case, the basis for that tendency is the expectation of provision on the part of the family members. With the transfer of the farm and the break of the family at either

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

like the sanctions of the exercise of sexual rights in marriage, 593
are part of and take their form in the family group. Conse- 582
quently, in the wider and larger alignments of individuals springing from the family which make up the kinship system, similar prohibitions occur.

For the kindred are the group within which marriage is 582
prohibited. In a sense the formulation of the individuals in 602
it as a group is an abstraction. Kinship bonds come ready 857
formed to the newborn human being. The child is soon brought to know and adopt requisite behavior and sentiments toward the individuals with whom the other persons of his family are reciprocally bound.

Thus the Irish child very early meets his mother's and 602
father's brothers and sisters; he runs errands and receives 431
small gifts from them; as soon as he is able he carries pres- 571
ents. In later years of boyhood he does odd jobs for them; 857
his labor is lent at cooring; he takes his place with them at the family table or round the hearth on visiting. At various times of crisis in his career, such as First Communion, Confirmation, and marriage, he receives gifts from them which signalize the intimacy between him and them. They share his parent's superordination to him, for they belong to the same older generation as his parents.

He is very likely, too, to be thrown constantly with their 602
children, especially if they are substantially of the same age, 571
where his uncles and aunts remain within visiting distance. 857
In country regions, such as Luogh, nearly all of the families are united by complicated, reduplicated bonds of marriage and descent. There the boys and girls grow up together in constant association, both as "friends" and companions. It is with them that the natural course of development creates bonds of sentiment and mutual aid, quite like those within the family, which take the form of that "friendliness" at once obligatory and pleasurable seen in the account of farm work.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 unfortunate that the authors have not statements of the
167 amount of these annual remittances for local districts. The
457 total for Ireland, however, is enormous. There is a marked
434 tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself, sons and daughters of each generation going out to join the members of the last. One district round Cross to the west of Carrigaholt, a little settlement on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, said locally to be supported by sons in the Shanghai police force. The first to go became chief of police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the force have gone to men of Cross.

167 The authors had the opportunity of examining some of the family setting in which emigrant remittances operate in Luogh. There the greatest number of emigrants had gone out to Boston. In one family, there was a succession of nephews and nieces following uncles and aunts from the same farmhouse for four generations. In four recent cases Luogh boys and girls had married one another in Boston. In two more they had married in Ireland and emigrated together.

434 Remittances from sons and daughters arrive around
Christmas. In one family the farmer's wife had written
593 to children in America saying that the family were trying
431 to acquire an addition to their holding from the Land Commission. The children sent them the purchase price. In this case the daughter sent her regular Christmas remittance as well. When she was admonished by her parents for such generosity, she wrote: "I would think it wasn't Christmas and I hadn't any father and mother if I didn't send them something."

[527] Her mention of the festival in the same breath with her parents is understandable when it is realized that Christmas is the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland.

434 The role played by emigrated relatives in providing for
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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
602 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
167 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
484 of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the
533 peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
326 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken,
232 is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exercise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
● 431 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the
759 farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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wife got her reward in presents, gifts, and whiskey, but not in money. Money, however, would be proferred to the nurse.

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That the factor of payment in money should be crucial is really the cloak of the set of dispositions arising from habitual relations. In the local community the handy man is not paid, since, like "friends" and neighbors, he is one of themselves. Since he is one of the countrymen, he is caught within the system of much the same habitual relations of reciprocal service and mutual aid which make up cooring in agriculture.

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To see this point, we must describe the action of the local community in respect to the work to be done once again. Cooring is a form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. One old fellow described it aptly when he said that it meant that for a day of work given you would receive a day in return. We have already seen its connection with familism and the extended family. But besides cooring, there was another form of the custom known as *meitheal* (mihil). The word *comhair* (coor) referred to the reciprocity, the word *meitheal* to the band of men and teams acting together to perform a task. On various occasions when work beyond the capacity of cooring families was to be done, a *meitheal* of men or women or horses could be made up.

As described by the old people who still remember its heyday, the *meitheal* rested on a foundation slightly different from the reciprocity of cooring. The work was done by a gang of local persons got up for the purpose through the wish and custom of the local inhabitants, but without expectancy of individual return in like measure.

Bands of men and women were got up in rural communities by *meitheal* for the following purposes, of which the authors heard record:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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market areas are the areas of effective, habitual relationship among farmers. They are definable only in terms of social relations made up of the acts of specific local persons. Such relations differ in duration and the frequency of the events making them up. Change such relations and geography is changed. For a human setting geography is merely the locus of relationship. The system of distribution that orders space in rural Ireland functions to do so within a system of social relations, which we have called familism. 438 484 571

It is not surprising that the relationships existing between the small farmers and their local distributing agencies go farther by far than economic acts of barter, purchase, and sale. The country crossroad shopkeepers, especially, win very special status in rural communities out of these relationships. In Ireland and in Clare shopkeeping is predominantly an urban and small-town trade. Yet shops are numerous and important in the country districts, and a word must be said of them. 444 571

In typical western rural communities the smallest and poorest of the crossroad shops, serving the minutest areas, are ordinary cottages or farmhouses. The slightest alteration has sufficed to turn one of the rooms into an emporium where makeshift till, counter, and shelves carry little more than tobacco, matches, oil, and a few sweets and small sundries. 444

Such a shop is usually run by a woman, who subsists upon it and a plot of land or garden. She is often a widow, or the wife of a local tradesman. In many cases the little shop is the local post office as well, and a salary from the state contributes to the owner's upkeep. Such a shop is sometimes, too, a local gathering place for the boys, in the way the local smithy once was such a gathering place. The boys get their fags here. It is encumbent upon the woman who keeps the shop to make them presents at Christmas time, in recognition of their custom. Everyone agrees that the woman [205] [431]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

A good deal of skill was required and "the contestants were hindered by the unkind jokes of their friends. When the cailleach was eventually "stretched" or "cut and dead," she was "waked," carried into the house or barn, and generally kept until the following year." To quote Mr. Paterson once more, "Sometimes a party followed the ceremony, at which it was usual for the boys and girls to wear harvest knots." I illustrate two examples of knots, one with the ears left on, which is done in three plait, and the other the more common two-straw pattern (Fig. 114). It has been claimed that the

Fig. 114.

latter form is a late introduction from England, but it is known that the first type was worn by girls, in their hair, and the second by boys. They were often made before the actual cutting of the corn and are not necessarily associated with the ceremony of the last sheaf. Mr. Paterson tells me that in Armagh they used to be exchanged between the sexes as a token of admiration or love.

Finally we must not forget the countless superstitious beliefs connected with birds and trees, with water beasts, and

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FIXED FESTIVALS

527 The May Festival, the Gaelic Beltane, remained almost untouched by Christianity, and an astonishingly rich growth of magic beliefs and superstitious customs accumulated around it. They were concerned with the safety of the familiar things which supported life, and especially the milk cows whose 'whitemeats' were to provide the main food-supply until harvest came round once more. It was a matter of pride to have a last formal dish of stirabout on May Day, 'for if they can hold out so well with bread they can do well enough . . . for then milk becomes plenty, and butter, new cheese, and curds and shamrocks are the food of the meaner sort all this season'.[1] It was considered [431] most unlucky and unwise to give away salt, water or fire on May Day lest the luck and 'profit' of the farm went with the gifts. Witches and fairies were unusually active at this time, and [776] many tales are told of the wiles they adopted to outwit the unwary and gain admission to house or byre to do their mischief. It was a wise precaution to pour milk on the threshold, or at the roots of a fairy thorn, and the many protective charms against the stealing of cattle and milk were augmented by others special to the occasion. 'On May Eve the peasantry used to drive all their cattle into old raths and forts thought to be much frequented by the fairies, bleed them, taste their blood, and pour the remainder on the earth'.[2] It was said that the ghosts of cattle that had been lost could be seen in such places.

527 Portents, prognostications and protection were sought in the
824 familiar flowers of field and hedgerow, in the weeds and shrubs
751 which had followed in man's footsteps and were associated with his secular struggle for survival, especially in those that carried the promise of butter in their golden cups and a free flow of milk in their bounteous white blossom. May flowers, primroses and gorse gathered before sunrise were scattered on the threshold of the house and garlands of 'Summer', as the flowers were called, were hung on the doorposts and even tied to the cows' tails. In the Antrim Glens the mayflowers were crushed to provide a juice with which the cows' udders were washed, and elsewhere buttercups were used for the purpose. Cow dung, if less hygienic, had similar protective power, presumably in

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.
[2] *U.J.A.* 3 (1855), 165.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness 277 226
of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct
mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar [192]
tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as
Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the
crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should
leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this
superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and,
we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always
be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne [502]
'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour,
and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two
boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a
Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you
a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for
the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to
sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to
leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made [431]
they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat
and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen
clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the
fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to
steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The
long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the
first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first
fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh- 825
water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most 312
part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of
them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, 234
and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are 825
peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these
unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new
venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should
be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is
attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 52.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3]S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

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The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

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The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance • [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of
343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of
621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

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Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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796 527 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is [574] to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [521] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
198 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
776 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid	She is deaf and
Dressed in white.	She is dumb.
Give her something	For God's sake,
For the night.	Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
• 431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
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May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
796 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
776 roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[822] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[778] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to
[233] attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the [609]
influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual [124]
phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag 797
every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests 793
(usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers [776]
with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" [783]
to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme [577]
is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is [781]
displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through 861
instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and 155
unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and 855
affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested [561]
in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to [856]
supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct [864]
or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of [863]
either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among 858
siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments 562
of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, [593]
and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from [872]
school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further 562
separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the [794]
four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer [858]
months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and [609]
women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels [832]
and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of [154]
sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals 204
found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality 831
of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to
whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only 124
to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could 831
855

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 178 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be 777
thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be 543
tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair [885]
that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which [538]
raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with 437
success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over 443
some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the 432●
fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a [558]
woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of 443
the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable [439]
export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

241 463 much of the land is useless. Again, a farm small in area might be exclusively devoted to the sort of economy which is usually found on very large farms. In any single case, statistical generalities do not hold, of course. But in the large kind of correlation which a count of varying factors affords, bulk correspondences turn up with complete regularity.

241 463 162 The course by which this conclusion is reached takes one through the devious labyrinth of Free State Government statistical abstracts. In 1926, the last census year before the authors' field work was undertaken, the numbers living in country districts, "outside villages and towns with 200 or more population," made up 63 per cent of the Free State's population of almost 3,000,000. They were 1,815,496. Of the 1,307,662 classed as "occupied persons 12 years of age and over" for the whole Free State, 672,129, or 51 per cent, were engaged in agriculture. Any attempt, then, to understand the human setting of Irish farming involves an inquiry into the forces motivating the lives of well over half the country's people.

241 433 In 1926 this agricultural population produced a total output valued at £64,757,000. Industry in Ireland produced goods to the value of only a little over half that figure (£34,000,000 net output).

231 433 In the agricultural output of that year, the proportions of the various products indicate the character of the agriculture. Foodstuffs, with livestock products among them, made up the bulk of the output. Milk products accounted for £13,600,000; cattle, exported alive or slaughtered within the country, accounted for another £13,800,000. Pigs and eggs made up £9,800,000 and £6,690,000 respectively. Other livestock such as poultry, sheep, and horses accounted for the rest, in that order of importance. Wool and sundry items such as honey brought in a mere £700,000. All of these, the total output of livestock, reached a value of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

£50,555,000. The figures illustrate the preponderant importance of livestock and particularly cattle and pigs in Irish economy.

The remaining £14,000,000 was made up of crops and turf, the latter alone accounting for £5,938,000. Among the crops, potatoes came first, with a value for the year of £3,786,000. Oats, cabbage, and barley accounted for about £900,000 each; and there were a few other items of smaller values, the largest of which was fruit at £466,000.

These figures of the agricultural products rather underestimate the amount of tillage products raised. In the words of the Census Report, they "do not include any part of the produce which was used for further agricultural production in the Saorstat whether that part was used on the farm on which produced or sold by one farmer to another — e.g. milk fed to calves, potatoes fed to pigs, hay, turnips, mangels fed to cattle, corn used for seed, horses used for farm work." [1]

Within this generality of the monetary value of the goods produced, one can begin to take account of the wide difference of the sizes of the holdings engaged in this agricultural production. A glance at the figure illustrating this kind of economy by relative size of acreage (Fig. 1) will bring the matter out.

The agricultural community carried on this production upon farms of very widely different character. Holdings range in size from one acre or less to 500 or more. Those under 30 acres comprise 23 per cent of the total acreage of agricultural land in the Saorstat, those of 30–50, 17 per cent; those of 50–100, 24 per cent; and those of 100–200, 19 per cent. Farms larger than 200 acres cover only 16 per cent of agricultural land.

In general, the smaller ones practice the more generalized economy, their production being markedly different from

[1] *Agricultural Output of Saorstat Eireann, 1926–27* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

ports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

Of these exports, of course, cattle were the most valuable item and represented the great export staple. They were likewise the crop to which most other produce could be devoted when not used as human food. That this kind of conversion of other stuffs into cattle could take place is to be seen in the figures for milk. Though the Free State produced in the year in question a total of 589,000,000 gallons of milk, including both whole milk and butter, comparing favorably with such an output as Switzerland's yearly 528,000,000 in 1923, only 43 per cent of it was exported, while in Switzerland the export was 67 per cent of the Swiss total.

The figures for exports introduce a new factor of difference between the holdings of large and small size and their populations. Small holdings do not share equally with large holdings either in the consumption of agricultural produce or in its export. In both consumption and export commerce in the Free State, small holders and large holders play distinct roles.

Taking the first of these considerations, the figures for consumption reveal the difference. The estimated human consumption of whole milk (as milk) was some 90,000,000 gallons, according to the statistical record of the year 1928,[17] of which 70,000,000 gallons were consumed by agriculturalists and 20,000,000 by the remainder of the population. It was estimated that on the farms 38 gallons were consumed yearly per person. But that is the figure for all farms. There is a considerable difference here between types of farms.

Thus, in this case, on farms less than 50 acres only 36 gallons per person per annum were consumed, it was estimated, while on farms of over 50 acres, the consumption was 42 gallons. In Munster, the chief milk-producing province,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER XII

Occupation and Status

433 COUNTY CLARE, like other more westerly Irish counties agricultural in outlook, presents a picture in which there is little industrial activity at all, comparatively speaking, other than that involved in agriculture, trading in market towns, and administration and communication. The fact holds pretty generally for the whole of the south of Ireland.[1] Whether the inhabitants like it or not, Ireland has long been peripheral to the huge English industrial centers. It has been little more than a market and a source of foodstuffs. A western region like Clare has been nothing more. Ireland was called not very long ago "England's bread basket." But we have already seen, where economic matters have come up, that such a view of her is a bit astigmatic. Ireland was her own bread basket first, long before she was anything else.

288 178 In rural Ireland outside the large cities, other industrial activity than that involved in agriculture is merely a matter of supply and service, as far as the country people are concerned. The market towns, with their fairs, their shops, their banks, and their artisans and laborers, fill functions entirely distributive in nature.

This has not always been the situation. In 1810 the economist Wakefield found domestic woolen manufacture

[1] At the time of the authors' study the De Valera government's program of industrialization had hardly begun.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

288 Otway[3] describes the weavers of Drogheda in 1840 subsisting on conacre gardens (plots hired without right other than to the current crop) in circumstances of dire poverty.
[427]

433 O'Brien sums up his *Economic History* by concluding that the result of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century was that Ireland abandoned all pretense of being an industrial country and came to rely on agriculture to a greater extent than at any time formerly and even than in the eighteenth century. The accounts of Ireland at the time of the famine and after it bear him out. They show a very great lack of any kind of industrial activity other than agriculture.
178

463 The petty crafts of the countryside, which never gave any promise of reaching industrial proportions as those in the town centers might have, suffered a similar decline. But with them the decline seems to have come later and to have been part of the general change brought by the industrial revolution. All the supply crafts of the countryside have now come to be concentrated in the market towns. Nevertheless, through western regions, at least, local craftsmen, often with garden plots to help them eke out a living, seem to have long continued to be part of the local scene. In the novels of Carleton written just before and after the famine, many local shoemakers, cobblers, weavers, carpenters, smiths, coopers, nailers, and other followers of small trades appear. Upon them, the agricultural population depended for much of its tools and goods for local consumption. It is impossible to determine now how many of these were rural, since censuses of occupations before 1926 do not distinguish occupations in towns from those in country districts. But these men were part of the generally greater proportions of country dwellers before the rise of towns and the opening up of the railroads during the last century.
178

[3] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (Dublin: W. Curry, Jr., & Company, 1839).

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(c)]

121 living rarely encountered in the modern world. As will be shown later, however, the island people maintain their simple but not uncomfortable way of living only by help from outside: if [433] one believes that every inhabited area must make its economic contribution to the state, Inishbofin is a debtor on a considerable scale.

"A small and dwindling population 167 maintain a precarious existence on the 657 Atlantic fringe of our industrial society and present upon the whole an aspect of decline and, in some parts, of dereliction." In these words the Scottish crofting report[1] names a problem, com- [659] mon alike to the Atlantic fringe of Ireland and of Scotland, which was investigated by two Congested Districts Boards, in Ireland from 1891–1923[2] and in Scotland from 1897–1911[3]; in both countries the powers of these boards were transferred to the general administration of agricultural affairs. One by one the islands off the west coast of Ireland are being abandoned[4] but on Inishbofin this prospect does not seem immediate: past and present government assistance has resulted in a planned

[1] Department of Agriculture for Scotland, [113] Report of the Commission of enquiry into crofting conditions. H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 1954, Cmd. 9091, para. 281, p. 87.

[2] For a general treatment, T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 23, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[3] Cmd. 9091, 1954, para. 265, p. 81.

[4] T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 120, 1954, p. 332.

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
167 or—in comparatively few instances—by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[6] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[6] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433 assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124] guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462 it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178 tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857 household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462 round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252] planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241] caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231] clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286] for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294] months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437] livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226] than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178] and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222] than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482] of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561] complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178] women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178 ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461 benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561 Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

size from fourths to quarter-acres, located along the quarter that his community fronts. As a result of past inheritance and purchase, however, five Castle villagers own plots in one or two other quarters, as do five High and two Low villagers. Before field building commenced, the most extensive and fertile soils were found on the terraces; shallow and less widespread soils were situated just south of the terrace crest, while the back of the island was, and still is, mostly limestone pavement. Landholders originally were assigned equal acreage in each of these three areas, so that no one would have an advantage over his neighbors, and this pattern still predominates. The quarters are separated from one another by high, thick stone fences which run almost the length of Inis Beag, and, from west to east, they are known as Quarter of the *Phoillín* (derivation unknown), Quarter of the Ridge of Huts (after an ancient *clochán* settlement behind High Village), Quarter of the Castle, and Quarter of the Lake; they embrace, respectively, 271, 261, 240, and 263 acres.

Fifty-nine of the 71 householders in Inis Beag hold or own land, and one of these is an absentee holder. If an individual possesses four or fewer acres, he is regarded as landless—"a man of few gardens"—and 11 men are so designated. Two as yet unresolved disputes over the possession of land when resolved will add two other householders to the landless category, unless the property is divided in some manner among all four litigants by the Irish Land Commission. The folk prefer to rent rather than to own land, so that the commission will supervise matters relating to inheritance "fairly" and with little cost to the litigants should a dispute arise. The average sized Inis Beag holding is 15.7 acres, or approximately a croggery, and 25 islanders hold this amount of land; in addition, one person has 40 acres, three 32 acres, one 28 acres, eight 24 acres, eight 20 acres, four 12 acres, and nine 8 acres. Below is a chart summing up ownership data by village:

	Landholders and Owners	*Landless Householders*	*Average Sized Holding (in acres)*
Low Village	17	9	11.0
High Village	14	1	18.2
Castle Village	15	2	19.0
Terrace Village	13	1	16.4

The disproportionate number of landless persons in Low are, for the most part, either descendants of fisherfolk who centered in that community in earlier times and did not possess land, or siblings of landholders who chose not to emigrate. They support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing shops, and working for the government, among other pursuits.

Farming

There is neither legendary nor historical evidence of when soil building commenced in Inis Beag, but the process is an archaic one and is practiced in other communities along the Atlantic seaboard where appropriate seaweeds are available. Today, between 45 and 50 percent of the land surface of the island is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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[482]

Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[436] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce, under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the
[438] agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[439] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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343
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333
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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent 434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts 437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 118 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [231] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [226] eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [311] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [654] fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [241] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the [231] subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

443 434 [501] [295] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [438] [659] [437] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 [502] [433] [322] [184] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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421
422 valuable commodities. Vessels which have run aground in the past have been
[178] stripped, and in 1960 a portion of the stricken freighter's cargo—namely Scotch
[722] whiskey, yarn, boiler pipes, toilet fixtures, sacks, shoes, and other goods—was
[432] obtained by the folk under the law of wrack. The importance and tenacity of the law were attested by the fact that "salvaging" was continued in the face of opposition from ship owners, insurance representatives, customs officials, visiting police, and even the imprecations of curate and parish priest.

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

433
434
226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip, ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
674 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

593 daughters with two hundred pound fortunes, settled three sons
578 and a daughter with her husband in each of the farms. Pat him-
428 self, the eldest, now about eighty, got the largest farm but not the one he wanted. He has been warring with his brothers and his neighbors ever since. He held out against his father for five years, refusing to marry and take his farm. In Pat's youth, land agitation and reform had not yet prevented subdivision and acquiring of new farms by a successful tenant. Pat on his fifty-acre mountain farm has married off a daughter locally at three hundred pounds and sent two sons out to America. Another daughter works in England. Two sons, aged forty-three and thirty-six, are at home and Pat hasn't made up his mind yet which one shall get the land.

593 The examples, various as they are, need not be multiplied.
167 The sons and daughter who are not to be portioned at home, in the words of the Luogh residents, "must travel." To that end both the savings of the family, created through their united efforts under the headship of father and mother, and
[583] the incoming dowry, are devoted. In Luogh there had been only four marriages in ten years; two of them were the usual farm-transferring matches, one a returned emigrant who married a boyhood sweetheart and bought a farm, and one a widower who took a second wife and a second fortune. An old woman described the situation: "There aren't any matches nowadays. Nobody has a fortune to give his daugh-
[454] ter and the young men must travel." Yet the woman who lamented this state of affairs was carefully husbanding half crowns for her baby granddaughter's fortune.

593 Nevertheless this necessary dispersal of the members of
167 the family at its reorganization does not ordinarily destroy
457 the family ties. The bonds of affection and family obligation still hold. If they have emigrated, the family members send
434 back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces and brothers and sisters left at home. A great many farms, especially in West and North Clare, are partially supported by Christmas gifts from Americans and other exiles. It is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

593 unfortunate that the authors have not statements of the
167 amount of these annual remittances for local districts. The
457 total for Ireland, however, is enormous. There is a marked
434 tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself, sons and daughters of each generation going out to join the members of the last. One district round Cross to the west of Carrigaholt, a little settlement on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, said locally to be supported by sons in the Shanghai police force. The first to go became chief of police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the force have gone to men of Cross.

167 The authors had the opportunity of examining some of the family setting in which emigrant remittances operate in Luogh. There the greatest number of emigrants had gone out to Boston. In one family, there was a succession of nephews and nieces following uncles and aunts from the same farmhouse for four generations. In four recent cases Luogh boys and girls had married one another in Boston. In two more they had married in Ireland and emigrated together.

434 Remittances from sons and daughters arrive around
593 Christmas. In one family the farmer's wife had written
431 to children in America saying that the family were trying to acquire an addition to their holding from the Land Commission. The children sent them the purchase price. In this case the daughter sent her regular Christmas remittance as well. When she was admonished by her parents for such generosity, she wrote: "I would think it wasn't Christmas and I hadn't any father and mother if I didn't send them something."

[527] Her mention of the festival in the same breath with her parents is understandable when it is realized that Christmas is the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland.

434 The role played by emigrated relatives in providing for
593

434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
602 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
167 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
484 of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the
533 peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 also send one upon many false scents. One must use them with proper care. In such a case as this, care consists in discovering correlations and fitting them into wholes. For example, one learns little or nothing of various kinds of human beings if one counts only single characteristics. On the other hand, if one counts a wide variety of numerable features and finds one human group distinguishing itself again and again within this wide variety, one is justified in thinking one is dealing with a class of which the individuals are instances.

So it is with the economic data in the Irish records. The small farmers do appear as a true category. They reveal themselves in the cold figures as a class with habits of life of its own, different in kind and in quantitative expression from all others.

Rather than delay over the reasoning which leads to this conclusion, I should prefer to recite the distinguishing marks in the economic sphere.

231 First, it is clear that the small farmers practise
241 a type of agriculture all their own. Their products
434 differ widely from those of the large farmers, some-
437 times in kind, sometimes in proportion. The large farmer is a cattleman, a stockman. The small farmer is typically what we have come to call in this country 'a subsistence farmer'. Both depend primarily upon livestock, for Ireland is a country of grass and pasturage, depending less upon tillage than any other European land. But their economies

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

are quite distinct. The small farmer cultivates a 231
'garden' of oats, rye, potatoes, cabbage and tur- 241
nips, and devotes his pasture and the hay of his 434
fields to milch cattle. He sells his cows' increase 437
each year. He keeps large numbers of hens and a few pigs. But the milch cow is the centre round which this economy revolves. Nearly all he raises he consumes at home; his family and his farm animals take the greater part of his produce. It is only his surplus and his annual crop of calves which break out of the circle of subsistence and in so doing bring him the only monetary income he receives.

In all this he differs considerably from the big farmer, particularly the so-called 'rancher' of Irish agriculture. The big farmer is primarily a producer of beef. He concentrates upon the production of fat cattle; he depends upon a monetary market in which to dispose of his fattened stock. Upon this market he relies for the supplies which feed himself and his labourers. If he is wealthier and much more of a man of business, he is also nearly entirely dependent upon the whims of price and demand.

Naturally, then, the small farmer and big farmer play quite distinct roles in the economics of exchange, distribution and commerce. The small farmer disposes of his cattle, usually calves of his own breeding, quite differently. He sells this surplus to the dealer, the middleman, the big farmer.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

231 As calves grow up they move from the small farm
241 to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them
434 until they are ready for the English table. Con-
437 sequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

With all this, it is natural that the small farmers
262 should be different consumers from the rest.
184 They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

present the one staple which he must buy off the 262
farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and 184
the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for 184
mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are 241
cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs 412
again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their 184
lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer- 241
owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the 464
owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of 241
peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in 231
a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is 434
that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

231 which beasts feed him in their turn. He need go
241 to town only for clothing and sundries, for flour
434 and tea, and to sell at the fairs the calves and yearlings which bring in his principal monetary income and provide thus for whatever he cannot produce at home. These cattle go to big farmers, ranchers and shippers; and with the sale his participation in trade and commerce, in 'business', is finished except for his account with the shopkeeper (and in late years, the creamery). As you can well imagine, it is a livelihood little connected with the outside world, and now that agrarian reform has made him full owner of his holding, it is little open to disturbance from the outside.

This is the external view of the small farm. It is the view that usually satisfies the economist. But if one probes deeper and looks at the small farmer's livelihood from within, a fuller picture appears.

241 That the small farmer is a family man even at
593 work is important for the study of human be-
[461] haviour. Eight out of ten people working in agriculture in Ireland work not for wages and salaries but by virtue of their family relationship. The work a man does and the directions he gives and receives take form within a social group. That fact yields an opportunity for the anthropologist. Here, in a modern country, is an economy in which there are other controls on labour than those we know—money, contracts, individual profit. To under-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 593 888 Where the transition is smooth, father and son continue to work together. One family in Luogh, for example, was regarded as a model of family harmony. It was made up of a young man and his wife and two children and the old couple. But the old man worked by his side, and the son deferred to his judgment. The greatest compliment the neighbours had for them was this: "Look at the Careys; old Johnny gives his boy a hand in everything. You wouldn't know which one has the land."

182 745 593 888 The introduction of the old-age pension has facilitated this transfer. Originally designed for the support of the aged in an industrial population in England, it has speedily woven itself into the fabric of Irish rural life. Nowadays, the farmer can turn over his land at the age of seventy. In doing so, he divests himself of his property which stands in the way of his receiving the pension. One countryman of my acquaintance sang the praises of the pension [434] in no uncertain terms. His words show clearly that, even with this new source of income at his disposal, the old, abdicating farm father still forms part of the family economic unit. "To have old people in the house", he said, "is a great blessing in these times, because if you have one it means ten bob a week and if you have two it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'Donoghue (a neighbour) and every Friday he will go to Corofin to collect his ten bob. He may buy a couple of bottles of porter but he'll spend the

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands. 444

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. 465

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50. 462 [434]

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, generally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The marriages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family. 871 584 585 591

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding, 585 [115]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(B)]

121 IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the
[167] availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated districts of the country, an island off the
● [434] west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly col-
114 lected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of
124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
[578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer
[231] told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
167 or—in comparatively few instances—by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

Home spinning and weaving of fab-
291 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was
438 noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[8] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[8] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[20]

Second, emigration has been of vast 167 benefit to the community; money comes 434 in to most of the homes from America[21] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

Third, it is regrettable that the lack 443 of commercial facilities means that eggs, 489 poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [20] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only
[804] three barrels a week in winter. The standard content of a barrel is 256 pints.
[291] [21] Many of the children are dressed in American clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent
434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts
437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils
[311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and
178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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291 underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as
[513] the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits
[515] them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income
• 434 instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by
[501] four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the
[298] coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man.
[294] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are
[438] made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold
[457] to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced.
[437] Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west
[171] coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as
[174] the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of
[178] varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-
501 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single
502 tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom
[502] three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the
[433] crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at
[322] work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally,
[184] and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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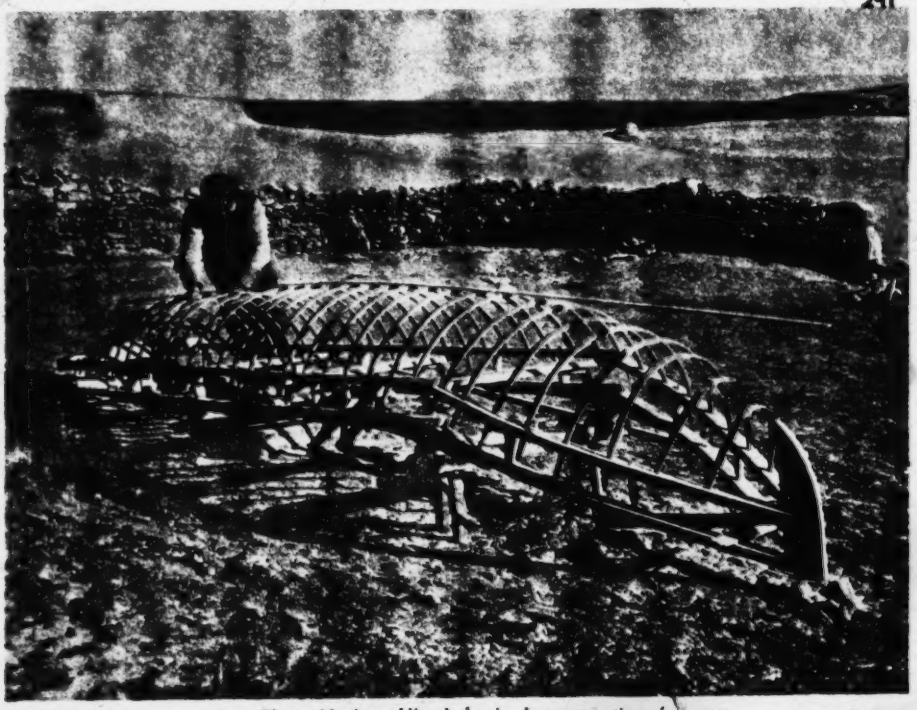

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

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folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

[184]
[434]

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

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The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip, ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
674 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization 582
for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 per- 161
sons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to
497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when
my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern 168
over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another
generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands.
Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phe- 167
nomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes 182
pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also 582
stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal 589
causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal
factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital.
Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the [434]
island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and
the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the [657]
increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and
taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for
the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, [434]
despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this
fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past [183]
century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders [178]
in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to [582]
leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise
their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling [831]
population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secu-
lar "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons 181
for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a 183
suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because 829
it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created
a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate
to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a 167
suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis 182
[181]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:— 162 592

Islands.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
Inishbofin, .	2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark, .	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, . .	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males. 162 167

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons. [142]

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6s. A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled 423 311 [495]

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

423 311 to give by the kindness of the proprietor, Cyril Allies, Esq., J.P. :—

Townland.	Area.	Commonage.
	A. R. P.	A. R. P.
Westquarter, ...	493 3 32	349 2 8
Fawnmore, ...	194 1 14	116 1 15
Middlequarter, ...	612 2 0	375 3 9
Knock, ...	366 1 9	161 3 39
Cloonamore, ...	645 1 1	424 3 29
Inishshark, ...	581 1 12	435 3 12
Islets, ...	257 3 35	—
Total, ...	3151 3 1	1864 1 32

Taking the available area at 930 acres, and the number of families at 215, the average size of a holding per house is 4·3 acres, with a [435] corresponding average valuation of £2 13*s*. The size of a holding, [427] however, varies from 1A. 3R., at a rent of 14*s*. 6*d*., to 56 acres, at £7. Out of 127, the particulars of which were furnished me by Mr. Allies, there were :—

3	holdings of	1	acre and under	2	acres.
21	,,	2	,,	3	,,
17	,,	3	,,	4	,,
8	,,	4	,,	5	,,
23	,,	5	,,	6	,,
15	,,	6	,,	7	,,
12	,,	7	,,	8	,,
17	,,	8	,,	10	,,
5	,,	10	,,	13	,,
4	,,	13	,,	18	,,
1	holding of	25	acres		
1	,,	56	,,		

It will be observed that most of the holdings in this list are of very small size, only eleven being more than ten acres in extent, and 59 or 46·5 per cent. being under 5 acres.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at, or under, £2. 423 311 [435]

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inishshark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among themselves, but many of the children and young people have little or no acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark, which is less in communication with the outer world than Inishbofin. 191

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. were illiterate :— 212 162

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160 females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65 females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inishbofin.

(D.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were— 145 162

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
" 80 " 85, 5 males and 14 females,
" 85 " 90, 4 " 0 "

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

161 The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and outbuildings was as follows in 1891 :—

Locality.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
The Mullet, .	23,333 1 27	3757	1893	1864	600	532
N. Inishkea, .	464 1 32	126	60	66	21	4
S. Inishkea, .	344 3 19	180	92	88	32	33
23 Islets, . .	350 0 17	48	22	26	10	27
Portacloy, .	7845 1 1	299	148	151	54	29
Totals, . . .	32,338 0 6	410	2215	2195	717 7	625

423 (B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area of the district is that of
311 Kilmore, being 29,492 acres, and the three townlands forming the Portacloy district, 7,845 acres.

The total valuation of Kilmore is £4,055 18*s.*, and of Portacloy
[435] £163 7*s.*

There is very little commonage in the Mullet, but about Portacloy there is a good deal.

The holdings are not large, averaging about 4½ or 5 acres at a
[427] rental of about £3 10*s.* in the Mullet, and about £2 10*s.* in "the mountains." There is considerable variation, however, as there are some farms of good size, but the majority are small.

In 1891 there were, in Kilmore, 210 holdings of between £4 and £10 valuation, 305 of £2 and under £4, and no less than 252 at, or under, £2 valuation.

The land is mostly held now at judicial rentals (the people having early taken advantage of the Land Act of 1881), but sixty years ago the greater part of the land was held in common, and the mode of
175 tenure is thus described by Knight :—"In the whole of the peninsula there are few farms divided . . . the usual system being commonage both in tillage and pasture. In tillage, lots are cast every third year for the number of ridges each person is entitled to after the usual rotation is over. Potatoes the first year, then barley or oats, after which new lots must be cast for new potato ground. The holdings are by sums or collops, which originally meant the number

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive,
372 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
[435] and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222 minutely fragmented appearance of land held in rundale. Rights
387 of access, by narrow lanes between the beds, were often dis-
423 puted, and there were occasions for fights when as many as a
[578] hundred carts from forty townlands might converge on Mill Bay at low tide. I first heard of the seaweed beds from an Air Force pilot who brought me air photographs of what he thought was submerged farmland: the little rectangular fields of Mourne seemed to march out beneath the sea.[1] In fact they were necessary adjuncts to the arable land, and the rents of up to twenty pounds an acre were often higher than those paid for the fields of coarse sand and gravel which the wrack enriched. An auctioneer told me he had sold a wrackbed of one Irish acre for
[435] £145 not many years ago. Nearly all of the several hundred farmers who had wrack rights here held two or three beds, and each man's plans were scattered so that he had different kinds of weed growing on them: 'knob wrack' close inshore, then 'bladder wrack' and farther out still the 'lazy wrack' whose fronds are submerged at high water even at neaps and which therefore grows faster than the other species.

222 The crop was harvested with knives and sickles between March and June, the bare-footed reapers at the same time lifting, turning and re-setting the heavy boulders which tend to get buried in the sand. Carts too are liable to sink, and when the going is too soft the weed is rafted ashore. It is allowed to float on the incoming tide and a boat dragging a rope pulls the
[501] load together and tows it ashore. Very large rafts, secured by a rope of seaweed, used to be floated ashore on the tide in Mayo. Patrick Knight, describing Ballycroy about 1830, observed that the steersman, armed with a pole, might be seen 'sitting on the heap, roasting his potatoes and shellfish'.[2]

222 The great bulk of the wrack taken all round the coast for
423 manure was driftweed thrown up during storms, but the supply was often supplemented by cutting or pulling weed from the rocks, and in some places there were complicated methods of regulating and distributing the harvest. On a stretch of coast familiar to me in south Down one can pick out strips running out into the sea, demarcated by marked boulders. They were

[1] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 15.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 99.

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Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[436] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce, under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the
[438] agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[439] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [231] [226] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [311] eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [654] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [241] fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [231] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960 1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe. the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 lies began to save the hay, mowing it, letting it dry, and
246 stacking it as soon as possible, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six to eight foot haycocks. After several weeks it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. There was a great deal of interest and much comment back and forth over the progress of the various families, the probable weather, and the yield of the various meadows. The men seemed to feel a general rivalry to do their work
[407] well and quickly. About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows as quickly as possible, working from earliest morning as long as light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and with that of boys from the families who had no machines of their own. At each subsequent stage of the harvesting, a boy or young man not a member of the family whose meadow was being worked could be seen giving his labor in aid; he took his place at meals during the day.

The mowing done, the farmer then took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed the meadows belonging to his friend. In one instance a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others; in another, of two. Certain meadows were full-handed enough not to require extra hands, and in five cases no help was given, though the mowing and stacking took a very long time with them
[589 in comparison to the others, and they were obviously short-
609] handed. Two of these were bachelors who lived alone, and two more were the "strangers." Two other families had insufficient meadow of their own and were forced to buy
[437] hay on the so-called "conacre" system (buying the hay as it stands and reaping it oneself within a stipulated time).

Here then was an example of an important agricultural operation undertaken by the local community in which provision was made (except in five or six cases) for effective coöperation over and above the usual family economy. This is not an isolated instance; in Luogh it has been the practice

463 The country people distinguish between these men who are handy men and have had no formal induction into their trade and those who are legally recognized as "tradesmen." But the line of formal distinction is thin, and more recognized in the abstract than in the concrete. Thus in the story of the development of one local mason, one can see that the difference lies rather more in the kind of remuneration than anything else. One farmer's account of the "tradesmen" of his knowledge led him on as follows:

> There are other men who are carpenters and masons who are handy men, but they usually work for pay because the job might take several days, and no neighbor could stay away from his work with a friend for that length of time. Donovan is a mason and he taught himself. He built his own house and several others. A man cannot build a house because he would not know how to do it. Donovan is a very intelligent man. He has a terrible head on him.

437 476 463 465 That the difference of remuneration is seized upon by countrymen as the distinguishing mark came to the authors' notice again and again. The handy man is the local resident who fits into the local pattern of courtesies, barter, gifts, as in the case of the butcher, described above, who got his reward in the shape of the meat shoved under his arm. In cooring, of course, one never pays. In any act of "friendship" and alliance in a familistic setting no formal remuneration of monetary payment is ever present. We have already seen that it is only at the crucial period of family reorganization, when the whole system of relations between members undergoes change, that any considerations of money enter the schedule of rural services and rewards. The same absence of money payment is the point of distinction here. It distinguishes the relations between the men of a local community and one of themselves who is "handy" through special experience from those between formal client and tradesman. Money payment is the mark of the outsider;

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.[9]

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

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The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

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Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

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[9] Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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443 conventional. How much, if anything, survives of medieval commerce in them and how much comes down from the days of the medieval Irish *aonach* is a matter for the historian. In ancient times the fair was a gathering for purposes much more widely embracing than exchange of produce. The *aonach* was often the occasion of a royal or chieftainly court, a bardic contest, and local games. Nothing of this remains today.

443 Cattle, horse, sheep, and pig fairs are fixed, habitual
424 occasions. Their dates and places of meeting are universal knowledge in the countryside. An extension of medieval English law has made most of them proprietary, making of the right to hold a fair a legal title to be bought and sold and charged for in the shape of tolls. But they are public occasions none the less.

443 The lore of fairs is an inexhaustible fund of information among the small farmers. Among them, indeed, the size of the local fairs is a matter of local pride. It is an index of the industry and wealth of the region. The state of prices is as much a clue to the fate of the local universe as the financial vagaries of Wall Street or the City reveal the destinies of the world.

443 All this is natural enough where fairs and local markets
462 represent the chief outlets for produce and the chief source of monetary income. As cattle are the chief concern of the
562 males of the family and source of ultimate success or failure for the family, so the cattle fair is the great testing ground for male prowess, skill, and intelligence. In the market place of the cattle fair, the male command of the family corporation and masculine representation of that corporation in the community makes public display of its stewardship. On this stage, the farmer can meet the outsider on his own terms and with his own weapons of shrewdness and experience.

437 The farmers criticize bitterly any departure from cus-
443 tomary procedure. Even though they complain that the fair

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation.

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers.

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance.

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities.

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the

443 morning. To dress, snatch a cup of tea, and bless himself
484 takes only a moment. Usually he has arranged for companionship, and he and his neighbors drive their beasts along the roads together. Company makes the night less lonely and the handling of the animals easier. Driving them is a skilled task against the dangers of the road, both natural and eerie. The men hope to reach the site of the fair before daybreak. They want to arrive in time to find a "good pitch," as they call it. They want to take their stand in the drawn-up lines of men and beasts where buyers are most likely to notice them. His pitch taken, each man stands over his beasts, ready for the inspection of buyers, careful that his beasts do not wander off or get mixed up with the others.

443 As dawn breaks, the buyers arrive. They are nearly always
438 cattle dealers and big farmers. Only occasionally are they local men. One can recognize them as they hurry about,
[291] businesslike, wearing trench coat, bowler, and leggings. The costume is practically a uniform with them, quite different from the drab coats and boots of the countrymen. They carry chalk or scissors and pencils and a notebook to mark the beasts of their choice and record their purchases.

In the good days of high prices, as during the World War, the buyers arrive even before dawn and buy by lantern light. All the good beasts of the fair may be gone by the time the sun comes up. On occasions of little demand, however, the buyers have time to look about carefully and make the exhaustive tests of quality that long experience has convinced them are the secret of commercial success.

443 The procedure of choice, bargaining, and sale is as un-
437 changing a ritual as any church provides. The buyer — dealer or farmer — strolls unconcernedly along the lines of farmers and their beasts. Here and there he greets an acquaintance. But he is appraising the animals all the while. Rigid custom forbids his breaking in on a bargain already

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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443 begun. He must find a farmer who is free for the moment.
437 Should he catch sight of an unoccupied owner of a likely animal, he crosses over to him and begins the business of the day. His first move is to ask the price, knowing well he will get one larger than the farmer really hopes to receive. This first exchange is merely the occasion for the closer inspection of the cattle and a notice to the other that a bargain is in process.

Such a move is a signal. As questions and offers pass between buyer and farmer, a crowd of bystanders soon collects. They offer suggestions, shout out commentaries, encourage one party or the other, contributing animatedly to the debate, which will eventually culminate in a sale at a price which instantly becomes the knowledge of buyers and sellers alike.

One of the bystanders almost invariably adopts a well-recognized role. He becomes an intermediary between buyer and seller. He turns all his energy, backed by the plaudits of the crowd, to the consummation of the sale. He may be a friend of either buyer or seller, brought in for his shrewdness or experience or skill, or he may be a wandering tinker in hopes of a commission from one or the other. He may even be only an interested bystander.

The intermediary is almost always a major factor in the transaction. He is the one who forges an agreement over the distrust and shyness of the farmer and the autocratic impatience of the buyer. All the parties are vociferous, the farmer in praise of his wares and the buyer in depreciation of them. The intermediary turns grandiose claims into laughter, wears down the resistance of the farmer by wit, and raises the offers of the buyer by appeals to fair dealing. Time and time again he will drag back a buyer who rushes off in well-feigned disgust at an outrageous demand or push forward the hand of a reluctant farmer to be seized by the buyer in the handclasp that marks completion of the sale.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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443 Amid the encouragements of the bystanders, he repeats the
437 old bargaining cries. He shouts, "Split the difference!" when taking-price and asking-price approach one another, and he wrings concessions from each party until agreement is reached. They end with a handshake between them. The sale is made.

If the buyer is ready to pay for his purchase on the spot, the older custom, all three parties step off the fair ground into any convenient near-by pub. There they celebrate the transaction at the expense of the buyer, the purchase money changes hands, and they make assurances all round. The seller turns back a "luck penny" out of the purchase price. This is a payment often as large as half a crown, depending upon the transaction, repaid to the buyer in token of good faith.

Custom is changing here. A large-scale dealer may have little time or inclination for such amenities. He may give the seller a ticket or slip of paper as his record of the transaction and arrange to see him later in the day. He stands, slip in hand, ready to receive payment in his turn. Later on, then, at the time arranged, the farmer takes his place with the others with whom the dealer has been dealing during the day. Even then the farmer usually gives back a luck penny, even though he knows the dealer may reckon it a reduction of price rather than a ceremonial gesture. For it is a traditional gesture of independence and equality on his part.

443 Fairs beginning at dawn are usually over by noon. By that time the farmers are clear that they must sell at a sacrifice or drive the beasts home unsold to wait for another day. If prices are good, eager buyers have snatched up everything except unsalable scrubs.

443 For the farmer this mart is more than a simple economic
437 exchange. The form of exchange is as important as the exchange itself. It is an instance of traditional behavior

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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on the part of the small farmers, supported by sanctions and sentiment. In the ritual of bargaining and exchange in the fair, many relationships are acted out: the relations between farmer and farmer; the relations between farmers and their sons and the boys of their kindred; the relations between farmers and persons from the outside world of big farms, business and trade, and the towns. Throughout the whole of the proceedings one can see all these get a periodic, ceremonial reiteration here. 443 437

The economic circumstances of the fair are only part of the picture the fair presents. The fair and market are almost the only sources of monetary income for the farmers. They are the chief occasions for realizing the labor of a year's agricultural work. Consequently they are also the traditional occasions for settling debts, for making payments on accounts with shopkeepers. They are also the occasion of stocking up with everything from boots and clothes to feed and manure. 443

Indeed the fairs are the chief occasions of commercial and monetary activity in the agricultural counties. They are periodic high points of local activity in which laborers and local government have as much interest as the farmers. They are great events at which the economy of the western and southern parts of Ireland gets its only general, public, and spectacular circulation of funds. Yet they have a ceremonial side equally vivid.

The lining up of the farmers and their sons before their cattle to await the inspection and commencement of bargaining we must not idly dismiss as a mere convenience in bringing cattle to the attention of the prospective buyer. Like the other conventions of conduct in the fair, it deserves a careful treatment. These conventions can be put under a common explanatory scheme with those of farm life. In the arrangements of events in the fairs there are new events among persons which follow the same course as in the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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443 daily life of the family members at home on the farm and in the rural community. But in this case there is a far different setting.

443 At a fair the dealers or buyers initiate transactions or ter-
437 minate the bargaining at will. They are free to choose both the cattle they shall buy and the farmers with whom they shall deal. This is the same organization of relations between farmers and outsiders as that which prevails in the local community. The efforts of the intermediary and the emotional connotations of the luck penny as well as the grumbles of the farmers fit into this pattern of social and economic relations. There is some antagonism here, of the farmers against the others, but the solidarities of the two parties carry their own check. Prices may be so low that the farmers refuse to sell. Buyers band together to force a low price on various occasions. Resentments are mutual and common enough. But the ceremonial survives. It is an enactment of the community relations of the small farmers. It will change only as those relations change. The familistic farmer stands for himself, and his community is built only on gossip, public opinion, and common values. His mechanism of economic exchange expresses his social order and the community it serves.

443 Beside the cattle fairs there are fairs for dealing in sheep, pigs, and horses. These take much the same form, their complexity and importance depending upon the importance of the animal sold. Sheep, for example, are not so important in farm economy as cattle. Neither do they command such high prices. Consequently, sheep fairs are less imposing affairs, often held in conjunction with cattle fairs. The conventions are the same as in the cattle fairs.

443 Horse fairs again are very similar. Because of the higher
437 value of the horse and the use of the horse for sport and ceremony among the upper classes, the horse fairs are less frequent than cattle fairs, but more elaborate. In the case of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

cattle, the farmer must usually drive the beasts he has sold to the station himself. In the case of horses, the buyer exercises a greater care. A deal is closed not only by the usual handclasps but by the change of halters as well. Horses are put through their paces very carefully, sometimes in secrecy off in a side field or down a dark street. The majority of horses are sold between farmers and destined for farm work, but there is always a strong atmosphere of riches and brilliant chance about the proceedings. Many are the tales of half-bred horses, picked up for a song, that have come to win all before them. 443 437

Since most of the fairs are legally proprietary, they are protected by law. In many cases the towns have bought out the rights to tolls from private families, finding them a welcome source of revenue. To safeguard these rights, action may be brought against illicit buyers and sellers. In practice, however, it is only in horse-dealing that the owners of the tolls exercise vigilance, since there the tolls are so great. All this contributes to the atmosphere of importance that surrounds the horse fairs. 443 424

Pigs are sold more frequently, especially as they represent a great deal shorter period of development. Every town has its bonham and pig market. Every Saturday may witness a few transactions complete with the same rituals of inspection, repartee, and bargaining, but there are times of greater activity as well. It is generally only in pig markets that women are to be seen at fairs. 443

The second chief occasions of economic exchange, which afford further examples of the ceremonial surrounding the small farmer's mechanisms of contact with the outside world, are the produce markets of the towns. In them similar enactments of family and community relations are to be seen.

Each market town has its weekly market day. The day is fixed so as not to conflict with that of any other near-by

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

443 In buying and selling in the town markets, bargaining
437 ritual is very much the same as in the fairs. Every seller
must negotiate for himself, but the luck penny is neglected.
462 The sexual division of labor on the farm is amply represented. The women stand over and bargain about their eggs, butter, and poultry. Men alone are to be seen dealing in pigs, lambs, wool, and corn. Yet it is not unusual to see a woman dealing for a sack of potatoes or for bonhams.

443 In all these transactions the usual ritual of bargaining
437 appears. It is customary, though in a curtailed and abbreviated form, in the purchasing that the small farmer does in the shops. It appears wherever persons of diverse allegiance are brought together in the life of the farmers. It appears, as we have seen, in the making of a match between two families. Like monetary payment for services, it figures only in the external relations of the farmers' groups. Indeed, it is the behavior characteristically connected with monetary payment.

Occasionally a small farmer buys from another in his own community, but the practice is rare. Goods change hands rather through the mechanisms of borrowing and gifts in the patterns of kinship and cooring. The difference of behavior must be referred to the different relationships.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 also send one upon many false scents. One must use them with proper care. In such a case as this, care consists in discovering correlations and fitting them into wholes. For example, one learns little or nothing of various kinds of human beings if one counts only single characteristics. On the other hand, if one counts a wide variety of numerable features and finds one human group distinguishing itself again and again within this wide variety, one is justified in thinking one is dealing with a class of which the individuals are instances.

So it is with the economic data in the Irish records. The small farmers do appear as a true category. They reveal themselves in the cold figures as a class with habits of life of its own, different in kind and in quantitative expression from all others.

Rather than delay over the reasoning which leads to this conclusion, I should prefer to recite the distinguishing marks in the economic sphere.

231 First, it is clear that the small farmers practise
241 a type of agriculture all their own. Their products
434 differ widely from those of the large farmers, some-
437 times in kind, sometimes in proportion. The large farmer is a cattleman, a stockman. The small farmer is typically what we have come to call in this country 'a subsistence farmer'. Both depend primarily upon livestock, for Ireland is a country of grass and pasturage, depending less upon tillage than any other European land. But their economies

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

are quite distinct. The small farmer cultivates a 231
'garden' of oats, rye, potatoes, cabbage and tur- 241
nips, and devotes his pasture and the hay of his 434
fields to milch cattle. He sells his cows' increase 437
each year. He keeps large numbers of hens and a few pigs. But the milch cow is the centre round which this economy revolves. Nearly all he raises he consumes at home; his family and his farm animals take the greater part of his produce. It is only his surplus and his annual crop of calves which break out of the circle of subsistence and in so doing bring him the only monetary income he receives.

In all this he differs considerably from the big farmer, particularly the so-called 'rancher' of Irish agriculture. The big farmer is primarily a producer of beef. He concentrates upon the production of fat cattle; he depends upon a monetary market in which to dispose of his fattened stock. Upon this market he relies for the supplies which feed himself and his labourers. If he is wealthier and much more of a man of business, he is also nearly entirely dependent upon the whims of price and demand.

Naturally, then, the small farmer and big farmer play quite distinct roles in the economics of exchange, distribution and commerce. The small farmer disposes of his cattle, usually calves of his own breeding, quite differently. He sells this surplus to the dealer, the middleman, the big farmer.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

231 As calves grow up they move from the small farm
241 to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them
434 until they are ready for the English table. Con-
437 sequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

With all this, it is natural that the small farmers
262 should be different consumers from the rest.
184 They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the grave-stones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or stirabout and milk. 264

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money. [439] [437]

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit distilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent. 273

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character. 291

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel. [439] [444]

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction. [443]

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[13] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever bought. As one of the islanders put it,
● 437 "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [13] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p. 206(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the 322
place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have 415
heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants [539]
a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the 323
country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when
bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-
vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the 172
climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more 326
reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits 415
and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly
prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the
special property of the head of the house and they seem to
have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They
were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the
ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his
rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent
place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest pre- 172
historic pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthen- 171
ware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a
pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is [323]
one of the indications of a common substratum in the early
civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels
simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have
continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know
that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in
Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older
custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the
Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a
vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitu-
tion of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent
Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide [487]
should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots,
as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched
on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they
seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set
over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

combined knife and drag found in Cornacht has three heavy 222
hooks attached to a strong sickle-shaped blade mounted on a 413
12-ft. pole (Fig. 73). Powerful long-handled scythes and great hand-rakes with teeth a foot long were used on the south coast. In Donegal the men would wield their long knives from curraghs while the women dragged the weed ashore.

In the Rosses of west Donegal around 1750 the rents were 222
paid in kelp: any surplus was bartered for 'the two luxuries, [427]
spirits and tobacco, enjoyed by men and women alike.'[1] For the lesser weeds growing in shallow water ordinary sickles [437]
were employed when the tide was low, but these species made inferior kelp. Yet in some areas, for example Strangford Lough, stones were planted on the shore to grow wrack for kelp burning: Arthur Young commented on this practice in 1776.[2] Old seaweed beds may be seen also in Lough Swilly, Clew Bay, Achill Sound and probably elsewhere.

Today the most remarkable area of cultivated weed is near 222
the mouth of Carlingford Lough in County Down, where at 387
low tide a wide stretch of mud and sand is exposed in Mill Bay. 423
It is grown solely to supply fertilizer for the potato crop. Wrack rights are mentioned in grants of land in County Down as far back as 1506, but the earliest reference I have found to the cultivated weed in Carlingford Lough is in a guidebook of 1846. As we have seen, however, Arthur Young refers to the growing of wrack for kelp-burning in Strangford Lough, and since the best species for kelp grow in deeper water the planting of seaweed beds is not likely to have originated with the kelp industry. Through the second half of last century some 1,100 beds, covering well over a square mile in area, were maintained in Mill Bay, and it was not until the depression between the two world wars that they began to be neglected. Today the use of wrack has almost entirely given way to artificial fertilizers, with a great easement of labour but a loss of annually renewed organic matter in the soil. The wrackbeds, or 'plans', are half-acre rectangles set with rows of boulders a foot or so in diameter, but many beds are subdivided into small 'cuts' for sub-letting, and the Estate Map showing the beds has the

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.
[2] A. Young, *Tour*, 1, 194.

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

443 One may readily see how this[1] came about, for these were the
437 times when the stock was gathered and sorted, and dues were paid to the overlords in cattle. In the ordinary business of the fair exchange and barter gave way in time to money transactions, but one has only to visit a cattle fair to sense that the noisy ritual of assessing values and the prolonged bargaining have come down from a time before the use of money was general. The vigorous hand-slapping by which bargains
[201] are sealed in tight-lipped silence could derive from the days when different languages were spoken at the fairs. Apart from the difference between English and Gaelic it should be remembered that in many districts pockets of non-Gaelic speech, perhaps even of non-Aryan tongues, survived well into the Christian era. Another interesting accompaniment of the con-
[777] cluded bargain is the piece of money, the luck penny, which the seller hands back to the purchaser as a gesture of independence when a price has finally been agreed on. Many a fight has begun because a buyer has been dissatisfied with the
[578] amount of his luck money. Similar bargaining took place when a servant was being hired for the half year, and he received his earles or earnest money as a sign that the contract was concluded, handing over to his employer his bundle of clothes in return.

543 The countryman will find any excuse for going to the fair, and it is his proud boast that he has seen so many fairs. It
[805] is by the fairs, and not by the calendar, that he measures time and dates important events in the life of the community. 'Their whole thought seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging', it was written of the Mayo peasantry in 1836,[1] and in the seventeenth century we find this comment on 'the inferior rank of husbandmen' in Westmeath: '(they) are very crafty and subtile in all manner of bargaining, especially in their dealings in fairs and markets'.[2] Your luck at the fair might depend
777 on the colour of the hair of the first person you met on the road,
543 and it was unlucky to be passed on the way, so that horsemen riding at full gallop were not merely trying out their paces for the races which followed. For good luck you should carry with

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 104.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 115.

1 [ie, the seasons and rent days dating from 1 May and 1 November. — Analyst]

you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be 777
thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be 543
tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair [885]
that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own [538]
at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with 437
success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases
of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over 443
some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the 432
fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a [558]
woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of 443
the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes
and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable [439]
export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[712] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[848] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[437] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the
[361] lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [667] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [427] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

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241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

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as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers.

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained.

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden.

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by

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Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[436] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce,
[433] under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[437] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent 434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts • 437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils [311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and 178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [231] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [226] eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [311] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [654] fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [241] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the [231] subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

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221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 [232] [224] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [641]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

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291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 434 [501] [295] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [438] [657] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. [437] Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-501 502 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 [502] [433] [322] [184] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

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The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[657] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
[178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[999] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for 291
themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their [177]
fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 294
40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to 281
shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and [437]
when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept [463]
moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a 128
livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have 434
touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century 434
men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the main- 602
land. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to 437
scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The [178]
Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in 502
the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humor- 539
ous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right 421
of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person 422
discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander [829]
along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the im- [176]
mense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the [722]
islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other [433]

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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In Clare the same situation is present. Most, if not nearly all, of the work of the small farmers is done by the family relatives. And for the whole county in 1926, 83.5% of all males engaged in agricultural pursuits were farmers or farmers' relatives (and 99 per cent of the rather small number of females). Only in the two districts which we have

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162
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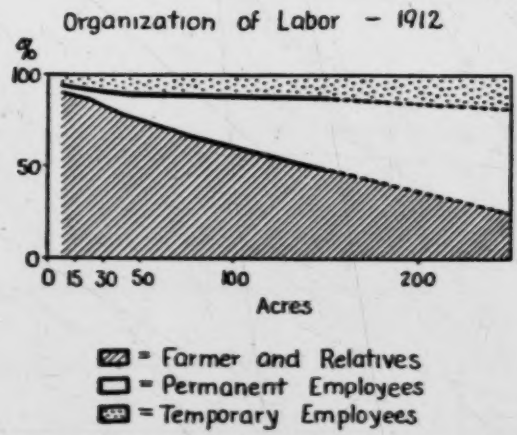
FIGURE 4



The chart again shows a constant progression. The larger the farm, the less the dependence upon other members of the family and the more often hired hands are present. The chart begins on the left with a figure of 89 per cent of farmers of 1–15 acres depending upon family help and ends at the right with 24 per cent of farmers of over 200 acres depending upon such help.

already mentioned as regions of large holdings and ranches, Ballyvaughan and Ennis, did the percentage fall appreciably below that figure (to 73 per cent and 75 per cent).

Figure 4 presents this difference in organization of labor for all Ireland in 1912.

Small farmers and large farmers make a different disposal of their products. At the same time there is an exchange of products between the two groups. 438

These facts are to be got from the many statistics reflect-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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438 ing the internal trade carried on within Ireland. There we can follow the movement of the goods of production through the population.[15] The writers deal with the statistics reflecting conditions before the advent of the De Valera government (1932) because they are the more complete and because changes introduced since then by the Fianna Fáil domestic and foreign policies had not yet (1935) had time to become the settled habit of the people at the time of the study.

438 In 1930 the majority of the agricultural produce of the Free State was exported. Estimated by the value of the 439 products, the destination of the produce was as follows: £23,000,000 worth, or about 35 per cent, was consumed by the agricultural community; about 17 per cent was consumed by others in the Free State; and about 43 per cent was exported. The greater consumption of agricultural [146] products in the country does not, of course, imply a better diet necessarily, since we are disregarding for the moment the large imports of foodstuffs made by both town and country districts, and since much of the country consumption went into further animal production.

439 Export, of course, was designed for the English market. In terms of specific products, 81 per cent of the cattle and sheep production was exported, 59 per cent of the pigs, 37 per cent of the output of butter and cream.[16]

In other words, only a small part of the output of more expensive cattle and sheep was consumed at home, but, at the other extreme, the cheaper stuffs stayed on the farm. The great bulk of the potatoes and turf produced, and just about one-half of the output of such dairy produce as whole milk, butter, eggs, and poultry, were consumed by the producers. Tillage crops tell the same story; they remained at home. The chief and overwhelmingly important exports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

[15] *Agricultural Output of Saorstát Éireann, 1926–27*, pp. 6, 10.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 the cities and larger towns that is unknown on the small
262 farms. The fact is evident when it is observed that Dublin,
511 Cork, and Waterford counties (each dominated numerically by the city of the name) count an average meat consumption taken on the same scale of 69, 40, and 37 pounds per capita respectively.

231 The difference between the two kinds of farm shows itself
241 again strongly in the export trade from Ireland and in the
439 roles of each in the transfer of farm produce to its ultimate market. The two kinds of farm make a totally different disposal of their produce, particularly their cattle. In this fact we see for the first time that in some regard they have a complementary role. Between them Irish cattle trade is carried on.

231 The huge internal Irish cattle trade is thus significant.
438 It reveals itself in the figures as a movement from small farm to large, an interchange between the two kinds of farmers which shows once again their distinctness. The trade is both geographical and social, in the sense that it flows between two sections of Ireland and between her two great agricultural classes.

To get at the facts which show the case demands looking at the statistics of cattle in the Free State. These illustrate clearly how far the internal cattle trade shows up the great difference between the two types of farm. It is necessary to take into consideration the age groups of cattle in the various areas and in the possession of holders of various acreages in those areas. This roundabout course of determining the outlines of internal cattle trade is necessary because there are no barriers or *octrois* at which count might be made as the cattle move from dealer to dealer across the country.

231 The seven southwestern counties are the areas predominant in milch cattle production; they are the areas of the calf-producing cow. Clare is one of these. A chart of birth dates of cattle in various parts of Ireland demonstrates that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the majority of the calves in the seven southwestern counties are born in March. A large majority of the calves in the eastern part of the country, the thirteen central eastern counties, are born in April, and a majority of the calves born in the northern tier of counties in the area of the Free State, a region we shall call the six northwestern counties, are born in May. This sort of progression of the birth dates of cattle through the spring months is, of course, related to climatic conditions. 231

Because such a progression exists, an annual count of cattle taken on the basis of age, undertaken each June first, the beginning of the butter export season, when cows are in full milk, would lead to the strong presumption that cattle recorded as under one year of age at that date would, in fact, nearly all be under three months of age; yearlings so recorded would, in fact, be under fifteen months, and so on. When an actual count was taken in 1926 of the cattle in Ireland, this presumption was borne out. On it is based the following picture of internal cattle trade to be derived from the Report on Agricultural Statistics already quoted.

Following the reasoning of the Report we learn that since "exceedingly few calves are either exported from or slaughtered in the Saorstat and . . . on June 1st, 1926, there were 78 cattle under one year per 100 milch cows, it follows that any district or group of holdings . . . with much less than 78 must have exported them."[21] Then, transferring this device to the annual count of cattle by age, it becomes readily apparent that all of the central eastern counties who count many over 78 cattle under one year of age per 100 milch cows on June first 1926 must have been importing, while the northern counties, Donegal and Leitrim, and the southern counties, Cork, Kerry, and Limerick, with figures much less than 78, must have been exporting. The last three 231 438

[21] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. xvi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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231 counties named are the principal members of the group of
438 seven southwestern dairying counties.

A great cattle trade thus takes place between the southwestern dairying area and the "ranching" counties of the central eastern area. When yearlings are taken into account by the same statistics, a fuller picture of this trade emerges. All but one of the central eastern counties has considerably more than 100 yearlings for every 100 calves under a year old, showing that the area is continuing to import the cattle as they grow older. The other sections of the country have considerably fewer than 100 yearlings for every 100 younger cattle, and have been continuing their exports. The principal dairying counties again have the fewest yearlings and are again the leaders in export.

Likewise in counting two-year-olds, the same proportions hold, and in counting cattle over three years old they hold again. In the last two cases, however, northern counties show a greater export than do the dairying counties of the southwest, the latter presumably having got rid of a larger proportion of all cattle not designed for milk production at an earlier age.

[439] The importing central eastern counties are devoted largely to raising and fattening dry store cattle for the British market. And since this is the case, it can be seen that the statistics given above reflect a continuous movement of cattle, calves, yearlings, and two-year-olds to the rich grazing lands of the central plain. Yet to regard this trade as exclusively geographical would be misleading and obscuring, for the profound differences between small and large holders which we have been examining are involved here as well.

Further statistical inquiry demonstrates that the trade takes place as much between the different sized farms as between the regions of different soil and climate. If we correlate proportions of cattle of various ages with the size of the holdings in the various county groups we have already

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named, rather than with the counties as a whole, this great internal cattle trade takes on the new aspect we mention. For example, figures for calves under one year reach 78 and over per 100 milch cows on holdings of all sizes in the thirteen central eastern counties, holdings of all sizes above 30 acres (the average size) in the northern counties, but only on holdings above 100 acres in the calf-producing dairying southwestern counties. That means that, though holdings of all sizes are importing calves in the "ranching" areas, in the other areas only large farms are importing them.

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Taking yearlings next, figures on the table showing more than 100 yearlings per 100 calves under one year old appear on all holdings in the thirteen county midland areas except on the very smallest farms, but in the northern and southwestern areas such figures appear only on the very largest holdings. The midlands import yearlings, particularly in the large farms, and in the rest of the country large farms do likewise, but small farmers get rid of them. Thus in the southwestern counties, holders of 200 acres and over, with a count of 118 yearlings per 100 calves, are importers of cattle produced on other farms, as are holders of 100 acres and over in the northern counties, where the counts of yearlings are 132 for the 100–200 acre group and 154 for the 200 and over group. But small farmers in all counties, regardless of the section of the country in which they live, are exporters, not only in dairying Kerry but even in the flatlands of Meath.

Taking a similar count of dry two-year-old cattle, we find that all small holdings in all areas are still exporting, though the size of holding at which exporting ceases is lower in the central eastern area (the 50–100 acre group), and all large holdings in all areas are still importing, though, conversely, the size of holding at which importing begins is higher in the dairying county region.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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For a graphic representation of this argument and its conclusions, let the reader turn to Figures 6 and 7. Figure 6 gives the numbers for various kinds of cattle by various size holdings separated out for the three groups of counties.[22] It shows the characteristic increase of the numbers of store or dry cattle, for export upon holdings as one goes from small to large and from the northern and southern areas of intensive small farm production of different kinds, based upon different soil and climate, to the rich grazing country of the central plain. It shows that one is really dealing with two kinds of increase of holding of dry cattle; the first, the difference of area, and the second, the difference of size of holding. The last seems to be the more important since it has a characteristic influence in each of the areas.

Figure 7 completes the picture. In *A* one sees the characteristic relative absence of milch cows upon large holdings. In *B* one sees that calf production is fairly uniform everywhere. In *C*, however, one begins to see the movement of cattle from small farm to large as the calves grow older. Small holdings have dropped out as possessors of older dry cattle, and through *D* and *E* continue to do so. As the dry cattle mature they become more and more concentrated upon the large holdings. The figure demonstrates at a glance that it is not a geographical trade that is involved so much as it is a trade between the two kinds of economy, between the two rural classes in the Free State.

Numerical statement of the movement of cattle thus shows us that the internal cattle trade in Ireland is in reality a trade between two types of farmers. It reflects again the great difference in the economies of large farmer and small, and shows that this difference extends to their participation in the business, commerce, and export trade of the country. The large farmers are directly concerned with preparation

[22] The figures are based on tables given in *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, pp. xvii, xix.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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FIGURE 6

PROPORTIONS OF STORE CATTLE TO MILCH CATTLE ON VARIOUS SIZE HOLDINGS IN THE AREAS OF DISTINCTIVE ECONOMY IN THE IRISH FREE STATE

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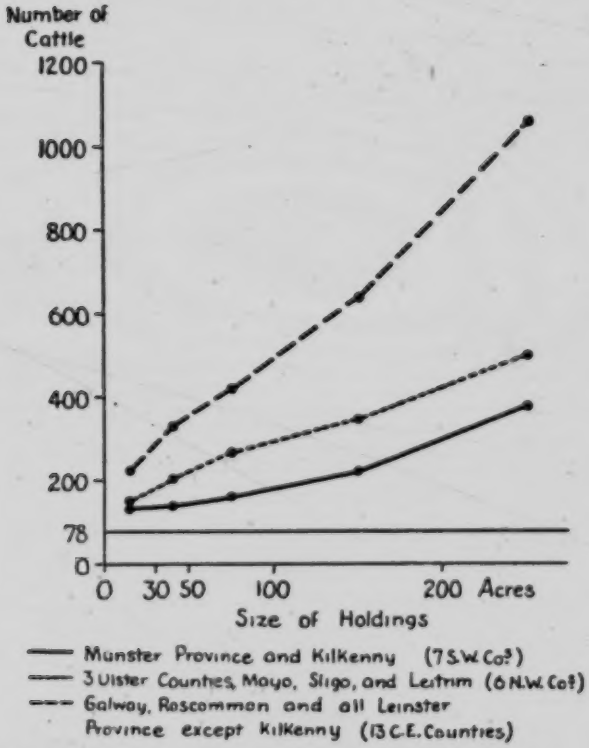
All cattle except milch cows on 1st. June, 1926, per 100 milch cows on that date



The three areas are those of distinctive climatic and soil conditions. The northern and southern areas are alike in being suppliers of young cattle, the central area in retaining herds of dry cattle. Yet one can see at a glance that the difference among the broad areas reflects real differences in cattle-holding on small and large acreages. Points on the graph express for each size holding the number of non-milk-producing cattle per 100 cattle. The number of non-milk-producing cattle then ranges from a proportion of 78 to 100, to over 1,000 to 100.

[p.27]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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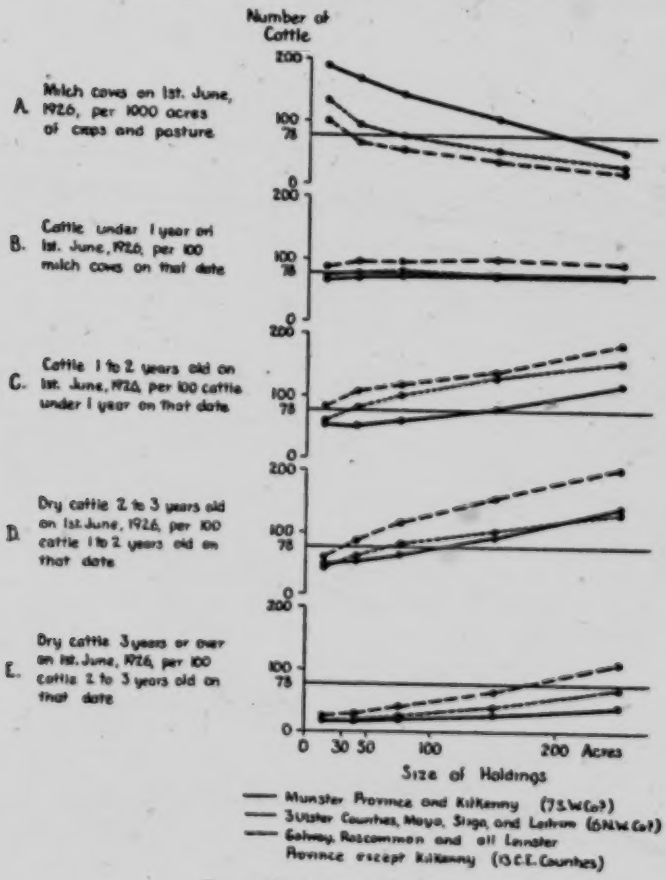
FIGURE 7

CATTLE TRADE BETWEEN CLASSES OF IRISH FARMERS, 1926



For explanation see the text.

[p. 28]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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of cattle for direct shipment to the English market; the small farmers are concerned only remotely, for the large farmer himself is their immediate market. They deal in much younger cattle and prepare them for sale to the middlemen and the big farmers. 231 438

Consequently, the small farmers are much less immediately affected by disturbances in the cattle trade with Great Britain. The fact has been evident throughout the years of the De Valera regime. It has blasted the prognostications of those who argued that a restriction and interruption of the trade with England, such as grew up in the "economic war" which followed De Valera's retention of the land annuity payments and the English retaliation in the form of import duties on cattle, would alienate the farmers' support of De Valera's government. It certainly alienated the large farmers, who were immediately affected, but the "farmer" of the politician is not always the whole population of that name. It left the small farmer relatively undisturbed. He was at one or two points removed from the actual trade with England and saw it only as a sale to big farmers. With the small farmers, the economic argument of De Valera's opponents failed. 231 439 648

However this may be, the conclusions as to the great division among farmers that statistics and the cattle trade have yielded us are borne out equally well within the separate counties. County Clare, for instance, shares fully in the internal cattle trade. And in Clare, the trade flows from small farmers to large. There are no statistics on the matter, but the generalities hold. Clare occupies a middle place within the system of exchanges. It is one of the seven southwestern dairying counties we have dealt with. But it does not always follow them statistically. As we have seen, Clare is a county of mixed holdings. Both the midland type of big farmer and the small farmer of the west and south are present. The cattle trade within Clare is a miniature of 231 438

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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that of Ireland. Clare buys in as many cattle in certain sections as it exports in others. Those who do the bulk of the buying are big farmers from the flatlands along the Fergus estuary or the hills of Burren. The small farmers of the remaining sections do the selling.

All this tedious statistical inquiry has not been without its purpose. It has established for us through the medium of economic inquiry the existence of two distinct kinds of orientation and adaptation to the soil and two kinds of agricultural activity. In doing so, in marking the first distinctions and differences to be observed among the dwellers of the countryside and showing us something of the relations between them, it has introduced us to the first great group with which we must deal: the small farmers.

221 types, varieties, growth cycles, yields, and care of seeds and
521 cattle passes round by word of mouth.

[805] The first of February, St. Brigid's Day, marks the begin-
221 ning of spring. For the countryman the return of the
132 "hard" days of wind and clear weather herald the season of
241 the land's drying off. Through February and March the gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted, and the fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each hard day is a welcome opportunity, for only then can work in the fields go on. With favorable weather, the work of preparation is over in the beginning of March, and the actual planting begins. By St. Patrick's Day, with its promise of continuous hard weather, the gardens are ready for a second planting.

221 The potatoes demand the greatest attention. A fortnight
241 after they are planted, they must be manured well with manure brought from the pile near the cattle cabins, and the ground must be leveled so that the plant will not go to stalk and thus fail to produce tubers. A fortnight more and the ground must be "softened" and the earth round the plant, which now shows its first leaves, must be "stirred." By the time May is reached, the potatoes must be "landed." Earth must be taken from between the long ridges in which the potatoes are planted and heaped up over them from each side. Thereafter nothing remains until the harvest but a summer spraying against blight.

221 Throughout the spring the cattle have demanded atten-
231 tion. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the milk season and intensified butter-making.
● 438 The great spring cattle fairs take place. The farmer must devote himself to the all-important business of buying and selling his milch and store cattle and his calves. At home the cattle demand constant care against hunger, disease, and cold as he mixes their diet of fast diminishing hay with the slowly returning pasture grass.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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though he may have seen very little of either beyond his 621
market towns. The small farmer of Luogh has allegiances 186
to all these communities. He is quite ready to find his emotion stirred in any one of them. He is ready to back the men of Luogh against the men of the neighboring townland; to back those of the mountain region against those of the valley lands; those of his parish against the rest; those of the countryside against the towns of Lisdoonvarna and Ennistymon; those of North Clare against other sections of the county; those of Clare against all other counties; those of his class against all others; of his religion against all others; of his nation against all others. Each one of these allegiances has a geographical base, though in the last analysis each one of these is built up out of his personal experience of human relations.

A study of the local community among the small farmers 621
must thus be a study of the geographic basis of their relationships. In the course of such study an inquiry into the spatial relationships involved in the distribution of produce and shop goods between the farms and the market towns is a first step.

The chief agencies of distribution in the countryside 438 ●
draw upon well-marked areas. Each crossroad shop, each hamlet, each market town, each fair, has its own hinterland. In recent years creameries have grown up at strategic places. Likewise, in the same years, larger towns have pushed their hinterlands farther back into the country districts, and motor lorries go even into the back roads.

The definition of such market areas and the demarcation of those into which such a rural county as Clare can be divided is a relatively simple task. It can be reached by plotting out on the map lists of customers' names and addresses obtained from each of the myriad crossroad centers and clusters of shops sprinkled over the county, combining them with others obtained from records of tolls paid by

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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438 farmers in larger centers. This information can be checked with the testimony of farmers themselves as to where they do their buying and selling. It can be checked again with testimony upon the part of shopkeepers in the market towns as to the area from which they draw their clientele.

Plotting out these lists gives a picture of many superimposed areas. The smallest of all of them groups only a few townlands together about a crossroad or a hamlet. These areas about hamlets cluster together in turn, along the roads, to form larger areas about a village. The area about a village groups together with that round other villages, again depending upon the terrain and the roads, to form a larger district around one of the larger towns. These town-encircling areas themselves fall together to form still larger districts embracing all the farms trading in the largest centers such as Ennis, the county seat of 6,000 population, Kilrush, the metropolis of the West Clare peninsula of 4,000 population, and the city of Limerick. For Limerick draws farmers along the main roads as far as Newmarket-on-Fergus, fifteen miles into Clare. The whole county, of course, centers ultimately in Limerick, since rail, road, and river all lead there rather than over the upland divides to Galway city to the north.

443 Local fairs figure in this plotting. Traditional long-established fairs are sometimes not held within the confines of a town of the present day, though all but a few of them now take place in the streets of some town or on a modern fair-green set aside at one edge of a town. Nevertheless, the areas from which farmers come to fairs yield the same picture of overlapping distributions. The smaller fairs of little attendance draw from the smaller areas, which group together in turn. Widest of all are the areas of the largest fairs, held at Ennis and Kilrush. And there is not a village to be found on the map that does not have its fairs, carefully scheduled so that within the immediate area there will be

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TABLE 8 (*continued*)

443 Killaloe, third Monday in January, February 28, March 28, April 12, May 20, June 26, July 16, August 12, September 3, October 20, November 17, first Tuesday after Christmas, cattle and sheep
Kilmihill, January 7, February 15, March 30, May 19, July 18, August 15, September 28, November 1, December 13
Kilmurry M'Mahon, May 24
Kilrush, last Wednesday in each month, for pigs; January 16, February 22, April 13, May 10, June 12, September 1, October 12, November 16, for cattle and sheep; March 25, first Thursday in June, October 10, November 23, for horses
Labasheeda, June 10, August 10, October 10, December 10
Liscannor, January 6
Lisdoonvarna, April 1, May 1, November 1, December 1
Miltown Malbay, February 1, March 9, May 4, June 21, August 11, September 10, October 18, December 9. Pigs first Thursday of each month
Mullagh, January 1, March 17
Newmarket-on-Fergus, December 20
O'Brien's Bridge, March 18, July 25, November 17
O'Callaghan's Mills, June 27, November 14
Quin, July 7 (cattle and sheep), November 1 (horses, cattle, and sheep)
Ruane, June 17, September 26
Scarriff, January 5, February 1, March 3, April 3, May 1, June 2, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 3, December 9, pigs day previous
Sixmilebridge, December 5
Spancil-hill, June 23, 24
Tulla, last Tuesday in January and February, March 25, April 25, May 13, June 15, July 19, August 15, September 29, October 19, November 9, December 7

438 133 In these ever-larger overlapping market areas the natural physical divisions of the countryside are well represented. The great central mass of Mount Callan divides West Clare from the rest of the county. It divides as well the market districts of Ennis and Kilrush. In the valley of the Fergus River, which drains the highlands of Mid-Clare to the north and East Clare beyond the corcasses (rough marshlands) to the east, the human flow of trade and produce exchange tends downward to the towns of Ennis and Clarecastle, at the head of tidewater. The high country marking the divides over into the Inagh and Cullinagh rivers and into the lake country of North Clare, just south of the gaunt hills 438 of Burren, divides the market district of Ennis from the smaller districts upon which the villages of Ennistymon, Corrofin, and Lisdoonvarna draw. Yet these villages in their turn are within the region of Clare from which the

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farmers converge upon Ennis. In each case a center, 438
whether a larger market town or one of the smaller villages, serves a natural area demarcated by the configuration of the land and the course of the roads.

In such natural regions, particularly in more remote and 491
mountainous country, the roads determine the intercourse 361
of the communities with one another. Today each focal 438
point is joined with another by a motor road. As the roads wind out from the larger centers, shops come to be placed at the strategic crossroad; a public house springs up; perhaps a schoolhouse, a parochial house, a chapel of the parish, rise beside them. Nowadays creameries are put up at these or still other points along the roads, where they are most conveniently accessible to small and medium farms producing milk. Even more recently lorries have begun to come direct [494]
to the crossroad to pick up produce that once, before motor traffic, had to be carried by the farmers themselves all the way to town.

Plotting out the market areas of the towns and villages 438
of the countryside reveals a characteristic of social and economic space even here where the deepest hinterlands are never more than a half-day's leisurely trip by horse and cart. Any list of customers plotted by residence around a minor center gives an area which extends considerably farther in the direction away from the nearest larger center than it does in the direction leading to it. The minor centers draw principally from the hinterlands behind them and their areas extend only a little way along the roads in the direction of the next larger center. Ennistymon in North Clare draws custom twelve miles to the north, but to the south its influence reaches only three miles up the valley of the Inagh River, where the region of the larger center, Ennis, begins. Ennis itself serves all Clare, and its own immediate area extends, to judge from the residences of the farmers who come to buy and sell in her markets, beyond Ennistymon

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

491 Today the roads both great and small provide all-weather
494 routes for every kind of local traffic. They carry many lorries
496 and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad — the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

491 The main roads are much more direct. They follow divides and occasionally cut right across high bog country. Today they negotiate bogs, which once would have prohibited any sort of transportation during wet weather, by dint of side ditches and high crowns of gravel and dirt. Over high country they have better foundations and wander in comparatively straight fashion through the country.

491 At various points along these main roads there are
653 branches today penetrating the countryside. These are rougher and simpler constructions of crushed stones taken from local quarries, leased by the County Council. The stone is broken by laborers and small farmers of the district through which the road runs. In the case of the smaller roads each landholder is responsible for the bit of the road that runs by his land. "Road metal," as the crushed stone is called, is spread during the late autumn, winter, or very early spring. When the weather is dry, in summer, a fine white dust rises after every vehicle. But in the rainy months of spring and winter the roads are soft and full of chuck holes, and new stones must be laid down. Then the heavy
[493] iron-tired carts of the farmers break them further and press them into the soft roadbeds.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related
489 to the distances to be traveled and the errands to be run. These things are matters of the organization and relationships of family and community. It is not only the means of transport which can be related to the constituent relationships of country social life. Each kind of farm product exported and farm need purchased involves a different distance of travel, a holder of a different status in family and community, and a different relation with the outsider.

489 The goods the farmer produces travel to the centers at
443 which they are exchanged over distances which are com-
438 mensurate with their value, their importance in farm economy, and their association with the status of the persons in the rural communities under whose charge they are produced. Horses take most care, are most valuable, and are the very special charge of the man of the house. The horse fair accordingly draws from the largest area. Cattle are the great money crop, the export staple. Accordingly the cattle fairs are among the chief lodestones of the larger centers, drawing from the deepest hinterlands of the major market areas. They are masculine affairs. Likewise potatoes and corn crops, oats, come to market only in the major centers. Farm fathers bring them down by horse and car from the deepest hinterlands.

Pigs represent a much shorter period of work and care. They are often in woman's province. The pig fairs are smaller gatherings, held in small centers, drawing from small hinterlands. Lesser vegetables, principally cabbage, travel no such distance as potatoes, and women often sell them. Finally, butter and eggs travel the shortest distance of all. They are often bartered at the crossroad centers. Before creameries were introduced, salted firkins or tubs of butter, representing a longer accumulation, went longer distances to the village centers.

234 Creamery associations were not established until the
438 middle of the time of research in County Clare. They are

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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part of a new economics which brings distributing agencies 234
to the farmer's door. Consequently they do not fit this pic- 438
ture and are among the great forces of gradual change. They have made dairying the pursuit of the farm father, as it was not before. Like motor lorries, they represent the new geographic order that is gradually overcoming the old.

The goods that reach the farmer cover distances between 438
their ultimate distributing center and consumer in the farm 462
families in the same proportion as they are bound in with 484
the statuses and relationships in work and life of the familistically organized groups. The men go to the larger towns with or without their wives for the larger annual purchases of boots and cloth goods or furniture or tools and implements. The boys may go for the more ordinary purchases of flour and foodstuffs and feeds and so on, to be bought in their fathers' names, to the local centers and villages. The household needs from day to day are the women's province. Tallow, candles, oil, sugar, tea, are to be had either in the villages or in the crossroad centers. The only need the men may fill so close to home is the recurrent hunger for tobacco and drink.

If we turn this view of travel and distribution and personal relationship into generality, we see that the pattern is such that it fits those of community life we have described. In the masculine sphere of life the disposal of produce means masculine travel and masculine building of relationship with the outside world of greatest geographical range. Taking each item of masculine produce in the descending order of its importance to the farm families, the area out of which the product is brought to a center is progressively smaller. The same fact is true of the feminine produce, with the difference, of course, that the range is smaller to begin with. The area of widest contacts established by women and the areas drawn upon by women and the areas

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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438 drawn upon by centers of distribution of women's produce
462 are always much less in extent than those of men.
484 It is not enough to point out that the distance to be traveled and the size of the area which a center serves are in
438 direct proportion to the monetary value of the goods con-
484 cerned. This is the case. It is an old story among economists.
571 But like all generalities it does not fail to have many exceptions. The point of interest is not the monetary but the sociological aspect of the matter.

Areas of distributive service coincide roughly with areas of personal contact and habitual travel. They coincide also with areas of effective social relationship. Thus there is a direct correlation between the area over which a peasant moves and has social relations and the value of the product he raises, as the economist would point out. But the source of this correlation is not to be found in economic considerations alone. The economic matters are themselves the outcome of the patterning of activities between persons. They show us the interdependence of the internal organization of the peasant community and the relationships making that community's articulation with the outside world.

Nothing in the world prevents any small farmer from going to Dublin markets to sell his cattle, not even the price of the ticket, for he has that. But he goes only so rarely as to make the fact negligible. On the other hand, the big farmer, the cattleman, in County Clare habitually goes farther, buying and selling far beyond the confines of the local market areas, purchasing his household and family goods in the great urban centers, patronizing even a Dublin tailor sometimes. The difference in travel is a part once again of the difference by class and economy between large farmer and small. The small farmer's community is made up of the persons related to him who are also small farmers and the persons who connect these men with the outside world. This we saw in the discussion of occupations. The

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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market areas are the areas of effective, habitual relationship 438
among farmers. They are definable only in terms of social 484
relations made up of the acts of specific local persons. Such
relations differ in duration and the frequency of the events 571
making them up. Change such relations and geography is changed. For a human setting geography is merely the locus of relationship. The system of distribution that orders space in rural Ireland functions to do so within a system of social relations, which we have called familism.

It is not surprising that the relationships existing between 444
the small farmers and their local distributing agencies go
farther by far than economic acts of barter, purchase, and 571
sale. The country crossroad shopkeepers, especially, win very special status in rural communities out of these relationships. In Ireland and in Clare shopkeeping is predominantly an urban and small-town trade. Yet shops are numerous and important in the country districts, and a word must be said of them.

In typical western rural communities the smallest and 444
poorest of the crossroad shops, serving the minutest areas, are ordinary cottages or farmhouses. The slightest alteration has sufficed to turn one of the rooms into an emporium where makeshift till, counter, and shelves carry little more than tobacco, matches, oil, and a few sweets and small sundries.

Such a shop is usually run by a woman, who subsists upon it and a plot of land or garden. She is often a widow, or the wife of a local tradesman. In many cases the little shop is [205]
the local post office as well, and a salary from the state contributes to the owner's upkeep. Such a shop is sometimes, too, a local gathering place for the boys, in the way the local smithy once was such a gathering place. The boys get their fags here. It is encumbent upon the woman who keeps [431]
the shop to make them presents at Christmas time, in recognition of their custom. Everyone agrees that the woman

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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443 morning. To dress, snatch a cup of tea, and bless himself
484 takes only a moment. Usually he has arranged for companionship, and he and his neighbors drive their beasts along the roads together. Company makes the night less lonely and the handling of the animals easier. Driving them is a skilled task against the dangers of the road, both natural and eerie. The men hope to reach the site of the fair before daybreak. They want to arrive in time to find a "good pitch," as they call it. They want to take their stand in the drawn-up lines of men and beasts where buyers are most likely to notice them. His pitch taken, each man stands over his beasts, ready for the inspection of buyers, careful that his beasts do not wander off or get mixed up with the others.

443 As dawn breaks, the buyers arrive. They are nearly always
438 cattle dealers and big farmers. Only occasionally are they local men. One can recognize them as they hurry about,
[291] businesslike, wearing trench coat, bowler, and leggings. The costume is practically a uniform with them, quite different from the drab coats and boots of the countrymen. They carry chalk or scissors and pencils and a notebook to mark the beasts of their choice and record their purchases.

In the good days of high prices, as during the World War, the buyers arrive even before dawn and buy by lantern light. All the good beasts of the fair may be gone by the time the sun comes up. On occasions of little demand, however, the buyers have time to look about carefully and make the exhaustive tests of quality that long experience has convinced them are the secret of commercial success.

443 The procedure of choice, bargaining, and sale is as un-
437 changing a ritual as any church provides. The buyer — dealer or farmer — strolls unconcernedly along the lines of farmers and their beasts. Here and there he greets an acquaintance. But he is appraising the animals all the while. Rigid custom forbids his breaking in on a bargain already

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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443 center. Only in the central largest town of a whole area is Saturday the market day *par excellence*. In Clare, for instance, only Ennis and Kilrush have Saturday markets. Smaller centers set other days of the week aside.

In the larger towns such markets may be held in stores and yards owned by the municipality. More often custom has set aside a section of a street or a central square for each kind of produce. In Ennis a separate yard and shed serves as a butter market, another yard and shed with a weighhouse serves for corn and wool. Pigs, lambs, cabbage, and other vegetables are sold in the streets.

The principal commodities sold at the weekly markets in Clare are oats, mangels, turnips, wool, potatoes, hay, straw, cabbage, calves, lambs, kids (an Easter delicacy), pigs, bonhams, chickens, geese, other poultry. Records of these sales itemize the commerce of the whole hinterland in agricultural produce. Public institutions in the town buy through contracts awarded to various suppliers, the weighing and delivery taking place through the public market. Dealers for each product visit the markets. Even those who have come recently to use lorries that tour the country crossroads still appear at the weekly markets.

443 For those interested in a typical view of this kind of commerce, Table 9 presents a picture of the tolls received in the
438 town of Ennis during the years 1927–33. The table is arranged as a calendar and gives average toll receipts for each product for each month during the period. One can see the monthly fluctuations at a glance and the annual periods of activity in sales. The chief change during the period was the dropping off of butter sales, a fact accounted for by the rise of creameries in other parts of the county and the introduction of the lorry. Otherwise sales were of much the same volume each year. As the tolls were constant during the period charted, the figures are a very good index to the local produce marketed.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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443
438

TABLE 9

Sales of Ennis Market, 1927–1933 *

Item	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Cattle	£54.00	? [a]	0	0	0	20.00	? [e]	0	? [g]	30.00	41.00	44.00
Sheep	£19.00	? [b]	0	? [c]	0	? [d]	? [f]	0	? [h]	3.00	4.00	5.00
Butter	£ 8.00	18.00	25.00	27.00	32.00	28.00	26.00	15.00	6.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Potatoes	£14.00	9.00	6.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	9.00	9.00	17.00
Roots	£ 3.00	.75	.13	0	0	0	0	2.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	4.00
Corn	£ 3.00	.50	.13	0	0	12.00	30.00	29.00	17.00	8.00	5.00	9.00
Hay	£13.00	1.00	.13	.13	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	9.00
Wool	£ .75	2.00	13.00	7.00	3.00	4.00	7.00	2.00	.50	.20	1.00	.50
Pigs	262	56	37	46	76	118	115	118	118	94	84	90
Bonhams	2122	155	111	84	94	99	117	115	64	42	59	112

* Toll receipts are given in pounds or hundredths of pounds except in the case of the last two, which are given in shillings. The figures are average total receipts for the month named over the six-year period.

[a] Figures only for 1928, 1932 (£49, £11 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[b] Figures only for 1928, 1932 (£22, £17 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[c] Figures only for 1932 (£4). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[d] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£8, £12 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[e] Figures only for 1932 (£18). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[f] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£35, £37 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[g] Figures only for 1932 (£11). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[h] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£9, £10 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.

[Pr 307]

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
167 or—in comparatively few instances—by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[6] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[6] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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POTS AND PANS

Despite certain conservative elements it must be recognized that very great changes have taken place in the Irishman's diet in recent centuries. Tea and the potato, invaders from east and west, have largely replaced whitemeats, although another more recent pair of intruders, maize-meal and rice, distributed by the British government during the famine, have made no such conquest. Dr. Salaman has fully discussed the depressing effects of the potato on diet and culture.[1] Unless one has seen a peasant family sitting down to a meal of boiled potatoes it is hardly possible to credit the consumption figures. It used to be reckoned that a stone a day was the allowance for a labourer, and it was 'by no means uncommon, in times of plenty, for a labourer to eat 14 lb. of potatoes at a meal'.[2] An average consumption of 8 lb. per day for each member of a family is well authenticated. It is not surprising that there was a general craving for 'kitchen', tasty relishes such as strong butter when this bulky, starchy and monotonous food came to dominate the Irish diet. There seems to have been an expansion of sea fishing to keep pace with the demand for 'kitchen'. Down to recent times salt fish were hawked through the autumn countryside by noisy 'cadgers', and the careful housewife would have a barrel or two of salt herrings put by for the winter. One is reminded of the 'relishes' with which many African peoples relieve the monotony of a diet of mealies.

One of the many Irish customs which the English found revolting was the bleeding of cattle. Fynes Moryson wrote: 'they often let their cows' blood, eating the congealed blood with butter'.[3] Arthur Young notes that in Wicklow 'they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food'.[4] In Ulster cattle were bled 'in a smooth place, the coagulating blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed. This was cut up into squares and 'laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year'.[5] Unfortunately few details of the bleeding operation have come down to us though I have been told that it was customary to close the wound with a cloven stick.

[1] R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), chs. 11–18.
[2] I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 429.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[4] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 62.
[5] C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 333.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 434 [501] [298] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [438] [657] [437] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 [502] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

[433] [322] [184]

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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438 ing the internal trade carried on within Ireland. There we can follow the movement of the goods of production through the population.[15] The writers deal with the statistics reflecting conditions before the advent of the De Valera government (1932) because they are the more complete and because changes introduced since then by the Fianna Fáil domestic and foreign policies had not yet (1935) had time to become the settled habit of the people at the time of the study.

438 In 1930 the majority of the agricultural produce of the Free State was exported. Estimated by the value of the 439 products, the destination of the produce was as follows: £23,000,000 worth, or about 35 per cent, was consumed by the agricultural community; about 17 per cent was consumed by others in the Free State; and about 43 per cent was exported. The greater consumption of agricultural [146] products in the country does not, of course, imply a better diet necessarily, since we are disregarding for the moment the large imports of foodstuffs made by both town and country districts, and since much of the country consumption went into further animal production.

439 Export, of course, was designed for the English market. In terms of specific products, 81 per cent of the cattle and sheep production was exported, 59 per cent of the pigs, 37 per cent of the output of butter and cream.[16]

In other words, only a small part of the output of more expensive cattle and sheep was consumed at home, but, at the other extreme, the cheaper stuffs stayed on the farm. The great bulk of the potatoes and turf produced, and just about one-half of the output of such dairy produce as whole milk, butter, eggs, and poultry, were consumed by the producers. Tillage crops tell the same story; they remained at home. The chief and overwhelmingly important exports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

[15] *Agricultural Output of Saorstát Éireann, 1926–27*, pp. 6, 10.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

Of these exports, of course, cattle were the most valuable item and represented the great export staple. They were likewise the crop to which most other produce could be devoted when not used as human food. That this kind of conversion of other stuffs into cattle could take place is to be seen in the figures for milk. Though the Free State produced in the year in question a total of 589,000,000 gallons of milk, including both whole milk and butter, comparing favorably with such an output as Switzerland's yearly 528,000,000 in 1923, only 43 per cent of it was exported, while in Switzerland the export was 67 per cent of the Swiss total.

The figures for exports introduce a new factor of difference between the holdings of large and small size and their populations. Small holdings do not share equally with large holdings either in the consumption of agricultural produce or in its export. In both consumption and export commerce in the Free State, small holders and large holders play distinct roles.

Taking the first of these considerations, the figures for consumption reveal the difference. The estimated human consumption of whole milk (as milk) was some 90,000,000 gallons, according to the statistical record of the year 1928,[17] of which 70,000,000 gallons were consumed by agriculturalists and 20,000,000 by the remainder of the population. It was estimated that on the farms 38 gallons were consumed yearly per person. But that is the figure for all farms. There is a considerable difference here between types of farms.

Thus, in this case, on farms less than 50 acres only 36 gallons per person per annum were consumed, it was estimated, while on farms of over 50 acres, the consumption was 42 gallons. In Munster, the chief milk-producing province,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 the cities and larger towns that is unknown on the small
262 farms. The fact is evident when it is observed that Dublin,
511 Cork, and Waterford counties (each dominated numerically by the city of the name) count an average meat consumption taken on the same scale of 69, 40, and 37 pounds per capita respectively.

231 The difference between the two kinds of farm shows itself
241 again strongly in the export trade from Ireland and in the roles of each in the transfer of farm produce to its ultimate
439 market. The two kinds of farm make a totally different disposal of their produce, particularly their cattle. In this fact we see for the first time that in some regard they have a complementary role. Between them Irish cattle trade is carried on.

231 The huge internal Irish cattle trade is thus significant.
438 It reveals itself in the figures as a movement from small farm to large, an interchange between the two kinds of farmers which shows once again their distinctness. The trade is both geographical and social, in the sense that it flows between two sections of Ireland and between her two great agricultural classes.

To get at the facts which show the case demands looking at the statistics of cattle in the Free State. These illustrate clearly how far the internal cattle trade shows up the great difference between the two types of farm. It is necessary to take into consideration the age groups of cattle in the various areas and in the possession of holders of various acreages in those areas. This roundabout course of determining the outlines of internal cattle trade is necessary because there are no barriers or *octrois* at which count might be made as the cattle move from dealer to dealer across the country.

231 The seven southwestern counties are the areas predominant in milch cattle production; they are the areas of the calf-producing cow. Clare is one of these. A chart of birth dates of cattle in various parts of Ireland demonstrates that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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231 counties named are the principal members of the group of
438 seven southwestern dairying counties.

A great cattle trade thus takes place between the southwestern dairying area and the "ranching" counties of the central eastern area. When yearlings are taken into account by the same statistics, a fuller picture of this trade emerges. All but one of the central eastern counties has considerably more than 100 yearlings for every 100 calves under a year old, showing that the area is continuing to import the cattle as they grow older. The other sections of the country have considerably fewer than 100 yearlings for every 100 younger cattle, and have been continuing their exports. The principal dairying counties again have the fewest yearlings and are again the leaders in export.

Likewise in counting two-year-olds, the same proportions hold, and in counting cattle over three years old they hold again. In the last two cases, however, northern counties show a greater export than do the dairying counties of the southwest, the latter presumably having got rid of a larger proportion of all cattle not designed for milk production at an earlier age.

[439] The importing central eastern counties are devoted largely to raising and fattening dry store cattle for the British market. And since this is the case, it can be seen that the statistics given above reflect a continuous movement of cattle, calves, yearlings, and two-year-olds to the rich grazing lands of the central plain. Yet to regard this trade as exclusively geographical would be misleading and obscuring, for the profound differences between small and large holders which we have been examining are involved here as well.

Further statistical inquiry demonstrates that the trade takes place as much between the different sized farms as between the regions of different soil and climate. If we correlate proportions of cattle of various ages with the size of the holdings in the various county groups we have already

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

 231 438

of cattle for direct shipment to the English market; the small farmers are concerned only remotely, for the large farmer himself is their immediate market. They deal in much younger cattle and prepare them for sale to the middlemen and the big farmers.

Consequently, the small farmers are much less immediately affected by disturbances in the cattle trade with Great Britain. The fact has been evident throughout the years of the De Valera regime. It has blasted the prognostications of those who argued that a restriction and interruption of the trade with England, such as grew up in the "economic war" which followed De Valera's retention of the land annuity payments and the English retaliation in the form of import duties on cattle, would alienate the farmers' support of De Valera's government. It certainly alienated the large farmers, who were immediately affected, but the "farmer" of the politician is not always the whole population of that name. It left the small farmer relatively undisturbed. He was at one or two points removed from the actual trade with England and saw it only as a sale to big farmers. With the small farmers, the economic argument of De Valera's opponents failed. 231 439 648

However this may be, the conclusions as to the great division among farmers that statistics and the cattle trade have yielded us are borne out equally well within the separate counties. County Clare, for instance, shares fully in the internal cattle trade. And in Clare, the trade flows from small farmers to large. There are no statistics on the matter, but the generalities hold. Clare occupies a middle place within the system of exchanges. It is one of the seven southwestern dairying counties we have dealt with. But it does not always follow them statistically. As we have seen, Clare is a county of mixed holdings. Both the midland type of big farmer and the small farmer of the west and south are present. The cattle trade within Clare is a miniature of 231 438

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

222

[413]
[244]

Fig. 102.

[439]

231
222
262

Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

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228
[439]

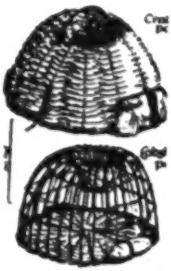

Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

but a few years ago the ordinary means of lighting the houses was a 373
rude open lamp, filled with oil extracted from the livers of fish, and having a piece of peeled rush for a wick.

Kelp-burning was formerly one of the industries of the islands, 381
but of late years it declined rapidly, and is now practically extinct. As to the cause of this decay of a formerly profitable source of income, very different accounts are given, some alleging the poor quality of the weed; others that they were not fairly treated in selling; and others again that it does not pay as well as the fish-curing.

The fish most taken are sea-bream, glassan (a sort of pollock), 226
mackerel, turbot, and plaice, used mostly for home consumption; cod 439
and ling, which are cured at the fish-curing station for exportation, and oil extracted from their livers; also large quantities of crabs and lobsters, which are taken to Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, from which they are forwarded to the English market. The boat used for conveying [501]
them is of peculiar construction, and has a large salt-water tank amidships, in which the lobsters are kept alive. The lobster-pots are of the usual type. There is nothing unusual about their ordinary method of fishing, except that the Inishbofin men, as mentioned in [502]
a footnote to the account of that island in the Memoir of the Geological Survey, already alluded to, do not follow the shoals of fish around the western headland, but carry their boats across the narrow isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated.

The pursuit of the "sun-fish," or basking-shark (*Selache maxima*), 226
was formerly a source of considerable profit to the islanders, but has been almost altogether abandoned of late years owing to the decline in the price of the oil, and partly, it is said, to the loss of several lives on one occasion when a boat was charged and overturned by a wounded fish, also to the partial disappearance for some years of the sharks.

The season for this enterprise is from April until the end of June, and in that time large numbers of these fish were taken formerly, and some are still killed from time to time. Mr. G. H. Kinahan, to whom I am indebted for several notes relative to the condition of the islands some years ago, says:—"The sun-fish fishing was considerable in my time (1870). I have seen strings of seven and nine fish; when caught, they towed them into the harbour, cut out the liver, and left the carcass to rot, or be eaten by the pigs; the stench in the harbour was something to remember." A very full description of the fishing is given by Sir H. W. Gore-Booth in a recent article. He states that the value of the oil (from eight to twelve petroleum barrels full) obtained from the liver of one of these fish has been variously estimated

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive,
272 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
281 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time.
[435] The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen, and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or stirabout and milk. 264

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money. [439] [437]

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit distilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent. 273

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character. 291

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel. [439] [444]

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction. [443]

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

342 been built for almost the entire population. In 1893 it was said that there
511 were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds,
[657] so that peat was stacked in a corner of the cottage with the fowls roosting on it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace, the cattle in a pen at the other end of the room, and the farm implements and fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] Now the
[343] old houses are the outbuildings, still thatched, with oat straw (not rye as formerly) laid on sods and tied down with home-made straw ropes weighted with large stones. Only five thatched houses were still inhabited in 1954. Some of the thatch has sprouting oats and some of it is rotten, but, when a roof is beyond further repair, it is all stripped off and the sodding and thatching begins again. Happily, corrugated iron is not used as it cannot stand the weather.

Farming

Agricultural practice is almost uni-
241 form: an acre or so is divided between oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—barley, and there is generally a small patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions, carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen. The ground used for crops is called the "garden," and its fertility is maintained by using animal manure and seaweed, and also by rotating the crops. Strange (or "foreign") seed is favored, and
[657] bought at a cheap rate under a government scheme. The remainder of the farmstead consists of a varying amount of meadow, generally 1-3 acres, and some pasture. The precious crops are carefully walled, but some of the farm-
[231] ers open their fields to the cattle and sheep after the harvest, partly as a means of natural fertilizing.

231 Each farmer has one or two cows and
439

[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[p. 206(A)]

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[13] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever bought. As one of the islanders put it,
437 "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [13] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p. 206(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

VII

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

GOOD craftsmanship in wood is so rarely seen in the Irish peasant house that one easily notices a piece of quality furniture. The chances are that it has come out of 'the big house' or, near the coast, from a wrecked ship. Very little oak furniture has survived from the days before the famine, and what there is is likely to be of bog-oak, that is timber dug out of the bogs. The truth seems to be that by the time improved styles of furniture and settled conditions of life had come about, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the native oak-woods had been almost everywhere destroyed, and the common furniture came to be made of bog wood or imported soft woods. The gentry favoured mahogany. Already in the early seventeenth century Ireland was importing pine wood from western Scotland,[1] and during the eighteenth century it was the returning timber ships from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia that initiated Southern Irish emigration to the New World.

No doubt this lack of good quality peasant furniture may be partly attributed to poverty, and to the recurrent famines, of fuel as well as food, which brought despair and led to the burning of furniture. But it also reflects the weak tradition of built-up furniture among a people predominantly pastoral and to some extent nomadic. Certainly degrading poverty and insecure tenancies did not provide the means of support for skilled craftsmen: yet in Wales, where conditions under an

[1]H. G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the 18th Century*, 4th ed. (1937), 196. On bog timber see A. T. Lucas in *Béaloideas*, 33, 71–134.

farms today. The scythed grass is shaken out by hand and 246
spread thinly over the field. When partly dry it is gathered into windrows and lapped or coiled, that is folded against the leg over the forearm into small 'lap-cocks' resembling a lady's muff, the hole permitting the wind to pass through and the smooth rounded top allowing the rain to run off. Like all practised hand-work it is a job carried through with apparently mechanical indifference, but the old hands will take care to ensure that the laps are properly made and laid down so that they are aligned with the prevailing wind. Even on rich lowland farms the hay will be 'lapped' if it is first season's grass grown, as in Ulster, for the seed, which is a valuable export. Alter- [439]
natively seed grass is tied in sheaves and 'gaited' like flax or stooked like a cereal crop (Fig. 51).

[248]
[243]

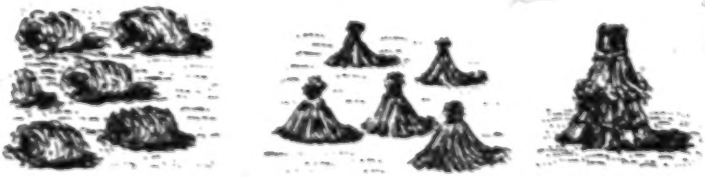

FIG. 51. Laps of hay, gaits of flax and stook of wheat, with 'hudders'.

When dry the laps are shaken open and built into small cocks or lumps which are later enlarged into hand cocks. Or if the hay is in good condition it is made, chiefly in the drier parts of the country, into larger ricks or tramp cocks which are trodden down firmly and secured with a hay-rope (Fig. 52, 10). The process of hay-making is thus, like the winning of turf (Chapter XIV), one of gradually increasing the size of the pile as the material is dried by sun and wind. The cocked hay is left standing for some weeks in the fields to season, so that it seems to the English visitor, as Arthur Young remarked, that the Irish are generally two months 'making or marring their hay'.[1] The explanation given is the necessity of avoiding overheating, but English critics say that it is the farmers who dislike getting overheated! A more charitable view is that by the

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 246.

 [Text continues on p. 155]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

314 the costly hand-cutting, -wheeling, and -turning. The calorific value of peat is less than half that of coal, and its bulk makes 372 transport costs high. Small coal-boats put in at harbours all round the coast, and in the larger towns, whose adjacent supplies [439] were early exhausted, coal has been the chief fuel since the days when Dean Swift vainly advised the Irish to burn everything English except their coal. During the second world war, however, even Dublin had to depend on turf brought from the west and stacked in immense piles in Phoenix Park. Some peat is still burnt in the towns, especially in the interior of the country, but it is in the small farms that the bulk of the annual turf harvest is consumed. So necessary was a supply of peat in former times that proximity to a turf bog was a factor in land values. As to the antiquity of its use as fuel in Ireland we have little evidence, though Pliny describes its preparation in ancient Germany. Petty tells us in the second half of the seventeenth century that 'their fuel is turf in most places',[1] although Professor O'Brien, writing of the same century states that 'until the woods began to sink to very small proportions, turf was not at all employed for heating.'[2] The difficulty is that such a lowly pursuit as peat-cutting is not likely to be mentioned in the Irish law texts, and if we rely on documentary evidence alone we might suppose that all sorts of ancient practices were introduced by the English who first described them. To judge from the bright red ashes one frequently sees in the excavated hearths of Dark Age habitations peat was used as firing before history begins in upland areas and along the wind-swept coasts. But we may accept the view that over most of the country turf-cutting on its historic scale developed, probably under the stimulus of improved techniques brought in by English settlers, after the major forest clearances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is evidence from some parts of the country, for the eighteenth century, that the cutting of peat for winter use was one of the occupations of transhumant herders who took their livestock to the bog pastures in summer.[3] But it is unreasonable to suppose that the great labour involved

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), 82.
[2]G. O'Brien, *The Economic History of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century*, 44.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down*, 125.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

raghs—and would not be out of place in the fiords. In fact 501
during the nineteenth century, and perhaps from earlier times,
many yawls were imported unfinished from Norway, carrying [439]
only the bottom (garboard) strakes hollowed from a thick
plank. Local materials, always scarce in Ireland in recent [396]
centuries, were utilized where possible, holly for the keel (it
wears smooth and slides well on beach gravel) ropes of bog fir,
and a 'whin root' for the tiller. In Kerry the entire vessel was
sometimes built from bog fir: for this purpose as for making
roof-frames it had the advantage of impermeability.[1] For off-
shore fishing in the Irish Sea the lugger—a name now applied
to the motor drifter which has taken its place—developed in
the nineteenth century under the influence of visiting 'nickies',
the Manx name for Cornish lug-sailed herring boats, said to
have been given because so many of their crews were named
Nicholas. On the west coast the Galway hookers are now, des-
pite their name, used almost entirely for carrying turf and live-
stock. The lug-sailed pookhauns used for fishing are a variant
of the Irish Sea yawl, of clumsy construction thanks to limited
resources and unsuitable building materials.

On many inland loughs and larger rivers dug-out boats not
much different from those of the Bronze Age seem to have
continued to be made into the seventeenth century and probably
even later in places. The most serious problem to be solved in 396
hollowing out a solid log is how to keep the sides and bottom
of the vessel of even thickness. Some of the ancient dug-outs
recovered from the Irish lakes and rivers show that their makers
had availed themselves of a method which is practised today
in parts of Indonesia. The method is to bore holes through the
shell and plug the holes with pegs of the right length to serve
as gauges. The plugged holes observed in the bottom of many
an Irish dug-out have been explained as drainage holes, but
the pegs would in that case have been left protruding, and one
hole would surely have sufficed. As the country lost its forests it
must have become difficult to obtain trees of the right size and
kind, especially oak, for boat making, and by the eighteenth
century, it seems, plank boats retaining some features of the
dug-out were substituted. Around 1800 the salmon-fishing cots 501

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 89.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

come across surviving examples of these ancient devices. The 227
iron 'cribs' associated with modern salmon weirs, however, appear to derive from wattled traps. And the long conical 'coghill' nets in which the eels are caught in the weirs of the Bann, the Shannon and (until recently) the Erne, are shaped like weels and indeed they are sometimes built up of a series of cones. The fine meshed 'tail' of the net is made to open and the eels, nowadays, are poured directly into submerged tanks. A detail suggestive of long custom is that the 'skiver' with which the tail is closed in the coghills of the weirs at Portna on the Bann consists of a perforated rib-bone of horse or cow. The pin is attached to a cord, which is wound round the end of the net and secured by thrusting the pin into the windings. The walls of the weirs are often still built of wattles, and the old style of weir on the Erne consists of a base of large stones into which the wattled superstructure is thrust.[1]

The wattles are known on the Bann as *skeaghs*: of the six weirs now fishing there four are of the traditional type and two have been modernized. At Athlone on the Shannon there were twenty-two eel weirs in the early seventeenth century, and nearly all were still working in the nineteenth century: a single weir is now fished there.[2] The eel weirs of the River Erne had been reduced to five when they were abandoned owing to the recent construction of a dam for the Ballyshannon [376] hydro-electric scheme. The Bann silver eel fisheries are probably the largest of their kind in western Europe, and it is significant that the Bann is one of the richest rivers in Europe for archaeological discoveries ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the [172] early medieval period. Both salmon and eels have now become money-crops and the catches are exported. Already in the eighteenth century Irish salt salmon was exported in considerable [439] quantities to America. The ice-house in which salmon used to be preserved is one of the many ruined buildings to be seen [343] about the decaying houses of the gentry, and most country houses also had their fish ponds.

Among the common folk eels are esteemed only by the folk 262
who catch them, legally or otherwise, but they were formerly

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 213–23.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 80 (1950), 146–54.

443 the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous
527 gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone
543 grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon
[361] and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry
[487] footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those
489 of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement
439 of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-
441 dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These
439 dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

as they are called, were born in the mountain country of Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, adjoining the rich plains of the Pale where their ancestors sharpened their wits on the English settlers. Many stories are told of the tricks by which 'the goatmen' disposed of their animals before they reached their goal at Barnet Fair, of billy-goats sold to the innocent English as good milkers or as an infallible means of keeping a garden free of weeds. 'Every guy who comes here selling cloth', said a Canadian rancher, 'tells me he is from Slieve Gullion. It must be some city.'

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Before the agrarian revolution and the import of feeding stuffs made it possible to keep stock through the winter, the months of October and November were critical for the farmer, who had to dispose of many of his animals at this time. The trade is now better distributed through the year, but although monthly fairs have become general since the famine, the sales vary a good deal from month to month, and the important fairs still fall at the turning points of the pastoral year, particularly in May and November. The spring fairs of February and March and the Lammas fairs of July and August were to a large extent concerned respectively with horses and with sheep and wool, but those of May and November were the great cattle fairs and also the hiring fairs. We are reminded that the Celtic year in pre-Christian times had only two seasons, winter and summer, and that the first days of November and May are still the Irish gale-days, the times when rents fall due.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be 777
thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be 543
tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair [885]
that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own
at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which [538]
raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with 437
success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases
of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over 443
some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the 432
fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold
only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a [558]
woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of 443
the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes
and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable [439] ●
export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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444 subsists only because she is a part of the local community. Though she charges a bit more, she spares one the longer walk to the village center.

Country shops are often larger than hers. Sometimes where the distance to the village center is greater, they sell nearly everything one could get in town, outside the specialized drapers' or hardware, boot, and shoe shops. They sell all the farm staples, such as groceries, sugar, flour, tea, and tobacco. Here people may come from two or three miles around. The farmers all know they pay more, but the shop is a convenience. It may get the only newspaper in the district, and men drop in to hear the news. In the evenings a local school of cards may flourish here and the boys foregather.

[203 571]

The country shop reaches its zenith at the crossroad, where a church, a parochial house, a school, and a creamery may stand as well. Here the shop often dates from the days just after the famine and has had a long history of prosperity. In the past generation many such crossroads produced county councillors, and the rewards of public service often meant the acquisition of several rich farms in addition to the shop. The shop serves the surrounding countryside and collects its produce, and it derives its reward from the service it performs.

441 565 571 The position of the country shopkeeper is to be found in his place within the system of relations which make up the community of small farmers behind his shop. His function as economic agent of distribution is only part of his role. He is in a situation which must be described as a perpetual seesaw. If he is drawn too far within the local community, he loses contact with the outside world. If he is drawn too far outward, he loses touch with his customers. He must maintain a balance in a delicate equilibrium.

He is caught within a pattern of mutual obligations to the farmers on the one hand and the social system of the

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town classes on the other. Let it suffice to show his place that in a recitation of such a shopkeeper's intimates and associates it is most often not the farmers but the members of the community who are in a similar position who figure. His associates are the parish priest, the schoolmaster, the local police, and the local "rancher." When marriages are made for his daughters, they are made with big farmers, and husbands are got at considerably greater distances than in the case of the small farmers. Along with his associates, he makes up the rural middle class, at once a halfway point and a channel of movement for the infiltration of gradual change, poised between the small farmers of the countryside and the middle and upper classes of the urban centers. 441 565 571

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The two chief occasions of economic exchange outside the shops at the crossroad or in the towns are the best examples of such ceremonial. Let us take the fairs first. The fairs are still the most important mechanism of exchange between the small farm producers and the middlemen who start farm produce upon its journey to the ultimate consumer. Nothing has risen to threaten them seriously even in this day of economic complexity. The farmers of the rural hinterland of towns and villages journey with cattle, pigs, corn, and wool to market, to sell them that day or else to carry them home again. Some big farmers sell from the land direct to dealers and jobbers. A few small farmers sell direct to neighbors. These are exceptions, and sales in market and fair are well-nigh universal. 443

The fairs are not only universal, they are also elaborately

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443 the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous
527 gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone
543 grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon
[361] and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry
[487] footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those
489 of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement
439 of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-
● 441 dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These
439 dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

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as they are called, were born in the mountain country of Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, adjoining the rich plains of the Pale where their ancestors sharpened their wits on the English settlers. Many stories are told of the tricks by which 'the goatmen' disposed of their animals before they reached their goal at Barnet Fair, of billy-goats sold to the innocent English as good milkers or as an infallible means of keeping a garden free of weeds. 'Every guy who comes here selling cloth', said a Canadian rancher, 'tells me he is from Slieve Gullion. It must be some city.'

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[442]

[p.280]

TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Big farmer	Occasional employment of local young men; occasional aid to small farmers and local purchase of corn, vegetables, animals, produce	Of a higher class and wider contacts than the small farmers; most often a townsman by culture and even by residence. In the countryside, close informal contacts with others of his kind over a wide area; interest in fashionable recreation and sport. Contacts with small farmers often friendly but usually few, except where big farmer is active politically	
Cattle and produce dealers	Purchase of produce and livestock, providing chief monetary income of small farmers	When not townsmen, whom the farmer meets only at periodic fairs and markets, these men are usually big farmers. Buy "from the land" (that is, from individual farmers not gathered at the local fairs and markets) very rarely; butter and egg dealers nearly always buy through crossroads shopkeepers	

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438 farmers in larger centers. This information can be checked with the testimony of farmers themselves as to where they do their buying and selling. It can be checked again with testimony upon the part of shopkeepers in the market towns as to the area from which they draw their clientele.

Plotting out these lists gives a picture of many superimposed areas. The smallest of all of them groups only a few townlands together about a crossroad or a hamlet. These areas about hamlets cluster together in turn, along the roads, to form larger areas about a village. The area about a village groups together with that round other villages, again depending upon the terrain and the roads, to form a larger district around one of the larger towns. These town-encircling areas themselves fall together to form still larger districts embracing all the farms trading in the largest centers such as Ennis, the county seat of 6,000 population, Kilrush, the metropolis of the West Clare peninsula of 4,000 population, and the city of Limerick. For Limerick draws farmers along the main roads as far as Newmarket-on-Fergus, fifteen miles into Clare. The whole county, of course, centers ultimately in Limerick, since rail, road, and river all lead there rather than over the upland divides to Galway city to the north.

443 Local fairs figure in this plotting. Traditional long-established fairs are sometimes not held within the confines of a town of the present day, though all but a few of them now take place in the streets of some town or on a modern fair-green set aside at one edge of a town. Nevertheless, the areas from which farmers come to fairs yield the same picture of overlapping distributions. The smaller fairs of little attendance draw from the smaller areas, which group together in turn. Widest of all are the areas of the largest fairs, held at Ennis and Kilrush. And there is not a village to be found on the map that does not have its fairs, carefully scheduled so that within the immediate area there will be

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no conflict of schedules. The farmer may go this week to a small village fair two miles or so away in one direction, next week three miles or so in another, and the third week to a larger town.

The list of cattle, sheep, horse, and pig fairs within County Clare given in Table 8 is taken from *Old Moore's*, the farmer's almanac. *Old Moore's* has hung in every farmer's house for nearly a century. It is his infallible guide. A glance at the map of Clare will show how many are the fairs within even a very small compass of a few miles.

TABLE 8

CALENDAR OF FAIRS IN COUNTY CLARE, 1934

Ballina, March 28
Ballyket, March 22, July 4, August 17 (cattle), December 1
Ballynacally, February 28, April 14, June 14, July 30, September 16, November 8
Ballyvaughan, May 29, June 24, September 16, December 18
Bauroe, *see* Feakle
Bridgetown, January 24, April 18, June 16, November 25
Broadford, April 13, June 21, September 13, November 21
Carrigaholt, June 1, July 5, August 19 (cattle, pigs, and sheep)
Clare Castle, May 30 (pigs day previous), November 11 (pigs day previous)
Clonroad (Ennis), May 8, July 31, October 13, December 2
Connolly, January 2, April 17, July 18, October 3
Corofin, February 19, May 20, July 20, September 12, November 22, December 14 (cattle, sheep, and pigs)
Doonbeg, February 8, April 1, May 2, July 1 and 26, October 8, December 16
Ennis (*see also* Clonroad), January 5 (sheep), 6, 11 (pigs only), February 2, 8 (pigs only), March 2, 3, 8 (pigs only), April 4 (horses and sheep), 5, 10 (pigs only), 16 (cattle), 18 and 19 (sheep), May 10 (pigs only), June 14 (pigs only), July 12 (pigs only), August 9 (pigs only), September 4 (cattle and sheep), 13 (pigs only), October 11 (pigs only), November 8 (pigs only), December 13 (pigs only)
Ennistymon, January 22, February 12, March 24, April 15, May 15, July 2, August 22, September 29, November 19, December 13. Pig market last Tuesday of each month
Feakle, January 24, February 17 (Bauroe), March 24, April 24, May 17 (Bauroe), June 20, July 24, August 17 (Bauroe), September 24, October 24, November 17 (Bauroe), December 20
Kilclaran, June 1
Kildysart, January 21, February 20, March 15, April 24, May 22, July 15, August 27, October 24, December 18. Pig fair second Thursday of each month
Kilenena, March 11, June 13, September 12, December 12
Kilfenora, February 25, April 9, June 2, August 15, October 9, November 4 (cattle, sheep, and pigs)
Kilkee, January 8, February 24, April 15, May 13, July 10, August 13, October 5, November 26. Pig fair second Tuesday of each month
Kilkishen, January 20, March 15, May 9, August 31, December 23

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TABLE 8 (*continued*)

443 Killaloe, third Monday in January, February 28, March 28, April 12, May 20, June 26, July 16, August 12, September 3, October 20, November 17, first Tuesday after Christmas, cattle and sheep
Kilmihill, January 7, February 15, March 30, May 19, July 18, August 15, September 28, November 1, December 13
Kilmurry M'Mahon, May 24
Kilrush, last Wednesday in each month, for pigs; January 16, February 22, April 13, May 10, June 12, September 1, October 12, November 16, for cattle and sheep; March 25, first Thursday in June, October 10, November 23, for horses
Labasheeda, June 10, August 10, October 10, December 10
Liscannor, January 6
Lisdoonvarna, April 1, May 1, November 1, December 1
Miltown Malbay, February 1, March 9, May 4, June 21, August 11, September 10, October 18, December 9. Pigs first Thursday of each month
Mullagh, January 1, March 17
Newmarket-on-Fergus, December 20
O'Brien's Bridge, March 18, July 25, November 17
O'Callaghan's Mills, June 27, November 14
Quin, July 7 (cattle and sheep), November 1 (horses, cattle, and sheep)
Ruane, June 17, September 26
Scarriff, January 5, February 1, March 3, April 3, May 1, June 2, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 3, December 9, pigs day previous
Sixmilebridge, December 5
Spancil-hill, June 23, 24
Tulla, last Tuesday in January and February, March 25, April 25, May 13, June 15, July 19, August 15, September 29, October 19, November 9, December 7

438 133 In these ever-larger overlapping market areas the natural physical divisions of the countryside are well represented. The great central mass of Mount Callan divides West Clare from the rest of the county. It divides as well the market districts of Ennis and Kilrush. In the valley of the Fergus River, which drains the highlands of Mid-Clare to the north and East Clare beyond the corcasses (rough marshlands) to the east, the human flow of trade and produce exchange tends downward to the towns of Ennis and Clarecastle, at the head of tidewater. The high country marking the divides over into the Inagh and Cullinagh rivers and into the lake country of North Clare, just south of the gaunt hills 438 of Burren, divides the market district of Ennis from the smaller districts upon which the villages of Ennistymon, Corrofin, and Lisdoonvarna draw. Yet these villages in their turn are within the region of Clare from which the

The methods of transport in the countryside are related
489 to the distances to be traveled and the errands to be run. These things are matters of the organization and relationships of family and community. It is not only the means of transport which can be related to the constituent relationships of country social life. Each kind of farm product exported and farm need purchased involves a different distance of travel, a holder of a different status in family and community, and a different relation with the outsider.

489 The goods the farmer produces travel to the centers at
443 which they are exchanged over distances which are com-
438 mensurate with their value, their importance in farm economy, and their association with the status of the persons in the rural communities under whose charge they are produced. Horses take most care, are most valuable, and are the very special charge of the man of the house. The horse fair accordingly draws from the largest area. Cattle are the great money crop, the export staple. Accordingly the cattle fairs are among the chief lodestones of the larger centers, drawing from the deepest hinterlands of the major market areas. They are masculine affairs. Likewise potatoes and corn crops, oats, come to market only in the major centers. Farm fathers bring them down by horse and car from the deepest hinterlands.

Pigs represent a much shorter period of work and care. They are often in woman's province. The pig fairs are smaller gatherings, held in small centers, drawing from small hinterlands. Lesser vegetables, principally cabbage, travel no such distance as potatoes, and women often sell them. Finally, butter and eggs travel the shortest distance of all. They are often bartered at the crossroad centers. Before creameries were introduced, salted firkins or tubs of butter, representing a longer accumulation, went longer distances to the village centers.

234 Creamery associations were not established until the
438 middle of the time of research in County Clare. They are

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town classes on the other. Let it suffice to show his place that in a recitation of such a shopkeeper's intimates and associates it is most often not the farmers but the members of the community who are in a similar position who figure. His associates are the parish priest, the schoolmaster, the local police, and the local "rancher." When marriages are made for his daughters, they are made with big farmers, and husbands are got at considerably greater distances than in the case of the small farmers. Along with his associates, he makes up the rural middle class, at once a halfway point and a channel of movement for the infiltration of gradual change, poised between the small farmers of the countryside and the middle and upper classes of the urban centers.

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443 conventional. How much, if anything, survives of medieval commerce in them and how much comes down from the days of the medieval Irish *aonach* is a matter for the historian. In ancient times the fair was a gathering for purposes much more widely embracing than exchange of produce. The *aonach* was often the occasion of a royal or chieftainly court, a bardic contest, and local games. Nothing of this remains today.

443 Cattle, horse, sheep, and pig fairs are fixed, habitual
424 occasions. Their dates and places of meeting are universal knowledge in the countryside. An extension of medieval English law has made most of them proprietary, making of the right to hold a fair a legal title to be bought and sold and charged for in the shape of tolls. But they are public occasions none the less.

443 The lore of fairs is an inexhaustible fund of information among the small farmers. Among them, indeed, the size of the local fairs is a matter of local pride. It is an index of the industry and wealth of the region. The state of prices is as much a clue to the fate of the local universe as the financial vagaries of Wall Street or the City reveal the destinies of the world.

443 All this is natural enough where fairs and local markets
462 represent the chief outlets for produce and the chief source of monetary income. As cattle are the chief concern of the
562 males of the family and source of ultimate success or failure for the family, so the cattle fair is the great testing ground for male prowess, skill, and intelligence. In the market place of the cattle fair, the male command of the family corporation and masculine representation of that corporation in the community makes public display of its stewardship. On this stage, the farmer can meet the outsider on his own terms and with his own weapons of shrewdness and experience.

437 The farmers criticize bitterly any departure from cus-
443 tomary procedure. Even though they complain that the fair

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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation. 437 443 [555]

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers. 443 868

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance. 521 443

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities. 443 484 574 602

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the 443 484

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443 morning. To dress, snatch a cup of tea, and bless himself
484 takes only a moment. Usually he has arranged for companionship, and he and his neighbors drive their beasts along the roads together. Company makes the night less lonely and the handling of the animals easier. Driving them is a skilled task against the dangers of the road, both natural and eerie. The men hope to reach the site of the fair before daybreak. They want to arrive in time to find a "good pitch," as they call it. They want to take their stand in the drawn-up lines of men and beasts where buyers are most likely to notice them. His pitch taken, each man stands over his beasts, ready for the inspection of buyers, careful that his beasts do not wander off or get mixed up with the others.

443 As dawn breaks, the buyers arrive. They are nearly always
438 cattle dealers and big farmers. Only occasionally are they local men. One can recognize them as they hurry about,
[291] businesslike, wearing trench coat, bowler, and leggings. The costume is practically a uniform with them, quite different from the drab coats and boots of the countrymen. They carry chalk or scissors and pencils and a notebook to mark the beasts of their choice and record their purchases.

In the good days of high prices, as during the World War, the buyers arrive even before dawn and buy by lantern light. All the good beasts of the fair may be gone by the time the sun comes up. On occasions of little demand, however, the buyers have time to look about carefully and make the exhaustive tests of quality that long experience has convinced them are the secret of commercial success.

443 The procedure of choice, bargaining, and sale is as un-
437 changing a ritual as any church provides. The buyer — dealer or farmer — strolls unconcernedly along the lines of farmers and their beasts. Here and there he greets an acquaintance. But he is appraising the animals all the while. Rigid custom forbids his breaking in on a bargain already

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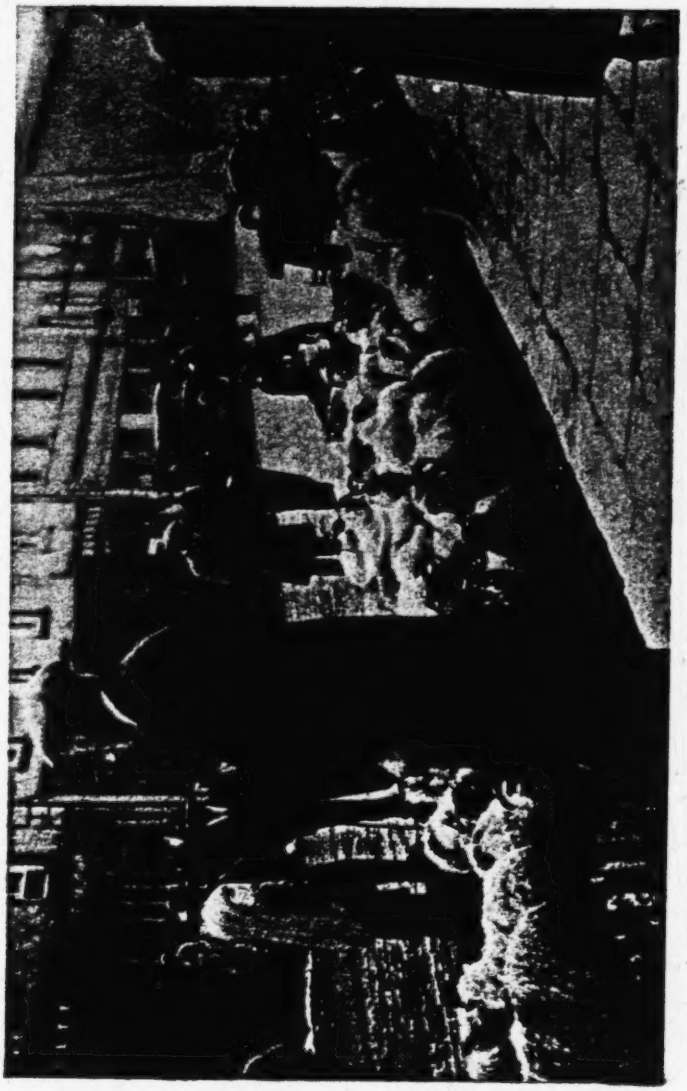

SHEEP FAIR IN A MARKET TOWN

[facing p. 300]

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443 begun. He must find a farmer who is free for the moment.
437 Should he catch sight of an unoccupied owner of a likely animal, he crosses over to him and begins the business of the day. His first move is to ask the price, knowing well he will get one larger than the farmer really hopes to receive. This first exchange is merely the occasion for the closer inspection of the cattle and a notice to the other that a bargain is in process.

Such a move is a signal. As questions and offers pass between buyer and farmer, a crowd of bystanders soon collects. They offer suggestions, shout out commentaries, encourage one party or the other, contributing animatedly to the debate, which will eventually culminate in a sale at a price which instantly becomes the knowledge of buyers and sellers alike.

One of the bystanders almost invariably adopts a well-recognized role. He becomes an intermediary between buyer and seller. He turns all his energy, backed by the plaudits of the crowd, to the consummation of the sale. He may be a friend of either buyer or seller, brought in for his shrewdness or experience or skill, or he may be a wandering tinker in hopes of a commission from one or the other. He may even be only an interested bystander.

The intermediary is almost always a major factor in the transaction. He is the one who forges an agreement over the distrust and shyness of the farmer and the autocratic impatience of the buyer. All the parties are vociferous, the farmer in praise of his wares and the buyer in depreciation of them. The intermediary turns grandiose claims into laughter, wears down the resistance of the farmer by wit, and raises the offers of the buyer by appeals to fair dealing. Time and time again he will drag back a buyer who rushes off in well-feigned disgust at an outrageous demand or push forward the hand of a reluctant farmer to be seized by the buyer in the handclasp that marks completion of the sale.

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443 Amid the encouragements of the bystanders, he repeats the
437 old bargaining cries. He shouts, "Split the difference!" when taking-price and asking-price approach one another, and he wrings concessions from each party until agreement is reached. They end with a handshake between them. The sale is made.

If the buyer is ready to pay for his purchase on the spot, the older custom, all three parties step off the fair ground into any convenient near-by pub. There they celebrate the transaction at the expense of the buyer, the purchase money changes hands, and they make assurances all round. The seller turns back a "luck penny" out of the purchase price. This is a payment often as large as half a crown, depending upon the transaction, repaid to the buyer in token of good faith.

Custom is changing here. A large-scale dealer may have little time or inclination for such amenities. He may give the seller a ticket or slip of paper as his record of the transaction and arrange to see him later in the day. He stands, slip in hand, ready to receive payment in his turn. Later on, then, at the time arranged, the farmer takes his place with the others with whom the dealer has been dealing during the day. Even then the farmer usually gives back a luck penny, even though he knows the dealer may reckon it a reduction of price rather than a ceremonial gesture. For it is a traditional gesture of independence and equality on his part.

443 Fairs beginning at dawn are usually over by noon. By that time the farmers are clear that they must sell at a sacrifice or drive the beasts home unsold to wait for another day. If prices are good, eager buyers have snatched up everything except unsalable scrubs.

443 For the farmer this mart is more than a simple economic
437 exchange. The form of exchange is as important as the exchange itself. It is an instance of traditional behavior

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on the part of the small farmers, supported by sanctions and sentiment. In the ritual of bargaining and exchange in the fair, many relationships are acted out: the relations between farmer and farmer; the relations between farmers and their sons and the boys of their kindred; the relations between farmers and persons from the outside world of big farms, business and trade, and the towns. Throughout the whole of the proceedings one can see all these get a periodic, ceremonial reiteration here. 443 437

The economic circumstances of the fair are only part of the picture the fair presents. The fair and market are almost the only sources of monetary income for the farmers. They are the chief occasions for realizing the labor of a year's agricultural work. Consequently they are also the traditional occasions for settling debts, for making payments on accounts with shopkeepers. They are also the occasion of stocking up with everything from boots and clothes to feed and manure. 443

Indeed the fairs are the chief occasions of commercial and monetary activity in the agricultural counties. They are periodic high points of local activity in which laborers and local government have as much interest as the farmers. They are great events at which the economy of the western and southern parts of Ireland gets its only general, public, and spectacular circulation of funds. Yet they have a ceremonial side equally vivid.

The lining up of the farmers and their sons before their cattle to await the inspection and commencement of bargaining we must not idly dismiss as a mere convenience in bringing cattle to the attention of the prospective buyer. Like the other conventions of conduct in the fair, it deserves a careful treatment. These conventions can be put under a common explanatory scheme with those of farm life. In the arrangements of events in the fairs there are new events among persons which follow the same course as in the

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443 daily life of the family members at home on the farm and in the rural community. But in this case there is a far different setting.

443 At a fair the dealers or buyers initiate transactions or ter-
437 minate the bargaining at will. They are free to choose both the cattle they shall buy and the farmers with whom they shall deal. This is the same organization of relations between farmers and outsiders as that which prevails in the local community. The efforts of the intermediary and the emotional connotations of the luck penny as well as the grumbles of the farmers fit into this pattern of social and economic relations. There is some antagonism here, of the farmers against the others, but the solidarities of the two parties carry their own check. Prices may be so low that the farmers refuse to sell. Buyers band together to force a low price on various occasions. Resentments are mutual and common enough. But the ceremonial survives. It is an enactment of the community relations of the small farmers. It will change only as those relations change. The familistic farmer stands for himself, and his community is built only on gossip, public opinion, and common values. His mechanism of economic exchange expresses his social order and the community it serves.

443 Beside the cattle fairs there are fairs for dealing in sheep, pigs, and horses. These take much the same form, their complexity and importance depending upon the importance of the animal sold. Sheep, for example, are not so important in farm economy as cattle. Neither do they command such high prices. Consequently, sheep fairs are less imposing affairs, often held in conjunction with cattle fairs. The conventions are the same as in the cattle fairs.

443 Horse fairs again are very similar. Because of the higher
437 value of the horse and the use of the horse for sport and ceremony among the upper classes, the horse fairs are less frequent than cattle fairs, but more elaborate. In the case of

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cattle, the farmer must usually drive the beasts he has sold to the station himself. In the case of horses, the buyer exercises a greater care. A deal is closed not only by the usual handclasps but by the change of halters as well. Horses are put through their paces very carefully, sometimes in secrecy off in a side field or down a dark street. The majority of horses are sold between farmers and destined for farm work, but there is always a strong atmosphere of riches and brilliant chance about the proceedings. Many are the tales of half-bred horses, picked up for a song, that have come to win all before them. 443 437

Since most of the fairs are legally proprietary, they are protected by law. In many cases the towns have bought out the rights to tolls from private families, finding them a welcome source of revenue. To safeguard these rights, action may be brought against illicit buyers and sellers. In practice, however, it is only in horse-dealing that the owners of the tolls exercise vigilance, since there the tolls are so great. All this contributes to the atmosphere of importance that surrounds the horse fairs. 443 424

Pigs are sold more frequently, especially as they represent a great deal shorter period of development. Every town has its bonham and pig market. Every Saturday may witness a few transactions complete with the same rituals of inspection, repartee, and bargaining, but there are times of greater activity as well. It is generally only in pig markets that women are to be seen at fairs. 443

The second chief occasions of economic exchange, which afford further examples of the ceremonial surrounding the small farmer's mechanisms of contact with the outside world, are the produce markets of the towns. In them similar enactments of family and community relations are to be seen.

Each market town has its weekly market day. The day is fixed so as not to conflict with that of any other near-by

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443 center. Only in the central largest town of a whole area is Saturday the market day *par excellence*. In Clare, for instance, only Ennis and Kilrush have Saturday markets. Smaller centers set other days of the week aside.

In the larger towns such markets may be held in stores and yards owned by the municipality. More often custom has set aside a section of a street or a central square for each kind of produce. In Ennis a separate yard and shed serves as a butter market, another yard and shed with a weighhouse serves for corn and wool. Pigs, lambs, cabbage, and other vegetables are sold in the streets.

The principal commodities sold at the weekly markets in Clare are oats, mangels, turnips, wool, potatoes, hay, straw, cabbage, calves, lambs, kids (an Easter delicacy), pigs, bonhams, chickens, geese, other poultry. Records of these sales itemize the commerce of the whole hinterland in agricultural produce. Public institutions in the town buy through contracts awarded to various suppliers, the weighing and delivery taking place through the public market. Dealers for each product visit the markets. Even those who have come recently to use lorries that tour the country crossroads still appear at the weekly markets.

443 For those interested in a typical view of this kind of com-
438 merce, Table 9 presents a picture of the tolls received in the town of Ennis during the years 1927–33. The table is arranged as a calendar and gives average toll receipts for each product for each month during the period. One can see the monthly fluctuations at a glance and the annual periods of activity in sales. The chief change during the period was the dropping off of butter sales, a fact accounted for by the rise of creameries in other parts of the county and the introduction of the lorry. Otherwise sales were of much the same volume each year. As the tolls were constant during the period charted, the figures are a very good index to the local produce marketed.

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TABLE 9

Sales of Ennis Market, 1927–1933 *

Item	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Cattle	£54.00	? [a]	0	0	0	20.00	? [e]	0	? [g]	30.00	41.00	44.00
Sheep	£19.00	? [b]	0	? [e]	0	? [d]	? [f]	0	? [h]	3.00	4.00	5.00
Butter	£ 8.00	18.00	25.00	27.00	32.00	28.00	26.00	15.00	6.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
Potatoes	£14.00	9.00	6.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	9.00	9.00	17.00
Roots	£ 3.00	.75	.13	0	0	0	0	2.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	4.00
Corn	£ 3.00	.50	.13	0	0	12.00	30.00	29.00	17.00	8.00	5.00	9.00
Hay	£13.00	1.00	.13	.13	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	9.00
Wool	£ .75	2.00	13.00	7.00	3.00	4.00	7.00	2.00	.50	.20	1.00	.50
Pigs	362	56	37	46	76	118	115	118	118	94	84	90
Bonhams	1122	155	111	84	94	99	117	115	64	42	59	112

* Toll receipts are given in pounds or hundredths of pounds except in the case of the last two, which are given in shillings. The figures are average total receipts for the month named over the six-year period.

[a] Figures only for 1928, 1932 (£49, £11 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[b] Figures only for 1928, 1932 (£22, £17 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[c] Figures only for 1932 (£4). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[d] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£8, £12 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[e] Figures only for 1932 (£18). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[f] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£35, £37 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[g] Figures only for 1932 (£11). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.
[h] Figures only for 1931, 1932 (£9, £10 respectively). Presumably no fairs tolled other years.

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443 In buying and selling in the town markets, bargaining
437 ritual is very much the same as in the fairs. Every seller must negotiate for himself, but the luck penny is neglected.
462 The sexual division of labor on the farm is amply represented. The women stand over and bargain about their eggs, butter, and poultry. Men alone are to be seen dealing in pigs, lambs, wool, and corn. Yet it is not unusual to see a woman dealing for a sack of potatoes or for bonhams.

443 In all these transactions the usual ritual of bargaining
437 appears. It is customary, though in a curtailed and abbreviated form, in the purchasing that the small farmer does in the shops. It appears wherever persons of diverse allegiance are brought together in the life of the farmers. It appears, as we have seen, in the making of a match between two families. Like monetary payment for services, it figures only in the external relations of the farmers' groups. Indeed, it is the behavior characteristically connected with monetary payment.

Occasionally a small farmer buys from another in his own community, but the practice is rare. Goods change hands rather through the mechanisms of borrowing and gifts in the patterns of kinship and cooring. The difference of behavior must be referred to the different relationships.

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221 fields made ready for the return of the cattle to
241 them. Each 'hard' day is more than welcome, for
462 then work in the fields can go on. By St. Patrick's day, they say in Clare, the potatoes should all be 'down'; after that there still remains much to do,
[776] though the worst is over. St. Patrick promised that after his day *every* day would 'come hard'.

Through the rest of the spring, work is at its most intense. Potatoes must be 'stirred' and 'landed'; other root crops 'put down'. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the season of greater milk yields and intensified butter-making. Before that in February and March
[443] the 'great spring fairs' take place, and the year's buying and selling of cattle must be done.

Then, gradually, with the return of warm weather and the drying-off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is often the first summer month. Soon the bogs are dry enough for cutting the year's supply of turf and for stacking it to dry under the summer warmth at the bog's edge.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the first fruits of the farmer's labour begin to appear. The first crop is cabbage, which was planted at odd times very early. It is practically the only green of the
[261] diet and old people remember June or July *an chabáiste*, 'the hungry month', when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semi-starvation upon cabbage. Today new varieties of potatoes mature as early as June. But

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a more elaborate scale perhaps, the country farm 366
house kitchen. Like its country counterpart it is the 347
seat of family life. 369
342

Upstairs, a front room facing the street is transformed, by family portraits, an ornamental mantle and a piece or two of good mahogany, into a ceremonial parlour. Behind this, range the bedrooms of the family. Perhaps, in affluence and refinement there is an upstairs sitting-room as well. For the shop is no mere place of business. It is first of all a household, of which one section and one only is devoted to the world of affairs.

The family which this household houses and 443
supports, in the majority of cases, works the shop 369
in much the same way that the family of the farmer 593
works the land. It conducts its business as a united corporation in which all members may take a hand and each have his place. Husband and wife tend the counter together and between them shopkeeping is divided; sons and daughters work as shop-assistants, as long as they remain at home. Only when affluence lifts the shop to importance and dignifies the shopkeeper with the title and station of merchant, expanding his business to wholesaling, is this arrangement greatly modified.

Yet, self-sufficient as this familistic shop-world 369
is, the countryman has many a connection with it. 443
It lives its own quiet life and plies its own trade so different from the farmer's work upon the farm. Town life breeds its own sentiment and weaves its

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369 own bonds, making of the townsmen a community
443 of conduct, feeling and values. But, nevertheless, despite this isolating process which shuts the countryman out, he is not at all remote. The first great tie, and the obvious one, is the economic. The country-dwellers buy the shop goods which move across the townsmen's counters and bring in the moneys realized in fair and market in exchange for retail goods.

But the economic tie is not sufficient, in Irish life, for permanence. Time and assimilation have woven a full social pattern round it. The pattern is really an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order. The market town fills its role as a metropolis of native sentiment in that extension.

There is a saying in the towns of Ireland that summarizes well the movements of town life. "The country-people flock into the towns," they say, "and the townspeople all die out of them." A moment's investigation bears out the fact. Though the town, too, is a familistic world, like the countryside, it differs in that it is a world in slow movement. Generation after generation, a new family sets up shop or public-house, flourishes or fails and then passes on out of the town's life; pressed from behind by the vigour of new country blood or graduated upward economically and socially into the professions. Some families withstand the movement a long time; here and there one can point to

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a century or more of burgher succession. Others 369
have known a more rapid change of station down- 443
ward or upward in a single generation. But all of them together can feel the compelling sweep of movement which is part of town life.

Is it really the countryman's vigour that sweeps thus through the Irish towns? I know that is the usual explanation, where such a situation in town and urban life exists. Much has been written in Ireland and in all modern countries about the debilitating effect of urban and near-urban life. It is the fashion to lament the onward sweep which fills the towns and cities with fresh blood, names and faces and pushes out the old. Landmarks change out of recognition; the old families disappear mysteriously, and one can cry out that a new barbarian flood is sweeping away the life's blood of the educated urban classes.

But such a view is very blind. It is astigmatic from a too close looking upon the immediate, instant case. It neglects entirely the organization of human behaviour and sentiment, unreasoned and unplanned though it be, that makes our human societies. It confounds the force of ordered change with weakness and decay.

Nowhere would the view fail worse than in southern Ireland. The countryman who presses in upon the townsman does not drive him out through superior vigour, nor does the townsman fade away in weak decay. Each is caught in a social

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369 pattern which fashions many lifetimes and their desires, ambitions, achievements and failures. History and habit have wrought a series of pathways almost as definite as those of a termite's nest; but history and habit care little which termite follows them. Vigour, if it exists, can only be measured in the ease with which the path-follower travels along his course, and the change which his passing makes upon it.

I am sure I shall be accused of a thorough-going, even mystical determinism in human affairs. But let us follow the countryman and the towns-dweller and see wherein my heresy is justifiable and wherein we may temper it.

369 443 571 In the communities my colleagues and I came to know, the country customer who brings his trade into the shop does so in response to the ties of kinship and friendliness. He 'goes with' a shopkeeper or publican, most often, as he 'coors' with his country friends. This is not his only incentive but it is his principal one. The social order of which he is a part embraces the town-dwelling shopkeeper; trade follows friendship. Many indeed are the shops which rely almost entirely upon this 'family trade'. Others know it to be the base upon which they must build.

But, we remember, the relation of kinship and friendship is reciprocal. The shopkeeper is bound in his turn to his 'family trade'. He owes obligation to the 'country cousins' who buy from him. In

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this way, a durable bond is created which exists 369
over and above the economics of retail trade. It is 443
of the kind that the countryman understands best; 571
it charges the relationship with interest for him; it infuses it with sentiment, habit and reciprocal force. The shopkeeper, too, can rely upon it. Even though he be caught in the demands it makes upon him, he, nevertheless, can rely heavily upon its expectancies.

The ordinary modest retail shop or pub lives upon this tie. In many cases the tie infuses business with a social content which becomes co-extensive with the distributive function the shop performs in economic exchange. If the tie is weakened, if it dies, the shop weakens and dies too. And with it dies the family which derives livelihood, status and much of its corporate existence from that shop. For possession of the shop gives status and prestige and marks one's social place for the family, as much as does the 'farm of land' in the countryside. The family's 'name is on the shop' in much the same way as the country family's name is 'on the land'. In fact, almost symbolically, that name is literally [551] on the shop, for in Ireland most often a single word —the family name—rather than any announcement of the type of retail trade carried on—hangs over the door to proclaim the shop's existence to the buying public. And when the 'family trade' dies, that name dies out of the shop world with it.

Business, then, in the market-towns is no frantic

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369 search for better qualities at lower prices. It is first
● 443 of all a technique in social relations. It demands an
571 orientation to a social order, that of the country-man-customer. Customer and retailer are brought together, not primarily through a cheap price nor an eye-compelling package, but through personalities and through blood and marriage bonds.

In this social context, the interests of shopkeeper and farmer coincide. If the shop is to live it must renew its ties with the rural hinterland; if the farm on the land is to grow in status and strength it must ally itself in a higher and wider social sphere, and in so doing, provide well for its dispersed children. This coincidence of interest determines much of the shopkeeper's life; through it the countryman has assimilated the town to his own way of life.

The town represents that higher and wider sphere for the countryman. Its life is that of a higher station in life; it is a centre of metropolitan prestige. So the farmer can come to send his son into a shop, as he sends a daughter 'into the land' in match-making, to provide him with a better place in life, to make a gentleman of him. The shopkeeper may need a young and pliable assistant in his business. He must have one upon whose kindred he can depend for extension of his trade. He takes in the farmer's son.

In this way, the first of the social bonds that unite the shop and the pub to the rural hinterland

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is created. A pathway is created along which human 369
lives can move and play out their roles in social 443
life. One of the farmer's sons can hope, with luck 571
and affluence, to become a shop-assistant in the market-town. The portion he receives upon the dispersal of the farm family may well take the form of such a start in life. The farmer-father pays the 467
boy's apprentice bond. 443

Formal apprenticeships still flourish in Irish 369
country towns and nowhere better than in the shop 571
or pub. The country boy is bound in custom and in law to his new employer and learns the alien way of business and social habit under a master's eye. Eventually he may succeed to a shop of his own, but first he 'must serve his time'. In this, rural Ireland has preserved an older form and charged it with its own peculiar content. The town-bred lad is seldom hired; he brings no rural kindred with him. Then, too, he is neither so impressionable nor so easy to control. The country lad, at first, is both. The shopkeeper taps the social order of the countryside in the person of his fledgling 'prentice boy.

But time brings ordered change in social life, in 369
the town no less than in the countryside. The boy 443
grows up; he serves his time. He acquires the 571
experience and the technique which fit him for 166
the role for which his parents paid his apprentice bond. Unless he is to retain a subordinate and unimportant place as shop-assistant for a lifetime, he must move on. He must acquire a shop himself.

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369 And so he does, if he humanly can, and to that end
443 his savings go.

571 So much for the farmer's son. In his person, he
166 represents a rough one-half of the countryside's invasion of the town. Yet he has sisters, too, at home upon the farm. The attraction of metropolis is no less great for them; they, too, must be provided for in the dispersal of the family upon the land. And with them goes the rural social order and the ties of kinship and community.

In this fact one can see another rough half of the
369 rural tide that sweeps into the ranks of business in
443 the towns. The shop-world taps its country hinter-
571 land again in the persons of the daughters of the
584 farms. The farmer must, if he can, marry his daughter off well; prestige and alliance go with her and the dowry which she carries as her portion. The shopkeeper must renew his ties with the countryside with each new generation, if the shop is to survive. In this coincidence of interest, again, a great deal of the marriage custom of the town revolves. The world of shops and pubs is caught within the ordered mechanism of change called *match-making*, in the same way as is the 'farm of land'.

Currently in country towns, the 'match' is the accepted type of marriage for publican and shopkeeper as much as it is for the farmer. The more sophisticated and more affluent shopkeepers, those who are close, or would like to be, to the higher

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status of merchant, would repudiate the rustic word. They would tell you that they make instead 'proper marriage settlements'. But their humbler fellow-tradesmen, whose shops have not such pretensions, are closer to the soil. They would admit what is for both of them the fact.

Consequently, one can find in the town, round the shop and pub, the same reorganization of human relationships that goes forward when the country match transfers land and household command to a marrying son. But there is one great difference. In the town one must bring a country-woman in.

If one analyses the census of marriage, age and occupation in the Free State made in 1926, one can see how general this reorganization is. It lies behind the statistics of a great part of the country. Without it, one cannot explain the striking uniformity that gives a roughly similar grouping of individuals by age, by sex, by marital conditions, in all the towns, except the large cities, of southern Ireland. For instance, shop-assistants everywhere are young unmarried men and women. Entrance into the ownership of shop and public-house takes place at the same age as does entrance into married state. Though the towns show no such marked extremes as do the country districts, marriage is long delayed and bachelorhood and spinsterhood are very frequent by world standards. One need not be a demographer or statistician to be struck with the parallel, and to wonder at such coincidence between

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369 the lives of the followers of occupations so dissimilar
443 as agriculture and retail commerce.

571 For this statistical correspondence overlies the
584 facts of social life. It merely expresses numerically the community of custom between country and town. If one cares to probe deeper, among the lives whose events the census records, one finds the custom at the root of human behaviour and human sentiment. One lays bare the outline of the balance in which the lives of townsmen and countrymen co-mingle in a larger whole.

For setting up a shop means setting up a family; it means marriage and the bringing-in of a country girl. There are exceptions, of course; custom is only a general imperative. Nevertheless, the country match is the generality.

Most often, the shopkeeper-father turns over the shop to the son who is to succeed him when that son marries. The daughter-in-law is the daughter of a farmer of the countryside. Her people 'walk the shop' as they would 'walk the land' in a country match. Long negotiation equates the dowry they give with the shop, its stock, its debts and its prospects. The two families cast the agreement into proper legal form. The shopkeeper transfers his control and his ownership to the son and the son's wife. The other shop children are dispersed and are provided for, where possible. The older generation retires; and a new family is established in business in the town.

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This is a smooth and orderly transition. The shop keeps its identification with human ties unbroken, from parents to children. It renews them once again, outward into the rural hinterland, in the persons of kindred the young wife brings 'into the shop'. The shop's life blood is renewed: literally, in the persons of the new master and mistress; socially, in the extensions of kinship and alliance; and economically, because trade follows personal ties.

The erstwhile apprentice boy, the farmer's son, who sets up 'on his own', follows the same course and makes a comparable transition. His marriage and his setting up his own shop most often coincide. His savings and the bride's fortune make possible, together, many a start in the life of the market-towns. Money buys the shop, credit may stock its shelves, but it is the social alliance, contracted in a country marriage, which supplies the trade upon which business rests.

One might ask here if the role of the sexes is not reversible. Might not the young man marry-in into the shop, and the girl rise from assistantship to full-fledged ownership? Naturally, such a course might well be taken; a social order allows many channels. It has not the rigidity of formal law. Or the girl may inherit a shop, or receive one, in the towns, as her particular portion. For to set up a daughter in a small shop is to provide well for her and to assure her station for her lifetime; even

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 though little wealth will come to her through that
443 shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases,
571 these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a
584 finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly
369 universal occurrence where a society preserves
443 some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural
571 necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic
582 order. In India, for instance, it is immediately recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

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 [171]

gain a foothold in the world of shops. For that, the countryman is willing, currently, to pay about twice the usual dowry-price. 369 443 571 582

And in his willing adherence to custom, stability is achieved. The relationship between class and class, like that in the countryside between kindred and kindred, attains some permanence of form. The bride carries social bonds with her; in this case she carries them upward and townward into the shops and pubs of metropolis.

Her brother, on the other hand, carries with him another social function, in his capacity of male. His place is that of a potential fatherhood in a line of patrilineal descent. He carries on a corporate name upon the land or shop. Where he cannot inherit, in such descent, a sure place among his fellows, he must win it. The man is the bread-winner who carves out a place for his line; round him the family must be grouped. The woman, on the other hand, is the uniting force within the grouping. In this dichotomization of social role between the sexes, the Irish town and the Irish countryside, like the Church to which they both subscribe, are agreed. Hypergamy takes its form in the agreement. Along the lines laid down by the social bonds of apprenticeship and hypergamous marriage, the world of the market-town and the rural hinterland are united; along the same lines the flow of the country-people townward moves.

Once again, then, we see how complete the in-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives
443 on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he
571 be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must
582 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

This order, one must not forget, is nothing
182 esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than
369 it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire
443 among the constituent human beings, both make
571 it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern
584 into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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to cook, sew, keep house, and she hasn't a lot of grand ideas in her head that the town girls have. When she comes to town, she feels she's got on in the world; while the town girl will only be wanting more than her husband can give her, or she won't do her share."

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369
443
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The speaker was a townsman, born and bred, but one can see that he endorsed the system heartily. He was an older man who had made his adaptations to social life successfully.

For others, for those whom the life of the town has caught up and who have acquired 'grand ideas', as the last speaker called them, adaptation is more difficult. The town, as I have said, engenders its own near-urban values. These come to conflict with those which unite the shop world to its countryside. Thus ambition is born, which means a severance of old ties. The ties become thwarting chains, and here and there a young man, caught within the pulls of two incompatible forces, becomes a bitter and scornful rebel.

One such young man, who found himself swept back into the ways of the market-towns after a brief flight into larger horizons in Dublin, fought against the fate that closed him in. He tells his own story: "This town is very dull. I don't understand what brings you here. The trouble with everybody here is that they are all misfits and that they are all in jobs they loathe. Successful men give you good counsel: they tell you to work hard and forget your

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 troubles. But that is because they are in occupations
369 which they like. There is something glamorous
● 443 about being a solicitor, and everybody comes to
571 you. I would like to have been one. There will be
584 opportunity here when the older men clear out.

"I went off and studied in Dublin for a long while. Then my father died and my mother was stricken with paralysis and I had to come back here and work behind the counter, which I loathe. There's no one else now but my sister. Most shopkeepers make out through their family trade; and the only thing for me to do now is to marry some rich woman in from the country and then all her friends will come in. If you want to get married here there is nothing in it at all but to look out for a country girl. If you don't want to make a fool of yourself and go in for politics, you have to depend on your friends and your wife's friends, and if you can, you've got to marry a girl from the country. Then she'll bring in all her people for miles round, with all their relatives and their married families, and they're the ones that will buy your flour and sugar and tea. You can't get on without them."

182 In this rebellious young man's lament, another
369 aspect of the life of the towns appears and takes its proper place. The social order which demands the maintenance of personal bonds between countryman and townsman carries with it the seeds of change as well. The young man I have just quoted is caught within the very wheels of this change. A

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
452
626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
668 public life who has contributed so much to humour and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and
443 cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the 1916 Rebellion, have other broad social classes 178
of what used to be called the 'Irishry' made a sub- 668
stantial contribution to organized political life, 443
though all of them figured well enough in patriotic rebellion. 1898 is the crucial date, because then the landlords were displaced in the management of local affairs. The older Grand Jury system, based upon large property qualifications, gave way to the elective County Councils.

At about the same time, land war had broken the last remaining ties between the landlords, as a class, and the social order of the countryside. The growth of the towns since the Famine had by then well established the new relation between the market-town and its rural hinterland which I have described. In the new situation, the shopkeeper and the publican could best represent the united interests of the social order of which they were, in their own way, an important part.

All nations infuse political forms with their own genius. The Irish were not slow to do so; they soon made their own infusion. The reciprocities of a familistic order, in which sentiment and habit found effective organization, were the materials they had at hand. The bonds between town and countryside provided channels through which the infusion could flow.

For, as I have tried to show you, the shop- 443
keeper-publican occupied then, and still does, a 661
strategic place in the organization of the country- 626

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 661 626 side. From that point of vantage he could serve many ends. His business depended upon the social role he performed; the countryman expected favours for favours rendered. He knew best the direct personal approaches of social obligation. So, at first, geese and country produce besieged the new officers and magistrates; a favourable decision or a necessary public work performed was interpreted as a favour given. It demanded a direct and personal return. 'Influence' to the countryman was and is a direct personal relationship, like the friendship of the countryside along which his own life moves. Like money, 'influence' was a somewhat mysterious entity; it seemed to be a powerful agent for both good and evil. But its real content seemed understandable enough; it was an easily recognizable social bond.

Then, too, the shop and the pub was and is the countryman's metropolitan club. The man who worked it was a friend and kinsman, one of one's own kind. Near-urban prestige made him a superior, as one in touch with seats of power, fashion and law. But it made him no more, in the last analysis, than a *primus inter pares*. In all this, the conventional moralistic concept of public administration might well be little developed, on both sides. But there was much popular wisdom.

For the shopkeeper-publican dealt effectively first with the realities in which life, his own and his country constituents', is fashioned. To cry corrup-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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tion is to mistake the issue. To enforce a political 443
morality without emotional conviction would be 626
false conversion indeed. 661

Thus, the shopkeeper-publican-politician was a very effective instrument, both for the countryside which used him and for himself. He might perhaps exact buying at his shop in return for the performance of his elective duties, as his enemies charge: but he also saw to it that those duties were performed for the very people who wished to see them done. Through him, as through no other possible channel, Ireland reached political maturity and effective national strength. That strength persists today, despite superficial strife and internal growth and change. And it persists by virtue of its connection with the society from which it springs.

For a social order, we can see clearly now, is a 121
thing of very wide inclusions indeed. The same set 182
of dispositions runs right through, from the 'west room' of remote Luogh to the political life of the market-towns and cities of Ireland. In this study, for instance, we began our examination of the countryman's way of life with a discussion of 'old custom'—folklore and folk-belief. By now it is clear to you, I think, that 'old custom' is more than a dying survival of an age-old habit. It is part of a larger whole, a whole which in its total is co-extensive with the total-pattern of the life of which old custom is still a part. Our two original ex-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

114 221 settlement, the baile or townland, kept its significance and its importance. In many cases what has passed for nomadism has been the ancient and normal practice of seasonal movement to the hill pastures, which is still not entirely abandoned and has left many traces in the life and landscape of the country (Chapter 6).

181 462 In essentials Ireland is and has been a peasant country, and it may be well to examine objectively some of the general characteristics of peasant society. A permanent link with the soil on which man lives and works is the essence of a peasantry; and in this work of the fields woman co-operates with man. For her, however, field work is a secondary task since her main interests must lie in the house and in the milking of the stock. Work with spade and plough and the care of the draught animals is for the men, although carrying—necessarily done by women in primitive communities where the men must have their hands free to use their weapons—often remains an activity of the peasant woman where not entirely superseded by animal transport. Where fishing and shore-collecting engage the men's attention the women's sphere of action and responsibilities are widened.

181 323 Among tasks in which the women of some peasantries play a leading part is the making of domestic pottery, but this tradition, though strong in Neolithic Ireland, gave way to the use of metal "pots" and vessels of wood, the making of which was the work of the men. Nor have local survivals of hand-made pottery, like the Barvas ware of the Hebrides, been recorded here.

181 ● 443 796 Periodic gatherings for exchange and social intercourse are a feature of peasant life which has contributed to the growth of towns. The immemorial meetings in fairs and markets have been weakened by modern means of transport and by government marketing boards; and in some parts of the country the whole fabric of rural society is being undermined in consequence. As in North Africa to-day, the fairs were often held near some ancient burial place, and the assemblies were linked with religious festivals which brought

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major 181
operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of 443
peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair 796
seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the 181
cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures 789
of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic 181
magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, 842
common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of 181
marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the [582]
highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and 181
duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and 496

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

in the combined pastimes of feasting and foretelling the future, 796
and cabbages figure in many an old game, for they are of 221
ancient lineage: the potato, barely three centuries introduced, has not displaced them in traditional ceremony. It is the young folks' day. Many of the games played turn upon the theme of identifying the future husband, and we shall see in the following chapters that match-making and marriage were among the functions of the great festivals, closely linked up with the magic of the earth's increase and the prosperity of crops and animals.

In parts of Ireland curious traditions attach to St. Martin's Eve (November 10th) and the feast on the following day. A sheep or a fowl is ceremonially killed and its blood [782] sprinkled in the corners of the house. No wheel must turn on the day of the festival. Finally there are the mid-winter celebrations, now marked by Christmas and New Year, which carry the year round towards St. Bridget's Eve. On St. Stephen's Day (December 26th) the hunting of the wren was formerly an occasion for general revel: it is now little more than a children's game.

We must conclude this chapter with some suggestions, 443
necessarily brief and tentative, as to the importance of these 527
seasonal gatherings in the social and commercial life of peasant Ireland. From very early times the major ritual assemblies of the year provided opportunity for exchange of goods, of livestock and of news, and for the maintenance of folk tradition and bardic skill. In ancient Ireland it is recorded that there were two kinds of assemblies, the "aonach" for pleasure and the "aireacht" for business, but it seems probable that, like the great fairs of recent times, they served both purposes. It is suggestive of the ritual and religious element in the old assemblies that they generally met upon hill-tops—often the sites of prehistoric burials—and that they took place at the fixed times marking the beginning of the Celtic seasons. May and November remain the favourite periods for country fairs, and the hiring fairs were always held at these times. A century ago the February and August fairs were also of considerable importance. The Old Lammas Fair

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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443 527 at Ballycastle, for instance, lasted a full week and though now limited to a single day is still the great event of the year in north Antrim. August and perhaps February were closely associated with the sale of sheep, the May and November fairs with cattle. In the early 19th century the great fair of Ballinasloe in Co. Galway handled as many as 20,000 cattle and 90,000 sheep. "Their whole thought," wrote Knight of the Mayo peasantry about that time, "seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging." "A yard of linen or a couple of chickens," says Arthur Young, "will carry an unemployed hand ten miles."

443 366 It is by the fairs and not by the calendar that the countryman dates events. It may be observed that the popularity of fairs, with their emphasis on livestock, illustrates the strength of the pastoral tradition. They have been something of an obstacle to good husbandry because they occur at the changes of the seasons and thus interfere with field work, particularly with harvest. Nowadays most of the fairs are associated with urban settlements, but the name "Fair *Hill*" still clings to the streets where they are held, and many a town has its fair hill just outside. On such sites tents were formerly erected for refreshment, and there are certain old fair grounds now abandoned where you may see the grassy foundations of the huts and the fire holes where the giant cauldrons were boiled. In the ancient aireachts streets of booths were set up for the fair period, so that they might be described as temporary towns. Professor MacNeill has put forward the thesis that these were the "cities" named by Ptolemy in his description of Ireland.

369 361 This brings us to the problem of urban origins. It is perhaps true to say that the fair used to be regarded as the product of the town, but recent research supports the view that the fair precedes the town and was one factor in its rise. Apart from comparative evidence drawn from certain north African communities, for instance, anyone who has watched a small town on fair day must get the impression that he is looking at something which has been going on throughout the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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ages. He sees the country taking complete possession of the town, blocking its streets, ignoring its traffic: he is in the presence of a force older and more fundamental than the town which has given it hospitality (Fig. 110).

When we inquire into the origins and antiquity of the Irish towns we find that very few go back to pre-Norman times, while it is abundantly clear that periodic gatherings in "temporary towns" are far older. The pre-Christian fortress-palaces such as Tara and Navan did not survive into historic times, and as a rule the church in Celtic lands had no civic interests, though many a confiscated monastic site was revived as the nucleus of a town when occupied by English troops in the 16th century. Some coastal cities such as Dublin and Waterford were founded by Norsemen, but most of the inland towns grew up as castle-market-towns during the Anglo-Norman period or in the plantations of the 16th and 17th centuries. To-day the five chief seaports, none of them strictly "native," contain one quarter of the total population: very few inland towns have more than 10,000 people, and only one of these is outside the industrial Six Counties. Most of the fair centres have a population of from 500 to 5,000: there are 187 towns of this size in Eire. There are 202 "towns" with from 200 to 500 inhabitants and only 25 with more than 5,000 (Fig. 107).

It is to these small towns, scattered at convenient intervals of 10 or 15 miles up and down the country, that the fairs have been attracted, the centre of authority and administration becoming the centre of exchange. Although most of the settlements are of "foreign" origin, they have become thoroughly Irish. The family system and blood-ties link up town and country, and trade follows the personal bond of "friendship," that is, blood relationship, however remote. Over shops and inns it is family names one sees painted up: O'Flynn and Flanagan take the place of the English "General Stores" and "Red Lion." Since the countryman's money comes only at the periodic fairs, he relies on the shopkeeper's credit, and the debt must never be entirely paid off, for that

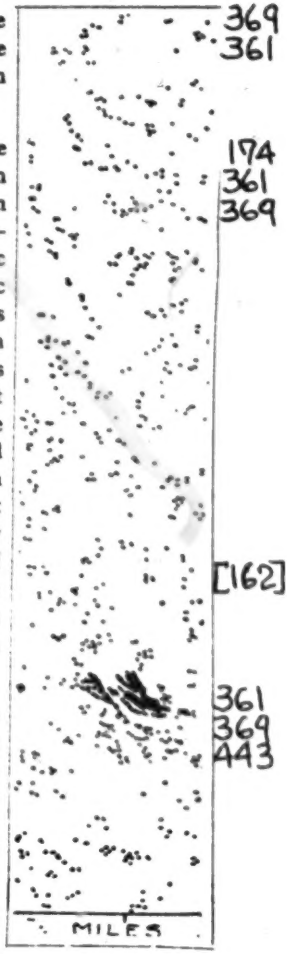

Fig. 107.
A market town with scattered country population. Each dot represents a building.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 would "spoil" social relations. Even in the larger towns the
[369] shopkeeper is reluctant to have his bills completely settled by
[443] his customers. These personal ties readily give rise to cliques and municipal corruption: it must be admitted that the

[162]

Fig. 108.

corporate spirit is poorly developed. Similarly the Irish country town is generally lacking in any native traditions of
[344] civic architecture, and even the splendid buildings of Dublin and Galway together with the distinctive court-houses of smaller towns owe much to outside influence. The small

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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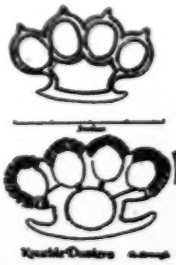
town consists of streets of houses of peasant style strung end to end, picturesque with their washes of many colours, but perpetuating and even accentuating the filth which can be tolerated in a village setting of streams and fields but which becomes highly objectionable under urban conditions. On the other hand there are some spaciously-planned country towns which have an air of quiet opulence reminding one of the English heritage to which they owe their foundation. I am aware that in saying this I am ignoring the "inner flame" of the Irish towns, but it cannot be denied that externally they have much to learn from the older civic traditions of the sister isle. Dr. Arensberg has analysed the pattern of the country town and described it as "an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order." He shows that, until recent times, its economy has been that of distribution, not production. Banks and pubs and shops do most of the business and owing to the family system "Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation." If we exclude the Lough Neagh basin, all the denser areas of population are coastal and most of the country's manufacturing industries are concentrated in the ports (Fig. 108).

The small 361 [364] [162]

To return to the fair, we have tried to show how the periodic gatherings in which they originated were associated with ritual and emotional experiences connected with the celebration of recurring events such as seed-time and harvest. Breaking the routine of toil, it is characteristic that much licence was permitted on these occasions. Until recent times a strong spirit of revelry and a temporary slackening of the moral code distinguished the great Irish fairs. Even to-day the police or civic guards make allowances for fair day and turn a blind eye to many offences against the law: it is recognized as a time of special licence. Games, dancing and faction fights were the order of the day once the buying and selling were over. Until a generation ago cruel "knuckle-dusters" (Fig. 109) were carried in readiness, and the countryman's heavy felt hat was worn as a defence against the blackthorn shillelagh.

443 786 578



[411]

Fig. 109.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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443 blackthorn shillelagh. Trailing the long coat or "trusty"
786 was a recognized invitation for a fight.
578 To the onlooker it appears as though the business of selling is itself in the nature of a fight, such are the hearty and
443 resounding slappings of open hands up and down the street. Then follows the prolonged argument, the cut and thrust of keen bargainers in a circle of interested onlookers, over the amount of "luck money" to be given back to the seller. It is an age-old ritual far removed from the mechanical sale of a pen of cattle at an auction. The establishment of auction sales and latterly of marketing boards not only undermines the business of the country town, but threatens to destroy the intricate fabric which binds together a thousand homesteads in the intercourse of fair day. It is a sad commentary on rural development that in recent years "dole-days" have brought as many people to town as "fair-days."

[493]

Fig. 110. Fair Day.
A bargain is being struck on the left.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or stirabout and milk. 264

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money. [439] [437]

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit distilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent. 273

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character. 291

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel. [439] [444]

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction. [443]

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[20]

Second, emigration has been of vast 167 benefit to the community; money comes 434 in to most of the homes from America[21] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

443 Third, it is regrettable that the lack 489 of commercial facilities means that eggs, poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [20] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only three barrels a week in winter. The standard [304] content of a barrel is 256 pints.

[21] Many of the children are dressed in American clothes. [291]

[p. 209(A)]

443 creameries or to dealers brings useful
489 income. The difficulty lies in transport, especially during the winter when the isolation is most acutely felt.

Fourth, remote and isolated as their
484 island may be, some of its people have seen much of the world. It is unlikely that many of the young people will remain here in the future; on the other hand, some former emigrants have come back to rest with thankfulness after their labors elsewhere. As one of them said, "America is a good place for the young, but this is a good place when you're old."

000 To summarize, Inishbofin now is neither a tragic island nor a romantic enclave of ancient ways. It is an area in which the work begun by the Congested Districts Board has borne fruit, whose people live reasonably well by crofting standards thanks to the help of emigrants and of the state. So long as the fuel holds out, there seems to be no reason why this island should not remain inhabited; but the problems of so curious a population age structure (p. 208) need investigation by a sociologist, and the cost of maintaining this community to the state and its relatives could well form a subject for an economist. For this island is not, and presumably cannot be, self-supporting under modern conditions.

[p. 209(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XVIII

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

THE Irish countryman enjoys nothing so much as 'a gathering' of people, and when he is forced to leave his native land he does not willingly settle down away from large urban centres. At home a crowd goes to his head like poteen. The daily routine of life on an isolated farm presents him with few opportunities for seeing people from outside his immediate neighbourhood, and on fine summer evenings his favourite pastime is to throw himself against a roadside ditch with a knot of companions and watch the passers-by. That the remarkably large attendances at rural churches and chapels owe something to the social needs of a scattered population is suggested by the phrase, applied to someone who arrives late at chapel: 'he missed the mass but hit the gathering'—he had something worth while for his trouble. In the Irish laws the freeman's rights of assembly were carefully defined: there were assemblies for transacting legal business (the oireacht), and others for commerce and games (the aenach) which came to be called fairs. With the coming of Christianity the traditional gatherings at sacred sites were transmuted into patterns (pardons), at which the new religion was quickened by practices of the elder faiths. In fact most gatherings served more than one purpose. The secret assemblies of Roman Catholics at 'mass rocks' in penal days no doubt also provided opportunities for social and commercial dealings, and the 'sacrament Sabbaths' of Presbyterian Ulster were great gatherings having something of the nature of fairs. Tents and booths were erected for the occasion, and indeed they were popularly known as 'holy fairs'.

Although the fair has lost something of its former significance in Northern Ireland, thanks to Government marketing schemes

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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543 and purchasing boards, it is still a powerful commercial and social force in the rest of Ireland. In fact the numbers of fairs
● 443 have increased with the post-famine dominance of the cattle trade, though they have tended to be concentrated in fewer centres as many small fair-towns have been by-passed by improved means of communication. On the other hand the weekly markets have declined or disappeared, their place taken by shops which typically handle drinks as well as groceries, clothing as well as hardware. Thus the fair has retained and even strengthened its magnetic hold on the countryfolk, and though many of its subsidiary functions have been taken over by institutions of more recent origin, the fair itself retains a pagan aura. There is a widespread belief, by no means confined to Ireland,
[821] that fair days are always rainy days. This belief may well be justified by climatic averages, but I have heard it explained as a consequence of the lies and profanity, the fights and pagan ways of the fair. Many an ancient fair has become extinct, no doubt because it no longer fulfilled its economic functions, but the explanation usually given is that it was abandoned 'on account of the fighting'.

In Europe, north of the Alpine mountains, the fair as a means
172 of exchange and social intercourse is an institution older than
543 the town, and older far than Christianity. The periodic assemblies of early Celtic Ireland served as temporary towns, and it was probably these sites which Ptolemy marked as cities on his map of the second century A.D. They were held on hill-tops hallowed by an antiquity which archaeology has in some instances traced back to the Bronze Age, and the regions which they served were, we have suggested, already taking shape in the late Neolithic period. Ireland has a number of large enclosures of Neolithic date analogous to Windmill Hill in Wiltshire, which apparently functioned as seasonal meeting places where stock was rounded-up and sorted. An enclosure of rather different type but of similar age—the Giant's Ring
[541] near Belfast—was the scene of horse-racing down to recent centuries. On the cairn-crowned Cave Hill, too, overlooking
543 Belfast, crowds used to assemble on Easter Monday 'in accordance with immemorial usage'.[1] We may see in the 'parles

[1] J. B. Doyle, *Tours in Ulster* (1855), 102.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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upon hills', which the Dublin government found so obnoxious in the sixteenth century, the persistent efforts of the Irish to maintain their ancient rights and customs of public assembly. In the Anglo-Norman period and again during the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries towns were deliberately established with the intention of bringing 'civilized ways of living to the wild Irish'. Many of them are characterized by a wide street or square—the 'diamond' in Northern Ireland—where fairs and other gatherings could be dominated and controlled from a castle which overlooked it. These urban settlements were known to the Irish, whose native 'towns' were rarely anything more than disorderly clachans, as 'street towns'. They are found scattered at fairly regular intervals all through the countryside, usually at some river crossing or hill gap where routeways meet. Some of them, well-placed in good fertile country, have expanded, while others have decayed or remained mere villages. Often one will find not far away the old Fair Hill from which the fair was attracted as the facilities of the town outweighed the traditional pull of the inconvenient hilltop. But for long the Irish kept to their own fairs which continued, according to an Act of 1431, to 'take great customs and profits to the depression of the boroughs and the trading towns'.[1] The old assembly places are not entirely forgotten, and it often happened that they were visited for games and horse-racing long after they had lost their function as places of commerce. They are celebrated in local ballads and their sites can still be traced by the grassy mounds which are the remains of booths and cattle pens. The lost fairs of Ireland deserve a study such as is being made of the lost villages of England, but the chief sources for such a study, in the absence of records, must lie in field work and the fast-fading memories of the countryside.

The fairs were formerly organized in a recognized sequence of goods and livestock, terminating in sports and horse-racing—and not infrequently in bloodshed. Several of them achieved a notoriety which made their names a byword, and among them none was more notorious, owing partly no doubt to its proximity to Dublin, than Donnybrook Fair. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of 1845 forgets its sober purpose in thus describing

[1] T. W. Freeman, *Ireland*, 95.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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443 it: 'During the week, beginning on the 26th August, is held
543 the notorious Donnybrook Fair, professedly for the sale of
578 horses and black cattle, but really for vulgar dissipation, and
786 formerly for criminal outrage and the most revolting debauchery. It was for generations a perfect prodigy of moral horrors —a concentration of disgrace upon, not Ireland alone, but civilized Europe. It far surpassed all other fairs in the multitude and grossness of its disgusting incidents of vice; and, in general, it exhibited such continuous scenes of riot, bloodshed, debauchery and brutality, as only the coarsest taste and the most hardened heart could witness without painful emotion.' This was by day; 'the orgies of the night may be better imagined than described'. An anonymous writer is quoted as saying: 'We venture to say that there is more misery and madness, devilment and debauchery, than could be found crowded into an equal space of ground in any other part of this our globe, during five times the same space, which is spent at Donnybrook, in one given year'. The *Gazetteer* then recovers itself and offers excuses for 'describing what ought never to have been described'. One regrets rather that the compiler was so overcome by horror as to forget his statistical duties.

The absence of moral restraint which led to extremes of
543 lawlessness at Donnybrook and elsewhere was a normal and
527 characteristic accompaniment of these periodic folk-gatherings.
443 Such moral holidays are a feature of many societies which have
[786] not been greatly influenced by urban ways and values. Their purpose appears to be cathartic, but that there is a lingering fertility magic underlying the excitement is suggested by such strange rituals as those which mark the 'Puck Fair and Pattern' of Kilorglin at the head of Dingle Bay in Co. Kerry. The fair is unfortunately not mentioned in the *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, though the village of Kilorglin is described as 'an unprosperous, sequestered, and almost squalid seat of population; and appears to have acquired marvellously little profit from the advantageousness of its position for both inland and seaward trade'. Puck Fair, held every August, is the great event of the year in West Kerry, and lasts three days. 10th August is 'Gathering Day', the 11th is 'Fair Day', and the 12th 'Scattering Day', terms which have no doubt been handed down from days when

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'the order of the fair' was prescribed and the business lasted several days. On the evening of Gathering Day a procession assembles at the bridge and makes its way to the central square carrying (nowadays in a large cage mounted on a lorry) a billy-goat bedecked with ribbons. He is chained by the horns on a high platform erected for the purpose and, supplied with a liberal stock of cabbages, he presides over the fair. Tradition says that the goat used to stand, 'garlanded by greenery' on the old castle which was erected here by the Geraldines in the thirteenth century. The business of the fair is the sale of livestock, and as with many another large fair it is a traditional gathering place for the tinkers who in Ireland take the place of the gypsies. On the evening of Scattering Day the Puck is borne triumphantly back to the bridge. The popular explanation of the custom is that it commemorates an occasion when the noise of goats warned the Irish of advancing English forces, but it is more reasonable to see Puck as a symbol of fertility and good luck. 12th August is Old Lammas, and Lammas Day, the 1st August, was known to the Irish as 'Lewy's Fair', in memory of a pre-Christian deity. This season of high summer has many associations with the pastoral freedom of the hills, with young people and with dancing and courting. There are traditions of other Puck Fairs in the south of Ireland, and there were certain fairs at which a white horse was paraded through the assembled crowds and then tied up to preside over the proceedings.

543 527 443 [825] [825]

Another celebrated gathering place was the great fair of Ballinasloe, which brought such fame to this Galway town that the *Gazetteer* describes it as 'the cynosure of much the larger part of the western province of Ireland', so prosperous that even its poorer quarters, 'a segregation of lanes, and houses, and cabins, aggregately repulsive', were yet 'greatly less haggard than what constitutes the whole of many a third or second rate town in Ireland'. The fair was held from the 5th to the 9th of October, and during the first half of the nineteenth century the average numbers of sheep and cattle offered for sale were respectively 90,000 and 12,000. Ballinasloe Fair served the west of Ireland in much the same way as the great trysts of Crieff and Falkirk served the Scottish Highlands in the days of

443 the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous
527 gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone
543 grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon
[361] and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry
[487] footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those
489 of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement
439 of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-
441 dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose
439 experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

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as they are called, were born in the mountain country of Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, adjoining the rich plains of the Pale where their ancestors sharpened their wits on the English settlers. Many stories are told of the tricks by which 'the goatmen' disposed of their animals before they reached their goal at Barnet Fair, of billy-goats sold to the innocent English as good milkers or as an infallible means of keeping a garden free of weeds. 'Every guy who comes here selling cloth', said a Canadian rancher, 'tells me he is from Slieve Gullion. It must be some city.' 441 439

Although the export of live cattle from Ireland was prohibited, in the interests of British farming, through most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the short sea-crossings from north-east Ireland enabled dealers to ship them to southern Scotland. The embargo was lifted in 1765, and by the early nineteenth century many thousands of cattle were reaching Portpatrick and being driven to the fairs at Dumfries and Carlisle, and farther afield to Barnet in Hertfordshire and St. Faith's near Norwich. Many Irish harvesters and other summer migrants followed the trails trodden by Irish cattle and their drovers, but after 1830, with the coming of the steamship, Glasgow, the Mersey and Holyhead became, as they remain, the chief points of entry for both animals and men. 439

Before the agrarian revolution and the import of feeding stuffs made it possible to keep stock through the winter, the months of October and November were critical for the farmer, who had to dispose of many of his animals at this time. The trade is now better distributed through the year, but although monthly fairs have become general since the famine, the sales vary a good deal from month to month, and the important fairs still fall at the turning points of the pastoral year, particularly in May and November. The spring fairs of February and March and the Lammas fairs of July and August were to a large extent concerned respectively with horses and with sheep and wool, but those of May and November were the great cattle fairs and also the hiring fairs. We are reminded that the Celtic year in pre-Christian times had only two seasons, winter and summer, and that the first days of November and May are still the Irish gale-days, the times when rents fall due. 439 443 543 [805] [427]

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

443 One may readily see how this[1] came about, for these were the
437 times when the stock was gathered and sorted, and dues were paid to the overlords in cattle. In the ordinary business of the fair exchange and barter gave way in time to money transactions, but one has only to visit a cattle fair to sense that the noisy ritual of assessing values and the prolonged bargaining have come down from a time before the use of money was general. The vigorous hand-slapping by which bargains
[201] are sealed in tight-lipped silence could derive from the days when different languages were spoken at the fairs. Apart from the difference between English and Gaelic it should be remembered that in many districts pockets of non-Gaelic speech, perhaps even of non-Aryan tongues, survived well into the Christian era. Another interesting accompaniment of the con-
[777] cluded bargain is the piece of money, the luck penny, which the seller hands back to the purchaser as a gesture of independence when a price has finally been agreed on. Many a fight
[578] has begun because a buyer has been dissatisfied with the amount of his luck money. Similar bargaining took place when a servant was being hired for the half year, and he received his earles or earnest money as a sign that the contract was concluded, handing over to his employer his bundle of clothes in return.

543 The countryman will find any excuse for going to the fair, and it is his proud boast that he has seen so many fairs. It
[805] is by the fairs, and not by the calendar, that he measures time and dates important events in the life of the community. 'Their whole thought seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging', it was written of the Mayo peasantry in 1836,[1] and in the seventeenth century we find this comment on 'the inferior rank of husbandmen' in Westmeath: '(they) are very crafty and subtile in all manner of bargaining, especially in their dealings in fairs and markets'.[2] Your luck at the fair might depend
777 on the colour of the hair of the first person you met on the road,
543 and it was unlucky to be passed on the way, so that horsemen riding at full gallop were not merely trying out their paces for the races which followed. For good luck you should carry with

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 104.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 115.

[1] [ie, the seasons and rent days 260 dating from 1 May and 1 November. — Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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●443 trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-
322 lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples
443 are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there
543 were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of
443 ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 83), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for
[584] a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts,
[582] binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints'
796 days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1]See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland, 1796–97*, 250.
[2]R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 253.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the community. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 276
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [443]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. 262
Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat 272
biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals. [561]

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the 252
open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread
which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring [443]
must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a
family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally 252
made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in 262
a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and [234]
also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the
fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial
product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are
eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking [273]
their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread gener-
ously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained
of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on
the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their [561]
bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing
six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days
will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, [445]
mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the
shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from
mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy
are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other
shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or
cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and [824]
are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled
but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which
when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed [751]
to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard
them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even 262
when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking 252
pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than 415
its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat
them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. 262
They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed 264
only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is 415
thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the [829]
folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor
did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which
the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes
when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

 574 579

parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to 178
houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of [938]
stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and [273]
factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, [738]
with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting
"hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who 275
purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others 443
who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still
others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is 571
composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are eco- [602]
nomically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and
give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only
when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one
of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them,
or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by [562]
children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits
as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout
and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are
working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic
services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the 275
only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom [562]
is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the [535]
audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with
an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance
at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow
room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside.
Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately. [521]

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. 275
Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his 273
turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to 573
drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in 576
like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of recipro-
cation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island— [123]
almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking
"glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a
short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the 275
men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one 273
another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is 576
overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a 571
wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have
"courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be [167]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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market areas are the areas of effective, habitual relationship 438
among farmers. They are definable only in terms of social 484
relations made up of the acts of specific local persons. Such
relations differ in duration and the frequency of the events 571
making them up. Change such relations and geography is changed. For a human setting geography is merely the locus of relationship. The system of distribution that orders space in rural Ireland functions to do so within a system of social relations, which we have called familism.

It is not surprising that the relationships existing between 444
the small farmers and their local distributing agencies go 571
farther by far than economic acts of barter, purchase, and sale. The country crossroad shopkeepers, especially, win very special status in rural communities out of these relationships. In Ireland and in Clare shopkeeping is predominantly an urban and small-town trade. Yet shops are numerous and important in the country districts, and a word must be said of them.

In typical western rural communities the smallest and 444
poorest of the crossroad shops, serving the minutest areas, are ordinary cottages or farmhouses. The slightest alteration has sufficed to turn one of the rooms into an emporium where makeshift till, counter, and shelves carry little more than tobacco, matches, oil, and a few sweets and small sundries.

Such a shop is usually run by a woman, who subsists upon it and a plot of land or garden. She is often a widow, or the wife of a local tradesman. In many cases the little shop is [205]
the local post office as well, and a salary from the state contributes to the owner's upkeep. Such a shop is sometimes, too, a local gathering place for the boys, in the way the local smithy once was such a gathering place. The boys get their
fags here. It is encumbent upon the woman who keeps [431]
the shop to make them presents at Christmas time, in recognition of their custom. Everyone agrees that the woman

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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444 subsists only because she is a part of the local community. Though she charges a bit more, she spares one the longer walk to the village center.

Country shops are often larger than hers. Sometimes where the distance to the village center is greater, they sell nearly everything one could get in town, outside the specialized drapers' or hardware, boot, and shoe shops. They sell all the farm staples, such as groceries, sugar, flour, tea, and tobacco. Here people may come from two or three miles around. The farmers all know they pay more, but the shop is a convenience. It may get the only newspaper in the district, and men drop in to hear the news. In the evenings a local school of cards may flourish here and the boys foregather.

[203 571]

The country shop reaches its zenith at the crossroad, where a church, a parochial house, a school, and a creamery may stand as well. Here the shop often dates from the days just after the famine and has had a long history of prosperity. In the past generation many such crossroads produced county councillors, and the rewards of public service often meant the acquisition of several rich farms in addition to the shop. The shop serves the surrounding countryside and collects its produce, and it derives its reward from the service it performs.

441 565 571 The position of the country shopkeeper is to be found in his place within the system of relations which make up the community of small farmers behind his shop. His function as economic agent of distribution is only part of his role. He is in a situation which must be described as a perpetual seesaw. If he is drawn too far within the local community, he loses contact with the outside world. If he is drawn too far outward, he loses touch with his customers. He must maintain a balance in a delicate equilibrium.

He is caught within a pattern of mutual obligations to the farmers on the one hand and the social system of the

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands. 444

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. 465

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50. 462 [434]

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, generally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The marriages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family. 871 584 585 591

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding, 585 [115]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or 264
stirabout and milk.

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being [439]
exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small
dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money. [437]

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit dis- 273
tilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent.

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear 291
to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character.

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all [439]
shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local
shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, [444]
wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel.

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the
poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares [443]
by a sort of Dutch auction.

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

228 to collect one stone in an hour. Kelp
[381] (seaweed) burning for iodine on the beaches was almost extinct by 1894.[17]

Settlement and Population

361 Of the 96 houses counted as inhabited, 53 are in five hamlets and another six in a loose cluster near the harbor. There is no village as the term is commonly understood, though the main center is beside the harbor, where the inn occupies the one-time "big house" of the Allies family, with the church and the Post Office a short distance away. In
[444] all there are eight shops, none of which is recognizable from the outside, as everyone knows them: one is attached to the inn, another to the Post Office, a third occupies a specially built room in a farmyard, and the rest are in front rooms of houses. All the houses except about six have land attached.

Is this nucleated settlement as such?
361 On the first Ordnance Survey map (1838) there were large clusters of houses
178 and on the 1898 map the vast majority
621 of the houses were in clusters. The redistribution of land and building of new houses has broken up many hamlets or made new ones, for example in Knock townland (405 acres) where an old hamlet on a sandy site has been replaced by a new one on drier ground by the shore, with 15 of the townland's 17 houses. In Cloonamore (663 acres)
361 eight houses are placed along the shore
621 and eleven others scattered over the hillside; in Middlequarter (608 acres) there are eleven houses in the main hamlet, six beside the harbor and eleven others at various points beside the shore or on side roads; in Fawnmore (199 acres) six houses out of sixteen are in a loosely defined hamlet; and in West-
361 quarter (523 acres) nine houses out of

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[p.208(A)]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
• 444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement.... It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting.... Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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888 573 521 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps [592] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty. As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a [484 great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the ● 446] roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

573 521 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which allow all to take part.

573 521 589 O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and, though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone. Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road, breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 lifts it far beyond the plane of the mere economics
571 of the exchange of goods and the distribution of rural and urban products.

For example, a great deal has been said and
369 written about the so-called 'credit system' of rural
571 Ireland. Much indignation has been wasted pro
452 and con upon it. The term refers to the economics of retail distribution in the market-towns. The farmer is often chronically in debt to his shopkeeper. He must live upon credit from fair to fair, paying off a little of his debt from year to year with the price his cattle bring him, but seldom working himself entirely clear. Such a system of chronic indebtedness has analogues in other countries. In Ireland, many commissions have investigated it and many attempts to break its hold have been made. The shopkeeper has been called, sometimes, alas, with cause, a usurer, a 'gombeen-man'. His power as creditor is very great. Where, as here, the farmer-debtor is dependent for his shop-bought foods and farm materials upon the shop, and where no other source of credit exists, that power is, of course, well open to abuse. This is the old problem of equity, the rights of creditor and debtor, and the controls each may put upon the other. It interests us here because in it the countryman's way of life is deeply involved. Let us see what peculiar content his social order gives it.

Any credit system exists, the economist will tell

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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you, upon a peculiar state of mind in which expectancies are roughly balanced. He calls it, sometimes, 'confidence'. Should all the debts be called in and all outstanding obligations mature at a single blow, the system would perforce come to an end. If 'confidence' fails, he will tell you, and a movement to dissolve the fiscal ties grows swift and strong, a crash results. The world has had bitter experience of this fact in recent years.

Yet how little we know even today of that brittle and momentous thing we name 'confidence'! We have the word, but we have not yet decided to what factors it refers. Today we grope toward it in this way and that and wrangle endlessly about the means of creating and restoring it.

In the credit system of the market-towns of rural Ireland, the problem of confidence is a simpler one. Townsmen and countrymen have not yet reached the sophistication of using the word; but they are immediately concerned with the factors to which it refers in their special case. Those factors lie immediately before them, in the social habit which they both follow.

Thus, once the shop has established trade in the creation of the bonds uniting it to the countryside: through the 'family trade' of brothers, fathers, cousins, country wives and country 'prentice boys, that trade must be retained.

The shop must have a permanent expectancy of clientele; the farmer a permanent expectancy of

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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receiving goods and shop articles necessary in the economy by which the farm family lives. The farmer cannot shop about, paying cash; his monetary income comes only periodically: largely in the spring and autumn fairs, to a lesser extent in weekly produce markets. Nor can the shopkeeper depend upon the casual passers-by, for their number is infinitely small. The needs of countryside and town are thus coincident.

In the countryside, I must repeat it once again, kinship and friendship, practically synonymous, provide the base for this coincidence. They make the same provision for the life of the town. They are reciprocal in nature; a favour given is a favour received. A good turn done, the 'friendly thing', creates the expectancy of reciprocity. On such a base a social relationship, reciprocal and permanent, is built.

So the permanence that each party demands is the permanence of social obligation. The credit system of the market-towns rests upon this base. In such a situation, the debt the farmer owes, like the fortune he gives in marriage, is a tangible monetary symbol of alliance and mutual obligation. To owe money is not merely to accept a convenience, for either townsman or countryman. To owe money is to accept a social obligation.

One can call this disposition the 'confidence' upon which the credit system of rural Ireland rests. Naturally, the relationship is not perfectly sym-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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metrical. The shopkeeper, as creditor, has the 369
whip-hand. As an urbanite, he has the superior 571
status. Yet he is no less under obligation to his 452
debtor.

Habit and sentiment weave amusing identifica- 369
tions round this social pattern. For example, to pay 571
off a debt entirely is perforce to dissolve the rela- 452
tionship. It is to destroy the mutuality of expecta- 626
tions. If one's debt is paid off one loses, not only a 578
customer, but a friend, quite literally. The ordinary small farmer would pay off all his debt only in a fit of anger. By so doing he would mean to break the tie completely and irrevocably. Consequently, he remains upon the shopkeeper's books indefinitely, paying off periodically bit by bit, but never working himself entirely clear. Should he do so, the shopkeeper would be fully warned. He would know his customer was about to carry his trade elsewhere, and to enter a new tie better suited to his desires.

But the shopkeeper is obligated, too, in his turn. He may not dun his customer heedlessly. To do so is to cast doubt upon the customer's ability or willingness, not to pay a money debt but to meet his obligation. It is in fact to call into question the social status which is his. If the shopkeeper errs in this nice tact, the debt is paid forthwith perhaps, but the relationship is broken.

Nor can he press even a just claim too far. He may often have to carry credit endlessly, in hope of better days. This is part of his obligation, and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 boycott awaits the offender or the usurper. To
571 carry the claim to court is of no avail; one cannot
452 these days foreclose on land in rural Ireland. Per-
626 haps eventually he might win the farmer's holding
578 from him, in satisfaction of his claim. But one must remember the farmer's 'name is on the land'. A whole kindred and the whole community with which the kindred is related become his bitter and dangerous enemies. In a familistic world that enmity endures for life and longer, even into the next generation.

If even then, in spite of this, the shopkeeper persists and grinds his debtor down, still another sanction closes in upon him. The countryman will make his last resort to age-old folk-belief. He will tell you, for instance, that the shopkeeper or publican dies out because the curses of men and women and the tears and prayers of broken families have wreaked a sure retribution. What better way indeed to express, in traditional mystical and quasi-religious terms, the force of social censure? The countryside can bring its whole traditional scheme of attitudes to bear upon the offender; it can justify the forces of social and personal action in the realm of the awesome mysteries of belief before which all must bow.

369 Thus one can see why, in folk-belief, money it-
571 self is evil. It is one of those mysterious powers
452 which can bring, as though of its own awful and
626 incomprehensible efficacy, both good and evil in its

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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train. The finder of the 'crock of gold' is stricken 369
down in the flush of discovery; the townsman who 571
rises too high and waxes too arrogant in his wealth 452
may soon be stricken, too, and his family and its 626
shop or public-house seems mysteriously to melt away.

Nor is this the only instance in which the social order overlies the economic form of debt and shapes it to its purposes. The debt, like the dowry, can and does become a measure of status, too. It is a sign of one's ability to support that network of social obligation which gives one's self and one's family a place in social life. In this fact, too, lies 'confidence'. The debt descends with the land or the shop from father to son. It moves onward with the progression of the generations. Many a small farmer pays off bit by bit the family debt of a parent or relative. Social obligation, in which pride and sentiment are involved, long outlives the statute of limitations. In this disposition, religion, sentiment and custom coincide. Many a shopkeeper till [167]
recently has assisted a boy or girl to emigrate, in the sure knowledge that his or her remittances would eventually reach his money-till.

In the days of the British, a Royal Commission found itself mystified by this so-called 'honesty'. The debt to the landlord, in the form of rent, seemed to them an honest debt. Yet the countryman, often as not, scorned honesty in that direction; though he might bend his last efforts in what

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
452
626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
668 public life who has contributed so much to humour
443 and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 daughters with two hundred pound fortunes, settled three sons
578 and a daughter with her husband in each of the farms. Pat him-
428 self, the eldest, now about eighty, got the largest farm but not the one he wanted. He has been warring with his brothers and his neighbors ever since. He held out against his father for five years, refusing to marry and take his farm. In Pat's youth, land agitation and reform had not yet prevented subdivision and acquiring of new farms by a successful tenant. Pat on his fifty-acre mountain farm has married off a daughter locally at three hundred pounds and sent two sons out to America. Another daughter works in England. Two sons, aged forty-three and thirty-six, are at home and Pat hasn't made up his mind yet which one shall get the land.

593 The examples, various as they are, need not be multiplied.
167 The sons and daughter who are not to be portioned at home, in the words of the Luogh residents, "must travel." To that end both the savings of the family, created through their united efforts under the headship of father and mother, and
[583] the incoming dowry, are devoted. In Luogh there had been only four marriages in ten years; two of them were the usual farm-transferring matches, one a returned emigrant who married a boyhood sweetheart and bought a farm, and one a widower who took a second wife and a second fortune. An old woman described the situation: "There aren't any matches nowadays. Nobody has a fortune to give his daughter and the young men must travel." Yet the woman who
[454] lamented this state of affairs was carefully husbanding half crowns for her baby granddaughter's fortune.

593 Nevertheless this necessary dispersal of the members of
167 the family at its reorganization does not ordinarily destroy
457 the family ties. The bonds of affection and family obligation still hold. If they have emigrated, the family members send
434 back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces and brothers and sisters left at home. A great many farms, especially in West and North Clare, are partially supported by Christmas gifts from Americans and other exiles. It is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has
their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility
toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of
wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to [793]
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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● 457 the family ties. The bonds of affection and family obligation still hold. If they have emigrated, the family members send
434 back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces and brothers and sisters left at home. A great many farms, especially in West and North Clare, are partially supported by Christmas gifts from Americans and other exiles. It is

593 unfortunate that the authors have not statements of the
167 amount of these annual remittances for local districts. The
457 total for Ireland, however, is enormous. There is a marked
434 tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself, sons and daughters of each generation going out to join the members of the last. One district round Cross to the west of Carrigaholt, a little settlement on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, said locally to be supported by sons in the Shanghai police force. The first to go became chief of police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the force have gone to men of Cross.

167 The authors had the opportunity of examining some of the family setting in which emigrant remittances operate in Luogh. There the greatest number of emigrants had gone out to Boston. In one family, there was a succession of nephews and nieces following uncles and aunts from the same farmhouse for four generations. In four recent cases Luogh boys and girls had married one another in Boston. In two more they had married in Ireland and emigrated together.

434 Remittances from sons and daughters arrive around
593 Christmas. In one family the farmer's wife had written
431 to children in America saying that the family were trying to acquire an addition to their holding from the Land Commission. The children sent them the purchase price. In this case the daughter sent her regular Christmas remittance as well. When she was admonished by her parents for such generosity, she wrote: "I would think it wasn't Christmas and I hadn't any father and mother if I didn't send them something."

[527] Her mention of the festival in the same breath with her parents is understandable when it is realized that Christmas is the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland.

434 The role played by emigrated relatives in providing for
593

The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[175] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach
[657] the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear
the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the
Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has
its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able
to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41
sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn
slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls
choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion
dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase
their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into
island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal,
a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although
made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have
heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish
expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by
weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland
shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to
monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
[178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[777] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new
crios if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants
who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the division of labor between males and females is regarded as corresponding to the natural propensities of the two sexes. That a man should concern himself with a woman's work, such as the sale of eggs or the making of butter, is the subject of derisive laughter, while a woman's smaller hands make it "natural" for her to be a better hand at milking the cows. 462 626 183

Even when the communal labor of the family is demanded and women take their place in bog, garden, and meadow, a definite role is assigned them. Usually it is the lighter tasks which are known as women's work. There is no formal taboo confining a woman to women's work. Heavy work is merely felt to be a hardship upon her. At the potato planting the women do the arduous work of planting the sprouts which they have prepared, bending over to put them into the ridges prepared by the men. They do their share, if necessary, of cultivating, but they are not generally accustomed to the spade, which like the plough, the harrow, the mower, scythe, and turf "slan" is regarded as a masculine implement. At the potato lifting they go along behind the man who turns the potatoes out of the ridge with spade and plough, and pick them up. At the haymaking, the pitching, raking, and some of the building of the haycocks are left to them. But the mowing, especially where it involves the horse-drawn mowing machine, and the building of the rick in the haggard, are masculine skills. In all cases of field work of this sort the role of the woman is usually auxiliary. The same holds in turf cutting. The men do the actual cutting in the bog trenches, while the women knead the peat into briquets and pile it for drying. 241 462 [562] [314]

The many attitudes and beliefs which surround this type of division of labor illustrate again the socially determined character of the distinctions and their genesis in the intersexual relationship. Just as the man's work is the harder, the more various, and the wider in scope, so the attitudes express a greater valuation of the men's work within the 241 462 626 183 461

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the
462 authors have heard men admonish a woman for interrup-
626 tion with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we
183 [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laugh-
●461 ter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conven-
593 tional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral
183 specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within the farm family. The connection between family status and
626 labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the non-economic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 Within the framework of the division of labor on the
593 basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the
561 basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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462 561 593 868 the household, he has full control of them, disposes of them, drives them to the fair, handles and uses the money got for them. If he fails to get a good price, handles the beasts badly, or proves himself a bad judge of them, the criticism of his wife and neighbors soon establishes the value of careful husbandry in the son's mind.

462 593 868 The father does all the constant heavy work necessary to keep the land in condition in so rainy and treeless a country. He makes drains, ditches, fences, walls, shelters, and barns, as we have seen. As the son grows older, he learns to help at these tasks, finally taking them over. The father prepares the garden, ploughs, plants, and harrows, does all the spade work of cultivation and everything involving the use of horses and agricultural implements. The son soon learns that these are men's tasks, and he gradually assumes his share of them. The adult men of the neighborhood rival one another at these tasks; they chafe and boast back and forth over their prowess. The son cannot fail to hear and value the techniques which he acquires.

462 593 868 626 He learns those techniques in a narrow school. Where tradition is still so strong and the incursions of trained agriculturalists still relatively infrequent, as among the small farmers, there is little variation from the tried and true way. Each operation and each tool demand a technique of their own. The father makes sure that the son learns it well. Command, rivalry, ridicule, and many an adage and bit of folklore all conspire to the same result.

The father must make sure that the son has learned the right and traditional technique. For he must be ready to stand his ground with anyoné in the community in farm skills. Every operation becomes the intimate concern of his neighbors; a man must hold his head high. More important, [461] many skills are plied in coöperative activities, in turf cutting, haymaking, and much of the work of the garden. In such cases, a definite rhythm is necessary for greater effec-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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462 593 868 626 [461]

tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands.

462 593 868

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women.

462 593 857

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's

[852]

462 593 883 [884]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of the clothing of the small farmers was made at home by the women. Now, however, it is nearly all shop-bought. Certain vestiges of the former practice remain, however, in knitting sweaters, gloves, socks, and scarfs; and in the country districts, at least of West and North Clare, there is a custom which demands that some woman of the house be always at work. If there is no other task on hand, they must occupy themselves with knitting. In former days, the daughters of the community might gather in a *meitheal*, or coöperative work group, under the supervision of older women for carding and spinning flax and wool. In any event, the younger woman, the girl, is at the older woman's command.

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Much the same content of emotion and sentiment exists in this relationship, subordinate as the daughter must remain, as in the case of the boy. But in the case of the daughter there is never a readjustment, and there is never a period of community of interest with the father. Nor need the mother fear a competition with an impatient oncoming successor as must the farm father who knows he cannot put off forever his relinquishing his farm to his son. For, eagerly as the daughter may look forward to her own marriage, she knows that marriage will bring in a rivalry over household control with a totally new person in an entirely new scene. It is her husband's mother, not her own, to whom new adjustments must be made. The implication of this fact, and the struggle it entails, will bear examination in the discussion of marriage.

593

Still another relationship exists within the household under normal circumstances. The relationship of brother to sister has its reflection in farm work. But it is a relationship with a different history from the relationship between siblings of similar sex. Sexual differences in behavior have made a different habit, beginning very early in the child's experience. And, for each of them, the sexual differences are colored a great deal by the norms which mark the rela-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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and that he was trying to black them with the disgrace of it. The girl ran in but they threw her out into the hall where her father caught her and held her. They said that all the people belonging to him were thieves, and that two of them, two uncles of his, his mother's brothers, were convicted for robbery and that all his people before him had been insane, and that he was trying to black the name of a good family. In the end they caught him and beat him till he consented to sign the receipts. They gave him a good hiding.

The teller drew his own conclusions from the case:

If the girl had listened to her parents, they would have told her all this and saved her. But she went on and married right ahead on her own advice. She probably thought she was doing well in marrying into sixty acres.

It is interesting that the application of sanctions does not confine itself to a single dereliction. In this case, according to the storyteller:

[46]

Murphy was a terrible lazy farmer and wouldn't even till a patch of ground for a garden for himself or his stock, and the woman's people had to send up a load of potatoes for them. They told him when they beat him if he didn't turn into a farmer and do a man's work, till his garden, and provide, they would be up again and make him do it.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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country "stations"[8] the elder men and women file in for 554
confession and come forward for Communion first. On the 888
road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant 561
discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. 554
No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 888
"stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural 521
community such personal communion is an indispensable [461]
bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men [203]
must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the commu- 561
nity with the outside world. The elder men, these same 554
father-owners; represent the interests of the community be- 888
fore priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and govern-
ment official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to 561
round out the picture. 554

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The 888
better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of 276

[8] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland. [194]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 571 skills of individual experience and prowess with one's place in such groups.

476 461 In dealing with local techniques and local specializations, it is impossible to divorce them from this social setting. The attitudes of the country people support this view. Their emotional outlook on work gives added proof of the identity between work role and the social relations it involves. Solitary work is difficult and tedious. It offers little incentive. Communal effort on the other hand has a pleasant and variegated rhythm which works up an emotional satisfaction which can counteract fatigue and monotony.

Consequently, concerted effort and hard work are not often divorced in the minds of the country people, to judge from what they say of it, from their experience of the *esprit de corps* which they feel. The old people as usual deny any value to present-day activity. The young think the doings of an older day the behavior of savages. We have already seen how the attitudes which express one's age status color one's view of life in the countryside. That is the case again here. If the old people deny the existence of community effort today, it is because they think of the zest of working in unison in youth long ago and remember the times when emotion was highest and the solidarity of communal effort greatest. And the young people forget this. Listening to the accounts of such mighty effort, they think only of the hardship and the ignorance of labor-saving short-cuts it entailed. Similarly the old people forget or fail to see that the young people go through the same experience as they once did.

476 571 Thus one can hear such a description of communal effort and the joys of work in common as follows from the old people and at the same time one can still watch a harvest where coöperative action and competition in skills is just as great. And we can know that the essential patterns are the same, though the techniques may change:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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The formally recognized artisans of the country districts represent a sort of halfway stage in this process. The blacksmith is the most important of them, through historical associations and because his skill suffers so little loss of demand. Others, such as the weaver and tailor, are in process of disappearance; others perhaps in process of emergence. It is the incorporation they experience into the habitual relations of the group that determines their presence or absence and determines whether or not their skill shall develop or be lost.

Take, for instance, the few cases of persons who return to their native communities in the countryside from abroad. They find adjustment extremely difficult. The "returned Yank," if he has been long away, is declassed and to an extent deracinated. This is true of all his behavior, through all his relations with those from whom he went. The process of reabsorbing him is slow and painful. None of this shows itself better than in his inability to fit himself in again technically and occupationally. If he takes a farm, he is better off because he is independent. But otherwise he must learn a different kind of organization of work relations, a different tempo, and he must wait upon the slow development of the relations with his fellows which alone can give him full occupational status among them. This is the reason why innovations of all kinds seem to be infinitely slow in conservative rural life. Ardent agricultural reformers all too often fail to recognize this enforced tempo of habitual working relations in agriculture and suffer disillusionment accordingly. In fact, it is the rock on which most well-meaning reforms or innovations break. Change and innovation do come about, surprisingly quickly from one point of view. But they proceed through social relations; they do not overthrow them. They come about through a new habit's achieving a compatibility with old ones.

In the Irish countryside the organization of the community upon an occupational basis can be understood not

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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231 which beasts feed him in their turn. He need go
241 to town only for clothing and sundries, for flour
434 and tea, and to sell at the fairs the calves and yearlings which bring in his principal monetary income and provide thus for whatever he cannot produce at home. These cattle go to big farmers, ranchers and shippers; and with the sale his participation in trade and commerce, in 'business', is finished except for his account with the shopkeeper (and in late years, the creamery). As you can well imagine, it is a livelihood little connected with the outside world, and now that agrarian reform has made him full owner of his holding, it is little open to disturbance from the outside.

This is the external view of the small farm. It is the view that usually satisfies the economist. But if one probes deeper and looks at the small farmer's livelihood from within, a fuller picture appears.

241 That the small farmer is a family man even at
593 work is important for the study of human be-
[461] haviour. Eight out of ten people working in agriculture in Ireland work not for wages and salaries but by virtue of their family relationship. The work a man does and the directions he gives and receives take form within a social group. That fact yields an opportunity for the anthropologist. Here, in a modern country, is an economy in which there are other controls on labour than those we know—money, contracts, individual profit. To under-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

but you have heard enough to see his mistrust of a system which to his mind makes no provision for the mutuality between young and old. 561 521 888

This mutuality was and is strongest in the realm of farm work. The farm family demands the co-operation of all its members. No less the community makes its valuation of young and old upon that co-operation. General discussions among the country-people bring out this fact again and again. To illustrate by quotation once more: two old fellows, adult farmers with families, could reach agreement upon a formula running somewhat as follows:

"The men were stronger in the past, they worked harder, while you try to get any young person to do as much work as the old men now and they would laugh at you. The young people today seem to see how little work they can do rather than how much. While the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work." [461]

So they went on, but even in the midst of their theme they were forced to admit that there were compensations: "It is true for you that the people in the old times weren't as knacky as they are now. Wasn't it how they used to have the horse in a stall feeding, while they [themselves] would be out with a spade turning over the garden [and no plough]."

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771]
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady 181
occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment 426
of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577
truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XI

LAZY-BEDS

241 IN the Western Isle, as throughout Highland Britain, climate and custom have conspired to limit the farmer's work in the fields to little more than half the year, from March to October. It is geared to a régime of spring-sown crops, supplemented since the agrarian revolution by intensive hay-farming. Wheat-growing is now encouraged under the Republican drive towards economic self-sufficiency, but it is a risky crop except in the drier eastern lowlands, and though it was the chief cereal in early prehistoric times there is some evidence to suggest that it was then a spring-sown crop. Barley has been grown in small amounts since early times and was especially popular in remote places during the great days of poteen-making, but it is now insignificant as a crop in comparison with oats and potatoes. Before the coming of the potato the oats (corn) crop was all-important, and the routine of its cultivation set the pattern of the farming year and was closely integrated with pastoral needs. In bad seasons even the oats may not ripen properly, and their safe harvesting is at best a gamble in the oceanic climate of the west where autumn is the wettest season of the year. Thus great toil was endured and every care taken in the preparations for sowing, rites of propitiation were performed during the growing season, and every chance of harvesting the crop was quickly seized. It was in the nature of a rescue operation, and indeed the Irish farmer always speaks of 'saving' his harvest. The normal worries of a cereal farmer are here accentuated, and the harvest period is so vital that autumn in rural Ireland is
241 always referred to as 'harvest'.

● 461 Spells of fine weather in spring and harvest were times of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

intense effort, when the toilers were spurred on by rivalries in 241
their efforts to avoid the bad luck which tradition wisely bes- 461
towed on the laggards. The seasonal festivals which marked the end of these periods of strain—at the beginning of May and November—were not merely celebrations of work completed and a new season begun, but also the occasion for the release of emotional stresses. The Irishman's capacity for bouts of strenuous work, and his more notorious addiction to spells of complete idleness, are surely related to the experience accumulated through countless springs, harvests, and winters. Winter was a dead season for man as for the world around him. It was no time for fairs, fighting or raiding, for selling or even stealing animals which were not worth the trouble of stealing: the problem was to maintain life in them.

Long tradition explains the neglect of winter ploughing 241
which is still characteristic of the greater part of Ireland. The 311
infield stubble was required to augment the very poor and limited outfield grazing available for the wintering stock. There are some townlands, in the west, where to this day all the fields become common grazing during the winter, and only the strongly-enclosed 'gardens' are safe places to grow cabbages, for instance, or a little rye for the thatch. Moreover even with improved ploughs the grass tends to grow in the furrows of ploughed land during a mild winter. And when it is recalled that much of the old infield land was on sloping ground, if only for the sake of the natural drainage thus provided, it can be conceded that there was wisdom in not breaking the earth in winter and opening the way to soil erosion. Moreover the loss of fertility by the leaching of exposed soils can be serious.

Preparing the land for seed had thus to await the spring, and 241
pressure of time as well as the uncertainties of weather strength- 476
ened the tradition of co-operative labour in the form of pooled plough-teams in the infield and gangs of ridgemakers in the outfield. The plough-team, normally of four horses or oxen supplied by as many neighbours, had to be supplemented by spade and mell, for the furrows were badly turned, and after the seed-bed had been prepared and the corn sown the seed was covered with shovelled soil. In order to facilitate drainage,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 in the days before field drains, the land was ploughed in ridges
476 or 'lands' some ten or twelve feet wide, separated by trenches which provided the soil for burying the corn. Lazy-beds, that is spade-ridges for potatoes, made even heavier demands on many hands (Fig. 46). A writer in the 1830s describing the scene in the fields as neighbours worked together in teams, remarks that 'these congregations give vivacity to the labour . . . and occasionally an animated shout is set up by the whole body'.[1] The pooling of labour resources, 'sharing' or 'morrowing'—there are several terms for this co-operative system—is still by no means uncommon even if there is nowadays less need for it. It not only cements social relationships but provides the [461] stimulus of competitive effort. In the north of Ireland Protestant and Roman Catholic neighbours frequently share their labour in this way.

FIG. 46. Ploughed ridges, Co. Cavan, and spade ridges (lazy-beds), Co. Mayo.

241 By tradition the vital spring-time preparations are hedged around with tabus and omens. The ploughman should turn his horses with the sun, from left to right, to invoke its blessing on the work, and when yoking or unyoking his team his horses' heads should be facing south. Friday—which is regarded as a lucky day to begin all operations not needing iron—is the best day to begin sowing, and Good Friday is best of all. The sower going forth should begin his labours with the solemn words 'In the name of God', and he should give the horses a handful of corn from the seed-bag and throw a handful of earth over each horse's rump. Ashes from the turf fire were sometimes mixed with the seed for luck and there are traditions of the ashes of the midsummer bonfires being kept for this purpose.

In some parts of the country, chiefly in the south and east, the sower carried a straw seed-basket, and this is presumably

[1] Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 660.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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243 heads of corn at the wrong end, or they would be missed in thrashing with the flail, and for the same reason the ears of the straw band-knot should lie towards the top of the sheaf. The sheaves should be laid with their butts to the wind, for these need most drying. The bands should be tied with nice judgement, tight but not over-tight: one should not be able to put the toe of one's boot under the band when one stands on the butt of the sheaf.

[461] As in all farming operations conducted in traditional ways, music and magic to ease the labour were part of the scene. There were shearing songs to match the rhythm of the sickle, and its efficiency was improved by keeping a fly or other insect [825] imprisoned in the handle; perhaps its incessant activity was meant to speed up the work. Another strange belief was that [777] luck followed the reaper who carried a child on his back. The world of magic and fairy was close by at harvest time: it was believed that the top grain (pickle) of every stalk of corn was empty because it had been taken by the fairies and was their due. The sheaf had its share of lore, too, related possibly to its [754] semblance of human shape. A curse could be worked by sticking pins into the joints of the straw, and the sheaf might be properly waked and buried so that as it withered the object of the curse would decline. Stooks with their 'hudders' (Fig. 51) (hooding sheaves) also take on human forms, and I have known various terms for these large stooks applied as nicknames to broad-based country women. 'The last sheaf' also is known as the cailleach or hag.

Beliefs and customs connected with the last sheaf are legion and find their counterparts in many parts of the world. 'Winning the churn' was an incentive to the reaper, for good luck attended those who had their rigs sheared quickly if only because they avoided the ill-luck of being last. Stories are told of rigs being left unclaimed and uncut because their owners feared to incur 'the famine of the farm', of having the hag to feed until next harvest. The basis of this belief was that the last sheaf was sometimes hidden overnight in the corn of lazy farmers, who would watch at nights and reap by moonlight to avoid what was an omen of misfortune or death.

[787] The last handful of standing corn, selected for the purpose,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf-cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the difference between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month, so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a 'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf. Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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314 could account for twenty-five loads in a day, but, my in-
[461] formant added, 'they would need to be strong in the back and weak in the head'; as at corn harvest competitive cutting and 'striving' brought intense excitement and severe strain.

'Opening up' a bank involves first of all the removal of the top layer of tough fibrous peat—'flow' or 'fum'—to a depth of a foot or so. It grows heather, tough grasses or mosses and makes poor firing, though there are districts, especially on the islands, which have exhausted their turf and burn nothing but the even more fibrous sods or 'rough-heads' skinned off the rocks. The common spade is usually employed for opening a face, supplemented often by a sharp nicking tool, a hay-knife
[412] or a portion of an old scythe-blade hafted for the purpose. In parts of north Ulster the thin top-layer of the mountain bogs is removed with a small variant of the breast-plough known as a flachter or flaying-spade, one of the tools which this region shares with western Scotland (Fig. 45). The term breast-plough is a euphemism, for it is really a groin-plough, pushed forward by thrusts of the thighs and groin.

The bog parings are generally spread on the cut-over bog below the bank, where they give a dry footing for the barrow-men wheeling away the turves. The pared sods in time consolidate, so that the rough grazing of the bog is preserved at a lower level. Conditions vary considerably from one bog to another, and so do the methods of working and the shapes of the tools. The minutiae of the craft are so perfected that a team of diggers works with the rhythm of a machine. Strong arms are required—a single turf may weigh up to 20 lb. when cut—but experience and a good eye are necessary for speed, and skilled 'slanesmen' are becoming scarce. Great importance was attached to 'keeping a straight face', that is keeping the cutting face vertical, and a poor digger was referred to as a 'clod-cutter'. To break a turf was almost a crime: in the old days 'they'd have thrown you out of the bog'. Not only do broken turves double the handling each time they are lifted or turned, but they tend to break adjacent turves when stacked, and the stack will show by its shape if the turf has been badly cut. At the end of the bank it is customary, in the north, to leave three steps of turf uncut. They enable one to scramble out on to the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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formerly allotted to tenants in proportion to the acreages of 222
their farm holdings. The weed had to be carried away among the 423
slippery boulders in back-creels and hand-barrows and stacked on the beach ready for the carts and creel-asses. The driftweed cast up by the storms of winter was more accessible but its division gave rise to endless disputes and was often regulated by careful procedure and the casting of lots, though some beaches were subdivided by standing stones. In Donegal I was told how at low tide, by the light of lanterns, men would dash into the sea up to their necks to drag out the floating weed. It is an interesting example of manorial privilege that on one beach, below the Norman castle at Greencastle, County Down, all the wrack blown in after 17th March goes to the farm which occupies the ruined castle. Every little bay where the weed collects has its wrack road leading down (Fig. 4), and fields near the shore may have a seaweed gate giving direct access. From Christmas onwards a careful watch was kept on the weather, and a spirit of excitement spread inland from the 222
shore as the wind rose. Every bay has its own particular wind, [821]
blowing from 'the right art', for a good yield of wrack. (For kelp, however, an offshore wind was needed, because it is the returning undertow which brings the deeper weeds ashore). There are many accounts of the extraordinary zeal of the wrack 222
gatherers and their feats of endurance. Even English visitors 461
were forced to admit that 'it would be impossible to witness a scene of greater industry than was being enacted by these lazy Irish'.[1]

As on other occasions when men left their lonely farms and gathered together there was much merry-making and noisy recollection of past wrack harvests. One cannot doubt that the harvest of the fields, its 'luck' as well as its bounty, was felt to depend on success in this first step in the farming year. The desire to be first and the intense rivalry were prompted by motives stronger than the wish for material gain. In Scotland one reads of the great anxiety that was shown to secure the first load of wrack on New Year's Day, and on that day a portion of seaweed was laid at the doors of the farmstead and in each of the fields.[2] In Jersey the *vraic* (wrack) harvest is

[1] J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught*, 54.
[2] M. Banks, *British Calendar Customs: Scotland*, 2, 97.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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222 described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting
461 and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful
[482] on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the
226 sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland
[492] and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed
[241] lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable
[517] gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters,
[462] when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[4] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young chil-
dren. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring
groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend
less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them
more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men
of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school,
at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and
their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the house-
hold. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the
other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often de-
manded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially
when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461 •
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about
being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer
hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in
America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed"
(a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

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333
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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted. 246 221

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a "reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder. 246 [293] [461] [343]

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226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[626] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
[518] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[154] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
• 461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[662] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
562 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céili* on the common land, which married women do not.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

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members and the organization of effort involved. It is to be expected, of course, that there is a great deal of variation at different seasons of the year, a fact which makes it impossible to describe farm activities without reference to seasonal change and the requirements of various crops. Nevertheless, the work round the house is constant and less variant than that outside on the "land," and for that reason it is significant to begin with it. 512

A typical winter day begins for the farm family about seven-thirty in the morning. At other seasons the family rises earlier, but the long wet days have reduced outside work to a bare minimum and confine the work of the family members within doors. To the woman falls the first duty of the day. She must rake together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire in the hearth, put down new sods for the fire, and rekindle the blaze. This done, she hangs the kettle on the hook, making ready for the first tea of the day. For the rest of the day she must keep the hanging kettle ready, for at any moment of the day she may be called upon to serve a cup of tea to her husband, children, and all visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast, usually of bread, eggs, and milk. By the time breakfast is finished, the household is ready for its workaday existence. The farmer father and husband is dressed and ready for his daily tasks, in which he relies upon the aid of whatever grown sons may still be at home, and who now take their breakfasts beside him. Similarly, the farm wife and mother who serves her men, husband and sons, and stands by unwilling to take her place at the deal table before the window at one side of the kitchen hearth until they have eaten their fill, is ready to begin her daily round with the help of the daughters and young children of both sexes who wait their turns with her. 512 462 264 [272] [262]

In the household the responsibility of day-to-day housekeeping belongs to the woman. Hers, too, is the care of the 512 462 356

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512 462 356 children. If they are of school age, she must dress them, feed them, and get them off to school. She does all the cooking and washing up after meals and keeps the teapot always ready. Each morning she sweeps the house, makes the beds, and so on. The clothes of the household are her care as well, and the indispensable and constant mending of them which rough wear makes necessary all falls to her lot.

This household work is familiar to us; the point of itemizing it is merely to make clear the confined sphere in which the woman's recurrent and indispensable duties fall.

512 462 356 231 234 But her work stretches beyond the house door. In the morning after breakfast she takes the milk buckets and milks the cows in the sheds in the haggard. This is merely one of the many trips she makes in and out of the kitchen doors for fuel, for water, to feed and tend the animals and the fowl. Her milking finished, she must bring the milk in and separate it. In recent years, more prosperous farms have been able to make use of the separator. If there is none, she must set the milk in large pans and allow the cream to rise. The whole process of the conversion of milk to butter is her charge.

512 462 231 After the morning milking and the feeding of her human charges, she must turn her attention to the feeding of the farm animals, especially the young ones. The cows and horses are not her province, but all the care of the calves, pigs, and fowl falls to her lot. She prepares a mixture of warm milk and grain for the calves, feeding them from a bucket. They must not be allowed to suck, as the milk is meant for human consumption. Then she boils a large kettle of potatoes over the fire for the chickens and the pigs, or takes them the leavings of the previous day.

512 462 [251] Before noon she hangs another kettle over the fire filled with potatoes for the use of the family. In season she adds white cabbage and nearly always includes a portion or two of bacon, some of it home cured in brine to resemble salt

PORK.

512 462 pork. By the time this is ready, the men are in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

In the meantime the men have been engaged upon work of their own. The farmer rises when he hears his wife busy herself in rekindling the turf on the hearth. If there are sons, he wakes them. After that he goes to the cow barns in the haggard to inspect the cattle housed there overnight and tend to their wants in water and hay. After breakfast, if the day is fine, neither too bitterly cold nor too soakingly wet, he sallies forth into the fields to whatever work the time of the year demands. If he finds himself confined to the house, he still has plenty to do in house and haggard.

512 462 264 [153] If he and his sons go to the fields, he probably returns about eleven-thirty for the noon meal, the heavy meal of the day. Long habit calls forth his hunger and identifies it with the house. Several countrymen have remarked that they never feel hungry away from the house but are ready to eat when they get inside. The dinner unites most of the family for the first time during the day since breakfast. Only the small children of school age are absent. Their share of the meal is often saved for them until they return about four o'clock.

[262] [521] As at breakfast, the men sit down together immediately, falling to the steaming plates of cabbage, bacon, and potatoes the woman sets before them. As they eat, she stands ready to refill their plates, talking with them about the morning's work and the news of the neighborhood. It is the chief time of family conversation. During the meal the woman has boiled tea and, when the men finish with their plates, she clears away and lays bread and tea before them. Sometimes there is a longer interval between tea and dinner, devoted to smoking and talk.

512 264 [273] As before, the women and children do not eat until the men have finished. They take their places together when the men have left or have moved off to smoke an after-dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them,

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512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
[521 silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
858] sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women
● 462 begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
231 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] news.

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news. An hour or so later[1] the man brings the cattle in from the fields, if they have been grazing during the day. He is ready for evening tea. 512 462 [231]

At that hour the work of the men is over for the day, but that of the woman goes on. She must prepare, serve, and clean up after the tea, and then go milk the cows brought in from the fields. Her work ends only with the separating that takes place when she brings her milk into the house. Even then, while the men may sit round the fire talking over the day's work or the affairs of the community, she is not idle. If the children need help in lessons, it is she who gives it to them. She puts them to bed, and, if she returns then to join the men at the fire, she continues with knitting and baking. When the whole family has finally gone off to bed, it is she who must close up the house at night and slake the fire in the hearth.

Work round and inside the house is continuous and varies very little from day to day and season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfills its needs of nourishment and shelter in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habitual behaviors. What variation there is in the accepted pattern is itself confined to narrow range. Certain chores indispensable in the day-to-day habits of the people are divided among days of the week. One woman informant, a small farmer's wife in Inagh, gave as her weekly round a much more rigid daily division of tasks than is actually to be observed. On Monday she did the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday she made butter, on Friday she went to market, on Saturday she got ready for Sunday, and on Sunday she went to mass and did as little as she could. Really, however, it is only on Sunday that there comes any serious alteration in the daily round. [527]

Work in the land beyond the haggard and the house is less restricted and more varied. It has a greater range of 512

1 [about 5 P.M. - Analyst]

512 activity over the farm and over the round of the year. Coupled with such greater variety, there is also a greater freedom of choice among necessary tasks. The necessities imposed by soil and climate permit a wider range of action and a less narrowly repetitious routine than do the ordered regularities of a household.

512 221 Yet within the greater range of activity there is still a constant and nearly invariant pattern of work. The progression of the seasons brings a recurrent demand upon the farmer in the care of beasts, crops, and the land itself. Each season brings a task which must be performed, begun, or ended if the farmer is to raise his produce successfully. 512 626 Similarly, the custom and rivalry of the community exert a further restriction upon his activity. He works within the influence of a long-established tradition of ancestral experience which has established for him the best dates for planting, for reaping, for breeding cattle, and for most of the tasks of his yearly round. The community holds that tradition in common, and the farmer is caught in the midst of a mesh of rivalries, competitions, and gossip in praise and condemnation, which binds him the more strongly to the accepted patterning of his yearly activity.

512 221 462 The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its lowest pitch in winter. Activity is confined to house and haggard. On bitter wet days little can be done beyond the haggard wall, but within it there is always a variety of necessary tasks involving care of farm machinery, implements, and buildings, and the housing and feeding of the cattle who cannot be driven to graze in the open field. In the house there is much that can be done. Harness can be patched, boots fitted with new soles, plates, and spikes, furniture repaired and occasionally new pieces made.

These tasks fall to the males of the household, the farmer father and his grown or adolescent sons. Any discussion of the annual round of farm work necessarily describes their

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labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents.

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year.

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew.

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with

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CHAPTER III

Family Labor

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AT crucial points in the annual round we have sketched out, the whole family lends its labor. Particularly at the turf making, the hay saving, and the potato planting, all members work together in bog, garden, or meadow. Though tasks vary according to age, sex, and relative status, the group works in a unison of effort in which a definite rhythm can be observed. Under the direction of the father, the husband and farm-owner, the variously divided tasks are correlated to the end in view. The periods of common effort in which all the family members, even to the children, are working in unison are also those in which the greatest speed is needed. At such times the pattern of daily household activity suffers; the regularities belonging to it are transferred to the field. Tea and bread, and perhaps sometimes heavier fare, make their appearance at the regular times, no longer within the house but on the edge of bog or meadow.

Within this concerted effort, a division of labor between the sexes and upon the basis of age appears. The division, however, is not confined entirely to farm work. It covers the whole field of the behavior of the individual. It divides obligations, duties, sentiments, and values of the group, and is enforced by the group. It pertains both among the members of the family groups and in the community at large. It controls individual action and attitudes and gives a standard

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of comparison between one's own farm work and that of one's fellows. The interests and the desires of the individual concur in large measure with the norm, and he finds reward and pleasure in it. He can rely upon similar obligations and duties toward himself on the part of others.

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The greatest scope and variation in activity which we have seen to fall to the lot of the male takes its form in part from his relationship to the others of the household. On the normal farm there is an adult male farmer who is husband, father, and owner of the farm. Within the group he has the controlling role, subject to conventional restrictions of his authority. In farm work, as we have seen, he directs the activity of the family as it works in concert. In his special province he looks after and cares for the cattle, has full control over them, and takes complete charge of buying and selling them. He disposes of the income they bring in. But all this he is obliged to do in the interests of his wife and children. Should he fail to get a good price or prove a bad judge of cattle or handle them badly, his wife and children are entitled to a just anger against him.

As we have seen, all the work requiring heavy effort in garden and field falls to his lot. He makes and tends the drains, fences, barns, and shelters, which protect both cattle and garden produce. He works the fields and gardens with plough, mower, harrow, and spade. All the agricultural implements and the heavy work involved in their use and in the use of the horse are his province.

The produce which such work assures is his to be disposed of, as is all income derived from it. He may order it as he sees fit; yet his first charge is to the family he heads. The division of income between household needs and the demands of farm and livestock springs from his decisions; yet it is a matter of nice adjustment between himself and his wife in favor of the group as a whole. Custom and his own desire demand that he provide for his household to

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593 the best of his ability. Though he can make what disposal
462 he will of the funds earned by the labor of the group, his wife and children can expect as of right that he shall make it for the family as a whole in which each member receives his share. For the work of his wife is complementary to his, and in its own sphere of as great importance to the livelihood and the organization of the family unit. While he may demand and expect of his wife that she fulfill her household duties, so may she demand and expect that he fulfill his in the management and working of the farm and in providing for herself and the children.

593 As regards income, all money derived from the sale of eggs and butter, the chief concern of the women beyond the house itself, belongs to her to dispose of as she sees fit. Yet the fruits of her labors are also subject to the needs of the family unit, husband and children.

462 The division of labor between the sexes arises within a
593 field of larger interests and obligations. It is part of the behavior expected reciprocally of husband and wife. It is a functional element of their relationship within the family.

868 The training each sex receives from childhood in farm work reflects this fact. Each learns his or her part in farm economy, not as a vocational preparation but as a making ready for marriage. The boy acquires his man's skills and techniques for the farm and farm family he may head himself some day; the girl learns the woman's role as an integral part of her future state of wife and mother. Each learns to expect of the other not only the loving consideration of husband or wife but the proper skills in farm economy.

462 Among the small farmers this dichotomy of tasks assigned
626 to the sexes in the economy of the farm family is more even than the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, father and
183 mother. It is also an integral part of the personalities of all men and women of the peasant's own kind. One can get many expressions of attitude of this sort. They show that

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the division of labor between males and females is regarded as corresponding to the natural propensities of the two sexes. That a man should concern himself with a woman's work, such as the sale of eggs or the making of butter, is the subject of derisive laughter, while a woman's smaller hands make it "natural" for her to be a better hand at milking the cows. 462 626 183

Even when the communal labor of the family is demanded and women take their place in bog, garden, and meadow, a definite role is assigned them. Usually it is the lighter tasks which are known as women's work. There is no formal taboo confining a woman to women's work. Heavy work is merely felt to be a hardship upon her. At the potato planting the women do the arduous work of planting the sprouts which they have prepared, bending over to put them into the ridges prepared by the men. They do their share, if necessary, of cultivating, but they are not generally accustomed to the spade, which like the plough, the harrow, the mower, scythe, and turf "slan" is regarded as a masculine implement. At the potato lifting they go along behind the man who turns the potatoes out of the ridge with spade and plough, and pick them up. At the haymaking, the pitching, raking, and some of the building of the haycocks are left to them. But the mowing, especially where it involves the horse-drawn mowing machine, and the building of the rick in the haggard, are masculine skills. In all cases of field work of this sort the role of the woman is usually auxiliary. The same holds in turf cutting. The men do the actual cutting in the bog trenches, while the women knead the peat into briquets and pile it for drying. 241 462 [562] [314]

The many attitudes and beliefs which surround this type of division of labor illustrate again the socially determined character of the distinctions and their genesis in the intersexual relationship. Just as the man's work is the harder, the more various, and the wider in scope, so the attitudes express a greater valuation of the men's work within the 241 462 626 183 461

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241 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the
462 authors have heard men admonish a woman for interrup-
626 tion with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we
183 [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laugh-
461 ter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conven-
593 tional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral
183 specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within
626 the farm family. The connection between family status and labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the non-economic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 Within the framework of the division of labor on the
593 basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the
561 basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

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his relationship to his fellows within the group. The controls exercised among members in work and in the life of the family in general show themselves a constant pattern to be observed from farm to farm wherever one elects to examine the daily and annual rounds of activity. 593 561 462

Thus in any of the tasks which the group must perform in its economy, the division of labor between the adult farmer-father and his sons may be observed. The father is owner and director of the enterprise; in him the farm and its income are vested; in the community it is known as his and the sons are spoken of as his "boys." Thus in the draining of a field or the sale of cattle in a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye and refer necessary decisions to him.

Perhaps the best method of illustrating this relationship is to present it from the point of view of the growing individual who takes his place in the farm family. He forms part of the productive unit which is his own family. The techniques of farming are passed on to him, and he learns them under the direction of his father, uncles, and brothers. At their hands he acquires the conditioning which will fit him to form a farm family of his own, thus to continue the traditional pattern. Naturally, his conditioning is more than merely technological; he gets on the farm the full training which makes him a member of his class and time. 462 561 593 868

The growing child ordinarily sees his father as owner and principal worker of the farm. When the whole family group of father, mother, children, and whatever other relatives may be living with them, works in concert, as at the potato planting, the turf cutting, and the haymaking, it is the father who directs the group's activities, himself doing the heavy tasks. The father looks after and takes care of the cattle, delegating minor tasks connected with them to his sons. Even though the cattle may be generally discussed by

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462 561 593 868 the household, he has full control of them, disposes of them, drives them to the fair, handles and uses the money got for them. If he fails to get a good price, handles the beasts badly, or proves himself a bad judge of them, the criticism of his wife and neighbors soon establishes the value of careful husbandry in the son's mind.

462 593 868 The father does all the constant heavy work necessary to keep the land in condition in so rainy and treeless a country. He makes drains, ditches, fences, walls, shelters, and barns, as we have seen. As the son grows older, he learns to help at these tasks, finally taking them over. The father prepares the garden, ploughs, plants, and harrows, does all the spade work of cultivation and everything involving the use of horses and agricultural implements. The son soon learns that these are men's tasks, and he gradually assumes his share of them. The adult men of the neighborhood rival one another at these tasks; they chafe and boast back and forth over their prowess. The son cannot fail to hear and value the techniques which he acquires.

462 593 868 626 He learns those techniques in a narrow school. Where tradition is still so strong and the incursions of trained agriculturalists still relatively infrequent, as among the small farmers, there is little variation from the tried and true way. Each operation and each tool demand a technique of their own. The father makes sure that the son learns it well. Command, rivalry, ridicule, and many an adage and bit of folklore all conspire to the same result.

The father must make sure that the son has learned the right and traditional technique. For he must be ready to stand his ground with anyone in the community in farm skills. Every operation becomes the intimate concern of his neighbors; a man must hold his head high. More important, [461] many skills are plied in coöperative activities, in turf cutting, haymaking, and much of the work of the garden. In such cases, a definite rhythm is necessary for greater effec-

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462 593 868 626 [461]

tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands.

462 593 868

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women.

462 593 857

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's

[852]

462 593 883 [884]

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593 direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to
883 him at his marriage.

If economic apprenticeship is also a process of condition-
593 ing within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

For the child grows up within the full complex of life
593 within the family. The petty errands which constitute his
867 first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members
[864 superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the
684] development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

593 Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his be-
857 ginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or
513 seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm
593 work is again merely incidental to his long years of life
561 with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

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654 Where the question arises, a household consisting of father and
594 mother and sons, rather than daughters alone, would have a prior claim. But, regarding the position of the wife, it is a fact that, if the husband goes, the wife keeps the farm up. She is the person who saves the money and governs everything.

Again:

594 Twenty to twenty-five acres of all-purpose land where the mother is normal and the father energetic is sufficient to keep a
462 farmer and his family. It is the province of the mother to look after the fowl, the milk, the butter, the pigs, the calves, and the milking of the cows. A woman on a small farm can milk five cows in thirty minutes. She also takes care of the children, though she sometimes has a girl in to help her for a time. She also makes and repairs the clothes. She does the buying for the house and the husband only for feed, seed and fertilizer. She has the responsibility regarding medical attention, and where she has any showing of culture the family pushes on ahead. In fact, on the mother depends the organization of the family in all ways.

594 Such evidence points to a situation in which the immediate family of husband, wife, and children, the group basic to Irish society and especially to Irish rural life, carries on a corporate economy. The roles of the component individuals are assigned them by virtue of their position in the family. The character of the economic effort, its control, direction, and purposes, are part and parcel of the life of the social group.

476 Beyond the family economy of the small farm, there exists also a certain amount of coöperation in the Irish countryside among the small farmers. Agricultural labor upon the individual farms is not performed in isolated competition, but is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids. That coöperation takes the following forms:

1. Lending tools, or doing the work with one's own, for friends and neighbors who have not the requisite tools, especially in mowing, spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing.

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part of a new economics which brings distributing agencies 234
to the farmer's door. Consequently they do not fit this pic- 438
ture and are among the great forces of gradual change. They have made dairying the pursuit of the farm father, as it was not before. Like motor lorries, they represent the new geographic order that is gradually overcoming the old.

The goods that reach the farmer cover distances between 438
their ultimate distributing center and consumer in the farm 462
families in the same proportion as they are bound in with 484
the statuses and relationships in work and life of the familistically organized groups. The men go to the larger towns with or without their wives for the larger annual purchases of boots and cloth goods or furniture or tools and implements. The boys may go for the more ordinary purchases of flour and foodstuffs and feeds and so on, to be bought in their fathers' names, to the local centers and villages. The household needs from day to day are the women's province. Tallow, candles, oil, sugar, tea, are to be had either in the villages or in the crossroad centers. The only need the men may fill so close to home is the recurrent hunger for tobacco and drink.

If we turn this view of travel and distribution and personal relationship into generality, we see that the pattern is such that it fits those of community life we have described. In the masculine sphere of life the disposal of produce means masculine travel and masculine building of relationship with the outside world of greatest geographical range. Taking each item of masculine produce in the descending order of its importance to the farm families, the area out of which the product is brought to a center is progressively smaller. The same fact is true of the feminine produce, with the difference, of course, that the range is smaller to begin with. The area of widest contacts established by women and the areas drawn upon by women and the areas

438 drawn upon by centers of distribution of women's produce
462 are always much less in extent than those of men.
484 It is not enough to point out that the distance to be traveled and the size of the area which a center serves are in
438 direct proportion to the monetary value of the goods con-
484 cerned. This is the case. It is an old story among economists.
571 But like all generalities it does not fail to have many exceptions. The point of interest is not the monetary but the sociological aspect of the matter.

Areas of distributive service coincide roughly with areas of personal contact and habitual travel. They coincide also with areas of effective social relationship. Thus there is a direct correlation between the area over which a peasant moves and has social relations and the value of the product he raises, as the economist would point out. But the source of this correlation is not to be found in economic considerations alone. The economic matters are themselves the outcome of the patterning of activities between persons. They show us the interdependence of the internal organization of the peasant community and the relationships making that community's articulation with the outside world.

Nothing in the world prevents any small farmer from going to Dublin markets to sell his cattle, not even the price of the ticket, for he has that. But he goes only so rarely as to make the fact negligible. On the other hand, the big farmer, the cattleman, in County Clare habitually goes farther, buying and selling far beyond the confines of the local market areas, purchasing his household and family goods in the great urban centers, patronizing even a Dublin tailor sometimes. The difference in travel is a part once again of the difference by class and economy between large farmer and small. The small farmer's community is made up of the persons related to him who are also small farmers and the persons who connect these men with the outside world. This we saw in the discussion of occupations. The

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443 conventional. How much, if anything, survives of medieval commerce in them and how much comes down from the days of the medieval Irish *aonach* is a matter for the historian. In ancient times the fair was a gathering for purposes much more widely embracing than exchange of produce. The *aonach* was often the occasion of a royal or chieftainly court, a bardic contest, and local games. Nothing of this remains today.

443 Cattle, horse, sheep, and pig fairs are fixed, habitual
424 occasions. Their dates and places of meeting are universal knowledge in the countryside. An extension of medieval English law has made most of them proprietary, making of the right to hold a fair a legal title to be bought and sold and charged for in the shape of tolls. But they are public occasions none the less.

443 The lore of fairs is an inexhaustible fund of information among the small farmers. Among them, indeed, the size of the local fairs is a matter of local pride. It is an index of the industry and wealth of the region. The state of prices is as much a clue to the fate of the local universe as the financial vagaries of Wall Street or the City reveal the destinies of the world.

443 All this is natural enough where fairs and local markets
462 represent the chief outlets for produce and the chief source of monetary income. As cattle are the chief concern of the
562 males of the family and source of ultimate success or failure for the family, so the cattle fair is the great testing ground for male prowess, skill, and intelligence. In the market place of the cattle fair, the male command of the family corporation and masculine representation of that corporation in the community makes public display of its stewardship. On this stage, the farmer can meet the outsider on his own terms and with his own weapons of shrewdness and experience.

437 The farmers criticize bitterly any departure from cus-
443 tomary procedure. Even though they complain that the fair

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443 In buying and selling in the town markets, bargaining
437 ritual is very much the same as in the fairs. Every seller must negotiate for himself, but the luck penny is neglected.
462 The sexual division of labor on the farm is amply represented. The women stand over and bargain about their eggs, butter, and poultry. Men alone are to be seen dealing in pigs, lambs, wool, and corn. Yet it is not unusual to see a woman dealing for a sack of potatoes or for bonhams.

443 In all these transactions the usual ritual of bargaining
437 appears. It is customary, though in a curtailed and abbreviated form, in the purchasing that the small farmer does in the shops. It appears wherever persons of diverse allegiance are brought together in the life of the farmers. It appears, as we have seen, in the making of a match between two families. Like monetary payment for services, it figures only in the external relations of the farmers' groups. Indeed, it is the behavior characteristically connected with monetary payment.

Occasionally a small farmer buys from another in his own community, but the practice is rare. Goods change hands rather through the mechanisms of borrowing and gifts in the patterns of kinship and cooring. The difference of behavior must be referred to the different relationships.

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Following the countryman at his work, we can 592
learn what his role is, what determines it, and what keeps him to it; we can see its controls and the organization of labour it entails.

The first duty of the farm family's day falls to 462
'the woman of the house'. Before the others are up, 512
she rakes together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire, puts down new sods, and rekindles the blaze. Then she hangs the kettle on the hook over the hearth, making ready for the first tea of the day. All day long the kettle will hang there, for [272]
at any moment she must be ready to serve a cup of tea to husband, children and visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast: bread, eggs and milk.

By the time breakfast is over, the household is ready for its workaday life. The men are up and dressed for the day's tasks, and the farm wife and [264]
mother who serves them and stands by unwilling to sit down till they have had their fill, has begun her daily round. She takes her place later with her daughters and young children who help her throughout the day.

But familiar housework is not the whole of the woman's duty. Her work takes her beyond the house door. After breakfast she takes the milk buckets and goes to milk the cows in the sheds. This is merely one of many trips she makes out into the haggard, for fuel, for water, and to feed the animals and poultry. Milking over, she must not rest, for the whole process of converting milk

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462 to butter is her charge. She is an expert at the
512 churn.

Her human charges fed, she must feed the animals in their turn. The full-grown cattle and the horse are not her charge, but she must tend calves and pigs and fowl. Milk and potatoes must be prepared for them all.

Before noon, she hangs a second kettle from the hook. This time she fills it with potatoes for the
[262] family. In season, she will add white cabbage, and a portion or two of bacon or salt pork. By the time this is ready the men will be in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

For the men have not been idle. The farmer-father and husband wakes his sons, inspects the cattle and horse, if there is one, and gives them hay and water. If the day is fine, he sallies forth to the fields; if not, and the weather confines him to house and haggard, he has still plenty to do, in building walls, repairing and making machine parts, harness and tools.

Dinner unites the family for the first time since breakfast. Only children of school age are absent and their share of the meal is saved till later. As before, the women and children do not eat till the men have finished. But as the women serve, they
[521] all talk about the experiences of the day. It is the chief time of general family conversation. Only the
[858] children are silent, for in rural Ireland a well-behaved child is a silent one.

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After dinner, work begins anew. For the women chores are much the same as in the morning. Should routine duties come to a pause, there is still plenty to do. Washing, mending, knitting must be done; and their hands are never idle.

The great staple, bread, is baked daily, upon the 'griddle' at the hearth. The women may bake at any time, and even late in the evening when the family is gathered round the fire, their last task may be to bake for supper of bread and tea.

At four in the 'evening', as the countryman divides the day, children arrive from school, to be fed and questioned. For they are important purveyors of news. Later, the men are home from the fields, driving the cattle home, bedding them for the night. The woman must serve supper and milk the cows, bringing the milk in to separate. But though her day is over with the separating, she may not sit idly with the men for long beside the evening's fire. Children, knitting, and baking can still be attended to; tradition and proverb demand that 'one woman in the house be always working'.

Work round house and haggard is continuous; it varies little from season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfils its first needs in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habit. What variation there is, is itself confined to a narrow range. Certain chores are divided among days of the week, but they show nothing of the swift change

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462 512 of a Solomon Grundy. A farmer's wife of Clare divided her week more rigidly in describing it than she did in practice. "On Monday", she said, "I do the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday I make butter, on Friday to market, on Saturday I get ready for Sunday, and on Sunday I go to mass and do as little as I can." Really it is only on Sunday that any change seriously alters the daily round; for the country-people are strict sabbatarians, at least regarding work.

241 462 221 Work on the 'land' beyond the haggard and the house is less restricted. It has a greater range over the farm and offers a wider variety of tasks round the year. There is a wider freedom of choice among tasks as well. Soil and climate are just as insistent as is the household, but they do not force such narrow regularities.

Yet each season brings a task the farmer must perform. Custom and rivalry in the community restrict him as well. He is in fact less free to choose the date of sowing than his wife the hour of dinner. Long-established tradition and ancestral experience imprint upon his mind the best dates for planting, for reaping, for harrowing, for breeding cattle, and so forth. The farmer is caught, willingly of course, in a mesh of rivalries, competitions, condemnations, which binds him the more strongly to the community's patterning of his yearly round.

The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its low in winter. On bitter wet days little can be done

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beyond the haggard wall, as we have noted. All the 241
many tasks of patching and repair are men's work, 221
they fall to the farmer-father and his sons. The 462
annual round is theirs, as the daily one belongs to the women.

For the countryman, the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to the Epiphany or 'Little Christmas', is the dead of winter. All farm work is at a standstill. The farmer is free to devote the season to holiday. Outside the weather is unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. For him the year has stopped and is waiting to renew its forces.

With the Epiphany, the succession of bitter wet days does not end, but holiday does. One's mind turns to the earnest work of the year to come. The farmer plans his spring planting. On drier days he can clean ditches and drains; he can lay in seed and repair machines. In the evenings, conversation on [521]
visits and at home revolves round the coming planting and calving, and traditional experience goes from mouth to mouth. In fact, it is the time for all new plans, for it is Shrovetide, the season of match-making and marriage.

St. Bridget's Day, February 1, marks the begin- [805]
ning of spring. For St. Bridget promised every [776]
second day thereafter would be 'hard'. The return of the 'hard' days of wind and clear weather herald the land's drying-off. Through February and March, gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted,

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221 fields made ready for the return of the cattle to
241 them. Each 'hard' day is more than welcome, for
462 then work in the fields can go on. By St. Patrick's day, they say in Clare, the potatoes should all be 'down'; after that there still remains much to do,
[776] though the worst is over. St. Patrick promised that after his day *every* day would 'come hard'.

Through the rest of the spring, work is at its most intense. Potatoes must be 'stirred' and 'landed'; other root crops 'put down'. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the season of greater milk yields and intensified butter-making. Before that in February and March
[443] the 'great spring fairs' take place, and the year's buying and selling of cattle must be done.

Then, gradually, with the return of warm weather and the drying-off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is often the first summer month. Soon the bogs are dry enough for cutting the year's supply of turf and for stacking it to dry under the summer warmth at the bog's edge.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the first fruits of the farmer's labour begin to appear. The first crop is cabbage, which was planted at odd times very early. It is practically the only green of the diet and old people remember June or July *an*
[261] *chabáiste*, 'the hungry month', when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semi-starvation upon cabbage. Today new varieties of potatoes mature as early as June. But

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the mature potatoes mark no harvest; they are turned out of the ridges with spade and plough as they are needed.

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The first true harvest, and the most important one of the year, is the haymaking. Mowing begins in late July or early August. The haymaking is a race against time and rainy weather. Every effort must be bent to mow, rake, dry and stack the grasses, first in small haycocks, then in the great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers speak of it aptly when they call it 'saving the hay'.

Corn crops, oats and rye, come in next, and then through September, October and November the other roots, mangels and turnips, must be 'pulled'. Turf must be brought down to the haggard from the bog-ricks; and everything made ready for man and cattle for the coming winter. Autumn fairs bring a new high in buying and selling cattle; and with the last of them, winter sets in again and Advent has returned. In late November the farmer may turn over his gardens with the plough, to prepare them for the spring. As he follows the furrow, he can look back upon a year ended and forward upon a new one to begin.

Yet, unvarying as this yearly round is, and much as the recurrent patterns of work in garden, meadow and field follow the farmer year after year, from boyhood to death, this work—man's round—is freer and more various, even perhaps

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more arduous, than woman's. We must remember this difference. It reflects an important dichotomy between the sexes in the organization of labour.

We can see this dichotomy even when the group works as a unit. At various crucial points in the annual round we have just followed, the whole family bends to the tasks at hand together. At potato planting, turf-cutting and haymaking, one can see them working in unison. Even the young children contribute their share to the common rhythm of the task. Yet the woman's role is separate. It is auxiliary; the simpler, less arduous tasks fall to her. The heavier work and command of the enterprise rests with the men. The plough, the harrow, the mower, the scythe, the spade and the turf-cutting *slán* are regarded as masculine implements. The attitudes of the countryside forbid a woman's using them. In the same way, they heap ridicule upon the thought of a man's interesting himself in the feminine sphere, in poultry, or in the churning.

Immemorial folklore bolsters this division. The woman is unlucky to masculine enterprises, for instance: it is dangerous to see a woman on the road to the fair. Likewise, man is dangerous to the woman's work. If he so much as takes his lighted pipe out of the house while she is churning, he may 'take the butter', through fairy magic.

In this dichotomy, of course, the male sphere bears higher value. But dichotomy implies no de-

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rogation. Man's role and woman's role are complementary; both are indispensable patterns of skill without which the farm family cannot live. And for that reason each is reciprocal to the other. Each feels a right to expect good work from the other, in his or her proper sphere. A good husband is a skilful farmer; a good wife is a skilful, willing household worker and auxiliary field hand. The family makes its way through a nice adjustment of these reciprocal roles. A small farmer of mid-Clare describes the situation in his own words:

"Here is something I want to tell you and you can put it in your head and take it back with you. The small farmer (in Ireland) has to have an intelligent wife or he won't last long. He may do for a few years, but after that he can't manage. You take children's clothes . . . if she knows how to buy material and make the clothes she saves a lot of money, and there are a thousand ways an intelligent woman makes money." Here his wife interrupted him and asked, "What about the tillage?" "That's all right," he went on. "But if it wasn't for the woman the farmer wouldn't last, and when he is getting a wife for one of his sons, he should look to a house where there has been an industrious and intelligent woman, because she has taught her daughters how to work and that is what is needed."

Here, then, we have one important control in work. The division of labour between the sexes arises within a larger field of interests and mutual

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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462 obligations. It is a function of the relationship of husband and wife within the family.

But it is more, too. The attitudes of the countryside toward men's work and women's work show that their respective skills are regarded also as integral parts of the personalities of all men and women of the countryman's own kind. Here we can see how strongly social dispositions influence both mind and vocabulary. 'Natural' is a word very frequently on the countryman's lips. Thus, it is 'natural' for a woman to be a better milker, her smaller hands are proof. And it is laughably 'unnatural' that a man should bother about the sale of eggs. This division is embedded in tradition, too. Luogh still tells a humorous old tale of the spades, men's tools, that used to work of themselves in the olden days, till a woman forgot to say "God bless the work" to them. This division is bolstered in [789] magic, too, for the 'coulter of a plough', that masculine implement, can bring back the butter the fairies have taken.

The division of labour between the sexes is not the only important division within the countryman's pattern of farm work. Work is divided just as much upon the basis of age. Within the masculine sphere, male family members divide the practice of masculine techniques. Within the feminine sphere, there are similar divisions.

462 Let us look at the men at their work. The father
593 and husband is normally owner and director of

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the enterprise. The farm and its income are 462
vested in him. The farm bears his name in the 593
community and sons are spoken of as his 'boys'. In the draining of a field or the sale of cattle at a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye, and refer necessary decisions to him.

But this relationship is much more than economic. Perhaps the best way of describing it is to 462 593 trace its development. The child forms part of the 861 productive unit which is his own family. His growing up is also an apprenticeship. He learns the techniques which will make him a full-fledged member of his class; but there is no divorce between technical and non-technical training. All he learns fits him for one end—to become a farmer-father-husband in a family of his own.

The child sees his father as owner, director and principal worker of the farm. From his example, he learns which are men's tasks and he learns to value the skills they demand. In family deliberations he learns, too, the nice balance between the needs of household and land. It is true he learns these techniques in a narrow school; his father makes sure that he does not deviate from the right and traditional pattern, which folklore, adage and the censure of the village support. But he learns well, by example, competition and practice.

This process is the daily experience of many years; it is very gradual and is embedded in tradi-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

462 tional social life. The boy's first duties, as soon as
593 he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands
857 to neighbours and near-by friends. Until he is seven and passes through first communion, his place is in the house with the women, and he shares the same bed with his sisters. After that year, he leaves his mother's apron strings, and is slowly drawn into men's ways; he is thrown more and more with his elder brothers and sleeps with them henceforward. In remote regions he takes off girl's clothing for
[291] the first time; for girl's clothing has protected
[789] him from the fairies, they say. Both socially and economically he is becoming a male, but his male status is still very little. By the time he is ten or eleven, he is brought home from school when needed to take part in the important agricultural work of the year. But not until he passes confirmation and leaves school, usually at the same time, does he take on full men's work and assume men's clothing. Even then, as he reaches maturity, and takes on more and more the heavy tasks of the farm, he never escapes his father's direction. Only when his father makes over the farm to him, at death or at his own marriage, can he assume command, and with it full adult status.

Economic apprenticeship is thus a process of conditioning within the family. But there is no separation of economic and non-economic spheres. The father's direction of the enterprise coincides with his dominant, controlling role as parent and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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adult; the boy learns work as he learns manhood. 462

Also, the child grows up within the full complex 593
of life within the farm family. His first petty 861
errands are a mere incident in the relationship he 857
builds up with his parents and brothers. He learns not only his work but the whole code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his class, at their hands. This conduct is itself part of his relation to them. It ranges all the way from the errands he runs for his superiors in the family to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make sexual behaviour of any kind an offence, and of that within the family, incest.

Consequently, in so well-knit a group, the com- 462
mand which his father (and his mother) exercises 593
over the son in farm work is only one aspect of that control. His subordination continues as long as his father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the son and his brothers, they have no control of the direction of farm work nor the disposal of the farm's income. I say the son and his brothers, for all the sons are equal in this [554]
subordination; rural Ireland knows neither primo- [858]
geniture nor junior right. As long as they remain at home upon the farm they share this status equally.

The behaviour that reflects this state of affairs 593
can be readily observed. Sons go to market and fair from the time they are ten or twelve, but they buy or sell little if anything. Father and sons can be

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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gories. He is a family man. He may be the shrewd- 593
est of traders and the best of farmers, but what gives him his occupational status, determines his pattern of work, provides his incentive, is a set of dispositions arising in the balanced interests and reciprocal obligations of the social group to which he belongs.

We can test this conclusion. There are a large 589
number of small farms in the countryside worked 593
by what we can call incomplete families. They are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, widows. In such farms the person owning the farm exercises control. A widow, for instance, is helped out by a male relative—brother, nephew or son. The male takes over the tasks which would ordinarily fall to a farm father. Even if the widow retains control of ex- [462]
penditures and disposal of farm goods, the bargaining, buying and selling in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair rests with the man. For instance, in one example which came to my knowledge, a 'landless' young man pleaded successfully to the Land Commission for an addition to his aunt's holding. It was he who carried out the negotiations successfully. The feeling of the community was sufficiently strong to push the young man into a position beyond his status. Some male must represent the aunt and her holding in the outer world. With old bachelors, a nephew moves in and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control, even to regulating sums spent by the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

114 221 settlement, the baile or townland, kept its significance and its importance. In many cases what has passed for nomadism has been the ancient and normal practice of seasonal movement to the hill pastures, which is still not entirely abandoned and has left many traces in the life and landscape of the country (Chapter 6).

181 ●462 In essentials Ireland is and has been a peasant country, and it may be well to examine objectively some of the general characteristics of peasant society. A permanent link with the soil on which man lives and works is the essence of a peasantry; and in this work of the fields woman co-operates with man. For her, however, field work is a secondary task since her main interests must lie in the house and in the milking of the stock. Work with spade and plough and the care of the draught animals is for the men, although carrying—necessarily done by women in primitive communities where the men must have their hands free to use their weapons—often remains an activity of the peasant woman where not entirely superseded by animal transport. Where fishing and shore-collecting engage the men's attention the women's sphere of action and responsibilities are widened.

181 323 Among tasks in which the women of some peasantries play a leading part is the making of domestic pottery, but this tradition, though strong in Neolithic Ireland, gave way to the use of metal "pots" and vessels of wood, the making of which was the work of the men. Nor have local survivals of hand-made pottery, like the Barvas ware of the Hebrides, been recorded here.

181 443 796 Periodic gatherings for exchange and social intercourse are a feature of peasant life which has contributed to the growth of towns. The immemorial meetings in fairs and markets have been weakened by modern means of transport and by government marketing boards; and in some parts of the country the whole fabric of rural society is being undermined in consequence. As in North Africa to-day, the fairs were often held near some ancient burial place, and the assemblies were linked with religious festivals which brought

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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244

[462]

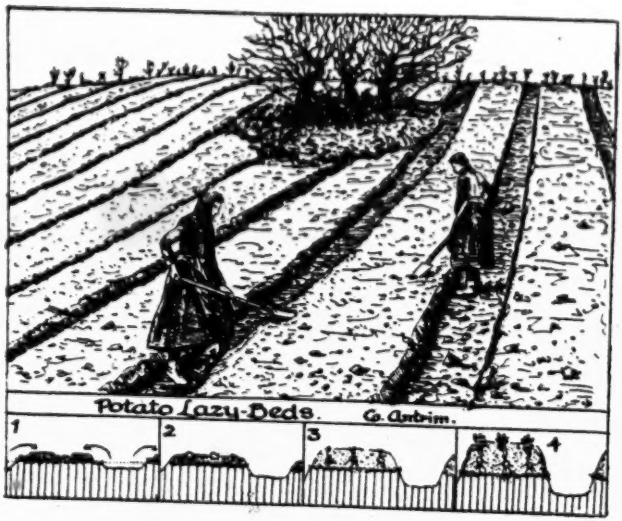

Fig. 46.

the bed and the furrow varies considerably from one locality to another. The latter may be as much as three feet on shallow soils, for it is essential to have sufficient earth both to cover the seeds and to mould the young plants, generally in two stages, later on, but an average width is 1½ feet. Similarly the ridges, while about 4 feet wide as a rule, may be as narrow as two feet. The first step is to turn over the sods from the furrow, one sod on each side, and place them face down, that is grass against grass, on the ridges, so that when they are buried the grass rots and helps to feed the growing crop. With the many methods of turning the sod, of preparing the seed-bed, manuring, setting and covering the potatoes it is impossible to deal here, for the customs differ from one district to another, the manure being spread, for example, sometimes under and sometimes over the seeds. But it is relevant to notice that the old Irish spade or loy (Chapter 13) is a specialized implement adapted for sod cutting and turning and not for

244
412

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

digging or shovelling. For these processes the digging fork 244
and long-handled shovel are the proper tools. (Fig. 65). It 412
should also be remarked that the preparation of lazy-beds
was communal team-work, undertaken by groups of from [462]
8 to 16 men who shared their labour under the system of
voluntary co-operation which distinguished the village [476]
community. The custom is maintained in a few localities.

The loy served in certain districts as a dibber for setting the potatoes "against the back of the spade." but various special dibbers were also used. There was, for instance, the large two-handed "steeveen" found from Co. Leitrim to Co. Clare. As another example of a dibber we illustrate the clumsy-looking "stamp" from Co. Armagh (Fig. 47), employed in sowing turnips. Reference will be made elsewhere (Chapter 16) to the use of seaweed as manure. Old thatch, with its content of soot from the turf fire, is occasionally used as a fertilizer, and I am told that in Achill Island miniature stone, sod or turf buildings used as "soot houses" are roofed with rafters and scraws each autumn. Fires are lit in them, the smoke depositing soot on its passage through the thatch. This is then stripped off and, with the ashes of the fires, spread on the land as manure in spring. The thatch of the Hebridean black houses was utilized in the same way.

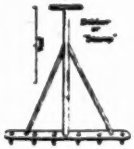

Fig. 47.

A practice which was formerly widespread and attracted a 241
great deal of heated discussion in the period of agricultural 412
development at the end of the 18th century was the preparing of waste ground for cultivation by "paring and burning," or "denshiring." It seems probable that this was a survival of ancient custom, and I believe that old-fashioned tool, the flachter, was probably employed for the purpose, just as its sister-tool, the breast-plough, was in England. Many types of tools were perfected for land reclamation, including a [185]
special skinning-plough. In the south-west a heavy hoe or mattock, known as a graffan—similar to the implement still used in Kerry for breaking clods on potato ridges—was popular as a paring tool, the sod being rolled with the foot as it was cut. By such laborious processes, and by centuries of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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317 We referred in the first paragraph to sand and gravel: the white shell sand is taken for manure and is also strewn on the kitchen floor, while beach stones and gravel find many uses as cobble stones, pebble-dashing and so on. Among other 226 by-products of the sea we must not forget fish-oil, manu- 373 factured not only as a medicine for cattle but also as an illuminant. The iron crusie lamp (Fig. 105) was not long since the chief source of light in the islands, and until half a century ago large sea-shells are said to have been employed for the purpose in Co. Kerry. The wick of the crusie was a peeled rush or a twist of cotton: because of the strong smell the lamp was hung under the chimney so that the draught carried away the fumes. The abundant sea shells are also utilized for lime on some islands, for example Tory, by burning them in a kiln made of turf.

317

228

Fig. 105.
Length 15"

Finally, we must not omit the dread harvest of the sea cast up after storms—the timber and food-stuffs and wreckage—always welcome and perhaps in olden days not uninvited. Many an islandman's cabin is roofed with couples of ships' masts, and a visit to treeless Tory or Rathlin will reveal the many uses to which drift timber is put. Mysterious objects brought by the currents from the West Indies occasionally turn up: pumice, perhaps from this source, has been found, treasured no doubt as a magic stone, in sandhill settlements of 4,000 years ago.

162 It is not to be wondered at, when we consider the ancient 226 and varied, if often toilsome and dangerous life of the Irish shores, that the coasts carry a much denser population than districts inland. It should be stressed that these various activities are carried on not as a rule by specialized fishermen but by farmers and peasants to whom the sea offers an accessory source of life and interest, and who often perpetuate the old communal schemes by taking shares in a boat and nets. Old ways die hardest by the sea; prohibitions and super- [162] stitions are rife, and fishing is one of the few occupations in which women take no active part.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular 444
counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands.

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work 465
is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day.

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, 462 ●
help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The [434]
average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are 871
usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, gene- 584
rally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The mar- 585
riages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some 591
cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family.

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable 585
information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me [115]
that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional 352
width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed— [171]
the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart 462
and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, 372
the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' [534]
The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is [574]
invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can [787]
give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which an- [769]
cestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

two feet or as much as eight feet wide, the furrows between them being from one to three feet in width. These dimensions and the different methods of building the ridges are intimately related to the depth and quality of the soil and to the types of spade used in each locality. Both the breadth and length of the ridges are commonly measured by the spade, and the term score-ground, applied in Co. Kerry to potato land let in conacre, that is from year to year, refers to twenty spade-lengths. When the crop is lifted the ridges are roughly levelled, and the following year they are split, that is the new furrow is dug in the middle of the old ridge. 241

It is not easy to describe the process of ridge-making with the spade and impossible to portray all the varieties of technique employed. It is back-breaking work, yet it is performed with an easy rhythm and a seemingly effortless and almost mechanical efficiency. In its simplest form the grassy strip which is to become the furrow is notched centrally down its length and the sods on each side are each undercut by two spade-thrusts and levered over on to the beds, where they lie flat, grass to grass, like closed hinges (Fig. 48). Normally the manure has already

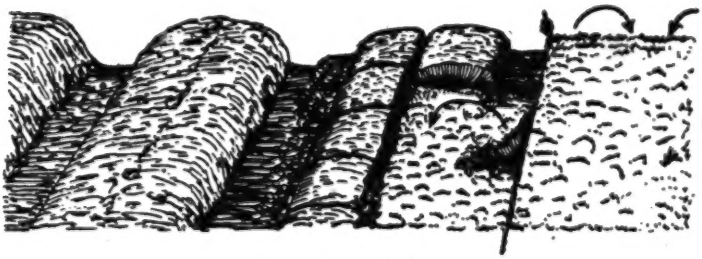

FIG. 48. Lazy-beds.

been spread on the beds, and if the potato sets have also been planted all that is needed to complete the ridge is to break the earth of the furrow and shovel it on to the ridge. More commonly, however, the beds are fully prepared before the sets are planted, and it is the task of the women and children to follow the ridgemakers and thrust the potatoes into the sandwich of sods and manure. This is the method appropriate to the wetter [462] [857]

241 west, for it means that the ridges can be prepared beforehand as opportunity offers. What is known as the Munster mode of planting 'with the back of the spade' is to thrust the narrow spade through the inverted top sod and drop the set behind the blade as it is levered forward. On the average three rows of potatoes go to each bed, but there are also one- two- and four-set ridges.

A special wooden dibber known as the steeveen, kibbin (little 241 spade) or gugger is employed for planting in Cavan, Leitrim 412 and Longford and may perhaps be correlated with the heavy loy as another archaic tool which has kept its hold in that area. The steeveen with its conical head (Fig. 48) will break through the toughest sod and open a way for the young sprouts. Typi- [462] cally 'guggering' is woman's work, the children following, [857] dropping in the sets and closing the hole with a fork or a mell. I like to think that the steeveen is descended from that universal tool of the women of humble cultivating societies, the digging or planting stick, remote ancestor of the spade. It is a plausible theory that the crops of wheat and barley sown by the first Irish cultivators were planted in this way in the ashes of burnt woodland on the mountainsides. Larger dibbers or 'stamps' with several teeth for planting corn were used until quite recently in some counties, for example Armagh (Fig. 49).

[407]

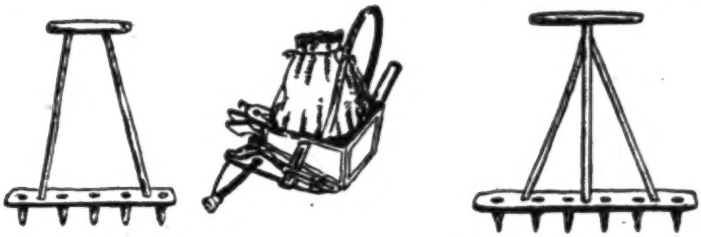

FIG. 49. Dibbers and (*centre*) sowing fiddle, Co. Armagh.

They are probably the descendents of specimens introduced by English 'planters' of the early seventeenth century. It is the [539] dibberhole which is referred to in the rhyme which has outlived the action it once accompanied:

246 milder winters there seems to have been no such response. Although there has been hay-making on the rich meadows of Co. Meath, for example, since medieval times, when the English openfield system was introduced, I have found no literary or archaeological evidence for it anywhere in early Ireland. Indeed Giraldus Cambrensis expressed surprise in the [114] twelfth century that the Irish neither made hay nor built stalls for cattle, and despite his untrustworthiness I believe his witness may be accepted in this instance. Hay-making would have begun on the river bottoms (callows, holms) which, being liable to floods, were not available for winter grazing: this meadow hay is today much less important than 'upland' hay, the significant term used for rotation grass. The hay-making season is nowadays a time of toil for all members of the family, but I suspect that the period from midsummer to late July was under the old order a slack season, the time for raiding and fighting, and catching the English bending in the hayfields. For the Irish it was the 'blue month', when food was scarce (July is also called 'the hungry month') and the meal bins empty. In Ulster at any rate, for reasons which may be older than King William III, July is the holiday month and the time for faction fights. Sir John Myres used to say that in the Mediterranean world, where there is little grass to make hay, the month of May was the slackest time of the summer, the [721] favourite time for fighting instead of hay-making. In Ireland as in classical Greece the winter climate made it difficult and unsportsmanlike to go to war at that season.

To judge from present practice on the tiny farms of the west of Ireland, grass was cut as required from field-banks and odd [462] corners, a creelful at a time to give to the cow as a 'bribe' at milking time, and it was woman's work. The hook used for [412] this purpose, the grass or scythe hook, is smooth-edged, unlike the saw-toothed corn sickle, and what hay was made in former times was probably cut for the most part with the hook. The [231] livestock would be fed in winter mainly on oatstraw, and grazed on the infield stubble, supplemented by the outfield grasses which had been allowed to mature while the bulk of the stock was at the summer booley-grounds. We may be sure that what little hay was saved was treated much as it is on mountainy

372 hands into cakes and piled against a wall until dry enough to
237 carry home.[1]

After lying spread on the ground for a week or two the turves
314 are footed, that is a dozen or so are put to lean together in the shape of a pitched roof, to catch the wind (Fig. 64). This is
[462] work for women and for children, who are, in some districts,
[857] given a week's holiday from school. Through the months of June and July and often into August there is constant coming and going as the peats are turned and built into larger and larger piles, turn-foots, castles, rickles, lumps and clamps—the names and the shapes show considerable regional variation —until they can be wished on stacked on the bog ready to be carried to the farms as opportunity offers. The wind is the main drying agent, and once dried the peats acquire a waterproof skin. A well-built stack will throw off the rain, but it is usual in the west to thatch with rushes and add a coping of sods or
[343] stones against the wind. Open-sided turfsheds specially built of wood or stone are the exception rather than the rule. A favourite place for the stack is against the house gable, where it provides a protective warmth even before the turf is burnt. The fuel is taken into the house in baskets, creels or wights, and a small supply is kept handy by the fireside or stored, as in the Aran Islands, on the kitchen loft (Pl. 9, 2).

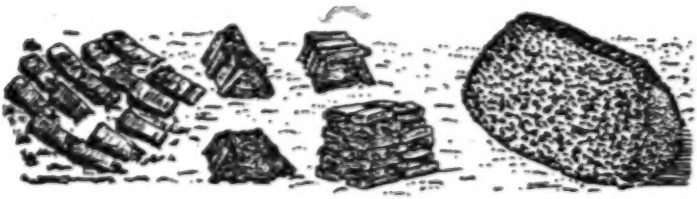

FIG. 64. Stages in the drying and stacking of turf (not to scale; the stack, right, is about 9 feet high).

Some lowland bogs are too waterlogged to be cut into turves, and if no slane-turf is available the black turf-mud is moulded by hand into bricks or balls which are stacked to dry. In some counties, for instance Meath and Cavan, mud turf is highly prized and its preparation follows a well-ordered routine. After

[1]C. R. Browne and A. C. Haddon, *The Aran Islands*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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222 described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting
461 and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful
[482] on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the
226 sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland
[492] and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed
[241] lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable
[517] gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters,
[462] when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2]T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[4]A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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226 types of gear. It used to be said that you should never risk taking a dog into some of the fishing villages on the north coast: [281] their skins were in great demand for making the line floats or 'stookies'. Very probably seal skins were formerly used for this purpose, as among the Eskimo. The sinkers of grooved stones from the beach might well pass for prehistoric implements (Fig. 74). The beautifully made line-baskets of unpeeled [285] willow have the graceful curves that one associates with the work of untouched 'primitives' (Fig. 82). And the division of labour was on a primitive level, for to the womenfolk fell the [462] tedious labour of baiting and preparing the hooks. The long-line fishermen were exceptionally hardy and were regarded with awe and respect by the inshore fishermen-farmers. No doubt the timid and the weakly had been weeded out by continual stress. Their knowledge of the sea and of the fishing [423] marks was a guarded secret, and the best banks were some- [777] times allotted, no doubt to avoid fights, by casting lots. In the Hebrides this was done on Bride's Day. There also, and possibly in Ireland, the banks were held in rotation in a kind of marine rundale.

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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

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244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

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kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the mainland and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

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221 233 234 fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than [462] the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and [233] outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were [232] low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they [224] also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [541]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

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291
are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters 294
are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are
sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn 291
lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white [192]
woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting [462] [286] and darning stockings for their husbands and children. [296]

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, [286] made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, [301] somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool, which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets [178] are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always [292] is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and children of all ages go barefooted or put on sandals during the summer and add hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers, bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes [296] that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt, and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing; the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer [513] attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

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The knit sweater

291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[657] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
[178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[999] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

158 751 [291] [834] [753] It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 827 [863] [825] [562] [273] [241] Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

237 372 514 283 • [462]

* 831 522 [154] [123] Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER I

The Small Farmers

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CENSUSES have laid bare the existence of two widely different types of agricultural activity in the Irish countryside. There are two widely different groups of persons whom we can tentatively designate as large and small farmers. Indeed, the statistics, if used correctly, give factual base to the divisions the Irish reckon in the countryside themselves. They remind one continually that the large and small farmers are different beings and belong to ways of life which are quite opposed.

In general, the differences are such as to present two groups of persons defined by two different ways of adapting themselves to nature and carrying on the business of agricultural production. Large farmers differ from small farmers in their techniques, in their products, in the use of the soil and the land. They differ in the way in which numbers derive support from their farms. They differ significantly in the organization of labor upon those farms and presumably in consequence in their relations with other elements of the community. Family labor characterizes the small man, hired labor the big fellow.

No one, of course, expects this to be an exact correspondence in which one gets perfect correlations in each instance between the size of the acreage and other factors. A typical small farm economy might well exist on a farm very large in area, and often does so in mountainous areas, where

[p.3, p.2 is blank]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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241 much of the land is useless. Again, a farm small in area
463 might be exclusively devoted to the sort of economy which is usually found on very large farms. In any single case, statistical generalities do not hold, of course. But in the large kind of correlation which a count of varying factors affords, bulk correspondences turn up with complete regularity.

241 The course by which this conclusion is reached takes one
463 through the devious labyrinth of Free State Government statistical abstracts. In 1926, the last census year before
162 the authors' field work was undertaken, the numbers living in country districts, "outside villages and towns with 200 or more population," made up 63 per cent of the Free State's population of almost 3,000,000. They were 1,815,496. Of the 1,307,662 classed as "occupied persons 12 years of age and over" for the whole Free State, 672,129, or 51 per cent, were engaged in agriculture. Any attempt, then, to understand the human setting of Irish farming involves an inquiry into the forces motivating the lives of well over half the country's people.

241 In 1926 this agricultural population produced a total
433 output valued at £64,757,000. Industry in Ireland produced goods to the value of only a little over half that figure (£34,000,000 net output).

231 In the agricultural output of that year, the proportions of
433 the various products indicate the character of the agriculture. Foodstuffs, with livestock products among them, made up the bulk of the output. Milk products accounted for £13,600,000; cattle, exported alive or slaughtered within the country, accounted for another £13,800,000. Pigs and eggs made up £9,800,000 and £6,690,000 respectively. Other livestock such as poultry, sheep, and horses accounted for the rest, in that order of importance. Wool and sundry items such as honey brought in a mere £700,000. All of these, the total output of livestock, reached a value of

593 and a man with many years' experience in Irish rural affairs,
428 attempt to give a statement of the generalities. They express, however, an ideal rather than an actuality.

The average household consists of six persons [and the parents]. Of necessity not more than one could be provided for on the holding and assuming, for example, that the family consisted of two girls and four boys, the position would be somewhat as follows:

593 The eldest son would in the course of years assume ownership of the holding. A second son might be provided with a second-
428 ary education and might possibly win a County Council scholar-
874 ship . . . enabling him to pursue a course of engineering or medicine practically free. In the event, however, of his not being so fortunate, the thrift of the family may enable him to pursue a similar course at the university, the intervals between terms and the long vacation being spent on the farm.

Some years ago medicine was the profession usually pursued provided the boy had no vocation for the priesthood. At that time the cost of his board was appreciably reduced by an arrangement through which neighbors' sons lodged together and brought with them supplies of potatoes, oatmeal, home-cured pork, in fact, provided for almost all their own food. When the boy is qualified to his own particular calling, to his credit it may be said that he denies himself many little luxuries in order to pay back the cost of his training and thus assist the other members of his family.

593 The third son either got trained in business and in due course started one of his own, or emigrated where he could also refund
428 the cost to his parents. The fourth son might possibly become a primary school teacher, a civic guard, a tradesman [artisan] apprenticed by his father in the near-by town, or again his family might give him enough to marry into another small holding.

One of the girls received a dowry or, as they say here, she was "fortuned off" into another small holding of similar status. The second girl possibly favored nursing, teaching, business, or domestic service, or again possibly religion, or even a clerical position of some sort either here or abroad.

166 The above quotation states the generalities in terms of
463 upward social mobility. The influx of the country people
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into the towns, into governmental, professional positions, and into the ranks of urban occupations must wait for special analysis in itself. It is not possible here to determine how great the effect of this movement from the small farms is upon the current much lamented overcrowding of the professions in Ireland. The point of interest for us is the dispersal of the farm group. 463 593

Naturally enough, this dispersal does not always occur so happily as in the above statement of the ideal. Yet the portioning off of the children and the success with which it is done is the pride as well as the duty of every farm family. A few examples will give the variations. They are more matters of success or failure to advance beyond the level of small farm life, but they show the genesis of the movement in the farm family. In a later section this subject will be dealt with in more detail. These examples, however, are typical, though the names are fictitious.

Leary of F —, a farmer with sixty acres, has a daughter married near-by with a four hundred pound fortune, and another, a nun in Mercy Convent, Ennis. Four sons have entered the priesthood, an expensive training from his point of view. A fifth is at home working, not yet thirty. Leary is a "strong" farmer, highly prosperous.

Tom Casey, K —, is a very poor holder with thirty acres of mountain and bog. Two sons and a daughter are still at home, and a bachelor brother works with him. Another daughter works for herself as a domestic servant in Ennis. One son Tom is apprenticed to a carpenter in Ennis. A daughter emigrated through the good graces of her aunt.

Michael Dunn of T — has twenty acres, but has not prospered. His two sons left at eighteen and twenty respectively to drive hackney automobiles in Ennis, an uncle there giving them a start. Another son now thirty and a daughter are still at home working the farm.

In a mountain townland, Pat Looney's father prospered, won the good graces of the landlord's agent, amassed four farms, the largest fifty acres, the smallest eighteen. He married off two 593 578 428

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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288 Otway[3] describes the weavers of Drogheda in 1840 subsisting on conacre gardens (plots hired without right other than to the current crop) in circumstances of dire poverty.
[427]

433 O'Brien sums up his *Economic History* by concluding that the result of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century was that Ireland abandoned all pretense of being an industrial country and came to rely on agriculture to a greater extent than at any time formerly and even than in the eighteenth century. The accounts of Ireland at the time of the famine and after it bear him out. They show a very great lack of any kind of industrial activity other than agriculture.
178

463 The petty crafts of the countryside, which never gave any promise of reaching industrial proportions as those in the town centers might have, suffered a similar decline. But with them the decline seems to have come later and to have been part of the general change brought by the industrial revolution. All the supply crafts of the countryside have now come to be concentrated in the market towns. Nevertheless, through western regions, at least, local craftsmen, often with garden plots to help them eke out a living, seem to have long continued to be part of the local scene. In the novels of Carleton written just before and after the famine, many local shoemakers, cobblers, weavers, carpenters, smiths, coopers, nailers, and other followers of small trades appear. Upon them, the agricultural population depended for much of its tools and goods for local consumption. It is impossible to determine now how many of these were rural, since censuses of occupations before 1926 do not distinguish occupations in towns from those in country districts. But these men were part of the generally greater proportions of country dwellers before the rise of towns and the opening up of the railroads during the last century.
178

[3] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (Dublin: W. Curry, Jr., & Company, 1839).

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Another very great occupational change, though it does not show itself in any great numbers in census records, has been connected with the disappearance of the landlord from the western counties. A whole series of occupations clustering around the management of estates or the tastes of the local gentry and their families has gradually disappeared. Even the adoption of many of the conventions and habits, once exclusive marks of the Ascendancy, by other classes of the population has not served to stem the change. 463 427 178

If we fasten our attention directly upon determining what occupations are characteristically found represented in the countryside rather than in the towns in Ireland today, we get a picture of rural economy in which the followers of other occupations than farming are few indeed in the countryside. The occupations predominantly rural in Ireland are nearly exclusively those of farm ownership or farm labor. Only in recent years has there been any further development of rural pursuits to take the place of those going out with the changes brought about by modern communication and distribution of factory-made products. The chief of the new influences is not yet represented in full, even in the census of 1926. It is too recent a development. The introduction of creameries had not yet made its mark in that year. Plans for industrialization, since undertaken by the De Valera regime, had not yet even been drawn up. 463 178

To get a picture of rural life and the view of technological adaptation which it entails, we can look through the figures for a comparison of urban and rural industry in the years of the study. 463 464

Volume VI of the Irish census of population of 1926 entitled "Industrial Status" gives a view of the industries of the whole country and a preliminary view of the chief forms of industrial organization. Though the volume is largely concerned with unemployment, it also contains tables which classify those at work in the Free State accord-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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463 464 ing to occupation and employment. It distinguishes between employers (those employing persons for pay in their principal business) and employees (those working for others) and counts the latter by trade or industry or, if farmers' employees, by size of farm in acres. It further distinguishes those persons working on their own account and those assisting relatives. Persons employing domestics only are not classed as employers. Even in keeping these categories separate, the census ran into difficulties. The following statements indicate the troubles met in separating the smaller farmers from those who engaged in non-agricultural occupation and from hired farm labor.

> Large numbers of small farmers and their sons work as agricultural laborers, road laborers, etc., as opportunity offers and many described their 'principal occupation' in the census (1926) as agricultural labor or road labor. (In gathering agricultural statistics in 1927, they were recorded, however, as farmers.) This is the chief reason why the numbers of farmers, male and female, shown in censuses of population were always so much less than the numbers of occupiers of agricultural holdings as compared with the agricultural statistics.[4]

The introduction to the volume then compares occupiers and farmers from figures of 1929 and 1926 respectively, and finding the occupiers much more numerous than the farmers, particularly in Leinster, the writers conclude:

> It is evident that large numbers of small farmers in all parts of the country did not describe themselves as farmers in the census and that this was more common in Leinster than in Connacht, as more employment can be obtained on the large farms and elsewhere in Leinster than in Connacht.[5]

Thus the presence or absence of big farmers in a district seems to have an effect upon the occupational status of the small farmers, in affording them the chance of employment

[4] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. VI: Industrial Status, p. ix.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. x.

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away from their holdings but within their own area. In 463
such cases the small farmers are both employees and em- 464
ployers employing their own families.

In regard to such difficulties the introduction makes the following final qualifications of its own categories of industrial status:

> As regards the numbers returned as employers, persons working on their own account, persons assisting relatives and employees, it should be explained that persons employing domestic servants only were not classified as employers, that persons assisted in business only by relatives who had no contract for wages were classified as persons 'working on their own account', . . . persons working on their own account and persons assisting relatives were classed as employees (e.g., clergymen, nuns), and finally that many employers having small concerns (blacksmiths, dressmakers, etc.) described themselves not as employers as they should have done but as persons working on their own account.*

It is clear that, in segregating country occupations from those of the towns, industrial status as defined in the census is less significant than occupation itself.

For the whole country, taking in all industries, there 464
were in 1926 as totals at work and out of work over twelve years of age some 850,000 men and some 341,082 women. Of these, those employing others numbered 62,605 men and 16,509 women, a fairly large proportion for employers. About 232,340 men and 62,949 women worked on their own account, and 196,034 men and 73,062 women were returned as assisting relatives. Employees of others numbered 402,631 men and 176,324 women. The figure for men, at least, indicates that those working for others were less in fact than those carrying on for themselves and families. The same fact is indicated for women, too, but only after the large figure of those engaged in "home duties" (a class which, according to the census, belongs in no indus-

* *Ibid.*, p. xii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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464 try at all) is included. At the time, 1926, the census recorded 6.9 per cent of men and 3.4 per cent women as unemployed, figures to be added to make industrial totals. The percentages were very low, and by the advent of the De Valera regime in 1931 had increased considerably. However numerous they are, they do not change the industrial pic-
471 ture very much in Ireland. Small enterprises predominate, and very little of the great developments of the machine age is present. The supply and service industries are in a definite preponderance, and in that fact reflect the country's dependence upon its agriculture and agriculturalists.

463 The Census of Occupations is quite different in purpose from that of industries and industrial status and proceeds by different counts. To quote the notes:

> The difference between statistics of occupation and industries must be kept clearly in view. . . . A person's occupation is defined by the operations he performs in earning his living: grainmiller, jamboiler, tramdriver, packer, clerk. A person follows his occupation within a certain industry or service. Some occupations are peculiar to a single industry or service, . . . others are found in very many industries and services. . . .[7]

The Census of Occupations is obviously in many ways an elaboration of that of industries. The two overlap frequently. Yet they are distinct enough to give us an alternate view of Irish industrial activity of great detail. If now we examine this view for what it will tell us of the survival of rural industry, we see again that occupations other than those of farming are very few indeed in the country districts.

463 Table 5 records the occupations of the whole country
369 classed within industries. It lists followers of occupations living in rural districts in the left-hand column and followers of those living in urban districts in the right-hand column. Weighting the figures for all occupied persons properly between towns and country districts, we find that

[7] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. II, p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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TABLE 5

Comparison of Rural and Urban Occupations, 1926
Irish Free State[1]

The table lists in the left-hand column, under the heading "Rural Occupation," those occupations 67 per cent or more of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. It lists in the right-hand column, under the heading "Urban Occupations," those less than 67 per cent of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. Percentage figures near 67 per cent are usually given; those greatly divergent are omitted. Industrial categories grouping occupations are listed at the head of the occupations. Figures for females of each occupation, and sometimes for males, are omitted if very small.

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
I. Agriculture and Fishing	
Farmers, male	Gardeners and nurserymen, 62%
Farmers, female	Gardeners' laborers, 62%
Sons assisting farmers	
Daughters assisting farmers	
Other relatives assisting, male	
Other relatives assisting, female	
Farm managers	
Agricultural laborers living in	
Agricultural laborers living away	
Woodmen	
Other agricultural labor	
Fishermen	
II. Mining and Quarrying	
Coal-mining	
Quarrying and other mining	
III. Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
a. Makers of Food	
Creamery workers, 80%	Employers, managers, 62%
	Bakers, pastry cooks, biscuit makers
	Sugar, sweet, jam makers
	Grain millers
	Other skilled food makers, including foremen
	Other unskilled food makers
b. Makers of Drink and Tobacco	
	Employers, managers, foremen
	Maltsters
	Other skilled workers
	Other makers of drink
	Makers of tobacco and snuff

[1] Based on Irish Free State Census, 1926, vol. II, Occupations. Categories are sometimes not exactly those of the census but are occasionally grouped together for convenience.

[p. 239]

TABLE 5 (*continued*)

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Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
c. Textile Workers	
Breakers and scutchers, 89%	Employers, managers, foremen
Knitters, female, 67%	Spinners, piecers, carders, winders
	Winders, female
	Weavers, 49%
	Weavers, female, 30%
	Knitters, male
	Hand-lace workers, female, 65%
	Other skilled textile workers
	Other textile workers
d. Makers of Apparel and Textile Goods	
	Employers, managers
	Boot and shoe makers, 40%
	Cutters
	Tailors, tailors' machinists, 50%
	Dressmakers, female, 50%
	Sewers and sewing machinists, female
	Embroidering, female
	Other skilled workers
	Other workers
e. Workers in Hides, Skins, Leather, not Boots or Shoes	
	Workers in hides, skins
	Saddlers, 50%
	Other makers of leather goods
f. Workers in Wood and Furniture	
	Employers and managers
	Carpenters, 57%
	Cartwrights, wheelwrights, 28%
	Sawyers and wood machinists, 28%
	Coopers, 20%
	Basket makers
	Boat and barge builders
	Cabinetmakers
	Upholsterers, coach trimmers
	Other skilled workers
	Other workers
g. Metal Workers	
Employers, managers, 67%	Foundry workers
Smiths, 67%	Motor mechanics, 30%
	Cycle mechanics
	Mechanics
	Fitters
	Plumbers
	Tinsmiths, sheet-metal workers
	Machine-tool workers
	Boilermakers, shipwrights
	Other skilled metal workers
	Other metal workers

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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

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Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
h. Electrical Workers	
	Electrical fitters and wiremen
i. Workers in Chemical Processes, Makers of Fertilizers, Soaps, Paints, and Workers in and Makers of Paper and Cardboard	
	Skilled workers
	Other workers
j. Printers, Bookbinders, Photographers	
	Employers, managers, foremen
	Compositors
	Printers
	Bookbinders
	Photographers
	Printing-machine setters and minders
	Machine assistants
	Others
k. Builders, Bricklayers, Stone and Slate Workers and Contractors	
Foremen and overlookers, 75%	Employers and managers
Masons, 75%	Bricklayers
Platelayers, 75 %	Plasterers
Contractors' laborers and navvies, 74%	Slaters, tilers
	Other skilled workers
	Builders' laborers, 25%
	Other workers
l. Painters and Decorators	
	Employers, managers, and foremen
	House, ship, general painters
	Painters of vehicles
	Other workers
m. Other Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
	Watch and clock makers and repairers
	Workers in precious metals
	Electroplate workers
	Makers of bricks and earthenware
	Makers of glass and glassware
	Brushmakers
	Other skilled workers
	Workers in gas works
IV. Transport and Communication	
a. Railway Workers	
	Station masters and railway officials, 50%
	Locomotive engine drivers
	Firemen

[p.241]

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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Cleaners
	Guards
	Signalmen, 58%
	Shunters, level-crossing keepers, 40%
	Ticket collectors, checkers
	Railway porters
	Other special railway occupations
b. Road Transport Workers	
	Proprietors, managers of motor car garages
	Drivers of motor vehicles, 40%
	Drivers of horse vehicles for passengers
	Drivers of horse lorries, carts, vans, 25%
	Tramdrivers
	Tram and bus conductors
	Grooms, 53%
	Other road transport workers
c. Water Transport Workers	
	Ship owners
	Harbor officials and stevedores
	Navigating and engineering officers
	Petty officers, seamen, deck hands
	Firemen, donkeymen
	Barge- and boatmen, 40%
	Dock laborers
	Other water transport workers
d. Other Transport Workers	
	Post office sorters
	Postmen, 61%
	Telegraph operators
	Telephone operators
	Telephone operators, female
	Messengers
	Porters
	Other workers
V. Commercial, Insurance, Finance	
	Cattle, sheep, pig, horse dealers, 53%
	Shopkeepers, male, 43%
	Shopkeepers, female, 39%
	Shop assistants and salesmen, male, 30%
	Shop assistants and salesmen, female, 30%
	Buyers
	Agents and factors (coal, drapery, etc.)

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Commercial travelers
	Van salesmen and canvassers
	Hawkers of coal, vegetables, etc.
	Newspaper sellers
	Bank officials not clerks
	Insurance officials and agents
	Auctioneers and valuers
	Other commercial, insurance, finance occupations
VI. Public Administration and Defense, excluding Professional Men and Typists	
	Civil service officials and clerks
	Local authority officials and clerks
	Civic guards, 60%
	Army, commissioned officers
	Army, others
	Others in defense
VII. Professional Occupations	
Catholic clergymen, 65%	Other clergymen, 60%
Schoolteachers, male, 65%	Nuns and postulants, female, 34%
Schoolteachers, female, 67%	Christian brothers and monks
	Religious lay brothers
	Theological students, 54%
	Church officials, 50%
	Barristers
	Solicitors
	Medical doctors
	Dentists
	Veterinarians
	Midwives, female, 40%
	Sick nurses, female, 40%
	Music teachers
	Civil engineers and surveyors
	Chartered accountants
	Analytical chemists
	Professional students and articled clerks
	Journalists and authors
	Other professions
VIII. Personal Service	
Gamekeepers, 87%	Domestic servants living in, male, 60%
	Domestic servants living in, female, 58%
	Domestic servants away, male, 40%
	Domestic servants away, female, 45%
	Hotel and restaurant keepers, male and female, 25%

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TABLE 5 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Publicans, male, 56%
	Publicans, female, 53%
	Bar attendants, male, 46%
	Bar attendants, female, 54%
	Waiters
	Laundry workers
	Hairdressers
	Caretakers
	Charwomen, office cleaners, female
	Others in personal service
IX. Clerks and Draughtsmen and All Typists, but not in Civil Service or Local Authority	
	Heads of commercial sections of business
	Clerks, 14%
	Typists, male
	Typists, female
	Clerks, female
X. Other Gainful Occupations – Entertainment	
Race horse trainers and jockeys, 78%	Proprietors, managers
	Actors
	Musicians
	Other occupations, sport, entertainment
XI. Warehouses, Stores, Packing	
	Warehousemen and storekeepers
	Packers and other warehouse assistants
XII. Other and Undefined Gainful Occupations	
	Stationary engine drivers
	Timekeepers, gatekeepers
	Watchmen
	General and unclassified laborers, 25%
	Other and unclassified occupations
XIII. Persons Twelve Years Old and Over not Gainfully Occupied	
At school, 12–18, male, 69%	Retired from active occupation, not army or navy, 57%
At school, 12–18, female, 69%	Retired from active occupation, female, 50%
	Ex-officers of army and navy not described, 39%
	Students over 18, male, 50%
	Students over 18, female, 50%

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on the basis of chance expectancy any occupational class should have about two-thirds of its members in the country districts and one-third in the towns. It follows then that any occupation two-thirds or more of whose followers are still recorded as country dwellers can safely be called a rural occupation. Any occupation whose followers are less than two-thirds country dwellers can be called urban. 463 369

In the table, therefore, occupations 67 per cent or more of whose followers are rural are listed in the left-hand column. They are called rural occupations for our purposes. Those occupations which have less than 67 per cent of their followers residing in the country districts are listed in the right-hand column. They are called, for our purposes, urban occupations. In some cases the percentage of the followers of an occupation who are country dwellers is given for reference, particularly where it is near the critical percentage, 67 per cent, but in most cases, where it is not close to 67 per cent, it is omitted.

In actual number the followers of non-agricultural occupations in the countryside are not a small army. They are 249, 930 persons, to compare with 658,800 agriculturalists of one sort or another. Of this army the largest single total is to be found among the "other producers," that is, those not listed in the recognized census industries, such as transport, communications, trade and commerce, the professions, or "personal service." There are 194,969 "other producers" in the country districts today.

A glance at the left-hand column of the table shows that there are practically no characteristically rural occupations left other than agriculture and the small occupations of fishing, coal mining, quarrying, creamery working. Breaking and scutching and hand knitting are still country occupations, but their followers are few. The rest of the textile workers are characteristically townsmen today. Tailors and shoemakers and woodworkers, even carpenters, are towns-

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463 369 men today, overwhelmingly so, though among carpenters quite a few rural ones still survive. Smiths and employers in smithing and other metals businesses, many of whom are presumably smiths employing a few hands, often their sons, are still country dwellers characteristically. Masons and foremen and overlookers of construction and building are still country dwellers, as are contractors' navvies and platelayers. Except for the smith, therefore, there are no characteristically rural artisans left outside the building trades.

Those in the building trades or in construction, in the west at least, are not highly skilled men at all, not even the masons. They are largely laborers and landless cotters who work for local authorities as stone breakers and suppliers of gravel and broken rock for road construction. They are often farmers' sons who get work off the farm whenever they find work is to be had. Yet the local mason who puts up stone houses in the countryside, and the petty contractor ready to get up a crew of local boys for any sort of building, are still characteristically rural dwellers and part of the rural scene.

In transport industries the only occupation which is even nearly rural in complexion is that of postman, for obvious [205] reasons. The local post office is usually a small crossroads shop in the western counties. The post office workers are members of the rural communities they serve.

In commerce, in spite of the two currents at work, no occupation is characteristically rural. Dealers in animal produce, however, come closest to it. Yet most livestock and animal produce dealers are now townsmen, often town shopkeepers as well. The country shop at a crossroad is still important but not characteristic.

Civic guards, clergymen, and schoolteachers make up the only other occupational classes in the country who still live in the rural districts and are part of rural communities.

Three other occupational classes, according to the table,

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are also characteristically rural still today. These are game- 463
keepers, race-horse trainers, and jockeys. These are, of 369
course, employees of the landed gentry who follow the cult of the horse. They are more often to be found now in the eastern midland counties than elsewhere today.

In County Clare rural occupations other than agricultural are equally rare. There the figures necessitate a slightly different definition of rural districts, since certain towns smaller than 1500 possessing local self-government are included in the town areas. But, by the same procedure as before, we can divide the proportions of total population into rural population in the county and then classify the occupations in Clare according to their rural or urban character.

In Clare, of course, there are no very large cities. The 162
county counts 5,023 males and 5,522 females in town dis- 464
tricts, and the overwhelming majority are country dwell- 369
ers as one would expect in the agricultural west. The total rural districts in 1926 numbered 45,048 male inhabitants and 39,471 female. As befits a largely agricultural area such as the county, occupations and industries show a little different distribution. The population is for males 89 per cent rural and for females 88 per cent rural. Those gainfully occupied in rural districts number for males well over two-thirds of the total population, for females only one-fifth of the total, so that for men, at least, the numbers recorded as unoccupied are negligible. The low figure for occupied females is due to the inclusion of housewives among the unoccupied. The rural-urban ratio upon which we can build expectancies of proportions of followers of occupations to be found in towns or countryside is 92 per cent for males and 84 per cent for females. As for the whole country, female occupations are found only in the towns.

The table for Clare (Table 6) repeats practically exactly 463
the same story as that for Ireland as a whole. In fact, the 369

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TABLE 6

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Comparison of Rural and Urban Occupations, 1926, County Clare[1]

The table lists in the left-hand column, under the heading "Rural Occupations," those occupations 89 per cent or more of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population or in places having local self-government (a special case). It lists in the right-hand column, under the heading "Urban Occupations," those occupations less than 89 per cent of whose followers live in country districts or places under 1,500 population. Percentages near 89 per cent are given; those greatly divergent are omitted. Industrial categories grouping occupations are listed at the head of occupations. Occupations represented in Table 5 which are not listed here have so small a following in County Clare that they are included among "Others." Figures in parentheses following occupations give the total numbers for County Clare.

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
I. Agriculture and Fishing	
Agricultural occupations, male, 99% (23,572)	Fishermen, 84% (199)
Agricultural occupations, female, 99% (5,307)	
II. Mining and Quarrying	
Mining and quarrying, 92% (21)	
III. Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
a. Makers of Food	
	Employers, managers, 60% (21)
	Bakers, 50% (82)
	Makers of foods, female, 61% (13)
	Others, 20% (80)
b. Makers of Drink and Tobacco	
	Makers of drink, 99% (12)
	Makers of tobacco (0)
c. Textile Workers	
Textile workers, male, 95% (43)	
Textile workers, female, 87% (15)	
d. Makers of Apparel and Textile Goods	
	Employers, managers, 70% (48)
	Tailors, 67% (180)
	Bootmakers, 65% (141)
	Employers and managers, female, 70% (14)
	Dressmakers, female, 71% (304)
	Milliners, female, 50% (43)
	Others, female, 50% (13)

[1] Based on Irish Free State Census, 1926, vol. II, Occupations. The Census does not divide occupations within this category between rural and urban districts for Clare. It gives merely the total for the category of occupational classifications.

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TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
e. Workers in Hides, Skins, Leather, not Boots or Shoes	
	Saddlers, 67% (45)
f. Workers in Wood and Furniture	
	Employers, managers, foremen, 71% (38) Carpenters, 84% (491) Cartwrights, 40% (27) Others, 60% (66)
g. Metal Workers	
	Employers, managers, 84% (56) Smiths, 85% (199) Fitters, 67% (31) Plumbers, 50% (11) Motor mechanics, 40% (91) Other mechanics, 80% (69) Others, 80% (112)
h. Electrical Workers	
	Electrical apparatus makers and fitters, 80% (87)
i. Workers in Chemical Processes, Makers of Fertilizers, Soaps, Paints, and Workers in and Makers of Paper and Cardboard	
j. Printers, Bookbinders, Photographers	
	Compositors and printers, 0% (16)
k. Builders, Bricklayers, Stone and Slate Workers, and Contractors	
Contractors' laborers and navvies, 91% (2,054)	Employers, managers, foremen, 88% (136) Bricklayers, 40% (5) Plasterers, 42% (28) Masons, 87% (114) Builders' laborers, 43% (121) Others, 78% (88)
l. Painters and Decorators	
	Painters and decorators, 43% (65)
m. Other Producers, Makers, and Repairers	
	Others, 50% (50)
IV. Transport and Communication	
a. Railway Workers	
	Railway officials not clerks, 84% (21) Locomotive engine drivers, 67% (34) Firemen, 33% (16) Porters, 60% (45) Others not clerks, 60% (41)

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TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
b. Road Transport Workers	
	Proprietors, managers, foremen, 50% (21)
	Motor drivers, 50% (231)
	Drivers, horse vehicles for passengers, 60% (13)
	Drivers for goods, 50% (96)
	Others, 50% (6)
c. Water Transport Workers	
	Dock laborers, 9% (54)
	Boatmen, 88% (116)
d. Other Transport Workers	
Postmen and post-office sorters, 89% (190)	Messengers, 50% (39)
	Porters, 13% (63)
	Others, 80% (5)
V. Commerce, Insurance, Finance	
	Cattle, sheep, horse, pig dealers, 65% (69)
	Shopkeepers, 62% (574)
	Shopkeepers, female, 55% (341)
	Shopkeepers' assistants and salesmen, 50% (378)
	Shop assistants, female, 54% (263)
	Commercial travelers, 40% (25)
	Van salesmen and canvassers, 50% (15)
	Insurance canvassers and agents, 50% (19)
	Others not clerks and typists, 47% (83)
	Others not clerks, female, 80% (10)
VI. Public Administration and Defense, excluding Professional Men and Typists	
	Civil service officers and clerks, 68% (102)
	Local authority officers and clerks, 59% (78)
	Civic guards, 82% (260)
	Army officers, 5% (42)
	Civil service officers and clerks, female, 86% (93)
	Local authority officers and clerks, female, 30% (15)
VII. Professional Occupations	
Catholic clergymen, 90% (120)	Other clergymen, 69% (13)
Theological students, 90% (32)	Christian brothers and monks, 35% (14)
Mental attendants, female, 91% (37)	Nuns and postulants, 50% (227)
Schoolteachers, male, 86% (200)	Solicitors, 40% (10)
Schoolteachers, female, 91% (322)	Medical doctors, 77% (46)

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TABLE 6 (*continued*)

Rural Occupations	Urban Occupations
	Dentists, 13% (8)
	Civil engineers and surveyors, 79% (28)
	Other professional, 63% (90)
	Other professional, female, 75% (23)
	Mental attendants, 50% (33)
	Registered midwives, 75% (4)
	Sick nurses, female, 77% (121)
VIII. Personal Service	
	Domestic servants, male, 83% (63)
	Domestic servants living in, female, 78% (1,312)
	Domestic servants living out, female, 75% (451)
	Hotel and boarding-house keepers, male, 78% (45)
	Hotel keepers, female, 50% (157)
	Publicans, 70% (229)
	Publicans, female, 75% (145)
	Bar men, 75% (76)
	Barmaids, 76% (113)
	Waitresses, 67% (15)
	Laundry women, 60% (27)
	Charwomen, 30% (24)
	Others, female, 40% (11)
	Hairdressers, 30% (19)
	Others, 57% (57)
IX. Clerks and Draughtsmen and All Typists, but not in Civil Service or Local Authority	
	Clerks, all typists, male, 45% (153)
	Clerks, all typists, female, 57% (82)
X. Other Gainful Occupations — Entertainment	
	Entertainment and sports, male, 59% (42)
XI. Warehouses, Stores, Packing	
	Warehousemen and assistants, 75%, (23)
XII. Other and Undefined Gainful Occupations	
	Stationary engine drivers, 80% (45)
	All others, 50% (33)
	All others, female, 60% (41)
	General laborers, 48% (387)
XIII. Persons Twelve Years Old and Over not Gainfully Occupied	
Retired, 87% (637)	Ex-officers, ex-soldiers, etc., 69% (137)
At school, male, 87% (3,504)	Students over 18 not elsewhere recorded, 83% (92)
At school, female, 86% (3,482)	Not yet at work, male, 77% (281)
Others, male, 90% (1,620)	Not yet at work, female, 75% (336)
Engaged in home duties, female, 88% (17,657)	Others, female, 83% (3,602)

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463 dropping away of rural occupations other than agricultural
369 is even more marked. Yet the smith, carpenter, mason, building-contractor, employer, and foreman, and their navvies and laborers are characteristically rural producers. Only they of all the occupations and crafts survive in rural districts, with the exception of the very few textile workers. But the figures for the weavers of Clare are somewhat deceptive, since one of Clare's few industries was a tweed factory in Sixmilebridge, a town just too small to be excluded from the rural districts. Actually except for them the rural weaver is nearly entirely gone.

In Clare, as in the whole country, two professional occupations are still rural. Priests and schoolteachers are country dwellers. And theological students, characteristically "strong" farmers' sons destined for the priesthood, are rural too. That female mental hospital attendants should be
[743] characteristically rural in Clare is a statistical accident due entirely to the fact that the County Mental Hospital happens to be just outside an urban boundary.

The statistical record restates the fact that today in Ireland no less than elsewhere social differentiation on the basis of occupation and technique is an urban matter. The countryside has been relegated entirely to the agriculturalist. Only very few others occupy the countryside with him in the face of the extreme division of labor of modern industrial civilization. The Irish countryside is an extreme example of the relegation of the rural districts to agriculture. Nevertheless the statistical record shows us that a few of the rural artisans survive. It demonstrates too that a few men of professional status still serve the rural community. Even the crossroad shopkeeper is an important rural figure still, though he does not count a sufficiently large number to distinguish himself statistically as a rural occupation.

Occupational and technological differentiation is thus not entirely lacking in the country districts. Such division

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of labor of a non-agricultural character as still persists in the country communities is very simple. Yet it is an interesting part of community life. It affords status to local artisans in the lives of the small farmers.

The families upon the separate farms are not, of course, entirely self-dependent units. We have already had occasion to examine the kind of coöperation called cooring, often based upon the extended family which flourishes in the country districts. Such reciprocal aids in ordinary farm work are only one part of the fabric of services which one meets among the country people. Another part can be distinguished. It takes account of what elementary specialization in local techniques and handicrafts exists. The man or woman skilled in some particular branch of work is called the "handy man." The handy man is an important person at the times when his or her special skill comes into use. The local reputation of such a specialist is sufficient to keep the recognition of his skill alive between periods of use and to afford him a definite status. In the country districts of Clare even full-fledged artisans, appearing in census records as full-time carpenters, smiths, and the like, sons of fathers and grandfathers who followed the same trade, are not much more than local specialists.

Many a farmer is still a jack-of-all-trades, ready if need be to turn his hand to shoeing his horse or resoling a boot or building himself a house. Only where the products of factory and foundry have become deeply entrenched in farm life, embodying skills of distant workers abroad, do local goods and services represent techniques the small farmer cannot come close to emulating. For example, the smelting of iron is a process completely unknown, and neither the local blacksmith nor the farmer can do more than rework the iron they have at hand. But the blacksmith and the farmer both can do it, though it is the blacksmith who has the greater skill. In the countryside the techniques and the

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463 products of specialized labor are open and visible to everyone, and in some measure they are part of the lore which each man learns. Not all the men come to practice them, but they have all seen them or heard them described, and they are part of the fund of conversation, precedent, and value which is common coin among the people of the community. One's special craft does not segregate one from one's neighbors or take one outside the community here. Rather it is one's mark or sign, one's reputation and status within it.

This is the case particularly where, as here, most of the craftsmen of one sort or another have always depended upon a plot of land or a kitchen garden behind their cabins, with perhaps a pig or a cow or two, nearly as much as they depended upon their craft. By this dependence they were never segregated from the rest of the local population, either physically or occupationally. They too were agriculturalists of a sort and shared farmers' tribulations. Just as the farmers knew something of their techniques, so the local craftsmen were nearly always proficient in the ways of agriculture. Today in rural Clare the handy man may be anything from a veterinarian or bonesetter to a building contractor. He is always without benefit of law, apprenticeship, or formal training, and merely follows a technique of which everyone knows something. The farmers are ready to pass upon his skill, to debate the technical points of his work, to build up or tear down his reputation.

463 467 874 Down to the time of the World War, in the last generation, the close acquaintance the small farmers had with the special skills of the countryside was reinforced by the interest the farmers had in putting their sons to a trade. They could often find a place for them thus. In the towns even today formal apprenticeships, into which the farmer must pay for his son to enter, still flourish.

The statements one can get about the local specialists,

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at least of those of the better recognized trades, are direct 467
and intimate. The following words illustrate something of 874
the character of apprenticeship. A small farmer is speaking of his own knowledge of local conditions:

Before the war there used to be about twenty shoemakers in 463
the neighborhood, but now they've mostly gone away or are in 467
the towns. One of them went into Ennistymon. Whenever a 874
farmer wants a strong pair of boots even yet, he will not go to
a shop but he would go to the shoemaker. It wasn't always the 294
case the son of a shoemaker would follow the trade because there was good money in it. With it they would buy a farm and so for his sons, and they would go to farming. If a farmer had a crippled son, he might send him to the shoemaker to teach him the trade. Papers were signed that bound the boy for three years to the tradesman, and then the boy would go live with the shoemaker. At first he would be taught to tap, then to stick, then to sew, and the last thing would be to cut. If a boy left before the three years were up, no one would give him a job, and no other tradesman would take him on to teach him a trade. The father had to give twenty pounds to twenty-five pounds to teach him. At the end of three years the boy was given his indenture papers which meant he could set himself up any place in the country or, if he had not enough money to do that, he would work as a journeyman for someone else and his papers would give him the right to do it.

There were a great many tailors and smiths too. The time of work was three years. A boy who was a cripple might be sent to tailoring. He was taught three years and then he could set himself up. It was the easiest of them all to get along with because it required no money to start with. In the old days the tailor used to come to the house and stay for a week or so and make clothes for all the men of the house and go to the next house after.

The smiths trained boys also. When I was small, a cousin of 463
mine had a forge below on the road and any wet day all the 874
boys used to gather there and watch and talk. I started out by 326
blowing the bellows and then doing other things until finally I was as good as anyone. If I had the material I could make shoes, and I always shoe my own horses.

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463 326 554 Of these local specialists only the smith survives in any strength today. He shares with the mason the admiration the country people feel for physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this that made the more sedentary occupations of weaver, shoemaker, and tailor of less prestige. Thus the crippled son, as the quotation says, might be put to one of them.

463 294 The tailor was often a peripatetic. He moved around from house to house and community to community where he was known, living and eating among the family. He was made welcome, not only as a maker of clothes but also as a carrier of gossip. Today the few tailors who survive in the country districts are petty cotters with only a memory of their trade. The few still active ones have retreated to the towns. Most of the farmers' clothing is now shop-bought and factory-made.

463 286 [283] The weaver was perhaps the most sedentary of the local craftsmen. He is the one who has failed to survive even in the towns. The women of the farm families carded and spun the wool into yarn until home spinning died out, and broke and scutched the flax for linen, but the weaver made it into cloth. He spent all his days indoors, moving from one side of his loom to the other in a small room heavy-laden with fluff and lint. The farmers seem to remember most strongly the unhealthiness of the life, but they tell one also of the weavers' arrogance when their skill was in great demand. The following is the kind of description one can still get, the first part of it discoursing on weavers in general and the second relating the history of the local man:

> In the old days the weaver might have enough work to keep him busy for four months and, when you went to see him, he would put you off and tell you to come back in a fortnight for your goods. It would be no good for you, none in the world, if you didn't take a bowl of butter and a few dozen eggs to him

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as a way of getting him to start on your yarn in a hurry. If you 463
didn't, he would not do it until he got ready. They were inde- 286
pendent, all right, and then when they were finished, you had to reach down into your pocket and pay for what he did. There used to be a lot of weavers here, but they are all gone now. The women have got out of weaving the wool.

A weaver here, Paddy Seán R—, was a very fine fellow 463
though he drank a lot. You cannot blame him for that because his job was a mean one and bad on the health. He worked to 286
keep his mother out of the workhouse and till the day she died 735
he would not let her go there. Wasn't that a decent thing for him to do? Afterwards he went to Galway and then he came back here and as an old man he died in the workhouse. But wasn't it a decent thing he would not let his poor old mother go [386
and her going up the streets of the town every morning collecting the urine from the people who lived in the house [to use 514]
for bleaching].

These three occupations were the meaner ones in the eyes 463
of the country people. It was not that they degraded their 554
followers. Rather it was that they were intrinsically of less value than the more robust crafts of outdoor life. Something of the sexual dichotomization of labor was involved in this attitude equating sedentary, house-bound pursuits with the feminine spheres of activity.

The chief exponents of the robuster, more masculine crafts within local ken were the carpenter, the mason, the house builder, and the smith. But there were many others. Between the landless or "backward" cotters and laborers, who might turn their hand to anything, and the small farmers, who were themselves occasionally forced to turn to harvesting abroad or to road-mending and stone-breaking at home, there were as many specialists as there were activities in which special renown and skill could be attained. In fact, the development of local skills seems restricted only by the limits of the *matériel* which peasant life requires.

Other local experts were the thatcher, the cattle doctor 463
or "vet," often a herdsmen with a lifelong experience of

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463 cattle, the butcher, expert at pig killing and skinning (pigs are regularly butchered on the small farms), the expert at rigging the great hayricks which stand in the farmers' haggards, and, lately, the threshing machine experts. All these robust, outdoor specialists are male. The feminine sphere of life does not seem to have bred such specialization. Yet many women were known also for their special skill at this and that branch of women's work and were consulted accordingly. Nevertheless, the only traditionally feminine crafts to develop and flourish apart were witchcraft and midwifery.

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A local craft or proficiency seems to develop out of some special crucial activity in local life. A local craft or skill of the kind that meets us here builds up directly out of social life itself. It is a development of habitual association about any person who gradually builds a reputation for a particular proficiency. The proficiency may center around some traditionally established technique of peasant life, like the weaving of homespun and shawls, the clothing of the small farmers, or else it may build up about local conventions having no direct economic value. Dances, gambles, and other entertainments and ceremonies of local social life may likewise afford areas in which a special skill gains recognition, gradually to grow into an occupation.

Thus the local specialists included fiddlers, singers, poets, storytellers. In the last century, in a day of great poverty and much displacement from the land, each of these skills gave an occupation to many wanderers along the roads of Ireland. Their followers found employment in the rural communities among the small farmers. Even itinerant dancing masters once flourished in the country districts during Carleton's day.[8]

The existence of other conventions leads likewise to the

[8] Students of Gaelic culture have described these artists very amply. See Robin Flower, Daniel Corkery, *et al.*

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habitual utilization of persons specially skilled in them. 463 They are the ones to whom the small farmers habitually resort. Thus legal sanction might become necessary for matchmaking as soon as land reform made the farmers legal owners of the farms they transfer in the match. But a long experience of court tangles and reprimands by judges was necessary to establish the licensed solicitor as the channel for negotiation. The handy man who was a legal expert and had a fine copyist's hand in the country districts flourished quite a while longer, and flourishes occasionally even now. In the country districts, down to the present, these local specializations were acquired through personal association of one kind or another with former specialists. Very often skills are deemed hereditary in the eyes of the country people. But actually they are acquired as often through gradual development of habit begun out of interest and imitation as by inheritance and parental instruction. They are passed on quite often to others than sons. The following extract from field notes illustrates the development of such skills:

The local man who cuts hair here is a handy man; the man 463
Donnolly, who goes about and kills pigs for his neighbors is a 874
handy man. When we asked, we were told by Flanagan that 231
Donnolly was the butcher and handy man. They butcher only sheep, goats, and pigs. Cattle would be killed by the town butcher. Flanagan said Donnolly was not a true butcher, for he did not serve his time. If they want a boy to be a butcher, they send him to town and pay a fee and he would be trained there. Then they take out papers binding him. Donnolly said he learned it when he was a young man, but now that he was getting old he was not doing it any more. It takes several men to hold the pig, put a hook through the mouth, and kill it with a heavy blow on the head. They take it home, lay it on a table, and take a knife and cut it up. Then it is hung up, salted, and cured. Afterwards the butcher is given a bottle of stout for his work, as well as some fresh meat, while the husbands who helped get nothing.

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463 The country people distinguish between these men who are handy men and have had no formal induction into their trade and those who are legally recognized as "tradesmen." But the line of formal distinction is thin, and more recognized in the abstract than in the concrete. Thus in the story of the development of one local mason, one can see that the difference lies rather more in the kind of remuneration than anything else. One farmer's account of the "tradesmen" of his knowledge led him on as follows:

> There are other men who are carpenters and masons who are handy men, but they usually work for pay because the job might take several days, and no neighbor could stay away from his work with a friend for that length of time. Donovan is a mason and he taught himself. He built his own house and several others. A man cannot build a house because he would not know how to do it. Donovan is a very intelligent man. He has a terrible head on him.

437 That the difference of remuneration is seized upon by
476 countrymen as the distinguishing mark came to the authors'
463 notice again and again. The handy man is the local resident
465 who fits into the local pattern of courtesies, barter, gifts, as in the case of the butcher, described above, who got his reward in the shape of the meat shoved under his arm. In cooring, of course, one never pays. In any act of "friendship" and alliance in a familistic setting no formal remuneration of monetary payment is ever present. We have already seen that it is only at the crucial period of family reorganization, when the whole system of relations between members undergoes change, that any considerations of money enter the schedule of rural services and rewards. The same absence of money payment is the point of distinction here. It distinguishes the relations between the men of a local community and one of themselves who is "handy" through special experience from those between formal client and tradesman. Money payment is the mark of the outsider;

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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.*

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work. 463 232 476

The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid. 463 759 476 [656]

Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase: 463 465 326

* Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

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463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has
about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
326 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken,
232 is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exer-
cise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
431 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the
754 farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

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wife got her reward in presents, gifts, and whiskey, but not in money. Money, however, would be proferred to the nurse.

463 465 571

That the factor of payment in money should be crucial is really the cloak of the set of dispositions arising from habitual relations. In the local community the handy man is not paid, since, like "friends" and neighbors, he is one of themselves. Since he is one of the countrymen, he is caught within the system of much the same habitual relations of reciprocal service and mutual aid which make up cooring in agriculture.

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To see this point, we must describe the action of the local community in respect to the work to be done once again. Cooring is a form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. One old fellow described it aptly when he said that it meant that for a day of work given you would receive a day in return. We have already seen its connection with familism and the extended family. But besides cooring, there was another form of the custom known as *meitheal* (mihil). The word *comhair* (coor) referred to the reciprocity, the word *meitheal* to the band of men and teams acting together to perform a task. On various occasions when work beyond the capacity of cooring families was to be done, a *meitheal* of men or women or horses could be made up.

As described by the old people who still remember its heyday, the *meitheal* rested on a foundation slightly different from the reciprocity of cooring. The work was done by a gang of local persons got up for the purpose through the wish and custom of the local inhabitants, but without expectancy of individual return in like measure.

Bands of men and women were got up in rural communities by *meitheal* for the following purposes, of which the authors heard record:

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476 would be waiting outside to whisk them away or to have a dance.
571 Then when they ground the oats, they had a quern and the men and women would come together and each take a turn at grinding so it was not tiring and they would have a big supper of spuds and milk for all of them before they would go. Then they would get together for the carding and spinning before the thread was taken to the weaver. The young women might be carding and the old women spinning and the *meitheal* of
[535] girls would work away. They would get a dance when they would be done.

All the above description of close concert and deeply imprinted habitual work relations among the members of the local communities in the framework of the organization of behaviors of age and sex depict the now dead past. The same activities today, though certain techniques are different, bring out the same picture of work relations in an emotionally charged unison among persons of similar status within the community. The present-day hay harvest is very little different, though mowing machines are used. The great hayrick is still built in the same setting, and still calls for celebration. Everyone still waits for a signal from the hayrick rigger, a personage of considerable importance on such a day.

476 The unison of working on oats harvest with flails is gone.
571 But in its place is a threshing machine, and its owners come around and a local crew is got up out of the local men. The
● 463 same jollities still reign. In all this our chief interest is not
554 in changing custom. Rather it is from this kind of observation that a new conclusion arises. The factors of differentiation about skills and techniques in the rural communities give rise to statuses of the same kind as before, statuses based upon the development of a specialty by a member of the local community which is recognized and valued within the habitual activities of his fellows. Here is an opportunity to see the embryonic form of division of labor and development of occupations in terms of the life of a community. It is a continuous process.

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The formally recognized artisans of the country districts represent a sort of halfway stage in this process. The blacksmith is the most important of them, through historical associations and because his skill suffers so little loss of demand. Others, such as the weaver and tailor, are in process of disappearance; others perhaps in process of emergence. It is the incorporation they experience into the habitual relations of the group that determines their presence or absence and determines whether or not their skill shall develop or be lost. 463 571 461

Take, for instance, the few cases of persons who return to their native communities in the countryside from abroad. They find adjustment extremely difficult. The "returned Yank," if he has been long away, is declassed and to an extent deracinated. This is true of all his behavior, through all his relations with those from whom he went. The process of reabsorbing him is slow and painful. None of this shows itself better than in his inability to fit himself in again technically and occupationally. If he takes a farm, he is better off because he is independent. But otherwise he must learn a different kind of organization of work relations, a different tempo, and he must wait upon the slow development of the relations with his fellows which alone can give him full occupational status among them. This is the reason why innovations of all kinds seem to be infinitely slow in conservative rural life. Ardent agricultural reformers all too often fail to recognize this enforced tempo of habitual working relations in agriculture and suffer disillusionment accordingly. In fact, it is the rock on which most well-meaning reforms or innovations break. Change and innovation do come about, surprisingly quickly from one point of view. But they proceed through social relations; they do not overthrow them. They come about through a new habit's achieving a compatibility with old ones.

In the Irish countryside the organization of the community upon an occupational basis can be understood not 463 571

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463 in terms of such considerations as income, wealth, or skill,
571 or any such factors, but in terms of the place and function of the persons specializing among their fellows. It can be understood in terms of social relations and the organization of habit. Status based upon technical differentiation is built up out of personal relations in the work experience of the community members.

476 If then we take inventory of the kinds of goods and ob-
571 jects which make up the *matériel* of peasant life, and draw
621 up such an inventory to illustrate for us the connection between social relations and these goods and objects, we can construct a series of charts which connect community life and the exchanges and uses of goods, services, and objects in one comprehensive view.

In such a chart those goods and services which come to the farmer from those within his own community come to him in connection with traditional social relations uniting fellow community members. They are the ones transferred under the pattern of cooring: through "friendliness" and non-monetary reciprocal obligation.

Those goods and services which come to the farmer and his family from without the community come to him in connection with more recently developed non-traditional relations uniting him to persons outside the community. They fall into quite different patterns of activity. Likewise any person whose occupation makes him both a member of the local community and part of the outside world, by virtue of his relations extending beyond, is also in a position of oscillation between the first and the second relationships.

For there is a continual attempt to extend the pattern of cooring, as with all local familistic and communal obligation and sentiment, outward on the part of the farmers, and a continual extension inward on the part of outsiders of other patterns of relationship. Much of the enduring pattern of town and country relationship evolved in Irish

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TABLE 7

Relations of Farmers and Non-Farmers in Three Rural Communities in County Clare

The table which follows is a chart of relationships between farmers and non-farmers in the rural communities of Clare. It lists those of different skill or habit with whom the farmers have relations. Those who fall under the pattern of reciprocities, gifts, and cooring, and the goods and services they provide the farmer, appear in one list. Those who fall under other patterns, who do not figure in the obligations of cooring, are listed in another. At the right of each item in each list is a word or phrase characterizing the initiation of the actions taking place between the farmer and the non-farmer in the course of the provision of the goods or services described.

Read another way, the lists arrange in two groups all the local specialists with whom we have been dealing. They show us that the differences are to be found in social relations, not in goods or services rendered or any other factor. All the specialists of whom the authors got information in the country districts are here. The first list describes the specialists whose relations to the farmers are "internal" to the community. The second list describes those persons who connect the farmers with the outside world and are thus "external." List I gives those who enjoy superior prestige and local standing, whose contacts with the community proceed through the heads of families, the adult men, and who are capable of initiating action among them. In that limited sense only, they are dominant over the farmers and make a higher class. List II gives those who share inferior prestige and local standing, who form cliques with the "boys," and who are not ordinarily capable of initiating action among the adult members of the community except in a course of communal action employing their special skill. These are a lower class in the country districts by such definition.

This configuration of factors reveals the lines of relationship within the community and those extending outward from it.

The reader may judge for himself how close the connection is between the familistic system of farm life and the structure of the rural community.

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List I

Extra-Familial Relations within the Local Communities, Internal

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations [1]	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services [2]
Weavers	Homespuns, shawls, cloths, blankets		
Tailors	Clothing		
Carpenters	Furniture, houses, buildings		

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case this consists of gifts and cooring.
[2] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case the farmer commissions the labor.

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Smiths	Farm implements, horseshoes, tools, repairs	Gifts, annual payment, and cooring	
Shoemakers	Boots, shoes		
Thatchers	House thatching		
Hayrick experts	Hayrick building		
Masons	House building, sheds, walls		
Wall builders	Walls		
Whitewashers	Limewashing of houses, sheds		
Water diviners and well diggers	Finding and building of wells		
Threshing-machine operators, owners	Threshing	Payment, gifts and cooring	Farmer commissions labor and machine and pays hire
Midwives	Attendance at childbirth		
Bonesetters	Broken bones		
Local "vets"	Treatment of sick animals		
Local "doctors," wise men or women	Treatment of sick; magic		
Domestic servants	Household aid	Wages only for outsiders not kin	Farmer hires and pays hire, otherwise kinship relations hold
Agricultural laborers, employees of big farmers	Occasional aid in agriculture		Either party requests aid
Gravekeepers	Records of grave locations, tending of graves	Wages by priest, gifts and cooring from farmers	Unobserved
Slate quarrymen	Building and roofing slates	Unobserved	Unobserved
Sextons	Tending of churches	Wages by priest	Unobserved
Limekiln and lime burners	Fertilizer	Gifts and cooring from local men, payment for outsiders	Unobserved

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services

List II

Extra-Familial Relations with Local Persons Extending Outside the Local Communities, External

Special Cases, Occasional Relationship

Tinkers	Asses, pots, pans, repairs	Occasional trade at the door	Tinker makes rounds
Dealers, hawkers, feathermongers	Odds and ends, small trade articles. Feather mongers buy feathers from farmers	Occasional trade at the door	Dealer makes rounds

Habitual Relationships

Crossroad shopkeeper	Supplies liquors, foodstuffs, tobacco, sundries not bought in town. (Most trading of staples done in towns, however.) Collects eggs and butter for sale to produce dealers	Farmer an habitual client, purchasing on long-term credit. Relationship overlaid with obligations of "friendliness," involving reciprocal gifts and occasional advances. Barter significant only in the shopkeepers' acting as depot for eggs and butter sales	Relationship habitual over long term (see other columns)
Civic guards, (police) officials and uniformed men (*Gardai Siochána*)	Local protection of person and property, apprehension and prosecution of misdemeanor and felony. Informally, police settle disputes, report grievances, give amateur legal advice, and gather census data for governmental departments	By law, civic guards must be neither members of the communities in which they are stationed nor related in it by marriage. They are instructed to maintain close rapport and very friendly relations with local people, and seem to succeed. They go in for much sport with the local young men and boys. They are attached to local barracks but, if they are married, maintain homes in the local community	Assigned to stations on departmental orders

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1935) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Big farmer	Occasional employment of local young men; occasional aid to small farmers and local purchase of corn, vegetables, animals, produce	Of a higher class and wider contacts than the small farmers; most often a townsman by culture and even by residence. In the countryside, close informal contacts with others of his kind over a wide area; interest in fashionable recreation and sport. Contacts with small farmers often friendly but usually few, except where big farmer is active politically	
Cattle and produce dealers	Purchase of produce and livestock, providing chief monetary income of small farmers	When not townsmen, whom the farmer meets only at periodic fairs and markets, these men are usually big farmers. Buy "from the land" (that is, from individual farmers not gathered at the local fairs and markets) very rarely; butter and egg dealers nearly always buy through crossroads shopkeepers	

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Parish priest and curate and other clergy	Religious leadership and moral control. Regulation of personal conduct and family behavior. Settlement of conflicts and disputes. Recommendation of "characters" before the outside world. Regulation of formal beliefs and attitudes, supervision of education in the interests of the accepted *mores*. Priest supplies ceremonial and cultural leadership and takes an active part in nearly all recreational and cultural activity, along with the schoolteacher, in country parishes. Only at times of high ceremony or special devotion, as at marriages, or in pilgrimages and retreats, does the small farmer make use of town churches, though he and his wife often contribute to them	In country districts today formal religious relationship seems to be superseding older paternalistic dominance of parish priest. Little informal contact except in the case of young curates in local sport. But the priest still commands greatest respect and reverence and, in many cases, the love of his parishioners. He is still the local court of appeal and the arbiter of local custom. He is consulted a great deal by both men and women. His parishioners are jealous lest he overstep his sphere of authority, particularly in politics, yet they concur in granting him obedience in everything else. Nevertheless the older magical power he possessed once is gone. Today he is often superior to the small farmers in wealth and education, and is not one of them. His more usual associates are other clergy, big farmers, and townsmen	

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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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another guise. They are controls upon the system. 182
They are unconscious patterns of human action 554
whose social function is to ensure conformities and 565
to enforce cohesions against internal disruption and external defection. Much of the fate of human beings, both at their own hands and at those of their fellows, conforms to the controls the community exerts in response to the system of customs and values by which it builds itself and in which it ensures its preservation.

Tragedy, for example, lies in the fate of one 463 ●
romantic human type in rural Ireland. In the last 178
century before the introduction of railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, smiths, followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Open any account of rural Ireland before the last quarter of the last century, such as the tales of William Carleton, and you will be rewarded with a full-blooded picture of this lusty crew. Their crafts were very primitive, but their place was sure. Since then, nearly all of them, except the smith, their peer, have been swept away before the skill of townsmen and factory. These men supplied their neighbours, lived among them, were an integral part of rural life. When poverty struck too deep, they became peripatetics, like the wandering singers, scholars, fiddlers, spalpeen labourers, petty hawkers and beggars who swarmed the roads of Ireland. The world of fairy-tale was

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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178 not remote from the farmers who knew these men.
463 Rumpelstiltskin, in a Gaelic dress, was at one's very doors.

In remote communities some few of these survive. Where they do, the community can still make use of them. Commissioning them follows a traditional pattern of gifts and courtesies little resembling conventional monetary commerce. Their skill descends, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; it is 'in the blood'. Their surplus children must disperse to towns and in emigration. For theirs too is a familistic world.

178 Unless they marry within their own fast-
463 diminishing numbers, they too must have land and fortune. Now and again one of them rises in the
556 world. He acquires land, he sets aside a fortune, he marries sons and daughters on the land. Year by year, his trade goes into the discard, till one fine day he is a full-fledged small farmer.

463 But such upward mobility is rare and difficult.
554 Economic change has swept his skill aside. The local artisan is more often a landless man, with nothing but a garden patch. The services he performs, however indispensable, do not give him equality with his neighbours. His standing is low, though his person is welcome. A farmer might 'put a son to a trade', perhaps, and often did not long ago. But it would be the lame son, the one not 'suited to the land'.

So today one finds broken remnants of this local

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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craftsmanship scattered in cabins here and there 463
through the countryside. The mere memory of 554
their trade may be all that still remains to them to tell one that they are not the petty cotters they seem to be. They have not married, or if they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Or here and there the countryman will point out the shells of their houses; "The family all died out of it", he will explain.

For the pressure of social standing is a powerful force, even in such a setting. Rather than admit an inevitable decline into the status of a landless labourer, they must 'die out of it'. One's standing, we remember, is one's blood. If they cannot amass a tangible representation of that blood in the dowry, they cannot marry. Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

Even if they do succeed, and merge by marriage into the farmers' commonality, they bear a trace of a different origin yet a while longer. Change is slow where lines are tightly drawn; even peasant society knows its parvenus. And if dispute and anger flare up to strip life to its essential core, what insults do we hear? The countryman 'throws up' to 463
his fellow, not his face or his manners or his 554
animal likeness, in a wild *chameau* or *schwein*, but 578
his descent. He damns him with the reminder of 'carpenter' or 'weaver blood'.

Strange as this epithet may seem to us, it brings

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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463 an adequate, instantaneous response. The psycho-
554 logist knows that expressions of anger, like any
578 other emotion, are conditioned within particular social systems. And here the Irish system works, in its own fashion, to draw and to reinforce the inevitable distinctions and discriminations of social life.

From this fact springs comedy as well. Joke and
522 fun play round this central theme. A good deal of old custom and traditional pastime cluster here. The picturesque buffoonery of the 'strawboys' —privileged masqueraded figures whose mock-dangerous invasion of the wedding feast has been dignified to represent a last remnant of a primeval bride-capture—is better explained thus more simply. Such symbolism as the gaiety of Shrove Tuesday, when in Clare, at least, young men beat loudly on the doors of those unmarried women who took no husband through the Shrovetide, is still direct enough.

For comedy and laughter soften the sharpness of social controls. They are the velvet glove that clothes the iron hand.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

226 to him by old fishermen at from £30 to £100, so that the loss of this industry must have told considerably on a poor community such as this. The primitive method which he found in use on his visit to the islands he describes in full as it was explained by Michael Halloran, the 'king'[1] of Inishshark, a veteran harpooner, who had just killed his nineteenth fish a few days before.

"I had been told that these sun-fish generally took from sixteen to eighteen hours, and frequently longer, to kill; in fact, I have heard it sometimes took two days, so naturally felt considerable interest in the gear used for the purpose. The king brought with him his trusty harpoon, which, to my mind, looked a most antiquated arrangement, especially designed to cut out of a fish, instead of holding it. I could not see a whale-boat or anything like one, so inquired where the boat was, and was shown an ordinary square-sterned boat, about 16 feet in the keel, which had nailed on her starboard bow a piece of wood about 1 foot long, with three small notches, or scores, barely half an inch deep, cut in it. I found out that these notches or scores were all they had to run the line through, and that when a boat fastened a fish, it was a pulling match between our friend the shark on one hand, and sixteen men on the other, a regular case of 'pull devil, pull baker'! Such a thing as a bollard head to take a turn of the line round seems never to have entered their heads."

226 501

463 In addition to fishing and farming, the other occupations are fish-curing at the station recently established by the landlord, Cyril Allies, Esq., J.P., who resides on the island, and personally superintends it, and the trades, represented by a boat-builder, a blacksmith, a shoemaker who imports his leather from the mainland, a tailor, who still adheres to the old method of measuring his clients without a tape, using instead a sheet of paper, on which the several lengths are recorded by "snips," or notches cut with the scissors; there is one weaver who makes use of a rather archaic form of hand-loom, four men who, on occasion, act as sawyers, extemporising a saw-pit in the nearest convenient spot by the aid of trestles, and using to mark their lines a cord blackened with the ashes of straw or shavings, and finally, a fiddler.

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[622] [1] In answer to an inquiry of mine relative to the position of king, Mr. Myles Joyce, National Teacher of Bofin, writes:—"The title of king is not hereditary in the island. There is at present a man removed something beyond his neighbours in the way of education and position, who is, *par excellence*, the king; and to whom all persons who want any information about the island or its history must apply."

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(C.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Doghertys, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(D.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(E.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dennistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct. 463 241 [351] [412]

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [407] [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and among the farming population a new roof is hardly ever covered with thatch. The country thatcher finds employment in patching, not thatching. 342 [463]

The erection of such simple houses as I have described did not call for the services of specialists. When the need arose the collective skills of a whole community were available, and one can readily see how prescribed methods were handed down in any particular area. 'The custom on such occasions', wrote Lord George Hill[1]—he is speaking of Donegal in the years before the Great Famine—'is for the person who has the work 342 476 527

[413]

FIG. 15. Thatching tools. (1) Needles, the upper one for hay or fir ropes. (2) Mallet. (3) Trimming knife. (4) Rake. (5) Spurtles for stappling and patching. All from Co. Down except the last, from Co. Meath.

to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and singing while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day'. Like all work done in common, the thatching too was regarded as a sort of festival. In the Aran Islands 'from the moment a roof is taken in hand there is a whirl of laughter and talk till it is ended, and, as the man whose house is being covered is a host instead of an employer, he lays himself out to please the men who work with

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 40.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

X

PLOUGH AND SPADE

STRONG arms have been the Irish labourer's passport to labouring jobs overseas, and it may be recalled that the word 'navvy' derives from the canal-diggers or navigators, many of them Irish, who opened the waterways of industrial England. Later it was Irish labourers who built the first railroad tracks of North America. Those arms were toughened by spade-work in field and bog, for the Irish spade is much more than a gardening tool: it was, and still is in backward areas and in the boglands, an implement for field cultivation and for cutting turf. The small field pattern of all except the most fertile regions is in part a reflection of this historic fact. An acre or two and often less in area, the tiny hillside fields are a measure of spade work just as the wide prairie wheatlands mirror the multiple plough or the mounded garden plots of an African village are the mark of women's work with mattock and digging-stick. Even in the deep-soiled lowlands where the plough is now universal the observant eye, still more the viewer from the air, will pick out the narrow ridges made by the spade faintly showing, as in a palimpsest, through the more regular pattern of wide plough ridges. In hilly country, especially in the west, the spade is still in common use in the fields, and the traveller moving about Ireland in spring, when the potatoes are being planted, will notice an astonishing variety of spades in use. Even in districts where the plough is universal the spade may still be pressed into service to deal with stony patches or awkward corners, and I have seen it supplementing the plough in another way by being tied on to a lea plough to convert it into a double-sided drill plough.

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13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XV

HOME-MADE THINGS

UNTIL the agrarian and industrial revolutions broke up economic self-sufficiency nearly every material need on the small farms was satisfied by the work of the family and the local community. Houses, furniture, food, clothing, simple implements and tools were home made or home produced. The most important specialist was the maker of edged tools, the blacksmith who thus occupied a special position in the community. His forge, customarily placed at a cross roads near running water, was never locked and became a rallying centre for idle men on wet days and for dancing in the evenings. His strength and skill were proverbial and magic powers were attributed to him and to the forge water. The smith was the first person to be invited to social functions. Not being a food producer he was, like the seers and later the priests, entitled to tribute of corn and first fruits. When a beast was slain the head was the perquisite of the smith. The ancient laws prescribe in detail the allotment of the various parts of the carcase to different offices, and the smith's right was maintained down to recent times. George Petrie, the nineteenth century antiquarian, is reported to have said that he remembered the time when a smith might have 50 or 100 heads of cows and pigs pickled in his kitchen.[1] Other craftsmen were itinerant because they could not be supported by the work available in any one district, and the last

[1]See Stephen Gwynn, *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906), 219. The method of dividing a carcase is thus described about the year 1600: the head, tongue and feet to the smith, the neck to the butcher, two small ribs that go with the hindquarters to the tailor, the kidneys to the physician, the udder to the harper, the liver to the carpenter and sweetbread to he that is with child. *C.S.P.* (*I*) (1601–3), 684. Dr. Johnson refers to the custom in the account of his journey to the Western Isles: cf. Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 171.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of
178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

291 underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as
[513] the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits
[515] them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

• 463 434 Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income
instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by
[501] four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the
[295] coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man.
[294] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are
438 made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold
to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the
[659] factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced.
[437] Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west
[171] coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as
[174] the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of
varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it
[178] is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-
501 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single
502 tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom
[502] three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the
[433] crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at
[322] work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally,
[184] and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for 291
themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their [177]
fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 294
40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to 281
shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and [437]
when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept [463]
moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however,
because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their
softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a 128
livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have 434
touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—
piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before
ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century 434
men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the main- 502
land. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to 437
scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would
race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The [178]
Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and
more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with
modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in 502
the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humor- 539
ous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these
concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a
passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that
he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that
he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a
great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all
the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did,
and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by
boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the
fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does
not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin
in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right 421
of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person 422
discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carry-
ing it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander [829]
along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the
night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known
disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage.
During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the im- [176]
mense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the [722]
islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other [433]

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [363] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [674] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

764 Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

764 When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [654] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

764 The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 198 of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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there were 828 farmers on farms 10–15 acres and 486 on farms 5–10. Farmers living on farms under 5 acres are few (180). Those on farms up to 200 number 597 and above 200, 218. 241 162

When the total population engaged in agriculture is considered rather than merely the farmers (owners), the greater numbers living upon small holdings become even more apparent. A full report based upon the 1926 census had not yet appeared, but a report was published upon the 1912 figures at the time the 1926 figures were released.[12] From that report it is at once apparent that the difference between large and small farms extends to the population engaged upon them and the type of labor employed. This new difference demonstrates a marked contrast, still apparent today, in the way in which large and small farmers carry on their economies. 241 162 464

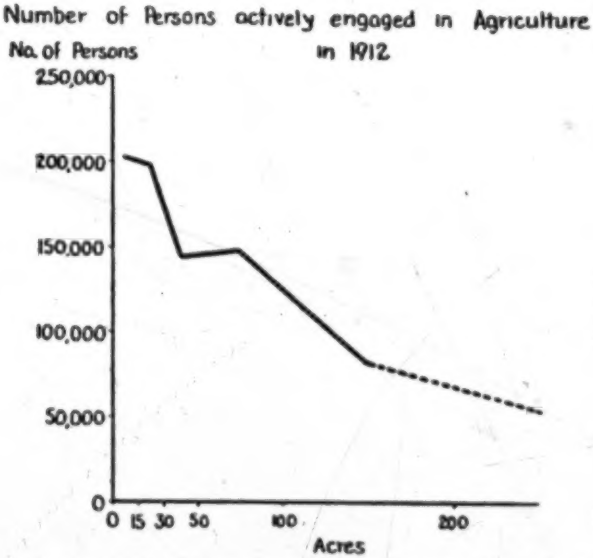
In 1926 the number of farmers and relatives assisting them in the Saorstat was 533,025 and those otherwise engaged in agriculture numbered only 139,104. The figures of the Report, based upon the 1912 census, show higher numbers, but the proportion of hired to family labor had not materially changed. From the tables of the Report, it is established that "only 26% were wage earners," that is, were not farmers and their relatives, working without periodic monetary recompense on an employee basis. Relating this to size of farms, it was discovered that not only were "5 times as many persons working on farms of 15 to 30 acres and 3½ times as many on farms of 30–50 acres as on farms of over 200 acres,"[13] but that also "family labor accounted for 89% of the total on farms 1–15 acres but only 24% for farms of over 200 acres. . . . Taking all holdings into account, 74% of the persons working on farms consisted of farmers, their wives, sons, daughters, and other relatives," and only "15% were permanent wage earners and 11%

[12] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. liv. [13] *Ibid.*, p. li.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

241 were temporary employees."[14] In other words, the small
162 farm is generally worked by the family of the owner, while
464 the large farm, particularly the ranch, is worked by agricultural laborers employed by the owner.

FIGURE 3



These are the actual numbers arranged proportionately, in true descending scale, with the size of the holding. Figures for all Ireland. The figures are quite comparable with those of County Clare for 1932, where in records published in the local newspaper by the County Council Committee on Agriculture it was stated that on farms of 15–30 acres, the median-sized holding, on which the plurality of the farm population live, there were 10 acres to each person. But on farms of 200 acres and over, more than 35 acres were required for each person the farms supported.

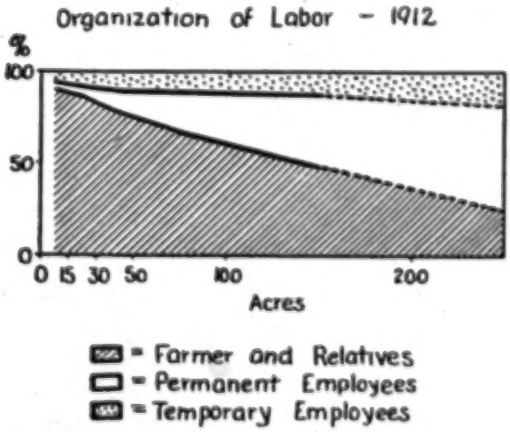
In Figure 3 the tables are reduced to a graphic representation which shows well how much truth there is in the Irish assertion that "the smaller the farm, the larger the number of people it supports." One has only to look at it to understand much of Irish political currents.

[14] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926*, p. lii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

In Clare the same situation is present. Most, if not nearly all, of the work of the small farmers is done by the family relatives. And for the whole county in 1926, 83.5% of all males engaged in agricultural pursuits were farmers or farmers' relatives (and 99 per cent of the rather small number of females). Only in the two districts which we have

FIGURE 4



The chart again shows a constant progression. The larger the farm, the less the dependence upon other members of the family and the more often hired hands are present. The chart begins on the left with a figure of 89 per cent of farmers of 1–15 acres depending upon family help and ends at the right with 24 per cent of farmers of over 200 acres depending upon such help.

already mentioned as regions of large holdings and ranches, Ballyvaughan and Ennis, did the percentage fall appreciably below that figure (to 73 per cent and 75 per cent).

Figure 4 presents this difference in organization of labor for all Ireland in 1912.

Small farmers and large farmers make a different disposal of their products. At the same time there is an exchange of products between the two groups.

These facts are to be got from the many statistics reflect-

476 from time immemorial. Old people here remembered the
246 day when, there being no mowing machines, scythes alone were used. Then the coöperating groups would have been larger and a more pronounced rotation of the working groups from meadow to meadow could have been observed. The same custom occurs in other places; in fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work. Given the different techniques, the same coöperation had taken place in Luogh and elsewhere at the turf cutting, the oats harvest, and the potato planting.

[164] Yet there was no monetary wage or payment involved. In the community of Luogh and surrounding townlands, the only hired labor was to be seen in the meadows of the large farmer (a cattleman with over three hundred acres), [184] who had not coöperated with the small farmers and whose entire way of life, as well as the agriculture he practiced, was different from theirs. Except in so far as the agricultural operation the small farmers were undertaking was economic in itself, it was evident that an interpretation of the incentives for this coöperation must include other factors.

476 Driven to social rather than economic explanation, the
246 authors were able to ascertain that in each case of this
602 coöperation there was an extended family relationship involved. Thus Carey, who had mowed the meadows of Dennis and Seamus Molony and Brian McMahon, was second cousin to them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively of the two farmers whose meadows he had mowed. The young men or boys who had worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows with the latter's wives and children were also relatives; they were sons of the relatives for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. In no instance, of course, had a man mowed for all his relatives; it was not necessary

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Another very great occupational change, though it does not show itself in any great numbers in census records, has been connected with the disappearance of the landlord from the western counties. A whole series of occupations clustering around the management of estates or the tastes of the local gentry and their families has gradually disappeared. Even the adoption of many of the conventions and habits, once exclusive marks of the Ascendancy, by other classes of the population has not served to stem the change. 463 427 178

If we fasten our attention directly upon determining what occupations are characteristically found represented in the countryside rather than in the towns in Ireland today, we get a picture of rural economy in which the followers of other occupations than farming are few indeed in the countryside. The occupations predominantly rural in Ireland are nearly exclusively those of farm ownership or farm labor. Only in recent years has there been any further development of rural pursuits to take the place of those going out with the changes brought about by modern communication and distribution of factory-made products. The chief of the new influences is not yet represented in full, even in the census of 1926. It is too recent a development. The introduction of creameries had not yet made its mark in that year. Plans for industrialization, since undertaken by the De Valera regime, had not yet even been drawn up. 463 178

To get a picture of rural life and the view of technological adaptation which it entails, we can look through the figures for a comparison of urban and rural industry in the years of the study. 463 464

Volume VI of the Irish census of population of 1926 entitled "Industrial Status" gives a view of the industries of the whole country and a preliminary view of the chief forms of industrial organization. Though the volume is largely concerned with unemployment, it also contains tables which classify those at work in the Free State accord-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 ing to occupation and employment. It distinguishes between
464 employers (those employing persons for pay in their principal business) and employees (those working for others) and counts the latter by trade or industry or, if farmers' employees, by size of farm in acres. It further distinguishes those persons working on their own account and those assisting relatives. Persons employing domestics only are not classed as employers. Even in keeping these categories separate, the census ran into difficulties. The following statements indicate the troubles met in separating the smaller farmers from those who engaged in non-agricultural occupation and from hired farm labor.

> Large numbers of small farmers and their sons work as agricultural laborers, road laborers, etc., as opportunity offers and many described their 'principal occupation' in the census (1926) as agricultural labor or road labor. (In gathering agricultural statistics in 1927, they were recorded, however, as farmers.) This is the chief reason why the numbers of farmers, male and female, shown in censuses of population were always so much less than the numbers of occupiers of agricultural holdings as compared with the agricultural statistics.[4]

The introduction to the volume then compares occupiers and farmers from figures of 1929 and 1926 respectively, and finding the occupiers much more numerous than the farmers, particularly in Leinster, the writers conclude:

> It is evident that large numbers of small farmers in all parts of the country did not describe themselves as farmers in the census and that this was more common in Leinster than in Connacht, as more employment can be obtained on the large farms and elsewhere in Leinster than in Connacht.[5]

Thus the presence or absence of big farmers in a district seems to have an effect upon the occupational status of the small farmers, in affording them the chance of employment

[4] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. VI: Industrial Status, p. ix.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. x.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

away from their holdings but within their own area. In such cases the small farmers are both employees and employers employing their own families. 463 464

In regard to such difficulties the introduction makes the following final qualifications of its own categories of industrial status:

> As regards the numbers returned as employers, persons working on their own account, persons assisting relatives and employees, it should be explained that persons employing domestic servants only were not classified as employers, that persons assisted in business only by relatives who had no contract for wages were classified as persons 'working on their own account', . . . persons working on their own account and persons assisting relatives were classed as employees (e.g., clergymen, nuns), and finally that many employers having small concerns (blacksmiths, dressmakers, etc.) described themselves not as employers as they should have done but as persons working on their own account.[8]

It is clear that, in segregating country occupations from those of the towns, industrial status as defined in the census is less significant than occupation itself.

For the whole country, taking in all industries, there were in 1926 as totals at work and out of work over twelve years of age some 850,000 men and some 341,082 women. Of these, those employing others numbered 62,605 men and 16,509 women, a fairly large proportion for employers. About 232,340 men and 62,949 women worked on their own account, and 196,034 men and 73,062 women were returned as assisting relatives. Employees of others numbered 402,631 men and 176,324 women. The figure for men, at least, indicates that those working for others were less in fact than those carrying on for themselves and families. The same fact is indicated for women, too, but only after the large figure of those engaged in "home duties" (a class which, according to the census, belongs in no indus- 464

[8] *Ibid.*, p. xii.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

464 try at all) is included. At the time, 1926, the census recorded 6.9 per cent of men and 3.4 per cent women as unemployed, figures to be added to make industrial totals. The percentages were very low, and by the advent of the De Valera regime in 1931 had increased considerably. However numerous they are, they do not change the industrial pic-
471 ture very much in Ireland. Small enterprises predominate, and very little of the great developments of the machine age is present. The supply and service industries are in a definite preponderance, and in that fact reflect the country's dependence upon its agriculture and agriculturalists.

463 The Census of Occupations is quite different in purpose from that of industries and industrial status and proceeds by different counts. To quote the notes:

> The difference between statistics of occupation and industries must be kept clearly in view. . . . A person's occupation is defined by the operations he performs in earning his living: grainmiller, jamboiler, tramdriver, packer, clerk. A person follows his occupation within a certain industry or service. Some occupations are peculiar to a single industry or service, . . . others are found in very many industries and services. . . .[7]

The Census of Occupations is obviously in many ways an elaboration of that of industries. The two overlap frequently. Yet they are distinct enough to give us an alternate view of Irish industrial activity of great detail. If now we examine this view for what it will tell us of the survival of rural industry, we see again that occupations other than those of farming are very few indeed in the country districts.

463 Table 5 records the occupations of the whole country
369 classed within industries. It lists followers of occupations living in rural districts in the left-hand column and followers of those living in urban districts in the right-hand column. Weighting the figures for all occupied persons properly between towns and country districts, we find that

[7] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. II, p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

are also characteristically rural still today. These are game- 463
keepers, race-horse trainers, and jockeys. These are, of 369
course, employees of the landed gentry who follow the cult of the horse. They are more often to be found now in the eastern midland counties than elsewhere today.

In County Clare rural occupations other than agricultural are equally rare. There the figures necessitate a slightly different definition of rural districts, since certain towns smaller than 1500 possessing local self-government are included in the town areas. But, by the same procedure as before, we can divide the proportions of total population into rural population in the county and then classify the occupations in Clare according to their rural or urban character.

In Clare, of course, there are no very large cities. The 162
county counts 5,023 males and 5,522 females in town dis- 464
tricts, and the overwhelming majority are country dwell- 369
ers as one would expect in the agricultural west. The total rural districts in 1926 numbered 45,048 male inhabitants and 39,471 female. As befits a largely agricultural area such as the county, occupations and industries show a little different distribution. The population is for males 89 per cent rural and for females 88 per cent rural. Those gainfully occupied in rural districts number for males well over two-thirds of the total population, for females only one-fifth of the total, so that for men, at least, the numbers recorded as unoccupied are negligible. The low figure for occupied females is due to the inclusion of housewives among the unoccupied. The rural-urban ratio upon which we can build expectancies of proportions of followers of occupations to be found in towns or countryside is 92 per cent for males and 84 per cent for females. As for the whole country, female occupations are found only in the towns.

The table for Clare (Table 6) repeats practically exactly 463
the same story as that for Ireland as a whole. In fact, the 369

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

present the one staple which he must buy off the 262
farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and 184
the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for 184
mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are 241
cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs 412
again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their 184
lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer- 241
owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the 464
owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of 241
peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in 231
a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is 434
that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

light held. They worked with the aid of their sons 246
and of boys from the families who had no machines. 476
At each stage of the process a boy not a member of the family gave his labour; he took his place at meals during the day.

His own mowing done, the farmer paid his debt. He took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed that man's meadow. In one instance, a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others. In another, a farmer mowed for two others. Certain meadows in Luogh were full-handed enough to do without extra hands; but in five cases, though mowing and stacking took a very [184]
long time and they were obviously short of hands, no help was given. Two of these cases were bachelors, who lived alone; two more were 'strangers'.

Here was an important agricultural operation undertaken by the small local community in which provision was made for effective co-operation over and above the usual family economy. It was no isolated instance; it is immemorial practice in Luogh. In fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work.

There was no monetary payment involved in this
work. In the country surrounding Luogh, the only [464] ●
hired labour to be seen worked the meadows of a large farmer, a cattleman with over 300 acres. He did not co-operate; in fact, his whole life was cut out of a different cloth.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the grave-stones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

[P.153, C]

551 and the names of her husband, *e.g.* 'Máire Ní Dhubhghain
[585] bean Shéamuis Mhic Ruadhraigh'—literally, 'Mary, daughter of Doohan, wife of James the son of Rory.' A number of circumstances will determine whether or not her husband's name will 'stick' as a surname or whether she will go on being known by her maiden name. These names in their full forms are only used on ceremonial occasions such as dances—when a man or woman is called upon to sing or step-dance—, or for prayers in church during a serious illness, or for calling the roll in school, or for putting on a tombstone.

551 The practical names are the rough English equivalents
191 of the Gaelic names, used in dealing with English-speakers
167 generally and particularly for use when working in England and Scotland. The Government is usually dealt with in English for several reasons, mainly because although the
● 464 islanders all speak Gaelic as their native tongue, the language they read and write is English—a situation brought about by the pattern of migrant labouring which forced literacy on them when working in Britain. Also they find 'Dublin' or 'civil service' Irish difficult to follow. Most islanders, then, have an 'English' name. Our examples would be 'Paddy Rogers' and 'Mary Doohan' to the outside world. Sometimes these names stick and are used amongst the islanders rather like nicknames. Usually the English version is a rough phonetic equivalent of the Gaelic—Ó Duibhir becomes Diver, Ó Dubhgain becomes Doogan or Duggan, Mac Fhlaithbheartaigh becomes MacClafferty, etc. Sometimes this is abandoned and an English name taken for its 'likeness' to the Gaelic as with MacRuadhraigh and Rogers—Roger being the English name most like 'Rory.' The name Fioruisce is sometimes hopefully rendered Whorriskey, but mostly this is not even tried and the simple 'Waters' is substituted. Those going to England for work are particularly inclined to pick an 'English' name, *i.e.* one the foreman will recognize.

551 The third set of names, used for reference, consists of two or more Christian names, either Gaelic or English or both, 'strung' together in the manner described by Synge for Aran. Some people have as many as five or six names and 'epithets' strung together in this fashion. These names are the names of lineal ancestors either on the mother's or the father's side of the family. A person will take as many names as is necessary to distinguish him from all other persons, the surname system being inadequate for this task. (Four surnames cover 80 per cent. of the population.) He does not, however, pick these names arbitrarily but inherits the whole string. He can stop at any point in the string. Thus if a man was called 'Jimmy-Dhonnchadha-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his father must have been 'Donnchadh-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his paternal grandmother 'Máire-Mhicí' or maybe 'Máire-Mhicí-Tom.' Thus if our man wanted to add to his names, he would have to add 'Tom.' Usually one or at most two names are enough to distinguish a person, in

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the
106 lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings
349 in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by
[427] islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the
[461] other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

743 Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

344 The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor,
205 just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room
206 with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use
[203] in matters pertaining to the service during the prescribed hours. When the freighter ran aground before dawn, it was discovered by islanders who informed the company; Radio Eireann reported the plight of the vessel, on the basis of S.O.S. messages, in the seven o'clock news, but the company had reached the reef before the telephone was available.

346 Inis Beag has only a small church, known as the "chapel." After the church of the patron saint was abandoned, a house served as the place of worship for a time, then was superseded by the old chapel whose foundations can be discerned

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

2

The Land and the Sea

Standard of Living

THE STANDARD OF LIVING of the folk has improved vastly since the estab- 511
lishment of the Irish Land Commission in 1881 and the Congested Districts 175
Board ten years later, and the islanders are better off today than the in- 657
habitants of some other areas of the Gaeltacht. In 1891, the Congested Districts 168
were delineated as regions in which the population did not possess sufficient land to maintain life except at an extremely low standard. Between that year and 1951, the population in the districts declined 42 percent—from 541,000 to 367,000 persons. The few areas which would rank as congested now, on the 1891 basis, [167]
are mainly in Cos. Donegal, Mayo, and Galway (Freeman 1960:121–123). A vigorous and continuing effort to stem the tide of emigration, in part caused by poverty, led the commission, the board, subsequently the Gaeltacht Eireann which replaced the board after 1925, and other government agencies appointed in this century, to improve the standard of living by various actions: the enlargement of land holdings for more effective farming, the encouragement of small factory and domestic industries, the improvement of fishing, the construction of public works, and the introduction of various subsidies. Seasonal laboring in England, often [464]
practiced out of necessity by mainland farmers but not by the islanders, and remittances from relatives who have emigrated are income sources which also have served to alleviate poverty; but the major palliative throughout Ireland has been emigration. One of the factors limiting migration from Inis Beag to the mainland [167]
until recent decades was the low standard of living which prevailed in the country at large. An islander could not escape local hardships and privations by emigrating to urban centers as he can today; he had to turn his back on Ireland.

Most Inis Beag people believe themselves to be materially poor, although 511
they resent others agreeing publicly with this view. A well-known Dublin news- 829
paper feature writer in 1963 was denounced, and a vow made not to permit him to

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 The country people distinguish between these men who are handy men and have had no formal induction into their trade and those who are legally recognized as "tradesmen." But the line of formal distinction is thin, and more recognized in the abstract than in the concrete. Thus in the story of the development of one local mason, one can see that the difference lies rather more in the kind of remuneration than anything else. One farmer's account of the "tradesmen" of his knowledge led him on as follows:

> There are other men who are carpenters and masons who are handy men, but they usually work for pay because the job might take several days, and no neighbor could stay away from his work with a friend for that length of time. Donovan is a mason and he taught himself. He built his own house and several others. A man cannot build a house because he would not know how to do it. Donovan is a very intelligent man. He has a terrible head on him.

437 476 463 465 That the difference of remuneration is seized upon by countrymen as the distinguishing mark came to the authors' notice again and again. The handy man is the local resident who fits into the local pattern of courtesies, barter, gifts, as in the case of the butcher, described above, who got his reward in the shape of the meat shoved under his arm. In cooring, of course, one never pays. In any act of "friendship" and alliance in a familistic setting no formal remuneration of monetary payment is ever present. We have already seen that it is only at the crucial period of family reorganization, when the whole system of relations between members undergoes change, that any considerations of money enter the schedule of rural services and rewards. The same absence of money payment is the point of distinction here. It distinguishes the relations between the men of a local community and one of themselves who is "handy" through special experience from those between formal client and tradesman. Money payment is the mark of the outsider;

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.*

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work. 463 232 476

The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid. 463 759 476 [656]

Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase: 463 465 326

* Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has
326 about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
232 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken, is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exer-
431 cise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
759 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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wife got her reward in presents, gifts, and whiskey, but not in money. Money, however, would be proferred to the nurse.

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That the factor of payment in money should be crucial is really the cloak of the set of dispositions arising from habitual relations. In the local community the handy man is not paid, since, like "friends" and neighbors, he is one of themselves. Since he is one of the countrymen, he is caught within the system of much the same habitual relations of reciprocal service and mutual aid which make up cooring in agriculture.

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To see this point, we must describe the action of the local community in respect to the work to be done once again. Cooring is a form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. One old fellow described it aptly when he said that it meant that for a day of work given you would receive a day in return. We have already seen its connection with familism and the extended family. But besides cooring, there was another form of the custom known as *meitheal* (mihil). The word *comhair* (coor) referred to the reciprocity, the word *meitheal* to the band of men and teams acting together to perform a task. On various occasions when work beyond the capacity of cooring families was to be done, a *meitheal* of men or women or horses could be made up.

As described by the old people who still remember its heyday, the *meitheal* rested on a foundation slightly different from the reciprocity of cooring. The work was done by a gang of local persons got up for the purpose through the wish and custom of the local inhabitants, but without expectancy of individual return in like measure.

Bands of men and women were got up in rural communities by *meitheal* for the following purposes, of which the authors heard record:

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

593 seen together at the local markets, but it is the father who does the bargaining. Their attitudes are in agreement with this arrangement. Once I asked a countryman about it at a potato market in Clare. He explained he could not leave his post for long because his full-grown son wasn't well enough known yet and was not yet a good hand at selling. If a son in Luogh and other Clare communities wants a half-crown to go to a hurley match, he must get it from his father. The son may earn money in employment off the farm, on the roads, [465] or as a labourer, but even then he is expected to contribute everything he receives to the household, as long as he remains on the farm. Very often, as the author saw in Luogh, in work on land division, the old fellows will walk to the pay-off to collect for themselves the wages their sons have earned.

You will say, perhaps, that all this has a very familiar ring; it is characteristic of closely knit farm families everywhere. So it is, but we are prone to disregard the familiar; we forget that the familiar stuff of life has often more important implications than the exotic. In the Irish countryside we must not undervalue the familiar. For the implications of these factors of family life are the signposts along the road.

593 In the countryside this subordination of the sons 885 does not gradually come to an end. It is a constant. Even at forty-five and fifty, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm, the countryman re-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular 444
counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands.

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work 465
is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day.

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, 462
help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The [434]
average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are 871
usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, gene- 584
rally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The mar- 585
riages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some 591
cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family.

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable 585
information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding, [115]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 products of specialized labor are open and visible to everyone, and in some measure they are part of the lore which each man learns. Not all the men come to practice them, but they have all seen them or heard them described, and they are part of the fund of conversation, precedent, and value which is common coin among the people of the community. One's special craft does not segregate one from one's neighbors or take one outside the community here. Rather it is one's mark or sign, one's reputation and status within it.

This is the case particularly where, as here, most of the craftsmen of one sort or another have always depended upon a plot of land or a kitchen garden behind their cabins, with perhaps a pig or a cow or two, nearly as much as they depended upon their craft. By this dependence they were never segregated from the rest of the local population, either physically or occupationally. They too were agriculturalists of a sort and shared farmers' tribulations. Just as the farmers knew something of their techniques, so the local craftsmen were nearly always proficient in the ways of agriculture. Today in rural Clare the handy man may be anything from a veterinarian or bonesetter to a building contractor. He is always without benefit of law, apprenticeship, or formal training, and merely follows a technique of which everyone knows something. The farmers are ready to pass upon his skill, to debate the technical points of his work, to build up or tear down his reputation.

463 467 874 Down to the time of the World War, in the last generation, the close acquaintance the small farmers had with the special skills of the countryside was reinforced by the interest the farmers had in putting their sons to a trade. They could often find a place for them thus. In the towns even today formal apprenticeships, into which the farmer must pay for his son to enter, still flourish.

The statements one can get about the local specialists,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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at least of those of the better recognized trades, are direct 467
and intimate. The following words illustrate something of 874
the character of apprenticeship. A small farmer is speaking of his own knowledge of local conditions:

Before the war there used to be about twenty shoemakers in 463
the neighborhood, but now they've mostly gone away or are in 467
the towns. One of them went into Ennistymon. Whenever a 874
farmer wants a strong pair of boots even yet, he will not go to 294
a shop but he would go to the shoemaker. It wasn't always the case the son of a shoemaker would follow the trade because there was good money in it. With it they would buy a farm and so for his sons, and they would go to farming. If a farmer had a crippled son, he might send him to the shoemaker to teach him the trade. Papers were signed that bound the boy for three years to the tradesman, and then the boy would go live with the shoemaker. At first he would be taught to tap, then to stick, then to sew, and the last thing would be to cut. If a boy left before the three years were up, no one would give him a job, and no other tradesman would take him on to teach him a trade. The father had to give twenty pounds to twenty-five pounds to teach him. At the end of three years the boy was given his indenture papers which meant he could set himself up any place in the country or, if he had not enough money to do that, he would work as a journeyman for someone else and his papers would give him the right to do it.

There were a great many tailors and smiths too. The time of work was three years. A boy who was a cripple might be sent to tailoring. He was taught three years and then he could set himself up. It was the easiest of them all to get along with because it required no money to start with. In the old days the tailor used to come to the house and stay for a week or so and make clothes for all the men of the house and go to the next house after.

The smiths trained boys also. When I was small, a cousin of 463
mine had a forge below on the road and any wet day all the 874
boys used to gather there and watch and talk. I started out by 326
blowing the bellows and then doing other things until finally I was as good as anyone. If I had the material I could make shoes, and I always shoe my own horses.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

is created. A pathway is created along which human 369
lives can move and play out their roles in social 443
life. One of the farmer's sons can hope, with luck 571
and affluence, to become a shop-assistant in the market-town. The portion he receives upon the dispersal of the farm family may well take the form of such a start in life. The farmer-father pays the 467
boy's apprentice bond. 443

Formal apprenticeships still flourish in Irish 369
country towns and nowhere better than in the shop 571
or pub. The country boy is bound in custom and in law to his new employer and learns the alien way of business and social habit under a master's eye. Eventually he may succeed to a shop of his own, but first he 'must serve his time'. In this, rural Ireland has preserved an older form and charged it with its own peculiar content. The town-bred lad is seldom hired; he brings no rural kindred with him. Then, too, he is neither so impressionable nor so easy to control. The country lad, at first, is both. The shopkeeper taps the social order of the countryside in the person of his fledgling 'prentice boy.

But time brings ordered change in social life, in 369
the town no less than in the countryside. The boy 443
grows up; he serves his time. He acquires the 571
experience and the technique which fit him for 166
the role for which his parents paid his apprentice bond. Unless he is to retain a subordinate and unimportant place as shop-assistant for a lifetime, he must move on. He must acquire a shop himself.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

£50,555,000. The figures illustrate the preponderant importance of livestock and particularly cattle and pigs in Irish economy.

The remaining £14,000,000 was made up of crops and turf, the latter alone accounting for £5,938,000. Among the crops, potatoes came first, with a value for the year of £3,786,000. Oats, cabbage, and barley accounted for about £900,000 each; and there were a few other items of smaller values, the largest of which was fruit at £466,000.

These figures of the agricultural products rather underestimate the amount of tillage products raised. In the words of the Census Report, they "do not include any part of the produce which was used for further agricultural production in the Saorstat whether that part was used on the farm on which produced or sold by one farmer to another – e.g. milk fed to calves, potatoes fed to pigs, hay, turnips, mangels fed to cattle, corn used for seed, horses used for farm work." [1]

Within this generality of the monetary value of the goods produced, one can begin to take account of the wide difference of the sizes of the holdings engaged in this agricultural production. A glance at the figure illustrating this kind of economy by relative size of acreage (Fig. 1) will bring the matter out.

The agricultural community carried on this production upon farms of very widely different character. Holdings range in size from one acre or less to 500 or more. Those under 30 acres comprise 23 per cent of the total acreage of agricultural land in the Saorstat, those of 30–50, 17 per cent; those of 50–100, 24 per cent; and those of 100–200, 19 per cent. Farms larger than 200 acres cover only 16 per cent of agricultural land.

In general, the smaller ones practice the more generalized economy, their production being markedly different from

[1] *Agricultural Output of Saorstat Eireann, 1926–27* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. 5.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

231 that of the large farms. The latter, especially in the mid-
241 land counties, where they are most numerous, raise little
311 more than beef cattle. Their owners are the graziers or
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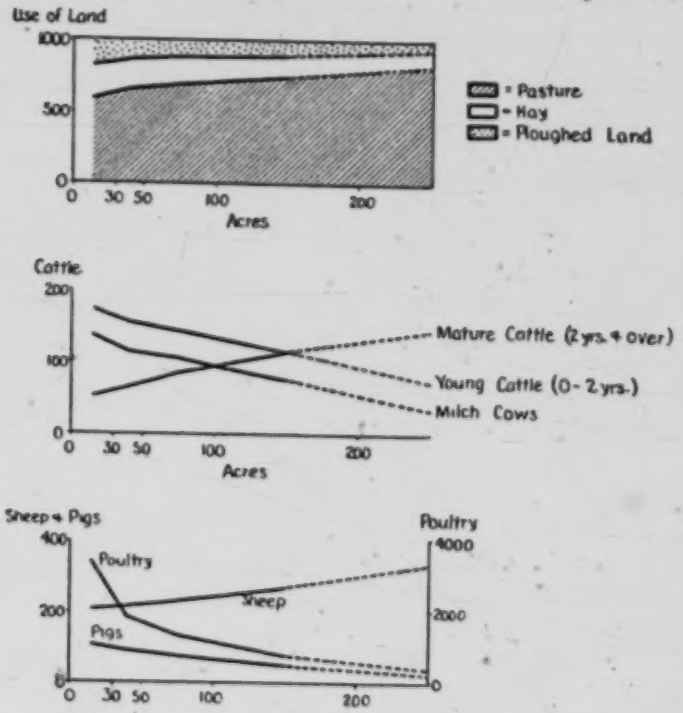
FIGURE 1

PRODUCTION ON LARGE AND SMALL HOLDINGS, ALL IRELAND, 1926 CENSUS



(date 1926)

"ranchers" of current political controversy in Ireland. The different economies express themselves in the census as follows:

The numbers of acres ploughed and the numbers under hay, per 1000 acres of agricultural land decrease continuously as the size of the holdings increases; the numbers of milch cows, of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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young cattle, of pigs, and of poultry also decrease but the number of dry older cattle and of sheep per 1000 acres increase as the size of the holdings increases. The contrast between the smallest and the largest holdings is exceedingly great and is very great even between the second smallest and second largest. Contrasting the holdings 30–50 acres with holdings 100–200 acres the table shows that on equal areas of agricultural land, the smaller holdings have 32% more ploughed land, 29% more hay, 54% more milch cows, 53% more cattle under one year, 16% more cattle one to two years old, and 9% more cattle of all kinds, 80% more pigs, and 139% more poultry than the holdings 100–200 acres, but the latter have 24% more sheep, 52% more dry cattle, 2 to 3 years old, and 209% more dry cattle 3 years old or over than do holdings 30–50 acres.[2]

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In County Clare, the area of our investigation, agriculture presents much the same character and the same difference between small and large farmers as does the whole of Ireland. Clare occupies a middle place among the counties; neither the large nor the small farm predominates. Almost always the small farmer has a garden in potatoes and cabbage with a few oats and turnips and perhaps some rye. The rest of his land will be under several meadows in hay, grazed during the winter months and in fields (pasture land) grazed during both summer and winter, if sheltered. In rough mountain areas sheep are common, particularly in the Broadford and Tubber districts. In addition to cattle, the smaller holder generally has a large flock of ducks, geese, and hens, and he keeps several pigs. These are also fed upon the oats, potatoes, cabbage, and milk left over after the other livestock have been fed. Specialization in poultry raising is still rare, though poultry stations are being established here and there under the supervision of agents of the Department of Agriculture. Certain areas, of course, show minor specializations, such as Miltown Malbay, a seacoast region known for its cabbage, and Newquay, known

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[2] *Agricultural Statistics, 1847–1926, Report and Tables* (Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, Dublin Stationery Office, 1930), p. xxi.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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them with holdings in other parts of the country when in the latter much mountain land is included. The valuations, however, are exceedingly high, the full valuation of the Ennis district (which includes the Fergus plain) being £67,000 for 112,000 acres compared with the neighboring Killadysert district at £25,000 for 62,000 acres. 233

The second of the "ranching districts" or areas of large holdings practicing this type of agriculture is the region in the northern part of the county called "the hills of Burren" (the Ballyvaughan area). This is a limestone country which provides rich winterage for cattle. Consequently land there is very valuable to the rancher who has to winter his store cattle. Grass grows there fairly richly throughout the winter among the limestone crags, and the cattle are allowed to forage for themselves. In several cases, farmers own large holdings of 200 acres and over in each of the two areas. They drive their cattle down from the winterages in April and back again in November.

Certain other farms of large size, and especially in rich alluvial areas such as Clarecastle and Newmarket-on-Fergus, make extensive use of tillage, primarily of oats. In other areas such as Tubber, Broadford, and Feakle, mountain land is given over to sheep. 233 243

County Clare, in fact, shows a fourfold division into sections differentiated partly geographically, partly by the different utilization of the soil. "West Clare" includes all the peninsula west and south of the ridge culminating in Mount Callan and cutting off the Fergus drainage from the Atlantic. Here the holdings are predominantly small, and the more generalized economy is common. "North Clare" covers the country of the "hills of Burren." "East Clare" contains both the rough country of Feakle and Broadford, where small mountain holdings approximate the conditions of West Clare, and the Tulla and Quin districts, which with "Mid-Clare" and "South Clare" cover the alluvial plain of the 311 471

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

●471 Fergus River, where there are many "ranches" and, in parts, extensive oats tillage.

162 Statistics are available only for the whole of Clare; they
471 give a comprehensive view of the county's farming.[3] All but 21.6 per cent of the population of 95,064 lived in country districts. The area they worked, 787,768 acres, was divided into 15,857 holdings, of which 1,179 did not exceed one acre, 909 contained from 1 to 5, 841 from 5 to 10, 1,108 from 10 to 15, and 3,767 from 15 to 30, 3,617 from 30 to 50, and 3,135 from 50 to 100. The farms larger than 100 acres numbered 997 in the 100 to 200 acre group, and 394 exceeding 200 acres. Clare thus fell into a category among counties in which medium-sized holdings were normal, but both the small farms and the large rancher type were present.

241 We have no separate statistics for Clare's produce, but we
311 know that in June 1932 the land was being utilized in the following manner. There were only 465 acres of wheat, 335 acres of barley, 207 acres of rye, 1 acre of beans and peas, 147 acres of fruit, 3 acres of sugar beet, 57 acres of experimental ensilage for cattle, and 151 acres of miscellaneous root and green crops. The figures [4] show the small part played by vegetable products other than cabbage and potatoes used for human food. Bread, the great staple, was of course, made from imported flour or wheat. Potatoes and oats, however, made a better showing, with 13,518 and 8,199 acres respectively devoted to them. Turnips and mangels accounted for 3,897 and 306 acres respectively; like potatoes and oats, they are used for both human and animal consumption. This was the extent of ploughed land.

The great bulk of the area was, of course, in hay and pasture. There were 2,791 acres of first-year hay, 131,429 acres of other hay, and 394,791 acres of pasture.

[3] Figures taken from Annual Report, County Clare Council Agricultural Committee, June 1932.

[4] Report of the County Clare Agricultural Committee, 1932.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

476 The commonest form of coöperation is that which in-
246 volves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed. In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings, [471] none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners; they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land [737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest
246 began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh
621 people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral
589 association to the land and to each other. There were three lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter present, if they were old, and many growing children if they [167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so that a smaller number of young people were present than is
476 perhaps usual.
246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

361 Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along
491 it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear
[311] witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously
cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives
rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward
into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round
the lake.

311 The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with
limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the
crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

361 Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the
621 lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are
471 scattered through the fields and across the lake. These
households and a few more a little further off make up the
community. These are small farms of the kind we met in
Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has
fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the
village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard
gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement
is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and
behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to
these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for
them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles
off.

621 Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated
476 bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all re-
653 lated one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the
491 usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds
itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the
borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the
towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who
break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the
621 village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder.
487 Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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464 try at all) is included. At the time, 1926, the census recorded 6.9 per cent of men and 3.4 per cent women as unemployed, figures to be added to make industrial totals. The percentages were very low, and by the advent of the De Valera regime in 1931 had increased considerably. However numerous they are, they do not change the industrial pic-
471 ture very much in Ireland. Small enterprises predominate, and very little of the great developments of the machine age is present. The supply and service industries are in a definite preponderance, and in that fact reflect the country's dependence upon its agriculture and agriculturalists.

463 The Census of Occupations is quite different in purpose from that of industries and industrial status and proceeds by different counts. To quote the notes:

> The difference between statistics of occupation and industries must be kept clearly in view. . . . A person's occupation is defined by the operations he performs in earning his living: grainmiller, jamboiler, tramdriver, packer, clerk. A person follows his occupation within a certain industry or service. Some occupations are peculiar to a single industry or service, . . . others are found in very many industries and services. . . .[1]

The Census of Occupations is obviously in many ways an elaboration of that of industries. The two overlap frequently. Yet they are distinct enough to give us an alternate view of Irish industrial activity of great detail. If now we examine this view for what it will tell us of the survival of rural industry, we see again that occupations other than those of farming are very few indeed in the country districts.

463 Table 5 records the occupations of the whole country
369 classed within industries. It lists followers of occupations living in rural districts in the left-hand column and followers of those living in urban districts in the right-hand column. Weighting the figures for all occupied persons properly between towns and country districts, we find that

[1] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. II, p. 5.

> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21). 114 181

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible. [124]

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.). 114 12 181 [538]

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor- 554 [423] [471] [511] 556

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In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of the clothing of the small farmers was made at home by the women. Now, however, it is nearly all shop-bought. Certain vestiges of the former practice remain, however, in knitting sweaters, gloves, socks, and scarfs; and in the country districts, at least of West and North Clare, there is a custom which demands that some woman of the house be always at work. If there is no other task on hand, they must occupy themselves with knitting. In former days, the daughters of the community might gather in a *meitheal*, or coöperative work group, under the supervision of older women for carding and spinning flax and wool. In any event, the younger woman, the girl, is at the older woman's command.

294 461 476 178

Much the same content of emotion and sentiment exists in this relationship, subordinate as the daughter must remain, as in the case of the boy. But in the case of the daughter there is never a readjustment, and there is never a period of community of interest with the father. Nor need the mother fear a competition with an impatient oncoming successor as must the farm father who knows he cannot put off forever his relinquishing his farm to his son. For, eagerly as the daughter may look forward to her own marriage, she knows that marriage will bring in a rivalry over household control with a totally new person in an entirely new scene. It is her husband's mother, not her own, to whom new adjustments must be made. The implication of this fact, and the struggle it entails, will bear examination in the discussion of marriage.

593

Still another relationship exists within the household under normal circumstances. The relationship of brother to sister has its reflection in farm work. But it is a relationship with a different history from the relationship between siblings of similar sex. Sexual differences in behavior have made a different habit, beginning very early in the child's experience. And, for each of them, the sexual differences are colored a great deal by the norms which mark the rela-

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654 594 Where the question arises, a household consisting of father and mother and sons, rather than daughters alone, would have a prior claim. But, regarding the position of the wife, it is a fact that, if the husband goes, the wife keeps the farm up. She is the person who saves the money and governs everything.

Again:

594 462 Twenty to twenty-five acres of all-purpose land where the mother is normal and the father energetic is sufficient to keep a farmer and his family. It is the province of the mother to look after the fowl, the milk, the butter, the pigs, the calves, and the milking of the cows. A woman on a small farm can milk five cows in thirty minutes. She also takes care of the children, though she sometimes has a girl in to help her for a time. She also makes and repairs the clothes. She does the buying for the house and the husband only for feed, seed and fertilizer. She has the responsibility regarding medical attention, and where she has any showing of culture the family pushes on ahead. In fact, on the mother depends the organization of the family in all ways.

594 Such evidence points to a situation in which the immediate family of husband, wife, and children, the group basic to Irish society and especially to Irish rural life, carries on a corporate economy. The roles of the component individuals are assigned them by virtue of their position in the family. The character of the economic effort, its control, direction, and purposes, are part and parcel of the life of the social group.

476 Beyond the family economy of the small farm, there exists also a certain amount of coöperation in the Irish countryside among the small farmers. Agricultural labor upon the individual farms is not performed in isolated competition, but is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids. That coöperation takes the following forms:

1. Lending tools, or doing the work with one's own, for friends and neighbors who have not the requisite tools, especially in mowing, spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing.

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2. Lending a boy at turf making, spring sowing, hay harvest, oats harvest, or driving cattle to a fair; that is, at any time that the farm needs an extra hand to get its work done quickly.
3. Of women: making up a tub of butter, or firkin of salted butter, thus pooling resources, the proceeds to be divided proportionately.
4. Of women: lending a girl on any occasion that an extra hand is needed in the household.
5. Helping at times of distress, or when one household is short or a crop delayed, with gifts of cattle, food, or labor.
6. Working together communally to get a harvest done, particularly the oats reaping and threshing. Here again the actual work is done by the "boys," who are lent by their fathers, though, of course, the latter may also take a hand, if necessary.
7. Obligations surrounding *rites de passage* and ceremonies.

In former days this coöperation was more widespread, according to the testimony of the older people. But even today the oats harvest, which used to be celebrated locally by a large dinner and dance at the expense of the farmer whose crop was being reaped by "friends"[1] and neighbors, still calls forth some coöperation of the next to last type.

In recent years the farmers have been wealthy enough to acquire their own horses, carts (called "cars," only two-wheeled vehicles being used, at least in Clare), and mowing machines. In the last century, however, these were less numerous and, as an older countryman put it: "Once if you had a horse and car, you'd have forty or fifty people helping you with the turf.

Similarly, before the mowing machine became general, ten or a dozen "friends" and neighbors would work each other's meadows in turn with the scythe. Nowadays, the owner of a machine need only go about to his "friends" and cut their hay for them, getting their aid in return in building his own stacks and hayricks.

[1] Used here in the sense explained in Chapter V.

476 The commonest form of coöperation is that which in-
246 volves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed. In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district
[471] of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings, none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners; they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land
[737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest
246 began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh
621 people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral
589 association to the land and to each other. There were three lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter present, if they were old, and many growing children if they
[167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so that a smaller number of young people were present than is
476 perhaps usual.
246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

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476 lies began to save the hay, mowing it, letting it dry, and
246 stacking it as soon as possible, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six to eight foot haycocks. After several weeks it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. There was a great deal of interest and much comment back and forth over the progress of the various families, the probable weather, and the yield of the various meadows. The men seemed to feel a general rivalry to do their work
[407] well and quickly. About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows as quickly as possible, working from earliest morning as long as light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and with that of boys from the families who had no machines of their own. At each subsequent stage of the harvesting, a boy or young man not a member of the family whose meadow was being worked could be seen giving his labor in aid; he took his place at meals during the day.

The mowing done, the farmer then took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed the meadows belonging to his friend. In one instance a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others; in another, of two. Certain meadows were full-handed enough not to require extra hands, and in five cases no help was given, though the mowing and stacking took a very long time with them
[589 in comparison to the others, and they were obviously short-
609] handed. Two of these were bachelors who lived alone, and two more were the "strangers." Two other families had insufficient meadow of their own and were forced to buy
[437] hay on the so-called "conacre" system (buying the hay as it stands and reaping it oneself within a stipulated time).

Here then was an example of an important agricultural operation undertaken by the local community in which provision was made (except in five or six cases) for effective coöperation over and above the usual family economy. This is not an isolated instance; in Luogh it has been the practice

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476 from time immemorial. Old people here remembered the
246 day when, there being no mowing machines, scythes alone were used. Then the coöperating groups would have been larger and a more pronounced rotation of the working groups from meadow to meadow could have been observed. The same custom occurs in other places; in fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work. Given the different techniques, the same coöperation had taken place in Luogh and elsewhere at the turf cutting, the oats harvest, and the potato planting.

[164] Yet there was no monetary wage or payment involved. In the community of Luogh and surrounding townlands, the only hired labor was to be seen in the meadows of the large farmer (a cattleman with over three hundred acres),
[184] who had not coöperated with the small farmers and whose entire way of life, as well as the agriculture he practiced, was different from theirs. Except in so far as the agricultural operation the small farmers were undertaking was economic in itself, it was evident that an interpretation of the incentives for this coöperation must include other factors.

476 Driven to social rather than economic explanation, the authors were able to ascertain that in each case of this
246 coöperation there was an extended family relationship in-
602 volved. Thus Carey, who had mowed the meadows of Dennis and Seamus Molony and Brian McMahon, was second cousin to them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively of the two farmers whose meadows he had mowed. The young men or boys who had worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows with the latter's wives and children were also relatives; they were sons of the relatives for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. In no instance, of course, had a man mowed for all his relatives; it was not necessary

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to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

476 ties of act, sentiment, and obligation which make up family
577 relationships.

That he is doing so becomes evident when we find that
602 the habitual, obligatorily performed acts toward extended relatives are similarly described, where the context is definitely not economic nor connected with agricultural labor. Thus in the townland where we examined agricultural coöperation there takes place the same lending of a boy or girl and the giving of a hand in aid at such festivals of social and family life as weddings, christenings, wakes, and funerals.

This aid is felt to be the same category. Thus one farmer speaking of another, his second cousin, could say:

> He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. When the children were little and our cow died on us, Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth twelve pounds to us and didn't want anything for it.

And in more general terms, another farmer could explain:

> Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you. They lend you a horse with the hay or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to know if they can help when somebody dies with you.

476 Thus it is part of the "friendliness" for the relatives to
577 make up and serve the food at wakes and weddings, to
602 dig the grave for the dead, and to keen (wail) over the dead.
764 The obligatory character and something of the reciprocities involved in such behavior are well expressed by one countryman who gave as his reason for going to a funeral (at a time when he was needed at home for farm work): "I have right to go (to the funeral of a second cousin); they always come over to this side."

476 Likewise, when in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister
577 took over the child, she was praised for doing the "friendly"
602 thing which she "had right" to do. In the very same terms a

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man called upon his brother-in-law to lend him his son to help drive his cattle to the fair. In a case similar to the last, a violent quarrel arose because an uncle, who "had right" to lend a son badly needed in doing some fence work, refused to do so. And in the same scale of value a family which did not attend the funeral of a relative was subjected to great criticism for being "unfriendly." 476 577 602 476 577 602

In fact, failure to fulfill the pattern of conduct demanded by extended family obligations leads often to punitive action on the part of the aggrieved party. Near R— a small farmer, who neglected his garden and forced his father-in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support, was finally beaten up one night in his own house by the irate in-laws. Ordinarily, of course, failure to fulfill such obligations either in directly social situations or in agricultural coöperation does not lead to such violent conflict, but rather to an estrangement. The niggardly "friend," especially the one who refuses or fails to return an obligation, is held up to general condemnation, not only by his kindred but by the whole community. The position of a small farmer near but not in Luogh was the result of such failure. He was regarded by all his neighbors and kindred as a "miser" and a "Jew" and on several occasions was accused of petty thefts by them, which perpetuated the breach. As a result he lived as a recluse, refusing even to visit others; in return he was not greeted by his "friends." 578 626

The obligations of this sort[2] extend to visiting and to the hospitality which the Irish countryman deems so great a virtue. "A sup of tea" and such food as eggs and bread is 574 602

[2] The word *cóir* (a fit and traditional right or duty) corresponds almost exactly with the full range of the small farmer's obligations, as we have seen. It well reflects the farmer's habit in two other uses. The phrase *cóir mhaith* means good food. When the speaker says, *tá cóir mhaith agam ansud* (there's a good feed for me there), he refers not so much to the food itself as to the social situation in which he finds himself well provided for. And the term of address, *duine cóir* (worthy fellow), indicates that "worthiness" springs from a fit observance of one's obligations.

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361 Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along
491 it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear
[311] witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously
cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives
rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward
into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round
the lake.

311 The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with
limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the
crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

361 Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the
621 lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are
471 scattered through the fields and across the lake. These
households and a few more a little further off make up the
community. These are small farms of the kind we met in
Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has
fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the
village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard
gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement
is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and
behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to
these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for
them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles
off.

621 Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated
● 476 bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all re-
653 lated one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the
491 usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds
itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the
borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the
towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who
break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the
621 village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder.
487 Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

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of labor of a non-agricultural character as still persists in the country communities is very simple. Yet it is an interesting part of community life. It affords status to local artisans in the lives of the small farmers. 463 369

The families upon the separate farms are not, of course, entirely self-dependent units. We have already had occasion to examine the kind of coöperation called cooring, often based upon the extended family which flourishes in the country districts. Such reciprocal aids in ordinary farm work are only one part of the fabric of services which one meets among the country people. Another part can be distinguished. It takes account of what elementary specialization in local techniques and handicrafts exists. The man or woman skilled in some particular branch of work is called the "handy man." The handy man is an important person at the times when his or her special skill comes into use. The local reputation of such a specialist is sufficient to keep the recognition of his skill alive between periods of use and to afford him a definite status. In the country districts of Clare even full-fledged artisans, appearing in census records as full-time carpenters, smiths, and the like, sons of fathers and grandfathers who followed the same trade, are not much more than local specialists. 476 463

Many a farmer is still a jack-of-all-trades, ready if need be to turn his hand to shoeing his horse or resoling a boot or building himself a house. Only where the products of factory and foundry have become deeply entrenched in farm life, embodying skills of distant workers abroad, do local goods and services represent techniques the small farmer cannot come close to emulating. For example, the smelting of iron is a process completely unknown, and neither the local blacksmith nor the farmer can do more than rework the iron they have at hand. But the blacksmith and the farmer both can do it, though it is the blacksmith who has the greater skill. In the countryside the techniques and the 463 [326]

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463 The country people distinguish between these men who are handy men and have had no formal induction into their trade and those who are legally recognized as "tradesmen." But the line of formal distinction is thin, and more recognized in the abstract than in the concrete. Thus in the story of the development of one local mason, one can see that the difference lies rather more in the kind of remuneration than anything else. One farmer's account of the "tradesmen" of his knowledge led him on as follows:

> There are other men who are carpenters and masons who are handy men, but they usually work for pay because the job might take several days, and no neighbor could stay away from his work with a friend for that length of time. Donovan is a mason and he taught himself. He built his own house and several others. A man cannot build a house because he would not know how to do it. Donovan is a very intelligent man. He has a terrible head on him.

437 That the difference of remuneration is seized upon by countrymen as the distinguishing mark came to the authors' 476 notice again and again. The handy man is the local resident 463 who fits into the local pattern of courtesies, barter, gifts, 465 as in the case of the butcher, described above, who got his reward in the shape of the meat shoved under his arm. In cooring, of course, one never pays. In any act of "friendship" and alliance in a familistic setting no formal remuneration of monetary payment is ever present. We have already seen that it is only at the crucial period of family reorganization, when the whole system of relations between members undergoes change, that any considerations of money enter the schedule of rural services and rewards. The same absence of money payment is the point of distinction here. It distinguishes the relations between the men of a local community and one of themselves who is "handy" through special experience from those between formal client and tradesman. Money payment is the mark of the outsider;

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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.*

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

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The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

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Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

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* Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

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wife got her reward in presents, gifts, and whiskey, but not in money. Money, however, would be proferred to the nurse.

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That the factor of payment in money should be crucial is really the cloak of the set of dispositions arising from habitual relations. In the local community the handy man is not paid, since, like "friends" and neighbors, he is one of themselves. Since he is one of the countrymen, he is caught within the system of much the same habitual relations of reciprocal service and mutual aid which make up cooring in agriculture.

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To see this point, we must describe the action of the local community in respect to the work to be done once again. Cooring is a form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. One old fellow described it aptly when he said that it meant that for a day of work given you would receive a day in return. We have already seen its connection with familism and the extended family. But besides cooring, there was another form of the custom known as *meitheal* (mihil). The word *comhair* (coor) referred to the reciprocity, the word *meitheal* to the band of men and teams acting together to perform a task. On various occasions when work beyond the capacity of cooring families was to be done, a *meitheal* of men or women or horses could be made up.

As described by the old people who still remember its heyday, the *meitheal* rested on a foundation slightly different from the reciprocity of cooring. The work was done by a gang of local persons got up for the purpose through the wish and custom of the local inhabitants, but without expectancy of individual return in like measure.

Bands of men and women were got up in rural communities by *meitheal* for the following purposes, of which the authors heard record:

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1. Mowing and harvesting for priest and school teacher.
2. Mowing and harvesting for an old couple without children who could not do it themselves.
3. Hauling and moving where many horses were needed, as a *meitheal* of horses, for bringing sand or seaweed manure from the coast, or moving and re-settling a family.
4. Rebuilding a house and re-settling an evicted family.
5. Collecting a *meitheal* of girls with their spinning wheels from all the community's houses to spin after shearing.
6. Collecting a *meitheal* of men and girls for various processes connected with the conversion of flax to linen.

There were probably many other more extraordinary kinds of coöperative action. But the above list exhausts those which are remembered by the local communities the authors knew in Clare and which are unconnected with the more directly reciprocal and familistic pattern of cooring. The difference between *meitheal* and *comhair* was not a contrast, however, by any means. The term *meitheal*, applied strictly, referred to the band of persons and their tools got together. Yet there was a certain unanimity in the country people's feeling that the word *meitheal* should be reserved specifically for occasions of the local community's communal action. In *meitheal* work no individual or family expected a like return.

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Community action in concert, in which bands of workers are got up for specific purposes, is nowadays very different. Most of the characteristic actions of *meitheal* remembered by the old people are no longer carried out. Just as in the case of cooring, the need of the small farmer for his fellows is no longer so great. Monetary hire is spreading into the country communities. Yet even today the schoolteacher and the priest are donated services at hay harvesting occasionally, though nowadays schoolteacher and priest rely no longer upon bits of land and garden for support but upon fixed monetary salaries from state or church. Such aid is of little importance in their economies. Likewise, old-age

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pensions and other benefits have removed the necessity of action by *meitheal* for the support of the aged and childless. General prosperity and the spread of machinery and tools have made it unnecessary for such concerted action in other cases, and local self-sufficiency is no longer so complete. 571 178

Nevertheless, the foundation of mutual relations between members of the local community upon which *meitheal* was based still exists. It can be called into play in emergency or under special circumstance still. Not all the townsman's accusation that the spirit of self-help and self-sufficiency has gone out of the country people is true by any means. They still will buckle to a community task, if necessity forces action, quite willingly. But they have learned that they have a voice nowadays in the kind of activity to which public funds and public works shall be put. This awareness is part of the extension inward into the community of the lines of relationship with persons and institutions external to the farm community which is so characteristic of the age. Such relationships are now made use of where before there were none of them beyond appeal to a landlord. 476 571

Some description of the former kind of activity might be of interest here, though it is in the nature of a digression. The techniques of the last century, particularly those of wool and flax, were different from those of today; yet the situation is in other respects quite like that of today as far as the organization of persons in the community is concerned. The age groups of old and young, the sex division of activity between men and women, and the reciprocities between family groups and the direction of the community in the hands of the old men were even more marked than they are today. But nothing fundamental has changed except the techniques. 476 571 286

The following is an account of the older custom in weaving:

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476 A man would go to town and buy two or more pottles of flax
571 to sow. Then on the first of May he would go to the garden
248 and plant it. In August he would pull it up by the roots and lay it in small bundles to be made into stooks. Then they would take it and put it into a bog and leave it there fifteen or twenty days, after which they could dry it in the house by hanging it from the rafters. About the first of November you would take it down and some men would come in and help break it. They would then put it back and later take it down and scutch it with a pronged tool, drawing the flax over it and breaking it.

476 Some time about Christmas time you would have a *meitheal*
571 of girls come in and they would sit in a semicircle round the fire and clove the flax. It would take several days depending on how much you had. The girls would stay with you all that
283 time. At seven in the evening they would be through and within half an hour you could hear them in the hills leaping and shouting. About eight or eight-thirty the boys would begin
[535] to arrive and there would be a dance and be no more good out of them for that night. They might have a dance every two or three days. You fed them good.

The next thing was the hackling, and this might be done by men or women. You had a box with iron prongs sticking up and you would hit the stalk against the irons and the small particles would fall into the box below. It might take several nights. Old man Roughan was a great man at the hackling, but he was always great for nothing else to do with flax. It was fine if you got him to come and help you and he would be glad to do it. Then you might be good at something else and you would go and help him with that. Some men were good at one thing and others at something else and they would help each other.

After this the next thing was the spinning, and this was done by the woman. She would sit in this corner by the fire and she might be there every night, or whenever she had the time, spinning the flax fiber into thread. She had no one to help her and it was a hard job. After it was made into thread, it would be taken out and bleached and re-wound and then taken to the
[286] weaver. The weaver made it into cloth and you would use it for sheets and shirts and other things. Flax was a hard thing and there was a lot of hard work about it.

248 They have been out of growing it for thirty or forty years

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and now they would never think of growing it but must be running to town and buying what they want. 248

The process of conversion of wool to yarn and thence into cloth was equally difficult. It demanded the concerted efforts of most of the rural community. It gave scope for the development of specialists who could give their skills back and forth even though, as before, their skills were part of the equipment of all the young people in the community. Two other old fellows of Inagh combined in the following account: 476 571 283

With the wool it was sheared on May 15 and, if that fell on a Monday or Tuesday and the following was Saturday in town (market day) you would see the men there with wool to sell while others would be there to buy it with large baskets in which to put it. The first thing was to card the wool. About the first of June you would get ready to spin it. For that you go around to all the neighbors and ask for a loan of a girl to spin the wool, and if you got eight or ten you must get the loan of that many spinning wheels. Then they come to the house on a certain day and I have seen eight wheels in this room and two in the other, all the girls spinning and talking away. It might take several days before they were through and they would have a dance and the boys would come around. You want to be sure to get the girls early for there is a great demand for them. After the yarn is spun, it is placed on the wall to be taken to the weaver later on. [535]

All this was part of the pattern of work in which the members of the community were accustomed to work in close association. The behavior described here is that which we have already looked at in the discussion of the obligations of cooring. The *meitheal* referred to the working gang rather than the system in which the local habits were set. That setting was a constant play of habitual work relations between the "friends" and neighbors of the local community in which the characteristic organization of the community aligned sex and age groups and associated the 476 571

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476 571 skills of individual experience and prowess with one's place in such groups.

476 461 In dealing with local techniques and local specializations, it is impossible to divorce them from this social setting. The attitudes of the country people support this view. Their emotional outlook on work gives added proof of the identity between work role and the social relations it involves. Solitary work is difficult and tedious. It offers little incentive. Communal effort on the other hand has a pleasant and variegated rhythm which works up an emotional satisfaction which can counteract fatigue and monotony.

Consequently, concerted effort and hard work are not often divorced in the minds of the country people, to judge from what they say of it, from their experience of the *esprit de corps* which they feel. The old people as usual deny any value to present-day activity. The young think the doings of an older day the behavior of savages. We have already seen how the attitudes which express one's age status color one's view of life in the countryside. That is the case again here. If the old people deny the existence of community effort today, it is because they think of the zest of working in unison in youth long ago and remember the times when emotion was highest and the solidarity of communal effort greatest. And the young people forget this. Listening to the accounts of such mighty effort, they think only of the hardship and the ignorance of labor-saving short-cuts it entailed. Similarly the old people forget or fail to see that the young people go through the same experience as they once did.

476 571 Thus one can hear such a description of communal effort and the joys of work in common as follows from the old people and at the same time one can still watch a harvest where coöperative action and competition in skills is just as great. And we can know that the essential patterns are the same, though the techniques may change:

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And at the time of the saving of the hay and up to the War 476 ●
didn't it used to be that a man's place was done in turn and 571
there would be fifteen or twenty men working at a time on the one place. There would be one man make the hayrick and there were no round ricks in it then, they were all long. There would be another who would rack it and two above on the rick putting hay into it. The other men and women would be in the fields bringing the hay in on their backs, and the children would be there too. Each would do as much as he could. Then the man whose field it was would have half a barrel of porter and the men would all drink. At noon and in the evening the neighboring women would come in and spread a great feed with jam and sweet breads and other things out of the ordinary, and in the evening there would be a tea for all of them in the fields.

Then at the cutting of the turf the man might have porter, though the hay saving was a bigger time than the turf cutting. There would be several working together at the cutting of the turf, some cutting and others laying it out, and they would be given a feed and some drink for it. There was a man who agreed to cut turf for a widow woman who had several small children. After he arrived, he was sorry he came, for there was no one to lay out the turf for him. But the widow and children were there and worked all day and never a sod did he get ahead of them. As soon as he had one cut, there was a child there to carry it away.

The people also helped each other with the ploughing and the planting of the garden, several men working to help and be called. There was one woman who would help one neighbor today and another the next and so on. It would kill you if you had to do it alone but you never feel the work when there are several of you all working.

There is none of that today. Everyone is begrudging the other if he manages to get along tolerably well and each man does his own. Then the women used to work together. They had what they called a *meitheal*. On an appointed evening all the girls would gather at the house and work on the flax, scutching it, and they might be there for several days or a week working and living in the same house until all the work was done. Then they might go to another house and stay there. We had a great fortnight long ago at the Murphys here. The young men

476 would be waiting outside to whisk them away or to have a dance.
571 Then when they ground the oats, they had a quern and the men and women would come together and each take a turn at grinding so it was not tiring and they would have a big supper of spuds and milk for all of them before they would go. Then they would get together for the carding and spinning before the thread was taken to the weaver. The young women might be carding and the old women spinning and the *meitheal* of
[535] girls would work away. They would get a dance when they would be done.

All the above description of close concert and deeply imprinted habitual work relations among the members of the local communities in the framework of the organization of behaviors of age and sex depict the now dead past. The same activities today, though certain techniques are different, bring out the same picture of work relations in an emotionally charged unison among persons of similar status within the community. The present-day hay harvest is very little different, though mowing machines are used. The great hayrick is still built in the same setting, and still calls for celebration. Everyone still waits for a signal from the hayrick rigger, a personage of considerable importance on such a day.

476 The unison of working on oats harvest with flails is gone.
But in its place is a threshing machine, and its owners come
571 around and a local crew is got up out of the local men. The
463 same jollities still reign. In all this our chief interest is not
554 in changing custom. Rather it is from this kind of observation that a new conclusion arises. The factors of differentiation about skills and techniques in the rural communities give rise to statuses of the same kind as before, statuses based upon the development of a specialty by a member of the local community which is recognized and valued within the habitual activities of his fellows. Here is an opportunity to see the embryonic form of division of labor and development of occupations in terms of the life of a community. It is a continuous process.

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463 in terms of such considerations as income, wealth, or skill,
571 or any such factors, but in terms of the place and function of the persons specializing among their fellows. It can be understood in terms of social relations and the organization of habit. Status based upon technical differentiation is built up out of personal relations in the work experience of the community members.

476 If then we take inventory of the kinds of goods and ob-
571 jects which make up the *matériel* of peasant life, and draw
621 up such an inventory to illustrate for us the connection between social relations and these goods and objects, we can construct a series of charts which connect community life and the exchanges and uses of goods, services, and objects in one comprehensive view.

In such a chart those goods and services which come to the farmer from those within his own community come to him in connection with traditional social relations uniting fellow community members. They are the ones transferred under the pattern of cooring: through "friendliness" and non-monetary reciprocal obligation.

Those goods and services which come to the farmer and his family from without the community come to him in connection with more recently developed non-traditional relations uniting him to persons outside the community. They fall into quite different patterns of activity. Likewise any person whose occupation makes him both a member of the local community and part of the outside world, by virtue of his relations extending beyond, is also in a position of oscillation between the first and the second relationships.

For there is a continual attempt to extend the pattern of cooring, as with all local familistic and communal obligation and sentiment, outward on the part of the farmers, and a continual extension inward on the part of outsiders of other patterns of relationship. Much of the enduring pattern of town and country relationship evolved in Irish

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society hinges on this point. Much of political life is explained here. Gifts and personal favors, fashioned on the pattern of the extended family and local community, besiege (or used to besiege) magistrates and government officials. Before land reform they besieged such links with the outer world as the older estate system provided, such as the bog warden, the land steward, and the other functionaries of landlords. Yet against this pattern's sway there runs a continual incursion of other patterns which the institutions extending their sway from town life and higher social classes downward provide. In this meeting and conflict of social patterns much is to be learned of the structure of Irish social classes and of the continuing course of Irish social life.

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The matter is of interest here only as a summary of the life of the rural community itself. It occupies us only in so far as it points to a conclusion about the kinds of relationship which build up within the local community between the farmers and those of their fellows who are not farmers. There is always a primary distinction among them. There are those who have, quantitatively speaking, most of their activities taken up in relations within the local community alone, and there are those who are divided between the local community and the outside world and who make a bridge between. The former fall in one way or another into the pattern of cooring. They are a "cut below" the farmer, yet his intimates. They are the ones in relation to whom the farmer is the dominant party, since it is the farmer who commissions, hires, or otherwise sets off the other's activity, expert as it may be. The secret of the equivalence of the status of these persons with that of the landless boys lies in these facts. For the boys are in exactly the same case.

The others, however, who are in one way or another part of the outside world, are alike if only in that. Various as they are, they are never in the same case as the local handy

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TABLE 7

Relations of Farmers and Non-Farmers in Three Rural Communities in County Clare

The table which follows is a chart of relationships between farmers and non-farmers in the rural communities of Clare. It lists those of different skill or habit with whom the farmers have relations. Those who fall under the pattern of reciprocities, gifts, and cooring, and the goods and services they provide the farmer, appear in one list. Those who fall under other patterns, who do not figure in the obligations of cooring, are listed in another. At the right of each item in each list is a word or phrase characterizing the initiation of the actions taking place between the farmer and the non-farmer in the course of the provision of the goods or services described.

Read another way, the lists arrange in two groups all the local specialists with whom we have been dealing. They show us that the differences are to be found in social relations, not in goods or services rendered or any other factor. All the specialists of whom the authors got information in the country districts are here. The first list describes the specialists whose relations to the farmers are "internal" to the community. The second list describes those persons who connect the farmers with the outside world and are thus "external." List I gives those who enjoy superior prestige and local standing, whose contacts with the community proceed through the heads of families, the adult men, and who are capable of initiating action among them. In that limited sense only, they are dominant over the farmers and make a higher class. List II gives those who share inferior prestige and local standing, who form cliques with the "boys," and who are not ordinarily capable of initiating action among the adult members of the community except in a course of communal action employing their special skill. These are a lower class in the country districts by such definition.

This configuration of factors reveals the lines of relationship within the community and those extending outward from it.

The reader may judge for himself how close the connection is between the familistic system of farm life and the structure of the rural community.

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List I

Extra-Familial Relations within the Local Communities, Internal

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations [1]	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services [2]
Weavers	Homespuns, shawls, cloths, blankets		
Tailors	Clothing		
Carpenters	Furniture, houses, buildings		

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case this consists of gifts and cooring.
[2] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case the farmer commissions the labor.

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Smiths	Farm implements, horseshoes, tools, repairs	Gifts, annual payment, and cooring	
Shoemakers	Boots, shoes		
Thatchers	House thatching		
Hayrick experts	Hayrick building		
Masons	House building, sheds, walls		
Wall builders	Walls		
Whitewashers	Limewashing of houses, sheds		
Water diviners and well diggers	Finding and building of wells		
Threshing-machine operators, owners	Threshing	Payment, gifts and cooring	Farmer commissions labor and machine and pays hire
Midwives	Attendance at childbirth		
Bonesetters	Broken bones		
Local "vets"	Treatment of sick animals		
Local "doctors," wise men or women	Treatment of sick; magic		
Domestic servants	Household aid	Wages only for outsiders not kin	Farmer hires and pays hire, otherwise kinship relations hold
Agricultural laborers, employees of big farmers	Occasional aid in agriculture		Either party requests aid
Gravekeepers	Records of grave locations, tending of graves	Wages by priest, gifts and cooring from farmers	Unobserved
Slate quarrymen	Building and roofing slates	Unobserved	Unobserved
Sextons	Tending of churches	Wages by priest	Unobserved
Limekiln and lime burners	Fertilizer	Gifts and cooring from local men, payment for outsiders	Unobserved

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
List II			
Extra-Familial Relations with Local Persons Extending Outside the Local Communities, External			
Special Cases, Occasional Relationship			
Tinkers	Asses, pots, pans, repairs	Occasional trade at the door	Tinker makes rounds
Dealers, hawkers, feather-mongers	Odds and ends, small trade articles. Feather mongers buy feathers from farmers	Occasional trade at the door	Dealer makes rounds
Habitual Relationships			
Crossroad shopkeeper	Supplies liquors, foodstuffs, tobacco, sundries not bought in town. (Most trading of staples done in towns, however.) Collects eggs and butter for sale to produce dealers	Farmer an habitual client, purchasing on long-term credit. Relationship overlaid with obligations of "friendliness," involving reciprocal gifts and occasional advances. Barter significant only in the shopkeepers' acting as depot for eggs and butter sales	Relationship habitual over long term (see other columns)
Civic guards, (police) officials and uniformed men (*Gardaí Siochána*)	Local protection of person and property, apprehension and prosecution of misdemeanor and felony. Informally, police settle disputes, report grievances, give amateur legal advice, and gather census data for governmental departments	By law, civic guards must be neither members of the communities in which they are stationed nor related in it by marriage. They are instructed to maintain close rapport and very friendly relations with local people, and seem to succeed. They go in for much sport with the local young men and boys. They are attached to local barracks but, if they are married, maintain homes in the local community	Assigned to stations on departmental orders

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1935) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Big farmer	Occasional employment of local young men; occasional aid to small farmers and local purchase of corn, vegetables, animals, produce	Of a higher class and wider contacts than the small farmers; most often a townsman by culture and even by residence. In the countryside, close informal contacts with others of his kind over a wide area; interest in fashionable recreation and sport. Contacts with *small farmers often* friendly but usually few, except where big farmer is active politically	
Cattle and produce dealers	Purchase of produce and livestock, providing chief monetary income of small farmers	When not townsmen, whom the farmer meets only at periodic fairs and markets, these men are usually big farmers. Buy "from the land" (that is, from individual farmers not gathered at the local fairs and markets) very rarely; butter and egg dealers nearly always buy through crossroads shopkeepers	

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Parish priest and curate and other clergy	Religious leadership and moral control. Regulation of personal conduct and family behavior. Settlement of conflicts and disputes. Recommendation of "characters" before the outside world. Regulation of formal beliefs and attitudes, supervision of education in the interests of the accepted *mores*. Priest supplies ceremonial and cultural leadership and takes an active part in nearly all recreational and cultural activity, along with the schoolteacher, in country parishes. Only at times of high ceremony or special devotion, as at marriages, or in pilgrimages and retreats, does the small farmer make use of town churches, though he and his wife often contribute to them	In country districts today formal religious relationship seems to be superseding older paternalistic dominance of parish priest. Little informal contact except in the case of young curates in local sport. But the priest still commands greatest respect and reverence and, in many cases, the love of his parishioners. He is still the local court of appeal and the arbiter of local custom. He is consulted a great deal by both men and women. His parishioners are jealous lest he overstep his sphere of authority, particularly in politics, yet they concur in granting him obedience in everything else. Nevertheless the older magical power he possessed once is gone. Today he is often superior to the small farmers in wealth and education, and is not one of them. His more usual associates are other clergy, big farmers, and townsmen	

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593 nephew for amusement. Where a widower had a
589 small son, the son was taken by a childless sister. She brought him up to inherit her husband's farm, and her brother might marry again. Two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their cousins.

To the country-people, such arrangements, successful enough economically sometimes, are makeshifts, subjects for commiseration. One hears often enough such phrases as these: "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her." "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow." Even government
[656] officials nowadays recognize the social value of the full family. A household of father, mother and sons gets preference in land division. The work to be done is the strengthening of the social group; personal enrichment and use of the soil are merely incidental.

476 Up to this point, I have described the country-
593 man as though he worked in isolation from his fellows. In a measure this is true, for his first duties are to his immediate family. Still, there is a great deal of work which goes on between farms. There is a certain amount of co-operation of an informal kind. Work in the countryside is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids.

476 Co-operation of this sort takes many forms. Men lend tools, or work with tools of their own for 'friends' and neighbours, particularly at mowing,

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spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing. They send 476 along a boy to help whenever the farm needs an extra hand to get its work done quickly. Women pool resources in making up a tub or firkin of butter or they lend a girl to a short-handed household. 'Friends' and neighbours help one another at times of distress, or when a household is short or a crop delayed. Gifts of cattle, food and labour are made. Or they work together communally, particularly at turf-cutting, oats harvest and threshing. Here again much of the actual work is done by the 'boys' lent by their fathers, though the latter take a hand when necessary. Lastly, there is a great deal of aid given and received in preparing for ceremonial and social occasions, at christenings, weddings and funerals.

Once this co-operation was more widespread. Older people remember the days when "once if you had a horse and car you'd have forty or fifty people helping you with the turf". Before mowing-machines came in, ten or a dozen 'friends' would work each other's meadows in turn with the scythe. In that way the slender resources of the countrymen were pooled; and the work of life went forward. Nowadays, the small farmer is better off; he has less immediate need of his fellows. Nevertheless, he has not forgotten them; in all but the communities where large farmers have forsaken peasant life for a monetary agriculture, he can and does rely upon them still. Nowadays, however, the

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476 co-operating groups are smaller; tools are more modern and better distributed; resources are fuller.

246 476 Lending a 'boy' is the commonest form of co-operation. It goes on constantly, but can best be described in a scene of great activity, such as hay-making. I met it first there, in Luogh, the townland in which we found the 'west room'. The hay was early in Luogh in 1933. Harvest began in mid-July. The weather was just right. Warm dry days had brought the grasses to maturity, and gave promise of continuing. The families of Luogh set to work to 'save the hay': mowing it, letting it dry as it lay, and then stacking it, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six- to eight-foot hay-cocks. Later, after several weeks, it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. Now it was a question of mowing, drying and stacking it before rains caught the farmers in mid-course.

There was much interest in every family's pro-
[521] gress. The weather and the yields of the meadows drove all other subjects out of conversation. The men felt spurred to work well and quickly; there was a general rivalry in the air. The women were as eager, and brought their children to the meadow's edge, while they worked with their rakes behind the mowers.

About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows, working from earliest morning as long as

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light held. They worked with the aid of their sons 246
and of boys from the families who had no machines. 476
At each stage of the process a boy not a member of the family gave his labour; he took his place at meals during the day.

His own mowing done, the farmer paid his debt. He took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed that man's meadow. In one instance, a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others. In another, a farmer mowed for two others. Certain meadows in Luogh were full-handed enough to do without extra hands; but in five cases, though mowing and stacking took a very [184]
long time and they were obviously short of hands, no help was given. Two of these cases were bachelors, who lived alone; two more were 'strangers'.

Here was an important agricultural operation undertaken by the small local community in which provision was made for effective co-operation over and above the usual family economy. It was no isolated instance; it is immemorial practice in Luogh. In fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work.

There was no monetary payment involved in this
work. In the country surrounding Luogh, the only [464]
hired labour to be seen worked the meadows of a large farmer, a cattleman with over 300 acres. He did not co-operate; in fact, his whole life was cut out of a different cloth.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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476 602 This co-operation is woven deeply into the countryman's habit and sentiment. Questioning in the life of the present soon brought out the base upon which it rests. In every case an extended-family relationship was involved. The countryman is a family man in this co-operation with his fellows, as well as in his work at home. Carey, who mowed for Denis and Seamus Moloney and for Brian MacMahon, was second cousin to each of them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively to the two farmers whose meadows he mowed. The 'boys' who worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows were also relatives; they were sons of the kinsmen for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. No man had mowed for all his relatives, that was not necessary. One man had mowed not for a relative, but for a boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors, whom no one had helped, had been able to help no one. The two 'strangers', who had moved into the [609] townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives 'on this side'.

The small farmers of Luogh explained their co-operation in their own general terms. They call it 'cooring' in the brogue. The word is the Irish *comhair*, meaning aid, partnership, and alliance. They explained their 'cooring' in terms of the 'friendliness' of the place. Their answer was that they "had right to help their friends", or in a more general

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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statement, "country people do be very friendly, they always help one another". 476 602

Now, 'have right' and 'friend' are both expressions in the brogue. Like so much of that rich English dialect, for it is a true dialect with an ancient history, both words translate Gaelic idiom. A 'friend' is a relative. To 'have right' expresses an obligation, a duty and the traditional fitness of an act. It is an anglicization of an Irish *tá cóir orm*, 'the obligation is on me'. The countryman is explaining his acts as part of the traditional reciprocities of sentiment and duty which make up his system of kinship. 476 602 195 [197]

This fact strikes one the more strongly when one finds him describing other traditional acts of obligation to kindred in exactly the same terms. Aid lent and duties performed at wedding and funeral are felt to be in the same category as co-operation in farming. Thus a farmer of my acquaintance could say of a cousin: "He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth £12 to us and didn't want anything for it." And he could go on in more general terms: "Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you; they lend you a horse with the hay, or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to help when somebody dies with you". It is part of the 'friendliness' owed one's kinsmen to make up and serve food at wakes and weddings, to dig the grave, to carry the coffin, to 476 602

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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476 602 keen over the dead. This conduct is reciprocal; 'friendliness' implies mutual obligation. One countryman gave me as his reason for going to the funeral of a second cousin: "I have right to go, they always come over to this side". When in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister took over the child, she did the 'friendly' thing that she 'had right to do'. In the very same terms a man 'made bold' upon his brother-in-law to lend him a son to help drive cattle to the fair, as the brother-in-law 'had right' to do.

In fact, failure to fulfil the pattern of conduct demanded by the obligations of 'friendliness' may bring punitive action on the part of the aggrieved kindred. We have seen this before in the story of the 'old man's curse' in the first lecture. In a part of Clare, not many miles from Luogh, a small farmer neglected his garden and forced his father-
[578] in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support. He was finally beaten up one night in his own house by his irate in-laws. Ordinarily, perhaps
[626] failure leads rather to an estrangement; it holds one up to general condemnation by the whole community. Persistence in failure leads to social death; the recluse is greeted by no one, not even his 'friends'.

574 602 But fulfilment entrenches one in social life. The obligations extend to visiting and hospitality, the countryman's great virtue. 'A sup of tea' is 'put down before' the countryman who is travelling to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major 181
operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of 443
peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair 796
seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the 181
cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures 789
of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic 181
magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, 842
common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of 181
marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the [582]
highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and 181
duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and 476

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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181 individual ownership they have by no means entirely collapsed.
476 The principle of service, of mutual aid within the local family groups, survives; the element of competition is reduced to a minimum. Though the old social laws have been "abolished" by acts of parliament, such external decrees could destroy only the superficial features and hardly touched the minds in
181 which these customs were rooted. The primary unit of land
631 division—the townland—is still a very real thing; and as the townland retains its Gaelic name even in the districts of Dublin and Belfast, so there survives beyond the city's influence the social fabric of the townland community. Reeves and Joyce have argued that the careful subdivision of Irish land points to the existence of a considerable settled population in remote antiquity, and recent archæological research supports this view. There are no less than 62,205 townlands in the country; their size, which varies from curiosities of less than an acre to large tracts of moorland of 1,000 acres, averages 325 acres.

181 The townlands in turn group themselves into baronies
631 corresponding to the petty kingdoms of old. Writers tell us
291 that even into the 19th century one barony could be easily distinguished from another by the dresses peculiar to each. Thus there were the dark blue and damson of Cork and Waterford, the grey of Kerry and the blue of Galway. A traveller in 1830 remarked wisely that "such peculiarities frequently point out the natural divisions of a country in more important matters than dress": they are an index to regional diversity. The distinctive features of particular districts are well illustrated in the case of "the Irish Flanders," the isolated tract in Co. Wexford comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth; while nothing could reveal the separateness of some island communities better than the heaviest punishment meted out to offenders in Rathlin or Clear I.: it consisted of "banishment to Ireland."

000 Enough has been said to suggest that the traditions of the Irish countryside are of long standing, and that many strains in those traditions are not only of Celtic but of pre-Celtic antiquity. Before we consider some of the relics of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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342 can be shown or assumed to be additions. A wicker windbreak of birch or hazel (called the wassock or corrag in Co. Antrim), was occasionally erected at one side of the door. Here, too, there was often a stone bench or "stile." The chimney generally betrays its modernity by being built of brick, but wooden or wattled chimneys, neatly thatched and bound with sugán, are not uncommon, and there are a few chimneyless dwellings still inhabited in the west. Old houses frequently have no more than a few inches of chimney projecting, and it is recorded that when efficient chimneys were built by improving landlords they were promptly covered with a sod, "because the smoke keeps them warm." It remains to be said that in former days house-building, like so many tasks demanding much labour, was a communal affair. "The custom on such occasions"—the scene is Donegal a century ago—"is for the person who has the work to be done to hire a fiddler, upon [476] which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs [482] to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing [535] and working while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day."

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241 407 [492] struck a rock, thus saving the share, the traces and the ploughman from injury. The tying of the tail-hair to the traces, which were commonly of sugán or fir rope, required a difficult knot known in later days to very few. This undoubtedly ancient practice seems to have been linked with other customs such as walking backwards before the plough horses, burning the corn in the straw, and plucking or clipping wool from the sheep whenever it was required. It appears that we have in this group of survivals an older culture-laver overlaid by newer methods some of which are themselves of high antiquity. There is some evidence that the original simpler wooden plough mentioned below, together with the clod-breaker and the winnowing tray (Chapter 14) belong to the older layer, whereas the improved wooden plough, the harrow and the flail are later arrivals.

English visitors of the 18th century and the writers of the Statistical Accounts published by the Royal Dublin Society have given many particulars of the varying practices of a century and a half ago. From them we select a few observations. The method of ploughing in Co. Clare was to use four horses abreast, the driver walking backwards between the two middle horses. This is also described as "the old method" in Co. Roscommon. Four oxen were employed in Co. Dublin and Co. Tipperary, "never less than four oxen or four horses" in Kilkenny, six in Meath, three in Fermanagh and two in King's County. The large teams of some regions may imply that co-aration had at one time been practised. [476 171] The four horses of the north Antrim plough-team were contributed or "pooled" by four farmers under the system of "morrowing" or "neighbour dealing" which finds ready parallels in Scotland. In Co. Clare this pooling custom is known as "cooring," and in other parts as "milling." The Irish farm horse, it should be remembered, is a small light breed: except near large towns heavy cart horses are rarely seen.

Nevertheless in the more backward parts the two horse plough seems to have been general, as it is to-day, and it has been supposed that the two-ox plough was standard in early

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digging or shovelling. For these processes the digging fork 244
and long-handled shovel are the proper tools. (Fig. 65). It 412
should also be remarked that the preparation of lazy-beds
was communal team-work, undertaken by groups of from [462]
8 to 16 men who shared their labour under the system of
voluntary co-operation which distinguished the village [476]
community. The custom is maintained in a few localities.

The loy served in certain districts as a dibber for setting the potatoes "against the back of the spade." but various special dibbers were also used. There was, for instance, the large two-handed "steeveen" found from Co. Leitrim to Co. Clare. As another example of a dibber we illustrate the clumsy-looking "stamp" from Co. Armagh (Fig. 47), employed in sowing turnips. Reference will be made elsewhere (Chapter 16) to the use of seaweed as manure. Old thatch, with its content of soot from the turf fire, is occasionally used as a fertilizer, and I am told that in Achill Island miniature stone, sod or turf buildings used as "soot houses" are roofed with rafters and scraws each autumn. Fires are lit in them, the smoke depositing soot on its passage through the thatch. This is then stripped off and, with the ashes of the fires, spread on the land as manure in spring. The thatch of the Hebridean black houses was utilized in the same way.

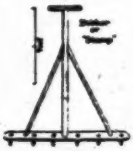

Fig. 47.

A practice which was formerly widespread and attracted a 241
great deal of heated discussion in the period of agricultural 412
development at the end of the 18th century was the preparing of waste ground for cultivation by "paring and burning," or "denshiring." It seems probable that this was a survival of ancient custom, and I believe that old-fashioned tool, the flachter, was probably employed for the purpose, just as its sister-tool, the breast-plough, was in England. Many types of tools were perfected for land reclamation, including a [185]
special skinning-plough. In the south-west a heavy hoe or mattock, known as a graffan—similar to the implement still used in Kerry for breaking clods on potato ridges—was popular as a paring tool, the sod being rolled with the foot as it was cut. By such laborious processes, and by centuries of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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492 246 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, [493] which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently [407] old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

246 In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built [171] around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to [476] hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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314 the homestead as preparations are made to visit the bog, which may lie at any distance up to some miles away. I fancy turf-cutting was one of the tasks undertaken in the old days by the young people who took the cattle to the booleys. It used to be a communal task, for instance in Donegal until lately [476] six or eight men with their women and child helpers would pool their labour, receiving their meals for the day from the owner of each successive bank to be cut. Similarly each man would take his burden-creel to assist in the communal gathering and stacking in July or August.

Fig. 83. The flachter in use, Coolnagoppoge, Co. Antrim.

Fig. 84. Flachter in "at rest" position.

The first process in turf-cutting is the removal of the surface "parings"—the scraw—consisting of tough matted roots, coarse grass and moss, to a depth of anything from three or four inches to as much as 18 inches. The scraw is not taken as fuel except in areas where turf is scarce, but in some localities where the bogs have all been cut out, as in Rathlin and Tory, thin scraw scraped off the rock is the only fuel, and a very dirty and inefficient fire it makes. A broad spade is employed for paring, supplemented by some sharp cutting tool such as a hay-knife (Fig. 82), or an old scythe blade hafted and fitted with a foot-spur, for notching the vertical

[413]

Fig. 82.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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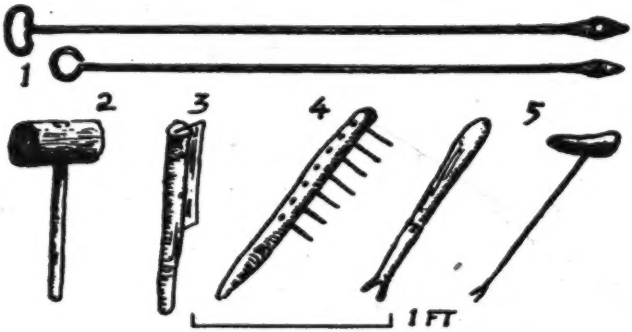
the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

and among the farming population a new roof is hardly ever 342
covered with thatch. The country thatcher finds employment [463]
in patching, not thatching.

The erection of such simple houses as I have described did 342
not call for the services of specialists. When the need arose the
collective skills of a whole community were available, and one 476
can readily see how prescribed methods were handed down in 527
any particular area. 'The custom on such occasions', wrote Lord George Hill[1]—he is speaking of Donegal in the years before the Great Famine—'is for the person who has the work



[413]

FIG. 15. Thatching tools. (1) Needles, the upper one for hay or fir ropes. (2) Mallet. (3) Trimming knife. (4) Rake. (5) Spurtles for stappling and patching. All from Co. Down except the last, from Co. Meath.

to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and singing while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day'. Like all work done in common, the thatching too was regarded as a sort of festival. In the Aran Islands 'from the moment a roof is taken in hand there is a whirl of laughter and talk till it is ended, and, as the man whose house is being covered is a host instead of an employer, he lays himself out to please the men who work with

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 40.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 him'.[1] Synge goes on to remark that much of the intelligence
476 and charm of the islanders is due to the absence of a division of
527 labour and to the wide development of each individual. Truly it may be said that with the disappearance of the thatched house something more than a picturesque archaism passes from the land.

[1]J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*, 156.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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intense effort, when the toilers were spurred on by rivalries in 241
their efforts to avoid the bad luck which tradition wisely bes- 461
towed on the laggards. The seasonal festivals which marked the end of these periods of strain—at the beginning of May and November—were not merely celebrations of work completed and a new season begun, but also the occasion for the release of emotional stresses. The Irishman's capacity for bouts of strenuous work, and his more notorious addiction to spells of complete idleness, are surely related to the experience accumulated through countless springs, harvests, and winters. Winter was a dead season for man as for the world around him. It was no time for fairs, fighting or raiding, for selling or even stealing animals which were not worth the trouble of stealing: the problem was to maintain life in them.

Long tradition explains the neglect of winter ploughing 241
which is still characteristic of the greater part of Ireland. The 311
infield stubble was required to augment the very poor and limited outfield grazing available for the wintering stock. There are some townlands, in the west, where to this day all the fields become common grazing during the winter, and only the strongly-enclosed 'gardens' are safe places to grow cabbages, for instance, or a little rye for the thatch. Moreover even with improved ploughs the grass tends to grow in the furrows of ploughed land during a mild winter. And when it is recalled that much of the old infield land was on sloping ground, if only for the sake of the natural drainage thus provided, it can be conceded that there was wisdom in not breaking the earth in winter and opening the way to soil erosion. Moreover the loss of fertility by the leaching of exposed soils can be serious.

Preparing the land for seed had thus to await the spring, and 241
pressure of time as well as the uncertainties of weather strength- 476
ened the tradition of co-operative labour in the form of pooled plough-teams in the infield and gangs of ridgemakers in the outfield. The plough-team, normally of four horses or oxen supplied by as many neighbours, had to be supplemented by spade and mell, for the furrows were badly turned, and after the seed-bed had been prepared and the corn sown the seed was covered with shovelled soil. In order to facilitate drainage,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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LAZY-BEDS

241 in the days before field drains, the land was ploughed in ridges
476 or 'lands' some ten or twelve feet wide, separated by trenches which provided the soil for burying the corn. Lazy-beds, that is spade-ridges for potatoes, made even heavier demands on many hands (Fig. 46). A writer in the 1830s describing the scene in the fields as neighbours worked together in teams, remarks that 'these congregations give vivacity to the labour . . . and occasionally an animated shout is set up by the whole body'.[1] The pooling of labour resources, 'sharing' or 'morrowing'—there are several terms for this co-operative system—is still by no means uncommon even if there is nowadays less need for it. It not only cements social relationships but provides the
[461] stimulus of competitive effort. In the north of Ireland Protestant and Roman Catholic neighbours frequently share their labour in this way.

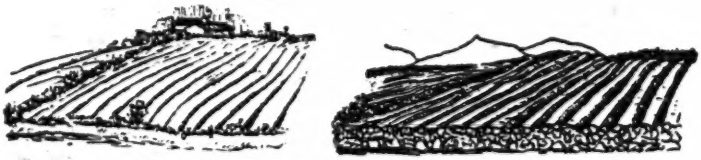

FIG. 46. Ploughed ridges, Co. Cavan, and spade ridges (lazy-beds), Co. Mayo.

241 By tradition the vital spring-time preparations are hedged around with tabus and omens. The ploughman should turn his horses with the sun, from left to right, to invoke its blessing on the work, and when yoking or unyoking his team his horses' heads should be facing south. Friday—which is regarded as a lucky day to begin all operations not needing iron—is the best day to begin sowing, and Good Friday is best of all. The sower going forth should begin his labours with the solemn words 'In the name of God', and he should give the horses a handful of corn from the seed-bag and throw a handful of earth over each horse's rump. Ashes from the turf fire were sometimes mixed with the seed for luck and there are traditions of the ashes of the midsummer bonfires being kept for this purpose.

In some parts of the country, chiefly in the south and east, the sower carried a straw seed-basket, and this is presumably

[1]Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 660.

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HARVEST

When the scythe was transferred from the mowing of hay 243
to the cutting of corn during the second half of last century 412
there was much opposition from the reapers, sometimes for the 178
good reason that little fields full of great boulders or the stumps of bog-fir gave no space to swing a scythe, and a single blow on the fast-moving point may ruin the blade. But one suspects that conservatism was rooted in magic. It is said that the rice-growers of Malaya refuse to use a scythe because its slashing motion would frighten away the spirits of the rice. Some such notion may have strengthened the Irishman's condemnation of the scythe. And I find another curious parallel with the Far East. The Malayan reaper hums like an insect while he is cutting the rice, perhaps to soothe the spirits of the living crop. In Ireland there is an old belief that an insect kept in a little box fastened to the handle of hook or scythe will bring luck and give the blade greater cutting power. Both scythe and sickle are personal possessions and their luck is personal: they are loaned with [422] reluctance. When a sickle is borrowed it should not be passed [426] directly from hand to hand but thrown on the ground and then picked up. This belief, which applies to all pointed objects, may be explained by the danger of handling a sharp tool, for bad luck is often related to bad practice.

But before coming to corn harvest the handling of flax should 248
be described. Unpleasant handling it is, even if not quite so onerous (and odorous) as working with hemp or jute. When grown for fibre flax is harvested after the pale blue flowers have fallen but before the seed ripens, and because it is the stalk that is being harvested it is not cut but pulled up by the roots. 'Lint' is a crop of the small family farm, for many hands are required, teams or 'boons' of anything from half a dozen to [476] ● thirty people gathering from neighbouring farms and working together in a festival spirit which reaches its climax in the evening dance. The tough flax is hard on the hands and the stooping is back-breaking. But the beets (sheaves) are carefully put together, for they have to be spread after retting and the stalks should lie evenly. The three handfuls which compose the beet are laid down at slightly different angles so that they will separate easily. A standard beet is reckoned to be 22 inches in diameter. The bands (ties) are prepared beforehand and consist [284]

and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this 314
time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals
and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf- [786]
cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the
lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a
stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out
of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades
and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on
fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an
exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers
that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the differ-
ence between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere
the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an [132]
early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the
planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month,
so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There
is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when [821]
the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the
tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it
is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but
once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep
cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a [521]
'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the [423]
decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when
banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally
has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or [476]
three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in
turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the
helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient
fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required
depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf.
Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown
top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a
proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist
humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like
coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is
the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that [804]
a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading, [461]

222 674 of the common people and have not been caught in the net of written records, it is still harder to throw light on some of the darker aspects of shore life. Both smuggling and wrecking have almost everywhere at one time or another been regarded as legitimate methods of obtaining food and acquiring goods from the sea. A dread harvest from ships sunk by enemy action was reaped with seeming callousness during two world wars by coastal dwellers who would risk their own lives in the process. Driftwood has always been an acceptable gift, and many a fisherman's cabin is roofed with ship's timbers and its fittings augmented with ship's furniture. Nearly all these varied shore 222 476 activities demand a measure of co-operation, and one finds that communal schemes of one kind and another and old ways and beliefs live long among folk who have to deal with the sea. Collective effort is necessary in hauling boats and handling nets, and while there are traditional rivalries between different coastal settlements each one tends to be a closely knit com- [186] munity displaying a strong spirit of independence. They were often able to resist the repressive hand of landlords and they still remain suspicious of the efforts of government bodies to improve their lot.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 Ireland has so often been symbolized by a bare-footed colleen bashfully hiding behind a creel-carrying donkey that it comes as a shock to discover that the animal is a relative novelty in the Irish scene. There is no evidence of the use of the ass as a beast of burden in Ireland until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Professor Mahaffy, who wrote learnedly 'On the Introduction of the Ass as a Beast of Burden into Ireland',[1] pointed out that the little donkey was conquering Hibernia when the Great Duke was subduing Iberia. In fact asses came in to replace the Irish horses which were being drawn on in large numbers to maintain the British cavalry in the peninsular wars. Although they were apparently introduced, like so many 177 other novelties, by way of Scotland, they proved unsuited to the 492 comparative rigours of the climate of the northern coasts of Ireland, and it was in the west of the country that they fitted best into the physical and social environment. It is strange to reflect that a culture-trait so well adapted to a region which has ancient physical and human relations with Iberia should have been so long in reaching Lusitanian Ireland and should have got there by the back door, through Ulster.

Down to recent times, then, the horse—a pony, not a heavy 492 cart horse—was the universal draught animal and beast of 48 burden save where poverty or environmental difficulties imposed carrying duties on men, women and children. There were places such as soft bogs or slippery seashores where even pack-horses could not find a footing, and there went the women and children with their back-creels to carry the peats and sea-wrack. In spring, when the men were fully occupied with ridge-making, the transport of manure seems to have been the special task of the women, though in time the ass came to relieve them of this duty. The manure creels or pots (pardogs) of a fashion which has been recorded all along the Atlantic coastlands from Spain to Scotland, have a hinged or slip bottom which allows the load to be dropped where required (Fig. 56). Nowadays the creels are hung in pairs on the donkey's wooden straddle (pack saddle), and in the west it is no uncommon sight to see convoys of asses so laden picking their way from the dung-hill to the fields. I have also seen hay being transported by hanging

[1] *P.R.I.A.*, 33 (1916–17), 580–8.

 [Text continues on p. 170]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets. 493 494

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. 481 At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields [487] in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add 493 perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just be- 494 ginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only 492 adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related 000

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

521 is not only because one of the listeners was the
888 anthropologist 'looking for old custom'. For, where
561 descent is a critical nexus of habitual relationship and old age the most honoured state, the past cannot fail to be the focus of interest.

Thus the older men and women are very partial to the things of their own age. And the young people are, in part, swept along with them. The 'old times' are a very ready topic among the country-people. Many a time an old person will be got to tell of them; he or she takes little warming to the task. They were the hard times, even bad times, of famine and death but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. There were few tools, no draft-animals, no shoes, none of the amenities of present existence. The listeners murmur phrases of commiseration and shake their heads in pity. "Weren't they the bad old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" they ask one another. But there is a tinge of pride in their voices, in the manner of tellers and listeners alike.

For remembered necessities, in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale, are now feats of endurance to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young
● [481] man today to walk from Corofin to Ballinasloe, walk in his bare feet the forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but the tales of it that best survive are those that relate it to the life of the present and express in the fairy-belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillenasearrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a common end. They provide the countryman with a world-view in which his regard for things and scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

known to be of mediæval descent. The method of manufacture is shown in Fig. 50, and the tying down of a hay pike in Fig. 51. Sugán was sometimes employed instead of wattle 283

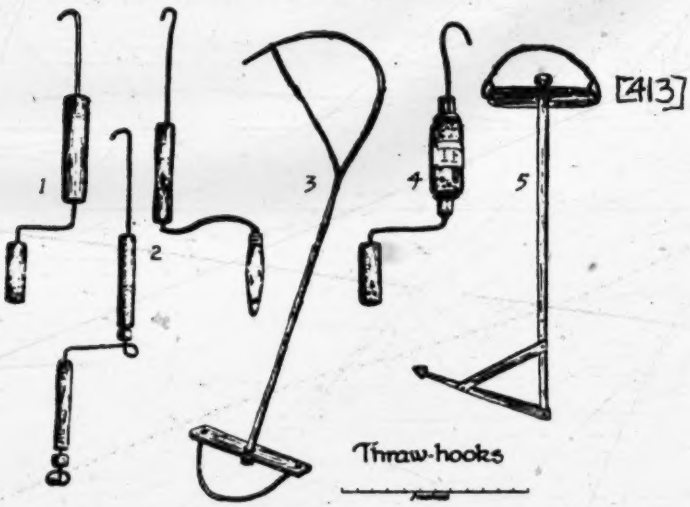


Fig. 78.

Sugán twisters 1. Co. Antrim. 2. Both Donegal. 3. Lecale, Down. 4. Leitrim. 5. Dingle, Kerry.

in the chimney canopies. It was used for the seats of chairs and for the clothes-line which stretched across the kitchen. A short length was sometimes worn as a girdle around a child's dress. From it were made tethering ropes, spancels and langles, traces and tail-ropes; and on the Donegal seaboard I have heard of cabbages being tethered "against the wind" by three hay-ropes! It is on record that the men of Mayo would descend the seacliffs suspended by a straw-rope.

A length of sugán is also the foundation course of many more complex objects of straw such as mats, mattresses, screens, beehives, nesting boxes, stools, arm-chairs, baskets and hampers. I illustrate (Fig. 79) one of the conical hen-nests which are hung on pegs in the kitchen: large

Fig. 79.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuttings a long-handled graip is sometimes used, and the 314
smiths turned out special two-pronged pitching forks for the 413
purpose (Fig. 66). If the peat is soft a long-handled shovel is employed instead. A barrow-load varies in capacity, for instance it is 10 turves in parts of Antrim and 14 in Armagh. [493]
The difference depends on the dimensions of the turves as well as the size of the barrow and the state of the bog surface: turves range from about 22 inches by 4 by 5 to 10 inches by 4 by 3, but they shrink considerably as they dry.

The turf barrow is a low solid-wheeled archaic-looking 314
vehicle (Fig. 90) the details of its construction showing as 493
many adaptations to local conditions and traditions as the slane itself. It is a compromise between two opposing needs—a large wheel for ease of pushing over the rough bog surface and a low chassis to facilitate loading and emptying, for the barrow is merely tilted on one side by the spreader, the turves slipping off and standing on end in serried rows to dry. The barrow must be as light as possible: hence no iron is used in its construction except for the axle-ends, and, perhaps, a light tyre for the solid wheel or "trundle." In soft bogs the trundle must be wide—as much as 5 inches—but three inches is more usual. Its diameter ranges from 12 to 18 inches. The legs of the barrow are always short and may be mere lugs, or they may be absent, in which case there must be some arrangement for enabling the handles to be gripped: they are either perforated or upturned (Fig. 90). An interesting variant which I have noticed around Athenry has the legs bent [492]
backwards in a curve to act as slides or runners. A curious adaptation to soft bogland is recorded a century ago from Co. [481]
Mayo, where both horses and men were "shod with boards" when working in the moss. Box-barrows are something used to transport dried turf, or a "kish" may be placed on the flat barrow. In Armagh "carrying baskets" are employed (Fig. 91).

Little can be said here about the methods adopted to dry 314
the turf: the shapes and names of the various piles into which

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

developed from wicker constructions which, like the stone weirs, were once built by shore dwellers for their own needs. 226
But weirs were not the only structure built in tidal waters. The inquiring visitor will observe along many stretches of coast straight lines of stones running out to sea which are the 504
remains of little piers alongside which small boats could lie. Back of them beyond the reach of the tide there may be the ruins of a boat shelter which might never have been more than a rectangular pen of stone walls or earth banks. Such pens are still used to protect the curraghs of the west coast from the wind which is their worst enemy.[1] The vessels are in addition weighted down with stones (Fig. 75), and to this end the gunwales often project at the rear of the curraghs to give purchase for the boulders (Fig. 78).

On the lonely and now abandoned island of St. Kilda the 223
portion which a woman took to her husband on marriage is said to have been 'a pound of horsehair to make a gin to catch fowls'.[2] [583]
Martin Martin in his account of the island also tells us that the 200 inhabitants yearly killed and preserved above 20,000 birds, and in addition prodigious numbers of seabirds' eggs were consumed. The killing of seabirds and the taking of eggs for export to England during the worst period of food shortage in the second world war brought about a temporary revival of old skills on many parts of the Irish coast. Down to times still remembered fowling was a seasonal activity on most of the islands where seabirds assemble to nest. Birds of the auk family were caught in horsehair 'dulls' (snares) pegged to the ground. For other birds such as rock pigeons the snares were baited. July was the busy month, and the birds not eaten in this 'hungry month' were salted down for the winter. On Rathlin Island the cliffs and sea-slopes were apportioned in strips and demarcated by spikes driven into the rocks. It is remembered that single men in search of eggs would let themselves alone [481] down ropes attached to iron pins in the cliff edge. Traditions of other ways of catching the birds have been lost but one may be fairly sure that the various methods described by Martin Martin and more recently by Kenneth Williamson for the

[1] S. Piggott, *Antiquity*, 28 (1954), 19–24.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 317.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

223 Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

225 Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes in-
[481] volving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed. The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with
[292] charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The
[251] meat was salted down.

226 Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now neglected and even despised, though there are commercial
[228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he
[481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular,
[227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned
[578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

222 674 If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [Text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 99.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

227 confined to Co. Westmeath) is that the eel was undamaged and its skin could therefore be utilized. Apart from their use as [237] thongs and flail-hangings eel-skins were worn as charms against rheumatic pains. Eel fat, too, is esteemed as a cure for rheuma- [751] tism. The third type of eel-spear is quite different in form and [757] methods of use. It is confined to Wexford Harbour and would appear to be a relic of Scandinavian influence in that half-foreign south-eastern corner of Ireland comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth. It consists of two splayed prongs between which is ingeniously mounted a single barbed prong on to which 227 the eel is guided by the outer members (Fig. 79). When the 226 tide covers the mudflats the fisherman lies in a punt with his head over the prow, and with a spear in each hand propels the boat until he spies an eel in the mud, when his punting pole becomes a weapon. At low tide the eel fishers wear yard-long [481] 'scooches' or mud-shoes, wooden boards turned up at the front like miniature skis. We note in passing that boards were formerly worn by both men and horses in working on soft bogs in Co. Mayo.[1]

The salmon spear or leister, being illegal, is normally a light three-pronged instrument, but large specimens weighing up to eight pounds and made after the fashion of the Westmeath eel-spears are found on the River Suir (Fig. 80). The fish were attracted at night by 'burning the river' with resinous splits of bog-fir or lumps of peat soaked in oil.

Riverine weirs of many kinds have been the privilege of religious houses and landed properties through the ages, and many examples specially designed for the capture of migratory fish, salmon and eels are maintained. There are traditions of temporary weirs of heather stems weighted down with stones, into which trout were driven to be extracted when the bundles of heather were pitched on to the bank. Gerard Boate describes the weirs in his day as consisting of 'big stones set close together from the one side of the river to the other, leaving only one hole . . . before which hole a basket being laid, they take 227 therein a great quantity of fish'.[2] 'Fish baskets' and 'weels' are referred to in many ancient fishing grants, but I have not

[1] J. McParlan, *Mayo*, 94.
[2] Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 70.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

888 He or she takes little warming to the task. They were hard
521 times, even "bad times" of famine and death, but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. Even the mention of the lack of tools, draft animals, shoes, and many other amenities of present existence evokes comments such as "Weren't they the poor old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" Phrases of murmured commiseration and headshaking regret or pity are not without a tinge of pride for listener and teller alike. Remembered necessities in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale are now feats of endurance and strength to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young man today to walk from Corrofin to Ballinasloe in his bare feet forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who could shoulder a [482] creel turf and carry it a hundred yards out through the bog mud to the famine road before the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunnagore?

888 Even the meager diet of the old times is remembered with
521 a certain nostalgic pride. An old man, called upon one
262 winter evening, began his remarks upon the theme characteristically:

> In the old days people used to have a maize gruel "stirabout" for breakfast, but you couldn't get any of the young people to eat it now. There was a potato bread, *stampai*, and it was very good too. The people in the old times had great teeth and, when they died, they would have every one left in their heads. Their teeth would be stronger than a horse's. When the people ate potatoes and bread three times a day, they were healthier and lived to a ripe old age. Now with all the better food, they are not as well.

888 Such a belief rises very frequently to the lips of the old
521 people who remember the days of the past either in their own or their parents' experience. The implication is clear. The young people, the new generation, are not so strong

6: Ó Súilleabháin B-4, 5 (no date) 1956 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Two Death Customs in Ireland

SEÁN Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN

DUBLIN

121 In this article, I wish to draw the attention of students of the cult of the dead to two customs associated with it which have been observed for many generations in the southwest of Ireland. So far as I know, neither of them has hitherto been described in detail in any scientific journal or other work.

1. Funeral Boundaries

764 The importance of *an teampoll dúchais*, the traditional family burial-ground, is shown by the many customs and superstitions relating to it which are still fairly common in rural communities in Ireland. How often have we heard or read of a strange funeral seen at night, which was composed of deceased relatives of some recently dead person who had died and had been buried far from his family graveyard; the dead concourse was taking the body home (often even across the Atlantic) to find rest with his deceased kith and kin? Or, of a decapitated or maimed corpse which had been buried in the proper graveyard; the missing head or other member, however, was carefully carried by a "dead funeral" at night and laid in the same grave as the body? Thus, every effort within reason was made to bury the dead in the family burial-ground. This might have been due either to (a) respect for the dead, (b) fear of evil results, if the duty was ignored, (c) the wish of the dying person to be buried with his ancestors, or (d) any of a long list of other reasons which might be adduced. Even within a far-flung parish, the distance which the corpse had to be carried might amount to twenty miles. The distance would naturally be greater when the person had died in a remote district or county. Thus, funerals often took days in such cases, and halts had to be made overnight. The hardship endured by the coffin-bearers, who in olden times [482] almost always carried the coffin on their shoulders, may well be imagined.

In Ireland, as in most European countries, in the days when coffins were borne on men's shoulders, and even still in certain parts of Ireland, certain resting-places for funerals were traditionally appointed along the route. These were often at crossroads, at ancient market-crosses, which may have been associated with boundaries, or at boundaries between lands, parishes, or counties. In olden times, the corpse was not allowed to touch the earth at these resting-places; the toes of the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Where is the woman today who
could shoulder a creel of turf a hundred yards out 521 561 888
through the bog mud to the famine road, before
the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunna- [482]
gore?

Often the expressions take a different turn. They 517
become that universal complaint — the younger 521
generation. "Young people aren't what they used 561
to be," said one old farmer in the course of a 888
general discussion of the golden age that was his youth. "They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else to a dance, and if they happen to win a turkey they will nearly shake the house down [in their triumph]. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. Now you can't get them to do anything unless you pay them."

Here he paused for an illustration, chose one 561
from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on. 521 888
"Wasn't old Keane out every night with his cattle
and he putting them in small fields and late in the [291]
night? Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept at it till he had cattle all the way up by Ballyvaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no controlling them."

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. The past, for the older members of the community,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 can be shown or assumed to be additions. A wicker windbreak of birch or hazel (called the wassock or corrag in Co. Antrim), was occasionally erected at one side of the door. Here, too, there was often a stone bench or "stile." The chimney generally betrays its modernity by being built of brick, but wooden or wattled chimneys, neatly thatched and bound with sugán, are not uncommon, and there are a few chimneyless dwellings still inhabited in the west. Old houses frequently have no more than a few inches of chimney projecting, and it is recorded that when efficient chimneys were built by improving landlords they were promptly covered with a sod, "because the smoke keeps them warm." It remains to be said that in former days house-building, like so many tasks demanding much labour, was a communal affair. "The custom on such occasions"—the scene is Donegal a century ago—"is for the person who has the work to be done to hire a fiddler, upon [476] which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs [482] to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing [535] and working while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day."

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

square, crane and "Sligo." The steel edge of its narrow blade is notched on the underside, the notches radiating so that they all cut at an angle of about 70 degrees. 243 412

It is much more difficult to use than the smooth hook; the straw must be held firmly in one hand and sawn through with a pulling motion. Some writers have indulged in idealized pictures of hand reaping which bear little relation to the cruel toil and "terrible strain" more faithfully and unforgettably portrayed by Richard Jefferies in his "Field and Hedgerow." There was no respite for reapers or binders: "Down with the head and up with the tail" was the descriptive phrase which I was given in the Glens of Antrim. In some parts, however, the reaper knelt down on one knee. Women and children generally did the binding. The corn was cut before it was fully ripe, "between green and gold," and as an illustration of the interdependence of the old ways it is worth noting that such straw was much more suitable for good thatching than the dry straw from the reaper. The old-fashioned scythe (see Frontispiece), not yet entirely displaced by the new style, was straight-handled. A short bladed tool, known in Co. Antrim as the "bramble scythe," is used for cutting coarse vegetation or mowing hay around bushes.

Corn stooks vary greatly in the number of sheaves they contain and in the methods of construction. They are often tied at the top with a straw band, and cap-sheaves are frequently seen. In wet districts the sheaves are later built into small round stacks, "barts" or "huts," until the time comes to carry them home. On small farms this is still done on the back, using a burden rope (Chapter 14), but the rick-lifter is also employed. Or the sheaves are piled high on ponies so that they resemble walking stacks. At harvest time two-ply twists of straw are worn in the button-hole (Fig. 114): they are part of the ceremonial of harvest time. The custom is general in north-eastern Ireland but I am not aware of it from other parts: it may be a feature of the Plantation. More widespread and fundamental are the practices, now mere 243 [482]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XII.

CARTS AND ROADS.

498 It has been claimed that the humble vehicles of certain regions of survival such as the Glens of Antrim represent an evolutionary sequence, the assumption being that the sledge or "slipe" was developed locally into the slide-car and the latter into the solid-wheeled car until the stage of the spoke-wheeled Scotch cart was reached. This argument ignores the wide distribution of similar means of transport in countries overseas, and the extent to which simple ideas are diffused from a common centre. It would be strange indeed if that centre were to be located on the extreme periphery of Europe when parallel forms of transport are found as far away as China. Nevertheless the Irish vehicles are of great ethnological interest, and they have survived because they are adapted to the soft turf bogs or the steep mountain sides. In more recent times the two-wheeled cart has blossomed into several specialized means of transport such as the side-car, the long-car, and the hay-cart or rick-lifter (Chapter 11). The latter is also found in Lowland Scotland and may possibly have originated there.

482 But something must first be said about the still humbler transport agents such as the burden-rope, the back-creel and side-creel, the use of which has greatly declined, however, during the last half century. The two former show to what extent men and women, but especially women, act as beasts of

[p. 105]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

482 burden in Ireland as among other peasantries. The burden-
rope, constructed of rushes, horse-hair or grass-rope (Chap.
[283] 14 and Figs. 79 & 80), was employed for carrying surprisingly large loads of hay, corn or bushes—" as much as a pony could draw," I have been told—while the burden-creel, slung over one shoulder or worn like a rucksack by women who would thus have their hands free for knitting, was mainly used for carrying turf. Nor should we omit the wheel-barrow, both
[493] box and turf types (Chapter 15 and Fig. 90), the hand barrow (for loads of stones and also for fish and nets) and the two-man turf creel (Fig. 91).

493 Side-creels are the panniers attached to an ass or small
492 pony. Most of them are constructed with a hinged bottom so that the contents of turf, wrack, gravel or manure are automatically unloaded (Fig. 58). The sides are broken by ornamental " windows " which give a handhold for lifting and help to lighten the creel. Comparative study would reveal several regional and specialized forms of creel, and I have observed different methods of attachment even in neighbouring valleys. They are generally slung on wooden pegs driven into a roof-shaped crutch or straddle (Fig. 56) which rests on two straw mats. In the example figured from Tuam (Fig. 57) the straw mats are pegged together, and the straddle is strengthened by two osier ties, to one of which the tail-sugán is fastened. When hay or corn is being carried the creels may be dispensed with and the " bottles " or sheaves hung on the straddle pegs with an osier ring. Alternatively the creels are tied together with ropes which pass over a thick straw pad laid along the animal's spine, and the straddle is not used. The creels are D-shaped and can be made of openwork, for turf or wrack, or of closely-woven sides for manure. We shall have something more to say about their construction in Chapter 14.

Fig. 56.

493 Among horse-drawn vehicles the sledge or slipe is very generally employed for transporting stones, manure, or turf and also for conveying the plough and harrows from one field to another. I illustrate the common slipe of Co. Antrim

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of " calf basket " (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a " cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

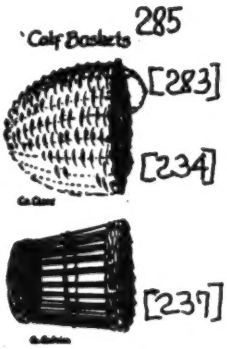


Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or " floats " are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

285
415
[482]
[184]
[482]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Line Baskets

Fig. 76. Length *c.* 3 ft.

into a narrow mouth, a feature which is found in all Aran basket-work. Miss Gahan of the Irish Homespun Society regards it as an adaptation to the conditions on the islands, for the contents might easily be spilled owing to the number of loose stone walls which have to be crossed on a journey to the fields. Many of the Aran carrying baskets (" kishauns ") are constructed of coiled straw rope bound together with split bramble (Fig. 77). They no doubt help to keep warm the food carried in them, such as boiled potatoes, boiled in their skins needless to say, in the Irish fashion. Such " lipe-work " was once common in Wales, where seed-baskets, yarn-holders, hassocks and meal containers were made in this way, but in Ireland the only coiled work I have seen outside the Aran Islands is the bee-skep of rye straw, tied with bramble. The illustration shows the small bone pin or awl used by the islanders in threading the brambles. Similar pins, which doubtless had many uses, are frequently found in archæological excavations, particularly on sites where a Mesolithic heritage may be suspected.

[282]

[231]

Coiled Straw Basket

Fig. 77.
Note bone pin.

This brings us to the very large topic of the uses made of straw. There is no need to refer to the value of oat straw as fodder or as thatch, though it does not last long as roofing material, and either wheat or rye straw is preferred. A humble example of the use of thatch is shown in the beehive (Fig. 77*a*) Rope (sugán) made of straw or hay still finds many uses, especially for tying down thatch on houses and stacks. It is twisted on a " thraw-hook " of ash or hazel, with a sally hand-grip, but the old styles are declining with the spread of a simple " twister " of strong bent wire (Fig. 78). This type is found throughout the British Isles in many forms some of which are

285

[231]

283

Fig. 77*a*.
Height 4 ft.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

3/4 the fuel is built differ from one area to another, and I give as a sample the list prepared by Mr. J. M. Mogey for Co. Antrim. After about a fortnight the spread turf is stacked in small "foots" formed by leaning a number of turves together, and later in "turn-foots" and "castles" which are built up in storeys. These are then combined into larger "rickles" or

[482]
[285]

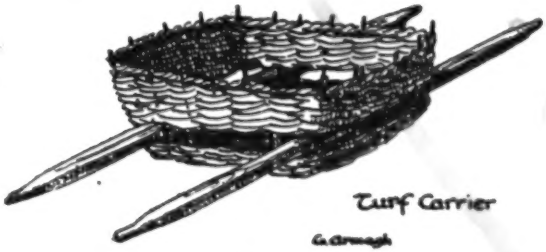


Fig. 91.

"clamps" and finally stored in "hand-stacks" erected alongside a bog road or in larger stacks built at the homestead (Fig. 93).

[413]

Fig. 92.

In many parts of the country the low-lying bogs are too wet to cut with the spade, and other methods of "winning" the turf must be adopted. Making "hand-turf" by moulding or "kneading" the black mud into balls is the simplest solution of the problem, but systematic methods have been evolved in some districts, and we give an account of the process as observed in Co. Meath, where mud turf is highly prized and considered to burn better and last longer than cut peat. It is dug in pits, broken down with short-handled shovels and graips and well mixed with water until the slushy mixture is ready to shovel into a box barrow, that is an ordinary manure barrow or a turf barrow fitted with sides, It is wheeled on to a smooth place and spread in a layer some 9 inches thick. When dry enough to take a man's weight the layer is notched in deep parallel grooves made with the edges of the hands, with cross grooves at intervals. The worker

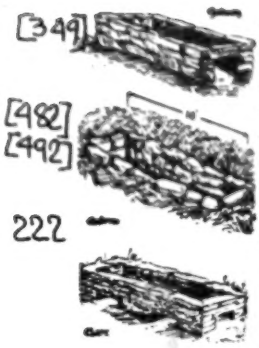
9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 100.
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.



Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen 582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully 844 watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if 763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their 764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great [762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to [178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin [482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women 764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own 533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, 415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of [491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a sideways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies [243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

For water transport there are a good many boats of various 501 descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

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[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

time large-scale hay-making developed it had to fit into a fixed rota of farm work which kept men busy in late July and August at flax-pulling and turf-carrying, so that the cocked hay had to wait. Today the baling machine is speeding up the process, but the bales, whether from the need of seasoning or from force of habit, are left piled in angular cocks scattered over the hayfield. 246

Carried at last to the haggard on rick-shifters or slipes— [493] formerly on slide-cars or the backs of men and ponies—the hay [492] is built into small circular stacks (pikes). As a protection against [482] wind and rain they are thatched with rushes forthwith and roped (Fig. 52). Since the stacks are thatched before they have had time to settle, the pegged or scolloped thatch found in England is not used. Not only do ropes hold the thatch more securely but it is a simple matter to tighten them as the stack sinks. In the simplest form of roping, hanging stones are attached to the rope ends so that the adjustment is automatic. But where the roof of the stack is not rounded but conical a straw-rope is wrapped round in a spiral which can later be tightened by vertical ropes pegged into the lower part of the stack. One sees this spiral roping also in parts of western Britain. Several other patterns of roping are found, some making a complete network; and the shape of the stack also shows many regional variations (Fig. 52). The size and shape depend not only on local custom but to some extent on the weather and the condition of the hay. Small rounded stacks are most usual, for they are wind-resistant. They are characteristic too of much of Highland Britain from Caithness to Cornwall. 246 284

The scythe has not entirely given way to the mowing machine on small farms in whose tiny fields it would anyhow be difficult to turn a machine. The Irish scythesmen, though not so well known as the spalpeens or reapers, had their brief day in the English harvest-fields, and those who remember working 'across the water' in the nineteenth century tell of great feats of piece-work. I was told of one heroic figure who could scythe seven acres in the day, 'and four lifters wouldn't lift after him'. Henry Stephens, in 1855, reckoned that the English labourer would scythe four acres of oats or barley in a ten-hour working day.[1] 246

[1]Quoted in E. C. Curwen, *Plough and Pasture* (1946), 98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

covered from early Celtic sites in Ireland suggest that the horse 175
was held in high regard and was perhaps reserved for pageants, 493
combats and ceremonies. The detailed evidence in the legendary [492]
histories of ancient Ireland for the existence of roads, however,
is clear. The fact that the Celtic roads are rarely traceable today
is understandable in view of the physical conditions of the [491]
country, especially the prevalence of obliterating bogs. Moreover the road system must have decayed with the decline of Celtic culture. In any case it is evident that the use of the chariot was confined to the highest castes, and that its humble relation the block-wheeled car was fated to outlast it. The finely-spoked wheeled vehicles of the Celtic invaders were as much out of place in Ireland as the great wagons which later overlords introduced from England. The block-wheeled car, if not previously known in Ireland, may have been the native response to the impressive magic of the Celtic wheel, or it may have reached this country with Celtic camp-followers. We shall see that it could have been developed from the slide-car which almost certainly preceded it in Europe. The term 'wheel-car' as used in Ireland refers to the block-wheeled car and is clearly meant to distinguish it from the wheel-less slide-car. The spoke-wheeled cart is a newcomer in most parts. Nevertheless there is evidence that a light spoke wheeled cart continued to be used in early Christian times: an example drawn chariot-wise by two horses is figured on the eighth century Ahenny Cross in Co. Tipperary. It seems that such light carts were used for personal transport, for example St. Sampson took one with him, according to an eleventh-century account of his travels, to carry his books across Cornwall on his way from Ireland to Brittany.[1] And the spoke-wheeled cart must have been known in the planted areas since the Middle Ages, so that it is very probable that in parts of the country the cart has had a continuous life since early Celtic times.

But we should first examine certain archaic methods of 492
transport which depend on the carrying power of beasts and [482]
men, or rather women, for in simple societies the bearers of children are also the burden-bearers. The romance of rural

[1]O. G. S. Crawford, 'Western Seaways' in *Custom is King* (1936), 196.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 tied bundles on to the straddle-pins, and both sheaves and
482 firewood are occasionally carried on light V-shaped wooden frames. A similar carrying frame is known from Spain. There are several varieties of straddle, and a pattern found on Clare Island, in which one side engages in a hole bored through the
[171] other side, finds a parallel in the Shetland Islands and among the Lapps of north Norway: it could be of Norwegian origin. For long hauls the pack animal was undoubtedly the chief means of transport until the coming of the spoke-wheeled cart. For short distances the burden rope (Chapter XV) or the carrying creel was more convenient and it is still not uncommon to see the back-creel, the carrying basket or the hand barrow used for transporting turf or wrack over rough, soft or slippery ground (Fig. 57).

493 In some parts of the country, especially along the east coast,
483 a form of sled fitted with a box body is kept for the transport

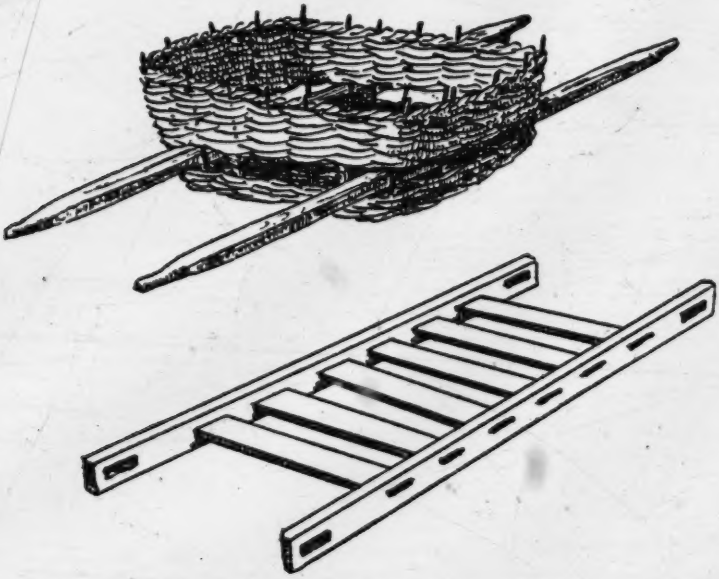

FIG. 57. Turf-basket, Co. Armagh and hand barrow, for carrying nets, Co. Antrim.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

283 of these rope-making materials had other uses as well, not forgetting their functions in ceremony and magic as represented by Briget's crosses, harvest knots, the blaeberry baskets of Lammas and the rush ladders of Hallowe'en. Better known, [373] though no longer made, are the rushlights whose feeble glow, in the words of Gilbert White, made 'darkness visible'.

[284]
[285]

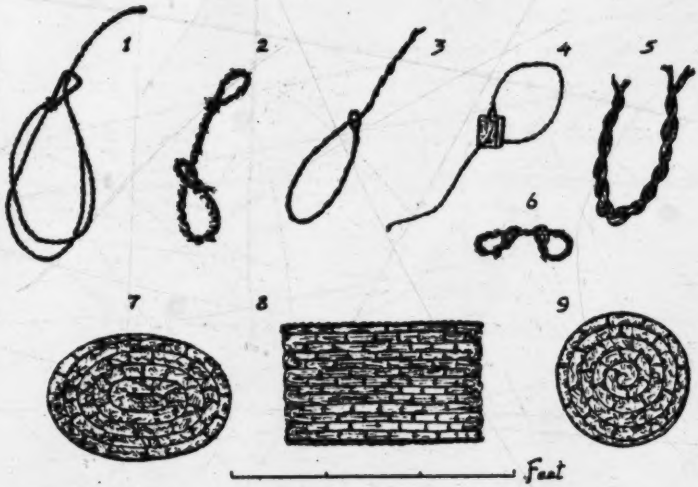

FIG. 68. Ropes and mats. (1) Rush burden rope, Co. Donegal. (2) Tie of cow-hair, Co. Kerry. (3) Willow bark burden rope, Co. Roscommon. (4) Grass burden rope, Aran Islands. (5) Tie of fir-rope, from roof, Co. Down. (6) Sheep's langle of oat straw, Co. Down. (7) Plaited mat of marram grass, Co. Wexford. (8) Coiled mat of rye straw, Aran Islands. (9) Coiled mat of oat straw, Co. Donegal.

283 Examples of ropes and mats of various kinds are shown in Fig. 68. The burden ropes, carefully made in two or three ply, ●482 enabled quite heavy loads to be carried from inaccessible places. A correspondent in Co. Cork has sent me the following account of one method of lifting the burden, in this case of furze (gorse, whin) which was harvested both for bedding and for fodder. 'Passing his rope round the bundle, the carrier would throw himself on his back on top of the bundle, kick his heels in the air and jerk himself to the vertical, walking away completely concealed beneath a moving mountain of furze.' Where tracks

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were poor and there were no wheeled vehicles, or where there 283
was no horse for a slide-car, the burden rope was all that was [482]
required to carry home the harvest; distances were mercifully
small on the tiny farms. Rushes for rope making were cut when
fully grown, beetled with a mell and broken by hand to rid
them of pith. They were then spread to dry and afterwards tied in
bundles ready to be fashioned into ropes when wintry weather
brought indoor leisure. Ropes made of cowhair as well as 283
horsehair, sometimes mixed with seasoned sedge (sprit) once 237
found many uses about the farm. Horsehair fishing lines and 223
snares for seabirds are described elsewhere, but we may refer
here to snares for small birds which in south Armagh, for
example, are laid on the grass in hard wintry weather over a
scattering of grain or breadcrumbs. Inside the frame of a pegged
string or a bent sally rod are tied a dozen or more snares made
of single or double horsehair. By this means blackbirds, thrushes,
sparrows, and finches are caught by the feet, nowadays for
sport but, no doubt, once as a welcome addition to the food
supply. Similar horsehair snares for catching small birds are
known from England and, further afield, from the Sudan. Reins
of horsehair are said to have been common quite recently in
Donegal, and I would hazard a guess that horsehair nets, such
as were made in Harris (Martin Martin tells us) for catching
seals, were formerly made there.

Mats and baskets of many kinds were fashioned from straw 285
and other materials such as marram grass. This tough grass is [314]
harvested in places all around the coast and put to many uses,
including thatching. It is cut below the surface of the sandy
dunes, and in Donegal I have seen a toothed sickle used for the
purpose. The techniques of constructing mats and baskets of
these materials are closely related and seem to fall into three
classes, sown plaits, built-up plaits and coiled work. Coiled
basketry is best represented in the once universal bee-skep, in
the seed-baskets of the south, the seats and armchairs of the
west, and in the food-carrying baskets of the Aran Islands
(Fig. 69). It is an interesting detail of their construction that a
bone pin is used to insert the ties, which are usually made of
split briar. The conical hens' nests hung on pegs on the kitchen
walls (Fig. 16) are also constructed in a coil technique, but

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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222 461 described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful [482] on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

226 Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland [492] and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed [241] lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable [517] gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters, [462] when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2]T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[4]A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 435
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring
groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend
less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them
more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men
of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school,
at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and
their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor 231
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls 286
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer 294
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the
other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines 178
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops 222
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially 482
when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the 561
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married 178
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about
being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer
hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in
America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers. 824 [437] [241]

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained. 222 222 423

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden. 222 [482] 241

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by 241 654 [177] [178] [184]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

241
231
291
333
• [482]

Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

241
654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[435] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce,
[833] under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[437] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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many of the stones are set vertically or diagonally.[1] Others of the same character, or equally massive earthen banks, may be observed to radiate from some of the raths or 'Danish forts' which we now know to have been farmsteads of the Dark Ages and, since they seem to have been single farms held in severalty, the enclosures which they presuppose are likely to be co-eval with the raths. Indeed Professor O'Riordain has claimed that the existing earthen field fences around the group of raths at Cush in Co. Limerick closely follow those of the late Bronze Age which were 'essentially similar' . . . 'the present-day field system is the direct descendant of the ancient one'.[2] 351 417 172

Much smaller and more irregular are the walls one sees associated with areas of megalithic settlement, though this may be because of their great age. Indeed one example recently discovered during the excavation of a megalithic tomb in Co. Down, which was older than the construction of the cairn and partly preserved by it, was built in coursed dry-stone work.[3] We have as yet little information to draw on but it seems likely that these oldest walls were mainly the result of the casual piling-up of stones cleared from little patches of cultivated ground. Some of the great walls associated with clachans and referred to above may well be built on the foundations of such lines of stones pitched around and between bedded boulders which could not be moved. Yet the size of some of the stones built into these ancient walls is astonishing. I have watched a loose-limbed farmer, who seemed to inherit the physical characters as well as the skills of the megalith builders, handle with superb ease great boulders which one would think it beyond human power to move. A stout timber or iron bar and a sturdy slipe (Chapter XIII) are the tools used. Alternatively boulders may be buried *in situ* if there is sufficient depth of soil, but until recently there was a reluctance, for superstitious reasons, to break up large stones. I have not come across the old miners' practice of cracking stones with fire,[4] and except near towns or quarries the splitting of field stones by means of wedges, 'plug 351 417 [483] [316]

[1] O. Davies, loc. cit., 62.

[2] S. P. O'Riordain, *P.R.I.A.*, 45 (1940), 83–181.

[3] A. E. P. Collins and D. M. Waterman, *Millin Bay, a late Neolithic Cairn in Co. Down*, H.M.S.O. (1955), 8.

[4] But A. Young (*Tour*, 2, 115) describes the process near Killarney in 1778.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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492 tied bundles on to the straddle-pins, and both sheaves and firewood are occasionally carried on light V-shaped wooden
482 frames. A similar carrying frame is known from Spain. There are several varieties of straddle, and a pattern found on Clare Island, in which one side engages in a hole bored through the
[171] other side, finds a parallel in the Shetland Islands and among the Lapps of north Norway: it could be of Norwegian origin. For long hauls the pack animal was undoubtedly the chief means of transport until the coming of the spoke-wheeled cart. For short distances the burden rope (Chapter XV) or the carrying creel was more convenient and it is still not uncommon to see the back-creel, the carrying basket or the hand barrow used for transporting turf or wrack over rough, soft or slippery ground (Fig. 57).

493 In some parts of the country, especially along the east coast,
483 a form of sled fitted with a box body is kept for the transport

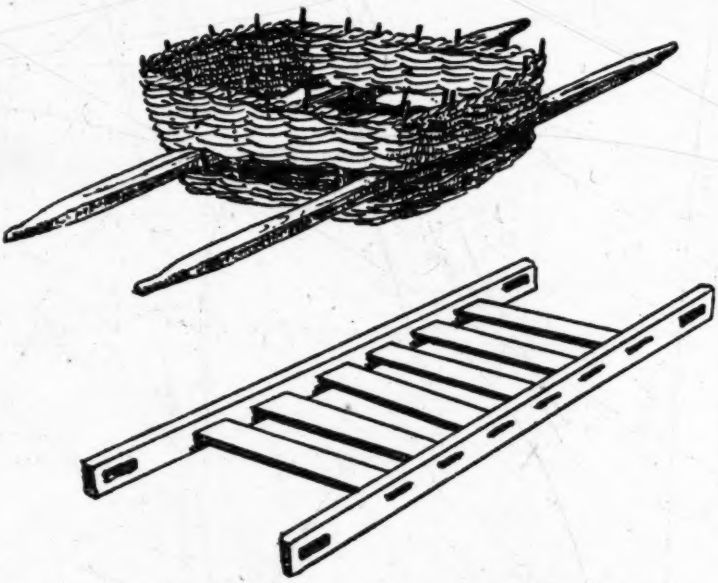

FIG. 57. Turf-basket, Co. Armagh and hand barrow, for carrying nets, Co. Antrim.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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493 in addition to its strength, is reputed to have special sliding qualities. A forked slipe can be dragged over rough, trackless,
483 boulder-strewn hillsides, where it will make and widen its own path as it goes. In such circumstances, given a favourable gradient, it can be man-hauled, and the persistent use of similar sledges for transporting large stones in other regions of megalithic culture such as the Dordogne—and indeed in Assam for surviving megalithic cults—hints that it comes down to us from very early times. The present distribution area of the forked
[171] sledge in Europe, from Scandinavia round to the western Mediterranean, can be correlated with many archaic culture-elements.[1] Its preparation calls for no tool more sophisticated than an axe—even a stone axe would suffice—and as I have watched huge stones being sliped from the fields I have easily imagined myself transported to a clearing in a long vanished Neolithic forest.

The standard flat slipe is a rectangular platform supported on two low parallel runners which may be shod with iron. It will be found on many farms and serves numerous purposes—for hauling stones, potatoes or turf, or for transporting the plough or the harrows from field to field (Fig. 58, 2, 3). There is, however, a simple, light slipe, made either of wood or of iron, which is kept specially for moving the wheel-less plough (Fig. 42). The wooden form finds exact parallels in Sweden and the east Baltic lands.

In the Antrim Glens, where topographic conditions and isolation have preserved an unusually full series of archaic vehicles, I have seen a light forked slipe loaded with sacks of peat being man-hauled, the forked end being lifted off the ground by a rope bearing on the puller's shoulder. This is in effect a slide-car, and although the Irish slide-car is always pulled by a pony, it may be noticed that the Swedish slide-car, used mainly for carrying hay, is often man-hauled. No doubt the forked form is the more primitive and there is some evidence to suggest that it was from a forked slide-car that the first European carts and wagons were evolved by the addition of

[1]E. E. Evans, 'Some Archaic Forms of Agricultural Transport in Ulster' in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), (1951), 108–23; J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, *Man*, 51 (1951), 3–5.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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wheels and a draught-pole. The body of the traditional ox-cart of Spain and many parts of India is suggestively triangular in shape. 493 [483]

The horse-drawn, wheel-less slide-car consists in its simplest form of two parallel poles, serving both as shafts and runners, fastened together by cross-pieces which form a carrying platform (Fig. 59). It was widely used down to the eighteenth century, but is now confined in distribution almost entirely to Ulster and in function mainly to the transport of turf from mountain bogs down steep tracks to the valley farms. For this purpose a large creel or kish is secured to the carrying platform, and it will take loads of potatoes or manure as required, but as a vehicle for general farm use the slide-car is now virtually extinct. That it has lingered so long in the mountainous corners of Ulster is perhaps due to the fact that the creel-carrying ass did not supplant it as it did in the milder south and west of Ireland (Pl. 8, 1).

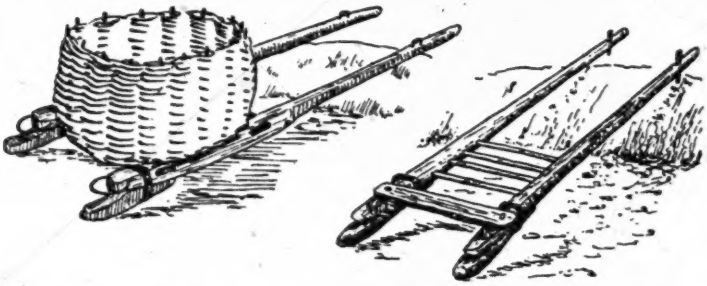

FIG. 59. Slide-cars, Cos. Tyrone and Antrim.

This primitive vehicle, which can be constructed entirely of wood—in treeless districts even bog-timber was utilized[1]—is of high antiquity and of great ethnographic interest. It has been contended that the one-horse wheel-car evolved from a slide-car to which a log roller had been fitted, and in view of the fact that the wheel-car has a revolving axle such an evolutionary sequence seems probable. Gösta Berg thinks that this evolution took place in the heart of Asia,[2] but there is the possibility that

[1]H. Dutton, *Clare* (1808), 65.
[2]Gösta Berg, *Sledges and Wheeled Vehicles* (1935), 140.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
602 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
167 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
484 of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the
533 peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

888 573 521 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps [592] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty. As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a [484 great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider 446] experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

573 521 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which allow all to take part.

573 521 589 O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and, though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone. Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road, breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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part of a new economics which brings distributing agencies 234
to the farmer's door. Consequently they do not fit this pic- 438
ture and are among the great forces of gradual change. They have made dairying the pursuit of the farm father, as it was not before. Like motor lorries, they represent the new geographic order that is gradually overcoming the old.

The goods that reach the farmer cover distances between 438
their ultimate distributing center and consumer in the farm 462
families in the same proportion as they are bound in with 484
the statuses and relationships in work and life of the familistically organized groups. The men go to the larger towns with or without their wives for the larger annual purchases of boots and cloth goods or furniture or tools and implements. The boys may go for the more ordinary purchases of flour and foodstuffs and feeds and so on, to be bought in their fathers' names, to the local centers and villages. The household needs from day to day are the women's province. Tallow, candles, oil, sugar, tea, are to be had either in the villages or in the crossroad centers. The only need the men may fill so close to home is the recurrent hunger for tobacco and drink.

If we turn this view of travel and distribution and personal relationship into generality, we see that the pattern is such that it fits those of community life we have described. In the masculine sphere of life the disposal of produce means masculine travel and masculine building of relationship with the outside world of greatest geographical range. Taking each item of masculine produce in the descending order of its importance to the farm families, the area out of which the product is brought to a center is progressively smaller. The same fact is true of the feminine produce, with the difference, of course, that the range is smaller to begin with. The area of widest contacts established by women and the areas drawn upon by women and the areas

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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438 drawn upon by centers of distribution of women's produce
462 are always much less in extent than those of men.
484 It is not enough to point out that the distance to be traveled and the size of the area which a center serves are in
438 direct proportion to the monetary value of the goods con-
484 cerned. This is the case. It is an old story among economists.
571 But like all generalities it does not fail to have many exceptions. The point of interest is not the monetary but the sociological aspect of the matter.

Areas of distributive service coincide roughly with areas of personal contact and habitual travel. They coincide also with areas of effective social relationship. Thus there is a direct correlation between the area over which a peasant moves and has social relations and the value of the product he raises, as the economist would point out. But the source of this correlation is not to be found in economic considerations alone. The economic matters are themselves the outcome of the patterning of activities between persons. They show us the interdependence of the internal organization of the peasant community and the relationships making that community's articulation with the outside world.

Nothing in the world prevents any small farmer from going to Dublin markets to sell his cattle, not even the price of the ticket, for he has that. But he goes only so rarely as to make the fact negligible. On the other hand, the big farmer, the cattleman, in County Clare habitually goes farther, buying and selling far beyond the confines of the local market areas, purchasing his household and family goods in the great urban centers, patronizing even a Dublin tailor sometimes. The difference in travel is a part once again of the difference by class and economy between large farmer and small. The small farmer's community is made up of the persons related to him who are also small farmers and the persons who connect these men with the outside world. This we saw in the discussion of occupations. The

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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market areas are the areas of effective, habitual relationship among farmers. They are definable only in terms of social relations made up of the acts of specific local persons. Such relations differ in duration and the frequency of the events making them up. Change such relations and geography is changed. For a human setting geography is merely the locus of relationship. The system of distribution that orders space in rural Ireland functions to do so within a system of social relations, which we have called familism.

It is not surprising that the relationships existing between the small farmers and their local distributing agencies go farther by far than economic acts of barter, purchase, and sale. The country crossroad shopkeepers, especially, win very special status in rural communities out of these relationships. In Ireland and in Clare shopkeeping is predominantly an urban and small-town trade. Yet shops are numerous and important in the country districts, and a word must be said of them.

In typical western rural communities the smallest and poorest of the crossroad shops, serving the minutest areas, are ordinary cottages or farmhouses. The slightest alteration has sufficed to turn one of the rooms into an emporium where makeshift till, counter, and shelves carry little more than tobacco, matches, oil, and a few sweets and small sundries.

Such a shop is usually run by a woman, who subsists upon it and a plot of land or garden. She is often a widow, or the wife of a local tradesman. In many cases the little shop is the local post office as well, and a salary from the state contributes to the owner's upkeep. Such a shop is sometimes, too, a local gathering place for the boys, in the way the local smithy once was such a gathering place. The boys get their fags here. It is encumbent upon the woman who keeps the shop to make them presents at Christmas time, in recognition of their custom. Everyone agrees that the woman

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation. 437 443 555

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers. 443 868

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance. 521 443

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities. 443 484 574 602

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the 443 484

443 morning. To dress, snatch a cup of tea, and bless himself
484 takes only a moment. Usually he has arranged for companionship, and he and his neighbors drive their beasts along the roads together. Company makes the night less lonely and the handling of the animals easier. Driving them is a skilled task against the dangers of the road, both natural and eerie. The men hope to reach the site of the fair before daybreak. They want to arrive in time to find a "good pitch," as they call it. They want to take their stand in the drawn-up lines of men and beasts where buyers are most likely to notice them. His pitch taken, each man stands over his beasts, ready for the inspection of buyers, careful that his beasts do not wander off or get mixed up with the others.

443 As dawn breaks, the buyers arrive. They are nearly always
438 cattle dealers and big farmers. Only occasionally are they local men. One can recognize them as they hurry about,
[291] businesslike, wearing trench coat, bowler, and leggings. The costume is practically a uniform with them, quite different from the drab coats and boots of the countrymen. They carry chalk or scissors and pencils and a notebook to mark the beasts of their choice and record their purchases.

In the good days of high prices, as during the World War, the buyers arrive even before dawn and buy by lantern light. All the good beasts of the fair may be gone by the time the sun comes up. On occasions of little demand, however, the buyers have time to look about carefully and make the exhaustive tests of quality that long experience has convinced them are the secret of commercial success.

443 The procedure of choice, bargaining, and sale is as un-
437 changing a ritual as any church provides. The buyer — dealer or farmer — strolls unconcernedly along the lines of farmers and their beasts. Here and there he greets an acquaintance. But he is appraising the animals all the while. Rigid custom forbids his breaking in on a bargain already

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
or—in comparatively few instances—
167 by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[8] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[8] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

443 creameries or to dealers brings useful
489 income. The difficulty lies in transport, especially during the winter when the isolation is most acutely felt.

Fourth, remote and isolated as their
484 island may be, some of its people have seen much of the world. It is unlikely that many of the young people will remain here in the future; on the other hand, some former emigrants have come back to rest with thankfulness after their labors elsewhere. As one of them said, "America is a good place for the young, but this is a good place when you're old."

000 To summarize, Inishbofin now is neither a tragic island nor a romantic enclave of ancient ways. It is an area in which the work begun by the Congested Districts Board has borne fruit, whose people live reasonably well by crofting standards thanks to the help of emigrants and of the state. So long as the fuel holds out, there seems to be no reason why this island should not remain inhabited; but the problems of so curious a population age structure (p. 208) need investigation by a sociologist, and the cost of maintaining this community to the state and its relatives could well form a subject for an economist. For this island is not, and presumably cannot be, self-supporting under modern conditions.

[p. 209(B)]

354 washed jambs of a stone chimney (Fig. 19) the simple wrought-iron crane has the simple beauty of fitness to purpose which most hand-made things possess. The smith rarely attempted the decorative scrolls which were more suited to light objects such as oatcake toasters. From the cranes must hang the mighty iron pots, some with a capacity of 25 gallons, to hold [406] food for man and beast. One hears of examples which were literally 'cranes', fitted with a windlass and chain to lift pots on and off the fire. Such capacious vessels could not have come into use had the fire not been at floor level.

The adjustable pot-hanger which hooks on to the arm of the crane is a simple but effective device for adjusting the height of the hanging pot (Fig. 20). Like so many of the culture-elements we are describing in this book, it apparently belongs to the Atlantic fringes of Europe. While it could be a medieval or later introduction to Ireland, research may show that it is a Celtic trait (fire-irons are a ritual feature of early Celtic cultures) which has found its last refuge in the open hearths of the west. The crane and other fire-irons and the very soot that [372] clings to them have been regarded with superstitious reverence by virtue of their association with fire. Soot carried in the pocket, [484] for example, gave protection on a journey. More ancient in origin than the crane is the hanging chain suspended from a crook-stick and terminating in a movable pot-hook (crook). From existing examples one could work out a plausible evolutionary sequence of hangings from the roof-suspension which can still be seen in the black-houses of the Hebrides. The sequence begins with a wooden peg stuck high in the back wall of the fire, giving way to a transverse bar set parallel to the wall in the smoke canopy, which might in turn become the arm of the crane. These crook-sticks are said to have been made of holly. The long chain of the first example certainly gives more 'play' than the short suspension from a chimney bar, but the peg is more inaccessible and this supports the contention that it is a survival of the long hanging from the roof-timbers over a chimneyless central hearth.

Pots and pans and other hearth-gear we shall discuss in the next chapter, but here we should notice some further architectural fittings of the partitioned fireside. On one side of the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes
582 from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
[586] articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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361 Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along
491 it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear
[311] witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously
cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives
rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward
into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round
the lake.

311 The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with
limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the
crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

361 Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the
621 lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are
471 scattered through the fields and across the lake. These
households and a few more a little further off make up the
community. These are small farms of the kind we met in
Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has
fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the
village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard
gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement
is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and
behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to
these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for
them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles
off.

621 Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated
476 bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all re-
653 lated one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the
491 usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds
itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the
borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the
towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who
break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the
621 village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder.
487 Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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621 487 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

887 573 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village, is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

> The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

888 542 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

888 573 521 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction. 491 [731] 361 491 [487]

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics. 491 653

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler. 493 494

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets. 493 494

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. 481 At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields [487] in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add 493 perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just be- 494 ginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only 492 adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related 000

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

hills, whose rocks were scraped into the smooth rounded 133
forms known as "roches moutonnées," or splintered, in steep rock faces above the ice, into the walls of mountain corries. Widely scattered over the plain and through the marginal valleys from Limerick to Carlow and from Cavan to Antrim are the winding ridges of sand and gravel called eskers. They mark the stages in the retreat of the ice-sheet as it melted away and left its rock rubbish to be sorted out by water into great curving dumps. To-day these "green hills," as they are often called, rise in surprising freshness of contour and colour from the level plain. They are often followed by [487] ●
winding tracks which thus avoid the damp plain. Fig. 2.

Elsewhere the ice left behind a solid residue of clay and boulders, often to a depth of many feet, generally levelled by flooding waters from the ice-edge but sometimes piled into shapely steep-sided hills elongated in the direction in which the ice moved. These drumlins, or "little hills," give much of the border country, from south Down through Armagh and Monaghan to Cavan, Lough Erne and Donegal Bay its characteristic scenery. Their steep sides and the confused drainage of winding streams and lakelets to which they give rise long made the drumlin country a considerable obstacle to movement; and with other physical factors it helped to isolate the north from the rest of the country in early times. Southwards over the western parts of the plain, ice scooped out hollows and blocked rivers to form lakes many of which have been filled up with bog. But on the whole the ice-sheet, through its mantle of deposits, gave more than it took away: "the cold that for a time drove out life, in the end largely contributed to the fertility of Irish land." Fig. 3.

When warmer times returned and plants and animals began to find their way to the outpost of Europe, the land stood higher than to-day. Ireland was then, as it has been through most of its geological history, an integral part of Europe, and the great Irish deer roamed over the continent from the Atlantic to the Baltic. We are now within measurable distance of modern times, say 10,000 years ago, and it is

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 were 'melled' with a wooden maul, are sometimes to be seen in the farmyard, and there were a few water-driven 'whin-mills'. 417 Their use is almost forgotten as is the custom of growing a [246] field of whins to provide fodder. This was done in Co. Cavan and it is a recognized method of land utilization in the poorer parts of Brittany. A gorse hedge near the homestead is still popular as a place for drying clothes on washing day. 'Firing being scarce', wrote Gabriel Beranger of the barony of Bargy and Forth, 'they plant all their ditches with furze, which serves them for firing, and is reckoned equal in value with the produce of the land.'[1] Small farmers in Co. Down preferred wide earthen ditches because, as Binns was told: 'we have both sides of the ditch for feeding the cattle, and whins to bruise for the horses'.[2] The economy of the grass-grown ditch becomes clearer when we realize that on boulder-strewn hillsides where wide stone ditches separate the tiny fields a high proportion of the land is sterilized. Such wide earth banks often serve as footpaths where [487] the land is wet, and in Co. Limerick I have seen cart tracks on top of them. This habit may go back to the wide balks between some of the openfield patches, which were used as access ways where the boggy fields were too soft to take a cart. Such double ditches, when faced with stones on both sides, are undoubtedly an old type of fence, for they are characteristic of many raths or Dark Age farmsteads. These 'dry fences' are common in Co. Kerry and also in north Antrim, and they occur in Brittany, and in parts of Anglesey and north Pembrokeshire. In stony country the filling of a double ditch may be of loose stones gathered from the fields, and here again we have ancient examples in the enclosing walls of small cashels which are the equivalent in thin-soiled areas of the raths of the lowlands.

351 What nearly all these many types of field fences have in common is their untidy appearance. Dry stone walls tend to be cyclopean, lacking the precision of those of north England or the Cotswold country. Rough glacial boulders are a poor substitute for oolite, and one recalls the comment of Sir John Russell that Irish architecture suffered because of the virtual absence of Jurassic rocks in the geological series. Rarely does

[1] Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 132.
[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 native to the country. Around the coasts the sycamore is almost
313 the only tree that persists, for it will stand up to the salt-laden gales everywhere save on the most exposed parts of the west coast. R. U. Sayce has recorded the belief, from Montgomeryshire, that 'sycamore trees keep the fairies away and stop them spoiling the milk',[1] but this bit of lore cannot be of any great antiquity since the tree did not reach Britain from its home in the mountain belt of southern Europe until the sixteenth century. It presumably arose from the association of the tree with the farmyard. In Ireland the sycamore probably came in with the early seventeenth century planters, though the beech may be a medieval or even older introduction. Both trees had many economic uses, especially for dry-coopering, that is the
[322] manufacture of provision casks and butter firkins, and the sycamore is an excellent wood for turnery. Later, as the linen industry became mechanized, the beetling mills demanded sycamore for the great beam of the engine and beech for the vertical beetles.

The lay-out of farm buildings seems to have been, in the
351 native single-farms, as haphazard and formless as was that of
361 the houses themselves in an old clachan. As separate farms with outbuildings ('offices') became fashionable improvements after the middle of the eighteenth century, the latter were built for convenience of access and they were put close to the farmhouse, either attached to one end or lying parallel to provide a windbreak. Only in the planted areas does one find old examples of planned 'courtyard farms' where the house and offices enclose a square or rectangular yard. I fancy the stone or wooden 'hovel-stands' with their picturesque mushroom-like staddle-stones are also confined to planted districts. In the west a favourite method of making stacks is to build them about a central pole. (See p. 164.)

● 487 The wayside style is another absentee in the native Irish
[417] countryside, as is the footpath which is its companion. Short-cuts are rarely worth while in a land of tiny fields, and if there is a right of way there is sure to be a tolerable road. In fact there are so many farm lanes and access ways to mountain, seashore or bog that an economist might regard the amount of land so taken out of cultivation as excessive. It has been

[1] R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 45 (1938).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

calculated that in some thickly settled and much-enclosed townlands the land wasted in ditches may amount to a quarter of the whole area.[1] The peasant proprietor, however, would regard the loss of land as the price he pays for his independence, remembering 'the fights, trespasses, confusion, disputes and assaults' which were 'the natural and unavoidable consequences' of the openfield rundale system.[2] 487

[1] *Devon Commission*, 1, 422.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous
527 gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone
543 grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon
[361] and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry
[487] footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those
489 of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement
439 of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-
441 dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose
439 experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 653 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

The methods of transport in the countryside are related
489 to the distances to be traveled and the errands to be run. These things are matters of the organization and relationships of family and community. It is not only the means of transport which can be related to the constituent relationships of country social life. Each kind of farm product exported and farm need purchased involves a different distance of travel, a holder of a different status in family and community, and a different relation with the outsider.

489 The goods the farmer produces travel to the centers at
443 which they are exchanged over distances which are com-
438 mensurate with their value, their importance in farm economy, and their association with the status of the persons in the rural communities under whose charge they are produced. Horses take most care, are most valuable, and are the very special charge of the man of the house. The horse fair accordingly draws from the largest area. Cattle are the great money crop, the export staple. Accordingly the cattle fairs are among the chief lodestones of the larger centers, drawing from the deepest hinterlands of the major market areas. They are masculine affairs. Likewise potatoes and corn crops, oats, come to market only in the major centers. Farm fathers bring them down by horse and car from the deepest hinterlands.

Pigs represent a much shorter period of work and care. They are often in woman's province. The pig fairs are smaller gatherings, held in small centers, drawing from small hinterlands. Lesser vegetables, principally cabbage, travel no such distance as potatoes, and women often sell them. Finally, butter and eggs travel the shortest distance of all. They are often bartered at the crossroad centers. Before creameries were introduced, salted firkins or tubs of butter, representing a longer accumulation, went longer distances to the village centers.

234 Creamery associations were not established until the
438 middle of the time of research in County Clare. They are

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

415 though it may be put to the less innocent purpose of preparing malt for poteen, and a spinning-wheel of the usual type. For light at night
373 modern lamps are coming into use, but in many houses the "flare" is used. It consists of a rude sconce, in which is fastened a cylindrical reservoir for oil, closed at the top by a lid, and having a spout like that of a coffee-pot, through which the wick is drawn. Rush lights are still used by some.

The house is often whitewashed outside; the roof is thatch, of
342 straw in most localities, but on the islands, and some places in the peninsula, bent is use instead. This is laid on over "scraws" of grass-turf and fastened down by sougans (straw ropes), the ends of which may be attached to pegs driven into the walls, or have long pieces of
[284] wood or heavy stones fastened to them. These ropes are often arranged in a net work so as to hold the thatch more securely. Coir rope, bought in Belmullet, is now used by some instead of sougans. The gable is stepped or cut away so that the thatch does not project over the end wall.

There are several other types of houses, though the style just described is the most common. Most of the newer houses and those building have chimneys, pig-styes of turf or stone, and in some cases byres. Few of the old one-roomed dwellings, built partly or altogether of turf, are still to be seen, but there are a number of one-roomed huts of stone, many of which have no windows.

The most primitive habitations in the district, and perhaps in Ireland, are the rude huts (*boolies*) on Inishglora, inhabited during the lobster fishing season by the men of Inishkea; they are about a dozen in number, rudely built of dry stone and thatched with "scraws." There is not room to stand upright in them, the height from floor to roof being about 5 feet. Internally they contain a rude bunk filled with straw for sleeping in and a few large stones to sit upon. Cooking appears to be done out of doors. Successive batches of men live in these huts for about three months of the year. Some of the poorest houses on the mainland are in the isolated and primitive village of Fallmore, where few of the dwellings have windows and few or none chimneys. The houses on the islands are decidedly among the best in the district. Many are whitewashed inside, and the furniture is of a superior class, abundant material being thrown up as drift wood. The beds are four-posted structures, with flat board tops, and some of them have bright-coloured curtains, and the bedding is clean and tidy-looking.

489 6. *Transport.*—Lying as it does far from towns of any size, and separated from the nearest by a wide stretch of wild and thinly-

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are 492
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few
boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class
boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are
about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their
turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate [609]
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[20]

Second, emigration has been of vast 167 benefit to the community; money comes 434 in to most of the homes from America[21] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

Third, it is regrettable that the lack 443 of commercial facilities means that eggs, ● 489 poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [20] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only three barrels a week in winter. The standard [304] content of a barrel is 256 pints.

[291] [21] Many of the children are dressed in American clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

443 creameries or to dealers brings useful
489 income. The difficulty lies in transport, especially during the winter when the isolation is most acutely felt.

Fourth, remote and isolated as their
484 island may be, some of its people have seen much of the world. It is unlikely that many of the young people will remain here in the future; on the other hand, some former emigrants have come back to rest with thankfulness after their labors elsewhere. As one of them said, "America is a good place for the young, but this is a good place when you're old."

000 To summarize, Inishbofin now is neither a tragic island nor a romantic enclave of ancient ways. It is an area in which the work begun by the Congested Districts Board has borne fruit, whose people live reasonably well by crofting standards thanks to the help of emigrants and of the state. So long as the fuel holds out, there seems to be no reason why this island should not remain inhabited; but the problems of so curious a population age structure (p. 208) need investigation by a sociologist, and the cost of maintaining this community to the state and its relatives could well form a subject for an economist. For this island is not, and presumably cannot be, self-supporting under modern conditions.

[p. 209(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 from it. The Gaelic conquest of the Irish Midlands was not completed until the sixth century A.D., and down to the Anglo-Norman invasions the distinction between free and tributary tribes remained.[1] The counties bordering the middle Shannon—Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and the western parts of Westmeath and Offaly—are probably as full of survivals as any in Ireland. This is the land of the loy and the steeveen (Chapter X) and the last home of many an ancient custom. The lowland [133] of which it is the centre is floored with limestone levelled off at about 200 ft. but diversified by occasional low hills, by intricate solution lakes and by glacial eskers and drifts among which lie countless small lakes and bogs (Fig. 3). It is hard to realize [489] the isolation from which this area suffered before the introduction of improved wheeled vehicles and the coming of the canal and the railway.[2]

311 Let us now look at the cultural landscape which the hand of man has fitted to the physical frame of the island. Although man has been in this country for only a fraction of the time he has occupied South England and the continent, his mark is everywhere. Wander where you will through the length and breadth of the island, and through the dozens of lesser isles around its shores, and you will never fail to see traces of human activity, past or present, even in the most empty and inaccessible spots. Apart from the more or less datable remains of church and rath, castle and cairn, the land is covered with the marks of man's toil. The history of rural Ireland could be read out of doors, had we the skill, from the scrawlings made by men in the field boundaries of successive periods. In them the unlettered countryman wrote his runes on the land. The student of historical geography has been greatly assisted in the task of interpreting this palimpsest by the new tool of air-photography which, given suitable conditions, will pick out all man-made marks on the face of the earth.

311 178 The sturdy field walls and hedged banks which give the countryside its intimate character are by no means as immutable

[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), 204.

[2] Improvements in public transport were initiated by the Italian, Bianconi, who, profiting from the cavalry horses thrown on the market after the Napoleonic wars, began his famous fleet of 'cars' in Tipperary in 1815.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XIII

CARS AND CARTS

PEASANT communities concerned primarily with livestock which can be moved on the hoof have little need for elaborate means of transport. Long-tried devices adapted to the difficulties of the terrain continue to be used even in this age of tractors, and Ireland can show a remarkable variety of archaic farm vehicles of simple types. The heavy lumbering wagon would be out of place and out of scale in this environment. It is included in medieval inventories of manors and monasteries but it never took hold of the country, and although some landlords re-introduced English farm wagons in the eighteenth century, they were soon 'laid aside'.[1] The common Irish car was better adapted to the needs and skills of the people as well as to the condition of the roads.

The Irish low-back car, which is not yet extinct, is a light vehicle fitted with block wheels rigidly attached to a rotating axle (Fig. 55). Arthur Young commented that the loads they carried were 'such as an Englishman would be ashamed to take in a wheelbarrow'.[2] Yet he praised them because they required only one horse and did little damage to the roads. Prior to the eighteenth century there were very few roads except for those connecting the towns, and it seems that even the humble low-back cars were rare outside the urban spheres. For farm-work the wheel-less slide-car was used almost everywhere, supplemented by sledges, panniers, back-creels, and burden-ropes. It was progressive landlords who initiated, in the interests of the new agriculture, the construction of roads on their estates; and

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 22.
[2] ibid., 2, 59.

443 the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous
527 gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone
543 grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon
[361] and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry
[487] footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

489 No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement
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[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

●491
492
351

A JAUNTING CAR "FACES THE ROAD"

[facing p. 148]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER X

The Old in the Community[1]

LET us examine the life of a local community in the rural "West of Ireland" and put to the test of observation the claim that the clique of evening visitors among the old men of the community plays a decisive role in its social life. Perhaps Rynamona already mentioned affords the best example. Yet any other community the authors knew well would afford as good a one. In all of them the old men met in much the same way and, in spite of different names and persons, acted in much the same way to form a similar old men's clique. By taking the example of Rynamona, we can throw the generalities of this conduct into relief. 573 887

Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another in the "good land" of rough limestone outcrops stretching back from the sea into the glaciated lakes strewn north in County Clare. To reach Rynamona is no easy task, even for horse and car. The main road north out of Corrofin to Kilfenora passes through Kilnaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel, and a post office are all that remains of an antiquity preserved to the eye only in the ninth-century church and graveyard. 361 491

There, beside the graveyard, a side road leads off toward

[1] Much of the material in this chapter is taken from *The Irish Countryman* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1936), by Conrad M. Arensberg. It is used here by permission of the publishers.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

361 Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along
● 491 it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear
[311] witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously
cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives
rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward
into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round
the lake.

311 The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with
limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the
crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

361 Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the
621 lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are
471 scattered through the fields and across the lake. These
households and a few more a little further off make up the
community. These are small farms of the kind we met in
Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has
fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the
village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard
gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement
is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and
behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to
these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for
them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles
off.

621 Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated
476 bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all re-
653 lated one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the
491 usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds
itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the
borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the
towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who
break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the
621 village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder.
487 Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

farmers converge upon Ennis. In each case a center, 438
whether a larger market town or one of the smaller villages, serves a natural area demarcated by the configuration of the land and the course of the roads.

In such natural regions, particularly in more remote and 491
mountainous country, the roads determine the intercourse 361
of the communities with one another. Today each focal 438
point is joined with another by a motor road. As the roads wind out from the larger centers, shops come to be placed at the strategic crossroad; a public house springs up; perhaps a schoolhouse, a parochial house, a chapel of the parish, rise beside them. Nowadays creameries are put up at these or still other points along the roads, where they are most conveniently accessible to small and medium farms producing milk. Even more recently lorries have begun to come direct [494]
to the crossroad to pick up produce that once, before motor traffic, had to be carried by the farmers themselves all the way to town.

Plotting out the market areas of the towns and villages 438
of the countryside reveals a characteristic of social and economic space even here where the deepest hinterlands are never more than a half-day's leisurely trip by horse and cart. Any list of customers plotted by residence around a minor center gives an area which extends considerably farther in the direction away from the nearest larger center than it does in the direction leading to it. The minor centers draw principally from the hinterlands behind them and their areas extend only a little way along the roads in the direction of the next larger center. Ennistymon in North Clare draws custom twelve miles to the north, but to the south its influence reaches only three miles up the valley of the Inagh River, where the region of the larger center, Ennis, begins. Ennis itself serves all Clare, and its own immediate area extends, to judge from the residences of the farmers who come to buy and sell in her markets, beyond Ennistymon

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

491 Today the roads both great and small provide all-weather
494 routes for every kind of local traffic. They carry many lorries
496 and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad — the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

491 The main roads are much more direct. They follow divides and occasionally cut right across high bog country. Today they negotiate bogs, which once would have prohibited any sort of transportation during wet weather, by dint of side ditches and high crowns of gravel and dirt. Over high country they have better foundations and wander in comparatively straight fashion through the country.

491 At various points along these main roads there are
653 branches today penetrating the countryside. These are rougher and simpler constructions of crushed stones taken from local quarries, leased by the County Council. The stone is broken by laborers and small farmers of the district through which the road runs. In the case of the smaller roads each landholder is responsible for the bit of the road that runs by his land. "Road metal," as the crushed stone is called, is spread during the late autumn, winter, or very early spring. When the weather is dry, in summer, a fine white dust rises after every vehicle. But in the rainy months of spring and winter the roads are soft and full of chuck holes, and new stones must be laid down. Then the heavy
[493] iron-tired carts of the farmers break them further and press them into the soft roadbeds.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction.

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics.

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler.

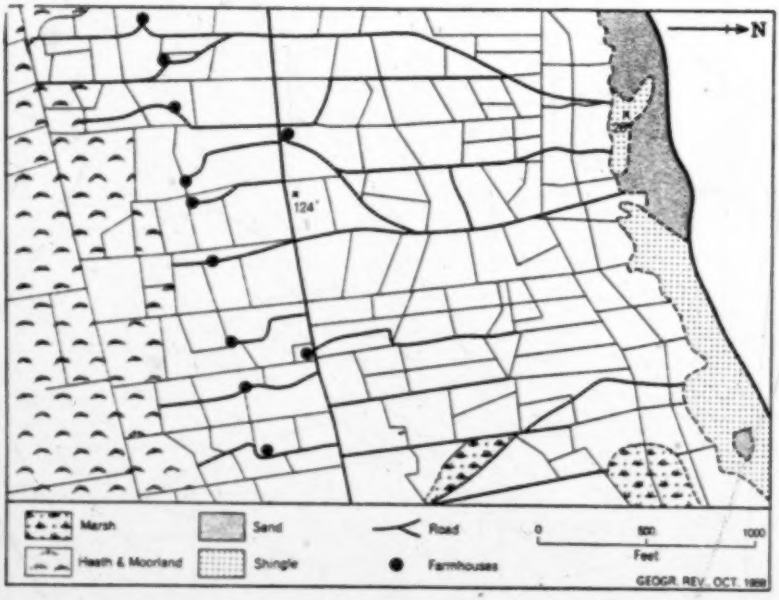
The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

boots of the bearers or else the type of barrow (of wood or straw) on which the coffin was borne, served to prevent the coffin from touching the soil. Again, in Ireland (at least, in parts of County Wexford), as in some European countries, wooden crosses or other memorials were left behind at such halts; in the Kilmore area of South Wexford, two crosses are carried with each funeral—one is left at the roadside at a halting-place, the other is set up on the grave. Cairns were often associated with funeral resting-places. It was customary in certain European countries for the bearers to partake of food and drink at resting-points; this, I am told, was the practice also in parts of Donegal and Waterford. Having rested for a while, fresh bearers took up the coffin, and the graveyard was ultimately reached. 764 [264]

I have already referred to the practice of laying down the coffin when a boundary-line was reached. My father, who died six years ago, at the age of 86, told me about a funeral-boundary custom in my native parish of Tuosist, in County Kerry, in the extreme southwest corner of Ireland. He was born in 1863 in the townland of Clogherane in Kerry, only a mile distant from the County Cork border. The high range of the Caha Mountains runs for over thirty miles through the peninsula of Béara, and separates at this point the Kerry parish of Tuosist from the Cork parish of Clanlawrence. During the Famine period of 1845–50 the men who lived at either side of the pass, Bealach Scairte, which led from one county (and parish) to the other, were employed, by way of a relief-scheme, in building a road across the pass. When the work ceased, the middle portion—about two miles in length—still remained undone. And so it remained until about twenty-five years ago, when, by the aid of State funds, the road now known as The Healy Pass was built across the mountain and the two ends were joined up. I often crossed by the old path from Kerry to Cork myself, before the new road was built; it was not so difficult in the early stage of the journey, but when the narrow defile (An Céim Cumhang) at the border was reached, one had to clamber as best one could over and between huge boulders which had fallen into the defile, some of them weighing forty or fifty tons, at a rough estimate. 764 491 [794]

Any funeral which now has occasion to pass from Cork to Kerry (or *vice versa*), can do so with the luxury of a hearse and motor-cars. But it was different when my father was a boy, and for long generations before that. He told me that one day, when he was on his way to the school at Glenmore—it was in the 1870's—he saw a large concourse of men, both young and old, passing along the old road at the foot of the mountain and through the fields. They were all carrying weapons or implements of some kind—some had hay-forks, he said, others had scythes, others hatchets, still others heavy sticks. He asked later on where they were going, and was told that they were going to meet a funeral, which was coming into Kerry from Cork, at the boundary-line. He told me that he knew well the Kerryman, who was leader of the large group; I knew him too, as he lived to a great age, and could speak no English. His name was Conchobhar Uaithne Ó Súilleabháin, and he lived at Shinnagh in the parish of Tuosist. My father told me that he heard later from some of those that were present at the boundary-line, that when the Corkmen appeared at the border, carrying the corpse tortuously on their shoulders, Conchobhar stepped in front of the bearers and stood with his stick raised on the large flat stone which marked the border at this point. The stone, by the way, is still known as Leac na gCorp (The Stone of the Corpses), and it is in the middle of the hollow which, avoiding the defile, was used by funerals, or by cattle 764 578 [191]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6



311
361
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FIG. 4—"Striped" farms and fields in County Kerry. (Based on the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Minister of Finance, Republic of Ireland.)

mentary authorization. Although it is rarely possible to obtain information on the methods and precise date of consolidation, the destruction of the system can be explained, in broad terms, by its growing inefficiency and by the dissemination of new agricultural techniques. 178 361 311

Some of the unsatisfactory aspects of rundale agriculture sprang from the steady growth of the population of Ireland, which continued from sometime in the middle of the eighteenth century until the Great Famine of 1845–1847.[30] This increase led to a constant encroachment on various uncultivated areas, a process in which the general adoption of the potato as a subsistence crop played a major part.[31] But the "waste" lands brought under cultivation had not been completely unused, since often they were grazed by livestock under a well-developed transhumance.[32] This seasonal movement was important to the rural economy, because efficient rundale farming required that the animals be removed from the unfenced cultivated strips during the growing

[30] K. H. Connell: The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845 (Oxford, 1950). 113

[31] *Idem*: The Colonization of Waste Land in Ireland, 1780–1845, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Ser. 2, Vol. 3, 1950–1951, pp. 44–71.

[32] J. M. Graham: Transhumance in Ireland, *The Advancement of Sci.*, Vol. 10, 1953–1954, pp. 74–79.

[Text continues on p. 565]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

haps our knowledge of the strains which make up the peoples of the world, Ireland included, may stand us in good stead. 114

Already such work as this will show us the relation of the Irish to other European strains and help us to trace out historical currents in the country. Think of the field such work opens! Where is the Gael pure today? Who is the Firbolg, the aboriginal whom the Milesians found in possession? Who and where are the invading Gall? Briton, Norman, Dane, Fleming, Saxon, Englishman and Scotsman brought their bloods to this land and mingled them with the Gael. What traces have they all left and what bloods are at work today?

All these queries, nevertheless, do not primarily concern us in this discussion. The antiquity of some of the data stimulates another inquiry. But we cannot escape the sway of these other considerations entirely. There is no reason why we should. Even if they can offer us no direct aid, they can, nevertheless, afford us a stimulation.

Some such thoughts as these must have been in the social anthropologist's mind when he first made his way into a rural community. I cannot speak for my colleagues, Mr. Warner of Chicago University and Mr. Kimball of Harvard, who helped to gather the field material on Ireland. But I *can* speak for myself.

I felt Ireland's fascination as I toiled along behind my bicycle up the mountain road that runs 114 491 133

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

114 from the narrow valley lands at Doolin in the ex-
●491 treme north-west of County Clare. I was on my
133 way to my first stay in an Irish west-country farm community. My road, no wider than a bridle-path, led up a sharp escarpment out of the tiny valley which empties its stony river into the Atlantic, not three miles away from the southernmost island of Aran. Once the top of the rim is reached
114 the mountainside flattens out into a green and
133 gently sloping table-land. Standing there one can see the whaleback rocks that are the Aran Islands and the masses of Mount Elva on the southern shore of Galway Bay. Far beyond in Connemara, one can catch the glint of the Twelve Pins, if the day is 'hard' and sunny. Off to the left, the table-land breaks off abruptly three hundred feet downward into the Atlantic, for the famed Cliffs of Moher are here, reminders of an Irish mountain that the sea has shorn off clean.

The community toward which I was making my
361 way lies along the table-land between mountain-
191 top of bracken and black bog and the cliffs. It keeps up the old tradition. It calls itself Luogh, and its language, at least that of the old people, is Irish, but the young people are forgetting the old tongue. English is the more common speech today, even here. Yet Mr. Delargy, the editor of the *Irish*
114 *Folklore Journal*, has collected a large number of
538 stories, songs and traditional tales and sayings here, some of them going back to the saga cycles.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 of rough limestone outcrops that stretch back from the sea into the glaciated lake-stream North Clare country. To reach Rynamona is no easy 361 task, even for horse and car. The main road north 491 out of Corofin to Kilfenora passes through Killinaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel and a post-office mark an ancient settlement. Only a ruined ninth-century church and graveyard attest to its great antiquity.

There, beside the graveyard, a side-road leads off toward Glanquin mountain, and the hills of Burren beyond. One follows this road along through ragged upland for a mile and a half. 361 This is Killinaboy Commons, and its many small fields, laboriously cleared of stones, bear witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted. The upland is not high. It merely gives rise enough to start a half-mile of gentle slope into a basin whose bottom is filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round the lake, at the end of a rough borheen.

The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with limestone ridges. Yet the grass grows richly among the crags, and the farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the lake shore. This is 'Rynamona village'. Five others are scattered through the fields and across the lake. These households, with a few more a little farther off, make up the community.

The farms are all small; they are of the kind we

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

They are market-towns and administrative seats. 361
Their economics is that of distribution, not production. The industrial revolution has passed southern Ireland by. The shop, the pub, the fair bring the towns their life-blood and link them to their hinterlands and to the outside world. Many of them still collect market tolls on rural produce, as if they still had a ring of stone-wall fortification about them. Many of them have no fair green but throw open all their streets to shouting, bargaining men and milling cattle, on the day of the fair, surrendering themselves entirely to the countryside upon which they live.

One still approaches many of them today as one approached them in the sixteenth century, [491]
although now perhaps an automobile road breaks a new entrance into them or the railroad halts a [496]
jaunting car's distance away. The roads that radiate inward toward the heart of the town are still lined with labourers' and artisans' thatched cottages long before one reaches the town itself. As one proceeds along them, the cottages give way to shops and public houses which rise higher and more stately as one nears the centre, in the market-place or in the central square. There, quite often, that emporium of the most valuable commodity of all—the local bank—now dominates the scene.

Between the shop-fronts, back lanes lead off to the recesses in which the labourers live; and, off by

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 174 four houses together, which can almost invariably be shown to have once been larger: even these tiny groupings are referred to as "towns," and the use of this word suggests that such clusters were once the nuclei of the "townlands." It is because of this association with the vital townland unit, and because many rural customs find their explanation in past conditions, that I have thought it worth while to attempt a reconstruction of the chief features of these old communities. This is based largely on records and on surviving examples which I have studied in Co. Donegal and Co. Antrim. Allowance must be made for differences between one region and another, but I believe the following description to be applicable to most parts of Ireland, though the decay of the village-system began earlier in some areas than in others.

Travellers a century or so ago tell us that villages with 50 or 60 houses were not uncommon. In 1802 Donegal is said to have had about 500 villages, with an average perhaps of 20 or 30 families to each, but they were "dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings" (Figs. 13 & 14). One uses the term village for want of a better word, for such clusters lack many of the well-known features of the English village. They were essentially communities of related families bound together in "friendship"—the word "friend" means a blood-relation in Ireland—with one or two surnames predominating in each group. This fact is still true of townland populations even though the holdings are scattered, and it [55] helps to explain the prevalence of nicknames in rural Ireland, and, for the same reason, in Wales and Scotland. The houses were clustered without plan or order (and never strung together end-to-end) generally in some sheltered hollow in the richest part of the townland, though they might be disposed along a road with some semblance of regularity. Shelter is always the first consideration. I have been told in Donegal that house sites were selected by the simple process of throwing up a hat on a windy day and letting the wind decide by noting its resting place.

174 Made roads were almost unknown in hilly districts—there
● 49 was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one
361 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 50--ANALYST]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 Donegal parish in 1837—and all the carrying depended upon
[491] slide cars and creels (Chapter 12). The village had neither
361 shop nor inn, and required little besides salt and iron from the market town. These self-sufficing communities were held together by blood ties and by the exchange of services under the Irish open-field or "rundale" system of cultivation. Around the house-clusters were small walled gardens and haggards, but the arable land was an unenclosed open field in which each holder had his scattered patches, averaging perhaps a quarter of an acre in area. There are cases on record where [423] 29 partnership-peasants shared 422 plots of ground, where one man held 32 different patches, or again where 26 people had shares in a field of half an acre. In some districts it is known that the plots changed hands periodically. but no memory of this survives in the areas I am acquainted with. Live stock was sometimes subject to joint-ownership, with disastrous results where, for instance, three men claimed shares in a horse and could not agree as to the ownership of the fourth leg. But most of the stories that are told about rundale farming belong to the period of its decline.

174 Between the cultivated patches, which were dug with the
221 spade or ploughed and devoted almost exclusively to potatoes
361 and oats, ran waste strips or balks ("mearings," "bones" or "ribs") often left as much as three yards wide, apparently from a sort of pride, though they had their uses both as a source of hay and as tracks for the creel ponies when they could not enter the waterlogged plots. In the absence of fences all livestock had to be tethered, spancelled, herded, or sent to the mountain pastures during the crop season, which traditionally began on St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) and ended on the last day of October (Hallowe'en), when the animals were free to wander over the whole townland throughout the winter. "Any that had not their potatoes dug, or other crops off the ground, were much injured, neither could any one man venture to grow turnips, clover or other green crops . . . no one would attempt to manure better or otherwise improve his proportion, as his neighbour's cattle only would have the benefit." It is clear that the introduction of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 now of iron but formerly of wood, that rotates with them. The wheels are so small—little more than two feet in diameter—that the floor of the car has to be raised up behind, and it carries such a small load that the number of horses in Ireland is said to have been considerably reduced when the spoke-wheeled cart took its place. In the 18th century "wheel-cars were used throughout the kingdom" in town and country alike: the Dublin "noddies" were of this type, and according to illustrations published in the early 18 hundreds the driver rode on the horse's rump. The low-backed car is now generally fitted with sides to make a "box car," but in former days it carried a kish of the kind used with the slide car. It should be noticed that until roads and tracks were [491] metalled—mostly within the last two centuries—the disc wheel had the advantage over the spoked wheel in soft loose ground. Even "superior farmers" in Donegal had only low-back cars as late as 1821, and we may repeat the statement made in Chapter 6 that there was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one Donegal parish in 1837. The slide [177] car and the creel did all the carrying. In the Glens of Antrim, too, the wheel-car was apparently something of a novelty about that time. An old man told me that his grandmother remembered the first car seen in her valley.

It must not be assumed from this that wheeled vehicles [401] were unknown in ancient Ireland: the literature suggests that they were in regular use but doubtless confined to the wealthier classes and districts. On analogy with other parts of north-western Europe the wheel was already known in Bronze Age Ireland. It is wrong to assume that the wheel was "invented" by the Irish peasants who adapted it to their slide cars. The disc and in turn the spoked wheel are ancient discoveries which came into use gradually as social conditions and road-making improved, and it was natural that the slide car should keep its form though lifted off the ground. Although we cannot accept the theory of local "evolution" for the spoke-wheeled cart, it is none the less clear that local experience controlled the details of its construction when it became

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred years. 493

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little "dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long "runners" which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or "trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a "box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a "soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate. [531] [492]

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the "two-wheeled" culture region. 493 178

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but 491

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

491 unprofitable pastime. The many old metalled roads running from town to town in direct Roman fashion seem to be military or post roads no more than a couple of centuries old. A few ridgeway tracks are certainly ancient, probably prehistoric, and they need studying in connexion with seasonal booleying routes. Some old timber roads have also been observed in or under the bogs, but in general it seems that the majority of existing roads and lanes were constructed to keep pace with the improvements of agriculture and means of transport, and to feed the single farms which resulted from the break-up of the village system. Any large-scale map will show the extraordinary pattern of narrow lanes which is required to supply the evenly scattered homesteads. An economist might calculate how much valuable agricultural land is wasted by this multiplicity of tracks, but the "loanin's" and "bohereens" are an intimate part of the rural scene whose value is not to be assessed in money, and it is at the "loan-ends" that the young folk assemble on summer evenings.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

313 In the north long splits were twisted into fir-rope, a craft which is almost dead (Fig. 21 and Chapter 14). Both fir and oak were employed for constructional work of all kinds: old cabins will be found to be roofed with bog timber in most districts, and many implements, dressers, settles, stools, churns, tubs, slide-cars and even boats were fashioned from it. The buried trunks are located in winter by seeking frost-free patches on the bog-surface, or on summer mornings by noting where the dew lies thinnest. Their size and soundness are tested with an iron probing rod or "bog auger" and if satisfactory the trunks are then dug out.

491 Much might be said about the bog roads and means of access to the turf. In Armagh and Monaghan, to quote Mr. T. G. F. Paterson, the track or "car-path" by which the turf is carted home is called the "rampar" or "turf-pad," the rampar being the standing strip of bog preserved between cuttings. The various methods of tenure and rights of turbary are an interesting topic but a notorious source of trouble, and the Irish peasant finds ample opportunity for [691] indulging his litigious tastes in disputes over drainage and rights of way.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, 415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of [491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a sideways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies [243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

For water transport there are a good many boats of various 501 descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

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[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills. Off this part of the coast lie Inishkea and Duvillaun, having a sandy or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low. 133 [502]

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones. [134]

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe. [504] 132

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very few and only grow in sheltered localities. 137

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the mail road from Ballina runs.[1] 491

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few 125

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks that have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward. [133]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly 492
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few
boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class
boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are
about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their
turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish [609]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

311
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632
361
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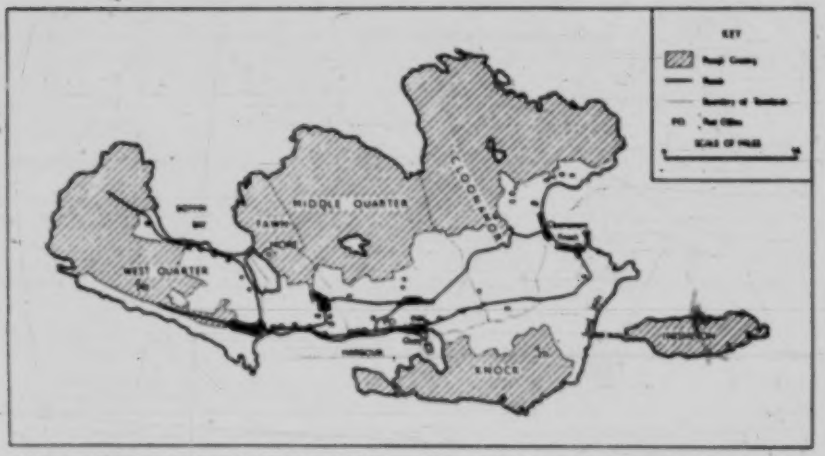

FIG. 1. The townlands of Inishbofin. Inishlyon has no inhabitants, but is used as sheep pasture. Cloonamore and Knock appear as a single line of houses on the shore but are in different townlands. The boundaries of the rough pasture and the distribution of houses were mapped in July, 1954. (Based on Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to 1 mile, Co. Galway, sheet 9, 1898, by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.)

[p. 204(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 where the land has been almost the sole available re-
[578] source go far to explain the jealousy with which established rights are maintained, but there are deeper needs and bonds in the rural community.

[491]
[102]

FIG. 4. Map of scattered farms on the Co. Down coast, showing seaweed-roads. (Based upon the Ordnance map with the sanction of the Controller, H.M.S.O.)

[417]
[351]

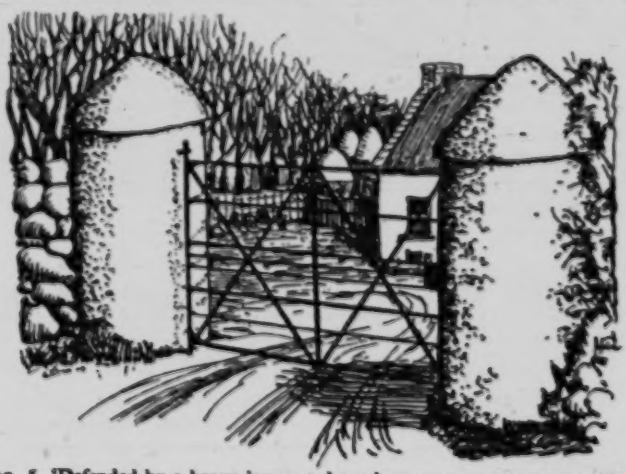

FIG. 5. 'Defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars:' an Ulster farm.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XIII

CARS AND CARTS

PEASANT communities concerned primarily with livestock 493
which can be moved on the hoof have little need for elaborate
means of transport. Long-tried devices adapted to the difficulties [489]
of the terrain continue to be used even in this age of tractors, and Ireland can show a remarkable variety of archaic farm vehicles of simple types. The heavy lumbering wagon would be out of place and out of scale in this environment. It is included in medieval inventories of manors and monasteries but it never took hold of the country, and although some landlords re-introduced English farm wagons in the eighteenth century, they were soon 'laid aside'.[1] The common Irish car was better adapted to the needs and skills of the people as well as to the condition of the roads.

The Irish low-back car, which is not yet extinct, is a light vehicle fitted with block wheels rigidly attached to a rotating axle (Fig. 55). Arthur Young commented that the loads they carried were 'such as an Englishman would be ashamed to take in a wheelbarrow'.[2] Yet he praised them because they required only one horse and did little damage to the roads. Prior to the eighteenth century there were very few roads except for those connecting the towns, and it seems that even the humble low-back cars were rare outside the urban spheres. For farm-work the wheel-less slide-car was used almost everywhere, supplemented by sledges, panniers, back-creels, and burden-ropes. It 491
was progressive landlords who initiated, in the interests of the 493
new agriculture, the construction of roads on their estates; and

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 22.
[2] Ibid., 2, 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

491 when the making and repair of 'cross roads' became a public
493 charge it was done on the basis of baronies, and the Grand Juries—composed largely of landlords—became responsible, under the presentment system, for local road-making and repairing. Thus from about 1760 onwards a fairly close network of roads began to be established in the richer parts of the country—especially about the big demesnes—and the way was open for the more capacious spoke-wheeled cart which held its own until in our own day it is being replaced by the lorry and the tractor-trailer.

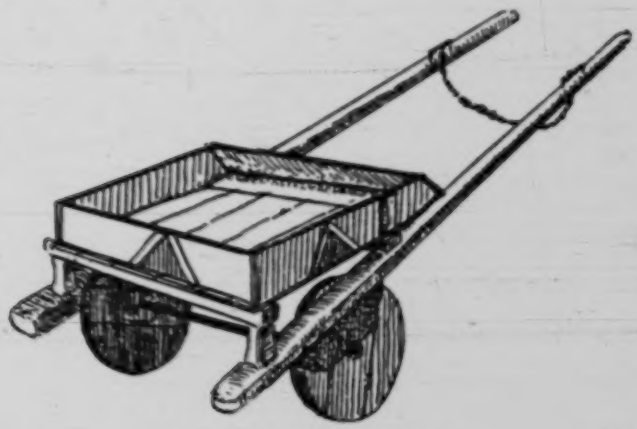

FIG. 55. Wheel-car, Co. Antrim.

175 In the face of abundant evidence as to the backwardness of
493 rural transport and the rarity of wheeled vehicles and made roads until quite recent times, it is startling to read of the prominence of chariotry and of the rapid movement of armies in the Irish legendary histories. In fact, up to date, the archaeological evidence which would clearly establish the use of chariots in early Celtic Ireland is scanty. There can be little doubt, however, that horse-drawn spoke-wheeled vehicles were a significant element in Celtic culture, and it is known that the Romans took into their language nearly a dozen Celtic names for horse-
[492] drawn vehicles.[1] Such fragments of harness as have been re-

[1]E. M. Jope, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 57–60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

covered from early Celtic sites in Ireland suggest that the horse 175
was held in high regard and was perhaps reserved for pageants, 493
combats and ceremonies. The detailed evidence in the legendary [492]
histories of ancient Ireland for the existence of roads, however,
is clear. The fact that the Celtic roads are rarely traceable today
is understandable in view of the physical conditions of the [491]
country, especially the prevalence of obliterating bogs. Moreover the road system must have decayed with the decline of Celtic culture. In any case it is evident that the use of the chariot was confined to the highest castes, and that its humble relation the block-wheeled car was fated to outlast it. The finely-spoked wheeled vehicles of the Celtic invaders were as much out of place in Ireland as the great wagons which later overlords introduced from England. The block-wheeled car, if not previously known in Ireland, may have been the native response to the impressive magic of the Celtic wheel, or it may have reached this country with Celtic camp-followers. We shall see that it could have been developed from the slide-car which almost certainly preceded it in Europe. The term 'wheel-car' as used in Ireland refers to the block-wheeled car and is clearly meant to distinguish it from the wheel-less slide-car. The spoke-wheeled cart is a newcomer in most parts. Nevertheless there is evidence that a light spoke wheeled cart continued to be used in early Christian times: an example drawn chariot-wise by two horses is figured on the eighth century Ahenny Cross in Co. Tipperary. It seems that such light carts were used for personal transport, for example St. Sampson took one with him, according to an eleventh-century account of his travels, to carry his books across Cornwall on his way from Ireland to Brittany.[1] And the spoke-wheeled cart must have been known in the planted areas since the Middle Ages, so that it is very probable that in parts of the country the cart has had a continuous life since early Celtic times.

But we should first examine certain archaic methods of 492
transport which depend on the carrying power of beasts and [482]
men, or rather women, for in simple societies the bearers of children are also the burden-bearers. The romance of rural

[1]O. G. S. Crawford, 'Western Seaways' in *Custom is King* (1936), 196.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

501 of the River Nure were described as 'flat narrow boats equal at both ends and propelled by paddles'.[1] Earlier, about 1645, Gerard Boate described the cots as 'things like boats, but very unshapely, being nothing but square pieces of timber made hollow.' 'They are very common throughout all Ireland . . . even upon the great rivers and loughs'.[2]

To judge from the numerous discoveries of small dug-outs at [491] river crossings their last surviving use was for ferrying purposes. They were replaced locally by flat-bottomed cots built with wide planks laid edge to edge, such as serve the eel-fishers of the River Bann. These are propelled with a pole. The punt-like cot is also the old craft of the River Shannon. A number of dug-outs are found to have been adapted for propulsion with oars, using the single thole-pin of the rowing-curragh. The large rowing boats of Lough Neagh also use the single thole-pin: to give greater leverage for the heavy oars the iron thole-pin is set out from the gunwale on an outrigger or 'bolster'. In the cots of Lough Erne the oar is worked between double thole-pins (Fig. 78). The maze of lakes which make up the Lough Erne group have yielded many ancient dug-outs of varied types, some of them spoon-shaped, others rectangular and provided with carrying lugs. Others again seem to be both boat and sledge, an alternative to the portable curragh in a land strewn with little lakes. But the strangest vessel, apparently misnamed a curragh, was a kind of raft which is said to have survived until a hundred years ago, 'composed of wreaths of bull-rushes tied upon a frame or raft made of rough branches of trees'.[3]

Methods of fishing in river and lake include not only legiti-
226 mate forms of angling and netting, but many ways of killing fish which game laws and other vested interests have made illegal, but have not extinguished. The spearing of salmon, prohibited since 1714, is now left to poachers, but well into the last century it was openly practised in the city of Galway.[4] On [423] Lough Neagh yellow (feeding) eels are caught illicitly on long lines by fisherfolk whose claims to ancient rights have not been recognized by the courts.

[1]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 150.
[2]G. Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 64, 136.
[3]W. F. Wakeman, loc. cit.
[4]A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 82 (1952), 110

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
246 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
241 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
556] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
221 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips
241 and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to
[492] the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
231 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

491
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351

A JAUNTING CAR "FACES THE ROAD"

[facing p. 148]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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494

ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets.

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. 481
At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields [487]
in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add 493
perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just be- 494
ginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only 492
adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Plate III

342
[492]
[493]

THATCHED ROOF SECURED WITH PEGGED FIR-ROPES

N. ANTRIM

SCOLLOP THATCH OF MARROM GRASS

MAGILLIGAN CO. DERRY

ROPED THATCH OF RYE STRAW

ARTICLAVE, CO. DERRY

[facing p. 57]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER X.

SEEDTIME.

Except in a few districts where winter wheat is grown the 241
farmer's year may be said to begin in spring when, from 221
February on, the land is ploughed or dug for the new crops. Several arguments are advanced against autumn ploughing—that the land is too wet and that the winter destroys the seed-bed—but as with many other things the preference is best explained by deep-rooted custom. So long as the land was held in rundale autumn ploughing was out of the question since the stock had the run of the whole townland after Hallowe'en.

We have very little information about old Irish ploughs. 241
Owing to the fact that they were made almost entirely of wood 407
archæology cannot help us much, but shaped stones that may have been shares and coulters have been found, and plough-irons do sometimes turn up. The discovery by Dr. O'Neill Hencken of a large iron coulter in the Ballinderry crannog shows that a heavy plough necessitating a big team had reached Co. Westmeath by the 10th century A.D. Pipe-rolls of the 13th century refer to plough teams of 8 oxen in Co. Meath: this was the normal complement under the English three-field system. At the other end of the scale, as it were, there survived into living memory along the west coast the custom of attaching the horse to the plough or harrows by [492] the tail, and although the practice was severely condemned it had the advantage that the horse would stop if the plough

[p.87]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 struck a rock, thus saving the share, the traces and the
407 ploughman from injury. The tying of the tail-hair to the
[492] traces, which were commonly of sugán or fir rope, required a difficult knot known in later days to very few. This undoubtedly ancient practice seems to have been linked with other customs such as walking backwards before the plough horses, burning the corn in the straw, and plucking or clipping wool from the sheep whenever it was required. It appears that we have in this group of survivals an older culture-laver overlaid by newer methods some of which are themselves of high antiquity. There is some evidence that the original simpler wooden plough mentioned below, together with the clod-breaker and the winnowing tray (Chapter 14) belong to the older layer, whereas the improved wooden plough, the harrow and the flail are later arrivals.

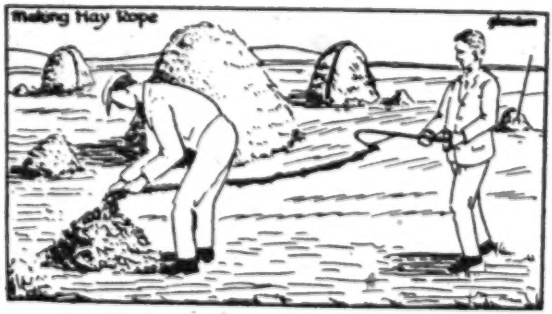
English visitors of the 18th century and the writers of the Statistical Accounts published by the Royal Dublin Society have given many particulars of the varying practices of a century and a half ago. From them we select a few observations. The method of ploughing in Co. Clare was to use four horses abreast, the driver walking backwards between the two middle horses. This is also described as "the old method" in Co. Roscommon. Four oxen were employed in Co. Dublin and Co. Tipperary, "never less than four oxen or four horses" in Kilkenny, six in Meath, three in Fermanagh and two in King's County. The large teams of some regions
[476 may imply that co-aration had at one time been practised.
171] The four horses of the north Antrim plough-team were contributed or "pooled" by four farmers under the system of "morrowing" or "neighbour dealing" which finds ready parallels in Scotland. In Co. Clare this pooling custom is known as "cooring," and in other parts as "milling." The Irish farm horse, it should be remembered, is a small light breed: except near large towns heavy cart horses are rarely seen.

Nevertheless in the more backward parts the two horse plough seems to have been general, as it is to-day, and it has been supposed that the two-ox plough was standard in early

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

rotation grass is referred to as upland hay to distinguish it 246
from meadow hay, although in fact it often grows at lower levels. Sometimes at this stage the hay is hung on bushes and fences something after the Scandinavian manner.

When sufficiently dry the laps are opened and the hay piled into small cocks (ricks or lumps), and this process is repeated a number of times if the weather is bad until the stage of large hand-cocks is reached, or, if the hay is in good condition, even larger "tramp-cocks," trodden down firmly. The cocks are tied down with a hay-rope made on the spot (Fig. 50) and left "to season" for a period which may be only a week or two but which, to the stranger, seems generally an unconscionable time. In this matter the Irish



[283]

Fig. 50.

are confirmed in what the English call their lazy ways. Admittedly there are dry years when it would do no harm to the hay to stack it at once, but the Irish method is adapted to the average season, and rooted in a firmly-fixed rota of farm work. In August the turf must be carried home while the [314]
bogs are firm enough to take the carts, and in many parts the busy time of flax-pulling and retting is come. Although these alternative demands on the farmer's time are not always present, they may have helped in the past to standardize the 492
rotation of work. Moreover, when the opportunity of carry- 246

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage
246 can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock,
[493] which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently
[407] old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

246 In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built
[171] around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to
[476] hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

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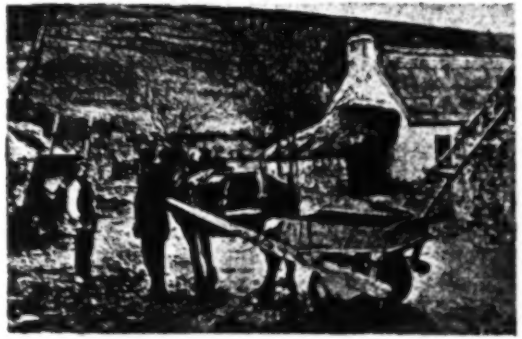
9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Antrim

SLIDE CAR WITH KISH ; STRAW HARNESS

LOW-BACK CAR



BOX-CAR WITH DISC WHEELS

Plate IV.
ALL FROM GLENS OF ANTRIM

SPOKE-WHEELED CAR

[Facing p. 105]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

482 burden in Ireland as among other peasantries. The burden-
rope, constructed of rushes, horse-hair or grass-rope (Chap.
[283] 14 and Figs. 79 & 80), was employed for carrying surpris-
ingly large loads of hay, corn or bushes—" as much as a pony
could draw," I have been told—while the burden-creel, slung
over one shoulder or worn like a rucksack by women who
would thus have their hands free for knitting, was mainly used
for carrying turf. Nor should we omit the wheel-barrow, both
[493] box and turf types (Chapter 15 and Fig. 90), the hand
barrow (for loads of stones and also for fish and nets) and the
two-man turf creel (Fig. 91).

493
492 Side-creels are the panniers attached to an ass or small
pony. Most of them are constructed with a hinged bottom
so that the contents of turf, wrack, gravel or manure are
automatically unloaded (Fig. 58). The sides are broken by
ornamental " windows " which give a handhold for lifting and
help to lighten the creel. Comparative study would reveal
several regional and specialized forms of creel, and I have
observed different methods of attachment even in neighbouring
valleys. They are generally slung on wooden pegs driven
into a roof-shaped crutch or straddle (Fig. 56) which rests on
two straw mats. In the example figured from Tuam (Fig. 57)
the straw mats are pegged together, and the straddle is
strengthened by two osier ties, to one of which the tail-sugán
is fastened. When hay or corn is being carried the creels may
be dispensed with and the " bottles " or sheaves hung on the
straddle pegs with an osier ring. Alternatively the creels are
tied together with ropes which pass over a thick straw pad laid
along the animal's spine, and the straddle is not used. The
creels are D-shaped and can be made of openwork, for turf
or wrack, or of closely-woven sides for manure. We shall
have something more to say about their construction in
Chapter 14.

Fig. 56.

493 Among horse-drawn vehicles the sledge or slipe is very
generally employed for transporting stones, manure, or turf
and also for conveying the plough and harrows from one field
to another. I illustrate the common slipe of Co. Antrim

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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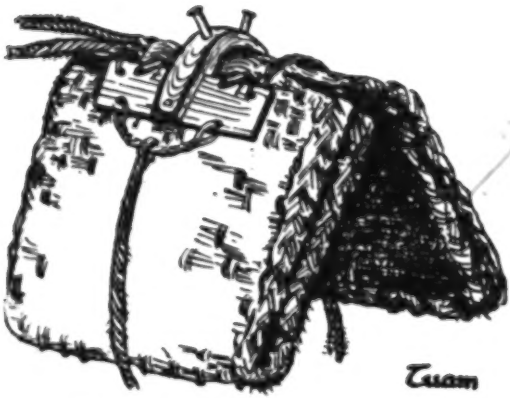
493



Straw pads & straddle for Creels

Fig. 57.

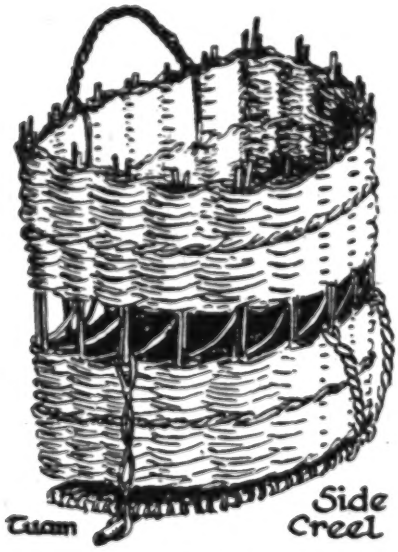


Fig. 58.

[p. 107]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 (Fig. 59): the type used for drawing manure in Co. Down has the runners set close together so that it can be easily tipped over to empty. An even simpler sledge described as a "triangular framework" is said to have been used for dragging boulders out of fields. I have not seen this, but a similar "forked runner sledge" is known in Sweden.

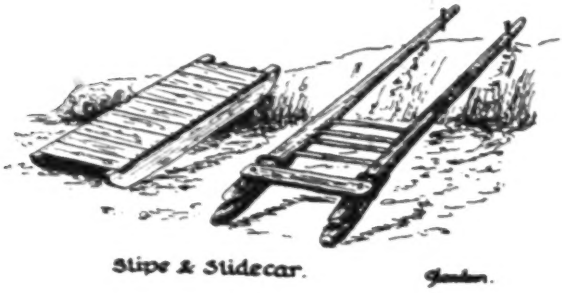


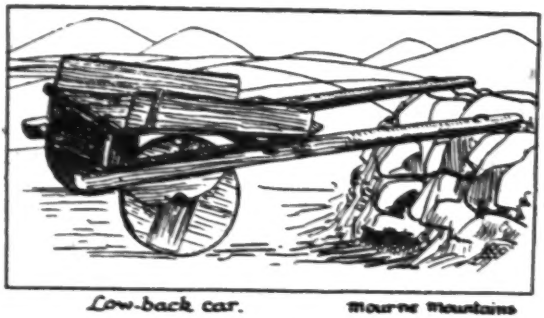
Fig. 59.

The slide-car (Fig. 59), now confined to a few hilly districts such as the Antrim Glens, was almost universal a century ago. It consists of two strong poles or shafts—bog timber was often used for the purpose—the ends of which slide on the ground. Attached to the ends by wooden pegs and an iron ring (called the "bowman") are short pieces of hardwood which take the wear and tear, though nowadays thin iron runners are often substituted. The shafts are tied together by cross-beams making a rough platform on which rests the wicker "kish," resembling the smaller creels but oval in shape, and like them, adapted to carry either turf or manure. For other loads such as hay or timber the kish is dispensed with. Although they will carry but small weights they can be taken on the roughest of moorland tracks and down slopes of incredible steepness. 492 The harness of the slide-car pony was until recent years 493 made entirely of wood and straw apart from a bit and halter for leading purposes. The straw collar (Chapter 14) was fitted with wooden hames attached to the shafts by short sugán

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

traces. The shafts were also tied by straw ropes to the pegs 492
of a straddle which rested on a back sugán secured in turn by 493
a tail rope of straw. Bridles and halters were sometimes made of horse hair.

The slide car, like so many of the Irish relics we are 171
considering, was found not long ago in the Scottish Highlands and is still used in central Wales. It is common in the Baltic lands and far afield through the mountain country of Europe and the Siberian tundra; and its wide and scattered distribution betokens its high antiquity. In general the slide car is employed for transporting hay and timber in mountain country; and it is of interest to find that in Sweden it is



[493]

Low-back car. Mourne Mountains

Fig. 60.

especially associated with the mountain dairies which are paralleled by the Irish booleys (Chapter 6). Scandinavian ethnologists have shown how areas which had the slide-car have become regions of the one-horse cart and have generally remained without the four-wheeled waggon. This applies with peculiar force to Ireland. (Pl. IV.)

The older style of two-wheeled cart is that known as the 493
"wheel" or "low-back" car, which survives in the same environments as the slide-car. I illustrate an example from the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down (Fig. 60). The solid disc wheels lie under the body of the car and are fixed to an axle,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred years. 493

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little " dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long " runners " which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or " trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a " box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a " soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate. [531] [492]

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the " two-wheeled " culture region. 493 178

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but 491

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 80.

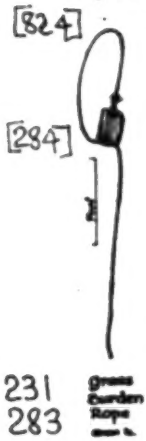


Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugán and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a "tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way: some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or "mell"), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply: finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. "Langles" and "burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuttings a long-handled graip is sometimes used, and the 314
smiths turned out special two-pronged pitching forks for the 413
purpose (Fig. 66). If the peat is soft a long-handled shovel is
employed instead. A barrow-load varies in capacity, for
instance it is 10 turves in parts of Antrim and 14 in Armagh. [493]
The difference depends on the dimensions of the turves as well
as the size of the barrow and the state of the bog surface:
turves range from about 22 inches by 4 by 5 to 10 inches by 4
by 3, but they shrink considerably as they dry.

The turf barrow is a low solid-wheeled archaic-looking 314
vehicle (Fig. 90) the details of its construction showing as 493
many adaptations to local conditions and traditions as the
slane itself. It is a compromise between two opposing needs—
a large wheel for ease of pushing over the rough bog surface
and a low chassis to facilitate loading and emptying, for the
barrow is merely tilted on one side by the spreader, the turves
slipping off and standing on end in serried rows to dry. The
barrow must be as light as possible: hence no iron is used in
its construction except for the axle-ends, and, perhaps, a
light tyre for the solid wheel or "trundle." In soft bogs the
trundle must be wide—as much as 5 inches—but three inches
is more usual. Its diameter ranges from 12 to 18 inches.
The legs of the barrow are always short and may be mere
lugs, or they may be absent, in which case there must be some
arrangement for enabling the handles to be gripped: they
are either perforated or upturned (Fig. 90). An interesting
variant which I have noticed around Athenry has the legs bent [492]
backwards in a curve to act as slides or runners. A curious
adaptation to soft bogland is recorded a century ago from Co. [481]
Mayo, where both horses and men were "shod with boards"
when working in the moss. Box-barrows are something used
to transport dried turf, or a "kish" may be placed on the
flat barrow. In Armagh "carrying baskets" are employed
(Fig. 91).

Little can be said here about the methods adopted to dry 314
the turf: the shapes and names of the various piles into which

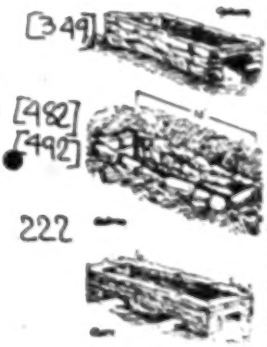
9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 100.
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.



Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, 415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of [491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a side-ways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies [243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

501 For water transport there are a good many boats of various descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

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[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are 492
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few
boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class
boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are
about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their
turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate [609]
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish

231 is said to be due to the expense of importing feedstuffs. Donkeys and Con-
[492] nemara ponies are kept as draft animals, and almost everything is conveyed in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was made in 1907 by a local carpenter from one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required, including lobster pots, fishing nets, furniture, doors, windows, and hand barrows, which consist of two shafts joined by slats and a single wheel in the rear, all of wood.

221 Digging and manuring of the land begins in late February, and seaweed is brought from the shore as needed. The potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's Day (March 17); oats, two to three weeks later; barley and mangolds at the end of April or in May. Most calves are born from March to May. In dry years peat is cut from May onwards, laid out to dry, and eventually stacked in ricks six feet high secured by large stones, or placed against a stone wall. Apart from routine work, there is little to do until the hay harvest, generally in August or September, though sometimes a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with the hope of a second crop in the autumn. Oats and barley are harvested in September, after which the main potato digging takes place, though some are dug earlier for the household. From October to late February, there is little to do except tend the stock, though some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under government schemes. Few farmers make the ricks of peat beside their houses so commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major aim of the Congested Districts Board, and from the eighteen-nineties to the

[p.207(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354
shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373]
were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse-
collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made [492]
partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342
is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the
chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft 353
is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In
Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231]
to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with
them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513]
the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352
the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-
west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

of a rath (farmstead) at Lissue, Co. Antrim, in 1946.[1] Its barrel- 234
shaped body has the unusual refinement of an oval mouth, designed for pouring, with an iron rim-mount over which a cloth could be tied. A central iron band has two rings attached, evidently for suspension. A century ago, that is a thousand years after the Lissue churn was in use, we know that butter was made not far away on the shores of Lough Neagh by swinging the churn to and fro, suspended from the roof timbers. The Lissue churn could also have been used to carry milk from the summer pastures to the homestead. There are stories in the Mourne Mountains of milk transported in this way which would turn to butter by the automatic churning of the rough journey home from the hills. Evidently the lidless churn is the older type, and I have seen large specimens in Donegal. It was pre- [492]
sumably from a churn of this kind, slung from a pony's back, that the Donegal child was observed 'peeping and screeching' as the pastoral cavalcade moved up to the summer booleys in the days before the Great Famine.[2]

The simplest form of churn dash, found along the west coast, 234
terminates in a wooden cross. A similar Norwegian dasher has 777
the ends of the cross joined with a sally ring, and a rope of cowhair is said to have been used for the purpose in Scotland. It was considered lucky to have the cross-pieces made of two different woods; indeed everything about the churn had to be made 'right'. In the whole business of handling milk luck was more important than labour, and butter-making in particular was a task fraught with unseen dangers. Often the butter would mysteriously refuse to break, and many were the precautions taken and the remedies sought. It seems that the old Irish method was to churn from the whole milk, and it was customary until recently to pour the skim milk into the churn along with the risen cream. It should be remembered, too, that the butterfat content was low, and that since many peasant farmers had no more than one cow at a time in milk, its quality would be more variable than the milk of a large herd. The unaccountable variations in the success of churning were widely attributed to the intervention of witches or fairies.

[1] G. Bersu, *U.J.A.*, X (1947), 30–58.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 8

492
493
342
291
285

1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

492
493
417

2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[Facing p. 113]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

seen on the small farms until after the Great Famine: 'the things called ploughs would only scratch the surface, a log of wood sharpened and shod with iron'.[1] This 'poorer sort of plough' was made of alder in Co. Londonderry.[2] Observers attributed the Irish addiction to cross-ploughing to the fact that the ribs of unploughed land could only be broken by this means. Small squarish cultivation plots and fields are a natural consequence of cross-ploughing. 407 241

It seems that even these light ploughs, quite incapable of penetrating lea ground, were pulled by three or four horses abreast, 'so weak and small are the horses'.[3] Thus 'coaring' (coaration) was necessary, though one suspects that tradition rather than need lay behind the large teams. In the seventeenth century four horses abreast pulled the plough by the tails in Co. Clare, 'which was the custom all over Ireland. The tackle and traces being made of gadds or withies of twigs twisted, would be broken to pieces otherwise . . . . But the horses being sensible stop until the ploughman lifts the plough over the rock.'[4] At the same time we find complaints from the midland counties that the native plough was 'heavy and unmanageable, distressing to men and horses.[5] Here we probably have to deal with the descendant of the heavy Anglo-Norman plough. 407 241 492

Unfortunately we have no details of the Irish *ard*. One would like to know, for instance, whether it turned the furrow or rather threw the earth—for it merely scratched the soil—to the left or to the right. It has been found that in certain parts of western Europe left-sided ploughs are traditional whereas, of course, the common plough is almost universally right-sided. Mr. Robert Aitken has traced the left-sided plough in a clearly defined area of south France and north-east Spain.[6] The explanation may be that in these areas cultivation was originally done with a foot plough, for which the right foot was used, so that the soil, as with the Scottish caschrom, was turned to the left, and that the plough when adopted became a traction- 407 241

[1]W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland* (1880), 20.
[2]G. V. Sampson, *Memoir* (1814), 290.
[3]W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. Sligo.
[4]*Dineley's Tour in Ireland* (1681), Ed. J. Graves, (1870), 162.
[5]W. Shaw Mason, 2 (1816), s.v. King's Co. and Queen's Co.
[6]R. Aitken, *Man*, 1953, 286.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

time large-scale hay-making developed it had to fit into a fixed rota of farm work which kept men busy in late July and August at flax-pulling and turf-carrying, so that the cocked hay had to wait. Today the baling machine is speeding up the process, but the bales, whether from the need of seasoning or from force of habit, are left piled in angular cocks scattered over the hayfield. 246

Carried at last to the haggard on rick-shifters or slipes—formerly on slide-cars or the backs of men and ponies—the hay is built into small circular stacks (pikes). As a protection against wind and rain they are thatched with rushes forthwith and roped (Fig. 52). Since the stacks are thatched before they have had time to settle, the pegged or scolloped thatch found in England is not used. Not only do ropes hold the thatch more securely but it is a simple matter to tighten them as the stack sinks. In the simplest form of roping, hanging stones are attached to the rope ends so that the adjustment is automatic. But where the roof of the stack is not rounded but conical a straw-rope is wrapped round in a spiral which can later be tightened by vertical ropes pegged into the lower part of the stack. One sees this spiral roping also in parts of western Britain. Several other patterns of roping are found, some making a complete network; and the shape of the stack also shows many regional variations (Fig. 52). The size and shape depend not only on local custom but to some extent on the weather and the condition of the hay. Small rounded stacks are most usual, for they are wind-resistant. They are characteristic too of much of Highland Britain from Caithness to Cornwall. [493] [492] [482] 246 284

The scythe has not entirely given way to the mowing machine on small farms in whose tiny fields it would anyhow be difficult to turn a machine. The Irish scythesmen, though not so well known as the spalpeens or reapers, had their brief day in the English harvest-fields, and those who remember working 'across the water' in the nineteenth century tell of great feats of piece-work. I was told of one heroic figure who could scythe seven acres in the day, 'and four lifters wouldn't lift after him'. Henry Stephens, in 1855, reckoned that the English labourer would scythe four acres of oats or barley in a ten-hour working day.[1] 246

[1]Quoted in E. C. Curwen, *Plough and Pasture* (1946), 98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLATE 12

501

1. Curraghs, the Aran Islands.

246
492
342

2. Dragging home the hay in the west of Ireland.

[Facing p. 161]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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491 when the making and repair of 'cross roads' became a public
493 charge it was done on the basis of baronies, and the Grand Juries—composed largely of landlords—became responsible, under the presentment system, for local road-making and repairing. Thus from about 1760 onwards a fairly close network of roads began to be established in the richer parts of the country—especially about the big demesnes—and the way was open for the more capacious spoke-wheeled cart which held its own until in our own day it is being replaced by the lorry and the tractor-trailer.

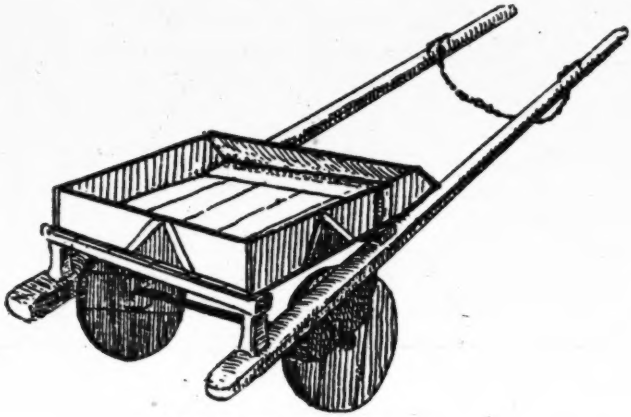

FIG. 55. Wheel-car, Co. Antrim.

175 In the face of abundant evidence as to the backwardness of
493 rural transport and the rarity of wheeled vehicles and made roads until quite recent times, it is startling to read of the prominence of chariotry and of the rapid movement of armies in the Irish legendary histories. In fact, up to date, the archaeological evidence which would clearly establish the use of chariots in early Celtic Ireland is scanty. There can be little doubt, however, that horse-drawn spoke-wheeled vehicles were a significant element in Celtic culture, and it is known that the Romans took into their language nearly a dozen Celtic names for horse-
● [492] drawn vehicles.[1] Such fragments of harness as have been re-

[1] E. M. Jope, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 57–60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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covered from early Celtic sites in Ireland suggest that the horse 175
was held in high regard and was perhaps reserved for pageants, 493
combats and ceremonies. The detailed evidence in the legendary [492]
histories of ancient Ireland for the existence of roads, however,
is clear. The fact that the Celtic roads are rarely traceable today [491]
is understandable in view of the physical conditions of the
country, especially the prevalence of obliterating bogs. Moreover the road system must have decayed with the decline of Celtic culture. In any case it is evident that the use of the chariot was confined to the highest castes, and that its humble relation the block-wheeled car was fated to outlast it. The finely-spoked wheeled vehicles of the Celtic invaders were as much out of place in Ireland as the great wagons which later overlords introduced from England. The block-wheeled car, if not previously known in Ireland, may have been the native response to the impressive magic of the Celtic wheel, or it may have reached this country with Celtic camp-followers. We shall see that it could have been developed from the slide-car which almost certainly preceded it in Europe. The term 'wheel-car' as used in Ireland refers to the block-wheeled car and is clearly meant to distinguish it from the wheel-less slide-car. The spoke-wheeled cart is a newcomer in most parts. Nevertheless there is evidence that a light spoke wheeled cart continued to be used in early Christian times: an example drawn chariot-wise by two horses is figured on the eighth century Ahenny Cross in Co. Tipperary. It seems that such light carts were used for personal transport, for example St. Sampson took one with him, according to an eleventh-century account of his travels, to carry his books across Cornwall on his way from Ireland to Brittany.[1] And the spoke-wheeled cart must have been known in the planted areas since the Middle Ages, so that it is very probable that in parts of the country the cart has had a continuous life since early Celtic times.

But we should first examine certain archaic methods of 492
transport which depend on the carrying power of beasts and [482]
men, or rather women, for in simple societies the bearers of
children are also the burden-bearers. The romance of rural

[1]O. G. S. Crawford, 'Western Seaways' in *Custom is King* (1936), 196.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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492 Ireland has so often been symbolized by a bare-footed colleen bashfully hiding behind a creel-carrying donkey that it comes as a shock to discover that the animal is a relative novelty in the Irish scene. There is no evidence of the use of the ass as a beast of burden in Ireland until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Professor Mahaffy, who wrote learnedly 'On the Introduction of the Ass as a Beast of Burden into Ireland',[1] pointed out that the little donkey was conquering Hibernia when the Great Duke was subduing Iberia. In fact asses came in to replace the Irish horses which were being drawn on in large numbers to maintain the British cavalry in the peninsular wars. Although they were apparently introduced, like so many 177 other novelties, by way of Scotland, they proved unsuited to the 492 comparative rigours of the climate of the northern coasts of Ireland, and it was in the west of the country that they fitted best into the physical and social environment. It is strange to reflect that a culture-trait so well adapted to a region which has ancient physical and human relations with Iberia should have been so long in reaching Lusitanian Ireland and should have got there by the back door, through Ulster.

Down to recent times, then, the horse—a pony, not a heavy 492 cart horse—was the universal draught animal and beast of 48 burden save where poverty or environmental difficulties imposed carrying duties on men, women and children. There were places such as soft bogs or slippery seashores where even pack-horses could not find a footing, and there went the women and children with their back-creels to carry the peats and sea-wrack. In spring, when the men were fully occupied with ridge-making, the transport of manure seems to have been the special task of the women, though in time the ass came to relieve them of this duty. The manure creels or pots (pardogs) of a fashion which has been recorded all along the Atlantic coastlands from Spain to Scotland, have a hinged or slip bottom which allows the load to be dropped where required (Fig. *56*). Nowadays the creels are hung in pairs on the donkey's wooden straddle (pack saddle), and in the west it is no uncommon sight to see convoys of asses so laden picking their way from the dung-hill to the fields. I have also seen hay being transported by hanging

[1] *P.R.I.A.*, 33 (1916–17), 530–8.

 [Text continues on p. 170]

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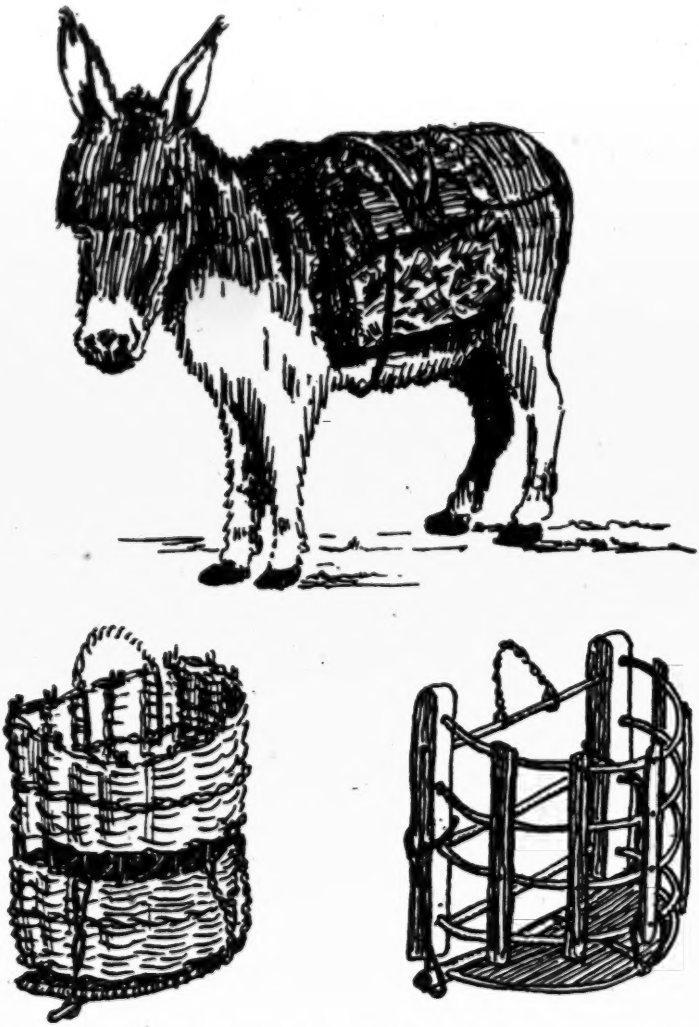

FIG. 56. Ass with straw pads and straddle, Co. Fermanagh. Creels with slip-bottoms for manure, Co. Galway and wrack, Co. Down.

492 tied bundles on to the straddle-pins, and both sheaves and firewood are occasionally carried on light V-shaped wooden
482 frames. A similar carrying frame is known from Spain. There are several varieties of straddle, and a pattern found on Clare Island, in which one side engages in a hole bored through the
[171] other side, finds a parallel in the Shetland Islands and among the Lapps of north Norway: it could be of Norwegian origin. For long hauls the pack animal was undoubtedly the chief means of transport until the coming of the spoke-wheeled cart. For short distances the burden rope (Chapter XV) or the carrying creel was more convenient and it is still not uncommon to see the back-creel, the carrying basket or the hand barrow used for transporting turf or wrack over rough, soft or slippery ground (Fig. 57).

493 In some parts of the country, especially along the east coast,
483 a form of sled fitted with a box body is kept for the transport

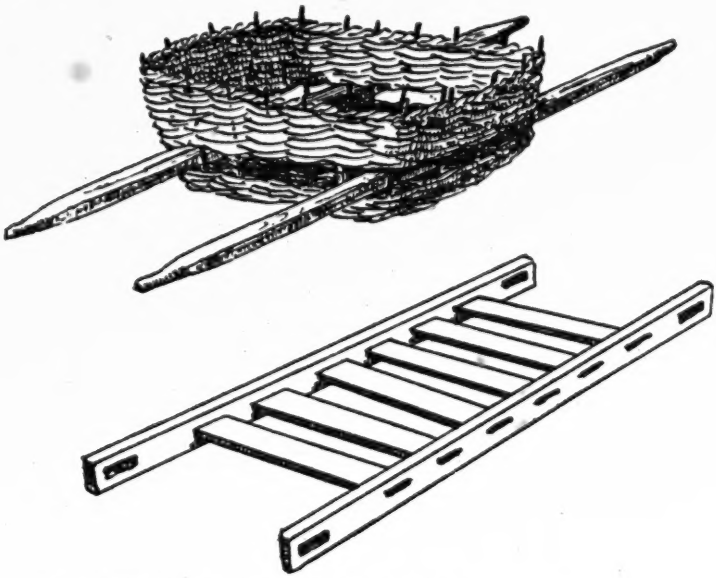

FIG. 57. Turf-basket, Co. Armagh and hand barrow, for carrying nets, Co. Antrim.

493 the block wheel was independently invented in north-western Europe, or at least adapted from the log roller as a native response to the novelty of the spoked wheel.

A feature of the Ulster slide-cars which distinguishes them both from Scots and Welsh examples and from most other slide-cars is the provision of separate wooden runners or 'shoes' which are pegged to the ends of the shafts and can be replaced when worn out. They have the effect of reducing somewhat the slope of the platform and its load. Formerly a special slide-car was kept for carrying corn, the sheaves being supported by a [171] hooped frame of osiers which finds parallels in Sweden and Finland. Another archaic feature was the harness, which was [492] constructed, until quite recent times, entirely of wood, straw and withies (Fig. 69).

Slide-cars, 'strange survivals from the twilight of history',[1] 171 are found not only in Highland Britain and the Baltic lands but 493 in many parts of east central Europe, in Siberia, China, Siam and the Indian Deccan. Such a distribution points to a dispersal in high antiquity, probably from western Asia. There is no direct archaeological evidence of ancient slide-cars but it has been plausibly argued that the well-known 'cart tracks' of Malta were made by slide-cars some 3,000 years ago.[2] This humble vehicle is well suited to simple societies, whose transport needs are few, and to country, especially hilly country, without made roads, where the wheel would be out of place.

In Ireland the wheel-car clings to the same districts as the 493 slide-car and serves much the same purpose, but it may occasionally be used for longer journeys by road, for example to take an animal to the fair. (Slide-cars are very injurious to roads and were driven off them by ordinances against their [494] use on the highways). On steep slopes the wheels, being secured to a rotating axle, act as a brake on each other. Measuring only some two feet in diameter, they are composed of three segments of wood dowelled together as in the oldest known Mesopotamian wheels, and shod with an iron hoop. They revolve under the car inside the shafts, so that the body must be raised to give clearance. It is supported by vertical struts morticed into the

[1] A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man* (1898), 161.
[2] H. S. Gracie, *Antiquity* (1954), 91–98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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spectacle design was retained but in time instead of being panelled it was merely painted on the front-board. In Ulster carts of this kind, lacking the tilting device of the Scots prototype, have been made until recent years by many local wheelwrights, and it is interesting to notice how the original panelled design, which is present on old specimens, has been replaced by painted motifs which break up into many varieties, some of which are shown in Fig. 61. Mr. Tebbutt illustrates similar sequences of derived decoration on English carts. 493 177 531

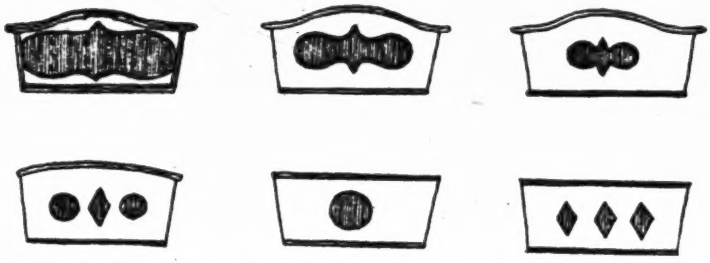

FIG. 61. The 'fiddle' design on the Scots cart in north-eastern Ireland. The front-boards illustrated are all from Co. Antrim and suggest both the derivation and the deterioration of the design. The upper examples are panelled and painted, the lower simply painted. The recess in the 'cape' of the first example is for the horse's tail.

The Scots cart with its box body, ideal for holding sacks of corn or potatoes, is not suited for carrying home crops, and both in Scotland and Ireland it is supplemented by a specialized harvest carrier known as the rick-shifter. This is a large platform with low wheels, fitted with a windlass by which the cock of hay or hut of corn is dragged into position on the platform. It is often dispensed with in moving hay cocks to the haggard, for they can easily be pulled or 'traced' along the ground simply by harnessing a horse to a chain placed around the base of the cock, a method which was used in the eighteenth century (Pl. 12). Six bullocks 'yoked as for ploughing' were employed for this purpose in Co. Meath.[1] The rick-shifter appears to have evolved 493 177 [492]

[1]W. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 217. See also J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, loc. cit.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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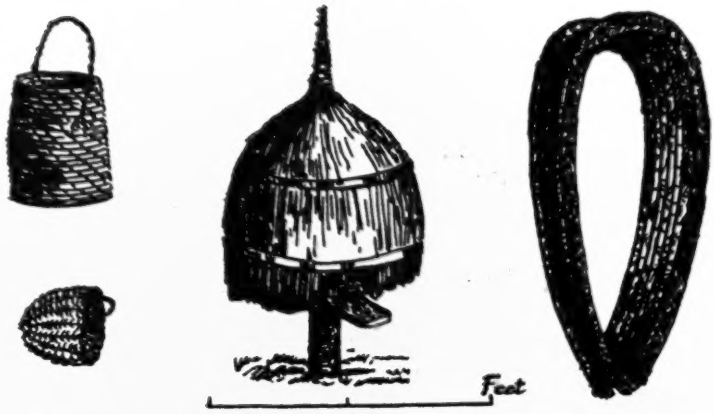

FIG. 69. Coiled food-basket, Aran Islands; calf muzzle, Co. Clare; beehive and horse-collar, Co. Antrim; all of straw except the calf muzzle.

some large rectangular examples seem to be made of built-up plait as described below. The distribution of coiled basketry in western Europe suggests that it is an extension northwards from south European and African regions where it is a richly developed art. A straw underthatch from Co. Down—the only one of its kind I have seen in the north—was made in a simple weaving technique, using straw ropes. But the commonest method of making mats was by what I have called built-up plaiting; beginning with a straw rope twisted on itself, wisps of straw are inserted in every third twist and their ends worked into plait in combination with the combined ends of the previous wisp. Fresh handfuls of straw are regularly inserted into the plaits. They are given different names in various parts of the country; for example, tates in Antrim, kets in Down, and gleogs in Meath.

Such mats can be made of any desired size, and in the past they served many purposes, as hangings to mark off bedrooms or bed alcoves, as linings for the wattled doors of houses, and as mattresses. Their long-continued use with wattled doors on houses of mud or stone carries the suggestion that wattled [342] houses of the better class may once have been lined with straw mats serving as draught screens and taking the place of the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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hanging skins, carpets or tapestries of other cultures. Today 285
the most familiar use of the plaited mats is as creel mats on the [342]
backs of asses (Fig. 56). When creels are dispensed with and
the load is placed directly on the ass a simple 'sugan' is some- 285
times made—a ring of straw some fifteen inches in diameter 492
bound with a fine straw rope. This is a variant of the head-wreath once widely worn in western Europe as a carrying pad. Straw collars—made entirely of straw and not merely straw-stuffed—have so recently gone out of use that I have seen several decayed specimens on hill farms in the north, and the art of making them is not forgotten. In their construction several oval rings of three-strand straw plait are stitched together (Fig. 69). Unlike the ordinary Irish horse collar, they are, of course, not made to open; they were carefully shaped to hold flattish wooden hames.

Many varieties of baskets of straw rushes and other pliant 285
materials which were once made in the homes are now known
only by name: for example, the puckan of built-up plaiting which 415
held seed potatoes in Co. Down, or, hung in the stable, served as a nest for pigeons. They had short lives, and few specimens have survived, so that we shall never know the full range of such domestic skills. On the other hand fancy basket work, using both whole and split fine sally rods, has probably long been a specialized craft, and has clung to certain districts such as the shores of Lough Neagh and the Suir Valley. As in these areas so all around the coasts of the island it is a craft which accompanies fishing skills. The long-line fishermen of the sea coasts have traditionally made their own line and fish baskets, but it is only inland communities such as those mentioned who have become commercial basket-makers, possibly because their fishing was more seasonal than that of the sea folk. Their products are now mainly baskets for carrying potatoes or turf (Fig. 71). In a special class are the large creels and carrying baskets made of hazel or black sally which were generally employed for farm transport before wheeled carts were adopted. In many districts these were made by itinerant creel-makers who were held in very low esteem, next above the hackler and the tinker. The method of construction, in which the standard rods are stuck upright in the ground, stamps the craft as being of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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222 described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting
461 and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful
[482] on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

226 Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland
[492] and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed
[241] lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable
[517] gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters,
[462] when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2]T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[4]A. B., *The Roscos in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]

438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

491 494 496 Today the roads both great and small provide all-weather routes for every kind of local traffic. They carry many lorries and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad — the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

491 The main roads are much more direct. They follow divides and occasionally cut right across high bog country. Today they negotiate bogs, which once would have prohibited any sort of transportation during wet weather, by dint of side ditches and high crowns of gravel and dirt. Over high country they have better foundations and wander in comparatively straight fashion through the country.

491 653 At various points along these main roads there are branches today penetrating the countryside. These are rougher and simpler constructions of crushed stones taken from local quarries, leased by the County Council. The stone is broken by laborers and small farmers of the district through which the road runs. In the case of the smaller roads each landholder is responsible for the bit of the road that runs by his land. "Road metal," as the crushed stone is called, is spread during the late autumn, winter, or very early spring. When the weather is dry, in summer, a fine white dust rises after every vehicle. But in the rainy months of spring and winter the roads are soft and full of chuck holes, and new stones must be laid down. Then the heavy [493] iron-tired carts of the farmers break them further and press them into the soft roadbeds.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction. 491 [731] 361 491 [487]

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics. 491 653

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler. 493 494

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

493 two or three motor cars for important guests and the prin-
494 cipals. At election time the local political organizations of the national parties provide free transport to the polls for the old and lame. In all else the motor car is the mark of the townsman, either the produce-collector in his lorry or the man of influence on a jaunt.

493 Even at such times of high ceremony as weddings, funerals,
494 and elections the country people still use the horse and
554 trap or sidecar. This is the traditional mode of polite travel, and it retains its popularity today. The trap is used only by the whole family or by its adult farm-owning members. It is used only in connection with activities of importance which mark their own status and those to whom they travel. It is always used at funerals and marriages. It sometimes transports all the family in Sunday best to church. It is brought out to honor a visitor or announce the arrival or departure of a friend. And it is used occasionally on visits of state to the town. Sunday clothes always go with it. It would be a very big farmer who used the trap in all his trips to town.

493 The vehicle-of-all-work, and the one on which produce
494 goes to market and shop-bought goods come back, is the common two-wheeled cart. The farmers call it a "car." With the addition of side boards it becomes a "creel" and can carry small livestock, turf, and many another bulky object. Occasionally it appears on Sunday, but one never sees it in times of high ceremony such as in a funeral procession. It is the vehicle of everyday working life. Even the younger members of the family may use it sometimes in going about their work. But it is most often to be seen in the hands of the man of the house.

The ass and car, on the other hand, ordinarily has no such eminence. The donkey cart is a woman's vehicle. It takes her and her farm produce to and from the crossroad center. In a town market it is no accident that one can find the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets. 493 494

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. 481 At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields [487] in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add 493 perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just be- 494 ginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only 492 adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related 000

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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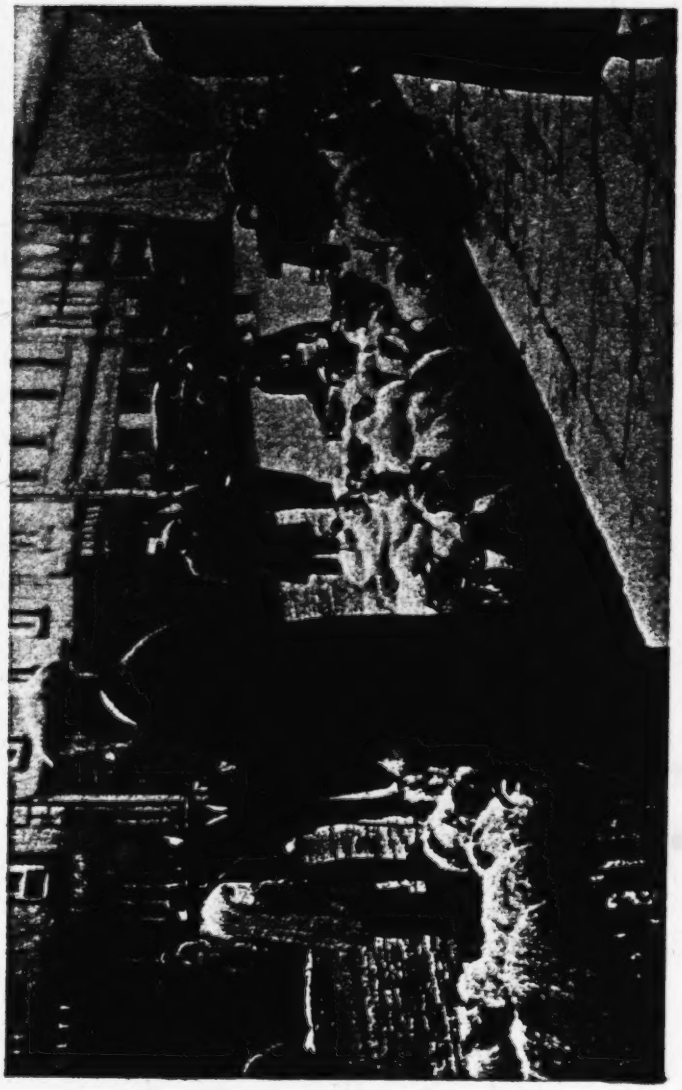


SHEEP FAIR IN A MARKET TOWN

[facing p. 300]

764 578 and sheep and horses being driven across to fairs at either side. The hollow is still named Eisc na gCorp (The Hollow of the Corpses), but travellers over the new road, which by-passed the hollow, cannot see it except they are told about it and search for it. To get back to my father's story: the Kerrymen, a hundred or more strong, had lined the boundary-line with their weapons ready for action and, as the Corkmen approached the flat stone, the Kerry leader ordered them to lay down the coffin on it.

"*Leagaidh síos annsan anois í! Ná téighidh a thuille!*"[1] he ordered, indicating the stone with his stick.

The Corkmen obeyed the order, and the Kerrymen then took the coffin on their shoulders and bore it down the mountainside into their own territory and along the six miles of road to the graveyard at Kilmackillogue. No fighting took place at the border-line on that day. But it was not always so on previous occasions. I heard the old people of the parish say that fights took place in former years when funerals crossed the boundary at Leac na gCorp, and that some of those engaged had been killed.

I know of three other boundary-lines where similar precautions were taken against those who carried the coffin to the border-line forcing their way across, while still carrying the remains. The first was at Glaise'n Fhineáin, a stream some miles to the west of Leac na gCorp, in the Béara peninsula, whose waters separate the counties of Cork and Kerry. The second was at Barrlinn, an old mountain road between counties Cork and Kerry, which ran southwards from Kilgarvan in the latter county to Bantry in the former; a cairn lies just beside the boundary-line where funerals halted and bearers were exchanged; fights are said to have taken place here in former times when funerals crossed the border. These two boundary-lines, as well as that described in more detail at Leac na gCorp, are all fairly close together, and all three are at the dividing-lines of parishes as well as counties. I have been told of still another boundary-line where fights took place on funeral days. This is the mountain pass known as Mullach Bhéal in the Dingle peninsula in Kerry, over which funerals passed in former times (before the Connor Hill road was built). These funerals were either on their way westwards from the parish of Clochán to some graveyard in the parishes to the west, or *vice versa*. Old people in that area tell of coffins even having been broken at this point during the attempt to force the boundary-line, and a large cairn marks the spot. Even when this old route was by-passed by the building of the Connor Hill road, and funerals followed the new route, the men from either side who assembled at the boundary insisted that the coffin be handed over to them at that point, and they carried it into their own parish. [493] When carts replaced shoulder-bearers at a later date, the coffin had to be transferred from the cart which had carried it to the border to one from the other parish.

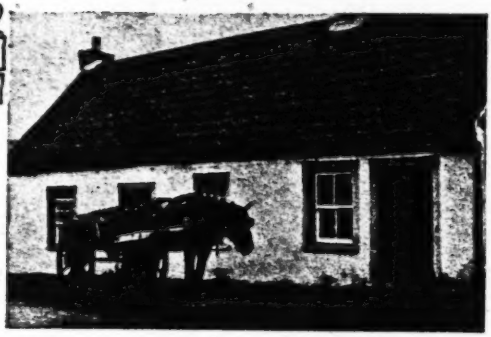
The reason given in more recent times for the insistence on the change of bearers being made at the border was that the men of the second parish (to which the funeral was going) did not wish it to be said by the men of the first parish that their assistance was needed to carry the coffin further; they were strong enough to bear the coffin into and through their own parish without any help from outsiders. This reason is hardly the main one, however, and is likely to have been put forward only when the original reason had been forgotten.

[1] "Lay it down there now! Don't go any further!"

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Plate III

342
[492]
[493]



THATCHED ROOF SECURED WITH PEGGED FIR-ROPES

N. ANTRIM

SCOLLOP THATCH OF MARROM GRASS

MAGILLIGAN CO. DERRY

ROPED THATCH OF RYE STRAW

ARTICLAVE, CO. DERRY

[Facing p. 57]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 246 ing the hay to the haggard presents itself, quick advantage can be taken of the weather by transporting the cocks as single loads by the simple process of putting a rope round the bottom and hauling them with a horse or two to the haggard. I have also seen a long iron runner placed under the cock, [493] which is thus " sliped " home, but on larger farms a hay-cart is employed. The Irish hay-cart is a specialized vehicle, used for no other purpose : its low platform can be backed against the cock, which is then drawn on to it by a winding gear. This is an interesting example of the versatility which the Irish have shown in developing the two-wheeled cart, their primary mode of transport (Chapter 12). When other horse-drawn implements are employed in hay-making they are frequently [407] old-fashioned in their sturdy simplicity, for example the wooden hay rake or " sweep " with its long ash teeth.

246 In the haggard (" hay-guard ") the stacks are built on prepared foundations of stones and heather or bushes which " draw the wind in under." Sometimes one sees them built [171] around an upright pole, as in the Tyrol and elsewhere abroad. The stacks are either circular (" pikes " in Co. Antrim) or oblong (" havels ") : there are advantages and disadvantages attaching to both shapes and it is doubtful whether, as has been suggested, there is any correlation with regional house-shapes and types. But local styles and methods of finishing the stack need working out. The rush thatch is secured by hay-ropes crossed and recrossed in various patterns or applied as a continuous spiral (Fig. 51).

248 Flax, probably one of the oldest Irish crops, was grown very widely before the Industrial Revolution brought a concentration in the north-east. Small patches are still grown in Donegal for the sole purpose of providing the thatch, the tradition of flax cultivation surviving long after the home industries of spinning and weaving died out. Though mechanical pullers are now being adopted, the flax crop, which must be drawn out, roots and all, is one that lends itself to [476] hand labour. Teams of 8 or a dozen pullers—and sometimes as many as thirty—work together, the men being exchanged or "swapped" between neighboring farms, and a day of flax-pulling traditionally ended with dancing.

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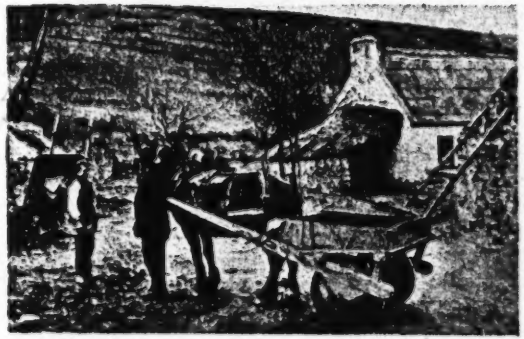
9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Antrim

SLIDE CAR WITH KISH ; STRAW HARNESS

LOW-BACK CAR



BOX-CAR WITH DISC WHEELS

Plate IV.
ALL FROM GLENS OF ANTRIM

SPOKE-WHEELED CAR

[Facing p. 105]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XII.

CARTS AND ROADS.

• 493 It has been claimed that the humble vehicles of certain regions of survival such as the Glens of Antrim represent an evolutionary sequence, the assumption being that the sledge or "slipe" was developed locally into the slide-car and the latter into the solid-wheeled car until the stage of the spoke-wheeled Scotch cart was reached. This argument ignores the wide distribution of similar means of transport in countries overseas, and the extent to which simple ideas are diffused from a common centre. It would be strange indeed if that centre were to be located on the extreme periphery of Europe when parallel forms of transport are found as far away as China. Nevertheless the Irish vehicles are of great ethnological interest, and they have survived because they are adapted to the soft turf bogs or the steep mountain sides. In more recent times the two-wheeled cart has blossomed into several specialized means of transport such as the side-car, the long-car, and the hay-cart or rick-lifter (Chapter 11). The latter is also found in Lowland Scotland and may possibly have originated there.

482 But something must first be said about the still humbler transport agents such as the burden-rope, the back-creel and side-creel, the use of which has greatly declined, however, during the last half century. The two former show to what extent men and women, but especially women, act as beasts of

[p. 105]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

482 burden in Ireland as among other peasantries. The burden-
rope, constructed of rushes, horse-hair or grass-rope (Chap.
[283] 14 and Figs. 79 & 80), was employed for carrying surpris-
ingly large loads of hay, corn or bushes—" as much as a pony
could draw," I have been told—while the burden-creel, slung
over one shoulder or worn like a rucksack by women who
would thus have their hands free for knitting, was mainly used
for carrying turf. Nor should we omit the wheel-barrow, both
[493] box and turf types (Chapter 15 and Fig. 90), the hand
barrow (for loads of stones and also for fish and nets) and the
two-man turf creel (Fig. 91).

493 Side-creels are the panniers attached to an ass or small
492 pony. Most of them are constructed with a hinged bottom
so that the contents of turf, wrack, gravel or manure are
automatically unloaded (Fig. 58). The sides are broken by
ornamental " windows " which give a handhold for lifting and
help to lighten the creel. Comparative study would reveal
several regional and specialized forms of creel, and I have
observed different methods of attachment even in neighbouring
valleys. They are generally slung on wooden pegs driven
into a roof-shaped crutch or straddle (Fig. 56) which rests on
two straw mats. In the example figured from Tuam (Fig. 57)
the straw mats are pegged together, and the straddle is
strengthened by two osier ties, to one of which the tail-sugán
is fastened. When hay or corn is being carried the creels may
be dispensed with and the " bottles " or sheaves hung on the
straddle pegs with an osier ring. Alternatively the creels are
tied together with ropes which pass over a thick straw pad laid
along the animal's spine, and the straddle is not used. The
creels are D-shaped and can be made of openwork, for turf
or wrack, or of closely-woven sides for manure. We shall
have something more to say about their construction in
Chapter 14.

Fig. 56.

493 Among horse-drawn vehicles the sledge or slipe is very
generally employed for transporting stones, manure, or turf
and also for conveying the plough and harrows from one field
to another. I illustrate the common slipe of Co. Antrim

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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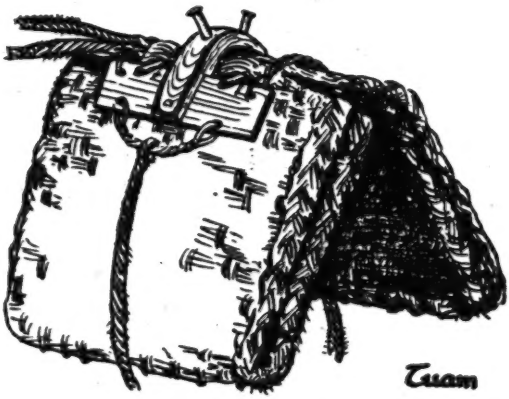


Straw pads & straddle for Creels

Fig. 57.

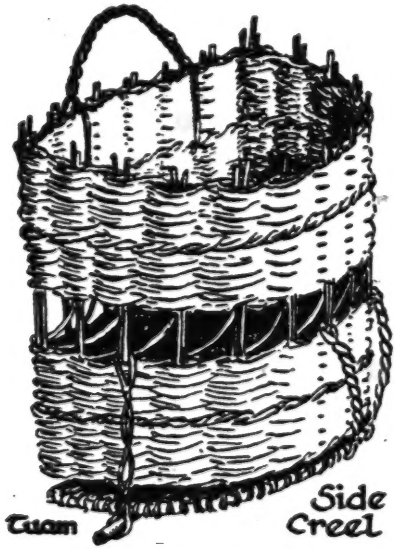


Fig. 58.

[p. 107]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 (Fig. 59): the type used for drawing manure in Co. Down has the runners set close together so that it can be easily tipped over to empty. An even simpler sledge described as a "triangular framework" is said to have been used for dragging boulders out of fields. I have not seen this, but a similar "forked runner sledge" is known in Sweden.

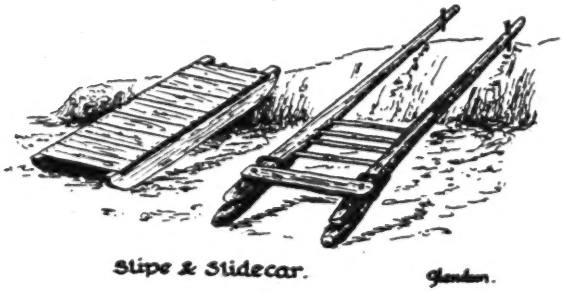


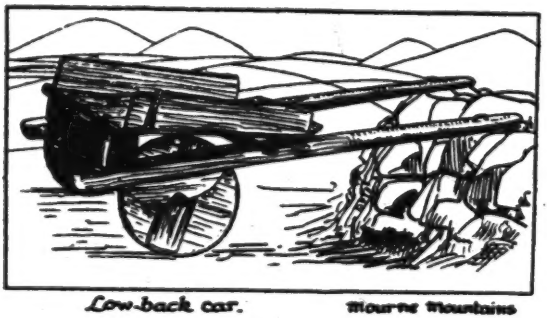
Fig. 59.

The slide-car (Fig. 59), now confined to a few hilly districts such as the Antrim Glens, was almost universal a century ago. It consists of two strong poles or shafts—bog timber was often used for the purpose—the ends of which slide on the ground. Attached to the ends by wooden pegs and an iron ring (called the "bowman") are short pieces of hardwood which take the wear and tear, though nowadays thin iron runners are often substituted. The shafts are tied together by cross-beams making a rough platform on which rests the wicker "kish," resembling the smaller creels but oval in shape, and like them, adapted to carry either turf or manure. For other loads such as hay or timber the kish is dispensed with. Although they will carry but small weights they can be taken on the roughest of moorland tracks and down slopes of incredible steepness.
492 The harness of the slide-car pony was until recent years
493 made entirely of wood and straw apart from a bit and halter for leading purposes. The straw collar (Chapter 14) was fitted with wooden hames attached to the shafts by short sugán

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

traces. The shafts were also tied by straw ropes to the pegs 492
of a straddle which rested on a back sugán secured in turn by 493
a tail rope of straw. Bridles and halters were sometimes made of horse hair.

The slide car, like so many of the Irish relics we are 171
considering, was found not long ago in the Scottish Highlands and is still used in central Wales. It is common in the Baltic lands and far afield through the mountain country of Europe and the Siberian tundra; and its wide and scattered distribution betokens its high antiquity. In general the slide car is employed for transporting hay and timber in mountain country; and it is of interest to find that in Sweden it is



[493]

Low-back car. Mourne Mountains

Fig. 60.

especially associated with the mountain dairies which are paralleled by the Irish booleys (Chapter 6). Scandinavian ethnologists have shown how areas which had the slide-car have become regions of the one-horse cart and have generally remained without the four-wheeled waggon. This applies with peculiar force to Ireland. (Pl. IV.)

The older style of two-wheeled cart is that known as the 493
"wheel" or "low-back" car, which survives in the same environments as the slide-car. I illustrate an example from the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down (Fig. 60). The solid disc wheels lie under the body of the car and are fixed to an axle,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 now of iron but formerly of wood, that rotates with them. The wheels are so small—little more than two feet in diameter—that the floor of the car has to be raised up behind, and it carries such a small load that the number of horses in Ireland is said to have been considerably reduced when the spoke-wheeled cart took its place. In the 18th century "wheel-cars were used throughout the kingdom" in town and country alike: the Dublin "noddies" were of this type, and according to illustrations published in the early 18 hundreds the driver rode on the horse's rump. The low-backed car is now generally fitted with sides to make a "box car," but in former days it carried a kish of the kind used with the slide car. It should be noticed that until roads and tracks were [491] metalled—mostly within the last two centuries—the disc wheel had the advantage over the spoked wheel in soft loose ground. Even "superior farmers" in Donegal had only low-back cars as late as 1821, and we may repeat the statement made in Chapter 6 that there was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one Donegal parish in 1837. The slide [177] car and the creel did all the carrying. In the Glens of Antrim, too, the wheel-car was apparently something of a novelty about that time. An old man told me that his grandmother remembered the first car seen in her valley.

It must not be assumed from this that wheeled vehicles [401] were unknown in ancient Ireland: the literature suggests that they were in regular use but doubtless confined to the wealthier classes and districts. On analogy with other parts of north-western Europe the wheel was already known in Bronze Age Ireland. It is wrong to assume that the wheel was "invented" by the Irish peasants who adapted it to their slide cars. The disc and in turn the spoked wheel are ancient discoveries which came into use gradually as social conditions and road-making improved, and it was natural that the slide car should keep its form though lifted off the ground. Although we cannot accept the theory of local "evolution" for the spoke-wheeled cart, it is none the less clear that local experience controlled the details of its construction when it became

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred years. 493

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little " dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long " runners " which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or " trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a " box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a " soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate. [531] [492]

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the " two-wheeled " culture region. 493 178

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but 491

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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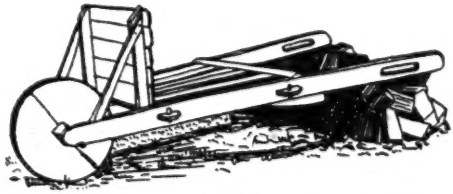
413

drawal of the blade, and the expanded socket acts in the same way. An interesting method of hafting is found in the "diamond" breast spade of East Galway (Fig. 88) in which the handle is fitted by soaking it to expand and grip the diamond-shaped perforations in the socket. The flat breast spade has to make two separate cuts before a turf is detached from the face. It has a short handle the length of which, about 2 ft., is adjusted to the length of the user's arm.

An experienced slanesman works with astonishing precision which recalls the steady ticking of a clock, his

[493]

Fig. 89.
Top two are breast slanes.



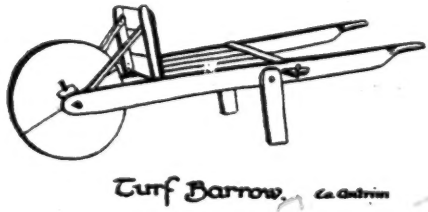


Fig. 90.

strong thrusts alternating with little jabs, designed to clean the edge of the spade, which remind the onlooker of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the smith's hammer between his blows. Similarly the co-operation between slanesman, pitcher and spreader, or "holer," is a delightful thing to watch. But the work is hard and relentless. The severed turves may be placed directly on the barrow from the spade, or lifted off by hand two at a time and either loaded or pitched to a third hand who places them on the barrow. On deep

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cuttings a long-handled graip is sometimes used, and the 314
smiths turned out special two-pronged pitching forks for the 413
purpose (Fig. 66). If the peat is soft a long-handled shovel is employed instead. A barrow-load varies in capacity, for instance it is 10 turves in parts of Antrim and 14 in Armagh. [493]
The difference depends on the dimensions of the turves as well as the size of the barrow and the state of the bog surface: turves range from about 22 inches by 4 by 5 to 10 inches by 4 by 3, but they shrink considerably as they dry.

The turf barrow is a low solid-wheeled archaic-looking 314
vehicle (Fig. 90) the details of its construction showing as 493
many adaptations to local conditions and traditions as the slane itself. It is a compromise between two opposing needs—a large wheel for ease of pushing over the rough bog surface and a low chassis to facilitate loading and emptying, for the barrow is merely tilted on one side by the spreader, the turves slipping off and standing on end in serried rows to dry. The barrow must be as light as possible: hence no iron is used in its construction except for the axle-ends, and, perhaps, a light tyre for the solid wheel or "trundle." In soft bogs the trundle must be wide—as much as 5 inches—but three inches is more usual. Its diameter ranges from 12 to 18 inches. The legs of the barrow are always short and may be mere lugs, or they may be absent, in which case there must be some arrangement for enabling the handles to be gripped: they are either perforated or upturned (Fig. 90). An interesting variant which I have noticed around Athenry has the legs bent [492]
backwards in a curve to act as slides or runners. A curious adaptation to soft bogland is recorded a century ago from Co. [481]
Mayo, where both horses and men were "shod with boards" when working in the moss. Box-barrows are something used to transport dried turf, or a "kish" may be placed on the flat barrow. In Armagh "carrying baskets" are employed (Fig. 91).

Little can be said here about the methods adopted to dry 314
the turf: the shapes and names of the various piles into which

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 blackthorn shillelagh. Trailing the long coat or "trusty"
786 was a recognized invitation for a fight.
578 To the onlooker it appears as though the business of selling is itself in the nature of a fight, such are the hearty and
443 resounding slappings of open hands up and down the street. Then follows the prolonged argument, the cut and thrust of keen bargainers in a circle of interested onlookers, over the amount of "luck money" to be given back to the seller. It is an age-old ritual far removed from the mechanical sale of a pen of cattle at an auction. The establishment of auction sales and latterly of marketing boards not only undermines the business of the country town, but threatens to destroy the intricate fabric which binds together a thousand homesteads in the intercourse of fair day. It is a sad commentary on rural development that in recent years "dole-days" have brought as many people to town as "fair-days."

[493]

Fig. 110. Fair Day.
A bargain is being struck on the left.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(C.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Doghertys, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(D.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(E.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dennistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. 463 241 There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. [351] The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct. [412]

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [407] [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

231 is said to be due to the expense of im-
[492] porting feedstuffs. Donkeys and Con-
nemara ponies are kept as draft ani-
mals, and almost everything is conveyed
in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was
made in 1907 by a local carpenter from
one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required,
including lobster pots, fishing nets, fur-
niture, doors, windows, and hand bar-
rows, which consist of two shafts joined
by slats and a single wheel in the rear,
all of wood.

221 Digging and manuring of the land
begins in late February, and seaweed is
brought from the shore as needed. The
potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's
Day (March 17); oats, two to three
weeks later; barley and mangolds at the
end of April or in May. Most calves
are born from March to May. In dry
years peat is cut from May onwards,
laid out to dry, and eventually stacked
in ricks six feet high secured by large
stones, or placed against a stone wall.
Apart from routine work, there is little
to do until the hay harvest, generally in
August or September, though sometimes
a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with
the hope of a second crop in the autumn.
Oats and barley are harvested in Sep-
tember, after which the main potato
digging takes place, though some are
dug earlier for the household. From
October to late February, there is little
to do except tend the stock, though
some men build walls four feet high at
[653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under gov-
ernment schemes. Few farmers make
the ricks of peat beside their houses so
commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch
it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major
aim of the Congested Districts Board,
and from the eighteen-nineties to the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

252 As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the
262 price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America,
that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline
171 in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial
baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly
recent development virtually confined to the large towns, especially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads. We should probably make an exception of the English-settled parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargy. Dublin and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some
[256] seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, similarly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost
[493] unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life: its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
262 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully
252 inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread. The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
[857] and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children, they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 8

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1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

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2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[facing p. 113]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Fermanagh
County Antrim

PLATE 9

314
516
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1. Cutting turf (underfooting) in a Co. Fermanagh bog.

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2. Building a peat stack, Co. Antrim.

[facing p.144]

time large-scale hay-making developed it had to fit into a fixed rota of farm work which kept men busy in late July and August at flax-pulling and turf-carrying, so that the cocked hay had to wait. Today the baling machine is speeding up the process, but the bales, whether from the need of seasoning or from force of habit, are left piled in angular cocks scattered over the hayfield. 246

Carried at last to the haggard on rick-shifters or slipes—formerly on slide-cars or the backs of men and ponies—the hay is built into small circular stacks (pikes). As a protection against wind and rain they are thatched with rushes forthwith and roped (Fig. 52). Since the stacks are thatched before they have had time to settle, the pegged or scolloped thatch found in England is not used. Not only do ropes hold the thatch more securely but it is a simple matter to tighten them as the stack sinks. In the simplest form of roping, hanging stones are attached to the rope ends so that the adjustment is automatic. But where the roof of the stack is not rounded but conical a straw-rope is wrapped round in a spiral which can later be tightened by vertical ropes pegged into the lower part of the stack. One sees this spiral roping also in parts of western Britain. Several other patterns of roping are found, some making a complete network; and the shape of the stack also shows many regional variations (Fig. 52). The size and shape depend not only on local custom but to some extent on the weather and the condition of the hay. Small rounded stacks are most usual, for they are wind-resistant. They are characteristic too of much of Highland Britain from Caithness to Cornwall. [493] [492] [482] 246 284

The scythe has not entirely given way to the mowing machine on small farms in whose tiny fields it would anyhow be difficult to turn a machine. The Irish scythesmen, though not so well known as the spalpeens or reapers, had their brief day in the English harvest-fields, and those who remember working 'across the water' in the nineteenth century tell of great feats of piece-work. I was told of one heroic figure who could scythe seven acres in the day, 'and four lifters wouldn't lift after him'. Henry Stephens, in 1855, reckoned that the English labourer would scythe four acres of oats or barley in a ten-hour working day.[1] 246

[1]Quoted in E. C. Curwen, *Plough and Pasture* (1946), 98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XIII

CARS AND CARTS

PEASANT communities concerned primarily with livestock 493
which can be moved on the hoof have little need for elaborate
means of transport. Long-tried devices adapted to the difficulties [489]
of the terrain continue to be used even in this age of tractors, and Ireland can show a remarkable variety of archaic farm vehicles of simple types. The heavy lumbering wagon would be out of place and out of scale in this environment. It is included in medieval inventories of manors and monasteries but it never took hold of the country, and although some landlords re-introduced English farm wagons in the eighteenth century, they were soon 'laid aside'.[1] The common Irish car was better adapted to the needs and skills of the people as well as to the condition of the roads.

The Irish low-back car, which is not yet extinct, is a light vehicle fitted with block wheels rigidly attached to a rotating axle (Fig. 55). Arthur Young commented that the loads they carried were 'such as an Englishman would be ashamed to take in a wheelbarrow'.[2] Yet he praised them because they required only one horse and did little damage to the roads. Prior to the eighteenth century there were very few roads except for those connecting the towns, and it seems that even the humble low-back cars were rare outside the urban spheres. For farm-work the wheel-less slide-car was used almost everywhere, supplemented by sledges, panniers, back-creels, and burden-ropes. It 491
was progressive landlords who initiated, in the interests of the 493
new agriculture, the construction of roads on their estates; and

[1]A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 22.
[2]ibid., 2, 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

491 when the making and repair of 'cross roads' became a public
493 charge it was done on the basis of baronies, and the Grand Juries—composed largely of landlords—became responsible, under the presentment system, for local road-making and repairing. Thus from about 1760 onwards a fairly close network of roads began to be established in the richer parts of the country—especially about the big demesnes—and the way was open for the more capacious spoke-wheeled cart which held its own until in our own day it is being replaced by the lorry and the tractor-trailer.

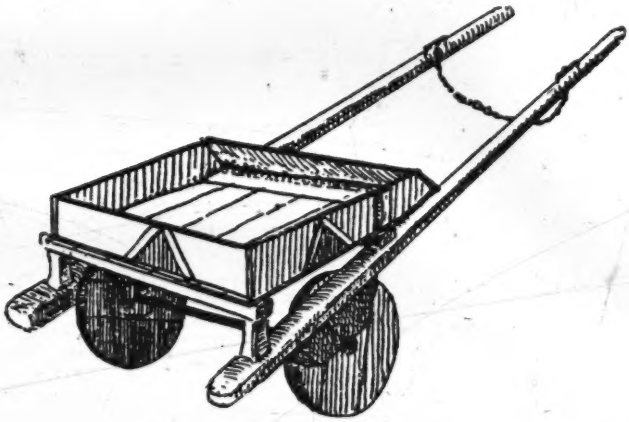

FIG. 55. Wheel-car, Co. Antrim.

175 In the face of abundant evidence as to the backwardness of
493 rural transport and the rarity of wheeled vehicles and made roads until quite recent times, it is startling to read of the prominence of chariotry and of the rapid movement of armies in the Irish legendary histories. In fact, up to date, the archaeological evidence which would clearly establish the use of chariots in early Celtic Ireland is scanty. There can be little doubt, however, that horse-drawn spoke-wheeled vehicles were a significant element in Celtic culture, and it is known that the Romans took into their language nearly a dozen Celtic names for horse-
[492] drawn vehicles.[1] Such fragments of harness as have been re-

[1]E. M. Jope, *U.J.A.*, 13 (1950), 57–60.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

covered from early Celtic sites in Ireland suggest that the horse was held in high regard and was perhaps reserved for pageants, combats and ceremonies. The detailed evidence in the legendary histories of ancient Ireland for the existence of roads, however, is clear. The fact that the Celtic roads are rarely traceable today is understandable in view of the physical conditions of the country, especially the prevalence of obliterating bogs. Moreover the road system must have decayed with the decline of Celtic culture. In any case it is evident that the use of the chariot was confined to the highest castes, and that its humble relation the block-wheeled car was fated to outlast it. The finely-spoked wheeled vehicles of the Celtic invaders were as much out of place in Ireland as the great wagons which later overlords introduced from England. The block-wheeled car, if not previously known in Ireland, may have been the native response to the impressive magic of the Celtic wheel, or it may have reached this country with Celtic camp-followers. We shall see that it could have been developed from the slide-car which almost certainly preceded it in Europe. The term 'wheel-car' as used in Ireland refers to the block-wheeled car and is clearly meant to distinguish it from the wheel-less slide-car. The spoke-wheeled cart is a newcomer in most parts. Nevertheless there is evidence that a light spoke wheeled cart continued to be used in early Christian times: an example drawn chariot-wise by two horses is figured on the eighth century Ahenny Cross in Co. Tipperary. It seems that such light carts were used for personal transport, for example St. Sampson took one with him, according to an eleventh-century account of his travels, to carry his books across Cornwall on his way from Ireland to Brittany.[1] And the spoke-wheeled cart must have been known in the planted areas since the Middle Ages, so that it is very probable that in parts of the country the cart has had a continuous life since early Celtic times.

175 493 [492] [491]

But we should first examine certain archaic methods of transport which depend on the carrying power of beasts and men, or rather women, for in simple societies the bearers of children are also the burden-bearers. The romance of rural

492 [482]

[1] O. G. S. Crawford, 'Western Seaways' in *Custom is King* (1936), 196.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

492 tied bundles on to the straddle-pins, and both sheaves and firewood are occasionally carried on light V-shaped wooden
482 frames. A similar carrying frame is known from Spain. There are several varieties of straddle, and a pattern found on Clare Island, in which one side engages in a hole bored through the
[171] other side, finds a parallel in the Shetland Islands and among the Lapps of north Norway: it could be of Norwegian origin. For long hauls the pack animal was undoubtedly the chief means of transport until the coming of the spoke-wheeled cart. For short distances the burden rope (Chapter XV) or the carrying creel was more convenient and it is still not uncommon to see the back-creel, the carrying basket or the hand barrow used for transporting turf or wrack over rough, soft or slippery ground (Fig. 57).

493 In some parts of the country, especially along the east coast,
483 a form of sled fitted with a box body is kept for the transport

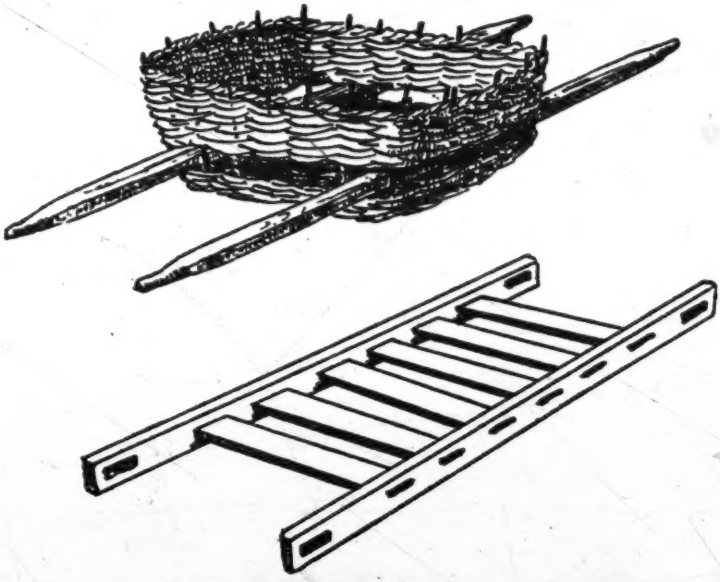

FIG. 57. Turf-basket, Co. Armagh and hand barrow, for carrying nets, Co. Antrim.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

of manure, though it is also used for carrying earth on steep slopes where the soil is washed away and is tediously replaced. In this form of sled the runners are deep and set close together so that the load can be tipped out over the side (Fig. 58, 4). The sled or slipe is a transport-agent of remarkable versatility, ideally suited to small-scale operations involving heavy loads, and it persists because for some purposes no more convenient method of transport can be devised. In the apple-orchards of Co. Armagh, for example, a large, low box-slipe, involving little lifting of the apples, conveys the gathered crop to the store with a minimum of jolting, and it is frequently drawn by a tractor. Similarly the flat slipe finds its uses in hauling large stones in quarry and field, side by side with, and supplementing, elaborate modern machines. To the great advantage of its low body is added its suitability on slopes which are too steep or soils which are too sodden to take wheeled vehicles. 493

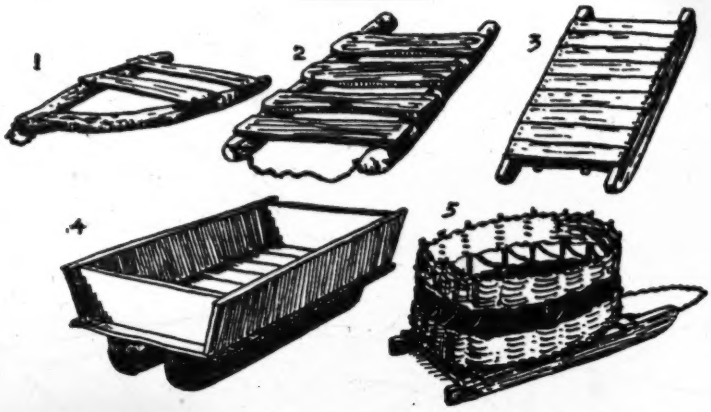

FIG. 58. Slipes. (1) Forked slipe, Co. Antrim. (2, 3) Stone slipes, Co. Down. (4) Manure slipe, Co. Down. (5) Turf slipe, Co. Antrim.

The simplest form of slipe consists of nothing more than a forked branch or young tree with a drag-chain secured to the point of the V (Fig. 58, 1). This forked sledge is not shod and it finds its principal use in moving large boulders from the fields. Some examples I have examined are made of holly which,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 in addition to its strength, is reputed to have special sliding qualities. A forked slipe can be dragged over rough, trackless, 483 boulder-strewn hillsides, where it will make and widen its own path as it goes. In such circumstances, given a favourable gradient, it can be man-hauled, and the persistent use of similar sledges for transporting large stones in other regions of megalithic culture such as the Dordogne—and indeed in Assam for surviving megalithic cults—hints that it comes down to us from very early times. The present distribution area of the forked [171] sledge in Europe, from Scandinavia round to the western Mediterranean, can be correlated with many archaic culture-elements.[1] Its preparation calls for no tool more sophisticated than an axe—even a stone axe would suffice—and as I have watched huge stones being sliped from the fields I have easily imagined myself transported to a clearing in a long vanished Neolithic forest.

The standard flat slipe is a rectangular platform supported on two low parallel runners which may be shod with iron. It will be found on many farms and serves numerous purposes—for hauling stones, potatoes or turf, or for transporting the plough or the harrows from field to field (Fig. 58, 2, 3). There is, however, a simple, light slipe, made either of wood or of iron, which is kept specially for moving the wheel-less plough (Fig. 42). The wooden form finds exact parallels in Sweden and the east Baltic lands.

In the Antrim Glens, where topographic conditions and isolation have preserved an unusually full series of archaic vehicles, I have seen a light forked slipe loaded with sacks of peat being man-hauled, the forked end being lifted off the ground by a rope bearing on the puller's shoulder. This is in effect a slide-car, and although the Irish slide-car is always pulled by a pony, it may be noticed that the Swedish slide-car, used mainly for carrying hay, is often man-hauled. No doubt the forked form is the more primitive and there is some evidence to suggest that it was from a forked slide-car that the first European carts and wagons were evolved by the addition of

[1]E. E. Evans, 'Some Archaic Forms of Agricultural Transport in Ulster' in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), (1951), 108–23; J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, *Man*, 51 (1951), 3–5.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

wheels and a draught-pole. The body of the traditional ox-cart of Spain and many parts of India is suggestively triangular in shape. 493 [483]

The horse-drawn, wheel-less slide-car consists in its simplest form of two parallel poles, serving both as shafts and runners, fastened together by cross-pieces which form a carrying platform (Fig. 59). It was widely used down to the eighteenth century, but is now confined in distribution almost entirely to Ulster and in function mainly to the transport of turf from mountain bogs down steep tracks to the valley farms. For this purpose a large creel or kish is secured to the carrying platform, and it will take loads of potatoes or manure as required, but as a vehicle for general farm use the slide-car is now virtually extinct. That it has lingered so long in the mountainous corners of Ulster is perhaps due to the fact that the creel-carrying ass did not supplant it as it did in the milder south and west of Ireland (Pl. 8, 1).

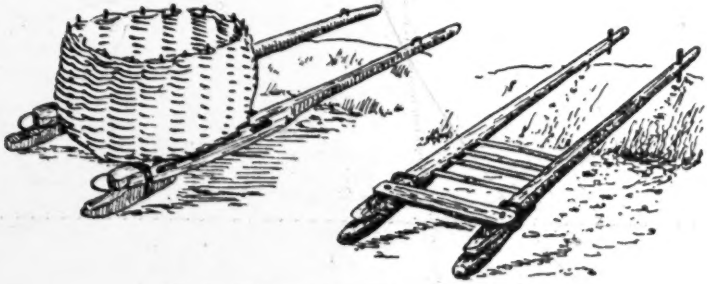

FIG. 59. Slide-cars, Cos. Tyrone and Antrim.

This primitive vehicle, which can be constructed entirely of wood—in treeless districts even bog-timber was utilized[1]—is of high antiquity and of great ethnographic interest. It has been contended that the one-horse wheel-car evolved from a slide-car to which a log roller had been fitted, and in view of the fact that the wheel-car has a revolving axle such an evolutionary sequence seems probable. Gösta Berg thinks that this evolution took place in the heart of Asia,[2] but there is the possibility that

[1]H. Dutton, *Clare* (1808), 65.
[2]Gösta Berg, *Sledges and Wheeled Vehicles* (1935), 140.

493 the block wheel was independently invented in north-western Europe, or at least adapted from the log roller as a native response to the novelty of the spoked wheel.

A feature of the Ulster slide-cars which distinguishes them both from Scots and Welsh examples and from most other slide-cars is the provision of separate wooden runners or 'shoes' which are pegged to the ends of the shafts and can be replaced when worn out. They have the effect of reducing somewhat the slope of the platform and its load. Formerly a special slide-car was kept for carrying corn, the sheaves being supported by a [171] hooped frame of osiers which finds parallels in Sweden and Finland. Another archaic feature was the harness, which was [492] constructed, until quite recent times, entirely of wood, straw and withies (Fig. 69).

Slide-cars, 'strange survivals from the twilight of history',[1] 171 are found not only in Highland Britain and the Baltic lands but 493 in many parts of east central Europe, in Siberia, China, Siam and the Indian Deccan. Such a distribution points to a dispersal in high antiquity, probably from western Asia. There is no direct archaeological evidence of ancient slide-cars but it has been plausibly argued that the well-known 'cart tracks' of Malta were made by slide-cars some 3,000 years ago.[2] This humble vehicle is well suited to simple societies, whose transport needs are few, and to country, especially hilly country, without made roads, where the wheel would be out of place.

In Ireland the wheel-car clings to the same districts as the 493 slide-car and serves much the same purpose, but it may occasionally be used for longer journeys by road, for example to take an animal to the fair. (Slide-cars are very injurious to roads and were driven off them by ordinances against their [494] use on the highways). On steep slopes the wheels, being secured to a rotating axle, act as a brake on each other. Measuring only some two feet in diameter, they are composed of three segments of wood dowelled together as in the oldest known Mesopotamian wheels, and shod with an iron hoop. They revolve under the car inside the shafts, so that the body must be raised to give clearance. It is supported by vertical struts morticed into the

[1] A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man* (1898), 161.
[2] H. S. Gracie, *Antiquity* (1954), 91–98.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

rear ends of the shafts, which are, however, left projecting so as to take the weight of the tilted car when it is not in use. It is these projecting shafts or 'trams' which give the wheel-car the appearance of a slide-car on wheels and seem to confirm the suggested evolution (Fig. 55). 493

In eighteenth-century Ireland possession of a wheel-car was a mark of social distinction, and entire districts were without wheeled vehicles of any kind. Down to the middle of the nineteenth century it was considered 'respectable' to go to 'meetings' in a wheel-car in the Presbyterian parts of north Antrim. In the course of the nineteenth century, as the larger spoke-wheeled cart was adopted by prosperous farmers, the little wheel-car sought refuge in the poor mountainous districts where we find it clinging precariously today. As late as the 1914–18 war one was in use on a farm on Black Mountain, within the city boundary of Belfast (Pl. 8, 2). 493 554

The wheel-car has its place in history because it was the ancestor of the nineteenth century jaunting-car which Lloyd Praeger rightly lists as one of the essentially native Irish products.[1] The platform of the wheel-car, to which a box body or a wicker-work creel was secured when goods were being carried, became a seat, covered with a straw mat, when the vehicle was used for social occasions. The passengers sat on each side, back to back, their feet dangling near the ground or resting on a hay-rope slung fore and aft, which could accommodate any length of leg. By the end of the eighteenth century this 'side-car', fitted with wooden foot-rests, had become a standard hiring vehicle, and it needed only the substitution of spoked for solid wheels, the addition of springs and consequent alterations of height to give the Irish jaunting-car which Bianconi adopted in 1815 and later developed into the four-wheeled long-car.[2] There can be no doubt that 'the Bians', traversing the highways and byways of the whole country, made a contribution to the social and economic life of Ireland which was, in its day, as important as that of the railway in the latter part of the century or the motor bus in the twentieth century. 493

The spoked wheel, which throughout the eighteenth century 401 177

[1] R. Ll. Praeger, *The Way that I Went* (1937), Ch. I.
[2] I. J. Herring, *U.J.A.*, 3 (1940), 115–22; *U.J.A.*, 7 (1944), 42–46.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 was reserved for coaches and the carriages of the rich, was popu-
177 larized by its adoption for farm carts (Scots carts) under the
[401] improving zeal of landlords towards the end of the century. In Ulster, which has always looked to Scotland for its inspiration, the Scots cart was first used for transporting linen, and one thinks of it spreading along the improved roads and being copied and adapted to local needs and traditions. Around Lough Erne, for instance, one reads of large one-horse carts, adopted by carriers in the early nineteenth century, which had 'trams' or rearshafts four feet long,[1] and these projections, surely a reminiscence of the long slide-car runners, are still characteristic of the 'flat' carts of the west and south-west (Fig. 60).

493 The Scots cart with its four-foot wheels was able to take twice the load of the native wheel-car, and as industry increased and roads were improved through the nineteenth century it drove the block-wheeled cars off the roads. But for rough work in the fields and bogs various types of slipe were preferred: the cart
[554] was little used for harvesting and its possession was to some extent a sign of prestige. (Unlike the native car, the woodwork
[531] of the cart was and is brightly painted, usually in red and blue.) The slipe and slide-car were better adapted to moist ground, to undrained fields and the uneven surface of ridge and furrow. As roads and farm practice were improved it was a new version of Scots cart (Fig. 60) which ultimately drove out the slide-car and the wheel-car in Ulster. It seems that the older varieties of Irish carts were derived from the Leith cart of the eastern lowlands of Scotland.[2] The body consisted of little more than a slatted platform without fixed sides and ends. This 'flat cart', as distinct from the 'box cart', is the usual pattern of farm cart in the west of Ireland and, fitted with springs, is the common hawker's cart. As a farm cart it suits the small farmer because it can be used for a variety of purposes by fitting different kinds of sides, for example tall slatted 'crates' for carrying turf.

493 Towards the middle of the nineteenth century there was evolved, in Lanarkshire and the neighbouring counties, the box
177 cart with upright panelled sides perhaps derived from the
531

[1] L. Atthill, *Recollections of an Irish Doctor* (1911), 44.
[2] R. L. Edgeworth, *An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages* (1813).

 [Text continues on p. 178]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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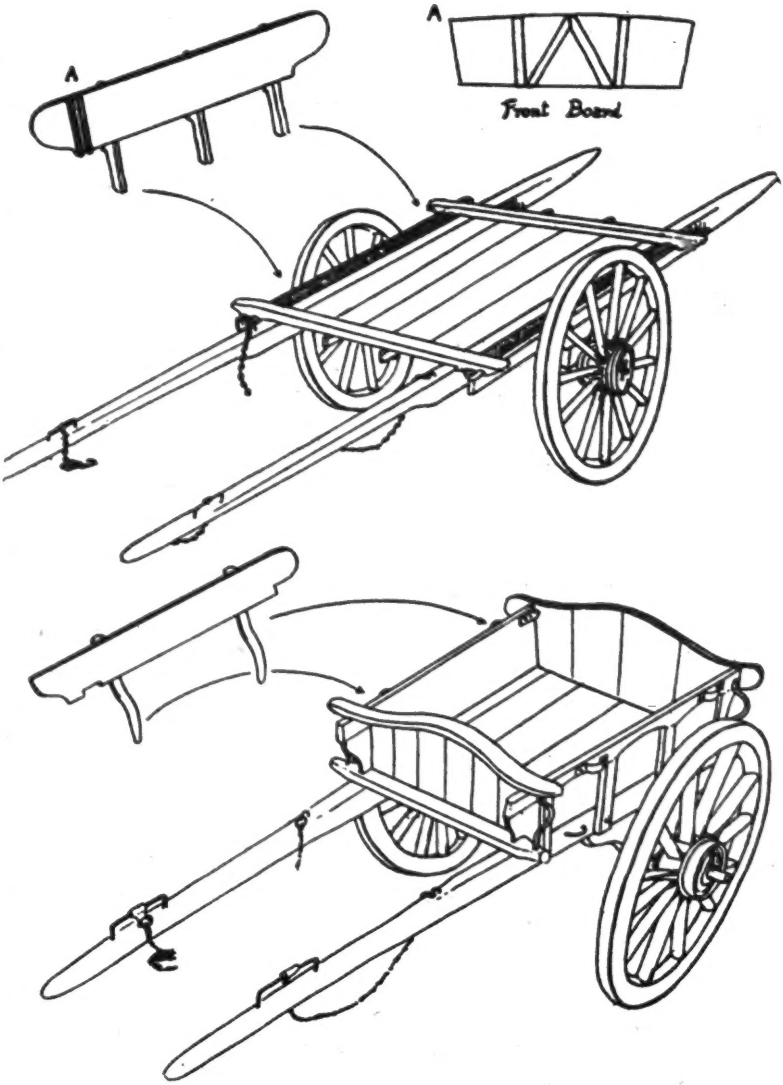

FIG. 60. The Scots cart in Ireland. *Above:* the flat cart with projecting trams, Killarney, Co. Kerry. *Below:* the improved box cart, Cushendall, Co. Antrim (after G. B. Thompson).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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wagon, a sturdy vehicle which was manufactured by large Scottish firms and exported far and wide and also copied locally. Its distribution can be readily traced because it carried an unusual design on the front board—the 'spectacles'—consisting of a pattern of linked circles out cut of an outer layer of horizontal boarding which is applied to the main vertical boarding of the front-board. The design is further emphasized by being painted a contrasting colour, red or blue. The spectacle design became a kind of trade-mark of the Lanarkshire style of cart. It may have evolved simply by the gradual enlargement of two curving strengthening boards at top and bottom, until they met to form a design which became standardized (Fig. 61). C. F. Tebbutt is inclined to seek an origin in the magic *oculi* such as occur in prehistoric pottery and to this day on Mediterranean boats, but it is difficult to see the connecting links.[1] If one looks for a more practical origin it could be argued that when freshly painted front-boards were first fitted to carts they were marked and damaged by the rump and tail of the horse. At any rate I have occasionally noticed a spectacle-like pattern rubbed by the horse on to the paint of Scots carts not fitted with the recessed front-board. On this theory the board was strengthened by means of panelling while at the same time the shaped recess gave the horse's rear a little more space and saved the paint.

In Ireland the Scots cart with 'fiddle' (spectacle) decoration has an interesting distribution corresponding closely with the area of historic Scottish influence, from east Down across Antrim to Londonderry and north Donegal. It has replaced the flat-cart over much of Ulster, but the latter survives in south Fermanagh, in an area where thatched houses with hipped roofs are also found, representing an older culture-layer. In Scotland it is found throughout the Highlands and Islands, in the central lowlands and the south-west. In eastern England the Scots cart has replaced older forms over a wide area extending from Lincolnshire to North Bedfordshire and from Essex to South-east Nottinghamshire. Mr. Tebbutt believes that it was first introduced to the fenlands by improving farmers who, in the second half of last century, looked to the Scottish lowlands as a model of farming methods. In all these areas the original

[1]C. F. Tebbutt, *Man*, 55 (1955), 113–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

spectacle design was retained but in time instead of being panelled it was merely painted on the front-board. In Ulster carts of this kind, lacking the tilting device of the Scots prototype, have been made until recent years by many local wheelwrights, and it is interesting to notice how the original panelled design, which is present on old specimens, has been replaced by painted motifs which break up into many varieties, some of which are shown in Fig. 61. Mr. Tebbutt illustrates similar sequences of derived decoration on English carts. 493 177 531

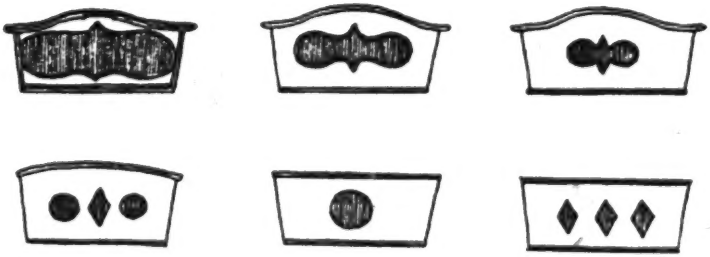

FIG. 61. The 'fiddle' design on the Scots cart in north-eastern Ireland. The front-boards illustrated are all from Co. Antrim and suggest both the derivation and the deterioration of the design. The upper examples are panelled and painted, the lower simply painted. The recess in the 'cape' of the first example is for the horse's tail.

The Scots cart with its box body, ideal for holding sacks of corn or potatoes, is not suited for carrying home crops, and both in Scotland and Ireland it is supplemented by a specialized harvest carrier known as the rick-shifter. This is a large platform with low wheels, fitted with a windlass by which the cock of hay or hut of corn is dragged into position on the platform. It is often dispensed with in moving hay cocks to the haggard, for they can easily be pulled or 'traced' along the ground simply by harnessing a horse to a chain placed around the base of the cock, a method which was used in the eighteenth century (Pl. 12). Six bullocks 'yoked as for ploughing' were employed for this purpose in Co. Meath.[1] The rick-shifter appears to have evolved 493 177 [492]

[1]W. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 217. See also J. M. Mogey and G B. Thompson, loc. cit.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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493 177 from the platform carts of the East Scottish or Leith type. Edgeworth remarks in 1813 that carts of this kind were common in the Low Countries and many parts of France. What more likely than that this model should have reached Scotland by way of the port of Leith? The district bordering the Firth of Forth was an area of rapid agricultural improvement after 1750, and it was to it that Irish landlords turned for new ideas at the end of the century. The rick-shifter was probably evolved at some period from the same source, for Edgeworth tells us that the platform carts of the Low Countries were fitted with windlasses attached to the shafts. But it is risky to speculate on these matters: for example, a simple horse-drawn hay-rake, now rarely seen, used to be considered characteristically Irish and was popularly known as a 'tumbling paddy'. This rotating sweep is stated to have been introduced from America in 1850.[1]

[1] *Agricultural Implements and Machinery* (Science Museum), 1980.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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uncut bog above, but one suspects that behind the custom there 314
lies the widespread notion that a task should never be completely finished and that a small portion of anything taken by man should be left for luck or the fairies. You will be told that the steps are cut to avoid the curse of Columbkille, for it is [776]
said that the saint was once trapped in a bog hole and laid a curse on all who did not cut the three steps.

There are two methods of cutting, vertically or 'underfooting' and horizontally or 'breasting', and they tend to be used respectively on thin upland and deep lowland bogs, though these have to be cut underfoot if badly drained unless a platform or 'footgo' of flow turf can be built up for the breaster to stand on. Also, the upper layers of brown turf which preserve some of the tough plant fibres are easier to cut vertically. Breasting not only imposes less strain on the back but speeds up the work, since the turves can be retained on the slane and placed directly on the barrow. (The vertical digger can do this only if his spade has a lift, that is bends forward.) In consequence the [493]
breast-cutter's turf-barrow will be designed for his convenience, for example it commonly has no legs so that he can swing it into position laterally by hooking the wing of his spade over the handle. Slanes, as well as barrows, will be found to vary in some 314
slight degree from one bog to another, and a seemingly trivial 412
difference can generally be explained in terms of differences of local conditions and techniques: the human ecology of the bogs is no less interesting than the plant ecology. In essentials the turf slane is a narrow straight-shafted steel blade with a wing set at right-angles after the manner of a cheese-knife, which is said, indeed, to owe its origin to 'an ingenious cutler of Dublin' who borrowed the idea from the slane.[1] The purpose of the wing is to detach a complete turf at a single stroke of the spade. The breadth and length of blade and wing are variables depending on many factors, but mainly on the size of turf required, and this in turn is determined to a considerable extent by the nature of the bog. If it is a very wet bog, for example, the turves must be cut larger than normal to allow for greater shrinkage on drying. When absolutely dry peat will shrink to less than one-eighth its original volume, and though air-dried peat still contains

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*, 96

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

way a separate hilt, frequently a cow's horn well polished by use, 314
saved the strain on the palm of the hand, but many slanesmen 412
preferred a handle shaped to their own taste and to the needs of the cutting technique required. In the Antrim Glens I have seen a bent piece of black sally carefully spliced on: this wood is said to have the virtue of absorbing sweat. The blade itself widens towards the cutting edge which is from four to six inches in width, the splay preventing the spade from sticking in the wet peat. The cutting edge of the wing is anything from four to seven inches long, and the top edge is finished in a variety of pleasing shapes and is often notched with the proprietary marks of the owner.

A breast slane can as a rule be distinguished from the underfoot by the upward slant of the cutting edge of the wing as viewed from the side with the spade held vertically, whereas the wing of the underfoot slane slopes down. This ensures that the face of the bog which is left after cutting shall be vertical when breasting and horizontal when underfooting, for the strokes are naturally made with a slight downward slope in the former case and a forward slope in the latter. Another difference is that the underfoot slane is normally provided with a foot-step on one side or the other, depending on whether the user is left or right handed. In practice the foot is not used, however, unless the peat is very tough and little humified. Bits of fibrous matter (called fog, cat or 'old wife's tow') clogging the cutting edge are troublesome, but it is kept clean by a quick preliminary jab into the peat, which reminds one of the rhythmic anvil-tapping of the blacksmith. Modern slanes tend to have the blade made all in one piece, riveted to the haft with straps and fitted with a narrow foot-plate on the side away from the wing. (Fig. 62, 4.) The breast slane has been partly replaced, especially in wet bogs, by a short-handled flat spade which cuts larger peats (Fig. 62, 3). They are of a good shape for stacking and for transport on the canal-boats and, latterly, the lorries which supply Dublin with turf.

For taking the cut peats to the spread-field two wheelers and 314
turf barrows are the minimum needs. The severed turves may 493 ●
be placed directly from the spade on to the waiting barrow, but a loader is more often required, lifting two turves at a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

314 time: his finger marks can still be seen when the dried turves are burning in the fire. In deep bogs the lifter may use a long-
493 handled fork (Fig. 66, 2) or shovel, pitching the turves for the barrowman to load. A barrow load is anything from ten to twenty peats. Apparently crude and artless, the turf barrow is well designed for its purpose, and it shows many adaptations to local conditions and traditions (Fig. 63). It is slatted for lightness and is made almost entirely of wood, yet it must be strong enough to take heavy loads over rough ground: it should be low and flat for convenience in loading and unloading, yet it needs a large broad wheel for pushing over an uneven surface. Legs may be dispensed with, reduced to lugs or swept back to serve as runners. Again the shape of the handles and the slope of the front board depend on the method of loading and tipping, over the side or over the front. Every detail of the design is in answer to a general or local problem. If the ground is very rough or soft the barrow must be pulled, not pushed, and in extreme cases its place is taken by a slipe. In Antrim alone there are several varieties of turf slipe. All are slatted lengthwise—because the peats are loaded transversely—and are fitted with short corner posts and tipping handles. An interesting variant—the roller slipe—has been recorded but is no longer seen: it had two rollers fitted under the body of the sledge.[1] The dried peats also may be transported, if the bog is soft, on a slipe (Fig. 58, 5) or in a carrying basket (Fig. 57).

Despite ingenious shifts towards greater speed the spreading
314 and drying of turf are inefficient because of the time taken in
372 wheeling and handling and the great difficulty of drying turf which is spread on almost saturated surfaces. In exceptionally wet summers the peats do not dry out, and tragedy may follow if the winter is severe. It is then that the countryside is stripped of what little timber it can provide, and before coal was obtainable anything from furniture to fishbones and cowdung was
237 utilized to boil the pot. In bogless districts dung was quite
372 regularly used: there are several accounts of it in travel records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed in the treeless islands dung was until recently carefully harvested, gathered in piles in the fields in spring, and sometimes worked with the

[1] E. E. Evans in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), plate 2A.

 [Text continues on p. 194]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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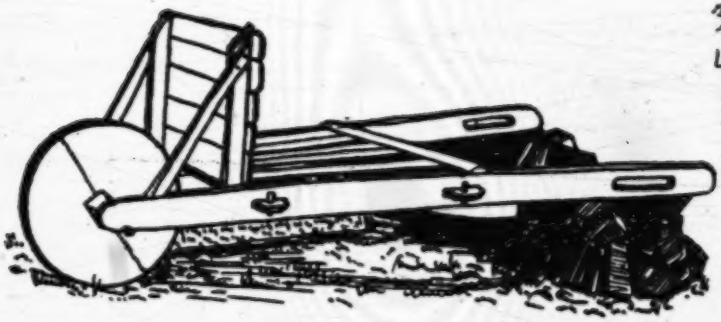

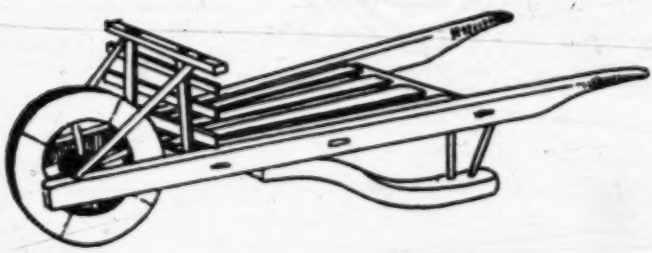

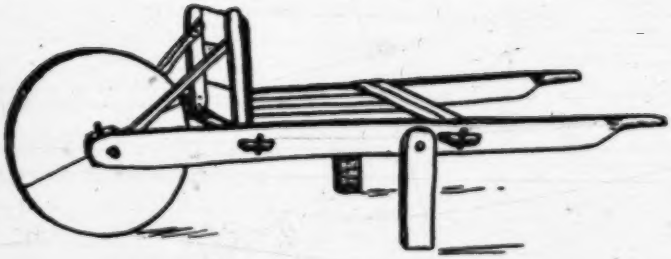

Fig. 68. Turf barrows from Cos. Meath, Donegal and Antrim

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

farmers converge upon Ennis. In each case a center, 438
whether a larger market town or one of the smaller villages, serves a natural area demarcated by the configuration of the land and the course of the roads.

In such natural regions, particularly in more remote and 491
mountainous country, the roads determine the intercourse 361
of the communities with one another. Today each focal 438
point is joined with another by a motor road. As the roads wind out from the larger centers, shops come to be placed at the strategic crossroad; a public house springs up; perhaps a schoolhouse, a parochial house, a chapel of the parish, rise beside them. Nowadays creameries are put up at these or still other points along the roads, where they are most conveniently accessible to small and medium farms producing milk. Even more recently lorries have begun to come direct [494] to the crossroad to pick up produce that once, before motor traffic, had to be carried by the farmers themselves all the way to town.

Plotting out the market areas of the towns and villages 438
of the countryside reveals a characteristic of social and economic space even here where the deepest hinterlands are never more than a half-day's leisurely trip by horse and cart. Any list of customers plotted by residence around a minor center gives an area which extends considerably farther in the direction away from the nearest larger center than it does in the direction leading to it. The minor centers draw principally from the hinterlands behind them and their areas extend only a little way along the roads in the direction of the next larger center. Ennistymon in North Clare draws custom twelve miles to the north, but to the south its influence reaches only three miles up the valley of the Inagh River, where the region of the larger center, Ennis, begins. Ennis itself serves all Clare, and its own immediate area extends, to judge from the residences of the farmers who come to buy and sell in her markets, beyond Ennistymon

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

491 Today the roads both great and small provide all-weather
494 routes for every kind of local traffic. They carry many lorries
496 and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad — the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

491 The main roads are much more direct. They follow divides and occasionally cut right across high bog country. Today they negotiate bogs, which once would have prohibited any sort of transportation during wet weather, by dint of side ditches and high crowns of gravel and dirt. Over high country they have better foundations and wander in comparatively straight fashion through the country.

491 At various points along these main roads there are
653 branches today penetrating the countryside. These are rougher and simpler constructions of crushed stones taken from local quarries, leased by the County Council. The stone is broken by laborers and small farmers of the district through which the road runs. In the case of the smaller roads each landholder is responsible for the bit of the road that runs by his land. "Road metal," as the crushed stone is called, is spread during the late autumn, winter, or very early spring. When the weather is dry, in summer, a fine white dust rises after every vehicle. But in the rainy months of spring and winter the roads are soft and full of chuck holes, and new stones must be laid down. Then the heavy
[493] iron-tired carts of the farmers break them further and press them into the soft roadbeds.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction.

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics.

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler.

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

493 two or three motor cars for important guests and the prin-
494 cipals. At election time the local political organizations of the national parties provide free transport to the polls for the old and lame. In all else the motor car is the mark of the townsman, either the produce-collector in his lorry or the man of influence on a jaunt.

493 Even at such times of high ceremony as weddings, funerals,
494 and elections the country people still use the horse and
554 trap or sidecar. This is the traditional mode of polite travel, and it retains its popularity today. The trap is used only by the whole family or by its adult farm-owning members. It is used only in connection with activities of importance which mark their own status and those to whom they travel. It is always used at funerals and marriages. It sometimes transports all the family in Sunday best to church. It is brought out to honor a visitor or announce the arrival or departure of a friend. And it is used occasionally on visits of state to the town. Sunday clothes always go with it. It would be a very big farmer who used the trap in all his trips to town.

493 The vehicle-of-all-work, and the one on which produce
494 goes to market and shop-bought goods come back, is the common two-wheeled cart. The farmers call it a "car." With the addition of side boards it becomes a "creel" and can carry small livestock, turf, and many another bulky object. Occasionally it appears on Sunday, but one never sees it in times of high ceremony such as in a funeral procession. It is the vehicle of everyday working life. Even the younger members of the family may use it sometimes in going about their work. But it is most often to be seen in the hands of the man of the house.

The ass and car, on the other hand, ordinarily has no such eminence. The donkey cart is a woman's vehicle. It takes her and her farm produce to and from the crossroad center. In a town market it is no accident that one can find the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets. 493 494

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. 481 At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields [487] in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add 493 perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just be- 494 ginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only 492 adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related 000

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp 361
along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. 621
Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawl- 494
ing village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train
runs between the two.

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this re- 185
moteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. 621
Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive 234
through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic
liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many
of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing
machine, out of an English steel works, and some
of the houses own a mechanical cream separator,
even though next door a wooden hand churn is still
in use which looks no different from those found
deep in the bogs.

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. 185
They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But 621
in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's
attention turns to the life into which these few
strays of modernity find their way.

For Luogh is like many another community of 621
small farms over Clare and southern and western 184
Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are 181
even more remote. Many are better off; some few
are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language
better; others have abandoned it altogether for the
brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic
still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded
in their common folk life.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are 492
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish [609]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 the block wheel was independently invented in north-western Europe, or at least adapted from the log roller as a native response to the novelty of the spoked wheel.

A feature of the Ulster slide-cars which distinguishes them both from Scots and Welsh examples and from most other slide-cars is the provision of separate wooden runners or 'shoes' which are pegged to the ends of the shafts and can be replaced when worn out. They have the effect of reducing somewhat the slope of the platform and its load. Formerly a special slide-car was kept for carrying corn, the sheaves being supported by a [171] hooped frame of osiers which finds parallels in Sweden and Finland. Another archaic feature was the harness, which was [492] constructed, until quite recent times, entirely of wood, straw and withies (Fig. 69).

Slide-cars, 'strange survivals from the twilight of history',[1] 171 are found not only in Highland Britain and the Baltic lands but 493 in many parts of east central Europe, in Siberia, China, Siam and the Indian Deccan. Such a distribution points to a dispersal in high antiquity, probably from western Asia. There is no direct archaeological evidence of ancient slide-cars but it has been plausibly argued that the well-known 'cart tracks' of Malta were made by slide-cars some 3,000 years ago.[2] This humble vehicle is well suited to simple societies, whose transport needs are few, and to country, especially hilly country, without made roads, where the wheel would be out of place.

In Ireland the wheel-car clings to the same districts as the 493 slide-car and serves much the same purpose, but it may occasionally be used for longer journeys by road, for example to take an animal to the fair. (Slide-cars are very injurious to [494] roads and were driven off them by ordinances against their use on the highways). On steep slopes the wheels, being secured to a rotating axle, act as a brake on each other. Measuring only some two feet in diameter, they are composed of three segments of wood dowelled together as in the oldest known Mesopotamian wheels, and shod with an iron hoop. They revolve under the car inside the shafts, so that the body must be raised to give clearance. It is supported by vertical struts morticed into the

[1] A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man* (1898), 161.
[2] H. S. Gracie, *Antiquity* (1954), 91–98.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

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496 and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad — the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

They are market-towns and administrative seats. 361
Their economics is that of distribution, not production. The industrial revolution has passed southern Ireland by. The shop, the pub, the fair bring the towns their life-blood and link them to their hinterlands and to the outside world. Many of them still collect market tolls on rural produce, as if they still had a ring of stone-wall fortification about them. Many of them have no fair green but throw open all their streets to shouting, bargaining men and milling cattle, on the day of the fair, surrendering themselves entirely to the countryside upon which they live.

One still approaches many of them today as one approached them in the sixteenth century, although now perhaps an automobile road breaks [491] a new entrance into them or the railroad halts a [496] jaunting car's distance away. The roads that radiate inward toward the heart of the town are still lined with labourers' and artisans' thatched cottages long before one reaches the town itself. As one proceeds along them, the cottages give way to shops and public houses which rise higher and more stately as one nears the centre, in the market-place or in the central square. There, quite often, that emporium of the most valuable commodity of all—the local bank—now dominates the scene.

Between the shop-fronts, back lanes lead off to the recesses in which the labourers live; and, off by

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XXI

OLD PISHROGUES

AMONG the serious nineteenth-century students of Irish folk-life a Dublin surgeon, who is perhaps better known as the father of Oscar Wilde, deserves special mention. Sir William Wilde was not only a frequent contributor to the learned journals but he found time to compile a pioneer catalogue of the Irish antiquities now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. His very active life spanned the Great Famine, and the monumental report on the *Tables of Death* which appeared as Vol. I of Part 5 of the Census of 1851 was largely his work. In it he dwells on the shattering effects of those tragic years, 1845–47, on the immemorial customs and natural poetry of the Irish peasants: 'The closest ties of kinship were dissolved; the most ancient and long-cherished usages of the people were disregarded; the once proverbial gaiety and lightheartedness of the peasant people seemed to have vanished completely, and village merriment or marriage festival was no longer heard or seen throughout the regions desolated by the intensity and extent of the famine.'[1] Another observer noted that the traditions of hospitality were weakened greatly and that padlocks made their first appearance at this time.[2]

Wilde observed that the coming of the railway at about the same period was a contributory factor in the change because it worked to a time-table—more or less—and involved an artificial division of the day instead of an observance of the signs of nature changing with the seasons. Time was related to social activity and had different values at various seasons of the year.

[1] *Census of Ireland* (1851), I, Part 5 (1956), 242.
[2] A. M. Sullivan, *The New Ireland* (1877), 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

OLD PISHROGUES

805 The whistle of the 7.15 now replaced cock-crow. But if it were
178 indeed true that peasant values had perished entirely and that
the rural population was transformed into the moronic cattle-
[496] herders of Filson Young's *Ireland at the Cross-Roads*, then this
book could not have been written. Luckily a mountain farmer
will still relate time to nature and refer to a moment of summer
twilight, in a memorable phrase quoted by Dr. James Delargy,
as 'the time when the dew was thinking of falling'. The wonder
178 is that so much lore and so many relics of pre-famine days have
771 survived. Yet the term 'old pishrogues' which is applied to all
varieties of witchcraft and fairy lore—even if sometimes used
in awe rather than contempt—shows that these things are
now regarded objectively and are no longer an accepted part
of social life. Superstitious practices tend to be carried out in
secret and to be resorted to only when more rational methods
have been tried and found wanting. Many of the old customs,
however, have had their life prolonged by children's games,
the seasonal bonfires and May Queens becoming their amuse-
ments.

823 Most of the pishrogues relate to fairies and to trees, wells
and stones; and that these elder faiths have their roots in a very
171 remote pre-agricultural phase of human evolution is attested by
their very general observance among primitive people. As an
example we may take the South African Bushmen, one of the
lowliest branches of the human family. In a recent report from
G. P. van der Post's expedition to the Kalahari we read that in
the heart of the Bushman country there are sacred hills which
are regarded as the home of very ancient spirits. Van der Post
was told that 'right on the top of the central hill there was a
spring of water and beside it a tree which bore the fruit of
knowledge, and close by the tree a rock with deep marks where
the greatest spirit of all had knelt to pray'.[1] The sacred hill-
tops, the ancestral spirits, the well of water, the 'gentle' tree
and the cup-marked stone are familiar themes in Irish folk
tradition. Throughout western Europe, from the fifth century
Council of Arles onwards, churchmen denounced those 'who
offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones'. The great religions
have had to come to terms with such cults, in Monsoon Asia as

[1] *The Times* (14th December, 1955).

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
167 or—in comparatively few instances—by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[6] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[6] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

have met in Luogh. None has ten cows, and only 361
one has a single beast. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard wall. In the case of the villagers, the fields are scattered about and behind the haggards in irregular patterns. Besides these home fields, most of Rynamona has two or three acres in additions carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Re- 621
duplicated bonds of kinship unite all the house- 602
holds. "We are all related one way or another", they say. 'Cooring' is the usual form of co-operation. The village holds itself responsible amid grumbles for maintaining the borheen which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays, the County Council pays the sons who break [499]
stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of paths criss-crosses the fields in all directions.

Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the 573
village, is the 'old men's house'. Mrs. Ruin, a neighbour, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village. "The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?"

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

another heritage of the Mesolithic. Research will probably show that many details of material culture as well as a substantial element in the racial composition of the Irish people derive from the Mesolithic background, which has been termed "the main vital period in the setting out of the human map of Europe." 172

Left to themselves, however, it is unlikely that these fisherfolk, specialized as they were in the arts and crafts of food-gathering, would have advanced to the full status of civilisation. If our eyes were fixed on Ireland alone we should be unable to account for the origin of Irish agriculture and stock-raising, for the crops and animals that came to be used are not found in the native flora and fauna. It was from distant western Asia, by way of the seas and islands of the Mediterranean and the western peninsulas of Europe that the new ideas found their way to Ireland. And although the food-gatherers and fisherfolk had blazed the trail, it was a revolution in food production that now brought with it the elements of true civilisation. To it the term Neolithic (new stone) Revolution is applied.

501

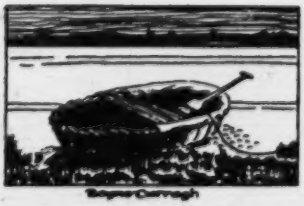


Fig. 4.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

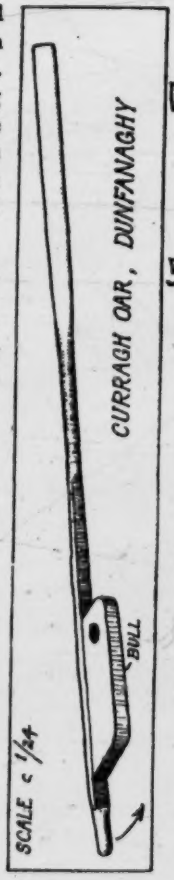
227

netting in sea and lake and for poaching. And in this connexion one may whisper that the illegal eel-spear (Fig. 94), the leister or salmon spear, and the trout net (Fig. 96)[1] will sometimes be shown to the discreet inquirer. Old garden forks and shovels are often fashioned into spears by the smith. Resinous bog-fir sometimes provided the torches for "burning the river" in salmon-poaching. Much might be said of these dark practices, but this is not the place to give away all the secrets of the countryside. We may properly refer to the huge "legitimate" catches of eels in weirs such as those of "the fishy fruitful Bann."

The well-known curraghs of the Boyne and the west coast have recently been described in James Hornell's book, "British Coracles and Irish Curraghs," but details of rowing and sailing craft of all kinds should be recorded and sketched before regional types give way, as they are slowly doing, to standardised boats. It is probably not too much to say that every coastal county, every large river and lake, has its own traditional styles of vessels, and their comparative study would be an important contribution to science. Some of the small oval curraghs of the Boyne are still covered with cow-hide, but tarred canvas has taken its place in the larger sea-going curraghs of the west coast. These display many interesting variations according to local conditions and custom, but all, with the exception of the paddle curraghs of Tory Island, are fitted with single thole pins on which the oars swivel, the wooden pin passing through a hole in the heavy "bool" of the oar (Fig. 99). This curious device is employed also on some river and lake boats (e.g., the Corrib, the Shannon and Lough Neagh) and was until recent years found on the fishing boats of the Scotch Quarter at Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. I have no information on the distribution of the single thole-pin oar outside Ireland, except that Mr. Hornell has reported (in a letter) that the method is used in the Sudan on the Nile. It is true of such ethnographical studies

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 150--ANALYST]

[1] Similar poaching nets were made in the Hebrides—and probably also in Ireland—of heather stems and even sedge roots (*Carex flacca*).



[416]

501

Fig. 99.

[824]

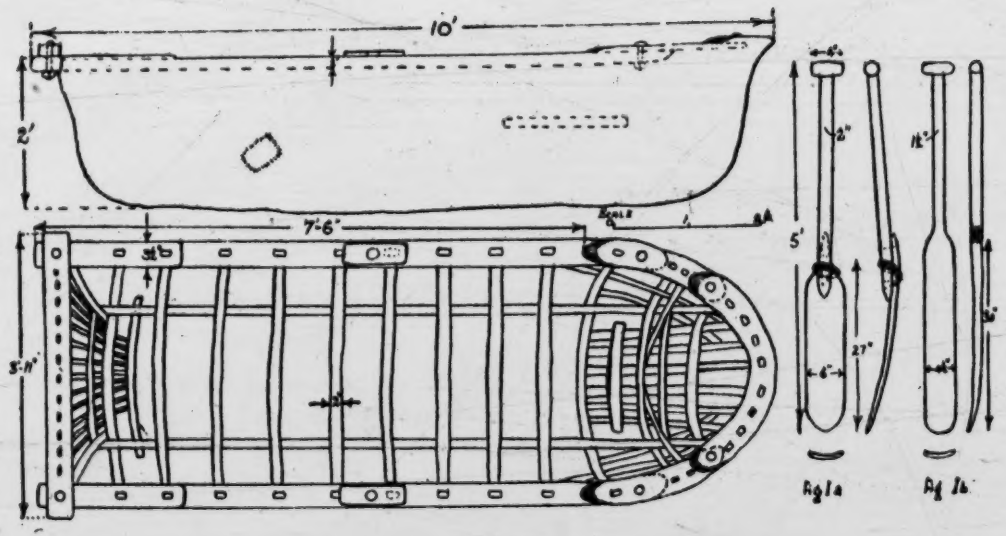


Fig. 97.
The Bunbeg paddle-curragh, Co. Donegal, with types of paddles, old and new.

[p. 148]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Donegal

501 •

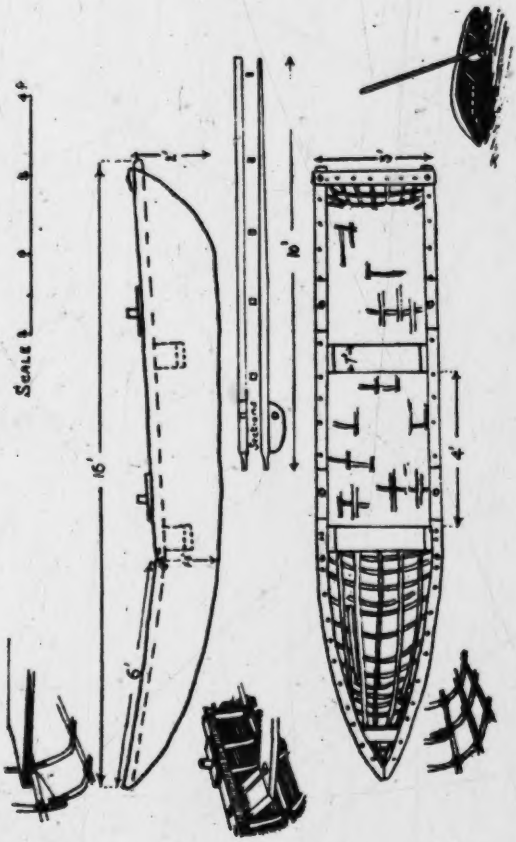


Fig. 98. The rowing curragh of Sheephaven, Co. Donegal.

[p. 149]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 100.
Total length 50"

as of other branches of the sciences of humanity that we know more of the ways of remote peoples of the world that we do of our own folk (Figs. 97 and 98, and Plate VI).

Before leaving the sea and coming back to shore, brief reference must be made to some other sea-creatures which have contributed to the economy of the coasts. There is the basking shark of the Aran Islands pursued in curraghs and captured with a harpoon of the type shown in Figure 100. Seals, despite the many superstitions attaching to them, have been hunted for their skins; according to an old account the skins were made into covers for the oval curraghs of the Rosses in Donegal. It is recorded that seal-catchers in Co. Cork wore on their arms "bags quilted with charcoal." The seals when they bite are said to let go the hold when they hear the crunch of the charcoal.

Shore-collecting plays a varied if nowadays greatly reduced part in the life of coastal communities. The great days of kelp-burning, when the strong dense smoke drifted far inland, are no more, but this once flourishing industry has left its traces in half-ruined kelp-kilns (Fig. 101) and in various rusting hooks and drags (102, 103) which betray the keen rivalry shown in gathering the crop. The best weeds (tangle or "fyams," that is, *Laminaria*) were cut in deep water and their value was enhanced if they were free of sand. The men would sometimes have their knives and sickles fitted with handles as much as twenty feet long: women and children with back creels, assisted by donkeys or ponies with side-creels, did the carrying. In Aran the creel women protect their backs from the damp seaweed by wearing a goatskin.

Kelp Kilns
Fig. 101.

Carting or "drawing" the wrack for manuring the fields is still an active industry in spring on most Irish shores. The wrack is often carried some miles inland, and there are many stories of the contraband goods once smuggled from the coast under cover of loads of piled wrack. In Carlingford Lough, where the tides run high, wide stretches of foreshore are "planted" with rows of boulders in orderly fields called "plans." The bladderwrack which grows on the stones is

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

but a few years ago the ordinary means of lighting the houses was a rude open lamp, filled with oil extracted from the livers of fish, and having a piece of peeled rush for a wick. 373

Kelp-burning was formerly one of the industries of the islands, but of late years it declined rapidly, and is now practically extinct. As to the cause of this decay of a formerly profitable source of income, very different accounts are given, some alleging the poor quality of the weed; others that they were not fairly treated in selling; and others again that it does not pay as well as the fish-curing. 381

The fish most taken are sea-bream, glassan (a sort of pollock), mackerel, turbot, and plaice, used mostly for home consumption; cod and ling, which are cured at the fish-curing station for exportation, and oil extracted from their livers; also large quantities of crabs and lobsters, which are taken to Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, from which they are forwarded to the English market. The boat used for conveying them is of peculiar construction, and has a large salt-water tank amidships, in which the lobsters are kept alive. The lobster-pots are of the usual type. There is nothing unusual about their ordinary method of fishing, except that the Inishbofin men, as mentioned in a footnote to the account of that island in the Memoir of the Geological Survey, already alluded to, do not follow the shoals of fish around the western headland, but carry their boats across the narrow isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated. 226 439 [501] [502]

The pursuit of the "sun-fish," or basking-shark (*Selache maxima*), was formerly a source of considerable profit to the islanders, but has been almost altogether abandoned of late years owing to the decline in the price of the oil, and partly, it is said, to the loss of several lives on one occasion when a boat was charged and overturned by a wounded fish, also to the partial disappearance for some years of the sharks. 226

The season for this enterprise is from April until the end of June, and in that time large numbers of these fish were taken formerly, and some are still killed from time to time. Mr. G. H. Kinahan, to whom I am indebted for several notes relative to the condition of the islands some years ago, says:—"The sun-fish fishing was considerable in my time (1870). I have seen strings of seven and nine fish; when caught, they towed them into the harbour, cut out the liver, and left the carcass to rot, or be eaten by the pigs; the stench in the harbour was something to remember." A very full description of the fishing is given by Sir H. W. Gore-Booth in a recent article. He states that the value of the oil (from eight to twelve petroleum barrels full) obtained from the liver of one of these fish has been variously estimated

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

226 to him by old fishermen at from £30 to £100, so that the loss of this industry must have told considerably on a poor community such as this. The primitive method which he found in use on his visit to the islands he describes in full as it was explained by Michael Halloran, the 'king'[1] of Inishshark, a veteran harpooner, who had just killed his nineteenth fish a few days before.

"I had been told that these sun-fish generally took from sixteen to eighteen hours, and frequently longer, to kill; in fact, I have heard it sometimes took two days, so naturally felt considerable interest in the gear used for the purpose. The king brought with him his trusty harpoon, which, to my mind, looked a most antiquated arrangement, especially designed to cut out of a fish, instead of holding it. I could not see a whale-boat or anything like one, so inquired where the boat was, and was shown an ordinary square-sterned boat, about 16 feet in the keel, which had nailed on her starboard bow a piece of wood about 1 foot long, with three small notches, or scores, barely half an inch deep, cut in it. I found out that these notches or scores were all they had to run the line through, and that when a boat fastened a fish, it was a pulling match between our friend the shark on one hand, and sixteen men on the other, a regular case of 'pull devil, pull baker'! Such a thing as a bollard head to take a turn of the line round seems never to have entered their heads."

226 501

In addition to fishing and farming, the other occupations are fish-curing at the station recently established by the landlord, Cyril Allies, Esq., J.P., who resides on the island, and personally superintends it, and the trades, represented by a boat-builder, a blacksmith, a shoemaker who imports his leather from the mainland, a tailor, who still adheres to the old method of measuring his clients without a tape, using instead a sheet of paper, on which the several lengths are recorded by "snips," or notches cut with the scissors; there is one weaver who makes use of a rather archaic form of hand-loom, four men who, on occasion, act as sawyers, extemporising a saw-pit in the nearest convenient spot by the aid of trestles, and using to mark their lines a cord blackened with the ashes of straw or shavings, and finally, a fiddler.

463

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[622] [1] In answer to an inquiry of mine relative to the position of king, Mr. Myles Joyce, National Teacher of Bofin, writes:—"The title of king is not hereditary in the island. There is at present a man removed something beyond his neighbours in the way of education and position, who is, *par excellence*, the king; and to whom all persons who want any information about the island or its history must apply."

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, 415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of [491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a side-ways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies [243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

● 501 For water transport there are a good many boats of various descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

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[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Inishshark has about twelve boats of from one to two tons. The natives of this island do not approve of the curragh, for which their coast is too rocky. 501

The ordinary rowing boat is manned by five men, the curragh by three.

The curragh is of the ordinary west coast type, consisting of a light wooden frame covered with tarred canvas.

VI.—FOLK-LORE.

Of this interesting branch of the subject, I regret to be able to give but little information, as the people are chary of talking upon such matters to strangers, and only a local collector working for a considerable time could be expected to gather much. Thanks, however, to the kindness of the Rev. Edward Lavelle, his brother Mr. Michael Lavelle, Mr. Myles Joyce, the schoolmaster of the island, as well as to several of the boatmen and others, I am enabled to give the following few notes on the subject. The legendary lore of these islands, especially Inishshark, has been very fully dealt with by Lady Wilde, to whose work I must refer the reader. These notes, however, are new. Omens and death-warnings, such as the banshee, the death-watch, and as mentioned previously (p. 352), the giving of wood out of a house to make a coffin foretelling the death of the giver, are fully believed in. 609 115 121

Luck.—The sight of a red-haired woman or a cat, on starting out in the morning, will bring bad luck to the fishing; and it is stated that people have resorted to the expedient of getting a red-haired girl to lie in wait for a rival, and cross his path as he was starting. 777

To remove from one house to another is also looked upon as decidedly unlucky; but should a move become necessary, it is always made on Monday to the eastward, and on Tuesday to the westward, according to the Irish saying *Luan Soir, agus Mart Siar* (Monday, eastward, and Tuesday, westward). Should any addition be made to the dwelling it is always to the east, never to the west.

It is extremely unlucky to break a looking-glass; so also it is to mention a priest, or a fox, or a hare while fishing.

No man will buy a cow at the New Year without putting some of her milk into his boots, as otherwise she would certainly run dry.

People born on Whit Sunday are thought to be exceptionally ill-tempered.

The evil-eye, also, is strongly believed in; and if any one praises either a child or a beast belonging to a native without saying "God

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The spinning-wheel and hand-loom are the same as those commonly used on the west coast, the former, as usual, having no treadle. 172 [283]

Querns are still in use, and in connection with them the boran, or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, used for screening the meal. [252] [412]

Grain is still winnowed by shaking it in a sieve in a strong wind. [243]

The method of washing clothes is the same as that customary in Connemara, the clothes being folded, laid in the water of a lake or pool, and beaten with a club or paddle. [296]

The tailor, when making clothes, does not measure his customers with a tape, but takes all his measurements on one sheet of paper, marking the lengths by cutting notches out of the edge. [294]

The curraghs, which are still in use, are of the usual form; they are rapidly going out of fashion, however. [501]

The anchor used for small boats is a stone, not fixed in a wooden clamp, as in Clare and Aran, but having a groove around it for the rope.

As mentioned previously, the apparatus used for the shark-fishing is very rude and primitive.

2. *Antiquities.*—Inishbofin is not very rich in architectural antiquities, and the few that still remain are being rapidly destroyed; some ruins which were standing in the first half of the present century have altogether disappeared, and the others are much shattered. 172

In Inishshark, also, the buildings have sustained a great injury.

It does not lie within my province to enter upon any detailed description of the ruins; but I desire, in the following notes (extracted almost *verbatim* from my Field Note-book), to direct the attention of archæologists to the buildings of interest in these islands which are being rapidly blotted out of existence. The number and nature of these have been described by the late Mr. O'Donovan, Mr. Hardiman, Mr. G. H. Kinahan, and others.

In the account of their present condition given below, they are arranged in the order in which they are described by Mr. Hardiman.[1]

Inishbofin.—(1). St. Colman's church, in Knock townland, built in A.D. 667, is in a very ruinous state, and the interior is filled with rough gravestones and weeds, and in a small recess near the east window is a pile of crania and broken bones. In the enclosure around the church the foundations of the cells (cloghans (?)) of the abbey, or monastic colony, may still be traced, though with difficulty, but the

[1] "H-Iar Connaught," p. 116, footnote.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

[158] *Insanity.*—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
[273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

Fevers.—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter
164 being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are 492
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few
boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class
boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are
about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their
turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish [609]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

178 grinding barley for cattle food, or in some few cases for malt for
[412] *poteen.*

Hooped piggins are used in many houses, as also are sheepskin
[415] sieves (*borans*).

The spinning-wheel for wool is of the usual Connaught type, with-
178 out treadle, and is made in the district. The cards used for the wool
283 are imported, being all made in Dublin. The hand-looms are the same as used elsewhere in the West, and of rather rude construction, though capable of turning out good work.

A machine of rather primitive design is used for compressing cloth.
287 It was made by its user, and has been working for many years.

Rush-lights are used in some houses, and in others the rude lamp
373 already referred to, which is evidently merely a reproduction in tin-ware of the old stone or iron lamp for fish oil.

The stills employed by the makers of poteen are constructed of tin,
273 and of simple but effective design. They are made in the owners houses by tinkers.

The curragh, of the usual form, is the boat most in use, and seems
501 likely to hold its own. It is now covered with tarred canvas, but seventy years ago horse-skins were used for this purpose. A large stone is often used as an anchor for small boats.

2. *Antiquities* may be divided into two classes—(*a*) Architectural
172 remains, and (*b*) Articles of use or ornament. (*a*) Architectural remains are still very numerous, though many of the most interesting have altogether disappeared; of these the most noticeable was the *Oileach*, the fortified seat of the chiefs of Hy-Fiachrach, which was situated at Elly in the Mullet, on or near the position of Bingham's Castle. Several castles belonging to the Barrets and Burkes have also been entirely destroyed.

Some of the ruins still remaining are of pagan origin, others are ecclesiastical structures. The principal pagan antiquities are the duns or forts, both stone and earthen, the monuments, &c. There are several duns, both within the district actually treated of in this Paper, and along the coast line of the surrounding country; those within the Mullet are *Dunnamoe*, a stone fort of large size, built on a rocky promontory overhanging the sea, and formerly one of the most perfect on this coast; of late years, however, it has suffered severely, the greater part of the wall has been broken down to afford building material for houses and walls about Belmullet; the guard-chambers mentioned by O'Donovan and others are now almost destroyed, the outworks thrown down. One part of the wall alone

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 12

501

1. Curraghs, the Aran Islands.

246
492
342

2. Dragging home the hay in the west of Ireland.

[Facing p. 161]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222 minutely fragmented appearance of land held in rundale. Rights
387 of access, by narrow lanes between the beds, were often dis-
423 puted, and there were occasions for fights when as many as a
[578] hundred carts from forty townlands might converge on Mill Bay at low tide. I first heard of the seaweed beds from an Air Force pilot who brought me air photographs of what he thought was submerged farmland: the little rectangular fields of Mourne seemed to march out beneath the sea.[1] In fact they were necessary adjuncts to the arable land, and the rents of up to twenty pounds an acre were often higher than those paid for the fields of coarse sand and gravel which the wrack enriched. An auctioneer told me he had sold a wrackbed of one Irish acre for
[435] £145 not many years ago. Nearly all of the several hundred farmers who had wrack rights here held two or three beds, and each man's plans were scattered so that he had different kinds of weed growing on them: 'knob wrack' close inshore, then 'bladder wrack' and farther out still the 'lazy wrack' whose fronds are submerged at high water even at neaps and which therefore grows faster than the other species.

222 The crop was harvested with knives and sickles between March and June, the bare-footed reapers at the same time lifting, turning and re-setting the heavy boulders which tend to get buried in the sand. Carts too are liable to sink, and when the going is too soft the weed is rafted ashore. It is allowed to float on the incoming tide and a boat dragging a rope pulls the
[501] load together and tows it ashore. Very large rafts, secured by a rope of seaweed, used to be floated ashore on the tide in Mayo. Patrick Knight, describing Ballycroy about 1830, observed that the steersman, armed with a pole, might be seen 'sitting on the heap, roasting his potatoes and shellfish'.[2]

222 The great bulk of the wrack taken all round the coast for
423 manure was driftweed thrown up during storms, but the supply was often supplemented by cutting or pulling weed from the rocks, and in some places there were complicated methods of regulating and distributing the harvest. On a stretch of coast familiar to me in south Down one can pick out strips running out into the sea, demarcated by marked boulders. They were

[1] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 15.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 99.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XVII

BOATS AND FISHING

THE lower reaches of the River Boyne, celebrated among archaeologists as the setting of one of the most remarkable groups of chamber tombs in western Europe, have another claim on our interests as the last refuge of a venerable craft. This is perhaps the only place in Europe where the phrase 'the skin of a boat' preserves its literal meaning. The lath or wicker-work coracle is known on several of the Welsh rivers, but only in the Boyne curragh (Ir. *currach*) is the covering still made of hide. The ox-hides now used are imported: the one I examined during a recent visit to the salmon fisheries near Drogheda had been tanned by a specialist in the dressing of beaver skins. Each hide may outlast several 'baskets' or boat-frames, for these quickly rot with repeated wettings and dryings, and on the average two frames of doubled hazel wands are required each season, which lasts from 12th February to 12th August. A few other Irish rivers kept their curraghs into recent centuries—the curragh was certainly known on the Shannon and the Erne and possibly on the Bann—but on most of the inland waters dug-outs seem to have been traditional, and if we knew more about the two distributions important cultural inferences might be drawn. Dug-outs have been found, however, in nearly every part of the country, including the River Boyne.

The curragh is not likely to survive much longer and its lore should be fully recorded. Netting salmon in fresh water on all Irish rivers has been illegal since 1st January 1948, so that the curragh's last legal refuge is the tidal portion of the Boyne. But it has been long a-dying. I was told that no more would be made after the death of that fine craftsman Michael O'Brien

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

501 some twenty years ago, but it was not so. I find that W. F. Wakeman was informed that the two curraghs which he sketched on the Boyne in 1848 were 'probably the last which would be constructed for use on those waters'.[1]

396 Fortunately James Hornell has published a careful study of *British Coracles and Irish Curraghs*,[2] and the following account is based on his book, supplemented by personal observation. On the level sward—his rustic shipyard—the boat-builder first marks out, with string and pegs, two semicircles of 2 ft. radius, their centres being about twenty inches apart. This will give the basket a mouth measuring 6 ft. by 4 ft., a size determined by the average size of a hide. Joining the two circles into an ellipse, he thrusts into the ground along this line, at intervals of about nine inches, long pointed hazel rods which have been cut the previous autumn after the leaf-fall and allowed to season (Fig. 77). They are pushed about six inches into the ground, at an angle so that they slope outwards somewhat. At one end, the bow-to-be, an extra rod is inserted on either side to give strength where the weight of the kneeling paddleman will fall. Against the ground a strong gunwale of withies is woven on to the rods, and above it a skirting of lighter withies. Opposite rods on each side are now bent over and their thin ends pushed into the ground to secure them temporarily. The fore-and-aft rods are similarly bent over and heavy stones placed on the basket, their weight distributed so as to make a symmetrical frame with the top (that is the bottom of the curragh) as nearly flat as possible. At this stage two or three days are allowed for the frame to set. Then the crossings of the rods are lashed with a continuous twine and again the frame is left weighted. The thin ends of the rods are now broken off at the last lashings in such a way as to leave the bark projecting to prevent the ends from damaging the hide. This, which has meanwhile been softening in the river, is sewn on to the gunwale with twine, the basket having been pulled out of the ground and inverted. The thwart is fixed in position amidship, its ends suspended from the gunwale with withy ties, and withy braces are laced across the stern portion to form a rest for the

[1] W. F. Wakeman, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1872), 76.
[2] J. Hornell, *British Coracles and Irish Curraghs* (1938).

 [Text continues on p. 236]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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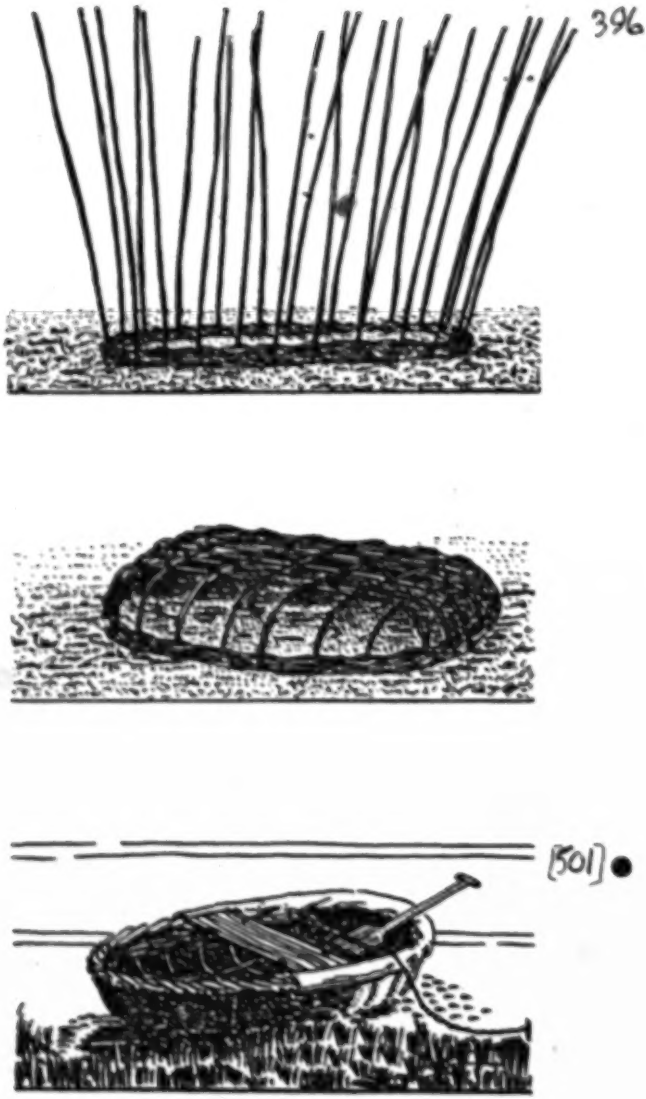

FIG. 77. The Boyne curragh: construction of basket.

396 net. Sitting on the thwart, the boat-builder now drives in the projecting rod-ends to tighten the skin, and trims them to within an inch of the gunwale. Finally he weaves on a protecting mouth of hazel rods which he binds to the gunwale and covers, behind the thwart, with canvas to save the net from damage as it is played out.

The curragh was well adapted to the draft-net salmon fishery 501 at the Oldbridge weir on the Boyne. The following account is 226 based on notes made at Oldbridge in 1947: 'Every half hour of daylight during the season, the curragh makes its brief trip with a draft-net around the pool of water where the salmon lie below the weir. Its virtue lies in its lightness and ease of handling—though not for the novice—in the method of paddling over the bows which allows it to keep close to the banks, and especially in the shallow draught which enables it to pass right under the weir without being swept down by the under-current. The paddler kneels in the deep bows and draws the boat along with rapid strokes alternately to left and right. The net-man sits on the thwart facing backwards and plays out the net, the end of which is held by a third man on the bank. Having reached the far end of the weir the paddler races downstream and returns across the current to join the third man and close the net. The salmon are dispatched with a heavy 'priest' here called the killing-stick.' The fishermen still operate two rectangular fishtraps below the weir, one near each bank, composed of iron gratings which have probably replaced wicker traps since they are known as 'hurdles'. The salmon are taken out with a landing net. A weir has probably been worked continuously at this spot since the Middle Ages, for the monks of Mellifont Abbey operated a weir here.[1]

It comes as a shock, after seeing the little basket-curragh of 501 the Boyne, to recall that the legendary histories tell of much trafficking across the seas in splendid curraghs which carried sails. *The Voyage of Teigue* was made in a curragh constructed of forty oxhides and fitted with twenty-five thwarts.[2] Allowance must be made for picturesque exaggeration, but there is no doubt that the monks of the Irish Church went far afield in

[1]A. E. J. Went, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1953), 18–33.
[2]Standish O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica* (1892), 586.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

their skin boats and almost certainly reached Iceland before the Norsemen. An account of the legendary voyagings of St. Brendan speaks of the hides of his curragh as dressed with butter. Port-na-Curaich, on the island of Iona, commemorates the landing of another Irish saint, St. Columba, though one hesitates to accept the tradition that the long mound which may be seen there is the place where he buried his curragh so that he could not return to Ireland. The sea-going curraghs were ideal craft for the Irish raiders who plundered west Britain during and after the Roman occupation: light in weight, of shallow draught and capable of flying over the waves. Probably the plank-built longboats of the Vikings drove the curraghs from the Irish Sea, but its descendants are still to be found in the rowing curraghs of the west coast from Donegal to Kerry. The Boyne curragh is a fossilized relic of an earlier form, if indeed it is not, as Hornell thought, a degeneration product. 501 ●

But besides the rowing curraghs up to twenty-five feet in length there are also, in Donegal, smaller paddling curraghs eight or ten feet long which seem to stand between the oval river baskets and the sharp-pointed rowing curraghs. In an account of the Rosses in the 1750s we read of the funeral processions to the island of Aranmore in Donegal which comprised as many as sixty or eighty curraghs covered with seal skins.[1] We learn from a description of their construction written nearly 100 years later that the frame of sallies and laths, at that time 'skinned with a hide or tarred canvas' was lashed together with cords of horsehair.[2] The same writer tells us that cattle were transported in them by lifting an animal into the curragh on its back, with its legs tied, and carrying the loaded vessel into the water. He gives the following example of 'the reckless daring of these islanders. A man and his wife coming out of the island of Aranmore, in a little boat filled with turf, had a horse standing on top of it; with the roll of the sea, the animal was thrown out, and as they were a long way from land, must have been drowned, had not the man cleverly succeeded in getting him into the boat again!' It seems from what records are available that the hides used for covering the vessels, [505] [281]

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 202.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 31.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

501 whether seal-skin or the hide of a cow or horse, were untanned. I can add little to the historical account given by Hornell, but [281] it should be noticed that the paddle curragh, covered with horsehide, was common in Erris, Co. Mayo, around 1830[1] and that, to judge from an entry in a Rathlin Island account book of 1760—'paid for one mare's hide for the boat, 1s. and 6d.'—the paddle curragh was used there also.

The long rowing curragh with its high pointed nose is 501 widely distributed on the west coast from Donegal to Kerry, 3% and its seaworthy qualities are known to many from its dramatic participation in such films as *Man of Aran* and *Shark Island*. This vessel too is built bottom upwards, but the frame is pegged, not into the ground but into a strong wooden gunwale frame, single or double, which Hornell believes was borrowed, along with the fixed thwarts which give lateral rigidity, from plank-built boats. Yet the method of pivoting the oar on a single tholepin, originally perhaps a strong projecting rib of the curragh frame, rather than in a rowlock, suggests that the rowing curragh has native forerunners. There are many variations in constructional details from one district to another but nearly all the vessels are now built of laths and all are covered with tarred canvas. An emergency repair is contrived by an operation which, if you are a timid passenger, looks like 'burning your boats': the curragh is inverted, the tar around the hole is set alight and a calico patch stuck on when the tar has run. The curraghs are rowed by two, three or four men, and the largest are said to have a carrying capacity of two tons. In Kerry they are masted to carry a small lug sail. A feature of [777] many curraghs is a small bottle of holy water, a protection against misfortune, suspended on a string in the bows.

The looms of the long narrow oars overlap so that the oars- 501 man pulls cross-handed. A heavy wooded counterweight, the bool, is attached near the loom, and the oar pivots by means of a round hole in the bool on a single wooden peg, the tholepin, driven into the gunwale (Fig. 78). This method of rowing is found on many lake and river boats in Ireland, perhaps es- [171] pecially in those areas, such as the Shannon and Lough Neagh,

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 56. See also *Pococke's Tour* 1752, 64.

 [Text continues on p. 240]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

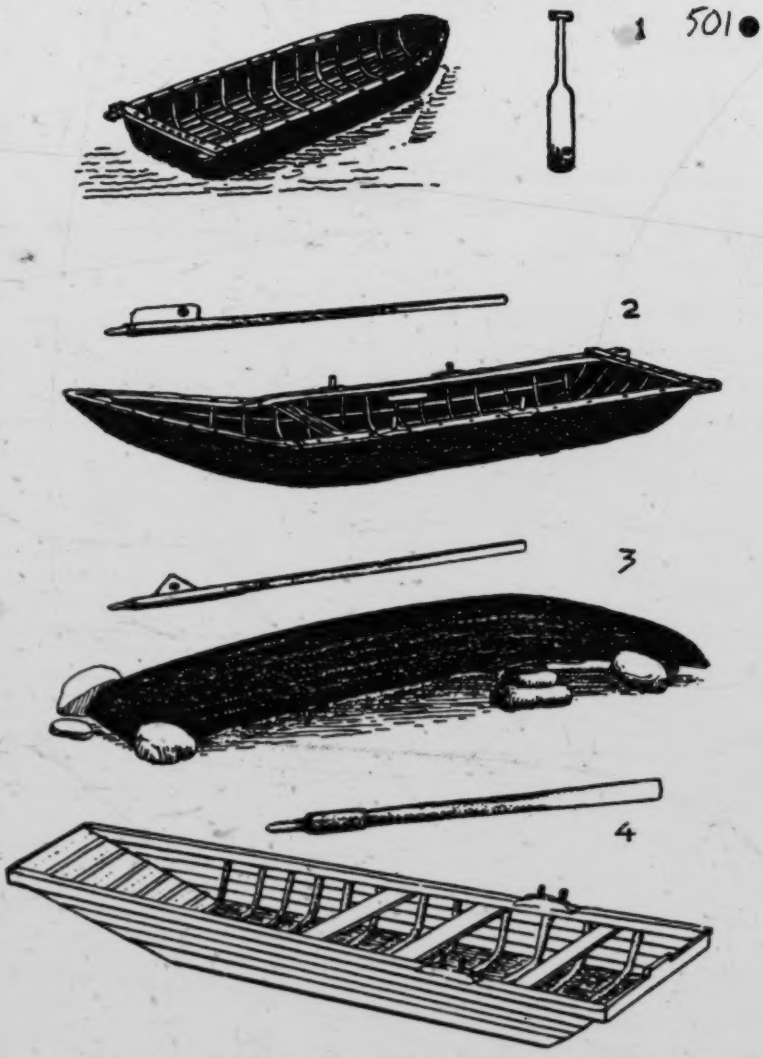

FIG. 78. Curraghs and cot. (1) Paddle curragh and paddle, Bunbeg, Co. Donegal. (2) Rowing curragh and oar, Sheephaven, Co. Donegal. (3) Rowing curragh and oar, Spiddal, Co. Galway. (4) Cot and oar, Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

501 where curraghs were formerly known. But it is also characteristic of Scottish cobles and the boats of some English lakes.
171 The inshore fishing boats of Co. Antrim also had booled oars,[1] and farther afield the single tholepin is said to typify the rowing boats of Madeira, the sardine boats of Portugal and some vessels of the Upper Nile. These often use a grommet, as do the boats of the north-east coast of England.

Sea-going curraghs are put to many uses, for inshore net
226 fishing, for setting lobster pots or long lines, for gathering kelp and for carrying freight, livestock and passengers. But the most spectacular purpose to which they have been put is for hunting the basking shark or sunfish from whose liver, before
[373] the advent of paraffin, oil for lighting was obtained. A single fish will yield from seven to ten barrels of liver. Measuring up to forty feet in length, the basking shark is one of the world's largest fish and though harmless—its diet is minute copepods—its bulk makes it a formidable adversary. These fish move down the west coast in summer, and in early May they haunt the Sunfish Bank thirty miles off Achill Island, where they come to the surface in the morning and evening. The bank is remarkable for the break of the tide on it, although it lies between seventy and ninety fathoms near the edge of 'soundings'—the continental shelf—and a heavy swell makes conditions difficult for small boats. Here and elsewhere the sunfish used to be harpooned from curraghs, but the advantage lay with decked vessels which could stand by for several days. In the early nineteenth century as many as thirty or forty fish were sometimes killed on the Sunfish Bank in a single day of fine weather. Nowadays the sharks are taken in strong nets fixed to island headlands around which they swim. They are occasionally seen off the other Irish coasts, where they cause great havoc if they get involved in the fishing nets.

Of the small open clinker-built boats of traditional type which
501 takes the place of the curragh on the north, east and south
[174] coasts, no systematic study has been made. Some of them betray their Norse inheritance in their lines or their names, for example the Wicklow skiff and the drontheim (Trondhjem) of the north coast. These boats are double-ended—unlike the cur-

[1] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 276.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

raghs—and would not be out of place in the fiords. In fact 501
during the nineteenth century, and perhaps from earlier times,
many yawls were imported unfinished from Norway, carrying [439]
only the bottom (garboard) strakes hollowed from a thick
plank. Local materials, always scarce in Ireland in recent [396]
centuries, were utilized where possible, holly for the keel (it
wears smooth and slides well on beach gravel) ropes of bog fir,
and a 'whin root' for the tiller. In Kerry the entire vessel was
sometimes built from bog fir: for this purpose as for making
roof-frames it had the advantage of impermeability.[1] For off-
shore fishing in the Irish Sea the lugger—a name now applied
to the motor drifter which has taken its place—developed in
the nineteenth century under the influence of visiting 'nickies',
the Manx name for Cornish lug-sailed herring boats, said to
have been given because so many of their crews were named
Nicholas. On the west coast the Galway hookers are now, des-
pite their name, used almost entirely for carrying turf and live-
stock. The lug-sailed pookhauns used for fishing are a variant
of the Irish Sea yawl, of clumsy construction thanks to limited
resources and unsuitable building materials.

On many inland loughs and larger rivers dug-out boats not
much different from those of the Bronze Age seem to have
continued to be made into the seventeenth century and probably
even later in places. The most serious problem to be solved in 396
hollowing out a solid log is how to keep the sides and bottom
of the vessel of even thickness. Some of the ancient dug-outs
recovered from the Irish lakes and rivers show that their makers
had availed themselves of a method which is practised today
in parts of Indonesia. The method is to bore holes through the
shell and plug the holes with pegs of the right length to serve
as gauges. The plugged holes observed in the bottom of many
an Irish dug-out have been explained as drainage holes, but
the pegs would in that case have been left protruding, and one
hole would surely have sufficed. As the country lost its forests it
must have become difficult to obtain trees of the right size and
kind, especially oak, for boat making, and by the eighteenth
century, it seems, plank boats retaining some features of the
dug-out were substituted. Around 1800 the salmon-fishing cots 501

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 89.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

501 of the River Nure were described as 'flat narrow boats equal at both ends and propelled by paddles'.[1] Earlier, about 1645, Gerard Boate described the cots as 'things like boats, but very unshapely, being nothing but square pieces of timber made hollow.' 'They are very common throughout all Ireland . . . even upon the great rivers and loughs'.[2]

To judge from the numerous discoveries of small dug-outs at [491] river crossings their last surviving use was for ferrying purposes. They were replaced locally by flat-bottomed cots built with wide planks laid edge to edge, such as serve the eel-fishers of the River Bann. These are propelled with a pole. The punt-like cot is also the old craft of the River Shannon. A number of dug-outs are found to have been adapted for propulsion with oars, using the single thole-pin of the rowing-curragh. The large rowing boats of Lough Neagh also use the single thole-pin: to give greater leverage for the heavy oars the iron thole-pin is set out from the gunwale on an outrigger or 'bolster'. In the cots of Lough Erne the oar is worked between double thole-pins (Fig. 78). The maze of lakes which make up the Lough Erne group have yielded many ancient dug-outs of varied types, some of them spoon-shaped, others rectangular and provided with carrying lugs. Others again seem to be both boat and sledge, an alternative to the portable curragh in a land strewn with little lakes. But the strangest vessel, apparently misnamed a curragh, was a kind of raft which is said to have survived until a hundred years ago, 'composed of wreaths of bull-rushes tied upon a frame or raft made of rough branches of trees'.[3]

226 Methods of fishing in river and lake include not only legitimate forms of angling and netting, but many ways of killing fish which game laws and other vested interests have made illegal, but have not extinguished. The spearing of salmon, prohibited since 1714, is now left to poachers, but well into the last century it was openly practised in the city of Galway.[4] On [423] Lough Neagh yellow (feeding) eels are caught illicitly on long lines by fisherfolk whose claims to ancient rights have not been recognized by the courts.

[1] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 150.
[2] G. Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 64, 136.
[3] W. F. Wakeman, loc. cit.
[4] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 82 (1952), 110

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and are therefore known as 'harvest herrings'. It is then that the yawls or skiffs which lie half hidden for most of the year have their brief spell of activity, and the farmers who jointly own them find on moonlight nights a cool relief from the hot pressure of harvest. The fish are caught in trammel nets, and they were formerly in great demand not only locally but for many miles inland for salting down as winter 'kitchen'.[1] A more varied diet has lessened the demand, for the great days of the salt herring were the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when a potato diet cried out for a tasty accompaniment. On the north-west coast the herring fishery extends through the winter, with consequent serious risks which the Donegal men have none the less been willing to take. Here, perhaps, is one explanation for the survival of the light rowing curragh down to the coming of powered vessels, for a small sail boat brings many hazards on this stormy Atlantic coast.

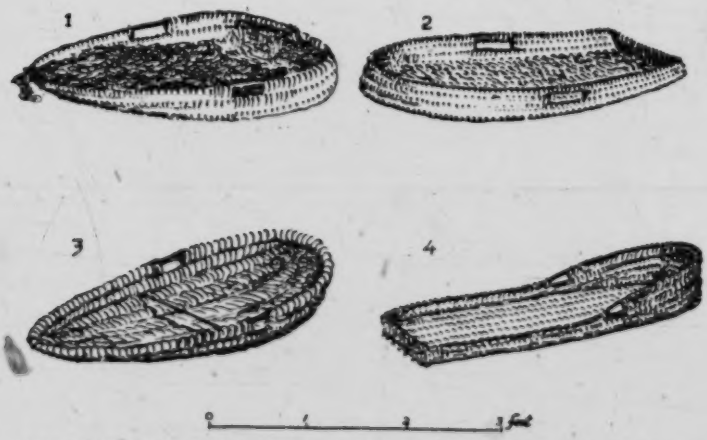

FIG. 82. Long-line baskets. (1) Co. Antrim. (2) Co. Galway. (3) Co. Down. (4) Aran Islands.

Long line fishing for cod, skate, ling and other big fish is almost certainly far older than the herring fishery, and it has preserved down to our own day many ancient practices and

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 18.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Introduction

101 131 105 178 [162] INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

[241] [244] [501] [197]

114 121 127 My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

131 197 162 103 192

[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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• 501
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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

226
177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 229
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

443 434 Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by [501] [295] four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are [438] made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the [657] factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. [437] Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west [171] coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as [174] the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it [178] is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-501 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single 502 tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom [502] three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrao villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the [433] crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at [322] work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, [184] and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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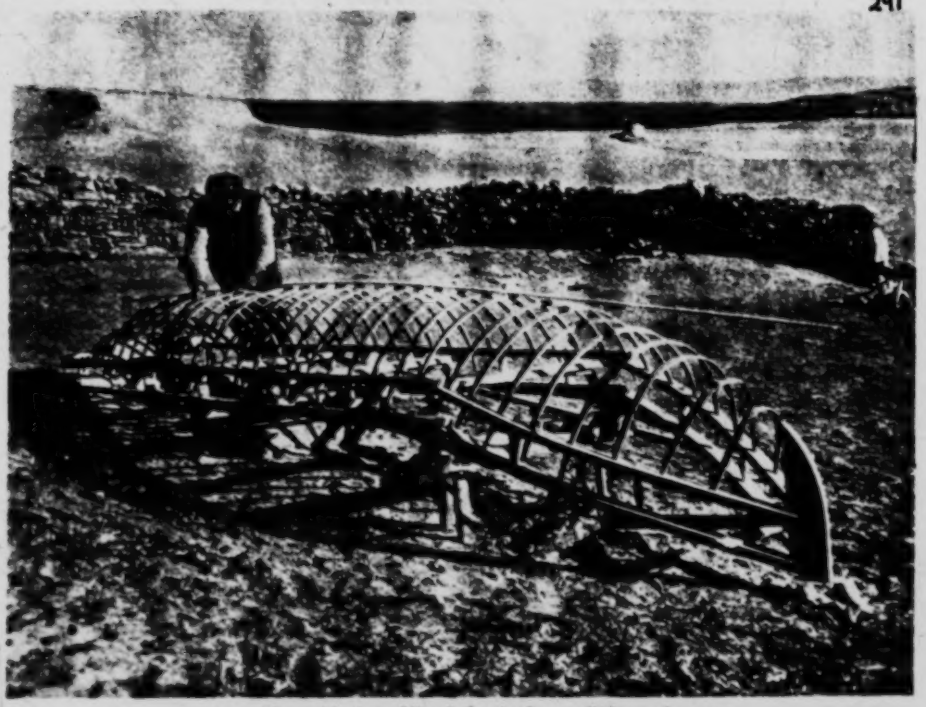

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

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folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *currach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

[184]
[434]

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

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[178]
[177]
[187]

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is

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17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in 831 *
Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of 832
this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only [291]
infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; [514]
children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their 291
faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my 515
wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a 834
man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once [854]
when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said
with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Cloth- [513]
ing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea 481
in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. 834
Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that 526
nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and 761
weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is 777
best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean [501] •
rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The 291
truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in 834
order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back [526]
of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small
pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity [231]
of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors.
My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popu- 123
lar folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American 291
Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only 834
two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had 291
they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of 834
nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it [165]
might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when [759]
finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

but a few years ago the ordinary means of lighting the houses was a rude open lamp, filled with oil extracted from the livers of fish, and having a piece of peeled rush for a wick. 373

Kelp-burning was formerly one of the industries of the islands, but of late years it declined rapidly, and is now practically extinct. As to the cause of this decay of a formerly profitable source of income, very different accounts are given, some alleging the poor quality of the weed; others that they were not fairly treated in selling; and others again that it does not pay as well as the fish-curing. 381

The fish most taken are sea-bream, glassan (a sort of pollock), mackerel, turbot, and plaice, used mostly for home consumption; cod and ling, which are cured at the fish-curing station for exportation, and oil extracted from their livers; also large quantities of crabs and lobsters, which are taken to Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, from which they are forwarded to the English market. The boat used for conveying them is of peculiar construction, and has a large salt-water tank amidships, in which the lobsters are kept alive. The lobster-pots are of the usual type. There is nothing unusual about their ordinary method of fishing, except that the Inishbofin men, as mentioned in a footnote to the account of that island in the Memoir of the Geological Survey, already alluded to, do not follow the shoals of fish around the western headland, but carry their boats across the narrow isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated. 226 439 [501] [502]

The pursuit of the "sun-fish," or basking-shark (*Selache maxima*), was formerly a source of considerable profit to the islanders, but has been almost altogether abandoned of late years owing to the decline in the price of the oil, and partly, it is said, to the loss of several lives on one occasion when a boat was charged and overturned by a wounded fish, also to the partial disappearance for some years of the sharks. 226

The season for this enterprise is from April until the end of June, and in that time large numbers of these fish were taken formerly, and some are still killed from time to time. Mr. G. H. Kinahan, to whom I am indebted for several notes relative to the condition of the islands some years ago, says:—"The sun-fish fishing was considerable in my time (1870). I have seen strings of seven and nine fish; when caught, they towed them into the harbour, cut out the liver, and left the carcass to rot, or be eaten by the pigs; the stench in the harbour was something to remember." A very full description of the fishing is given by Sir H. W. Gore-Booth in a recent article. He states that the value of the oil (from eight to twelve petroleum barrels full) obtained from the liver of one of these fish has been variously estimated

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies 133
Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-
station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern [502]
boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low
rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills.
Off this part of the coast lie Iniskea and Duvillaun, having a sandy
or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore
along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low.

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal [134]
of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones.

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just [504]
outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and 132
snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe.

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very 137
few and only grow in sheltered localities.

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the 491
mail road from Ballina runs.[1]

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great 125
extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north [133]
rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks that have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and, we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne 'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour, and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh-water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 59.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for 291
themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their [177]
fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 294
40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to 281
shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and [437]
when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept [463]
moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a 128
livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have 434
touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century 434
men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the main- 502
land. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to 437
scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The [178]
Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in 502
the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humor- 539
ous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right 421
of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person 422
discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander [829]
along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the im- [176]
mense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the [122]
islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other [433]

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

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which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The inquiry was conducted on almost exactly the same lines as
121 that of last year; the slight differences of method being either due to changes made as the result of former experience or to local causes; but every effort was made to ensure as great uniformity as possible, a matter of much importance as facilitating comparison of results.

In this report the same headings as used in the previous one, and arranged in the same order, have been adhered to as closely as possible, so as to allow of easy reference.

II.—Physiography of the Islands.

The two islands under consideration, together with several small
131 uninhabited islets, form the parish of Inishbofin; they are situated
101 outside the mouth of Killary Bay, and are distant some thirty-six miles from Westport, and about sixteen miles from Clifden, Co. Galway, the nearest town of any size. The post town is Cleggan, a small village on a point of the mainland, about seven miles from Inishbofin. Of the two main islands Inishbofin (locally called Bofin or Boffin) is much the larger, as out of the total area of the parish of 3151 acres, it contains 2312.

Its greatest length is about four miles, and it varies in breadth
133 from half a mile to over two miles. The nature of its coast line is greatly varied; at some places, as at Knock-quarter or East End, being low and sandy; at others, as on the north side, and at Dun More on the western extremity, being rocky, at times rising into high and jagged cliffs worn into coves and natural bridges; while, again, in other places it is high bluff overhanging a shingly foreshore. The
[504] harbour is very safe and well sheltered, and looks S.W. The coast of Shark, which lies about a mile S.W. of Inishbofin, is much more rocky, and may be said to be precipitous nearly all round, and much broken into by caves and deep fissures a few yards wide, with precipitous overhanging walls. It is difficult to land on this island if the weather be at all rough, and the inhabitants are often stormbound for weeks at a time. The difficulty and danger of landing is not so great
[653] as it used to be since the building of a new pier by the Government as a relief work in 1892. Mr. Michael Lavelle, writing about the natives of this island, says:—"It is very hard for these people to live; they may be two months before they can go to Boffin to get some commands, and they live during that time on potatoes and 'white wine.'"

The principal rock of both islands is gneiss, but belts of steatite are also found.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities,
101 one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the
631 little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of
133 North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the
[504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills. Off this part of the coast lie Iniskea and Duvillaun, having a sandy or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low. 133 [502]

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones. [134]

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe. [504] 132

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very few and only grow in sheltered localities. 137

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the mail road from Ballina runs.[1] 491

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few 125

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks that have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward. [133]

[p.204(B)]

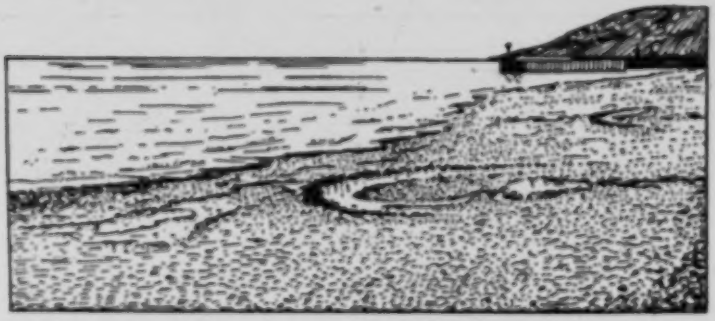
000 railway was closed in 1925. But the
206 Inishbofin postmistress operates a radio-telephone.

THE LANDSCAPE

Three types of landscape are char-
133 acteristic: first, craggy hills of no great altitude, with a maximum of 292 feet in Westquarter, 288 feet in Middle-quarter, and 271 feet in Knock; second, the farmed rolling countryside ranging from sea level to about 150 feet, and having some natural drainage; and, third, an area of sand dunes and blown
[311] sand in the extreme east, once settled and farmed but now used only for rough pasture. The larger of the two lakes, Lough Bofin, is held back by a magnificent shingle ridge in a fine bay, partially protected from strong winds and high seas but open to northerly gales. The coast is rocky almost every. where and there are some splendid cliffs
[504] with outlying stacks: the best harbor is the long inlet on the south side. No recent geological work has been done

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

227



504

FIG. 75. Fishing weirs and curragh pens. *Above:* wattled head weir in River Bride, Co. Waterford (after Went). *Centre:* old stone fishing weirs at Newcastle, Co. Down. *Below:* curragh pens, Achill Island, Co. Mayo (after Piggott).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

developed from wicker constructions which, like the stone weirs, were once built by shore dwellers for their own needs. 226
But weirs were not the only structure built in tidal waters. The inquiring visitor will observe along many stretches of coast straight lines of stones running out to sea which are the 504 remains of little piers alongside which small boats could lie. Back of them beyond the reach of the tide there may be the ruins of a boat shelter which might never have been more than a rectangular pen of stone walls or earth banks. Such pens are still used to protect the curraghs of the west coast from the wind which is their worst enemy.[1] The vessels are in addition weighted down with stones (Fig. 75), and to this end the gunwales often project at the rear of the curraghs to give purchase for the boulders (Fig. 78).

On the lonely and now abandoned island of St. Kilda the 223 portion which a woman took to her husband on marriage is said to have been 'a pound of horsehair to make a gin to catch fowls'.[2] [583] Martin Martin in his account of the island also tells us that the 200 inhabitants yearly killed and preserved above 20,000 birds, and in addition prodigious numbers of seabirds' eggs were consumed. The killing of seabirds and the taking of eggs for export to England during the worst period of food shortage in the second world war brought about a temporary revival of old skills on many parts of the Irish coast. Down to times still remembered fowling was a seasonal activity on most of the islands where seabirds assemble to nest. Birds of the auk family were caught in horsehair 'dulls' (snares) pegged to the ground. For other birds such as rock pigeons the snares were baited. July was the busy month, and the birds not eaten in this 'hungry month' were salted down for the winter. On Rathlin Island the cliffs and sea-slopes were apportioned in strips and demarcated by spikes driven into the rocks. It is remembered that single men in search of eggs would let themselves alone [481] down ropes attached to iron pins in the cliff edge. Traditions of other ways of catching the birds have been lost but one may be fairly sure that the various methods described by Martin Martin and more recently by Kenneth Williamson for the

[1] S. Piggott, *Antiquity*, 28 (1954), 19–24.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 317.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] • [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504 •
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *currach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest rises and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pub. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and belief, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-cheek statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

352 stools, and a rough table or two, with a dresser containing a scanty assortment of coarse earthenware, a spinning-wheel, and a quilting-frame, constitute the furniture of the kitchen. In one corner is a pile of turf for fuel, on which the fowl roost, and above the couples are stored the dried fish, &c., for the winter's use, and the agricultural and piscatorial implements.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual large three-legged pot, 415 slung on a crook over the fire, a griddle, a frying-pan, and, perhaps, 352 a quern, a boran or sieve of sheepskin stretched over a wicker frame, and a couple of skids or shallow, circular wicker baskets. The furniture of the bedroom, or rooms, consists of a couple of tent beds; a few chairs and, perhaps, a small table. There is very rarely a loft 231 to the house. At night the cattle, fowl, and pigs are taken into the kitchen, the pigs being accommodated in a pen beside the fire-place, while the cattle are fastened at the opposite side of the room.

6. *Transport.*—The roads are good, and extend over a large part of [491] the islands, but are only used for foot traffic and cattle, as there are 492 no wheeled vehicles of any description, and all goods are carried [482] either in hampers slung on the back, the usual method of taking home potatoes, &c., or in two wicker panniers or cleaves, slung across the back of a pony or donkey, one or other of which is owned by nearly every family. The harness of these animals is home-made, and of primitive design, the panniers, manufactured from osiers grown on the islands, being slung from pegs on a wooden frame, beneath which, to protect the animal's back, is a thick straw mat saddle. Both sexes ride on the horses behind the panniers, and both adopt the same position, a sideways posture, the men not riding astride.

The method of taking home the harvest is picturesque; the ponies [243] have cloths hung over their faces to prevent their eating the grain, and are then literally clothed with sheaves, which are hung all round them, and piled up so as to give them the appearance of walking straw stacks.

For water transport there are a good many boats of various 501 descriptions, the primary use of which is for fishing; only one, the [505] post-boat, which goes thrice a week to the mainland if the weather permits, being regularly used for transport.

The number and classification of the boats are, it is believed, given correctly below, but it was difficult to get any two accounts to agree.

There are five hookers, seven pookauns,[1] fifteen curraghs, one yawl, and about thirty rowing-boats.

[1] An undecked sailing-boat, cutter rigged.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are 492
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few
boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class
boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are
about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their
turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate [609]
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish

167 landscape combined with financial help
657 of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is sep-
[131] arated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring
311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs
132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[5] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

● 505 Isolation is a major problem, but on four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost
[261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport problems

[137] [5] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

their skin boats and almost certainly reached Iceland before the Norsemen. An account of the legendary voyagings of St. Brendan speaks of the hides of his curragh as dressed with butter. Port-na-Curaich, on the island of Iona, commemorates the landing of another Irish saint, St. Columba, though one hesitates to accept the tradition that the long mound which may be seen there is the place where he buried his curragh so that he could not return to Ireland. The sea-going curraghs were ideal craft for the Irish raiders who plundered west Britain during and after the Roman occupation: light in weight, of shallow draught and capable of flying over the waves. Probably the plank-built longboats of the Vikings drove the curraghs from the Irish Sea, but its descendants are still to be found in the rowing curraghs of the west coast from Donegal to Kerry. The Boyne curragh is a fossilized relic of an earlier form, if indeed it is not, as Hornell thought, a degeneration product. 501

But besides the rowing curraghs up to twenty-five feet in length there are also, in Donegal, smaller paddling curraghs eight or ten feet long which seem to stand between the oval river baskets and the sharp-pointed rowing curraghs. In an account of the Rosses in the 1750s we read of the funeral processions to the island of Aranmore in Donegal which comprised as many as sixty or eighty curraghs covered with seal skins.[1] We learn from a description of their construction written nearly 100 years later that the frame of sallies and laths, at that time 'skinned with a hide or tarred canvas' was lashed together with cords of horsehair.[2] The same writer tells us that cattle were transported in them by lifting an animal into the curragh on its back, with its legs tied, and carrying the loaded vessel into the water. He gives the following example of 'the reckless daring of these islanders. A man and his wife coming out of the island of Aranmore, in a little boat filled with turf, had a horse standing on top of it; with the roll of the sea, the animal was thrown out, and as they were a long way from land, must have been drowned, had not the man cleverly succeeded in getting him into the boat again!' It seems from what records are available that the hides used for covering the vessels, [505] [281]

[1] A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 202.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 31.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505] •
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [231] [226] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [311] eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [654] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [241] fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [231] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] • struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

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which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

Of these exports, of course, cattle were the most valuable 439
item and represented the great export staple. They were 234
likewise the crop to which most other produce could be 433
devoted when not used as human food. That this kind of conversion of other stuffs into cattle could take place is to be seen in the figures for milk. Though the Free State produced in the year in question a total of 589,000,000 gallons of milk, including both whole milk and butter, comparing favorably with such an output as Switzerland's yearly 528,000,000 in 1923, only 43 per cent of it was exported, while in Switzerland the export was 67 per cent of the Swiss total.

The figures for exports introduce a new factor of differ- 241
ence between the holdings of large and small size and their 439
populations. Small holdings do not share equally with large 511
holdings either in the consumption of agricultural produce or in its export. In both consumption and export commerce in the Free State, small holders and large holders play distinct roles.

Taking the first of these considerations, the figures for 241
consumption reveal the difference. The estimated human 511
consumption of whole milk (as milk) was some 90,000,000 262
gallons, according to the statistical record of the year 1928,[17] of which 70,000,000 gallons were consumed by agriculturalists and 20,000,000 by the remainder of the population. It was estimated that on the farms 38 gallons were consumed yearly per person. But that is the figure for all farms. There is a considerable difference here between types of farms.

Thus, in this case, on farms less than 50 acres only 36 gallons per person per annum were consumed, it was estimated, while on farms of over 50 acres, the consumption was 42 gallons. In Munster, the chief milk-producing province,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

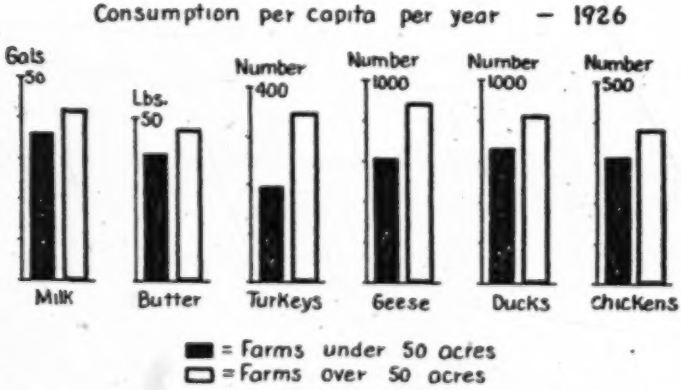
1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

241 262 511

the difference is even more marked, the indices being 35 gallons and 44 gallons.

Similar differences hold as well for the consumption of milk as butter, a commodity of which the Irish consume more than any other civilized country. The difference between farms under and farms over 50 acres can be expressed in the spread between 40 and 48 pounds annual consumption per person. For poultry and for eggs, great farm diet staples, similar differences hold. On farms less than 50 acres, 197 turkeys, 601 geese, 672 ducks, and 3,177 ordinary

FIGURE 5



Notice that in each instance the smaller farms produce more, consume less. The great "money crop," cattle, which neither party consumes to any great degree, tells another story.

fowls, we are told, were consumed in the year in question, for every 1,000 persons living on such farms; while on farms over 50 acres, 325, 884, 873, and 3,823 are the respective figures. "As might be expected, the difference between average consumption on large and small farms of valuable fowl like turkeys is very marked." [18]

In the case of eggs, of those consumed per 100 persons on

[18] *Agricultural Output . . . . 1926–27*, p. 37.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

farms in January 1929,[19] the figures are for small farms 530, for large farms 582. All of these figures reflect a difference of diet the more marked because the small farmer population is so much the larger.

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262
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In Figure 5 this difference of consumption is represented in the form of blocks depicting the contrast between small and large farms. One could conclude quite rightly from this kind of picture that in each instance the smaller farms produce more per person at work and eat less. In terms of production, then, the small farm is the more productive. In terms of monetary return, it is a different story. Cattle, of course, are the Irish "money crop," much like cotton and wheat in parts of the United States.

Observation makes it clear that this difference of diet is more marked than even these figures reveal. But figures for other items of diet appearing in agricultural production are not available in correlation with farm size. The home consumption of meats from the farm animals, except pigs, is negligible among both kinds of farmers. Nevertheless, we can gain a substantial insight into the difference in meat-eating between large and small farmers when we realize that, out of the comparatively small total of 123,000 cattle and 504,000 sheep and lambs slaughtered for consumption in the Free State in 1926, a per capita count of average consumption by dressed weight gives such a predominantly large-holding county as Westmeath a weight of 34 pounds per consuming person, counties with large urban population rising higher, while the same count gives such a predominantly small-holding county as Mayo a weight of only 13 pounds. Clare, where small and medium farmers are predominant in the population, shows a similar small consumption of meat, a similar count giving only 19 pounds per person.[20]

In fact, the large farm population shares a meat diet with

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 49.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

241 the cities and larger towns that is unknown on the small
262 farms. The fact is evident when it is observed that Dublin,
511 Cork, and Waterford counties (each dominated numerically by the city of the name) count an average meat consumption taken on the same scale of 69, 40, and 37 pounds per capita respectively.

231 The difference between the two kinds of farm shows itself
241 again strongly in the export trade from Ireland and in the
439 roles of each in the transfer of farm produce to its ultimate market. The two kinds of farm make a totally different disposal of their produce, particularly their cattle. In this fact we see for the first time that in some regard they have a complementary role. Between them Irish cattle trade is carried on.

231 The huge internal Irish cattle trade is thus significant.
438 It reveals itself in the figures as a movement from small farm to large, an interchange between the two kinds of farmers which shows once again their distinctness. The trade is both geographical and social, in the sense that it flows between two sections of Ireland and between her two great agricultural classes.

To get at the facts which show the case demands looking at the statistics of cattle in the Free State. These illustrate clearly how far the internal cattle trade shows up the great difference between the two types of farm. It is necessary to take into consideration the age groups of cattle in the various areas and in the possession of holders of various acreages in those areas. This roundabout course of determining the outlines of internal cattle trade is necessary because there are no barriers or *octrois* at which count might be made as the cattle move from dealer to dealer across the country.

231 The seven southwestern counties are the areas predominant in milch cattle production; they are the areas of the calf-producing cow. Clare is one of these. A chart of birth dates of cattle in various parts of Ireland demonstrates that

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER VII.

THE IRISH PEASANT HOUSE.

342 The Irish peasant house consists of a low single-storied rectangle, some 12 to 15 feet wide internally but of varying length, customarily thatched and whitewashed; but this generalised description embraces a surprising range of styles. So much abuse has been levelled at the Irish cabin that it is well to recall the opinion of a Swedish scientist who writes as follows :—" Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building material, the Irish peasant house never stands out in bold relief against its background but melts into it even as a tree or rock. Whenever the old building traditions are faithfully maintained its features are of a fine simplicity. The best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe."

342 362 ●571 The other side of the picture is the dirt and smells inseparable from the long habits of close association with livestock, so that within living memory, " cows and calves, men, women and children, horse and poultry were herded together in one apartment." Poverty and the rack-rent system have been blamed for this, but behind it lie facts of ethnology which are rooted in the remote past. Local authorities are striving to wipe away the stigma of the old order, and are spreading a " rash " of red-roofed cottages over the fair face of the country, but there is still a great mass of material for study.

[p. 57]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

175 given leases and were accompanied by a clergyman of their own persuasion; the only original inhabitants obtaining leases were the Cormicks. This colony does not appear to have made any extensive change in the composition of the population, as the settlers after a time ceased to be agriculturists to any extent, and took the natives of the district on to their lands as tenants. A curious petition to Sir Henry Bingham, Governor of Connaught, in reference to the revenge taken on these settlers by the natives, shows the names of those in the district in the reign of Queen Anne, and of these but two now remain, all the rest having disappeared, a fate which is ascribed by Mr. Knight to the habits of extravagance induced by the nature of their life. Sir Arthur Shaen began the canal across the neck of the Mullet, but soon abandoned the project, which was not revived until after the foundation of the town of Belmullet. Sir Arthur's two daughters, he had no sons, married, one Henry Boyle Carter of Castlemartin, county Kildare, and the other John Bingham Esq., Newbrook, county Mayo, and the property was divided between these two.

In the year 1793 a fight took place in the Mullet between the local yeomanry and the people of the district, in which thirty-six of the latter were slain. The origin of the fight was the opposition to the enrolment of the militia, then causing a great stir in the west of Ireland. Major Bingham having come to reside in the Mullet in 1796 built Bingham Castle at Eley, and began to make some roads and reclaim some of the land. The first road into the district was made in 1823, and about the same period Major Bingham founded the town in the Mullet known as Binghamstown, which at first was fairly prosperous and had at one time a population of 673.

In 1823 the first vehicle entered the Mullet, and in 1824 Mr. W. H. Carter founded the town of Belmullet at the neck of the peninsula. This town being more favourably situated, has completely destroyed its rival Binghamstown, which, though once containing some fine buildings, is now in ruins, and contains only about a dozen inhabited houses. From the time of the establishment of Belmullet and the construction of good roads into the districts, the condition of the people has [511] shown steady improvement, though it is still extremely primitive and poverty-stricken.

VIII.—Concluding Remarks.

174 This report being, like its two predecessors, a record of available facts, as found, in order to form a basis for comparison between different parts of the country, all advocacy of personal theories or opinions

[p.205(c)]

311 bor, and then with no break to Cloon-
amore on the east side.

This island has a planned landscape.
311 The roads of the commonage pastures
657 and peat bogs have been built under relief schemes and the farms include seven acres of improved land, "striped" or defined by the Congested Districts Board after the land was acquired from its owner, Mr. C. Allies, in 1907.[10]
342 Since then new houses of concrete, with
511 a concrete floor, roofed with asbestos
657 slate or, rarely, ordinary slates, have

[10] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 18th report for the year ending March 31, 1909, Cmd. 4927, p. 139. The price paid was £8301, including £401 for tenants' interests. Up to March 31, 1915, £7047 was spent on the island, 23rd report, 1915, Cmd. 8076.

342 been built for almost the entire population. In 1893 it was said that there
511 were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds,
[657] so that peat was stacked in a corner of the cottage with the fowls roosting on it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace, the cattle in a pen at the other end of the room, and the farm implements and fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] Now the
[343] old houses are the outbuildings, still thatched, with oat straw (not rye as formerly) laid on sods and tied down with home-made straw ropes weighted with large stones. Only five thatched houses were still inhabited in 1954. Some of the thatch has sprouting oats and some of it is rotten, but, when a roof is beyond further repair, it is all stripped off and the sodding and thatching begins again. Happily, corrugated iron is not used as it cannot stand the weather.

Farming

241 Agricultural practice is almost uniform: an acre or so is divided between oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—barley, and there is generally a small patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions, carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen. The ground used for crops is called the "garden," and its fertility is maintained by using animal manure and seaweed, and also by rotating the crops. Strange (or "foreign") seed is favored, and
[657] bought at a cheap rate under a government scheme. The remainder of the farmstead consists of a varying amount of meadow, generally 1–3 acres, and some pasture. The precious crops are
[231] carefully walled, but some of the farmers open their fields to the cattle and sheep after the harvest, partly as a means of natural fertilizing.

231 Each farmer has one or two cows and
439

[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[p. 206(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

century we find a description from Ulster: 'In the bosom of the Mourne Mountains there is a place called the Deers' Meadow to which great numbers of poor people resort in the summer months to graze their cattle. They bring with them their wives, children and little wretched furniture, erect huts, and there live . . . and often cut their turf.'[1] A century later a fuller account of a more complicated transhumance, reminiscent of the Norwegian seaboard, comes from Donegal: 'It often happens that a man has three dwellings—one in the mountains, another upon the shore, and the third upon an island, he and his family flitting from one to another of these habitations . . . This change usually takes place upon a fixed day, the junior branches of the family generally perform the land journey on the top of the household goods with which the pony may often be seen so loaded, and at the same time so obscured, that little more than the head can be observed; and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected et cetera . . . creep along the roads.'[2] The author goes on to comment on the restrictions imposed on the comfort and possessions of the peasants by their 'Arab mode of life'. In Achill Island too the movements were complicated, involving the entire population which, having moved to the summer pastures and sowed their corn, returned to the permanent coastal village for the high summer to fish and went back to gather the harvest at the booley in the autumn.[3]

For the most part we are dependent on folk tradition for details of booleying. The Ordnance Survey Letters written in the 1830s contain valuable material from Counties Antrim and Londonderry, and the following extract relates to the parish of Dunaghy: 'Some of the very old men of the country recollect seeing the boliehouses inhabited. They were built of sods upon a foundation of earth and stones and were thatched with heath. Many of the poorer sort lived here in summer grazing the cattle upon land that nobody appears to have claimed and supporting themselves upon their milk and blood which they took from

[1]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 125.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.
[3]An account by Sir William Wilde, written in 1836, is contained in Wood-Martin, *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (1888), 238.

them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rectangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process. 114 121 127

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated. 12 [639] [177] [178]

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next. 105 [121] [161] [241] [436] [511] [161] [593] [581] [177] [178] [829] [165] [212] [829]

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the 668

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

2

The Land and the Sea

Standard of Living

THE STANDARD OF LIVING of the folk has improved vastly since the establishment of the Irish Land Commission in 1881 and the Congested Districts Board ten years later, and the islanders are better off today than the inhabitants of some other areas of the Gaeltacht. In 1891, the Congested Districts were delineated as regions in which the population did not possess sufficient land to maintain life except at an extremely low standard. Between that year and 1951, the population in the districts declined 42 percent—from 541,000 to 367,000 persons. The few areas which would rank as congested now, on the 1891 basis, are mainly in Cos. Donegal, Mayo, and Galway (Freeman 1960:121–123). A vigorous and continuing effort to stem the tide of emigration, in part caused by poverty, led the commission, the board, subsequently the Gaeltacht Eireann which replaced the board after 1925, and other government agencies appointed in this century, to improve the standard of living by various actions: the enlargement of land holdings for more effective farming, the encouragement of small factory and domestic industries, the improvement of fishing, the construction of public works, and the introduction of various subsidies. Seasonal laboring in England, often practiced out of necessity by mainland farmers but not by the islanders, and remittances from relatives who have emigrated are income sources which also have served to alleviate poverty; but the major palliative throughout Ireland has been emigration. One of the factors limiting migration from Inis Beag to the mainland until recent decades was the low standard of living which prevailed in the country at large. An islander could not escape local hardships and privations by emigrating to urban centers as he can today; he had to turn his back on Ireland.

Most Inis Beag people believe themselves to be materially poor, although they resent others agreeing publicly with this view. A well-known Dublin newspaper feature writer in 1963 was denounced, and a vow made not to permit him to

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *currach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21) 114 181

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible. [124]

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.). 114 12 181 [538]

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor- 554 [423] [471] [511] • 556

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

1 Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated 231
are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops 241
for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and 311
rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand ready for household and farm use.

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are 231
the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various 343
sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the 351
house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later.

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called 231
"all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view 241
is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken 311
from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it would do for any area.

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard 342
also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of 343
the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is carefully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general 351
plan for all such houses of small farmers.

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work 512
which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various

[text continues on p. 35]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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members and the organization of effort involved. It is to be expected, of course, that there is a great deal of variation at different seasons of the year, a fact which makes it impossible to describe farm activities without reference to seasonal change and the requirements of various crops. Nevertheless, the work round the house is constant and less variant than that outside on the "land," and for that reason it is significant to begin with it. 512

A typical winter day begins for the farm family about seven-thirty in the morning. At other seasons the family rises earlier, but the long wet days have reduced outside work to a bare minimum and confine the work of the family members within doors. To the woman falls the first duty of the day. She must rake together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire in the hearth, put down new sods for the fire, and rekindle the blaze. This done, she hangs the kettle on the hook, making ready for the first tea of the day. For the rest of the day she must keep the hanging kettle ready, for at any moment of the day she may be called upon to serve a cup of tea to her husband, children, and all visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast, usually of bread, eggs, and milk. By the time breakfast is finished, the household is ready for its workaday existence. The farmer father and husband is dressed and ready for his daily tasks, in which he relies upon the aid of whatever grown sons may still be at home, and who now take their breakfasts beside him. Similarly, the farm wife and mother who serves her men, husband and sons, and stands by unwilling to take her place at the deal table before the window at one side of the kitchen hearth until they have eaten their fill, is ready to begin her daily round with the help of the daughters and young children of both sexes who wait their turns with her. 512 462 264 [272] [262]

In the household the responsibility of day-to-day housekeeping belongs to the woman. Hers, too, is the care of the 512 462 356

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 462 356 children. If they are of school age, she must dress them, feed them, and get them off to school. She does all the cooking and washing up after meals and keeps the teapot always ready. Each morning she sweeps the house, makes the beds, and so on. The clothes of the household are her care as well, and the indispensable and constant mending of them which rough wear makes necessary all falls to her lot.

This household work is familiar to us; the point of itemizing it is merely to make clear the confined sphere in which the woman's recurrent and indispensable duties fall.

512 462 356 231 234 But her work stretches beyond the house door. In the morning after breakfast she takes the milk buckets and milks the cows in the sheds in the haggard. This is merely one of the many trips she makes in and out of the kitchen doors for fuel, for water, to feed and tend the animals and the fowl. Her milking finished, she must bring the milk in and separate it. In recent years, more prosperous farms have been able to make use of the separator. If there is none, she must set the milk in large pans and allow the cream to rise. The whole process of the conversion of milk to butter is her charge.

512 462 231 After the morning milking and the feeding of her human charges, she must turn her attention to the feeding of the farm animals, especially the young ones. The cows and horses are not her province, but all the care of the calves, pigs, and fowl falls to her lot. She prepares a mixture of warm milk and grain for the calves, feeding them from a bucket. They must not be allowed to suck, as the milk is meant for human consumption. Then she boils a large kettle of potatoes over the fire for the chickens and the pigs, or takes them the leavings of the previous day.

512 462 [251] Before noon she hangs another kettle over the fire filled with potatoes for the use of the family. In season she adds white cabbage and nearly always includes a portion or two of bacon, some of it home cured in brine to resemble salt

PORK.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 462 pork. By the time this is ready, the men are in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

In the meantime the men have been engaged upon work of their own. The farmer rises when he hears his wife busy herself in rekindling the turf on the hearth. If there are sons, he wakes them. After that he goes to the cow barns in the haggard to inspect the cattle housed there overnight and tend to their wants in water and hay. After breakfast, if the day is fine, neither too bitterly cold nor too soakingly wet, he sallies forth into the fields to whatever work the time of the year demands. If he finds himself confined to the house, he still has plenty to do in house and haggard.

512 462 264 [153] If he and his sons go to the fields, he probably returns about eleven-thirty for the noon meal, the heavy meal of the day. Long habit calls forth his hunger and identifies it with the house. Several countrymen have remarked that they never feel hungry away from the house but are ready to eat when they get inside. The dinner unites most of the family for the first time during the day since breakfast. Only the small children of school age are absent. Their share of the meal is often saved for them until they return about four o'clock.

[262] [521] As at breakfast, the men sit down together immediately, falling to the steaming plates of cabbage, bacon, and potatoes the woman sets before them. As they eat, she stands ready to refill their plates, talking with them about the morning's work and the news of the neighborhood. It is the chief time of family conversation. During the meal the woman has boiled tea and, when the men finish with their plates, she clears away and lays bread and tea before them. Sometimes there is a longer interval between tea and dinner, devoted to smoking and talk.

512 264 [273] As before, the women and children do not eat until the men have finished. They take their places together when the men have left or have moved off to smoke an after-dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
[521 silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
858] sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
462 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading
231 the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] News.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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news. An hour or so later, the man brings the cattle in from the fields, if they have been grazing during the day. He is ready for evening tea. 512 462 [231]

At that hour the work of the men is over for the day, but that of the woman goes on. She must prepare, serve, and clean up after the tea, and then go milk the cows brought in from the fields. Her work ends only with the separating that takes place when she brings her milk into the house. Even then, while the men may sit round the fire talking over the day's work or the affairs of the community, she is not idle. If the children need help in lessons, it is she who gives it to them. She puts them to bed, and, if she returns then to join the men at the fire, she continues with knitting and baking. When the whole family has finally gone off to bed, it is she who must close up the house at night and slake the fire in the hearth.

Work round and inside the house is continuous and varies very little from day to day and season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfills its needs of nourishment and shelter in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habitual behaviors. What variation there is in the accepted pattern is itself confined to narrow range. Certain chores indispensable in the day-to-day habits of the people are divided among days of the week. One woman informant, a small farmer's wife in Inagh, gave as her weekly round a much more rigid daily division of tasks than is actually to be observed. On Monday she did the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday she made butter, on Friday she went to market, on Saturday she got ready for Sunday, and on Sunday she went to mass and did as little as she could. [527] Really, however, it is only on Sunday that there comes any serious alteration in the daily round.

Work in the land beyond the haggard and the house is less restricted and more varied. It has a greater range of 512

[about 5 P.M.: - Analysis]

i:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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512 activity over the farm and over the round of the year. Coupled with such greater variety, there is also a greater freedom of choice among necessary tasks. The necessities imposed by soil and climate permit a wider range of action and a less narrowly repetitious routine than do the ordered regularities of a household.

512 221 Yet within the greater range of activity there is still a constant and nearly invariant pattern of work. The progression of the seasons brings a recurrent demand upon the farmer in the care of beasts, crops, and the land itself. Each season brings a task which must be performed, begun, or ended if the farmer is to raise his produce successfully. 512 626 Similarly, the custom and rivalry of the community exert a further restriction upon his activity. He works within the influence of a long-established tradition of ancestral experience which has established for him the best dates for planting, for reaping, for breeding cattle, and for most of the tasks of his yearly round. The community holds that tradition in common, and the farmer is caught in the midst of a mesh of rivalries, competitions, and gossip in praise and condemnation, which binds him the more strongly to the accepted patterning of his yearly activity.

512 221 462 The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its lowest pitch in winter. Activity is confined to house and haggard. On bitter wet days little can be done beyond the haggard wall, but within it there is always a variety of necessary tasks involving care of farm machinery, implements, and buildings, and the housing and feeding of the cattle who cannot be driven to graze in the open field. In the house there is much that can be done. Harness can be patched, boots fitted with new soles, plates, and spikes, furniture repaired and occasionally new pieces made.

These tasks fall to the males of the household, the farmer father and his grown or adolescent sons. Any discussion of the annual round of farm work necessarily describes their

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents. 512 221 462

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year. 132 527 221

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew. 221 527 574 621

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with 221 132 241 221 521

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Following the countryman at his work, we can 592
learn what his role is, what determines it, and what keeps him to it; we can see its controls and the organization of labour it entails.

The first duty of the farm family's day falls to 462
'the woman of the house'. Before the others are up, 512
she rakes together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire, puts down new sods, and rekindles the blaze. Then she hangs the kettle on the hook over the hearth, making ready for the first tea of the day. All day long the kettle will hang there, for [272]
at any moment she must be ready to serve a cup of tea to husband, children and visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast: bread, eggs and milk.

By the time breakfast is over, the household is ready for its workaday life. The men are up and dressed for the day's tasks, and the farm wife and [264]
mother who serves them and stands by unwilling to sit down till they have had their fill, has begun her daily round. She takes her place later with her daughters and young children who help her throughout the day.

But familiar housework is not the whole of the woman's duty. Her work takes her beyond the house door. After breakfast she takes the milk buckets and goes to milk the cows in the sheds. This is merely one of many trips she makes out into the haggard, for fuel, for water, and to feed the animals and poultry. Milking over, she must not rest, for the whole process of converting milk

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

462 to butter is her charge. She is an expert at the
512 churn.

Her human charges fed, she must feed the animals in their turn. The full-grown cattle and the horse are not her charge, but she must tend calves and pigs and fowl. Milk and potatoes must be prepared for them all.

Before noon, she hangs a second kettle from the hook. This time she fills it with potatoes for the
[262] family. In season, she will add white cabbage, and a portion or two of bacon or salt pork. By the time this is ready the men will be in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

For the men have not been idle. The farmer-father and husband wakes his sons, inspects the cattle and horse, if there is one, and gives them hay and water. If the day is fine, he sallies forth to the fields; if not, and the weather confines him to house and haggard, he has still plenty to do, in building walls, repairing and making machine parts, harness and tools.

Dinner unites the family for the first time since breakfast. Only children of school age are absent and their share of the meal is saved till later. As before, the women and children do not eat till the men have finished. But as the women serve, they
[521] all talk about the experiences of the day. It is the chief time of general family conversation. Only the children are silent, for in rural Ireland a well-
[858] behaved child is a silent one.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

After dinner, work begins anew. For the women chores are much the same as in the morning. Should routine duties come to a pause, there is still plenty to do. Washing, mending, knitting must be done; and their hands are never idle. 462 512

The great staple, bread, is baked daily, upon the 'griddle' at the hearth. The women may bake at any time, and even late in the evening when the family is gathered round the fire, their last task may be to bake for supper of bread and tea.

At four in the 'evening', as the countryman divides the day, children arrive from school, to be fed and questioned. For they are important purveyors of news. Later, the men are home from the fields, driving the cattle home, bedding them for the night. The woman must serve supper and milk the cows, bringing the milk in to separate. But though her day is over with the separating, she may not sit idly with the men for long beside the evening's fire. Children, knitting, and baking can still be attended to; tradition and proverb demand that 'one woman in the house be always working'. [805] [203]

Work round house and haggard is continuous; it varies little from season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfils its first needs in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habit. What variation there is, is itself confined to a narrow range. Certain chores are divided among days of the week, but they show nothing of the swift change

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

462 of a Solomon Grundy. A farmer's wife of Clare
512 divided her week more rigidly in describing it than she did in practice. "On Monday", she said, "I do the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday I make butter, on Friday to market, on Saturday I get ready for Sunday, and on Sunday I go to mass and do as little as I can." Really it is only on Sunday that any change seriously alters the daily round; for the country-people are strict sabbatarians, at least regarding work.

241 Work on the 'land' beyond the haggard and the
462 house is less restricted. It has a greater range over
221 the farm and offers a wider variety of tasks round the year. There is a wider freedom of choice among tasks as well. Soil and climate are just as insistent as is the household, but they do not force such narrow regularities.

Yet each season brings a task the farmer must perform. Custom and rivalry in the community restrict him as well. He is in fact less free to choose the date of sowing than his wife the hour of dinner. Long-established tradition and ancestral experience imprint upon his mind the best dates for planting, for reaping, for harrowing, for breeding cattle, and so forth. The farmer is caught, willingly of course, in a mesh of rivalries, competitions, condemnations, which binds him the more strongly to the community's patterning of his yearly round.

The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its low in winter. On bitter wet days little can be done

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

is concluded. The burial grounds are kept much better than in many other parts of the West; and on Inishkea, as well as in the Mullet, it it is customary to decorate the graves with large white pebbles, and to place at the head a neatly made wooden cross. A curious custom exists, some instances of which were observed at Tarmoncarra, of placing tobacco pipes on the graves; these are the pipes which were left unused after the wake. What the reason is for so placing them could not be ascertained, but it is considered extremely unlucky to remove them. 764 [777]

Unbaptised infants are interred in separate burying grounds by themselves, several of which are in the district. 766

It is now no longer customary for the people of the Mullet to bury their dead in Inisglora, the last instance of this having occured over thirty years ago. Formerly many families used regularly to make use of this island as a cemetery, always taking a body over from a point of the mainland opposite, which was stated by tradition to have once been connected with the main, but to have got separated afterwards by a channel which has gradually widened. 173 764

Maxwell,[1] writing in 1832, says—"There are no people on earth more punctilious in the interment of their dead than the peasantry of this remote district. A strange and unaccountable custom exists of burying different families resident on the main in island cemeteries, and great difficulty and often great danger attends the conveyance of a corpse to its insulated resting place. No inducement will make these wild people inter a body apart from the tomb of its fathers, and, if a boat will live, the corpse will be transported to the family tomb. At times the weather renders this impracticable, but the deceased is kept for many days unburied in the hope that the storm may subside; and only when frail mortality evinces unequivocal tokens of decay will the relatives consent to unite its dust with the ashes of a stranger." 764

A considerable number of migratory labourers leave this district annually to do harvesting work in England, on the proceeds of which work they in part support themselves during the winter. The number doing thus has decreased somewhat of late years. 167

There is not much to be said about the everyday mode of life. The men fish and attend to their holdings; the women manage household affairs and assist at field work in times of pressure. The people are early risers in the summer months, and, as a rule, retire to bed early, few lights being seen in the hamlets after nine or ten p.m. 512

[1] Maxwell, W. H., "Wild sports of the West," chap. XIX.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and a handful of thatch taken from above the door of his house. 234
Butter-making must have been a chancy and critical business 789
when each family had only one or two cows, ill-fed for a large part of the year, and there were fairies, witches and blinkers to contend with. The protective charms and prognostications connected with churning are legion. If you should enter an old-style mountain kitchen when churning is in progress you may well be invited to lend a hand, or at least to 'leave your weight on the staff,' just to show that your intentions are not evil. There must be no bad words during churning, no quarrels, no singing or drinking: to drink anything is presumably to dilute the milk. If the milk splashes the churner is fated to marry a drunken mate. When the butter at last breaks a small ball of it is traditionally taken and smeared on the wall or tossed on top of the dresser to bring luck to the house, perhaps originally as an offering to the fairies. And when the churning is finished the staff should be twisted round three times and placed across the mouth of the churn. There are many other precautions that may be taken: a horseshoe—preferably 'a shoe of one heating'—tied to the churn or nailed to the bottom; a nail from a horseshoe or from a coffin driven into churn or staff; a ring of salt placed on the lid; a twig of rowan tied round the churn. Or the plough coulter should be heated in the fire, and the churnstaff tied with a straw rope to the fire-crane: if the staff is made of rowan-wood so much the better. If despite all precautions the butter does not come there are ways of catching the thief. For instance, a cake is baked and stuck with pins and a bunch of yarrow placed in the churn. The thief will come crying to the door in pain, and he must not be allowed in but turned away.

Special precautions should also be taken to make the house 512 ●
safe at night from unwanted visitations. Before the fire is raked 352
and 'smoored' (buried in peat-ash) a spark should be dropped
into the foot-water, the water in which feet have been washed [515]
and to which many superstitions are attached. The carded flax
should be placed under a weight, the band taken off the spinning wheel and the quern dismantled. Many stories are told of the risks involved in letting the fairies have access to these things. Finally the besom should be placed against the door: the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

512 besom's association with everyday tasks and with the fireside
352 endows it with special power. Thrown after a departing match-
[777] maker or anyone going on an important errand, it brings luck to his mission.

For most people, needless to say, such things are now mean-
771 ingless superstitions—old pishrogues. True, one still hears
789 occasionally of cows being blinked, of a black cock buried alive
178 as a cure for epilepsy, of a healthy woman pining away because a neighbour was sticking pins into a waxen image. These are stray survivals, doomed to disappear; but in a larger sense the past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds of men and in the landscapes they have fashioned.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

132 only four hours of relative darkness, from midnight on, six months later at mid-
• 512 summer. People tend to sleep late during the winter, sometimes to nine or even
132 ten o'clock, and to begin their social activities early in the evening, while in June and July they arise an hour or two earlier and work as late as ten o'clock at night. My wife and I have attended parties during the 12 days of Christmas when guests assembled before eight o'clock, whereas in July we have waited until almost midnight for festivities to commence, when darkness afforded privacy of movement, desirable for reasons to be explained later. Times for meals, feeding and milking cattle, and many other enterprises also follow the lengthening and shortening of daylight hours from season to season.

221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 [232] [224] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Measenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-cheek statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

> conditions appraised. . . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and . . boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191). 573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [895] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately. 628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list. 181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it 521 203 571 [574] [512]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

521 203 591 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [533] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [639] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 589 162 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to him at his marriage.

If economic apprenticeship is also a process of conditioning within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

For the child grows up within the full complex of life within the family. The petty errands which constitute his first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his beginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm work is again merely incidental to his long years of life with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

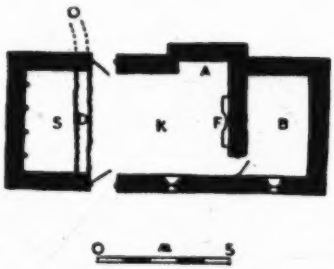
343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

● 513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is
512 of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

house, pigsty, calf-pen and sheepfold, and there are several other references in the ancient law tracts to cow-houses and pigstyes.

But, notwithstanding this old and varied farmyard tradition, it is also quite clear that there was, up to the beginning of the present century, a widespread custom of keeping the livestock, or part of it, in the dwelling house. There are very many references to this in descriptions of life and conditions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Few, however, give any description of the internal arrangement of the houses, or the reason for the custom, and usually the accounts refer to small houses and a few poor animals. Some observers have mentioned the fear of wild beasts or robbers. "They are brought in by night for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves."[1] Here the writer refers to the bawns attached to the castles, but of course the same risk existed for the small farmer also. Another traveller writes of a night spent in a house in west Co. Galway: "I had just compos'd myselfe to sleepe when I was strangely surprised to heare the cows and sheep all comeing into my bed chamber. I enquired the meaneing and was told it was to preserve them from the wolfe which everie night was rambling about for prey."[2] Another and much later writer describes a night spent in a small house in the Kerry mountains, near Kenmare: "In the house where I slept—as indeed in every house of the same character in the county—the whole stock of the family, consisting chiefly of cows and sheep, were locked in at night. Such was the extreme poverty of the people that they would not otherwise be safe. ... There was a slight partition between the room where my bed was and the kitchen where there were three cows, a man, his wife and four children."[3]



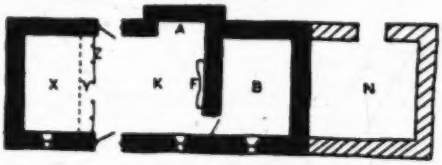


Fig. 10 House at Doolough, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; D, drain; O, drain outlet; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; S, byre.

Fig. 11. House at Srahataggle, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; X, former byre; Y, filled-in drain; Z, screen of canvas on wooden frame; N, present byre.

In many dwelling houses fowl, especially hatching hens, were kept in special coops or boxes, and it was quite usual to have weak or sickly young animals, or calves or lambs which for some reason were separated from their dams, in the kitchen where they had warmth and attention until strong enough to be put with the other animals. In many parts of Ireland the poorest people—

[1] Fynes Moryson: Itinerary, 1617.

[2] Dunton, John: Letter no. 2 (1699), in MacLysaght, E.: Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1939, 339.

[3] Doherty, M.: The Felon's Track.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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241 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one
231 time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow fastened to the horses tail.

The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed
513 in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and *is regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the
[834] strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but
262 fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more
[272] extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal)
264 stirabout, buttermilk.

[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354
shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373] were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse-collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made [492] partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342
is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the 353
chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231] to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513] the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352
the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

 [text continues on p. 71]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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322 often oppressive landlordism were not dissimilar, a strong
352 tradition of good quality oak furniture was standardized in the eighteenth century and has remained a source of inspiration and pride ever since. The destruction of the native oak woods and the stronger pastoral strain in Ireland were perhaps the dominant factors, but once more we note the exceptional position of the barony of Bargy and Forth, where Gabriel Beranger commented in 1780 on the good-quality, well-kept furniture: 'I have seen in these cabins bureaus of oak so clean that they shone like polished mahogany.'[1]

Sturdiness rather than elegance was the characteristic feature of Irish peasant furniture, and many small household and dairy fittings were hand-cut from the solid or lathe-turned. Yet there
353 was no lack of care taken in the proper arrangement of the furniture in the house. Its disposition was fixed by long custom and varied little throughout the country. One is reminded of the careful division of the limited floor-space of the nomads' tent among the Lapps or Mongols. In fact only by adhering to a strict formula could the family and all their belongings be fitted into a single room which was traditionally also a byre. Invariably the centre of the room, and the whole space in front of the fire, was kept open. This was, for the bulk of the peasant population down to the eighteenth century, the family sleeping-place. According to an account of Mayo in 1799, they slept
● 513 naked with their feet to the fire, lying on rushes, with a covering of blankets or day-clothes.[2] An earlier account of the Rosses of Donegal, relating to the middle of the eighteenth century, gives us more details: 'All the family lay together in one bed, and, if any visitors came in the evening, they too slept with them; for they set no bounds to their hospitality . . . heath or bent bushes were spread across the floor, to a length sufficient for the number present, and in breadth about six feet; over this litter, the mistress of the house laid part of a long plaid or blanket, on which the others, having stripped off their clothes, lay down as fast as they could; men and women together, all naked: then the mistress having drawn the rest of the blanket over them, lay down herself, naked also. This they call a

[1]Lady Wilde, 'Memoir of Gabriel Beranger', *J.R.S.A.I.* (1876), 132.
[2]In C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 28, 32.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Thorough-bed.'[1] The Poor Law Commissioners reported in 1836 that nearly three-quarters of the 10,000 inhabitants of one parish were sleeping on the floor, though they add that this was because the bedsteads had been burnt to boil potatoes. Even after 1850 the custom of sleeping 'in stradogue' as it was called, was not unknown in the west.[2] In Ulster, too, though the master and mistress of the house would have slept in their wall-bed, the young children, where there was only one room, must have slept on the floor. Long custom as well as wretched poverty explains the statement made by Patrick McKye of a Donegal parish in 1837: 'Nor can many of them afford a second bed, but whole families of sons and daughters of mature age indiscriminately lie together . . . and all in the bare buff.'[3] The wall-bed was a wooden frame built into the outshot which has been described earlier. It had its own wooden covering or tester to give protection from roof drips, and originally, to judge by the Hebridean black-houses, the covering was of sods. In Donegal, bog timber supplied the bed frame, and the mattress was made of wattles or of ropes twisted from the root fibres of bog-fir. That fir-rope mattresses were once standard fittings is shown by the specification for the beds to be supplied to the Belfast Charitable Association in 1774.[4] But some of the wall-beds in parts of Connacht were until recently mere stone benches covered with dried bracken. Half-ruined examples may be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island.

In the house with fireside partition the kitchen bed often takes the form of a settle-bed, a seat by day and a bed by night. The front and seat are in one piece, hinged at the bottom so that the whole can be folded down to make a low bed (Fig. 18). In bachelor homes, where the settle-bed has been retained, I have been offered a seat on one which had been closed a moment before by bundling in the mattress and bedclothes. Placed against one of the side walls near the fire, the settle-bed

[1] J. C. Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, 2nd ed. (1818), Appendix 1, 196–204.
[2] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 192.
[3] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 16.
[4] R. W. M. Strain, *The Ulster Medical Journal*, 22 (1953), 37.

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are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters 294
are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are
sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn 291
lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white [192]
woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and [462]
shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting [286]
and darning stockings for their husbands and children. [296]

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, [286]
made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the
front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, [301]
somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool,
which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets [178]
are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always [292]
is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and children of all ages go barefooted or put on sandals during the summer and add hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers, bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes [296]
that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt, and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing;
the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer [513]
attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

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291 underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as
[513] the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits
[515] them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income
434 instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by
[501] four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the
[295] coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man.
[294] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are
[438] made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold
[659] to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the
[437] factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west
[171] coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as
[174] the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of
[178] varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-
501 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single
502 tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom
[502] three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the
[433] crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at
[322] work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally,
[184] and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

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Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

as a way of getting him to start on your yarn in a hurry. If you 463
didn't, he would not do it until he got ready. They were inde- 286
pendent, all right, and then when they were finished, you had to reach down into your pocket and pay for what he did. There used to be a lot of weavers here, but they are all gone now. The women have got out of weaving the wool.

A weaver here, Paddy Seán R—, was a very fine fellow 463
though he drank a lot. You cannot blame him for that because his job was a mean one and bad on the health. He worked to 286
keep his mother out of the workhouse and till the day she died 735
he would not let her go there. Wasn't that a decent thing for him to do? Afterwards he went to Galway and then he came back here and as an old man he died in the workhouse. But wasn't it a decent thing he would not let his poor old mother go [386
and her going up the streets of the town every morning collect- 514]
ing the urine from the people who lived in the house [to use for bleaching].

These three occupations were the meaner ones in the eyes 463
of the country people. It was not that they degraded their followers. Rather it was that they were intrinsically of less 554
value than the more robust crafts of outdoor life. Something of the sexual dichotomization of labor was involved in this attitude equating sedentary, house-bound pursuits with the feminine spheres of activity.

The chief exponents of the robuster, more masculine crafts within local ken were the carpenter, the mason, the house builder, and the smith. But there were many others. Between the landless or "backward" cotters and laborers, who might turn their hand to anything, and the small farmers, who were themselves occasionally forced to turn to harvesting abroad or to road-mending and stone-breaking at home, there were as many specialists as there were activities in which special renown and skill could be attained. In fact, the development of local skills seems restricted only by the limits of the *matériel* which peasant life requires.

Other local experts were the thatcher, the cattle doctor 463
or "vet," often a herdsmen with a lifelong experience of

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352
[354]

FIG. 19. A Donegal hearth, with crane, creepie and bread-iron. Pot and pot-hole on right.

other'.[1] It is interesting to notice that it is the Mongol usage to allot the right side of the yurt to men and the left side to women.[2] We are surely dealing with a very ancient tradition related perhaps to the ordered routine of a pastoral nomadic life. For the Mongols the right and left sides were symbolized respectively by horse and cow. In the humblest Irish farms, [514] which lack sanitary conveniences of any kind, it is customary for the women to use the byre and the men the stable.

If we now turn to the methods of suspending cooking pots 354 over the fire we shall see how the woman's functions are best 821 carried out on the left side. Besides the convenience of this for a normal right-handed person, there lies behind it the notion that for good luck significant actions involving the food supply—such as ploughing, casting a net or taking a pot off the fire—should follow the direction of the sun's movement in the sky. Thus the crane on which the pots are hung is almost

[1]Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (1857), 96
[2]E. D. Chapple and C. S. Coon, *Anthropology* (1946), 539.

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241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614 •
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

574 273 Women
[562] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused
[514] them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen [535] and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the [562] cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, [857] while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist [123] with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while 574 273 stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the [533] activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts [535] prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, [576] followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [356] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the 574 table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after every-535 one is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an 579 islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, 123 when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out [577] between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the 574 same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, 579 "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at
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[738]

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

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[155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

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[291]
[834]
[753]

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

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Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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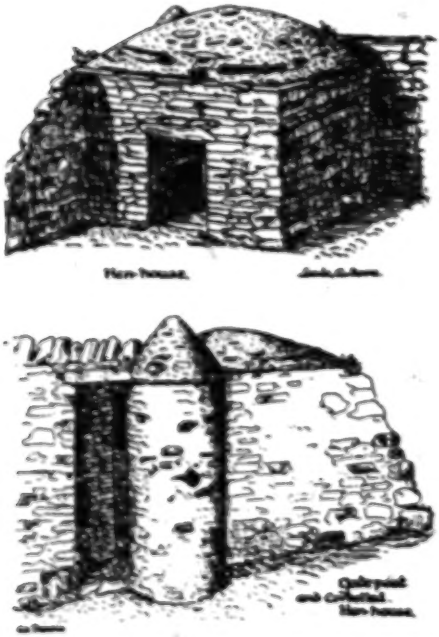

Fig. 38. Two views of hen-house.

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343 Some of the holy wells visited throughout Ireland for their reputed curative powers are protected by corbelled coverings of some antiquity: one may cite the wells at Struell near Downpatrick and Ronogue's Well near Cork. Domestic wells also frequently show some degree of corbelling, but free standing well-covers like that shown in Fig. 41 are rare. To the same class of construction belong most of the surviving [757] sweat-houses which were resorted to by rheumatic cases, profuse sweating being induced by heating the interior with turf fires beforehand. In certain counties, for example Cavan, these structures are quite common and were used into living memory. In Rathlin Island I was told that girls would go to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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Corbelled Pig sty

Fig. 39.

the sweathouses in order to improve their complexions before paying a visit to the Lammas fair at Ballycastle. It should be added that the treatment is said to have included a final plunge into cold water: running water is generally found alongside the sweat-houses (Fig. 40).

Such buildings are, from the simplicity of their construction, undateable: there is nothing to show, in many cases, whether they were erected a hundred, a thousand or even four thousand years ago, and though one suspects that many examples are no more than a century or two old—indeed the Gaeltacht turf-houses are still being built—they are in truth ageless. But the functions of the stone-roofed houses have changed. Once tombs of the dead and homes of the

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Sweathouse.

Fig. 40.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771]
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great 181
deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit 426
to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577
truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

of water. I was told on Rathlin Island that eligible girls would 343
take a sweating bath to clear their complexions before the annual 757
visit to the Lammas Fair at Ballycastle on the mainland. They [515]
were in demand also during kelp-burning operations—a notoriously filthy occupation. Not all sweat-houses were built of stone. Wood-Martin quotes accounts of some which were dug into an earth bank and 'finished with sods', while others were excavated in turf banks.[1] He also records that water was sometimes poured on stones inside the sweat-house, 'thus converting it into a vapour- as well as a sweat-bath'.[2]

More intimately linked with the house is the turf-shelter, the 343
Irish equivalent of the English coal-shed. In the drier eastern 372
part of the country a built shelter is not necessary, and the peats, skilfully built into a huge turf-stack protected from the driving rains by a wall or gable, perhaps improve by exposure to the winds, but in the wetter west unless the turf is under cover it must be dried in small quantities in the loft or by the fire before burning. In parts of Kerry the turf is stored in large clochauns: elsewhere narrow oblong or oval stone enclosures are erected, their walls loosely built to allow the wind to blow through. The peat-store or cleit of St. Kilda was similar—an oblong corbelled stone building with open joints.

The well is another essential item of equipment of farm or 312
clachan, and it is often provided with a corbelled stone cover. 343
Since springs are abundant, except in bare limestone country, the wells are not deep and few are fitted with windlasses. In their absence quite elaborate ramps with stone steps are sometimes needed to obtain access to the water, and the whole structure being roofed, some examples (for instance in the south-east of Co. Down) are considerable architectural feats (Fig. 40). In the limestone districts the woman of the house may have to walk as much as half a mile to carry drinking water from a dip-well. It is now carried in buckets but was formerly transported in stave-built piggins balanced on the head. The peasant makes a virtue of necessity by asserting that almost every spring well yields 'the finest water in all Ireland, and never runs dry'. Wells are regarded as chancy things, not to be

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, II (1902), 166.
[2]ibid., 165.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and a handful of thatch taken from above the door of his house. 234
Butter-making must have been a chancy and critical business 789
when each family had only one or two cows, ill-fed for a large part of the year, and there were fairies, witches and blinkers to contend with. The protective charms and prognostications connected with churning are legion. If you should enter an old-style mountain kitchen when churning is in progress you may well be invited to lend a hand, or at least to 'leave your weight on the staff,' just to show that your intentions are not evil. There must be no bad words during churning, no quarrels, no singing or drinking: to drink anything is presumably to dilute the milk. If the milk splashes the churner is fated to marry a drunken mate. When the butter at last breaks a small ball of it is traditionally taken and smeared on the wall or tossed on top of the dresser to bring luck to the house, perhaps originally as an offering to the fairies. And when the churning is finished the staff should be twisted round three times and placed across the mouth of the churn. There are many other precautions that may be taken: a horseshoe—preferably 'a shoe of one heating'—tied to the churn or nailed to the bottom; a nail from a horseshoe or from a coffin driven into churn or staff; a ring of salt placed on the lid; a twig of rowan tied round the churn. Or the plough coulter should be heated in the fire, and the churnstaff tied with a straw rope to the fire-crane: if the staff is made of rowan-wood so much the better. If despite all precautions the butter does not come there are ways of catching the thief. For instance, a cake is baked and stuck with pins and a bunch of yarrow placed in the churn. The thief will come crying to the door in pain, and he must not be allowed in but turned away.

Special precautions should also be taken to make the house 512
safe at night from unwanted visitations. Before the fire is raked 352
and 'smoored' (buried in peat-ash) a spark should be dropped
into the foot-water, the water in which feet have been washed [515]
and to which many superstitions are attached. The carded flax
should be placed under a weight, the band taken off the spinning wheel and the quern dismantled. Many stories are told of the risks involved in letting the fairies have access to these things. Finally the besom should be placed against the door: the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
• 515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 434 [501] [295] Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] [438] [657] [437] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 [171] [174] [178] The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 [502] [433] [322] [184] Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
171 of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

9: Evans K-5 (ca.1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 toil and grazing, by plough and spade, hoof and muzzle, have
412 Ireland's green fields been "moulded."

Clips

Fig. 48.

Although we cannot touch on the other crops and have given a very inadequate idea of the bustle, worries and humours of the Irish springtime, when all the crops demand to be put in the ground at the same time, we must end this chapter with a few comments on the growing season. The general practice when thinning root crops is to work on the [516] knees with the hands: one rarely sees a hoe being used for thinning. Yet paradoxically corn is weeded, if it gets any attention at all, with a pair of wooden pincers or thistle-pullers, called, in Co. Antrim, "clips" (Fig. 48). This tool is already [184] mentioned in a Tour of Ireland in 1752. The weeders are not so common in the south of the country and are fitted with iron pincers in some counties. Another home-made device once familiar in the north was the crow-scarer or "corn-crake," a noisy instrument made on the principle of the watchman's rattle or—to give a modern instance—the gas rattle of the A.R.P. services.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Aran Islands

Plate V.

285
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291
351

MAKING A SKIB
INISHERE, ARAN
CREEL IN GROUND BEHIND

[facing p. 12]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 admirably illustrates the economy of space and function characteristic of Irish kitchen fittings, but I doubt whether this rather complicated piece of furniture is of any great antiquity: it was probably introduced by planters or adapted from a settle fitted with a coffer seat.

The black-houses, as described in the nineteenth century, had no table, and there are still to be seen, in Donegal for instance, houses where there is no kitchen table. At meal-times [264] the family sit around a shallow potato basket resting on the circle of knees. The origin of the tripod tray-table of south-eastern Europe and south-western Asia is surely to be sought in a similar custom. In fact the Blasket Island table was described as a tripod to which was fitted a board which hung on the wall when not in use.[1] The little round table is known from many parts of western Europe. There is, for example, the three-legged 'cricket' table of Wales, which has a special place in the affections of the family. Placed near the fire, it is reserved at meal-times for the father and mother while the children and servants eat at the big table. In Ireland the kitchen table is a flimsy construction, and its place is against the side wall, under a window. Not infrequently it is hinged to the wall as a 'falling leaf table' which drops when not in use, thus enlarging the open space in front of the fire.

Bishop Pococke describes the Tirawley (Mayo) table as 'a long sort of stool about 20 inches high and broad and two yards long',[2] clearly designed to be stowed away along a wall. Small tables which have been found in the bogs are little more than small boards, their four short legs being cut from the solid. They are provided with holes by which they could be transported or hung up when not in use (Fig. 26). It follows that table-chairs were unnecessary: long, low, narrow stools or three [516] legged 'creepies' would serve, and the children would have squatted eastern-fashion on the floor.

The table, therefore, in the words of a Swedish student of 352 Irish ethnology, 'never attracted the social activities of the 592 house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating

[1] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman* (1934), 40.
[2] *Pococke's Tour*, 1752 (1891), 87.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 6

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516
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1. Shearing oats with the toothed sickle, Co. Antrim.

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2. Thrashing oats with flails, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 97]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Fermanagh
County Antrim

PLATE 9

314
516
493
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412

1. Cutting turf (underfooting) in a Co. Fermanagh bog.

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417
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2. Building a peat stack, Co. Antrim.

[facing p.144]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Meath

PLATE 10

314
291
[412]

1. Spreading mud turf with long-handled shovel, Co. Meath.

[516]

2. "Running" the spread turf.

[Facing p.145]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

stranger was accosted and held down on the ground, a woman 243
would lie on top of him and another woman would tumble them over.[1] Such horse-play was more than a consequence of the high spirits of harvest, the 'rural saturnalia' described by Richard Jefferies in *The Toilers of the Field*. Displays of the rites and symbols of fertility were closely bound up with the bounty of harvest.

There were many variations in the methods of reaping, or shearing—to use the old term—depending on the type of hook, which might be smooth or notched, on the width of the ridges, [412] the condition of the crop and so on. The toothed sickle is probably the older implement, going back to the time when iron was a new metal and could not be given a sharp steel edge. Whereas the smooth or scythe hook is wielded with a slashing cut which may spill the grain, especially of rye, if the crop is ripe and the edge not kept very keen, the sickle is pulled towards the shearer, who holds each bunch as it is cut, pressing it back into the standing corn. As a rule three handfuls or 'loghters' go to each sheaf, the bands of which are prepared beforehand and laid out for the reaper to place the loghters on them straight from the hook (Pl. 6, 1).

The term shearing implies that the crop was cut close to the ground as wool is clipped from a sheep, and indeed urban officials have been known to confuse the operations. Pride was taken in a stubble-field that looked as if it had been shaved. 'Low and clean' was the injunction, 'cut it down to the living earth!' 'Down with the head and up with the tail' were my instructions when I lent a hand at harvest in the Glens of [516] Antrim. Mercifully one worked uphill: where the land was level the reaper would go down on one knee, wearing a knee-pad. If the ridges were wide there might be two shearers and one binder to each ridge, the shearers working from the furrows on each side, the depth of which minimized the amount of stooping required. A 'crack hooksman' could reap and tie fifty twelve-sheaf stooks a day, or say an Irish acre (= 1⅓ English acres). It is necessary to have worked with a gang of reapers to appreciate the relentless pace of the work and at the same time the care with which every operation is carried out. There must be no

[1] M. Banks, *British Calendar Customs*, Scotland, I (1937).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 [262] [264] [415] [178] [352] The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [516] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of [211] local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the [793] confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the [356] stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water [783] is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the [674] priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families in- [777] volved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them [776]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

FAMILY TRANSITION AT MARRIAGE 131 561

Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same 885
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 886
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those differentiations of status which are given formal and explicit recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re- 561
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 574
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 576
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the 517
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit behind them round the room on other chairs or on the window seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the principal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrangement shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving the center of the stage to the old men, and the children stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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When the authors first made their way into the small farm communities which they came to know best, they were plunged into a mass of observation which, without knowledge of the valuations of the community upon age, had no interpretation. Night after night, the day's work done, their new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, "gambles," "hooleys," sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive events were age-old survivals of ancient custom, like the bonfires of St. John's Eve. Others were nearly as ancient celebrations of crucial events in individual and family life, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occasional and less specialized gatherings, and others wore a very modern dress: a turkey raffle and a dance round a gramophone. 517 573

But our interest was soon caught by distinctions of participation, rather than those of kind. The people of the village participated variously. Different groups met more or less regularly at specific houses.

For instance, the "old fellows" went out on *cuaird*, as they called their visiting to join one another. They followed a deep-set regular habit. As they phrased it, "a man would feel lonely if he didn't go out on *cuaird*." In most communities, they usually convened at a particular house. Often their gatherings bore particular names. In one North Clare community, Rynamona by name, the old men's meeting was known as the *Dáil*. Before the Free State, it had been the "parliament." The name is a jocular one, of course, but it is expressive of the participants' evaluation of themselves nonetheless. 517 573 887

The young men know the *Dáil* as the "old men's house." They stay away. One of the cronies of Rynamona put the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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517 matter most clearly when he described the old men's gather-
573 ing from its members' point of view:

887 It wouldn't suit [for the young men to come]. They gather in at Jack Roche's and they laugh and joke and play cards. They talk about the next gamble and the next dance, and that is all they know. It is a lot of codology [nonsense, buncombe]. It is only the old men, the men with families and a responsibility on them, they are the ones that come. And in our own way we learn a great deal. If you advance any argument, you must be prepared to defend it from all attack, and John Roche, "the public prosecutor," will ask you questions till he is sure it is right or wrong. Then some evening we have real discussions in which we settle problems. Other times we discuss farming. It wouldn't suit for the young men to come in, but, when we get old and they get married, then they will gather and talk about this and that. That is the way it always has been and that is the way it always will be. There is never any bad blood between any of the village, and one reason is because we talk things over.

This statement on the old men's gathering imparts a deeper reality to what appears to be merely a companionable pastime of the old men. The evening *cuaird* of the old men takes on an institutional flavor. It is a clique, of course, a tightly knit group of males of similar interests and similar status, giving rise to nicknames within itself which, as in the case here mentioned of the public prosecutor, express the members' position in the internal arrangement of the group. It has a definite meeting place and meeting time. It excludes those of dissimilar traits; in this instance, the young men. But it is a clique which operates within a traditional setting: "That is the way it always has been and is the way it always will be."

It is a clique, too, which performs a function for a larger group than those who make it up. In this case it is claimed for it, at least, that it prevents bad blood in the local community.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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audience. The point of importance here is that it is among 887
the old people that folk myth and folk belief are preserved 538
and expressed for the community.

If we are to examine in full rural behavior based upon 571
age and its connection with the old adult clique whose 517
function in the community we are assessing, we must offer
some contrast with the behavior of other age groups.

We have already mentioned that the old men's house in Rynamona was not the only seat of visiting after the day's work, and that the entertainment provided there was merely one instance of many gatherings taking place almost nightly, at least through the winter, in rural communities. In the statements given by older men about the meeting of the young men we have seen something of the manner in which other pursuits than those of the men's house are regarded.

Indeed in all the communities which came under the authors' notice the young men were as ardent evening visitors as were the older men. In Rynamona they were no less so.

There they gathered in most often at the house of Roche, the "prosecutor." They did this from long habit, as did their elders. But they had no larger justification for their doing so. They went because "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys." But there were marked differences in their meeting. There was no central clique so closely integrated as that in O'Donoghue's house. There were pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together.

A greater difference lay in their complete lack of concern
with the affairs of the community. One could get them to [521]
talk only about their own plans or the trials of their own
kind and age. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition. The skills upon which those taking part in the meetings prided themselves and for which

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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571 they received their nicknames were of other sorts. Not even
517 farming occupied a large share of their conversation, keen as their rivalry in the matter often was while work was going on.

571 Taking these matters in order, the young men who met
517 at Roche's house met habitually there for card playing.
524 Roche's unmarried son, a man about thirty, was perhaps the central figure. His cousin, another Roche, was the brother of a young man just married, who took part in no *cuaird*. This cousin helped work his brother's farm. He was another central figure. The group that formed itself round them included most of the young men of Rynamona between the ages of twenty and thirty. They played the usual games of the Irish countryside, "forty-five" and "nap," often far into the night.

571 Roche's house was the more informal center. It took in
517 the younger men. But there was present in the community
525 a custom somewhat more organized, namely, the "gamble." As often as once a week a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household, as its turn comes, throws open its doors to the card players. Admission, usually a shilling, is charged and goes toward defraying the expense of the supper of bread and tea for all and toward the prize. What is left after those charges are met belongs to the householder. Often this amount reaches a profitable figure, and, where the custom is firmly entrenched, a certain commercialism shows its head.

But the gamble is a sporting event. Teams, often formed of habitual associates in card playing, are pitted against one another in one form of the gamble. In another, individual high scorers win. The prize is usually a turkey or two geese, even a bonham (young pig), a side of bacon, or a calf. Elab-
[555] orate rules and canons of honesty govern the play, the conduct of the players, and the obligation of the person offering the prize. Play is serious and intense, and the win-

THE OLD IN THE COMMUNITY

571 517 525 555 887 554 571 517

ner of the prize can count himself a proud man, for to be known in the countryside as a "great gambler" is a coveted mark of shrewdness and skill.

The older men seldom attend the gambles. They are the province of the young. For the latter, they are a crystallization of the more informal card playing, such as that at Roche's house, already described, and they give the successful young men a prestige in the community ordinarily denied them. For in late years tournaments have sprung up covering whole sections of the county and it is a proud team which can bring back a five or ten pound district prize to its home community.

From the standpoint of an enumeration of those taking part in the gambles, too, the gambles show themselves to be such a crystallization. They bring into association on more definite occasions the groups, such as that at Roche's house, which meet habitually. They unite most of the young men, especially the more active among them, with a few of the older. But it is from the young men's world of habit that their union is created.

In Rynamona the young men who gathered nightly at Roche's house were the mainstays of the gambles. They could be counted upon to attend all of them. They played well and long, as they had learned the games among themselves. But they were not the only ones to come. Most of the slightly older men of what we shall call the intermediate *cuaird*, to be described later, such as John Quin, the newcomer to the old men's house already named, came from time to time, and there was always a sprinkling of young men, kinsfolk, and "friends" from near-by communities. It was only the members of the old men's house who stayed away. They alone had given up the habits of young men. To them the gamble was "codology."

Thus the first point of difference between the visiting habits of the old men and the young men, their lack of cen-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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571 tral clique, is not without wider interest. The young men
517 are more numerous, and they group themselves together as much as do the old. But it is upon a different basis. It is a synthesis in a looser, more widely inclusive, gathering which
[573] unites smaller cliques of brothers, friends, and boon companions. The gamble is only one of many entertainments
571 they provide themselves. Equally frequently they hold a
517 dance. The country dance is undergoing change in rural
535 Ireland today, but it is still much as it was in the last century, although it may not enliven the country districts as often as it did. Irish square dances, jigs, and flings, most of them variations of sixteenth-century European dance forms, are most common, although some Gaelic-speaking districts preserve an older tradition.

621 The country dance belongs to the young people. It differs from the gamble, from the standpoint of participants, in
535 that it unites both sexes. In most communities it is an
517 affair in which the whole community takes part, the old people as onlookers, the young and the still spry among the older ones as performers. In late years the more formal "all night" dance, an organized dance for which admission is charged and from which the older people are usually absent, has made its appearance. Like the gamble it draws from a wider area.

517 But there is a good deal of the spontaneous dancing which springs up wherever the young people of the community
535 gather even today. The young men and women learn the skills required and value them. There are elaborate codes of etiquette round them and a wealth of proverbs and jocular superstitions. But here again, unlike the behavior followed in the old men's house, these conducts have little larger purpose than uniting the scattered cliques of young people. They are recreations. They are ends in themselves. They are good times that pass the time.

517 The gamble and the dance do not, of course, exhaust the
571 list. The young people have other activities, games, sports,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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contests, and playful roles of solemn occasions, such as acting as strawboys (mummers) at weddings. But all these activities, in which the old members of the community do not directly participate, are alike in their playing no great part in organizing other elements in the community than the young people themselves. They serve other functions. 517 571

All these activities bind the young men, the young people, together in common interests. They provide them with a scope of action in which they are comparatively free, yet which keeps them divorced from the seats of a power over community life which is denied them. In this sphere they may develop complex norms, valuations, and conducts.

But such developments do not serve primarily to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. They are associated with the lesser prestige of the young people. Consequently, the old men's house comes to have in contrast a double function. It unites the old men in much the same way as the gamble and the dance unite the young men, in fact even more strongly. But it does so in terms of the old men's common position as recipients of the respect of the community and in terms of their individual positions as integrators of their families. The difference is structural. The activities of young men unite them across family and clique lines even from one community to the next. But those of the old men do more; they unite young and old as well. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive one, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble and dance may be greater. 517 571 621 888 554 182

In such a system of integrations, that of the old men has the greater prestige. A great gambler or a great dancer wins wide respect. But the distinction is short-lived. It is a nine days' or a nine years' wonder. It bestows great prestige among one's fellows, but it removes one very little, if at all, from one's subordinate, less valued place as "boy" in the community. 182 888 554 621

Where such is the case, the individual's progression

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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own sex than otherwise, except in the house itself. Except upon ceremonial occasions in family life or in the considerable affluence of owning a gig or a trap or a motorcar, in Clare at least they go to mass, to town, or to sportive gatherings with companions of their own sex. Till recently and even now in remote districts, a conventional peasant woman always kept several paces behind her man, even if they were walking somewhere together. 562 834

The women do not go out on *cuaird* like the men. Their sphere of interest and influence is better confined within the family circle. Women do not take part directly in the deliberations of such cliques as that described in the old men's house at Rynamona. On the other hand, they are not in the least excluded or treated lightly or in a derogatory fashion. At the old men's *cuaird* the woman of the house is nearly always present. Her being of the company does not seem to stem the flow of talk in the slightest. She remains silent or is ignored so long as their talk deals with the world of the men's interest. But when the talk swings around to her sphere, she is consulted and is ready to take an active part. 562

The girls, of course, the unmarried younger women and adolescents, keep to themselves and form cliques and smaller groups of neighbors and kinswomen among themselves. Occasionally a dance breaks the ordinary succession of work and evening talk in the kitchen. And then, in their more restricted place, they are ready to go about under the tutelage of parent or brother to meet the young men and boys of the community. 562 571 517

All this is nothing new and has been described before. Yet one must review it, because in it one can see the existence of statuses of the kind we have demonstrated before. Old woman, married young woman, and girl, each term is a status in the countryside, in the same manner as in the cases of the boys and men we have already presented. The 561 562

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Where is the woman today who
could shoulder a creel of turf a hundred yards out 521 561 through the bog mud to the famine road, before 888 the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunna- [482] gore?

Often the expressions take a different turn. They 517 become that universal complaint — the younger 521 generation. "Young people aren't what they used 561 to be," said one old farmer in the course of a 888 general discussion of the golden age that was his youth. "They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else to a dance, and if they happen to win a turkey they will nearly shake the house down [in their triumph]. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. Now you can't get them to do anything unless you pay them."

Here he paused for an illustration, chose one 561 from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on. 521 888 "Wasn't old Keane out every night with his cattle and he putting them in small fields and late in the [291] night? Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept at it till he had cattle all the way up by Ballyvaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no controlling them."

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. The past, for the older members of the community,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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276 I; call back the old man. He was just a few paces
561 down the road. She did, and his face lighted up and
576 he couldn't thank her enough."

Informal as these differences are, they are never-
561 theless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct
517 among small farmers. Without them the flavour of rural life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the continual round of informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. For the country-people have their entertainments, like their more sophisticated urban contemporaries. The student of society cannot afford to dismiss them as inconsequential. They are often important controls of human activity.

When my colleagues and I first made our way into the rural communities we were to come to know best, we were plunged into a mass of observations which seemed to have no interpretation. Night after night, their day's work done, our new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, gambles, sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive gatherings were age-old customs like the bonfires of St. John's Eve; others celebrated crucial events, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occa-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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sional and less specialized gatherings; and others 561
again wore a very modern dress: a turkey raffle and 517
a dance round a gramophone.

But our interest was soon caught by distinctions of participation, rather than those of kind. The personalities of the 'village' participated variously, different groups met more or less regularly at specific houses.

For instance, the 'old fellows' went out on 517
cuaird, as they called their visiting, to join one 561
another. They followed a deep-set regular habit. 573
As they phrased it "a man would feel lonely if he didn't go out on *cuaird*".

In most communities they usually convened at a particular house. Often their gatherings bore particular names. In one North Clare community, Rynamona by name, the old men's meeting was known as the 'Dáil'. Before the Free State, it had been the 'parliament'. The name is a jocular one, of course, but as we shall see, it is expressive of the participants' evaluation of themselves, none the less.

The young men know the 'Dáil' as the 'old men's house'; they stay away. One of the cronies of Rynamona put the matter most clearly, when he described the old men's gathering from its members' point of view:

"It wouldn't suit [for the young men to come]," he said. "They gather in at Jack Roche's and they laugh and joke and play cards; they talk about the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

561 next gamble and the next dance, and that is all they
●577 know. It is a lot of codology [he means, nonsense,
573 buncombe]. It is only the old men, the men with families and a responsibility on them, they are the ones that come. And in our own way we learn a great deal. If you advance any argument you must be prepared to defend it from all attack, and John Roche, 'the public prosecutor', will ask you questions till he is sure it is right or wrong. Then some evening we have real discussions in which we settle problems. Other times we discuss farming. It wouldn't suit for the young men to come in, but when we get old and they get married, then they will gather just as we do and talk about this and that. That is the way it always has been and that is the way it always will be. There is never any bad blood between any of the village, and one reason is because we talk things over."

The statement, then, imparts a deeper reality to what appears at first sight to be merely a companionable pastime of the older men. This meeting of theirs is a clique, a tightly knit group of males of similar status and interests. It is strong enough and binding enough to bestow nicknames upon its members as in the case of the 'public prosecutor'. But it is a clique, too, which operates within a traditional setting. It has a function to perform for others than the cronies who make it up. The speaker claims for it at least that it prevented bad blood in the village.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

It is stated that in
Mayo a ploughman would be called in to shake a woman at a 845
difficult childbirth, presumably because it is he who prepares the ground and shakes the seed which brings new life to the fields.

Music, dancing, games and dramatic performances also 536
played their part in the seasonal gatherings, and one may 527
hazard the guess that the Irishman's passion for betting 796
derives from this source. A ritual element, as in the wake 842
games mentioned in the previous chapter, can often be detected, for example in the following account taken from the source quoted above. It describes a May game or pantomime from the Louth-Armagh border, modified survivals of which were current through most of the 19th century in the Slieve Gullion district. "On May day the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby.' Around it a man and woman (generally his wife) dressed also fantastically with straw, dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures, the figure at the same time being kept moving by the rustic maiden that supports it. These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children also attend (some of them from a considerable distance) to see this figure and exhibition, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children. Money is collected, and when the actors and musician have received some remuneration the remainder is laid out in drink, and the evening passes by jovially." This magic pantomime was originally intended to secure the success of the year's crops.

Such rites and gatherings have gradually been suppressed 517
or won over by the Church; and Sunday evening is now the 526
favourite recreation time for dancing and games. Among the older games, hurley is most popular, and horse-racing has by no means lost its appeal although it has suffered like other amusements from commercial exploitation. On many a

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

517 sea-strand, hurley, horse-racing and games have drawn
526 together large crowds at certain seasons of the year, and in summer there were also boat or curragh races. These have by no means lost their appeal: one may instance the gatherings at Omey Island, Co. Mayo. If bull-baiting, doubtless a relic of ceremonial bull-fights, is now dead, cock-fighting is still secretly indulged in, while the illegal "long bullets,"[1] played with a heavy ball along the roads of Co. Armagh and Co. Cork—a curious distribution, for I have not come across it elsewhere—is still popular, and though Wakefield seems to attribute it to English influence it recalls the skill of the Irish peasantry in stone-throwing. This was, legend tells us, one of the playful habits of the giants of old, and a phrase used of the Aran Islands—"quarrels usually end in stone-throwing"—would not be inapplicable to some Irish cities during the "troubles." In the Claddagh of Galway a favourite amusement, turned at times into its original use as "a mode of warfare," used to be casting stones with slings. "When a man was able to strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen, he was considered a good shot." O'Curry states that it was the custom of the ancient Irish to use a flat circular stone in warfare: it was carried in the hollow of the shield.

526 Games which have kept their seasonal character are still played at Hallowe'en, especially that known as "diving for apples." "Riding and shoeing the wooden mare" is perhaps no longer played, but we must repeat that it is rarely safe to speak of old customs as extinct in rural Ireland. It has more than once been my experience to come across habits and beliefs which were described as dead half a century ago. Certain
534 toys should also find a place in this brief summary: there is,
524 for instance, the "bull-roarer," a thin lath of wood with serrated edges which is swung round on a string so as to

[1] An interesting account of bullet throwing is given by Michael J. Murphy in *At Slieve Gullion's Foot*, 1941, p. 78. Both iron and stone bullets were home-made, and the writer describes how the latter were fashioned in "bullet-holes" resembling the ancient cup-marks mentioned above on p. 164. The game was also played round Dunleer, Co. Louth, fifty years ago, but in the Cork style, that is by overhand "bowling."

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

164 very even and white, and seem to last well; even men of over sixty
[142] often have good incisors; but many suffer from toothache. Abscess of the alveolus, unlike what is seen in Aran, is not at all common.

Skin.—Ulcers due to the friction of ropes and of the thick home-spun clothing when wet, eczema, "sea-boils," scabies, and acne, are frequently met with, as is anthrax or carbuncle; but, perhaps, the most common of all skin affections, especially among the younger members of the population, is tinea tonsurans. Alopecia areata, whether caused by the last-mentioned affection or not, seems to be common. Uterine troubles are not at all common. Venereal diseases are practically unknown.

164 *Accidents* arising out of the surroundings and occupation of the
752 people are, as might be expected, very numerous. These are burns, severe cuts from reaping hooks, injuries inflicted by domestic animals, and, above all, contusions and fractures due in most cases to falls from rocks and ponies.

4. *Psychology.*—For one who has had only a short experience of
181 the people this very difficult and delicate point is exceedingly hard to deal justly with, but the following description, for the most part obtained from local sources, both on the islands and on the opposite part of the mainland, and to some small degree from personal observation, is believed to be accurate as far as it goes.

To strangers, the people are not, at first, attractive, as their manner
[609] is shy and not unmarked by suspicion; but after this reserve is broken through they reveal themselves in a much more attractive light, and are kindly, courteous, and very communicative.

Among themselves they are cheerful and social, given much to gossip and chaff, though their wit is not of a very sparkling character.
[517] They contrast strongly with the Aran Islanders in their taste for music and dancing, concertinas and melodions being in common use in several houses.

In their dealings with one another they are honest and fair, even
181 a petty theft being an extremely rare occurrence. As to their dealings
674 with the people of the mainland, the usual hostile statements, common with all insular communities, are made by both sides with respect to
[609] each others honesty, but much reliance cannot be put in these vague assertions. Crime is almost unknown, and the administration of justice is seldom called into requisition, and then only for small quarrels among neighbours.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

181 sources, my informants being those who are brought into close contact with the everyday life of the people. So far as it goes it is believed to be accurate. No attempt has been made to do otherwise than describe the actual state of the case, and while the faults of the people are not extenuated, yet any circumstances which may explain these are given as far as possible, and their good qualities are believed to be stated without exaggeration.

181 To the casual visitor the people, on acquaintance, are decidedly attractive; in the outlying parts of the district, it is true, they are at 609 first rather suspicious of strangers, but after a short time are very obliging and communicative, ready to show anything of interest in their neighbourhood, and hospitable to the best of their power. The natives of both the islands at Inishkea, are very hospitable and kindly to strangers, of whom they are, however, rather distrustful, [574] a visitor being welcomed into their houses, and entertained with the best they can give. With each other they seem in all parts of the district to be much given to chaff and joking of a more or less practical nature, and their sense of the ridiculous seems to be rather keen. In times of trouble or distress they are very kind, generous with what they have, and helpful to one another.

181 They are fond of music, dancing, and bright colours, and more than one song-maker in their own tongue, the Irish, has been a native ●517 of this district; amongst these was the celebrated Dick Barrett, 53 several of whose productions have been collected and published. In common with most of the people of our rural districts, there do not seem to be many traces of artistic taste, and a native art is conspicious by its absence. One or two instances of attempted decoration were observed in Inishkea, none on the mainland.

181 On the whole, though cases of dishonesty and sharp practice in bargaining occur, they are honest in their dealings with one another. 577 As is often the case in remote districts, the people of one locality are sometimes on strained relations with those of another; thus there exists a certain amount of jealousy and distrust between the natives of the two Inishkeas, while the people of the mainland do not readily amalgamate with those of either island.

181 As regards intelligence, they are extremely sharp and shrewd, and seem rather fond of argumentation. There is but little crime, 691 with the exception of illicit distillation and drunkenness, but the people are very litigious, going to law with each other about slight trespasses and similar matters. This tendency is not by any means of recent origin, but has been remarked on by several writers. Maxwell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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361 narrow strip between the boundary and the wall. 'Fights, tres-
578 passes, confusion, disputes and assaults, were the natural and
311 unavoidable consequences of the rundale system.'[1] On the other
423 hand we must recall the extreme reluctance with which the system was at last abandoned, the social benefits it conferred on members of the kin. The reforming landlord, Lord George Hill, comments that 'the pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together, made them consider the removal of the houses, from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built to the separate farms, a great grievance.'[2] Another writer gives as the basis of the tenants' grievance, 'the recollection of nights of social concourse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of [517] defence against bailiff or gauger'.[3] There were ceilidhes and spinning parties, and many a clachan had its shanachie (story-teller) and its fiddler or piper—usually a maimed or simple person—who accompanied with folk-tunes. Folk-songs, occupational airs and legendary tales were kept alive in this way. Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there [252] would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some [343] districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains.

The openfield which lay around the cluster, normally on the
311 down-hill side so that the vital manure could be 'sliped' down-
423 slope (see Chapter XIII), seems to have been kept in cultivation in some areas at least year after year. This was the infield, in contrast to the outfield, the outlying rough pasture bits of which were temporarily reclaimed and then left to rest for long periods. We shall return to the plough and spade and methods of cultivation in another place but may refer here to the allotment of the holdings in the common fields. Although in many parts of the country the holdings, by the end of the eighteenth century, had become fixed in their scattered parcels on the several qualities of land in the openfield, there is abundant

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.
[2]Ibid., 42.
[3]W. R. Wilde, *Dublin University Magazine*, 41 (1853), 20.

285 ancient origin. We shall see that it is the way the Boyne
415 curraghs are built, and it is said that the African pygmies make their carrying baskets in similar fashion. For lightness and to facilitate lifting one or more rows of open 'windows' are left in the sides of the creels. Those used for seaweed were sometimes quite open in construction, and like the manure pots they were generally fitted with hinged bottoms for unloading (Fig. 56).

301 Besides their utilitarian uses, rushes, grasses and straw have
524 long been playthings for young folk who fashion out of them, for love or for luck, many varieties of decorations and emblems.
285 We describe the Briget's Crosses elsewhere (Fig. 85). Harvest knots, twisted out of the ripe straw of harvest, seem formerly
[832] to have been in truth love tokens, though now worn merely as buttonholes for the harvest fair (Plate 13). As one might expect, the girls' knots were the more ornate and they differed from those worn by the boys in having the ears left attached. Some exceptionally fine specimens are fashioned out of flax or fine wild grasses. Star-shaped emblems in these materials are also made (Fig. 70). More complicated knots have four or six strand work, but the ordinary knots are in two ply, made by bending the straws sharply over each other at right angles. Before being knotted they make tolerably strong cords: I have experimented with these on unbaked clay pots and find that when impressed in the soft clay they make very good imitations of the 'cord impressions' seen on Bronze Age pottery. I have heard that in Nigeria the same two-ply technique is employed in making roulettes, from the fibres of the wine palm, for decorating the native pottery. Among the many toys and playthings made of rushes we find baskets for wild strawberries and blaeberries, rattles, butterfly cages, fishing nets, caps, bracelets, belts, hatbands, mock-ceremonial whips, canes and swords and imitation birds' feet and flowers, some of which are shown in Fig. 70. Many of them are associated with particular
• [517] occasions of the year, for example the imitation flowers with Easter and the blaeberry baskets with Garland Sunday (Chapter XIX) but in general they are the products of the infinite leisure of long summer days of cattle-tending in field, bog or mountain. Probably a number of these objects once had a practical value

 [text continues on p. 210]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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222 461 described as a gathering of the whole people, a time of feasting and festivals and courting. That there was magic as well as manure in the golden weed is apparent from the urge to possess some share, however small, of the harvest. In the kingdom of Mourne 'men would walk three miles to be present at the division of the wrack and were content to take back a single creelful [482] on their backs. They would gather the bits of wrack on their knees, scraping them up with their hands as though it was gold dust.'[1] Here the division was by lot following a given signal—in one case a bush hoisted on a tall pole—for the farmers concerned to assemble. Wrack rights and ways of access are sometimes still bitterly fought over though they now have little meaning.

226 Spring was also the season for gathering other gifts of the sea, the shellfish and the shell sand which was carted inland [492] and even taken on horseback for distances of up to thirty miles. Prized because 'it cut up the clay', it also provided much needed [241] lime for acid soils. In South Donegal boatloads of mussels used to be scraped off the rocks with spades and distributed in creels for spreading on the potato ridges. In Dundalk Bay, Mr. H. G. Tempest tells me, mussels for the table and for bait are scraped up from boats with long-handled rakes (Fig. 74). Easter and Good Friday in particular were times for visiting the shore. Of the now deserted Blasket Islands Thomas O'Crohan writes: 'it has always been the custom here to go and get kitchen from the strand to eat on Good Friday.'[2] Winkles (willucks) were the favourite food on these occasions, but after St. Patrick's Day, they say, limpets are better eating than winkles. Shellfish were boiled in milk to give food for children and for calves. Sandeels were pulled up with a bent iron rod or a blunted sickle: in Mayo 'they are taken on moonlit nights by considerable [517] gatherings of young people, the object being as much the amusement as the sandeels'.[3] In Donegal 'for scallops and oysters, [462] when the tide was out, the young women waded into the sea, some of them naked, and by armfuls brought them to the shore.'[4]

[1]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 144.
[2]T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 29.
[3]C. R. Browne, *Ballycrey*.
[4]A. B., *The Rosses in 1753*, 201.

[Text continues on p. 226]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XVIII

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

THE Irish countryman enjoys nothing so much as 'a gathering' of people, and when he is forced to leave his native land he does not willingly settle down away from large urban centres. At home a crowd goes to his head like poteen. The daily routine of life on an isolated farm presents him with few opportunities for seeing people from outside his immediate neighbourhood, and on fine summer evenings his favourite pastime is to throw himself against a roadside ditch with a knot of companions and watch the passers-by. That the remarkably large attendances at rural churches and chapels owe something to the social needs of a scattered population is suggested by the phrase, applied to someone who arrives late at chapel: 'he missed the mass but hit the gathering'—he had something worth while for his trouble. In the Irish laws the freeman's rights of assembly were carefully defined: there were assemblies for transacting legal business (the oireacht), and others for commerce and games (the aenach) which came to be called fairs. With the coming of Christianity the traditional gatherings at sacred sites were transmuted into patterns (pardons), at which the new religion was quickened by practices of the elder faiths. In fact most gatherings served more than one purpose. The secret assemblies of Roman Catholics at 'mass rocks' in penal days no doubt also provided opportunities for social and commercial dealings, and the 'sacrament Sabbaths' of Presbyterian Ulster were great gatherings having something of the nature of fairs. Tents and booths were erected for the occasion, and indeed they were popularly known as 'holy fairs'.

Although the fair has lost something of its former significance in Northern Ireland, thanks to Government marketing schemes

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 462 pork. By the time this is ready, the men are in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

In the meantime the men have been engaged upon work of their own. The farmer rises when he hears his wife busy herself in rekindling the turf on the hearth. If there are sons, he wakes them. After that he goes to the cow barns in the haggard to inspect the cattle housed there overnight and tend to their wants in water and hay. After breakfast, if the day is fine, neither too bitterly cold nor too soakingly wet, he sallies forth into the fields to whatever work the time of the year demands. If he finds himself confined to the house, he still has plenty to do in house and haggard.

512 462 264 [153] If he and his sons go to the fields, he probably returns about eleven-thirty for the noon meal, the heavy meal of the day. Long habit calls forth his hunger and identifies it with the house. Several countrymen have remarked that they never feel hungry away from the house but are ready to eat when they get inside. The dinner unites most of the family for the first time during the day since breakfast. Only the small children of school age are absent. Their share of the meal is often saved for them until they return about four o'clock.

[262] [521] As at breakfast, the men sit down together immediately, falling to the steaming plates of cabbage, bacon, and potatoes the woman sets before them. As they eat, she stands ready to refill their plates, talking with them about the morning's work and the news of the neighborhood. It is the chief time of family conversation. During the meal the woman has boiled tea and, when the men finish with their plates, she clears away and lays bread and tea before them. Sometimes there is a longer interval between tea and dinner, devoted to smoking and talk.

512 264 [273] As before, the women and children do not eat until the men have finished. They take their places together when the men have left or have moved off to smoke an after-dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
[521 silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
858] sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
462 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading
231 the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] news.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents. 512 221 462

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year. 132 527 221

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew. 221 527 574 621

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with 221 132 241 221 521

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221 521 types, varieties, growth cycles, yields, and care of seeds and cattle passes round by word of mouth.

[805] 221 132 241 The first of February, St. Brigid's Day, marks the beginning of spring. For the countryman the return of the "hard" days of wind and clear weather herald the season of the land's drying off. Through February and March the gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted, and the fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each hard day is a welcome opportunity, for only then can work in the fields go on. With favorable weather, the work of preparation is over in the beginning of March, and the actual planting begins. By St. Patrick's Day, with its promise of continuous hard weather, the gardens are ready for a second planting.

221 241 The potatoes demand the greatest attention. A fortnight after they are planted, they must be manured well with manure brought from the pile near the cattle cabins, and the ground must be leveled so that the plant will not go to stalk and thus fail to produce tubers. A fortnight more and the ground must be "softened" and the earth round the plant, which now shows its first leaves, must be "stirred." By the time May is reached, the potatoes must be "landed." Earth must be taken from between the long ridges in which the potatoes are planted and heaped up over them from each side. Thereafter nothing remains until the harvest but a summer spraying against blight.

221 231 438 Throughout the spring the cattle have demanded attention. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the milk season and intensified butter-making. The great spring cattle fairs take place. The farmer must devote himself to the all-important business of buying and selling his milch and store cattle and his calves. At home the cattle demand constant care against hunger, disease, and cold as he mixes their diet of fast diminishing hay with the slowly returning pasture grass.

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574 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to
602 town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local com-
[521] munity gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in
[522] Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

574 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of
602 good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market.
273 "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy
594 as a family situation in which economic effort, individual
182 and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

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592 606 578 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 522] The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman must be effected smoothly. The whole moral force of the [626] community as well as the interest of family harmony bear upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighborhood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide its personal troubles as much as possible from the general knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides for continuance.

592 888 The new position of the old couple and their desires in the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

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They[1] occupy this place and receive this respect from other persons than their relatives. This respect is as much folk custom as the norms of family life. The community can on occasion enforce it upon the family members through gossip, verbal censure, and, more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest. 888 626

The vocabulary of the countryman and a great many of the judgments and comments he makes upon his surroundings express the valuations of the community upon age. In the discussion of the house interior it was remarked that the conducts of the different age groups were too "natural" to the farmers to evoke verbal recognition among them. The statement is true only in a sense. The farmers make no explicit recognition of the organization of behavior upon the basis of age. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. 888 561

More cogent, perhaps, for our understanding are the many expressions which arise from day to day based upon the speaker's place within an age grade. A great part of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the friends and neighbors who pass their lives within a rural community takes its form so. Particularly is this true of discussion of the past, a favorite topic and one which came very frequently indeed to the authors' ears. Gossip and personalities are as frequent a theme, and a speaker rarely fails to qualify the object of his remarks with an appropriate definition of his relative age. Even to intimates a man is referred to as "old John" or "young Michael." 888 561 521

Perhaps it is the discussion of the past which illustrates best partiality for the things of one's own age. The older men and women describe the "old days" with enthusiasm and regret. The "old times" are a ready topic among the country people, or rather among the older ones. Many an evening an old person can be got to tell of the "old times." 888 521

1 [i.e., the aged. – Analyst]

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888 He or she takes little warming to the task. They were hard times, even "bad times" of famine and death, but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. Even the mention of the lack of tools, draft animals, shoes, and many other amenities of present existence evokes comments such as "Weren't they the poor old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" Phrases of murmured commiseration and headshaking regret or pity are not without a tinge of pride for listener and teller alike. Remembered necessities in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale are now feats of endurance and strength to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young man today to walk from Corrofin to Ballinasloe in his bare feet forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who could shoulder a creel turf and carry it a hundred yards out through the bog mud to the famine road before the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunnagore?

888 Even the meager diet of the old times is remembered with a certain nostalgic pride. An old man, called upon one winter evening, began his remarks upon the theme characteristically:

> In the old days people used to have a maize gruel "stirabout" for breakfast, but you couldn't get any of the young people to eat it now. There was a potato bread, *stampaí*, and it was very good too. The people in the old times had great teeth and, when they died, they would have every one left in their heads. Their teeth would be stronger than a horse's. When the people ate potatoes and bread three times a day, they were healthier and lived to a ripe old age. Now with all the better food, they are not as well.

888 Such a belief rises very frequently to the lips of the old people who remember the days of the past either in their own or their parents' experience. The implication is clear. The young people, the new generation, are not so strong

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nor so hardy nor even so good-natured as those who went before.

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Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. Just as, for the older members of the community, the past reflects their glories and is a convenient vehicle for the expression of their superiority, so the present can be measured against the past in the same terms, usually only to be found lacking.

Often the expressions take a different turn. They become that universal complaint, the younger generation.

> Young people today are not what they used to be [said one old farmer in the course of a general discussion of the golden age that was his youth]. They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else go to a dance, and, if they happen to win a turkey, they will nearly shake the house down when they come in. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always to be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. They expect everything to be done for them.

He paused for an illustration, selected one from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on:

> Wasn't Keane out every night with his cattle putting them in small fields and late in the night? He would have his supper waiting for him when he came in, but he would take off his shoes so not to waken his father, and then to bed. Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept it all until he had cattle up by Ballywaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no control of them.

But even among his listeners, all of them "old" like himself, the young people had some defense:

> But there has to be some fun for the young people. If they don't enjoy themselves, there is no heart in them. You can't expect them to be always at home.

But these statements express more than a mere rivalry between young and old. They spring from a feeling of

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mutuality between young and old which transcends rivalry. The old days were better, among other reasons, because the dependence of the young upon the old was greater. The present is less attractive because the young no longer help the old as they should. Both facets of such mutuality may be expressed, even though the speaker, if he is old, casts it in the form of mistrust and dislike for the young. The whole of experience can be brought within this scheme of attitudes. To give an example, let an old fellow, an opponent of the present regime of Gaelicization in Ireland, recite his misgivings about the school system:

> I am patriotic and it may be a bad thing to say but I think the school system they have now is bad and the teaching of Irish is bad. In my day and before, a man might go to school when he could – maybe for only three months out of the twelve – but he would know more than they get now when they go to school all the time. The old people learned more then. When the child finished school, he could be expected to read a newspaper to the old people and to write a letter for them, or to do sums – and he would do it well.

His complaint is much longer, but enough has been given to show his mistrust of a schooling which to his mind makes no provision for the mutuality mentioned. This mutuality was and is strongest in the realm of farm work. The farm family demands the coöperation of all its members. No less, the community makes its valuation of young and old upon that coöperation. General discussions among the country people bring out this fact again and again. To illustrate again, two "old fellows," adult farmers with families, could agree upon a formula running somewhat as follows:

> The men were stronger in the past, they worked harder, while you try to get any young person to do as much work as the old men now and they would laugh at you. The young people today seem to see how little they can do rather than how much, while

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the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work. 888 521

Yet they were later forced to admit:

The people in the old times were not as knacky as they are now. Isn't it true that they used to have the horse in a stall feeding him while the man would be out with a spade turning over the garden?

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm work. Just as the rivalry between father and son in the farm family is most intimate and most constant in the economy which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community at large takes the same form and finds its expression within the frame of the work that the community must do to live. 888 578 561

Naturally enough, the young people do not express these attitudes. They do not agree with their elders on the score of their own shortcomings. But they have a good deal to say, among themselves, from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them, and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be sweepingly condemned with some such criticism as "old fool" and "old blatherer." Like the son already quoted who gave his father his head in farm work and listened patiently for orders only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations of themselves in which youth and strength outweigh age and wisdom.

But within a system of values in which the old represent the nexus of kinship and bear honor within the community, the young people do not see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the older men and women. The young people recognize themselves as forming a distinct group with interests and sentiments of its own, opposed in the scheme of rural life to the elders. They use the word "we" and oppose it to "them" for the old. They recognize places, pursuits, 578 561

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country "stations"[8] the elder men and women file in for 554
confession and come forward for Communion first. On the 888
road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant 561
discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. 554
No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 888
"stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural 521
community such personal communion is an indispensable [461]
bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men [203]
must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the commu- 561
nity with the outside world. The elder men, these same 554
father-owners, represent the interests of the community be- 888
fore priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to 561
round out the picture. 554

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The 888
better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of 276

[8] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the [194]
private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland.

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621 487 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

887 573 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village, is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

> The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

889 542 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

888 573 521 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

888 573 521 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps [542] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty. As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a [484 great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider 446] experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

573 521 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which allow all to take part.

573 521 589 O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and, though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone. Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road, breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

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Roche, "the public prosecutor," sits by the fire, opposite 573
the old man O'Donoghue. He is a man of sixty or so, with 521
a wife of the same age and an unmarried son and daughter, [592]
both in their thirties, still at home. His is a good farm and he is still active upon it. He, too, has a reputation for shrewdness, but his role here is a different one. Roche demands "why?" He makes one bring out one's best arguments, and pursues a point to its final conclusion. There his interest stops and he makes way for O'Donoghue, who sums up the agreement of the group. Roche earns his title well. He tests out the other's mettle. No one is offended at his "prosecution," for it clears the issue and brings out the right and the wrong upon which all can agree and O'Donoghue phrase judgment.

Behind them, a little further into the middle of the room 573
away from the hearth, sits Cullinan, the "senator." Cullinan 592
lives across the lake, where he works a middling farm with a wife and five children. Several of the sons are nearing twenty-five and Cullinan himself is well past fifty.

The "senator" is a weighty man. His part in the *cuaird* 573
is in character. Cullinan is the one of them most fertile in 521
cogent and fitting anecdotal illustrations. In a scheme of references, such as this, to past events and traditional precedents, Cullinan's many memories of persons and happenings, slowly and accurately phrased, give weight to the evening discussions.

Still further behind them, and often perched upon settle 573
or table in the kitchen, are two other habitués. The elder 592
of them is Noonan, a man of sixty, who lives in the village with a wife a little younger than himself and two boys and a girl, out of a once numerous progeny, still at home. The children are in their twenties and help him in his still active conduct of the farm.

Privately at least, the others think Noonan a bit of a fool. 573
He is as good a farmer as any of them, it is true, and knows 521

573 how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not
521 a weighty one. Noonan is a very voluble man. He can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with many opinions on all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the public prosecutor's relentless logic, but it helps too to keep the conversation alive and active. Consequently, though he has no important title, he is a member of long standing.

573 The younger of the two sitting in back is John Quin. His
592 position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quin lives on a good farm just outside the village. He married-in there, taking over the
[582] place of a dead husband. But, true to the country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister, who, in turn, married Quin. But both women are still living in the house. The elder sister has become the "old woman" and is treated more like a parent than a contemporary. It is Quin and his wife, the younger sister, who work the farm and who regard it as their own. Their claim is a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune: they are childless at fifty.

573 Quin is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old
561 one, as the countryside reckons age status. His place in the evening gathering reflects this intermediate state. In the two years in which the authors had the old men's house at Rynamona under observation, Quin was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but which showed itself well in his behavior.

573 When we first came, Quin divided his evenings between
561 the old men's house and card playing in several of the young
521 men's gathering places. At one of these, to be described shortly, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had "weight," and he conducted himself importantly and showed a serious demeanor and a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. In the

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old men's house he looked a different person. He was often 573
silent or contented himself with answering questions. 561
When he did speak, it was to "act the playboy," in the 521
country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to dance, and to break into playful banter. Sometimes his lively efforts were successful. Sometimes they were not. But the playboy role did not last long. A year later he was a constant visitor, and he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, the "judge," passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy," he said, "but there's a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. As the 573
evidence of their behavior shows, they are a closely knit 887
clique with a code of conduct and valuation of their own, one strong enough to enforce a specific personality on each of the members in accord with his role in the group.

To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group in Rynamona, we must examine it in relation to the rest of the community. These seven are not the only old men in the community. Roche, the prosecutor, had an elder brother with a good farm across the lake on the line between Rynamona and the next townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door. He is too feeble to come to the *cuaird* house, and his faculties are failing. His sons, still young men, work the farm.

But there is another as well, a more active old man. Moroney is perhaps the strongest farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best also, and he has the best-stocked farm. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, have a son [592]
and daughter nearing thirty still at home. The four work energetically and the household is prosperous. Each year Moroney stands for them in the "station," and the family's

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loneliness at home. Two new cliques of slightly younger "old men" were competing for central position in the community.

But despite such variation from community to community, the old men's *cuairds* act very similarly. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. First in importance, however, are those concerning agriculture. Times of sowing, reaping, harvesting are debated; the merits of various seeds are disputed; shop and fair prices are compared; and the community's trade often affected thus. The "old men" are conservative farmers, as are most peasants, and an innovation must be thoroughly tested before it wins, here in the evening *cuaird*, the approval of the community. Traditional methods of farming receive their strongest support here in the web of legend, proverb, and reference to the past that the speakers weave around them.

Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and determined by the old men's agreement. In late years, this has come to be called "politics." It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for example, it was felt that it was in the interest of all that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. The old men's *cuaird* debated the matter and agreed upon support of Fianna Fail, the De Valera party, an allegiance it held for the years 1927 to the time of the authors' visits. Even O'Halloran, whose private views leaned in another direction, begged the authors that no word of his political heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of his neighbors. "I wouldn't want them to think I wasn't with them," he said.

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Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or condition appraised. Even the priest finds each of his acts and even his sermons discussed and debated in the evening *cuaird*, and he "gets a name" according to the decision reached. In Rynamona an incident occurred which shows the type of slow appraisal the community makes and the speed with which, once its judgment is formed, it puts its decision into action. Not far away in the same general region, a gentlewoman moved back after years of absence to a small manor house which the family had had for many years. She was unknown to the farmers and, despite her friendly interest in them, seemed to be unable to establish contact with them. This distressed her, the more that her kindness seemed ineffectual in putting an end to the inevitable petty pilfering which she knew she must expect. One day, about a year later, her horse bolted on the country road. An expert horsewoman, she soon brought him into control. Thereafter her luck with the country people changed. Her exploit had made the rounds of the local community and had won approval for her. The old men agreed she was a grand lady and had a great hand with horses. And the petty pilfering sank to manageable proportions.

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The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and in action the power which in the critical days of the land agitation won itself an international name: the boycott.

In a later section the sanctions the local community exercises will be discussed. It is sufficient here to point out

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audience. The point of importance here is that it is among 887
the old people that folk myth and folk belief are preserved 538
and expressed for the community.

If we are to examine in full rural behavior based upon 571
age and its connection with the old adult clique whose 517
function in the community we are assessing, we must offer
some contrast with the behavior of other age groups.

We have already mentioned that the old men's house in Rynamona was not the only seat of visiting after the day's work, and that the entertainment provided there was merely one instance of many gatherings taking place almost nightly, at least through the winter, in rural communities. In the statements given by older men about the meeting of the young men we have seen something of the manner in which other pursuits than those of the men's house are regarded.

Indeed in all the communities which came under the authors' notice the young men were as ardent evening visitors as were the older men. In Rynamona they were no less so.

There they gathered in most often at the house of Roche, the "prosecutor." They did this from long habit, as did their elders. But they had no larger justification for their doing so. They went because "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys." But there were marked differences in their meeting. There was no central clique so closely integrated as that in O'Donoghue's house. There were pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together.

A greater difference lay in their complete lack of concern with the affairs of the community. One could get them to [521] talk only about their own plans or the trials of their own kind and age. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition. The skills upon which those taking part in the meetings prided themselves and for which

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation. 437 443 [555]

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers. 443 868

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance. 521 443

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities. 443 484 574 602

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the 443 484

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

462 to butter is her charge. She is an expert at the
512 churn.

Her human charges fed, she must feed the animals in their turn. The full-grown cattle and the horse are not her charge, but she must tend calves and pigs and fowl. Milk and potatoes must be prepared for them all.

Before noon, she hangs a second kettle from the hook. This time she fills it with potatoes for the [262] family. In season, she will add white cabbage, and a portion or two of bacon or salt pork. By the time this is ready the men will be in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

For the men have not been idle. The farmer-father and husband wakes his sons, inspects the cattle and horse, if there is one, and gives them hay and water. If the day is fine, he sallies forth to the fields; if not, and the weather confines him to house and haggard, he has still plenty to do, in building walls, repairing and making machine parts, harness and tools.

Dinner unites the family for the first time since breakfast. Only children of school age are absent and their share of the meal is saved till later. As before, the women and children do not eat till the men have finished. But as the women serve, they [521] all talk about the experiences of the day. It is the chief time of general family conversation. Only the children are silent, for in rural Ireland a well-[858] behaved child is a silent one.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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beyond the haggard wall, as we have noted. All the 241
many tasks of patching and repair are men's work, 221
they fall to the farmer-father and his sons. The 462
annual round is theirs, as the daily one belongs to the women.

For the countryman, the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to the Epiphany or 'Little Christmas', is the dead of winter. All farm work is at a standstill. The farmer is free to devote the season to holiday. Outside the weather is unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. For him the year has stopped and is waiting to renew its forces.

With the Epiphany, the succession of bitter wet days does not end, but holiday does. One's mind turns to the earnest work of the year to come. The farmer plans his spring planting. On drier days he can clean ditches and drains; he can lay in seed and repair machines. In the evenings, conversation on [521]
visits and at home revolves round the coming planting and calving, and traditional experience goes from mouth to mouth. In fact, it is the time for all new plans, for it is Shrovetide, the season of match-making and marriage.

St. Bridget's Day, February 1, marks the begin- [805]
ning of spring. For St. Bridget promised every [776]
second day thereafter would be 'hard'. The return of the 'hard' days of wind and clear weather herald the land's drying-off. Through February and March, gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

476 co-operating groups are smaller; tools are more modern and better distributed; resources are fuller.

246 476 Lending a 'boy' is the commonest form of co-operation. It goes on constantly, but can best be described in a scene of great activity, such as hay-making. I met it first there, in Luogh, the townland in which we found the 'west room'. The hay was early in Luogh in 1933. Harvest began in mid-July. The weather was just right. Warm dry days had brought the grasses to maturity, and gave promise of continuing. The families of Luogh set to work to 'save the hay': mowing it, letting it dry as it lay, and then stacking it, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six- to eight-foot hay-cocks. Later, after several weeks, it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. Now it was a question of mowing, drying and stacking it before rains caught the farmers in mid-course.

There was much interest in every family's pro-
[521] gress. The weather and the yields of the meadows drove all other subjects out of conversation. The men felt spurred to work well and quickly; there was a general rivalry in the air. The women were as eager, and brought their children to the meadow's edge, while they worked with their rakes behind the mowers.

About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows, working from earliest morning as long as

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

custom of the community as it is the habit of family 888
life. Where necessary, the community can enforce 626
its maintenance. The community can, as it were, invade the family and regulate its members through gossip, verbal censure, and more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest.

The countryman's vocabulary is full of allusions 561
to values upon age. A great deal of the judgments 888
and the comments he makes upon his surroundings 626
express them. Naturally, they do not discuss the organization of behaviour upon age in explicit terms; for such conducts are 'natural' and unchangeable in the minds of those who are shaped by them. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. The upstart 'boy', the 'bold' child, the 'old man who ought to have shame for acting like that' are as constant objects of reproof and censure as the 'bad' father or son.

In general statements, one hears many expressions, day after day, which arise from the speaker's place within an age group. The broad opposition between 'old' and 'young' colours rural thinking powerfully. A great deal of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the 'friends' and neighbours who pass their lives within the rural community takes its form within this social context.

This is particularly true of discussion of the 521
past. The past is a favourite topic; the 'old days' 888
something of an obsession in the countryside. This 561

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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521 is not only because one of the listeners was the
888 anthropologist 'looking for old custom'. For, where
561 descent is a critical nexus of habitual relationship and old age the most honoured state, the past cannot fail to be the focus of interest.

Thus the older men and women are very partial to the things of their own age. And the young people are, in part, swept along with them. The 'old times' are a very ready topic among the country-people. Many a time an old person will be got to tell of them; he or she takes little warming to the task. They were the hard times, even bad times, of famine and death but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. There were few tools, no draft-animals, no shoes, none of the amenities of present existence. The listeners murmur phrases of commiseration and shake their heads in pity. "Weren't they the bad old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" they ask one another. But there is a tinge of pride in their voices, in the manner of tellers and listeners alike.

For remembered necessities, in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale, are now feats of endurance to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young
[481] man today to walk from Corofin to Ballinasloe, walk in his bare feet the forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Where is the woman today who
could shoulder a creel of turf a hundred yards out 521 561 888
through the bog mud to the famine road, before
the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunna- [482]
gore?

Often the expressions take a different turn. They 517
become that universal complaint — the younger 521
generation. "Young people aren't what they used 561
to be," said one old farmer in the course of a 888
general discussion of the golden age that was his youth. "They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else to a dance, and if they happen to win a turkey they will nearly shake the house down [in their triumph]. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. Now you can't get them to do anything unless you pay them."

Here he paused for an illustration, chose one 561
from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on. 521
"Wasn't old Keane out every night with his cattle 888
and he putting them in small fields and late in the [291]
night? Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept at it till he had cattle all the way up by Ballyvaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no controlling them."

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. The past, for the older members of the community,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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reflects their glories and serves as a convenient vehicle for the expression of their superiority. In the same spirit, the present can be measured against the past, usually only to be found lacking.

But these statements express much more than a mere rivalry between old and young. They spring from a mutuality between them which transcends rivalry. The old days are better among other things, because the interdependence of young and old was greater. The present is less attractive because the old no longer control the young, and the young no longer aid the old, as they should. Both facts of this interrelation may be expressed, even though the speaker, if he be old, may cast them in terms of mistrust and dislike for the young. In fact, the whole of experience may be brought within this scheme of attitudes. To give an example, here is one old fellow's rationalization of his misgivings about the present Irish school system:

"I am patriotic and it may be a bad thing to say but I think the school system they have now is bad and the teaching of Irish is bad. In my day and before, a man might go to school when he could—maybe for only three months in the year. But he would know more than they get now when they go to school all the time. The old people learned more then. When a child finished school he would be expected to read a newspaper to the old people, and to write a letter for them, or to do sums. And he would do it well." His complaint is much longer

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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but you have heard enough to see his mistrust of a system which to his mind makes no provision for the mutuality between young and old.

This mutuality was and is strongest in the realm of farm work. The farm family demands the co-operation of all its members. No less the community makes its valuation of young and old upon that co-operation. General discussions among the country-people bring out this fact again and again. To illustrate by quotation once more: two old fellows, adult farmers with families, could reach agreement upon a formula running somewhat as follows:

"The men were stronger in the past, they worked harder, while you try to get any young person to do as much work as the old men now and they would laugh at you. The young people today seem to see how little work they can do rather than how much. While the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work."

So they went on, but even in the midst of their theme they were forced to admit that there were compensations: "It is true for you that the people in the old times weren't as knacky as they are now. Wasn't it how they used to have the horse in a stall feeding, while they [themselves] would be out with a spade turning over the garden [and no plough]."

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

521 work. Just as the rivalry between father and son is
888 most intimate and most constant in the economy
561 which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community takes the same form.

You will probably ask if there are not grains of truth in the older generation's statements. My answer is that I neither know nor care. And I feel the countryman is not much more concerned. For this is a very old rivalry and once its expression was even more formalized than it is today. We owe the first poem of the eighteenth-century poet O'Rahilly to the expression of this rivalry, in an older day when Gaelic poetry still survived. He was called in to defend the young unmarried men, the 'boys' of today, in a poetic contest over respective merits between them and the 'old men', that is, the married men of family and substance. And he played, too, in the hurley game which fought out the contest in another field. For we are dealing here not so much with truths or falsities as with group-attitudes reciprocally held. Pareto would call them derivations; he would find their residues in the sentiments of those grouped together about a common status in the community. Once these sentiments were expressed ceremonially as in O'Rahilly's day. Even now the men of Luogh point out a large stone. With that stone the 'men' and the 'boys' competed at tests of strength till just a few years ago.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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For the young people do not agree with their 521
elders on the score of their own shortcomings. They 561
do not express these attitudes. They have a good 888
deal to say, on the other hand, among themselves from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them; and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be swept aside with some such sweeping condemnation as 'old fool' and 'old blatherer'. Like the son I quoted in the last lecture, who listened patiently to his father, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations in which youth and strength outweigh age and ripe experience.

Yet within a system of values in which the old 561
represent the nexus of kinship and bear honour 888
within the community, the young people do not 576
see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the old people. In the non-verbal behaviour of daily conduct, deference is uppermost. This fact sobers their group's egocentricity. In their position there is a necessary balance between subordination and compensatory vauntings and distastes. If you remember Synge's *Playboy*, you remember how reality broke in upon the playboy when the community saw his father still very much alive.

So, within this framework the young men can 561
recognize themselves as a distinct group—an age 888
grade, to use technical language. They have their

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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561 come forward only when called upon. At country 'stations' the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for communion first. On the road to shop, church or fair, the young man must keep pace, and the elder may call him to his side.

521 561 The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 'stopping on the road to pass the time of day'. In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form, in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must 'listen in'.

[208] At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the 'boys' are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

561 571 Then, secondly, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners, represent

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) · 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this 314
time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals
and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf- [786]
cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the difference between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere
the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an [132]
early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month, so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There
is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when [821]
the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep
cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a [521]
'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the
decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when [423]
banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally
has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or [476]
three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf. Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is
the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that [804]
a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading, [461]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift 133
valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island 311
to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley [361]
and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island
form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are
situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms [172]
the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the
rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are
Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as 361
"shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office 34
and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common
land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the
monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older 366
of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common
land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the com-
munity. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling 366
of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, 276
beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve
the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small
enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop
are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes
purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions [443]
usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an
aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to [521]
discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the 000

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and [182] indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most [521] activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently [676] in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, [127] and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of [137] islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50-51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, [886] several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess [207] barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
• [521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed"
(a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [521] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gael receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

625 There are no police, called *gardai* and "guards," in the island, but three, including a sergeant, are posted in a nearby island and visit Inis Beag at least 674 once a month. Crime is virtually unknown among the folk, the few cases on record [683] being for assault and battery and destruction of property; most cases are civil ones, [684] involving property ownership and inheritance, and are tried intermittently by a 829 visiting magistrate. The guards are subjected to frequent criticism and derision, 625 especially when they come to the island dressed in plain-clothes to search for [673]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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> conditions appraised. . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuand* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and . . . boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191)

573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [815] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

181 177 667

829 521 [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

521 203 571 [571] [512]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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521 203 591 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [612] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [539] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 589 162 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

582 689 581 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few 562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the [154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [581] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that 584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently 173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love 684 marches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, [208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céili*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the 584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his 584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The 671 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleamhnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleamhnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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121 between the separate groups of kin in the village are seen to be in delicate balance
518 of power which is expressed in the local phrase, "you can't fight anybody around
609 here because all their people will gang up on you." If an individual's kinsmen must defend him in his personal disputes, it necessarily follows that a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin.

114 By and large, these three conscious models apply to Inis Beag as well as Aughnaboy.
121 Leyton discovers broad "disparities between the conscious models and the
518 statistical patterns formed by the actual behaviour" of people in Aughnaboy, manifested in 74 disputes covering a time span of ten years in the memories of his respondents. He classifies these disputes according to three criteria: their severity, the issues provoking them, and the categories of individuals involved (Leyton 1966:537–539). The criterion of severity yields three types of disputes: argument —"characterized by frequent or continuous arguments . . . associated primarily with exchange of verbal abuse;" withdrawal—where "social relations are actually severed and cooperation is withdrawn;" and interference—in which active attempts are made to "interfere with the welfare of the opposing party. These attempts, which may be secret or open, include legal suits, reports to the police, theft and, rarely, physical violence, as well as withdrawal of all cooperation." Three types of disputes also are distinguishable when issues provoking hostility are examined: economic—"which includes conflict such as rivalry between shopkeepers and disputed inheritance;" personality clashes—"which includes disputes primarily attributed to the innately quarrelsome personalities of certain individuals;" and jealousy—"which refers primarily to situations in which an individual's affections are alienated." The categories of persons involved in disputes are agnatic kin, uterine kin, affinal kin, and non-kin. Leyton establishes rank orders for each of his type classifications, and finds that the rank order for the severity classification is withdrawal, interference, and argument; for the issues classification, it is personality clashes, jealousy, and economic; and for the individuals involved classification, it is affinal kin, agnatic kin, non-kin, and uterine kin.

121 In applying Leyton's unconscious models of disputes to Inis Beag, I have
518 modified slightly his severity and issues classifications. To the former, I have added
• [521] a fourth type which I call gossip; this is not gossip of the ordinary variety so
[683] common on the island, but rather continuous, pernicious verbal attacks made by a person within earshot of his victim's relatives and close friends, which usually do not lead to argument. In the case of the issues classification, I have broadened the
[651] range of personality clashes. There are several "innately quarrelsome" individuals in Inis Beag, but most personality conflicts involve persons other than these, who have come to dislike one another intensely for numerous reasons, most of which are related to envy, jealousy (other than alienation of affections), resentment
518 against authority, and hostility toward members of the opposite sex. Over 200 disputes have occurred on the island within the past generation, excluding those involving semi-permanent dwellers—curates, lighthouse keepers, and the Dane.
518 The higher incidence of disputes in Inis Beag is attributable, for the most part, to
121 the longer time span appraised and the addition of gossip to the severity classification in my analysis. However, the rank orders of the three type classifications

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year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during
[167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the
[582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is
[574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on
[621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing
[351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are
[356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for
[262] the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large
[364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are
[574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper,
[431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs,
[861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children
[431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in
[262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

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114 tent; they have depended on a limited sample of respondents; and most
538 of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, which does not contain numerous categories of significance to anthropologists.

12 My wife and I devoted most of our research to documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also described formal and informal education and the personality traits formed by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many types and probing the memories of aged island respondents, and recorded cultural change in process over an eight-year period. The standard ethnographic research techniques that we employed include guided and open-ended interviews, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, cross-checking, photography, and phonog-
[161] raphy. The sample for much of our data was the total universe of 350 inhabitants.

It is extremely difficult to obtain information in Inis Beag about such matters as amounts and sources of income, disputes, pagan religious retentions and reinterpretations, and sex. This brief list might be increased by at least threefold and gives rise to a consideration of the problems associated with obtaining reliable data from the Irish in general and the
114 islanders in particular. Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled
12 "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously
181 presents one of the shortest, yet most discerning analyses of Irish national character yet written by a novelist and predicts the various reactions that her volume will evoke in Irish readers.[4] She concludes with the following remarks about the difficulties surrounding fact finding in Ireland:

> This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged
> [521] with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing

[4] These reactions appear to be institutionalized, as my writings and conversational remarks have also evoked them. Two additional responses that I have encountered are: my conclusions are invalidated because I failed to consult certain "source materials" written in Gaelic, and my inferior writing style precludes serious consideration of my findings. I take pains to explain, usually in vain, the many methods of fieldwork utilized by ethnographers to Irish persons who are critical of my data and who invariably use the phrase, "You can't trust what an Irishman tells you." On a rare occasion, one listener to my lengthy explanation said, "Ah, you're cuter than we are"—a compliment indeed!

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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574 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to
602 town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local com-
[521] munity gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in
[522] Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

574 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of
602 good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market.
273 "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy
594 as a family situation in which economic effort, individual and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative
182 within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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He's nothing but an old blatherer, he was always sitting on 583
matches and saying he would give a fellow his daughter when
he hadn't any fortune on her at all. He'd break it off by saying 577
the girl wasn't willing and all the time it was only boasting and 626
drinking the porter he was.

Today the boaster is a local joke, and his daughter has fled to America.

A famous local character round Ennis, a laborer now 522
dead, once bested a countryman through a judicious whet- 584
ting of the farmer's cupidity at matchmaking. The story 583
goes that the laborer broke the countryman's bargaining resistance by distracting his attention from the cow he was selling at the fair to the prospects of a match between the farmer and a purely fictitious sister, who was dowered with an equally fictitious three hundred pounds. Later when the farmer and his friends came to town again to discuss the matter further, the wit told them elaborately that, after making full inquiries, he had decided they belonged to too respectable a family to allow themselves to make a match with his sister, since the sister had already "a little one" out of wedlock.

Another case of subterfuge practiced illustrates a variation 584
in the match. A fellow near Ennistymon got a farmer with 583
a daughter to back his note at the local bank to the extent of 577
six hundred pounds. The borrowing was kept secret, and the endorser does not seem to have known that the security offered was his own farm. Accordingly, when the borrower later offered to bring in the six hundred pounds in marrying the daughter, the farmer accepted, thinking he was to receive the fortune clear of debt. He discovered only too late that he had a son-in-law whose fortune he must make good himself. The deception led to bad blood between the two, but nothing could be done.

This last example illustrates a reversal of the usual pro- 583
cedure. Ordinarily since the Irish farm family is both

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 606 578 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 522] The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman must be effected smoothly. The whole moral force of the [626] community as well as the interest of family harmony bear upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighborhood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide its personal troubles as much as possible from the general knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides for continuance.

592 688 The new position of the old couple and their desires in the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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joking ascription of ignorance and stupidity. In Ireland, however, there is another side of the expression of town and country distrust. The countryside points to prostitution and immorality in the towns and finds something to back up its condemnations. The town returns its dislike with double measure and accuses the countryside of primitive lack of all sensitivity of feeling or restraint of impulse. But these antagonistic attitudes and ways of regarding other groups than one's own are not our concern here. They are of interest here because such ascriptions of ignorance are part of a common misapprehension of the complexity of the peasant attitudes. 369 834

For instance, to an outsider the countrymen will seem often to give a mere lip service to the attitudes of the townsman, for one is always apt to mistake the function of hearty laughter. The country people have strict moral and ethical attitudes around the question of sex, as rigid as those of any other class if not more so. Yet they have conventional licenses and conventional niceties which do not coincide with those of the other classes and are thus open to misunderstanding. And, like all classes and peoples, they have two sets of attitudes, not one, and these are "ambivalent," to adopt the Freudian term. 369 834 208

But these attitudes and their "ambivalent" nature, the kind of alternation they seem to present, must be understood in terms of the social relationships of the countryside. The greatest single cause of misapprehension lies here. In different contexts, toward different persons, in connection with different events, one and the same person regards the same subjects quite differently.

For example, in discussions of the peccadillos of young people and the censurable events of the district the farmers and their wives were full of animus against the "crabbit" great "bucks" of lads who led girls astray and from whom the innocent were not safe. Yet even then, in discussing the fault of such amorous lads and the necessity of circum- 369 834 208 522

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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369 834 208 522

spection and immediate and frequent confession for girls as their best defense, one sees that the pure young maidens are also not without blame. They bear the taint of Eve. "Sure the boys have no chance," said one woman in this respect, "for the girls always lay the blame on them." Yet these attitudes coexist together with other very hearty, casual, and sometimes ribald attitudes which make their appearance in banter, joke, and repartee even between speakers of different sex. These even take the form of taunts about prowess and mild ridicule for the possession of a greater relish than is meet, or fanciful recitation of past magnificent misdeeds. This is particularly true in the recitations of stories and adventures of persons in the ken of the community, where details of amorous desire and accomplishment are given with considerable gusto, and greeted and reiterated again and again amid hearty laughter.

369 834 208 [178]

Certain observers profess to find the puritanical outlook on sexual matters on the increase in the countryside. The country people themselves purport to see a change in their own outlook. And it may be that the last generation has brought a considerable spread of Catholic moral standards with the spread of education and the opening of the countryside to urban influence.

In any event the laughter and hearty guffaws with which references of nearly any kind to sexual intercourse, sexual attraction, and childbearing are greeted, and the evident interest they evoke, are very much part of the everyday behavior of the small farmers. They do not imply in any sense an approval or acceptance of the deeds described. They are rather expressions of a very definite judgment. They are in the nature of a condemnation in which laughter is itself a sanction upon the forbidden.[1]

[1] The authors accept readily the view of laughter as a response to a situation where socially conditioned values are threatened with upset and yet not so deeply or irrevocably broken as to bring out a full reproval. The view is well developed by Pilkington and agrees with that of Max Eastman. The tabloid reader is not

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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of situations. For instance, we have already seen that a 834
woman whose son has married and who fails to get along well with the "new woman" may, quite without censure, move into the house of a daughter and share that house with the daughter's husband's father. Several cases came to notice in which women who had relinquished their farms moved in with the dead husband's brothers.

A famous joke between a well-loved old priest and his 834
bishop in Clare based on a real incident plays around this 522
last theme. On the occasion of his usual pastoral visit, the bishop congratulated the parish priest on the high moral standard of his parish. He had one reservation to make, however. He was shocked to learn that a couple who had recently moved into the priest's parish were living together openly and were not married. The parish priest caught the twinkle in his bishop's eye, but nevertheless he promised to make an inquiry and take necessary action. Next day he reported that he had learned that the couple were an old man and old woman, brother's wife and sister's husband, who had recently moved into a cottage together. They were both seventy, and had been living in the bishop's own parish for the last ten years. Since the bishop had been so shocked by their taking the house together, the priest said he would send them back and let his lordship deal with the problem as he had been doing before.

In such cases, obviously, the difference of sex of the house-mates as a danger to morality has disappeared. This agrees with the equation many country people seem to make between the "saintliness" of the old and their emancipation from the flesh.

By the same token, the old person who has already had 834
his or her day of childgetting and childbearing, and yet 522
still persists in manifesting sexual aspirations, is a stock 587
figure of fun. He or she is the butt of endless ridicule and practical joking in the countryside. Again, of course, such

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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834 laughter is best explained as playful censure. For very real
522 censure often breaks out against such a person. It is particu-
587 larly likely to break out into overt punitive action in cases where old farmers threaten the expectations of their heirs by taking young women as second wives. In fact, the one kind of man or woman of considerable age who does not command respect is this. The countryside finds endless amusement in the theme of May and November. Naturally the matchmaking system does lend itself fairly well to matings between oldish men and young women, since ownership of a farm is the basis for a match.

581 The most interesting point of inquiry, then, may well be
554 the connection between the sexual status of the family mem-
183 bers, as we have described it here, and the standing of the family. The sexual status of the members is a reflection of their capacity for carrying alliance among the other families of the countryside. Can we draw, therefore, a connection between rural familistic norms about sexual behavior and the class structure of the rural community?

We know already that marriage in rural Ireland yields us one clue to the connection. At matchmaking the negotiations between the contracting parties concern the relative standing of each. That standing is at stake. The equivalence of dowry and land are arrived at through a careful enumeration of all the past history and the present material substance of the contracting families. The location of the farm, its livestock, its soil, the reputation and ancestry of the family, all these are compared. Backward places, we remember, do not grow big fortunes. Neither do many other kinds of persons and places.

We are dealing here of course only with one broad class, the country people. Yet within the boundaries of rural life there is much to be learned of the country people's treatment of relative prestige and standing among themselves. There are many behaviors in the activity of the countryside

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 an adequate, instantaneous response. The psycho-
554 logist knows that expressions of anger, like any
578 other emotion, are conditioned within particular social systems. And here the Irish system works, in its own fashion, to draw and to reinforce the inevitable distinctions and discriminations of social life.

522 From this fact springs comedy as well. Joke and fun play round this central theme. A good deal of old custom and traditional pastime cluster here. The picturesque buffoonery of the 'strawboys' —privileged masqueraded figures whose mock-dangerous invasion of the wedding feast has been dignified to represent a last remnant of a primeval bride-capture—is better explained thus more simply. Such symbolism as the gaiety of Shrove Tuesday, when in Clare, at least, young men beat loudly on the doors of those unmarried women who took no husband through the Shrovetide, is still direct enough.

For comedy and laughter soften the sharpness of social controls. They are the velvet glove that clothes the iron hand.

776 787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[642] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most slattish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1965, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping
776 fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered overly superstitious.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchai*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 538 • 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [171] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [198] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [579] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *seialai* or *seanchai* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semicircle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

5

The Future of the Island

Emigration

MANY ELDERS IN INIS BEAG fear that the island and its neighbors will go the way of the Blasket Islands of Co. Kerry, whose remaining inhabitants were removed by the government because their support had become an economic liability. With only slight fluctuations, the population of Inis Beag has been diminishing since it reached its zenith of 532 persons in 1861. Below are population figures since 1821—when the first census was compiled—until the present time: 829 168 161

1821	421
1841	456
1861	532
1881	497
1901	485
1926	409
1936	443
1946	447
1956	376
1960	350

The upsurge in population after 1926 reflects the depression in the United States and the Second World War, when emigrants returned home to escape unemployment and conscription, while the downsurge after 1946 reflects the shift of emigration from America to England. Frequently discussed by elders is the steady increase in emigration during the past 15 years, the decreasing age of emigrants, and the presence within the past decade—for the first time in three centuries—of aged parents all of whose children have emigrated, and of land which is idle or rented out by emigrants who probably never will return to Inis Beag. Jokes concerning the building of a hotel by the Germans or a missile site by the Americans in the island to stimulate the economy, as well as serious suggestions that the 161 167 829 168 829 [522]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying
[622] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 590 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing
[162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and
[182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities,
[162] seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

291 834 [754] [156] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" 158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. 751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with [291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear [834] of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism [753] and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac- 827 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and [863] animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha- [325] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. [562] Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at [273] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most [241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main- 237 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and 372 burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is 514 burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another 283 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the [462] secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

• 831 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are • 522 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood [154] by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore [123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and coye sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying
592 the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
● [523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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571 they received their nicknames were of other sorts. Not even
517 farming occupied a large share of their conversation, keen as their rivalry in the matter often was while work was going on.

571 Taking these matters in order, the young men who met
517 at Roche's house met habitually there for card playing.
524 Roche's unmarried son, a man about thirty, was perhaps the central figure. His cousin, another Roche, was the brother of a young man just married, who took part in no *cuaird*. This cousin helped work his brother's farm. He was another central figure. The group that formed itself round them included most of the young men of Rynamona between the ages of twenty and thirty. They played the usual games of the Irish countryside, "forty-five" and "nap," often far into the night.

571 Roche's house was the more informal center. It took in
517 the younger men. But there was present in the community
525 a custom somewhat more organized, namely, the "gamble." As often as once a week a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household, as its turn comes, throws open its doors to the card players. Admission, usually a shilling, is charged and goes toward defraying the expense of the supper of bread and tea for all and toward the prize. What is left after those charges are met belongs to the householder. Often this amount reaches a profitable figure, and, where the custom is firmly entrenched, a certain commercialism shows its head.

But the gamble is a sporting event. Teams, often formed of habitual associates in card playing, are pitted against one another in one form of the gamble. In another, individual high scorers win. The prize is usually a turkey or two geese, even a bonham (young pig), a side of bacon, or a calf. Elab-
[555] orate rules and canons of honesty govern the play, the conduct of the players, and the obligation of the person offering the prize. Play is serious and intense, and the win-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

517 sea-strand, hurley, horse-racing and games have drawn
526 together large crowds at certain seasons of the year, and in summer there were also boat or curragh races. These have by no means lost their appeal: one may instance the gatherings at Omey Island, Co. Mayo. If bull-baiting, doubtless a relic of ceremonial bull-fights, is now dead, cock-fighting is still secretly indulged in, while the illegal "long bullets,"[1] played with a heavy ball along the roads of Co. Armagh and Co. Cork—a curious distribution, for I have not come across it elsewhere—is still popular, and though Wakefield seems to attribute it to English influence it recalls the skill of the Irish peasantry in stone-throwing. This was, legend tells us, one of the playful habits of the giants of old, and a phrase used of the Aran Islands—"quarrels usually end in stone-throwing"—would not be inapplicable to some Irish cities during the "troubles." In the Claddagh of Galway a favourite amusement, turned at times into its original use as "a mode of warfare," used to be casting stones with slings. "When a man was able to strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen, he was considered a good shot." O'Curry states that it was the custom of the ancient Irish to use a flat circular stone in warfare: it was carried in the hollow of the shield.

526 Games which have kept their seasonal character are still played at Hallowe'en, especially that known as "diving for apples." "Riding and shoeing the wooden mare" is perhaps no longer played, but we must repeat that it is rarely safe to speak of old customs as extinct in rural Ireland. It has more than once been my experience to come across habits and beliefs which were described as dead half a century ago. Certain
534 toys should also find a place in this brief summary: there is,
524 for instance, the "bull-roarer," a thin lath of wood with serrated edges which is swung round on a string so as to

[1] An interesting account of bullet throwing is given by Michael J. Murphy in *At Slieve Gullion's Foot*, 1941, p. 78. Both iron and stone bullets were home-made, and the writer describes how the latter were fashioned in "bullet-holes" resembling the ancient cup-marks mentioned above on p. 164. The game was also played round Dunleer, Co. Louth, fifty years ago, but in the Cork style, that is by overhand "bowling."

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

produce a buzzing noise. The toy is known in Co. Carlow as a "whee-doodle" and in Co. Down, where it seems formerly to have been regarded as a "sacred" thing, as a "boomer." Professor Haddon has described specimens from Co. Antrim and Co. Cork. About the Co. Carlow example in the Dublin Museum Dr. Raftery provides me with the following note. "A boy was whirling it around and an old man who saw him was very angry and told him to take the thing home and burn it, as otherwise he would bring bad luck on the countryside." This was in 1921. I illustrate a "bull-roarer" from Cape Clear, Co. Cork (Fig. 113). Its Irish name is Cláirín Búirthe.

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[777]

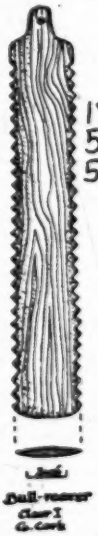

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Fig. 113.

It is, of course, possible that some Irish localities may have learnt the use of this toy from stray specimens brought home from regions where it is still in regular ceremonial use, but when we remember all the other Irish survivals we cannot doubt that the bull-roarer is a relic of the past that has lost, or nearly lost, its sacred character. The bull-roarer has an almost world-wide distribution. It is said to have been employed in ancient Greece in connexion with the Dionysiac mysteries. We can imagine its employment in the initiation rites and magical practices of pagan times so picturesquely reconstructed by Professor Macalister in his book "Ancient Ireland." In various parts of the modern world the bull-roarer is used as a rain charm, in raising a wind or producing thunder, in driving game, herding cattle (*cf.* Chapter 6) or preparing for fishing, in rites of initiation and circumcision, in funeral festivities and mask dances: it is a general rule that the instrument must not be seen by women or children on pain of death. In the words of Haddon: "This insignificant toy is perhaps the most ancient, widely spread and sacred religious symbol in the world."

Of great antiquity and wide distribution, the spear-thrower is another instrument which appears to have survived in Ireland as a toy, used as a throwing stick in boys' games. And another toy "not yet connected with any ceremonial usage" but paralleled among the Chinese and the North

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524
[411]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

171 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a
524 circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

857 Many examples could be given of children's games and
524 rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.
754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance
789 of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love
821 charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

241 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting
289 of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 to a round-ended house. But there are many missing links in the evolution of the Irish house, which archaeological excavation will hope to find some day. Interpretative studies of Dark-Age texts are also needed.[1]

342 Clues to old methods of house building may also be found in
524 forms of construction used for outbuildings or in children's
787 games. There is, for example, a Hallowe'en spell or divination game known as 'building the house' in which twelve couples of holly twigs are arranged in a circle, pushed into the ground and tied together at the apex. A live turf representing the fire is placed in the centre. The coupled twigs are named after the boys and girls present, and the pair which first catches fire indicates which boy and girl will first be coupled in marriage.[2] Compare with this a description of Irish houses in the early seventeenth century: 'the baser cottages are built of underwood, called wattles, and covered with thatch . . . of a round form and without chimneys, and in my imagination resemble so many hives of bees about a country farm.'[3]

342 Today nearly all Irish farm-houses are a simple rectangle in ground plan, anything from ten to twenty feet in width and of varying length according to the number of rooms they comprise, each room being the full width of the house. The normal developed house has three rooms, consisting of a central kitchen with a bedroom at the bottom end and another—the best room, called simply 'the room'—behind the chimney, which helps to warm it (Fig. 8). This, in the Gaeltacht, is the 'west room', reserved for family mementoes, for the old people and especially for the dead. Here the body is placed during wakes, and a wealth of superstition gathers around this room.[4] Arensberg may have been mistaken in translating the Gaelic *iarthar* as 'west', for the word also means 'back', but there are old beliefs about the orientation of the dwelling house, and it is possible that there was an association between death and the direction of the setting sun. The confusion between 'west' and 'back' is amusingly illustrated in the story of the Irish boy who,

[1]Angus Graham, 'Archaeological Gleanings from Dark Age Records', *P.S.A. Scot.* (1950–51), 64–91.

[2]Lady Wilde, *Ancient Legends of Ireland* (1888), 111.

[3]Luke Gernon, *A Discourse of Ireland, Anno 1620.*

[4]C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman* (1937), Ch. 1.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

285 ancient origin. We shall see that it is the way the Boyne
415 curraghs are built, and it is said that the African pygmies make their carrying baskets in similar fashion. For lightness and to facilitate lifting one or more rows of open 'windows' are left in the sides of the creels. Those used for seaweed were sometimes quite open in construction, and like the manure pots they were generally fitted with hinged bottoms for unloading (Fig. 56).

301 Besides their utilitarian uses, rushes, grasses and straw have
● 524 long been playthings for young folk who fashion out of them, for love or for luck, many varieties of decorations and emblems.
285 We describe the Briget's Crosses elsewhere (Fig. 85). Harvest
[832] knots, twisted out of the ripe straw of harvest, seem formerly to have been in truth love tokens, though now worn merely as buttonholes for the harvest fair (Plate 13). As one might expect, the girls' knots were the more ornate and they differed from those worn by the boys in having the ears left attached. Some exceptionally fine specimens are fashioned out of flax or fine wild grasses. Star-shaped emblems in these materials are also made (Fig. 70). More complicated knots have four or six strand work, but the ordinary knots are in two ply, made by bending the straws sharply over each other at right angles. Before being knotted they make tolerably strong cords: I have experimented with these on unbaked clay pots and find that when impressed in the soft clay they make very good imitations of the 'cord impressions' seen on Bronze Age pottery. I have heard that in Nigeria the same two-ply technique is employed in making roulettes, from the fibres of the wine palm, for decorating the native pottery. Among the many toys and playthings made of rushes we find baskets for wild strawberries and blaeberries, rattles, butterfly cages, fishing nets, caps, bracelets, belts, hatbands, mock-ceremonial whips, canes and swords and imitation birds' feet and flowers, some of which are shown in Fig. 70. Many of them are associated with particular
[517] occasions of the year, for example the imitation flowers with Easter and the blaeberry baskets with Garland Sunday (Chapter XIX) but in general they are the products of the infinite leisure of long summer days of cattle-tending in field, bog or mountain. Probably a number of these objects once had a practical value

 [text continues on p. 210]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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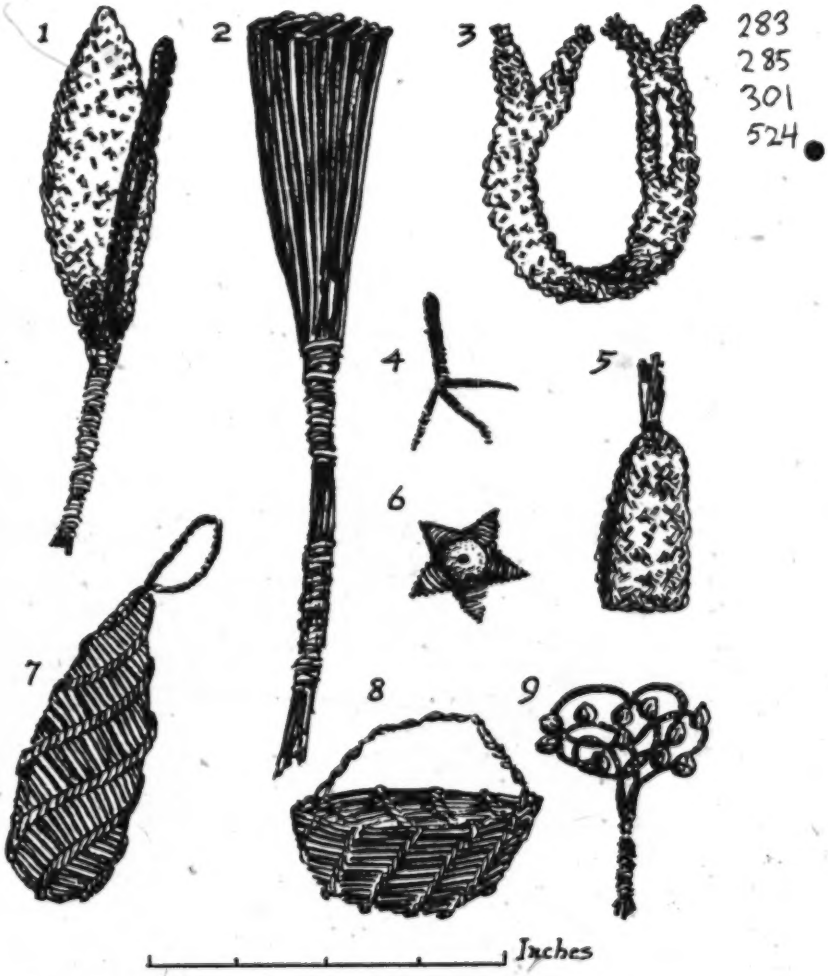

FIG. 70. Rush, grass and straw-work. (1) Cuckoo pint made of rushes, Co. Armagh. (2) Butterfly cage of rushes, Co. Down. (3) Rush bracelet in nine-strand plait, Co. Armagh. (4) 'Hen's claw' of grass, Co. Mayo. (5) 'Briget's rag' of oat straw. Tory Island charm. (6) 'Harvest star' of flax, Co. Antrim. (7) Rush rattle, Co. Mayo. (8) Blaeberry basket of rushes, Co. Down. (9) Harvest knot of flax, Co. Armagh.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

301 and others were ceremonial; some may be no more than simple
●524 pastimes prompted by fancy. Rush baskets were in fact made
until recently in some of the Hebridean islands for carrying the
285 fishermen's bait and for holding fish. Baskets of birch twigs, dock stems, ragwort and thistles have also been recorded, and it should be recalled that several examples of grass, sedge, and even moss, made in a similar cross-twisted technique have been recorded from Bronze Age burials in Scotland. The cone-shaped hat of rushes or straw made by children (Fig. 86) recalls in shape at least the traditional headdress of the leprechauns, and it may be noticed that tall steeple hats and helmets seem to have been popular among the Irish down to the seventeenth century.[1] In Co. Kerry the rush hats are worn in mock fights and seem to be regarded as helmets.

Of all these rush toys, none is stranger than the butterfly
524 cage (Fig. 70) which is deftly made by bending long rushes,
222 held upright between the fingers, over others placed transversely. One side of the cage may be left open and a dock leaf inserted as a door. The ends of the rushes are bound together to make a handle. This pastoral plaything can be paralleled in many parts of the world: in the cages in which Spanish shepherd boys carry insects, in the little baskets of dried grass which the Indian herd children make for grasshoppers, in the locust traps which Greek boys, Theocritus tells us, used to weave out of asphodel stalks, and even among the nomads of the Gobi Desert, where, when the cicada begins to call in the great heat, 'every child cuts the desert grass to make a tiny cage to hold one of the fascinating tree-hoppers . . . The Gobi baby's rattle, too, is a hollow ball of twisted grass enclosing a large bead.'[2] The Irish rush rattle is provided with two hazel nuts. Some of the leaves and bracelets are plaited with four, six, nine, or even twelve strands, and a nine strand plait is also seen in one variety of three-cornered Briget's Cross (Fig. 85, 3; Pl. 13, 7).

The conical straw masks and the capes worn by strawboys
524 (Chapter XX, Fig. 88) stripped of their gay ribbons, have been
285 compared with the straw dresses of peasants in Spain or China,
292 and, no doubt, they had their practical prototypes in Ireland.

[1] H. F. McClintock, *Old Irish and Highland Dress*, 88.
[2] M. Cable and F. French, *The Gobi Desert*, 100.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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HOME-MADE THINGS

The straw cape placed over the bee-skep (Fig. 69) is a humble relation. Straw masks are worn also by Biddy Boys on St. Briget's Eve, and by the Christmas Rhymers. On St. Briget's Eve, too, a small straw doll (Brideóg) was dressed up and carried from door to door in the south-west of Ireland. A charm of plaited straw known as Bratóg Brighde (literally, Briget's Rag) is carried by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection against storms (Fig. 70, 5). There was also Briget's Girdle, a two-strand straw rope, a circle with crosses attached, which was passed over the body as a protective charm, by inserting one leg and then pushing the head through on the Saints' Feast Day (Fig. 85). 524 285 [292] [789]

Before the Irish live-cattle trade developed there had been for some centuries a great export of hides and skins, and if one goes back earlier it becomes clear that these products must have found a multitude of uses about the farm. For a number of purposes where toughness and durability are specially needed animal skin has remained a traditional material, and in old-fashioned mountainy areas the countryman makes a habit of curing the skins of wild and domesticated animals on the principle that 'you never know but what they'll come in useful'. On analogy with the Hebrides, with which Donegal in particular shows close cultural affinities, skin mealbags should have had a place in cottage economy in north Ireland. When grinding corn, a skin was laid on the floor under the quern to catch the meal. Seal skin served many purposes, from plough traces, in Harris, to the covers of curraghs in Donegal. We have descriptions of cured sheepskins serving as windows,[1] and (from St. Kilda) of fowling ropes bound with strips of salted cowhide to prevent them from being cut by the rocks.[2] But it is in the skin tray, the wecht or wight, that one is most likely to see tradition maintained (Fig. 71). The well-scraped skin of sheep, or sometimes of goat, is stitched on to a rim of ash, bog fir or, in the naked islands which have exhausted even their bog timber, a ring of sugan. To secure the skin free of wrinkles is skilled work, and the finished product is not unlike a tambourine: in fact, it closely resembles the Eskimo caribou drum. Irish wrenboys 281 281 415

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 25.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 315.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchai*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [524] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators, a *seealai* or *seanchai* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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FAMILY TRANSITION AT MARRIAGE

 561

Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 885
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age 886
do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of
their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on
the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which
mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which
betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those dif-
ferentiations of status which are given formal and explicit
recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of
daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers
themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re-
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 561
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 574
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the 576
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by 517
right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit be-
hind them round the room on other chairs or on the window
seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the prin-
cipal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrange-
ment shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old
men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to
sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter
in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the
old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger
men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving
the center of the stage to the old men, and the children
stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men
have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the
divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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571 they received their nicknames were of other sorts. Not even
517 farming occupied a large share of their conversation, keen as their rivalry in the matter often was while work was going on.

571 Taking these matters in order, the young men who met
517 at Roche's house met habitually there for card playing.
524 Roche's unmarried son, a man about thirty, was perhaps the central figure. His cousin, another Roche, was the brother of a young man just married, who took part in no *cuaird*. This cousin helped work his brother's farm. He was another central figure. The group that formed itself round them included most of the young men of Rynamona between the ages of twenty and thirty. They played the usual games of the Irish countryside, "forty-five" and "nap," often far into the night.

571 Roche's house was the more informal center. It took in
517 the younger men. But there was present in the community
525 a custom somewhat more organized, namely, the "gamble." As often as once a week a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household, as its turn comes, throws open its doors to the card players. Admission, usually a shilling, is charged and goes toward defraying the expense of the supper of bread and tea for all and toward the prize. What is left after those charges are met belongs to the householder. Often this amount reaches a profitable figure, and, where the custom is firmly entrenched, a certain commercialism shows its head.

But the gamble is a sporting event. Teams, often formed of habitual associates in card playing, are pitted against one another in one form of the gamble. In another, individual high scorers win. The prize is usually a turkey or two geese, even a bonham (young pig), a side of bacon, or a calf. Elab-
[555] orate rules and canons of honesty govern the play, the conduct of the players, and the obligation of the person offering the prize. Play is serious and intense, and the win-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ner of the prize can count himself a proud man, for to be known in the countryside as a "great gambler" is a coveted mark of shrewdness and skill.

The older men seldom attend the gambles. They are the province of the young. For the latter, they are a crystallization of the more informal card playing, such as that at Roche's house, already described, and they give the successful young men a prestige in the community ordinarily denied them. For in late years tournaments have sprung up covering whole sections of the county and it is a proud team which can bring back a five or ten pound district prize to its home community.

From the standpoint of an enumeration of those taking part in the gambles, too, the gambles show themselves to be such a crystallization. They bring into association on more definite occasions the groups, such as that at Roche's house, which meet habitually. They unite most of the young men, especially the more active among them, with a few of the older. But it is from the young men's world of habit that their union is created.

In Rynamona the young men who gathered nightly at Roche's house were the mainstays of the gambles. They could be counted upon to attend all of them. They played well and long, as they had learned the games among themselves. But they were not the only ones to come. Most of the slightly older men of what we shall call the intermediate *cuaird*, to be described later, such as John Quin, the newcomer to the old men's house already named, came from time to time, and there was always a sprinkling of young men, kinsfolk, and "friends" from near-by communities. It was only the members of the old men's house who stayed away. They alone had given up the habits of young men. To them the gamble was "codology."

Thus the first point of difference between the visiting habits of the old men and the young men, their lack of cen-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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among them. Most of the young men between 884
twenty-five and thirty-five met there. Through the 573
winter months they met nearly every night, and played the usual games of the countryside, 'nap' and 'forty-five', often far into the wee hours. Other groups through the community met like these men and followed like pursuits with an equal zest.

At times, a custom somewhat more organized, 884
the 'gamble', unites them all. It often brings in 525
other young men across the lines separating com- 573
munity from community. As often as once a week, a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household in its turn throws open its doors to the card-players. Admission, usually a shilling, goes to defraying the expense of a supper and tea for all and goes toward the prize.

For the gamble is one of many sporting events. The prize may be a turkey, or two geese, even a young pig or calf. Elaborate conventions govern the play, and the winner may count himself a proud man. To be known in the countryside, far and wide, as a 'great gambler' is a coveted distinction proving shrewdness and skill. The country dance 535
is another such event, and still enlivens the country- 884
side in the winter months, bringing the younger 573
members of the communities together and providing honour for the distinguished. For 'a great dancer' is as widely known. In summer, hurley, the 526
national game, has the same effect; and nowadays, 884
through the nation-wide organization of the Gaelic 573

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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526 573 884 Athletic Association, the 'great hurler' may win his way to the admiration of all Ireland.

But at home, in the local community, the young 884 men remain what they are. Their distinction lifts 573 them not at all from their status. Their skills are nothing more than proficiencies. The pursuits of the subordinate generation are no more than 'good times' that 'pass the time'. For, through no plan or design, but merely through the force of the social organization of values and behaviours, the activities of the young men's cliques exert no larger role within the community.

For the young men's cliques do not primarily serve to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. The difference is structural. The activities of the young men unite them from farm to farm, from clique to clique, even from one community to the next. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive integration than that the old men's clique performs, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble, dance or hurley match are much greater.

888 For the old men's clique unites, in its controlling 573 voice, both young and old. The old men's clique unites the old men in terms of their common individual positions as recipients of the respect of the community, and as heads, owners and commanders of their family corporations. It expresses for the community the same subordination of the young men that is their lot within their families.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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It is stated that in
Mayo a ploughman would be called in to shake a woman at a 845
difficult childbirth, presumably because it is he who prepares the ground and shakes the seed which brings new life to the fields.

Music, dancing, games and dramatic performances also 536
played their part in the seasonal gatherings, and one may 527
hazard the guess that the Irishman's passion for betting 796
derives from this source. A ritual element, as in the wake 842
games mentioned in the previous chapter, can often be detected, for example in the following account taken from the source quoted above. It describes a May game or pantomime from the Louth-Armagh border, modified survivals of which were current through most of the 19th century in the Slieve Gullion district. "On May day the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby.' Around it a man and woman (generally his wife) dressed also fantastically with straw, dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures, the figure at the same time being kept moving by the rustic maiden that supports it. These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children also attend (some of them from a considerable distance) to see this figure and exhibition, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children. Money is collected, and when the actors and musician have received some remuneration the remainder is laid out in drink, and the evening passes by jovially." This magic pantomime was originally intended to secure the success of the year's crops.

Such rites and gatherings have gradually been suppressed 517
or won over by the Church; and Sunday evening is now the 526
favourite recreation time for dancing and games. Among the older games, hurley is most popular, and horse-racing has by no means lost its appeal although it has suffered like other amusements from commercial exploitation. On many a

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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517 sea-strand, hurley, horse-racing and games have drawn
526 together large crowds at certain seasons of the year, and in summer there were also boat or curragh races. These have by no means lost their appeal: one may instance the gatherings at Omey Island, Co. Mayo. If bull-baiting, doubtless a relic of ceremonial bull-fights, is now dead, cock-fighting is still secretly indulged in, while the illegal "long bullets,"[1] played with a heavy ball along the roads of Co. Armagh and Co. Cork—a curious distribution, for I have not come across it elsewhere—is still popular, and though Wakefield seems to attribute it to English influence it recalls the skill of the Irish peasantry in stone-throwing. This was, legend tells us, one of the playful habits of the giants of old, and a phrase used of the Aran Islands—"quarrels usually end in stone-throwing"—would not be inapplicable to some Irish cities during the "troubles." In the Claddagh of Galway a favourite amusement, turned at times into its original use as "a mode of warfare," used to be casting stones with slings. "When a man was able to strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen, he was considered a good shot." O'Curry states that it was the custom of the ancient Irish to use a flat circular stone in warfare: it was carried in the hollow of the shield.

526 Games which have kept their seasonal character are still played at Hallowe'en, especially that known as "diving for apples." "Riding and shoeing the wooden mare" is perhaps no longer played, but we must repeat that it is rarely safe to speak of old customs as extinct in rural Ireland. It has more than once been my experience to come across habits and beliefs which were described as dead half a century ago. Certain
534 toys should also find a place in this brief summary: there is,
524 for instance, the "bull-roarer," a thin lath of wood with serrated edges which is swung round on a string so as to

[1] An interesting account of bullet throwing is given by Michael J. Murphy in *At Slieve Gullion's Foot*, 1941, p. 78. Both iron and stone bullets were home-made, and the writer describes how the latter were fashioned in "bullet-holes" resembling the ancient cup-marks mentioned above on p. 164. The game was also played round Dunleer, Co. Louth, fifty years ago, but in the Cork style, that is by overhand "bowling."

241 have been greatly accelerated in the eighteenth century, thanks no doubt to the stimulus of contemporary English practice, but it may well be that the custom perpetuates the prehistoric method of clearing the land for cultivation. The fact that burning the land was prohibited by various Acts of Parliament in Ireland would point to its being another abominable native custom, like ploughing by the tail. We have referred to the graffan as a [412] skinning tool of ancient lineage, and may add that in Devon and Cornwall the implement used 'in the infancy of the art of paring'[1] was a mattock or adze which also served as a clod-breaker. The 'hack' of the Pennine country comes to mind here. The flachter, the Highland equivalent of the breast-plough which became the standard English paring instrument, may well be, in fact, the ancestor of the breast-plough, and I suggest that it came into use for skinning the outfield before burning and planting. We know that outfield cultivation of burnt-over forest lasted in France, in the Vosges country, into the eighteenth century, and the custom probably survived long enough in Ireland to be replaced by 'paring and burning'. This view is certainly in line with the other evidences of cultural continuity from prehistoric times. The customs of throwing the ashes of May Day and Midsummer bonfires into the fields and the mixing of peat ash from the hearth with the seed corn may be magical residues of the ancient practice of firing the land before sowing.

We shall describe in a later chapter the various methods of 241 carrying manure to the fields: here we may refer to another 412 simple implement which serves in the preparation of the ridges. This is the clod-breaking wooden mallet or mell, resembling a croquet mallet (Fig. 1). The subject of our drawing might have been taken straight from the Luttrell Psalter of the fourteenth century, but it is a mell which I saw in use in Co. 241 Armagh a few years ago. Hurling sticks served the same pur- 526 pose in some southern counties,[2] and one wonders whether the Gaelic game of hurling evolved in this way by playfully knocking a rounded stone among the rigs. Patrick Geddes amusingly, if erroneously, traced the origin of the game of golf back to the

[1] *Loudan's Encyclopaedia of Agriculture* (1831).
[2] W. Tighe, *Kilkenny* (1802), 182.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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idle Scots shepherd who with his crook knocked a white sea pebble into a rabbit hole among the dunes. And one recalls the theory that the game of cricket, with its 22-yard pitch, had its beginnings in the English openfields among ploughboys (players) and landlords' sons (gentlemen) who threw clods at the ploughman's marking sticks across the chain-wide acre strips completed at the end of a day's work. At any rate cricket has not strayed far from the English openfields and village greens, and in Ireland it clings to the larger towns and to the English-settled areas along the east coast.

Among other implements for preparing the soil the roller is probably of no great antiquity, though examples of wood or stone are of considerable interest. Alternatively, flat boulders or specially-built clod-slipes are driven over the ploughed ground, the driver being carried along on the platform thus provided and adding to its weight. I have seen the former in Co. Wexford and the latter in Co. Down. In the west the breaking of clods on the ridges is done by hand with a heavy rake (Fig. 1), and the 'harrows' which were formerly pulled by the horse's tail was a similar implement, a block of wood armed with a few wooden teeth. Even the larger harrows were a source of amusement to visiting farmers like Arthur Young, 'more fit to raise laughter than soil', as one observer put it.

The weeding and protection of the young corn were serious matters in the days when a patch of oats provided a family with its only cereal food. The tethering and herding of livestock were universal habits, and hand-weeding was another task for the young folk. O'Flaherty writes of Connacht: 'They go and lie prostrate or sit upon the corn, to weed it with their bare hands, leaving nothing behind but pure corn'.[1] Swedes are almost invariably weeded and thinned by hand. Thistles growing in corn or flax are pulled with special pincers or 'clips' made either of iron or more usually of wood, of a type which is illustrated in the Luttrell Psalter. The very similar French weeders known as Havre pincers were also used for catching eels. Docks were removed with a heavy forked spud (Fig. 50). There were other less arduous ways of inducing a bounteous crop. The custom of placing a sickle in the corn-field at the

[1]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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figured in the economy of the farm or in medicinal and magical lore would be an almost endless task. One recalls that a group of Californian Indians practising a food-gathering economy is said to have made use of 176 species of wild plants for satisfying almost all their needs. A few examples of the survival of a collecting culture in Ireland may be given, taken from various sources such as Wood-Martin's pioneer work, but also from folk-memory. From the roots of ferns were extracted oils used in weaving, from those of the water lily, a cherished red dye, a substance for tanning from tormentil roots, and ink from the roots of flags (saggins). Bracken and wood ash were kept for making soap, and the ashes of thistles were the perquisite of the herdsmen. Large lake rushes provided materials for caulking boats and churns, and phragmites stems for winding yarn in the shuttle. Lady's bedstraw besides being rubbed on bee-skeps to attract a swarm, produced both dye and rennet. For cures we have the carrageen or Irish moss as well as the moss growing on crosses and other special stones, and a great number of flowers and herbs. Yarrow, in Irish, is called 'the herb of the seven cures'. But the sovereign remedy was the essence of all wild flowers contained in what was euphemistically known as 'all-flower water', i.e., cow's urine.[1] We shall return to these topics in Chapter XXI.

222 824 [278] [237]

[1]W. G. Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 183.

Note. Mr. A. T. Lucas has recently published accounts of hurling balls made of cowhair (see *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 57, 99–104; 59, 78–81). [526] [237]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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sometimes killed at this time, so that the animal slaughter may be a sacrificial substitute. 527 [782]

Although Christmas is the outstanding Christian festival of the year its traditional 'Twelve Days' of holiday are steeped in pagan lore and in folk practices relating to the winter solstice and the new year. In Co. Cavan I came across a custom known as 'blowing the Christmas horns' by which youths heralded the festival by blowing horns from hilltops. The burning of candles on Christmas Eve is a ceremony which involved divination as well as devotion. 'Each district seems to have its taste in colour. For example, in Limerick and Clare white candles are mainly used, while red and green are popular everywhere. In the Midland areas pink candles are sought, and in some parts of Dublin only blue candles will be taken. In Killarney nothing less than a 6-lb. candle will suffice for the occasion'.[1] On Christmas Day traditional ball-games were played, often between parishes, and [526] near the coasts these meetings took place on the strands.

St. Stephen's Day is in many parts of the country associated with the hunting of the wren, and the sport is not entirely extinct. It seems that some details of the ceremony, such as the rhymes which are sung, are of English origin, but the wrenboys often wore straw masks in the native tradition, and occasionally animal skins or horns. The wrens were killed beforehand by noisy and excited bands of youths, and carried on a holly bush or a decorated wooden tray on St. Stephen's Day (Fig. 87). The procession, shouting and singing the prescribed songs to the accompaniment of home-made skin tambourines, made its way from house to house demanding money or drinks. The wrenboy processions, despite their English rhymes, appear to be a degeneration of more elaborate performances of native origin which had affinities with the mummers' plays and which like them may have been attracted by the powerful prestige of the Christmas festival from their proper season of spring. At one time the wrenboy ceremonies involved much fertility symbolism and were attended by men disguised as women.[2] The robin, linked with the wren in superstition, was also the object of persecution in south-western Ireland, but in this case the tail 527 825

[1] *Ireland* (Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs) No. 303 (1955), 10.
[2] E. R. R. Green, *U.J.A.*, 9 (1946), 3–21.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder 823
bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint 755
of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some
which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded [776]
with superstitious awe up and down the country and were generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin 823
slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts [584]
are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.' Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork, [844]
women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup- 526 ●
marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 103.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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526 perfect sphere the rounded igneous pebbles which are selected for the purpose. One wonders whether some of the many cup-marked stones which turn up in the fields in certain districts—I have seen many in Inishowen in Donegal—were used for shaping stones, such as the sling-stones with which champion slingers, of whom the legendary Cuchulainn was one, performed [411] their feats. The sling and the sling-rod were originally hunting weapons and probably instruments of war, and one of the last refuges of slinging as a pastime was the now vanished Claddagh, the fishing suburb of Galway, where a man was not reckoned a good shot until he could strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen.[1]

Where a holy well has dried up—the usual explanation is that 312 it was desecrated and moved its position—the sanctity of the 824 site may be transferred to a tree. The so-called pin-well at 778 Arboe in Co. Tyrone is a beech tree, hirsute with pins and nails, growing in the burying ground on a Celtic monastic site. A rag-well at Clonmel is visited by mountain farmers who hang rag offerings on briars at lambing and calving times, and afterwards place more rags appropriate in number to the increase obtained.[2] There is on the island of Inishmurray a wind- [821] well which has the power of controlling the wind, the ritual being to empty the well to produce a calm. Sticks and stones also 789 figure in wind-raising ceremonies, and 'the rude stone image of 778 Inniskea' (Inishkea in Co. Mayo), which was dressed up in flannel each New Year's Day, had powers of producing either storm or calm.[3] Powerful magic was worked by a wooden statue of St. Macdara, formerly kept in his chapel—an oratory of early type with projecting *antae*—on an island dedicated to the saint in the extreme south-western corner of Co. Galway. Sailors passing the island dipped their sails three times in honour of the image, but we are left to guess what superstitions were involved from the statement that about the year 1640 'the bishop of Tuam caused it to be buried for weighty reasons'.[4]

[1] *U.J.A.*, 2 (1854), 164.
[2] *Béaloideas*, 15 (1945), 284.
[3] C. Otway, *Erris and Tyrawly*, 107.
[4] C. R. Browne, *Carna and Mweenish*.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased
the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites con-
[789] nected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed
secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and
527 then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
175 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted
down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old
people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so
much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this
place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the
beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the
native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so
down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (phonetically
Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but
steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in
1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh
(Tuanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—
"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined
to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound
in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are
numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877
onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh
("Fair or Assembly Crag")[8] on the bare hill over Termon in the
Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter
probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in
1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and
may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with
a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten
assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings")
in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later
under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

823 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their
religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[8] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

[P. 229]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[82] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

555 526 181 [171] 123

struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. A famous writer claimed that he introduced into Inis Beag a feat of agility that he had learned in France, which consists of holding a stick in both hands at the knees and jumping back and forth across it without losing grip; the islanders attest that this "trick" was known locally for at least a century, and one man boasted that his father was able to leap back and forth a dozen times in quick succession. My rapport with the men was enhanced by the fact that I had been a weight thrower and lifter and used to entertain them by putting a granite boulder, throwing a discus that I had brought with me, and performing repetition presses with a barrel of stout. However, the one time that I was persuaded to compete for Inis Beag against Inis Thiar in putting the shot (a flat-bottomed store weight of 14 pounds), I fouled with my foot all three times and thus suffered ignominious defeat. The curate who officiated at the event appeared pleased, but the islanders who had placed wagers on me were of opposite disposition.

*831 562 834 [858] [864] recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). [443] Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. [484] [526] [291] [832] [184] Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

154 It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. [839] [273] [733] [578] Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. 83 584 My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. 832 The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. [771] [626] [783] The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

833 We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. [291] Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. [12] (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

000 Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in 831 *
Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of 832
this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only [291]
infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; [514]
children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their 291
faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my 515
wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a 834
man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once [854]
when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said
with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Cloth- [513]
ing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the
bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea 481
in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. 834
Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that 526 •
nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and 761
weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is 777
best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean [501]
rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the
agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The 291
truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in 834
order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back [526]
of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small
pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity [231]
of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually
aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for
licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors.
My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popu- 123
lar folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American 291
Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only 834
two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and,
needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular
song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had 291
they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of 834
nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it [165]
might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when [759]
finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was
assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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news. An hour or so later, the man brings the cattle in from the fields, if they have been grazing during the day. He is ready for evening tea. 512 462 [231]

At that hour the work of the men is over for the day, but that of the woman goes on. She must prepare, serve, and clean up after the tea, and then go milk the cows brought in from the fields. Her work ends only with the separating that takes place when she brings her milk into the house. Even then, while the men may sit round the fire talking over the day's work or the affairs of the community, she is not idle. If the children need help in lessons, it is she who gives it to them. She puts them to bed, and, if she returns then to join the men at the fire, she continues with knitting and baking. When the whole family has finally gone off to bed, it is she who must close up the house at night and slake the fire in the hearth.

Work round and inside the house is continuous and varies very little from day to day and season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfills its needs of nourishment and shelter in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habitual behaviors. What variation there is in the accepted pattern is itself confined to narrow range. Certain chores indispensable in the day-to-day habits of the people are divided among days of the week. One woman informant, a small farmer's wife in Inagh, gave as her weekly round a much more rigid daily division of tasks than is actually to be observed. On Monday she did the washing, on Tuesday the ironing, on Thursday she made butter, on Friday she went to market, on Saturday she got ready for Sunday, and on Sunday she went to mass and did as little as she could. Really, however, it is only on Sunday that there comes any serious alteration in the daily round. [527]

Work in the land beyond the haggard and the house is less restricted and more varied. It has a greater range of 512

[about 5 P.M. - Analyst]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the 512
household fall in their province. We shall have occasion 221
later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a 462
division of tasks represents.

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the be- 132
ginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" 527
(January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which
all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed 221
the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes
from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the
winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the
house during the cold wet days and devote his season to
holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the
weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden
fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had
stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new
year.

It is a period of great social activity in the local commu- 221
nity. The very important religious ceremonies of the season 527
call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are
constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer 574
its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives 621
itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the
religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman
feel that the year begins anew.

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain 221
weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the 132
fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas 241
season has marked the transition. The farmer must now
make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair
machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin.
On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning
ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conver- 221
sation on visits and at home revolves round the coming 521
planting, and both new and traditional experience with

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 unfortunate that the authors have not statements of the
167 amount of these annual remittances for local districts. The
457 total for Ireland, however, is enormous. There is a marked
434 tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself, sons and daughters of each generation going out to join the members of the last. One district round Cross to the west of Carrigaholt, a little settlement on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, said locally to be supported by sons in the Shanghai police force. The first to go became chief of police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the force have gone to men of Cross.

167 The authors had the opportunity of examining some of the family setting in which emigrant remittances operate in Luogh. There the greatest number of emigrants had gone out to Boston. In one family, there was a succession of nephews and nieces following uncles and aunts from the same farmhouse for four generations. In four recent cases Luogh boys and girls had married one another in Boston. In two more they had married in Ireland and emigrated together.

434 Remittances from sons and daughters arrive around Christmas. In one family the farmer's wife had written
593 to children in America saying that the family were trying
431 to acquire an addition to their holding from the Land Commission. The children sent them the purchase price. In this case the daughter sent her regular Christmas remittance as well. When she was admonished by her parents for such generosity, she wrote: "I would think it wasn't Christmas and I hadn't any father and mother if I didn't send them something."

[527] Her mention of the festival in the same breath with her parents is understandable when it is realized that Christmas is the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland.

434 The role played by emigrated relatives in providing for
593

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

in the combined pastimes of feasting and foretelling the future, 796
and cabbages figure in many an old game, for they are of 221
ancient lineage: the potato, barely three centuries introduced, has not displaced them in traditional ceremony. It is the young folks' day. Many of the games played turn upon the theme of identifying the future husband, and we shall see in the following chapters that match-making and marriage were among the functions of the great festivals, closely linked up with the magic of the earth's increase and the prosperity of crops and animals.

In parts of Ireland curious traditions attach to St. Martin's Eve (November 10th) and the feast on the following day. A sheep or a fowl is ceremonially killed and its blood [782] sprinkled in the corners of the house. No wheel must turn on the day of the festival. Finally there are the mid-winter celebrations, now marked by Christmas and New Year, which carry the year round towards St. Bridget's Eve. On St. Stephen's Day (December 26th) the hunting of the wren was formerly an occasion for general revel: it is now little more than a children's game.

We must conclude this chapter with some suggestions, 443
necessarily brief and tentative, as to the importance of these 527
seasonal gatherings in the social and commercial life of peasant Ireland. From very early times the major ritual assemblies of the year provided opportunity for exchange of goods, of livestock and of news, and for the maintenance of folk tradition and bardic skill. In ancient Ireland it is recorded that there were two kinds of assemblies, the "aonach" for pleasure and the "aireacht" for business, but it seems probable that, like the great fairs of recent times, they served both purposes. It is suggestive of the ritual and religious element in the old assemblies that they generally met upon hill-tops—often the sites of prehistoric burials—and that they took place at the fixed times marking the beginning of the Celtic seasons. May and November remain the favourite periods for country fairs, and the hiring fairs were always held at these times. A century ago the February and August fairs were also of considerable importance. The Old Lammas Fair

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 527 at Ballycastle, for instance, lasted a full week and though now limited to a single day is still the great event of the year in north Antrim. August and perhaps February were closely associated with the sale of sheep, the May and November fairs with cattle. In the early 19th century the great fair of Ballinasloe in Co. Galway handled as many as 20,000 cattle and 90,000 sheep. "Their whole thought," wrote Knight of the Mayo peasantry about that time, "seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging." "A yard of linen or a couple of chickens," says Arthur Young, "will carry an unemployed hand ten miles."

443 366 It is by the fairs and not by the calendar that the countryman dates events. It may be observed that the popularity of fairs, with their emphasis on livestock, illustrates the strength of the pastoral tradition. They have been something of an obstacle to good husbandry because they occur at the changes of the seasons and thus interfere with field work, particularly with harvest. Nowadays most of the fairs are associated with urban settlements, but the name "Fair *Hill*" still clings to the streets where they are held, and many a town has its fair hill just outside. On such sites tents were formerly erected for refreshment, and there are certain old fair grounds now abandoned where you may see the grassy foundations of the huts and the fire holes where the giant cauldrons were boiled. In the ancient aireachts streets of booths were set up for the fair period, so that they might be described as temporary towns. Professor MacNeill has put forward the thesis that these were the "cities" named by Ptolemy in his description of Ireland.

369 361 This brings us to the problem of urban origins. It is perhaps true to say that the fair used to be regarded as the product of the town, but recent research supports the view that the fair precedes the town and was one factor in its rise. Apart from comparative evidence drawn from certain north African communities, for instance, anyone who has watched a small town on fair day must get the impression that he is looking at something which has been going on throughout the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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It is stated that in
Mayo a ploughman would be called in to shake a woman at a 845
difficult childbirth, presumably because it is he who prepares the ground and shakes the seed which brings new life to the fields.

Music, dancing, games and dramatic performances also 536
played their part in the seasonal gatherings, and one may 527
hazard the guess that the Irishman's passion for betting 796
derives from this source. A ritual element, as in the wake 842
games mentioned *in the previous* chapter, can often be detected, for example in the following account taken from the source quoted above. It describes a May game or pantomime from the Louth-Armagh border, modified survivals of which were current through most of the 19th century in the Slieve Gullion district. "On May day the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby.' Around it a man and woman (generally his wife) dressed also fantastically with straw, dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures, the figure at the same time being kept moving by the rustic maiden that supports it. These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children also attend (some of them from a considerable distance) to see this figure and exhibition, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children. Money is collected, and when the actors and musician have received some remuneration the remainder is laid out in drink, and the evening passes by jovially." This magic pantomime was originally intended to secure the success of the year's crops.

Such rites and gatherings have gradually been suppressed 517
or won over by the Church; and Sunday evening is now the 526
favourite recreation time for dancing and games. Among the older games, hurley is most popular, and horse-racing has by no means lost its appeal although it has suffered like other amusements from commercial exploitation. On many a

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

778 like a basin; it contains almost a gallon of water; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

527 The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

773 2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could
823 be collected are given below; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

Lough Bofin (The Lake of the White Cow).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.[1] As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

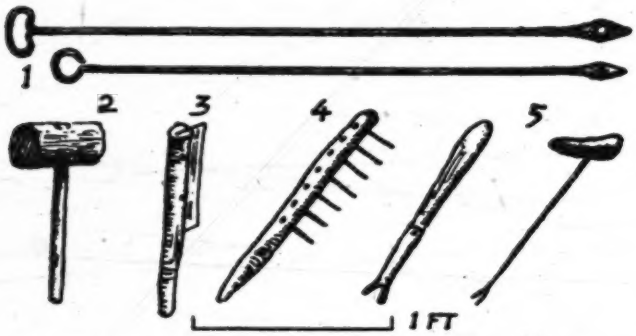
Carrig Guairim.—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or
173 Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the roadside in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act; he was taken over to Rinvyle

[276] [1] Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

and among the farming population a new roof is hardly ever covered with thatch. The country thatcher finds employment in patching, not thatching. 342 [463]

The erection of such simple houses as I have described did not call for the services of specialists. When the need arose the collective skills of a whole community were available, and one can readily see how prescribed methods were handed down in any particular area. 'The custom on such occasions', wrote Lord George Hill[1]—he is speaking of Donegal in the years before the Great Famine—'is for the person who has the work 342 476 527



[413]

FIG. 15. Thatching tools. (1) Needles, the upper one for hay or fir ropes. (2) Mallet. (3) Trimming knife. (4) Rake. (5) Spurtles for stappling and patching. All from Co. Down except the last, from Co. Meath.

to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and singing while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day'. Like all work done in common, the thatching too was regarded as a sort of festival. In the Aran Islands 'from the moment a roof is taken in hand there is a whirl of laughter and talk till it is ended, and, as the man whose house is being covered is a host instead of an employer, he lays himself out to please the men who work with

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 40.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 him'.[1] Synge goes on to remark that much of the intelligence
476 and charm of the islanders is due to the absence of a division of
527 labour and to the wide development of each individual. Truly it may be said that with the disappearance of the thatched house something more than a picturesque archaism passes from the land.

[1]J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*, 156.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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443 it: 'During the week, beginning on the 26th August, is held
543 the notorious Donnybrook Fair, professedly for the sale of
578 horses and black cattle, but really for vulgar dissipation, and
786 formerly for criminal outrage and the most revolting debauchery. It was for generations a perfect prodigy of moral horrors —a concentration of disgrace upon, not Ireland alone, but civilized Europe. It far surpassed all other fairs in the multitude and grossness of its disgusting incidents of vice; and, in general, it exhibited such continuous scenes of riot, bloodshed, debauchery and brutality, as only the coarsest taste and the most hardened heart could witness without painful emotion.' This was by day; 'the orgies of the night may be better imagined than described'. An anonymous writer is quoted as saying: 'We venture to say that there is more misery and madness, devilment and debauchery, than could be found crowded into an equal space of ground in any other part of this our globe, during five times the same space, which is spent at Donnybrook, in one given year'. The *Gazetteer* then recovers itself and offers excuses for 'describing what ought never to have been described'. One regrets rather that the compiler was so overcome by horror as to forget his statistical duties.

The absence of moral restraint which led to extremes of
543 lawlessness at Donnybrook and elsewhere was a normal and
●527 characteristic accompaniment of these periodic folk-gatherings.
443 Such moral holidays are a feature of many societies which have
[786] not been greatly influenced by urban ways and values. Their purpose appears to be cathartic, but that there is a lingering fertility magic underlying the excitement is suggested by such strange rituals as those which mark the 'Puck Fair and Pattern' of Kilorglin at the head of Dingle Bay in Co. Kerry. The fair is unfortunately not mentioned in the *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, though the village of Kilorglin is described as 'an unprosperous, sequestered, and almost squalid seat of population; and appears to have acquired marvellously little profit from the advantageousness of its position for both inland and seaward trade'. Puck Fair, held every August, is the great event of the year in West Kerry, and lasts three days. 10th August is 'Gathering Day', the 11th is 'Fair Day', and the 12th 'Scattering Day', terms which have no doubt been handed down from days when

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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'the order of the fair' was prescribed and the business lasted several days. On the evening of Gathering Day a procession assembles at the bridge and makes its way to the central square carrying (nowadays in a large cage mounted on a lorry) a billy-goat bedecked with ribbons. He is chained by the horns on a high platform erected for the purpose and, supplied with a liberal stock of cabbages, he presides over the fair. Tradition says that the goat used to stand, 'garlanded by greenery' on the old castle which was erected here by the Geraldines in the thirteenth century. The business of the fair is the sale of livestock, and as with many another large fair it is a traditional gathering place for the tinkers who in Ireland take the place of the gypsies. On the evening of Scattering Day the Puck is borne triumphantly back to the bridge. The popular explanation of the custom is that it commemorates an occasion when the noise of goats warned the Irish of advancing English forces, but it is more reasonable to see Puck as a symbol of fertility and good luck. 12th August is Old Lammas, and Lammas Day, the 1st August, was known to the Irish as 'Lewy's Fair', in memory of a pre-Christian deity. This season of high summer has many associations with the pastoral freedom of the hills, with young people and with dancing and courting. There are traditions of other Puck Fairs in the south of Ireland, and there were certain fairs at which a white horse was paraded through the assembled crowds and then tied up to preside over the proceedings.

Another celebrated gathering place was the great fair of Ballinasloe, which brought such fame to this Galway town that the *Gazetteer* describes it as 'the cynosure of much the larger part of the western province of Ireland', so prosperous that even its poorer quarters, 'a segregation of lanes, and houses, and cabins, aggregately repulsive', were yet 'greatly less haggard than what constitutes the whole of many a third or second rate town in Ireland'. The fair was held from the 5th to the 9th of October, and during the first half of the nineteenth century the average numbers of sheep and cattle offered for sale were respectively 90,000 and 12,000. Ballinasloe Fair served the west of Ireland in much the same way as the great trysts of Crieff and Falkirk served the Scottish Highlands in the days of

443 the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous
527 gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone
543 grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon
[361] and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry
[487] footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those
489 of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement
439 of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-
441 dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These
439 dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XIX

FIXED FESTIVALS

THE great fairs, patterns and pilgrimages were attended by people who travelled considerable distances and included strange folk from the outside world, 'beyond the mountain men'. It was partly for this reason that they earned a reputation for lawlessness, especially where 'the gatherings' had outlived their original purpose and their real business had become subordinate to pleasure. A Nottingham Goose Fair or a Marlborough Mop Fair may still be conducted with propriety, but in Ireland they would probably have become Donnybrooks. Having little opportunity for regular social contacts as compared with the villagers of the ploughlands, a pastoral people makes the most of the periodic pauses in the cycle of the seasons.

For climatic reasons these great gatherings have been largely confined to the summer half-year between May and November. The winter festivals have been more local, involving the family and the townland rather than rival groups from different parishes and baronies. The feast days of both St. Briget and St. Patrick fall in early spring and their associations are more intimate and have more local colour than those of the saints of high summer such as St. John the Baptist. But the entire round of the year is liberally sprinkled with days of festival, and if we begin with St. Briget it is not merely because she was Irish-born but because her feast marks the beginning of the pastoral year. The blessed Bridie was a cowherd and is therefore associated with cattle and with such flowers as the dandelion—the Plant of Bride—yielding a milky juice which was believed to nourish the young lambs in spring. St. Briget's Feast was very popular and many superstitious practices, more or less

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 Christianized, cling to the preparations made on St. Briget's Eve, the last day of January. On that day rushes are fashioned into protective charms known as Briget's Crosses, a name 527 which illustrates how the church has won over pagan symbols, 778 for the 'crosses' take the form of either swastikas or lozenges, 301 and comparative evidence suggests that they are magic symbols of suns or eyes (Fig. 85). A three-legged swastika, presumably an old form, is reserved for use in the byre: its shape may be compared with the Celtic triskele. The lozenge-shaped charms have their counterparts in many parts of the world. The Huichols of Mexico make similar charms of wool mounted on a bamboo frame: known as a 'god-eyes', they bring good health and [171] long life to children.[1] A Californian Indian charm made of grass or rushes is very similar. In the Old World similar magic 'squares' have a wide distribution, in Europe, Africa, Tibet, Burma, Assam and Indonesia, and farther afield in Melanesia, Polynesia and Australia. Among the Nagas of Assam the squares, made of coloured thread, are placed on the graves of women and protect them against evil spirits.[2] In Sweden and Estonia straw squares are strung up as Christmas decorations and tied to the straw masks worn during Christmas games (Fig. 85).

Briget's Crosses are believed to protect the house and the livestock from harm and from fire. No evil spirit could pass the charm, which was therefore hung above the door of house and byre. The rushes must be pulled, not cut, on St. Briget's Eve, and care must be taken to fashion the crosses from left to right, with the sun. As a rule they are left in position until replaced the following year, though I have seen byres with many crosses thrust into the underthatch, the decaying accumulation of annual offerings. In Co. Galway similar crosses made of wood or straw were also placed in the rafters at Hallowe'en, and the discovery of a partly burnt rush cross which had been deposited in a megalith in Co. Limerick points to a more general cult of the 'cross'.[3] A 'love-knot' of similar shape, fashioned out of sedge leaves, is known from South Wales.

[1] F. Toor, *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* (1947), 72.
[2] H. E. Kauffmann, *J.R.A.I.*, 73 (1943), 101, 106.
[3] S. P. O'Riordain, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 1 (1936), 36. For a study of Briget's Crosses in Co. Armagh, see T. G. F. Paterson, *U.J.A.*, 8 (1945), 43–48.

 [Text continues on p. 270]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit
[264] gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1]

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning.

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 43.

FIXED FESTIVALS

527 The May Festival, the Gaelic Beltane, remained almost untouched by Christianity, and an astonishingly rich growth of magic beliefs and superstitious customs accumulated around it. They were concerned with the safety of the familiar things which supported life, and especially the milk cows whose 'whitemeats' were to provide the main food-supply until harvest came round once more. It was a matter of pride to have a last formal dish of stirabout on May Day, 'for if they can hold out so well with bread they can do well enough . . . for then milk becomes plenty, and butter, new cheese, and curds and shamrocks are the food of the meaner sort all this season'.[1] It was considered [431] most unlucky and unwise to give away salt, water or fire on May Day lest the luck and 'profit' of the farm went with the gifts. Witches and fairies were unusually active at this time, and [776] many tales are told of the wiles they adopted to outwit the unwary and gain admission to house or byre to do their mischief. It was a wise precaution to pour milk on the threshold, or at the roots of a fairy thorn, and the many protective charms against the stealing of cattle and milk were augmented by others special to the occasion. 'On May Eve the peasantry used to drive all their cattle into old raths and forts thought to be much frequented by the fairies, bleed them, taste their blood, and pour the remainder on the earth'.[2] It was said that the ghosts of cattle that had been lost could be seen in such places.

527 Portents, prognostications and protection were sought in the familiar flowers of field and hedgerow, in the weeds and shrubs 824 which had followed in man's footsteps and were associated with 751 his secular struggle for survival, especially in those that carried the promise of butter in their golden cups and a free flow of milk in their bounteous white blossom. May flowers, primroses and gorse gathered before sunrise were scattered on the threshold of the house and garlands of 'Summer', as the flowers were called, were hung on the doorposts and even tied to the cows' tails. In the Antrim Glens the mayflowers were crushed to provide a juice with which the cows' udders were washed, and elsewhere buttercups were used for the purpose. Cow dung, if less hygienic, had similar protective power, presumably in

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.
[2] *U.J.A.* 8 (1855), 165.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the belief that it contained the essence of the flowers of the fields. Sprigs of rowan were stuck in the midden, placed over the door of the byre and hung on the cows' horns. Flowers were also put around the well, for it was supposed that a milk-thief could steal your summer's milk and butter by skimming the water at this time, or by dragging a rope across a field to collect the dew. Boundary streams were also potent in this connexion, and I was told in Donegal that the milk churn had to be washed on May Day in 'three landlords' waters', that is the meeting place of three properties.

Besides these family rites there were public ceremonies, the lighting of bonfires and parades of May Babies, of May Boys and the May Queen. One of the rhymes sung by May Boys in the west of Ireland runs, in translation:

> Summer! Summer! the milk of the heifers,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us,
> The yellow summer, and the white daisy,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us.[1]

The May Baby parades link the festival with the fertility of the family as well as the fields. I give an account of the ceremonies as described in Co. Louth in the early nineteenth century: 'On May Day, the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby' . . . Around this figure a man and woman (generally his wife) of the humble class, dressed also fantastically with straw, etc., dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures . . . These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children to their husbands also attend to see this figure and performance, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children.'[2]

The May Day bonfires and the May Queens are now little more than children's games and excuses for begging. The burning of bones—whence the word bonfire, which in Ireland keeps its original pronunciation—and in particular of horses'

[1]Lady Wilde, *The Dublin University Magazine* (1849), 541–60.
[2]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

527 bones, were formerly considered proper to the occasion. There
[372] were dances round the fires, performed with great dexterity
and precision by youths armed with cudgels. The May-pole,
[177] however, and the May-bush observances seem to go with areas
[824] of strong English influence and do not seem to have been
generally adopted by the Irish, perhaps because May-trees, which are not given this name in Ireland, are likely to be fairy thorns and therefore should not be damaged. The May Eve assemblies are thus described in eighteenth century Kilkenny: 'Bloody battles and much confusion and uproar is the mischief that follows from the barbarous and unheeded custom of collecting *May-balls* among the new-married folks . . . The hedges and fences, in the outlets of our city, are stripped of full-grown hawthorns, whose late blooming pride and fragrancy is now miserably dying away on dunghills before cabin doors, by way of *May-bushes*, no longer, alas! to afford a nuptial bed to the new-married linnet and his mate, but fastened in the ground for the vilest purpose—to hang filthy clouts upon'.[1] The gold and white balls which were hung on maypoles have been regarded as symbols of sun and moon—or it may be of butter and milk. Another May Day custom was the licence allowed
[786] young boys to run about stinging people with nettles, a privilege which in my youth in Shropshire was permitted only on 29th May, the victims being those who did not wear an oak-apple.

527 If the May Day fires are now more in evidence in the back streets
of Belfast than on the high hills, the Midsummer fires still burn
372 strongly in some country districts and their pagan flames have not been so easily quenched. I saw dozens of them in Co. Galway on Midsummer Eve in 1956, mostly at country crossroads. Old men in Donegal have told me that they remembered the time when they had counted from their hilltop fire nearly a hundred others. Young men would show their mettle by jumping to and fro through the flames, and girls by doing so hoped to marry early and have many children. We recall that
[789] leaping is in folk tradition a widely approved method of making the crops grow high, and the fires, it is conjectured, were meant to encourage the sun, now at its turning point, to shine on through the harvest. Midsummer was a time when evil influ-

[1] *Finn's Leinster Journal* (4th May, 1768).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

ences affecting human beings and the animals and crops were usually potent. It is remembered that 'the oldest woman in the town' would go round the fire three times on her knees, reciting prayers. To walk three times sunwise round the fire was to ensure a year without sickness, and as the flames died down the cattle were driven through the embers and their backs were singed with a lighted hazel wand: the sticks were preserved and utilized for driving the cows. By tradition everyone carried home a burning stick from the fire, and whoever was first to take it into the house brought the good luck of the year with him. A glowing turf from the fire was carried three times sunwise round the dwelling house, and others were thrown into the growing crops. Yarrow was hung in the house to ward off illness. Fernseed was gathered for its magic powers and divinations made from the roots of bracken and lilies. We have already noticed the custom of retaining some of the ashes from the Midsummer fires to mix with the following season's seed corn.

The third fire-festival of the year is associated with St. Peter's Eve on 28th June, but I have not come across many traditions of St. Peter's bonfires except in Armagh and Wexford: it may thus be mainly restricted to areas where English influence was strong. More widespread and better known, because they have been caught up in many patterns and in such popular pilgrimages as that to Croagh Patrick, are the celebrations of Lammas, originally 1st August, now held on Lammas Sunday, the last in July, which is also known as Garland, Bilberry or Height Sunday. This marked the end of summer and the beginning of harvest: it was a first-fruits festival into which the alien potato has been fitted, and no potatoes were dug before this time. Offerings of flowers and fruits were made at holy wells, and in some places cattle were made to swim through streams and loughs into which lumps of fresh butter had been cast:[1] 'They think no beast will live the whole year through unless they be thus drenched'.[2] In hilly districts Height Sunday is observed by climbing to a recognized picnic place where bilberries are gathered and games and dancing were formerly enjoyed. In Co. Down a large prehistoric

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 1, 282.
[2]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.

527 cairn on the summit of Slieve Croob was until recent years the
372 scene of a great gathering on the first Sunday in August. The fiddling and dancing are no more, though numbers of young people still assemble there and frolic in the heather. Blaeberries (bilberries) were picked into little rush baskets made on the spot (Fig. 70) and that the occasion was recognized as a
[584] legitimate time of courting is shown by the comment that 'many a lad met his wife on Blaeberry Sunday'. The name Garland Sunday derives from the hoops decorated with ribbons and flowers which were made by unmarried girls and, latterly, carried to church before being set up in the graveyard to preside over the dancing with which the day terminated. Rites in
[769] honour of the dead seem to have marked the old Lammas festival, so that again we notice the association of ancestral spirits with the fertility of farm and family.

527 By St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, harvest is well under way and the first-saved corn is ready to be thrashed. By tradition the flails were made ready on this day, and if the high harvest winds are blowing it is said that the saint is testing his flails. Next comes Michaelmas, 29th September, linked closely with the sea, with horses, and, strangely, with the ceremony of killing a cock or a goose, originally as a sacrifice in honour of the saint. In some parts Michaelmas was regarded as one of the most important feasts of the year, but I have not found any districts where it was, as in Uist, 'much the most imposing pageant and most popular demonstration of the Celtic year': nor have I come across any tradition of the rites of digging up and making presents of wild carrots which was associated, in the Hebrides, with the eating of cakes made of mixed flour baked before a stone flag, with the killing of a lamb, visits to graveyards, and a night of 'dance, song and love-making'.[1]

527 Throughout Ireland these lesser feast days pale in comparison
769 with the culminating festival which marks the end of the dying year on All-Hallows Eve. An astonishing amount of lore still clings to Hallowe'en, and we must restrict ourselves to picking out some of the main elements of this crowded occasion. The crops should now be all gathered in and no fruit should be picked

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928), 198.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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after this date, for the *púca*, a supernatural being, is busy 527 ●
befouling unpicked fruit at Hallowe'en. Here again we notice 769
superstition acting as a stimulus towards the completion of
routine tasks. The return of the livestock from their summer grazings, once accompanied by their herders, made the occasion one of family reunion, and this is a strong element in the present festival. But it was also a reunion with the ancestral spirits of the family: for Hallowe'en was preeminently a commemoration of the dead, a time when ghosts and fairies were unusually active, the whole of the world of the supernatural astir and the dead returned to their earthly homes. On that night the grass-grown homesteads—the fairy raths—were wide open and the fairies were on the move to winter quarters, surely a folk memory of a former transhumance. It used to be thought unlucky not to make preparations for the return of the dead by leaving the door of the house open, putting out tobacco and traditional dishes such as sowans—a kind of porridge—and setting seats around the fire. The games and amusements which alone survive have commonly degenerated into pranks and horseplay, but one can detect in them echoes of magical observances. The many divination customs may well have begun as rites to avert evil or to secure the benefits which they now pretend to forecast. Among the things involved in these games and divinations are apples, nuts, oatcakes, cabbages, a ball of yarn, articles made of straw and rushes (Fig. 86), and herbs such as yarrow. The wearing of straw dresses and the breaking of pots are certainly archaic elements. In Co. Cork there survived well into last century a Hallowe'en ceremony similar to the well-known Mari Lwyd of South Wales: a procession was led by a figure clad in a white shirt and carrying a horse's head. This 'white mare' was followed by youths blowing cow-horns, and as they stopped to levy toll from farmhouses they recited a long string of verses 'savouring strongly of paganism'.[1] Hallowe'en bonfires and noisy demonstrations remind us that these features of Guy Fawkes' Day have, in England, been stolen from the older festival.

In certain districts, especially in Connacht, north Munster 527
and south Leinster, strange customs have been associated with 782

[1] *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 303—19.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 782 the Feast of St. Martin on 11th November. On St. Martin's Eve the blood of a farm animal or fowl was spilled and sprinkled in the corners of the house, on the door-posts and windows, and in the byre and stable. In some areas the blood was also used to make the mark of a cross on the forehead of each member of the household. The flesh was eaten on St. Martin's Day, which is by tradition one of the feast days on which flesh meat is taken.

[292] [285] [769]

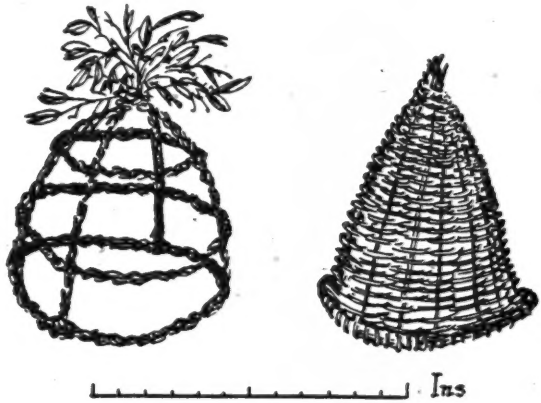

FIG. 86. Hallowe'en caps. *Left:* of plaited straw, Co. Down. *Right:* of woven rushes, Co. Kerry.

We recall that in Scotland a mart was an animal killed at Martinmas to be salted down as winter food, and it may well be that this very practical custom grew out of the cult, which was intended 'to exclude evil spirits for the year'.[1] It seems that seabirds were sometimes killed for the occasion, and there are many superstitions relating to the ill luck which attended anyone who went fishing at Martinmas. Wheel-turning of any kind, whether on cart, mill or spinning wheel, was prohibited. These sacrificial offerings and tabus must be of great antiquity and relate to the preparations for winter. St. Martin's Summer was regarded as the last spell of fine weather before the gales began in earnest. There are hints in folklore that ailing children were

[1] I. Weld, *Roscommon*, 553.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

sometimes killed at this time, so that the animal slaughter may be a sacrificial substitute. 527 [782]

Although Christmas is the outstanding Christian festival of the year its traditional 'Twelve Days' of holiday are steeped in pagan lore and in folk practices relating to the winter solstice and the new year. In Co. Cavan I came across a custom known as 'blowing the Christmas horns' by which youths heralded the festival by blowing horns from hilltops. The burning of candles on Christmas Eve is a ceremony which involved divination as well as devotion. 'Each district seems to have its taste in colour. For example, in Limerick and Clare white candles are mainly used, while red and green are popular everywhere. In the Midland areas pink candles are sought, and in some parts of Dublin only blue candles will be taken. In Killarney nothing less than a 6-lb. candle will suffice for the occasion'.[1] On Christmas Day traditional ball-games were played, often between parishes, and [526] near the coasts these meetings took place on the strands.

St. Stephen's Day is in many parts of the country associated with the hunting of the wren, and the sport is not entirely extinct. It seems that some details of the ceremony, such as the rhymes which are sung, are of English origin, but the wrenboys often wore straw masks in the native tradition, and occasionally animal skins or horns. The wrens were killed beforehand by noisy and excited bands of youths, and carried on a holly bush or a decorated wooden tray on St. Stephen's Day (Fig. 87). The procession, shouting and singing the prescribed songs to the accompaniment of home-made skin tambourines, made its way from house to house demanding money or drinks. The wrenboy processions, despite their English rhymes, appear to be a degeneration of more elaborate performances of native origin which had affinities with the mummers' plays and which like them may have been attracted by the powerful prestige of the Christmas festival from their proper season of spring. At one time the wrenboy ceremonies involved much fertility symbolism and were attended by men disguised as women.[2] The robin, linked with the wren in superstition, was also the object of persecution in south-western Ireland, but in this case the tail 527 825

[1] *Ireland* (Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs) No. 308 (1955), 10.
[2] E. R. R. Green, *U.J.A.*, 9 (1946), 3–21.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

527 825 was pulled out and the bird's life spared: 'In severe winters a robin with a tail was rarely seen.'[1] Another popular Boxing-Day pastime was bull-baiting, though in Kilkenny, where it was officially supported by the town officials and was presumably an English introduction, it was held on the following day, St. John's. In several parts of the country bull-baiting continued well into last century, in Kilkenny down to 1837.[2]

[293] [534]

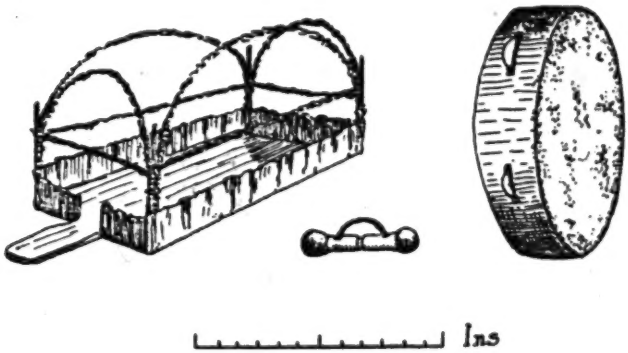

FIG. 87. Hunting the wren. Wren Box for carrying dead wren, and wrenboys' tambourine and stick, Co. Clare. (National Museum, Dublin.)

527 New Year's Day similarly has attracted to itself some of the portents proper to the older year's beginning on 1st November. The prosperity of the individual and the household is felt to depend on the events of New Year's Day. The fairies are active on New Year's Eve and it is well for people to stay indoors that night. First-footing ceremonies appear to be confined to families of recent Scots origin, but the idea behind them is widespread. In parts of Co. Down it is customary for youths to prepare little 'wisps' of straw or dry grass and go from house to house distributing them together with New Year's greetings in the expectation of a gift. In the west on the last night of the year (or alternatively on the eve of Twelfth Night) a large 'Christmas Loaf' specially prepared for the occasion was taken

[1] W. R. Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, 41.
[2] J. G. R. Prim, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 326.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

by the head of the house and hammered against the barred doors and windows to the accompaniment of an Irish rhyme which warned famine to retire.[1] This too has parallels with the banging of doors and the 'pounding away of hunger' at Hallowe'en. 527

[1] *J.R.S.A.I.* (1858), 146.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites con-
[789] nected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
● 527 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted
175 down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (p[illegible]ally Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in 1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh (Lanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877 onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh ("Fair or Assembly Crag")[8] on the bare hill over Termon in the Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in 1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings") in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

823 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[8] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience, "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming, and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only, which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St. Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which, if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796
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782
year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during
[167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the
[582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is
[574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on
[621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing
[351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are
[356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of
[262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large
[364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are
[574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper,
[431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs,
[861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children
[431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in
[262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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181 sources, my informants being those who are brought into close contact with the everyday life of the people. So far as it goes it is believed to be accurate. No attempt has been made to do otherwise than describe the actual state of the case, and while the faults of the people are not extenuated, yet any circumstances which may explain these are given as far as possible, and their good qualities are believed to be stated without exaggeration.

181 To the casual visitor the people, on acquaintance, are decidedly attractive; in the outlying parts of the district, it is true, they are at 609 first rather suspicious of strangers, but after a short time are very obliging and communicative, ready to show anything of interest in their neighbourhood, and hospitable to the best of their power. The natives of both the islands at Inishkea, are very hospitable and kindly to strangers, of whom they are, however, rather distrustful, [574] a visitor being welcomed into their houses, and entertained with the best they can give. With each other they seem in all parts of the district to be much given to chaff and joking of a more or less practical nature, and their sense of the ridiculous seems to be rather keen. In times of trouble or distress they are very kind, generous with what they have, and helpful to one another.

181 They are fond of music, dancing, and bright colours, and more than one song-maker in their own tongue, the Irish, has been a native 517 of this district; amongst these was the celebrated Dick Barrett, 53 several of whose productions have been collected and published. In common with most of the people of our rural districts, there do not seem to be many traces of artistic taste, and a native art is conspicious by its absence. One or two instances of attempted decoration were observed in Inishkea, none on the mainland.

181 On the whole, though cases of dishonesty and sharp practice in bargaining occur, they are honest in their dealings with one another. 577 As is often the case in remote districts, the people of one locality are sometimes on strained relations with those of another; thus there exists a certain amount of jealousy and distrust between the natives of the two Inishkeas, while the people of the mainland do not readily amalgamate with those of either island.

181 As regards intelligence, they are extremely sharp and shrewd, and seem rather fond of argumentation. There is but little crime, 691 with the exception of illicit distillation and drunkenness, but the people are very litigious, going to law with each other about slight trespasses and similar matters. This tendency is not by any means of recent origin, but has been remarked on by several writers. Maxwell

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [782] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 776 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil 796 and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 776 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 782 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck [234] during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [828] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [237] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following • 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 711 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[64] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

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178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the
124 lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

538 539 191 [537] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb 539 derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

• 53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than 534 its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [178] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of [177] the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

JOHN C. MESSENGER

*831
155 Ireland was . . . one of the world's most ascetic countries, and the monastic ideal has undoubtedly left a deep mark on the Irish mind. Although Irish priests were permitted to have wives as late as the eighth century, sexual renunciation came to be identified with virtue and distinction in the community, and thousands of the best men and women lived apart from each other. Kevin Devlin in his *Christus Rex* article on "Single and Selfish" . . . says of the ancient Irish that "when they 'fell in love with Christianity' . . . they took to the ideal of virginity with a Pauline enthusiasm unknown elsewhere. St. Patrick himself noted this with an inflection of surprise in the *Confessions* . . ." (Blanshard 1954: 160–161).
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Several Irish scholars since 1955 have expressed the opinion in personal conversations that the rapidity of Irish conversion to monasticism in the early medieval period can be attributed, in large measure, to masochism. This ancient character trait is most evident in the projective system of early Irish verbal art, if one discounts the possibility of widespread distortion through the actions of Celtic defense mechanisms and later revisionists.
• [53]

In a recent book, the impact of Augustinianism at this time and in the centuries to come is examined by Fr. Alexander Humphreys. He says in *New Dubliners:*

The specific doctrinal tradition to which Ireland and the Irish countryman in particular has fallen heir is the Augustinian. . . . [It] lays relatively greater emphasis on the weakness and evil to which human nature is prone as the result of original sin. By the same token, it attributes relatively less efficacy to natural knowledge and human action and relatively more validity to God's revelation and more power to the action of God's grace. . . . [The] Irish countryman has acquired a more than average distrust of native human reason. As a Catholic he cannot and does not deny the validity of rational thought, but he tends to be quite suspicious of the pride of the mind and so wary of ultimate rationalism that he shies away from reasoned discussions of high truths. . . . The tradition he inherits tends toward a certain historical and theological positivism in regard to the major truths and values of life, and, together with other historical factors, has led him to an intensified reliance upon the teaching power of the Church as voiced by the clergy. At the same time, while appreciating the need for positive good works, he is inclined to place relatively greater emphasis on those which are directly concerned with obtaining grace and relatively lesser store by simple ethical behaviour. And finally, although he is certain that man's bodily nature with its emotions is at root good, he is rather more suspicious of it and deals with it somewhat more severely. As a result he inclines to a jaundiced view of sex and a generally ascetic outlook which

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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Oatcake Toasters (Harnen Stands)

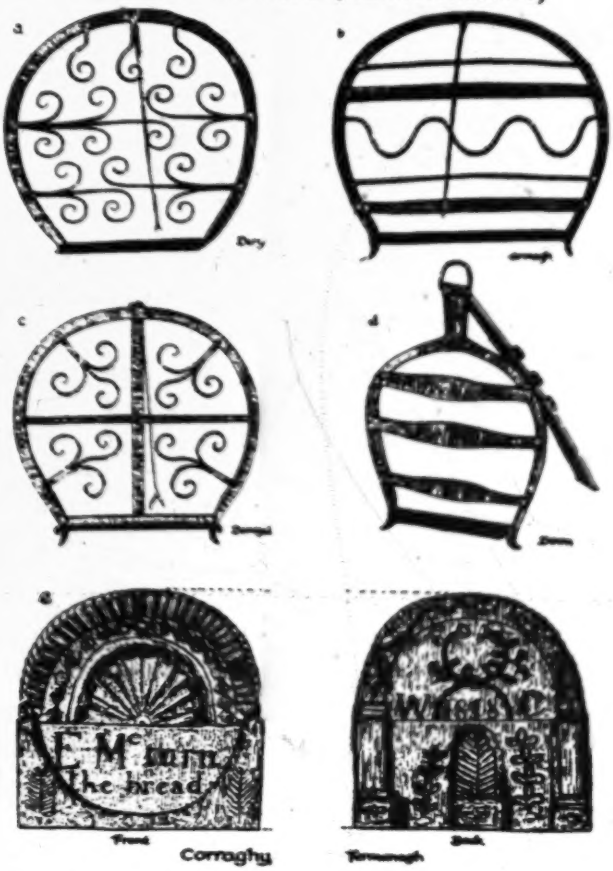

Fig. 33. Scale ½. a, b, c, d, iron; e, stone.

[p. 74]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred years. 493

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little " dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long " runners " which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or " trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a " box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a " soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are [531] markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for [492] investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate.

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 493 17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and 178 tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the " two-wheeled " culture region.

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads 491 and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 which rest on the thatch directly over the eaves (Fig. 12, 1). This method has an extremely primitive air but it has the advantage over the pinned ropes in that it is simpler to keep the ropes taut. A still older method, frequently seen on thatched stacks and rarely on buildings, is to let the weighted ropes hang from the eaves. In Donegal a century ago boulders weighing fifty or sixty pounds are stated to have been suspended on hay ropes.[1] This very primitive mode is found also in the Inner Hebrides.[2] Roped thatch in general seems to be characteristic [171] of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe and areas around the North Sea.

The most widely distributed mode of thatching is by means of scollops, or sally rods (sometimes hazel, briar or bog-fir), which pin down the thatch. In well-finished work the rods are hidden, for if exposed they tend to let water seep through the scraw, but it is customary to leave a row exposed at the eaves and ridge and against the gables, where the outer layer of straw should lie snugly. The exposed scollops are often arranged [531] in lattice patterns, and the expert thatcher delights in showing his skill and leaving his grace-mark in finishes of various designs which are practical as well as decorative, serving for example to distribute the rain and prevent 'guttering'. Thus twists of straw (bobbins) at the gables carry the drips evenly to the ground. When the ridge—and sometimes the eaves as well—is also adorned with a row of bobbins the scollop-thatched roof can be most attractive (Fig. 13, 1). A thatched chimney occasionally adds the last finishing touch. The word scollop is derived from the Gaelic, and it is natural to assume that this most widely distributed of all styles—from north Antrim through the heart of the Irish midlands to south Cork—is [171] indigenous. But rod-thatching is widespread in England and on the continent, and it may have reached Ireland with the Celts. There are various ways of pushing in the scollops: they may be thrust in at each end (Fig. 14) or bent into wooden staples resembling large hairpins, which secure the ends of horizontal rods (Fig. 13, 1). The scolloped thatch is perhaps best suited to, and is almost universal on, roofs which are

[1] *Dub. Univ. Mag.* 41 (1853), 715.
[2] Colin Sinclair, *Thatched Houses* (1953), 36. [Text continues on p. 56]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 was reserved for coaches and the carriages of the rich, was popu-
177 larized by its adoption for farm carts (Scots carts) under the
[401] improving zeal of landlords towards the end of the century. In Ulster, which has always looked to Scotland for its inspiration, the Scots cart was first used for transporting linen, and one thinks of it spreading along the improved roads and being copied and adapted to local needs and traditions. Around Lough Erne, for instance, one reads of large one-horse carts, adopted by carriers in the early nineteenth century, which had 'trams' or rearshafts four feet long,[1] and these projections, surely a reminiscence of the long slide-car runners, are still characteristic of the 'flat' carts of the west and south-west (Fig. 60).

The Scots cart with its four-foot wheels was able to take twice
493 the load of the native wheel-car, and as industry increased and roads were improved through the nineteenth century it drove the block-wheeled cars off the roads. But for rough work in the fields and bogs various types of slipe were preferred: the cart
[554] was little used for harvesting and its possession was to some extent a sign of prestige. (Unlike the native car, the woodwork
[531] of the cart was and is brightly painted, usually in red and blue.) The slipe and slide-car were better adapted to moist ground, to undrained fields and the uneven surface of ridge and furrow. As roads and farm practice were improved it was a new version of Scots cart (Fig. 60) which ultimately drove out the slide-car and the wheel-car in Ulster. It seems that the older varieties of Irish carts were derived from the Leith cart of the eastern lowlands of Scotland.[2] The body consisted of little more than a slatted platform without fixed sides and ends. This 'flat cart', as distinct from the 'box cart', is the usual pattern of farm cart in the west of Ireland and, fitted with springs, is the common hawker's cart. As a farm cart it suits the small farmer because it can be used for a variety of purposes by fitting different kinds of sides, for example tall slatted 'crates' for carrying turf.

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century there was
493 evolved, in Lanarkshire and the neighbouring counties, the box
177 cart with upright panelled sides perhaps derived from the
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[1] L. Atthill, *Recollections of an Irish Doctor* (1911), 44.
[2] R. L. Edgeworth, *An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages* (1813).

 [Text continues on p. 178]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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wagon, a sturdy vehicle which was manufactured by large Scottish firms and exported far and wide and also copied locally. Its distribution can be readily traced because it carried an unusual design on the front board—the 'spectacles'—consisting of a pattern of linked circles out cut of an outer layer of horizontal boarding which is applied to the main vertical boarding of the front-board. The design is further emphasized by being painted a contrasting colour, red or blue. The spectacle design became a kind of trade-mark of the Lanarkshire style of cart. It may have evolved simply by the gradual enlargement of two curving strengthening boards at top and bottom, until they met to form a design which became standardized (Fig. 61). C. F. Tebbutt is inclined to seek an origin in the magic *oculi* such as occur in prehistoric pottery and to this day on Mediterranean boats, but it is difficult to see the connecting links.[1] If one looks for a more practical origin it could be argued that when freshly painted front-boards were first fitted to carts they were marked and damaged by the rump and tail of the horse. At any rate I have occasionally noticed a spectacle-like pattern rubbed by the horse on to the paint of Scots carts not fitted with the recessed front-board. On this theory the board was strengthened by means of panelling while at the same time the shaped recess gave the horse's rear a little more space and saved the paint.

In Ireland the Scots cart with 'fiddle' (spectacle) decoration has an interesting distribution corresponding closely with the area of historic Scottish influence, from east Down across Antrim to Londonderry and north Donegal. It has replaced the flat-cart over much of Ulster, but the latter survives in south Fermanagh, in an area where thatched houses with hipped roofs are also found, representing an older culture-layer. In Scotland it is found throughout the Highlands and Islands, in the central lowlands and the south-west. In eastern England the Scots cart has replaced older forms over a wide area extending from Lincolnshire to North Bedfordshire and from Essex to South-east Nottinghamshire. Mr. Tebbutt believes that it was first introduced to the fenlands by improving farmers who, in the second half of last century, looked to the Scottish lowlands as a model of farming methods. In all these areas the original

[1]C. F. Tebbutt, *Man*, 55 (1955), 113–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

spectacle design was retained but in time instead of being panelled it was merely painted on the front-board. In Ulster carts of this kind, lacking the tilting device of the Scots prototype, have been made until recent years by many local wheelwrights, and it is interesting to notice how the original panelled design, which is present on old specimens, has been replaced by painted motifs which break up into many varieties, some of which are shown in Fig. 61. Mr. Tebbutt illustrates similar sequences of derived decoration on English carts. 493 177 531

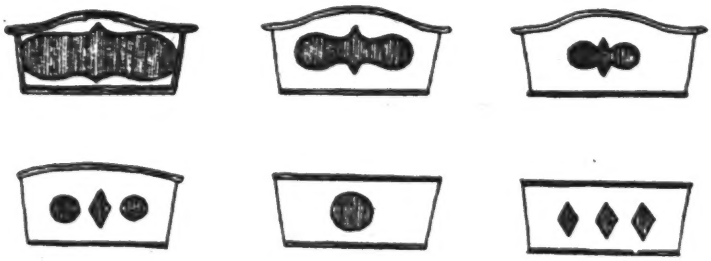


FIG. 61. The 'fiddle' design on the Scots cart in north-eastern Ireland. The front-boards illustrated are all from Co. Antrim and suggest both the derivation and the deterioration of the design. The upper examples are panelled and painted, the lower simply painted. The recess in the 'cape' of the first example is for the horse's tail.

The Scots cart with its box body, ideal for holding sacks of corn or potatoes, is not suited for carrying home crops, and both in Scotland and Ireland it is supplemented by a specialized harvest carrier known as the rick-shifter. This is a large platform with low wheels, fitted with a windlass by which the cock of hay or hut of corn is dragged into position on the platform. It is often dispensed with in moving hay cocks to the haggard, for they can easily be pulled or 'traced' along the ground simply by harnessing a horse to a chain placed around the base of the cock, a method which was used in the eighteenth century (Pl. 12). Six bullocks 'yoked as for ploughing' were employed for this purpose in Co. Meath.[1] The rick-shifter appears to have evolved 493 177 [492]

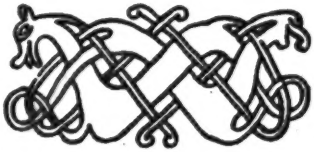
[1]W. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 217. See also J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, loc. cit.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Plate XIV.

531
764

Rath-Blathmaic. "Broc-sidh" and "Sheelah".



"Peists"
Dysert-O'Dea

1910 "Ghost Stone". Clonlara. JJW

[Facing p. 202]

~~To face p. 340~~

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

The knit sweater

291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[65] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
[178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[999] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons, however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

585 whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold this race for the bottle. The first person to reach the bride's house is victorious; he is rewarded with a bottle (? of poteen) which is drunk by the company and then broken by the bridegroom. Next "a cake of oatmeal or flour, called the bride's cake, is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young persons present for the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow. Another scene of noisy festivity then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties."

Fig. 112.

585 A wedding custom recorded within the last 50 years from
532 Sligo, Mayo, Galway and Kerry was the wearing of straw masks by "straw-boys" or "soppers," who went about begging money and drink and threatening mischief. The styles of mask varied from one district to another: we illustrate (Fig. 112) the pattern worn in Mayo. It is hardly necessary to add that parallels to this kind of ceremonial dress and mime can be found in many parts of the world. Among the practices connected with childbirth attention has been
846 drawn to survivals of the "couvade," whereby the husband is supposed to share the woman's pains. It is stated that in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

988
532

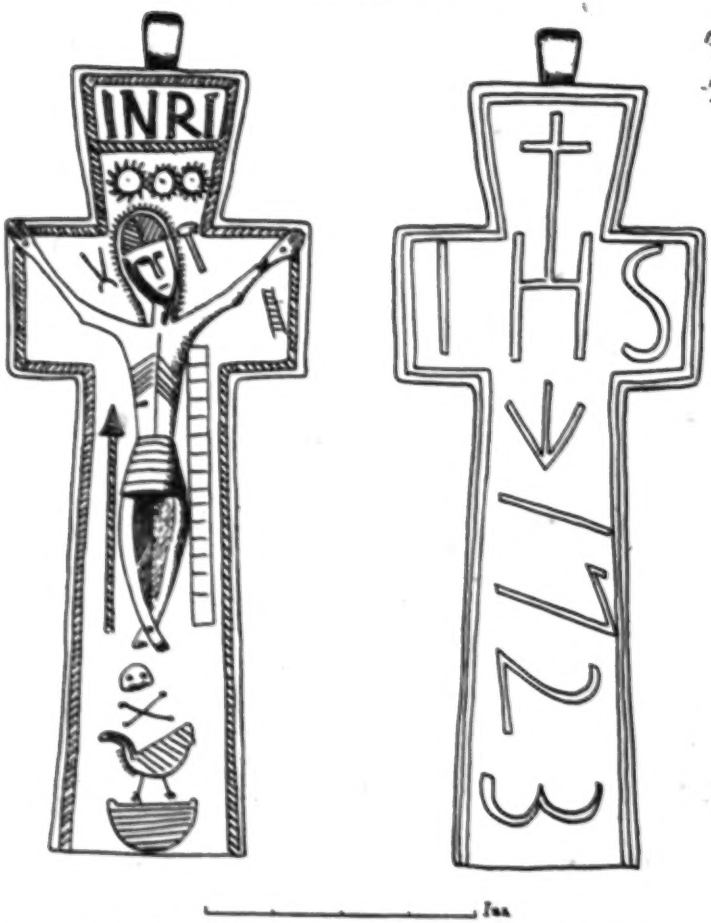


FIG. 84. Portable crucifix ('penal cross'). Found at Hilltown, Co. Down.

dancing, shouting, fiddling, courting, drinking and fighting'.[1] 796
In some celebrated instances the holy wells are associated [786]
with lakes and islands, for example Gouganebarra at the source 788
of the River Lee, and the most famous of all Irish pilgrimages 778

[1]Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character Etc.*, 1, 281.

FIXED FESTIVALS

527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated
[264] by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

775 gorgeous vestments. He shut his eyes in terror and prayed, and when he ventured to look again he saw only "the clouds flitting over the roofless church and the old ravens croaking and wheeling over their nests on the tower top."[8] At Stamer Park I was told, in 1873, that "a string of monks" used formerly to pass up the garden to the Abbey of Ennis, but, even then, it was only a vague tradition. A 'she-ghost' haunted the canal bridge of Clonlara, while it was being built in 1769, and was at last exorcised by a slab, still remaining, with her figure cut on it in low relief and the date (Plate XIV.). This figure closely resembles the grotesque (and usually indecent) carvings of prophylactic female figures called "hags of the castle," and now [532] *sheelanagigs* from a well-known carving in County Cork. Two undoubted examples of these figures remain in Clare, a much-defaced one above the door of Kilnaboy church, and a perfect one, struggling with two dragons, on the ornate, and possibly eleventh-century, sill at Rath-Blathmaic church.[9] The Clonlara figure, if older than 1769, may have been brought from one of the ruined towers of Rinroe, Newtown, and Aharinagh, not far away.

The back avenue near the castle of Teermicbrain or Adelphi was haunted, until 1885 at least, by a dark shadowy figure. A "grey man" haunted the lonely storm-beaten shell of Dunlicka Castle, on the cliffs near Kilkee, one of the wildest and most beautiful parts of that glorious coast. He tried to point out hidden treasure, but failed owing to the fears of the man who saw him, and who, when at last venturing back, could not remember the exact hiding-place. The disgusted treasure guardian has made no later attempt.[10] Doonmore, a shore castle farther north, was notorious for the ghastly sounds heard in its vaults, probably caused by waves lapping into rock crannies,

[8] Told by an old peasant of his grandfather, *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. viii. (1841), p. 548. The same person one moonlight night saw a dim figure making signs, and, following it, found his cow with her legs firmly fixed in a hole and in great danger.

[9] See Plate XIV. and the figures in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., pp. 27, 33.

[10] From two residents at Moveen in 1908.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
602 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
167 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
484 of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the
533 peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen
582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully
844 watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if
763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their
764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great
[762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to
[178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin
[482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women
764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own
533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the gravestones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

58 not, like an Inishbofin man, consider himself disgraced, nor is he inconsolable.

Engaged couples or newly married people often come in for an amount of attention from the children of the neighbourhood, which, however flattering it may be, is decidedly embarrassing; they are followed about and cheered whenever they appear together. Weddings
585 are occasions of family festivities, and are usually followed by a dance.
533 "Straw-boys" go round to the house on these occasions and take part
292 in the dancing. They are disguised in tall conical-shaped straw masks, adorned with strips of red and green cloth, white shirts decorated with coloured ribbons, and white or red petticoats. The band is headed by a captain and a mate, who enter the house first and declare that they are shipwrecked sailors, and that they have come to dance at the wedding; the captain then dances with the bride, the mate with the bridesmaid, and the rest of the band with the other girls. It is usual to treat the straw-boys to drink, but they often refuse it, and never demand money, or indulge in any rowdy conduct.

The young couple usually set up house on their own account,
591 except in the case of the youngest son, who inherits his parents' house and property, in which case the bride goes to live with her people-in-law.

When a person is dying, windows and doors are thrown open, and
763 the clock (if there be one) stopped; it is considered unlucky or im-
777 proper for any of those in the house to cry until after the death has actually occured.

Wakes are still held in this district, and many of the old obser-
764 vances and games are kept up; but owing to the discouragement of these by the clergy, the people show a great reluctance to give any information on the matter. A good deal of drinking usually takes place on these occasions.

The funeral customs have undergone some change during the past thirty years, but much still remains that is worthy of notice. A grave is not usually dug until the coffin reaches the graveyard, if begun before hand it is never dug on a Monday, or commenced at least, but a start is made, if necessity compels, by raising a few sods on Sunday. It is believed to be unlucky to bury a corpse on New Year's Day, an act
[777] which is thought to bring misfortune to the whole neighbourhood.

The coffin is usually taken out the back door of the house, and conveyed to the cemetery by the longest route. At the graveyard the *caoine* is raised by the women immediately after the religious ceremony

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 is worth noticing that symbols in the form of a swastika, but
789 including also circles, pentagrams and horses, were formerly cut as protective devices in the beams of barns in Scandinavia. Some of the designs are reminiscent of the art of the Bronze Age.

243 An Irish verse giving the four essentials of a good thrashing, collected in Co. Armagh, runs in translation:

[539]

A hand-staff of holly,
A souple of hazel,
A single sheaf,
And a clean floor.

This is where the besom of heather or bent comes in: it is still preferred to the sweeping-broom for a clay floor or to get into the joins of boards or cobbles. Thrashing was a daily job, carried out on well-run farms night and morning before the cattle were fed. It was held that the cattle throve best on freshly thrashed oats, and the storage of grain would anyhow have been difficult where there were no barns.[1] For this reason, too, the level 'street' in front of the house, or even the public road was often the most suitable floor available. The thrashing was usually done on a strong linen sheet. Publicity as well as a steady echoing beat seem to have been the desired aims. Every-
[555] where prestige has attached to a noisy thrashing, and partly no doubt for self-aggrandisement a solitary thrasher would beat with his feet to make the noise of two. Everywhere too the
●[533] sound of the flail has been turned into jingles and rustic rhymes. They did not accompany the work itself because it was too noisy and too exhausting to allow talking or singing. The flails' beaters made their own merry music; was it, one wonders, originally intended to drive away evil spirits from the precious food supply?

222 In this chapter we have confined ourselves to some of the
824 things that were made at home out of materials that lay to hand. To describe the utilization of all the lesser plants that have

[343] [1]Mr. A. T. Lucas, however, has described traditional outdoor granaries, now restricted to west Cork, constructed of thick straw ropes, which when completed resemble round stacks (*Gwerin*, I (1956), 2–20). Mr. V. B. Proudfoot calls my attention to the similar 'corn bykes' of Caithness (*P.S.A.S.* (1932), 136–7).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

521 203 571 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [612] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [639] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 589 162 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

538 539 191 [537] 538 539 add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

•533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

63 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 634 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [178] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and [179] related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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 533 534 177 178

and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party. 533 534 536 535 [123] [177]

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region. 114 533 533 184 [538] [171] [173] 533 [539]

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. [124] [539] 533 184

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[831] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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275 The best singers will be
273 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
• 533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[157] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
273 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[578] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
273 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
273 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk
[576] who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the free stout brought me in."

*831
626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
154 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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174 played a dominant part, to which the claims of agriculture were
621 subordinated. It was customary for the young folk, and in
221 some cases the whole family, to leave the village as soon as the
231 crops were sown and migrate to summer pastures among the hills. This custom is still widely followed in various mountain areas in Europe, for instance Switzerland and Spain, where it can be shown to be of great antiquity. To it the name "transhumance" is given, but we shall use the term "booleying," from "booley" (milking place), or summer hill dwelling. It is strange that scarcely any attention has been given or any importance attached to this aspect of the Irish past, despite its direct bearing on the social and cultural as well as the economic development of rural Ireland, on language and literature, music and the arts. From rare memories or survivals of the custom—it is still followed on Achill Island—and by analogy with transhumant societies overseas, we can envisage the part played by booleying in ancient Ireland, where its wide occurrence was facilitated by the presence of scattered mountain masses in all parts of the island (Chapter 2). We shall refer to some survivals below. The illustration (Fig. 15) shows a bullock's "horn" which used to be blown not long ago at a farm in the Torr Head district of Co. Antrim, to summon people together. One is tempted to see in this custom a relic of the pastoral heritage. Traditions of hospitality are a common accompaniment of pastoral life: there is no need to stress the reputation of the country people in this connexion, but it is relevant to add that the lavish hospitality for which the landed aristocracy have been famous may well have been derived from Gaelic custom.

●534

Fig. 15.

Wherever it is found, this seasonal nomadism assumes a ritual significance, especially where, as in the old Ireland, cattle are its main concern. Thus the departure of the herds and their attendants in spring is accompanied by festivities and ceremonial; and the return to the homestead in autumn is the occasion for the rejoicings and reunions of Hallowe'en, when the youngsters play seasonal games among themselves and tricks upon their elders. We shall revert to this topic in chapter 17. Here we are concerned rather to describe the life

Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

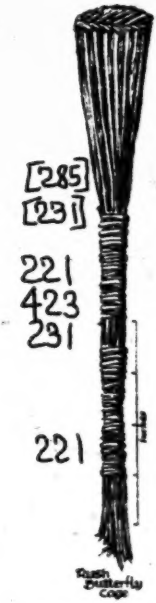

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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517 sea-strand, hurley, horse-racing and games have drawn
526 together large crowds at certain seasons of the year, and in summer there were also boat or curragh races. These have by no means lost their appeal: one may instance the gatherings at Omey Island, Co. Mayo. If bull-baiting, doubtless a relic of ceremonial bull-fights, is now dead, cock-fighting is still secretly indulged in, while the illegal "long bullets,"[1] played with a heavy ball along the roads of Co. Armagh and Co. Cork—a curious distribution, for I have not come across it elsewhere—is still popular, and though Wakefield seems to attribute it to English influence it recalls the skill of the Irish peasantry in stone-throwing. This was, legend tells us, one of the playful habits of the giants of old, and a phrase used of the Aran Islands—"quarrels usually end in stone-throwing"—would not be inapplicable to some Irish cities during the "troubles." In the Claddagh of Galway a favourite amusement, turned at times into its original use as "a mode of warfare," used to be casting stones with slings. "When a man was able to strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen, he was considered a good shot." O'Curry states that it was the custom of the ancient Irish to use a flat circular stone in warfare: it was carried in the hollow of the shield.

526 Games which have kept their seasonal character are still played at Hallowe'en, especially that known as "diving for apples." "Riding and shoeing the wooden mare" is perhaps no longer played, but we must repeat that it is rarely safe to speak of old customs as extinct in rural Ireland. It has more than once been my experience to come across habits and beliefs which were described as dead half a century ago. Certain
534 toys should also find a place in this brief summary: there is,
524 for instance, the "bull-roarer," a thin lath of wood with serrated edges which is swung round on a string so as to

[1] An interesting account of bullet throwing is given by Michael J. Murphy in *At Slieve Gullion's Foot*, 1941, p. 78. Both iron and stone bullets were home-made, and the writer describes how the latter were fashioned in "bullet-holes" resembling the ancient cup-marks mentioned above on p. 164. The game was also played round Dunleer, Co. Louth, fifty years ago, but in the Cork style, that is by overhand "bowling."

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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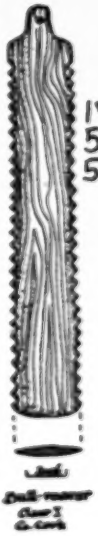
produce a buzzing noise. The toy is known in Co. Carlow as 534
a "whee-doodle" and in Co. Down, where it seems formerly 524
to have been regarded as a "sacred" thing, as a "boomer." Professor Haddon has described specimens from Co. Antrim and Co. Cork. About the Co. Carlow example in the Dublin Museum Dr. Raftery provides me with the following note. [777]
"A boy was whirling it around and an old man who saw him was very angry and told him to take the thing home and burn it, as otherwise he would bring bad luck on the countryside." This was in 1921. I illustrate a "bull-roarer" from Cape Clear, Co. Cork (Fig. 113). Its Irish name is Cláirín Búirthe.



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524
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Fig. 113.

It is, of course, possible that some Irish localities may have learnt the use of this toy from stray specimens brought home from regions where it is still in regular ceremonial use, but when we remember all the other Irish survivals we cannot doubt that the bull-roarer is a relic of the past that has lost, or nearly lost, its sacred character. The bull-roarer has an almost world-wide distribution. It is said to have been employed in ancient Greece in connexion with the Dionysiac mysteries. We can imagine its employment in the initiation rites and magical practices of pagan times so picturesquely reconstructed by Professor Macalister in his book "Ancient Ireland." In various parts of the modern world the bull-roarer is used as a rain charm, in raising a wind or producing thunder, in driving game, herding cattle (*cf.* Chapter 6) or preparing for fishing, in rites of initiation and circumcision, in funeral festivities and mask dances: it is a general rule that the instrument must not be seen by women or children on pain of death. In the words of Haddon: "This insignificant toy is perhaps the most ancient, widely spread and sacred religious symbol in the world."

Of great antiquity and wide distribution, the spear- 171
thrower is another instrument which appears to have survived 524
in Ireland as a toy, used as a throwing stick in boys' games. [411]
And another toy "not yet connected with any ceremonial usage" but paralleled among the Chinese and the North

HOME-MADE THINGS

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[322]
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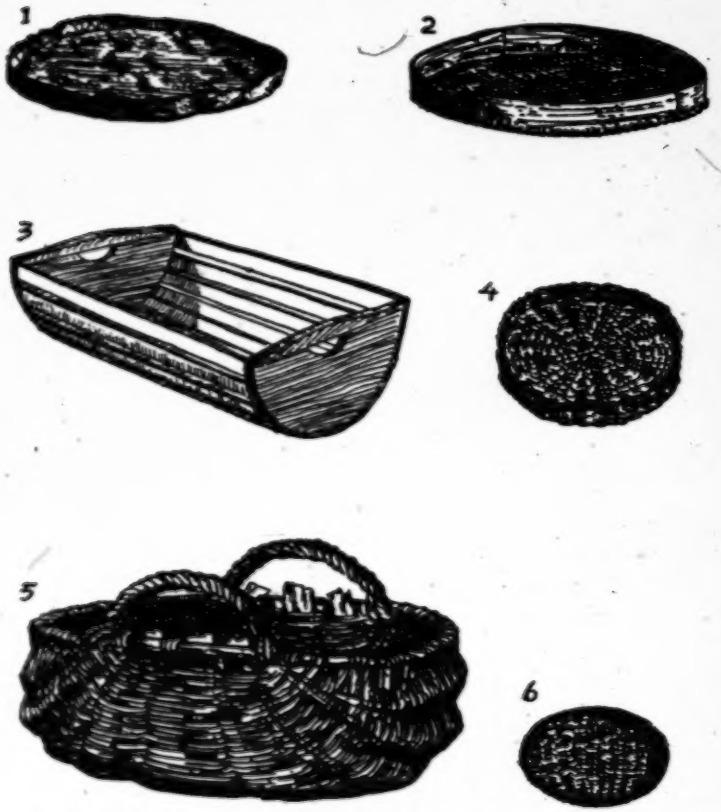

FIG. 71. Skin-tray, split-ash riddle and potato baskets. Approximate scale 1/9 (No. 5, 1/6). (1) Sheep-skin tray or wight. (2) Split-ash riddle. (3) Potato 'basket'. (4) Potato skib. (5) Potato basket. (6) Potato skib. (All Co. Antrim.)

Irish wren boys

[534] carried a skin tambourine which they beat when hunting the wren on St. Stephen's Day, and one wonders whether the drummers from whom the Orange performers on King William's Day inherit their wild rhythms were trained on ceremonial wights. (There are also sieves, riddles and shallow baskets of split ash or sally, but these, for example the flat round potato skib—a communal self-service plate—should properly be classed as the work of specialists. 212 (Fig. 71).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 825 was pulled out and the bird's life spared: 'In severe winters a robin with a tail was rarely seen.'[1] Another popular Boxing-Day pastime was bull-baiting, though in Kilkenny, where it was officially supported by the town officials and was presumably an English introduction, it was held on the following day, St. John's. In several parts of the country bull-baiting continued well into last century, in Kilkenny down to 1837.[2]

[293] [534]

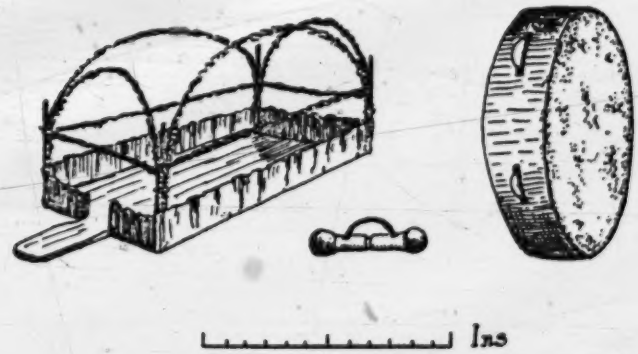

FIG. 87. Hunting the wren. Wren Box for carrying dead wren, and wrenboys' tambourine and stick, Co. Clare. (National Museum, Dublin.)

527 New Year's Day similarly has attracted to itself some of the portents proper to the older year's beginning on 1st November. The prosperity of the individual and the household is felt to depend on the events of New Year's Day. The fairies are active on New Year's Eve and it is well for people to stay indoors that night. First-footing ceremonies appear to be confined to families of recent Scots origin, but the idea behind them is widespread. In parts of Co. Down it is customary for youths to prepare little 'wisps' of straw or dry grass and go from house to house distributing them together with New Year's greetings in the expectation of a gift. In the west on the last night of the year (or alternatively on the eve of Twelfth Night) a large 'Christmas Loaf' specially prepared for the occasion was taken

[1] W. R. Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, 41.
[2] J. G. R. Prim, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 326.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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538 539 191 [537] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb 539 derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than 534 its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [198] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [194] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of [177] the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

 533 534 177 178

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Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party. 533 534 536 535 [123] [177]

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region. 114 533 533 184 [538] [171] [173] 533 [539]

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. [126] [539] 533 184

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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571 tral clique, is not without wider interest. The young men
517 are more numerous, and they group themselves together as much as do the old. But it is upon a different basis. It is a synthesis in a looser, more widely inclusive, gathering which
[573] unites smaller cliques of brothers, friends, and boon companions. The gamble is only one of many entertainments
571 they provide themselves. Equally frequently they hold a
517 dance. The country dance is undergoing change in rural
535 Ireland today, but it is still much as it was in the last century, although it may not enliven the country districts as often as it did. Irish square dances, jigs, and flings, most of them variations of sixteenth-century European dance forms, are most common, although some Gaelic-speaking districts preserve an older tradition.

621 The country dance belongs to the young people. It differs from the gamble, from the standpoint of participants, in
535 that it unites both sexes. In most communities it is an
517 affair in which the whole community takes part, the old people as onlookers, the young and the still spry among the older ones as performers. In late years the more formal "all night" dance, an organized dance for which admission is charged and from which the older people are usually absent, has made its appearance. Like the gamble it draws from a wider area.

517 But there is a good deal of the spontaneous dancing which springs up wherever the young people of the community
535 gather even today. The young men and women learn the skills required and value them. There are elaborate codes of etiquette round them and a wealth of proverbs and jocular superstitions. But here again, unlike the behavior followed in the old men's house, these conducts have little larger purpose than uniting the scattered cliques of young people. They are recreations. They are ends in themselves. They are good times that pass the time.

517 The gamble and the dance do not, of course, exhaust the
571 list. The young people have other activities, games, sports,

834 571 and play for the young men and women of the rural communities. The customs and conventions which surround them are constant reminders of marriage and its hopes and privileges.

834 571 626 Yet as soon as any intimacy of acquaintanceship builds up between a particular pair, they are matched together in local gossip. They are forced to take a position which is only a single step from betrothal. But, as elsewhere, lovers separate to find others. Though a once or twice fickle or jilted girl is subjected to constant gossip, her luck seems not to doom her entirely if she is attractive or a good match.

834 571 626 535 Such outings as the "patterns,"[2] relics of saints' festivals, and race meetings in summer, and the dances in winter, are occasions of courtship, excitement, and philandering of sorts in the countryside. They are objects of censure on the part of those of the clergy, townsmen, and people of higher class who unite in condemning more obvious manifestations of peasant social life with little insight into a custom's function. The clergy, in particular, fulminate constantly against all-night dances. They object not so much to the jollities as to the opportunities for "walking out" among the young couples.

834 535 571 The following quotations from country people describe the situation. In the first a countryman is talking about "crabbit lads" who are to blame for local sexual irregularities, and comes around at last to the local dances:

> They are awfully crabbit around here. If a girl has money or land and she will get it, the boys try any way at all to put her up the hill so they will marry her and get it. And the parents keep the girl away from the boys for fear it will happen. But it is no good to keep the girl in the house, because, if you do, she knows nothing. Let her knock away and she soon learns how to take care of herself. If you don't, there are ways the crabbit lads will get to her.

[2] The local name of country festivals once religious, somewhat like the *pardons* of Brittany.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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That was the way with the girl who married Willie Meaney[3] and he thought to get the money, but the parents said let her go. Now they are in Ennis and she never got anything. The same way with the two who married the Shaughnessy girls. They thought they would get something but they didn't get a thing. Would you believe that? America is not the only place where things like that happen. The people have crosses to bear. Every year we have a talk from the priest about the dances. He says the dances are all right but it is the going home that is bad. There is always a laugh when he says that. Then some of the parents get worried and they won't let their daughters go to a dance for a month or so, and they forget about it after that. 834 571 535

The status of boy and girl involves a "repression" of sexual impulse, virginity, and chastity of thought and expression, but custom and the attitudes of the older people provide a constant stimulation of sexual interest in the direction of the familistic system. The status of boy and girl thus involves a definite kind of sexual organization, based directly upon social relationships. 834 183 554

Nowhere is this better to be seen than in the case of the young woman's "character." Here the Church fathers and the country people seem to have attained quite a unanimity. Sexual orientation is inseparable from social role. Sexual repute and status are identical. The authors do not say this identification is unique. They do not know its historical origins. But they do wish to point out its function in this setting: The young woman's "character" is her full status as a social being because the familistic system is such that sexual activity, no less than economic, is completely integrated with one's role in social life. Consequently her sexual conduct is no concern of hers alone.

In the relationships in family and community in which the young girls of the countryside find their roles, any departure from the norm of conduct on their part is cause for

[3] Names of persons and smaller places in this and subsequent quotations are, of course, fictitious and refer to no actual persons or places of such names.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 A man would go to town and buy two or more pottles of flax
571 to sow. Then on the first of May he would go to the garden
and plant it. In August he would pull it up by the roots and
248 lay it in small bundles to be made into stooks. Then they would
take it and put it into a bog and leave it there fifteen or twenty
days, after which they could dry it in the house by hanging it
from the rafters. About the first of November you would take
it down and some men would come in and help break it. They
would then put it back and later take it down and scutch it with
a pronged tool, drawing the flax over it and breaking it.

476 Some time about Christmas time you would have a *meitheal*
571 of girls come in and they would sit in a semicircle round the
fire and clove the flax. It would take several days depending
on how much you had. The girls would stay with you all that
283 time. At seven in the evening they would be through and
within half an hour you could hear them in the hills leaping
and shouting. About eight or eight-thirty the boys would begin
[535] to arrive and there would be a dance and be no more good out
of them for that night. They might have a dance every two or
three days. You fed them good.

The next thing was the hackling, and this might be done by men or women. You had a box with iron prongs sticking up and you would hit the stalk against the irons and the small particles would fall into the box below. It might take several nights. Old man Roughan was a great man at the hackling, but he was always great for nothing else to do with flax. It was fine if you got him to come and help you and he would be glad to do it. Then you might be good at something else and you would go and help him with that. Some men were good at one thing and others at something else and they would help each other.

After this the next thing was the spinning, and this was done by the woman. She would sit in this corner by the fire and she might be there every night, or whenever she had the time, spinning the flax fiber into thread. She had no one to help her and it was a hard job. After it was made into thread, it would be taken out and bleached and re-wound and then taken to the
[266] weaver. The weaver made it into cloth and you would use it for sheets and shirts and other things. Flax was a hard thing and there was a lot of hard work about it.

248 They have been out of growing it for thirty or forty years

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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and now they would never think of growing it but must be 248
running to town and buying what they want.

The process of conversion of wool to yarn and thence 476
into cloth was equally difficult. It demanded the concerted 571
efforts of most of the rural community. It gave scope for
the development of specialists who could give their skills 283
back and forth even though, as before, their skills were part of the equipment of all the young people in the community. Two other old fellows of Inagh combined in the following account:

With the wool it was sheared on May 15 and, if that fell on a Monday or Tuesday and the following was Saturday in town (market day) you would see the men there with wool to sell while others would be there to buy it with large baskets in which to put it. The first thing was to card the wool. About the first of June you would get ready to spin it. For that you go around to all the neighbors and ask for a loan of a girl to spin the wool, and if you got eight or ten you must get the loan of that many spinning wheels. Then they come to the house on a certain day and I have seen eight wheels in this room and two in the other, all the girls spinning and talking away. It
might take several days before they were through and they [535]
would have a dance and the boys would come around. You want to be sure to get the girls early for there is a great demand for them. After the yarn is spun, it is placed on the wall to be taken to the weaver later on.

All this was part of the pattern of work in which the 476
members of the community were accustomed to work in 571
close association. The behavior described here is that
which we have already looked at in the discussion of the obligations of cooring. The *meitheal* referred to the working gang rather than the system in which the local habits were set. That setting was a constant play of habitual work relations between the "friends" and neighbors of the local community in which the characteristic organization of the community aligned sex and age groups and associated the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 would be waiting outside to whisk them away or to have a dance.
571 Then when they ground the oats, they had a quern and the men and women would come together and each take a turn at grinding so it was not tiring and they would have a big supper of spuds and milk for all of them before they would go. Then they would get together for the carding and spinning before the thread was taken to the weaver. The young women might be carding and the old women spinning and the *meitheal* of [535] girls would work away. They would get a dance when they would be done.

All the above description of close concert and deeply imprinted habitual work relations among the members of the local communities in the framework of the organization of behaviors of age and sex depict the now dead past. The same activities today, though certain techniques are different, bring out the same picture of work relations in an emotionally charged unison among persons of similar status within the community. The present-day hay harvest is very little different, though mowing machines are used. The great hayrick is still built in the same setting, and still calls for celebration. Everyone still waits for a signal from the hayrick rigger, a personage of considerable importance on such a day.

476 The unison of working on oats harvest with flails is gone.
But in its place is a threshing machine, and its owners come
571 around and a local crew is got up out of the local men. The
463 same jollities still reign. In all this our chief interest is not
554 in changing custom. Rather it is from this kind of observation that a new conclusion arises. The factors of differentiation about skills and techniques in the rural communities give rise to statuses of the same kind as before, statuses based upon the development of a specialty by a member of the local community which is recognized and valued within the habitual activities of his fellows. Here is an opportunity to see the embryonic form of division of labor and development of occupations in terms of the life of a community. It is a continuous process.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

among them. Most of the young men between 884
twenty-five and thirty-five met there. Through the 573
winter months they met nearly every night, and played the usual games of the countryside, 'nap' and 'forty-five', often far into the wee hours. Other groups through the community met like these men and followed like pursuits with an equal zest.

At times, a custom somewhat more organized, 884
the 'gamble', unites them all. It often brings in 525
other young men across the lines separating com- 573
munity from community. As often as once a week, a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household in its turn throws open its doors to the card-players. Admission, usually a shilling, goes to defraying the expense of a supper and tea for all and goes toward the prize.

For the gamble is one of many sporting events. The prize may be a turkey, or two geese, even a young pig or calf. Elaborate conventions govern the play, and the winner may count himself a proud man. To be known in the countryside, far and wide, as a 'great gambler' is a coveted distinction proving shrewdness and skill. The country dance 535
is another such event, and still enlivens the country- 884
side in the winter months, bringing the younger 573
members of the communities together and providing honour for the distinguished. For 'a great dancer' is as widely known. In summer, hurley, the 526
national game, has the same effect; and nowadays, 884
through the nation-wide organization of the Gaelic 573

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 can be shown or assumed to be additions. A wicker windbreak of birch or hazel (called the wassock or corrag in Co. Antrim), was occasionally erected at one side of the door. Here, too, there was often a stone bench or "stile." The chimney generally betrays its modernity by being built of brick, but wooden or wattled chimneys, neatly thatched and bound with sugán, are not uncommon, and there are a few chimneyless dwellings still inhabited in the west. Old houses frequently have no more than a few inches of chimney projecting, and it is recorded that when efficient chimneys were built by improving landlords they were promptly covered with a sod, "because the smoke keeps them warm." It remains to be said that in former days house-building, like so many tasks demanding much labour, was a communal affair. "The custom on such occasions"—the scene is Donegal a century ago—"is for the person who has the work to be done to hire a fiddler, upon [476] which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an [482] incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing [535] and working while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day."

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of 343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of 621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

592 162

Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

538 539 191 [537] 538 539 add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[831] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[197] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

• 535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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574 273 Women tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused [562] [514] them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen [535] and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the [562] cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, [857] while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist [123] with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while 574 273 stout is poured; the, may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the [533] activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts [535] prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the chil- [576] dren, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [351] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the 574 table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after every- 535 one is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an 579 islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, 123 when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out [517] between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the 574 same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, 579 "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at 178 [738]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

9:-Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

It is stated that in
Mayo a ploughman would be called in to shake a woman at a 845
difficult childbirth, presumably because it is he who prepares the ground and shakes the seed which brings new life to the fields.

Music, dancing, games and dramatic performances also 536
played their part in the seasonal gatherings, and one may 527
hazard the guess that the Irishman's passion for betting 796
derives from this source. A ritual element, as in the wake 842
games mentioned in the previous chapter, can often be detected, for example in the following account taken from the source quoted above. It describes a May game or pantomime from the Louth-Armagh border, modified survivals of which were current through most of the 19th century in the Slieve Gullion district. "On May day the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby.' Around it a man and woman (generally his wife) dressed also fantastically with straw, dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures, the figure at the same time being kept moving by the rustic maiden that supports it. These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children also attend (some of them from a considerable distance) to see this figure and exhibition, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children. Money is collected, and when the actors and musician have received some remuneration the remainder is laid out in drink, and the evening passes by jovially." This magic pantomime was originally intended to secure the success of the year's crops.

Such rites and gatherings have gradually been suppressed 517
or won over by the Church; and Sunday evening is now the 526
favourite recreation time for dancing and games. Among the older games, hurley is most popular, and horse-racing has by no means lost its appeal although it has suffered like other amusements from commercial exploitation. On many a

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
796 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
776 roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[822] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[778] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to
[233] attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, however, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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538 539 191 [537] 538 539 add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 534 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [178] [874] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] [178] [177] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

573 626 208 887 this role of the *cuaird*. An example from another community than Rynamona will throw the type of action it can take into relief.

An "incomplete family" affords the example. It was made up of an old woman and her thirty-year-old son. Theirs was a poor farm, and ordinarily they would have been an object of commiseration. But they were not. In fact, they were a constant annoyance. The son was generally regarded as bad and lazy. He neglected his farm and exhibited an obstinate disregard of village opinion in which his mother abetted him. The result was, naturally, that their house was shunned and he went nowhere to *cuaird*.

But no crisis arose till the episode of the pig. One autumn the son brought home a large Irish white sow. The sow was more nimble than most of her kind, and neither the mother nor the son took any pains to keep her at home. She wandered through the village at will and soon devastated many a cabbage patch. The village took alarm, and the more so that the sow might well prove dangerous to young children. There were angry words among the women, and the men for once backed them up. In the *cuaird* it was hinted that the sow might be found dead one morning. But before such an event could take place, the son took warning and sold the pig. "Public pressure," if you will, forced his decision and resolved the conflict, but it left him as low as ever in the village's esteem.

573 887 538 And lastly, the *cuaird* is the seat of traditional lore and entertainment. Its members are the repositories of folklore and legend. And the official belief of the countryside finds its expression and its reaffirmation in the discussion of events and the recounting of histories and incidents. In communities still at least partly Irish-speaking, such as Luogh, most of its members are *seanachaidhthe*, storytellers in the traditional vein. And it is among them that traditional repertories of a saga, folk tale, song, and legend still get an

 573

audience. The point of importance here is that it is among 887
the old people that folk myth and folk belief are preserved 538
and expressed for the community.

If we are to examine in full rural behavior based upon 571
age and its connection with the old adult clique whose 517
function in the community we are assessing, we must offer
some contrast with the behavior of other age groups.

We have already mentioned that the old men's house in Rynamona was not the only seat of visiting after the day's work, and that the entertainment provided there was merely one instance of many gatherings taking place almost nightly, at least through the winter, in rural communities. In the statements given by older men about the meeting of the young men we have seen something of the manner in which other pursuits than those of the men's house are regarded.

Indeed in all the communities which came under the authors' notice the young men were as ardent evening visitors as were the older men. In Rynamona they were no less so.

There they gathered in most often at the house of Roche, the "prosecutor." They did this from long habit, as did their elders. But they had no larger justification for their doing so. They went because "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys." But there were marked differences in their meeting. There was no central clique so closely integrated as that in O'Donoghue's house. There were pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together.

A greater difference lay in their complete lack of concern
with the affairs of the community. One could get them to [521]
talk only about their own plans or the trials of their own
kind and age. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition. The skills upon which those taking part in the meetings prided themselves and for which

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

pologist avoids all explanations except those which 000
arise out of his observations of what men do, and if he accepts them only when he can test them again against observed behaviour, he will be, if only imperfectly, in the main line of scientific development.

Before one makes a frontal attack, it is good tactics to survey one's ground. One likes to know what interest it holds in store.

Ireland, particularly Celtic southern Ireland, has always had a fascination for most of us. The cities, particularly Dublin, the last stronghold of the art of conversation, are as charming as the countryside. But it is the country districts which occupy us here.

Most of us probably know at least four countrysides in Ireland. Like Caesar we divide our Gaul. But the divisions we make are not geographical. Our four Irelands are lands of the spirit.

Perhaps our first Ireland is the mystic land of 538 ●
the past. This is the land of the 'Celtic twilight', 181
the country of Synge and Yeats and Stephens. It is the seat of an age-old tradition, of the remains of a once brilliant Celtic civilization. Literature has taught us to look for this land in the barren moors and rugged mountains of the west, among the tiny white cabins of Connemara and along the misty headlands of Kerry and West Cork. It is the Ireland

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 of Aran and the Blaskets. There a remnant of the sagas and hero-tales can still be heard, a wandering poet sang but yesterday in the lilt of Blind Raferty. There old men and old women sitting by turf fires still spin tales of banshees and the good people; and just the other day in Daniel Corkery's hidden Munster the hedge school-master and the wandering scholar had Ovid and Horace at his tongue's tip. And there too the riders to the sea go down to their deaths amid the keening women, whose language rings to us of simple, old-world poetry long ago passed from our own tongues.

538

A second Ireland is a gay, full-blooded picture, though some among the nationalists dislike it. It is the Ireland of the merry and happy-go-lucky present. Handled badly, it becomes the land of the 'stage-Irishman', that buffoonish figure which the nation's pride so justly resents. But handled well, by a Lady Gregory, a George Birmingham, and on the stage by the Abbey Players, it is a world of its own. In it, innocent boasting, the excitement of a race-meeting, the hurly-burly of a fair, the flashing wit of a court-room, and the staccato thunder of a political campaign, reveal a talkative, mercurial, witty people, amusing and intelligent, romantic and gallant.

The third Ireland most of us know is a more 181 serious scene. One might even call it a grimmer land. It is a sober, hard-working land of minute towns and small farms upon a soil not always

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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from the narrow valley lands at Doolin in the extreme north-west of County Clare. I was on my way to my first stay in an Irish west-country farm community. My road, no wider than a bridle-path, led up a sharp escarpment out of the tiny valley which empties its stony river into the Atlantic, not three miles away from the southernmost island of Aran. Once the top of the rim is reached the mountainside flattens out into a green and gently sloping table-land. Standing there one can see the whaleback rocks that are the Aran Islands and the masses of Mount Elva on the southern shore of Galway Bay. Far beyond in Connemara, one can catch the glint of the Twelve Pins, if the day is 'hard' and sunny. Off to the left, the table-land breaks off abruptly three hundred feet downward into the Atlantic, for the famed Cliffs of Moher are here, reminders of an Irish mountain that the sea has shorn off clean.

The community toward which I was making my way lies along the table-land between mountain-top of bracken and black bog and the cliffs. It keeps up the old tradition. It calls itself Luogh, and its language, at least that of the old people, is Irish, but the young people are forgetting the old tongue. English is the more common speech today, even here. Yet Mr. Delargy, the editor of the *Irish Folklore Journal*, has collected a large number of stories, songs and traditional tales and sayings here, some of them going back to the saga cycles.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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them to think I wasn't with them", he put it. No 573
wonder, then, that the political allegiances of whole 621
countrysides are constant factors in Irish politics. [66]

The community reaches agreement upon its 621
internal affairs, too, through the old men's dis- 573
cussions. It is in just this type of activity that one 626
can at last put one's finger upon that nebulous force among men: public opinion. That force is not implemented; it is merely the power of gossip and censure; only in critical days, as in the time of land agitation, can it rise to action, as a last resort, and win itself an international name: the boycott. But it is none the less powerful.

But, in rural Ireland, the group through which 573
this power flows serves another function which 888
cannot be disassociated from its role as the seat of 538
public opinion. The members of the old men's *cuaird* are the living repositories of tradition. In communities, such as Luogh, where the Irish language lingers on, many of them are *seanachaidhthe* or story-tellers. Among them the ancient repertories of legend, saga and folk-tale still find an audience. That the exponents of fairy-lore have always been, and are still, old men and old women, is no social accident. For the pattern of local life retains its continuity and preserves what it can of its conformity with the past through them.

But what of the young men, those who have not 884
attained full status? They do not attend at the old 573
men's house; they take no part in the deliberations

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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VI

The Good People

In this last lecture we are finally ready to return to 538 ●
'old custom'. Folklore is part of the social order 182
which we have been sketching out. Folk-custom and folk-belief, even though 'survivals' of an ancient day, have an important role in the life of the countryman. Something of that role I have already tried to show you. Ancient belief surrounded and reinforced the conventional division of labour. It gave point and interest to the necessary changes of social and family life. It helped provide sanctions and formulae of agreement in which the local community could pursue and regulate its unconscious organization of human lives. It cropped up again in the synthesis between the life of the town and that of the countryside.

What is it then that gives old custom and belief this power? What does it contain within itself that allows it to persist and outlive the centuries? The anthropologist Marrett said once: "Survivals are no mere wreckage of the past, but are likewise symptomatic of those tendencies of our common nature which have the best chance of surviving in the long run".

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 The anthropologist must take note of such
538 'tendencies' in folklore. Consequently, rather than devote time to a description of folk-belief as it still exists, I prefer to attack such questions. In attacking them, I hope to proceed as we have done before. I shall try to treat folklore as it occurs in the life of the countryman and find the answers to our queries there.

538 In so doing, I must give warning that I must leave aside a good deal of the most picturesque elements of Irish folklore. Remnants of hero-tales, fragments of the sagas of Oisín and Fionn MacCumhaill and the Fianna are still to be heard sometimes upon the lips of the old people. A popular history, half-legend, commemorates patriots and the enemies they fought, and weaves itself round the monuments of the past which crowd the Irish landscape. Norman barons, Celtic chieftains, noble lines both native and alien throng the unwritten pages of this history and elbow for room with saints and martyrs, Cromwellian soldiers, moonlighters and 'ripparees', minstrel poets and hedge-schoolmasters of learning. A great many religious legends, in fact a whole popular hagiology, still survive, infusing local piety with romantic glamour. International tales, like those Grimm recorded first in Germany, traceable from India and Siberia to the remotest Irish coasts, can still be heard, regarbed in a traditional Gaelic dress. But all these are a popular literature, unwritten perhaps, but

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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none the less evolved in response to canons of 538 literary expression. They have been dealt with by more competent commentators than I.

I must give warning, too, that I am not equipped to give you the usual collector's report. I can give little account of the marvellous fauna and flora that filled the Irish countryside till recently. Better collectors than I have done ample justice to many a headless black dog that haunts a road in country districts and to many a *péist* or *broc-shidhe* that dwells in lake and cave. Nor can I regale you with the marvellous or fearsome deeds of 'weasels', 'hares' and 'worms' that clothe a fairy power in animal form. Likewise the whole great field of charms and nostrums, magic cures, lucky and unlucky deeds and days and things, is a world of detail into which I cannot lead you very far, except in furtherance of the purpose of this discussion.

For in attempting to relate folklore to social life, interest lies not so much in the minutiae of particular folk-belief as in the part the scheme of thought they make up plays in customary conduct. The problem is not so much just what is believed, but the effect of and the reason for such belief.

In such a discussion, some preliminary definition of the folklore we deal with is necessary. The usual definition is very loose: the unrecorded traditions of the people as they appear in popular fiction, custom and belief, magic and ritual. I prefer rather to narrow the field down, and to leave aside the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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538 historical question involved. But even then, we are left with a very broad field of inquiry. All the acts and rituals associated with belief in supernatural powers not directly recognized and regulated by the official doctrine of the Church remain for us to examine.

776 538 The chief of these powers is usually called the 'fairies'. The country-people have many other names for them which they prefer. But, most often, they feel no need of distinguishing them by particular names. They call them simply 'them'. In the pronoun they summarize both their nameless power and their immanence. No greater specification is necessary where such powers crowd so closely in upon one's life. The acts and rituals which spring out of this belief are similarly broad in scope. They range from minor doings and turns of speech of daily life to the most hidden practices of rare and deadly black magic.

Perhaps the native name gives the best definition. The whole fairy-cult is under attack these days. The forces of Church and school are pitted against it. It is nothing more than 'pisherogues', the countryman will tell you. The word is usually translated as 'superstition', but the English word contains too great a bias for us to use it. The 'pisherogues' are much more than ignorant superstitions. In the light of an acquaintance with the practices of the world's peoples, they are easily understandable in much broader terms. They form

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937 -
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a symbolic order overlying the values of social life 776
and clothing them in emotional terms in much the 538
same way as do unofficial dogmas and unofficial, non-logical cosmologies among all peoples, not excepting those of our own urban civilization of today. In that, they respond to recognizable sociological and psychological necessities. In its own way, Yankee New England is as fertile of such non-logical beliefs as is rural Ireland. Rural Ireland is different only in that she has preserved an older and more ancient terminology in which to build her particular symbolism. She has her own genius in the matter which expresses the age-long continuities of her culture.

I think you will perhaps understand me better if I go on to sketch out the symbolism which the 'pisherogues' contain.

First, one must notice that the Irish countryman 781
is a very devout man. His life is ordered in his 789
adherence to his religion. Much of his habit of 776
mind and his view of the world responds to his Faith. He is a devout and practising Catholic. But he is also devout in another direction too, very often. Just as there is room in his mind and heart for patriotic fervour along with religious zeal, so is there room for fairy belief. Sometimes, of course, these devotions may conflict; but ordinarily they need not. They can intermesh and support one another.

789
Thus in his daily life, one finds the countryman 776

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

on this subject, I shall not attempt the treatment of it myself, but shall quote the opinion of the Rev. Eugene O'Growney, who has an exceptional knowledge of both people and language, and has kindly furnished me with some of his notes relating to them. He says:— "The Irish spoken in Boffin has a very poor vocabulary, as far as I heard it spoken. I must say, however, that it was not easy to get the people to speak it, and many children at first refused point blank to utter a word of Irish. In most of the Irish-speaking districts of the west, the people have preserved a number of old poetic prayers and hymns. Many of these are very beautiful, and some appear to be of great age. I was particularly interested at the time of my visit in these hymns, but was told that the only hymn in use in Boffin and Shark was the *ortha Mhuire*, or prayer of Mary. I could not find any person in Boffin who could recite it, and the only person in Shark who was supposed to have it in full was out at sea. An old man in Boffin recited for me a portion of a quaint old religious composition in English." In another place he states that the people speak neither English nor Irish well, their dialect of the language containing many corrupted English words, and at least one curious word. "I recollect that the cove in which St. Leo's well is situated is called *fuath Leo*. I take the word *fuath*, which is the usual word in Inishshark and Inisboffin for a 'cove,' to be a corruption of *uamh*, which is used by the Four Masters in the year 893 as meaning 'cave.'"[1]

19 [538]

IV. SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Every family combines fishing and farming, and has some share in a boat. The farms are small (see p. 340), about three acres and a-half under potatoes and oats, being about the average amount of tillage per family. All are held direct from the landlord, who resides on Inishbofin, there being no subletting or con-acre. The rents average about £2 per holding, but vary much according to the extent and quality of the land.

241 [226] 427

The holdings are not divided up into small fields, as in Aran, but are often insufficiently fenced, allowing the cattle to stray, which

241 423

[1] The Rev. E. A. Lavelle has, since the above was written, sent a translation of a curious old Irish litany used on both islands, both in Irish and English, which he obtained from an old man, aged 84, whose father, Peter Lavelle, fought under Nelson at Trafalgar. As the litany is in English and of great length, it is not inserted here, but it is to be hoped that the Irish form will be recorded and preserved as it may possess the linguistic value wanting in a translation.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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feet in diameter. (Small, carefully made clews of hay rope, with 283
a centre of rags or corks, are occasionally used as footballs; similar coils of rope in England seem to be oval in shape and would serve rather as balls for Rugby football.) Laying by a stock of clews was a useful occupation for a wet day. The man of the house chose the sedentary end of the rope, sitting under cover in the barn among the thrashed straw and feeding it evenly into the rope as the other end was twisted by a retreating youth armed with a thraw-hook. As the rope grew, the boy had to withdraw into the rain away from the shelter and the sociability of the barn, and this simple scene is the theme of one of Douglas Hyde's Irish plays, *Casadh an tSugáin* (The Twisting of the Rope). A rival suitor makes love to a girl in the barn while the unfortunate twister is forced by his unco-operative employer to watch the proceedings from the end of a lengthening and apparently endless rope. [538]

Hay ropes are both softer and stronger than straw and were used, for example, for parts of the harness where straw ropes would have chafed and broken. They were naturally employed for securing large cocks of hay (tramp cocks, Fig. 52) against the wind; and tethers for young animals were often made of hay rope. A Donegal landlord writing of the early nineteenth century tells of cabbages tethered against the wind with three hay ropes.[1] The shearing rope, four or five feet long, by which the legs of sheep were tied together when clipping the wool, was also made of hay or marram grass. Here we may take note of the curious practice of piecemeal shearing, recorded from [236]
Mayo[2] and Donegal[3] and possibly to be attributed to ancient usage rather than to indolence. It seems that the women were in the habit of clipping bits off the sheep at any season, as they needed the wool. Stronger than ropes of straw or hay are those made of rushes or sedges, and stronger still those of fir, heather, birch twigs, willow bark, horsehair or rawhide. Bog fir ropes were still being twisted in north Antrim, a few years ago, for securing thatch and making bed-frames. Ropes were made even from seaweed, as we shall see in the following chapter. Many

[1] J. Hamilton, *Sixty Years Experience*, 19.
[2] C. R. Browne, *Garumna and Letterfullen*.
[3] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be 777
thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be 543
tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair [885]
that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own [538]
at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with 437
success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases 443
of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over 432
some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a [558]
woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of 443
the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable [439]
export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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as their war-goddess,[21] so, before the baptism of King Cairthinn, (first Christian Prince of his House, about A.D. 430), the ancestors of the Dalcassians may have worshipped Aibhinn on her holy hill, and her equally lovely sister Aine, crowned with meadowsweet, on the tamer mound of Knockaney. Whether, if so, they found her already enthroned at Craglea on their conquest of the district, or whether the conqueror Lugad consecrated the mountains to his patroness, it is now impossible to guess. Aibhill, as banshee, held her own. We find her even usurping the place of the "Sybil" in a translation of the *Dies Iræ*,[22] in unwonted companionship with King David, and she was a commonplace of local threnodies during the eighteenth, and even the nineteenth, century. In the lake below Rathblamaic in Inchiquin she has down to recent years been seen, with the twenty-five other banshees of Clare that call her their queen, washing clothes before any impending disaster.[2]

The next appearance of a banshee in local history is of a very different spirit three centuries later. The *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* ("Triumphs of Torlough") was written probably about A.D. 1350 by Seean mac Craith, the hereditary historian.[23] It contains accounts of three spirit women,—one, the "Sovereignty of Erin," being of surpassing loveliness, and the two others, (if not the same,—"Dismal" and "Water Dismal"), of loathsome hideousness. The hags, however, probably survive, while the "Sovereignty" has perished. Bronach ("the sorrowful or dismal one") of Ceann Boirne was known as the "Hag of Black Head" from the modern name of the older Ceann (or Rinn) of Burren. She was in full repute in 1839, and I have heard of her vaguely about 1885 or 1887. In August, 1317, she

[21] Cf. *Revue Archéologique*, N.S., vol. xviii. (1868), p. 1; Sir Samuel Ferguson's paper, from the Irish point of view, in *Dublin University Magazine*, Oct. 1834, p. 463; W. M. Hennessy, "The War Goddess of the Ancient Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x., p. 425.

[22] Mss., Royal Irish Academy, 23.M.47.

[23] As yet only in manuscript,—one copy of A.D. 1509, and another probably from one of 1449. For its age see *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxxii., p. 139.

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washing armour and rich robes till the red gore churned and splashed through her hands.[25] Calling an Irish ally to question her, De Clare heard that "the armour and clothes were of the English, and few would escape immolation." "I am the Water Doleful One. I lodge in the green fairy mounds (*siáh*) of the land, but I am of the Tribes of Hell. Thither I invite you. Soon we shall be dwellers in one country." Next day De Clare, his son, and nearly all his English troops lay dead upon the fields near the ford of Dysert for miles over the country in their flight. 175 776 763

The belief of the early eleventh and fourteenth centuries is still extant, for local legend near Dysert tells how Aibhill and twenty-five banshees washed blood-stained clothes in Rath Lake before "Claraghmore" (De Clare) fell, and that they still do so when mischief is afoot.[26]

For nearly 300 years there is no other Clare banshee tale, till the famous one of 1642 in the *Memoires of Lady Fanshawe*, (published in 1665).[27] It is so well known that a brief abstract will suffice. Her Ladyship, staying with some of the O'Briens, was sleeping in a room, of which the window overhung water at some height, at a castle, perhaps Bunratty or Castle Lake. She was awakened by a horrible scream, and saw a girl outside the window. The apparition was pale, rather handsome, and with her reddish hair hanging dishevelled over her shoulders. After some time the unwelcome visitor vanished, with other ghastly shrieks. In the morning Lady Fanshawe, telling her tale, was told of the death of a relative of the family whose illness had been concealed from her. The spirit was that of the peasant wife of a former owner of the castle, drowned in the moat by her husband and of evil omen to his descendants. [538]

The next story was told in my own family and, I understand, in that of the Ross Lewins. I have traced it to a daughter of Jane Ross Lewin, one of the girls who saw the banshee. It related to Jane's father, Harrison Ross Lewin of Fortfergus, who probably died in 1776, as his will, dated November, 1775, was proved in

[25] Another "washer of the ford" appears in "Da Choca's Hostel," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi. (1900), p. 157, and she is also a Bodbh.

[26] Told me by Prof. Brian O'Looney in 1890, and I have heard more recently of the existence of the belief.

[27] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 83-6.

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763 of Fortanne says that the coach was heard at the deaths of certain Westropps after 1873, but nothing happened after its last appearance.

The phantom of a coach and horse was seen not far from Corofin, at Cragmoher, not long since, but it is agreed that no death took place after the apparition. An equally vague story was told about 1870 at Attyflin by a very old woman, Norry Halloran, whom the sound of the coach pursued one dark evening for a long way, but it did not pass her door, and nothing happened afterwards.

IV. *Fairies and Fairy Forts and Mounds.*

776 823 [538] MacCraith, in the *Triumphs of Torlough*, in describing the prognostics of the death of Prince Donchad early in the fourteenth century says that "lights shone on the fairy forts," and it has already been noted that the *sidhs* or fairy mounds were lodgings of appalling apparitions, like Bronach when not at her proper residence in the lower deep. The *Dindsenchas*,—that early encyclopædia invaluable for everything but the reliable account of the origin of place names which it purports to be,—describes how a lady dwelling in such a mound sprang out at her would-be lover in the form of a dragon.[36] Probably such beliefs, and the consequent fear of irate and deadly beings in earthworks, have helped until recent years to preserve the residential earthen "forts," although the ring walls were destroyed with but little scruple. Nevertheless the son of a farmer named Nihill told me in 1892 that, after some days wreckage and removal of the outer wall of the fine triple stone fort of Cahercalla, near Quin, his father was stricken with acute pain, and only recovered from his illness when the work was stopped,—whence this interesting ruin has been preserved to the present day. A certain landlord, still living, nearly lost the use of one eye from the dust of an explosion when blasting a rock in an earth fort which was being removed, and this incident has upheld the faith and fear of the fairies in north-eastern Clare. A locally famous "astronomer" and weather prophet tried, many years ago, to blast a dolmen in Inchiquin Barony, and a splinter hit his hand, which was badly injured and

[36] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv., p. 441.

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by "the stroke of a fairy," the poet recommends the holy man to get the aid of a local practitioner of renown, Peter the Fairy Killer.[43] 776 823

In recent years I have met only one sign of true respect for the "Sheevra" race. A small patch of land was left untilled in the midst of a cornfield at the end of the steep descent from Carran old church to Eanty in the Burren. It was left for three years amidst the tillage, and then the field was allowed to return to grass. The owners obviously disliked to explain the matter, but the act was clearly understood in the neighbourhood as a concession to the spirits of the field when the grass land was broken up for the first time in human memory.[44]

The appearances of the fairies also seem now very rare indeed. At Newmarket-on-Fergus, a centre of much folklore, we find that, besides the two forts named above and a low earth mound (perhaps sepulchral), only one spot has been honoured by an actual apparition in the last ten years. In this case a man walking on the Ennis road, not far from Lough Gaish, saw a very little man neatly dressed in green and walking on the path. Suspecting the green man to be a *leprechaun*,—and hence an owner of gold,—the Clare man tried to grasp him, but the sprite vanished out of his hands.[45]

The "literary movement" will probably affect the folklore very soon, as it is already affecting historical tradition,—which is shown by the variations in certain legends collected at long intervals at the same sites. By some the Danann have been identified with the Danes as "fort builders." If this were so, why did Dane's fort become Caher Loghlanach, (Caher Loglin, 1652), and similar forms? The people once knew better, for forts were attributed to all sorts of times and races, not only to members of the Tuatha Dé Danann, but also to Firbolgs and mythical persons such as Aenghus, Eerish, Eir, Farvagh, and 776 538

[43] *Ibid.* 23. K. 10.

[44] It was certainly not the darker belief that in Scotland dedicated an offering to the one called euphemistically "The Goodman," nor like the sheaf sometimes dedicated to Brigit and other saints in West Munster, or, indeed, in other parts of Ireland.

[45] Collected by Miss Katherine Neville. The sprite was, of course, proved not to be a *leprechaun*, as that being can be held by the eye alone.

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776 Croghan, and Celts such as Lachtna (A.D. 820-840), and Brian
● 538 Boru (A.D. 980-1014). In one notable instance, King Conor (A.D. 1242-69) is the reputed builder of the great stone fort of Dun Conor in Aran, which in the eleventh-century legend is evidently connected with Conchiurn or Conchraed the Firbolg,—a relation accepted in 1685 by Roderic O'Flaherty, although he called its hero "Conquevar" (*i.e.* Chonchobhar or Conor). Any modern allusion to the Danann is therefore "suspect." Many visits to the recesses of the hills in Burren from 1878 onwards,—and I may add that
776 the same is true of the rest of Clare,—only gave me, in 1905, one
788 direct reference to the Danann.* At the natural moat crowned
823 by the small stone ring wall of Croaghateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna, we were told to cross ourselves as a protection against the Danann. The place was, nevertheless, undoubtedly regarded by the older people living near it as a most dangerous fairy fort, and we were told how certain badger hunters,—(who brought drink with them), —after a long festival on its summit got benighted there; they eventually returned home sobered by fright, as they suddenly "saw the whole fleet" of "them" coming up the mound, and escaped only just in time.

776 The "whirlwinds" along dusty roads and sudden gusts were
788 not long ago everywhere supposed to be caused by the progress of
821 fairy beings. The older folk believed, and trembled,—crossing themselves, or saying a word of prayer,—while the younger folk, more than half in jest, raised their hats, as is still sometimes done to the unlucky "single magpie" and the weasel.

776 I know of two cases of reputed changelings. My second sister, whose delicacy, when an infant, excited remark, was, about 1842, taken out by a servant to be exposed on a shovel on the doorstep at Carnelly. The angry and hasty intervention of another servant saved the child, but the would-be "exposer" was convinced of the propriety of her attempt "to get back the real child" from the fairies. A very old woman, Kate (Geerin) Molony, a henwife at Maryfort, near Tulla, whom I faintly remember in 1869, was many years before anxious about her little daughter's failing health, and went to a "wise woman," who assured her that the child was "changed." She spoke of this on her return, and unfortunately

* Apart from Lon, at Slievnaglasha, and the "hags."

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COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

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In a preceding article I have dealt with place names and legends of names, banshees, the death coach, and fairies, and in the present one I propose to deal mainly with other appearances of a spectral or spiritual character. In doing this it is necessary carefully to avoid attributing to older writers beliefs which they never held. It is more than probable that the writer of the *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, and Seean MacCraith, the author of the *Triumphs of Torlough*, were no more under a delusion when they personified the spirits of Valour, Bloodshed, Terror, and Sovereignty than the modern journalist who writes of "Public Opinion sitting in judgment," or the "Spirit of Loyalty attending King George." The first ancient writer, describing the terrors of the deadly combat of the Irish and the Norse in 1014, tells us that there was "a bird of valour and championship fluttering over Murchad's head and flying on his breath." He also tells how there flew a dark, merciless, (and many more adjective-endowed) *bodbh*, screaming and fluttering over the combatants, while "the satyrs (*bannanaig*), the idiots, the maniacs of the glens, the witches, the goblins, the ancient birds, the destroying demons of the air and sky, and the feeble demonic phantom host" arose to accompany the warriors in the combat. He probably meant little more than "Amazement in the van and Flight combined with Sorrow's faded form and Solitude behind," though possibly the various uncanny "creatures of the wild" were real to him in their proper places in the hills and glens, but not in daylight on the fields beside Dublin. The second writer (*circa*

[p. 200]

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1350) describes King Torlough, about 1286, returning from a successful raid, which has left its mark very clearly on the legal rolls of the day, ravaging the English lands round the mountains of eastern County Limerick and northern Tipperary, and marching up the western (Clare) shore of Lough Derg. A lovely maiden appeared, "modest, strange in aspect, glorious in form, rosy-lipped, soft-taper-handed, pliant-wavy-haired, white-bosomed." She was the "Sovereignty of Erin" come to rebuke the chief for letting De Burgh dissuade him from attempting the reconquest of all Ireland, and vanished in a lustrous cloud. The author's intent here is unmistakable. MacCraith has one other passage, so suggestive and remarkable that it can only be regarded as a literal statement of the beliefs of the warriors at the burial of some of whom his father, Ruadri, presided, a few years later, in 1317. Donchad, a prince of the Clan Torlough line, aided by William de Burgh, gave his deadly enemy, Richard de Clare, a severe defeat near Bunratty in 1311. At the moment of victory De Burgh was captured by the foe, and the victors fled in indescribable confusion,—the English to their nearest castles, and the Irish to their stone strongholds, the great terraced mountains of Burren. De Clare and his protegé, Prince Dermot, camped on two ridges at Cruchwill and Tullycommaun, a long ridge capped with tumuli, dolmens, and "forts." Donchad lay across the valley and lake on the spurs of Slieve Carran opposite. The soldiers of Donchad, we are told, "were disturbed by phantoms and delusive dreams, lights shone on the fairy forts," the waves of Erin[1] groaned, "the deep plaint resounded from the woods and streams," shades were seen, and hollow groans were heard. This is evidently a true tale of the reminiscences of the depressed and anxious men who lay looking at the foes' camp fires opposite. I have often heard with wonder on these lonely hills

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> "undescribed sounds
> That come a swooning over hollow grounds
> And wither drearily on barren moors,"

the noise of the winds in the rocks and bushes, the strange prattle of streams in crannies deep down in the rocks, the cry of night

[1] Misfortune was foretold by great waves at four spots on the Irish coast, to which later belief added a fifth at Malbay in Clare.

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XVII. *Religious Objects and their Legends.*

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Clare was once rich in religious objects, and some important ones have survived until our times, such as the Bell Shrine of St. Senan, the croziers of St. Blathmac of Rath and St. Tola of Dysert O'Dea, and the bells of Rath, Burren, and Kilshanny,—all, except the last, in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, besides the reputed bell of Iniscatha.[14] St. Colman MacDuach and St. Lachtin were also closely connected with the county, and the crozier of the first and shrine of the arm of the second are preserved in the Irish collection. We read in early records how the Norse, in their destruction of the monastery of Iniscaltra in 922, "drowned its relics and shrines" in Lough Derg. The early *Life of St. Senan* tells how his bell descended ringing from heaven, and the place where this is reputed to have happened is still shown at Cross, between Kildimo and Farighy. The richly-enshrined crozier of St. Flannan of Killaloe (c. 680), and the bell brought from Rome by St. MacCreehy (c. 620), were extant when their *Lives* were written in the middle of the twelfth century. Early in the seventh century "the relics of Columb, son of Crimthann, were brought in a wain" to Caimin of Iniscaltra.[15] There were a number of relics and a bell "gold-enshrined" at Tulla in 1318.[16] Recent legend tells of the bells of the round towers of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy being hidden in the pool of Poulaclug and the marsh below the latter monastery, and of a silver bell of Kilmoon or Killeany, in the Burren, hidden in the stream named from it Owennaclugga. A brass bell found in the round tower of Dysert was sold in Limerick about 1837. The Black Bell of the MacNamaras was probably one of the relics at Tulla, and may be the one attributed to St. Mochulla in 1141. The "Black Book" of that saint was probably a register, and existed down to 1627, when it was used (and disappeared) in a lawsuit

[14] It was exhibited in Dublin in 1853 by a Mr. John Cooke, and sold to the British Museum. There is no local tradition attached to it.

[15] *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, "Calendar of Oengus," (early ninth century, ed. Whitley Stokes), under Dec. 13, p. 182; also published by Henry Bradshaw Society.

[16] *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh*:—"Tullach nan espoc sanctified by bell and precious mass, by relic, gold-enshrined, by rare piety and notable miracles."

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of the Delahoydes. The shrine of St. Lachtin's arm,[17] made for Cormac MacCarthy, king of Munster between 1118-27, was preserved in his church at Kilnamona, and about 1640 removed to Lislachtin Abbey in Kerry; no folklore seems attached to it. The crozier of St. Blawfugh, *i.e.* Blathmac, son of Onchu, was preserved at Rath, near Corofin, and then in a hole in the wall of the old chapel of Corofin, where it was used for very solemn swearing and was much feared. The crozier of St. Manaula (Bán Thola) of Dysert was purchased from an old woman, daughter of an O'Quin, its last hereditary keeper, and was held in great reverence for cures and as an object upon which oaths were taken. The most important of all these relics is the Clog-an-oir, or "golden bell,"[18] the empty bell shrine preserved by the Keanes of Beechpark, one of whom had married the daughter of one of the Keanes or O'Cahans the "coarbs" (*comharba*) or successors of St. Senan. It consists of a bronze cover of the twelfth century, adorned by later silver plates, and violation of an oath taken on this shrine twisted the perjurer's face or resulted in convulsions and death. It is told that a gentleman living in County Galway sent his servant to borrow the "bell" to test his servants about a theft. His messenger happened to be the thief, and on the way home again threw the dreaded object into the sea. He then boldly told his master that the Keanes would not lend it. "You are a liar," was the reply, "for there it is on the table before you." The man fell on his knees, and confessed. It was last asked for in 1834, when a farmer had been robbed of twenty pounds, and borrowed the "bell" to swear the neighbours after Mass. On the Saturday night before the ordeal his family was awakened by a crash, as something was thrown in through the window. This proved to be the missing notes, tied with the original string. There are many similar stories, and the Clog-an-oir is said to have been stolen, but to have always returned to its rightful owners.[19]

[17] An illustration of this was published by Vallancey in 1770. See Mr. Geo. Coffey's *Guide to the Christian Antiquities in the Collection of the Royal Irish Academy*, pp. 53-4, 60-2, and for the croziers of Dysert and Rath and bell of Rath, *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., pp. 337-9.

[18] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxx., pp. 237-44.

[19] Much of this information came from Mr. Marcus Keane of Beechpark, the present possessor, and the remainder from the paper cited in note 18.

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668 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary,
000 and clerical figures.[3] A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

668 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Associa-
197 tion, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the
• 538 formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage
[204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

> The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasised the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195–196).

177 Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on
185 language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since
668 the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the
[648] time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

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[113] [3] The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603–1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

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> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21). 114 181

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible. [124]

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.). 114 12 181 [538]

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor- 554 [423] [471] [511] 556

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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] • [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, and the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

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178 characterized by storytelling, games of various sorts, contests of strength, taunting and mocking, mischief-making, and factional fighting (O Suilleabhain 1967:
764 26–129). It is hard to imagine a wake more somber than that which takes place in Inis Beag. Most of those who attend it do so before midnight and stay two to three hours, coming and going at will, while "only those who own him stay all night." Each visitor on arrival prays briefly at the bedside of the deceased or in the doorway of the room before expressing condolences, and at midnight all who are anywhere in the wake-house kneel and recite the responses of the Rosary intoned
[178] by the curate. Immediate kin express their grief in muffled sobs beside the corpse, but the ancient wailing lament for the dead, known as the "keen," no longer is
[273] heard in Inis Beag. Tables and benches are set up in the kitchen on which the
[276] men sit silently or converse in whispers with their neighbors, as they drink stout
[562] or whiskey and pass around clay pipes offered them "to keep the night awake." Most of the women congregate in the room of the dead, where only very old women smoke pipes. I have counted as many as 18 minutes of absolute silence at a wake and have never heard laughter.

[562] Before the procession to the church forms, men tend to gather in small groups outside the house of the deceased and women gather inside the house. After the corpse is placed in the coffin, close relatives and even friends shake the hand and kiss the face of the dead person before the top is nailed down; then the box is carried to the front street and placed across two chairs for prayers to be said and holy water sprinkled over it by the priest. A white sheet is draped on the casket, and six pallbearers shoulder it and carry it through a gap made in the stone fence to the road which leads to the chapel. The pallbearers are both agnatic and uterine kin of the deceased, excluding his sons, and two of them have the further duty of digging the shallow grave that night or in the morning before the body is interred. Moving slowly behind the coffin bearers, the procession is headed by the spouse and sons of the dead person, followed by his daughters, then women, and finally men in a long, slow moving, silent column; children other than the offspring of the deceased seldom join the procession, and the sexes walk separately.
[793] The curate may or may not lead this procession and the one the next morning, sometimes preferring to go ahead to church and cemetery by himself. A son of the dead person treats the grave diggers to stout in a pub before they set out with spades for the graveyard, as he does the pallbearers after they return from the
[178] church. In the past, the grave was dug as part of the funeral service, but this custom was altered as the cemetery became filled and occasionally diggers by acci-
[538] dent broke into previously interred coffins revealing their contents. A number of grisly legends and anecdotes tell of islanders buried alive by mistake, or whose bodies were partially preserved, as revealed by such accidents.

The procession from the chapel to the graveyard leaves the modern road, as we saw in Chapter 1, to follow an ancient, obliterated trail past a church believed to have been buried beneath the sand centuries ago, and then climbs the long hill of kitchen midden and sand to the gate of the cemetery. Here the column breaks up, some people going to the graves of relatives to pray and others to the newly opened grave. Men and women kneel separately at the graveside for the service (see Fig. 11), and many of the women cry as the casket is lowered into the shallow

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
198 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
776 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid	She is deaf and
Dressed in white.	She is dumb.
Give her something	For God's sake,
For the night.	Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

746 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[533] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 796 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of [778]
wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to [233]
"give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of 796
the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time [784]
garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. [782]
Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the [777]
Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is [769]
tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for 784
future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a [638]
small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of
the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night 123
when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of 796
cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed 787
by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whit- 796
sunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as 776
the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually [821]
the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend
to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does
anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a [613]
danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children
and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground
unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the
demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or [461]
decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter [777]
are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then
may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern
day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer [857]
celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather 313
wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of [372]
Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for 789
protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A [842]
man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the
failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the
folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the
hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven
between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry
leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish [114]
life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the
plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British
anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns
jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin 539
(O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 796

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[164] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

177 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
178 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those
53 found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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 538

male but sometimes female. Also, the former occupied a higher prestige position [662] than the latter, but there was not the clear-cut distinction between genres appropriate to each type of narrator as elsewhere in Ireland; the *seanchai* sometimes [654] related the exploits of Finn and the *scéalaí* the pranks of the red man. The two surviving storytellers in 1960 were both old men, but the *seanchai* died in 1963 and the *scéalaí* two years later. Both had been prolific contributors to Irish Folklore Commission collectors and Continental folklorists. [814]

All of the above kinds of folklore expression, with the exception of folktales, were regarded as true by island folk in the past. The myths either coexisted or were reinterpreted with Biblical stories, and the legends were synchronized with events of ancient world history dating from just before the Flood to the eighth century. The Inis Beag *scéalaí* sometimes was derided by school children for still believing his narratives to be true, as was the *seanchai* for claiming that the supernatural happenings described in his tales actually were experienced by islanders in the past century. Both narrators for many years had been visited only by folklorists [814] and tourists wishing to hear them relate their repertoires of stories, for the only form of storytelling which has been perpetuated is the occasional gathering of men in a home or pub to exchange anecdotes, mostly related to fishing. I was told that in his prime the *scéalaí* could have recited narratives nightly for "at least a month" without ever repeating a story, had he ever been called on to do so. That [114] the memory of the esteemed narrator is prodigious is revealed in the complete collection of all the material recorded from a single *scéalaí* of Co. Kerry, reported by Delargy, which included 396 pages of text: 186 tales, a few songs and song fragments, and various smaller items of prose and verse. These had been obtained from 27 different sources by the narrator, all of whom save one were neighbors (Delargy 1945:11).

Most liked by the folk were the prose narratives related by the *scéalaí* and 538 tales of recent and contemporary historical events in the region, stories of the 539 supernatural in Inis Beag, and personal experiences told by the *seanchai*. Few of the stories dealt with historical occurrences in Ireland between the coming of Christianity and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and none of them concerned personages or happenings associated with the church. At my request, the 124 *seanchai* read three books of Irish folklore that I had brought with me—J. J. Camp- 538 bell's *Legends of Ireland*, Jeremiah Curtin's *Irish Folk-Tales*, and Eileen O'Faolain's 539 *Irish Sagas and Folk-Tales*—and declared that he had heard all of the stories therein as a youth from his father and other island storytellers. However, the versions in the books often were "incorrect," he claimed, and he delighted in "correcting" them; of course, there are many variants of each tale (as many as 527—Aarne-Thompson type 300 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission), and he regarded the Inis Beag stories as the legitimate variants. Most of the local and Irish tales share types (plots) and motifs (incidents, characters, and objects) with those of European and other societies brought about by millennia of diffusion, but the Irish have refashioned these elements in their own corpus according to their culture and personality dispositions.

I will not discuss the various prose narratives told by the *scéalaí* of Inis 538 Beag; the greater number of them can be obtained from Campbell or O'Faolain 114 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent Folktales of Ireland.

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchai*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [571] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *seealai* or *seanchai* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[859] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semicircle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, however, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

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538 539 191 [537] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb 539 derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than 534 its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [178] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [184] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of [177] the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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533 534 177 178

and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party.

533 534 536 535 [123] [177]

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

114 533 533 184 [538] [171] [173] 533 [539]

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

[126] [539] 533 184

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body. 78 95

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation. 771 178 [184] [182]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit- 114 538

tent; they have depended on a limited sample of respondents; and most of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, which does not contain numerous categories of significance to anthropologists.

My wife and I devoted most of our research to documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also described formal and informal education and the personality traits formed by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many types and probing the memories of aged island respondents, and recorded cultural change in process over an eight-year period. The standard ethnographic research techniques that we employed include guided and open-ended interviews, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, cross-checking, photography, and phonography. The sample for much of our data was the total universe of 350 inhabitants.

It is extremely difficult to obtain information in Inis Beag about such matters as amounts and sources of income, disputes, pagan religious retentions and reinterpretations, and sex. This brief list might be increased by at least threefold and gives rise to a consideration of the problems associated with obtaining reliable data from the Irish in general and the islanders in particular. Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously presents one of the shortest, yet most discerning analyses of Irish national character yet written by a novelist and predicts the various reactions that her volume will evoke in Irish readers.[4] She concludes with the following remarks about the difficulties surrounding fact finding in Ireland:

> This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing

[4] These reactions appear to be institutionalized, as my writings and conversational remarks have also evoked them. Two additional responses that I have encountered are: my conclusions are invalidated because I failed to consult certain "source materials" written in Gaelic, and my inferior writing style precludes serious consideration of my findings. I take pains to explain, usually in vain, the many methods of fieldwork utilized by ethnographers to Irish persons who are critical of my data and who invariably use the phrase, "You can't trust what an Irishman tells you." On a rare occasion, one listener to my lengthy explanation said, "Ah, you're cuter than we are"—a compliment indeed!

12 cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which characterize ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as an epistemology.

181 The use by the folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and
195 "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition
[178] of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is a product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can very effectively serve to shield genuine thoughts
[538] and feelings and thus protect the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition of verbal skill, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*. (At least one folklorist has collected "Joycean utterances" from Irish peasants.)

123 Most of our information came from observation and unguided interviews. It proved impossible to take field notes openly, except when collecting innocuous data—such as the number of livestock owned by each householder—from a few particular persons. Thus, we were forced to limit our visits to less than two hours, after which we immediately
[562] transcribed what our combined memories could resuscitate. Despite frequent explanations of our presence in Inis Beag, which were candid and truthful, it was thought by the islanders that I was interested only in archeological sites and oral literature, and that my wife was not a trained and experienced co-worker; this, obviously, reflects their previous experiences with scientists and their conception of the position of women in society. Their inability to evaluate adequately our intentions proved
[609] to be a research boon. For once "accepted" (a relative term, since no outsider is ever accepted) after many months in the island, we were allowed to listen to and participate in conversations and activities from which we would otherwise have been excluded.

123 Our data on sex came from my involvement as a participant-
*831 observer in personal and often intimate conversations with men and my wife's counseling of women who were bothered by such matters as explaining and coping with menstruation, menopause, mental illness, the sexual curiosity of their children, and "excessive" sexual demands of their spouses. Our sexual knowledge and sympathy coupled with their needs and inquisitiveness gave rise to a "counselor-client" relationship between many of the folk and ourselves. They came to speak freely, albeit indirectly at times, with each of us about this sphere of behavior which arouses so much anxiety and fear. I must mention that the relationship

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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581 to them, but neither the Church nor the Irish farmers in-
601 clude them within the kinship system. Marriage taboo,
which the Church calls diriment impediment, does not ex-
612 tend to them. For this reason two brothers may marry two sisters under canon law, and a man his stepson's widow. There is no "blood" connection. For the same reason, the spouses of mother's and father's siblings, who are called uncles and aunts in American and British terminology, are not included in ego's group; "call" does not extend to them; they do not "belong" to ego.

581 The explanation of this exclusion of all relatives by
611 affinity except those brought in by ego's own individual
612 marriage lies in the concept of marriage uniting only the marrying individuals. For in the Irish system blood descent alone determines kinship: from the point of view of ego only those within a common system of blood descent are recognized as kin. Accordingly, on marrying, only those within a common system of descent with ego's wife become kin. Such a rigid adherence to the principle of descent does not prevent the development of very amicable and prescribed relations with such individuals as one's father's brother's wife. It merely excludes them from one's own kinship group.

601 The Irish terminology expresses the same reckoning of
612 affinity. The word *cleamhnas* covers both marriage and relationship by affinity. It also indicates a "match." The word *céile* is used both as an adverb with the sense of the English word "together" and as a noun meaning "mate."
601 *Céile* is the root of various expressions, such as *céilidheacht*,
612 referring to marriage. In Irish, father-in-law is called either
539 *athair cleamhna* or *athair chéile*, mother-in-law *máthair chéile*, as in the proverb:

> Bean mhic is máthair chéile,
> Mar chat agus luch ar aghaidh a céile

(mother-in-law and daughter-in-law like cat and mouse together). 601 612 [539]

Similar terms are used for brother- and sister-in-law. But in both languages the tendency is again to use purely descriptive phrases analogous to those we found in designating blood kindred. Thus "my wife's brother" and "my wife's mother," etc., are much more often heard among the farmers, both in English and in Irish.

The Irish language, however, has a separate term for son-in-law. It is *cliamhan*, which is related to the word *cleamhnas*. It is the only nondescriptive term in general use, for daughter-in-law is rendered as "son's wife" (*bean mhic*) in Irish. It may be that the singling out of this relative among those united to one by affinity reflects the greater importance put upon males in a patrilineal system.

The relatives by affinity just described include all those of the spouse's immediate family. The principle at work has been to coalesce ego's immediate or restricted kindred with his wife's. Beyond this group to whom the extension of the kinship behaviors is primary lies the total group of the wife's extended kindred. They are referred to as "my wife's friends"; there is a general tendency to extend kinship behavior to them; and they lie within the prohibited group. They are what might be expressed as potential kindred in the same sense that ego's third, fourth, and fifth cousins, their progenitors and descendants, are potential kindred. Should the need arise, the common descent may be remembered. At times of family crises, particularly at funerals, this sort of bond comes into active force. 612

In this fact lies the peculiar character of a kinship system based upon extension rather than rigidity of form. The demarcations between the kindred groups of one individual and the next are not rigidly drawn. The individual can expand and contract the group outward from the restricted family to which he belongs. If he is important in the com- 612 554 602

342 This custom should be compared with the proverb which I have heard in different parts of Western Ireland: "Only a man stronger than God can [539] build back (westward) of his house" *(Is treise ná Dia an fear a chuireann siar le na theach")*. Additions made at the fireplace end of the house are always used as bedrooms. Therefore it will be very difficult to decide whether the bedroom behind the fireplace has originated as an addition to a gable-chimney house or as a partition of a central chimney house. When the wall behind the fire-place does not reach the roof the house must be regarded as a central-chimney house. Now and then it is also possible to discover in another way whether the bedroom belongs to the original house, or is built as an addition to a gable-chimney house.

In both house types the partition walls at the lower end of the house very often were made by very thin wooden partitions, *síleála*. As already mentioned, furniture especially the dresser may be used instead of a partition wall, fig. 1.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland you will find the fireplace cut off to a certain degree from the living room and forming a special kitchen corner by stone-built breasts or piers at both or at one side of the fire-place. This side wall of the fire-place can also be built of wood, fig. 6, and can go a good way into the room, so that the kitchen corner will be more like a closed room.

342 171 Such houses with fireplace partition apparently have their parallels in Welsh houses. The Irish house, then, closely resembles to the living room of the Welsh long-house. This type of Irish house can be called "house with fireplace partition".

Another way of arranging accommodation in the house is to build lofts, *lochta*, and rooms on an upper floor. This upper floor will be arranged at both ends of the living room or kitchen. Then the arrangement with the house divided into three sections and with lofts at both ends is very similar to a house type in southern Sweden, the socalled Sydgötiska huset.[4] which has the kitchen or "stugan" in the centre of the house without any loft and at both ends additional chambers with lofts. Another likeness between the Irish and South Swedish houses is that there are bedplaces in the same way in the additional rooms.

[417] In the Irish house the loft can be reached by a ladder from the kitchen.

The construction of the different elements of the house.

342 Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building-material, the Irish peasant house never

In Tuosist the reason given to me by my father and some other old people was that ill-luck would fall upon Kerry and especially on the parish of Tuosist, if the Corkmen succeeded in forcing the coffin across Leac na gCorp and laid it down on Kerry soil. Sickness, bad crops, and misfortunes of many kinds would follow the corpse, if it were laid beyond the boundary-stone. This is undoubtedly the original reason for the defence of the border on funeral days. A corpse has in many lands for long been regarded as having evil magical power (known scientifically as *orenda* or *mana*) of an impersonal kind latent in itself. In Ireland, for example, fishermen regarded it as unlucky to take the corpse of a drowned person into a boat. Also, *an féar gorta* ("the hungry grass"), which grew wherever a corpse touched the earth, had the power of causing all those who walked over the spot to be stricken with abnormal hunger. Many other instances of the evil power of a corpse might be cited. Just two hundred years ago, Morty Óg O'Sullivan, a native chieftain of Béara in West Cork, who had fought against the British both in Ireland and in many European countries as a member of the "Wild Geese", was slain outside his own house near Eyeries in Béara. The British took his body to a warship at Bere Island and dragged it through the sea in the wake of the ship about sixty miles to Cork. A poet who described this happening wrote the couplet: 764 578 778 [539]

Ní raibh aon rath ar an uisce ó Chorcaigh go Béara
Ó tairngeadh tríd an bradán gléigeal.[1]

No fish were said to have since been caught in the sea-route through which the corpse was dragged.

In Sweden, Miss Louise Hagberg tells us, if a corpse were carried over cultivated ground or over lakes, they became thereby unfruitful, and crop-growing fields lost their vegetation. She also says that during the Middle Ages those persons over whose lands a corpse was carried unlawfully had the right to compensation; in Västergötland anybody who carried a corpse across the land of another, without the permission of the owner, rendered himself liable to a prescribed fine. 171

Thus, the funeral-boundary customs in the Cork-Kerry area, which have died out only in comparatively recent times, seem to fit into the wider pattern of custom and superstition devised to give protection against the magical evil power associated with corpses.

2. Wearing Clothes for the Dead

In the year 1918 or so, an uncle of mine died in the townland of Fehanagh, in the parish of Tuosist, in southwest Kerry. This is my native parish. Jerry Sullivan was my uncle's name; he died at the age of sixty-four. I was fifteen years old at the time, and was spending some weeks of my summer holidays at my uncle's when he became ill and died. I was allowed to remain in the house during the illness, wake, and funeral. 764 294 292

It is still the immemorial custom in that parish to get a suit of clothes specially made by a local tailor when a person dies. The suit is not worn by the corpse in the coffin. Still, it is intended

[1] There has been no luck on the water from Cork to Béara
Since the gleaming salmon was dragged through it.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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In such a clique, the student of social behaviour 573
can see fairly closely the interplay of social dispositions and individual character. Concrete cases have a way of disposing of controversies by transporting the issue to a new plane. In the study of such a case as this, as we shall see, the old question whether the individual affects the society or the society moulds the individual—a long-standing scholastic debate among sociologists—can be pushed into well-merited oblivion. For the answer is that both interpretations are correct; and that neither is at all penetrating. The issue is free to move to a new plane: the relations between behaviours and the patterning of sentiment and conduct.

In the old men's clique of Rynamona we have our concrete instance. Similar old men's gatherings from any other of the rural communities my colleagues and I knew would serve as well. They are remarkably similar even to duplicating nicknames. For as our informant explains: "That is the [539]
way it always was and that is the way it always will be". A social system endures in past and future and exists in space, its changes are changes of this spatial and temporal world, its constancies are likewise bound to earth and time.

Rynamona, then, shall be our present instant 361
in time and space. Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another of the 'good land'

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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234 776 789 told by a Clare farmer of friends of his, whose house he named:

"Two men return from a fair to the house of one 234 of them to have breakfast. There the woman was 776 churning, but no butter would come. The first of 789 the men suggested maybe they [the men] were ● 539 holding it up, and they left the house, but with no result, for when they returned there was still no butter. Upon finding out that an old woman, a stranger, had borrowed a bit of milk the day before, the first man closed the doors, took a ploughshare and held it in the turf fire. Soon there came a knock at the door, and after the third knock the woman of the house went to it. Then an old woman's hand passed a jug of milk through the crack of the door and a voice said: 'put this back in the churn'. She did so, and immediately all the milk turned to good butter."

But the farmer knows, too, that the fairies do not 776 always work alone. There is often a human agency 754 involved along with theirs. Here one enters the really dangerous 'pisherogues', the practices of wicked magic. A human being may perform a rite or omit a precaution in such a way as to bring about a visitation of ill-luck and disaster. He may transfer disease and sickness from his own farm to the next, he may steal the butter of another's churn, he may destroy, steal, maim and kill by inducing the super-776 natural powers to commit the havoc.

789 But sometimes the human being who brings

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

about such a visitation upon another does so un- 776
intentionally, innocent of evil intent. A person can 789
be either lucky or unlucky; he may tap a fairy [777]
power without meaning to. Thus one humorous story, a favourite yarn of the fairy-lore, found widely over Ireland, relates the misadventures of one rash fellow:

"A man that was usually drunk was going by a 789
fort one night and he heard 'them' talking in it, and 776
saying, 'I'll take half of it and let you have the 539
other.' 'I'll have all of it', shouted my boy-o, never thinking. When he got home, his wife was making butter, but she couldn't get any to come. But now she tried again, and it came in and filled the churn twice over and ran over the floor. There was a big farmer near by, and it was all his butter she was getting. She was an honest woman and knew the butter wasn't hers and she wanted to make it known she hadn't anything to do with it, so she told the priest about it."

Other things than butter are so taken, of course. 776
Cattle figure prominently in folk belief. Cattle, as 789
we know, are very important to the countryman. 233
The time of calving is a crucial event in farm-family life. Consequently, precautions must be taken; danger is abroad, and rites must be performed. If cattle fall sick, other rites drive off the threatening good people and restore the cow to health. Fairy-tales are full of the taking of cattle by the people of the raths.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

173 'deed of old' to delighted listening ears, but in language so ancient as to be now almost unintelligible to most Irish speakers of the modern school." The tradition of St. Brendan's discovery of America is well known, but the statement made by old writers about the supposed anti-putrefactive nature of the soil of Inishglora, does not seem to be recognised by the people of the district, who point to the bones among the ruins in disproof of the story.

O'Flaherty, in his "Ogygia," mentions the island in the following
● 539 lines :—

> "In Innisglore on Erris shore,
> Should we the bodies of our sires explore
> We'ed find them blooming, fresh and fair,
> No human flesh can rot or perish there."

The Priest's Leap.—Just below the sea face of Dunnamoe, and
173 separated from it by a narrow channel, is a large rock, which, tradition
823 relates, was once part of the cliff on which the fort is built. It is said that once in the old times, some say the time of Cromwell, a priest was saying Mass at Tarmoncarra, when he was surprised by the soldiery. Not knowing whither to fly, he ran towards the cliffs and reached them at this spot, his pursuers coming close behind him. Just when all seemed lost the large mass of rock on which he was broke away from the cliff and settled down in the sea as an islet, bearing down the priest with it, comfortably seated, in a niche, known as the "priest's chair," sheltered from the bullets of his enemies. Thus protected he remained until night, when he was taken off in a curragh by his people. The place has since been known as the "Priest's Leap."

The Namhoge or Neewoge.—There was formerly on Iniskea a small
778 stone figure called the *neewoge* (little saint), which was believed to have great power over the weather, and was accordingly treated with great reverence and used to be invoked for favourable winds. It is said that a pirate landed on the island, and after carrying off all that was portable, set fire to the houses, with the exception of the one in which the *neewoge* was kept, which did not take fire. Search was made for the cause and the image was taken out and broken. The *neewoge* never fully recovered this treatment. His power, though still great, was not the same as it had been.

Some years ago the attention of the parish priest became directed to the existence of this image, and having obtained the stone by a stratagem from the woman who was its custodian he threw it into the sea. As he died not very long after this, some of the islanders ascribe

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

THE THATCHED HOUSE

Poverty and rack-renting undoubtedly contributed to the long survival of such conditions, but they ultimately derive from cultural forces of wide distribution and high antiquity. It used to be said in defence of the custom of sharing the house with the cow that she helped to keep the house warm and that in turn the cow yielded more milk. Inquire further and you will find that it was thought to be unlucky if the cow was not able to get a glimpse of the fire. Behind this belief there lies faith in the power of the fire to dispel evil spirits. The end of the house farthest from the hearth is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-end', a relic of the time when it housed the cattle, for it was obviously wise to have the floor sloping down towards the byre. Many cabins and huts were constructed as lean-tos against a bog-face or an old fence (ditch). Hence the saying applied, for example, to the Cappagh district of Co. Armagh, that 'you can't cross a ditch or you'll fall down a chimney'. It should be recalled that in Ireland the tenants built and repaired their own houses with, normally, no assistance from the landlord, and there was little inducement to build houses to last longer than the lease of say twenty-one years. Only in Ulster under the custom of tenant right could outgoing tenants claim recompense from the new tenants for improvements made. 342 362 231 [372] [361] [539]

The simple rectangular shape is a feature of west European house-types from prehistoric times and has characterized some houses of Neolithic age excavated in Ireland. Such houses were usually built of timber, clay or sods (scraws). Circular or oval houses are of similar antiquity, whether made of stone or of wattles, but although a few round-ended rectangular houses survive, the round hut of corbelled stone slabs is used today only as a store place or animal house (Chapter IX). The houses of Achill Island are described by several writers about 1840 as circular or oval in shape, built of boulders without mortar and having the thatched roof continuous with the walls. They had neither chimneys nor windows, and the single door was sometimes not more than four feet high. None of these houses is now inhabited though their ruins can be seen. The round or oval house, however, has probably contributed to certain features of the traditional rectangular-house in some areas, for example the central hearth and the hipped roof which is proper 342

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional 352
width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed—the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the [171] Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart 462
and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, 372
the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' [539] The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is [574] invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can [787] give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which ancestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1] [769]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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were known as noggin weavers. Cheap delph has now taken the place of the noggin, but the word survives in a phrase I have heard applied to a child who is thriving on his food: 'he wants a stave out of his noggin'.

The art of pot-making declined and in many parts of the country almost disappeared after the late Bronze Age, when bronze cauldrons came in to provide serviceable cooking-vessels. Some archaeologists have related this decline to the climatic deterioration of the late Bronze Age, but it is more reasonable to associate it with an increase of pastoral pursuits and a diet of whitemeats. The bronze cauldrons were highly prized: from Gaelic literature we know that they were the special property of the head of the house and they seem to have taken on something of the magic of the early pots. They were sometimes credited with strange virtues such as the ability to yield to each guest the piece of flesh to which his rank or occupation entitled him, and they occupy a prominent place in folk-lore and legend.

It is interesting to notice that the bulk of the earliest prehistoric pots in Ireland are of plain brown burnished earthenware, faithful copies of the leather prototypes proper to a pastoral people. This western European Neolithic pottery is one of the indications of a common substratum in the early civilizations of Atlantic Europe. The round-bottomed vessels simulated round-bellied leather containers, which may well have continued to be used for cooking into historic times. We know that whole cow-hides were employed for the purpose in Elizabethan times. This is undoubtedly a survival of older custom: we find it among hunting peoples, for example the Indians of Labrador are in the habit of preparing broth in a vessel made from the belly of a caribou. A relic of the substitution of pots for skins may perhaps be seen in the persistent Irish belief that the money obtained from the sale of a cow-hide should be used for the purchase of a metal vessel. The Scots, as Froissart and Burt tell us, cooked their beef in skins stretched on four stakes. Fynes Moryson says of the Irish: 'Flesh they seethe in a hollow tree lapped in a raw cow's hide, and so set over the fire.'[1] From prehistoric times we have many ancient

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 228.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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407 version of the foot-plough. This is an almost unexplored field
241 of rural history. Mr. Aitken is of the opinion, however, that the left-sided plough goes with the use of the right hand as holding hand.

At any rate it is interesting to find that in Ireland the majority
412 of diggers use the right foot, and although in theory the
241 wooden foot-rest of the native one-eared spade can be fitted either to left or right of the narrow blade it is, in the west, almost invariably on the right side. Presumably only habitually left-handed people use the left foot. In eastern Ireland, on the other hand, and particularly in the Protestant districts of the north-east, the left foot is normally the digging-foot, though judging from the proportions of right to left (about one to three in the north-east), the old Irish stocks continue to dig with the right foot. Hence there is a basis of fact in the phrase 'digging
[539] with the wrong foot'. (To say that someone digs with the other
[798] foot is in Ireland an oblique way of referring to his religious faith.) The old Irish spade, we have seen, is a highly specialized tool. It may have been preceded by some kind of hoe or planting stick such as are represented today by the graffan or the steeveen which we describe in the following chapter.

We have no direct evidence of Bronze Age ploughs in Ire-
174 land, though marks of furrows have been observed underneath
407 burial barrows of that period in Jutland and Holland and it has been claimed that the *ard* had reached the west Baltic region
412 before the end of the Neolithic phase. However this may be the sod-cutting spade, which could be supplemented by the wooden shovel, is not likely to have been introduced much before the beginning of the Christian era, since it required an efficient knowledge of iron-working. By facilitating the building of ridges it would have improved crop yields during a climatic period, the sub-Atlantic, which was even wetter than at present. A mould-board plough capable of forming ridges did not reach Ireland on present evidence until about the seventh century, and as we have seen it had not been adopted in parts of the west until the nineteenth century. Thus the narrow spade, coming into use at about the same time as oats, would have been a factor in stabilizing settlement by permitting ridge cultivation on the outfield grazing ground round about. This is speculative,

241 west, for it means that the ridges can be prepared beforehand as opportunity offers. What is known as the Munster mode of planting 'with the back of the spade' is to thrust the narrow spade through the inverted top sod and drop the set behind the blade as it is levered forward. On the average three rows of potatoes go to each bed, but there are also one- two- and four-set ridges.

A special wooden dibber known as the steeveen, kibbin (little 241 spade) or gugger is employed for planting in Cavan, Leitrim 412 and Longford and may perhaps be correlated with the heavy loy as another archaic tool which has kept its hold in that area. The steeveen with its conical head (Fig. 48) will break through the toughest sod and open a way for the young sprouts. Typi- [462] cally 'guggering' is woman's work, the children following, [857] dropping in the sets and closing the hole with a fork or a mell. I like to think that the steeveen is descended from that universal tool of the women of humble cultivating societies, the digging or planting stick, remote ancestor of the spade. It is a plausible theory that the crops of wheat and barley sown by the first Irish cultivators were planted in this way in the ashes of burnt woodland on the mountainsides. Larger dibbers or 'stamps' with several teeth for planting corn were used until quite recently in some counties, for example Armagh (Fig. 49).

[407]

Fig. 49. Dibbers and (*centre*) sowing fiddle, Co. Armagh.

They are probably the descendents of specimens introduced by English 'planters' of the early seventeenth century. It is the [539] dibberhole which is referred to in the rhyme which has outlived the action it once accompanied:

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241
[539]

LAZY-BEDS

Four seeds in a hole,
One for the rook
One for the crow
One to rot
And one to grow.

The sowing fiddle which scatters seed broadcast and which may frequently be seen in use in some districts, for example Co. Down, is another introduction from England which has survived here longer than in its presumed home (Fig. 49). The fiddler makes a striking figure, seen from a distance, as he strides steadily up and down the field with his silent instrument; he must beware of changing his pace whether going uphill or downhill or the crop will grow in uneven strips. [407]

In many parts of the world burning of the vegetation is a necessary preliminary to shifting cultivation, and the use of fire in the preparation of the outfield for ridge cultivation therefore raises some interesting questions. We know that the burning of sods pared from rough pasture, sometimes called 'denshiring' from its reputed Devonshire home, was widely practised in Ireland down to the time of the famine. In the early nineteenth century nine-tenths of the potatoes grown in Co. Clare were planted on burnt land,[1] and a special skinning plough was used to pare off the sod. Elsewhere the graffan and flachter were put to a like purpose. From a description of Donegal in 1880 it seems that the drying and warming of the soil were regarded as more important than the fertilizing ashes: 'There is on the fresh bogs a process of heating resorted to in the Spring, i.e., the end of April and the first half of May: the piles of earth are never allowed to burn out into a fire but combustion is kept stopped up within the mass . . . the heated earth, not ashes, is scattered and the first crop put in.'[2] Where the land was of fairly good quality only the furrow sods were burnt. They were stood on edge to dry and then burnt in piles on the ridges, after which the ashes were spread and the potato sets planted in them, to be covered with earth dug from the trenches in the usual way.[3] The process of paring and burning seems to

[1] H. Dutton, *Clare* (1808), 36.

[2] *Report of the Royal Commission on the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881* (1887), Appendix B, 137.

[3] R. Thompson, *Meath*, 272.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

HARVEST

243 Corn harvest did not begin until a certain set day which differed in various parts of the country, and the appointed day was a time of much excitement. The following description of [171] the Reaping Blessing in the Scottish Highlands would probably apply to Ulster, though I have not found a record of it in Ireland. 'The day the reaping began was one of commotion and ceremonial. The whole family repaired to the field dressed in their best . . . the father of the family took his sickle and, facing the sun, cut a handful of corn. Putting it three times sunwise round his head, the Reaping Blessing was sung'.[1] We know that in Ireland it was the custom for the first sheaves cut to be scutched or lashed, that is the grain was beaten out without using the flail. The winnowed grain was parched over the fire, ground in a quern and boiled in time to make a breakfast for the reapers.[2] This ceremonial breakfast undoubtedly preserves archaic practices.

Reaping with hook or sickle is by no means uncommon on little hill farms where fields are small and uneven, but the days of the great 'gatherings' are no more, when down to late in the last century as many as seventy men might have been seen at work. Most of the lore of these reaping boons has passed away unrecorded, and we get only glimpses of the terrible strain imposed on the toilers and the compensating gaieties. The [558] pressure was most severe when to the rivalry between workers was added the drive of a pace-setter, for it was a mark of disgrace not to keep pace. In Ulster the leader of the boon was 'stubble hook', so called because his ridge was the first of the 'set', next the stubble. (A set was the number of ridges equal to the number of reapers in the boon). The driver, called 'corn-land', took the rig or land next to the standing corn, and between the two the other reapers on their ridges would strive to keep a straight line. 'A bad shearer', runs the Ulster saying, ● [539] 'always gets a big rig and a blunt hook'. But a spirited reaper, I have been told, 'would die upon the rig before he would suffer "corn-land" to pass him'. Between each set a rest was taken at the 'land-end' and it was an interlude of 'crack and courting'. If we may judge from a Scottish custom, any visiting

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928).
[2] *Béaloideas*, 10, 293.

13 Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 is worth noticing that symbols in the form of a swastika, but
789 including also circles, pentagrams and horses, were formerly cut as protective devices in the beams of barns in Scandinavia. Some of the designs are reminiscent of the art of the Bronze Age.

243 An Irish verse giving the four essentials of a good thrashing, collected in Co. Armagh, runs in translation:

●[539]

A hand-staff of holly,
A souple of hazel,
A single sheaf,
And a clean floor.

This is where the besom of heather or bent comes in: it is still preferred to the sweeping-broom for a clay floor or to get into the joins of boards or cobbles. Thrashing was a daily job, carried out on well-run farms night and morning before the cattle were fed. It was held that the cattle throve best on freshly thrashed oats, and the storage of grain would anyhow have been difficult where there were no barns.[1] For this reason, too, the level 'street' in front of the house, or even the public road was often the most suitable floor available. The thrashing was usually done on a strong linen sheet. Publicity as well as a steady echoing beat seem to have been the desired aims. Every-
[555] where prestige has attached to a noisy thrashing, and partly no doubt for self-aggrandisement a solitary thrasher would beat with his feet to make the noise of two. Everywhere too the
[533] sound of the flail has been turned into jingles and rustic rhymes. They did not accompany the work itself because it was too noisy and too exhausting to allow talking or singing. The flails' beaters made their own merry music; was it, one wonders, originally intended to drive away evil spirits from the precious food supply?

222 In this chapter we have confined ourselves to some of the
824 things that were made at home out of materials that lay to hand. To describe the utilization of all the lesser plants that have

[343] [1]Mr. A. T. Lucas, however, has described traditional outdoor granaries, now restricted to west Cork, constructed of thick straw ropes, which when completed resemble round stacks (*Gwerin*, I (1956), 2–20). Mr. V. B. Proudfoot calls my attention to the similar 'corn bykes' of Caithness (*P.S.A.S.* (1932), 136–7).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the belief that it contained the essence of the flowers of the 527
fields. Sprigs of rowan were stuck in the midden, placed over 824
the door of the byre and hung on the cows' horns. Flowers were 751
also put around the well, for it was supposed that a milk-thief
could steal your summer's milk and butter by skimming the
water at this time, or by dragging a rope across a field to collect
the dew. Boundary streams were also potent in this connexion,
and I was told in Donegal that the milk churn had to be washed
on May Day in 'three landlords' waters', that is the meeting
place of three properties.

Besides these family rites there were public ceremonies, the 527
lighting of bonfires and parades of May Babies, of May Boys
and the May Queen. One of the rhymes sung by May Boys in
the west of Ireland runs, in translation:

> Summer! Summer! the milk of the heifers, [539] ●
> And ourselves brought the summer with us,
> The yellow summer, and the white daisy,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us.[1]

The May Baby parades link the festival with the fertility of the 527
family as well as the fields. I give an account of the ceremonies 842
as described in Co. Louth in the early nineteenth century: 'On 831
May Day, the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short
pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons,
etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby' . . . Around this
figure a man and woman (generally his wife) of the humble
class, dressed also fantastically with straw, etc., dance to the
sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows
and postures . . . These exhibitions cause great merriment
among the assembled populace; women who have had no child-
ren to their husbands also attend to see this figure and per-
formance, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them,
and cause them to have children.'[2]

The May Day bonfires and the May Queens are now little 527
more than children's games and excuses for begging. The 372
burning of bones—whence the word bonfire, which in Ireland
keeps its original pronunciation—and in particular of horses'

[1]Lady Wilde, *The Dublin University Magazine* (1849), 541–60.
[2]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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583 [581] matter of form to make valid the marriage.'[1] After the famine, at least, the mutual attraction of the suitors themselves was a secondary consideration. An ill-favoured girl could be made pretty with a dowry of cows or its equivalent in cash, known in the west as 'dry-money'. A marriage between near relatives was not unknown if it meant keeping the name on the land or enlarging the patrimony: 'a blanket is the better of being doubled,' it was said. 'We are all related one way or another' is a comment one hears in isolated mountain districts. In general romantic love was the luxury of the landless, but whatever the motives of marriage there were many charms and omens to be taken into account in winning a person's affections, and some of the magic devices to which a girl might resort are listed in one of Bryan Merryman's poems of the late eighteenth century:

● [539]

> Up the chimney stuck the flail
> Slept with a spade without avail,
> Hid my wool in the limekiln late
> And my distaff behind the churchyard gate;
> Flax in the road to halt coach and carriage,
> And haycocks stuffed with heads of cabbage.[2]

582 To this day the marriage or remarriage of old men to young women is regarded as unnatural and wrong, perhaps because it complicates the question of succession. In Co. Wexford, and probably elsewhere, unpopular marriages of this kind are marked by noisy gatherings of young men who serenade the married couple with horn-blowing. A similar custom, the *vito*, is well-known in Andalusia, where it includes the ringing of cow-bells and the singing of scurrilous songs. One of the strangest 585 [292] traditional features of Irish weddings is the visitation of 'straw-boys', that is youths wearing straw masks who attend as uninvited guests and disport themselves at the dance which normally follows a wedding (Fig. 88). I am told that they may still be seen occasionally in Co. Cavan and parts of the west. Formerly the visitors also wore straw suits or white shirts and red petticoats decorated with coloured ribbons. The leader

[1] Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 82.
[2] *The Midnight Court*, translated by Frank O'Connor (1945).

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up or in a sort of cage,[7] was till lately carried around. There is still sometimes to be found tolerable dancing and singing, as a break in the weary succession of small begging parties, shuffling and playing stupid buffoonery. The verses usually begin :— 796 178

> "The wran, the wran, the king of all birds,
> On Stephen's Day was caught in the furze."

178

but the next lines are greatly varied :— 539

> "Although he is little, his family is great,
> And (*or* So) I pray you all ladies (*or* good Christians) to give him a treat."

796

I noted the following haunting lines on Stephen's Day in 1909 :—

> "Put your hand in your pocket and take out your purse
> And give us some money to bury the wran."

Equally melodious were lines in vogue some thirty years ago :—

> "We broke his bones with sticks and stones,
> And give us some money to get us a drink."

There was another form, evidently from an "artificial" source, heard by my elder brothers about Carnelly, perhaps sixty years ago or more :—

> "Landlady, Landlady, give us some cheer,
> Landlady, Landlady, give us some beer.
> If you give us of the best,
> We'll pray your soul in Heaven may rest.
> If you give us of the worse,
> We'll pray it will (*or* may) be quite the reverse."

It was generally believed that St. Stephen had hid in a cave, and that his retreat had been betrayed to his enemies by the wren. Mummers are now reappearing, after a long lapse of time, among the wren boys. 796 178

Another practice which my predecessors often saw before the Famine was the carrying of a sort of scarecrow figure, to represent St. Brigit, by women in August about the Clare Castle district. St. Brigit's rites in some places take place on Lady Day (August 15th).

Killing an animal, or a goose, at Martinmas and a goose at Michaelmas are of recent occurrence. On St. John's Eve I have, as a child, leaped over or passed between fires, and been told of cattle being forced to do the same. About 1895 very few bonfires were lighted, and the custom appeared likely to expire, but of late the

[7] A somewhat similar wren's cage has been procured for the National Museum, Dublin.

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

521 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk
203 publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and
571 young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [539] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other
589 Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of
162 the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7
582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
[824] the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[174] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[175] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid	She is deaf and
Dressed in white.	She is dumb.
Give her something	For God's sake,
For the night.	Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[233] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire, as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

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539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [182] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 796 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil 796 and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck 182 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [234] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [825] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood [237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 771 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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male but sometimes female. Also, the former occupied a higher prestige position [662]
than the latter, but there was not the clear-cut distinction between genres appro- [654]
priate to each type of narrator as elsewhere in Ireland; the *seanchaí* sometimes related the exploits of Finn and the *scéalaí* the pranks of the red man. The two surviving storytellers in 1960 were both old men, but the *seanchaí* died in 1963 and the *scéalaí* two years later. Both had been prolific contributors to Irish Folklore [814]
Commission collectors and Continental folklorists.

All of the above kinds of folklore expression, with the exception of folktales, were regarded as true by island folk in the past. The myths either coexisted or were reinterpreted with Biblical stories, and the legends were synchronized with events of ancient world history dating from just before the Flood to the eighth century. The Inis Beag *scéalaí* sometimes was derided by school children for still believing his narratives to be true, as was the *seanchaí* for claiming that the supernatural happenings described in his tales actually were experienced by islanders in the past century. Both narrators for many years had been visited only by folklorists [814]
and tourists wishing to hear them relate their repertoires of stories, for the only form of storytelling which has been perpetuated is the occasional gathering of men in a home or pub to exchange anecdotes, mostly related to fishing. I was told that in his prime the *scéalaí* could have recited narratives nightly for "at least a month" without ever repeating a story, had he ever been called on to do so. That [114]
the memory of the esteemed narrator is prodigious is revealed in the complete collection of all the material recorded from a single *scéalaí* of Co. Kerry, reported by Delargy, which included 396 pages of text: 186 tales, a few songs and song fragments, and various smaller items of prose and verse. These had been obtained from 27 different sources by the narrator, all of whom save one were neighbors (Delargy 1945:1!).

Most liked by the folk were the prose narratives related by the *scéalaí* and 538
tales of recent and contemporary historical events in the region, stories of the 539
supernatural in Inis Beag, and personal experiences told by the *seanchaí*. Few of the stories dealt with historical occurrences in Ireland between the coming of Christianity and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and none of them concerned personages or happenings associated with the church. At my request, the 124
seanchaí read three books of Irish folklore that I had brought with me—J. J. Camp- 538
bell's *Legends of Ireland*, Jeremiah Curtin's *Irish Folk-Tales*, and Eileen O'Faolain's 539
Irish Sagas and Folk-Tales—and declared that he had heard all of the stories therein as a youth from his father and other island storytellers. However, the versions in the books often were "incorrect," he claimed, and he delighted in "correcting" them; of course, there are many variants of each tale (as many as 527—Aarne-Thompson type 300 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission), and he regarded the Inis Beag stories as the legitimate variants. Most of the local and Irish tales share types (plots) and motifs (incidents, characters, and objects) with those of European and other societies brought about by millennia of diffusion, but the Irish have refashioned these elements in their own corpus according to their culture and personality dispositions.

I will not discuss the various prose narratives told by the *scéalaí* of Inis 538
Beag; the greater number of them can be obtained from Campbell or O'Faolain 114
or Sean O'Sullivan's recent Folktales of Ireland.

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [198] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [524] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, however, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

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538 539 191 [537] 538 539 add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

53 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

533 534 [178] [874] [184] [178] [177]

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533 634 177 178

and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céili* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céili* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céili* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party.

533 534 536 535 [123] [177]

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

114 533 533 184 [538] [171] [173] 533 [539]

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

[126] [539] 533 184

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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
• [539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[834] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania,* alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

> The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

*831
626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
154 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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543 and purchasing boards, it is still a powerful commercial and
443 social force in the rest of Ireland. In fact the numbers of fairs have increased with the post-famine dominance of the cattle trade, though they have tended to be concentrated in fewer centres as many small fair-towns have been by-passed by improved means of communication. On the other hand the weekly markets have declined or disappeared, their place taken by shops which typically handle drinks as well as groceries, clothing as well as hardware. Thus the fair has retained and even strengthened its magnetic hold on the countryfolk, and though many of its subsidiary functions have been taken over by institutions of more recent origin, the fair itself retains a pagan aura. There is a widespread belief, by no means confined to Ireland,
[821] that fair days are always rainy days. This belief may well be justified by climatic averages, but I have heard it explained as a consequence of the lies and profanity, the fights and pagan ways of the fair. Many an ancient fair has become extinct, no doubt because it no longer fulfilled its economic functions, but the explanation usually given is that it was abandoned 'on account of the fighting'.

In Europe, north of the Alpine mountains, the fair as a means
172 of exchange and social intercourse is an institution older than
543 the town, and older far than Christianity. The periodic assemblies of early Celtic Ireland served as temporary towns, and it was probably these sites which Ptolemy marked as cities on his map of the second century A.D. They were held on hill-tops hallowed by an antiquity which archaeology has in some instances traced back to the Bronze Age, and the regions which they served were, we have suggested, already taking shape in the late Neolithic period. Ireland has a number of large enclosures of Neolithic date analogous to Windmill Hill in Wiltshire, which apparently functioned as seasonal meeting places where stock was rounded-up and sorted. An enclosure
[541] of rather different type but of similar age—the Giant's Ring near Belfast—was the scene of horse-racing down to recent centuries. On the cairn-crowned Cave Hill, too, overlooking
543 Belfast, crowds used to assemble on Easter Monday 'in accordance with immemorial usage'.[1] We may see in the 'parles

[1] J. B. Doyle, *Tours in Ulster* (1855), 102.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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upon hills', which the Dublin government found so obnoxious in the sixteenth century, the persistent efforts of the Irish to maintain their ancient rights and customs of public assembly. In the Anglo-Norman period and again during the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries towns were deliberately established with the intention of bringing 'civilized ways of living to the wild Irish'. Many of them are characterized by a wide street or square—the 'diamond' in Northern Ireland—where fairs and other gatherings could be dominated and controlled from a castle which overlooked it. These urban settlements were known to the Irish, whose native 'towns' were rarely anything more than disorderly clachans, as 'street towns'. They are found scattered at fairly regular intervals all through the countryside, usually at some river crossing or hill gap where routeways meet. Some of them, well-placed in good fertile country, have expanded, while others have decayed or remained mere villages. Often one will find not far away the old Fair Hill from which the fair was attracted as the facilities of the town outweighed the traditional pull of the inconvenient hill-top. But for long the Irish kept to their own fairs which continued, according to an Act of 1481, to 'take great customs and profits to the depression of the boroughs and the trading towns'.[1] The old assembly places are not entirely forgotten, and it often happened that they were visited for games and horse-racing long after they had lost their function as places of commerce. They are celebrated in local ballads and their sites can still be traced by the grassy mounds which are the remains of booths and cattle pens. The lost fairs of Ireland deserve a study such as is being made of the lost villages of England, but the chief sources for such a study, in the absence of records, must lie in field work and the fast-fading memories of the countryside.

The fairs were formerly organized in a recognized sequence of goods and livestock, terminating in sports and horse-racing—and not infrequently in bloodshed. Several of them achieved a notoriety which made their names a byword, and among them none was more notorious, owing partly no doubt to its proximity to Dublin, than Donnybrook Fair. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of 1845 forgets its sober purpose in thus describing

[1] T. W. Freeman, *Ireland*, 95.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [641]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XVIII

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

THE Irish countryman enjoys nothing so much as 'a gathering' of people, and when he is forced to leave his native land he does not willingly settle down away from large urban centres. At home a crowd goes to his head like poteen. The daily routine of life on an isolated farm presents him with few opportunities for seeing people from outside his immediate neighbourhood, and on fine summer evenings his favourite pastime is to throw himself against a roadside ditch with a knot of companions and watch the passers-by. That the remarkably large attendances at rural churches and chapels owe something to the social needs of a scattered population is suggested by the phrase, applied to someone who arrives late at chapel: 'he missed the mass but hit the gathering'—he had something worth while for his trouble. In the Irish laws the freeman's rights of assembly were carefully defined: there were assemblies for transacting legal business (the oireacht), and others for commerce and games (the aenach) which came to be called fairs. With the coming of Christianity the traditional gatherings at sacred sites were transmuted into patterns (pardons), at which the new religion was quickened by practices of the elder faiths. In fact most gatherings served more than one purpose. The secret assemblies of Roman Catholics at 'mass rocks' in penal days no doubt also provided opportunities for social and commercial dealings, and the 'sacrament Sabbaths' of Presbyterian Ulster were great gatherings having something of the nature of fairs. Tents and booths were erected for the occasion, and indeed they were popularly known as 'holy fairs'.

Although the fair has lost something of its former significance in Northern Ireland, thanks to Government marketing schemes

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

543 and purchasing boards, it is still a powerful commercial and
443 social force in the rest of Ireland. In fact the numbers of fairs have increased with the post-famine dominance of the cattle trade, though they have tended to be concentrated in fewer centres as many small fair-towns have been by-passed by improved means of communication. On the other hand the weekly markets have declined or disappeared, their place taken by shops which typically handle drinks as well as groceries, clothing as well as hardware. Thus the fair has retained and even strengthened its magnetic hold on the countryfolk, and though many of its subsidiary functions have been taken over by institutions of more recent origin, the fair itself retains a pagan aura. There is a widespread belief, by no means confined to Ireland,
[821] that fair days are always rainy days. This belief may well be justified by climatic averages, but I have heard it explained as a consequence of the lies and profanity, the fights and pagan ways of the fair. Many an ancient fair has become extinct, no doubt because it no longer fulfilled its economic functions, but the explanation usually given is that it was abandoned 'on account of the fighting'.

In Europe, north of the Alpine mountains, the fair as a means
172 of exchange and social intercourse is an institution older than
543 the town, and older far than Christianity. The periodic assemblies of early Celtic Ireland served as temporary towns, and it was probably these sites which Ptolemy marked as cities on his map of the second century A.D. They were held on hill-tops hallowed by an antiquity which archaeology has in some instances traced back to the Bronze Age, and the regions which they served were, we have suggested, already taking shape in the late Neolithic period. Ireland has a number of large enclosures of Neolithic date analogous to Windmill Hill in Wiltshire, which apparently functioned as seasonal meeting places where stock was rounded-up and sorted. An enclosure of rather different type but of similar age—the Giant's Ring
[541] near Belfast—was the scene of horse-racing down to recent centuries. On the cairn-crowned Cave Hill, too, overlooking
543 Belfast, crowds used to assemble on Easter Monday 'in accordance with immemorial usage'.[1] We may see in the 'parles

[1] J. B. Doyle, *Tours in Ulster* (1855), 102.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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upon hills', which the Dublin government found so obnoxious in the sixteenth century, the persistent efforts of the Irish to maintain their ancient rights and customs of public assembly. In the Anglo-Norman period and again during the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries towns were deliberately established with the intention of bringing 'civilized ways of living to the wild Irish'. Many of them are characterized by a wide street or square—the 'diamond' in Northern Ireland—where fairs and other gatherings could be dominated and controlled from a castle which overlooked it. These urban settlements were known to the Irish, whose native 'towns' were rarely anything more than disorderly clachans, as 'street towns'. They are found scattered at fairly regular intervals all through the countryside, usually at some river crossing or hill gap where routeways meet. Some of them, well-placed in good fertile country, have expanded, while others have decayed or remained mere villages. Often one will find not far away the old Fair Hill from which the fair was attracted as the facilities of the town outweighed the traditional pull of the inconvenient hill-top. But for long the Irish kept to their own fairs which continued, according to an Act of 1431, to 'take great customs and profits to the depression of the boroughs and the trading towns'.[1] The old assembly places are not entirely forgotten, and it often happened that they were visited for games and horse-racing long after they had lost their function as places of commerce. They are celebrated in local ballads and their sites can still be traced by the grassy mounds which are the remains of booths and cattle pens. The lost fairs of Ireland deserve a study such as is being made of the lost villages of England, but the chief sources for such a study, in the absence of records, must lie in field work and the fast-fading memories of the countryside.

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[1] T. W. Freeman, *Ireland*, 95.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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443 it: 'During the week, beginning on the 26th August, is held
543 the notorious Donnybrook Fair, professedly for the sale of
578 horses and black cattle, but really for vulgar dissipation, and
786 formerly for criminal outrage and the most revolting debauchery. It was for generations a perfect prodigy of moral horrors —a concentration of disgrace upon, not Ireland alone, but civilized Europe. It far surpassed all other fairs in the multitude and grossness of its disgusting incidents of vice; and, in general, it exhibited such continuous scenes of riot, bloodshed, debauchery and brutality, as only the coarsest taste and the most hardened heart could witness without painful emotion.' This was by day; 'the orgies of the night may be better imagined than described'. An anonymous writer is quoted as saying: 'We venture to say that there is more misery and madness, devilment and debauchery, than could be found crowded into an equal space of ground in any other part of this our globe, during five times the same space, which is spent at Donnybrook, in one given year'. The *Gazetteer* then recovers itself and offers excuses for 'describing what ought never to have been described'. One regrets rather that the compiler was so overcome by horror as to forget his statistical duties.

The absence of moral restraint which led to extremes of
543 lawlessness at Donnybrook and elsewhere was a normal and
527 characteristic accompaniment of these periodic folk-gatherings.
443 Such moral holidays are a feature of many societies which have
[786] not been greatly influenced by urban ways and values. Their purpose appears to be cathartic, but that there is a lingering fertility magic underlying the excitement is suggested by such strange rituals as those which mark the 'Puck Fair and Pattern' of Kilorglin at the head of Dingle Bay in Co. Kerry. The fair is unfortunately not mentioned in the *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, though the village of Kilorglin is described as 'an unprosperous, sequestered, and almost squalid seat of population; and appears to have acquired marvellously little profit from the advantageousness of its position for both inland and seaward trade'. Puck Fair, held every August, is the great event of the year in West Kerry, and lasts three days. 10th August is 'Gathering Day', the 11th is 'Fair Day', and the 12th 'Scattering Day', terms which have no doubt been handed down from days when

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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'the order of the fair' was prescribed and the business lasted several days. On the evening of Gathering Day a procession assembles at the bridge and makes its way to the central square carrying (nowadays in a large cage mounted on a lorry) a billy-goat bedecked with ribbons. He is chained by the horns on a high platform erected for the purpose and, supplied with a liberal stock of cabbages, he presides over the fair. Tradition says that the goat used to stand, 'garlanded by greenery' on the old castle which was erected here by the Geraldines in the thirteenth century. The business of the fair is the sale of livestock, and as with many another large fair it is a traditional gathering place for the tinkers who in Ireland take the place of the gypsies. On the evening of Scattering Day the Puck is borne triumphantly back to the bridge. The popular explanation of the custom is that it commemorates an occasion when the noise of goats warned the Irish of advancing English forces, but it is more reasonable to see Puck as a symbol of fertility and good luck. 12th August is Old Lammas, and Lammas Day, the 1st August, was known to the Irish as 'Lewy's Fair', in memory of a pre-Christian deity. This season of high summer has many associations with the pastoral freedom of the hills, with young people and with dancing and courting. There are traditions of other Puck Fairs in the south of Ireland, and there were certain fairs at which a white horse was paraded through the assembled crowds and then tied up to preside over the proceedings.

543 527 443 [825] [825]

Another celebrated gathering place was the great fair of Ballinasloe, which brought such fame to this Galway town that the *Gazetteer* describes it as 'the cynosure of much the larger part of the western province of Ireland', so prosperous that even its poorer quarters, 'a segregation of lanes, and houses, and cabins, aggregately repulsive', were yet 'greatly less haggard than what constitutes the whole of many a third or second rate town in Ireland'. The fair was held from the 5th to the 9th of October, and during the first half of the nineteenth century the average numbers of sheep and cattle offered for sale were respectively 90,000 and 12,000. Ballinasloe Fair served the west of Ireland in much the same way as the great trysts of Crieff and Falkirk served the Scottish Highlands in the days of

443 the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous
527 gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone
543 grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon
[361] and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry
[487] footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those
489 of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement
439 of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-
441 dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose
439 experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[i.e., Ballinasloe.- Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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as they are called, were born in the mountain country of Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, adjoining the rich plains of the Pale where their ancestors sharpened their wits on the English settlers. Many stories are told of the tricks by which 'the goatmen' disposed of their animals before they reached their goal at Barnet Fair, of billy-goats sold to the innocent English as good milkers or as an infallible means of keeping a garden free of weeds. 'Every guy who comes here selling cloth', said a Canadian rancher, 'tells me he is from Slieve Gullion. It must be some city.'

Although the export of live cattle from Ireland was prohibited, in the interests of British farming, through most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the short sea-crossings from north-east Ireland enabled dealers to ship them to southern Scotland. The embargo was lifted in 1765, and by the early nineteenth century many thousands of cattle were reaching Portpatrick and being driven to the fairs at Dumfries and Carlisle, and farther afield to Barnet in Hertfordshire and St. Faith's near Norwich. Many Irish harvesters and other summer migrants followed the trails trodden by Irish cattle and their drovers, but after 1830, with the coming of the steamship, Glasgow, the Mersey and Holyhead became, as they remain, the chief points of entry for both animals and men.

Before the agrarian revolution and the import of feeding stuffs made it possible to keep stock through the winter, the months of October and November were critical for the farmer, who had to dispose of many of his animals at this time. The trade is now better distributed through the year, but although monthly fairs have become general since the famine, the sales vary a good deal from month to month, and the important fairs still fall at the turning points of the pastoral year, particularly in May and November. The spring fairs of February and March and the Lammas fairs of July and August were to a large extent concerned respectively with horses and with sheep and wool, but those of May and November were the great cattle fairs and also the hiring fairs. We are reminded that the Celtic year in pre-Christian times had only two seasons, winter and summer, and that the first days of November and May are still the Irish gale-days, the times when rents fall due.

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

443 One may readily see how this[1] came about, for these were the
437 times when the stock was gathered and sorted, and dues were paid to the overlords in cattle. In the ordinary business of the fair exchange and barter gave way in time to money transactions, but one has only to visit a cattle fair to sense that the noisy ritual of assessing values and the prolonged bargaining have come down from a time before the use of money was general. The vigorous hand-slapping by which bargains
[201] are sealed in tight-lipped silence could derive from the days when different languages were spoken at the fairs. Apart from the difference between English and Gaelic it should be remembered that in many districts pockets of non-Gaelic speech, perhaps even of non-Aryan tongues, survived well into the Christian era. Another interesting accompaniment of the con-
[777] cluded bargain is the piece of money, the luck penny, which the seller hands back to the purchaser as a gesture of independence when a price has finally been agreed on. Many a fight
[578] has begun because a buyer has been dissatisfied with the amount of his luck money. Similar bargaining took place when a servant was being hired for the half year, and he received his earles or earnest money as a sign that the contract was concluded, handing over to his employer his bundle of clothes in return.

543 The countryman will find any excuse for going to the fair, and it is his proud boast that he has seen so many fairs. It
[805] is by the fairs, and not by the calendar, that he measures time and dates important events in the life of the community. 'Their whole thought seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging', it was written of the Mayo peasantry in 1836,[1] and in the seventeenth century we find this comment on 'the inferior rank of husbandmen' in Westmeath: '(they) are very crafty and subtile in all manner of bargaining, especially in their dealings in fairs and markets'.[2] Your luck at the fair might depend
777 on the colour of the hair of the first person you met on the road,
543 and it was unlucky to be passed on the way, so that horsemen riding at full gallop were not merely trying out their paces for the races which followed. For good luck you should carry with

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 104.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 115.

[1] [i.e., the seasons and rent days dating from 1 May and 1 November. — Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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443 trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-
322 lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples
443 are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there
543 were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of
443 ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 83), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for
[584] a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts,
[582] binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints'
796 days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1] See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland, 1796–97*, 250.
[2] R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 253.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of certain acts in the hope of inducing success in similar fields of action, provides an explanation of many of the folk-practices with which we are concerned.

Pushed too far, however, the observance of such antiquated practices in the end defeated its purpose and threatened the extinction of traditional life. A clue to much of the paradox in Irish culture is to be found in the reaction which follows an adherence to custom carried beyond the breaking-point. Spade-labour for example has reluctantly given way to the plough, but once the plough is generally accepted the spade becomes a despised implement so that a vegetable garden is a rare thing, at best a tiny plot left to the care of the women. In another field, the substitution of the vilest American films for the traditional ceilidhe gathering is a sad change. The crisis of the Great Famine was a major turning-point, and there followed a general reaction against everything associated with it. This was particularly true of the Irish peasants who sought refuge across the Atlantic: the American immigrants, driven from the land by extreme poverty, were determined to have nothing more to do with it and became almost invariably town-dwellers. The donkey and the goat, symbols of poverty, are neglected and despised in many parts of Ireland. A Donegal crofter once told me he dare not keep a donkey for fear of being unable to marry off his daughters: instead he kept a horse, though he could ill afford one, for its prestige value. The dangerously monotonous diet of Irish countryfolk, also, can be explained in the light of the famine. So bitter is the folk-memory of these times that useful wild sources of food are now neglected and despised; for example, wild berries of all kinds, the ubiquitous eel, hare and rabbit; the cresses and the edible seaweeds and fungi. It should be added, however, that some of these foods were apparently tabu—the rabbit, an Anglo-Norman invader, was rarely eaten—and that the potato had played its part in debasing diet in the period before the famine.[1]

Perhaps the most striking example of reaction is to be found in the expressed desire of most country people to have an isolated dwelling-house. The clachan or hamlet, once the centre of communal life and tradition, is despised, a symbol of squabbling

[1]R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), Ch.15.

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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578 and forms of activity as their own and find much more inter-
561 est in them than in those of the other group. The young men greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gathering of old men in something of the tone of derision which they reserve for women. But the rivalry in their sentiments between respect and egocentric feeling, like the controls imposed by their parents to keep them respectfully silent in the presence of their elders, imposes a silence upon them. Consequently, one cannot find among them the voluble expression of attitudes based upon one's belonging to a certain relative age. One must look for it rather in particular expressions of annoyance, boredom, and chafing against restraint.

Expressions of sentiment about age are the products of a system of values upon it in which the individual makes the valuation from the place he occupies. They express not only a grouping of individuals of similar age but a mutuality between groups so composed. And, too, they form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

561 Let us examine one instance at least of this categorization.
554 The community in rural Ireland bestows many names and titles. They are ephemeral. They have no currency outside
● 551 the immediate circle of life in the townland or village. At
888 best, they spread through a parish. They are nicknames and express no more than the individual's particular place in the hearts of his fellows. Yet some of them are generic epithets. Like "old" and "young," they may prefix a name and designate the more closely the personality of the person named. Like "boy" and "old fellow," they may express broad categories of a man's age and its associated behavior, and may designate not so much a biologic or physiognomic reality as a sociological status. The words "saint" and *cailleach* are of the last kind of epithet, in rural usage. In the brogue they refer only to the old. In strict philology

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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both are metaphorical, for the brogue knows and makes use of the words in their "proper" meanings. *Cailleach*, the Gaelic word, means properly "hag" or "witch." "Saint," of course, is the canonized saint of the church. 561 554 551 888

The small farmer who refers to this or that contemporary and neighbor as a "saint" or a *cailleach* is making a social and moral categorization. He is not concerned with purity of diction. The old man or woman, who follows a behavior proper to his or her status and is an ornament to the community, is a "saint." The old man or woman who does not is the object of distrust and dislike. His or her departures from accepted conduct cause disturbance and strife in the community. Accordingly, he or she is a *cailleach*. Thus, in one North Clare community a "stranger" whom the community disliked was a *cailleach*, despite the feminine gender of the word. Likewise, the old man who lived in harmony with his son upon a farm already transferred, a leader in the village whose oldest hale inhabitant he was, could be described by a neighbor as follows:

> The old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humor and, if he went to town to have a drink, he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as gentle and harmless as a child, and it will be a great loss to the village when he is gone. He and Roche [a neighbor] are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any farm advice, you can go to them and they will give you as good advice as you can get, because both of them have been successful farmers. It would pay a young man to listen to them.

"Saintliness" of this kind is a matter of one's filling one's role. But it is one's role for the village that counts. There is nothing individual in the canon of conduct. The young person who follows ardently the conventions laid down for him is not a "saint" even if he is exceedingly chaste and religious. It is the word "holy," not "saint," which comes

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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561 to the countryman's lips in describing him. Nor is a young
554 person a *cailleach*, for, like "saint," the term applies only to
● 551 the old. Both terms refer to sociological age rather than
888 chronological age, for those old people who occupy the role of "old" only because they have been forced into that position within the farm family can also be "saints." Thus the elder sister described in the discussion of farm marriage, who occupied the west room and the hob by the fire, was known in the neighborhood as a "saint."

Relative age makes a difference in status in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values. And lastly, as in the description of "saint," it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

561 The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself
554 into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland
888 wherever he meets countrymen of different ages together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of such broad age groups in terms of status.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellow, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons — those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great. In the community at large it is little less so. A farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat. His sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake house to honor the dead, the places by the fire go to the older men and women. The boys and girls must group themselves behind. They come forward only when called upon. At

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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182 554 621 888 through rural life under normal circumstances is not toward a greater and greater prominence in the activities of the young men's group. Rather, there comes a time when one must break away altogether. One faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new kind of behavior. Growing old brings many more changes than the physiological.

888 573 885 554 The case of the newcomer, John Quin, already described, shows the necessary changes. In Rynamona it is brought out very clearly in the clique to which he first belonged and to which we have referred at various times, calling it once the "intermediate."

[551] The clique we name so met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, more commonly known as Oscair (the Hercules of Irish saga) for his physical strength. Oscair was a rural carpenter with only a very small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good singer, a jokester, and a repository of folk tale, though he was not much past forty. He lived just at the edge of the slope leading from Kilnaboy Commons down to Rynamona. The townland was what would be called in urban sociology an "interstitial area." It was higher, rougher, and more craggy than Rynamona and Kilnaboy, lying between them. Its inhabitants were descendants of people evicted from round about who had squatted there. Most of them were "died out and left," and the place was always poor. It acted as a sort of outlying fringe of Rynamona.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged thirty-five to sixty. Just as their ages were intermediate between fully old and fully young, so was their habit here. They very seldom played cards. Talk was the order of the day, enlivened by Oscair's humor and ballads. A few of them spoke of the affairs of the village with some weight. The rest did not. Those who came were as follows:

a. Young Mackey, from the village, the man recently married, still too young for the old men's house.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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561 888 own interests and sentiments, opposed in the scheme of rural life to those of their elders. Various places, pursuits and forms of activity are their own preserve. They greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gatherings of the old men with something of the derision they reserve for women. But the ambivalence of their attitudes makes general expression difficult. Their position imposes silence, except among themselves. Consequently, one finds their attitudes rather more frequently in particular annoyances, boredoms and chafings against restraint. Rural ceremony gives them few outlets today; the fine articulateness of O'Rahilly's day is either dammed or searches out more devious outlets.

The sentiments of both groups, then, are the products of a system of values about age status. The individual makes his statements and entertains his feelings by virtue of the place he occupies. These express not only a rough grouping of individuals of similar age and status but a rough interrelation between the groups so composed. They form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

551 888 One can trace this process in rural Ireland in the many names and epithets the local community bestows. Local titles are ephemeral; they have little currency outside the immediate circle of the townland and the village. At best they spread through a parish. They are nicknames, and express no more

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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than the named-one's place in the hearts of his fellows. Yet many of them, too, are generic epithets and like 'old' and 'young' they may prefix a name and designate the bearer's social place. They thus come to express broad categories of a man's behaviour and describe not a biological or a physiognomic but a sociological individuality. All well-developed social systems show this power; rural Ireland makes much use of it.

Thus two common epithets in the brogue are of this latter kind. The countryman speaks often of a 'saint', in praise, and a *cailleach*, in condemnation. Both words refer only to the 'old'. In strict linguistics, both are metaphors, of course, for the brogue knows and makes use of the words in their proper meanings. *Cailleach*, the Gaelic word, is properly a 'hag' or 'witch'. A 'saint', of course, is canonized by the Church.

But the countryman who refers to this or that contemporary as a *cailleach* or a saint is not concerned with purity of diction. He is making a sociological categorization with an ethical bias. He is judging an old man or woman for his or her success in filling the role rural life assigns. His thinking is social, not reformist, as the term has come to be loosely used, but rather conditioned within the dispositions of a particular social pattern. Thus one man in Luogh, already referred to, who was a model of family harmony and 'had a kind word for everyone' in the local community, was a 'saint'.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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551 888 Another old fellow, a leader in his village, could be described by a neighbour as follows:

"That old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humour and if he went to town to take a drink he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as harmless as a child. He and his friend Roche are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any advice in farming, you can go to them and they will give as good advice as you can get. It would pay a young man to listen to them."

181 551 888 I have quoted this rural eulogy for a reason. It shows much better than words of mine could how the speaker's mind could flow uninterruptedly, without any sense of transition, from ethical judgment to agricultural advice. For 'saintliness' of this kind is a matter of filling a social role. But it is one's role for the community that counts. That role runs all the way from peaceful and friendly demeanour to directing farm work. There is nothing individual in it; it is the behaviour the community patterns about the old man. It is his *noblesse oblige*. That the word 'saint' should be borrowed from religion should surprise no one. It is merely proof that one society survives in western civilization in which theology and the popular mind have not yet suffered a divorce. The early Puritan and the ancient Roman would have understood such a state of affairs.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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this way, a durable bond is created which exists 369
over and above the economics of retail trade. It is 443
of the kind that the countryman understands best; 571
it charges the relationship with interest for him; it infuses it with sentiment, habit and reciprocal force. The shopkeeper, too, can rely upon it. Even though he be caught in the demands it makes upon him, he, nevertheless, can rely heavily upon its expectancies.

The ordinary modest retail shop or pub lives upon this tie. In many cases the tie infuses business with a social content which becomes co-extensive with the distributive function the shop performs in economic exchange. If the tie is weakened, if it dies, the shop weakens and dies too. And with it dies the family which derives livelihood, status and much of its corporate existence from that shop. For possession of the shop gives status and prestige and marks one's social place for the family, as much as does the 'farm of land' in the countryside. The family's 'name is on the shop' in much the same way as the country family's name is 'on the land'. In fact, almost symbolically, that name is literally [551] on the shop, for in Ireland most often a single word —the family name—rather than any announcement of the type of retail trade carried on—hangs over the door to proclaim the shop's existence to the buying public. And when the 'family trade' dies, that name dies out of the shop world with it.

Business, then, in the market-towns is no frantic

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 174 four houses together, which can almost invariably be shown to have once been larger: even these tiny groupings are referred to as "towns," and the use of this word suggests that such clusters were once the nuclei of the "townlands." It is because of this association with the vital townland unit, and because many rural customs find their explanation in past conditions, that I have thought it worth while to attempt a reconstruction of the chief features of these old communities. This is based largely on records and on surviving examples which I have studied in Co. Donegal and Co. Antrim. Allowance must be made for differences between one region and another, but I believe the following description to be applicable to most parts of Ireland, though the decay of the village-system began earlier in some areas than in others.

Travellers a century or so ago tell us that villages with 50 or 60 houses were not uncommon. In 1802 Donegal is said to have had about 500 villages, with an average perhaps of 20 or 30 families to each, but they were "dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings" (Figs. 13 & 14). One uses the term village for want of a better word, for such clusters lack many of the well-known features of the English village. They were essentially communities of related families bound together in "friendship"—the word "friend" means a blood-relation in Ireland—with one or two surnames predominating in each group. This fact is still true of townland populations even though the holdings are scattered, and it ● [55] helps to explain the prevalence of nicknames in rural Ireland, and, for the same reason, in Wales and Scotland. The houses were clustered without plan or order (and never strung together end-to-end) generally in some sheltered hollow in the richest part of the townland, though they might be disposed along a road with some semblance of regularity. Shelter is always the first consideration. I have been told in Donegal that house sites were selected by the simple process of throwing up a hat on a windy day and letting the wind decide by noting its resting place.

174 Made roads were almost unknown in hilly districts—there
49 was "no wheel car" among a population of 8,000 in one
361 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 50--ANALYST]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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142
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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
1	Boyce, Myles, .	62	Middlequarter	blue	dark-brown	ruddy	Nose sinuous; schoolmaster.
2	Lavelle, Anthony,	35	Knock	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Nose aquiline.
3	Reilly, John, . .	63	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; is somewhat bald.
4	Malia, John, . .	50	Westquarter	grey	dark	pale	Nose straight; bald on vertex.
5	Joyce, James, .	48	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Lobe of ear attached; large left ear only partially developed.
6	Malia, Michael, .	35	Knock	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight.
7	Walsh, Patrick, .	24	Middlequarter	blue-grey	dark	pale	Sight very keen; nose straight.
8	Halloran, John, .	20	Shark	blue-grey	brown	sallow	Nose straight.
9	Cannon, Michael,	19	Middlequarter	blue	fair	pale	Lobes of ears absent.
10	King, John, . .	40	Cloonamore	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Vision very acute.
11	Powell, Patrick, .	24	Knock	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Vision very keen; nose straight; lobes of ears attached.
12	Cloherty, Festus,	24	Knock	dark-hazel	dark	ruddy	Nose retroussé.
13	Toole, John, . .	21	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Nose aquiline.
14	Scuffle, Patrick, .	(?)	Cloonamore	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; would not give age; lobes of ears attached.
15	Malia, George, .	24	Shark	grey	dark	pale	Lobes of ears attached: vision very keen.
16	Halloran, John, .	25	Westquarter	blue	red	ruddy	Nose sinuous.
17	Kenny, Michael,	31	Cloonamore	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight.
18	M'Greal, Michl.,	20	Shark	green	dark	sallow	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; a fine-looking specimen of the islanders.
19	Burk, Thomas, .	19	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose retroussé; lobes of ears attached.
20	Joyce, Michael, .	19	Middlequarter	grey	dark-brown	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
21	Prendergast, Wm.	53	Middlequarter	brown	black	ruddy	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; teeth even and meeting.

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10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

141
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551
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No.	Name.	Age.	Townland.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Remarks.
22	Lenane, John,	50	Middlequarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Lobes of ears attached.
23	Leonard, John,	30	Middlequarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; teeth meet.
24	Walsh, John,*	30	Middlequarter	brown	black	pale	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears absent; sight keen.
25	Malia, Patrick,	—	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; lobes of ears attached; would not give age; sight good.
26	Cannon, Edward,	54	Middlequarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
27	Cannon, John,	53	Middlequarter	blue	brown	ruddy	Nose straight; abundant beard.
28	Lavelle, ——,	60	(?)	dark-hazel	dark	pale	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears attached.
29	Cloherty, Patrick	19	Westquarter	grey-blue	dark	ruddy	Nose sinuous; lobes of ears absent; vision acute.
30	Lavelle, Thomas,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous.
31	Martin, Thomas,	60	Westquarter	blue	dark	pale	Hair dark, when young; lobes of ears attached; sight very keen.
32	Cloherty, John,	38	Westquarter	blue	dark	ruddy	Nose aquiline; lobes of ears attached.
33	Lavelle, Michael,	50	Knock	blue	dark	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
34	Moran, Michael,	55	Middlequarter	dark-grey	brown	pale	Slightly bald; nose straight.
35	Mogan, ——,	23	Westquarter	grey	black	pale	Hair on face brown: nose straight.
36	Halloran, Thomas	53	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Nose straight; slightly bald.
37	Halloran, Redmond,	36	Westquarter	blue	brown	pale	Obliterated folds of pinna; slightly bald; head of large size.
38	Lavelle, Patrick,	30	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Nose sinuous; folds of pinna slightly obliterated.
39	Lavelle, John,	17	Fawnmore	blue	brown	pale	Hair curly; lobes of ears attached.
40	Naughten, Michl.	50	Middlequarter	blue	dark	pale	Nose straight; says he is of Scotch descent.

* Name indistinct.

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10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

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551 Aran report there occurs the name Ryder, marked as having originally come from Inishbofin.[1]

SURNAMES OF INISHBOFIN—NO. OF FAMILIES, 186.

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
Allies, ...	1	Lavelle, ...	15
Baker, ...	3	Lacy, ...	5
Barret, ...	4	Mannion, ...	3
Burke, ...	6	Martin, ...	1
Clogherty, ...	9	Moran, ...	6
Cloonane, ...	2	Melia, ...	10
Coyne, ...	1	Madden, ...	1
Corbett, ...	1	Mullen, ...	1
Concannon, ..	8	Mogan, ...	1
Conneely, ...	4	M'Cann, ...	1
Cummins, ...	1	M'Namara, ..	1
Cunnane, ...	7	M'Donagh, ..	4
Davis, ...	1	M'Kendrick, ..	1
Darcy, ...	1	Naughton, ..	4
Davin, ...	1	Price, ...	2
Dimond, ...	1	Powel, ...	2
Grodan, ...	1	Prendergast, ..	2
Halloran, ...	8	Quigley, ...	1
Hart, ...	3	Reilly, ...	1
Hughes, ...	4	Scuffle, ...	22
Joyce, ...	4	Smith, ...	1
King, ...	4	Tierney, ...	11
Kerrigan, ...	2	Toole, ...	4
Kenny, ...	1	Ward, ...	2
Leenane, ...	2	Walsh, ...	1

SURNAMES OF INISHSHARK.—NO. OF FAMILIES, 26.

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
Cloonane, ...	6	Lucy, ...	6
Davis, ...	1	Lavelle, ...	2
Dimond, ...	2	Melia, ...	2
Halloran, ...	2	Murray, ...	3
King, ...	1	Ward, ...	1

19 6. *Language.*—As I am not competent to speak with any authority

[1] One of the women photographed at Westquarter was named Browne, a surname not given in the list. (See Pl. VIII.).

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be
[788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch,
754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the
821 barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these
825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27):—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Conġaile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It
[551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is sub-
776 ject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by
854 the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

No.	Name.	Age.	Locality.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Ears.	Cephalic. Length.	Cephalic. Breadth.
141 1	Lavelle, Philip, .	33	Inishkea, N.	blue	dark-brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	202	160
142 2	Lavelle, William,	38	Inishkea, N.	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	199	159
551 3	Cawley, Patrick,	40	Inishkea, S.	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Lobes attached	210	169
4	Cawley, Michael,	41	Inishkea, S.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	198	152
5	Lavelle, Michael,	32	Inishkea, N.	blue	light-brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes detached	202	150
6	Lavelle, William,	27	Inishkea, N.	dark-grey	black	pale	Outstanding, lobes detached	204	156
7	Reilly, Michael, .	32	Inishkea, N.	blue	fair	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	158
8	Reilly, John, . .	28	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding	193	163
9	Lavelle, Patrick, .	28	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding	200	152
10	Lavelle, John, .	31	Inishkea, N.	blue	brown	ruddy	—	200	151
11	O'Reilly, P. T.,	17	Carne, Mullet	dark-grey	dark	pale	Flat	186	162
12	Gaughan, Wm., .	28	Emlybeg, Mullet	dark-grey	dark	freckled	Flat, lobes absent	200	154
13	Dunlevy, Anth., .	60	Emlybeg, Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	184	148
14	Gaughan, Michl.,	60	Moyrahan, Mullet	blue	black	ruddy	Outstanding	196	148
15	Clery, Francis, .	22	Belmullet	dark-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	191	162
16	Coyle, William, .	28	Shanaghy	light-brown	black	dark	Outstanding	196	154
17	Geraghty, Michl.,	30	Mullaghroe	blue	dark	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	200	152
18	Cawley, Patrick,	58	Aughleam	blue	black	pale	Outstanding	200	158
19	Monaghan, Wm.,	51	Crossrenagh	blue	black	ruddy	Outstanding	194	156
20	Gaughan, John, .	33	Gladree	blue	dark	pale	Flat, lobes attached	196	153
21	Reilly, Peter, .	35	Duvillaun (?)	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	200	149
22	Barrett, Michael,	44	Drumreagh	light-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	196	154
23	Barrett, William,	30	Mullaghroe	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	200	160
24	Henry, Phelim,	40	Name of locality not decipherable	blue	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	199	156
25	Coyle, Michael, .	18	Belmullet	blue	dark	pale	Outstanding	191	150
26	M'Cormac, Thos.,	21	Aughaglassheen, Belmullet	dark-grey	dark	dark	Outstanding, lobes attached	195	154
27	Doocy, Patrick, .	19	Porturlin	blue	dark	pale	Outstanding	190	150
28	Flannery, Thos.,	60	Srahataggle	light-grey	dark	pale	Outstanding	194	154
29	Gannon, Richard,	26	Carrowboy (?)	light-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding	194	151
30	Dogherty, Wm.,	21	Portacloy	green	red	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	196	159
31	Naughton, Michl.	40	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	190	157

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No.	Name.	Age.	Locality.	Eye Colour.	Hair Colour.	Skin.	Ears.	Cephalic. Length.	Cephalic. Breadth.
32	Magrath, Patk.,	44	Portacloy	blue	dark	pale	Flat	178	152
33	Bourne, William,	33	Portacloy	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Flat	199	155
34	Bourke, John,	33	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	200	160
35	Tooie, Thomas,	33	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Outstanding	189	151
36	Hogan, John,	40	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	155
37	Bourke, Domk.,	21	Portacloy	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	203	160
38	Hevernan, Philip,	50	Aughleam, Mullet	light-grey	dark	ruddy	Outstanding	200	154
39	Reilly, James,	35	Drum, Mullet	light-grey	brown	pale	Outstanding	198	154
40	Kane, Richard,	—	Fallmore, Mullet	green	brown	—	Outstanding	211	161
41	———	—	Mullet	blue	brown	pale & freckled	Outstanding	186	164
42	M'Loughlin, Th.,	25	Blacksod, Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Flat	197	154
43	Meenaghan, Th.,	18	Blacksod, Mullet	light-grey	brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	196	159
44	Dixon, ——,	50	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	dark	Attached lobules	196	153
45	Cafferky, Hugh,	—	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Attached lobules	198	148
46	Coyle, Francis,	47	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	204	161
47	Padden, Domk.,	22	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Outstanding, lobes absent	196	156
48	Padden, John,	18	Tip., Mullet	blue	dark	pale, freckled	Flat, lobes absent	194	150
49	Dixon, James,	28	Tip., Mullet	blue	brown	pale	Flat, lobes absent	200	156
50	Lavelle, Anthony,	24	Tip., Mullet	green	black	ruddy	Flat, lobes absent	206	164
51	Meenaghan, Ml.,	—	Inishkea, S.	green	dark	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	196	159
52	M'Ginty, Owen,	35	Inishkea, S.	blue	black-brown	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes attached	208	162
53	Monaghan, Ml.,	59	Inishkea, S.	light-brown	black	dark	Outstanding	192	160
54	Keane, Patrick,	19	Inishkea, S.	blue	fair	ruddy, freckled	Outstanding	195	164
55	O'Donnell, John,	24	Inishkea, S.	blue	fair	ruddy, freckled	Outstanding, lobes attached	204	157
56	Dixon, Patrick,	33	Aghadoon, Mullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat	204	158
57	Carey, Martin,	26	Aghadoon, Mullet	dark-grey	black	ruddy	Outstanding, lobes absent	194	162
58	Lavelle, Patrick,	30	Aghadoon, Mullet	blue	dark	ruddy	Flat	202	157
59	Dixon, Patrick,	30	Aghadoon, Mullet	green	black	pale	Flat	208	159
60	Burke, John,	23	Belmullet	blue	brown	ruddy	Flat, lobes attached	194	164
61	Joyce, Patrick,	18	Buncrena, Mullet	blue	fair	ruddy	Outstanding	191	156
62	Padden, Michael,	22	Knocknashambo, Mullet	blue	brown	dark	Flat, lobes attached	195	154

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55/ 5. *Folk Names.*—The following list of surnames was obtained, comprising all those of the district, with the exception of a few new comers, and the names of the inhabitants of the town of Belmullet :—

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
Barrett,	27	Garrett,	1
Bingham,	3	Gavan,	2
Boland,	1	Gaughan,	23
Boylan,	2	Gaynard,	4
Brotherick,	3	Geoghan,	2
Burnes,	3	Geraghty,	15
Burke,	2	Gibbon,	1
Carden,	1[1]	Gilbert,	1
Carey,	12	Gilboy,	1
Cattigan,	2	Ginnelly,	8
Caufield,	1	Ginnings,	1
Cawley,	13	Ginty,	1
Connell,	2	Goonan,	1
Connolly,	1	Gonigal,	1
Connor,	2	Hannely,	1
Conroy,	3	Haveron,	7
Conway,	3	Henry,	1
Costello,	1	Henaghan,	4
Cosgrove,	1	Heaveran,	3
Coyle,	5	Hogan,	1
Craine,	7	Hopkins,	1
Cuff,	1	Horkin,	4
Curduff,	4	Howard,	3
Curley,	1	Hughes,	1
Davitt,	3	Joyce,	7
Deane,	8	Keane,	5
Dent,	1	Kelly,	5
Devanny,	1	Keeraghan,	1
Diamond,	2	Kearney,	1
Dinnery,	2	Kennedy,	6
Diver,	2	Kilker,	3
Dixon,	16	Kilkoyne,	1
Dogherty,	1	King,	1
Doogan,	2	Lally,	9
Dunleavy,	4	Langan,	1
Earley,	6	Lavelle,	31
Egan,	2	Lenaghan	1
Follan,	1	Loftus,	1
Friel,	1	Lynch,	1
Gallagher,	8	Lynskey,	2
Gammell,	1	Lyons,	1
Gannon,	3	Malowney,	1
Garvan,	1	M'Andrew,	8

[1] Not native.

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LIST OF SURNAMES—*continued.*

551

Surname.	Number of Families.	Surname.	Number of Families.
M'Cormack, ..	1	Neely, ...	1
M'Dermott, ..	1	O'Boy, ...	1
M'Donnell, ..	6	O'Donnell, ...	4
M'Loughlin, ..	1	O'Mallen, ...	1
M'Ginty, ...	4	O'Malley, ...	2
M'Grath, ...	5	Padden, ...	16
M'Guinness, ..	2	Palmer, ...	1
M'Hale, ...	4	Philbin, ...	3
M'Intyre, ...	3	Quigley, ...	1
M'Mannam, ..	2	Reilly, ...	27
M'Namara, ..	1	Richards, ...	1
M'Neely, ...	1	Ruane, ...	5
M'Nulty, ...	3	Ruddy, ...	7
Meenaghan, ..	14	Scanlon, ...	2
Monaghan, ..	20	Tighe, ...	10
Monnelly, ..	4	Togher, ...	12
Monghan, ..	4	Tollet, ...	1
Moran, ...	1	Toole, ...	2
Mullaney, ...	1	Walker, ...	2
Murphy, ...	9	Walshe, ...	10
Murray, ...	4	Ward, ...	1
Nallon, ...	2	Williams, ...	4
Neary, ...	1	Wilson, ...	4

While the original localities of some of these names are easily traced, those of others are very obscure, and this for several reasons: one of these is the anglicising of old Irish surnames, often into forms bearing little or no resemblance to the original; which here, as in other parts of the country, has taken place to a very great extent: a second is the hibernicising of the names and branches of Welsh and Anglo-Norman families, *e.g.* M'Andrew, which has been adopted by a branch of the Barretts: a third difficulty is the use by many of the people of double surnames, one employed when speaking Irish, the other in speaking English; thus, Togher is anglicised Swift.

The following names are traceable, either by tradition, or by historical evidence.

(A.) The ancient surnames of the territory (Hy Fiachrach), in which this district was included, still persist to a large extent, though in altered forms; and all the principal of these now extant, as far as

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551 could be ascertained, are given below in both the ancient and the modern forms.

Modern Form.	Ancient Name.
Boland,	O'Beollain.
Burnes,	Mac Conboirne.
Conroy,	O'Mailchonairi.
Connolly,	Mac Conghaile.
Crain or Crean,	O'Criadhchen.
Doogan = Egan,	Mac Egan.
Earley,	O'Mailfomhair.
Friel,	O'Farghil (from Ulster originally).
Gannon,	Mag Fhionnain.
Gaughan,	O'Gaibhtheachain.
Heaveran & Haveron,	O'Fuathmharain.
Henaghan,	O'h-Eidhneachan.
Hughes,	O'h-Aodha.
Kean, or Kane,	O'Cathan, or O'Caithneadh.
Kearney,	O'Cearnaigh.
Lavelle,	O'Maolfabhaill.
Loftus,	O'Lachtna.
Lyons,	O'Liathain (?).
Mac Dermott,	———
Mac Hale,	Mac Cele.
Mac Grath,	O'Moran.
Meenaghan,	O'Muinhneachain.
Moran,	O'Moran.
Monghan,	Mochain (originally from Roscommon) (?).
Murphy,	O'Murchada.
Murray,	O'Muireadhaigh.
Ruane,	O'Ruaidhin.
Ruddy,	Brodaibh.
Scanlon,	Scanlain.

Although these are the only names which I have been able to trace, (chiefly from O'Donovan), yet there can be no doubt that many other surnames of the region are quite as long established, though the families bearing them may not have been of sufficient historical importance to have received record.

(B.) The next in order of antiquity are Welsh or Anglo-Norman families, who, for so long, held the reins of power in this part of

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Ireland. Barrett, Burke, Carey, Joyce, M'Andrew, Walsh, and probably Williams (if it be, as is alleged, a form of Mac William or Mac Quillin). 551

(C.) The immigrants from Ulster come next, amongst whose descendants are said to be the O'Donnells, Connells, Doghertys, Gallaghers, Geraghtys, Reillys (from Cavan), and perhaps M'Loughlins.

(D.) The Mac Cormicks came into the district in the reign of James I.

(E.) Last come names of English origin, the most ancient of which seems to be Bingham, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Tollet, and probably Dixon, are names of descendants of the Shane settlers. The other English names are of shorter standing, and some of them may really be anglicised local surnames.

The names of the English settlers signed to the petition to Sir Henry Bingham, sometime in the reign of Queen Anne, are Higginbotham, Maxwell, Dennistoun, Linney, Langford, Tollett, Houston, Parker, Gamble, Calwell, and Low; of these, Tollett is the only one now found in the parish, if Gammell be not a corrupted form of Gamble.[1]

IV.—SOCIOLOGY.

1. *Occupations.*—Excluding the inhabitants of the little town of Belmullet, in which most of the tradesmen reside, the people are, as a rule, either fishermen or farmers, or they combine both occupations. 463 241 There are a few large holders and proprietors, but the majority of the farms are of small size. These holdings are but poorly fenced, a frequent cause of dispute. Fences are usually earthen or turf, but on [351] the islands dry stone walls, such as are seen in Aran, are common. The principal crops are barley, oats, rye, and potatoes. All the farming is rude and primitive. Spade labour is practically universal, the spades being of modern form, as the old "gowel"[2] or "gowel-gob," a [412] two-bladed or forked wooden spade formerly used here, has long been extinct.

In 1834 there were only 3 ploughs and the same number of carts [407] in use in the Mullet: now (1895) the number of ploughs is 30, and of carts 63. [493]

[1] Though these settlers are spoken of as English by the various writers who have mentioned the colony, yet the majority of these surnames appear to be Scotch.

[2] A specimen of this curious agricultural implement is figured in the Catalogue of Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy.

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Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), used as an expectorant. 757
Marsh-mallow (*Althæa officinalis*), used as poultice for "sore breast." 278
Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), used as an infusion for coughs.
Parsely (*Petroselinum sativum*), boiled in milk for "gravel."
Belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*), used for palpitation or "heart beat."

It will be seen from this list that several of the remedies used are officinal; and others, though not officially recognised, possess medicinal properties.

3. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many of these current in the district, but only a small number could be collected. Among all these, few bearing on the early history of this region seem to have come down to the present time, except the tradition of a great battle fought at Cross, in the Mullet, between the people of the country, and an invading army under a king of Munster who was slain in the fight, and over whose remains a tumulus was erected. 173

There is, so far as could be ascertained, no tradition as to the origin of the earlier inhabitants, either of the mainland, or of the islands; but the families whose ancestors came from Ulster two centuries ago are well known, and sometimes are called by the name Ultagh, instead of their own surnames. [551]

It would be expected that there would be some tales connected with the duns, of which there are several, but very few seem to be known, even the oldest inhabitants not seeming to have heard any history of them. The story of Dun Donald, related by Knight,[1] the vague tradition that Dunamoa was built by the Burkes, and besieged by the "Danes"; and another concerning Dun Fiachrach, which is believed to have been a favourite resting place for the children of Lir, and the fishermen of the neighbourhood say that the founder of the fort used to ride a "water-horse," on which he could leap across the deep caves on to the cliffs on each side of the dun. Many of the people ascribe these forts to "the Danes."

The favourite tales and poems are either ancient myth, or of a semi-religious character; legends of the saints forming a large portion of the old chroniclers' stock.

Mr Knight says[2]—"It is not from these cairns (Seefins) alone we claim Fingal and Ossian as *peculiarly* ours; we have heard them in *real song*, and many a winter's evening have I heard the old chronicler lying on his back quietly, in the bed beyond the fire, repeat the

[1] P. Knight, Erris, &c., p. 166. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

423 of different sizes and various origins into which rural Ireland
621 is divided—townland, parish, barony, diocese, rural district and so on—it is the townland which most closely touches the daily life and social relations of the countryman. The townland is his postal address, for individual farms preserve their historic communal anonymity: they still belong to the townland though they have become separate units since the 'town' or cluster has broken up. The farms rarely carry any names other than those of
[103] their owner (Mulligan's place, Thomson's farm or merely O'Brien's) and since there may be a dozen O'Briens in a
[551] particular townland various nicknames[1] and patronymics are used to distinguish between them. Thus one farm may be Kilty O'Brien's (from its left-handed owner), another Patsy Kate O'Brien's (from the owner's mother), and a third Yank O'Brien's (a returned emigrant, this). Similarly, the public house takes its title not from the brewers who supply it or from heraldic beasts such as the Red Lion but from the Mooneys or the Murnaghans who own it. Shops in country towns, too,
[602] carry personal names, and the nucleus of their trade is built up among blood relations.

423 The townland names, involving so many land holdings, are legal titles, and their Gaelic names, however erroneously spelt
621 on the Ordnance Survey maps, are fossilized in their current
103 forms. Only an Act of Parliament can alter them. A glance at any six-inch Ordnance map will reveal the strange names that Gaelic imagination contrived and English scribes corrupted. Here are a few which I have come across in Ulster: Ballywillwill, Ballymunterhiggin, Aghayeevoge, Treantaghmucklagh. In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of them named Ballybeg (little town). Some 2,000 townlands begin with Knock (a hill); there are sixty called Tully and there are eleven Edens. The degree of repetition shows that these names have come down from a time when life was organized on a local basis. There are between 60,000 and 70,000 townlands in Ireland, averaging 325 acres or
423 ½ sq. mile, and the average townland population in the rural
621 areas is perhaps fifty. In fact their size varies considerably,
184

[1]Writing in 1682 (*West-Meath*, 113), Sir Henry Piers noticed their prevalence in that county '. . . so as no man whatever can escape a nickname.'

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimneaigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19] 173 556 [574]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan. [778]

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains 764

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe. [554] 551

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[P. 153, B]

● 551 **192** In *The Aran Islands*[1] Synge makes the following observations on the system of personal names then in use (1898–1902):

> When a child begins to wander about the island, the neighbours speak of it by its Christian name, followed by the Christian name of its father. If this is not enough to identify it, the father's epithet—whether it is a nickname or the name of his own father—is added.
>
> Sometimes when the father's name does not lend itself, the mother's Christian name is adopted as epithet for the children.
>
> Occasionally the surname is employed in its Irish form, but I have not heard them using the 'Mac' prefix when speaking Irish among themselves; perhaps the idea of a surname which it gives is too modern for them, perhaps they do use it at times that I have not noticed.
>
> Sometimes a man is named from the colour of his hair. There is thus a Seaghan Ruadh (Red John), and his children are 'Mourteen Seaghan Ruadh,' etc.
>
> The schoolmaster tells me that when he reads out the roll in the morning the children repeat the local name all together in a whisper after each official name and then the child answers. If he calls, for instance, 'Patrick O'Flaharty,' the children murmer, 'Patch Seaghan Dearg' or some such name, and the boy answers.
>
> If an islander's name alone is enough to distinguish him it is used by itself, and I know one man who is spoken of as Eamonn. There may be other Edmunds on the island, but if so they have probably good nicknames or epithets of their own.

[114 184] While on Tory Island (Oileán Thoraighe), Co. Donegal, in 1962, I collected the names of all living adults and found the system to be basically that reported by Synge for the Aran Islands, with enough distinctiveness to be worth a separate analysis.[2]

601 Kinship terms are rarely used among the islanders except between young children and their parents and parents' 551 siblings. Cousinship is indicated by saying of a person something like 'his mother and my father were the children of two brothers' (*Bhí a mháthair agus m'athair clann na beirte dearbhráthar*), or 'we are children of brother and sister' (*Támuid clann dearbhráthar agus deirbhsheathar*). But in a small community where the genealogical links between persons are common knowledge, such descriptive explanations are rarely called for. Personal names are used 551 instead and in themselves help to indicate a person's position in the kinship structure by showing his line of descent for up to four generations.

A person will in fact have three sets of names: a Gaelic 'ceremonial' set; an English 'practical' set; and a Gaelic-English 'personal' set. A man's full Gaelic name will consist of his baptismal name followed perhaps by his 'epithet' such as Óg (young—usually means youngest of several brothers), Bán (fair), Mór (big), Beag (small—wee), followed by his surname. Such a combination might yield, [585] for example, 'Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh.' A woman, strictly speaking, retains her family name on marriage and adds the descriptive phrase 'wife of' (literally 'woman of')

* *With two tables*

[P.153, C]

551 and the names of her husband, *e.g.* 'Máire Ní Dhubhghain
[585] bean Shéamuis Mhic Ruadhraigh'—literally, 'Mary, daughter of Doohan, wife of James the son of Rory.' A number of circumstances will determine whether or not her husband's name will 'stick' as a surname or whether she will go on being known by her maiden name. These names in their full forms are only used on ceremonial occasions such as dances—when a man or woman is called upon to sing or step-dance—, or for prayers in church during a serious illness, or for calling the roll in school, or for putting on a tombstone.

551 The practical names are the rough English equivalents
191 of the Gaelic names, used in dealing with English-speakers generally and particularly for use when working in England
167 and Scotland. The Government is usually dealt with in English for several reasons, mainly because although the
464 islanders all speak Gaelic as their native tongue, the language they read and write is English—a situation brought about by the pattern of migrant labouring which forced literacy on them when working in Britain. Also they find 'Dublin' or 'civil service' Irish difficult to follow. Most islanders, then, have an 'English' name. Our examples would be 'Paddy Rogers' and 'Mary Doohan' to the outside world. Sometimes these names stick and are used amongst the islanders rather like nicknames. Usually the English version is a rough phonetic equivalent of the Gaelic—Ó Duibhir becomes Diver, Ó Dubhgain becomes Doogan or Duggan, Mac Fhlaithbheartaigh becomes MacClafferty, etc. Sometimes this is abandoned and an English name taken for its 'likeness' to the Gaelic as with MacRuadhraigh and Rogers—Roger being the English name most like 'Rory.' The name Fíoruisce is sometimes hopefully rendered Whorriskey, but mostly this is not even tried and the simple 'Waters' is substituted. Those going to England for work are particularly inclined to pick an 'English' name, *i.e.* one the foreman will recognize.

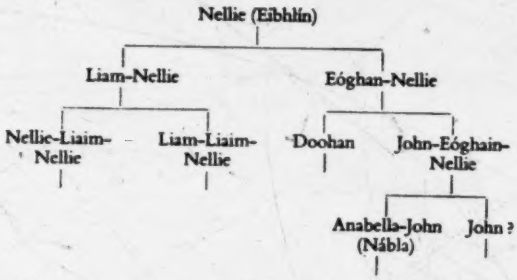
551 The third set of names, used for reference, consists of two or more Christian names, either Gaelic or English or both, 'strung' together in the manner described by Synge for Aran. Some people have as many as five or six names and 'epithets' strung together in this fashion. These names are the names of lineal ancestors either on the mother's or the father's side of the family. A person will take as many names as is necessary to distinguish him from all other persons, the surname system being inadequate for this task. (Four surnames cover 80 per cent. of the population.) He does not, however, pick these names arbitrarily but inherits the whole string. He can stop at any point in the string. Thus if a man was called 'Jimmy-Dhonnchadha-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his father must have been 'Donnchadh-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his paternal grandmother 'Máire-Mhicí' or maybe 'Máire-Mhicí-Tom.' [3] Thus if our man wanted to add to his names, he would have to add 'Tom.' Usually one or at most two names are enough to distinguish a person, in

551 addition to his own. As Synge observes, if a man's name is unique in some way he may be known by it alone, although on Tory he will usually have a 'latent' string of names which he never actually uses but which could be used if his Christian name were to crop up again. If any of the ancestors in the 'string' had epithets (using this to mean descriptive terms), these are included. But there is a tendency to use only the epithet of the last person in the string. Sometimes, if an ancestor was firmly known by his surname (if, say, he was an immigrant and the first of his name on the island) then this is added also.[4] Below are some examples of these names:

Eóghan-John-Dooley-Mhalainne	Dooley was a man from Malin in Co. Donegal.
Mary-John-Dooley-Mhalainne	Eóghan's sister.
Kate-Dooley-Mhalainne	His paternal aunt.
Jimmy-Mhuire-Bhillí	Jimmy-Mary-Willy (Billy)
Peggy-Phaidí-Shéamuis-Dhomhnaill	Peggy-Paddy-Jimmy-Donal
Pádraig-Hughdie-Dhuibhir	Patrick Hugh Diver
Paddy-Johnnie-Fhlaithbheartaigh	Paddy John (Mac)-Clafferty[5]

An alternative type of name—and a man may have two or three alternative types—consists of the addition of the Christian name of a parent to the surname. Thus two paternal first cousins might be respectively 'Jimmy Diver Nancy' and 'Jimmy Diver Madge.'

551 611 The segmentary process in the cognatic descent groups on the island affects this naming mechanism. This is illustrated in the following diagram:



This is an actual descent group tracing its ancestry to a widow, Nellie Doohan. The first four generations of the group are shown here, there being eight altogether. Nellie's descendants, 'Clann Nellie,' are divided into the Liam-Nellies and the Eóghan-Nellies. Clann Liaim-Nellie are subdivided into the Nellie-Liaim-Nellies and the Liam-Liaim-Nellies. The descendants of Eóghan-Nellie are segmented into the John-Eóghain-Nellies and another group known as the Doohans. There have only been sons in this latter group, and they have tended to be known by the 'John Doohan Nancy' type of name. The four or five generations below those shown on the diagram are not clearly segmented as yet. Amongst these, the name continuity is not so strong, but they all regard themselves as 'Liam-Nellies' or 'John-Eóghain-Nellies' or Doohans' according to the level of segmentation relevant to their various collective activities.[6] The degree to which the

551 611 name continuity of such a group can be maintained, converging on the founder's name as in our example, is some measure of the continuing solidarity of the group. This tends to weaken after about six generations and the disintegration of the group is reflected in the native commentary—*Tá na h-ainmneacha caillte*, 'the names is lost.' [182] The attempt to keep the name continuity often conflicts with the desire to distinguish person from person, hence the existence of alternative name types.

The following formula[1] shows the ideal structure of the Tory name using the following symbols: C = Christian name, S = surname, E = epithet, Fa = father's Christian name, Mo = mother's Christian name. A symbol in the lower case indicates that the item can be omitted from the progression of names.

		Generation 0		Generation +1		Generation +2
Patrilateral		Ce	+S	Fa e es s	+	FaFa e es s; FaMo e es s
				fa mo		——
Matrilateral				Mo e es s	+	MoFa e es s; MoMo e es s

The columns represent the alternative possibilities, the rows the matrilateral and patrilateral 'progression' of names. The formula can be expanded according to the same rules.

To see how this basic choice between matrilateral and patrilateral 'progressions' worked out in practice I tabulated instances of each type of name progression in my collection, distinguishing by sex of nominee (m and f) but ignoring the optional epithets and surnames (Table I). I collected these names separately from the two settlements on the island, East Town (*Baile Thoir*) and West Town (*Baile Thiar*), and they are so listed on the table. It is [184] commonly believed that the East is more traditional than the West, but this does not show up in any differences in the naming systems.

What emerges from this table is the overwhelming preference for taking the father's name (and his father's) by both men and women, and the fact that for both sexes one possible combination does not occur—m/f+Mo+MoMo. I am told that this has occurred in the past, but infrequently. The fourth cluster of name types in the table is a group of residual types. The oddities here are the girl who took her father's brother's name and the rest which skip a generation and start with the grandparental names. These cases usually result from an uncle or grandparents bringing up children in the absence of parents. If these relatives are seen as *in loco parentis* then the pattern remains the same as for the majority.

[1 [This formula has been corrected according to the specifications given in Man, vol. 63, article 248, p. 195, Dec. 1963 - Analyst]

[P. 155, A]

TABLE I

Name type	West Town	East Town	Total
551 *m* + *Fa*	24	25	49
f + *Fa*	26	16	42
611 *m* + *Mo*	13	4	17
184 *f* + *Mo*	6	4	10
m + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	15	5	20
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	13	4	17
m + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
f + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
m + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	0	3	3
f + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	2	1	3
m + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	3	3
f + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*	2	1	3
m + *MoFa*	3	1	4
f + *MoFa*	1	0	1
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	3	0	3
f + *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	0	1	1
f + *FaBro*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	3	0	3
f + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	1	0	1
	112	70	182

551 Table II summarizes the 'laterality preference' as it
611 affects men and women respectively.

TABLE II

	Patrilateral	*Matrilateral*	*Total*
m	72 (70·6 *per cent.*)	30 (29·4 *per cent.*)	102
f	67 (83·75 *per cent.*)	13 (16·25 *per cent.*)	80
Total	139 (76·4 *per cent.*)	43 (23·6 *per cent.*)	182

The figures in parenthesis are percentages of the row totals.

The overall preference is, as we have seen, patrilateral, but there is an interesting minority preference amongst males for matrilateral names. Practically a third of the men and less than a sixth of the women have matrilateral names.[7] There are several explanations for this trend amongst
[162] males. It may stem from the large number of widows with sons, or from the name continuity of the descent system. In a number of cases it follows from the fact that a man is given his father's Christian name as his own and hence takes his mother's name to distinguish him, although this
182 is not all that common.
551 Such a highly personalized naming system only works
611 within the particularistic boundaries of a small community.

182 The world at large is not interested in the particular ante-
551 cedents of a man and the islanders recognize this in their
611 use of surnames with the outside world. The old 'family' or clan names placed a man in his wider kinship group in the days when this was important—it no longer matters today. Within the community the naming system described above distinguishes a man from other men and places him in his immediate kin group. It helps to establish his descent. Research in small communities in Western societies may reveal similar systems serving similar ends but based on different diacritical criteria.[8]

Notes

113 [1] J. M. Synge, *Four Plays and The Aran Islands*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 263f.

[2] Brief ethnographical details of Tory Island can be found in J. R. Fox, 'The Vanishing Gael,' *New Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1962.

551 [3] The second and subsequent names, when in Gaelic, are in the genitive. Some English names are Gaelicized and given a genitive form. I make no claims for the correctness of the spelling of the names given here (Irish spelling is pretty fluid), except that they are the forms recognized by literate islanders. I could not have made any headway with the Tory naming system and genealogies without the patient help of Máire Nic Fhlaithbheartaigh bean Aodha Uí Dhubhghain, Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh, and Aodh Ó Dubhghain. [115]

[4] See Synge's comment on the use of the surname and the 'Mac' prefix. In the 'ceremonial' names on Tory both Mac and Ó are used, but when a surname is included in the 'personal' set, these prefixes are not usually used.

[5] This could be Paddy-John Uí Fhlaithbheartaigh—roughly Paddy John O'Flaherty. The pronunciation would be the same.

551 [6] A fuller analysis of the structure and functions of these descent
611 groups is in preparation. They seem to be mainly concerned with landholding—as a consequence of the equal division of land amongst all a man's (or woman's) heirs, and the system of keeping land in trust for migrants. Their other functions lie mainly in the sphere of mutual support amongst members in times of crisis.

[7] This distribution could only occur by chance in one sample out of 20: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4{\cdot}30$: $p = < {\cdot}05$.

551 [8] The Welsh system of stringing ancestral names together with
171 'ap' is obviously similar to the Tory method, but the Welsh, I believe, used only male names. Mr. Andrew Dunsire tells me that in some Scottish coastal villages a man will be known by the boat he owns, his children inheriting this epithet. In some working-class communities which I know in England a system similar to that on Tory operates. A man may be known as 'Mary's Tom' and his son as 'Mary's Tom's Johnnie,' etc. Synge notes the use of occupations as marks of distinction in Wales and comments on the lack of occupational differentiation on the Aran Islands which makes this method impossible. In some rural communities a man is known by the name of his farm. W. M. Williams in *The Sociology of an English Village* (Routledge, 1956) gives examples of this. See also his fascinating discussion of Naming and Family Continuity, pp. 79–82 and 229f. The contrast with the Tory system is marked, however, in that one can, in Gosforth, move from 'side' to 'side' in choice of names—both surnames and Christian names being used.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

593 —with a strong agnatic bias. Rights and duties are distributed among cognates,
602 but they are less strong among uterine and affinal kin, as well as among relatives of both lines according to distance from ego. Rights and duties include obligations to assist and defend, and mutual assistance in Inis Beag characterizes farming, fishing, housebuilding, unloading turf, carrying the coffin at a funeral, and many other activities. Reciprocation in some form for services rendered is almost an obsession among both kin and non-kin, and not to reciprocate adequately means to lose face. The matter of mutual defense will be considered in later sections and chapters.

• 551 Only 13 surnames are represented on the island, and there are 27 families bearing a single one, 11 bearing another, and 8 a third. Most Christian names are those of the Blessed Virgin and of saints, especially from the Irish past. Michael, Patrick, Sean (which often is transformed into John, although Eoin is John in Irish), Thomas, Martin, Peter, Coleman, and Joseph—in that order—are the most popular first names for males, while for females it is Mary, Brigid, Margaret, Ann,
[B44] Catherine, Sarah, Nora, and Teresa. In the past, it was customary for Inis Beag
[177] women to bear their offspring at home attended by nurse, midwife, or skilled female relative; but during the past decade, most infants have been delivered in the mainland hospital serving the island, where mothers have learned of "different" surnames and have assigned them to their own children—such as Gerard, Xavier, Christopher, and Pius for boys, and Rita, Carmel, Veronica, and Jude for girls.

601 Each person in the island has a term of reference which never is employed
561 as a term of address.[2] For a man, it is a nickname or his Christian name followed by that of his father: "The General" or Sean Michael. Women ordinarily are not given nicknames; if single, they append their father's first name to their own, and if married, their husband's. An adult man may bear the Christian name of his mother following his own rather than his father's, if, for instance, his mother was widowed early or unduly dominated her husband. Nicknames relate to such things as occupations, abodes, personality idiosyncracies, stature, color of hair, and events of the past; and many are uncomplimentary to the degree of fomenting disputes if uttered at improper times or to inappropriate persons.

155 Before turning to reciprocal relationships which exist between certain
593 agnatic, uterine, and affinal relatives, it is necessary to examine two phenomena which have a vital bearing on kinship and other behavior: the Oedipus complex and male solidarity. Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys says that there is in Ireland a ". . . centripetal mechanism built into the fabric of rural life. This is the strong, preferential love of the rural mother for her sons. She is a magnetic center of the family and her cohesive power is affection. This love, which leads her 'to slave' for her sons and to demand that her daughters do likewise, cushions the sons' hard lot. It mollifies the constant rub of his subordination to his father . . ."

[2] A term of reference is a name used to refer to a person who is not present, while a term of address is a name used to address a person to his face. In America, one might say in referring to his mother, "That woman walking toward us is my mother.", and then greet her as she joins the group, "Hi, Mom."; in this case, mother is a term of reference and Mom a term of address. Often terms of address in the Western world are Christian names, and some terms of reference and address may be identical. Anthropologists usually collect only terms which are used to designate various kin.

291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[657] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[146] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[178] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[822] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[799] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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593 events of a common life build up very complete adaptations and very close emotional bonds among all those who share the life together. The bonds must be compatible; adjustment is made all round, again through gradual habituation. Otherwise conflict is ready to set off young against old, men against women, persons against one another. There is reciprocity of obligation and expectancy.

But the point of interest here is that it is the bonds that must be dealt with for understanding, not anything within them or the activities associated with them. Here there is an absolute coincidence of "social" and "economic" factors within single relationships. In the case of a small farmer and his son, there is only one relationship; to separate their social from their economic activities is meaningless. They are one in fact, and, as far as the peasants are concerned, they are one in name.

593 Thus any of the words designating status in the relation-
● 554 ship, such as father, son, owner, employee, heir, etc., might well be used, but in actual practice the first two of them are sufficient to cover all the activities of the relationship. Only the statuses of father and son are distinguished by the country people. These words are the only designations of status that are to be heard among them. All others are unnecessary. They are not part of the experience of the small farmers except as they become so when the outside world breaks in. Consequently, terms designating status are not to be understood or interpreted on a basis of *a priori* or philological meaning, but as references to the events in connection with which they were used.

593 Thus when it comes to understanding the force of such terms for the small farmers who use them, we are able to see why it is that the terms are emotional symbols of very great power. They are part of the peasant's own experience in the very relations we have been discussing, and they make definite and reinforce the relations for him. They cannot

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(mother-in-law and daughter-in-law like cat and mouse together). 601 612 [539]

Similar terms are used for brother- and sister-in-law. But in both languages the tendency is again to use purely descriptive phrases analogous to those we found in designating blood kindred. Thus "my wife's brother" and "my wife's mother," etc., are much more often heard among the farmers, both in English and in Irish.

The Irish language, however, has a separate term for son-in-law. It is *cliamhan*, which is related to the word *cleamhnas*. It is the only nondescriptive term in general use, for daughter-in-law is rendered as "son's wife" (*bean mhic*) in Irish. It may be that the singling out of this relative among those united to one by affinity reflects the greater importance put upon males in a patrilineal system.

The relatives by affinity just described include all those of the spouse's immediate family. The principle at work has been to coalesce ego's immediate or restricted kindred with his wife's. Beyond this group to whom the extension of the kinship behaviors is primary lies the total group of the wife's extended kindred. They are referred to as "my wife's friends"; there is a general tendency to extend kinship behavior to them; and they lie within the prohibited group. They are what might be expressed as potential kindred in the same sense that ego's third, fourth, and fifth cousins, their progenitors and descendants, are potential kindred. Should the need arise, the common descent may be remembered. At times of family crises, particularly at funerals, this sort of bond comes into active force. 612

In this fact lies the peculiar character of a kinship system based upon extension rather than rigidity of form. The demarcations between the kindred groups of one individual and the next are not rigidly drawn. The individual can expand and contract the group outward from the restricted family to which he belongs. If he is important in the com- 612 554 602

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612 munity, he can command the respect and the services of a
554 great number of kindred; it becomes an advantage to the
602 peripheral relatives to establish the reciprocals of behavior which the system allows. On the other hand, if the individual is without personal importance, the scope of his actual integration through behavior to his kindred may be narrowed down to include only members of his immediate family.

612 It is the potentiality of extension and contraction within
602 the kinship group which is both praised and condemned in such phrases as "A neighbor is nearer than a friend" and "The higher the man, the more people he has." If the individual attempts to rise above his fellows or to forget them in his way upward, the cry immediately rises that he is "forgetting his friends." In fact, disloyalty to one's kinship group is felt to be a deadly crime against the group.

596 The Irish extended family, combining in different de-
612 grees of intensity of solidarity all descendants of a common ancestor through five contemporaneous generations, is not a rigidly defined structure set off from the other groups of society. On the contrary, the extended families present a picture of a series of interlocking pyramids in which each individual is assigned a definite place, but in which no two individuals (unless siblings) occupy quite the same place. It is a group of kindred reckoning common bilateral descent, and linking as equals all individuals occupying the same step within that descent to the number of five such steps, and including the corresponding group of the spouse's
[614] kindred. It is in no sense a clan or gens, as its bounds are not constant, but descend and ascend through the total group of possible kindred. That is, an existing group resolves itself into a number of new ones, as descent proceeds from father to son. It is because of this that farmers having the same patronym and living side by side yet may not be "friends."

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are not used but are inalienably associated with the family. 583
This is a new development. In Carleton's day, before the famine, a daughter was often dowered with goods as well. Today this is not the case, for the goods like the land are part of an indivisible and corporate whole.

In this way, when we remember that the farm is identified in popular thinking with the patrilineal and patronymic family line of the landowner and that the girl is an outsider brought into that group, the money appears as a payment for the girl's inclusion. There is significantly no corresponding recompense or payment to the girl's father. He loses both daughter and dowry. The identification of his family, both immediate and ancestral, with the family farm is undisturbed. Of course the father of the girl makes sure that his prestige does not suffer. He demands that the farm she enters shall at least equal the dowry. The size of the dowry [554] he gives his daughter is a very strong index of that prestige. It is both a duty and a great source of pride to provide well for her.

A further indication of the nature of the movement of 583
the dowry is to be found in the terminological (formal) 602
structure of the family which we have already described. It will be remembered that there was no integration between the boy's father and the girl's, and that relationship by affinity proceeded only from the point of view of the young couple. The two fathers-in-law or mothers-in-law are not felt to be related. No kinship terms express the new connection between them. Clearly, then, we have two patrilineal groups still unmerged, still distinct. That this is the case 578
can be seen in Carleton's [1] descriptions of faction fights in 583
which two families are often pitched against one another in 602
spite of their alliance by marriage. The authors have seen some of them, not on the scale of faction fights, it is true,

[1] William Carleton, peasant novelist (1794–1869), principally *Tales and Sketches* (Dublin: J. Duffy, 1845) and *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (10th complete ed.; London: W. Tegg, 1864).

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578 and forms of activity as their own and find much more inter-
561 est in them than in those of the other group. The young men greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gathering of old men in something of the tone of derision which they reserve for women. But the rivalry in their sentiments between respect and egocentric feeling, like the controls imposed by their parents to keep them respectfully silent in the presence of their elders, imposes a silence upon them. Consequently, one cannot find among them the voluble expression of attitudes based upon one's belonging to a certain relative age. One must look for it rather in particular expressions of annoyance, boredom, and chafing against restraint.

Expressions of sentiment about age are the products of a system of values upon it in which the individual makes the valuation from the place he occupies. They express not only a grouping of individuals of similar age but a mutuality between groups so composed. And, too, they form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

561 Let us examine one instance at least of this categorization.
● 554 The community in rural Ireland bestows many names and titles. They are ephemeral. They have no currency outside
551 the immediate circle of life in the townland or village. At
888 best, they spread through a parish. They are nicknames and express no more than the individual's particular place in the hearts of his fellows. Yet some of them are generic epithets. Like "old" and "young," they may prefix a name and designate the more closely the personality of the person named. Like "boy" and "old fellow," they may express broad categories of a man's age and its associated behavior, and may designate not so much a biologic or physiognomic reality as a sociological status. The words "saint" and *cailleach* are of the last kind of epithet, in rural usage. In the brogue they refer only to the old. In strict philology

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both are metaphorical, for the brogue knows and makes use of the words in their "proper" meanings. *Cailleach*, the Gaelic word, means properly "hag" or "witch." "Saint," of course, is the canonized saint of the church. 561 554 551 888

The small farmer who refers to this or that contemporary and neighbor as a "saint" or a *cailleach* is making a social and moral categorization. He is not concerned with purity of diction. The old man or woman, who follows a behavior proper to his or her status and is an ornament to the community, is a "saint." The old man or woman who does not is the object of distrust and dislike. His or her departures from accepted conduct cause disturbance and strife in the community. Accordingly, he or she is a *cailleach*. Thus, in one North Clare community a "stranger" whom the community disliked was a *cailleach*, despite the feminine gender of the word. Likewise, the old man who lived in harmony with his son upon a farm already transferred, a leader in the village whose oldest hale inhabitant he was, could be described by a neighbor as follows:

> The old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humor and, if he went to town to have a drink, he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as gentle and harmless as a child, and it will be a great loss to the village when he is gone. He and Roche [a neighbor] are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any farm advice, you can go to them and they will give you as good advice as you can get, because both of them have been successful farmers. It would pay a young man to listen to them.

"Saintliness" of this kind is a matter of one's filling one's role. But it is one's role for the village that counts. There is nothing individual in the canon of conduct. The young person who follows ardently the conventions laid down for him is not a "saint" even if he is exceedingly chaste and religious. It is the word "holy," not "saint," which comes

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561 to the countryman's lips in describing him. Nor is a young
554 person a *cailleach*, for, like "saint," the term applies only to
551 the old. Both terms refer to sociological age rather than
888 chronological age, for those old people who occupy the role of "old" only because they have been forced into that position within the farm family can also be "saints." Thus the elder sister described in the discussion of farm marriage, who occupied the west room and the hob by the fire, was known in the neighborhood as a "saint."

Relative age makes a difference in status in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values. And lastly, as in the description of "saint," it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

561 The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself
554 into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland
888 wherever he meets countrymen of different ages together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of such broad age groups in terms of status.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellow, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons — those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great. In the community at large it is little less so. A farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat. His sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake house to honor the dead, the places by the fire go to the older men and women. The boys and girls must group themselves behind. They come forward only when called upon. At

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country "stations"[5] the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for Communion first. On the road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from "stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners, represent the interests of the community before priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to round out the picture.

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of

[5] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland.

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561 whiskey, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of tobacco,
554 go to the elder men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter
888 where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require
276 careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe around among one's intimates and guests for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man. He must content himself with an occasional "fag." When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells:

> During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door, I said to her she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. "Let the young bucks go," said I; "they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly." She looked at me and says, "Frank, are you serious?" "I am, faith," says I; "call the old man back." He was just a few paces down the road. She did and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough.

561 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless
554 powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among the
888 small farmers. Without them, the flavor of country life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the never-varying annual round of social activity in the country districts nor any inkling of the importance of those informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. It is here that social patterns of behavior upon age difference assume importance as controls of human activity. It is here that the roles the age grades play in the organization of the community reveal themselves most clearly.

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ner of the prize can count himself a proud man, for to be known in the countryside as a "great gambler" is a coveted mark of shrewdness and skill.

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The older men seldom attend the gambles. They are the province of the young. For the latter, they are a crystallization of the more informal card playing, such as that at Roche's house, already described, and they give the successful young men a prestige in the community ordinarily denied them. For in late years tournaments have sprung up covering whole sections of the county and it is a proud team which can bring back a five or ten pound district prize to its home community.

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From the standpoint of an enumeration of those taking part in the gambles, too, the gambles show themselves to be such a crystallization. They bring into association on more definite occasions the groups, such as that at Roche's house, which meet habitually. They unite most of the young men, especially the more active among them, with a few of the older. But it is from the young men's world of habit that their union is created.

In Rynamona the young men who gathered nightly at Roche's house were the mainstays of the gambles. They could be counted upon to attend all of them. They played well and long, as they had learned the games among themselves. But they were not the only ones to come. Most of the slightly older men of what we shall call the intermediate *cuaird*, to be described later, such as John Quin, the newcomer to the old men's house already named, came from time to time, and there was always a sprinkling of young men, kinsfolk, and "friends" from near-by communities. It was only the members of the old men's house who stayed away. They alone had given up the habits of young men. To them the gamble was "codology."

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Thus the first point of difference between the visiting habits of the old men and the young men, their lack of cen-

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contests, and playful roles of solemn occasions, such as acting as strawboys (mummers) at weddings. But all these activities, in which the old members of the community do not directly participate, are alike in their playing no great part in organizing other elements in the community than the young people themselves. They serve other functions.

All these activities bind the young men, the young people, together in common interests. They provide them with a scope of action in which they are comparatively free, yet which keeps them divorced from the seats of a power over community life which is denied them. In this sphere they may develop complex norms, valuations, and conducts.

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But such developments do not serve primarily to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. They are associated with the lesser prestige of the young people. Consequently, the old men's house comes to have in contrast a double function. It unites the old men in much the same way as the gamble and the dance unite the young men, in fact even more strongly. But it does so in terms of the old men's common position as recipients of the respect of the community and in terms of their individual positions as integrators of their families. The difference is structural. The activities of young men unite them across family and clique lines even from one community to the next. But those of the old men do more; they unite young and old as well. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive one, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble and dance may be greater.

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In such a system of integrations, that of the old men has the greater prestige. A great gambler or a great dancer wins wide respect. But the distinction is short-lived. It is a nine days' or a nine years' wonder. It bestows great prestige among one's fellows, but it removes one very little, if at all, from one's subordinate, less valued place as "boy" in the community.

Where such is the case, the individual's progression

182 554 621 888 through rural life under normal circumstances is not toward a greater and greater prominence in the activities of the young men's group. Rather, there comes a time when one must break away altogether. One faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new kind of behavior. Growing old brings many more changes than the physiological.

888 573 885 554 The case of the newcomer, John Quin, already described, shows the necessary changes. In Rynamona it is brought out very clearly in the clique to which he first belonged and to which we have referred at various times, calling it once the "intermediate."

[551] The clique we name so met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, more commonly known as Oscair (the Hercules of Irish saga) for his physical strength. Oscair was a rural carpenter with only a very small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good singer, a jokester, and a repository of folk tale, though he was not much past forty. He lived just at the edge of the slope leading from Kilnaboy Commons down to Rynamona. The townland was what would be called in urban sociology an "interstitial area." It was higher, rougher, and more craggy than Rynamona and Kilnaboy, lying between them. Its inhabitants were descendants of people evicted from round about who had squatted there. Most of them were "died out and left," and the place was always poor. It acted as a sort of outlying fringe of Rynamona.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged thirty-five to sixty. Just as their ages were intermediate between fully old and fully young, so was their habit here. They very seldom played cards. Talk was the order of the day, enlivened by Oscair's humor and ballads. A few of them spoke of the affairs of the village with some weight. The rest did not. Those who came were as follows:

a. Young Mackey, from the village, the man recently married, still too young for the old men's house.

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b. Moroney, the sixty-year-old, "strongest" (richest) farmer of the village. One of the few who spoke with weight.
c. Young Roche, son of the very old man, still unmarried but entirely in charge of the farm he would soon inherit.
d. O'Sullivan, a herdsman, from near-by, who was a stranger in the community but had won himself a place, despite his being a landless man of sixty-five, by acting as the local veterinarian. He spoke, too, with weight.
e. John Quin, already described, who spoke here with weight.
f. Two forty-year-old Pilkington brothers, unmarried, from the Commons, very small farmers, most often silent.
g. Oscair himself, whose role was to entertain.

Of these men it can be seen that only Mackey, Moroney, and John Quin could make the transition to full farm-owning, farm-father status of old men. Mackey had years to pass before he could so do. His eldest child was very young and he himself not long in possession of his farm. John Quin, in a somewhat anomalous position, could and did move onward. In doing so, as we described, he felt it necessary to break away completely from this group. This he did, with the result that the group, itself never stable, fell to pieces. Moroney, as we remember, had a disagreement with the villagers and would not attend the old men's gatherings.

What was it then that brought these men together? The authors could get no answer from the men themselves, other than their amusement with Oscair and, in Moroney's case, a guardedly phrased dislike of the villagers. Yet, through observation and interview in the community, it became clear that they were all passing through a similar transition. Oscair's visitors were not a stable clique, nor too faithful in attendance. Both young Roche and young Mackey were still going occasionally to the young men's meeting at the other Roche's house, but both felt too great responsibilities for gambling and cards. John Quin gambled heartily enough

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but was more and more impatient with the "playboys" of young fellows. Old Moroney was gruff and lonely. The others were neighbors of Oscair's and, being poor or landless men, felt awkward going elsewhere. O'Sullivan could visit as he pleased, for, as the local "vet," his word carried weight, but, always a stranger in sentiment, he felt most at home here.

The intermediate clique was a product of similarity of interests, in contrast to the interests of other better organized groups. Its members were in some way or another a little different from the ordinary old or young of Rynamona. Some of them were remote topographically, but not all. Some were without full community status, but not all, and some of a transitional age.

Oscair's house was thus a sort of catchall for those whose position in Rynamona was not clearly defined. It was intermediate between the clearly defined groups, and for the small farmers, such as Mackey, R[illegible] and Quin, was a halfway stage in their advance from the status of young men to that of old.

The progression of which this is the halfway stage is an upward one, metaphorically speaking. It leads no longer to a greater role as "playboy" but toward full family and community status. It leads to a new behavior and new personal desires, more highly valued. One's discarded status and one's discarded behavior fall away into lesser esteem. In terms of this progression we can understand the attitude of the old men on the behavior of the young ones. It is a transitory, impermanent, unimportant thing. It is a "codology." "When they grow older," one old man said, "and become married, they will meet just as we do."

What shows itself in Oscair's clique is a transitional state. For a moment were gathered here those who could move upward, like John Quin. Gradually, they could attain full status. Oscair's hearth for them was a roadside resting place.

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With these intermediates were gathered the representatives of another anomalous social place. Both Oscair and O'Sullivan, the "vet," were important figures in the community. Their occupations and their skills won them respect and admiration over the countryside. O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were "landless" men. They could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism, they were condemned to celibacy. Neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place for them except, as Oscair's behavior showed, as playboys and entertainers. So they too must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

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That was the way with the girl who married Willie Meaney[8] and he thought to get the money, but the parents said let her go. Now they are in Ennis and she never got anything. The same way with the two who married the Shaughnessy girls. They thought they would get something but they didn't get a thing. Would you believe that? America is not the only place where things like that happen. The people have crosses to bear. Every year we have a talk from the priest about the dances. He says the dances are all right but it is the going home that is bad. There is always a laugh when he says that. Then some of the parents get worried and they won't let their daughters go to a dance for a month or so, and they forget about it after that. 834 571 535

The status of boy and girl involves a "repression" of sexual impulse, virginity, and chastity of thought and expression, but custom and the attitudes of the older people provide a constant stimulation of sexual interest in the direction of the familistic system. The status of boy and girl thus involves a definite kind of sexual organization, based directly upon social relationships. 834 183 554

Nowhere is this better to be seen than in the case of the young woman's "character." Here the Church fathers and the country people seem to have attained quite a unanimity. Sexual orientation is inseparable from social role. Sexual repute and status are identical. The authors do not say this identification is unique. They do not know its historical origins. But they do wish to point out its function in this setting: The young woman's "character" is her full status as a social being because the familistic system is such that sexual activity, no less than economic, is completely integrated with one's role in social life. Consequently her sexual conduct is no concern of hers alone.

In the relationships in family and community in which the young girls of the countryside find their roles, any departure from the norm of conduct on their part is cause for

[8] Names of persons and smaller places in this and subsequent quotations are, of course, fictitious and refer to no actual persons or places of such names.

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834 violent disturbance in the relations uniting others to them-
183 selves and to one another. To "destroy a girl's character"
554 in the countryside is to upset the pattern of family and community life by overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change in farm succession. Much more than a shooting or a fight, a sexual irregularity, which cannot be righted in a match, is capable of destroying the intricate mutual obligations and expectancies of rural familism.

For the family whose "name" is "destroyed" and whose hopes of orderly re-formation are upset, two courses are open. One is to patch up a compromise, to accept the match
[626] forced upon them. The other is to expel the offenders bodily. Community feeling gives full support. In either case the girl concerned can no longer hope for full status. If the match is made or another husband found to father a child, time may right matters and give her full adult status as a farm wife and mother. Her failure as a girl may be forgotten, but it was a failure still. Otherwise there is little further to do but suffer expulsion. Emigration has been the refuge till recently.

836 The country people's attitudes toward illegitimacy and
848 premarital intercourse, one and the same to them, reflect well the disturbances they occasion. In discussing a local
626 case, one woman could voice the community's opinion in the following general terms:

> A young lady with a good fortune even, she couldn't get any man because her character is broken. Unless maybe he is very low. And so she usually goes to America and passes for a maiden. Everyone knows the father of the child but, if he has a good farm of land, no one would say anything, but he would be unlucky and have no family. He would get another woman [a wife, that is] with no bother. The baby might be sent to a home. And after a time they bring it home as a cousin.

836 But it is not always that the boys are treated so leniently,
626 and they, too, must emigrate, driven off by public censure.

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834 laughter is best explained as playful censure. For very real
522 censure often breaks out against such a person. It is particu-
587 larly likely to break out into overt punitive action in cases where old farmers threaten the expectations of their heirs by taking young women as second wives. In fact, the one kind of man or woman of considerable age who does not command respect is this. The countryside finds endless amusement in the theme of May and November. Naturally the matchmaking system does lend itself fairly well to matings between oldish men and young women, since ownership of a farm is the basis for a match.

581 The most interesting point of inquiry, then, may well be
554 the connection between the sexual status of the family mem-
183 bers, as we have described it here, and the standing of the family. The sexual status of the members is a reflection of their capacity for carrying alliance among the other families of the countryside. Can we draw, therefore, a connection between rural familistic norms about sexual behavior and the class structure of the rural community?

We know already that marriage in rural Ireland yields us one clue to the connection. At matchmaking the negotiations between the contracting parties concern the relative standing of each. That standing is at stake. The equivalence of dowry and land are arrived at through a careful enumeration of all the past history and the present material substance of the contracting families. The location of the farm, its livestock, its soil, the reputation and ancestry of the family, all these are compared. Backward places, we remember, do not grow big fortunes. Neither do many other kinds of persons and places.

We are dealing here of course only with one broad class, the country people. Yet within the boundaries of rural life there is much to be learned of the country people's treatment of relative prestige and standing among themselves. There are many behaviors in the activity of the countryside

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which express attitudes of social stratification. These do not only express the differences between the country people and outsiders from other classes beyond the confines of the local districts; they have much to do with the intimate details of personal relations in daily life among the small farmers as well. Intimate as they may be, however, these behaviors are nonetheless powerful. Like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization around marriage and matchmaking in country custom. In that they are directly a part of the organization of sexual conduct and attitudes among the small farmers.

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From this fact springs the seeming paradox of Irish rural life, already mentioned. A social system centering so strongly round the institution of the family condemns a large proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only through marriage does one attain full stature and one's family take its full place in the interlocking alliances of extended kindreds in the countryside. Failure to make a match is not only failure to fulfill one's own destiny of mating and procreating; it is also, as we have seen, failure to provide for the dispersal and re-formation of one's group. It is also, as we shall see, failure to maintain or establish the alliances making status among one's peers.

Thus it is the identification of sexual behavior with familistic role on the one hand and attainment of status on the other that makes the problems of marriage and sex of such great social and emotional importance.

Their importance is both individual and social. Individually, the powerful dispositions and sentiments concerned give a deep-seated biological and physiological basis to the institutional imperatives and the behavioral norms learned in experience of human relations. Socially, the fact that such a basis can be relied upon gives added strength to the attitudes evoked in support of the social institutions of the

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countryside and an added, automatic sanction to the enforcement, through public and official channels, of the accepted behaviors. In this manner, based upon and reinforced by such deep-rooted automatic reactions of individual conscience, the canons of morality, custom, personal habit, religious teaching, and social sanction form a whole piece all together. To hazard a comparison, let us select other central nexuses of custom, attitude, and emotion, among other peoples. By the process described, sexual morality becomes to Irish society, from the country people with whom we are dealing upward through other classes of society, what respect for law is to English society, what filial piety once was to Chinese society.

Let us now see how this mutual incorporation of sexual, marital, and stratificational standards works out in the experience of the countryside.

In the system of relations we have described, the fate of persons at the hands of their fellows and the repute they bear among them are closely connected. Local standing is, of course, a product of values arising in local experience. Consequently when we come upon the comedies and tragedies of life within a specific community, and hear described by the people themselves the course of events through which these little dramas took place and the impression they made upon the witnesses, we are close to observation of the experience which builds a scale of values and the place of individuals in it. The problem of local repute and public opinion can be reviewed in the light of concrete events and referred to actual relationships built out of behavior.

Thus one can come to see these petty events not merely as personal histories but also as functions of the patterns of organization we have been detailing.

If then we should take up the life of a local community and its inhabitants and search it through for its family histories of recent years, we should lay bare the roots of local

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values. Such a study was made in one community studied. Family histories since the famine times were secured from two hundred families of a Clare parish. The histories included farms owned or rented, worked, subdivided, added or lost, in each generation since pre-famine days; names, numbers, sexes, and life-sketches of family members of each generation; occupations of each person not taking to farming; emigrations and the destination of the emigrants in each generation; marriages made in each generation, according to farms married into, occupations of husbands and fathers-in-law, and size of dowry. Much of this material was statistical in form, but along with it a considerable amount of anecdotal material was gathered, describing in detail many local incidents. This information is out of place here; and it will be reported elsewhere. But certain conclusions of relevance to the problem of understanding the social role of marital alliances in the countryside are of importance for the present discussion.

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The first of these conclusions concerns the mechanism by which families without farms or with very small and "backward" ones were forced to extinction through celibacy. The second of these conclusions illustrates the means by which alliances made through the matchmaking mechanism provided a channel of upward social movement and incidentally a path of recruitment of the successful children of farmers in the "bad" or poorer lands into the ranks of those of the "good" or better lands.

The first conclusion illustrated by the material of this survey of family histories is one we have already met. Failure to make marital alliances led to failure of family reformation and hence either to celibacy for all the children or to emigration on the part of the whole generation. In the words of the countryside, if a family could find no one with whom to marry "they died out of it."

Even so broad a question as the disappearance of the class

Even so broad a question as the disappearance of the class
183 of artisans in the countryside comes, for its explanation,
581 under this conclusion. It cannot be understood except in
terms of responses to values determined in the relations of
554 familism. The social mechanism by which the local artisans have disappeared — whatever the historic and economic occasion of their fate in the industrial revolution and its aftermath — is something specific to the system of social organization we have described.

The few local artisans who survive today were once members of a numerous group. In the days before railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, and smiths followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Their skills descended, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; the trade was "in their blood." Their surplus children have had to disperse to the towns and in emigration. For theirs, too, is a familistic world.

Unless the artisans in the countryside marry within their own fast-diminishing numbers, they, too, must have land and fortune. If they do not get it, they must either marry one of their own kind or stay celibate. Today one finds many survivors of this local class of craftsmen scattered here and there in the countryside. The mere memory of their trade may be all that remains to distinguish them from petty cotters. In the majority of cases they have not married. If they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Thus the family "dies out of it." Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

The mechanism by which this extinction is brought about is clear enough. Occupational names have emotional significance far beyond their reference to skill and economic
183 function. They are symbols evocative of social stratification,
581 among the small farmers as no less elsewhere.
554 In disputes even within a family, angry reference to ties

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outside the family may well be a method of attack. Where, as here, such ties are a matter of one's "blood," the attack is direct and personal. One's status is part of one's person. How close a part it is can well be seen in the quotation of one farmer's account of transition in family relations at the match:

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> If the old people don't like the girl, then the mother and the father go to their room and fight with her every day; and if she has low blood in her, they will take her to task for it, if she has weaver, tinker, or tailor blood. If they don't like her they will not work like they used, but go out on *cuaird* and spread the bad news about her.

The familistic outlook gives all this kind of evocation and reference the character of genealogical commentary. Everything one does or is can be referred to one's "blood." Heredity is the explanation of success or failure, high position or low estate. Since one's heredity includes the occupational and other status of one's forbears and the whole gamut of relations which marked their place in the community, a continuity is preserved between the present and the past which defines one fully as a member of one's group.

Consequently, the instances of failure to find wives and husbands, the instances of courtships opposed by parental and other pressures, the instances of elopements ending in emigration, the instances of families of brothers and sisters who stuck together celibate until old age, are far oftener examples of the force of failure to find a mate of acceptable status than of any other cause. The organization of sexual behavior in the countryside is inseparable from that of the stratification of the community itself.

The second interesting point, again one in which the examination of family histories led to an illumination of the connection between the patterns of sexual organization and those of small farmer familism, is in a sense the reverse of the coin.

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183 581 554 In these histories, when a countrywoman explained that she or someone she knew had married from bad land into good, or paid a larger dowry than she might have, had she stayed in her own townland, she referred to a movement that was quite readily discernible in her parish. She had experienced, and took pride in, a natural wedding of desire and ambition, which combined, for her as an individual, the instincts of a woman to be wife and mother and the demands of her group's advancement in the systems of familist alliances that made up her community. This was the individual side of the matter. Many indeed were the farmers and their wives who were careful to specify to us how successful a match had been in carrying a larger-than-might-be dowry to better land. One might grumble perhaps about one's lot, if there were anything to grumble over, but in such a case one might be proud that one had assured one's children of a better farm and a better standing than one's own.

166 581 But there was a social side of the matter which showed that this ambition was not a merely personal thing. For in the parish in which we gathered detailed information an interesting statistical movement could be seen. This movement was reflected in the geography of the district.

Marriages since 1864 in this parish have shown a tendency to move brides from the westward out of the poorer lands eastward toward richer farms. The parish happens to lie between higher, poorer soil to the westward and a more fertile area to the east. One must know the local topography and the fertility of the soil to understand the details of the movement. But its over-all tendency is statistically clear. None of the marriages among small farmers and their fellows have taken place (if they took place in the County at all) beyond a six-mile range of distance between the farm married-out-of and the farm married-into. In all cases the movement is small. Yet, small as it is, it shows a distinct tendency. In general, the higher and more westerly town-

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463 326 554 Of these local specialists only the smith survives in any strength today. He shares with the mason the admiration the country people feel for physical strength and prowess. Perhaps it is this that made the more sedentary occupations of weaver, shoemaker, and tailor of less prestige. Thus the crippled son, as the quotation says, might be put to one of them.

463 294 The tailor was often a peripatetic. He moved around from house to house and community to community where he was known, living and eating among the family. He was made welcome, not only as a maker of clothes but also as a carrier of gossip. Today the few tailors who survive in the country districts are petty cotters with only a memory of their trade. The few still active ones have retreated to the towns. Most of the farmers' clothing is now shop-bought and factory-made.

463 286 [283] The weaver was perhaps the most sedentary of the local craftsmen. He is the one who has failed to survive even in the towns. The women of the farm families carded and spun the wool into yarn until home spinning died out, and broke and scutched the flax for linen, but the weaver made it into cloth. He spent all his days indoors, moving from one side of his loom to the other in a small room heavy-laden with fluff and lint. The farmers seem to remember most strongly the unhealthiness of the life, but they tell one also of the weavers' arrogance when their skill was in great demand. The following is the kind of description one can still get, the first part of it discoursing on weavers in general and the second relating the history of the local man:

> In the old days the weaver might have enough work to keep him busy for four months and, when you went to see him, he would put you off and tell you to come back in a fortnight for your goods. It would be no good for you, none in the world, if you didn't take a bowl of butter and a few dozen eggs to him

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as a way of getting him to start on your yarn in a hurry. If you 463
didn't, he would not do it until he got ready. They were inde- 286
pendent, all right, and then when they were finished, you had to reach down into your pocket and pay for what he did. There used to be a lot of weavers here, but they are all gone now. The women have got out of weaving the wool.

A weaver here, Paddy Seán R—, was a very fine fellow 463
though he drank a lot. You cannot blame him for that because his job was a mean one and bad on the health. He worked to 286
keep his mother out of the workhouse and till the day she died 735
he would not let her go there. Wasn't that a decent thing for him to do? Afterwards he went to Galway and then he came back here and as an old man he died in the workhouse. But wasn't it a decent thing he would not let his poor old mother go [386
and her going up the streets of the town every morning collecting the urine from the people who lived in the house [to use 514]
for bleaching].

These three occupations were the meaner ones in the eyes 463
of the country people. It was not that they degraded their 554
followers. Rather it was that they were intrinsically of less value than the more robust crafts of outdoor life. Something of the sexual dichotomization of labor was involved in this attitude equating sedentary, house-bound pursuits with the feminine spheres of activity.

The chief exponents of the robuster, more masculine crafts within local ken were the carpenter, the mason, the house builder, and the smith. But there were many others. Between the landless or "backward" cotters and laborers, who might turn their hand to anything, and the small farmers, who were themselves occasionally forced to turn to harvesting abroad or to road-mending and stone-breaking at home, there were as many specialists as there were activities in which special renown and skill could be attained. In fact, the development of local skills seems restricted only by the limits of the *matériel* which peasant life requires.

Other local experts were the thatcher, the cattle doctor 463
or "vet," often a herdsmen with a lifelong experience of

476 would be waiting outside to whisk them away or to have a dance.
571 Then when they ground the oats, they had a quern and the men and women would come together and each take a turn at grinding so it was not tiring and they would have a big supper of spuds and milk for all of them before they would go. Then they would get together for the carding and spinning before the thread was taken to the weaver. The young women might be carding and the old women spinning and the *meitheal* of
[535] girls would work away. They would get a dance when they would be done.

All the above description of close concert and deeply imprinted habitual work relations among the members of the local communities in the framework of the organization of behaviors of age and sex depict the now dead past. The same activities today, though certain techniques are different, bring out the same picture of work relations in an emotionally charged unison among persons of similar status within the community. The present-day hay harvest is very little different, though mowing machines are used. The great hayrick is still built in the same setting, and still calls for celebration. Everyone still waits for a signal from the hayrick rigger, a personage of considerable importance on such a day.

476 The unison of working on oats harvest with flails is gone.
571 But in its place is a threshing machine, and its owners come around and a local crew is got up out of the local men. The
463 same jollities still reign. In all this our chief interest is not in changing custom. Rather it is from this kind of observa-
●554 tion that a new conclusion arises. The factors of differentiation about skills and techniques in the rural communities give rise to statuses of the same kind as before, statuses based upon the development of a specialty by a member of the local community which is recognized and valued within the habitual activities of his fellows. Here is an opportunity to see the embryonic form of division of labor and development of occupations in terms of the life of a community. It is a continuous process.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

493 two or three motor cars for important guests and the prin-
494 cipals. At election time the local political organizations of the national parties provide free transport to the polls for the old and lame. In all else the motor car is the mark of the townsman, either the produce-collector in his lorry or the man of influence on a jaunt.

493 Even at such times of high ceremony as weddings, funerals,
494 and elections the country people still use the horse and
554 trap or sidecar. This is the traditional mode of polite travel, and it retains its popularity today. The trap is used only by the whole family or by its adult farm-owning members. It is used only in connection with activities of importance which mark their own status and those to whom they travel. It is always used at funerals and marriages. It sometimes transports all the family in Sunday best to church. It is brought out to honor a visitor or announce the arrival or departure of a friend. And it is used occasionally on visits of state to the town. Sunday clothes always go with it. It would be a very big farmer who used the trap in all his trips to town.

493 The vehicle-of-all-work, and the one on which produce
494 goes to market and shop-bought goods come back, is the common two-wheeled cart. The farmers call it a "car." With the addition of side boards it becomes a "creel" and can carry small livestock, turf, and many another bulky object. Occasionally it appears on Sunday, but one never sees it in times of high ceremony such as in a funeral procession. It is the vehicle of everyday working life. Even the younger members of the family may use it sometimes in going about their work. But it is most often to be seen in the hands of the man of the house.

The ass and car, on the other hand, ordinarily has no such eminence. The donkey cart is a woman's vehicle. It takes her and her farm produce to and from the crossroad center. In a town market it is no accident that one can find the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

adult; the boy learns work as he learns manhood. 462

Also, the child grows up within the full complex 593
of life within the farm family. His first petty 861
errands are a mere incident in the relationship he 857
builds up with his parents and brothers. He learns not only his work but the whole code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his class, at their hands. This conduct is itself part of his relation to them. It ranges all the way from the errands he runs for his superiors in the family to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make sexual behaviour of any kind an offence, and of that within the family, incest.

Consequently, in so well-knit a group, the com- 462
mand which his father (and his mother) exercises 593
over the son in farm work is only one aspect of that control. His subordination continues as long as his father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the son and his brothers, they have no control of the direction of farm work nor the disposal of the farm's income. I say the son and his brothers, for all the sons are equal in this [554] [858]
subordination; rural Ireland knows neither primogeniture nor junior right. As long as they remain at home upon the farm they share this status equally.

The behaviour that reflects this state of affairs 593
can be readily observed. Sons go to market and fair from the time they are ten or twelve, but they buy or sell little if anything. Father and sons can be

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

to subordination, though they cannot clothe their acts in words and build moralities and philosophies out of them.

Today, in a democratic country, it is part of the folkways either to deny that such activities exist, or to demand that, like some unmentionable, they remain unstudied and unsaid. Yet, the student of human behaviour cannot neglect so rich and so deep-rooted a fount of human action. Nor can he afford to relegate the study entirely to distant horizons. Caste in India is a relatively safe topic for an American; caste in New England or in the South is a high explosive. Only the most painstaking objectivity and the most colourless vocabulary can safeguard the temerarious investigator. And the only fair treatment is that of the laboratory: to treat the behaviours in their own settings and to analyse them for nothing more than their function in that setting. If one adopts this view, one can no more blame the Smiths for snubbing the Joneses then one can berate one protoplasm for repelling another. In either case, one seeks the reason why and describes the manner how.

In the Irish countryside we are dealing with one broad class, the country-people. The behaviours which preserve the distinctions between them and others—townsmen, big farmers, gentry, and so on—do not concern us here. Yet within their own community—within the essential democracy of rural life—the country-people can be seen to act

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

554 in many ways to separate, to draw distinctions, to
565 repel the nonconformable. Remember that preposition 'within'. For these behaviours do not discriminate between broad groups, like the hauteur of a nobleman toward a lackey.

They operate within a larger inclusion. They are remotely like the ways of a schoolboy of the eighth grade who may scoff at the seventh-grader, look down on him, and bully him half in fun. Yet let the outside world break in, in the person of the teacher or rival schoolboys, and the distinction vanishes in the violence of united opposition. Nevertheless, intimate as they may be, these behaviours are none the less powerful. And like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization at the match, in country marriage.

From this fact springs the seeming paradox of
182 Irish rural life. A social system centring so strongly
554 round marriage and the family condemns a large
565 proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only the words are antithetical. It is through marriage that one's group and oneself attains and retains full stature. Failure in either sphere leaves unrealized the other.

From this fact, too, comes much of the homely comedy and tragedy of rural life. One prefers the human terms. That comedy and that tragedy show themselves to the student of social behaviour in

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

another guise. They are controls upon the system. 182
They are unconscious patterns of human action 554
whose social function is to ensure conformities and 565
to enforce cohesions against internal disruption and external defection. Much of the fate of human beings, both at their own hands and at those of their fellows, conforms to the controls the community exerts in response to the system of customs and values by which it builds itself and in which it ensures its preservation.

Tragedy, for example, lies in the fate of one 463
romantic human type in rural Ireland. In the last 178
century before the introduction of railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, smiths, followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Open any account of rural Ireland before the last quarter of the last century, such as the tales of William Carleton, and you will be rewarded with a full-blooded picture of this lusty crew. Their crafts were very primitive, but their place was sure. Since then, nearly all of them, except the smith, their peer, have been swept away before the skill of townsmen and factory. These men supplied their neighbours, lived among them, were an integral part of rural life. When poverty struck too deep, they became peripatetics, like the wandering singers, scholars, fiddlers, spalpeen labourers, petty hawkers and beggars who swarmed the roads of Ireland. The world of fairy-tale was

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

178 not remote from the farmers who knew these men.
463 Rumpelstiltskin, in a Gaelic dress, was at one's very doors.

In remote communities some few of these survive. Where they do, the community can still make use of them. Commissioning them follows a traditional pattern of gifts and courtesies little resembling conventional monetary commerce. Their skill descends, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; it is 'in the blood'. Their surplus children must disperse to towns and in emigration. For theirs too is a familistic world.

178 Unless they marry within their own fast-
463 diminishing numbers, they too must have land and fortune. Now and again one of them rises in the
556 world. He acquires land, he sets aside a fortune, he marries sons and daughters on the land. Year by year, his trade goes into the discard, till one fine day he is a full-fledged small farmer.

463 But such upward mobility is rare and difficult.
554 Economic change has swept his skill aside. The local artisan is more often a landless man, with nothing but a garden patch. The services he performs, however indispensable, do not give him equality with his neighbours. His standing is low, though his person is welcome. A farmer might 'put a son to a trade', perhaps, and often did not long ago. But it would be the lame son, the one not 'suited to the land'.

So today one finds broken remnants of this local

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

craftsmanship scattered in cabins here and there 463
through the countryside. The mere memory of 554
their trade may be all that still remains to them to tell one that they are not the petty cotters they seem to be. They have not married, or if they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Or here and there the countryman will point out the shells of their houses; "The family all died out of it", he will explain.

For the pressure of social standing is a powerful force, even in such a setting. Rather than admit an inevitable decline into the status of a landless labourer, they must 'die out of it'. One's standing, we remember, is one's blood. If they cannot amass a tangible representation of that blood in the dowry, they cannot marry. Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

Even if they do succeed, and merge by marriage into the farmers' commonality, they bear a trace of a different origin yet a while longer. Change is slow where lines are tightly drawn; even peasant society knows its parvenus. And if dispute and anger flare up to strip life to its essential core, what insults do we hear? The countryman 'throws up' to 463
his fellow, not his face or his manners or his 554
animal likeness, in a wild *chameau* or *schwein*, but 578
his descent. He damns him with the reminder of 'carpenter' or 'weaver blood'.

Strange as this epithet may seem to us, it brings

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 an adequate, instantaneous response. The psycho-
554 logist knows that expressions of anger, like any
578 other emotion, are conditioned within particular social systems. And here the Irish system works, in its own fashion, to draw and to reinforce the inevitable distinctions and discriminations of social life.

From this fact springs comedy as well. Joke and
522 fun play round this central theme. A good deal of old custom and traditional pastime cluster here. The picturesque buffoonery of the 'strawboys' —privileged masqueraded figures whose mock-dangerous invasion of the wedding feast has been dignified to represent a last remnant of a primeval bride-capture—is better explained thus more simply. Such symbolism as the gaiety of Shrove Tuesday, when in Clare, at least, young men beat loudly on the doors of those unmarried women who took no husband through the Shrovetide, is still direct enough.

For comedy and laughter soften the sharpness of social controls. They are the velvet glove that clothes the iron hand.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

In such a case, the course of the countryman's path through rural life is plainly charted. In the normal event, the circle of his friends and contemporaries must change and progress. There comes a time when either he or they must break away altogether. Distinction in the world of the young men's pursuits is at best but a nine days' or nine years' wonder. He faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new sort of behaviour. Just as he moves to a new social place at marriage, he must move onward among the cliques of his fellows in the community.

The case of John Quinn in Rynamona, the newcomer to the old men's house, can bear re-examination in this light. Quinn first belonged to a group which met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, better known as Oscair, the Hercules of Irish saga, for his great strength. Oscair was the centre of the group. He was a rural carpenter, with only a small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good workman, a good singer, a gay-hearted jokester, and something of a repository of folk-tale. He was between forty-five and fifty.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged from thirty-five to sixty. Like their age, their habit was intermediate between old and young. Talk was the order of the day; they seldom played cards. Oscair's song and ballad enlivened the gathering.

Some of the men who came here spoke with

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

573 'weight'; they tried to turn the talk into a discussion
554 of the affairs of the community. Old Moroney, the 'strongest' farmer of Rynamona, who would not go to the old men's house, came here. John Quinn came. Before he began his entrance into the old men's house, which we have described, he spoke here with 'weight'. He gambled willingly enough, but he showed himself more and more impatient with the 'playboys' of young fellows. Another man, O'Sullivan, a herdsman of sixty-five and the local 'vet', also came. The rest were younger men, farmer's sons.

But this was a very unstable group. When finally John Quinn moved onward it fell to pieces, and Oscair's hearth was left untenanted each night.

For what shows itself here is a transitional state; the members of the group were in some way or another a little off the centres of their kind in Rynamona. For a moment were gathered here those who could move upward, like John Quinn. Gradually, they could attain full status, they could move into the social place which centres family headship, the land, a line of descent, and the old man's role within the community. Oscair's hearth for them was a roadside resting-place.

With these intermediates were gathered the representatives of another anomalous social place. Both Oscair and O'Sullivan 'the vet' were important figures in the community; their occupations and their skills won them respect and admiration

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

over the countryside. At least, O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were 'landless' men; they could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism they were condemned to celibacy; neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place there for them, except as Oscair's behaviour showed, as 'playboys' and entertainers. So they, too, must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

For once again the examination of rural life leads one perforce to concepts of structural balance. The organization of the community takes its form in the social behaviour of cliques among the countrypeople. That behaviour cannot be disassociated from the characteristic alignment of sentiment and interests which at once separates and reintegrates the generations. And the alignment itself in its turn relates the countrymen to one another in the community, upon the basis of relative age, with the familistic nexus in which are balanced prestige, command, the land and the continuities of descent. That to which the countryman is attached is a social order, as Sir Horace Plunkett alone among the commentators on the Irish scene could see. And a social order is an active living growth whose embrace soon gathers in the whole of life.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

rear ends of the shafts, which are, however, left projecting so as to take the weight of the tilted car when it is not in use. It is these projecting shafts or 'trams' which give the wheel-car the appearance of a slide-car on wheels and seem to confirm the suggested evolution (Fig. 55). 493

In eighteenth-century Ireland possession of a wheel-car was a mark of social distinction, and entire districts were without wheeled vehicles of any kind. Down to the middle of the nineteenth century it was considered 'respectable' to go to 'meetings' in a wheel-car in the Presbyterian parts of north Antrim. In the course of the nineteenth century, as the larger spoke-wheeled cart was adopted by prosperous farmers, the little wheel-car sought refuge in the poor mountainous districts where we find it clinging precariously today. As late as the 1914–18 war one was in use on a farm on Black Mountain, within the city boundary of Belfast (Pl. 8, 2). 493 554

The wheel-car has its place in history because it was the ancestor of the nineteenth century jaunting-car which Lloyd Praeger rightly lists as one of the essentially native Irish products.[1] The platform of the wheel-car, to which a box body or a wicker-work creel was secured when goods were being carried, became a seat, covered with a straw mat, when the vehicle was used for social occasions. The passengers sat on each side, back to back, their feet dangling near the ground or resting on a hay-rope slung fore and aft, which could accommodate any length of leg. By the end of the eighteenth century this 'side-car', fitted with wooden foot-rests, had become a standard hiring vehicle, and it needed only the substitution of spoked for solid wheels, the addition of springs and consequent alterations of height to give the Irish jaunting-car which Bianconi adopted in 1815 and later developed into the four-wheeled long-car.[2] There can be no doubt that 'the Bians', traversing the highways and byways of the whole country, made a contribution to the social and economic life of Ireland which was, in its day, as important as that of the railway in the latter part of the century or the motor bus in the twentieth century. 493

The spoked wheel, which throughout the eighteenth century 401 177

[1] R. Ll. Praeger, *The Way that I Went* (1937), Ch. I.
[2] I. J. Herring, *U.J.A.*, 3 (1940), 115–22; *U.J.A.*, 7 (1944), 42–46.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 was reserved for coaches and the carriages of the rich, was popu-
177 larized by its adoption for farm carts (Scots carts) under the
[401] improving zeal of landlords towards the end of the century. In Ulster, which has always looked to Scotland for its inspiration, the Scots cart was first used for transporting linen, and one thinks of it spreading along the improved roads and being copied and adapted to local needs and traditions. Around Lough Erne, for instance, one reads of large one-horse carts, adopted by carriers in the early nineteenth century, which had 'trams' or rearshafts four feet long,[1] and these projections, surely a reminiscence of the long slide-car runners, are still characteristic of the 'flat' carts of the west and south-west (Fig. 60).

493 The Scots cart with its four-foot wheels was able to take twice the load of the native wheel-car, and as industry increased and roads were improved through the nineteenth century it drove the block-wheeled cars off the roads. But for rough work in the fields and bogs various types of slipe were preferred: the cart
● [554] was little used for harvesting and its possession was to some extent a sign of prestige. (Unlike the native car, the woodwork
[531] of the cart was and is brightly painted, usually in red and blue.) The slipe and slide-car were better adapted to moist ground, to undrained fields and the uneven surface of ridge and furrow. As roads and farm practice were improved it was a new version of Scots cart (Fig. 60) which ultimately drove out the slide-car and the wheel-car in Ulster. It seems that the older varieties of Irish carts were derived from the Leith cart of the eastern lowlands of Scotland.[2] The body consisted of little more than a slatted platform without fixed sides and ends. This 'flat cart', as distinct from the 'box cart', is the usual pattern of farm cart in the west of Ireland and, fitted with springs, is the common hawker's cart. As a farm cart it suits the small farmer because it can be used for a variety of purposes by fitting different kinds of sides, for example tall slatted 'crates' for carrying turf.

493 Towards the middle of the nineteenth century there was evolved, in Lanarkshire and the neighbouring counties, the box
177 cart with upright panelled sides perhaps derived from the
531

[1] L. Atthill, *Recollections of an Irish Doctor* (1911), 44.
[2] R. L. Edgeworth, *An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages* (1813).

 [Text continues on p. 178]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
●[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of
178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimneaigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19]

173 556 [574]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan. [778]

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains 764

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe. [554 551]

[P. 265]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

624 875 more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held, because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are [793] apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the [554] headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches. [571] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

875 593 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him 895 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity 896 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in [861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This [123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents [171] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority senti- [829] ment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and [123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21). 114 181

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible. [124]

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.). 114 12 181 [538]

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor- 554 [423] [471] [511] 556

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor. [262] [363] [674]

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Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable. [761] 765

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When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning. [602] [654] [322] [463]

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The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding, 178

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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male but sometimes female. Also, the former occupied a higher prestige position [662] than the latter, but there was not the clear-cut distinction between genres appropriate to each type of narrator as elsewhere in Ireland; the *seanchaí* sometimes related the exploits of Finn and the *scéalaí* the pranks of the red man. The two surviving storytellers in 1960 were both old men, but the *seanchaí* died in 1963 and the *scéalaí* two years later. Both had been prolific contributors to Irish Folklore [814] Commission collectors and Continental folklorists. [654]

All of the above kinds of folklore expression, with the exception of folktales, were regarded as true by island folk in the past. The myths either coexisted or were reinterpreted with Biblical stories, and the legends were synchronized with events of ancient world history dating from just before the Flood to the eighth century. The Inis Beag *scéalaí* sometimes was derided by school children for still believing his narratives to be true, as was the *seanchaí* for claiming that the supernatural happenings described in his tales actually were experienced by islanders in the past century. Both narrators for many years had been visited only by folklorists [814] and tourists wishing to hear them relate their repertoires of stories, for the only form of storytelling which has been perpetuated is the occasional gathering of men in a home or pub to exchange anecdotes, mostly related to fishing. I was told that in his prime the *scéalaí* could have recited narratives nightly for "at least a month" without ever repeating a story, had he ever been called on to do so. That [114] the memory of the esteemed narrator is prodigious is revealed in the complete collection of all the material recorded from a single *scéalaí* of Co. Kerry, reported by Delargy, which included 396 pages of text: 186 tales, a few songs and song fragments, and various smaller items of prose and verse. These had been obtained from 27 different sources by the narrator, all of whom save one were neighbors (Delargy 1945:11).

Most liked by the folk were the prose narratives related by the *scéalaí* and 538 tales of recent and contemporary historical events in the region, stories of the 539 supernatural in Inis Beag, and personal experiences told by the *seanchaí*. Few of the stories dealt with historical occurrences in Ireland between the coming of Christianity and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and none of them concerned personages or happenings associated with the church. At my request, the 124 *seanchaí* read three books of Irish folklore that I had brought with me—J. J. Camp- 538 bell's *Legends of Ireland*, Jeremiah Curtin's *Irish Folk-Tales*, and Eileen O'Faolain's 539 *Irish Sagas and Folk-Tales*—and declared that he had heard all of the stories therein as a youth from his father and other island storytellers. However, the versions in the books often were "incorrect," he claimed, and he delighted in "correcting" them; of course, there are many variants of each tale (as many as 527—Aarne-Thompson type 300 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission), and he regarded the Inis Beag stories as the legitimate variants. Most of the local and Irish tales share types (plots) and motifs (incidents, characters, and objects) with those of European and other societies brought about by millennia of diffusion, but the Irish have refashioned these elements in their own corpus according to their culture and personality dispositions.

I will not discuss the various prose narratives told by the *scéalaí* of Inis 538 Beag; the greater number of them can be obtained from Campbell or O'Faolain 114 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent Folktales of Ireland.

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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571 they received their nicknames were of other sorts. Not even
517 farming occupied a large share of their conversation, keen as their rivalry in the matter often was while work was going on.

571 Taking these matters in order, the young men who met
517 at Roche's house met habitually there for card playing.
524 Roche's unmarried son, a man about thirty, was perhaps the central figure. His cousin, another Roche, was the brother of a young man just married, who took part in no *cuaird*. This cousin helped work his brother's farm. He was another central figure. The group that formed itself round them included most of the young men of Rynamona between the ages of twenty and thirty. They played the usual games of the Irish countryside, "forty-five" and "nap," often far into the night.

571 Roche's house was the more informal center. It took in
517 the younger men. But there was present in the community
525 a custom somewhat more organized, namely, the "gamble." As often as once a week a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household, as its turn comes, throws open its doors to the card players. Admission, usually a shilling, is charged and goes toward defraying the expense of the supper of bread and tea for all and toward the prize. What is left after those charges are met belongs to the householder. Often this amount reaches a profitable figure, and, where the custom is firmly entrenched, a certain commercialism shows its head.

But the gamble is a sporting event. Teams, often formed of habitual associates in card playing, are pitted against one another in one form of the gamble. In another, individual high scorers win. The prize is usually a turkey or two geese, even a bonham (young pig), a side of bacon, or a calf. Elab-
[555] orate rules and canons of honesty govern the play, the conduct of the players, and the obligation of the person offering the prize. Play is serious and intense, and the win-

THE OLD IN THE COMMUNITY

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ner of the prize can count himself a proud man, for to be known in the countryside as a "great gambler" is a coveted mark of shrewdness and skill.

[887]

The older men seldom attend the gambles. They are the province of the young. For the latter, they are a crystallization of the more informal card playing, such as that at Roche's house, already described, and they give the successful young men a prestige in the community ordinarily denied them. For in late years tournaments have sprung up covering whole sections of the county and it is a proud team which can bring back a five or ten pound district prize to its home community.

[554]

From the standpoint of an enumeration of those taking part in the gambles, too, the gambles show themselves to be such a crystallization. They bring into association on more definite occasions the groups, such as that at Roche's house, which meet habitually. They unite most of the young men, especially the more active among them, with a few of the older. But it is from the young men's world of habit that their union is created.

In Rynamona the young men who gathered nightly at Roche's house were the mainstays of the gambles. They could be counted upon to attend all of them. They played well and long, as they had learned the games among themselves. But they were not the only ones to come. Most of the slightly older men of what we shall call the intermediate *cuaird*, to be described later, such as John Quin, the newcomer to the old men's house already named, came from time to time, and there was always a sprinkling of young men, kinsfolk, and "friends" from near-by communities. It was only the members of the old men's house who stayed away. They alone had given up the habits of young men. To them the gamble was "codology."

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Thus the first point of difference between the visiting habits of the old men and the young men, their lack of cen-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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161 of social sentiments and forms of social organization shaped entirely within the familism of the small farmers. The new opportunities have appeared first and foremost as means for personal and group advancement within the existing social and familist order.

One could hazard that the census figures represent not an "economic problem" in the sense of a flight from poverty or a fight against its restrictions but the movement of a population seizing upon new opportunities and new prosperity without relinquishing at any point the already existing organization of their social sentiments and habits. In such a view the problems of population decline in Ireland are results not of poverty but of prosperity.

161 However that may be, there is a close parallel between
166 the opening of opportunities for education and for rise into
555 the professions, the ranks of business in the Irish towns, and government, all taking place since 1870, and the demography of the small farmer class. The children of the small farmers have flocked through the doors opened to them into every walk of Irish life. They continue to do so today. The towns and their occupations continue to grow and grow, but the countryside does not. The process is one by which the long delays in marriage, the restriction of children to the few who can be well provided for, and the fierce centering of family ambition in the occupational status of its members, more usually thought of as urban, petit-bourgeois phenomena, have spread outward in to the countryside and overtaken the small farmer on his farm. The mobility of a changing, democratized social order, capable of recruiting the ranks of one class from the children of another, has been combined with the fixity, the conservatism, and the rigidity of an ancient and still vital familism. It should be said that Ireland is not unique in this recombination of elements of social organization. She is unique in illustrating so well, in her special way, a social process universal in the countries of Western European civilization.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation. 437 443 [555]

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers. 443 868

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance. 521 443

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities. 443 484 574 602

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the 443 484

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 is worth noticing that symbols in the form of a swastika, but
789 including also circles, pentagrams and horses, were formerly cut as protective devices in the beams of barns in Scandinavia. Some of the designs are reminiscent of the art of the Bronze Age.

243 An Irish verse giving the four essentials of a good thrashing, collected in Co. Armagh, runs in translation:

[539]

A hand-staff of holly,
A souple of hazel,
A single sheaf,
And a clean floor.

This is where the besom of heather or bent comes in: it is still preferred to the sweeping-broom for a clay floor or to get into the joins of boards or cobbles. Thrashing was a daily job, carried out on well-run farms night and morning before the cattle were fed. It was held that the cattle throve best on freshly thrashed oats, and the storage of grain would anyhow have been difficult where there were no barns.[1] For this reason, too, the level 'street' in front of the house, or even the public road was often the most suitable floor available. The thrashing was usually done on a strong linen sheet. Publicity as well as a steady echoing beat seem to have been the desired aims. Every-
● [555] where prestige has attached to a noisy thrashing, and partly no doubt for self-aggrandisement a solitary thrasher would beat with his feet to make the noise of two. Everywhere too the
[533] sound of the flail has been turned into jingles and rustic rhymes. They did not accompany the work itself because it was too noisy and too exhausting to allow talking or singing. The flails' beaters made their own merry music; was it, one wonders, originally intended to drive away evil spirits from the precious food supply?

222 In this chapter we have confined ourselves to some of the
824 things that were made at home out of materials that lay to hand. To describe the utilization of all the lesser plants that have

[343] [1]Mr. A. T. Lucas, however, has described traditional outdoor granaries, now restricted to west Cork, constructed of thick straw ropes, which when completed resemble round stacks (*Gwerin*, I (1956), 2–20). Mr. V. B. Proudfoot calls my attention to the similar 'corn bykes' of Caithness (*P.S.A.S.* (1932), 156–7).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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555
526 struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. A famous writer
181 claimed that he introduced into Inis Beag a feat of agility that he had learned in
[171] France, which consists of holding a stick in both hands at the knees and jumping back and forth across it without losing grip; the islanders attest that this "trick" was known locally for at least a century, and one man boasted that his father was
123 able to leap back and forth a dozen times in quick succession. My rapport with the men was enhanced by the fact that I had been a weight thrower and lifter and used to entertain them by putting a granite boulder, throwing a discus that I had brought with me, and performing repetition presses with a barrel of stout. However, the one time that I was persuaded to compete for Inis Beag against Inis Thiar in putting the shot (a flat-bottomed store weight of 14 pounds), I fouled with my foot all three times and thus suffered ignominious defeat. The curate who officiated at the event appeared pleased, but the islanders who had placed wagers on me were of opposite disposition.

221 also one that calls forth the united efforts of the whole
216 family. It is a race, too, against time and rainy weather, and every effort must be bent to mow, rake, and let dry, and stack the meadow grasses, first in small haycocks, then in a great hayrick in the haggard, before rain brings rot to the lush crop. The farmers well speak of the harvest as "saving the hay."

221 No sooner is the hay saved than the corn crops demand
211 attention. Rye and oats are ready for the scythe or the mowing machine (only the larger farmers have reapers) by
[407 late August. The farmer and his sons must bind it, stack it,
● 516] and leave it for several days drying. Later they will return to the fields and cart it back to the haggard for threshing. Not long ago the flail was still the most frequent means of threshing among the small farmers. In recent years steam-
[407] powered threshing machines make the rounds, and threshing, which under the older system seems to have taken place as need arose for the grain, takes place now more regularly in late September and early October.

With the bringing in of the corn, the agricultural year
201 draws to a close. Through October and November turnips
241 and mangels are ready to be "pulled" and stored in the
251 fields, near at hand to the haggard, in straw- and earth-covered pits. The potatoes which remain in the ridges must be turned up with spade and plough and similarly stored for the winter. All the root crops are indispensable supplies for men and animals during the months to come when there is no grass. The winter's supply of turf must be brought to
[492] the haggard from the reeks alongside of the bogs, where it has been drying for the summer. The carting is an intermittent labor, performed by the men at odd times when they are free of other duties. As winter comes with Novem-
221 ber cold and rain, the cattle must be housed and made ready
221 for the long, dark days of no grass to come; and the farmer is busy with them acquiring and disposing of his stock, as

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

342 tive builder has replaced the doomed roof by the thatched roof if, naturally, timber and material for thatching were at hand.

A great number of houses of this type have been in use as late as the 19th century in remote parts of Ireland. Many references are given in the travel sketches and other literature of that time.

Particular attention may be called to the houses in Achill, Co. Galway, which belong to booleying settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, describing the island of Achill[12a] tell us about a certain kind of booleying (the cattle were brought down towards the coast when the season for fishing was on). They sketch the houses in a picture, pl. 34.a, and in words:

"The habitations of the islanders are very singular. Their houses are heaps of rude stones moulded by the tide, procured from the beach, uncemented; they are rounded at the gables, and roofed with fern, heath, and shingles, fastened on by straw bands. In the village of Dooagha, consisting of about forty cabins, there is not a single chimney. Some of the wealthier graziers, however, have an odd custom of residing in such houses, or in houses of a still more simple construction, only during the summer months, when the season for fishing is "on", and their cattle are brought down towards the coast to feed on the young herbage. These hovels, they call 'Builly houses'."

[556] [221] [231]

From another traveller, Caesar Otway, who made a short excursion in Achill in the summer 1838, can be collected some valuable informations.[12b] Otway mentions (p. 353, 356) a certain type of wall construction, viz, the pilledpin double wall: two dry stone walls with the interspace filled in with sand. This is the same archaic construction, which Thomas describes from Lewis. It is also known from archaeological excavations in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

342 361 "An Achill village consisted of congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky, and their construction was as follows: — a dry stone wall was built of a form like an obtuse oval, for they had not arrived at the art of making a square quoin, or erecting a gable end. Outside this wall, and at about a foot distance, another loose wall was run up, and the space between the two filled with sea sand, and then this was roofed, generally with timber washed on shore from wrecks, and covered with heath, which covering did not reach over the outside wall, and form an eave, but rested on the middle between the walls, and the moisture from above passed, as it should, through the intervening sand."

"— — — we entered the village of Dugurth. Just such a village as I

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 on them. Then they go to an attorney next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father of the boy to sign over the land." With the writings, the match is made, and the wedding can go forward.

This long statement, in fact, contains the essence of the whole of match-making. It serves very well as a general guide. A great deal is at stake in this elaborate negotiation. To our eyes, such a way of winning a wife seems very unromantic. It savours a little too much of hard-headed business. We should call a man a cynic who put farm and fortune ahead of personal attractions.

584 182 Yet we should be wrong to make such an evaluation of the countryman. The sentiments prompting him, and his expectations, are quite different; they must be understood in their proper setting. In matchmaking, the interests of all the members of both families are deeply involved. The match is a convention by which they are expressed and realized. We are prone to forget that a living convention can be just as joyous, even more so, in fact, than bohemian revolt.

182 556 584 For example, the heated, formal bargaining quickly summarized by the quotation has deep significance. It effects a necessary and balanced equality between the two families. Superficially, it seems merely a nice adjustment between the farm and fortune. But looked at more closely, it assures many things.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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The girl's family know that she will be well provided for. They make sure of it when they 'walk the land'. They make sure their standing in the countryside will not suffer. Fortune and farm must be roughly equivalent. In the scale of rural prestige, each farm is valued against the fortune it can pay out with its daughters and the fortune it can bring in with its inheriting son's wife. In the words of the Inagh countryman quoted: "Backward places do not grow big fortunes". And as the farm is identified socially with the family whose members work it, these dowries measure the family's standing.

On the side of the family receiving the fortune, too, interests are served. The girl's dowry comes to them, to be used for their own purposes. With it, they are assured a competent 'new woman', as they call the new wife and daughter-in-law. She is trained to their position in life and to their own habits and sentiments. Girl and dowry are a fair exchange for prestige and alliance.

But these are not the only values at stake. The 'fortune' in the match is woven into the internal necessities of farm family life.

When agreement is finally reached between the negotiating parties, they go to a solicitor to make up the 'writings', as we saw in the quotation. By this, the countryman means they cast their agreement into legal form. For the 'writings' is a contractual instrument which unites marriage settlement and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

178 not remote from the farmers who knew these men.
463 Rumpelstiltskin, in a Gaelic dress, was at one's very doors.

In remote communities some few of these survive. Where they do, the community can still make use of them. Commissioning them follows a traditional pattern of gifts and courtesies little resembling conventional monetary commerce. Their skill descends, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; it is 'in the blood'. Their surplus children must disperse to towns and in emigration. For theirs too is a familistic world.

178 Unless they marry within their own fast-
463 diminishing numbers, they too must have land and fortune. Now and again one of them rises in the
556 world. He acquires land, he sets aside a fortune, he marries sons and daughters on the land. Year by year, his trade goes into the discard, till one fine day he is a full-fledged small farmer.

463 But such upward mobility is rare and difficult.
554 Economic change has swept his skill aside. The local artisan is more often a landless man, with nothing but a garden patch. The services he performs, however indispensable, do not give him equality with his neighbours. His standing is low, though his person is welcome. A farmer might 'put a son to a trade', perhaps, and often did not long ago. But it would be the lame son, the one not 'suited to the land'.

So today one finds broken remnants of this local

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

173 son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with
173 Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the
823 other side of the "Rine."

XXI. *Miscellanea and Addenda.*

173 *Treasure legends and hunting.*—Many forts have been much defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are
556 few. Caheiscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib of 1551),[14] is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*" or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the finest of all drinks").[15] Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost. Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results, in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver) near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka castle,[16] near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told [172] to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

[14] In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrogh, Earl of Thomond.

[15] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvi., p. 368.

[16] See also vol. xxi., p. 344. [P 264]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimneaigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19] 173 556 [574]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan. [778]

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains 764

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe. [554 551]

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with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has
their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility
toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of
wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to [793]
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
• 556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[73[] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement. . . . It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. . . . Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

> Obfuscation is the rule, and while it may seem a little foolish at times, there is no doubt that it makes for a great deal of fun. It cultivates too a sharpness of ear, a feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and a wary alertness that would be worth its weight in gold should one ever be lost in a jungle (Tracy 1953:20–21). 114 181

The quotation in some measure applies to interviewing in Inis Beag, where my wife and I took great pains to disentangle real from ideal culture by substantiating interview data with observation wherever possible. [124]

The existence of the conditions depicted by Tracy, as well as the numerous cultural practices shrouded in secrecy, led us to return to the island several times after 1960 before I attempted this book, to emphasize various modes of participant observation, to devise *ad hoc* research methods of an unorthodox nature, to "hone" our orthodox tools and employ cross-checking techniques at every stage of our project, and to cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which so distinguishes ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as a systematic epistemology. The use by many folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is the product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can serve very effectively to shield genuine thoughts and feelings and thus defend the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* (At least one Irish folklorist has collected "Joycean" utterances from peasants.). 114 12 181 [538]

Prestige Status

Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect human relationships are few. That land and capital—known collectively as "money," "wealth," or "riches"—are the major symbols is revealed in the frequently heard phrase, "If you have money and your health, you're all right." (Health alone is mentioned by those of lesser means.). The men of highest prestige are the king and the 13 who own 24 or more acres of land. But they and their families do not interact more with one another than with others, for, as we have noted, the web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes largely determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Nor is their style of life different from that of other islanders, since material possessions and social etiquette are relatively unimportant in the status system. Although the king is a "man of few gardens," his capital, charismatic personality, and "connections" with priests, politicians, and civil servants earn him his high position in the status hierarchy. The prestige which comes with land ownership is based more on the fact of its possession than on the potential wealth that it represents. Men with large holdings can, of course, build more fields and on the increased acreage raise more cattle and sheep and grow more surplus crops for sale, but few take advantage of this oppor- 554 [423] [471] [511] 556

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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
[171] of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
567 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
[171] of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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For it is said by country people that "to destroy a girl's 836
'character' is murder." In the logic of the familistic system, 626
the statement is true.

The following incident, described by a countrywoman in a discussion of religion, shows the fate of such cases and the verdict of the community.

> There is no such place as hell. God forbid. No one would be there except a few murderers and a person who destroyed a girl's character. Sure to destroy a girl's character is murder. The C— girl above was great with a boy who was her second cousin and she couldn't marry him here, so they made it up and he went to Canada, and she would go to the States, and they would meet there and marry. He had to go to Canada because he had bad eyes. They went away and seven weeks later she came back and in a few months had a child. Sure no one knows whether she went to the States or what happened to her. The boy was a red-haired, wild lad, and I often ask his sister above if she has heard from him. She says they haven't but we don't know whether they have or not.
>
> The girl put a shame on all people. She isn't married now. Sure who would marry her now that her character is destroyed? The child died after eleven months, and she is living in the house there, and that is why she isn't married. Would you believe such things could happen in Ireland?

The last quotation contains a further consideration. Pres- 836
tige and respectability are bound up with proper conduct 558
and proper fulfillment of the role in social life one's status gives one. If the girl whose "character" is broken gets a husband at all, she must get one of lower standing in the community. She cannot expect to carry the full prestige of her own family with her, even if she does find a farm into which to take a dowry. As the woman quoted remarked, no one will take her unless he is "very low."

Failure to retain and advance in the status assigned the young of the sexes leads to the same kind of relegation to other cliques and other spheres of social participation as in

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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836 the case of the followers of rural occupations other than the
558 ownership of land.

Even among the country people improper behavior has the effect of declassing the offender. Just as the farmers attribute sexual laxity to the classes of the population they consider below themselves, such as fishermen, tinkers, and itinerant laborers, and the laborers of the town, so, by a reversal of the view, destruction of status over sexual misdemeanor condemns one to membership in such categories.

This declassing effect of sexual misconduct is, of course, strongest for young women. Apart from the moral censure misconduct brings upon a young woman and the shame it inflicts upon the people of her "name," it brings as well the destruction of her social role. It makes an end of her potentialities, for these, too, are her "character": potential motherhood of a familist line on the one hand, and potential transmission of an advantageous alliance on the other. In a familistic order they are identical. They are both based upon her sex. They make of the unmarried girl a sort of symbol of familistic aspiration. To use the symbol for any but its proper purpose of procreation and alliance is to destroy not only its efficacy but the aspirations that are attached to it. Rural Ireland, indeed, provides a sort of archetype or "pure" form of this sexual outlook, the conventional western European ideal of premarital virginity. It is important here as a living function of a closely integrated social system.

834 When we turn to the rural attitude toward sexuality in the old people, all those who have relinquished farm command in favor of a younger procreant couple, the norms of the small farmers present the reverse of the coin. Both rural expressions and rural standards of conduct seem to reflect the attitude that only the married have a sex life or, if others have it, they should not.

The first facet of this attitude shows itself in many kinds

HARVEST

243 Corn harvest did not begin until a certain set day which differed in various parts of the country, and the appointed day was a time of much excitement. The following description of [171] the Reaping Blessing in the Scottish Highlands would probably apply to Ulster, though I have not found a record of it in Ireland. 'The day the reaping began was one of commotion and ceremonial. The whole family repaired to the field dressed in their best . . . the father of the family took his sickle and, facing the sun, cut a handful of corn. Putting it three times sunwise round his head, the Reaping Blessing was sung'.[1] We know that in Ireland it was the custom for the first sheaves cut to be scutched or lashed, that is the grain was beaten out without using the flail. The winnowed grain was parched over the fire, ground in a quern and boiled in time to make a breakfast for the reapers.[2] This ceremonial breakfast undoubtedly preserves archaic practices.

Reaping with hook or sickle is by no means uncommon on little hill farms where fields are small and uneven, but the days of the great 'gatherings' are no more, when down to late in the last century as many as seventy men might have been seen at work. Most of the lore of these reaping boons has passed away unrecorded, and we get only glimpses of the terrible strain imposed on the toilers and the compensating gaieties. The [558] pressure was most severe when to the rivalry between workers was added the drive of a pace-setter, for it was a mark of disgrace not to keep pace. In Ulster the leader of the boon was 'stubble hook', so called because his ridge was the first of the 'set', next the stubble. (A set was the number of ridges equal to the number of reapers in the boon). The driver, called 'corn-land', took the rig or land next to the standing corn, and between the two the other reapers on their ridges would strive to keep a straight line. 'A bad shearer', runs the Ulster saying, [539] 'always gets a big rig and a blunt hook'. But a spirited reaper, I have been told, 'would die upon the rig before he would suffer "corn-land" to pass him'. Between each set a rest was taken at the 'land-end' and it was an interlude of 'crack and courting'. If we may judge from a Scottish custom, any visiting

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928).
[2] *Béaloideas*, 10, 288.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle. 777 543 [885] [538]

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1] 437 443 432 [558]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this 443 [439]

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the
462 authors have heard men admonish a woman for interrup-
626 tion with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we
183 [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laugh-
461 ter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conven-
593 tional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral
183 specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within the farm family. The connection between family status and
626 labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the non-economic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 Within the framework of the division of labor on the
593 basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the
561 basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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his relationship to his fellows within the group. The controls exercised among members in work and in the life of the family in general show themselves a constant pattern to be observed from farm to farm wherever one elects to examine the daily and annual rounds of activity. 593 561 462

Thus in any of the tasks which the group must perform in its economy, the division of labor between the adult farmer-father and his sons may be observed. The father is owner and director of the enterprise; in him the farm and its income are vested; in the community it is known as his and the sons are spoken of as his "boys." Thus in the draining of a field or the sale of cattle in a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye and refer necessary decisions to him.

Perhaps the best method of illustrating this relationship is to present it from the point of view of the growing individual who takes his place in the farm family. He forms part of the productive unit which is his own family. The techniques of farming are passed on to him, and he learns them under the direction of his father, uncles, and brothers. At their hands he acquires the conditioning which will fit him to form a farm family of his own, thus to continue the traditional pattern. Naturally, his conditioning is more than merely technological; he gets on the farm the full training which makes him a member of his class and time. 462 561 593 868

The growing child ordinarily sees his father as owner and principal worker of the farm. When the whole family group of father, mother, children, and whatever other relatives may be living with them, works in concert, as at the potato planting, the turf cutting, and the haymaking, it is the father who directs the group's activities, himself doing the heavy tasks. The father looks after and takes care of the cattle, delegating minor tasks connected with them to his sons. Even though the cattle may be generally discussed by

462 the household, he has full control of them, disposes of them,
561 drives them to the fair, handles and uses the money got for
593 them. If he fails to get a good price, handles the beasts badly,
868 or proves himself a bad judge of them, the criticism of his wife and neighbors soon establishes the value of careful husbandry in the son's mind.

462 The father does all the constant heavy work necessary to
593 keep the land in condition in so rainy and treeless a country.
868 He makes drains, ditches, fences, walls, shelters, and barns, as we have seen. As the son grows older, he learns to help at these tasks, finally taking them over. The father prepares the garden, ploughs, plants, and harrows, does all the spade work of cultivation and everything involving the use of horses and agricultural implements. The son soon learns that these are men's tasks, and he gradually assumes his share of them. The adult men of the neighborhood rival one another at these tasks; they chafe and boast back and forth over their prowess. The son cannot fail to hear and value
462 the techniques which he acquires.

593 He learns those techniques in a narrow school. Where
868 tradition is still so strong and the incursions of trained
626 agriculturalists still relatively infrequent, as among the small farmers, there is little variation from the tried and true way. Each operation and each tool demand a technique of their own. The father makes sure that the son learns it well. Command, rivalry, ridicule, and many an adage and bit of folklore all conspire to the same result.

The father must make sure that the son has learned the right and traditional technique. For he must be ready to stand his ground with anyone in the community in farm skills. Every operation becomes the intimate concern of his neighbors; a man must hold his head high. More important,
[461] many skills are plied in coöperative activities, in turf cutting, haymaking, and much of the work of the garden. In such cases, a definite rhythm is necessary for greater effec-

direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to him at his marriage.

If economic apprenticeship is also a process of conditioning within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

For the child grows up within the full complex of life within the family. The petty errands which constitute his first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his beginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm work is again merely incidental to his long years of life with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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itself in household arrangement and in the grouping of individuals in other spheres than farm work. 593 561

This parental dominance continues as long as the father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the sons, they have no control of the direction of farm activities nor of the disposal of farm income. They go to market and fair from the time they are twelve years old, but they buy or sell little, if anything, for themselves. Thus the small farmer and his sons are often seen at the fairs and markets together, but it is the farmer-father who does the bargaining. Once when one of the authors asked a countryman about this at a potato market, he explained that he could not leave his post for long because his full-grown son "isn't well known yet and isn't a good hand at selling." If the son wants a half crown to go to a hurley match or to take a drink on market day with friends, he must get it from his father. The authors have seen many sons, fully adult, come into shops to buy some farm requirement, such as a bag of meal, and say that the "old fellow" will pay for it. And a few days later the old fellow arrives to pay for the goods "my young fellow got." The son may, of course, earn money in employment off the farm, as many do at work on the roads in occasional employment with governmental bodies or large farmers. But in this case he is expected to contribute the larger part of the money to the general household expenses as long as he remains on the farm.

The procedure of the Land Commission, a government body, in providing additions to small holdings from the [654] break-up of large estates illustrates well this retention of parental authority. It is the policy of the Commission to employ local men as much as possible in the reclamation and fencing work necessary at the division of an estate; the owners of the holdings to be enlarged are entitled to the work. Consequently, when the work is given, the farmer owners are assigned it. But it is the sons who do the work,

593 and at the pay-off the "old fellows" walk sometimes many
561 miles to be paid the wages their sons have earned. In one case of land division which the authors witnessed, a Land Commission official walked about the estate pointing out the plots which the selected farmers were to get. The farmers followed in a body at a respectful distance, each ready to step forward when his name was called. Behind them came all the young men of the neighborhood, the farmers' sons. When it was necessary to send someone back to a farmhouse or to cut up stakes to mark boundaries, the orders were transmitted from the official to the farmer and from the farmer to his sons, though these were in the majority of cases adult men. Likewise in country post offices, even after the farm has been made over to the son and the "old people" have the old-age pension, it is the son who comes to collect it for them.

Even at forty-five and fifty, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm, the countryman remains a "boy" in respect to farm work and in the rural vocabulary. A deputy to the *Dáil* (the Irish parliament) raised a considerable laugh in 1933, which echoed into the daily newspapers, when he inadvertently dropped into the country idiom and pleaded for special treatment in land division for "boys of forty-five and older" who have nothing in prospect but to wait for their fathers' farms. Likewise, a countryman, complaining to one of the authors about his position, said: "You can be a boy here forever as long as the old fellow is still alive."

593 It goes without saying that the father exercises his control
561 over the whole activity of the "boy." It is by no means
861 confined to their work together. Indeed, the father is the court of last resort, which dispenses punishment for deviations from the norm of conduct in all spheres. Within the bounds of custom and law he has full power to exercise discipline. Corporal punishment is not a thing of the past in

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Ireland, and, especially in the intermediate stages of the child's development, from seven to puberty, it gets full play.

It is during those years that the characteristic relationship between father and son is developed in rural communities. The son has suffered a remove from the previous almost exclusive control of its mother, in which an affective content of sympathy and indulgence was predominant, and is brought into contact for the first time with the father and older men. But the transfer is not completed. There is a hiatus in his development through the years of school when his participation in men's work and his relationship with his father has little chance of developing into an effective partnership. A real union of interests does not take place until after Confirmation and school-leaving, when for the first time his exclusive contacts and his entire day-to-day activity, particularly in farm work, will be with his father and the older men.

This fact colors greatly the relationship of father and son, as far as affective content goes. There is none of the close companionship and intimate sympathy which characterizes, at least ideally, the relationship in other groups. Where such exists, it is a matter for surprised comment to the small farmers. In its place there is developed, necessarily perhaps, a marked respect, expressing itself in the tabooing of many actions, such as smoking, drinking, and physical contact of any sort, which can be readily observed in any small farm family. Coupled with this is the lifelong subordination the retention of the name "boy" implies, which is never relaxed even in the one sphere in which farmer father and son can develop an intense community of interest — farm work. Nothing prevents the development of great mutual pride, the boy in his experienced and skillful mentor, tutor, and captain in work, and the man in a worthy and skillful successor and fellow workman, but on the other hand everything within the behavior developed in the rela-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 tionship militates against the growth of close mutual sym-
[578] pathy. As a result, the antagonisms inherent in such a situation often break through very strongly when conflicts arise.

The division of labor in the masculine sphere between father and sons, then, is more than an arrangement in farm management. It is very directly part of the systems of controls, duties, and sentiments which make up the whole family life. The apprenticeship and the long subordination of the sons in farm work are reflections of the entirety of their relationship to parents; it is impossible to treat the two spheres of behavior separately.

Similarly, the relationships in farm work between the other members of the household cannot be treated separately.

593 On the other hand, the relationship of mother and son
561 has a very different content. Like that between father and
562 son, it is the product of years of development. It is marked, too, by a similar retention of subordinate status on the part of the son. In farm work the boy is subject to commands of his mother even when, fully adult, he has passed over exclusively to men's work. It is for this reason that many Irish farm widows with grown sons can successfully manage a farm for many years before they ultimately make it over upon a son's marriage, and from their restricted scope within the household and haggard effectively direct operations in the masculine sphere. In such cases, the woman retains control. Even in such an important matter as her son's eventual marriage she has a very dominant voice.

But within the scope of such a subordination there is a
593 quite different affective history. The relationship is the first and earliest into which a child enters. It is very close, intimate, and all-embracing for the first years of life; only gradually does the experience of the child expand to include brothers, sisters, and, last, the older male members of the household.

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592 888 His shifting the topic from help to alignments within the family is entirely unconscious; it could not better illustrate the connection between work roles and reciprocal interaction in the family.

If there was a squabble between the mother and daughter, the old woman would more than likely stand up for the daughter. She would teach her how to do things and would have more patience than the father.

592 888 589 Quite as before in the case of the farm economy, the strength of the pattern reveals itself in the aberrant cases. Where there is no old couple to take up new status and position in the family group, others within the family of the older generation or even of the same may be forced into such a position.

Two cases came under the particular notice of the authors. In one an elder sister became to all intents and purposes the "old woman" in the house. A widow, she owned the farm, was in the "west room," and had the place at the hob. Her younger sister and her husband, who had married into the farm, managed the farm and knew that their children would inherit it. The elder sister helped a bit with the household, but spent much of her time before the fire. Both the man and woman of the house referred to her as "the old woman," a term of respect, and one of the authors, who lived in the house for a time, learned only after much intimacy the half-forgotten fact that she was not mother but sister to the younger woman. In the other case it was a father's sister who took up the role, the product of long substitution for a lost mother, and at the match the writings made provision for her.

888 561 Intimately connected with the transition at marriage are all the phenomena of age grading so marked in Irish country life. The old couple advance one step in their course through life; they enter a new age grade.

FAMILY TRANSITION AT MARRIAGE 131 561

Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 885
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age 886
do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of
their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on
the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which
mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which
betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those dif-
ferentiations of status which are given formal and explicit
recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of
daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers
themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re- 561
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 574
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 576
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the 517
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by
right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit be-
hind them round the room on other chairs or on the window
seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the prin-
cipal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrange-
ment shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old
men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to
sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter
in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the
old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger
men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving
the center of the stage to the old men, and the children
stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men
have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the
divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

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561 571 794 When the whole population of a country district is on the move on Sunday, the groupings are especially noteworthy. There are occasional family groups driving in the jaunty car, but generally the older men walk in a group of their own, the older women in another. The young men walk together by themselves and the young women by themselves. On Sunday afternoons the young men can be seen at the nearest crossroad standing together in groups of ten to thirty, while the older men keep more to their houses or visit one another. Before mass, when the weather permits, the men congregate outside the church and do not move in until all the women have entered and the priest has arrived. As the groups stand outside waiting for the mass to begin and gossiping back and forth, the older men stand off together and the younger men keep to themselves. In wakes, weddings, christenings, the same age groupings are observed.

561 571 There is, of course, no formal prescription of such behavior nor formal taboo against its infringement; the conduct rather springs from the divisions of the family and the solidarity of the individuals occupying similar status as these forces operate in everyday life. It is evident how close a connection exists between age grading and marital status.

[561] If behavior of this type reflects the age grading within the family and the transitions between age grades which are part 342 of the transformation of the family at marriage, so does the arrangement of the house interior. For a graphic representation of this characteristic arrangement, let the reader return to Figure 9. [565] The houses of the small farmers show a remarkable uniformity over great areas; it becomes at once apparent that the variations in house types and forms are more associable with differences of class than of locality. But as we are dealing only with the small farmer or peasant class, we need concern ourselves only with the implications of the striking uniformity in house form among the country people. Throughout West and North Clare the house is rectangular

[see p. 34. -Analyst]

592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is
512 of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

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They occupy this place and receive this respect from other persons than their relatives. This respect is as much folk custom as the norms of family life. The community can on occasion enforce it upon the family members through gossip, verbal censure, and, more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest. 888 626

The vocabulary of the countryman and a great many of the judgments and comments he makes upon his surroundings express the valuations of the community upon age. In the discussion of the house interior it was remarked that the conducts of the different age groups were too "natural" to the farmers to evoke verbal recognition among them. The statement is true only in a sense. The farmers make no explicit recognition of the organization of behavior upon the basis of age. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. 888 561

More cogent, perhaps, for our understanding are the many expressions which arise from day to day based upon the speaker's place within an age grade. A great part of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the friends and neighbors who pass their lives within a rural community takes its form so. Particularly is this true of discussion of the past, a favorite topic and one which came very frequently indeed to the authors' ears. Gossip and personalities are as frequent a theme, and a speaker rarely fails to qualify the object of his remarks with an appropriate definition of his relative age. Even to intimates a man is referred to as "old John" or "young Michael." 888 561 521

Perhaps it is the discussion of the past which illustrates best partiality for the things of one's own age. The older men and women describe the "old days" with enthusiasm and regret. The "old times" are a ready topic among the country people, or rather among the older ones. Many an evening an old person can be got to tell of the "old times." 888 521

[i.e., the aged. – Analyst]

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the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work. 888 521

Yet they were later forced to admit:

> The people in the old times were not as knacky as they are now. Isn't it true that they used to have the horse in a stall feeding him while the man would be out with a spade turning over the garden?

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm work. Just as the rivalry between father and son in the farm family is most intimate and most constant in the economy which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community at large takes the same form and finds its expression within the frame of the work that the community must do to live. 888 578 561

Naturally enough, the young people do not express these attitudes. They do not agree with their elders on the score of their own shortcomings. But they have a good deal to say, among themselves, from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them, and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be sweepingly condemned with some such criticism as "old fool" and "old blatherer." Like the son already quoted who gave his father his head in farm work and listened patiently for orders, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations of themselves in which youth and strength outweigh age and wisdom.

But within a system of values in which the old represent the nexus of kinship and bear honor within the community, the young people do not see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the older men and women. The young people recognize themselves as forming a distinct group with interests and sentiments of its own, opposed in the scheme of rural life to the elders. They use the word "we" and oppose it to "them" for the old. They recognize places, pursuits, 578 561

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578 and forms of activity as their own and find much more inter-
561 est in them than in those of the other group. The young men greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gathering of old men in something of the tone of derision which they reserve for women. But the rivalry in their sentiments between respect and egocentric feeling, like the controls imposed by their parents to keep them respectfully silent in the presence of their elders, imposes a silence upon them. Consequently, one cannot find among them the voluble expression of attitudes based upon one's belonging to a certain relative age. One must look for it rather in particular expressions of annoyance, boredom, and chafing against restraint.

Expressions of sentiment about age are the products of a system of values upon it in which the individual makes the valuation from the place he occupies. They express not only a grouping of individuals of similar age but a mutuality between groups so composed. And, too, they form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

561 Let us examine one instance at least of this categorization.
554 The community in rural Ireland bestows many names and
551 titles. They are ephemeral. They have no currency outside the immediate circle of life in the townland or village. At
888 best, they spread through a parish. They are nicknames and express no more than the individual's particular place in the hearts of his fellows. Yet some of them are generic epithets. Like "old" and "young," they may prefix a name and designate the more closely the personality of the person named. Like "boy" and "old fellow," they may express broad categories of a man's age and its associated behavior, and may designate not so much a biologic or physiognomic reality as a sociological status. The words "saint" and *cailleach* are of the last kind of epithet, in rural usage. In the brogue they refer only to the old. In strict philology

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both are metaphorical, for the brogue knows and makes use of the words in their "proper" meanings. *Cailleach*, the Gaelic word, means properly "hag" or "witch." "Saint," of course, is the canonized saint of the church.

The small farmer who refers to this or that contemporary and neighbor as a "saint" or a *cailleach* is making a social and moral categorization. He is not concerned with purity of diction. The old man or woman, who follows a behavior proper to his or her status and is an ornament to the community, is a "saint." The old man or woman who does not is the object of distrust and dislike. His or her departures from accepted conduct cause disturbance and strife in the community. Accordingly, he or she is a *cailleach*. Thus, in one North Clare community a "stranger" whom the community disliked was a *cailleach*, despite the feminine gender of the word. Likewise, the old man who lived in harmony with his son upon a farm already transferred, a leader in the village whose oldest hale inhabitant he was, could be described by a neighbor as follows:

> The old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humor and, if he went to town to have a drink, he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as gentle and harmless as a child, and it will be a great loss to the village when he is gone. He and Roche [a neighbor] are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any farm advice, you can go to them and they will give you as good advice as you can get, because both of them have been successful farmers. It would pay a young man to listen to them.

"Saintliness" of this kind is a matter of one's filling one's role. But it is one's role for the village that counts. There is nothing individual in the canon of conduct. The young person who follows ardently the conventions laid down for him is not a "saint" even if he is exceedingly chaste and religious. It is the word "holy," not "saint," which comes

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561 to the countryman's lips in describing him. Nor is a young
554 person a *cailleach*, for, like "saint," the term applies only to
551 the old. Both terms refer to sociological age rather than
888 chronological age, for those old people who occupy the role of "old" only because they have been forced into that position within the farm family can also be "saints." Thus the elder sister described in the discussion of farm marriage, who occupied the west room and the hob by the fire, was known in the neighborhood as a "saint."

Relative age makes a difference in status in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values. And lastly, as in the description of "saint," it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

561 The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself
554 into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland
888 wherever he meets countrymen of different ages together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of such broad age groups in terms of status.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellow, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons — those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great. In the community at large it is little less so. A farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat. His sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake house to honor the dead, the places by the fire go to the older men and women. The boys and girls must group themselves behind. They come forward only when called upon. At

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country "stations"[5] the elder men and women file in for 554
confession and come forward for Communion first. On the 888
road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant 561
discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. 554
No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 888
"stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural 521
community such personal communion is an indispensable [461]
bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men [203]
must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the commu- 561
nity with the outside world. The elder men, these same 554
father-owners; represent the interests of the community be- 888
fore priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and govern-
ment official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to 561
round out the picture. 554

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The 888
better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of 276

[5] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland. [794]

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561 554 888 276 whiskey, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of tobacco, go to the elder men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe around among one's intimates and guests for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man. He must content himself with an occasional "fag." When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells:

> During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door, I said to her she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. "Let the young bucks go," said I; "they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly." She looked at me and says, "Frank, are you serious?" "I am, faith," says I; "call the old man back." He was just a few paces down the road. She did and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough.

561 554 888 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among the small farmers. Without them, the flavor of country life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the never-varying annual round of social activity in the country districts nor any inkling of the importance of those informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. It is here that social patterns of behavior upon age difference assume importance as controls of human activity. It is here that the roles the age grades play in the organization of the community reveal themselves most clearly.

573 how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not
521 a weighty one. Noonan is a very voluble man. He can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with many opinions on all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the public prosecutor's relentless logic, but it helps too to keep the conversation alive and active. Consequently, though he has no important title, he is a member of long standing.

573 The younger of the two sitting in back is John Quin. His
592 position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quin lives on a good farm just outside the village. He married-in there, taking over the
[582] place of a dead husband. But, true to the country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister, who, in turn, married Quin. But both women are still living in the house. The elder sister has become the "old woman" and is treated more like a parent than a contemporary. It is Quin and his wife, the younger sister, who work the farm and who regard it as their own. Their claim is a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune: they are childless at fifty.

573 Quin is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old
561 one, as the countryside reckons age status. His place in the evening gathering reflects this intermediate state. In the two years in which the authors had the old men's house at Rynamona under observation, Quin was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but which showed itself well in his behavior.

573 When we first came, Quin divided his evenings between
561 the old men's house and card playing in several of the young
521 men's gathering places. At one of these, to be described shortly, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had "weight," and he conducted himself importantly and showed a serious demeanor and a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. In the

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old men's house he looked a different person. He was often 573
silent or contented himself with answering questions. 561
When he did speak, it was to "act the playboy," in the 521
country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to dance, and to break into playful banter. Sometimes his lively efforts were successful. Sometimes they were not. But the playboy role did not last long. A year later he was a constant visitor, and he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, the "judge," passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy," he said, "but there's a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. As the 573
evidence of their behavior shows, they are a closely knit 887
clique with a code of conduct and valuation of their own, one strong enough to enforce a specific personality on each of the members in accord with his role in the group.

To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group in Rynamona, we must examine it in relation to the rest of the community. These seven are not the only old men in the community. Roche, the prosecutor, had an elder brother with a good farm across the lake on the line between Rynamona and the next townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door. He is too feeble to come to the *cuaird* house, and his faculties are failing. His sons, still young men, work the farm.

But there is another as well, a more active old man. Moroney is perhaps the strongest farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best also, and he has the best-stocked farm. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, have a son [592] and daughter nearing thirty still at home. The four work energetically and the household is prosperous. Each year Moroney stands for them in the "station," and the family's

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own sex than otherwise, except in the house itself. Except upon ceremonial occasions in family life or in the considerable affluence of owning a gig or a trap or a motorcar, in Clare at least they go to mass, to town, or to sportive gatherings with companions of their own sex. Till recently and even now in remote districts, a conventional peasant woman always kept several paces behind her man, even if they were walking somewhere together.

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The women do not go out on *cuaird* like the men. Their sphere of interest and influence is better confined within the family circle. Women do not take part directly in the deliberations of such cliques as that described in the old men's house at Rynamona. On the other hand, they are not in the least excluded or treated lightly or in a derogatory fashion. At the old men's *cuaird* the woman of the house is nearly always present. Her being of the company does not seem to stem the flow of talk in the slightest. She remains silent or is ignored so long as their talk deals with the world of the men's interest. But when the talk swings around to her sphere, she is consulted and is ready to take an active part.

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The girls, of course, the unmarried younger women and adolescents, keep to themselves and form cliques and smaller groups of neighbors and kinswomen among themselves. Occasionally a dance breaks the ordinary succession of work and evening talk in the kitchen. And then, in their more restricted place, they are ready to go about under the tutelage of parent or brother to meet the young men and boys of the community.

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All this is nothing new and has been described before. Yet one must review it, because in it one can see the existence of statuses of the kind we have demonstrated before. Old woman, married young woman, and girl, each term is a status in the countryside, in the same manner as in the cases of the boys and men we have already presented. The

562 561 terms are summaries of status in farm economy, family life, and the cliques of the community.

834 208 Consequently the comment and attitude of the small farmers toward sexual behavior cannot be divorced from their appreciation of status in family and community. For them sexual behavior is merely one aspect, not of individual personality, but of sociological role. If one turns to any record of the sort of commentary and discussion the small farmers carry on among themselves, both in the semi-public discussion of the *cuaird* and in the more private talk of conversation among friends of a common age and status, one encounters a characteristic set of remarks and evaluations. These are for the most part discussions of specific persons in specific events. The attitudes expressed are directed now toward persons, now toward general conditions, now toward moral or ethical imperatives, now toward cosmological principle. Yet always, if sex is the subject, the status of the actors and the interests of the familist farm economy are the themes.

562 842 Women are valued and praised for their fecundity. All this is part of generally accepted convention among the small farmers, and such conversations as the following are not in the least unusual, despite the very great modesty and reticence of the farmers. A small farmer is praising an old woman, the head of the household, to one of the authors and contrasting her to her son's wife, both being listeners:

> Here is a woman that has no more milk of her own. They shouldn't allow a woman like that to breed because a man should always keep his wife in the milk. The old woman, God bless her, raised every child with the didi [breast].

369 831 The country-bred boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of constant reference to sex and breeding. There seems to be little of the ignorance about such matters which the townsman delights so in attributing to country people. In Ireland, no less than elsewhere in the world, the antagonism between town and country often expresses itself in such

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provinces often still today mark divisions among 621
human beings that go back variously into remote past ages. A cleavage of the earth's face agreed upon long ago between forgotten clans can still persist in memory and influence conduct. The boundary of a parish, along which just the other day the countrymen fought hard-contested hurley-matches may once have marked an ancient kingdom's frontier. I mean, rather, that to understand the local past, one must first know the local present. Only then is it clear how such tradition moves and how it wields its force among men.

Therefore, I wish to devote this lecture to directing your attention inside such lines, to the behaviours which pattern local life inside them. We have already examined much of those that mark distinctions within the community, dividing it by 'blood' and by prestige. A good deal more could well be said of kinship and social stratification, were it not that we must hurry on. The existence of similar patterns which redirect integration across such distinctions is a new challenge.

One such pattern thrusts itself into notice im- 561
mediately and insistently in rural Ireland. It clusters about age and age status. The conducts and sentiments round age are perhaps the most important factor, after familism, in shaping the countryman's way of life. Naturally, they are related to all that I have described before; they dovetail into family life. In them, the community

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561 finds its most compatible and its most enduring organization. No other social disposition sets a deeper stamp upon the countryman. No other is more immediate to the observer, tourist or anthropologist. No other, too, explains better why old custom lives today.

561 Ireland is in many ways an old person's country.
888 Where emigration carries youth away, old age is
165 disproportionately numerous. But that fact is not all the story, for the rural Irish are long-lived. The country districts set a norm for the Free State which shows itself statistically. Despite poverty, hardship, and the erroneously assumed 'decline of rural life', the countryman lives long and dies, often very old indeed. Many causes have been sought for this strange fact, but might it not be after all a simple matter? They live long because they have much to live for. In their own sphere of life, they are honoured; they have power.

888 We remember that the household and the family centres itself in them. Their room is semi-sacred in the fairy-lore; it is the best in the house. The chair by the fire, the seat of honour and most comfort, is theirs. Even with the transfer of command up on the farm, they are objects of marked deference.

888 But this is more than a family matter. The old
626 people have privilege among and receive respect from others than their own relatives. The conduct which bestows both upon them is as much the folk

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custom of the community as it is the habit of family 888
life. Where necessary, the community can enforce 626
its maintenance. The community can, as it were, invade the family and regulate its members through gossip, verbal censure, and more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest.

The countryman's vocabulary is full of allusions 561
to values upon age. A great deal of the judgments 888
and the comments he makes upon his surroundings 626
express them. Naturally, they do not discuss the organization of behaviour upon age in explicit terms; for such conducts are 'natural' and unchangeable in the minds of those who are shaped by them. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. The upstart 'boy', the 'bold' child, the 'old man who ought to have shame for acting like that' are as constant objects of reproof and censure as the 'bad' father or son.

In general statements, one hears many expressions, day after day, which arise from the speaker's place within an age group. The broad opposition between 'old' and 'young' colours rural thinking powerfully. A great deal of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the 'friends' and neighbours who pass their lives within the rural community takes its form within this social context.

This is particularly true of discussion of the 521
past. The past is a favourite topic; the 'old days' 888
something of an obsession in the countryside. This 561

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521 is not only because one of the listeners was the
888 anthropologist 'looking for old custom'. For, where
561 descent is a critical nexus of habitual relationship and old age the most honoured state, the past cannot fail to be the focus of interest.

Thus the older men and women are very partial to the things of their own age. And the young people are, in part, swept along with them. The 'old times' are a very ready topic among the country-people. Many a time an old person will be got to tell of them; he or she takes little warming to the task. They were the hard times, even bad times, of famine and death but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. There were few tools, no draft-animals, no shoes, none of the amenities of present existence. The listeners murmur phrases of commiseration and shake their heads in pity. "Weren't they the bad old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" they ask one another. But there is a tinge of pride in their voices, in the manner of tellers and listeners alike.

For remembered necessities, in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale, are now feats of endurance to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young
[481] man today to walk from Corofin to Ballinasloe, walk in his bare feet the forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who

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Where is the woman today who
could shoulder a creel of turf a hundred yards out 521 561 through the bog mud to the famine road, before 888 the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunna- [482] gore?

Often the expressions take a different turn. They 517 become that universal complaint — the younger 521 generation. "Young people aren't what they used 561 to be," said one old farmer in the course of a 888 general discussion of the golden age that was his youth. "They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else to a dance, and if they happen to win a turkey they will nearly shake the house down [in their triumph]. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. Now you can't get them to do anything unless you pay them."

Here he paused for an illustration, chose one 561 from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on. 521 "Wasn't old Keane out every night with his cattle 888 and he putting them in small fields and late in the [291] night? Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept at it till he had cattle all the way up by Ballyvaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no controlling them."

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. The past, for the older members of the community,

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reflects their glories and serves as a convenient vehicle for the expression of their superiority. In the same spirit, the present can be measured against the past, usually only to be found lacking.

But these statements express much more than a mere rivalry between old and young. They spring from a mutuality between them which transcends rivalry. The old days are better among other things, because the interdependence of young and old was greater. The present is less attractive because the old no longer control the young, and the young no longer aid the old, as they should. Both facts of this interrelation may be expressed, even though the speaker, if he be old, may cast them in terms of mistrust and dislike for the young. In fact, the whole of experience may be brought within this scheme of attitudes. To give an example, here is one old fellow's rationalization of his misgivings about the present Irish school system:

"I am patriotic and it may be a bad thing to say but I think the school system they have now is bad and the teaching of Irish is bad. In my day and before, a man might go to school when he could—maybe for only three months in the year. But he would know more than they get now when they go to school all the time. The old people learned more then. When a child finished school he would be expected to read a newspaper to the old people, and to write a letter for them, or to do sums. And he would do it well." His complaint is much longer

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but you have heard enough to see his mistrust of a system which to his mind makes no provision for the mutuality between young and old. 561 521 888

This mutuality was and is strongest in the realm of farm work. The farm family demands the co-operation of all its members. No less the community makes its valuation of young and old upon that co-operation. General discussions among the country-people bring out this fact again and again. To illustrate by quotation once more: two old fellows, adult farmers with families, could reach agreement upon a formula running somewhat as follows:

"The men were stronger in the past, they worked harder, while you try to get any young person to do as much work as the old men now and they would laugh at you. The young people today seem to see how little work they can do rather than how much. While the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work." [461]

So they went on, but even in the midst of their theme they were forced to admit that there were compensations: "It is true for you that the people in the old times weren't as knacky as they are now. Wasn't it how they used to have the horse in a stall feeding, while they [themselves] would be out with a spade turning over the garden [and no plough]."

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm

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521 work. Just as the rivalry between father and son is
888 most intimate and most constant in the economy
561 which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community takes the same form.

You will probably ask if there are not grains of truth in the older generation's statements. My answer is that I neither know nor care. And I feel the countryman is not much more concerned. For this is a very old rivalry and once its expression was even more formalized than it is today. We owe the first poem of the eighteenth-century poet O'Rahilly to the expression of this rivalry, in an older day when Gaelic poetry still survived. He was called in to defend the young unmarried men, the 'boys' of today, in a poetic contest over respective merits between them and the 'old men', that is, the married men of family and substance. And he played, too, in the hurley game which fought out the contest in another field. For we are dealing here not so much with truths or falsities as with group-attitudes reciprocally held. Pareto would call them derivations; he would find their residues in the sentiments of those grouped together about a common status in the community. Once these sentiments were expressed ceremonially as in O'Rahilly's day. Even now the men of Luogh point out a large stone. With that stone the 'men' and the 'boys' competed at tests of strength till just a few years ago.

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For the young people do not agree with their 521
elders on the score of their own shortcomings. They 561
do not express these attitudes. They have a good 888
deal to say, on the other hand, among themselves from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them; and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be swept aside with some such sweeping condemnation as 'old fool' and 'old blatherer'. Like the son I quoted in the last lecture, who listened patiently to his father, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations in which youth and strength outweigh age and ripe experience.

Yet within a system of values in which the old 561
represent the nexus of kinship and bear honour 888
within the community, the young people do not 576
see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the old people. In the non-verbal behaviour of daily conduct, deference is uppermost. This fact sobers their group's egocentricity. In their position there is a necessary balance between subordination and compensatory vauntings and distastes. If you remember Synge's *Playboy*, you remember how reality broke in upon the playboy when the community saw his father still very much alive.

So, within this framework the young men can 561
recognize themselves as a distinct group—an age 888
grade, to use technical language. They have their

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561 888 own interests and sentiments, opposed in the scheme of rural life to those of their elders. Various places, pursuits and forms of activity are their own preserve. They greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gatherings of the old men with something of the derision they reserve for women. But the ambivalence of their attitudes makes general expression difficult. Their position imposes silence, except among themselves. Consequently, one finds their attitudes rather more frequently in particular annoyances, boredoms and chafings against restraint. Rural ceremony gives them few outlets today; the fine articulateness of O'Rahilly's day is either dammed or searches out more devious outlets.

The sentiments of both groups, then, are the products of a system of values about age status. The individual makes his statements and entertains his feelings by virtue of the place he occupies. These express not only a rough grouping of individuals of similar age and status but a rough interrelation between the groups so composed. They form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

551 888 One can trace this process in rural Ireland in the many names and epithets the local community bestows. Local titles are ephemeral; they have little currency outside the immediate circle of the townland and the village. At best they spread through a parish. They are nicknames, and express no more

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Relative age thus makes a difference in status 561
in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values, and lastly, it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland. One finds it wherever one meets the countrymen together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of the broad age groups.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellows, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons—those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great; in the community at large it is little less so. A [574]
farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat, his sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake- [764]
house to honour the dead, the places by the fire go to the old adult 'men' and 'women'; the 'boys and girls' must group themselves behind. They

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●561 come forward only when called upon. At country 'stations' the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for communion first. On the road to shop, church or fair, the young man must keep pace, and the elder may call him to his side.

521 561 The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 'stopping on the road to pass the time of day'. In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form, in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must 'listen in'.

[203] At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the 'boys' are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

561 571 Then, secondly, there is the matter of the contacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners, represent

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the interests of the community, before priest, 561 ●
schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman and govern- 571
ment official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel.

The relation extends in fact to very small matters 276
indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of 561
bread, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of 576
tobacco, go to the older men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe round among one's ~~intimates~~ and guests, for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man; he must content himself with an occasional 'fag'. When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells: "During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door I said to her—she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. Let the young bucks go, says I, they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly. She looked at me and says, Frank, are you serious? I am, faith, says

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276 I; call back the old man. He was just a few paces
561 down the road. She did, and his face lighted up and
576 he couldn't thank her enough."

Informal as these differences are, they are never-
561 theless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct
517 among small farmers. Without them the flavour of rural life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the continual round of informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. For the country-people have their entertainments, like their more sophisticated urban contemporaries. The student of society cannot afford to dismiss them as inconsequential. They are often important controls of human activity.

When my colleagues and I first made our way into the rural communities we were to come to know best, we were plunged into a mass of observations which seemed to have no interpretation. Night after night, their day's work done, our new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, gambles, sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive gatherings were age-old customs like the bonfires of St. John's Eve; others celebrated crucial events, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occa-

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sional and less specialized gatherings; and others 561 ●
again wore a very modern dress: a turkey raffle and 517
a dance round a gramophone.

But our interest was soon caught by distinctions of participation, rather than those of kind. The personalities of the 'village' participated variously, different groups met more or less regularly at specific houses.

For instance, the 'old fellows' went out on 517
cuaird, as they called their visiting, to join one 561
another. They followed a deep-set regular habit. 573
As they phrased it "a man would feel lonely if he didn't go out on *cuaird*".

In most communities they usually convened at a particular house. Often their gatherings bore particular names. In one North Clare community, Rynamona by name, the old men's meeting was known as the 'Dáil'. Before the Free State, it had been the 'parliament'. The name is a jocular one, of course, but as we shall see, it is expressive of the participants' evaluation of themselves, none the less.

The young men know the 'Dáil' as the 'old men's house'; they stay away. One of the cronies of Rynamona put the matter most clearly, when he described the old men's gathering from its members' point of view:

"It wouldn't suit [for the young men to come]," he said. "They gather in at Jack Roche's and they laugh and joke and play cards; they talk about the

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561 next gamble and the next dance, and that is all they
577 know. It is a lot of codology [he means, nonsense,
573 buncombe]. It is only the old men, the men with families and a responsibility on them, they are the ones that come. And in our own way we learn a great deal. If you advance any argument you must be prepared to defend it from all attack, and John Roche, 'the public prosecutor', will ask you questions till he is sure it is right or wrong. Then some evening we have real discussions in which we settle problems. Other times we discuss farming. It wouldn't suit for the young men to come in, but when we get old and they get married, then they will gather just as we do and talk about this and that. That is the way it always has been and that is the way it always will be. There is never any bad blood between any of the village, and one reason is because we talk things over."

The statement, then, imparts a deeper reality to what appears at first sight to be merely a companionable pastime of the older men. This meeting of theirs is a clique, a tightly knit group of males of similar status and interests. It is strong enough and binding enough to bestow nicknames upon its members as in the case of the 'public prosecutor'. But it is a clique, too, which operates within a traditional setting. It has a function to perform for others than the cronies who make it up. The speaker claims for it at least that it prevented bad blood in the village.

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complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows." Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron, the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

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tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young chil-
dren. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring
groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend
less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them
more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men
of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school,
at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and
their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the house-
hold. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the
other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often de-
manded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially
when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about
being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer
hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in
America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

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226 181 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of [461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the [526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim, [831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons [526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri- [539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo- [526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 165 181 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss [821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements, [602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore- [502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight- 121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 264 252 212 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches [372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu. [561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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[561]

with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

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Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

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Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creamnach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

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[824]
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The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [888]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 562
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[154]

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case. 203 [609] [124]

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics. 797 793 [776] [783] [577] [431] [781]

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis. 861 155 855 [561] [856] [864] [863] 858 562 [593] [872] 562 [794] [858] [609] [832] [164]

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could 204 831 124 831 855

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case) in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

"Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6). In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [571] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [561] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the [562] storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, however, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

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589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
• [561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes
582 from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
[586] articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

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the division of labor between males and females is regarded as corresponding to the natural propensities of the two sexes. That a man should concern himself with a woman's work, such as the sale of eggs or the making of butter, is the subject of derisive laughter, while a woman's smaller hands make it "natural" for her to be a better hand at milking the cows. 462 626 183

Even when the communal labor of the family is demanded and women take their place in bog, garden, and meadow, a definite role is assigned them. Usually it is the lighter tasks which are known as women's work. There is no formal taboo confining a woman to women's work. Heavy work is merely felt to be a hardship upon her. At the potato planting the women do the arduous work of planting the sprouts which they have prepared, bending over to put them into the ridges prepared by the men. They do their share, if necessary, of cultivating, but they are not generally accustomed to the spade, which like the plough, the harrow, the mower, scythe, and turf "slan" is regarded as a masculine implement. At the potato lifting they go along behind the man who turns the potatoes out of the ridge with spade and plough, and pick them up. At the haymaking, the pitching, raking, and some of the building of the haycocks are left to them. But the mowing, especially where it involves the horse-drawn mowing machine, and the building of the rick in the haggard, are masculine skills. In all cases of field work of this sort the role of the woman is usually auxiliary. The same holds in turf cutting. The men do the actual cutting in the bog trenches, while the women knead the peat into briquets and pile it for drying. 241 462 [562] [314]

The many attitudes and beliefs which surround this type of division of labor illustrate again the socially determined character of the distinctions and their genesis in the intersexual relationship. Just as the man's work is the harder, the more various, and the wider in scope, so the attitudes express a greater valuation of the men's work within the 241 462 626 183 461

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593 tionship militates against the growth of close mutual sym-
[578] pathy. As a result, the antagonisms inherent in such a situation often break through very strongly when conflicts arise.

The division of labor in the masculine sphere between father and sons, then, is more than an arrangement in farm management. It is very directly part of the systems of controls, duties, and sentiments which make up the whole family life. The apprenticeship and the long subordination of the sons in farm work are reflections of the entirety of their relationship to parents; it is impossible to treat the two spheres of behavior separately.

Similarly, the relationships in farm work between the other members of the household cannot be treated separately.

593 On the other hand, the relationship of mother and son
561 has a very different content. Like that between father and
son, it is the product of years of development. It is marked,
● 562 too, by a similar retention of subordinate status on the part of the son. In farm work the boy is subject to commands of his mother even when, fully adult, he has passed over exclusively to men's work. It is for this reason that many Irish farm widows with grown sons can successfully manage a farm for many years before they ultimately make it over upon a son's marriage, and from their restricted scope within the household and haggard effectively direct operations in the masculine sphere. In such cases, the woman retains control. Even in such an important matter as her son's eventual marriage she has a very dominant voice.

But within the scope of such a subordination there is a
593 quite different affective history. The relationship is the first and earliest into which a child enters. It is very close, intimate, and all-embracing for the first years of life; only gradually does the experience of the child expand to include brothers, sisters, and, last, the older male members of the household.

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593 tionship of their parents. Thus there is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. He shares the masculine ultimate control of farm and household. If she remains on the farm after her brother's marriage, she must look to him for her dowry.

The country people have a good deal to say about the strength of this bond. Deep-rooted in the years of common subordination and common association, it survives the re-
[574] moval of the sister to another house and farm. It means much visiting and a close relationship with the coming
[604] children. The country people marvel that a young child may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family name are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.

589 That the complete family is the complete unit of life both
592 social and economic to the small farmer is admirably illustrated by the incomplete families of the countryside. By the term "incomplete" the authors indicate those many small farms which are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, and widows.

589 In such farms, control is exercised by the person owning
592 the farm. A widow is usually helped out by a male rela-
562 tive, brother, nephew, or son. Here again the male devotes himself to the tasks which in ordinary circumstances would fall to the father in a full family unit. The control over expenditure and the disposal of farm goods rests, however, with the woman. But even then the bargaining in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair would be delegated by her to her helping relative. In one instance which came to the authors' notice a young widow called

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her unmarried brother to live with her and directed his 589
efforts in draining a large field. The two of them ran the 592
farm very successfully, though the brother grumbled. In 562
another, a "landless" young man pleaded successfully to a [654]
Land Commission official for an addition to his aunt's holding, presented his case, and carried out the negotiations, but the final reference had to be made, of course, to the aunt for whom he worked, for in such case the feeling that the man must represent the family and farm unit in the community at large is sufficiently strong to push a subordinate "boy" into the position usually filled by the farm husband and father.

Similarly with several old bachelors. A nephew moves in 589
and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control 592
even to regulating the nephew's expenditures for amusements. In one case, where a widower had a small son, the son was taken in by a childless sister and raised by her, and when he grew up and married he inherited the sister's farm. His father remarried and raised a second brood. In another, two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their two cousins.

The attitudes of the country people to these arrangements 589
show that incomplete farm families are felt to be departures from the normal; they are subjects for commiseration. Such phrases as "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her" and "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow," are commonly applied to them.

The policy of the Land Commission in increasing farm 654
holdings is very significant in this regard. The officials 594
recognize the social value of the full family explicitly. According to the official in charge of land division in Clare, who has had successful experience in other regions as well:

> An old-age pensioner without family could not be considered for an addition of land, nor could a couple of spinsters. . . .

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592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is
512 of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

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586 842 of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

428 592 Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

602 Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

582 836 At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

592 562 428 There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be brought into the house, and matches made for them. In this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

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right of a woman to hold property. The patrilineal identification of family and land is incompatible with it. Whatever farm a woman works or controls is regarded as a trust for a son or brother of her husband or father.

The conflict is naturally never so phrased, nor is it ever debated. Yet there are many instances which show behavior, accepted fully as right and just by the local community, which reveal the patrilineal identification. A widow, for instance, remains upon the farm only if the children are beginning to grow up. If they are very young, she returns to her parents and a husband's brother may take the farm. Even if she marries, she and her new husband merely hold the land in trust. The new husband is, graphically, a "stranger to the land."

As a "stranger" he has no right to it. In a village in mid-Clare, to give an example, a "Yank" returned after many years in the United States to his father's farm, from which he and all his brothers had emigrated. His mother, now dead, had married again, and her two children by her second husband still worked the farm. D——, the "Yank," threw the husband out into the road, told him to go home, and took up the land. Later when he gave fortunes to both of the children, the village felt he had made ample amends for the stepfather's years of toil.

Whether or not there is a legally executed will, it is much the same. In Luogh, a son, inheriting a farm upon the death of his mother, allowed her old second husband to stay on with him. He was said to be "very kind to the old man." In Inagh again, though a small farmer, dying, willed the family's farm to his wife and children, a brother on a neighboring farm got most of the land. "He paid her nothing for it. He took bits of it here and there until it was all gone." Whatever protest there is must come from the growing nephews. Inagh makes none.

In matchmaking, too, legal form may be subordinated to

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CHAPTER XI

Familism and Sex

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THE small farmers' treatment of sex and the relations of men and women is no less characteristic of their communities than is their treatment of age differences. The country people are the ones among whom marriage is latest in Ireland, bachelorhood and spinsterhood most common, fecundity greatest. They are the ones among whom there is an excess of males over females, a fact which gives all Ireland a sex ratio (973 females to every 1,000 males) unexampled among the long-settled Old World countries and comparable only to those of the new countries. Yet the best evidence gives them a comparatively low illegitimacy rate, too, and the country people yield to no one in the strictness of their sexual morality.

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In the small farm households of the countryside, the roles, privileges, and duties of male and female are complementary. The division of labor between the sexes is only part of separation of human activity into male and female spheres. By oriental standards, perhaps, physical segregation of the sexes may be lacking. Yet in the countryside the community sets very rigid norms of conduct regulating the relations between men and women.

Indeed, the bounds of propriety among the small farmers are quite well marked. An outsider can come to see something of them almost at once. Men and women are much more often to be seen in the company of members of their

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own sex than otherwise, except in the house itself. Except upon ceremonial occasions in family life or in the considerable affluence of owning a gig or a trap or a motorcar, in Clare at least they go to mass, to town, or to sportive gatherings with companions of their own sex. Till recently and even now in remote districts, a conventional peasant woman always kept several paces behind her man, even if they were walking somewhere together. 562 834

The women do not go out on *cuaird* like the men. Their sphere of interest and influence is better confined within the family circle. Women do not take part directly in the deliberations of such cliques as that described in the old men's house at Rynamona. On the other hand, they are not in the least excluded or treated lightly or in a derogatory fashion. At the old men's *cuaird* the woman of the house is nearly always present. Her being of the company does not seem to stem the flow of talk in the slightest. She remains silent or is ignored so long as their talk deals with the world of the men's interest. But when the talk swings around to her sphere, she is consulted and is ready to take an active part. 562

The girls, of course, the unmarried younger women and adolescents, keep to themselves and form cliques and smaller groups of neighbors and kinswomen among themselves. Occasionally a dance breaks the ordinary succession of work and evening talk in the kitchen. And then, in their more restricted place, they are ready to go about under the tutelage of parent or brother to meet the young men and boys of the community. 562 571 517

All this is nothing new and has been described before. Yet one must review it, because in it one can see the existence of statuses of the kind we have demonstrated before. Old woman, married young woman, and girl, each term is a status in the countryside, in the same manner as in the cases of the boys and men we have already presented. The 561 562

562 561 terms are summaries of status in farm economy, family life, and the cliques of the community.

834 208 Consequently the comment and attitude of the small farmers toward sexual behavior cannot be divorced from their appreciation of status in family and community. For them sexual behavior is merely one aspect, not of individual personality, but of sociological role. If one turns to any record of the sort of commentary and discussion the small farmers carry on among themselves, both in the semi-public discussion of the *cuaird* and in the more private talk of conversation among friends of a common age and status, one encounters a characteristic set of remarks and evaluations. These are for the most part discussions of specific persons in specific events. The attitudes expressed are directed now toward persons, now toward general conditions, now toward moral or ethical imperatives, now toward cosmological principle. Yet always, if sex is the subject, the status of the actors and the interests of the familist farm economy are the themes.

562 842 Women are valued and praised for their fecundity. All this is part of generally accepted convention among the small farmers, and such conversations as the following are not in the least unusual, despite the very great modesty and reticence of the farmers. A small farmer is praising an old woman, the head of the household, to one of the authors and contrasting her to her son's wife, both being listeners:

> Here is a woman that has no more milk of her own. They shouldn't allow a woman like that to breed because a man should always keep his wife in the milk. The old woman, God bless her, raised every child with the didi [breast].

369 831 The country-bred boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of constant reference to sex and breeding. There seems to be little of the ignorance about such matters which the townsman delights so in attributing to country people. In Ireland, no less than elsewhere in the world, the antagonism between town and country often expresses itself in such

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation. 848 183 581

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls. 183 836 562

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. 837 183 [593]

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire. 834 571

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

443 conventional. How much, if anything, survives of medieval commerce in them and how much comes down from the days of the medieval Irish *aonach* is a matter for the historian. In ancient times the fair was a gathering for purposes much more widely embracing than exchange of produce. The *aonach* was often the occasion of a royal or chieftainly court, a bardic contest, and local games. Nothing of this remains today.

443 Cattle, horse, sheep, and pig fairs are fixed, habitual
424 occasions. Their dates and places of meeting are universal knowledge in the countryside. An extension of medieval English law has made most of them proprietary, making of the right to hold a fair a legal title to be bought and sold and charged for in the shape of tolls. But they are public occasions none the less.

443 The lore of fairs is an inexhaustible fund of information among the small farmers. Among them, indeed, the size of the local fairs is a matter of local pride. It is an index of the industry and wealth of the region. The state of prices is as much a clue to the fate of the local universe as the financial vagaries of Wall Street or the City reveal the destinies of the world.

443 All this is natural enough where fairs and local markets
462 represent the chief outlets for produce and the chief source
562 of monetary income. As cattle are the chief concern of the males of the family and source of ultimate success or failure for the family, so the cattle fair is the great testing ground for male prowess, skill, and intelligence. In the market place of the cattle fair, the male command of the family corporation and masculine representation of that corporation in the community makes public display of its stewardship. On this stage, the farmer can meet the outsider on his own terms and with his own weapons of shrewdness and experience.

437 The farmers criticize bitterly any departure from cus-
443 tomary procedure. Even though they complain that the fair

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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777 the hens from laying more; this is held at least near Tulla and Sixmilebridge, but seems dying out near the former place.

XIII. *Omens, Dreams, and Divination.*

787 *Omens.*—It is an unlucky sign to meet "a stranger woman with red hair," or a hare, or a fox, when setting out in the morning. A poem by Andrew MacCurtin, as already noted,[4] condoles with Father MacDonnell, a Franciscan living in Corcomroe, for the loss of his horse, and suggests that the *garran* [562] fell a victim to the evil eye or to the look of a red-haired woman. A sign much feared in north-east Clare is the flying of a bat into one's face, which forebodes sickness. A robin, a stray cat, or [763] a cricket coming into a house is lucky, but some regard the last as a sign of death,—though this belief is rare and perhaps imported, for in Dublin "the ever-faithful cricket" is also a death omen. If the right ear tingles some one is praising you, and if the left someone is abusing you. If the right hand itches you will lose money, and if the left you will receive it, providing you rub or scratch it on wood. Any one of these omens from itching is good after sunset, and rubbing the right hand on wood saves the situation or the money in either case. To get dirt on [777] one is most lucky,—"the dirtier the better." To stumble upstairs, and to be looked at by a cat after it has washed its face, are signs of approaching marriage.

Dreams.—It is most unlucky to dream of church or clergy, and, above all, of the sacraments. To dream of a cat foretells an enemy; of a dog, a friend; of crows or filth, riches and plenty; of silver, disappointment; and of dirty or stormy water, trouble. Cheap dream books have corrupted local belief so much that it is now almost impossible to separate the older dream lore.

Divination.—I have not found many methods of foretelling the future, but the following were of such common knowledge that I need cite no single authorities. On All Hallows Eve, I remember, before 1870, a blindfolded person would touch one of several saucers in which were respectively earth, water, salt, a bean, etc., symbolising death, emigration, luck, marriage, etc., in

[4] Vol. xxi., p. 196.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued from* p. 213).

XVI. *Patterns and Religious Rites.*

796 The three chief *patterns*, (or religious rites at wells and holy places), were held on Iniscatha or Scattery Island in the Shannon, at Killone near Ennis, and on Iniscaltra in Lough Derg. To all three thousands of persons came from Clare, Kerry, and more distant counties, until by degrees dissipation crept in and the clergy suppressed the festivals, leaving only a purely devotional shadow.

The Scattery pattern was held at the beginning of March, and celebrated St. Senan's victory over the "Cata" monster.[1] Its best record is a stone, which I last saw and sketched in 1875 in a garden at Naboclish Lodge in Kilkee, to which it had been brought from Kilrush by the late Capt. Kennedy. It had been brought over from the island to Kilrush when the pattern was suppressed by Dean Kenny,—some say in 1810 and others "before 1827," though the pattern was still celebrated in 1816. John Windele some sixty years ago thus copied it:—

"In the name of God, Amen | Bare head, bare feet, all pious Christians are to kneel | At every station say or read, five Paters, Aves and a Creed | Five times round each blessed place | singing hymns and partner (? pater) beads. | Round the altar is a first | And two noted stations on the strand annex (? are next). | Round the Island on the water's edge: | Fourth, the Nun's[2] tomb on the strand du (*sic*) west. | Whoever kneels and read (*sic*) a prayer will not meet a watery grave. | Bringing up a stone to Monument Hill[3] perform there and that's the fifth. | Sixth, N. East a place called Laoth[4] and at our Lady's church women stop. | Eighth, the large church. Ninth is the S[illegible] (? Saviour's). Tenth is the bed called St. Synan's grave.[5] | The well is eleventh finish and pray for ye souls of ye erectors of this blessed place."

[1] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 477.

[2] St. Cannara, buried on the strand as the saint would not permit her to land on the island.

[3] Knocknanangel to the south of the cathedral.

[4] Lacht.

[5] No woman dared approach, and still less enter, St. Senan's church, the most northern of the group. For a description and plan see *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., pp. 276–89. "S. F." says, (*The Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 547), that no woman dares to approach the Lady's Well.

[562] [P. 235]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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The names Thomas, James, and Patt. Cusack, and carvings of the round tower, Crucifixion, an angel, and a figure with a chalice, also appeared, as well as St. Senan with a crozier driving out a beast with a serrated back, belly, and tail, and the inscription "St. Synon and the Angel casting the amphibious beast out of the blessed Island." I could not find the stone after 1878. The devotees in 1816 took their rounds about the holy well annually on their bare knees, and it was the practice of those who could not conveniently attend to hire for a small payment some poor person to act as their substitute. The pattern was sometimes held on Easter Monday, and, as it was degenerating into drunkenness, the Roman Catholic Dean of Killaloe endeavoured to stop it.[6] His curate also persuaded several women to enter St. Senan's church, but their families were soon after evicted and left the Island, so that the fame of the saint's legendary misogyny was established more firmly than ever. But in 1878, when I first visited the Island, women entered the church without protest.

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[176]
[176 562]

At Killone the great patterns have been long since suppressed,[7] and I could learn nothing about the actual rites. "Rounds" are still performed at other times, being frequently vowed in sickness or for a sick relative. The rite consists in going on the bare knees, with bare head, sunwise round the green tongue of land from the altar between the crags and the lake. This being done, prayers are offered at the altar itself. Some pilgrims also wash their heads, feet, and hands in the bathing tank. The details vary according to the vow, and count is kept of the rounds and prayers by the rounded stones on the altar.[8] None of the observances seem to extend to the neighbouring abbey. The Pilgrim's Road is still visible, running north from the well far towards Ennis. The altar was last repaired by Anthony Roche, an Ennis merchant, in 1731.

The patterns on Iniscaltra, in Lough Derg, have long been nearly forgotten. In 1877 an old boatman told me that he had heard from old people of the flotillas of boats from every side of the great lake, the villages of tents, and the crowds of beggars,

[6] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 459, under Kilrush parish.

[7] The summer pattern on St. John's Day still attracts a fair number of devotees, but seems to have no very exceptional feature.

[8] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate III.

[P 236]

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561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[524] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality, men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148). Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn mainland attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them, the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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582 589 581 562 [154] [593] able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 155 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 584 173 584 [208] Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 584 584 571 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.' "

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit) —still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

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(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family: 155 593

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent. . . . An Irish male . . . beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. . . . Irish resistance to role identification . . . was seen as . . . having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters. . . . [The] . . . basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt . . . (Opler and Singer 1956:15–18). [154] [582] [589]

Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present: 155 572 154

> *Grania* is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal: which runs through the heroic Irish sagas . . . its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman . . . would be forever excluded . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all. . . . A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145–146). 155 572 154 562

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581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
[578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[164] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[662] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
662 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céilí* on the common land, which married women do not.

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Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858
children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842
high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162
average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593
done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861
mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom
they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864]
elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of
firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155]
and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593
bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582]
to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood.
"This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606]
law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother'" (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593
have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828]
hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household.
Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155]
rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562]
with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831]
the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

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593 [155] belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually
[562] responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]
[B31]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between
593 brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the
578 mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when
[B58] the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand
603 that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculca-
593 tion of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

596 The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background
888 reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious.
> [606] Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

114 Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied
578 seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

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closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference. 578 121

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin. 114 121 578 578

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families. 578 609 602 [428] [626] [691] [685]

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than 578 [602] [609] [122] [562]

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578 women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip
[642] and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples.
578 One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism
626 of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into
[828] a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first
[123] meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

121 I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an
578 observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants;
181 this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

114 Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

> 114 This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every
> 181 book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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829
779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, [123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying
793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and
776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them
165 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are
• 562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of
[829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk
[788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obliga-
771 tions can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some
828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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764 178 characterized by storytelling, games of various sorts, contests of strength, taunting and mocking, mischief-making, and factional fighting (O Suilleabhain 1967: 764 26–129). It is hard to imagine a wake more somber than that which takes place in Inis Beag. Most of those who attend it do so before midnight and stay two to three hours, coming and going at will, while "only those who own him stay all night." Each visitor on arrival prays briefly at the bedside of the deceased or in the doorway of the room before expressing condolences, and at midnight all who are anywhere in the wake-house kneel and recite the responses of the Rosary intoned [178] by the curate. Immediate kin express their grief in muffled sobs beside the corpse, but the ancient wailing lament for the dead, known as the "keen," no longer is [293] heard in Inis Beag. Tables and benches are set up in the kitchen on which the [296] men sit silently or converse in whispers with their neighbors, as they drink stout or whiskey and pass around clay pipes offered them "to keep the night awake." [562] Most of the women congregate in the room of the dead, where only very old women smoke pipes. I have counted as many as 18 minutes of absolute silence at a wake and have never heard laughter.

[562] Before the procession to the church forms, men tend to gather in small groups outside the house of the deceased and women gather inside the house. After the corpse is placed in the coffin, close relatives and even friends shake the hand and kiss the face of the dead person before the top is nailed down; then the box is carried to the front street and placed across two chairs for prayers to be said and holy water sprinkled over it by the priest. A white sheet is draped on the casket, and six pallbearers shoulder it and carry it through a gap made in the stone fence to the road which leads to the chapel. The pallbearers are both agnatic and uterine kin of the deceased, excluding his sons, and two of them have the further duty of digging the shallow grave that night or in the morning before the body is interred. Moving slowly behind the coffin bearers, the procession is headed by the spouse and sons of the dead person, followed by his daughters, then women, and finally men in a long, slow moving, silent column; children other than the offspring of the deceased seldom join the procession, and the sexes walk separately. [793] The curate may or may not lead this procession and the one the next morning, sometimes preferring to go ahead to church and cemetery by himself. A son of the dead person treats the grave diggers to stout in a pub before they set out with spades for the graveyard, as he does the pallbearers after they return from the [178] church. In the past, the grave was dug as part of the funeral service, but this custom was altered as the cemetery became filled and occasionally diggers by acci- [538] dent broke into previously interred coffins revealing their contents. A number of grisly legends and anecdotes tell of islanders buried alive by mistake, or whose bodies were partially preserved, as revealed by such accidents.

The procession from the chapel to the graveyard leaves the modern road, as we saw in Chapter 1, to follow an ancient, obliterated trail past a church believed to have been buried beneath the sand centuries ago, and then climbs the long hill of kitchen midden and sand to the gate of the cemetery. Here the column breaks up, some people going to the graves of relatives to pray and others to the newly opened grave. Men and women kneel separately at the graveside for the service (see Fig. 11), and many of the women cry as the casket is lowered into the shallow

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776
787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping
776 fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered everly superstitious.

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[787] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

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273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[164] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

177
178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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male but sometimes female. Also, the former occupied a higher prestige position [662] than the latter, but there was not the clear-cut distinction between genres appropriate to each type of narrator as elsewhere in Ireland; the *seanchaí* sometimes [654] related the exploits of Finn and the *scéalaí* the pranks of the red man. The two surviving storytellers in 1960 were both old men, but the *seanchaí* died in 1963 and the *scéalaí* two years later. Both had been prolific contributors to Irish Folklore [814] Commission collectors and Continental folklorists.

All of the above kinds of folklore expression, with the exception of folktales, were regarded as true by island folk in the past. The myths either coexisted or were reinterpreted with Biblical stories, and the legends were synchronized with events of ancient world history dating from just before the Flood to the eighth century. The Inis Beag *scéalaí* sometimes was derided by school children for still believing his narratives to be true, as was the *seanchaí* for claiming that the supernatural happenings described in his tales actually were experienced by islanders in the past century. Both narrators for many years had been visited only by folklorists [814] and tourists wishing to hear them relate their repertoires of stories, for the only form of storytelling which has been perpetuated is the occasional gathering of men in a home or pub to exchange anecdotes, mostly related to fishing. I was told that in his prime the *scéalaí* could have recited narratives nightly for "at least a month" without ever repeating a story, had he ever been called on to do so. That [114] the memory of the esteemed narrator is prodigious is revealed in the complete collection of all the material recorded from a single *scéalaí* of Co. Kerry, reported by Delargy, which included 396 pages of text: 186 tales, a few songs and song fragments, and various smaller items of prose and verse. These had been obtained from 27 different sources by the narrator, all of whom save one were neighbors (Delargy 1945:11).

Most liked by the folk were the prose narratives related by the *scéalaí* and 538 tales of recent and contemporary historical events in the region, stories of the 539 supernatural in Inis Beag, and personal experiences told by the *seanchaí*. Few of the stories dealt with historical occurrences in Ireland between the coming of Christianity and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and none of them concerned personages or happenings associated with the church. At my request, the 124 *seanchaí* read three books of Irish folklore that I had brought with me—J. J. Camp- 538 bell's *Legends of Ireland*, Jeremiah Curtin's *Irish Folk-Tales*, and Eileen O'Faolain's 539 *Irish Sagas and Folk-Tales*—and declared that he had heard all of the stories therein as a youth from his father and other island storytellers. However, the versions in the books often were "incorrect," he claimed, and he delighted in "correcting" them; of course, there are many variants of each tale (as many as 527—Aarne-Thompson type 300 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission), and he regarded the Inis Beag stories as the legitimate variants. Most of the local and Irish tales share types (plots) and motifs (incidents, characters, and objects) with those of European and other societies brought about by millennia of diffusion, but the Irish have refashioned these elements in their own corpus according to their culture and personality dispositions.

I will not discuss the various prose narratives told by the *scéalaí* of Inis 538 Beag; the greater number of them can be obtained from Campbell or O'Faolain 114 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent Folktales of Ireland.

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [574] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [561] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the [562] storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semicircle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings. 535 178 [874]

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers. 535 [175] [177] [179] [184]

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality. [874]

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women 574 63 574 342 343 352 574 273 [888] [272] [343] [562]

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Women tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to 178
houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of [938]
stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and [278]
factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, [938]
with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting
"hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who 275
purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others 443
who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still
others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is 571
composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are eco- [602]
nomically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and
give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only
when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one
of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them,
or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by [562]
children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits
as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout
and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are
working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic
services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the 275
only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom [562]
is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the [535]
audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with
an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance
at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow
room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside.
Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately. [521]

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. 275
Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his 273
turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to 573
drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in 576
like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of recipro-
cation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island— [123]
almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking
"glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a
short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the 275
men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one 273
another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is 576
overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a 571
wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have
"courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be [167]

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167
178 ble to visit Inis Beag frequently, as the cost and distance are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic.

The many vacationing emigrants who now return to the island at Christmas or Easter or during the summer months often succeed in persuading relatives and acquaintances to return to England with them. Those so persuaded declare that they will return soon with their "fortunes" to settle permanently, but they seldom do once "emancipated." Since the Second World War, several Americans have returned home, and their stories of life in the United States make the youth restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many islanders also sow the seeds of discontent. A favorite subject of talk in the pubs is the relative advantages to be gained from migrating to particular cities in England and America, and anthropologists as well as returned emigrants are called on as consultants in this matter by youths.

167
204 Almost every cottage in Inis Beag has a radio, or "wireless," and although the folk seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines
207 and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, because they allow islanders a glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and
177 freer world. Television was introduced into Inis Beag in 1963 at the lighthouse,
207 and a second set was procured for the new "dance hall" when it was completed two years later. Few islanders venture to the lighthouse to view television, but I am told by correspondents that many now visit the hall during the several evening hours when transmission from Telefis Eireann takes place. As a result, television has become an acculturative medium to be reckoned with. Both radio and television programs are censored in Ireland, but even so the morality expressed in them—especially in the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A hypothetical censor from Inis Beag most certainly would create more discontinuities with his shears in television performances than would his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin. My wife and I found that viewing television with islanders at the lighthouse on two occasions was a traumatic experience; it gave us a different (and even more disquieting) perspective on programs in the United States and their enculturative effects than can be obtained at home.

167
873 Since the Second World War, 28 island youths have pursued secondary education elsewhere in Ireland, either in high schools, called "colleges," or in technical schools, and most have been supported by government scholarships. The usual high school scholarship is for 5 years, and a student must be 14 years of age and qualify by competitive examination to receive one. Only 4 of these 28 students
873 —of which 2 are teachers in the national school—have returned to Inis Beag. One
[562] young man watched 2 girls, either of whom he eventually might have married, go off to the mainland for school and said, "Scholarships are killing the island;" what he was referring to, other than his own disappointment, is the fact that 19 of the 28 students who left for advanced education are girls. The reason for the disproportionate number of girls receiving scholarships is that they are far more moti-
[829] vated academically and have better scholastic records than boys. There is, however, a widespread belief in the island that certain families are favored by priests and

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

• 562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

12 cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which characterize ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as an epistemology.

181 The use by the folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition
195 of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm,"
[178] which often is a product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can very effectively serve to shield genuine thoughts
[538] and feelings and thus protect the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition of verbal skill, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*. (At least one folklorist has collected "Joycean utterances" from Irish peasants.)

123 Most of our information came from observation and unguided interviews. It proved impossible to take field notes openly, except when collecting innocuous data—such as the number of livestock owned by each householder—from a few particular persons. Thus, we were forced to limit our visits to less than two hours, after which we immediately
[562] transcribed what our combined memories could resuscitate. Despite frequent explanations of our presence in Inis Beag, which were candid and truthful, it was thought by the islanders that I was interested only in archeological sites and oral literature, and that my wife was not a trained and experienced co-worker; this, obviously, reflects their previous experiences with scientists and their conception of the position of women in society. Their inability to evaluate adequately our intentions proved
[609] to be a research boon. For once "accepted" (a relative term, since no outsider is ever accepted) after many months in the island, we were allowed to listen to and participate in conversations and activities from which we would otherwise have been excluded.

123 Our data on sex came from my involvement as a participant-
*831 observer in personal and often intimate conversations with men and my wife's counseling of women who were bothered by such matters as explaining and coping with menstruation, menopause, mental illness, the sexual curiosity of their children, and "excessive" sexual demands of their spouses. Our sexual knowledge and sympathy coupled with their needs and inquisitiveness gave rise to a "counselor-client" relationship between many of the folk and ourselves. They came to speak freely, albeit indirectly at times, with each of us about this sphere of behavior which arouses so much anxiety and fear. I must mention that the relationship

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] [864]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

291
834 bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and
[759] sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)
[155]

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health"
158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria.
751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with
[291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear
[834] of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism
[753] and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac-
514 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and
827 animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha-
[863] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten.
[825] Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at
[562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting
[273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most
[241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main-
237 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and
372 burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is
514 burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another
283 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the
[462] secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are
831 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood
522 by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows
[154] little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore
[123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania,* alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

• 562
539 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers
571 further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the
828 quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their main-
829 spring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

182
177 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed
178 to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the
181 penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not
*831 exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread
795 throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism,
779 which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

*831 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined
181 in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions,
182 enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control"
626 —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble savages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case.

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

561 When the whole population of a country district is on
571 the move on Sunday, the groupings are especially note-
794 worthy. There are occasional family groups driving in the jaunty car, but generally the older men walk in a group of their own, the older women in another. The young men walk together by themselves and the young women by themselves. On Sunday afternoons the young men can be seen at the nearest crossroad standing together in groups of ten to thirty, while the older men keep more to their houses or visit one another. Before mass, when the weather permits, the men congregate outside the church and do not move in until all the women have entered and the priest has arrived. As the groups stand outside waiting for the mass to begin and gossiping back and forth, the older men stand off together and the younger men keep to themselves. In wakes, weddings, christenings, the same age groupings are observed.

561 There is, of course, no formal prescription of such be-
571 havior nor formal taboo against its infringement; the conduct rather springs from the divisions of the family and the solidarity of the individuals occupying similar status as these forces operate in everyday life. It is evident how close a connection exists between age grading and marital status.

[561] If behavior of this type reflects the age grading within the family and the transitions between age grades which are part
342 of the transformation of the family at marriage, so does the arrangement of the house interior. For a graphic representation of this characteristic arrangement, let the reader return to Figure 9. [1]The houses of the small farmers show a remark-
[565] able uniformity over great areas; it becomes at once apparent that the variations in house types and forms are more associable with differences of class than of locality. But as we are dealing only with the small farmer or peasant class, we need concern ourselves only with the implications of the striking uniformity in house form among the country people. Throughout West and North Clare the house is rectangular

[1] [see p. 34. -Analyst]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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476 571 621

society hinges on this point. Much of political life is explained here. Gifts and personal favors, fashioned on the pattern of the extended family and local community, besiege (or used to besiege) magistrates and government officials. Before land reform they besieged such links with the outer world as the older estate system provided, such as the bog warden, the land steward, and the other functionaries of landlords. Yet against this pattern's sway there runs a continual incursion of other patterns which the institutions extending their sway from town life and higher social classes downward provide. In this meeting and conflict of social patterns much is to be learned of the structure of Irish social classes and of the continuing course of Irish social life.

565 571 621

The matter is of interest here only as a summary of the life of the rural community itself. It occupies us only in so far as it points to a conclusion about the kinds of relationship which build up within the local community between the farmers and those of their fellows who are not farmers. There is always a primary distinction among them. There are those who have, quantitatively speaking, most of their activities taken up in relations within the local community alone, and there are those who are divided between the local community and the outside world and who make a bridge between. The former fall in one way or another into the pattern of cooring. They are a "cut below" the farmer, yet his intimates. They are the ones in relation to whom the farmer is the dominant party, since it is the farmer who commissions, hires, or otherwise sets off the other's activity, expert as it may be. The secret of the equivalence of the status of these persons with that of the landless boys lies in these facts. For the boys are in exactly the same case.

The others, however, who are in one way or another part of the outside world, are alike if only in that. Various as they are, they are never in the same case as the local handy

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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men and the boys. For them the patterns of dominance by the farmer, of recipiency of gifts and cooring favors, of articulation with the peasant cliques in the local community, are never complete, because of their conflict with other, external ties. The crossroad shopkeeper, the policeman, the schoolteacher, the priest, the big farmer, even the local man who becomes a county councillor by election, are always a "cut above" the farmers. They come to form a group apart. They take over near-urban standards first. Some of them, of course, priest, schoolteacher, and policeman, are often residents for only a short term. They have come to the country district they serve as strangers and outsiders, if only from the next parish. But a certain aloofness and a certain difference clings to these men even if they are natives by ancestral descent. Contact with the outer world brings in the outer world's ways and sets them apart and a little above.

Only the wanderers, the tinkers, the itinerant beggars, hawkers, and "dealing" men and women, many of them uprooted urban laborers, whose ties are with the towns and whose visits in country districts are short and predatory, fall outside this pattern. They are a special case. They are also many a "cut below" the farmers. They are an outcast lowest class.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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444 subsists only because she is a part of the local community. Though she charges a bit more, she spares one the longer walk to the village center.

Country shops are often larger than hers. Sometimes where the distance to the village center is greater, they sell nearly everything one could get in town, outside the specialized drapers' or hardware, boot, and shoe shops. They sell all the farm staples, such as groceries, sugar, flour, tea, and tobacco. Here people may come from two or three miles around. The farmers all know they pay more, but the shop is a convenience. It may get the only newspaper in the district, and men drop in to hear the news. In the evenings a local school of cards may flourish here and the boys foregather.

[203 571]

The country shop reaches its zenith at the crossroad, where a church, a parochial house, a school, and a creamery may stand as well. Here the shop often dates from the days just after the famine and has had a long history of prosperity. In the past generation many such crossroads produced county councillors, and the rewards of public service often meant the acquisition of several rich farms in addition to the shop. The shop serves the surrounding countryside and collects its produce, and it derives its reward from the service it performs.

441 The position of the country shopkeeper is to be found in his place within the system of relations which make up the community of small farmers behind his shop. His function as economic agent of distribution is only part of his role. He is in a situation which must be described as a perpetual seesaw. If he is drawn too far within the local community, he loses contact with the outside world. If he is drawn too far outward, he loses touch with his customers. He must maintain a balance in a delicate equilibrium.

565 571

He is caught within a pattern of mutual obligations to the farmers on the one hand and the social system of the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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town classes on the other. Let it suffice to show his place that in a recitation of such a shopkeeper's intimates and associates it is most often not the farmers but the members of the community who are in a similar position who figure. His associates are the parish priest, the schoolmaster, the local police, and the local "rancher." When marriages are made for his daughters, they are made with big farmers, and husbands are got at considerably greater distances than in the case of the small farmers. Along with his associates, he makes up the rural middle class, at once a halfway point and a channel of movement for the infiltration of gradual change, poised between the small farmers of the countryside and the middle and upper classes of the urban centers. 441 565 571

Other agencies of exchange and contact between rural communities and the outside world are as much overlaid with social sentiment and custom expressive of valuations upon local status as is the position of the crossroad shopkeeper. The form of exchange is ceremonial, and a ritual exists to express much more than the mere mechanism of contact and exchange.

The two chief occasions of economic exchange outside the shops at the crossroad or in the towns are the best examples of such ceremonial. Let us take the fairs first. The fairs are still the most important mechanism of exchange between the small farm producers and the middlemen who start farm produce upon its journey to the ultimate consumer. Nothing has risen to threaten them seriously even in this day of economic complexity. The farmers of the rural hinterland of towns and villages journey with cattle, pigs, corn, and wool to market, to sell them that day or else to carry them home again. Some big farmers sell from the land direct to dealers and jobbers. A few small farmers sell direct to neighbors. These are exceptions, and sales in market and fair are well-nigh universal. 443

The fairs are not only universal, they are also elaborately

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

to subordination, though they cannot clothe their 000
acts in words and build moralities and philosophies out of them.

Today, in a democratic country, it is part of the folkways either to deny that such activities exist, or to demand that, like some unmentionable, they remain unstudied and unsaid. Yet, the student of human behaviour cannot neglect so rich and so deep-rooted a fount of human action. Nor can he afford to relegate the study entirely to distant horizons. Caste in India is a relatively safe topic for an American; caste in New England or in the South is a high explosive. Only the most painstaking objectivity and the most colourless vocabulary can safeguard the temerarious investigator. And the only fair treatment is that of the laboratory: to treat the behaviours in their own settings and to analyse them for nothing more than their function in that setting. If one adopts this view, one can no more blame the Smiths for snubbing the Joneses then one can berate one protoplasm for repelling another. In either case, one seeks the reason why and describes the manner how.

In the Irish countryside we are dealing with one 565
broad class, the country-people. The behaviours 554
which preserve the distinctions between them and others—townsmen, big farmers, gentry, and so on —do not concern us here. Yet within their own community — within the essential democracy of rural life—the country-people can be seen to act

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

554 in many ways to separate, to draw distinctions, to
565 repel the nonconformable. Remember that preposition 'within'. For these behaviours do not discriminate between broad groups, like the hauteur of a nobleman toward a lackey.

They operate within a larger inclusion. They are remotely like the ways of a schoolboy of the eighth grade who may scoff at the seventh-grader, look down on him, and bully him half in fun. Yet let the outside world break in, in the person of the teacher or rival schoolboys, and the distinction vanishes in the violence of united opposition. Nevertheless, intimate as they may be, these behaviours are none the less powerful. And like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization at the match, in country marriage.

From this fact springs the seeming paradox of
182 Irish rural life. A social system centring so strongly
554 round marriage and the family condemns a large
565 proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only the words are antithetical. It is through marriage that one's group and oneself attains and retains full stature. Failure in either sphere leaves unrealized the other.

From this fact, too, comes much of the homely comedy and tragedy of rural life. One prefers the human terms. That comedy and that tragedy show themselves to the student of social behaviour in

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

another guise. They are controls upon the system. 182
They are unconscious patterns of human action 554
whose social function is to ensure conformities and 565
to enforce cohesions against internal disruption and external defection. Much of the fate of human beings, both at their own hands and at those of their fellows, conforms to the controls the community exerts in response to the system of customs and values by which it builds itself and in which it ensures its preservation.

Tragedy, for example, lies in the fate of one 463
romantic human type in rural Ireland. In the last 178
century before the introduction of railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, smiths, followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Open any account of rural Ireland before the last quarter of the last century, such as the tales of William Carleton, and you will be rewarded with a full-blooded picture of this lusty crew. Their crafts were very primitive, but their place was sure. Since then, nearly all of them, except the smith, their peer, have been swept away before the skill of townsmen and factory. These men supplied their neighbours, lived among them, were an integral part of rural life. When poverty struck too deep, they became peripatetics, like the wandering singers, scholars, fiddlers, spalpeen labourers, petty hawkers and beggars who swarmed the roads of Ireland. The world of fairy-tale was

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589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
• 567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
582 articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in
[586] Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

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like the sanctions of the exercise of sexual rights in marriage, 593
are part of and take their form in the family group. Conse- 582
quently, in the wider and larger alignments of individuals springing from the family which make up the kinship system, similar prohibitions occur.

For the kindred are the group within which marriage is 582
prohibited. In a sense the formulation of the individuals in 602
it as a group is an abstraction. Kinship bonds come ready 857
formed to the newborn human being. The child is soon brought to know and adopt requisite behavior and sentiments toward the individuals with whom the other persons of his family are reciprocally bound.

Thus the Irish child very early meets his mother's and 602
father's brothers and sisters; he runs errands and receives 431
small gifts from them; as soon as he is able he carries pres- 571
ents. In later years of boyhood he does odd jobs for them; 857
his labor is lent at cooring; he takes his place with them at the family table or round the hearth on visiting. At various times of crisis in his career, such as First Communion, Confirmation, and marriage, he receives gifts from them which signalize the intimacy between him and them. They share his parent's superordination to him, for they belong to the same older generation as his parents.

He is very likely, too, to be thrown constantly with their 602
children, especially if they are substantially of the same age, 571
where his uncles and aunts remain within visiting distance. 857
In country regions, such as Luogh, nearly all of the families are united by complicated, reduplicated bonds of marriage and descent. There the boys and girls grow up together in constant association, both as "friends" and companions. It is with them that the natural course of development creates bonds of sentiment and mutual aid, quite like those within the family, which take the form of that "friendliness" at once obligatory and pleasurable seen in the account of farm work.

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602 571 Likewise, if such development of relations is carried a step higher, the brothers and sisters of the grandfather and grandmother, with their families down to the generation of the growing child himself, can retain an interest which springs out of the original brotherhood or sisterhood between them. The "friendliness," the give-and-take, the "welcome put down before" the individual, come quite naturally to the child at the hands of these relatives. His parents visit their own uncles and aunts, take occasional presents, lend them labor and so on. The child finds himself included; and he finds himself expected to adopt a similar intimacy of behavior with the children of these houses which he visits.

601 In the generation of the father, his father's brothers and mother's brothers are known as uncles; their sisters are known as aunts, both terms being the usual English classificatory ones. In both Irish and English among country people, however, descriptive terms seem to be preferred, though the English terms have been taken into the Irish as *aintin* and *uncail*. In the countryside these classificatory terms are still felt to be slightly foreign, and, as is always the case even within the immediate family relationship, kinship terms are seldom used in address. There is no distinction made between parents' siblings upon seniority. The terms niece and nephew exist, but are used by farmers only in legal contexts. Descriptive terms, such as brother's son, take their place.

In the direct line of ascent, parents' parents are "grandfather" and "grandmother" in English, according to sex, without reference to the sex of the immediate parent of the speaker. In Irish, terms correspond exactly: *seanathair* or *athair criona*, *seanmháthair* or *máthair criona*. In the direct line of descent, however, only the English terms for children's children, grandson and granddaughter, are classificatory and neglect the intervening child. The Irish terms are completely descriptive, specifying the sex of the child whose children are the grandchildren in question. They

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561 When the whole population of a country district is on
571 the move on Sunday, the groupings are especially note-
794 worthy. There are occasional family groups driving in the jaunty car, but generally the older men walk in a group of their own, the older women in another. The young men walk together by themselves and the young women by themselves. On Sunday afternoons the young men can be seen at the nearest crossroad standing together in groups of ten to thirty, while the older men keep more to their houses or visit one another. Before mass, when the weather permits, the men congregate outside the church and do not move in until all the women have entered and the priest has arrived. As the groups stand outside waiting for the mass to begin and gossiping back and forth, the older men stand off together and the younger men keep to themselves. In wakes, weddings, christenings, the same age groupings are observed.

561 There is, of course, no formal prescription of such be-
571 havior nor formal taboo against its infringement; the conduct rather springs from the divisions of the family and the solidarity of the individuals occupying similar status as these forces operate in everyday life. It is evident how close a connection exists between age grading and marital status.

[561] If behavior of this type reflects the age grading within the family and the transitions between age grades which are part
342 of the transformation of the family at marriage, so does the arrangement of the house interior. For a graphic representation of this characteristic arrangement, let the reader return to Figure 9. [1] The houses of the small farmers show a remark-
[565] able uniformity over great areas; it becomes at once apparent that the variations in house types and forms are more associable with differences of class than of locality. But as we are dealing only with the small farmer or peasant class, we need concern ourselves only with the implications of the striking uniformity in house form among the country people. Throughout West and North Clare the house is rectangular

[1] [see p. 34. -Analyst]

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audience. The point of importance here is that it is among the old people that folk myth and folk belief are preserved and expressed for the community. 887 538

If we are to examine in full rural behavior based upon age and its connection with the old adult clique whose function in the community we are assessing, we must offer some contrast with the behavior of other age groups. 571 517

We have already mentioned that the old men's house in Rynamona was not the only seat of visiting after the day's work, and that the entertainment provided there was merely one instance of many gatherings taking place almost nightly, at least through the winter, in rural communities. In the statements given by older men about the meeting of the young men we have seen something of the manner in which other pursuits than those of the men's house are regarded.

Indeed in all the communities which came under the authors' notice the young men were as ardent evening visitors as were the older men. In Rynamona they were no less so.

There they gathered in most often at the house of Roche, the "prosecutor." They did this from long habit, as did their elders. But they had no larger justification for their doing so. They went because "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys." But there were marked differences in their meeting. There was no central clique so closely integrated as that in O'Donoghue's house. There were pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together.

A greater difference lay in their complete lack of concern with the affairs of the community. One could get them to talk only about their own plans or the trials of their own kind and age. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition. The skills upon which those taking part in the meetings prided themselves and for which [521]

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571 517 they received their nicknames were of other sorts. Not even farming occupied a large share of their conversation, keen as their rivalry in the matter often was while work was going on.

571 517 524 Taking these matters in order, the young men who met at Roche's house met habitually there for card playing. Roche's unmarried son, a man about thirty, was perhaps the central figure. His cousin, another Roche, was the brother of a young man just married, who took part in no *cuaird*. This cousin helped work his brother's farm. He was another central figure. The group that formed itself round them included most of the young men of Rynamona between the ages of twenty and thirty. They played the usual games of the Irish countryside, "forty-five" and "nap," often far into the night.

571 517 525 Roche's house was the more informal center. It took in the younger men. But there was present in the community a custom somewhat more organized, namely, the "gamble." As often as once a week a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household, as its turn comes, throws open its doors to the card players. Admission, usually a shilling, is charged and goes toward defraying the expense of the supper of bread and tea for all and toward the prize. What is left after those charges are met belongs to the householder. Often this amount reaches a profitable figure, and, where the custom is firmly entrenched, a certain commercialism shows its head.

But the gamble is a sporting event. Teams, often formed of habitual associates in card playing, are pitted against one another in one form of the gamble. In another, individual high scorers win. The prize is usually a turkey or two geese, even a bonham (young pig), a side of bacon, or a calf. Elaborate rules and canons of honesty govern the play, the [555] conduct of the players, and the obligation of the person offering the prize. Play is serious and intense, and the win-

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ner of the prize can count himself a proud man, for to be 525
known in the countryside as a "great gambler" is a coveted [555]
mark of shrewdness and skill.

The older men seldom attend the gambles. They are the [887]
province of the young. For the latter, they are a crystallization of the more informal card playing, such as that at Roche's house, already described, and they give the suc- [554]
cessful young men a prestige in the community ordinarily denied them. For in late years tournaments have sprung up covering whole sections of the county and it is a proud team which can bring back a five or ten pound district prize to its home community.

From the standpoint of an enumeration of those taking part in the gambles, too, the gambles show themselves to be such a crystallization. They bring into association on more definite occasions the groups, such as that at Roche's house, which meet habitually. They unite most of the young men, especially the more active among them, with a few of the older. But it is from the young men's world of habit that their union is created.

In Rynamona the young men who gathered nightly at Roche's house were the mainstays of the gambles. They could be counted upon to attend all of them. They played well and long, as they had learned the games among themselves. But they were not the only ones to come. Most of the slightly older men of what we shall call the intermediate *cuaird*, to be described later, such as John Quin, the newcomer to the old men's house already named, came from time to time, and there was always a sprinkling of young men, kinsfolk, and "friends" from near-by communities. It was only the members of the old men's house who stayed away. They alone had given up the habits of young men. To them the gamble was "codology."

Thus the first point of difference between the visiting 571
habits of the old men and the young men, their lack of cen- 517

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571 tral clique, is not without wider interest. The young men
517 are more numerous, and they group themselves together as much as do the old. But it is upon a different basis. It is a synthesis in a looser, more widely inclusive, gathering which
[573] unites smaller cliques of brothers, friends, and boon companions. The gamble is only one of many entertainments
571 they provide themselves. Equally frequently they hold a
517 dance. The country dance is undergoing change in rural
535 Ireland today, but it is still much as it was in the last century, although it may not enliven the country districts as often as it did. Irish square dances, jigs, and flings, most of them variations of sixteenth-century European dance forms, are most common, although some Gaelic-speaking districts preserve an older tradition.

621 The country dance belongs to the young people. It differs from the gamble, from the standpoint of participants, in
535 that it unites both sexes. In most communities it is an
517 affair in which the whole community takes part, the old people as onlookers, the young and the still spry among the older ones as performers. In late years the more formal "all night" dance, an organized dance for which admission is charged and from which the older people are usually absent, has made its appearance. Like the gamble it draws from a wider area.

517 But there is a good deal of the spontaneous dancing which springs up wherever the young people of the community
535 gather even today. The young men and women learn the skills required and value them. There are elaborate codes of etiquette round them and a wealth of proverbs and jocular superstitions. But here again, unlike the behavior followed in the old men's house, these conducts have little larger purpose than uniting the scattered cliques of young people. They are recreations. They are ends in themselves. They are good times that pass the time.

517 The gamble and the dance do not, of course, exhaust the
571 list. The young people have other activities, games, sports,

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contests, and playful roles of solemn occasions, such as acting 571
as strawboys (mummers) at weddings. But all these activities, in which the old members of the community do not directly participate, are alike in their playing no great part in organizing other elements in the community than the young people themselves. They serve other functions.

All these activities bind the young men, the young people, together in common interests. They provide them with a scope of action in which they are comparatively free, yet which keeps them divorced from the seats of a power over community life which is denied them. In this sphere they may develop complex norms, valuations, and conducts.

But such developments do not serve primarily to knit the 517
community as a whole the more firmly. They are associated 571
with the lesser prestige of the young people. Consequently, 621
the old men's house comes to have in contrast a double 888
function. It unites the old men in much the same way as 554
the gamble and the dance unite the young men, in fact 182
even more strongly. But it does so in terms of the old men's common position as recipients of the respect of the community and in terms of their individual positions as integrators of their families. The difference is structural. The activities of young men unite them across family and clique lines even from one community to the next. But those of the old men do more; they unite young and old as well. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive one, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble and dance may be greater.

In such a system of integrations, that of the old men has 182
the greater prestige. A great gambler or a great dancer wins 888
wide respect. But the distinction is short-lived. It is a nine 554
days' or a nine years' wonder. It bestows great prestige 621
among one's fellows, but it removes one very little, if at all, from one's subordinate, less valued place as "boy" in the community.

Where such is the case, the individual's progression

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own sex than otherwise, except in the house itself. Except upon ceremonial occasions in family life or in the considerable affluence of owning a gig or a trap or a motorcar, in Clare at least they go to mass, to town, or to sportive gatherings with companions of their own sex. Till recently and even now in remote districts, a conventional peasant woman always kept several paces behind her man, even if they were walking somewhere together. 562 834

The women do not go out on *cuaird* like the men. Their sphere of interest and influence is better confined within the family circle. Women do not take part directly in the deliberations of such cliques as that described in the old men's house at Rynamona. On the other hand, they are not in the least excluded or treated lightly or in a derogatory fashion. At the old men's *cuaird* the woman of the house is nearly always present. Her being of the company does not seem to stem the flow of talk in the slightest. She remains silent or is ignored so long as their talk deals with the world of the men's interest. But when the talk swings around to her sphere, she is consulted and is ready to take an active part. 562

The girls, of course, the unmarried younger women and adolescents, keep to themselves and form cliques and smaller groups of neighbors and kinswomen among themselves. Occasionally a dance breaks the ordinary succession of work and evening talk in the kitchen. And then, in their more restricted place, they are ready to go about under the tutelage of parent or brother to meet the young men and boys of the community. 562 571 517

All this is nothing new and has been described before. Yet one must review it, because in it one can see the existence of statuses of the kind we have demonstrated before. Old woman, married young woman, and girl, each term is a status in the countryside, in the same manner as in the cases of the boys and men we have already presented. The 561 562

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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation. 848 183 581

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls. 183 836 562

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. 837 183 [593]

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire. 834 571

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

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834 571 and play for the young men and women of the rural communities. The customs and conventions which surround them are constant reminders of marriage and its hopes and privileges.

834 571 626 Yet as soon as any intimacy of acquaintanceship builds up between a particular pair, they are matched together in local gossip. They are forced to take a position which is only a single step from betrothal. But, as elsewhere, lovers separate to find others. Though a once or twice fickle or jilted girl is subjected to constant gossip, her luck seems not to doom her entirely if she is attractive or a good match.

834 571 626 535 Such outings as the "patterns," [2] relics of saints' festivals, and race meetings in summer, and the dances in winter, are occasions of courtship, excitement, and philandering of sorts in the countryside. They are objects of censure on the part of those of the clergy, townsmen, and people of higher class who unite in condemning more obvious manifestations of peasant social life with little insight into a custom's function. The clergy, in particular, fulminate constantly against all-night dances. They object not so much to the jollities as to the opportunities for "walking out" among the young couples.

834 535 571 The following quotations from country people describe the situation. In the first a countryman is talking about "crabbit lads" who are to blame for local sexual irregularities, and comes around at last to the local dances:

> They are awfully crabbit around here. If a girl has money or land and she will get it, the boys try any way at all to put her up the hill so they will marry her and get it. And the parents keep the girl away from the boys for fear it will happen. But it is no good to keep the girl in the house, because, if you do, she knows nothing. Let her knock away and she soon learns how to take care of herself. If you don't, there are ways the crabbit lads will get to her.

[2] The local name of country festivals once religious, somewhat like the *pardons* of Brittany.

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That was the way with the girl who married Willie Meaney[3] and he thought to get the money, but the parents said let her go. Now they are in Ennis and she never got anything. The same way with the two who married the Shaughnessy girls. They thought they would get something but they didn't get a thing. Would you believe that? America is not the only place where things like that happen. The people have crosses to bear. Every year we have a talk from the priest about the dances. He says the dances are all right but it is the going home that is bad. There is always a laugh when he says that. Then some of the parents get worried and they won't let their daughters go to a dance for a month or so, and they forget about it after that. 834 571 535

The status of boy and girl involves a "repression" of sexual impulse, virginity, and chastity of thought and expression, but custom and the attitudes of the older people provide a constant stimulation of sexual interest in the direction of the familistic system. The status of boy and girl thus involves a definite kind of sexual organization, based directly upon social relationships. 834 183 554

Nowhere is this better to be seen than in the case of the young woman's "character." Here the Church fathers and the country people seem to have attained quite a unanimity. Sexual orientation is inseparable from social role. Sexual repute and status are identical. The authors do not say this identification is unique. They do not know its historical origins. But they do wish to point out its function in this setting: The young woman's "character" is her full status as a social being because the familistic system is such that sexual activity, no less than economic, is completely integrated with one's role in social life. Consequently her sexual conduct is no concern of hers alone.

In the relationships in family and community in which the young girls of the countryside find their roles, any departure from the norm of conduct on their part is cause for

[3] Names of persons and smaller places in this and subsequent quotations are, of course, fictitious and refer to no actual persons or places of such names.

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wife got her reward in presents, gifts, and whiskey, but not in money. Money, however, would be proferred to the nurse.

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That the factor of payment in money should be crucial is really the cloak of the set of dispositions arising from habitual relations. In the local community the handy man is not paid, since, like "friends" and neighbors, he is one of themselves. Since he is one of the countrymen, he is caught within the system of much the same habitual relations of reciprocal service and mutual aid which make up cooring in agriculture.

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To see this point, we must describe the action of the local community in respect to the work to be done once again. Cooring is a form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. One old fellow described it aptly when he said that it meant that for a day of work given you would receive a day in return. We have already seen its connection with familism and the extended family. But besides cooring, there was another form of the custom known as *meitheal* (mihil). The word *comhair* (coor) referred to the reciprocity, the word *meitheal* to the band of men and teams acting together to perform a task. On various occasions when work beyond the capacity of cooring families was to be done, a *meitheal* of men or women or horses could be made up.

As described by the old people who still remember its heyday, the *meitheal* rested on a foundation slightly different from the reciprocity of cooring. The work was done by a gang of local persons got up for the purpose through the wish and custom of the local inhabitants, but without expectancy of individual return in like measure.

Bands of men and women were got up in rural communities by *meitheal* for the following purposes, of which the authors heard record:

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1. Mowing and harvesting for priest and school teacher.
2. Mowing and harvesting for an old couple without children who could not do it themselves.
3. Hauling and moving where many horses were needed, as a *meitheal* of horses, for bringing sand or seaweed manure from the coast, or moving and re-settling a family.
4. Rebuilding a house and re-settling an evicted family.
5. Collecting a *meitheal* of girls with their spinning wheels from all the community's houses to spin after shearing.
6. Collecting a *meitheal* of men and girls for various processes connected with the conversion of flax to linen.

There were probably many other more extraordinary kinds of coöperative action. But the above list exhausts those which are remembered by the local communities the authors knew in Clare and which are unconnected with the more directly reciprocal and familistic pattern of cooring. The difference between *meitheal* and *comhair* was not a contrast, however, by any means. The term *meitheal*, applied strictly, referred to the band of persons and their tools got together. Yet there was a certain unanimity in the country people's feeling that the word *meitheal* should be reserved specifically for occasions of the local community's communal action. In *meitheal* work no individual or family expected a like return.

476 Community action in concert, in which bands of workers
571 are got up for specific purposes, is nowadays very different.
178 Most of the characteristic actions of *meitheal* remembered by the old people are no longer carried out. Just as in the case of cooring, the need of the small farmer for his fellows is no longer so great. Monetary hire is spreading into the country communities. Yet even today the schoolteacher and the priest are donated services at hay harvesting occasionally, though nowadays schoolteacher and priest rely no longer upon bits of land and garden for support but upon fixed monetary salaries from state or church. Such aid is of little importance in their economies. Likewise, old-age

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pensions and other benefits have removed the necessity 571
of action by *meitheal* for the support of the aged and child- 178
less. General prosperity and the spread of machinery and tools have made it unnecessary for such concerted action in other cases, and local self-sufficiency is no longer so complete.

Nevertheless, the foundation of mutual relations between 476
members of the local community upon which *meitheal* was 571
based still exists. It can be called into play in emergency or under special circumstance still. Not all the townsman's accusation that the spirit of self-help and self-sufficiency has gone out of the country people is true by any means. They still will buckle to a community task, if necessity forces action, quite willingly. But they have learned that they have a voice nowadays in the kind of activity to which public funds and public works shall be put. This awareness is part of the extension inward into the community of the lines of relationship with persons and institutions external to the farm community which is so characteristic of the age. Such relationships are now made use of where before there were none of them beyond appeal to a landlord.

Some description of the former kind of activity might 476
be of interest here, though it is in the nature of a digression. 571
The techniques of the last century, particularly those of wool 286
and flax, were different from those of today; yet the situation is in other respects quite like that of today as far as the organization of persons in the community is concerned. The age groups of old and young, the sex division of activity between men and women, and the reciprocities between family groups and the direction of the community in the hands of the old men were even more marked than they are today. But nothing fundamental has changed except the techniques.

The following is an account of the older custom in weaving:

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476 A man would go to town and buy two or more pottles of flax
571 to sow. Then on the first of May he would go to the garden
and plant it. In August he would pull it up by the roots and
248 lay it in small bundles to be made into stooks. Then they would
take it and put it into a bog and leave it there fifteen or twenty
days, after which they could dry it in the house by hanging it
from the rafters. About the first of November you would take
it down and some men would come in and help break it. They
would then put it back and later take it down and scutch it with
a pronged tool, drawing the flax over it and breaking it.

476 Some time about Christmas time you would have a *meitheal*
571 of girls come in and they would sit in a semicircle round the
fire and clove the flax. It would take several days depending
on how much you had. The girls would stay with you all that
283 time. At seven in the evening they would be through and
within half an hour you could hear them in the hills leaping
and shouting. About eight or eight-thirty the boys would begin
[535] to arrive and there would be a dance and be no more good out
of them for that night. They might have a dance every two or
three days. You fed them good.

The next thing was the hackling, and this might be done by men or women. You had a box with iron prongs sticking up and you would hit the stalk against the irons and the small particles would fall into the box below. It might take several nights. Old man Roughan was a great man at the hackling, but he was always great for nothing else to do with flax. It was fine if you got him to come and help you and he would be glad to do it. Then you might be good at something else and you would go and help him with that. Some men were good at one thing and others at something else and they would help each other.

After this the next thing was the spinning, and this was done by the woman. She would sit in this corner by the fire and she might be there every night, or whenever she had the time, spinning the flax fiber into thread. She had no one to help her and it was a hard job. After it was made into thread, it would be taken out and bleached and re-wound and then taken to the
[286] weaver. The weaver made it into cloth and you would use it for sheets and shirts and other things. Flax was a hard thing and there was a lot of hard work about it.

248 They have been out of growing it for thirty or forty years

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and now they would never think of growing it but must be running to town and buying what they want. 248

The process of conversion of wool to yarn and thence into cloth was equally difficult. It demanded the concerted efforts of most of the rural community. It gave scope for the development of specialists who could give their skills back and forth even though, as before, their skills were part of the equipment of all the young people in the community. Two other old fellows of Inagh combined in the following account: 476 571 283

> With the wool it was sheared on May 15 and, if that fell on a Monday or Tuesday and the following was Saturday in town (market day) you would see the men there with wool to sell while others would be there to buy it with large baskets in which to put it. The first thing was to card the wool. About the first of June you would get ready to spin it. For that you go around to all the neighbors and ask for a loan of a girl to spin the wool, and if you got eight or ten you must get the loan of that many spinning wheels. Then they come to the house on a certain day and I have seen eight wheels in this room and two in the other, all the girls spinning and talking away. It might take several days before they were through and they would have a dance and the boys would come around. You want to be sure to get the girls early for there is a great demand for them. After the yarn is spun, it is placed on the wall to be taken to the weaver later on. [535]

All this was part of the pattern of work in which the members of the community were accustomed to work in close association. The behavior described here is that which we have already looked at in the discussion of the obligations of cooring. The *meitheal* referred to the working gang rather than the system in which the local habits were set. That setting was a constant play of habitual work relations between the "friends" and neighbors of the local community in which the characteristic organization of the community aligned sex and age groups and associated the 476 571

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476 571 skills of individual experience and prowess with one's place in such groups.

476 461 In dealing with local techniques and local specializations, it is impossible to divorce them from this social setting. The attitudes of the country people support this view. Their emotional outlook on work gives added proof of the identity between work role and the social relations it involves. Solitary work is difficult and tedious. It offers little incentive. Communal effort on the other hand has a pleasant and variegated rhythm which works up an emotional satisfaction which can counteract fatigue and monotony.

Consequently, concerted effort and hard work are not often divorced in the minds of the country people, to judge from what they say of it, from their experience of the *esprit de corps* which they feel. The old people as usual deny any value to present-day activity. The young think the doings of an older day the behavior of savages. We have already seen how the attitudes which express one's age status color one's view of life in the countryside. That is the case again here. If the old people deny the existence of community effort today, it is because they think of the zest of working in unison in youth long ago and remember the times when emotion was highest and the solidarity of communal effort greatest. And the young people forget this. Listening to the accounts of such mighty effort, they think only of the hardship and the ignorance of labor-saving short-cuts it entailed. Similarly the old people forget or fail to see that the young people go through the same experience as they once did.

476 571 Thus one can hear such a description of communal effort and the joys of work in common as follows from the old people and at the same time one can still watch a harvest where coöperative action and competition in skills is just as great. And we can know that the essential patterns are the same, though the techniques may change:

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And at the time of the saving of the hay and up to the War 476
didn't it used to be that a man's place was done in turn and 571
there would be fifteen or twenty men working at a time on the one place. There would be one man make the hayrick and there were no round ricks in it then, they were all long. There would be another who would rack it and two above on the rick putting hay into it. The other men and women would be in the fields bringing the hay in on their backs, and the children would be there too. Each would do as much as he could. Then the man whose field it was would have half a barrel of porter and the men would all drink. At noon and in the evening the neighboring women would come in and spread a great feed with jam and sweet breads and other things out of the ordinary, and in the evening there would be a tea for all of them in the fields.

Then at the cutting of the turf the man might have porter, though the hay saving was a bigger time than the turf cutting. There would be several working together at the cutting of the turf, some cutting and others laying it out, and they would be given a feed and some drink for it. There was a man who agreed to cut turf for a widow woman who had several small children. After he arrived, he was sorry he came, for there was no one to lay out the turf for him. But the widow and children were there and worked all day and never a sod did he get ahead of them. As soon as he had one cut, there was a child there to carry it away.

The people also helped each other with the ploughing and the planting of the garden, several men working to help and be called. There was one woman who would help one neighbor today and another the next and so on. It would kill you if you had to do it alone but you never feel the work when there are several of you all working.

There is none of that today. Everyone is begrudging the other if he manages to get along tolerably well and each man does his own. Then the women used to work together. They had what they called a *meitheal*. On an appointed evening all the girls would gather at the house and work on the flax, scutching it, and they might be there for several days or a week working and living in the same house until all the work was done. Then they might go to another house and stay there. We had a great fortnight long ago at the Murphys here. The young men

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476 would be waiting outside to whisk them away or to have a dance.
571 Then when they ground the oats, they had a quern and the men and women would come together and each take a turn at grinding so it was not tiring and they would have a big supper of spuds and milk for all of them before they would go. Then they would get together for the carding and spinning before the thread was taken to the weaver. The young women might be carding and the old women spinning and the *meitheal* of [535] girls would work away. They would get a dance when they would be done.

All the above description of close concert and deeply imprinted habitual work relations among the members of the local communities in the framework of the organization of behaviors of age and sex depict the now dead past. The same activities today, though certain techniques are different, bring out the same picture of work relations in an emotionally charged unison among persons of similar status within the community. The present-day hay harvest is very little different, though mowing machines are used. The great hayrick is still built in the same setting, and still calls for celebration. Everyone still waits for a signal from the hayrick rigger, a personage of considerable importance on such a day.

476 The unison of working on oats harvest with flails is gone.
But in its place is a threshing machine, and its owners come
571 around and a local crew is got up out of the local men. The
463 same jollities still reign. In all this our chief interest is not
554 in changing custom. Rather it is from this kind of observation that a new conclusion arises. The factors of differentiation about skills and techniques in the rural communities give rise to statuses of the same kind as before, statuses based upon the development of a specialty by a member of the local community which is recognized and valued within the habitual activities of his fellows. Here is an opportunity to see the embryonic form of division of labor and development of occupations in terms of the life of a community. It is a continuous process.

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The formally recognized artisans of the country districts 463
represent a sort of halfway stage in this process. The black- 571
smith is the most important of them, through historical asso-
ciations and because his skill suffers so little loss of demand. 461
Others, such as the weaver and tailor, are in process of disappearance; others perhaps in process of emergence. It is the incorporation they experience into the habitual relations of the group that determines their presence or absence and determines whether or not their skill shall develop or be lost.

Take, for instance, the few cases of persons who return to their native communities in the countryside from abroad. They find adjustment extremely difficult. The "returned Yank," if he has been long away, is declassed and to an extent deracinated. This is true of all his behavior, through all his relations with those from whom he went. The process of reabsorbing him is slow and painful. None of this shows itself better than in his inability to fit himself in again technically and occupationally. If he takes a farm, he is better off because he is independent. But otherwise he must learn a different kind of organization of work relations, a different tempo, and he must wait upon the slow development of the relations with his fellows which alone can give him full occupational status among them. This is the reason why innovations of all kinds seem to be infinitely slow in conservative rural life. Ardent agricultural reformers all too often fail to recognize this enforced tempo of habitual working relations in agriculture and suffer disillusionment accordingly. In fact, it is the rock on which most well-meaning reforms or innovations break. Change and innovation do come about, surprisingly quickly from one point of view. But they proceed through social relations; they do not overthrow them. They come about through a new habit's achieving a compatibility with old ones.

In the Irish countryside the organization of the com- 463
munity upon an occupational basis can be understood not 571

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463 in terms of such considerations as income, wealth, or skill,
571 or any such factors, but in terms of the place and function of the persons specializing among their fellows. It can be understood in terms of social relations and the organization of habit. Status based upon technical differentiation is built up out of personal relations in the work experience of the community members.

476 If then we take inventory of the kinds of goods and ob-
571 jects which make up the *matériel* of peasant life, and draw
621 up such an inventory to illustrate for us the connection between social relations and these goods and objects, we can construct a series of charts which connect community life and the exchanges and uses of goods, services, and objects in one comprehensive view.

In such a chart those goods and services which come to the farmer from those within his own community come to him in connection with traditional social relations uniting fellow community members. They are the ones transferred under the pattern of cooring: through "friendliness" and non-monetary reciprocal obligation.

Those goods and services which come to the farmer and his family from without the community come to him in connection with more recently developed non-traditional relations uniting him to persons outside the community. They fall into quite different patterns of activity. Likewise any person whose occupation makes him both a member of the local community and part of the outside world, by virtue of his relations extending beyond, is also in a position of oscillation between the first and the second relationships.

For there is a continual attempt to extend the pattern of cooring, as with all local familistic and communal obligation and sentiment, outward on the part of the farmers, and a continual extension inward on the part of outsiders of other patterns of relationship. Much of the enduring pattern of town and country relationship evolved in Irish

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society hinges on this point. Much of political life is explained here. Gifts and personal favors, fashioned on the pattern of the extended family and local community, besiege (or used to besiege) magistrates and government officials. Before land reform they besieged such links with the outer world as the older estate system provided, such as the bog warden, the land steward, and the other functionaries of landlords. Yet against this pattern's sway there runs a continual incursion of other patterns which the institutions extending their sway from town life and higher social classes downward provide. In this meeting and conflict of social patterns much is to be learned of the structure of Irish social classes and of the continuing course of Irish social life.

The matter is of interest here only as a summary of the life of the rural community itself. It occupies us only in so far as it points to a conclusion about the kinds of relationship which build up within the local community between the farmers and those of their fellows who are not farmers. There is always a primary distinction among them. There are those who have, quantitatively speaking, most of their activities taken up in relations within the local community alone, and there are those who are divided between the local community and the outside world and who make a bridge between. The former fall in one way or another into the pattern of cooring. They are a "cut below" the farmer, yet his intimates. They are the ones in relation to whom the farmer is the dominant party, since it is the farmer who commissions, hires, or otherwise sets off the other's activity, expert as it may be. The secret of the equivalence of the status of these persons with that of the landless boys lies in these facts. For the boys are in exactly the same case.

The others, however, who are in one way or another part of the outside world, are alike if only in that. Various as they are, they are never in the same case as the local handy

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565 men and the boys. For them the patterns of dominance by
571 the farmer, of recipiency of gifts and cooring favors, of articu-
621 lation with the peasant cliques in the local community, are never complete, because of their conflict with other, external ties. The crossroad shopkeeper, the policeman, the schoolteacher, the priest, the big farmer, even the local man who becomes a county councillor by election, are always a "cut above" the farmers. They come to form a group apart. They take over near-urban standards first. Some of them, of course, priest, schoolteacher, and policeman, are often residents for only a short term. They have come to the country district they serve as strangers and outsiders, if only from the next parish. But a certain aloofness and a certain difference clings to these men even if they are natives by ancestral descent. Contact with the outer world brings in the outer world's ways and sets them apart and a little above.

Only the wanderers, the tinkers, the itinerant beggars, hawkers, and "dealing" men and women, many of them uprooted urban laborers, whose ties are with the towns and whose visits in country districts are short and predatory, fall outside this pattern. They are a special case. They are also many a "cut below" the farmers. They are an outcast lowest class.

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TABLE 7

Relations of Farmers and Non-Farmers in Three Rural Communities in County Clare

The table which follows is a chart of relationships between farmers and non-farmers in the rural communities of Clare. It lists those of different skill or habit with whom the farmers have relations. Those who fall under the pattern of reciprocities, gifts, and cooring, and the goods and services they provide the farmer, appear in one list. Those who fall under other patterns, who do not figure in the obligations of cooring, are listed in another. At the right of each item in each list is a word or phrase characterizing the initiation of the actions taking place between the farmer and the non-farmer in the course of the provision of the goods or services described.

Read another way, the lists arrange in two groups all the local specialists with whom we have been dealing. They show us that the differences are to be found in social relations, not in goods or services rendered or any other factor. All the specialists of whom the authors got information in the country districts are here. The first list describes the specialists whose relations to the farmers are "internal" to the community. The second list describes those persons who connect the farmers with the outside world and are thus "external." List I gives those who enjoy superior prestige and local standing, whose contacts with the community proceed through the heads of families, the adult men, and who are capable of initiating action among them. In that limited sense only, they are dominant over the farmers and make a higher class. List II gives those who share inferior prestige and local standing, who form cliques with the "boys," and who are not ordinarily capable of initiating action among the adult members of the community except in a course of communal action employing their special skill. These are a lower class in the country districts by such definition.

This configuration of factors reveals the lines of relationship within the community and those extending outward from it.

The reader may judge for himself how close the connection is between the familistic system of farm life and the structure of the rural community.

List I

Extra-Familial Relations within the Local Communities, Internal

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations [1]	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services [2]
Weavers	Homespuns, shawls, cloths, blankets		
Tailors	Clothing		
Carpenters	Furniture, houses, buildings		

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case this consists of gifts and cooring.
[2] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case the farmer commissions the labor.

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Smiths	Farm implements, horseshoes, tools, repairs	Gifts, annual payment, and cooring	
Shoemakers	Boots, shoes		
Thatchers	House thatching		
Hayrick experts	Hayrick building		
Masons	House building, sheds, walls		
Wall builders	Walls		
Whitewashers	Limewashing of houses, sheds		
Water diviners and well diggers	Finding and building of wells		
Threshing-machine operators, owners	Threshing	Payment, gifts and cooring	Farmer commissions labor and machine and pays hire
Midwives	Attendance at childbirth		
Bonesetters	Broken bones		
Local "vets"	Treatment of sick animals		
Local "doctors," wise men or women	Treatment of sick; magic		
Domestic servants	Household aid	Wages only for outsiders not kin	Farmer hires and pays hire, otherwise kinship relations hold
Agricultural laborers, employees of big farmers	Occasional aid in agriculture		Either party requests aid
Gravekeepers	Records of grave locations, tending of graves	Wages by priest, gifts and cooring from farmers	Unobserved
Slate quarrymen	Building and roofing slates	Unobserved	Unobserved
Sextons	Tending of churches	Wages by priest	Unobserved
Limekiln and lime burners	Fertilizer	Gifts and cooring from local men, payment for outsiders	Unobserved

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
List II			
Extra-Familial Relations with Local Persons Extending Outside the Local Communities, External			
Special Cases, Occasional Relationship			
Tinkers	Asses, pots, pans, repairs	Occasional trade at the door	Tinker makes rounds
Dealers, hawkers, feather-mongers	Odds and ends, small trade articles. Feather mongers buy feathers from farmers	Occasional trade at the door	Dealer makes rounds
Habitual Relationships			
Crossroad shopkeeper	Supplies liquors, foodstuffs, tobacco, sundries not bought in town. (Most trading of staples done in towns, however.) Collects eggs and butter for sale to produce dealers	Farmer an habitual client, purchasing on long-term credit. Relationship overlaid with obligations of "friendliness," involving reciprocal gifts and occasional advances. Barter significant only in the shopkeepers' acting as depot for eggs and butter sales	Relationship habitual over long term (see other columns)
Civic guards, (police) officials and uniformed men (*Gardai Siochána*)	Local protection of person and property, apprehension and prosecution of misdemeanor and felony. Informally, police settle disputes, report grievances, give amateur legal advice, and gather census data for governmental departments	By law, civic guards must be neither members of the communities in which they are stationed nor related in it by marriage. They are instructed to maintain close rapport and very friendly relations with local people, and seem to succeed. They go in for much sport with the local young men and boys. They are attached to local barracks but, if they are married, maintain homes in the local community	Assigned to stations on departmental orders

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1933) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Big farmer	Occasional employment of local young men; occasional aid to small farmers and local purchase of corn, vegetables, animals, produce	Of a higher class and wider contacts than the small farmers; most often a townsman by culture and even by residence. In the countryside, close informal contacts with others of his kind over a wide area; interest in fashionable recreation and sport. Contacts with small farmers often friendly but usually few, except where big farmer is active politically	
Cattle and produce dealers	Purchase of produce and livestock, providing chief monetary income of small farmers	When not townsmen, whom the farmer meets only at periodic fairs and markets, these men are usually big farmers. Buy "from the land" (that is, from individual farmers not gathered at the local fairs and markets) very rarely; butter and egg dealers nearly always buy through crossroads shopkeepers	

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Parish priest and curate and other clergy	Religious leadership and moral control. Regulation of personal conduct and family behavior. Settlement of conflicts and disputes. Recommendation of "characters" before the outside world. Regulation of formal beliefs and attitudes, supervision of education in the interests of the accepted *mores*. Priest supplies ceremonial and cultural leadership and takes an active part in nearly all recreational and cultural activity, along with the schoolteacher, in country parishes. Only at times of high ceremony or special devotion, as at marriages, or in pilgrimages and retreats, does the small farmer make use of town churches, though he and his wife often contribute to them	In country districts today formal religious relationship seems to be superseding older paternalistic dominance of parish priest. Little informal contact except in the case of young curates in local sport. But the priest still commands greatest respect and reverence and, in many cases, the love of his parishioners. He is still the local court of appeal and the arbiter of local custom. He is consulted a great deal by both men and women. His parishioners are jealous lest he overstep his sphere of authority, particularly in politics, yet they concur in granting him obedience in everything else. Nevertheless the older magical power he possessed once is gone. Today he is often superior to the small farmers in wealth and education, and is not one of them. His more usual associates are other clergy, big farmers, and townsmen	

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438 drawn upon by centers of distribution of women's produce
462 are always much less in extent than those of men.
484 It is not enough to point out that the distance to be traveled and the size of the area which a center serves are in
438 direct proportion to the monetary value of the goods con-
484 cerned. This is the case. It is an old story among economists.
571 But like all generalities it does not fail to have many exceptions. The point of interest is not the monetary but the sociological aspect of the matter.

Areas of distributive service coincide roughly with areas of personal contact and habitual travel. They coincide also with areas of effective social relationship. Thus there is a direct correlation between the area over which a peasant moves and has social relations and the value of the product he raises, as the economist would point out. But the source of this correlation is not to be found in economic considerations alone. The economic matters are themselves the outcome of the patterning of activities between persons. They show us the interdependence of the internal organization of the peasant community and the relationships making that community's articulation with the outside world.

Nothing in the world prevents any small farmer from going to Dublin markets to sell his cattle, not even the price of the ticket, for he has that. But he goes only so rarely as to make the fact negligible. On the other hand, the big farmer, the cattleman, in County Clare habitually goes farther, buying and selling far beyond the confines of the local market areas, purchasing his household and family goods in the great urban centers, patronizing even a Dublin tailor sometimes. The difference in travel is a part once again of the difference by class and economy between large farmer and small. The small farmer's community is made up of the persons related to him who are also small farmers and the persons who connect these men with the outside world. This we saw in the discussion of occupations. The

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market areas are the areas of effective, habitual relationship among farmers. They are definable only in terms of social relations made up of the acts of specific local persons. Such relations differ in duration and the frequency of the events making them up. Change such relations and geography is changed. For a human setting geography is merely the locus of relationship. The system of distribution that orders space in rural Ireland functions to do so within a system of social relations, which we have called familism. 438 484 571

It is not surprising that the relationships existing between the small farmers and their local distributing agencies go farther by far than economic acts of barter, purchase, and sale. The country crossroad shopkeepers, especially, win very special status in rural communities out of these relationships. In Ireland and in Clare shopkeeping is predominantly an urban and small-town trade. Yet shops are numerous and important in the country districts, and a word must be said of them. 444 571

In typical western rural communities the smallest and poorest of the crossroad shops, serving the minutest areas, are ordinary cottages or farmhouses. The slightest alteration has sufficed to turn one of the rooms into an emporium where makeshift till, counter, and shelves carry little more than tobacco, matches, oil, and a few sweets and small sundries. 444

Such a shop is usually run by a woman, who subsists upon it and a plot of land or garden. She is often a widow, or the wife of a local tradesman. In many cases the little shop is the local post office as well, and a salary from the state contributes to the owner's upkeep. Such a shop is sometimes, too, a local gathering place for the boys, in the way the local smithy once was such a gathering place. The boys get their fags here. It is encumbent upon the woman who keeps the shop to make them presents at Christmas time, in recognition of their custom. Everyone agrees that the woman [205] [431]

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444 subsists only because she is a part of the local community. Though she charges a bit more, she spares one the longer walk to the village center.

Country shops are often larger than hers. Sometimes where the distance to the village center is greater, they sell nearly everything one could get in town, outside the specialized drapers' or hardware boot, and shoe shops. They sell all the farm staples, such as groceries, sugar, flour, tea, and tobacco. Here people may come from two or three miles around. The farmers all know they pay more, but the shop is a convenience. It may get the only newspaper in the district, and men drop in to hear the news. In the evenings a local school of cards may flourish here and the boys foregather.

[203 571]

The country shop reaches its zenith at the crossroad, where a church, a parochial house, a school, and a creamery may stand as well. Here the shop often dates from the days just after the famine and has had a long history of prosperity. In the past generation many such crossroads produced county councillors, and the rewards of public service often meant the acquisition of several rich farms in addition to the shop. The shop serves the surrounding countryside and collects its produce, and it derives its reward from the service it performs.

441 565 571 The position of the country shopkeeper is to be found in his place within the system of relations which make up the community of small farmers behind his shop. His function as economic agent of distribution is only part of his role. He is in a situation which must be described as a perpetual seesaw. If he is drawn too far within the local community, he loses contact with the outside world. If he is drawn too far outward, he loses touch with his customers. He must maintain a balance in a delicate equilibrium.

He is caught within a pattern of mutual obligations to the farmers on the one hand and the social system of the

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town classes on the other. Let it suffice to show his place that in a recitation of such a shopkeeper's intimates and associates it is most often not the farmers but the members of the community who are in a similar position who figure. His associates are the parish priest, the schoolmaster, the local police, and the local "rancher." When marriages are made for his daughters, they are made with big farmers, and husbands are got at considerably greater distances than in the case of the small farmers. Along with his associates, he makes up the rural middle class, at once a halfway point and a channel of movement for the infiltration of gradual change, poised between the small farmers of the countryside and the middle and upper classes of the urban centers. 441 565 571

Other agencies of exchange and contact between rural communities and the outside world are as much overlaid with social sentiment and custom expressive of valuations upon local status as is the position of the crossroad shopkeeper. The form of exchange is ceremonial, and a ritual exists to express much more than the mere mechanism of contact and exchange.

The two chief occasions of economic exchange outside the shops at the crossroad or in the towns are the best examples of such ceremonial. Let us take the fairs first. The fairs are still the most important mechanism of exchange between the small farm producers and the middlemen who start farm produce upon its journey to the ultimate consumer. Nothing has risen to threaten them seriously even in this day of economic complexity. The farmers of the rural hinterland of towns and villages journey with cattle, pigs, corn, and wool to market, to sell them that day or else to carry them home again. Some big farmers sell from the land direct to dealers and jobbers. A few small farmers sell direct to neighbors. These are exceptions, and sales in market and fair are well-nigh universal. 443

The fairs are not only universal, they are also elaborately

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561 come forward only when called upon. At country 'stations' the elder men and women file in for confession and come forward for communion first. On the road to shop, church or fair, the young man must keep pace, and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the 521 constant discussions that are the breath of life for 561 the countryman. No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 'stopping on the road to pass the time of day'. In the rural community such personal communion is an indispensable bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form, in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men must 'listen in'.

At such times the important news of the country- [203] side disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the 'boys' are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

561 Then, secondly, there is the matter of the con- 571 tacts of the community with the outside world. The elder men, these same father-owners, represent

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the interests of the community, before priest, 561
schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman and govern- 571
ment official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel.

The relation extends in fact to very small matters 276
indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of 561
bread, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of 576
tobacco, go to the older men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe round among one's intimates and guests, for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man; he must content himself with an occasional 'fag'. When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells: "During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door I said to her—she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. Let the young bucks go, says I, they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly. She looked at me and says, Frank, are you serious? I am, faith, says

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'weight'. He showed in his serious manner a little 573
disdain for frivolous pursuits.

In the old men's house, however, he looked a different figure. He was often silent, or contented himself with answering questions. When he did speak, it was to 'act the playboy', in the country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent, and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to break into playful banter. Sometimes his efforts were successful, sometimes they were not.

But Quinn's playboy role did not last long. A year later he was an *habitué* of the old men's *cuaird*; he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, 'the judge', passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy", he said, "but he has a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. One can see how closely knit a clique they are. They have code and values of their own, strong enough to enforce specific personalities on each of the members, in accordance with the role of each in the group.

But there is an external side to this clique as 571
well. To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group 573
in Rynamona, one must know its place in the community. These seven men, for instance, are not the only old men in Rynamona. Roche the 'public prosecutor' has a brother, with a good farm,

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571 573 across the line between Rynamona and the next townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door; he is too feeble. His sons, still 'young men', work the farm.

But there is also another, and more active, old fellow. Moroney is, perhaps, the 'strongest' farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best in the townland, and his farm the best stocked. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, work it with the help of a son and daughter, both nearing thirty. Each year, Moroney stands for them all at the 'station' and the family's dues to the Church are greater than any other's in Rynamona. Such prosperity draws Moroney a bit apart from the villagers. Occasionally, in discussions of politics, he will identify himself with the Cosgrave party, as a man with a 'stake in the country'.

All this sets Moroney a bit apart. Some say there was an incident long ago when Moroney was young; but most have forgotten it. Nevertheless, the breach is there. Moroney never attends at the old men's house.

Furthermore, just as not all the old men of Rynamona come to O'Donoghue's, so are there also households which have no representative there. With them, however, the transition we saw in John Quinn's case has scarcely begun. Two examples will show you the case. O'Brien is a man of forty. He is married, his parents are dead, his

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children none older than fifteen. He is eligible in age and status, perhaps, but he does nothing to hasten the transition from young man to old. For O'Brien is a man of moody temper, given to gusts of anger. He goes out very little at all; when he does it is to the young men's gambles.

With Mackey, the process is hardly begun. Mackey's parents are dead, and the farm is his. But Mackey is only very recently married, and he sent off a brother to the towns only a year or so ago. He, too, still visits with the young men.

Therefore, with these easily accounted-for exceptions, the old men's house includes all the farm-fathers of complete families. It is made up of those who are married and in the words already quoted 'have a responsibility on them'. Informal as it is, it nevertheless unites these men of full status within the community and unites them, too, in such a way as to crystallize and canalize the influence their status gives them.

For this clique is built round discussion and decision, as its nicknames show us, because discussion and decision are its role for the community at large. In the persons of these old men, in their deliberation, the integration of the community is accomplished.

The old man's superior status in the family and in the community cannot be separated from his half of a mutuality which unites him to his subordinates, and gives him, as it were, his *noblesse*

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571 573 *oblige*. In the same way, the old men's clique operates.

For here in the old men's house, the countryman's way of life exerts its strongest sway upon him. It is the 'parliament' of his fellows. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. Agriculture, perhaps, comes first. Times of sowing, reaping and harvesting are debated. Prices are compared, innovations tested. Traditional methods receive their strongest support here, in the web of legend, proverb and reference to the past the speakers throw round them.

573 621 66 Much of the community's relation to the outer world takes its form here, determined in the old men's argument and agreement. In late years this has come to be called 'politics'. Petitions for relief road work, for expansion of agricultural prize schemes, most, in fact, of the business of the County Council and its committees originates on the side of local community in the discussions of the old men's *cuaird*. It is here, too, that the community reaches unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for instance, it is felt that the interest of all demands that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. Consequently, even O'Halloran, the 'drawer down', whose private views leaned in a different direction from those of the villagers, begged that no word of his heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of Rynamona. "I wouldn't want

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369 pattern which fashions many lifetimes and their desires, ambitions, achievements and failures. History and habit have wrought a series of pathways almost as definite as those of a termite's nest; but history and habit care little which termite follows them. Vigour, if it exists, can only be measured in the ease with which the path-follower travels along his course, and the change which his passing makes upon it.

I am sure I shall be accused of a thorough-going, even mystical determinism in human affairs. But let us follow the countryman and the towns-dweller and see wherein my heresy is justifiable and wherein we may temper it.

In the communities my colleagues and I came
369 to know, the country customer who brings his
443 trade into the shop does so in response to the ties
●571 of kinship and friendliness. He 'goes with' a shopkeeper or publican, most often, as he 'coors' with his country friends. This is not his only incentive but it is his principal one. The social order of which he is a part embraces the town-dwelling shopkeeper; trade follows friendship. Many indeed are the shops which rely almost entirely upon this 'family trade'. Others know it to be the base upon which they must build.

But, we remember, the relation of kinship and friendship is reciprocal. The shopkeeper is bound in his turn to his 'family trade'. He owes obligation to the 'country cousins' who buy from him. In

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this way, a durable bond is created which exists 369
over and above the economics of retail trade. It is 443
of the kind that the countryman understands best; 571
it charges the relationship with interest for him; it infuses it with sentiment, habit and reciprocal force. The shopkeeper, too, can rely upon it. Even though he be caught in the demands it makes upon him, he, nevertheless, can rely heavily upon its expectancies.

The ordinary modest retail shop or pub lives upon this tie. In many cases the tie infuses business with a social content which becomes co-extensive with the distributive function the shop performs in economic exchange. If the tie is weakened, if it dies, the shop weakens and dies too. And with it dies the family which derives livelihood, status and much of its corporate existence from that shop. For possession of the shop gives status and prestige and marks one's social place for the family, as much as does the 'farm of land' in the countryside. The family's 'name is on the shop' in much the same way as the country family's name is 'on the land'. In fact, almost symbolically, that name is literally [551] on the shop, for in Ireland most often a single word —the family name—rather than any announcement of the type of retail trade carried on—hangs over the door to proclaim the shop's existence to the buying public. And when the 'family trade' dies, that name dies out of the shop world with it.

Business, then, in the market-towns is no frantic

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369 search for better qualities at lower prices. It is first
443 of all a technique in social relations. It demands an
571 orientation to a social order, that of the country-man-customer. Customer and retailer are brought together, not primarily through a cheap price nor an eye-compelling package, but through personalities and through blood and marriage bonds.

In this social context, the interests of shopkeeper and farmer coincide. If the shop is to live it must renew its ties with the rural hinterland; if the farm on the land is to grow in status and strength it must ally itself in a higher and wider social sphere, and in so doing, provide well for its dispersed children. This coincidence of interest determines much of the shopkeeper's life; through it the countryman has assimilated the town to his own way of life.

The town represents that higher and wider sphere for the countryman. Its life is that of a higher station in life; it is a centre of metropolitan prestige. So the farmer can come to send his son into a shop, as he sends a daughter 'into the land' in match-making, to provide him with a better place in life, to make a gentleman of him. The shopkeeper may need a young and pliable assistant in his business. He must have one upon whose kindred he can depend for extension of his trade. He takes in the farmer's son.

In this way, the first of the social bonds that unite the shop and the pub to the rural hinterland

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is created. A pathway is created along which human 369
lives can move and play out their roles in social 443
life. One of the farmer's sons can hope, with luck 571
and affluence, to become a shop-assistant in the market-town. The portion he receives upon the dispersal of the farm family may well take the form of such a start in life. The farmer-father pays the 467
boy's apprentice bond. 443

Formal apprenticeships still flourish in Irish 369
country towns and nowhere better than in the shop 571
or pub. The country boy is bound in custom and in law to his new employer and learns the alien way of business and social habit under a master's eye. Eventually he may succeed to a shop of his own, but first he 'must serve his time'. In this, rural Ireland has preserved an older form and charged it with its own peculiar content. The town-bred lad is seldom hired; he brings no rural kindred with him. Then, too, he is neither so impressionable nor so easy to control. The country lad, at first, is both. The shopkeeper taps the social order of the countryside in the person of his fledgling 'prentice boy.

But time brings ordered change in social life, in 369
the town no less than in the countryside. The boy 443
grows up; he serves his time. He acquires the 571
experience and the technique which fit him for 166
the role for which his parents paid his apprentice bond. Unless he is to retain a subordinate and unimportant place as shop-assistant for a lifetime, he must move on. He must acquire a shop himself.

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369 And so he does, if he humanly can, and to that end
443 his savings go.

571 So much for the farmer's son. In his person, he
166 represents a rough one-half of the countryside's invasion of the town. Yet he has sisters, too, at home upon the farm. The attraction of metropolis is no less great for them; they, too, must be provided for in the dispersal of the family upon the land. And with them goes the rural social order and the ties of kinship and community.

In this fact one can see another rough half of the
369 rural tide that sweeps into the ranks of business in
443 the towns. The shop-world taps its country hinter-
571 land again in the persons of the daughters of the
584 farms. The farmer must, if he can, marry his daughter off well; prestige and alliance go with her and the dowry which she carries as her portion. The shopkeeper must renew his ties with the countryside with each new generation, if the shop is to survive. In this coincidence of interest, again, a great deal of the marriage custom of the town revolves. The world of shops and pubs is caught within the ordered mechanism of change called *match-making*, in the same way as is the 'farm of land'.

Currently in country towns, the 'match' is the accepted type of marriage for publican and shopkeeper as much as it is for the farmer. The more sophisticated and more affluent shopkeepers, those who are close, or would like to be, to the higher

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status of merchant, would repudiate the rustic 369
word. They would tell you that they make instead 443
'proper marriage settlements'. But their humbler 571
fellow-tradesmen, whose shops have not such pre- 584
tensions, are closer to the soil. They would admit what is for both of them the fact.

Consequently, one can find in the town, round the shop and pub, the same reorganization of human relationships that goes forward when the country match transfers land and household command to a marrying son. But there is one great difference. In the town one must bring a country-woman in.

If one analyses the census of marriage, age and occupation in the Free State made in 1926, one can see how general this reorganization is. It lies behind the statistics of a great part of the country. Without it, one cannot explain the striking uniformity that gives a roughly similar grouping of individuals by age, by sex, by marital conditions, in all the towns, except the large cities, of southern Ireland. For instance, shop-assistants everywhere are young unmarried men and women. Entrance into the ownership of shop and public-house takes place at the same age as does entrance into married state. Though the towns show no such marked extremes as do the country districts, marriage is long delayed and bachelorhood and spinsterhood are very frequent by world standards. One need not be a demographer or statistician to be struck with the parallel, and to wonder at such coincidence between

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369 the lives of the followers of occupations so dissimilar
443 as agriculture and retail commerce.

571 For this statistical correspondence overlies the
584 facts of social life. It merely expresses numerically the community of custom between country and town. If one cares to probe deeper, among the lives whose events the census records, one finds the custom at the root of human behaviour and human sentiment. One lays bare the outline of the balance in which the lives of townsmen and countrymen co-mingle in a larger whole.

For setting up a shop means setting up a family; it means marriage and the bringing-in of a country girl. There are exceptions, of course; custom is only a general imperative. Nevertheless, the country match is the generality.

Most often, the shopkeeper-father turns over the shop to the son who is to succeed him when that son marries. The daughter-in-law is the daughter of a farmer of the countryside. Her people 'walk the shop' as they would 'walk the land' in a country match. Long negotiation equates the dowry they give with the shop, its stock, its debts and its prospects. The two families cast the agreement into proper legal form. The shopkeeper transfers his control and his ownership to the son and the son's wife. The other shop children are dispersed and are provided for, where possible. The older generation retires; and a new family is established in business in the town.

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This is a smooth and orderly transition. The shop keeps its identification with human ties unbroken, from parents to children. It renews them once again, outward into the rural hinterland, in the persons of kindred the young wife brings 'into the shop'. The shop's life blood is renewed: literally, in the persons of the new master and mistress; socially, in the extensions of kinship and alliance; and economically, because trade follows personal ties.

The erstwhile apprentice boy, the farmer's son, who sets up 'on his own', follows the same course and makes a comparable transition. His marriage and his setting up his own shop most often coincide. His savings and the bride's fortune make possible, together, many a start in the life of the market-towns. Money buys the shop, credit may stock its shelves, but it is the social alliance, contracted in a country marriage, which supplies the trade upon which business rests.

One might ask here if the role of the sexes is not reversible. Might not the young man marry-in into the shop, and the girl rise from assistantship to full-fledged ownership? Naturally, such a course might well be taken; a social order allows many channels. It has not the rigidity of formal law. Or the girl may inherit a shop, or receive one, in the towns, as her particular portion. For to set up a daughter in a small shop is to provide well for her and to assure her station for her lifetime; even

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369 though little wealth will come to her through that
443 shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases,
571 these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a
584 finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly
369 universal occurrence where a society preserves
443 some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural
571 necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic
582 order. In India, for instance, it is immediately recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

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 [171]

gain a foothold in the world of shops. For that, the countryman is willing, currently, to pay about twice the usual dowry-price. 369 443 571 582

And in his willing adherence to custom, stability is achieved. The relationship between class and class, like that in the countryside between kindred and kindred, attains some permanence of form. The bride carries social bonds with her; in this case she carries them upward and townward into the shops and pubs of metropolis.

Her brother, on the other hand, carries with him another social function, in his capacity of male. His place is that of a potential fatherhood in a line of patrilineal descent. He carries on a corporate name upon the land or shop. Where he cannot inherit, in such descent, a sure place among his fellows, he must win it. The man is the bread-winner who carves out a place for his line; round him the family must be grouped. The woman, on the other hand, is the uniting force within the grouping. In this dichotomization of social role between the sexes, the Irish town and the Irish countryside, like the Church to which they both subscribe, are agreed. Hypergamy takes its form in the agreement. Along the lines laid down by the social bonds of apprenticeship and hypergamous marriage, the world of the market-town and the rural hinterland are united; along the same lines the flow of the country-people townward moves.

Once again, then, we see how complete the in-

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369 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives
443 on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he
571 be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must
582 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

This order, one must not forget, is nothing
182 esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than
369 it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire
443 among the constituent human beings, both make
571 it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern
584 into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

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to cook, sew, keep house, and she hasn't a lot of grand ideas in her head that the town girls have. When she comes to town, she feels she's got on in the world; while the town girl will only be wanting more than her husband can give her, or she won't do her share."

The speaker was a townsman, born and bred, but one can see that he endorsed the system heartily. He was an older man who had made his adaptations to social life successfully.

For others, for those whom the life of the town has caught up and who have acquired 'grand ideas', as the last speaker called them, adaptation is more difficult. The town, as I have said, engenders its own near-urban values. These come to conflict with those which unite the shop world to its countryside. Thus ambition is born, which means a severance of old ties. The ties become thwarting chains, and here and there a young man, caught within the pulls of two incompatible forces, becomes a bitter and scornful rebel.

One such young man, who found himself swept back into the ways of the market-towns after a brief flight into larger horizons in Dublin, fought against the fate that closed him in. He tells his own story: "This town is very dull. I don't understand what brings you here. The trouble with everybody here is that they are all misfits and that they are all in jobs they loathe. Successful men give you good counsel: they tell you to work hard and forget your

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182 troubles. But that is because they are in occupations
369 which they like. There is something glamorous
443 about being a solicitor, and everybody comes to
571 you. I would like to have been one. There will be
584 opportunity here when the older men clear out.

"I went off and studied in Dublin for a long while. Then my father died and my mother was stricken with paralysis and I had to come back here and work behind the counter, which I loathe. There's no one else now but my sister. Most shopkeepers make out through their family trade; and the only thing for me to do now is to marry some rich woman in from the country and then all her friends will come in. If you want to get married here there is nothing in it at all but to look out for a country girl. If you don't want to make a fool of yourself and go in for politics, you have to depend on your friends and your wife's friends, and if you can, you've got to marry a girl from the country. Then she'll bring in all her people for miles round, with all their relatives and their married families, and they're the ones that will buy your flour and sugar and tea. You can't get on without them."

182 In this rebellious young man's lament, another
369 aspect of the life of the towns appears and takes its proper place. The social order which demands the maintenance of personal bonds between countryman and townsman carries with it the seeds of change as well. The young man I have just quoted is caught within the very wheels of this change. A

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182 has no part. New blood fills its old place along the
369 converging lines of shops and pubs which make up the market-town. The new blood succeeds by virtue of the same ties which originally brought success to the first immigrants from the countryside. It brings with it new bonds of friendship and kinship.

This is a continual movement, a flow along definite pathways in which human lives work out their courses. The country family 'on the land', as we know, buds off with each new generation upon the farm. With the dispersed children go those relationships of a familistic order which unite the human beings in time and space. In this movement ever renewed, yet ever the same, the market-town is caught. Its shops, its pubs, its business life, the whole economic function it performs, flows with this movement.

369
571 I have described this relation between the country and the town as though it had no other content than that of kinship bonds. This, of course, is a much too simple view. There are other pathways of success and there are other ties less intimate in nature. But one cannot understand these others till this first has been fully sketched out. For the bonds round kinship and friendship form the great all-pervading base to which all the others must be referred.

In this fact lies a new consideration. In retaining

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older custom and a more intense emotional and 369
purely social organization of life, Ireland may well 571
have preserved better than most nations of western civilization that unity of spirit which, underneath the surface of superficial strife, welds a nation into a single crucible. If the rationale of economic and social individualism with its attempted divorce between sentiment and logical self-interest seems lacking, the matter is no cause for lamentation or disdain. Who knows ultimately which is the better way? Each people seeks its own better union; unconsciously in social habit, consciously through religion, through politics, through detached and enlightened social thought. Either the conscious or the unconscious may be the more congenial, to nations as well as to individuals.

But danger lies in neglecting one entirely for the other. In the so-called Anglo-Saxon lands one feels that the unconscious organization of social habit has been neglected for the conscious. The logical has been too often mistaken for the ultimate. The all-powerful force of human sentiment has been neglected and too lightly regarded. We are prone to forget, with many an economist, that man not only does not, but cannot and will not, live by bread alone.

The social habit of rural Ireland entertains no such fallacy. In the light of this consideration, the rest of the adaptation of the countryman to his market-town acquires a depth of meaning which

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 lifts it far beyond the plane of the mere economics
571 of the exchange of goods and the distribution of rural and urban products.

369 For example, a great deal has been said and
571 written about the so-called 'credit system' of rural
452 Ireland. Much indignation has been wasted pro and con upon it. The term refers to the economics of retail distribution in the market-towns. The farmer is often chronically in debt to his shopkeeper. He must live upon credit from fair to fair, paying off a little of his debt from year to year with the price his cattle bring him, but seldom working himself entirely clear. Such a system of chronic indebtedness has analogues in other countries. In Ireland, many commissions have investigated it and many attempts to break its hold have been made. The shopkeeper has been called, sometimes, alas, with cause, a usurer, a 'gombeen-man'. His power as creditor is very great. Where, as here, the farmer-debtor is dependent for his shop-bought foods and farm materials upon the shop, and where no other source of credit exists, that power is, of course, well open to abuse. This is the old problem of equity, the rights of creditor and debtor, and the controls each may put upon the other. It interests us here because in it the countryman's way of life is deeply involved. Let us see what peculiar content his social order gives it.

Any credit system exists, the economist will tell

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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you, upon a peculiar state of mind in which expectancies are roughly balanced. He calls it, sometimes, 'confidence'. Should all the debts be called in and all outstanding obligations mature at a single blow, the system would perforce come to an end. If 'confidence' fails, he will tell you, and a movement to dissolve the fiscal ties grows swift and strong, a crash results. The world has had bitter experience of this fact in recent years.

Yet how little we know even today of that brittle and momentous thing we name 'confidence'! We have the word, but we have not yet decided to what factors it refers. Today we grope toward it in this way and that and wrangle endlessly about the means of creating and restoring it.

In the credit system of the market-towns of rural Ireland, the problem of confidence is a simpler one. Townsmen and countrymen have not yet reached the sophistication of using the word; but they are immediately concerned with the factors to which it refers in their special case. Those factors lie immediately before them, in the social habit which they both follow.

Thus, once the shop has established trade in the creation of the bonds uniting it to the countryside: through the 'family trade' of brothers, fathers, cousins, country wives and country 'prentice boys, that trade must be retained.

The shop must have a permanent expectancy of clientele; the farmer a permanent expectancy of

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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receiving goods and shop articles necessary in the economy by which the farm family lives. The farmer cannot shop about, paying cash; his monetary income comes only periodically: largely in the spring and autumn fairs, to a lesser extent in weekly produce markets. Nor can the shopkeeper depend upon the casual passers-by, for their number is infinitely small. The needs of countryside and town are thus coincident.

In the countryside, I must repeat it once again, kinship and friendship, practically synonymous, provide the base for this coincidence. They make the same provision for the life of the town. They are reciprocal in nature; a favour given is a favour received. A good turn done, the 'friendly thing', creates the expectancy of reciprocity. On such a base a social relationship, reciprocal and permanent, is built.

So the permanence that each party demands is the permanence of social obligation. The credit system of the market-towns rests upon this base. In such a situation, the debt the farmer owes, like the fortune he gives in marriage, is a tangible monetary symbol of alliance and mutual obligation. To owe money is not merely to accept a convenience, for either townsman or countryman. To owe money is to accept a social obligation.

One can call this disposition the 'confidence' upon which the credit system of rural Ireland rests. Naturally, the relationship is not perfectly sym-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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metrical. The shopkeeper, as creditor, has the whip-hand. As an urbanite, he has the superior status. Yet he is no less under obligation to his debtor.

Habit and sentiment weave amusing identifications round this social pattern. For example, to pay off a debt entirely is perforce to dissolve the relationship. It is to destroy the mutuality of expectations. If one's debt is paid off one loses, not only a customer, but a friend, quite literally. The ordinary small farmer would pay off all his debt only in a fit of anger. By so doing he would mean to break the tie completely and irrevocably. Consequently, he remains upon the shopkeeper's books indefinitely, paying off periodically bit by bit, but never working himself entirely clear. Should he do so, the shopkeeper would be fully warned. He would know his customer was about to carry his trade elsewhere, and to enter a new tie better suited to his desires.

But the shopkeeper is obligated, too, in his turn. He may not dun his customer heedlessly. To do so is to cast doubt upon the customer's ability or willingness, not to pay a money debt but to meet his obligation. It is in fact to call into question the social status which is his. If the shopkeeper errs in this nice tact, the debt is paid forthwith perhaps, but the relationship is broken.

Nor can he press even a just claim too far. He may often have to carry credit endlessly, in hope of better days. This is part of his obligation, and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 boycott awaits the offender or the usurper. To
571 carry the claim to court is of no avail; one cannot
452 these days foreclose on land in rural Ireland. Per-
626 haps eventually he might win the farmer's holding
578 from him, in satisfaction of his claim. But one must remember the farmer's 'name is on the land'. A whole kindred and the whole community with which the kindred is related become his bitter and dangerous enemies. In a familistic world that enmity endures for life and longer, even into the next generation.

If even then, in spite of this, the shopkeeper persists and grinds his debtor down, still another sanction closes in upon him. The countryman will make his last resort to age-old folk-belief. He will tell you, for instance, that the shopkeeper or publican dies out because the curses of men and women and the tears and prayers of broken families have wreaked a sure retribution. What better way indeed to express, in traditional mystical and quasi-religious terms, the force of social censure? The countryside can bring its whole traditional scheme of attitudes to bear upon the offender; it can justify the forces of social and personal action in the realm of the awesome mysteries of belief before which all must bow.

369 Thus one can see why, in folk-belief, money it-
571 self is evil. It is one of those mysterious powers
452 which can bring, as though of its own awful and
626 incomprehensible efficacy, both good and evil in its

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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train. The finder of the 'crock of gold' is stricken down in the flush of discovery; the townsman who rises too high and waxes too arrogant in his wealth may soon be stricken, too, and his family and its shop or public-house seems mysteriously to melt away.

Nor is this the only instance in which the social order overlies the economic form of debt and shapes it to its purposes. The debt, like the dowry, can and does become a measure of status, too. It is a sign of one's ability to support that network of social obligation which gives one's self and one's family a place in social life. In this fact, too, lies 'confidence'. The debt descends with the land or the shop from father to son. It moves onward with the progression of the generations. Many a small farmer pays off bit by bit the family debt of a parent or relative. Social obligation, in which pride and sentiment are involved, long outlives the statute of limitations. In this disposition, religion, sentiment and custom coincide. Many a shopkeeper till recently has assisted a boy or girl to emigrate, in the sure knowledge that his or her remittances would eventually reach his money-till.

In the days of the British, a Royal Commission found itself mystified by this so-called 'honesty'. The debt to the landlord, in the form of rent, seemed to them an honest debt. Yet the countryman, often as not, scorned honesty in that direction; though he might bend his last efforts in what

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
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626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
668 public life who has contributed so much to humour
443 and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XVIII

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

THE Irish countryman enjoys nothing so much as 'a gathering' of people, and when he is forced to leave his native land he does not willingly settle down away from large urban centres. At home a crowd goes to his head like poteen. The daily routine of life on an isolated farm presents him with few opportunities for seeing people from outside his immediate neighbourhood, and on fine summer evenings his favourite pastime is to throw himself against a roadside ditch with a knot of companions and watch the passers-by. That the remarkably large attendances at rural churches and chapels owe something to the social needs of a scattered population is suggested by the phrase, applied to someone who arrives late at chapel: 'he missed the mass but hit the gathering'—he had something worth while for his trouble. In the Irish laws the freeman's rights of assembly were carefully defined: there were assemblies for transacting legal business (the oireacht), and others for commerce and games (the aenach) which came to be called fairs. With the coming of Christianity the traditional gatherings at sacred sites were transmuted into patterns (pardons), at which the new religion was quickened by practices of the elder faiths. In fact most gatherings served more than one purpose. The secret assemblies of Roman Catholics at 'mass rocks' in penal days no doubt also provided opportunities for social and commercial dealings, and the 'sacrament Sabbaths' of Presbyterian Ulster were great gatherings having something of the nature of fairs. Tents and booths were erected for the occasion, and indeed they were popularly known as 'holy fairs'.

Although the fair has lost something of its former significance in Northern Ireland, thanks to Government marketing schemes

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XIX

FIXED FESTIVALS

THE great fairs, patterns and pilgrimages were attended by people who travelled considerable distances and included strange folk from the outside world, 'beyond the mountain men'. It was partly for this reason that they earned a reputation for lawlessness, especially where 'the gatherings' had outlived their original purpose and their real business had become subordinate to pleasure. A Nottingham Goose Fair or a Marlborough Mop Fair may still be conducted with propriety, but in Ireland they would probably have become Donnybrooks. Having little opportunity for regular social contacts as compared with the villagers of the ploughlands, a pastoral people makes the most of the periodic pauses in the cycle of the seasons.

For climatic reasons these great gatherings have been largely confined to the summer half-year between May and November. The winter festivals have been more local, involving the family and the townland rather than rival groups from different parishes and baronies. The feast days of both St. Briget and St. Patrick fall in early spring and their associations are more intimate and have more local colour than those of the saints of high summer such as St. John the Baptist. But the entire round of the year is liberally sprinkled with days of festival, and if we begin with St. Briget it is not merely because she was Irish-born but because her feast marks the beginning of the pastoral year. The blessed Bridie was a cowherd and is therefore associated with cattle and with such flowers as the dandelion—the Plant of Bride—yielding a milky juice which was believed to nourish the young lambs in spring. St. Briget's Feast was very popular and many superstitious practices, more or less

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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624 more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held,
875 because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are
[793] apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the
[554] headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches.
[591] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

895 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of
593 their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him
895 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity
896 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in
[861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This
[123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents
[171] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority senti-
[829] ment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and
[123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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> conditions appraised. . . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and . . boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191).

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king.

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces a work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

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521 203 • 571 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [612] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [638] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [639] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other 589 Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of 162 the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented. 354 593 178

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street. 342 353 [788] [574]

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists). 571 602 609 [572] 835 602 582 602 609

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias. 428 611

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag. [113] [601]

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574 273 Women [562] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused [514] them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 [535] [562] The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, [857] while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 [123] 574 273 [533] [535] Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 [576] Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [351] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. 574 535 The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 123 [577] 574 579 178 [738] My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

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293 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
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533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
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293 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
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275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
293 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
293 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk
[576] who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the free stout brought me in."

433
434
226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip,
674 ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power,* says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

> The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented. 354 593 178

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street. 342 353 [788] [574]

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists). 571 602 609 [572] • 835 602 582 602 609

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias. 428 611

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag. [113] [601]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family: 155 593

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.... An Irish male... beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous.... all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications.... Irish resistance to role identification... was seen as... having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters.... [The]... basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt... (Opler and Singer 1956:15–18). [154] [582] [589]

Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present: 155 572 154

> *Grania* is... a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas... Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work.... it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman... would be forever excluded... such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines... are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all.... A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar... to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145–146). 155 572 154 562

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

When the authors first made their way into the small farm communities which they came to know best, they were plunged into a mass of observation which, without knowledge of the valuations of the community upon age, had no interpretation. Night after night, the day's work done, their new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, "gambles," "hooleys," sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive events were age-old survivals of ancient custom, like the bonfires of St. John's Eve. Others were nearly as ancient celebrations of crucial events in individual and family life, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occasional and less specialized gatherings, and others wore a very modern dress: a turkey raffle and a dance round a gramophone. 517 573

But our interest was soon caught by distinctions of participation, rather than those of kind. The people of the village participated variously. Different groups met more or less regularly at specific houses.

For instance, the "old fellows" went out on *cuaird*, as they called their visiting to join one another. They followed a deep-set regular habit. As they phrased it, "a man would feel lonely if he didn't go out on *cuaird*." In most communities, they usually convened at a particular house. Often their gatherings bore particular names. In one North Clare community, Rynamona by name, the old men's meeting was known as the *Dáil*. Before the Free State, it had been the "parliament." The name is a jocular one, of course, but it is expressive of the participants' evaluation of themselves nonetheless. 517 573 887

The young men know the *Dáil* as the "old men's house." They stay away. One of the cronies of Rynamona put the

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517 matter most clearly when he described the old men's gather-
573 ing from its members' point of view:

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> It wouldn't suit [for the young men to come]. They gather in at Jack Roche's and they laugh and joke and play cards. They talk about the next gamble and the next dance, and that is all they know. It is a lot of codology [nonsense, buncombe]. It is only the old men, the men with families and a responsibility on them, they are the ones that come. And in our own way we learn a great deal. If you advance any argument, you must be prepared to defend it from all attack, and John Roche, "the public prosecutor," will ask you questions till he is sure it is right or wrong. Then some evening we have real discussions in which we settle problems. Other times we discuss farming. It wouldn't suit for the young men to come in, but, when we get old and they get married, then they will gather and talk about this and that. That is the way it always has been and that is the way it always will be. There is never any bad blood between any of the village, and one reason is because we talk things over.

This statement on the old men's gathering imparts a deeper reality to what appears to be merely a companionable pastime of the old men. The evening *cuaird* of the old men takes on an institutional flavor. It is a clique, of course, a tightly knit group of males of similar interests and similar status, giving rise to nicknames within itself which, as in the case here mentioned of the public prosecutor, express the members' position in the internal arrangement of the group. It has a definite meeting place and meeting time. It excludes those of dissimilar traits; in this instance, the young men. But it is a clique which operates within a traditional setting: "That is the way it always has been and is the way it always will be."

It is a clique, too, which performs a function for a larger group than those who make it up. In this case it is claimed for it, at least, that it prevents bad blood in the local community.

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CHAPTER X

The Old in the Community[1]

LET us examine the life of a local community in the rural "West of Ireland" and put to the test of observation the claim that the clique of evening visitors among the old men of the community plays a decisive role in its social life. Perhaps Rynamona already mentioned affords the best example. Yet any other community the authors knew well would afford as good a one. In all of them the old men met in much the same way and, in spite of different names and persons, acted in much the same way to form a similar old men's clique. By taking the example of Rynamona, we can throw the generalities of this conduct into relief. 573 887

Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another in the "good land" of rough limestone outcrops stretching back from the sea into the glaciated lakes strewn north in County Clare. To reach Rynamona is no easy task, even for horse and car. The main road north out of Corrofin to Kilfenora passes through Kilnaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel, and a post office are all that remains of an antiquity preserved to the eye only in the ninth-century church and graveyard. 361 491

There, beside the graveyard, a side road leads off toward

[1] Much of the material in this chapter is taken from *The Irish Countryman* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1936), by Conrad M. Arensberg. It is used here by permission of the publishers.

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621 487 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

887 573 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village, is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

> The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

888 542 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

888 573 521 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

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573 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through
521 him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps
[592] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty. As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a
[484 great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider
446] experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

573 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran
521 seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which allow all to take part.

573 O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no
521 real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and,
589 though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone. Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road, breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

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Roche, "the public prosecutor," sits by the fire, opposite 573
the old man O'Donoghue. He is a man of sixty or so, with 521
a wife of the same age and an unmarried son and daughter, [592]
both in their thirties, still at home. His is a good farm and
he is still active upon it. He, too, has a reputation for shrewdness, but his role here is a different one. Roche demands "why?" He makes one bring out one's best arguments, and pursues a point to its final conclusion. There his interest stops and he makes way for O'Donoghue, who sums up the agreement of the group. Roche earns his title well. He tests out the other's mettle. No one is offended at his "prosecution," for it clears the issue and brings out the right and the wrong upon which all can agree and O'Donoghue phrase judgment.

Behind them, a little further into the middle of the room 573
away from the hearth, sits Cullinan, the "senator." Cullinan 592
lives across the lake, where he works a middling farm with a wife and five children. Several of the sons are nearing twenty-five and Cullinan himself is well past fifty.

The "senator" is a weighty man. His part in the *cuaird* 573
is in character. Cullinan is the one of them most fertile in 521
cogent and fitting anecdotal illustrations. In a scheme of references, such as this, to past events and traditional precedents, Cullinan's many memories of persons and happenings, slowly and accurately phrased, give weight to the evening discussions.

Still further behind them, and often perched upon settle 573
or table in the kitchen, are two other habitués. The elder 592
of them is Noonan, a man of sixty, who lives in the village with a wife a little younger than himself and two boys and a girl, out of a once numerous progeny, still at home. The children are in their twenties and help him in his still active conduct of the farm.

Privately at least, the others think Noonan a bit of a fool. 573
He is as good a farmer as any of them, it is true, and knows 521

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573 521 how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not a weighty one. Noonan is a very voluble man. He can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with many opinions on all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the public prosecutor's relentless logic, but it helps too to keep the conversation alive and active. Consequently, though he has no important title, he is a member of long standing.

573 592 The younger of the two sitting in back is John Quin. His position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quin lives on a good farm just outside the village. He married-in there, taking over the [582] place of a dead husband. But, true to the country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister, who, in turn, married Quin. But both women are still living in the house. The elder sister has become the "old woman" and is treated more like a parent than a contemporary. It is Quin and his wife, the younger sister, who work the farm and who regard it as their own. Their claim is a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune: they are childless at fifty.

573 561 Quin is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old one, as the countryside reckons age status. His place in the evening gathering reflects this intermediate state. In the two years in which the authors had the old men's house at Rynamona under observation, Quin was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but which showed itself well in his behavior.

573 561 521 When we first came, Quin divided his evenings between the old men's house and card playing in several of the young men's gathering places. At one of these, to be described shortly, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had "weight," and he conducted himself importantly and showed a serious demeanor and a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. In the

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old men's house he looked a different person. He was often 573
silent or contented himself with answering questions. 561
When he did speak, it was to "act the playboy," in the 521
country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to dance, and to break into playful banter. Sometimes his lively efforts were successful. Sometimes they were not. But the playboy role did not last long. A year later he was a constant visitor, and he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, the "judge," passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy," he said, "but there's a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. As the 573
evidence of their behavior shows, they are a closely knit 887
clique with a code of conduct and valuation of their own, one strong enough to enforce a specific personality on each of the members in accord with his role in the group.

To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group in Rynamona, we must examine it in relation to the rest of the community. These seven are not the only old men in the community. Roche, the prosecutor, had an elder brother with a good farm across the lake on the line between Rynamona and the next townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door. He is too feeble to come to the *cuaird* house, and his faculties are failing. His sons, still young men, work the farm.

But there is another as well, a more active old man. Moroney is perhaps the strongest farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best also, and he has the best-stocked farm. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, have a son [592]
and daughter nearing thirty still at home. The four work energetically and the household is prosperous. Each year Moroney stands for them in the "station," and the family's

573 dues to the church are greater than any other's in Rynamona. Such prosperity draws him a bit apart from the villagers, and occasionally in political discussions he will identify himself with the Cosgrave party, as a man with a "stake in the country."

All this draws Moroney away from his fellows. Some say there was an incident long ago when Moroney was young, but most have forgotten it. Nevertheless, there is a breach between Moroney and the rest of the older men of the village. He never attends at the old men's house and, when he goes on *cuaird*, it is usually to the house of Oscair, whom we shall describe presently.

Furthermore, just as not all the old men of Rynamona came to O'Donoghue's, so are their households unrepresented there. Unlike the cases of the elder Roche and Moroney, it is because in these other cases the men of the house are not eligible in age.

573 Two houses in the village send no man to the *cuaird* house. One of these is very poor and is a case of the "incomplete farm family" already discussed in a prior section. The only man there is a lad of twenty-five or so, who lives alone with his mother. Another of these is the case of O'Brien, a man of forty, married and with a family of children, the eldest of whom, a boy, is fifteen. O'Brien is a man of uncertain temper, given to gusts of anger. He is a moody man who doesn't do much or go out much. When he does, it is to the young men's gambles. Like John Quin, already described, he is in a transitional state, but he does nothing to hasten his advance.

Among the households beyond the village, one, that of Mackey, is likewise in transition. But with Mackey the process is hardly begun. His parents are dead, but he has only recently married and sent off a brother to the towns. He still visits with the young men.

The same holds for another family of Roches. The man

[i.e., farms worked by spinsters, bachelors, widows and widowers - Analyst]

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of the house is only a few years married. His brother is as yet unprovided for and still lives with him. Both frequent young men's meetings. 573

The old men's house includes all the adult farm fathers of complete families whose children have just succeeded or are nearly ready to succeed them, with two exceptions. It brings in, too, two others, O'Loughlin, the silent old bachelor, and John Quin, whose status among the old age group is still provisional. The interviews already quoted have given an insight into the function this meeting performs for the community. The behavior of the group points again to the same function. This is the seat of judgment in the community. It is the clearing house of information and the court of opinion in which the decisions of the community are reached and the traditional knowledge of the peasantry applied and disseminated. From these meetings the men return home to their wives and sons, and the formulations they have reached spread thus through the community of individuals who share life in Rynamona. 573 621 208 887

Let us examine the type of topic that comes up in the old men's meetings. If we want to assure ourselves that the meeting has the influence its members ascribe to it, a glance at the conversation that takes place there should bear them out.

The old men's meeting is an informal gathering. It arises in response to the community's interests and its immemorial custom. Naturally, different personalities and personal idiosyncrasies make the gathering slightly different in each rural community. Occasionally it may be absent altogether for various causes, such as the dying-off of a central member of the group. Often there is a sort of interregnum between one generation of old men and the next. This was the case in one Clare community studied by the authors. There the old men had lost the central figure of their group and, diminished in number, spent most of their time in enfeebled 573 887

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887 loneliness at home. Two new cliques of slightly younger "old men" were competing for central position in the community.

573 But despite such variation from community to commu-
521 nity, the old men's *cuairds* act very similarly. The topics
208 brought up and debated upon are much the same from year
626 to year and place to place. First in importance, however,
are those concerning agriculture. Times of sowing, reaping,
887 harvesting are debated; the merits of various seeds are disputed; shop and fair prices are compared; and the community's trade often affected thus. The "old men" are conservative farmers, as are most peasants, and an innovation must be thoroughly tested before it wins, here in the evening *cuaird*, the approval of the community. Traditional methods of farming receive their strongest support here in the web of legend, proverb, and reference to the past that the speakers weave around them.

Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and determined by the old men's agreement. In late years, this has come to be called "politics." It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for example, it was felt that it was in the interest of all that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. The old men's *cuaird* debated the matter and agreed upon support of Fianna Fail, the De Valera party, an allegiance it held for the years 1927 to the time of the authors' visits. Even O'Halloran, whose private views leaned in another direction, begged the authors that no word of his political heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of his neighbors. "I wouldn't want them to think I wasn't with them," he said.

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Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of 573 ●
its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And 521
that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the com- 208
munity will adopt toward the person or condition appraised. 626
Even the priest finds each of his acts and even his sermons 887
discussed and debated in the evening *cuaird*, and he "gets a
name" according to the decision reached. In Rynamona an
incident occurred which shows the type of slow appraisal
the community makes and the speed with which, once its
judgment is formed, it puts its decision into action. Not far
away in the same general region, a gentlewoman moved
back after years of absence to a small manor house which
the family had had for many years. She was unknown to the
farmers and, despite her friendly interest in them, seemed
to be unable to establish contact with them. This distressed [674]
her, the more that her kindness seemed ineffectual in put-
ting an end to the inevitable petty pilfering which she knew
she must expect. One day, about a year later, her horse
bolted on the country road. An expert horsewoman, she
soon brought him into control. Thereafter her luck with
the country people changed. Her exploit had made the
rounds of the local community and had won approval for
her. The old men agreed she was a grand lady and had a
great hand with horses. And the petty pilfering sank to
manageable proportions.

The community regulates its internal affairs through the
cuaird as well. It is here public opinion is formulated.
There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the
incidents arising from day to day. The local community
has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has
the power of gossip and in action the power which in the
critical days of the land agitation won itself an international
name: the boycott. 573

In a later section the sanctions the local community 626
exercises will be discussed. It is sufficient here to point out 208
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573 626 208 887 this role of the *cuaird*. An example from another community than Rynamona will throw the type of action it can take into relief.

An "incomplete family" affords the example. It was made up of an old woman and her thirty-year-old son. Theirs was a poor farm, and ordinarily they would have been an object of commiseration. But they were not. In fact, they were a constant annoyance. The son was generally regarded as bad and lazy. He neglected his farm and exhibited an obstinate disregard of village opinion in which his mother abetted him. The result was, naturally, that their house was shunned and he went nowhere to *cuaird*.

But no crisis arose till the episode of the pig. One autumn the son brought home a large Irish white sow. The sow was more nimble than most of her kind, and neither the mother nor the son took any pains to keep her at home. She wandered through the village at will and soon devastated many a cabbage patch. The village took alarm, and the more so that the sow might well prove dangerous to young children. There were angry words among the women, and the men for once backed them up. In the *cuaird* it was hinted that the sow might be found dead one morning. But before such an event could take place, the son took warning and sold the pig. "Public pressure," if you will, forced his decision and resolved the conflict, but it left him as low as ever in the village's esteem.

573 887 538 And lastly, the *cuaird* is the seat of traditional lore and entertainment. Its members are the repositories of folklore and legend. And the official belief of the countryside finds its expression and its reaffirmation in the discussion of events and the recounting of histories and incidents. In communities still at least partly Irish-speaking, such as Luogh, most of its members are *seanachaidhthe*, storytellers in the traditional vein. And it is among them that traditional repertories of a saga, folk tale, song, and legend still get an

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audience. The point of importance here is that it is among 887
the old people that folk myth and folk belief are preserved 538
and expressed for the community.

If we are to examine in full rural behavior based upon 571
age and its connection with the old adult clique whose 517
function in the community we are assessing, we must offer
some contrast with the behavior of other age groups.

We have already mentioned that the old men's house in Rynamona was not the only seat of visiting after the day's work, and that the entertainment provided there was merely one instance of many gatherings taking place almost nightly, at least through the winter, in rural communities. In the statements given by older men about the meeting of the young men we have seen something of the manner in which other pursuits than those of the men's house are regarded.

Indeed in all the communities which came under the authors' notice the young men were as ardent evening visitors as were the older men. In Rynamona they were no less so.

There they gathered in most often at the house of Roche, the "prosecutor." They did this from long habit, as did their elders. But they had no larger justification for their doing so. They went because "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys." But there were marked differences in their meeting. There was no central clique so closely integrated as that in O'Donoghue's house. There were pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together.

A greater difference lay in their complete lack of concern
with the affairs of the community. One could get them to [521]
talk only about their own plans or the trials of their own
kind and age. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition. The skills upon which those taking part in the meetings prided themselves and for which

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571 tral clique, is not without wider interest. The young men
517 are more numerous, and they group themselves together as much as do the old. But it is upon a different basis. It is a synthesis in a looser, more widely inclusive, gathering which
[573] unites smaller cliques of brothers, friends, and boon companions. The gamble is only one of many entertainments
571 they provide themselves. Equally frequently they hold a
517 dance. The country dance is undergoing change in rural
535 Ireland today, but it is still much as it was in the last century, although it may not enliven the country districts as often as it did. Irish square dances, jigs, and flings, most of them variations of sixteenth-century European dance forms, are most common, although some Gaelic-speaking districts preserve an older tradition.

621 The country dance belongs to the young people. It differs from the gamble, from the standpoint of participants, in
535 that it unites both sexes. In most communities it is an
517 affair in which the whole community takes part, the old people as onlookers, the young and the still spry among the older ones as performers. In late years the more formal "all night" dance, an organized dance for which admission is charged and from which the older people are usually absent, has made its appearance. Like the gamble it draws from a wider area.

517 But there is a good deal of the spontaneous dancing which springs up wherever the young people of the community
535 gather even today. The young men and women learn the skills required and value them. There are elaborate codes of etiquette round them and a wealth of proverbs and jocular superstitions. But here again, unlike the behavior followed in the old men's house, these conducts have little larger purpose than uniting the scattered cliques of young people. They are recreations. They are ends in themselves. They are good times that pass the time.

517 The gamble and the dance do not, of course, exhaust the
571 list. The young people have other activities, games, sports,

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182 554 621 888 through rural life under normal circumstances is not toward a greater and greater prominence in the activities of the young men's group. Rather, there comes a time when one must break away altogether. One faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new kind of behavior. Growing old brings many more changes than the physiological.

888 573 885 554 The case of the newcomer, John Quin, already described, shows the necessary changes. In Rynamona it is brought out very clearly in the clique to which he first belonged and to which we have referred at various times, calling it once the "intermediate."

[551] The clique we name so met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, more commonly known as Oscair (the Hercules of Irish saga) for his physical strength. Oscair was a rural carpenter with only a very small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good singer, a jokester, and a repository of folk tale, though he was not much past forty. He lived just at the edge of the slope leading from Kilnaboy Commons down to Rynamona. The townland was what would be called in urban sociology an "interstitial area." It was higher, rougher, and more craggy than Rynamona and Kilnaboy, lying between them. Its inhabitants were descendants of people evicted from round about who had squatted there. Most of them were "died out and left," and the place was always poor. It acted as a sort of outlying fringe of Rynamona.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged thirty-five to sixty. Just as their ages were intermediate between fully old and fully young, so was their habit here. They very seldom played cards. Talk was the order of the day, enlivened by Oscair's humor and ballads. A few of them spoke of the affairs of the village with some weight. The rest did not. Those who came were as follows:

a. Young Mackey, from the village, the man recently married, still too young for the old men's house.

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b. Moroney, the sixty-year-old, "strongest" (richest) farmer of the village. One of the few who spoke with weight.
c. Young Roche, son of the very old man, still unmarried but entirely in charge of the farm he would soon inherit.
d. O'Sullivan, a herdsman, from near-by, who was a stranger in the community but had won himself a place, despite his being a landless man of sixty-five, by acting as the local veterinarian. He spoke, too, with weight.
e. John Quin, already described, who spoke here with weight.
f. Two forty-year-old Pilkington brothers, unmarried, from the Commons, very small farmers, most often silent.
g. Oscair himself, whose role was to entertain.

Of these men it can be seen that only Mackey, Moroney, and John Quin could make the transition to full farm-owning, farm-father status of old men. Mackey had years to pass before he could so do. His eldest child was very young and he himself not long in possession of his farm. John Quin, in a somewhat anomalous position, could and did move onward. In doing so, as we described, he felt it necessary to break away completely from this group. This he did, with the result that the group, itself never stable, fell to pieces. Moroney, as we remember, had a disagreement with the villagers and would not attend the old men's gatherings.

What was it then that brought these men together? The authors could get no answer from the men themselves, other than their amusement with Oscair and, in Moroney's case, a guardedly phrased dislike of the villagers. Yet, through observation and interview in the community, it became clear that they were all passing through a similar transition. Oscair's visitors were not a stable clique, nor too faithful in attendance. Both young Roche and young Mackey were still going occasionally to the young men's meeting at the other Roche's house, but both felt too great responsibilities for gambling and cards. John Quin gambled heartily enough

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but was more and more impatient with the "playboys" of young fellows. Old Moroney was gruff and lonely. The others were neighbors of Oscair's and, being poor or landless men, felt awkward going elsewhere. O'Sullivan could visit as he pleased, for, as the local "vet," his word carried weight, but, always a stranger in sentiment, he felt most at home here.

The intermediate clique was a product of similarity of interests, in contrast to the interests of other better organized groups. Its members were in some way or another a little different from the ordinary old or young of Rynamona. Some of them were remote topographically, but not all. Some were without full community status, but not all, and some of a transitional age.

Oscair's house was thus a sort of catchall for those whose position in Rynamona was not clearly defined. It was intermediate between the clearly defined groups, and for the small farmers, such as Mackey, Roche, and Quin, was a halfway stage in their advance from the status of young men to that of old.

The progression of which this is the halfway stage is an upward one, metaphorically speaking. It leads no longer to a greater role as "playboy" but toward full family and community status. It leads to a new behavior and new personal desires, more highly valued. One's discarded status and one's discarded behavior fall away into lesser esteem. In terms of this progression we can understand the attitude of the old men on the behavior of the young ones. It is a transitory, impermanent, unimportant thing. It is a "codology." "When they grow older," one old man said, "and become married, they will meet just as we do."

What shows itself in Oscair's clique is a transitional state. For a moment were gathered here those who could move upward, like John Quin. Gradually, they could attain full status. Oscair's hearth for them was a roadside resting place.

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With these intermediates were gathered the representatives of another anomalous social place. Both Oscair and O'Sullivan, the "vet," were important figures in the community. Their occupations and their skills won them respect and admiration over the countryside. O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were "landless" men. They could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism, they were condemned to celibacy. Neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place for them except, as Oscair's behavior showed, as playboys and entertainers. So they too must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

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sional and less specialized gatherings; and others 561
again wore a very modern dress: a turkey raffle and 517
a dance round a gramophone.

But our interest was soon caught by distinctions of participation, rather than those of kind. The personalities of the 'village' participated variously, different groups met more or less regularly at specific houses.

For instance, the 'old fellows' went out on 517
cuaird, as they called their visiting, to join one 561
another. They followed a deep-set regular habit. 573
As they phrased it "a man would feel lonely if he didn't go out on *cuaird*".

In most communities they usually convened at a particular house. Often their gatherings bore particular names. In one North Clare community, Rynamona by name, the old men's meeting was known as the 'Dáil'. Before the Free State, it had been the 'parliament'. The name is a jocular one, of course, but as we shall see, it is expressive of the participants' evaluation of themselves, none the less.

The young men know the 'Dáil' as the 'old men's house'; they stay away. One of the cronies of Rynamona put the matter most clearly, when he described the old men's gathering from its members' point of view:

"It wouldn't suit [for the young men to come]," he said. "They gather in at Jack Roche's and they laugh and joke and play cards; they talk about the

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561 next gamble and the next dance, and that is all they
577 know. It is a lot of codology [he means, nonsense,
● 573 buncombe]. It is only the old men, the men with families and a responsibility on them, they are the ones that come. And in our own way we learn a great deal. If you advance any argument you must be prepared to defend it from all attack, and John Roche, 'the public prosecutor', will ask you questions till he is sure it is right or wrong. Then some evening we have real discussions in which we settle problems. Other times we discuss farming. It wouldn't suit for the young men to come in, but when we get old and they get married, then they will gather just as we do and talk about this and that. That is the way it always has been and that is the way it always will be. There is never any bad blood between any of the village, and one reason is because we talk things over."

The statement, then, imparts a deeper reality to what appears at first sight to be merely a companionable pastime of the older men. This meeting of theirs is a clique, a tightly knit group of males of similar status and interests. It is strong enough and binding enough to bestow nicknames upon its members as in the case of the 'public prosecutor'. But it is a clique, too, which operates within a traditional setting. It has a function to perform for others than the cronies who make it up. The speaker claims for it at least that it prevented bad blood in the village.

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In such a clique, the student of social behaviour can see fairly closely the interplay of social dispositions and individual character. Concrete cases have a way of disposing of controversies by transporting the issue to a new plane. In the study of such a case as this, as we shall see, the old question whether the individual affects the society or the society moulds the individual—a long-standing scholastic debate among sociologists—can be pushed into well-merited oblivion. For the answer is that both interpretations are correct; and that neither is at all penetrating. The issue is free to move to a new plane: the relations between behaviours and the patterning of sentiment and conduct.

In the old men's clique of Rynamona we have our concrete instance. Similar old men's gatherings from any other of the rural communities my colleagues and I knew would serve as well. They are remarkably similar even to duplicating nicknames. For as our informant explains: "That is the way it always was and that is the way it always will be". A social system endures in past and future and exists in space, its changes are changes of this spatial and temporal world, its constancies are likewise bound to earth and time.

Rynamona, then, shall be our present instant in time and space. Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another of the 'good land'

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have met in Luogh. None has ten cows, and only 361
one has a single beast. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard wall. In the case of the villagers, the fields are scattered about and behind the haggards in irregular patterns. Besides these home fields, most of Rynamona has two or three acres in additions carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Re- 621
duplicated bonds of kinship unite all the house- 602
holds. "We are all related one way or another", they say. 'Cooring' is the usual form of co-operation. The village holds itself responsible amid grumbles for maintaining the borheen which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays, the County Council pays the sons who break [499]
stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of paths criss-crosses the fields in all directions.

Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the 573
village, is the 'old men's house'. Mrs. Ruin, a neighbour, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village. "The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?"

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● 573 But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the day's work shortest. Soon after supper they begin to gather. Perhaps this or that *habitué* may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here" and take their accustomed places.

O'Donoghue has the place of honour. He sits in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer very active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his wife. The nephew and nephew's wife have no children, but must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm; the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man's judgment in most matters.

O'Donoghue is the 'judge' in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place round his hearth he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man. All must defer to his opinions. Usually he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again, a slow, measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing. Only occasionally does he add a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdote as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes; when he does, his theme is the 'old times'.

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the

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central position in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through him. He takes the proffered verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And, when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "so it is" that settles the point for good. 573

O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the 'drawer down' in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a mature man of fifty or more. He owns a farm a little better perhaps than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearly thirty. As he has no parents left alive, O'Halloran is the 'old man' and the 'man of the house'. But, individually, he is more. "He has a great head on him", they say. He has had a somewhat wider experience; once he travelled over the roads of southern Ireland as a salesman. Yet, though he is a little sceptical occasionally, and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are de Valera men today, almost to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

His title of 'drawer down' is an apt one. O'Halloran seeks information. Most frequently it is he who brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them, he is most at home in finding apt illustrations in definite, precisely told anecdotes. But his chief role is to 'draw the talk down' to common levels of interest.

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O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or more, and though he comes here, he has little to say. He is silent nearly all the time. When he breaks silence it is only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin, the bachelor, lives alone, is very poor, and having no family, can neither 'coor' nor work his land to best advantage. Occasionally he works with the 'boys' at stone-breaking on the roads. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

Roche, the 'public prosecutor', sits in the chair before the hearth opposite the old man O'Donoghue. He is a man of sixty. He has a wife and an unmarried son and daughter, both in their thirties, still at home. His is a good farm, and he is still active upon it. Roche also has a reputation for shrewdness, but his role here is a different one. Roche demands 'why', he forces one to parade one's best arguments, he pursues a point relentlessly to its final conclusion. There his interest stops, and he makes way for O'Donoghue, who sums up the agreement of the group.

Roche earns his title well; he tests one's mettle. No one takes offence at his 'prosecution'. It clears the issue and brings out the right and the wrong upon which all can agree and O'Donoghue phrase judgment.

Behind these two, a little further into the middle of the room, sits Cullinan, the 'senator'. Cullinan

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lives across the lake. He works a middling farm with his wife and five children. Several of the sons are nearing twenty-five, and Cullinan himself is well past fifty. 573

The 'senator' is a 'weighty' man. His part here is in character. Cullinan is the one of them most fertile in cogent and fitting anecdotal illustration. In a scheme, such as this, of reference to past event and traditional precedent, Cullinan's memory of persons and happenings, slowly and accurately, even pompously phrased, gives 'weight' to the evening's discussions.

Still further behind them, and often perched upon settle or table in this kitchen, are two other *habitués*. The elder of them is Ruin, a man of sixty, who lives in the village with a wife considerably younger than himself, and two boys and a girl, out of a once more numerous progeny, still at home. The children are in their twenties, and help him in his still active conduct of the farm.

Privately, at least, the others think Ruin 'a bit of a fool'. He is as good a farmer as any of them, it is true, and knows how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not a weighty one. Ruin is a very voluble man; he can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with a deal of opinion upon all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the 'public prosecutor's' relentless logic. Nevertheless, it helps to keep the conversation alive and active. Conse-

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573 quently, though he has no important title, Ruin is a member of long standing.

The younger of the two men sitting in back, of which Ruin is one, is John Quinn. His position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quinn works a good farm just beyond the village. He married-in there, taking over the place of a dead husband. But, true to country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister who in turn married Quinn. Both women are still living in the house. But the elder sister has become the 'old woman' and is treated more like a parent than like a contemporary. It is Quinn and his wife who work the farm and regard it as their own. Their claim would be a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune; they are childless, at fifty.

Quinn is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old one, as the countryside reckons age status. And his place in the evening gathering reflects this indeterminate state. In the two years in which my colleagues and I had Rynamona under observation, Quinn was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but one which showed itself well in his behaviour.

When we first came, Quinn divided his evenings between the old men's house and card-playing in several of the young men's gathering places. At one of these, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had

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'weight'. He showed in his serious manner a little 573 disdain for frivolous pursuits.

In the old men's house, however, he looked a different figure. He was often silent, or contented himself with answering questions. When he did speak, it was to 'act the playboy', in the country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent, and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to break into playful banter. Sometimes his efforts were successful, sometimes they were not.

But Quinn's playboy role did not last long. A year later he was an *habitué* of the old men's *cuaird*; he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, 'the judge', passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy", he said, "but he has a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. One can see how closely knit a clique they are. They have code and values of their own, strong enough to enforce specific personalities on each of the members, in accordance with the role of each in the group.

But there is an external side to this clique as 571 well. To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group 573 in Rynamona, one must know its place in the community. These seven men, for instance, are not the only old men in Rynamona. Roche the 'public prosecutor' has a brother, with a good farm,

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571 across the line between Rynamona and the next
573 townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door; he is too feeble. His sons, still 'young men', work the farm.

But there is also another, and more active, old fellow. Moroney is, perhaps, the 'strongest' farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best in the townland, and his farm the best stocked. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, work it with the help of a son and daughter, both nearing thirty. Each year, Moroney stands for them all at the 'station' and the family's dues to the Church are greater than any other's in Rynamona. Such prosperity draws Moroney a bit apart from the villagers. Occasionally, in discussions of politics, he will identify himself with the Cosgrave party, as a man with a 'stake in the country'.

All this sets Moroney a bit apart. Some say there was an incident long ago when Moroney was young; but most have forgotten it. Nevertheless, the breach is there. Moroney never attends at the old men's house.

Furthermore, just as not all the old men of Rynamona come to O'Donoghue's, so are there also households which have no representative there. With them, however, the transition we saw in John Quinn's case has scarcely begun. Two examples will show you the case. O'Brien is a man of forty. He is married, his parents are dead, his

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children none older than fifteen. He is eligible in age and status, perhaps, but he does nothing to hasten the transition from young man to old. For O'Brien is a man of moody temper, given to gusts of anger. He goes out very little at all; when he does it is to the young men's gambles.

With Mackey, the process is hardly begun. Mackey's parents are dead, and the farm is his. But Mackey is only very recently married, and he sent off a brother to the towns only a year or so ago. He, too, still visits with the young men.

Therefore, with these easily accounted-for exceptions, the old men's house includes all the farm-fathers of complete families. It is made up of those who are married and in the words already quoted 'have a responsibility on them'. Informal as it is, it nevertheless unites these men of full status within the community and unites them, too, in such a way as to crystallize and canalize the influence their status gives them.

For this clique is built round discussion and decision, as its nicknames show us, because discussion and decision are its role for the community at large. In the persons of these old men, in their deliberation, the integration of the community is accomplished.

The old man's superior status in the family and in the community cannot be separated from his half of a mutuality which unites him to his subordinates, and gives him, as it were, his *noblesse*

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571 *oblige*. In the same way, the old men's clique
573 operates.

For here in the old men's house, the countryman's way of life exerts its strongest sway upon him. It is the 'parliament' of his fellows. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. Agriculture, perhaps, comes first. Times of sowing, reaping and harvesting are debated. Prices are compared, innovations tested. Traditional methods receive their strongest support here, in the web of legend, proverb and reference to the past the speakers throw round them.

573 Much of the community's relation to the outer
621 world takes its form here, determined in the old
66 men's argument and agreement. In late years this has come to be called 'politics'. Petitions for relief road work, for expansion of agricultural prize schemes, most, in fact, of the business of the County Council and its committees originates on the side of local community in the discussions of the old men's *cuaird*. It is here, too, that the community reaches unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for instance, it is felt that the interest of all demands that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. Consequently, even O'Halloran, the 'drawer down', whose private views leaned in a different direction from those of the villagers, begged that no word of his heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of Rynamona. "I wouldn't want

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them to think I wasn't with them", he put it. No 573
wonder, then, that the political allegiances of whole 621
countrysides are constant factors in Irish politics. [66]

The community reaches agreement upon its 621
internal affairs, too, through the old men's dis- 573
cussions. It is in just this type of activity that one 626
can at last put one's finger upon that nebulous force among men: public opinion. That force is not implemented; it is merely the power of gossip and censure; only in critical days, as in the time of land agitation, can it rise to action, as a last resort, and win itself an international name: the boycott. But it is none the less powerful.

But, in rural Ireland, the group through which 573
this power flows serves another function which 888
cannot be disassociated from its role as the seat of 538
public opinion. The members of the old men's *cuaird* are the living repositories of tradition. In communities, such as Luogh, where the Irish language lingers on, many of them are *seanachaidhthe* or story-tellers. Among them the ancient repertories of legend, saga and folk-tale still find an audience. That the exponents of fairy-lore have always been, and are still, old men and old women, is no social accident. For the pattern of local life retains its continuity and preserves what it can of its conformity with the past through them.

But what of the young men, those who have not 884
attained full status? They do not attend at the old 573
men's house; they take no part in the deliberations

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884 there. From their own point of vantage, they scorn
573 their elders, as much as their subordinate position allows. And they, too, walk out on *cuaird* upon the roads night after night and gather-in at this house and that.

In Rynamona, they were as ardent evening visitors as the older men. But their habit showed a great difference. There was no single central clique so closely knit as that of the old men's house. They had no larger justification, as the old men had, for their meetings. They went because, frankly, "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys". They formed pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together. A still greater difference marked these groups. One rarely heard them talk of the affairs of the community. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition and precedent. They spoke most often of their own plans, and the trials of their own age and kind. The skills upon which the cliques prided themselves and from which they drew their nicknames were of other sorts. Not even farming occupied a large share of their conversation, keen as their rivalry often was when work was going on.

In Rynamona the most frequent centre for the gatherings of the young men was the house of Roche, 'the public prosecutor', whose eldest son, a keen farmer about thirty, was something of a leader

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among them. Most of the young men between 884
twenty-five and thirty-five met there. Through the 573
winter months they met nearly every night, and played the usual games of the countryside, 'nap' and 'forty-five', often far into the wee hours. Other groups through the community met like these men and followed like pursuits with an equal zest.

At times, a custom somewhat more organized, 884
the 'gamble', unites them all. It often brings in 525
other young men across the lines separating com- 573
munity from community. As often as once a week, a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household in its turn throws open its doors to the card-players. Admission, usually a shilling, goes to defraying the expense of a supper and tea for all and goes toward the prize.

For the gamble is one of many sporting events. The prize may be a turkey, or two geese, even a young pig or calf. Elaborate conventions govern the play, and the winner may count himself a proud man. To be known in the countryside, far and wide, as a 'great gambler' is a coveted distinction proving shrewdness and skill. The country dance 535
is another such event, and still enlivens the country- 884
side in the winter months, bringing the younger 573
members of the communities together and providing honour for the distinguished. For 'a great dancer' is as widely known. In summer, hurley, the 526
national game, has the same effect; and nowadays, 884
through the nation-wide organization of the Gaelic 573

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526 Athletic Association, the 'great hurler' may win his
573 way to the admiration of all Ireland.
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But at home, in the local community, the young
884 men remain what they are. Their distinction lifts
573 them not at all from their status. Their skills are nothing more than proficiencies. The pursuits of the subordinate generation are no more than 'good times' that 'pass the time'. For, through no plan or design, but merely through the force of the social organization of values and behaviours, the activities of the young men's cliques exert no larger role within the community.

For the young men's cliques do not primarily serve to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. The difference is structural. The activities of the young men unite them from farm to farm, from clique to clique, even from one community to the next. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive integration than that the old men's clique performs, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble, dance or hurley match are much greater.

888 For the old men's clique unites, in its controlling
573 voice, both young and old. The old men's clique unites the old men in terms of their common individual positions as recipients of the respect of the community, and as heads, owners and commanders of their family corporations. It expresses for the community the same subordination of the young men that is their lot within their families.

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In such a case, the course of the countryman's 573 path through rural life is plainly charted. In the 554 normal event, the circle of his friends and contemporaries must change and progress. There comes a time when either he or they must break away altogether. Distinction in the world of the young men's pursuits is at best but a nine days' or nine years' wonder. He faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new sort of behaviour. Just as he moves to a new social place at marriage, he must move onward among the cliques of his fellows in the community.

The case of John Quinn in Rynamona, the newcomer to the old men's house, can bear re-examination in this light. Quinn first belonged to a group which met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, better known as Oscair, the Hercules of Irish saga, for his great strength. Oscair was the centre of the group. He was a rural carpenter, with only a small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good workman, a good singer, a gay-hearted jokester, and something of a repository of folk-tale. He was between forty-five and fifty.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged from thirty-five to sixty. Like their age, their habit was intermediate between old and young. Talk was the order of the day; they seldom played cards. Oscair's song and ballad enlivened the gathering.

Some of the men who came here spoke with

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573 554 'weight'; they tried to turn the talk into a discussion of the affairs of the community. Old Moroney, the 'strongest' farmer of Rynamona, who would not go to the old men's house, came here. John Quinn came. Before he began his entrance into the old men's house, which we have described, he spoke here with 'weight'. He gambled willingly enough, but he showed himself more and more impatient with the 'playboys' of young fellows. Another man, O'Sullivan, a herdsman of sixty-five and the local 'vet', also came. The rest were younger men, farmer's sons.

But this was a very unstable group. When finally John Quinn moved onward it fell to pieces, and Oscair's hearth was left untenanted each night.

For what shows itself here is a transitional state; the members of the group were in some way or another a little off the centres of their kind in Rynamona. For a moment were gathered here those who could move upward, like John Quinn. Gradually, they could attain full status, they could move into the social place which centres family headship, the land, a line of descent, and the old man's role within the community. Oscair's hearth for them was a roadside resting-place.

With these intermediates were gathered the representatives of another anomalous social place. Both Oscair and O'Sullivan 'the vet' were important figures in the community; their occupations and their skills won them respect and admiration

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over the countryside. At least, O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were 'landless' men; they could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism they were condemned to celibacy; neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place there for them, except as Oscair's behaviour showed, as 'playboys' and entertainers. So they, too, must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

For once again the examination of rural life leads one perforce to concepts of structural balance. The organization of the community takes its form in the social behaviour of cliques among the countrypeople. That behaviour cannot be disassociated from the characteristic alignment of sentiment and interests which at once separates and reintegrates the generations. And the alignment itself in its turn relates the countrymen to one another in the community, upon the basis of relative age, with the familistic nexus in which are balanced prestige, command, the land and the continuities of descent. That to which the countryman is attached is a social order, as Sir Horace Plunkett alone among the commentators on the Irish scene could see. And a social order is an active living growth whose embrace soon gathers in the whole of life.

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
669 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement.... It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting.... Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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> conditions appraised. . . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and . . . boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191).

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king.

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchai*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [574] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [561] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the [562] storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scealai* or *seanchai* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents. 512 221 462

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year. 132 527 221

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew. 221 527 574 621

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with 221 132 241 221 521

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 tionship of their parents. Thus there is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. He shares the masculine ultimate control of farm and household. If she remains on the farm after her brother's marriage, she must look to him for her dowry.

The country people have a good deal to say about the strength of this bond. Deep-rooted in the years of common subordination and common association, it survives the re- [574] moval of the sister to another house and farm. It means much visiting and a close relationship with the coming children. The country people marvel that a young child [604] may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family name are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.

589 That the complete family is the complete unit of life both 592 social and economic to the small farmer is admirably illustrated by the incomplete families of the countryside. By the term "incomplete" the authors indicate those many small farms which are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, and widows.

589 In such farms, control is exercised by the person owning 592 the farm. A widow is usually helped out by a male rela- 562 tive, brother, nephew, or son. Here again the male devotes himself to the tasks which in ordinary circumstances would fall to the father in a full family unit. The control over expenditure and the disposal of farm goods rests, however, with the woman. But even then the bargaining in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair would be delegated by her to her helping relative. In one instance which came to the authors' notice a young widow called

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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man called upon his brother-in-law to lend him his son to help drive his cattle to the fair. In a case similar to the last, a violent quarrel arose because an uncle, who "had right" to lend a son badly needed in doing some fence work, refused to do so. And in the same scale of value a family which did not attend the funeral of a relative was subjected to great criticism for being "unfriendly." 476 577 602 476 577 602

In fact, failure to fulfill the pattern of conduct demanded by extended family obligations leads often to punitive action on the part of the aggrieved party. Near R— a small farmer, who neglected his garden and forced his father-in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support, was finally beaten up one night in his own house by the irate in-laws. Ordinarily, of course, failure to fulfill such obligations either in directly social situations or in agricultural coöperation does not lead to such violent conflict, but rather to an estrangement. The niggardly "friend," especially the one who refuses or fails to return an obligation, is held up to general condemnation, not only by his kindred but by the whole community. The position of a small farmer near but not in Luogh was the result of such failure. He was regarded by all his neighbors and kindred as a "miser" and a "Jew" and on several occasions was accused of petty thefts by them, which perpetuated the breach. As a result he lived as a recluse, refusing even to visit others; in return he was not greeted by his "friends." 578 626

The obligations of this sort[2] extend to visiting and to the hospitality which the Irish countryman deems so great a virtue. "A sup of tea" and such food as eggs and bread is 574 602

[2] The word *cóir* (a fit and traditional right or duty) corresponds almost exactly with the full range of the small farmer's obligations, as we have seen. It well reflects the farmer's habit in two other uses. The phrase *cóir mhaith* means good food. When the speaker says, *tá cóir mhaith agam ansud* (there's a good feed for me there), he refers not so much to the food itself as to the social situation in which he finds himself well provided for. And the term of address, *duine cóir* (worthy fellow), indicates that "worthiness" springs from a fit observance of one's obligations.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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574 602 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local community gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

574 602 273 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market. "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 594 182 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy as a family situation in which economic effort, individual and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

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Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same 885
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 886
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those differentiations of status which are given formal and explicit recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re- 561
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 574
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 576
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the 517
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit behind them round the room on other chairs or on the window seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the principal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrangement shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving the center of the stage to the old men, and the children stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, 437
they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is 443
recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a [555]
good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation.

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He 443
is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the 868
fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers.

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the 521
importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days 443
ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance.

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he 443
has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his 484
stock together, gives them any special attention they may 574
need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks 602
and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities.

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the 443
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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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476 keen over the dead. This conduct is reciprocal;
602 'friendliness' implies mutual obligation. One countryman gave me as his reason for going to the funeral of a second cousin: "I have right to go, they always come over to this side". When in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister took over the child, she did the 'friendly' thing that she 'had right to do'. In the very same terms a man 'made bold' upon his brother-in-law to lend him a son to help drive cattle to the fair, as the brother-in-law 'had right' to do.

In fact, failure to fulfil the pattern of conduct demanded by the obligations of 'friendliness' may bring punitive action on the part of the aggrieved kindred. We have seen this before in the story of the 'old man's curse' in the first lecture. In a part of Clare, not many miles from Luogh, a small farmer neglected his garden and forced his father-
[578] in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support. He was finally beaten up one night in his own house by his irate in-laws. Ordinarily, perhaps
[626] failure leads rather to an estrangement; it holds one up to general condemnation by the whole community. Persistence in failure leads to social death; the recluse is greeted by no one, not even his 'friends'.

● 574 But fulfilment entrenches one in social life. The
602 obligations extend to visiting and hospitality, the countryman's great virtue. 'A sup of tea' is 'put down before' the countryman who is travelling to

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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town, or to the fair, or only making the evening 602
cuaird or visit. The obligations pattern good- 574
fellowship and holiday, for friends treat one another when they meet near a pub. In fact one countryman complained to me that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his friends, but others seem to manage their obligations better.

And lastly, the obligations of kinship are a bulwark against disaster. The Johnny mentioned above sent the cow down when it was badly needed. If you have read the book from the Blaskets called *The Islandman*, you remember that the Islandman [582]
might not marry the girl of his choice because she was a mainlander and the friends she would bring him would be too far away from Great Blasket when he needed aid. In the system of reciprocal duties which surround kinship, much of the strength of the countryside against external destruction and internal disaster is explained.

We have followed the countryman a long way. 000
In watching him at his work, we have begun to recognize the outlines of the way of life which is his. He is a subsistence farmer, as we now call the peasant, but he is more. He is part of an intricate social system which patterns his life along definite channels, which brings him rewards, gives him incentives, and deals its own punishments. The traditional patterns of old custom have a place in this system; folklore surrounds it as in the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Relative age thus makes a difference in status 561
in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values, and lastly, it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland. One finds it wherever one meets the countrymen together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of the broad age groups.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellows, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons—those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great; in the community at large it is little less so. A [574] farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat, his sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake- [764] house to honour the dead, the places by the fire go to the old adult 'men' and 'women'; the 'boys and girls' must group themselves behind. They

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE: FIRESIDE AND FOOD.

As we step inside an old Irish cottage, over a threshold of 352 stone slabs or a pattern of small cobble-stones, we tread on a 342 hard mud floor in which we may see, towards the hearth, the "pot hole" where the large iron pot rests when it is lifted off the fire. I have noticed similar holes in the mud floor, with the remains of the round-bottomed pottery vessel inside, near the excavated hearths of Irish houses nearly 40 centuries old. In paved kitchens a block of wood set flush with the flags [354] answers the same purpose or there may be an iron pot rest (Fig. 25). The area surrounding the hearth is always paved, and the fire itself, in the old style, is at floor level. We shall be invited to take a seat at the fire, for this is the place of honour given to strangers: the fireside is both the focus of 352 family life and the symbol of hospitality. The seat may be a [574] stone slab built into the fireplace, so that the social tradition is incorporated in the architecture of the hearth, or it may be a roughly made but sturdy chair, bench or "creepie" (Fig. 26). The low stool not only brings one near fire-level, but keeps one's head out of the peat smoke hanging in the open rafters, while its three legs find firm footing on the uneven floor. Other low stools are made of solid turf or wood—a section of a tree-trunk —or again of coiled straw-rope, while chairs are often made with seats of sugán or of rush. Comfortable high-backed chairs fashioned out of straw in the manner of a

Fig. 25.

Fig. 26.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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372 county. Originally they were intended, it is thought, to keep
796 the sun, now about to decline, on its course, but they also
221 played a part in the blessing of crops and animals. In Donegal until lately a burning turf was flung into each patch of growing corn. These and the other relics recorded are of course, not peculiar to Ireland: they are part of the common heritage of the ancient civilization of Eurasia. There is evidence that this festival was important also in fishing communities. The inhabitants of the Galway Claddagh, for instance, marched through the town in procession on St. John's Eve, "gaily dressed and miming, to the accompaniment of music; they collected money for merrymaking from the townspeople, and spent the evening dancing, drinking, and lighting bonfires in their own quarters."

796 The Lammas festival is nowadays particularly associated
221 with fairs, and the first of August, is referred to in Gaelic as "Lewy's Fair." But other traces of old custom survive. My colleague Dr. O'Brien tells me that in mid-Down, on the first Sunday in August, crowds of countryfolk assemble, accompanied by fiddlers, at the great prehistoric hill-top cairn on Slieve Croob. The "Criocan Thorn," in the heart of Slieve Bloom, is the scene of similar assemblies on the last Sunday in July. Here they dance to the pipes, and bilberries are eaten: the day is called "Fraochán (bilberry) Sunday."

So the year goes on its course to the culminating festival of All Hallows. We have touched on one of its former functions, the reunion of the family after the summer booleying, in Chapter 6. It is an occasion of reunion still: all Irish
● [574] folk like to be at home on this date, which is in some ways the most significant of the year, for it corresponds with what was once the New Year. Fires were lighted to mark the end of the
[372] period of growth and to herald the new year. (In England the ceremonies have become assimilated to the Guy Fawkes celebrations on November 5th). As at Beltane, the Halloween fire used long ago to supply light to rekindle the domestic fire, which now serves as a substitute in the many games of divination played by the young at this time. Hazel-nuts, apples and other fruits of the autumn take an important place

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

181 sources, my informants being those who are brought into close contact with the everyday life of the people. So far as it goes it is believed to be accurate. No attempt has been made to do otherwise than describe the actual state of the case, and while the faults of the people are not extenuated, yet any circumstances which may explain these are given as far as possible, and their good qualities are believed to be stated without exaggeration.

181 To the casual visitor the people, on acquaintance, are decidedly attractive; in the outlying parts of the district, it is true, they are at 609 first rather suspicious of strangers, but after a short time are very obliging and communicative, ready to show anything of interest in their neighbourhood, and hospitable to the best of their power. The natives of both the islands at Inishkea, are very hospitable and kindly to strangers, of whom they are, however, rather distrustful, [574] a visitor being welcomed into their houses, and entertained with the best they can give. With each other they seem in all parts of the district to be much given to chaff and joking of a more or less practical nature, and their sense of the ridiculous seems to be rather keen. In times of trouble or distress they are very kind, generous with what they have, and helpful to one another.

181 They are fond of music, dancing, and bright colours, and more than one song-maker in their own tongue, the Irish, has been a native 517 of this district; amongst these was the celebrated Dick Barrett, 53 several of whose productions have been collected and published. In common with most of the people of our rural districts, there do not seem to be many traces of artistic taste, and a native art is conspicious by its absence. One or two instances of attempted decoration were observed in Inishkea, none on the mainland.

181 On the whole, though cases of dishonesty and sharp practice in bargaining occur, they are honest in their dealings with one another. 577 As is often the case in remote districts, the people of one locality are sometimes on strained relations with those of another; thus there exists a certain amount of jealousy and distrust between the natives of the two Inishkeas, while the people of the mainland do not readily amalgamate with those of either island.

181 As regards intelligence, they are extremely sharp and shrewd, and seem rather fond of argumentation. There is but little crime, 691 with the exception of illicit distillation and drunkenness, but the people are very litigious, going to law with each other about slight trespasses and similar matters. This tendency is not by any means of recent origin, but has been remarked on by several writers. Maxwell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional 352
width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed— the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the [171] Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart 462
and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, 372
the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' [539] The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is [574] invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can [787] give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which ancestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1] [769]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Thorough-bed.'[1] The Poor Law Commissioners reported in 1836 that nearly three-quarters of the 10,000 inhabitants of one parish were sleeping on the floor, though they add that this was because the bedsteads had been burnt to boil potatoes. Even after 1850 the custom of sleeping 'in stradogue' as it was called, was not unknown in the west.[2] In Ulster, too, though the master and mistress of the house would have slept in their wall-bed, the young children, where there was only one room, must have slept on the floor. Long custom as well as wretched poverty explains the statement made by Patrick McKye of a Donegal parish in 1837: 'Nor can many of them afford a second bed, but whole families of sons and daughters of mature age indiscriminately lie together . . . and all in the bare buff.'[3] The wall-bed was a wooden frame built into the outshot which has been described earlier. It had its own wooden covering or tester to give protection from roof drips, and originally, to judge by the Hebridean black-houses, the covering was of sods. In Donegal, bog timber supplied the bed frame, and the mattress was made of wattles or of ropes twisted from the root fibres of bog-fir. That fir-rope mattresses were once standard fittings is shown by the specification for the beds to be supplied to the Belfast Charitable Association in 1774.[4] But some of the wall-beds in parts of Connacht were until recently mere stone benches covered with dried bracken. Half-ruined examples may be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island.

In the house with fireside partition the kitchen bed often takes the form of a settle-bed, a seat by day and a bed by night. The front and seat are in one piece, hinged at the bottom so that the whole can be folded down to make a low bed (Fig. 18). In bachelor homes, where the settle-bed has been retained, I have been offered a seat on one which had been closed a moment before by bundling in the mattress and bedclothes. Placed against one of the side walls near the fire, the settle-bed

[1] J. C. Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, 2nd ed. (1818), Appendix 1, 196–204.
[2] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 192.
[3] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 16.
[4] R. W. M. Strain, *The Ulster Medical Journal*, 22 (1953), 37.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XXI

OLD PISHROGUES

AMONG the serious nineteenth-century students of Irish folk-life a Dublin surgeon, who is perhaps better known as the father of Oscar Wilde, deserves special mention. Sir William Wilde was not only a frequent contributor to the learned journals but he found time to compile a pioneer catalogue of the Irish antiquities now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. His very active life spanned the Great Famine, and the monumental report on the *Tables of Death* which appeared as Vol. I of Part 5 of the Census of 1851 was largely his work. In it he dwells on the shattering effects of those tragic years, 1845–47, on the immemorial customs and natural poetry of the Irish peasants: 'The closest ties of kinship were dissolved; the most ancient and long-cherished usages of the people were disregarded; the once proverbial gaiety and lightheartedness of the peasant people seemed to have vanished completely, and village merriment or marriage festival was no longer heard or seen throughout the regions desolated by the intensity and extent of the famine.'[1] Another observer noted that the traditions of hospitality were weakened greatly and that padlocks made their first appearance at this time.[2]

Wilde observed that the coming of the railway at about the same period was a contributory factor in the change because it worked to a time-table—more or less—and involved an artificial division of the day instead of an observance of the signs of nature changing with the seasons. Time was related to social activity and had different values at various seasons of the year.

[1] *Census of Ireland* (1851), I, Part 5 (1956), 242.
[2] A. M. Sullivan, *The New Ireland* (1877), 65.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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COLLECTANEA.

A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE (*continued from p.* 60).

XII. *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds.*

IT is unlucky to see the new moon through glass; to throw dust or slops out of a house on New Year's Day, as you throw away with them all the good luck of the year; to throw dust or slops towards a neighbouring "fort";[1] to see one magpie, or a "weazel" (stoat), without saluting it by bowing or taking off your hat; to go out of a house where they are churning without "putting your hand to the churn," *i.e.* giving a few strokes with the churn "dash," so that you will not "take" the butter; and to take fire out of a house,—so that, if you light a pipe indoors, it should be smoked out before leaving. Iron and pins,—except crooked pins with the points towards you,—should be picked up, and the first thrown over the left shoulder. Rub your hand on wood if it itches or after a boastful speech or speaking too confidently of the future; in east Clare you touch wood twice, with the phrase, "Good word (*or* time) be it spoken," after an imprudent expression.[2] You should bow to the new moon. Turn your money for luck after seeing the new moon. On visiting a friend in a new house, you should give some present, however small. In east Clare some persons are careful to throw a hen or other fowl that has died of disease over the fence on to their neighbour's land, to remove the ill-luck from their own poultry.[3] Others will not wash eggs offered for sale, as it stops

[1] So Dr. Macnamara and others.
[2] "Scratch it in wood, and it will come good," says a rhyme.
[3] Practised near Tulla, and resulting in some cases in great ill-will.

777 [825] [574] [578] [p. 224]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimneaigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan.

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31] 585 796 626

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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> conditions appraised. . . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191). 573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [815] [629]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately. 628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list. 181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it 521 203 571 [574] [512]

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521 203 591 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [539] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 589 162 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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582 589 581 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few 562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the [154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [513] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that 584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently 173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love 584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, [208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the 584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his 584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The 674 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleamhnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleamhnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of 343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of 621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

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Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

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796 527 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is [574] to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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796 at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [368] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [674] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

764 Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

764 When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [654] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

764 The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 198 of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families involved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchai*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [574] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalai* or *seanchai* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semicircle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings. 535 178 [874]

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers. 535 [175] [177] [179] [184]

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality. [874]

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women 574 63 574 342 343 362 674 273 [888] [272] [343] [542]

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• 574 273 Women [562] [514] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 [535] [562] [857] The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 [123] 574 273 [533] [535] Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 [576] Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [351] 574 535 Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 123 [577] 574 579 178 [738] My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, 121
and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized [626] by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, [114] and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble sav- [181] ages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every 831* opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its 626 victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind [609] fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at [167] the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous [574] announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case. 831* 626

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities [562] of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem [167] the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples [584] who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

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[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the [839] apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case) in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

"Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6). In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

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Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same 885
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 886
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age
do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of
their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on
the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which
mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which
betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those dif-
ferentiations of status which are given formal and explicit
recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of
daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers
themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re- 561
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 574
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 576
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by 517
right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit be-
hind them round the room on other chairs or on the window
seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the prin-
cipal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrange-
ment shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old
men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to
sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter
in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the
old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger
men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving
the center of the stage to the old men, and the children
stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men
have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the
divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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For the young people do not agree with their 521
elders on the score of their own shortcomings. They 561
do not express these attitudes. They have a good 888
deal to say, on the other hand, among themselves from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them; and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be swept aside with some such sweeping condemnation as 'old fool' and 'old blatherer'. Like the son I quoted in the last lecture, who listened patiently to his father, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations in which youth and strength outweigh age and ripe experience.

Yet within a system of values in which the old 561
represent the nexus of kinship and bear honour 888
within the community, the young people do not 576
see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the old people. In the non-verbal behaviour of daily conduct, deference is uppermost. This fact sobers their group's egocentricity. In their position there is a necessary balance between subordination and compensatory vauntings and distastes. If you remember Synge's *Playboy*, you remember how reality broke in upon the playboy when the community saw his father still very much alive.

So, within this framework the young men can 561
recognize themselves as a distinct group—an age 888
grade, to use technical language. They have their

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the interests of the community, before priest, 561
schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman and govern- 571
ment official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel.

The relation extends in fact to very small matters 276
indeed. The better cup of tea, the bigger piece of 561
bread, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of 576
tobacco, go to the older men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe round among one's intimates and guests, for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man; he must content himself with an occasional 'fag'. When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells: "During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door I said to her—she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. Let the young bucks go, says I, they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly. She looked at me and says, Frank, are you serious? I am, faith, says

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

V 276 561 576 I; call back the old man. He was just a few paces down the road. She did, and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough."

561 517 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among small farmers. Without them the flavour of rural life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the continual round of informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. For the country-people have their entertainments, like their more sophisticated urban contemporaries. The student of society cannot afford to dismiss them as inconsequential. They are often important controls of human activity.

When my colleagues and I first made our way into the rural communities we were to come to know best, we were plunged into a mass of observations which seemed to have no interpretation. Night after night, their day's work done, our new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, gambles, sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive gatherings were age-old customs like the bonfires of St. John's Eve; others celebrated crucial events, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occa-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the small farmers as being a 'cut' below themselves; consequently, his untidiness is a byword among them. One version of the story goes, in synopsis, as follows:

"Many families moved into a herdsman's place, but they were all chased out of it. Finally, one family moved in, cleaned up the house, and a 'paving path' round it. A little old woman visits the wife, borrows a cooking-pot, and is similarly well treated. In gratitude she explains that the woman of the house and her husband will always prosper and never be molested, because they alone of all the families had cleaned up the place where 'they' walk."

In this way the values of daily life are projected into and reinforced by the supernatural world. The same state of affairs holds good even in the convention of social intercourse. The vocabulary of the countryman is full of homely pieties. On entering a house the proper greeting is "God bless all here". On coming upon another at work, one says, "God bless the work". Similarly, "God spare you the health" is 'put on' anyone who 'coors' with you. Any praise of person, child, or animal is accompanied with a "God bless it"; any mention of unpleasantness or danger is followed with some such homily as "God bless the mark", and so on. If one omits such pieties, one is sure to rouse resentment in the listeners. For one must remember that emotion supports these conventions. But the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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152 resentment springs from other causes, too. These
576 formulae are known to the folklorist as 'protective
626 formulae'. He means by that that they have reference to the lesser faith as well as to the greater that the countryman holds.

751 If you ask the countryman why he uses such
terms, he will give you several answers. First, "You
152 have right to do it, because you owe it to God",
576 and then, second, "It will bring good luck, it will
626 keep 'them' away". For the countryman, both answers are true. The phrases are both acts of pious invocation and protective devices warding off evil. Their omission is really dangerous. It puts the person or thing so neglected in jeopardy; the negligent speaker is open to suspicion of an evil intent. Thus there are many stories which attribute disease, disaster and death to such omissions. In this way again, persons and things of value to the countryman are brought into the scope of his beliefs and attitudes. The forces which affect them are brought into a shape in which he can understand them and in which he can cope with them.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this process
776 is to be found in the way in which the goods by which the countryman lives are brought into his belief. The good people affect the household and all its goods. They 'take' those things which one values, round which one's interest and sentiments, as a member of the farm-working family, are centred. One Galway woman phrased this idea to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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000 sea monsters, with animals both wild and tame, with red hair, physical deformities and so on, nor the wealth of folk-lore and folk tales which the Irish Folklore Commission is rescuing from every barony in the country. A beginning has been made in the immense task of sorting out, mapping and interpreting these beliefs. One would like to know the distribution of many persistent customs and practices, for this is the best guide to their origin and significance. How far south, for instance, does the typical Ulster greeting on 576 the road extend—that slow silent half-negative sideways nod of the head? Some day it may be possible, as I wrote five years ago, "to interpret the subtle differences between one region and another which make up the attractive variety of rural Ireland and provide sources of friendly rivalry and rich humour."[1]

824

A Fairy Thorn

[1] *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, July 1935.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and [182] indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most [521] activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently [676] in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, [127] and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year ... Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year ... Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of [137] islands and remote coastal districts ... profit from periodic salvage hauls ... The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds ... (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, [815] several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess [207] barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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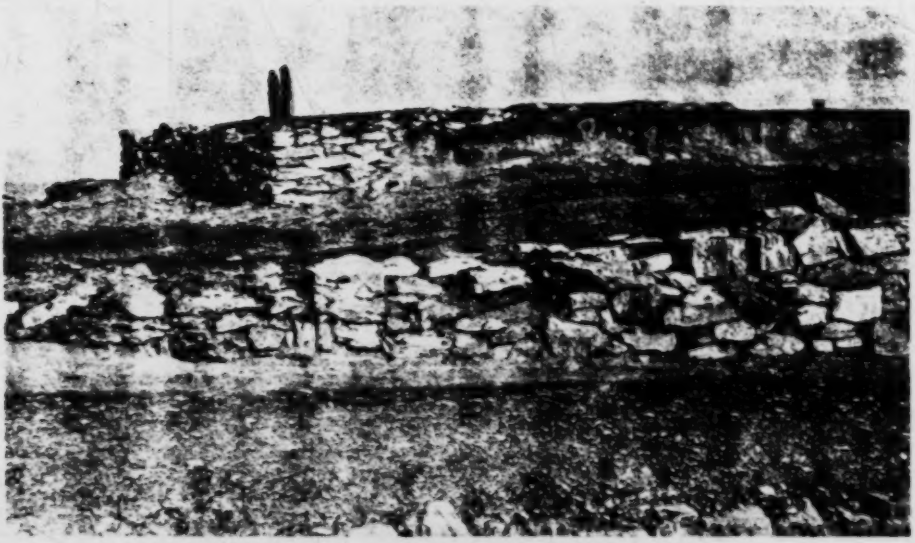

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [626] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on November 1st.

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574 273 Women [562] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused [514] them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen [535] and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the [562] cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, [857] while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist [123] with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while 574 stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or 273 one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the [533] activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts [535] prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other [576] men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [354] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the 574 table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The 535 remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, 123 when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out [577] between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the 574 same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, 579 "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at 178 [738]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey, only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

275 The best singers will be
293 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[167] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
293 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[578] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
293 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
293 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the
[576] free stout brought me in."

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626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
154 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor 241 who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. 602 Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, [572] of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." [609] One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary 476 coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word 196 is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the 602 added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the 476 farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help 577 friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; 602 they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 ties of act, sentiment, and obligation which make up family
● 577 relationships.

602 That he is doing so becomes evident when we find that the habitual, obligatorily performed acts toward extended relatives are similarly described, where the context is definitely not economic nor connected with agricultural labor. Thus in the townland where we examined agricultural coöperation there takes place the same lending of a boy or girl and the giving of a hand in aid at such festivals of social and family life as weddings, christenings, wakes, and funerals.

This aid is felt to be the same category. Thus one farmer speaking of another, his second cousin, could say:

> He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. When the children were little and our cow died on us, Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth twelve pounds to us and didn't want anything for it.

And in more general terms, another farmer could explain:

> Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you. They lend you a horse with the hay or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to know if they can help when somebody dies with you.

476 Thus it is part of the "friendliness" for the relatives to
577 make up and serve the food at wakes and weddings, to
602 dig the grave for the dead, and to keen (wail) over the dead.
764 The obligatory character and something of the reciprocities involved in such behavior are well expressed by one countryman who gave as his reason for going to a funeral (at a time when he was needed at home for farm work): "I have right to go (to the funeral of a second cousin); they always come over to this side."

476 Likewise, when in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister
577 took over the child, she was praised for doing the "friendly"
602 thing which she "had right" to do. In the very same terms a

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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man called upon his brother-in-law to lend him his son to 476
help drive his cattle to the fair. In a case similar to the last, 577
a violent quarrel arose because an uncle, who "had right" 602
to lend a son badly needed in doing some fence work, refused to do so. And in the same scale of value a family 476
which did not attend the funeral of a relative was subjected 577
to great criticism for being "unfriendly." 602

In fact, failure to fulfill the pattern of conduct demanded 578
by extended family obligations leads often to punitive action 626
on the part of the aggrieved party. Near R— a small farmer, who neglected his garden and forced his father-in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support, was finally beaten up one night in his own house by the irate in-laws. Ordinarily, of course, failure to fulfill such obligations either in directly social situations or in agricultural coöperation does not lead to such violent conflict, but rather to an estrangement. The niggardly "friend," especially the one who refuses or fails to return an obligation, is held up to general condemnation, not only by his kindred but by the whole community. The position of a small farmer near but not in Luogh was the result of such failure. He was regarded by all his neighbors and kindred as a "miser" and a "Jew" and on several occasions was accused of petty thefts by them, which perpetuated the breach. As a result he lived as a recluse, refusing even to visit others; in return he was not greeted by his "friends."

The obligations of this sort[2] extend to visiting and to 574
the hospitality which the Irish countryman deems so great 602
a virtue. "A sup of tea" and such food as eggs and bread is

[2] The word *cóir* (a fit and traditional right or duty) corresponds almost exactly with the full range of the small farmer's obligations, as we have seen. It well reflects the farmer's habit in two other uses. The phrase *cóir mhaith* means good food. When the speaker says, *tá cóir mhaith agam ansud* (there's a good feed for me there), he refers not so much to the food itself as to the social situation in which he finds himself well provided for. And the term of address, *duine cóir* (worthy fellow), indicates that "worthiness" springs from a fit observance of one's obligations.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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584 drink by the young man, and then another by the young lady's
583 father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day. After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, and maybe another girl, and her brother and father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker. If they suit one another, they will then appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong. The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one. Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points. If the girl's father likes the land, he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes on them. Then they go to an attorney until the next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father [boy's] to sign over the land. Then there comes another day to fit her for a ring. The girl and boy meet in town some day. He buys her some present. They walk the town that day and all admire the pair and gander after them.

584 Several instances have come to notice where agreement
583 was not reached and where a farmer has broken off negotiations on finding a girl with fifty pounds more. There are
● 577 also many subterfuges which, though they are regarded by others as humorous occurrences, are often sore spots between the contracting parties. Thus a farmer near Ennistymon drove his neighbor's cows into his farm on the day of the girl's father's walking the land so that the other would think him richer than he was. After the marriage the deception was discovered, but too late.

[626] In another case, a sure penalty overtook a farmer who abused the bargaining system. I give the description of a neighbor:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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He's nothing but an old blatherer, he was always sitting on matches and saying he would give a fellow his daughter when he hadn't any fortune on her at all. He'd break it off by saying the girl wasn't willing and all the time it was only boasting and drinking the porter he was. 584 583 577 626

Today the boaster is a local joke, and his daughter has fled to America.

A famous local character round Ennis, a laborer now dead, once bested a countryman through a judicious whetting of the farmer's cupidity at matchmaking. The story goes that the laborer broke the countryman's bargaining resistance by distracting his attention from the cow he was selling at the fair to the prospects of a match between the farmer and a purely fictitious sister, who was dowered with an equally fictitious three hundred pounds. Later when the farmer and his friends came to town again to discuss the matter further, the wit told them elaborately that, after making full inquiries, he had decided they belonged to too respectable a family to allow themselves to make a match with his sister, since the sister had already "a little one" out of wedlock. 522 584 583

Another case of subterfuge practiced illustrates a variation in the match. A fellow near Ennistymon got a farmer with a daughter to back his note at the local bank to the extent of six hundred pounds. The borrowing was kept secret, and the endorser does not seem to have known that the security offered was his own farm. Accordingly, when the borrower later offered to bring in the six hundred pounds in marrying the daughter, the farmer accepted, thinking he was to receive the fortune clear of debt. He discovered only too late that he had a son-in-law whose fortune he must make good himself. The deception led to bad blood between the two, but nothing could be done. 584 583 577

This last example illustrates a reversal of the usual procedure. Ordinarily since the Irish farm family is both 583

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 888 young man's. The man, almost eighty, did not want to remain idle. "Time enough to sit by the fire in the winter," he would say. The greatest compliment the neighbors had for them was: "Look at the C—s. Old Johnny gives his boy a hand with everything. You wouldn't know which one has the farm."

592 888 606 The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. Disputes arise, as the provisions made in the "writings" indicate. The following quotation from an official with years of experience in dealing with country people illustrates:

> As years go on, either the parents die or, if they live sufficiently long, they receive the old-age pension. Before they are qualified for this, the farms have to be made over to a son or daughter. This is done on the occasion of the son's marriage. The father reserves to himself and his wife the use of a room and the freedom of the kitchen, and they are entitled to all their food. The points were carefully discussed at length in the process of matchmaking, and the family of the future wife had no hesitation in agreeing, realizing that such points formed the final phase of a cycle of life on the farm. If the daughter-in-law has been well and properly advised by her mother, she immediately on her arrival in the new house submits tactfully to all proposals of her mother-in-law and lets the old lady feel that she is still the master mariner. If she didn't, it would cause a lot of trouble, as sometimes happens.

[626] In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law in the new household, and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control.

● [577] An open breach between the two couples is universally condemned, of course; "turning the old people out on the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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side of the road" has occurred, although the authors found no instance of it. If, however, the new family finds the old too great a burden, the old may go to the County Home, where the poor and derelict old people are maintained. A grave stigma of inability to support one's duties still attaches to this. 888 606 577

It is interesting that the old-age pension, originally designed in Great Britain to support the aged members of an industrial population and extended some years later to Ireland, has been incorporated into Irish farm life without upsetting, but rather reinforcing, the matchmaking pattern. The tendency is now to turn the farm over to the son as soon as the father passes his seventieth year. Receipt of the pension facilitates the maintenance of the old people and hastens the transfer of land to the son, as the farmers must divest themselves of their small farms in the majority of cases in order to become eligible for the pension. 592 888 737

Even from the point of view of the household expense, the pension is very welcome. In the words of one farmer:

> To have old people in the house is a great blessing in these times because if you have one, it means ten bob a week and, if you have two, it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'D— and every Friday he will go to Corrofin [town] to collect his ten bob and he may buy a couple of bottles of porter, but spend the rest on things for the house and then come home with a few shillings which will go into the common fund.
>
> Not only that but it adds at least ten years to a man's life because the anticipation that each Friday he is to get ten shillings will cheer him up and keep him keen. Any house which has one old person is well off in the last few years, and, if there are two, it is a great blessing.

But the blessing the pension represents is more than an economic aid in bad times. It plays a great role in the transition the match brings about in family relationships. As one countrywoman phrased it:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Even where matches are made between strangers, some kind of sexual attraction is not to be neglected, and local custom provides for a brief introduction and a setting for courtship. Several cases came to the authors' notice in which advantageous matches were broken off when either boy or girl expressed distaste for his or her prospective partner, usually when confronted with him or her at the preliminary festivities of the country marriage. Other cases again came to their notice in which a shy suitor could be galvanized into a final decision to take matters into his own hands and press a suit, when his family began to cast around for a match for him elsewhere. Matchmaking was, in fact, far from presenting a scene of "loveless" marriages. The match is a convention like any other. For those who are trained in it, it provides occasion for arousing sexual interest and marital aspirations in young couples quite in the manner of "falling in love" in communities where courtship is more immediately a matter of personal initiative. 581 584

And, like any other convention, the match could also come to cloak another situation. The match made by the contracting families is the ideal kind of marriage, for the reasons we have discussed. But it does not necessarily imply any one kind of courtship. In many instances a couple who made their own decision had a match made for them. Even in the case of "runaways," as elopements are called, the boy and girl could often be brought back and a match made for them. And lastly, as a way of establishing respectability and providing for the movement of the re-formation of the family, even those cases of marriage necessitated by premarital pregnancy could be fitted into the dominant convention. [836]

Thus the forms of courtship and the development of pairings among the population of boys and girls of the country communities must all be understood, even in their most unusual forms, in terms of the dominant pattern of the 581 183 577

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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581 familistic system and the kind of marriage it entails in rural
183 Ireland. The country people feel this. Their attitudes
577 identify the convention with the whole code of morality and folkways of their own class and kind.

183 They equate any departure from the accepted norm as a
577 sin, a lack of religion. They bring the whole weight of all
673 their sanctions and values to bear upon it. They make the ultimate identification between their own norms and the only right conduct, particularly in this matter so central to the rural familistic system. This final attitude was often addressed to the observers, particularly, but there is reason to believe that it is as often expressed among the country people themselves. In discussions of immorality, illegitimacy, premarital intercourse, the question would arise: Would you believe such a thing could happen in Ireland? In such countries as England and America well it might, for there, the country people hear, the boys and girls just take a liking for one another and go off and marry and "never mind the money." And we remember that in this case the "money" means the re-formation of the entire two families as well.

Even those cases which meet condemnation are likewise often thought to have to do with the dominant pattern. Whether or not the suspicions of the country people are correct, the authors do not know. But they were struck with the fact that so very often in discussions of cases of immorality and unethical sexual conduct the country people made no recourse to concepts of search for pleasure or even of the overpowering force of emotion as explanations of the condemned conduct. Both explanations were to be heard in other classes. Rather, the country people insisted upon looking for a motive in terms of the system of organizing human relations which they understood. The culprits, young "bucks," tried deliberately in such cases to impregnate the girls and force marriages. They were motivated

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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by greed for land and dowries. Sex without familism seemed beyond the country people's imagination.

But the last statement must be qualified in a definite direction. It is only for themselves that they seemed to be unable or, better, unwilling to imagine a sexuality without familism. Other patterns of sexual behavior they see and have heard of, but these are immoral and unworthy ways of doing things and acting, departures from the right and normal, sometimes disgusting, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes mysterious. In any event they are marks of standards of a lower class and lesser dignity and respectability than that of the farmers. They are to be repudiated not only for their lack of common sense but for supernatural reasons as well.

183 777 592 577

Thus the authors heard several instances in which bad luck attended the departure from the usual familistic norm. There was a feeling, sometimes overtly expressed, that at any one time there should be only one sexually active procreant couple in a household. Young and old could well be part of the household in any numbers, but there should be only one adult married couple under one roof. Any other arrangement brought its own punishment and ill luck.

183 577 832

But more often there was identification between the expression of sexual impulse outside the familistic pattern and the debased conduct of the lower ranks of the landless and disreputable of the countryside, the laborers of the towns, the runaways, remnants of broken households. Or else the small farmers put the onus of guilt on other regions "more backward" than their own. At the most, wrong conduct might be the result of some occult compelling force strong enough to break through all sense and caution. The authors were struck with the countryside's version of love charms. In accounts of love charms and love magic, proof of their existence and efficacy was always to be found in the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

183 otherwise unaccountable cases in which a man or woman
577 abondoned farm and fortune and the favor of friends for
832 a sexual attraction. How else to explain, for instance, an old man's senile infatuation, a young boy's indiscourageable devotion to an older woman who could bring him nothing?

583 A word must be said here of the other ways of bringing about marriage than the formal process of family matchmaking. In the last century, to judge from the accounts of the old people, and to follow the testimony of novelists on Irish life, a stage-managed elopement was often resorted to. It was a semi-respectable kind of marriage. The swain and his friends kidnapped the bride out through the window in the night. They took her away from her father's house to the house of an uncle or other relative of the young man's. There dancing and general jollity reigned, and the young couple were feted. Very often all parties seem to have connived at the result. On other occasions, the elopment was obviously designed to bring about a match to which parents objected or to force parents to a decision. Staged elopements of this kind seem now to have died out in Clare, or at least to be rather infrequent. But the difference between this and a true runaway is slight. In the latter case the young couple take matters into their own hands entirely. Throughout the years many couples have eloped, run off to towns and to emigrate without parental blessing. Others have done likewise and returned to get their portions and a delayed parental sanction. Nevertheless one can see that all these forms are mere modifications upon the dominant convention.

583 They too must lead into the familistic pattern. A match
581 must be made, or at least fortunes given and provision for family re-formation made. In cases of premarital pregnancy, the match may be forced or hastened, but it is nonetheless the final and respectable resolution.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

181 sources, my informants being those who are brought into close contact with the everyday life of the people. So far as it goes it is believed to be accurate. No attempt has been made to do otherwise than describe the actual state of the case, and while the faults of the people are not extenuated, yet any circumstances which may explain these are given as far as possible, and their good qualities are believed to be stated without exaggeration.

181 To the casual visitor the people, on acquaintance, are decidedly attractive; in the outlying parts of the district, it is true, they are at 609 first rather suspicious of strangers, but after a short time are very obliging and communicative, ready to show anything of interest in their neighbourhood, and hospitable to the best of their power. The natives of both the islands at Inishkea, are very hospitable and kindly to strangers, of whom they are, however, rather distrustful, [574] a visitor being welcomed into their houses, and entertained with the best they can give. With each other they seem in all parts of the district to be much given to chaff and joking of a more or less practical nature, and their sense of the ridiculous seems to be rather keen. In times of trouble or distress they are very kind, generous with what they have, and helpful to one another.

181 They are fond of music, dancing, and bright colours, and more than one song-maker in their own tongue, the Irish, has been a native 517 of this district; amongst these was the celebrated Dick Barrett, 53 several of whose productions have been collected and published. In common with most of the people of our rural districts, there do not seem to be many traces of artistic taste, and a native art is conspicuous by its absence. One or two instances of attempted decoration were observed in Inishkea, none on the mainland.

181 On the whole, though cases of dishonesty and sharp practice in bargaining occur, they are honest in their dealings with one another. 577 As is often the case in remote districts, the people of one locality are sometimes on strained relations with those of another; thus there exists a certain amount of jealousy and distrust between the natives of the two Inishkeas, while the people of the mainland do not readily amalgamate with those of either island.

181 As regards intelligence, they are extremely sharp and shrewd, and seem rather fond of argumentation. There is but little crime, 691 with the exception of illicit distillation and drunkenness, but the people are very litigious, going to law with each other about slight trespasses and similar matters. This tendency is not by any means of recent origin, but has been remarked on by several writers. Maxwell

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last
century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather
prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it
among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771]
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice
of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is
so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but
disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at
another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great 181
deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady
occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit 426
to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment
of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577
truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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harmony, but other biases are at work (Messenger 1968:29–30). Writers of strong religious bent have exaggerated the Catholic moral virtues embodied in the Irish family and community and have disregarded disputes because they involve unchristian behavior, while social scientists with a functional theoretical orientation have emphasized the integration of social groups and have neglected disputes because they betray dysfunction. Those observers who have depended almost entirely on the guided interview to obtain data concerning family and community often have remained oblivious to disputes. Some researchers, however, have collected information on disputes in an objective manner, but have been unwilling to publish it for fear of antagonizing the folk, the church, and the government—thus losing their positions or jeopardizing research in the future. The most valuable study to date on disputes in Ireland is that of Elliott Leyton, which is based on research that he conducted between 1964 and 1966 in Aughnaboy (like Inis Beag, a fictitious name), a village in Co. Down with three times the population of Inis Beag.

Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' distinction between conscious and unconscious models, Leyton first examines the conscious models—explanatory constructs, or norms, of the people themselves—held by Aughnaboy villagers concerning disputes, then the types of disputes which in fact do occur within the community—from which the unconscious models are inferred by the analyst. Three conscious models held by the villagers are of pertinence to us: those for personal conduct, relations between kinsmen, and relations between non-kin (Leyton 1966:535–536). The first is summarized in the concept of "decency."

> To be a "decent" man is to carry out one's obligations to society in a style characterized by cheerfulness and friendliness, to pause willingly for a chat and, most importantly, to refrain—regardless of the provocation—from any display of overt hostility. . . . greatest esteem is reserved for those who succeed in maintaining cordial relations with everyone in the village; and the greatest contempt is reserved for those quarrelsome individuals who are frequently involved in disputes.

Relations between kinsmen, Leyton says,

> . . . are characterized, ideally, by the highest degree of friendliness and harmony. The individual is expected to feel the strongest affection for his kinsmen, and to subordinate all other loyalties . . . to the demands of his kinsmen. . . . individuals are expected to suppress their personal desires and ideals if they conflict with the unity of the group. . . . Close affective ties and regular visiting rarely occur outside the field of kinship. Non-kin are regarded with suspicion and distrust, and the interests of non-kin are seen as being in potential opposition to the interests of one's own kin.

Ideally, friendliness and harmony characterize relations between non-kin as well in Aughnaboy.

> Non-kin are in general expected to behave according to the standards of "decency" . . . to be cheerful and talkative and to avoid quarrels. . . . Aughnaboy inhabitants conceive relations between non-kin to be a system in equilibrium . . . relations

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

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574 273 Women [562] [514] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 [535] [562] [857] The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 [123] 574 273 [533] [535] Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 [576] Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [356] 574 535 Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 123 [577] 574 579 178 [738] My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom 121
islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage 114
among those who have left the country. 582

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic 167
communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus com- 593
plex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to 154
the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength 114
of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have 829
married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread dis- 577
affection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is 829
blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen 114
islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported 124
herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether 167
more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they 581
made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one 829
that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle else- 000
where, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

*831
626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
154 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[208] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to
[577] alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[533] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[539] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience
[576] so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

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Ireland, and, especially in the intermediate stages of the child's development, from seven to puberty, it gets full play.

It is during those years that the characteristic relationship between father and son is developed in rural communities. The son has suffered a remove from the previous almost exclusive control of its mother, in which an affective content of sympathy and indulgence was predominant, and is brought into contact for the first time with the father and older men. But the transfer is not completed. There is a hiatus in his development through the years of school when his participation in men's work and his relationship with his father has little chance of developing into an effective partnership. A real union of interests does not take place until after Confirmation and school-leaving, when for the first time his exclusive contacts and his entire day-to-day activity, particularly in farm work, will be with his father and the older men.

This fact colors greatly the relationship of father and son, as far as affective content goes. There is none of the close companionship and intimate sympathy which characterizes, at least ideally, the relationship in other groups. Where such exists, it is a matter for surprised comment to the small farmers. In its place there is developed, necessarily perhaps, a marked respect, expressing itself in the tabooing of many actions, such as smoking, drinking, and physical contact of any sort, which can be readily observed in any small farm family. Coupled with this is the lifelong subordination the retention of the name "boy" implies, which is never relaxed even in the one sphere in which farmer father and son can develop an intense community of interest — farm work. Nothing prevents the development of great mutual pride, the boy in his experienced and skillful mentor, tutor, and captain in work, and the man in a worthy and skillful successor and fellow workman, but on the other hand everything within the behavior developed in the rela-

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593 tionship militates against the growth of close mutual sym-
[578] pathy. As a result, the antagonisms inherent in such a situation often break through very strongly when conflicts arise.

The division of labor in the masculine sphere between father and sons, then, is more than an arrangement in farm management. It is very directly part of the systems of controls, duties, and sentiments which make up the whole family life. The apprenticeship and the long subordination of the sons in farm work are reflections of the entirety of their relationship to parents; it is impossible to treat the two spheres of behavior separately.

Similarly, the relationships in farm work between the other members of the household cannot be treated separately.

593 On the other hand, the relationship of mother and son
561 has a very different content. Like that between father and
562 son, it is the product of years of development. It is marked, too, by a similar retention of subordinate status on the part of the son. In farm work the boy is subject to commands of his mother even when, fully adult, he has passed over exclusively to men's work. It is for this reason that many Irish farm widows with grown sons can successfully manage a farm for many years before they ultimately make it over upon a son's marriage, and from their restricted scope within the household and haggard effectively direct operations in the masculine sphere. In such cases, the woman retains control. Even in such an important matter as her son's eventual marriage she has a very dominant voice.

But within the scope of such a subordination there is a
593 quite different affective history. The relationship is the first and earliest into which a child enters. It is very close, intimate, and all-embracing for the first years of life; only gradually does the experience of the child expand to include brothers, sisters, and, last, the older male members of the household.

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man called upon his brother-in-law to lend him his son to help drive his cattle to the fair. In a case similar to the last, a violent quarrel arose because an uncle, who "had right" to lend a son badly needed in doing some fence work, refused to do so. And in the same scale of value a family which did not attend the funeral of a relative was subjected to great criticism for being "unfriendly."

In fact, failure to fulfill the pattern of conduct demanded by extended family obligations leads often to punitive action on the part of the aggrieved party. Near R— a small farmer, who neglected his garden and forced his father-in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support, was finally beaten up one night in his own house by the irate in-laws. Ordinarily, of course, failure to fulfill such obligations either in directly social situations or in agricultural coöperation does not lead to such violent conflict, but rather to an estrangement. The niggardly "friend," especially the one who refuses or fails to return an obligation, is held up to general condemnation, not only by his kindred but by the whole community. The position of a small farmer near but not in Luogh was the result of such failure. He was regarded by all his neighbors and kindred as a "miser" and a "Jew" and on several occasions was accused of petty thefts by them, which perpetuated the breach. As a result he lived as a recluse, refusing even to visit others; in return he was not greeted by his "friends."

The obligations of this sort[2] extend to visiting and to the hospitality which the Irish countryman deems so great a virtue. "A sup of tea" and such food as eggs and bread is

[2] The word *cóir* (a fit and traditional right or duty) corresponds almost exactly with the full range of the small farmer's obligations, as we have seen. It well reflects the farmer's habit in two other uses. The phrase *cóir mhaith* means good food. When the speaker says, *tá cóir mhaith agam ansud* (there's a good feed for me there), he refers not so much to the food itself as to the social situation in which he finds himself well provided for. And the term of address, *duine cóir* (worthy fellow), indicates that "worthiness" springs from a fit observance of one's obligations.

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674 herein described. A case in County Clare in K— parish[6] shows the same provenance of conflict in a disturbance of the traditional pattern. The following extract from the diary of one of the authors gives the setting of the dispute:

674 January 19th. K – District Court. Nothing much in court today but the following case: Two lads about nineteen were up
● 578 for having tarred the house of Tim Nihill, the publican, night before the last fair. This wasn't an isolated occurrence; attempts have been made to intimidate Nihill over a period of years. The guards agree he is himself a peaceable citizen. Both Mr. –, the justice, and Mr. –, the local superintendent of civic guards, agreed that the lads were only "tools of some one behind the scenes who is inciting them." The justice bound them over, gave them a stiff fine. Later he explained to me that a certain Mr. Mulvaney has been calling Nihill a land-grabber in the districts and setting the lads on him. Last year the house was fired into in the night. It all arises out of a farm which Nihill owns and which Mulvaney says ought to be his. Mulvaney is
[583] landless now, only a farm laborer. His mother, who had the farm, was to have left it to him, but he made a runaway match with a servant girl and his mother wouldn't let them into the house. So she sold the farm to Nihill for cash and some debts outstanding and Mulvaney has been blackguarding Nihill ever since.

583 This story introduces the whole position of "runaway matches," as elopements are called. There are a few instances of coercion into matches. The autobiographic sketch of one Hannah M—, an old woman, the widow of a petty shopkeeper, illustrates the form which it can take. To paraphrase her:

She is eighty-four, and guess how long she has been a widow. forty years. She's been behind the counter all the time. She has a sister in America with nine children. The sister sent her over her passage, but the family tore it up and married her here in Ennis. She wanted to be a teacher; the work was easy, the holidays (ample) and it was a good job. There were three candidates

[6] Fictitious names for persons and smaller places have been substituted in this and following incidents.

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her year and she got first. At that time her sister sent over the passage money, and she was about to go when they stopped her and married her into this shop. Her sister was coming over before the marriage but her fiancé wouldn't let her go for fear someone would snatch her up too. 583

Ordinarily, as so many of the examples we have already given show, marriage in the matchmaking system is a matter of free agreement within the traditional setting. Love enters the situation, however, only to complicate it. A runaway match upsets the whole pattern, the interplay of dowries, land, and portions of it for children, the transition between adulthood and old age for the parental couple. There are other considerations, too, which account for the disturbance a runaway match creates, such as those of class involved in "marrying beneath" one, but they are outside our present subject. 583 581

The following story illustrates the case. A countryman is describing a happening in his district:

Tom L — was making a match for his daughter with a fine farm of land, and they got as far as picking the gander [the name of a feast given by the bride's people slightly before the wedding]. They were all up there eating and drinking and dancing all night. Now a fellow from Ennistymon [town] came to it, but he was such an ordinary fellow he was not even invited into the front of the house but stayed in the kitchen. He was so poor and lazy, he brought a little turf to market sometimes, but that was all. Next day, the girl came down to the chapel to be married, and before they knew it, didn't she run off with this fellow. Tom cut her off and disowned her, and she's living in Limerick with her fellow now, but it might be in Australia for all Tom will do for her.

Even when matters have not gone so far, the runaway match causes a grave disturbance and destroys the cohesion of the family. The following account given by a publican in Ennis of country acquaintances shows that reconciliation occurs after a time, but that the disruptive effect upon the 583 578

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583 family is severe. We give the statement in detail in order
578 to show the general situation as he saw it. He is a townsman, and somewhat detached.

The daughter on the farm has to wait till all the sons are got ready for their going off and maybe have been given their passage to America or money to set up in business or to settle on the land. But there are runaway matches all the time, they fall in love, they run off together, and they come in here and take work away from the laborers here. It takes a lot of love and courage because the son is usually cut off and the daughter leaves a very good place for nothing but a cabin and they get none of the money. Maybe after several years the girl will get her fortune, but not always. I remember Jerry N — whose father was very well off as farmers go, but he wouldn't marry the girl they picked for him and took up with a servant girl instead. He's driving a hackney now and lives in a cabin with a flock of children. Jimmy L — ran off but he gradually became reconciled with his people. The father had a good farm of sixty acres, and so had the girl, but the young fellow got nothing out of it. His father helps a little now, sending down a bag of potatoes.

602 Another case which the authors had under observation
593 from time to time illustrates not only the matchmaking
578 system but the general family setting in which marriage takes place and farm life moves. Sanctions for conduct
627 aggrieving the families are applied by the families themselves. The case is long but worth quoting in the words of the teller for its comprehensive character:

There was a girl of the O'Rourkes from D —, they have a farm out there and she married a fellow named Murphy up in C —. She was a school teacher out in England for several years and she became great with this fellow the farmer, and she used to send him money over from England for when they would get married. She sent about two hundred pounds in all. She has an aunt up in C — married up there and it was all the fault of the aunt. She came home and she hadn't yet told her people anything about it. She was just about ready to get married to the fellow and she told them that she was going to get married. They agreed. Then she said she was going to get married to

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Murphy and they tried to argue her out of it, but she said it was too far gone now and she was committed to marry him, so they hastily gave her their blessing. He lived in a big house up by C — and had sixty acres.

Well, he was a sort of uncouth kind of chap, rough, and she was what you might say anglified, or citified. She wanted to brighten up the house and make it nice and hang up curtains and that sort of thing. He thought the reins of the horse would do for the curtains and so on, and it came to a fight between them, a clash of wills, and in the end, as it must, the stronger one won out; that is, the man's. She got hysterical and he cast round for ways of getting rid of her, and he sent up to Ennistymon for the doctor to come down and examine her to commit her to the asylum. He didn't send her up to C — though that was nearer and in his district, but he sent up for Dr. MacNulty to Ennistymon, leaving Dr. Starr in C — so as to get someone who wouldn't know the case.

The married sister of the wife was staying in the house at the time and he was driving her home. He told her the doctor was coming, and she said, "You are doing wrong," and made him turn round and go back to the house where Dr. MacNulty was examining the hysterical woman. Then the married sister got her brother and father to take her back to D —. They came up with Father Brendan of Ennis here and took her away down to D —. After a time they got up a party and invited him down for a reconciliation.

After a while she went back to live with him. He started it again and got her hysterical and called in another doctor, who said that there was nothing wrong with the woman.

One night the three brothers of the girl and her father came up to the house and one went round to the back door and the others went in the front and they caught the fellow. They were going to force him to sign receipts for the money the daughter gave him. Country people demand receipts for money they give and they are right, but the girl hadn't liked to ask and hadn't got any, so her people were going to step in and get them themselves. Murphy had rifled her belongings and torn off his name from all the receipts he had sent her to England. They came in and said that he was lucky he was going to escape with his life. No one in their family had ever been in the asylum and no one belonging to them had ever been insane or robbers.

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602 593 578 627 and that he was trying to black them with the disgrace of it. The girl ran in but they threw her out into the hall where her father caught her and held her. They said that all the people belonging to him were thieves, and that two of them, two uncles of his, his mother's brothers, were convicted for robbery and that all his people before him had been insane, and that he was trying to black the name of a good family. In the end they caught him and beat him till he consented to sign the receipts. They gave him a good hiding.

The teller drew his own conclusions from the case:

If the girl had listened to her parents, they would have told her all this and saved her. But she went on and married right ahead on her own advice. She probably thought she was doing well in marrying into sixty acres.

It is interesting that the application of sanctions does not confine itself to a single dereliction. In this case, according to the storyteller:

[461] Murphy was a terrible lazy farmer and wouldn't even till a patch of ground for a garden for himself or his stock, and the woman's people had to send up a load of potatoes for them. They told him when they beat him if he didn't turn into a farmer and do a man's work, till his garden, and provide, they would be up again and make him do it.

592 888 737 578 There is no chance that the old people would give up the land but for the pension, and there is no hurrying them. Before the old-age pension the father would keep the fat of the land and there would be argument between them, the young woman and the old woman slashing each other with tongs, the doors broke, and it would be two dwellings in the house, like, but since the old-age pension, there are no rows and, if there are, then they make it up with the old people for the ten bob a week.

592 888 If the transition is smooth, there need be no such violence of dispute as the last quotation describes. Each of the members of the household must adopt a new role in relation to the others. The old man abdicates his controlling position with his transference of the farm to his son. Usually such a change goes smoothly enough. If the son can still seem to defer to superior experience and judgment and refer decisions to the old man, all goes well. The happiest compromise is that suggested in the statement of one countryman:

> Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what he thought I should do for the day, and the old man would say that it is now time to do this or that or that the cows should have something done for them or the garden should be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty to thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then go about my own business.

592 606 It is in the feminine province of farm work and household control that the transition is most difficult. Under the patrilocal type of marriage here described, the bride is a stranger and of necessity cannot rely upon the experience of an association of years in order to meet the new conditions, as can father and son. In the graphic phrase of the people, she is the "new woman."

For her the transition brings a violent uprooting from prior attachments. Unlike her urban sister, she has little of the ideal of romantic love to help her over the crisis. Consequently her introduction into the new household is

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gradual, and her assumption of her new duties takes place over a moderately lengthy period. Two considerations, of course, are her primary inspiration in moments of stress: first, that she is now a fully adult woman with a household of her own although she must still share its control with her mother-in-law; and second, that the customary usage of the countryside provides her with an occasional escape back to her own people still on the farm at home. The following quotation expresses one woman's remembrance of her emotional difficulty. It is interesting that it is given expression most effectively in terms of Christmas, the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland: 592 606

> When I first came here, I didn't like it; I thought I couldn't stand living here, and I was always wanting to go home. I could go home, then, every fortnight. Now it doesn't matter so much and I go home about twice a year. I especially miss home at Christmas time because it is then that you miss those you always used to see, and Christmas doesn't seem right if they are not in it.

But for the bride, as for the old people, the transition brings forth a new behavior, and a new habit in her relationship with them. She must learn a nice balance between her new freedom and new full status and the continued control and the vested interest of her mother-in-law. It is a matter between the two women of the household; the father and son prefer to remain neutral witnesses to the process. The statement of one countryman illustrates well the possibilities and the type of new attitude and behavior the young woman must learn to make a satisfactory adjustment: 592 606 578

> When a marriage is made, an agreement is drawn up so that the man hands over to his son the land, but makes certain reservations. A new woman is brought into the house. The wife may have modern ideas and be "hoity-toity" about the way to do things, and the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man without interfering would light his pipe and go out until the squabble was over.

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592 606 578 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 522] The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman must be effected smoothly. [626] The whole moral force of the community as well as the interest of family harmony bear upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighborhood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide its personal troubles as much as possible from the general knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides for continuance.

592 888 The new position of the old couple and their desires in the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

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are not used but are inalienably associated with the family. 583
This is a new development. In Carleton's day, before the famine, a daughter was often dowered with goods as well. Today this is not the case, for the goods like the land are part of an indivisible and corporate whole.

In this way, when we remember that the farm is identified in popular thinking with the patrilineal and patronymic family line of the landowner and that the girl is an outsider brought into that group, the money appears as a payment for the girl's inclusion. There is significantly no corresponding recompense or payment to the girl's father. He loses both daughter and dowry. The identification of his family, both immediate and ancestral, with the family farm is undisturbed. Of course the father of the girl makes sure that his prestige does not suffer. He demands that the farm she enters shall at least equal the dowry. The size of the dowry [554] he gives his daughter is a very strong index of that prestige. It is both a duty and a great source of pride to provide well for her.

A further indication of the nature of the movement of 583
the dowry is to be found in the terminological (formal) 602
structure of the family which we have already described. It will be remembered that there was no integration between the boy's father and the girl's, and that relationship by affinity proceeded only from the point of view of the young couple. The two fathers-in-law or mothers-in-law are not felt to be related. No kinship terms express the new connection between them. Clearly, then, we have two patrilineal groups still unmerged, still distinct. That this is the case 578
can be seen in Carleton's[1] descriptions of faction fights in 583
which two families are often pitched against one another in 602
spite of their alliance by marriage. The authors have seen some of them, not on the scale of faction fights, it is true,

[1] William Carleton, peasant novelist (1794–1869), principally *Tales and Sketches* (Dublin: J. Duffy, 1845) and *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (10th complete ed.; London: W. Tegg, 1864).

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602 but ones in which brothers-in-law flared up to strike one another even though after a week or so the two connections became reconciled.

428 Up to this point we have failed to distinguish between wills and marriage settlements in the statement of match-
583 making and transfer of farms. The confusion is justified because in so many cases they are one and the same. Nevertheless, the subject of wills made apart from the son's marriage needs discussion. If our conclusions as to the nature of farm marriage are valid, something of the same play of changes, obligations, and goods must be present.

Money in the dowry functions to recompense the farmer for his relinquishment of the farm and the break-up of the family which he headed. Similarly, in the cases where inheritance proceeds without marriage, money plays the same role. There are many instances in which the old farmer has demanded payment for the property his heir is to receive. Let an Ennis solicitor describe his experience with one of them:

428 I remember an old fellow, Jimmy B — of K — who was taken
763 off dying to the County Home. He called for me to go out there and make a will for him. Seven wills I made for that old codger before he was through. He hadn't any idea of dying. He had only ten or fifteen acres of a farm, but he said he would give it to his son [only] if the son paid him ten pounds a year for it. They often do that, make the son pay from ten pounds to fifty pounds a year for the land. Then [when the solicitor pointed out that the son would inherit the money anyway as the old fellow had no other heirs], old Jimmy made me make another will leaving the money itself to the son.

Another case the authors knew involved no son. The old fellow left a small farm to his cousin and even though he was on the verge of dying, he forced the cousin to pay for it.

In still another instance, an old fellow had some land and about two hundred and fifty pounds to give away. He gave

CHAPTER VIII

Dispersal and Emigration

THE internal reorganization of the family consequent on the marriage of one of their number produces a marked change in the situation of the as yet unprovided-for brothers and sisters. The other members of the family broken up by the marriage of one of their number on the home farm must be provided for elsewhere. They feel themselves entitled to portions, either in the form of dowries to marry into another farm or of some other means of establishing themselves. If such provisions in fact are not made, conflict arises, as we saw in the case of the McDermott murder. A classical case in the Ennis region of Clare was that of an old farmer of substance who married a nineteen-year-old girl when he was eighty. When the birth of a son precipitated a crisis, he had to be protected from his scandalized relatives, sons, and daughters by the police. When he died the following year, he gave a hundred pounds each to the constable who protected him and the priest "plucky enough to marry me." His sons refused to attend his funeral.

Normally, however, the transfer of land and the break-up of the family which worked it is made with the fullest possible provision for the other children. The dowry brought in is utilized to that end, and the savings of a lifetime on the farm have been used. The following observations made by a Land Commission official, himself a small farmer's son

 166 463 593

into the towns, into governmental, professional positions, and into the ranks of urban occupations must wait for special analysis in itself. It is not possible here to determine how great the effect of this movement from the small farms is upon the current much lamented overcrowding of the professions in Ireland. The point of interest for us is the dispersal of the farm group.

Naturally enough, this dispersal does not always occur so happily as in the above statement of the ideal. Yet the portioning off of the children and the success with which it is done is the pride as well as the duty of every farm family. A few examples will give the variations. They are more matters of success or failure to advance beyond the level of small farm life, but they show the genesis of the movement in the farm family. In a later section this subject will be dealt with in more detail. These examples, however, are typical, though the names are fictitious.

Leary of F —, a farmer with sixty acres, has a daughter married near-by with a four hundred pound fortune, and another, a nun in Mercy Convent, Ennis. Four sons have entered the priesthood, an expensive training from his point of view. A fifth is at home working, not yet thirty. Leary is a "strong" farmer, highly prosperous.

Tom Casey, K —, is a very poor holder with thirty acres of mountain and bog. Two sons and a daughter are still at home, and a bachelor brother works with him. Another daughter works for herself as a domestic servant in Ennis. One son Tom is apprenticed to a carpenter in Ennis. A daughter emigrated through the good graces of her aunt.

Michael Dunn of T — has twenty acres, but has not prospered. His two sons left at eighteen and twenty respectively to drive hackney automobiles in Ennis, an uncle there giving them a start. Another son now thirty and a daughter are still at home working the farm.

In a mountain townland, Pat Looney's father prospered, won the good graces of the landlord's agent, amassed four farms, the largest fifty acres, the smallest eighteen. He married off two 593 578 428

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593 daughters with two hundred pound fortunes, settled three sons
578 and a daughter with her husband in each of the farms. Pat him-
428 self, the eldest, now about eighty, got the largest farm but not the one he wanted. He has been warring with his brothers and his neighbors ever since. He held out against his father for five years, refusing to marry and take his farm. In Pat's youth, land agitation and reform had not yet prevented subdivision and acquiring of new farms by a successful tenant. Pat on his fifty-acre mountain farm has married off a daughter locally at three hundred pounds and sent two sons out to America. Another daughter works in England. Two sons, aged forty-three and thirty-six, are at home and Pat hasn't made up his mind yet which one shall get the land.

593 The examples, various as they are, need not be multiplied.
167 The sons and daughter who are not to be portioned at home, in the words of the Luogh residents, "must travel." To that end both the savings of the family, created through their united efforts under the headship of father and mother, and
[583] the incoming dowry, are devoted. In Luogh there had been only four marriages in ten years; two of them were the usual farm-transferring matches, one a returned emigrant who married a boyhood sweetheart and bought a farm, and one a widower who took a second wife and a second fortune. An old woman described the situation: "There aren't any matches nowadays. Nobody has a fortune to give his daugh-
[454] ter and the young men must travel." Yet the woman who lamented this state of affairs was carefully husbanding half crowns for her baby granddaughter's fortune.

593 Nevertheless this necessary dispersal of the members of
167 the family at its reorganization does not ordinarily destroy
457 the family ties. The bonds of affection and family obligation still hold. If they have emigrated, the family members send
434 back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces and brothers and sisters left at home. A great many farms, especially in West and North Clare, are partially supported by Christmas gifts from Americans and other exiles. It is

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the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work. 888 521

Yet they were later forced to admit:

> The people in the old times were not as knacky as they are now. Isn't it true that they used to have the horse in a stall feeding him while the man would be out with a spade turning over the garden?

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm work. Just as the rivalry between father and son in the farm family is most intimate and most constant in the economy which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community at large takes the same form and finds its expression within the frame of the work that the community must do to live. 888 578 561

Naturally enough, the young people do not express these attitudes. They do not agree with their elders on the score of their own shortcomings. But they have a good deal to say, among themselves, from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them, and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be sweepingly condemned with some such criticism as "old fool" and "old blatherer." Like the son already quoted who gave his father his head in farm work and listened patiently for orders, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations of themselves in which youth and strength outweigh age and wisdom.

But within a system of values in which the old represent the nexus of kinship and bear honor within the community, the young people do not see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the older men and women. The young people recognize themselves as forming a distinct group with interests and sentiments of its own, opposed in the scheme of rural life to the elders. They use the word "we" and oppose it to "them" for the old. They recognize places, pursuits, 578 561

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578 and forms of activity as their own and find much more interest in them than in those of the other group. The young
561 men greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gathering of old men in something of the tone of derision which they reserve for women. But the rivalry in their sentiments between respect and egocentric feeling, like the controls imposed by their parents to keep them respectfully silent in the presence of their elders, imposes a silence upon them. Consequently, one cannot find among them the voluble expression of attitudes based upon one's belonging to a certain relative age. One must look for it rather in particular expressions of annoyance, boredom, and chafing against restraint.

Expressions of sentiment about age are the products of a system of values upon it in which the individual makes the valuation from the place he occupies. They express not only a grouping of individuals of similar age but a mutuality between groups so composed. And, too, they form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

561 Let us examine one instance at least of this categorization.
554 The community in rural Ireland bestows many names and
551 titles. They are ephemeral. They have no currency outside the immediate circle of life in the townland or village. At
888 best, they spread through a parish. They are nicknames and express no more than the individual's particular place in the hearts of his fellows. Yet some of them are generic epithets. Like "old" and "young," they may prefix a name and designate the more closely the personality of the person named. Like "boy" and "old fellow," they may express broad categories of a man's age and its associated behavior, and may designate not so much a biologic or physiognomic reality as a sociological status. The words "saint" and *cailleach* are of the last kind of epithet, in rural usage. In the brogue they refer only to the old. In strict philology

boots of the bearers or else the type of barrow (of wood or straw) on which the coffin was borne, served to prevent the coffin from touching the soil. Again, in Ireland (at least, in parts of County Wexford), as in some European countries, wooden crosses or other memorials were left behind at such halts; in the Kilmore area of South Wexford, two crosses are carried with each funeral—one is left at the roadside at a halting-place, the other is set up on the grave. Cairns were often associated with funeral resting-places. It was customary in certain European countries for the bearers to partake of food and drink at resting-points; this, I am told, was the practice also in parts of Donegal and Waterford. Having rested for a while, fresh bearers took up the coffin, and the graveyard was ultimately reached. 764 [264]

I have already referred to the practice of laying down the coffin when a boundary-line was reached. My father, who died six years ago, at the age of 86, told me about a funeral-boundary custom in my native parish of Tuosist, in County Kerry, in the extreme southwest corner of Ireland. He was born in 1863 in the townland of Clogherane in Kerry, only a mile distant from the County Cork border. The high range of the Caha Mountains runs for over thirty miles through the peninsula of Béara, and separates at this point the Kerry parish of Tuosist from the Cork parish of Clanlawrence. During the Famine period of 1845–50 the men who lived at either side of the pass, Bealach Scairte, which led from one county (and parish) to the other, were employed, by way of a relief-scheme, in building a road across the pass. When the work ceased, the middle portion—about two miles in length—still remained undone. And so it remained until about twenty-five years ago, when, by the aid of State funds, the road now known as The Healy Pass was built across the mountain and the two ends were joined up. I often crossed by the old path from Kerry to Cork myself, before the new road was built; it was not so difficult in the early stage of the journey, but when the narrow defile (An Céim Cumhang) at the border was reached, one had to clamber as best one could over and between huge boulders which had fallen into the defile, some of them weighing forty or fifty tons, at a rough estimate. 764 491 [794]

Any funeral which now has occasion to pass from Cork to Kerry (or *vice versa*), can do so with the luxury of a hearse and motor-cars. But it was different when my father was a boy, and for long generations before that. He told me that one day, when he was on his way to the school at Glenmore—it was in the 1870's—he saw a large concourse of men, both young and old, passing along the old road at the foot of the mountain and through the fields. They were all carrying weapons or implements of some kind—some had hay-forks, he said, others had scythes, others hatchets, still others heavy sticks. He asked later on where they were going, and was told that they were going to meet a funeral, which was coming into Kerry from Cork, at the boundary-line. He told me that he knew well the Kerryman, who was leader of the large group; I knew him too, as he lived to a great age, and could speak no English. His name was Conchobhar Uaithne Ó Súilleabháin, and he lived at Shinnagh in the parish of Tuosist. My father told me that he heard later from some of those that were present at the boundary-line, that when the Corkmen appeared at the border, carrying the corpse tortuously on their shoulders, Conchobhar stepped in front of the bearers and stood with his stick raised on the large flat stone which marked the border at this point. The stone, by the way, is still known as Leac na gCorp (The Stone of the Corpses), and it is in the middle of the hollow which, avoiding the defile, was used by funerals, or by cattle 764 578 [191]

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and sheep and horses being driven across to fairs at either side. The hollow is still named Eisc na gCorp (The Hollow of the Corpses), but travellers over the new road, which by-passed the hollow, cannot see it except they are told about it and search for it. To get back to my father's story: the Kerrymen, a hundred or more strong, had lined the boundary-line with their weapons ready for action and, as the Corkmen approached the flat stone, the Kerry leader ordered them to lay down the coffin on it.

"*Leagaidh síos annsan anois í! Ná téighidh a thuille!*"[1] he ordered, indicating the stone with his stick.

The Corkmen obeyed the order, and the Kerrymen then took the coffin on their shoulders and bore it down the mountainside into their own territory and along the six miles of road to the graveyard at Kilmackillogue. No fighting took place at the border-line on that day. But it was not always so on previous occasions. I heard the old people of the parish say that fights took place in former years when funerals crossed the boundary at Leac na gCorp, and that some of those engaged had been killed.

I know of three other boundary-lines where similar precautions were taken against those who carried the coffin to the border-line forcing their way across, while still carrying the remains. The first was at Glaise'n Fhineáin, a stream some miles to the west of Leac na gCorp, in the Béara peninsula, whose waters separate the counties of Cork and Kerry. The second was at Barrlinn, an old mountain road between counties Cork and Kerry, which ran southwards from Kilgarvan in the latter county to Bantry in the former; a cairn lies just beside the boundary-line where funerals halted and bearers were exchanged; fights are said to have taken place here in former times when funerals crossed the border. These two boundary-lines, as well as that described in more detail at Leac na gCorp, are all fairly close together, and all three are at the dividing-lines of parishes as well as counties. I have been told of still another boundary-line where fights took place on funeral days. This is the mountain pass known as Mullach Bhéal in the Dingle peninsula in Kerry, over which funerals passed in former times (before the Connor Hill road was built). These funerals were either on their way westwards from the parish of Clochán to some graveyard in the parishes to the west, or *vice versa*. Old people in that area tell of coffins even having been broken at this point during the attempt to force the boundary-line, and a large cairn marks the spot. Even when this old route was by-passed by the building of the Connor Hill road, and funerals followed the new route, the men from either side who assembled at the boundary insisted that the coffin be handed over to them at that point, and they carried it into their own parish. [493] When carts replaced shoulder-bearers at a later date, the coffin had to be transferred from the cart which had carried it to the border to one from the other parish.

The reason given in more recent times for the insistence on the change of bearers being made at the border was that the men of the second parish (to which the funeral was going) did not wish it to be said by the men of the first parish that their assistance was needed to carry the coffin further; they were strong enough to bear the coffin into and through their own parish without any help from outsiders. This reason is hardly the main one, however, and is likely to have been put forward only when the original reason had been forgotten.

[1] "Lay it down there now! Don't go any further!"

In Tuosist the reason given to me by my father and some other old people was that ill-luck would fall upon Kerry and especially on the parish of Tuosist, if the Corkmen succeeded in forcing the coffin across Leac na gCorp and laid it down on Kerry soil. Sickness, bad crops, and misfortunes of many kinds would follow the corpse, if it were laid beyond the boundary-stone. This is undoubtedly the original reason for the defence of the border on funeral days. A corpse has in many lands for long been regarded as having evil magical power (known scientifically as *orenda* or *mana*) of an impersonal kind latent in itself. In Ireland, for example, fishermen regarded it as unlucky to take the corpse of a drowned person into a boat. Also, *an féar gorta* ("the hungry grass"), which grew wherever a corpse touched the earth, had the power of causing all those who walked over the spot to be stricken with abnormal hunger. Many other instances of the evil power of a corpse might be cited. Just two hundred years ago, Morty Óg O'Sullivan, a native chieftain of Béara in West Cork, who had fought against the British both in Ireland and in many European countries as a member of the "Wild Geese", was slain outside his own house near Eyeries in Béara. The British took his body to a warship at Bere Island and dragged it through the sea in the wake of the ship about sixty miles to Cork. A poet who described this happening wrote the couplet: 764 578 778 [539]

Ní raibh aon rath ar an uisce ó Chorcaigh go Béara
Ó tairngeadh tríd an bradán gléigeal.[1]

No fish were said to have since been caught in the sea-route through which the corpse was dragged.

In Sweden, Miss Louise Hagberg tells us, if a corpse were carried over cultivated ground or over lakes, they became thereby unfruitful, and crop-growing fields lost their vegetation. She also says that during the Middle Ages those persons over whose lands a corpse was carried unlawfully had the right to compensation; in Västergötland anybody who carried a corpse across the land of another, without the permission of the owner, rendered himself liable to a prescribed fine. 171

Thus, the funeral-boundary customs in the Cork-Kerry area, which have died out only in comparatively recent times, seem to fit into the wider pattern of custom and superstition devised to give protection against the magical evil power associated with corpses.

2. Wearing Clothes for the Dead

In the year 1918 or so, an uncle of mine died in the townland of Fehanagh, in the parish of Tuosist, in southwest Kerry. This is my native parish. Jerry Sullivan was my uncle's name; he died at the age of sixty-four. I was fifteen years old at the time, and was spending some weeks of my summer holidays at my uncle's when he became ill and died. I was allowed to remain in the house during the illness, wake, and funeral. 764 294 292

It is still the immemorial custom in that parish to get a suit of clothes specially made by a local tailor when a person dies. The suit is not worn by the corpse in the coffin. Still, it is intended

[1] There has been no luck on the water from Cork to Béara
Since the gleaming salmon was dragged through it.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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old as the Celtic sagas. The belief is spread, of 754
course, far beyond Ireland. The Neapolitan fisherman paints his boat against the evil eye, the Balkan woman embroiders her petticoat to ward off evil and curses. The West African sorcerer knows the technique to perfection; our own Pennsylvania Dutch 'hexes' are modern practitioners. For the belief belongs to the infinite realm of magic.

If one were satisfied with the bald collector's statement, one would be content to leave the young man in such company. But by inquiring more deeply into the incident, one can look into the situation in which he suffered. If the belief can be seen at work in a situation which can be readily assessed, then it will serve better as a guide toward understanding the life in which it can still operate.

The situation has many elements. In the first place, the details of the young man's trouble are simple enough. In working a scythe round the bush-choked wall of a field, he fell in such a way as to drive a sliver of bush into his eye. We should call it, I suppose, a simple accident and pity him his bad luck.

But the small farmers among whom he lived 754
wove another world of explanation round that eye. 578
Gradually the tale unfolds. Perhaps the loss of 888
the eye is a punishment. For the young man was not entirely blameless. An unvoiced suspicion had pointed his way.

For there had been a few weeks before what used

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754 to be called, in more heated days, 'an agrarian out-
578 rage'. Two old men, bachelors living alone, had
888 been fired upon in the night. Some one had pumped gunshot through the window of their poor cabin, high up the mountainside. As was probably intended, the shots buried themselves harmlessly in the cabin floor. But they awakened the old men, and frightened them badly.

The occurrence shocked the community. The two old men were harmless creatures; they were 'saints' in the country phrase. Who would want to injure them or drive them out?

The country-people had their suspicions; but the police could get nothing from them. There was nothing for the inspector to do but report another 'agrarian intimidation'. Even if he too knew, there was nothing to do; he could prove nothing without witnesses.

The country-people kept silence for good reason, from their point of view. If their suspicions were correct, the matter was a private affair, a family squabble. It was no business of theirs.

For the old men, by the standards of rural kinship, were not entirely blameless either. They held a farm they did not work. They took none of their kinsmen in. They should long ago have given up their land. One of them should have brought a girl in, married her and raised a family. They should have passed the land on to their sons, or failing sons, they should have brought in a nephew

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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or other boy of their kindred. Then they could have turned the farm over to the boy, when they felt themselves too old, and let him marry, in order that their kindred's name continue and grow in land.

But the old men had never had a 'taste for marrying'. They were victims themselves of a too-intense loyalty. I say victims, because their loyalty had been narrowest of all. Their old mother had lived too long in her turn. She had never decided which one should get the land and bring in a girl. Perhaps their father might have decided, had he lived, but their mother survived him by many years. Neither of them wished to leave her side and neither would leave to make room for the other. When at last the mother died, the two bachelor sons were already old; they were long past marrying and set in celibate ways. They lingered on in an ever narrower round.

In the community they were 'saints', as I have said; they were 'no trouble to man or beast'. Yet, from another point of view, they were not doing the 'natural' thing; they made no provisions for their kinsmen; they did not pass on the land to those to whom by country right it should go. They refused to fill their proper roles in life. No wonder, then, that their cabin was a byword for neglect and disrepair. The countrymen would tell you, in a moralizing vein, it had become so 'for lack of a woman's hand'.

But to censure them for their misspent lives was

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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626 no affair of the community's. The kindred of the
578 old men were the aggrieved parties. Their name
888 suffered and their sons were landless and unborn;
754 land belonging to them lay idle. So, whoever did the shooting—perhaps he had a reason for it. Suspicion might point here and there, but whatever measures the kinsmen might take to remedy their grievance concerned the kinsmen alone. Let those to whom the old men's duty lay see that they followed it. It was best to say nothing beyond one's immediate circle.

But the community could not entirely condone the shooting either. It was a bad thing, no good could come of it. To disturb the peace in such a way shook the security of them all; it gave the district 'a bad name'.

So, when a new event took place, the community found outlet for its censure. When the young man lost his eye, the community was ready for this reaffirmation of its threatened values. For the young man was one of the aggrieved kindred; he was a landless cousin's son; to him and his brothers the old men's farm should have gone. In the loss of his eye, the community felt he paid his penalty. No one knew just how it was inflicted; one does not attempt to unveil such mysteries. Their force is too great, too little controllable. Some felt the 'old man's curse' had done it, some felt that the priest might have done it, for the old men had appealed to him. Some blamed a vague mysterious power in the bush

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the young man cut. Whatever it was, the fact was plain. Only a week or so after the shooting, the young man lost his eye. His crime found a sure punishment in a realm in which all could agree without running risk of retaliation at the hands of the disputing parties.

I have couched this incident in vague, unprecise language for a reason. In the realm of folk-belief outlines are not clear and concepts are not precise. No one could formulate logically this retribution which put out the young man's eye. Nevertheless all felt it. And a moralist among them could sum up: "It is right to respect the old people".

The second example, then, points in the same direction as the first. Both 'west room' and the 'old man's curse' reflect age-old tradition. But both reveal a system of values which rules life in the present. That system of values dictates attitudes and reflects itself in behaviour. For example, neither the young man who may or may not have done the shooting, nor the old men who were shot at, were free agents. They both followed interests growing out of the values of rural life. Sometimes, as in this case, these interests conflict. If open fighting is not to tear life asunder, ways must be found to resolve the conflict, to find a formula of agreement, as the diplomats say.

I have tried in the last of my two examples to show you something of the movements of this sort and something of the agreement which can be

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

476 keen over the dead. This conduct is reciprocal;
602 'friendliness' implies mutual obligation. One countryman gave me as his reason for going to the funeral of a second cousin: "I have right to go, they always come over to this side". When in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister took over the child, she did the 'friendly' thing that she 'had right to do'. In the very same terms a man 'made bold' upon his brother-in-law to lend him a son to help drive cattle to the fair, as the brother-in-law 'had right' to do.

In fact, failure to fulfil the pattern of conduct demanded by the obligations of 'friendliness' may bring punitive action on the part of the aggrieved kindred. We have seen this before in the story of the 'old man's curse' in the first lecture. In a part of Clare, not many miles from Luogh, a small farmer neglected his garden and forced his father-
[578] in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support. He was finally beaten up one night in his own house by his irate in-laws. Ordinarily, perhaps
[626] failure leads rather to an estrangement; it holds one up to general condemnation by the whole community. Persistence in failure leads to social death; the recluse is greeted by no one, not even his 'friends'.

574 But fulfilment entrenches one in social life. The
602 obligations extend to visiting and hospitality, the countryman's great virtue. 'A sup of tea' is 'put down before' the countryman who is travelling to

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

he inherits, he is proud to be an able genealogist. 182
Genealogy permeates his view of man and the 602
world.

He judges himself and his contemporaries by 182
their 'blood'. Like many another people, he makes 602
a *deus ex machina* of this verbal identification. 578
'Good blood' explains success and high position; 'bad blood' failure and low estate. To insult a man it is enough to suggest he has 'tinker blood' or 'robber blood' in his veins. One damns thus a whole kindred by impugning its descent. Even such a socially undesirable state of affairs as a feud between two angry, warring kindreds can be given a name in accordance with this identification. It is said that 'there is bad blood between them'.

In fairy-tales and folklore the mystic force of 182
common descent is stronger than fate and cir- 602
cumstance. The rightful son and brother, lost or stolen away, is finally restored to the heritage of his blood. For the 'blood' and the 'land' are identified as well. The social mind is not content with half-hearted inclusions. One's blood calls to one's possessions. A particular ancestral line is inseparable from a particular plot of earth. All others are 'strangers to the land'.

But there is, of course, a practical side too. We have seen it already in the account of agricultural co-operation, not, unfortunately, the kind A. E. and Sir Horace Plunkett advocated, but the pattern of centuries of local life. We shall learn more of it

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

 182 593 888 [745]

rest on things for the household and then come home with a few shillings to go into the common fund."

For the old couple are still very important within the family. Their years of command do not disappear overnight. The change must be handled smoothly. The happiest compromise is that one farmer of Inagh described: "Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what I should do for the day, and the old man would say it is now time to do this or that, or the cows should have something done for them, or the garden be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty-thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then I would go do my own business."

The solution rural Ireland suggests to this problem is deference and respect. There can be no equality between the generations. In the words of one local sage, who could discuss the matter with the experience of a Dorothy Dix: "When the new woman is brought into the house, she may have modern ideas and be hoity-toity about the way to do things. So the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man wouldn't say anything but he would light his pipe and go out till the squabble is over. It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave, and go live with her daughter some place. She could do this if the daughter's husband's mother were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. 182 578 593 888

"But these squabbles are bad things. If the new

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 woman would ask the old person her opinion on
593 how to do this and that there never would be any
888 trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just
578 as she pleased. Then the old woman would think she was doing it the way that she said. If the daughter-in-law did what she ought, she would do this and treat the old folks nice."

Deference and respect solve the problem, then, but if they do not, it is the older woman who must leave. That this should be the case reflects one great function of farm marriage. The son must cleave to his bride. If the worst comes to the worst, the new family may 'turn the old people out on the side of the road'. Terrible as such an ending would be, it is the necessary one. For the pattern of family and land must continue in the persons of the new man and woman and their children.

182 This desire is the binding force in the relations
593 of all the household. It is as strong in the old people
887 as in the new couple. The new balance of senti-
602 ments finds its expression in the inclusion of the children born to the young man and woman. Like so much of their behaviour, the country-people describe the new ties in terms of the 'help' they afford to the family corporation. And once again, naturally, an economic explanation is all too elliptical. A thoughtful farmer of Inagh generalized the matter in words which show the identity between help in farm work and social reciprocities: "When there are children in the house, the old

182 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land,
602 and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such con-
428 duct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can
182 arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at
589 all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own
428 person. That does not mean she cannot exercise
593 full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her
[766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

Even if she marries, she and her new husband
182 merely hold the land in trust. The second husband
428 and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The
587 rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the
593 land, may turn them out. So strong is the identifica-
578 tion. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

may be often quite different and run counter to rural values, breeding strife and forcing the aggrieved to seek redress outside the law.

Here, then, is the new equilibrium in the countryman's social life. The match provides a transition between the generations. Within the family unit, it provides for the establishment of a new nuclear group. It makes room for an essential continuity in which all the members may share and round which all their interests may be centred. Externally, it regathers those whom it must disperse. Round this dispersal, the web of kinship can be built. In the persons of the old people moved one step toward death, and in the identifications round them, 'descent' and 'blood' and 'the name on the land', the emotions of human groups can find their nexus.

In this movement, household, land, adult status, economic control, all move together. Marriage is a turning point round which rural life hinges. It is a structural centre. Every tie between human beings is modified. Then, in a new form, they can crystallize again—to give scope for movement, to allow continuities, to habituate human beings to new social places.

The whole of this movement takes place within a frame of human sentiments, ambitions and desires. Emotion lends its force. Convention, habit and the sanctions of public opinion and private anger keep the bounds and punish transgression. Public honour and self-satisfaction reward conformity.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

craftsmanship scattered in cabins here and there 463
through the countryside. The mere memory of 554
their trade may be all that still remains to them to tell one that they are not the petty cotters they seem to be. They have not married, or if they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Or here and there the countryman will point out the shells of their houses; "The family all died out of it", he will explain.

For the pressure of social standing is a powerful force, even in such a setting. Rather than admit an inevitable decline into the status of a landless labourer, they must 'die out of it'. One's standing, we remember, is one's blood. If they cannot amass a tangible representation of that blood in the dowry, they cannot marry. Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

Even if they do succeed, and merge by marriage into the farmers' commonality, they bear a trace of a different origin yet a while longer. Change is slow where lines are tightly drawn; even peasant society knows its parvenus. And if dispute and anger flare up to strip life to its essential core, what insults do we hear? The countryman 'throws up' to 463
his fellow, not his face or his manners or his 554
animal likeness, in a wild *chameau* or *schwein*, but 578
his descent. He damns him with the reminder of 'carpenter' or 'weaver blood'.

Strange as this epithet may seem to us, it brings

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 an adequate, instantaneous response. The psycho-
554 logist knows that expressions of anger, like any
578 other emotion, are conditioned within particular social systems. And here the Irish system works, in its own fashion, to draw and to reinforce the inevitable distinctions and discriminations of social life.

From this fact springs comedy as well. Joke and
522 fun play round this central theme. A good deal of old custom and traditional pastime cluster here. The picturesque buffoonery of the 'strawboys' —privileged masqueraded figures whose mock-dangerous invasion of the wedding feast has been dignified to represent a last remnant of a primeval bride-capture—is better explained thus more simply. Such symbolism as the gaiety of Shrove Tuesday, when in Clare, at least, young men beat loudly on the doors of those unmarried women who took no husband through the Shrovetide, is still direct enough.

For comedy and laughter soften the sharpness of social controls. They are the velvet glove that clothes the iron hand.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

metrical. The shopkeeper, as creditor, has the 369
whip-hand. As an urbanite, he has the superior 571
status. Yet he is no less under obligation to his 452
debtor.

Habit and sentiment weave amusing identifica- 369
tions round this social pattern. For example, to pay 571
off a debt entirely is perforce to dissolve the rela- 452
tionship. It is to destroy the mutuality of expecta- 626
tions. If one's debt is paid off one loses, not only a 578
customer, but a friend, quite literally. The ordinary small farmer would pay off all his debt only in a fit of anger. By so doing he would mean to break the tie completely and irrevocably. Consequently, he remains upon the shopkeeper's books indefinitely, paying off periodically bit by bit, but never working himself entirely clear. Should he do so, the shopkeeper would be fully warned. He would know his customer was about to carry his trade elsewhere, and to enter a new tie better suited to his desires.

But the shopkeeper is obligated, too, in his turn. He may not dun his customer heedlessly. To do so is to cast doubt upon the customer's ability or willingness, not to pay a money debt but to meet his obligation. It is in fact to call into question the social status which is his. If the shopkeeper errs in this nice tact, the debt is paid forthwith perhaps, but the relationship is broken.

Nor can he press even a just claim too far. He may often have to carry credit endlessly, in hope of better days. This is part of his obligation, and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 boycott awaits the offender or the usurper. To
571 carry the claim to court is of no avail; one cannot
452 these days foreclose on land in rural Ireland. Per-
626 haps eventually he might win the farmer's holding
578 from him, in satisfaction of his claim. But one must remember the farmer's 'name is on the land'. A whole kindred and the whole community with which the kindred is related become his bitter and dangerous enemies. In a familistic world that enmity endures for life and longer, even into the next generation.

If even then, in spite of this, the shopkeeper persists and grinds his debtor down, still another sanction closes in upon him. The countryman will make his last resort to age-old folk-belief. He will tell you, for instance, that the shopkeeper or publican dies out because the curses of men and women and the tears and prayers of broken families have wreaked a sure retribution. What better way indeed to express, in traditional mystical and quasi-religious terms, the force of social censure? The countryside can bring its whole traditional scheme of attitudes to bear upon the offender; it can justify the forces of social and personal action in the realm of the awesome mysteries of belief before which all must bow.

369 Thus one can see why, in folk-belief, money it-
571 self is evil. It is one of those mysterious powers
452 which can bring, as though of its own awful and
626 incomprehensible efficacy, both good and evil in its

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

town consists of streets of houses of peasant style strung The small end to end, picturesque with their washes of many colours, but 361 [364] perpetuating and even accentuating the filth which can be tolerated in a village setting of streams and fields but which becomes highly objectionable under urban conditions. On the other hand there are some spaciously-planned country towns which have an air of quiet opulence reminding one of the English heritage to which they owe their foundation. I am aware that in saying this I am ignoring the "inner flame" of the Irish towns, but it cannot be denied that externally they have much to learn from the older civic traditions of the sister isle. Dr. Arensberg has analysed the pattern of the country town and described it as "an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order." He shows that, until recent times, its economy has been that of distribution, not production. Banks and pubs and shops do most of the business and owing to the family system "Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation." If we exclude the Lough Neagh basin, [162] all the denser areas of population are coastal and most of the country's manufacturing industries are concentrated in the ports (Fig. 108).

To return to the fair, we have tried to show how the 443 periodic gatherings in which they originated were associated 786 with ritual and emotional experiences connected with the 578 celebration of recurring events such as seed-time and harvest. Breaking the routine of toil, it is characteristic that much licence was permitted on these occasions. Until recent times a strong spirit of revelry and a temporary slackening of the moral code distinguished the great Irish fairs. Even to-day the police or civic guards make allowances for fair day and turn a blind eye to many offences against the law: it is recognized as a time of special licence. Games, dancing and faction fights were the order of the day once the buying and selling were over. Until a generation ago cruel "knuckle-dusters" (Fig. 109) were carried in readiness, and the country-man's heavy felt hat was worn as a defence against the blackthorn shillelagh.

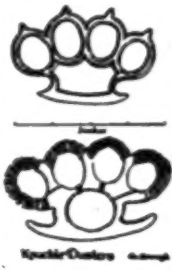

Fig. 109.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 blackthorn shillelagh. Trailing the long coat or "trusty"
786 was a recognized invitation for a fight.

578 To the onlooker it appears as though the business of selling is itself in the nature of a fight, such are the hearty and
443 resounding slappings of open hands up and down the street. Then follows the prolonged argument, the cut and thrust of keen bargainers in a circle of interested onlookers, over the amount of "luck money" to be given back to the seller. It is an age-old ritual far removed from the mechanical sale of a pen of cattle at an auction. The establishment of auction sales and latterly of marketing boards not only undermines the business of the country town, but threatens to destroy the intricate fabric which binds together a thousand homesteads in the intercourse of fair day. It is a sad commentary on rural development that in recent years "dole-days" have brought as many people to town as "fair-days."

[493]

Fig. 110. Fair Day.
A bargain is being struck on the left.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771]
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady 181
occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment 426
of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577
truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(B)]

121 IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the
[167] availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated districts of the country, an island off the
[434] west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly col-
114 lected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of
124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
[578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer
[231] told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

Little attention has been given to the Irish openfield system.[1] 311
It has escaped the notice of historians because the revolution which broke it down was a prolonged and silent one, involving no Enclosure Acts such as those which record the disappearance of the English openfields. Under the Irish system it was the practice, in some areas at least, for the plots to change hands periodically among co-partners by the casting of lots. Thus the transition to consolidated holdings was easier than under the English system, where the scattered plough strips were apparently permanently held. It is important to examine the openfield system more closely than might seem to be warranted by its almost complete disappearance from the modern scene, because it was against this background that many of the tools and customs we shall discuss were evolved. Just as in lowland England the English village was inseparable from its openfields, so in Ireland hamlets or 'clachans' accompanied the old form of land utilization. They will crop up again and again in the chapters which follow. But today and for the last century o. so the isolated farm has characterized the Irish rural scene (Fig. 4). From some elevated viewpoint in the mountainy 311
parts one may count hundreds of small whitewashed homesteads 361
dotted among the fields, each nestling behind a handful of wind-bent trees and approached by its own access-road—the loaning or borheen beloved of the sentimental song writers. Every farmstead has the air of a fortress, an independent unit within its jealously guarded boundary fences, defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars (Fig. 5) and claiming rights of way whose protection keeps the town solicitors profitably engaged. The degree of independence has been notably strengthened by the Land Acts (1869–1925) [423]
under which former tenants have become their own landlords. Peasant-proprietorship is an established fact throughout the country, though it has by no means solved Ireland's problems as some politician-prophets claimed it would.

The truth is that, taking the country as a whole, most of the 311
farms are too small to be truly independent of their neighbours. 578
Bitter experience and the traditional land-hunger of a community

[1]E. E. Evans, *Geography*, 24 (1939), 24–36; D. McCourt, *Economic History Review*, 7, 369–76.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 where the land has been almost the sole available re-
[578] source go far to explain the jealousy with which established rights are maintained, but there are deeper needs and bonds in the rural community.

[491]
[102]

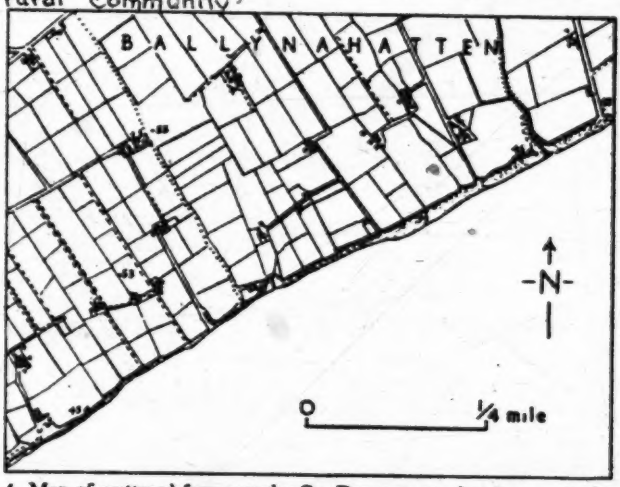

FIG. 4. Map of scattered farms on the Co. Down coast, showing seaweed-roads. (Based upon the Ordnance map with the sanction of the Controller, H.M.S.O.)

[417]
[351]

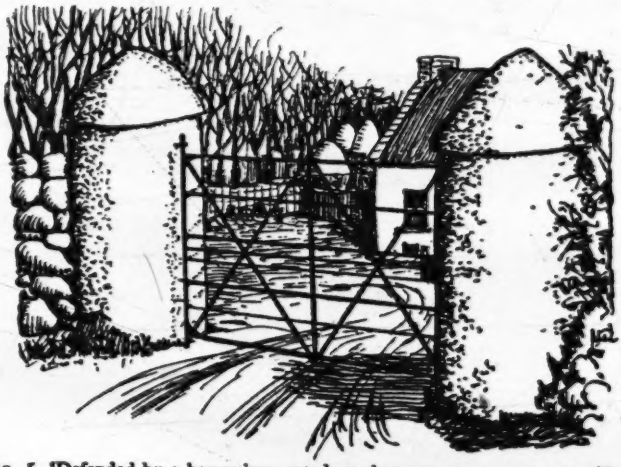

FIG. 5. 'Defended by a heavy iron gate hung between stout stone gate-pillars:' an Ulster farm.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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BALLY AND BOOLEY

These clachans, while some had their speciality such as weaving or thatching, were concerned primarily and almost exclusively with agriculture and attracted none of the elements of the true village, whether church, inn or shops. Itinerant 'tinkers and tailors' paid periodic visits and with the pedlars and beggars brought news of other districts, but the economic and social needs of the hamlet were met by periodic visits to the fairs and by seasonal gatherings of various kinds. Within the group the bonds of kinship were close and strong, and ties of marriage carrying reciprocal responsibilities linked one clachan with another within small neighbourhood units consisting of perhaps half a dozen townlands. With the close kinship bonds went corresponding rivalries with adjacent neighbourhoods which provided social motive force by acting as incentives. These rivalries broke out characteristically into feuds and blood-letting at fairs and gatherings. But in later days, at any rate, internal rivalries and squabbles were more conspicuous and found more opportunities within overgrown kinship groups which had become too complicated to function smoothly. A few illustrations will suffice. 361 621

One visitor explained the presence of the back-doors on clustered houses, for which we shall offer other explanations in the following chapter, by the fact that the women needed an escape when too hotly engaged in rows with neighbours.[1] Joint ownership sometimes extended to single animals with strange results. For example: 'three men were concerned in one horse; but the poor brute was rendered useless, as the unfortunate foot of the supernumerary leg remained unshod . . . and accordingly it became quite lame.[2] We are reminded of the difficulties arising from the joint ownership of fruit trees in some Mediterranean countries. It was in Donegal too that I heard of a ram which died of exposure when it was part-shorn by one of its joint owners. In the same district a man wishing to build a wall around one of his fields but unable to get his neighbour to agree, deliberately erected it a yard or two on his own side of the boundary so that the neighbour would still be forced to herd or tether his cow to prevent it trespassing on the 361 578 311 423 [422]

[1]Isaac Weld, *Statistical Survey of Roscommon* (1832), 475.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 23.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361 narrow strip between the boundary and the wall. 'Fights, tres-
578 passes, confusion, disputes and assaults, were the natural and
311 unavoidable consequences of the rundale system.'[1] On the other
423 hand we must recall the extreme reluctance with which the system was at last abandoned, the social benefits it conferred on members of the kin. The reforming landlord, Lord George Hill, comments that 'the pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together, made them consider the removal of the houses, from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built to the separate farms, a great grievance.'[2] Another writer gives as the basis of the tenants' grievance, 'the recollection of nights of social concourse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of
[517] defence against bailiff or gauger'.[3] There were ceilidhes and spinning parties, and many a clachan had its shanachie (story-teller) and its fiddler or piper—usually a maimed or simple person—who accompanied with folk-tunes. Folk-songs, occupational airs and legendary tales were kept alive in this way. Apart from the co-operation implicit in the openfield system there was a good deal of sharing in other ways. Thus there
[252] would be a communal corn-kiln for drying the grain before grinding, a knocking stone for pounding barley, and in some
[343] districts a corbelled stone sweat-house which took the place of the village doctor in treating rheumatic pains.

The openfield which lay around the cluster, normally on the
311 down-hill side so that the vital manure could be 'sliped' down-
423 slope (see Chapter XIII), seems to have been kept in cultivation in some areas at least year after year. This was the infield, in contrast to the outfield, the outlying rough pasture bits of which were temporarily reclaimed and then left to rest for long periods. We shall return to the plough and spade and methods of cultivation in another place but may refer here to the allotment of the holdings in the common fields. Although in many parts of the country the holdings, by the end of the eighteenth century, had become fixed in their scattered parcels on the several qualities of land in the openfield, there is abundant

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22.
[2]ibid., 42.
[3]W. R. Wilde, *Dublin University Magazine*, 41 (1853), 20.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

222 minutely fragmented appearance of land held in rundale. Rights
387 of access, by narrow lanes between the beds, were often dis-
423 puted, and there were occasions for fights when as many as a hundred carts from forty townlands might converge on Mill Bay
[578] at low tide. I first heard of the seaweed beds from an Air Force pilot who brought me air photographs of what he thought was submerged farmland: the little rectangular fields of Mourne seemed to march out beneath the sea.[1] In fact they were necessary adjuncts to the arable land, and the rents of up to twenty pounds an acre were often higher than those paid for the fields of coarse sand and gravel which the wrack enriched. An auctioneer told me he had sold a wrackbed of one Irish acre for
[435] £145 not many years ago. Nearly all of the several hundred farmers who had wrack rights here held two or three beds, and each man's plans were scattered so that he had different kinds of weed growing on them: 'knob wrack' close inshore, then 'bladder wrack' and farther out still the 'lazy wrack' whose fronds are submerged at high water even at neaps and which therefore grows faster than the other species.

222 The crop was harvested with knives and sickles between March and June, the bare-footed reapers at the same time lifting, turning and re-setting the heavy boulders which tend to get buried in the sand. Carts too are liable to sink, and when the going is too soft the weed is rafted ashore. It is allowed to float on the incoming tide and a boat dragging a rope pulls the
[501] load together and tows it ashore. Very large rafts, secured by a rope of seaweed, used to be floated ashore on the tide in Mayo. Patrick Knight, describing Ballycroy about 1830, observed that the steersman, armed with a pole, might be seen 'sitting on the heap, roasting his potatoes and shellfish'.[2]

222 The great bulk of the wrack taken all round the coast for manure was driftweed thrown up during storms, but the supply
423 was often supplemented by cutting or pulling weed from the rocks, and in some places there were complicated methods of regulating and distributing the harvest. On a stretch of coast familiar to me in south Down one can pick out strips running out into the sea, demarcated by marked boulders. They were

[1] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, ch. 15.
[2] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 99.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

223 Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

225 Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes in-
[481] volving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed.
[292] The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The
[251] meat was salted down.

226 Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now neglected and even despised, though there are commercial
[228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he
[481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular,
[227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned
[578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

222 If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of
674 such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [Text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 99.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

upon hills', which the Dublin government found so obnoxious in the sixteenth century, the persistent efforts of the Irish to maintain their ancient rights and customs of public assembly. In the Anglo-Norman period and again during the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries towns were deliberately established with the intention of bringing 'civilized ways of living to the wild Irish'. Many of them are characterized by a wide street or square—the 'diamond' in Northern Ireland—where fairs and other gatherings could be dominated and controlled from a castle which overlooked it. These urban settlements were known to the Irish, whose native 'towns' were rarely anything more than disorderly clachans, as 'street towns'. They are found scattered at fairly regular intervals all through the countryside, usually at some river crossing or hill gap where routeways meet. Some of them, well-placed in good fertile country, have expanded, while others have decayed or remained mere villages. Often one will find not far away the old Fair Hill from which the fair was attracted as the facilities of the town outweighed the traditional pull of the inconvenient hill-top. But for long the Irish kept to their own fairs which continued, according to an Act of 1431, to 'take great customs and profits to the depression of the boroughs and the trading towns'.[1] The old assembly places are not entirely forgotten, and it often happened that they were visited for games and horse-racing long after they had lost their function as places of commerce. They are celebrated in local ballads and their sites can still be traced by the grassy mounds which are the remains of booths and cattle pens. The lost fairs of Ireland deserve a study such as is being made of the lost villages of England, but the chief sources for such a study, in the absence of records, must lie in field work and the fast-fading memories of the countryside.

The fairs were formerly organized in a recognized sequence of goods and livestock, terminating in sports and horse-racing—and not infrequently in bloodshed. Several of them achieved a notoriety which made their names a byword, and among them none was more notorious, owing partly no doubt to its proximity to Dublin, than Donnybrook Fair. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of 1845 forgets its sober purpose in thus describing

[1] T. W. Freeman, *Ireland*, 95.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 it: 'During the week, beginning on the 26th August, is held
543 the notorious Donnybrook Fair, professedly for the sale of
578 horses and black cattle, but really for vulgar dissipation, and
786 formerly for criminal outrage and the most revolting debauchery. It was for generations a perfect prodigy of moral horrors —a concentration of disgrace upon, not Ireland alone, but civilized Europe. It far surpassed all other fairs in the multitude and grossness of its disgusting incidents of vice; and, in general, it exhibited such continuous scenes of riot, bloodshed, debauchery and brutality, as only the coarsest taste and the most hardened heart could witness without painful emotion.' This was by day; 'the orgies of the night may be better imagined than described'. An anonymous writer is quoted as saying: 'We venture to say that there is more misery and madness, devilment and debauchery, than could be found crowded into an equal space of ground in any other part of this our globe, during five times the same space, which is spent at Donnybrook, in one given year'. The *Gazetteer* then recovers itself and offers excuses for 'describing what ought never to have been described'. One regrets rather that the compiler was so overcome by horror as to forget his statistical duties.

The absence of moral restraint which led to extremes of
543 lawlessness at Donnybrook and elsewhere was a normal and
527 characteristic accompaniment of these periodic folk-gatherings.
443 Such moral holidays are a feature of many societies which have
[786] not been greatly influenced by urban ways and values. Their purpose appears to be cathartic, but that there is a lingering fertility magic underlying the excitement is suggested by such strange rituals as those which mark the 'Puck Fair and Pattern' of Kilorglin at the head of Dingle Bay in Co. Kerry. The fair is unfortunately not mentioned in the *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, though the village of Kilorglin is described as 'an unprosperous, sequestered, and almost squalid seat of population; and appears to have acquired marvellously little profit from the advantageousness of its position for both inland and seaward trade'. Puck Fair, held every August, is the great event of the year in West Kerry, and lasts three days. 10th August is 'Gathering Day', the 11th is 'Fair Day', and the 12th 'Scattering Day', terms which have no doubt been handed down from days when

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

443 One may readily see how this[1] came about, for these were the
437 times when the stock was gathered and sorted, and dues were paid to the overlords in cattle. In the ordinary business of the fair exchange and barter gave way in time to money transactions, but one has only to visit a cattle fair to sense that the noisy ritual of assessing values and the prolonged bargaining have come down from a time before the use of money was general. The vigorous hand-slapping by which bargains
[201] are sealed in tight-lipped silence could derive from the days when different languages were spoken at the fairs. Apart from the difference between English and Gaelic it should be remembered that in many districts pockets of non-Gaelic speech, perhaps even of non-Aryan tongues, survived well into the Christian era. Another interesting accompaniment of the con-
[777] cluded bargain is the piece of money, the luck penny, which the seller hands back to the purchaser as a gesture of independence when a price has finally been agreed on. Many a fight
[578] has begun because a buyer has been dissatisfied with the amount of his luck money. Similar bargaining took place when a servant was being hired for the half year, and he received his earles or earnest money as a sign that the contract was concluded, handing over to his employer his bundle of clothes in return.

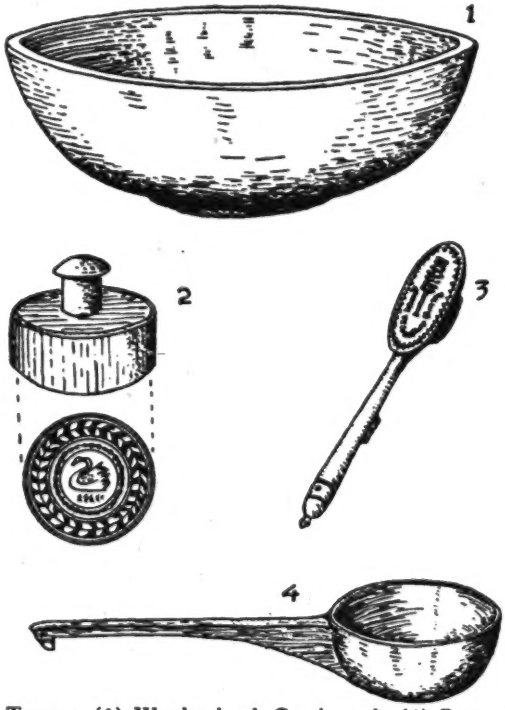
543 The countryman will find any excuse for going to the fair,
[805] and it is his proud boast that he has seen so many fairs. It is by the fairs, and not by the calendar, that he measures time and dates important events in the life of the community. 'Their whole thought seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging', it was written of the Mayo peasantry in 1836,[1] and in the seventeenth century we find this comment on 'the inferior rank of husbandmen' in Westmeath: '(they) are very crafty and subtile in all manner of bargaining, especially in their dealings in fairs and markets'.[2] Your luck at the fair might depend
777 on the colour of the hair of the first person you met on the road,
543 and it was unlucky to be passed on the way, so that horsemen riding at full gallop were not merely trying out their paces for the races which followed. For good luck you should carry with

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 104.
[2]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 115.

1 [ie, the seasons and rent days 260 dating from 1 May and 1 November. — Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

them have had to be suppressed: they became occasions of law- 796
lessness and bloodshed. Like the fairs they drew their adherents
from several rival neighbourhoods and therefore brought 796
feuding clans together. The following is a typical comment of 579
the early nineteenth century: 'On these patron days, which [786]



[322]
[415]

FIG. 88. Turnery. (1) Wooden bowl, Co. Armagh. (2) Butter stamp, Co Fermanagh. (3) Butter stamp, Co. Antrim. (4) Ladle, Co. Antrim.

generally fall out on Sundays, great numbers of young persons of both sexes assemble, tents are erected, music, dancing, drinking and every kind of excess takes place, and the revel not infrequently terminates in battery and bloodshed, from the contention of adverse factions'.[1] Sir William Wilde's description

[1]W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 3, 245 (of Listerling, Co. Kilkenny).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

796 of the Pattern of Glendalough in Co. Wicklow was written
578 later in the century. The fights would begin early on the eve of the patron's day, on 23rd June; 'the scene was remarkable, an immense crowd had bivouacked among the ruins (of the seven churches of Glendalough) and were cooking their evening meal, gipsy-wise, throughout the space of the sacred enclosure. Dancing, drinking, thimble-rigging, prick-o'-the-loop and other amusements continued even while the bare-
[788] headed venerable pilgrims and bare-kneed voteens were going their prescribed rounds. Towards evening the fun became fast and furious . . . the crowd thickened, sticks were brandished and the faction fight began. It was an unsafe locality unless a stipendiary magistrate and about 100 police could keep the combatants, the Byrnes, Tools and Farrells, etc., separate'.[1]

796 Some of the most notorious patterns were connected with
786 holy wells named after a saint but not necessarily located near an old church site. Reading the accounts of witnesses in the early nineteenth century it is hard to believe that religious devotion could be associated with such profanity, but granting that social conditions in the decades before the great famine must have contributed to scenes which the church itself described as 'drunkenness and debauchery', there was, as with the wakes for the dead, a vestige of innocent paganism in the rituals. Some patterns survived their banning by the church and have persisted, stripped of their grosser elements, to this day. The
[788] celebrated wells of St. Patrick at Struell in Co. Down, which are still visited by a few pilgrims on St. John's Eve, were the scene of the gathering of great crowds of people and of strange rites until a few years ago. Here as often happened the chief celebration was on the Eve of the Feast of St. John the Baptist and not on the patron saint's day, so that it was not strictly a pattern. Another Midsummer gathering which has often been described is that of St. Ronogue's Well near Cork, which has changed beyond recognition since Mrs. Hall, in 1824, described it as an assembly of 'the worthless and dissipated of the whole county. To the superstitious rites of the morning succeeded the saturnalia of the evening;—the having drunk of the water being considered as a licence for every sort of debauchery . . .

[1]Sir William Wilde, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1873), 449.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued from p.* 60).

XII. *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds.*

It is unlucky to see the new moon through glass; to throw dust or slops out of a house on New Year's Day, as you throw away with them all the good luck of the year; to throw dust or slops towards a neighbouring "fort";[1] to see one magpie, or a "weazel" (stoat), without saluting it by bowing or taking off your hat; to go out of a house where they are churning without "putting your hand to the churn," *i.e.* giving a few strokes with the churn "dash," so that you will not "take" the butter; and to take fire out of a house,—so that, if you light a pipe indoors, it should be smoked out before leaving. Iron and pins,—except crooked pins with the points towards you,—should be picked up, and the first thrown over the left shoulder. Rub your hand on wood if it itches or after a boastful speech or speaking too confidently of the future; in east Clare you touch wood twice, with the phrase, "Good word (*or* time) be it spoken," after an imprudent expression.[2] You should bow to the new moon. Turn your money for luck after seeing the new moon. On visiting a friend in a new house, you should give some present, however small. In east Clare some persons are careful to throw a hen or other fowl that has died of disease over the fence on to their neighbour's land, to remove the ill-luck from their own poultry.[3] Others will not wash eggs offered for sale, as it stops

[1] So Dr. Macnamara and others.
[2] "Scratch it in wood, and it will come good," says a rhyme.
[3] Practised near Tulla, and resulting in some cases in great ill-will.

[577] [825] [574] [578] [p. 224]

Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
• [578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[154] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[562] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
562 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céilí* on the common land, which married women do not.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculcation of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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harmony, but other biases are at work (Messenger 1968:29–30). Writers of strong 578 •
religious bent have exaggerated the Catholic moral virtues embodied in the Irish family and community and have disregarded disputes because they involve unchristian behavior, while social scientists with a functional theoretical orientation have emphasized the integration of social groups and have neglected disputes because they betray dysfunction. Those observers who have depended almost entirely on the guided interview to obtain data concerning family and community often have remained oblivious to disputes. Some researchers, however, have collected information on disputes in an objective manner, but have been unwilling to publish it for fear of antagonizing the folk, the church, and the government—thus losing their positions or jeopardizing research in the future. The most valuable study to date on disputes in Ireland is that of Elliott Leyton, which is based on research that he conducted between 1964 and 1966 in Aughnaboy (like Inis Beag, a fictitious name), a village in Co. Down with three times the population of Inis Beag.

Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' distinction between conscious and uncon- 121
scious models, Leyton first examines the conscious models—explanatory constructs, 578
or norms, of the people themselves—held by Aughnaboy villagers concerning disputes, then the types of disputes which in fact do occur within the community —from which the unconscious models are inferred by the analyst. Three conscious models held by the villagers are of pertinence to us: those for personal conduct, relations between kinsmen, and relations between non-kin (Leyton 1966:535–536). The first is summarized in the concept of "decency."

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> To be a "decent" man is to carry out one's obligations to society in a style characterized by cheerfulness and friendliness, to pause willingly for a chat and, most importantly, to refrain—regardless of the provocation—from any display of overt hostility. . . . greatest esteem is reserved for those who succeed in maintaining cordial relations with everyone in the village; and the greatest contempt is reserved for those quarrelsome individuals who are frequently involved in disputes.

Relations between kinsmen, Leyton says,

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> . . . are characterized, ideally, by the highest degree of friendliness and harmony. The individual is expected to feel the strongest affection for his kinsmen, and to subordinate all other loyalties . . . to the demands of his kinsmen. . . . individuals are expected to suppress their personal desires and ideals if they conflict with the unity of the group. . . . Close affective ties and regular visiting rarely occur outside the field of kinship. Non-kin are regarded with suspicion and distrust, and the 121
interests of non-kin are seen as being in potential opposition to the interests of one's 578
own kin. 609

Ideally, friendliness and harmony characterize relations between non-kin as well in Aughnaboy.

> Non-kin are in general expected to behave according to the standards of "decency" . . . to be cheerful and talkative and to avoid quarrels. . . . Aughnaboy inhabitants conceive relations between non-kin to be a system in equilibrium . . . relations

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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121 between the separate groups of kin in the village are seen to be in delicate balance
578 of power which is expressed in the local phrase, "you can't fight anybody around
609 here because all their people will gang up on you." If an individual's kinsmen must defend him in his personal disputes, it necessarily follows that a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin.

114 By and large, these three conscious models apply to Inis Beag as well as Aughnaboy.
121 Leyton discovers broad "disparities between the conscious models and the
578 statistical patterns formed by the actual behaviour" of people in Aughnaboy, manifested in 74 disputes covering a time span of ten years in the memories of his respondents. He classifies these disputes according to three criteria: their severity, the issues provoking them, and the categories of individuals involved (Leyton 1966:537–539). The criterion of severity yields three types of disputes: argument —"characterized by frequent or continuous arguments . . . associated primarily with exchange of verbal abuse;" withdrawal—where "social relations are actually severed and cooperation is withdrawn;" and interference—in which active attempts are made to "interfere with the welfare of the opposing party. These attempts, which may be secret or open, include legal suits, reports to the police, theft and, rarely, physical violence, as well as withdrawal of all cooperation." Three types of disputes also are distinguishable when issues provoking hostility are examined: economic—"which includes conflict such as rivalry between shopkeepers and disputed inheritance;" personality clashes—"which includes disputes primarily attributed to the innately quarrelsome personalities of certain individuals;" and jealousy—"which refers primarily to situations in which an individual's affections are alienated." The categories of persons involved in disputes are agnatic kin, uterine kin, affinal kin, and non-kin. Leyton establishes rank orders for each of his type classifications, and finds that the rank order for the severity classification is withdrawal, interference, and argument; for the issues classification, it is personality clashes, jealousy, and economic; and for the individuals involved classification, it is affinal kin, agnatic kin, non-kin, and uterine kin.

121 In applying Leyton's unconscious models of disputes to Inis Beag, I have
578 modified slightly his severity and issues classifications. To the former, I have added
[521] a fourth type which I call gossip; this is not gossip of the ordinary variety so
[683] common on the island, but rather continuous, pernicious verbal attacks made by a person within earshot of his victim's relatives and close friends, which usually do not lead to argument. In the case of the issues classification, I have broadened the
[157] range of personality clashes. There are several "innately quarrelsome" individuals in Inis Beag, but most personality conflicts involve persons other than these, who have come to dislike one another intensely for numerous reasons, most of which are related to envy, jealousy (other than alienation of affections), resentment
578 against authority, and hostility toward members of the opposite sex. Over 200 disputes have occurred on the island within the past generation, excluding those involving semi-permanent dwellers—curates, lighthouse keepers, and the Dane.
578 The higher incidence of disputes in Inis Beag is attributable, for the most part, to
121 the longer time span appraised and the addition of gossip to the severity classification in my analysis. However, the rank orders of the three type classifications

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closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference. 578 121

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin. 114 121 578 578

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families. 578 609 602 [428] [626] [691] [685]

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than 578 [602] [609] [122] [562]

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578 women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip
[662] and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples.
578 One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism
626 of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into
[828] a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first
[123] meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

121 I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an
578 observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants;
181 this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

114 Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

> 114 This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every
> 181 book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

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275 The best singers will be
273 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[167] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
273 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[578] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
273 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
273 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the
[576] free stout brought me in."

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

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574 273 Women [562] [514] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 [535] [562] The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

[857] 574 834

574 533 [123] 574 273 [533] [535] Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 [576] Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

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574 579 123 [577] My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

574 579 178 [738]

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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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58 not, like an Inishbofin man, consider himself disgraced, nor is he inconsolable.

Engaged couples or newly married people often come in for an amount of attention from the children of the neighbourhood, which, however flattering it may be, is decidedly embarrassing; they are followed about and cheered whenever they appear together. Weddings
585 are occasions of family festivities, and are usually followed by a dance.
533 "Straw-boys" go round to the house on these occasions and take part in the dancing. They are disguised in tall conical-shaped straw
292 masks, adorned with strips of red and green cloth, white shirts decorated with coloured ribbons, and white or red petticoats. The band is headed by a captain and a mate, who enter the house first and declare that they are shipwrecked sailors, and that they have come to dance at the wedding; the captain then dances with the bride, the mate with the bridesmaid, and the rest of the band with the other girls. It is usual to treat the straw-boys to drink, but they often refuse it, and never demand money, or indulge in any rowdy conduct.

The young couple usually set up house on their own account,
591 except in the case of the youngest son, who inherits his parents' house and property, in which case the bride goes to live with her people-in-law.

When a person is dying, windows and doors are thrown open, and
763 the clock (if there be one) stopped; it is considered unlucky or im-
777 proper for any of those in the house to cry until after the death has actually occured.

Wakes are still held in this district, and many of the old obser-
764 vances and games are kept up; but owing to the discouragement of these by the clergy, the people show a great reluctance to give any information on the matter. A good deal of drinking usually takes place on these occasions.

The funeral customs have undergone some change during the past thirty years, but much still remains that is worthy of notice. A grave is not usually dug until the coffin reaches the graveyard, if begun before hand it is never dug on a Monday, or commenced at least, but a start is made, if necessity compels, by raising a few sods on Sunday. It is believed to be unlucky to bury a corpse on New Year's Day, an act
[777] which is thought to bring misfortune to the whole neighbourhood.

The coffin is usually taken out the back door of the house, and conveyed to the cemetery by the longest route. At the graveyard the *caoine* is raised by the women immediately after the religious ceremony

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

114 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe,* by
155 William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark,* probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and
[12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and
+ 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.[6] Opler and Singer have the following to
15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland:
[593]

> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.
> • [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures
> [838] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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[815] [6] Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma,
[779] and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] • [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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absolution from the sin of adultery must be obtained before normal relations of husband and wife can be resumed. This is the effect of the infringement of the marriage taboo upon wife's relatives. 602 612 835

In a patrilineal, patrilocal structure, such as the Irish one, the wife is brought into the husband's family, given a place therein, and takes his patronym. Yet the inclusion is not complete, and, though a woman takes the husband's name, especially among the upper classes and at law, becomes the mistress of the husband's house, and in a thousand ways is oriented to her husband's group, her origin is never lost sight of. Her kindred are referred to as "my wife's friends," yet through the integration of the two families at marriage they become likewise "friends" of the husband. Kinship obligations extend to them. 591 602 612

From an internal point of view, however, marriage is a destruction of two former restricted families, in so far as two individuals leave them in order to form a new restricted family in which the individuals are husband and wife. Perhaps because of this disruptive effect on the paternal families, there is no provision made for a closer integration between them. No terms express the new relationship; the emphasis of relationship by affinity is restricted to the point of view of the marrying couple. Where the primary accent is upon vertical descent through blood kindred, there is little scope for a lateral rapport between the parental families of the marrying pair. 612 581 [601]

From the point of view of the marrying pair, however, an extension of kinship bonds is made. They are now one. Thus the immediate family of ego's wife are included in ego's kinship group. In the English terminology these relatives are called father-, mother-, brother-, sister-, son- "in-law." It must be noted that the terms brother-in-law and sister-in-law do not include wife or husband's siblings' spouses. The British and American usage extends the term 581 601 612

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581 to them, but neither the Church nor the Irish farmers in-
601 clude them within the kinship system. Marriage taboo,
612 which the Church calls diriment impediment, does not extend to them. For this reason two brothers may marry two sisters under canon law, and a man his stepson's widow. There is no "blood" connection. For the same reason, the spouses of mother's and father's siblings, who are called uncles and aunts in American and British terminology, are not included in ego's group; "call" does not extend to them; they do not "belong" to ego.

581 The explanation of this exclusion of all relatives by
611 affinity except those brought in by ego's own individual
612 marriage lies in the concept of marriage uniting only the marrying individuals. For in the Irish system blood descent alone determines kinship: from the point of view of ego only those within a common system of blood descent are recognized as kin. Accordingly, on marrying, only those within a common system of descent with ego's wife become kin. Such a rigid adherence to the principle of descent does not prevent the development of very amicable and prescribed relations with such individuals as one's father's brother's wife. It merely excludes them from one's own kinship group.

601 The Irish terminology expresses the same reckoning of
612 affinity. The word *cleamhnas* covers both marriage and relationship by affinity. It also indicates a "match." The word *céile* is used both as an adverb with the sense of the English word "together" and as a noun meaning "mate."
601 *Céile* is the root of various expressions, such as *céilidheacht*,
612 referring to marriage. In Irish, father-in-law is called either
539 *áthair cleamhna* or *athair chéile*, mother-in-law *máthair chéile*, as in the proverb:

> Bean mhic is máthair chéile,
> Mar chat agus luch ar aghaidh a céile

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balance between high fertility and few and late marriages 163
keeps their number down.

The kernel of the problem lies,[1] of course, in the behavior 581
of the country people. Marriage brings both dispersal of the farm family and change of status for boys and girls. The marriage of one of the sons brings re-formation of the whole family group upon the farm. The crux of the matter lies in this reorganization of the farm family and the mechanism of the change and continuity it provides.

The nearly universal form of marriage in the Irish coun- 581 ●
tryside unites transfer of economic control, land ownership, 584
reformation of family ties, advance in family and community status, and entrance into adult procreative sex life. It is a central focus of rural life, a universal turning point in individual histories. This form of marriage is known as matchmaking. It is the usual, in fact until recently the only respectable, method of marriage and usually too of inheritance.

In Figure 12 the reader will find a graphic representation of the description of the movement of the family and the re-formation of relations which the match involves and which is the burden of this chapter. It explains itself, and it gives a very good illustration of the generalities. Organicists should take heart at its resemblance to an amoeba expanding and budding. But the resemblance is accidental. The examples we cite come nearly all from County Clare, but literary references and interviewing in other places have been made to show that matchmaking prevails almost universally among small farmers with very little local modification. It is furthermore imbedded in the Irish (Gaelic) tongue and very old in Irish history.

A match (Gaelic, *cleamhnas*, marriage, and *spré*, a match) is a contractual marriage made by the parents or families of the marrying parties and involving the disposal of properties. Generally it begins with a farmer's casting round for a

1 [i.e., that of population decline.—Analyst]

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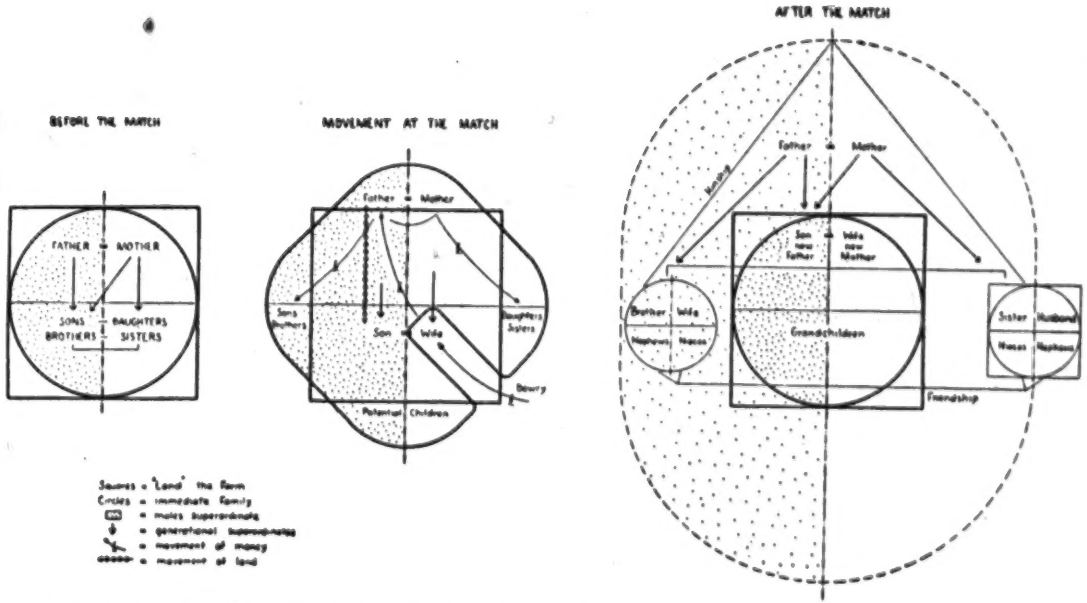
581
584

FIGURE 12

THE MATCH
(FARM MARRIAGE)

[P. 108]



Diagrammatic representation of the re-formation of farm families at the marriage of the heir. The diagram demonstrates the rearrangement of all the constituent relations between persons and the reëstablishment of the equilibrium of the familistic system.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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suitable girl for one of his sons who is to inherit his farm. 581 ●
The choice of the heir from among the sons rests in the 584
father's hands. Historically, all the sons and daughters were provided for on the land, and, where possible, this is still the ideal situation, but the closer identification of family with one particular plot of land and the difficulty of land division fostered through three generations of agrarian agitation and land reform have prevented this. One son, then, is ordinarily to be "settled on the land." Typically today only one son remains, and he gets the farm.

In the words of one countryman, the procedure would be: 583

If I wanted to give my farm over to my son and I would be 584
worth, say, two hundred pounds, I would know a fellow up the hill, for instance, that would be worth three hundred pounds. I would send up a neighbor fellow to him and ask him if he would like to join my family in marriage. If the fellow would send back word he would and the girl would say she was willing (and the usual courtesies were exchanged), then on a day they agreed on I and the fellow would meet in Ennistymon (the local market town) and talk over the whole thing as to terms, maybe sitting on it the whole day. Then, before, if it was land I didn't know or the fellow came from afar off, I would walk his land and look at it and the cattle there were on it to make sure of the farm. Then we would go to a solicitor that day and make up the writings in Ennistymon. The money, say three hundred pounds, would be paid over in cash or in promissory notes, and it is usual here to divide it into two parts or sometimes more. One-half is paid at the wedding, and the other is paid a year after.

This statement contains in essence nearly the whole of matchmaking. As the old fellow indicates, the initiative in the matter lies with the owner of the farm, usually the father of the boy. When the time comes for him to relinquish the farm, he lets it be known in the district to those who have daughters ready to be dowered. On the other hand, the father of the girl may often take the initiative, letting it be known that his daughter has a dowry at such and such a

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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her year and she got first. At that time her sister sent over the 583
passage money, and she was about to go when they stopped her
and married her into this shop. Her sister was coming over
before the marriage but her fiancé wouldn't let her go for fear
someone would snatch her up too.

Ordinarily, as so many of the examples we have already 583
given show, marriage in the matchmaking system is a matter
of free agreement within the traditional setting. Love enters 581
the situation, however, only to complicate it. A runaway
match upsets the whole pattern, the interplay of dowries,
land, and portions of it for children, the transition between
adulthood and old age for the parental couple. There are
other considerations, too, which account for the disturbance a runaway match creates, such as those of class involved in "marrying beneath" one, but they are outside our present subject.

The following story illustrates the case. A countryman is describing a happening in his district:

Tom L— was making a match for his daughter with a fine farm of land, and they got as far as picking the gander [the name of a feast given by the bride's people slightly before the wedding]. They were all up there eating and drinking and dancing all night. Now a fellow from Ennistymon [town] came to it, but he was such an ordinary fellow he was not even invited into the front of the house but stayed in the kitchen. He was so poor and lazy, he brought a little turf to market sometimes, but that was all. Next day, the girl came down to the chapel to be married, and before they knew it, didn't she run off with this fellow. Tom cut her off and disowned her, and she's living in Limerick with her fellow now, but it might be in Australia for all Tom will do for her.

Even when matters have not gone so far, the runaway 583
match causes a grave disturbance and destroys the cohesion 578
of the family. The following account given by a publican
in Ennis of country acquaintances shows that reconciliation
occurs after a time, but that the disruptive effect upon the

FAMILY TRANSITION AT MARRIAGE 131 561

Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581 ●
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 885
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age 886
do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of
their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on
the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which
mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which
betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those dif-
ferentiations of status which are given formal and explicit
recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of
daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers
themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re-
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 561
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 574
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the 576
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by 517
right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit be-
hind them round the room on other chairs or on the window
seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the prin-
cipal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrange-
ment shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old
men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to
sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter
in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the
old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger
men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving
the center of the stage to the old men, and the children
stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men
have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the
divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

592 342 775 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

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The "earthiness" and the ribaldry of the country people is not an antithesis to their strict moral code. Rather it reinforces it. It gives its pietistic and too-respectable, churchly and town-bourgeois aspects an authentic, indigenous touch. Even more important, it makes for a modification of the conventional attitudes which fit them for the country people's social life. 369 834 208

In this ambivalence of attitude one can see the identifications between status in human relations and norms about sexual behavior more clearly. The one view, that "holiness" denies sex, can be reserved to suit the non-procreant statuses of family life. The other, the hearty and open view embodying animal analogy, frank interest, overt desire, can be reserved for the persons whose roles in social life allow free rein to the amatory and procreative urges.

For the small farmers marriages are for the purpose of producing children and assuring continuity of descent and ownership. They are "forever." They are indissoluble. Sexual relations are part of marriage, its pleasure and its duty. They lead to children if one is fortunate and strong and potent. It is the will of God. One may regret that one's childbearing came so early. There might have been more time for free enjoyment. But it is a regret to which one resigns oneself easily. 581 833

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weakening his horror of murder or his distaste for adulterous behavior, however familiar his tabloid-viewing may make them. Similarly the Englishman reading his detective stories and the Frenchman listening to his *chanteuses* are merely indulging vicarious "thrills." All of them are going through a playful rehearsal of the conditioned reflexes of social sanction, indignation, rage, and punitive action in the same way a dog growls and bares his fangs at his play fighting. The idea may seem a bit ludicrous in itself, and it will offend the moralists. But let them remember that in most persons moral and ethical activity is absolutely unreasoned, spontaneous, and without any kind of intellectual support at all. It is pure reflex. Like any other reflex, it must be kept alive by a constant restimulation. Only overzealous priests, reformers, teachers, "nice people," and prudes miss this point. They fail to understand that vulgarity often hides far stricter morality than hypocritic cant. This laughter represents a constant and not unpleasurable reiteration of the accepted canons of morality upon so important a matter.

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581 833 842 Thus marital and sexual success have but one criterion. One proves one's worth sexually in the marriage bed, which is in turn the childbirth bed. The proof of happy adjustment, of masculine virility, and of feminine worth is "the good long family." "Lots of women have no children," you are told, "but the men have no value in them if they don't." Both man and woman are at fault and in misfortune in childlessness. In one case of repeated miscarriages, the man might be at fault, it was said, because "he usedn't to make them [the children] right."

834 It is only with the married men and women who are still engaged in producing offspring that any kind of sexual interest, officially at least, is permitted or even deemed to exist. Among others in the rural communities the interest either does not exist at all, in the eyes of small farmers, or it exists only as an evil, but powerful force. As such it must be subjected to constant control. This is the case among the young. Among the old, if it exists at all, it is only as a survival of embers that should far better be long dead. For adults, in adult family life, sex is divested of any awesome, evil character. "God help us," said one woman in this regard, "what is natural can't be wonderful."

581 Thus one can see why it is that nearly everything the young people do seems to their elders to shape them for the goal of marriage and family headship. Much of local custom comes to have that explanation. The goal is taken for granted. It is the ambition of all the young members. Their activity either marks time until they shall be able to take their places as married family heads or it prepares them for that directly. Even the pastimes and jollities of country life in the communities the authors came to know had that keynote.

The pastimes of the young people in which the usual segregation of the sexes is bridged point toward matchmaking and country marriage.

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Even where matches are made between strangers, some kind of sexual attraction is not to be neglected, and local custom provides for a brief introduction and a setting for courtship. Several cases came to the authors' notice in which advantageous matches were broken off when either boy or girl expressed distaste for his or her prospective partner, usually when confronted with him or her at the preliminary festivities of the country marriage. Other cases again came to their notice in which a shy suitor could be galvanized into a final decision to take matters into his own hands and press a suit, when his family began to cast around for a match for him elsewhere. Matchmaking was, in fact, far from presenting a scene of "loveless" marriages. The match is a convention like any other. For those who are trained in it, it provides occasion for arousing sexual interest and marital aspirations in young couples quite in the manner of "falling in love" in communities where courtship is more immediately a matter of personal initiative. 581 584

And, like any other convention, the match could also come to cloak another situation. The match made by the contracting families is the ideal kind of marriage, for the reasons we have discussed. But it does not necessarily imply any one kind of courtship. In many instances a couple who made their own decision had a match made for them. Even in the case of "runaways," as elopements are called, the boy and girl could often be brought back and a match made for them. And lastly, as a way of establishing respectability and providing for the movement of the re-formation of the family, even those cases of marriage necessitated by premarital pregnancy could be fitted into the dominant convention. [836]

Thus the forms of courtship and the development of pairings among the population of boys and girls of the country communities must all be understood, even in their most unusual forms, in terms of the dominant pattern of the 581 183 577

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581 familistic system and the kind of marriage it entails in rural
183 Ireland. The country people feel this. Their attitudes
577 identify the convention with the whole code of morality and folkways of their own class and kind.

183 They equate any departure from the accepted norm as a
577 sin, a lack of religion. They bring the whole weight of all
673 their sanctions and values to bear upon it. They make the ultimate identification between their own norms and the only right conduct, particularly in this matter so central to the rural familistic system. This final attitude was often addressed to the observers, particularly, but there is reason to believe that it is as often expressed among the country people themselves. In discussions of immorality, illegitimacy, premarital intercourse, the question would arise: Would you believe such a thing could happen in Ireland? In such countries as England and America well it might, for there, the country people hear, the boys and girls just take a liking for one another and go off and marry and "never mind the money." And we remember that in this case the "money" means the re-formation of the entire two families as well.

Even those cases which meet condemnation are likewise often thought to have to do with the dominant pattern. Whether or not the suspicions of the country people are correct, the authors do not know. But they were struck with the fact that so very often in discussions of cases of immorality and unethical sexual conduct the country people made no recourse to concepts of search for pleasure or even of the overpowering force of emotion as explanations of the condemned conduct. Both explanations were to be heard in other classes. Rather, the country people insisted upon looking for a motive in terms of the system of organizing human relations which they understood. The culprits, young "bucks," tried deliberately in such cases to impregnate the girls and force marriages. They were motivated

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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183 otherwise unaccountable cases in which a man or woman
577 abondoned farm and fortune and the favor of friends for
832 a sexual attraction. How else to explain, for instance, an old man's senile infatuation, a young boy's indiscourageable devotion to an older woman who could bring him nothing?

583 A word must be said here of the other ways of bringing about marriage than the formal process of family matchmaking. In the last century, to judge from the accounts of the old people, and to follow the testimony of novelists on Irish life, a stage-managed elopement was often resorted to. It was a semi-respectable kind of marriage. The swain and his friends kidnapped the bride out through the window in the night. They took her away from her father's house to the house of an uncle or other relative of the young man's. There dancing and general jollity reigned, and the young couple were feted. Very often all parties seem to have connived at the result. On other occasions, the elopment was obviously designed to bring about a match to which parents objected or to force parents to a decision. Staged elopements of this kind seem now to have died out in Clare, or at least to be rather infrequent. But the difference between this and a true runaway is slight. In the latter case the young couple take matters into their own hands entirely. Throughout the years many couples have eloped, run off to towns and to emigrate without parental blessing. Others have done likewise and returned to get their portions and a delayed parental sanction. Nevertheless one can see that all these forms are mere modifications upon the dominant convention.

583 They too must lead into the familistic pattern. A match
581 must be made, or at least fortunes given and provision for family re-formation made. In cases of premarital pregnancy, the match may be forced or hastened, but it is nonetheless the final and respectable resolution.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation. 848 183 581

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls. 183 836 562

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. 837 183 [593]

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire. 834 571

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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834 laughter is best explained as playful censure. For very real
522 censure often breaks out against such a person. It is particu-
587 larly likely to break out into overt punitive action in cases where old farmers threaten the expectations of their heirs by taking young women as second wives. In fact, the one kind of man or woman of considerable age who does not command respect is this. The countryside finds endless amusement in the theme of May and November. Naturally the matchmaking system does lend itself fairly well to matings between oldish men and young women, since ownership of a farm is the basis for a match.

581 The most interesting point of inquiry, then, may well be
554 the connection between the sexual status of the family mem-
183 bers, as we have described it here, and the standing of the family. The sexual status of the members is a reflection of their capacity for carrying alliance among the other families of the countryside. Can we draw, therefore, a connection between rural familistic norms about sexual behavior and the class structure of the rural community?

We know already that marriage in rural Ireland yields us one clue to the connection. At matchmaking the negotiations between the contracting parties concern the relative standing of each. That standing is at stake. The equivalence of dowry and land are arrived at through a careful enumeration of all the past history and the present material substance of the contracting families. The location of the farm, its livestock, its soil, the reputation and ancestry of the family, all these are compared. Backward places, we remember, do not grow big fortunes. Neither do many other kinds of persons and places.

We are dealing here of course only with one broad class, the country people. Yet within the boundaries of rural life there is much to be learned of the country people's treatment of relative prestige and standing among themselves. There are many behaviors in the activity of the countryside

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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which express attitudes of social stratification. These do not only express the differences between the country people and outsiders from other classes beyond the confines of the local districts; they have much to do with the intimate details of personal relations in daily life among the small farmers as well. Intimate as they may be, however, these behaviors are nonetheless powerful. Like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization around marriage and matchmaking in country custom. In that they are directly a part of the organization of sexual conduct and attitudes among the small farmers.

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From this fact springs the seeming paradox of Irish rural life, already mentioned. A social system centering so strongly round the institution of the family condemns a large proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only through marriage does one attain full stature and one's family take its full place in the interlocking alliances of extended kindreds in the countryside. Failure to make a match is not only failure to fulfill one's own destiny of mating and procreating; it is also, as we have seen, failure to provide for the dispersal and re-formation of one's group. It is also, as we shall see, failure to maintain or establish the alliances making status among one's peers.

Thus it is the identification of sexual behavior with familistic role on the one hand and attainment of status on the other that makes the problems of marriage and sex of such great social and emotional importance.

Their importance is both individual and social. Individually, the powerful dispositions and sentiments concerned give a deep-seated biological and physiological basis to the institutional imperatives and the behavioral norms learned in experience of human relations. Socially, the fact that such a basis can be relied upon gives added strength to the attitudes evoked in support of the social institutions of the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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countryside and an added, automatic sanction to the enforcement, through public and official channels, of the accepted behaviors. In this manner, based upon and reinforced by such deep-rooted automatic reactions of individual conscience, the canons of morality, custom, personal habit, religious teaching, and social sanction form a whole piece all together. To hazard a comparison, let us select other central nexuses of custom, attitude, and emotion, among other peoples. By the process described, sexual morality becomes to Irish society, from the country people with whom we are dealing upward through other classes of society, what respect for law is to English society, what filial piety once was to Chinese society.

Let us now see how this mutual incorporation of sexual, marital, and stratificational standards works out in the experience of the countryside.

In the system of relations we have described, the fate of persons at the hands of their fellows and the repute they bear among them are closely connected. Local standing is, of course, a product of values arising in local experience. Consequently when we come upon the comedies and tragedies of life within a specific community, and hear described by the people themselves the course of events through which these little dramas took place and the impression they made upon the witnesses, we are close to observation of the experience which builds a scale of values and the place of individuals in it. The problem of local repute and public opinion can be reviewed in the light of concrete events and referred to actual relationships built out of behavior.

Thus one can come to see these petty events not merely as personal histories but also as functions of the patterns of organization we have been detailing.

If then we should take up the life of a local community and its inhabitants and search it through for its family histories of recent years, we should lay bare the roots of local

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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values. Such a study was made in one community studied. Family histories since the famine times were secured from two hundred families of a Clare parish. The histories included farms owned or rented, worked, subdivided, added or lost, in each generation since pre-famine days; names, numbers, sexes, and life-sketches of family members of each generation; occupations of each person not taking to farming; emigrations and the destination of the emigrants in each generation; marriages made in each generation, according to farms married into, occupations of husbands and fathers-in-law, and size of dowry. Much of this material was statistical in form, but along with it a considerable amount of anecdotal material was gathered, describing in detail many local incidents. This information is out of place here; and it will be reported elsewhere. But certain conclusions of relevance to the problem of understanding the social role of marital alliances in the countryside are of importance for the present discussion.

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The first of these conclusions concerns the mechanism by which families without farms or with very small and "backward" ones were forced to extinction through celibacy. The second of these conclusions illustrates the means by which alliances made through the matchmaking mechanism provided a channel of upward social movement and incidentally a path of recruitment of the successful children of farmers in the "bad" or poorer lands into the ranks of those of the "good" or better lands.

The first conclusion illustrated by the material of this survey of family histories is one we have already met. Failure to make marital alliances led to failure of family reformation and hence either to celibacy for all the children or to emigration on the part of the whole generation. In the words of the countryside, if a family could find no one with whom to marry "they died out of it."

Even so broad a question as the disappearance of the class

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Even so broad a question as the disappearance of the class
183 of artisans in the countryside comes, for its explanation,
● 581 under this conclusion. It cannot be understood except in
554 terms of responses to values determined in the relations of familism. The social mechanism by which the local artisans have disappeared — whatever the historic and economic occasion of their fate in the industrial revolution and its aftermath — is something specific to the system of social organization we have described.

The few local artisans who survive today were once members of a numerous group. In the days before railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, and smiths followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Their skills descended, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; the trade was "in their blood." Their surplus children have had to disperse to the towns and in emigration. For theirs, too, is a familistic world.

Unless the artisans in the countryside marry within their own fast-diminishing numbers, they, too, must have land and fortune. If they do not get it, they must either marry one of their own kind or stay celibate. Today one finds many survivors of this local class of craftsmen scattered here and there in the countryside. The mere memory of their trade may be all that remains to distinguish them from petty cotters. In the majority of cases they have not married. If they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Thus the family "dies out of it." Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

The mechanism by which this extinction is brought about is clear enough. Occupational names have emotional significance far beyond their reference to skill and economic
183 function. They are symbols evocative of social stratification,
581 among the small farmers as no less elsewhere.
554 In disputes even within a family, angry reference to ties

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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outside the family may well be a method of attack. Where, as here, such ties are a matter of one's "blood," the attack is direct and personal. One's status is part of one's person. How close a part it is can well be seen in the quotation of one farmer's account of transition in family relations at the match:

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> If the old people don't like the girl, then the mother and the father go to their room and fight with her every day; and if she has low blood in her, they will take her to task for it, if she has weaver, tinker, or tailor blood. If they don't like her they will not work like they used, but go out on *cuaird* and spread the bad news about her.

The familistic outlook gives all this kind of evocation and reference the character of genealogical commentary. Everything one does or is can be referred to one's "blood." Heredity is the explanation of success or failure, high position or low estate. Since one's heredity includes the occupational and other status of one's forbears and the whole gamut of relations which marked their place in the community, a continuity is preserved between the present and the past which defines one fully as a member of one's group.

Consequently, the instances of failure to find wives and husbands, the instances of courtships opposed by parental and other pressures, the instances of elopements ending in emigration, the instances of families of brothers and sisters who stuck together celibate until old age, are far oftener examples of the force of failure to find a mate of acceptable status than of any other cause. The organization of sexual behavior in the countryside is inseparable from that of the stratification of the community itself.

The second interesting point, again one in which the examination of family histories led to an illumination of the connection between the patterns of sexual organization and those of small farmer familism, is in a sense the reverse of the coin.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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183 581 554 In these histories, when a countrywoman explained that she or someone she knew had married from bad land into good, or paid a larger dowry than she might have, had she stayed in her own townland, she referred to a movement that was quite readily discernible in her parish. She had experienced, and took pride in, a natural wedding of desire and ambition, which combined, for her as an individual, the instincts of a woman to be wife and mother and the demands of her group's advancement in the systems of familist alliances that made up her community. This was the individual side of the matter. Many indeed were the farmers and their wives who were careful to specify to us how successful a match had been in carrying a larger-than-might-be dowry to better land. One might grumble perhaps about one's lot, if there were anything to grumble over, but in such a case one might be proud that one had assured one's children of a better farm and a better standing than one's own.

166 581 But there was a social side of the matter which showed that this ambition was not a merely personal thing. For in the parish in which we gathered detailed information an interesting statistical movement could be seen. This movement was reflected in the geography of the district.

Marriages since 1864 in this parish have shown a tendency to move brides from the westward out of the poorer lands eastward toward richer farms. The parish happens to lie between higher, poorer soil to the westward and a more fertile area to the east. One must know the local topography and the fertility of the soil to understand the details of the movement. But its over-all tendency is statistically clear. None of the marriages among small farmers and their fellows have taken place (if they took place in the County at all) beyond a six-mile range of distance between the farm married-out-of and the farm married-into. In all cases the movement is small. Yet, small as it is, it shows a distinct tendency. In general, the higher and more westerly town-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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lands of the area made up of this parish and the contiguous parishes are the townlands from which marriages have moved brides outward. These same higher and more westerly townlands are also the ones that have lost population fastest and have been marked by the highest rates of celibacy. Since 1860, at least, families of this area have consistently paid higher dowries to establish their girls on better lands nearer urban and shopping centers. These families have married their daughters along the country roads downward and eastward, from the higher, poorer, more westwardly townlands to the better lands in lower and more eastwardly ones. Relatively speaking, there has been no movement of brides in a reverse direction. By comparison with the better lands, the poorer farms have done without brides for their young men. These poorer farms are the ones, then, who have seen their families "die out of it."

This is merely the evidence from one small parish and its neighbors. But it is instructive that it corresponds with the picture for Ireland as a whole, as the marital statistics of the censuses reveal it. Late marriage, celibacy, the marked preponderance of males in the sex ratio, are all phenomena of the western and poorer farming districts of the country.

Neither the establishment of a peasant proprietorship in the years of agrarian reform since the Land War nor the remarkable growth of prosperity among the farmers since the nadir of famine times has had any success in reversing the long-persistent trend of population decline in the countryside. They have had no effect either, it seems, upon the demographic phenomena associated with that decline. Perhaps the reason for the persistence of the trend despite all changes lies in the considerations revealed by the study of the matter in one small parish, as we have just described them. The acquisition of better lands, the growth of a greater rural prosperity, and the opening up of new opportunities at home have gone hand in hand with a persistence

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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at that time and that the ceremony presumably took place in the 585
priest's house.)

'Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the nuptial benediction, will, it is considered, live longest . . .; after this scene is over they again adjourn to the public house . . ., after which the company again mount their horses, the bride being then changed behind the bridegroom's man, and scamper away towards the bride's house, whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold the race for the bottle. The winning of the bottle is frequently contended for between the bridegroom's and the bride's parties; the first person that arrives at the bride's house is victorious. The victor then receives the bottle and again returns to the main body of the wedding, where he hands it to the bridegroom, who [273] first drinks of it and hands it to his bride, who also partakes, it then goes the round until nearly finished, when . . . the bridegroom flings it with the remaining contents away. On their arrival at the bride's house a cake of oatmeal or flour, which is called the bride's cake is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young people of both sexes for [787] the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow, in order that they may dream of their future partners in life. Another scene of noisy festivity and drunkenness then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties; there being frequently a kind of rivalry between them in supporting the dignity of the bridegroom and bride, particularly if they do not happen to be of one line of ancestors.'[1]

No doubt where land and livestock were involved such 581 marriages were not so uninhibited as it might appear. Physical 583 attraction was not a prime consideration. The normal course was for a peasant to marry a girl whose capabilities were known or could be fairly judged, preferably 'a far-out friend', who lived close enough for family visits and exchanges of labour to be made. We know from other accounts of marriage customs in the early nineteenth century that the order of events as described above was sometimes reversed: 'The marriage is agreed upon by bargain, and the theft or abduction follows as a concerted

[1] J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 64–66.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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583 matter of form to make valid the marriage.'[1] After the famine,
at least, the mutual attraction of the suitors themselves was a
[581] secondary consideration. An ill-favoured girl could be made pretty with a dowry of cows or its equivalent in cash, known in the west as 'dry-money'. A marriage between near relatives was not unknown if it meant keeping the name on the land or enlarging the patrimony: 'a blanket is the better of being doubled,' it was said. 'We are all related one way or another' is a comment one hears in isolated mountain districts. In general romantic love was the luxury of the landless, but whatever the motives of marriage there were many charms and omens to be taken into account in winning a person's affections, and some of the magic devices to which a girl might resort are listed in one of Bryan Merryman's poems of the late eighteenth century:

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> Up the chimney stuck the flail
> Slept with a spade without avail,
> Hid my wool in the limekiln late
> And my distaff behind the churchyard gate;
> Flax in the road to halt coach and carriage,
> And haycocks stuffed with heads of cabbage.[2]

582 To this day the marriage or remarriage of old men to young women is regarded as unnatural and wrong, perhaps because it complicates the question of succession. In Co. Wexford, and probably elsewhere, unpopular marriages of this kind are marked by noisy gatherings of young men who serenade the married couple with horn-blowing. A similar custom, the *vito*, is well-known in Andalusia, where it includes the ringing of cow-bells and the singing of scurrilous songs. One of the strangest
585 traditional features of Irish weddings is the visitation of 'straw-
[292] boys', that is youths wearing straw masks who attend as uninvited guests and disport themselves at the dance which normally follows a wedding (Fig. 88). I am told that they may still be seen occasionally in Co. Cavan and parts of the west. Formerly the visitors also wore straw suits or white shirts and red petticoats decorated with coloured ribbons. The leader

[1] Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 32.
[2] *The Midnight Court*, translated by Frank O'Connor (1945).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood. production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [388]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 562
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[154]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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582 589 581 562 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the [154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [581] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that 584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently 173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love 584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, [208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the 584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his 584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The 674 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [189]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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• 581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
[578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[154] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[662] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
562 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céilí* on the common land, which married women do not.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] • [182] 562 539 571 828 829

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things [173]

to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsibilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years. Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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"friends," particularly if they occupy one's own generation; one's father's relatives, even his brothers, become "my father's friends." A "distant friend" refers not to distance in space but to that in cousinship.

Before we detail the individuals included within this category, let us make two points clear. The first of these is directly associated with the dominance of the father within the family. He comes, as it were, to stand for the group which he heads; the farm is known by his name, and wife and children bear his name likewise. For the Irish family is patrilocal and patronymic, to use the technical terms. Farm, house, and most of the household goods descend from father to son with the patronym; we shall follow their general movement in a later section.

This patrilineal descent gives a certain accent upon the kinship system; it chooses one line of descent out of the many possible and gives those who make it up a common name. There is a reflection of this fact in the groupings of Irish rural life. To outsiders a person may be known as "a boy of the Shannons" or a "man of the Flaherties," but in a sense these groupings are merely linguistic conveniences. For in many cases two families of Shannons may live side by side, yet not be considered "friends." None of the obligations of kinship bind them. For in the phrase of the countryman: "They are not the same Shannons or, if they are, they are too far out."

Our examination of the various ways of reckoning kinship will make the statement clear. Patriliny is merely one device, an extension of the father-son relationship, by which individuals are included in one's group of "friends."

A second observation upon the kinship system springs from the fact that the family relationships regulate sexual conduct. Indeed, our examination of farm agriculture leads us to see that the technological training of the individual goes hand in hand with the sexual. Marriage prohibitions,

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like the sanctions of the exercise of sexual rights in marriage, 593
are part of and take their form in the family group. Conse- 582
quently, in the wider and larger alignments of individuals springing from the family which make up the kinship system, similar prohibitions occur.

For the kindred are the group within which marriage is 582
prohibited. In a sense the formulation of the individuals in 602
it as a group is an abstraction. Kinship bonds come ready 857
formed to the newborn human being. The child is soon brought to know and adopt requisite behavior and sentiments toward the individuals with whom the other persons of his family are reciprocally bound.

Thus the Irish child very early meets his mother's and 602
father's brothers and sisters; he runs errands and receives 431
small gifts from them; as soon as he is able he carries pres- 571
ents. In later years of boyhood he does odd jobs for them; 857
his labor is lent at cooring; he takes his place with them at the family table or round the hearth on visiting. At various times of crisis in his career, such as First Communion, Confirmation, and marriage, he receives gifts from them which signalize the intimacy between him and them. They share his parent's superordination to him, for they belong to the same older generation as his parents.

He is very likely, too, to be thrown constantly with their 602
children, especially if they are substantially of the same age, 571
where his uncles and aunts remain within visiting distance. 857
In country regions, such as Luogh, nearly all of the families are united by complicated, reduplicated bonds of marriage and descent. There the boys and girls grow up together in constant association, both as "friends" and companions. It is with them that the natural course of development creates bonds of sentiment and mutual aid, quite like those within the family, which take the form of that "friendliness" at once obligatory and pleasurable seen in the account of farm work.

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are *mac mhic, mac inghine, inghean mhic, inghean inghine,* 601
respectively (i.e., son's son, daughter's son, son's daughter, and daughter's daughter).

Father's and mother's siblings' children are called, as in English, cousins, or more specifically first cousins, a classificatory term without distinction in sex. The term, however, is never used as a term of address. In fact, "returned Yanks" who bring back the American usage of prefixing the word to the name of their "friends" in address are ridiculed. The word seems to be slightly foreign to the brogue. "Friend" is the usual designation, or a descriptive circumlocution is used both in Irish and English, such as "our fathers were brothers," or *clann na beirte dearbhráthar,* in which relationship is established by reference to an immediate family connection in the ascendant generation.

Irish terms for these relatives are various. The common- 601
est is *col ceathair.* This term is interesting because it in- 582
troduces the type of reckoning upon which the kinship system is built. *Col* is the term used to refer to blood relationship within which marriage is prohibited. By extension it refers to consanguinity and to an ecclesiastical impediment to marriage. Thus the phrase *cia an col atá agat leis* is used to ask, "What is the blood relationship you have with him?" and to go to the priest for a dispensation removing an impediment to marriage is known as *ceannach col* (buying *col*). Among the English-speaking countrymen of Clare the word "call," pronounced quite similarly, is likewise used to signify relationship. Thus one "friend" is said to "have a call on" another. Whether or not the words are one and the same we do not know; in any case the English word seems to refer both to the obligations and the blood relationship.

First cousins then are known in Irish as *col ceathair* or 601
fourth *col* whenever the specific designation of these relatives is required. The choice of the numerical adjective is

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601 presumably determined by counting the number of individuals or, better, personalities separated by reciprocal relations within which *col* or prohibitions arise. They are, for instance, myself, my father, my father's brother, and my father's brother's son. Here the accent upon the kinship system makes use of the two consanguine reciprocals within the immediate family: parent-child and sibling-sibling. Through the working of the principle of equivalence of siblings only two generations, my father's and my own, are considered. Thus the same reference to an immediate family relationship as we saw in such circumlocutions as "our fathers were brothers" is contained in the term.

601 Another set of terms exists in Irish for reckoning these relatives. The authors have not heard it in use in Clare, 612 however. In it, first cousins are said to be *a dó a's a dó i* 582 *ngaol*. The phrase means literally "two and two in blood relationship." Here accent is placed upon the lineal father-son (parent-child) descent, for brother and sister are called *a h-aon a's a h-aon i ngaol* — that is, "one and one." The reasoning here traces back to a common parent; in the latter case there is but one step, in the former, two.

The Church uses the system embodied in this last terminology in determining consanguinity. The following slightly abridged quotation indicates that it also recognizes a different system in Roman civil law.

> The civil (Roman) law founded its degrees in the number of generations. Thus between brothers there are two degrees, between first cousins there are four. [Compare *col ceathair.*] Canon law still follows this system in determining inheritance, but the Church for marriages computes, in the collateral line of consanguinity, one series only of generations, and if the series are unequal only the longer one. Hence, the principle of canon law is there are in the transverse or collateral line as many degrees of consanguinity as there are persons in the longer line counting the common stock or root.[1]

[1] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."

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Thus brother and sister are in the first degree, uncle and niece in the second, because niece is "two degrees from grandfather." First cousins are likewise reckoned in the second degree for the same reason. Here, as in the counting *a dó a's a dó i ngaol*, the accent is upon the parent-child reciprocal. The Church calls this the *linea recta* of descent. It bases its prohibition of marriage (incest) in the *linea recta* upon divinely ordained natural law. No dispensations for this type of marriage are ever granted.[2]

Another system is perhaps commonest — at least in Clare, where the authors have met it on several occasions — among the methods used to determine kinship in order to maintain the bounds within which alliance is forbidden. It appears both in Irish and in English speech. The system reckons descent by "generations." The Irish phrase is to *réidhteach gaol* by counting *glúin*.[3] *Gaol*, we remember, is the word for blood relationship in general; *glúin* refers first to a knee joint, then by extension to a step in family descent, a generation. In this reckoning, first cousins, that is, parents' siblings' children, are said to be in the *tríumhadh glúin*, or, in English, "the third generation."

Here the accent is again upon two elements in the constellation of reciprocals within the immediate family: the parent-child reciprocal and the equivalence of siblings. By counting back to the common grandfather or grandmother the *gaol* or "blood" is determined through three generations, i.e., ego's, his father's, and his grandfather's. Each person in the line of descent seems to represent a generation. All so descended in ego's generation are "friends."

Still another system of reckoning cousinship may be contained in certain idiomatic terms for the cousins. The authors here rely only on the Irish language dictionaries, for they have not heard these terms used. First cousins are

[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Cf. Canon O'Leary's *Mo Sgeul Féin*, where he has a chapter (*Mo Shinnsear*) in which he reckons his ancestry in these terms.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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son (5), and the last's son (6) who is again normally within ego's generation. By counting the common root, for instance, again patrilineally, father's father's father, four generations are counted together. These four explain the *ceathradh glúin*. 601 612

Now both the Church and Irish rural society reckon descent bilaterally; all possible roots, male and female, are counted. In that case, the count gives thirty-two kinship personalities in ego's own generation who come within this group of first and second cousins. These can all be counted as cousins or "friends." They are within the range of *col* or marriage taboo. They make up the extended family whose behavior we have examined above. Of the thirty-two, only two (father's brother's son and father's father's brother's son's son) in ego's own generation bear the same patronym as he; but the total number of personalities within the system bearing ego's patronym is nine, if the immediate progenitors back to common great-grandfather are counted. [611]

Consanguinity is carried one step further by the Church. As a barrier to marriage, or diriment impediment, it extends to the "fourth degree." This includes the group taken from a common descent yet a generation higher. It brings in those relatives known in English as third cousins. 582 601 612

These include all those descendant from a common great-grand-grandparent, described in the various terminologies as "third cousins," *col ochtar* (eighth *col*), members of the *cúigeadh glúin* or fifth generation, or people *ar a trí ó*. As before, the emphasis in each of these terms is to link together all those kindred of one generation who have common descent. When all possible roots are taken into account, the personalities so linked ideally number 128. The total within the whole system, including those of all generations ascendant, bearing the same patronym as ego, is thirteen, and five contemporaneous generations are comprised. 601 612

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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When these two emphases upon the kinship system are 601
recognized, it becomes evident why there is a lack of terms 612
describing those individuals appearing above and below ego's generation but not in the direct line. In the direct line we do have such terms as grandfather, grandson, etc., but the others do not figure. They are not named except descriptively, and even then usually only in reference to the generation which they occupy. Thus father's father's brother is called "my grandfather's brother." The term granduncle exists, but it has not found its way into the countryman's vocabulary.

Similarly, though uncle, aunt, nephew, and niece have become fully acclimated to Ireland, there is still a marked preference for descriptive terms. The son of a cousin is described in such terms, and the immediate progenitors of the cousin are thought of in terms of their place in the precedent generation. They are thus "my father's friends," though they are, of course, within ego's kinship group. In this way, two distantly removed cousins can often establish a relationship and adopt the requisite behavior to one another through establishing a more immediate connection in a parental generation.

The bounds of the consanguine group are naturally not 612
rigid in this type of extensional structure. There is a gradation of intensity in the taboo as it extends towards the peripheral relatives. First and second cousins, to use the more convenient English terms, are tabooed, the first more strongly than the second. Third cousins, felt to be "very far out" 582 ●
and sometimes "not counted" by the Irish, are nevertheless 582
formally tabooed by the Church. Yet dispensations can be 588
obtained with relative ease for kindred of this degree. They 612
are granted for all alliances within the system for "cause" inward even as far as first cousins and uncles and nieces, but

a different word, *dearbhrdthair*, or "true-brother," is reserved for one's father's son.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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612 never within the restricted family.[5] When the dispensation
● 582 of the Church is obtained, there is no feeling of horror at
588 such marriages. They are, however, always felt to be anomalous and are a matter of comment. In the country areas where there is a necessity among the farmers of keeping farms and dowries within the extended family group, or where the introduction of an outsider is difficult because of class and regional antagonisms, marriages between first and second cousins are not uncommon. Nevertheless the general feeling of the community condemns this type of union. Too close intermarriage of this type is a common charge used by townsmen in condemning the country folk. The authors unfortunately had little chance of observing such alliances in their rural setting.

582 At marriage the individual acquires a new group of kin-
612 dred. This group is also within the marriage prohibition
602 and the "call"; they are "friends." In the formal or ideal arrangement all those related to one's wife become related to oneself in the same degree. This is the view taken by the Catholic Church. A marriage, the doctrine goes, unites husband and wife as "one flesh." "Affinity from a true marriage is a diriment impediment to the fourth degree of consanguinity of the deceased spouse."[6] A widower "may not marry any of his deceased wife's blood relatives as far as the fourth degree of consanguinity."[7]

612 In other words, the union of man and woman brings a
835 union of the two extended families from the point of view
602 of the marrying individuals. In the eyes of the Church, the husband stands in the same relation to a wife's relatives as does the wife herself, and vice versa. So strong is this provision in the eyes of the Church that sexual intercourse with any of the wife's kin creates a barrier to the exercise of conjugal rights over the wife. A dispensation as well as

[5] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority.

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside.

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard, and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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 167 [178 231]

coincident upon that change cannot be assigned as the sole cause of emigration.

As the decline in population has been more characteristic of the small farmers, it may be possible to associate it with social conditions pertaining among that class. They have participated in the very agricultural changes which are thought to have caused their dispersal. They enjoyed the high prosperity of the closing decades of the last century, and won the progressive reforms of agrarian tenure. Yet they continued to send forth thousands of emigrants. Fluctuating economic conditions have undoubtedly had their effect, but factors whose greatest demonstrable result is merely to stay or hurry the stream of emigration cannot be evoked as efficient causes. In taking the problem directly to the small farmer, it will become possible to sketch the social setting in which emigration takes its form.

Clearly connected with the decline in population are other demographic statistics, particularly those of marriage. They present features which are unique among civilized peoples. Inasmuch as they are again indications of an underlying uniform social pattern whose occurrences they record, it is necessary to analyze them in terms of the behavior patterns of rural Ireland. Like emigration, they are more characteristic of the country people. Springing from marriage, they are thus directly indicative of social forces within the small farmers' family economy. 162

Briefly stated, they present the following characteristics: In Saorstat Eireann in 1926, according to the census then conducted, there was a larger proportion of unmarried persons of all ages than in any other country for which records are kept. Marriage, furthermore, did not take place until a comparatively late age. Thus 80 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty years of age were unmarried in 1926, 62 per cent of males thirty to thirty-five, 50 per cent of males thirty-five to forty, and 26 per cent of males fifty-five to 162 582 589

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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162 sixty-five. The significance of these figures springs from their comparison with other countries. In the United States only 582 39 per cent of males twenty-five to thirty are unmarried, 589 24 per cent between thirty and thirty-five, and only 10 per cent between fifty-five and sixty-five. Denmark, an agricultural country similar in many ways to Ireland, had only 49 per cent, 25 per cent, 15 per cent, and 8 per cent of these age groups not yet benedict, respectively. In England the percentages were 45 per cent, 25 per cent, 16 per cent, and 10 per cent, a great contrast to the sister island. Indeed, in the Free State the percentages of unmarried among the males of each age group are usually double those of other countries.

Unmarried females are also very numerous, though not so excessively so as is the case with the males. In the age groups twenty-five to thirty, thirty to thirty-five, thirty-five to forty, and fifty-five to sixty-five the percentages are respectively 62 per cent, 42 per cent, 32 per cent, and 24 per cent. In Denmark the same groups showed only 39 per cent, 25 per cent, 19 per cent, and 14 per cent; in England, 41 per cent, 26 per cent, 20 per cent, and 15 per cent. Figure 11 gives a graphic comparison between the Irish Free State and three other modern countries.

Later marriage and high incidence of bachelorhood is, like population decline, more pronounced among the country people. And among them, it is highest in those areas where small holdings prevail. In County Clare 88 per cent of the males between twenty-five and thirty in rural districts were unmarried. This percentage is not abnormally high for Ireland, as Sligo, Galway, Mayo, and Leitrim, areas of small holdings, have 90 per cent and Roscommon 91 per cent. In Clare 90 per cent of women between twenty and twenty-five were unmarried, yet six western counties have higher percentages than Clare's.

In fact the thickly populated and poorer western counties

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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162 70 per cent and 50 per cent. There is a general tendency: the larger the town, the earlier marriage takes place. Ennis, the largest town and county seat of Clare (6,000), has a 582 589 somewhat lower percentage than is usual for towns of its size in Ireland. In fact, Clare's figures, 60 per cent and 30 per cent in those age grades, are better even than those for such a metropolis as Cork City, with 68 per cent and 40 per cent.

Correlations of occupation and marital status[3] support the assumption that the longest delay in marriage is found among the small farmers. Both agricultural laborers and town laborers marry younger and in greater numbers proportionately. No other occupational class, not even the professional class, delays marriage so long or has so many celibate members.

162 These facts obviously relate themselves to the population decline. They are, as it were, two different symptoms of the 163 same condition. But strangely enough in a declining population, fecundity is very high. Although there are fewer married women of childbearing age per 1,000 inhabitants than in other countries (74 in Ireland, 142 in the United States, 125 in Germany, 112 in Denmark, 121 in England, and 119 in Italy), the fertility of these women is remarkably high. For every 100 married women under 45, there are 131 children under five years of age, compared with only 77 in the United States, 71 in England, 93 in Denmark, and 75 in Germany. The number of children is higher again in western counties of Ireland than in eastern. The women of Clare under 45 produced 140 children for every 100 married women, those of Donegal 152, but in County Dublin and County Wicklow, the two eastern counties, only 122 and 124. In spite of this great fecundity there is, however, in Ireland only a normal proportion of children under 15, if Ireland is compared to other countries. The

[3] *Census of Population*, 1926, vol. V, part II: Ages and Conjugal Conditions.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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583 figure. In either case, when a suitable boy or girl has been
584 found, the farmer sends an emissary to his or her parent. The relative value of the farms and the "fortune" that a farmer will give for his daughter are generally pretty well known in the district, but where the two families are comparative strangers, or belong to different localities, the role of the emissary in laying the proposals of one set of parents before the other is more important. The emissary is not a relative of either party ordinarily. Certain individuals become well known locally as successful negotiators. In former days there was once a fully developed "matchmaker" or marriage broker. The office is said to exist still in Connemara, but it has died out in Clare.

584 Quite often a well-known shopkeeper or local politician comes to play the role. One in particular in Ennistymon (a market town of 1,200) came under the author's notice. The back room of his public house reserved for special customers became one of the centers of local matchmaking. It was there that the fathers of both boy and girl would meet and "sit on the match." Their deliberation, to the accompaniment of many bottles of stout, threshes out the whole matter of the disposal of the properties involved,
[582] the relative status of the families, and any possible barriers to the union, such as consanguinity, insanity, or notorious crime in past ancestry.

584 The bargaining is a matter of nice adjustment between
583 the "fortune" and the farm. The custom known as "walking the land," referred to above, insures that the farm is roughly equivalent to the fortune, though each party strives for a higher valuation of its own claims. Thus, where a fortune of five hundred pounds has finally been agreed upon, the girl's father will have offered only four hundred and the boy's will have held out for six hundred, instancing all the prospects and advantages of his farm in support of his figure. Finally, through the offices of the intermediary

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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586 842 of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

428 Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the trans-
592 ference of control within a family.

602 Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

582 At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur
836 here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

592 There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be
562 brought into the house, and matches made for them. In
428 this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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573 how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not
521 a weighty one. Noonan is a very voluble man. He can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with many opinions on all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the public prosecutor's relentless logic, but it helps too to keep the conversation alive and active. Consequently, though he has no important title, he is a member of long standing.

573 The younger of the two sitting in back is John Quin. His
592 position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quin lives on a good farm just outside the village. He married-in there, taking over the
[582] place of a dead husband. But, true to the country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister, who, in turn, married Quin. But both women are still living in the house. The elder sister has become the "old woman" and is treated more like a parent than a contemporary. It is Quin and his wife, the younger sister, who work the farm and who regard it as their own. Their claim is a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune: they are childless at fifty.

573 Quin is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old
561 one, as the countryside reckons age status. His place in the evening gathering reflects this intermediate state. In the two years in which the authors had the old men's house at Rynamona under observation, Quin was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but which showed itself well in his behavior.

573 When we first came, Quin divided his evenings between
561 the old men's house and card playing in several of the young
521 men's gathering places. At one of these, to be described shortly, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had "weight," and he conducted himself importantly and showed a serious demeanor and a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. In the

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It has already been pointed out that the census figures available at the time of the fieldwork on which this book is based are those of the Irish census of 1926. Since that time some at least of the figures based on the succeeding decennial census, that of 1936, have become available. There are also a number of annual statistics which bear on the questions of Irish population. It is interesting to turn to these for the light they throw on subsequent development in the trends we have noted. 161

The release of the 1936 census figures in 1939 showed conclusively that the demographic trends that have marked Ireland since Famine times continue to persist. Neither the years of the establishment of the Free State up to 1932 nor the years of depression, economic war, and the experimental programs of the De Valera regime since then have affected the trends. Any of the charts prepared for the 1926 figures needs only to be extrapolated along the trend line a few points to show the situation of ten years later.

Stated briefly, these trends recapitulate and reëmphasize the points we have already made. Emigration continues to mark the life of the country, draining the countryside first into the towns and second overseas, now to Great Britain rather than across the oceans. Ireland continues to hold its record of possessing the highest percentage of unmarried men and women in the world. The population over sixty-five years of age continues to rise. The population of children continues to fall. Marriages continue to be fertile, by comparison with many other countries. But they still tend to become fewer and fewer, and the delay of marriage into middle life grows longer and longer. The ratio of females to males continues to fall, until in 1936 there were 975 males for every 935 females in Ireland, the lowest sex ratio in Europe and one of the lowest in the world. 162 166 167 [589]

These figures mark the continued existence of the familistic order we have discussed. They mark as well the continuance of its struggle to fit modern life. Perhaps a figure 582

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582 in the report of the Registrar-General for 1938 gives the best illustration of the culmination of the trends that mark this struggle. In that year slightly over half of all women who married (and only a negligible number of them were not making first marriages) were between thirty-five and forty-five years of age. The problem of delay in marriages seems to be reaching some sort of climax.

161 It is interesting to speculate what that climax might be
178 and what future trend of demography it may inaugurate. It is obvious that the conditions these figures point to, rooted as they are in the social order of the countryside and of the nation, are in any case beyond the reach of ordinary measures. They have marked, as we have seen, every Irish administration since Famine days, whether native or not. They are not matters of "poverty" within the reach of immediate economic policies. If "poverty" refers to hunger and an absolute low level of living, the concept does not apply at all. If it denotes rather relative standing within a community of certain values, it has some meaning. But such meaning waits for its understanding on a realization of the form of family and community these values express.

Yet the old cry about a flight from the land has arisen in Ireland once again. Until the outbreak of war in 1939, the population question, linked now with continuing unemployment in the towns and a shortage of labor in the agricultural districts, had become a football of politics once more. The new small local factories of the regime of industrialization now have their place in the controversy. The opposition in the *Dáil* are bitter against a program they believe subsidizes industry at home out of the farmer's pocket, yet leaves him unable to employ the hands his farm requires. The government finds itself in a quandary. To accept the opposition view would be to admit itself responsible for a condition far beyond its control. To put a stop to the program of industrialization would leave the incoming farm

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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town, or to the fair, or only making the evening 602
cuaird or visit. The obligations pattern good- 574
fellowship and holiday, for friends treat one another when they meet near a pub. In fact one countryman complained to me that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his friends, but others seem to manage their obligations better.

And lastly, the obligations of kinship are a bulwark against disaster. The Johnny mentioned above sent the cow down when it was badly needed. If you have read the book from the Blaskets called *The Islandman*, you remember that the Islandman [582] might not marry the girl of his choice because she was a mainlander and the friends she would bring him would be too far away from Great Blasket when he needed aid. In the system of reciprocal duties which surround kinship, much of the strength of the countryside against external destruction and internal disaster is explained.

We have followed the countryman a long way. 000
In watching him at his work, we have begun to recognize the outlines of the way of life which is his. He is a subsistence farmer, as we now call the peasant, but he is more. He is part of an intricate social system which patterns his life along definite channels, which brings him rewards, gives him incentives, and deals its own punishments. The traditional patterns of old custom have a place in this system; folklore surrounds it as in the

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167 the normal, small farmers' flow from country to town—the other, overseas. As this group, the small farmers, is overwhelmingly the most numerous in the land, the drain has taxed it most.

582 But the small farmers, the country-people, are the very group who exhibit most strongly another statistical peculiarity. They set the norm for the country in marital statistics. In this, the Irish Free State occupies a unique place. Marriage takes place at a later age than in any other country for which records are kept. Sixty-two per cent of all males between the ages of thirty to thirty-five are still unmarried. Nor is it only the men who escape matrimony so long. Forty-two per cent of all women who reach that age of middle life are single. In the United States, in England, in Denmark, in all other countries in fact, there is no such long delay in marrying. In all three of the countries named, comparative figures for both men and women do not reach 25 per cent. Only in Ireland is a single man or woman of thirty the rule rather than the exception.

But it is not a question merely of the Irishman's hanging back a little longer from an inescapable fate. For a surprising number escape altogether. One man out of every four men who reach fifty in Ireland is still a bachelor. And though the women have slightly better luck in finding mates, the same figure holds for them.

Other countries usually delay marriage longest in the urban professional classes. But in Ireland, it is

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the country-people who marry latest. One can range the country in something of a scale in this regard. The more numerous in a county the numbers of small holdings, roughly, the later marriage takes place, and the greater number of bachelors, particularly males, of all ages, there are. Late marriage and bachelorhood are characteristics today of the countryman's way of life.

In the problem presented by these statistics, the structural approach to the countryman's way of life can bring a new illumination. It throws into relief the human setting in which economic and historical changes have run their course.

After the terrible disaster of the Famine, agriculture underwent a change. Canadian and Argentine wheat forced Irish land into cattle production. The great land clearances took place, turning out the population to make way for pasture. Then the small farmer followed the large into pasturage for dry cattle, on a lesser scale, and the milch cow declined. Small towns and crossroads distributing centres and the railroads sprang up all through the country; and abroad, the roaring industrial expansion, first of England and then of America, gave opportunities denied at home. Through all this: through curtailment of employment at home, through substitution of cattle for men upon the land, through denial of local opportunity, the stream of emigration kept its steady flow.

Through all this, too, the figures of Irish mar-

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riage kept pace. Age of marriage was normal in the year of the first census. In 1841 there was a normally low percentage of the unmarried in the population, and men and women married as early as they do in the United States today. At each decennial census afterwards, marriage was a little later and the unmarried a little more numerous. Through all the welter of changes, the figures grew steadily toward wider and wider spread celibacy.

Then when the economic and political tides turned, the human setting still endured. The clearances ceased; land reform won security of tenure; years of prosperity after 1870 brought an income that could be used more and more at home, as lowered rents spread and freehold was assured. Finally, the war brought undreamed-of prosperity and on its heels the strength for revolution and civil war. The milch cow came back to a position from which it had only retreated very little; dairying could be organized and come to vie with beef cattle as a market outlet. Finally, as a last step, industry began to make its call at home.

In all this flow of circumstance who can say what factor determined the numerical count of Irish population? Emigration went on as before, checked this year, hurried the next, until, perhaps from external check, the flow grew less and less.[1]

[1] Preliminary reports of the current (1936) census indicate emigration still continues, though now largely directed toward Great Britain rather than overseas.

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On the other hand, the corollary check on the population—late marriage—did not lag. It still grew. In the census of 1911 it reached its peak and has held it since. It alone shows no sign of falling-off in response to new economics and better days. For a social system is no brittle, changeable thing. Its adjustments to change and circumstance are a lesson, not in economics, but in the tenacity of human sentiment and human habit. Late marriage in Ireland can be associated with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership. It is part of the long struggle to acquire means to portion children. The closed corporation of the family cannot be dispersed until it is possible to establish a new one. The self-sufficiency of the group makes it always difficult to destroy. And now, today, the identification of a single family with a single individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new group upon the land.

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So, when subdivision of holdings ceased after the Famine, Irish familism made its adaptation. The local community could not any longer settle its sons at home; it could no longer divide its land among them. Yet, unless it were to die it must live on. I say must, for a social system is co-extensive with the lives of its members. The Polynesians, in their island paradises, might die out nation by nation when their culture crashed, bled by a malady stronger than foreign germs or foreign guns. The Irish countrymen were tougher.

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167 178 582 In living on, the system could still mould the lives of its members. As prosperity arrived, and land agitation fixed the attention of the farmer, 'land' became more and more a central value. Irish rural familism felt more and more strongly the threefold identification of 'land', 'blood' and local standing. Where land, alliance and prestige all follow the same lines, in marriage, the group finds its coherence in, and centres its tightly woven bonds round, that crucial reorganization of social life.

So, the 'landless' and the 'backward' must die out. In rural Ireland, however, it is not men but families which are so forced to their deaths. "Backward places do not grow big fortunes", we remember. That homely phrase is full of social meaning. The all-too-human drives for social rise, for prestige, leave them behind and marriageless. And in a familistic world, celibacy leads to extinction.

000 With the homely phrase we enter a new field in social life, yet one just as central to the way of rural Ireland. This is the broad area of social stratification. Under the awkward term are subsumed the judgments man makes among his fellows upon rank, upon prestige, upon inferiority and superiority, and the behaviours that embody them. All societies exhibit them ; all organize them in one way or another. Even the animals show analogous behaviours. They practise dominance and submit

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369 though little wealth will come to her through that
443 shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases,
571 these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a
584 finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly
369 universal occurrence where a society preserves
443 some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural
571 necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic
● 582 order. In India, for instance, it is immediately recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

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gain a foothold in the world of shops. For that, the countryman is willing, currently, to pay about twice the usual dowry-price. 369 443 571 582

And in his willing adherence to custom, stability is achieved. The relationship between class and class, like that in the countryside between kindred and kindred, attains some permanence of form. The bride carries social bonds with her; in this case she carries them upward and townward into the shops and pubs of metropolis.

Her brother, on the other hand, carries with him another social function, in his capacity of male. His place is that of a potential fatherhood in a line of patrilineal descent. He carries on a corporate name upon the land or shop. Where he cannot inherit, in such descent, a sure place among his fellows, he must win it. The man is the bread-winner who carves out a place for his line; round him the family must be grouped. The woman, on the other hand, is the uniting force within the grouping. In this dichotomization of social role between the sexes, the Irish town and the Irish countryside, like the Church to which they both subscribe, are agreed. Hypergamy takes its form in the agreement. Along the lines laid down by the social bonds of apprenticeship and hypergamous marriage, the world of the market-town and the rural hinterland are united; along the same lines the flow of the country-people townward moves.

Once again, then, we see how complete the in-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

369 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives
443 on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he
571 be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must
582 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

This order, one must not forget, is nothing
182 esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than
369 it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire
443 among the constituent human beings, both make
571 it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern
584 into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major 181
operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of 443
peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair 796
seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the 181
cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures 789
of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic 181
magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, 842
common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of 181
marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the [582]
highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and 181
duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and 496

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

(E.) *Health.*—Taken as a whole, the people may be said to be a 164 healthy one. Serious diseases, apart from accidents incident to their callings, are but few in number; and the general physique of the people speaks to a healthy active life.

Consanguineous Unions.—A large proportion of the marriages come 582 under this heading, including not only those of persons within the 588 prohibited degrees, for which dispensations are obtained, but also those which take place between people who are related in some recognisable but hardly nameable degree. Cases of the first class, or those which require dispensations, are of frequent occurrence, but seldom or never take place between persons nearer of kin than third cousins. The other cases, of course, are the most common of all, as from the size of the population and its isolated position, every family must, after a few generations, become more or less related to every other. Marriages with strangers, though more numerous of late years, are not common. The uniformity of strain does not appear to have produced any effect except the great similarity of appearance already noticed (p. 322); no cases of malformation or congenital disease are ascribed to it.

Diseases.—For most of the following facts I am indebted to the 164 kindness of Dr. P. J. Hart, the medical officer of the islands, who, besides affording me much valuable information relative to the people and their ailments, the result of his long experience of them, kindly allowed me to look over his notes of cases. The main diseases may be classed as follows:—

Insanity.—There is at present no case of this among the natives of [158] the islands, nor has there been one since 1888 when a case which, however, was not of long duration, occurred in Inishshark.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Properly speaking there is no idiocy; but 164 there are two cases in which the persons, though shrewd and sharp 732 enough about most of their own affairs, yet show signs of mental want in a sufficient degree to amount to slight imbecility.

Epilepsy is not common, but two cases are known in one of which the patient is subject to delusions, and always states, after a fit, that he has been with the fairies on the mainland. Of the other no information could be obtained except that the patient had had "fits."

Deaf-mutism has not been known for years on either island, but a case of temporary dumbness occurred on Inishshark in 1892.

Blindness is equally rare, there being but one case, a man over sixty years of age who acquired it late in life.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen
● 582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully
844 watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if
763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their
764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great
[762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to
[178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin
[482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women
764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own
533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

(D.) *Health.*—It was found to be a difficult matter to obtain reliable information on this point, but there seems to be, on the whole, but little serious disease, and the people appear to be strong and healthy. The affections suffered from are mainly due to the nature of their food and occupations, and the unwholesome state of their dwellings. 164

Consanguineous Marriages.—The intermarriage of relations seems to be very common, not only on the islands, but also on the mainland, where it is most common in small fishing hamlets difficult of access, such as Fallmore, Tip, and Portacloy. While visiting Inishkea inquiries were made as to these unions, and several of the inhabitants assured me that intermarriage between the people of the North and South Islands was not common, it being a far more usual thing for the islanders to marry people from the opposite shore of the Mullet; thus, the South Island people seem to intermarry a good deal with the inhabitants of Fallmore, a very primitive village at the extreme end of the peninsula, which has only being provided with a road, such as it is, since 1881. On both islands, however, the majority of the marriages seem to take place between members of the community. 582

It does not seem as if it were usual for first cousins to marry, but matches between relatives of all degrees farther out seem to be of very common occurrence.

Through the kindness of the Rev. H. Hewson, P.P. of Belmullet, I am enabled to give actual figures, as he has kept the record of dispensations for these marriages since 1875; from that date until August, 1894, there were in the Parish of Kilmore, which contains about 700 families, altogether 276 marriages, and of these 61 or 22·1 per cent. obtained dispensations, as the parties were relatives. In the Parish of Belmullet, number of families 460, there were in the same period 247 with 26 consanguineous (or 10·5 per cent.) and Kilcommon, with about 620 families, had 276 marriages, for 72 of which, or 26·1 per cent., dispensations were granted. The average in the whole three parishes was thus 19·5 per cent. To these may be added some 10 or 12 more cases of marriages of first cousins dispensed by the bishop of the diocese. There does not seem to be any marked result from this long continued close intermarriage, except the very marked local types observable in the more isolated places, which seem to have been fixed or preserved by this cause. This is especially the case in the islands whose inhabitants, while bearing a general resemblance to each other, differ much in appearance from their neighbours of the mainland. 582 588

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
● 582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

Insanity.—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly
[158] in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
[273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

Fevers.—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter
164 being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-
322 lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples
443 are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there
543 were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of
443 ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 89), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for
[584] a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts,
[582] binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints'
796 days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1] See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland*, 1796–97, 250.
[2] R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 253.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XX

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

582 178 731 776 THE average age of marriage among Irish countrywomen, about 28, is said to be higher than in any other country in the world: that of the men is higher still, and in addition there are many who never marry. These are among the demographic consequences of the economic and social changes which followed the Great Famine of 1845–47, for down to that time the mass of the population had nothing to lose and everything to gain by marrying young. Among the economic factors which led to the postponement of marriage may be mentioned the rising standards of living, the prohibition of the subdivision of holdings so that only one son could inherit, and the need for larger farms consequent on the decline of subsistence farming and the increase of pastoral husbandry, which meant that the peasant had to look and plan ahead. Equally important, I believe, was the effect of the crisis of the famine in breaking down patterns of behaviour which had continued with little change since prehistoric times. The elder faiths were rudely shattered so that today we have only the broken remnants left, stray survivals which have lost their meaning in a modern setting. The scattering of the fairy hosts is the constant lament of old people for whose parents they were a reality. Over large parts of the country, down to famine times the fairies (among them the ancestral spirits), and the powers of nature in sun and stone, tree, flower and welling water were ruling forces whose malice must somehow be averted, and whose beneficence must be courted by magical acts. Nature's reproductive surplus on which [842] human life depended could best be assured by breeding children to capacity.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed mar- 163
riages the population would continue to increase were it not
for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, [167]
sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious prac- [842]
tices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be
cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless
marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some 582
evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or
bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway
and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a
means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested.
The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may
be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in [114]
Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living
traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and London-
derry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive 842
the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well-
organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead
and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns
and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation
in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the
spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings
at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary
histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral
spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to [172]
many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a
reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton
in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves
barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed
certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many
ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic
magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman
who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far re- 584
moved from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day
peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1]R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1755*, 105.
[2]H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

583 matter of form to make valid the marriage.'[1] After the famine, at least, the mutual attraction of the suitors themselves was a [581] secondary consideration. An ill-favoured girl could be made pretty with a dowry of cows or its equivalent in cash, known in the west as 'dry-money'. A marriage between near relatives was not unknown if it meant keeping the name on the land or enlarging the patrimony: 'a blanket is the better of being doubled,' it was said. 'We are all related one way or another' is a comment one hears in isolated mountain districts. In general romantic love was the luxury of the landless, but whatever the motives of marriage there were many charms and omens to be taken into account in winning a person's affections, and some of the magic devices to which a girl might resort are listed in one of Bryan Merryman's poems of the late eighteenth century:

[539]

> Up the chimney stuck the flail
> Slept with a spade without avail,
> Hid my wool in the limekiln late
> And my distaff behind the churchyard gate;
> Flax in the road to halt coach and carriage,
> And haycocks stuffed with heads of cabbage.[2]

582 To this day the marriage or remarriage of old men to young women is regarded as unnatural and wrong, perhaps because it complicates the question of succession. In Co. Wexford, and probably elsewhere, unpopular marriages of this kind are marked by noisy gatherings of young men who serenade the married couple with horn-blowing. A similar custom, the *vito*, is well-known in Andalusia, where it includes the ringing of cow-bells and the singing of scurrilous songs. One of the strangest 585 traditional features of Irish weddings is the visitation of 'straw-[292] boys', that is youths wearing straw masks who attend as uninvited guests and disport themselves at the dance which normally follows a wedding (Fig. 88). I am told that they may still be seen occasionally in Co. Cavan and parts of the west. Formerly the visitors also wore straw suits or white shirts and red petticoats decorated with coloured ribbons. The leader

[1] Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 82.
[2] *The Midnight Court*, translated by Frank O'Connor (1945).

16: Messenger

ER6 Rural Irish ER6

167
582

[For information pertaining to the marriage patterns abroad of emigrants from Inis Beag, see 16: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, pp. 130-131.]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

521 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk
203 publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and
571 young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a
[574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events
[512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have
[638] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took
[639] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on
[123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other
589 Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of
162 the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7
582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [188]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 562
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[154]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 589 581 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few
562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the
[154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has
[593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous
581 work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land,
155 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run
[589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that
584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently
173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love
584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on,
[208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céili*, held on a large flagging near the school, and
[175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani-
[581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the
584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his
584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The
574 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon
[521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink-
585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the
[829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the
[582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of
[593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [189]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" anc maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit) —still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

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582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 [262] [264] [415] [718] [352] The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [516] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 354 593 a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178 from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342 placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353 serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788] two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574] floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571 kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602 tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609 strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572] parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835 most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602 genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582 forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602 collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609 are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428 is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611 --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113] in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The [601] Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

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(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family: 155 593

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.... An Irish male... beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous.... all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications.... Irish resistance to role identification... was seen as... having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters.... [The]... basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt... (Opler and Singer 1956:15-18). [154] [582] [589]

Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present: 155 572 154

> *Grania* is... a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas... Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work.... it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman... would be forever excluded... such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines... are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all.... A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar... to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145-146). 155 572 154 562

Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858 children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842 high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162 average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593 done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861 mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864] elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155] and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593 bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582] to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606] law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother'" (Humphreys 1965:246)

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593 have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828] hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155] rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562] with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831] the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

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year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during
[167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the
[582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is
[574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on
[621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing
[351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are
[356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of
[262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large
[364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are
[574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper,
[431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs,
[861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children
[431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in
[262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

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[For information pertaining to emigration and its relation to sexual repression, late marriage, celibacy, and family relations in Ireland, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 32-36.]

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18).

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories.

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a socio-cultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present.

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
• 582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
582 articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in
[586] Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades! 582

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration. 161 168 167 182 582 589

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining. [434] [657] [434] [183] [178] [582]

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis [831] 181 183 829 167 182 [181]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

suitable girl for one of his sons who is to inherit his farm. 581
The choice of the heir from among the sons rests in the 584
father's hands. Historically, all the sons and daughters were provided for on the land, and, where possible, this is still the ideal situation, but the closer identification of family with one particular plot of land and the difficulty of land division fostered through three generations of agrarian agitation and land reform have prevented this. One son, then, is ordinarily to be "settled on the land." Typically today only one son remains, and he gets the farm.

In the words of one countryman, the procedure would be: 583

If I wanted to give my farm over to my son and I would be 584
worth, say, two hundred pounds, I would know a fellow up the hill, for instance, that would be worth three hundred pounds. I would send up a neighbor fellow to him and ask him if he would like to join my family in marriage. If the fellow would send back word he would and the girl would say she was willing (and the usual courtesies were exchanged), then on a day they agreed on I and the fellow would meet in Ennistymon (the local market town) and talk over the whole thing as to terms, maybe sitting on it the whole day. Then, before, if it was land I didn't know or the fellow came from afar off, I would walk his land and look at it and the cattle there were on it to make sure of the farm. Then we would go to a solicitor that day and make up the writings in Ennistymon. The money, say three hundred pounds, would be paid over in cash or in promissory notes, and it is usual here to divide it into two parts or sometimes more. One-half is paid at the wedding, and the other is paid a year after.

This statement contains in essence nearly the whole of matchmaking. As the old fellow indicates, the initiative in the matter lies with the owner of the farm, usually the father of the boy. When the time comes for him to relinquish the farm, he lets it be known in the district to those who have daughters ready to be dowered. On the other hand, the father of the girl may often take the initiative, letting it be known that his daughter has a dowry at such and such a

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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583 figure. In either case, when a suitable boy or girl has been
584 found, the farmer sends an emissary to his or her parent. The relative value of the farms and the "fortune" that a farmer will give for his daughter are generally pretty well known in the district, but where the two families are comparative strangers, or belong to different localities, the role of the emissary in laying the proposals of one set of parents before the other is more important. The emissary is not a relative of either party ordinarily. Certain individuals become well known locally as successful negotiators. In former days there was once a fully developed "matchmaker" or marriage broker. The office is said to exist still in Connemara, but it has died out in Clare.

584 Quite often a well-known shopkeeper or local politician comes to play the role. One in particular in Ennistymon (a market town of 1,200) came under the author's notice. The back room of his public house reserved for special customers became one of the centers of local matchmaking. It was there that the fathers of both boy and girl would meet and "sit on the match." Their deliberation, to the accompaniment of many bottles of stout, threshes out the whole matter of the disposal of the properties involved,
[582] the relative status of the families, and any possible barriers to the union, such as consanguinity, insanity, or notorious crime in past ancestry.

584 The bargaining is a matter of nice adjustment between
583 the "fortune" and the farm. The custom known as "walking the land," referred to above, insures that the farm is roughly equivalent to the fortune, though each party strives for a higher valuation of its own claims. Thus, where a fortune of five hundred pounds has finally been agreed upon, the girl's father will have offered only four hundred and the boy's will have held out for six hundred, instancing all the prospects and advantages of his farm in support of his figure. Finally, through the offices of the intermediary

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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and after concessions on each side, the two will "split the difference" and thus reach an agreement. The decision rests with the fathers, but they will have had the quite vocal assistance of friends and older members of the kindred. 584 583

Perhaps the words of a countryman best describe the matching of values and prospects the bargaining entails. Farm and spouse are inextricably interwoven in his mind:

> When a young man is once on the lookout for a lady, it is put through his friends for to get a suitable woman for his wife. It all goes by friendship and friends and meeting at public houses. The young man sends a speaker to the young lady and the speaker will sound a note to know what fortune she has, will she suit, and will she marry this Shrove? She and her friends will inquire what kind of a man is he, is he nice and steady? If he suits, they tell the speaker to go ahead and draw it down. So then he goes back to the young man's house and arranges for them to meet in such a place on such a night and we will see about it. The speaker goes with the young man and his father that night, and they meet the father of the girl and his friends or maybe his son and son-in-law. The first drink is called by the young man, the second by the young lady's father. The young lady's father asks the speaker what fortune do he want. He asks him the place of how many cows, sheep, and horses it is. He asks what makings of a garden are in it; is there plenty of water or spring wells? Is it far from the road or on it? What kind of house is in it, slate or thatch? Are cabins good, are they slate or thatch? If it is too far in from the road, he won't take it. Backward places don't grow big fortunes. And he asks too is it near a chapel and the school or near town? If it is a nice place, near the road, and the place of eight cows, they are sure to ask three hundred and fifty pounds fortune. Then the young lady's father offers two hundred and fifty pounds. Then maybe the boy's father throws off fifty pounds. If the young lady's father still has two hundred and fifty pounds on it, the speaker divides the fifty pounds between them, so now it's two hundred and seventy-five. Then the young male says he is not willing to marry without three hundred pounds – but if she's a nice girl and a good housekeeper, he'll think of it. So there's another

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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584 drink by the young man, and then another by the young lady's father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day. After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, and maybe another girl, and her brother and father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker. If they suit one another, they will then appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong. The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one. Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points. If the girl's father likes the land, he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes on them. Then they go to an attorney until the next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father [boy's] to sign over the land. Then there comes another day to fit her for a ring. The girl and boy meet in town some day. He buys her some present. They walk the town that day and all admire the pair and gander after them.

584 583 577 Several instances have come to notice where agreement was not reached and where a farmer has broken off negotiations on finding a girl with fifty pounds more. There are also many subterfuges which, though they are regarded by others as humorous occurrences, are often sore spots between the contracting parties. Thus a farmer near Ennistymon drove his neighbor's cows into his farm on the day of the girl's father's walking the land so that the other would think him richer than he was. After the marriage the deception was discovered, but too late.

[626] In another case, a sure penalty overtook a farmer who abused the bargaining system. I give the description of a neighbor:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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He's nothing but an old blatherer, he was always sitting on 583
matches and saying he would give a fellow his daughter when
he hadn't any fortune on her at all. He'd break it off by saying 577
the girl wasn't willing and all the time it was only boasting and 626
drinking the porter he was.

Today the boaster is a local joke, and his daughter has fled to America.

A famous local character round Ennis, a laborer now 522
dead, once bested a countryman through a judicious whet- 584
ting of the farmer's cupidity at matchmaking. The story 583
goes that the laborer broke the countryman's bargaining resistance by distracting his attention from the cow he was selling at the fair to the prospects of a match between the farmer and a purely fictitious sister, who was dowered with an equally fictitious three hundred pounds. Later when the farmer and his friends came to town again to discuss the matter further, the wit told them elaborately that, after making full inquiries, he had decided they belonged to too respectable a family to allow themselves to make a match with his sister, since the sister had already "a little one" out of wedlock.

Another case of subterfuge practiced illustrates a variation 584
in the match. A fellow near Ennistymon got a farmer with 583
a daughter to back his note at the local bank to the extent of 577
six hundred pounds. The borrowing was kept secret, and the endorser does not seem to have known that the security offered was his own farm. Accordingly, when the borrower later offered to bring in the six hundred pounds in marrying the daughter, the farmer accepted, thinking he was to receive the fortune clear of debt. He discovered only too late that he had a son-in-law whose fortune he must make good himself. The deception led to bad blood between the two, but nothing could be done.

This last example illustrates a reversal of the usual pro- 583
cedure. Ordinarily since the Irish farm family is both

●583 patrilineal and patrilocal, the fortune is brought in by the girl and goes to the father of the boy. When, however, there is no male heir, the incoming son-in-law must give a fortune to the farm holder. Generally the man's fortune is much larger than that of the girl. It may be that the necessity for its being larger arises from the fact that he has no land of his own. Frequently the farm into which he marries is known for at least a generation longer by the name of the girl's family, which reflects the identification of the patrilineal line with a particular plot of land, so strong in rural Ireland. It may be that the additional payment is deemed necessary to overcome the anomaly felt at the reversal of the usual roles of sons and daughters. The Irish term for an in-marrying son-in-law is a graphic one; it is *cliamhan isteach* (literally, son-in-law going in).

583 584 A quite similar case illustrates not only the position of the man marrying-in but the different aspirations which may be involved. A local politician, a farmer himself, and an automobile driver, a farmer's son, arranged a match for a girl who had lately inherited a farm and a thriving shop in a tiny country town. The prospective groom was a "returned South African" who had brought back two thousand pounds. At the last minute negotiations fell through be- [831] cause the young woman objected to the South African's obesity. The driver was to have got a hundred pounds out of it. We learned that several weeks later a second match arranged for the South African turned out more successfully.

583 The "fortune" is a prerequisite of country marriages. even divorced from its usual family setting. Many instances can be cited where returned immigrants have come back with dowries made abroad, to marry into local farms. In three cases that the authors had under particular observation, the small farmers' daughters had spent five, eight. and ten years respectively in the United States as domestic servants. Each returned to Ireland with dowry enough to

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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permit her to marry into local farms, in two of the cases on a somewhat better scale than the farms which they had left. The case of the South African shows how the man also may return with his fortune to establish himself in his native district after several years or even a decade or two of exile. 583

The dowry or marriage portion is, of course, a phenomenon universal in European peasant life. What gives it special interest here is its intimate connection with the farm family and with the land. That connection is evidenced particularly in the "writings."

After the "walking of the land" and the making of the bargain, the two parties to marry go to a solicitor. There the agreements reached are cast into proper legal form. The "writings" is a legal instrument conveying the ownership of the holding to the son. It is usually both marriage settlement and will. On the event of the stipulated marriage, the father conveys the farm and all appurtenances to his son in return for the portion brought in by the girl. The father makes also definite provisions for his own maintenance and that of his wife. Generally, these include the right to the "grass of a cow," to food and the use of the hearth, perhaps the yield of one patch of potatoes, and the use of a room in the house. The room is nearly always, at least in West and North Clare, the one known as the "west room" for reasons we shall examine later. To take care of possible disputes arising out of the failure of these provisions to work smoothly, certain very hard-headed stipulations are often included, allowing for the conversion of these rights into cash support or a lump sum. 583 584 428 883

In return for the farm, the father receives the fortune brought in by the girl and paid to him by her father. Furthermore, the provisions which must be made for other children are often transferred with the land. The father is now expected to give (if he has not given them already) portions to those of his children who are not to be settled 583 428

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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583 428 at home on the land. Where the will and marriage settlement are one and the same document, these obligations are passed on to the inheriting son.

The following description of several "writings" (which we examined) given by an Ennis solicitor specializing in this lucrative practice illustrates the type and the possibilities of variation. The solicitor is describing certain marriage settlements, the originals of which he held in his hand:

> In this settlement John F— of C— had one son and two daughters at home. He left the farm, you see, all that goes with it, to his son on condition of his marrying the girl named here in the deed. He also made the transfer subject to the son's providing for the two daughters by giving them rights of residence and keep in the house as long as they remain unmarried, and by making them special money gifts when they should marry. He then reserved a right for his wife, leaving her a small sum, and the right to the potato patch and her bedroom free of all charge as long as she lived. In the event of her not liking the new arrangements, she was to get a monthly stipend in lieu of her keep and room until she died.

We shall go on to give this interview in some detail to illustrate the full character of the arrangements made. The solicitor continues:

> If there are two sons . . . one of them gets the farm, and when the old people find a girl with a suitable fortune, and the son marries her, they give the money over to the next son, or they provide with it for the other children who haven't yet gone off. It's a pernicious system. [An upper-class person is speaking, not a farmer.] You'll go out to a small holding and see several able-bodied men and women waiting around doing nothing. They are waiting for the eldest son to get married and for their share of the fortune the wife brings in.

674 What may happen when such an arrangement fails to work smoothly for one reason or another may be seen from the following examples. The first is the description (recorded in the course of a general conversation, not elicited in any

674 herein described. A case in County Clare in K— parish[6] shows the same provenance of conflict in a disturbance of the traditional pattern. The following extract from the diary of one of the authors gives the setting of the dispute:

674 January 19th. K – District Court. Nothing much in court
578 today but the following case: Two lads about nineteen were up for having tarred the house of Tim Nihill, the publican, night before the last fair. This wasn't an isolated occurrence; attempts have been made to intimidate Nihill over a period of years. The guards agree he is himself a peaceable citizen. Both Mr. –, the justice, and Mr. –, the local superintendent of civic guards, agreed that the lads were only "tools of some one behind the scenes who is inciting them." The justice bound them over, gave them a stiff fine. Later he explained to me that a certain Mr. Mulvaney has been calling Nihill a land-grabber in the districts and setting the lads on him. Last year the house was fired into in the night. It all arises out of a farm which Nihill owns and which Mulvaney says ought to be his. Mulvaney is
[583] landless now, only a farm laborer. His mother, who had the farm, was to have left it to him, but he made a runaway match with a servant girl and his mother wouldn't let them into the house. So she sold the farm to Nihill for cash and some debts outstanding and Mulvaney has been blackguarding Nihill ever since.

583 This story introduces the whole position of "runaway matches," as elopements are called. There are a few instances of coercion into matches. The autobiographic sketch of one Hannah M—, an old woman, the widow of a petty shopkeeper, illustrates the form which it can take. To paraphrase her:

She is eighty-four, and guess how long she has been a widow. forty years. She's been behind the counter all the time. She has a sister in America with nine children. The sister sent her over her passage, but the family tore it up and married her here in Ennis. She wanted to be a teacher; the work was easy, the holidays (ample) and it was a good job. There were three candidates

[6] Fictitious names for persons and smaller places have been substituted in this and following incidents.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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her year and she got first. At that time her sister sent over the passage money, and she was about to go when they stopped her and married her into this shop. Her sister was coming over before the marriage but her fiancé wouldn't let her go for fear someone would snatch her up too. 583

Ordinarily, as so many of the examples we have already given show, marriage in the matchmaking system is a matter of free agreement within the traditional setting. Love enters the situation, however, only to complicate it. A runaway match upsets the whole pattern, the interplay of dowries, land, and portions of it for children, the transition between adulthood and old age for the parental couple. There are other considerations, too, which account for the disturbance a runaway match creates, such as those of class involved in "marrying beneath" one, but they are outside our present subject. 583 581

The following story illustrates the case. A countryman is describing a happening in his district:

Tom L — was making a match for his daughter with a fine farm of land, and they got as far as picking the gander [the name of a feast given by the bride's people slightly before the wedding]. They were all up there eating and drinking and dancing all night. Now a fellow from Ennistymon [town] came to it, but he was such an ordinary fellow he was not even invited into the front of the house but stayed in the kitchen. He was so poor and lazy, he brought a little turf to market sometimes, but that was all. Next day, the girl came down to the chapel to be married, and before they knew it, didn't she run off with this fellow. Tom cut her off and disowned her, and she's living in Limerick with her fellow now, but it might be in Australia for all Tom will do for her.

Even when matters have not gone so far, the runaway match causes a grave disturbance and destroys the cohesion of the family. The following account given by a publican in Ennis of country acquaintances shows that reconciliation occurs after a time, but that the disruptive effect upon the 583 578

583 family is severe. We give the statement in detail in order
578 to show the general situation as he saw it. He is a townsman, and somewhat detached.

> The daughter on the farm has to wait till all the sons are got ready for their going off and maybe have been given their passage to America or money to set up in business or to settle on the land. But there are runaway matches all the time, they fall in love, they run off together, and they come in here and take work away from the laborers here. It takes a lot of love and courage because the son is usually cut off and the daughter leaves a very good place for nothing but a cabin and they get none of the money. Maybe after several years the girl will get her fortune, but not always. I remember Jerry N — whose father was very well off as farmers go, but he wouldn't marry the girl they picked for him and took up with a servant girl instead. He's driving a hackney now and lives in a cabin with a flock of children. Jimmy L — ran off but he gradually became reconciled with his people. The father had a good farm of sixty acres, and so had the girl, but the young fellow got nothing out of it. His father helps a little now, sending down a bag of potatoes.

602 Another case which the authors had under observation
593 from time to time illustrates not only the matchmaking
578 system but the general family setting in which marriage takes place and farm life moves. Sanctions for conduct
627 aggrieving the families are applied by the families themselves. The case is long but worth quoting in the words of the teller for its comprehensive character:

> There was a girl of the O'Rourkes from D —, they have a farm out there and she married a fellow named Murphy up in C —. She was a school teacher out in England for several years and she became great with this fellow the farmer, and she used to send him money over from England for when they would get married. She sent about two hundred pounds in all. She has an aunt up in C — married up there and it was all the fault of the aunt. She came home and she hadn't yet told her people anything about it. She was just about ready to get married to the fellow and she told them that she was going to get married. They agreed. Then she said she was going to get married to

In matchmaking, too, legal form may be subordinated to
583 country-bred aspirations. To insist upon the full letter of
842 the contract, even if its purpose is not fulfilled, is meanness. It is a breach of social convention, even though quite within legal right. For the "writings" is a formal legal instrument nowadays. Not all the farmers have gone so far in safeguarding himself as one F— in Inagh did. "He put it in the writings that he would pay the last half when his daughter was safe delivered," so we were told. For the provisions of the match reflect again the identifying continuity and the importance to all parties of the girl's bearing children for the family into which she marries. Most often the second instalment of the fortune is not paid until the first child is born, or, with more legal formality, till a year after the marriage contract is completed. One informant summed the matter up:

583 If the woman dies after a year and the first part of the fortune is paid, the man doesn't usually claim the rest, although he may
768 be mean enough to claim it. For the young man can marry again. If the man dies, the girl is given the money if there is no heir and is sent home. If there is, then she gets the place.

583 Let us reëxamine the dowry in the light of this complexity of interrelated factors. As has been explained, the fortune goes to the farm owner, in ordinary cases the father of the boy. At the match, land, house, cattle, and household effects move from father to son just as kinship relationships move and as adult status moves. One family, that of the old couple in which the son was merely one of the children, is partially destroyed in order to make way for a new one, in which the son and the incoming wife are now the adult married couple. The movement of goods corresponds to social forces. And the fortune brought in by the new wife moves from her father to the boy's as if to recompense the father for his loss of the farm. It is significant that the fortune is paid always in money. Try as we might, we never found it paid in any other way. Land, cattle, and household effects

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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are not used but are inalienably associated with the family. 583 ●
This is a new development. In Carleton's day, before the famine, a daughter was often dowered with goods as well. Today this is not the case, for the goods like the land are part of an indivisible and corporate whole.

In this way, when we remember that the farm is identified in popular thinking with the patrilineal and patronymic family line of the landowner and that the girl is an outsider brought into that group, the money appears as a payment for the girl's inclusion. There is significantly no corresponding recompense or payment to the girl's father. He loses both daughter and dowry. The identification of his family, both immediate and ancestral, with the family farm is undisturbed. Of course the father of the girl makes sure that his prestige does not suffer. He demands that the farm she enters shall at least equal the dowry. The size of the dowry [554] he gives his daughter is a very strong index of that prestige. It is both a duty and a great source of pride to provide well for her.

A further indication of the nature of the movement of the dowry is to be found in the terminological (formal) structure of the family which we have already described. It will be remembered that there was no integration between the boy's father and the girl's, and that relationship by affinity proceeded only from the point of view of the young couple. The two fathers-in-law or mothers-in-law are not felt to be related. No kinship terms express the new connection between them. Clearly, then, we have two patrilineal groups still unmerged, still distinct. That this is the case can be seen in Carleton's[1] descriptions of faction fights in which two families are often pitched against one another in spite of their alliance by marriage. The authors have seen some of them, not on the scale of faction fights, it is true,

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578 583 602

[1] William Carleton, peasant novelist (1794–1869), principally *Tales and Sketches* (Dublin: J. Duffy, 1845) and *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (10th complete ed.; London: W. Tegg, 1864).

578
583
602 but ones in which brothers-in-law flared up to strike one another even though after a week or so the two connections became reconciled.

428 Up to this point we have failed to distinguish between wills and marriage settlements in the statement of match-
583 making and transfer of farms. The confusion is justified because in so many cases they are one and the same. Nevertheless, the subject of wills made apart from the son's marriage needs discussion. If our conclusions as to the nature of farm marriage are valid, something of the same play of changes, obligations, and goods must be present.

Money in the dowry functions to recompense the farmer for his relinquishment of the farm and the break-up of the family which he headed. Similarly, in the cases where inheritance proceeds without marriage, money plays the same role. There are many instances in which the old farmer has demanded payment for the property his heir is to receive. Let an Ennis solicitor describe his experience with one of them:

428 I remember an old fellow, Jimmy B – of K – who was taken
763 off dying to the County Home. He called for me to go out there and make a will for him. Seven wills I made for that old codger before he was through. He hadn't any idea of dying. He had only ten or fifteen acres of a farm, but he said he would give it to his son [only] if the son paid him ten pounds a year for it. They often do that, make the son pay from ten pounds to fifty pounds a year for the land. Then [when the solicitor pointed out that the son would inherit the money anyway as the old fellow had no other heirs], old Jimmy made me make another will leaving the money itself to the son.

Another case the authors knew involved no son. The old fellow left a small farm to his cousin and even though he was on the verge of dying, he forced the cousin to pay for it.

In still another instance, an old fellow had some land and about two hundred and fifty pounds to give away. He gave

593 daughters with two hundred pound fortunes, settled three sons
578 and a daughter with her husband in each of the farms. Pat him-
428 self, the eldest, now about eighty, got the largest farm but not the one he wanted. He has been warring with his brothers and his neighbors ever since. He held out against his father for five years, refusing to marry and take his farm. In Pat's youth, land agitation and reform had not yet prevented subdivision and acquiring of new farms by a successful tenant. Pat on his fifty-acre mountain farm has married off a daughter locally at three hundred pounds and sent two sons out to America. Another daughter works in England. Two sons, aged forty-three and thirty-six, are at home and Pat hasn't made up his mind yet which one shall get the land.

593 The examples, various as they are, need not be multiplied.
167 The sons and daughter who are not to be portioned at home, in the words of the Luogh residents, "must travel." To that end both the savings of the family, created through their united efforts under the headship of father and mother, and
[533] the incoming dowry, are devoted. In Luogh there had been only four marriages in ten years; two of them were the usual farm-transferring matches, one a returned emigrant who married a boyhood sweetheart and bought a farm, and one a widower who took a second wife and a second fortune. An old woman described the situation: "There aren't any matches nowadays. Nobody has a fortune to give his daugh-
[454] ter and the young men must travel." Yet the woman who lamented this state of affairs was carefully husbanding half crowns for her baby granddaughter's fortune.

593 Nevertheless this necessary dispersal of the members of
167 the family at its reorganization does not ordinarily destroy
457 the family ties. The bonds of affection and family obligation still hold. If they have emigrated, the family members send
434 back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces and brothers and sisters left at home. A great many farms, especially in West and North Clare, are partially supported by Christmas gifts from Americans and other exiles. It is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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183 otherwise unaccountable cases in which a man or woman
577 abondoned farm and fortune and the favor of friends for
832 a sexual attraction. How else to explain, for instance, an old man's senile infatuation, a young boy's indiscourageable devotion to an older woman who could bring him nothing?

583 A word must be said here of the other ways of bringing about marriage than the formal process of family matchmaking. In the last century, to judge from the accounts of the old people, and to follow the testimony of novelists on Irish life, a stage-managed elopement was often resorted to. It was a semi-respectable kind of marriage. The swain and his friends kidnapped the bride out through the window in the night. They took her away from her father's house to the house of an uncle or other relative of the young man's. There dancing and general jollity reigned, and the young couple were feted. Very often all parties seem to have connived at the result. On other occasions, the elopment was obviously designed to bring about a match to which parents objected or to force parents to a decision. Staged elopements of this kind seem now to have died out in Clare, or at least to be rather infrequent. But the difference between this and a true runaway is slight. In the latter case the young couple take matters into their own hands entirely. Throughout the years many couples have eloped, run off to towns and to emigrate without parental blessing. Others have done likewise and returned to get their portions and a delayed parental sanction. Nevertheless one can see that all these forms are mere modifications upon the dominant convention.

583 They too must lead into the familistic pattern. A match
581 must be made, or at least fortunes given and provision for family re-formation made. In cases of premarital pregnancy, the match may be forced or hastened, but it is nonetheless the final and respectable resolution.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 The Inagh farmer goes on: "The speaker goes with the young man and his father that night, and they meet the father of the girl and his friends or maybe his son and son-in-law. The first drink is [273] called by the young man; the second by the young lady's father.

"The young lady's father asks the speaker what fortune do he want. He asks him the place of how many cows, sheep, and horses is it? He asks what makings of a garden are in it; is there plenty of water or spring wells? Is it far in from the road, or on it? What kind of house is in it, slate or thatch? Are the cabins good, are they slate or thatch? If it is too far in from the road, he won't take it. Backward places don't grow big fortunes. And he asks, too, is it near a chapel and the school, or near town?"

The Inagh countryman could pause here; he had summarized a very long and important negotiation.

583 "Well," he went on, getting to the heart of the
584 matter, "if it is a nice place, near the road, and the place of eight cows, they are sure to ask £350 fortune. Then the young lady's father offers £250. Then maybe the boy's father throws off £50. If the young lady's father still has £250 on it, the speaker divides the £50 between them. So now it's £275. Then the young man says he is not willing to marry without £300—but if she's a nice girl and a good
273 housekeeper, he'll think of it. So, there's another
584 drink by the young man, and then another by the

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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developed from wicker constructions which, like the stone weirs, were once built by shore dwellers for their own needs. But weirs were not the only structure built in tidal waters. The inquiring visitor will observe along many stretches of coast straight lines of stones running out to sea which are the remains of little piers alongside which small boats could lie. Back of them beyond the reach of the tide there may be the ruins of a boat shelter which might never have been more than a rectangular pen of stone walls or earth banks. Such pens are still used to protect the curraghs of the west coast from the wind which is their worst enemy.[1] The vessels are in addition weighted down with stones (Fig. 75), and to this end the gunwales often project at the rear of the curraghs to give purchase for the boulders (Fig. 78).

On the lonely and now abandoned island of St. Kilda the portion which a woman took to her husband on marriage is said to have been 'a pound of horsehair to make a gin to catch fowls'.[2] Martin Martin in his account of the island also tells us that the 200 inhabitants yearly killed and preserved above 20,000 birds, and in addition prodigious numbers of seabirds' eggs were consumed. The killing of seabirds and the taking of eggs for export to England during the worst period of food shortage in the second world war brought about a temporary revival of old skills on many parts of the Irish coast. Down to times still remembered fowling was a seasonal activity on most of the islands where seabirds assemble to nest. Birds of the auk family were caught in horsehair 'dulls' (snares) pegged to the ground. For other birds such as rock pigeons the snares were baited. July was the busy month, and the birds not eaten in this 'hungry month' were salted down for the winter. On Rathlin Island the cliffs and sea-slopes were apportioned in strips and demarcated by spikes driven into the rocks. It is remembered that single men in search of eggs would let themselves alone down ropes attached to iron pins in the cliff edge. Traditions of other ways of catching the birds have been lost but one may be fairly sure that the various methods described by Martin Martin and more recently by Kenneth Williamson for the

[1] S. Piggott, *Antiquity*, 28 (1954), 19–24.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 317.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

at that time and that the ceremony presumably took place in the 585
priest's house.)

'Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the nuptial benediction, will, it is considered, live longest . . .; after this scene is over they again adjourn to the public house . . ., after which the company again mount their horses, the bride being then changed behind the bridegroom's man, and scamper away towards the bride's house, whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold the race for the bottle. The winning of the bottle is frequently contended for between the bridegroom's and the bride's parties; the first person that arrives at the bride's house is victorious. The victor then receives the bottle and again returns to the main body of the wedding, where he hands it to the bridegroom, who [273] first drinks of it and hands it to his bride, who also partakes, it then goes the round until nearly finished, when . . . the bridegroom flings it with the remaining contents away. On their arrival at the bride's house a cake of oatmeal or flour, which is called the bride's cake is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young people of both sexes for [787] the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow, in order that they may dream of their future partners in life. Another scene of noisy festivity and drunkenness then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties; there being frequently a kind of rivalry between them in supporting the dignity of the bridegroom and bride, particularly if they do not happen to be of one line of ancestors.'[1]

No doubt where land and livestock were involved such 581
marriages were not so uninhibited as it might appear. Physical 583
attraction was not a prime consideration. The normal course was for a peasant to marry a girl whose capabilities were known or could be fairly judged, preferably 'a far-out friend', who lived close enough for family visits and exchanges of labour to be made. We know from other accounts of marriage customs in the early nineteenth century that the order of events as described above was sometimes reversed: 'The marriage is agreed upon by bargain, and the theft or abduction follows as a concerted

[1]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 64–66.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

583 [581] matter of form to make valid the marriage.'[1] After the famine, at least, the mutual attraction of the suitors themselves was a secondary consideration. An ill-favoured girl could be made pretty with a dowry of cows or its equivalent in cash, known in the west as 'dry-money'. A marriage between near relatives was not unknown if it meant keeping the name on the land or enlarging the patrimony: 'a blanket is the better of being doubled,' it was said. 'We are all related one way or another' is a comment one hears in isolated mountain districts. In general romantic love was the luxury of the landless, but whatever the motives of marriage there were many charms and omens to be taken into account in winning a person's affections, and some of the magic devices to which a girl might resort are listed in one of Bryan Merryman's poems of the late eighteenth century:

[539]

> Up the chimney stuck the flail
> Slept with a spade without avail,
> Hid my wool in the limekiln late
> And my distaff behind the churchyard gate;
> Flax in the road to halt coach and carriage,
> And haycocks stuffed with heads of cabbage.[2]

582 To this day the marriage or remarriage of old men to young women is regarded as unnatural and wrong, perhaps because it complicates the question of succession. In Co. Wexford, and probably elsewhere, unpopular marriages of this kind are marked by noisy gatherings of young men who serenade the married couple with horn-blowing. A similar custom, the *vito*, is well-known in Andalusia, where it includes the ringing of cow-bells and the singing of scurrilous songs. One of the strangest 585 traditional features of Irish weddings is the visitation of 'straw-[292] boys', that is youths wearing straw masks who attend as uninvited guests and disport themselves at the dance which normally follows a wedding (Fig. 88). I am told that they may still be seen occasionally in Co. Cavan and parts of the west. Formerly the visitors also wore straw suits or white shirts and red petticoats decorated with coloured ribbons. The leader

[1] Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 32.
[2] *The Midnight Court*, translated by Frank O'Connor (1945).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the
decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one
reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to
furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging
parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed
by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's
relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations
of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness
or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of
the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited
only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity
to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of
body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It
is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be
attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too
many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's
house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities com-
mence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles
in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then
accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them
before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [789]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with
the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close
behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in
order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests;
the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate
in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month follow-
ing the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grand-
child was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven
shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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 162

balance between high fertility and few and late marriages 163
keeps their number down.

The kernel of the problem lies,[1] of course, in the behavior 581
of the country people. Marriage brings both dispersal of the farm family and change of status for boys and girls. The marriage of one of the sons brings re-formation of the whole family group upon the farm. The crux of the matter lies in this reorganization of the farm family and the mechanism of the change and continuity it provides.

The nearly universal form of marriage in the Irish coun- 581
tryside unites transfer of economic control, land ownership, 584
reformation of family ties, advance in family and community status, and entrance into adult procreative sex life. It is a central focus of rural life, a universal turning point in individual histories. This form of marriage is known as matchmaking. It is the usual, in fact until recently the only respectable, method of marriage and usually too of inheritance.

In Figure 12 the reader will find a graphic representation of the description of the movement of the family and the re-formation of relations which the match involves and which is the burden of this chapter. It explains itself, and it gives a very good illustration of the generalities. Organicists should take heart at its resemblance to an amoeba expanding and budding. But the resemblance is accidental. The examples we cite come nearly all from County Clare, but literary references and interviewing in other places have been made to show that matchmaking prevails almost universally among small farmers with very little local modification. It is furthermore imbedded in the Irish (Gaelic) tongue and very old in Irish history.

A match (Gaelic, *cleamhnas*, marriage, and *spré*, a match) is a contractual marriage made by the parents or families of the marrying parties and involving the disposal of properties. Generally it begins with a farmer's casting round for a

1 [i.e., that of population decline.—Analyst]

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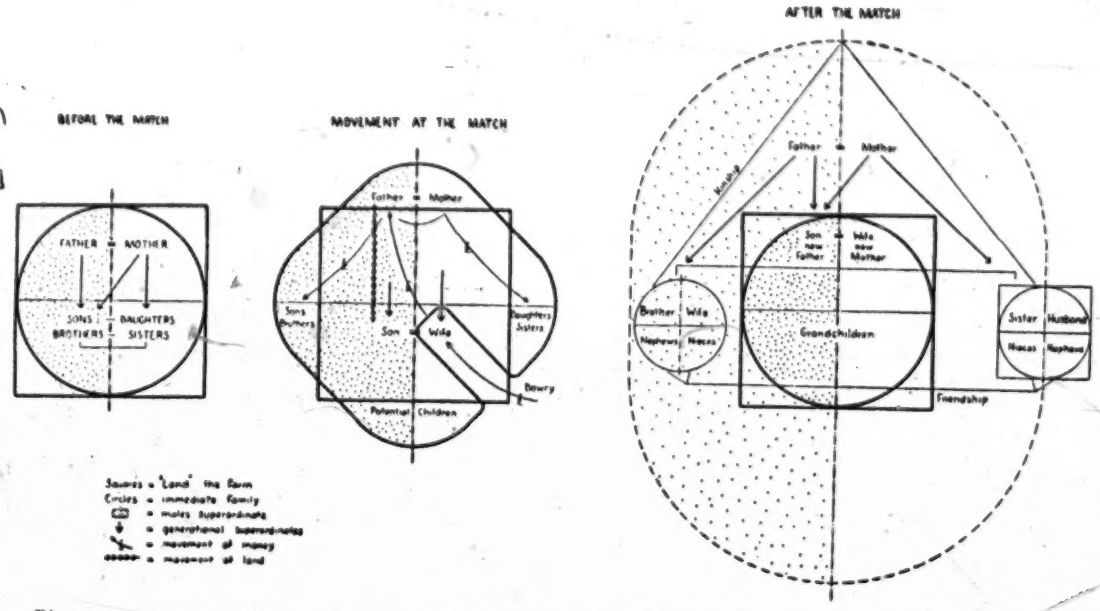
581
584

FIGURE 12

THE MATCH
(FARM MARRIAGE)



Diagrammatic representation of the re-formation of farm families at the marriage of the heir. The diagram demonstrates the rearrangement of all the constituent relations between persons and the reëstablishment of the equilibrium of the familistic system.

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suitable girl for one of his sons who is to inherit his farm. 581
The choice of the heir from among the sons rests in the 584
father's hands. Historically, all the sons and daughters were provided for on the land, and, where possible, this is still the ideal situation, but the closer identification of family with one particular plot of land and the difficulty of land division fostered through three generations of agrarian agitation and land reform have prevented this. One son, then, is ordinarily to be "settled on the land." Typically today only one son remains, and he gets the farm.

In the words of one countryman, the procedure would be: 583

If I wanted to give my farm over to my son and I would be 584
worth, say, two hundred pounds, I would know a fellow up the hill, for instance, that would be worth three hundred pounds. I would send up a neighbor fellow to him and ask him if he would like to join my family in marriage. If the fellow would send back word he would and the girl would say she was willing (and the usual courtesies were exchanged), then on a day they agreed on I and the fellow would meet in Ennistymon (the local market town) and talk over the whole thing as to terms, maybe sitting on it the whole day. Then, before, if it was land I didn't know or the fellow came from afar off, I would walk his land and look at it and the cattle there were on it to make sure of the farm. Then we would go to a solicitor that day and make up the writings in Ennistymon. The money, say three hundred pounds, would be paid over in cash or in promissory notes, and it is usual here to divide it into two parts or sometimes more. One-half is paid at the wedding, and the other is paid a year after.

This statement contains in essence nearly the whole of matchmaking. As the old fellow indicates, the initiative in the matter lies with the owner of the farm, usually the father of the boy. When the time comes for him to relinquish the farm, he lets it be known in the district to those who have daughters ready to be dowered. On the other hand, the father of the girl may often take the initiative, letting it be known that his daughter has a dowry at such and such a

583 figure. In either case, when a suitable boy or girl has been found, the farmer sends an emissary to his or her parent. ●584 The relative value of the farms and the "fortune" that a farmer will give for his daughter are generally pretty well known in the district, but where the two families are comparative strangers, or belong to different localities, the role of the emissary in laying the proposals of one set of parents before the other is more important. The emissary is not a relative of either party ordinarily. Certain individuals become well known locally as successful negotiators. In former days there was once a fully developed "matchmaker" or marriage broker. The office is said to exist still in Connemara, but it has died out in Clare.

584 Quite often a well-known shopkeeper or local politician comes to play the role. One in particular in Ennistymon (a market town of 1,200) came under the author's notice. The back room of his public house reserved for special customers became one of the centers of local matchmaking. It was there that the fathers of both boy and girl would meet and "sit on the match." Their deliberation, to the accompaniment of many bottles of stout, threshes out the whole matter of the disposal of the properties involved, [582] the relative status of the families, and any possible barriers to the union, such as consanguinity, insanity, or notorious crime in past ancestry.

584 The bargaining is a matter of nice adjustment between the "fortune" and the farm. The custom known as "walk- 583 ing the land," referred to above, insures that the farm is roughly equivalent to the fortune, though each party strives for a higher valuation of its own claims. Thus, where a fortune of five hundred pounds has finally been agreed upon, the girl's father will have offered only four hundred and the boy's will have held out for six hundred, instancing all the prospects and advantages of his farm in support of his figure. Finally, through the offices of the intermediary

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and after concessions on each side, the two will "split the difference" and thus reach an agreement. The decision rests with the fathers, but they will have had the quite vocal assistance of friends and older members of the kindred. 584 583

Perhaps the words of a countryman best describe the matching of values and prospects the bargaining entails. Farm and spouse are inextricably interwoven in his mind:

When a young man is once on the lookout for a lady, it is put through his friends for to get a suitable woman for his wife. It all goes by friendship and friends and meeting at public houses. The young man sends a speaker to the young lady and the speaker will sound a note to know what fortune she has, will she suit, and will she marry this Shrove? She and her friends will inquire what kind of a man is he, is he nice and steady? If he suits, they tell the speaker to go ahead and draw it down. So then he goes back to the young man's house and arranges for them to meet in such a place on such a night and we will see about it. The speaker goes with the young man and his father that night, and they meet the father of the girl and his friends or maybe his son and son-in-law. The first drink is called by the young man, the second by the young lady's father. The young lady's father asks the speaker what fortune do he want. He asks him the place of how many cows, sheep, and horses it is. He asks what makings of a garden are in it; is there plenty of water or spring wells? Is it far from the road or on it? What kind of house is in it, slate or thatch? Are cabins good, are they slate or thatch? If it is too far in from the road, he won't take it. Backward places don't grow big fortunes. And he asks too is it near a chapel and the school or near town? If it is a nice place, near the road, and the place of eight cows, they are sure to ask three hundred and fifty pounds fortune. Then the young lady's father offers two hundred and fifty pounds. Then maybe the boy's father throws off fifty pounds. If the young lady's father still has two hundred and fifty pounds on it, the speaker divides the fifty pounds between them, so now it's two hundred and seventy-five. Then the young male says he is not willing to marry without three hundred pounds — but if she's a nice girl and a good housekeeper, he'll think of it. So there's another

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584 drink by the young man, and then another by the young lady's
583 father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day. After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, and maybe another girl, and her brother and father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker. If they suit one another, they will then appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong. The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one. Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points. If the girl's father likes the land, he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes on them. Then they go to an attorney until the next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father [boy's] to sign over the land. Then there comes another day to fit her for a ring. The girl and boy meet in town some day. He buys her some present. They walk the town that day and all admire the pair and gander after them.

584 Several instances have come to notice where agreement
583 was not reached and where a farmer has broken off negotia-
577 tions on finding a girl with fifty pounds more. There are also many subterfuges which, though they are regarded by others as humorous occurrences, are often sore spots between the contracting parties. Thus a farmer near Ennistymon drove his neighbor's cows into his farm on the day of the girl's father's walking the land so that the other would think him richer than he was. After the marriage the deception was discovered, but too late.

[626] In another case, a sure penalty overtook a farmer who abused the bargaining system. I give the description of a neighbor:

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He's nothing but an old blatherer, he was always sitting on 584 matches and saying he would give a fellow his daughter when 583 he hadn't any fortune on her at all. He'd break it off by saying 577 the girl wasn't willing and all the time it was only boasting and 626 drinking the porter he was.

Today the boaster is a local joke, and his daughter has fled to America.

A famous local character round Ennis, a laborer now 522 dead, once bested a countryman through a judicious whet- 584 ting of the farmer's cupidity at matchmaking. The story 583 goes that the laborer broke the countryman's bargaining resistance by distracting his attention from the cow he was selling at the fair to the prospects of a match between the farmer and a purely fictitious sister, who was dowered with an equally fictitious three hundred pounds. Later when the farmer and his friends came to town again to discuss the matter further, the wit told them elaborately that, after making full inquiries, he had decided they belonged to too respectable a family to allow themselves to make a match with his sister, since the sister had already "a little one" out of wedlock.

Another case of subterfuge practiced illustrates a variation 584 in the match. A fellow near Ennistymon got a farmer with 583 a daughter to back his note at the local bank to the extent of 577 six hundred pounds. The borrowing was kept secret, and the endorser does not seem to have known that the security offered was his own farm. Accordingly, when the borrower later offered to bring in the six hundred pounds in marrying the daughter, the farmer accepted, thinking he was to receive the fortune clear of debt. He discovered only too late that he had a son-in-law whose fortune he must make good himself. The deception led to bad blood between the two, but nothing could be done.

This last example illustrates a reversal of the usual pro- 583 cedure. Ordinarily since the Irish farm family is both

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583 patrilineal and patrilocal, the fortune is brought in by the girl and goes to the father of the boy. When, however, there is no male heir, the incoming son-in-law must give a fortune to the farm holder. Generally the man's fortune is much larger than that of the girl. It may be that the necessity for its being larger arises from the fact that he has no land of his own. Frequently the farm into which he marries is known for at least a generation longer by the name of the girl's family, which reflects the identification of the patrilineal line with a particular plot of land, so strong in rural Ireland. It may be that the additional payment is deemed necessary to overcome the anomaly felt at the reversal of the usual roles of sons and daughters. The Irish term for an in-marrying son-in-law is a graphic one; it is *cliamhan isteach* (literally, son-in-law going in).

583 A quite similar case illustrates not only the position of
● 584 the man marrying-in but the different aspirations which may be involved. A local politician, a farmer himself, and an automobile driver, a farmer's son, arranged a match for a girl who had lately inherited a farm and a thriving shop in a tiny country town. The prospective groom was a "returned South African" who had brought back two thousand pounds. At the last minute negotiations fell through be
[831] cause the young woman objected to the South African's obesity. The driver was to have got a hundred pounds out of it. We learned that several weeks later a second match arranged for the South African turned out more successfully.

583 The "fortune" is a prerequisite of country marriages. even divorced from its usual family setting. Many instances can be cited where returned immigrants have come back with dowries made abroad, to marry into local farms. In three cases that the authors had under particular observation, the small farmers' daughters had spent five, eight. and ten years respectively in the United States as domestic servants. Each returned to Ireland with dowry enough to

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permit her to marry into local farms, in two of the cases on a somewhat better scale than the farms which they had left. The case of the South African shows how the man also may return with his fortune to establish himself in his native district after several years or even a decade or two of exile. 583

The dowry or marriage portion is, of course, a phenomenon universal in European peasant life. What gives it special interest here is its intimate connection with the farm family and with the land. That connection is evidenced particularly in the "writings."

After the "walking of the land" and the making of the bargain, the two parties to marry go to a solicitor. There the agreements reached are cast into proper legal form. The "writings" is a legal instrument conveying the ownership of the holding to the son. It is usually both marriage settlement and will. On the event of the stipulated marriage, the father conveys the farm and all appurtenances to his son in return for the portion brought in by the girl. The father makes also definite provisions for his own maintenance and that of his wife. Generally, these include the right to the "grass of a cow," to food and the use of the hearth, perhaps the yield of one patch of potatoes, and the use of a room in the house. The room is nearly always, at least in West and North Clare, the one known as the "west room" for reasons we shall examine later. To take care of possible disputes arising out of the failure of these provisions to work smoothly, certain very hard-headed stipulations are often included, allowing for the conversion of these rights into cash support or a lump sum. 583 584 428 888

In return for the farm, the father receives the fortune brought in by the girl and paid to him by her father. Furthermore, the provisions which must be made for other children are often transferred with the land. The father is now expected to give (if he has not given them already) portions to those of his children who are not to be settled 583 428

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Even where matches are made between strangers, some kind of sexual attraction is not to be neglected, and local custom provides for a brief introduction and a setting for courtship. Several cases came to the authors' notice in which advantageous matches were broken off when either boy or girl expressed distaste for his or her prospective partner, usually when confronted with him or her at the preliminary festivities of the country marriage. Other cases again came to their notice in which a shy suitor could be galvanized into a final decision to take matters into his own hands and press a suit, when his family began to cast around for a match for him elsewhere. Matchmaking was, in fact, far from presenting a scene of "loveless" marriages. The match is a convention like any other. For those who are trained in it, it provides occasion for arousing sexual interest and marital aspirations in young couples quite in the manner of "falling in love" in communities where courtship is more immediately a matter of personal initiative. 581 584

And, like any other convention, the match could also come to cloak another situation. The match made by the contracting families is the ideal kind of marriage, for the reasons we have discussed. But it does not necessarily imply any one kind of courtship. In many instances a couple who made their own decision had a match made for them. Even in the case of "runaways," as elopements are called, the boy and girl could often be brought back and a match made for them. And lastly, as a way of establishing respectability and providing for the movement of the re-formation of the family, even those cases of marriage necessitated by premarital pregnancy could be fitted into the dominant convention. [836]

Thus the forms of courtship and the development of pairings among the population of boys and girls of the country communities must all be understood, even in their most unusual forms, in terms of the dominant pattern of the 581 183 577

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182 ships. He may never attain such a view of himself, of course; from his point of vantage, he is a staunch 'friend' and a loyal son and brother. The balance, which we can see objectively, is to him a deep personal intuition.

Now I face the question: How does this balance maintain itself? What does it imply for him? The point round which the balance revolves is marriage. As we have seen, the 'west room' takes its aura from a change which comes over the parental [885] couple; the 'boy' reaches adult status when he marries and inherits the farm. The family and the land are both involved in this crucial reorganization.

584 Country marriage in Ireland follows an ancient and widespread pattern. It is called 'match-making' and it is the sort of *mariage de convenance* involving parental negotiations and a dowry which is nearly universal in Europe. In Ireland its importance is such as to make it the crucial point of rural social organization.

To describe the match one has to sink one's teeth into the countryman's way of life. For the match is made up of many things. It unites transfer of economic control and advance to adult status. It is the only respectable method of marriage and the usual method of inheritance in the Irish countryside. It is embedded in the Gaelic tongue, in joke and story, and in folklore.

A match usually begins when a farmer casts

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round for a suitable wife for one of his sons. The 584 son to be married is to inherit the farm. The farmer has full power to choose among his sons. A hundred years ago, before famine, clearances and land reform, all the sons and daughters could hope to be provided for on the land. Such a situation is still an ideal, but little more. One cannot subdivide one's holding any longer, and new farms are hard to get. Today the farmer looks forward, ordinarily, to 'settling' only one son 'on the land'.

"When a young man is on the lookout for a young lady", a farmer of Inagh in mid-Clare told me, "it is put through his friends for to get a suitable woman for him for his wife. It all goes by friendship and friends and meeting at public-houses." I think we can remember from the last lecture what he means. Getting married is no carefree, personal matter; one's whole kindred help, even to suggesting candidates.

"The young man", the farmer goes on, "sends a 'speaker' to the young lady and the speaker will sound a note to know what fortune she has, will she suit, and will she marry this Shrove? She and her friends will inquire what kind of a man he is, is he nice and steady. And, if he suits, they tell the speaker to go ahead and 'draw it down'. So then he goes back to the young man's house and arranges for them to meet in such a place, on such a night and we will see about it." With this, the first step in the delicate negotiations is safely passed.

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584 The Inagh farmer goes on: "The speaker goes with the young man and his father that night, and they meet the father of the girl and his friends or maybe his son and son-in-law. The first drink is [273] called by the young man; the second by the young lady's father.

"The young lady's father asks the speaker what fortune do he want. He asks him the place of how many cows, sheep, and horses is it? He asks what makings of a garden are in it; is there plenty of water or spring wells? Is it far in from the road, or on it? What kind of house is in it, slate or thatch? Are the cabins good, are they slate or thatch? If it is too far in from the road, he won't take it. Backward places don't grow big fortunes. And he asks, too, is it near a chapel and the school, or near town?"

The Inagh countryman could pause here; he had summarized a very long and important negotiation.

583 "Well," he went on, getting to the heart of the
584 matter, "if it is a nice place, near the road, and the place of eight cows, they are sure to ask £350 fortune. Then the young lady's father offers £250. Then maybe the boy's father throws off £50. If the young lady's father still has £250 on it, the speaker divides the £50 between them. So now it's £275. Then the young man says he is not willing to marry without £300—but if she's a nice girl and a good
273 housekeeper, he'll think of it. So, there's another
584 drink by the young man, and then another by the

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584
[273]

young lady's father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day."

The farmer paused here again; for the match is developing marvellously. "All this is one day's work," he continued. "After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, maybe another girl, and her brother and her father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker.

"If they suit one another, then they will appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong.

"The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one." He said this last slyly, for to pretend to own more stock than one really has, is an unfair trick in the bargaining.

"Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points.

"If the girl's father likes the land he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes

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584 on them. Then they go to an attorney next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father of the boy to sign over the land." With the writings, the match is made, and the wedding can go forward.

This long statement, in fact, contains the essence of the whole of match-making. It serves very well as a general guide. A great deal is at stake in this elaborate negotiation. To our eyes, such a way of winning a wife seems very unromantic. It savours a little too much of hard-headed business. We should call a man a cynic who put farm and fortune ahead of personal attractions.

584 182 Yet we should be wrong to make such an evaluation of the countryman. The sentiments prompting him, and his expectations, are quite different; they must be understood in their proper setting. In matchmaking, the interests of all the members of both families are deeply involved. The match is a convention by which they are expressed and realized. We are prone to forget that a living convention can be just as joyous, even more so, in fact, than bohemian revolt.

182 556 584 For example, the heated, formal bargaining quickly summarized by the quotation has deep significance. It effects a necessary and balanced equality between the two families. Superficially, it seems merely a nice adjustment between the farm and fortune. But looked at more closely, it assures many things.

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The girl's family know that she will be well 584
provided for. They make sure of it when they 182
'walk the land'. They make sure their standing in 556
the countryside will not suffer. Fortune and farm must be roughly equivalent. In the scale of rural prestige, each farm is valued against the fortune it can pay out with its daughters and the fortune it can bring in with its inheriting son's wife. In the words of the Inagh countryman quoted: "Backward places do not grow big fortunes". And as the farm is identified socially with the family whose members work it, these dowries measure the family's standing.

On the side of the family receiving the fortune, too, interests are served. The girl's dowry comes to them, to be used for their own purposes. With it, they are assured a competent 'new woman', as they call the new wife and daughter-in-law. She is trained to their position in life and to their own habits and sentiments. Girl and dowry are a fair exchange for prestige and alliance.

But these are not the only values at stake. The 'fortune' in the match is woven into the internal necessities of farm family life.

When agreement is finally reached between the 584
negotiating parties, they go to a solicitor to make up 675
the 'writings', as we saw in the quotation. By this, the countryman means they cast their agreement into legal form. For the 'writings' is a contractual instrument which unites marriage settlement and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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584 675 will. Reforms in land tenure have made it necessary recently to give an age-old custom proper legality, since the transfer of the farm is involved.

584 675 888 In the 'writings' the father of the groom makes over the farm and all its appurtenances to his son. In return, the girl's fortune goes to him. The father also makes provision for his own maintenance and that of his wife. It is his abdication, and like Charles V, he keeps only one monastery out of a vast empire for himself. He usually reserves the right to the 'grass of a cow', his keep, the use of the hearth, and the use of a room in the house. That room is the 'west room' already described, the best in the house. Thus, the cycle of life on the farm is completing itself. He and his wife step down from active command.

584 593 In payment for his abdication, he receives the fortune of the girl. A fair arrangement, we should say. But we should be wrong; it is much more. True to the obligations of his social role, he may not use it entirely for himself. The Irish small farmer does not retire, like the Iowan, to sunny California and the Townsend plan. He must meet the interests of the group. Ordinarily, the other children have been stalwart workers in the farm family corporation. They are not to be 'settled on the land'; some other provision must be made. They may come forward now for their long due reward and their corporate share.

Here the purposes behind the match show them-

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selves again. One daughter is ordinarily married 584
into a near-by farm. The family makes a match for 593
her. With her, of course, goes a fortune equal to that the son's bride brings in. Perhaps, a son may be similarly married into a farm where there are only daughters; even though a *cliamhan isteach*, 'son-in-law going-in', as he is graphically called in Irish, must pay a much larger fortune. He has to overcome the anomaly felt in reversing the usual role of sons and daughters and has to compensate the family for the loss of 'their name on the land'.

But it is a very fortunate farmer indeed who can provide for all his sons and daughters so. Usually, only the heir and one daughter are married and dowered, the one with the farm, the other with the fortune. All the rest, in the words of the Luogh residents, 'must travel'.

Thus, either at the match or in preparation for it comes the inevitable dispersal of the farm family. The unit must break up. Time and change are inevitable in human affairs; only an orderly social mechanism can tame their ravages.

The match provides rural Ireland with this mechanism. It accomplishes the necessary transformation of the family. The balance of interests and duties, of prides and loyalties, hinges upon it.

There are two facets to the change, an external 584
and an internal. The distinction is understandable, 593
it is that between internal constitution and external 182
face. Or better, let us state it in figurative terms.

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182 Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage" was pro-
584 found sociology. Life in organized society is a
593 drama. In the match, even though the marriage of one principal is the theme, the action includes the whole cast. Internally, the action forcibly and finally changes the interrelations of all the characters; externally, the parts they play to the audience alter and grow. The changes must run their course till the action resolves itself in the crystallization of a new situation; and the act is over.

It is this dramatic quality which gives the sociologist and the social anthropologist the right to use such terms as 'structure', 'dynamics' and 'equilibrium'. He has that right in describing the life of the countryman. The match brings changes in dramatic completeness. It forces the relationships of the constituent human beings into a new equilibrium and creates a scaffolding for new behaviours and sentiments.

182 Let us look at the external change first. The sons
593 and daughters who must travel are forced out of
166 the closely knit group in which they once had their being. Yet, unless they emigrate beyond hope of call, they do not drop out of sight. The sentiments of years of close association do not die out. It has been a matter of pride and duty with the farm father to provide well for his children. Wherever he can, he has found them an opening. He has sent them into the towns, into the shops, the professions, the trades, and into the Church. As in nearly

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369 And so he does, if he humanly can, and to that end
443 his savings go.

571 So much for the farmer's son. In his person, he
166 represents a rough one-half of the countryside's invasion of the town. Yet he has sisters, too, at home upon the farm. The attraction of metropolis is no less great for them; they, too, must be provided for in the dispersal of the family upon the land. And with them goes the rural social order and the ties of kinship and community.

In this fact one can see another rough half of the
369 rural tide that sweeps into the ranks of business in
443 the towns. The shop-world taps its country hinter-
571 land again in the persons of the daughters of the
584 farms. The farmer must, if he can, marry his daughter off well; prestige and alliance go with her and the dowry which she carries as her portion. The shopkeeper must renew his ties with the countryside with each new generation, if the shop is to survive. In this coincidence of interest, again, a great deal of the marriage custom of the town revolves. The world of shops and pubs is caught within the ordered mechanism of change called *match-making*, in the same way as is the 'farm of land'.

Currently in country towns, the 'match' is the accepted type of marriage for publican and shopkeeper as much as it is for the farmer. The more sophisticated and more affluent shopkeepers, those who are close, or would like to be, to the higher

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status of merchant, would repudiate the rustic word. They would tell you that they make instead 'proper marriage settlements'. But their humbler fellow-tradesmen, whose shops have not such pretensions, are closer to the soil. They would admit what is for both of them the fact.

Consequently, one can find in the town, round the shop and pub, the same reorganization of human relationships that goes forward when the country match transfers land and household command to a marrying son. But there is one great difference. In the town one must bring a country-woman in.

If one analyses the census of marriage, age and occupation in the Free State made in 1926, one can see how general this reorganization is. It lies behind the statistics of a great part of the country. Without it, one cannot explain the striking uniformity that gives a roughly similar grouping of individuals by age, by sex, by marital conditions, in all the towns, except the large cities, of southern Ireland. For instance, shop-assistants everywhere are young unmarried men and women. Entrance into the ownership of shop and public-house takes place at the same age as does entrance into married state. Though the towns show no such marked extremes as do the country districts, marriage is long delayed and bachelorhood and spinsterhood are very frequent by world standards. One need not be a demographer or statistician to be struck with the parallel, and to wonder at such coincidence between

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 the lives of the followers of occupations so dissimilar
443 as agriculture and retail commerce.

571 For this statistical correspondence overlies the
584 facts of social life. It merely expresses numerically the community of custom between country and town. If one cares to probe deeper, among the lives whose events the census records, one finds the custom at the root of human behaviour and human sentiment. One lays bare the outline of the balance in which the lives of townsmen and countrymen co-mingle in a larger whole.

For setting up a shop means setting up a family; it means marriage and the bringing-in of a country girl. There are exceptions, of course; custom is only a general imperative. Nevertheless, the country match is the generality.

Most often, the shopkeeper-father turns over the shop to the son who is to succeed him when that son marries. The daughter-in-law is the daughter of a farmer of the countryside. Her people 'walk the shop' as they would 'walk the land' in a country match. Long negotiation equates the dowry they give with the shop, its stock, its debts and its prospects. The two families cast the agreement into proper legal form. The shopkeeper transfers his control and his ownership to the son and the son's wife. The other shop children are dispersed and are provided for, where possible. The older generation retires; and a new family is established in business in the town.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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This is a smooth and orderly transition. The shop keeps its identification with human ties unbroken, from parents to children. It renews them once again, outward into the rural hinterland, in the persons of kindred the young wife brings 'into the shop'. The shop's life blood is renewed: literally, in the persons of the new master and mistress; socially, in the extensions of kinship and alliance; and economically, because trade follows personal ties.

The erstwhile apprentice boy, the farmer's son, who sets up 'on his own', follows the same course and makes a comparable transition. His marriage and his setting up his own shop most often coincide. His savings and the bride's fortune make possible, together, many a start in the life of the market-towns. Money buys the shop, credit may stock its shelves, but it is the social alliance, contracted in a country marriage, which supplies the trade upon which business rests.

One might ask here if the role of the sexes is not reversible. Might not the young man marry-in into the shop, and the girl rise from assistantship to full-fledged ownership? Naturally, such a course might well be taken; a social order allows many channels. It has not the rigidity of formal law. Or the girl may inherit a shop, or receive one, in the towns, as her particular portion. For to set up a daughter in a small shop is to provide well for her and to assure her station for her lifetime; even

S:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 though little wealth will come to her through that
443 shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases,
571 these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a
584 finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly
369 universal occurrence where a society preserves
443 some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural
571 necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic
582 order. In India, for instance, it is immediately recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives
443 on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he
571 be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must
582 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

This order, one must not forget, is nothing
182 esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than
369 it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire
443 among the constituent human beings, both make
571 it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern
584 into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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to cook, sew, keep house, and she hasn't a lot of grand ideas in her head that the town girls have. When she comes to town, she feels she's got on in the world; while the town girl will only be wanting more than her husband can give her, or she won't do her share." 182 369 443 571 584

The speaker was a townsman, born and bred, but one can see that he endorsed the system heartily. He was an older man who had made his adaptations to social life successfully.

For others, for those whom the life of the town has caught up and who have acquired 'grand ideas', as the last speaker called them, adaptation is more difficult. The town, as I have said, engenders its own near-urban values. These come to conflict with those which unite the shop world to its countryside. Thus ambition is born, which means a severance of old ties. The ties become thwarting chains, and here and there a young man, caught within the pulls of two incompatible forces, becomes a bitter and scornful rebel.

One such young man, who found himself swept back into the ways of the market-towns after a brief flight into larger horizons in Dublin, fought against the fate that closed him in. He tells his own story: "This town is very dull. I don't understand what brings you here. The trouble with everybody here is that they are all misfits and that they are all in jobs they loathe. Successful men give you good counsel: they tell you to work hard and forget your

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 troubles. But that is because they are in occupations
369 which they like. There is something glamorous
443 about being a solicitor, and everybody comes to
571 you. I would like to have been one. There will be
584 opportunity here when the older men clear out.

"I went off and studied in Dublin for a long while. Then my father died and my mother was stricken with paralysis and I had to come back here and work behind the counter, which I loathe. There's no one else now but my sister. Most shopkeepers make out through their family trade; and the only thing for me to do now is to marry some rich woman in from the country and then all her friends will come in. If you want to get married here there is nothing in it at all but to look out for a country girl. If you don't want to make a fool of yourself and go in for politics, you have to depend on your friends and your wife's friends, and if you can, you've got to marry a girl from the country. Then she'll bring in all her people for miles round, with all their relatives and their married families, and they're the ones that will buy your flour and sugar and tea. You can't get on without them."

182 In this rebellious young man's lament, another
369 aspect of the life of the towns appears and takes its proper place. The social order which demands the maintenance of personal bonds between countryman and townsman carries with it the seeds of change as well. The young man I have just quoted is caught within the very wheels of this change. A

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XIX

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. II.

Shrove Tuesday or " Shraft " was not long ago the great 584 day for weddings in rural Ireland. In older times it seems 585 certain that marriages were celebrated at the seasonal festivals described in Chapter 17. An interesting account of the ceremonies in the barony of Upper Fews, Co. Armagh, [114] was written down in 1818 and has been printed in a pamphlet published by the Dundalgan Press in 1923. It relates how " the courtship of the parties often commences and is carried on at fairs and patrons, and at wakes and funerals, from whence they run away together, that is, the male brings the female, sometimes by force, to one of his friends house." It goes on to describe the negotiations between the two families and the fixing of the bride's portion or dowry. On 585 the wedding day the two parties, consisting of from 20 to 40 relations, contend, on horseback or afoot, " for who will be at the bride's house first ; where, when the parties arrive, the bridegroom and bride are presented with a plate of oatmeal and salt, of which each of them takes three small mouthfulls. After this the parties mount their horses and join in one grand cavalcade to the alehouse and then to the priest. Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the nuptial benediction will, it is considered, live longest."

Following another visit to the alehouse the parties separate and " scamper away towards the bride's house,

[p. 171]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands. 444

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. 465

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50. 462 [434]

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, generally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The marriages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family. 871 584 585 591

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding, 585 [115]

was twisted into a three-stranded plait. Standing back at a mark, the reapers threw their spinning hooks at it in turn until it was severed and 'stretched'. At this a triumphant shout was raised. The cailleach was sometimes 'waked' before it was lifted: the 'corpse' was hung round the neck of the triumphant slayer, who was guest at the subsequent 'churn' (the harvest feast and dance) and who was fated to be the reaper who would be first married. It was, perhaps, more usual for the cailleach to be put around the neck of the master or mistress of the house. From the threat of being hanged by it they would purchase their freedom by providing the churn supper, for which special food was prepared. There are many variant practices but it is clear that they all turn on the same themes, the spirit of the corn and the luck of a speedy harvest. In some districts the cailleach was known as the hare, and the cry which kept the toiling shearers to their task was; 'We'll put the hare out of it today!' 243 187 248

It was customary to hang the churn in the kitchen, either over the door, on the dresser, or about the chimney hearth, and to keep it until the following harvest, when it was given to the cows. Or it might be fed to the horses on the first day of ploughing. In some houses the last sheaf was preserved year after year, and I have seen specimens half a century old. One of these was dressed with coloured papers, hinting that there was formerly more ceremony connected with the last sheaf than has survived. These dressed cailleachs figure in the harvest festival decoration in some churches in Co. Armagh, where also miniature corn ricks surmounted by a harvest knot are displayed, the Church thus having won over and preserved the pagan symbols of harvest (See Tailpiece).

Harvest knots or bows are decorative twists of straw which were worn by the harvesters, and are still quite commonly carried by young men at harvest time in some districts (Plate 13, 1). Girls would wear them in their hair, boys in their coats, and in former times they were exchanged by the sexes as a sign of mutual attachment. They are made in a fine plait of two straws tied into loops or interlaced, those worn by the girls having the ears of the corn left on. The best examples are made from wheat, and some exceptionally fine specimens are made from 243 301 [584]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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443 trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-
322 lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples
443 are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there
543 were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of
443 ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 88), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for
[584] a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts,
[582] binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints'
796 days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1]See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland*, 1796–97, 250.
[2]R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 253.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1]

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning.

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 48.

527 cairn on the summit of Slieve Croob was until recent years the
372 scene of a great gathering on the first Sunday in August. The fiddling and dancing are no more, though numbers of young people still assemble there and frolic in the heather. Blaeberries (bilberries) were picked into little rush baskets made on the spot (Fig. 70) and that the occasion was recognized as a [584] legitimate time of courting is shown by the comment that 'many a lad met his wife on Blaeberry Sunday'. The name Garland Sunday derives from the hoops decorated with ribbons and flowers which were made by unmarried girls and, latterly, carried to church before being set up in the graveyard to preside over the dancing with which the day terminated. Rites in [769] honour of the dead seem to have marked the old Lammas festival, so that again we notice the association of ancestral spirits with the fertility of farm and family.

527 By St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, harvest is well under way and the first-saved corn is ready to be thrashed. By tradition the flails were made ready on this day, and if the high harvest winds are blowing it is said that the saint is testing his flails. Next comes Michaelmas, 29th September, linked closely with the sea, with horses, and, strangely, with the ceremony of killing a cock or a goose, originally as a sacrifice in honour of the saint. In some parts Michaelmas was regarded as one of the most important feasts of the year, but I have not found any districts where it was, as in Uist, 'much the most imposing pageant and most popular demonstration of the Celtic year': nor have I come across any tradition of the rites of digging up and making presents of wild carrots which was associated, in the Hebrides, with the eating of cakes made of mixed flour baked before a stone flag, with the killing of a lamb, visits to graveyards, and a night of 'dance, song and love-making'.[1]

527 Throughout Ireland these lesser feast days pale in comparison
769 with the culminating festival which marks the end of the dying year on All-Hallows Eve. An astonishing amount of lore still clings to Hallowe'en, and we must restrict ourselves to picking out some of the main elements of this crowded occasion. The crops should now be all gathered in and no fruit should be picked

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928), 198.

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed mar- 163
riages the population would continue to increase were it not [167]
for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, [842]
sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious practices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some 582
evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested. The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may [114]
be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and Londonderry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive 842
the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well-organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to [172]
many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far re- 584 ●
moved from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1] R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1775*, 103.
[2] H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 not subject to recognized laws of marriage. Romantic unions there must have been, but among the farming population they would have been followed by prolonged arguments and arrangements as to the bride-price. An unusually detailed account of marriage customs in County Armagh in the early nineteenth century is worth quoting at some length:

'The acquaintance and courtship of the parties often commence and are carried on at fairs, patrons and other public places of rural sports and amusements, and at wakes, funerals, etc. from whence they run away together—that is, the male brings the female to one of his friends or relations house. This was heretofore sometimes accomplished by force . . . Shortly after the running away, as it is termed, some of the female's relatives follow her and negotiations commence respecting the match, which often terminate by the female's unhappy father being obliged to promise more portion than his abilities will allow, in order to preserve the reputation of his daughter. The match being agreed upon and the day appointed for the wedding, the intended bride is permitted to return to her father's house, where a scene of preparation commences for the wedding dinner, which generally consists of bruised potatoes and flour . . . and large quantities of oatbread and butter.

585 'On the day appointed for the wedding, the bridegroom's party, from ten to twenty of his relations . . . mount their horses, the women behind the men, except a few of the latter that are single and intend running for the bottle, and advance towards the bride's residence, where they are met by a few single horsemen belonging to the bride's party. When the parties meet, those of them that are single-mounted then contend for who will be at the bride's house first; where, when the parties arrive, the bridegroom and bride are presented . . . with a plate of oatmeal and salt, of which each of them take three small mouthfuls; probably to prevent the power of witchcraft or the effect of an evil eye. After this the parties . . . mount their horses, and the whole then join in one grand cavalcade, the van being led by the bridegroom; the bride riding behind the bridesman, until they reach the ale-house most convenient to where the priest lives. (Here it should be explained that there were few Roman Catholic places of worship

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

585 [777] [273] The good luck of the bottle race referred to above may be associated with the 'agreement bottle' of whiskey which was drunk, according to a seventeenth-century account, when the parents and relations of the young couple had reached a marriage agreement.[1] To this day in parts of Co. Down 'running for the broth' is a feature of country marriages, a bowl of broth being the reward given to the person who reaches the bride's house first after the wedding. Until recently, also, the young couple were expected to appear at the Bride's Show on the first Sunday after their marriage: they were accompanied to a special sloping field where they ran hand-in-hand to a stone near the bottom of the field, followed by pairs of linked boys and girls, each boy kissing the stone. Games and what was described to us as 'general carrying on' followed the Bride's Show.[2]

584 In more remote parts of the country match-making is still a recognized procedure. The professional match-maker is a well-known figure, usually a shrewd elderly person well versed in the arts of rural diplomacy, and his role has been fully described by Arensberg. He acts for the farmer who is ready for his son to marry—the son being often well into middle age—by negotiating with the parents of the girl whom the farmer has selected. In the prolonged bargaining as to the amount of the 'fortune' which the girl is to bring with her the values of peasant living stand clearly revealed.[3] Marriage is not so much a personal relationship as a union between groups, reinforcing relations which extend far beyond individuals.

There was a popular belief that the curse of sterility could be placed on the bride by any ill-disposed person who tied knots in a string during the marriage ceremony. A more obvious example of magic was the custom of tying a hen which was about to lay an egg to the bed-post on the marriage night. [585] There are widespread traditions of the days when landlords exercised the *jus primae noctis* over their tenants' wives, and one hears of leases which contained clauses governing the right. 844 During pregnancy it was lucky to do certain things and to avoid

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 1, 122.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 193
[3] C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, ch. 3.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder 823
bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint 755
of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some
which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded [976]
with superstitious awe up and down the country and were generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin 823
slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts [584] ●
are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.' Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork, [844]
women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup- 526
marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 103.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 689 581 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few 562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the [154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that • 584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently 173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love 584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, [208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the 584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his 584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The 574 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleamhnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleamhnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the
decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one
reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to
furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging
parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed
by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's
relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations
of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness
or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of
the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited
only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity
to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of
body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It
is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be
attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too
many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's
house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities com-
mence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles
in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then
accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them
before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [189]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with
the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close
behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in
order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests;
the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate
in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month follow-
ing the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grand-
child was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven
shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, 121
and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized [626] by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, [114] and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble sav- [181] ages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every 831* opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its 626 victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind [609] fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at [167] the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous [574] announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case. 831* 626

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities [562] of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem [167] the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples [584] who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the [839] apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XIX

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. · II.

Shrove Tuesday or " Shraft " was not long ago the great 584
day for weddings in rural Ireland. In older times it seems 585
certain that marriages were celebrated at the seasonal
festivals described in Chapter 17. An interesting account
of the ceremonies in the barony of Upper Fews, Co. Armagh, [114]
was written down in 1818 and has been printed in a pamphlet
published by the Dundalgan Press in 1923. It relates how
" the courtship of the parties often commences and is carried
on at fairs and patrons, and at wakes and funerals, from
whence they run away together, that is, the male brings the
female, sometimes by force, to one of his friends house."
It goes on to describe the negotiations between the two
families and the fixing of the bride's portion or dowry. On 585
the wedding day the two parties, consisting of from 20 to 40
relations, contend, on horseback or afoot, " for who will be
at the bride's house first ; where, when the parties arrive, the
bridegroom and bride are presented with a plate of oatmeal
and salt, of which each of them takes three small mouthfulls.
After this the parties mount their horses and join in one
grand cavalcade to the alehouse and then to the priest.
Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the
nuptial benediction will, it is considered, live longest."

Following another visit to the alehouse the parties
separate and " scamper away towards the bride's house,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

585 whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold this race for the bottle. The first person to reach the bride's house is victorious; he is rewarded with a bottle (? of poteen) which is drunk by the company and then broken by the bridegroom. Next "a cake of oatmeal or flour, called the bride's cake, is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young persons present for the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow. Another scene of noisy festivity then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties."

Fig. 112.

585 532 A wedding custom recorded within the last 50 years from Sligo, Mayo, Galway and Kerry was the wearing of straw masks by "straw-boys" or "soppers," who went about begging money and drink and threatening mischief. The styles of mask varied from one district to another: we illustrate (Fig. 112) the pattern worn in Mayo. It is hardly necessary to add that parallels to this kind of ceremonial dress and mime can be found in many parts of the world. Among the practices connected with childbirth attention has been 846 drawn to survivals of the "couvade," whereby the husband is supposed to share the woman's pains. It is stated that in

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands. 444

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. 465

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50. 462 [434]

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, generally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The marriages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family. 871 584 585 591

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding, 585 [115]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen 582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully 844 watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if 763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their 764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great [762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to [178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin [482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women 764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own 533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

58 not, like an Inishbofin man, consider himself disgraced, nor is he inconsolable.

Engaged couples or newly married people often come in for an amount of attention from the children of the neighbourhood, which, however flattering it may be, is decidedly embarrassing; they are followed about and cheered whenever they appear together. Weddings
585 are occasions of family festivities, and are usually followed by a dance.
533 "Straw-boys" go round to the house on these occasions and take part in the dancing. They are disguised in tall conical-shaped straw
292 masks, adorned with strips of red and green cloth, white shirts decorated with coloured ribbons, and white or red petticoats. The band is headed by a captain and a mate, who enter the house first and declare that they are shipwrecked sailors, and that they have come to dance at the wedding; the captain then dances with the bride, the mate with the bridesmaid, and the rest of the band with the other girls. It is usual to treat the straw-boys to drink, but they often refuse it, and never demand money, or indulge in any rowdy conduct.

The young couple usually set up house on their own account,
591 except in the case of the youngest son, who inherits his parents' house and property, in which case the bride goes to live with her people-in-law.

When a person is dying, windows and doors are thrown open, and
763 the clock (if there be one) stopped; it is considered unlucky or im-
777 proper for any of those in the house to cry until after the death has actually occured.

Wakes are still held in this district, and many of the old obser-
764 vances and games are kept up; but owing to the discouragement of these by the clergy, the people show a great reluctance to give any information on the matter. A good deal of drinking usually takes place on these occasions.

The funeral customs have undergone some change during the past thirty years, but much still remains that is worthy of notice. A grave is not usually dug until the coffin reaches the graveyard, if begun before hand it is never dug on a Monday, or commenced at least, but a start is made, if necessity compels, by raising a few sods on Sunday. It is believed to be unlucky to bury a corpse on New Year's Day, an act
[777] which is thought to bring misfortune to the whole neighbourhood.

The coffin is usually taken out the back door of the house, and conveyed to the cemetery by the longest route. At the graveyard the *caoine* is raised by the women immediately after the religious ceremony

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

814 is likely to succeed in collecting much. Fortunately there is a
[609] resident (the Rev. P. A. O'Reilly), who is engaged in collecting the old Irish songs of the district, several of which he has already published. As to the legends, many of these have been recorded by C. O. and Mr. Knight, to whose works the reader is referred.

The following notes, mainly dealing with what may be termed minor folk-lore, were some of them obtained from fishermen and others of the natives, but mainly through the kindness of several residents, some of whom desired that their names should not be mentioned.

115 1. *Customs and Beliefs.*—For the majority of the notes on these I
814 am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, who, being a native of the district, and personally acquainted with nearly everyone in it, has an exceptionally large knowledge of the subject; for a large part of what remains I have also to thank Messrs. F. C. Wallace, D.I. R.I.C., Belmullet, and P. T. O'Reilly, Carn.

777 A very large number of things are considered lucky or the reverse. It is unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, on which day also no change of residence should be made, a Friday should rather be chosen, as that is the lucky day for moving. To meet a red-haired woman on starting out in the morning, to mention a priest while fishing, to take fish out of a house without sprinkling some salt on it, to sell milk without putting in a pinch of salt, to give fire out of the house on May-day, or to anyone in whose dwelling a sick person may be, all these are unlucky. People "born with teeth"
[845] are unlucky also; but to be "born with a caul" is a sign of great good fortune, though should the original owner ever see it his luck will depart; the possession of a caul is believed to protect against death by drowning. A mole on the face, if "above the breath," is considered to have the same protective influence.

787 Death within the year is believed to be the fate of the man who has the temerity to make an addition to the western side of his house, or to build out at the back; several instances of men who died within a short time after thus offending are sure to be told to the incredulous.

The banshee, the death-watch, the creaking of furniture, and the howling of a dog at night are all looked upon as death-warnings. Several persons were met with who asserted that they had heard the banshee before the death of relatives.

● 585 At weddings the bride and bridegroom must step over the threshold of the chapel door together, as whichever goes out first will be the first to die.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 not subject to recognized laws of marriage. Romantic unions there must have been, but among the farming population they would have been followed by prolonged arguments and arrangements as to the bride-price. An unusually detailed account of marriage customs in County Armagh in the early nineteenth century is worth quoting at some length:

'The acquaintance and courtship of the parties often commence and are carried on at fairs, patrons and other public places of rural sports and amusements, and at wakes, funerals, etc. from whence they run away together—that is, the male brings the female to one of his friends or relations house. This was heretofore sometimes accomplished by force . . . Shortly after the running away, as it is termed, some of the female's relatives follow her and negotiations commence respecting the match, which often terminate by the female's unhappy father being obliged to promise more portion than his abilities will allow, in order to preserve the reputation of his daughter. The match being agreed upon and the day appointed for the wedding, the intended bride is permitted to return to her father's house, where a scene of preparation commences for the wedding dinner, which generally consists of bruised potatoes and flour . . . and large quantities of oatbread and butter.

585 'On the day appointed for the wedding, the bridegroom's party, from ten to twenty of his relations . . . mount their horses, the women behind the men, except a few of the latter that are single and intend running for the bottle, and advance towards the bride's residence, where they are met by a few single horsemen belonging to the bride's party. When the parties meet, those of them that are single-mounted then contend for who will be at the bride's house first; where, when the parties arrive, the bridegroom and bride are presented . . . with a plate of oatmeal and salt, of which each of them take three small mouthfuls; probably to prevent the power of witchcraft or the effect of an evil eye. After this the parties . . . mount their horses, and the whole then join in one grand cavalcade, the van being led by the bridegroom; the bride riding behind the bridesman, until they reach the ale-house most convenient to where the priest lives. (Here it should be explained that there were few Roman Catholic places of worship

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

at that time and that the ceremony presumably took place in the 585 priest's house.)

'Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the nuptial benediction, will, it is considered, live longest . . .; after this scene is over they again adjourn to the public house . . ., after which the company again mount their horses, the bride being then changed behind the bridegroom's man, and scamper away towards the bride's house, whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold the race for the bottle. The winning of the bottle is frequently contended for between the bridegroom's and the bride's parties; the first person that arrives at the bride's house is victorious. The victor then receives the bottle and again returns to the main body of the wedding, where he hands it to the bridegroom, who [273] first drinks of it and hands it to his bride, who also partakes, it then goes the round until nearly finished, when . . . the bridegroom flings it with the remaining contents away. On their arrival at the bride's house a cake of oatmeal or flour, which is called the bride's cake is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young people of both sexes for [787] the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow, in order that they may dream of their future partners in life. Another scene of noisy festivity and drunkenness then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties; there being frequently a kind of rivalry between them in supporting the dignity of the bridegroom and bride, particularly if they do not happen to be of one line of ancestors.'[1]

No doubt where land and livestock were involved such 581 marriages were not so uninhibited as it might appear. Physical 583 attraction was not a prime consideration. The normal course was for a peasant to marry a girl whose capabilities were known or could be fairly judged, preferably 'a far-out friend', who lived close enough for family visits and exchanges of labour to be made. We know from other accounts of marriage customs in the early nineteenth century that the order of events as described above was sometimes reversed: 'The marriage is agreed upon by bargain, and the theft or abduction follows as a concerted

[1] J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 64–66.

583 matter of form to make valid the marriage.'[1] After the famine,
at least, the mutual attraction of the suitors themselves was a
[581] secondary consideration. An ill-favoured girl could be made pretty with a dowry of cows or its equivalent in cash, known in the west as 'dry-money'. A marriage between near relatives was not unknown if it meant keeping the name on the land or enlarging the patrimony: 'a blanket is the better of being doubled,' it was said. 'We are all related one way or another' is a comment one hears in isolated mountain districts. In general romantic love was the luxury of the landless, but whatever the motives of marriage there were many charms and omens to be taken into account in winning a person's affections, and some of the magic devices to which a girl might resort are listed in one of Bryan Merryman's poems of the late eighteenth century:

[539]

> Up the chimney stuck the flail
> Slept with a spade without avail,
> Hid my wool in the limekiln late
> And my distaff behind the churchyard gate;
> Flax in the road to halt coach and carriage,
> And haycocks stuffed with heads of cabbage.[2]

582 To this day the marriage or remarriage of old men to young women is regarded as unnatural and wrong, perhaps because it complicates the question of succession. In Co. Wexford, and probably elsewhere, unpopular marriages of this kind are marked by noisy gatherings of young men who serenade the married couple with horn-blowing. A similar custom, the *vito*, is well-known in Andalusia, where it includes the ringing of cow-bells and the singing of scurrilous songs. One of the strangest
585 traditional features of Irish weddings is the visitation of 'straw-
[292] boys', that is youths wearing straw masks who attend as uninvited guests and disport themselves at the dance which normally follows a wedding (Fig. 88). I am told that they may still be seen occasionally in Co. Cavan and parts of the west. Formerly the visitors also wore straw suits or white shirts and red petticoats decorated with coloured ribbons. The leader

[1] Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 32.
[2] *The Midnight Court*, translated by Frank O'Connor (1945).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

585
[292]

FIG. 88. Straw hats and dress. (1) Strawboys' wedding mask, Co. Mayo. (2) Strawboys' straw suit, Co. Kerry (National Museum, Dublin). (3) Biddyboys' straw hat, Co. Londonderry. (4) Mummers' straw hat, Co. Fermanagh. (5) Estonian straw hat, worn at Christmas games.

of the strawboys claimed the right to dance with the bride, and they were all well entertained. It seems that they would sometimes claim to be shipwrecked sailors, and whatever the origin of the custom it is evident that disguise was an important element in it.[1]

[1]C. R. Browne, *The Mullet.*

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

585 The good luck of the bottle race referred to above may be [777] associated with the 'agreement bottle' of whiskey which was [273] drunk, according to a seventeenth-century account, when the parents and relations of the young couple had reached a marriage agreement.[1] To this day in parts of Co. Down 'running for the broth' is a feature of country marriages, a bowl of broth being the reward given to the person who reaches the bride's house first after the wedding. Until recently, also, the young couple were expected to appear at the Bride's Show on the first Sunday after their marriage: they were accompanied to a special sloping field where they ran hand-in-hand to a stone near the bottom of the field, followed by pairs of linked boys and girls, each boy kissing the stone. Games and what was described to us as 'general carrying on' followed the Bride's Show.[2]

584 In more remote parts of the country match-making is still a recognized procedure. The professional match-maker is a well-known figure, usually a shrewd elderly person well versed in the arts of rural diplomacy, and his role has been fully described by Arensberg. He acts for the farmer who is ready for his son to marry—the son being often well into middle age—by negotiating with the parents of the girl whom the farmer has selected. In the prolonged bargaining as to the amount of the 'fortune' which the girl is to bring with her the values of peasant living stand clearly revealed.[3] Marriage is not so much a personal relationship as a union between groups, reinforcing relations which extend far beyond individuals.

There was a popular belief that the curse of sterility could be placed on the bride by any ill-disposed person who tied knots in a string during the marriage ceremony. A more obvious example of magic was the custom of tying a hen which was about to lay an egg to the bed-post on the marriage night. [585] There are widespread traditions of the days when landlords exercised the *jus primae noctis* over their tenants' wives, and one hears of leases which contained clauses governing the right. 844 During pregnancy it was lucky to do certain things and to avoid

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 1, 122.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 193
[3] C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, ch. 3.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31] 585 796 626

Pucas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *puca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

[P.153, B]

551 **192** In *The Aran Islands*[1] Synge makes the following observations on the system of personal names then in use (1898–1902):

> When a child begins to wander about the island, the neighbours speak of it by its Christian name, followed by the Christian name of its father. If this is not enough to identify it, the father's epithet—whether it is a nickname or the name of his own father—is added.
>
> Sometimes when the father's name does not lend itself, the mother's Christian name is adopted as epithet for the children.
>
> Occasionally the surname is employed in its Irish form, but I have not heard them using the 'Mac' prefix when speaking Irish among themselves; perhaps the idea of a surname which it gives is too modern for them, perhaps they do use it at times that I have not noticed.
>
> Sometimes a man is named from the colour of his hair. There is thus a Seaghan Ruadh (Red John), and his children are 'Mourteen Seaghan Ruadh,' etc.
>
> The schoolmaster tells me that when he reads out the roll in the morning the children repeat the local name all together in a whisper after each official name and then the child answers. If he calls, for instance, 'Patrick O'Flaharty,' the children murmer, 'Patch Seaghan Dearg' or some such name, and the boy answers.
>
> If an islander's name alone is enough to distinguish him it is used by itself, and I know one man who is spoken of as Eamonn. There may be other Edmunds on the island, but if so they have probably good nicknames or epithets of their own.

[114 184] While on Tory Island (Oileán Thoraighe), Co. Donegal, in 1962, I collected the names of all living adults and found the system to be basically that reported by Synge for the Aran Islands, with enough distinctiveness to be worth a separate analysis.[2]

601 Kinship terms are rarely used among the islanders except between young children and their parents and parents' 551 siblings. Cousinship is indicated by saying of a person something like 'his mother and my father were the children of two brothers' (*Bhí a mháthair agus m'athair clann na beirte dearbhráthar*), or 'we are children of brother and sister' (*Támuid clann dearbhráthar agus deirbhsheathar*). But in a small community where the genealogical links between persons are common knowledge, such descriptive explanations are rarely called for. Personal names are used 551 instead and in themselves help to indicate a person's position in the kinship structure by showing his line of descent for up to four generations.

A person will in fact have three sets of names: a Gaelic 'ceremonial' set; an English 'practical' set; and a Gaelic-English 'personal' set. A man's full Gaelic name will consist of his baptismal name followed perhaps by his 'epithet' such as Óg (young—usually means youngest of several brothers), Bán (fair), Mór (big), Beag (small—wee), followed by his surname. Such a combination might yield, [585] for example, 'Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh.' A woman, strictly speaking, retains her family name on marriage and adds the descriptive phrase 'wife of' (literally 'woman of')

* *With two tables*

[P.153, C]

551 and the names of her husband, *e.g.* 'Máire Ní Dhubhghain
[585] bean Shéamuis Mhic Ruadhraigh'—literally, 'Mary, daughter of Doohan, wife of James the son of Rory.' A number of circumstances will determine whether or not her husband's name will 'stick' as a surname or whether she will go on being known by her maiden name. These names in their full forms are only used on ceremonial occasions such as dances—when a man or woman is called upon to sing or step-dance—, or for prayers in church during a serious illness, or for calling the roll in school, or for putting on a tombstone.

551 The practical names are the rough English equivalents
191 of the Gaelic names, used in dealing with English-speakers generally and particularly for use when working in England
167 and Scotland. The Government is usually dealt with in English for several reasons, mainly because although the
464 islanders all speak Gaelic as their native tongue, the language they read and write is English—a situation brought about by the pattern of migrant labouring which forced literacy on them when working in Britain. Also they find 'Dublin' or 'civil service' Irish difficult to follow. Most islanders, then, have an 'English' name. Our examples would be 'Paddy Rogers' and 'Mary Doohan' to the outside world. Sometimes these names stick and are used amongst the islanders rather like nicknames. Usually the English version is a rough phonetic equivalent of the Gaelic—Ó Duibhir becomes Diver, Ó Dubhgain becomes Doogan or Duggan, Mac Fhlaithbheartaigh becomes MacClafferty, etc. Sometimes this is abandoned and an English name taken for its 'likeness' to the Gaelic as with MacRuadhraigh and Rogers—Roger being the English name most like 'Rory.' The name Fioruisce is sometimes hopefully rendered Whorriskey, but mostly this is not even tried and the simple 'Waters' is substituted. Those going to England for work are particularly inclined to pick an 'English' name, *i.e.* one the foreman will recognize.

551 The third set of names, used for reference, consists of two or more Christian names, either Gaelic or English or both, 'strung' together in the manner described by Synge for Aran. Some people have as many as five or six names and 'epithets' strung together in this fashion. These names are the names of lineal ancestors either on the mother's or the father's side of the family. A person will take as many names as is necessary to distinguish him from all other persons, the surname system being inadequate for this task. (Four surnames cover 80 per cent. of the population.) He does not, however, pick these names arbitrarily but inherits the whole string. He can stop at any point in the string. Thus if a man was called 'Jimmy-Dhonnchadha-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his father must have been 'Donnchadh-Mhuire-Mhicí,' his paternal grandmother 'Máire-Mhicí' or maybe 'Máire-Mhicí-Tom.'[3] Thus if our man wanted to add to his names, he would have to add 'Tom.' Usually one or at most two names are enough to distinguish a person, in

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 589 581 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few
562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the
[154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has
[593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous
work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land,
581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because
155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to
retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run
[589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors
and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the
sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that
584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently
173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love
584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on,
[208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost
has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to
have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the
sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the
occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and
[175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two
generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women
the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about
the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani-
[581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding
into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths
for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the
584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man
who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his
584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The
574 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a
bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young
man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and
acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleamhnas* (the word for
matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three
more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the
bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12
days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon
[521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these
times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink-
585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the
[829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleamhnas*, but now the
[582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of
[593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree
of consanguinity.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585 •
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [789]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[177] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of 343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of 621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

592 162

Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Family and community alike support them in their attitude. A woman could say bitterly, for she was childless: 183 842

No matter how much money you have and how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you're no good. But if you're ugly as the worst and have children you are all right.

The husband has every right to express his displeasure at his wife's barrenness. To have no children is a source of shame to him and a terrible disappointment in his desire to continue his line upon the farm. One woman put it: 183 593 842

The man wants children because he is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of the country, especially if you haven't any.

In the country districts they say that he may beat her and in their graphic phrase "bounce a boot off her now and then for it." Country belief still regards the woman as the offending partner in a childless marriage. Near Inagh one farmer, a returned Yankee, was regarded as an anomaly because, though childless, he treated his wife just as well as though she had many and did not get angry when he was twitted on his lack of an heir. They explained it by saying that he "knew it was his own fault." [195]

The day of the "country divorce," as the farmers call it, is rapidly passing. In the old days, they say, a man might send a barren wife back to her parents, though Catholic law forbade him to marry again.. There are cases which illustrate that the custom survives in altered form. They are particularly revealing in our analysis of the desire to preserve the family unity and its identification with farm and household through the generations. Here the brothers act, sociologically, as a single individual in order to insure the desired continuity. For instance, in one case, a middling farmer of Corrofin, childless after several years, got a country divorce. He gave the land thereafter to his brother in return for a thousand pounds, which the brother had inherited in lieu 586 842

536 842 of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

428 592 Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

602 Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

582 836 At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

592 562 428 There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be brought into the house, and matches made for them. In this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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But in each case, they conform to the system of values lying at the centre of the countryman's way of life. They are social detours, ways past the obstacles of adverse circumstance and bad luck. 182 593 428

For instance there used to be, not long ago, what was known as a 'country divorce'. In the old days, they say, a farmer might send a barren wife back to her parents. He could not marry again, of course; Catholic law forbids it. But he could do something just as effective in assuring the family descendants. He could remarry, not in his own person, but in that of his brother. The two men are equivalent in status, why should they not act sociologically as a single individual. Even today this device survives. Thus a farmer of Corofin, in North Clare, could make use of it. Childless after several years, he got a 'country divorce'. Then he gave the land to his brother, in return for a large fortune, on the stipulation that his brother should marry. One brother thus got wife and farm; the other the dowry. The identity of land and family were preserved for another generation. 182 586 593 428

What other devices are possible has already appeared in what I previously called 'incomplete families'. Nephews, nieces, even grandchildren may be brought in. In time, a match is made for them, and normal succession assured. The former owners move to the 'west room'; they become the old people, and the pattern of a complete farm family unit is restored. To the country-people it 182 602 428

16:Messenger E-4.5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [888]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 862
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[154]

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes
582 from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
[586] articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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right of a woman to hold property. The patrilineal identification of family and land is incompatible with it. Whatever farm a woman works or controls is regarded as a trust for a son or brother of her husband or father. 562 428

The conflict is naturally never so phrased, nor is it ever debated. Yet there are many instances which show behavior, accepted fully as right and just by the local community, which reveal the patrilineal identification. A widow, for instance, remains upon the farm only if the children are beginning to grow up. If they are very young, she returns to her parents and a husband's brother may take the farm. Even if she marries, she and her new husband merely hold the land in trust. The new husband is, graphically, a "stranger to the land." 562 768 428 587

As a "stranger" he has no right to it. In a village in mid-Clare, to give an example, a "Yank" returned after many years in the United States to his father's farm, from which he and all his brothers had emigrated. His mother, now dead, had married again, and her two children by her second husband still worked the farm. D——, the "Yank," threw the husband out into the road, told him to go home, and took up the land. Later when he gave fortunes to both of the children, the village felt he had made ample amends for the stepfather's years of toil. 587 428

Whether or not there is a legally executed will, it is much the same. In Luogh, a son, inheriting a farm upon the death of his mother, allowed her old second husband to stay on with him. He was said to be "very kind to the old man." In Inagh again, though a small farmer, dying, willed the family's farm to his wife and children, a brother on a neighboring farm got most of the land. "He paid her nothing for it. He took bits of it here and there until it was all gone." Whatever protest there is must come from the growing nephews. Inagh makes none.

In matchmaking, too, legal form may be subordinated to

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER VIII

Dispersal and Emigration

THE internal reorganization of the family consequent on the marriage of one of their number produces a marked change in the situation of the as yet unprovided-for brothers and sisters. The other members of the family broken up by the marriage of one of their number on the home farm must be provided for elsewhere. They feel themselves entitled to portions, either in the form of dowries to marry into another farm or of some other means of establishing themselves. If such provisions in fact are not made, conflict arises, as we saw in the case of the McDermott murder. A classical case in the Ennis region of Clare was that of an old farmer of substance who married a nineteen-year-old girl when he was eighty. When the birth of a son precipitated a crisis, he had to be protected from his scandalized relatives, sons, and daughters by the police. When he died the following year, he gave a hundred pounds each to the constable who protected him and the priest "plucky enough to marry me." His sons refused to attend his funeral.

Normally, however, the transfer of land and the break-up of the family which worked it is made with the fullest possible provision for the other children. The dowry brought in is utilized to that end, and the savings of a lifetime on the farm have been used. The following observations made by a Land Commission official, himself a small farmer's son

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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of situations. For instance, we have already seen that a 834
woman whose son has married and who fails to get along well with the "new woman" may, quite without censure, move into the house of a daughter and share that house with the daughter's husband's father. Several cases came to notice in which women who had relinquished their farms moved in with the dead husband's brothers.

A famous joke between a well-loved old priest and his 834
bishop in Clare based on a real incident plays around this last theme. On the occasion of his usual pastoral visit, the 522
bishop congratulated the parish priest on the high moral standard of his parish. He had one reservation to make, however. He was shocked to learn that a couple who had recently moved into the priest's parish were living together openly and were not married. The parish priest caught the twinkle in his bishop's eye, but nevertheless he promised to make an inquiry and take necessary action. Next day he reported that he had learned that the couple were an old man and old woman, brother's wife and sister's husband, who had recently moved into a cottage together. They were both seventy, and had been living in the bishop's own parish for the last ten years. Since the bishop had been so shocked by their taking the house together, the priest said he would send them back and let his lordship deal with the problem as he had been doing before.

In such cases, obviously, the difference of sex of the house-mates as a danger to morality has disappeared. This agrees with the equation many country people seem to make between the "saintliness" of the old and their emancipation from the flesh.

By the same token, the old person who has already had 834
his or her day of childgetting and childbearing, and yet 522
still persists in manifesting sexual aspirations, is a stock 587
figure of fun. He or she is the butt of endless ridicule and practical joking in the countryside. Again, of course, such

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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834 laughter is best explained as playful censure. For very real
522 censure often breaks out against such a person. It is particu-
587 larly likely to break out into overt punitive action in cases where old farmers threaten the expectations of their heirs by taking young women as second wives. In fact, the one kind of man or woman of considerable age who does not command respect is this. The countryside finds endless amusement in the theme of May and November. Naturally the matchmaking system does lend itself fairly well to matings between oldish men and young women, since ownership of a farm is the basis for a match.

581 The most interesting point of inquiry, then, may well be
554 the connection between the sexual status of the family mem-
183 bers, as we have described it here, and the standing of the family. The sexual status of the members is a reflection of their capacity for carrying alliance among the other families of the countryside. Can we draw, therefore, a connection between rural familistic norms about sexual behavior and the class structure of the rural community?

We know already that marriage in rural Ireland yields us one clue to the connection. At matchmaking the negotiations between the contracting parties concern the relative standing of each. That standing is at stake. The equivalence of dowry and land are arrived at through a careful enumeration of all the past history and the present material substance of the contracting families. The location of the farm, its livestock, its soil, the reputation and ancestry of the family, all these are compared. Backward places, we remember, do not grow big fortunes. Neither do many other kinds of persons and places.

We are dealing here of course only with one broad class, the country people. Yet within the boundaries of rural life there is much to be learned of the country people's treatment of relative prestige and standing among themselves. There are many behaviors in the activity of the countryside

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land,
602 and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such con-
428 duct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can
182 arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at
589 all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own
428 person. That does not mean she cannot exercise
593 full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her
[766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

Even if she marries, she and her new husband
182 merely hold the land in trust. The second husband
428 and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The
587 rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the
593 land, may turn them out. So strong is the identifica-
578 tion. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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may be often quite different and run counter to rural values, breeding strife and forcing the aggrieved to seek redress outside the law.

Here, then, is the new equilibrium in the countryman's social life. The match provides a transition between the generations. Within the family unit, it provides for the establishment of a new nuclear group. It makes room for an essential continuity in which all the members may share and round which all their interests may be centred. Externally, it regathers those whom it must disperse. Round this dispersal, the web of kinship can be built. In the persons of the old people moved one step toward death, and in the identifications round them, 'descent' and 'blood' and 'the name on the land', the emotions of human groups can find their nexus.

In this movement, household, land, adult status, economic control, all move together. Marriage is a turning point round which rural life hinges. It is a structural centre. Every tie between human beings is modified. Then, in a new form, they can crystallize again—to give scope for movement, to allow continuities, to habituate human beings to new social places.

The whole of this movement takes place within a frame of human sentiments, ambitions and desires. Emotion lends its force. Convention, habit and the sanctions of public opinion and private anger keep the bounds and punish transgression. Public honour and self-satisfaction reward conformity.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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When these two emphases upon the kinship system are 601
recognized, it becomes evident why there is a lack of terms 612
describing those individuals appearing above and below ego's generation but not in the direct line. In the direct line we do have such terms as grandfather, grandson, etc., but the others do not figure. They are not named except descriptively, and even then usually only in reference to the generation which they occupy. Thus father's father's brother is called "my grandfather's brother." The term granduncle exists, but it has not found its way into the countryman's vocabulary.

Similarly, though uncle, aunt, nephew, and niece have become fully acclimated to Ireland, there is still a marked preference for descriptive terms. The son of a cousin is described in such terms, and the immediate progenitors of the cousin are thought of in terms of their place in the precedent generation. They are thus "my father's friends," though they are, of course, within ego's kinship group. In this way, two distantly removed cousins can often establish a relationship and adopt the requisite behavior to one another through establishing a more immediate connection in a parental generation.

The bounds of the consanguine group are naturally not 612
rigid in this type of extensional structure. There is a gradation of intensity in the taboo as it extends towards the peripheral relatives. First and second cousins, to use the more convenient English terms, are tabooed, the first more strongly than the second. Third cousins, felt to be "very far out" 582
and sometimes "not counted" by the Irish, are nevertheless 582
formally tabooed by the Church. Yet dispensations can be 588
obtained with relative ease for kindred of this degree. They 612
are granted for all alliances within the system for "cause" inward even as far as first cousins and uncles and nieces, but

a different word, *dearbhráthair*, or "true-brother," is reserved for one's father's son.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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never within the restricted family.[5] When the dispensation of the Church is obtained, there is no feeling of horror at such marriages. They are, however, always felt to be anomalous and are a matter of comment. In the country areas where there is a necessity among the farmers of keeping farms and dowries within the extended family group, or where the introduction of an outsider is difficult because of class and regional antagonisms, marriages between first and second cousins are not uncommon. Nevertheless the general feeling of the community condemns this type of union. Too close intermarriage of this type is a common charge used by townsmen in condemning the country folk. The authors unfortunately had little chance of observing such alliances in their rural setting.

At marriage the individual acquires a new group of kindred. This group is also within the marriage prohibition and the "call"; they are "friends." In the formal or ideal arrangement all those related to one's wife become related to oneself in the same degree. This is the view taken by the Catholic Church. A marriage, the doctrine goes, unites husband and wife as "one flesh." "Affinity from a true marriage is a diriment impediment to the fourth degree of consanguinity of the deceased spouse."[6] A widower "may not marry any of his deceased wife's blood relatives as far as the fourth degree of consanguinity."[7]

In other words, the union of man and woman brings a union of the two extended families from the point of view of the marrying individuals. In the eyes of the Church, the husband stands in the same relation to a wife's relatives as does the wife herself, and vice versa. So strong is this provision in the eyes of the Church that sexual intercourse with any of the wife's kin creates a barrier to the exercise of conjugal rights over the wife. A dispensation as well as

[5] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

164 (K.) *Health.*—Taken as a whole, the people may be said to be a healthy one. Serious diseases, apart from accidents incident to their callings, are but few in number; and the general physique of the people speaks to a healthy active life.

Consanguineous Unions.—A large proportion of the marriages come 582 under this heading, including not only those of persons within the 588 prohibited degrees, for which dispensations are obtained, but also those which take place between people who are related in some recognisable but hardly nameable degree. Cases of the first class, or those which require dispensations, are of frequent occurrence, but seldom or never take place between persons nearer of kin than third cousins. The other cases, of course, are the most common of all, as from the size of the population and its isolated position, every family must, after a few generations, become more or less related to every other. Marriages with strangers, though more numerous of late years, are not common. The uniformity of strain does not appear to have produced any effect except the great similarity of appearance already noticed (p. 322); no cases of malformation or congenital disease are ascribed to it.

Diseases.—For most of the following facts I am indebted to the 164 kindness of Dr. P. J. Hart, the medical officer of the islands, who, besides affording me much valuable information relative to the people and their ailments, the result of his long experience of them, kindly allowed me to look over his notes of cases. The main diseases may be classed as follows:—

Insanity.—There is at present no case of this among the natives of [158] the islands, nor has there been one since 1888 when a case which, however, was not of long duration, occurred in Inishshark.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Properly speaking there is no idiocy; but 164 there are two cases in which the persons, though shrewd and sharp 732 enough about most of their own affairs, yet show signs of mental want in a sufficient degree to amount to slight imbecility.

Epilepsy is not common, but two cases are known in one of which the patient is subject to delusions, and always states, after a fit, that he has been with the fairies on the mainland. Of the other no information could be obtained except that the patient had had "fits."

Deaf-mutism has not been known for years on either island, but a case of temporary dumbness occurred on Inishshark in 1892.

Blindness is equally rare, there being but one case, a man over sixty years of age who acquired it late in life.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

(D.) *Health.*—It was found to be a difficult matter to obtain reliable information on this point, but there seems to be, on the whole, but little serious disease, and the people appear to be strong and healthy. The affections suffered from are mainly due to the nature of their food and occupations, and the unwholesome state of their dwellings. 164

Consanguineous Marriages.—The intermarriage of relations seems to be very common, not only on the islands, but also on the mainland, where it is most common in small fishing hamlets difficult of access, such as Fallmore, Tip, and Portacloy. While visiting Inishkea inquiries were made as to these unions, and several of the inhabitants assured me that intermarriage between the people of the North and South Islands was not common, it being a far more usual thing for the islanders to marry people from the opposite shore of the Mullet; thus, the South Island people seem to intermarry a good deal with the inhabitants of Fallmore, a very primitive village at the extreme end of the peninsula, which has only being provided with a road, such as it is, since 1881. On both islands, however, the majority of the marriages seem to take place between members of the community. 582

It does not seem as if it were usual for first cousins to marry, but matches between relatives of all degrees farther out seem to be of very common occurrence.

Through the kindness of the Rev. H. Hewson, P.P. of Belmullet, I am enabled to give actual figures, as he has kept the record of dispensations for these marriages since 1875; from that date until August, 1894, there were in the Parish of Kilmore, which contains about 700 families, altogether 276 marriages, and of these 61 or 22·1 per cent. obtained dispensations, as the parties were relatives. In the Parish of Belmullet, number of families 460, there were in the same period 247 with 26 consanguineous (or 10·5 per cent.) and Kilcommon, with about 620 families, had 276 marriages, for 72 of which, or 26·1 per cent., dispensations were granted. The average in the whole three parishes was thus 19·5 per cent. To these may be added some 10 or 12 more cases of marriages of first cousins dispensed by the bishop of the diocese. There does not seem to be any marked result from this long continued close intermarriage, except the very marked local types observable in the more isolated places, which seem to have been fixed or preserved by this cause. This is especially the case in the islands whose inhabitants, while bearing a general resemblance to each other, differ much in appearance from their neighbours of the mainland. 582 588

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 house, and, though the cases nowadays find their way into
628 the courts, a very common defense is that the feud is very long-standing and that "the two grandfathers" began it. The tales written in the last century by William Carleton, who wrote of a life he himself knew intimately, describe faction fights in which whole parishes became involved, but the center of disturbance was invariably a family dispute in which the brothers of a family ranged with their friends against those of another. So fierce is the solidarity which the identification of brothers and their land calls forth that even today in Clare the name "defending Tim Flanagan's title" is jocularly given to forcible resistance to eviction, after a famous stalwart of the last century whose ten sons fought valiantly for their father's farm.

593 In fact, this emotional attachment is strong enough some-
589 times to preclude the breaking up of the family. Two instances of this sort came under the authors' special notice out of the many which occur. It is difficult to get the exact figures, since census materials deal only with the marital status of farm owners, but many of the bachelor-owned farms of Clare may be of this type. In the first case, two brothers and four sisters occupied a small holding of twenty-three acres and a four-room house for over fifty years. Several of them at various times had tried to break away; in fact, two brothers did, but the ones who stayed gave as their reason first that they hadn't wanted to leave the old people and afterwards that none of them had wanted "to be the first to leave." The second case was very similar. Two brothers and a sister had stayed on to work a small farm for their old parents, but, when the old couple died, none of them wanted to leave and each felt too old for marriage.

593 Whatever differences make a rift in this fraternal front
428 are matters more of preparation for leaving the farm family than of internal differentiation in status and behavior. On most small farms only one son can be kept at home as suc-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 tionship of their parents. Thus there is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. He shares the masculine ultimate control of farm and household. If she remains on the farm after her brother's marriage, she must look to him for her dowry.

The country people have a good deal to say about the strength of this bond. Deep-rooted in the years of common subordination and common association, it survives the re-
[574] moval of the sister to another house and farm. It means much visiting and a close relationship with the coming
[604] children. The country people marvel that a young child may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family name are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.

589 That the complete family is the complete unit of life both
592 social and economic to the small farmer is admirably illustrated by the incomplete families of the countryside. By the term "incomplete" the authors indicate those many small farms which are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, and widows.

589 In such farms, control is exercised by the person owning
592 the farm. A widow is usually helped out by a male rela-
562 tive, brother, nephew, or son. Here again the male devotes himself to the tasks which in ordinary circumstances would fall to the father in a full family unit. The control over expenditure and the disposal of farm goods rests, however, with the woman. But even then the bargaining in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair would be delegated by her to her helping relative. In one instance which came to the authors' notice a young widow called

her unmarried brother to live with her and directed his efforts in draining a large field. The two of them ran the farm very successfully, though the brother grumbled. In another, a "landless" young man pleaded successfully to a Land Commission official for an addition to his aunt's holding, presented his case, and carried out the negotiations, but the final reference had to be made, of course, to the aunt for whom he worked, for in such case the feeling that the man must represent the family and farm unit in the community at large is sufficiently strong to push a subordinate "boy" into the position usually filled by the farm husband and father.

Similarly with several old bachelors. A nephew moves in and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control even to regulating the nephew's expenditures for amusements. In one case, where a widower had a small son, the son was taken in by a childless sister and raised by her, and when he grew up and married he inherited the sister's farm. His father remarried and raised a second brood. In another, two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their two cousins.

The attitudes of the country people to these arrangements show that incomplete farm families are felt to be departures from the normal; they are subjects for commiseration. Such phrases as "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her" and "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow," are commonly applied to them.

The policy of the Land Commission in increasing farm holdings is very significant in this regard. The officials recognize the social value of the full family explicitly. According to the official in charge of land division in Clare, who has had successful experience in other regions as well:

> An old-age pensioner without family could not be considered for an addition of land, nor could a couple of spinsters. . . .

476 The commonest form of coöperation is that which in-
246 volves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed. In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district
[471] of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings, none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners; they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land
[737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest
246 began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh
621 people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral association to the land and to each other. There were three
589 lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter present, if they were old, and many growing children if they
[167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so that a smaller number of young people were present than is
476 perhaps usual.
246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

476 lies began to save the hay, mowing it, letting it dry, and
246 stacking it as soon as possible, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six to eight foot haycocks. After several weeks it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. There was a great deal of interest and much comment back and forth over the progress of the various families, the probable weather, and the yield of the various meadows. The men seemed to feel a general rivalry to do their work
[407] well and quickly. About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows as quickly as possible, working from earliest morning as long as light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and with that of boys from the families who had no machines of their own. At each subsequent stage of the harvesting, a boy or young man not a member of the family whose meadow was being worked could be seen giving his labor in aid; he took his place at meals during the day.

The mowing done, the farmer then took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed the meadows belonging to his friend. In one instance a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others; in another, of two. Certain meadows were full-handed enough not to require extra hands, and in five cases no help was given, though the mowing and stacking took a very long time with them
[589 in comparison to the others, and they were obviously short-
609] handed. Two of these were bachelors who lived alone, and two more were the "strangers." Two other families had insufficient meadow of their own and were forced to buy
[437] hay on the so-called "conacre" system (buying the hay as it stands and reaping it oneself within a stipulated time).

Here then was an example of an important agricultural operation undertaken by the local community in which provision was made (except in five or six cases) for effective coöperation over and above the usual family economy. This is not an isolated instance; in Luogh it has been the practice

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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coincident upon that change cannot be assigned as the sole cause of emigration.

As the decline in population has been more characteristic of the small farmers, it may be possible to associate it with social conditions pertaining among that class. They have participated in the very agricultural changes which are thought to have caused their dispersal. They enjoyed the high prosperity of the closing decades of the last century, and won the progressive reforms of agrarian tenure. Yet they continued to send forth thousands of emigrants. Fluctuating economic conditions have undoubtedly had their effect, but factors whose greatest demonstrable result is merely to stay or hurry the stream of emigration cannot be evoked as efficient causes. In taking the problem directly to the small farmer, it will become possible to sketch the social setting in which emigration takes its form.

Clearly connected with the decline in population are other demographic statistics, particularly those of marriage. They present features which are unique among civilized peoples. Inasmuch as they are again indications of an underlying uniform social pattern whose occurrences they record, it is necessary to analyze them in terms of the behavior patterns of rural Ireland. Like emigration, they are more characteristic of the country people. Springing from marriage, they are thus directly indicative of social forces within the small farmers' family economy. 162

Briefly stated, they present the following characteristics: In Saorstat Eireann in 1926, according to the census then conducted, there was a larger proportion of unmarried persons of all ages than in any other country for which records are kept. Marriage, furthermore, did not take place until a comparatively late age. Thus 80 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty years of age were unmarried in 1926, 62 per cent of males thirty to thirty-five, 50 per cent of males thirty-five to forty, and 26 per cent of males fifty-five to 162 582 589

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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sixty-five. The significance of these figures springs from their comparison with other countries. In the United States only 39 per cent of males twenty-five to thirty are unmarried, 24 per cent between thirty and thirty-five, and only 10 per cent between fifty-five and sixty-five. Denmark, an agricultural country similar in many ways to Ireland, had only 49 per cent, 25 per cent, 15 per cent, and 8 per cent of these age groups not yet benedict, respectively. In England the percentages were 45 per cent, 25 per cent, 16 per cent, and 10 per cent, a great contrast to the sister island. Indeed, in the Free State the percentages of unmarried among the males of each age group are usually double those of other countries.

Unmarried females are also very numerous, though not so excessively so as is the case with the males. In the age groups twenty-five to thirty, thirty to thirty-five, thirty-five to forty, and fifty-five to sixty-five the percentages are respectively 62 per cent, 42 per cent, 32 per cent, and 24 per cent. In Denmark the same groups showed only 39 per cent, 25 per cent, 19 per cent, and 14 per cent; in England, 41 per cent, 26 per cent, 20 per cent, and 15 per cent. Figure 11 gives a graphic comparison between the Irish Free State and three other modern countries.

Later marriage and high incidence of bachelorhood is, like population decline, more pronounced among the country people. And among them, it is highest in those areas where small holdings prevail. In County Clare 88 per cent of the males between twenty-five and thirty in rural districts were unmarried. This percentage is not abnormally high for Ireland, as Sligo, Galway, Mayo, and Leitrim, areas of small holdings, have 90 per cent and Roscommon 91 per cent. In Clare 90 per cent of women between twenty and twenty-five were unmarried, yet six western counties have higher percentages than Clare's.

In fact the thickly populated and poorer western counties

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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162 70 per cent and 50 per cent. There is a general tendency: the larger the town, the earlier marriage takes place. Ennis, the largest town and county seat of Clare (6,000), has a somewhat lower percentage than is usual for towns of its size in Ireland. In fact, Clare's figures, 60 per cent and 30 per cent in those age grades, are better even than those for such a metropolis as Cork City, with 68 per cent and 40 per cent.

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589

Correlations of occupation and marital status[5] support the assumption that the longest delay in marriage is found among the small farmers. Both agricultural laborers and town laborers marry younger and in greater numbers proportionately. No other occupational class, not even the professional class, delays marriage so long or has so many celibate members.

162 These facts obviously relate themselves to the population decline. They are, as it were, two different symptoms of the same condition. But strangely enough in a declining population, fecundity is very high. Although there are fewer married women of childbearing age per 1,000 inhabitants than in other countries (74 in Ireland, 142 in the United States, 125 in Germany, 112 in Denmark, 121 in England, and 119 in Italy), the fertility of these women is remarkably high. For every 100 married women under 45, there are 131 children under five years of age, compared with only 77 in the United States, 71 in England, 93 in Denmark, and 75 in Germany. The number of children is higher again in western counties of Ireland than in eastern. The women of Clare under 45 produced 140 children for every 100 married women, those of Donegal 152, but in County Dublin and County Wicklow, the two eastern counties, only 122 and 124. In spite of this great fecundity there is, however, in Ireland only a normal proportion of children under 15, if Ireland is compared to other countries. The

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[5] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, part II: Ages and Conjugal Conditions.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

592 888 His shifting the topic from help to alignments within the family is entirely unconscious; it could not better illustrate the connection between work roles and reciprocal interaction in the family.

> If there was a squabble between the mother and daughter, the old woman would more than likely stand up for the daughter. She would teach her how to do things and would have more patience than the father.

592 888 589 Quite as before in the case of the farm economy, the strength of the pattern reveals itself in the aberrant cases. Where there is no old couple to take up new status and position in the family group, others within the family of the older generation or even of the same may be forced into such a position.

Two cases came under the particular notice of the authors. In one an elder sister became to all intents and purposes the "old woman" in the house. A widow, she owned the farm, was in the "west room," and had the place at the hob. Her younger sister and her husband, who had married into the farm, managed the farm and knew that their children would inherit it. The elder sister helped a bit with the household, but spent much of her time before the fire. Both the man and woman of the house referred to her as "the old woman," a term of respect, and one of the authors, who lived in the house for a time, learned only after much intimacy the half-forgotten fact that she was not mother but sister to the younger woman. In the other case it was a father's sister who took up the role, the product of long substitution for a lost mother, and at the match the writings made provision for her.

888 561 Intimately connected with the transition at marriage are all the phenomena of age grading so marked in Irish country life. The old couple advance one step in their course through life; they enter a new age grade.

888 573 521 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps [592] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty. As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a [484 great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider 446] experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

573 521 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which allow all to take part.

573 521 589 O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and, though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone. Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road, breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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It has already been pointed out that the census figures available at the time of the fieldwork on which this book is based are those of the Irish census of 1926. Since that time some at least of the figures based on the succeeding decennial census, that of 1936, have become available. There are also a number of annual statistics which bear on the questions of Irish population. It is interesting to turn to these for the light they throw on subsequent development in the trends we have noted. 161

The release of the 1936 census figures in 1939 showed conclusively that the demographic trends that have marked Ireland since Famine times continue to persist. Neither the years of the establishment of the Free State up to 1932 nor the years of depression, economic war, and the experimental programs of the De Valera regime since then have affected the trends. Any of the charts prepared for the 1926 figures needs only to be extrapolated along the trend line a few points to show the situation of ten years later.

Stated briefly, these trends recapitulate and reëmphasize the points we have already made. Emigration continues to mark the life of the country, draining the countryside first into the towns and second overseas, now to Great Britain rather than across the oceans. Ireland continues to hold its record of possessing the highest percentage of unmarried men and women in the world. The population over sixty-five years of age continues to rise. The population of children continues to fall. Marriages continue to be fertile, by comparison with many other countries. But they still tend to become fewer and fewer, and the delay of marriage into middle life grows longer and longer. The ratio of females to males continues to fall, until in 1936 there were 975 males for every 935 females in Ireland, the lowest sex ratio in Europe and one of the lowest in the world. 162 166 167 [589]

These figures mark the continued existence of the familistic order we have discussed. They mark as well the continuance of its struggle to fit modern life. Perhaps a figure 582

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

gories. He is a family man. He may be the shrewd- 593
est of traders and the best of farmers, but what gives him his occupational status, determines his pattern of work, provides his incentive, is a set of dispositions arising in the balanced interests and reciprocal obligations of the social group to which he belongs.

We can test this conclusion. There are a large 589 ●
number of small farms in the countryside worked 593
by what we can call incomplete families. They are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, widows. In such farms the person owning the farm exercises control. A widow, for instance, is helped out by a male relative—brother, nephew or son. The male takes over the tasks which would ordinarily fall to a farm father. Even if the widow retains control of ex- [462]
penditures and disposal of farm goods, the bargaining, buying and selling in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair rests with the man. For instance, in one example which came to my knowledge, a 'landless' young man pleaded successfully to the Land Commission for an addition to his aunt's holding. It was he who carried out the negotiations successfully. The feeling of the community was sufficiently strong to push the young man into a position beyond his status. Some male must represent the aunt and her holding in the outer world. With old bachelors, a nephew moves in and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control, even to regulating sums spent by the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

593 589 nephew for amusement. Where a widower had a small son, the son was taken by a childless sister. She brought him up to inherit her husband's farm, and her brother might marry again. Two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their cousins.

To the country-people, such arrangements, successful enough economically sometimes, are makeshifts, subjects for commiseration. One hears often enough such phrases as these: "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her." "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow." Even government [656] officials nowadays recognize the social value of the full family. A household of father, mother and sons gets preference in land division. The work to be done is the strengthening of the social group; personal enrichment and use of the soil are merely incidental.

Up to this point, I have described the country-476 man as though he worked in isolation from his 593 fellows. In a measure this is true, for his first duties are to his immediate family. Still, there is a great deal of work which goes on between farms. There is a certain amount of co-operation of an informal kind. Work in the countryside is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids.

Co-operation of this sort takes many forms. Men 476 lend tools, or work with tools of their own for 'friends' and neighbours, particularly at mowing,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land,
602 and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such con-
428 duct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can
182 arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at
589 all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own
428 person. That does not mean she cannot exercise
593 full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her
[766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

Even if she marries, she and her new husband
182 merely hold the land in trust. The second husband
428 and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The
587 rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the
593 land, may turn them out. So strong is the identifica-
578 tion. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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over the countryside. At least, O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were 'landless' men; they could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism they were condemned to celibacy; neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place there for them, except as Oscair's behaviour showed, as 'playboys' and entertainers. So they, too, must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

For once again the examination of rural life leads one perforce to concepts of structural balance. The organization of the community takes its form in the social behaviour of cliques among the country-people. That behaviour cannot be disassociated from the characteristic alignment of sentiment and interests which at once separates and reintegrates the generations. And the alignment itself in its turn relates the countrymen to one another in the community, upon the basis of relative age, with the familistic nexus in which are balanced prestige, command, the land and the continuities of descent. That to which the countryman is attached is a social order, as Sir Horace Plunkett alone among the commentators on the Irish scene could see. And a social order is an active living growth whose embrace soon gathers in the whole of life.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

521 203 571 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [639] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other • 589 Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of 162 the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 693
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [388]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 662
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[164]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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582 689 581 562 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the [154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that 584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently 173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love 584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, [208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the 584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his 584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The 674 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.' " 592 162 [591] [589]

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts. 428 582 423 428 888 [583] [562]

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond. 428 593 [888] [776] [578] [167] 423 162 [428]

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of 582 621 [609] [167] [593]

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(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family: 155 593

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.... An Irish male... beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous.... all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications.... Irish resistance to role identification... was seen as... having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters.... [The]... basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt... (Opler and Singer 1956:15–18). [154] [582] [589]

Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present: 155 572 154

> *Grania* is... a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas... Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work.... it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman... would be forever excluded... such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines... are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all.... A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar... to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145–146). 155 572 154 562

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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[For information pertaining to emigration and its relation to sexual repression, late marriage, celibacy, and family relations in Ireland, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 32-36.]

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression. 831* 182 582 589 178

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the patern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this. 162 589 582 582 589 182 428 [745] [593] [167] [311]

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision 589 593 [606] [155] [793]

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to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsibilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years. Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

601 "friends," particularly if they occupy one's own generation;
612 one's father's relatives, even his brothers, become "my father's friends." A "distant friend" refers not to distance in space but to that in cousinship.

612 Before we detail the individuals included within this
593 category, let us make two points clear. The first of these is directly associated with the dominance of the father within the family. He comes, as it were, to stand for the group which he heads; the farm is known by his name, and
[591] wife and children bear his name likewise. For the Irish family is patrilocal and patronymic, to use the technical
[611] terms. Farm, house, and most of the household goods descend from father to son with the patronym; we shall follow their general movement in a later section.

611 This patrilineal descent gives a certain accent upon the
612 kinship system; it chooses one line of descent out of the many possible and gives those who make it up a common name. There is a reflection of this fact in the groupings of Irish rural life. To outsiders a person may be known as "a boy of the Shannons" or a "man of the Flaherties," but in a sense these groupings are merely linguistic conveniences. For in many cases two families of Shannons may live side by side, yet not be considered "friends." None of the obligations of kinship bind them. For in the phrase of the countryman: "They are not the same Shannons or, if they are, they are too far out."

Our examination of the various ways of reckoning kinship will make the statement clear. Patriliny is merely one device, an extension of the father-son relationship, by which individuals are included in one's group of "friends."

593 A second observation upon the kinship system springs
582 from the fact that the family relationships regulate sexual conduct. Indeed, our examination of farm agriculture leads us to see that the technological training of the individual goes hand in hand with the sexual. Marriage prohibitions,

absolution from the sin of adultery must be obtained before normal relations of husband and wife can be resumed. This is the effect of the infringement of the marriage taboo upon wife's relatives. 602 612 835

In a patrilineal, patrilocal structure, such as the Irish one, the wife is brought into the husband's family, given a place therein, and takes his patronym. Yet the inclusion is not complete, and, though a woman takes the husband's name, especially among the upper classes and at law, becomes the mistress of the husband's house, and in a thousand ways is oriented to her husband's group, her origin is never lost sight of. Her kindred are referred to as "my wife's friends," yet through the integration of the two families at marriage they become likewise "friends" of the husband. Kinship obligations extend to them. 591 602 612

From an internal point of view, however, marriage is a destruction of two former restricted families, in so far as two individuals leave them in order to form a new restricted family in which the individuals are husband and wife. Perhaps because of this disruptive effect on the paternal families, there is no provision made for a closer integration between them. No terms express the new relationship; the emphasis of relationship by affinity is restricted to the point of view of the marrying couple. Where the primary accent is upon vertical descent through blood kindred, there is little scope for a lateral rapport between the parental families of the marrying pair. 612 581 [601]

From the point of view of the marrying pair, however, an extension of kinship bonds is made. They are now one. Thus the immediate family of ego's wife are included in ego's kinship group. In the English terminology these relatives are called father-, mother-, brother-, sister-, son- "in-law." It must be noted that the terms brother-in-law and sister-in-law do not include wife or husband's siblings' spouses. The British and American usage extends the term 581 601 612

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority. 582 601 612 621 [793]

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside. 602 612 621 [609]

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard, and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each 612 591 602

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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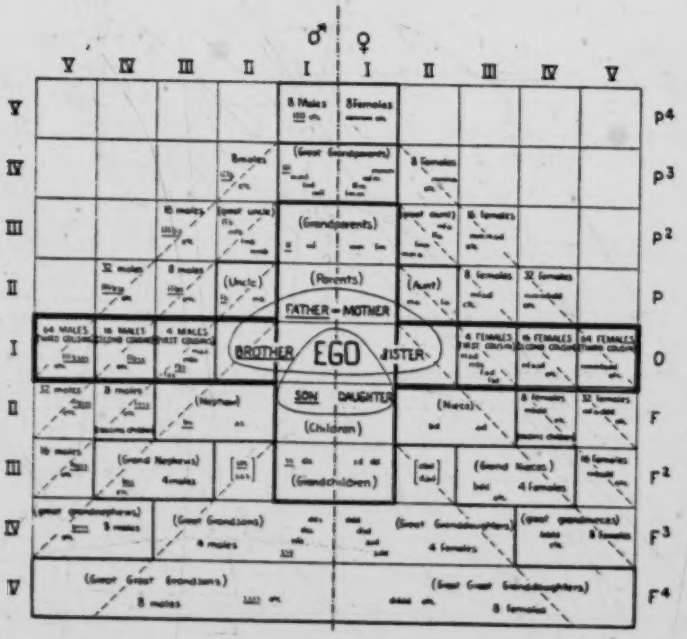
square is contingent to that of its parent of the same sex and to that of its child of the same sex. Thus the lines of descent strike one's eye at a glance. The English terms adorn each square, and small letters in each square give the abbreviation for the designation of the personalities whose place

FIGURE 10

KINSHIP AND DESCENT



the square represents and who are grouped together under a common term. A number is included which lists the number of personalities in all possible descent lines represented by the square.

Anyone interested in explaining to himself the Irish reckonings, such as for instance "fourth *col*," need only count off the squares from ego.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands. 444

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. 465

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50. 462 [434]

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, generally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The marriages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family. 871 584 585 591

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding, 585 [115]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

58 not, like an Inishbofin man, consider himself disgraced, nor is he inconsolable.

Engaged couples or newly married people often come in for an amount of attention from the children of the neighbourhood, which, however flattering it may be, is decidedly embarrassing; they are followed about and cheered whenever they appear together. Weddings
585 are occasions of family festivities, and are usually followed by a dance.
533 "Straw-boys" go round to the house on these occasions and take part in the dancing. They are disguised in tall conical-shaped straw
292 masks, adorned with strips of red and green cloth, white shirts decorated with coloured ribbons, and white or red petticoats. The band is headed by a captain and a mate, who enter the house first and declare that they are shipwrecked sailors, and that they have come to dance at the wedding; the captain then dances with the bride, the mate with the bridesmaid, and the rest of the band with the other girls. It is usual to treat the straw-boys to drink, but they often refuse it, and never demand money, or indulge in any rowdy conduct.

The young couple usually set up house on their own account,
● 591 except in the case of the youngest son, who inherits his parents' house and property, in which case the bride goes to live with her people-in-law.

When a person is dying, windows and doors are thrown open, and
763 the clock (if there be one) stopped; it is considered unlucky or im-
777 proper for any of those in the house to cry until after the death has actually occured.

Wakes are still held in this district, and many of the old obser-
764 vances and games are kept up; but owing to the discouragement of these by the clergy, the people show a great reluctance to give any information on the matter. A good deal of drinking usually takes place on these occasions.

The funeral customs have undergone some change during the past thirty years, but much still remains that is worthy of notice. A grave is not usually dug until the coffin reaches the graveyard, if begun before hand it is never dug on a Monday, or commenced at least, but a start is made, if necessity compels, by raising a few sods on Sunday. It is believed to be unlucky to bury a corpse on New Year's Day, an act
[777] which is thought to bring misfortune to the whole neighbourhood.

The coffin is usually taken out the back door of the house, and conveyed to the cemetery by the longest route. At the graveyard the *caoine* is raised by the women immediately after the religious ceremony

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. 342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [778] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER II

Small Farm Economy

THE small farmers' family groups inhabit the holdings or plots of land from which they make the livelihood we have described numerically. Except in a few and special cases, there is no physical separation of house plot from fields; the individual family's plot is usually a continuous one, and the other forms of settlement present in Ireland are rapidly being reshaped with that condition as the ideal. Consequently, the farmhouse is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. In it the farm family group spends its entire life, sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work upon the fields. 361 592

The farm family lives and performs almost all of its work within this spatial unit of land and house. And the unit is identified with the family in the eyes of its community in name and ownership. Outside this range, the farmer has little participation in affairs in comparison with others of the population. His wife and children have even less. Within this range most of the activity marking the relations of the human beings who make up the group takes place. 592

The "land," as we have seen, is usually divided into "field," "meadow," "garden," "bog," and "mountain," according to its character and agricultural use. These divisions make up the holding and represent the productive 231 241 311

[p. 31]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

593 tionship of their parents. Thus there is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. He shares the masculine ultimate control of farm and household. If she remains on the farm after her brother's marriage, she must look to him for her dowry.

The country people have a good deal to say about the strength of this bond. Deep-rooted in the years of common subordination and common association, it survives the re-
[574] moval of the sister to another house and farm. It means much visiting and a close relationship with the coming
[604] children. The country people marvel that a young child may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family name are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.

589 That the complete family is the complete unit of life both
592 social and economic to the small farmer is admirably illustrated by the incomplete families of the countryside. By the term "incomplete" the authors indicate those many small farms which are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, and widows.

589 In such farms, control is exercised by the person owning
592 the farm. A widow is usually helped out by a male rela-
562 tive, brother, nephew, or son. Here again the male devotes himself to the tasks which in ordinary circumstances would fall to the father in a full family unit. The control over expenditure and the disposal of farm goods rests, however, with the woman. But even then the bargaining in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair would be delegated by her to her helping relative. In one instance which came to the authors' notice a young widow called

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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her unmarried brother to live with her and directed his efforts in draining a large field. The two of them ran the farm very successfully, though the brother grumbled. In another, a "landless" young man pleaded successfully to a Land Commission official for an addition to his aunt's holding, presented his case, and carried out the negotiations, but the final reference had to be made, of course, to the aunt for whom he worked, for in such case the feeling that the man must represent the family and farm unit in the community at large is sufficiently strong to push a subordinate "boy" into the position usually filled by the farm husband and father. 589 592 562 [654]

Similarly with several old bachelors. A nephew moves in and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control even to regulating the nephew's expenditures for amusements. In one case, where a widower had a small son, the son was taken in by a childless sister and raised by her, and when he grew up and married he inherited the sister's farm. His father remarried and raised a second brood. In another, two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their two cousins. 589 592

The attitudes of the country people to these arrangements show that incomplete farm families are felt to be departures from the normal; they are subjects for commiseration. Such phrases as "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her" and "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow," are commonly applied to them. 589

The policy of the Land Commission in increasing farm holdings is very significant in this regard. The officials recognize the social value of the full family explicitly. According to the official in charge of land division in Clare, who has had successful experience in other regions as well: 654 544

> An old-age pensioner without family could not be considered for an addition of land, nor could a couple of spinsters. . . .

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CHAPTER V

The Kinship System

THE mothers and fathers who order farm life are themselves sons and daughters. They have or have had (before their creation of a family of their own upon the farm) much the same relationships with their parents as their children have with them. Indeed in many cases households comprise three generations. Grandfathers and grandmothers of the children live in the house. Family structure is not confined to the immediate present family group, but descends with each generation as the boys and girls reach social maturity at marriage and the creation of their own families. 592 593

This descent forms the basis of any kinship system; it provides also the basis upon which the "friends" to whom one has obligations in rural Ireland are reckoned. The individuals comprised within the system are so because of their sharing of that descent in common. These are one's "people" or "friends," in the countryman's vocabulary. 601 612

The terms express the generic category into which the kindred fall. Both terms are, in a sense, translations of Gaelic idiom. The first, people, corresponds exactly with the Irish *muinntear*. The second in ordinary rural usage refers not to a comrade, as in English, but to one's relatives. Even in the towns one's father, mother, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, are referred to as "immediate friends." In the countryside one speaks of one's kinsmen as one's

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CHAPTER VII

Family Transition at Marriage

WITH the transfer of land at the marriage of the son who remains to work the farm, the relations of the members of the farm family to each other and to the farm they work undergo a drastic change. In the first place, the headship of the old couple under whom the family group worked undergoes change. The old couple relinquish the farm, they enter the age grade of the dying, and direction of the enterprise of the group passes from their hands to those of the young people. Something of the change has already been indicated in the "writings." From the point of view of the father, it means the abandonment of the ownership he has long enjoyed; from the point of view of the old woman it means she is no longer the "woman of the house." Her place is taken by the incoming daughter-in-law. Naturally, this change is accomplished in effect only with difficulty and with considerable reluctance upon the part of the old couple. Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. For example, the authors know one family, consisting of a young man and his wife, their two children, and the old couple, which was regarded as a model of family harmony in the neighborhood. The young man did all the heavy work of the farm, but his father worked by his side. Yet the initiative in agricultural matters was clearly the

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592 888 young man's. The man, almost eighty, did not want to remain idle. "Time enough to sit by the fire in the winter," he would say. The greatest compliment the neighbors had for them was: "Look at the C—'s. Old Johnny gives his boy a hand with everything. You wouldn't know which one has the farm."

592 888 606 The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. Disputes arise, as the provisions made in the "writings" indicate. The following quotation from an official with years of experience in dealing with country people illustrates:

> As years go on, either the parents die or, if they live sufficiently long, they receive the old-age pension. Before they are qualified for this, the farms have to be made over to a son or daughter. This is done on the occasion of the son's marriage. The father reserves to himself and his wife the use of a room and the freedom of the kitchen, and they are entitled to all their food. The points were carefully discussed at length in the process of matchmaking, and the family of the future wife had no hesitation in agreeing, realizing that such points formed the final phase of a cycle of life on the farm. If the daughter-in-law has been well and properly advised by her mother, she immediately on her arrival in the new house submits tactfully to all proposals of her mother-in-law and lets the old lady feel that she is still the master mariner. If she didn't, it would cause a lot of trouble, as sometimes happens.

[626] In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law in the new household, and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control.

[577] An open breach between the two couples is universally condemned, of course; "turning the old people out on the

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side of the road" has occurred, although the authors found no instance of it. If, however, the new family finds the old too great a burden, the old may go to the County Home, where the poor and derelict old people are maintained. A grave stigma of inability to support one's duties still attaches to this. 888 606 577

It is interesting that the old-age pension, originally designed in Great Britain to support the aged members of an industrial population and extended some years later to Ireland, has been incorporated into Irish farm life without upsetting, but rather reinforcing, the matchmaking pattern. The tendency is now to turn the farm over to the son as soon as the father passes his seventieth year. Receipt of the pension facilitates the maintenance of the old people and hastens the transfer of land to the son, as the farmers must divest themselves of their small farms in the majority of cases in order to become eligible for the pension. 592 888 737

Even from the point of view of the household expense, the pension is very welcome. In the words of one farmer:

> To have old people in the house is a great blessing in these times because if you have one, it means ten bob a week and, if you have two, it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'D— and every Friday he will go to Corrofin [town] to collect his ten bob and he may buy a couple of bottles of porter, but spend the rest on things for the house and then come home with a few shillings which will go into the common fund.
>
> Not only that but it adds at least ten years to a man's life because the anticipation that each Friday he is to get ten shillings will cheer him up and keep him keen. Any house which has one old person is well off in the last few years, and, if there are two, it is a great blessing.

But the blessing the pension represents is more than an economic aid in bad times. It plays a great role in the transition the match brings about in family relationships. As one countrywoman phrased it:

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592 There is no chance that the old people would give up the land but for the pension, and there is no hurrying them. Before
888 the old-age pension the father would keep the fat of the land
737 and there would be argument between them, the young woman
578 and the old woman slashing each other with tongs, the doors broke, and it would be two dwellings in the house, like, but since the old-age pension, there are no rows and, if there are, then they make it up with the old people for the ten bob a week.

592 If the transition is smooth, there need be no such violence
888 of dispute as the last quotation describes. Each of the members of the household must adopt a new role in relation to the others. The old man abdicates his controlling position with his transference of the farm to his son. Usually such a change goes smoothly enough. If the son can still seem to defer to superior experience and judgment and refer decisions to the old man, all goes well. The happiest compromise is that suggested in the statement of one countryman:

> Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what he thought I should do for the day, and the old man would say that it is now time to do this or that or that the cows should have something done for them or the garden should be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty to thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then go about my own business.

592 It is in the feminine province of farm work and house-
606 hold control that the transition is most difficult. Under the patrilocal type of marriage here described, the bride is a stranger and of necessity cannot rely upon the experience of an association of years in order to meet the new conditions, as can father and son. In the graphic phrase of the people, she is the "new woman."

For her the transition brings a violent uprooting from prior attachments. Unlike her urban sister, she has little of the ideal of romantic love to help her over the crisis. Consequently her introduction into the new household is

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gradual, and her assumption of her new duties takes place over a moderately lengthy period. Two considerations, of course, are her primary inspiration in moments of stress: first, that she is now a fully adult woman with a household of her own although she must still share its control with her mother-in-law; and second, that the customary usage of the countryside provides her with an occasional escape back to her own people still on the farm at home. The following quotation expresses one woman's remembrance of her emotional difficulty. It is interesting that it is given expression most effectively in terms of Christmas, the family festival *par excelence* in Ireland: 592 606

> When I first came here, I didn't like it; I thought I couldn't stand living here, and I was always wanting to go home. I could go home then, every fortnight. Now it doesn't matter so much and I go home about twice a year. I especially miss home at Christmas time because it is then that you miss those you always used to see, and Christmas doesn't seem right if they are not in it.

But for the bride, as for the old people, the transition brings forth a new behavior, and a new habit in her relationship with them. She must learn a nice balance between her new freedom and new full status and the continued control and the vested interest of her mother-in-law. It is a matter between the two women of the household; the father and son prefer to remain neutral witnesses to the process. The statement of one countryman illustrates well the possibilities and the type of new attitude and behavior the young woman must learn to make a satisfactory adjustment: 592 606 578

> When a marriage is made, an agreement is drawn up so that the man hands over to his son the land, but makes certain reservations. A new woman is brought into the house. The wife may have modern ideas and be "hoity-toity" about the way to do things, and the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man without interfering would light his pipe and go out until the squabble was over.

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592 606 578 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 522] The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman must be effected smoothly. The whole moral force of the [626] community as well as the interest of family harmony bear upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighborhood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide its personal troubles as much as possible from the general knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides for continuance.

592 888 The new position of the old couple and their desires in the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

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press this need for continuance. They are part of the pattern themselves. The statements of the blessings they bring to the farm family with their pension money are very elliptical assessments of their new place within the group.

In their new role, if the transition has been smooth, they retain, if not a dominance of control and direction of the group economic enterprise, at least a dominance of respect and prestige. They occupy a venerable and dignified place in the community and within the household. The sentiments of which they have been the object during the years of their son's youth and manhood undergo no change, even though their strict control relaxes and may disappear.

Likewise when, with the birth of the bride's children, the newly married couple begin to create a full farm family of their own, the old couple remain a part of the united group. They very soon become the objects of the children's love and respect, and enter into the complex of family relationship and family behavior which fashions the status of the children.

This new completion of the family pattern the countrymen express, as they do the reciprocities of kinship, in terms of help and aid to the economic unit of the farm. One countryman generalized as follows:

> When there are children in the house, the old people are a great help to the mother because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see that they did not fall into the fire or something of that nature, and thus the woman can go about her business. The old woman would help while the old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able, because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. As they grew older, they might do some of the lighter work, but they would always help.

He went on to discuss the new relationships between family members and the modification of the immediate family behaviors which the presence of the old couple brings about.

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592 888 His shifting the topic from help to alignments within the family is entirely unconscious; it could not better illustrate the connection between work roles and reciprocal interaction in the family.

> If there was a squabble between the mother and daughter, the old woman would more than likely stand up for the daughter. She would teach her how to do things and would have more patience than the father.

592 888 589 Quite as before in the case of the farm economy, the strength of the pattern reveals itself in the aberrant cases. Where there is no old couple to take up new status and position in the family group, others within the family of the older generation or even of the same may be forced into such a position.

Two cases came under the particular notice of the authors. In one an elder sister became to all intents and purposes the "old woman" in the house. A widow, she owned the farm, was in the "west room," and had the place at the hob. Her younger sister and her husband, who had married into the farm, managed the farm and knew that their children would inherit it. The elder sister helped a bit with the household, but spent much of her time before the fire. Both the man and woman of the house referred to her as "the old woman," a term of respect, and one of the authors, who lived in the house for a time, learned only after much intimacy the half-forgotten fact that she was not mother but sister to the younger woman. In the other case it was a father's sister who took up the role, the product of long substitution for a lost mother, and at the match the writings made provision for her.

888 561 Intimately connected with the transition at marriage are all the phenomena of age grading so marked in Irish country life. The old couple advance one step in their course through life; they enter a new age grade.

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and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater 342
part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen. There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of house is common, but there is also a squarer type which may have a second story.

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled, rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the [362]
governmental agencies and patterned after those built first by the Congested Districts Board (1893–1923) are slated and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statistical statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families, but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's population live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings, which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence between the proportion of small farm population to total population.

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is 592
the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking 352
is done, the table around which the family — first the adult 353
males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen [778]
utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the "Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled [415]
with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festivals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part

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592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock, agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is
512 of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom. It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the religious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the past members of the household. Where there is only one couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.
[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the members of the family, especially the familiar daguerreotypes of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks, are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable
[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] Must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

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must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

It is into this room that the old couple move upon the son's marriage. They move in among the symbols of family unity, among the religious symbols of the house, into surroundings of a certain religious or sacred character. If we can discover certain other indications of the nature of this room, we shall feel warranted in drawing conclusions as to the nature of the change which takes place in the status of the old couple and the attitudes which surround them.

This room we have described is the "west room" mentioned in the "writings." It is so literally. With remarkable uniformity the small farmers' houses in West and North Clare face east and west, the room behind the hearth being generally at the west end of the house. Now the west room and the western end of the house are associated in folklore with the "fairies" which still flourish in the countrymen's minds, especially among the older generation.

The Irish "fairies" include the spirits of the dead. In fact, the identity between the two is explicitly recognized. It was so at Luogh, where older men could name the "good people" with whom they had had encounters.

It is the west room and the western end of the house that the fairies frequent. Where a fairy path is believed to pass the house, it passes invariably along the western end of the house. The country people of Luogh and other parts of West Clare give this as the reason why no extensions, outhouses, sheds, or other structures are built on that side; bad luck would result. In Luogh none of the twenty-five houses of the townland had any structure of any sort built there. And it is often in this room that the fairies spend the night when they visit a house on their nocturnal travels. If we remember that the old people, relinquishing their adult status and preparing for death, move into this room amid heirlooms, religious pictures, and photographs of dead

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542 342 775 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

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of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be brought into the house, and matches made for them. In this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

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right of a woman to hold property. The patrilineal identification of family and land is incompatible with it. Whatever farm a woman works or controls is regarded as a trust for a son or brother of her husband or father. 562 428

The conflict is naturally never so phrased, nor is it ever debated. Yet there are many instances which show behavior, accepted fully as right and just by the local community, which reveal the patrilineal identification. A widow, for instance, remains upon the farm only if the children are beginning to grow up. If they are very young, she returns to her parents and a husband's brother may take the farm. Even if she marries, she and her new husband merely hold the land in trust. The new husband is, graphically, a "stranger to the land." 562 768 428 587

As a "stranger" he has no right to it. In a village in mid-Clare, to give an example, a "Yank" returned after many years in the United States to his father's farm, from which he and all his brothers had emigrated. His mother, now dead, had married again, and her two children by her second husband still worked the farm. D—, the "Yank," threw the husband out into the road, told him to go home, and took up the land. Later when he gave fortunes to both of the children, the village felt he had made ample amends for the stepfather's years of toil. 587 428

Whether or not there is a legally executed will, it is much the same. In Luogh, a son, inheriting a farm upon the death of his mother, allowed her old second husband to stay on with him. He was said to be "very kind to the old man." In Inagh again, though a small farmer, dying, willed the family's farm to his wife and children, a brother on a neighboring farm got most of the land. "He paid her nothing for it. He took bits of it here and there until it was all gone." Whatever protest there is must come from the growing nephews. Inagh makes none.

In matchmaking, too, legal form may be subordinated to

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621 487 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

887 573 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village, is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

> The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

888 542 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

888 573 521 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

888 573 521 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps [542] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty. As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a [484 great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the 446] roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

573 521 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which allow all to take part.

573 521 589 O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and, though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone. Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road, breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Roche, "the public prosecutor," sits by the fire, opposite 573
the old man O'Donoghue. He is a man of sixty or so, with 521
a wife of the same age and an unmarried son and daughter, [592]
both in their thirties, still at home. His is a good farm and
he is still active upon it. He, too, has a reputation for shrewdness, but his role here is a different one. Roche demands "why?" He makes one bring out one's best arguments, and pursues a point to its final conclusion. There his interest stops and he makes way for O'Donoghue, who sums up the agreement of the group. Roche earns his title well. He tests out the other's mettle. No one is offended at his "prosecution," for it clears the issue and brings out the right and the wrong upon which all can agree and O'Donoghue phrase judgment.

Behind them, a little further into the middle of the room 573
away from the hearth, sits Cullinan, the "senator." Cullinan 592
lives across the lake, where he works a middling farm with a wife and five children. Several of the sons are nearing twenty-five and Cullinan himself is well past fifty.

The "senator" is a weighty man. His part in the *cuaird* 573
is in character. Cullinan is the one of them most fertile in 521
cogent and fitting anecdotal illustrations. In a scheme of references, such as this, to past events and traditional precedents, Cullinan's many memories of persons and happenings, slowly and accurately phrased, give weight to the evening discussions.

Still further behind them, and often perched upon settle 573
or table in the kitchen, are two other habitués. The elder 592
of them is Noonan, a man of sixty, who lives in the village with a wife a little younger than himself and two boys and a girl, out of a once numerous progeny, still at home. The children are in their twenties and help him in his still active conduct of the farm.

Privately at least, the others think Noonan a bit of a fool. 573
He is as good a farmer as any of them, it is true, and knows 521

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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573 how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not
521 a weighty one. Noonan is a very voluble man. He can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with many opinions on all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the public prosecutor's relentless logic, but it helps too to keep the conversation alive and active. Consequently, though he has no important title, he is a member of long standing.

573 The younger of the two sitting in back is John Quin. His
592 position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quin lives on a good farm just outside the village. He married-in there, taking over the
[582] place of a dead husband. But, true to the country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister, who, in turn, married Quin. But both women are still living in the house. The elder sister has become the "old woman" and is treated more like a parent than a contemporary. It is Quin and his wife, the younger sister, who work the farm and who regard it as their own. Their claim is a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune: they are childless at fifty.

573 Quin is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old
561 one, as the countryside reckons age status. His place in the evening gathering reflects this intermediate state. In the two years in which the authors had the old men's house at Rynamona under observation, Quin was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but which showed itself well in his behavior.

573 When we first came, Quin divided his evenings between
561 the old men's house and card playing in several of the young
521 men's gathering places. At one of these, to be described shortly, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had "weight," and he conducted himself importantly and showed a serious demeanor and a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. In the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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old men's house he looked a different person. He was often 573
silent or contented himself with answering questions. 561
When he did speak, it was to "act the playboy," in the 521
country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to dance, and to break into playful banter. Sometimes his lively efforts were successful. Sometimes they were not. But the playboy role did not last long. A year later he was a constant visitor, and he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, the "judge," passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy," he said, "but there's a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. As the 573
evidence of their behavior shows, they are a closely knit 887
clique with a code of conduct and valuation of their own, one strong enough to enforce a specific personality on each of the members in accord with his role in the group.

To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group in Rynamona, we must examine it in relation to the rest of the community. These seven are not the only old men in the community. Roche, the prosecutor, had an elder brother with a good farm across the lake on the line between Rynamona and the next townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door. He is too feeble to come to the *cuaird* house, and his faculties are failing. His sons, still young men, work the farm.

But there is another as well, a more active old man. Moroney is perhaps the strongest farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best also, and he has the best-stocked farm. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, have a son [592] and daughter nearing thirty still at home. The four work energetically and the household is prosperous. Each year Moroney stands for them in the "station," and the family's

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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183 by greed for land and dowries. Sex without familism seemed beyond the country people's imagination. 577 673

But the last statement must be qualified in a definite direction. It is only for themselves that they seemed to be unable or, better, unwilling to imagine a sexuality without familism. Other patterns of sexual behavior they see and have heard of, but these are immoral and unworthy ways of doing things and acting, departures from the right and normal, sometimes disgusting, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes mysterious. In any event they are marks of standards of a lower class and lesser dignity and respectability than that of the farmers. They are to be repudiated not only for their lack of common sense but for supernatural reasons as well.

Thus the authors heard several instances in which bad 183 luck attended the departure from the usual familistic norm. 777 There was a feeling, sometimes overtly expressed, that at 592 ● any one time there should be only one sexually active 577 procreant couple in a household. Young and old could well be part of the household in any numbers, but there should be only one adult married couple under one roof. Any other arrangement brought its own punishment and ill luck.

But more often there was identification between the ex- 183 pression of sexual impulse outside the familistic pattern 577 and the debased conduct of the lower ranks of the landless 832 and disreputable of the countryside, the laborers of the towns, the runaways, remnants of broken households. Or else the small farmers put the onus of guilt on other regions "more backward" than their own. At the most, wrong conduct might be the result of some occult compelling force strong enough to break through all sense and caution. The authors were struck with the countryside's version of love charms. In accounts of love charms and love magic, proof of their existence and efficacy was always to be found in the

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, 342
the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on 354
a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Done- [184]
gal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in 592
Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted 354
to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All [775]
Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the [171]
fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, [184]
I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot 352
with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district 171
between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh*, where the in-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 I did not know this as I came to Luogh. But I was to learn it soon in Luogh and in other communities in County Clare. Later I was to find it so even more widely; in newspapers, in novels, in court records, in statistical reports, in political bombasts. It was a way of life with its own laws which included Luogh and the Blaskets and even the fertile small farms of rich Tipperary.

When I first came to Luogh I knew only that in 114 this remote little community of small farmers I should find something of the old tradition still alive. My learning was a piecemeal process — a sketching out of wider and wider ramifications of the observations which came my way.

It is this process to which I wish to devote the remainder of this lecture. It is a process in which you can follow me. Perhaps better than anything else it will prepare us for an anthropological study of Irish rural life.

Let me illustrate this process with two examples. I shall call them the 'west room' and the 'old man's curse'. Both of them are related to old custom and both will serve to show the process by which one lays bare the rural life of which old custom is a part.

●592 The house to which my road into Luogh finally 361 led was a typical small farmer's cottage. It was one of twenty-six in Luogh. It was the seat of a small farm of sixteen acres (with eight more in the valley), 'the place of four cows and a horse', as the country-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

people describe it. Much of it was rough, wet 592
mountain land, but the phrase implies that it was 361
good enough at least to provide grass for animals. All farms are described in this way, for by the cows and the small 'gardens' of potatoes, cabbage, oats and turnips, the small farmers live. We shall have more to say of agriculture in another context; I think the explanation is sufficient here.

My host's house in Luogh, as I have said, was 342
like the others. It was a bit 'stronger', that is, neater, better built and kept, than many of the others, but it was like the others in all essentials. It was a white-washed stone cottage, rectangular, roofed with slate (though it was only a few years ago that they gave up thatch). Its long sides faced roughly north and south, each with a door opening directly out into the yards. In the gable of the roof was a loft for sleeping; otherwise it was confined to a single story. The central room, the largest by far, was the kitchen. There the family passed their lives and prepared and ate the food cooked on the hearth. The hearth was an open turf fire, built in a chimney large enough to have two hobs or seats deep within on either side. It had, too, an iron hook which swung the cooking-pots out into the room from off the fire.

Behind this hearth was another room. It was 342
called, for its position in the house, the 'west room'. 353
This is the 'west room' which is to provide my first example.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus of the countryman's way of life.

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the small farmer's family lives upon the holding it works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them.

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, it is natural that this unit should be known and judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 tain', and wherever possible, it includes a 'bit of
231 bog' for 'turf' for the year's fuel. When a small
592 farmer tells you he 'has the place of four cows' he sums up this sort of farm, judging it for its ability to support himself and his family in the country manner and to give pasture to four milch cows. In the phrase he epitomizes rural economy.

592 Ordinarily the house opens directly into the
361 'haggard', as the farmyard is called. There in the haggard are the cabins in which cattle are housed and the various sheds and stalls, often built into the masonry of the house itself. In them, farm machines, tools and carts are kept and crops and seed are stored. Hens and other poultry roam at will through the haggard and are housed there, and in one of the sheds pig or pigs find their quarters. The winter's supply of fodder stands there in the form of the great hayrick. The straw-covered pit of turnips and mangels, not far away, will serve for men and cattle; and the turf-rick is near at hand. As for the house itself we have already looked inside, in our search for the 'west room'.

592 The family with which this unit is associated centres its activity round house and haggard. Even for the men, whose work lies primarily in field, garden and meadow, work centres round the house for a good part of the year. If I give you a sketch of this activity as my co-workers and I saw it day after day in several rural communities in Clare, I hope to throw its general features into relief.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Following the countryman at his work, we can 592
learn what his role is, what determines it, and what keeps him to it; we can see its controls and the organization of labour it entails.

The first duty of the farm family's day falls to 462
'the woman of the house'. Before the others are up, 512
she rakes together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire, puts down new sods, and rekindles the blaze. Then she hangs the kettle on the hook over the hearth, making ready for the first tea of the day. All day long the kettle will hang there, for [272]
at any moment she must be ready to serve a cup of tea to husband, children and visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast: bread, eggs and milk.

By the time breakfast is over, the household is ready for its workaday life. The men are up and dressed for the day's tasks, and the farm wife and [264]
mother who serves them and stands by unwilling to sit down till they have had their fill, has begun her daily round. She takes her place later with her daughters and young children who help her throughout the day.

But familiar housework is not the whole of the woman's duty. Her work takes her beyond the house door. After breakfast she takes the milk buckets and goes to milk the cows in the sheds. This is merely one of many trips she makes out into the haggard, for fuel, for water, and to feed the animals and poultry. Milking over, she must not rest, for the whole process of converting milk

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

(3). Vital Statistics (General and Economic).

161 (a.) *Population.*—The population of these islands, though still dense, is, like that of the rest of Ireland, steadily decreasing, though in this case the decline is of recent date compared with many other parts of the country.

161 Between the years 1851 and 1871 the population had increased from 1047 persons, occupying 196 houses, to 1262, and 251, respectively.
167 Some time after 1871, however, emigration began to take a sensible effect; and between that year and the census of 1891 there has been a loss in people of 20·99 per cent., and in houses of 11·55 per cent. That the decrease is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths for the decennial period 1880–1890, in which time the births exceeded the deaths by 89 or 38·7 per cent., the respective numbers being births 230, deaths 141.

161 The Table given below shows the population of the islands at each census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average
●592 number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head. It thus indicates the period at which the decrease began, and the amount of congestion of the district, both past and present. This congestion, however, must be greater than what the figures show, as under the heading of Inishbofin are grouped some fifty-four other islands or islets, all uninhabited, and varying in size from seventy-four acres downwards. Some of these are utilized for grazing by the people of the two larger islands, but a large number of them are quite useless, being mere barren rocks.

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	1047	196	5·34	3·00
1861	1236	239	5·17	2·55
1871	1262	251	5·03	2·50
1881	1166	250	4·67	2·70
1891	997	215	4·64	3·10

161 That the overcrowding is, even now, great, will be seen when it is considered that the density of population per square mile is 202, whilst that of the Aran Islands is 171, of the county of Galway 86, and of Ireland, as a whole, 146.[1]

[1] In the Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland (1846), the population of the islands in 1831 is given as 1462, number of houses not given; population in 1841 as 1612, houses, 285. The decrease afterwards is evidently due to the famine in 1847.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:— 162 592

Islands.	Area.	Population.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
	A. R. P.					
Inishbofin, .	2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark, .	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals, . .	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males. 162 167

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons. [142]

(B.) *Acreage and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6*s.* A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled 423 311 [495]

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

townlands having only been temporary. That this loss is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths in the registration district of Binghamstown for the decennial period 1884–1893 in which space of time the births numbered 1260, and the deaths 707, an excess of 553, or 22·7 per cent. The following Table, which refers only to the parish of Kilmore, shows the population of the district at each census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head.[1] 161 [167]

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	7379	1106	6·67	3·99
1861	6452	1243	5·19	4·57
1871	5552	1054	5·27	5·31
1881	5327	911	5·85	5·53
1891	4111	694	5·92	7·17

[592]

The density of population is thus seen to be about 89 per square mile, but varies with locality, being greatest on S. Inishkea, where it is about 304.

The town of Belmullet, which is not included in the table given above, has fluctuated much since its foundation in 1825. In 1831 its population was 585, and it continued to increase until after 1851, when it had attained its maximum of 935; from that time forth it declined. In 1861 its inhabitants numbered 907; in 1871, 849; in 1881 there was a slight increase, 852; and at the last census, in 1891, the population had fallen to 652.

It was difficult to lay down any exact boundaries to what, for the purposes of this report, is termed the Portacloy district; but the three townlands—Srahataggle, Portacloy, and Curraunboy, from which most of those measured at Portacloy came, have been taken to represent it; in these the population has not undergone the same change as that of Kilmore, the population having risen since 1851, from 248, inhabiting 46 houses, to 299 in 53 houses. 634 161

[1] In 1831 the population of Kilmore Erris was 9287.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 admirably illustrates the economy of space and function characteristic of Irish kitchen fittings, but I doubt whether this rather complicated piece of furniture is of any great antiquity: it was probably introduced by planters or adapted from a settle fitted with a coffer seat.

The black-houses, as described in the nineteenth century, had no table, and there are still to be seen, in Donegal for instance, houses where there is no kitchen table. At meal-times [264] the family sit around a shallow potato basket resting on the circle of knees. The origin of the tripod tray-table of south-eastern Europe and south-western Asia is surely to be sought in a similar custom. In fact the Blasket Island table was described as a tripod to which was fitted a board which hung on the wall when not in use.[1] The little round table is known from many parts of western Europe. There is, for example, the three-legged 'cricket' table of Wales, which has a special place in the affections of the family. Placed near the fire, it is reserved at meal-times for the father and mother while the children and servants eat at the big table. In Ireland the kitchen table is a flimsy construction, and its place is against the side wall, under a window. Not infrequently it is hinged to the wall as a 'falling leaf table' which drops when not in use, thus enlarging the open space in front of the fire.

Bishop Pococke describes the Tirawley (Mayo) table as 'a long sort of stool about 20 inches high and broad and two yards long',[2] clearly designed to be stowed away along a wall. Small tables which have been found in the bogs are little more than small boards, their four short legs being cut from the solid. They are provided with holes by which they could be transported or hung up when not in use (Fig. 26). It follows that table-chairs were unnecessary: long, low, narrow stools or three [516] legged 'creepies' would serve, and the children would have squatted eastern-fashion on the floor.

352 The table, therefore, in the words of a Swedish student of Irish ethnology, 'never attracted the social activities of the 592 house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating

[1] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman* (1934), 40.
[2] *Pococke's Tour, 1752* (1891), 87.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the 352
fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served 592
since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore
endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky
to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in
the English language gave its name to a committee, has not
replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman
talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies [776]
or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the
fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged [769]
around the fire.

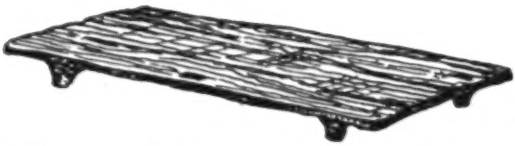

FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means 354
of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the
table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still 373
hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish
and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was ex-
pedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke.
The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged
since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around
the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin
lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from [171]
Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to
recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said,
that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first suc-
cumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age
known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were
hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken
by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

[1] Å. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of 343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of 621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

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Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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168 829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying [522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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CHAPTER III

Family Labor

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AT crucial points in the annual round we have sketched out, the whole family lends its labor. Particularly at the turf making, the hay saving, and the potato planting, all members work together in bog, garden, or meadow. Though tasks vary according to age, sex, and relative status, the group works in a unison of effort in which a definite rhythm can be observed. Under the direction of the father, the husband and farm-owner, the variously divided tasks are correlated to the end in view. The periods of common effort in which all the family members, even to the children, are working in unison are also those in which the greatest speed is needed. At such times the pattern of daily household activity suffers; the regularities belonging to it are transferred to the field. Tea and bread, and perhaps sometimes heavier fare, make their appearance at the regular times, no longer within the house but on the edge of bog or meadow.

Within this concerted effort, a division of labor between the sexes and upon the basis of age appears. The division, however, is not confined entirely to farm work. It covers the whole field of the behavior of the individual. It divides obligations, duties, sentiments, and values of the group, and is enforced by the group. It pertains both among the members of the family groups and in the community at large. It controls individual action and attitudes and gives a standard

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of comparison between one's own farm work and that of one's fellows. The interests and the desires of the individual concur in large measure with the norm, and he finds reward and pleasure in it. He can rely upon similar obligations and duties toward himself on the part of others. 593 462

The greatest scope and variation in activity which we have seen to fall to the lot of the male takes its form in part from his relationship to the others of the household. On the normal farm there is an adult male farmer who is husband, father, and owner of the farm. Within the group he has the controlling role, subject to conventional restrictions of his authority. In farm work, as we have seen, he directs the activity of the family as it works in concert. In his special province he looks after and cares for the cattle, has full control over them, and takes complete charge of buying and selling them. He disposes of the income they bring in. But all this he is obliged to do in the interests of his wife and children. Should he fail to get a good price or prove a bad judge of cattle or handle them badly, his wife and children are entitled to a just anger against him.

As we have seen, all the work requiring heavy effort in garden and field falls to his lot. He makes and tends the drains, fences, barns, and shelters, which protect both cattle and garden produce. He works the fields and gardens with plough, mower, harrow, and spade. All the agricultural implements and the heavy work involved in their use and in the use of the horse are his province.

The produce which such work assures is his to be disposed of, as is all income derived from it. He may order it as he sees fit; yet his first charge is to the family he heads. The division of income between household needs and the demands of farm and livestock springs from his decisions; yet it is a matter of nice adjustment between himself and his wife in favor of the group as a whole. Custom and his own desire demand that he provide for his household to

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593 the best of his ability. Though he can make what disposal
462 he will of the funds earned by the labor of the group, his wife and children can expect as of right that he shall make it for the family as a whole in which each member receives his share. For the work of his wife is complementary to his, and in its own sphere of as great importance to the livelihood and the organization of the family unit. While he may demand and expect of his wife that she fulfill her household duties, so may she demand and expect that he fulfill his in the management and working of the farm and in providing for herself and the children.

593 As regards income, all money derived from the sale of eggs and butter, the chief concern of the women beyond the house itself, belongs to her to dispose of as she sees fit. Yet the fruits of her labors are also subject to the needs of the family unit, husband and children.

462 The division of labor between the sexes arises within a
593 field of larger interests and obligations. It is part of the behavior expected reciprocally of husband and wife. It is a functional element of their relationship within the family.

868 The training each sex receives from childhood in farm work reflects this fact. Each learns his or her part in farm economy, not as a vocational preparation but as a making ready for marriage. The boy acquires his man's skills and techniques for the farm and farm family he may head himself some day; the girl learns the woman's role as an integral part of her future state of wife and mother. Each learns to expect of the other not only the loving consideration of husband or wife but the proper skills in farm economy.

462 Among the small farmers this dichotomy of tasks assigned
626 to the sexes in the economy of the farm family is more even
183 than the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, father and mother. It is also an integral part of the personalities of all men and women of the peasant's own kind. One can get many expressions of attitude of this sort. They show that

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241 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the
462 authors have heard men admonish a woman for interrup-
626 tion with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we
183 [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laugh-
461 ter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conven-
593 tional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral
183 specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within
626 the farm family. The connection between family status and labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the non-economic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 Within the framework of the division of labor on the
593 basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the
561 basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

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his relationship to his fellows within the group. The controls exercised among members in work and in the life of the family in general show themselves a constant pattern to be observed from farm to farm wherever one elects to examine the daily and annual rounds of activity. 593 561 462

Thus in any of the tasks which the group must perform in its economy, the division of labor between the adult farmer-father and his sons may be observed. The father is owner and director of the enterprise; in him the farm and its income are vested; in the community it is known as his and the sons are spoken of as his "boys." Thus in the draining of a field or the sale of cattle in a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye and refer necessary decisions to him.

Perhaps the best method of illustrating this relationship is to present it from the point of view of the growing individual who takes his place in the farm family. He forms part of the productive unit which is his own family. The techniques of farming are passed on to him, and he learns them under the direction of his father, uncles, and brothers. At their hands he acquires the conditioning which will fit him to form a farm family of his own, thus to continue the traditional pattern. Naturally, his conditioning is more than merely technological; he gets on the farm the full training which makes him a member of his class and time. 462 561 593 868

The growing child ordinarily sees his father as owner and principal worker of the farm. When the whole family group of father, mother, children, and whatever other relatives may be living with them, works in concert, as at the potato planting, the turf cutting, and the haymaking, it is the father who directs the group's activities, himself doing the heavy tasks. The father looks after and takes care of the cattle, delegating minor tasks connected with them to his sons. Even though the cattle may be generally discussed by

462 561 593 868 the household, he has full control of them, disposes of them, drives them to the fair, handles and uses the money got for them. If he fails to get a good price, handles the beasts badly, or proves himself a bad judge of them, the criticism of his wife and neighbors soon establishes the value of careful husbandry in the son's mind.

462 593 868 The father does all the constant heavy work necessary to keep the land in condition in so rainy and treeless a country. He makes drains, ditches, fences, walls, shelters, and barns, as we have seen. As the son grows older, he learns to help at these tasks, finally taking them over. The father prepares the garden, ploughs, plants, and harrows, does all the spade work of cultivation and everything involving the use of horses and agricultural implements. The son soon learns that these are men's tasks, and he gradually assumes his share of them. The adult men of the neighborhood rival one another at these tasks; they chafe and boast back and forth over their prowess. The son cannot fail to hear and value the techniques which he acquires.

462 593 868 626 He learns those techniques in a narrow school. Where tradition is still so strong and the incursions of trained agriculturalists still relatively infrequent, as among the small farmers, there is little variation from the tried and true way. Each operation and each tool demand a technique of their own. The father makes sure that the son learns it well. Command, rivalry, ridicule, and many an adage and bit of folklore all conspire to the same result.

The father must make sure that the son has learned the right and traditional technique. For he must be ready to stand his ground with anyone in the community in farm skills. Every operation becomes the intimate concern of his neighbors; a man must hold his head high. More important, [461] many skills are plied in coöperative activities, in turf cutting, haymaking, and much of the work of the garden. In such cases, a definite rhythm is necessary for greater effec-

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tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands.

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women.

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's

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direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to him at his marriage.

If economic apprenticeship is also a process of conditioning within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

For the child grows up within the full complex of life within the family. The petty errands which constitute his first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his beginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm work is again merely incidental to his long years of life with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

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itself in household arrangement and in the grouping of individuals in other spheres than farm work. 593 561

This parental dominance continues as long as the father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the sons, they have no control of the direction of farm activities nor of the disposal of farm income. They go to market and fair from the time they are twelve years old, but they buy or sell little, if anything, for themselves. Thus the small farmer and his sons are often seen at the fairs and markets together, but it is the farmer-father who does the bargaining. Once when one of the authors asked a countryman about this at a potato market, he explained that he could not leave his post for long because his full-grown son "isn't well known yet and isn't a good hand at selling." If the son wants a half crown to go to a hurley match or to take a drink on market day with friends, he must get it from his father. The authors have seen many sons, fully adult, come into shops to buy some farm requirement, such as a bag of meal, and say that the "old fellow" will pay for it. And a few days later the old fellow arrives to pay for the goods "my young fellow got." The son may, of course, earn money in employment off the farm, as many do at work on the roads in occasional employment with governmental bodies or large farmers. But in this case he is expected to contribute the larger part of the money to the general household expenses as long as he remains on the farm.

The procedure of the Land Commission, a government body, in providing additions to small holdings from the [654] break-up of large estates illustrates well this retention of parental authority. It is the policy of the Commission to employ local men as much as possible in the reclamation and fencing work necessary at the division of an estate; the owners of the holdings to be enlarged are entitled to the work. Consequently, when the work is given, the farmer owners are assigned it. But it is the sons who do the work,

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593 561 and at the pay-off the "old fellows" walk sometimes many miles to be paid the wages their sons have earned. In one case of land division which the authors witnessed, a Land Commission official walked about the estate pointing out the plots which the selected farmers were to get. The farmers followed in a body at a respectful distance, each ready to step forward when his name was called. Behind them came all the young men of the neighborhood, the farmers' sons. When it was necessary to send someone back to a farmhouse or to cut up stakes to mark boundaries, the orders were transmitted from the official to the farmer and from the farmer to his sons, though these were in the majority of cases adult men. Likewise in country post offices, even after the farm has been made over to the son and the "old people" have the old-age pension, it is the son who comes to collect it for them.

Even at forty-five and fifty, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm, the countryman remains a "boy" in respect to farm work and in the rural vocabulary. A deputy to the *Dáil* (the Irish parliament) raised a considerable laugh in 1933, which echoed into the daily newspapers, when he inadvertently dropped into the country idiom and pleaded for special treatment in land division for "boys of forty-five and older" who have nothing in prospect but to wait for their fathers' farms. Likewise, a countryman, complaining to one of the authors about his position, said: "You can be a boy here forever as long as the old fellow is still alive."

593 561 861 It goes without saying that the father exercises his control over the whole activity of the "boy." It is by no means confined to their work together. Indeed, the father is the court of last resort, which dispenses punishment for deviations from the norm of conduct in all spheres. Within the bounds of custom and law he has full power to exercise discipline. Corporal punishment is not a thing of the past in

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Ireland, and, especially in the intermediate stages of the child's development, from seven to puberty, it gets full play.

It is during those years that the characteristic relationship between father and son is developed in rural communities. The son has suffered a remove from the previous almost exclusive control of its mother, in which an affective content of sympathy and indulgence was predominant, and is brought into contact for the first time with the father and older men. But the transfer is not completed. There is a hiatus in his development through the years of school when his participation in men's work and his relationship with his father has little chance of developing into an effective partnership. A real union of interests does not take place until after Confirmation and school-leaving, when for the first time his exclusive contacts and his entire day-to-day activity, particularly in farm work, will be with his father and the older men.

This fact colors greatly the relationship of father and son, as far as affective content goes. There is none of the close companionship and intimate sympathy which characterizes, at least ideally, the relationship in other groups. Where such exists, it is a matter for surprised comment to the small farmers. In its place there is developed, necessarily perhaps, a marked respect, expressing itself in the tabooing of many actions, such as smoking, drinking, and physical contact of any sort, which can be readily observed in any small farm family. Coupled with this is the lifelong subordination the retention of the name "boy" implies, which is never relaxed even in the one sphere in which farmer father and son can develop an intense community of interest — farm work. Nothing prevents the development of great mutual pride, the boy in his experienced and skillful mentor, tutor, and captain in work, and the man in a worthy and skillful successor and fellow workman, but on the other hand everything within the behavior developed in the rela-

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593 tionship militates against the growth of close mutual sym-
[578] pathy. As a result, the antagonisms inherent in such a situation often break through very strongly when conflicts arise.

The division of labor in the masculine sphere between father and sons, then, is more than an arrangement in farm management. It is very directly part of the systems of controls, duties, and sentiments which make up the whole family life. The apprenticeship and the long subordination of the sons in farm work are reflections of the entirety of their relationship to parents; it is impossible to treat the two spheres of behavior separately.

Similarly, the relationships in farm work between the other members of the household cannot be treated separately.

593 On the other hand, the relationship of mother and son
561 has a very different content. Like that between father and
562 son, it is the product of years of development. It is marked, too, by a similar retention of subordinate status on the part of the son. In farm work the boy is subject to commands of his mother even when, fully adult, he has passed over exclusively to men's work. It is for this reason that many Irish farm widows with grown sons can successfully manage a farm for many years before they ultimately make it over upon a son's marriage, and from their restricted scope within the household and haggard effectively direct operations in the masculine sphere. In such cases, the woman retains control. Even in such an important matter as her son's eventual marriage she has a very dominant voice.

But within the scope of such a subordination there is a
593 quite different affective history. The relationship is the first and earliest into which a child enters. It is very close, intimate, and all-embracing for the first years of life; only gradually does the experience of the child expand to include brothers, sisters, and, last, the older male members of the household.

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Until seven, the child of either sex is the constant companion of its mother. If the family is numerous an elder child, usually a sister, may take over much of the mother's role, but the mother is always near-by. As the woman works in the house or fields, the child is kept by her side. In the house it usually sits in a crib by the fire or plays about on the floor, but always within sight and sound. It learns its speech from its mother, amid a flood of constant endearments, admonitions, and encouragements. The woman's work never separates her from the child. Custom imposes no restraints or interruptions in her solicitude. She looks after its comforts, gives it food, dresses it, etc. She constantly exercises restraints and controls over it, teaching it day by day in a thousand situations the elements of prudery, modesty, and good conduct. 593 855 [868] [867]

The controls she exercises are of a different kind from those of the father. She is both guide and companion. Her authority most often makes itself felt through praise, persuasion, and endearment. Only when a grave breach of discipline demands a restraining power greater than hers, or when an appeal to ultimate authority is needed, does the father begin to play his role. Especially in the years before puberty, the farm father enters the child's cognizance as a disciplinary force. The barriers of authority, respect, extra-household interests, and the imperatives of duty rather than of encouragement make it difficult for any intimacy to develop. 593 861

Even after Confirmation the child's relationship to his mother is not materially weakened. He becomes confirmed, it is true, in a masculine scorn for feminine interests and pursuits, but he can and must still look for protection to his mother against a too-arbitrary exercise of his father's power. In family disputes the mother takes a diplomatic, conciliatory role. From her intermediary position she can call upon the strongest ties between herself and her sons 593

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● 593 to restore rifts in parental authority and filial submission.

Throughout the years of the son's full activity in the farm economy under the father's headship, the mother still remains the source of comfort and the preparer of food and is still infinitely solicitous of his welfare. It is only at marriage that the bond is broken and undergoes material transformation. If the child must leave the farm for other walks of life, the closest possible relationship is still maintained. When one goes home, it is to see one's mother. There is always an attempt to carry on a correspondence. In exile, the bond lingers as a profound sentimental nostalgia.

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CHAPTER IV

The Relations of Kindred

THE relations of the members of the farm family are 593 best described in terms of the patterns which uniformity of habit and association build up. They are built up within the life of the farm household and its daily and yearly work. The relations of the fathers to sons and mothers to sons fall repeatedly into regular and expectable patterns of this kind that differ very little from farm to farm.

If we are to understand them, then, we must trace them out of this setting and see in what manner they offer us explanation of Irish rural behavior. In terms of a formal sociology, such as Simmel might give us, the position of the parents is one of extreme superordination, that of the children of extreme subordination. The retention of the names "boy" and "girl" reflects the latter position. Sociological adulthood has little to do with physiological adulthood. Age brings little change of modes of address and ways of treating and regarding one another in the relationships within the farm family. The relative positions of the parties must be stated in terms of the events taking place between them. These events run over the years and redefine relationships in their course. This kind of development characterizes and gives form to the family relations we have already detailed. We shall see now that it gives form to all of them and to the farm family itself.

The long years of intimate association in the act and

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593 events of a common life build up very complete adaptations and very close emotional bonds among all those who share the life together. The bonds must be compatible; adjustment is made all round, again through gradual habituation. Otherwise conflict is ready to set off young against old, men against women, persons against one another. There is reciprocity of obligation and expectancy.

But the point of interest here is that it is the bonds that must be dealt with for understanding, not anything within them or the activities associated with them. Here there is an absolute coincidence of "social" and "economic" factors within single relationships. In the case of a small farmer and his son, there is only one relationship; to separate their social from their economic activities is meaningless. They are one in fact, and, as far as the peasants are concerned, they are one in name.

593 554 Thus any of the words designating status in the relationship, such as father, son, owner, employee, heir, etc., might well be used, but in actual practice the first two of them are sufficient to cover all the activities of the relationship. Only the statuses of father and son are distinguished by the country people. These words are the only designations of status that are to be heard among them. All others are unnecessary. They are not part of the experience of the small farmers except as they become so when the outside world breaks in. Consequently, terms designating status are not to be understood or interpreted on a basis of *a priori* or philological meaning, but as references to the events in connection with which they were used.

593 Thus when it comes to understanding the force of such terms for the small farmers who use them, we are able to see why it is that the terms are emotional symbols of very great power. They are part of the peasant's own experience in the very relations we have been discussing, and they make definite and reinforce the relations for him. They cannot

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be divorced from the patterns of relationships which they 593
symbolize, and their role cannot be understood except in the fact.

If then we turn back to the common life of the families of the small farmers, it is these very terms which give us the clue to the relationships which that life builds up.

In the Irish family, the sons and the daughters are equally 593
subordinate; there is no formal distinction made between 601
them. The kinship terms of both the English and the Irish languages reflect this equivalence of siblings. In either case, one term, son or *mac*, reflects the unity of the position of all male children, the procreated generation, from the point of view of the elder or procreant pair, the mother and father. Similarly, a single term in both languages, brother and *dearbhráthair*, expresses for the siblings their common occupancy of that position. Rural Ireland knows neither primogeniture nor junior right. Except as age differences separate them informally, the brothers occupy the same status both within and outside the family group. Thus neighbors and other outsiders refer to them all alike as "the boys" of the farmer's family.

Accordingly, their equality reflects itself in farm activity. 593
All are on an equal footing there. The brothers are all 628
alike under the father's direction and control as long as they remain on the farm. They work together, and the years of common effort and common dependence create a strong
solidarity between them. Though only one of them may [428]
ordinarily expect to inherit land and cattle, the others renounce their rights as it were in the interests of the identification of the family group with the land they work. The bloody faction fights which used to disfigure Irish country life have practically passed away, but the forces which brought them into existence still continue. Many a country fight involving a dispute over rights of way and water courses brings in the adherents of all the brothers of either

593 house, and, though the cases nowadays find their way into
628 the courts, a very common defense is that the feud is very long-standing and that "the two grandfathers" began it. The tales written in the last century by William Carleton, who wrote of a life he himself knew intimately, describe faction fights in which whole parishes became involved, but the center of disturbance was invariably a family dispute in which the brothers of a family ranged with their friends against those of another. So fierce is the solidarity which the identification of brothers and their land calls forth that even today in Clare the name "defending Tim Flanagan's title" is jocularly given to forcible resistance to eviction, after a famous stalwart of the last century whose ten sons fought valiantly for their father's farm.

593 In fact, this emotional attachment is strong enough some-
589 times to preclude the breaking up of the family. Two instances of this sort came under the authors' special notice out of the many which occur. It is difficult to get the exact figures, since census materials deal only with the marital status of farm owners, but many of the bachelor-owned farms of Clare may be of this type. In the first case, two brothers and four sisters occupied a small holding of twenty-three acres and a four-room house for over fifty years. Several of them at various times had tried to break away; in fact, two brothers did, but the ones who stayed gave as their reason first that they hadn't wanted to leave the old people and afterwards that none of them had wanted "to be the first to leave." The second case was very similar. Two brothers and a sister had stayed on to work a small farm for their old parents, but, when the old couple died, none of them wanted to leave and each felt too old for marriage.

593 Whatever differences make a rift in this fraternal front
428 are matters more of preparation for leaving the farm family than of internal differentiation in status and behavior. On most small farms only one son can be kept at home as suc-

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 593

cessor to land and chattels. The family property, house, stock, and land, descend to him intact. The other sons must be provided for elsewhere. 428

In choosing the son to remain upon the farm, the father has full power of decision. His interest lies in choosing among his sons the one he thinks will carry on most successfully. There is no rule or norm in the matter; and the brothers are united in expecting an adequate return for their years of service. But none of them may claim more than the other, and they are all dependent upon the father's sense of their fair deserts. In many cases there may be an early difference among them in the inclinations they show in adolescence. But the special position a brother occupies in this regard is a matter of agreement among them all and easy enough of adjustment.

Turning now to the other relationships neither fraternal nor parental within the family, it is obvious that those among the females and between females and males build up in the same way as the ones we have already discussed. 593

The family makes a formal distinction between the female members and their male fellow members in terminology, just as it builds a dichotomy of behavior upon the sexual difference. Thus in the procreated generation daughter and sister, *inghean* and *deirbhshiúr*, correspond to son and brother; for the daughters occupy equivalent positions in a common subordination to the parents. 593 601

These terms express merely a classification of the female individuals and their positions in the complex of reciprocal relationships between family members. What has been said of the conditioning of the boy can be repeated of the girl, with, of course, a difference in the techniques acquired. And no less than in the boy's case, farm work is merely a part of the total adaptation the girl makes toward her fellows and toward the environment in which they live. 593 861

The work of the women is as important in farm economy

593 as the men's. The coincidence between family status and
861 economic role holds for them as well. Women's work on the small farm is complementary to that of the men, as we have seen, though, of course, it is quite distinct. The young girl growing up on the small farm learns this, just as the young man acquires the masculine techniques. The girl is thrown constantly with the mother and the older women of the household. After she is seven, her pursuits differ completely from those of her brother and, except as she is in very close constant association within the household, she has no working contact with her father.

857 Many minor tasks fall to the girl as she grows up, par-
868 ticularly driving and milking the cows. Her conditioning prepares her to fill the role her mother occupies in the household. All the interior of the house, the immediate vicinity of courts and haggard where the fuel is stacked, the well, the poultry yard and sheds, are her concern. She learns to milk cows, feed the pig, tend the chickens, and look after all the young animals through helping the older women. She learns the lore of disposing of eggs, butter, and occasionally of some of the vegetable produce of the garden, potatoes and cabbage, and occasionally goes to market with her mother.

In the chief business of the women, the house itself, the preparation and serving of food and the repair and upkeep of clothing, she serves a never-ending daily apprenticeship. A young girl may often be delegated to look after the hearth, make and keep the fires going, etc. Only the mother makes small purchases of food and household goods. Only the mother bakes the great variety of breads. But by the time she leaves school, the girl may be proficient in these tasks too. So also with the butter making. Income derived from this and from poultry belongs to the older woman; the girl has no share until she herself has married.

000 In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of

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In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of the clothing of the small farmers was made at home by the women. Now, however, it is nearly all shop-bought. Certain vestiges of the former practice remain, however, in knitting sweaters, gloves, socks, and scarfs; and in the country districts, at least of West and North Clare, there is a custom which demands that some woman of the house be always at work. If there is no other task on hand, they must occupy themselves with knitting. In former days, the daughters of the community might gather in a *meitheal*, or coöperative work group, under the supervision of older women for carding and spinning flax and wool. In any event, the younger woman, the girl, is at the older woman's command. 294 461 476 178

Much the same content of emotion and sentiment exists in this relationship, subordinate as the daughter must remain, as in the case of the boy. But in the case of the daughter there is never a readjustment, and there is never a period of community of interest with the father. Nor need the mother fear a competition with an impatient oncoming successor as must the farm father who knows he cannot put off forever his relinquishing his farm to his son. For, eagerly as the daughter may look forward to her own marriage, she knows that marriage will bring in a rivalry over household control with a totally new person in an entirely new scene. It is her husband's mother, not her own, to whom new adjustments must be made. The implication of this fact, and the struggle it entails, will bear examination in the discussion of marriage. 593

Still another relationship exists within the household under normal circumstances. The relationship of brother to sister has its reflection in farm work. But it is a relationship with a different history from the relationship between siblings of similar sex. Sexual differences in behavior have made a different habit, beginning very early in the child's experience. And, for each of them, the sexual differences are colored a great deal by the norms which mark the rela-

● 593 tionship of their parents. Thus there is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. He shares the masculine ultimate control of farm and household. If she remains on the farm after her brother's marriage, she must look to him for her dowry.

The country people have a good deal to say about the strength of this bond. Deep-rooted in the years of common subordination and common association, it survives the re-
[574] moval of the sister to another house and farm. It means much visiting and a close relationship with the coming children. The country people marvel that a young child
[604] may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family name are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.

589 That the complete family is the complete unit of life both
592 social and economic to the small farmer is admirably illustrated by the incomplete families of the countryside. By the term "incomplete" the authors indicate those many small farms which are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, and widows.

589 In such farms, control is exercised by the person owning
592 the farm. A widow is usually helped out by a male rela-
562 tive, brother, nephew, or son. Here again the male devotes himself to the tasks which in ordinary circumstances would fall to the father in a full family unit. The control over expenditure and the disposal of farm goods rests, however, with the woman. But even then the bargaining in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair would be delegated by her to her helping relative. In one instance which came to the authors' notice a young widow called

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CHAPTER V

The Kinship System

THE mothers and fathers who order farm life are themselves sons and daughters. They have or have had (before their creation of a family of their own upon the farm) much the same relationships with their parents as their children have with them. Indeed in many cases households comprise three generations. Grandfathers and grandmothers of the children live in the house. Family structure is not confined to the immediate present family group, but descends with each generation as the boys and girls reach social maturity at marriage and the creation of their own families. 592 593

This descent forms the basis of any kinship system; it provides also the basis upon which the "friends" to whom one has obligations in rural Ireland are reckoned. The individuals comprised within the system are so because of their sharing of that descent in common. These are one's "people" or "friends," in the countryman's vocabulary. 601 612

The terms express the generic category into which the kindred fall. Both terms are, in a sense, translations of Gaelic idiom. The first, people, corresponds exactly with the Irish *muinntear*. The second in ordinary rural usage refers not to a comrade, as in English, but to one's relatives. Even in the towns, one's father, mother, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, are referred to as "immediate friends." In the countryside one speaks of one's kinsmen as one's

601 "friends," particularly if they occupy one's own generation;
612 one's father's relatives, even his brothers, become "my father's friends." A "distant friend" refers not to distance in space but to that in cousinship.

612 Before we detail the individuals included within this
593 category, let us make two points clear. The first of these is directly associated with the dominance of the father within the family. He comes, as it were, to stand for the group which he heads; the farm is known by his name, and
[591] wife and children bear his name likewise. For the Irish family is patrilocal and patronymic, to use the technical
[611] terms. Farm, house, and most of the household goods descend from father to son with the patronym; we shall follow their general movement in a later section.

611 This patrilineal descent gives a certain accent upon the
612 kinship system; it chooses one line of descent out of the many possible and gives those who make it up a common name. There is a reflection of this fact in the groupings of Irish rural life. To outsiders a person may be known as "a boy of the Shannons" or a "man of the Flaherties," but in a sense these groupings are merely linguistic conveniences. For in many cases two families of Shannons may live side by side, yet not be considered "friends." None of the obligations of kinship bind them. For in the phrase of the countryman: "They are not the same Shannons or, if they are, they are too far out."

Our examination of the various ways of reckoning kinship will make the statement clear. Patriliny is merely one device, an extension of the father-son relationship, by which individuals are included in one's group of "friends."

593 A second observation upon the kinship system springs
582 from the fact that the family relationships regulate sexual conduct. Indeed, our examination of farm agriculture leads us to see that the technological training of the individual goes hand in hand with the sexual. Marriage prohibitions,

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like the sanctions of the exercise of sexual rights in marriage, 593
are part of and take their form in the family group. Conse- 582
quently, in the wider and larger alignments of individuals springing from the family which make up the kinship system, similar prohibitions occur.

For the kindred are the group within which marriage is 582
prohibited. In a sense the formulation of the individuals in 602
it as a group is an abstraction. Kinship bonds come ready 857
formed to the newborn human being. The child is soon brought to know and adopt requisite behavior and sentiments toward the individuals with whom the other persons of his family are reciprocally bound.

Thus the Irish child very early meets his mother's and 602
father's brothers and sisters; he runs errands and receives 431
small gifts from them; as soon as he is able he carries pres- 571
ents. In later years of boyhood he does odd jobs for them; 857
his labor is lent at cooring; he takes his place with them at the family table or round the hearth on visiting. At various times of crisis in his career, such as First Communion, Confirmation, and marriage, he receives gifts from them which signalize the intimacy between him and them. They share his parent's superordination to him, for they belong to the same older generation as his parents.

He is very likely, too, to be thrown constantly with their 602
children, especially if they are substantially of the same age, 571
where his uncles and aunts remain within visiting distance. 857
In country regions, such as Luogh, nearly all of the families are united by complicated, reduplicated bonds of marriage and descent. There the boys and girls grow up together in constant association, both as "friends" and companions. It is with them that the natural course of development creates bonds of sentiment and mutual aid, quite like those within the family, which take the form of that "friendliness" at once obligatory and pleasurable seen in the account of farm work.

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583 family is severe. We give the statement in detail in order
578 to show the general situation as he saw it. He is a townsman, and somewhat detached.

The daughter on the farm has to wait till all the sons are got ready for their going off and maybe have been given their passage to America or money to set up in business or to settle on the land. But there are runaway matches all the time, they fall in love, they run off together, and they come in here and take work away from the laborers here. It takes a lot of love and courage because the son is usually cut off and the daughter leaves a very good place for nothing but a cabin and they get none of the money. Maybe after several years the girl will get her fortune, but not always. I remember Jerry N — whose father was very well off as farmers go, but he wouldn't marry the girl they picked for him and took up with a servant girl instead. He's driving a hackney now and lives in a cabin with a flock of children. Jimmy L — ran off but he gradually became reconciled with his people. The father had a good farm of sixty acres, and so had the girl, but the young fellow got nothing out of it. His father helps a little now, sending down a bag of potatoes.

602 Another case which the authors had under observation
593 from time to time illustrates not only the matchmaking
578 system but the general family setting in which marriage takes place and farm life moves. Sanctions for conduct
627 aggrieving the families are applied by the families themselves. The case is long but worth quoting in the words of the teller for its comprehensive character:

There was a girl of the O'Rourkes from D —, they have a farm out there and she married a fellow named Murphy up in C —. She was a school teacher out in England for several years and she became great with this fellow the farmer, and she used to send him money over from England for when they would get married. She sent about two hundred pounds in all. She has an aunt up in C — married up there and it was all the fault of the aunt. She came home and she hadn't yet told her people anything about it. She was just about ready to get married to the fellow and she told them that she was going to get married. They agreed. Then she said she was going to get married to

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Murphy and they tried to argue her out of it, but she said it was too far gone now and she was committed to marry him, so they hastily gave her their blessing. He lived in a big house up by C— and had sixty acres. 602 593 578

Well, he was a sort of uncouth kind of chap, rough, and she was what you might say anglified, or citified. She wanted to brighten up the house and make it nice and hang up curtains and that sort of thing. He thought the reins of the horse would do for the curtains and so on, and it came to a fight between them, a clash of wills, and in the end, as it must, the stronger one won out; that is, the man's. She got hysterical and he cast round for ways of getting rid of her, and he sent up to Ennistymon for the doctor to come down and examine her to commit her to the asylum. He didn't send her up to C— though that was nearer and in his district, but he sent up for Dr. MacNulty to Ennistymon, leaving Dr. Starr in C— so as to get someone who wouldn't know the case. 627 [158 743]

The married sister of the wife was staying in the house at the time and he was driving her home. He told her the doctor was coming, and she said, "You are doing wrong," and made him turn round and go back to the house where Dr. MacNulty was examining the hysterical woman. Then the married sister got her brother and father to take her back to D—. They came up with Father Brendan of Ennis here and took her away down to D—. After a time they got up a party and invited him down for a reconciliation.

After a while she went back to live with him. He started it again and got her hysterical and called in another doctor, who said that there was nothing wrong with the woman.

One night the three brothers of the girl and her father came up to the house and one went round to the back door and the others went in the front and they caught the fellow. They were going to force him to sign receipts for the money the daughter gave him. Country people demand receipts for money they give and they are right, but the girl hadn't liked to ask and hadn't got any, so her people were going to step in and get them themselves. Murphy had rifled her belongings and torn off his name from all the receipts he had sent her to England. They came in and said that he was lucky he was going to escape with his life. No one in their family had ever been in the asylum and no one belonging to them had ever been insane or robbers.

602 and that he was trying to black them with the disgrace of it.
593 The girl ran in but they threw her out into the hall where her
578 father caught her and held her. They said that all the people
627 belonging to him were thieves, and that two of them, two uncles of his, his mother's brothers, were convicted for robbery and that all his people before him had been insane, and that he was trying to black the name of a good family. In the end they caught him and beat him till he consented to sign the receipts. They gave him a good hiding.

The teller drew his own conclusions from the case:

If the girl had listened to her parents, they would have told her all this and saved her. But she went on and married right ahead on her own advice. She probably thought she was doing well in marrying into sixty acres.

It is interesting that the application of sanctions does not confine itself to a single dereliction. In this case, according to the storyteller:

[461] Murphy was a terrible lazy farmer and wouldn't even till a patch of ground for a garden for himself or his stock, and the woman's people had to send up a load of potatoes for them. They told him when they beat him if he didn't turn into a farmer and do a man's work, till his garden, and provide, they would be up again and make him do it.

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Family and community alike support them in their attitude. A woman could say bitterly, for she was childless: 183 842

> No matter how much money you have and how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you're no good. But if you're ugly as the worst and have children you are all right.

The husband has every right to express his displeasure at his wife's barrenness. To have no children is a source of shame to him and a terrible disappointment in his desire to continue his line upon the farm. One woman put it: 183 593 842

> The man wants children because he is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of the country, especially if you haven't any.

In the country districts they say that he may beat her and in their graphic phrase "bounce a boot off her now and then for it." Country belief still regards the woman as the offending partner in a childless marriage. Near Inagh one farmer, a returned Yankee, was regarded as an anomaly because, though childless, he treated his wife just as well as though she had many and did not get angry when he was twitted on his lack of an heir. They explained it by saying that he "knew it was his own fault." [195]

The day of the "country divorce," as the farmers call it, is rapidly passing. In the old days, they say, a man might send a barren wife back to her parents, though Catholic law forbade him to marry again.. There are cases which illustrate that the custom survives in altered form. They are particularly revealing in our analysis of the desire to preserve the family unity and its identification with farm and household through the generations. Here the brothers act, sociologically, as a single individual in order to insure the desired continuity. For instance, in one case, a middling farmer of Corrofin, childless after several years, got a country divorce. He gave the land thereafter to his brother in return for a thousand pounds, which the brother had inherited in lieu 586 842

CHAPTER VIII

Dispersal and Emigration

THE internal reorganization of the family consequent on the marriage of one of their number produces a marked change in the situation of the as yet unprovided-for brothers and sisters. The other members of the family broken up by the marriage of one of their number on the home farm must be provided for elsewhere. They feel themselves entitled to portions, either in the form of dowries to marry into another farm or of some other means of establishing themselves. If such provisions in fact are not made, conflict arises, as we saw in the case of the McDermott murder. A classical case in the Ennis region of Clare was that of an old farmer of substance who married a nineteen-year-old girl when he was eighty. When the birth of a son precipitated a crisis, he had to be protected from his scandalized relatives, sons, and daughters by the police. When he died the following year, he gave a hundred pounds each to the constable who protected him and the priest "plucky enough to marry me." His sons refused to attend his funeral.

Normally, however, the transfer of land and the break-up of the family which worked it is made with the fullest possible provision for the other children. The dowry brought in is utilized to that end, and the savings of a lifetime on the farm have been used. The following observations made by a Land Commission official, himself a small farmer's son

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593 and a man with many years' experience in Irish rural affairs,
428 attempt to give a statement of the generalities. They express, however, an ideal rather than an actuality.

The average household consists of six persons [and the parents]. Of necessity not more than one could be provided for on the holding and assuming, for example, that the family consisted of two girls and four boys, the position would be somewhat as follows:

593 The eldest son would in the course of years assume ownership
428 of the holding. A second son might be provided with a secondary education and might possibly win a County Council scholar-
874 ship . . . enabling him to pursue a course of engineering or medicine practically free. In the event, however, of his not being so fortunate, the thrift of the family may enable him to pursue a similar course at the university, the intervals between terms and the long vacation being spent on the farm.

Some years ago medicine was the profession usually pursued provided the boy had no vocation for the priesthood. At that time the cost of his board was appreciably reduced by an arrangement through which neighbors' sons lodged together and brought with them supplies of potatoes, oatmeal, home-cured pork, in fact, provided for almost all their own food. When the boy is qualified to his own particular calling, to his credit it may be said that he denies himself many little luxuries in order to pay back the cost of his training and thus assist the other members of his family.

593 The third son either got trained in business and in due course
428 started one of his own, or emigrated where he could also refund the cost to his parents. The fourth son might possibly become a primary school teacher, a civic guard, a tradesman [artisan] apprenticed by his father in the near-by town, or again his family might give him enough to marry into another small holding.

One of the girls received a dowry or, as they say here, she was "fortuned off" into another small holding of similar status. The second girl possibly favored nursing, teaching, business, or domestic service, or again possibly religion, or even a clerical position of some sort either here or abroad.

166 The above quotation states the generalities in terms of
463 upward social mobility. The influx of the country people
593

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into the towns, into governmental, professional positions, and into the ranks of urban occupations must wait for special analysis in itself. It is not possible here to determine how great the effect of this movement from the small farms is upon the current much lamented overcrowding of the professions in Ireland. The point of interest for us is the dispersal of the farm group. 463 593

Naturally enough, this dispersal does not always occur so happily as in the above statement of the ideal. Yet the portioning off of the children and the success with which it is done is the pride as well as the duty of every farm family. A few examples will give the variations. They are more matters of success or failure to advance beyond the level of small farm life, but they show the genesis of the movement in the farm family. In a later section this subject will be dealt with in more detail. These examples, however, are typical, though the names are fictitious.

Leary of F —, a farmer with sixty acres, has a daughter married near-by with a four hundred pound fortune, and another, a nun in Mercy Convent, Ennis. Four sons have entered the priesthood, an expensive training from his point of view. A fifth is at home working, not yet thirty. Leary is a "strong" farmer, highly prosperous.

Tom Casey, K —, is a very poor holder with thirty acres of mountain and bog. Two sons and a daughter are still at home, and a bachelor brother works with him. Another daughter works for herself as a domestic servant in Ennis. One son Tom is apprenticed to a carpenter in Ennis. A daughter emigrated through the good graces of her aunt.

Michael Dunn of T — has twenty acres, but has not prospered. His two sons left at eighteen and twenty respectively to drive hackney automobiles in Ennis, an uncle there giving them a start. Another son now thirty and a daughter are still at home working the farm.

In a mountain townland, Pat Looney's father prospered, won the good graces of the landlord's agent, amassed four farms, the largest fifty acres, the smallest eighteen. He married off two 593 578 428

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593 daughters with two hundred pound fortunes, settled three sons
578 and a daughter with her husband in each of the farms. Pat him-
428 self, the eldest, now about eighty, got the largest farm but not the one he wanted. He has been warring with his brothers and his neighbors ever since. He held out against his father for five years, refusing to marry and take his farm. In Pat's youth, land agitation and reform had not yet prevented subdivision and acquiring of new farms by a successful tenant. Pat on his fifty-acre mountain farm has married off a daughter locally at three hundred pounds and sent two sons out to America. Another daughter works in England. Two sons, aged forty-three and thirty-six, are at home and Pat hasn't made up his mind yet which one shall get the land.

593 The examples, various as they are, need not be multiplied.
167 The sons and daughter who are not to be portioned at home, in the words of the Luogh residents, "must travel." To that end both the savings of the family, created through their united efforts under the headship of father and mother, and
[583] the incoming dowry, are devoted. In Luogh there had been only four marriages in ten years; two of them were the usual farm-transferring matches, one a returned emigrant who married a boyhood sweetheart and bought a farm, and one a widower who took a second wife and a second fortune. An old woman described the situation: "There aren't any matches nowadays. Nobody has a fortune to give his daugh-
[454] ter and the young men must travel." Yet the woman who lamented this state of affairs was carefully husbanding half crowns for her baby granddaughter's fortune.

593 Nevertheless this necessary dispersal of the members of
167 the family at its reorganization does not ordinarily destroy
457 the family ties. The bonds of affection and family obligation still hold. If they have emigrated, the family members send
434 back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces and brothers and sisters left at home. A great many farms, especially in West and North Clare, are partially supported by Christmas gifts from Americans and other exiles. It is

593 unfortunate that the authors have not statements of the
167 amount of these annual remittances for local districts. The
457 total for Ireland, however, is enormous. There is a marked
434 tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself, sons and daughters of each generation going out to join the members of the last. One district round Cross to the west of Carrigaholt, a little settlement on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, said locally to be supported by sons in the Shanghai police force. The first to go became chief of police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the force have gone to men of Cross.

167 The authors had the opportunity of examining some of the family setting in which emigrant remittances operate in Luogh. There the greatest number of emigrants had gone out to Boston. In one family, there was a succession of nephews and nieces following uncles and aunts from the same farmhouse for four generations. In four recent cases Luogh boys and girls had married one another in Boston. In two more they had married in Ireland and emigrated together.

434 Remittances from sons and daughters arrive around
593 Christmas. In one family the farmer's wife had written
431 to children in America saying that the family were trying to acquire an addition to their holding from the Land Commission. The children sent them the purchase price. In this case the daughter sent her regular Christmas remittance as well. When she was admonished by her parents for such generosity, she wrote: "I would think it wasn't Christmas and I hadn't any father and mother if I didn't send them something."

[527] Her mention of the festival in the same breath with her parents is understandable when it is realized that Christmas is the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland.

434 The role played by emigrated relatives in providing for
593

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434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
● 593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
602 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
167 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
484 of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the
533 peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

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destroyed. The best example of this fact is the change which 593
comes over the attitudes of the old people toward their children's personal expenditures. The economic corporation which they directed is destroyed with their headship of the group. Consequently, they no longer can demand the services of their children as before. Thus the authors saw several old couples doing their best to learn how much a returned emigrant had earned but, because of the change in position, not daring to ask outright. If the son had remained on the farm, they would not have hesitated to demand a strict accounting. Likewise, in such important matters as marriage, over which the parents would have had great authority as long as the son or daughter remained at home, the parents lose their control. More than one old couple remarked, on hearing from a distant exiled son of his marriage, that they wished him well but that he must please himself now that he was on his own.

A word more might be said to clarify the position of the 593
dispersed relatives. They equally share the new attenuated 602
bonds which take the place of the old closely integrated family group. But, as might be expected in the structure of a family, which, as we have seen, is based, not upon the principle of rigidity in classification as in many primitive kinship systems, but upon the principle of extensions of relationship outward from the nucleus of the immediate family, the bonds are stronger as the original relationship is closer. The children of each generation growing up on the home farm can look far oftener to a father's or mother's emigrant brother for aid when their own time comes to emigrate than to father's and mother's emigrant cousins. The closer relatives are the ones who most often step forward, though the obligation theoretically binds them all. The following incident from Luogh illustrates the clash between the varying degrees of relationship. Let the small farmer tell the story himself:

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593 A fellow named O'Dwyer – married to a cousin of the old
602 woman out of Ballyheline [a neighboring townland] – was home from Australia one summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a new greatcoat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. [After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship] he asked if he could take the boy (second son) out to Australia with him, and he would set him behind his bar. [He had a hotel there.] I said, yes, he could have him. After the fellow went back to Australia, he sent over fifty pounds for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas's sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia, I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. And I sent back the fifty pounds, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back.

The new behavior, as this example shows, is that of the extended kindred already examined. Where emigration has not removed the brother and sister altogether, they are now "friends" and are bound by reciprocal obligations and sentimental attachment. The necessary disposal of their brothers and sisters provides for the continuance of the family unit upon the farm. The very mechanism which assures that continuance does the dispersing. Yet the dispersed do not leave the family. They stay within the bonds of kinship. They are united by the new more attenuated ties of cousinship. Their displacement, like that of the old people, is a regular social movement, providing for them, as it were, a new place and status, changing radically and necessarily their old family membership, yet still confining them within the web of interest and sentiment, though upon a new footing. Henceforward the relatives see one another, of course, less and less often and rely more and more upon the proxy of mementos and gifts.

593 In summary, the dispersal of the family is part of a general movement arising out of the re-formation of the family

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group. Forces within the relations of the members of the group bring it into being. Yet the dispersal is carried out very often in ways which depend also upon familial ties. The whole movement is carried on in the midst of an orderly and organic transformation which comes over the family regularly at marriage and death. Old and new meet at marriage in Ireland. Between them social organization is passed on though a prior group is partially destroyed. 593

Let us recapitulate, then, for a moment. Statistical statement of productive and consumptive behavior in rural economy revealed a marked difference between small and large farmers. Within that difference the small farmers presented a great statistical uniformity. Consequently, it was necessary to look beyond the numerical count to the actual behavior of the small farmers. In referring the question to the lives of the small farmers themselves, we were led to a new analysis of their behavior and to the discovery of a new uniformity. 182 593

The new uniformity, however, is of a different nature. It is itself a coherent and consistent pattern, widely extensive, and responsible to laws of inner development of its own. We are entitled, or rather compelled, to call it a system and to give it the character of other systems, where that word is used with precise meaning and is not warped into a catch-all of common speech.

For, it is evident, the intricate web of human movement and interrelationship involving objects, household and land, which the study of "matchmaking" reveals, is no random movement. It arises in response to definite needs of the family group. It performs a definite function of reorganization and recrystallization in the group. The manifold changes the match brings upon the lives of the family members, the new positions which they take up, and the new behaviors which are theirs are dependent upon its success in this function. We do not need to insist that they are

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593 fully dependent upon it. It is sufficient that they cannot be adequately understood without some assessment of its influence. If we keep this fact in mind, we are ready for an analytic interpretation of our data. The uniform social behaviors of the small farmers begin to form an interrelated whole.

Marriage, property transfer, and the dispersal of the family members derive their character from family relationships. The immediate family of father, mother, and children form a corporate group engaged in agriculture upon a small farm. The roles of the father and mother make them superordinate to the children. Theirs is the direction of the group enterprise. Within the group, technological roles correspond with family status. Economic endeavor, both upon the individual farms and in the form of coöperation between farms, is controlled through the operation of social forces springing from the family. In the testimony of the farmers themselves, that effort is but part of a larger constellation of behavior patterns, obligations, and sentiments governing the individual in other fields by virtue again of his place in the family group. In total, Irish small farm agriculture presents a picture, not of isolated individuals or units pursuing a course of the greatest economic gain, amassing material objects in response wholly to individual desires and selling labor as a commodity, but of a way of life, only a small part of which we have examined, in which the relations between individuals, the soil, productive work, and the material goods of the household constitute a web of social ties, bearing their own incentive and reward and determining the part of the individual in the labor and the goods of the group.

At marriage and at death, as we have seen, this web of relationships is disturbed. New individuals are introduced, old ones lost. The match brings a re-formation of the family involving a dispersal of former members and an introduction

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of a new set of component individuals into the relationships between land, goods, labor, and human beings.

In the light of this system and of the internal changes which are brought about within it, the Irish population statistics now may become interpretable. Late marriage and the high incidence of bachelorhood are associable with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership, the necessity of acquiring sufficient means to portion children, and the delay in dispersing the closed corporation of the family group until it is possible to establish the new one. The practical self-sufficiency of the family group makes it difficult to destroy. The identification of a single immediate family with the individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new such group upon the land. 161 182 593

As we pointed out, subdivision of holdings practically ceased after 1852. Since then the struggle for land and legal reforms in land tenure have prohibited any great further division. The matchmaking system is very old in Ireland. The works of such Gaelic writers as Canon O'Leary describe it explicitly for the pre-famine period. With the cessation of subdivision of holdings came the necessity of providing for children elsewhere than on the land. From that same cessation of subdivision dates the high incidence of bachelorhood. In 1841, at the time of greatest population, age of marriage was normal. Then only 43 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty-five were unmarried, not 72 per cent, as at present. Then only 15 per cent of males between thirty-five and forty-five were celibate, not 29 per cent as today. Figure 13 represents the percentages of unmarried males and females at each age in each subsequent census from 1841 to 1926.

Viewed in the light of this family structure, the decline of population becomes interpretable not as a flight from intolerable conditions, though economic distress had a powerful effect, not as a political gesture, though political

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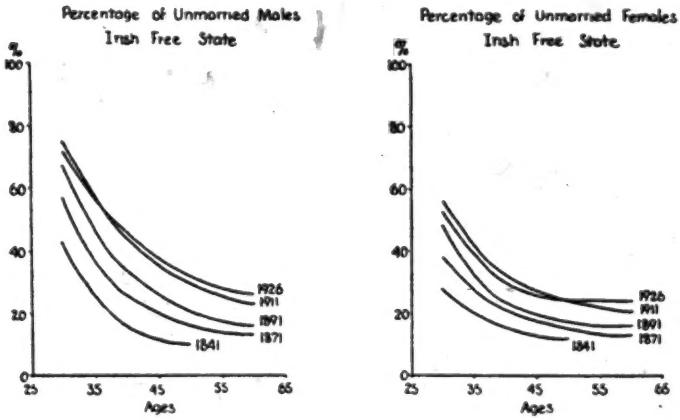
161 disturbance took its toll, but rather as a movement arising
182 from the effect of all these causes upon a family system
●593 whose very nature predisposed it to disperse population and which could, therefore, accommodate itself to that dispersal when it occurred. Emigration, no new thing in 1845, ap-

FIGURE 13

PERCENTAGE OF UNMARRIED PERSONS, IRISH FREE STATE



The figures are taken from the censuses from 1841 to 1926.

pears as the logical corollary of this dispersal. It derives much of its character, such as assisted passages and remittances, from the social forces at work in the family. It can become a traditional movement like the movement from country to town without destroying the family structure or the rural culture whose members it takes away.

The authors do not mean to imply that anything within the social forces of the family as it exists in Ireland has had direct causal effect upon the peculiar statistics of Irish population. The authors would rather point out that the forces operative within that structure are of such a nature as to allow the society of which they are a part to continue to

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function in essentially similar fashion through the welter of economic, political, and other events which have impinged upon the human beings who have successively filled the structure. Likewise, the structure is capable of continued and virile existence in the present, governing the lives of its component individuals and modifying itself to take in new influences.

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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation. 848 183 581

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls. 183 836 562

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. 837 183 [593]

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire. 834 571

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

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which beasts feed him in their turn. He need go to town only for clothing and sundries, for flour and tea, and to sell at the fairs the calves and yearlings which bring in his principal monetary income and provide thus for whatever he cannot produce at home. These cattle go to big farmers, ranchers and shippers; and with the sale his participation in trade and commerce, in 'business', is finished except for his account with the shopkeeper (and in late years, the creamery). As you can well imagine, it is a livelihood little connected with the outside world, and now that agrarian reform has made him full owner of his holding, it is little open to disturbance from the outside.

This is the external view of the small farm. It is the view that usually satisfies the economist. But if one probes deeper and looks at the small farmer's livelihood from within, a fuller picture appears.

That the small farmer is a family man even at work is important for the study of human behaviour. Eight out of ten people working in agriculture in Ireland work not for wages and salaries but by virtue of their family relationship. The work a man does and the directions he gives and receives take form within a social group. That fact yields an opportunity for the anthropologist. Here, in a modern country, is an economy in which there are other controls on labour than those we know—money, contracts, individual profit. To under-

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stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus of the countryman's way of life. 241 593

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the small farmer's family lives upon the holding it works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them. 361 592

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, it is natural that this unit should be known and judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun- 231 311 592

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462 obligations. It is a function of the relationship of husband and wife within the family.

But it is more, too. The attitudes of the countryside toward men's work and women's work show that their respective skills are regarded also as integral parts of the personalities of all men and women of the countryman's own kind. Here we can see how strongly social dispositions influence both mind and vocabulary. 'Natural' is a word very frequently on the countryman's lips. Thus, it is 'natural' for a woman to be a better milker, her smaller hands are proof. And it is laughably 'unnatural' that a man should bother about the sale of eggs. This division is embedded in tradition, too. Luogh still tells a humorous old tale of the spades, men's tools, that used to work of themselves in the olden days, till a woman forgot to say "God bless the work" to them. This division is bolstered in [789] magic, too, for the 'coulter of a plough', that masculine implement, can bring back the butter the fairies have taken.

The division of labour between the sexes is not the only important division within the countryman's pattern of farm work. Work is divided just as much upon the basis of age. Within the masculine sphere, male family members divide the practice of masculine techniques. Within the feminine sphere, there are similar divisions.

462 Let us look at the men at their work. The father
593 and husband is normally owner and director of

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the enterprise. The farm and its income are 462
vested in him. The farm bears his name in the 593
community and sons are spoken of as his 'boys'. In the draining of a field or the sale of cattle at a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye, and refer necessary decisions to him.

But this relationship is much more than economic. Perhaps the best way of describing it is to 462 593 trace its development. The child forms part of the 861 productive unit which is his own family. His growing up is also an apprenticeship. He learns the techniques which will make him a full-fledged member of his class; but there is no divorce between technical and non-technical training. All he learns fits him for one end—to become a farmer-father-husband in a family of his own.

The child sees his father as owner, director and principal worker of the farm. From his example, he learns which are men's tasks and he learns to value the skills they demand. In family deliberations he learns, too, the nice balance between the needs of household and land. It is true he learns these techniques in a narrow school; his father makes sure that he does not deviate from the right and traditional pattern, which folklore, adage and the censure of the village support. But he learns well, by example, competition and practice.

This process is the daily experience of many years; it is very gradual and is embedded in tradi-

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462 tional social life. The boy's first duties, as soon as
593 he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands
857 to neighbours and near-by friends. Until he is seven and passes through first communion, his place is in the house with the women, and he shares the same bed with his sisters. After that year, he leaves his mother's apron strings, and is slowly drawn into men's ways; he is thrown more and more with his elder brothers and sleeps with them henceforward.
[291] In remote regions he takes off girl's clothing for
[789] the first time; for girl's clothing has protected him from the fairies, they say. Both socially and economically he is becoming a male, but his male status is still very little. By the time he is ten or eleven, he is brought home from school when needed to take part in the important agricultural work of the year. But not until he passes confirmation and leaves school, usually at the same time, does he take on full men's work and assume men's clothing. Even then, as he reaches maturity, and takes on more and more the heavy tasks of the farm, he never escapes his father's direction. Only when his father makes over the farm to him, at death or at his own marriage, can he assume command, and with it full adult status.

Economic apprenticeship is thus a process of conditioning within the family. But there is no separation of economic and non-economic spheres. The father's direction of the enterprise coincides with his dominant, controlling role as parent and

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adult; the boy learns work as he learns manhood. 462

Also, the child grows up within the full complex 593 of life within the farm family. His first petty 861 errands are a mere incident in the relationship he 857 builds up with his parents and brothers. He learns not only his work but the whole code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his class, at their hands. This conduct is itself part of his relation to them. It ranges all the way from the errands he runs for his superiors in the family to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make sexual behaviour of any kind an offence, and of that within the family, incest.

Consequently, in so well-knit a group, the com- 462 mand which his father (and his mother) exercises 593 over the son in farm work is only one aspect of that control. His subordination continues as long as his father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the son and his brothers, they have no control of the direction of farm work nor the disposal of the farm's income. I say the son and his brothers, for all the sons are equal in this [554 858] subordination; rural Ireland knows neither primogeniture nor junior right. As long as they remain at home upon the farm they share this status equally.

The behaviour that reflects this state of affairs 593 can be readily observed. Sons go to market and fair from the time they are ten or twelve, but they buy or sell little if anything. Father and sons can be

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593 seen together at the local markets, but it is the father who does the bargaining. Their attitudes are in agreement with this arrangement. Once I asked a countryman about it at a potato market in Clare. He explained he could not leave his post for long because his full-grown son wasn't well enough known yet and was not yet a good hand at selling. If a son in Luogh and other Clare communities wants a half-crown to go to a hurley match, he must get it from his father. The son may earn money in employment off the farm, on the roads, [465] or as a labourer, but even then he is expected to contribute everything he receives to the household, as long as he remains on the farm. Very often, as the author saw in Luogh, in work on land division, the old fellows will walk to the pay-off to collect for themselves the wages their sons have earned.

You will say, perhaps, that all this has a very familiar ring; it is characteristic of closely knit farm families everywhere. So it is, but we are prone to disregard the familiar; we forget that the familiar stuff of life has often more important implications than the exotic. In the Irish countryside we must not undervalue the familiar. For the implications of these factors of family life are the signposts along the road.

593 885 In the countryside this subordination of the sons does not gradually come to an end. It is a constant. Even at forty-five and fifty, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm, the countryman re-

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mains a 'boy', both in farm work and in the rural 593
vocabulary. In 1933, a deputy to the Dáil raised 885
considerable laughter in the sophisticated Dublin papers when he inadvertently used the country idiom in expressing country realities. He pleaded for special treatment in land division for "boys of forty-five and older"—boys who have nothing in prospect but to wait for their father's farm. For 'boyhood' in this instance is a social status rather than a physiological state. A countryman complained to me in words which tell the whole story. "You can be a boy forever," he said, "as long as the old fellow is alive."

Had we more time we might devote a long in- 593
quiry to this relationship, to its affective content, to the mutual respect and pride of father and son. The Irish countryside values the stern father perhaps more highly than the indulgent one; the peasant father takes great pride in a sturdy successor and competent fellow-worker. Camaraderie and intimacy may not flourish between them; but deeper-felt affections underlie formal respect and gruff command. The Irish mother, compassionate, indulgent, is of course a counterpoise to this stern paternality. She has an emotional role in the balance of reciprocal sentiments as indispensable to the family's existence as the economic role she plays. Freud might illuminate us about the sort of conflicts such a human structure engenders, but he has little to say of the far more important, and

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593 more apparent, balance of emotional forces which it entails.

For this balance is the health of a complete social organism. The countryman who occupies boyhood status so long ordinarily does not revolt. His economic dependence galls him perhaps at times, but he cannot regard it as an injustice. That dependence is itself a product of healthy balance. He has expectancies and prospects; father and mother owe him obligations for which he can and does wait; emotional bonds are fiercely strong, for there is little opportunity to diffuse them. The solidarity of his own family is strengthened through competition with other socio-economic units. The endless petty disputes of the countryside over rights of way, boundaries, cattle trespasses, drainages, are much more than defences of property. "The two grandfathers" of the contestants "began it" is the usual defence in court. That solidarity is a mountain of strength against the outside world. "Defending
[195] Tim Flanagan's title" is the jocular way of describing armed resistance to eviction in the country districts in Clare. For Tim Flanagan worked a farm with ten strong adult sons; evicting ten armed stalwarts is no small matter for the best of police. Sons and brothers are a better title than the clearest deed.

The controls in farm work, then, are those of a social group—the family. The countryman at work is little concerned with the usual economic cate-

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gories. He is a family man. He may be the shrewd- 593
est of traders and the best of farmers, but what gives him his occupational status, determines his pattern of work, provides his incentive, is a set of dispositions arising in the balanced interests and reciprocal obligations of the social group to which he belongs.

We can test this conclusion. There are a large 589
number of small farms in the countryside worked 593
by what we can call incomplete families. They are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, widows. In such farms the person owning the farm exercises control. A widow, for instance, is helped out by a male relative—brother, nephew or son. The male takes over the tasks which would ordinarily fall to a farm father. Even if the widow retains control of ex- [462]
penditures and disposal of farm goods, the bargaining, buying and selling in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair rests with the man. For instance, in one example which came to my knowledge, a 'landless' young man pleaded successfully to the Land Commission for an addition to his aunt's holding. It was he who carried out the negotiations successfully. The feeling of the community was sufficiently strong to push the young man into a position beyond his status. Some male must represent the aunt and her holding in the outer world. With old bachelors, a nephew moves in and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control, even to regulating sums spent by the

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593 589 nephew for amusement. Where a widower had a small son, the son was taken by a childless sister. She brought him up to inherit her husband's farm, and her brother might marry again. Two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their cousins.

To the country-people, such arrangements, successful enough economically sometimes, are makeshifts, subjects for commiseration. One hears often enough such phrases as these: "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her." "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow." Even government [656] officials nowadays recognize the social value of the full family. A household of father, mother and sons gets preference in land division. The work to be done is the strengthening of the social group; personal enrichment and use of the soil are merely incidental.

Up to this point, I have described the country-476 man as though he worked in isolation from his 593 fellows. In a measure this is true, for his first duties are to his immediate family. Still, there is a great deal of work which goes on between farms. There is a certain amount of co-operation of an informal kind. Work in the countryside is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids.

476 Co-operation of this sort takes many forms. Men lend tools, or work with tools of their own for 'friends' and neighbours, particularly at mowing,

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584 675 will. Reforms in land tenure have made it necessary recently to give an age-old custom proper legality, since the transfer of the farm is involved.

584 675 888 In the 'writings' the father of the groom makes over the farm and all its appurtenances to his son. In return, the girl's fortune goes to him. The father also makes provision for his own maintenance and that of his wife. It is his abdication, and like Charles V, he keeps only one monastery out of a vast empire for himself. He usually reserves the right to the 'grass of a cow', his keep, the use of the hearth, and the use of a room in the house. That room is the 'west room' already described, the best in the house. Thus, the cycle of life on the farm is completing itself. He and his wife step down from active command.

584 593 In payment for his abdication, he receives the fortune of the girl. A fair arrangement, we should say. But we should be wrong; it is much more. True to the obligations of his social role, he may not use it entirely for himself. The Irish small farmer does not retire, like the Iowan, to sunny California and the Townsend plan. He must meet the interests of the group. Ordinarily, the other children have been stalwart workers in the farm family corporation. They are not to be 'settled on the land'; some other provision must be made. They may come forward now for their long due reward and their corporate share.

Here the purposes behind the match show them-

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selves again. One daughter is ordinarily married 584
into a near-by farm. The family makes a match for 593
her. With her, of course, goes a fortune equal to that the son's bride brings in. Perhaps, a son may be similarly married into a farm where there are only daughters; even though a *cliamhan isteach*, 'son-in-law going-in', as he is graphically called in Irish, must pay a much larger fortune. He has to overcome the anomaly felt in reversing the usual role of sons and daughters and has to compensate the family for the loss of 'their name on the land'.

But it is a very fortunate farmer indeed who can provide for all his sons and daughters so. Usually, only the heir and one daughter are married and dowered, the one with the farm, the other with the fortune. All the rest, in the words of the Luogh residents, 'must travel'.

Thus, either at the match or in preparation for it comes the inevitable dispersal of the farm family. The unit must break up. Time and change are inevitable in human affairs; only an orderly social mechanism can tame their ravages.

The match provides rural Ireland with this mechanism. It accomplishes the necessary transformation of the family. The balance of interests and duties, of prides and loyalties, hinges upon it.

There are two facets to the change, an external 584
and an internal. The distinction is understandable, 593
it is that between internal constitution and external 182
face. Or better, let us state it in figurative terms.

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182 Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage" was pro-
584 found sociology. Life in organized society is a
593 drama. In the match, even though the marriage of one principal is the theme, the action includes the whole cast. Internally, the action forcibly and finally changes the interrelations of all the characters; externally, the parts they play to the audience alter and grow. The changes must run their course till the action resolves itself in the crystallization of a new situation; and the act is over.

It is this dramatic quality which gives the sociologist and the social anthropologist the right to use such terms as 'structure', 'dynamics' and 'equilibrium'. He has that right in describing the life of the countryman. The match brings changes in dramatic completeness. It forces the relationships of the constituent human beings into a new equilibrium and creates a scaffolding for new behaviours and sentiments.

182 Let us look at the external change first. The sons
593 and daughters who must travel are forced out of
166 the closely knit group in which they once had their being. Yet, unless they emigrate beyond hope of call, they do not drop out of sight. The sentiments of years of close association do not die out. It has been a matter of pride and duty with the farm father to provide well for his children. Wherever he can, he has found them an opening. He has sent them into the towns, into the shops, the professions, the trades, and into the Church. As in nearly

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all modern countries today, there is in Ireland a great and constant flow of population from country to city. Much of this is made up of the farm sons and daughters.

Yet, they do not always go to the towns, of course. The farm father tries to settle them on the land round about him, too, as we have seen. In either case, nevertheless, they are not lost to the new family which supplant them on the farm. They are merely removed a single step. They have become 'friends'. They are part of the extended kinship system which stretches from the farmhouse door. They owe the obligations of kindred which we saw in farm work; they are the uncles and their children the cousins of the new generation in the home farm.

Out of this sort of expansion Irish kinship is built. The point of integration is the farm father and mother, whose relinquishment of command forces dispersal. Projected backward and upward through the generations, to common grandfathers and great-grandfathers, this transferred remembrance of the duty and sentiment between father and son unites ever wider circles of descendants in the ties of brotherhood. It provides a scaffolding for the behaviours of 'friendliness' and 'cooring' between members of contemporaneous generations. In it each man has a place, reckoned upon 'blood' as he calls it. With the word, a social structure of interwoven habit patterns and emotional

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ing townland) was home from Australia one 167
summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a great 602
new coat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day 182
when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. (After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship) he asked could he take the boy (my second son) out to Australia with him, and he would put him behind his bar (he had a hotel out there). I said yes, he could have him.

"After this fellow went back to Australia, he sent over £50 for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas' sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. I sent back the £50, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back."

So much for the external change which the 182
match brings. What now can we learn of the 602
internal change and the new internal equilibrium 888
that change brings?

The transfer of the land to the son who marries 182
carries with it a drastic reformation in the relations 513
of the household members who remain. The head- 888
ship of the parental couple is profoundly modified. The 'old people' move into a new status, that of old age. For both the man and the woman it means an abandonment of power; they are no longer the 'man and woman of the house'.

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182 593 888 Where the transition is smooth, father and son continue to work together. One family in Luogh, for example, was regarded as a model of family harmony. It was made up of a young man and his wife and two children and the old couple. But the old man worked by his side, and the son deferred to his judgment. The greatest compliment the neighbours had for them was this: "Look at the Careys; old Johnny gives his boy a hand in everything. You wouldn't know which one has the land."

182 745 593 888 The introduction of the old-age pension has facilitated this transfer. Originally designed for the support of the aged in an industrial population in England, it has speedily woven itself into the fabric of Irish rural life. Nowadays, the farmer can turn over his land at the age of seventy. In doing so, he divests himself of his property which stands in the way of his receiving the pension. One countryman of my acquaintance sang the praises of the pension [434] in no uncertain terms. His words show clearly that, even with this new source of income at his disposal, the old, abdicating farm father still forms part of the family economic unit. "To have old people in the house", he said, "is a great blessing in these times, because if you have one it means ten bob a week and if you have two it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'Donoghue (a neighbour) and every Friday he will go to Corofin to collect his ten bob. He may buy a couple of bottles of porter but he'll spend the

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 182

rest on things for the household and then come home 593
with a few shillings to go into the common fund." 888 [745]

For the old couple are still very important within the family. Their years of command do not disappear overnight. The change must be handled smoothly. The happiest compromise is that one farmer of Inagh described: "Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what I should do for the day, and the old man would say it is now time to do this or that, or the cows should have something done for them, or the garden be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty-thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then I would go do my own business."

The solution rural Ireland suggests to this prob- 182
lem is deference and respect. There can be no 578
equality between the generations. In the words of 593
one local sage, who could discuss the matter with 888
the experience of a Dorothy Dix: "When the new woman is brought into the house, she may have modern ideas and be hoity-toity about the way to do things. So the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man wouldn't say anything but he would light his pipe and go out till the squabble is over. It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave, and go live with her daughter some place. She could do this if the daughter's husband's mother were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house.

"But these squabbles are bad things. If the new

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182 woman would ask the old person her opinion on
593 how to do this and that there never would be any
888 trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just
578 as she pleased. Then the old woman would think she was doing it the way that she said. If the daughter-in-law did what she ought, she would do this and treat the old folks nice."

Deference and respect solve the problem, then, but if they do not, it is the older woman who must leave. That this should be the case reflects one great function of farm marriage. The son must cleave to his bride. If the worst comes to the worst, the new family may 'turn the old people out on the side of the road'. Terrible as such an ending would be, it is the necessary one. For the pattern of family and land must continue in the persons of the new man and woman and their children.

182 This desire is the binding force in the relations
593 of all the household. It is as strong in the old people
887 as in the new couple. The new balance of senti-
602 ments finds its expression in the inclusion of the children born to the young man and woman. Like so much of their behaviour, the country-people describe the new ties in terms of the 'help' they afford to the family corporation. And once again, naturally, an economic explanation is all too elliptical. A thoughtful farmer of Inagh generalized the matter in words which show the identity between help in farm work and social reciprocities: "When there are children in the house, the old

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people are a great help to the mother, because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see they didn't fall into the fire or something of that nature. The old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. The old woman would help in the house. If there was a squabble between the mother and the daughter, the old woman would be more likely to stand up for the daughter. She would also teach her how to do things and have more patience than the mother. The grandfather would show the boy how to do things and would have more patience than the father." 182 593 887 602

Accordingly, the chief duty of the 'new woman' is to bear children. She succeeds or fails as a supplier of new persons to the family. Only with children can the new balance complete itself and the essential social continuity be assured. 182 593 606 842

The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law upon her success in this role. The first year of the girl's marriage is a time of apprenticeship. Her work is light. Highly ceremonialized custom grants her an occasional escape back to her own people. Her major duty is pregnancy, and the old couple watch her like a hawk for signs of fertility. All during her child-bearing years the old people will help her, praising her in terms of her increase, and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as she does herself.

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182 One countryman of North Clare put that first
593 year into words: "At first", he said, "the boy's
606 people make much of the new woman. They would
842 hardly let her work at all. This carries on for seven or eight months, and if then the old people don't see evidence of increase of young, they get angry and abuse her. But if they do, they don't let her do any work at all now and are so proud."

In such a situation barrenness is a curse and a disgrace. The husband has every right to express his disappointment and his displeasure. It is a source of shame to him as well. He fails in preserving the continuity of his line upon the land.

One childless woman of Inagh in Clare knew bitterly how much both family and community support these attitudes: "No matter how much money you have," she said, "no matter how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you are no good. But if you are ugly as the worst and have children, you are all right." Then she went on, to perpetrate an Irish bull, perhaps, but to express the matter very forcibly: "The man wants children just as much as the woman. He is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of this country, especially if you haven't any."

182 Nevertheless, there are other ways of ensuring
593 the continuity. They 'keep the name on the land'
428 too, but they are makeshifts at best. These makeshifts transfer control of the land, as does the match.

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But in each case, they conform to the system of values lying at the centre of the countryman's way of life. They are social detours, ways past the obstacles of adverse circumstance and bad luck.

For instance there used to be, not long ago, what was known as a 'country divorce'. In the old days, they say, a farmer might send a barren wife back to her parents. He could not marry again, of course; Catholic law forbids it. But he could do something just as effective in assuring the family descendants. He could remarry, not in his own person, but in that of his brother. The two men are equivalent in status, why should they not act sociologically as a single individual. Even today this device survives. Thus a farmer of Corofin, in North Clare, could make use of it. Childless after several years, he got a 'country divorce'. Then he gave the land to his brother, in return for a large fortune, on the stipulation that his brother should marry. One brother thus got wife and farm; the other the dowry. The identity of land and family were preserved for another generation.

What other devices are possible has already appeared in what I previously called 'incomplete families'. Nephews, nieces, even grandchildren may be brought in. In time, a match is made for them, and normal succession assured. The former owners move to the 'west room'; they become the old people, and the pattern of a complete farm family unit is restored. To the country-people it

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182 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land,
602 and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such con-
428 duct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can
182 arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at
589 all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own
428 person. That does not mean she cannot exercise
593 full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her
[766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

Even if she marries, she and her new husband
182 merely hold the land in trust. The second husband
428 and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The
587 rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the
593 land, may turn them out. So strong is the identifica-
578 tion. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

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may be often quite different and run counter to rural values, breeding strife and forcing the aggrieved to seek redress outside the law.

Here, then, is the new equilibrium in the countryman's social life. The match provides a transition between the generations. Within the family unit, it provides for the establishment of a new nuclear group. It makes room for an essential continuity in which all the members may share and round which all their interests may be centred. Externally, it regathers those whom it must disperse. Round this dispersal, the web of kinship can be built. In the persons of the old people moved one step toward death, and in the identifications round them, 'descent' and 'blood' and 'the name on the land', the emotions of human groups can find their nexus.

In this movement, household, land, adult status, economic control, all move together. Marriage is a turning point round which rural life hinges. It is a structural centre. Every tie between human beings is modified. Then, in a new form, they can crystallize again—to give scope for movement, to allow continuities, to habituate human beings to new social places.

The whole of this movement takes place within a frame of human sentiments, ambitions and desires. Emotion lends its force. Convention, habit and the sanctions of public opinion and private anger keep the bounds and punish transgression. Public honour and self-satisfaction reward conformity.

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a more elaborate scale perhaps, the country farm 366
house kitchen. Like its country counterpart it is the 347
seat of family life. 369
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Upstairs, a front room facing the street is transformed, by family portraits, an ornamental mantle and a piece or two of good mahogany, into a ceremonial parlour. Behind this, range the bedrooms of the family. Perhaps, in affluence and refinement there is an upstairs sitting-room as well. For the shop is no mere place of business. It is first of all a household, of which one section and one only is devoted to the world of affairs.

The family which this household houses and 443
supports, in the majority of cases, works the shop 369
in much the same way that the family of the farmer 593
works the land. It conducts its business as a united corporation in which all members may take a hand and each have his place. Husband and wife tend the counter together and between them shopkeeping is divided; sons and daughters work as shop-assistants, as long as they remain at home. Only when affluence lifts the shop to importance and dignifies the shopkeeper with the title and station of merchant, expanding his business to wholesaling, is this arrangement greatly modified.

Yet, self-sufficient as this familistic shop-world 369
is, the countryman has many a connection with it. 443
It lives its own quiet life and plies its own trade so different from the farmer's work upon the farm. Town life breeds its own sentiment and weaves its

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process. 114 121 127

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated. 12 [539] [177] [178]

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1) the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe, the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws, the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next. 105 [121] [161] [241] [436] [511] [161] [593] [581] [177] [178] [829] [165] [212] [829]

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the 668

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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and
often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis
Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping
slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more
concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all
Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to
the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality,
men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested
successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also
are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives
and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in
social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of
Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the
people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis
Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well
abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who
come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and
primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain
a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines
in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held
accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148).
Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although
fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied
secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined
denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting
towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn main-
land attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their
English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency
than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever
my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by
islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other
business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the
folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of
the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them,
the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness
of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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624 more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held,
876 because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are
[793] apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the
[554] headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches.
[571] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

875 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of
• 593 their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him
875 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity
876 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in
[861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This
[123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents
[171] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority senti-
[829] ment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and
[123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [188]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 562
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[154]

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582 589 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few 581 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the 562 sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has [154] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous [593] work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, 581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because 155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run [589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that 584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently 173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love 584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, [208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and [175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani- [581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the 584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his 584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The 574 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon [521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink- 585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the [829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the [582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of [593] the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.' "

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

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582 621 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual
• 593 economic and emotional support.

591 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction
428 passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west
342 room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in
822 Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are
796 aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs
[198] (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been reno-
[177] vated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the
[657] traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder
[372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings
[343] surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter
[244] often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening
[262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the
[264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking
[415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around
[998] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser,"
[352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs,
[352] or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and
[516] sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This
[593]
[178]

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 354 593 178 a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342 placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353 serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788] two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574] floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571 kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602 tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609 strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572] parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835 most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602 genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582 forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602 collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609 are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428 is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611 --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113] in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo [601] type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

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593 602 —with a strong agnatic bias. Rights and duties are distributed among cognates, but they are less strong among uterine and affinal kin, as well as among relatives of both lines according to distance from ego. Rights and duties include obligations to assist and defend, and mutual assistance in Inis Beag characterizes farming, fishing, housebuilding, unloading turf, carrying the coffin at a funeral, and many other activities. Reciprocation in some form for services rendered is almost an obsession among both kin and non-kin, and not to reciprocate adequately means to lose face. The matter of mutual defense will be considered in later sections and chapters.

551 Only 13 surnames are represented on the island, and there are 27 families bearing a single one, 11 bearing another, and 8 a third. Most Christian names are those of the Blessed Virgin and of saints, especially from the Irish past. Michael, Patrick, Sean (which often is transformed into John, although Eoin is John in Irish), Thomas, Martin, Peter, Coleman, and Joseph—in that order—are the most popular first names for males, while for females it is Mary, Brigid, Margaret, Ann, [B44] Catherine, Sarah, Nora, and Teresa. In the past, it was customary for Inis Beag [177] women to bear their offspring at home attended by nurse, midwife, or skilled female relative; but during the past decade, most infants have been delivered in the mainland hospital serving the island, where mothers have learned of "different" surnames and have assigned them to their own children—such as Gerard, Xavier, Christopher, and Pius for boys, and Rita, Carmel, Veronica, and Jude for girls.

601 Each person in the island has a term of reference which never is employed 551 as a term of address.[2] For a man, it is a nickname or his Christian name followed by that of his father: "The General" or Sean Michael. Women ordinarily are not given nicknames; if single, they append their father's first name to their own, and if married, their husband's. An adult man may bear the Christian name of his mother following his own rather than his father's, if, for instance, his mother was widowed early or unduly dominated her husband. Nicknames relate to such things as occupations, abodes, personality idiosyncracies, stature, color of hair, and events of the past; and many are uncomplimentary to the degree of fomenting disputes if uttered at improper times or to inappropriate persons.

155 Before turning to reciprocal relationships which exist between certain 593 agnatic, uterine, and affinal relatives, it is necessary to examine two phenomena which have a vital bearing on kinship and other behavior: the Oedipus complex and male solidarity. Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys says that there is in Ireland a ". . . centripetal mechanism built into the fabric of rural life. This is the strong, preferential love of the rural mother for her sons. She is a magnetic center of the family and her cohesive power is affection. This love, which leads her 'to slave' for her sons and to demand that her daughters do likewise, cushions the sons' hard lot. It mollifies the constant rub of his subordination to his father . . ."

[2] A term of reference is a name used to refer to a person who is not present, while a term of address is a name used to address a person to his face. In America, one might say in referring to his mother, "That woman walking toward us is my mother.", and then greet her as she joins the group, "Hi, Mom."; in this case, mother is a term of reference and Mom a term of address. Often terms of address in the Western world are Christian names, and some terms of reference and address may be identical. Anthropologists usually collect only terms which are used to designate various kin.

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(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family: 155 593

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.... An Irish male... beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous.... all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications.... Irish resistance to role identification... was seen as... having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters.... [The]... basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt... (Opler and Singer 1956:15–18). [154] [582] [589]

Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present: 155 572 154

> *Grania* is... a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas... Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work.... it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman... would be forever excluded... such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines... are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all.... A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar... to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145–146). 155 572 154 562

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581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
• 593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
[578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[154] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[662] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
562 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céilí* on the common land, which married women do not.

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Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858
children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842
high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162
average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593
done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861
mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864]
elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155]
and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593
bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582]
to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606]
law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother' " (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593
have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828]
hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155]
rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562]
with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831]
the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

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belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculcation of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

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[For information pertaining to emigration and its relation to sexual repression, late marriage, celibacy, and family relations in Ireland, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 32-36.]

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

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114 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe,* by
155 William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark,* probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and
[12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and
+ 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.[6] Opler and Singer have the following to
15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland:
• [593]

> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.
> [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures
> [838] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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[815] [6] Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma,
[779] and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
• 593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
582 articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in
[586] Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

her unmarried brother to live with her and directed his 589
efforts in draining a large field. The two of them ran the 592
farm very successfully, though the brother grumbled. In 562
another, a "landless" young man pleaded successfully to a [654]
Land Commission official for an addition to his aunt's holding, presented his case, and carried out the negotiations, but the final reference had to be made, of course, to the aunt for whom he worked, for in such case the feeling that the man must represent the family and farm unit in the community at large is sufficiently strong to push a subordinate "boy" into the position usually filled by the farm husband and father.

Similarly with several old bachelors. A nephew moves in 589
and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control 592
even to regulating the nephew's expenditures for amusements. In one case, where a widower had a small son, the son was taken in by a childless sister and raised by her, and when he grew up and married he inherited the sister's farm. His father remarried and raised a second brood. In another, two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their two cousins.

The attitudes of the country people to these arrangements 589
show that incomplete farm families are felt to be departures from the normal; they are subjects for commiseration. Such phrases as "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her" and "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow," are commonly applied to them.

The policy of the Land Commission in increasing farm 654
holdings is very significant in this regard. The officials 594
recognize the social value of the full family explicitly. According to the official in charge of land division in Clare, who has had successful experience in other regions as well:

> An old-age pensioner without family could not be considered for an addition of land, nor could a couple of spinsters. . . .

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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654 Where the question arises, a household consisting of father and
594 mother and sons, rather than daughters alone, would have a prior claim. But, regarding the position of the wife, it is a fact that, if the husband goes, the wife keeps the farm up. She is the person who saves the money and governs everything.

Again:

594 Twenty to twenty-five acres of all-purpose land where the
462 mother is normal and the father energetic is sufficient to keep a farmer and his family. It is the province of the mother to look after the fowl, the milk, the butter, the pigs, the calves, and the milking of the cows. A woman on a small farm can milk five cows in thirty minutes. She also takes care of the children, though she sometimes has a girl in to help her for a time. She also makes and repairs the clothes. She does the buying for the house and the husband only for feed, seed and fertilizer. She has the responsibility regarding medical attention, and where she has any showing of culture the family pushes on ahead. In fact, on the mother depends the organization of the family in all ways.

594 Such evidence points to a situation in which the immediate family of husband, wife, and children, the group basic to Irish society and especially to Irish rural life, carries on a corporate economy. The roles of the component individuals are assigned them by virtue of their position in the family. The character of the economic effort, its control, direction, and purposes, are part and parcel of the life of the social group.

476 Beyond the family economy of the small farm, there exists also a certain amount of coöperation in the Irish countryside among the small farmers. Agricultural labor upon the individual farms is not performed in isolated competition, but is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids. That coöperation takes the following forms:

1. Lending tools, or doing the work with one's own, for friends and neighbors who have not the requisite tools, especially in mowing, spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

574 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to
602 town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local com-
[521] munity gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in
[522] Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

574 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of
602 good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market.
273 "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy
594 as a family situation in which economic effort, individual and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative
182 within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

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612 554 602 munity, he can command the respect and the services of a great number of kindred; it becomes an advantage to the peripheral relatives to establish the reciprocals of behavior which the system allows. On the other hand, if the individual is without personal importance, the scope of his actual integration through behavior to his kindred may be narrowed down to include only members of his immediate family.

612 602 It is the potentiality of extension and contraction within the kinship group which is both praised and condemned in such phrases as "A neighbor is nearer than a friend" and "The higher the man, the more people he has." If the individual attempts to rise above his fellows or to forget them in his way upward, the cry immediately rises that he is "forgetting his friends." In fact, disloyalty to one's kinship group is felt to be a deadly crime against the group.

● 596 612 The Irish extended family, combining in different degrees of intensity of solidarity all descendants of a common ancestor through five contemporaneous generations, is not a rigidly defined structure set off from the other groups of society. On the contrary, the extended families present a picture of a series of interlocking pyramids in which each individual is assigned a definite place, but in which no two individuals (unless siblings) occupy quite the same place. It is a group of kindred reckoning common bilateral descent, and linking as equals all individuals occupying the same step within that descent to the number of five such steps, and including the corresponding group of the spouse's [614] kindred. It is in no sense a clan or gens, as its bounds are not constant, but descend and ascend through the total group of possible kindred. That is, an existing group resolves itself into a number of new ones, as descent proceeds from father to son. It is because of this that farmers having the same patronym and living side by side yet may not be "friends."

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

593 [158] belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually [567] responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[8]
[834]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between 593 brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the 578 mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when [858] the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand 603 that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculca- 593 tion of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

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> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. [606] Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

114 Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied 578 seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[8] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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be divorced from the patterns of relationships which they 593
symbolize, and their role cannot be understood except in the fact.

If then we turn back to the common life of the families of the small farmers, it is these very terms which give us the clue to the relationships which that life builds up.

In the Irish family, the sons and the daughters are equally 593
subordinate; there is no formal distinction made between 601
them. The kinship terms of both the English and the Irish languages reflect this equivalence of siblings. In either case, one term, son or *mac*, reflects the unity of the position of all male children, the procreated generation, from the point of view of the elder or procreant pair, the mother and father. Similarly, a single term in both languages, brother and *dearbhráthair*, expresses for the siblings their common occupancy of that position. Rural Ireland knows neither primogeniture nor junior right. Except as age differences separate them informally, the brothers occupy the same status both within and outside the family group. Thus neighbors and other outsiders refer to them all alike as "the boys" of the farmer's family.

Accordingly, their equality reflects itself in farm activity. 593
All are on an equal footing there. The brothers are all 628
alike under the father's direction and control as long as they remain on the farm. They work together, and the years of common effort and common dependence create a strong solidarity between them. Though only one of them may [428]
ordinarily expect to inherit land and cattle, the others renounce their rights as it were in the interests of the identification of the family group with the land they work. The bloody faction fights which used to disfigure Irish country life have practically passed away, but the forces which brought them into existence still continue. Many a country fight involving a dispute over rights of way and water courses brings in the adherents of all the brothers of either

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cessor to land and chattels. The family property, house, stock, and land, descend to him intact. The other sons must be provided for elsewhere. 428

In choosing the son to remain upon the farm, the father has full power of decision. His interest lies in choosing among his sons the one he thinks will carry on most successfully. There is no rule or norm in the matter; and the brothers are united in expecting an adequate return for their years of service. But none of them may claim more than the other, and they are all dependent upon the father's sense of their fair deserts. In many cases there may be an early difference among them in the inclinations they show in adolescence. But the special position a brother occupies in this regard is a matter of agreement among them all and easy enough of adjustment.

Turning now to the other relationships neither fraternal nor parental within the family, it is obvious that those among the females and between females and males build up in the same way as the ones we have already discussed. 593

The family makes a formal distinction between the female members and their male fellow members in terminology, just as it builds a dichotomy of behavior upon the sexual difference. Thus in the procreated generation daughter and sister, *inghean* and *deirbhshiúr*, correspond to son and brother; for the daughters occupy equivalent positions in a common subordination to the parents. 593 601

These terms express merely a classification of the female individuals and their positions in the complex of reciprocal relationships between family members. What has been said of the conditioning of the boy can be repeated of the girl, with, of course, a difference in the techniques acquired. And no less than in the boy's case, farm work is merely a part of the total adaptation the girl makes toward her fellows and toward the environment in which they live. 593 861

The work of the women is as important in farm economy

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CHAPTER V

The Kinship System

THE mothers and fathers who order farm life are 592
themselves sons and daughters. They have or have 593
had (before their creation of a family of their own upon the farm) much the same relationships with their parents as their children have with them. Indeed in many cases households comprise three generations. Grandfathers and grandmothers of the children live in the house. Family structure is not confined to the immediate present family group, but descends with each generation as the boys and girls reach social maturity at marriage and the creation of their own families.

This descent forms the basis of any kinship system; it pro- 601
vides also the basis upon which the "friends" to whom one 612
has obligations in rural Ireland are reckoned. The individuals comprised within the system are so because of their sharing of that descent in common. These are one's "people" or "friends," in the countryman's vocabulary.

The terms express the generic category into which the kindred fall. Both terms are, in a sense, translations of Gaelic idiom. The first, people, corresponds exactly with the Irish *muinntear*. The second in ordinary rural usage refers not to a comrade, as in English, but to one's relatives. Even in the towns, one's father, mother, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, are referred to as "immediate friends." In the countryside one speaks of one's kinsmen as one's

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601 "friends," particularly if they occupy one's own generation;
612 one's father's relatives, even his brothers, become "my father's friends." A "distant friend" refers not to distance in space but to that in cousinship.

612 Before we detail the individuals included within this
593 category, let us make two points clear. The first of these is directly associated with the dominance of the father within the family. He comes, as it were, to stand for the group which he heads; the farm is known by his name, and
[591] wife and children bear his name likewise. For the Irish family is patrilocal and patronymic, to use the technical
[611] terms. Farm, house, and most of the household goods descend from father to son with the patronym; we shall follow their general movement in a later section.

611 This patrilineal descent gives a certain accent upon the
612 kinship system; it chooses one line of descent out of the many possible and gives those who make it up a common name. There is a reflection of this fact in the groupings of Irish rural life. To outsiders a person may be known as "a boy of the Shannons" or a "man of the Flaherties," but in a sense these groupings are merely linguistic conveniences. For in many cases two families of Shannons may live side by side, yet not be considered "friends." None of the obligations of kinship bind them. For in the phrase of the countryman: "They are not the same Shannons or, if they are, they are too far out."

Our examination of the various ways of reckoning kinship will make the statement clear. Patriliny is merely one device, an extension of the father-son relationship, by which individuals are included in one's group of "friends."

593 A second observation upon the kinship system springs
582 from the fact that the family relationships regulate sexual conduct. Indeed, our examination of farm agriculture leads us to see that the technological training of the individual goes hand in hand with the sexual. Marriage prohibitions,

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Likewise, if such development of relations is carried a step higher, the brothers and sisters of the grandfather and grandmother, with their families down to the generation of the growing child himself, can retain an interest which springs out of the original brotherhood or sisterhood between them. The "friendliness," the give-and-take, the "welcome put down before" the individual, come quite naturally to the child at the hands of these relatives. His parents visit their own uncles and aunts, take occasional presents, lend them labor and so on. The child finds himself included; and he finds himself expected to adopt a similar intimacy of behavior with the children of these houses which he visits.

601

In the generation of the father, his father's brothers and mother's brothers are known as uncles; their sisters are known as aunts, both terms being the usual English classificatory ones. In both Irish and English among country people, however, descriptive terms seem to be preferred, though the English terms have been taken into the Irish as *aintín* and *uncail*. In the countryside these classificatory terms are still felt to be slightly foreign, and, as is always the case even within the immediate family relationship, kinship terms are seldom used in address. There is no distinction made between parents' siblings upon seniority. The terms niece and nephew exist, but are used by farmers only in legal contexts. Descriptive terms, such as brother's son, take their place.

In the direct line of ascent, parents' parents are "grandfather" and "grandmother" in English, according to sex, without reference to the sex of the immediate parent of the speaker. In Irish, terms correspond exactly: *seanathair* or *athair criona*, *seanmháthair* or *máthair criona*. In the direct line of descent, however, only the English terms for children's children, grandson and granddaughter, are classificatory and neglect the intervening child. The Irish terms are completely descriptive, specifying the sex of the child whose children are the grandchildren in question. They

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are *mac mhic, mac inghine, inghean mhic, inghean inghine,* 601 ●
respectively (i.e., son's son, daughter's son, son's daughter, and daughter's daughter).

Father's and mother's siblings' children are called, as in English, cousins, or more specifically first cousins, a classificatory term without distinction in sex. The term, however, is never used as a term of address. In fact, "returned Yanks" who bring back the American usage of prefixing the word to the name of their "friends" in address are ridiculed. The word seems to be slightly foreign to the brogue. "Friend" is the usual designation, or a descriptive circumlocution is used both in Irish and English, such as "our fathers were brothers," or *clann na beirte dearbhráthar,* in which relationship is established by reference to an immediate family connection in the ascendant generation.

Irish terms for these relatives are various. The commonest is *col ceathair.* This term is interesting because it introduces the type of reckoning upon which the kinship system is built. *Col* is the term used to refer to blood relationship within which marriage is prohibited. By extension it refers to consanguinity and to an ecclesiastical impediment to marriage. Thus the phrase *cia an col atá agat leis* is used to ask, "What is the blood relationship you have with him?" and to go to the priest for a dispensation removing an impediment to marriage is known as *ceannach col* (buying *col*). Among the English-speaking countrymen of Clare the word "call," pronounced quite similarly, is likewise used to signify relationship. Thus one "friend" is said to "have a call on" another. Whether or not the words are one and the same we do not know; in any case the English word seems to refer both to the obligations and the blood relationship. 601 582

First cousins then are known in Irish as *col ceathair* or fourth *col* whenever the specific designation of these relatives is required. The choice of the numerical adjective is 601

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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601 presumably determined by counting the number of individuals or, better, personalities separated by reciprocal relations within which *col* or prohibitions arise. They are, for instance, myself, my father, my father's brother, and my father's brother's son. Here the accent upon the kinship system makes use of the two consanguine reciprocals within the immediate family: parent-child and sibling-sibling. Through the working of the principle of equivalence of siblings only two generations, my father's and my own, are considered. Thus the same reference to an immediate family relationship as we saw in such circumlocutions as "our fathers were brothers" is contained in the term.

601 Another set of terms exists in Irish for reckoning these relatives. The authors have not heard it in use in Clare, 612 however. In it, first cousins are said to be *a dó a's a dó i* 582 *ngaol*. The phrase means literally "two and two in blood relationship." Here accent is placed upon the lineal father-son (parent-child) descent, for brother and sister are called *a h-aon a's a h-aon i ngaol* — that is, "one and one." The reasoning here traces back to a common parent; in the latter case there is but one step, in the former, two.

The Church uses the system embodied in this last terminology in determining consanguinity. The following slightly abridged quotation indicates that it also recognizes a different system in Roman civil law.

> The civil (Roman) law founded its degrees in the number of generations. Thus between brothers there are two degrees, between first cousins there are four. [Compare *col ceathair*.] Canon law still follows this system in determining inheritance, but the Church for marriages computes, in the collateral line of consanguinity, one series only of generations, and if the series are unequal only the longer one. Hence, the principle of canon law is there are in the transverse or collateral line as many degrees of consanguinity as there are persons in the longer line counting the common stock or root.[1]

[1] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."

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Thus brother and sister are in the first degree, uncle and niece in the second, because niece is "two degrees from grandfather." First cousins are likewise reckoned in the second degree for the same reason. Here, as in the counting *a dó a's a dó i ngaol*, the accent is upon the parent-child reciprocal. The Church calls this the *linea recta* of descent. It bases its prohibition of marriage (incest) in the *linea recta* upon divinely ordained natural law. No dispensations for this type of marriage are ever granted.[2]

601 612 582

Another system is perhaps commonest — at least in Clare, where the authors have met it on several occasions — among the methods used to determine kinship in order to maintain the bounds within which alliance is forbidden. It appears both in Irish and in English speech. The system reckons descent by "generations." The Irish phrase is to *réidhteach gaol* by counting *glúin*.[3] *Gaol*, we remember, is the word for blood relationship in general; *glúin* refers first to a knee joint, then by extension to a step in family descent, a generation. In this reckoning, first cousins, that is, parents' siblings' children, are said to be in the *tríumhadh glúin*, or, in English, "the third generation."

Here the accent is again upon two elements in the constellation of reciprocals within the immediate family: the parent-child reciprocal and the equivalence of siblings. By counting back to the common grandfather or grandmother the *gaol* or "blood" is determined through three generations, i.e., ego's, his father's, and his grandfather's. Each person in the line of descent seems to represent a generation. All so descended in ego's generation are "friends."

Still another system of reckoning cousinship may be contained in certain idiomatic terms for the cousins. The authors here rely only on the Irish language dictionaries, for they have not heard these terms used. First cousins are

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Cf. Canon O'Leary's *Mo Sgeul Féin*, where he has a chapter (*Mo Shinnsear*) in which he reckons his ancestry in these terms.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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601 612 designated in the phrase *tá siad i n-ó amháin*, which can only be translated in some such terms as "they are in the one grandson(ship)," for the word *ó* or *ua* was in ancient and medieval Irish the term for grandson and today seems to survive chiefly in the *O'* of surnames. This last idiomatic usage is merely a restatement of the reckoning by generations, and corresponds with English and Irish usage in explaining cousins by saying that they had the same grandfather.

All these systems of reckoning first cousins we have seen to be extensions outward of immediate family reciprocals to include the parents' siblings' children on the basis of their common descent with ego.

The process, however, does not stop there. For the descent is carried a step further back to a common great-grandparent. Marriage taboos and extended family obligations go backward and upward with the reckoning. Thus second cousins are recognized as being within the kindred and within the prohibited degrees. In fact, in the authors' experience the obligations of cooring and "friendliness" were equally strong with them.

To include these, all the various terminological reckonings of cousinship undergo an expansion. By the various terminologies, the group of kindred who are common descendants with ego of the same great-grandparent become *col seisear* (sixth *col*); relatives in the third degree (as reckoned by the Church); *a trí a's a trí i ngaol* (three and three); members of the *ceathradh glúin* or "fourth generation"; and lastly, in the idiomatic terms for cousinship, *ar a dá ó* (thus: in the second grandsonship).

The first of these terms, "sixth *col*," illustrates again the reckoning through counting the persons separated by reciprocal relations within which prohibitions arise. They are, for instance, patrilineally: ego (1), father (2), father's father (3), father's father's brother (4), father's father's brother's

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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son (5), and the last's son (6) who is again normally within ego's generation. By counting the common root, for instance, again patrilineally, father's father's father, four generations are counted together. These four explain the *ceathradh glúin*. 601 612

Now both the Church and Irish rural society reckon descent bilaterally; all possible roots, male and female, are counted. In that case, the count gives thirty-two kinship personalities in ego's own generation who come within this group of first and second cousins. These can all be counted as cousins or "friends." They are within the range of *col* or marriage taboo. They make up the extended family whose behavior we have examined above. Of the thirty-two, only two (father's brother's son and father's father's brother's son's son) in ego's own generation bear the same patronym as he; but the total number of personalities within the system bearing ego's patronym is nine, if the immediate progenitors back to common great-grandfather are counted. [611]

Consanguinity is carried one step further by the Church. As a barrier to marriage, or diriment impediment, it extends to the "fourth degree." This includes the group taken from a common descent yet a generation higher. It brings in those relatives known in English as third cousins. 582 601 612

These include all those descendant from a common great-grand-grandparent, described in the various terminologies as "third cousins," *col ochtar* (eighth *col*), members of the *cúigeadh glúin* or fifth generation, or people *ar a trí ó*. As before, the emphasis in each of these terms is to link together all those kindred of one generation who have common descent. When all possible roots are taken into account, the personalities so linked ideally number 128. The total within the whole system, including those of all generations ascendant, bearing the same patronym as ego, is thirteen, and five contemporaneous generations are comprised. 601 612

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This last group is formed then by extension outward of the same principles found within the immediate family which determined the formation of the smaller ones of first and second cousins. Ego's descent from his parents is extended upward through the ascending generations and downward through his children to the descending generations. But ego and his siblings are equivalent in their relation to their parents. So, as the parent-child reciprocal is extended vertically, a lateral extension of the equivalence of the first siblings occurs concomitantly. In this way, an ever-widening circle of individuals are brought into reciprocal relationship with ego, expressed through their bearing a name in common, as his line of descent is traced further back. The marriage taboos within the immediate family follow the extensions both vertical and lateral.

Recapitulating, then, the relationships of ego with his kindred depend upon his place in the successive generations of descent through either male or female progenitors. The emphasis in the system is twofold. In the first instance, it places the individual within a given series of parent-child relationships, and in the second it establishes a commonalty between him and the other individuals who occupy the same place within that series. The structure of the restricted family functions identically; that of the extended family uses the same mechanisms to effect an integration of individuals upon a larger scale. The great proliferation of methods of describing this kinship system arises from a cause inherent in the system. All the terms we discussed are attempts to categorize the widening circles, lateral and vertical, of kindred; the desire to establish reciprocal terms to designate the members of the widening circles; [4] there is no need to particularize except in the horizontal and vertical lines.

[4] The extension of sibling equivalence to embrace widely one's generation is further exemplified in the Irish terminology. *Bráthair*, the word etymologically cognate with *frater*, brother, is used to describe all kinsmen of one's generation;

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When these two emphases upon the kinship system are recognized, it becomes evident why there is a lack of terms describing those individuals appearing above and below ego's generation but not in the direct line. In the direct line we do have such terms as grandfather, grandson, etc., but the others do not figure. They are not named except descriptively, and even then usually only in reference to the generation which they occupy. Thus father's father's brother is called "my grandfather's brother." The term granduncle exists, but it has not found its way into the countryman's vocabulary. 601 612

Similarly, though uncle, aunt, nephew, and niece have become fully acclimated to Ireland, there is still a marked preference for descriptive terms. The son of a cousin is described in such terms, and the immediate progenitors of the cousin are thought of in terms of their place in the precedent generation. They are thus "my father's friends," though they are, of course, within ego's kinship group. In this way, two distantly removed cousins can often establish a relationship and adopt the requisite behavior to one another through establishing a more immediate connection in a parental generation.

The bounds of the consanguine group are naturally not rigid in this type of extensional structure. There is a gradation of intensity in the taboo as it extends towards the peripheral relatives. First and second cousins, to use the more convenient English terms, are tabooed, the first more strongly than the second. Third cousins, felt to be "very far out" and sometimes "not counted" by the Irish, are nevertheless formally tabooed by the Church. Yet dispensations can be obtained with relative ease for kindred of this degree. They are granted for all alliances within the system for "cause" inward even as far as first cousins and uncles and nieces, but 612 582 582 588 612

a different word, *dearbhráthair*, or "true-brother," is reserved for one's father's son.

absolution from the sin of adultery must be obtained before normal relations of husband and wife can be resumed. This is the effect of the infringement of the marriage taboo upon wife's relatives. 602 612 835

In a patrilineal, patrilocal structure, such as the Irish one, the wife is brought into the husband's family, given a place therein, and takes his patronym. Yet the inclusion is not complete, and, though a woman takes the husband's name, especially among the upper classes and at law, becomes the mistress of the husband's house, and in a thousand ways is oriented to her husband's group, her origin is never lost sight of. Her kindred are referred to as "my wife's friends," yet through the integration of the two families at marriage they become likewise "friends" of the husband. Kinship obligations extend to them. 591 602 612

From an internal point of view, however, marriage is a destruction of two former restricted families, in so far as two individuals leave them in order to form a new restricted family in which the individuals are husband and wife. Perhaps because of this disruptive effect on the paternal families, there is no provision made for a closer integration between them. No terms express the new relationship; the emphasis of relationship by affinity is restricted to the point of view of the marrying couple. Where the primary accent is upon vertical descent through blood kindred, there is little scope for a lateral rapport between the parental families of the marrying pair. 612 581 [601]

From the point of view of the marrying pair, however, an extension of kinship bonds is made. They are now one. Thus the immediate family of ego's wife are included in ego's kinship group. In the English terminology these relatives are called father-, mother-, brother-, sister-, son- "in-law." It must be noted that the terms brother-in-law and sister-in-law do not include wife or husband's siblings' spouses. The British and American usage extends the term 581 601 612

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581 to them, but neither the Church nor the Irish farmers in-
601 clude them within the kinship system. Marriage taboo,
612 which the Church calls diriment impediment, does not extend to them. For this reason two brothers may marry two sisters under canon law, and a man his stepson's widow. There is no "blood" connection. For the same reason, the spouses of mother's and father's siblings, who are called uncles and aunts in American and British terminology, are not included in ego's group; "call" does not extend to them; they do not "belong" to ego.

581 The explanation of this exclusion of all relatives by
611 affinity except those brought in by ego's own individual
612 marriage lies in the concept of marriage uniting only the marrying individuals. For in the Irish system blood descent alone determines kinship: from the point of view of ego only those within a common system of blood descent are recognized as kin. Accordingly, on marrying, only those within a common system of descent with ego's wife become kin. Such a rigid adherence to the principle of descent does not prevent the development of very amicable and prescribed relations with such individuals as one's father's brother's wife. It merely excludes them from one's own kinship group.

601 The Irish terminology expresses the same reckoning of
612 affinity. The word *cleamhnas* covers both marriage and relationship by affinity. It also indicates a "match." The word *céile* is used both as an adverb with the sense of the English word "together" and as a noun meaning "mate."
601 *Céile* is the root of various expressions, such as *céilidheacht*,
612 referring to marriage. In Irish, father-in-law is called either
539 *athair cleamhna* or *athair chéile*, mother-in-law *máthair chéile*, as in the proverb:

> Bean mhic is máthair chéile,
> Mar chat agus luch ar aghaidh a céile

 601 612 [539]

(mother-in-law and daughter-in-law like cat and mouse together).

Similar terms are used for brother- and sister-in-law. But in both languages the tendency is again to use purely descriptive phrases analogous to those we found in designating blood kindred. Thus "my wife's brother" and "my wife's mother," etc., are much more often heard among the farmers, both in English and in Irish.

The Irish language, however, has a separate term for son-in-law. It is *cliamhan*, which is related to the word *cleamhnas*. It is the only nondescriptive term in general use, for daughter-in-law is rendered as "son's wife" (*bean mhic*) in Irish. It may be that the singling out of this relative among those united to one by affinity reflects the greater importance put upon males in a patrilineal system.

The relatives by affinity just described include all those 612
of the spouse's immediate family. The principle at work has been to coalesce ego's immediate or restricted kindred with his wife's. Beyond this group to whom the extension of the kinship behaviors is primary lies the total group of the wife's extended kindred. They are referred to as "my wife's friends"; there is a general tendency to extend kinship behavior to them; and they lie within the prohibited group. They are what might be expressed as potential kindred in the same sense that ego's third, fourth, and fifth cousins, their progenitors and descendants, are potential kindred. Should the need arise, the common descent may be remembered. At times of family crises, particularly at funerals, this sort of bond comes into active force.

In this fact lies the peculiar character of a kinship system 612
based upon extension rather than rigidity of form. The 554
demarcations between the kindred groups of one individual 602
and the next are not rigidly drawn. The individual can expand and contract the group outward from the restricted family to which he belongs. If he is important in the com-

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Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority.

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside.

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard, and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each

15: Fox E-5 (1962) 1963 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Tory Island

[P. 153, B]

551 **192** In *The Aran Islands*[1] Synge makes the following observations on the system of personal names then in use (1898–1902):

> When a child begins to wander about the island, the neighbours speak of it by its Christian name, followed by the Christian name of its father. If this is not enough to identify it, the father's epithet—whether it is a nickname or the name of his own father—is added.
>
> Sometimes when the father's name does not lend itself, the mother's Christian name is adopted as epithet for the children.
>
> Occasionally the surname is employed in its Irish form, but I have not heard them using the 'Mac' prefix when speaking Irish among themselves; perhaps the idea of a surname which it gives is too modern for them, perhaps they do use it at times that I have not noticed.
>
> Sometimes a man is named from the colour of his hair. There is thus a Seaghan Ruadh (Red John), and his children are 'Mourteen Seaghan Ruadh,' etc.
>
> The schoolmaster tells me that when he reads out the roll in the morning the children repeat the local name all together in a whisper after each official name and then the child answers. If he calls, for instance, 'Patrick O'Flaharty,' the children murmer, 'Patch Seaghan Dearg' or some such name, and the boy answers.
>
> If an islander's name alone is enough to distinguish him it is used by itself, and I know one man who is spoken of as Eamonn. There may be other Edmunds on the island, but if so they have probably good nicknames or epithets of their own.

[114 184] While on Tory Island (Oileán Thoraighe), Co. Donegal, in 1962, I collected the names of all living adults and found the system to be basically that reported by Synge for the Aran Islands, with enough distinctiveness to be worth a separate analysis.[2]

● 601 Kinship terms are rarely used among the islanders except between young children and their parents and parents' 551 siblings. Cousinship is indicated by saying of a person something like 'his mother and my father were the children of two brothers' (*Bhí a mháthair agus m'athair clann na beirte dearbhráthar*), or 'we are children of brother and sister' (*Támuid clann dearbhráthar agus deirbhsheathar*). But in a small community where the genealogical links between persons are common knowledge, such descriptive explanations are rarely called for. Personal names are used 551 instead and in themselves help to indicate a person's position in the kinship structure by showing his line of descent for up to four generations.

A person will in fact have three sets of names: a Gaelic 'ceremonial' set; an English 'practical' set; and a Gaelic-English 'personal' set. A man's full Gaelic name will consist of his baptismal name followed perhaps by his 'epithet' such as Óg (young—usually means youngest of several brothers), Bán (fair), Mór (big), Beag (small—wee), followed by his surname. Such a combination might yield, [585] for example, 'Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh.' A woman, strictly speaking, retains her family name on marriage and adds the descriptive phrase 'wife of' (literally 'woman of')

* *With two tables*

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

354
fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 593
a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178
from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342
placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353
serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788]
two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574]
floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571
kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602
tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609
strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572]
parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835
most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602
genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582
forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602
collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609
are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428
is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611
--with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113]
in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo [601]
type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

593 —with a strong agnatic bias. Rights and duties are distributed among cognates,
602 but they are less strong among uterine and affinal kin, as well as among relatives of both lines according to distance from ego. Rights and duties include obligations to assist and defend, and mutual assistance in Inis Beag characterizes farming, fishing, housebuilding, unloading turf, carrying the coffin at a funeral, and many other activities. Reciprocation in some form for services rendered is almost an obsession among both kin and non-kin, and not to reciprocate adequately means to lose face. The matter of mutual defense will be considered in later sections and chapters.

551 Only 13 surnames are represented on the island, and there are 27 families bearing a single one, 11 bearing another, and 8 a third. Most Christian names are those of the Blessed Virgin and of saints, especially from the Irish past. Michael, Patrick, Sean (which often is transformed into John, although Eoin is John in Irish), Thomas, Martin, Peter, Coleman, and Joseph—in that order—are the most popular first names for males, while for females it is Mary, Brigid, Margaret, Ann,
[B44] Catherine, Sarah, Nora, and Teresa. In the past, it was customary for Inis Beag
[197] women to bear their offspring at home attended by nurse, midwife, or skilled female relative; but during the past decade, most infants have been delivered in the mainland hospital serving the island, where mothers have learned of "different" surnames and have assigned them to their own children—such as Gerard, Xavier, Christopher, and Pius for boys, and Rita, Carmel, Veronica, and Jude for girls.

601 Each person in the island has a term of reference which never is employed
551 as a term of address.[2] For a man, it is a nickname or his Christian name followed by that of his father: "The General" or Sean Michael. Women ordinarily are not given nicknames; if single, they append their father's first name to their own, and if married, their husband's. An adult man may bear the Christian name of his mother following his own rather than his father's, if, for instance, his mother was widowed early or unduly dominated her husband. Nicknames relate to such things as occupations, abodes, personality idiosyncracies, stature, color of hair, and events of the past; and many are uncomplimentary to the degree of fomenting disputes if uttered at improper times or to inappropriate persons.

155 Before turning to reciprocal relationships which exist between certain
593 agnatic, uterine, and affinal relatives, it is necessary to examine two phenomena which have a vital bearing on kinship and other behavior: the Oedipus complex and male solidarity. Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys says that there is in Ireland a ". . . centripetal mechanism built into the fabric of rural life. This is the strong, preferential love of the rural mother for her sons. She is a magnetic center of the family and her cohesive power is affection. This love, which leads her 'to slave' for her sons and to demand that her daughters do likewise, cushions the sons' hard lot. It mollifies the constant rub of his subordination to his father . . ."

[2] A term of reference is a name used to refer to a person who is not present, while a term of address is a name used to address a person to his face. In America, one might say in referring to his mother, "That woman walking toward us is my mother.", and then greet her as she joins the group, "Hi, Mom."; in this case, mother is a term of reference and Mom a term of address. Often terms of address in the Western world are Christian names, and some terms of reference and address may be identical. Anthropologists usually collect only terms which are used to designate various kin.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 from time immemorial. Old people here remembered the
246 day when, there being no mowing machines, scythes alone were used. Then the coöperating groups would have been larger and a more pronounced rotation of the working groups from meadow to meadow could have been observed. The same custom occurs in other places; in fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work. Given the different techniques, the same coöperation had taken place in Luogh and elsewhere at the turf cutting, the oats harvest, and the potato planting.

[464] Yet there was no monetary wage or payment involved. In the community of Luogh and surrounding townlands, the only hired labor was to be seen in the meadows of the large farmer (a cattleman with over three hundred acres), [184] who had not coöperated with the small farmers and whose entire way of life, as well as the agriculture he practiced, was different from theirs. Except in so far as the agricultural operation the small farmers were undertaking was economic in itself, it was evident that an interpretation of the incentives for this coöperation must include other factors.

476 Driven to social rather than economic explanation, the authors were able to ascertain that in each case of this
246 coöperation there was an extended family relationship in-
602 volved. Thus Carey, who had mowed the meadows of Dennis and Seamus Molony and Brian McMahon, was second cousin to them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively of the two farmers whose meadows he had mowed. The young men or boys who had worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows with the latter's wives and children were also relatives; they were sons of the relatives for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. In no instance, of course, had a man mowed for all his relatives; it was not necessary

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor 246 who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, 602 of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers [572] who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." [609] One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary 476 coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word 196 is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the 602 added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the 476 farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help 577 friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; 602 they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

476 ties of act, sentiment, and obligation which make up family
577 relationships.

That he is doing so becomes evident when we find that
602 the habitual, obligatorily performed acts toward extended relatives are similarly described, where the context is definitely not economic nor connected with agricultural labor. Thus in the townland where we examined agricultural coöperation there takes place the same lending of a boy or girl and the giving of a hand in aid at such festivals of social and family life as weddings, christenings, wakes, and funerals.

This aid is felt to be the same category. Thus one farmer speaking of another, his second cousin, could say:

> He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. When the children were little and our cow died on us, Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth twelve pounds to us and didn't want anything for it.

And in more general terms, another farmer could explain:

> Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you. They lend you a horse with the hay or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to know if they can help when somebody dies with you.

476 Thus it is part of the "friendliness" for the relatives to
577 make up and serve the food at wakes and weddings, to
602 dig the grave for the dead, and to keen (wail) over the dead.
764 The obligatory character and something of the reciprocities involved in such behavior are well expressed by one countryman who gave as his reason for going to a funeral (at a time when he was needed at home for farm work): "I have right to go (to the funeral of a second cousin); they always come over to this side."

476 Likewise, when in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister
577 took over the child, she was praised for doing the "friendly"
602 thing which she "had right" to do. In the very same terms a

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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man called upon his brother-in-law to lend him his son to help drive his cattle to the fair. In a case similar to the last, a violent quarrel arose because an uncle, who "had right" to lend a son badly needed in doing some fence work, refused to do so. And in the same scale of value a family which did not attend the funeral of a relative was subjected to great criticism for being "unfriendly." 476 577 602 476 577 602

In fact, failure to fulfill the pattern of conduct demanded by extended family obligations leads often to punitive action on the part of the aggrieved party. Near R— a small farmer, who neglected his garden and forced his father-in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support, was finally beaten up one night in his own house by the irate in-laws. Ordinarily, of course, failure to fulfill such obligations either in directly social situations or in agricultural coöperation does not lead to such violent conflict, but rather to an estrangement. The niggardly "friend," especially the one who refuses or fails to return an obligation, is held up to general condemnation, not only by his kindred but by the whole community. The position of a small farmer near but not in Luogh was the result of such failure. He was regarded by all his neighbors and kindred as a "miser" and a "Jew" and on several occasions was accused of petty thefts by them, which perpetuated the breach. As a result he lived as a recluse, refusing even to visit others; in return he was not greeted by his "friends." 578 626

The obligations of this sort[2] extend to visiting and to the hospitality which the Irish countryman deems so great a virtue. "A sup of tea" and such food as eggs and bread is 574 602

[2] The word *cóir* (a fit and traditional right or duty) corresponds almost exactly with the full range of the small farmer's obligations, as we have seen. It well reflects the farmer's habit in two other uses. The phrase *cóir mhaith* means good food. When the speaker says, *tá cóir mhaith agam ansud* (there's a good feed for me there), he refers not so much to the food itself as to the social situation in which he finds himself well provided for. And the term of address, *duine cóir* (worthy fellow), indicates that "worthiness" springs from a fit observance of one's obligations.

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574 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to
602 town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local com-
[521] munity gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in
[522] Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

574 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of
602 good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market.
273 "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy
594 as a family situation in which economic effort, individual and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative
182 within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

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like the sanctions of the exercise of sexual rights in marriage, 593
are part of and take their form in the family group. Conse- 582
quently, in the wider and larger alignments of individuals springing from the family which make up the kinship system, similar prohibitions occur.

For the kindred are the group within which marriage is 582
prohibited. In a sense the formulation of the individuals in 602
it as a group is an abstraction. Kinship bonds come ready 857
formed to the newborn human being. The child is soon brought to know and adopt requisite behavior and sentiments toward the individuals with whom the other persons of his family are reciprocally bound.

Thus the Irish child very early meets his mother's and 602
father's brothers and sisters; he runs errands and receives 431
small gifts from them; as soon as he is able he carries pres- 571
ents. In later years of boyhood he does odd jobs for them; 857
his labor is lent at cooring; he takes his place with them at the family table or round the hearth on visiting. At various times of crisis in his career, such as First Communion, Confirmation, and marriage, he receives gifts from them which signalize the intimacy between him and them. They share his parent's superordination to him, for they belong to the same older generation as his parents.

He is very likely, too, to be thrown constantly with their 602
children, especially if they are substantially of the same age, 571
where his uncles and aunts remain within visiting distance. 857
In country regions, such as Luogh, nearly all of the families are united by complicated, reduplicated bonds of marriage and descent. There the boys and girls grow up together in constant association, both as "friends" and companions. It is with them that the natural course of development creates bonds of sentiment and mutual aid, quite like those within the family, which take the form of that "friendliness" at once obligatory and pleasurable seen in the account of farm work.

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602 571 Likewise, if such development of relations is carried a step higher, the brothers and sisters of the grandfather and grandmother, with their families down to the generation of the growing child himself, can retain an interest which springs out of the original brotherhood or sisterhood between them. The "friendliness," the give-and-take, the "welcome put down before" the individual, come quite naturally to the child at the hands of these relatives. His parents visit their own uncles and aunts, take occasional presents, lend them labor and so on. The child finds himself included; and he finds himself expected to adopt a similar intimacy of behavior with the children of these houses which he visits.

601 In the generation of the father, his father's brothers and mother's brothers are known as uncles; their sisters are known as aunts, both terms being the usual English classificatory ones. In both Irish and English among country people, however, descriptive terms seem to be preferred, though the English terms have been taken into the Irish as *aintín* and *uncail*. In the countryside these classificatory terms are still felt to be slightly foreign, and, as is always the case even within the immediate family relationship, kinship terms are seldom used in address. There is no distinction made between parents' siblings upon seniority. The terms niece and nephew exist, but are used by farmers only in legal contexts. Descriptive terms, such as brother's son, take their place.

In the direct line of ascent, parents' parents are "grandfather" and "grandmother" in English, according to sex, without reference to the sex of the immediate parent of the speaker. In Irish, terms correspond exactly: *seanathair* or *athair criona*, *seanmháthair* or *máthair criona*. In the direct line of descent, however, only the English terms for children's children, grandson and granddaughter, are classificatory and neglect the intervening child. The Irish terms are completely descriptive, specifying the sex of the child whose children are the grandchildren in question. They

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612 never within the restricted family.[5] When the dispensation
582 of the Church is obtained, there is no feeling of horror at
588 such marriages. They are, however, always felt to be anomalous and are a matter of comment. In the country areas where there is a necessity among the farmers of keeping farms and dowries within the extended family group, or where the introduction of an outsider is difficult because of class and regional antagonisms, marriages between first and second cousins are not uncommon. Nevertheless the general feeling of the community condemns this type of union. Too close intermarriage of this type is a common charge used by townsmen in condemning the country folk. The authors unfortunately had little chance of observing such alliances in their rural setting.

582 At marriage the individual acquires a new group of kin-
612 dred. This group is also within the marriage prohibition
602 and the "call"; they are "friends." In the formal or ideal arrangement all those related to one's wife become related to oneself in the same degree. This is the view taken by the Catholic Church. A marriage, the doctrine goes, unites husband and wife as "one flesh." "Affinity from a true marriage is a diriment impediment to the fourth degree of consanguinity of the deceased spouse."[6] A widower "may not marry any of his deceased wife's blood relatives as far as the fourth degree of consanguinity."[7]

612 In other words, the union of man and woman brings a
835 union of the two extended families from the point of view
602 of the marrying individuals. In the eyes of the Church, the husband stands in the same relation to a wife's relatives as does the wife herself, and vice versa. So strong is this provision in the eyes of the Church that sexual intercourse with any of the wife's kin creates a barrier to the exercise of conjugal rights over the wife. A dispensation as well as

[5] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."
[6] *Ibid.* [7] *Ibid.*

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absolution from the sin of adultery must be obtained before normal relations of husband and wife can be resumed. This is the effect of the infringement of the marriage taboo upon wife's relatives. 612 835

In a patrilineal, patrilocal structure, such as the Irish one, the wife is brought into the husband's family, given a place therein, and takes his patronym. Yet the inclusion is not complete, and, though a woman takes the husband's name, especially among the upper classes and at law, becomes the mistress of the husband's house, and in a thousand ways is oriented to her husband's group, her origin is never lost sight of. Her kindred are referred to as "my wife's friends," yet through the integration of the two families at marriage they become likewise "friends" of the husband. Kinship obligations extend to them. 591 602 612

From an internal point of view, however, marriage is a destruction of two former restricted families, in so far as two individuals leave them in order to form a new restricted family in which the individuals are husband and wife. Perhaps because of this disruptive effect on the paternal families, there is no provision made for a closer integration between them. No terms express the new relationship; the emphasis of relationship by affinity is restricted to the point of view of the marrying couple. Where the primary accent is upon vertical descent through blood kindred, there is little scope for a lateral rapport between the parental families of the marrying pair. 612 581 [601]

From the point of view of the marrying pair, however, an extension of kinship bonds is made. They are now one. Thus the immediate family of ego's wife are included in ego's kinship group. In the English terminology these relatives are called father-, mother-, brother-, sister-, son- "in-law." It must be noted that the terms brother-in-law and sister-in-law do not include wife or husband's siblings' spouses. The British and American usage extends the term 581 601 612

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(mother-in-law and daughter-in-law like cat and mouse together). 601 612 [539]

Similar terms are used for brother- and sister-in-law. But in both languages the tendency is again to use purely descriptive phrases analogous to those we found in designating blood kindred. Thus "my wife's brother" and "my wife's mother," etc., are much more often heard among the farmers, both in English and in Irish.

The Irish language, however, has a separate term for son-in-law. It is *cliamhan*, which is related to the word *cleamhnas*. It is the only nondescriptive term in general use, for daughter-in-law is rendered as "son's wife" (*bean mhic*) in Irish. It may be that the singling out of this relative among those united to one by affinity reflects the greater importance put upon males in a patrilineal system.

The relatives by affinity just described include all those of the spouse's immediate family. The principle at work has been to coalesce ego's immediate or restricted kindred with his wife's. Beyond this group to whom the extension of the kinship behaviors is primary lies the total group of the wife's extended kindred. They are referred to as "my wife's friends"; there is a general tendency to extend kinship behavior to them; and they lie within the prohibited group. They are what might be expressed as potential kindred in the same sense that ego's third, fourth, and fifth cousins, their progenitors and descendants, are potential kindred. Should the need arise, the common descent may be remembered. At times of family crises, particularly at funerals, this sort of bond comes into active force. 612

In this fact lies the peculiar character of a kinship system based upon extension rather than rigidity of form. The demarcations between the kindred groups of one individual and the next are not rigidly drawn. The individual can expand and contract the group outward from the restricted family to which he belongs. If he is important in the com- 612 554 602

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612 554 602 munity, he can command the respect and the services of a great number of kindred; it becomes an advantage to the peripheral relatives to establish the reciprocals of behavior which the system allows. On the other hand, if the individual is without personal importance, the scope of his actual integration through behavior to his kindred may be narrowed down to include only members of his immediate family.

612 602 It is the potentiality of extension and contraction within the kinship group which is both praised and condemned in such phrases as "A neighbor is nearer than a friend" and "The higher the man, the more people he has." If the individual attempts to rise above his fellows or to forget them in his way upward, the cry immediately rises that he is "forgetting his friends." In fact, disloyalty to one's kinship group is felt to be a deadly crime against the group.

596 612 The Irish extended family, combining in different degrees of intensity of solidarity all descendants of a common ancestor through five contemporaneous generations, is not a rigidly defined structure set off from the other groups of society. On the contrary, the extended families present a picture of a series of interlocking pyramids in which each individual is assigned a definite place, but in which no two individuals (unless siblings) occupy quite the same place. It is a group of kindred reckoning common bilateral descent, and linking as equals all individuals occupying the same step within that descent to the number of five such steps, and including the corresponding group of the spouse's [614] kindred. It is in no sense a clan or gens, as its bounds are not constant, but descend and ascend through the total group of possible kindred. That is, an existing group resolves itself into a number of new ones, as descent proceeds from father to son. It is because of this that farmers having the same patronym and living side by side yet may not be "friends."

Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority. 582 601 612 621 [793]

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside. 602 612 621 [609]

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard, and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each 612 591 602

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612
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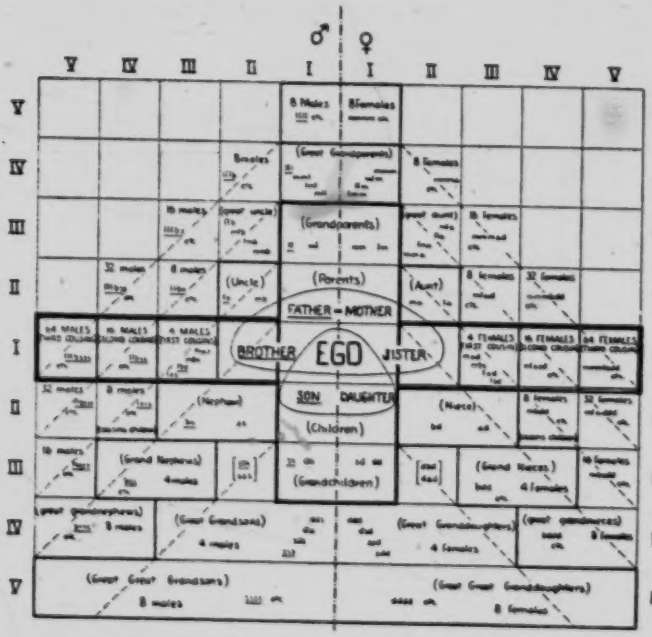
square is contingent to that of its parent of the same sex and to that of its child of the same sex. Thus the lines of descent strike one's eye at a glance. The English terms adorn each square, and small letters in each square give the abbreviation for the designation of the personalities whose place

FIGURE 10

KINSHIP AND DESCENT



the square represents and who are grouped together under a common term. A number is included which lists the number of personalities in all possible descent lines represented by the square.

Anyone interested in explaining to himself the Irish reckonings, such as for instance "fourth *col*," need only count off the squares from ego.

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The groups usually designated are shown within blocks 602
united under heavier margins. Thus those grouped in 612
double black margin across the whole diagram, taking in all the generation marked horizontally as I and O, are ego's "friends." They are members of his generation, united by common descent reckoned back five generations to common great-great-grandparent.

It goes without saying, of course, that, except for minor 602
variations, this system is essentially that of all northern and 612
western Europe. It is that of the United States. It is technically a descriptive, bilateral, patrilineal system. Like all 171
kinship systems without exception throughout the whole world, it provides for reckoning in a common scheme nine generations, five of which must already occupy the past. Like all others, it represents a self-consistent system built up of the relationships within the immediate family.

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583 family is severe. We give the statement in detail in order
578 to show the general situation as he saw it. He is a townsman, and somewhat detached.

> The daughter on the farm has to wait till all the sons are got ready for their going off and maybe have been given their passage to America or money to set up in business or to settle on the land. But there are runaway matches all the time, they fall in love, they run off together, and they come in here and take work away from the laborers here. It takes a lot of love and courage because the son is usually cut off and the daughter leaves a very good place for nothing but a cabin and they get none of the money. Maybe after several years the girl will get her fortune, but not always. I remember Jerry N – whose father was very well off as farmers go, but he wouldn't marry the girl they picked for him and took up with a servant girl instead. He's driving a hackney now and lives in a cabin with a flock of children. Jimmy L – ran off but he gradually became reconciled with his people. The father had a good farm of sixty acres, and so had the girl, but the young fellow got nothing out of it. His father helps a little now, sending down a bag of potatoes.

602 Another case which the authors had under observation
593 from time to time illustrates not only the matchmaking
578 system but the general family setting in which marriage
627 takes place and farm life moves. Sanctions for conduct aggrieving the families are applied by the families themselves. The case is long but worth quoting in the words of the teller for its comprehensive character:

> There was a girl of the O'Rourkes from D –, they have a farm out there and she married a fellow named Murphy up in C –. She was a school teacher out in England for several years and she became great with this fellow the farmer, and she used to send him money over from England for when they would get married. She sent about two hundred pounds in all. She has an aunt up in C – married up there and it was all the fault of the aunt. She came home and she hadn't yet told her people anything about it. She was just about ready to get married to the fellow and she told them that she was going to get married. They agreed. Then she said she was going to get married to

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Murphy and they tried to argue her out of it, but she said it was too far gone now and she was committed to marry him, so they hastily gave her their blessing. He lived in a big house up by C — and had sixty acres. 602 593 578

Well, he was a sort of uncouth kind of chap, rough, and she was what you might say anglified, or citified. She wanted to brighten up the house and make it nice and hang up curtains and that sort of thing. He thought the reins of the horse would do for the curtains and so on, and it came to a fight between them, a clash of wills, and in the end, as it must, the stronger one won out; that is, the man's. She got hysterical and he cast round for ways of getting rid of her, and he sent up to Ennistymon for the doctor to come down and examine her to commit her to the asylum. He didn't send her up to C — though that was nearer and in his district, but he sent up for Dr. MacNulty to Ennistymon, leaving Dr. Starr in C — so as to get someone who wouldn't know the case. 627 [158 743]

The married sister of the wife was staying in the house at the time and he was driving her home. He told her the doctor was coming, and she said, "You are doing wrong," and made him turn round and go back to the house where Dr. MacNulty was examining the hysterical woman. Then the married sister got her brother and father to take her back to D —. They came up with Father Brendan of Ennis here and took her away down to D —. After a time they got up a party and invited him down for a reconciliation.

After a while she went back to live with him. He started it again and got her hysterical and called in another doctor, who said that there was nothing wrong with the woman.

One night the three brothers of the girl and her father came up to the house and one went round to the back door and the others went in the front and they caught the fellow. They were going to force him to sign receipts for the money the daughter gave him. Country people demand receipts for money they give and they are right, but the girl hadn't liked to ask and hadn't got any, so her people were going to step in and get them themselves. Murphy had rifled her belongings and torn off his name from all the receipts he had sent her to England. They came in and said that he was lucky he was going to escape with his life. No one in their family had ever been in the asylum and no one belonging to them had ever been insane or robbers.

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602 593 578 627 and that he was trying to black them with the disgrace of it. The girl ran in but they threw her out into the hall where her father caught her and held her. They said that all the people belonging to him were thieves, and that two of them, two uncles of his, his mother's brothers, were convicted for robbery and that all his people before him had been insane, and that he was trying to black the name of a good family. In the end they caught him and beat him till he consented to sign the receipts. They gave him a good hiding.

The teller drew his own conclusions from the case:

If the girl had listened to her parents, they would have told her all this and saved her. But she went on and married right ahead on her own advice. She probably thought she was doing well in marrying into sixty acres.

It is interesting that the application of sanctions does not confine itself to a single dereliction. In this case, according to the storyteller:

[461] Murphy was a terrible lazy farmer and wouldn't even till a patch of ground for a garden for himself or his stock, and the woman's people had to send up a load of potatoes for them. They told him when they beat him if he didn't turn into a farmer and do a man's work, till his garden, and provide, they would be up again and make him do it.

of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be brought into the house, and matches made for them. In this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

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are not used but are inalienably associated with the family. 583
This is a new development. In Carleton's day, before the famine, a daughter was often dowered with goods as well. Today this is not the case, for the goods like the land are part of an indivisible and corporate whole.

In this way, when we remember that the farm is identified in popular thinking with the patrilineal and patronymic family line of the landowner and that the girl is an outsider brought into that group, the money appears as a payment for the girl's inclusion. There is significantly no corresponding recompense or payment to the girl's father. He loses both daughter and dowry. The identification of his family, both immediate and ancestral, with the family farm is undisturbed. Of course the father of the girl makes sure that his prestige does not suffer. He demands that the farm she enters shall at least equal the dowry. The size of the dowry [554] he gives his daughter is a very strong index of that prestige. It is both a duty and a great source of pride to provide well for her.

A further indication of the nature of the movement of 583
the dowry is to be found in the terminological (formal) 602
structure of the family which we have already described. It will be remembered that there was no integration between the boy's father and the girl's, and that relationship by affinity proceeded only from the point of view of the young couple. The two fathers-in-law or mothers-in-law are not felt to be related. No kinship terms express the new connection between them. Clearly, then, we have two patrilineal groups still unmerged, still distinct. That this is the case 578
can be seen in Carleton's[1] descriptions of faction fights in 583
which two families are often pitched against one another in 602
spite of their alliance by marriage. The authors have seen some of them, not on the scale of faction fights, it is true,

[1] William Carleton, peasant novelist (1794–1869), principally *Tales and Sketches* (Dublin: J. Duffy, 1845) and *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (10th complete ed.; London: W. Tegg, 1864).

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602 but ones in which brothers-in-law flared up to strike one another even though after a week or so the two connections became reconciled.

428 Up to this point we have failed to distinguish between wills and marriage settlements in the statement of match-
583 making and transfer of farms. The confusion is justified because in so many cases they are one and the same. Nevertheless, the subject of wills made apart from the son's marriage needs discussion. If our conclusions as to the nature of farm marriage are valid, something of the same play of changes, obligations, and goods must be present.

Money in the dowry functions to recompense the farmer for his relinquishment of the farm and the break-up of the family which he headed. Similarly, in the cases where inheritance proceeds without marriage, money plays the same role. There are many instances in which the old farmer has demanded payment for the property his heir is to receive. Let an Ennis solicitor describe his experience with one of them:

428 I remember an old fellow, Jimmy B — of K — who was taken
763 off dying to the County Home. He called for me to go out there and make a will for him. Seven wills I made for that old codger before he was through. He hadn't any idea of dying. He had only ten or fifteen acres of a farm, but he said he would give it to his son [only] if the son paid him ten pounds a year for it. They often do that, make the son pay from ten pounds to fifty pounds a year for the land. Then [when the solicitor pointed out that the son would inherit the money anyway as the old fellow had no other heirs], old Jimmy made me make another will leaving the money itself to the son.

Another case the authors knew involved no son. The old fellow left a small farm to his cousin and even though he was on the verge of dying, he forced the cousin to pay for it.

In still another instance, an old fellow had some land and about two hundred and fifty pounds to give away. He gave

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434 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dis-
593 persed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when
[431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the
602 dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The
167 emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland
484 of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so in-
152 extricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character
533 as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

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destroyed. The best example of this fact is the change which 593
comes over the attitudes of the old people toward their children's personal expenditures. The economic corporation which they directed is destroyed with their headship of the group. Consequently, they no longer can demand the services of their children as before. Thus the authors saw several old couples doing their best to learn how much a returned emigrant had earned but, because of the change in position, not daring to ask outright. If the son had remained on the farm, they would not have hesitated to demand a strict accounting. Likewise, in such important matters as marriage, over which the parents would have had great authority as long as the son or daughter remained at home, the parents lose their control. More than one old couple remarked, on hearing from a distant exiled son of his marriage, that they wished him well but that he must please himself now that he was on his own.

A word more might be said to clarify the position of the 593
dispersed relatives. They equally share the new attenuated 602
bonds which take the place of the old closely integrated family group. But, as might be expected in the structure of a family, which, as we have seen, is based, not upon the principle of rigidity in classification as in many primitive kinship systems, but upon the principle of extensions of relationship outward from the nucleus of the immediate family, the bonds are stronger as the original relationship is closer. The children of each generation growing up on the home farm can look far oftener to a father's or mother's emigrant brother for aid when their own time comes to emigrate than to father's and mother's emigrant cousins. The closer relatives are the ones who most often step forward, though the obligation theoretically binds them all. The following incident from Luogh illustrates the clash between the varying degrees of relationship. Let the small farmer tell the story himself:

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593 A fellow named O'Dwyer – married to a cousin of the old woman out of Ballyheline [a neighboring townland] – was 602 home from Australia one summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a new greatcoat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. [After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship] he asked if he could take the boy (second son) out to Australia with him, and he would set him behind his bar. [He had a hotel there.] I said, yes, he could have him. After the fellow went back to Australia, he sent over fifty pounds for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas's sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia, I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. And I sent back the fifty pounds, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back.

The new behavior, as this example shows, is that of the extended kindred already examined. Where emigration has not removed the brother and sister altogether, they are now "friends" and are bound by reciprocal obligations and sentimental attachment. The necessary disposal of their brothers and sisters provides for the continuance of the family unit upon the farm. The very mechanism which assures that continuance does the dispersing. Yet the dispersed do not leave the family. They stay within the bonds of kinship. They are united by the new more attenuated ties of cousinship. Their displacement, like that of the old people, is a regular social movement, providing for them, as it were, a new place and status, changing radically and necessarily their old family membership, yet still confining them within the web of interest and sentiment, though upon a new footing. Henceforward the relatives see one another, of course, less and less often and rely more and more upon the proxy of mementos and gifts.

593 In summary, the dispersal of the family is part of a general movement arising out of the re-formation of the family

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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation.

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers.

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance.

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities.

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the

He later put on the suit for Mass, and wore it at the Divine Service and afterwards, until he returned home. Although there was a disparity of over thirty years in the ages of my cousin and that of his father, the resemblance caused by the unusual dress was striking. 764 292

This custom of wearing clothes for the dead is still quite strong in Tuosist. It is also practised either fully, or in varying degrees of decadence, in some of the surrounding parishes, as well as in the south-western part of the adjoining county of Cork. In the Dingle peninsula, further north, in West Kerry, the custom now is to bring a suit of clothes for the dead person in a parcel to Mass on the three prescribed Sundays. A suit of clothes which had already belonged to the deceased suffices for the fulfilment of the practice in some districts in the southwest of Ireland, where, as far as can be judged by the vigour of its survival, the custom had its stronghold. It is difficult to say whether the accounts of the wearing of clothes for the dead in Counties Cavan and Wexford, which I have been given, point to a country-wide distribution in olden times or to the practice having taken hold in these two widely separated counties through some other cause.

The elaborate ceremony carried out by Mrs. Healy after the death of my uncle, which I have described above, was confined to the first Saturday evening and Sunday morning. My cousin took off the suit on his return from Mass on that day, and wore it at Mass again on the two succeeding Sundays, without any preliminary ceremony. Even when a neighbour wears the clothes instead of some member of the household, he must return them to the house on each of the first two Sundays; he may retain them altogether after the third Sunday, if the immediate relatives so arrange. Otherwise they are given to some poor person to wear in the normal way. A neighbour is called upon to wear the clothes only when there is no relative of the deceased who can fulfil the custom, e.g., when the sons of the dead man have emigrated or are too young for the purpose. [602] [621]

Almost everybody in the parish of Tuosist, where, as I have said, the practice of wearing clothes for the dead at Mass on three consecutive Sundays after the interment is still faithfully carried out, is a Catholic, and a large congregation attends Mass every Sunday. After Mass, it is customary for the people to spend some time chatting near the church when Mass is over. They all notice that a certain young man from the parish, as the case may be, is dressed like an old man on three particular Sundays, but, knowing well that he is fulfilling the age-old custom referred to, they pass no comment on it. While the custom of wearing the clothes for adults is still strong in the parish, the Saturday evening and Sunday morning rituals have, however, now died out.

It is evident from the words used by Mrs. Healy in the Saturday evening ritual ("may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this") that the traditional and original intention of the making of a special suit of clothes in this manner was to provide the dead person with raiment in the afterworld. That the dead were believed to have some kind of continuing existence after passing from this life is also indicated by, among other things, the variety of goods which were buried in coffins with the dead: in Ireland, we have references to such things as food, pipes, tobacco, defensive weapons, tools or implements, watches and other jewellery, as well as money, being placed in coffins in former times. The practice was well-known in other countries also. Prior to the introduction of the special cerements for the bodies of the dead, which have come to be known in Catholic lands as habits, it was customary to fit out the dead for burial in their best clothes. Young unmarried girls were often dressed as brides in Northern Europe, 764 775 292

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476 602 This co-operation is woven deeply into the countryman's habit and sentiment. Questioning in the life of the present soon brought out the base upon which it rests. In every case an extended-family relationship was involved. The countryman is a family man in this co-operation with his fellows, as well as in his work at home. Carey, who mowed for Denis and Seamus Moloney and for Brian MacMahon, was second cousin to each of them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively to the two farmers whose meadows he mowed. The 'boys' who worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows were also relatives; they were sons of the kinsmen for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. No man had mowed for all his relatives, that was not necessary. One man had mowed not for a relative, but for a boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors, whom no one had helped, had been able to help no one. The two 'strangers', who had moved into the [609] townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives 'on this side'.

The small farmers of Luogh explained their co-operation in their own general terms. They call it 'cooring' in the brogue. The word is the Irish *comhair*, meaning aid, partnership, and alliance. They explained their 'cooring' in terms of the 'friendliness' of the place. Their answer was that they "had right to help their friends", or in a more general

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statement, "country people do be very friendly, they always help one another". 476 602

Now, 'have right' and 'friend' are both expressions in the brogue. Like so much of that rich English dialect, for it is a true dialect with an ancient history, both words translate Gaelic idiom. A 'friend' is a relative. To 'have right' expresses an obligation, a duty and the traditional fitness of an act. It is an anglicization of an Irish *tá cóir orm*, 'the obligation is on me'. The countryman is explaining his acts as part of the traditional reciprocities of sentiment and duty which make up his system of kinship. 476 602 195 [197]

This fact strikes one the more strongly when one finds him describing other traditional acts of obligation to kindred in exactly the same terms. Aid lent and duties performed at wedding and funeral are felt to be in the same category as co-operation in farming. Thus a farmer of my acquaintance could say of a cousin: "He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth £12 to us and didn't want anything for it." And he could go on in more general terms: "Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you; they lend you a horse with the hay, or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to help when somebody dies with you". It is part of the 'friendliness' owed one's kinsmen to make up and serve food at wakes and weddings, to dig the grave, to carry the coffin, to 476 602

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476 keen over the dead. This conduct is reciprocal;
602 'friendliness' implies mutual obligation. One countryman gave me as his reason for going to the funeral of a second cousin: "I have right to go, they always come over to this side". When in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister took over the child, she did the 'friendly' thing that she 'had right to do'. In the very same terms a man 'made bold' upon his brother-in-law to lend him a son to help drive cattle to the fair, as the brother-in-law 'had right' to do.

In fact, failure to fulfil the pattern of conduct demanded by the obligations of 'friendliness' may bring punitive action on the part of the aggrieved kindred. We have seen this before in the story of the 'old man's curse' in the first lecture. In a part of Clare, not many miles from Luogh, a small farmer neglected his garden and forced his father-
[578] in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support. He was finally beaten up one night in his own house by his irate in-laws. Ordinarily, perhaps
[626] failure leads rather to an estrangement; it holds one up to general condemnation by the whole community. Persistence in failure leads to social death; the recluse is greeted by no one, not even his 'friends'.

574 But fulfilment entrenches one in social life. The
602 obligations extend to visiting and hospitality, the countryman's great virtue. 'A sup of tea' is 'put down before' the countryman who is travelling to

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town, or to the fair, or only making the evening 602
cuaird or visit. The obligations pattern good- 574
fellowship and holiday, for friends treat one another when they meet near a pub. In fact one countryman complained to me that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his friends, but others seem to manage their obligations better.

And lastly, the obligations of kinship are a bulwark against disaster. The Johnny mentioned above sent the cow down when it was badly needed. If you have read the book from the Blaskets called *The Islandman*, you remember that the Islandman [582]
might not marry the girl of his choice because she was a mainlander and the friends she would bring him would be too far away from Great Blasket when he needed aid. In the system of reciprocal duties which surround kinship, much of the strength of the countryside against external destruction and internal disaster is explained.

We have followed the countryman a long way. 000
In watching him at his work, we have begun to recognize the outlines of the way of life which is his. He is a subsistence farmer, as we now call the peasant, but he is more. He is part of an intricate social system which patterns his life along definite channels, which brings him rewards, gives him incentives, and deals its own punishments. The traditional patterns of old custom have a place in this system; folklore surrounds it as in the

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all modern countries today, there is in Ireland a great and constant flow of population from country to city. Much of this is made up of the farm sons and daughters.

Yet, they do not always go to the towns, of course. The farm father tries to settle them on the land round about him, too, as we have seen. In either case, nevertheless, they are not lost to the new family which supplant them on the farm. They are merely removed a single step. They have become 'friends'. They are part of the extended kinship system which stretches from the farmhouse door. They owe the obligations of kindred which we saw in farm work; they are the uncles and their children the cousins of the new generation in the home farm.

Out of this sort of expansion Irish kinship is built. The point of integration is the farm father and mother, whose relinquishment of command forces dispersal. Projected backward and upward through the generations, to common grandfathers and great-grandfathers, this transferred remembrance of the duty and sentiment between father and son unites ever wider circles of descendants in the ties of brotherhood. It provides a scaffolding for the behaviours of 'friendliness' and 'cooring' between members of contemporaneous generations. In it each man has a place, reckoned upon 'blood' as he calls it. With the word, a social structure of interwoven habit patterns and emotional

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reciprocities gains a mystic force, all the more compelling.

For all its intensity, Irish kinship is no 'clan', as anthropology uses the term. For there are no fast bounds and no rigidities; it is a system of potentialities. It is expansive, rather than restrictive. Both the Gaelic language and the brogue are very chary of kinship terms. One finds no huge vocabulary such as categorizes each Australian blackfellow for his comrades. All the reckonings proceed from the heart of the system; they are appeals to 'blood'. Because of the structural simplicity of the system they are insistent upon membership in a common generation in a common descent. Thus one hears countrymen distinguish between 'my friends' and 'my father's friends', specifying two generational groups. In his own generation, he will make a similar distinction, categorizing with a variety of expressions all those who occupy the same place as he does in descent from a common ancestor. Thus, he embraces ever wider numbers of his contemporaries. For him 'a distant friend' is less to be relied upon than a 'near' one; but the distance he reckons is not that of space. Rather it is that of cousinship.

Though he has no elaborate terminology of kinship in which to enmesh his relatives, the countryman has another weapon, in appeal to common 'blood'. He is no rootless parvenu. Like the medieval Irish annalists, whose kinship system

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he inherits, he is proud to be an able genealogist. 182
Genealogy permeates his view of man and the 602
world.

He judges himself and his contemporaries by 182
their 'blood'. Like many another people, he makes 602
a *deus ex machina* of this verbal identification. 578
'Good blood' explains success and high position; 'bad blood' failure and low estate. To insult a man it is enough to suggest he has 'tinker blood' or 'robber blood' in his veins. One damns thus a whole kindred by impugning its descent. Even such a socially undesirable state of affairs as a feud between two angry, warring kindreds can be given a name in accordance with this identification. It is said that 'there is bad blood between them'.

In fairy-tales and folklore the mystic force of 182
common descent is stronger than fate and cir- 602
cumstance. The rightful son and brother, lost or stolen away, is finally restored to the heritage of his blood. For the 'blood' and the 'land' are identified as well. The social mind is not content with half-hearted inclusions. One's blood calls to one's possessions. A particular ancestral line is inseparable from a particular plot of earth. All others are 'strangers to the land'.

But there is, of course, a practical side too. We have seen it already in the account of agricultural co-operation, not, unfortunately, the kind A. E. and Sir Horace Plunkett advocated, but the pattern of centuries of local life. We shall learn more of it

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 when we discuss shops, pubs and fairs. In either
602 of these cases, the kinsmen, the dispersed children, remain within the confines of local life.

167 The new equilibrium has a place even where
602 emigration removes the dispersed children alto-
182 gether. The behaviours and sentiments of kinship 'travel' with them. They send back remittances and passage money for nephews and nieces, brothers and sisters. There is a marked tendency for emigration from a local region to perpetuate itself. Sons and daughters of each generation go out to join the members of the last. One little settlement called Cross, on the Loop Head peninsula which juts out from Clare into the Atlantic at the Shannon's mouth, is said locally to be supported by the Shanghai police force. The first man to go is now Chief of Police in the International Settlement there, and many places in the Force have gone to men of Cross.

Such services are part of the same 'friendliness' which sums up the kinship system. And naturally, where kinship is based upon extension, bonds are stronger as the original relationship is closer. Thus a brother is more likely to aid one's self and one's children than is a cousin, though the obligation binds them both. An incident from Luogh will show the human setting in which emigration often takes place. The farmer tells the story himself:

"A fellow named O'Dwyer married to a cousin of the old woman's out of Ballyheline (a neighbour-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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ing townland) was home from Australia one 167
summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a great 602
new coat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day 182
when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. (After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship) he asked could he take the boy (my second son) out to Australia with him, and he would put him behind his bar (he had a hotel out there). I said yes, he could have him.

"After this fellow went back to Australia, he sent over £50 for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas' sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. I sent back the £50, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back."

So much for the external change which the 182
match brings. What now can we learn of the 602
internal change and the new internal equilibrium 888
that change brings?

The transfer of the land to the son who marries 182
carries with it a drastic reformation in the relations 593
of the household members who remain. The head- 888
ship of the parental couple is profoundly modified. The 'old people' move into a new status, that of old age. For both the man and the woman it means an abandonment of power; they are no longer the 'man and woman of the house'.

S:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 woman would ask the old person her opinion on
593 how to do this and that there never would be any
888 trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just
578 as she pleased. Then the old woman would think she was doing it the way that she said. If the daughter-in-law did what she ought, she would do this and treat the old folks nice."

Deference and respect solve the problem, then, but if they do not, it is the older woman who must leave. That this should be the case reflects one great function of farm marriage. The son must cleave to his bride. If the worst comes to the worst, the new family may 'turn the old people out on the side of the road'. Terrible as such an ending would be, it is the necessary one. For the pattern of family and land must continue in the persons of the new man and woman and their children.

182 This desire is the binding force in the relations
593 of all the household. It is as strong in the old people
887 as in the new couple. The new balance of senti-
602 ments finds its expression in the inclusion of the children born to the young man and woman. Like so much of their behaviour, the country-people describe the new ties in terms of the 'help' they afford to the family corporation. And once again, naturally, an economic explanation is all too elliptical. A thoughtful farmer of Inagh generalized the matter in words which show the identity between help in farm work and social reciprocities: "When there are children in the house, the old

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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people are a great help to the mother, because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see they didn't fall into the fire or something of that nature. The old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. The old woman would help in the house. If there was a squabble between the mother and the daughter, the old woman would be more likely to stand up for the daughter. She would also teach her how to do things and have more patience than the mother. The grandfather would show the boy how to do things and would have more patience than the father."

Accordingly, the chief duty of the 'new woman' is to bear children. She succeeds or fails as a supplier of new persons to the family. Only with children can the new balance complete itself and the essential social continuity be assured.

The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law upon her success in this role. The first year of the girl's marriage is a time of apprenticeship. Her work is light. Highly ceremonialized custom grants her an occasional escape back to her own people. Her major duty is pregnancy, and the old couple watch her like a hawk for signs of fertility. All during her child-bearing years the old people will help her, praising her in terms of her increase, and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as she does herself.

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But in each case, they conform to the system 182
of values lying at the centre of the countryman's 593
way of life. They are social detours, ways past the 428
obstacles of adverse circumstance and bad luck.

For instance there used to be, not long ago, 182
what was known as a 'country divorce'. In the old 586
days, they say, a farmer might send a barren wife 593
back to her parents. He could not marry again, of 428
course; Catholic law forbids it. But he could do something just as effective in assuring the family descendants. He could remarry, not in his own person, but in that of his brother. The two men are equivalent in status, why should they not act sociologically as a single individual. Even today this device survives. Thus a farmer of Corofin, in North Clare, could make use of it. Childless after several years, he got a 'country divorce'. Then he gave the land to his brother, in return for a large fortune, on the stipulation that his brother should marry. One brother thus got wife and farm; the other the dowry. The identity of land and family were preserved for another generation.

What other devices are possible has already 182
appeared in what I previously called 'incomplete 602
families'. Nephews, nieces, even grandchildren 428
may be brought in. In time, a match is made for them, and normal succession assured. The former owners move to the 'west room'; they become the old people, and the pattern of a complete farm family unit is restored. To the country-people it

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land,
602 and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such con-
428 duct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can
182 arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at
589 all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own
428 person. That does not mean she cannot exercise
593 full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her
[766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

Even if she marries, she and her new husband
182 merely hold the land in trust. The second husband
428 and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The
587 rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the
593 land, may turn them out. So strong is the identifica-
578 tion. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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have met in Luogh. None has ten cows, and only 361
one has a single beast. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard wall. In the case of the villagers, the fields are scattered about and behind the haggards in irregular patterns. Besides these home fields, most of Rynamona has two or three acres in additions carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Re- 621
duplicated bonds of kinship unite all the house- 602
holds. "We are all related one way or another", they say. 'Cooring' is the usual form of co-operation. The village holds itself responsible amid grumbles for maintaining the borheen which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays, the County Council pays the sons who break [499]
stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of paths criss-crosses the fields in all directions.

Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the 573
village, is the 'old men's house'. Mrs. Ruin, a neighbour, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village. "The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?"

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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In the treatment of death, one can see the social 764
system of rural Ireland in the full perspective of its 183
deep-rooted strength. In the flashes of poetic genius 602
which seem so prone to trip from an Irish tongue, 776
death acquires a deeper and more poignant meaning than many another racial tongue could give it. And so it is in the mundane, prosaic world of social life. The most important secular ceremony of rural life is the wake and funeral. In the crowds that come to the wake-house to pay their respects to the dead and condole with the living; in the long lines of marching figures, traps, jaunting cars and motor-cars that make a slow procession over the open roads from wake-house to church and from church to graveside, the observer glimpses an epitome of rural life in which all its values are mingled.

Kinship bonds are at their strongest. Traditional custom enforces upon the kindred important roles in laying out the dead, in carrying the coffin, in digging the grave, in keening him, in reciting funeral laments that are the last survivals of bardic elegies, in preparing entertainment for all comers, in which the dead man's survivors proudly affirm their place and his in the life of the community.

In all this the fairy-lore takes part. The banshee's cry is merely the funeral keen issued from a fairy voice. It signalizes death in the symbolic world just as the keen of the living signalizes living personal loss. It is the lament over common loss in a common cause, for relatives of the dead must greet each other with the keen at the wake-house.

175 way of life was fostered by the ease with which the humbler
311 members of the community could compete with others in arts
361 demanding not wealth but personal qualities, in poetry, oratory, song and physical prowess. Down to our own day the small size of the average farm has encouraged the survival of simple tools and limited the acquisition of machines. Subdivision of farms and the depressing effects of short leases and absenteeism were contributory factors. Subdivision of holdings was prohibited under an Act of 1881, but like so many other prohibited practices it did not cease.

175 The retention of many of the attributes of a peasant society is the key to the survival of the folk ways with which we are
602 concerned in the following chapters. Even the Great Famine
178 which marks a grim watershed in social and economic history did not entirely obliterate them, though it had such far-reaching effects that it might be regarded as the end of prehistoric times in Ireland. First in importance is the strength of blood-ties in extended family groups, still maintained even in many urban communities. During the air raids on Belfast, for example, the problem of finding billets for evacuated homeless was complicated by the refusal of large groups of related families to be separated from each other. In remote rural areas the blood-tie is a dominant force, governing economic as well as social relationships,[1] its loyalties overriding the impartial administration of justice. A relative is a 'friend', even if 'far-out'—that is, remotely connected—and friendship is a matter of blood relationship. A peasant community is concerned first and foremost with the maintenance and continuity of society: it does not judge—and cannot be judged—purely by economic standards. Immemorially peasant families have been large, and child-bearing is widely regarded as part of the ritual necessary to bring success with the stock and the crops. In rural Ireland
[842] barrenness in a wife still tends to be regarded as an unnatural and disgraceful thing, and many superstitious cures for 'the
178 sterile curse' are recorded. This is but one example of a wide-spread attitude towards life, to which comparative anthropology
789 offers many parallels. Sympathetic magic, or the performance

[1]C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940), Ch. 15.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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423 of different sizes and various origins into which rural Ireland
621 is divided—townland, parish, barony, diocese, rural district and so on—it is the townland which most closely touches the daily life and social relations of the countryman. The townland is his postal address, for individual farms preserve their historic communal anonymity: they still belong to the townland though they have become separate units since the 'town' or cluster has broken up. The farms rarely carry any names other than those of
[103] their owner (Mulligan's place, Thomson's farm or merely O'Brien's) and since there may be a dozen O'Briens in a
[551] particular townland various nicknames[1] and patronymics are used to distinguish between them. Thus one farm may be Kilty O'Brien's (from its left-handed owner), another Patsy Kate O'Brien's (from the owner's mother), and a third Yank O'Brien's (a returned emigrant, this). Similarly, the public house takes its title not from the brewers who supply it or from heraldic beasts such as the Red Lion but from the Mooneys or the Murnaghans who own it. Shops in country towns, too,
[602] carry personal names, and the nucleus of their trade is built up among blood relations.

423 The townland names, involving so many land holdings, are
621 legal titles, and their Gaelic names, however erroneously spelt
103 on the Ordnance Survey maps, are fossilized in their current forms. Only an Act of Parliament can alter them. A glance at any six-inch Ordnance map will reveal the strange names that Gaelic imagination contrived and English scribes corrupted. Here are a few which I have come across in Ulster: Ballywillwill, Ballymunterhiggin, Aghayeevoge, Treantaghmucklagh. In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of them named Ballybeg (little town). Some 2,000 townlands begin with Knock (a hill); there are sixty called Tully and there are eleven Edens. The degree of repetition shows that these names have come down from a time when life was organized on a local basis. There are between 60,000 and 70,000 townlands in Ireland, averaging 325 acres or
423 ½ sq. mile, and the average townland population in the rural
621 areas is perhaps fifty. In fact their size varies considerably,
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[1]Writing in 1682 (*West-Meath*, 113), Sir Henry Piers noticed their prevalence in that county '. . . so as no man whatever can escape a nickname.'

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[626] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[82] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
272 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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000 Strangers who spend weeks or months in Inis Beag and are able to grasp some of the realities of life there often leave emotionally distraught, knowing that they
609 never will be accepted by the people. Acceptance by the islanders is a problem faced by not only outsiders, but by immigrants. The latter remain strangers for two or three generations, and some people, particularly descendants of fisherfolk, are regarded as outsiders despite the fact that the families of some have resided in
[152] Inis Beag for almost a century. Later we will learn that the islanders have difficulty
[602] forming affectional bonds among themselves, even among kin; thus, they are able to give even less of themselves to those "who do not belong." Strangers who know Inis Beag well often complain that they must do all of the "giving," as the folk can only "take."

The islanders also share attitudes toward other individuals and groups, which I can mention only in passing. Among the most important are those concerning outsiders who have lived in Inis Beag for long periods of time (the expatriate Dane, lighthouse keepers, Brendan Behan the writer, and Siobhain McKenna the actress); writers who have composed works about the island and have dwelled there or are folk themselves; particular persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands (a policeman, a teacher, a man of great strength, a keeper of a guest house, and a man who provides taxi service between the islands and the mainland in a small boat); peasants from bordering counties; religious groups (Protestants generally, members of the Church of Ireland, Jews, and even Italian Catholics); ethnic and racial groups (Americans, English, Germans, Negroes, tinkers, and foreigners as a class); and, finally, politicians and government bureaucrats and the Irish press.

609 I know of but few cases of discrimination practiced against any of these,
829 but prejudices held against some of them abound, based either on historical
186 experiences (with the English and the Church of Ireland) or on views inculcated by returned emigrants (concerning Jews and Negroes, who seldom visit Inis Beag).
[123] Islanders, as well as most Irish, are ambivalent about "Yanks," as visiting emigrants from the United States are called, but are mostly critical of them; often my wife and I have been asked on first meeting an Irish person whether we are Irish-Americans or "real Americans," and when we have admitted to being the latter we have been well received. Conversely, we have seen Yanks shunned on revealing their pedigree. They are accused of "lording it over" their Irish kin and friends.

Formal Social Control

000 Anthropologists customarily classify social control systems as formal and informal. Formal systems are governments whose controls are based on physical violence or its threat—physical punishment, ostracism, banishment, and extermination; while informal systems include sanctions of a religious or economic nature and those exercised by primary groups—gossip, ridicule, persuasion, and opprobrium. Controls of a negative nature are buttressed by positive rewards, such as services provided by a government or the feeling of security gained from primary group approval. It is not the formal system of local and national governments

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 593
a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178
from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342
placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353
serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788]
two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574]
floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571
kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602
tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609
strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572]
parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835
most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602
genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582
forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602
collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609
are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428
is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611
--with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113]
in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo [601]
type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

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593 —with a strong agnatic bias. Rights and duties are distributed among cognates,
• 602 but they are less strong among uterine and affinal kin, as well as among relatives of both lines according to distance from ego. Rights and duties include obligations to assist and defend, and mutual assistance in Inis Beag characterizes farming, fishing, housebuilding, unloading turf, carrying the coffin at a funeral, and many other activities. Reciprocation in some form for services rendered is almost an obsession among both kin and non-kin, and not to reciprocate adequately means to lose face. The matter of mutual defense will be considered in later sections and chapters.

551 Only 13 surnames are represented on the island, and there are 27 families bearing a single one, 11 bearing another, and 8 a third. Most Christian names are those of the Blessed Virgin and of saints, especially from the Irish past. Michael, Patrick, Sean (which often is transformed into John, although Eoin is John in Irish), Thomas, Martin, Peter, Coleman, and Joseph—in that order—are the most popular first names for males, while for females it is Mary, Brigid, Margaret, Ann,
B44 Catherine, Sarah, Nora, and Teresa. In the past, it was customary for Inis Beag
177 women to bear their offspring at home attended by nurse, midwife, or skilled female relative; but during the past decade, most infants have been delivered in the mainland hospital serving the island, where mothers have learned of "different" surnames and have assigned them to their own children—such as Gerard, Xavier, Christopher, and Pius for boys, and Rita, Carmel, Veronica, and Jude for girls.

601 Each person in the island has a term of reference which never is employed
551 as a term of address.[2] For a man, it is a nickname or his Christian name followed by that of his father: "The General" or Sean Michael. Women ordinarily are not given nicknames; if single, they append their father's first name to their own, and if married, their husband's. An adult man may bear the Christian name of his mother following his own rather than his father's, if, for instance, his mother was widowed early or unduly dominated her husband. Nicknames relate to such things as occupations, abodes, personality idiosyncracies, stature, color of hair, and events of the past; and many are uncomplimentary to the degree of fomenting disputes if uttered at improper times or to inappropriate persons.

155 Before turning to reciprocal relationships which exist between certain
593 agnatic, uterine, and affinal relatives, it is necessary to examine two phenomena which have a vital bearing on kinship and other behavior: the Oedipus complex and male solidarity. Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys says that there is in Ireland a ". . . centripetal mechanism built into the fabric of rural life. This is the strong, preferential love of the rural mother for her sons. She is a magnetic center of the family and her cohesive power is affection. This love, which leads her 'to slave' for her sons and to demand that her daughters do likewise, cushions the sons' hard lot. It mollifies the constant rub of his subordination to his father . . ."

[2] A term of reference is a name used to refer to a person who is not present, while a term of address is a name used to address a person to his face. In America, one might say in referring to his mother, "That woman walking toward us is my mother.", and then greet her as she joins the group, "Hi, Mom."; in this case, mother is a term of reference and Mom a term of address. Often terms of address in the Western world are Christian names, and some terms of reference and address may be identical. Anthropologists usually collect only terms which are used to designate various kin.

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harmony, but other biases are at work (Messenger 1968:29–30). Writers of strong religious bent have exaggerated the Catholic moral virtues embodied in the Irish family and community and have disregarded disputes because they involve unchristian behavior, while social scientists with a functional theoretical orientation have emphasized the integration of social groups and have neglected disputes because they betray dysfunction. Those observers who have depended almost entirely on the guided interview to obtain data concerning family and community often have remained oblivious to disputes. Some researchers, however, have collected information on disputes in an objective manner, but have been unwilling to publish it for fear of antagonizing the folk, the church, and the government—thus losing their positions or jeopardizing research in the future. The most valuable study to date on disputes in Ireland is that of Elliott Leyton, which is based on research that he conducted between 1964 and 1966 in Aughnaboy (like Inis Beag, a fictitious name), a village in Co. Down with three times the population of Inis Beag.

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Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' distinction between conscious and unconscious models, Leyton first examines the conscious models—explanatory constructs, or norms, of the people themselves—held by Aughnaboy villagers concerning disputes, then the types of disputes which in fact do occur within the community—from which the unconscious models are inferred by the analyst. Three conscious models held by the villagers are of pertinence to us: those for personal conduct, relations between kinsmen, and relations between non-kin (Leyton 1966:535–536). The first is summarized in the concept of "decency."

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> To be a "decent" man is to carry out one's obligations to society in a style characterized by cheerfulness and friendliness, to pause willingly for a chat and, most importantly, to refrain—regardless of the provocation—from any display of overt hostility . . . greatest esteem is reserved for those who succeed in maintaining cordial relations with everyone in the village; and the greatest contempt is reserved for those quarrelsome individuals who are frequently involved in disputes.

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Relations between kinsmen, Leyton says,

> . . . are characterized, ideally, by the highest degree of friendliness and harmony. The individual is expected to feel the strongest affection for his kinsmen, and to subordinate all other loyalties . . . to the demands of his kinsmen. . . . individuals are expected to suppress their personal desires and ideals if they conflict with the unity of the group. . . . Close affective ties and regular visiting rarely occur outside the field of kinship. Non-kin are regarded with suspicion and distrust, and the interests of non-kin are seen as being in potential opposition to the interests of one's own kin.

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Ideally, friendliness and harmony characterize relations between non-kin as well in Aughnaboy.

> Non-kin are in general expected to behave according to the standards of "decency" . . . to be cheerful and talkative and to avoid quarrels. . . . Aughnaboy inhabitants conceive relations between non-kin to be a system in equilibrium . . . relations

16:Messenger E-4.5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference. 578 121

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin. 114 121 578 578

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families. 578 609 602 [428] [626] [691] [685]

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than 578 [602] [609] [122] [562]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [363] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [674] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

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Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

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When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [554] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

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The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 178 of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculcation of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 tionship of their parents. Thus there is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. He shares the masculine ultimate control of farm and household. If she remains on the farm after her brother's marriage, she must look to him for her dowry.

The country people have a good deal to say about the strength of this bond. Deep-rooted in the years of common subordination and common association, it survives the re-
[574] moval of the sister to another house and farm. It means much visiting and a close relationship with the coming children. The country people marvel that a young child
● [604] may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family name are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.

589 That the complete family is the complete unit of life both social and economic to the small farmer is admirably illus-
592 trated by the incomplete families of the countryside. By the term "incomplete" the authors indicate those many small farms which are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, and widows.

589 In such farms, control is exercised by the person owning the farm. A widow is usually helped out by a male rela-
592 tive, brother, nephew, or son. Here again the male devotes
562 himself to the tasks which in ordinary circumstances would fall to the father in a full family unit. The control over expenditure and the disposal of farm goods rests, however, with the woman. But even then the bargaining in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair would be delegated by her to her helping relative. In one instance which came to the authors' notice a young widow called

592 young man's. The man, almost eighty, did not want to re-
888 main idle. "Time enough to sit by the fire in the winter," he would say. The greatest compliment the neighbors had for them was: "Look at the C——s. Old Johnny gives his boy a hand with everything. You wouldn't know which one has the farm."

592 The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not
888 so harmonious. Disputes arise, as the provisions made in
● 606 the "writings" indicate. The following quotation from an official with years of experience in dealing with country people illustrates:

> As years go on, either the parents die or, if they live sufficiently long, they receive the old-age pension. Before they are qualified for this, the farms have to be made over to a son or daughter. This is done on the occasion of the son's marriage. The father reserves to himself and his wife the use of a room and the freedom of the kitchen, and they are entitled to all their food. The points were carefully discussed at length in the process of matchmaking, and the family of the future wife had no hesitation in agreeing, realizing that such points formed the final phase of a cycle of life on the farm. If the daughter-in-law has been well and properly advised by her mother, she immediately on her arrival in the new house submits tactfully to all proposals of her mother-in-law and lets the old lady feel that she is still the master mariner. If she didn't, it would cause a lot of trouble, as sometimes happens.

[626] In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law in the new household, and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control.

[577] An open breach between the two couples is universally condemned, of course; "turning the old people out on the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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side of the road" has occurred, although the authors found no instance of it. If, however, the new family finds the old too great a burden, the old may go to the County Home, where the poor and derelict old people are maintained. A grave stigma of inability to support one's duties still attaches to this. 888 606 577

It is interesting that the old-age pension, originally designed in Great Britain to support the aged members of an industrial population and extended some years later to Ireland, has been incorporated into Irish farm life without upsetting, but rather reinforcing, the matchmaking pattern. The tendency is now to turn the farm over to the son as soon as the father passes his seventieth year. Receipt of the pension facilitates the maintenance of the old people and hastens the transfer of land to the son, as the farmers must divest themselves of their small farms in the majority of cases in order to become eligible for the pension. 592 888 737

Even from the point of view of the household expense, the pension is very welcome. In the words of one farmer:

> To have old people in the house is a great blessing in these times because if you have one, it means ten bob a week and, if you have two, it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'D — and every Friday he will go to Corrofin [town] to collect his ten bob and he may buy a couple of bottles of porter, but spend the rest on things for the house and then come home with a few shillings which will go into the common fund.
>
> Not only that but it adds at least ten years to a man's life because the anticipation that each Friday he is to get ten shillings will cheer him up and keep him keen. Any house which has one old person is well off in the last few years, and, if there are two, it is a great blessing.

But the blessing the pension represents is more than an economic aid in bad times. It plays a great role in the transition the match brings about in family relationships. As one countrywoman phrased it:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 There is no chance that the old people would give up the land but for the pension, and there is no hurrying them. Before
888 the old-age pension the father would keep the fat of the land
737 and there would be argument between them, the young woman
578 and the old woman slashing each other with tongs, the doors broke, and it would be two dwellings in the house, like, but since the old-age pension, there are no rows and, if there are, then they make it up with the old people for the ten bob a week.

592 If the transition is smooth, there need be no such violence
888 of dispute as the last quotation describes. Each of the members of the household must adopt a new role in relation to the others. The old man abdicates his controlling position with his transference of the farm to his son. Usually such a change goes smoothly enough. If the son can still seem to defer to superior experience and judgment and refer decisions to the old man, all goes well. The happiest compromise is that suggested in the statement of one countryman:

> Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what he thought I should do for the day, and the old man would say that it is now time to do this or that or that the cows should have something done for them or the garden should be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty to thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then go about my own business.

592 It is in the feminine province of farm work and house-
● 606 hold control that the transition is most difficult. Under the patrilocal type of marriage here described, the bride is a stranger and of necessity cannot rely upon the experience of an association of years in order to meet the new conditions, as can father and son. In the graphic phrase of the people, she is the "new woman."

For her the transition brings a violent uprooting from prior attachments. Unlike her urban sister, she has little of the ideal of romantic love to help her over the crisis. Consequently her introduction into the new household is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gradual, and her assumption of her new duties takes place over a moderately lengthy period. Two considerations, of course, are her primary inspiration in moments of stress: first, that she is now a fully adult woman with a household of her own although she must still share its control with her mother-in-law; and second, that the customary usage of the countryside provides her with an occasional escape back to her own people still on the farm at home. The following quotation expresses one woman's remembrance of her emotional difficulty. It is interesting that it is given expression most effectively in terms of Christmas, the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland: 592 606

> When I first came here, I didn't like it; I thought I couldn't stand living here, and I was always wanting to go home. I could go home, then, every fortnight. Now it doesn't matter so much and I go home about twice a year. I especially miss home at Christmas time because it is then that you miss those you always used to see, and Christmas doesn't seem right if they are not in it.

But for the bride, as for the old people, the transition brings forth a new behavior, and a new habit in her relationship with them. She must learn a nice balance between her new freedom and new full status and the continued control and the vested interest of her mother-in-law. It is a matter between the two women of the household; the father and son prefer to remain neutral witnesses to the process. The statement of one countryman illustrates well the possibilities and the type of new attitude and behavior the young woman must learn to make a satisfactory adjustment: 592 606 578

> When a marriage is made, an agreement is drawn up so that the man hands over to his son the land, but makes certain reservations. A new woman is brought into the house. The wife may have modern ideas and be "hoity-toity" about the way to do things, and the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man without interfering would light his pipe and go out until the squabble was over.

592 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the
●606 mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the
578 father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law
522] is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman
[626] must be effected smoothly. The whole moral force of the community as well as the interest of family harmony bear upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighborhood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide its personal troubles as much as possible from the general knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides for continuance.

592 The new position of the old couple and their desires in
888 the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

592 342 775 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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people are a great help to the mother, because the 182
old woman would nurse the youngsters and see 593
they didn't fall into the fire or something of that 887
nature. The old man would keep on at his work 602
just as long as he was able because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. The old woman would help in the house. If there was a squabble between the mother and the daughter, the old woman would be more likely to stand up for the daughter. She would also teach her how to do things and have more patience than the mother. The grandfather would show the boy how to do things and would have more patience than the father."

Accordingly, the chief duty of the 'new woman' 182
is to bear children. She succeeds or fails as a sup- 593
plier of new persons to the family. Only with 606
children can the new balance complete itself and 842
the essential social continuity be assured.

The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law upon her success in this role. The first year of the girl's marriage is a time of apprenticeship. Her work is light. Highly ceremonialized custom grants her an occasional escape back to her own people. Her major duty is pregnancy, and the old couple watch her like a hawk for signs of fertility. All during her child-bearing years the old people will help her, praising her in terms of her increase, and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as she does herself.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 One countryman of North Clare put that first
593 year into words: "At first", he said, "the boy's
●606 people make much of the new woman. They would
842 hardly let her work at all. This carries on for seven or eight months, and if then the old people don't see evidence of increase of young, they get angry and abuse her. But if they do, they don't let her do any work at all now and are so proud."

In such a situation barrenness is a curse and a disgrace. The husband has every right to express his disappointment and his displeasure. It is a source of shame to him as well. He fails in preserving the continuity of his line upon the land.

One childless woman of Inagh in Clare knew bitterly how much both family and community support these attitudes: "No matter how much money you have," she said, "no matter how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you are no good. But if you are ugly as the worst and have children, you are all right." Then she went on, to perpetrate an Irish bull, perhaps, but to express the matter very forcibly: "The man wants children just as much as the woman. He is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of this country, especially if you haven't any."

182 Nevertheless, there are other ways of ensuring
593 the continuity. They 'keep the name on the land'
428 too, but they are makeshifts at best. These makeshifts transfer control of the land, as does the match.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858
children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842
high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162
average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593
done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861
mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom
they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864]
elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of
firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155]
and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593
bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582]
to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood.
"This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606]
law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother'" (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593
have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828]
hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household.
Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155]
rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562]
with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831]
the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculcation of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

476 lies began to save the hay, mowing it, letting it dry, and
246 stacking it as soon as possible, first into small grass cocks, then into the usual six to eight foot haycocks. After several weeks it would be moved into a single great hayrick in the haggard. There was a great deal of interest and much comment back and forth over the progress of the various families, the probable weather, and the yield of the various meadows. The men seemed to feel a general rivalry to do their work
[407] well and quickly. About half the families had horse-drawn mowing machines. Those who had them mowed their own meadows as quickly as possible, working from earliest morning as long as light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and with that of boys from the families who had no machines of their own. At each subsequent stage of the harvesting, a boy or young man not a member of the family whose meadow was being worked could be seen giving his labor in aid; he took his place at meals during the day.

The mowing done, the farmer then took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed the meadows belonging to his friend. In one instance a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others; in another, of two. Certain meadows were full-handed enough not to require extra hands, and in five cases no help was given, though the mowing and stacking took a very long time with them
[589 in comparison to the others, and they were obviously short-
609] handed. Two of these were bachelors who lived alone, and two more were the "strangers." Two other families had insufficient meadow of their own and were forced to buy
[437] hay on the so-called "conacre" system (buying the hay as it stands and reaping it oneself within a stipulated time).

Here then was an example of an important agricultural operation undertaken by the local community in which provision was made (except in five or six cases) for effective coöperation over and above the usual family economy. This is not an isolated instance; in Lugh it has been the practice

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

to do so. In one instance a man had mowed for a neighbor who, while not a relative, was a great boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors whom no one had helped had, of course, been able to help no one. And the two strangers who had moved into the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives "on this side." One of these was a man who had never got along with his neighbors, accused the whole townland of plotting against him, and was cordially disliked in return. The other had the help of a boy sent by a cousin in a near-by townland.

The generic term "cooring" is given to all non-monetary coöperation of this sort in many parts of Clare. The word is a direct borrowing from the Irish *comhair*, which is similarly used, originally meaning cotillage, now having the added meanings of alliance or partnership. But more interesting was the fact that the small farmers explained their cooring in terms of the "friendliness" of the place. So, we shall see, the term "friendly" is applied to the extended (and also immediate) relatives or "friends."

When asked especially why they were coöperating, the farmers' answer was that they "had right to help." In general terms they would phrase it that "you have right to help friends," or again that "country people do be very friendly; they always help one another."

Now the phrase "have right" is an expression in the brogue or English dialect spoken in Ireland (and in Clare) which, like "friendly," is a translation of a Gaelic idiom. It expresses an obligation, duty, or the traditional fitness of an act. The Gaelic word for which it is a substitute is *cóir*, and a bilingual countryman translates the Gaelic phrase *tá cóir orm* (the obligation is on me) into "I have right to." The countrymen of Clare, at least, do not ordinarily use or understand the phrase "I am right" to mean "what I have said is true." The countryman is explaining his economic acts in their traditional family setting as part of the reciproci-

Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority. 582 601 612 621 [793]

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside. 602 612 621 [609]

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard, and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each 612 591 602

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

I

The Interpretation of Custom

609 The arrival of a stranger in a west country Irish
123 town is still an event. The age of machinery has not yet destroyed the leisure of curiosity. But when the stranger shows no intent of hurrying on, like an ordinary tourist, and sports none of the weapons of field and stream, the matter assumes no mean local importance. A new bank clerk or land commissioner is expectable; he soon sinks into the colour of his position and surroundings. Even a 'returned Yank', once his parentage and probable savings have been determined, and his clothes and manners scrutinized, soon drops out of mind.

But there is no understanding a stranger whose only apparent business is to chat with people and to walk about with notebook in hand. And when he calls himself an 'anthropologist', the mystery thickens. The 'squinting windows', for which Brinsley MacNamara once named a novel of the Irish countryside, do not soon lose their squint; and an eddy of whispered speculation follows the stranger up and down the narrow old-world streets of the town.

But time brings acceptance of most mysteries.

[p 1]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

609 It finds a formula for them that gives them a
123 familiar ring. So, the anthropologist gradually found acceptance. Even his formidable title grew easier as its translation spread. The Irish today
[212] are a very literate people. And a sudden increase in the circulation of books on anthropology
[217] from the county library helped very quickly to establish the anthropologist as 'looking for old customs'.

Once, perhaps, the translation would have been
121 adequate. But anthropology today is much more than a search for ancient custom. Even in Ireland, where the traditional Celtic life still lingers on, the anthropologist must conceive his purpose in broader terms. I want to devote this first lecture to the new purpose and its application to the Irish scene. In the remaining five lectures I shall try to present to you certain of the factors of custom and belief in the countryside of the south and west of Ireland and to analyse them in terms of the purpose we discuss here.

000 First of all we must clear up the matter of presumption. It may seem presumptuous that an anthropologist should profess to discuss the life of a modern nation. To some of us it may seem something like an engineer or a physicist, who deserts his field for metaphysics and morals. To others it may seem to betray a rather derogatory attitude toward the nation discussed. But neither desertion nor derogation can rightfully be charged. Our con-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

476 This co-operation is woven deeply into the
602 countryman's habit and sentiment. Questioning in the life of the present soon brought out the base upon which it rests. In every case an extended-family relationship was involved. The countryman is a family man in this co-operation with his fellows, as well as in his work at home. Carey, who mowed for Denis and Seamus Moloney and for Brian MacMahon, was second cousin to each of them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively to the two farmers whose meadows he mowed. The 'boys' who worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows were also relatives; they were sons of the kinsmen for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. No man had mowed for all his relatives, that was not necessary. One man had mowed not for a relative, but for a boon companion. Furthermore, the bachelors, whom no one had helped, had been able to help no one. The two 'strangers', who had moved into the
[609] townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives 'on this side'.

The small farmers of Luogh explained their co-operation in their own general terms. They call it 'cooring' in the brogue. The word is the Irish *comhair*, meaning aid, partnership, and alliance. They explained their 'cooring' in terms of the 'friendliness' of the place. Their answer was that they "had right to help their friends", or in a more general

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

portance when there are several persons to be examined, for, if kept waiting, they will most probably either slip off or refuse to be measured. 125

(A). *Hair and Eye Colour.*—In the obtaining of these data the methods, cards, and tables were precisely the same as those used in the expedition to Aran, to the report of which the reader is referred for particulars.

(B). *Measurements.*—These were, with the exceptions hereafter mentioned, the same as previously. The head circumference and external binocular breadth, not having proved satisfactory, were omitted, and for them were substituted:—(1). The upper face length measured from the naso-frontal suture to the separation between the central incisors at the gum. (2). The height sitting. This, though it is certainly a most valuable measurement, for which reason it was inserted in the observation schedule, was found to be altogether unsuited for field work, as it could only be taken in a few exceptional cases, so I had reluctantly to abandon it. (3). Auriculo-mental radius, measured with the Dublin craniometer, from the centre of the ear-hole to the point of the chin.

(C). *Instruments used.*—These consisted of Garson's anthropometer, a sliding measure for the limbs, Broca's compas d'épaisseur and compas glissière and a Chesterman steel tape. Instead of the fixed metallic Cunningham craniometer, the new portable pattern of the same instrument (made specially for field work by Messrs. Robinson, of Grafton-street, Dublin) was taken, and stood the test well, being quite as rigid as the older pattern when set up, and, as it is made of boxwood, much lighter. Its portability is a great advantage, as by the removal of one screw-bolt the whole instrument may be disjointed and carried in the coat-pocket. A set of Snellen test-types for accurately estimating the keenness of eyesight was also taken, and proved to be very useful. 126

The whole, with note-books and observation forms, were carried, fitted in a canvas knapsack, and, as they weighed under ten pounds, were light enough to be easily carried even in long walks over very rough ground.

(D). *Remarks on the Methods employed.*—There were several difficulties experienced in the making of the observations this year, due partly to the visit being made at harvest time when most of the people were engaged in the fields, partly to local causes, the principal of which were the shyness of the people, the manner in which the hair of most of the women was covered by the shawl which was drawn more closely on the approach of a stranger, and the closeness with 124 [609] [291] [302]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

164 very even and white, and seem to last well; even men of over sixty
[142] often have good incisors; but many suffer from toothache. Abscess of the alveolus, unlike what is seen in Aran, is not at all common.

Skin.—Ulcers due to the friction of ropes and of the thick homespun clothing when wet, eczema, "sea-boils," scabies, and acne, are frequently met with, as is anthrax or carbuncle; but, perhaps, the most common of all skin affections, especially among the younger members of the population, is tinea tonsurans. Alopecia areata, whether caused by the last-mentioned affection or not, seems to be common. Uterine troubles are not at all common. Venereal diseases are practically unknown.

164 *Accidents* arising out of the surroundings and occupation of the
752 people are, as might be expected, very numerous. These are burns, severe cuts from reaping hooks, injuries inflicted by domestic animals, and, above all, contusions and fractures due in most cases to falls from rocks and ponies.

4. *Psychology.*—For one who has had only a short experience of
181 the people this very difficult and delicate point is exceedingly hard to deal justly with, but the following description, for the most part obtained from local sources, both on the islands and on the opposite part of the mainland, and to some small degree from personal observation, is believed to be accurate as far as it goes.

To strangers, the people are not, at first, attractive, as their manner
[609] is shy and not unmarked by suspicion; but after this reserve is broken through they reveal themselves in a much more attractive light, and are kindly, courteous, and very communicative.

Among themselves they are cheerful and social, given much to gossip and chaff, though their wit is not of a very sparkling character.
[517] They contrast strongly with the Aran Islanders in their taste for music and dancing, concertinas and melodions being in common use in several houses.

In their dealings with one another they are honest and fair, even
181 a petty theft being an extremely rare occurrence. As to their dealings
674 with the people of the mainland, the usual hostile statements, common with all insular communities, are made by both sides with respect to
[609] each others honesty, but much reliance cannot be put in these vague assertions. Crime is almost unknown, and the administration of justice is seldom called into requisition, and then only for small quarrels among neighbours.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Inishshark has about twelve boats of from one to two tons. The natives of this island do not approve of the curragh, for which their coast is too rocky. 501

The ordinary rowing boat is manned by five men, the curragh by three.

The curragh is of the ordinary west coast type, consisting of a light wooden frame covered with tarred canvas.

VI.—FOLK-LORE.

Of this interesting branch of the subject, I regret to be able to give but little information, as the people are chary of talking upon such matters to strangers, and only a local collector working for a considerable time could be expected to gather much. Thanks, however, to the kindness of the Rev. Edward Lavelle, his brother Mr. Michael Lavelle, Mr. Myles Joyce, the schoolmaster of the island, as well as to several of the boatmen and others, I am enabled to give the following few notes on the subject. The legendary lore of these islands, especially Inishshark, has been very fully dealt with by Lady Wilde, to whose work I must refer the reader. These notes, however, are new. Omens and death-warnings, such as the banshee, the death-watch, and as mentioned previously (p. 352), the giving of wood out of a house to make a coffin foretelling the death of the giver, are fully believed in. 609 115 121

Luck.—The sight of a red-haired woman or a cat, on starting out in the morning, will bring bad luck to the fishing; and it is stated that people have resorted to the expedient of getting a red-haired girl to lie in wait for a rival, and cross his path as he was starting. 777

To remove from one house to another is also looked upon as decidedly unlucky; but should a move become necessary, it is always made on Monday to the eastward, and on Tuesday to the westward, according to the Irish saying *Luan Soir, agus Mart Siar* (Monday, eastward, and Tuesday, westward). Should any addition be made to the dwelling it is always to the east, never to the west.

It is extremely unlucky to break a looking-glass; so also it is to mention a priest, or a fox, or a hare while fishing.

No man will buy a cow at the New Year without putting some of her milk into his boots, as otherwise she would certainly run dry.

People born on Whit Sunday are thought to be exceptionally ill-tempered.

The evil-eye, also, is strongly believed in; and if any one praises either a child or a beast belonging to a native without saying "God

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

181 sources, my informants being those who are brought into close contact with the everyday life of the people. So far as it goes it is believed to be accurate. No attempt has been made to do otherwise than describe the actual state of the case, and while the faults of the people are not extenuated, yet any circumstances which may explain these are given as far as possible, and their good qualities are believed to be stated without exaggeration.

181 To the casual visitor the people, on acquaintance, are decidedly attractive; in the outlying parts of the district, it is true, they are at 609 first rather suspicious of strangers, but after a short time are very obliging and communicative, ready to show anything of interest in their neighbourhood, and hospitable to the best of their power. The natives of both the islands at Inishkea, are very hospitable and kindly to strangers, of whom they are, however, rather distrustful, [574] a visitor being welcomed into their houses, and entertained with the best they can give. With each other they seem in all parts of the district to be much given to chaff and joking of a more or less practical nature, and their sense of the ridiculous seems to be rather keen. In times of trouble or distress they are very kind, generous with what they have, and helpful to one another.

181 They are fond of music, dancing, and bright colours, and more than one song-maker in their own tongue, the Irish, has been a native 517 of this district; amongst these was the celebrated Dick Barrett, 53 several of whose productions have been collected and published. In common with most of the people of our rural districts, there do not seem to be many traces of artistic taste, and a native art is conspicuous by its absence. One or two instances of attempted decoration were observed in Inishkea, none on the mainland.

181 On the whole, though cases of dishonesty and sharp practice in bargaining occur, they are honest in their dealings with one another. 577 As is often the case in remote districts, the people of one locality are sometimes on strained relations with those of another; thus there exists a certain amount of jealousy and distrust between the natives of the two Inishkeas, while the people of the mainland do not readily amalgamate with those of either island.

181 As regards intelligence, they are extremely sharp and shrewd, and seem rather fond of argumentation. There is but little crime, 691 with the exception of illicit distillation and drunkenness, but the people are very litigious, going to law with each other about slight trespasses and similar matters. This tendency is not by any means of recent origin, but has been remarked on by several writers. Maxwell

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are 492
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few
boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class
boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are
about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their
turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate [609]
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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814 is likely to succeed in collecting much. Fortunately there is a [609] resident (the Rev. P. A. O'Reilly), who is engaged in collecting the old Irish songs of the district, several of which he has already published. As to the legends, many of these have been recorded by C. O. and Mr. Knight, to whose works the reader is referred.

The following notes, mainly dealing with what may be termed minor folk-lore, were some of them obtained from fishermen and others of the natives, but mainly through the kindness of several residents, some of whom desired that their names should not be mentioned.

115 1. *Customs and Beliefs.*—For the majority of the notes on these I 814 am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, who, being a native of the district, and personally acquainted with nearly everyone in it, has an exceptionally large knowledge of the subject; for a large part of what remains I have also to thank Messrs. F. C. Wallace, D.I. R.I.C., Belmullet, and P. T. O'Reilly, Carn.

777 A very large number of things are considered lucky or the reverse. It is unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, on which day also no change of residence should be made, a Friday should rather be chosen, as that is the lucky day for moving. To meet a red-haired woman on starting out in the morning, to mention a priest while fishing, to take fish out of a house without sprinkling some salt on it, to sell milk without putting in a pinch of salt, to give fire out of the house on May-day, or to anyone in whose dwelling a sick person may be, all these are unlucky. People "born with teeth" [845] are unlucky also; but to be "born with a caul" is a sign of great good fortune, though should the original owner ever see it his luck will depart; the possession of a caul is believed to protect against death by drowning. A mole on the face, if "above the breath," is considered to have the same protective influence.

787 Death within the year is believed to be the fate of the man who has the temerity to make an addition to the western side of his house, or to build out at the back; several instances of men who died within a short time after thus offending are sure to be told to the incredulous.

The banshee, the death-watch, the creaking of furniture, and the howling of a dog at night are all looked upon as death-warnings. Several persons were met with who asserted that they had heard the banshee before the death of relatives.

585 At weddings the bride and bridegroom must step over the threshold of the chapel door together, as whichever goes out first will be the first to die.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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by choice, an old woman said, "City folk are always troubled. They aren't their 186 own bosses, and they get up too early and work too hard. They face the dangers of traffic, and, worst of all, they meet with temptations of the flesh."

In the last chapter, I discussed two facets of the Inis Beag self-image: their seldom admitted poverty and indolence. Other facets have just been revealed in their appraisals of various groups, and still more are apparent when one examines their attitudes toward visitors to the island. During the summer, they enjoy the 609 presence of strangers on the strand at steamer time, in the pubs, and at parties, and when winter comes many conversations dwell on those who were "great gas" —entertaining in song, dance, or repartee. But outsiders fulfill a far deeper need, in that most of them express admiration for the island and its inhabitants. They praise the beauty, antiquities, and history of Inis Beag, but more importantly the friendliness of the people and those customs and personality traits publicized by writers and film producers, which are "discovered" even when nonexistent or considerably "diluted." Departing tourists usually vow that they will return, and they are asked repetitiously what it was that so pleased them and if they will be "lonesome after they leave." Reflected here are the profound feelings of inferiority [156] of the folk and their need for constant reassurance of their worth. Much of the depression among islanders during winter months is related to the absence of outsiders who stimulate them and are subjects of gossip.

The people of Inis Beag regard themselves as friendly, polite, and hospitable 829 to outsiders—not at all like their Inis Thiar neighbors, who are said not to like 609 tourists and to extort money from them for giving information and allowing themselves to be photographed. Strangers never are derided for behaving in a disapproved fashion but are "treated with dignity," although some men will try to gain free drinks and other favors from outsiders in a calculating and beguiling manner (called "being cute" in Ireland), which is frowned on by the majority of folk. During the summer when tourists are plentiful, many islanders behave according to the nativistic and primitivistic expectations of the strangers: attire becomes more traditional and newer costumes are worn, canoes are rowed with greater vigor, conversations become more boastful, and the like. The sensitivity of the islanders to nativism and primitivism is quite selective, however, in that they extol certain of their indigenous customs and are ashamed of others. Actions which give credence to such character traits as spirituality, strength, and courage are exaggerated, while those which belie such traits as independence, self-reliance, and industriousness are carefully hidden. My wife and I kept a careful record of the responses [126] of Inis Beag folk to questions that we posed concerning their history and culture when we first visited the island in 1958. More than 40 replies turned out to be erroneous, and some of them would have done credit to the most ardent nativist or primitivist.

Most tourists who visit Inis Beag share a mystique fostered by interpreta- 000 tions of island life in the works of writers and film producers. A similar mystique is found elsewhere in the world among idealized primitive and peasant peoples. In Inis Beag, it often causes visitors to seek acceptance from the folk, to resent the presence of other outsiders, to boast of their intimate knowledge of Inis Beag customs, and, in some cases, to "go native" in so far as circumstances permit.

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000 Strangers who spend weeks or months in Inis Beag and are able to grasp some of the realities of life there often leave emotionally distraught, knowing that they
609 never will be accepted by the people. Acceptance by the islanders is a problem faced by not only outsiders, but by immigrants. The latter remain strangers for two or three generations, and some people, particularly descendants of fisherfolk, are regarded as outsiders despite the fact that the families of some have resided in
[152] Inis Beag for almost a century. Later we will learn that the islanders have difficulty
602 forming affectional bonds among themselves, even among kin; thus, they are able to give even less of themselves to those "who do not belong." Strangers who know Inis Beag well often complain that they must do all of the "giving," as the folk can only "take."

The islanders also share attitudes toward other individuals and groups, which I can mention only in passing. Among the most important are those concerning outsiders who have lived in Inis Beag for long periods of time (the expatriate Dane, lighthouse keepers, Brendan Behan the writer, and Siobhain McKenna the actress); writers who have composed works about the island and have dwelled there or are folk themselves; particular persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands (a policeman, a teacher, a man of great strength, a keeper of a guest house, and a man who provides taxi service between the islands and the mainland in a small boat); peasants from bordering counties; religious groups (Protestants generally, members of the Church of Ireland, Jews, and even Italian Catholics); ethnic and racial groups (Americans, English, Germans, Negroes, tinkers, and foreigners as a class); and, finally, politicians and government bureaucrats and the Irish press.

609 I know of but few cases of discrimination practiced against any of these,
829 but prejudices held against some of them abound, based either on historical
186 experiences (with the English and the Church of Ireland) or on views inculcated by returned emigrants (concerning Jews and Negroes, who seldom visit Inis Beag).
[123] Islanders, as well as most Irish, are ambivalent about "Yanks," as visiting emigrants from the United States are called, but are mostly critical of them; often my wife and I have been asked on first meeting an Irish person whether we are Irish-Americans or "real Americans," and when we have admitted to being the latter we have been well received. Conversely, we have seen Yanks shunned on revealing their pedigree. They are accused of "lording it over" their Irish kin and friends.

Formal Social Control

000 Anthropologists customarily classify social control systems as formal and informal. Formal systems are governments whose controls are based on physical violence or its threat—physical punishment, ostracism, banishment, and extermination; while informal systems include sanctions of a religious or economic nature and those exercised by primary groups—gossip, ridicule, persuasion, and opprobrium. Controls of a negative nature are buttressed by positive rewards, such as services provided by a government or the feeling of security gained from primary group approval. It is not the formal system of local and national governments

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In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

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One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and funtionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "madhouse" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

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Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

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Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.' " 592 162 [591] [589]

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit) —still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts. 428 582 423 428 888 [583] [562]

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond. 428 593 [888] [776] [578] [167] 423 162 [428]

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of 582 621 [609] [167] [593]

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 593
a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178
from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342
placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353
serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788]
two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574]
floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571
kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602
tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609
strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572]
parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835
most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602
genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582
forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602
collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609
are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428
is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611
--with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag. [113] [601]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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harmony, but other biases are at work (Messenger 1968:29–30). Writers of strong religious bent have exaggerated the Catholic moral virtues embodied in the Irish family and community and have disregarded disputes because they involve unchristian behavior, while social scientists with a functional theoretical orientation have emphasized the integration of social groups and have neglected disputes because they betray dysfunction. Those observers who have depended almost entirely on the guided interview to obtain data concerning family and community often have remained oblivious to disputes. Some researchers, however, have collected information on disputes in an objective manner, but have been unwilling to publish it for fear of antagonizing the folk, the church, and the government—thus losing their positions or jeopardizing research in the future. The most valuable study to date on disputes in Ireland is that of Elliott Leyton, which is based on research that he conducted between 1964 and 1966 in Aughnaboy (like Inis Beag, a fictitious name), a village in Co. Down with three times the population of Inis Beag.

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Using Claude Lévi-Strauss' distinction between conscious and unconscious models, Leyton first examines the conscious models—explanatory constructs, or norms, of the people themselves—held by Aughnaboy villagers concerning disputes, then the types of disputes which in fact do occur within the community —from which the unconscious models are inferred by the analyst. Three conscious models held by the villagers are of pertinence to us: those for personal conduct, relations between kinsmen, and relations between non-kin (Leyton 1966:535–536). The first is summarized in the concept of "decency."

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> To be a "decent" man is to carry out one's obligations to society in a style characterized by cheerfulness and friendliness, to pause willingly for a chat and, most importantly, to refrain—regardless of the provocation—from any display of overt hostility. . . . greatest esteem is reserved for those who succeed in maintaining cordial relations with everyone in the village; and the greatest contempt is reserved for those quarrelsome individuals who are frequently involved in disputes.

Relations between kinsmen, Leyton says,

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> . . . are characterized, ideally, by the highest degree of friendliness and harmony. The individual is expected to feel the strongest affection for his kinsmen, and to subordinate all other loyalties . . . to the demands of his kinsmen. . . . individuals are expected to suppress their personal desires and ideals if they conflict with the unity of the group. . . . Close affective ties and regular visiting rarely occur outside the field of kinship. Non-kin are regarded with suspicion and distrust, and the interests of non-kin are seen as being in potential opposition to the interests of one's own kin.

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Ideally, friendliness and harmony characterize relations between non-kin as well in Aughnaboy.

> Non-kin are in general expected to behave according to the standards of "decency" . . . to be cheerful and talkative and to avoid quarrels. . . . Aughnaboy inhabitants conceive relations between non-kin to be a system in equilibrium . . . relations

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121 578 609 between the separate groups of kin in the village are seen to be in delicate balance of power which is expressed in the local phrase, "you can't fight anybody around here because all their people will gang up on you." If an individual's kinsmen must defend him in his personal disputes, it necessarily follows that a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin.

114 By and large, these three conscious models apply to Inis Beag as well as Aughnaboy.

121 578 Leyton discovers broad "disparities between the conscious models and the statistical patterns formed by the actual behaviour" of people in Aughnaboy, manifested in 74 disputes covering a time span of ten years in the memories of his respondents. He classifies these disputes according to three criteria: their severity, the issues provoking them, and the categories of individuals involved (Leyton 1966.537–539). The criterion of severity yields three types of disputes: argument —"characterized by frequent or continuous arguments . . . associated primarily with exchange of verbal abuse;" withdrawal—where "social relations are actually severed and cooperation is withdrawn;" and interference—in which active attempts are made to "interfere with the welfare of the opposing party. These attempts, which may be secret or open, include legal suits, reports to the police, theft and, rarely, physical violence, as well as withdrawal of all cooperation." Three types of disputes also are distinguishable when issues provoking hostility are examined: economic—"which includes conflict such as rivalry between shopkeepers and disputed inheritance;" personality clashes—"which includes disputes primarily attributed to the innately quarrelsome personalities of certain individuals;" and jealousy—"which refers primarily to situations in which an individual's affections are alienated." The categories of persons involved in disputes are agnatic kin, uterine kin, affinal kin, and non-kin. Leyton establishes rank orders for each of his type classifications, and finds that the rank order for the severity classification is withdrawal, interference, and argument; for the issues classification, it is personality clashes, jealousy, and economic; and for the individuals involved classification, it is affinal kin, agnatic kin, non-kin, and uterine kin.

121 578 [521] [683] In applying Leyton's unconscious models of disputes to Inis Beag, I have modified slightly his severity and issues classifications. To the former, I have added a fourth type which I call gossip; this is not gossip of the ordinary variety so common on the island, but rather continuous, pernicious verbal attacks made by a person within earshot of his victim's relatives and close friends, which usually do not lead to argument. In the case of the issues classification, I have broadened the [157] range of personality clashes. There are several "innately quarrelsome" individuals in Inis Beag, but most personality conflicts involve persons other than these, who have come to dislike one another intensely for numerous reasons, most of which are related to envy, jealousy (other than alienation of affections), resentment 578 against authority, and hostility toward members of the opposite sex. Over 200 disputes have occurred on the island within the past generation, excluding those involving semi-permanent dwellers—curates, lighthouse keepers, and the Dane. 578 121 The higher incidence of disputes in Inis Beag is attributable, for the most part, to the longer time span appraised and the addition of gossip to the severity classification in my analysis. However, the rank orders of the three type classifications

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closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference. 578 121

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin. 114 121 578 578

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families. 578 609 602 [428] [626] [691] [685]

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Jnis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than 578 [602] [609] [122] [562]

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775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of [173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of [825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

157 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag 771 islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

157 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is 831 sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century. [174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from vague and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

157 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in 831 three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the 864 islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in 626 the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice 793 it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves 834 "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and 831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run 203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland [609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

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275 The best singers will be
273 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[167] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
273 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[578] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
273 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
273 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk
[576] who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the free stout brought me in."

12 cultivate that "sharpness of ear . . . feeling for half-tones and shades and subtleties, and . . . wary alertness" which characterize ethnographic endeavor as an art as well as an epistemology.

181 195 [178] The use by the folk of "wings of fancy," "honeyed words," and "obfuscations"—popularly known as "blarney"—reflects a long tradition of verbal skill. It is a vital component of Irish and Inis Beag "charm," which often is a product of a delicately poised set of defense mechanisms; beneath it can lie feelings of inferiority and dislike, envy, and jealousy of others. Blarney can very effectively serve to shield genuine thoughts [538] and feelings and thus protect the ego. Irish folklore and literature also reflect this tradition of verbal skill, and it is probably expressed most formidably in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*. (At least one folklorist has collected "Joycean utterances" from Irish peasants.)

123 Most of our information came from observation and unguided interviews. It proved impossible to take field notes openly, except when collecting innocuous data—such as the number of livestock owned by each householder—from a few particular persons. Thus, we were forced to limit our visits to less than two hours, after which we immediately [562] transcribed what our combined memories could resuscitate. Despite frequent explanations of our presence in Inis Beag, which were candid and truthful, it was thought by the islanders that I was interested only in archeological sites and oral literature, and that my wife was not a trained and experienced co-worker; this, obviously, reflects their previous experiences with scientists and their conception of the position of women in society. Their inability to evaluate adequately our intentions proved • [609] to be a research boon. For once "accepted" (a relative term, since no outsider is ever accepted) after many months in the island, we were allowed to listen to and participate in conversations and activities from which we would otherwise have been excluded.

123 *831 Our data on sex came from my involvement as a participant-observer in personal and often intimate conversations with men and my wife's counseling of women who were bothered by such matters as explaining and coping with menstruation, menopause, mental illness, the sexual curiosity of their children, and "excessive" sexual demands of their spouses. Our sexual knowledge and sympathy coupled with their needs and inquisitiveness gave rise to a "counselor-client" relationship between many of the folk and ourselves. They came to speak freely, albeit indirectly at times, with each of us about this sphere of behavior which arouses so much anxiety and fear. I must mention that the relationship

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble savages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case.

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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601 "friends," particularly if they occupy one's own generation;
612 one's father's relatives, even his brothers, become "my father's friends." A "distant friend" refers not to distance in space but to that in cousinship.

612 Before we detail the individuals included within this
593 category, let us make two points clear. The first of these is directly associated with the dominance of the father within the family. He comes, as it were, to stand for the group which he heads; the farm is known by his name, and
[591] wife and children bear his name likewise. For the Irish family is patrilocal and patronymic, to use the technical
[611] terms. Farm, house, and most of the household goods descend from father to son with the patronym; we shall follow their general movement in a later section.

611 This patrilineal descent gives a certain accent upon the
612 kinship system; it chooses one line of descent out of the many possible and gives those who make it up a common name. There is a reflection of this fact in the groupings of Irish rural life. To outsiders a person may be known as "a boy of the Shannons" or a "man of the Flaherties," but in a sense these groupings are merely linguistic conveniences. For in many cases two families of Shannons may live side by side, yet not be considered "friends." None of the obligations of kinship bind them. For in the phrase of the countryman: "They are not the same Shannons or, if they are, they are too far out."

Our examination of the various ways of reckoning kinship will make the statement clear. Patriliny is merely one device, an extension of the father-son relationship, by which individuals are included in one's group of "friends."

593 A second observation upon the kinship system springs
582 from the fact that the family relationships regulate sexual conduct. Indeed, our examination of farm agriculture leads us to see that the technological training of the individual goes hand in hand with the sexual. Marriage prohibitions,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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son (5), and the last's son (6) who is again normally within ego's generation. By counting the common root, for instance, again patrilineally, father's father's father, four generations are counted together. These four explain the *ceathradh glúin*. 601 612

Now both the Church and Irish rural society reckon descent bilaterally; all possible roots, male and female, are counted. In that case, the count gives thirty-two kinship personalities in ego's own generation who come within this group of first and second cousins. These can all be counted as cousins or "friends." They are within the range of *col* or marriage taboo. They make up the extended family whose behavior we have examined above. Of the thirty-two, only two (father's brother's son and father's father's brother's son's son) in ego's own generation bear the same patronym as he; but the total number of personalities within the system bearing ego's patronym is nine, if the immediate progenitors back to common great-grandfather are counted. [611]

Consanguinity is carried one step further by the Church. As a barrier to marriage, or diriment impediment, it extends to the "fourth degree." This includes the group taken from a common descent yet a generation higher. It brings in those relatives known in English as third cousins. 582 601 612

These include all those descendant from a common great-grand-grandparent, described in the various terminologies as "third cousins," *col ochtar* (eighth *col*), members of the *cúigeadh glúin* or fifth generation, or people *ar a trí ó*. As before, the emphasis in each of these terms is to link together all those kindred of one generation who have common descent. When all possible roots are taken into account, the personalities so linked ideally number 128. The total within the whole system, including those of all generations ascendant, bearing the same patronym as ego, is thirteen, and five contemporaneous generations are comprised. 601 612

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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581 to them, but neither the Church nor the Irish farmers in-
601 clude them within the kinship system. Marriage taboo,
612 which the Church calls diriment impediment, does not extend to them. For this reason two brothers may marry two sisters under canon law, and a man his stepson's widow. There is no "blood" connection. For the same reason, the spouses of mother's and father's siblings, who are called uncles and aunts in American and British terminology, are not included in ego's group; "call" does not extend to them; they do not "belong" to ego.

581 The explanation of this exclusion of all relatives by
611 affinity except those brought in by ego's own individual
612 marriage lies in the concept of marriage uniting only the marrying individuals. For in the Irish system blood descent alone determines kinship: from the point of view of ego only those within a common system of blood descent are recognized as kin. Accordingly, on marrying, only those within a common system of descent with ego's wife become kin. Such a rigid adherence to the principle of descent does not prevent the development of very amicable and prescribed relations with such individuals as one's father's brother's wife. It merely excludes them from one's own kinship group.

601 The Irish terminology expresses the same reckoning of
612 affinity. The word *cleamhnas* covers both marriage and relationship by affinity. It also indicates a "match." The word *céile* is used both as an adverb with the sense of the English word "together" and as a noun meaning "mate."
601 *Céile* is the root of various expressions, such as *céilidheacht*,
612 referring to marriage. In Irish, father-in-law is called either
539 *athair cleamhna* or *athair chéile*, mother-in-law *máthair chéile*, as in the proverb:

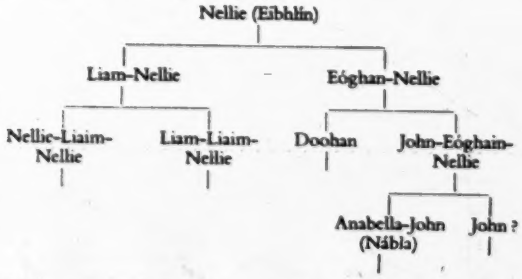
> Bean mhic is máthair chéile,
> Mar chat agus luch ar aghaidh a céile

551 addition to his own. As Synge observes, if a man's name is unique in some way he may be known by it alone, although on Tory he will usually have a 'latent' string of names which he never actually uses but which could be used if his Christian name were to crop up again. If any of the ancestors in the 'string' had epithets (using this to mean descriptive terms), these are included. But there is a tendency to use only the epithet of the last person in the string. Sometimes, if an ancestor was firmly known by his surname (if, say, he was an immigrant and the first of his name on the island) then this is added also.[4] Below are some examples of these names:

Eóghan-John-Dooley-Mhalainne	Dooley was a man from Malin in Co. Donegal.
Mary-John-Dooley-Mhalainne	Eóghan's sister.
Kate-Dooley-Mhalainne	His paternal aunt.
Jimmy-Mhaire-Bhilli	Jimmy-Mary-Willy (Billy)
Peggy-Phaidi-Shéamuis-Dhomhnaill	Peggy-Paddy-Jimmy-Donal
Pádraig-Hughdie-Dhuibhir	Patrick Hugh Diver
Paddy-Johnnie-Fhlaithbheartaigh	Paddy John (Mac)-Clafferty[5]

An alternative type of name—and a man may have two or three alternative types—consists of the addition of the Christian name of a parent to the surname. Thus two paternal first cousins might be respectively 'Jimmy Diver Nancy' and 'Jimmy Diver Madge.'

551 611 The segmentary process in the cognatic descent groups on the island affects this naming mechanism. This is illustrated in the following diagram:



This is an actual descent group tracing its ancestry to a widow, Nellie Doohan. The first four generations of the group are shown here, there being eight altogether. Nellie's descendants, 'Clann Nellie,' are divided into the Liam-Nellies and the Eóghan-Nellies. Clann Liaim-Nellie are subdivided into the Nellie-Liaim-Nellies and the Liam-Liaim-Nellies. The descendants of Eóghan-Nellie are segmented into the John-Eóghain-Nellies and another group known as the Doohans. There have only been sons in this latter group, and they have tended to be known by the 'John Doohan Nancy' type of name. The four or five generations below those shown on the diagram are not clearly segmented as yet. Amongst these, the name continuity is not so strong, but they all regard themselves as 'Liam-Nellies' or 'John-Eóghain-Nellies' or Doohans' according to the level of segmentation relevant to their various collective activities.[6] The degree to which the

551 name continuity of such a group can be maintained, con-
611 verging on the founder's name as in our example, is some measure of the continuing solidarity of the group. This tends to weaken after about six generations and the disintegration of the group is reflected in the native com-
[182] mentary—*Tá na h-ainmneacha caillte*, 'the names is lost.' The attempt to keep the name continuity often conflicts with the desire to distinguish person from person, hence the existence of alternative name types.

The following formula[1] shows the ideal structure of the Tory name using the following symbols: C = Christian name, S = surname, E = epithet, Fa = father's Christian name, Mo = mother's Christian name. A symbol in the lower case indicates that the item can be omitted from the progression of names.

		Generation 0	+1	+2
Patrilateral	Ce +S	Fa	e es s +	FaFa e es s FaMo e es s
		fa		
		mo		
Matrilateral		Mo	e es s +	MoFa e es s MoMo e es s

The columns represent the alternative possibilities, the rows the matrilateral and patrilateral 'progression' of names. The formula can be expanded according to the same rules.

To see how this basic choice between matrilateral and patrilateral 'progressions' worked out in practice I tabulated instances of each type of name progression in my collection, distinguishing by sex of nominee (m and f) but ignoring the optional epithets and surnames (Table 1). I collected these names separately from the two settlements on the island, East Town (*Baile Thoir*) and West
[184] Town (*Baile Thiar*), and they are so listed on the table. It is commonly believed that the East is more traditional than the West, but this does not show up in any differences in the naming systems.

What emerges from this table is the overwhelming preference for taking the father's name (and his father's) by both men and women, and the fact that for both sexes one possible combination does not occur—m/f+Mo+MoMo. I am told that this has occurred in the past, but infrequently. The fourth cluster of name types in the table is a group of residual types. The oddities here are the girl who took her father's brother's name and the rest which skip a generation and start with the grandparental names. These cases usually result from an uncle or grandparents bringing up children in the absence of parents. If these relatives are seen as *in loco parentis* then the pattern remains the same as for the majority.

[1 [This formula has been corrected according to the specifications given in Man, vol. 63, article 248, p. 195, Dec. 1963 - Analyst]

[P. 155, A]

TABLE I

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Name type	West Town	East Town	Total
m + *Fa*	24	25	49
f + *Fa*	26	16	42
m + *Mo*	13	4	17
f + *Mo*	6	4	10
m + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	15	5	20
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	13	4	17
m + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
f + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
m + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	0	3	3
f + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	2	1	3
m + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	3	3
f + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*	2	1	3
m + *MoFa*	3	1	4
f + *MoFa*	1	0	1
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	3	0	3
f + *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	0	1	1
f + *FaBro*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	3	0	3
f + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	1	0	1
	112	70	182

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Table II summarizes the 'laterality preference' as it affects men and women respectively.

TABLE II

	Patrilateral	*Matrilateral*	*Total*
m	72 (70·6 *per cent.*)	30 (29·4 *per cent.*)	102
f	67 (83·75 *per cent.*)	13 (16·25 *per cent.*)	80
Total	139 (76·4 *per cent.*)	43 (23·6 *per cent.*)	182

The figures in parenthesis are percentages of the row totals.

The overall preference is, as we have seen, patrilateral, but there is an interesting minority preference amongst males for matrilateral names. Practically a third of the men and less than a sixth of the women have matrilateral names.[7] There are several explanations for this trend amongst males. It may stem from the large number of widows with sons, or from the name continuity of the descent system. In a number of cases it follows from the fact that a man is given his father's Christian name as his own and hence takes his mother's name to distinguish him, although this is not all that common.

[162]

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Such a highly personalized naming system only works within the particularistic boundaries of a small community.

182 The world at large is not interested in the particular ante-
551 cedents of a man and the islanders recognize this in their
use of surnames with the outside world. The old 'family'
611 or clan names placed a man in his wider kinship group in
the days when this was important—it no longer matters
today. Within the community the naming system described above distinguishes a man from other men and places him in his immediate kin group. It helps to establish his descent. Research in small communities in Western societies may reveal similar systems serving similar ends but based on different diacritical criteria.[8]

Notes

113 [1] J. M. Synge, *Four Plays and The Aran Islands*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 263f.

[2] Brief ethnographical details of Tory Island can be found in J. R. Fox, 'The Vanishing Gael,' *New Society*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1962.

551 [3] The second and subsequent names, when in Gaelic, are in the genitive. Some English names are Gaelicized and given a genitive form. I make no claims for the correctness of the spelling of the names given here (Irish spelling is pretty fluid), except that they are the forms recognized by literate islanders. I could not have made
[115] any headway with the Tory naming system and genealogies without the patient help of Máire Nic Fhlaithbheartaigh bean Aodha Uí Dhubhghain, Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh, and Aodh Ó Dubhghain.

[4] See Synge's comment on the use of the surname and the 'Mac' prefix. In the 'ceremonial' names on Tory both Mac and Ó are used, but when a surname is included in the 'personal' set, these prefixes are not usually used.

[5] This could be Paddy-John Uí Fhlaithbheartaigh—roughly Paddy John O'Flaherty. The pronunciation would be the same.

551 [6] A fuller analysis of the structure and functions of these descent
611 groups is in preparation. They seem to be mainly concerned with landholding—as a consequence of the equal division of land amongst all a man's (or woman's) heirs, and the system of keeping land in trust for migrants. Their other functions lie mainly in the sphere of mutual support amongst members in times of crisis.

[7] This distribution could only occur by chance in one sample out of 20: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 4{\cdot}30$: $p = < {\cdot}05$.

551 [8] The Welsh system of stringing ancestral names together with
171 'ap' is obviously similar to the Tory method, but the Welsh, I believe, used only male names. Mr. Andrew Dunsire tells me that in some Scottish coastal villages a man will be known by the boat he owns, his children inheriting this epithet. In some working-class communities which I know in England a system similar to that on Tory operates. A man may be known as 'Mary's Tom' and his son as 'Mary's Tom's Johnnie,' etc. Synge notes the use of occupations as marks of distinction in Wales and comments on the lack of occupational differentiation on the Aran Islands which makes this method impossible. In some rural communities a man is known by the name of his farm. W. M. Williams in *The Sociology of an English Village* (Routledge, 1956) gives examples of this. See also his fascinating discussion of Naming and Family Continuity, pp. 79–82 and 229f. The contrast with the Tory system is marked, however, in that one can, in Gosforth, move from 'side' to 'side' in choice of names—both surnames and Christian names being used.

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 593
a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178
from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342
placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353
serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788]
two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574]
floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571
kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602
tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609
strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572]
parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835
most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602
genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582
forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602
collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609
are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428
is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611 •
--with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113]
in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo [601]
type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which [184]
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [165]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [212]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [611]
heritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional subcultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

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CHAPTER V

The Kinship System

THE mothers and fathers who order farm life are 592
themselves sons and daughters. They have or have 593
had (before their creation of a family of their own upon the farm) much the same relationships with their parents as their children have with them. Indeed in many cases households comprise three generations. Grandfathers and grandmothers of the children live in the house. Family structure is not confined to the immediate present family group, but descends with each generation as the boys and girls reach social maturity at marriage and the creation of their own families.

This descent forms the basis of any kinship system; it pro- 601
vides also the basis upon which the "friends" to whom one 612
has obligations in rural Ireland are reckoned. The individuals comprised within the system are so because of their sharing of that descent in common. These are one's "people" or "friends," in the countryman's vocabulary.

The terms express the generic category into which the kindred fall. Both terms are, in a sense, translations of Gaelic idiom. The first, people, corresponds exactly with the Irish *muinntear*. The second in ordinary rural usage refers not to a comrade, as in English, but to one's relatives. Even in the towns, one's father, mother, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, are referred to as "immediate friends." In the countryside one speaks of one's kinsmen as one's

601 "friends," particularly if they occupy one's own generation;
● 612 one's father's relatives, even his brothers, become "my father's friends." A "distant friend" refers not to distance in space but to that in cousinship.

612 Before we detail the individuals included within this
593 category, let us make two points clear. The first of these is directly associated with the dominance of the father within the family. He comes, as it were, to stand for the group which he heads; the farm is known by his name, and
[591] wife and children bear his name likewise. For the Irish family is patrilocal and patronymic, to use the technical
[611] terms. Farm, house, and most of the household goods descend from father to son with the patronym; we shall follow their general movement in a later section.

611 This patrilineal descent gives a certain accent upon the
612 kinship system; it chooses one line of descent out of the many possible and gives those who make it up a common name. There is a reflection of this fact in the groupings of Irish rural life. To outsiders a person may be known as "a boy of the Shannons" or a "man of the Flaherties," but in a sense these groupings are merely linguistic conveniences. For in many cases two families of Shannons may live side by side, yet not be considered "friends." None of the obligations of kinship bind them. For in the phrase of the countryman: "They are not the same Shannons or, if they are, they are too far out."

Our examination of the various ways of reckoning kinship will make the statement clear. Patriliny is merely one device, an extension of the father-son relationship, by which individuals are included in one's group of "friends."

593 A second observation upon the kinship system springs
582 from the fact that the family relationships regulate sexual conduct. Indeed, our examination of farm agriculture leads us to see that the technological training of the individual goes hand in hand with the sexual. Marriage prohibitions,

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601 presumably determined by counting the number of individuals or, better, personalities separated by reciprocal relations within which *col* or prohibitions arise. They are, for instance, myself, my father, my father's brother, and my father's brother's son. Here the accent upon the kinship system makes use of the two consanguine reciprocals within the immediate family: parent-child and sibling-sibling. Through the working of the principle of equivalence of siblings only two generations, my father's and my own, are considered. Thus the same reference to an immediate family relationship as we saw in such circumlocutions as "our fathers were brothers" is contained in the term.

601 612 582 Another set of terms exists in Irish for reckoning these relatives. The authors have not heard it in use in Clare, however. In it, first cousins are said to be *a dó a's a dó i ngaol*. The phrase means literally "two and two in blood relationship." Here accent is placed upon the lineal father-son (parent-child) descent, for brother and sister are called *a h-aon a's a h-aon i ngaol* – that is, "one and one." The reasoning here traces back to a common parent; in the latter case there is but one step, in the former, two.

The Church uses the system embodied in this last terminology in determining consanguinity. The following slightly abridged quotation indicates that it also recognizes a different system in Roman civil law.

> The civil (Roman) law founded its degrees in the number of generations. Thus between brothers there are two degrees, between first cousins there are four. [Compare *col ceathair.*] Canon law still follows this system in determining inheritance, but the Church for marriages computes, in the collateral line of consanguinity, one series only of generations, and if the series are unequal only the longer one. Hence, the principle of canon law is there are in the transverse or collateral line as many degrees of consanguinity as there are persons in the longer line counting the common stock or root.[1]

[1] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."

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Thus brother and sister are in the first degree, uncle and niece in the second, because niece is "two degrees from grandfather." First cousins are likewise reckoned in the second degree for the same reason. Here, as in the counting *a dó a's a dó i ngaol*, the accent is upon the parent-child reciprocal. The Church calls this the *linea recta* of descent. It bases its prohibition of marriage (incest) in the *linea recta* upon divinely ordained natural law. No dispensations for this type of marriage are ever granted.[2]

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Another system is perhaps commonest — at least in Clare, where the authors have met it on several occasions — among the methods used to determine kinship in order to maintain the bounds within which alliance is forbidden. It appears both in Irish and in English speech. The system reckons descent by "generations." The Irish phrase is to *réidhteach gaol* by counting *glúin*.[3] *Gaol*, we remember, is the word for blood relationship in general; *glúin* refers first to a knee joint, then by extension to a step in family descent, a generation. In this reckoning, first cousins, that is, parents' siblings' children, are said to be in the *tríumhadh glúin*, or, in English, "the third generation."

Here the accent is again upon two elements in the constellation of reciprocals within the immediate family: the parent-child reciprocal and the equivalence of siblings. By counting back to the common grandfather or grandmother the *gaol* or "blood" is determined through three generations, i.e., ego's, his father's, and his grandfather's. Each person in the line of descent seems to represent a generation. All so descended in ego's generation are "friends."

Still another system of reckoning cousinship may be contained in certain idiomatic terms for the cousins. The authors here rely only on the Irish language dictionaries, for they have not heard these terms used. First cousins are

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Cf. Canon O'Leary's *Mo Sgeul Féin*, where he has a chapter (*Mo Shinnsear*) in which he reckons his ancestry in these terms.

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designated in the phrase *tá siad i n-ó amháin*, which can only be translated in some such terms as "they are in the one grandson(ship)," for the word *ó* or *ua* was in ancient and medieval Irish the term for grandson and today seems to survive chiefly in the *O'* of surnames. This last idiomatic usage is merely a restatement of the reckoning by generations, and corresponds with English and Irish usage in explaining cousins by saying that they had the same grandfather.

All these systems of reckoning first cousins we have seen to be extensions outward of immediate family reciprocals to include the parents' siblings' children on the basis of their common descent with ego.

The process, however, does not stop there. For the descent is carried a step further back to a common great-grandparent. Marriage taboos and extended family obligations go backward and upward with the reckoning. Thus second cousins are recognized as being within the kindred and within the prohibited degrees. In fact, in the authors' experience the obligations of cooring and "friendliness" were equally strong with them.

To include these, all the various terminological reckonings of cousinship undergo an expansion. By the various terminologies, the group of kindred who are common descendants with ego of the same great-grandparent become *col seisear* (sixth *col*); relatives in the third degree (as reckoned by the Church); *a tri a's a tri i ngaol* (three and three); members of the *ceathradh glúin* or "fourth generation"; and lastly, in the idiomatic terms for cousinship, *ar a dá ó* (thus: in the second grandsonship).

The first of these terms, "sixth *col*," illustrates again the reckoning through counting the persons separated by reciprocal relations within which prohibitions arise. They are, for instance, patrilineally: ego (1), father (2), father's father (3), father's father's brother (4), father's father's brother's

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son (5), and the last's son (6) who is again normally within ego's generation. By counting the common root, for instance, again patrilineally, father's father's father, four generations are counted together. These four explain the *ceathradh glúin*. 601 612

Now both the Church and Irish rural society reckon descent bilaterally; all possible roots, male and female, are counted. In that case, the count gives thirty-two kinship personalities in ego's own generation who come within this group of first and second cousins. These can all be counted as cousins or "friends." They are within the range of *col* or marriage taboo. They make up the extended family whose behavior we have examined above. Of the thirty-two, only two (father's brother's son and father's father's brother's son's son) in ego's own generation bear the same patronym as he; but the total number of personalities within the system bearing ego's patronym is nine, if the immediate progenitors back to common great-grandfather are counted. [611]

Consanguinity is carried one step further by the Church. As a barrier to marriage, or diriment impediment, it extends to the "fourth degree." This includes the group taken from a common descent yet a generation higher. It brings in those relatives known in English as third cousins. 582 601 612

These include all those descendant from a common great-grand-grandparent, described in the various terminologies as "third cousins," *col ochtar* (eighth *col*), members of the *cúigeadh glúin* or fifth generation, or people *ar a trí ó*. As before, the emphasis in each of these terms is to link together all those kindred of one generation who have common descent. When all possible roots are taken into account, the personalities so linked ideally number 128. The total within the whole system, including those of all generations ascendant, bearing the same patronym as ego, is thirteen, and five contemporaneous generations are comprised. 601 612

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601 This last group is formed then by extension outward of the same principles found within the immediate family
612 which determined the formation of the smaller ones of first and second cousins. Ego's descent from his parents is extended upward through the ascending generations and downward through his children to the descending generations. But ego and his siblings are equivalent in their relation to their parents. So, as the parent-child reciprocal is extended vertically, a lateral extension of the equivalence of the first siblings occurs concomitantly. In this way, an ever-widening circle of individuals are brought into reciprocal relationship with ego, expressed through their bearing a name in common, as his line of descent is traced further back. The marriage taboos within the immediate family follow the extensions both vertical and lateral.

Recapitulating, then, the relationships of ego with his kindred depend upon his place in the successive generations of descent through either male or female progenitors. The emphasis in the system is twofold. In the first instance, it places the individual within a given series of parent-child relationships, and in the second it establishes a commonalty between him and the other individuals who occupy the same place within that series. The structure of the restricted family functions identically; that of the extended family uses the same mechanisms to effect an integration of individuals upon a larger scale. The great proliferation of methods of describing this kinship system arises from a cause inherent in the system. All the terms we discussed are attempts to categorize the widening circles, lateral and vertical, of kindred; the desire to establish reciprocal terms to designate the members of the widening circles; [4] there is no need to particularize except in the horizontal and vertical lines.

[4] The extension of sibling equivalence to embrace widely one's generation is further exemplified in the Irish terminology. *Bráthair*, the word etymologically cognate with *frater*, brother, is used to describe all kinsmen of one's generation;

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When these two emphases upon the kinship system are recognized, it becomes evident why there is a lack of terms describing those individuals appearing above and below ego's generation but not in the direct line. In the direct line we do have such terms as grandfather, grandson, etc., but the others do not figure. They are not named except descriptively, and even then usually only in reference to the generation which they occupy. Thus father's father's brother is called "my grandfather's brother." The term granduncle exists, but it has not found its way into the countryman's vocabulary. 601 612

Similarly, though uncle, aunt, nephew, and niece have become fully acclimated to Ireland, there is still a marked preference for descriptive terms. The son of a cousin is described in such terms, and the immediate progenitors of the cousin are thought of in terms of their place in the precedent generation. They are thus "my father's friends," though they are, of course, within ego's kinship group. In this way, two distantly removed cousins can often establish a relationship and adopt the requisite behavior to one another through establishing a more immediate connection in a parental generation.

The bounds of the consanguine group are naturally not rigid in this type of extensional structure. There is a gradation of intensity in the taboo as it extends towards the peripheral relatives. First and second cousins, to use the more convenient English terms, are tabooed, the first more strongly than the second. Third cousins, felt to be "very far out" and sometimes "not counted" by the Irish, are nevertheless formally tabooed by the Church. Yet dispensations can be obtained with relative ease for kindred of this degree. They are granted for all alliances within the system for "cause" inward even as far as first cousins and uncles and nieces, but 612 582 582 588 612

a different word, *dearbhráthair*, or "true-brother," is reserved for one's father's son.

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612 never within the restricted family.[5] When the dispensation
582 of the Church is obtained, there is no feeling of horror at
588 such marriages. They are, however, always felt to be anomalous and are a matter of comment. In the country areas where there is a necessity among the farmers of keeping farms and dowries within the extended family group, or where the introduction of an outsider is difficult because of class and regional antagonisms, marriages between first and second cousins are not uncommon. Nevertheless the general feeling of the community condemns this type of union. Too close intermarriage of this type is a common charge used by townsmen in condemning the country folk. The authors unfortunately had little chance of observing such alliances in their rural setting.

582 At marriage the individual acquires a new group of kin-
612 dred. This group is also within the marriage prohibition
602 and the "call"; they are "friends." In the formal or ideal arrangement all those related to one's wife become related to oneself in the same degree. This is the view taken by the Catholic Church. A marriage, the doctrine goes, unites husband and wife as "one flesh." "Affinity from a true marriage is a diriment impediment to the fourth degree of consanguinity of the deceased spouse."[6] A widower "may not marry any of his deceased wife's blood relatives as far as the fourth degree of consanguinity."[7]

612 In other words, the union of man and woman brings a
835 union of the two extended families from the point of view
602 of the marrying individuals. In the eyes of the Church, the husband stands in the same relation to a wife's relatives as does the wife herself, and vice versa. So strong is this provision in the eyes of the Church that sexual intercourse with any of the wife's kin creates a barrier to the exercise of conjugal rights over the wife. A dispensation as well as

[5] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."
[6] *Ibid.* [7] *Ibid.*

absolution from the sin of adultery must be obtained before normal relations of husband and wife can be resumed. This is the effect of the infringement of the marriage taboo upon wife's relatives. 602 612 835

In a patrilineal, patrilocal structure, such as the Irish one, the wife is brought into the husband's family, given a place therein, and takes his patronym. Yet the inclusion is not complete, and, though a woman takes the husband's name, especially among the upper classes and at law, becomes the mistress of the husband's house, and in a thousand ways is oriented to her husband's group, her origin is never lost sight of. Her kindred are referred to as "my wife's friends," yet through the integration of the two families at marriage they become likewise "friends" of the husband. Kinship obligations extend to them. 591 602 612

From an internal point of view, however, marriage is a destruction of two former restricted families, in so far as two individuals leave them in order to form a new restricted family in which the individuals are husband and wife. Perhaps because of this disruptive effect on the paternal families, there is no provision made for a closer integration between them. No terms express the new relationship; the emphasis of relationship by affinity is restricted to the point of view of the marrying couple. Where the primary accent is upon vertical descent through blood kindred, there is little scope for a lateral rapport between the parental families of the marrying pair. 612 581 [601]

From the point of view of the marrying pair, however, an extension of kinship bonds is made. They are now one. Thus the immediate family of ego's wife are included in ego's kinship group. In the English terminology these relatives are called father-, mother-, brother-, sister-, son- "in-law." It must be noted that the terms brother-in-law and sister-in-law do not include wife or husband's siblings' spouses. The British and American usage extends the term 581 601 612

581 to them, but neither the Church nor the Irish farmers in-
601 clude them within the kinship system. Marriage taboo,
which the Church calls diriment impediment, does not ex-
612 tend to them. For this reason two brothers may marry two sisters under canon law, and a man his stepson's widow. There is no "blood" connection. For the same reason, the spouses of mother's and father's siblings, who are called uncles and aunts in American and British terminology, are not included in ego's group; "call" does not extend to them; they do not "belong" to ego.

581 The explanation of this exclusion of all relatives by
611 affinity except those brought in by ego's own individual
612 marriage lies in the concept of marriage uniting only the marrying individuals. For in the Irish system blood descent alone determines kinship: from the point of view of ego only those within a common system of blood descent are recognized as kin. Accordingly, on marrying, only those within a common system of descent with ego's wife become kin. Such a rigid adherence to the principle of descent does not prevent the development of very amicable and prescribed relations with such individuals as one's father's brother's wife. It merely excludes them from one's own kinship group.

601 The Irish terminology expresses the same reckoning of
612 affinity. The word *cleamhnas* covers both marriage and relationship by affinity. It also indicates a "match." The word *céile* is used both as an adverb with the sense of the English word "together" and as a noun meaning "mate."
601 *Céile* is the root of various expressions, such as *céilidheacht*,
612 referring to marriage. In Irish, father-in-law is called either
539 *athair cleamhna* or *athair chéile*, mother-in-law *máthair chéile*, as in the proverb:

> Bean mhic is máthair chéile,
> Mar chat agus luch ar aghaidh a céile

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[539]

(mother-in-law and daughter-in-law like cat and mouse together).

Similar terms are used for brother- and sister-in-law. But in both languages the tendency is again to use purely descriptive phrases analogous to those we found in designating blood kindred. Thus "my wife's brother" and "my wife's mother," etc., are much more often heard among the farmers, both in English and in Irish.

The Irish language, however, has a separate term for son-in-law. It is *cliamhan*, which is related to the word *cleamhnas*. It is the only nondescriptive term in general use, for daughter-in-law is rendered as "son's wife" (*bean mhic*) in Irish. It may be that the singling out of this relative among those united to one by affinity reflects the greater importance put upon males in a patrilineal system.

The relatives by affinity just described include all those of the spouse's immediate family. The principle at work has been to coalesce ego's immediate or restricted kindred with his wife's. Beyond this group to whom the extension of the kinship behaviors is primary lies the total group of the wife's extended kindred. They are referred to as "my wife's friends"; there is a general tendency to extend kinship behavior to them; and they lie within the prohibited group. They are what might be expressed as potential kindred in the same sense that ego's third, fourth, and fifth cousins, their progenitors and descendants, are potential kindred. Should the need arise, the common descent may be remembered. At times of family crises, particularly at funerals, this sort of bond comes into active force. 612

In this fact lies the peculiar character of a kinship system based upon extension rather than rigidity of form. The demarcations between the kindred groups of one individual and the next are not rigidly drawn. The individual can expand and contract the group outward from the restricted family to which he belongs. If he is important in the com- 612 554 602

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612 554 602 munity, he can command the respect and the services of a great number of kindred; it becomes an advantage to the peripheral relatives to establish the reciprocals of behavior which the system allows. On the other hand, if the individual is without personal importance, the scope of his actual integration through behavior to his kindred may be narrowed down to include only members of his immediate family.

612 602 It is the potentiality of extension and contraction within the kinship group which is both praised and condemned in such phrases as "A neighbor is nearer than a friend" and "The higher the man, the more people he has." If the individual attempts to rise above his fellows or to forget them in his way upward, the cry immediately rises that he is "forgetting his friends." In fact, disloyalty to one's kinship group is felt to be a deadly crime against the group.

596 612 The Irish extended family, combining in different degrees of intensity of solidarity all descendants of a common ancestor through five contemporaneous generations, is not a rigidly defined structure set off from the other groups of society. On the contrary, the extended families present a picture of a series of interlocking pyramids in which each individual is assigned a definite place, but in which no two individuals (unless siblings) occupy quite the same place. It is a group of kindred reckoning common bilateral descent, and linking as equals all individuals occupying the same step within that descent to the number of five such steps, and including the corresponding group of the spouse's [614] kindred. It is in no sense a clan or gens, as its bounds are not constant, but descend and ascend through the total group of possible kindred. That is, an existing group resolves itself into a number of new ones, as descent proceeds from father to son. It is because of this that farmers having the same patronym and living side by side yet may not be "friends."

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Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority. 582 601 612 621 [793]

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside. 602 612 621 [609]

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard. and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each 612 591 602

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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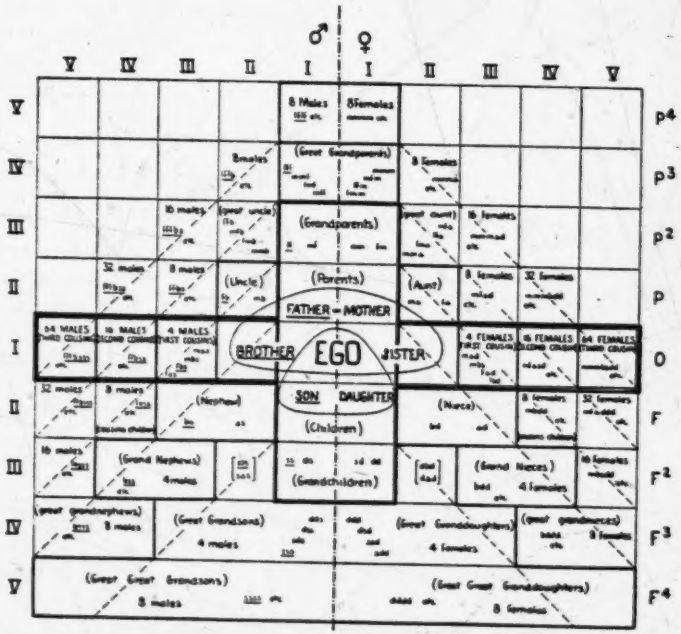
square is contingent to that of its parent of the same sex and to that of its child of the same sex. Thus the lines of descent strike one's eye at a glance. The English terms adorn each square, and small letters in each square give the abbreviation for the designation of the personalities whose place

FIGURE 10

KINSHIP AND DESCENT



the square represents and who are grouped together under a common term. A number is included which lists the number of personalities in all possible descent lines represented by the square.

Anyone interested in explaining to himself the Irish reckonings, such as for instance "fourth *col*," need only count off the squares from ego.

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The groups usually designated are shown within blocks united under heavier margins. Thus those grouped in double black margin across the whole diagram, taking in all the generation marked horizontally as I and O, are ego's "friends." They are members of his generation, united by common descent reckoned back five generations to common great-great-grandparent. 602 612

It goes without saying, of course, that, except for minor variations, this system is essentially that of all northern and western Europe. It is that of the United States. It is technically a descriptive, bilateral, patrilineal system. Like all kinship systems without exception throughout the whole world, it provides for reckoning in a common scheme nine generations, five of which must already occupy the past. Like all others, it represents a self-consistent system built up of the relationships within the immediate family. 602 612 171

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612 munity, he can command the respect and the services of a
554 great number of kindred; it becomes an advantage to the
602 peripheral relatives to establish the reciprocals of behavior which the system allows. On the other hand, if the individual is without personal importance, the scope of his actual integration through behavior to his kindred may be narrowed down to include only members of his immediate family.

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602 the kinship group which is both praised and condemned in such phrases as "A neighbor is nearer than a friend" and "The higher the man, the more people he has." If the individual attempts to rise above his fellows or to forget them in his way upward, the cry immediately rises that he is "forgetting his friends." In fact, disloyalty to one's kinship group is felt to be a deadly crime against the group.

596 The Irish extended family, combining in different de-
612 grees of intensity of solidarity all descendants of a common ancestor through five contemporaneous generations, is not a rigidly defined structure set off from the other groups of society. On the contrary, the extended families present a picture of a series of interlocking pyramids in which each individual is assigned a definite place, but in which no two individuals (unless siblings) occupy quite the same place. It is a group of kindred reckoning common bilateral descent, and linking as equals all individuals occupying the same step within that descent to the number of five such steps, and including the corresponding group of the spouse's
[614] kindred. It is in no sense a clan or gens, as its bounds are not constant, but descend and ascend through the total group of possible kindred. That is, an existing group resolves itself into a number of new ones, as descent proceeds from father to son. It is because of this that farmers having the same patronym and living side by side yet may not be "friends."

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labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents. 512 221 462

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year. 132 527 221

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew. 221 527 574 621

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with 221 132 241 221 521

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476 The commonest form of coöperation is that which in-
246 volves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed. In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings,
[471] none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners; they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land
[737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest
246 began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh
621 people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral
589 association to the land and to each other. There were three lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter present, if they were old, and many growing children if they
[167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so that a smaller number of young people were present than is
476 perhaps usual.
246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

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Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority. 582 601 612 621 [793]

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside. 602 612 621 [609]

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard, and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each 612 591 602

361 Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along
491 it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half. This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear
[311] witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round the lake.

311 The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

361 Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the
● 621 lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are
471 scattered through the fields and across the lake. These households and a few more a little further off make up the community. These are small farms of the kind we met in Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

621 Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated
476 bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all re-
653 lated one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the
491 usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the
621 village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder.
487 Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

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621 487 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

887 573 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village, is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

> The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

888 542 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

888 573 521 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

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of the house is only a few years married. His brother is as 573
yet unprovided for and still lives with him. Both frequent young men's meetings.

The old men's house includes all the adult farm fathers 573
of complete families whose children have just succeeded or 621
are nearly ready to succeed them, with two exceptions. It 208
brings in, too, two others, O'Loughlin, the silent old bache- 887
lor, and John Quin, whose status among the old age group is still provisional. The interviews already quoted have given an insight into the function this meeting performs for the community. The behavior of the group points again to the same function. This is the seat of judgment in the community. It is the clearing house of information and the court of opinion in which the decisions of the community are reached and the traditional knowledge of the peasantry applied and disseminated. From these meetings the men return home to their wives and sons, and the formulations they have reached spread thus through the community of individuals who share life in Rynamona.

Let us examine the type of topic that comes up in the old men's meetings. If we want to assure ourselves that the meeting has the influence its members ascribe to it, a glance at the conversation that takes place there should bear them out.

The old men's meeting is an informal gathering. It arises 573
in response to the community's interests and its immemorial 887
custom. Naturally, different personalities and personal idiosyncrasies make the gathering slightly different in each rural community. Occasionally it may be absent altogether for various causes, such as the dying-off of a central member of the group. Often there is a sort of interregnum between one generation of old men and the next. This was the case in one Clare community studied by the authors. There the old men had lost the central figure of their group and, diminished in number, spent most of their time in enfeebled

571 tral clique, is not without wider interest. The young men
517 are more numerous, and they group themselves together as much as do the old. But it is upon a different basis. It is a synthesis in a looser, more widely inclusive, gathering which
[573] unites smaller cliques of brothers, friends, and boon companions. The gamble is only one of many entertainments
571 they provide themselves. Equally frequently they hold a
517 dance. The country dance is undergoing change in rural
535 Ireland today, but it is still much as it was in the last century, although it may not enliven the country districts as often as it did. Irish square dances, jigs, and flings, most of them variations of sixteenth-century European dance forms, are most common, although some Gaelic-speaking districts preserve an older tradition.

621 The country dance belongs to the young people. It differs from the gamble, from the standpoint of participants, in
535 that it unites both sexes. In most communities it is an
517 affair in which the whole community takes part, the old people as onlookers, the young and the still spry among the older ones as performers. In late years the more formal "all night" dance, an organized dance for which admission is charged and from which the older people are usually absent, has made its appearance. Like the gamble it draws from a wider area.

517 But there is a good deal of the spontaneous dancing which springs up wherever the young people of the community
535 gather even today. The young men and women learn the skills required and value them. There are elaborate codes of etiquette round them and a wealth of proverbs and jocular superstitions. But here again, unlike the behavior followed in the old men's house, these conducts have little larger purpose than uniting the scattered cliques of young people. They are recreations. They are ends in themselves. They are good times that pass the time.

517 The gamble and the dance do not, of course, exhaust the
571 list. The young people have other activities, games, sports,

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contests, and playful roles of solemn occasions, such as acting as strawboys (mummers) at weddings. But all these activities, in which the old members of the community do not directly participate, are alike in their playing no great part in organizing other elements in the community than the young people themselves. They serve other functions.

All these activities bind the young men, the young people, together in common interests. They provide them with a scope of action in which they are comparatively free, yet which keeps them divorced from the seats of a power over community life which is denied them. In this sphere they may develop complex norms, valuations, and conducts.

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But such developments do not serve primarily to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. They are associated with the lesser prestige of the young people. Consequently, the old men's house comes to have in contrast a double function. It unites the old men in much the same way as the gamble and the dance unite the young men, in fact even more strongly. But it does so in terms of the old men's common position as recipients of the respect of the community and in terms of their individual positions as integrators of their families. The difference is structural. The activities of young men unite them across family and clique lines even from one community to the next. But those of the old men do more; they unite young and old as well. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive one, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble and dance may be greater.

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In such a system of integrations, that of the old men has the greater prestige. A great gambler or a great dancer wins wide respect. But the distinction is short-lived. It is a nine days' or a nine years' wonder. It bestows great prestige among one's fellows, but it removes one very little, if at all, from one's subordinate, less valued place as "boy" in the community.

Where such is the case, the individual's progression

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182 554 621 888 through rural life under normal circumstances is not toward a greater and greater prominence in the activities of the young men's group. Rather, there comes a time when one must break away altogether. One faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new kind of behavior. Growing old brings many more changes than the physiological.

888 573 885 554 The case of the newcomer, John Quin, already described, shows the necessary changes. In Rynamona it is brought out very clearly in the clique to which he first belonged and to which we have referred at various times, calling it once the "intermediate."

[551] The clique we name so met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, more commonly known as Oscair (the Hercules of Irish saga) for his physical strength. Oscair was a rural carpenter with only a very small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good singer, a jokester, and a repository of folk tale, though he was not much past forty. He lived just at the edge of the slope leading from Kilnaboy Commons down to Rynamona. The townland was what would be called in urban sociology an "interstitial area." It was higher, rougher, and more craggy than Rynamona and Kilnaboy, lying between them. Its inhabitants were descendants of people evicted from round about who had squatted there. Most of them were "died out and left," and the place was always poor. It acted as a sort of outlying fringe of Rynamona.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged thirty-five to sixty. Just as their ages were intermediate between fully old and fully young, so was their habit here. They very seldom played cards. Talk was the order of the day, enlivened by Oscair's humor and ballads. A few of them spoke of the affairs of the village with some weight. The rest did not. Those who came were as follows:

a. Young Mackey, from the village, the man recently married, still too young for the old men's house.

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463 in terms of such considerations as income, wealth, or skill,
571 or any such factors, but in terms of the place and function of the persons specializing among their fellows. It can be understood in terms of social relations and the organization of habit. Status based upon technical differentiation is built up out of personal relations in the work experience of the community members.

476 If then we take inventory of the kinds of goods and ob-
571 jects which make up the *matériel* of peasant life, and draw
621 up such an inventory to illustrate for us the connection between social relations and these goods and objects, we can construct a series of charts which connect community life and the exchanges and uses of goods, services, and objects in one comprehensive view.

In such a chart those goods and services which come to the farmer from those within his own community come to him in connection with traditional social relations uniting fellow community members. They are the ones transferred under the pattern of cooring: through "friendliness" and non-monetary reciprocal obligation.

Those goods and services which come to the farmer and his family from without the community come to him in connection with more recently developed non-traditional relations uniting him to persons outside the community. They fall into quite different patterns of activity. Likewise any person whose occupation makes him both a member of the local community and part of the outside world, by virtue of his relations extending beyond, is also in a position of oscillation between the first and the second relationships.

For there is a continual attempt to extend the pattern of cooring, as with all local familistic and communal obligation and sentiment, outward on the part of the farmers, and a continual extension inward on the part of outsiders of other patterns of relationship. Much of the enduring pattern of town and country relationship evolved in Irish

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society hinges on this point. Much of political life is explained here. Gifts and personal favors, fashioned on the pattern of the extended family and local community, besiege (or used to besiege) magistrates and government officials. Before land reform they besieged such links with the outer world as the older estate system provided, such as the bog warden, the land steward, and the other functionaries of landlords. Yet against this pattern's sway there runs a continual incursion of other patterns which the institutions extending their sway from town life and higher social classes downward provide. In this meeting and conflict of social patterns much is to be learned of the structure of Irish social classes and of the continuing course of Irish social life.

The matter is of interest here only as a summary of the life of the rural community itself. It occupies us only in so far as it points to a conclusion about the kinds of relationship which build up within the local community between the farmers and those of their fellows who are not farmers. There is always a primary distinction among them. There are those who have, quantitatively speaking, most of their activities taken up in relations within the local community alone, and there are those who are divided between the local community and the outside world and who make a bridge between. The former fall in one way or another into the pattern of cooring. They are a "cut below" the farmer, yet his intimates. They are the ones in relation to whom the farmer is the dominant party, since it is the farmer who commissions, hires, or otherwise sets off the other's activity, expert as it may be. The secret of the equivalence of the status of these persons with that of the landless boys lies in these facts. For the boys are in exactly the same case.

The others, however, who are in one way or another part of the outside world, are alike if only in that. Various as they are, they are never in the same case as the local handy

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565 men and the boys. For them the patterns of dominance by
571 the farmer, of recipiency of gifts and cooring favors, of articu-
621 lation with the peasant cliques in the local community, are never complete, because of their conflict with other, external ties. The crossroad shopkeeper, the policeman, the schoolteacher, the priest, the big farmer, even the local man who becomes a county councillor by election, are always a "cut above" the farmers. They come to form a group apart. They take over near-urban standards first. Some of them, of course, priest, schoolteacher, and policeman, are often residents for only a short term. They have come to the country district they serve as strangers and outsiders, if only from the next parish. But a certain aloofness and a certain difference clings to these men even if they are natives by ancestral descent. Contact with the outer world brings in the outer world's ways and sets them apart and a little above.

Only the wanderers, the tinkers, the itinerant beggars, hawkers, and "dealing" men and women, many of them uprooted urban laborers, whose ties are with the towns and whose visits in country districts are short and predatory, fall outside this pattern. They are a special case. They are also many a "cut below" the farmers. They are an outcast lowest class.

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TABLE 7

Relations of Farmers and Non-Farmers in Three Rural Communities in County Clare

The table which follows is a chart of relationships between farmers and non-farmers in the rural communities of Clare. It lists those of different skill or habit with whom the farmers have relations. Those who fall under the pattern of reciprocities, gifts, and cooring, and the goods and services they provide the farmer, appear in one list. Those who fall under other patterns, who do not figure in the obligations of cooring, are listed in another. At the right of each item in each list is a word or phrase characterizing the initiation of the actions taking place between the farmer and the non-farmer in the course of the provision of the goods or services described.

Read another way, the lists arrange in two groups all the local specialists with whom we have been dealing. They show us that the differences are to be found in social relations, not in goods or services rendered or any other factor. All the specialists of whom the authors got information in the country districts are here. The first list describes the specialists whose relations to the farmers are "internal" to the community. The second list describes those persons who connect the farmers with the outside world and are thus "external." List I gives those who enjoy superior prestige and local standing, whose contacts with the community proceed through the heads of families, the adult men, and who are capable of initiating action among them. In that limited sense only they are dominant over the farmers and make a higher class. List II gives those who share inferior prestige and local standing, who form cliques with the "boys," and who are not ordinarily capable of initiating action among the adult members of the community except in a course of communal action employing their special skill. These are a lower class in the country districts by such definition.

This configuration of factors reveals the lines of relationship within the community and those extending outward from it.

The reader may judge for himself how close the connection is between the familistic system of farm life and the structure of the rural community.

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List I

Extra-Familial Relations within the Local Communities, Internal

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations [1]	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services [2]
Weavers	Homespuns, shawls, cloths, blankets		
Tailors	Clothing		
Carpenters	Furniture, houses, buildings		

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case this consists of gifts and cooring.
[2] Unless otherwise indicated, in each case the farmer commissions the labor.

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Smiths	Farm implements, horseshoes, tools, repairs	Gifts, annual payment, and cooring	
Shoemakers	Boots, shoes		
Thatchers	House thatching		
Hayrick experts	Hayrick building		
Masons	House building, sheds, walls		
Wall builders	Walls		
Whitewashers	Limewashing of houses, sheds		
Water diviners and well diggers	Finding and building of wells		
Threshing-machine operators, owners	Threshing	Payment, gifts and cooring	Farmer commissions labor and machine and pays hire
Midwives	Attendance at childbirth		
Bonesetters	Broken bones		
Local "vets"	Treatment of sick animals		
Local "doctors," wise men or women	Treatment of sick; magic		
Domestic servants	Household aid	Wages only for outsiders not kin	Farmer hires and pays hire, otherwise kinship relations hold
Agricultural laborers, employees of big farmers	Occasional aid in agriculture		Either party requests aid
Gravekeepers	Records of grave locations, tending of graves	Wages by priest, gifts and cooring from farmers	Unobserved
Slate quarrymen	Building and roofing slates	Unobserved	Unobserved
Sextons	Tending of churches	Wages by priest	Unobserved
Limekiln and lime burners	Fertilizer	Gifts and cooring from local men, payment for outsiders	Unobserved

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
List II			
Extra-Familial Relations with Local Persons Extending Outside the Local Communities, External			
Special Cases, Occasional Relationship			
Tinkers	Asses, pots, pans, repairs	Occasional trade at the door	Tinker makes rounds
Dealers, hawkers, feather-mongers	Odds and ends, small trade articles. Feather mongers buy feathers from farmers	Occasional trade at the door	Dealer makes rounds
Habitual Relationships			
Crossroad shopkeeper	Supplies liquors, foodstuffs, tobacco, sundries not bought in town. (Most trading of staples done in towns, however.) Collects eggs and butter for sale to produce dealers	Farmer an habitual client, purchasing on long-term credit. Relationship overlaid with obligations of "friendliness," involving reciprocal gifts and occasional advances. Barter significant only in the shopkeepers' acting as depot for eggs and butter sales	Relationship habitual over long term (see other columns)
Civic guards, (police) officials and uniformed men (*Gardai Siochdna*)	Local protection of person and property, apprehension and prosecution of misdemeanor and felony. Informally, police settle disputes, report grievances, give amateur legal advice, and gather census data for governmental departments	By law, civic guards must be neither members of the communities in which they are stationed nor related in it by marriage. They are instructed to maintain close rapport and very friendly relations with local people, and seem to succeed. They go in for much sport with the local young men and boys. They are attached to local barracks but, if they are married, maintain homes in the local community	Assigned to stations on departmental orders

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1935) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Big farmer	Occasional employment of local young men; occasional aid to small farmers and local purchase of corn, vegetables, animals, produce	Of a higher class and wider contacts than the small farmers; most often a townsman by culture and even by residence. In the countryside, close informal contacts with others of his kind over a wide area; interest in fashionable recreation and sport. Contacts with small farmers often friendly but usually few, except where big farmer is active politically	
Cattle and produce dealers	Purchase of produce and livestock, providing chief monetary income of small farmers	When not townsmen, whom the farmer meets only at periodic fairs and markets, these men are usually big farmers. Buy "from the land" (that is, from individual farmers not gathered at the local fairs and markets) very rarely; butter and egg dealers nearly always buy through crossroads shopkeepers	

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Parish priest and curate and other clergy	Religious leadership and moral control. Regulation of personal conduct and family behavior. Settlement of conflicts and disputes. Recommendation of "characters" before the outside world. Regulation of formal beliefs and attitudes, supervision of education in the interests of the accepted *mores*. Priest supplies ceremonial and cultural leadership and takes an active part in nearly all recreational and cultural activity, along with the schoolteacher, in country parishes. Only at times of high ceremony or special devotion, as at marriages, or in pilgrimages and retreats, does the small farmer make use of town churches, though he and his wife often contribute to them	In country districts today formal religious relationship seems to be superseding older paternalistic dominance of parish priest. Little informal contact except in the case of young curates in local sport. But the priest still commands greatest respect and reverence and, in many cases, the love of his parishioners. He is still the local court of appeal and the arbiter of local custom. He is consulted a great deal by both men and women. His parishioners are jealous lest he overstep his sphere of authority, particularly in politics, yet they concur in granting him obedience in everything else. Nevertheless the older magical power he possessed once is gone. Today he is often superior to the small farmers in wealth and education, and is not one of them. His more usual associates are other clergy, big farmers, and townsmen	

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER XIII

Markets and the Community

621 IN rural Ireland what we have called the "rural community" is no simply defined geographical area. Any one of the recognized divisions of the countryside in Ireland, a townland, a group of townlands, a parish, an old barony, a mountain upland, a portion of a valley floor or plain, except perhaps the newer administrative divisions, is in a sense a community. The lines of relationship among the small farmers are continuous from one of these to another across the land. Geographic barriers serve only to deflect the lines of this continuum, not to divide it.

621 186 We observe of a farmer of Luogh, for example, that he coors largely in Luogh townland. But he has kinsmen scattered around about as far as Mount Elva, four miles to the north, and Liscannor, three miles to the south. He attends the parish church of Killilagh, a two-mile walk from his house, but sends his children to school at Ballycotton, only a mile off. He does most of his shopping in Roadford, a crossroad settlement two miles away. Yet he takes his larger produce for sale and his larger needs of purchase to the market town of Ennistymon, some eight miles off, or the smaller one of Lisdoonvarna, some five miles off. He votes and pays his taxes as a member of a certain electoral district which overlaps exactly none of these regions. He associates himself in tradition with Clare and Munster as a North Clare man, rather than with Galway and Connaught.

[p.282]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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though he may have seen very little of either beyond his 621
market towns. The small farmer of Luogh has allegiances 186
to all these communities. He is quite ready to find his emotion stirred in any one of them. He is ready to back the men of Luogh against the men of the neighboring townland; to back those of the mountain region against those of the valley lands; those of his parish against the rest; those of the countryside against the towns of Lisdoonvarna and Ennistymon; those of North Clare against other sections of the county; those of Clare against all other counties; those of his class against all others; of his religion against all others; of his nation against all others. Each one of these allegiances has a geographical base, though in the last analysis each one of these is built up out of his personal experience of human relations.

A study of the local community among the small farmers 621
must thus be a study of the geographic basis of their relationships. In the course of such study an inquiry into the spatial relationships involved in the distribution of produce and shop goods between the farms and the market towns is a first step.

The chief agencies of distribution in the countryside 438
draw upon well-marked areas. Each crossroad shop, each hamlet, each market town, each fair, has its own hinterland. In recent years creameries have grown up at strategic places. Likewise, in the same years, larger towns have pushed their hinterlands farther back into the country districts, and motor lorries go even into the back roads.

The definition of such market areas and the demarcation of those into which such a rural county as Clare can be divided is a relatively simple task. It can be reached by plotting out on the map lists of customers' names and addresses obtained from each of the myriad crossroad centers and clusters of shops sprinkled over the county, combining them with others obtained from records of tolls paid by

He later put on the suit for Mass, and wore it at the Divine Service and afterwards, until he returned home. Although there was a disparity of over thirty years in the ages of my cousin and that of his father, the resemblance caused by the unusual dress was striking. 764 292

This custom of wearing clothes for the dead is still quite strong in Tuosist. It is also practised either fully, or in varying degrees of decadence, in some of the surrounding parishes, as well as in the south-western part of the adjoining county of Cork. In the Dingle peninsula, further north, in West Kerry, the custom now is to bring a suit of clothes for the dead person in a parcel to Mass on the three prescribed Sundays. A suit of clothes which had already belonged to the deceased suffices for the fulfilment of the practice in some districts in the southwest of Ireland, where, as far as can be judged by the vigour of its survival, the custom had its stronghold. It is difficult to say whether the accounts of the wearing of clothes for the dead in Counties Cavan and Wexford, which I have been given, point to a country-wide distribution in olden times or to the practice having taken hold in these two widely separated counties through some other cause.

The elaborate ceremony carried out by Mrs. Healy after the death of my uncle, which I have described above, was confined to the first Saturday evening and Sunday morning. My cousin took off the suit on his return from Mass on that day, and wore it at Mass again on the two succeeding Sundays, without any preliminary ceremony. Even when a neighbour wears the clothes instead of some member of the household, he must return them to the house on each of the first two Sundays; he may retain them altogether after the third Sunday, if the immediate relatives so arrange. Otherwise they are given to some poor person to wear in the normal way. A neighbour is called upon to wear the clothes only when there is no relative of the deceased who can fulfil the custom, e.g., when the sons of the dead man have emigrated or are too young for the purpose. [602] [621]

Almost everybody in the parish of Tuosist, where, as I have said, the practice of wearing clothes for the dead at Mass on three consecutive Sundays after the interment is still faithfully carried out, is a Catholic, and a large congregation attends Mass every Sunday. After Mass, it is customary for the people to spend some time chatting near the church when Mass is over. They all notice that a certain young man from the parish, as the case may be, is dressed like an old man on three particular Sundays, but, knowing well that he is fulfilling the age-old custom referred to, they pass no comment on it. While the custom of wearing the clothes for adults is still strong in the parish, the Saturday evening and Sunday morning rituals have, however, now died out.

It is evident from the words used by Mrs. Healy in the Saturday evening ritual ("may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this") that the traditional and original intention of the making of a special suit of clothes in this manner was to provide the dead person with raiment in the afterworld. That the dead were believed to have some kind of continuing existence after passing from this life is also indicated by, among other things, the variety of goods which were buried in coffins with the dead: in Ireland, we have references to such things as food, pipes, tobacco, defensive weapons, tools or implements, watches and other jewellery, as well as money, being placed in coffins in former times. The practice was well-known in other countries also. Prior to the introduction of the special cerements for the bodies of the dead, which have come to be known in Catholic lands as habits, it was customary to fit out the dead for burial in their best clothes. Young unmarried girls were often dressed as brides in Northern Europe, 764 775 292

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp 361
along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. 621
Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawl- 494
ing village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train
runs between the two.

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this re- 185
moteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. 621
Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive 234
through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic
liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many
of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing
machine, out of an English steel works, and some
of the houses own a mechanical cream separator,
even though next door a wooden hand churn is still
in use which looks no different from those found
deep in the bogs.

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. 185
They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But 621
in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's
attention turns to the life into which these few
strays of modernity find their way.

For Luogh is like many another community of 621
small farms over Clare and southern and western 184
Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are 181
even more remote. Many are better off; some few
are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language
better; others have abandoned it altogether for the
brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic
still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded
in their common folk life.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

IV

Boys and Men

I HAVE mentioned the rural community several 621 times throughout the previous lectures. Irish rural familism is nothing if not bound to one's own stretch of countryside. But nowhere have I defined the term. I have given you no adequate picture of the countryman's way of life which ties it fast to time and place. I admit the deficiency. In self-justification I can only plead my inability. A full-sized study of the human being within a specific setting is not my art. It is that of the novelist.

Yet the question of the organization of the community confronts the social anthropologist. He seeks to analyse the means by which men relate themselves over space and time. In Ireland, the question is important for the student of old custom, too. For tradition works locally.

Irish familism is of the soil. It operates most strongly within allegiances to a definite small area. Life moves within this area for the countryman; he very rarely goes beyond it except on periodic visits to his market town. He counts his fellows from within these same narrow bounds. Beyond the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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621 next stream, over the next hill, down the valley, a similar allegiance begins and ends. Across the line are people no different from himself; but they are 'strangers', 'from beyond', or 'from the other side'.

The countryman's round of life brings him into contact, close and intimate, with those within this area. The others in turn group themselves about him, through attachment to home and familiar associations. It is this group, defined variously in space, less so perhaps in numbers, that makes up the local community. However its topographic range may correspond to man-made or natural divisions of the earth's face, it is, first of all, a habit-woven social unity. Anyone who knows a summer resort has felt this fact. How little force the common landscape has in welding disparities, such as 'the summer people' and 'the natives'! Anyone who remembers childhood can recall the boundaries between his own gang and the next. For childish empires carve up space as quickly as do full-grown warrior bands.

To relate the form of the community, then, to rural life, once again leads to human behaviour. If I am to show you Irish familism in its proper local setting, I must bring you once more to observe and watch and question the life of the present. I do not mean the great antiquity of local groupings has no importance. Townland boundaries, parish lines, market areas, baronies, counties, dioceses and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

provinces often still today mark divisions among 621
human beings that go back variously into remote past ages. A cleavage of the earth's face agreed upon long ago between forgotten clans can still persist in memory and influence conduct. The boundary of a parish, along which just the other day the countrymen fought hard-contested hurley-matches may once have marked an ancient kingdom's frontier. I mean, rather, that to understand the local past, one must first know the local present. Only then is it clear how such tradition moves and how it wields its force among men.

Therefore, I wish to devote this lecture to directing your attention inside such lines, to the behaviours which pattern local life inside them. We have already examined much of those that mark distinctions within the community, dividing it by 'blood' and by prestige. A good deal more could well be said of kinship and social stratification, were it not that we must hurry on. The existence of similar patterns which redirect integration across such distinctions is a new challenge.

One such pattern thrusts itself into notice im- 561
mediately and insistently in rural Ireland. It clusters about age and age status. The conducts and sentiments round age are perhaps the most important factor, after familism, in shaping the countryman's way of life. Naturally, they are related to all that I have described before; they dovetail into family life. In them, the community

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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have met in Luogh. None has ten cows, and only 361
one has a single beast. Except for the eight houses huddled in the village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard wall. In the case of the villagers, the fields are scattered about and behind the haggards in irregular patterns. Besides these home fields, most of Rynamona has two or three acres in additions carved out for them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles off.

Rynamona is a closely knit community. Re- 621
duplicated bonds of kinship unite all the house- 602
holds. "We are all related one way or another", they say. 'Cooring' is the usual form of co-operation. The village holds itself responsible amid grumbles for maintaining the borheen which leads out to the outside world of the towns. Nowadays, the County Council pays the sons who break [499]
stones and lay them in the winter months, but the village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder. Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of paths criss-crosses the fields in all directions.

Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the 573
village, is the 'old men's house'. Mrs. Ruin, a neighbour, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village. "The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?"

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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571 *oblige*. In the same way, the old men's clique
573 operates.

For here in the old men's house, the countryman's way of life exerts its strongest sway upon him. It is the 'parliament' of his fellows. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. Agriculture, perhaps, comes first. Times of sowing, reaping and harvesting are debated. Prices are compared, innovations tested. Traditional methods receive their strongest support here, in the web of legend, proverb and reference to the past the speakers throw round them.

Much of the community's relation to the outer
573 world takes its form here, determined in the old
621 men's argument and agreement. In late years this
66 has come to be called 'politics'. Petitions for relief road work, for expansion of agricultural prize schemes, most, in fact, of the business of the County Council and its committees originates on the side of local community in the discussions of the old men's *cuaird*. It is here, too, that the community reaches unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for instance, it is felt that the interest of all demands that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. Consequently, even O'Halloran, the 'drawer down', whose private views leaned in a different direction from those of the villagers, begged that no word of his heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of Rynamona. "I wouldn't want

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

them to think I wasn't with them", he put it. No 573 621 wonder, then, that the political allegiances of whole countrysides are constant factors in Irish politics. [66]

The community reaches agreement upon its 621 internal affairs, too, through the old men's dis- 573 cussions. It is in just this type of activity that one 626 can at last put one's finger upon that nebulous force among men: public opinion. That force is not implemented; it is merely the power of gossip and censure; only in critical days, as in the time of land agitation, can it rise to action, as a last resort, and win itself an international name: the boycott. But it is none the less powerful.

But, in rural Ireland, the group through which 573 this power flows serves another function which 888 cannot be disassociated from its role as the seat of 538 public opinion. The members of the old men's *cuaird* are the living repositories of tradition. In communities, such as Luogh, where the Irish language lingers on, many of them are *seanachaidhthe* or story-tellers. Among them the ancient repertories of legend, saga and folk-tale still find an audience. That the exponents of fairy-lore have always been, and are still, old men and old women, is no social accident. For the pattern of local life retains its continuity and preserves what it can of its conformity with the past through them.

But what of the young men, those who have not 884 attained full status? They do not attend at the old 573 men's house; they take no part in the deliberations

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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over the countryside. At least, O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were 'landless' men; they could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism they were condemned to celibacy; neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place there for them, except as Oscair's behaviour showed, as 'playboys' and entertainers. So they, too, must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

For once again the examination of rural life leads one perforce to concepts of structural balance. The organization of the community takes its form in the social behaviour of cliques among the countrypeople. That behaviour cannot be disassociated from the characteristic alignment of sentiment and interests which at once separates and reintegrates the generations. And the alignment itself in its turn relates the countrymen to one another in the community, upon the basis of relative age, with the familistic nexus in which are balanced prestige, command, the land and the continuities of descent. That to which the countryman is attached is a social order, as Sir Horace Plunkett alone among the commentators on the Irish scene could see. And a social order is an active living growth whose embrace soon gathers in the whole of life.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

potato was one of the factors that led to the decline of rundale agriculture, both because of its late harvest and because it resulted in increased populations which brought disastrous subdivision of the holdings. Under the " gavelkind " code of inheritance a man's property was divided equally among all his sons, so that the impossibly small fields came to be spoken of not as the standard " cow's grass," but as a " foot " and even a half-foot or " cleet." 174 221 361 [428]

Much has been written of the drawbacks of the rundale system. It is so easy to condemn it—the " fights, trespasses, confusion, disputes and assaults " to which it gave rise, the wretched poverty which it bred, the evil consequences of dwelling in packed house clusters—that it is well to recall the better side of the system before it fell into decline. A writer in 1853 has left his " recollections of nights of social converse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of defence against bailiff or gauger which contrasted mournfully with the solitary grandeur of the new dwelling." Another apologist wrote : " the closer the rundale system is followed, the more the unwritten customs and regulations observed, the more do intelligent tenants regret a departure from them." Many of its better features, indeed, have survived the enclosure movement and the separation of farms ; we may cite co-operation in farm work and the social fire-side evenings or " caileys." " Gatherings " of many kinds, for work and pleasure, distinguished the rundale communities. Every village had its musician, piper or fiddler, who was often maimed in some way and supported himself by his skill. Folk songs, occupational airs and epic tales were kept alive in this way. 174 621

It was formerly the task of an appointed leader in a townland or group of townlands to see that customs were observed, to arrange the casting of lots in re-allotting strips, and so on. Probably we should see in the " king " not long ago recognized as leader in such communities as Rathlin and Tory a relic of this custom. [622]

To understand the village-system in working order we must see it as part of a wider pattern in which cattle-herding 174 621 221 231

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

V

174 played a dominant part, to which the claims of agriculture were
● 621 subordinated. It was customary for the young folk, and in
221 some cases the whole family, to leave the village as soon as the
231 crops were sown and migrate to summer pastures among the hills. This custom is still widely followed in various mountain areas in Europe, for instance Switzerland and Spain, where it can be shown to be of great antiquity. To it the name "transhumance" is given, but we shall use the term "booleying," from "booley" (milking place), or summer hill dwelling. It is strange that scarcely any attention has been given or any importance attached to this aspect of the Irish past, despite its direct bearing on the social and cultural as well as the economic development of rural Ireland, on language and literature, music and the arts. From rare memories or survivals of the custom—it is still followed on Achill Island—and by analogy with transhumant societies overseas, we can envisage the part played by booleying in ancient Ireland, where its wide occurrence was facilitated by the presence of scattered mountain masses in all parts of the island (Chapter 2). We shall refer to some survivals below. The illustration (Fig. 15) shows a bullock's "horn" which used to be blown not long ago at a farm in the Torr Head district of Co. Antrim, to summon people together. One is tempted to see in this custom a relic of the pastoral heritage. Traditions of hospitality are a common accompaniment of pastoral life: there is no need to stress the reputation of the country people in this connexion, but it is relevant to add that the lavish hospitality for which the landed aristocracy have been famous may well have been derived from Gaelic custom.

534

Fig. 15.

Wherever it is found, this seasonal nomadism assumes a ritual significance, especially where, as in the old Ireland, cattle are its main concern. Thus the departure of the herds and their attendants in spring is accompanied by festivities and ceremonial; and the return to the homestead in autumn is the occasion for the rejoicings and reunions of Hallowe'en, when the youngsters play seasonal games among themselves and tricks upon their elders. We shall revert to this topic in chapter 17. Here we are concerned rather to describe the life

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the 174
cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of 621
the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, 221
together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the 231
hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, "the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in "booley" or "boley" 221
assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the 342
actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were 343
generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had 221
two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed 234
in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular "town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of "whitemeats" that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter [25]
appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This "bog-butter" frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations: it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter.

228 to collect one stone in an hour. Kelp
[381] (seaweed) burning for iodine on the beaches was almost extinct by 1894.[17]

Settlement and Population

361 Of the 96 houses counted as inhabited, 53 are in five hamlets and another six in a loose cluster near the harbor. There is no village as the term is commonly understood, though the main center is beside the harbor, where the inn occupies the one-time "big house" of the Allies family, with the church and the Post Office a short distance away. In all there are eight shops, none of which
[444] is recognizable from the outside, as everyone knows them: one is attached to the inn, another to the Post Office, a third occupies a specially built room in a farmyard, and the rest are in front rooms of houses. All the houses except about six have land attached.

Is this nucleated settlement as such?
361 On the first Ordnance Survey map (1838) there were large clusters of houses
178 and on the 1898 map the vast majority
● 621 of the houses were in clusters. The redistribution of land and building of new houses has broken up many hamlets or made new ones, for example in Knock townland (405 acres) where an old hamlet on a sandy site has been replaced by a new one on drier ground by the shore, with 15 of the townland's 17 houses. In Cloonamore (663 acres)
361 eight houses are placed along the shore
621 and eleven others scattered over the hillside; in Middlequarter (608 acres) there are eleven houses in the main hamlet, six beside the harbor and eleven others at various points beside the shore or on side roads; in Fawnmore (199 acres) six houses out of sixteen are in a loosely defined hamlet; and in West-
361 quarter (523 acres) nine houses out of

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[p.208(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the rural community. It is convenient for the farmer to live among his fields near his stock—to look after the calving cow—and for the farmer's wife to keep a close watch on her poultry. (Not long ago, as we shall see, it was quite common for the cows to share the kitchen, and the cow-byre and dwelling house are still often under the same roof.) But for jobs requiring traction-implements or expensive tools the help of neighbours is necessary. The small family-farm can support only one horse, and thus there is a good deal of co-operation, perforce, among neighbours in tilling the ground, in harvest work and other operations. Both seed-time and harvest are, in the Irish climate, seasons of heavy pressure, when the work must be got through speedily, and nothing is so conducive to speed as a 'gathering' of neighbours among whom a spirit of rivalry acts as a spur. These relics of former communal habits are becoming less frequent with mechanization, but in many districts not less than a quarter of the small farmers possess only one horse, so that 'joining' or 'cooring' to make up a two-horse team is usual. In all such cases no money payments are made. A fairly common practice, however, is for the small farmer to buy a second horse at the February fairs and sell it in May after the spring work is finished.

In this and other ways the isolated houses are bound by ties of neighbourhood and friendship so that one may think of them as forming close-knit communities lacking only the physical nucleation of former times. The improving planners, eager to confer urban amenities on the countryside, would have 'housing schemes' and planned villages in place of scattered houses, but nothing could be less suitable under existing conditions. Physical independence is the price paid for good neighbourliness. The old clachans, necessary so long as the infield-outfield or rundale method of land-use was practised, became a hopeless anachronism when new tools and new crops brought with them a rotational system and hedged fields.

We have little knowledge of the nature of rural settlement in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, but since partnership farming, presumably with clachans and rundale, is well attested in ancient Ireland and is known to have been widespread in the eighteenth century it is safe to suppose that there was a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

III

BALLY AND BOOLEY

BAILE (bally) is the Gaelic word for the home-place or townland,[1] Ireland's smallest administrative unit; buaile (booley) the name of the summer milking-place or shieling where in times past the flocks and their tenders spent the summer months. I believe that seasonal nomadism (transhumance) between bally and booley is an important and neglected aspect of Irish social history, and one which goes far to explain many features of traditional life. It is significant that the Irish word for a boy (buachaill) originally meant a herdsman. The charge of nomadism, using the word in its worst connotation, which English writers made against the Irish, finds some justification in the prevalence of a pastoral economy which was, in fact, more comparable to that of the Swiss peasants or the Norwegian milk-girls. Wherever transhumance is or has been practised, it is associated with difficult environments and marginal conditions, where it has provided opportunities for escape from authority and served as a means of preserving and transmitting ancient traditions. This is well illustrated in the example of the Carpathian shepherds of Roumania. 221

It is clear from the Irish laws and from the findings of archaeology that farming practice had permitted some degree of permanent settlement long before the dawn of the Middle Ages, probably by early Celtic times. Of all the administrative units 423 621

[1] I have discussed the townland unit in my *Mourne Country*, Ch. 11. My colleague Mr. J. B. Arthurs thinks that the word *baile* may be a very old pre-Goidelic word, and that where 'ballys' are numerous the indigenous peoples had been left mainly undisturbed by Goidelic expansion.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

423 of different sizes and various origins into which rural Ireland
621 is divided—townland, parish, barony, diocese, rural district and so on—it is the townland which most closely touches the daily life and social relations of the countryman. The townland is his postal address, for individual farms preserve their historic communal anonymity: they still belong to the townland though they have become separate units since the 'town' or cluster has broken up. The farms rarely carry any names other than those of their owner (Mulligan's place, Thomson's farm or merely
[103] O'Brien's) and since there may be a dozen O'Briens in a
[551] particular townland various nicknames[1] and patronymics are used to distinguish between them. Thus one farm may be Kilty O'Brien's (from its left-handed owner), another Patsy Kate O'Brien's (from the owner's mother), and a third Yank O'Brien's (a returned emigrant, this). Similarly, the public house takes its title not from the brewers who supply it or from heraldic beasts such as the Red Lion but from the Mooneys or the Murnaghans who own it. Shops in country towns, too,
[602] carry personal names, and the nucleus of their trade is built up among blood relations.

423 The townland names, involving so many land holdings, are
621 legal titles, and their Gaelic names, however erroneously spelt on the Ordnance Survey maps, are fossilized in their current
103 forms. Only an Act of Parliament can alter them. A glance at any six-inch Ordnance map will reveal the strange names that Gaelic imagination contrived and English scribes corrupted. Here are a few which I have come across in Ulster: Ballywillwill, Ballymunterhiggin, Aghayeevoge, Treantaghmucklagh. In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of them named Ballybeg (little town). Some 2,000 townlands begin with Knock (a hill); there are sixty called Tully and there are eleven Edens. The degree of repetition shows that these names have come down from a time when life was organized on a local basis. There are between 60,000 and 70,000 townlands in Ireland, averaging 325 acres or
423 ½ sq. mile, and the average townland population in the rural
621 areas is perhaps fifty. In fact their size varies considerably,
184

[1]Writing in 1682 (*West-Meath*, 113), Sir Henry Piers noticed their prevalence in that county '. . . so as no man whatever can escape a nickname.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

since they were based on the fertility of the land rather than its acreage, and it seems that many moorland tracts were not divided until fairly recent times, for they were formerly shared as common summer pasturage by the people of a whole parish or barony, covering 100 sq. miles or more. In such hilly areas the townlands may be as much as 2,000 acres: on the other hand in thickly-settled lowlands they are frequently less than 100 acres, and some anomalous fragments of an acre or two are designated townlands. This diversity also reflects cultural differences both between regions and between various classes from the kings and chiefs down to the humblest of bondmen. The first Ordnance Survey (1830–42) suppressed many of the local names for subdivisions and applied the term townland universally. Though the townland appears to have been equated with an agricultural unit, the ploughland or *seisrach*, it is clear that in many parts of the country 'the cow's grass' was the effective unit of measurement. Of Donegal about 1840 we read: 'The land is never let, sold or devised by the acre, but by 'a cow's grass'. This is a complement of land well understood by the people, being in fact the general standard; and they judge of the dimensions of a holding by its being to the extent, as the case may be, of one, two or three 'cows' grass'. They have divided not only into the fourth part of a cow's grass, called a 'foot', but into the eighth part of a cow's grass, or half a foot, denominated 'a cleet'.'[1] In Bantry, Co. Cork, land was let 'in the wilder parts by what is termed the gneeve, which is the twelfth part of a townland, and therefore of very undefined acreage'.[2]

To judge from surviving examples of clachans and openfields, it was customary for each house in the cluster to have a small enclosure or 'gort' (garden) adjacent to it, their high walls lining a maze of narrow lanes winding haphazard among the houses (Fig. 6). These settlements were characterized by an extreme disorder, as though the houses, in the words of one writer, had fallen 'in a shower from the sky'.[3] Linear villages, it is true, are not uncommon along the western seaboard,

[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 26.
[2] *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1844), s.v. Bantry.
[3] Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (1839), 353.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

BALLY AND BOOLEY

These clachans, while some had their speciality such as weaving or thatching, were concerned primarily and almost exclusively with agriculture and attracted none of the elements of the true village, whether church, inn or shops. Itinerant 'tinkers and tailors' paid periodic visits and with the pedlars and beggars brought news of other districts, but the economic and social needs of the hamlet were met by periodic visits to the fairs and by seasonal gatherings of various kinds. Within the group the bonds of kinship were close and strong, and ties of marriage carrying reciprocal responsibilities linked one clachan with another within small neighbourhood units consisting of perhaps half a dozen townlands. With the close kinship bonds went corresponding rivalries with adjacent neighbourhoods which provided social motive force by acting as incentives. These rivalries broke out characteristically into feuds and blood-letting at fairs and gatherings. But in later days, at any rate, internal rivalries and squabbles were more conspicuous and found more opportunities within overgrown kinship groups which had become too complicated to function smoothly. A few illustrations will suffice. 361 621

One visitor explained the presence of the back-doors on clustered houses, for which we shall offer other explanations in the following chapter, by the fact that the women needed an escape when too hotly engaged in rows with neighbours.[1] Joint ownership sometimes extended to single animals with strange results. For example: 'three men were concerned in one horse; but the poor brute was rendered useless, as the unfortunate foot of the supernumerary leg remained unshod . . . and accordingly it became quite lame.[2] We are reminded of the difficulties arising from the joint ownership of fruit trees in some Mediterranean countries. It was in Donegal too that I heard of a ram which died of exposure when it was part-shorn by one of its joint owners. In the same district a man wishing to build a wall around one of his fields but unable to get his neighbour to agree, deliberately erected it a yard or two on his own side of the boundary so that the neighbour would still be forced to herd or tether his cow to prevent it trespassing on the 361 578 311 423 [422]

[1]Isaac Weld, *Statistical Survey of Roscommon* (1832), 475.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 23.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of 343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of • 621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

592 162

Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [198] [177] [65] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. 342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [718] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [516] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

potato was one of the factors that led to the decline of rundale 174
agriculture, both because of its late harvest and because it 221
resulted in increased populations which brought disastrous 361
subdivision of the holdings. Under the " gavelkind " code of inheritance a man's property was divided equally among all his sons, so that the impossibly small fields came to be spoken [428] of not as the standard " cow's grass," but as a " foot " and even a half-foot or " cleet."

Much has been written of the drawbacks of the rundale 174
system. It is so easy to condemn it—the " fights, trespasses, 621
confusion, disputes and assaults " to which it gave rise, the wretched poverty which it bred, the evil consequences of dwelling in packed house clusters—that it is well to recall the better side of the system before it fell into decline. A writer in 1853 has left his " recollections of nights of social converse, of aid in sickness, of sympathy in joy and sorrow, of combined operations of defence against bailiff or gauger which contrasted mournfully with the solitary grandeur of the new dwelling." Another apologist wrote : " the closer the rundale system is followed, the more the unwritten customs and regulations observed, the more do intelligent tenants regret a departure from them." Many of its better features, indeed, have survived the enclosure movement and the separation of farms ; we may cite co-operation in farm work and the social fire-side evenings or " caileys." " Gatherings " of many kinds, for work and pleasure, distinguished the rundale communities. Every village had its musician, piper or fiddler, who was often maimed in some way and supported himself by his skill. Folk songs, occupational airs and epic tales were kept alive in this way.

It was formerly the task of an appointed leader in a [622] townland or group of townlands to see that customs were observed, to arrange the casting of lots in re-allotting strips, and so on. Probably we should see in the " king " not long ago recognized as leader in such communities as Rathlin and Tory a relic of this custom.

To understand the village-system in working order we 174
must see it as part of a wider pattern in which cattle-herding 621 221 231

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

226 to him by old fishermen at from £30 to £100, so that the loss of this industry must have told considerably on a poor community such as this. The primitive method which he found in use on his visit to the islands he describes in full as it was explained by Michael Halloran, the 'king'[1] of Inishshark, a veteran harpooner, who had just killed his nineteenth fish a few days before.

"I had been told that these sun-fish generally took from sixteen to eighteen hours, and frequently longer, to kill; in fact, I have heard it sometimes took two days, so naturally felt considerable interest in the gear used for the purpose. The king brought with him his trusty harpoon, which, to my mind, looked a most antiquated arrangement, especially designed to cut out of a fish, instead of holding it. I could not see a whale-boat or anything like one, so inquired where the boat was, and was shown an ordinary square-sterned boat, about 16 feet in the keel, which had nailed on her starboard bow a piece of wood about 1 foot long, with three small notches, or scores, barely half an inch deep, cut in it. I found out that these notches or scores were all they had to run the line through, and that when a boat fastened a fish, it was a pulling match between our friend the shark on one hand, and sixteen men on the other, a regular case of 'pull devil, pull baker'! Such a thing as a bollard head to take a turn of the line round seems never to have entered their heads."

226 501

In addition to fishing and farming, the other occupations are fish-curing at the station recently established by the landlord, Cyril Allies, Esq., J.P., who resides on the island, and personally superintends it, and the trades, represented by a boat-builder, a blacksmith, a shoemaker who imports his leather from the mainland, a tailor, who still adheres to the old method of measuring his clients without a tape, using instead a sheet of paper, on which the several lengths are recorded by "snips," or notches cut with the scissors; there is one weaver who makes use of a rather archaic form of hand-loom, four men who, on occasion, act as sawyers, extemporising a saw-pit in the nearest convenient spot by the aid of trestles, and using to mark their lines a cord blackened with the ashes of straw or shavings, and finally, a fiddler.

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[622] [1] In answer to an inquiry of mine relative to the position of king, Mr. Myles Joyce, National Teacher of Bofin, writes:—"The title of king is not hereditary in the island. There is at present a man removed something beyond his neighbours in the way of education and position, who is, *par excellence*, the king; and to whom all persons who want any information about the island or its history must apply."

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

> conditions appraised. The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuard* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190-191).

573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [875] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process. since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves," assessed the situation accurately.

628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

521 203 571 [574] [512]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [521] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gael receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

625 There are no police, called *gardai* and "guards," in the island, but three, including a sergeant, are posted in a nearby island and visit Inis Beag at least once a month. Crime is virtually unknown among the folk, the few cases on record 674 [683] [684] being for assault and battery and destruction of property; most cases are civil ones, involving property ownership and inheritance, and are tried intermittently by a visiting magistrate. The guards are subjected to frequent criticism and derision, 829 625 especially when they come to the island dressed in plain-clothes to search for [673]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

 793

the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a 829
symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter [123]
despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic 793
and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among 829
themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of 178
pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should 624
be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control 876
system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have [626]
been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older [793]
men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs [178]
and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance
although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they [666]
were provided with food, given *curach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was
owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are [793]

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624 875 [793] [554] more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held, because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches. [591] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

895 593 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him 895 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity 896 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in [861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This [123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents [171] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 [829] Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority sentiment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and [123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

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with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his customers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna-Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
659 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *ceaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
889 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement. . . . It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. . . . Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

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> conditions appraised. The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191).

573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [875] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

521 203 571 [674] [512]

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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious reten-
tions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip,
674 ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
829 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians, and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

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829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [521] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gáel receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

2 625 There are no police, called *gardai* and "guards," in the island, but three, including a sergeant, are posted in a nearby island and visit Inis Beag at least 674 once a month. Crime is virtually unknown among the folk, the few cases on record [683] being for assault and battery and destruction of property; most cases are civil ones, [684] involving property ownership and inheritance, and are tried intermittently by a 829 visiting magistrate. The guards are subjected to frequent criticism and derision, 625 especially when they come to the island dressed in plain-clothes to search for [673]

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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardai*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

i:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 activity over the farm and over the round of the year. Coupled with such greater variety, there is also a greater freedom of choice among necessary tasks. The necessities imposed by soil and climate permit a wider range of action and a less narrowly repetitious routine than do the ordered regularities of a household.

512 Yet within the greater range of activity there is still a
221 constant and nearly invariant pattern of work. The progression of the seasons brings a recurrent demand upon the farmer in the care of beasts, crops, and the land itself. Each season brings a task which must be performed, begun, or ended if the farmer is to raise his produce successfully.
512 Similarly, the custom and rivalry of the community exert
626 a further restriction upon his activity. He works within the influence of a long-established tradition of ancestral experience which has established for him the best dates for planting, for reaping, for breeding cattle, and for most of the tasks of his yearly round. The community holds that tradition in common, and the farmer is caught in the midst of a mesh of rivalries, competitions, and gossip in praise and condemnation, which binds him the more strongly to the accepted patterning of his yearly activity.

512 The seasonal rhythm of farm work reaches its lowest pitch
221 in winter. Activity is confined to house and haggard. On bitter wet days little can be done beyond the haggard wall,
462 but within it there is always a variety of necessary tasks involving care of farm machinery, implements, and buildings, and the housing and feeding of the cattle who cannot be driven to graze in the open field. In the house there is much that can be done. Harness can be patched, boots fitted with new soles, plates, and spikes, furniture repaired and occasionally new pieces made.

These tasks fall to the males of the household, the farmer father and his grown or adolescent sons. Any discussion of the annual round of farm work necessarily describes their

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 the best of his ability. Though he can make what disposal
462 he will of the funds earned by the labor of the group, his wife and children can expect as of right that he shall make it for the family as a whole in which each member receives his share. For the work of his wife is complementary to his, and in its own sphere of as great importance to the livelihood and the organization of the family unit. While he may demand and expect of his wife that she fulfill her household duties, so may she demand and expect that he fulfill his in the management and working of the farm and in providing for herself and the children.

593 As regards income, all money derived from the sale of eggs and butter, the chief concern of the women beyond the house itself, belongs to her to dispose of as she sees fit. Yet the fruits of her labors are also subject to the needs of the family unit, husband and children.

462 The division of labor between the sexes arises within a
593 field of larger interests and obligations. It is part of the behavior expected reciprocally of husband and wife. It is a functional element of their relationship within the family.

868 The training each sex receives from childhood in farm work reflects this fact. Each learns his or her part in farm economy, not as a vocational preparation but as a making ready for marriage. The boy acquires his man's skills and techniques for the farm and farm family he may head himself some day; the girl learns the woman's role as an integral part of her future state of wife and mother. Each learns to expect of the other not only the loving consideration of husband or wife but the proper skills in farm economy.

462 Among the small farmers this dichotomy of tasks assigned
● 626 to the sexes in the economy of the farm family is more even
183 than the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, father and mother. It is also an integral part of the personalities of all men and women of the peasant's own kind. One can get many expressions of attitude of this sort. They show that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the division of labor between males and females is regarded 462
as corresponding to the natural propensities of the two sexes. 626
That a man should concern himself with a woman's work, 183
such as the sale of eggs or the making of butter, is the subject of derisive laughter, while a woman's smaller hands make it "natural" for her to be a better hand at milking the cows.

Even when the communal labor of the family is demanded 241
and women take their place in bog, garden, and meadow, 462
a definite role is assigned them. Usually it is the lighter tasks which are known as women's work. There is no formal [562]
taboo confining a woman to women's work. Heavy work is merely felt to be a hardship upon her. At the potato planting the women do the arduous work of planting the sprouts which they have prepared, bending over to put them into the ridges prepared by the men. They do their share, if necessary, of cultivating, but they are not generally accustomed to the spade, which like the plough, the harrow, the mower, scythe, and turf "slan" is regarded as a masculine implement. At the potato lifting they go along behind the man who turns the potatoes out of the ridge with spade and plough, and pick them up. At the haymaking, the pitching, raking, and some of the building of the haycocks are left to them. But the mowing, especially where it involves the horse-drawn mowing machine, and the building of the rick in the haggard, are masculine skills. In all cases of field work of this sort the role of the woman is usually auxiliary. The same holds in turf cutting. The men do the actual [314]
cutting in the bog trenches, while the women knead the peat into briquets and pile it for drying.

The many attitudes and beliefs which surround this type 241
of division of labor illustrate again the socially determined 462
character of the distinctions and their genesis in the inter- 626
sexual relationship. Just as the man's work is the harder, 183
the more various, and the wider in scope, so the attitudes
express a greater valuation of the men's work within the 461

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241 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the
462 authors have heard men admonish a woman for interrup-
626 tion with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we
183 [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laugh-
461 ter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conven-
593 tional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral
183 specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within the farm family. The connection between family status and
626 labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the non-economic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 Within the framework of the division of labor on the
593 basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the
561 basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

462 561 593 868 the household, he has full control of them, disposes of them, drives them to the fair, handles and uses the money got for them. If he fails to get a good price, handles the beasts badly, or proves himself a bad judge of them, the criticism of his wife and neighbors soon establishes the value of careful husbandry in the son's mind.

462 593 868 The father does all the constant heavy work necessary to keep the land in condition in so rainy and treeless a country. He makes drains, ditches, fences, walls, shelters, and barns, as we have seen. As the son grows older, he learns to help at these tasks, finally taking them over. The father prepares the garden, ploughs, plants, and harrows, does all the spade work of cultivation and everything involving the use of horses and agricultural implements. The son soon learns that these are men's tasks, and he gradually assumes his share of them. The adult men of the neighborhood rival one another at these tasks; they chafe and boast back and forth over their prowess. The son cannot fail to hear and value 462 the techniques which he acquires.

593 868 626 He learns those techniques in a narrow school. Where tradition is still so strong and the incursions of trained agriculturalists still relatively infrequent, as among the small farmers, there is little variation from the tried and true way. Each operation and each tool demand a technique of their own. The father makes sure that the son learns it well. Command, rivalry, ridicule, and many an adage and bit of folklore all conspire to the same result.

The father must make sure that the son has learned the right and traditional technique. For he must be ready to stand his ground with anyoné in the community in farm skills. Every operation becomes the intimate concern of his neighbors; a man must hold his head high. More important, [461] many skills are plied in coöperative activities, in turf cutting, haymaking, and much of the work of the garden. In such cases, a definite rhythm is necessary for greater effec-

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tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands. 462 593 868 626 [461]

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women. 462 593 868

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's 462 593 857 [852] 462 593 883 [884]

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man called upon his brother-in-law to lend him his son to help drive his cattle to the fair. In a case similar to the last, a violent quarrel arose because an uncle, who "had right" to lend a son badly needed in doing some fence work, refused to do so. And in the same scale of value a family which did not attend the funeral of a relative was subjected to great criticism for being "unfriendly."

In fact, failure to fulfill the pattern of conduct demanded by extended family obligations leads often to punitive action on the part of the aggrieved party. Near R— a small farmer, who neglected his garden and forced his father-in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support, was finally beaten up one night in his own house by the irate in-laws. Ordinarily, of course, failure to fulfill such obligations either in directly social situations or in agricultural coöperation does not lead to such violent conflict, but rather to an estrangement. The niggardly "friend," especially the one who refuses or fails to return an obligation, is held up to general condemnation, not only by his kindred but by the whole community. The position of a small farmer near but not in Luogh was the result of such failure. He was regarded by all his neighbors and kindred as a "miser" and a "Jew" and on several occasions was accused of petty thefts by them, which perpetuated the breach. As a result he lived as a recluse, refusing even to visit others; in return he was not greeted by his "friends."

The obligations of this sort[2] extend to visiting and to the hospitality which the Irish countryman deems so great a virtue. "A sup of tea" and such food as eggs and bread is

[2] The word *cóir* (a fit and traditional right or duty) corresponds almost exactly with the full range of the small farmer's obligations, as we have seen. It well reflects the farmer's habit in two other uses. The phrase *cóir mhaith* means good food. When the speaker says, *tá cóir mhaith agam anseo* (there's a good feed for me there), he refers not so much to the food itself as to the social situation in which he finds himself well provided for. And the term of address, *duine cóir* (worthy fellow), indicates that "worthiness" springs from a fit observance of one's obligations.

584 drink by the young man, and then another by the young lady's
583 father, and so on with every second drink till they're near drunk. The speaker gets plenty and has a good day. After this, they appoint a place for the young people to see one another and be introduced. The young lady takes along her friends, and maybe another girl, and her brother and father and mother. The young man takes along his friends and the speaker. If they suit one another, they will then appoint a day to come and see the land. If they don't, no one will reflect on anybody, but they will say he or she doesn't suit. They do not say plainly what is wrong. The day before the girl's people come to see the land, geese are killed, the house is whitewashed, whiskey and porter bought. The cows get a feed early so as to look good; and maybe they get an extra cow in, if they want one. Then next day comes the walking of the land. The young man stays outside in the street, but he sends his best friend in to show the girl's father round, but sure the friend won't show him the bad points. If the girl's father likes the land, he returns, and there will be eating and drinking until night comes on them. Then they go to an attorney until the next day and get the writings between the two parties and get the father [boy's] to sign over the land. Then there comes another day to fit her for a ring. The girl and boy meet in town some day. He buys her some present. They walk the town that day and all admire the pair and gander after them.

584 Several instances have come to notice where agreement
583 was not reached and where a farmer has broken off negotia-
577 tions on finding a girl with fifty pounds more. There are also many subterfuges which, though they are regarded by others as humorous occurrences, are often sore spots between the contracting parties. Thus a farmer near Ennistymon drove his neighbor's cows into his farm on the day of the girl's father's walking the land so that the other would think him richer than he was. After the marriage the deception was discovered, but too late.

[626] In another case, a sure penalty overtook a farmer who abused the bargaining system. I give the description of a neighbor:

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He's nothing but an old blatherer, he was always sitting on 583
matches and saying he would give a fellow his daughter when 577
he hadn't any fortune on her at all. He'd break it off by saying
the girl wasn't willing and all the time it was only boasting and 626
drinking the porter he was.

Today the boaster is a local joke, and his daughter has fled to America.

A famous local character round Ennis, a laborer now 522
dead, once bested a countryman through a judicious whet- 584
ting of the farmer's cupidity at matchmaking. The story 583
goes that the laborer broke the countryman's bargaining resistance by distracting his attention from the cow he was selling at the fair to the prospects of a match between the farmer and a purely fictitious sister, who was dowered with an equally fictitious three hundred pounds. Later when the farmer and his friends came to town again to discuss the matter further, the wit told them elaborately that, after making full inquiries, he had decided they belonged to too respectable a family to allow themselves to make a match with his sister, since the sister had already "a little one" out of wedlock.

Another case of subterfuge practiced illustrates a variation 584
in the match. A fellow near Ennistymon got a farmer with 583
a daughter to back his note at the local bank to the extent of 577
six hundred pounds. The borrowing was kept secret, and the endorser does not seem to have known that the security offered was his own farm. Accordingly, when the borrower later offered to bring in the six hundred pounds in marrying the daughter, the farmer accepted, thinking he was to receive the fortune clear of debt. He discovered only too late that he had a son-in-law whose fortune he must make good himself. The deception led to bad blood between the two, but nothing could be done.

This last example illustrates a reversal of the usual pro- 583
cedure. Ordinarily since the Irish farm family is both

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592 young man's. The man, almost eighty, did not want to re-
888 main idle. "Time enough to sit by the fire in the winter," he would say. The greatest compliment the neighbors had for them was: "Look at the C—s. Old Johnny gives his boy a hand with everything. You wouldn't know which one has the farm."

592 The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not
888 so harmonious. Disputes arise, as the provisions made in the "writings" indicate. The following quotation from an
606 official with years of experience in dealing with country people illustrates:

> As years go on, either the parents die or, if they live sufficiently long, they receive the old-age pension. Before they are qualified for this, the farms have to be made over to a son or daughter. This is done on the occasion of the son's marriage. The father reserves to himself and his wife the use of a room and the freedom of the kitchen, and they are entitled to all their food. The points were carefully discussed at length in the process of matchmaking, and the family of the future wife had no hesitation in agreeing, realizing that such points formed the final phase of a cycle of life on the farm. If the daughter-in-law has been well and properly advised by her mother, she immediately on her arrival in the new house submits tactfully to all proposals of her mother-in-law and lets the old lady feel that she is still the master mariner. If she didn't, it would cause a lot of trouble, as sometimes happens.

[626] In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law in the new household, and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control.

[577] An open breach between the two couples is universally condemned, of course; "turning the old people out on the

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592 606 578 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 522] The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman must be effected smoothly. [626] The whole moral force of the community as well as the interest of family harmony bear upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighborhood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide its personal troubles as much as possible from the general knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides for continuance.

592 888 The new position of the old couple and their desires in the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

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They occupy this place and receive this respect from other persons than their relatives. This respect is as much folk custom as the norms of family life. The community can on occasion enforce it upon the family members through gossip, verbal censure, and, more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest. 888 626

The vocabulary of the countryman and a great many of the judgments and comments he makes upon his surroundings express the valuations of the community upon age. In the discussion of the house interior it was remarked that the conducts of the different age groups were too "natural" to the farmers to evoke verbal recognition among them. The statement is true only in a sense. The farmers make no explicit recognition of the organization of behavior upon the basis of age. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. 888 561

More cogent, perhaps, for our understanding are the many expressions which arise from day to day based upon the speaker's place within an age grade. A great part of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the friends and neighbors who pass their lives within a rural community takes its form so. Particularly is this true of discussion of the past, a favorite topic and one which came very frequently indeed to the authors' ears. Gossip and personalities are as frequent a theme, and a speaker rarely fails to qualify the object of his remarks with an appropriate definition of his relative age. Even to intimates a man is referred to as "old John" or "young Michael." 888 561 521

Perhaps it is the discussion of the past which illustrates best partiality for the things of one's own age. The older men and women describe the "old days" with enthusiasm and regret. The "old times" are a ready topic among the country people, or rather among the older ones. Many an evening an old person can be got to tell of the "old times." 888 521

[i.e., the aged. – Analyst]

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loneliness at home. Two new cliques of slightly younger "old men" were competing for central position in the community.

But despite such variation from community to community, the old men's *cuairds* act very similarly. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. First in importance, however, are those concerning agriculture. Times of sowing, reaping, harvesting are debated; the merits of various seeds are disputed; shop and fair prices are compared; and the community's trade often affected thus. The "old men" are conservative farmers, as are most peasants, and an innovation must be thoroughly tested before it wins, here in the evening *cuaird*, the approval of the community. Traditional methods of farming receive their strongest support here in the web of legend, proverb, and reference to the past that the speakers weave around them.

Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and determined by the old men's agreement. In late years, this has come to be called "politics." It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for example, it was felt that it was in the interest of all that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. The old men's *cuaird* debated the matter and agreed upon support of Fianna Fail, the De Valera party, an allegiance it held for the years 1927 to the time of the authors' visits. Even O'Halloran, whose private views leaned in another direction, begged the authors that no word of his political heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of his neighbors. "I wouldn't want them to think I wasn't with them," he said.

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Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or condition appraised. Even the priest finds each of his acts and even his sermons discussed and debated in the evening *cuaird*, and he "gets a name" according to the decision reached. In Rynamona an incident occurred which shows the type of slow appraisal the community makes and the speed with which, once its judgment is formed, it puts its decision into action. Not far away in the same general region, a gentlewoman moved back after years of absence to a small manor house which the family had had for many years. She was unknown to the farmers and, despite her friendly interest in them, seemed to be unable to establish contact with them. This distressed her, the more that her kindness seemed ineffectual in putting an end to the inevitable petty pilfering which she knew she must expect. One day, about a year later, her horse bolted on the country road. An expert horsewoman, she soon brought him into control. Thereafter her luck with the country people changed. Her exploit had made the rounds of the local community and had won approval for her. The old men agreed she was a grand lady and had a great hand with horses. And the petty pilfering sank to manageable proportions.

573 521 208 626 887 [674]

The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and in action the power which in the critical days of the land agitation won itself an international name: the boycott.

In a later section the sanctions the local community exercises will be discussed. It is sufficient here to point out

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573 626 208 887 this role of the *cuaird*. An example from another community than Rynamona will throw the type of action it can take into relief.

An "incomplete family" affords the example. It was made up of an old woman and her thirty-year-old son. Theirs was a poor farm, and ordinarily they would have been an object of commiseration. But they were not. In fact, they were a constant annoyance. The son was generally regarded as bad and lazy. He neglected his farm and exhibited an obstinate disregard of village opinion in which his mother abetted him. The result was, naturally, that their house was shunned and he went nowhere to *cuaird*.

But no crisis arose till the episode of the pig. One autumn the son brought home a large Irish white sow. The sow was more nimble than most of her kind, and neither the mother nor the son took any pains to keep her at home. She wandered through the village at will and soon devastated many a cabbage patch. The village took alarm, and the more so that the sow might well prove dangerous to young children. There were angry words among the women, and the men for once backed them up. In the *cuaird* it was hinted that the sow might be found dead one morning. But before such an event could take place, the son took warning and sold the pig. "Public pressure," if you will, forced his decision and resolved the conflict, but it left him as low as ever in the village's esteem.

573 887 538 And lastly, the *cuaird* is the seat of traditional lore and entertainment. Its members are the repositories of folklore and legend. And the official belief of the countryside finds its expression and its reaffirmation in the discussion of events and the recounting of histories and incidents. In communities still at least partly Irish-speaking, such as Luogh, most of its members are *seanachaidhthe*, storytellers in the traditional vein. And it is among them that traditional repertories of a saga, folk tale, song, and legend still get an

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834 571 and play for the young men and women of the rural communities. The customs and conventions which surround them are constant reminders of marriage and its hopes and privileges.

834 571 626 Yet as soon as any intimacy of acquaintanceship builds up between a particular pair, they are matched together in local gossip. They are forced to take a position which is only a single step from betrothal. But, as elsewhere, lovers separate to find others. Though a once or twice fickle or jilted girl is subjected to constant gossip, her luck seems not to doom her entirely if she is attractive or a good match.

834 571 626 535 Such outings as the "patterns," [2] relics of saints' festivals, and race meetings in summer, and the dances in winter, are occasions of courtship, excitement, and philandering of sorts in the countryside. They are objects of censure on the part of those of the clergy, townsmen, and people of higher class who unite in condemning more obvious manifestations of peasant social life with little insight into a custom's function. The clergy, in particular, fulminate constantly against all-night dances. They object not so much to the jollities as to the opportunities for "walking out" among the young couples.

834 535 571 The following quotations from country people describe the situation. In the first a countryman is talking about "crabbit lads" who are to blame for local sexual irregularities, and comes around at last to the local dances:

> They are awfully crabbit around here. If a girl has money or land and she will get it, the boys try any way at all to put her up the hill so they will marry her and get it. And the parents keep the girl away from the boys for fear it will happen. But it is no good to keep the girl in the house, because, if you do, she knows nothing. Let her knock away and she soon learns how to take care of herself. If you don't, there are ways the crabbit lads will get to her.

[2] The local name of country festivals once religious, somewhat like the *pardons* of Brittany.

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834 violent disturbance in the relations uniting others to them-
183 selves and to one another. To "destroy a girl's character"
554 in the countryside is to upset the pattern of family and community life by overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change in farm succession. Much more than a shooting or a fight, a sexual irregularity, which cannot be righted in a match, is capable of destroying the intricate mutual obligations and expectancies of rural familism.

For the family whose "name" is "destroyed" and whose hopes of orderly re-formation are upset, two courses are open. One is to patch up a compromise, to accept the match
[626] forced upon them. The other is to expel the offenders bodily. Community feeling gives full support. In either case the girl concerned can no longer hope for full status. If the match is made or another husband found to father a child, time may right matters and give her full adult status as a farm wife and mother. Her failure as a girl may be forgotten, but it was a failure still. Otherwise there is little further to do but suffer expulsion. Emigration has been the refuge till recently.

836 The country people's attitudes toward illegitimacy and
848 premarital intercourse, one and the same to them, reflect well the disturbances they occasion. In discussing a local
626 case, one woman could voice the community's opinion in the following general terms:

> A young lady with a good fortune even, she couldn't get any man because her character is broken. Unless maybe he is very low. And so she usually goes to America and passes for a maiden. Everyone knows the father of the child but, if he has a good farm of land, no one would say anything, but he would be unlucky and have no family. He would get another woman [a wife, that is] with no bother. The baby might be sent to a home. And after a time they bring it home as a cousin.

836 But it is not always that the boys are treated so leniently,
626 and they, too, must emigrate, driven off by public censure.

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For it is said by country people that "to destroy a girl's 836
'character' is murder." In the logic of the familistic system, 626
the statement is true.

The following incident, described by a countrywoman in a discussion of religion, shows the fate of such cases and the verdict of the community.

> There is no such place as hell. God forbid. No one would be there except a few murderers and a person who destroyed a girl's character. Sure to destroy a girl's character is murder. The C— girl above was great with a boy who was her second cousin and she couldn't marry him here, so they made it up and he went to Canada, and she would go to the States, and they would meet there and marry. He had to go to Canada because he had bad eyes. They went away and seven weeks later she came back and in a few months had a child. Sure no one knows whether she went to the States or what happened to her. The boy was a red-haired, wild lad, and I often ask his sister above if she has heard from him. She says they haven't but we don't know whether they have or not.
>
> The girl put a shame on all people. She isn't married now. Sure who would marry her now that her character is destroyed? The child died after eleven months, and she is living in the house there, and that is why she isn't married. Would you believe such things could happen in Ireland?

The last quotation contains a further consideration. Prestige and respectability are bound up with proper conduct 836 558
and proper fulfillment of the role in social life one's status gives one. If the girl whose "character" is broken gets a husband at all, she must get one of lower standing in the community. She cannot expect to carry the full prestige of her own family with her, even if she does find a farm into which to take a dowry. As the woman quoted remarked, no one will take her unless he is "very low."

Failure to retain and advance in the status assigned the young of the sexes leads to the same kind of relegation to other cliques and other spheres of social participation as in

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or other boy of their kindred. Then they could have turned the farm over to the boy, when they felt themselves too old, and let him marry, in order that their kindred's name continue and grow in land. 754 578 888

But the old men had never had a 'taste for marrying'. They were victims themselves of a too-intense loyalty. I say victims, because their loyalty had been narrowest of all. Their old mother had lived too long in her turn. She had never decided which one should get the land and bring in a girl. Perhaps their father might have decided, had he lived, but their mother survived him by many years. Neither of them wished to leave her side and neither would leave to make room for the other. When at last the mother died, the two bachelor sons were already old; they were long past marrying and set in celibate ways. They lingered on in an ever narrower round.

In the community they were 'saints', as I have said; they were 'no trouble to man or beast'. Yet, from another point of view, they were not doing the 'natural' thing; they made no provisions for their kinsmen; they did not pass on the land to those to whom by country right it should go. They refused to fill their proper roles in life. No wonder, then, that their cabin was a byword for neglect and disrepair. The countrymen would tell you, in a moralizing vein, it had become so 'for lack of a woman's hand'. 626 578 888 754

But to censure them for their misspent lives was

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626 578 888 754

no affair of the community's. The kindred of the old men were the aggrieved parties. Their name suffered and their sons were landless and unborn; land belonging to them lay idle. So, whoever did the shooting—perhaps he had a reason for it. Suspicion might point here and there, but whatever measures the kinsmen might take to remedy their grievance concerned the kinsmen alone. Let those to whom the old men's duty lay see that they followed it. It was best to say nothing beyond one's immediate circle.

But the community could not entirely condone the shooting either. It was a bad thing, no good could come of it. To disturb the peace in such a way shook the security of them all; it gave the district 'a bad name'.

So, when a new event took place, the community found outlet for its censure. When the young man lost his eye, the community was ready for this reaffirmation of its threatened values. For the young man was one of the aggrieved kindred; he was a landless cousin's son; to him and his brothers the old men's farm should have gone. In the loss of his eye, the community felt he paid his penalty. No one knew just how it was inflicted; one does not attempt to unveil such mysteries. Their force is too great, too little controllable. Some felt the 'old man's curse' had done it, some felt that the priest might have done it, for the old men had appealed to him. Some blamed a vague mysterious power in the bush

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the young man cut. Whatever it was, the fact was 626
plain. Only a week or so after the shooting, the 578
young man lost his eye. His crime found a sure 888
punishment in a realm in which all could agree 754
without running risk of retaliation at the hands of the disputing parties.

I have couched this incident in vague, unprecise language for a reason. In the realm of folk-belief outlines are not clear and concepts are not precise. No one could formulate logically this retribution which put out the young man's eye. Nevertheless all felt it. And a moralist among them could sum up: "It is right to respect the old people".

The second example, then, points in the same direction as the first. Both 'west room' and the 'old man's curse' reflect age-old tradition. But both reveal a system of values which rules life in the present. That system of values dictates attitudes and reflects itself in behaviour. For example, neither the young man who may or may not have done the shooting, nor the old men who were shot at, were free agents. They both followed interests growing out of the values of rural life. Sometimes, as in this case, these interests conflict. If open fighting is not to tear life asunder, ways must be found to resolve the conflict, to find a formula of agreement, as the diplomats say.

I have tried in the last of my two examples to 000
show you something of the movements of this sort and something of the agreement which can be

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476 keen over the dead. This conduct is reciprocal;
602 'friendliness' implies mutual obligation. One countryman gave me as his reason for going to the funeral of a second cousin: "I have right to go, they always come over to this side". When in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister took over the child, she did the 'friendly' thing that she 'had right to do'. In the very same terms a man 'made bold' upon his brother-in-law to lend him a son to help drive cattle to the fair, as the brother-in-law 'had right' to do.

In fact, failure to fulfil the pattern of conduct demanded by the obligations of 'friendliness' may bring punitive action on the part of the aggrieved kindred. We have seen this before in the story of the 'old man's curse' in the first lecture. In a part of Clare, not many miles from Luogh, a small farmer neglected his garden and forced his father-
[578] in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support. He was finally beaten up one night in his own house by his irate in-laws. Ordinarily, perhaps
[626] failure leads rather to an estrangement; it holds one up to general condemnation by the whole community. Persistence in failure leads to social death; the recluse is greeted by no one, not even his 'friends'.

574 But fulfilment entrenches one in social life. The
602 obligations extend to visiting and hospitality, the countryman's great virtue. 'A sup of tea' is 'put down before' the countryman who is travelling to

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561 finds its most compatible and its most enduring organization. No other social disposition sets a deeper stamp upon the countryman. No other is more immediate to the observer, tourist or anthropologist. No other, too, explains better why old custom lives today.

561 Ireland is in many ways an old person's country.
888 Where emigration carries youth away, old age is
165 disproportionately numerous. But that fact is not all the story, for the rural Irish are long-lived. The country districts set a norm for the Free State which shows itself statistically. Despite poverty, hardship, and the erroneously assumed 'decline of rural life', the countryman lives long and dies, often very old indeed. Many causes have been sought for this strange fact, but might it not be after all a simple matter? They live long because they have much to live for. In their own sphere of life, they are honoured; they have power.

888 We remember that the household and the family centres itself in them. Their room is semi-sacred in the fairy-lore; it is the best in the house. The chair by the fire, the seat of honour and most comfort, is theirs. Even with the transfer of command up on the farm, they are objects of marked deference.

888 But this is more than a family matter. The old
626 people have privilege among and receive respect from others than their own relatives. The conduct which bestows both upon them is as much the folk

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custom of the community as it is the habit of family 888
life. Where necessary, the community can enforce 626
its maintenance. The community can, as it were, invade the family and regulate its members through gossip, verbal censure, and more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest.

The countryman's vocabulary is full of allusions 561
to values upon age. A great deal of the judgments 888
and the comments he makes upon his surroundings 626
express them. Naturally, they do not discuss the organization of behaviour upon age in explicit terms; for such conducts are 'natural' and unchangeable in the minds of those who are shaped by them. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. The upstart 'boy', the 'bold' child, the 'old man who ought to have shame for acting like that' are as constant objects of reproof and censure as the 'bad' father or son.

In general statements, one hears many expressions, day after day, which arise from the speaker's place within an age group. The broad opposition between 'old' and 'young' colours rural thinking powerfully. A great deal of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the 'friends' and neighbours who pass their lives within the rural community takes its form within this social context.

This is particularly true of discussion of the 521
past. The past is a favourite topic; the 'old days' 888
something of an obsession in the countryside. This 561

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them to think I wasn't with them", he put it. No 573
wonder, then, that the political allegiances of whole 621
countrysides are constant factors in Irish politics. [66]

The community reaches agreement upon its 621
internal affairs, too, through the old men's dis- 573
cussions. It is in just this type of activity that one 626
can at last put one's finger upon that nebulous force among men: public opinion. That force is not implemented; it is merely the power of gossip and censure; only in critical days, as in the time of land agitation, can it rise to action, as a last resort, and win itself an international name: the boycott. But it is none the less powerful.

But, in rural Ireland, the group through which 573
this power flows serves another function which 888
cannot be disassociated from its role as the seat of 538
public opinion. The members of the old men's *cuaird* are the living repositories of tradition. In communities, such as Luogh, where the Irish language lingers on, many of them are *seanachaidhthe* or story-tellers. Among them the ancient repertories of legend, saga and folk-tale still find an audience. That the exponents of fairy-lore have always been, and are still, old men and old women, is no social accident. For the pattern of local life retains its continuity and preserves what it can of its conformity with the past through them.

But what of the young men, those who have not 884
attained full status? They do not attend at the old 573
men's house; they take no part in the deliberations

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metrical. The shopkeeper, as creditor, has the 369
whip-hand. As an urbanite, he has the superior 571
status. Yet he is no less under obligation to his 452
debtor.

Habit and sentiment weave amusing identifica- 369
tions round this social pattern. For example, to pay 571
off a debt entirely is perforce to dissolve the rela- 452
tionship. It is to destroy the mutuality of expecta- 626
tions. If one's debt is paid off one loses, not only a 578
customer, but a friend, quite literally. The ordinary small farmer would pay off all his debt only in a fit of anger. By so doing he would mean to break the tie completely and irrevocably. Consequently, he remains upon the shopkeeper's books indefinitely, paying off periodically bit by bit, but never working himself entirely clear. Should he do so, the shopkeeper would be fully warned. He would know his customer was about to carry his trade elsewhere, and to enter a new tie better suited to his desires.

But the shopkeeper is obligated, too, in his turn. He may not dun his customer heedlessly. To do so is to cast doubt upon the customer's ability or willingness, not to pay a money debt but to meet his obligation. It is in fact to call into question the social status which is his. If the shopkeeper errs in this nice tact, the debt is paid forthwith perhaps, but the relationship is broken.

Nor can he press even a just claim too far. He may often have to carry credit endlessly, in hope of better days. This is part of his obligation, and

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369 boycott awaits the offender or the usurper. To
571 carry the claim to court is of no avail; one cannot
452 these days foreclose on land in rural Ireland. Per-
626 haps eventually he might win the farmer's holding
578 from him, in satisfaction of his claim. But one must remember the farmer's 'name is on the land'. A whole kindred and the whole community with which the kindred is related become his bitter and dangerous enemies. In a familistic world that enmity endures for life and longer, even into the next generation.

If even then, in spite of this, the shopkeeper persists and grinds his debtor down, still another sanction closes in upon him. The countryman will make his last resort to age-old folk-belief. He will tell you, for instance, that the shopkeeper or publican dies out because the curses of men and women and the tears and prayers of broken families have wreaked a sure retribution. What better way indeed to express, in traditional mystical and quasi-religious terms, the force of social censure? The countryside can bring its whole traditional scheme of attitudes to bear upon the offender; it can justify the forces of social and personal action in the realm of the awesome mysteries of belief before which all must bow.

369 Thus one can see why, in folk-belief, money it-
571 self is evil. It is one of those mysterious powers
452 which can bring, as though of its own awful and
626 incomprehensible efficacy, both good and evil in its

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train. The finder of the 'crock of gold' is stricken down in the flush of discovery; the townsman who rises too high and waxes too arrogant in his wealth may soon be stricken, too, and his family and its shop or public-house seems mysteriously to melt away.

Nor is this the only instance in which the social order overlies the economic form of debt and shapes it to its purposes. The debt, like the dowry, can and does become a measure of status, too. It is a sign of one's ability to support that network of social obligation which gives one's self and one's family a place in social life. In this fact, too, lies 'confidence'. The debt descends with the land or the shop from father to son. It moves onward with the progression of the generations. Many a small farmer pays off bit by bit the family debt of a parent or relative. Social obligation, in which pride and sentiment are involved, long outlives the statute of limitations. In this disposition, religion, sentiment and custom coincide. Many a shopkeeper till recently has assisted a boy or girl to emigrate, in the sure knowledge that his or her remittances would eventually reach his money-till.

In the days of the British, a Royal Commission found itself mystified by this so-called 'honesty'. The debt to the landlord, in the form of rent, seemed to them an honest debt. Yet the countryman, often as not, scorned honesty in that direction; though he might bend his last efforts in what

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369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
452
626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
668 public life who has contributed so much to humour
443 and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

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the 1916 Rebellion, have other broad social classes of what used to be called the 'Irishry' made a substantial contribution to organized political life, though all of them figured well enough in patriotic rebellion. 1898 is the crucial date, because then the landlords were displaced in the management of local affairs. The older Grand Jury system, based upon large property qualifications, gave way to the elective County Councils.

At about the same time, land war had broken the last remaining ties between the landlords, as a class, and the social order of the countryside. The growth of the towns since the Famine had by then well established the new relation between the market-town and its rural hinterland which I have described. In the new situation, the shopkeeper and the publican could best represent the united interests of the social order of which they were, in their own way, an important part.

All nations infuse political forms with their own genius. The Irish were not slow to do so; they soon made their own infusion. The reciprocities of a familistic order, in which sentiment and habit found effective organization, were the materials they had at hand. The bonds between town and countryside provided channels through which the infusion could flow.

For, as I have tried to show you, the shopkeeper-publican occupied then, and still does, a strategic place in the organization of the country-

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626

side. From that point of vantage he could serve many ends. His business depended upon the social role he performed; the countryman expected favours for favours rendered. He knew best the direct personal approaches of social obligation. So, at first, geese and country produce besieged the new officers and magistrates; a favourable decision or a necessary public work performed was interpreted as a favour given. It demanded a direct and personal return. 'Influence' to the countryman was and is a direct personal relationship, like the friendship of the countryside along which his own life moves. Like money, 'influence' was a somewhat mysterious entity; it seemed to be a powerful agent for both good and evil. But its real content seemed understandable enough; it was an easily recognizable social bond.

Then, too, the shop and the pub was and is the countryman's metropolitan club. The man who worked it was a friend and kinsman, one of one's own kind. Near-urban prestige made him a superior, as one in touch with seats of power, fashion and law. But it made him no more, in the last analysis, than a *primus inter pares*. In all this, the conventional moralistic concept of public administration might well be little developed, on both sides. But there was much popular wisdom.

For the shopkeeper-publican dealt effectively first with the realities in which life, his own and his country constituents', is fashioned. To cry corrup-

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tion is to mistake the issue. To enforce a political morality without emotional conviction would be false conversion indeed.

Thus, the shopkeeper-publican-politician was a very effective instrument, both for the countryside which used him and for himself. He might perhaps exact buying at his shop in return for the performance of his elective duties, as his enemies charge: but he also saw to it that those duties were performed for the very people who wished to see them done. Through him, as through no other possible channel, Ireland reached political maturity and effective national strength. That strength persists today, despite superficial strife and internal growth and change. And it persists by virtue of its connection with the society from which it springs.

For a social order, we can see clearly now, is a thing of very wide inclusions indeed. The same set of dispositions runs right through, from the 'west room' of remote Luogh to the political life of the market-towns and cities of Ireland. In this study, for instance, we began our examination of the countryman's way of life with a discussion of 'old custom'—folklore and folk-belief. By now it is clear to you, I think, that 'old custom' is more than a dying survival of an age-old habit. It is part of a larger whole, a whole which in its total is co-extensive with the total-pattern of the life of which old custom is still a part. Our two original ex-

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along this border-line that we must trace the 776
countryman.

I say fear is not his chief motive. For the good people are not entirely fearsome. I have often heard countrymen, steeped in the old lore, say, "They'll leave you alone if you don't be in their way". One makes a great mistake to think of any holder of popular belief as a person ridden with superstitious fear, unable to make his way through ordinary life. As one countryman told another collector, Lady Gregory, in the days before the war: "If we knew how to be neighbourly with them, they would be neighbourly and friendly with us".

It is a question, then, of giving 'them' their due. 776
Where older custom survives, certain precautions 626
must be taken. You are probably all familiar with many of them. Food and water must be left for them at night. Dirty water must not be thrown out at night. For the night is a 'lonely time'; 'you wouldn't like to be out in it'. The fairies are abroad. Were the water thrown out, there is danger that it might dirty them as they pass along a fairy-path or make a nocturnal visit. Then they will be angry, and disaster will follow. A hen, a pig, a cow, even a child may sicken and die.

But this anger of theirs, you see, results from direct affront. And that affront lies, really, in improper conduct. In the case of dirty water, it lies directly in improper conduct of the household.

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776 Throwing out dirty water is slovenly and bad
626 management. The community condemns it as much as do the fairies who might be wetted.

Consequently, one can begin to see the existence of a projection of values into the world of belief. Dangerous as 'they' are, they bring good luck and prosperity as well, if they receive their proper due. Their favour follows proper conduct of the household and good household management in daily life. Thus one finds such statements possible as the following, in which an old fellow of North Clare, an authority on such matters, speaks of 'their' nocturnal visits:

"They very often put up at a house in the night. They would come to certain houses, and if they liked the house and it was good and clean and everything swept for them, they would come often to the same house, and that house would be prosperous. If it was dirty and they found no comfort in it they would not stop. They'd go to strong houses like the Careys' [he named a comfortable, neat family of small farmers in the neighbourhood]. You often see a little old woman going along the road and stopping in asking for a bite to eat, and you might give it to her, and she looking to see was it a good house for them to stop in it."

Thus many tales told of the good people point a moral. In this light such a common tale as that of the herdsman's house is readily understandable. The herdsman, as a landless man, is regarded by

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the small farmers as being a 'cut' below them- 776
selves; consequently, his untidiness is a byword 626
among them. One version of the story goes, in synopsis, as follows:

"Many families moved into a herdsman's place, but they were all chased out of it. Finally, one family moved in, cleaned up the house, and a 'paving path' round it. A little old woman visits the wife, borrows a cooking-pot, and is similarly well treated. In gratitude she explains that the woman of the house and her husband will always prosper and never be molested, because they alone of all the families had cleaned up the place where 'they' walk."

In this way the values of daily life are projected [181]
into and reinforced by the supernatural world. The 626
same state of affairs holds good even in the con- 576
vention of social intercourse. The vocabulary of the 152
countryman is full of homely pieties. On entering a house the proper greeting is "God bless all here". On coming upon another at work, one says, "God bless the work". Similarly, "God spare you the health" is 'put on' anyone who 'coors' with you. Any praise of person, child, or animal is accompanied with a "God bless it"; any mention of unpleasantness or danger is followed with some such homily as "God bless the mark", and so on. If one omits such pieties, one is sure to rouse resentment in the listeners. For one must remember that emotion supports these conventions. But the

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152 resentment springs from other causes, too. These
576 formulae are known to the folklorist as 'protective
626 formulae'. He means by that that they have reference to the lesser faith as well as to the greater that the countryman holds.

If you ask the countryman why he uses such
751 terms, he will give you several answers. First, "You
152 have right to do it, because you owe it to God",
576 and then, second, "It will bring good luck, it will
626 keep 'them' away". For the countryman, both answers are true. The phrases are both acts of pious invocation and protective devices warding off evil. Their omission is really dangerous. It puts the person or thing so neglected in jeopardy; the negligent speaker is open to suspicion of an evil intent. Thus there are many stories which attribute disease, disaster and death to such omissions. In this way again, persons and things of value to the countryman are brought into the scope of his beliefs and attitudes. The forces which affect them are brought into a shape in which he can understand them and in which he can cope with them.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this process
776 is to be found in the way in which the goods by which the countryman lives are brought into his belief. The good people affect the household and all its goods. They 'take' those things which one values, round which one's interest and sentiments, as a member of the farm-working family, are centred. One Galway woman phrased this idea to

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31] 585 796 626

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

262
264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

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In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

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One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and funtionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "madhouse" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

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Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

[124]

Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

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the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a 829
symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter [123]
despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic 793
and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among 829
themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of 178
pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should 624
be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control 876
system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have [626]
been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older [793]
men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs [178]
and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance
although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they [666]
were provided with food, given *curach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was
owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are [793]

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
[793] influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[73] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

• 626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement. . . . It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. . . . Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

> conditions appraised. . . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and . . . boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190-191).

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Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [875] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately. 628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list. 181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it 521 203 571 [674] [512]

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521 203 571 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [574] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

• 626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [538] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [639] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 589 162 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

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closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference. 578 121

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin. 114 121 578 578

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families. 578 609 602 [428] [626] [691] [685]

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than 578 [602] [609] [122] [562]

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578 women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip
[642] and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples.
578 One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism
• 626 of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into
[828] a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first
[123] meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

121 I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an
578 observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants;
181 this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

114 Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

> 114 This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every
> 181 book there should be a fact here and there or the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 564 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

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4

The Supernatural and the Esthetic

Catholicism

BECAUSE OF THE WRITINGS OF NATIVISTS, most visitors to Inis Beag believe 771
that the Catholicism of the folk embodies an ideal unattained even on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for all of Christendom. In fact, however, the worship of the islanders is obsessively oriented [776]
toward salvation in the next world with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a marked tendency toward polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and certain Irish saints; rituals and sacred artifacts, Christian as well as pagan, often are employed by them to serve magical ends; and, finally, many observances that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or to Ireland. Christian morality in its outward [626] •
manifestations, as we have seen, is realized to a remarkable degree, but it is less a product of the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation than of the techniques of social control exercised by the priests and an overwhelming fear of damnation.

Coexisting with Catholicism in Inis Beag are pre-Celtic, Celtic, and early 771
medieval Christian retentions of religious beliefs and behavior. It is these which 178
are accentuated in the writings of primitivists, some of whom have ignored altogether Catholicism in the lives of the folk. Nativists and primitivists part company in the matter of religion in peasant Ireland, and writers of nativistic persuasion have exerted the most influence on visitors to Inis Beag, who are preponderantly Irish Catholic. Theologians and scholars in Ireland label as pagan unorthodox religious forms from any historical period, and many of these have become reinterpreted with similar Catholic elements. The pagan array of supernatural beings [776]
includes a variety of spirits and demons, witches, ghosts, and phantom ships; among other retentions are taboos, signs which foretell the future, charms and incantations of a protective nature, folk medicines, and the aforementioned emphasis on natural foods and other products impinging on the human body.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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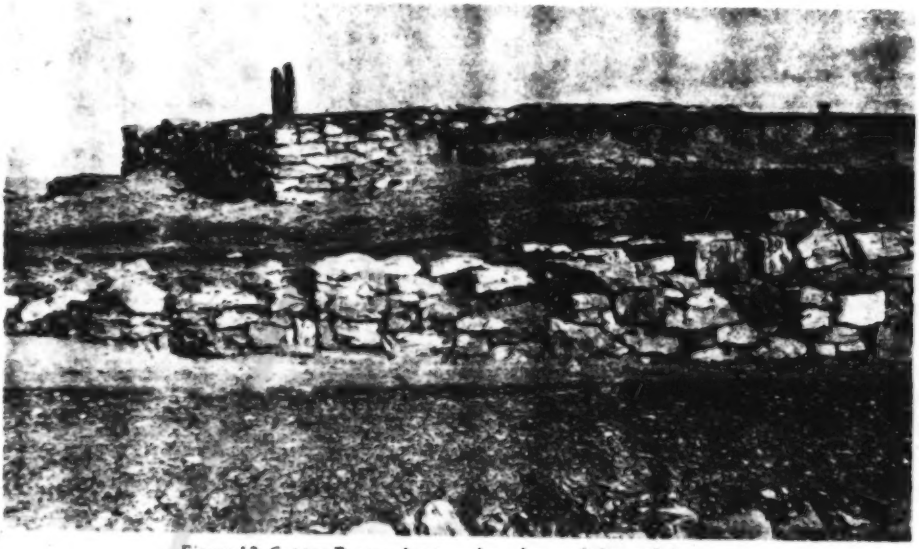

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

764 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus [624] are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near [576] his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been
792 created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of
[173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of
[825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

157 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag
771 islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

157 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is
831 sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century.
[174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

157 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in
831 three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the
864 islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in
• 626 the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice
793 it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves
834 "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and
831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run
203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland
[609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[164] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

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178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
538 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *scéalaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

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434
226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

• 626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip,
674 ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as employing informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative experiences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorganization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble savages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case.

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

*831
• 626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives or close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
154 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[533] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[539] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience
[576] so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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583 family is severe. We give the statement in detail in order
578 to show the general situation as he saw it. He is a townsman, and somewhat detached.

> The daughter on the farm has to wait till all the sons are got ready for their going off and maybe have been given their passage to America or money to set up in business or to settle on the land. But there are runaway matches all the time, they fall in love, they run off together, and they come in here and take work away from the laborers here. It takes a lot of love and courage because the son is usually cut off and the daughter leaves a very good place for nothing but a cabin and they get none of the money. Maybe after several years the girl will get her fortune, but not always. I remember Jerry N – whose father was very well off as farmers go, but he wouldn't marry the girl they picked for him and took up with a servant girl instead. He's driving a hackney now and lives in a cabin with a flock of children. Jimmy L – ran off but he gradually became reconciled with his people. The father had a good farm of sixty acres, and so had the girl, but the young fellow got nothing out of it. His father helps a little now, sending down a bag of potatoes.

602 Another case which the authors had under observation
593 from time to time illustrates not only the matchmaking
578 system but the general family setting in which marriage
627 takes place and farm life moves. Sanctions for conduct aggrieving the families are applied by the families themselves. The case is long but worth quoting in the words of the teller for its comprehensive character:

> There was a girl of the O'Rourkes from D –, they have a farm out there and she married a fellow named Murphy up in C –. She was a school teacher out in England for several years and she became great with this fellow the farmer, and she used to send him money over from England for when they would get married. She sent about two hundred pounds in all. She has an aunt up in C – married up there and it was all the fault of the aunt. She came home and she hadn't yet told her people anything about it. She was just about ready to get married to the fellow and she told them that she was going to get married. They agreed. Then she said she was going to get married to

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Murphy and they tried to argue her out of it, but she said it was too far gone now and she was committed to marry him, so they hastily gave her their blessing. He lived in a big house up by C— and had sixty acres. 602 593 578

Well, he was a sort of uncouth kind of chap, rough, and she was what you might say anglified, or citified. She wanted to brighten up the house and make it nice and hang up curtains and that sort of thing. He thought the reins of the horse would do for the curtains and so on, and it came to a fight between them, a clash of wills, and in the end, as it must, the stronger one won out; that is, the man's. She got hysterical and he cast round for ways of getting rid of her, and he sent up to Ennistymon for the doctor to come down and examine her to commit her to the asylum. He didn't send her up to C— though that was nearer and in his district, but he sent up for Dr. MacNulty to Ennistymon, leaving Dr. Starr in C— so as to get someone who wouldn't know the case. 627 [158 743]

The married sister of the wife was staying in the house at the time and he was driving her home. He told her the doctor was coming, and she said, "You are doing wrong," and made him turn round and go back to the house where Dr. MacNulty was examining the hysterical woman. Then the married sister got her brother and father to take her back to D—. They came up with Father Brendan of Ennis here and took her away down to D—. After a time they got up a party and invited him down for a reconciliation.

After a while she went back to live with him. He started it again and got her hysterical and called in another doctor, who said that there was nothing wrong with the woman.

One night the three brothers of the girl and her father came up to the house and one went round to the back door and the others went in the front and they caught the fellow. They were going to force him to sign receipts for the money the daughter gave him. Country people demand receipts for money they give and they are right, but the girl hadn't liked to ask and hadn't got any, so her people were going to step in and get them themselves. Murphy had rifled her belongings and torn off his name from all the receipts he had sent her to England. They came in and said that he was lucky he was going to escape with his life. No one in their family had ever been in the asylum and no one belonging to them had ever been insane or robbers.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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602 and that he was trying to black them with the disgrace of it.
593 The girl ran in but they threw her out into the hall where her
father caught her and held her. They said that all the people
578 belonging to him were thieves, and that two of them, two
627 uncles of his, his mother's brothers, were convicted for robbery and that all his people before him had been insane, and that he was trying to black the name of a good family. In the end they caught him and beat him till he consented to sign the receipts. They gave him a good hiding.

The teller drew his own conclusions from the case:

If the girl had listened to her parents, they would have told her all this and saved her. But she went on and married right ahead on her own advice. She probably thought she was doing well in marrying into sixty acres.

It is interesting that the application of sanctions does not confine itself to a single dereliction. In this case, according to the storyteller:

[461] Murphy was a terrible lazy farmer and wouldn't even till a patch of ground for a garden for himself or his stock, and the woman's people had to send up a load of potatoes for them. They told him when they beat him if he didn't turn into a farmer and do a man's work, till his garden, and provide, they would be up again and make him do it.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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buttons, and broken crockery. Patients sit in the "chair" to cure lumbago. It is believed that the water of this lake cannot be boiled and that no one can be drowned by it, and sixty or seventy years ago cattle were cured by it. The beasts were brought in herds to the lake to drink, and were driven into it. If they turned to the right hand they would recover, but not if they swam to the left. It is said that on one occasion a cow sank, but was found next day grazing in a field beside the lake, completely cured. In consequence of drainage works, the water level has fallen, and the mud round the shore is too deep to allow the cattle to be driven through it, so on May Day every year, before sunrise, a little crowd gathers, of perhaps over 100 persons, to fill bottles with the water for curing cattle, especially of "the worm." The water keeps good till the next anniversary, and is also used to give a "good churning" and to clear a "garden" of caterpillars.[22]

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In 1839 Lough Iona (now Eenagh) was reputed to cure sick cattle on Mondays and Thursdays.[23] In 1808 the smiths were in some districts employed to kill the cattle,—or rather to fell them for slaying,—and their perquisites were the animals' heads.[24]

Persons over sixty years of age are often firm believers in the charming away, or "taking," of milk and butter. The younger folk usually deny that they hold this belief, and, where they take part in quarrels caused by it, avowedly only do so to support their elders. Two families living in the south-east corner of the county had about 1890 a quarrel resulting in a serious feud, hardly as yet appeased. It seems that for about three years the cows of the first household gave but little milk, and that little so bad and unwholesome for pigs and calves that several died. Ordinary veterinary practitioners, and even the local "knowing men," did no good, so the farmer sought a "wise man" of renown in another parish. This sage directed his client to watch the local well all May Eve, and to let no one come near it till after midnight. The farmer and his sons hid near it, saw a man and a woman of the

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[22] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. ii.

[23] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 161.

[24] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 359. The smith was a magician amongst the Irish, and the ancient *St. Patrick's Lorica* prays against the spells of "smiths, women, and druids."

[P. 242]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the
233 newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
823 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26]
789 In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
826 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to
789 the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale.

[P. 243]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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be divorced from the patterns of relationships which they 593
symbolize, and their role cannot be understood except in the fact.

If then we turn back to the common life of the families of the small farmers, it is these very terms which give us the clue to the relationships which that life builds up.

In the Irish family, the sons and the daughters are equally 593
subordinate; there is no formal distinction made between 601
them. The kinship terms of both the English and the Irish languages reflect this equivalence of siblings. In either case, one term, son or *mac*, reflects the unity of the position of all male children, the procreated generation, from the point of view of the elder or procreant pair, the mother and father. Similarly, a single term in both languages, brother and *dearbhráthair*, expresses for the siblings their common occupancy of that position. Rural Ireland knows neither primogeniture nor junior right. Except as age differences separate them informally, the brothers occupy the same status both within and outside the family group. Thus neighbors and other outsiders refer to them all alike as "the boys" of the farmer's family.

Accordingly, their equality reflects itself in farm activity. 593
All are on an equal footing there. The brothers are all 628
alike under the father's direction and control as long as they remain on the farm. They work together, and the years of common effort and common dependence create a strong solidarity between them. Though only one of them may [428]
ordinarily expect to inherit land and cattle, the others renounce their rights as it were in the interests of the identification of the family group with the land they work. The bloody faction fights which used to disfigure Irish country life have practically passed away, but the forces which brought them into existence still continue. Many a country fight involving a dispute over rights of way and water courses brings in the adherents of all the brothers of either

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 house, and, though the cases nowadays find their way into
628 the courts, a very common defense is that the feud is very long-standing and that "the two grandfathers" began it. The tales written in the last century by William Carleton, who wrote of a life he himself knew intimately, describe faction fights in which whole parishes became involved, but the center of disturbance was invariably a family dispute in which the brothers of a family ranged with their friends against those of another. So fierce is the solidarity which the identification of brothers and their land calls forth that even today in Clare the name "defending Tim Flanagan's title" is jocularly given to forcible resistance to eviction, after a famous stalwart of the last century whose ten sons fought valiantly for their father's farm.

593 In fact, this emotional attachment is strong enough some-
589 times to preclude the breaking up of the family. Two instances of this sort came under the authors' special notice out of the many which occur. It is difficult to get the exact figures, since census materials deal only with the marital status of farm owners, but many of the bachelor-owned farms of Clare may be of this type. In the first case, two brothers and four sisters occupied a small holding of twenty-three acres and a four-room house for over fifty years. Several of them at various times had tried to break away; in fact, two brothers did, but the ones who stayed gave as their reason first that they hadn't wanted to leave the old people and afterwards that none of them had wanted "to be the first to leave." The second case was very similar. Two brothers and a sister had stayed on to work a small farm for their old parents, but, when the old couple died, none of them wanted to leave and each felt too old for marriage.

593 Whatever differences make a rift in this fraternal front
428 are matters more of preparation for leaving the farm family than of internal differentiation in status and behavior. On most small farms only one son can be kept at home as suc-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and
often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis
Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping
slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more
concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all
Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to
the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality,
men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested
successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also
are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives
and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in
social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of
Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the
people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis
Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well
abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who
come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and
primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain
a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines
in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held
accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148).
Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although
fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied
secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined
denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
[291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting
towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn main-
land attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their
English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency
than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever
my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by
islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other
business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the
folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of
the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them,
the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness
of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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> conditions appraised. The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190-191).

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Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [875] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government, their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

181 177 667 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

521 203 571 [574] [512]

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning. 796 [292] [574]

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day. 796 527 628 • [782] [578] [834] [273]

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion. 796 [178] [789] [527]

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the [539] 796 527 [782]

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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181 individual ownership they have by no means entirely collapsed.
476 The principle of service, of mutual aid within the local family groups, survives; the element of competition is reduced to a minimum. Though the old social laws have been "abolished" by acts of parliament, such external decrees could destroy only the superficial features and hardly touched the minds in
181 which these customs were rooted. The primary unit of land
631 division—the townland—is still a very real thing; and as the townland retains its Gaelic name even in the districts of Dublin and Belfast, so there survives beyond the city's influence the social fabric of the townland community. Reeves and Joyce have argued that the careful subdivision of Irish land points to the existence of a considerable settled population in remote antiquity, and recent archæological research supports this view. There are no less than 62,205 townlands in the country; their size, which varies from curiosities of less than an acre to large tracts of moorland of 1,000 acres, averages 325 acres.

181 The townlands in turn group themselves into baronies
631 corresponding to the petty kingdoms of old. Writers tell us
291 that even into the 19th century one barony could be easily distinguished from another by the dresses peculiar to each. Thus there were the dark blue and damson of Cork and Waterford, the grey of Kerry and the blue of Galway. A traveller in 1830 remarked wisely that "such peculiarities frequently point out the natural divisions of a country in more important matters than dress": they are an index to regional diversity. The distinctive features of particular districts are well illustrated in the case of "the Irish Flanders," the isolated tract in Co. Wexford comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth; while nothing could reveal the separateness of some island communities better than the heaviest punishment meted out to offenders in Rathlin or Clear I.: it consisted of "banishment to Ireland."

000 Enough has been said to suggest that the traditions of the Irish countryside are of long standing, and that many strains in those traditions are not only of Celtic but of pre-Celtic antiquity. Before we consider some of the relics of the

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities, one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in 101 its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the 631 little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of 133 North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the [504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond, 63 though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon. Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*, 776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317, 787 and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago, foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Péists* or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con- 121 sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen- 124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p.180]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

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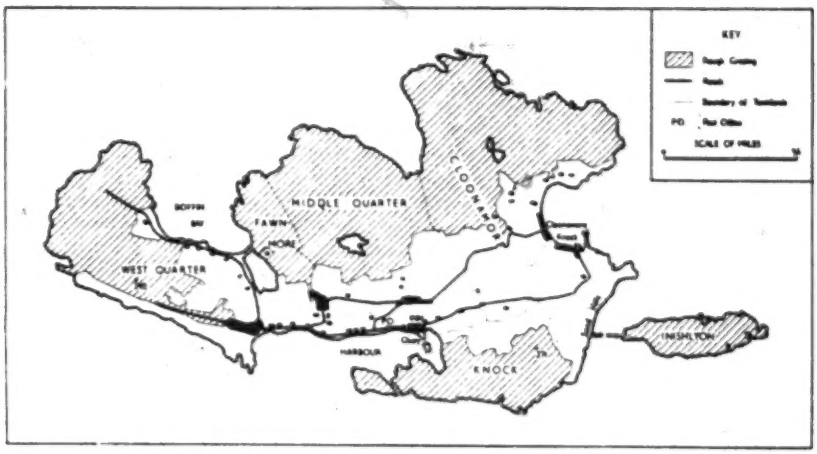

FIG. 1. The townlands of Inishbofin. Inishlyon has no inhabitants, but is used as sheep pasture. Cloonamore and Knock appear as a single line of houses on the shore but are in different townlands. The boundaries of the rough pasture and the distribution of houses were mapped in July, 1954. (Based on Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to 1 mile, Co. Galway, sheet 9, 1898, by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.)

[p. 204(A)]

[p.205(B)]

314 year the feed of a dozen sheep is burnt in the homes."

Agricultural life depends on the use
311 of the "commonage," or rough pasture,
231 and the improved land, which is almost entirely drift fertilized by seaweed and
632 farmyard manure. Two-thirds of the island's 2480 acres is rough pasture, used for the sheep, cattle, ponies, and donkeys, as well as for peat collection. Figure 1 shows that the island is divided into five townlands, in each of which the commonage is shared, with the result that a farmer may take his animals not to the rough pasture near his holding but to ground as much as a mile away. There is a band of farm lands
311 stretching from lough Bofin to the har-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

[p. 278]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1935) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

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11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

townlands having only been temporary. That this loss is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths in the registration district of Binghamstown for the decennial period 1884–1893 in which space of time the births numbered 1260, and the deaths 707, an excess of 553, or 22·7 per cent. The following Table, which refers only to the parish of Kilmore, shows the population of the district at each census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head.[1] 161 [167]

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	7379	1106	6·67	3·99
1861	6452	1243	5·19	4·57
1871	5552	1054	5·27	5·31
1881	5327	911	5·85	5·53
1891	4111	694	5·92	7·17

[592]

The density of population is thus seen to be about 89 per square mile, but varies with locality, being greatest on S. Inishkea, where it is about 304.

The town of Belmullet, which is not included in the table given above, has fluctuated much since its foundation in 1825. In 1831 its population was 585, and it continued to increase until after 1851, when it had attained its maximum of 935; from that time forth it declined. In 1861 its inhabitants numbered 907; in 1871, 849; in 1881 there was a slight increase, 852; and at the last census, in 1891, the population had fallen to 652.

It was difficult to lay down any exact boundaries to what, for the purposes of this report, is termed the Portacloy district; but the three townlands—Srahataggle, Portacloy, and Curraunboy, from which most of those measured at Portacloy came, have been taken to represent it; in these the population has not undergone the same change as that of Kilmore, the population having risen since 1851, from 248, inhabiting 46 houses, to 299 in 53 houses. 634 161

[1] In 1831 the population of Kilmore Erris was 9287.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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FIG. 2. The Provinces of Ireland.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

> conditions appraised. The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott. (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191)

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Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [875] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face" and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

521 203 571 [574] [512]

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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip, ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
674 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
• 641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among
[66] officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

 231 438

of cattle for direct shipment to the English market; the small farmers are concerned only remotely, for the large farmer himself is their immediate market. They deal in much younger cattle and prepare them for sale to the middlemen and the big farmers.

Consequently, the small farmers are much less immediately affected by disturbances in the cattle trade with Great Britain. The fact has been evident throughout the years of the De Valera regime. It has blasted the prognostications of those who argued that a restriction and interruption of the trade with England, such as grew up in the "economic war" which followed De Valera's retention of the land annuity payments and the English retaliation in the form of import duties on cattle, would alienate the farmers' support of De Valera's government. It certainly alienated the large farmers, who were immediately affected, but the "farmer" of the politician is not always the whole population of that name. It left the small farmer relatively undisturbed. He was at one or two points removed from the actual trade with England and saw it only as a sale to big farmers. With the small farmers, the economic argument of De Valera's opponents failed. 231 439 648

However this may be, the conclusions as to the great division among farmers that statistics and the cattle trade have yielded us are borne out equally well within the separate counties. County Clare, for instance, shares fully in the internal cattle trade. And in Clare, the trade flows from small farmers to large. There are no statistics on the matter, but the generalities hold. Clare occupies a middle place within the system of exchanges. It is one of the seven southwestern dairying counties we have dealt with. But it does not always follow them statistically. As we have seen, Clare is a county of mixed holdings. Both the midland type of big farmer and the small farmer of the west and south are present. The cattle trade within Clare is a miniature of 231 438

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

668 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary,
000 and clerical figures.[3] A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

668 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Associa-
197 tion, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the
538 formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage
[204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

> The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasised the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195–196).

177 Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on
185 language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since
668 the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the
• [648] time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

[113] [3] The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603–1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

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on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

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The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower.

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade.

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket.

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[712] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[698] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
193 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[437] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [541]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [521] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gael receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

625 There are no police, called *gardaí* and "guards," in the island, but three, including a sergeant, are posted in a nearby island and visit Inis Beag at least 674 once a month. Crime is virtually unknown among the folk, the few cases on record [683] being for assault and battery and destruction of property; most cases are civil ones, [684] involving property ownership and inheritance, and are tried intermittently by a 820 visiting magistrate. The guards are subjected to frequent criticism and derision, 625 especially when they come to the island dressed in plain-clothes to search for [673]

[For information pertaining to governmental activities in Inis Beag, see category 657.]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

[p. 278]

342 Windows, as well as chimneys, were taxed, hence the oldfashioned blind
[65] wall and the old fireplace (without chimney) being preserved. The daylight was admitted to the kitchen by the door opening. A pad of straw was placed at the door, *sop i mbéal dorais* (Dinneen) on which tailors and other crafts-
[294] men used to sit to avoid window-tax. When windows came later on, they were placed on the side of the house sheltered from the prevailing wind.

The gables. The stone built gables are higher or lower according to the form of the roof, which is determined by the wind. In some districts of Ireland
[184] especially in the Aran Islands, Connemara, Sligo, Mayo there are often even in very primitive buildings, step gables or serrated gables. In other parts of Ireland the gables are straight up to the top. In Southern and Eastern Ireland the gables are generally of this type. Half thatched or hipped gables are sometimes found in the east, where now and then the thatch is also bent over the gable edge in the same way as in Wales. This is common on mud houses.

How the gables protect the ends of the thatched roof and support the horizontal ribs is shown in pl. XLIV: 2.

The roof. Roof and wall constructions meet one another in the most primitive stages, when the house is only a roof over a foundation wall, of a cavity, or when the roof is constructed similarly to the *clochán*s with the upper course of stones slightly overlapping the lower course. This construction is not known among dwelling houses of to-day, but can be found in outhouses, sweating buths etc.

Roofs made by wide slates or stone flags will be seen in some parts of Ireland when there is a natural access to stones suitable for slates as in Co. Clare where such roofs are found on outhouses with the narrow stone walls carrying the flags.

The Irish house from olden times generally has had not a stone roof, but a thatched roof, *ceann tuighe*. The art of making good thatched roofs is now dying out but in earlier times Irishmen had developed great skill in roofing with thatch.

The thatched roof is supported internally by beams joined in pairs forming
[804] the couples, *cúplaí*. The couples are placed at a certain distance and the space enclosed between two couples must be looked upon as a sort of architectural unit. The length of the house can be measured by the number of couples.
[171] A very similar kind of measuring is well known in Denmark and Skåne. In many old houses the length of the house seems to indicate traditions from the ancient Irish laws (See Addy, p. 84).

The roof-supporting system of beams varies very little. The beams can

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip, ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
674 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

361 Glanquin Mountain and the hills of Burren beyond. Along
491 it one passes through ragged upland for a mile and a half.
This is Kilnaboy Commons, and its many small fields bear
[311] witness to its having been a refuge of the evicted, laboriously
cleared of stones. The upland is not high. It merely gives
rise enough to start a half mile of gentle slope downward
into a basin filled with a little lake. Rynamona lies round
the lake.

311 The fields here are cleared, too, and cut up between with
limestone ridges. But the grass grows richly among the
crags and ridges. The farmers are a fairly prosperous lot.

361 Eight of their houses stand in an irregular cluster on the
621 lake shore. This is Rynamona village. Five others are
471 scattered through the fields and across the lake. These
households and a few more a little further off make up the
community. These are small farms of the kind we met in
Luogh. No one has more than nine cows; and only one has
fewer than two. Except for the eight houses huddled in the
village, fields and meadows stretch away from the haggard
gate. In the case of the villagers' holdings, the arrangement
is not much different. Their fields are scattered about and
behind their haggards in irregular patterns. In addition to
these fields, most of them have several acres, carved out for
them by the Land Commission on an estate about two miles
off.

621 Rynamona is a closely knit community. Reduplicated
476 bonds of kinship unite all the households. "We are all re-
653 lated one way or another," they describe it. Cooring is the
491 usual form of coöperation, and the village as a whole holds
itself responsible amid grumbles for the maintenance of the
borheen (road) which leads out to the outside world of the
towns. Nowadays the County Council pays the sons who
break stones and lay them in the winter months, but the
621 village still assigns a bit of the road to each householder.
487 Small matter if the borheen is bad, for a well-trod maze of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1935) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

[279]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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438 to the north and as far as Killadysert to the south. In the direction of Limerick, the metropolis of southwest Ireland, however, the influence of Ennis ends at Newmarket-on-Fergus, a scant five miles off.

491 Today the roads both great and small provide all-weather
494 routes for every kind of local traffic. They carry many lorries
496 and not a few buses in competition with the only local railroad — the small and winding West Clare Railroad, which joins Kilrush and Kilkee to Ennis and Limerick in the east, and Gort and Galway in the north, tapping Ennistymon and Corrofin on the way through, all this in the roundabout leisurely fashion of the earlier days of railroading.

491 The main roads are much more direct. They follow divides and occasionally cut right across high bog country. Today they negotiate bogs, which once would have prohibited any sort of transportation during wet weather, by dint of side ditches and high crowns of gravel and dirt. Over high country they have better foundations and wander in comparatively straight fashion through the country.

491 At various points along these main roads there are
653 branches today penetrating the countryside. These are rougher and simpler constructions of crushed stones taken from local quarries, leased by the County Council. The stone is broken by laborers and small farmers of the district through which the road runs. In the case of the smaller roads each landholder is responsible for the bit of the road that runs by his land. "Road metal," as the crushed stone is called, is spread during the late autumn, winter, or very early spring. When the weather is dry, in summer, a fine white dust rises after every vehicle. But in the rainy months of spring and winter the roads are soft and full of chuck holes, and new stones must be laid down. Then the heavy
[493] iron-tired carts of the farmers break them further and press them into the soft roadbeds.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction.

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics.

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler.

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The inquiry was conducted on almost exactly the same lines as
121 that of last year; the slight differences of method being either due to changes made as the result of former experience or to local causes; but every effort was made to ensure as great uniformity as possible, a matter of much importance as facilitating comparison of results.

In this report the same headings as used in the previous one, and arranged in the same order, have been adhered to as closely as possible, so as to allow of easy reference.

II.—Physiography of the Islands.

The two islands under consideration, together with several small
131 uninhabited islets, form the parish of Inishbofin; they are situated
101 outside the mouth of Killary Bay, and are distant some thirty-six miles from Westport, and about sixteen miles from Clifden, Co. Galway, the nearest town of any size. The post town is Cleggan, a small village on a point of the mainland, about seven miles from Inishbofin. Of the two main islands Inishbofin (locally called Bofin or Boffin) is much the larger, as out of the total area of the parish of 3151 acres, it contains 2312.

Its greatest length is about four miles, and it varies in breadth
133 from half a mile to over two miles. The nature of its coast line is greatly varied; at some places, as at Knock-quarter or East End, being low and sandy; at others, as on the north side, and at Dun More on the western extremity, being rocky, at times rising into high and jagged cliffs worn into coves and natural bridges; while, again, in other places it is high bluff overhanging a shingly foreshore. The
[504] harbour is very safe and well sheltered, and looks S.W. The coast of Shark, which lies about a mile S.W. of Inishbofin, is much more rocky, and may be said to be precipitous nearly all round, and much broken into by caves and deep fissures a few yards wide, with precipitous overhanging walls. It is difficult to land on this island if the weather be at all rough, and the inhabitants are often stormbound for weeks at a time. The difficulty and danger of landing is not so great as it used to be since the building of a new pier by the Government
● [653] as a relief work in 1892. Mr. Michael Lavelle, writing about the natives of this island, says:—"It is very hard for these people to live; they may be two months before they can go to Boffin to get some commands, and they live during that time on potatoes and 'white wine.'"

The principal rock of both islands is gneiss, but belts of steatite are also found.

231 is said to be due to the expense of im-
[492] porting feedstuffs. Donkeys and Connemara ponies are kept as draft animals, and almost everything is conveyed in panniers. There are only five carts
[493] on the island, of which the first was made in 1907 by a local carpenter from one he had seen on the mainland. The
335 two carpenters make anything required, including lobster pots, fishing nets, furniture, doors, windows, and hand barrows, which consist of two shafts joined by slats and a single wheel in the rear, all of wood.

221 Digging and manuring of the land begins in late February, and seaweed is brought from the shore as needed. The potatoes are planted about St. Patrick's Day (March 17); oats, two to three weeks later; barley and mangolds at the end of April or in May. Most calves are born from March to May. In dry years peat is cut from May onwards, laid out to dry, and eventually stacked in ricks six feet high secured by large stones, or placed against a stone wall. Apart from routine work, there is little to do until the hay harvest, generally in August or September, though sometimes a cut is made in July (as in 1954) with the hope of a second crop in the autumn. Oats and barley are harvested in September, after which the main potato digging takes place, though some are dug earlier for the household. From October to late February, there is little to do except tend the stock, though some men build walls four feet high at
● [653] 12/6 a perch or mend roads under government schemes. Few farmers make the ricks of peat beside their houses so commonly seen in Ireland; most fetch it as required.

The Sea

228 Encouragement of fishing was a major aim of the Congested Districts Board, and from the eighteen-nineties to the

[p.207(A)]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several e [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

221 233 234 [462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above. [512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

653 312 [233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a [343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

233 236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight [437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer. [262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat [437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

231 All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were [232] low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they [224] also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

 It is not the formal system of local and national governments which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather 779 the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more 67 potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate.

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward 829 government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly 687 is sought and even expected as an obligation, or "right," of the government by the [181] islanders (especially since nativism engendered by the Gaelic Revival has made [668] Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht," to quote a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders.

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes [66] were commanded by politicians who put forth grandiose plans for the betterment of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another [653] to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular —and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide. The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, [346] and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords. Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configura- 829 tion, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and 181 sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history.

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior 829 and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the 666 county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds. 873 [829]

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths. 167 177 874 [658] [668] [829] [186]

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school. 167 168 653 344 [793] [657] [829] [657] [874]

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there 167 168 829

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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itself in household arrangement and in the grouping of individuals in other spheres than farm work. 593 561

This parental dominance continues as long as the father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the sons, they have no control of the direction of farm activities nor of the disposal of farm income. They go to market and fair from the time they are twelve years old, but they buy or sell little, if anything, for themselves. Thus the small farmer and his sons are often seen at the fairs and markets together, but it is the farmer-father who does the bargaining. Once when one of the authors asked a countryman about this at a potato market, he explained that he could not leave his post for long because his full-grown son "isn't well known yet and isn't a good hand at selling." If the son wants a half crown to go to a hurley match or to take a drink on market day with friends, he must get it from his father. The authors have seen many sons, fully adult, come into shops to buy some farm requirement, such as a bag of meal, and say that the "old fellow" will pay for it. And a few days later the old fellow arrives to pay for the goods "my young fellow got." The son may, of course, earn money in employment off the farm, as many do at work on the roads in occasional employment with governmental bodies or large farmers. But in this case he is expected to contribute the larger part of the money to the general household expenses as long as he remains on the farm.

The procedure of the Land Commission, a government body, in providing additions to small holdings from the break-up of large estates illustrates well this retention of parental authority. It is the policy of the Commission to employ local men as much as possible in the reclamation and fencing work necessary at the division of an estate; the owners of the holdings to be enlarged are entitled to the work. Consequently, when the work is given, the farmer owners are assigned it. But it is the sons who do the work, [654]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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her unmarried brother to live with her and directed his efforts in draining a large field. The two of them ran the farm very successfully, though the brother grumbled. In another, a "landless" young man pleaded successfully to a Land Commission official for an addition to his aunt's holding, presented his case, and carried out the negotiations, but the final reference had to be made, of course, to the aunt for whom he worked, for in such case the feeling that the man must represent the family and farm unit in the community at large is sufficiently strong to push a subordinate "boy" into the position usually filled by the farm husband and father.

Similarly with several old bachelors. A nephew moves in and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control even to regulating the nephew's expenditures for amusements. In one case, where a widower had a small son, the son was taken in by a childless sister and raised by her, and when he grew up and married he inherited the sister's farm. His father remarried and raised a second brood. In another, two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their two cousins.

The attitudes of the country people to these arrangements show that incomplete farm families are felt to be departures from the normal; they are subjects for commiseration. Such phrases as "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her" and "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow," are commonly applied to them.

The policy of the Land Commission in increasing farm holdings is very significant in this regard. The officials recognize the social value of the full family explicitly. According to the official in charge of land division in Clare, who has had successful experience in other regions as well:

> An old-age pensioner without family could not be considered for an addition of land, nor could a couple of spinsters. . . .

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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654 594 Where the question arises, a household consisting of father and mother and sons, rather than daughters alone, would have a prior claim. But, regarding the position of the wife, it is a fact that, if the husband goes, the wife keeps the farm up. She is the person who saves the money and governs everything.

Again:

594 462 Twenty to twenty-five acres of all-purpose land where the mother is normal and the father energetic is sufficient to keep a farmer and his family. It is the province of the mother to look after the fowl, the milk, the butter, the pigs, the calves, and the milking of the cows. A woman on a small farm can milk five cows in thirty minutes. She also takes care of the children, though she sometimes has a girl in to help her for a time. She also makes and repairs the clothes. She does the buying for the house and the husband only for feed, seed and fertilizer. She has the responsibility regarding medical attention, and where she has any showing of culture the family pushes on ahead. In fact, on the mother depends the organization of the family in all ways.

594 Such evidence points to a situation in which the immediate family of husband, wife, and children, the group basic to Irish society and especially to Irish rural life, carries on a corporate economy. The roles of the component individuals are assigned them by virtue of their position in the family. The character of the economic effort, its control, direction, and purposes, are part and parcel of the life of the social group.

476 Beyond the family economy of the small farm, there exists also a certain amount of coöperation in the Irish countryside among the small farmers. Agricultural labor upon the individual farms is not performed in isolated competition, but is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids. That coöperation takes the following forms:

1. Lending tools, or doing the work with one's own, for friends and neighbors who have not the requisite tools, especially in mowing, spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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TABLE 7 (*continued*)

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Agricultural instructors, horticultural instructors, poultry instructresses, etc. Permanent officials, employees of local authority, county councils, and members of government departments	Instruction and demonstration through experimental plots, prize contests and schemes, assignment of grants, evening lectures, etc.	Agricultural instructors of all kinds make home visits and hold classes locally but have large districts and are often townsmen. Informal contact with farmers slight	Instructor either pays a visit of inquiry or is called upon by the farmer for his advice and aid; farmers make inquiries at central offices
Land commission officials and staff	Division and regulation of land holdings provided by land law in breaking up former large estates, often affording occasional employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Land commission proceeds officially to estate division; farmers petition for increase of holdings at local offices
Commission of Public Works officials and staff	Provision of public works and relief works in connection with drainage, conservation, government projects, supplying occasional local employment for young men	Usually entirely official and administrative; very little informal contact; tempered, however, by indirect political influence originating among farmers	Public works commission proceeds officially to put a project into effect
Local government authority, County Council, officials and staff:			
a. Rate collectors	Collection of rates, taxes, land annuities	Make collections in person, most frequently at farmer's house, though also by post. Usually owe jobs to local influence and are most often of the farming class, but collections are large and contacts not wide	Rate collection proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council

[p.278]

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult
654 route described on p. 203. The policy of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[12] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever bought. As one of the islanders put it,
437 "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only a few fowls since there is no way of
[235] selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [12] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

[p. 206(B)]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers. 824 [437] [241]

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained. 222 222 423

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden. 222 [482] 241

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by 241 654 • [177] [178] [184]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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• 654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[435] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce, under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the
[433] agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[439] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433 become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of island- [231] ers. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [226] and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [311] eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming [654] became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [241] expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the [231] subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231 more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422] 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654] horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [831] inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232] castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231 cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437 and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234] low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505] struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435] forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221 land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233 throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234 south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462] and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

• 654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [894]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned [312]
foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.*

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

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The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

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Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

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* Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

593 589 nephew for amusement. Where a widower had a small son, the son was taken by a childless sister. She brought him up to inherit her husband's farm, and her brother might marry again. Two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their cousins.

To the country-people, such arrangements, successful enough economically sometimes, are makeshifts, subjects for commiseration. One hears often enough such phrases as these: "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her." "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow." Even government [656] officials nowadays recognize the social value of the full family. A household of father, mother and sons gets preference in land division. The work to be done is the strengthening of the social group; personal enrichment and use of the soil are merely incidental.

Up to this point, I have described the country-476 man as though he worked in isolation from his 593 fellows. In a measure this is true, for his first duties are to his immediate family. Still, there is a great deal of work which goes on between farms. There is a certain amount of co-operation of an informal kind. Work in the countryside is permeated with a give-and-take of reciprocal aids.

476 Co-operation of this sort takes many forms. Men lend tools, or work with tools of their own for 'friends' and neighbours, particularly at mowing,

167 Beag, only limited amounts of which have been reported in this chapter.
182 Even though sexual repression and fear of the clergy prevent the folk
[181] from being outspoken in this matter, it is constantly broached among
+[83] themselves.

167 Paramount among external factors stimulating emigration are pros-
177 perity on the mainland and abroad, the impact of the mass media of
182 communication, the increasing number of tourists visiting Inis Beag, the return of former emigrants, and the fact that, with an increase in incomes and scholarship funds, more island children are going to the mainland for their schooling each year. America has been a land of freedom and prosperity to the Irish since before the famine, and, until the Second World War, most islanders migrated there never to return. But the growth of prosperity in England following 1946 shifted the stream of emigration in that direction, for not only were jobs plentiful across the Irish Sea, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in big cities. And it was possible to visit Ireland frequently, as the distance and cost are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic. It is common for youths vacationing in Inis Beag from England to talk others into returning with them. The latter declare
167 that they will soon come back to the island to settle permanently, hope-
177 fully with "great riches," but they seldom return. Since the war, a number of "Yanks" have also returned home, and their stories of life in America make the youthful islanders restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many folk also sow the seeds of discontent.

167 Television was introduced into Inis Beag during 1963, and the two sets now installed always have ready and willing audiences. Almost
207 every cottage has a radio, and, although the islanders seldom read books,
182 a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers
177 find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, as they allow the islanders to glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a
• [656] happier and freer world. Television and radio programs are censored, but, even so, the morality expressed in them—especially the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A censor from Inis Beag would most certainly create more discontinuities in films with his shears than do his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin.

114 Most of what I have written in this essay is to be found expressed in the works of such older Irish writers as James Joyce, Sean O'Casey,

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(c)]

121 living rarely encountered in the modern world. As will be shown later, however, the island people maintain their simple but not uncomfortable way of living only by help from outside: if [433] one believes that every inhabited area must make its economic contribution to the state, Inishbofin is a debtor on a considerable scale.

"A small and dwindling population 167 maintain a precarious existence on the 657 Atlantic fringe of our industrial society and present upon the whole an aspect of decline and, in some parts, of dereliction." In these words the Scottish crofting report[1] names a problem, com- [659] mon alike to the Atlantic fringe of Ireland and of Scotland, which was investigated by two Congested Districts Boards, in Ireland from 1891–1923[2] and in Scotland from 1897–1911[3]; in both countries the powers of these boards were transferred to the general administration of agricultural affairs. One by one the islands off the west coast of Ireland are being abandoned[4] but on Inishbofin this prospect does not seem immediate: past and present government assistance has resulted in a planned

[113] [1] Department of Agriculture for Scotland, Report of the Commission of enquiry into crofting conditions. H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 1954, Cmd. 9091, para. 281, p. 87.

[2] For a general treatment, T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 23, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[3] Cmd. 9091, 1954, para. 265, p. 81.

[4] T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 120, 1954, p. 332.

167 landscape combined with financial help
●657 of such varied forms that one may see the welfare state in action. Inishbofin, four miles beyond the coast of Connemara (10° 10′ W. to 10° 15′ W.), is sep-
[131] arated by a strait almost one mile wide from the nearest inhabited island, Inishark. Some of the neighboring
311 small uninhabited islands are useful sheep pastures and others merely reefs
132 dangerous to shipping. In calm weather these islands rise above deep clear waters, but in storms Atlantic waves send spray to a height of 300 feet and more[5] and a dangerous swell sweeps through intricate channels. The inhabitants, farmers and farmer-fishermen are at the mercy of the weather. In 1954 the dry spring resulted in a short growth of oats and barley straw and a feeble growth of potatoes; the fishermen's lobster pots were swept out to sea, replaced and then swept out again; and the hookers could not be taken out in waters always dangerous but vastly more so when the weather consists of an apparently endless series of deep depressions.

505 Isolation is a major problem, but on four days a week in summer and three days a week in winter a hooker runs from the pier at Cleggan to the island, where it is rarely able to berth at the pier, so that all passengers and goods must be put over the side into a curragh and rowed ashore. In winter the island may be storm-bound for as much as a fortnight at a time, and almost
[261] every household has a bag of meal kept for such an emergency. Special arrangements have to be made for the shipment of cattle; fish can be taken for sale to the mainland in rowing boats only during favorable weather; and no eggs are sold owing to transport problems

[137] [5] On the cliffs of the island the vegetation is halophytic and consists generally of a low sward of seapink (*Psamma maritima*).

[p. 203(A)]

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
● 657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
167 or—in comparatively few instances—by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[6] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[497] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[6] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]

[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

[p.205(c)]

311 bor, and then with no break to Cloon-
amore on the east side.

This island has a planned landscape.
311 The roads of the commonage pastures
657 and peat bogs have been built under
relief schemes and the farms include
seven acres of improved land, "striped"
or defined by the Congested Districts
Board after the land was acquired from
its owner, Mr. C. Allies, in 1907.[10]
342 Since then new houses of concrete, with
511 a concrete floor, roofed with asbestos
657 slate or, rarely, ordinary slates, have

[10] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 18th report for the year ending March 31, 1909, Cmd. 4927, p. 139. The price paid was £8301, including £401 for tenants' interests. Up to March 31, 1915, £7047 was spent on the island, 23rd report, 1915, Cmd. 8076.

342 been built for almost the entire popula-
511 tion. In 1893 it was said that there
[657] were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds, so that peat was stacked in a corner of the cottage with the fowls roosting on it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace, the cattle in a pen at the other end of the room, and the farm implements and fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] Now the
[343] old houses are the outbuildings, still thatched, with oat straw (not rye as formerly) laid on sods and tied down with home-made straw ropes weighted with large stones. Only five thatched houses were still inhabited in 1954. Some of the thatch has sprouting oats and some of it is rotten, but, when a roof is beyond further repair, it is all stripped off and the sodding and thatching begins again. Happily, corrugated iron is not used as it cannot stand the weather.

Farming

241 Agricultural practice is almost uniform: an acre or so is divided between oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—barley, and there is generally a small patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions, carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen. The ground used for crops is called the "garden," and its fertility is maintained by using animal manure and seaweed, and also by rotating the crops. Strange (or "foreign") seed is favored, and
[657] bought at a cheap rate under a government scheme. The remainder of the farmstead consists of a varying amount of meadow, generally 1–3 acres, and some pasture. The precious crops are
[231] carefully walled, but some of the farmers open their fields to the cattle and sheep after the harvest, partly as a
231 means of natural fertilizing.
439 Each farmer has one or two cows and

[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

[p. 206(A)]

[961] sixteen are in a similarly formless cluster.

167 Emigration has entered deeply into the fabric of life: in 1841, Inishbofin
161 with Inishark had 1612 people, but ten years later there were only 1047. A rise to 1236 in 1861 and 1262 in 1871 was followed by a drop to 997 in 1891, when there were 215 families of whom one-quarter were said to be "very poor."[18] Steadily the population declined, to 510 in 1936, 406 in 1946, and 341 in 1951, and now less than 300 (including 40 in Inishark). One-quarter of the families were interviewed in 1954; of these only one-third were "normal families" of parents with children. In the school there were only 29 children aged 5-14, whereas the normal figure would be 48. On Inishark there are now only nine able-bodied men, six of whom are needed to man a boat seaworthy in winter, with the result that an epidemic might be disastrous. Permanent emigration to Britain, or, if possible, to America, is favored by the young and adventurous. Even in 1893 seasonal emigration to Britain as harvesters or domestics was declining,[19] though a number of people went to America for several years, saved money, and returned to the islands. A large proportion of the people have spent several years in the United States. In many cases a family has its older relatives in America, its younger ones in Britain.

Conclusion

● 657 Having reviewed the economic geography of this island certain conclusions emerge. First, the present relative comfort of the population has been made possible only by past and present government assistance bestowed with lib-

[113] [18] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891.
[19] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

[p.208(B)]

●657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[20]

167 Second, emigration has been of vast benefit to the community; money comes
434 in to most of the homes from America[21] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

443 Third, it is regrettable that the lack of commercial facilities means that eggs,
489 poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [20] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only
[804] three barrels a week in winter. The standard content of a barrel is 256 pints.
[291] [21] Many of the children are dressed in American clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

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2

The Land and the Sea

Standard of Living

THE STANDARD OF LIVING of the folk has improved vastly since the establishment of the Irish Land Commission in 1881 and the Congested Districts Board ten years later, and the islanders are better off today than the inhabitants of some other areas of the Gaeltacht. In 1891, the Congested Districts were delineated as regions in which the population did not possess sufficient land to maintain life except at an extremely low standard. Between that year and 1951, the population in the districts declined 42 percent—from 541,000 to 367,000 persons. The few areas which would rank as congested now, on the 1891 basis, are mainly in Cos. Donegal, Mayo, and Galway (Freeman 1960:121–123). A vigorous and continuing effort to stem the tide of emigration, in part caused by poverty, led the commission, the board, subsequently the Gaeltacht Eireann which replaced the board after 1925, and other government agencies appointed in this century, to improve the standard of living by various actions: the enlargement of land holdings for more effective farming, the encouragement of small factory and domestic industries, the improvement of fishing, the construction of public works, and the introduction of various subsidies. Seasonal laboring in England, often practiced out of necessity by mainland farmers but not by the islanders, and remittances from relatives who have emigrated are income sources which also have served to alleviate poverty; but the major palliative throughout Ireland has been emigration. One of the factors limiting migration from Inis Beag to the mainland until recent decades was the low standard of living which prevailed in the country at large. An islander could not escape local hardships and privations by emigrating to urban centers as he can today; he had to turn his back on Ireland.

511 175 657 168 [167] [464] [167]

Most Inis Beag people believe themselves to be materially poor, although they resent others agreeing publicly with this view. A well-known Dublin newspaper feature writer in 1963 was denounced, and a vow made not to permit him to

511 829

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

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291 [513] [515] underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

463 434 Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income [501] instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by [298] four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. [294] Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are [438] made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold [657] to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. [437] Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

501 The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west [171] coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as [174] the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of [178] varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-
501 long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single
502 tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

501 Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom [502] three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the [433] crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at [322] work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, [184] and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

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The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[657] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[178] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[822] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[777] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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 It is not the formal system of local and national governments which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate. 779 67

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly is sought and even expected as an obligation, or "right," of the government by the islanders (especially since nativism engendered by the Gaelic Revival has made Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht," to quote a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders. 829 657 [181] [668]

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes were commanded by politicians who put forth grandiose plans for the betterment of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular—and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide. The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords. Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configuration, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history. [66] [653] [346] 829 181

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail 829 666

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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[73] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement.... It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting.... Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

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> conditions appraised The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuard* as well It is here public opinion is formulated There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190-191)

573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king [793] [815] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately. 628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list. 181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it 521 203 571 [574] [512]

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582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 312 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. 342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [178] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds. 873 [829]

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths. 167 177 874 [658] [668] [829] [186]

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school. 167 168 653 344 [793] [657] [829] [657] [874]

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there 167 168 829

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence 105
and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, 178
and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money 181
economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and [177]
the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage
figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which
continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter [184]
to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and [165]
illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although in- [212]
heritance is patrilineal). [611]

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and 184
the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a
subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared [171]
with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional sub-
cultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The 178
island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establish- [657]
ment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) [177]
in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions
there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in 161
seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "vil- 361
lages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the 133
northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, sep- 311
arated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the 134
villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side,
where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils
deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many 241
generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new
soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure.
On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the 133
island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle
dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a
mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices, [137]

433
434
226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
• 657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip, ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
674 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades! 582

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration. 161 168 167 182 582 589

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining. [434] [657] [434] [183] [178] [582]

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis [831] 181 183 829 167 182 [181]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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[p. 202(c)]

121 living rarely encountered in the modern world. As will be shown later, however, the island people maintain their simple but not uncomfortable way of living only by help from outside: if [433] one believes that every inhabited area must make its economic contribution to the state, Inishbofin is a debtor on a considerable scale.

"A small and dwindling population 167 maintain a precarious existence on the 657 Atlantic fringe of our industrial society and present upon the whole an aspect of decline and, in some parts, of dereliction." In these words the Scottish crofting report[1] names a problem, com- [659] mon alike to the Atlantic fringe of Ireland and of Scotland, which was investigated by two Congested Districts Boards, in Ireland from 1891–1923[2] and in Scotland from 1897–1911[3]; in both countries the powers of these boards were transferred to the general administration of agricultural affairs. One by one the islands off the west coast of Ireland are being abandoned[4] but on Inishbofin this prospect does not seem immediate: past and present government assistance has resulted in a planned

[1] Department of Agriculture for Scotland, [113] Report of the Commission of enquiry into crofting conditions. H.M.S.O., Edinburgh, 1954, Cmd. 9091, para. 281, p. 87.

[2] For a general treatment, T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Res.*, Vol. 23, 1943, pp. 1–14.

[3] Cmd. 9091, 1954, para. 265, p. 81.

[4] T. W. Freeman: *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 120, 1954, p. 332.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

form the basis of a reconstructed Ireland. One of his proposals, perhaps the most original of all the varied suggestions for solving 'the Irish problem', was to import a further 200,000 English settlers so as to bring the total English population to half a million, and then to remove the 20,000 unmarried Irish girls and marry them off 'one in every English parish', replacing them by 20,000 English girls to be married to Irishmen. In this way the Irish language, food, clothing and customs would be replaced by English modes.[1] Petty's scientific approach was devoid of sentiment and left him without sympathy for the Irish past. Other seventeenth-century writers, however, interested themselves in the ancient forts and towers, and Sir James Ware, who published his *Irish Antiquities* in 1654, also collected Irish manuscripts. This antiquarianism was continued by the brothers Molyneux, whose essays were the first of countless misguided speculations on Danish Mounts and Round Towers.

The eighteenth century brought a more rational view of Ireland, thanks especially to Arthur Young, whose *Travels in Ireland* (1776–79) are justly renowned. There followed a spate of travellers throughout the nineteenth century, aided by improved communications and attracted, after 1845, by the grim spectacle of the Great Famine. Unfortunately most of the visitors, finding, in the words of the Earl of Bristol, 'nothing curious to engage admiration and nothing horrid enough to stare at', do not give us details such as contemporary travellers were eagerly gathering from remoter lands. Yet their accounts, vitiated as many of them are by prejudice and an assumption of moral superiority, do give us first-hand descriptions of conditions in rural Ireland before and after the famine. From the first decades of the nineteenth century we have valuable sources of information in the Ordnance Survey maps and letters, in the census returns and in the Statistical Surveys compiled for the Royal Dublin Society, covering nearly all the thirty-two counties of Ireland.

If we ask why so much of the past lives on in Ireland we must first notice the position of the island at the north-western extremity of the old world, the 'last outpost of Eurasia'.[2] Until

[1]Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* (1691), 30.
[2]Grenville Cole, *Ireland the Outpost*, 9.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

311 continuous tradition of partnership. Rundale, as we find it in
361 decay in the nineteenth century, was a diseased system that had outlived its purpose. A few examples will serve to illustrate the appalling conditions to which it led when the removal of traditional checks and the adoption of the potato had allowed the population to expand recklessly within the framework of an inherited system of land use and settlement.

311 Our first example comes from the present century, and from
361 Co. Mayo. The clachan of Rathlackan, when the Congested
659 Districts Board tried to disperse it in 1918, was occupied by fifty-six families whose land was scattered in 1,500 fragments, some of them no more than a dozen square yards in area (Fig. 6). A two-acre holding was split into eighteen tiny plots, and on the average twenty-seven lots were held by each farm. Such was the confusion that it was not until 1942 that the process of redistribution and consolidation of holdings was completed, with the result that 'fairly compact holdings' were provided for thirty-two families.[1]

The following quotations are from the pamphlets of an 'improv-
311 ing landlord' in Donegal, and refer to a period about a hundred
361 years earlier, in the 1840s.

'We suppose it would not be believed that in this district, until very lately, fences were altogether unknown. In some instances a tenant having any part of a townland (no matter how small), had his proportion in thirty or forty different places, and without fences between them. One poor man who had his inheritance in thirty-two different places, abandoned them in utter despair of ever being able to make them out . . . The rundale system was a complete bar to any attempt at improvement; as, on a certain day, all the cattle belonging to the townland were brought from the mountains and allowed to run indiscriminately over the arable land. And in spring no individual occupier would set or sow, or labour in the fields, before a certain day, when the cattle were again sent to the hills, until after harvest. In one instance a small field of about half an acre was held by twenty-six people.'[2]

[1] *The Irish Times* (12th Jan., 1948). This was achieved only at the cost of the physical collapse of one land-officer and the mental breakdown of another.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 22, 46.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[524] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

571 *oblige*. In the same way, the old men's clique
573 operates.

For here in the old men's house, the countryman's way of life exerts its strongest sway upon him. It is the 'parliament' of his fellows. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. Agriculture, perhaps, comes first. Times of sowing, reaping and harvesting are debated. Prices are compared, innovations tested. Traditional methods receive their strongest support here, in the web of legend, proverb and reference to the past the speakers throw round them.

Much of the community's relation to the outer
573 world takes its form here, determined in the old
621 men's argument and agreement. In late years this
● 66 has come to be called 'politics'. Petitions for relief road work, for expansion of agricultural prize schemes, most, in fact, of the business of the County Council and its committees originates on the side of local community in the discussions of the old men's *cuaird*. It is here, too, that the community reaches unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for instance, it is felt that the interest of all demands that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. Consequently, even O'Halloran, the 'drawer down', whose private views leaned in a different direction from those of the villagers, begged that no word of his heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of Rynamona. "I wouldn't want

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

them to think I wasn't with them", he put it. No 573
wonder, then, that the political allegiances of whole 621
countrysides are constant factors in Irish politics. [66]

The community reaches agreement upon its 621
internal affairs, too, through the old men's dis- 573
cussions. It is in just this type of activity that one 626
can at last put one's finger upon that nebulous force among men: public opinion. That force is not implemented; it is merely the power of gossip and censure; only in critical days, as in the time of land agitation, can it rise to action, as a last resort, and win itself an international name: the boycott. But it is none the less powerful.

But, in rural Ireland, the group through which 573
this power flows serves another function which 888
cannot be disassociated from its role as the seat of 538
public opinion. The members of the old men's *cuaird* are the living repositories of tradition. In communities, such as Luogh, where the Irish language lingers on, many of them are *seanachaidhthe* or story-tellers. Among them the ancient repertories of legend, saga and folk-tale still find an audience. That the exponents of fairy-lore have always been, and are still, old men and old women, is no social accident. For the pattern of local life retains its continuity and preserves what it can of its conformity with the past through them.

But what of the young men, those who have not 884
attained full status? They do not attend at the old 573
men's house; they take no part in the deliberations

 It is not the formal system of local and national governments

which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather 779
the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more 67
potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate.

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward 829
government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly 657
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Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht," to quote a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders.

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes [66]
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of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another [653]
to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular —and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide.
The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, [346]
and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords.
Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configura- 829
tion, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and 181
sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history.

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior 829
and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the 666
county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail

433
434
226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions, since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip,
674 ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
• [66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the 1916 Rebellion, have other broad social classes 178
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though all of them figured well enough in patriotic rebellion. 1898 is the crucial date, because then the landlords were displaced in the management of local affairs. The older Grand Jury system, based upon large property qualifications, gave way to the elective County Councils.

At about the same time, land war had broken the last remaining ties between the landlords, as a class, and the social order of the countryside. The growth of the towns since the Famine had by then well established the new relation between the market-town and its rural hinterland which I have described. In the new situation, the shopkeeper and the publican could best represent the united interests of the social order of which they were, in their own way, an important part.

All nations infuse political forms with their own genius. The Irish were not slow to do so; they soon made their own infusion. The reciprocities of a familistic order, in which sentiment and habit found effective organization, were the materials they had at hand. The bonds between town and countryside provided channels through which the infusion could flow.

For, as I have tried to show you, the shop- 443
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443 side. From that point of vantage he could serve
661 many ends. His business depended upon the social
626 role he performed; the countryman expected favours for favours rendered. He knew best the direct personal approaches of social obligation. So, at first, geese and country produce besieged the new officers and magistrates; a favourable decision or a necessary public work performed was interpreted as a favour given. It demanded a direct and personal return. 'Influence' to the countryman was and is a direct personal relationship, like the friendship of the countryside along which his own life moves. Like money, 'influence' was a somewhat mysterious entity; it seemed to be a powerful agent for both good and evil. But its real content seemed understandable enough; it was an easily recognizable social bond.

Then, too, the shop and the pub was and is the countryman's metropolitan club. The man who worked it was a friend and kinsman, one of one's own kind. Near-urban prestige made him a superior, as one in touch with seats of power, fashion and law. But it made him no more, in the last analysis, than a *primus inter pares*. In all this, the conventional moralistic concept of public administration might well be little developed, on both sides. But there was much popular wisdom.

For the shopkeeper-publican dealt effectively first with the realities in which life, his own and his country constituents', is fashioned. To cry corrup-

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tion is to mistake the issue. To enforce a political morality without emotional conviction would be false conversion indeed. 443 626 661

Thus, the shopkeeper-publican-politician was a very effective instrument, both for the countryside which used him and for himself. He might perhaps exact buying at his shop in return for the performance of his elective duties, as his enemies charge: but he also saw to it that those duties were performed for the very people who wished to see them done. Through him, as through no other possible channel, Ireland reached political maturity and effective national strength. That strength persists today, despite superficial strife and internal growth and change. And it persists by virtue of its connection with the society from which it springs.

For a social order, we can see clearly now, is a thing of very wide inclusions indeed. The same set of dispositions runs right through, from the 'west room' of remote Luogh to the political life of the market-towns and cities of Ireland. In this study, for instance, we began our examination of the countryman's way of life with a discussion of 'old custom'—folklore and folk-belief. By now it is clear to you, I think, that 'old custom' is more than a dying survival of an age-old habit. It is part of a larger whole, a whole which in its total is co-extensive with the total-pattern of the life of which old custom is still a part. Our two original ex- 121 182

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
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829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [521] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gael receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

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the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they were provided with food, given *curach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are

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369 seemed to the Commissioners a petty commercial
571 credit system.
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626 They forgot, perhaps, that the landlord was removed from the identifications of sentiment and reciprocity which bound Irishman to Irishman and in which the ties between the countryside and the towns at last are formed. For a favour done is a favour received; and the debt is no more than the monetary sign of a social obligation. The 'confidence' its members have in the rural credit system is their trust in a social order.

178 What then can one say of that figure of Irish
● 668 public life who has contributed so much to humour
443 and story on the one hand, and to the bitterness and cynicism of his opponents on the other? I refer to the shopkeeper or publican in politics. His enemies have a stronger name for him; they call him a saloon-keeper and heap moral coals on his head. His friends, on the other hand, know him as a shrewd and genial soul.

[121] The student of social behaviour and the types it produces cannot and must not join either the moralists or the sentimentalists. He must appraise only for the facts; knowledge is not an ethical judgment, it is the analysis of what is. Those who occupy a social place may be good or bad, brilliant or pitiful; only the place can interest the anthropologist.

This type, the shopkeeper-publican in politics, reached its zenith in Ireland in the years from 1898 to the Sinn Fein times. Only in recent years, since

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the 1916 Rebellion, have other broad social classes of what used to be called the 'Irishry' made a substantial contribution to organized political life, though all of them figured well enough in patriotic rebellion. 1898 is the crucial date, because then the landlords were displaced in the management of local affairs. The older Grand Jury system, based upon large property qualifications, gave way to the elective County Councils.

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visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process. 114 121 127

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated. 12 [539] [177] [178]

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next. 105 [121] [160] [241] [436] [511] [161] [593] [581] [177] [178] [829] [165] [212] [829]

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the 668

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668 revival of a moribund language, and spearheaded by charismatic political, literary,
000 and clerical figures.[3] A nativistic movement is a conscious, organized attempt by the members of a society to revive or perpetuate selected elements of its indigenous culture under conditions of acculturation with dominance. Such a movement provides the members of a society with psychological compensation for the frustrations engendered by cultural subordination; the revived forms come to symbolize the real or imagined freedom, unity, greatness, or happiness enjoyed by the people in precontact times, while the perpetuated elements become symbols of the society's existence as a unique entity, culturally distinct from the superordinate society. As the result of assimilating the values of the alien culture, a subjugated people will come to denigrate certain of their indigenous customs and will refuse to revive or perpetuate them, and sometimes they will exalt "racial" or personality traits assumed to be characteristic of their ancestors.

668 Although earlier influenced by Fenianism and the Gaelic Athletic Associa-
197 tion, the nativistic movement in Ireland gained its full momentum with the
538 formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 and shows few signs of waning today, more than four decades after the achievement of independence. The objectives of the league are to preserve the Irish language and extend its use as the vernacular, to further the study of medieval and modern Gaelic literature, and to encourage
[204] the cultivation of a contemporary literature in Irish. Spurred on by the formation of the association with its many local branches, Irish newspapers were established and Gaelic texts published which were read widely; Irish customs were revived, particularly in the esthetic and recreational aspects of culture; and Irish legends and history came to be "glorified."

> The language led inevitably to other things, to Irish music, Irish customs and traditions, Irish place-names, Irish territorial divisions, Irish history; it emphasised the separateness of Ireland as nothing else could; it brought with it national self-respect, a feeling of kinship with the past, the vision of a persistent and continuing tradition going back beyond human memory. The Gaelic League was not alone a re-discovery of the language but a re-discovery of the Nation, a resurrection of the Gael (an unidentified quotation from Inglis 1965:195–196).

177 Whereas the revivalistic emphasis of the nativistic movement has been on
185 language and literature, the perpetuative emphasis has centered on religion. Since
668 the fifth century, Ireland has been a predominantly Catholic country, and from the
[648] time of the Protestant Reformation religion gradually has become part of the warp and woof of the antagonism between the Irish and English. The basic differences in religion came to be fused with other national animosities, mainly political and economic in origin, and Catholicism emerged as one of the significant symbols of Irish uniqueness and superiority in the acculturation process.

668 It is readily apparent that the Irish have been extremely selective in their

[113] [3] The next few pages and Chapter 1 will draw heavily on Irish history. I recommend to those readers not well acquainted with the Irish past two brief histories: Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish: A Character Study* and Brian Inglis' *The Story of Ireland*. The definitive longer works are Edmund Curtis' *A History of Ireland* and J. C. Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603–1923*. The final chapter of the O'Faolain volume and Part III of the one by Inglis deal with Irish nativism.

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choice of cultural elements to be revived and perpetuated. Countless forms of peasant culture, many of which are still widespread, have come to be demeaned and even their existence denied by the more militant nativists. The attitude of these persons toward traditional songs, dances, and sports such as hurling is quite at variance with that toward matchmaking in courtship and the belief in fairies, ghosts, and witches. It is the prevalence of such customs as the latter in rural Ireland which has been largely responsible for bringing the term peasant into such disrepute.

Some of the extreme points of view held by Irish nativists are: the Irish today are a "pure" Celtic "race" and possess psychological and behavioral traits which are "racially" rooted, including even a "racial memory;" Celtic civilization developed before and was "superior" to Greek and Roman civilizations, and the Irish branch of European civilization during the Middle Ages was "advanced" over those of other European societies; the Irish literary tradition has been "richer" and of greater esthetic "worth" than other European traditions of the past; the Irish language is a more effective communicator of ideas than other languages (especially English) and mirrors the distinctive Irish or Celtic "personality," "spirit," or "soul;" in order to achieve national identity, unity, and greatness, the Gaelic tongue once again must be spoken universally in the nation; and, Ireland is the "most Catholic" of all countries—in historical tradition, strength of belief, and morality. Inis Beag folk have been singled out for adulation by nativists because they are Gaelic speakers, pious Catholics, and believed to be lineal decendants of Celts who lived in the island two millennia ago. Their character is thought to embody those traits of ancient origin held in highest esteem by the Irish: spirituality, independence, self-reliance, industriousness, strength, courage, imaginativeness, sanity, and emotional stability.

Nativism has had a profound impact both on government policies affecting Inis Beag and other Gaeltacht communities, and on the interpretations of the Inis Beag milieu by writers and film, radio, and television producers. The extensive services and subsidies afforded the islanders reflect, in part, the nativistic outlook of the government; it is hoped that they will halt emigration and preserve the Irish tongue and other valued cultural forms which are preserved here but are disappearing rapidly from the rest of the country. Nativism also has caused artists, who have most observed and publicized the folk, to distort the Inis Beag way of life in their works. Too often they have been unaware of, ignored, exaggerated, or misinterpreted beliefs and behavior so as to present a desired picture of the folk, one in keeping with the nativistic stereotype.

Distortions of Inis Beag culture also have been caused by primitivism—the idealization of past or future cultural estates or of contemporary primitive and folk cultures. Like nativism, it provides psychological compensation for frustrations created by personal or social disorganization. Its origins are manifold and can be traced back to antiquity, but in its modern guise it is an amalgam of utopianism since the sixteenth century, Enlightenment views of "natural man," rural attitudes toward urban life since the industrial revolution, Marxian socialism, late nineteenth-century cultural evolutionism, and early twentieth-century ethnology. Central to the primitivistic position is the belief that civilization has dehumanized man and undermined his valued institutions; it has caused social bonds to disintegrate,

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668 fostered immorality, and created mental illness on a vast scale. Primitive and folk peoples, according to this view, represent man as he once was and could or should be again were civilized society drastically reformed.

000 Most of the ideas held by primitivists are as extreme as those maintained by nativists: primitive and folk societies possess simple, static cultures in which dysfunctional forms are rare; their economies are primarily subsistence ones, approximate the householding type, and lack competitive elements; social control is mostly informal; the family is the core social group and is a highly integrated and cooperative unit; religion is a pervasive force which sanctions most behavior and assures psychological security and social cohesion; and, religious dissent and skepticism are unknown. Primitivists also contend that primitive and folk peoples are content with their conditions of life, are seldom if ever mentally ill, and possess character traits that civilization has perverted. It is probable that primitivists would include all of the traits designated as Irish by nativists and would add many others.

114 12 The antiquarians George Petrie and John T. O'Flaherty during the 1820s were the first scientists to undertake research in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. Since that time, there have been short and sporadic visits to the island by a variety of investigators, among them anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians, philologists, and others. Most of the anthropological research has been conducted by archeologists, anthropometricians, and linguists. Several archeological expeditions have examined thoroughly surface sites in Inis Beag, but no prehistorian has excavated as yet, and the accurate dating of artifacts scarcely has begun. Reconstruction of a number of ancient monuments by the government was made possible through the research findings of archeologists, and today site descriptions on mounted plaques mark the principal monuments. Alfred C. Haddon and C. R. Browne in 1892 and E. A. Hooton and C. W. Dupertius between 1932 and 1934 made anthropometric studies, the latter as part of the Harvard University anthropological survey of Ireland, which also included archeological and ethnographic investigations. The ethnographic study—reported in Conrad M. Arensberg's *The Irish Countryman* and Arensberg's and Solon T. Kimball's *Family and Community in Ireland*—was made in three communities of Co. Clare by these authors with W. Lloyd Warner; it was the first holistic ethnographic study made in Ireland, and my research in Inis Beag in its initial stages was only the third. (The second, by Rosemary Harris, is reported in a 1954 M.A. thesis in the University of London—see References.)

114 12 197 177 178 [162] Linguists, as well as philologists and those wishing to learn Gaelic, long have visited Inis Beag. There now remain only a few areas along the western seaboard of Europe where Gaelic dialects still are spoken, and the island is located in one of these.[4] One-half the population of Ireland spoke the vernacular at the end of the eighteenth century, but by the middle of the last century the ratio had fallen to one-quarter, or approximately 1,500,000 speakers. Sixty years later the

[4] The Celtic languages are Gaulish, Goidelic, and Brittanic, of which the first became extinct at the beginning of the medieval period, and the last two are represented today by the Irish and Scottish Gaelic dialects on the one hand, and the Breton and Welsh on the other. Two other related dialects are now extinct: Manx of the Isle of Man and Cornish, the British dialect of Cornwall (Dillon 1957:207).

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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

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 It is not the formal system of local and national governments which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate. 779 67

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly is sought and even expected as an obligation, or "right," of the government by the islanders (especially since nativism engendered by the Gaelic Revival has made Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht," to quote a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either *apathetic or antagonistic toward* the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders. 829 657 [181] [668]

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes were commanded by politicians who put forth grandiose plans for the betterment of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular —and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide. The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords. Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configuration, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history. [66] [653] [346] 829 181

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail 829 666

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[951] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[769] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

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teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds. 873 [829]

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths. 167 177 874 [658] [668] [829] [186]

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school. 167 168 653 344 [793] [657] [829] [657] [874]

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there 167 168 829

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are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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 It is not the formal system of local and national governments which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate. 779 67

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly is sought and even expected as an obligation, or "right," of the government by the islanders (especially since nativism engendered by the Gaelic Revival has made Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht," to quote a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders. 829 667 [181] [668]

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes were commanded by politicians who put forth grandiose plans for the betterment of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular —and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide. The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords. [66] [653] [346]

Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configuration, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history. 829 181

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail 829 666

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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581 familistic system and the kind of marriage it entails in rural
183 Ireland. The country people feel this. Their attitudes
577 identify the convention with the whole code of morality and folkways of their own class and kind.

183 They equate any departure from the accepted norm as a
577 sin, a lack of religion. They bring the whole weight of all their sanctions and values to bear upon it. They make the
673 ultimate identification between their own norms and the only right conduct, particularly in this matter so central to the rural familistic system. This final attitude was often addressed to the observers, particularly, but there is reason to believe that it is as often expressed among the country people themselves. In discussions of immorality, illegitimacy, premarital intercourse, the question would arise: Would you believe such a thing could happen in Ireland? In such countries as England and America well it might, for there, the country people hear, the boys and girls just take a liking for one another and go off and marry and "never mind the money." And we remember that in this case the "money" means the re-formation of the entire two families as well.

Even those cases which meet condemnation are likewise often thought to have to do with the dominant pattern. Whether or not the suspicions of the country people are correct, the authors do not know. But they were struck with the fact that so very often in discussions of cases of immorality and unethical sexual conduct the country people made no recourse to concepts of search for pleasure or even of the overpowering force of emotion as explanations of the condemned conduct. Both explanations were to be heard in other classes. Rather, the country people insisted upon looking for a motive in terms of the system of organizing human relations which they understood. The culprits, young "bucks," tried deliberately in such cases to impregnate the girls and force marriages. They were motivated

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

by greed for land and dowries. Sex without familism seemed beyond the country people's imagination. 183 577 673

But the last statement must be qualified in a definite direction. It is only for themselves that they seemed to be unable or, better, unwilling to imagine a sexuality without familism. Other patterns of sexual behavior they see and have heard of, but these are immoral and unworthy ways of doing things and acting, departures from the right and normal, sometimes disgusting, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes mysterious. In any event they are marks of standards of a lower class and lesser dignity and respectability than that of the farmers. They are to be repudiated not only for their lack of common sense but for supernatural reasons as well.

Thus the authors heard several instances in which bad luck attended the departure from the usual familistic norm. There was a feeling, sometimes overtly expressed, that at any one time there should be only one sexually active procreant couple in a household. Young and old could well be part of the household in any numbers, but there should be only one adult married couple under one roof. Any other arrangement brought its own punishment and ill luck. 183 777 592 577

But more often there was identification between the expression of sexual impulse outside the familistic pattern and the debased conduct of the lower ranks of the landless and disreputable of the countryside, the laborers of the towns, the runaways, remnants of broken households. Or else the small farmers put the onus of guilt on other regions "more backward" than their own. At the most, wrong conduct might be the result of some occult compelling force strong enough to break through all sense and caution. The authors were struck with the countryside's version of love charms. In accounts of love charms and love magic, proof of their existence and efficacy was always to be found in the 183 577 832

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [521] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gael receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

625 There are no police, called *gardai* and "guards," in the island, but three, including a sergeant, are posted in a nearby island and visit Inis Beag at least 674 once a month. Crime is virtually unknown among the folk, the few cases on record [683] being for assault and battery and destruction of property; most cases are civil ones, [684] involving property ownership and inheritance, and are tried intermittently by a 829 visiting magistrate. The guards are subjected to frequent criticism and derision, 626 especially when they come to the island dressed in plain-clothes to search for [673]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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at home on the land. Where the will and marriage settlement are one and the same document, these obligations are passed on to the inheriting son.

The following description of several "writings" (which we examined) given by an Ennis solicitor specializing in this lucrative practice illustrates the type and the possibilities of variation. The solicitor is describing certain marriage settlements, the originals of which he held in his hand:

> In this settlement John F— of C— had one son and two daughters at home. He left the farm, you see, all that goes with it, to his son on condition of his marrying the girl named here in the deed. He also made the transfer subject to the son's providing for the two daughters by giving them rights of residence and keep in the house as long as they remain unmarried, and by making them special money gifts when they should marry. He then reserved a right for his wife, leaving her a small sum, and the right to the potato patch and her bedroom free of all charge as long as she lived. In the event of her not liking the new arrangements, she was to get a monthly stipend in lieu of her keep and room until she died.

We shall go on to give this interview in some detail to illustrate the full character of the arrangements made. The solicitor continues:

> If there are two sons . . . one of them gets the farm, and when the old people find a girl with a suitable fortune, and the son marries her, they give the money over to the next son, or they provide with it for the other children who haven't yet gone off. It's a pernicious system. [An upper-class person is speaking, not a farmer.] You'll go out to a small holding and see several able-bodied men and women waiting around doing nothing. They are waiting for the eldest son to get married and for their share of the fortune the wife brings in.

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What may happen when such an arrangement fails to work smoothly for one reason or another may be seen from the following examples. The first is the description (recorded in the course of a general conversation, not elicited in any

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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way) of the circumstances leading to a murder which was something of a *cause célèbre* in Ireland in 1932. The speaker is a superintendent of civic guards (the police) in charge of the area. It is instructive that the general marriage system is the same as that of Clare, though Roscommon was the county in which the murder (the Frank McDermott case) took place. The speaker began:

> The lawyer for the defense at the trial had tried to establish absence of motive. I went into the case thoroughly when the question of reprieve came up. I discovered that the father of the two brothers [accused and murdered man] left the farm to the elder brother with the understanding that he should pay off the younger brother the sum of two hundred pounds to set himself up elsewhere as the farm wasn't big enough for both. The sister was also to be married off with a dowry provided for in the will. But the brother was delicate; he had an asthmatic complaint, and he needed the services of his younger brother on the farm. The farm was paying badly, and there was no two hundred pounds to pay off the other with. In this way the younger brother had no place to turn and he was kept in virtual slavery. He tried to get married in the district, but he had no prospects. The elder brother was also trying to get married to bring in a dowry to pay off his brother and sister, but no girl would have him on account of his asthmatic complaint. In the end the younger fellow decided to take matters into his own hands. He borrowed a gun from his cousin, and went out to a field where he seems to have taken a practice shot, for he apparently had never used a revolver before. No one would have discovered the thing if the cousin hadn't become alarmed when his gun was found and it was thought that he was implicated. The younger brother lay in wait for the elder brother beside a gate leading into their farm. He shot him twice . . . at any rate he left the body where it fell with the revolver beside it, evidence of panicky behavior.

By citing this fratricide, the authors do not mean to indicate that failure of matchmaking leads to such violent conclusions; they mean merely to point out the provenance of the crime in a social situation arising from the family system

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

674 herein described. A case in County Clare in K— parish* shows the same provenance of conflict in a disturbance of the traditional pattern. The following extract from the diary of one of the authors gives the setting of the dispute:

674 January 19th. K – District Court. Nothing much in court today but the following case: Two lads about nineteen were up
578 for having tarred the house of Tim Nihill, the publican, night before the last fair. This wasn't an isolated occurrence; attempts have been made to intimidate Nihill over a period of years. The guards agree he is himself a peaceable citizen. Both Mr. –, the justice, and Mr. –, the local superintendent of civic guards, agreed that the lads were only "tools of some one behind the scenes who is inciting them." The justice bound them over, gave them a stiff fine. Later he explained to me that a certain Mr. Mulvaney has been calling Nihill a land-grabber in the districts and setting the lads on him. Last year the house was fired into in the night. It all arises out of a farm which Nihill owns and which Mulvaney says ought to be his. Mulvaney is
[583] landless now, only a farm laborer. His mother, who had the farm, was to have left it to him, but he made a runaway match with a servant girl and his mother wouldn't let them into the house. So she sold the farm to Nihill for cash and some debts outstanding and Mulvaney has been blackguarding Nihill ever since.

583 This story introduces the whole position of "runaway matches," as elopements are called. There are a few instances of coercion into matches. The autobiographic sketch of one Hannah M—, an old woman, the widow of a petty shopkeeper, illustrates the form which it can take. To paraphrase her:

She is eighty-four, and guess how long she has been a widow. forty years. She's been behind the counter all the time. She has a sister in America with nine children. The sister sent her over her passage, but the family tore it up and married her here in Ennis. She wanted to be a teacher; the work was easy, the holidays (ample) and it was a good job. There were three candidates

* Fictitious names for persons and smaller places have been substituted in this and following incidents.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or condition appraised. Even the priest finds each of his acts and even his sermons discussed and debated in the evening *cuaird*, and he "gets a name" according to the decision reached. In Rynamona an incident occurred which shows the type of slow appraisal the community makes and the speed with which, once its judgment is formed, it puts its decision into action. Not far away in the same general region, a gentlewoman moved back after years of absence to a small manor house which the family had had for many years. She was unknown to the farmers and, despite her friendly interest in them, seemed to be unable to establish contact with them. This distressed her, the more that her kindness seemed ineffectual in putting an end to the inevitable petty pilfering which she knew she must expect. One day, about a year later, her horse bolted on the country road. An expert horsewoman, she soon brought him into control. Thereafter her luck with the country people changed. Her exploit had made the rounds of the local community and had won approval for her. The old men agreed she was a grand lady and had a great hand with horses. And the petty pilfering sank to manageable proportions.

573 521 208 626 887 [674]

The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and in action the power which in the critical days of the land agitation won itself an international name: the boycott.

In a later section the sanctions the local community exercises will be discussed. It is sufficient here to point out

573 626 208 887

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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164 very even and white, and seem to last well; even men of over sixty
[142] often have good incisors; but many suffer from toothache. Abscess of the alveolus, unlike what is seen in Aran, is not at all common.

Skin.—Ulcers due to the friction of ropes and of the thick home-spun clothing when wet, eczema, "sea-boils," scabies, and acne, are frequently met with, as is anthrax or carbuncle; but, perhaps, the most common of all skin affections, especially among the younger members of the population, is tinea tonsurans. Alopecia areata, whether caused by the last-mentioned affection or not, seems to be common. Uterine troubles are not at all common. Venereal diseases are practically unknown.

164 *Accidents* arising out of the surroundings and occupation of the people are, as might be expected, very numerous. These are burns,
752 severe cuts from reaping hooks, injuries inflicted by domestic animals, and, above all, contusions and fractures due in most cases to falls from rocks and ponies.

4. *Psychology.*—For one who has had only a short experience of
181 the people this very difficult and delicate point is exceedingly hard to deal justly with, but the following description, for the most part obtained from local sources, both on the islands and on the opposite part of the mainland, and to some small degree from personal observation, is believed to be accurate as far as it goes.

To strangers, the people are not, at first, attractive, as their manner
[609] is shy and not unmarked by suspicion; but after this reserve is broken through they reveal themselves in a much more attractive light, and are kindly, courteous, and very communicative.

Among themselves they are cheerful and social, given much to gossip and chaff, though their wit is not of a very sparkling character.
[517] They contrast strongly with the Aran Islanders in their taste for music and dancing, concertinas and melodions being in common use in several houses.

In their dealings with one another they are honest and fair, even
181 a petty theft being an extremely rare occurrence. As to their dealings
674 with the people of the mainland, the usual hostile statements, common with all insular communities, are made by both sides with respect to
[609] each others honesty, but much reliance cannot be put in these vague assertions. Crime is almost unknown, and the administration of justice is seldom called into requisition, and then only for small quarrels among neighbours.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

from 'the troubles' of the early nineteen-twenties. Souterrains have also been used for other illegal activities which were enjoyed irrespective of political party, such as the making of illicit whiskey—poteen—an activity which is not yet entirely suppressed and which called for secrecy. I have more than once been shown specially-made underground hiding-holes where the poteen-makers went to earth when the gaugers were scented. 343 [273] [674]

In the category of temporary shelters we place the wretched 'fever-huts' erected to isolate victims of infectious diseases in the famine years. We cannot wonder that no detailed descriptions are to be found, but the account of a structure of 'turf built up in the form of a cone, with an entrance scarcely large enough for a dog to crawl through'[1] hints that some of these huts presented features of interest to the ethnographer. Temporary windbreaks erected by turf-cutters are also of considerable interest. One which I saw in Co. Fermanagh (Fig. 38) [758]

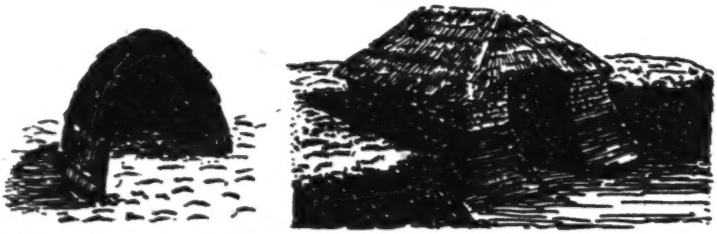

FIG. 38. Bog shelters, Co. Fermanagh. Left, for turf-cutters; right, partly dug out of the bog, for calves.

was built of birch rods bent over and neatly thatched with branches and rushes. The construction of animal shelters in great variety, too, built of sods or wattles, doubtless perpetuates skills once devoted to human habitations. I illustrate in Fig. 39 an outhouse with a solid hipped roof, known as a flat roof.

Unusual, because so far as I know confined to Achill Island, are little soot-houses erected for the special purpose of manufacturing supplies of soot and ashes as fertilizers. It is probable that we have to deal with a custom which has died out elsewhere and has maintained itself here in insular isolation. It will 343 387

[1] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 143.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

223 Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of
225 seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes in-
[481] volving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed. The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with
[292] charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The
[251] meat was salted down.

Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now
226 neglected and even despised, though there are commercial
[228] fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he
[481] searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular,
[227] with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned
[578] from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

222 If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of
674 such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [Text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 99.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

222 674 of the common people and have not been caught in the net of written records, it is still harder to throw light on some of the darker aspects of shore life. Both smuggling and wrecking have almost everywhere at one time or another been regarded as legitimate methods of obtaining food and acquiring goods from the sea. A dread harvest from ships sunk by enemy action was reaped with seeming callousness during two world wars by coastal dwellers who would risk their own lives in the process. Driftwood has always been an acceptable gift, and many a fisherman's cabin is roofed with ship's timbers and its fittings augmented with ship's furniture. Nearly all these varied shore 222 476 activities demand a measure of co-operation, and one finds that communal schemes of one kind and another and old ways and beliefs live long among folk who have to deal with the sea. Collective effort is necessary in hauling boats and handling nets, and while there are traditional rivalries between different [186] coastal settlements each one tends to be a closely knit community displaying a strong spirit of independence. They were often able to resist the repressive hand of landlords and they still remain suspicious of the efforts of government bodies to improve their lot.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip, ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
• 674 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

The girl's family know that she will be well provided for. They make sure of it when they 'walk the land'. They make sure their standing in the countryside will not suffer. Fortune and farm must be roughly equivalent. In the scale of rural prestige, each farm is valued against the fortune it can pay out with its daughters and the fortune it can bring in with its inheriting son's wife. In the words of the Inagh countryman quoted: "Backward places do not grow big fortunes". And as the farm is identified socially with the family whose members work it, these dowries measure the family's standing.

On the side of the family receiving the fortune, too, interests are served. The girl's dowry comes to them, to be used for their own purposes. With it, they are assured a competent 'new woman', as they call the new wife and daughter-in-law. She is trained to their position in life and to their own habits and sentiments. Girl and dowry are a fair exchange for prestige and alliance.

But these are not the only values at stake. The 'fortune' in the match is woven into the internal necessities of farm family life.

When agreement is finally reached between the negotiating parties, they go to a solicitor to make up the 'writings', as we saw in the quotation. By this, the countryman means they cast their agreement into legal form. For the 'writings' is a contractual instrument which unites marriage settlement and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

584 675 will. Reforms in land tenure have made it necessary recently to give an age-old custom proper legality, since the transfer of the farm is involved.

584 675 888 In the 'writings' the father of the groom makes over the farm and all its appurtenances to his son. In return, the girl's fortune goes to him. The father also makes provision for his own maintenance and that of his wife. It is his abdication, and like Charles V, he keeps only one monastery out of a vast empire for himself. He usually reserves the right to the 'grass of a cow', his keep, the use of the hearth, and the use of a room in the house. That room is the 'west room' already described, the best in the house. Thus, the cycle of life on the farm is completing itself. He and his wife step down from active command.

584 593 In payment for his abdication, he receives the fortune of the girl. A fair arrangement, we should say. But we should be wrong; it is much more. True to the obligations of his social role, he may not use it entirely for himself. The Irish small farmer does not retire, like the Iowan, to sunny California and the Townsend plan. He must meet the interests of the group. Ordinarily, the other children have been stalwart workers in the farm family corporation. They are not to be 'settled on the land'; some other provision must be made. They may come forward now for their long due reward and their corporate share.

Here the purposes behind the match show them-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardai*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

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The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

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The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [621] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gael receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

625 There are no police, called *gardaí* and "guards," in the island, but three, including a sergeant, are posted in a nearby island and visit Inis Beag at least 674 once a month. Crime is virtually unknown among the folk, the few cases on record [683] being for assault and battery and destruction of property; most cases are civil ones, [684] involving property ownership and inheritance, and are tried intermittently by a 829 visiting magistrate. The guards are subjected to frequent criticism and derision, 625 especially when they come to the island dressed in plain-clothes to search for [673]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

121 between the separate groups of kin in the village are seen to be in delicate balance
578 of power which is expressed in the local phrase, "you can't fight anybody around
609 here because all their people will gang up on you." If an individual's kinsmen must defend him in his personal disputes, it necessarily follows that a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin.

114 By and large, these three conscious models apply to Inis Beag as well as Aughnaboy.
121 Leyton discovers broad "disparities between the conscious models and the
578 statistical patterns formed by the actual behaviour" of people in Aughnaboy, manifested in 74 disputes covering a time span of ten years in the memories of his respondents. He classifies these disputes according to three criteria: their severity, the issues provoking them, and the categories of individuals involved (Leyton 1966:537–539). The criterion of severity yields three types of disputes: argument —"characterized by frequent or continuous arguments . . . associated primarily with exchange of verbal abuse;" withdrawal—where "social relations are actually severed and cooperation is withdrawn;" and interference—in which active attempts are made to "interfere with the welfare of the opposing party. These attempts, which may be secret or open, include legal suits, reports to the police, theft and, rarely, physical violence, as well as withdrawal of all cooperation." Three types of disputes also are distinguishable when issues provoking hostility are examined: economic—"which includes conflict such as rivalry between shopkeepers and disputed inheritance;" personality clashes—"which includes disputes primarily attributed to the innately quarrelsome personalities of certain individuals;" and jealousy—"which refers primarily to situations in which an individual's affections are alienated." The categories of persons involved in disputes are agnatic kin, uterine kin, affinal kin, and non-kin. Leyton establishes rank orders for each of his type classifications, and finds that the rank order for the severity classification is withdrawal, interference, and argument; for the issues classification, it is personality clashes, jealousy, and economic; and for the individuals involved classification, it is affinal kin, agnatic kin, non-kin, and uterine kin.

121 In applying Leyton's unconscious models of disputes to Inis Beag, I have
578 modified slightly his severity and issues classifications. To the former, I have added
[521] a fourth type which I call gossip; this is not gossip of the ordinary variety so
[683] common on the island, but rather continuous, pernicious verbal attacks made by a person within earshot of his victim's relatives and close friends, which usually do not lead to argument. In the case of the issues classification, I have broadened the
[151] range of personality clashes. There are several "innately quarrelsome" individuals in Inis Beag, but most personality conflicts involve persons other than these, who have come to dislike one another intensely for numerous reasons, most of which are related to envy, jealousy (other than alienation of affections), resentment
578 against authority, and hostility toward members of the opposite sex. Over 200 disputes have occurred on the island within the past generation, excluding those involving semi-permanent dwellers—curates, lighthouse keepers, and the Dane.
578 The higher incidence of disputes in Inis Beag is attributable, for the most part, to
121 the longer time span appraised and the addition of gossip to the severity classification in my analysis. However, the rank orders of the three type classifications

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to him at his marriage.

If economic apprenticeship is also a process of conditioning within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

For the child grows up within the full complex of life within the family. The petty errands which constitute his first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his beginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm work is again merely incidental to his long years of life with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, 181
the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked 182
factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural 626
manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing 831*
the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme 626
methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as em- 793
ploying informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments
to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal [779]
classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as [872]
effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, [155]
since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative
years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and 831*
even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative ex- 626
periences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorgan- 684*
ization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and 793
talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip,
informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting,
dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly"
(widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that
is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and
halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of
intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward
intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of
the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates
to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis 831*
Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist 797
priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a 626
week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver 771
long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, [796]
even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to [783]
receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening
the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence
used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the
penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred
well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally
magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which
are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in [781]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference. 578 121

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin. 114 121 578 578

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families. 578 609 602 [428] [626] [691] [685]

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than 578 [602] [609] [122] [562]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

796 devotees, and merrymakers. A legend was then told how a wild young squire of the Brady family in attempting to carry off a lovely peasant girl from the pattern was overtaken by the vengeance of 796 St. Caimin. The boat was upset by a squall, and the squire and ●688 his "understrapper" (a foster-brother) were drowned; the girl and boatman clung to the keel, and floated ashore unharmed. The local horror of the sacrilege was emphasized by the gruesome addition that, when "the young master" was waked in the "big house" and the foster-brother in the barn, all stole away to the better entertainment, and, when the barn was unlocked in the morning, the bare skeleton of the instigator of the outrage was found covered with rats and *keerogues* (black-beetles). The horrible "turf rick legend"[9] says that the Iniscaltra pattern lasted for three days.

796 Other less famous patterns were held on the sandhills near Lehinch in honour of St. MacCreehy. The celebration got shifted to "Garland Sunday" (*Domhnach cruim duibh*, the last in July), and to the honour of St. Brigit of Kildare. It was [178] finally replaced by races, which at Kilnaboy and elsewhere may also represent degenerated patterns.

At St. Lachtin's well, near Miltown Malbay, a few poor old people may be seen, especially on Sundays and Thursdays, making "rounds." These are usually two sets of five each,—the first on the causeway round the well, and the second on a wider circle "sunwise." The devotees take off their shoes, stockings, and hats, (or, if women, their shawls and bonnets), and start for the well repeating the prescribed prayers. They climb to kiss a cross on the branch of one of the weird old weather-bent trees in the hollow, and, lastly, pour water from the well on their faces, hands, and feet.[10]

Patterns were held near the very early church of Termonchronain, near Castletown in the Burren, and, not many miles away, on the last day of summer "rounds" are performed at the two altars of the oratory of St. Colman MacDuach at Kinallia.[11] Stations were held till late years at Kilmoon, and at Tobermogua,

[9] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 348.

[10] *Limerick Field Club Journal*, vol. iii., p. 15.

[11] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate IV. [P. 237]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

313 In the north long splits were twisted into fir-rope, a craft which is almost dead (Fig. 21 and Chapter 14). Both fir and oak were employed for constructional work of all kinds: old cabins will be found to be roofed with bog timber in most districts, and many implements, dressers, settles, stools, churns, tubs, slide-cars and even boats were fashioned from it. The buried trunks are located in winter by seeking frost-free patches on the bog-surface, or on summer mornings by noting where the dew lies thinnest. Their size and soundness are tested with an iron probing rod or "bog auger" and if satisfactory the trunks are then dug out.

491 Much might be said about the bog roads and means of access to the turf. In Armagh and Monaghan, to quote Mr. T. G. F. Paterson, the track or "car-path" by which the turf is carted home is called the "rampar" or "turf-pad," the rampar being the standing strip of bog preserved between cuttings. The various methods of tenure and rights of turbary are an interesting topic but a notorious source of trouble, and the Irish peasant finds ample opportunity for [691] indulging his litigious tastes in disputes over drainage and rights of way.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

181 sources, my informants being those who are brought into close contact with the everyday life of the people. So far as it goes it is believed to be accurate. No attempt has been made to do otherwise than describe the actual state of the case, and while the faults of the people are not extenuated, yet any circumstances which may explain these are given as far as possible, and their good qualities are believed to be stated without exaggeration.

181 To the casual visitor the people, on acquaintance, are decidedly attractive; in the outlying parts of the district, it is true, they are at
609 first rather suspicious of strangers, but after a short time are very obliging and communicative, ready to show anything of interest in their neighbourhood, and hospitable to the best of their power. The natives of both the islands at Inishkea, are very hospitable and kindly to strangers, of whom they are, however, rather distrustful,
[574] a visitor being welcomed into their houses, and entertained with the best they can give. With each other they seem in all parts of the district to be much given to chaff and joking of a more or less practical nature, and their sense of the ridiculous seems to be rather keen. In times of trouble or distress they are very kind, generous with what they have, and helpful to one another.

181 They are fond of music, dancing, and bright colours, and more than one song-maker in their own tongue, the Irish, has been a native
517 of this district; amongst these was the celebrated Dick Barrett,
53 several of whose productions have been collected and published. In common with most of the people of our rural districts, there do not seem to be many traces of artistic taste, and a native art is conspicious by its absence. One or two instances of attempted decoration were observed in Inishkea, none on the mainland.

181 On the whole, though cases of dishonesty and sharp practice in bargaining occur, they are honest in their dealings with one another.
577 As is often the case in remote districts, the people of one locality are sometimes on strained relations with those of another; thus there exists a certain amount of jealousy and distrust between the natives of the two Inishkeas, while the people of the mainland do not readily amalgamate with those of either island.

181 As regards intelligence, they are extremely sharp and shrewd, and seem rather fond of argumentation. There is but little crime,
●691 with the exception of illicit distillation and drunkenness, but the people are very litigious, going to law with each other about slight trespasses and similar matters. This tendency is not by any means of recent origin, but has been remarked on by several writers. Maxwell

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771]
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great 181
deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit 426
to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577
truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."
[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

closely approximate those for Aughnaboy; only the severity classification in Inis Beag differs, with gossip most prevalent followed by withdrawal, argument, and interference. 578 121

A further step in Leyton's analysis is his examination of the severity of disputes and the issues provoking them with relation to the four categories of persons involved. Jealousy and personality clashes, in that order, are the causes of disputes between affinal kin in Aughnaboy, which give rise to withdrawal and argument. In the case of agnatic kin, the causes are personality clashes and economic conflict, and withdrawal and argument are the sole responses; the same causes apply to disputes between non-kin, but interference rather than withdrawal is by far the most conspicuous response. Disputes between uterine kin are negligible. These rank orders are in accord with those of Inis Beag except for the predominance of interference in disputes between non-kin; on the island, gossip and withdrawal outweigh interference. The major disputes in Inis Beag are: between spouses and between mothers and daughters-in-law among affinal kin; between fathers and sons, between brothers, and between brothers and sisters among agnatic kin; and between families, between shopkeepers, and between particular individuals who are distantly or not related. Since disputes between agnatic, uterine, and affinal kin have been discussed in the last two sections, I will consider here only disputes between non-kin. 114 121 578 578

At least eight family disputes are ongoing in Inis Beag today, one of which has roots in events of a century ago (Another is supported by the exhortations of a ghost, as we shall see in the next chapter.). All are the result of past and present contests over the ownership and inheritance of land, and of past personality clashes which have led to violent argument and interference, especially physical violence, and have come to involve near cognates of the original enemies—"a clash between two individuals soon becomes a clash between two groups of kin." This type of factionalism gives rise mostly to gossip and the avoidance of one another by members of the contending families; only on rare occasions, usually at large social gatherings after much drink has been taken by the men, will disputants engage in face-to-face argument, which soon can provoke fighting between two and sometimes more persons. Fights are short-lived, inasmuch as other islanders, the headmaster, or the priest intervene to redress "the delicate balance of power . . . between the separate groups of kin." Legal suits over land ownership and inheritance have been many during the past three decades, and on several occasions guards have been summoned to Inis Beag by feuding families to investigate cases of physical violence and the destruction of property. Theft as a form of interference is practically unknown on the island. Economic conflict and the clash of personalities also underlie the dispute between the two shopkeepers, and gossip and withdrawal characterize their relationship, just as that between members of disputing families. 578 609 602 [428] [626] [691] [685]

Since most of the folk in Inis Beag are related at least distantly, the term non-kin denotes both "those I have a relationship with" and those who are unrelated. Leyton finds that most non-kin disputes in Aughnaboy involve at least one person who has no effective kin; this situation does not exist in the island where everyone has effective kin. By far the greatest number of disputes between non-kin in Inis Beag occur between members of the same sex and involve men rather than 578 [602] 609 [122] [562]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the
106 349 lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by [327] [364] islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

343 Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

344 205 206 The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor, just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use [203] in matters pertaining to the service during the prescribed hours. When the freighter ran aground before dawn, it was discovered by islanders who informed the company; Radio Eireann reported the plight of the vessel, on the basis of S.O.S. messages, in the seven o'clock news, but the company had reached the reef before the telephone was available.

346 Inis Beag has only a small church, known as the "chapel." After the church of the patron saint was abandoned, a house served as the place of worship for a time, then was superseded by the old chapel whose foundations can be discerned

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

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778 on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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721 At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

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175 The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,
• 712

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is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[712] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

176 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

246 milder winters there seems to have been no such response. Although there has been hay-making on the rich meadows of Co. Meath, for example, since medieval times, when the English openfield system was introduced, I have found no literary or archaeological evidence for it anywhere in early Ireland. Indeed Giraldus Cambrensis expressed surprise in the [114] twelfth century that the Irish neither made hay nor built stalls for cattle, and despite his untrustworthiness I believe his witness may be accepted in this instance. Hay-making would have begun on the river bottoms (callows, holms) which, being liable to floods, were not available for winter grazing: this meadow hay is today much less important than 'upland' hay, the significant term used for rotation grass. The hay-making season is nowadays a time of toil for all members of the family, but I suspect that the period from midsummer to late July was under the old order a slack season, the time for raiding and fighting, and catching the English bending in the hayfields. For the Irish it was the 'blue month', when food was scarce (July is also called 'the hungry month') and the meal bins empty. In Ulster at any rate, for reasons which may be older than King William III, July is the holiday month and the time for faction fights. Sir John Myres used to say that in the Mediterranean world, where there is little grass to make hay, the month of May was the slackest time of the summer, the [721] favourite time for fighting instead of hay-making. In Ireland as in classical Greece the winter climate made it difficult and unsportsmanlike to go to war at that season.

To judge from present practice on the tiny farms of the west of Ireland, grass was cut as required from field-banks and odd [462] corners, a creelful at a time to give to the cow as a 'bribe' at milking time, and it was woman's work. The hook used for [412] this purpose, the grass or scythe hook, is smooth-edged, unlike the saw-toothed corn sickle, and what hay was made in former times was probably cut for the most part with the hook. The [231] livestock would be fed in winter mainly on oatstraw, and grazed on the infield stubble, supplemented by the outfield grasses which had been allowed to mature while the bulk of the stock was at the summer booley-grounds. We may be sure that what little hay was saved was treated much as it is on mountainy

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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[3] for kin in a rhythmic manner

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[3] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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422 valuable commodities. Vessels which have run aground in the past have been
[175] stripped, and in 1960 a portion of the stricken freighter's cargo—namely Scotch
[722] whiskey, yarn, boiler pipes, toilet fixtures, sacks, shoes, and other goods—was
[432] obtained by the folk under the law of wrack. The importance and tenacity of the law were attested by the fact that "salvaging" was continued in the face of opposition from ship owners, insurance representatives, customs officials, visiting police, and even the imprecations of curate and parish priest.

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Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, [726]
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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER VI

Demography and Familism

161 OF the demographic phenomena the small farmers present, the decline of population is most easily isolated. The facts are as follows: There has been [73] a continuous and characteristic decline since the great famine of 1845. Numbers have fallen from 6,548,000 in 1841 to 2,963,000 in 1926. With the exception of Dublin, the whole of the country has suffered in this decline. On the whole, however, the country districts have suffered at a greater rate than have the towns. In 1841, 80 per cent of the population was rural; today only 63 per cent. In other words, since 1841 there has been an almost continuous increase in the town population at the expense of the rural, though the two have shared a common decline. Put in terms of percentages: since 1841, the country districts have lost 64 per cent of their population, towns from 200 to 500 49 per cent, towns from 5,000 to 10,000 25 per cent, and towns other than Dublin over 10,000 13 per cent. Dublin, on the other hand, has gained 47 per cent. That the enormous [167] emigration associated with this decline is a matter of the contemporary generation is evident when it is recognized that 30 per cent of the native-born Irish were living in other countries in 1926.

161 The closest approach among European countries is the 171 case of Norway, where 15 per cent live outside. Italy, which has provided so many citizens for the United States and the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The interlocking net of roads covering Clare high and low must have been fairly complete at an early period. In high country many of the roads were "famine roads," built to give relief during the "bad times." In lower, richer land they are older. They ran originally from one concentration of estates to another, reflecting the older social order. Even today there is still a considerable amount of new road building carried on by local authorities, opening up districts which formerly had little or no communication with the outside world. There are still many farmhouses and village clusters of farmhouses far away from any improved road in higher country. Their inhabitants rely on rough borheens and stony trails leading from the nearest road. Many such isolated houses were originally built in inaccessible parts of hills and bogs to keep their owners from the eyes of bog rangers and estate stewards and to hide them from the threat of eviction. 491 [731] 361 491 [487]

Today the roads are kept up by the county government and the state. The system of road labor is very old. Private contracts for stones, maintenance, and repair and gang work under county officials are still important sources of outside work for the farm communities and occasions of local relief important in county politics. 491 653

The small farmer today uses five principal methods of travel. Choice among these is determined by the nature of one's errand and the status of the traveler. 493 494

The motor car is the newest and most costly method of transport. Small farmers do not own motor cars. They hire them from the towns when occasion arises. The motor car is still in process of introduction into the Irish Free State. In the countryside it is used only in time of crisis and high ceremony. If a member of a farm family needs hospital attention, he is removed to the nearest hospital, either in a private motor car or in the free county ambulance. At a wedding and an important funeral a family may engage

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

351 and feathers', or explosives is a comparatively recent develop-
417 ment. These methods took a heavy toll of the megalithic
[316] monuments of granite-quarrying districts such as the Mourne Mountains in the nineteenth century, though superstitious tales are still told of the misfortunes which befell the stone-workers.

Another type of stone ditch popular in the limestone plain of east Galway is curiously similar to the Scots Galloway dyke and may well have been introduced by improving landlords or their agents. The lower portion of the ditch is a dry wall of small stones about two feet high carefully levelled on top, and on this rests a wall of boulders of lace-work type two or three feet high. The heavy superstructure not only secures the lower part with its weight but, perhaps because of its slight overhang and tottering appearance, is said to deter cattle and sheep from approaching the wall (Fig. 35). The low walls of loosely piled

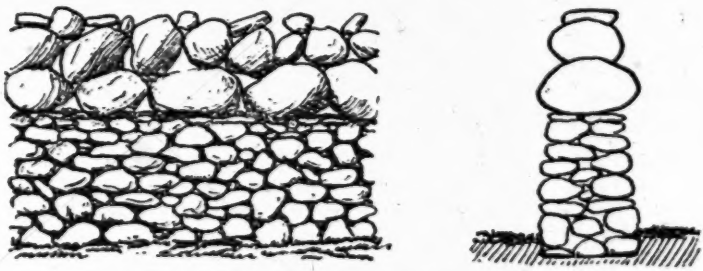

FIG. 35. East Galway ditch of Galloway type, and cross-section.

stones on Rathlin Island are said to act as a deterrent on the principle of the modern electric fence: I was told that animals give them a wide berth once having learnt that they collapse almost at a touch. At the other extreme are the ten-foot walls which run for miles around many demesnes, isolating them physically from the surrounding country so that only at the entrances or the now numerous gaps does one get a glimpse of the decayed grandeur inside. A good many of them are 'famine
[731] walls' built to relieve distress during famine years, in return for a meagre allowance of food and a wage of perhaps a few pence per day.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XX

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

582 178 ●731 776 THE average age of marriage among Irish countrywomen, about 28, is said to be higher than in any other country in the world: that of the men is higher still, and in addition there are many who never marry. These are among the demographic consequences of the economic and social changes which followed the Great Famine of 1845–47, for down to that time the mass of the population had nothing to lose and everything to gain by marrying young. Among the economic factors which led to the postponement of marriage may be mentioned the rising standards of living, the prohibition of the subdivision of holdings so that only one son could inherit, and the need for larger farms consequent on the decline of subsistence farming and the increase of pastoral husbandry, which meant that the peasant had to look and plan ahead. Equally important, I believe, was the effect of the crisis of the famine in breaking down patterns of behaviour which had continued with little change since prehistoric times. The elder faiths were rudely shattered so that today we have only the broken remnants left, stray survivals which have lost their meaning in a modern setting. The scattering of the fairy hosts is the constant lament of old people for whose parents they were a reality. Over large parts of the country, down to famine times the fairies (among them the ancestral spirits), and the powers of nature in sun and stone, tree, flower and welling water were ruling forces whose malice must somehow be averted, and whose beneficence must be courted by magical acts. Nature's reproductive surplus on which [842] human life depended could best be assured by breeding children to capacity.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XXI

OLD PISHROGUES

AMONG the serious nineteenth-century students of Irish folk-life a Dublin surgeon, who is perhaps better known as the father of Oscar Wilde, deserves special mention. Sir William Wilde was not only a frequent contributor to the learned journals but he found time to compile a pioneer catalogue of the Irish antiquities now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. His very active life spanned the Great Famine, and the monumental report on the *Tables of Death* which appeared as Vol. I of Part 5 of the Census of 1851 was largely his work. In it he dwells on the shattering effects of those tragic years, 1845–47, on the immemorial customs and natural poetry of the Irish peasants: 'The closest ties of kinship were dissolved; the most ancient and long-cherished usages of the people were disregarded; the once proverbial gaiety and lightheartedness of the peasant people seemed to have vanished completely, and village merriment or marriage festival was no longer heard or seen throughout the regions desolated by the intensity and extent of the famine.'[1] Another observer noted that the traditions of hospitality were weakened greatly and that padlocks made their first appearance at this time.[2]

Wilde observed that the coming of the railway at about the same period was a contributory factor in the change because it worked to a time-table—more or less—and involved an artificial division of the day instead of an observance of the signs of nature changing with the seasons. Time was related to social activity and had different values at various seasons of the year.

[1] *Census of Ireland* (1851), I, Part 5 (1856), 242.
[2] A. M. Sullivan, *The New Ireland* (1877), 65.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Griffin, of men starting seaward to reach its fairy shores, and never returning. 773

Another magic island was Kilstuitheen, or Kilstuiffen, in Liscannor Bay. On the southern shore, in 1839, there was said to have been an ecclesiastical city swallowed up by the earthquake that split Innis Fitae into the present three islands,[84] which suggests derivation from O'Conor's then recent version of the various Irish Annals. On the northern shore the tradition was fuller. Kilstuitheen sank when its chieftain lost its golden key in battle, nor will it be restored until the key is recovered from its hiding place, some say, under the ogham-inscribed gravestone of "Conan" on Mount Callan. (When that place was dug out only bones and rusted iron were found.)[85] The island, with its golden-roofed palaces, churches, and towers, may at times be seen shining far below the waves, but once in seven years it rises above them, and those who see it then are said to die before its next appearance. The fishermen [731] [763]

> "point how high the billows roll above lost Kilsafeen,
> Its palaces and towers of pride
> All buried in the rushing tide
> And deep-sea waters green."[86]

Comyn, in *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh* (1750), connects it with the raid of Crochaun, Dahlin, and Sal in the time of Finn and their defeat of Ruidin, Ceannir, and Stuithin. Legend near Lehinch places the battle at Bohercrochaun. A pretty legend in 1878 told how those rowing over the sunken island smell the flowers of its fields through the waters.[87]

[84] Annals of Ulster, Clonmacnoise, and the Four Masters; *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 304.

[85] *The Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, ser. ii., vol. i. (1872), pp. 269 et seq.

[86] *Monks of Kilcrea.*

[87] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., pp. 300-4, vol. ii., pp. 74, 99; *Handbook to Lisdoonvarna* (1896), p. 64; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxx., p. 289; *Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. iii., p. 197, where I have collected the materials at some length. Other sunken monasteries and churches are alleged at Monaster Letteragh, off the coast of Mayo, and the Castilloes' Church in Ballybeigue Bay in Kerry. I do not regard the story in the *Irish Penny Journal*, vol. i., p. 362, by J. Geraghty MacTeague, as anything but a work of fiction; it is very artificial,

[P. 221]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

764 placed on the new coffin. Where burials take place at short intervals the results are best left untold, but such cases are rare. A consequence of this fearful overcrowding is that no old graveyard is free from coffin planks and plates, bones, and fragmentary or whole skulls.[30] Those who saw Quin "Abbey" before 1879 will remember the enormous heap of skulls, (even then, however, much diminished), heaped round a tree near the graveyard gate. At Tomfinlough the bones and skulls were neatly stacked in a recess, at Kilmacreehy they were heaped on a sort of side altar in the chancel, and in other churches (Coad etc.) I have seen single skulls staring out of holes in the wall.

766 Places for the burial of strangers and unbaptized children are common, and are usually *killeens*, old forgotten church sites, sometimes in a fort, sometimes at a well, or unenclosed in a field.[31] Those at Kilquane, near Ennis; Fomerla, near Tulla; Kyleeine, near Barefield (with Doughnambraher stone); and Kilvoydane, near Spanail Hill, have basin stones. Some *killeens*, such as that between the forts of Mortyclogh, near Corcomroe Abbey, and that at Fortanne, have crept back into favour for adult burial, but several ancient churches at which bones are found have not been so used in traditional memory (*e.g.* Toomullin, Crumlin, Killonaghan, and Kilbract, round Lisdoonvarna; Templeline, in Carran; Temple-an-aird, near Carrigaholt; St. Senan's, on Mutton Island; Temple aed O'Connell, near Ruan; and several churches on Scattery and Iniscaltra). The church of Kilcashen was not remembered to have been a burial place before Eugene O'Curry's grandfather, Melachein O'Curry, in a pestilence about 1760, charitably [731] collected the deserted unburied corpses "on carts and sledges," and buried them at the ruin on his farm.[32] Bodies were similarly buried during the Great Famine at the Lisheen, near Lough Fergus. Oughtdarra, near Lisdoonvarna, has the remains of a [776] church of St. Sinnach MacDara,[33] where children under seven

[30] See also vol. xxii., p. 56.

[31] For a list, with notes, see *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. vi., ser. iii., p. 129.

[32] Kilcashen, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 369.

[33] A saint famous all round Galway Bay, but not found in the ancient Calendars. Some suppose him to be a Fox Hero, *i.e.* Sinnach mac Dara, Fox

[p. 266

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[192] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

176 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
• 731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the
[361] lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[73] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
669 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
889 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement. . . . It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. . . . Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

164 (E.) *Health.*—Taken as a whole, the people may be said to be a healthy one. Serious diseases, apart from accidents incident to their callings, are but few in number; and the general physique of the people speaks to a healthy active life.

582 588 *Consanguineous Unions.*—A large proportion of the marriages come under this heading, including not only those of persons within the prohibited degrees, for which dispensations are obtained, but also those which take place between people who are related in some recognisable but hardly nameable degree. Cases of the first class, or those which require dispensations, are of frequent occurrence, but seldom or never take place between persons nearer of kin than third cousins. The other cases, of course, are the most common of all, as from the size of the population and its isolated position, every family must, after a few generations, become more or less related to every other. Marriages with strangers, though more numerous of late years, are not common. The uniformity of strain does not appear to have produced any effect except the great similarity of appearance already noticed (p. 322); no cases of malformation or congenital disease are ascribed to it.

164 *Diseases.*—For most of the following facts I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. P. J. Hart, the medical officer of the islands, who, besides affording me much valuable information relative to the people and their ailments, the result of his long experience of them, kindly allowed me to look over his notes of cases. The main diseases may be classed as follows:—

[158] *Insanity.*—There is at present no case of this among the natives of the islands, nor has there been one since 1888 when a case which, however, was not of long duration, occurred in Inishshark.

164 732 *Idiocy and Imbecility.*—Properly speaking there is no idiocy; but there are two cases in which the persons, though shrewd and sharp enough about most of their own affairs, yet show signs of mental want in a sufficient degree to amount to slight imbecility.

Epilepsy is not common, but two cases are known in one of which the patient is subject to delusions, and always states, after a fit, that he has been with the fairies on the mainland. Of the other no information could be obtained except that the patient had had "fits."

Deaf-mutism has not been known for years on either island, but a case of temporary dumbness occurred on Inishshark in 1892.

Blindness is equally rare, there being but one case, a man over sixty years of age who acquired it late in life.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have
141 arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the
582 close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though,
164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

Insanity.—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly
[158] in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may pro-
[273] bably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than
732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet.
164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally
[501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

Fevers.—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter
164 being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

273 to procure stout and brandy (ostensibly a general purpose medicine in this case)
[562] in disguised containers to be consumed at home. The drinking of the men takes
273 place, for the most part, in the pubs and at parties, and seldom is it indulged in to
275 the extent that the imbibers become physically incapacitated. There were no cases
[733] of alcoholism in Inis Beag during 1959, according to the nurse. Although drinking
[164] obviously is done to combat depression and boredom, dissolve feelings of shyness and inferiority, alleviate the sense of sin and guilt, and overcome secretiveness which limits extroversion, the folk defend the practice by claiming that it makes them more articulate and convivial and thus better able to sing, dance, converse with one another, and tell stories. The often used phrases "to give us courage" and
273 "great gas" connote just these benefits. In Ireland today, there are nearly half-a-
575 million members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society—founded in that country 125 years ago—who have "taken the pledge" not to drink spirits in any form; they wear a small badge shaped like a shield which bears the emblem of the Sacred Heart. Twelve "Pioneers" in Inis Beag have taken a lifetime pledge and about 30 others
[561] a two year pledge not to imbibe. Most of these persons are old men, women, and
[626] boys. Young and middle-aged men who are members of the society are the objects of a good deal of indirect ridicule and direct jesting.

Folklore

177
178 As a result of acculturation, the Inis Beag esthetic tradition today is not
53 nearly so rich as it was two generations ago, nor has it ever been as rich as those found in many other peasant areas of Ireland. The principal esthetic forms are folklore, music, and dance; lacking are the graphic and plastic arts, and of the crafts already considered only the knitting of ganzies, the crocheting of shawls, and *crios* making transcend sheer utility in their manufacture, according to the
538 evaluation of island artisans. Myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes among prose narratives, and song texts and proverbs, are the predominant genres of oral literature. There is no drama, while poetry, riddles, and jokes seldom are recited.

114 "Along the western shores of Ireland and Scotland . . . is preserved the
171 oldest vernacular literature in Europe, north and west of the Alps. Along this
538 tattered cultural frontier . . . [are] the last remnants of the most venerable body of
178 orally preserved tradition in western Europe" (Delargy 1957:178). The Inis Beag
124 folk share this body of folklore, and storytelling always has loomed large in the lives of the people. However, it had disappeared formally from the island by the time that my wife and I came, and we were never able to attend a traditional storytelling session, but had to reconstruct its institutionalized characteristics by
638 plumbing the memory of one of the two aged narrators still alive. There are two types of Irish storytellers: the *seóidaí*, who recounts myths and legends of the mythological, Ulster, Fenian, and historical cycles, as well as ancient folktales; and the *seanchaí*, "who makes a specialty of local tales, family-sagas, or genealogies, social-historical tradition, and the like, and can recount many tales of a short realistic type about fairies, ghosts, and other supernatural beings (Delargy 1945:6).
[562] In Inis Beag, the former type of storyteller was always male and the latter usually

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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as a way of getting him to start on your yarn in a hurry. If you 463
didn't, he would not do it until he got ready. They were inde- 286
pendent, all right, and then when they were finished, you had to reach down into your pocket and pay for what he did. There used to be a lot of weavers here, but they are all gone now. The women have got out of weaving the wool.

A weaver here, Paddy Seán R—, was a very fine fellow 463
though he drank a lot. You cannot blame him for that because his job was a mean one and bad on the health. He worked to 286
keep his mother out of the workhouse and till the day she died 735
he would not let her go there. Wasn't that a decent thing for him to do? Afterwards he went to Galway and then he came back here and as an old man he died in the workhouse. But wasn't it a decent thing he would not let his poor old mother go [386
and her going up the streets of the town every morning collecting the urine from the people who lived in the house [to use 514]
for bleaching].

These three occupations were the meaner ones in the eyes 463
of the country people. It was not that they degraded their 554
followers. Rather it was that they were intrinsically of less value than the more robust crafts of outdoor life. Something of the sexual dichotomization of labor was involved in this attitude equating sedentary, house-bound pursuits with the feminine spheres of activity.

The chief exponents of the robuster, more masculine crafts within local ken were the carpenter, the mason, the house builder, and the smith. But there were many others. Between the landless or "backward" cotters and laborers, who might turn their hand to anything, and the small farmers, who were themselves occasionally forced to turn to harvesting abroad or to road-mending and stone-breaking at home, there were as many specialists as there were activities in which special renown and skill could be attained. In fact, the development of local skills seems restricted only by the limits of the *matériel* which peasant life requires.

Other local experts were the thatcher, the cattle doctor 463
or "vet," often a herdsmen with a lifelong experience of

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does 181
not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though [735]
occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good
take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their [273]
religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of
their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. [793]
Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having [848]
been recorded from the islands for years.

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; 181
this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed
in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west
coast.

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be 578
unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive lan-
guage, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman 181
when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she
would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his
part, even when she was very provoking.

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary 181
life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and
have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, [515]
is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland
allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts,
rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same
as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to
one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local [609]
affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down
to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity
when roused.

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises 551
all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names,
however, are those of families not long established on the islands,
while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now
without representatives.

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin,
as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, [444]
and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and
manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself.
It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames
may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

241 sometimes raises cases of trespass. The fences are the usual dry stone
[423] walls of the west, and the fields seldom have gates.
[417] The crops most grown are barley, oats, potatoes, and a little rye, and a few turnips. The manures are sea-weed and farm-yard manure, and occasionally old thatch, saturated with peat smoke, and well rotted with age. The agricultural implements employed are the spade and shovel, and the sickle; the use of plough or harrow is not known. Low-lying, damp places are utilized for the growth of osiers for panniers, baskets, and lobster-pots.

As is the case in many fishing communities, the fields are not well kept, and have a rather untended appearance, the weeds being let grow rankly in the potato fields, the reason given for which is that without the shelter given by the weeds the crop would be speedily destroyed by the winds; but the most probable explanation is that the amount of attention directed towards the fishing at the most critical periods of the year causes the less important occupation to be to some extent neglected. A family keeps a couple of pigs, some
[231] sheep, a cow or two, geese (of which large flocks are kept on the islands), ducks and fowl, but no turkeys.

735 Some sixty families are said to be in very poor circumstances, and of these forty-six have no cattle.

231 The animals are to a large extent supported on the very extensive commonage.

The pigs, cattle, and fowl are taken into the houses at night, while the sheep, geese, and ponies get shelter how they can. The pigs are not regularly fed, but have, as the people express it, "the run of their teeth" of the island, and by feeding on such provision as they can pick up on the sea-shore, the flesh is often rendered rank and fishy-flavoured.

372 Fuel is supplied either by peat cut from the bogs, or, in a large proportion of cases, by "scraws" of the thin peaty layer which covers the rocky surface of the higher and wilder parts of the islands, cut into blocks the size of peats, and dried in the sun. The substance thus obtained can be burned, and will throw out considerable heat, but is extremely dirty and wasteful, as it contains a large proportion of earth and small pebbles, which are left in the ash. From repeated cuttings of these "scraws" the surface of the higher ground has become much deteriorated in value, and this is especially the case on
[237] Inishshark, where there are no bogs. In times of scarcity fish-bones and cow-mats (*bois de vâche*) are used as fuel.

373 For light, petroleum lamps and candles are now generally used,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
198 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
776 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
• 735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid	She is deaf and
Dressed in white.	She is dumb.
Give her something	For God's sake,
For the night.	Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
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796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[233] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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476 The commonest form of coöperation is that which in-
246 volves lending a boy to a "friend" whenever he is needed. In order to illustrate this form of coöperation and to give the setting in which it takes place, it will be well to describe the hay harvest in a country district. We choose the district of Luogh. Luogh is a mountain region of small holdings,
[471] none of them larger than twenty-five acres, divided among twenty-four households. There was only one large farmer in the immediate vicinity; he worked his lands through a herdsman and, as he had his own hired hands, did not figure in the haymaking. All the rest of the holders had what is called "general purpose land" by the Land Commissioners; they had some bog, some meadow, several fields being grazed over, and a garden of potatoes, rye, cabbage, and oats, always less than an acre in extent. The number of cattle each had ranged from six cows, two calves, and two bullocks held by one holder with sixteen acres of mountain land and an addition about three miles off in fertile bottomland (he had got this, eight acres, several years before from the Land
[737] Commission) to none. The person having no cattle was an old bachelor, an old-age pensioner, who lived by himself on a farm of four acres stocked only with a few hens.

476 The hay was early, the weather favorable, and the harvest
246 began in mid-July. All the holders except two were Luogh
621 people related by complicated ties of blood and ancestral
589 association to the land and to each other. There were three lone bachelors, a widow helped by her brother, and three widowers helped respectively by one son, three sons and a daughter, and two sons. The other holders were married couples with each a son or two and perhaps a daughter present, if they were old, and many growing children if they
[167] were not. The region was one of large-scale emigration, so that a smaller number of young people were present than is
476 perhaps usual.
246 As the hay ripened and the weather turned fine, the fami-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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side of the road" has occurred, although the authors found no instance of it. If, however, the new family finds the old too great a burden, the old may go to the County Home, where the poor and derelict old people are maintained. A grave stigma of inability to support one's duties still attaches to this.

It is interesting that the old-age pension, originally designed in Great Britain to support the aged members of an industrial population and extended some years later to Ireland, has been incorporated into Irish farm life without upsetting, but rather reinforcing, the matchmaking pattern. The tendency is now to turn the farm over to the son as soon as the father passes his seventieth year. Receipt of the pension facilitates the maintenance of the old people and hastens the transfer of land to the son, as the farmers must divest themselves of their small farms in the majority of cases in order to become eligible for the pension. 592 888 737

Even from the point of view of the household expense, the pension is very welcome. In the words of one farmer:

> To have old people in the house is a great blessing in these times because if you have one, it means ten bob a week and, if you have two, it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'D— and every Friday he will go to Corrofin [town] to collect his ten bob and he may buy a couple of bottles of porter, but spend the rest on things for the house and then come home with a few shillings which will go into the common fund.
>
> Not only that but it adds at least ten years to a man's life because the anticipation that each Friday he is to get ten shillings will cheer him up and keep him keen. Any house which has one old person is well off in the last few years, and, if there are two, it is a great blessing.

But the blessing the pension represents is more than an economic aid in bad times. It plays a great role in the transition the match brings about in family relationships. As one countrywoman phrased it:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 There is no chance that the old people would give up the land but for the pension, and there is no hurrying them. Before
888 the old-age pension the father would keep the fat of the land
737 and there would be argument between them, the young woman
578 and the old woman slashing each other with tongs, the doors broke, and is would be two dwellings in the house, like, but since the old-age pension, there are no rows and, if there are, then they make it up with the old people for the ten bob a week.

592 If the transition is smooth, there need be no such violence
888 of dispute as the last quotation describes. Each of the members of the household must adopt a new role in relation to the others. The old man abdicates his controlling position with his transference of the farm to his son. Usually such a change goes smoothly enough. If the son can still seem to defer to superior experience and judgment and refer decisions to the old man, all goes well. The happiest compromise is that suggested in the statement of one countryman:

> Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what he thought I should do for the day, and the old man would say that it is now time to do this or that or that the cows should have something done for them or the garden should be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty to thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then go about my own business.

592 It is in the feminine province of farm work and house-
606 hold control that the transition is most difficult. Under the patrilocal type of marriage here described, the bride is a stranger and of necessity cannot rely upon the experience of an association of years in order to meet the new conditions, as can father and son. In the graphic phrase of the people, she is the "new woman."

For her the transition brings a violent uprooting from prior attachments. Unlike her urban sister, she has little of the ideal of romantic love to help her over the crisis. Consequently her introduction into the new household is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardai*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

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The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

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The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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574 273 Women
[562] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused
[514] them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen
[535] and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the
[562] cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other,
[857] while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart.
574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist
[123] with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while
574 273 stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the
[533] activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts
[535] prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the chil-
[576] dren, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy.
[351] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the
574 table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after every-
535 one is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight,
123 when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out
[577] between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the
574 same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years,
579 "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at
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[738]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Murphy and they tried to argue her out of it, but she said it was too far gone now and she was committed to marry him, so they hastily gave her their blessing. He lived in a big house up by C— and had sixty acres. 602 593 578

Well, he was a sort of uncouth kind of chap, rough, and she was what you might say anglified, or citified. She wanted to brighten up the house and make it nice and hang up curtains and that sort of thing. He thought the reins of the horse would do for the curtains and so on, and it came to a fight between them, a clash of wills, and in the end, as it must, the stronger one won out; that is, the man's. She got hysterical and he cast round for ways of getting rid of her, and he sent up to Ennistymon for the doctor to come down and examine her to commit her to the asylum. He didn't send her up to C— though that was nearer and in his district, but he sent up for Dr. MacNulty to Ennistymon, leaving Dr. Starr in C— so as to get someone who wouldn't know the case. 627 [158 743]

The married sister of the wife was staying in the house at the time and he was driving her home. He told her the doctor was coming, and she said, "You are doing wrong," and made him turn round and go back to the house where Dr. MacNulty was examining the hysterical woman. Then the married sister got her brother and father to take her back to D—. They came up with Father Brendan of Ennis here and took her away down to D—. After a time they got up a party and invited him down for a reconciliation.

After a while she went back to live with him. He started it again and got her hysterical and called in another doctor, who said that there was nothing wrong with the woman.

One night the three brothers of the girl and her father came up to the house and one went round to the back door and the others went in the front and they caught the fellow. They were going to force him to sign receipts for the money the daughter gave him. Country people demand receipts for money they give and they are right, but the girl hadn't liked to ask and hadn't got any, so her people were going to step in and get them themselves. Murphy had rifled her belongings and torn off his name from all the receipts he had sent her to England. They came in and said that he was lucky he was going to escape with his life. No one in their family had ever been in the asylum and no one belonging to them had ever been insane or robbers.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

463 dropping away of rural occupations other than agricultural
369 is even more marked. Yet the smith, carpenter, mason, building-contractor, employer, and foreman, and their navvies and laborers are characteristically rural producers. Only they of all the occupations and crafts survive in rural districts, with the exception of the very few textile workers. But the figures for the weavers of Clare are somewhat deceptive, since one of Clare's few industries was a tweed factory in Sixmilebridge, a town just too small to be excluded from the rural districts. Actually except for them the rural weaver is nearly entirely gone.

In Clare, as in the whole country, two professional occupations are still rural. Priests and schoolteachers are country dwellers. And theological students, characteristically "strong" farmers' sons destined for the priesthood, are rural too. That female mental hospital attendants should be
[743] characteristically rural in Clare is a statistical accident due entirely to the fact that the County Mental Hospital happens to be just outside an urban boundary.

The statistical record restates the fact that today in Ireland no less than elsewhere social differentiation on the basis of occupation and technique is an urban matter. The countryside has been relegated entirely to the agriculturalist. Only very few others occupy the countryside with him in the face of the extreme division of labor of modern industrial civilization. The Irish countryside is an extreme example of the relegation of the rural districts to agriculture. Nevertheless the statistical record shows us that a few of the rural artisans survive. It demonstrates too that a few men of professional status still serve the rural community. Even the crossroad shopkeeper is an important rural figure still, though he does not count a sufficiently large number to distinguish himself statistically as a rural occupation.

Occupational and technological differentiation is thus not entirely lacking in the country districts. Such division

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the
106 lighthouse was built. Three guardsmen and their families lived in private dwellings
349 in Terrace Village until the large station was erected after 1883 in Low Village, following which the contingent was enlarged to four men. The two-story structure contains four apartments, and these housed the families of the personnel until 1922. Now owned by the Irish Land Commission, two apartments are rented by
[427] islanders who sublet them to visitors; a third accommodates the nurse; and the
[464] other has been converted into a government sponsored knitting "factory" which employs local girls. One of the several outbuildings of the station contains the breeches buoy apparatus of the Coast Life Saving Service. The life saving company is composed of 15 Inis Beag men, hired and supervised by a branch of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and was responsible for the rescue of the freighter's crew in 1960—its only rescue operation since being formed almost 60 years ago. A boathouse was erected on the strand by the coast guard company, and now it serves as an all-purpose building: dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place.

• 743 Health services are provided the folk by a nurse, a doctor who lives in a neighboring island, and medical and dental personnel from the mainland who visit the island occasionally for specific examination and treatment purposes. A much renowned mainland woman who lived in Inis Beag intermittently between 1903 and 1923 (and wrote a book about her experiences) was the first nurse to serve the islanders; but since 1932, the Lady Dudley Nursing Scheme of Dublin has maintained "Jubilee Nurses" in Inis Beag continuously, each one serving from one to five years. The nurse is responsible to the doctor, from whom she obtains medicines furnished by the county council, and handles most of the medical cases which arise. Bedridden patients and women who are secretive about their ailments are visited by her during two daily rounds, while after dark she is visited by other patients, mostly men, who are also secretive about their infirmities, and she may be called out on emergencies. The doctor comes to Inis Beag once a month and visits the seriously ill accompanied by the nurse, and in the case of emergencies at other times which cannot be taken care of by her, he is brought over in the lifeboat of the Coast Life Saving Service at her summons.

344 The post office in High Village is an adjunct to the house of its supervisor,
205 just as the shops are to the homes of their proprietors. The office is a small room
206 with a counter, separating the clerk and her desk and switchboard from those who do business there, and a telephone booth. A radio telephone serves the island and can be used between nine o'clock in the morning and six at night. A line runs to the house of "Number One" of the life saving company, which he alone can use
[203] in matters pertaining to the service during the prescribed hours. When the freighter ran aground before dawn, it was discovered by islanders who informed the company; Radio Eireann reported the plight of the vessel, on the basis of S.O.S. messages, in the seven o'clock news, but the company had reached the reef before the telephone was available.

346 Inis Beag has only a small church, known as the "chapel." After the church of the patron saint was abandoned, a house served as the place of worship for a time, then was superseded by the old chapel whose foundations can be discerned

16:Messenger E-4.5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul. 164 [829] [668] [753]

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task. 828 [743] 164 743 753

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family. [776] [787] [178] [829] [827] [776] 753 732 827

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs 273 [562]

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
b. Road engineers, foremen, overseers and staff	Maintenance of roads through direct labor or through contracts with the farmers for supply of local quarry stone or paving materials. Relief work and road building an important source of employment of young men	Permanent officials employees of the local authorities, the County Council; foremen, overseers, and "gangers" often chosen from the farming community; much local influence exerted through county councillors	Road work proceeds under orders of administrative staff of County Council
c. County councillors	Local political representatives on local authority. In practice present local needs, wishes, and grievances, smooth the local administration of governmental bodies, and carry out the official duties of the County Council, not delegated to permanent staff	Elected by voters of rural electoral districts through universal suffrage of all citizens over thirty years of age (1935) in periodic local government elections. Have very often been crossroad shopkeepers or influential local big farmers; nowadays, however, are often small farmers as well. Depend for election upon canvassing, personal contacts, and attention to constitutents' business, though political party endorsement is not unimportant	
d. County Board of Health, officials and staff, local dispensary doctors, nurses, and home assistance (relief) officers	Investigation and report of cases in need of assistance, relief, etc., and provision of same	Employees or appointees of local authority; usually townsmen, and not members of the local community. Their duties, however, demand that they maintain friendly contact and acquire considerable local information	Farmers petition Board of Health or County Council or apply at dispensaries

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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 593 888 Where the transition is smooth, father and son continue to work together. One family in Luogh, for example, was regarded as a model of family harmony. It was made up of a young man and his wife and two children and the old couple. But the old man worked by his side, and the son deferred to his judgment. The greatest compliment the neighbours had for them was this: "Look at the Careys; old Johnny gives his boy a hand in everything. You wouldn't know which one has the land."

182 745 593 888 The introduction of the old-age pension has facilitated this transfer. Originally designed for the support of the aged in an industrial population in England, it has speedily woven itself into the fabric of Irish rural life. Nowadays, the farmer can turn over his land at the age of seventy. In doing so, he divests himself of his property which stands in the way of his receiving the pension. One countryman of my acquaintance sang the praises of the pension [434] in no uncertain terms. His words show clearly that, even with this new source of income at his disposal, the old, abdicating farm father still forms part of the family economic unit. "To have old people in the house", he said, "is a great blessing in these times, because if you have one it means ten bob a week and if you have two it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'Donoghue (a neighbour) and every Friday he will go to Corofin to collect his ten bob. He may buy a couple of bottles of porter but he'll spend the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

 182 593 888 [745]

rest on things for the household and then come home with a few shillings to go into the common fund."

For the old couple are still very important within the family. Their years of command do not disappear overnight. The change must be handled smoothly. The happiest compromise is that one farmer of Inagh described: "Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what I should do for the day, and the old man would say it is now time to do this or that, or the cows should have something done for them, or the garden be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty-thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then I would go do my own business."

The solution rural Ireland suggests to this problem is deference and respect. There can be no equality between the generations. In the words of one local sage, who could discuss the matter with the experience of a Dorothy Dix: "When the new woman is brought into the house, she may have modern ideas and be hoity-toity about the way to do things. So the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man wouldn't say anything but he would light his pipe and go out till the squabble is over. It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave, and go live with her daughter some place. She could do this if the daughter's husband's mother were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. 182 578 593 888

"But these squabbles are bad things. If the new

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip, ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
674 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body.

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

resentment springs from other causes, too. These formulae are known to the folklorist as 'protective formulae'. He means by that that they have reference to the lesser faith as well as to the greater that the countryman holds.

If you ask the countryman why he uses such terms, he will give you several answers. First, "You have right to do it, because you owe it to God", and then, second, "It will bring good luck, it will keep 'them' away". For the countryman, both answers are true. The phrases are both acts of pious invocation and protective devices warding off evil. Their omission is really dangerous. It puts the person or thing so neglected in jeopardy; the negligent speaker is open to suspicion of an evil intent. Thus there are many stories which attribute disease, disaster and death to such omissions. In this way again, persons and things of value to the countryman are brought into the scope of his beliefs and attitudes. The forces which affect them are brought into a shape in which he can understand them and in which he can cope with them.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this process is to be found in the way in which the goods by which the countryman lives are brought into his belief. The good people affect the household and all its goods. They 'take' those things which one values, round which one's interest and sentiments, as a member of the farm-working family, are centred. One Galway woman phrased this idea to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

343 234 Behind the cows there runs a slab-lined drain or groop, which carries the refuse through the "groop hole" in the wall to the midden. Hanging from the rannel-tree you may perchance see a charm in the shape of a perforated flint [176] pebble, while over the door, decaying Brigid's Crosses dating [751] back for several successive years show that the cattle are under the special protection of the Irish saint. In the byre gable it is not uncommon to see a dove-cote, at any rate along [235] the east coast where English influence has been strong since Norman times. Pigeons are fond of heat and thrive near farm animals. In Lecale, Co. Down, I have seen nests made of straw rope hung above the horses in the stable.

343 251 The barn is not infrequently built above the byre. When the dwelling house alongside remains, in the Irish tradition, single-storied, the effect of the towering barn is rather incongruous. This arrangement makes it simple to feed the animals, provides a springy wooden floor for thrashing, and also gives a better draught for the purpose. Moreover, the raised position helps to make the corn secure from damp and rats. The barn has opposite doors and half doors to regulate the through draught and to keep out stray animals while work goes on inside. Access to the barn is obtained by external stone steps or a sloping ramp, under which the stone dog kennel is often built in. Some of the activities and appurtenances of the barn are described in Chapter 14.

343 Little need be said about the stable, since small farms have as a rule only one mare. In the old-time single-roomed kitchen-byres, the mare had her stall alongside the cows, and you will sometimes see the keeping-hole above the back door where the brush and curry comb were stored. The stable, like the byre, may be attached to the house or may be separate, but for convenience and economy it tends to be built as part of a range of buildings. In decayed rundale clusters now occupied by only one or two holders there were, ready to hand, many old dwelling houses which could be put to different uses as "offices."

Before we turn to the housing of other livestock, mention should be made of the turf-house, for which many different

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

able part in the ceremonies of megalithic burial: we remember the significance attached to hazel nuts in the Hallowe'en games of divination (Chapter 17). 764 824

The ancient raths or forths, earthen enclosures around old homesteads, are also favourite haunts of fairies, and many are the tales of mysterious happenings in their neighbourhood at night, and of signs of habitation and sweet music issuing from them. Protection from fairies is believed to be obtained by possession of a black-hafted knife, while oatmeal or oat-cakes are also specifics against their malign influence. From fairies as from witches the supreme hour of peril to mortals is at the eves of Beltane, Midsummer and All Hallows. Cattle afflicted with disease were believed to be "elf-shot"—the belief is not entirely dead—and flint arrowheads were produced as proof of the attack. The cure was to give the affected animal a drink of the water in which the arrow had been placed. Among other archæological relics the polished stone axes of the Neolithic and Bronze ages are known as thunderbolts and are accredited with healing powers, and the small spinning-whorls are termed fairy mill-stones. As Arthur Mitchell writes of Scotland: "It is believed that stone celts assist the birth of children; that they increase the milk of cows; that they cure the diseases of the eye; that they protect the houses in which they are kept from lightning; and that they have many other such marvellous virtues. It is believed that, as they have a sort of supernatural origin, they may reasonably be supposed to have supernatural powers." 776 789 829 778

When food is taken out of doors it is a common belief that some must be left behind for the fairies, otherwise the dreaded "hungry grass" will grow; and the countryman will often spill a portion of his drink as a perhaps unconscious libation to the wee folk. Their activities are peculiarly dangerous to cattle and to butter-making. Among the charms designed to secure a good supply of butter in the churn we find the use of a horse-shoe, of a rusty nail from a coffin or the hand of a corpse, of rowan branches, salt, a live turf, or a cross made of verbena leaves. 776 789 [751]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

227 confined to Co. Westmeath) is that the eel was undamaged and its skin could therefore be utilized. Apart from their use as [237] thongs and flail-hangings eel-skins were worn as charms against rheumatic pains. Eel fat, too, is esteemed as a cure for rheuma- [751] tism. The third type of eel-spear is quite different in form and [757] methods of use. It is confined to Wexford Harbour and would appear to be a relic of Scandinavian influence in that half-foreign south-eastern corner of Ireland comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth. It consists of two splayed prongs between which is ingeniously mounted a single barbed prong on to which 227 the eel is guided by the outer members (Fig. 79). When the 226 tide covers the mudflats the fisherman lies in a punt with his head over the prow, and with a spear in each hand propels the boat until he spies an eel in the mud, when his punting pole becomes a weapon. At low tide the eel fishers wear yard-long [481] 'scooches' or mud-shoes, wooden boards turned up at the front like miniature skis. We note in passing that boards were formerly worn by both men and horses in working on soft bogs in Co. Mayo.[1]

The salmon spear or leister, being illegal, is normally a light three-pronged instrument, but large specimens weighing up to eight pounds and made after the fashion of the Westmeath eel-spears are found on the River Suir (Fig. 80). The fish were attracted at night by 'burning the river' with resinous splits of bog-fir or lumps of peat soaked in oil.

Riverine weirs of many kinds have been the privilege of religious houses and landed properties through the ages, and many examples specially designed for the capture of migratory fish, salmon and eels are maintained. There are traditions of temporary weirs of heather stems weighted down with stones, into which trout were driven to be extracted when the bundles of heather were pitched on to the bank. Gerard Boate describes the weirs in his day as consisting of 'big stones set close together from the one side of the river to the other, leaving only one hole . . . before which hole a basket being laid, they take 227 therein a great quantity of fish'.[2] 'Fish baskets' and 'weels' are referred to in many ancient fishing grants, but I have not

[1] J. McParlan, *Mayo*, 94.
[2] Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIXED FESTIVALS

527 The May Festival, the Gaelic Beltane, remained almost untouched by Christianity, and an astonishingly rich growth of magic beliefs and superstitious customs accumulated around it. They were concerned with the safety of the familiar things which supported life, and especially the milk cows whose 'whitemeats' were to provide the main food-supply until harvest came round once more. It was a matter of pride to have a last formal dish of stirabout on May Day, 'for if they can hold out so well with bread they can do well enough . . . for then milk becomes plenty, and butter, new cheese, and curds and shamrocks are the food of the meaner sort all this season'.[1] It was considered [431] most unlucky and unwise to give away salt, water or fire on May Day lest the luck and 'profit' of the farm went with the gifts. Witches and fairies were unusually active at this time, and [776] many tales are told of the wiles they adopted to outwit the unwary and gain admission to house or byre to do their mischief. It was a wise precaution to pour milk on the threshold, or at the roots of a fairy thorn, and the many protective charms against the stealing of cattle and milk were augmented by others special to the occasion. 'On May Eve the peasantry used to drive all their cattle into old raths and forts thought to be much frequented by the fairies, bleed them, taste their blood, and pour the remainder on the earth'.[2] It was said that the ghosts of cattle that had been lost could be seen in such places.

527 Portents, prognostications and protection were sought in the familiar flowers of field and hedgerow, in the weeds and shrubs 824 which had followed in man's footsteps and were associated with ●751 his secular struggle for survival, especially in those that carried the promise of butter in their golden cups and a free flow of milk in their bounteous white blossom. May flowers, primroses and gorse gathered before sunrise were scattered on the threshold of the house and garlands of 'Summer', as the flowers were called, were hung on the doorposts and even tied to the cows' tails. In the Antrim Glens the mayflowers were crushed to provide a juice with which the cows' udders were washed, and elsewhere buttercups were used for the purpose. Cow dung, if less hygienic, had similar protective power, presumably in

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.
[2] *U.J.A.* 3 (1855), 165.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the belief that it contained the essence of the flowers of the fields. Sprigs of rowan were stuck in the midden, placed over the door of the byre and hung on the cows' horns. Flowers were also put around the well, for it was supposed that a milk-thief could steal your summer's milk and butter by skimming the water at this time, or by dragging a rope across a field to collect the dew. Boundary streams were also potent in this connexion, and I was told in Donegal that the milk churn had to be washed on May Day in 'three landlords' waters', that is the meeting place of three properties.

Besides these family rites there were public ceremonies, the lighting of bonfires and parades of May Babies, of May Boys and the May Queen. One of the rhymes sung by May Boys in the west of Ireland runs, in translation:

> Summer! Summer! the milk of the heifers,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us,
> The yellow summer, and the white daisy,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us.[1]

The May Baby parades link the festival with the fertility of the family as well as the fields. I give an account of the ceremonies as described in Co. Louth in the early nineteenth century: 'On May Day, the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby' . . . Around this figure a man and woman (generally his wife) of the humble class, dressed also fantastically with straw, etc., dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures . . . These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children to their husbands also attend to see this figure and performance, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children.'[2]

The May Day bonfires and the May Queens are now little more than children's games and excuses for begging. The burning of bones—whence the word bonfire, which in Ireland keeps its original pronunciation—and in particular of horses'

[1] Lady Wilde, *The Dublin University Magazine* (1849), 541–60.
[2] J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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ences affecting human beings and the animals and crops were usually potent. It is remembered that 'the oldest woman in the town' would go round the fire three times on her knees, reciting prayers. To walk three times sunwise round the fire was to ensure a year without sickness, and as the flames died down the cattle were driven through the embers and their backs were singed with a lighted hazel wand: the sticks were preserved and utilized for driving the cows. By tradition everyone carried home a burning stick from the fire, and whoever was first to take it into the house brought the good luck of the year with him. A glowing turf from the fire was carried three times sunwise round the dwelling house, and others were thrown into the growing crops. Yarrow was hung in the house to ward off illness. Fernseed was gathered for its magic powers and divinations made from the roots of bracken and lilies. We have already noticed the custom of retaining some of the ashes from the Midsummer fires to mix with the following season's seed corn. 527 372 [751] [231] [824] [751] [787]

The third fire-festival of the year is associated with St. Peter's Eve on 28th June, but I have not come across many traditions of St. Peter's bonfires except in Armagh and Wexford: it may thus be mainly restricted to areas where English influence was strong. More widespread and better known, because they have been caught up in many patterns and in such popular pilgrimages as that to Croagh Patrick, are the celebrations of Lammas, originally 1st August, now held on Lammas Sunday, the last in July, which is also known as Garland, Bilberry or Height Sunday. This marked the end of summer and the beginning of harvest: it was a first-fruits festival into which the alien potato has been fitted, and no potatoes were dug before this time. Offerings of flowers and fruits were made at holy wells, and in some places cattle were made to swim through streams and loughs into which lumps of fresh butter had been cast:[1] 'They think no beast will live the whole year through unless they be thus drenched'.[2] In hilly districts Height Sunday is observed by climbing to a recognized picnic place where bilberries are gathered and games and dancing were formerly enjoyed. In Co. Down a large prehistoric [231]

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 1, 292.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *currach*, much as did their grandfathers. [801]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [894]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty
afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 229
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. 262
Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat 272
biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals. [56]

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the 252
open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread
which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring [443]
must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a
family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally 252
made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in 262
a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and [234]
also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the
fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial
product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are
eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking [273]
their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread gener-
ously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained
of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on
the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their [561]
bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing
six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days
will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, [443]
mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the
shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from
mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy
are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other
shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or
cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and [829]
are considered delicacies: *creamnach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled
but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigin*, which
when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed [751] •
to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard
them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even 262
when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking 252
pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than 415
its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat
them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. 262
They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed 264
only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is 415
thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the [829]
folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor
did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which
the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes
when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[542] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[168] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[951] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[953] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

291 834 [753] [156] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" 158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. • 751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with [291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear [834] of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism [753] and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac- 514 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and 827 animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha- [863] [325] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at [562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting [273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most [241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main- 237 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and 372 burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is 514 burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another 283 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the [462] secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

• 831 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are 522 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood [154] by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore [123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

164 very even and white, and seem to last well; even men of over sixty
[142] often have good incisors; but many suffer from toothache. Abscess of the alveolus, unlike what is seen in Aran, is not at all common.

Skin.—Ulcers due to the friction of ropes and of the thick home-spun clothing when wet, eczema, "sea-boils," scabies, and acne, are frequently met with, as is anthrax or carbuncle; but, perhaps, the most common of all skin affections, especially among the younger members of the population, is tinea tonsurans. Alopécia areata, whether caused by the last-mentioned affection or not, seems to be common. Uterine troubles are not at all common. Venereal diseases are practically unknown.

164 *Accidents* arising out of the surroundings and occupation of the
752 people are, as might be expected, very numerous. These are burns, severe cuts from reaping hooks, injuries inflicted by domestic animals, and, above all, contusions and fractures due in most cases to falls from rocks and ponies.

4. *Psychology.*—For one who has had only a short experience of
181 the people this very difficult and delicate point is exceedingly hard to deal justly with, but the following description, for the most part obtained from local sources, both on the islands and on the opposite part of the mainland, and to some small degree from personal observation, is believed to be accurate as far as it goes.

To strangers, the people are not, at first, attractive, as their manner
[609] is shy and not unmarked by suspicion; but after this reserve is broken through they reveal themselves in a much more attractive light, and are kindly, courteous, and very communicative.

Among themselves they are cheerful and social, given much to gossip and chaff, though their wit is not of a very sparkling character.
[517] They contrast strongly with the Aran Islanders in their taste for music and dancing, concertinas and melodions being in common use in several houses.

In their dealings with one another they are honest and fair, even
181 a petty theft being an extremely rare occurrence. As to their dealings
674 with the people of the mainland, the usual hostile statements, common with all insular communities, are made by both sides with respect to
[609] each others honesty, but much reliance cannot be put in these vague assertions. Crime is almost unknown, and the administration of justice is seldom called into requisition, and then only for small quarrels among neighbours.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis and struma are stated to be comparatively rare. 164

Malignant disease is very common in the Mullet, especially in the electoral district of Binghamstown South, which includes all the southern part of the peninsula. The majority of these cases are said to fall into the hands of "cancer curers," who use arsenic paste.

Rheumatism is one of the most prevalent troubles, especially in the elderly and old.

"Gravel" is a common complaint all over the district, and a good many deaths from this cause are registered.

Dietetic diseases.—Digestive troubles are very common everywhere, but more especially in the inland parts where the dietary is less varied; "boxty," or potato-bread and the abuse of strong tea seem to be very largely responsible. 164 292

Along the coast, ento-parasites, due to the large proportion of fish in the dietary, are of very frequent occurence.

Respiratory diseases.—Bronchitis is very prevalent in the winter and spring, and spasmodic asthma is stated to be not an uncommon affection. 164

Local affections are few and not very serious. Conjunctivitis is common, and much aggravated by the peat-smoke of the houses.

As regards dental troubles, the people are by no means free from these, though as a rule the teeth are even and white, and remain sound until late in life. [142]

"Female" troubles seem to be very common.

Venereal diseases are practically non-existant.

Skin.—Skin diseases are very prevalent. Among these the most common are—tinea tonsurans, eczema, sea boils, and scabies.

Accidental injuries.—Owing to the mode of life of the people and their environment, accidents frequently happen, especially fractures and contusions from falls, bites and other injuries from domestic animals, and burns. [752]

4. *Psychology.*—The difficulties of treating this part of the subject justly are, in the case of a stranger, very great, as his acquaintance with the people cannot be of sufficiently long standing to allow of the knowledge of more than the superficial part of their character, while, in the case of a resident, personal likes and antipathies, and local quarrels or friendships, largely influence his opinions. 181

The following description, though to some extent derived from personal observation, is for the most part obtained from several local

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

845 In cases of difficult labour a ploughman may be called in to lift and shake the woman gently, which it is thought will produce the desired effect. The reason given is that as he shakes and scatters the seed on the earth, so also he ought to produce a good effect here.

● [752] A nail which has got into the foot is always thrown into the fire.

757 *Leechcraft.*—Though regular medical assistance is usually sought for serious complaints, yet, the more common ailments are often 278 treated by the people themselves, several of the older men and women enjoying some local celebrity for this.

The following list of substances used medicinally was collected; it is believed to be but a small fraction of the local pharmacopœia.

(a.) Animal substances.—Saliva is used for many purposes; thus button scurvy is treated by spitting on the floor and rubbing on the mixed saliva and dust with the right thumb.

Seal oil is rubbed in for sprains and rheumatism, for which it has a great reputation locally; it is sold in Belmullet at a pretty high price.

The tongue of a fox is used as a poultice to extract thorns, &c.

(b.) Herbs.—Mr. Nolan kindly provided the following list of plants in use in the district, most of which he has seen used. The qualities of many of these were also described to me by several of the country people.

Dandelion (*Leontodon taraxacum*), used for "liver troubles."

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), used as a styptic.

Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*), used, boiled in milk, for heartburn.

Self-heal (locally called Heartease) (*Brunella vulgaris*), used for palpitations.

Mountain sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), used "for the heart" and in cough mixtures.

Ground-wood, or Bog-bark (not identified), used for gravel (boiled in milk).

Bugloss (*Echium* or *Lycopsis*), used, in poultices with oat-meal, for abscesses, &c.

Ground-ivy (*Nepeta glechoma*), used, as a "tea," for "heart best," or mixed with other herbs for a cough.

Nettles (*Urtica dioica*), used, with ginger, for "wind on the stomach."

Ivy (*Hedera helix*), leaves used as a cap for a "scabby head."

Burdock root (*Arctium lappa*),
Furze tops (*Ulex*),
Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*),
Carageen moss (*Sphærococcus europæus*),
} usually combined and boiled with sugar-stick to form a cough-syrup.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

824 753 *Plants.*—The "hungry grass" grows on mountains, and, if trodden on, causes a sickening hunger which kills if not relieved. I knew a man in County Limerick who said he "knew it to 757 happen to another man" on the Clare hills, and the victim got 824 food in bare time to save him.[80] Seven stripes of a plantain leaf [752] stop the bleeding of a bad wound. The "Seven Sisters" plant for healing purposes must be picked at a particular period of the sun and moon in August. Fern "dust" (seeds) heals cuts from rushes; the dock charms nettle stings; and the four-leafed shamrock brings luck if found accidentally. The belief that house-leek 824 preserves a house from burning[81] is widespread in north and east Clare. The pennywort has a sectarian bias, and only cures Protestants,[82] and this is connected near Bunratty with a curious legend of Anne Boleyn. This hapless queen, after enjoying by means of the plant the greatest influence over her terrible spouse,[83] "got into trouble, but, when she was sent to jail, she [777 couldn't get the plant, and they hanged her." The rowan, or 789] mountain ash, is a luck-bringer and preservative from magic, and I remember small forked twigs being carried. A rowan, planted at Iniscaltra about 890 by King Cormac mac Cuileanan, bore apples.[84] Moss from a skull, or an ancient cross such as that at Dysert O'Dea, or a pillar, is curative; the moss at Fortanne well was used for the eyes, but had to be replaced. If you see a "button mushroom" you should pluck it, as "it will never grow any more once it is looked at."[85]

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(*To be continued.*)

[P 252]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical anecdotes and ballads.

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In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dispossessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island.

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The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him.

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The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if

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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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755 Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well,
776 bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take
[239] anything from hens to men and women. When they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless, he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper and friend of former years. The vitality has gone out of him or her. The country-people can believe that 'they' have spirited away the real person and left in his place "some spent old man that they had with them for a long time". The real person is 'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not
[759] mean that they do not recognize what we might call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too well, from bitter experience. It means only that they have an explanation for it that infuses it with the associations they have about their belief.

776 For the belief in changelings, about which you all have heard a great deal, has its root in the fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die
[761] are taken, except the old people". Only for them is death the natural course of events; all others have fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

776 Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy
183 belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by
82 any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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give base to sentiment in mundane affairs can be projected into the after-world. One must act toward 'them' in death as one acts toward the living; one must do the 'friendly' thing. Thus they can tell a story in Luogh of a man there who they say "was walking along the road and he saw the ghost of his brother. He didn't say anything to it and it walked home with him all in silence. They sat at the fire for a long time, the [living] man waiting for the other to go, so he could go to bed. Finally, the dead man said: 'You have put me to great trouble tonight by not saluting me when we met. I must go now and now I won't be able to defend you in the council in the rath.' And it was true for him, too: the cow that was ailing with the man was taken the next week."

Thus, you see, one can envision 'them' both in mystic terms and in terms sometimes very bald and intimate indeed. The younger people in Luogh still follow the old belief, though they leave its expression to their elders. Yet they could explain the tumour on an old man's head in words which show how near 'the other people' are and how direct is the aid one's friends among them can give:

"Old Seumas was coming along the road drunk and he met a crowd of them on the road and one of them slapped him. If he'd taken the slap he'd be all right but he took off his coat and dared any one of them to stand down to him. They beat him and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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181 gave him a terrible knock over the poll. One of
183 them that was great friends with him saved
● 753 him."
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Nor are 'they' always fearsome, even in their
181 most wondrous apparitions. The dead are too
183 much a part of life in rural Ireland for that. For
775 the old people they are too near; too many friends have crossed the line between this world and the next.

Thus the dead may come to cover nearly every association of life; in the eyes of some of the old people, the other world of wonders where the 'other people' reign spreads all about them. To the initiate in such mysteries there is nothing to fear. Let me give you my record of one conversation of mine with a very old man of North Clare, a man of clear mind and great folk-learning. His answers to my naïve questions will show you how well he felt, accepted and expressed the symbolic order of the countryside:

I asked what a 'cowl' was. "They are the houses where the family has died out of them. People would live in them if they wasn't too bad, falling down and dirty. You often see old people sitting in them." "What people?" I asked. "The people that used to be in it," he replied. "Do you mean ghosts?" He answered me scornfully: "You might see lights in the cowl and you going along the road at night and you pass people you don't know and you can't tell if they are ghosts or not. Of all the

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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832 believed in, or at least spoken of, though not practised. It is called the spançel, and is thus described by C. O.[1]:—"This spancel, called in Irish 'stheioul dhrum agus tharragh,' signifying the skin of the back and of the belly, consists of a continuous band of skin taken from round the length of the body, viz. from the side of one foot up the outside of that leg and side, over the head and down the other side to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the stripe meets where it first set out; it is used as a love charm, and its power is believed to be irresistible, it being only necessary in order to secure the affections of the victim, to tie the spancel round him while asleep; if he does not awake during the operation all *must* turn out to the wish of the operator; if he does awake, he dies before the end of the year, so the poor desired one has no escape." The same author mentions several instances of this, which were said to have occurred shortly before he wrote (1841), one of which, the discovery of three young women taking the spancel off a corpse, is still remembered by some of the older inhabitants. There
312 are several holy wells in the district, but the most famous is the well
778 of St. Brendan, on Inishglora, the water of which is said to remain sweet and pure if drawn by a man, but to turn bloody and become
823 full of worms if a woman has the temerity to take it. Many tales are told of the misfortunes which have happened to women who persisted in drawing water from this well after being warned. There is now resident in Belmullet an old man who lived for some years on Inishglora. This man solemnly declared to the Rev. P. O'Reilly and the writer that he had three times cleared out the well after women had taken water from it, and that on each occasion it was "full of blood and corruption"; he also said that from the time he began to clean out the well until the job was completed no water flowed in, though it began to come as soon as the cleansing was finished. He added that if a woman were left alone on the island with only a male child of a month old, and she wanted to get water, the vessel would have to be held by the child's hand to prevent the water from becoming bloody.

[753] 2. *Charms and Leechcraft.*—Disease is often ascribed to supernatural agencies, and for this reason is often treated by charms or
755 incantations. There are several local "wise" men and women who treat disorders partly by means of charms, partly by herbal and animal remedies. In some cases the idea underlying the treatment

[1] "Erris and Tyrawley," p. 96.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

824 *Plants.*—The "hungry grass" grows on mountains, and, if
753 trodden on, causes a sickening hunger which kills if not relieved. I knew a man in County Limerick who said he "knew it to
757 happen to another man" on the Clare hills, and the victim got
824 food in bare time to save him.[30] Seven strips of a plantain leaf
[752] stop the bleeding of a bad wound. The "Seven Sisters" plant for healing purposes must be picked at a particular period of the sun and moon in August. Fern "dust" (seeds) heals cuts from rushes; the dock charms nettle stings; and the four-leafed shamrock brings luck if found accidentally. The belief that house-leek
824 preserves a house from burning[31] is widespread in north and east Clare. The pennywort has a sectarian bias, and only cures Protestants,[32] and this is connected near Bunratty with a curious legend of Anne Boleyn. This hapless queen, after enjoying by means of the plant the greatest influence over her terrible spouse,[33] "got into trouble, but, when she was sent to jail, she
[777 couldn't get the plant, and they hanged her." The rowan, or
789] mountain ash, is a luck-bringer and preservative from magic, and I remember small forked twigs being carried. A rowan, planted at Iniscaltra about 890 by King Cormac mac Cuileanan, bore apples.[34] Moss from a skull, or an ancient cross such as that at Dysert O'Dea, or a pillar, is curative; the moss at Fortanne well was used for the eyes, but had to be replaced. If you see a "button mushroom" you should pluck it, as "it will never grow any more once it is looked at."[35]

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(*To be continued.*)

[P. 252]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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995 In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness
[753] or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

993 One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of
626 influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and funtionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "madhouse" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

993 Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom
829 manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must
[609] be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its
[124] representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical anecdotes and ballads.

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dispossessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island.

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him.

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping
776 fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered everly superstitious.

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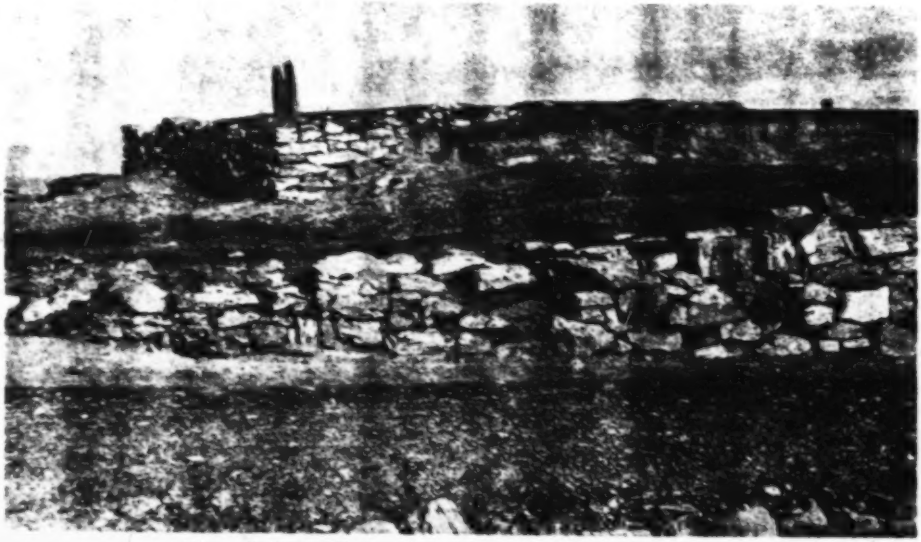

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the
[171] village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the
178 casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after
754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies,
• 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When
755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human
855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus
[624] are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near
[576] his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on November 1st.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[168] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[889] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[751] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

158 751 [291] [834] [753] It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 827 [363] [325] [562] [273] [241] Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

237 372 514 283 [462]

831 522 [154] [123] Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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463 cattle, the butcher, expert at pig killing and skinning (pigs are regularly butchered on the small farms), the expert at rigging the great hayricks which stand in the farmers' haggards, and, lately, the threshing machine experts. All these robust, outdoor specialists are male. The feminine sphere of life does not seem to have bred such specialization. Yet many women were known also for their special skill at this and that branch of women's work and were consulted accordingly. Nevertheless, the only traditionally feminine crafts to develop and flourish apart were witchcraft and midwifery.

[754 759]

A local craft or proficiency seems to develop out of some special crucial activity in local life. A local craft or skill of the kind that meets us here builds up directly out of social life itself. It is a development of habitual association about any person who gradually builds a reputation for a particular proficiency. The proficiency may center around some traditionally established technique of peasant life, like the weaving of homespun and shawls, the clothing of the small farmers, or else it may build up about local conventions having no direct economic value. Dances, gambles, and other entertainments and ceremonies of local social life may likewise afford areas in which a special skill gains recognition, gradually to grow into an occupation.

Thus the local specialists included fiddlers, singers, poets, storytellers. In the last century, in a day of great poverty and much displacement from the land, each of these skills gave an occupation to many wanderers along the roads of Ireland. Their followers found employment in the rural communities among the small farmers. Even itinerant dancing masters once flourished in the country districts during Carleton's day.[8]

The existence of other conventions leads likewise to the

[8] Students of Gaelic culture have described these artists very amply. See Robin Flower, Daniel Corkery, *et al.*

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

121 us the first example of our method. An inquiry into the present of rural life leads us into the ways of human behaviour rather than into those of cultural descent.

754 I called my second example 'the old man's curse'. It is perhaps not so pleasant an example and it springs out of infinitely rarer occasions. Yet it will serve as well as did the west room to show us where our queries must lie. The example of the old man's curse concerns a lost eye. Many of the country-people believed that the curse was directly responsible for the loss of a young man's eye. The young man in question lived in a district not far from Luogh; and the old man who cursed him was a neighbour. This is the baldest possible statement of the occurrence, and it would suffice if we were interested merely in collecting instances of magical injury.

For the baneful effects of curses, of black magic, of the 'evil eye', are a commonplace of anthropological literature. They are common enough too in Irish folklore. Men suffer injury in some way from supernatural causes. The possessor of the evil eye can blight, maim, and kill; the priest's curse, though in this case uttered only for cause, can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliever's head upon his shoulder; strike blindness; and the shrill imprecations of old men and women, or the *rann* of a satiric poet, can bring equal harm. Supernatural injuries of this sort are as

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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old as the Celtic sagas. The belief is spread, of course, far beyond Ireland. The Neapolitan fisherman paints his boat against the evil eye, the Balkan woman embroiders her petticoat to ward off evil and curses. The West African sorcerer knows the technique to perfection; our own Pennsylvania Dutch 'hexes' are modern practitioners. For the belief belongs to the infinite realm of magic. 754

If one were satisfied with the bald collector's statement, one would be content to leave the young man in such company. But by inquiring more deeply into the incident, one can look into the situation in which he suffered. If the belief can be seen at work in a situation which can be readily assessed, then it will serve better as a guide toward understanding the life in which it can still operate.

The situation has many elements. In the first place, the details of the young man's trouble are simple enough. In working a scythe round the bush-choked wall of a field, he fell in such a way as to drive a sliver of bush into his eye. We should call it, I suppose, a simple accident and pity him his bad luck.

But the small farmers among whom he lived wove another world of explanation round that eye. Gradually the tale unfolds. Perhaps the loss of the eye is a punishment. For the young man was not entirely blameless. An unvoiced suspicion had pointed his way. 754 578 888

For there had been a few weeks before what used

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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754 to be called, in more heated days, 'an agrarian out-
578 rage'. Two old men, bachelors living alone, had
888 been fired upon in the night. Some one had pumped gunshot through the window of their poor cabin, high up the mountainside. As was probably intended, the shots buried themselves harmlessly in the cabin floor. But they awakened the old men, and frightened them badly.

The occurrence shocked the community. The two old men were harmless creatures; they were 'saints' in the country phrase. Who would want to injure them or drive them out?

The country-people had their suspicions; but the police could get nothing from them. There was nothing for the inspector to do but report another 'agrarian intimidation'. Even if he too knew, there was nothing to do; he could prove nothing without witnesses.

The country-people kept silence for good reason, from their point of view. If their suspicions were correct, the matter was a private affair, a family squabble. It was no business of theirs.

For the old men, by the standards of rural kinship, were not entirely blameless either. They held a farm they did not work. They took none of their kinsmen in. They should long ago have given up their land. One of them should have brought a girl in, married her and raised a family. They should have passed the land on to their sons, or failing sons, they should have brought in a nephew

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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or other boy of their kindred. Then they could have turned the farm over to the boy, when they felt themselves too old, and let him marry, in order that their kindred's name continue and grow in land. 754 578 888

But the old men had never had a 'taste for marrying'. They were victims themselves of a too-intense loyalty. I say victims, because their loyalty had been narrowest of all. Their old mother had lived too long in her turn. She had never decided which one should get the land and bring in a girl. Perhaps their father might have decided, had he lived, but their mother survived him by many years. Neither of them wished to leave her side and neither would leave to make room for the other. When at last the mother died, the two bachelor sons were already old; they were long past marrying and set in celibate ways. They lingered on in an ever narrower round.

In the community they were 'saints', as I have said; they were 'no trouble to man or beast'. Yet, from another point of view, they were not doing the 'natural' thing; they made no provisions for their kinsmen; they did not pass on the land to those to whom by country right it should go. They refused to fill their proper roles in life. No wonder, then, that their cabin was a byword for neglect and disrepair. The countrymen would tell you, in a moralizing vein, it had become so 'for lack of a woman's hand'. 626 578 888 754

But to censure them for their misspent lives was

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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626 no affair of the community's. The kindred of the
578 old men were the aggrieved parties. Their name
888 suffered and their sons were landless and unborn;
754 land belonging to them lay idle. So, whoever did the shooting—perhaps he had a reason for it. Suspicion might point here and there, but whatever measures the kinsmen might take to remedy their grievance concerned the kinsmen alone. Let those to whom the old men's duty lay see that they followed it. It was best to say nothing beyond one's immediate circle.

But the community could not entirely condone the shooting either. It was a bad thing, no good could come of it. To disturb the peace in such a way shook the security of them all; it gave the district 'a bad name'.

So, when a new event took place, the community found outlet for its censure. When the young man lost his eye, the community was ready for this reaffirmation of its threatened values. For the young man was one of the aggrieved kindred; he was a landless cousin's son; to him and his brothers the old men's farm should have gone. In the loss of his eye, the community felt he paid his penalty. No one knew just how it was inflicted; one does not attempt to unveil such mysteries. Their force is too great, too little controllable. Some felt the 'old man's curse' had done it, some felt that the priest might have done it, for the old men had appealed to him. Some blamed a vague mysterious power in the bush

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the young man cut. Whatever it was, the fact was 626
plain. Only a week or so after the shooting, the 578
young man lost his eye. His crime found a sure 888
punishment in a realm in which all could agree 754
without running risk of retaliation at the hands of the disputing parties.

I have couched this incident in vague, unprecise language for a reason. In the realm of folk-belief outlines are not clear and concepts are not precise. No one could formulate logically this retribution which put out the young man's eye. Nevertheless all felt it. And a moralist among them could sum up: "It is right to respect the old people".

The second example, then, points in the same direction as the first. Both 'west room' and the 'old man's curse' reflect age-old tradition. But both reveal a system of values which rules life in the present. That system of values dictates attitudes and reflects itself in behaviour. For example, neither the young man who may or may not have done the shooting, nor the old men who were shot at, were free agents. They both followed interests growing out of the values of rural life. Sometimes, as in this case, these interests conflict. If open fighting is not to tear life asunder, ways must be found to resolve the conflict, to find a formula of agreement, as the diplomats say.

I have tried in the last of my two examples to 000
show you something of the movements of this sort and something of the agreement which can be

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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234 776 789 told by a Clare farmer of friends of his, whose house he named:

"Two men return from a fair to the house of one
234 of them to have breakfast. There the woman was
776 churning, but no butter would come. The first of
789 the men suggested maybe they [the men] were
539 holding it up, and they left the house, but with no result, for when they returned there was still no butter. Upon finding out that an old woman, a stranger, had borrowed a bit of milk the day before, the first man closed the doors, took a ploughshare and held it in the turf fire. Soon there came a knock at the door, and after the third knock the woman of the house went to it. Then an old woman's hand passed a jug of milk through the crack of the door and a voice said: 'put this back in the churn'. She did so, and immediately all the milk turned to good butter."

But the farmer knows, too, that the fairies do not
776 always work alone. There is often a human agency
●754 involved along with theirs. Here one enters the really dangerous 'pisherogues', the practices of wicked magic. A human being may perform a rite or omit a precaution in such a way as to bring about a visitation of ill-luck and disaster. He may transfer disease and sickness from his own farm to the next, he may steal the butter of another's churn, he may destroy, steal, maim and kill by inducing the super-
776 natural powers to commit the havoc.
789 But sometimes the human being who brings

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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776 brought into the scope of belief. They become
789 repositories of 'power'. They come to carry in their own substance the same supernatural efficacy for good or evil which belongs to the good people.

754 So, when the good people strike, the countryman
776 who still follows the old folklore is not unprepared.
789 If butter fails to come, for instance, he can take a hearth-coal and sear the bottom of the churn. He can apply iron in a variety of forms; for "there is great power in iron". He can use a hazel-stick, of the kind used in driving cattle, to cure cattle, or to give relief from sickness. He can ward off the disease that has struck his farm or household by transferring the dead thing to another's land, thus forcing the evil 'penalty' to follow it. Or, even more simply, he can merely transfer an egg, a potato, the hearth ashes, of his own threatened household to another's land or garden, and the danger goes with them. These practices drive off the 'good people'.

Similarly, when any of the household goods fall into another's possession, there is danger ahead for the household whose integrity is so broken. If butter fails, borrowed hearth-coals, or tools, or milk may hold the cause. One has merely to find the missing bit of goods, restore it to its rightful place, and thus restore the breach through which the good people have made their dangerous entrance into the life of one's family group and its possessions.

Naturally, then, transfer of this sort is dangerous

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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to the persons to whose land the object is transferred. Consequently, the fearsome 'pisherogues' of black magic often take this form. An egg, a potato, a wand of hazel or thorn mysteriously found in one's own garden is evidence of witchcraft, and danger for one's land and stock and family. That the reason ascribed to the outbreak of ill-luck may be arrived at after the fact, makes it none the less compelling. Belief is a social habit which events confirm.

I shall give you two examples, one of them about a dead thing, and another where simple, homely household objects come to have supernatural power. The first is the account a shopkeeper in a country town gave of a countryman-customer of his. "A countryman came into the shop one day and I asked him how things were going. Bad, said he, he was after losing three cows. I asked how was that, and Martin said it was the 'pisherogues'. He was working down in the bog and found the carcass of a cow there. What did you do with it? I asked him. He left it there, said himself. He was not going to move it for fear of the 'pisherogues'. Didn't they carry it there to put the curse on him, and wasn't it the next week his own cows sickened and died? . . . Then I was asking him, why didn't you get a vet, man? Sure, he said, why should I throw good money after a vet, and I knowing very well what happened to them?"

The second example is an account of disaster and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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776 its happy termination from a farmer who told the
789 story in a traditional vein, but whose own record of
● 754 actuality it is. I might say that the role of the curate
[793] in the episode was probably very different from that which the countryman imagined it to be.

"A fellow he knows was hilling potatoes and he got three young fellows to help him. Each of them found an egg in the garden, one a hen's egg, the second a goose egg, the third a turkey's egg. [He told this with great dramatic effect.] Well, the man hadn't any poultry on his farm at all.

"The boys went home and told their mothers, and the women told other women about it till it got all round the parish. The curate heard of it and one day he went over to the farmer and
[793] stopped in. They talked about all sorts of other things, and finally the curate said, I am sorry for you. Why? said himself. Because you are going to have bad luck. And he told him about the eggs.

"Well, the farmer had terrible hardships. His stock died on him, he'd go out in the morning and find his ewes dead on their backs with their legs in the air and lambs dropped dead out of their wombs. He had five cows in calf and after that spring he had only one cow left. A pig died on him, and his sister took sick, like to die herself she was. [After a
[793] time] the curate came . . . and he held masses in the farmer's house.

"He's doing well again now and has a fine lot of stock. That was about four years ago."

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Here then one can see a new kind of incorporation of the values of the countryman's life into belief. The goods round which his interests are centred come to be either beneficial or dangerous to the group to which he belongs, depending upon their connection with it in the critical situations which threaten disease and disaster. Ordinarily, there is nothing supernatural or dangerous about an egg or a hazel-stick, to the countryman. But in these special situations, in which tradition comes to his rescue, they take on a wholly different character. Thus we have the seemingly paradoxical case that the things of greatest 'power' are not by any means always the wondrous, unusual, and fearsome things, but the homely articles of use and familiar associations. Iron cures, but iron is not mysterious. An egg becomes a sign of witchcraft; a pinch of salt protects one against evil; but neither are fearsome things in themselves. Yet in critical circumstances they have the power to heal, to hurt, to cure, to destroy.

For what the countryman's belief is doing for him is something belief always seems destined to do, wherever it is found. Tradition is bearing upon him to keep alive and organize the regard his group must feel for the codes of conduct and the objects of use by which it lives. Belief focuses his attention and his emotions upon them. It gives sanctity to his conventions, his needs, and his goods. It infuses them with emotional associations far beyond

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Archæology (July, 1940) by I. R. Crozier and L. C. Rea, entitled "Bullauns and other Basin-stones," summarizes the various beliefs connected with cup-holes and the larger "bullauns" or stone basins, which the authors suggest were made in the same way by gradual ceremonial attrition. The water which accumulates in these artificial hollows is considered to possess special virtues, for instance as a cure for warts, and offerings of pins and coins are often made in them. It is significant that some of the basins seem to have served as fonts in the early churches. (Fig. 111.) Small boulders

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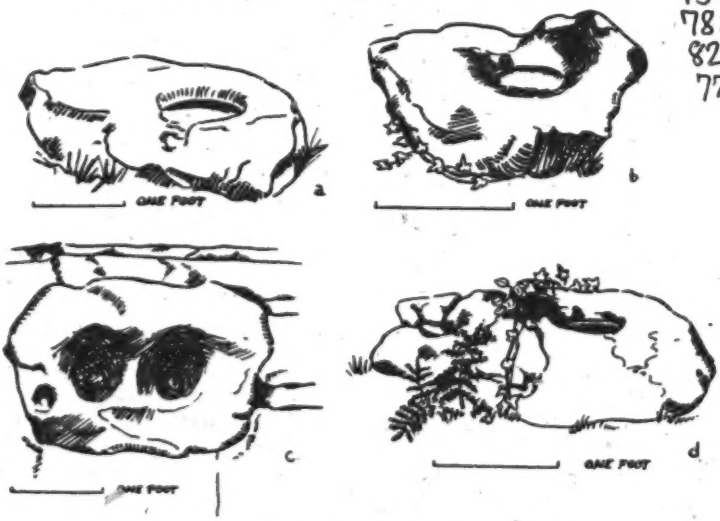

Fig. 111. Bullauns.

(*a*) Portmore Church, Co. Antrim.
(*b* & *d*) Aghalee, Co. Antrim (basins on both sides of the same stone).
(*c*) "St. Columba's Font," Londonderry. (Two bullauns and a cup-mark.

lying in certain basin-stones are occasionally employed as cursing stones, the ritual consisting of turning the stones against the sun in their holes—there may be as many as ten in one boulder—at the same time uttering a curse against the offending Person;

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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171 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a
524 circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

857 Many examples could be given of children's games and
524 rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.
754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance
789 of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love
821 charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

241 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting
289 of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Inishbofin

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be [788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch, ●754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the 821 barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these 825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27):—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Conzaile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It [551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is sub- 776 ject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by 854 the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

243 heads of corn at the wrong end, or they would be missed in thrashing with the flail, and for the same reason the ears of the straw band-knot should lie towards the top of the sheaf. The sheaves should be laid with their butts to the wind, for these need most drying. The bands should be tied with nice judgement, tight but not over-tight: one should not be able to put the toe of one's boot under the band when one stands on the butt of the sheaf.

[461] As in all farming operations conducted in traditional ways, music and magic to ease the labour were part of the scene. There were shearing songs to match the rhythm of the sickle, [825] and its efficiency was improved by keeping a fly or other insect imprisoned in the handle; perhaps its incessant activity was meant to speed up the work. Another strange belief was that [777] luck followed the reaper who carried a child on his back. The world of magic and fairy was close by at harvest time: it was believed that the top grain (pickle) of every stalk of corn was empty because it had been taken by the fairies and was their due. The sheaf had its share of lore, too, related possibly to its [754] semblance of human shape. A curse could be worked by sticking pins into the joints of the straw, and the sheaf might be properly waked and buried so that as it withered the object of the curse would decline. Stooks with their 'hudders' (Fig. 51) (hooding sheaves) also take on human forms, and I have known various terms for these large stooks applied as nicknames to broad-based country women. 'The last sheaf' also is known as the cailleach or hag.

Beliefs and customs connected with the last sheaf are legion and find their counterparts in many parts of the world. 'Winning the churn' was an incentive to the reaper, for good luck attended those who had their rigs sheared quickly if only because they avoided the ill-luck of being last. Stories are told of rigs being left unclaimed and uncut because their owners feared to incur 'the famine of the farm', of having the hag to feed until next harvest. The basis of this belief was that the last sheaf was sometimes hidden overnight in the corn of lazy farmers, who would watch at nights and reap by moonlight to avoid what was an omen of misfortune or death.

[987] The last handful of standing corn, selected for the purpose,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

believe that many examples were ground out in much the same way before the sign of the cross replaced that of the circle. Cup-marked stones are commonly found in megalithic graves, on standing stones and Bronze Age cists, both in the British Isles and further afield. Some of the larger bullauns were certainly mortars, and very similar 'knocking stones' were used until recent times for preparing barley meal by pounding the grain with a beetle or maul (Fig. 90). To judge from the frequency with which one finds a knocking stone in the ruins of an old clachan it was one of the communal possessions of such a settlement. Old specimens, more especially when the basins are sunk in an outcrop of rock, are frequently found to hold water, and they are then regarded as 'wells', the water being held efficacious as a cure for warts. That such rock-basins have magic powers is illustrated by the following reference to a site in Scotland. On the Loch Avon side of Cairngorm is a shelving rock bearing hand-made basins about a foot wide and correspondingly deep: 'sitting on them is said to be efficacious in cases of barrenness.'[1]

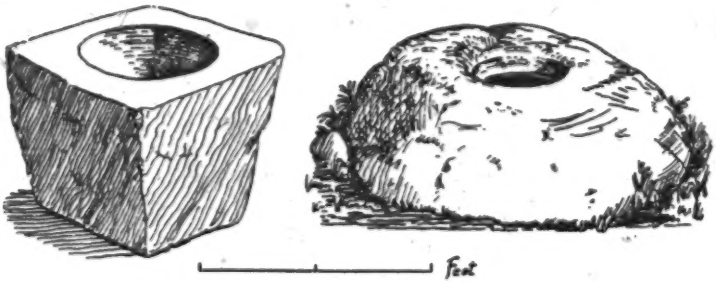

FIG. 90. Knocking stone and bullaun. Both Co. Antrim.

It is an interesting illustration of the pagan associations of cup-marks, and of the success of the symbol of the cross, that their use survived in folk practice only as cursing stones. Smooth pebbles resting in certain stone basins are turned three times against the sun. There are many examples in the west, some

[1]A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 265.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

754 occurring on natural rock outcrops (Fig. 91), others ground into stone slabs resting on built-up foundations and termed altars, as at Inishmurray off the coast of Sligo. I have little doubt that they were the communal mortars of pre-Christian settlements. Their utilization as cursing stones continued into recent times. I was told of the example illustrated at Killinagh in Co. Cavan, that 'you would think twice before turning the stones, because the curse would come back on you unless the

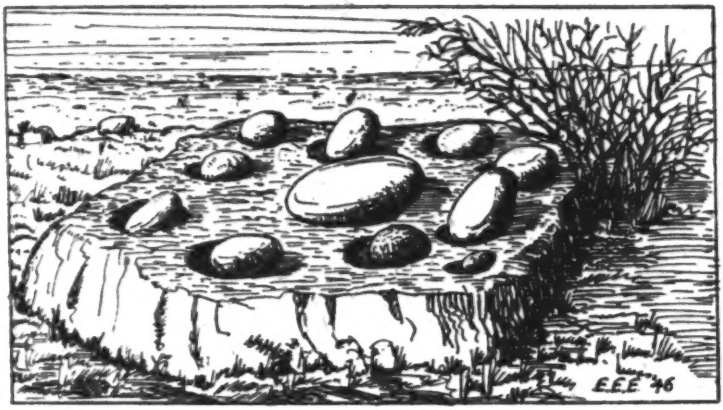

FIG. 91. Cursing stones by Upper Lough Macnean at Killinagh, Co. Cavan. (For scale, the large central stone measures 15 in. by 12 in.)

cause was just'. At many holy wells curiously shaped stones
823 were regarded as having curative powers, and they were bor-
755 rowed for use by people too ill to visit the well. At St. Olan's Well, Dromatimore, Co. Cork, the rounds include visits to the saint's Cap and Stone. The former is an oval quartzite stone which rests on an ogham-inscribed monolith and which replaces one, removed by the parish priest a century ago, which was invested with magical properties. 'It was said to be an unfailing talisman, and was much sought after for various feminine ailments, particularly maternity cases. If worn on the head and carried three times round the church it was said to cure the most violent headaches and, in addition, it had the gift of locomotion in that, if removed to any distance, it unfailingly

16:Messenger E-4,5. (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

778
135
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338

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

764 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on November 1st.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771 775
strangers from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island: he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783]
penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771
magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776
God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754
presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178
right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826
tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822]
of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171]
symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793]
even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775
Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772
fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
• 754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body. 78 95

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation. 771 178 [184] [182]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit- 114 538

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

755 776 [238] Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well, bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take anything from hens to men and women. When they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless, he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper and friend of former years. The vitality has gone out of him or her. The country-people can believe that 'they' have spirited away the real person and left in his place "some spent old man that they had with them for a long time". The real person is 'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not [753] mean that they do not recognize what we might call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too well, from bitter experience. It means only that they have an explanation for it that infuses it with the associations they have about their belief.

776 For the belief in changelings, about which you all have heard a great deal, has its root in the fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die [761] are taken, except the old people". Only for them is death the natural course of events; all others have fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

776 183 82 Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. I.

With the many material survivals from the past which we have mentioned in earlier chapters there lives on an imposing body of customs and superstitious beliefs of which we can attempt to give no more than a summary description. They concern not only the visible world with its common elements and events—water, fire, stones, salt, iron, trees, cattle, crops, harvest, food and drink, birth, marriage and death—and the relics of former ages—raths or "forths," great stone monuments, stone axes, flint arrowheads, spinning whorls and "crocks of gold"—but also the unseen or rarely glimpsed world of giants, fairies and other beings. All the major processes of the farmer's year had their appropriate magic rites which clung to them from the beginning. Many of these superstitions are so deep-rooted that centuries of opposition from the Christian Church have failed to suppress them, and while it has driven some practices into secrecy it has been forced to take others under its protection. 771

This applies, for instance, to the cult of holy wells, which is, like the worship of stones and the veneration of thorn trees, probably megalithic in origin and seems to carry us back to the sunnier lands of the Mediterranean where the megalithic religion took its rise. It has been calculated that there are some 3,000 holy wells in Ireland: many of them are still visited, generally at the festival seasons which we described in the last chapter, and it is customary for the devotees to tie 312 788 755 778

[p. 163]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

312 strings of beads, rags or bits of clothing in the holy tree which
788 often overhangs the well, so that it may bear their ailments.
● 955 I happened to come across a well near Cork just after mid-
summer this year. Alongside were the smouldering remains
778 of a great bonfire which had been lit on St. John's Eve.
The visitors to the well, having drunk the water, walked three times sunwise around the corbelled stone well-cover, and taking up pebbles kept ready to hand in crevices, they made the sign of the cross on certain stones which were marked with deep grooves which generations of patrons had cut by the same process. Some wells have old "cup-marks" instead of crosses, and it seems probable that these pagan symbols were made long ago in the same way as the crosses which have replaced them. Their round completed, the visitors
[825] looked into the well, for if they were to recover from their ailments they would see the trout which is reputed to live there and to show itself only to the cured.

The virtues of these wells are many: they are believed to be efficacious in such varied complaints as eye-disease, lameness, toothache and in some cases barrenness The first Sunday of each quarter of the Celtic year is generally the visiting time, but perhaps on account of the weather the summer festivals, and especially midsummer, are most popular. Pins and other bits of metal are sometimes deposited in wells. Offerings are also made to certain trees in the form of pins stuck in the bark, each pin representing a wish. Special gatherings known as patterns or pardons were held at such sites on the anniversary of the patron saint of the district. Devotions were followed by dancing and games which often degenerated into fights. It is possible to see relics of paganism in the sanctity of such sites, and it is worth recalling that some of the more celebrated centres of pilgrimage in western Europe, like Santiago da Compostella, seem to have megalithic connexions.

788 The mention of cup-marks brings us to the superstitions
823 concerning the great stone monuments with which they are
778 often associated. A recent article in the *Ulster Journal of*

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 823 778 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the [755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 776 [778] The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a [165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 [777] It has more than once been my experience to be refused permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth remarking that archæologists have often shown by their [824] discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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832 believed in, or at least spoken of, though not practised. It is called the spancel, and is thus described by C. O.[1]:—"This spancel, called in Irish 'stheioul dhrum agus tharragh,' signifying the skin of the back and of the belly, consists of a continuous band of skin taken from round the length of the body, viz. from the side of one foot up the outside of that leg and side, over the head and down the other side to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the stripe meets where it first set out; it is used as a love charm, and its power is believed to be irresistible, it being only necessary in order to secure the affections of the victim, to tie the spancel round him while asleep; if he does not awake during the operation all *must* turn out to the wish of the operator; if he does awake, he dies before the end of the year, so the poor desired one has no escape." The same author mentions several instances of this, which were said to have occurred shortly before he wrote (1841), one of which, the discovery of three young women taking the spancel off a corpse, is still remembered by some of the older inhabitants. There
312 are several holy wells in the district, but the most famous is the well
778 of St. Brendan, on Inishglora, the water of which is said to remain
823 sweet and pure if drawn by a man, but to turn bloody and become full of worms if a woman has the temerity to take it. Many tales are told of the misfortunes which have happened to women who persisted in drawing water from this well after being warned. There is now resident in Belmullet an old man who lived for some years on Inishglora. This man solemnly declared to the Rev. P. O'Reilly and the writer that he had three times cleared out the well after women had taken water from it, and that on each occasion it was "full of blood and corruption"; he also said that from the time he began to clean out the well until the job was completed no water flowed in, though it began to come as soon as the cleansing was finished. He added that if a woman were left alone on the island with only a male child of a month old, and she wanted to get water, the vessel would have to be held by the child's hand to prevent the water from becoming bloody.

2. *Charms and Leechcraft.*—Disease is often ascribed to supernatural agencies, and for this reason is often treated by charms or
[753] incantations. There are several local "wise" men and women who
755 treat disorders partly by means of charms, partly by herbal and animal remedies. In some cases the idea underlying the treatment

[1] "Erris and Tyrawley," p. 90.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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seems to be the transferrence of the malady to some inanimate object, which, if found, may transmit the disease to the finder. 755

Charms, &c.—For "the Rose" (erysipelas) the following is sometimes made use of, but to be efficacious it is thought that it must always be applied by a person of the opposite sex to the patient:—

The operator rubs salt butter into the part affected, and prays over it, this process being repeated twice a week. (Communicated by a friend, who has seen it employed.)

For the same—the old woman who performs this takes ten pebbles from a well or brook, one she throws back into the water, the other nine she takes to the patient, and having muttered some prayers over them she puts each down on its upper side (*i.e.* the side prayed over, and taking them up one by one, she rubs them on the affected part in the name of the Trinity, and of the *King of the Rose.* She then takes the stones to a stream and throws them in, praying that so and so (naming the patient) may never have "the rose" so long as the stones remain there.

The following is employed for a mote or piece of barley beard in the eye. The woman who practises this takes a clean bowl and a jug or cup full of clear water, she rinses her mouth with the water until it ceases to be sullied, when she takes a fresh quantity in her mouth and holds it there until she has repeated, or is supposed to repeat, some prayer or charm. She then empties her mouth into the clean vessel, and shows the mote floating in it.[1] Written charms for the toothache are sometimes worn about the person.

For a headache "head measuring" is employed; several old woman practise it. The cause of the pain is believed to be the opening of the head by separation of the bones. To cure this state of affairs, the woman takes a cord which she passes round the head, and marks the length; this done she mutters a charm or prayer and measures again, showing the patient that the circumference is now less and that the head is closed, a kerchief is usually kept bound around the brows for some time afterwards to prevent recurrence of the pain. There is great faith in the efficacy of the touch of a seventh son, especially in "evil" and ringworm. An Inishkea fisherman stated that on the islands it is believed that toothache may be completely removed and will never return if the tooth be rubbed with a dead man's finger.

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[1] I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. H. Hewson, P.P., Belmullet, for the description of these two charms both of which he has seen performed.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Co. Kerry, which is believed to date from the sixth or seventh century. Whether or not the origin of this style of building in western Europe should be placed, as I am inclined to believe, in the megalithic period, there can be no doubt that it represents, in various parts of the Mediterranean-Atlantic route, the survival of an ancient method of building. It has had a long life in exposed hilly districts where suitable materials lay to hand, especially where the interests of simple shepherds and cattlemen were dominant. Villages of houses with domed or conical stone or mud-brick roofs are a feature of south-east Italy and Syria, and of the dry belt stretching eastwards to India. 171

Some of the Co. Kerry farmyard clochauns are still used for storing milk; their thick walls are admirable for maintaining even temperatures. Their association with the pig may also be an archaic feature, for the pig was perhaps the first domesticated animal to be brought to Ireland, and although much altered in breed, it still thrives best in warm, draught-proof surroundings recalling the sultry jungles of its original south-east Asiatic home. The well-worn phrase about 'the gentleman that pays the rent' not only summarizes the role of the pig in recent historic times but carries a humorous hint of the veneration in which the pig was once held in southern and western Europe. Here archaeologists have postulated an early Neolithic matriarchal 'swine-culture', vestiges of which would explain the fact that the pig was the only cult animal of the oldest of the Greek mysteries, the Eleusinian.[1] Later pork became the favourite food of both the Roman and Celtic worlds. In parts of Ireland the pig is driven into the house for luck on May morning, and the pigsty figures in a strange ritual for certain cures, e.g., a sufferer from mumps should be led with an ass-halter three times round the sty! Further, there is surely a supernatural quality in an animal which is reputed to be able to see the wind! In many parts of the British Isles, especially in Scotland, it is unlucky to speak of a pig when fishing at sea. Superstitions about the pig are numerous in Scotland, and in the Highlands there was formerly a tabu against keeping pigs and eating pork. This was apparently true also of those parts of the north of Ireland which have had close connections with the Western Isles. 343 231 [1955]

[1]C. O. Sauer, *Agricultural Origins and Dispersals*, 57.

754 occurring on natural rock outcrops (Fig. 91), others ground into stone slabs resting on built-up foundations and termed altars, as at Inishmurray off the coast of Sligo. I have little doubt that they were the communal mortars of pre-Christian settlements. Their utilization as cursing stones continued into recent times. I was told of the example illustrated at Killinagh in Co. Cavan, that 'you would think twice before turning the stones, because the curse would come back on you unless the

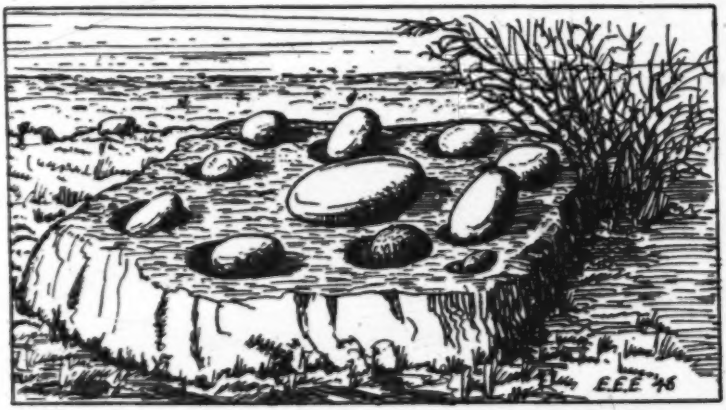

FIG. 91. Cursing stones by Upper Lough Macnean at Killinagh, Co. Cavan. (For scale, the large central stone measures 15 in. by 12 in.)

cause was just'. At many holy wells curiously shaped stones
823 were regarded as having curative powers, and they were bor-
● 755 rowed for use by people too ill to visit the well. At St. Olan's Well, Dromatimore, Co. Cork, the rounds include visits to the saint's Cap and Stone. The former is an oval quartzite stone which rests on an ogham-inscribed monolith and which replaces one, removed by the parish priest a century ago, which was invested with magical properties. 'It was said to be an unfailing talisman, and was much sought after for various feminine ailments, particularly maternity cases. If worn on the head and carried three times round the church it was said to cure the most violent headaches and, in addition, it had the gift of locomotion in that, if removed to any distance, it unfailingly

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded with superstitious awe up and down the country and were generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.' Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork, women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup-marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 108.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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Breeda, Miltown, Kilgorey, Fortanne, Broadford, Trough, Ralahine, Cragg, Lahardan, and Cappavilla, with perhaps, (if not of St. Molocus, c. 550), Moylough, Scattery, and Carrigaholt; *Molua* (c. 620), Killaloe; *Onchu*, Killonaghan; *Sanctan*, Dromline; *Screbann*, Clondegad and Kilmaley; *Senan* (d. 552), Iniscatha, Moylough, Iniscaeragh (Mutton Island), Kilclogher, Carrow (Kilmaduan), Erribul (Kilfiddan), Kilshanny, Killaneena, Cooraclare, Kilcredaun, and Drim (Quin); *Tola* (c. 635), Dysert O'Dea and Kiltola; and *Voydan* or *Braighdean* (unknown), Kilvoydan, Corofin, and Kilraughtis.

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Healing Powers.—The *Ordnance Survey Letters*[12] mention the following:—Gleninagh well, which has a fifteenth-century well-house or "turry," cured sore eyes; Tober Cholmain, above Oughtmama churches, sufferers from "the pearl," the films falling off the eyes at the third washing; St. Maccreehy's well, near Liscannor, eye troubles, which were also cured by St. Inghean Baoith's well near Kilshanny (even then nearly deserted), Tobermoghna near Clooney (Corcomroe), St. Senan's well on the cliffs south-west from Kilkee, Kilcrony well near Carrigaholt, Tobercuan in Kiltrellig near Loop Head, Tobershenan in Moyfadda, the Virgin's well at Templemaley, and Tober Isa at Corlack Glebe (Bunratty). Tobernatasha, ("well of the relic" or, as some say, "spectre"), in Kilmaley was shaped like a coffin, and delicate children used to be laid on their backs in it.[13] The black mud which gave its name to Toberduff cured sore eyes and swelled limbs. So did Senan's well at Kilkee; horrible to tell, the devotees,—down to 1875, at least, when a washing-tank was made outside the well-house,—used to wash in this, the only supply of drinking-water for the then fashionable watering-place. Toberlachtin at Kilnemona cured several diseases, its "day" being March 19th. Eyes were also healed by the well south from Newmarket-on-Fergus, and by the wetted moss of St. Mochulla's well near Tulla (the moss being put back to complete the cure). The latter well is said to have avenged itself, about 1780, on its landlord, who had dug away part of its enclosure, by rendering

[755]

[12] Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Mss. 14s 23. 24, (Co. Clare), vols. i. and ii.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 183.

[P 232]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [178] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, [798] rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of paganism. [788] Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk [755] during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [787] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [771] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

764 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 753 755 855

754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured 754
by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the [576]
calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly 754
arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds 756
after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, [789]
and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those [789]
in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being [827]
captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious 787
practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced [793]
techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly [798]
to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills [178]
of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of [789]
magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal [174]
doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and 787
do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share 759
a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound 184
the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk 755
medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of [759]
magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting 753
ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on 175
February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on 796
November 1st.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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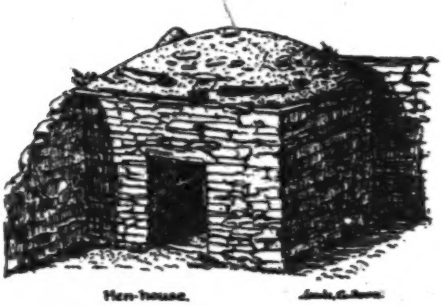

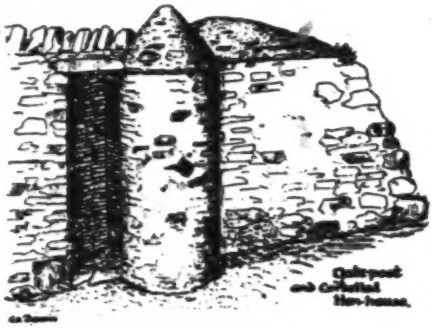

Fig. 38. Two views of hen-house.

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343 Some of the holy wells visited throughout Ireland for their reputed curative powers are protected by corbelled coverings of some antiquity: one may cite the wells at Struell near Downpatrick and Ronogue's Well near Cork. Domestic wells also frequently show some degree of corbelling, but free standing well-covers like that shown in Fig. 41 are rare. To the same class of construction belong most of the surviving [757] sweat-houses which were resorted to by rheumatic cases, profuse sweating being induced by heating the interior with turf fires beforehand. In certain counties, for example Cavan, these structures are quite common and were used into living memory. In Rathlin Island I was told that girls would go to

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

845 In cases of difficult labour a ploughman may be called in to lift and shake the woman gently, which it is thought will produce the desired effect. The reason given is that as he shakes and scatters the seed on the earth, so also he ought to produce a good effect here.

[752] A nail which has got into the foot is always thrown into the fire.

Leechcraft.—Though regular medical assistance is usually sought 757 for serious complaints, yet, the more common ailments are often 278 treated by the people themselves, several of the older men and women enjoying some local celebrity for this.

The following list of substances used medicinally was collected; it is believed to be but a small fraction of the local pharmacopœia.

(A.) Animal substances.—Saliva is used for many purposes; thus button scurvy is treated by spitting on the floor and rubbing on the mixed saliva and dust with the right thumb.

Seal oil is rubbed in for sprains and rheumatism, for which it has a great reputation locally; it is sold in Belmullet at a pretty high price.

The tongue of a fox is used as a poultice to extract thorns, &c.

(B.) Herbs.—Mr. Nolan kindly provided the following list of plants in use in the district, most of which he has seen used. The qualities of many of these were also described to me by several of the country people.

Dandelion (*Leoontodon taraxacum*), used for "liver troubles."

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), used as a styptic.

Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*), used, boiled in milk, for heart-burn.

Self-heal (locally called Heartsease) (*Brunella vulgaris*), used for palpitations.

Mountain sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), used "for the heart" and in cough mixtures.

Ground-wood, or Bog-bark (not identified), used for gravel (boiled in milk).

Bugloss (*Echium* or *Lycopsis*), used, in poultices with oat-meal, for abscesses, &c.

Ground-ivy (*Nepeta glechoma*), used, as a "tea," for "heart beat," or mixed with other herbs for a cough.

Nettles (*Urtica dioica*), used, with ginger, for "wind on the stomach."

Ivy (*Hedera helix*), leaves used as a cap for a "scabby head."

Burdock root (*Arctium lappa*),
Furze tops (*Ulex*),
Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*),
Carageen moss (*Sphærococcus europæus*),
} usually combined and boiled with sugar-stick to form a cough-syrup.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), used as an expectorant. 757
Marsh-mallow (*Althæa officinalis*), used as poultice for "sore breast." 278
Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), used as an infusion for coughs.
Parsely (*Petroselinum sativum*), boiled in milk for "gravel."
Belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*), used for palpitation or "heart beat."

It will be seen from this list that several of the remedies used are officinal; and others, though not officially recognised, possess medicinal properties.

3. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many of these current in the district, but only a small number could be collected. Among all these, few bearing on the early history of this region seem to have come down to the present time, except the tradition of a great battle fought at Cross, in the Mullet, between the people of the country, and an invading army under a king of Munster who was slain in the fight, and over whose remains a tumulus was erected. 173

There is, so far as could be ascertained, no tradition as to the origin of the earlier inhabitants, either of the mainland, or of the islands; but the families whose ancestors came from Ulster two centuries ago are well known, and sometimes are called by the name Ultagh, instead of their own surnames. [551]

It would be expected that there would be some tales connected with the duns, of which there are several, but very few seem to be known, even the oldest inhabitants not seeming to have heard any history of them. The story of Dun Donald, related by Knight,[1] the vague tradition that Dunamoa was built by the Burkes, and besieged by the "Danes"; and another concerning Dun Fiachrach, which is believed to have been a favourite resting place for the children of Lir, and the fishermen of the neighbourhood say that the founder of the fort used to ride a "water-horse," on which he could leap across the deep caves on to the cliffs on each side of the dun. Many of the people ascribe these forts to "the Danes."

The favourite tales and poems are either ancient myth, or of a semi-religious character; legends of the saints forming a large portion of the old chroniclers' stock.

Mr Knight says[2]—"It is not from these cairns (Seefins) alone we claim Fingal and Ossian as *peculiarly* ours; we have heard them in *real song*, and many a winter's evening have I heard the old chronicler lying on his back quietly, in the bed beyond the fire, repeat the

[1] P. Knight, Erris, &c., p. 166. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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343 XVI), had their great days in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but small-scale wrack-burning is far older than this. 381 In the later eighteenth century, when framed windows and brick chimneys became fashionable in the more prosperous [339] lowland farms, the bricks were locally burnt in circular kilns plastered with clay.

Another class of outbuilding, allied to the clochaun in con- 343 struction, is the stone sweat-house, the Irish version of the 757 Turkish bath, which the Germans, indeed, call the Irish bath. There is a theory that the idea reached Ireland with Christian missionaries who were accustomed to Roman practices, but heat-treatment as a cure is so widespread throughout the world (cf. the sweat-houses of Finland and pre-Columbian California) that one thinks of remoter origins. What is certain is that they were visited for cures within living memory in several parts of Ireland. In west Cavan twenty-five sweat-houses have been listed in one district, and many more are known to have been destroyed. A French traveller of the late eighteenth century observed that 'wherever there are four or five cabins near each other there is sure to be a sweating-house'.[1] And old people in Cavan confirm that every four or five families once shared a sweat-house, in which sweating cures were taken in summer and autumn (Fig. 37, *6*).

The sweat-house is a dry-stone corbelled structure, measuring internally from four to seven feet in diameter and rather less in height. A low lintelled doorway is the only means of access though some specimens have a roughly constructed chimney flue to allow the smoke to escape. This was closed with sods during the treatment, as was the door. The fire of turf—straw and bracken seem also to have been used—had been kept burning inside for a day or two previously. The floor, normally an earthen floor though some examples were cobbled or paved, was then swept clean and strewn with green rushes. On these, or on grass sods or low stools which they took in with them, from two to as many as six or seven persons would sit, naked and sweating profusely. After half an hour or so they would emerge and cool themselves either in a near-by stream or with a bucket

[1]De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland* (1796–97). Ed. J. Stevenson (1917), 193.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of water. I was told on Rathlin Island that eligible girls would take a sweating bath to clear their complexions before the annual visit to the Lammas Fair at Ballycastle on the mainland. They were in demand also during kelp-burning operations—a notoriously filthy occupation. Not all sweat-houses were built of stone. Wood-Martin quotes accounts of some which were dug into an earth bank and 'finished with sods', while others were excavated in turf banks.[1] He also records that water was sometimes poured on stones inside the sweat-house, 'thus converting it into a vapour- as well as a sweat-bath'.[2]

More intimately linked with the house is the turf-shelter, the Irish equivalent of the English coal-shed. In the drier eastern part of the country a built shelter is not necessary, and the peats, skilfully built into a huge turf-stack protected from the driving rains by a wall or gable, perhaps improve by exposure to the winds, but in the wetter west unless the turf is under cover it must be dried in small quantities in the loft or by the fire before burning. In parts of Kerry the turf is stored in large clochauns: elsewhere narrow oblong or oval stone enclosures are erected, their walls loosely built to allow the wind to blow through. The peat-store or cleit of St. Kilda was similar—an oblong corbelled stone building with open joints.

The well is another essential item of equipment of farm or clachan, and it is often provided with a corbelled stone cover. Since springs are abundant, except in bare limestone country, the wells are not deep and few are fitted with windlasses. In their absence quite elaborate ramps with stone steps are sometimes needed to obtain access to the water, and the whole structure being roofed, some examples (for instance in the south-east of Co. Down) are considerable architectural feats (Fig. 40). In the limestone districts the woman of the house may have to walk as much as half a mile to carry drinking water from a dip-well. It is now carried in buckets but was formerly transported in stave-built piggins balanced on the head. The peasant makes a virtue of necessity by asserting that almost every spring well yields 'the finest water in all Ireland, and never runs dry'. Wells are regarded as chancy things, not to be

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, II (1902), 166.
[2]Ibid., 165.

227 confined to Co. Westmeath) is that the eel was undamaged and its skin could therefore be utilized. Apart from their use as [237] thongs and flail-hangings eel-skins were worn as charms against [751] rheumatic pains. Eel fat, too, is esteemed as a cure for rheuma- [757] tism. The third type of eel-spear is quite different in form and methods of use. It is confined to Wexford Harbour and would appear to be a relic of Scandinavian influence in that half-foreign south-eastern corner of Ireland comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth. It consists of two splayed prongs between which is ingeniously mounted a single barbed prong on to which 227 the eel is guided by the outer members (Fig. 79). When the 226 tide covers the mudflats the fisherman lies in a punt with his head over the prow, and with a spear in each hand propels the boat until he spies an eel in the mud, when his punting pole becomes a weapon. At low tide the eel fishers wear yard-long [481] 'scooches' or mud-shoes, wooden boards turned up at the front like miniature skis. We note in passing that boards were formerly worn by both men and horses in working on soft bogs in Co. Mayo.[1]

The salmon spear or leister, being illegal, is normally a light three-pronged instrument, but large specimens weighing up to eight pounds and made after the fashion of the Westmeath eel-spears are found on the River Suir (Fig. 80). The fish were attracted at night by 'burning the river' with resinous splits of bog-fir or lumps of peat soaked in oil.

Riverine weirs of many kinds have been the privilege of religious houses and landed properties through the ages, and many examples specially designed for the capture of migratory fish, salmon and eels are maintained. There are traditions of temporary weirs of heather stems weighted down with stones, into which trout were driven to be extracted when the bundles of heather were pitched on to the bank. Gerard Boate describes the weirs in his day as consisting of 'big stones set close together from the one side of the river to the other, leaving only one hole . . . before which hole a basket being laid, they take 227 therein a great quantity of fish'.[2] 'Fish baskets' and 'weels' are referred to in many ancient fishing grants, but I have not

[1] J. McParlan, *Mayo*, 94.
[2] Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 70.

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Breeda, Miltown, Kilgorey, Fortanne, Broadford, Trough, Ralahine, Cragg, Lahardan, and Cappavilla, with perhaps, (if not of St. Molocus, c. 550), Moylough, Scattery, and Carrigaholt; *Molua* (c. 620), Killaloe; *Onchu*, Killonaghan; *Sanctan*, Dromline; *Screbann*, Clondegad and Kilmaley; *Senan* (d. 552), Iniscatha, Moylough, Iniscaeragh (Mutton Island), Kilclogher, Carrow (Kilmaduan), Erribul (Kilfiddan), Kilshanny, Killaneena, Cooraclare, Kilcredaun, and Drim (Quin); *Tola* (c. 635), Dysert O'Dea and Kiltola; and *Voydan* or *Braighdean* (unknown), Kilvoydan, Corofin, and Kilraughtis.

Healing Powers.—The *Ordnance Survey Letters*[12] mention the following:—Gleninagh well, which has a fifteenth-century well-house or "turry," cured sore eyes; Tober Cholmain, above Oughtmāma churches, sufferers from "the pearl," the films falling off the eyes at the third washing; St. Maccreehy's well, near Liscannor, eye troubles, which were also cured by St. Inghean Baoith's well near Kilshanny (even then nearly deserted), Tobermoghna near Clooney (Corcomroe), St. Senan's well on the cliffs south-west from Kilkee, Kilcrony well near Carrigaholt, Tobercuan in Kiltrellig near Loop Head, Tobershenan in Moyfadda, the Virgin's well at Templemaley, and Tober Isa at Corlack Glebe (Bunratty). Tobernatasha, ("well of the relic" or, as some say, "spectre"), in Kilmaley was shaped like a coffin, and delicate children used to be laid on their backs in it.[13] The black mud which gave its name to Toberduff cured sore eyes and swelled limbs. So did Senan's well at Kilkee; horrible to tell, the devotees,—down to 1875, at least, when a washing-tank was made outside the well-house,—used to wash in this, the only supply of drinking-water for the then fashionable watering-place. Toberlachtin at Kilnemona cured several diseases, its "day" being March 19th. Eyes were also healed by the well south from Newmarket-on-Fergus, and by the wetted moss of St. Mochulla's well near Tulla (the moss being put back to complete the cure). The latter well is said to have avenged itself, about 1780, on its landlord, who had dug away part of its enclosure, by rendering

[12] Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Mss. 14B 23. 24, (Co. Clare), vols. i. and ii.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 183.

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757 his son and daughter imbecile. The son survived till 1853, and
778 no other members of the family were affected after the well was
823 restored.[14] The Newmarket well indignantly removed itself to its present site when "a dirty woman washed her feet in it," and it also gave her the complaint it usually cured. So, also, when the holy well above Oughtmama[15] was offended, it closed, and broke out lower down the hillside, as the Sruhaunanaeve or "saints' stream," and the water of Killone well refused to boil. The Cunninghams, living near it, spoilt their cooking by using its water, though "they knew it would not boil." John Windele tells of other resentful wells in Cork and Kerry; for example, the well at Labba Molagga (Cork) ran dry when a woman washed her clothes in it, and at Maunaholtora the well near a dolmen ran dry, and its water refused to boil.[16] The Irish "Nennius" tells a story of ducks that could not be boiled because the water would not get hot while they were in it. In the last century a woman who drew water from a well and saw it did not boil found a fish in it. She took the fish back to the well, and the water then boiled without any difficulty. The mud of the dolmen or "well" of Tobergrania at Ballycroum cured sore or short-sighted eyes, and that of the bullaun or basin at Kiltinanlea church near Clonlara did the same. The well of St. Michael at Kilmihil was once powerful. Father Anthony Bruodin, a Franciscan and author of a history of his order[17] full of curious particulars about Clare before 1640, tells how "Lady" Mariana, wife of Thomas MacGorman, of the author's kinsfolk, had in 1632 long suffered from gout. The Archangel appeared to her in a dream, and bade her go to his church and dig where she should see rushes growing near it. Aided by her son and Dermot O'Quaely, the parish priest of Kilmihil, she found the well and was cured. Many other persons got similar relief, but there seems no tradition of any cures by it preserved among the people of Kilmihil.

778 *Offerings.*—It is right, on visiting a well, to make offerings of
782

[14] So Mrs. Connors at Fortanne.

823 [15] Pronounced Ooght-máw-má. It is a weird spot with three ancient churches in a grassy basin on the flank of a terraced hill of bare grey limestone.

[16] Windele, Mss. Royal Irish Academy; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. iii., pp. 765-9.

[17] *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Fidei*, 1665.

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frogs (at Newmarket-on-Fergus) would creep down their throats. The finding of flukes and other parasites in sheep and cattle has helped the belief, and a beast's tongue, if swollen, is supposed to have been "stung by a worm." We have already noted a cure for "worm" in cattle,[24] and the milk of the "Seven Sisters" plant[25] boiled in milk cures similar cases in human beings.[26]

Frog.—Besides jumping down children's throats, the frog cures a cough if held by the legs, put for a moment into the sufferer's mouth, and returned to the water.[27] In a variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, at Bohatey, near Lough Derg, frogs mob and devour a boy who has tortured one of their number.[28] Frogs are said to have been rained on a field in eastern Burren more than once.

Insects etc.—An old woman at Maryfort in 1869 scandalized her neighbours by asserting butterflies to be dwellings of the human soul, and that her own soul would go into a "blessed (tortoise-shell) butterfly." Whence she derived this belief is unknown. I heard about the same time, and, it may be, from the same source, a horrible story of a "spider as big as a *bonnive*" (young pig) sucking the blood of children in the dark, but I forget the details. It is lucky to kill the "daudayle" (*dubh dael*) or "devil's coach-horse," for this hideous but harmless creature has the repute of having guided Judas to Gethsemane.[29] When it "cocks up its hind end," you should crush it, preferably with your bare foot, for you are then spared a day, hour, or week in Purgatory. In Clare I have only found this belief near Tulla, but it is common in other counties.

[24] *Ante*, p. 58. [25] Cf. *ante*, p. 57.

[26] So the late Michael Hazelton, an astrologer and herb doctor near Limerick.

[27] So Mrs. O'Callaghan.

[28] So Capt. Hibbert of Woodpark. A similar tale is told about toads by Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerary in Wales*, cap. ii.

[29] In Ulster the "connach worm" replaces the beetle. The tale says that men were sowing a corn-field when Our Lord and the faithful disciples passed, and that He told the sowers to inform His pursuers that they had last seen Him when they were sowing. The corn at once sprang into ear, and the pursuers, on getting the answer to their enquiry, were turning back when the worm cried out that the seed had only just been sown. The Ulster tale was collected by Mr. W. F. De Vismes Kane, D.L., of Monaghan. In Clare Island (Mayo) Mr. N. Colgan found a similar tale told of St. Patrick and his enemies.

825 [757] [774] [194] [p. 251]

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824 753 757 824 [752] 824 [777 789]

Plants.—The "hungry grass" grows on mountains, and, if trodden on, causes a sickening hunger which kills if not relieved. I knew a man in County Limerick who said he "knew it to happen to another man" on the Clare hills, and the victim got food in bare time to save him.[30] Seven strips of a plantain leaf stop the bleeding of a bad wound. The "Seven Sisters" plant for healing purposes must be picked at a particular period of the sun and moon in August. Fern "dust" (seeds) heals cuts from rushes; the dock charms nettle stings; and the four-leafed shamrock brings luck if found accidentally. The belief that house-leek preserves a house from burning[31] is widespread in north and east Clare. The pennywort has a sectarian bias, and only cures Protestants,[32] and this is connected near Bunratty with a curious legend of Anne Boleyn. This hapless queen, after enjoying by means of the plant the greatest influence over her terrible spouse,[33] "got into trouble, but, when she was sent to jail, she couldn't get the plant, and they hanged her." The rowan, or mountain ash, is a luck-bringer and preservative from magic, and I remember small forked twigs being carried. A rowan, planted at Iniscaltra about 890 by King Cormac mac Cuileanan, bore apples.[34] Moss from a skull, or an ancient cross such as that at Dysert O'Dea, or a pillar, is curative; the moss at Fortanne well was used for the eyes, but had to be replaced. If you see a "button mushroom" you should pluck it, as "it will never grow any more once it is looked at."[35]

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(*To be continued.*)

[p. 252]

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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[20]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[21] 585 796 626

Púcas.[22]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[23]—The *grasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[24] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[20] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[21] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[22] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[23] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[24] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *currach*, much as did their grandfathers. [601]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [894]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [759]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned [312]
foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 229
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[168] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[288] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first opportunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send
[761] the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[763] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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from 'the troubles' of the early nineteen-twenties. Souterrains have also been used for other illegal activities which were enjoyed irrespective of political party, such as the making of illicit whiskey—poteen—an activity which is not yet entirely suppressed and which called for secrecy. I have more than once been shown specially-made underground hiding-holes where the poteen-makers went to earth when the gaugers were scented. 343 [273] [674]

In the category of temporary shelters we place the wretched 'fever-huts' erected to isolate victims of infectious diseases in the famine years. We cannot wonder that no detailed descriptions are to be found, but the account of a structure of 'turf built up in the form of a cone, with an entrance scarcely large enough for a dog to crawl through'[1] hints that some of these huts presented features of interest to the ethnographer. Temporary windbreaks erected by turf-cutters are also of considerable interest. One which I saw in Co. Fermanagh (Fig. 38) [758]

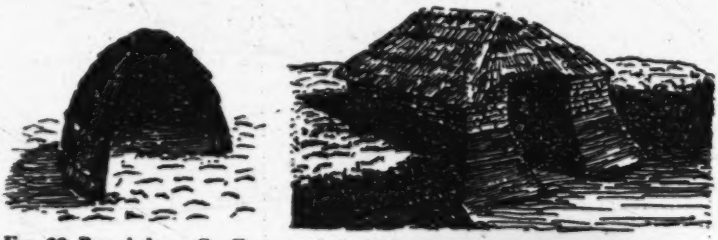

FIG. 38. Bog shelters, Co. Fermanagh. Left, for turf-cutters; right, partly dug out of the bog, for calves.

was built of birch rods bent over and neatly thatched with branches and rushes. The construction of animal shelters in great variety, too, built of sods or wattles, doubtless perpetuates skills once devoted to human habitations. I illustrate in Fig. 39 an outhouse with a solid hipped roof, known as a flat roof.

Unusual, because so far as I know confined to Achill Island, are little soot-houses erected for the special purpose of manufacturing supplies of soot and ashes as fertilizers. It is probable that we have to deal with a custom which has died out elsewhere and has maintained itself here in insular isolation. It will 343 387

[1] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 148.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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463 cattle, the butcher, expert at pig killing and skinning (pigs are regularly butchered on the small farms), the expert at rigging the great hayricks which stand in the farmers' haggards, and, lately, the threshing machine experts. All these robust, outdoor specialists are male. The feminine sphere of life does not seem to have bred such specialization. Yet many women were known also for their special skill at this and that branch of women's work and were consulted accordingly. Nevertheless, the only traditionally feminine crafts to develop and flourish apart were witchcraft and midwifery.

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A local craft or proficiency seems to develop out of some special crucial activity in local life. A local craft or skill of the kind that meets us here builds up directly out of social life itself. It is a development of habitual association about any person who gradually builds a reputation for a particular proficiency. The proficiency may center around some traditionally established technique of peasant life, like the weaving of homespun and shawls, the clothing of the small farmers, or else it may build up about local conventions having no direct economic value. Dances, gambles, and other entertainments and ceremonies of local social life may likewise afford areas in which a special skill gains recognition, gradually to grow into an occupation.

Thus the local specialists included fiddlers, singers, poets, storytellers. In the last century, in a day of great poverty and much displacement from the land, each of these skills gave an occupation to many wanderers along the roads of Ireland. Their followers found employment in the rural communities among the small farmers. Even itinerant dancing masters once flourished in the country districts during Carleton's day.[8]

The existence of other conventions leads likewise to the

[8] Students of Gaelic culture have described these artists very amply. See Robin Flower, Daniel Corkery, *et al.*

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gift and barter that of the fellow in the local community.*

For example, O'Sullivan, the "vet" of Rynamona, already mentioned, was a herdsman who did his cattle doctoring in his spare time. His services were always at the call of his neighbors. He seems to have been fairly good at his practice. He was quite widely sought after. His interest led him even to an experimental turn of mind. He said he often cut up cattle to see what killed them. In every description of him given by his neighbors they insisted he never took a penny for his work.

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The many bonesetters, whose help is much sought after, reject payment too. They are so numerous that a local dispensary doctor in Clare could complain that he had never been trusted to set a fracture but was consulted only to make sure a fracture had occurred. Even townsmen always emphasized in justification of local custom that the bonesetter accepted no money. Legal requirement has something to do with it. Statutes protecting legitimate doctors and veterinarians from this sort of competition exist and can be invoked, but that is only part of the story. The greater part of the matter lies here: The handy man is part of the local community. He is one of the farmers who has specialized, and thus he is within the pattern of reciprocal services and mutual aid.

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Such a figure as the blacksmith, who follows a recognized trade, and is paid for it accordingly, distinguishes carefully between the services for which money payment is possible and those which cannot be so remunerated. In the following case we can see that he distinguishes nicely in this tact indeed, for he can be paid in other communities for services for which he cannot accept payment at home. A blacksmith in North Clare is telling of himself in paraphrase:

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* Weavers, carpenters, thatchers, and masons may, of course, receive payment for their work, and do so. But such payment is made usually either where a farmer is in no position to return favors or does not want to enter a permanent relationship of cooring. The methods are alternatives.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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463 He is called the blacksmith by the people around; his place
465 is called the forge. He is also the local horse doctor. He has
about a hundred and twenty horses which he shoes for the
326 surrounding farmers. His father, whose place he has now taken,
232 is too old to work and so he does it all.

A rainy day is the time when the farmers bring their horses in to be shod, for it is then that work cannot be done on the farms. That's the time he will be busy all day, and it is very hard work. The shoe must be made to fit the horse. You work the fire with the bellows and put on the special coal for the forge. Usually the man whose horse it is will work the bellows for him.

He buys the iron in long strips and makes it up himself. The price is six shillings for a new set of shoes and three shillings for refitting an old set.

He keeps account of what the farmers owe him and usually between the first of November and the beginning of the new year they come in and pay. They pay once a year and he never sends an account or presses for the money. If they are poor people, he never charges and overlooks it until they have the money to come in. They come from about four miles around and he has the same ones year after year. He never charges them for looking at the horses. His father was a great horse doctor, better than himself. He was great for growths, sore teeth, or internal trouble. From miles around the farmers would come to have their animals treated. No charge was ever made for this of any man who had shoeing done with him, but a man from a distance would be charged. His father took a trip once through Galway and Connemara curing the ills of horses and he charged enough to pay his expenses and a little more.

463 Here we see the same consideration at work as in the case
465 of the handy man carpenters and masons. When the exer-
cise of skill is expanded to a point where it fills the work-
431 man's working existence, clearly setting him off from the
759 farmers, the farmers recognize his role as a fit subject for money payment. When his work is only the occasional avocation of one of their own kind, they do not. For this reason the midwife always differed from the local nurse. The mid-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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wife got her reward in presents, gifts, and whiskey, but not in money. Money, however, would be proferred to the nurse.

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That the factor of payment in money should be crucial is really the cloak of the set of dispositions arising from habitual relations. In the local community the handy man is not paid, since, like "friends" and neighbors, he is one of themselves. Since he is one of the countrymen, he is caught within the system of much the same habitual relations of reciprocal service and mutual aid which make up cooring in agriculture.

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To see this point, we must describe the action of the local community in respect to the work to be done once again. Cooring is a form of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. One old fellow described it aptly when he said that it meant that for a day of work given you would receive a day in return. We have already seen its connection with familism and the extended family. But besides cooring, there was another form of the custom known as *meitheal* (mihil). The word *comhair* (coor) referred to the reciprocity, the word *meitheal* to the band of men and teams acting together to perform a task. On various occasions when work beyond the capacity of cooring families was to be done, a *meitheal* of men or women or horses could be made up.

As described by the old people who still remember its heyday, the *meitheal* rested on a foundation slightly different from the reciprocity of cooring. The work was done by a gang of local persons got up for the purpose through the wish and custom of the local inhabitants, but without expectancy of individual return in like measure.

Bands of men and women were got up in rural communities by *meitheal* for the following purposes, of which the authors heard record:

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on November 1st.

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which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

291 834 759 155 bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

158 751 291 834 753 It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 827 863 825 562 273 241 Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

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* 831 522 154 123 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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755 776 [238] Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well, bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take anything from hens to men and women. When they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless, he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper and friend of former years. The vitality has gone out of him or her. The country-people can believe that 'they' have spirited away the real person and left in his place "some spent old man that they had with them for a long time". The real person is 'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not [758] mean that they do not recognize what we might call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too well, from bitter experience. It means only that they have an explanation for it that infuses it with the associations they have about their belief.

776 For the belief in changelings, about which you all have heard a great deal, has its root in the fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die [761] are taken, except the old people". Only for them is death the natural course of events; all others have fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

776 183 82 Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

If we leave aside marriage, where folk-custom and folk-belief are no less important toward the same ends, we can devote our attention to the greatest change of all. Death brings the greatest disturbance in social habit. It shakes emotional equilibrium to its foundation. Yet society must allow for death; it must provide an orderly transition and continuance.

The devout Irishman, of course, finds his greatest consolation in his Catholic Faith. He knows the fate of his loved ones. His religion teaches him how to communicate with them, in the Communion of Saints, through prayer. Faith heals his hurt and it gives him a way of filling the void death creates.

Yet, as I have said, he has room in his heart and mind for the fairy-belief too. Social life must take account of death no less than religion. When death removes one of the human beings to whom he is related as brother, friend or fellow, it leaves behind the traces of sentiment and habit that were once bonds of relationship and association. These must be reformed, and in the reformation a new synthesis between the dead member of the group and the living be found. The countryman resembles us all in this respect; he cannot forget 'the old familiar faces'. He must have an explanation in the world-view of folklore and folk-custom for

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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181 the effect they still exert upon him after they are
183 gone.

●761 So the dead join 'them'. On the border-line
776 between the mundane world and the mysteries of
[775] Faith, they find a place in the ranks of the good people, as the misnamed fairies are often called. They are the denizens of rath and fort and hill and cave. There is nothing fundamentally incompatible between this and religious belief, however folklore may escape the control of dogma and sometimes, in its humbler vein, run counter to it. The dead do affect the living, in memory and in tradition. Death is the 'other world' to which we are all advancing. As one fellow could say in a burst of poetic imagery growing out of folk-belief: "The old people in the west room are going down with the sun".

Why not indeed, when we remember that the good people are not always by any means evil and forbidding? They exert their power for both good and evil. They bring reward as well as punishment. The countryman has friends among them as he has friends among men in this world. An Aran woman put the belief for Lady Gregory in words which transport earthly loyalties to the other world. "There's often fighting heard about the house when one is sick. That is what we call the fighting of
181 friends, for we believe it is the friends and enemies
193 of the sick person fighting for him."
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775 Indeed, the same aids that make up habit and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [363] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [674] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

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Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

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When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [554] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

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The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 198 of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

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10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen
582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully
844 watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if
763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their
764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great
[762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to
[178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin
[482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women
764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own
533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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583
602 but ones in which brothers-in-law flared up to strike one another even though after a week or so the two connections became reconciled.

428 Up to this point we have failed to distinguish between wills and marriage settlements in the statement of match-
583 making and transfer of farms. The confusion is justified because in so many cases they are one and the same. Nevertheless, the subject of wills made apart from the son's marriage needs discussion. If our conclusions as to the nature of farm marriage are valid, something of the same play of changes, obligations, and goods must be present.

Money in the dowry functions to recompense the farmer for his relinquishment of the farm and the break-up of the family which he headed. Similarly, in the cases where inheritance proceeds without marriage, money plays the same role. There are many instances in which the old farmer has demanded payment for the property his heir is to receive. Let an Ennis solicitor describe his experience with one of them:

428 I remember an old fellow, Jimmy B — of K — who was taken off dying to the County Home. He called for me to go out
● 763 there and make a will for him. Seven wills I made for that old codger before he was through. He hadn't any idea of dying. He had only ten or fifteen acres of a farm, but he said he would give it to his son [only] if the son paid him ten pounds a year for it. They often do that, make the son pay from ten pounds to fifty pounds a year for the land. Then [when the solicitor pointed out that the son would inherit the money anyway as the old fellow had no other heirs], old Jimmy made me make another will leaving the money itself to the son.

Another case the authors knew involved no son. The old fellow left a small farm to his cousin and even though he was on the verge of dying, he forced the cousin to pay for it.

In still another instance, an old fellow had some land and about two hundred and fifty pounds to give away. He gave

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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the money in a will, but insisted the son pay for the land. 428
After that, there was a cow and a calf left over, which he 763
reserved for himself. When he called in a solicitor to make another will disposing of the cow and calf, this time, as he lay dying in the County Home, the nun in charge said he had been awake all night mumbling to himself about the cow and calf. The solicitor and the nun finally got him to leave the money for masses.

These cases show the hold of the pattern of receiving 428
money for the transfer of family property. It must be understood that under ordinary circumstances the payment the son had to make would be devoted to the other children, as is the dowry. But in these cases the pattern persisted though there were no other children.

Another case occurred in which a farmer named Patrick N— left money, farm, and everything he had to his nephew [429]
Michael in trusteeship to be given to him upon his marriage with the trustee's approval. Here no money was demanded, but another common feature of countrymen's wills was involved which throws light on the general family situation. The old man had other nephews who had given him a hand from time to time in fulfillment of the agricultural pattern. By mischance they discovered the content of the will, called their uncle an "old fraud" and a "robber," and stopped working for him. A generous move on the part of Michael prevented further bad blood.

English law of property gives the owner full right to dispose at will of farm and other real property as personal chattels. That right is, of course, embodied in Irish legal practice. But the situation underlying the Irish farm life is otherwise. In the first cases cited, we see a tendency to enforce payment for the farm, analogous to the dowry. In the last case, the basis for that tendency is the expectation of provision on the part of the family members. With the transfer of the farm and the break of the family at either

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own
533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

58 not, like an Inishbofin man, consider himself disgraced, nor is he inconsolable.

Engaged couples or newly married people often come in for an amount of attention from the children of the neighbourhood, which, however flattering it may be, is decidedly embarrassing; they are followed about and cheered whenever they appear together. Weddings
585 are occasions of family festivities, and are usually followed by a dance.
533 "Straw-boys" go round to the house on these occasions and take part in the dancing. They are disguised in tall conical-shaped straw
292 masks, adorned with strips of red and green cloth, white shirts decorated with coloured ribbons, and white or red petticoats. The band is headed by a captain and a mate, who enter the house first and declare that they are shipwrecked sailors, and that they have come to dance at the wedding; the captain then dances with the bride, the mate with the bridesmaid, and the rest of the band with the other girls. It is usual to treat the straw-boys to drink, but they often refuse it, and never demand money, or indulge in any rowdy conduct.

The young couple usually set up house on their own account,
591 except in the case of the youngest son, who inherits his parents' house and property, in which case the bride goes to live with her people-in-law.

When a person is dying, windows and doors are thrown open, and
763 the clock (if there be one) stopped; it is considered unlucky or im-
777 proper for any of those in the house to cry until after the death has actually occured.

Wakes are still held in this district, and many of the old obser-
764 vances and games are kept up; but owing to the discouragement of these by the clergy, the people show a great reluctance to give any information on the matter. A good deal of drinking usually takes place on these occasions.

The funeral customs have undergone some change during the past thirty years, but much still remains that is worthy of notice. A grave is not usually dug until the coffin reaches the graveyard, if begun before hand it is never dug on a Monday, or commenced at least, but a start is made, if necessity compels, by raising a few sods on Sunday. It is believed to be unlucky to bury a corpse on New Year's Day, an act
[777] which is thought to bring misfortune to the whole neighbourhood.

The coffin is usually taken out the back door of the house, and conveyed to the cemetery by the longest route. At the graveyard the *caoine* is raised by the women immediately after the religious ceremony

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied 342
"'twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the
fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the [763]
west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the [777]
luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was always carried out to the graveyard through the back door, [764]
and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the [354]
room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the [231]
flagged passage between the doors served as a path for livestock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh, [777]
in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands*.
[3] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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doing others; and there is simple symbolic magic in the act of 844
blowing the bellows in a forge to ensure safe delivery. In Mayo
a ploughman would be called in to lift and shake a woman in [845]
difficult labour,[1] and there are hints of the *couvade* in the
custom of wearing the husband's jacket during childbirth in the
belief that he will then bear some of the pain. Mothers and 854
babies were thought to be especially liable to be abducted by
the fairies, and protective charms were hidden in a baby's dress
or placed in the cradle. When children were taken to be baptised,
too, special preparations were made and precautions taken, for
example, a Co. Antrim clergyman reported that his parish-
ioners would place a piece of bread and cheese in the child's
clothing.[2] The old custom of dressing boys in girls' clothes, in long
frocks, until they were ten or eleven years of age has been
explained as a means of deceiving the fairies, who were always
on the lookout for healthy young boys whom they could
replace by feeble 'changelings'. For the same reason it is unwise
to praise a child without adding a saving 'God bless him', and
young boys are still half jocularly referred to as 'rogues and
tories'. The belief in 'changelings' may have arisen as an ex-
planation of the high mortality rate among baby boys as com-
pared with girls.

When we come to the topic of the omens and rites of death 763 ●
and burial the supernatural world is ever-present. The custom
of opening windows and doors to let the spirit of the dead
depart is well known: in addition a hole was sometimes made
in the roof thatch. Of Co. Sligo early last century we read:
'As soon as the breath has departed from a sick person, the bed
is carried out, and if there be high ground near the house, it is
there set on fire and consumed to ashes, while the air resounds
with doleful cries.'[3] When death was imminent the sick person
was laid on the floor, for this was believed to ease the escaping
spirit. Two persons of the household should take part in every
necessary task at this time, and two persons were sent out to
carry news of the death, traditionally to the livestock and the
bees as well as to the neighbours. Great care was taken to

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 39.
[3] W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 2, 368.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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763 observe the correct procedure in laying out the corpse, generally on a table or a door. A plate containing tobacco or salt was placed on the corpse and sometimes a turf, which was believed to prevent decomposition, a transference from the observed preservative qualities of the bogs.

764 786 Although a great deal of information on the wakes which followed has been collected, it is difficult to obtain precise details about the wake games because of their apparent obscenity. Some of them survive as innocent games in districts where wakes have not been entirely suppressed, but it should be stressed that the full ritual of the traditional wake games was carried out in innocence: 'the peasantry who practised them had no idea of outraging propriety or religion in their performance, holding an unquestioning faith that such observances were right and proper at wakes, whilst under any other circumstances they would shrink with horror from such indelicate exhibitions'.[1] Moreover, they were generally 'reserved for the deaths of old people who had survived the ordinary span of life, or young children who could not be looked upon as an irreparable loss.'[2]

Apart from a great variety of informal amusements which were traditional at wake gatherings—riddles, jokes, singing, dancing, horse-play, tricks, feats of strength or agility, wrestling and so on—a list of 130 specific wake games has been collected by Seán Ó Súilleabháin, and it is 'of necessity incomplete.'[3] Some of them were dramatic performances of considerable complexity; and one recalls the Irishman's traditional skill in dramatization. In Kilkenny the principal game was the *frannsa*, a mock ceremony during which several young folk were 'married' by a mock priest, usually a weaver or a tailor, who was dressed in straw and wore a huge straw rope as a stole. 'After each couple was married, he put them to bed in a corner of the room, sprinkled them with water and gave them plain advice about their future conduct as man and wife.'[4] We need not be surprised that, after this initiation, in the words of

[1] J. G. A. Prim, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 334.
[2] J. G. A. Prim, loc. cit.
[3] S. Ó Súilleabháin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, 662.
[4] J. O'Donovan, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1858), 31.

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as their war-goddess,[21] so, before the baptism of King Cairthinn, (first Christian Prince of his House, about A.D. 430), the ancestors of the Dalcassians may have worshipped Aibhinn on her holy hill, and her equally lovely sister Aine, crowned with meadowsweet, on the tamer mound of Knockaney. Whether, if so, they found her already enthroned at Craglea on their conquest of the district, or whether the conqueror Lugad consecrated the mountains to his patroness, it is now impossible to guess. Aibhill, as banshee, held her own. We find her even usurping the place of the "Sybil" in a translation of the *Dies Iræ*,[22] in unwonted companionship with King David, and she was a commonplace of local threnodies during the eighteenth, and even the nineteenth, century. In the lake below Rathblamaic in Inchiquin she has down to recent years been seen, with the twenty-five other banshees of Clare that call her their queen, washing clothes before any impending disaster.[2]

The next appearance of a banshee in local history is of a very different spirit three centuries later. The *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* ("Triumphs of Torlough") was written probably about A.D. 1350 by Seean mac Craith, the hereditary historian.[23] It contains accounts of three spirit women,—one, the "Sovereignty of Erin," being of surpassing loveliness, and the two others, (if not the same,—"Dismal" and "Water Dismal"), of loathsome hideousness. The hags, however, probably survive, while the "Sovereignty" has perished. Bronach ("the sorrowful or dismal one") of Ceann Boirne was known as the "Hag of Black Head" from the modern name of the older Ceann (or Rinn) of Burren. She was in full repute in 1839, and I have heard of her vaguely about 1885 or 1887. In August, 1317, she

[21] Cf. *Revue Archéologique*, N.S., vol. xviii. (1868), p. 1; Sir Samuel Ferguson's paper, from the Irish point of view, in *Dublin University Magazine*, Oct. 1834, p. 463; W. M. Hennessy, "The War Goddess of the Ancient Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x., p. 425.

[22] Mss., Royal Irish Academy, 23.M.47.

[23] As yet only in manuscript,—one copy of A.D. 1509, and another probably from one of 1449. For its age see *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxxii., p. 139.

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was able to appear in "the dark before sunrise" and foretell destruction by words and hideous action. The supporters of Prince Murchad O'Brien, (then absent in Dublin), under his brother Dermot invaded the territory of his rival Prince Donchad O'Brien. The latter got together an army, "even the man in a souterrain (*uamh*) of a fort" being summoned, and marched round the site of the modern village of Ballyvaughan, his foe having sheltered in Corcomroe Abbey, in a nook of the bare hills some miles to the north-west. Approaching Lough Rasga, (still known as Rask), "they looked on the shining mere, and there they saw the monstrous and distorted form of a lone, ancient hag, that stooped over the bright Lough shore. She was thatched with elf locks, foxy grey and rough like heather, matted and like long sea-wrack, a bossy, wrinkled, ulcerated brow, the hairs of her eyebrows like fish hooks; bleared, watery eyes peered with malignant fire between red inflamed lids; she had a great blue nose, flattened and wide, livid lips, and a stubbly beard."[24] The writer adds detail on detail (some 90 in all), many too disgusting to copy. The hag was washing human limbs and heads with gory weapons and clothes, till all the lake was defiled with blood, brains, and floating hair. Donchad at last spoke. "What is your name and race, and whose kin are those maltreated dead?" She replied,—"I am Bronach of Burren, of the Tuatha Dé Danann. This slaughter heap is of your army's heads; your own is in the middle." The angry men raised their javelins, but she rose on the wind, yelling more and more words of woe till she vanished. "Heed her not," said Donchad, "she is a friendly *Bodbh* of Clan Torlough" (his opponents). The army hurried on to the ridge of the Abbey, where Donchad and all his kindred, save one brother, were slain before evening.

Not to the Irish alone did the banshee foretell ruin. In May, 1318, Richard de Clare, leader of the Normans, was marching to what he supposed would be an easy victory over the O'Deas of Dysert. The English came to the "glittering, running water of fish-containing Fergus," when they saw a horrible beldam

[24] I have to thank Mr. Standish Hayes O'Grady for this and other extracts from the work, the translations in the library of the Royal Irish Academy being, (it is understood), very crude.

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washing armour and rich robes till the red gore churned and splashed through her hands.[25] Calling an Irish ally to question her, De Clare heard that "the armour and clothes were of the English, and few would escape immolation." "I am the Water Doleful One. I lodge in the green fairy mounds (*sidh*) of the land, but I am of the Tribes of Hell. Thither I invite you. Soon we shall be dwellers in one country." Next day De Clare, his son, and nearly all his English troops lay dead upon the fields near the ford of Dysert for miles over the country in their flight. 175 776 763

The belief of the early eleventh and fourteenth centuries is still extant, for local legend near Dysert tells how Aibhill and twenty-five banshees washed blood-stained clothes in Rath Lake before "Claraghmore" (De Clare) fell, and that they still do so when mischief is afoot.[26]

For nearly 300 years there is no other Clare banshee tale, till the famous one of 1642 in the *Memoires of Lady Fanshawe*, (published in 1665).[27] It is so well known that a brief abstract will suffice. Her Ladyship, staying with some of the O'Briens, was sleeping in a room, of which the window overhung water at some height, at a castle, perhaps Bunratty or Castle Lake. She was awakened by a horrible scream, and saw a girl outside the window. The apparition was pale, rather handsome, and with her reddish hair hanging dishevelled over her shoulders. After some time the unwelcome visitor vanished, with other ghastly shrieks. In the morning Lady Fanshawe, telling her tale, was told of the death of a relative of the family whose illness had been concealed from her. The spirit was that of the peasant wife of a former owner of the castle, drowned in the moat by her husband and of evil omen to his descendants. [538]

The next story was told in my own family and, I understand, in that of the Ross Lewins. I have traced it to a daughter of Jane Ross Lewin, one of the girls who saw the banshee. It related to Jane's father, Harrison Ross Lewin of Fortfergus, who probably died in 1776, as his will, dated November, 1775, was proved in

[25] Another "washer of the ford" appears in "Da Choca's Hostel," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi. (1900), p. 157, and she is also a Bodbh.

[26] Told me by Prof. Brian O'Looney in 1890, and I have heard more recently of the existence of the belief.

[27] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 83-6.

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175 March, 1777; but I have hitherto been unable to verify the circumstances or place of his death. Mr. Ross Lewin had gone
● 763 to Dublin on business, the journey at that time taking five days,
776 and the several stages being Limerick, Nenagh, Mountrath, Kildare, and Dublin. In his absence the "young people" went to a friend's house for the evening. The road passed an old church (Kilchrist), which was unenclosed, standing in an open field. As the party returned under bright moonlight, they were startled by loud keening and wailing from the direction of the ruin. Coming in sight, all clearly saw a little old woman with long white hair and a black cloak running to and fro on the top of the side wall, clapping her hands and wailing. The young men, leaving the girls together on the road, sent some of their number to watch each end of the building, and the remainder entered and climbed up on the wall. The apparition vanished as they approached the church, and, after a careful search, could not be found. The party, thoroughly frightened, hurried home, and found their mother in even greater terror. She had been sitting in the window when a great raven flapped three times at the glass, and, while she told them, the bird again flew against the window. Some days later, news arrived from Dublin that Ross Lewin had died suddenly on the very evening of the apparition and omen.

763 It is curious that an English family, no matter how long settled in Ireland, should have acquired the ministration of a banshee,
776 but, besides the Ross Lewins, both the Stamers and the Westropps were so endowed in Clare.[38] The Westropps had also death warnings in the shape of a white owl and the headless coach. This bird last appeared, it is said, before a death in 1909, but it would be more convincing if it appeared at places where the white owl does *not* nest and fly out every night. The banshee has been conspicuously absent of late years, although on the death of my father, the

[38] Among families with banshees, Thomas Crofton Croker (*op. cit.*, ed. 1862, p. 115,) names old Englishry such as the Burkes, Rices, Hussey's (the Norman, not the Gaelic, name), Trants, and Keatings. The FitzGeralds of Kerry and Limerick had also a banshee. Of the Clare families the Westropps came from Yorkshire, the Stamers from Essex, and the Lewins probably from Durham. Some banshees may have been acquired by marriage, for the three latter families were related to O'Briens, MacNamaras, and O'Gradys, to name only a part of their Celtic connections.

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late John Westropp, at Attyflin, in 1866, keening and weird lamentation, (probably of some of the country folk who held him in deep affection), were heard the same night by the servants and some of the family. When Mrs. Stamer died at Stamer Park, Ennis, in January, 1883, the banshee and death coach were also supposed to have been heard,—though far more satisfactory explanations of the noises were forthcoming. The popular belief in Clare is that each leading Irish race had a banshee, Eevul, the banshee of the royal O'Briens, ruling over twenty-five other banshees always attendant on her progresses. The stream from Caherminaun to Dough, (the Daelach), was called the "Banshee's Brook," and when, as sometimes happens after an unusually dry summer, the water gets red from iron scum, everyone is on the alert to hear the rustling flight of the banshee, (not apparently Eevul), and her attendants through the air. In the prevailing suspense someone generally succeeds, and then there is unrest and fear until a death removes the uncertainty. There are many other modern tales of banshees. Mr. Casey of Ruan heard a banshee cry at the death of his father. The late Dr. MacNamara of Corofin was similarly honoured; indeed, when his family lived at Ballymarkahan, near Quin, there were numerous "authentic instances" recorded. The Corofin banshees, however, did not lag behind the age by maintaining aristocratic prejudices, for one, at least, used to sit near the cross road leading to the workhouse and foretell the deaths of the poor inmates.[29]

The most recent visit of a banshee told to me was in 1905,[30] and is sadly tame when compared with the stories of MacCraith and Lady Fanshawe. Some scattered cottages form a sort of suburb to Newmarket-on-Fergus at a temporary lake (or *turlough*) called Lough Gaish. The inhabitants were greatly alarmed by the loud and ghastly wailing of some unknown being on several successive nights. Local panic spread, and few ventured out after dark. Had any tragedy happened, the reputation of the banshee would have rested on a rock of belief for another generation; but nothing occurred, and it is now doubted "whether it was a banshee at all, at all."

[29] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara at Caherminane and Corofin.
[30] By Mrs. and Miss Neville and Miss G. C. Stacpoole of Newmarket.

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III. *The Death Coach.*[31]

763 The "headless Coach" or "coach a bower" seems of far later date than the banshee. Ghostly chariots such as that of Cuchulain figure in very early tales, but neither their appearance nor their sound foretold death.[32] In Clare, at sight or sound of the coach, all gates should be thrown open, and then it will not stop at the house to call for a member of the family, but only foretell the death of some relative at a distance.[33]

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763 I collected five stories, three of well-defined character, and give them in order of time as the dates can be fixed. The first appearance, on the night before June 18th, 1806, was related to my three informants[34] most solemnly by their fathers and uncles. Two told it in a general and confused way, but varied from the story of the third, which I give, only by omissions. Ralph Westropp, of Attyflin and Lismehane,—the latter place is in Clare, but I never could learn where he died,—lay sick unto death. His sons in the late dusk waited on the steps for the arrival of the doctor. Suddenly they saw and heard a large coach drive into the paved court before the house. One of them stepped down to open the door, but the dark object rumbled past and drove down the long, straight avenue, which was fenced on both sides. Two of the watchers ran after it, hearing it ahead of them. The noise stopped, and they expected to find the coach at the gate. They ran full tilt against the bars, the gate being closed and locked. They called up the lodgekeeper, and he was found to have been asleep with the keys still beside him. The sick man died the next morning.

Lismehane, under its later name of Maryfort, afterwards became the residence of the O'Callaghan family, its present occupants. On the night of April 29th, 1821, two servants,—one of whom was "Matty Halloran" who died not long ago at an advanced

[31] Cf. "Irish Folklore from Cavan, Meath, Kerry, and Limerick," vol. xix., pp. 320-1; vol. x., p. 119.

[32] Is not the death coach, and not the Hellequin, the "hell waine" of Reginald Scot's list of spirits in *The discoverie of witchcraft*, Bk. vii., cap. xv.?

[33] Cf. Herefordshire belief about corpse candles.

[34] The late Capt. Ralph Westropp of Coolreagh (in 1879), and the late Mrs. Wilme and Mrs. Fitzalrn, whose fathers were present.

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age, and the other was a butler named Richard Burke,—were sitting up to receive a son of the family, Cornelius O'Callaghan, who had travelled for his health in vain and was returning home. Halloran, who told the tale with fearless faith and weary frequency, said that the heavy rumble of a coach roused them. Burke stood on the top of the long flight of steps with a lamp, and sent Halloran down to open the carriage door. He reached out his hand to do so, saw a skeleton looking out, gave one yell, and fell in a heap. When the badly-scared Burke picked him up, there was no sign or sound of any coach. A little later the invalid arrived, so exhausted that he died suddenly in the early morning. The present generation seems to have got the story from Halloran alone.

On the night of December 11th, 1876, a servant of the MacNamaras was going his rounds at Ennistymon, a beautiful spot in a wooded glen, with a broad stream falling in a series of cascades. In the dark he heard the rumbling of wheels on the back avenue, and, knowing from the hour and place that no "mortal vehicle" could be coming, concluded that it was the death coach and ran on, opening the gates before it. He had just time to open the third gate and throw himself on his face beside it, at the bank, before he "heard a coach go clanking past." It did not stop at the house, but passed on, and the sound died away. On the following day Admiral Sir Burton MacNamara died in London.[25]

A man living at Annaghneale was returning from Tulla late at night. As he reached the corner of Fortanne demesne he heard a heavy rumbling behind him, and horses trotting. Surprised after a time by its not coming nearer, he looked back and saw a large dark mass with a figure on the box. It came no closer to him, and in a fright he hurried on. At a bend in the road he ventured to stand at the fence and look again. This time he saw the horses and carriage drive over the wall and ditch into Fortanne. He fell, nearly insensible with terror, but, hearing and seeing nothing more, hurried home. This was told to a steward at Maryfort about twenty years ago, and happened "long after the sale of Fortanne" to its present owner in 1879. The present tradition

[25] From Mr. R. Twigge, F.S.A., whose wife is a daughter of the House of Ennistymon.

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763 of Fortanne says that the coach was heard at the deaths of certain Westropps after 1873, but nothing happened after its last appearance.

The phantom of a coach and horse was seen not far from Corofin, at Cragmoher, not long since, but it is agreed that no death took place after the apparition. An equally vague story was told about 1870 at Attyflin by a very old woman, Norry Halloran, whom the sound of the coach pursued one dark evening for a long way, but it did not pass her door, and nothing happened afterwards.

IV. *Fairies and Fairy Forts and Mounds.*

776 823 [538] MacCraith, in the *Triumphs of Torlough*, in describing the prognostics of the death of Prince Donchad early in the fourteenth century says that "lights shone on the fairy forts," and it has already been noted that the *sidhs* or fairy mounds were lodgings of appalling apparitions, like Bronach when not at her proper residence in the lower deep. The *Dindsenchas*,—that early encyclopædia invaluable for everything but the reliable account of the origin of place names which it purports to be,—describes how a lady dwelling in such a mound sprang out at her would-be lover in the form of a dragon.[36] Probably such beliefs, and the consequent fear of irate and deadly beings in earthworks, have helped until recent years to preserve the residential earthen "forts," although the ring walls were destroyed with but little scruple. Nevertheless the son of a farmer named Nihill told me in 1892 that, after some days wreckage and removal of the outer wall of the fine triple stone fort of Cabercalla, near Quin, his father was stricken with acute pain, and only recovered from his illness when the work was stopped,—whence this interesting ruin has been preserved to the present day. A certain landlord, still living, nearly lost the use of one eye from the dust of an explosion when blasting a rock in an earth fort which was being removed, and this incident has upheld the faith and fear of the fairies in north-eastern Clare. A locally famous "astronomer" and weather prophet tried, many years ago, to blast a dolmen in Inchiquin Barony, and a splinter hit his hand, which was badly injured and

[36] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv., p. 441.

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house. The old residences are in ruins, and their desertion took place over sixteen years ago.[16] 775

It is to the credit of the people of Eastern Clare that it possesses hardly any haunted houses, but there are two of transcending interest.

The first lay near the Fergus. A footstep followed one at night on the upper stairs, and curtains were drawn round the old-fashioned beds,—if not by "a hand of bone," at least by a "thing that no man sees." On more than one occasion all the bed-clothes were lifted, "as if by four people," off a sleeper. Even the late Mr. Richard Stacpoole, a man of iron nerve, told how once on a visit this happened to him; indignant at what he supposed to be a foolish joke, he got up, locked the door, searched the room, and kept awake, only to find the action repeated twice; he struck a light at once, but no one was visible. Hands were laid on the doors and their handles. Anyone who "married into" the family or its connections was liable to have their hands kissed in the dark on their first visit. An invisible [763] dog used to howl before deaths, being only heard from the room of the relation of the foredoomed person. A ghost, (said to be of no less a person than Maureen Rhue, the famous Amazonian O'Brien of 1640-50), used to pass up and down the long, straight [773] avenue. Legend said that, after the murder of her twenty-fifth husband,—(only three husbands are known to history, which is also ignorant of their murders),—she was fastened into a hollow tree and starved to death. There were also the ghosts of two nuns,—for the place was said to have been a convent, without a particle of evidence,[17]—and, in 1838, a lady on horseback at a "Druid's Altar." (The last-named was probably a pure invention of the then owner.) There was, however, another ghostly object of which I heard from an eye-witness still living. A dark spot used to break out in the wall of a quaint old brick-floored room, with an inside window looking down into the kitchen. The legend was that an old nurse, a pensioner of the family about 1750, used to live in this room, and died, aged over 90, suddenly

[16] So Mrs. MacDonnell.

[17] Except that skeletons, and, it is said, crucifixes, were found in the garden just beside the house.

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Water Cattle.—I have not found a water-bull legend clearly told in Clare, but cow's horns are seen over the waters of one lake and "something roared" under the waters of another.[18] In 1877 I heard of cattle coming out of some lake near Kilkishen, (perhaps Cullaun, with its enchanted city or palace), but I could not recover the story when searching twenty years later. "*Loch na bó girre* which is called *lock Gréine*" is given[19] as an old name for the large lake of Lough Graney in the Aughty mountains on the north border of Clare. This probably implies that it had a legend like that of Lough bo Girr, near Cahir in County Tipperary, whence an enormous long-horned cow used to issue. 776

Púcas and Horses.—Though the *púca* has influenced very often the place-names of Clare, its legends in the county are dry and vague. One man near Clonlara had the misfortune to become its sport. It took the form of a pony, and, finding the man searching for treasure in a gravel-pit, in which he had dreamed that gold was concealed, bore him away on a long rough ride and dropped him at the spot from which it started, where he was found bruised and insensible next morning.[20] The *púca* also appears as a hideous goat. I was told by a servant, about 1870, of a demon "black puck-goat with fiery eyes" appearing to a poor country woman on a roadside bank in the Cratloe hills.[21] The tale was very blood-curdling, but, doubtless to my relief then but regret now, I put it out of mind, and now forget its details. The *púca* always puts its hoof on the blackberries at Michaelmas, after which they become unfit to eat.[22]

Of spirit horses other than the *púca*, I have heard of one at a deep gravel quarry, near Trough in the same hills. The ghostly presentment of a Limerick gentleman, a Mr. Furnell, appeared one moonlight night on horseback. He rode at full gallop, with 776 763

[18] I think Lough Breeda, east from Tulla, and Clonlea Lake were intended. I am to blame for not making a note at the time, but was only interested in the legend. My notes only begin in 1878, though embodying earlier matter, and are too often "car notes" from drivers and others and not properly hunted. Where possible, I re-examined them from 1892 upwards.

[19] In the "Agallamh," *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 126.

[20] So the late Sir Hugh Dillon Massy at Doonass.

[21] So Mrs. O'Shea at Clonsne, Limerick.

[22] Cf. similar English belief as regards the devil.

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776 hounds in full cry, and the sound of horns, across the upper field, leaped the fence, and disappeared into the quarry with a crash and
●763 groan. Mr. Francis Drew of Drewsborough, who was driving past with a friend, recognised and called to the ghostly rider; when he saw the supposed accident, he ran into the quarry, but could find nothing. Next day he heard of the death of the hunter, but far away from the quarry.[23]

776 Supernatural, but evidently material, were the horses which came out of the caves of Kilcorney in the heart of the Burren,[24] for they left descendants, noted for their high spirits and fierceness, by earthly mares in the valley. A similar tale of sea-horses coming out of Galway Bay was told some thirty-five years since, and we owned a reputed scion of their race, a cob from Connemara on the opposite side of the Bay.

Dogs.—One spectral dog haunts the road between Carrigaholt and Ross in the long peninsula of the Irrus, and is believed to be the spirit of a comparatively recent local celebrity, "Robin of Ross," of whom many tales are told. He was a member of the Keane family, and one version makes his ghost a different dog from the one near Carrigaholt.[25] Another dog accompanies a human ghost on its nightly patrol between the railway bridge and the cemetery at the venerable church and shattered round tower of Dromcliff. The precincts of Ennistymon House were haunted by the spectre of a large black hound, quite harmless.[26] Once very famous, but now nearly forgotten, was the ghostly "Black Dog of Cratloe." Many believed that they had seen the apparition, which used often to accompany the D'Esterre's coach and the mail car. My mother and my brother Ralph Hugh Westropp, who travelled through the great floods of the Shannon on February 1st, 1869, told a very circumstantial tale of the dog.[27]

[23] So the late Capt. Ralph Westropp, from Mr. Drew.

[24] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236; cf. Gough, *Camden*, vol. iv., p. 366.

[25] So the MacDonnells and a driver named Russell. "Robin" lived in the early eighteenth century.

[26] So Mrs. Twigge.

[27] My mother in her diary notes,—"Drove home through several floods, the worst at Bunratty.... Saw the phantom dog at Cratloe."

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Griffin, of men starting seaward to reach its fairy shores, and never returning. 773

Another magic island was Kilstuitheen, or Kilstuiffen, in Liscannor Bay. On the southern shore, in 1839, there was said to have been an ecclesiastical city swallowed up by the earthquake that split Innis Fitae into the present three islands,[84] which suggests derivation from O'Conor's then recent version of the various Irish Annals. On the northern shore the tradition was fuller. Kilstuitheen sank when its chieftain lost its golden key in battle, nor will it be restored until the key is recovered from its hiding place, some say, under the ogham-inscribed gravestone of "Conan" on Mount Callan. (When that place was dug out only bones and rusted iron were found.)[85] The island, with its golden-roofed palaces, churches, and towers, may at times be seen shining far below the waves, but once in seven years it rises above them, and those who see it then are said to die before its next appearance. The fishermen [731] [763]

> "point how high the billows roll above lost Kilsafeen,
> Its palaces and towers of pride
> All buried in the rushing tide
> And deep-sea waters green."[86]

Comyn, in *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh* (1750), connects it with the raid of Crochaun, Dahlin, and Sal in the time of Finn and their defeat of Ruidin, Ceannir, and Stuithin. Legend near Lehinch places the battle at Bohercrochaun. A pretty legend in 1878 told how those rowing over the sunken island smell the flowers of its fields through the waters.[87]

[84] Annals of Ulster, Clonmacnoise, and the Four Masters; *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 304.

[85] *The Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, ser. ii., vol. i. (1872), pp. 269 *et seq.*

[86] *Monks of Kilcrea.*

[87] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., pp. 300-4, vol. ii., pp. 74, 99; *Handbook to Lisdoonvarna* (1896), p. 64; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxx., p. 289; *Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. iii., p. 197, where I have collected the materials at some length. Other sunken monasteries and churches are alleged at Monaster Letteragh, off the coast of Mayo, and the Cantillons' Church in Ballyheigue Bay in Kerry. I do not regard the story in the *Irish Penny Journal*, vol. i., p. 362, by J. Geraghty MacTeague, as anything but a work of fiction; it is very artificial,

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777 the hens from laying more; this is held at least near Tulla and Sixmilebridge, but seems dying out near the former place.

XIII. *Omens, Dreams, and Divination.*

787 *Omens.*—It is an unlucky sign to meet "a stranger woman with red hair," or a hare, or a fox, when setting out in the morning. A poem by Andrew MacCurtin, as already noted,[4] condoles with Father MacDonnell, a Franciscan living in Corcomroe, for the loss of his horse, and suggests that the *garran* [562] fell a victim to the evil eye or to the look of a red-haired woman. A sign much feared in north-east Clare is the flying of a bat into one's face, which forebodes sickness. A robin, a stray cat, or [763] a cricket coming into a house is lucky, but some regard the last as a sign of death,—though this belief is rare and perhaps imported, for in Dublin "the ever-faithful cricket" is also a death omen. If the right ear tingles some one is praising you, and if the left someone is abusing you. If the right hand itches you will lose money, and if the left you will receive it, providing you rub or scratch it on wood. Any one of these omens from itching is good after sunset, and rubbing the right hand on wood saves the situation or the money in either case. To get dirt on [777] one is most lucky,—"the dirtier the better." To stumble upstairs, and to be looked at by a cat after it has washed its face, are signs of approaching marriage.

Dreams.—It is most unlucky to dream of church or clergy, and, above all, of the sacraments. To dream of a cat foretells an enemy; of a dog, a friend; of crows or filth, riches and plenty; of silver, disappointment; and of dirty or stormy water, trouble. Cheap dream books have corrupted local belief so much that it is now almost impossible to separate the older dream lore.

Divination.—I have not found many methods of foretelling the future, but the following were of such common knowledge that I need cite no single authorities. On All Hallows Eve, I remember, before 1870, a blindfolded person would touch one of several saucers in which were respectively earth, water, salt, a bean, etc., symbolising death, emigration, luck, marriage, etc., in

[4] Vol. xxi., p. 196.

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825 776 enchanted human beings.[4] It gets more definite above Galway Bay, where the Kinealeys are of reputed seal descent. Some such belief may underlie the name Cumarra (or sea-hound) in the MacNamara family. I found more difficulty in getting fisher beliefs in recent years than in getting folklore from the country people. Much of what I heard in 1906 was probably of tourist origin, and, like the *merrow* at Killard,[5] not to be trusted as genuine belief.

Otter.—Beyond vague belief in an enormous "durracow"[6] (the king of the otters), which I heard of as a child on the Shannon Bank about some unnamed lake in east Clare, I am not aware of any folklore about this creature in the county. There was said to be a "remarkable" otter at Glenomera.

Cat.—The cat was much regarded by the early Irish, and holds honourable place in their ancient code of laws. It even appears in the illuminations of the *Book of Kells*. Numerous places in Clare bear its name, but local belief tends to consider the "cat" in these names as a weird monster. The "Cata" and "Faracat" of legend[7] were probably "dragons." The cat has supernatural knowledge. If a cat looks fixedly at a person without apparent reason it forebodes sickness or death, but if it does so to an unmarried person, after making its toilet, it foretells marriage.

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[4] So in Aed Baclamp from the *Book of Lismore*, (*Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 72), St. Brendan changes 50 seals into horses, which carry into the sea their riders, who, on reaching it, are, like their steeds, changed into seals.

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[5] Vol. xxi., p. 342. Mrs. Dorothea Townshend of Oxford calls my attention to the probability that this story was made up by Dr. Keightley (v. App. to his *Fairy Mythology*). In my original Ms. I expressed great doubt as to this story, having found no equivalent to it near Dunbeg or Kilkee, but this was unfortunately omitted in publication. The Miltown mermaid was probably one of the white seals occasionally seen on the coast.

[6] *i.e. Dobharchu*, water-hound. The Irish called the wolf *fael-chu* (wild hound) and *cu allaid*, and the marten *crann chu* (branch hound). The more common name for the wolf in Clare is *brugh*, as in Breaghva and Breffy, the name of several townlands. The other wolf name *Mac Tire* (son of the country), is attached to Knockaunvicteera hill near Lisdoonvarna (where it refers to the animal), and to Cahermactire, a fort near Inchiquin Hill; at the latter place it may refer to a person, as the name Mac Tire is found in various annals.

[7] Vol. xxi., pp. 477-9.

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Upper Bunratty, the fields being covered with them, but, when it broke up, the "troops" dispersed, and no bands were seen at any distance from the rendezvous. A rat was "heard talking with the Devil" in the grave of an unpopular person before 1875, but how the holders of this curious conversation were identified was never stated. I have met a belief in speaking rats in eastern Clare and among fishermen at Kilkee. 825 776

Hedgehog.—This animal is reputed to steal apples and suck cows and eggs, so that it is persecuted and called *grainoge* (little ugly thing).

Birds.—A pair of ravens roosted in a top window of the round tower of Iniscatha (Scattery) early in the last century. The birds were said to escort their young, when fully fledged, across the Shannon to Carrigfoile Castle in Kerry, and not to let them return to the island.[15] Scaldcrows (roystons) are considered unlucky, and much feared. The old Irish regarded them as incarnations of the war-goddess Bodbh.[16] Birds as omens have already been noted.[17] The bat is looked on as a sort of bird, and it is ominous of death for it to fly at one's face. The entry of a robin into a house is a death omen near Tulla, but elsewhere a sign of good fortune. Although swans are so plentiful that I have often seen more than forty together in Inchiquin and other lakes, the only folklore associated with them seems to be a tale of swan-maidens at Inchiquin. The hunting of the wren has been described in Section XIV.[18] [777] [763]

Fishes.—It was regarded as a custom among the fishermen of Kilrush and Scattery that no one should go fishing for three days after the arrival of the herring shoals, but, when the first day dawned, a crowd of boats was always discovered, and much quarrelling resulted.[19] As the shoals arrived, a mass used to be celebrated on the shore at Kilmurry, Ibrickan, to secure good 226 825

[15] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 546.

[16] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x.; *Revue Celtique*, vol. i.; Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 267.

[17] Vol. xxi., p. 190.

[18] *Ante*, pp. 206-7, and Plate IX.

[19] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare* (1808), pp. 228, 259.

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Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

776
787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

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776 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered everly superstitious.

476 ties of act, sentiment, and obligation which make up family
577 relationships.

That he is doing so becomes evident when we find that
602 the habitual, obligatorily performed acts toward extended relatives are similarly described, where the context is definitely not economic nor connected with agricultural labor. Thus in the townland where we examined agricultural coöperation there takes place the same lending of a boy or girl and the giving of a hand in aid at such festivals of social and family life as weddings, christenings, wakes, and funerals.

This aid is felt to be the same category. Thus one farmer speaking of another, his second cousin, could say:

> He is the best friend we ever had; we can make bold on him. When the children were little and our cow died on us, Johnny sent down a cow and calf worth twelve pounds to us and didn't want anything for it.

And in more general terms, another farmer could explain:

> Everybody's friends in the country here are very good to you. They lend you a horse with the hay or a boy going to the fair, or they send down to know if they can help when somebody dies with you.

476 Thus it is part of the "friendliness" for the relatives to
577 make up and serve the food at wakes and weddings, to
602 dig the grave for the dead, and to keen (wail) over the dead.
●764 The obligatory character and something of the reciprocities involved in such behavior are well expressed by one countryman who gave as his reason for going to a funeral (at a time when he was needed at home for farm work): "I have right to go (to the funeral of a second cousin); they always come over to this side."

476 Likewise, when in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister
577 took over the child, she was praised for doing the "friendly"
602 thing which she "had right" to do. In the very same terms a

6: Ó Súilleabháin B-4, 5 (no date) 1956 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Two Death Customs in Ireland

SEÁN Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN

DUBLIN

121 In this article, I wish to draw the attention of students of the cult of the dead to two customs associated with it which have been observed for many generations in the southwest of Ireland. So far as I know, neither of them has hitherto been described in detail in any scientific journal or other work.

1. Funeral Boundaries

764 The importance of *an teampoll dúchais*, the traditional family burial-ground, is shown by the many customs and superstitions relating to it which are still fairly common in rural communities in Ireland. How often have we heard or read of a strange funeral seen at night, which was composed of deceased relatives of some recently dead person who had died and had been buried far from his family graveyard; the dead concourse was taking the body home (often even across the Atlantic) to find rest with his deceased kith and kin? Or, of a decapitated or maimed corpse which had been buried in the proper graveyard; the missing head or other member, however, was carefully carried by a "dead funeral" at night and laid in the same grave as the body? Thus, every effort within reason was made to bury the dead in the family burial-ground. This might have been due either to (a) respect for the dead, (b) fear of evil results, if the duty was ignored, (c) the wish of the dying person to be buried with his ancestors, or (d) any of a long list of other reasons which might be adduced. Even within a far-flung parish, the distance which the corpse had to be carried might amount to twenty miles. The distance would naturally be greater when the person had died in a remote district or county. Thus, funerals often took days in such cases, and halts had to be made overnight. The hardship endured by the coffin-bearers, who in olden times [482] almost always carried the coffin on their shoulders, may well be imagined.

In Ireland, as in most European countries, in the days when coffins were borne on men's shoulders, and even still in certain parts of Ireland, certain resting-places for funerals were traditionally appointed along the route. These were often at crossroads, at ancient market-crosses, which may have been associated with boundaries, or at boundaries between lands, parishes, or counties. In olden times, the corpse was not allowed to touch the earth at these resting-places; the toes of the

boots of the bearers or else the type of barrow (of wood or straw) on which the coffin was borne, served to prevent the coffin from touching the soil. Again, in Ireland (at least, in parts of County Wexford), as in some European countries, wooden crosses or other memorials were left behind at such halts; in the Kilmore area of South Wexford, two crosses are carried with each funeral—one is left at the roadside at a halting-place, the other is set up on the grave. Cairns were often associated with funeral resting-places. It was customary in certain European countries for the bearers to partake of food and drink at resting-points; this, I am told, was the practice also in parts of Donegal and Waterford. Having rested for a while, fresh bearers took up the coffin, and the graveyard was ultimately reached. 764 [264]

I have already referred to the practice of laying down the coffin when a boundary-line was reached. My father, who died six years ago, at the age of 86, told me about a funeral-boundary custom in my native parish of Tuosist, in County Kerry, in the extreme southwest corner of Ireland. He was born in 1863 in the townland of Clogherane in Kerry, only a mile distant from the County Cork border. The high range of the Caha Mountains runs for over thirty miles through the peninsula of Béara, and separates at this point the Kerry parish of Tuosist from the Cork parish of Clanlawrence. During the Famine period of 1845–50 the men who lived at either side of the pass, Bealach Scairte, which led from one county (and parish) to the other, were employed, by way of a relief-scheme, in building a road across the pass. When the work ceased, the middle portion—about two miles in length—still remained undone. And so it remained until about twenty-five years ago, when, by the aid of State funds, the road now known as The Healy Pass was built across the mountain and the two ends were joined up. I often crossed by the old path from Kerry to Cork myself, before the new road was built; it was not so difficult in the early stage of the journey, but when the narrow defile (An Céim Cumhang) at the border was reached, one had to clamber as best one could over and between huge boulders which had fallen into the defile, some of them weighing forty or fifty tons, at a rough estimate. 764 491 [794]

Any funeral which now has occasion to pass from Cork to Kerry (or *vice versa*), can do so with the luxury of a hearse and motor-cars. But it was different when my father was a boy, and for long generations before that. He told me that one day, when he was on his way to the school at Glenmore—it was in the 1870's—he saw a large concourse of men, both young and old, passing along the old road at the foot of the mountain and through the fields. They were all carrying weapons or implements of some kind—some had hay-forks, he said, others had scythes, others hatchets, still others heavy sticks. He asked later on where they were going, and was told that they were going to meet a funeral, which was coming into Kerry from Cork, at the boundary-line. He told me that he knew well the Kerryman, who was leader of the large group; I knew him too, as he lived to a great age, and could speak no English. His name was Conchobhar Uaithne Ó Súilleabháin, and he lived at Shinnagh in the parish of Tuosist. My father told me that he heard later from some of those that were present at the boundary-line, that when the Corkmen appeared at the border, carrying the corpse tortuously on their shoulders, Conchobhar stepped in front of the bearers and stood with his stick raised on the large flat stone which marked the border at this point. The stone, by the way, is still known as Leac na gCorp (The Stone of the Corpses), and it is in the middle of the hollow which, avoiding the defile, was used by funerals, or by cattle 764 578 [191]

764 578 and sheep and horses being driven across to fairs at either side. The hollow is still named Eisc na gCorp (The Hollow of the Corpses), but travellers over the new road, which by-passed the hollow, cannot see it except they are told about it and search for it. To get back to my father's story: the Kerrymen, a hundred or more strong, had lined the boundary-line with their weapons ready for action and, as the Corkmen approached the flat stone, the Kerry leader ordered them to lay down the coffin on it.

"*Leagaidh síos annsan anois í! Ná téighidh a thuille!*"[1] he ordered, indicating the stone with his stick.

The Corkmen obeyed the order, and the Kerrymen then took the coffin on their shoulders and bore it down the mountainside into their own territory and along the six miles of road to the graveyard at Kilmackillogue. No fighting took place at the border-line on that day. But it was not always so on previous occasions. I heard the old people of the parish say that fights took place in former years when funerals crossed the boundary at Leac na gCorp, and that some of those engaged had been killed.

I know of three other boundary-lines where similar precautions were taken against those who carried the coffin to the border-line forcing their way across, while still carrying the remains. The first was at Glaise'n Fhineáin, a stream some miles to the west of Leac na gCorp, in the Béara peninsula, whose waters separate the counties of Cork and Kerry. The second was at Barrlinn, an old mountain road between counties Cork and Kerry, which ran southwards from Kilgarvan in the latter county to Bantry in the former; a cairn lies just beside the boundary-line where funerals halted and bearers were exchanged; fights are said to have taken place here in former times when funerals crossed the border. These two boundary-lines, as well as that described in more detail at Leac na gCorp, are all fairly close together, and all three are at the dividing-lines of parishes as well as counties. I have been told of still another boundary-line where fights took place on funeral days. This is the mountain pass known as Mullach Bhéal in the Dingle peninsula in Kerry, over which funerals passed in former times (before the Connor Hill road was built). These funerals were either on their way westwards from the parish of Clochán to some graveyard in the parishes to the west, or *vice versa*. Old people in that area tell of coffins even having been broken at this point during the attempt to force the boundary-line, and a large cairn marks the spot. Even when this old route was by-passed by the building of the Connor Hill road, and funerals followed the new route, the men from either side who assembled at the boundary insisted that the coffin be handed over to them at that point, and they carried it into their own parish. [493] When carts replaced shoulder-bearers at a later date, the coffin had to be transferred from the cart which had carried it to the border to one from the other parish.

The reason given in more recent times for the insistence on the change of bearers being made at the border was that the men of the second parish (to which the funeral was going) did not wish it to be said by the men of the first parish that their assistance was needed to carry the coffin further; they were strong enough to bear the coffin into and through their own parish without any help from outsiders. This reason is hardly the main one, however, and is likely to have been put forward only when the original reason had been forgotten.

[1] "Lay it down there now! Don't go any further!"

In Tuosist the reason given to me by my father and some other old people was that ill-luck would fall upon Kerry and especially on the parish of Tuosist, if the Corkmen succeeded in forcing the coffin across Leac na gCorp and laid it down on Kerry soil. Sickness, bad crops, and misfortunes of many kinds would follow the corpse, if it were laid beyond the boundary-stone. This is undoubtedly the original reason for the defence of the border on funeral days. A corpse has in many lands for long been regarded as having evil magical power (known scientifically as *orenda* or *mana*) of an impersonal kind latent in itself. In Ireland, for example, fishermen regarded it as unlucky to take the corpse of a drowned person into a boat. Also, *an féar gorta* ("the hungry grass"), which grew wherever a corpse touched the earth, had the power of causing all those who walked over the spot to be stricken with abnormal hunger. Many other instances of the evil power of a corpse might be cited. Just two hundred years ago, Morty Óg O'Sullivan, a native chieftain of Béara in West Cork, who had fought against the British both in Ireland and in many European countries as a member of the "Wild Geese", was slain outside his own house near Eyeries in Béara. The British took his body to a warship at Bere Island and dragged it through the sea in the wake of the ship about sixty miles to Cork. A poet who described this happening wrote the couplet:

764 578 778

[539]

Ní raibh aon rath ar an uisce ó Chorcaigh go Béara
Ó tairngeadh tríd an bradán gléigeal.[1]

No fish were said to have since been caught in the sea-route through which the corpse was dragged.

In Sweden, Miss Louise Hagberg tells us, if a corpse were carried over cultivated ground or over lakes, they became thereby unfruitful, and crop-growing fields lost their vegetation. She also says that during the Middle Ages those persons over whose lands a corpse was carried unlawfully had the right to compensation; in Västergötland anybody who carried a corpse across the land of another, without the permission of the owner, rendered himself liable to a prescribed fine.

171

Thus, the funeral-boundary customs in the Cork-Kerry area, which have died out only in comparatively recent times, seem to fit into the wider pattern of custom and superstition devised to give protection against the magical evil power associated with corpses.

2. Wearing Clothes for the Dead

In the year 1918 or so, an uncle of mine died in the townland of Fehanagh, in the parish of Tuosist, in southwest Kerry. This is my native parish. Jerry Sullivan was my uncle's name; he died at the age of sixty-four. I was fifteen years old at the time, and was spending some weeks of my summer holidays at my uncle's when he became ill and died. I was allowed to remain in the house during the illness, wake, and funeral.

764 294 292

It is still the immemorial custom in that parish to get a suit of clothes specially made by a local tailor when a person dies. The suit is not worn by the corpse in the coffin. Still, it is intended

[1] There has been no luck on the water from Cork to Béara
Since the gleaming salmon was dragged through it.

764 294 292 specifically for the dead person; I will describe in a moment the use to which it is put. Even though the dead person had a new suit of clothes at the time of his death, which he had never worn, but which he had ordered and got made for himself, this suit will not serve the purpose I mention, after his death. Still another new suit must be ordered immediately the person dies, and must be ready for wear on the Sunday following his death. There are certain rules which are *de rigeur* as far as the suit is concerned: (a) it must not be made to measure—the tailor would know most of the people of the parish and would have made clothes for many of them from time to time; when, therefore, a suit is ordered by the relatives of the man who has died, the tailor knows fairly well what the measurements of the deceased were, and makes the suit accordingly; (b) the material used in making the suit must be of good quality—otherwise the dead man will not be properly clad in the next world; (c) the suit must be complete in every detail; (d) it must not be tried on to see if it fits. Stories about events which followed a disregard for these rules will be referred to later.

764 292 When the clothes for my deceased uncle reached the house from the tailor on the Saturday evening after the burial, an interesting ritual was carried out, according to local custom. I remember the evening quite well; it was a very fine summer, and the mountains all around the valley were bathed by the rays of the setting sun. A neighbouring woman, named Mrs. Healy, who lived next door, came to the house of my late uncle at dusk, and asked his wife, children, and myself, to leave. We went some distance away from the house into a field. I heard afterwards from my aunt and from her children that Mrs. Healy then carried out the following rites: She was alone in the house, as I have said, and she first laid out the clothes, garment by garment, on the back of a kitchen chair, which was in the middle of the floor; the underclothes were on top of the pile of clothes, then came the shirt, then the trousers, then the waistcoat, then the coat, then the socks and shoes, and finally the hat and walking-stick underneath. Having thus arranged them, she then called on my deceased uncle three times by name, using the following words: "Here are your clothes, Jerry Sullivan! Come for them, and may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this!" She then sat down by the fire for short time. She then arose, took the chair and the garments to the threshold of the kitchen, leading to the yard, and repeated the same call and words three times. Having sat at the fireside again for a while, she took the chair and clothes out into the yard, again called three times on the dead man, and returned to the house alone, closing the door behind her. Having allowed some little time to elapse, she went out into the yard, brought the chair and clothes into the kitchen, and put them as they were, in the room at the bottom of the kitchen until next morning.

When she had finished her task, which occupied about a half-hour, as far as I can remember, she called us back to the house, and we all had our evening meal, as if nothing unusual had happened.

Early next morning, at the dawn of day, before anyone else in the house was up, my cousin, the dead man's son, arose, and Mrs. Healy again arrived to complete her task. My cousin went out through the kitchen door, turned round, and knelt on the threshold. Mrs. Healy then placed the suit, still arranged on the chair, inside the open door. My cousin then asked her for each garment in turn, in the name of the dead person, and she handed them to him as he asked for them.

He later put on the suit for Mass, and wore it at the Divine Service and afterwards, until he returned home. Although there was a disparity of over thirty years in the ages of my cousin and that of his father, the resemblance caused by the unusual dress was striking. 764 292

This custom of wearing clothes for the dead is still quite strong in Tuosist. It is also practised either fully, or in varying degrees of decadence, in some of the surrounding parishes, as well as in the south-western part of the adjoining county of Cork. In the Dingle peninsula, further north, in West Kerry, the custom now is to bring a suit of clothes for the dead person in a parcel to Mass on the three prescribed Sundays. A suit of clothes which had already belonged to the deceased suffices for the fulfilment of the practice in some districts in the southwest of Ireland, where, as far as can be judged by the vigour of its survival, the custom had its stronghold. It is difficult to say whether the accounts of the wearing of clothes for the dead in Counties Cavan and Wexford, which I have been given, point to a country-wide distribution in olden times or to the practice having taken hold in these two widely separated counties through some other cause.

The elaborate ceremony carried out by Mrs. Healy after the death of my uncle, which I have described above, was confined to the first Saturday evening and Sunday morning. My cousin took off the suit on his return from Mass on that day, and wore it at Mass again on the two succeeding Sundays, without any preliminary ceremony. Even when a neighbour wears the clothes instead of some member of the household, he must return them to the house on each of the first two Sundays; he may retain them altogether after the third Sunday, if the immediate relatives so arrange. Otherwise they are given to some poor person to wear in the normal way. A neighbour is called upon to wear the clothes only when there is no relative of the deceased who can fulfil the custom, e.g., when the sons of the dead man have emigrated or are too young for the purpose. [602] [621]

Almost everybody in the parish of Tuosist, where, as I have said, the practice of wearing clothes for the dead at Mass on three consecutive Sundays after the interment is still faithfully carried out, is a Catholic, and a large congregation attends Mass every Sunday. After Mass, it is customary for the people to spend some time chatting near the church when Mass is over. They all notice that a certain young man from the parish, as the case may be, is dressed like an old man on three particular Sundays, but, knowing well that he is fulfilling the age-old custom referred to, they pass no comment on it. While the custom of wearing the clothes for adults is still strong in the parish, the Saturday evening and Sunday morning rituals have, however, now died out.

It is evident from the words used by Mrs. Healy in the Saturday evening ritual ("may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this") that the traditional and original intention of the making of a special suit of clothes in this manner was to provide the dead person with raiment in the afterworld. That the dead were believed to have some kind of continuing existence after passing from this life is also indicated by, among other things, the variety of goods which were buried in coffins with the dead: in Ireland, we have references to such things as food, pipes, tobacco, defensive weapons, tools or implements, watches and other jewellery, as well as money, being placed in coffins in former times. The practice was well-known in other countries also. Prior to the introduction of the special cerements for the bodies of the dead, which have come to be known in Catholic lands as habits, it was customary to fit out the dead for burial in their best clothes. Young unmarried girls were often dressed as brides in Northern Europe, 764 775 292

764 perhaps to indicate that they had become the spouses of Death itself. It is probable, therefore, that
775 the Irish practice of providing, as well as the habit, a normal type of new suit for the dead, is but
292 an extension of the burial of clothes with the corpse itself. The fact that it is pagan in its origin, yet is still carried out by devout Catholics in a parish like Tuosist, who wear the clothes for the dead at Mass on three Sundays after the death has taken place, shows both the tenacity of pre-Christian ideas concerning the afterworld and the easy way in which Pagan ideas and practices were in this, as in many other cases, clothed over with Christian raiment. Indeed, it is possible that the Church itself, may have been instrumental in getting the Catholics under their care to wear the clothes to Mass for a certain number of Sundays with the intention of reminding the congregation of the person who had died and of getting them to pray for his soul.

764 Stories about the displeasure and even the sufferings of the dead whenever the custom of wear-
292 ing special clothes for them was not properly carried out are legion in the areas where the practice was known. I have already mentioned some of the traditional rules which had to be observed in the making and the wearing of the suit. Disregard of any or all of these was believed to give offence to the dead, and the reaction of the deceased to such indifference or carelessness on the part of the living relatives forms the basis of most of the stories. A few examples will illustrate their trend.

764 A man whom I knew well died in Tuosist about thirty years ago. A cousin of his was asked to
787 wear the clothes for the dead man on the three Sundays after his burial, and he agreed to do so.
292 During the week after the first Sunday (on which day the suit was first worn to Mass), a friend of mine, a shoemaker in the district, told me that he had a very vivid dream. He dreamt that he was making his way home along a lonely by-road late at night, and at a certain place, where the dead man had often stacked turf, he saw the dead man sitting with his back to the fence at the roadside. The moon shone down on his face and the shoemaker had no difficulty in recognising him in the dream. Plucking up courage, he saluted the dead man.

"Good night, Dan," said the shoemaker.

"Good night, Tim," was the reply.

"How are you?" asked the shoemaker, knowing that he was dead.

"I'm all right, except for one thing," said the dead man. "They gave me a fine suit and a fine shirt and a fine hat"—and he indicated each garment in turn—"but look at the boots they gave me!" And he pointed at the tattered boots on his feet.

"I'll attend to that, Dan," said the shoemaker, and he bade the other good night and made his way home, very much frightened.

Next morning he awoke with vivid recollections of the strange dream he had had during the night. It was Sunday morning, so he knew that the dead man's cousin would be wearing the clothes for the deceased at Mass for the second time that day. The church was four miles from his home, and having walked the mountainous road to Mass, he joined the congregation at the cross-roads afterwards. Without saying anything to anybody concerning his dream, he kept on the look-out for the dead man's cousin, and when he saw him, the shoemaker went over to join the group of men who were chatting with him. The shoemaker quietly concentrated his attention on the boots which the cousin was wearing, and it did not take long to establish that they

were not new, but had, in fact, been made by the shoemaker himself for the dead man, who had worn them only once before his death. The dead man's wife had apparently thought that it was not necessary to order a new pair of boots to be made. The shoemaker had, however, promised the dead man to have the matter set right, so he quietly sent a message to the dead man's wife next day about his dream. She immediately ordered a new pair of shoes to be procured, and these were worn at Mass, along with the rest of the outfit, until the traditional rule had been fully observed. 764 787 292

A friend of mine in the parish of Clanlawrence in County Cork told me the following story to illustrate how carefully the details of the practice must be observed. A woman in that parish had a son who died. She got a new suit made for him, to be worn at Mass on the three Sundays after his burial, and on the Saturday evening prior to the first Sunday she laid the suit (as Mrs. Healy had done when my uncle had died) on the back of a chair in the kitchen, sprinkled it with holy water, and called on the dead son to come for them. Having next placed them at the threshold of the kitchen, she finally left them for a short while in the yard, and sat by the fire for a moment, presumably to allow the dead son to come for the suit. Suddenly she heard something being thrown against the door and, on investigating, she found that it was the new waistcoat. She then remembered that she had deliberately refrained from putting her dead son's watch in the pocket, intending to keep it as a memento. Needless to say, she immediately put the watch in the waistcoat pocket and replaced the garment on the chair in the yard. There was no further disturbance.[1] 764 294 293

[1] For general references to the custom mentioned in 1, see: När Döden Gästar, Louise Hagberg, Stockholm, 1937, pp. 331–379. Also, Über Krankheit, Tod und Jenseitsvorstellungen in Irland, Hans Hartmann, Halle, 1942, pp. 11–115; and Der Totenkult in Irland, by the same author, Heidelberg, 1952, pp. 15–17, 183. [113]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Relative age thus makes a difference in status 561
in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values, and lastly, it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland. One finds it wherever one meets the countrymen together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of the broad age groups.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellows, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons—those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great; in the community at large it is little less so. A [574]
farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat, his sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake- [764]
house to honour the dead, the places by the fire go to the old adult 'men' and 'women'; the 'boys and girls' must group themselves behind. They

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

In the treatment of death, one can see the social 764 ●
system of rural Ireland in the full perspective of its 183
deep-rooted strength. In the flashes of poetic genius 602
which seem so prone to trip from an Irish tongue, 776
death acquires a deeper and more poignant meaning than many another racial tongue could give it. And so it is in the mundane, prosaic world of social life. The most important secular ceremony of rural life is the wake and funeral. In the crowds that come to the wake-house to pay their respects to the dead and condole with the living; in the long lines of marching figures, traps, jaunting cars and motor-cars that make a slow procession over the open roads from wake-house to church and from church to graveside, the observer glimpses an epitome of rural life in which all its values are mingled.

Kinship bonds are at their strongest. Traditional custom enforces upon the kindred important roles in laying out the dead, in carrying the coffin, in digging the grave, in keening him, in reciting funeral laments that are the last survivals of bardic elegies, in preparing entertainment for all comers, in which the dead man's survivors proudly affirm their place and his in the life of the community.

In all this the fairy-lore takes part. The banshee's cry is merely the funeral keen issued from a fairy voice. It signalizes death in the symbolic world just as the keen of the living signalizes living personal loss. It is the lament over common loss in a common cause, for relatives of the dead must greet each other with the keen at the wake-house.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

000 other with the keen at the wake-house.

764 183 181 776 The goods of household and farm suffer incorporation into emotional symbolism once more; precautions must be taken to protect them and prevent their going beyond with the lost one. Time and place of death are clothed with a hundred supernatural associations.

The reciprocities which make up friendship and give status in the community get full play. Every man, in death, can command a multitude. To stay away, to make no recognition of the day, is to give deadly affront. Every 'right Irishman' turns and walks, if only a few steps, along with the procession. In towns, all the blinds upon the street are drawn and shop-fronts are boarded, in recognition. In the Gaelic tongue, indeed, one and the same word does service for both funeral and multitude. And in the fairy-lore "there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind". Many a countryman, steeped in the old lore, sees in a whirlwind or puff of mist a *socraid sidhe* or fairy-funeral.

He knows thereby that somewhere the chief expression of traditional social life is calling the countrymen together through a whole countryside for a re-enactment, both solemn and gay, of their sentiments about their fellows and about their view of life and death and destiny.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 instance the stranger must not be allowed to leave the house that way lest he take the luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands it was the custom to carry out the corpse through [764] the back door.

The deal door has not long since replaced, in remote spots, the wickerwork frame, lined with straw, or the hanging straw mat, and I have been told of houses where a creel offered the only protection. There may be only one small window, towards the hearth-end, for the open door provides light. [281] A dried sheepskin was a substitute for glass, and I have come across windows where a sheet of glass was sealed with clay without any frame. Where the hole was open, a handful of hay or a wicker shutter closed it at nights. These conditions help us to understand why the window or windows, even now, tend to be restricted to the side sheltered from the prevailing winds.

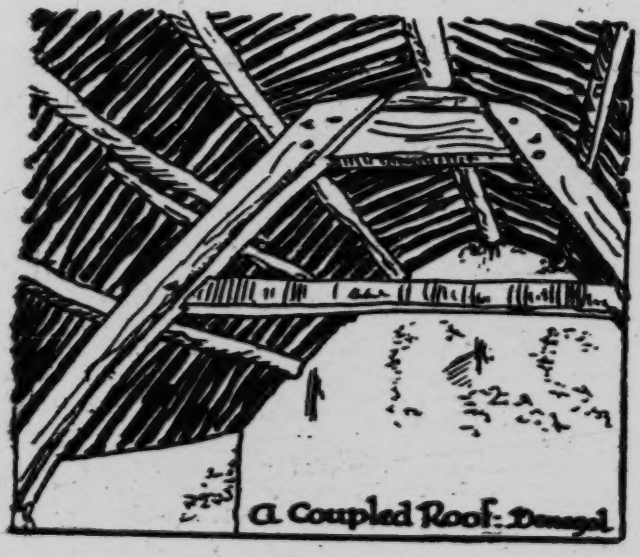

Fig. 20.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The
[778] same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[797] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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able part in the ceremonies of megalithic burial: we remember the significance attached to hazel nuts in the Hallowe'en games of divination (Chapter 17). 764 824

The ancient raths or forths, earthen enclosures around old homesteads, are also favourite haunts of fairies, and many are the tales of mysterious happenings in their neighbourhood at night, and of signs of habitation and sweet music issuing from them. Protection from fairies is believed to be obtained by possession of a black-hafted knife, while oatmeal or oat-cakes are also specifics against their malign influence. From fairies as from witches the supreme hour of peril to mortals is at the eves of Beltane, Midsummer and All Hallows. Cattle afflicted with disease were believed to be "elf-shot"—the belief is not entirely dead—and flint arrowheads were produced as proof of the attack. The cure was to give the affected animal a drink of the water in which the arrow had been placed. Among other archæological relics the polished stone axes of the Neolithic and Bronze ages are known as thunderbolts and are accredited with healing powers, and the small spinning-whorls are termed fairy mill-stones. As Arthur Mitchell writes of Scotland: "It is believed that stone celts assist the birth of children; that they increase the milk of cows; that they cure the diseases of the eye; that they protect the houses in which they are kept from lightning; and that they have many other such marvellous virtues. It is believed that, as they have a sort of supernatural origin, they may reasonably be supposed to have supernatural powers." 776 789 829 778

When food is taken out of doors it is a common belief that some must be left behind for the fairies, otherwise the dreaded "hungry grass" will grow; and the countryman will often spill a portion of his drink as a perhaps unconscious libation to the wee folk. Their activities are peculiarly dangerous to cattle and to butter-making. Among the charms designed to secure a good supply of butter in the churn we find the use of a horse-shoe, of a rusty nail from a coffin or the hand of a corpse, of rowan branches, salt, a live turf, or a cross made of veronica leaves. 776 789 [751]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

776 789 [777] veronica leaves. In the North it is considered unlucky for a person to enter a house where churning is taking place without "giving a brash," that is lending a hand at the churn-staff. In the words of a countryman in the west, "Queer things do happen to butter." Fairy tales are full of cattle and cattle-stealing: so are the epic tales. Writers of last century tell of cows that might be seen "with rags about their horns as a charm against the gentry," or gentle-folk, a name often applied to the fairies.

824 This brings us to the fairy or gentry thorns, skeaghs, or lone bushes, that is the solitary whitethorn trees which are regarded with dread. These trees, which must be counted by the thousand, are said "never to have been planted but to have grown of their own accord." They may be found on ancient monuments or alongside holy wells but the great majority are scattered through the fields, and it is worthy of notice that the cult is at least as strong in the Protestant north-east as in other parts of the country. A venerable thorn, pink-flowering, stands under my window as I write and casts its shadow into the Senate Room of the University. But no one will remove it or even lop its branches, and the story goes that when the buildings were being erected, the plans had to be changed in order that the thorn should not be interfered with. If a lone tree surrounded by half a dozen scientific departments has claimed such respect it can be imagined in what awe the country thorns are held! See Tailpiece.

It has recently been suggested that the veneration of thorn trees was a Belgic custom introduced to Ireland some 2,000 years ago, but it seems more likely that as with sacred stones and wells we should look even further away in time and space to Mediterranean origins and regard the cult of trees as part of the nature worship connected with man's first use of the Irish soil. Certain thorns dedicated to Irish saints figure also in ceremonies of burial: when funerals pass by they halt and [764] stones are placed beside the thorn until they have become cairns. Wayside cairns, in the form of memorial monuments,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Wayside cairns in the form of memorial monuments 824
line the roads to the graveyards of Aran. On thorns at cross roads it is the custom in Co. Wexford to hang small crosses, [211] made of coffin wood, as the funeral procession passes by. [764]

We cannot deal at any length with the superstitious practices which cling so tenaciously to death and burial: 764 they recall the customs of many other regions, such as Brittany, where the old megalithic cult was strong and seems to have lived on in obsessions about death and accompanying notions of re-birth. The anxiety to be buried with relatives reminds us of the strength of the blood-tie, and "bestows even on death a feeling of social interest." It is an Irish belief that the dead live on in the graveyard, and that the last person buried acts as servant to the others, a belief which not long ago led to disputes as to which of two bodies to be buried should be interred first. There are certain old graveyards where women only are said to be buried, and no living woman will enter them. On Innishmurray there are separate graveyards for men and women. [766] Unbaptised infants were generally interred in special burial grounds, some of which appear to be prehistoric cairns. There is no need to add to the many accounts that have been written of the keening of the dead and of wakes. In connexion with wakes we need only refer to the tricks, pastimes and games which were their accompaniment. The dramatic games were known under such titles as "The Walls of Troy," "Short Castle," "Building the Ship," "Turning the Spit," "Selling the Pig," "Building the Fort," "The Horse Fair," "The Mock Marriage" and "Shuffle the Brogue." While some seem to have been for amusement only, in others it is difficult not to see sex-symbolism and fertility-rites. In recent times the wake-games [786] have often degenerated into licence and drinking. Maria Edgeworth tells us that "more matches were made at wakes than at weddings."

When going to a funeral it was customary, in parts of the west until the beginning of the present century, to carry some salt in the pocket in order to avert evil influences. Arensberg quotes the belief that "there is never a funeral but the other

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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● 764 people are at it, too, walking along behind." In the Aran Islands, as we saw in Chapter 7, the corpse was carried out through the back door, and the front doors of all houses were closed as the funeral passed by. In Co. Mayo the coffin was carried three times round the church, sunwise, and pipes [782] filled with tobacco were left, presumably as offerings, on the grave. To prevent the spirit returning to the house of the living, it used to be thought necessary to apply a "lick" of whitewash around the door and window openings. The association of white stones and white shells with graves is [822] probably another prehistoric survival. Many of the megalithic cairns were covered with white quartz stones. It often happens that old superstitions and customs survive under the guise of children's games, and we shall have something to say about toys and games in the following chapter.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

141 (D). *Proportional Measurements.*—The proportional measurements are of some interest, as differing, in some respects, not only from those of the Aran Islanders, but also from the accepted canons, and from the proportions obtained by Quetelet, Gould, and others, in their investigations on several European peoples. The stature is taken as equaling 100.

FACE.

Here, as was observed to be the case last year, the proportion borne by the face to the height is very great, the total face-length being to the stature as 7·48 to 100 (the canon being 6·60).

Nose.—This is not very constant in its relations to the body-height, varying between 2·47 and 3·72, and giving an average of 3·30, nearly exactly that of the French canon. It may be stated that the proportion is less than three in only five instances, and out of the forty measured, one only is below 2·80.

UPPER LIMB.

Span.—This nearly corresponds with the average Irish proportion. In every case it is greater than the stature, but in one instance is very nearly equal to it. The average proportion is 104·95, thus testifying to the length of limb. The extremes were 100·72 and 109·14. The mean span of the Aran series was 101·94, and that of Gould's series of 827 Irish soldiers 104·6.

Hand.—This ranges between 10·76 and 12·08, but as a rule is slightly below the French canon of 11·50, the average being 11·33.

Forearm.—This section of the upper limb is subject to considerable variation. On the whole it is long, but not to so great a degree as in the case of the Aran Islanders, where it was 15·18, while here it is 15·03; this, with the greater proportion of the span to the stature, is probably due to the burlier build of the Bofin men.

(E). *Crania.*—In addition to the observations made on the living 141 subject, the measurements of a series of crania, the first ever put on 764 record from this island,[1] were obtained at St. Colman's Church, in Knock townland. As they could not be removed at the time of my 172 first visit, I was forced to measure them on the spot, and, as it turned out afterwards, it was well that this precaution had been taken, as, on revisiting the place some time after, in the hope of being able to obtain some of them, I found that they had all disappeared, having in the meantime been removed to some place of concealment.

[1] Since this was written Professor A. C. Haddon has read before the Academy a Paper on some crania obtained by him from Inishbofin: *antea*, p. 311.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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The specimens, about twenty in number, were piled in a heap in a small recess near the east window, and were all in a very bad state of preservation, being much weathered from long exposure, in addition to which they had suffered such extensive mutilations that only eleven, all calvaria, were in a suitable condition to allow of measurement; the others were merely shattered fragments of the cranial bones, presenting no feature of interest except their thinness. 141 764 172

The following description of those examined is extracted from the entries made in my note-book at the time. 141

The specimens examined are very uniform in their characters, which are, in the main, as follows:— 172

Norma verticalis.—The cranial outline is a short but very even oval, sometimes showing an approach to the quadrate in form, as the frontal region is flattened, and the frontal and parietal eminences are well-marked.

Norma lateralis.—The profile rises almost perpendicularly to the culmination of the frontal eminences, as the glabella and superciliary ridges project very slightly, and the frontal sinuses are not large. The upper part of the curve sweeps evenly backwards, and dips down rather suddenly below the lambda, in some cases projecting again below.

Norma facialis.—The forehead is seen to be broad, but not of any great height, and the superior borders of the orbits are nearly level or but slightly curved.

The muscular markings, as the inion superior curved line, and mastoids, are in four cases (Nos. 1, 4, 6, and 11) strong; in all the others they are very slight.

The sutures are rather complex, and by the very considerable amount of obliteration they have undergone, would seem to have belonged to persons of rather advanced age.

Pterion.—In every instance this is of the H type, but in two cases it contains small epactals.

Indices.—The crania are, without exception, mesaticephalic, having a mean cephalic index of 77, with extremes of 75·5 and 79·2. The vertical index can only be obtained in three cases, owing to the extremely shattered state of the specimens. All are tapeino-cephalic, the figures being 70·5, 75·3, and 71·9. The auriculo-vertical height is obtainable only on the same crania as the basi-bregmatic.

Curves.—The longitudinal curves, measurable in five instances, in three of which the frontal arc exceeded the parietal, and, in all, it is greater than the occipital. The parietal arc exceeds the occipital in four cases, and is less than it in one.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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V

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen
582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully
844 watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if
763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their
● 764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great
[762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to
[178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin
[482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women
764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own
533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *e* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachin follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'" 764● 533

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the gravestones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones. 764 324

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home. 464 167 [357]

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan. 262 [251]

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport. [437]

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with 272

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

58 not, like an Inishbofin man, consider himself disgraced, nor is he inconsolable.

Engaged couples or newly married people often come in for an amount of attention from the children of the neighbourhood, which, however flattering it may be, is decidedly embarrassing; they are followed about and cheered whenever they appear together. Weddings
585 are occasions of family festivities, and are usually followed by a dance.
533 "Straw-boys" go round to the house on these occasions and take part in the dancing. They are disguised in tall conical-shaped straw
292 masks, adorned with strips of red and green cloth, white shirts decorated with coloured ribbons, and white or red petticoats. The band is headed by a captain and a mate, who enter the house first and declare that they are shipwrecked sailors, and that they have come to dance at the wedding; the captain then dances with the bride, the mate with the bridesmaid, and the rest of the band with the other girls. It is usual to treat the straw-boys to drink, but they often refuse it, and never demand money, or indulge in any rowdy conduct.

591 The young couple usually set up house on their own account, except in the case of the youngest son, who inherits his parents' house and property, in which case the bride goes to live with her people-in-law.

763 When a person is dying, windows and doors are thrown open, and the clock (if there be one) stopped; it is considered unlucky or im-
777 proper for any of those in the house to cry until after the death has actually occured.

764 Wakes are still held in this district, and many of the old observances and games are kept up; but owing to the discouragement of these by the clergy, the people show a great reluctance to give any information on the matter. A good deal of drinking usually takes place on these occasions.

The funeral customs have undergone some change during the past thirty years, but much still remains that is worthy of notice. A grave is not usually dug until the coffin reaches the graveyard, if begun before hand it is never dug on a Monday, or commenced at least, but a start is made, if necessity compels, by raising a few sods on Sunday. It is believed to be unlucky to bury a corpse on New Year's Day, an act
[777] which is thought to bring misfortune to the whole neighbourhood.

The coffin is usually taken out the back door of the house, and conveyed to the cemetery by the longest route. At the graveyard the *caoine* is raised by the women immediately after the religious ceremony

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

is concluded. The burial grounds are kept much better than in many other parts of the West; and on Inishkea, as well as in the Mullet, it it is customary to decorate the graves with large white pebbles, and to place at the head a neatly made wooden cross. A curious custom exists, some instances of which were observed at Tarmoncarra, of placing tobacco pipes on the graves; these are the pipes which were left unused after the wake. What the reason is for so placing them could not be ascertained, but it is considered extremely unlucky to remove them. 764 [777]

Unbaptised infants are interred in separate burying grounds by themselves, several of which are in the district. 766

It is now no longer customary for the people of the Mullet to bury their dead in Inisglora, the last instance of this having occured over thirty years ago. Formerly many families used regularly to make use of this island as a cemetery, always taking a body over from a point of the mainland opposite, which was stated by tradition to have once been connected with the main, but to have got separated afterwards by a channel which has gradually widened. 173 764

Maxwell,[1] writing in 1832, says—"There are no people on earth more punctilious in the interment of their dead than the peasantry of this remote district. A strange and unaccountable custom exists of burying different families resident on the main in island cemeteries, and great difficulty and often great danger attends the conveyance of a corpse to its insulated resting place. No inducement will make these wild people inter a body apart from the tomb of its fathers, and, if a boat will live, the corpse will be transported to the family tomb. At times the weather renders this impracticable, but the deceased is kept for many days unburied in the hope that the storm may subside; and only when frail mortality evinces unequivocal tokens of decay will the relatives consent to unite its dust with the ashes of a stranger." 764

A considerable number of migratory labourers leave this district annually to do harvesting work in England, on the proceeds of which work they in part support themselves during the winter. The number doing thus has decreased somewhat of late years. 167

There is not much to be said about the everyday mode of life. The men fish and attend to their holdings; the women manage household affairs and assist at field work in times of pressure. The people are early risers in the summer months, and, as a rule, retire to bed early, few lights being seen in the hamlets after nine or ten p.m. 512

[1] Maxwell, W. H., "Wild sports of the West," chap. XIX.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied 342
"twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the
fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the [763]
west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the [777]
luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was always carried out to the graveyard through the back door [764]
and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the [354]
room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the [231]
flagged passage between the doors served as a path for livestock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh, [777]
in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands*.
[3] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a late Neolithic burial cairn at Lyles Hill near Belfast I found 172
tens of thousands of potsherds which had been collected from domestic refuse and thrown into the cairn during the course of its erection.[1] The broken plates which may be seen exposed on the graves in some old burial-grounds in Co. Mayo are [764] probably placed there in continuation of ancient practice. The breaking of pots is one of the elements in Hallowe'en pranks— [769] one might almost say rites—and again we notice the association with the dead, for All-Hallows is the time when the dead are believed to return to their homes.

It would appear that by breaking a pot you broke its spirit; 772
and by transference the power of the dead to do harm. Readers 775
will recall the significant lines from *Hamlet*, referring to the suicide of Ophelia: 'Her death was doubtful . . . for charitable prayers, shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.'[2] In some places in south-west England potsherds figure in the 'lent crocking' rites at Easter: like Easter eggs they are symbols of fertility. The association of fertility and decay, of life and death, comedy and tragedy, is clearly displayed in the wake games which are described in Chapter XX. This association, we note in passing, is ever-present in the mind of the Irish countryman, and the juxtaposition gives dramatic quality to the work of many Anglo-Irish playwrights.

This is not the place to enlarge on the technology of early 323
pot-making, but it may be observed that the designs, fabric 172
and finish of the Neolithic family of pottery in Ireland were far superior to those of succeeding periods: indeed it was not until wheel-made pots found local markets in the medieval towns that technically superior vessels were made in this country. In late prehistoric and early historic times the wealthy
were able to import fine wares in small quantities from the 323
continent, but the peasant homes over most of Ireland apparent- 415
ly did without pottery—the Gaelic word for potter is a loan-word—and vessels of wood, metal or leather did duty for the now universal imported 'delph'. The Dutchman, Gerard Boate, writing in 1645, said that 'the use of earthen vessels hath been very rare among them, and to the most part unknown even

[1] E. E. Evans, *Lyles Hill: a late Neolithic site in Co. Antrim*, H.M.S.O. (1953).
[2] *Hamlet*, Act V, Sc. 1.

[Facing p. 193]

Salruck graveyard, Co. Galway, with tobacco pipes left o

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

PLATE 14

764

graves,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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763 observe the correct procedure in laying out the corpse, generally on a table or a door. A plate containing tobacco or salt was placed on the corpse and sometimes a turf, which was believed to prevent decomposition, a transference from the observed preservative qualities of the bogs.

764 786 Although a great deal of information on the wakes which followed has been collected, it is difficult to obtain precise details about the wake games because of their apparent obscenity. Some of them survive as innocent games in districts where wakes have not been entirely suppressed, but it should be stressed that the full ritual of the traditional wake games was carried out in innocence: 'the peasantry who practised them had no idea of outraging propriety or religion in their performance, holding an unquestioning faith that such observances were right and proper at wakes, whilst under any other circumstances they would shrink with horror from such indelicate exhibitions'.[1] Moreover, they were generally 'reserved for the deaths of old people who had survived the ordinary span of life, or young children who could not be looked upon as an irreparable loss.'[2]

Apart from a great variety of informal amusements which were traditional at wake gatherings—riddles, jokes, singing, dancing, horse-play, tricks, feats of strength or agility, wrestling and so on—a list of 130 specific wake games has been collected by Seán Ó Súilleabháin, and it is 'of necessity incomplete.'[3] Some of them were dramatic performances of considerable complexity; and one recalls the Irishman's traditional skill in dramatization. In Kilkenny the principal game was the *frannsa*, a mock ceremony during which several young folk were 'married' by a mock priest, usually a weaver or a tailor, who was dressed in straw and wore a huge straw rope as a stole. 'After each couple was married, he put them to bed in a corner of the room, sprinkled them with water and gave them plain advice about their future conduct as man and wife.'[4] We need not be surprised that, after this initiation, in the words of

[1] J. G. A. Prim, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 334.
[2] J. G. A. Prim, loc. cit.
[3] S. Ó Súilleabháin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, 602.
[4] J. O'Donovan, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1858), 31.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

Maria Edgeworth, 'more matches were made at wakes than at weddings.' The most frank account of the nature of the games I have come across reads as follows: 'They were placed under the conduct of some peasant of the district who excelled in rustic wit and humour, who went under the title of "Borekeen", and whose orders were carried into force by subordinate officers, all arrayed in fantastic habiliments. The "game" usually first performed was termed "Bout", and was joined in by men and women, who all acted a very obscene part which cannot be described. The next scene generally was termed "Making the Ship', with its several parts of "laying the keel", forming the "stem and stern", and erecting "the mast", the latter of which was done by a female using a gesture and expression, proving beyond doubt that it was a relic of Pagan rites. The "Bull and the Cow" was another game strongly indicative of a Pagan origin, from circumstances too indelicate to be particularized. The game called "Hold the Light", in which a man is blindfolded and flogged, has been looked upon as a profane travestie of the passion of our Lord; and religion might also be considered as brought into contempt by another of the series, in which a person caricaturing a priest, and wearing a rosary, composed of small potatoes strung together, enters into conflict with the "Borekeen", and is put down and expelled from the room by direction of the latter . . . "Turning the Spit" and "Selling the Pig" are the names of two others of those games; in that called "Drawing the Ship out of the Mud" the men engaged actually presented themselves before the rest of the assembly, females as well as males, in a state of nudity, whilst in another game the female performers attired themselves in men's clothes and conducted themselves in a very strange manner.'[1] From other sources we learn that boys and girls, in some games, wore hides and appeared representing bulls and cows.

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Parallels to these practices can be adduced from the so-called simple societies in many parts of the world, and as in Ireland Christian missionaries found it very difficult to suppress the rituals enacted between death and burial. The keening of the corpse likewise carries us through time to the earliest emotions of human societies faced with the mystery of death. The liberal

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[1] J. G. A. Prim, loc. cit.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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764 171 distribution of food and drink on these occasions, and the provision of tobacco or snuff—a magic substance in Negro Africa—are widespread practices. In an Irish wake the distribution of tobacco and clay pipes follows a well-established routine. Curative properties were attributed to snuff left over from a wake, and the pipes were sometimes buried, apparently often in or near a prehistoric burial place, for quantities of old pipes not infrequently turn up in archaeological excavations of such sites. Among preliterate peoples in Africa ritual demonstrations similar to those of the wake games usually form part of ceremonies directed towards ancestral spirits who had power over the luck and livelihood of the group. The women on these occasions often assume a dominant role and behave lewdly, and as part of this reversal or normal behaviour they wear men's clothes. Such rituals of rebellion, it is claimed, by canalizing social tensions, perpetuate the established systems of political organization.[1] We cannot expect to piece together the fragmentary evidences of Irish folk customs to make a coherent 764 pattern, yet it is clear that the cathartic extravagances of the wakes not only served to dissipate overcharged tensions but were closely concerned with ancestral spirits and the perpetuation of the life of the community. Despite the emphasis on tobacco, which was, one supposes, a substitute for some forgotten magic substance, there are many hints of old custom in the names and rites of the wake games. Did the tobacco pipes, one wonders, take the place of offerings of potsherds when locally-made pottery ceased to be available? It is interesting to find that cheese is regarded as a necessary part of the food offered at wakes, for cheese is now rarely eaten by Irish countryfolk though we know that it was once an essential part of the summer diet.

Many superstitious customs pursued the corpse to the burying ground. The chairs on which the coffin rested were shaken in all directions before it was lifted off, and it was customary for those following the coffin to take some protective substance such as salt in the pocket, for 'there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind'.[2] With the

[1]Max Gluckman, *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa*, 24.
[2]C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, 216.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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idea no doubt of deceiving the spirit of the dead the coffin was carried to the graveyard by the longest route, preferably a disused track, and the procession made a sunwise circle around some place or object on the way, a cross, a church-site, a lone thorn tree or a crossroads. In Connacht, stones were added to small cairns which stood at stopping places on the way. In many areas tradition tells that the coffin was carried three times around the ruined church that stands in many old graveyards. Dr. Browne's account of the procedure in the graveyard was written of Ballycroy, Co. Mayo: 'On reaching the cemetery the coffin is carried to the place where it is to be interred, and then the people all scatter to kneel and pray at the graves of their own relatives. After this, new pipes and tobacco are served out to those present, who sit down and smoke. After the pipes have been smoked, the weeds are cleared away and the grave is dug. It may be worthy of remark here that a grave is not dug on Monday if possible, and if for any reason a burial has to be made on that day, a sod is raised the day before. After the grave has been dug and the coffin lowered into it, a band of women gather round it and sing the *caione*, which here has not degenerated into mere discordant wailing . . . but is often really very musical and plaintive. When this has been done, the mourners are sprinkled with holy water and then engage in prayer: after which the grave is filled in, covered over with rough stones, often white in colour, and the unused pipes placed upon it.'[1] (Plate 14.) In Achill Island I have seen plates, which presumably once held food, left on the graves, and there are firm traditions of food and tools being placed in the coffin. 'Our neighbour John Ryan', wrote W. R. Le Fanu, 'put two pairs of shoes in the coffin of his wife—a strong one for bad weather, a light pair for ordinary wear.'[2] It was believed that the last person to be buried would be placed in charge of the other dead, and would have to carry water for them. This is the reason given for the fights which, it is said, sometimes broke out at the graveyard between rival funeral parties as to which corpse should be buried first, but it seems that fighting not infrequently occurred on the occasion of graveyard gatherings, and I have heard it justified

[1]C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.
[2]W. R. Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, 36.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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764 by the tradition that 'there must be blood spilt at a funeral'. In some parts of the country there were separate graveyards for men and women, and the prohibition against burying the wrong sex lasted into the present century in Inishmurray, Co. Sligo.

Many gruesome superstitions gather around old graveyards, yet it is to them that the old people wish to be taken, however neglected and overcrowded they may be. As one observer put it: 'The anxiety to be interred with their deceased relatives bestows even on death a feeling of social interest.'[1] I have referred to the Saints' Beds—small stone enclosures in very old graveyards which were perhaps oratories—and their power of curing barrenness. Bits of skulls, too, or scrapings of the moss growing on them, were sought as cures for various ailments, and the clay from the graves of priests was considered efficacious, with fine impartiality, for human sins and for the diseases of cattle. Such cures were apparently mixed with water and taken as medicine, and as part of the ritual the cloth in which they were removed was replaced on the grave. A potent love
789 charm is said to have been worked by wrapping around the desired person, when sleeping, a long strip of skin removed from a corpse, and a dead man's hand, thrust into the milk, was, as a last resort, a sure way of getting the cream to rise.

[1]T. C. Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 167.

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Plate XIV.

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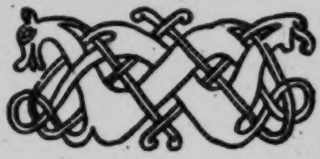
Rath-Blathmaic. "Broc-sidh" and "Sheelah".



"Peists"
Dysert-O'Dea

1910 "Ghost Stone". Clonlara. JGW

[Facing p. 202]

~~To face p. 310~~

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MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimnesigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19] 173 556 [574]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan. [778]

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains 764

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe. [554 551]

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764 placed on the new coffin. Where burials take place at short intervals the results are best left untold, but such cases are rare. A consequence of this fearful overcrowding is that no old graveyard is free from coffin planks and plates, bones, and fragmentary or whole skulls.[20] Those who saw Quin "Abbey" before 1879 will remember the enormous heap of skulls, (even then, however, much diminished), heaped round a tree near the graveyard gate. At Tomfinlough the bones and skulls were neatly stacked in a recess, at Kilmacreehy they were heaped on a sort of side altar in the chancel, and in other churches (Coad etc.) I have seen single skulls staring out of holes in the wall.

766 Places for the burial of strangers and unbaptized children are common, and are usually *killeens*, old forgotten church sites, sometimes in a fort, sometimes at a well, or unenclosed in a field.[21] Those at Kilquane, near Ennis; Fomerla, near Tulla; Kyleeáne, near Barefield (with Doughnambraher stone); and Kilvoydane, near Spansil Hill, have basin stones. Some *killeens*, such as that between the forts of Mortyclogh, near Corcomroe Abbey, and that at Fortanne, have crept back into favour for adult burial, but several ancient churches at which bones are found have not been so used in traditional memory (*e.g.* Toomullin, Crumlin, Killonaghan, and Kilbract, round Lisdoonvarna; Templeline, in Carran; Temple-an-aird, near Carrigaholt; St. Senan's, on Mutton Island; Temple aed O'Connell, near Ruan; and several churches on Scattery and Iniscaltra). The church of Kilcashen was not remembered to have been a burial place before Eugene O'Curry's grand-
[731] father, Melachein O'Curry, in a pestilence about 1760, charitably collected the deserted unburied corpses "on carts and sledges," and buried them at the ruin on his farm.[22] Bodies were similarly buried during the Great Famine at the Lisheen, near Lough Fergus. Oughtdarra, near Lisdoonvarna, has the remains of a
[776] church of St. Sinnach MacDara,[23] where children under seven

[20] See also vol. xxii., p. 56.

[21] For a list, with notes, see *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. vi., ser. iii., p. 129.

[22] Kilcashen, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 369.

[23] A saint famous all round Galway Bay, but not found in the ancient Calendars. Some suppose him to be a Fox Hero, *i.e.* Sinnach mac Dara, Fox

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years of age are buried; after that age bodies are taken to the parish graveyard at Killilagh. In Shanakill, on the Shannon bank opposite Scattery, it was believed that the dead were moved supernaturally under the river into the Sacred Isle.[24] 766 [775]

I know of a case in eastern Clare where parents, having lost several of their children, tried to break the deadly record by changing their burial place, but, alas! without success.

I am not aware of any belief in Clare that the spirit of the last-comer in a graveyard has to watch the place or to bring water to the souls in Purgatory. There was, however, recently a race between two funerals to Rathblamac graveyard, which may imply some such belief. The custom of burying a stone from a church or an ancient tombstone in a new grave, (which has led to the disappearance of several early monuments at Clonmacnoise), prevails at Tomgraney, two ancient tombstones having recently been recovered on digging new graves. As we have already seen,[25] St. Mochulla's well avenged the encroachment of its landlord on the *killeen* beside it, but the graveyards of Kildimo, near Kilkee, and St. Catherine's at Kells, near Corofin, are under cultivation. Dr. MacNamara noted a curious allusion to the last-named in O'Daly's fierce satire on "The Tribes of Ireland" in 1610. The people of Kells are there reproached for "digging the churchyard in the snow." The oldest Irish Law Code, the *Seanchus Mór*, has a clause against digging in a churchyard or breaking bones there. Kildimo was levelled, and its site included in an orchard by 1816.[26] Interference with human remains is deeply and dangerously resented, yet spells are sometimes worked with them.[27] The stealing of a dead man's hand for a butter charm is said to have taken place near Kilkee,[28] and the bones of a Franciscan with the brown cloth of his gown still adhering, found during the repairs at Ennis Abbey, were nearly all taken, but probably from most reverential motives. 764 [775] [765] 789

son of oak tree. There is a Knockaunatinnagh (little hill of the foxes) beside his church. [776]

[24] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii. (1841), p. 545.

[25] Vol. xxii., p. 211.

[26] W. G. Mason, *A Statistical Account etc.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

[27] See *Burial and Skull Beliefs*, vol. xxii., pp. 55-6, 456.

[28] Vol. xxii., p. 340.

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turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and [796]
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the offi-
ciating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient
tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured
soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the
church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hun-
dreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appear-
ance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

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Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

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778 on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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721 At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

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712 The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,

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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [363] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [574] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

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Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

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When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [654] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for 764 the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 178 of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

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764 178 764 characterized by storytelling, games of various sorts, contests of strength, taunting and mocking, mischief-making, and factional fighting (O Suilleabhain 1967: 26–129). It is hard to imagine a wake more somber than that which takes place in Inis Beag. Most of those who attend it do so before midnight and stay two to three hours, coming and going at will, while "only those who own him stay all night." Each visitor on arrival prays briefly at the bedside of the deceased or in the doorway of the room before expressing condolences, and at midnight all who are anywhere in the wake-house kneel and recite the responses of the Rosary intoned [178] by the curate. Immediate kin express their grief in muffled sobs beside the corpse, but the ancient wailing lament for the dead, known as the "keen," no longer is [273] heard in Inis Beag. Tables and benches are set up in the kitchen on which the [276] men sit silently or converse in whispers with their neighbors, as they drink stout or whiskey and pass around clay pipes offered them "to keep the night awake." [562] Most of the women congregate in the room of the dead, where only very old women smoke pipes. I have counted as many as 18 minutes of absolute silence at a wake and have never heard laughter.

[562] Before the procession to the church forms, men tend to gather in small groups outside the house of the deceased and women gather inside the house. After the corpse is placed in the coffin, close relatives and even friends shake the hand and kiss the face of the dead person before the top is nailed down; then the box is carried to the front street and placed across two chairs for prayers to be said and holy water sprinkled over it by the priest. A white sheet is draped on the casket, and six pallbearers shoulder it and carry it through a gap made in the stone fence to the road which leads to the chapel. The pallbearers are both agnatic and uterine kin of the deceased, excluding his sons, and two of them have the further duty of digging the shallow grave that night or in the morning before the body is interred. Moving slowly behind the coffin bearers, the procession is headed by the spouse and sons of the dead person, followed by his daughters, then women, and finally men in a long, slow moving, silent column; children other than the offspring of the deceased seldom join the procession, and the sexes walk separately. [793] The curate may or may not lead this procession and the one the next morning, sometimes preferring to go ahead to church and cemetery by himself. A son of the dead person treats the grave diggers to stout in a pub before they set out with spades for the graveyard, as he does the pallbearers after they return from the [178] church. In the past, the grave was dug as part of the funeral service, but this custom was altered as the cemetery became filled and occasionally diggers by acci- [538] dent broke into previously interred coffins revealing their contents. A number of grisly legends and anecdotes tell of islanders buried alive by mistake, or whose bodies were partially preserved, as revealed by such accidents.

The procession from the chapel to the graveyard leaves the modern road, as we saw in Chapter 1, to follow an ancient, obliterated trail past a church believed to have been buried beneath the sand centuries ago, and then climbs the long hill of kitchen midden and sand to the gate of the cemetery. Here the column breaks up, some people going to the graves of relatives to pray and others to the newly opened grave. Men and women kneel separately at the graveside for the service (see Fig. 11), and many of the women cry as the casket is lowered into the shallow

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of [211] local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the [793] confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the [356] stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water [783] is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the [674] priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families in- [777] volved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them [776]

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 171
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346]
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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years of age are buried; after that age bodies are taken to the parish graveyard at Killilagh. In Shanakill, on the Shannon bank opposite Scattery, it was believed that the dead were moved supernaturally under the river into the Sacred Isle.[24] 766 [775]

I know of a case in eastern Clare where parents, having lost several of their children, tried to break the deadly record by changing their burial place, but, alas! without success.

I am not aware of any belief in Clare that the spirit of the last-comer in a graveyard has to watch the place or to bring water to the souls in Purgatory. There was, however, recently a race between two funerals to Rathblamac graveyard, which may imply some such belief. The custom of burying a stone from a church or an ancient tombstone in a new grave, (which has led to the disappearance of several early monuments at Clonmacnoise), prevails at Tomgraney, two ancient tombstones having recently been recovered on digging new graves. As we have already seen,[25] St. Mochulla's well avenged the encroachment of its landlord on the *killeen* beside it, but the graveyards of Kildimo, near Kilkee, and St. Catherine's at Kells, near Corofin, are under cultivation. Dr. MacNamara noted a curious allusion to the last-named in O'Daly's fierce satire on "The Tribes of Ireland" in 1610. The people of Kells are there reproached for "digging the churchyard in the snow." The oldest Irish Law Code, the *Seanchus Mór*, has a clause against digging in a churchyard or breaking bones there. Kildimo was levelled, and its site included in an orchard by 1816.[26] Interference with human remains is deeply and dangerously resented, yet spells are sometimes worked with them.[27] The stealing of a dead man's hand for a butter charm is said to have taken place near Kilkee,[28] and the bones of a Franciscan with the brown cloth of his gown still adhering, found during the repairs at Ennis Abbey, were nearly all taken, but probably from most reverential motives. 764 [775] [765] 789

son of oak tree. There is a Knockaunatinnagh (little hill of the foxes) beside his church. [776]

[24] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii. (1841), p. 545.

[25] Vol. xxii., p. 211.

[26] W. G. Mason, *A Statistical Account etc.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

[27] See *Burial and Skull Beliefs*, vol. xxii., pp. 55-6, 456.

[28] Vol. xxii., p. 340.

[P. 267]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [368] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [674] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

764 Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

764 When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [654] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

764 The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 178 of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 is only the 'crabbit' person who will sell the land,
602 and 'go to town and drink the money'. Such con-
428 duct is indefensible, and for good reason. It runs counter to every law of kinship and local custom.

But in the case of a young widow, a conflict can
182 arise. The countryside recognizes only dimly, if at
589 all, the right of a woman to hold land in her own
428 person. That does not mean she cannot exercise
593 full control and work the land herself, which she often does. Rather, she is regarded as holding it in trust for a brother or a son of her husband or her father. She cannot alienate it from the patrilineal line to which it belongs. The conflict arises because she herself moves between two such lines; her father's and her husband's.

Consequently, a widow remains upon the farm only if her children are growing up. If they are very young she returns to her father's farm, and a husband's brother takes over. If she is childless, she is hardly regarded as having moved out of her
[766] own kindred; she is buried, when she dies, not with her husband but with her father.

Even if she marries, she and her new husband
182 merely hold the land in trust. The second husband
428 and his children are 'strangers to the land'. The
587 rightful heir by blood, whose 'name' is on the
593 land, may turn them out. So strong is the identifica-
578 tion. The woman gets the place only as a mother of the family's sons. One must remember that I am not speaking of formal title or legal right. They

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Wayside cairns in the form of memorial monuments 824
line the roads to the graveyards of Aran. On thorns at cross roads it is the custom in Co. Wexford to hang small crosses, [211] made of coffin wood, as the funeral procession passes by. [764]

We cannot deal at any length with the superstitious practices which cling so tenaciously to death and burial: 764 they recall the customs of many other regions, such as Brittany, where the old megalithic cult was strong and seems to have lived on in obsessions about death and accompanying notions of re-birth. The anxiety to be buried with relatives reminds us of the strength of the blood-tie, and "bestows even on death a feeling of social interest." It is an Irish belief that the dead live on in the graveyard, and that the last person buried acts as servant to the others, a belief which not long ago led to disputes as to which of two bodies to be buried should be interred first. There are certain old graveyards where women only are said to be buried, and no living woman will enter them. On Innishmurray there are separate graveyards for men and women. [766] Unbaptised infants were generally interred in special burial grounds, some of which appear to be prehistoric cairns. There is no need to add to the many accounts that have been written of the keening of the dead and of wakes. In connexion with wakes we need only refer to the tricks, pastimes and games which were their accompaniment. The dramatic games were known under such titles as "The Walls of Troy," "Short Castle," "Building the Ship," "Turning the Spit," "Selling the Pig," "Building the Fort," "The Horse Fair," "The Mock Marriage" and "Shuffle the Brogue." While some seem to have been for amusement only, in others it is difficult not to see sex-symbolism and fertility-rites. In recent times the wake-games [786] have often degenerated into licence and drinking. Maria Edgeworth tells us that "more matches were made at wakes than at weddings."

When going to a funeral it was customary, in parts of the west until the beginning of the present century, to carry some salt in the pocket in order to avert evil influences. Arensberg quotes the belief that "there is never a funeral but the other

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

is concluded. The burial grounds are kept much better than in many other parts of the West; and on Inishkea, as well as in the Mullet, it it is customary to decorate the graves with large white pebbles, and to place at the head a neatly made wooden cross. A curious custom exists, some instances of which were observed at Tarmoncarra, of placing tobacco pipes on the graves; these are the pipes which were left unused after the wake. What the reason is for so placing them could not be ascertained, but it is considered extremely unlucky to remove them. 764 [777]

Unbaptised infants are interred in separate burying grounds by themselves, several of which are in the district. 766

It is now no longer customary for the people of the Mullet to bury their dead in Inisglora, the last instance of this having occured over thirty years ago. Formerly many families used regularly to make use of this island as a cemetery, always taking a body over from a point of the mainland opposite, which was stated by tradition to have once been connected with the main, but to have got separated afterwards by a channel which has gradually widened. 173 764

Maxwell,[1] writing in 1832, says—"There are no people on earth more punctilious in the interment of their dead than the peasantry of this remote district. A strange and unaccountable custom exists of burying different families resident on the main in island cemeteries, and great difficulty and often great danger attends the conveyance of a corpse to its insulated resting place. No inducement will make these wild people inter a body apart from the tomb of its fathers, and, if a boat will live, the corpse will be transported to the family tomb. At times the weather renders this impracticable, but the deceased is kept for many days unburied in the hope that the storm may subside; and only when frail mortality evinces unequivocal tokens of decay will the relatives consent to unite its dust with the ashes of a stranger." 764

A considerable number of migratory labourers leave this district annually to do harvesting work in England, on the proceeds of which work they in part support themselves during the winter. The number doing thus has decreased somewhat of late years. 167

There is not much to be said about the everyday mode of life. The men fish and attend to their holdings; the women manage household affairs and assist at field work in times of pressure. The people are early risers in the summer months, and, as a rule, retire to bed early, few lights being seen in the hamlets after nine or ten p.m. 512

[1] Maxwell, W. H., "Wild sports of the West," chap. XIX.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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764 placed on the new coffin. Where burials take place at short intervals the results are best left untold, but such cases are rare. A consequence of this fearful overcrowding is that no old graveyard is free from coffin planks and plates, bones, and fragmentary or whole skulls.[20] Those who saw Quin "Abbey" before 1879 will remember the enormous heap of skulls, (even then, however, much diminished), heaped round a tree near the graveyard gate. At Tomfinlough the bones and skulls were neatly stacked in a recess, at Kilmacreehy they were heaped on a sort of side altar in the chancel, and in other churches (Coad etc.) I have seen single skulls staring out of holes in the wall.

766 Places for the burial of strangers and unbaptized children are common, and are usually *killeens*, old forgotten church sites, sometimes in a fort, sometimes at a well, or unenclosed in a field.[21] Those at Kilquane, near Ennis; Fomerla, near Tulla; Kyleeáne, near Barefield (with Doughnambraher stone); and Kilvoydane, near Spansil Hill, have basin stones. Some *killeens*, such as that between the forts of Mortyclogh, near Corcomroe Abbey, and that at Fortanne, have crept back into favour for adult burial, but several ancient churches at which bones are found have not been so used in traditional memory (*e.g.* Toomullin, Crumlin, Killonaghan, and Kilbract, round Lisdoonvarna; Templeline, in Carran; Temple-an-aird, near Carrigaholt; St. Senan's, on Mutton Island; Temple aed O'Connell, near Ruan; and several churches on Scattery and Iniscaltra). The church of Kilcashen was not remembered to have been a burial place before Eugene O'Curry's grandfather, Melachein O'Curry, in a pestilence about 1760, charitably [731] collected the deserted unburied corpses "on carts and sledges," and buried them at the ruin on his farm.[22] Bodies were similarly buried during the Great Famine at the Lisheen, near Lough Fergus. Oughtdarra, near Lisdoonvarna, has the remains of a [776] church of St. Sinnach MacDara,[23] where children under seven

[20] See also vol. xxii., p. 56.

[21] For a list, with notes, see *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. vi., ser. iii., p. 129.

[22] Kilcashen, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 369.

[23] A saint famous all round Galway Bay, but not found in the ancient Calendars. Some suppose him to be a Fox Hero, *i.e.* Sinnach mac Dara, Fox

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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son of oak tree. There is a Knockaunatinnagh (little hill of the foxes) beside his church. [776]

[24] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii. (1841), p. 545.

[25] Vol. xxii., p. 211.

[26] W. G. Mason, *A Statistical Account etc.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

[27] See *Burial and Skull Beliefs*, vol. xxii., pp. 55-6, 456.

[28] Vol. xxii., p. 340.

[P. 267]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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 592

right of a woman to hold property. The patrilineal identification of family and land is incompatible with it. Whatever farm a woman works or controls is regarded as a trust for a son or brother of her husband or father. 562 428

The conflict is naturally never so phrased, nor is it ever debated. Yet there are many instances which show behavior, accepted fully as right and just by the local community, which reveal the patrilineal identification. A widow, for instance, remains upon the farm only if the children are beginning to grow up. If they are very young, she returns to her parents and a husband's brother may take the farm. Even if she marries, she and her new husband merely hold the land in trust. The new husband is, graphically, a "stranger to the land." 562 768 428 587

As a "stranger" he has no right to it. In a village in mid-Clare, to give an example, a "Yank" returned after many years in the United States to his father's farm, from which he and all his brothers had emigrated. His mother, now dead, had married again, and her two children by her second husband still worked the farm. D——, the "Yank," threw the husband out into the road, told him to go home, and took up the land. Later when he gave fortunes to both of the children, the village felt he had made ample amends for the stepfather's years of toil. 587 428

Whether or not there is a legally executed will, it is much the same. In Luogh, a son, inheriting a farm upon the death of his mother, allowed her old second husband to stay on with him. He was said to be "very kind to the old man." In Inagh again, though a small farmer, dying, willed the family's farm to his wife and children, a brother on a neighboring farm got most of the land. "He paid her nothing for it. He took bits of it here and there until it was all gone." Whatever protest there is must come from the growing nephews. Inagh makes none.

In matchmaking, too, legal form may be subordinated to 000

In matchmaking, too, legal forms may be subordinated to
583 country-bred aspirations. To insist upon the full letter of
842 the contract, even if its purpose is not fulfilled, is meanness. It is a breach of social convention, even though quite within legal right. For the "writings" is a formal legal instrument nowadays. Not all the farmers have gone so far in safeguarding himself as one F— in Inagh did. "He put it in the writings that he would pay the last half when his daughter was safe delivered," so we were told. For the provisions of the match reflect again the identifying continuity and the importance to all parties of the girl's bearing children for the family into which she marries. Most often the second instalment of the fortune is not paid until the first child is born, or, with more legal formality, till a year after the marriage contract is completed. One informant summed the matter up:

583 If the woman dies after a year and the first part of the fortune is paid, the man doesn't usually claim the rest, although he may
●768 be mean enough to claim it. For the young man can marry again. If the man dies, the girl is given the money if there is no heir and is sent home. If there is, then she gets the place.

583 Let us reëxamine the dowry in the light of this complexity of interrelated factors. As has been explained, the fortune goes to the farm owner, in ordinary cases the father of the boy. At the match, land, house, cattle, and household effects move from father to son just as kinship relationships move and as adult status moves. One family, that of the old couple in which the son was merely one of the children, is partially destroyed in order to make way for a new one, in which the son and the incoming wife are now the adult married couple. The movement of goods corresponds to social forces. And the fortune brought in by the new wife moves from her father to the boy's as if to recompense the father for his loss of the farm. It is significant that the fortune is paid always in money. Try as we might, we never found it paid in any other way. Land, cattle, and household effects

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional 352
width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed— [171]
the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart 462
and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, 372
the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' [539]
The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is [574]
invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can [787]
give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which ancestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1] [769]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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a late Neolithic burial cairn at Lyles Hill near Belfast I found 172
tens of thousands of potsherds which had been collected from domestic refuse and thrown into the cairn during the course of its erection.[1] The broken plates which may be seen exposed on the graves in some old burial-grounds in Co. Mayo are [764]
probably placed there in continuation of ancient practice. The breaking of pots is one of the elements in Hallowe'en pranks— [769]
one might almost say rites—and again we notice the association with the dead, for All-Hallows is the time when the dead are believed to return to their homes.

It would appear that by breaking a pot you broke its spirit; 772
and by transference the power of the dead to do harm. Readers 775
will recall the significant lines from *Hamlet*, referring to the suicide of Ophelia: 'Her death was doubtful . . . for charitable prayers, shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.'[2] In some places in south-west England potsherds figure in the 'lent crocking' rites at Easter: like Easter eggs they are symbols of fertility. The association of fertility and decay, of life and death, comedy and tragedy, is clearly displayed in the wake games which are described in Chapter XX. This association, we note in passing, is ever-present in the mind of the Irish countryman, and the juxtaposition gives dramatic quality to the work of many Anglo-Irish playwrights.

This is not the place to enlarge on the technology of early 323
pot-making, but it may be observed that the designs, fabric 172
and finish of the Neolithic family of pottery in Ireland were far superior to those of succeeding periods: indeed it was not until wheel-made pots found local markets in the medieval towns that technically superior vessels were made in this country. In late prehistoric and early historic times the wealthy were able to import fine wares in small quantities from the 323
continent, but the peasant homes over most of Ireland apparent- 415
ly did without pottery—the Gaelic word for potter is a loan-word—and vessels of wood, metal or leather did duty for the now universal imported 'delph'. The Dutchman, Gerard Boate, writing in 1645, said that 'the use of earthen vessels hath been very rare among them, and to the most part unknown even

[1] E. E. Evans, *Lyles Hill: a late Neolithic site in Co. Antrim*, H.M.S.O. (1953).
[2] *Hamlet*, Act V, Sc. 1.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the 352
fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served 592
since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in the English language gave its name to a committee, has not replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies [776]
or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged [769]
around the fire.

FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means 354
of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the 373
table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke. The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from [171]
Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said, that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

[1] Å. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

refuge corners of Europe. The gate swings like a fire-crane, not on hinges or rings-and-hooks, but directly on its heel, on a projecting iron spud which swivels in a stone socket. These stone sockets or spud-stones are frequently seen around old farm sites, and very similar stones in Mesopotamia go back into the fifth millennium B.C. In the days before the iron gate was introduced wooden gates were hung in the same way, and we know from Scotland that they were sometimes tipped with stone.[1] A projecting stone perforated to hold the top of the gate-post (Fig. 33) has now been replaced, as a rule, by an iron eye. 351 417

In Co. Armagh I have heard the farm gate-piers referred to as the man and wife of the house, and one of the pair may have a flat top whereon, it is said, the fairies like to dance. The old people used to place the two first plates of champ—the Hallowe'en festival dish of mashed potatoes—on the top of the pier.[2] While all this may be nothing more than an exuberant play of fancy we cannot overlook the megalithic practice of selecting alternating pointed and flat-topped monoliths for some of their ritual erections, symbolizing, it is thought, male and female. The twin portal stones of many megalithic chamber graves come to mind, and pairs of such stones now standing in isolation, as at Lisdivin in Co. Tyrone,[3] may well have been a symbolic entrance to some vanished ceremonial enclosure. The tradition of large entrance piers dies hard. Not infrequently today the first thought of an improving farmer is to erect imposing concrete pillars at the entrance to his property. They are as a rule garishly painted and pebble-dashed, a poor substitute for their simple whitewashed forerunners. [769]

In the early nineteenth century field gates were almost unknown except near towns, and we read of the rustic forerunner of the iniquitous barbed wire—a hay-rope strung with thorns.[4] In boggy areas one commonly sees the gnarled root stumps of bog trees doing service as a gate, much as the Canadian pioneer will make a temporary fence with grubbed-up stumps. The huge

[1] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 127.
[2] Michael Murphy, *At Slieve Gullion's Foot* (1940), 64.
[3] O. Davies, *U.J.A.*, 2 (1939), 169.
[4] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 288.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1] 527 527 584

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning. 527 [784] [788] [769] [857] [195] [787]

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 48.

527 cairn on the summit of Slieve Croob was until recent years the
372 scene of a great gathering on the first Sunday in August. The fiddling and dancing are no more, though numbers of young people still assemble there and frolic in the heather. Blaeberries (bilberries) were picked into little rush baskets made on the spot (Fig. 70) and that the occasion was recognized as a
[584] legitimate time of courting is shown by the comment that 'many a lad met his wife on Blaeberry Sunday'. The name Garland Sunday derives from the hoops decorated with ribbons and flowers which were made by unmarried girls and, latterly, carried to church before being set up in the graveyard to preside over the dancing with which the day terminated. Rites in
[769] honour of the dead seem to have marked the old Lammas festival, so that again we notice the association of ancestral spirits with the fertility of farm and family.

527 By St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, harvest is well under way and the first-saved corn is ready to be thrashed. By tradition the flails were made ready on this day, and if the high harvest winds are blowing it is said that the saint is testing his flails. Next comes Michaelmas, 29th September, linked closely with the sea, with horses, and, strangely, with the ceremony of killing a cock or a goose, originally as a sacrifice in honour of the saint. In some parts Michaelmas was regarded as one of the most important feasts of the year, but I have not found any districts where it was, as in Uist, 'much the most imposing pageant and most popular demonstration of the Celtic year': nor have I come across any tradition of the rites of digging up and making presents of wild carrots which was associated, in the Hebrides, with the eating of cakes made of mixed flour baked before a stone flag, with the killing of a lamb, visits to graveyards, and a night of 'dance, song and love-making'.[1]

527 Throughout Ireland these lesser feast days pale in comparison
769 with the culminating festival which marks the end of the dying year on All-Hallows Eve. An astonishing amount of lore still clings to Hallowe'en, and we must restrict ourselves to picking out some of the main elements of this crowded occasion. The crops should now be all gathered in and no fruit should be picked

[1] A. Carmichael, *Carmina Gadelica*, I (1928), 198.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

after this date, for the *púca*, a supernatural being, is busy befouling unpicked fruit at Hallowe'en. Here again we notice superstition acting as a stimulus towards the completion of routine tasks. The return of the livestock from their summer grazings, once accompanied by their herders, made the occasion one of family reunion, and this is a strong element in the present festival. But it was also a reunion with the ancestral spirits of the family; for Hallowe'en was preeminently a commemoration of the dead, a time when ghosts and fairies were unusually active, the whole of the world of the supernatural astir and the dead returned to their earthly homes. On that night the grass-grown homesteads—the fairy raths—were wide open and the fairies were on the move to winter quarters, surely a folk memory of a former transhumance. It used to be thought unlucky not to make preparations for the return of the dead by leaving the door of the house open, putting out tobacco and traditional dishes such as sowans—a kind of porridge—and setting seats around the fire. The games and amusements which alone survive have commonly degenerated into pranks and horseplay, but one can detect in them echoes of magical observances. The many divination customs may well have begun as rites to avert evil or to secure the benefits which they now pretend to forecast. Among the things involved in these games and divinations are apples, nuts, oatcakes, cabbages, a ball of yarn, articles made of straw and rushes (Fig. 86), and herbs such as yarrow. The wearing of straw dresses and the breaking of pots are certainly archaic elements. In Co. Cork there survived well into last century a Hallowe'en ceremony similar to the well-known Mari Lwyd of South Wales: a procession was led by a figure clad in a white shirt and carrying a horse's head. This 'white mare' was followed by youths blowing cow-horns, and as they stopped to levy toll from farmhouses they recited a long string of verses 'savouring strongly of paganism'.[1] Hallowe'en bonfires and noisy demonstrations remind us that these features of Guy Fawkes' Day have, in England, been stolen from the older festival.

In certain districts, especially in Connacht, north Munster and south Leinster, strange customs have been associated with

[1] *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 303—19.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

527 the Feast of St. Martin on 11th November. On St. Martin's
782 Eve the blood of a farm animal or fowl was spilled and sprinkled in the corners of the house, on the door-posts and windows, and in the byre and stable. In some areas the blood was also used to make the mark of a cross on the forehead of each member of the household. The flesh was eaten on St. Martin's Day, which is by tradition one of the feast days on which flesh meat is taken.

[292]
[285]
[769]

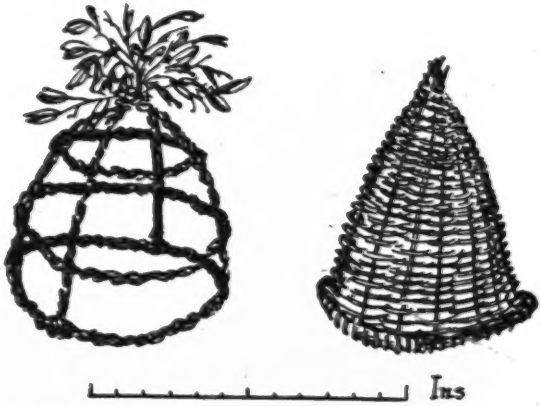

FIG. 86. Hallowe'en caps. *Left:* of plaited straw, Co. Down. *Right:* of woven rushes, Co. Kerry.

We recall that in Scotland a mart was an animal killed at Martinmas to be salted down as winter food, and it may well be that this very practical custom grew out of the cult, which was intended 'to exclude evil spirits for the year'.[1] It seems that seabirds were sometimes killed for the occasion, and there are many superstitions relating to the ill luck which attended anyone who went fishing at Martinmas. Wheel-turning of any kind, whether on cart, mill or spinning wheel, was prohibited. These sacrificial offerings and tabus must be of great antiquity and relate to the preparations for winter. St. Martin's Summer was regarded as the last spell of fine weather before the gales began in earnest. There are hints in folklore that ailing children were

[1] I. Weld, *Roscommon*, 553.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

grateful. It is a land of hard realities. This Ireland is subject to hot flashes of anger and dispute which throw into relief deep-lying hatreds and fierce loyalties. We all know something of the Land War and Sinn Fein and the bitter internecine strife of the Trouble. If we know anything of Ireland's history we see these rough upheavals of a tranquil scene as great punctuation marks upon a red page of struggle lasting seven hundred years. This is the Ireland of bitter economic fate and political unrest. Much of this can be laid at England's door, but not all. The Ireland of the Irish is no more free of internal strife than any other land.

Most of us recognize a fourth Ireland as well, especially those who are Catholics. It is the Ireland of the Faith, the Island of Saints and Scholars. It is the land of the devout, where word and deed breathe a religious fervour which most of us have forgotten. This is the land of holy wells and pilgrimages and roadside shrines. Well-filled churches rise above every hamlet now and the black-frocked priest is a familiar friendly figure. To many of us, perhaps a paradox lies here. Fierce love of political liberty goes hand in hand with a deep devotion to the most authoritarian of Christian creeds.

Nor is this the only paradox in a land of surprises where even the sun and sky are inconsistent. The beauty of the Irish landscape lies in the never-ending change of colour. A momentary break of sun

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. I.

With the many material survivals from the past which we have mentioned in earlier chapters there lives on an imposing body of customs and superstitious beliefs of which we can attempt to give no more than a summary description. They concern not only the visible world with its common elements and events—water, fire, stones, salt, iron, trees, cattle, crops, harvest, food and drink, birth, marriage and death—and the relics of former ages—raths or "forths," great stone monuments, stone axes, flint arrowheads, spinning whorls and "crocks of gold"—but also the unseen or rarely glimpsed world of giants, fairies and other beings. All the major processes of the farmer's year had their appropriate magic rites which clung to them from the beginning. Many of these superstitions are so deep-rooted that centuries of opposition from the Christian Church have failed to suppress them, and while it has driven some practices into secrecy it has been forced to take others under its protection. 771

This applies, for instance, to the cult of holy wells, which is, like the worship of stones and the veneration of thorn trees, probably megalithic in origin and seems to carry us back to the sunnier lands of the Mediterranean where the megalithic religion took its rise. It has been calculated that there are some 3,000 holy wells in Ireland: many of them are still visited, generally at the festival seasons which we described in the last chapter, and it is customary for the devotees to tie 312 788 755 778

[p. 163]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders. 691

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy. 181 [273] [771]

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical. [789]

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2] [848]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation. [578]

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault. [855]

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it. 461 181

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested. 181 426

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for truth is not a prominent part of their character. 181 515 577

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

I

IRELAND THE OUTPOST

THE charm of Ireland, north as well as south, lies as much in the colourful speech and old-fashioned ways of her people as in the beauty of her green fields and blue hills, the silver-glint of lake waters and the gold of the scented whins. The observant visitor cannot fail to be attracted by customs and turns of speech, by traditions and tools which are obsolescent if not archaic in England. He will occasionally see in use in field and farmyard implements which went out of fashion so long ago in most parts of Great Britain that one may truly speak of them as medieval. Thus the toothed sickle, the flail, the one-eared spade, the clod-breaking mallet and seed-rake, the upright churn and the three-legged pot can all be closely matched in illustrations of English medieval rural life (Fig. 1). The boon-work which was an obligation owed by tenants to English landlords in the Middle Ages survives in the flax-pulling boons of Ulster, and the Anglo-Norman word for the lord's part of an estate, the demesne, is universally applied to the parklands of Ireland. The Irish baronies or kingdoms, as they are sometimes called, are similarly relics of the Middle Ages. The prevalence of the Roman Catholic religion, to which 76 per cent of the population of Ireland adheres—the figure is 94 per cent for the Republic of Ireland—reinforces this sense of the past; and the English dialects spoken in many districts, even if shot through with Gaelic-derived turns of phrase, are strikingly Elizabethan. A strong medieval flavour attaches to the feast-day gatherings and patterns, to strawboys, wrenboys and the Christmas mummers. Medieval too is the diversity of folk-customs and of locally-made tools, which will be found to vary from one

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

OLD PISHROGUES

805 The whistle of the 7.15 now replaced cock-crow. But if it were
178 indeed true that peasant values had perished entirely and that
the rural population was transformed into the moronic cattle-
[496] herders of Filson Young's *Ireland at the Cross-Roads*, then this
book could not have been written. Luckily a mountain farmer
will still relate time to nature and refer to a moment of summer
twilight, in a memorable phrase quoted by Dr. James Delargy,
as 'the time when the dew was thinking of falling'. The wonder
178 is that so much lore and so many relics of pre-famine days have
survived. Yet the term 'old pishrogues' which is applied to all
● 771 varieties of witchcraft and fairy lore—even if sometimes used
in awe rather than contempt—shows that these things are
now regarded objectively and are no longer an accepted part
of social life. Superstitious practices tend to be carried out in
secret and to be resorted to only when more rational methods
have been tried and found wanting. Many of the old customs,
however, have had their life prolonged by children's games,
the seasonal bonfires and May Queens becoming their amuse-
ments.

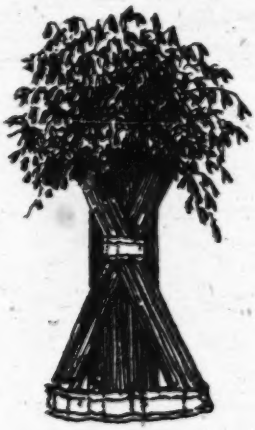
Most of the pishrogues relate to fairies and to trees, wells
823 and stones; and that these elder faiths have their roots in a very
171 remote pre-agricultural phase of human evolution is attested by
their very general observance among primitive people. As an
example we may take the South African Bushmen, one of the
lowliest branches of the human family. In a recent report from
G. P. van der Post's expedition to the Kalahari we read that in
the heart of the Bushman country there are sacred hills which
are regarded as the home of very ancient spirits. Van der Post
was told that 'right on the top of the central hill there was a
spring of water and beside it a tree which bore the fruit of
knowledge, and close by the tree a rock with deep marks where
the greatest spirit of all had knelt to pray'.[1] The sacred hill-
tops, the ancestral spirits, the well of water, the 'gentle' tree
and the cup-marked stone are familiar themes in Irish folk
tradition. Throughout western Europe, from the fifth century
Council of Arles onwards, churchmen denounced those 'who
offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones'. The great religions
have had to come to terms with such cults, in Monsoon Asia as

[1] *The Times* (14th December, 1955).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

512 besom's association with everyday tasks and with the fireside
352 endows it with special power. Thrown after a departing match-
[777] maker or anyone going on an important errand, it brings luck to his mission.

For most people, needless to say, such things are now mean-
●771 ingless superstitions—old pishrogues. True, one still hears
789 occasionally of cows being blinked, of a black cock buried alive
178 as a cure for epilepsy, of a healthy woman pining away because a neighbour was sticking pins into a waxen image. These are stray survivals, doomed to disappear; but in a larger sense the past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds of men and in the landscapes they have fashioned.



16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

4

The Supernatural and the Esthetic

Catholicism

BECAUSE OF THE WRITINGS OF NATIVISTS, most visitors to Inis Beag believe 771 that the Catholicism of the folk embodies an ideal unattained even on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for all of Christendom. In fact, however, the worship of the islanders is obsessively oriented [776] toward salvation in the next world with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a marked tendency toward polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and certain Irish saints; rituals and sacred artifacts, Christian as well as pagan, often are employed by them to serve magical ends; and, finally, many observances that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or to Ireland. Christian morality in its outward [626] manifestations, as we have seen, is realized to a remarkable degree, but it is less a product of the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation than of the techniques of social control exercised by the priests and an overwhelming fear of damnation.

Coexisting with Catholicism in Inis Beag are pre-Celtic, Celtic, and early 771 medieval Christian retentions of religious beliefs and behavior. It is these which 198 are accentuated in the writings of primitivists, some of whom have ignored altogether Catholicism in the lives of the folk. Nativists and primitivists part company in the matter of religion in peasant Ireland, and writers of nativistic persuasion have exerted the most influence on visitors to Inis Beag, who are preponderantly Irish Catholic. Theologians and scholars in Ireland label as pagan unorthodox religious forms from any historical period, and many of these have become reinterpreted with similar Catholic elements. The pagan array of supernatural beings [776] includes a variety of spirits and demons, witches, ghosts, and phantom ships; among other retentions are taboos, signs which foretell the future, charms and incantations of a protective nature, folk medicines, and the aforementioned emphasis on natural foods and other products impinging on the human body.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

829 779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] [123] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 793 776 165 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 562 [829] [788] It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obligations can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some 771 828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) · Inis Beag

 771

and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical 828
anecdotes and ballads.

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dis- 000
possessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard 771
God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of 776
personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island.

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls [753]
malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts [752]
Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such [796]
occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which [825]
run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him.

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic 771
faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many 775
of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly [123]
or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if

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there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience, "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming, and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only, which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St. Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which, if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago,
[174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands.
[184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after
[178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary
[798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan-
[788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray
[789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered
[755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and
[789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation.
[312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know
798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as
178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of
[743] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en-
[787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that
[829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their
[776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where
[115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night
[775] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan supernatural varied among the folk. 184 178 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123] to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178] lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764] (see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823] place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175 Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779 VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798 is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 171 being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incorporating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [346] worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, [778] will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, 776 and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171] and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
[824] the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[174] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[175] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[233] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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539 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771 775
"strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783]
penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771
magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776
God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754
presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178
right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826
tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822]
of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171]
symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793]
even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775
Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772
fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

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775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century. Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
• 771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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754

by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body. 78 95

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation. 771 • 178 [184] [182]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit- 114 538

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] [864]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

831*
cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, 181
the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked 182
factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural 626
manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing 831*
the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme 626
methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as em- 793
ploying informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments
to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal [779]
classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as [872]
effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, [155]
since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative
years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and 831*
even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative ex- 626
periences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorgan- 684
ization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and 793
talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip,
informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting,
dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly"
(widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that
is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and
halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of
intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward
intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of
the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates
to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis 831*
Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist 797
priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a 626
week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver 771*
long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, [796]
even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to [783]
receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening
the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence
used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the
penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred
well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally
magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which
are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in [781]

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a late Neolithic burial cairn at Lyles Hill near Belfast I found 172
tens of thousands of potsherds which had been collected from domestic refuse and thrown into the cairn during the course of its erection.[1] The broken plates which may be seen exposed on the graves in some old burial-grounds in Co. Mayo are [764] probably placed there in continuation of ancient practice. The breaking of pots is one of the elements in Hallowe'en pranks— [769] one might almost say rites—and again we notice the association with the dead, for All-Hallows is the time when the dead are believed to return to their homes.

It would appear that by breaking a pot you broke its spirit; 772 and by transference the power of the dead to do harm. Readers 775 will recall the significant lines from *Hamlet*, referring to the suicide of Ophelia: 'Her death was doubtful . . . for charitable prayers, shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.'[2] In some places in south-west England potsherds figure in the 'lent crocking' rites at Easter: like Easter eggs they are symbols of fertility. The association of fertility and decay, of life and death, comedy and tragedy, is clearly displayed in the wake games which are described in Chapter XX. This association, we note in passing, is ever-present in the mind of the Irish countryman, and the juxtaposition gives dramatic quality to the work of many Anglo-Irish playwrights.

This is not the place to enlarge on the technology of early 323 pot-making, but it may be observed that the designs, fabric 172 and finish of the Neolithic family of pottery in Ireland were far superior to those of succeeding periods: indeed it was not until wheel-made pots found local markets in the medieval towns that technically superior vessels were made in this country. In late prehistoric and early historic times the wealthy were able to import fine wares in small quantities from the 323 continent, but the peasant homes over most of Ireland apparent- 415 ly did without pottery—the Gaelic word for potter is a loan-word—and vessels of wood, metal or leather did duty for the now universal imported 'delph'. The Dutchman, Gerard Boate, writing in 1645, said that 'the use of earthen vessels hath been very rare among them, and to the most part unknown even

[1] E. E. Evans, *Lyles Hill: a late Neolithic site in Co. Antrim*, H.M.S.O. (1953).
[2] *Hamlet*, Act V, Sc. 1.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771 775
"strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783]
penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771
magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776
God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754
presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178
right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826
tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822]
of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171]
symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793]
even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775
Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772
fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century. Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

be found to give it expression. The cult of the 353
fairies, these days, is branded as 'superstition'. It 776
is under fire from townsman, school-teacher, and
priest. But even those who could express no views
could be seen to act as if they too were believers.

Where fairy paths were remembered to pass the
house, they went by the west room. Where food
and water was left out at night, it was left there.
No outhouse, shed, or other building could be built
on this side of the house. That would bring bad [777]
luck. Very few could or would tell why; they left it
to a common inference. The building would be 'in
the way'. Nevertheless, reluctant as they might be
to express belief, my hosts none the less practised
it. No house of Luogh's twenty-six had any shed or [342]
outhouse at its western end.

Here were two very definite associations with the
west room. What did they mean? The attitudes
they represented were respect, and perhaps a little
fear; but it was respect that was dominant. What
was this respect and why should it show itself in
fairy-lore and in household furnishing?

Faced with such a problem the anthropologist's 353
usual recourse is to history. Traditionally the west 773
is the land of the dead. In the ancient sun-cult, in 776
which early man has likened his own progress to
that of the sun's daily and yearly course, the west
is the sacred abode of the dead. Even today, we
speak of dying, half jocularly, as 'going west'. In
ancient Celtic mythology, the heaven at life's end,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

353 *Tír na nÓg*, and Avalon, the island of apple trees
773 which the Greeks knew as the Garden of the
776 Hesperides, and which in a Christian rendering the blessed Saint Brendan may have reached, lies to the west in the setting sun. It is very likely that in this folk practice there survives nearly all that remains of an elaborate early mythology.

Alas for our questioning, no one remembers Avalon in Luogh, *Tír na nÓg* is a dying legend. If you ask the old men about the west, tales of sunken cities and strange sea-creatures greet your ears; ask about the fairies and fairy paths and you get, first, indignant denials of such degrading belief, and then anecdotes, tales, incidents, which illustrate their character and their power for good and evil. Ask about the furniture of this room, and you learn only that it is the right and fitting thing that the objects fill this room and no other. No one can trace the continuity; tradition is felt in the mass rather than in the particular.

We are left then with what we can hear and observe about the present. To question upon anything else is to get nowhere; it merely starts a chain of obscuring generalities more inspired by the question than by what Luogh feels and thinks and does.

But the case is not hopeless. If one casts one's
353 reliance upon observations and questions in the
888 present, new facts appear. The west room figures in marriage. In the contracts drawn up it is often

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

778 like a basin; it contains almost a gallon of water; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

527 The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

●773 823 2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could be collected are given below; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

Lough Bofin (*The Lake of the White Cow*).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.[1] As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

Carrig Guairim.—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or 173 Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the roadside in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act; he was taken over to Rinvyle

[276] [1] Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

173 began to sink.[1] Suspecting that the bell was the cause of their misfortune, they threw it into the sea, and the ship was saved. Next morning, when some of the islanders were searching for sea-weed on the shore, they found the bell lying broken among the rocks. This [178] relic has long ago disappeared, having been cut up into pieces which were worn as amulets, most of which have been taken to America, but it is said that some are still kept as great treasures by some old people in Inishbofin, who refuse to show them to anyone.

Richard O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, makes mention of this bell ("H-Iar Connaught," p. 117) . . . "Inisark is of the same property with Bofin and the saint therein worshipped, St. Leo; of whose reliques is a bell there extant."

773 *St. Leo's Foot-print.*—There is pointed out an impression in the rock on which Cloghan Leo is built, which is said to be the imprint of 823 the saint's foot, and the people's explanation of how it came there is, that when he had finished building the cloghan Le had to leap down, as he had no ladder, and alighting on the rock he left the print of his foot upon it, where it still remains.

173 There is a tradition on the islands of a large treasure of gold being hidden on Davillaun (a small island of the Bofin group), on which a large vessel of the Spanish Armada was wrecked, and some of the people claim to know exactly where it is. There are also many stories about Lord Nelson, under whom several men from these islands served, and wild tales of the old smugglers; and a very narrow passage between two dangerous rocks through which a daring smuggler once steered his vessel, and thus baffled his pursurers, is pointed out.

Archæology.

178 Though making no pretentions to being an archæologist, yet as an inquiry of this sort would be imperfect without, at least, a partial [172] description of the antiquities of the place, I hope that the notes hereunder given may, in some degree at least, supply the want.

1. *Survivals.*—In these the locality is comparatively rich, a good many old implements and methods of working, which have become extinct in other places, being still common. Such are the continuance of the use of plants and lichens as dyes, and some details of dress, such as the old blue cap, &c., which have been referred to before.

[1] One version of the story states that the ship had got as far as the Bay of Biscay!

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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788 778 is that of St. Patrick's Purgatory, on a small island in Lough Derg in Donegal. Still a powerful attraction, it has been maintained since the early middle ages and has been described, with piety or derision, by innumerable writers since one of the earliest accounts was written by Giraldus Cambrensis, about 1185. The pilgrimage became very popular in the early nineteenth century, when the numbers of visitors are said to have averaged 10,000 annually. Mr. A. T. Lucas has shown that this pilgrimage resulted in the distribution through the country of certain portable wooden crucifixes popularly known as penal crosses.[1] Carved from the solid in a characteristic style, they bear dates between 1700 and 1880 (Fig. 84). It seems that they were sold to pilgrims at Lough Derg and taken home as souvenirs after being used in the devotional ritual. They were a local development, no doubt initiated by some peasant woodcarver, of simple crosses, consisting merely of two sticks tied together, such as are still made at some patterns and occasionally at the festivals of St. Briget and All-Hallows. In this way, as in sanctifying the gatherings themselves, Christianity has taken over the symbols and strength of the elder faiths.

The pilgrimage of Croagh Patrick, in Co. Mayo, is the most celebrated of those held at the end of July, involving the ascent of high mountains and marking, by tradition, the close of summer and the beginning of harvest, as discussed in the following chapter. Here we may quote once more the *Parliamentary Gazetteer* for 1845: 'No place in Ireland is the scene of more superstitious observances, or a more popular resort of pilgrims and devotees, or the site of more numerous small memorials of superstition, or the subject of more generally credited legends of hagiology. Vast crowds of miserable human beings . . . swarm all over its summit and sides and skirts; one grand current legend is almost everywhere believed in the teeth of all credulity, that St. Patrick gathered hither, and swept hence all venomous creatures in Ireland.' [773] [776]

[1] A. T. Lucas, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1954), 145–74.

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VI. *Underground Folk.*

To underground folk, other than fairies, I have only found few and uninteresting references, such as,—"an old woman looked out of the side of the fort, and the man ran away"; "he heard *them* talking inside the hill"; and "the little old man came out of the fort, and shut it behind him." 776

VII. *Water Spirits and Mer-folk.*

The Shannon, according to the *Dindsenchas*, derived its name from a sea-lady, but evidently not a "water-breather." Sinenn, daughter of Lodan, came from *Tir-tairngire*, the Land of Youth, under the sea, to visit the well of Connla, under the river now called Shannon. She came to Linn na feile, but was drowned at Tarrchinn "on this side Shannon," and gave her name to the great river.[3] A water spirit, or mermaid, is remembered at Killone Lake and Newhall. The legend is preserved in several variants. In 1839 it was told how O'Brien of Killone saw a lovely girl in the lake, and caught her. Bringing her home, he found to his great disgust and disappointment that she had a fish's tail. He ordered her to be kept in a "crib," and fed and well-treated. As she never spoke, a local fool threw scalding water on her to make her say something. He was only too successful, for, after a wild, blood-curdling shriek, she cried: 103 773 776

> "As the return of the salmon from the stream,
> A return without blood or flesh,
> May such be the departure of the O'Briens
> Like ears of wild corn from Killone."[4]

The legend recorded, almost at the same time (1840), by Crofton Croker was told to me by the old peasantry, about 1876, as follows:—A mermaid used to swim up a stream that flowed under the cellars of Newhall, in order to steal wine. The "master" (an O'Brien), or the butler, hid and stabbed her, (or threw her into a tub of scalding water where she became a big lump of jelly), and her blood ran down the stream and 773 776

[3] "The Dind Senchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), p. 456.
[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii., p. 111.

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● 773 776 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she wailed :—

> "As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> "As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer. [823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of [342] long, low, cross vaults. In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their [103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[8] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

[8] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soul Cagus").

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house. The old residences are in ruins, and their desertion took place over sixteen years ago.[16] 775

It is to the credit of the people of Eastern Clare that it possesses hardly any haunted houses, but there are two of transcending interest.

The first lay near the Fergus. A footstep followed one at night on the upper stairs, and curtains were drawn round the old-fashioned beds,—if not by "a hand of bone," at least by a "thing that no man sees." On more than one occasion all the bed-clothes were lifted, "as if by four people," off a sleeper. Even the late Mr. Richard Stacpoole, a man of iron nerve, told how once on a visit this happened to him; indignant at what he supposed to be a foolish joke, he got up, locked the door, searched the room, and kept awake, only to find the action repeated twice; he struck a light at once, but no one was visible. Hands were laid on the doors and their handles. Anyone who "married into" the family or its connections was liable to have their hands kissed in the dark on their first visit. An invisible [763] dog used to howl before deaths, being only heard from the room of the relation of the foredoomed person. A ghost, (said to be of no less a person than Maureen Rhue, the famous Amazonian O'Brien of 1640-50), used to pass up and down the long, straight [773] avenue. Legend said that, after the murder of her twenty-fifth husband,—(only three husbands are known to history, which is also ignorant of their murders),—she was fastened into a hollow tree and starved to death. There were also the ghosts of two nuns,—for the place was said to have been a convent, without a particle of evidence,[17]—and, in 1838, a lady on horseback at a "Druid's Altar." (The last-named was probably a pure invention of the then owner.) There was, however, another ghostly object of which I heard from an eye-witness still living. A dark spot used to break out in the wall of a quaint old brick-floored room, with an inside window looking down into the kitchen. The legend was that an old nurse, a pensioner of the family about 1750, used to live in this room, and died, aged over 90, suddenly

[16] So Mrs. MacDonnell.

[17] Except that skeletons, and, it is said, coffins, were found in the garden just beside the house.

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776 ravens and owls connected with the Ross-Lewins, Westropps, and other families as death warnings have already been referred to (p. 190).

X. *Spectral Lands and Cities.*

773 Clare formed a part of the outmost fringe of the ancient world, and its people were deeply impressed with the mysteries and wonders of the Outer Ocean. The voyage of Maelduin tells of the son of a Clare man sailing out into "the great endless deep" and finding isles of surpassing beauty and wonder, and the "Hui Corra" in deep repentance sailed towards the setting sun from the creek at the northern bound of Clare "to meet the Lord on the sea."[30] St. Brendan, eager to seek out new islands, went for advice to St. Enda, a saint closely connected with Clare, (where Killeany bears his name), and its appanage, Aran. In the bay to the north of Clare William Ires, a native of Galway, became accustomed to the ocean which he crossed with Columbus, and it may be that his tales of Hy Brasil, of St. Brendan's Isle, and of the "thrice fifty distant Isles in the ocean to the west of us. Larger than Erin, twice is each of them, or thrice,"[31] encouraged the frightened sailors of the great Admiral to persevere a little longer.

[792]

Hy Brasil,[32] the Isle of the Blessed, is possibly a legacy from ancient paganism, which placed its Tirnan-oge, The Land of Youth, in the waves "on the west side down from Aran, where goes the sun to its couch."[33] The desire for the ageless, deathless land prevailed all up the western coast, and was strong in Kilkee in 1868-78, and perhaps even still. I myself saw the mirage several times in 1872 giving the perfect image of a shadowy island with wooded hills and tall towers springing into sight for a moment as the sun sank below the horizon. I have also heard from Kilkee fishermen legends, like that embodied in the verses of Gerald

[30] "Voyage of the Hui Corra," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiv. (1893), p. 37; *Voyage of Bran*, (ed. Kuno Meyer), vol. i., p. 12; "Voyage of Maelduin," *Revue Celtique*, vol. ix. (1888), p. 45.

[31] *Voyage of Bran*, vol. i., p. 14.

[32] It is marked on a series of ancient maps from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries.

[33] *Grolla an Sháiqu*, (Irish Texts Society, vol. i.), p. 21.

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Griffin, of men starting seaward to reach its fairy shores, and never returning. 773

Another magic island was Kilstuitheen, or Kilstuiffen, in Liscannor Bay. On the southern shore, in 1839, there was said to have been an ecclesiastical city swallowed up by the earthquake that split Innis Fitae into the present three islands,[84] which suggests derivation from O'Conor's then recent version of the various Irish Annals. On the northern shore the tradition was fuller. Kilstuitheen sank when its chieftain lost its golden key in battle, nor will it be restored until the key is recovered from its hiding place, some say, under the ogham-inscribed gravestone of "Conan" on Mount Callan. (When that place was dug out only bones and rusted iron were found.)[85] The island, with its golden-roofed palaces, churches, and towers, may at times be seen shining far below the waves, but once in seven years it rises above them, and those who see it then are said to die before its next appearance. The fishermen [731] [763]

> "point how high the billows roll above lost Kilsafeen,
> Its palaces and towers of pride
> All buried in the rushing tide
> And deep-sea waters green."[86]

Comyn, in *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh* (1750), connects it with the raid of Crochaun, Dahlin, and Sal in the time of Finn and their defeat of Ruidin, Ceannir, and Stuithin. Legend near Lehinch places the battle at Bohercrochaun. A pretty legend in 1878 told how those rowing over the sunken island smell the flowers of its fields through the waters.[87]

[84] Annals of Ulster, Clonmacnoise, and the Four Masters; *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 304.

[85] *The Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, ser. ii., vol. i. (1872), pp. 269 *et seq.*

[86] *Monks of Kilkenny.*

[87] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., pp. 300-4, vol. ii., pp. 74, 99; *Handbook to Lisdoonvarna* (1896), p. 64; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxx., p. 289; *Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. iii., p. 197, where I have collected the materials at some length. Other sunken monasteries and churches are alleged at Monaster Letteragh, off the coast of Mayo, and the Cantillons' Church in Ballybeigue Bay in Kerry. I do not regard the story in the *Irish Penny Journal*, vol. i., p. 362, by J. Geraghty MacTeague, as anything but a work of fiction; it is very artificial,

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773 Another sunken island off Loop Head is named by the Rev. John Graham and the Halls,[38] and called Kilstiffin or Kilstapheen. I heard no such tradition in Moyarta, but O'Curry alludes to it without contradiction, although he was a native and son of a veritable repertory of the local legends of the Irrus.[39] The towers and other edifices were visible at times under the waves, and its [821] inhabitants sometimes raised destructive storms over its site when all around was calm.

The large lake of Cullaun (Cullaunyheeda) near Tulla is reputed to cover a palace or a city. Tradition said that a chief, Sioda MacNamara, (probably the restorer of the beautiful "Abbey" of Quin in 1402), was carried into the depths by a [776] "water horse" which he had caught and trained. The rock off which his treacherous steed leaped was shown before 1870, and the chief was believed to be sleeping till "the last weird battle in the west," doomed to win Ireland her liberty and a glorious place amongst the nations. It seems likely that it was from the same lake that magic cattle issued, as I heard about Kilkishen, near it, in 1877. A local bard, Michael Hogan, refers to the lake in one of his poems,[40] but how far he embodies local legend I am unable to say. His light-hearted, if lawless, hero is surprised on coming to "Cullaun's fairy waters" to see a noble park instead of a lake. He hits his cow in surprise, and she leaps the fence. Following her he reaches the palace of an ancient chief, who entertains him and dismisses him with his marvellously fattened cow. He finds at the fair that he has been absent for a year under the waters of the lake.

> "Thro' wild Cullane's embowering shades—
> Beneath the silver starlight, sleeping,
> He pass'd—the trees, with silent heads,
> Upon his darken'd path hung weeping.

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following other romances, and contradicting the genuine legends in several particulars.

[38] *Mason's Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 490, collected by Rev. J. Graham from the Behanes, Landers, Contis, and Cooneries of Kilrush and Carrigaholt; Mr. and Mrs. S. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery etc.*, vol. ii., p. 436.

[39] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii.

[40] *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, pp. 13, 20.

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He turned to see the Lake's blue plain,
With all its emerald glories round it;
But there appear'd a grand demesne,
By towering elms and poplars bounded.

. . . . . .

He look'd behind—the scene was gone—
A thrill of wonder gather'd o'er him;
For, nothing save the blue Lake shone
With all its silver curls, before him."

There was another legend, but a very vague one, about a city submerged by a magic well under the beautiful lake of Inchiquin. The legend seems to have died out near Corofin. Another curious legend about Inchiquin lake was found by Dr. G. U. MacNamara, to the effect that the lake originated from an old woman piercing the earth with a spindle, when waters burst out and filled the valley.

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(To be continued.)

FIFTY HAUSA FOLK-TALES (*continued*).

19. *The Hyæna and the Wrestling Match.* (B. G.)

This is about the Hyæna. She had a husband, a male hyæna.[1] So she arose and got a vessel to go to the stream. So she went and came to (the place where) games were being held (by) the Elephant, the Buffalo, the Hartebeeste, the Roan Antelope, the Gazelle, the Jerboa, the Hare, the Lizard, and the Water-lizard. They were having a game. Now the Elephant was the great one, the umpire. So she (Elephant) said,—"Now (in this) wrestling game whoever throws down another may eat the flesh of him whom he has beaten." Now, on the Hyæna's arrival, they said,—"Are you not coming to play?" She said,—"I am (playing) certainly." When she had put down

[1] "Kura" is nearly always employed for both sexes, but the word itself ending in "a" is feminine; only in story 28 is it made masculine. The male hyæna is larger than the female.

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XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date, for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, 825 are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle.*—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

778 The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round 825 Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an 233 irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural 823 stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St. [776] Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknocksun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolty-doolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaunk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1. [P 241]

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A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE (*continued*).

XIX. *Rocks, Caves, and Stones.*

133 *Rock markings.*—The strange marks left in the flat crags by
773 the weathering of softer portions and of fossils have caused
823 numerous legends. The dish-like hollows in the crags below the hermitage of St. Colman MacDuach, at the great "Cliff of the Eagle," in Kinallia, the name Bohernameesh (*bothar na mias, i.e.* road of the dishes), and marks like the footprints of men and animals all seem to have been seized on by the saint's biographers.[1] Colman, brother of King Guaire "the hospitable," of Hy Fiachrach Aidhne (the district round Gort), early in the seventh century retired to fast and pray in the wilderness. After a most austere observance of Lent, a companion monk yearned for meat, and Colman pitied him and prayed. The king's Easter feast therefore flew to the hermitage, pursued by the whole Court. Terrified by the angry warriors Colman again prayed, and their feet and the hoofs of their horses stuck fast in the rocks. The legend is still told in a form identical with that in the Life.[2] The servant is said to have died from the feast, and his grave is shown beside the Boher.[3]

Where Burren and Inchiquin meet, on the Glasgeivnagh Hill,

[1] Cf. *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* (ed. W. Stokes, Rolls Ser.), p. 405.
[2] Colgan, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ.*
[3] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100 (Ms. Royal Irish Academy).

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the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Cahercommaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of Lon the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of Lon's seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like débris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown Luno" of (Macpherson's) Ossian.[4]

At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbanaheanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In this bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.[5]

On Scattery Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara[6] floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint.

[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

[5] From Messrs. Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtdarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

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776 823 Another knee-stone of St. Senan was beside the creek of Poulanishery on the opposite shore to Scattery. Between Dysert O'Dea and Rath Blamaic a rock with two basins bore the marks of St. Manawla's knees when she carried off the round tower of Rath.[7] St. Columba's thumb and finger marks are shown on a limestone boulder in the road fence near the lane to his entrenched church in Glen Columbcille. The bosses on the "plague stone" at Tomfinlough church were the two plague swellings torn from a woman's head and thrown against the stone by St. Luchtighern.

773 823 Not only the saints, but also Finn MacCumhail and his warriors have left marks on the rocks of Clare. A huge rock named Cloughmornia or Cloughlea, near Ballysheen and not far from Sixmilebridge, has in its sides long straight gashes where Finn and his band tried (or sharpened) their swords.[8] Finn's fingerprints are visible on a rock which was brought to Cullaun House near Quin early in the last century by the facetious Tom Steele from Birr in King's County, where it was seen by Thomas Dineley about 1680. The stone was called "the Navel of Ireland,"[9] and the V-marks are now regarded as the footprints of the cock that crowed at St. Peter's denial.

Hughey's Rock, a great boulder on the brow of the ridge between Edenvale and Rockmount near Ennis, bears the finger-marks of Hughey, a giant who threw it at another giant from Mount Callan.[10]

Caves.—I have heard at Newhall of a cave "between Ennis and Lisdoonvarna" in which runs an underground river that

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 50. A similar legend occurs in the *Book of Lecan.*

[8] *The Battle of Magh Leana*, p. 30 (notes). The legend was still surviving at Ballysheen in 1899.

[9] *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archæological Society*, vol. viii. (1864), p. 360. The cock legend is often represented on tombstones etc., and appears at Ennis Abbey (1460). In a version gathered by me in eastern Limerick, the cock says,—"I'm only a cock, and you're an apostle; but I'm the better gentleman any day!" In *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 415, the Angel Victor in the form of a bird leaves footmarks on a stone.

[10] So told me by Shaneen (Little John) O'Halloran at Edenvale in 1869 and later.

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makes old people young. The exact locality is unknown, as the people who have gone to use it have never been seen again. Lismulbreeda cave, in Dromcliff parish and near the Kilrush road, is marked all over its soft sandstone sides and roof with crosses, figures, and initials, which it is considered lucky to cut on a visit. Horses are said to have come out of the Kilcorney cave, and left descendants in the valley below.[11] The caves of the Broc-sidh and Faracat have already been mentioned.[12] There is a tale of a wild boar in a cave some miles to the north-east of Feakle.

Dolmens.—These were supposed to be giants' graves, and, if called "altars," the word was understood in a Christian sense, with a belief that they had been used for the mass during the prevalence of the cruel penal laws. For example, Altoir Ultach was said to be named from an Ulster priest who served the mass there in the eighteenth century because the nearest magistrates were more tolerant than those of the north.[13] There is no evidence of any general popular belief that they were pagan altars, such an idea, where it existed, being derived from the "learned ignorance" of local gentry. The dolmens were, and are, called *leaba* (*labba*, "bed") and *leaba Diarmuid agus Grainne* (*labba 'iermuth a'us graunya*) from the elopement of those famous lovers. Legend on the west coast of Clare told that Diarmuid, finding that Finn could learn all the movements of his wife by biting his prophetic thumb, put seaweed on the cover of the dolmen. Finn, finding that seaweed was over the lovers, imagined

[11] This cave was famous in the eighteenth century for throwing out floods of water full of fish—(*cf. inter alia*, Gough's *Camden*),—and this is remembered traditionally, although the floods have been rare and insignificant since 1833. Other similar phenomena are recorded in Irish annals; *e.g.* in the Ulster Annals in 759 "Bennmuilt poured forth a stream with fishes," and in 867 "a strange eruption of water from Sliabh Caalann with little black fishes."

[12] Vol. xxi., pp. 180, 183, 479. The Faracat, according to *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, was a monstrous cat having a crescent on its forehead and a sharp nail in its tail.

[13] In fact, the Westropps, Drews, and Patersons acted as trustees under friendly "Protestant discoveries" to preserve the properties of the O'Briens, Macnamaras, and Barretts from the hostile effect of the laws, c. 1730-90.

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773 823 that they had drowned themselves, and gave up the pursuit.[14] Possibly the legend originated the association of indecency with the Clare dolmens found in 1808 by Hely Dutton.[15] A girl would not guide him to the fine one at Ballygannor until assured [831 that he was a stranger, for, it was explained to him, a woman 778] could refuse nothing to a man at one of these monuments. Some such reason probably lay behind the belief that, if a couple unblessed with children went to a *labba*, the defect in their house- [842] hold was amended. I have been told that this belief existed in Clare, but got no direct evidence of it. The Tuam an goskaigh monument in Ballynahown was believed to be the grave of a giant buried with his great sword, to recover which certain young men dug and overthrew the stones; but they found nothing, and afterwards prospered so ill that they had to emigrate.[16] Grania was supposed to be a male saint near Feakle, and the "scoop" in the west end of Tobergrania dolmen-well at Ballycroum was supposed to be the place where he put in his head to drink.[17] The long grave of Ballykelly, famed for its lovely outlook high over the woods and lake of Doon on the flank of Slieve Bernagh, was known as "Old Grania," but the term "Granny's bed" was not unknown in East Clare. I heard no legend of a "hag" at any dolmen. The alleged rites at the "Druid's Altars" at Maryfort and Carnelly have already been noted.[18] When two blocks of the latter structure were removed for use as gateposts, they returned during the night to their original site, and were never again removed. The hand of the destroyer of a dolmen near Ruan was struck by a splinter and severely injured,[19] the remains of the blocks being left where

[14] Corcomroe legend, given to me by the late Prof. Brian O'Looney.

[15] *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 318. On the Continent indecent names and legends are also attached to dolmens; cf. Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 555; vol. iii., p. 845.

[16] Messrs. Hilary and Kelleher of Oughtdarra.

[17] So among the inhabitants in 1896-9.

[18] Vol. xxii., p. 51.

[19] Told to me by the sufferer. His predecessor, who had overthrown some blocks, was also unlucky. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 212.

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they lay,—but no vengeance overtook those who levelled many dolmens at Miltown near Tulla.

Basin stones occur not infrequently at or near dolmens, *e.g.* at Kiltanon and Newgrove near Tulla, and at Ballyganner and Cappaghkennedy on the borders of Burren, at the last of which five appear in one slab. In the Life of St. Mochulleus,[20] written in 1141, a basin "like a large *hydria*" was found in a polished block of stone when the saint was levelling the site of his church on Tulla hill. The basins were evidently regarded as very early in date even in the twelfth century. The basin of Doughnambraher (Dabthach nam brathar) at Kyleeane has already been noticed.[21] A large block with two basins is amongst the remains at the place of inauguration of the local kings at Magh Adhair.[22]

Pillar stones and rocks.—Boughils ("petrified boys") and *farbreags* ("petrified men") have been referred to in Section I.[23] A frog-like natural rock, close to the west side of the road from Kilkishen to Fortanne, was blasted and removed after 1887, but I have a sketch of it made in that year. There was a vague saying that it had been made, (and I think I was told also that it was a creature petrified when cursed), by some saint. The Coad stone is said to have been the same height (*com fhod*, "equal height or length," whence Co'ad),[24] as King Teige Acomhad O'Brien about 1460. It, the Cloghlea near Tomgraney, and the "cross" near Kilmoon were evidently boundary marks of church lands. Another legend of Coad

[20] *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvii.; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xli., p. 9. The basin was filled with milk by a hind. Similar legends are found in Glendalough (County Wicklow) and elsewhere. Giraldus tells how a hollow stone at Skellig used to be filled with wine for the sacrament. [773]

[21] Vol. xxii. (Plate IV). The name is Killian on the map, but is pronounced Kyle-e-aan, with a long stress on the last syllable.

[22] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., p. 79, vol. xxxiv., pp. 190-1.

[23] Vol. xxi., pp. 183, 186, and the legend of Knocknafearbreags on p. 185; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv. (c), p. 97, vol. xxvi. (c), p. 471.

[24] *Com-fhod* is also a synonym for a grave. [P. 258]

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slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran. 172 823 776

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign. 823 173

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman. 823 778

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional, 346 773

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

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346 founder of the building, and is held to explain the rude and
773 inferior work of parts of it. Quin "Abbey" was built by the famous Master Mason Gobbán Saor, who twisted the spiral pillars of its beautiful cloister with his own hands. The builder of the south transept (1433) fell from its gable, and was killed where a tombstone with the scribed figure of an axe marks his grave. The north-west corner of Carran church overhangs, and is destined to fall on the wisest man that shall pass below it.

344 *Castles.*—A belief similar to that about Carran church was
773 attached to Ballymulcassel or Mountcashel castle. It is a peel tower, built by King Conor na Srona, about 1460, on a steep little knoll of rock beside the road from Sixmilebridge to Kilkishen. It was to fall on the handsomest person, and gossip told of a very ugly man who always took a longer road to avoid passing it. The same legend and gossip was attached to Newcastle peel tower, near Limerick and not far from the border of Clare. A wizard who lived in Shalee castle was so pestered by his wife that he flew away with half the tower, which remains as Glen castle near Ennistymon station. A guest praised Dysert castle to its owner,
344 O'Dea, and wished that it were full of gold. "I'd rather have it
173 full of O'Hiumhairs," replied O'Dea,[7] the family so complimented being a small but warlike clan, of which one member fought in the wars of 1313-8 and is reported to have slain Richard de Clare at Dysert in 1318. I heard in 1869 that the castles near Doonass were built by seven brothers, and that six came to an untimely end at the hands of the seventh, but the legend seems now forgotten at Clonlara.

346 *Round Towers.*—The peasants seem never to have adopted the
776 various druidic, Cuthite, phallic, and other theories of 1770
173 onwards from the so-called "educated classes." To them, as to our earlier writers, the towers are steeples built by saints. John Lloyd, in 1780,[8] calls that of Scattery "the loftiest old Steeple in the Kingdom." Michael O'Brannan, in 1794,[9] tells how St.

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 157. The tale closely resembles a legend of St. Caimin of Iniscaltra and Guaire Aidhne at Iniscaltra, Lough Derg.

[8] *A Short Tour etc.*, p. 21.

[9] Poem on Shannon, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. ii., pp. 15-8.

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Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

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son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the other side of the "Rine."

XXI. *Miscellanea and Addenda.*

173 556

Treasure legends and hunting.—Many forts have been much defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are few. Caherscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib of 1551),[14] is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*" or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the finest of all drinks").[15] Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially [187] of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost. Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results, in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver) near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka castle,[16] near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told [172] to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

[14] In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrogh, Earl of Thomond.

[15] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xx., p. 368.

[16] See also vol. xxi., p. 344. [p. 264]

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frogs (at Newmarket-on-Fergus) would creep down their throats. The finding of flukes and other parasites in sheep and cattle has helped the belief, and a beast's tongue, if swollen, is supposed to have been "stung by a worm." We have already noted a cure for "worm" in cattle,[24] and the milk of the "Seven Sisters" plant[25] boiled in milk cures similar cases in human beings.[26] 825 [757]

Frog.—Besides jumping down children's throats, the frog cures a cough if held by the legs, put for a moment into the sufferer's mouth, and returned to the water.[27] In a variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, at Bohatey, near Lough Derg, frogs mob and devour a boy who has tortured one of their number.[28] Frogs are said to have been rained on a field in eastern Burren more than once.

Insects etc.—An old woman at Maryfort in 1869 scandalized her neighbours by asserting butterflies to be dwellings of the human soul, and that her own soul would go into a "blessed (tortoise-shell) butterfly." Whence she derived this belief is unknown. I heard about the same time, and, it may be, from the same source, a horrible story of a "spider as big as a *bonnive*" (young pig) sucking the blood of children in the dark, but I forget the details. It is lucky to kill the "daudayle" (*dubh dael*) or "devil's coach-horse," for this hideous but harmless creature has the repute of having guided Judas to Gethsemane.[29] When it "cocks up its hind end," you should crush it, preferably with your bare foot, for you are then spared a day, hour, or week in Purgatory. In Clare I have only found this belief near Tulla, but it is common in other counties. [774]

[24] *Ante*, p. 58. [25] Cf. *ante*, p. 57.

[26] So the late Michael Hasselton, an astrologer and herb doctor near Limerick.

[27] So Mrs. O'Callaghan.

[28] So Capt. Hibbert of Woodpark. A similar tale is told about toads by Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerary in Wales*, cap. ii.

[29] In Ulster the "connach worm" replaces the beetle. The tale says that men were sowing a corn-field when Our Lord and the faithful disciples passed, and that He told the sowers to inform His pursuers that they had last seen Him when they were sowing. The corn at once sprang into ear, and the pursuers, on getting the answer to their enquiry, were turning back when the worm cried out that the seed had only just been sown. The Ulster tale was collected by Mr. W. F. De Vismes Kane, D.L., of Monaghan. In Clare Island (Mayo) Mr. N. Colgan found a similar tale told of St. Patrick and his enemies. [184]

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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must. They descend from father to son with the house and 600
the farm on which it stands.

It is into this room that the old couple move upon the 592
son's marriage. They move in among the symbols of family 888
unity, among the religious symbols of the house, into surroundings of a certain religious or sacred character. If we can discover certain other indications of the nature of this room, we shall feel warranted in drawing conclusions as to the nature of the change which takes place in the status of the old couple and the attitudes which surround them.

This room we have described is the "west room" mentioned in the "writings." It is so literally. With remarkable 592
uniformity the small farmers' houses in West and North 342
Clare face east and west, the room behind the hearth being 775
generally at the west end of the house. Now the west room 888
and the western end of the house are associated in folklore with the "fairies" which still flourish in the countrymen's minds, especially among the older generation.

The Irish "fairies" include the spirits of the dead. In fact, the identity between the two is explicitly recognized. It was so at Luogh, where older men could name the "good people" with whom they had had encounters.

It is the west room and the western end of the house that the fairies frequent. Where a fairy path is believed to pass the house, it passes invariably along the western end of the house. The country people of Luogh and other parts of West Clare give this as the reason why no extensions, outhouses, sheds, or other structures are built on that side; bad luck would result. In Luogh none of the twenty-five houses of the townland had any structure of any sort built there. And it is often in this room that the fairies spend the night when they visit a house on their nocturnal travels. If we remember that the old people, relinquishing their adult status and preparing for death, move into this room amid heirlooms, religious pictures, and photographs of dead

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 342 775 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, 342
the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on 354
a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Done- [184]
gal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in 592
Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted 354
to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All [775]
Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the [171]
fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, [184]
I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach.* The outshot 352
with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district 171
between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach,* and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh,* where the in-

He later put on the suit for Mass, and wore it at the Divine Service and afterwards, until he returned home. Although there was a disparity of over thirty years in the ages of my cousin and that of his father, the resemblance caused by the unusual dress was striking. 764 292

This custom of wearing clothes for the dead is still quite strong in Tuosist. It is also practised either fully, or in varying degrees of decadence, in some of the surrounding parishes, as well as in the south-western part of the adjoining county of Cork. In the Dingle peninsula, further north, in West Kerry, the custom now is to bring a suit of clothes for the dead person in a parcel to Mass on the three prescribed Sundays. A suit of clothes which had already belonged to the deceased suffices for the fulfilment of the practice in some districts in the southwest of Ireland, where, as far as can be judged by the vigour of its survival, the custom had its stronghold. It is difficult to say whether the accounts of the wearing of clothes for the dead in Counties Cavan and Wexford, which I have been given, point to a country-wide distribution in olden times or to the practice having taken hold in these two widely separated counties through some other cause.

The elaborate ceremony carried out by Mrs. Healy after the death of my uncle, which I have described above, was confined to the first Saturday evening and Sunday morning. My cousin took off the suit on his return from Mass on that day, and wore it at Mass again on the two succeeding Sundays, without any preliminary ceremony. Even when a neighbour wears the clothes instead of some member of the household, he must return them to the house on each of the first two Sundays; he may retain them altogether after the third Sunday, if the immediate relatives so arrange. Otherwise they are given to some poor person to wear in the normal way. A neighbour is called upon to wear the clothes only when there is no relative of the deceased who can fulfil the custom, e.g., when the sons of the dead man have emigrated or are too young for the purpose. [602] [621]

Almost everybody in the parish of Tuosist, where, as I have said, the practice of wearing clothes for the dead at Mass on three consecutive Sundays after the interment is still faithfully carried out, is a Catholic, and a large congregation attends Mass every Sunday. After Mass, it is customary for the people to spend some time chatting near the church when Mass is over. They all notice that a certain young man from the parish, as the case may be, is dressed like an old man on three particular Sundays, but, knowing well that he is fulfilling the age-old custom referred to, they pass no comment on it. While the custom of wearing the clothes for adults is still strong in the parish, the Saturday evening and Sunday morning rituals have, however, now died out.

It is evident from the words used by Mrs. Healy in the Saturday evening ritual ("may you wear them in the next world as they will be worn for you in this") that the traditional and original intention of the making of a special suit of clothes in this manner was to provide the dead person with raiment in the afterworld. That the dead were believed to have some kind of continuing existence after passing from this life is also indicated by, among other things, the variety of goods which were buried in coffins with the dead: in Ireland, we have references to such things as food, pipes, tobacco, defensive weapons, tools or implements, watches and other jewellery, as well as money, being placed in coffins in former times. The practice was well-known in other countries also. Prior to the introduction of the special cerements for the bodies of the dead, which have come to be known in Catholic lands as habits, it was customary to fit out the dead for burial in their best clothes. Young unmarried girls were often dressed as brides in Northern Europe, 764 775 292

764 perhaps to indicate that they had become the spouses of Death itself. It is probable, therefore, that
775 the Irish practice of providing, as well as the habit, a normal type of new suit for the dead, is but
292 an extension of the burial of clothes with the corpse itself. The fact that it is pagan in its origin, yet is still carried out by devout Catholics in a parish like Tuosist, who wear the clothes for the dead at Mass on three Sundays after the death has taken place, shows both the tenacity of pre-Christian ideas concerning the afterworld and the easy way in which Pagan ideas and practices were in this, as in many other cases, clothed over with Christian raiment. Indeed, it is possible that the Church itself, may have been instrumental in getting the Catholics under their care to wear the clothes to Mass for a certain number of Sundays with the intention of reminding the congregation of the person who had died and of getting them to pray for his soul.

764 Stories about the displeasure and even the sufferings of the dead whenever the custom of wear-
292 ing special clothes for them was not properly carried out are legion in the areas where the practice was known. I have already mentioned some of the traditional rules which had to be observed in the making and the wearing of the suit. Disregard of any or all of these was believed to give offence to the dead, and the reaction of the deceased to such indifference or carelessness on the part of the living relatives forms the basis of most of the stories. A few examples will illustrate their trend.

764 A man whom I knew well died in Tuosist about thirty years ago. A cousin of his was asked to
787 wear the clothes for the dead man on the three Sundays after his burial, and he agreed to do so.
292 During the week after the first Sunday (on which day the suit was first worn to Mass), a friend of mine, a shoemaker in the district, told me that he had a very vivid dream. He dreamt that he was making his way home along a lonely by-road late at night, and at a certain place, where the dead man had often stacked turf, he saw the dead man sitting with his back to the fence at the roadside. The moon shone down on his face and the shoemaker had no difficulty in recognising him in the dream. Plucking up courage, he saluted the dead man.

"Good night, Dan," said the shoemaker.

"Good night, Tim," was the reply.

"How are you?" asked the shoemaker, knowing that he was dead.

"I'm all right, except for one thing," said the dead man. "They gave me a fine suit and a fine shirt and a fine hat"—and he indicated each garment in turn—"but look at the boots they gave me!" And he pointed at the tattered boots on his feet.

"I'll attend to that, Dan," said the shoemaker, and he bade the other good night and made his way home, very much frightened.

Next morning he awoke with vivid recollections of the strange dream he had had during the night. It was Sunday morning, so he knew that the dead man's cousin would be wearing the clothes for the deceased at Mass for the second time that day. The church was four miles from his home, and having walked the mountainous road to Mass, he joined the congregation at the cross-roads afterwards. Without saying anything to anybody concerning his dream, he kept on the look-out for the dead man's cousin, and when he saw him, the shoemaker went over to join the group of men who were chatting with him. The shoemaker quietly concentrated his attention on the boots which the cousin was wearing, and it did not take long to establish that they

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 the effect they still exert upon him after they are
183 gone.

761 So the dead join 'them'. On the border-line
776 between the mundane world and the mysteries of
[775] Faith, they find a place in the ranks of the good people, as the misnamed fairies are often called. They are the denizens of rath and fort and hill and cave. There is nothing fundamentally incompatible between this and religious belief, however folklore may escape the control of dogma and sometimes, in its humbler vein, run counter to it. The dead do affect the living, in memory and in tradition. Death is the 'other world' to which we are all advancing. As one fellow could say in a burst of poetic imagery growing out of folk-belief: "The old people in the west room are going down with the sun".

Why not indeed, when we remember that the good people are not always by any means evil and forbidding? They exert their power for both good and evil. They bring reward as well as punishment. The countryman has friends among them as he has friends among men in this world. An Aran woman put the belief for Lady Gregory in words which transport earthly loyalties to the other world. "There's often fighting heard about the house when one is sick. That is what we call the fighting of
181 friends, for we believe it is the friends and enemies
183 of the sick person fighting for him."
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775 Indeed, the same aids that make up habit and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

give base to sentiment in mundane affairs can be projected into the after-world. One must act toward 'them' in death as one acts toward the living; one must do the 'friendly' thing. Thus they can tell a story in Luogh of a man there who they say "was walking along the road and he saw the ghost of his brother. He didn't say anything to it and it walked home with him all in silence. They sat at the fire for a long time, the [living] man waiting for the other to go, so he could go to bed. Finally, the dead man said: 'You have put me to great trouble tonight by not saluting me when we met. I must go now and now I won't be able to defend you in the council in the rath.' And it was true for him, too: the cow that was ailing with the man was taken the next week."

Thus, you see, one can envision 'them' both in mystic terms and in terms sometimes very bald and intimate indeed. The younger people in Luogh still follow the old belief, though they leave its expression to their elders. Yet they could explain the tumour on an old man's head in words which show how near 'the other people' are and how direct is the aid one's friends among them can give:

"Old Seumas was coming along the road drunk and he met a crowd of them on the road and one of them slapped him. If he'd taken the slap he'd be all right but he took off his coat and dared any one of them to stand down to him. They beat him and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 gave him a terrible knock over the poll. One of
183 them that was great friends with him saved
753 him."
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Nor are 'they' always fearsome, even in their
181 most wondrous apparitions. The dead are too
183 much a part of life in rural Ireland for that. For
775 the old people they are too near; too many friends have crossed the line between this world and the next.

Thus the dead may come to cover nearly every association of life; in the eyes of some of the old people, the other world of wonders where the 'other people' reign spreads all about them. To the initiate in such mysteries there is nothing to fear. Let me give you my record of one conversation of mine with a very old man of North Clare, a man of clear mind and great folk-learning. His answers to my naïve questions will show you how well he felt, accepted and expressed the symbolic order of the countryside:

I asked what a 'cowl' was. "They are the houses where the family has died out of them. People would live in them if they wasn't too bad, falling down and dirty. You often see old people sitting in them." "What people?" I asked. "The people that used to be in it," he replied. "Do you mean ghosts?" He answered me scornfully: "You might see lights in the cowl and you going along the road at night and you pass people you don't know and you can't tell if they are ghosts or not. Of all the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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people you pass in the town, how would you know what it is they are?"

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Only the young men, like myself, would be frightened by this uncertainty in rural Ireland. For all but the old people, such mysteries are awesome and compelling. Once again, folk-belief fashions itself for a social end. In belief the believers unconsciously agree upon an emotional organization of human relations; folklore expresses once again the organization of the community upon age and upon the past. The old couple who move in among the fairy influences and the symbols of family tradition and sentiment in the west room, the old people in whom rural kinship is centred and through whom sentiment is directed to the mystic past of ancestral blood lineage, the old men and women round whose influence the local community patterns its local life, need not fear greatly the imagery that symbolizes the very place they occupy. Rather they can come to immerse themselves in it. They grow very learned in this lore. They are the ones who sometimes come to manipulate it. They are themselves, sometimes, half fairy. 'Wise men' and 'wise women' are always old. It is no accident that the commonest representation of the fairy power is an old man or woman. They are the initiates in the mysteries of the fairy faith.

In this fact one can see the final synthesis between social habit and belief. Rural kinship organizes men and women in a common orientation

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 backward and upward toward the dead and the
183 ancestral. The community bestows ever greater
888 status and influence as one progresses further and
776 further toward the age-grade of the old, in whom
775 tradition and precedent are preserved and expressed. In the sphere of credence and emotion the fairy faith acts to the same end and is so designed. The design, in this instance as in all the others, is not conscious; no one has planned it. It is a design drawn from the social order and acting back upon it. Its imagery is traditional, but its efficacy is of the present. And for that reason it lives.

Thus, in the identification between the old, the dead and the influences which affect the goods, the conducts and the values of the countryman's life, the symbolic order is completed. Folk-belief, in the ancient fairy-cult, with its age-old imagery, makes a complete emotional synthesis, overlying and reacting back upon the sentiment and habit out of which it springs again and again with each generation that learns the old way of life. Consequently, each new generation works a change upon it; elements of the synthesis undergo constant re-embellishment and shift of emphasis. Both old and young are controlled by it, but each in a different way. Today the young are sceptical and a little rebellious; they repudiate much of the
[178] older imagery. All that the Church condemns in the 'pisherogues', they also condemn. Today folk-belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

But that does not mean the death-knell of folklore, as some students of folklore seem to think. Far from that, it means only that a symbolic order like any growth in human life must change and grow onward. New forms and new imagery will grow up to clothe in emotional terms the necessary reformations of habit and sentiment in social life, and new syntheses will fashion new belief, changing the old or supplanting it inch by inch.

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One can see this process at work in rural Ireland today. Those who repudiate the fairies repudiate only the outmoded symbols, the outworn images. They do not deny the necessity of a symbolic order in their own lives. The student of man is coming to think today that they could not do so, because no people can. There must always be some socially efficacious organization of the sentiments of social life in the logic of belief and imagery. Belief provides first of all a conception of life; then, and then only, does it carry on to become a conception of the world. But life among men includes emotional attitudes at once very necessary and very satisfying; one can starve the spirit only so far. And for that reason the logic of a social order is not that of science and prose, it is that of emotion. Consequently, those of the countryside who repudiate the older symbols merely demand that their emphasis be shifted. They do not cry out for bald

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

178 science, nor abandon symbolism. They merely
183 insist upon new symbols.

There are currently two directions in which the shift can be made. And, as usual, the popular mind has room for both movements; for they are related, and both are compatible with the countryman's social order. The first direction leads more deeply into the greater Faith of the countryman. Religion can come more and more to provide the emotional balances necessary in social life. Thus Catholicism is a growing, spreading force in the countryside, overtaking many an area of the mind where the 'pisherogues' still flourished till recently. The second direction leads to a reaffirmation, in ever stronger form, of that part of belief in which the dead and death are related to the disturbances and the securities of social life. After all, this is one of the indispensable cores of faith, and it expresses most forcefully the organization of life upon tradition and continuities. It can be retained even if the more picturesque imagery must go.

It is for that reason that the fairy gives way more
178 and more to the ghost in rural Ireland today. Dead
183 'Tans' now patrol the roads where the banshee may
775 have walked. In stressing the part of the dead in folk-belief, the necessary synthesis between emotional associations and social life can still persist and respond to change and growth. The ghost does his work as well as does the fairy, though he is perhaps less given to poetic dress.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be [788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch, 754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 821 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these 825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27):—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Conzaile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It [551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is sub- 776 ject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 854 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [262]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be buried alive with its wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [823] [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

775 bank by the roadside; after a time it rises, walks across the road to the mound, and then vanishes.

The ghost of Major —— is reported to be sometimes seen riding a phantom horse at a spot near Carn, and circles on the grass are pointed out as marking the scene of his equestrian feats; he is also said to ride at times to Bingham Castle.

776 There is a strong belief in fairies, and many people are to be found who say that they have seen them. They are said to dance at night and cause fairy rings; they dwell in grassy mounds and travel from place to place, using stems of the ragweed as horses.

The mirage which is sometimes seen off the coast is ascribed to [822] the fairies if it assumes the appearance of boats or ships; they are believed to have been seen to land on the shore, haul up their boats, and vanish. Many stories are told respecting the impudent pranks of these beings, and to their revenge for some injury, disease in man and cattle is sometimes ascribed. A man may become paralysed or waste away and die from fairy influence as well as from the evil eye, but their malice may have a less serious ending, and may only produce some disfigurement. Some time ago a man was one day walking homewards, when he saw lying on the road a bright new razor; he picked it up and took it home with him, but after shaving [828] with it got *sycosis menti*, and the implement was then declared to be a "fairy razor."

Women dying in puerperal fever are believed to have been taken [775] by the fairies to act as wet-nurses, and infants may be "taken away," and changelings put in their places. The changeling may be got rid of by putting on a roaring fire and throwing him behind it, when he [372] at once vanishes in the smoke. The *ignus fatuus* is believed to be caused by the fairies to lead people astray.

The attentions of these creatures are not expended on human beings alone, for they may revenge themselves on those who vex them by attacking domestic animals. Cattle becoming ill suddenly are supposed to be "shot" by the fairies, and the owners will often go to a great deal of trouble to find a person who possess a "fairy [823] stone," which is the only remedy. These stones are treasured very carefully and are kept wrapped up in a piece of cloth; they are used by rubbing them on the afflicted animal, and repeating a charm or prayer. Unfortunately no specimen of these stones was seen, so it cannot be stated positively whether they are flint arrow-heads or not.

A farm-house at a place called Illaunglass, in the Mullet, has a tale connected with it, illustrating the causing of disease in cattle by

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a late Neolithic burial cairn at Lyles Hill near Belfast I found 172
tens of thousands of potsherds which had been collected from domestic refuse and thrown into the cairn during the course of its erection.[1] The broken plates which may be seen exposed on the graves in some old burial-grounds in Co. Mayo are [764] probably placed there in continuation of ancient practice. The breaking of pots is one of the elements in Hallowe'en pranks— [769] one might almost say rites—and again we notice the association with the dead, for All-Hallows is the time when the dead are believed to return to their homes.

It would appear that by breaking a pot you broke its spirit; 772
and by transference the power of the dead to do harm. Readers 775
will recall the significant lines from *Hamlet*, referring to the suicide of Ophelia: 'Her death was doubtful . . . for charitable prayers, shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her.'[2] In some places in south-west England potsherds figure in the 'lent crocking' rites at Easter: like Easter eggs they are symbols of fertility. The association of fertility and decay, of life and death, comedy and tragedy, is clearly displayed in the wake games which are described in Chapter XX. This association, we note in passing, is ever-present in the mind of the Irish countryman, and the juxtaposition gives dramatic quality to the work of many Anglo-Irish playwrights.

This is not the place to enlarge on the technology of early 323
pot-making, but it may be observed that the designs, fabric 172
and finish of the Neolithic family of pottery in Ireland were far superior to those of succeeding periods: indeed it was not until wheel-made pots found local markets in the medieval towns that technically superior vessels were made in this country. In late prehistoric and early historic times the wealthy were able to import fine wares in small quantities from the 323
continent, but the peasant homes over most of Ireland apparent- 415
ly did without pottery—the Gaelic word for potter is a loan-word—and vessels of wood, metal or leather did duty for the now universal imported 'delph'. The Dutchman, Gerard Boate, writing in 1645, said that 'the use of earthen vessels hath been very rare among them, and to the most part unknown even

[1] E. E. Evans, *Lyles Hill: a late Neolithic site in Co. Antrim*, H.M.S.O. (1953).
[2] *Hamlet*, Act V, Sc. 1.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Malbay. She was white-skinned and had well-shaped white hands. The party tried to make friends with her, giving her bread, which she ate. Then a Quilty fisherman got frightened, said she was "something bad," and threw a pebble at her, on which she plunged into the sea and disappeared. Soon afterwards King Edward died. An old man at Spanish Point said the last mermaid was seen the year of the Great Famine (1846), and that such an appearance foretells a public disaster. 776 [787]

VIII. *Ghosts and Haunted Houses.*

Here, "where'er we tread is haunted," and libellous, ground, so that in the majority of cases the names and definite addresses must be withheld, although in every case I am acquainted with them. 775

Taking first the ancient buildings, I am unable to state the nature of the haunter of Lisananima (ghost fort) in Kilcorney, or of the other places of like name, although, as regards the former, Dr. George MacNamara and I did our best, about 1897, to find out, for the ghost was said to have been seen recently; so also at Toberatasha (spectre well). At Lisfuadnaheirka, near Kilkee, we were told in 1896 of a "horned ghost," but "Fuadnaheirka" was a local "terror by night" who slew people, as Eugene O'Curry says his bare legs knew when, (as a boy in 1816), he lived close to Dunaheirka (or Liscroneen), a large fort, which was the chief seat of this being, and was evidently a place to be run past on dark winter evenings.[6] It is not wonderful that stories should be so vague. A form "that shape has none" terrifies some nervous or drunken person, who afterwards speaks often of the ghost, but can give no details. The subject is usually regarded too seriously for verbal embroidery.

A fisherman, being detained on Scattery Island by a storm early last century, and hence unable to attend mass at Kilrush, went up into the "cathedral"[7] to pray. After a time he looked up and saw a crowd of monks and laity with priests at the altar in

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol i., pp. 370 *et seq.*

[7] This is the Church of St. Mary near the Round Tower.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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●775 gorgeous vestments. He shut his eyes in terror and prayed, and when he ventured to look again he saw only "the clouds flitting over the roofless church and the old ravens croaking and wheeling over their nests on the tower top."[8] At Stamer Park I was told, in 1873, that "a string of monks" used formerly to pass up the garden to the Abbey of Ennis, but, even then, it was only a vague tradition. A 'she-ghost' haunted the canal bridge of Clonlara, while it was being built in 1769, and was at last exorcised by a slab, still remaining, with her figure cut on it in low relief and the date (Plate XIV.). This figure closely resembles the grotesque (and usually indecent) carvings of prophylactic female figures called "hags of the castle," and now [532] *sheelanagigs* from a well-known carving in County Cork. Two undoubted examples of these figures remain in Clare, a much-defaced one above the door of Kilnaboy church, and a perfect one, struggling with two dragons, on the ornate, and possibly eleventh-century, sill at Rath-Blathmaic church.[9] The Clonlara figure, if older than 1769, may have been brought from one of the ruined towers of Rinroe, Newtown, and Aharinagh, not far away.

The back avenue near the castle of Teermicbrain or Adelphi was haunted, until 1885 at least, by a dark shadowy figure. A "grey man" haunted the lonely storm-beaten shell of Dunlicka Castle, on the cliffs near Kilkee, one of the wildest and most beautiful parts of that glorious coast. He tried to point out hidden treasure, but failed owing to the fears of the man who saw him, and who, when at last venturing back, could not remember the exact hiding-place. The disgusted treasure guardian has made no later attempt.[10] Doonmore, a shore castle farther north, was notorious for the ghastly sounds heard in its vaults, probably caused by waves lapping into rock crannies,

[8] Told by an old peasant of his grandfather, *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. viii. (1841), p. 548. The same person one moonlight night saw a dim figure making signs, and, following it, found his cow with her legs firmly fixed in a hole and in great danger.

[9] See Plate XIV. and the figures in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., pp. 27, 33.

[10] From two residents at Moveen in 1908.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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but imputed to the perturbed spirits of those who had perished miserably in the dungeons.[11] At Clare Castle, there used to be seen a ghost, said to be the wife of the first Colonel George Stamer of Carnelly (1680), who held the place under Lord Clare. Legend said that her infant had sprung from her arms through an open window into the river Fergus beneath. The mother went mad and died, and her ghost could be seen vainly searching for her lost child along the bank.[12] But in the records her place is occupied by a business-like lady who brought much land and money to her husband, survived him, and died, (evidently in full possession of her senses to the last), at a ripe old age with her children around her. At Carrigaholt Castle, on the Shannon, the ghosts of Lord Clare and his "yellow dragoons" could, I was told in 1875, be seen at military exercises in the castle field.[13] This seems now to be forgotten. Fortanne, or Rosslara Castle, near Tulla, and the old roadway south from it, were reputed to be "airy" (eery); the haunting beings whispered, laughed, and rustled in the hedges, and "things flew out." (I have often been there in the dusk, and, as in most lonely lanes on a hill-slope facing "the wild west wind," found the noises very weird and curious).

While, as we know, the country in darkness abounds with uncanny sounds, this is still more the case with old mansions. Such houses, with disused chimney flues and attics, ill-fitting casements, ivy and snails to tap on the windows, owls to flap and moan overhead, rats, shaking doors, and warped stairs to imitate footsteps, only need a legend and a few nervous inmates to become treasure-houses of ghost-lore.

One house on the verge of the Atlantic was haunted by a "breathing ghost," and had also a footstep passing with a faintly-clanking chain up and down a lobby. Our servant, after a couple of weeks in 1887, heard the first, and we heard the footsteps

[11] Alluded to by Crofton Croker in "Florry Cantillon's Funeral," *op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), p. 23. I heard it locally in 1892.

[12] So Mrs. Stamer in 1881.

[13] Their ghostly appearances sliding through Moyarta, and their plunging into the Shannon, are alluded to in 1816. Cf. Mason, *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 430.

[P. 207]

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●775 frequently. I finally located the latter in a dully-jarring sash which resounded in the flooring, the "chain" was a loose pump-handle, and both were actuated by the fairly regular recurrence of a prevailing sea-breeze in the stillest part of the night. A little inland, and not many miles from Lisdoonvarna, two rooms in an old family house are reputed haunted. The ghost of a faithless wife used to be seen getting out of the study window, just before dawn on the anniversary of her elopement. Loud noises, shaking the floor, were heard in the room overhead. The ghost of a legendary "Countess of Antrim," whose portrait was preserved there, haunted the hall and passages, and it was told that she had made away with her stepson in order that her own child might succeed. She was not visible, but revealed herself in a rustling of garments and turning of handles. A fragment of a poem on her crime is remembered:—

> "The blood on the cradle's the worst blood of all,
> For the young Lord of Antrim lies dead in the hall."[14]

Corofin has several haunted houses, both new and old, in and about it. One ghost haunted a house in the village for half a year, putting out candles and throwing sods of turf about at night. Near Moyhill, in the same district, a ghost was seen by a Mr. O'Neill coming through a ceiling; it used to put its hands on sleeping people, causing much alarm, but, like the preceding spectre, it lapsed into the Silence after a few months.[15] In a house near Ennis, a soft footstep hurried on some nights through several rooms, in one of which a cupboard used to open after the noise; this was not only seen and heard by the family and accustomed guests (like myself), but by new visitors unacquainted with the story.

It is not clear whether the beings that haunted two farmers' houses between Kilkee and Liscrona were ghosts or elves. The families began to "see things," and notably a little old man who used to sit on a sod of turf. This inoffensive haunting was more than the occupants could bear. One of them fitted up a cow-house as his dwelling-place, and the other actually built a new

[14] So Mrs. Twiggs. [15] So Dr. G. U. MacNamara.

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house. The old residences are in ruins, and their desertion took place over sixteen years ago.[16] 775

It is to the credit of the people of Eastern Clare that it possesses hardly any haunted houses, but there are two of transcending interest.

The first lay near the Fergus. A footstep followed one at night on the upper stairs, and curtains were drawn round the old-fashioned beds,—if not by "a hand of bone," at least by a "thing that no man sees." On more than one occasion all the bed-clothes were lifted, "as if by four people," off a sleeper. Even the late Mr. Richard Stacpoole, a man of iron nerve, told how once on a visit this happened to him; indignant at what he supposed to be a foolish joke, he got up, locked the door, searched the room, and kept awake, only to find the action repeated twice; he struck a light at once, but no one was visible. Hands were laid on the doors and their handles. Anyone who "married into" the family or its connections was liable to have their hands kissed in the dark on their first visit. An invisible [763] dog used to howl before deaths, being only heard from the room of the relation of the foredoomed person. A ghost, (said to be of no less a person than Maureen Rhue, the famous Amazonian O'Brien of 1640-50), used to pass up and down the long, straight [773] avenue. Legend said that, after the murder of her twenty-fifth husband,—(only three husbands are known to history, which is also ignorant of their murders),—she was fastened into a hollow tree and starved to death. There were also the ghosts of two nuns,—for the place was said to have been a convent, without a particle of evidence,[17]—and, in 1838, a lady on horseback at a "Druid's Altar." (The last-named was probably a pure invention of the then owner.) There was, however, another ghostly object of which I heard from an eye-witness still living. A dark spot used to break out in the wall of a quaint old brick-floored room, with an inside window looking down into the kitchen. The legend was that an old nurse, a pensioner of the family about 1750, used to live in this room, and died, aged over 90, suddenly

[16] So Mrs. MacDonnell.

[17] Except that skeletons, and, it is said, crucifixes, were found in the garden just beside the house.

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● 775 and mysteriously. One evening the kitchen-maid brought up some beer, and fancied she saw "a black shadow hanging over" the nurse. The latter was much alarmed at hearing this, and took her chair over to the inner window, where she could see into the kitchen. Next morning, when the girl brought up the breakfast, the beer stood untouched, and the old woman sat leaning back with a look of appalling horror on her face and with her hands resting on the table. The other servants ran up at the maid's shrieks and lifted the nurse, who was stone-dead, with a deep cut on the back of her head. There was a small patch of blood on the wall, and ever since it comes out as a dark spot on the wall about the anniversary of the nurse's mysterious death.[18]

The second house, now a dismantled ruin in a lonely valley in the eastern hills, had a far worse reputation. It brought misfortune on anyone who rented it, and a heavy doom lay on its actual owners; certainly, when my family rented it for the shooting, its reputation was maintained by the falling on us of a subsequent heavy trouble. Its most ghastly legend will be told later, and relates to a skeleton found buried under a peat rick in the yard, when the rick was removed owing to scarcity of peat; according to another version, told at Tulla, the rick was set on fire, and, when the white ashes blew away, the unconsumed skull of a murdered man remained.[19] One room was fastened up with iron clamps, tradition said, because its floor was soaked in ineffaceable blood. Another legend, (which I never heard locally or, indeed, in Eastern Clare at all), told how long ago a detachment of a Scottish regiment, quartered there, was poisoned by the owner. The drummer boy escaped the poison, but only to be brutally murdered as he tried to escape from the window. My informant (in the far west of the county), says that "the boy's ghost has been seen by many credible witnesses." There was some vague tale of a light on the lake, where dredging yielded a vast quantity of bones, said to be human and mainly of children, but I distrust profoundly the *dicta* of Clare people on comparative anatomy. The stories I give next were told me by

[18] So Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort.
[19] So the late Mrs. Spaight of Affock.

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at least six of my relatives, including my mother and two of my brothers. Those who stayed in the house rarely rested undisturbed, for whisperings and mutterings, footsteps down the passages, low sobbing, and strange shrieks and laughter were usual. Sometimes grimmer visitors came. My mother told how she and my father were awakened by the clang of a door and heavy footsteps. Someone then entered their room, though the door was afterwards found locked, and they both felt a horrible sense of some fearful presence in the darkness, seeing,—but unseen. After a few long minutes of suspense "It" passed back through the door and up the corridor, another door crashed to, and nothing more was heard. The clanging door was believed to be the one clamped up. My sisters also had a tale to tell. The curtains of their great bed had been carefully drawn and tucked in all round, but in the night my eldest sister awoke, and, feeling a gust of air and hearing a rustle, called to the others. She found the curtains drawn back, and all heard a horrible mocking laugh, but nothing was found in the room when the candle was lit. Noises and rustlings, with groans, sobs, and hurrying feet in the corridor, were heard for four nights. My brothers attested most of the noises, and I believe that most occupants of the place told similar tales.

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(To be continued.)

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825 the domestic hen. The "soft egg laid by the cock" was looked on
776 with suspicion, and so was the egg of the bat, which was even
[262] unlucky to find, and could be used for malignant charms.

Stoat.—In Clare the stoat is always called "weazel." A corruption of the strange Irish name *Feaség* (the little beard) is as often used, even by English speakers, as the *whishshoge* or *whushshoge*. The creature was equally disliked and respected. It is wished "Good morning, ma'am," by some, and generally saluted by raising the hat on meeting; but others spit and cross themselves. It is regarded as peevish and persistent; "as cross as a bag of weazels" is a proverb in east Clare, while Finn is compared to a weazel in the pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne. I have heard many stories about its revengefulness "when its nest is killed," and of one of its persistent attempts to get at a corpse in a house in south-east Clare, rather, it was thought, for magical purposes than from hunger. Old belief ascribed to the animal the power of poisoning. At Carnelly a labourer told that when cutting a meadow near the "Druids' Altar"[12] he killed a young weazel. Soon afterwards his wife brought him his dinner and a can of sour milk. While they talked, she cried out that a weazel was spitting into the can, but the man laughed and drank the milk. Soon afterwards he got violent gripes, and gave himself up for lost. The doctor had great difficulty in persuading him to try any remedy, and his wife was almost scandalized by his recovery. A similar tale was told at my old home, Attyflin, in which young weazels were not killed but put on a wisp of grass safely in a bush. The parents were seen spitting into the milk, but, on finding the young ones safe, they returned and upset the can.[13] So "even the weazel has justice." Both stories probably originated in the animal's love for milk.

Rat.—A Clare woman told me that a man whose love was
[775] rejected by a girl living in Limerick city died, and his soul went into a rat and used to bite her throat until she had to emigrate.[14] The rat tried to follow her and was drowned, and so the persecution ended. A curious "parliament of rats" was held near Durra in

[12] Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort and others.
[13] Late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[14] Mrs. M. MacCormick.

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years of age are buried; after that age bodies are taken to the parish graveyard at Killilagh. In Shanekill, on the Shannon bank opposite Scattery, it was believed that the dead were moved supernaturally under the river into the Sacred Isle.[24] 766 [775]

I know of a case in eastern Clare where parents, having lost several of their children, tried to break the deadly record by changing their burial place, but, alas! without success.

I am not aware of any belief in Clare that the spirit of the last-comer in a graveyard has to watch the place or to bring water to the souls in Purgatory. There was, however, recently a race between two funerals to Rathblamac graveyard, which may imply some such belief. The custom of burying a stone from a church or an ancient tombstone in a new grave, (which has led to the disappearance of several early monuments at Clonmacnoise), prevails at Tomgraney, two ancient tombstones having recently been recovered on digging new graves. As we have already seen,[25] St. Mochulla's well avenged the encroachment of its landlord on the *killeen* beside it, but the graveyards of Kildimo, near Kilkee, and St. Catherine's at Kells, near Corofin, are under cultivation. Dr. MacNamara noted a curious allusion to the last-named in O'Daly's fierce satire on "The Tribes of Ireland" in 1610. The people of Kells are there reproached for "digging the churchyard in the snow." The oldest Irish Law Code, the *Seanchus Mór*, has a clause against digging in a churchyard or breaking bones there. Kildimo was levelled, and its site included in an orchard by 1816.[26] Interference with human remains is deeply and dangerously resented, yet spells are sometimes worked with them.[27] The stealing of a dead man's hand for a butter charm is said to have taken place near Kilkee,[28] and the bones of a Franciscan with the brown cloth of his gown still adhering, found during the repairs at Ennis Abbey, were nearly all taken, but probably from most reverential motives. 764 [775] [765] 789

son of oak tree. There is a Knockaunatinnagh (little hill of the foxes) beside his church. [776]

[24] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii. (1841), p. 545.

[25] Vol. xxii., p. 211.

[26] W. G. Mason, *A Statistical Account etc.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

[27] See *Burial and Skull Beliefs*, vol. xxii., pp. 55-6, 456.

[28] Vol. xxii., p. 340.

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779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. [789] His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while [795] his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

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The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

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The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'" 592 162 [591] [589]

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts. 428 582 423 428 888 [583] [562]

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond. 428 593 [888] [776] [578] [167] 423 162 [428]

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of 582 621 [609] [167] [593]

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779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, [123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying 793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and • 776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them 165 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are 562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of [829] men at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk [788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obligations can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some 771 828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical 828
anecdotes and ballads.

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dis- 000
possessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard 771
God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of 796
personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island.

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls [753]
malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts [752]
Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such [796]
occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which [825]
run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him.

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic 771
faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many 715
of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly [123]
or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if

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771 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience, 775 "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

776 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St. [178] Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are [182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming, 796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent [262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people [273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only, 796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St. [527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the [177] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which, [292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [987] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

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539 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November
796 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with
[178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main
[182] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous
[252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter.
796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during
776 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few
798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil
796 and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is
776 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be
782 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck
[231] during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes
[826] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying
[237] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to
825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to
417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following
53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed
[184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with
776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld.
711 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies;
• 715 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771 775 "strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783] penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771 magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776 God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754 presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178 right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826 tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822] of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171] symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826 hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828 power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754 who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793] even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775 Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772 fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

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775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century. Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

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342 In most countrymen's houses, especially in
353 poorer regions, the 'west room', that behind the hearth, is the only room except for the kitchen and the loft. In some houses, however, there is another room too. This is usually a bedroom, at the opposite end of the kitchen. This was the case at my host's.

353 But in either case it soon becomes apparent that there is something special about the west room. At Luogh this struck one's eye immediately. At my host's the room was a sort of parlour into which none but distinguished guests were admitted. In it were kept pictures of the dead and emigrated members of the family, all 'fine' pieces of furniture, symbolic brass objects brought in by the bride at marriage; the rubrics used when mass was celebrated in the house, in fact all religious objects, crucifixes, and so forth, except the 'blessed lamp' and a 'holy picture' in the kitchen. Nor were my hosts alone in keeping objects of sentimental and religious value in this special room. Other houses did likewise. The general feeling was that such objects 'belonged' there.

353 But these facts had little significance until others
776 began to appear. Here we enter the realm which we ordinarily call 'old custom'. The 'west room' had still another association, of a supernatural cast. This appeared only gradually. The 'west room' was of central importance in fairy lore.

In this all Luogh concurred, though few could

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be found to give it expression. The cult of the 353
fairies, these days, is branded as 'superstition'. It 776
is under fire from townsman, school-teacher, and priest. But even those who could express no views could be seen to act as if they too were believers.

Where fairy paths were remembered to pass the house, they went by the west room. Where food and water was left out at night, it was left there. No outhouse, shed, or other building could be built on this side of the house. That would bring bad [777]
luck. Very few could or would tell why; they left it to a common inference. The building would be 'in the way'. Nevertheless, reluctant as they might be to express belief, my hosts none the less practised it. No house of Luogh's twenty-six had any shed or [342]
outhouse at its western end.

Here were two very definite associations with the west room. What did they mean? The attitudes they represented were respect, and perhaps a little fear; but it was respect that was dominant. What was this respect and why should it show itself in fairy-lore and in household furnishing?

Faced with such a problem the anthropologist's 353
usual recourse is to history. Traditionally the west 773
is the land of the dead. In the ancient sun-cult, in 776
which early man has likened his own progress to that of the sun's daily and yearly course, the west is the sacred abode of the dead. Even today, we speak of dying, half jocularly, as 'going west'. In ancient Celtic mythology, the heaven at life's end,

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353 *Tír na nÓg*, and Avalon, the island of apple trees
773 which the Greeks knew as the Garden of the
776 Hesperides, and which in a Christian rendering the blessed Saint Brendan may have reached, lies to the west in the setting sun. It is very likely that in this folk practice there survives nearly all that remains of an elaborate early mythology.

Alas for our questioning, no one remembers Avalon in Luogh, *Tír na nÓg* is a dying legend. If you ask the old men about the west, tales of sunken cities and strange sea-creatures greet your ears; ask about the fairies and fairy paths and you get, first, indignant denials of such degrading belief, and then anecdotes, tales, incidents, which illustrate their character and their power for good and evil. Ask about the furniture of this room, and you learn only that it is the right and fitting thing that the objects fill this room and no other. No one can trace the continuity; tradition is felt in the mass rather than in the particular.

We are left then with what we can hear and observe about the present. To question upon anything else is to get nowhere; it merely starts a chain of obscuring generalities more inspired by the question than by what Luogh feels and thinks and does.

But the case is not hopeless. If one casts one's
353 reliance upon observations and questions in the
888 present, new facts appear. The west room figures in marriage. In the contracts drawn up it is often

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beyond the haggard wall, as we have noted. All the 241
many tasks of patching and repair are men's work, 221
they fall to the farmer-father and his sons. The 462
annual round is theirs, as the daily one belongs to the women.

For the countryman, the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to the Epiphany or 'Little Christmas', is the dead of winter. All farm work is at a standstill. The farmer is free to devote the season to holiday. Outside the weather is unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. For him the year has stopped and is waiting to renew its forces.

With the Epiphany, the succession of bitter wet days does not end, but holiday does. One's mind turns to the earnest work of the year to come. The farmer plans his spring planting. On drier days he can clean ditches and drains; he can lay in seed and repair machines. In the evenings, conversation on [521]
visits and at home revolves round the coming planting and calving, and traditional experience goes from mouth to mouth. In fact, it is the time for all new plans, for it is Shrovetide, the season of match-making and marriage.

St. Bridget's Day, February 1, marks the begin- [805]
ning of spring. For St. Bridget promised every [776]
second day thereafter would be 'hard'. The return of the 'hard' days of wind and clear weather herald the land's drying-off. Through February and March, gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted,

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221 fields made ready for the return of the cattle to
241 them. Each 'hard' day is more than welcome, for
462 then work in the fields can go on. By St. Patrick's day, they say in Clare, the potatoes should all be 'down'; after that there still remains much to do, [776] though the worst is over. St. Patrick promised that after his day *every* day would 'come hard'.

Through the rest of the spring, work is at its most intense. Potatoes must be 'stirred' and 'landed'; other root crops 'put down'. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the season of greater milk yields and intensified butter-making. Before that in February and March [443] the 'great spring fairs' take place, and the year's buying and selling of cattle must be done.

Then, gradually, with the return of warm weather and the drying-off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is often the first summer month. Soon the bogs are dry enough for cutting the year's supply of turf and for stacking it to dry under the summer warmth at the bog's edge.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the first fruits of the farmer's labour begin to appear. The first crop is cabbage, which was planted at odd times very early. It is practically the only green of the diet and old people remember June or July *an* [261] *chabáiste*, 'the hungry month', when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semi-starvation upon cabbage. Today new varieties of potatoes mature as early as June. But

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538 historical question involved. But even then, we are left with a very broad field of inquiry. All the acts and rituals associated with belief in supernatural powers not directly recognized and regulated by the official doctrine of the Church remain for us to examine.

776 538 The chief of these powers is usually called the 'fairies'. The country-people have many other names for them which they prefer. But, most often, they feel no need of distinguishing them by particular names. They call them simply 'them'. In the pronoun they summarize both their nameless power and their immanence. No greater specification is necessary where such powers crowd so closely in upon one's life. The acts and rituals which spring out of this belief are similarly broad in scope. They range from minor doings and turns of speech of daily life to the most hidden practices of rare and deadly black magic.

Perhaps the native name gives the best definition. The whole fairy-cult is under attack these days. The forces of Church and school are pitted against it. It is nothing more than 'pisherogues', the countryman will tell you. The word is usually translated as 'superstition', but the English word contains too great a bias for us to use it. The 'pisherogues' are much more than ignorant superstitions. In the light of an acquaintance with the practices of the world's peoples, they are easily understandable in much broader terms. They form

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a symbolic order overlying the values of social life 776
and clothing them in emotional terms in much the 538
same way as do unofficial dogmas and unofficial, non-logical cosmologies among all peoples, not excepting those of our own urban civilization of today. In that, they respond to recognizable sociological and psychological necessities. In its own way, Yankee New England is as fertile of such non-logical beliefs as is rural Ireland. Rural Ireland is different only in that she has preserved an older and more ancient terminology in which to build her particular symbolism. She has her own genius in the matter which expresses the age-long continuities of her culture.

I think you will perhaps understand me better if I go on to sketch out the symbolism which the 'pisherogues' contain.

First, one must notice that the Irish countryman 781
is a very devout man. His life is ordered in his 789
adherence to his religion. Much of his habit of 776
mind and his view of the world responds to his Faith. He is a devout and practising Catholic. But he is also devout in another direction too, very often. Just as there is room in his mind and heart for patriotic fervour along with religious zeal, so is there room for fairy belief. Sometimes, of course, these devotions may conflict; but ordinarily they need not. They can intermesh and support one another.

Thus in his daily life, one finds the countryman 789 776

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789 carrying out many acts which are related both to
776 his Church and his fairy belief. His allegiance to the first is, of course, definitely greater, but he has room for both. One finds him, for instance, 'blessing' himself on setting out for the day's work, or on beginning a trip or a new undertaking such as the potato-planting, with two purposes in mind. If you ask him, you learn, first, that he dedicates his day or his enterprise to God. He throws himself upon divine protection. Secondly, he seeks that protection to a definite end. He hopes to ward off thus the forces of evil and ill-luck. He hopes to assure himself the enterprise will prosper. He guards himself against molestation from 'the good people'.

That does not mean he is motivated by fear even when 'the good people' are concerned. His devotion springs from deeper and wider emotional sources than mere fear. Rather he makes his peace with the fairies; he pays them their due. His religion is *the* Faith to him, and his acts are primarily, first and foremost, acts of religious devotion. But the popular mind is not distressed very much with logical inconsistencies, and somewhere in the act, very secondarily, of course, may lurk the other lesser faith he holds.

776 Thus, in one aspect, the 'pisherogues' occupy, like nearly all folklore, the border-line between the natural, profane, mundane world and that of the supernatural, the sacred, and the religious. It is

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along this border-line that we must trace the countryman. 776

I say fear is not his chief motive. For the good people are not entirely fearsome. I have often heard countrymen, steeped in the old lore, say, "They'll leave you alone if you don't be in their way". One makes a great mistake to think of any holder of popular belief as a person ridden with superstitious fear, unable to make his way through ordinary life. As one countryman told another collector, Lady Gregory, in the days before the war: "If we knew how to be neighbourly with them, they would be neighbourly and friendly with us".

It is a question, then, of giving 'them' their due. 776 Where older custom survives, certain precautions 626 must be taken. You are probably all familiar with many of them. Food and water must be left for them at night. Dirty water must not be thrown out at night. For the night is a 'lonely time'; 'you wouldn't like to be out in it'. The fairies are abroad. Were the water thrown out, there is danger that it might dirty them as they pass along a fairy-path or make a nocturnal visit. Then they will be angry, and disaster will follow. A hen, a pig, a cow, even a child may sicken and die.

But this anger of theirs, you see, results from direct affront. And that affront lies, really, in improper conduct. In the case of dirty water, it lies directly in improper conduct of the household.

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776 626 Throwing out dirty water is slovenly and bad management. The community condemns it as much as do the fairies who might be wetted.

Consequently, one can begin to see the existence of a projection of values into the world of belief. Dangerous as 'they' are, they bring good luck and prosperity as well, if they receive their proper due. Their favour follows proper conduct of the household and good household management in daily life. Thus one finds such statements possible as the following, in which an old fellow of North Clare, an authority on such matters, speaks of 'their' nocturnal visits:

"They very often put up at a house in the night. They would come to certain houses, and if they liked the house and it was good and clean and everything swept for them, they would come often to the same house, and that house would be prosperous. If it was dirty and they found no comfort in it they would not stop. They'd go to strong houses like the Careys' [he named a comfortable, neat family of small farmers in the neighbourhood]. You often see a little old woman going along the road and stopping in asking for a bite to eat, and you might give it to her, and she looking to see was it a good house for them to stop in it."

Thus many tales told of the good people point a moral. In this light such a common tale as that of the herdsman's house is readily understandable. The herdsman, as a landless man, is regarded by

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the small farmers as being a 'cut' below themselves; consequently, his untidiness is a byword among them. One version of the story goes, in synopsis, as follows:

"Many families moved into a herdsman's place, but they were all chased out of it. Finally, one family moved in, cleaned up the house, and a 'paving path' round it. A little old woman visits the wife, borrows a cooking-pot, and is similarly well treated. In gratitude she explains that the woman of the house and her husband will always prosper and never be molested, because they alone of all the families had cleaned up the place where 'they' walk."

In this way the values of daily life are projected into and reinforced by the supernatural world. The same state of affairs holds good even in the convention of social intercourse. The vocabulary of the countryman is full of homely pieties. On entering a house the proper greeting is "God bless all here". On coming upon another at work, one says, "God bless the work". Similarly, "God spare you the health" is 'put on' anyone who 'coors' with you. Any praise of person, child, or animal is accompanied with a "God bless it"; any mention of unpleasantness or danger is followed with some such homily as "God bless the mark", and so on. If one omits such pieties, one is sure to rouse resentment in the listeners. For one must remember that emotion supports these conventions. But the

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152 resentment springs from other causes, too. These
576 formulae are known to the folklorist as 'protective
626 formulae'. He means by that that they have reference to the lesser faith as well as to the greater that the countryman holds.

751 If you ask the countryman why he uses such
152 terms, he will give you several answers. First, "You
576 have right to do it, because you owe it to God",
626 and then, second, "It will bring good luck, it will keep 'them' away". For the countryman, both answers are true. The phrases are both acts of pious invocation and protective devices warding off evil. Their omission is really dangerous. It puts the person or thing so neglected in jeopardy; the negligent speaker is open to suspicion of an evil intent. Thus there are many stories which attribute disease, disaster and death to such omissions. In this way again, persons and things of value to the countryman are brought into the scope of his beliefs and attitudes. The forces which affect them are brought into a shape in which he can understand them and in which he can cope with them.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this process
● 776 is to be found in the way in which the goods by which the countryman lives are brought into his belief. The good people affect the household and all its goods. They 'take' those things which one values, round which one's interest and sentiments, as a member of the farm-working family, are centred. One Galway woman phrased this idea to

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Lady Gregory: "They have cows, and sheep, and chickens out in the raths just the way we have them with us. For it is they that take them when the bad luck is on us and then whatever we do won't stop them." The 'other people', as they are also called, are not very different in this regard from ordinary mortals; they surround themselves with much the same materials of life. 776

So, then, when ill-luck descends upon him, the countryman knows something at least of its nature, enough to allow him to cope with it. Take the example of butter. Butter is an important staple of farm diet; it is of great interest to all the family group. Yet the making of butter, especially with a hand-churn, is a notoriously tricky process. Should it fail to come in the churning, the matter is one of grave concern. One woman of North Clare put the matter very clearly when she said: "And queer things do happen to butter, and it's a fact it often wouldn't come and you don't know why. You'd be trying every way you could and still you'd be without it but for what your friends would give you." 234 776 789

But in that event, the countryman is not left helpless. His belief provides him with a sure knowledge of what the trouble is, and of what may be done about it. The fairies have 'taken' the butter and must be induced to bring it back. Many of the tales he has heard year after year attest to this taking. For instance, here is the synopsis of a story

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234 776 789 told by a Clare farmer of friends of his, whose house he named:

"Two men return from a fair to the house of one 234 of them to have breakfast. There the woman was 776 churning, but no butter would come. The first of 789 the men suggested maybe they [the men] were 539 holding it up, and they left the house, but with no result, for when they returned there was still no butter. Upon finding out that an old woman, a stranger, had borrowed a bit of milk the day before, the first man closed the doors, took a ploughshare and held it in the turf fire. Soon there came a knock at the door, and after the third knock the woman of the house went to it. Then an old woman's hand passed a jug of milk through the crack of the door and a voice said: 'put this back in the churn'. She did so, and immediately all the milk turned to good butter."

But the farmer knows, too, that the fairies do not 776 always work alone. There is often a human agency 754 involved along with theirs. Here one enters the really dangerous 'pisherogues', the practices of wicked magic. A human being may perform a rite or omit a precaution in such a way as to bring about a visitation of ill-luck and disaster. He may transfer disease and sickness from his own farm to the next, he may steal the butter of another's churn, he may destroy, steal, maim and kill by inducing the supernatural powers to commit the havoc.

776 789 But sometimes the human being who brings

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about such a visitation upon another does so un- 776
intentionally, innocent of evil intent. A person can 789
be either lucky or unlucky; he may tap a fairy [777]
power without meaning to. Thus one humorous story, a favourite yarn of the fairy-lore, found widely over Ireland, relates the misadventures of one rash fellow:

"A man that was usually drunk was going by a 789
fort one night and he heard 'them' talking in it, and 776
saying, 'I'll take half of it and let you have the 539
other.' 'I'll have all of it', shouted my boy-o, never thinking. When he got home, his wife was making butter, but she couldn't get any to come. But now she tried again, and it came in and filled the churn twice over and ran over the floor. There was a big farmer near by, and it was all his butter she was getting. She was an honest woman and knew the butter wasn't hers and she wanted to make it known she hadn't anything to do with it, so she told the priest about it."

Other things than butter are so taken, of course. 776
Cattle figure prominently in folk belief. Cattle, as 789
we know, are very important to the countryman. 233
The time of calving is a crucial event in farm-family life. Consequently, precautions must be taken; danger is abroad, and rites must be performed. If cattle fall sick, other rites drive off the threatening good people and restore the cow to health. Fairy-tales are full of the taking of cattle by the people of the raths.

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755 Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well,
● 776 bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take
[233] anything from hens to men and women. When they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless, he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper and friend of former years. The vitality has gone out of him or her. The country-people can believe that 'they' have spirited away the real person and left in his place "some spent old man that they had with them for a long time". The real person is 'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not
[753] mean that they do not recognize what we might call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too well, from bitter experience. It means only that they have an explanation for it that infuses it with the associations they have about their belief.

776 For the belief in changelings, about which you all have heard a great deal, has its root in the fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die
[761] are taken, except the old people". Only for them is death the natural course of events; all others have fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

776 Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy
183 belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by
82 any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

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of an emotionally charged explanatory scheme. 776 183 82 The trouble overtaking them becomes interpretable for him; he knows what has happened and is in some measure ready to take the necessary steps. The fate of his goods and his fellows affects him vitally, it upsets the attachments he feels. But belief is common property; it is given to him and held for him by that community of his fellows of which he is a part. It is a socially held ideology to which he gives credence and in which he is dependent upon his fellows for ways and means, for corroboration, for solace.

But this ideology is much more than a mere interpretative device. 776 183 Certain anthropologists have tried to see in magic and magic belief a groping, primitive science; but the concept has failed them if pressed very far. For the fairy faith enforces definite behaviour upon the countryman; it lays down rites and practices which he must perform. If he is to recover his goods that have been taken, restore his threatened animals, friends or children, he must follow a definite course. That course is laid down for him again by his community of belief and habit.

If we examine the course he must adopt to combat ill-luck and disaster, 776 we see a new incorporation 789 into belief of the things he values. In cures, nostrums, and other means of combating evil, the goods upon which he and his fellows are dependent and to which they are attached are once more

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776 789 brought into the scope of belief. They become repositories of 'power'. They come to carry in their own substance the same supernatural efficacy for good or evil which belongs to the good people.

754 776 789 So, when the good people strike, the countryman who still follows the old folklore is not unprepared. If butter fails to come, for instance, he can take a hearth-coal and sear the bottom of the churn. He can apply iron in a variety of forms; for "there is great power in iron". He can use a hazel-stick, of the kind used in driving cattle, to cure cattle, or to give relief from sickness. He can ward off the disease that has struck his farm or household by transferring the dead thing to another's land, thus forcing the evil 'penalty' to follow it. Or, even more simply, he can merely transfer an egg, a potato, the hearth ashes, of his own threatened household to another's land or garden, and the danger goes with them. These practices drive off the 'good people'.

Similarly, when any of the household goods fall into another's possession, there is danger ahead for the household whose integrity is so broken. If butter fails, borrowed hearth-coals, or tools, or milk may hold the cause. One has merely to find the missing bit of goods, restore it to its rightful place, and thus restore the breach through which the good people have made their dangerous entrance into the life of one's family group and its possessions.

Naturally, then, transfer of this sort is dangerous

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to the persons to whose land the object is transferred. Consequently, the fearsome 'pisherogues' of black magic often take this form. An egg, a potato, a wand of hazel or thorn mysteriously found in one's own garden is evidence of witchcraft, and danger for one's land and stock and family. That the reason ascribed to the outbreak of ill-luck may be arrived at after the fact, makes it none the less compelling. Belief is a social habit which events confirm.

776 789 754

I shall give you two examples, one of them about a dead thing, and another where simple, homely household objects come to have supernatural power. The first is the account a shopkeeper in a country town gave of a countryman-customer of his. "A countryman came into the shop one day and I asked him how things were going. Bad, said he, he was after losing three cows. I asked how was that, and Martin said it was the 'pisherogues'. He was working down in the bog and found the carcass of a cow there. What did you do with it? I asked him. He left it there, said himself. He was not going to move it for fear of the 'pisherogues'. Didn't they carry it there to put the curse on him, and wasn't it the next week his own cows sickened and died? . . . Then I was asking him, why didn't you get a vet, man? Sure, he said, why should I throw good money after a vet, and I knowing very well what happened to them?"

The second example is an account of disaster and

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776 its happy termination from a farmer who told the
789 story in a traditional vein, but whose own record of
754 actuality it is. I might say that the role of the curate
[193] in the episode was probably very different from that which the countryman imagined it to be.

"A fellow he knows was hilling potatoes and he got three young fellows to help him. Each of them found an egg in the garden, one a hen's egg, the second a goose egg, the third a turkey's egg. [He told this with great dramatic effect.] Well, the man hadn't any poultry on his farm at all.

"The boys went home and told their mothers, and the women told other women about it till it got all round the parish. The curate heard of it and one day he went over to the farmer and
[793] stopped in. They talked about all sorts of other things, and finally the curate said, I am sorry for you. Why? said himself. Because you are going to have bad luck. And he told him about the eggs.

"Well, the farmer had terrible hardships. His stock died on him, he'd go out in the morning and find his ewes dead on their backs with their legs in the air and lambs dropped dead out of their wombs. He had five cows in calf and after that spring he had only one cow left. A pig died on him, and his sister took sick, like to die herself she was. [After a
[793] time] the curate came . . . and he held masses in the farmer's house.

"He's doing well again now and has a fine lot of stock. That was about four years ago."

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Here then one can see a new kind of incorpora- 776
tion of the values of the countryman's life into 789
belief. The goods round which his interests are 754
centred come to be either beneficial or dangerous to 183
the group to which he belongs, depending upon their connection with it in the critical situations which threaten disease and disaster. Ordinarily, there is nothing supernatural or dangerous about an egg or a hazel-stick, to the countryman. But in these special situations, in which tradition comes to his rescue, they take on a wholly different character. Thus we have the seemingly paradoxical case that the things of greatest 'power' are not by any means always the wondrous, unusual, and fearsome things, but the homely articles of use and familiar associations. Iron cures, but iron is not mysterious. An egg becomes a sign of witchcraft; a pinch of salt protects one against evil; but neither are fearsome things in themselves. Yet in critical circumstances they have the power to heal, to hurt, to cure, to destroy.

For what the countryman's belief is doing for 183
him is something belief always seems destined to do, wherever it is found. Tradition is bearing upon him to keep alive and organize the regard his group must feel for the codes of conduct and the objects of use by which it lives. Belief focuses his attention and his emotions upon them. It gives sanctity to his conventions, his needs, and his goods. It infuses them with emotional associations far beyond

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181 *anschauung*, in which all experience has a place in
183 the logic of emotional associations. Thus one old fellow summed up a discussion of the sea creatures
181 which still haunt the western coasts of Ireland:
183 "Everything that does be on the land is in the sea,
821 too, if we could see them". This world-view incorporates the world into the life the countryman follows and knows. To the same old fellow, winds along the Clare and Galway border that separates Munster and Connaught provinces could appear as the battles of fairy hosts, for do not men today still remember human battles and still taunt the men of the other province in joke and banter? The rustle of a breeze and the flitting of bats in a ruin where men lived and died is not mere noise; it is still part of human life. One old fellow described to me the experience of 'them' that he got at close quarters, when he lived near the ruin of Ballyvaughan workhouse:

"They were so plentiful there that everybody living round it and myself got so used to them that we wouldn't mind them at all. The place is full of them and everywhere you go there is a door and long windows in the cowl, and you hear them going in and out. There was a great lot of people died in it long ago in the bad times. They are in every room and you hear them on all sides of you. I got so
181 used to it, I never minded them at all, but I heard
183 them every day."

823 The great cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast are
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a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but the tales of it that best survive are those that relate it to the life of the present and express in the fairy-belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillenasearrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a common end. They provide the countryman with a world-view in which his regard for things and scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

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order takes its form. Consequently, we should expect fairy-belief and rite to symbolize the regard he has for his fellows even more strongly than that he holds to the non-human associations of his life.

The expectation is amply borne out. Fairy-belief is first and foremost a symbolism of social life. In the logic of emotional identifications, it organizes, directs, and controls the feelings of human beings for their fellows.

Thus fairy power and dangerous influence are strongest at times when the interest of human beings in their fellows is strongest. With every change overtaking the individual in his course through life among his fellows, the supernatural world steps in. At such times as birth, growing-up, marriage, becoming a parent, growing old and dying, belief catches the countryman in a web of precautions and reminders which signalize forcefully the importance of the change. For example, the birth of a child is not just another event in nature. It is a change of vital importance to the family group, and indirectly to the community. It is cause for rejoicing and congratulation, but it is cause, too, for resolve and determination in the face of new duties. It brings a new orientation in the lives of those who welcome the newcomer. Their relations to one another undergo development; they must henceforth learn new ways which include the newcomer and which prepare a place for him in the life of his fellows.

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Consequently, rural ceremony signalizes the 181
event. Custom brings together those concerned, 183
for rejoicing, for recognition of the place of the 851
newcomer in the group, for an expression of the 776
sentiments that unite them all. The rural 'christening' is no mere idle jollification; it is a secular baptism, as important for social life as is the Sacrament of Baptism for religion. Naturally, then, fairy-belief is represented very strongly. It surrounds the crucial event of birth and its consequences with a hundred necessities of action which carry with them powerful emotional dispositions. Fear, awe, wonder, religious feeling, and plain caution can all be pressed into service to mould the countryman into an acceptance of the new state of affairs; the logic of belief fits these emotions into the countryman's world-view.

The good people are particularly active at such 181
times as this. Every association with birth is infused 183
with power and danger. Even the midwife who 844
attends becomes a magic figure; the aura that sur- 776
rounds the dangerous and crucial event invests her entire personality. She can command the fairies, disperse their attacks, travel through the air, transfer labour pains at will to a truculent or negligent husband. She is in communication with the fairy powers; in tale and story she often finds her ministrations commandeered by them and her person wafted off into the forts and raths to attend a fairy-woman there. She herself may deny all this; but it

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181 is true, none the less, in belief. Like all else at birth,
183 she is linked to the good people, and in the linkage
776 an explanation is given for the identity of the
844 emotional associations which surround both her and them.

181 Similarly, all other crucial changes in social life,
183 as well as those of the religious life, come to fit into
776 the same scheme for many of the country-people
852 who still follow the old tradition. The good people figure in them all.

Thus, First Communion and Confirmation—events of first magnitude in the life of the devout countryman—bring changes in emotional well-being; they bestow a real, if mysterious and holy, strength. This, of course, is first of all a part of religious experience. But the events are also accompanied, in the countryside, by changes in one's relations to one's fellows, in traditional social organization. The child is separated first from others of opposite sex after First Communion; he is introduced to full farm work and, very often, leaves school after Confirmation. His fellows in family and community must henceforward have a new regard for him and treat him differently. So, in these changes, the good people have their role, too. Precautions against their influence reinforce one's dependence upon a symbolic order which incorporates these changes. They make definite and unforgettable the magnitude of the change and the new dispositions which must be learned. Thus,

Again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

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again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social 000
habit.

If we leave aside marriage, where folk-custom 183
and folk-belief are no less important toward the 181
same ends, we can devote our attention to the 761
greatest change of all. Death brings the greatest disturbance in social habit. It shakes emotional equilibrium to its foundation. Yet society must allow for death; it must provide an orderly transition and continuance.

The devout Irishman, of course, finds his greatest consolation in his Catholic Faith. He knows the fate of his loved ones. His religion teaches him how to communicate with them, in the Communion of Saints, through prayer. Faith heals his hurt and it gives him a way of filling the void death creates.

Yet, as I have said, he has room in his heart and 181
mind for the fairy-belief too. Social life must take 183
account of death no less than religion. When death 761
removes one of the human beings to whom he is 776
related as brother, friend or fellow, it leaves behind the traces of sentiment and habit that were once bonds of relationship and association. These must be reformed, and in the reformation a new synthesis between the dead member of the group and the living be found. The countryman resembles us all in this respect; he cannot forget 'the old familiar faces'. He must have an explanation in the world-view of folklore and folk-custom for

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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181 the effect they still exert upon him after they are
183 gone.

761 So the dead join 'them'. On the border-line
776 between the mundane world and the mysteries of
[775] Faith, they find a place in the ranks of the good people, as the misnamed fairies are often called. They are the denizens of rath and fort and hill and cave. There is nothing fundamentally incompatible between this and religious belief, however folklore may escape the control of dogma and sometimes, in its humbler vein, run counter to it. The dead do affect the living, in memory and in tradition. Death is the 'other world' to which we are all advancing. As one fellow could say in a burst of poetic imagery growing out of folk-belief: "The old people in the west room are going down with the sun".

Why not indeed, when we remember that the good people are not always by any means evil and forbidding? They exert their power for both good and evil. They bring reward as well as punishment. The countryman has friends among them as he has friends among men in this world. An Aran woman put the belief for Lady Gregory in words which transport earthly loyalties to the other world. "There's often fighting heard about the house when one is sick. That is what we call the fighting of
181 friends, for we believe it is the friends and enemies
183 of the sick person fighting for him."
776
775 Indeed, the same aids that make up habit and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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give base to sentiment in mundane affairs can be 181
projected into the after-world. One must act to- 183
ward 'them' in death as one acts toward the living; 775
one must do the 'friendly' thing. Thus they can tell 776
a story in Luogh of a man there who they say "was walking along the road and he saw the ghost of his brother. He didn't say anything to it and it walked home with him all in silence. They sat at the fire for a long time, the [living] man waiting for the other to go, so he could go to bed. Finally, the dead man said: 'You have put me to great trouble tonight by not saluting me when we met. I must go now and now I won't be able to defend you in the council in the rath.' And it was true for him, too: the cow that was ailing with the man was taken the next week."

Thus, you see, one can envision 'them' both in 181
mystic terms and in terms sometimes very bald and 183
intimate indeed. The younger people in Luogh still 753
follow the old belief, though they leave its expres- 776
sion to their elders. Yet they could explain the tumour on an old man's head in words which show how near 'the other people' are and how direct is the aid one's friends among them can give:

"Old Seumas was coming along the road drunk and he met a crowd of them on the road and one of them slapped him. If he'd taken the slap he'd be all right but he took off his coat and dared any one of them to stand down to him. They beat him and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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181 gave him a terrible knock over the poll. One of
183 them that was great friends with him saved
753 him."
● 776

Nor are 'they' always fearsome, even in their
181 most wondrous apparitions. The dead are too
183 much a part of life in rural Ireland for that. For
775 the old people they are too near; too many friends have crossed the line between this world and the next.

Thus the dead may come to cover nearly every association of life; in the eyes of some of the old people, the other world of wonders where the 'other people' reign spreads all about them. To the initiate in such mysteries there is nothing to fear. Let me give you my record of one conversation of mine with a very old man of North Clare, a man of clear mind and great folk-learning. His answers to my naïve questions will show you how well he felt, accepted and expressed the symbolic order of the countryside:

I asked what a 'cowl' was. "They are the houses where the family has died out of them. People would live in them if they wasn't too bad, falling down and dirty. You often see old people sitting in them." "What people?" I asked. "The people that used to be in it," he replied. "Do you mean ghosts?" He answered me scornfully: "You might see lights in the cowl and you going along the road at night and you pass people you don't know and you can't tell if they are ghosts or not. Of all the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

people you pass in the town, how would you know what it is they are?"

Only the young men, like myself, would be frightened by this uncertainty in rural Ireland. For all but the old people, such mysteries are awesome and compelling. Once again, folk-belief fashions itself for a social end. In belief the believers unconsciously agree upon an emotional organization of human relations; folklore expresses once again the organization of the community upon age and upon the past. The old couple who move in among the fairy influences and the symbols of family tradition and sentiment in the west room, the old people in whom rural kinship is centred and through whom sentiment is directed to the mystic past of ancestral blood lineage, the old men and women round whose influence the local community patterns its local life, need not fear greatly the imagery that symbolizes the very place they occupy. Rather they can come to immerse themselves in it. They grow very learned in this lore. They are the ones who sometimes come to manipulate it. They are themselves, sometimes, half fairy. 'Wise men' and 'wise women' are always old. It is no accident that the commonest representation of the fairy power is an old man or woman. They are the initiates in the mysteries of the fairy faith.

In this fact one can see the final synthesis between social habit and belief. Rural kinship organizes men and women in a common orientation

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 backward and upward toward the dead and the
183 ancestral. The community bestows ever greater
888 status and influence as one progresses further and
●776 further toward the age-grade of the old, in whom
775 tradition and precedent are preserved and expressed. In the sphere of credence and emotion the fairy faith acts to the same end and is so designed. The design, in this instance as in all the others, is not conscious; no one has planned it. It is a design drawn from the social order and acting back upon it. Its imagery is traditional, but its efficacy is of the present. And for that reason it lives.

Thus, in the identification between the old, the dead and the influences which affect the goods, the conducts and the values of the countryman's life, the symbolic order is completed. Folk-belief, in the ancient fairy-cult, with its age-old imagery, makes a complete emotional synthesis, overlying and reacting back upon the sentiment and habit out of which it springs again and again with each generation that learns the old way of life. Consequently, each new generation works a change upon it; elements of the synthesis undergo constant re-embellishment and shift of emphasis. Both old and young are controlled by it, but each in a different way. Today the young are sceptical and a little rebellious; they repudiate much of the
[178] older imagery. All that the Church condemns in the 'pisherogues', they also condemn. Today folk-belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

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178
belief is undergoing marked change like all else 181
in this world, like all else in Ireland. 183

But that does not mean the death-knell of folk- 775
lore, as some students of folklore seem to think. 776
Far from that, it means only that a symbolic order like any growth in human life must change and grow onward. New forms and new imagery will grow up to clothe in emotional terms the necessary reformations of habit and sentiment in social life, and new syntheses will fashion new belief, changing the old or supplanting it inch by inch.

One can see this process at work in rural Ireland 178
today. Those who repudiate the fairies repudiate 183
only the outmoded symbols, the outworn images. They do not deny the necessity of a symbolic order in their own lives. The student of man is coming to think today that they could not do so, because no people can. There must always be some socially efficacious organization of the sentiments of social life in the logic of belief and imagery. Belief provides first of all a conception of life; then, and then only, does it carry on to become a conception of the world. But life among men includes emotional attitudes at once very necessary and very satisfying; one can starve the spirit only so far. And for that reason the logic of a social order is not that of science and prose, it is that of emotion. Consequently, those of the countryside who repudiate the older symbols merely demand that their emphasis be shifted. They do not cry out for bald

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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In the treatment of death, one can see the social 764
system of rural Ireland in the full perspective of its 183
deep-rooted strength. In the flashes of poetic genius 602
which seem so prone to trip from an Irish tongue, 776
death acquires a deeper and more poignant meaning than many another racial tongue could give it. And so it is in the mundane, prosaic world of social life. The most important secular ceremony of rural life is the wake and funeral. In the crowds that come to the wake-house to pay their respects to the dead and condole with the living; in the long lines of marching figures, traps, jaunting cars and motor-cars that make a slow procession over the open roads from wake-house to church and from church to graveside, the observer glimpses an epitome of rural life in which all its values are mingled.

Kinship bonds are at their strongest. Traditional custom enforces upon the kindred important roles in laying out the dead, in carrying the coffin, in digging the grave, in keening him, in reciting funeral laments that are the last survivals of bardic elegies, in preparing entertainment for all comers, in which the dead man's survivors proudly affirm their place and his in the life of the community.

In all this the fairy-lore takes part. The banshee's cry is merely the funeral keen issued from a fairy voice. It signalizes death in the symbolic world just as the keen of the living signalizes living personal loss. It is the lament over common loss in a common cause, for relatives of the dead must greet each other with the keen at the wake-house.

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000 other with the keen at the wake-house.

764 The goods of household and farm suffer incor-
183 poration into emotional symbolism once more;
181 precautions must be taken to protect them and
776 prevent their going beyond with the lost one. Time and place of death are clothed with a hundred supernatural associations.

The reciprocities which make up friendship and give status in the community get full play. Every man, in death, can command a multitude. To stay away, to make no recognition of the day, is to give deadly affront. Every 'right Irishman' turns and walks, if only a few steps, along with the procession. In towns, all the blinds upon the street are drawn and shop-fronts are boarded, in recognition. In the Gaelic tongue, indeed, one and the same word does service for both funeral and multitude. And in the fairy-lore "there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind". Many a countryman, steeped in the old lore, sees in a whirlwind or puff of mist a *socraid sidhe* or fairy-funeral.

He knows thereby that somewhere the chief expression of traditional social life is calling the countrymen together through a whole countryside for a re-enactment, both solemn and gay, of their sentiments about their fellows and about their view of life and death and destiny.

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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343 234 Behind the cows there runs a slab-lined drain or groop, which carries the refuse through the "groop hole" in the wall to the midden. Hanging from the rannel-tree you may perchance see a charm in the shape of a perforated flint [776] pebble, while over the door, decaying Brigid's Crosses dating [751] back for several successive years show that the cattle are under the special protection of the Irish saint. In the byre gable it is not uncommon to see a dove-cote, at any rate along [235] the east coast where English influence has been strong since Norman times. Pigeons are fond of heat and thrive near farm animals. In Lecale, Co. Down, I have seen nests made of straw rope hung above the horses in the stable.

343 251 The barn is not infrequently built above the byre. When the dwelling house alongside remains, in the Irish tradition, single-storied, the effect of the towering barn is rather incongruous. This arrangement makes it simple to feed the animals, provides a springy wooden floor for thrashing, and also gives a better draught for the purpose. Moreover, the raised position helps to make the corn secure from damp and rats. The barn has opposite doors and half doors to regulate the through draught and to keep out stray animals while work goes on inside. Access to the barn is obtained by external stone steps or a sloping ramp, under which the stone dog kennel is often built in. Some of the activities and appurtenances of the barn are described in Chapter 24.

343 Little need be said about the stable, since small farms have as a rule only one mare. In the old-time single-roomed kitchen-byres, the mare had her stall alongside the cows, and you will sometimes see the keeping-hole above the back door where the brush and curry comb were stored. The stable, like the byre, may be attached to the house or may be separate, but for convenience and economy it tends to be built as part of a range of buildings. In decayed rundale clusters now occupied by only one or two holders there were, ready to hand, many old dwelling houses which could be put to different uses as "offices."

Before we turn to the housing of other livestock, mention should be made of the turf-house, for which many different

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XVII

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS: THE COUNTRY TOWN.

Although the Celtic year began with All Hallows Day (November 1st), for our purpose we may regard it as starting on February 1st, or St. Bridget's Day. This was the first day of Spring, and of field work, for the Saint promised that every second day thereafter would be hard and dry. The circle of the year ran its course through the seasons, punctuated by certain fixed festivals and by the uncertain advent of births, marriages, illness and death. It is with the fixed festivals that we are concerned in this chapter. The four seasons have their opening days on the first of February, May, August and November, and the celebration of these days and the preceding Eves is a pagan survival breaking through the Christian calendar. The festivals of February and of November have been taken under the special protection of the Church through their association with St. Bridget and All Saints, but many traces of the "elder faiths" of nature worship live on, sanctified by tradition if not always by the Church.

221 796 805 [821] [996]

On St. Bridget's Eve (January 31st) it is customary for country children to pull rushes—they must not be cut with a knife—and take them home to be made into crosses by the family gathered round the fire. A fixed ritual, varying from one district to another, determines the procedure, and it traditionally included the St. Bridget's supper of pancakes or sowens taken from a plate laid on top of a rush cross. The

221 796 788 285

[p153]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The
[778] same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[797] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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able part in the ceremonies of megalithic burial: we remember 764
the significance attached to hazel nuts in the Hallowe'en games 824
of divination (Chapter 17).

The ancient raths or forths, earthen enclosures around old 776
homesteads, are also favourite haunts of fairies, and many 789
are the tales of mysterious happenings in their neighbourhood 829
at night, and of signs of habitation and sweet music issuing
from them. Protection from fairies is believed to be obtained 778
by possession of a black-hafted knife, while oatmeal or oat-
cakes are also specifics against their malign influence. From
fairies as from witches the supreme hour of peril to mortals is
at the eves of Beltane, Midsummer and All Hallows. Cattle
afflicted with disease were believed to be "elf-shot"—the
belief is not entirely dead—and flint arrowheads were pro-
duced as proof of the attack. The cure was to give the
affected animal a drink of the water in which the arrow had
been placed. Among other archæological relics the polished
stone axes of the Neolithic and Bronze ages are known as
thunderbolts and are accredited with healing powers, and the
small spinning-whorls are termed fairy mill-stones. As
Arthur Mitchell writes of Scotland: "It is believed that
stone celts assist the birth of children; that they increase
the milk of cows; that they cure the diseases of the eye;
that they protect the houses in which they are kept from
lightning; and that they have many other such marvellous
virtues. It is believed that, as they have a sort of super-
natural origin, they may reasonably be supposed to have
supernatural powers."

When food is taken out of doors it is a common belief that 776
some must be left behind for the fairies, otherwise the dreaded 789
"hungry grass" will grow; and the countryman will often
spill a portion of his drink as a perhaps unconscious libation
to the wee folk. Their activities are peculiarly dangerous to
cattle and to butter-making. Among the charms designed to
secure a good supply of butter in the churn we find the use of
a horse-shoe, of a rusty nail from a coffin or the hand of a [751]
corpse, of rowan branches, salt, a live turf, or a cross made of
veronica leaves.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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776 veronica leaves. In the North it is considered unlucky for a
789 person to enter a house where churning is taking place without
[777] "giving a brash," that is lending a hand at the churn-staff. In the words of a countryman in the west, "Queer things do happen to butter." Fairy tales are full of cattle and cattle-stealing: so are the epic tales. Writers of last century tell of cows that might be seen "with rags about their horns as a charm against the gentry," or gentle-folk, a name often applied to the fairies.

824 This brings us to the fairy or gentry thorns, skeaghs, or lone bushes, that is the solitary whitethorn trees which are regarded with dread. These trees, which must be counted by the thousand, are said "never to have been planted but to have grown of their own accord." They may be found on ancient monuments or alongside holy wells but the great majority are scattered through the fields, and it is worthy of notice that the cult is at least as strong in the Protestant north-east as in other parts of the country. A venerable thorn, pink-flowering, stands under my window as I write and casts its shadow into the Senate Room of the University. But no one will remove it or even lop its branches, and the story goes that when the buildings were being erected, the plans had to be changed in order that the thorn should not be interfered with. If a lone tree surrounded by half a dozen scientific departments has claimed such respect it can be imagined in what awe the country thorns are held! See Tailpiece.

It has recently been suggested that the veneration of thorn trees was a Belgic custom introduced to Ireland some 2,000 years ago, but it seems more likely that as with sacred stones and wells we should look even further away in time and space to Mediterranean origins and regard the cult of trees as part of the nature worship connected with man's first use of the Irish soil. Certain thorns dedicated to Irish saints figure also
[964] in ceremonies of burial: when funerals pass by they halt and stones are placed beside the thorn until they have become cairns. Wayside cairns, in the form of memorial monuments,

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be [788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch, 754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the 821 barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these 825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27):—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Congaile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It [551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

776 Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is subject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by 854 the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

775 bank by the roadside; after a time it rises, walks across the road to the mound, and then vanishes.

The ghost of Major —— is reported to be sometimes seen riding a phantom horse at a spot near Carn, and circles on the grass are pointed out as marking the scene of his equestrian feats; he is also said to ride at times to Bingham Castle.

●776 There is a strong belief in fairies, and many people are to be found who say that they have seen them. They are said to dance at night and cause fairy rings; they dwell in grassy mounds and travel from place to place, using stems of the ragweed as horses.

The mirage which is sometimes seen off the coast is ascribed to [822] the fairies if it assumes the appearance of boats or ships; they are believed to have been seen to land on the shore, haul up their boats, and vanish. Many stories are told respecting the impudent pranks of these beings, and to their revenge for some injury, disease in man and cattle is sometimes ascribed. A man may become paralysed or waste away and die from fairy influence as well as from the evil eye, but their malice may have a less serious ending, and may only produce some disfigurement. Some time ago a man was one day walking homewards, when he saw lying on the road a bright new razor; he picked it up and took it home with him, but after shaving [828] with it got *sycosis menti*, and the implement was then declared to be a "fairy razor."

Women dying in puerperal fever are ~~believed~~ to have been taken [775] by the fairies to act as wet-nurses, and infants may be "taken away," and changelings put in their places. The changeling may be got rid of by putting on a roaring fire and throwing him behind it, when he [372] at once vanishes in the smoke. The *ignus fatuus* is believed to be caused by the fairies to lead people astray.

The attentions of these creatures are not expended on human beings alone, for they may revenge themselves on those who vex them by attacking domestic animals. Cattle becoming ill suddenly are supposed to be "shot" by the fairies, and the owners will often go to a great deal of trouble to find a person who possess a "fairy [823] stone," which is the only remedy. These stones are treasured very carefully and are kept wrapped up in a piece of cloth; they are used by rubbing them on the afflicted animal, and repeating a charm or prayer. Unfortunately no specimen of these stones was seen, so it cannot be stated positively whether they are flint arrow-heads or not.

A farm-house at a place called Illaunglass, in the Mullet, has a tale connected with it, illustrating the causing of disease in cattle by

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 178 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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his death to his interference with this figure. An Inishkea man spoke about the matter with much indignation even after the lapse of years, and said that they had never known misfortune or hunger in the island until after the distruction of this *neewoge*. 778

Many different accounts have been given of the image itself. One writer (C. O.) states that it was a stone figure of rude workmanship, and that it was dressed in a suit of homespun, renewed every year.

The description given by those who have seen it agree in stating that it was not a statue but a small flat stone. One informant believed it to be part of the head of a stone figure. This was enveloped in a small bag of homespun, which was replaced when it got old and soiled, and was kept in a blind window or recess in the wall in one of the houses.

St. Brendan and the Devil.—During my visit to Inishglora some of the Inishkea fishermen, who were camped there at the time, pointed out that no grass grew on a part of the island, and gave the following explanation:—St. Brendan was one day disturbed in his devotions by the devil, who appeared to him in the form of a beautiful girl and tempted him. The saint indignantly repulsed the temptress, and drove her towards the end of the island, blessing the soil as he went, but at the point where the grass ends, Satan changed his form and assumed the shape of a ram, which so astonished the saint that in his excitement he ceased blessing and gave chase to the evil one who ran to the rocks and jumped into the sea. The unblessed land is that on which the grass does not grow. 776

VI. ARCHÆOLOGY.

The few notes made in this section do not purport to be fully descriptive, but merely to indicate the nature of the antiquities of the region, which are of importance in the study of the people as bearing on the history of their past, and to direct the attention of archaeologists to the quantity of material worthy of study and record which is still to be met with in this part of county Mayo. 172 178

1. *Survivals.*—The district is comparatively rich in these, though many articles in use in the localities previously reported on are now quite extinct in Erris. The primitive condition of many of the houses, the absence of chimneys, and the custom of taking cattle into the dwellings have already been referred to. 178

The quern is still in use in several houses, especially on the islands and in the remoter localities, though now only employed for 178 412

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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its old habits, as is illustrated by the persistence of cremation rites from the earliest megalithic phase to the end of the Bronze Age, almost on the threshold of the Christian era. 174

At some stage towards the close of the Bronze Age the expanding Celtic culture, carried with the sword across western Europe, was able to gain a foothold in the north-east, whence in time it imposed itself and its language on the whole of Ireland and later, by way of Argyll, on Scotland too. But the price of this conquest was the loss of many elements of Celtic culture or their adaptation to the Irish environment and to long-established native tradition. The art of the Celtic overlords, for example, quickly develops forms and features which are insular and distinctively Irish. In other words there is more continuity of folk ways throughout the prehistoric period in Ireland than in Britain. And this Irish-Celtic civilization of the Early Iron Age was able, during the following period, to maintain itself through the centuries when the Roman Empire embraced nearly all western Europe. The spirit of its art and life was almost untouched by the mass-production and standardization of imperial Rome. It survived long enough to be caught up and revitalized in the late Celtic phase by the fervour of a Christian faith whose adaptation to Celtic tradition is illustrated in Saint Columba's famous phrase: 'Christ is my druid'. It was a time of great missionary enterprise, but at home its greatest achievement was the taming of the damp lowland forests which earlier peoples had shunned. Legendary history, now receiving confirmation from archaeological research, tells of technological advances and increasing population and settlement from about the seventh century onwards. [776]

Irish Christianity grew up within the forms of Irish life: the church claimed no martyrs and there is little evidence of conflict with older beliefs, which clearly were absorbed. The Celtic church was peculiar in that the centres of its life were the great monasteries: there were no cities to form the seats of powerful bishops. Instead, the founders' kin retained the ownership of the monasteries, and the Celtic tradition survived in administration as in art and architecture. It was only after the ravages of the Vikings and the reassertion of pagan cults that the Irish Church was reformed by Saint Malachy, who established 795 175

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social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the 352
fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served 592
since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in the English language gave its name to a committee, has not replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies [776]
or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged [769]
around the fire.

FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means 354
of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the 373
table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke. The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from [171]
Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said, that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

[1] Å. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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uncut bog above, but one suspects that behind the custom there lies the widespread notion that a task should never be completely finished and that a small portion of anything taken by man should be left for luck or the fairies. You will be told that the steps are cut to avoid the curse of Columbkille, for it is said that the saint was once trapped in a bog hole and laid a curse on all who did not cut the three steps.

There are two methods of cutting, vertically or 'underfooting' and horizontally or 'breasting', and they tend to be used respectively on thin upland and deep lowland bogs, though these have to be cut underfoot if badly drained unless a platform or 'foot-go' of flow turf can be built up for the breaster to stand on. Also, the upper layers of brown turf which preserve some of the tough plant fibres are easier to cut vertically. Breasting not only imposes less strain on the back but speeds up the work, since the turves can be retained on the slane and placed directly on the barrow. (The vertical digger can do this only if his spade has a lift, that is bends forward.) In consequence the breast-cutter's turf-barrow will be designed for his convenience, for example it commonly has no legs so that he can swing it into position laterally by hooking the wing of his spade over the handle. Slanes, as well as barrows, will be found to vary in some slight degree from one bog to another, and a seemingly trivial difference can generally be explained in terms of differences of local conditions and techniques: the human ecology of the bogs is no less interesting than the plant ecology. In essentials the turf slane is a narrow straight-shafted steel blade with a wing set at right-angles after the manner of a cheese-knife, which is said, indeed, to owe its origin to 'an ingenious cutler of Dublin' who borrowed the idea from the slane.[1] The purpose of the wing is to detach a complete turf at a single stroke of the spade. The breadth and length of blade and wing are variables depending on many factors, but mainly on the size of turf required, and this in turn is determined to a considerable extent by the nature of the bog. If it is a very wet bog, for example, the turves must be cut larger than normal to allow for greater shrinkage on drying. When absolutely dry peat will shrink to less than one-eighth its original volume, and though air-dried peat still contains

[1]Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*, 96.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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788 778 is that of St. Patrick's Purgatory, on a small island in Lough Derg in Donegal. Still a powerful attraction, it has been maintained since the early middle ages and has been described, with piety or derision, by innumerable writers since one of the earliest accounts was written by Giraldus Cambrensis, about 1185. The pilgrimage became very popular in the early nineteenth century, when the numbers of visitors are said to have averaged 10,000 annually. Mr. A. T. Lucas has shown that this pilgrimage resulted in the distribution through the country of certain portable wooden crucifixes popularly known as penal crosses.[1] Carved from the solid in a characteristic style, they bear dates between 1700 and 1830 (Fig. 84). It seems that they were sold to pilgrims at Lough Derg and taken home as souvenirs after being used in the devotional ritual. They were a local development, no doubt initiated by some peasant woodcarver, of simple crosses, consisting merely of two sticks tied together, such as are still made at some patterns and occasionally at the festivals of St. Briget and All-Hallows. In this way, as in sanctifying the gatherings themselves, Christianity has taken over the symbols and strength of the elder faiths.

The pilgrimage of Croagh Patrick, in Co. Mayo, is the most celebrated of those held at the end of July, involving the ascent of high mountains and marking, by tradition, the close of summer and the beginning of harvest, as discussed in the following chapter. Here we may quote once more the *Parliamentary Gazetteer* for 1845: 'No place in Ireland is the scene of more superstitious observances, or a more popular resort of pilgrims and devotees, or the site of more numerous small memorials of superstition, or the subject of more generally-credited legends of hagiology. Vast crowds of miserable human beings . . . swarm all over its summit and sides and skirts; one grand current legend is almost everywhere believed in the [773] teeth of all credulity, that St. Patrick gathered hither, and swept [776] hence all venomous creatures in Ireland.'

[1] A. T. Lucas, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1954), 145–74.

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527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on
● 776 the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated
[264] by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of
[221] winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The countryman likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

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FIXED FESTIVALS

527 The May Festival, the Gaelic Beltane, remained almost untouched by Christianity, and an astonishingly rich growth of magic beliefs and superstitious customs accumulated around it. They were concerned with the safety of the familiar things which supported life, and especially the milk cows whose 'whitemeats' were to provide the main food-supply until harvest came round once more. It was a matter of pride to have a last formal dish of stirabout on May Day, 'for if they can hold out so well with bread they can do well enough . . . for then milk becomes plenty, and butter, new cheese, and curds and shamrocks are the food of the meaner sort all this season'.[1] It was considered [431] most unlucky and unwise to give away salt, water or fire on May Day lest the luck and 'profit' of the farm went with the gifts. Witches and fairies were unusually active at this time, and [776] many tales are told of the wiles they adopted to outwit the unwary and gain admission to house or byre to do their mischief. It was a wise precaution to pour milk on the threshold, or at the roots of a fairy thorn, and the many protective charms against the stealing of cattle and milk were augmented by others special to the occasion. 'On May Eve the peasantry used to drive all their cattle into old raths and forts thought to be much frequented by the fairies, bleed them, taste their blood, and pour the remainder on the earth'.[2] It was said that the ghosts of cattle that had been lost could be seen in such places.

527 Portents, prognostications and protection were sought in the familiar flowers of field and hedgerow, in the weeds and shrubs 824 which had followed in man's footsteps and were associated with 751 his secular struggle for survival, especially in those that carried the promise of butter in their golden cups and a free flow of milk in their bounteous white blossom. May flowers, primroses and gorse gathered before sunrise were scattered on the threshold of the house and garlands of 'Summer', as the flowers were called, were hung on the doorposts and even tied to the cows' tails. In the Antrim Glens the mayflowers were crushed to provide a juice with which the cows' udders were washed, and elsewhere buttercups were used for the purpose. Cow dung, if less hygienic, had similar protective power, presumably in

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.
[2] *U.J.A.* 3 (1855), 165.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XX

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

582 178 731 ●776 THE average age of marriage among Irish countrywomen, about 28, is said to be higher than in any other country in the world: that of the men is higher still, and in addition there are many who never marry. These are among the demographic consequences of the economic and social changes which followed the Great Famine of 1845–47, for down to that time the mass of the population had nothing to lose and everything to gain by marrying young. Among the economic factors which led to the postponement of marriage may be mentioned the rising standards of living, the prohibition of the subdivision of holdings so that only one son could inherit, and the need for larger farms consequent on the decline of subsistence farming and the increase of pastoral husbandry, which meant that the peasant had to look and plan ahead. Equally important, I believe, was the effect of the crisis of the famine in breaking down patterns of behaviour which had continued with little change since prehistoric times. The elder faiths were rudely shattered so that today we have only the broken remnants left, stray survivals which have lost their meaning in a modern setting. The scattering of the fairy hosts is the constant lament of old people for whose parents they were a reality. Over large parts of the country, down to famine times the fairies (among them the ancestral spirits), and the powers of nature in sun and stone, tree, flower and welling water were ruling forces whose malice must somehow be averted, and whose beneficence must be courted by magical acts. Nature's reproductive surplus on which [842] human life depended could best be assured by breeding children to capacity.

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returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded with superstitious awe up and down the country and were generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones. 823 755 [776]

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.' Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork, women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1). 823 [584] [844]

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup-marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a 526

[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 108.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

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COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united
63 politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond, though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon. Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*,
776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle
787 (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317, and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago, foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Plists* or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con-
121 sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen-
124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p. 180]

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since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and 121
not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, 124
where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions."

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would 103
be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of 173
traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only
give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may 776
accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4]

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they 103
occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also 173
premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca-

[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

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earthquake and tidal wave that split into three Inis Fitæ[9] on the same coast (A.D. 799-802), incline one to believe in a basis for the legend. In Nonghaval is a fort called Liskeentha, from "fairy songs" heard there. Not far away, in Kilfenora Parish, we have a Boughil or "petrified boy," and in Carran Parish a Farbreag or "petrified man"; such names, originating in strangely-shaped rocks, are rather common. A third Firbolg brother, Daelach, gives his name to the little river Daelach and the townland Ballydeely. In Carran and Kilmanaheen the belief in the *phooka* or *púca*, a demon horse or goat, is stamped on the Poulaphucas, one of which has a fine dolmen; such monuments all over Ireland are found connected with the malignant prototype of Puck. Lisfarbegnagommaun, "the fort of the little men (playing at) hurling," commemorates fairy sports.

Ibrickan.—Poulaphuca in Kilfarboy is, so far as I know, the only mythic name, but Doolough Lake (Nigricantis) is named in the early "Life of Senan"[10] as the prison of the fearful "Cata" of Iniscatha, while the "Legend of the sons of Thorailbh mac Stairn"[11] locates the cavern whence the ferocious "Faracat" launched itself on the heroes' spears, beside its waters. Dunbeg Bay is the scene of a curious merman story.[12]

Moyarta.—At Loop Head, the south-western extremity of the county, we find a Poulnapeiste and a line of forts,—Cahercrochain, Cahersanl, Dundahlin, and Cahernaheanmna,—connected with the monster killed by Dermod O'Duine and the brothers Crochaun, Sal, and Dahlin, whose sister ("the one (lone) woman") gave her title to the last fort.[13] Iniscatha commemorates its dragon, and Lisnarinka fort the "dances" of its fairy dwellers.

Clonderlaw.—Turning inland, up the Shannon and Fergus

[9] Now Inishcaseragh or Mutton Island, Illaunwattle, Inismatall, or Mattle Island, and Carrickaneelwar. The first two are named Iniskereth and Inismatall in a charter of 1216.

[10] Colgan, *op. cit.* (March 8).

[11] A romance of about 1750, by Michael Comyn.

[12] Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 1825, vol. ii., p. 31, (The Soul Cages).

[13] "Adventures of the sons of Thorailbh"; see also *Ordnance Survey Letters*, Co. Clare, Killhallyowen Parish, (MS., R.I. Academy).

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103 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a
173 "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshes.*

173 Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of
●776 mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff
133 of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones
[192] that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all
776 Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

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as their war-goddess,[21] so, before the baptism of King Cairthinn, (first Christian Prince of his House, about A.D. 430), the ancestors of the Dalcassians may have worshipped Aibhinn on her holy hill, and her equally lovely sister Aine, crowned with meadowsweet, on the tamer mound of Knockaney. Whether, if so, they found her already enthroned at Craglea on their conquest of the district, or whether the conqueror Lugad consecrated the mountains to his patroness, it is not impossible to guess. Aibhill, as banshee, held her own. We find her even usurping the place of the "Sybil" in a translation of the *Dies Iræ*,[22] in unwonted companionship with King David, and she was a commonplace of local threnodies during the eighteenth, and even the nineteenth, century. In the lake below Rathblamaic in Inchiquin she has down to recent years been seen, with the twenty-five other banshees of Clare that call her their queen, washing clothes before any impending disaster.[2]

175 776 [787]

The next appearance of a banshee in local history is of a very different spirit three centuries later. The *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* ("Triumphs of Torlough") was written probably about A.D. 1350 by Seean mac Craith, the hereditary historian.[23] It contains accounts of three spirit women,—one, the "Sovereignty of Erin," being of surpassing loveliness, and the two others, (if not the same,—"Dismal" and "Water Dismal"), of loathsome hideousness. The hags, however, probably survive, while the "Sovereignty" has perished. Bronach ("the sorrowful or dismal one") of Ceann Boirne was known as the "Hag of Black Head" from the modern name of the older Ceann (or Rinn) of Burren. She was in full repute in 1839, and I have heard of her vaguely about 1885 or 1887. In August, 1317, she

175 538 776
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[21] Cf. *Revue Archéologique*, N.S., vol. xviii. (1868), p. 1; Sir Samuel Ferguson's paper, from the Irish point of view, in *Dublin University Magazine*, Oct. 1834, p. 463; W. M. Hennessy, "The War Goddess of the Ancient Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x., p. 425.

[22] Mss., Royal Irish Academy, 23.M.47.

[23] As yet only in manuscript,—one copy of A.D. 1509, and another probably from one of 1449. For its age see *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxxii., p. 139.

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was able to appear in "the dark before sunrise" and foretell destruction by words and hideous action. The supporters of Prince Murchad O'Brien, (then absent in Dublin), under his brother Dermot invaded the territory of his rival Prince Donchad O'Brien. The latter got together an army, "even the man in a souterrain (*uamh*) of a fort" being summoned, and marched round the site of the modern village of Ballyvaughan, his foe having sheltered in Corcomroe Abbey, in a nook of the bare hills some miles to the north-west. Approaching Lough Rasga, (still known as Rask), "they looked on the shining mere, and there they saw the monstrous and distorted form of a lone, ancient hag, that stooped over the bright Lough shore. She was thatched with elf locks, foxy grey and rough like heather, matted and like long sea-wrack, a bossy, wrinkled, ulcerated brow, the hairs of her eyebrows like fish hooks; bleared, watery eyes peered with malignant fire between red inflamed lids; she had a great blue nose, flattened and wide, livid lips, and a stubbly beard."[24] The writer adds detail on detail (some 90 in all), many too disgusting to copy. The hag was washing human limbs and heads with gory weapons and clothes, till all the lake was defiled with blood, brains, and floating hair. Donchad at last spoke. "What is your name and race, and whose kin are those maltreated dead?" She replied,—"I am Bronach of Burren, of the Tuatha Dé Danann. This slaughter heap is of your army's heads; your own is in the middle." The angry men raised their javelins, but she rose on the wind, yelling more and more words of woe till she vanished. "Heed her not," said Donchad, "she is a friendly *Bodbh* of Clan Torlough" (his opponents). The army hurried on to the ridge of the Abbey, where Donchad and all his kindred, save one brother, were slain before evening.

Not to the Irish alone did the banshee foretell ruin. In May, 1318, Richard de Clare, leader of the Normans, was marching to what he supposed would be an easy victory over the O'Deas of Dysert. The English came to the "glittering, running water of fish-containing Fergus," when they saw a horrible beldam

[24] I have to thank Mr. Standish Hayes O'Grady for this and other extracts from the work, the translations in the library of the Royal Irish Academy being, (it is understood), very crude.

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washing armour and rich robes till the red gore churned and splashed through her hands.[25] Calling an Irish ally to question her, De Clare heard that "the armour and clothes were of the English, and few would escape immolation." "I am the Water Doleful One. I lodge in the green fairy mounds (*sidh*) of the land, but I am of the Tribes of Hell. Thither I invite you. Soon we shall be dwellers in one country." Next day De Clare, his son, and nearly all his English troops lay dead upon the fields near the ford of Dysert for miles over the country in their flight. 175 776 763

The belief of the early eleventh and fourteenth centuries is still extant, for local legend near Dysert tells how Aibhill and twenty-five banshees washed blood-stained clothes in Rath Lake before "Claraghmore" (De Clare) fell, and that they still do so when mischief is afoot.[26]

For nearly 300 years there is no other Clare banshee tale, till the famous one of 1642 in the *Memoires of Lady Fanshawe*, (published in 1665).[27] It is so well known that a brief abstract will suffice. Her Ladyship, staying with some of the O'Briens, was sleeping in a room, of which the window overhung water at some height, at a castle, perhaps Bunratty or Castle Lake. She was awakened by a horrible scream, and saw a girl outside the window. The apparition was pale, rather handsome, and with her reddish hair hanging dishevelled over her shoulders. After some time the unwelcome visitor vanished, with other ghastly shrieks. In the morning Lady Fanshawe, telling her tale, was told of the death of a relative of the family whose illness had been concealed from her. The spirit was that of the peasant wife of a former owner of the castle, drowned in the moat by her husband and of evil omen to his descendants. [538]

The next story was told in my own family and, I understand, in that of the Ross Lewins. I have traced it to a daughter of Jane Ross Lewin, one of the girls who saw the banshee. It related to Jane's father, Harrison Ross Lewin of Fortfergus, who probably died in 1776, as his will, dated November, 1775, was proved in

[25] Another "washer of the ford" appears in "Da Choca's Hostel," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi. (1900), p. 157; and she is also a Bodbh.

[26] Told me by Prof. Brian O'Looney in 1890, and I have heard more recently of the existence of the belief.

[27] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 83-6.

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175 March, 1777; but I have hitherto been unable to verify the circumstances or place of his death. Mr. Ross Lewin had gone
763 to Dublin on business, the journey at that time taking five days,
• 776 and the several stages being Limerick, Nenagh, Mountrath, Kildare, and Dublin. In his absence the "young people" went to a friend's house for the evening. The road passed an old church (Kilchrist), which was unenclosed, standing in an open field. As the party returned under bright moonlight, they were startled by loud keening and wailing from the direction of the ruin. Coming in sight, all clearly saw a little old woman with long white hair and a black cloak running to and fro on the top of the side wall, clapping her hands and wailing. The young men, leaving the girls together on the road, sent some of their number to watch each end of the building, and the remainder entered and climbed up on the wall. The apparition vanished as they approached the church, and, after a careful search, could not be found. The party, thoroughly frightened, hurried home, and found their mother in even greater terror. She had been sitting in the window when a great raven flapped three times at the glass, and, while she told them, the bird again flew against the window. Some days later, news arrived from Dublin that Ross Lewin had died suddenly on the very evening of the apparition and omen.

763 It is curious that an English family, no matter how long settled in Ireland, should have acquired the ministration of a banshee,
776 but, besides the Ross Lewins, both the Stamers and the Westropps were so endowed in Clare.[28] The Westropps had also death warnings in the shape of a white owl and the headless coach. This bird last appeared, it is said, before a death in 1909, but it would be more convincing if it appeared at places where the white owl does *not* nest and fly out every night. The banshee has been conspicuously absent of late years, although on the death of my father, the

[28] Among families with banshees, Thomas Crofton Croker (*op. cit.*, ed. 1862, p. 115,) names old Englishry such as the Burkes, Rices, Huseys (the Norman, not the Gaelic, name), Trants, and Keatings. The FitzGeralds of Kerry and Limerick had also a banshee. Of the Clare families the Westropps came from Yorkshire, the Stamers from Essex, and the Lewins probably from Durham. Some banshees may have been acquired by marriage, for the three latter families were related to O'Briens, MacNamaras, and O'Gradys, to name only a part of their Celtic connections.

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late John Westropp, at Attyflin, in 1866, keening and weird lamentation, (probably of some of the country folk who held him in deep affection), were heard the same night by the servants and some of the family. When Mrs. Stamer died at Stamer Park, Ennis, in January, 1883, the banshee and death coach were also supposed to have been heard,—though far more satisfactory explanations of the noises were forthcoming. The popular belief in Clare is that each leading Irish race had a banshee, Eevul, the banshee of the royal O'Briens, ruling over twenty-five other banshees always attendant on her progresses. The stream from Caherminaun to Dough, (the Daelach), was called the "Banshee's Brook," and when, as sometimes happens after an unusually dry summer, the water gets red from iron scum, everyone is on the alert to hear the rustling flight of the banshee, (not apparently Eevul), and her attendants through the air. In the prevailing suspense someone generally succeeds, and then there is unrest and fear until a death removes the uncertainty. There are many other modern tales of banshees. Mr. Casey of Ruan heard a banshee cry at the death of his father. The late Dr. MacNamara of Corofin was similarly honoured; indeed, when his family lived at Ballymarkahan, near Quin, there were numerous "authentic instances" recorded. The Corofin banshees, however, did not lag behind the age by maintaining aristocratic prejudices, for one, at least, used to sit near the cross road leading to the workhouse and foretell the deaths of the poor inmates.[29]

The most recent visit of a banshee told to me was in 1905,[30] and is sadly tame when compared with the stories of MacCraith and Lady Fanshawe. Some scattered cottages form a sort of suburb to Newmarket-on-Fergus at a temporary lake (or *turlough*) called Lough Gaish. The inhabitants were greatly alarmed by the loud and ghastly wailing of some unknown being on several successive nights. Local panic spread, and few ventured out after dark. Had any tragedy happened, the reputation of the banshee would have rested on a rock of belief for another generation; but nothing occurred, and it is now doubted "whether it was a banshee at all, at all."

[29] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara at Caherminaune and Corofin.
[30] By Mrs. and Miss Neville and Miss G. C. Stacpoole of Newmarket.

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763 of Fortanne says that the coach was heard at the deaths of certain Westropps after 1873, but nothing happened after its last appearance.

The phantom of a coach and horse was seen not far from Corofin, at Cragmoher, not long since, but it is agreed that no death took place after the apparition. An equally vague story was told about 1870 at Attyflin by a very old woman, Norry Halloran, whom the sound of the coach pursued one dark evening for a long way, but it did not pass her door, and nothing happened afterwards.

IV. *Fairies and Fairy Forts and Mounds.*

776 823 [538] MacCraith, in the *Triumphs of Torlough*, in describing the prognostics of the death of Prince Donchad early in the fourteenth century says that "lights shone on the fairy forts," and it has already been noted that the *sidhs* or fairy mounds were lodgings of appalling apparitions, like Bronach when not at her proper residence in the lower deep. The *Dindsenchas*,—that early encyclopædia invaluable for everything but the reliable account of the origin of place names which it purports to be,—describes how a lady dwelling in such a mound sprang out at her would-be lover in the form of a dragon.[36] Probably such beliefs, and the consequent fear of irate and deadly beings in earthworks, have helped until recent years to preserve the residential earthen "forts," although the ring walls were destroyed with but little scruple. Nevertheless the son of a farmer named Nihill told me in 1892 that, after some days wreckage and removal of the outer wall of the fine triple stone fort of Cahercalla, near Quin, his father was stricken with acute pain, and only recovered from his illness when the work was stopped,—whence this interesting ruin has been preserved to the present day. A certain landlord, still living, nearly lost the use of one eye from the dust of an explosion when blasting a rock in an earth fort which was being removed, and this incident has upheld the faith and fear of the fairies in north-eastern Clare. A locally famous "astronomer" and weather prophet tried, many years ago, to blast a dolmen in Inchiquin Barony, and a splinter hit his hand, which was badly injured and

[36] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv., p. 441.

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afterwards festered. The wreckage of the dolmen was lying untouched on the ground a few years ago. The collapse of a calf shed on its occupants followed the demolition of Templenaraha oratory for building the unstable structure;[37] this might be ascribed to a more sacred anger than that of the fairies, but the oratory stood in a ring fort. Another case of supposed vengeance occurred near Lehinch on the Atlantic. Some workmen were employed to level the earthworks of Dooneeva,[38] a fort on a low cliff at the end of the bay and near the modern Protestant Church. The man who originated this outrage was digging at the mounds when he fell to all appearance dead. The news was at once taken to his wife, a reputed "wise woman," and she ran to a "fairy spot" and "did magic." She then went to her apparently lifeless husband, and ordered the fairies in a peremptory way to restore him at once and take his stick. Then, before everyone, the stick vanished, and the "dead man" sat up none the worse for his "rapture to the land of faëry."[39] The date of this event could not be fixed, but it seems to be attributed to the period before 1840, and Dooneeva seems to have been in its present condition in 1839.

Two forts named Lissardcarney and Ballyhee in Templemaley Parish were in 1839 reputed strongholds garrisoned by troops of fairies. The songs of the fairies were heard in Cahernanoorane in Inchiquin, and Leskeentha near Noughaval.[40] They danced in the Lisnarinkas, played "hurley" in Lisfearbegnagommaun, and laid in wait to worry the belated traveller in Rathfollane and a small fort near the rectory, to the south of it, near Newmarket-on-Fergus. Fairies haunted the well of Tobesheefra, while even at the holy well of the powerful and vengeful St. Mochulla at Fortanne milk was once offered to them. The butter had refused to "come," and the mistress of the house, (a Protestant woman of good birth and fair education), as she told me herself about 1878, took some of the refractory milk to the well, made the sign

[37] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara about 1907.

[38] *Not* Doonmeeve as on the Ordnance Survey maps.

[39] Told to Miss Diana Parkinson. I heard it locally, but more vaguely, in 1907.

[40] Local traditions, 1904, 1908.

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776 823 [789] of the cross over it, said the Lord's Prayer, dug a hole in the mud at the well with her left heel, and went away without looking back. As might have been expected, the butter had "come" by the time she had got home again, and she used to quote the case as "proof positive." Besides the forts and wells, the dolmens are believed to have been fairy homes, but in my enquiries since 776 1892 I have never been able to authenticate a case of offerings 782 at them of milk and butter, although small basins like the Swedish "elf mills" are found in the covers of more than one of these 823 structures, and large *bullauns* or basins at others, such as Ballyganner Hill near Noughaval, Cappaghkennedy on the hills above Corofin, and Newgrove and Kiltanon near Tulla in eastern Clare. Food and drink, however, have been, until at least the present century, set out in plates and cups in Inchiquin and Moyarta Baronies, and in the latter, on the Shannon bank, the slops were thrown out and clean plates, water, chairs, and a well-swept hearth left by a punctilious servant for fairy guests in 1888 or 1889.

776 The greatest fairy monarch in Clare was "Donn of the Sand-823 hills" (now the golf links), near the old castle of Doogh, (*i.e.* Dumhach or Sand Dune), near Lehinch. He, or one of the other fairy princes named Donn, appears in a list of the divine race of the Tuatha Dé Danann,[41] and is therefore of the family of the Dagda, and, it may be presumed, a lineal descendant of the ancient Ana, Mother of the Gods. A well-known Irish scholar and antiquary, Andrew MacCurtin, before 1730 addressed a political petition to Donn of Dumhach complaining, like most Irish antiquaries, of the neglect of the gentry, and praying for any menial post at his Court.[42] As there was none that answered, the petitioner had to rest content with the hospitality of the MacDonnells of Kilkee and the O'Briens of Ennistymon. Donn's heartless conduct met poetic justice, for he has ever since "lacked a sacred bard," and, save for a slight uneasiness in a few poor old people passing across the sandhills after the golfers have left and the sun has set, he is now all but forgotten. In another poem of MacCurtin's, on a monk's horse "overlooked" and killed by the evil eye, or by the look of a red-haired woman, or

[41] *Cath Finntraga* (ed. Kuno Meyer), p. 15.

[42] Mss. Royal Irish Academy, 23. M. 47.

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by "the stroke of a fairy," the poet recommends the holy man to get the aid of a local practitioner of renown, Peter the Fairy Killer.[43] 776 823

In recent years I have met only one sign of true respect for the "Sheevra" race. A small patch of land was left untilled in the midst of a cornfield at the end of the steep descent from Carran old church to Eanty in the Burren. It was left for three years amidst the tillage, and then the field was allowed to return to grass. The owners obviously disliked to explain the matter, but the act was clearly understood in the neighbourhood as a concession to the spirits of the field when the grass land was broken up for the first time in human memory.[44]

The appearances of the fairies also seem now very rare indeed. At Newmarket-on-Fergus, a centre of much folklore, we find that, besides the two forts named above and a low earth mound (perhaps sepulchral), only one spot has been honoured by an actual apparition in the last ten years. In this case a man walking on the Ennis road, not far from Lough Gaish, saw a very little man neatly dressed in green and walking on the path. Suspecting the green man to be a *leprechaun*,—and hence an owner of gold,—the Clare man tried to grasp him, but the sprite vanished out of his hands.[45]

The "literary movement" will probably affect the folklore very soon, as it is already affecting historical tradition,—which is shown by the variations in certain legends collected at long intervals at the same sites. By some the Danann have been identified with the Danes as "fort builders." If this were so, why did Dane's fort become Caher Loghlanach, (Caher Loglin, 1652), and similar forms? The people once knew better, for forts were attributed to all sorts of times and races, not only to members of the Tuatha Dé Danann, but also to Firbolgs and mythical persons such as Aenghus, Eerish, Eir, Farvagh, and 776 538

[43] *Ibid.* 23. K. 10.

[44] It was certainly not the darker belief that in Scotland dedicated an offering to the one called euphemistically "The Goodman," nor like the sheaf sometimes dedicated to Brigit and other saints in West Munster, or, indeed, in other parts of Ireland.

[45] Collected by Miss Katherine Neville. The sprite was, of course, proved not to be a *leprechaun*, as that being can be held by the eye alone.

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776 538 Croaghan, and Celts such as Lachtna (A.D. 820-840) and Brian Boru (A.D. 980-1014). In one notable instance, King Conor (A.D. 1242-69) is the reputed builder of the great stone fort of Dun Conor in Aran, which in the eleventh-century legend is evidently connected with Conchiurn or Conchraed the Firbolg,—a relation accepted in 1685 by Roderic O'Flaherty, although he called its hero "Conquevar" (*i.e.* Chonchobhar or Conor). Any modern allusion to the Danann is therefore "suspect." Many visits to the recesses of the hills in Burren from 1878 onwards,—and I may add that 776 the same is true of the rest of Clare,—only gave me, in 1905, one 788 direct reference to the Danann.[40] At the natural moat crowned 823 by the small stone ring wall of Croaghateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna, we were told to cross ourselves as a protection against the Danann. The place was, nevertheless, undoubtedly regarded by the older people living near it as a most dangerous fairy fort, and we were told how certain badger hunters,—(who brought drink with them), --after a long festival on its summit got benighted there; they eventually returned home sobered by fright, as they suddenly "saw the whole fleet" of "them" coming up the mound, and escaped only just in time.

776 The "whirlwinds" along dusty roads and sudden gusts were 788 not long ago everywhere supposed to be caused by the progress of fairy beings. The older folk believed, and trembled,—crossing 821 themselves, or saying a word of prayer,—while the younger folk, more than half in jest, raised their hats, as is still sometimes done to the unlucky "single magpie" and the weasel.

776 I know of two cases of reputed changelings. My second sister, whose delicacy, when an infant, excited remark, was, about 1842, taken out by a servant to be exposed on a shovel on the doorstep at Carnelly. The angry and hasty intervention of another servant saved the child, but the would-be "exposer" was convinced of the propriety of her attempt "to get back the real child" from the fairies. A very old woman, Kate (Geerin) Molony, a henwife at Maryfort, near Tulla, whom I faintly remember in 1869, was many years before anxious about her little daughter's failing health, and went to a "wise woman," who assured her that the child was "changed." She spoke of this on her return, and unfortunately

[40] Apart from Lon, at Slievnaglasha, and the "hags."

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the patient was old enough to understand the fearful decision. The poor child turned over on the bed with a groan, and was a little later found to be dead. 776

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(*To be continued.*)

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VI. *Underground Folk.*

To underground folk, other than fairies, I have only found few and uninteresting references, such as,—"an old woman looked out of the side of the fort, and the man ran away"; "he heard *them* talking inside the hill"; and "the little old man came out of the fort, and shut it behind him." 776

VII. *Water Spirits and Mer-folk.*

The Shannon, according to the *Dindsenchas*, derived its name from a sea-lady, but evidently not a "water-breather." Sinenn, daughter of Lodan, came from *Tir-tairngire*, the Land of Youth, under the sea, to visit the well of Connla, under the river now called Shannon. She came to Linn na feile, but was drowned at Tarrchinn "on this side Shannon," and gave her name to the great river.[3] A water spirit, or mermaid, is remembered at Killone Lake and Newhall. The legend is preserved in several variants. In 1839 it was told how O'Brien of Killone saw a lovely girl in the lake, and caught her. Bringing her home, he found to his great disgust and disappointment that she had a fish's tail. He ordered her to be kept in a "crib," and fed and well-treated. As she never spoke, a local fool threw scalding water on her to make her say something. He was only too successful, for, after a wild, blood-curdling shriek, she cried: 103 773 776

> "As the return of the salmon from the stream,
> A return without blood or flesh,
> May such be the departure of the O'Briens
> Like ears of wild corn from Killone."[4]

The legend recorded, almost at the same time (1840), by Crofton Croker was told to me by the old peasantry, about 1876, as follows:—A mermaid used to swim up a stream that flowed under the cellars of Newhall, in order to steal wine. The "master" (an O'Brien), or the butler, hid and stabbed her, (or threw her into a tub of scalding water where she became a big lump of jelly), and her blood ran down the stream and 773 776

[3] "The Dind Senchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), p. 456.
[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii., p. 111.

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773 776 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she wailed :—

> "As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> "As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer. [823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of long, low, cross vaults. [342] In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their [103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[8] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

[8] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soul Cages").

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Malbay. She was white-skinned and had well-shaped white hands. The party tried to make friends with her, giving her bread, which she ate. Then a Quilty fisherman got frightened, said she was "something bad," and threw a pebble at her, on which she plunged into the sea and disappeared. Soon afterwards King Edward died. An old man at Spanish Point said the last mermaid was seen the year of the Great Famine (1846), and that such an appearance foretells a public disaster. 776 [787]

VIII. *Ghosts and Haunted Houses.*

Here, "where'er we tread is haunted," and libellous, ground, so that in the majority of cases the names and definite addresses must be withheld, although in every case I am acquainted with them. 775

Taking first the ancient buildings, I am unable to state the nature of the haunter of Lisananima (ghost fort) in Kilcorney, or of the other places of like name, although, as regards the former, Dr. George MacNamara and I did our best, about 1897, to find out, for the ghost was said to have been seen recently; so also at Toberatasha (spectre well). At Lisfuadnaheirka, near Kilkee, we were told in 1896 of a "horned ghost," but "Fuadnaheirka" was a local "terror by night" who slew people, as Eugene O'Curry says his bare legs knew when, (as a boy in 1816), he lived close to Dunaheirka (or Liscroneen), a large fort, which was the chief seat of this being, and was evidently a place to be run past on dark winter evenings.[6] It is not wonderful that stories should be so vague. A form "that shape has none" terrifies some nervous or drunken person, who afterwards speaks often of the ghost, but can give no details. The subject is usually regarded too seriously for verbal embroidery.

A fisherman, being detained on Scattery Island by a storm early last century, and hence unable to attend mass at Kilrush, went up into the "cathedral"[7] to pray. After a time he looked up and saw a crowd of monks and laity with priests at the altar in

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol i., pp. 370 *et seq.*

[7] This is the Church of St. Mary near the Round Tower.

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A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

IX. *Supernatural Animals.*

776 There is a rich fauna of supernatural animals in the county, even snakes being represented in it. There can be little doubt that the highly imaginative early Irish personified the more terrifying powers of nature, such as the sea, the storm, and the thunder. The roaring, writhing waves in a sea creek or river swirl may have suggested some great creature, (too great to be natural), wallowing under the waters, and so given rise to the endless *péist* names and legends, in which a distinction is never drawn between the spectral and the natural.

[136] *Péists.*—Ireland, although free from serpents at all times known to science, was yet much dominated by them mentally. Probably no lake of any importance in Clare was untenanted by a serpent, a wonderful animal, or a city. A *péist* could, however, be chained or slain by a hero or saint, and the majority of the *péists* were believed to have been eliminated by such warriors in the same way as the bear and, later, the wolf were cleared away by ordinary mortals. *Péist* only meant beast, and seems to mean no more in many place-names not belonging to lakes or river pools. Cappanapeasta near Inchicronan need not imply a monster, but Poulnapeasta we may always venture to translate as "water dragon's lair." There are many examples in tradition of the "dweller in the waters," "the serpent-god of this hallowed stream." In the *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* we find a *péist* with "ears as large as the gate of a Cathair" (stone fort) and "tusks as big as a tree."[1] The saga of *Da Derga's Hostel* brings into one the Norse, Irish, and Hebrew beliefs of the *péist*, Midgard Snake, and Leviathan by its tale of the "Leuidan, that surrounds the globe and strikes with its tail to overturn the world."[2] The *Feis tighe chonain* and *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* are full of allusions, and contain a dialogue with a Grecian *péist*, and tell how Finn slew spectres, arrachs, and aimids (women bugbears), and "banished from the raths (earth forts) each *péist*." Even in a nearly contemporary history of a hero of the time of Canute, a

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 115. [2] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi., p. 54.

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Clare prince Murchad, son of King Brian, and, like his father, slain at the moment of victory in 1014, is described as "the second powerful Hercules who destroyed and exterminated *péists* and monsters."[3] It is interesting to note how the deserted forts, even in pre-Norman times,[4] were believed to be the haunt of strange monsters, and to afford an equivalent to "big game shooting" for the local warriors:

> "He slew the spectre of Drom Cliabh,
> And the spectre and serpent of Lough Ree.
> Fionn banished from the raths
> Each piast he went to meet.
> A serpent in the refulgent Shannon
> He slew by frequenting the "lake.""[5]

First in importance amongst the *péists* is the "Cata." St. Senan (about A.D. 500) found that this monster dwelt in Iniscatha, now Scattery, in the estuary of the Shannon, where Finn had killed a like infester. The Cata devoured the saint's smith, Narach, but Senan brought him forth again alive. The subsequent combat promised great things, but ended tamely. The Cata advanced "its eyes flashing flame, with fiery breath, spitting venom and opening its horrible jaws," but Senan made the sign of the cross, and the beast collapsed and was chained and thrown into Doolough near Mount Callan (the black lake, "Nigricantis aquae juxta montem Callain in Tuamonia").[6] In the oldest (metrical) Life of Senan, the *péist* appears as the "immanis bellua" or "bestia," while Iniscatha is rendered "Belluanam Insulam." The legend is alluded to even in the late eighth-century *Calendar of Oengus* under March 8th, "Senan of InisCathaig gibbetted Naroch's foe." The story is remembered widely, and among all

[3] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series), p. 187. This curious and bombastic panegyric proves statistically that the valour of Murchad was $\frac{1}{1440}$th part of that of Hector of Troy, who was seven times more valiant than the Tuatha Dé Danann god Lag-long-hand.

[4] The Normans held similar beliefs. Giraldus Cambrensis gives an account of spectral apparitions in a fort during the conquest of Leinster.

[5] *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*, vol. vi.; cf. vol. ii., p. 58.

[6] Prose Life of St. Senanus, Colgan, *Acta S. Hib.*, under March 8th, Section xxxviii. See also Wh. Stokes, *Lives of the Irish Saints from the Book of Lismore.*

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776 classes at Scattery and along both banks of the river, at Kilkee, Kilmihil, and round Doolough and Miltown Malbay. In the fifteenth-century details of the "Cathedral" of Scattery a large-eyed dragon with crocodile jaws is conspicuous; there was another carving at Kilrush; and a third,—the "pattern-stone" removed from Scattery and until lately at Kilkee,—showed the Cata as "the amphibious beast of this blessed Isle," a nondescript creature with spiked back, scales, fish tail, nose curling up spirally, and clawed forefeet.

St. MacCreehy, a generation later than Senan (about 580), rivals the latter as a "dragon queller." He subdued the "Bruckee," a demon badger (*broc sidh*), at Rath Blathmaic near Inchiquin, which slew men and cattle and resisted the prayers of six local saints.[7] MacCreehy by his holiness soon overpowered and chained it; the aged saint then threw it

> "Deep in that forgotten mere
> Among the tumbled fragments of the hills"

below the hill of Scamhal (or Scool) where its den Poulnabruckee (Poll na broic sidhe) is still shown. As already suggested (p. 181) the Bruckee may have been a bear, and "a terrible bear,—he is death to a herd of cattle" in *Bricriu's Feast*[8] sounds like an allusion to a common occurrence. The Bruckee on "MacCreehy's tomb" in Kilmacreehy church, on the shore of Liscannor Bay, is exactly like the Cata carvings in Scattery, with long pointed ears, large eyes, and huge jaws blunt-ended, but bristling with pointed teeth. In the fifteenth century it had become a dragon in local belief.

Another Bruckee haunted Shandangan Lough near Corofin, a little pool famous, when I first knew it, for remarkable changes of colour. There are two funnel holes, eight to ten feet wide, full of water, in the soft ground near the pool which are still

[7] See Plate XIV., p. 340, *ante*. O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, vol. iii., p. 322; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxix., p. 249.

[8] P. 64 (ed. *Irish Texts Society*). However, if the animal was common in the literary period, one might expect that the Life of King David would have suggested an Irish counterpart to the monks. Fights with the wolf are practically absent from Irish tales, and it seems safer to regard the identity with the bear of the badger "as big as a cow" as a mere speculation.

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regarded with fear and suspicion. Ned Quin of Coad, a honest truthful man who died about eight years ago, firmly believed that he had seen the Bruckee in this lake. When he and a man named Pilkington were passing by, they saw a brown hairy monster swimming and plunging in the water, and it had eyes as large as turnips.[9] It was probably a "tussock" of peat and coarse grass that had, as often happens, fallen off the crumbling shore. There is no tradition that this pest was confined by the local sainted lady (Findclu) Inghean Baoith.

John Windele, amongst much speculation as to there being a dragon temple (*dracontium*) at Scattery and others at Loop Head in Clare and at Dun Farvagh in the Middle Isle of Aran, asserts, on the authority of *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, a romance written in 1750, that several other formidable monsters belong to this district.[10] These were the Faracat,[11] Fearboc or Fearbach, and three other dragons, the spawn of the "all-devouring sow, on the rock of Cruine" reared by "the red demon of Doolough." Comyn, in the same romance, derives the name of Illaunmattle, an island off the neighbouring coast, from the Matal, a formidable beast, (perhaps a demon boar), defeated by the same heroes.[12] How far those of Comyn's stories without local attestation are genuine folklore is doubtful. Akin to these monsters is the mighty serpent hunted and slain by the O'Briens' army down the valley of the Daelach in Corcomroe. They stoned it with rocks which still form the great cairn of Carnconnachtach, near Ennistymon, over its remains.[12] This cairn, being at Ballydeely (Daelach's town *par excellence*), may have been the reputed tomb of the Firbolg chief Daelach, son of Umór, and is almost certainly the "Carn mic Tail" where the O'Conors of Corcamodruad inaugurated their chiefs.

[9] So Dr. G. U. MacNamara.

[10] Windele, *Topographical MS.* (Royal Irish Academy), p. 31; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 350.

[11] *Ante*, p. 183.

[12] The Mata, a giant, many-legged, and carapaced monster, infested the Boyne valley, and left a pyramid of its bones in the cemetery of Brugh. See "Dindsenchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), pp. 292, 329.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 309.

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●776 These beliefs are obviously early, as in the "Agallamh" of *The Book of Lismore*[14] is a lough *péist* which kills men and hounds, and *The Book of Feenagh* tells of "Loc na pesti," where a hideous *péist* slew 900 youths as they bathed. The *Seanchus Mór* has a lake monster, the Murdris, which expands and contracts like a smith's bellows. The same idea takes shape in the reputed gigantic (if not supernatural) eels and pikes in certain lakes. An enormous pike haunts Gurteen Lough, an old property of the Stamers, in Lower Ennratty. The peasants dare not bathe in its waters, and believe they have seen in the dusk a huge misty form in the lough and even crawling up its shores, whence it has frequently carried off lambs, and even calves.[15]

Bulls.—In ruins and hollow trees sometimes a strong breeze from some particular point will cause a deep intermittent bellow, which might originate a belief in ghostly bulls. At Rosslara (Fortanemore) Castle near Tulla we have heard the wind from some undetermined point towards the north-west, when sufficiently strong, raise a roar so mighty as to be audible far from the ruin. I traced the noise to a small deep window nearly filled by a slope of earth and stones. The Castle enjoys the fame of being haunted, but I have heard no bull legend. At Rinroe (or Elmhill) Castle near Clonlara, the bull was seen about 1890 by the then owner of the farm on which the ivied tower stands. Having missed several "trams" of hay, the farmer was lying in wait in some bushes in the Castle field, and at last saw a huge black bull come out of the ruin, and throw its tail round a "tram" of hay and draw it into the castle.[16] There is an old lane way at a beautiful spot on the shore of Lough Derg opposite to the "Holy Island" of Iniscaltra with its lofty round tower and clustered churches with their noble setting of lake and mountains. In this old road are two dreaded spots, one haunted by a ghostly black bull with fiery eyes, and the other by a less awe-inspiring object "a ghost like a turkey cock"! Farther north is the scene of a curious variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, with frogs instead of rats and a brutal boy in place of a cruel prelate.[17]

[14] Translated by S. H. O'Grady in *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., pp. 101-265.
[15] So the late Ralph Hugh Westropp and Mrs. Stamer.
[16] The late Hugh Massy Westropp heard this from the farmer.
[17] So Capt. Hibbert.

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Water Cattle.—I have not found a water-bull legend clearly told in Clare, but cow's horns are seen over the waters of one lake and "something roared" under the waters of another.[18] In 1877 I heard of cattle coming out of some lake near Kilkishen, (perhaps Callaun, with its enchanted city or palace), but I could not recover the story when searching twenty years later. "*Lock na bó girre* which is called *lock Gréine*" is given[19] as an old name for the large lake of Lough Graney in the Aughty mountains on the north border of Clare. This probably implies that it had a legend like that of Lough bo Girr, near Cahir in County Tipperary, whence an enormous long-horned cow used to issue. 776

Púcas and Horses.—Though the *púca* has influenced very often the place-names of Clare, its legends in the county are dry and vague. One man near Clonlara had the misfortune to become its sport. It took the form of a pony, and, finding the man searching for treasure in a gravel-pit, in which he had dreamed that gold was concealed, bore him away on a long rough ride and dropped him at the spot from which it started, where he was found bruised and insensible next morning.[20] The *púca* also appears as a hideous goat. I was told by a servant, about 1870, of a demon "black puck-goat with fiery eyes" appearing to a poor country woman on a roadside bank in the Cratloe hills.[21] The tale was very blood-curdling, but, doubtless to my relief then but regret now, I put it out of mind, and now forget its details. The *púca* always puts its hoof on the blackberries at Michaelmas, after which they become unfit to eat.[22]

Of spirit horses other than the *púca*, I have heard of one at a deep gravel quarry, near Trough in the same hills. The ghostly presentment of a Limerick gentleman, a Mr. Furnell, appeared one moonlight night on horseback. He rode at full gallop, with 776 763

[18] I think Lough Breeda, east from Tulla, and Clonlea Lake were intended. I am to blame for not making a note at the time, but was only interested in the legend. My notes only begin in 1878, though embodying earlier matter, and are too often "car notes" from drivers and others and not properly located. Where possible, I re-examined them from 1892 upwards.

[19] In the "Agallamh," *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 126.

[20] So the late Sir Hugh Dillon Massy at Doonass.

[21] So Mrs. O'Shea at Clonsne, Limerick.

[22] Cf. similar English belief as regards the devil.

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776 763 hounds in full cry, and the sound of horns, across the upper field, leaped the fence, and disappeared into the quarry with a crash and groan. Mr. Francis Drew of Drewsborough, who was driving past with a friend, recognised and called to the ghostly rider; when he saw the supposed accident, he ran into the quarry, but could find nothing. Next day he heard of the death of the hunter, but far away from the quarry.[23]

776 Supernatural, but evidently material, were the horses which came out of the caves of Kilcorney in the heart of the Burren,[24] for they left descendants, noted for their high spirits and fierceness, by earthly mares in the valley. A similar tale of sea-horses coming out of Galway Bay was told some thirty-five years since, and we owned a reputed scion of their race, a cob from Connemara on the opposite side of the Bay.

Dogs.—One spectral dog haunts the road between Carrigaholt and Ross in the long peninsula of the Irrus, and is believed to be the spirit of a comparatively recent local celebrity, "Robin of Ross," of whom many tales are told. He was a member of the Keane family, and one version makes his ghost a different dog from the one near Carrigaholt.[25] Another dog accompanies a human ghost on its nightly patrol between the railway bridge and the cemetery at the venerable church and shattered round tower of Dromcliff. The precincts of Ennistymon House were haunted by the spectre of a large black hound, quite harmless.[26] Once very famous, but now nearly forgotten, was the ghostly "Black Dog of Cratloe." Many believed that they had seen the apparition, which used often to accompany the D'Esterre's coach and the mail car. My mother and my brother Ralph Hugh Westropp, who travelled through the great floods of the Shannon on February 1st, 1869, told a very circumstantial tale of the dog.[27]

[23] So the late Capt. Ralph Westropp, from Mr. Drew.

[24] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236; cf. Gough, *Camden*, vol. iv., p. 366.

[25] So the MacDonnells and a driver named Russell. "Robin" lived in the early eighteenth century.

[26] So Mrs. Twigge.

[27] My mother in her diary notes,—"Drove home through several floods, the worst at Bunratty. . . . Saw the phantom dog at Cratloe."

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I was present at its first telling, before they heard from our old servant, Mrs. Julia MacHugh, of the local belief. The tale, I have heard, was fully confirmed by their driver and a guide, a workman of the D'Esterres, who piloted them along a flooded and unfenced reach of the road a little to the east of Bunratty. A large, dark, shadowy dog seemed to run upon the moonlit water, first to one side and then to the other of the carriage, and was more than once lashed at by the driver. It disappeared near where the road ascends from the low marshy "corcasses" along the foot of the Cratloe hills. Julia MacHugh, a woman of wide local knowledge, at once "explained" the apparition and said that the omen was good if the dog ran alongside, but bad if he leaped at the carriage or horses. On one occasion he leaped at the mail car, and soon afterwards its driver was thrown off and killed on the spot. I recently learnt that a ghostly black dog haunts by night the lonely road above the old ruined house of Glenomera. 776

Seals.—The belief that seals are disguised human beings prevailed, I am told, in Clare forty years ago, at least along the Kilkee coast.[28] I never heard it myself from fisherfolk. A little further north, from Connemara up to Mayo, the Kinealys are reputed to be descended from a beautiful seal-woman. The belief is nearly universal, and is attached even to a few of the family in Clare. [825]

Rabbits.—Early this year a clever intelligent man, near Ennis, went with a boy and a ferret to shoot rabbits from a fort. Three ran out and were shot at and missed. The man then called the boy to come at once, and ran off in great excitement and fear, saying that the rabbits were fairies. Some such belief must be widely spread, as Mrs. MacDonnell of Newhall told me that, when a girl, she took up a small and very tame white rabbit in the glen at Edenvale and immediately afterwards found that she had lost a ring. The people who helped in the search, and her father's gamekeeper, were convinced that the rabbit was a fairy and had taken the ring with it.

Birds.—I have read of an enchanted bird which was caught in the cave of Kilcorney and spoke with a human voice.[29] The

[28] So the late Hugh Massy Westropp.

[29] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236.

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776 ravens and owls connected with the Ross-Lewins, Westropps, and other families as death warnings have already been referred to (p. 190).

X. *Spectral Lands and Cities.*

773 Clare formed a part of the outmost fringe of the ancient world, and its people were deeply impressed with the mysteries and wonders of the Outer Ocean. The voyage of Maelduin tells of the son of a Clare man sailing out into "the great endless deep" and finding isles of surpassing beauty and wonder, and the "Hui Corra" in deep repentance sailed towards the setting sun from the creek at the northern bound of Clare "to meet the Lord on the sea."[30] St. Brendan, eager to seek out new islands, went for advice to St. Enda, a saint closely connected with Clare, (where Killeany bears his name), and its appanage, Aran. In the bay to the north of Clare William Ires, a native of Galway, became accustomed to the ocean which he crossed with Columbus, and it may be that his tales of Hy Brasil, of St. Brendan's Isle, and of the "thrice fifty distant Isles in the ocean to the west of us. Larger than Erin, twice is each of them, or thrice,"[31] encouraged the frightened sailors of the great Admiral to persevere a little longer.

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Hy Brasil,[32] the Isle of the Blessed, is possibly a legacy from ancient paganism, which placed its Tirnan-oge, The Land of Youth, in the waves "on the west side down from Aran, where goes the sun to its couch."[33] The desire for the ageless, deathless land prevailed all up the western coast, and was strong in Kilkee in 1868-78, and perhaps even still. I myself saw the mirage several times in 1872 giving the perfect image of a shadowy island with wooded hills and tall towers springing into sight for a moment as the sun sank below the horizon. I have also heard from Kilkee fishermen legends, like that embodied in the verses of Gerald

[30] "Voyage of the Hui Corra," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiv. (1893), p. 37; *Voyage of Bran*, (ed. Kuno Meyer), vol. i., p. 12; "Voyage of Maelduin," *Revue Celtique*, vol. ix. (1888), p. 45.

[31] *Voyage of Bran*, vol. i., p. 14.

[32] It is marked on a series of ancient maps from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries.

[33] *Grella an fhéagu*, (Irish Texts Society, vol. i.), p. 21.

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773 Another sunken island off Loop Head is named by the Rev. John Graham and the Halls,[38] and called Kilstiffin or Kilstapheen. I heard no such tradition in Moyarta, but O'Curry alludes to it without contradiction, although he was a native and son of a veritable repertory of the local legends of the Irrus.[39] The towers and other edifices were visible at times under the waves, and its [821] inhabitants sometimes raised destructive storms over its site when all around was calm.

The large lake of Cullaun (Cullaunyheeda) near Tulla is reputed to cover a palace or a city. Tradition said that a chief, Sioda MacNamara, (probably the restorer of the beautiful "Abbey" of Quin in 1402), was carried into the depths by a [776] "water horse" which he had caught and trained. The rock off which his treacherous steed leaped was shown before 1870, and the chief was believed to be sleeping till "the last weird battle in the west," doomed to win Ireland her liberty and a glorious place amongst the nations. It seems likely that it was from the same lake that magic cattle issued, as I heard about Kilkishen, near it, in 1877. A local bard, Michael Hogan, refers to the lake in one of his poems,[40] but how far he embodies local legend I am unable to say. His light-hearted, if lawless, hero is surprised on coming to "Cullaun's fairy waters" to see a noble park instead of a lake. He hits his cow in surprise, and she leaps the fence. Following her he reaches the palace of an ancient chief, who entertains him and dismisses him with his marvellously fattened cow. He finds at the fair that he has been absent for a year under the waters of the lake.

"Thro' wild Cullane's embowering shades—
Beneath the silver starlight, sleeping,
He pass'd—the trees, with silent heads,
Upon his darken'd path hung weeping.

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following other romances, and contradicting the genuine legends in several particulars.

[38] *Mason's Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 490, collected by Rev. J. Graham from the Behanes, Landers, Contis, and Coonerties of Kilrush and Carrigaholt; Mr. and Mrs. S. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery etc.*, vol. ii., p. 436.

[39] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii.

[40] *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, pp. 13, 20.

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important subject somewhat bald. The pagan Irish, of course, reverenced wells, and the famous "King of the Waters" in Mayo was connected with St. Patrick by early biographers.[9] With the usual wise tactfulness of the ancient Irish missionaries all that was harmless was adopted into the new religion, and the wells lost none of their old observances and honour. The dedications of the Clare wells form a most valuable record, for, even when the founder of the church was forgotten, or a new patron invoked, the well usually kept the name of the ancient local saint. Unfortunately since about 1850 names of wells have been locally forgotten, and a re-dedication, often to St. Joseph, is common. Strange to say, the noteworthy saints Enda and Luchtighern are forgotten at the wells at their churches. The early mediæval life of St. Senan, (Colgan, *Vita S.S.*, March), says that, when that saint was born at Magh Lacha, Moylough, there was no water at hand to baptize him,—a rare thing in County Clare,—so he told his mother to pull up three rushes, and a spring welled out. The tale was still told in 1816.[10] The life of St. Mochulleus (Mochuille or Mochulla), about 1141 tells us how that early seventh-century saint struck a rock near a lake to the north of Tulla and three streams broke out. The well dedicated to him to the east of Loch Graney is evidently intended, and *two* streams still flow from it down the hillside. Some have supposed the wells of Tobereendowny, ("well of the King of the Sabbath," or, as suggested by Prof. Macalister and others, "of the world"),—were dedicated to a pre-Christian deity. Tobereevul is dedicated to Aibhill.[11] The flooded dolmen, Tobergrania, is named from Finn's fugitive spouse, "Granny's bed" occurring also as a dolmen name in Clare. Among Christian dedications we have Tobercruhnorindowan (of "the creator of the world") at Killard, Tober Isa (of "Jesus"), and Tobernacrohynaeve (*i.e.* Tobar-na-croiche-naoimh, of "the Holy Cross"). To the Virgin are dedicated wells at Drimelihy-Westby, Kilmacduan, and Killadysert. Of non-local saints,—usually, it is probable, late dedications,—we find St. John has

[9] *E.g.*, in the *Tripartite Life*, ed. W. Stokes, among the early "annotations" of Tirechan.

[10] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., under Kilrush Parish.

[11] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 186.

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776 778 823 the wells of Killone and Tromra, St. Michael wells at Kilbrecan, Cappagh (Bunratty) and the Kilmihils, St. Augustine at Kilshanny and Gallynagry, St. Bartholomew at Toberpartholaun in Rath (Inchiquin), and St. Martin at Moyarta, Ballynecally, and Lemaneagh. All the dedications to St. Joseph are modern. St. Patrick did not enter Clare, but has wells at Correen (Kilnaboy), Clooney (Bunratty Barony), and Rossalia. The following list of wells dedicated to local saints may be useful for reference. *Brecan* (c. 480) has wells at Noughaval near Clare Castle (Kilbrecan), Doora, and Clooney (Bunratty); *Brendan* (date doubtful), at Kilmoon and Farighy (Moyarta); *Brigid*, (probably the Abbess of Feenish Island, c. 550), Kiltanon, Cappafeeaun, Finnor, and Coney Island; *Caimin* (d. 653), Iniscaltra and Moynoe; *Caritan* (c. 550), Kilcredaun in Kilballyowen, Kilcredaun near O'Brien's Bridge, and Kilcredaunadober near Bunratty; *Carrol* (doubtful), Kilcarrol, where a wooden image of him existed in 1816; *Colan* of Tomgraney (d. 552), to the west of that village; *Colman mac Duach* of Kilmacduach (c. 630), Kinallia, Oughtmāma (where "the three Colmans" probably originate in a confusion of texts), Teernea, Lough George, and Crusheen: *Columba* of Iona (d. 597), Crumlin and Glen Columbcille; *Cornan* (unknown), Kilcornan and Tobercornan in Gleninagh; *Croine* (unknown), Kilcrony and Liscrona in Moyarta, *Cronan* (probably of Tomgraney, c. 505), Inchicronan, Ter-oncronan, Killokennedy, and Corrakyle; *Dioma*, Kildimo; *Enda* (c. 480), Killeany; *Fachtnan* (doubtful), Kilfenora; *Flannan* (c. 680), Killaloe; *Imer* (unknown), Killimer; *Inghean Baoith* (c. 630), Kilnaboy, Commons, Glenseeade, Inakerstown, Killavella, Dulick (Templemaley), Kiltacky, Kilshanny, Aglish, Moy-Ibrickan, Magowna, Ballycoree, Shalee (two), Cullaun, Castletown (Spansil Hill), Dromumna, and Quin; *Kirin* (not Kieran), Kilkierin (locally Kilkereen); *Lachtin*, Kilnamona, Kilfarboy, and Stacpoole Bridge near Miltown Malbay; *Lonan* (c. 580), Killaspuglonane and Derrynavahagh (Kilmoon); *Luchtighern* (c. 550), Tomfinlough and, probably, Moy Ibrickan; *Maccreehy* (c. 580), Kilmacreehy, Kilmanaheen, and Inagh; *Mainchin* (perhaps "St. Munchin," patron of Limerick), Kilmanaheen; *Mochonna* (unknown), Feakle and Moynoe; *Mochulla* (c. 620), Tulla, Templemoculla (Clonlara), Lough Graney, Lough

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Breeda, Miltown, Kilgorey, Fortanne, Broadford, Trough, Ralahine, Cragg, Lahardan, and Cappavilla, with perhaps, (if not of St. Molocus, c. 550), Moylough, Scattery, and Carrigaholt; *Molua* (c. 620), Killaloe; *Onchu*, Killonaghan; *Sanctan*, Dromline; *Screbann*, Clondegad and Kilmaley; *Senan* (d. 552), Iniscatha, Moylough, Iniscaeragh (Mutton Island), Kilclogher, Carrow (Kilmaduan), Erribul (Kilfiddan), Kilshanny, Killaneena, Cooraclare, Kilcredaun, and Drim (Quin); *Tola* (c. 635), Dysert O'Dea and Kiltola; and *Voydan* or *Braighdean* (unknown), Kilvoydan, Corofin, and Kilraughtis.

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Healing Powers.—The *Ordnance Survey Letters*[12] mention the following:—Gleninagh well, which has a fifteenth-century well-house or "turry," cured sore eyes; Tober Cholmain, above Oughtmāma churches, sufferers from "the pearl," the films falling off the eyes at the third washing; St. Maccreehy's well, near Liscannor, eye troubles, which were also cured by St. Inghean Baoith's well near Kilshanny (even then nearly deserted), Tobermoghna near Clooney (Corcomroe), St. Senan's well on the cliffs south-west from Kilkee, Kilcrony well near Carrigaholt, Tobercuan in Kiltrellig near Loop Head, Tobershenan in Moyfadda, the Virgin's well at Templemaley, and Tober Isa at Corlack Glebe (Bunratty). Tobernatasha, ("well of the relic" or, as some say, "spectre"), in Kilmaley was shaped like a coffin, and delicate children used to be laid on their backs in it.[13] The black mud which gave its name to Toberduff cured sore eyes and swelled limbs. So did Senan's well at Kilkee; horrible to tell, the devotees,—down to 1875, at least, when a washing-tank was made outside the well-house,—used to wash in this, the only supply of drinking-water for the then fashionable watering-place. Toberlachtin at Kilnemona cured several diseases, its "day" being March 19th. Eyes were also healed by the well south from Newmarket-on-Fergus, and by the wetted moss of St. Mochulla's well near Tulla (the moss being put back to complete the cure). The latter well is said to have avenged itself, about 1780, on its landlord, who had dug away part of its enclosure, by rendering

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[12] Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Mss. 14 B 23. 24, (Co. Clare), vols. i. and ii.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 183.

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The names Thomas, James, and Patt. Cusack, and carvings of the round tower, Crucifixion, an angel, and a figure with a chalice, also appeared, as well as St. Senan with a crozier driving out a beast with a serrated back, belly, and tail, and the inscription "St. Synon and the Angel casting the amphibious beast out of the blessed Island." I could not find the stone after 1878. The devotees in 1816 took their rounds about the holy well annually on their bare knees, and it was the practice of those who could not conveniently attend to hire for a small payment some poor person to act as their substitute. The pattern was sometimes held on Easter Monday, and, as it was degenerating into drunkenness, the Roman Catholic Dean of Killaloe endeavoured to stop it.[6] His curate also persuaded several women to enter St. Senan's church, but their families were soon after evicted and left the Island, so that the fame of the saint's legendary misogyny was established more firmly than ever. But in 1878, when I first visited the Island, women entered the church without protest.

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At Killone the great patterns have been long since suppressed,[7] and I could learn nothing about the actual rites. "Rounds" are still performed at other times, being frequently vowed in sickness or for a sick relative. The rite consists in going on the bare knees, with bare head, sunwise round the green tongue of land from the altar between the crags and the lake. This being done, prayers are offered at the altar itself. Some pilgrims also wash their heads, feet, and hands in the bathing tank. The details vary according to the vow, and count is kept of the rounds and prayers by the rounded stones on the altar.[8] None of the observances seem to extend to the neighbouring abbey. The Pilgrim's Road is still visible, running north from the well far towards Ennis. The altar was last repaired by Anthony Roche, an Ennis merchant, in 1731.

The patterns on Iniscaltra, in Lough Derg, have long been nearly forgotten. In 1877 an old boatman told me that he had heard from old people of the flotillas of boats from every side of the great lake, the villages of tents, and the crowds of beggars,

[6] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 459, under Kilrush parish.

[7] The summer pattern on St. John's Day still attracts a fair number of devotees, but seems to have no very exceptional feature.

[8] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate III.

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XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date,
825 for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle.*—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

778 The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round
825 Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an
233 irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural
823 stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St.
[776] Fergus, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boullarudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boulynaminscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolynaneka (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultaghdine in Kilmaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltagh means "mixed by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynanweila (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolty-dooleen in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaunk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

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A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions* (*continued*).

Horse.—I have found no folklore relating to horses except that already given regarding supernatural animals.[1] I have since recalled a legend of a dangerous spectral horse, probably a *púca*, haunting the bridge over the Blackwater, between Limerick and Clonlara, and the tree-darkened road towards the latter place,—a terror by night to passengers till about twenty years ago. There was also the bodiless head of a spectral horse which used to float beside cars on a road near Clooney, of which I heard about 1876, but now forget the details. The riding of horses by fairies was not unknown. 825 776

Dog, Fox, and Hare.—Besides the supernatural dogs already noted,[2] and the "Red Dog" (or Fox?), near Cragmoher, at Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge, there is little to tell. Finn's famous hound Bran was drowned at Tirmicbrain lake, and a ghastly dog broke the bones in some graveyard, (perhaps Doora or Clooney), before 1876.[3] It is unlucky to meet a fox, a red-haired woman, or a hare "first thing" in the morning. The hare is said to eat human flesh,—probably from being often "started" in graveyards. I have been told by several Clare people of witches turning into hares, but the alleged incident was never located in the county. [777] [791]

Seal.—A very vague belief prevails on the coast that seals are

[1] Vol. xxi., pp. 481-2.

[2] Vol. xxi., pp. 482-3.

[3] As in most of my recollections of folk-tales heard before 1876, the details are forgotten.

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825 enchanted human beings.[4] It gets more definite above Galway
• 776 Bay, where the Kinealeys are of reputed seal descent. Some such belief may underlie the name Cumarra (or sea-hound) in the MacNamara family. I found more difficulty in getting fisher beliefs in recent years than in getting folklore from the country people. Much of what I heard in 1906 was probably of tourist origin, and, like the *merrow* at Killard,[5] not to be trusted as genuine belief.

Otter.—Beyond vague belief in an enormous "durracow"[6] (the king of the otters), which I heard of as a child on the Shannon Bank about some unnamed lake in east Clare, I am not aware of any folklore about this creature in the county. There was said to be a "remarkable" otter at Glenomera.

Cat.—The cat was much regarded by the early Irish, and holds honourable place in their ancient code of laws. It even appears in the illuminations of the *Book of Kells.* Numerous places in Clare bear its name, but local belief tends to consider the "cat" in these names as a weird monster. The "Cata" and "Faracat" of legend[7] were probably "dragons." The cat has supernatural
[763 knowledge. If a cat looks fixedly at a person without apparent
787] reason it forebodes sickness or death, but if it does so to an unmarried person, after making its toilet, it foretells marriage.

[4] So in Aed Baclamp from the *Book of Lismore*, (*Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 72), St. Brendan changes 50 seals into horses, which carry into the sea their riders, who, on reaching it, are, like their steeds, changed into seals.

[114] [5] Vol. xxi., p. 342. Mrs. Dorothea Townshend of Oxford calls my attention to the probability that this story was made up by Dr. Keightley (v. App. to his *Fairy Mythology*). In my original Ms. I expressed great doubt as to this story, having found no equivalent to it near Dunlug or Kilkee, but this was unfortunately omitted in publication. The Miltown mermaid was probably one of the white seals occasionally seen on the coast.

[6] *I.e. Dobharchu*, water-hound. The Irish called the wolf *faol-chu* (wild hound) and *cu allaid*, and the marten *crann chu* (branch hound). The more common name for the wolf in Clare is *breagh*, as in Breaghva and Breffy, the name of several townlands. The other wolf name *Mac Tire* (son of the country), is attached to Knockaunvicteera hill near Lisdoonvarna (where it refers to the animal), and to Cahermactire, a fort near Inchiquin Hill; at the latter place it may refer to a person, as the name Mac Tire is found in various annals.

[7] Vol. xxi., pp. 477-9. [P. 246]

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The wild cat is believed to have a spike or hook at the end of its tail which it can stick into a pursuer, but I found no such fine legend in Clare on this point as I did near Kenry in Limerick, where the cats pursued, and anchored themselves on, a farmer and his dog, after chasing them from Clorane to Old Kildimo! 825 776

Elk.—The Irish elk is known among the turf cutters of Clooney and Tulla as the "Fiaghmore" (so pronounced, but really *fiadh mor*, big deer),—"it might be one of the deer Finn hunted." Its numerous remains have given to one townland the name "Fiaghmore, Fiah,"[8] in 1655. The "Agallamh"[9] has an interesting allusion. Diarmaid kills a huge deer, and its antler, when resting on his foot, reaches above his head, despite his great height. Caoilte produces this horn from a lake to convince St. Patrick of the truth of his stories of the heroes.

Badger, Squirrel, and Marten.—It is asserted that there are two kinds of badgers,—the "dog-badger," which eats carrion and digs into graves, and the "pig-badger," which is a strict vegetarian and is eatable. In the *Boroma* tract from the *Book of Leinster*,[10] and the "Agallamh," badger bacon and squirrels are mentioned as fit to set before a king or hero. It is doubtful whether the *fogmal*, (kept as a pet by Queen Maeve and killed on her shoulder by Cuchullin's slingstone), was a squirrel or a bird, but squirrel skins, along with marten skins, formed a considerable export from Ireland at least from 1230 to 1580, and in 1686 Roderic O'Flaherty names the squirrel amongst the animals of Connaught.[11] The true marten was until recently common in east Clare, and, like the supposed "marten-cat" (a large red domestic cat that has gone wild), was reputed uncanny in my boyhood. I have seen martens at play in the Clare woods in 1869, and had one stuffed in 1876, but they seem now to be extinct. [262]

Hybrids.—Besides the "dog-badger," there were said to be uneatable hybrids of the cat and the rabbit, and of the rook and [262]

[8] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv., p. 94.

[9] *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 176. Antlers over six feet long have been found in Clare, and there is a fine single antler 6 ft. 2 in. long at Violet Hill, Broadford.

[10] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiii., p. 47.

[11] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xl., p. 245.

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825 776 [262] the domestic hen. The "soft egg laid by the cock" was looked on with suspicion, and so was the egg of the bat, which was even unlucky to find, and could be used for malignant charms.

Stoat.—In Clare the stoat is always called "weazel." A corruption of the strange Irish name *Feasóg* (the little beard) is as often used, even by English speakers, as the *whishshoge* or *whushshoge*. The creature was equally disliked and respected. It is wished "Good morning, ma'am," by some, and generally saluted by raising the hat on meeting; but others spit and cross themselves. It is regarded as peevish and persistent; "as cross as a bag of weazels" is a proverb in east Clare, while Finn is compared to a weazel in the pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne. I have heard many stories about its revengefulness "when its nest is killed," and of one of its persistent attempts to get at a corpse in a house in south-east Clare, rather, it was thought, for magical purposes than from hunger. Old belief ascribed to the animal the power of poisoning. At Carnelly a labourer told that when cutting a meadow near the "Druids' Altar"[12] he killed a young weazel. Soon afterwards his wife brought him his dinner and a can of sour milk. While they talked, she cried out that a weazel was spitting into the can, but the man laughed and drank the milk. Soon afterwards he got violent gripes, and gave himself up for lost. The doctor had great difficulty in persuading him to try any remedy, and his wife was almost scandalized by his recovery. A similar tale was told at my old home, Attyflin, in which young weazels were not killed but put on a wisp of grass safely in a bush. The parents were seen spitting into the milk, but, on finding the young ones safe, they returned and upset the can.[13] So "even the weazel has justice." Both stories probably originated in the animal's love for milk.

Rat.—A Clare woman told me that a man whose love was [775] rejected by a girl living in Limerick city died, and his soul went into a rat and used to bite her throat until she had to emigrate.[14] The rat tried to follow her and was drowned, and so the persecution ended. A curious "parliament of rats" was held near Durra in

[12] Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort and others.
[13] Late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[14] Mrs. M. MacCormick.

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Upper Bunratty, the fields being covered with them, but, when it broke up, the "troops" dispersed, and no bands were seen at any distance from the rendezvous. A rat was "heard talking with the Devil" in the grave of an unpopular person before 1875, but how the holders of this curious conversation were identified was never stated. I have met a belief in speaking rats in eastern Clare and among fishermen at Kilkee. 825 776

Hedgehog.—This animal is reputed to steal apples and suck cows and eggs, so that it is persecuted and called *grainogs* (little ugly thing).

Birds.—A pair of ravens roosted in a top window of the round tower of Iniscatha (Scattery) early in the last century. The birds were said to escort their young, when fully fledged, across the Shannon to Carrigfoile Castle in Kerry, and not to let them return to the island.[15] Scaldcrows (roystons) are considered unlucky, and much feared. The old Irish regarded them as incarnations of the war-goddess Bodbh.[16] Birds as omens have already been noted.[17] The bat is looked on as a sort of bird, and it is ominous of death for it to fly at one's face. The entry of a robin into a house is a death omen near Tulla, but elsewhere a sign of good fortune. Although swans are so plentiful that I have often seen more than forty together in Inchiquin and other lakes, the only folklore associated with them seems to be a tale of swan-maidens at Inchiquin. The hunting of the wren has been described in Section XIV.[18] [777] [763]

Fishes.—It was regarded as a custom among the fishermen of Kilrush and Scattery that no one should go fishing for three days after the arrival of the herring shoals, but, when the first day dawned, a crowd of boats was always discovered, and much quarrelling resulted.[19] As the shoals arrived, a mass used to be celebrated on the shore at Kilmurry, Ibrickan, to secure good 226 825

[15] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 546.

[16] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x.; *Revue Celtique*, vol. i.; Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 267.

[17] Vol. xxi., p. 190.

[18] *Ante*, pp. 206-7, and Plate IX.

[19] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare* (1808), pp. 228, 259.

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the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Cahercommaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of Lon the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of Lon's seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like débris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown Luno" of (Macpherson's) Ossian.[4] 133 773 823

At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbanaheanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In this bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.[5] 823 773

On Scattery Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara[6] floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint. 776 823

[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

[5] From Messrs. Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtdarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

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776 823 Another knee-stone of St. Senan was beside the creek of Poulanishery on the opposite shore to Scattery. Between Dysert O'Dea and Rath Blamaic a rock with two basins bore the marks of St. Manawla's knees when she carried off the round tower of Rath.[7] St. Columba's thumb and finger marks are shown on a limestone boulder in the road fence near the lane to his entrenched church in Glen Columbcille. The bosses on the "plague stone" at Tomfinlough church were the two plague swellings torn from a woman's head and thrown against the stone by St. Luchtighern.

773 823 Not only the saints, but also Finn MacCumhail and his warriors have left marks on the rocks of Clare. A huge rock named Cloughmornia or Cloughlea, near Ballysheen and not far from Sixmilebridge, has in its sides long straight gashes where Finn and his band tried (or sharpened) their swords.[8] Finn's fingerprints are visible on a rock which was brought to Cullaun House near Quin early in the last century by the facetious Tom Steele from Birr in King's County, where it was seen by Thomas Dineley about 1680. The stone was called "the Navel of Ireland,"[9] and the V-marks are now regarded as the footprints of the cock that crowed at St. Peter's denial.

Hughey's Rock, a great boulder on the brow of the ridge between Edenvale and Rockmount near Ennis, bears the finger-marks of Hughey, a giant who threw it at another giant from Mount Callan.[10]

Caves.—I have heard at Newhall of a cave "between Ennis and Lisdoonvarna" in which runs an underground river that

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 50. A similar legend occurs in the *Book of Lecan.*

[8] *The Battle of Magh Leana*, p. 30 (notes). The legend was still surviving at Ballysheen in 1899.

[9] *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Society*, vol. viii. (1864), p. 360. The cock legend is often represented on tombstones etc., and appears at Ennis Abbey (1460). In a version gathered by me in eastern Limerick, the cock says,—"I'm only a cock, and you're an apostle; but I'm the better gentleman any day!" In *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 415, the Angel Victor in the form of a bird leaves footmarks on a stone.

[10] So told me by Shaneen (Little John) O'Halloran at Edenvale in 1869 and later.

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A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*concluded*).

XX. *Earthworks and Buildings.*

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Fairy forts and mounds have been dealt with in Section iv., haunted houses in Section viii., and foundation sacrifices in Section xi.

Forts.—The ring walls and mounds in County Clare are probably residential, or, more rarely, sepulchral, but certainly not military. They consist of one or more walls (or banks), usually slightly oval, and the earthworks have fosses and traces of stone facing. They are named *dun*, *lis*, *rath*, and even *caher* (*cathair*), but the last name is usually reserved for the dry stone ring walls. *Ooan* (*uamh*) is used both for forts and for artificial caves in them, and also, for a fort-souterain, in 1317 in the *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (History of the Wars of the O'Briens and de Clares). The country people have no limited views as to the makers of the 2400 forts in Clare. Croaghateeaun near Ballinalacken is attributed to the ancient deities, the Danánn, and one should cross oneself in entering its garth.[1] Mohernagartan and Mohernaglasha were made by the smith god Lon,—the latter for the grey "cloud and rain cow," the Glas. Oisin the poet lived in Caherussheen near Corofin, and the great stone fort on Turlough Hill probably belonged to the "Irish Militia" (Finn's warriors). Chonan, one of Finn's men, dwelt in the now levelled fort on Keentlae (*crann tsleibh*) on Inchiquin Hill.[2] Three contemporaries, Crochaun (lumped hill), Dahlin, and Sall (the brine), made the forts bearing their names at Loop Head, and one at Cahernaheanmná near them for their sister the beloved of the hero Dermot O'Duine.[3] Oircheannaigh "of the golden cap" made the vast triple Moghane for his "fighting ring."[4] A giant dwelt in the promontory fort of Doonaunmore at Ballinahown who lost his magic staff and was

[1] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 345.

[2] "*Feis tighe chonain.*"

[3] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxviii., p. 351.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 281; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxvii., pp. 218 *et seq.*

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slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran. 172 823 776

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign. 823 173

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman. 823 778

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional, 346 773

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

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346 773 founder of the building, and is held to explain the rude and inferior work of parts of it. Quin "Abbey" was built by the famous Master Mason Gobbán Saor, who twisted the spiral pillars of its beautiful cloister with his own hands. The builder of the south transept (1433) fell from its gable, and was killed where a tombstone with the scribed figure of an axe marks his grave. The north-west corner of Carran church overhangs, and is destined to fall on the wisest man that shall pass below it.

344 773 *Castles.*—A belief similar to that about Carran church was attached to Ballymulcassel or Mountcashel castle. It is a peel tower, built by King Conor na Srona, about 1460, on a steep little knoll of rock beside the road from Sixmilebridge to Kilkishen. It was to fall on the handsomest person, and gossip told of a very ugly man who always took a longer road to avoid passing it. The same legend and gossip was attached to Newcastle peel tower, near Limerick and not far from the border of Clare. A wizard who lived in Shalee castle was so pestered by his wife that he flew away with half the tower, which remains as Glen castle near Ennistymon station. A guest praised Dysert castle to its owner, 344 173 O'Dea, and wished that it were full of gold. "I'd rather have it full of O'Hiumhairs," replied O'Dea,[7] the family so complimented being a small but warlike clan, of which one member fought in the wars of 1313-8 and is reported to have slain Richard de Clare at Dysert in 1318. I heard in 1869 that the castles near Doonass were built by seven brothers, and that six came to an untimely end at the hands of the seventh, but the legend seems now forgotten at Clonlara.

346 776 173 *Round Towers.*—The peasants seem never to have adopted the various druidic, Cuthite, phallic, and other theories of 1770 onwards from the so-called "educated classes." To them, as to our earlier writers, the towers are steeples built by saints. John Lloyd, in 1780,[8] calls that of Scattery "the loftiest old Steeple in the Kingdom." Michael O'Brannan, in 1794,[9] tells how St.

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 157. The tale closely resembles a legend of St. Caimin of Iniscaltra and Guaire Aidhne at Iniscaltra, Lough Derg.

[8] *A Short Tour etc.*, p. 21.

[9] Poem on Shannon, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. ii., pp. 15-8.

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Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

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764 placed on the new coffin. Where burials take place at short intervals the results are best left untold, but such cases are rare. A consequence of this fearful overcrowding is that no old graveyard is free from coffin planks and plates, bones, and fragmentary or whole skulls.[20] Those who saw Quin "Abbey" before 1879 will remember the enormous heap of skulls, (even then, however, much diminished), heaped round a tree near the graveyard gate. At Tomfinlough the bones and skulls were neatly stacked in a recess, at Kilmacreehy they were heaped on a sort of side altar in the chancel, and in other churches (Coad etc.) I have seen single skulls staring out of holes in the wall.

766 Places for the burial of strangers and unbaptized children are common, and are usually *killeens*, old forgotten church sites, sometimes in a fort, sometimes at a well, or unenclosed in a field.[21] Those at Kilquane, near Ennis; Fomerla, near Tulla; Kyleeáne, near Barefield (with Doughnambraher stone); and Kilvoydane, near Spansil Hill, have basin stones. Some *killeens*, such as that between the forts of Mortyclogh, near Corcomroe Abbey, and that at Fortanne, have crept back into favour for adult burial, but several ancient churches at which bones are found have not been so used in traditional memory (*e.g.* Toomullin, Crumlin, Killonaghan, and Kilbract, round Lisdoonvarna; Templeline, in Carran; Temple-an-aird, near Carrigaholt; St. Senan's, on Mutton Island; Temple aed O'Connell, near Ruan; and several churches on Scattery and Iniscaltra). The church of Kilcashen was not remembered to have been a burial place before Eugene O'Curry's grandfather, Melachein O'Curry, in a pestilence about 1760, charitably [731] collected the deserted unburied corpses "on carts and sledges," and buried them at the ruin on his farm.[22] Bodies were similarly buried during the Great Famine at the Lisheen, near Lough Fergus. Oughtdarra, near Lisdoonvarna, has the remains of a [776] church of St. Sinnach MacDara,[23] where children under seven

[20] See also vol. xxii., p. 56.

[21] For a list, with notes, see *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. vi., ser. iii., p. 129.

[22] Kilcashen, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 369.

[23] A saint famous all round Galway Bay, but not found in the ancient Calendars. Some suppose him to be a Fox Hero, *i.e.* Sinnach mac Dara, Fox

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years of age are buried; after that age bodies are taken to the parish graveyard at Killilagh. In Shanakill, on the Shannon bank opposite Scattery, it was believed that the dead were moved supernaturally under the river into the Sacred Isle.[24] 766 [775]

I know of a case in eastern Clare where parents, having lost several of their children, tried to break the deadly record by changing their burial place, but, alas! without success.

I am not aware of any belief in Clare that the spirit of the last-comer in a graveyard has to watch the place or to bring water to the souls in Purgatory. There was, however, recently a race between two funerals to Rathblamac graveyard, which may imply some such belief. The custom of burying a stone from a church or an ancient tombstone in a new grave, (which has led to the disappearance of several early monuments at Clonmacnoise), prevails at Tomgraney, two ancient tombstones having recently been recovered on digging new graves. As we have already seen,[25] St. Mochulla's well avenged the encroachment of its landlord on the *killeen* beside it, but the graveyards of Kildimo, near Kilkee, and St. Catherine's at Kells, near Corofin, are under cultivation. Dr. MacNamara noted a curious allusion to the last-named in O'Daly's fierce satire on "The Tribes of Ireland" in 1610. The people of Kells are there reproached for "digging the churchyard in the snow." The oldest Irish Law Code, the *Seanchus Mór*, has a clause against digging in a churchyard or breaking bones there. Kildimo was levelled, and its site included in an orchard by 1816.[26] Interference with human remains is deeply and dangerously resented, yet spells are sometimes worked with them.[27] The stealing of a dead man's hand for a butter charm is said to have taken place near Kilkee,[28] and the bones of a Franciscan with the brown cloth of his gown still adhering, found during the repairs at Ennis Abbey, were nearly all taken, but probably from most reverential motives. 764 [775] [765] 789

son of oak tree. There is a Knockaunatinnagh (little hill of the foxes) beside his church. [776]

[24] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii. (1841), p. 545.

[25] Vol. xxii., p. 211.

[26] W. G. Mason, *A Statistical Account etc.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

[27] See *Burial and Skull Beliefs*, vol. xxii., pp. 55-6, 456.

[28] Vol. xxii., p. 340.

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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[20]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[21] 585 796 626

Púcas.[22]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[23]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[24] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[20] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[21] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[22] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[23] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[24] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

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777 Leochain, who was slain in 1024. The King of Cashel (over-king, therefore, of North Munster) was forbidden to pass a night at Latteragh in northern Tipperary at the beginning of harvest; to encamp for nine consecutive nights at the river Suir; to hold a border meeting at Gowran; and to listen to the groans of women (in a raid) in southern Tipperary. The King of Connacht was not to go in a speckled cloak,—the prose adds "on a piebald horse," —to the heath of Luchaid in Clare. On the other hand, the ruler of Cashel brought good luck by plundering cattle in Connacht while the cuckoo sings; burning north Leinster; passing over Sliabh Cua,—"on a Tuesday," says the prose,—to pacify south Munster; crossing Magh Aïlbhe with a light grey host; and resting six weeks (of Lent) every year at Cashel. It was most unlucky for him to wait for a feast at Killarney Lake for a full week from a Monday. At the present day some families still have their own tabus, lucky and lucky deeds and days, dreams, and omens, which sometimes even run counter to beliefs generally received,—*e.g.* that [787] the Friday falling on the thirteenth of any month, or to dream of a wild cat or other wild animal, is lucky.

791 825 *Witch hare.*[35]—Anthony Bruodin (*Bruodinus* or *Prodinus*), a Franciscan of Quin Abbey, tells in *Corolla Oecodemiae Minoritica* (Prague, 1664, p. 73) how his uncle (*patruus*), Florence of Moynaeo (Moynoe on Lough Derg) went out at the dawn of the first of May with his eldest son Bonaventura, (who died in Spain in 1643), and with their hounds to hunt hares. At last the servants saw one sucking a cow. The hounds chased it, biting it as it escaped, into a cottage, where an old woman was found torn behind.

● 776 *Glasgeivnagh cow.*[36]—Vague legends are told of her living at Treanahow, Shallee, and Ballygannon.

Ghosts or fairy men.—Mary (Mescal) Doyle, of Newmarket-on-Fergus, tells how she saw two ghostly men in black walking on a road near that village.

173 *Stolen bride.*—A legend of a stolen bride at Querin on the Shannon is told in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends etc. of Ireland* (1887), vol. i., p. 49.

[35] Addendum to vol. xxii. p. 449. [p.270]
[36] Addendum to p. 89 *supra.*

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turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and [776]
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the offi-
ciating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient
tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured
soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the
church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hun-
dreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appear-
ance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

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582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [198] [177] [65] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 [262] [264] [415] [998] [352] The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [995] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

4

The Supernatural and the Esthetic

Catholicism

BECAUSE OF THE WRITINGS OF NATIVISTS, most visitors to Inis Beag believe 771
that the Catholicism of the folk embodies an ideal unattained even on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for all of Christendom. In fact, however, the worship of the islanders is obsessively oriented [776]
toward salvation in the next world with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a marked tendency toward polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and certain Irish saints; rituals and sacred artifacts, Christian as well as pagan, often are employed by them to serve magical ends; and, finally, many observances that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or to Ireland. Christian morality in its outward [626]
manifestations, as we have seen, is realized to a remarkable degree, but it is less a product of the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation than of the techniques of social control exercised by the priests and an overwhelming fear of damnation.

Coexisting with Catholicism in Inis Beag are pre-Celtic, Celtic, and early 771
medieval Christian retentions of religious beliefs and behavior. It is these which 778
are accentuated in the writings of primitivists, some of whom have ignored altogether Catholicism in the lives of the folk. Nativists and primitivists part company in the matter of religion in peasant Ireland, and writers of nativistic persuasion have exerted the most influence on visitors to Inis Beag, who are preponderantly Irish Catholic. Theologians and scholars in Ireland label as pagan unorthodox religious forms from any historical period, and many of these have become reinterpreted with similar Catholic elements. The pagan array of supernatural beings [776]
includes a variety of spirits and demons, witches, ghosts, and phantom ships; among other retentions are taboos, signs which foretell the future, charms and incantations of a protective nature, folk medicines, and the aforementioned emphasis on natural foods and other products impinging on the human body.

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and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical 828
anecdotes and ballads.

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dis- 000
possessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard 771
God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of 776
personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island.

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls [753]
malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts [752]
Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such [796]
occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which [825]
run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him.

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic 771
faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many 775
of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly [123]
or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of [211] local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the [793] confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the [356] stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water [783] is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the [674] priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families in- [777] volved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them [776]

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [787] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

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776 787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken [753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until [562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18 [789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan- 776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is 778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged [823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where [123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 776 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call. [428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An [123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last 184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it 763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a 776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those [522] persons considered overly superstitious.

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan supernatural varied among the folk. 184 178 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance. 776 778 [123] [178]

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus (see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incorporating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a [764] [823] 175 779 798 177 [346] [778] 776 [171]

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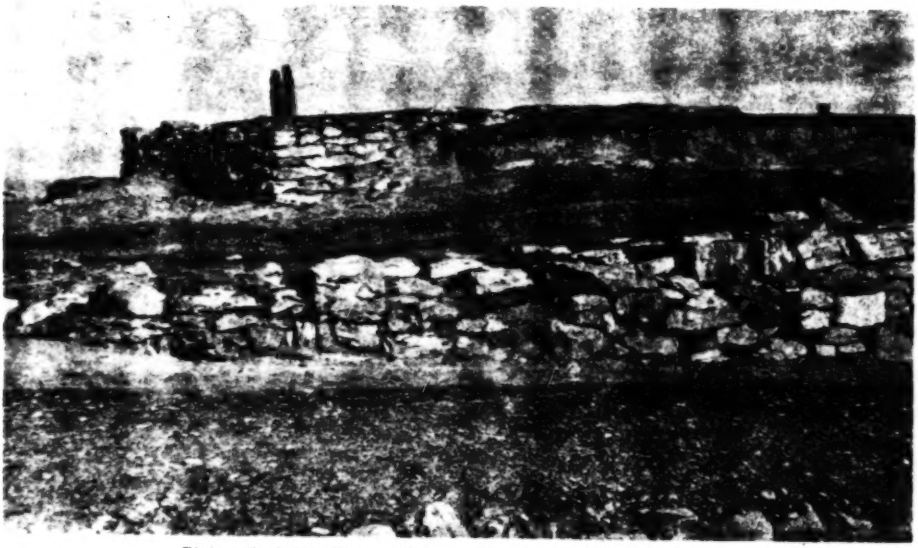

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [771] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
198 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

• 776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
[824] the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[174] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[175] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
796 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
776 roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[822] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[778] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to
[233] attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

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539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [182] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 796 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil 798 and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 796 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck 182 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [234] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [326] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood [237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 771 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771 775
"strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783]
penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771
magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776 •
God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754
presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178
right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826
tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822]
of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171]
symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793]
even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775
Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772
fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
• 776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

by greed for land and dowries. Sex without familism seemed beyond the country people's imagination. 183 577 673

But the last statement must be qualified in a definite direction. It is only for themselves that they seemed to be unable or, better, unwilling to imagine a sexuality without familism. Other patterns of sexual behavior they see and have heard of, but these are immoral and unworthy ways of doing things and acting, departures from the right and normal, sometimes disgusting, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes mysterious. In any event they are marks of standards of a lower class and lesser dignity and respectability than that of the farmers. They are to be repudiated not only for their lack of common sense but for supernatural reasons as well.

Thus the authors heard several instances in which bad luck attended the departure from the usual familistic norm. There was a feeling, sometimes overtly expressed, that at any one time there should be only one sexually active procreant couple in a household. Young and old could well be part of the household in any numbers, but there should be only one adult married couple under one roof. Any other arrangement brought its own punishment and ill luck. 183 777 592 577

But more often there was identification between the expression of sexual impulse outside the familistic pattern and the debased conduct of the lower ranks of the landless and disreputable of the countryside, the laborers of the towns, the runaways, remnants of broken households. Or else the small farmers put the onus of guilt on other regions "more backward" than their own. At the most, wrong conduct might be the result of some occult compelling force strong enough to break through all sense and caution. The authors were struck with the countryside's version of love charms. In accounts of love charms and love magic, proof of their existence and efficacy was always to be found in the 183 577 832

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 171 as a result of certain circumstances, such as social organisation, the demands and standard of the aristocracy, the clan, and the family etc. — introduced in Ireland, Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. This appears from some prehistoric materials as for example the Gall Arus near Dingle, Co. Kerry, and the so-called "kämpagravshuset" and the Viking Hall in Scandinavia.

Some of the features mentioned above in the descriptions of the central chimney-house and the gable-chimney house are common to nearly all primitive recent Irish houses.

342 354 It is especially interesting to notice the practice of providing two doorways, central and opposite, fig. 1, 3 and 4. In recent Irish houses the front door is called *doras tosaigh*, and the backdoor *doras cúl*. In Donegal however, I was told that the front door was called *doras an fhosgaidh*, door of the shelter, and the back door, *doras nagaoithe*. The opening and the closing of these two doors is determined by theprevailing wind, and its effect on the draught through the smokeholes. Thus the two doors were very often in Ireland made up of halfdoors, *leath dhoras*, constituting in co-operation with the smoke holes a machinery regulating the fire. In Ireland this is generally a turf-fire which needs special attention in its making, lighting and maintenance. The drawing off the smoke is also of importance.

342 777 Some superstitions connected with these two doors suggest that very old traditions lie behind them. There is a belief in Co. Kerry that it is very unlucky to go in one door and out the other. You must always go out of the door you entered by, otherwise you are supposed to take the luck of the house with you.

342 How the two doorways could be used with regard to the cattle I have shown by an example from Co. Kerry in my article in Béaloideas (op. cit. p. 70).

The two doorways are well-known from the Ancient Irish Laws and the old literature. The inches house and even larger houses had two doorways, a door in one and a hurdle (wattle) in the other (see Ancient Irish laws, Vol. IV, p. 305). O'Carry says that the principal house, even of kings, had but one room to which when the house was of an oblong form there were generally two doors, one opening east and one west. In the round houses on the other hand there seems to have been but one door, which faced south, west or east, and sometimes though rarely north. (O'Curry, Manners and customs of the ancient Irish. Vol. I). In Scottish beehive houses inhabited about 342 171 1850 however, there are often two opposite doors, about which Thomas says: "The two doors are a decided improvement, for the one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weater door — is closed with a stone or

PLATE XLVI

1. Fastening the hay-ropes, when thatching. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
2. Scollop-thatching. Connemara, Co. Galway.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

be found to give it expression. The cult of the 353
fairies, these days, is branded as 'superstition'. It 776
is under fire from townsman, school-teacher, and
priest. But even those who could express no views
could be seen to act as if they too were believers.

Where fairy paths were remembered to pass the
house, they went by the west room. Where food
and water was left out at night, it was left there.
No outhouse, shed, or other building could be built
on this side of the house. That would bring bad [777]
luck. Very few could or would tell why; they left it
to a common inference. The building would be 'in
the way'. Nevertheless, reluctant as they might be
to express belief, my hosts none the less practised
it. No house of Luogh's twenty-six had any shed or [342]
outhouse at its western end.

Here were two very definite associations with the
west room. What did they mean? The attitudes
they represented were respect, and perhaps a little
fear; but it was respect that was dominant. What
was this respect and why should it show itself in
fairy-lore and in household furnishing?

Faced with such a problem the anthropologist's 353
usual recourse is to history. Traditionally the west 773
is the land of the dead. In the ancient sun-cult, in 776
which early man has likened his own progress to
that of the sun's daily and yearly course, the west
is the sacred abode of the dead. Even today, we
speak of dying, half jocularly, as 'going west'. In
ancient Celtic mythology, the heaven at life's end,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

221 more arduous, than woman's. We must remember
241 this difference. It reflects an important dichotomy
462 between the sexes in the organization of labour.

We can see this dichotomy even when the group
462 works as a unit. At various crucial points in the annual round we have just followed, the whole family bends to the tasks at hand together. At potato planting, turf-cutting and haymaking, one can see them working in unison. Even the young children contribute their share to the common rhythm of the task. Yet the woman's role is separate. It is auxiliary; the simpler, less arduous tasks fall to her. The heavier work and command of the enterprise rests with the men. The plough, the harrow, the mower, the scythe, the spade and the turf-cutting *slán* are regarded as masculine implements. The attitudes of the countryside forbid a woman's using them. In the same way, they heap ridicule upon the thought of a man's interesting himself in the feminine sphere, in poultry, or in the churning.

Immemorial folklore bolsters this division. The
[777] woman is unlucky to masculine enterprises, for instance: it is dangerous to see a woman on the road to the fair. Likewise, man is dangerous to the woman's work. If he so much as takes his lighted pipe out of the house while she is churning, he may 'take the butter', through fairy magic.

In this dichotomy, of course, the male sphere bears higher value. But dichotomy implies no de-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

about such a visitation upon another does so un- 776
intentionally, innocent of evil intent. A person can 789
be either lucky or unlucky; he may tap a fairy [777]
power without meaning to. Thus one humorous story, a favourite yarn of the fairy-lore, found widely over Ireland, relates the misadventures of one rash fellow:

"A man that was usually drunk was going by a 789
fort one night and he heard 'them' talking in it, and 776
saying, 'I'll take half of it and let you have the 539
other.' 'I'll have all of it', shouted my boy-o, never thinking. When he got home, his wife was making butter, but she couldn't get any to come. But now she tried again, and it came in and filled the churn twice over and ran over the floor. There was a big farmer near by, and it was all his butter she was getting. She was an honest woman and knew the butter wasn't hers and she wanted to make it known she hadn't anything to do with it, so she told the priest about it."

Other things than butter are so taken, of course. 776
Cattle figure prominently in folk belief. Cattle, as 789
we know, are very important to the countryman. 233
The time of calving is a crucial event in farm-family life. Consequently, precautions must be taken; danger is abroad, and rites must be performed. If cattle fall sick, other rites drive off the threatening good people and restore the cow to health. Fairy-tales are full of the taking of cattle by the people of the raths.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

called simply "the room" or—in the Gaeltacht—the "west room," though not always at the west end, extends behind the chimney which helps to warm it. A wealth of customs and superstitions centres in the West Room; they have been described by Dr. Arensberg in his book, "The Irish Countryman." It is considered unlucky to build on to the other end of the house, that is the bottom gable. Similarly it is unlucky to widen a house. The "developed" Irish house thus consists of three compartments and is never more than a single room in width. The older houses are for the most part of stone, either dry-built or with mud laid as mortar. But mud-walled structures are common in areas where stone is not convenient: they by no means denote extreme poverty because from the absence of stones they are often situated in the richest alluvial valleys. A Dublin daily paper recently asked its readers, in a column headed "Believe it or not," to marvel at the fact that certain African tribes actually lived in houses built of mud! Here and there a few sod houses survive, and there is still standing in Co. Antrim a roomy dwelling occupied by a healthy and intelligent family, cut out of solid turf to the height of the eaves, the surrounding peat-bottom, now the farmland, having had several feet of turf removed from it. The stone and mud houses are almost invariably whitewashed both inside and out. Walls vary greatly in thickness but average from 20 to 30 inches.

342

[777]

A feature of many of these older houses is the two opposite doors at back and front, the latter always supplemented by a half-door which keeps animals and children in or out, forms an arm-rest for conversational interludes, and helps to regulate the fire draught. Back or front door could be used according to the wind, and this is the reason commonly advanced to explain the opposite doors. We have seen in the previous chapter, however, its relation to the pastoral tradition, and it should be added that parallels can be adduced from a wide province extending from southern Europe to Scandinavia. We may mention the feeding walk found in the old Welsh "long houses." As with many other parts of the house, superstition attaches to the use of the back door, for

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

796 crosses, of various patterns, are hung up over doors and beds
988 and in the byre to bring good luck. Some of them are very
285 elaborate, but the oldest style, to judge from its Celtic form, is the three-legged cross (Fig. 106) which is specially associated
[777] with cattle and is not, like the other shapes, taken to church to be blessed, a ceremony which is kept up even in parts of Belfast. In the Glens of Antrim a small bed is fashioned out of rushes and placed by the fire on St. Bridget's Eve: the door is left unlatched so that the Saint may come in and rest.

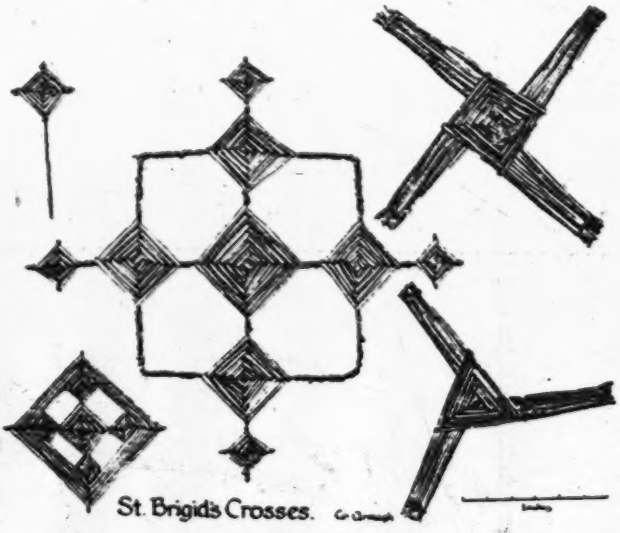

Fig. 106.

In Co. Kerry young lads called "Biddy Boys" wear hats of straw on the first of February, and in other parts of the west, I am told, "Bridget Belts" of plaited straw are worn.

796 The next important day in the calendar comes about the
221 middle of the three months of Spring, that is at the time now kept as a national holiday in North and South alike—St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. This is regarded as the proper time to commence sowing, and the countryman counts on

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

planting his first potatoes on that day, when St. Patrick "turned the warm side of the stone uppermost." In the Antrim Glens the hay meadows are closed on St. Patrick's Day, and under the rundale system the animals which had run through the townland from Hallowe'en were now carefully herded or driven to the rough grazing grounds so that they could not trespass on the unfenced cropland. A little later come the many memories of seed-time ritual and the spring sacrifice now represented in Easter egg-rolling games. 796 221

The May festival ranked next in importance to that of November: these are the major turning points of the year, where Nature decks herself in fresh green or in "rich Autumn's golden quittance." On the first days of these months the cattle were numbered, and it is a commonplace that these are still the rent or "gale days" in Ireland. On May Day the young crops were visited with torches and the cattle blessed before being driven to the mountain booleys, and hill-top fires played a large part in the rites. These Beltane fires were originally need-fires, that is they were produced by the friction of two pieces of wood. All hearth fires were extinguished on May Eve, and re-lit from the sacred fire. It is still a common superstition that it is unlucky to give away fire, even as light for a pipe, on May Day, for that would be to give away your luck for the year. In Donegal it is considered unlucky to be the first house to show smoke on May morn: the cattle are milked and the byres cleaned before the fire is made up. The Beltane ritual included the eating of oatcakes "which must not touch iron," and dancing three times clockwise round the fire. Many volumes could be written on the customs and superstitions connected with this festival, touching fire and food, salt and butter, the rowan and the flowers of the field, especially the marsh-marigold or May-flower. The city urchins have turned the celebrations into a prolonged parading of May Queens and collecting of pennies. See Chapter 19. [372] [777]

It is probable that fires continue to be lit on May eve in some parts. Certainly the mid-Summer festival which follows on St. John's Eve (June 23rd) still keeps its hold, for then fires will be seen blazing on hilltops in almost every Irish 372 221 796

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The
[778] same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[797] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

776 789 [177] veronica leaves. In the North it is considered unlucky for a person to enter a house where churning is taking place without "giving a brash," that is lending a hand at the churn-staff. In the words of a countryman in the west, "Queer things do happen to butter." Fairy tales are full of cattle and cattle-stealing: so are the epic tales. Writers of last century tell of cows that might be seen "with rags about their horns as a charm against the gentry," or gentle-folk, a name often applied to the fairies.

824 This brings us to the fairy or gentry thorns, skeaghs, or lone bushes, that is the solitary whitethorn trees which are regarded with dread. These trees, which must be counted by the thousand, are said "never to have been planted but to have grown of their own accord." They may be found on ancient monuments or alongside holy wells but the great majority are scattered through the fields, and it is worthy of notice that the cult is at least as strong in the Protestant north-east as in other parts of the country. A venerable thorn, pink-flowering, stands under my window as I write and casts its shadow into the Senate Room of the University. But no one will remove it or even lop its branches, and the story goes that when the buildings were being erected the plans had to be changed in order that the thorn should not be interfered with. If a lone tree surrounded by half a dozen scientific departments has claimed such respect it can be imagined in what awe the country thorns are held! See Tailpiece.

It has recently been suggested that the veneration of thorn trees was a Belgic custom introduced to Ireland some 2,000 years ago, but it seems more likely that as with sacred stones and wells we should look even further away in time and space to Mediterranean origins and regard the cult of trees as part of the nature worship connected with man's first use of the Irish soil. Certain thorns dedicated to Irish saints figure also in ceremonies of burial: when funerals pass by they halt and [964] stones are placed beside the thorn until they have become cairns. Wayside cairns, in the form of memorial monuments,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

produce a buzzing noise. The toy is known in Co. Carlow as 534
a "whee-doodle" and in Co. Down, where it seems formerly 524
to have been regarded as a "sacred" thing, as a "boomer." Professor Haddon has described specimens from Co. Antrim and Co. Cork. About the Co. Carlow example in the Dublin Museum Dr. Raftery provides me with the following note. [777] ●
"A boy was whirling it around and an old man who saw him was very angry and told him to take the thing home and burn it, as otherwise he would bring bad luck on the countryside." This was in 1921. I illustrate a "bull-roarer" from Cape Clear, Co. Cork (Fig. 113). Its Irish name is Cláirín Búirthe.

171
524
534
Fig. 113.

It is, of course, possible that some Irish localities may have learnt the use of this toy from stray specimens brought home from regions where it is still in regular ceremonial use, but when we remember all the other Irish survivals we cannot doubt that the bull-roarer is a relic of the past that has lost, or nearly lost, its sacred character. The bull-roarer has an almost world-wide distribution. It is said to have been employed in ancient Greece in connexion with the Dionysiac mysteries. We can imagine its employment in the initiation rites and magical practices of pagan times so picturesquely reconstructed by Professor Macalister in his book "Ancient Ireland." In various parts of the modern world the bull-roarer is used as a rain charm, in raising a wind or producing thunder, in driving game, herding cattle (*cf.* Chapter 6) or preparing for fishing, in rites of initiation and circumcision, in funeral festivities and mask dances: it is a general rule that the instrument must not be seen by women or children on pain of death. In the words of Haddon: "This insignificant toy is perhaps the most ancient, widely spread and sacred religious symbol in the world."

Of great antiquity and wide distribution, the spear- 171
thrower is another instrument which appears to have survived 524
in Ireland as a toy, used as a throwing stick in boys' games. [411]
And another toy "not yet connected with any ceremonial usage" but paralleled among the Chinese and the North

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Inishshark has about twelve boats of from one to two tons. The natives of this island do not approve of the curragh, for which their coast is too rocky. 501

The ordinary rowing boat is manned by five men, the curragh by three.

The curragh is of the ordinary west coast type, consisting of a light wooden frame covered with tarred canvas.

VI.—FOLK-LORE.

Of this interesting branch of the subject, I regret to be able to give but little information, as the people are chary of talking upon such matters to strangers, and only a local collector working for a considerable time could be expected to gather much. Thanks, however, to the kindness of the Rev. Edward Lavelle, his brother Mr. Michael Lavelle, Mr. Myles Joyce, the schoolmaster of the island, as well as to several of the boatmen and others, I am enabled to give the following few notes on the subject. The legendary lore of these islands, especially Inishshark, has been very fully dealt with by Lady Wilde, to whose work I must refer the reader. These notes, however, are new. Omens and death-warnings, such as the banshee, the death-watch, and as mentioned previously (p. 352), the giving of wood out of a house to make a coffin foretelling the death of the giver, are fully believed in. 609 115 121

Luck.—The sight of a red-haired woman or a cat, on starting out in the morning, will bring bad luck to the fishing; and it is stated that people have resorted to the expedient of getting a red-haired girl to lie in wait for a rival, and cross his path as he was starting. 777

To remove from one house to another is also looked upon as decidedly unlucky; but should a move become necessary, it is always made on Monday to the eastward, and on Tuesday to the westward, according to the Irish saying *Luan Soir, agus Mart Siar* (Monday, eastward, and Tuesday, westward). Should any addition be made to the dwelling it is always to the east, never to the west.

It is extremely unlucky to break a looking-glass; so also it is to mention a priest, or a fox, or a hare while fishing.

No man will buy a cow at the New Year without putting some of her milk into his boots, as otherwise she would certainly run dry.

People born on Whit Sunday are thought to be exceptionally ill-tempered.

The evil-eye, also, is strongly believed in; and if any one praises either a child or a beast belonging to a native without saying "God

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be [788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch, 754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the 821 barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these 825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27):—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Congaile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It [551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is sub- 776 ject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by 854 the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

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58 not, like an Inishbofin man, consider himself disgraced, nor is he inconsolable.

Engaged couples or newly married people often come in for an amount of attention from the children of the neighbourhood, which, however flattering it may be, is decidedly embarrassing; they are followed about and cheered whenever they appear together. Weddings
585 are occasions of family festivities, and are usually followed by a dance.
533 "Straw-boys" go round to the house on these occasions and take part in the dancing. They are disguised in tall conical-shaped straw
292 masks, adorned with strips of red and green cloth, white shirts decorated with coloured ribbons, and white or red petticoats. The band is headed by a captain and a mate, who enter the house first and declare that they are shipwrecked sailors, and that they have come to dance at the wedding; the captain then dances with the bride, the mate with the bridesmaid, and the rest of the band with the other girls. It is usual to treat the straw-boys to drink, but they often refuse it, and never demand money, or indulge in any rowdy conduct.

The young couple usually set up house on their own account,
591 except in the case of the youngest son, who inherits his parents' house and property, in which case the bride goes to live with her people-in-law.

When a person is dying, windows and doors are thrown open, and
763 the clock (if there be one) stopped; it is considered unlucky or im-
● 777 proper for any of those in the house to cry until after the death has actually occured.

Wakes are still held in this district, and many of the old obser-
764 vances and games are kept up; but owing to the discouragement of these by the clergy, the people show a great reluctance to give any information on the matter. A good deal of drinking usually takes place on these occasions.

The funeral customs have undergone some change during the past thirty years, but much still remains that is worthy of notice. A grave is not usually dug until the coffin reaches the graveyard, if begun before hand it is never dug on a Monday, or commenced at least, but a start is made, if necessity compels, by raising a few sods on Sunday. It is believed to be unlucky to bury a corpse on New Year's Day, an act
[777] which is thought to bring misfortune to the whole neighbourhood.

The coffin is usually taken out the back door of the house, and conveyed to the cemetery by the longest route. At the graveyard the *caoine* is raised by the women immediately after the religious ceremony

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is concluded. The burial grounds are kept much better than in many other parts of the West; and on Inishkea, as well as in the Mullet, it it is customary to decorate the graves with large white pebbles, and to place at the head a neatly made wooden cross. A curious custom exists, some instances of which were observed at Tarmoncarra, of placing tobacco pipes on the graves; these are the pipes which were left unused after the wake. What the reason is for so placing them could not be ascertained, but it is considered extremely unlucky to remove them. 764 [777]

Unbaptised infants are interred in separate burying grounds by themselves, several of which are in the district. 766

It is now no longer customary for the people of the Mullet to bury their dead in Inisglora, the last instance of this having occured over thirty years ago. Formerly many families used regularly to make use of this island as a cemetery, always taking a body over from a point of the mainland opposite, which was stated by tradition to have once been connected with the main, but to have got separated afterwards by a channel which has gradually widened. 73 764

Maxwell,[1] writing in 1832, says—"There are no people on earth more punctilious in the interment of their dead than the peasantry of this remote district. A strange and unaccountable custom exists of burying different families resident on the main in island cemeteries, and great difficulty and often great danger attends the conveyance of a corpse to its insulated resting place. No inducement will make these wild people inter a body apart from the tomb of its fathers, and, if a boat will live, the corpse will be transported to the family tomb. At times the weather renders this impracticable, but the deceased is kept for many days unburied in the hope that the storm may subside; and only when frail mortality evinces unequivocal tokens of decay will the relatives consent to unite its dust with the ashes of a stranger." 764

A considerable number of migratory labourers leave this district annually to do harvesting work in England, on the proceeds of which work they in part support themselves during the winter. The number doing thus has decreased somewhat of late years. 167

There is not much to be said about the everyday mode of life. The men fish and attend to their holdings; the women manage household affairs and assist at field work in times of pressure. The people are early risers in the summer months, and, as a rule, retire to bed early, few lights being seen in the hamlets after nine or ten p.m. 512

[1] Maxwell, W. H., "Wild sports of the West," chap. XIX.

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814 is likely to succeed in collecting much. Fortunately there is a
[609] resident (the Rev. P. A. O'Reilly), who is engaged in collecting the old Irish songs of the district, several of which he has already published. As to the legends, many of these have been recorded by C. O. and Mr. Knight, to whose works the reader is referred.

The following notes, mainly dealing with what may be termed minor folk-lore, were some of them obtained from fishermen and others of the natives, but mainly through the kindness of several residents, some of whom desired that their names should not be mentioned.

115 1. *Customs and Beliefs.*—For the majority of the notes on these I
814 am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, who, being a native of the district, and personally acquainted with nearly everyone in it, has an exceptionally large knowledge of the subject; for a large part of what remains I have also to thank Messrs. F. C. Wallace, D.I. R.I.C., Belmullet, and P. T. O'Reilly, Carn.

● 777 A very large number of things are considered lucky or the reverse. It is unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, on which day also no change of residence should be made, a Friday should rather be chosen, as that is the lucky day for moving. To meet a red-haired woman on starting out in the morning, to mention a priest while fishing, to take fish out of a house without sprinkling some salt on it, to sell milk without putting in a pinch of salt, to give fire out of the house on May-day, or to anyone in whose dwelling a sick person may be, all these are unlucky. People "born with teeth"
[845] are unlucky also; but to be "born with a caul" is a sign of great good fortune, though should the original owner ever see it his luck will depart; the possession of a caul is believed to protect against death by drowning. A mole on the face, if "above the breath," is considered to have the same protective influence.

787 Death within the year is believed to be the fate of the man who has the temerity to make an addition to the western side of his house, or to build out at the back; several instances of men who died within a short time after thus offending are sure to be told to the incredulous.

The banshee, the death-watch, the creaking of furniture, and the howling of a dog at night are all looked upon as death-warnings. Several persons were met with who asserted that they had heard the banshee before the death of relatives.

585 At weddings the bride and bridegroom must step over the threshold of the chapel door together, as whichever goes out first will be the first to die.

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The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [262]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. [823] A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be *buried alive with its* wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

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evidence that periodic re-allotment had been a general practice. It continued well into last century in some parts of the country, for example Antrim, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Kilkenny. The casting of lots, annually[1] or triennially[2] was the occasion for much display of feeling, and was regulated by a headman or 'king' who also made arrangements for the summer pasturing.[3] In Kilkenny[4] the lots were cast by means of marked stones wrapped in clay. The ritual was prolonged. 'They sometimes play at it to try their luck before they will cast lots in good earnest. Even then they must sometimes make a new division if too many are dissatisfied.'[5]

To understand the openfield system in full working order we should see it in its total geographical setting, the booley with the bally. Here in the hilly fringes of Europe, towards the ocean, even moderately fertile land is limited in extent: soils derived from barren rocks and heavily leached by excessive rains are subject to waterlogging, acidity and the accumulation of peat. Spring is the only season without excessive rain, and ploughing or digging in autumn or winter even if possible is unprofitable. Winter wheat is a risky crop in most parts, and the emphasis is on spring corn, especially oats. This meant that the arable land was free of crops from October to April, and it allowed pasturing and manuring by livestock for rather more than half the year. So deep-rooted is this communal pasturing that there are districts in Donegal where to this day the livestock of the whole townland has the run of all the farms through the winter. And elsewhere, as I know to my cost, having tried for many years to cultivate a garden in the Mountains of Mourne, one's neighbours have a lingering habit of ignoring the fences at that season, when food for livestock is scarce.

Manuring and treading of the infield by cattle and sheep were supplemented in spring by quantities of manure taken from the cabins, 'some houses having . . . from ten to fifteen

[1]Antrim: Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Rathlin Island (1830); Cork and Kerry: Lord Dufferin, *Irish Emigration* (1867), 340.

[2]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 47.

[3]ibid. For Norwegian parallels see *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 4 (1956), 17–81, 77.

[4]W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny* (1802), 419.

[5]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 117.

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when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied 342
"twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the
fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the [763]
west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the [777] ●
luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was always carried out to the graveyard through the back door, [764]
and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the [354]
room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the [231]
flagged passage between the doors served as a path for livestock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh, [777]
in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands*.
[3] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

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of a rath (farmstead) at Lissue, Co. Antrim, in 1946.[1] Its barrel- 234
shaped body has the unusual refinement of an oval mouth, designed for pouring, with an iron rim-mount over which a cloth could be tied. A central iron band has two rings attached, evidently for suspension. A century ago, that is a thousand years after the Lissue churn was in use, we know that butter was made not far away on the shores of Lough Neagh by swinging the churn to and fro, suspended from the roof timbers. The Lissue churn could also have been used to carry milk from the summer pastures to the homestead. There are stories in the Mourne Mountains of milk transported in this way which would turn to butter by the automatic churning of the rough journey home from the hills. Evidently the lidless churn is the older type, and I have seen large specimens in Donegal. It was pre- [492]
sumably from a churn of this kind, slung from a pony's back, that the Donegal child was observed 'peeping and screeching' as the pastoral cavalcade moved up to the summer booleys in the days before the Great Famine.[2]

The simplest form of churn dash, found along the west coast, 234
terminates in a wooden cross. A similar Norwegian dasher has the ends of the cross joined with a sally ring, and a rope of 777
cowhair is said to have been used for the purpose in Scotland. It was considered lucky to have the cross-pieces made of two different woods; indeed everything about the churn had to be made 'right'. In the whole business of handling milk luck was more important than labour, and butter-making in particular was a task fraught with unseen dangers. Often the butter would mysteriously refuse to break, and many were the precautions taken and the remedies sought. It seems that the old Irish method was to churn from the whole milk, and it was customary until recently to pour the skim milk into the churn along with the risen cream. It should be remembered, too, that the butterfat content was low, and that since many peasant farmers had no more than one cow at a time in milk, its quality would be more variable than the milk of a large herd. The unaccountable variations in the success of churning were widely attributed to the intervention of witches or fairies.

[1] G. Bersu, *U.J.A.*, X (1947), 30–58.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

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to keep an eye on his wealth. The muck-heap is the source of 237
good crops and good luck, a potent symbol of well-being: 351
'where there is muck there is luck'. It was the custom, recorded [777]
for instance in the Glens of Antrim, to stick a sprig of rowan
tree upright in the midden on May Eve to protect the farm [788]
from mischievous fairies. The muck symbolizes the fertility of the farm.

FIG. 32. Keeping-hole for pots, Co. Down.

In many parts of the country, especially in the northern 351
counties and in Co. Wexford, the entrance to the farmyard is 417
dignified by a pair of massive stone gate piers, generally built-up from field-stones in the form of a conical topped cylinder and kept whitewashed. There are many modern variants in concrete, and the old style piers are steadily disappearing and are often hastened to their end by carelessly driven tractors or lorries. They seem far too massive for the gates they carry, resembling twin bastions defending the entrance to a fortified enclosure (Figs. 5, 33). In some areas, probably under the influence of improving landlords or land agents, field entrances are also dignified by built-up stone piers, and it is possible to explain the fashion as part of the agrarian revolution which resulted in enclosure. In the virtual absence of well-grown oak trees they provided an Irish alternative to the oak gate-post of the English farm, sturdy enough to carry the iron gate which for the same reason took the place of the five-barred oaken gate.

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243 heads of corn at the wrong end, or they would be missed in thrashing with the flail, and for the same reason the ears of the straw band-knot should lie towards the top of the sheaf. The sheaves should be laid with their butts to the wind, for these need most drying. The bands should be tied with nice judgement, tight but not over-tight: one should not be able to put the toe of one's boot under the band when one stands on the butt of the sheaf.

[461] As in all farming operations conducted in traditional ways, music and magic to ease the labour were part of the scene. There were shearing songs to match the rhythm of the sickle, [825] and its efficiency was improved by keeping a fly or other insect imprisoned in the handle; perhaps its incessant activity was meant to speed up the work. Another strange belief was that [777] luck followed the reaper who carried a child on his back. The world of magic and fairy was close by at harvest time: it was believed that the top grain (pickle) of every stalk of corn was empty because it had been taken by the fairies and was their due. The sheaf had its share of lore, too, related possibly to its [754] semblance of human shape. A curse could be worked by sticking pins into the joints of the straw, and the sheaf might be properly waked and buried so that as it withered the object of the curse would decline. Stooks with their 'hudders' (Fig. 51) (hooding sheaves) also take on human forms, and I have known various terms for these large stooks applied as nicknames to broad-based country women. 'The last sheaf' also is known as the cailleach or hag.

Beliefs and customs connected with the last sheaf are legion and find their counterparts in many parts of the world. 'Winning the churn' was an incentive to the reaper, for good luck attended those who had their rigs sheared quickly if only because they avoided the ill-luck of being last. Stories are told of rigs being left unclaimed and uncut because their owners feared to incur 'the famine of the farm', of having the hag to feed until next harvest. The basis of this belief was that the last sheaf was sometimes hidden overnight in the corn of lazy farmers, who would watch at nights and reap by moonlight to avoid what was an omen of misfortune or death.

[787] The last handful of standing corn, selected for the purpose,

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Pyrenees and in Africa, but the flail, apparently spreading 243
through western Europe in post-Roman times, in time replaced 412
it almost everywhere, to be in turn displaced by the mechanical 171
thrasher. Thus the sound of the flail has almost gone from the countryside. The best thrashing place is the floor of the barn above the byre, with its opposite doors to draw the wind and 343
advertise the flailer's industry. Such barns, however, were not 243
built outside the planted districts before agrarian changes and 171
improvements spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ireland knows nothing of the carefully built thrashing floors of England and Scandinavia. At best on the farms lacking a barn a thrashing board was sometimes kept, a square wooden platform raised a few inches off the ground. A good thrashing floor should bend to meet the flail, and in Scandinavia, for instance, great pains were taken in the old days to construct floors which would make the flails sing. They were occasionally strung with wires, and to magnify the echo of clay floors a horse's skull was buried under each corner.[1] It has been thought that this purpose was secondary to the luck it was hoped would follow from what was originally a foundation sacrifice. In Ireland [777] traditions of the burying of horses' skulls under the floors of dwelling houses are both widespread and well authenticated. The usual explanation again is that this gives the house an echo, but it is also said to be lucky, and Sean O'Sullivan concludes that the custom of burying skulls began as a substitute for foundation sacrifices.[2] In Armagh 'the frontal bones of a [825] horse's head are regarded as being peculiarly sonsie; they were often buried in barn floors and under the thresholds of dwelling houses for that reason.'[3]

In time, the expressed object came to be to magnify the music 243
of the singing flails as well as that of the ballad-singing and 789
dancing before the fire. The space between the doors of the old style kitchen-byre, it will be recalled, was a favourite thrashing place in times past. The Briget's Crosses above the door would have blessed the thrashing as well as the cattle. It

[1] Albert Sandkelf, *Singing Flails* (Folklore Fellows Communications, Helsinki, No. 136), (1949).
[2] Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 45–52.
[3] J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 77.

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501 whether seal-skin or the hide of a cow or horse, were untanned. I can add little to the historical account given by Hornell, but [281] it should be noticed that the paddle curragh, covered with horsehide, was common in Erris, Co. Mayo, around 1830[1] and that, to judge from an entry in a Rathlin Island account book of 1760—'paid for one mare's hide for the boat, 1s. and 6d.'—the paddle curragh was used there also.

The long rowing curragh with its high pointed nose is 501 widely distributed on the west coast from Donegal to Kerry, 3% and its seaworthy qualities are known to many from its dramatic participation in such films as *Man of Aran* and *Shark Island*. This vessel too is built bottom upwards, but the frame is pegged, not into the ground but into a strong wooden gunwale frame, single or double, which Hornell believes was borrowed, along with the fixed thwarts which give lateral rigidity, from plank-built boats. Yet the method of pivoting the oar on a single tholepin, originally perhaps a strong projecting rib of the curragh frame, rather than in a rowlock, suggests that the rowing curragh has native forerunners. There are many variations in constructional details from one district to another but nearly all the vessels are now built of laths and all are covered with tarred canvas. An emergency repair is contrived by an operation which, if you are a timid passenger, looks like 'burning your boats': the curragh is inverted, the tar around the hole is set alight and a calico patch stuck on when the tar has run. The curraghs are rowed by two, three or four men, and the largest are said to have a carrying capacity of two tons. In Kerry they are masted to carry a small lug sail. A feature of ● [777] many curraghs is a small bottle of holy water, a protection against misfortune, suspended on a string in the bows.

The looms of the long narrow oars overlap so that the oars- 501 man pulls cross-handed. A heavy wooded counterweight, the bool, is attached near the loom, and the oar pivots by means of a round hole in the bool on a single wooden peg, the tholepin, driven into the gunwale (Fig. 78). This method of rowing is found on many lake and river boats in Ireland, perhaps es- [171] pecially in those areas, such as the Shannon and Lough Neagh,

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands* (1836), 56. See also *Pococke's Tour* 1752, 64.

 [Text continues on p. 240]

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226 types of gear. It used to be said that you should never risk taking a dog into some of the fishing villages on the north coast: [281] their skins were in great demand for making the line floats or 'stookies'. Very probably seal skins were formerly used for this purpose, as among the Eskimo. The sinkers of grooved stones from the beach might well pass for prehistoric implements (Fig. 74). The beautifully made line-baskets of unpeeled [285] willow have the graceful curves that one associates with the work of untouched 'primitives' (Fig. 82). And the division of [462] labour was on a primitive level, for to the womenfolk fell the tedious labour of baiting and preparing the hooks. The long-line fishermen were exceptionally hardy and were regarded with awe and respect by the inshore fishermen-farmers. No doubt the timid and the weakly had been weeded out by continual stress. Their knowledge of the sea and of the fishing [429] marks was a guarded secret, and the best banks were some- [777] times allotted, no doubt to avoid fights, by casting lots. In the Hebrides this was done on Bride's Day. There also, and possibly in Ireland, the banks were held in rotation in a kind of marine rundale.

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

443 One may readily see how this[1] came about, for these were the
437 times when the stock was gathered and sorted, and dues were paid to the overlords in cattle. In the ordinary business of the fair exchange and barter gave way in time to money transactions, but one has only to visit a cattle fair to sense that the noisy ritual of assessing values and the prolonged bargaining have come down from a time before the use of money was general. The vigorous hand-slapping by which bargains
[201] are sealed in tight-lipped silence could derive from the days when different languages were spoken at the fairs. Apart from the difference between English and Gaelic it should be remembered that in many districts pockets of non-Gaelic speech, perhaps even of non-Aryan tongues, survived well into the Christian era. Another interesting accompaniment of the con-
● [777] cluded bargain is the piece of money, the luck penny, which the seller hands back to the purchaser as a gesture of independence when a price has finally been agreed on. Many a fight
[578] has begun because a buyer has been dissatisfied with the amount of his luck money. Similar bargaining took place when a servant was being hired for the half year, and he received his earles or earnest money as a sign that the contract was concluded, handing over to his employer his bundle of clothes in return.

543 The countryman will find any excuse for going to the fair, and it is his proud boast that he has seen so many fairs. It
[805] is by the fairs, and not by the calendar, that he measures time and dates important events in the life of the community. 'Their whole thought seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging', it was written of the Mayo peasantry in 1836,[1] and in the seventeenth century we find this comment on 'the inferior rank of husbandmen' in Westmeath: '(they) are very crafty and subtile in all manner of bargaining, especially in their dealings in fairs and markets'.[2] Your luck at the fair might depend
777 on the colour of the hair of the first person you met on the road,
543 and it was unlucky to be passed on the way, so that horsemen riding at full gallop were not merely trying out their paces for the races which followed. For good luck you should carry with

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 104.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 115.

< [1] [ie, the seasons and rent days 260 dating from 1 May and 1 November. — Analyst]

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you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

585 The good luck of the bottle race referred to above may be [777] associated with the 'agreement bottle' of whiskey which was [273] drunk, according to a seventeenth-century account, when the parents and relations of the young couple had reached a marriage agreement.[1] To this day in parts of Co. Down 'running for the broth' is a feature of country marriages, a bowl of broth being the reward given to the person who reaches the bride's house first after the wedding. Until recently, also, the young couple were expected to appear at the Bride's Show on the first Sunday after their marriage: they were accompanied to a special sloping field where they ran hand-in-hand to a stone near the bottom of the field, followed by pairs of linked boys and girls, each boy kissing the stone. Games and what was described to us as 'general carrying on' followed the Bride's Show.[2]

584 In more remote parts of the country match-making is still a recognized procedure. The professional match-maker is a well-known figure, usually a shrewd elderly person well versed in the arts of rural diplomacy, and his role has been fully described by Arensberg. He acts for the farmer who is ready for his son to marry—the son being often well into middle age—by negotiating with the parents of the girl whom the farmer has selected. In the prolonged bargaining as to the amount of the 'fortune' which the girl is to bring with her the values of peasant living stand clearly revealed.[3] Marriage is not so much a personal relationship as a union between groups, reinforcing relations which extend far beyond individuals.

There was a popular belief that the curse of sterility could be placed on the bride by any ill-disposed person who tied knots in a string during the marriage ceremony. A more obvious example of magic was the custom of tying a hen which was about to lay an egg to the bed-post on the marriage night. [585] There are widespread traditions of the days when landlords exercised the *jus primae noctis* over their tenants' wives, and one hears of leases which contained clauses governing the right. 844 During pregnancy it was lucky to do certain things and to avoid

[1]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 1, 122.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 193
[3]C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, ch. 3.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and, we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne 'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour, and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh-water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 52.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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512 besom's association with everyday tasks and with the fireside
352 endows it with special power. Thrown after a departing match-
[777] maker or anyone going on an important errand, it brings luck to his mission.

For most people, needless to say, such things are now mean-
771 ingless superstitions—old pishrogues. True, one still hears
789 occasionally of cows being blinked, of a black cock buried alive
178 as a cure for epilepsy, of a healthy woman pining away because a neighbour was sticking pins into a waxen image. These are stray survivals, doomed to disappear; but in a larger sense the past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds of men and in the landscapes they have fashioned.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued from p.* 60).

XII. *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds.*

It is unlucky to see the new moon through glass; to throw dust or slops out of a house on New Year's Day, as you throw away with them all the good luck of the year; to throw dust or slops towards a neighbouring "fort";[1] to see one magpie, or a "weazel" (stoat), without saluting it by bowing or taking off your hat; to go out of a house where they are churning without "putting your hand to the churn," *i.e.* giving a few strokes with the churn "dash," so that you will not "take" the butter; and to take fire out of a house,—so that, if you light a pipe indoors, it should be smoked out before leaving. Iron and pins,—except crooked pins with the points towards you,—should be picked up, and the first thrown over the left shoulder. Rub your hand on wood if it itches or after a boastful speech or speaking too confidently of the future; in east Clare you touch wood twice, with the phrase, "Good word (*or* time) be it spoken," after an imprudent expression.[2] You should bow to the new moon. Turn your money for luck after seeing the new moon. On visiting a friend in a new house, you should give some present, however small. In east Clare some persons are careful to throw a hen or other fowl that has died of disease over the fence on to their neighbour's land, to remove the ill-luck from their own poultry.[3] Others will not wash eggs offered for sale, as it stops

[1] So Dr. Macnamara and others.
[2] "Scratch it in wood, and it will come good," says a rhyme.
[3] Practised near Tulla, and resulting in some cases in great ill-will.

777 825 574 578 [p. 224]

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●777 the hens from laying more; this is held at least near Tulla and Sixmilebridge, but seems dying out near the former place.

XIII. *Omens, Dreams, and Divination.*

787 *Omens.*—It is an unlucky sign to meet "a stranger woman with red hair," or a hare, or a fox, when setting out in the morning. A poem by Andrew MacCurtin, as already noted,[4] condoles with Father MacDonnell, a Franciscan living in Corcomroe, for the loss of his horse, and suggests that the *garran* [562] fell a victim to the evil eye or to the look of a red-haired woman. A sign much feared in north-east Clare is the flying of a bat into one's face, which forebodes sickness. A robin, a stray cat, or [763] a cricket coming into a house is lucky, but some regard the last as a sign of death,—though this belief is rare and perhaps imported, for in Dublin "the ever-faithful cricket" is also a death omen. If the right ear tingles some one is praising you, and if the left someone is abusing you. If the right hand itches you will lose money, and if the left you will receive it, providing you rub or scratch it on wood. Any one of these omens from itching is good after sunset, and rubbing the right hand on wood saves the situation or the money in either case. To get dirt on [777] one is most lucky,—"the dirtier the better." To stumble upstairs, and to be looked at by a cat after it has washed its face, are signs of approaching marriage.

Dreams.—It is most unlucky to dream of church or clergy, and, above all, of the sacraments. To dream of a cat foretells an enemy; of a dog, a friend; of crows or filth, riches and plenty; of silver, disappointment; and of dirty or stormy water, trouble. Cheap dream books have corrupted local belief so much that it is now almost impossible to separate the older dream lore.

Divination.—I have not found many methods of foretelling the future, but the following were of such common knowledge that I need cite no single authorities. On All Hallows Eve, I remember, before 1870, a blindfolded person would touch one of several saucers in which were respectively earth, water, salt, a bean, etc., symbolising death, emigration, luck, marriage, etc., in

[4] Vol. xxi., p. 196.

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A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions* (*continued*).

Horse.—I have found no folklore relating to horses except that already given regarding supernatural animals.[1] I have since recalled a legend of a dangerous spectral horse, probably a *púca*, haunting the bridge over the Blackwater, between Limerick and Clonlara, and the tree-darkened road towards the latter place,—a terror by night to passengers till about twenty years ago. There was also the bodiless head of a spectral horse which used to float beside cars on a road near Clooney, of which I heard about 1876, but now forget the details. The riding of horses by fairies was not unknown. 825 776

Dog, Fox, and Hare.—Besides the supernatural dogs already noted,[2] and the "Red Dog" (or Fox?), near Cragmoher, at Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge, there is little to tell. Finn's famous hound Bran was drowned at Tirmicbrain lake, and a ghastly dog broke the bones in some graveyard, (perhaps Doora or Clooney), before 1876.[3] It is unlucky to meet a fox, a red-haired woman, or a hare "first thing" in the morning. The hare is said to eat human flesh,—probably from being often "started" in graveyards. I have been told by several Clare people of witches turning into hares, but the alleged incident was never located in the county. [772] [791]

Seal.—A very vague belief prevails on the coast that seals are

[1] Vol. xxi., pp. 481-2.

[2] Vol. xxi., pp. 482-3.

[3] As in most of my recollections of folk-tales heard before 1876, the details are forgotten.

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Upper Bunratty, the fields being covered with them, but, when it broke up, the "troops" dispersed, and no bands were seen at any distance from the rendezvous. A rat was "heard talking with the Devil" in the grave of an unpopular person before 1875, but how the holders of this curious conversation were identified was never stated. I have met a belief in speaking rats in eastern Clare and among fishermen at Kilkee. 825 776

Hedgehog.—This animal is reputed to steal apples and suck cows and eggs, so that it is persecuted and called *grainoge* (little ugly thing).

Birds.—A pair of ravens roosted in a top window of the round tower of Iniscatha (Scattery) early in the last century. The birds were said to escort their young, when fully fledged, across the Shannon to Carrigfoile Castle in Kerry, and not to let them return to the island.[15] Scaldcrows (roystons) are considered unlucky, and much feared. The old Irish regarded them as incarnations of the war-goddess Bodbh.[16] Birds as omens have already been noted.[17] The bat is looked on as a sort of bird, and it is ominous of death for it to fly at one's face. The entry of a robin into a house is a death omen near Tulla, but elsewhere a sign of good fortune. Although swans are so plentiful that I have often seen more than forty together in Inchiquin and other lakes, the only folklore associated with them seems to be a tale of swan-maidens at Inchiquin. The hunting of the wren has been described in Section XIV.[18] [777] [763]

Fishes.—It was regarded as a custom among the fishermen of Kilrush and Scattery that no one should go fishing for three days after the arrival of the herring shoals, but, when the first day dawned, a crowd of boats was always discovered, and much quarrelling resulted.[19] As the shoals arrived, a mass used to be celebrated on the shore at Kilmurry, Ibrickan, to secure good 226 825

[15] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 546.

[16] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x.; *Revue Celtique*, vol. i.; Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 267.

[17] Vol. xxi., p. 190.

[18] *Ante*, pp. 206-7, and Plate IX.

[19] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare* (1808), pp. 228, 259.

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824 753 757 824 [752] 824 [777 789]

Plants.—The "hungry grass" grows on mountains, and, if trodden on, causes a sickening hunger which kills if not relieved. I knew a man in County Limerick who said he "knew it to happen to another man" on the Clare hills, and the victim got food in bare time to save him.[80] Seven strips of a plantain leaf stop the bleeding of a bad wound. The "Seven Sisters" plant for healing purposes must be picked at a particular period of the sun and moon in August. Fern "dust" (seeds) heals cuts from rushes; the dock charms nettle stings; and the four-leafed shamrock brings luck if found accidentally. The belief that house-leek preserves a house from burning[81] is widespread in north and east Clare. The pennywort has a sectarian bias, and only cures Protestants,[82] and this is connected near Bunratty with a curious legend of Anne Boleyn. This hapless queen, after enjoying by means of the plant the greatest influence over her terrible spouse,[83] "got into trouble, but, when she was sent to jail, she couldn't get the plant, and they hanged her." The rowan, or mountain ash, is a luck-bringer and preservative from magic, and I remember small forked twigs being carried. A rowan, planted at Iniscaltra about 890 by King Cormac mac Cuileanan, bore apples.[84] Moss from a skull, or an ancient cross such as that at Dysert O'Dea, or a pillar, is curative; the moss at Fortanne well was used for the eyes, but had to be replaced. If you see a "button mushroom" you should pluck it, as "it will never grow any more once it is looked at."[85]

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(*To be continued.*)

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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31] 585 796 626

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

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777 Leochain, who was slain in 1024. The King of Cashel (over-king, therefore, of North Munster) was forbidden to pass a night at Latteragh in northern Tipperary at the beginning of harvest; to encamp for nine consecutive nights at the river Suir; to hold a border meeting at Gowran; and to listen to the groans of women (in a raid) in southern Tipperary. The King of Connacht was not to go in a speckled cloak,—the prose adds "on a piebald horse," —to the heath of Luchaid in Clare. On the other hand, the ruler of Cashel brought good luck by plundering cattle in Connacht while the cuckoo sings; burning north Leinster; passing over Sliabh Cua,—"on a Tuesday," says the prose,—to pacify south Munster; crossing Magh Ailbhe with a light grey host; and resting six weeks (of Lent) every year at Cashel. It was most unlucky for him to wait for a feast at Killarney Lake for a full week from a Monday. At the present day some families still have their own tabus, lucky and lucky deeds and days, dreams, and omens, which sometimes even run counter to beliefs generally received,—*e.g.* that [787] the Friday falling on the thirteenth of any month, or to dream of a wild cat or other wild animal, is lucky.

791 825 *Witch hare.*[35]—Anthony Bruodin (*Bruodinus* or *Prodinus*), a Franciscan of Quin Abbey, tells in *Corolla Oecodemiae Minoritica* (Prague, 1664, p. 73) how his uncle (*patruus*), Florence of Moynaeo (Moynoe on Lough Derg) went out at the dawn of the first of May with his eldest son Bonaventura, (who died in Spain in 1643), and with their hounds to hunt hares. At last the servants saw one sucking a cow. The hounds chased it, biting it as it escaped, into a cottage, where an old woman was found torn behind.

776 *Glasgeivnagh cow.*[36]—Vague legends are told of her living at Treanahow, Shallee, and Ballygannon.

Ghosts or fairy men.—Mary (Mescal) Doyle, of Newmarket-on-Fergus, tells how she saw two ghostly men in black walking on a road near that village.

173 *Stolen bride.*—A legend of a stolen bride at Querin on the Shannon is told in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends etc. of Ireland* (1887), vol. i., p. 49.

[35] Addendum to vol. xxii. p. 449. [p.270]
[36] Addendum to p. 89 *supra*.

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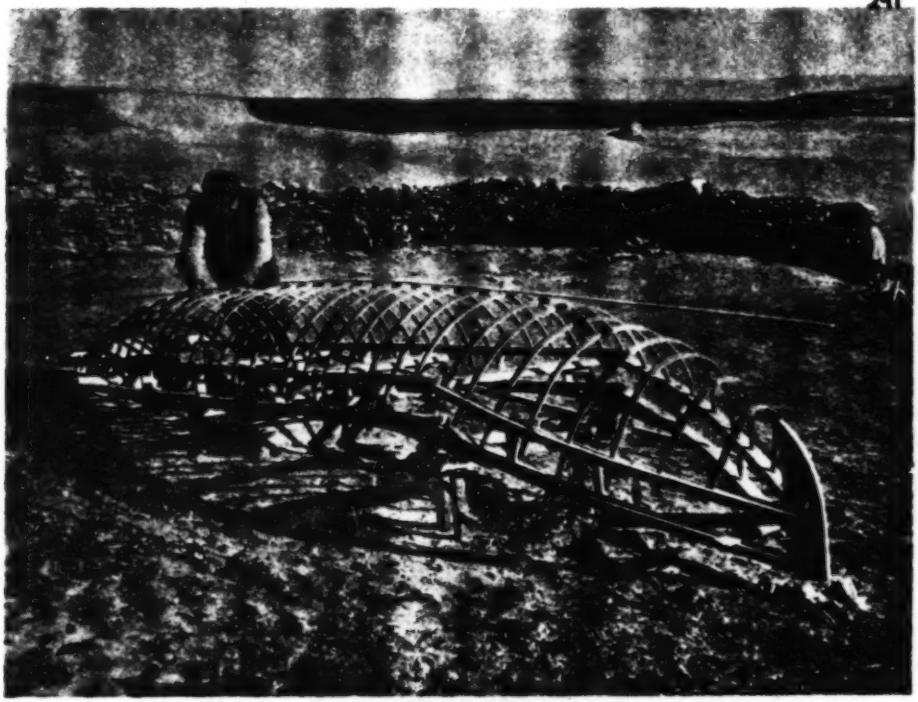

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

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folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

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The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is 000

The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[657] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[178] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[822] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons,
[999] however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of 343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of 621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

592 162

Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

771 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience,
775 "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

775 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St.
[178] Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are
[182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming,
796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent
[262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people
[273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only,
796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St.
[527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the
[177] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which,
[292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of [211] local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the [793] confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the [356] stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water [783] is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the [674] priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families in- [777] volved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them [776]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 796 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

[778] [733] 796 [784] [782] [777] [769] [784] [658] 123 796 787

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

796 776 [821] [613] [461] [777]

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

[867] [313] [372] [739] [842] [114]

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 539 796

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater 342
part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen. There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of house is common, but there is also a squarer type which may have a second story.

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled, rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the [362]
governmental agencies and patterned after those built first by the Congested Districts Board (1893–1923) are slated and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statistical statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families, but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's population live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings, which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence between the proportion of small farm population to total population.

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is 592
the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking 352
is done, the table around which the family — first the adult 353
males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and [278]
the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the "Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled [415]
with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festivals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part

In Tuosist the reason given to me by my father and some other old people was that ill-luck would fall upon Kerry and especially on the parish of Tuosist, if the Corkmen succeeded in forcing the coffin across Leac na gCorp and laid it down on Kerry soil. Sickness, bad crops, and misfortunes of many kinds would follow the corpse, if it were laid beyond the boundary-stone. This is undoubtedly the original reason for the defence of the border on funeral days. A corpse has in many lands for long been regarded as having evil magical power (known scientifically as *orenda* or *mana*) of an impersonal kind latent in itself. In Ireland, for example, fishermen regarded it as unlucky to take the corpse of a drowned person into a boat. Also, *an féar gorta* ("the hungry grass"), which grew wherever a corpse touched the earth, had the power of causing all those who walked over the spot to be stricken with abnormal hunger. Many other instances of the evil power of a corpse might be cited. Just two hundred years ago, Morty Óg O'Sullivan, a native chieftain of Béara in West Cork, who had fought against the British both in Ireland and in many European countries as a member of the "Wild Geese", was slain outside his own house near Eyeries in Béara. The British took his body to a warship at Bere Island and dragged it through the sea in the wake of the ship about sixty miles to Cork. A poet who described this happening wrote the couplet:

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[539]

Ní raibh aon rath ar an uisce ó Chorcaigh go Béara
Ó tairngeadh tríd an bradán gléigeal.[1]

No fish were said to have since been caught in the sea-route through which the corpse was dragged.

In Sweden, Miss Louise Hagberg tells us, if a corpse were carried over cultivated ground or over lakes, they became thereby unfruitful, and crop-growing fields lost their vegetation. She also says that during the Middle Ages those persons over whose lands a corpse was carried unlawfully had the right to compensation; in Västergötland anybody who carried a corpse across the land of another, without the permission of the owner, rendered himself liable to a prescribed fine.

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Thus, the funeral-boundary customs in the Cork-Kerry area, which have died out only in comparatively recent times, seem to fit into the wider pattern of custom and superstition devised to give protection against the magical evil power associated with corpses.

2. Wearing Clothes for the Dead

In the year 1918 or so, an uncle of mine died in the townland of Fehanagh, in the parish of Tuosist, in southwest Kerry. This is my native parish. Jerry Sullivan was my uncle's name; he died at the age of sixty-four. I was fifteen years old at the time, and was spending some weeks of my summer holidays at my uncle's when he became ill and died. I was allowed to remain in the house during the illness, wake, and funeral.

764 294 292

It is still the immemorial custom in that parish to get a suit of clothes specially made by a local tailor when a person dies. The suit is not worn by the corpse in the coffin. Still, it is intended

[1] There has been no luck on the water from Cork to Béara
Since the gleaming salmon was dragged through it.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. I.

With the many material survivals from the past which we have mentioned in earlier chapters there lives on an imposing body of customs and superstitious beliefs of which we can attempt to give no more than a summary description. They concern not only the visible world with its common elements and events—water, fire, stones, salt, iron, trees, cattle, crops, harvest, food and drink, birth, marriage and death—and the relics of former ages—raths or "forths," great stone monuments, stone axes, flint arrowheads, spinning whorls and "crocks of gold"—but also the unseen or rarely glimpsed world of giants, fairies and other beings. All the major processes of the farmer's year had their appropriate magic rites which clung to them from the beginning. Many of these superstitions are so deep-rooted that centuries of opposition from the Christian Church have failed to suppress them, and while it has driven some practices into secrecy it has been forced to take others under its protection. 771

This applies, for instance, to the cult of holy wells, which is, like the worship of stones and the veneration of thorn trees, probably megalithic in origin and seems to carry us back to the sunnier lands of the Mediterranean where the megalithic religion took its rise. It has been calculated that there are some 3,000 holy wells in Ireland: many of them are still visited, generally at the festival seasons which we described in the last chapter, and it is customary for the devotees to tie 312 788 755 778

[p. 163]

'9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

312 strings of beads, rags or bits of clothing in the holy tree which
788 often overhangs the well, so that it may bear their ailments.
955 I happened to come across a well near Cork just after mid-
summer this year. Alongside were the smouldering remains
778 of a great bonfire which had been lit on St. John's Eve.
The visitors to the well, having drunk the water, walked three times sunwise around the corbelled stone well-cover, and taking up pebbles kept ready to hand in crevices, they made the sign of the cross on certain stones which were marked with deep grooves which generations of patrons had cut by the same process. Some wells have old "cup-marks" instead of crosses, and it seems probable that these pagan symbols were made long ago in the same way as the crosses which have replaced them. Their round completed, the visitors
[825] looked into the well, for if they were to recover from their ailments they would see the trout which is reputed to live there and to show itself only to the cured.

The virtues of these wells are many: they are believed to be efficacious in such varied complaints as eye-disease, lameness, toothache and in some cases barrenness The first Sunday of each quarter of the Celtic year is generally the visiting time, but perhaps on account of the weather the summer festivals, and especially midsummer, are most popular. Pins and other bits of metal are sometimes deposited in wells. Offerings are also made to certain trees in the form of pins stuck in the bark, each pin representing a wish. Special gatherings known as patterns or pardons were held at such sites on the anniversary of the patron saint of the district. Devotions were followed by dancing and games which often degenerated into fights. It is possible to see relics of paganism in the sanctity of such sites, and it is worth recalling that some of the more celebrated centres of pilgrimage in western Europe, like Santiago da Compostella, seem to have megalithic connexions.

788 The mention of cup-marks brings us to the superstitions
823 concerning the great stone monuments with which they are
778 often associated. A recent article in the *Ulster Journal of*

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Archæology (July, 1940) by I. R. Crozier and L. C. Rea, entitled "Bullauns and other Basin-stones," summarizes the various beliefs connected with cup-holes and the larger "bullauns" or stone basins, which the authors suggest were made in the same way by gradual ceremonial attrition. The water which accumulates in these artificial hollows is considered to possess special virtues, for instance as a cure for warts, and offerings of pins and coins are often made in them. It is significant that some of the basins seem to have served as fonts in the early churches. (Fig. 111.) Small boulders

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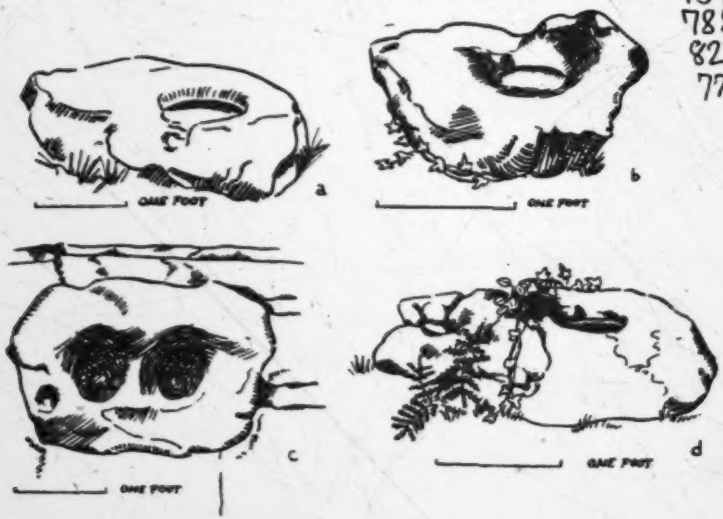

Fig. 111. Bullauns.

(*a*) Portmore Church, Co. Antrim.
(*b* & *d*) Aghalee, Co. Antrim (basins on both sides of the same stone).
(*c*) "St. Columba's Font," Londonderry. (Two bullauns and a cup-mark.

lying in certain basin-stones are occasionally employed as cursing stones, the ritual consisting of turning the stones against the sun in their holes—there may be as many as ten in one boulder—at the same time uttering a curse against the offending Person,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The
[778] same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[797] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

able part in the ceremonies of megalithic burial: we remember the significance attached to hazel nuts in the Hallowe'en games of divination (Chapter 17). 764 824

The ancient raths or forths, earthen enclosures around old homesteads, are also favourite haunts of fairies, and many are the tales of mysterious happenings in their neighbourhood at night, and of signs of habitation and sweet music issuing from them. Protection from fairies is believed to be obtained by possession of a black-hafted knife, while oatmeal or oat-cakes are also specifics against their malign influence. From fairies as from witches the supreme hour of peril to mortals is at the eves of Beltane, Midsummer and All Hallows. Cattle afflicted [illegible] disease were believed to be "elf-shot"—the belief is [illegible]tirely dead—and flint arrowheads were produced as [illegible] of the attack. The cure was to give the affected animal a drink of the water in which the arrow had been placed. Among other archæological relics the polished stone axes of the Neolithic and Bronze ages are known as thunderbolts and are accredited with healing powers, and the small spinning-whorls are termed fairy mill-stones. As Arthur Mitchell writes of Scotland: "It is believed that stone celts assist the birth of children; that they increase the milk of cows; that they cure the diseases of the eye; that they protect the houses in which they are kept from lightning; and that they have many other such marvellous virtues. It is believed that, as they have a sort of supernatural origin, they may reasonably be supposed to have supernatural powers." 776 789 829 778

When food is taken out of doors it is a common belief that some must be left behind for the fairies, otherwise the dreaded "hungry grass" will grow; and the countryman will often spill a portion of his drink as a perhaps unconscious libation to the wee folk. Their activities are peculiarly dangerous to cattle and to butter-making. Among the charms designed to secure a good supply of butter in the churn we find the use of a horse-shoe, of a rusty nail from a coffin or the hand of a corpse, of rowan branches, salt, a live turf, or a cross made of VERONICA leaves. 776 789 [151]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

778 like a basin; it contains almost a gallon of water; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

527 The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

773 2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could
823 be collected are given below; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

Lough Bofin (The Lake of the White Cow).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.[1] As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

173 *Carrig Guairim.*—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the roadside in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act; he was taken over to Rinvyle

[276] [1] Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

173 began to sink.[1] Suspecting that the bell was the cause of their misfortune, they threw it into the sea, and the ship was saved. Next morning, when some of the islanders were searching for sea-weed on the shore, they found the bell lying broken among the rocks. This [178] relic has long ago disappeared, having been cut up into pieces which were worn as amulets, most of which have been taken to America, but it is said that some are still kept as great treasures by some old people in Inishbofin, who refuse to show them to anyone.

Richard O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, makes mention of this bell ("H-Iar Connaught," p. 117) . . . "Inisark is of the same property with Bofin and the saint therein worshipped, St. Leo; of whose reliques is a bell there extant."

773 *St. Leo's Foot-print.*—There is pointed out an impression in the rock on which Cloghan Leo is built, which is said to be the imprint of 823 the saint's foot, and the people's explanation of how it came there is, that when he had finished building the cloghan he had to leap down, as he had no ladder, and alighting on the rock he left the print of his foot upon it, where it still remains.

173 There is a tradition on the islands of a large treasure of gold being hidden on Davillaun (a small island of the Bofin group), on which a large vessel of the Spanish Armada was wrecked, and some of the people claim to know exactly where it is. There are also many stories about Lord Nelson, under whom several men from these islands served, and wild tales of the old smugglers; and a very narrow passage between two dangerous rocks through which a daring smuggler once steered his vessel, and thus baffled his pursurers, is pointed out.

Archæology.

178 Though making no pretentions to being an archæologist, yet as an inquiry of this sort would be imperfect without, at least, a partial [172] description of the antiquities of the place, I hope that the notes hereunder given may, in some degree at least, supply the want.

1. *Survivals.*—In these the locality is comparatively rich, a good many old implements and methods of working, which have become extinct in other places, being still common. Such are the continuance of the use of plants and lichens as dyes, and some details of dress, such as the old blue cap, &c., which have been referred to before.

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[1] One version of the story states that the ship had got as far as the Bay of Biscay!

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

832 believed in, or at least spoken of, though not practised. It is called the spancel, and is thus described by C. O.[1]:—"This spancel, called in Irish 'stheioul dhrum agus tharragh,' signifying the skin of the back and of the belly, consists of a continuous band of skin taken from round the length of the body, viz. from the side of one foot up the outside of that leg and side, over the head and down the other side to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the stripe meets where it first set out; it is used as a love charm, and its power is believed to be irresistible, it being only necessary in order to secure the affections of the victim, to tie the spancel round him while asleep; if he does not awake during the operation all *must* turn out to the wish of the operator; if he does awake, he dies before the end of the year, so the poor desired one has no escape." The same author mentions several instances of this, which were said to have occurred shortly before he wrote (1841), one of which, the discovery of three young women taking the spancel off a corpse, is still remembered by some of the older inhabitants. There
312 are several holy wells in the district, but the most famous is the well
778 of St. Brendan, on Inishglora, the water of which is said to remain sweet and pure if drawn by a man, but to turn bloody and become
823 full of worms if a woman has the temerity to take it. Many tales are told of the misfortunes which have happened to women who persisted in drawing water from this well after being warned. There is now resident in Belmullet an old man who lived for some years on Inishglora. This man solemnly declared to the Rev. P. O'Reilly and the writer that he had three times cleared out the well after women had taken water from it, and that on each occasion it was "full of blood and corruption"; he also said that from the time he began to clean out the well until the job was completed no water flowed in, though it began to come as soon as the cleansing was finished. He added that if a woman were left alone on the island with only a male child of a month old, and she wanted to get water, the vessel would have to be held by the child's hand to prevent the water from becoming bloody.

[753] 2. *Charms and Leechcraft.*—Disease is often ascribed to supernatural agencies, and for this reason is often treated by charms or
755 incantations. There are several local "wise" men and women who treat disorders partly by means of charms, partly by herbal and animal remedies. In some cases the idea underlying the treatment

[1] "Erris and Tyrawley," p. 90.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

173 'deed of old' to delighted listening ears, but in language so ancient as to be now almost unintelligible to most Irish speakers of the modern school." The tradition of St. Brendan's discovery of America is well known, but the statement made by old writers about the supposed anti-putrefactive nature of the soil of Inishglora, does not seem to be recognised by the people of the district, who point to the bones among the ruins in disproof of the story.

O'Flaherty, in his "Ogygia," mentions the island in the following
539 lines:—

> "In Innisglore on Erris shore,
> Should we the bodies of our sires explore
> We'ed find them blooming, fresh and fair,
> No human flesh can rot or perish there."

The Priest's Leap.—Just below the sea face of Dunnamoe, and
173 separated from it by a narrow channel, is a large rock, which, tradition
823 relates, was once part of the cliff on which the fort is built. It is said that once in the old times, some say the time of Cromwell, a priest was saying Mass at Tarmoncarra, when he was surprised by the soldiery. Not knowing whither to fly, he ran towards the cliffs and reached them at this spot, his pursuers coming close behind him. Just when all seemed lost the large mass of rock on which he was broke away from the cliff and settled down in the sea as an islet, bearing down the priest with it, comfortably seated, in a niche, known as the "priest's chair," sheltered from the bullets of his enemies. Thus protected he remained until night, when he was taken off in a curragh by his people. The place has since been known as the "Priest's Leap."

The Namhoge or Neewoge.—There was formerly on Iniskea a small
● 778 stone figure called the *neewoge* (little saint), which was believed to have great power over the weather, and was accordingly treated with great reverence and used to be invoked for favourable winds. It is said that a pirate landed on the island, and after carrying off all that was portable, set fire to the houses, with the exception of the one in which the *neewoge* was kept, which did not take fire. Search was made for the cause and the image was taken out and broken. The *neewoge* never fully recovered this treatment. His power, though still great, was not the same as it had been.

Some years ago the attention of the parish priest became directed to the existence of this image, and having obtained the stone by a stratagem from the woman who was its custodian he threw it into the sea. As he died not very long after this, some of the islanders ascribe

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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his death to his interference with this figure. An Inishkea man spoke about the matter with much indignation even after the lapse of years, and said that they had never known misfortune or hunger in the island until after the distruction of this *neewogs*. 778

Many different accounts have been given of the image itself. One writer (C. O.) states that it was a stone figure of rude workmanship, and that it was dressed in a suit of homespun, renewed every year.

The description given by those who have seen it agree in stating that it was not a statue but a small flat stone. One informant believed it to be part of the head of a stone figure. This was enveloped in a small bag of homespun, which was replaced when it got old and soiled, and was kept in a blind window or recess in the wall in one of the houses.

St. Brendan and the Devil.—During my visit to Inishglora some of the Inishkea fishermen, who were camped there at the time, pointed out that no grass grew on a part of the island, and gave the following explanation :—St. Brendan was one day disturbed in his devotions by the devil, who appeared to him in the form of a beautiful girl and tempted him. The saint indignantly repulsed the temptress, and drove her towards the end of the island, blessing the soil as he went, but at the point where the grass ends, Satan changed his form and assumed the shape of a ram, which so astonished the saint that in his excitement he ceased blessing and gave chase to the evil one who ran to the rocks and jumped into the sea. The unblessed land is that on which the grass does not grow. 776

VI. ARCHÆOLOGY.

The few notes made in this section do not purport to be fully descriptive, but merely to indicate the nature of the antiquities of the region, which are of importance in the study of the people as bearing on the history of their past, and to direct the attention of archaeologists to the quantity of material worthy of study and record which is still to be met with in this part of county Mayo. 172 178

1. *Survivals.*—The district is comparatively rich in these, though many articles in use in the localities previously reported on are now quite extinct in Erris. The primitive condition of many of the houses, the absence of chimneys, and the custom of taking cattle into the dwellings have already been referred to. 178

The quern is still in use in several houses, especially on the islands and in the remoter localities, though now only employed for 178 412

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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1. Holestone "altar", Inishkeel, Co. Donegal.

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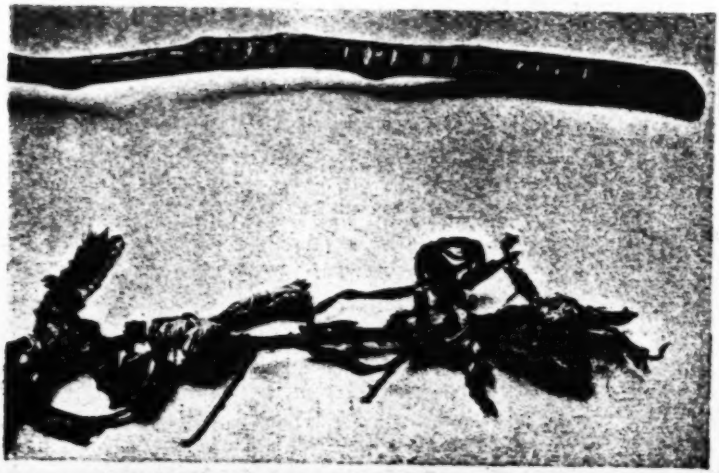

2. *Above*, Pilgrim's prayer-tally, Gouganebarra, Co. Cork.
Below, Rags on bramble at a wart-well.

[facing p. 208]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLATE 16

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Holy well at Doon, Co. Donegal. Crutches and bushes (*behind*) swathed in rags.

[facing p. 209]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIG. 84. Portable crucifix ('penal cross'). Found at Hilltown, Co. Down.

dancing, shouting, fiddling, courting, drinking and fighting'.[1] 796
In some celebrated instances the holy wells are associated [786]
with lakes and islands, for example Gouganebarra at the source 788
of the River Lee, and the most famous of all Irish pilgrimages 778

[1]Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character Etc.*, 1, 281.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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788 778 is that of St. Patrick's Purgatory, on a small island in Lough Derg in Donegal. Still a powerful attraction, it has been maintained since the early middle ages and has been described, with piety or derision, by innumerable writers since one of the earliest accounts was written by Giraldus Cambrensis, about 1185. The pilgrimage became very popular in the early nineteenth century, when the numbers of visitors are said to have averaged 10,000 annually. Mr. A. T. Lucas has shown that this pilgrimage resulted in the distribution through the country of certain portable wooden crucifixes popularly known as penal crosses.[1] Carved from the solid in a characteristic style, they bear dates between 1700 and 1830 (Fig. 84). It seems that they were sold to pilgrims at Lough Derg and taken home as souvenirs after being used in the devotional ritual. They were a local development, no doubt initiated by some peasant woodcarver, of simple crosses, consisting merely of two sticks tied together, such as are still made at some patterns and occasionally at the festivals of St. Briget and All-Hallows. In this way, as in sanctifying the gatherings themselves, Christianity has taken over the symbols and strength of the elder faiths.

The pilgrimage of Croagh Patrick, in Co. Mayo, is the most celebrated of those held at the end of July, involving the ascent of high mountains and marking, by tradition, the close of summer and the beginning of harvest, as discussed in the following chapter. Here we may quote once more the *Parliamentary Gazetteer* for 1845: 'No place in Ireland is the scene of more superstitious observances, or a more popular resort of pilgrims and devotees, or the site of more numerous small memorials of superstition, or the subject of more generally credited legends of hagiology. Vast crowds of miserable human beings . . . swarm all over its summit and sides and skirts; one grand current legend is almost everywhere believed in the [773] teeth of all credulity, that St. Patrick gathered hither, and swept [776] hence all venomous creatures in Ireland.'

[1]A. T. Lucas, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1954), 145–74.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

527 Christianized, cling to the preparations made on St. Briget's Eve, the last day of January. On that day rushes are fashioned into protective charms known as Briget's Crosses, a name 527 which illustrates how the church has won over pagan symbols, ● 778 for the 'crosses' take the form of either swastikas or lozenges, 301 and comparative evidence suggests that they are magic symbols of suns or eyes (Fig. 85). A three-legged swastika, presumably an old form, is reserved for use in the byre: its shape may be compared with the Celtic triskele. The lozenge-shaped charms have their counterparts in many parts of the world. The Huichols of Mexico make similar charms of wool mounted on a bamboo frame: known as a 'god-eyes', they bring good health and [171] long life to children.[1] A Californian Indian charm made of grass or rushes is very similar. In the Old World similar magic 'squares' have a wide distribution, in Europe, Africa, Tibet, Burma, Assam and Indonesia, and farther afield in Melanesia, Polynesia and Australia. Among the Nagas of Assam the squares, made of coloured thread, are placed on the graves of women and protect them against evil spirits.[2] In Sweden and Estonia straw squares are strung up as Christmas decorations and tied to the straw masks worn during Christmas games (Fig. 85).

Briget's Crosses are believed to protect the house and the livestock from harm and from fire. No evil spirit could pass the charm, which was therefore hung above the door of house and byre. The rushes must be pulled, not cut, on St. Briget's Eve, and care must be taken to fashion the crosses from left to right, with the sun. As a rule they are left in position until replaced the following year, though I have seen byres with many crosses thrust into the underthatch, the decaying accumulation of annual offerings. In Co. Galway similar crosses made of wood or straw were also placed in the rafters at Hallowe'en, and the discovery of a partly burnt rush cross which had been deposited in a megalith in Co. Limerick points to a more general cult of the 'cross'.[3] A 'love-knot' of similar shape, fashioned out of sedge leaves, is known from South Wales.

[1] F. Toor, *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* (1947), 72.
[2] H. E. Kauffmann, *J.R.A.I.*, 73 (1943), 101, 106.
[3] S. P. O'Riordain, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 1 (1936), 36. For a study of Briget's Crosses in Co. Armagh, see T. G. F. Paterson, *U.J.A.*, 8 (1945), 43–48.

 [Text continues on p. 270]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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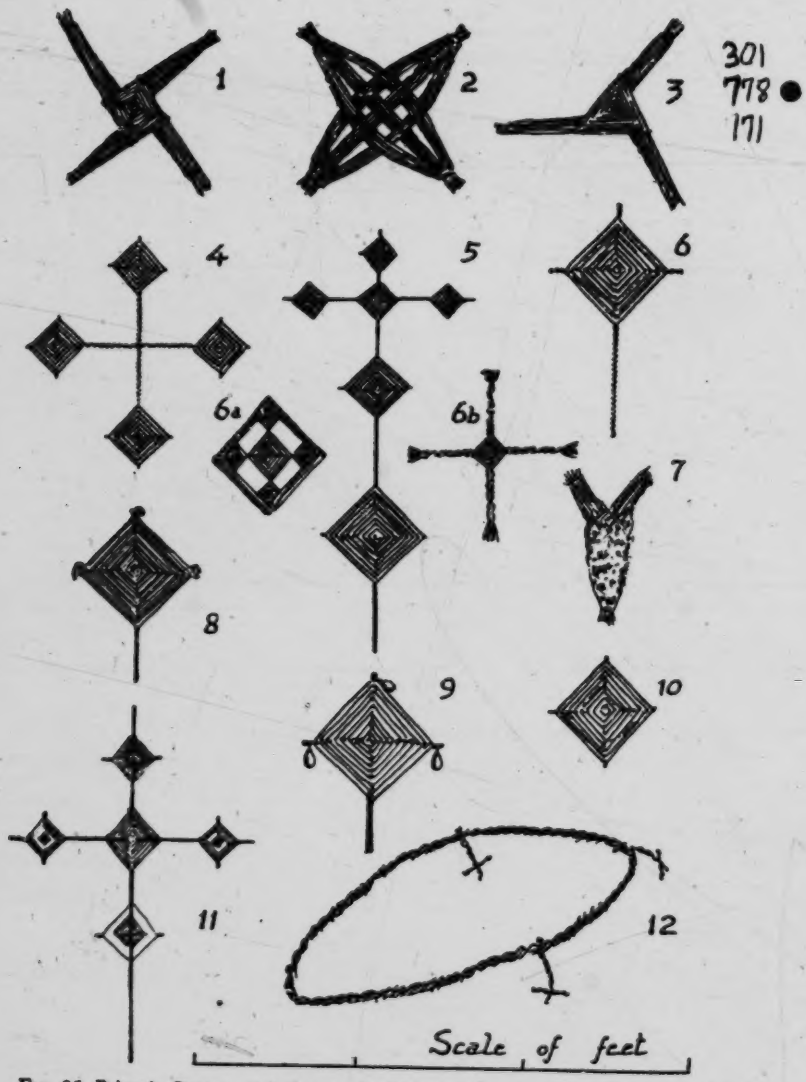

FIG 85. Briget's Crosses and charms. (1–7) all made of rushes, are from Co. Armagh (in County Museum, Armagh). (8) is a Naga thread-square (after Kauffmann). (9) is a Wailaki charm of rushes (after Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*). (10) is an Estonian straw-square, worn as decoration on straw hats at Christmas (see Fig. 88, 5). (11) is a Mexican 'God-eyes' made of woven wool (after Toor). (12) is a Briget's Girdle (in National Museum, Dublin).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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824 known instances when a branch accidentally broken from a fairy thorn was carefully tied back in position.

The policy of the Church was to attach new myths to old 797 rites, but only occasionally has the thorn tree been nominally 312 won over to Christianity by dedication to local saints or by its 778 association with sacred sites, with wells or Lammas celebrations, as for example the Criocan Thorn in the heart of Slieve Bloom.[1] On the other hand well-worship has had less stubborn roots, and 'holy water' has been more readily absorbed into Christian ritual. Nearly all the holy wells have close associations with the saints. Over 3,000 examples have been listed, most of them now half forgotten, others visited in secret and a declining number openly resorted to for cures. It is not difficult to understand the universal attraction of a spring of pure water. In the eyes of countryfolk a sense of mystery attaches to the upwelling of a spring well: it is considered lucky to have access to such a source of domestic water—a true 'well', not a hole bored in the ground—and one is invariably told that the local well yields the purest water for miles around, or even 'in all Ireland'. The attributes of purification, healing and fertility are natural concomitants of the magic welling of spring water, but besides possessing supernatural powers of this kind the holy wells are regarded as having had miraculous origins. The most famous sites where patterns are held have already been mentioned: the local holy well is rather an ever-present source of healing resorted to in need. One cannot but think of an ancient cult of waters springing from deep sources in primitive religion which was reinforced and adapted by successive intrusive cultures from the megalithic to the Christian (Pl. 16).

The ritual of 'paying rounds' at a well frequently involves 312 associated stones and trees. A sunwise circuit of the well is 778 made and the pilgrim, after taking a drink from the well, 788 hangs a rag or a rosary on an adjacent bush. The ritual commonly includes also tracing with a pebble on a stone of the well-covering the mark of a cross which has been incised by countless other pebbles. This practice has a bearing on the mysterious cup-marked stones and basin-stones (bullauns) which are associated with numerous ritual sites, including wells, for I

[1] V. Cornish, *Historic Thorn Trees in the British Isles*, 53.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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believe that many examples were ground out in much the same way before the sign of the cross replaced that of the circle. Cup-marked stones are commonly found in megalithic graves, on standing stones and Bronze Age cists, both in the British Isles and further afield. Some of the larger bullauns were certainly mortars, and very similar 'knocking stones' were used until recent times for preparing barley meal by pounding the grain with a beetle or maul (Fig. 90). To judge from the frequency with which one finds a knocking stone in the ruins of an old clachan it was one of the communal possessions of such a settlement. Old specimens, more especially when the basins are sunk in an outcrop of rock, are frequently found to hold water, and they are then regarded as 'wells', the water being held efficacious as a cure for warts. That such rock-basins have magic powers is illustrated by the following reference to a site in Scotland. On the Loch Avon side of Cairngorm is a shelving rock bearing hand-made basins about a foot wide and correspondingly deep: 'sitting on them is said to be efficacious in cases of barrenness.'[1]

FIG. 90. Knocking stone and bullaun. Both Co. Antrim.

It is an interesting illustration of the pagan associations of cup-marks, and of the success of the symbol of the cross, that their use survived in folk practice only as cursing stones. Smooth pebbles resting in certain stone basins are turned three times against the sun. There are many examples in the west, some

[1]A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 265.

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526 perfect sphere the rounded igneous pebbles which are selected for the purpose. One wonders whether some of the many cup-marked stones which turn up in the fields in certain districts—I have seen many in Inishowen in Donegal—were used for shaping stones, such as the sling-stones with which champion slingers, of whom the legendary Cuchulainn was one, performed [411] their feats. The sling and the sling-rod were originally hunting weapons and probably instruments of war, and one of the last refuges of slinging as a pastime was the now vanished Claddagh, the fishing suburb of Galway, where a man was not reckoned a good shot until he could strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen.[1]

Where a holy well has dried up—the usual explanation is that 312 it was desecrated and moved its position—the sanctity of the 824 site may be transferred to a tree. The so-called pin-well at ● 778 Arboe in Co. Tyrone is a beech tree, hirsute with pins and nails, growing in the burying ground on a Celtic monastic site. A rag-well at Clonmel is visited by mountain farmers who hang rag offerings on briars at lambing and calving times, and afterwards place more rags appropriate in number to the increase obtained.[2] There is on the island of Inishmurray a wind- [821] well which has the power of controlling the wind, the ritual being to empty the well to produce a calm. Sticks and stones also 789 figure in wind-raising ceremonies, and 'the rude stone image of 778 Inniskea' (Inishkea in Co. Mayo), which was dressed up in flannel each New Year's Day, had powers of producing either storm or calm.[3] Powerful magic was worked by a wooden statue of St. Macdara, formerly kept in his chapel—an oratory of early type with projecting *antae*—on an island dedicated to the saint in the extreme south-western corner of Co. Galway. Sailors passing the island dipped their sails three times in honour of the image, but we are left to guess what superstitions were involved from the statement that about the year 1640 'the bishop of Tuam caused it to be buried for weighty reasons'.[4]

[1] *U.J.A.*, 2 (1854), 164.
[2] *Béaloideas*, 15 (1945), 284.
[3] C. Otway, *Erris and Tyrawly*, 107.
[4] C. R. Browne, *Carna and Muwernish*.

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important subject somewhat bald. The pagan Irish, of course, reverenced wells, and the famous "King of the Waters" in Mayo was connected with St. Patrick by early biographers.[9] With the usual wise tactfulness of the ancient Irish missionaries all that was harmless was adopted into the new religion, and the wells lost none of their old observances and honour. The dedications of the Clare wells form a most valuable record, for, even when the founder of the church was forgotten, or a new patron invoked, the well usually kept the name of the ancient local saint. Unfortunately since about 1850 names of wells have been locally forgotten, and a re-dedication, often to St. Joseph, is common. Strange to say, the noteworthy saints Enda and Luchtighern are forgotten at the wells at their churches. The early mediæval life of St. Senan, (Colgan, *Vita S.S.*, March), says that, when that saint was born at Magh Lacha, Moylough, there was no water at hand to baptize him,—a rare thing in County Clare,—so he told his mother to pull up three rushes, and a spring welled out. The tale was still told in 1816.[10] The life of St. Mochulleus (Mochuille or Mochulla), about 1141 tells us how that early seventh-century saint struck a rock near a lake to the north of Tulla and three streams broke out. The well dedicated to him to the east of Loch Graney is evidently intended, and *two* streams still flow from it down the hillside. Some have supposed the wells of Tobereendowny, ("well of the King of the Sabbath," or, as suggested by Prof. Macalister and others, "of the world"),—were dedicated to a pre-Christian deity. Tobereevul is dedicated to Aibhill.[11] The flooded dolmen, Tobergrania, is named from Finn's fugitive spouse, "Granny's bed" occurring also as a dolmen name in Clare. Among Christian dedications we have Tobercruhnorindowan (of "the creator of the world") at Killard, Tober Isa (of "Jesus"), and Tobernacrohynaeve (*i.e.* Tobar-na-croiche-naoimh, of "the Holy Cross"). To the Virgin are dedicated wells at Drimelihy-Westby, Kilmacduan, and Killadysert. Of non-local saints,—usually, it is probable, late dedications,—we find St. John has

[9] *E.g.*, in the *Tripartite Life*, ed. W. Stokes, among the early "annotations" of Tirechan.

[10] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., under Kilrush Parish.

[11] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 186.

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ST. SENAN'S TREE WITH RAG OFFERINGS, KILTINANLEA.

To face p. 210. [P. 231]

[Facing P. 231]

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823

the wells of Killone and Tromra, St. Michael wells at Kilbrecan, Cappagh (Bunratty) and the Kilmihils, St. Augustine at Kilshanny and Gallynagry, St. Bartholomew at Toberpartholaun in Rath (Inchiquin), and St. Martin at Moyarta, Ballynecally, and Lemaneagh. All the dedications to St. Joseph are modern. St. Patrick did not enter Clare, but has wells at Correen (Kilnaboy), Clooney (Bunratty Barony), and Rossalia. The following list of wells dedicated to local saints may be useful for reference. *Brecan* (c. 480) has wells at Noughaval near Clare Castle (Kilbrecan), Doora, and Clooney (Bunratty); *Brendan* (date doubtful), at Kilmoon and Farighy (Moyarta); *Brigid*, (probably the Abbess of Feenish Island, c. 550), Kiltanon, Cappafeeaun, Finnor, and Coney Island; *Caimin* (d. 653), Iniscaltra and Moynoe; *Caritan* (c. 550), Kilcredaun in Kilballyowen, Kilcredaun near O'Brien's Bridge, and Kilcredaunadober near Bunratty; *Carrol* (doubtful), Kilcarrol, where a wooden image of him existed in 1816; *Colan* of Tomgraney (d. 552), to the west of that village; *Colman mac Duach* of Kilmacduach (c. 630), Kinallia, Oughtmāma (where "the three Colmans" probably originate in a confusion of texts), Teernea, Lough George, and Crusheen: *Columba* of Iona (d. 597), Crumlin and Glen Columbcille; *Cornan* (unknown), Kilcornan and Tobercornan in Gleninagh; *Croine* (unknown), Kilcrony and Liscrona in Moyarta, *Cronan* (probably of Tomgraney, c. 505), Inchicronan, Terryncronan, Killokennedy, and Corrakyle; *Dioma*, Kildimo; *Enda* (c. 480), Killeany; *Fachtnan* (doubtful), Kilfenora; *Flannan* (c. 680), Killaloe; *Imer* (unknown), Killimer; *Inghean Baoith* (c. 630), Kilnaboy, Commons, Glenseeade, Inakerstown, Killavella, Dulick (Templemaley), Kiltacky, Kilshanny, Aglish, Moy-Ibrickan, Magowna, Ballycoree, Shalee (two), Cullaun, Castletown (Spansil Hill), Dromumna, and Quin; *Kirin* (not Kieran), Kilkierin (locally Kilkereen); *Lachtin*, Kilnamona, Kilfarboy, and Stacpoole Bridge near Miltown Malbay; *Lonan* (c. 580), Killaspuglonane and Derrynavahagh (Kilmoon); *Luchtighern* (c. 550), Tomfinlough and, probably, Moy Ibrickan; *Macreehy* (c. 580), Kilmacreehy, Kilmanaheen, and Inagh; *Mainchin* (perhaps "St. Munchin," patron of Limerick), Kilmanaheen; *Mochonna* (unknown), Feakle and Moynoe; *Mochulla* (c. 620), Tulla, Templemoculla (Clonlara), Lough Graney, Lough

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Breeda, Miltown, Kilgorey, Fortanne, Broadford, Trough, Ralahine, Cragg, Lahardan, and Cappavilla, with perhaps, (if not of St. Molocus, c. 550), Moylough, Scattery, and Carrigaholt; *Molua* (c. 620), Killaloe; *Onchu*, Killonaghan; *Sanctan*, Dromline; *Screbann*, Clondegad and Kilmaley; *Senan* (d. 552), Iniscatha, Moylough, Iniscaeragh (Mutton Island), Kilclogher, Carrow (Kilmaduan), Erribul (Kilfiddan), Kilshanny, Killaneena, Cooraclare, Kilcredaun, and Drim (Quin); *Tola* (c. 635), Dysert O'Dea and Kiltola; and *Voydan* or *Braighdean* (unknown), Kilvoydan, Corofin, and Kilraughtis.

Healing Powers.—The *Ordnance Survey Letters*[12] mention the following:—Gleninagh well, which has a fifteenth-century well-house or "turry," cured sore eyes; Tober Cholmain, above Oughtmāma churches, sufferers from "the pearl," the films falling off the eyes at the third washing; St. Maccreehy's well, near Liscannor, eye troubles, which were also cured by St. Inghean Baoith's well near Kilshanny (even then nearly deserted), Tobermoghna near Clooney (Corcomroe), St. Senan's well on the cliffs south-west from Kilkee, Kilcrony well near Carrigaholt, Tobercuan in Kiltrellig near Loop Head, Tobershenan in Moyfadda, the Virgin's well at Templemaley, and Tober Isa at Corlack Glebe (Bunratty). Tobernatasha, ("well of the relic" or, as some say, "spectre"), in Kilmaley was shaped like a coffin, and delicate children used to be laid on their backs in it.[13] The black mud which gave its name to Toberduff cured sore eyes and swelled limbs. So did Senan's well at Kilkee; horrible to tell, the devotees,—down to 1875, at least, when a washing-tank was made outside the well-house,—used to wash in this, the only supply of drinking-water for the then fashionable watering-place. Toberlachtin at Kilnemona cured several diseases, its "day" being March 19th. Eyes were also healed by the well south from Newmarket-on-Fergus, and by the wetted moss of St. Mochulla's well near Tulla (the moss being put back to complete the cure). The latter well is said to have avenged itself, about 1780, on its landlord, who had dug away part of its enclosure, by rendering

[12] Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Mss. 14B 23. 24, (Co. Clare), vols. i. and ii.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 183.

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757 his son and daughter imbecile. The son survived till 1853, and
778 no other members of the family were affected after the well was
823 restored.[14] The Newmarket well indignantly removed itself to its present site when "a dirty woman washed her feet in it," and it also gave her the complaint it usually cured. So, also, when the holy well above Oughtmáma[15] was offended, it closed, and broke out lower down the hillside, as the Sruhaunanaeve or "saints' stream," and the water of Killone well refused to boil. The Cunninghams, living near it, spoilt their cooking by using its water, though "they knew it would not boil." John Windele tells of other resentful wells in Cork and Kerry; for example, the well at Labba Molagga (Cork) ran dry when a woman washed her clothes in it, and at Maunaholtora the well near a dolmen ran dry, and its water refused to boil.[16] The Irish "Nennius" tells a story of ducks that could not be boiled because the water would not get hot while they were in it. In the last century a woman who drew water from a well and saw it did not boil found a fish in it. She took the fish back to the well, and the water then boiled without any difficulty. The mud of the dolmen or "well" of Tobergrania at Ballycroum cured sore or short-sighted eyes, and that of the bullaun or basin at Kiltinanlea church near Clonlara did the same. The well of St. Michael at Kilmihil was once powerful. Father Anthony Bruodin, a Franciscan and author of a history of his order[17] full of curious particulars about Clare before 1640, tells how "Lady" Mariana, wife of Thomas MacGorman, of the author's kinsfolk, had in 1632 long suffered from gout. The Archangel appeared to her in a dream, and bade her go to his church and dig where she should see rushes growing near it. Aided by her son and Dermot O'Quaely, the parish priest of Kilmihil, she found the well and was cured. Many other persons got similar relief, but there seems no tradition of any cures by it preserved among the people of Kilmihil.

778 *Offerings.*—It is right, on visiting a well, to make offerings of
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[14] So Mrs. Connors at Fortanne.

823 [15] Pronounced Oogh-máw-mä. It is a weird spot with three ancient churches in a grassy basin on the flank of a terraced hill of bare grey limestone.

[16] Windele, Mss. Royal Irish Academy; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. iii., pp. 765-9.

[17] *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Fidei*, 1665. [P. 233]

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small objects, only of value as homage. Rag offerings are naturally most frequent where there is a "blessed bush" at the well, but they are frequently hung on a bramble, or even, on the Atlantic coast, kept in place by stones. Rags abounded, with other offerings, at Gleninagh, at least till 1899, being tied to the twigs of an old elder bush. They were hung in quantities on the stunted old hawthorn at Oughtmāma well, and were found at Tobersraheen, at Aglish graveyard in Ogonello, and on the large fallen hawthorn near the basin at Kiltinanlea. They are often accompanied by rosaries, religious medals, necklaces and ribbons, broken or whole plaster and china figures and vessels, and glass, buttons, pins, and nails. Such objects are abundant at many wells, such as the little rock well in Glensleade between the largest Berneens dolmen and the road, Killone altar, St. Senan's well near Kiltinanlea (Plate XI.), Fortanne, Kilseily, St. Lachtin's well near Miltown Malbay, Kilcredaun, and a well of St. Inghean Baoith (stopped by a too zealous Protestant, but recently reopened and dedicated to St. Joseph) near Inchiquin lake. The almost disused dolmen-well of Tobergrania had in 1893 two rude crosses of laths tied together, buttons, bottles, glass, crockery, and a coin.[18] In 1889 Kilfarboy well near Milltown was frequented on Sundays and Thursdays by sick persons, and abounded in such offerings as bits of leather, crockery, and blacking pots. (I am not certain whether this note refers to St. Lachtin's well or to one near Kilfarboy church.) China and pebbles have been offered at Kilcredaun in a cleft beside the Shannon estuary, and pebbles placed in the "Font" of Doughnambraher in central Clare.[19]

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(*To be continued.*)

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XVII. *Religious Objects and their Legends.*

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Clare was once rich in religious objects, and some important ones have survived until our times, such as the Bell Shrine of St. Senan, the croziers of St. Blathmac of Rath and St. Tola of Dysert O'Dea, and the bells of Rath, Burren, and Kilshanny,—all, except the last, in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, besides the reputed bell of Iniscatha.[14] St. Colman MacDuach and St. Lachtin were also closely connected with the county, and the crozier of the first and shrine of the arm of the second are preserved in the Irish collection. We read in early records how the Norse, in their destruction of the monastery of Iniscaltra in 922, "drowned its relics and shrines" in Lough Derg. The early *Life of St. Senan* tells how his bell descended ringing from heaven, and the place where this is reputed to have happened is still shown at Cross, between Kildimo and Farighy. The richly-enshrined crozier of St. Flannan of Killaloe (c. 680), and the bell brought from Rome by St. MacCreehy (c. 620), were extant when their *Lives* were written in the middle of the twelfth century. Early in the seventh century "the relics of Columb, son of Crimthann, were brought in a wain" to Caimin of Iniscaltra.[15] There were a number of relics and a bell "gold-enshrined" at Tulla in 1318.[16] Recent legend tells of the bells of the round towers of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy being hidden in the pool of Poulaclug and the marsh below the latter monastery, and of a silver bell of Kilmoon or Killeany, in the Burren, hidden in the stream named from it Owennaclugga. A brass bell found in the round tower of Dysert was sold in Limerick about 1837. The Black Bell of the MacNamaras was probably one of the relics at Tulla, and may be the one attributed to St. Mochulla in 1141. The "Black Book" of that saint was probably a register, and existed down to 1627, when it was used (and disappeared) in a lawsuit

[14] It was exhibited in Dublin in 1853 by a Mr. John Cooke, and sold to the British Museum. There is no local tradition attached to it.

[15] *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, "Calendar of Oengus," (early ninth century, ed. Whitley Stokes), under Dec. 13, p. 182; also published by Henry Bradshaw Society.

[16] *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh*:—"Tullach nan espoc sanctified by bell and precious mass, by relic, gold-enshrined, by rare piety and notable miracles."

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of the Delahoydes. The shrine of St. Lachtin's arm,[17] made for Cormac MacCarthy, king of Munster between 1118-27, was preserved in his church at Kilnamona, and about 1640 removed to Lislachtin Abbey in Kerry; no folklore seems attached to it. The crozier of St. Blawfugh, *i.e.* Blathmac, son of Onchu, was preserved at Rath, near Corofin, and then in a hole in the wall of the old chapel of Corofin, where it was used for very solemn swearing and was much feared. The crozier of St. Manaula (Bán Thola) of Dysert was purchased from an old woman, daughter of an O'Quin, its last hereditary keeper, and was held in great reverence for cures and as an object upon which oaths were taken. The most important of all these relics is the Clog-an-oir, or "golden bell,"[18] the empty bell shrine preserved by the Keanes of Beechpark, one of whom had married the daughter of one of the Keanes or O'Cahans the "coarbs" (*comharba*) or successors of St. Senan. It consists of a bronze cover of the twelfth century, adorned by later silver plates, and violation of an oath taken on this shrine twisted the perjurer's face or resulted in convulsions and death. It is told that a gentleman living in County Galway sent his servant to borrow the "bell" to test his servants about a theft. His messenger happened to be the thief, and on the way home again threw the dreaded object into the sea. He then boldly told his master that the Keanes would not lend it. "You are a liar," was the reply, "for there it is on the table before you." The man fell on his knees, and confessed. It was last asked for in 1834, when a farmer had been robbed of twenty pounds, and borrowed the "bell" to swear the neighbours after Mass. On the Saturday night before the ordeal his family was awakened by a crash, as something was thrown in through the window. This proved to be the missing notes, tied with the original string. There are many similar stories, and the Clog-an-oir is said to have been stolen, but to have always returned to its rightful owners.[19]

[17] An illustration of this was published by Vallancey in 1770. See Mr. Geo. Coffey's *Guide to the Christian Antiquities in the Collection of the Royal Irish Academy*, pp. 53-4, 60-2, and for the croziers of Dysert and Rath and bell of Rath, *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., pp. 337-9.

[18] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxx., pp. 237-44.

[19] Much of this information came from Mr. Marcus Keane of Beechpark, the present possessor, and the remainder from the paper cited in note 18.

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XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 825 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date, for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle.*—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

778 825 233 823 [776] The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St. Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwells (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolty-doolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaunk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

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buttons, and broken crockery. Patients sit in the "chair" to cure lumbago. It is believed that the water of this lake cannot be boiled and that no one can be drowned by it, and sixty or seventy years ago cattle were cured by it. The beasts were brought in herds to the lake to drink, and were driven into it. If they turned to the right hand they would recover, but not if they swam to the left. It is said that on one occasion a cow sank, but was found next day grazing in a field beside the lake, completely cured. In consequence of drainage works, the water level has fallen, and the mud round the shore is too deep to allow the cattle to be driven through it, so on May Day every year, before sunrise, a little crowd gathers, of perhaps over 100 persons, to fill bottles with the water for curing cattle, especially of "the worm." The water keeps good till the next anniversary, and is also used to give a "good churning" and to clear a "garden" of caterpillars.[22]

In 1839 Lough Iona (now Eenagh) was reputed to cure sick cattle on Mondays and Thursdays.[23] In 1808 the smiths were in some districts employed to kill the cattle,—or rather to fell them for slaying,—and their perquisites were the animals' heads.[24]

Persons over sixty years of age are often firm believers in the charming away, or "taking," of milk and butter. The younger folk usually deny that they hold this belief, and, where they take part in quarrels caused by it, avowedly only do so to support their elders. Two families living in the south-east corner of the county had about 1890 a quarrel resulting in a serious feud, hardly as yet appeased. It seems that for about three years the cows of the first household gave but little milk, and that little so bad and unwholesome for pigs and calves that several died. Ordinary veterinary practitioners, and even the local "knowing men," did no good, so the farmer sought a "wise man" of renown in another parish. This sage directed his client to watch the local well all May Eve, and to let no one come near it till after midnight. The farmer and his sons hid near it, saw a man and a woman of the

[22] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. ii.

[23] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 161.

[24] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 359. The smith was a magician amongst the Irish, and the ancient *St. Patrick's Lorica* prays against the spells of "smiths, women, and druids."

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773 that they had drowned themselves, and gave up the pursuit.[14]
823 Possibly the legend originated the association of indecency with the Clare dolmens found in 1808 by Hely Dutton.[15] A girl would not guide him to the fine one at Ballygannor until assured
[831 that he was a stranger, for, it was explained to him, a woman
778] could refuse nothing to a man at one of these monuments. Some such reason probably lay behind the belief that, if a couple unblessed with children went to a *labba*, the defect in their house-
[842] hold was amended. I have been told that this belief existed in Clare, but got no direct evidence of it. The Tuam an goskaigh monument in Ballynahown was believed to be the grave of a giant buried with his great sword, to recover which certain young men dug and overthrew the stones; but they found nothing, and afterwards prospered so ill that they had to emigrate.[16] Grania was supposed to be a male saint near Feakle, and the "scoop" in the west end of Tobergrania dolmen-well at Ballycroum was supposed to be the place where he put in his head to drink.[17] The long grave of Ballykelly, famed for its lovely outlook high over the woods and lake of Doon on the flank of Slieve Bernagh, was known as "Old Grania," but the term "Granny's bed" was not unknown in East Clare. I heard no legend of a "hag" at any dolmen. The alleged rites at the "Druid's Altars" at Maryfort and Carnelly have already been noted.[18] When two blocks of the latter structure were removed for use as gateposts, they returned during the night to their original site, and were never again removed. The hand of the destroyer of a dolmen near Ruan was struck by a splinter and severely injured,[19] the remains of the blocks being left where

[14] Corcomroe legend, given to me by the late Prof. Brian O'Looney.

[15] *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 318. On the Continent indecent names and legends are also attached to dolmens; cf. Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 555; vol. iii., p. 845.

[16] Messrs. Hilary and Kelleher of Oughtdarra.

[17] So among the inhabitants in 1896-9.

[18] Vol. xxii., p. 51.

[19] Told to me by the sufferer. His predecessor, who had overthrown some blocks, was also unlucky. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 212.

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they lay,—but no vengeance overtook those who levelled many dolmens at Miltown near Tulla.

Basin stones occur not infrequently at or near dolmens, *e.g.* at Kiltanon and Newgrove near Tulla, and at Ballyganner and Cappaghkennedy on the borders of Burren, at the last of which five appear in one slab. In the Life of St. Mochulleus,[20] written in 1141, a basin "like a large *hydria*" was found in a polished block of stone when the saint was levelling the site of his church on Tulla hill. The basins were evidently regarded as very early in date even in the twelfth century. The basin of Doughnambraher (Dabthach nam brathar) at Kyleeane has already been noticed.[21] A large block with two basins is amongst the remains at the place of inauguration of the local kings at Magh Adhair.[22]

Pillar stones and rocks.—*Boughils* ("petrified boys") and *farbreags* ("petrified men") have been referred to in Section I.[23] A frog-like natural rock, close to the west side of the road from Kilkishen to Fortanne, was blasted and removed after 1887, but I have a sketch of it made in that year. There was a vague saying that it had been made, (and I think I was told also that it was a creature petrified when cursed), by some saint. The Coad stone is said to have been the same height (*com fhod*, "equal height or length," whence Co'ad),[24] as King Teige Acomhad O'Brien about 1460. It, the Cloghlea near Tomgraney, and the "cross" near Kilmoon were evidently boundary marks of church lands. Another legend of Coad

[20] *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvii.; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xli., p. 9. The basin was filled with milk by a hind. Similar legends are found in Glendalough (County Wicklow) and elsewhere. Giraldus tells how a hollow stone at Skellig used to be filled with wine for the sacrament. [773]

[21] Vol. xxii. (Plate IV). The name is Killian on the map, but is pronounced Kyle-e-aan, with a long stress on the last syllable.

[22] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., p. 79, vol. xxxiv., pp. 190-1.

[23] Vol. xxi., pp. 183, 186, and the legend of Knocknafearbreaga on p. 185; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv. (c), p. 97, vol. xxvi. (c), p. 471.

[24] *Com-fhod* is also a synonym for a grave. [P. 258]

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stone was that the *liagann*[25] was exacted by a father from the slayer of his son, and was the length of the victim. The story of Prince Lachtna (ante 840) tells that an adviser of King Phelim of Cashel tried to arouse his suspicions of Lachtna by an alleged oracle of a pillar stone Liag na neasain, near Killaloe, against "a fair man from Craglea."

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[25] Dr. G. U. MacNamara. A *liagann* of equal length to the slain son of the Dagda was claimed as an *eric* by the victim's father, "Dind Senchas", *Revue Celtique*, vol. xvi., p. 42.

(*To be continued.*)

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slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran. 172 823 776

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign. 823 173

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman. 823 778

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional, 346 773

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

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Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

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MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimneaigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19] 173 556 [574]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan. [778]

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains 764

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe. [554 551]

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turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and [776]
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the offi-
ciating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient
tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured
soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the
church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hun-
dreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appear-
ance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

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Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

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778 on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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721 At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

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175 The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,
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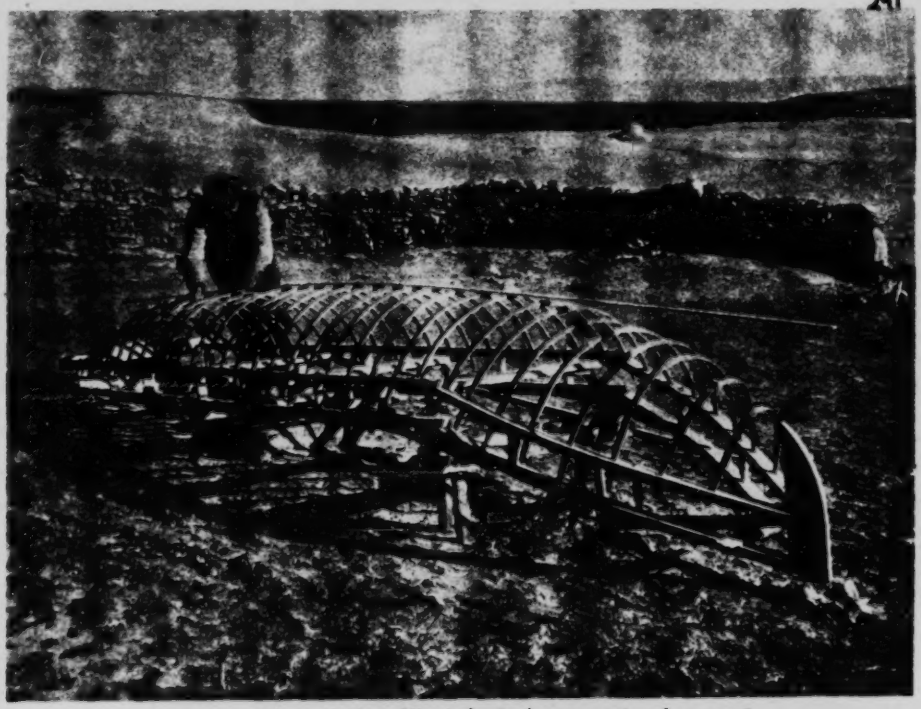

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is

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582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [198] [177] [651] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [778] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [362] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [781] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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776 787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken [753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until [562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18 [789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is 778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged [823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where [123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 776 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call. [428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An [123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last 184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it 763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a 776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those [522] persons considered overly superstitious.

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 171
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346]
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

764 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after 754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, 753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When 755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human 855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
198 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
[824] the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[174] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[175] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536
735 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
431 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
776 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
778 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[533] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

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choice of cultural elements to be revived and perpetuated. Countless forms of peasant culture, many of which are still widespread, have come to be demeaned and even their existence denied by the more militant nativists. The attitude of these persons toward traditional songs, dances, and sports such as hurling is quite at variance with that toward matchmaking in courtship and the belief in fairies, ghosts, and witches. It is the prevalence of such customs as the latter in rural Ireland which has been largely responsible for bringing the term peasant into such disrepute. 668

Some of the extreme points of view held by Irish nativists are: the Irish today are a "pure" Celtic "race" and possess psychological and behavioral traits which are "racially" rooted, including even a "racial memory;" Celtic civilization developed before and was "superior" to Greek and Roman civilizations, and the Irish branch of European civilization during the Middle Ages was "advanced" over those of other European societies; the Irish literary tradition has been "richer" and of greater esthetic "worth" than other European traditions of the past; the Irish language is a more effective communicator of ideas than other languages (especially English) and mirrors the distinctive Irish or Celtic "personality," "spirit," or "soul;" in order to achieve national identity, unity, and greatness, the Gaelic tongue once again must be spoken universally in the nation; and, Ireland is the "most Catholic" of all countries—in historical tradition, strength of belief, and morality. Inis Beag folk have been singled out for adulation by nativists because they are Gaelic speakers, pious Catholics, and believed to be lineal decendants of Celts who lived in the island two millennia ago. Their character is thought to embody those traits of ancient origin held in highest esteem by the Irish: spirituality, independence, self-reliance, industriousness, strength, courage, imaginativeness, sanity, and emotional stability. [197] [779]

Nativism has had a profound impact both on government policies affecting Inis Beag and other Gaeltacht communities, and on the interpretations of the Inis Beag milieu by writers and film, radio, and television producers. The extensive services and subsidies afforded the islanders reflect, in part, the nativistic outlook of the government; it is hoped that they will halt emigration and preserve the Irish tongue and other valued cultural forms which are preserved here but are disappearing rapidly from the rest of the country. Nativism also has caused artists, who have most observed and publicized the folk, to distort the Inis Beag way of life in their works. Too often they have been unaware of, ignored, exaggerated, or misinterpreted beliefs and behavior so as to present a desired picture of the folk, one in keeping with the nativistic stereotype.

Distortions of Inis Beag culture also have been caused by primitivism—the idealization of past or future cultural estates or of contemporary primitive and folk cultures. Like nativism, it provides psychological compensation for frustrations created by personal or social disorganization. Its origins are manifold and can be traced back to antiquity, but in its modern guise it is an amalgam of utopianism since the sixteenth century, Enlightenment views of "natural man," rural attitudes toward urban life since the industrial revolution, Marxian socialism, late nineteenth-century cultural evolutionism, and early twentieth-century ethnology. Central to the primitivistic position is the belief that civilization has dehumanized man and undermined his valued institutions; it has caused social bonds to disintegrate,

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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

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turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and [776]
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the officiating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth, 150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hundreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appearance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [964]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand, and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

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 It is not the formal system of local and national governments

which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather 779 •
the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more 67
potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate.

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward 829
government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly 667
is sought and even expected as an obligation, or "right," of the government by the [181]
islanders (especially since nativism engendered by the Gaelic Revival has made [668]
Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht," to quote a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders.

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes [66]
were commanded by politicians who put forth grandiose plans for the betterment
of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another [653]
to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular —and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide. The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, [346]
and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords. Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configura- 829
tion, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and 181
sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history.

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior 829
and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the 666
county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail

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779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [795] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

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The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

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The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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• 779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, [123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying
793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and
776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them
165 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are
562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of
[829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk
[788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obliga-
771 tions can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some
828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 171
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor- [346]
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings. 535 178 [874]

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers. 535 [175] [177] [179] [184]

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality. [874]

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women 574 63 574 342 343 352 674 273 [888] [272] [343] [542]

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[For information pertaining to the historical background of Irish national character and personality development, the relation to sexual repression and theological dogma, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 20-27.]

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regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

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Ireland was . . . one of the world's most ascetic countries, and the monastic ideal has undoubtedly left a deep mark on the Irish mind. Although Irish priests were permitted to have wives as late as the eighth century, sexual renunciation came to be identified with virtue and distinction in the community, and thousands of the best men and women lived apart from each other. Kevin Devlin in his *Christus Rex* article on "Single and Selfish" . . . says of the ancient Irish that "when they 'fell in love with Christianity' . . . they took to the ideal of virginity with a Pauline enthusiasm unknown elsewhere. St. Patrick himself noted this with an inflection of surprise in the *Confessions* . . ." (Blanshard 1954: 160–161).

Several Irish scholars since 1955 have expressed the opinion in personal conversations that the rapidity of Irish conversion to monasticism in the early medieval period can be attributed, in large measure, to masochism. [53] This ancient character trait is most evident in the projective system of early Irish verbal art, if one discounts the possibility of widespread distortion through the actions of Celtic defense mechanisms and later revisionists.

In a recent book, the impact of Augustinianism at this time and in the centuries to come is examined by Fr. Alexander Humphreys. He says in *New Dubliners:*

The specific doctrinal tradition to which Ireland and the Irish countryman in particular has fallen heir is the Augustinian. . . . [It] lays relatively greater emphasis on the weakness and evil to which human nature is prone as the result of original sin. By the same token, it attributes relatively less efficacy to natural knowledge and human action and relatively more validity to God's revelation and more power to the action of God's grace. . . . [The] Irish countryman has acquired a more than average distrust of native human reason. As a Catholic he cannot and does not deny the validity of rational thought, but he tends to be quite suspicious of the pride of the mind and so wary of ultimate rationalism that he shies away from reasoned discussions of high truths. . . . The tradition he inherits tends toward a certain historical and theological positivism in regard to the major truths and values of life, and, together with other historical factors, has led him to an intensified reliance upon the teaching power of the Church as voiced by the clergy. At the same time, while appreciating the need for positive good works, he is inclined to place relatively greater emphasis on those which are directly concerned with obtaining grace and relatively lesser store by simple ethical behaviour. And finally, although he is certain that man's bodily nature with its emotions is at root good, he is rather more suspicious of it and deals with it somewhat more severely. As a result he inclines to a jaundiced view of sex and a generally ascetic outlook which

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland,* by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

*831 enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theo-
155 logians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the
175 British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister
178 William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory
181 strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged
• 779 in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have
795 long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of
798 the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly
[785] could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges
155 of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one
178 Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism
181 as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the
779 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still
798 very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exagger-
ated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of
[874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

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chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

> Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161–162).

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

> Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better it God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105).

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters.

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent cor-

114 155 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe*, by William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark*, probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and [12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and * 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.[6] Opler and Singer have the following to 15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland: [593]

> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent. [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures [838] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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[815] [6] Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma, [779] and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

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539 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers
571 further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the
828 quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their main-
829 spring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

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177 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed
178 to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the
181 penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not
*831 exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread
795 throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism,
• 779 which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

*831 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined
181 in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions,
182 enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control"
626 —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as employing informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative experiences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorganization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in

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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body. 78 • 95

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation. 771 178 [184] [182]

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit- 114 538

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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grateful. It is a land of hard realities. This Ireland is subject to hot flashes of anger and dispute which throw into relief deep-lying hatreds and fierce loyalties. We all know something of the Land War and Sinn Fein and the bitter internecine strife of the Trouble. If we know anything of Ireland's history we see these rough upheavals of a tranquil scene as great punctuation marks upon a red page of struggle lasting seven hundred years. This is the Ireland of bitter economic fate and political unrest. Much of this can be laid at England's door, but not all. The Ireland of the Irish is no more free of internal strife than any other land.

Most of us recognize a fourth Ireland as well, especially those who are Catholics. It is the Ireland of the Faith, the Island of Saints and Scholars. It is the land of the devout, where word and deed breathe a religious fervour which most of us have forgotten. This is the land of holy wells and pilgrimages and roadside shrines. Well-filled churches rise above every hamlet now and the black-frocked priest is a familiar friendly figure. To many of us, perhaps a paradox lies here. Fierce love of political liberty goes hand in hand with a deep devotion to the most authoritarian of Christian creeds.

Nor is this the only paradox in a land of surprises where even the sun and sky are inconsistent. The beauty of the Irish landscape lies in the never-ending change of colour. A momentary break of sun

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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a symbolic order overlying the values of social life 776
and clothing them in emotional terms in much the 538
same way as do unofficial dogmas and unofficial, non-logical cosmologies among all peoples, not excepting those of our own urban civilization of today. In that, they respond to recognizable sociological and psychological necessities. In its own way, Yankee New England is as fertile of such non-logical beliefs as is rural Ireland. Rural Ireland is different only in that she has preserved an older and more ancient terminology in which to build her particular symbolism. She has her own genius in the matter which expresses the age-long continuities of her culture.

I think you will perhaps understand me better if I go on to sketch out the symbolism which the 'pisherogues' contain.

First, one must notice that the Irish countryman 781
is a very devout man. His life is ordered in his 789
adherence to his religion. Much of his habit of 776
mind and his view of the world responds to his Faith. He is a devout and practising Catholic. But he is also devout in another direction too, very often. Just as there is room in his mind and heart for patriotic fervour along with religious zeal, so is there room for fairy belief. Sometimes, of course, these devotions may conflict; but ordinarily they need not. They can intermesh and support one another.

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Thus in his daily life, one finds the countryman 776

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long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, [796]
even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to [783]
receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which
are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in [781]

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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in the combined pastimes of feasting and foretelling the future, 796
and cabbages figure in many an old game, for they are of 221
ancient lineage: the potato, barely three centuries introduced, has not displaced them in traditional ceremony. It is the young folks' day. Many of the games played turn upon the theme of identifying the future husband, and we shall see in the following chapters that match-making and marriage were among the functions of the great festivals, closely linked up with the magic of the earth's increase and the prosperity of crops and animals.

In parts of Ireland curious traditions attach to St. Martin's Eve (November 10th) and the feast on the following day. A sheep or a fowl is ceremonially killed and its blood [782] sprinkled in the corners of the house. No wheel must turn on the day of the festival. Finally there are the mid-winter celebrations, now marked by Christmas and New Year, which carry the year round towards St. Bridget's Eve. On St. Stephen's Day (December 26th) the hunting of the wren was formerly an occasion for general revel: it is now little more than a children's game.

We must conclude this chapter with some suggestions, 443
necessarily brief and tentative, as to the importance of these 527
seasonal gatherings in the social and commercial life of peasant Ireland. From very early times the major ritual assemblies of the year provided opportunity for exchange of goods, of livestock and of news, and for the maintenance of folk tradition and bardic skill. In ancient Ireland it is recorded that there were two kinds of assemblies, the "aonach" for pleasure and the "aireacht" for business, but it seems probable that, like the great fairs of recent times, they served both purposes. It is suggestive of the ritual and religious element in the old assemblies that they generally met upon hill-tops—often the sites of prehistoric burials—and that they took place at the fixed times marking the beginning of the Celtic seasons. May and November remain the favourite periods for country fairs, and the hiring fairs were always held at these times. A century ago the February and August fairs were also of considerable importance. The Old Lammas Fair

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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764 people are at it, too, walking along behind." In the Aran Islands, as we saw in Chapter 7, the corpse was carried out through the back door, and the front doors of all houses were closed as the funeral passed by. In Co. Mayo the coffin was carried three times round the church, sunwise, and pipes [982] filled with tobacco were left, presumably as offerings, on the grave. To prevent the spirit returning to the house of the living, it used to be thought necessary to apply a "lick" of whitewash around the door and window openings. The association of white stones and white shells with graves is [822] probably another prehistoric survival. Many of the megalithic cairns were covered with white quartz stones. It often happens that old superstitions and customs survive under the guise of children's games, and we shall have something to say about toys and games in the following chapter.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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after this date, for the *púca*, a supernatural being, is busy 527
befouling unpicked fruit at Hallowe'en. Here again we notice 769
superstition acting as a stimulus towards the completion of
routine tasks. The return of the livestock from their summer grazings, once accompanied by their herders, made the occasion one of family reunion, and this is a strong element in the present festival. But it was also a reunion with the ancestral spirits of the family: for Hallowe'en was preeminently a commemoration of the dead, a time when ghosts and fairies were unusually active, the whole of the world of the supernatural astir and the dead returned to their earthly homes. On that night the grass-grown homesteads—the fairy raths—were wide open and the fairies were on the move to winter quarters, surely a folk memory of a former transhumance. It used to be thought unlucky not to make preparations for the return of the dead by leaving the door of the house open, putting out tobacco and traditional dishes such as sowans—a kind of porridge—and setting seats around the fire. The games and amusements which alone survive have commonly degenerated into pranks and horseplay, but one can detect in them echoes of magical observances. The many divination customs may well have begun as rites to avert evil or to secure the benefits which they now pretend to forecast. Among the things involved in these games and divinations are apples, nuts, oatcakes, cabbages, a ball of yarn, articles made of straw and rushes (Fig. 86), and herbs such as yarrow. The wearing of straw dresses and the breaking of pots are certainly archaic elements. In Co. Cork there survived well into last century a Hallowe'en ceremony similar to the well-known Mari Lwyd of South Wales: a procession was led by a figure clad in a white shirt and carrying a horse's head. This 'white mare' was followed by youths blowing cow-horns, and as they stopped to levy toll from farmhouses they recited a long string of verses 'savouring strongly of paganism'.[1] Hallowe'en bonfires and noisy demonstrations remind us that these features of Guy Fawkes' Day have, in England, been stolen from the older festival.

In certain districts, especially in Connacht, north Munster 527
and south Leinster, strange customs have been associated with 782

[1] *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 303—19.

527 the Feast of St. Martin on 11th November. On St. Martin's
782 Eve the blood of a farm animal or fowl was spilled and sprinkled in the corners of the house, on the door-posts and windows, and in the byre and stable. In some areas the blood was also used to make the mark of a cross on the forehead of each member of the household. The flesh was eaten on St. Martin's Day, which is by tradition one of the feast days on which flesh meat is taken.

[292]
[285]
[769]

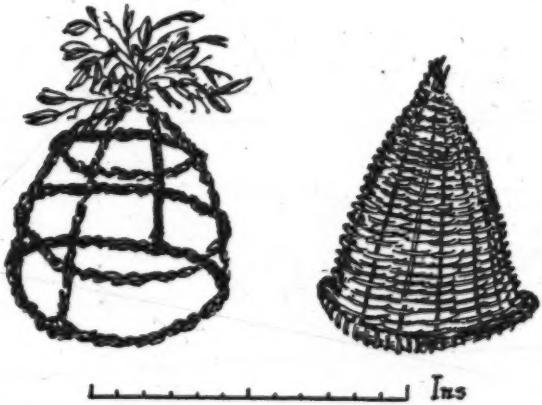

FIG. 86. Hallowe'en caps. *Left:* of plaited straw, Co. Down. *Right:* of woven rushes, Co. Kerry.

We recall that in Scotland a mart was an animal killed at Martinmas to be salted down as winter food, and it may well be that this very practical custom grew out of the cult, which was intended 'to exclude evil spirits for the year'.[1] It seems that seabirds were sometimes killed for the occasion, and there are many superstitions relating to the ill luck which attended anyone who went fishing at Martinmas. Wheel-turning of any kind, whether on cart, mill or spinning wheel, was prohibited. These sacrificial offerings and tabus must be of great antiquity and relate to the preparations for winter. St. Martin's Summer was regarded as the last spell of fine weather before the gales began in earnest. There are hints in folklore that ailing children were

[1] I. Weld, *Roscommon*, 553.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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sometimes killed at this time, so that the animal slaughter may be a sacrificial substitute. 527 [782]

Although Christmas is the outstanding Christian festival of the year its traditional 'Twelve Days' of holiday are steeped in pagan lore and in folk practices relating to the winter solstice and the new year. In Co. Cavan I came across a custom known as 'blowing the Christmas horns' by which youths heralded the festival by blowing horns from hilltops. The burning of candles on Christmas Eve is a ceremony which involved divination as well as devotion. 'Each district seems to have its taste in colour. For example, in Limerick and Clare white candles are mainly used, while red and green are popular everywhere. In the Midland areas pink candles are sought, and in some parts of Dublin only blue candles will be taken. In Killarney nothing less than a 6-lb. candle will suffice for the occasion'.[1] On Christmas Day traditional ball-games were played, often between parishes, and near the coasts these meetings took place on the strands. [526]

St. Stephen's Day is in many parts of the country associated with the hunting of the wren, and the sport is not entirely extinct. It seems that some details of the ceremony, such as the rhymes which are sung, are of English origin, but the wrenboys often wore straw masks in the native tradition, and occasionally animal skins or horns. The wrens were killed beforehand by noisy and excited bands of youths, and carried on a holly bush or a decorated wooden tray on St. Stephen's Day (Fig. 87). The procession, shouting and singing the prescribed songs to the accompaniment of home-made skin tambourines, made its way from house to house demanding money or drinks. The wrenboy processions, despite their English rhymes, appear to be a degeneration of more elaborate performances of native origin which had affinities with the mummers' plays and which like them may have been attracted by the powerful prestige of the Christmas festival from their proper season of spring. At one time the wrenboy ceremonies involved much fertility symbolism and were attended by men disguised as women.[2] The robin, linked with the wren in superstition, was also the object of persecution in south-western Ireland, but in this case the tail 527 825

[1] *Ireland* (Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs) No. 303 (1955), 10.
[2] E. R. R. Green, *U.J.A.*, 9 (1946), 3–21.

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776 of the cross over it, said the Lord's Prayer, dug a hole in the mud
823 at the well with her left heel, and went away without looking back.
[789] As might have been expected, the butter had "come" by the time she had got home again, and she used to quote the case as "proof positive." Besides the forts and wells, the dolmens are believed to have been fairy homes, but in my enquiries since
776 1892 I have never been able to authenticate a case of offerings
782 at them of milk and butter, although small basins like the Swedish
823 "elf mills" are found in the covers of more than one of these structures, and large *bullauns* or basins at others, such as Ballyganner Hill near Noughaval, Cappaghkennedy on the hills above Corofin, and Newgrove and Kiltanon near Tulla in eastern Clare. Food and drink, however, have been, until at least the present century, set out in plates and cups in Inchiquin and Moyarta Baronies, and in the latter, on the Shannon bank, the slops were thrown out and clean plates, water, chairs, and a well-swept hearth left by a punctilious servant for fairy guests in 1888 or 1889.

776 The greatest fairy monarch in Clare was "Donn of the Sand-
823 hills" (now the golf links), near the old castle of Doogh, (*i.e.* Dumhach or Sand Dune), near Lehinch. He, or one of the other fairy princes named Donn, appears in a list of the divine race of the Tuatha Dé Danann,[41] and is therefore of the family of the Dagda, and, it may be presumed, a lineal descendant of the ancient Ana, Mother of the Gods. A well-known Irish scholar and antiquary, Andrew MacCurtin, before 1730 addressed a political petition to Donn of Dumhach complaining, like most Irish antiquaries, of the neglect of the gentry, and praying for any menial post at his Court.[42] As there was none that answered, the petitioner had to rest content with the hospitality of the MacDonnells of Kilkee and the O'Briens of Ennistymon. Donn's heartless conduct met poetic justice, for he has ever since "lacked a sacred bard," and, save for a slight uneasiness in a few poor old people passing across the sandhills after the golfers have left and the sun has set, he is now all but forgotten. In another poem of MacCurtin's, on a monk's horse "overlooked" and killed by the evil eye, or by the look of a red-haired woman, or

[41] *Cath Finntraga* (ed. Kuno Meyer), p. 15.

[42] Mss. Royal Irish Academy, 23. M. 47.

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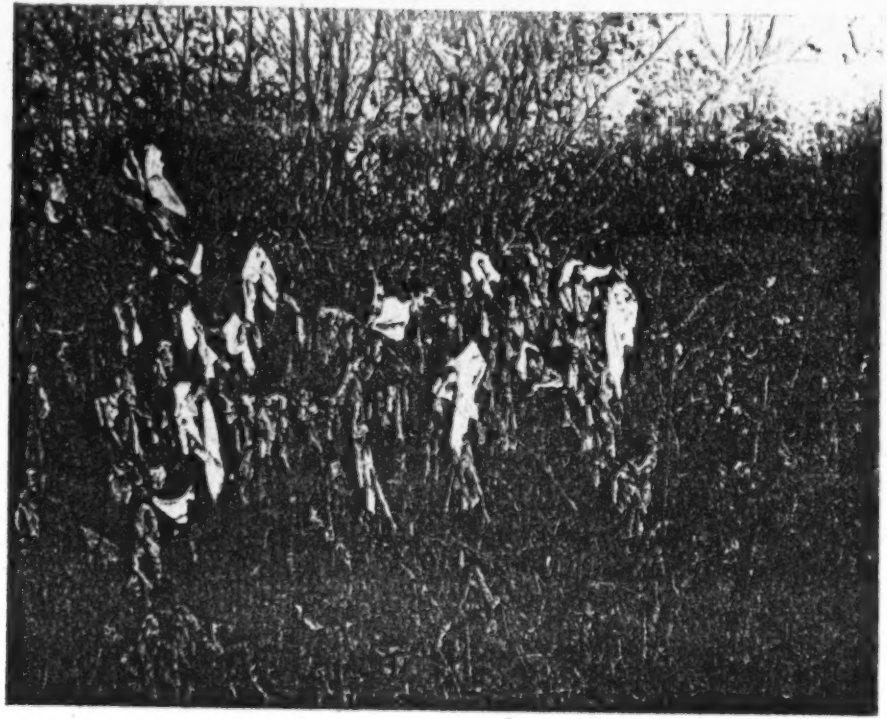

ST. SENAN'S TREE WITH RAG OFFERINGS, KILTINANLEA.

To face p. 210 [P. 231]

[Facing P. 231]

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757 his son and daughter imbecile. The son survived till 1853, and
778 no other members of the family were affected after the well was restored.[14] The Newmarket well indignantly removed itself to its
823 present site when "a dirty woman washed her feet in it," and it also gave her the complaint it usually cured. So, also, when the holy well above Oughtmāma[15] was offended, it closed, and broke out lower down the hillside, as the Sruhaunanaeve or "saints' stream," and the water of Killone well refused to boil. The Cunninghams, living near it, spoilt their cooking by using its water, though "they knew it would not boil." John Windele tells of other resentful wells in Cork and Kerry; for example, the well at Labba Molagga (Cork) ran dry when a woman washed her clothes in it, and at Maunaholtora the well near a dolmen ran dry, and its water refused to boil.[16] The Irish "Nennius" tells a story of ducks that could not be boiled because the water would not get hot while they were in it. In the last century a woman who drew water from a well and saw it did not boil found a fish in it. She took the fish back to the well, and the water then boiled without any difficulty. The mud of the dolmen or "well" of Tobergrania at Ballycroum cured sore or short-sighted eyes, and that of the bullaun or basin at Kiltinanlea church near Clonlara did the same. The well of St. Michael at Kilmihil was once powerful. Father Anthony Bruodin, a Franciscan and author of a history of his order[17] full of curious particulars about Clare before 1640, tells how "Lady" Mariana, wife of Thomas MacGorman, of the author's kinsfolk, had in 1632 long suffered from gout. The Archangel appeared to her in a dream, and bade her go to his church and dig where she should see rushes growing near it. Aided by her son and Dermot O'Quaely, the parish priest of Kilmihil, she found the well and was cured. Many other persons got similar relief, but there seems no tradition of any cures by it preserved among the people of Kilmihil.

778 *Offerings.*—It is right, on visiting a well, to make offerings of
●782
823

[14] So Mrs. Connors at Fortanne.

[15] Pronounced Ooght-máw-mā. It is a weird spot with three ancient churches in a grassy basin on the flank of a terraced hill of bare grey limestone.

[16] Windele, Mss. Royal Irish Academy; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. iii., pp. 765-9.

[17] *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Fidei*, 1663. [P. 233]

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small objects, only of value as homage. Rag offerings are naturally most frequent where there is a "blessed bush" at the well, but they are frequently hung on a bramble, or even, on the Atlantic coast, kept in place by stones. Rags abounded, with other offerings, at Gleninagh, at least till 1899, being tied to the twigs of an old elder bush. They were hung in quantities on the stunted old hawthorn at Oughtmāma well, and were found at Tobersraheen, at Aglish graveyard in Ogonello, and on the large fallen hawthorn near the basin at Kiltinanlea. They are often accompanied by rosaries, religious medals, necklaces and ribbons, broken or whole plaster and china figures and vessels, and glass, buttons, pins, and nails. Such objects are abundant at many wells, such as the little rock well in Glensleade between the largest Berneens dolmen and the road, Killone altar, St. Senan's well near Kiltinanlea (Plate XI.), Fortanne, Kilseily, St. Lachtin's well near Miltown Malbay, Kilcredaun, and a well of St. Inghean Baoith (stopped by a too zealous Protestant, but recently reopened and dedicated to St. Joseph) near Inchiquin lake. The almost disused dolmen-well of Tobergrania had in 1893 two rude crosses of laths tied together, buttons, bottles, glass, crockery, and a coin.[18] In 1889 Kilfarboy well near Milltown was frequented on Sundays and Thursdays by sick persons, and abounded in such offerings as bits of leather, crockery, and blacking pots. (I am not certain whether this note refers to St. Lachtin's well or to one near Kilfarboy church.) China and pebbles have been offered at Kilcredaun in a cleft beside the Shannon estuary, and pebbles placed in the "Font" of Doughnambraher in central Clare.[19]

THOS. J. WESTORPP.

(*To be continued.*)

[P 234]

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning. 796 [292] [674]

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day. 796 527 628 [782] • [878] [834] [273]

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion. 796 [178] [789] [527]

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the [539] 796 527 [782]

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• 782

year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796

The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during
[167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the
[582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is
[574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on
[521] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing
[351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are
[356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of
[262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large
[364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are
[574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper,
[431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs,
[861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children
[431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in
[262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
198 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
[824] the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[174] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[175] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

534 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[233] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

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539 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of [211] local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

796

Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the [793] confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the [356] stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water [783] is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the [674] priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families in- [777] volved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them [776]

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times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771 775
"strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783] • penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771 magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776 God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754 presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178 right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826 tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822] of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of e world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171] symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826 hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828 power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754 who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793] even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775 Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772 fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

831*
cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, 181
the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked 182
factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural 626
manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing 831*
the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme 626
methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as em- 793
ploying informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments
to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal [779]
classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as [872]
effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, [155]
since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative
years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and 831*
even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative ex- 626
periences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorgan- 684
ization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and 793
talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis 831*
Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist 797
priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a 626
week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver 771
long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, [796]
even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to [783]
receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which
are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in [781]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1] 527 527 584

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning. 527 [784] [788] [769] [857] [195] [787]

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 48.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 796 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of [778]
wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to [233]
"give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of 796
the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time
garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. [784]
Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the [782]
Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is [777]
tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for [769]
future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a [784]
small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of [538]
the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night
when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of 123
cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed 796
by the quick hardening metal. 787

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whit- 796
sunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as 776
the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually [821]
the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend
to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does
anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a [613]
danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children
and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground
unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the
demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or [461]
decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter [777]
are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then
may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern
day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer [867]
celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather 313
wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of
Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for [372]
protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A [789]
man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the [842]
failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the
folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the
hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven
between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry
leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish [114]
life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the
plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British
anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns
jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin 539
(O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 796

*831 the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children
864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
[163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant
83 Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
158 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
828 illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the
• [784] Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

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771 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience,
775 "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

775 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St.
[178] Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are
[182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

• 785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming,
796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent
[262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people
[273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only,
796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St.
[527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the
[171] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which,
[292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

*831 enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theo-
155 logians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the
175 British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister
178 William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory
181 strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged
779 in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have
795 long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of
798 the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly
• [785] could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges
155 of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one
178 Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism
181 as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the
779 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still
798 very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of
[874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

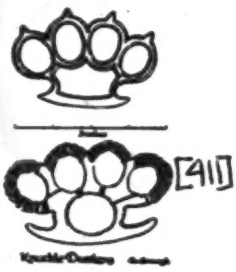
9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

town consists of streets of houses of peasant style strung end to end, picturesque with their washes of many colours, but perpetuating and even accentuating the filth which can be tolerated in a village setting of streams and fields but which becomes highly objectionable under urban conditions. On the other hand there are some spaciously-planned country towns which have an air of quiet opulence reminding one of the English heritage to which they owe their foundation. I am aware that in saying this I am ignoring the "inner flame" of the Irish towns, but it cannot be denied that externally they have much to learn from the older civic traditions of the sister isle. Dr. Arensberg has analysed the pattern of the country town and described it as "an extension townwards of the countryman's own social order." He shows that, until recent times, its economy has been that of distribution, not production. Banks and pubs and shops do most of the business and owing to the family system "Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation." If we exclude the Lough Neagh basin, all the denser areas of population are coastal and most of the country's manufacturing industries are concentrated in the ports (Fig. 108).

The small 361 [364] [162]

To return to the fair, we have tried to show how the periodic gatherings in which they originated were associated with ritual and emotional experiences connected with the celebration of recurring events such as seed-time and harvest. Breaking the routine of toil, it is characteristic that much licence was permitted on these occasions. Until recent times a strong spirit of revelry and a temporary slackening of the moral code distinguished the great Irish fairs. Even to-day the police or civic guards make allowances for fair day and turn a blind eye to many offences against the law: it is recognized as a time of special licence. Games, dancing and faction fights were the order of the day once the buying and selling were over. Until a generation ago cruel "knuckle-dusters" (Fig. 109) were carried in readiness, and the countryman's heavy felt hat was worn as a defence against the blackthorn shillelagh.

443 786 578



[911]

Fig. 109.

M

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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443 blackthorn shillelagh. Trailing the long coat or "trusty"
786 was a recognized invitation for a fight.
578 To the onlooker it appears as though the business of selling is itself in the nature of a fight, such are the hearty and
443 resounding slappings of open hands up and down the street. Then follows the prolonged argument, the cut and thrust of keen bargainers in a circle of interested onlookers, over the amount of "luck money" to be given back to the seller. It is an age-old ritual far removed from the mechanical sale of a pen of cattle at an auction. The establishment of auction sales and latterly of marketing boards not only undermines the business of the country town, but threatens to destroy the intricate fabric which binds together a thousand homesteads in the intercourse of fair day. It is a sad commentary on rural development that in recent years "dole-days" have brought as many people to town as "fair-days."

[493]

Fig. 110. Fair Day.
A bargain is being struck on the left.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Wayside cairns in the form of memorial monuments 824
line the roads to the graveyards of Aran. On thorns at cross roads it is the custom in Co. Wexford to hang small crosses, [211] made of coffin wood, as the funeral procession passes by. [764]

We cannot deal at any length with the superstitious practices which cling so tenaciously to death and burial: 764 they recall the customs of many other regions, such as Brittany, where the old megalithic cult was strong and seems to have lived on in obsessions about death and accompanying notions of re-birth. The anxiety to be buried with relatives reminds us of the strength of the blood-tie, and "bestows even on death a feeling of social interest." It is an Irish belief that the dead live on in the graveyard, and that the last person buried acts as servant to the others, a belief which not long ago led to disputes as to which of two bodies to be buried should be interred first. There are certain old graveyards where women only are said to be buried, and no living woman will enter them. On Innishmurray there are separate graveyards for men and women. [766] Unbaptised infants were generally interred in special burial grounds, some of which appear to be prehistoric cairns. There is no need to add to the many accounts that have been written of the keening of the dead and of wakes. In connexion with wakes we need only refer to the tricks, pastimes and games which were their accompaniment. The dramatic games were known under such titles as "The Walls of Troy," "Short Castle," "Building the Ship," "Turning the Spit," "Selling the Pig," "Building the Fort," "The Horse Fair," "The Mock Marriage" and "Shuffle the Brogue." While some seem to have been for amusement only, in others it is difficult not to see sex-symbolism and fertility-rites. In recent times the wake-games [786] have often degenerated into licence and drinking. Maria Edgeworth tells us that "more matches were made at wakes than at weddings."

When going to a funeral it was customary, in parts of the west until the beginning of the present century, to carry some salt in the pocket in order to avert evil influences. Arensberg quotes the belief that "there is never a funeral but the other

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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137 farmers, both the flowers of the fields and the shrubs of the
314 forest edge, took on a special significance which they have retained in the peasant mind to the present day. There is powerful magic in the flowers of May, in the hazel twig, the fairy birch, the rowan branch and above all in the flowering hawthorn. This most beautiful of trees first became common in the Neolithic period. In a later chapter we shall consider some of the enduring spiritual aspects of man's association with this environment of his own making. At about this time, too, when the Neolithic economy was both absorbing the older population and being supplemented by metal tools, pollen studies reveal a marked decline of the elm tree which has been explained by the use of its bark and branches as cattle fodder. The oak forests, however, persisted in strength, and were presumably treasured for their supply of pig-fattening mast. Alder also was abundant, occupying soils which were too damp to be cultivated.

The onset of the sub-Atlantic climatic deterioration in the last millennium B.C. seems to have accelerated the peat-forming processes. Both oak and elm decline, but the birch tree spreads widely. In County Antrim, for instance, extensive oak forests growing up to heights of 1,000 feet were overwhelmed in the spreading bogs. The pine had become rare by the end of prehistoric times, though it may have lingered into the historic period on sandy eskers and on the dried surfaces of some of the raised bogs. Despite climatic change and human interference, considerable oak and alder forests survived here and there into the seventeenth century, but these last remnants of the Irish forests were almost all destroyed by the military and economic demands of that troubled century. Among the many consequences was the almost universal exploitation of the peat bogs for fuel. In addition great quantities of turf were consumed by the linen bleachers from the late eighteenth century, and kilns for burning lime and bricks and for drying agricultural produce made considerable demands on the bogs. A minor traditional
[372] use which may be mentioned in passing was for the preparation of charcoal for smith's work. The peat was charred in pits.

314 For all its toil turf-cutting provides a welcome break from the routine of farmwork, a time when friends and neighbours
● 786 come together away from the familiar surroundings of fields

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this 314
time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals
and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf- [786]
cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the
lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a
stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out
of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades
and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on
fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an
exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers
that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the differ-
ence between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere [132]
the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an
early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the
planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month,
so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There [821]
is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when
the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the
tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it
is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but
once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep [521]
cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a
'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the [423]
decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when
banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally [476]
has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or
three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in
turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the
helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient
fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required
depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf.
Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown
top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a
proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist
humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like
coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is [804]
the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that
a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading, [461]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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upon hills', which the Dublin government found so obnoxious in the sixteenth century, the persistent efforts of the Irish to maintain their ancient rights and customs of public assembly. In the Anglo-Norman period and again during the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries towns were deliberately established with the intention of bringing 'civilized ways of living to the wild Irish'. Many of them are characterized by a wide street or square—the 'diamond' in Northern Ireland—where fairs and other gatherings could be dominated and controlled from a castle which overlooked it. These urban settlements were known to the Irish, whose native 'towns' were rarely anything more than disorderly clachans, as 'street towns'. They are found scattered at fairly regular intervals all through the countryside, usually at some river crossing or hill gap where routeways meet. Some of them, well-placed in good fertile country, have expanded, while others have decayed or remained mere villages. Often one will find not far away the old Fair Hill from which the fair was attracted as the facilities of the town outweighed the traditional pull of the inconvenient hill-top. But for long the Irish kept to their own fairs which continued, according to an Act of 1431, to 'take great customs and profits to the depression of the boroughs and the trading towns'.[1] The old assembly places are not entirely forgotten, and it often happened that they were visited for games and horse-racing long after they had lost their function as places of commerce. They are celebrated in local ballads and their sites can still be traced by the grassy mounds which are the remains of booths and cattle pens. The lost fairs of Ireland deserve a study such as is being made of the lost villages of England, but the chief sources for such a study, in the absence of records, must lie in field work and the fast-fading memories of the countryside.

The fairs were formerly organized in a recognized sequence of goods and livestock, terminating in sports and horse-racing—and not infrequently in bloodshed. Several of them achieved a notoriety which made their names a byword, and among them none was more notorious, owing partly no doubt to its proximity to Dublin, than Donnybrook Fair. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of 1845 forgets its sober purpose in thus describing

[1] T. W. Freeman, *Ireland*, 95.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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443 it: 'During the week, beginning on the 26th August, is held
543 the notorious Donnybrook Fair, professedly for the sale of
578 horses and black cattle, but really for vulgar dissipation, and
786 formerly for criminal outrage and the most revolting debauchery. It was for generations a perfect prodigy of moral horrors —a concentration of disgrace upon, not Ireland alone, but civilized Europe. It far surpassed all other fairs in the multitude and grossness of its disgusting incidents of vice; and, in general, it exhibited such continuous scenes of riot, bloodshed, debauchery and brutality, as only the coarsest taste and the most hardened heart could witness without painful emotion.' This was by day; 'the orgies of the night may be better imagined than described'. An anonymous writer is quoted as saying: 'We venture to say that there is more misery and madness, devilment and debauchery, than could be found crowded into an equal space of ground in any other part of this our globe, during five times the same space, which is spent at Donnybrook, in one given year'. The *Gazetteer* then recovers itself and offers excuses for 'describing what ought never to have been described'. One regrets rather that the compiler was so overcome by horror as to forget his statistical duties.

543 The absence of moral restraint which led to extremes of
527 lawlessness at Donnybrook and elsewhere was a normal and
443 characteristic accompaniment of these periodic folk-gatherings.
[786] Such moral holidays are a feature of many societies which have not been greatly influenced by urban ways and values. Their purpose appears to be cathartic, but that there is a lingering fertility magic underlying the excitement is suggested by such strange rituals as those which mark the 'Puck Fair and Pattern' of Kilorglin at the head of Dingle Bay in Co. Kerry. The fair is unfortunately not mentioned in the *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, though the village of Kilorglin is described as 'an unprosperous, sequestered, and almost squalid seat of population; and appears to have acquired marvellously little profit from the advantageousness of its position for both inland and seaward trade'. Puck Fair, held every August, is the great event of the year in West Kerry, and lasts three days. 10th August is 'Gathering Day', the 11th is 'Fair Day', and the 12th 'Scattering Day', terms which have no doubt been handed down from days when

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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them have had to be suppressed: they became occasions of law- 796
lessness and bloodshed. Like the fairs they drew their adherents
from several rival neighbourhoods and therefore brought 796
feuding clans together. The following is a typical comment of 579
the early nineteenth century: 'On these patron days, which [786]

[322]
[415]

FIG. 83. Turnery. (1) Wooden bowl, Co. Armagh. (2) Butter stamp, Co Fermanagh. (3) Butter stamp, Co. Antrim. (4) Ladle, Co. Antrim.

generally fall out on Sundays, great numbers of young persons of both sexes assemble, tents are erected, music, dancing, drinking and every kind of excess takes place, and the revel not infrequently terminates in battery and bloodshed, from the contention of adverse factions'.[1] Sir William Wilde's description

[1]W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 3, 245 (of Listerling, Co. Kilkenny).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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796 of the Pattern of Glendalough in Co. Wicklow was written
578 later in the century. The fights would begin early on the eve of the patron's day, on 23rd June; 'the scene was remarkable, an immense crowd had bivouacked among the ruins (of the seven churches of Glendalough) and were cooking their evening meal, gipsy-wise, throughout the space of the sacred enclosure. Dancing, drinking, thimble-rigging, prick-o'-the-loop and other amusements continued even while the bare-
[788] headed venerable pilgrims and bare-kneed voteens were going their prescribed rounds. Towards evening the fun became fast and furious . . . the crowd thickened, sticks were brandished and the faction fight began. It was an unsafe locality unless a stipendiary magistrate and about 100 police could keep the combatants, the Byrnes, Tools and Farrells, etc., separate'.[1]

796 Some of the most notorious patterns were connected with holy wells named after a saint but not necessarily located near
786 an old church site. Reading the accounts of witnesses in the early nineteenth century it is hard to believe that religious devotion could be associated with such profanity, but granting that social conditions in the decades before the great famine must have contributed to scenes which the church itself described as 'drunkenness and debauchery', there was, as with the wakes for the dead, a vestige of innocent paganism in the rituals. Some patterns survived their banning by the church and have persisted, stripped of their grosser elements, to this day. The
[788] celebrated wells of St. Patrick at Struell in Co. Down, which are still visited by a few pilgrims on St. John's Eve, were the scene of the gathering of great crowds of people and of strange rites until a few years ago. Here as often happened the chief celebration was on the Eve of the Feast of St. John the Baptist and not on the patron saint's day, so that it was not strictly a pattern. Another Midsummer gathering which has often been described is that of St. Ronogue's Well near Cork, which has changed beyond recognition since Mrs. Hall, in 1824, described it as an assembly of 'the worthless and dissipated of the whole county. To the superstitious rites of the morning succeeded the saturnalia of the evening;—the having drunk of the water being considered as a licence for every sort of debauchery . . .

[1]Sir William Wilde, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1873), 449.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788
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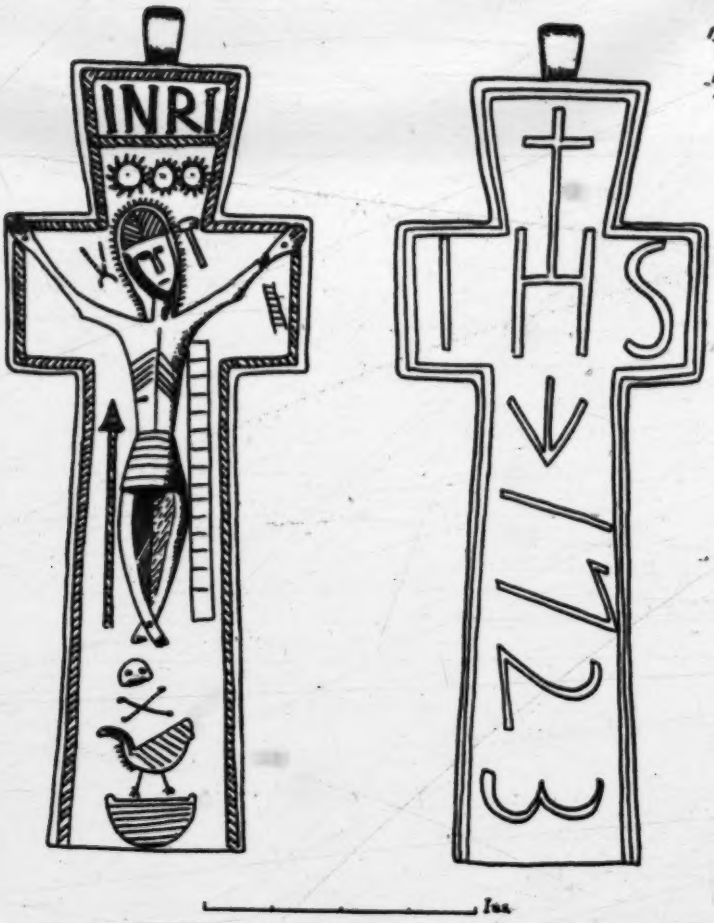

1 in.

FIG. 84. Portable crucifix ('penal cross'). Found at Hilltown, Co. Down.

dancing, shouting, fiddling, courting, drinking and fighting'.[1] 796
In some celebrated instances the holy wells are associated [786]
with lakes and islands, for example Gouganebarra at the source 788
of the River Lee, and the most famous of all Irish pilgrimages 778

[1]Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character Etc.*, 1, 281.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 bones, were formerly considered proper to the occasion. There
[372] were dances round the fires, performed with great dexterity and precision by youths armed with cudgels. The May-pole,
[177] however, and the May-bush observances seem to go with areas
[824] of strong English influence and do not seem to have been generally adopted by the Irish, perhaps because May-trees, which are not given this name in Ireland, are likely to be fairy thorns and therefore should not be damaged. The May Eve assemblies are thus described in eighteenth century Kilkenny: 'Bloody battles and much confusion and uproar is the mischief that follows from the barbarous and unheeded custom of collecting *May-balls* among the new-married folks . . . The hedges and fences, in the outlets of our city, are stripped of full-grown hawthorns, whose late blooming pride and fragrancy is now miserably dying away on dunghills before cabin doors, by way of *May-bushes*, no longer, alas! to afford a nuptial bed to the new-married linnet and his mate, but fastened in the ground for the vilest purpose—to hang filthy clouts upon'.[1] The gold and white balls which were hung on maypoles have been regarded as symbols of sun and moon—or it may be of butter and milk. Another May Day custom was the licence allowed
[786] young boys to run about stinging people with nettles, a privilege which in my youth in Shropshire was permitted only on 29th May, the victims being those who did not wear an oak-apple.

If the May Day fires are now more in evidence in the back streets
527 of Belfast than on the high hills, the Midsummer fires still burn
372 strongly in some country districts and their pagan flames have not been so easily quenched. I saw dozens of them in Co. Galway on Midsummer Eve in 1956, mostly at country crossroads. Old men in Donegal have told me that they remembered the time when they had counted from their hilltop fire nearly a hundred others. Young men would show their mettle by jumping to and fro through the flames, and girls by doing so hoped to marry early and have many children. We recall that
[789] leaping is in folk tradition a widely approved method of making the crops grow high, and the fires, it is conjectured, were meant to encourage the sun, now at its turning point, to shine on through the harvest. Midsummer was a time when evil influ-

[1] *Finn's Leinster Journal* (4th May, 1768).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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763 observe the correct procedure in laying out the corpse, generally on a table or a door. A plate containing tobacco or salt was placed on the corpse and sometimes a turf, which was believed to prevent decomposition, a transference from the observed preservative qualities of the bogs.

764 Although a great deal of information on the wakes which followed has been collected, it is difficult to obtain precise ●786 details about the wake games because of their apparent obscenity. Some of them survive as innocent games in districts where wakes have not been entirely suppressed, but it should be stressed that the full ritual of the traditional wake games was carried out in innocence: 'the peasantry who practised them had no idea of outraging propriety or religion in their performance, holding an unquestioning faith that such observances were right and proper at wakes, whilst under any other circumstances they would shrink with horror from such indelicate exhibitions'.[1] Moreover, they were generally 'reserved for the deaths of old people who had survived the ordinary span of life, or young children who could not be looked upon as an irreparable loss.'[2]

Apart from a great variety of informal amusements which were traditional at wake gatherings—riddles, jokes, singing, dancing, horse-play, tricks, feats of strength or agility, wrestling and so on—a list of 130 specific wake games has been collected by Seán Ó Súilleabháin, and it is 'of necessity incomplete.'[3] Some of them were dramatic performances of considerable complexity; and one recalls the Irishman's traditional skill in dramatization. In Kilkenny the principal game was the *frannsa*, a mock ceremony during which several young folk were 'married' by a mock priest, usually a weaver or a tailor, who was dressed in straw and wore a huge straw rope as a stole. 'After each couple was married, he put them to bed in a corner of the room, sprinkled them with water and gave them plain advice about their future conduct as man and wife.'[4] We need not be surprised that, after this initiation, in the words of

[1] J. G. A. Prim, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 334.
[2] J. G. A. Prim, loc. cit.
[3] S. Ó Súilleabháin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, 662.
[4] J. O'Donovan, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1858), 31.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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WEDDINGS AND WAKES

Maria Edgeworth, 'more matches were made at wakes than at weddings.' The most frank account of the nature of the games I have come across reads as follows: 'They were placed under the conduct of some peasant of the district who excelled in rustic wit and humour, who went under the title of "Borekeen", and whose orders were carried into force by subordinate officers, all arrayed in fantastic habiliments. The "game" usually first performed was termed "Bout", and was joined in by men and women, who all acted a very obscene part which cannot be described. The next scene generally was termed "Making the Ship', with its several parts of "laying the keel", forming the "stem and stern", and erecting "the mast", the latter of which was done by a female using a gesture and expression, proving beyond doubt that it was a relic of Pagan rites. The "Bull and the Cow" was another game strongly indicative of a Pagan origin, from circumstances too indelicate to be particularized. The game called "Hold the Light", in which a man is blindfolded and flogged, has been looked upon as a profane travestie of the passion of our Lord; and religion might also be considered as brought into contempt by another of the series, in which a person caricaturing a priest, and wearing a rosary, composed of small potatoes strung together, enters into conflict with the "Borekeen", and is put down and expelled from the room by direction of the latter . . . "Turning the Spit" and "Selling the Pig" are the names of two others of those games; in that called "Drawing the Ship out of the Mud" the men engaged actually presented themselves before the rest of the assembly, females as well as males, in a state of nudity, whilst in another game the female performers attired themselves in men's clothes and conducted themselves in a very strange manner.'[1] From other sources we learn that boys and girls, in some games, wore hides and appeared representing bulls and cows.

764 786

Parallels to these practices can be adduced from the so-called simple societies in many parts of the world, and as in Ireland Christian missionaries found it very difficult to suppress the rituals enacted between death and burial. The keening of the corpse likewise carries us through time to the earliest emotions of human societies faced with the mystery of death. The liberal

764 171

[1]J. G. A. Prim, loc. cit.

764 perhaps to indicate that they had become the spouses of Death itself. It is probable, therefore, that
775 the Irish practice of providing, as well as the habit, a normal type of new suit for the dead, is but
an extension of the burial of clothes with the corpse itself. The fact that it is pagan in its origin,
292 yet is still carried out by devout Catholics in a parish like Tuosist, who wear the clothes for the dead at Mass on three Sundays after the death has taken place, shows both the tenacity of pre-Christian ideas concerning the afterworld and the easy way in which Pagan ideas and practices were in this, as in many other cases, clothed over with Christian raiment. Indeed, it is possible that the Church itself, may have been instrumental in getting the Catholics under their care to wear the clothes to Mass for a certain number of Sundays with the intention of reminding the congregation of the person who had died and of getting them to pray for his soul.

764 Stories about the displeasure and even the sufferings of the dead whenever the custom of wear-
292 ing special clothes for them was not properly carried out are legion in the areas where the practice was known. I have already mentioned some of the traditional rules which had to be observed in the making and the wearing of the suit. Disregard of any or all of these was believed to give offence to the dead, and the reaction of the deceased to such indifference or carelessness on the part of the living relatives forms the basis of most of the stories. A few examples will illustrate their trend.

764 A man whom I knew well died in Tuosist about thirty years ago. A cousin of his was asked to
787 wear the clothes for the dead man on the three Sundays after his burial, and he agreed to do so.
292 During the week after the first Sunday (on which day the suit was first worn to Mass), a friend of mine, a shoemaker in the district, told me that he had a very vivid dream. He dreamt that he was making his way home along a lonely by-road late at night, and at a certain place, where the dead man had often stacked turf, he saw the dead man sitting with his back to the fence at the roadside. The moon shone down on his face and the shoemaker had no difficulty in recognising him in the dream. Plucking up courage, he saluted the dead man.

"Good night, Dan," said the shoemaker.

"Good night, Tim," was the reply.

"How are you?" asked the shoemaker, knowing that he was dead.

"I'm all right, except for one thing," said the dead man. "They gave me a fine suit and a fine shirt and a fine hat"—and he indicated each garment in turn—"but look at the boots they gave me!" And he pointed at the tattered boots on his feet.

"I'll attend to that, Dan," said the shoemaker, and he bade the other good night and made his way home, very much frightened.

Next morning he awoke with vivid recollections of the strange dream he had had during the night. It was Sunday morning, so he knew that the dead man's cousin would be wearing the clothes for the deceased at Mass for the second time that day. The church was four miles from his home, and having walked the mountainous road to Mass, he joined the congregation at the cross-roads afterwards. Without saying anything to anybody concerning his dream, he kept on the look-out for the dead man's cousin, and when he saw him, the shoemaker went over to join the group of men who were chatting with him. The shoemaker quietly concentrated his attention on the boots which the cousin was wearing, and it did not take long to establish that they

were not new, but had, in fact, been made by the shoemaker himself for the dead man, who had worn them only once before his death. The dead man's wife had apparently thought that it was not necessary to order a new pair of boots to be made. The shoemaker had, however, promised the dead man to have the matter set right, so he quietly sent a message to the dead man's wife next day about his dream. She immediately ordered a new pair of shoes to be procured, and these were worn at Mass, along with the rest of the outfit, until the traditional rule had been fully observed. 764 787 292

A friend of mine in the parish of Clanlawrence in County Cork told me the following story to illustrate how carefully the details of the practice must be observed. A woman in that parish had a son who died. She got a new suit made for him, to be worn at Mass on the three Sundays after his burial, and on the Saturday evening prior to the first Sunday she laid the suit (as Mrs. Healy had done when my uncle had died) on the back of a chair in the kitchen, sprinkled it with holy water, and called on the dead son to come for them. Having next placed them at the threshold of the kitchen, she finally left them for a short while in the yard, and sat by the fire for a moment, presumably to allow the dead son to come for the suit. Suddenly she heard something being thrown against the door and, on investigating, she found that it was the new waistcoat. She then remembered that she had deliberately refrained from putting her dead son's watch in the pocket, intending to keep it as a memento. Needless to say, she immediately put the watch in the waistcoat pocket and replaced the garment on the chair in the yard. There was no further disturbance.[1] 764 294 293

[1] For general references to the custom mentioned in 1, see: När Döden Gästar, LOUISE HAGBERG, Stockholm, 1937, pp. 331–379. Also, Über Krankheit, Tod und Jenseitsvorstellungen in Irland, HANS HARTMANN, Halle, 1942, pp. 11–115; and Der Totenkult in Irland, by the same author, Heidelberg, 1952, pp. 15–17, 183. [113]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

814 is likely to succeed in collecting much. Fortunately there is a
[609] resident (the Rev. P. A. O'Reilly), who is engaged in collecting the old Irish songs of the district, several of which he has already published. As to the legends, many of these have been recorded by C. O. and Mr. Knight, to whose works the reader is referred.

The following notes, mainly dealing with what may be termed minor folk-lore, were some of them obtained from fishermen and others of the natives, but mainly through the kindness of several residents, some of whom desired that their names should not be mentioned.

115 1. *Customs and Beliefs.*—For the majority of the notes on these I
814 am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, who, being a native of the district, and personally acquainted with nearly everyone in it, has an exceptionally large knowledge of the subject; for a large part of what remains I have also to thank Messrs. F. C. Wallace, D.I. R.I.C., Belmullet, and P. T. O'Reilly, Carn.

777 A very large number of things are considered lucky or the reverse. It is unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, on which day also no change of residence should be made, a Friday should rather be chosen, as that is the lucky day for moving. To meet a red-haired woman on starting out in the morning, to mention a priest while fishing, to take fish out of a house without sprinkling some salt on it, to sell milk without putting in a pinch of salt, to give fire out of the house on May-day, or to anyone in whose dwelling a sick person may be, all these are unlucky. People "born with teeth"
[845] are unlucky also; but to be "born with a caul" is a sign of great good fortune, though should the original owner ever see it his luck will depart; the possession of a caul is believed to protect against death by drowning. A mole on the face, if "above the breath," is considered to have the same protective influence.

● 787 Death within the year is believed to be the fate of the man who has the temerity to make an addition to the western side of his house, or to build out at the back; several instances of men who died within a short time after thus offending are sure to be told to the incredulous.

The banshee, the death-watch, the creaking of furniture, and the howling of a dog at night are all looked upon as death-warnings. Several persons were met with who asserted that they had heard the banshee before the death of relatives.

585 At weddings the bride and bridegroom must step over the threshold of the chapel door together, as whichever goes out first will be the first to die.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 178 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 to a round-ended house. But there are many missing links in the evolution of the Irish house, which archaeological excavation will hope to find some day. Interpretative studies of Dark-Age texts are also needed.[1]

342 Clues to old methods of house building may also be found in
524 forms of construction used for outbuildings or in children's
787 games. There is, for example, a Hallowe'en spell or divination game known as 'building the house' in which twelve couples of holly twigs are arranged in a circle, pushed into the ground and tied together at the apex. A live turf representing the fire is placed in the centre. The coupled twigs are named after the boys and girls present, and the pair which first catches fire indicates which boy and girl will first be coupled in marriage.[2] Compare with this a description of Irish houses in the early seventeenth century: 'the baser cottages are built of underwood, called wattles, and covered with thatch . . . of a round form and without chimneys, and in my imagination resemble so many hives of bees about a country farm.'[3]

342 Today nearly all Irish farm-houses are a simple rectangle in ground plan, anything from ten to twenty feet in width and of varying length according to the number of rooms they comprise, each room being the full width of the house. The normal developed house has three rooms, consisting of a central kitchen with a bedroom at the bottom end and another—the best room, called simply 'the room'—behind the chimney, which helps to warm it (Fig. 8). This, in the Gaeltacht, is the 'west room', reserved for family mementoes, for the old people and especially for the dead. Here the body is placed during wakes, and a wealth of superstition gathers around this room.[4] Arensberg may have been mistaken in translating the Gaelic *iarthar* as 'west', for the word also means 'back', but there are old beliefs about the orientation of the dwelling house, and it is possible that there was an association between death and the direction of the setting sun. The confusion between 'west' and 'back' is amusingly illustrated in the story of the Irish boy who,

[1]Angus Graham, 'Archaeological Gleanings from Dark Age Records', *P.S.A. Scot.* (1950–51), 64–91.

[2]Lady Wilde, *Ancient Legends of Ireland* (1888), 111.

[3]Luke Gernon, *A Discourse of Ireland, Anno 1620.*

[4]C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman* (1937), Ch. 1.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional 352
width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed— the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the [171] Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart 462
and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, 372
the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' [539] The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is [574] invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can [787] give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which ancestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1] [769]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

an English introduction since 'sowing baskets' are listed in the 241
medieval pipe-rolls of the Pale. In parts of the west, for example Mayo, a skin tray was used for sowing. But the usual Irish method is to sow from a linen sheet, kept specially for the purpose, which is tied round the sower. The seed is thrown with a one-handed cast, and it is not everyone's privilege to be allowed to undertake this important task. It calls for skill and concentrated care, for 'a missed bit' is a bad omen, foretelling death [787] ●
The seed should all be safely 'buried' by the beginning of May, and in Co. Armagh the first cuckoo's call was taken as a sign. [825]
To be found sowing corn after this was a mark of deep disgrace: the laggard was labelled 'a cuckoo farmer'.

With modern ploughs and improved drainage it is not often, save in the tiny fields of the west, that one comes across cereal crops sown in ridges, but the lazy-bed method is very generally employed for potatoes and other crops where the spade is used, though the great bulk of the potato crop is sown in drills. The potato ridge presumably derives its name, lazy-bed, from the fact that the sod under the ridge is not dug: the bed is built up on top of the grass with sods and soil dug from the trenches between the ridges. Not only does this method make full use of the humus and decaying grass but it prevents the sets from becoming waterlogged and rotting, for the whole bed is raised above the water-table. And the unbroken sod checks the downwash of plant nutrients. The trenches or furrows between the ridges provide open drains, and the lazy-beds are always carefully aligned with the slope of the land. Moreover, when the trenches are dug a second time for earthing the potatoes, they often go deep enough to penetrate the hard layer of iron pan which tends to form under heavily leached soils by the washing down of iron salts. This the old-fashioned plough could not do. Breaking the impermeable pan not only improves the drainage but provides minerals which are returned to the topsoil when the potatoes are earthed. The ridges in which potatoes are grown in their Andean homeland appear to be similar to the Irish lazy-beds, and tuber crops throughout the tropics are planted in ridges or mounds, but the ridge-technique is certainly older than the potato in Ireland. Clearly an efficient 241
shovel is a requirement in the construction of ridges of any 412

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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241
[412]

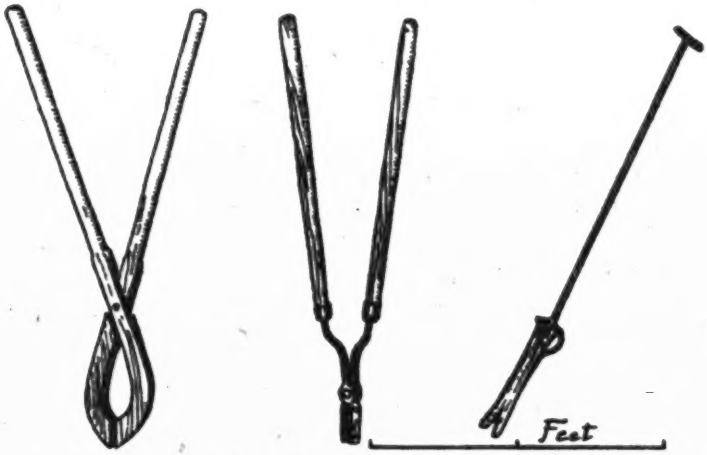

FIG. 50. Weeding 'clips', Antrim and Armagh, and iron dock-lifter, Antrim.

Midsummer festival was an easy way of showing the spirits of the corn what was expected of them. You might also hope to transfer ill-luck to someone else's crop by burying a dead animal, [787] a piece of meat, or even an egg on his land. It would be worth while listening for the call of the cuckoo on the first day of July, for to hear it was a sign of a good harvest. Prognostications were so many and so easily procured that they apparently provided a fatalistic society with a ready means of avoiding steady work. In some parts of the country, docks, thistles and [824] couch grass were apparently regarded as a good sign, because they kept the crop warm.[1]

[1] W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland*, 87.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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243 heads of corn at the wrong end, or they would be missed in thrashing with the flail, and for the same reason the ears of the straw band-knot should lie towards the top of the sheaf. The sheaves should be laid with their butts to the wind, for these need most drying. The bands should be tied with nice judgement, tight but not over-tight: one should not be able to put the toe of one's boot under the band when one stands on the butt of the sheaf.

[461] As in all farming operations conducted in traditional ways, music and magic to ease the labour were part of the scene. There were shearing songs to match the rhythm of the sickle, [825] and its efficiency was improved by keeping a fly or other insect imprisoned in the handle; perhaps its incessant activity was meant to speed up the work. Another strange belief was that [777] luck followed the reaper who carried a child on his back. The world of magic and fairy was close by at harvest time: it was believed that the top grain (pickle) of every stalk of corn was empty because it had been taken by the fairies and was their due. The sheaf had its share of lore, too, related possibly to its [954] semblance of human shape. A curse could be worked by sticking pins into the joints of the straw, and the sheaf might be properly waked and buried so that as it withered the object of the curse would decline. Stooks with their 'hudders' (Fig. 51) (hooding sheaves) also take on human forms, and I have known various terms for these large stooks applied as nicknames to broad-based country women. 'The last sheaf' also is known as the cailleach or hag.

Beliefs and customs connected with the last sheaf are legion and find their counterparts in many parts of the world. 'Winning the churn' was an incentive to the reaper, for good luck attended those who had their rigs sheared quickly if only because they avoided the ill-luck of being last. Stories are told of rigs being left unclaimed and uncut because their owners feared to incur 'the famine of the farm', of having the hag to feed until next harvest. The basis of this belief was that the last sheaf was sometimes hidden overnight in the corn of lazy farmers, who would watch at nights and reap by moonlight to avoid what was an omen of misfortune or death.

● [787] The last handful of standing corn, selected for the purpose,

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was twisted into a three-stranded plait. Standing back at a mark, the reapers threw their spinning hooks at it in turn until it was severed and 'stretched'. At this a triumphant shout was raised. The cailleach was sometimes 'waked' before it was lifted: the 'corpse' was hung round the neck of the triumphant slayer, who was guest at the subsequent 'churn' (the harvest feast and dance) and who was fated to be the reaper who would be first married. It was, perhaps, more usual for the cailleach to be put around the neck of the master or mistress of the house. From the threat of being hanged by it they would purchase their freedom by providing the churn supper, for which special food was prepared. There are many variant practices but it is clear that they all turn on the same themes, the spirit of the corn and the luck of a speedy harvest. In some districts the cailleach was known as the hare, and the cry which kept the toiling shearers to their task was; 'We'll put the hare out of it today!'

It was customary to hang the churn in the kitchen, either over the door, on the dresser, or about the chimney hearth, and to keep it until the following harvest, when it was given to the cows. Or it might be fed to the horses on the first day of ploughing. In some houses the last sheaf was preserved year after year, and I have seen specimens half a century old. One of these was dressed with coloured papers, hinting that there was formerly more ceremony connected with the last sheaf than has survived. These dressed cailleachs figure in the harvest festival decoration in some churches in Co. Armagh, where also miniature corn ricks surmounted by a harvest knot are displayed, the Church thus having won over and preserved the pagan symbols of harvest (See Tailpiece).

Harvest knots or bows are decorative twists of straw which were worn by the harvesters, and are still quite commonly carried by young men at harvest time in some districts (Plate 13, 1). Girls would wear them in their hair, boys in their coats, and in former times they were exchanged by the sexes as a sign of mutual attachment. They are made in a fine plait of two straws tied into loops or interlaced, those worn by the girls having the ears of the corn left on. The best examples are made from wheat, and some exceptionally fine specimens are made from

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIXED FESTIVALS

527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit
[264] gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1] 527 527 584

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning. 527 [784] [788] [769] [857] [195] [787]

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 48.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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ences affecting human beings and the animals and crops were usually potent. It is remembered that 'the oldest woman in the town' would go round the fire three times on her knees, reciting prayers. To walk three times sunwise round the fire was to ensure a year without sickness, and as the flames died down the cattle were driven through the embers and their backs were singed with a lighted hazel wand: the sticks were preserved and utilized for driving the cows. By tradition everyone carried home a burning stick from the fire, and whoever was first to take it into the house brought the good luck of the year with him. A glowing turf from the fire was carried three times sunwise round the dwelling house, and others were thrown into the growing crops. Yarrow was hung in the house to ward off illness. Fernseed was gathered for its magic powers and divinations made from the roots of bracken and lilies. We have already noticed the custom of retaining some of the ashes from the Midsummer fires to mix with the following season's seed corn.

The third fire-festival of the year is associated with St. Peter's Eve on 28th June, but I have not come across many traditions of St. Peter's bonfires except in Armagh and Wexford: it may thus be mainly restricted to areas where English influence was strong. More widespread and better known, because they have been caught up in many patterns and in such popular pilgrimages as that to Croagh Patrick, are the celebrations of Lammas, originally 1st August, now held on Lammas Sunday, the last in July, which is also known as Garland, Bilberry or Height Sunday. This marked the end of summer and the beginning of harvest: it was a first-fruits festival into which the alien potato has been fitted, and no potatoes were dug before this time. Offerings of flowers and fruits were made at holy wells, and in some places cattle were made to swim through streams and loughs into which lumps of fresh butter had been cast:[1] 'They think no beast will live the whole year through unless they be thus drenched'.[2] In hilly districts Height Sunday is observed by climbing to a recognized picnic place where bilberries are gathered and games and dancing were formerly enjoyed. In Co. Down a large prehistoric

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 1, 282.
[2]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.

at that time and that the ceremony presumably took place in the 585
priest's house.)

'Whichever of the new married couple first rises after the nuptial benediction, will, it is considered, live longest . . .; after this scene is over they again adjourn to the public house . . ., after which the company again mount their horses, the bride being then changed behind the bridegroom's man, and scamper away towards the bride's house, whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold the race for the bottle. The winning of the bottle is frequently contended for between the bridegroom's and the bride's parties; the first person that arrives at the bride's house is victorious. The victor then receives the bottle and again returns to the main body of the wedding, where he hands it to the bridegroom, who [273] first drinks of it and hands it to his bride, who also partakes, it then goes the round until nearly finished, when . . . the bridegroom flings it with the remaining contents away. On their arrival at the bride's house a cake of oatmeal or flour, which is called the bride's cake is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young people of both sexes for [787] the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow, in order that they may dream of their future partners in life. Another scene of noisy festivity and drunkenness then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties; there being frequently a kind of rivalry between them in supporting the dignity of the bridegroom and bride, particularly if they do not happen to be of one line of ancestors.'[1]

No doubt where land and livestock were involved such 581
marriages were not so uninhibited as it might appear. Physical 583
attraction was not a prime consideration. The normal course was for a peasant to marry a girl whose capabilities were known or could be fairly judged, preferably 'a far-out friend', who lived close enough for family visits and exchanges of labour to be made. We know from other accounts of marriage customs in the early nineteenth century that the order of events as described above was sometimes reversed: 'The marriage is agreed upon by bargain, and the theft or abduction follows as a concerted

[1] J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 64–66.

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County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united
631 politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond, though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon. Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*,
776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle
787 (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317, and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago, foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Péists* or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con-
121 sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen-
124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p.180]

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as their war-goddess,[21] so, before the baptism of King Cairthinn, (first Christian Prince of his House, about A.D. 430), the ancestors of the Dalcassians may have worshipped Aibhinn on her holy hill, and her equally lovely sister Aine, crowned with meadowsweet, on the tamer mound of Knockaney. Whether, if so, they found her already enthroned at Craglea on their conquest of the district, or whether the conqueror Lugad consecrated the mountains to his patroness, it is now impossible to guess. Aibhill, as banshee, held her own. We find her even usurping the place of the "Sybil" in a translation of the *Dies Iræ*,[22] in unwonted companionship with King David, and she was a commonplace of local threnodies during the eighteenth, and even the nineteenth, century. In the lake below Rathblamaic in Inchiquin she has down to recent years been seen, with the twenty-five other banshees of Clare that call her their queen, washing clothes before any impending disaster.[2]

175 776 [787]

The next appearance of a banshee in local history is of a very different spirit three centuries later. The *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* ("Triumphs of Torlough") was written probably about A.D. 1350 by Seean mac Craith, the hereditary historian.[23] It contains accounts of three spirit women,—one, the "Sovereignty of Erin," being of surpassing loveliness, and the two others, (if not the same,—"Dismal" and "Water Dismal"), of loathsome hideousness. The hags, however, probably survive, while the "Sovereignty" has perished. Bronach ("the sorrowful or dismal one") of Ceann Boirne was known as the "Hag of Black Head" from the modern name of the older Ceann (or Rinn) of Burren. She was in full repute in 1839, and I have heard of her vaguely about 1885 or 1887. In August, 1317, she

175 538 776
175 776 763

[21] Cf. *Revue Archéologique*, N.S., vol. xviii. (1868), p. 1; Sir Samuel Ferguson's paper, from the Irish point of view, in *Dublin University Magazine*, Oct. 1834, p. 463; W. M. Hennessy, "The War Goddess of the Ancient Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x., p. 425.

[22] Ms., Royal Irish Academy, 23.M.47.

[23] As yet only in manuscript,—one copy of A.D. 1509, and another probably from one of 1449. For its age see *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxxii., p. 139.

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III. *The Death Coach.*[31]

763 The "headless Coach" or "coach a bower" seems of far later date than the banshee. Ghostly chariots such as that of Cuchulain figure in very early tales, but neither their appearance nor their sound foretold death.[32] In Clare, at sight or sound of the coach, all gates should be thrown open, and then it will not stop at the house to call for a member of the family, but only foretell the death of some relative at a distance.[33]

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763 I collected five stories, three of well-defined character, and give them in order of time as the dates can be fixed. The first appearance, on the night before June 18th, 1806, was related to my three informants[34] most solemnly by their fathers and uncles. Two told it in a general and confused way, but varied from the story of the third, which I give, only by omissions. Ralph Westropp, of Attyflin and Lismehane,—the latter place is in Clare, but I never could learn where he died,—lay sick unto death. His sons in the late dusk waited on the steps for the arrival of the doctor. Suddenly they saw and heard a large coach drive into the paved court before the house. One of them stepped down to open the door, but the dark object rumbled past and drove down the long, straight avenue, which was fenced on both sides. Two of the watchers ran after it, hearing it ahead of them. The noise stopped, and they expected to find the coach at the gate. They ran full tilt against the bars, the gate being closed and locked. They called up the lodgekeeper, and he was found to have been asleep with the keys still beside him. The sick man died the next morning.

Lismehane, under its later name of Maryfort, afterwards became the residence of the O'Callaghan family, its present occupants. On the night of April 29th, 1821, two servants,—one of whom was "Matty Halloran" who died not long ago at an advanced

[31] Cf. "Irish Folklore from Cavan, Meath, Kerry, and Limerick," vol. xix., pp. 320-1; vol. x., p. 119.

[32] Is not the death coach, and not the Hellequin, the "hell waine" of Reginald Scot's list of spirits in *The discoverie of witchcraft*, Bk. vii., cap. xv.?

[33] Cf. Herefordshire belief about corpse candles.

[34] The late Capt. Ralph Westropp of Coolreagh (in 1879), and the late Mrs. Wilme and Mrs. Pitcairn, whose fathers were present.

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Malbay. She was white-skinned and had well-shaped white hands. The party tried to make friends with her, giving her bread, which she ate. Then a Quilty fisherman got frightened, said she was "something bad," and threw a pebble at her, on which she plunged into the sea and disappeared. Soon afterwards King Edward died. An old man at Spanish Point said the last mermaid was seen the year of the Great Famine (1846), and that such an appearance foretells a public disaster. 776 [787]

VIII. *Ghosts and Haunted Houses.*

Here, "where'er we tread is haunted," and libellous, ground, so that in the majority of cases the names and definite addresses must be withheld, although in every case I am acquainted with them. 775

Taking first the ancient buildings, I am unable to state the nature of the haunter of Lisananima (ghost fort) in Kilcorney, or of the other places of like name, although, as regards the former, Dr. George MacNamara and I did our best, about 1897, to find out, for the ghost was said to have been seen recently; so also at Toberatasha (spectre well). At Lisfuadnaheirka, near Kilkee, we were told in 1896 of a "horned ghost," but "Fuadnaheirka" was a local "terror by night" who slew people, as Eugene O'Curry says his bare legs knew when, (as a boy in 1816), he lived close to Dunaheirka (or Liscroneen), a large fort, which was the chief seat of this being, and was evidently a place to be run past on dark winter evenings.[6] It is not wonderful that stories should be so vague. A form "that shape has none" terrifies some nervous or drunken person, who afterwards speaks often of the ghost, but can give no details. The subject is usually regarded too seriously for verbal embroidery.

A fisherman, being detained on Scattery Island by a storm early last century, and hence unable to attend mass at Kilrush, went up into the "cathedral"[7] to pray. After a time he looked up and saw a crowd of monks and laity with priests at the altar in

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol I., pp. 370 *et seq.*

[7] This is the Church of St. Mary near the Round Tower.

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777 the hens from laying more; this is held at least near Tulla and Sixmilebridge, but seems dying out near the former place.

XIII. *Omens, Dreams, and Divination.*

●787 *Omens.*—It is an unlucky sign to meet "a stranger woman with red hair," or a hare, or a fox, when setting out in the morning. A poem by Andrew MacCurtin, as already noted,[4] condoles with Father MacDonnell, a Franciscan living in Corcomroe, for the loss of his horse, and suggests that the *garran* [562] fell a victim to the evil eye or to the look of a red-haired woman. A sign much feared in north-east Clare is the flying of a bat into one's face, which forebodes sickness. A robin, a stray cat, or [763] a cricket coming into a house is lucky, but some regard the last as a sign of death,—though this belief is rare and perhaps imported, for in Dublin "the ever-faithful cricket" is also a death omen. If the right ear tingles some one is praising you, and if the left someone is abusing you. If the right hand itches you will lose money, and if the left you will receive it, providing you rub or scratch it on wood. Any one of these omens from itching is good after sunset, and rubbing the right hand on wood saves the situation or the money in either case. To get dirt on [777] one is most lucky,—"the dirtier the better." To stumble upstairs, and to be looked at by a cat after it has washed its face, are signs of approaching marriage.

Dreams.—It is most unlucky to dream of church or clergy, and, above all, of the sacraments. To dream of a cat foretells an enemy; of a dog, a friend; of crows or filth, riches and plenty; of silver, disappointment; and of dirty or stormy water, trouble. Cheap dream books have corrupted local belief so much that it is now almost impossible to separate the older dream lore.

Divination.—I have not found many methods of foretelling the future, but the following were of such common knowledge that I need cite no single authorities. On All Hallows Eve, I remember, before 1870, a blindfolded person would touch one of several saucers in which were respectively earth, water, salt, a bean, etc., symbolising death, emigration, luck, marriage, etc., in

[4] Vol. xxi., p. 196.

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the ensuing year. In the same way a forecast was given by a ring, coin, bean, or red rag in the cake on the same day, and by a ring in the pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. On the former day also lead was melted and poured through a key handle into water for fortune-telling. The key of a bachelor's house or room and a piece of wedding-cake put under a girl's pillow produced a prophetic dream in which she might see her future husband or lover. A slug or snail put under a saucer on a slate or cabbage leaf, sprinkled with turf ashes or flour, traced the future lover's initials, as did a long apple or orange peel waved thrice round the head and then thrown down. "Cup-tossing" (*i.e.* cup-turning with tea leaves) was used, unsuccessfully, by a lady in 1879 to find out the future purchaser of her family's demesne. Wandering beggar-women used cup-tossing for the fortunes of both maids and mistresses, and some gained much repute. One of these crones showed a sister of mine a rearing horse in the tea leaves, and foretold that her client was about to have a very narrow escape from death on the hunting field that day, which came true. Biddy Erly, a famous white witch living between Bodyke and Feakle in the middle of last century, used to foretell the death or recovery of her patients by a shamrock leaf in some fluid in a bottle; if it rose they recovered, but if it sank they died, and her prophecies were received with such undoubting faith that it is likely that they worked sometimes their own fulfilments. I heard that by a Protestant servant a key was shut and tied up in a Bible, its wards on Ruth's reply when Naomi asked her to return from her, the book being then swung and the representative of Boaz surmised from the direction in which it pointed; but this may not have been true Clare folklore. Among the country folk crystal-gazing is unknown, and palmistry little, if at all, in use, but the more primitive methods have not been put down by increase of education, and the warning is still necessary of the quatrain cited in 1280, according to the *Cathreim Thoirhealbaigh*, by King Torlough mór O'Brien, as he set out to fight in this county,—"Attempt ye not the prediction of the lips; neither in curved (new) moon nor in presage of soothsayer put your trust."

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enchanted human beings.[4] It gets more definite above Galway Bay, where the Kinealeys are of reputed seal descent. Some such belief may underlie the name Cumarra (or sea-hound) in the MacNamara family. I found more difficulty in getting fisher beliefs in recent years than in getting folklore from the country people. Much of what I heard in 1906 was probably of tourist origin, and, like the *merrow* at Killard,[5] not to be trusted as genuine belief.

Otter.—Beyond vague belief in an enormous "durracow"[6] (the king of the otters), which I heard of as a child on the Shannon Bank about some unnamed lake in east Clare, I am not aware of any folklore about this creature in the county. There was said to be a "remarkable" otter at Glenomera.

Cat.—The cat was much regarded by the early Irish, and holds honourable place in their ancient code of laws. It even appears in the illuminations of the *Book of Kells*. Numerous places in Clare bear its name, but local belief tends to consider the "cat" in these names as a weird monster. The "Cata" and "Faracat" of legend[7] were probably "dragons." The cat has supernatural knowledge. If a cat looks fixedly at a person without apparent reason it forebodes sickness or death, but if it does so to an unmarried person, after making its toilet, it foretells marriage.

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[4] So in Aed Baclamp from the *Book of Lismore*, (*Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 72), St. Brendan changes 50 seals into horses, which carry into the sea their riders, who, on reaching it, are, like their steeds, changed into seals.

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[5] Vol. xxi., p. 342. Mrs. Dorothea Townshend of Oxford calls my attention to the probability that this story was made up by Dr. Keightley (v. App. to his *Fairy Mythology*). In my original Ms. I expressed great doubt as to this story, having found no equivalent to it near Dunbeg or Kilkee, but this was unfortunately omitted in publication. The Miltown mermaid was probably one of the white seals occasionally seen on the coast.

[6] *I.e. Dobharchu*, water-hound. The Irish called the wolf *fael-chu* (wild hound) and *cu allaid*, and the marten *cranu chu* (branch hound). The more common name for the wolf in Clare is *breagh*, as in Breaghva and Breffy, the name of several townlands. The other wolf name *Mac Tire* (son of the country), is attached to Knockaunvicteera hill near Lisdoonvarna (where it refers to the animal), and to Cahermactire, a fort near Inchiquin Hill; at the latter place it may refer to a person, as the name Mac Tire is found in various annals.

[7] Vol. xxi., pp. 477-9.

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173 son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with
773 Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the
823 other side of the "Rine."

XXI. *Miscellanea and Addenda.*

173 *Treasure legends and hunting.*—Many forts have been much
556 defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are few. Caherscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib of 1551),[14] is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*" or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the finest of all drinks").[15] Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially
● 787] of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost. Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results, in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver) near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka castle,[16] near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told
[172] to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

[14] In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrogh, Earl of Thomond.

[15] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvi., p. 368.

[16] See also vol. xxi., p. 344. [P. 264]

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777 Leochain, who was slain in 1024. The King of Cashel (over-king, therefore, of North Munster) was forbidden to pass a night at Latteragh in northern Tipperary at the beginning of harvest; to encamp for nine consecutive nights at the river Suir; to hold a border meeting at Gowran; and to listen to the groans of women (in a raid) in southern Tipperary. The King of Connacht was not to go in a speckled cloak,—the prose adds "on a piebald horse," —to the heath of Luchaid in Clare. On the other hand, the ruler of Cashel brought good luck by plundering cattle in Connacht while the cuckoo sings; burning north Leinster; passing over Sliabh Cua,—"on a Tuesday," says the prose,—to pacify south Munster; crossing Magh Ailbhe with a light grey host; and resting six weeks (of Lent) every year at Cashel. It was most unlucky for him to wait for a feast at Killarney Lake for a full week from a Monday. At the present day some families still have their own tabus, lucky and lucky deeds and days, dreams, and omens, which sometimes even run counter to beliefs generally received,—*e.g.* that [787] the Friday falling on the thirteenth of any month, or to dream of a wild cat or other wild animal, is lucky.

791 825 *Witch hare.*[35]—Anthony Bruodin (*Bruodinus* or *Prodinus*), a Franciscan of Quin Abbey, tells in *Corolla Oecodemiæ Minoritiæ* (Prague, 1664, p. 73) how his uncle (*patruus*), Florence of Moynaeo (Moynoe on Lough Derg) went out at the dawn of the first of May with his eldest son Bonaventura, (who died in Spain in 1643), and with their hounds to hunt hares. At last the servants saw one sucking a cow. The hounds chased it, biting it as it escaped, into a cottage, where an old woman was found torn behind.

776 *Glasgeivnagh cow.*[36]—Vague legends are told of her living at Treanahow, Shallee, and Ballygannon.

Ghosts or fairy men.—Mary (Mescal) Doyle, of Newmarket-on-Fergus, tells how she saw two ghostly men in black walking on a road near that village.

173 *Stolen bride.*—A legend of a stolen bride at Querin on the Shannon is told in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends etc. of Ireland* (1887), vol. i., p. 49.

[35] Addendum to vol. xxii. p. 449.
[36] Addendum to p. 89 *supra*.

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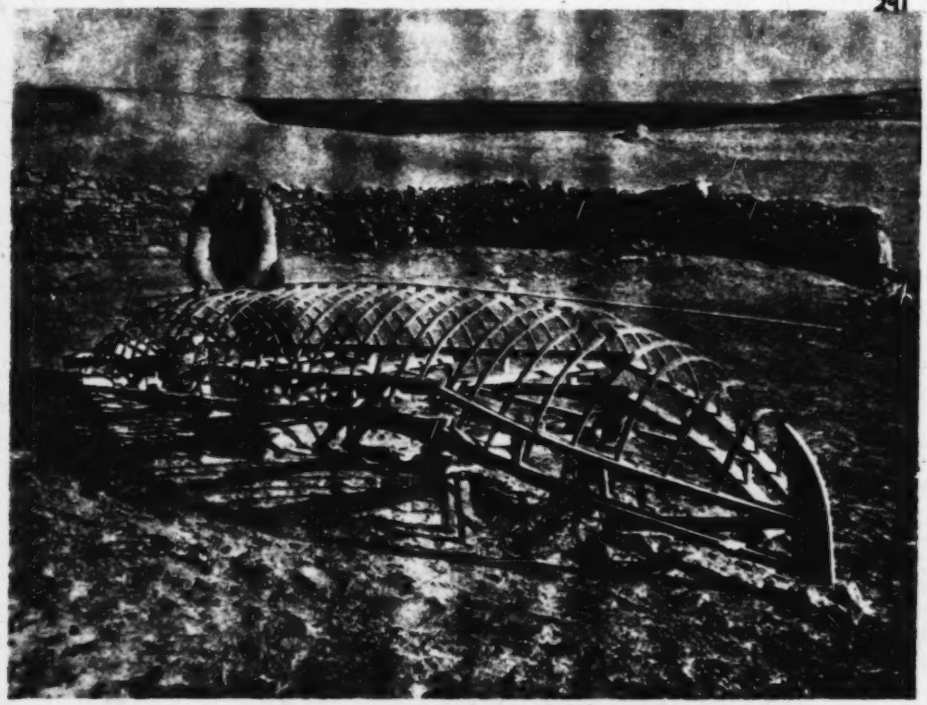

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [178] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, [798] rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of paganism. [788] Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk [755] during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [775] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

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• 787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping
776 fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered everly superstitious.

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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured 754
by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the [576]
calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly 754
arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds 756
after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, [789]
and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those [789]
in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being [827]
captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious 787
practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced [793]
techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly [798]
to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills [718]
of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of [789]
magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal [174]
doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and 787
do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share 759
a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound 184
the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk 755
medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of [759]
magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting 753
ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on 175
February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on 796
November 1st.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 796 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of [778]
wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to [233]
"give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of 796
the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time [784]
garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. [782]
Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the [777]
Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is [769]
tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for [784]
future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a [658]
small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of 123
the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night 796
when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of 787
cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed
by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whit- 796
sunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as 776
the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually [821]
the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend
to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does
anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a [613]
danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children
and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground
unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the
demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or [461]
decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter [777]
are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then
may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern
day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer [867]
celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather 313
wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of
Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for [372]
protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A 789
man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the [842]
failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the
folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the
hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven
between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry
leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish [114]
life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the
plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British
anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns
jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin 539
(O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 796

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVII

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS: THE COUNTRY TOWN.

Although the Celtic year began with All Hallows Day (November 1st), for our purpose we may regard it as starting on February 1st, or St. Bridget's Day. This was the first day of Spring, and of field work, for the Saint promised that every second day thereafter would be hard and dry. The circle of the year ran its course through the seasons, punctuated by certain fixed festivals and by the uncertain advent of births, marriages, illness and death. It is with the fixed festivals that we are concerned in this chapter. The four seasons have their opening days on the first of February, May, August and November, and the celebration of these days and the preceding Eves is a pagan survival breaking through the Christian calendar. The festivals of February and of November have been taken under the special protection of the Church through their association with St. Bridget and All Saints, but many traces of the "elder faiths" of nature worship live on, sanctified by tradition if not always by the Church.

221 796 805 [821] [996]

On St. Bridget's Eve (January 31st) it is customary for country children to pull rushes—they must not be cut with a knife—and take them home to be made into crosses by the family gathered round the fire. A fixed ritual, varying from one district to another, determines the procedure, and it traditionally included the St. Bridget's supper of pancakes or sowens taken from a plate laid on top of a rush cross. The

221 796 788 285

[p.153]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

796 crosses, of various patterns, are hung up over doors and The beds
788 and in the byre to bring good luck. Some of them are very
285 elaborate, but the oldest style, to judge from its Celtic form,
is the three-legged cross (Fig. 106) which is specially associated
[797] with cattle and is not, like the other shapes, taken to church to be blessed, a ceremony which is kept up even in parts of Belfast. In the Glens of Antrim a small bed is fashioned out of rushes and placed by the fire on St. Bridget's Eve: the door is left unlatched so that the Saint may come in and rest.

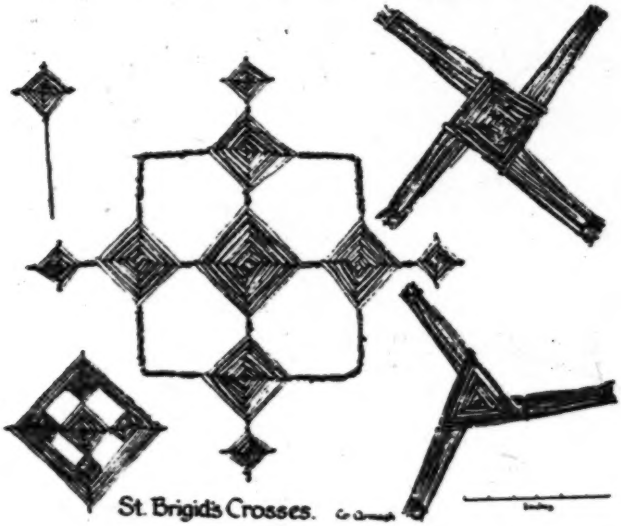


Fig. 106.

In Co. Kerry young lads called "Biddy Boys" wear hats of straw on the first of February, and in other parts of the west, I am told, "Bridget Belts" of plaited straw are worn.

796 The next important day in the calendar comes about the
221 middle of the three months of Spring, that is at the time now kept as a national holiday in North and South alike—St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. This is regarded as the proper time to commence sowing, and the countryman counts on

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS. I.

With the many material survivals from the past which we have mentioned in earlier chapters there lives on an imposing body of customs and superstitious beliefs of which we can attempt to give no more than a summary description. They concern not only the visible world with its common elements and events—water, fire, stones, salt, iron, trees, cattle, crops, harvest, food and drink, birth, marriage and death—and the relics of former ages—raths or "forths," great stone monuments, stone axes, flint arrowheads, spinning whorls and "crocks of gold"—but also the unseen or rarely glimpsed world of giants, fairies and other beings. All the major processes of the farmer's year had their appropriate magic rites which clung to them from the beginning. Many of these superstitions are so deep-rooted that centuries of opposition from the Christian Church have failed to suppress them, and while it has driven some practices into secrecy it has been forced to take others under its protection. 771

This applies, for instance, to the cult of holy wells, which is, like the worship of stones and the veneration of thorn trees, probably megalithic in origin and seems to carry us back to the sunnier lands of the Mediterranean where the megalithic religion took its rise. It has been calculated that there are some 3,000 holy wells in Ireland: many of them are still visited, generally at the festival seasons which we described in the last chapter, and it is customary for the devotees to tie 312 788 755 778

[p. 163]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

312 strings of beads, rags or bits of clothing in the holy tree which
788 often overhangs the well, so that it may bear their ailments.
755 I happened to come across a well near Cork just after mid-
778 summer this year. Alongside were the smouldering remains of a great bonfire which had been lit on St. John's Eve. The visitors to the well, having drunk the water, walked three times sunwise around the corbelled stone well-cover, and taking up pebbles kept ready to hand in crevices, they made the sign of the cross on certain stones which were marked with deep grooves which generations of patrons had cut by the same process. Some wells have old "cup-marks" instead of crosses, and it seems probable that these pagan symbols were made long ago in the same way as the crosses which have replaced them. Their round completed, the visitors
[825] looked into the well, for if they were to recover from their ailments they would see the trout which is reputed to live there and to show itself only to the cured.

The virtues of these wells are many: they are believed to be efficacious in such varied complaints as eye-disease, lameness, toothache and in some cases barrenness The first Sunday of each quarter of the Celtic year is generally the visiting time, but perhaps on account of the weather the summer festivals, and especially midsummer, are most popular. Pins and other bits of metal are sometimes deposited in wells. Offerings are also made to certain trees in the form of pins stuck in the bark, each pin representing a wish. Special gatherings known as patterns or pardons were held at such sites on the anniversary of the patron saint of the district. Devotions were followed by dancing and games which often degenerated into fights. It is possible to see relics of paganism in the sanctity of such sites, and it is worth recalling that some of the more celebrated centres of pilgrimage in western Europe, like Santiago da Compostella, seem to have megalithic connexions.

788 The mention of cup-marks brings us to the superstitions
823 concerning the great stone monuments with which they are
778 often associated. A recent article in the *Ulster Journal of*

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Archæology (July, 1940) by I. R. Crozier and L. C. Rea, 788
entitled "Bullauns and other Basin-stones," summarizes the 823
various beliefs connected with cup-holes and the larger 778
"bullauns" or stone basins, which the authors suggest were made in the same way by gradual ceremonial attrition. The water which accumulates in these artificial hollows is considered to possess special virtues, for instance as a cure for warts, and offerings of pins and coins are often made in them. It is significant that some of the basins seem to have served as fonts in the early churches. (Fig. III.) Small boulders 754
788
823
778

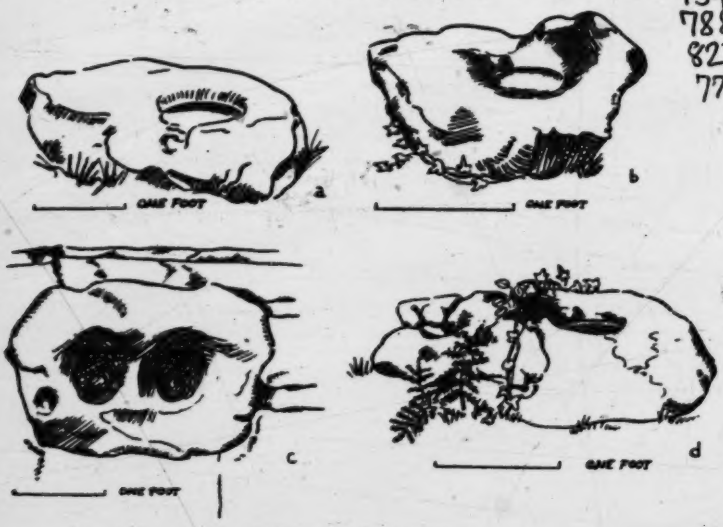


Fig. III. Bullauns.

(*a*) Portmore Church, Co. Antrim.
(*b* & *d*) Aghalee, Co. Antrim (basins on both sides of the same stone).
(*c*) "St. Columba's Font," Londonderry. (Two bullauns and a cup-mark.

lying in certain basin-stones are occasionally employed as cursing stones, the ritual consisting of turning the stones against the sun in their holes—there may be as many as ten in one boulder—at the same time uttering a curse against the offending person,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance
[778] some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[797] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be [788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch, 754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the 821 barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these 825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27):—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Conzaile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It [551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

776 Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is subject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by 854 the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 178 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

234 Bad luck could not always be avoided, but at least it was desirable to make the toil less wearisome, and to this end a
407 number of ingenious fittings were applied to the churn staff. Most of the examples I have seen, in the north-east, depend on the recoil of a strong spring to lift the staff, and they may well have been evolved from a spring pole, such as is used for the pole lathe, attached to the roof timbers.[1] Other devices enabled the staff to be moved in both directions by an arrangement of levers hinged to a couple-baulk. These engines, which have almost entirely gone out of use, were known as glaiks (Fig. 31).

[415]

FIG. 31. Glaiks for churning, Co. Down, with milk 'keeler' and piggin, Co. Donegal.

353 Here we may mention other things which were hung from the roof timbers: in the more prosperous homes sides of bacon
788 and portions of the autumn-killed ox, the mart; in poorer houses the salted ling or other 'kitchen'. And there was a strange custom of keeping in the roof, to bring luck to the livestock, part of a carcase, such as an animal's leg. This undoubtedly had its origin in the days when living-room and byre were under

[1]For another device, fitted to the churn, see my *Mourne Country*, Fig. 84.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

one roof. A relic of this practice may perhaps be seen in the 353
sheep's bones that one occasionally finds tucked away in the 788
keeping-holes of old-fashioned houses. Above the door the
Bridget's Cross gives protection from fire and other dangers.

Besides the churn the old-time farm will have a wide range of 415
other wooden dairying utensils, some stave-built, others carved
or turned from the solid. They will include milking-piggins 234
(Fig. 31), cream-skimmers, ladles, butter-scoops, and -prints,
butter tubs and buttermilk butts. A shallow stave-built 'keeler'
or a large turned bowl is kept for setting milk (Fig. 31). The
solid and often shapely carved cups and methers (literally mead
bowls) are already archaeological specimens (Fig. 65), and
many of the other wooden containers are going the same way,
including the little stave noggins described in an earlier chapter.

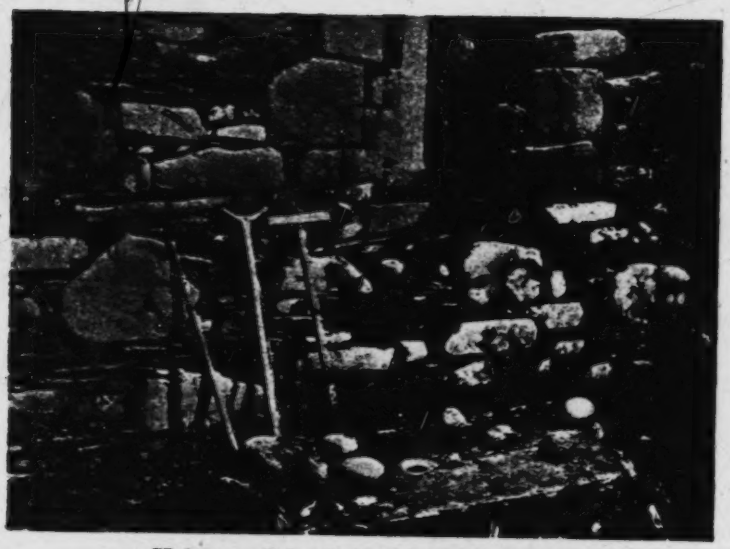
13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

to keep an eye on his wealth. The muck-heap is the source of good crops and good luck, a potent symbol of well-being: 'where there is muck there is luck'. It was the custom, recorded for instance in the Glens of Antrim, to stick a sprig of rowan tree upright in the midden on May Eve to protect the farm from mischievous fairies. The muck symbolizes the fertility of the farm. 237 351 [177] [188]

FIG. 32. Keeping-hole for pots, Co. Down.

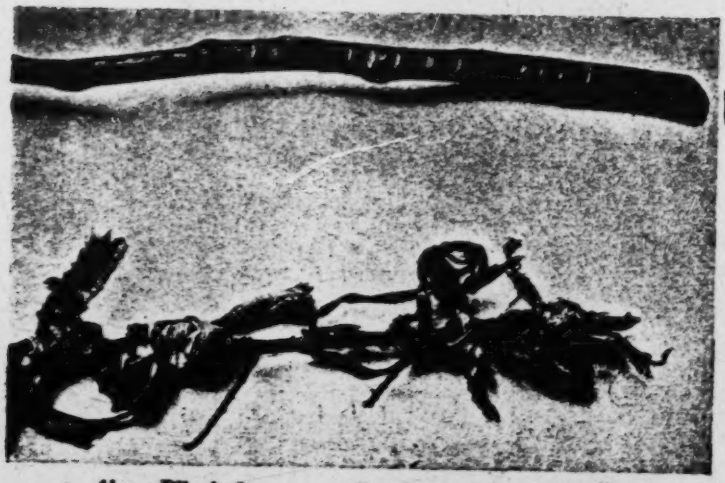
In many parts of the country, especially in the northern counties and in Co. Wexford, the entrance to the farmyard is dignified by a pair of massive stone gate piers, generally built-up from field-stones in the form of a conical topped cylinder and kept whitewashed. There are many modern variants in concrete, and the old style piers are steadily disappearing and are often hastened to their end by carelessly driven tractors or lorries. They seem far too massive for the gates they carry, resembling twin bastions defending the entrance to a fortified enclosure (Figs. 5, 33). In some areas, probably under the influence of improving landlords or land agents, field entrances are also dignified by built-up stone piers, and it is possible to explain the fashion as part of the agrarian revolution which resulted in enclosure. In the virtual absence of well-grown oak trees they provided an Irish alternative to the oak gate-post of the English farm, sturdy enough to carry the iron gate which for the same reason took the place of the five-barred oaken gate. 351 417

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6



778

1. Holestone "altar", Inishkeel, Co. Donegal.



788
778
[211]

2. *Above*, Pilgrim's prayer-tally, Gouganebarra, Co. Cork.
Below, Rags on bramble at a wart-well.

[facing p.208]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

796 of the Pattern of Glendalough in Co. Wicklow was written
578 later in the century. The fights would begin early on the eve of the patron's day, on 23rd June; 'the scene was remarkable, an immense crowd had bivouacked among the ruins (of the seven churches of Glendalough) and were cooking their evening meal, gipsy-wise, throughout the space of the sacred enclosure. Dancing, drinking, thimble-rigging, prick-o'-the-loop and other amusements continued even while the bare-
[788] headed venerable pilgrims and bare-kneed voteens were going their prescribed rounds. Towards evening the fun became fast and furious . . . the crowd thickened, sticks were brandished and the faction fight began. It was an unsafe locality unless a stipendiary magistrate and about 100 police could keep the combatants, the Byrnes, Tools and Farrells, etc., separate'.[1]

796 Some of the most notorious patterns were connected with
786 holy wells named after a saint but not necessarily located near an old church site. Reading the accounts of witnesses in the early nineteenth century it is hard to believe that religious devotion could be associated with such profanity, but granting that social conditions in the decades before the great famine must have contributed to scenes which the church itself described as 'drunkenness and debauchery', there was, as with the wakes for the dead, a vestige of innocent paganism in the rituals. Some patterns survived their banning by the church and have persisted, stripped of their grosser elements, to this day. The
[788] celebrated wells of St. Patrick at Struell in Co. Down, which are still visited by a few pilgrims on St. John's Eve, were the scene of the gathering of great crowds of people and of strange rites until a few years ago. Here as often happened the chief celebration was on the Eve of the Feast of St. John the Baptist and not on the patron saint's day, so that it was not strictly a pattern. Another Midsummer gathering which has often been described is that of St. Ronogue's Well near Cork, which has changed beyond recognition since Mrs. Hall, in 1824, described it as an assembly of 'the worthless and dissipated of the whole county. To the superstitious rites of the morning succeeded the saturnalia of the evening;—the having drunk of the water being considered as a licence for every sort of debauchery . . .

[1]Sir William Wilde, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1873), 449.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788
532

FIG. 84. Portable crucifix ('penal cross'). Found at Hilltown, Co. Down.

dancing, shouting, fiddling, courting, drinking and fighting'.[1] 796
In some celebrated instances the holy wells are associated [786]
with lakes and islands, for example Gouganebarra at the source 788
of the River Lee, and the most famous of all Irish pilgrimages 778

[1]Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character Etc.*, 1, 281.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

●788 778 is that of St. Patrick's Purgatory, on a small island in Lough Derg in Donegal. Still a powerful attraction, it has been maintained since the early middle ages and has been described, with piety or derision, by innumerable writers since one of the earliest accounts was written by Giraldus Cambrensis, about 1185. The pilgrimage became very popular in the early nineteenth century, when the numbers of visitors are said to have averaged 10,000 annually. Mr. A. T. Lucas has shown that this pilgrimage resulted in the distribution through the country of certain portable wooden crucifixes popularly known as penal crosses.[1] Carved from the solid in a characteristic style, they bear dates between 1700 and 1830 (Fig. 84). It seems that they were sold to pilgrims at Lough Derg and taken home as souvenirs after being used in the devotional ritual. They were a local development, no doubt initiated by some peasant woodcarver, of simple crosses, consisting merely of two sticks tied together, such as are still made at some patterns and occasionally at the festivals of St. Briget and All-Hallows. In this way, as in sanctifying the gatherings themselves, Christianity has taken over the symbols and strength of the elder faiths.

The pilgrimage of Croagh Patrick, in Co. Mayo, is the most celebrated of those held at the end of July, involving the ascent of high mountains and marking, by tradition, the close of summer and the beginning of harvest, as discussed in the following chapter. Here we may quote once more the *Parliamentary Gazetteer* for 1845: 'No place in Ireland is the scene of more superstitious observances, or a more popular resort of pilgrims and devotees, or the site of more numerous small memorials of superstition, or the subject of more generally credited legends of hagiology. Vast crowds of miserable human beings . . . swarm all over its summit and sides and skirts; one grand current legend is almost everywhere believed in the [773] teeth of all credulity, that St. Patrick gathered hither, and swept [776] hence all venomous creatures in Ireland.'

[1] A. T. Lucas, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1954), 145–74.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1] 527 527 584

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning. 527 [784] [788] [769] [857] [195] [787]

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 48.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

824 known instances when a branch accidentally broken from a fairy thorn was carefully tied back in position.

The policy of the Church was to attach new myths to old 797 rites, but only occasionally has the thorn tree been nominally 312 won over to Christianity by dedication to local saints or by its 778 association with sacred sites, with wells or Lammas celebrations, as for example the Criocan Thorn in the heart of Slieve Bloom.[1] On the other hand well-worship has had less stubborn roots, and 'holy water' has been more readily absorbed into Christian ritual. Nearly all the holy wells have close associations with the saints. Over 3,000 examples have been listed, most of them now half forgotten, others visited in secret and a declining number openly resorted to for cures. It is not difficult to understand the universal attraction of a spring of pure water. In the eyes of countryfolk a sense of mystery attaches to the upwelling of a spring well: it is considered lucky to have access to such a source of domestic water—a true 'well', not a hole bored in the ground—and one is invariably told that the local well yields the purest water for miles around, or even 'in all Ireland'. The attributes of purification, healing and fertility are natural concomitants of the magic welling of spring water, but besides possessing supernatural powers of this kind the holy wells are regarded as having had miraculous origins. The most famous sites where patterns are held have already been mentioned: the local holy well is rather an ever-present source of healing resorted to in need. One cannot but think of an ancient cult of waters springing from deep sources in primitive religion which was reinforced and adapted by successive intrusive cultures from the megalithic to the Christian (Pl. 16).

The ritual of 'paying rounds' at a well frequently involves 312 associated stones and trees. A sunwise circuit of the well is 778 made and the pilgrim, after taking a drink from the well, ● 788 hangs a rag or a rosary on an adjacent bush. The ritual commonly includes also tracing with a pebble on a stone of the well-covering the mark of a cross which has been incised by countless other pebbles. This practice has a bearing on the mysterious cup-marked stones and basin-stones (bullauns) which are associated with numerous ritual sites, including wells, for I

[1] V. Cornish, *Historic Thorn Trees in the British Isles*, 53.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

believe that many examples were ground out in much the same way before the sign of the cross replaced that of the circle. Cup-marked stones are commonly found in megalithic graves, on standing stones and Bronze Age cists, both in the British Isles and further afield. Some of the larger bullauns were certainly mortars, and very similar 'knocking stones' were used until recent times for preparing barley meal by pounding the grain with a beetle or maul (Fig. 90). To judge from the frequency with which one finds a knocking stone in the ruins of an old clachan it was one of the communal possessions of such a settlement. Old specimens, more especially when the basins are sunk in an outcrop of rock, are frequently found to hold water, and they are then regarded as 'wells', the water being held efficacious as a cure for warts. That such rock-basins have magic powers is illustrated by the following reference to a site in Scotland. On the Loch Avon side of Cairngorm is a shelving rock bearing hand-made basins about a foot wide and correspondingly deep: 'sitting on them is said to be efficacious in cases of barrenness.'[1]

FIG. 90. Knocking stone and bullaun. Both Co. Antrim.

It is an interesting illustration of the pagan associations of cup-marks, and of the success of the symbol of the cross, that their use survived in folk practice only as cursing stones. Smooth pebbles resting in certain stone basins are turned three times against the sun. There are many examples in the west, some

[1]A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 265.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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776 Croaghan, and Celts such as Lachtna (A.D. 820-840), and Brian
538 Boru (A.D. 980-1014). In one notable instance, King Conor (A.D. 1242-69) is the reputed builder of the great stone fort of Dun Conor in Aran, which in the eleventh-century legend is evidently connected with Conchiurn or Conchraed the Firbolg,—a relation accepted in 1685 by Roderic O'Flaherty, although he called its hero "Conquevar" (*i.e.* Chonchobhar or Conor). Any modern allusion to the Danann is therefore "suspect." Many visits to the recesses of the hills in Burren from 1878 onwards,—and I may add that
776 the same is true of the rest of Clare,—only gave me, in 1905, one
788 direct reference to the Danann.[46] At the natural moat crowned
823 by the small stone ring wall of Croaghateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna, we were told to cross ourselves as a protection against the Danann. The place was, nevertheless, undoubtedly regarded by the older people living near it as a most dangerous fairy fort, and we were told how certain badger hunters,—(who brought drink with them), —after a long festival on its summit got benighted there; they eventually returned home sobered by fright, as they suddenly "saw the whole fleet" of "them" coming up the mound, and escaped only just in time.

776 The "whirlwinds" along dusty roads and sudden gusts were
788 not long ago everywhere supposed to be caused by the progress of
821 fairy beings. The older folk believed, and trembled,—crossing themselves, or saying a word of prayer,—while the younger folk, more than half in jest, raised their hats, as is still sometimes done to the unlucky "single magpie" and the weasel.

776 I know of two cases of reputed changelings. My second sister, whose delicacy, when an infant, excited remark, was, about 1842, taken out by a servant to be exposed on a shovel on the doorstep at Carnelly. The angry and hasty intervention of another servant saved the child, but the would-be "exposer" was convinced of the propriety of her attempt "to get back the real child" from the fairies. A very old woman, Kate (Geerin) Molony, a henwife at Maryfort, near Tulla, whom I faintly remember in 1869, was many years before anxious about her little daughter's failing health, and went to a "wise woman," who assured her that the child was "changed." She spoke of this on her return, and unfortunately

[46] Apart from Lon, at Slievnaglasha, and the "hags."

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented. 354 593 178

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street. 342 353 [788] • [574]

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists). 571 602 609 [572] 835 602 582 602 609

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias. 428 611

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag. [113] [601]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

829 779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] [123] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 793 776 165 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 562 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of [829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk [788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obligations can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some 771 828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Berg. It was customary [178] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, [798] rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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462 obligations. It is a function of the relationship of husband and wife within the family.

But it is more, too. The attitudes of the countryside toward men's work and women's work show that their respective skills are regarded also as integral parts of the personalities of all men and women of the countryman's own kind. Here we can see how strongly social dispositions influence both mind and vocabulary. 'Natural' is a word very frequently on the countryman's lips. Thus, it is 'natural' for a woman to be a better milker, her smaller hands are proof. And it is laughably 'unnatural' that a man should bother about the sale of eggs. This division is embedded in tradition, too. Luogh still tells a humorous old tale of the spades, men's tools, that used to work of themselves in the olden days, till a woman forgot to say "God bless the work" to them. This division is bolstered in magic, too, for the 'coulter of a plough', that masculine implement, can bring back the butter the fairies have taken. [789]

The division of labour between the sexes is not the only important division within the countryman's pattern of farm work. Work is divided just as much upon the basis of age. Within the masculine sphere, male family members divide the practice of masculine techniques. Within the feminine sphere, there are similar divisions.

462 593 Let us look at the men at their work. The father and husband is normally owner and director of

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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462 tional social life. The boy's first duties, as soon as
593 he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands
857 to neighbours and near-by friends. Until he is seven and passes through first communion, his place is in the house with the women, and he shares the same bed with his sisters. After that year, he leaves his mother's apron strings, and is slowly drawn into men's ways; he is thrown more and more with his elder brothers and sleeps with them henceforward. In remote regions he takes off girl's clothing for the first time; for girl's clothing has protected him from the fairies, they say. Both socially and economically he is becoming a male, but his male status is still very little. By the time he is ten or eleven, he is brought home from school when needed to take part in the important agricultural work of the year. But not until he passes confirmation and leaves school, usually at the same time, does he take on full men's work and assume men's clothing. Even then, as he reaches maturity, and takes on more and more the heavy tasks of the farm, he never escapes his father's direction. Only when his father makes over the farm to him, at death or at his own marriage, can he assume command, and with it full adult status.

[291] [789]

Economic apprenticeship is thus a process of conditioning within the family. But there is no separation of economic and non-economic spheres. The father's direction of the enterprise coincides with his dominant, controlling role as parent and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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a symbolic order overlying the values of social life 776
and clothing them in emotional terms in much the 538
same way as do unofficial dogmas and unofficial, non-logical cosmologies among all peoples, not excepting those of our own urban civilization of today. In that, they respond to recognizable sociological and psychological necessities. In its own way, Yankee New England is as fertile of such non-logical beliefs as is rural Ireland. Rural Ireland is different only in that she has preserved an older and more ancient terminology in which to build her particular symbolism. She has her own genius in the matter which expresses the age-long continuities of her culture.

I think you will perhaps understand me better if I go on to sketch out the symbolism which the 'pisherogues' contain.

First, one must notice that the Irish countryman 781
is a very devout man. His life is ordered in his 789
adherence to his religion. Much of his habit of 776
mind and his view of the world responds to his Faith. He is a devout and practising Catholic. But he is also devout in another direction too, very often. Just as there is room in his mind and heart for patriotic fervour along with religious zeal, so is there room for fairy belief. Sometimes, of course, these devotions may conflict; but ordinarily they need not. They can intermesh and support one another.

789
Thus in his daily life, one finds the countryman 776

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

789 carrying out many acts which are related both to
776 his Church and his fairy belief. His allegiance to the first is, of course, definitely greater, but he has room for both. One finds him, for instance, 'blessing' himself on setting out for the day's work, or on beginning a trip or a new undertaking such as the potato-planting, with two purposes in mind. If you ask him, you learn, first, that he dedicates his day or his enterprise to God. He throws himself upon divine protection. Secondly, he seeks that protection to a definite end. He hopes to ward off thus the forces of evil and ill-luck. He hopes to assure himself the enterprise will prosper. He guards himself against molestation from 'the good people'.

That does not mean he is motivated by fear even when 'the good people' are concerned. His devotion springs from deeper and wider emotional sources than mere fear. Rather he makes his peace with the fairies; he pays them their due. His religion is *the* Faith to him, and his acts are primarily, first and foremost, acts of religious devotion. But the popular mind is not distressed very much with logical inconsistencies, and somewhere in the act, very secondarily, of course, may lurk the other lesser faith he holds.

776 Thus, in one aspect, the 'pisherogues' occupy, like nearly all folklore, the border-line between the natural, profane, mundane world and that of the supernatural, the sacred, and the religious. It is

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Lady Gregory: "They have cows, and sheep, and 776
chickens out in the raths just the way we have them with us. For it is they that take them when the bad luck is on us and then whatever we do won't stop them." The 'other people', as they are also called, are not very different in this regard from ordinary mortals; they surround themselves with much the same materials of life.

So, then, when ill-luck descends upon him, the 234
countryman knows something at least of its nature, 776
enough to allow him to cope with it. Take the 789
example of butter. Butter is an important staple of farm diet; it is of great interest to all the family group. Yet the making of butter, especially with a hand-churn, is a notoriously tricky process. Should it fail to come in the churning, the matter is one of grave concern. One woman of North Clare put the matter very clearly when she said: "And queer things do happen to butter, and it's a fact it often wouldn't come and you don't know why. You'd be trying every way you could and still you'd be without it but for what your friends would give you."

But in that event, the countryman is not left helpless. His belief provides him with a sure knowledge of what the trouble is, and of what may be done about it. The fairies have 'taken' the butter and must be induced to bring it back. Many of the tales he has heard year after year attest to this taking. For instance, here is the synopsis of a story

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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234 776 789 told by a Clare farmer of friends of his, whose house he named:

"Two men return from a fair to the house of one 234 of them to have breakfast. There the woman was 776 churning, but no butter would come. The first of 789 the men suggested maybe they [the men] were 539 holding it up, and they left the house, but with no result, for when they returned there was still no butter. Upon finding out that an old woman, a stranger, had borrowed a bit of milk the day before, the first man closed the doors, took a ploughshare and held it in the turf fire. Soon there came a knock at the door, and after the third knock the woman of the house went to it. Then an old woman's hand passed a jug of milk through the crack of the door and a voice said: 'put this back in the churn'. She did so, and immediately all the milk turned to good butter."

But the farmer knows, too, that the fairies do not 776 always work alone. There is often a human agency 754 involved along with theirs. Here one enters the really dangerous 'pisherogues', the practices of wicked magic. A human being may perform a rite or omit a precaution in such a way as to bring about a visitation of ill-luck and disaster. He may transfer disease and sickness from his own farm to the next, he may steal the butter of another's churn, he may destroy, steal, maim and kill by inducing the supernatural powers to commit the havoc.

776 789 But sometimes the human being who brings

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

about such a visitation upon another does so un- 776
intentionally, innocent of evil intent. A person can 789
be either lucky or unlucky; he may tap a fairy [777]
power without meaning to. Thus one humorous story, a favourite yarn of the fairy-lore, found widely over Ireland, relates the misadventures of one rash fellow:

"A man that was usually drunk was going by a 789
fort one night and he heard 'them' talking in it, and 776
saying, 'I'll take half of it and let you have the 539
other.' 'I'll have all of it', shouted my boy-o, never thinking. When he got home, his wife was making butter, but she couldn't get any to come. But now she tried again, and it came in and filled the churn twice over and ran over the floor. There was a big farmer near by, and it was all his butter she was getting. She was an honest woman and knew the butter wasn't hers and she wanted to make it known she hadn't anything to do with it, so she told the priest about it."

Other things than butter are so taken, of course. 776
Cattle figure prominently in folk belief. Cattle, as 789
we know, are very important to the countryman. 233
The time of calving is a crucial event in farm-family life. Consequently, precautions must be taken; danger is abroad, and rites must be performed. If cattle fall sick, other rites drive off the threatening good people and restore the cow to health. Fairy-tales are full of the taking of cattle by the people of the raths.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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of an emotionally charged explanatory scheme. 776
The trouble overtaking them becomes interpret- 183
able for him; he knows what has happened and is 82
in some measure ready to take the necessary steps. The fate of his goods and his fellows affects him vitally, it upsets the attachments he feels. But belief is common property; it is given to him and held for him by that community of his fellows of which he is a part. It is a socially held ideology to which he gives credence and in which he is dependent upon his fellows for ways and means, for corroboration, for solace.

But this ideology is much more than a mere in- 776
terpretative device. Certain anthropologists have 183
tried to see in magic and magic belief a groping, primitive science; but the concept has failed them if pressed very far. For the fairy faith enforces definite behaviour upon the countryman; it lays down rites and practices which he must perform. If he is to recover his goods that have been taken, restore his threatened animals, friends or children, he must follow a definite course. That course is laid down for him again by his community of belief and habit.

If we examine the course he must adopt to com- 776
bat ill-luck and disaster, we see a new incorporation 789
into belief of the things he values. In cures, nostrums, and other means of combating evil, the goods upon which he and his fellows are dependent and to which they are attached are once more

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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776 789 brought into the scope of belief. They become repositories of 'power'. They come to carry in their own substance the same supernatural efficacy for good or evil which belongs to the good people.

754 776 789 So, when the good people strike, the countryman who still follows the old folklore is not unprepared. If butter fails to come, for instance, he can take a hearth-coal and sear the bottom of the churn. He can apply iron in a variety of forms; for "there is great power in iron". He can use a hazel-stick, of the kind used in driving cattle, to cure cattle, or to give relief from sickness. He can ward off the disease that has struck his farm or household by transferring the dead thing to another's land, thus forcing the evil 'penalty' to follow it. Or, even more simply, he can merely transfer an egg, a potato, the hearth ashes, of his own threatened household to another's land or garden, and the danger goes with them. These practices drive off the 'good people'.

Similarly, when any of the household goods fall into another's possession, there is danger ahead for the household whose integrity is so broken. If butter fails, borrowed hearth-coals, or tools, or milk may hold the cause. One has merely to find the missing bit of goods, restore it to its rightful place, and thus restore the breach through which the good people have made their dangerous entrance into the life of one's family group and its possessions.

Naturally, then, transfer of this sort is dangerous

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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to the persons to whose land the object is transferred. Consequently, the fearsome 'pisherogues' of black magic often take this form. An egg, a potato, a wand of hazel or thorn mysteriously found in one's own garden is evidence of witchcraft, and danger for one's land and stock and family. That the reason ascribed to the outbreak of ill-luck may be arrived at after the fact, makes it none the less compelling. Belief is a social habit which events confirm.

I shall give you two examples, one of them about a dead thing, and another where simple, homely household objects come to have supernatural power. The first is the account a shopkeeper in a country town gave of a countryman-customer of his. "A countryman came into the shop one day and I asked him how things were going. Bad, said he, he was after losing three cows. I asked how was that, and Martin said it was the 'pisherogues'. He was working down in the bog and found the carcass of a cow there. What did you do with it? I asked him. He left it there, said himself. He was not going to move it for fear of the 'pisherogues'. Didn't they carry it there to put the curse on him, and wasn't it the next week his own cows sickened and died? . . . Then I was asking him, why didn't you get a vet, man? Sure, he said, why should I throw good money after a vet, and I knowing very well what happened to them?"

The second example is an account of disaster and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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776 its happy termination from a farmer who told the
789 story in a traditional vein, but whose own record of
754 actuality it is. I might say that the role of the curate
[193] in the episode was probably very different from that which the countryman imagined it to be.

"A fellow he knows was hilling potatoes and he got three young fellows to help him. Each of them found an egg in the garden, one a hen's egg, the second a goose egg, the third a turkey's egg. [He told this with great dramatic effect.] Well, the man hadn't any poultry on his farm at all.

"The boys went home and told their mothers, and the women told other women about it till it got all round the parish. The curate heard of it and one day he went over to the farmer and
[793] stopped in. They talked about all sorts of other things, and finally the curate said, I am sorry for you. Why? said himself. Because you are going to have bad luck. And he told him about the eggs.

"Well, the farmer had terrible hardships. His stock died on him, he'd go out in the morning and find his ewes dead on their backs with their legs in the air and lambs dropped dead out of their wombs. He had five cows in calf and after that spring he had only one cow left. A pig died on him, and his sister took sick, like to die herself she was. [After a
[793] time] the curate came . . . and he held masses in the farmer's house.

"He's doing well again now and has a fine lot of stock. That was about four years ago."

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Here then one can see a new kind of incorporation of the values of the countryman's life into belief. The goods round which his interests are centred come to be either beneficial or dangerous to the group to which he belongs, depending upon their connection with it in the critical situations which threaten disease and disaster. Ordinarily, there is nothing supernatural or dangerous about an egg or a hazel-stick, to the countryman. But in these special situations, in which tradition comes to his rescue, they take on a wholly different character. Thus we have the seemingly paradoxical case that the things of greatest 'power' are not by any means always the wondrous, unusual, and fearsome things, but the homely articles of use and familiar associations. Iron cures, but iron is not mysterious. An egg becomes a sign of witchcraft; a pinch of salt protects one against evil; but neither are fearsome things in themselves. Yet in critical circumstances they have the power to heal, to hurt, to cure, to destroy.

For what the countryman's belief is doing for him is something belief always seems destined to do, wherever it is found. Tradition is bearing upon him to keep alive and organize the regard his group must feel for the codes of conduct and the objects of use by which it lives. Belief focuses his attention and his emotions upon them. It gives sanctity to his conventions, his needs, and his goods. It infuses them with emotional associations far beyond

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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able part in the ceremonies of megalithic burial: we remember the significance attached to hazel nuts in the Hallowe'en games of divination (Chapter 17). 764 824

The ancient raths or forths, earthen enclosures around old homesteads, are also favourite haunts of fairies, and many are the tales of mysterious happenings in their neighbourhood at night, and of signs of habitation and sweet music issuing from them. Protection from fairies is believed to be obtained by possession of a black-hafted knife, while oatmeal or oat-cakes are also specifics against their malign influence. From fairies as from witches the supreme hour of peril to mortals is at the eves of Beltane, Midsummer and All Hallows. Cattle afflicted with disease were believed to be "elf-shot"—the belief is not entirely dead—and flint arrowheads were produced as proof of the attack. The cure was to give the affected animal a drink of the water in which the arrow had been placed. Among other archæological relics the polished stone axes of the Neolithic and Bronze ages are known as thunderbolts and are accredited with healing powers, and the small spinning-whorls are termed fairy mill-stones. As Arthur Mitchell writes of Scotland: "It is believed that stone celts assist the birth of children; that they increase the milk of cows; that they cure the diseases of the eye; that they protect the houses in which they are kept from lightning; and that they have many other such marvellous virtues. It is believed that, as they have a sort of supernatural origin, they may reasonably be supposed to have supernatural powers." 776 789 829 778

When food is taken out of doors it is a common belief that some must be left behind for the fairies, otherwise the dreaded "hungry grass" will grow; and the countryman will often spill a portion of his drink as a perhaps unconscious libation to the wee folk. Their activities are peculiarly dangerous to cattle and to butter-making. Among the charms designed to secure a good supply of butter in the churn we find the use of a horse-shoe, of a rusty nail from a coffin or the hand of a corpse, of rowan branches, salt, a live turf, or a cross made of veronica leaves. 776 789 [151]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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776 789 [777] veronica leaves. In the North it is considered unlucky for a person to enter a house where churning is taking place without "giving a brash," that is lending a hand at the churn-staff. In the words of a countryman in the west, "Queer things do happen to butter." Fairy tales are full of cattle and cattle-stealing: so are the epic tales. Writers of last century tell of cows that might be seen "with rags about their horns as a charm against the gentry," or gentle-folk, a name often applied to the fairies.

824 This brings us to the fairy or gentry thorns, skeaghs, or lone bushes, that is the solitary whitethorn trees which are regarded with dread. These trees, which must be counted by the thousand, are said "never to have been planted but to have grown of their own accord." They may be found on ancient monuments or alongside holy wells but the great majority are scattered through the fields, and it is worthy of notice that the cult is at least as strong in the Protestant north-east as in other parts of the country. A venerable thorn, pink-flowering, stands under my window as I write and casts its shadow into the Senate Room of the University. But no one will remove it or even lop its branches, and the story goes that when the buildings were being erected the plans had to be changed in order that the thorn should not be interfered with. If a lone tree surrounded by half a dozen scientific departments has claimed such respect it can be imagined in what awe the country thorns are held! See Tailpiece.

It has recently been suggested that the veneration of thorn trees was a Belgic custom introduced to Ireland some 2,000 years ago, but it seems more likely that as with sacred stones and wells we should look even further away in time and space to Mediterranean origins and regard the cult of trees as part of the nature worship connected with man's first use of the Irish soil. Certain thorns dedicated to Irish saints figure also [764] in ceremonies of burial: when funerals pass by they halt and stones are placed beside the thorn until they have become cairns. Wayside cairns, in the form of memorial monuments,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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171 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a
524 circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

857 Many examples could be given of children's games and
524 rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.
754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance
789 of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love
821 charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

241 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting
289 of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last
century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather
prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it
among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice [771]
of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is
so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but
disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at
another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great
deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady 181
occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit
to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment 426
of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 515
truth is not a prominent part of their character. 577

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [262]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be buried alive with its wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [823] [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 178 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major 181
operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of 443
peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair 796
seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the 181
cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures 789
of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic 181
magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, 842
common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of 181
marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the [582]
highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and 181
duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and 496

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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174 the way to the New World was opened up—a route the Irish were fated to follow in their millions—cultures and peoples moving across Europe found their last resting place in this Atlantic island. Here we need only pick out some of the most striking examples of such movements. Archaeologists have shown that the first Irishmen, who entered the island by the short sea-route from Scotland at a time, perhaps 7,000 or 8,000 years ago, when thanks to a lower sea-level it was even shorter than it is today, were the descendants of Old Stone Age man who sought refuge there. For nearly half the period that has since elapsed they were the only occupants of a heavily forested land which they shared with the beasts and the birds. As hunters, fishers and fowlers they spread slowly along the coasts and by tangled lakes and waterways south and south-west across Ireland. Their physical characters may be found in a small proportion of modern Irishmen, and certain of their habits, such as the building of lake-dwellings (crannogs) survived until a few centuries ago, while some of their skills—for example the skin boat or curragh—and their cults—the ancient rituals of fisherfolk and hunters—linger on to this day. The description, in the Irish legendary histories, of the first inhabitants of the land as fishers and fowlers may well be a genuine folk memory. In this oldest stratum, now almost submerged, Ireland preserves a sample of Palaeolithic Europe. Deep in this layer lie the roots of many superstitious customs, which [789] depend for their efficacy on sympathetic magic such as is believed to have inspired the cave-artists of France and Spain.

The revolution in human economy and thought which is associated with food-production, the Neolithic revolution, began to affect Ireland about 4,000 years ago, carried by refugees and adventurers from Britain and also from France, Spain and the western Mediterranean lands. Thanks to an abundance of alluvial gold and copper the early metal age which followed was a period of increasing prosperity and industrial skill, when the products of Irish craftsmen found distant markets in Britain and on the continent. Throughout the Bronze Age the island was protected from the full force of the continental invasions which spent themselves in Britain: it was able to absorb such influences as trickled across the Irish Sea and to retain many of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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175 way of life was fostered by the ease with which the humbler
311 members of the community could compete with others in arts
361 demanding not wealth but personal qualities, in poetry, oratory, song and physical prowess. Down to our own day the small size of the average farm has encouraged the survival of simple tools and limited the acquisition of machines. Subdivision of farms and the depressing effects of short leases and absenteeism were contributory factors. Subdivision of holdings was prohibited under an Act of 1881, but like so many other prohibited practices it did not cease.

175 The retention of many of the attributes of a peasant society
602 is the key to the survival of the folk ways with which we are
178 concerned in the following chapters. Even the Great Famine which marks a grim watershed in social and economic history did not entirely obliterate them, though it had such far-reaching effects that it might be regarded as the end of prehistoric times in Ireland. First in importance is the strength of blood-ties in extended family groups, still maintained even in many urban communities. During the air raids on Belfast, for example, the problem of finding billets for evacuated homeless was complicated by the refusal of large groups of related families to be separated from each other. In remote rural areas the blood-tie is a dominant force, governing economic as well as social relationships,[1] its loyalties overriding the impartial administration of justice. A relative is a 'friend', even if 'far-out'—that is, remotely connected—and friendship is a matter of blood relationship. A peasant community is concerned first and foremost with the maintenance and continuity of society: it does not judge—and cannot be judged—purely by economic standards. Immemorially peasant families have been large, and childbearing is widely regarded as part of the ritual necessary to bring success with the stock and the crops. In rural Ireland
[842] barrenness in a wife still tends to be regarded as an unnatural and disgraceful thing, and many superstitious cures for 'the
178 sterile curse' are recorded. This is but one example of a widespread attitude towards life, to which comparative anthropology
●789 offers many parallels. Sympathetic magic, or the performance

[1]C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940), Ch. 15.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of certain acts in the hope of inducing success in similar fields of action, provides an explanation of many of the folk-practices with which we are concerned. 178 [189]

Pushed too far, however, the observance of such antiquated practices in the end defeated its purpose and threatened the extinction of traditional life. A clue to much of the paradox in Irish culture is to be found in the reaction which follows an adherence to custom carried beyond the breaking-point. Spade-labour for example has reluctantly given way to the plough, but once the plough is generally accepted the spade becomes a despised implement so that a vegetable garden is a rare thing, at best a tiny plot left to the care of the women. In another field, the substitution of the vilest American films for the traditional ceilidhe gathering is a sad change. The crisis of the Great Famine was a major turning-point, and there followed a general reaction against everything associated with it. This was particularly true of the Irish peasants who sought refuge across the Atlantic: the American immigrants, driven from the land by extreme poverty, were determined to have nothing more to do with it and became almost invariably town-dwellers. The donkey and the goat, symbols of poverty, are neglected and despised in many parts of Ireland. A Donegal crofter once told me he dare not keep a donkey for fear of being unable to marry off his daughters: instead he kept a horse, though he could ill afford one, for its prestige value. The dangerously monotonous diet of Irish countryfolk, also, can be explained in the light of the famine. So bitter is the folk-memory of these times that useful wild sources of food are now neglected and despised; for example, wild berries of all kinds, the ubiquitous eel, hare and rabbit; the cresses and the edible seaweeds and fungi. It should be added, however, that some of these foods were apparently tabu—the rabbit, an Anglo-Norman invader, was rarely eaten—and that the potato had played its part in debasing diet in the period before the famine.[1] [177] [546] 178 262

Perhaps the most striking example of reaction is to be found in the expressed desire of most country people to have an isolated dwelling-house. The clachan or hamlet, once the centre of communal life and tradition, is despised, a symbol of squabbling 178 361

[1]R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), Ch.15.

243 grasses and flax. The many practical uses of straw will be
[301] described in a later chapter and its employment in fashioning various kinds of dolls, ceremonial dresses and masks, for example on St. Briget's Day. Certain protective charms were also made of oat-straw, for example the Bratóg Brighde (St.
● 789 Briget's rag or mantle) worn by the fishermen of Tory Island
243 as a protection against storms. Here the explanation may lie in the power of wind over bits of loose straw which by association gives the straw the secret of controlling the wind. This is the basis of the phrase used in Co. Cavan to describe something
[195] which circulates quickly: 'going round like the straws'. It was
[821] the custom to ward off storms by running with a handful of straws from one farm to another.

With corn, as with hay and turf, the harvesting proceeds by
243 building up stooks and ricks of increasing size according to the nature of the crop and the weather conditions. Little stooks (footings) of four or six sheaves are the first stage in the construction of the twelve-sheaf stooks (ten standing and two inverted hooding sheaves) which, however, are generally confined to wheat (Fig. 51). It is the general practice to build the little stooks of corn, after one or two weeks' seasoning, into hand-stacks which are of a convenient size to make a load for the rick-shifter, or for the tractor-lifter which is replacing it. The shapes of these miniature stacks, varying from one district to another, are often extremely picturesque, and their serried rows marching up the hillsides give the autumn fields a populated appearance. Their many names (hut, shig, bart, adag, and so on) would indicate that they are no novelty, and these little field stacks are as characteristic of Wales and Scotland as they are of Ireland (Fig. 52). A picturesque variety of hay-stack, commonly seen in Connacht, is the sheep-cock, built around a tall pole which prevents the cock from collapsing when eaten away at the base.

HOME-MADE THINGS

The straw cape placed over the bee-skep (Fig. 69) is a humble 524
relation. Straw masks are worn also by Biddy Boys on St. 285
Briget's Eve, and by the Christmas Rhymers. On St. Briget's [292]
Eve, too, a small straw doll (Brideóg) was dressed up and
carried from door to door in the south-west of Ireland. A charm
of plaited straw known as Bratóg Brighde (literally, Briget's [789]
Rag) is carried by the fishermen of Tory Island as a protection
against storms (Fig. 70, 5). There was also Briget's Girdle, a
two-strand straw rope, a circle with crosses attached, which was
passed over the body as a protective charm, by inserting one
leg and then pushing the head through on the Saints' Feast
Day (Fig. 85).

Before the Irish live-cattle trade developed there had been
for some centuries a great export of hides and skins, and if one 281
goes back earlier it becomes clear that these products must
have found a multitude of uses about the farm. For a number of
purposes where toughness and durability are specially needed
animal skin has remained a traditional material, and in old-
fashioned mountainy areas the countryman makes a habit of
curing the skins of wild and domesticated animals on the
principle that 'you never know but what they'll come in useful'.
On analogy with the Hebrides, with which Donegal in particular
shows close cultural affinities, skin mealbags should have had a
place in cottage economy in north Ireland. When grinding corn,
a skin was laid on the floor under the quern to catch the meal.
Seal skin served many purposes, from plough traces, in Harris,
to the covers of curraghs in Donegal. We have descriptions of
cured sheepskins serving as windows,[1] and (from St. Kilda)
of fowling ropes bound with strips of salted cowhide to prevent
them from being cut by the rocks.[2] But it is in the skin tray, the 281
wecht or wight, that one is most likely to see tradition main- 415
tained (Fig. 71). The well-scraped skin of sheep, or sometimes
of goat, is stitched on to a rim of ash, bog fir or, in the naked
islands which have exhausted even their bog timber, a ring of
sugan. To secure the skin free of wrinkles is skilled work, and
the finished product is not unlike a tambourine: in fact, it
closely resembles the Eskimo caribou drum. Irish wrenboys

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 25.
[2]Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 315.

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Pyrenees and in Africa, but the flail, apparently spreading 243
through western Europe in post-Roman times, in time replaced 412
it almost everywhere, to be in turn displaced by the mechanical 171
thrasher. Thus the sound of the flail has almost gone from the countryside. The best thrashing place is the floor of the barn above the byre, with its opposite doors to draw the wind and 343
advertise the flailer's industry. Such barns, however, were not 243
built outside the planted districts before agrarian changes and 171
improvements spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ireland knows nothing of the carefully built thrashing floors of England and Scandinavia. At best on the farms lacking a barn a thrashing board was sometimes kept, a square wooden platform raised a few inches off the ground. A good thrashing floor should bend to meet the flail, and in Scandinavia, for instance, great pains were taken in the old days to construct floors which would make the flails sing. They were occasionally strung with wires, and to magnify the echo of clay floors a horse's skull was buried under each corner.[1] It has been thought that this purpose was secondary to the luck it was hoped would follow from what was originally a foundation sacrifice. In Ireland [777]
traditions of the burying of horses' skulls under the floors of dwelling houses are both widespread and well authenticated. The usual explanation again is that this gives the house an echo, but it is also said to be lucky, and Sean O'Sullivan concludes that the custom of burying skulls began as a substitute for foundation sacrifices.[2] In Armagh 'the frontal bones of a [825]
horse's head are regarded as being peculiarly sonsie; they were often buried in barn floors and under the thresholds of dwelling houses for that reason.'[3]

In time, the expressed object came to be to magnify the music 243
of the singing flails as well as that of the ballad-singing and 789
dancing before the fire. The space between the doors of the old style kitchen-byre, it will be recalled, was a favourite thrashing place in times past. The Briget's Crosses above the door would have blessed the thrashing as well as the cattle. It

[1]Albert Sandkelf, *Singing Flails* (Folklore Fellows Communications, Helsinki, No. 136), (1949).
[2]Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 45–52.
[3]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fenn in 1838*, 77.

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243 is worth noticing that symbols in the form of a swastika, but
789 including also circles, pentagrams and horses, were formerly cut as protective devices in the beams of barns in Scandinavia. Some of the designs are reminiscent of the art of the Bronze Age.

243 An Irish verse giving the four essentials of a good thrashing, collected in Co. Armagh, runs in translation:

[539]

A hand-staff of holly,
A souple of hazel,
A single sheaf,
And a clean floor.

This is where the besom of heather or bent comes in: it is still preferred to the sweeping-broom for a clay floor or to get into the joins of boards or cobbles. Thrashing was a daily job, carried out on well-run farms night and morning before the cattle were fed. It was held that the cattle throve best on freshly thrashed oats, and the storage of grain would anyhow have been difficult where there were no barns.[1] For this reason, too, the level 'street' in front of the house, or even the public road was often the most suitable floor available. The thrashing was usually done on a strong linen sheet. Publicity as well as a steady echoing beat seem to have been the desired aims. Every-
[555] where prestige has attached to a noisy thrashing, and partly no doubt for self-aggrandisement a solitary thrasher would beat with his feet to make the noise of two. Everywhere too the
[533] sound of the flail has been turned into jingles and rustic rhymes. They did not accompany the work itself because it was too noisy and too exhausting to allow talking or singing. The flails' beaters made their own merry music; was it, one wonders, originally intended to drive away evil spirits from the precious food supply?

222 In this chapter we have confined ourselves to some of the
824 things that were made at home out of materials that lay to hand. To describe the utilization of all the lesser plants that have

[343] [1]Mr. A. T. Lucas, however, has described traditional outdoor granaries, now restricted to west Cork, constructed of thick straw ropes, which when completed resemble round stacks (*Gwerin*, I (1956), 2–20). Mr. V. B. Proudfoot calls my attention to the similar 'corn bykes' of Caithness (*P.S.A.S.* (1932), 136–7).

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527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit
[264] gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
● [789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

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527 bones, were formerly considered proper to the occasion. There
[372] were dances round the fires, performed with great dexterity and precision by youths armed with cudgels. The May-pole,
[177] however, and the May-bush observances seem to go with areas
[824] of strong English influence and do not seem to have been generally adopted by the Irish, perhaps because May-trees, which are not given this name in Ireland, are likely to be fairy thorns and therefore should not be damaged. The May Eve assemblies are thus described in eighteenth century Kilkenny: 'Bloody battles and much confusion and uproar is the mischief that follows from the barbarous and unheeded custom of collecting *May-balls* among the new-married folks . . . The hedges and fences, in the outlets of our city, are stripped of full-grown hawthorns, whose late blooming pride and fragrancy is now miserably dying away on dunghills before cabin doors, by way of *May-bushes*, no longer, alas! to afford a nuptial bed to the new-married linnet and his mate, but fastened in the ground for the vilest purpose—to hang filthy clouts upon'.[1] The gold and white balls which were hung on maypoles have been regarded as symbols of sun and moon—or it may be of butter and milk. Another May Day custom was the licence allowed
[786] young boys to run about stinging people with nettles, a privilege which in my youth in Shropshire was permitted only on 29th May, the victims being those who did not wear an oak-apple.

527 If the May Day fires are now more in evidence in the back streets of Belfast than on the high hills, the Midsummer fires still burn
372 strongly in some country districts and their pagan flames have not been so easily quenched. I saw dozens of them in Co. Galway on Midsummer Eve in 1956, mostly at country crossroads. Old men in Donegal have told me that they remembered the time when they had counted from their hilltop fire nearly a hundred others. Young men would show their mettle by jumping to and fro through the flames, and girls by doing so hoped to marry early and have many children. We recall that
● [789] leaping is in folk tradition a widely approved method of making the crops grow high, and the fires, it is conjectured, were meant to encourage the sun, now at its turning point, to shine on through the harvest. Midsummer was a time when evil influ-

[1] *Finn's Leinster Journal* (4th May, 1768).

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764 by the tradition that 'there must be blood spilt at a funeral'. In some parts of the country there were separate graveyards for men and women, and the prohibition against burying the wrong sex lasted into the present century in Inishmurray, Co. Sligo.

Many gruesome superstitions gather around old graveyards, yet it is to them that the old people wish to be taken, however neglected and overcrowded they may be. As one observer put it: 'The anxiety to be interred with their deceased relatives bestows even on death a feeling of social interest.'[1] I have referred to the Saints' Beds—small stone enclosures in very old graveyards which were perhaps oratories—and their power of curing barrenness. Bits of skulls, too, or scrapings of the moss growing on them, were sought as cures for various ailments, and the clay from the graves of priests was considered efficacious, with fine impartiality, for human sins and for the diseases of cattle. Such cures were apparently mixed with water and taken as medicine, and as part of the ritual the cloth in which they were removed was replaced on the grave. A potent love charm is said to have been worked by wrapping around the
789 desired person, when sleeping, a long strip of skin removed from a corpse, and a dead man's hand, thrust into the milk, was, as a last resort, a sure way of getting the cream to rise.

[1]T. C. Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 167.

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526 perfect sphere the rounded igneous pebbles which are selected for the purpose. One wonders whether some of the many cup-marked stones which turn up in the fields in certain districts—I have seen many in Inishowen in Donegal—were used for shaping stones, such as the sling-stones with which champion slingers, of whom the legendary Cuchulainn was one, performed [411] their feats. The sling and the sling-rod were originally hunting weapons and probably instruments of war, and one of the last refuges of slinging as a pastime was the now vanished Claddagh, the fishing suburb of Galway, where a man was not reckoned a good shot until he could strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen.[1]

312 Where a holy well has dried up—the usual explanation is that it was desecrated and moved its position—the sanctity of the 824 site may be transferred to a tree. The so-called pin-well at 778 Arboe in Co. Tyrone is a beech tree, hirsute with pins and nails, growing in the burying ground on a Celtic monastic site. A rag-well at Clonmel is visited by mountain farmers who hang rag offerings on briars at lambing and calving times, and afterwards place more rags appropriate in number to the increase obtained.[2] There is on the island of Inishmurray a wind-[821] well which has the power of controlling the wind, the ritual being to empty the well to produce a calm. Sticks and stones also ●789 figure in wind-raising ceremonies, and 'the rude stone image of 778 Inniskea' (Inishkea in Co. Mayo), which was dressed up in flannel each New Year's Day, had powers of producing either storm or calm.[3] Powerful magic was worked by a wooden statue of St. Macdara, formerly kept in his chapel—an oratory of early type with projecting *antae*—on an island dedicated to the saint in the extreme south-western corner of Co. Galway. Sailors passing the island dipped their sails three times in honour of the image, but we are left to guess what superstitions were involved from the statement that about the year 1640 'the bishop of Tuam caused it to be buried for weighty reasons'.[4]

[1] *U.J.A.*, 2 (1854), 164.
[2] *Béaloideas*, 15 (1945), 284.
[3] C. Otway, *Erris and Tyrawly*, 107.
[4] C. R. Browne, *Carna and Muvenish*.

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234 825 newly-calved cow should be milked on to a piece of metal placed in the pail. Offerings of the 'beastlings' were poured in the raths and at the roots of fairy thorns, to appease the fairies. When taking a drink out of doors, the old countryman will casually spill a portion of the draught on the earth as a complimentary libation to the good people. 'When a cow fell sick through fairy malice, it was formerly by no means an uncommon practice, in the west of Ireland, to devote the ailing animal to St. Martin. The ceremony was performed by letting a few drops of blood from the cow in honour of the saint.'[1] Cows which, for no apparent reason, are not thriving are said to be [172] elf-shot. The elf-stones or fairy-darts which are supposed to have caused the mischief are prehistoric flint arrowheads such as can be picked up in the fields. One of the tricks of the cow-doctor who is called in, and who keeps a few arrowheads handy, is to produce one by sleight of hand from the flank of the ailing beast. Or counter-magic can be worked by means of a flint arrowhead which must not be allowed to touch the ground after it has been found. The cow-doctor uses sympathetic magic in curing calves believed to be suffering from intestinal knots by drawing apart over the animal's back the loose ends of a string tied in a complicated witch-knot or 'bat', of the type which comes undone when pulled. But as always he must work the magic correctly, for if the knot is not resolved another one is tied 789 inside the calf.

234 Hanging in the byre one sometimes sees a flint pebble sus- [823] pended on a string through a natural hole. It is a witch-stone, protecting the cows from milk-stealers, and it may owe its virtue to the flint or to its symbolic ever-watching eye. In the Ardenne a holed flint hung in the stable is believed to preserve [171] the horses from nightmares,[2] and nearer home in the Yorkshire dales holed stones known as ring-stones protected the cows from the evil eye. 'Blessings on all that I can see' is the traditional formula to use when one enters a byre. An ill-disposed person could, merely by looking at it, 'blink' a cow so that its milk would yield no butter. The cow could be cured by burning under its nose a portion of the blinker's clothes

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 6.
[2] H. H. Turney-High, *Ch'teau-Gérrad* 53(19), 232.

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and a handful of thatch taken from above the door of his house. 234
Butter-making must have been a chancy and critical business
when each family had only one or two cows, ill-fed for a large 789
part of the year, and there were fairies, witches and blinkers to
contend with. The protective charms and prognostications
connected with churning are legion. If you should enter an
old-style mountain kitchen when churning is in progress you
may well be invited to lend a hand, or at least to 'leave your
weight on the staff,' just to show that your intentions are not
evil. There must be no bad words during churning, no quarrels,
no singing or drinking: to drink anything is presumably to
dilute the milk. If the milk splashes the churner is fated to
marry a drunken mate. When the butter at last breaks a small
ball of it is traditionally taken and smeared on the wall or tossed
on top of the dresser to bring luck to the house, perhaps
originally as an offering to the fairies. And when the churning
is finished the staff should be twisted round three times and
placed across the mouth of the churn. There are many other
precautions that may be taken: a horseshoe—preferably 'a shoe
of one heating'—tied to the churn or nailed to the bottom; a
nail from a horseshoe or from a coffin driven into churn or
staff; a ring of salt placed on the lid; a twig of rowan tied round
the churn. Or the plough coulter should be heated in the fire,
and the churnstaff tied with a straw rope to the fire-crane: if
the staff is made of rowan-wood so much the better. If despite
all precautions the butter does not come there are ways of
catching the thief. For instance, a cake is baked and stuck with
pins and a bunch of yarrow placed in the churn. The thief will
come crying to the door in pain, and he must not be allowed in
but turned away.

Special precautions should also be taken to make the house 512
safe at night from unwanted visitations. Before the fire is raked
and 'smoored' (buried in peat-ash) a spark should be dropped 352
into the foot-water, the water in which feet have been washed
and to which many superstitions are attached. The carded flax [515]
should be placed under a weight, the band taken off the spinning
wheel and the quern dismantled. Many stories are told of the
risks involved in letting the fairies have access to these things.
Finally the besom should be placed against the door: the

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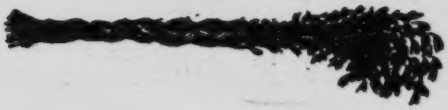
512 besom's association with everyday tasks and with the fireside
352 endows it with special power. Thrown after a departing match-
[777] maker or anyone going on an important errand, it brings luck to his mission.

For most people, needless to say, such things are now mean-
771 ingless superstitions—old pishrogues. True, one still hears
● 789 occasionally of cows being blinked, of a black cock buried alive
178 as a cure for epilepsy, of a healthy woman pining away because a neighbour was sticking pins into a waxen image. These are stray survivals, doomed to disappear; but in a larger sense the past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds of men and in the landscapes they have fashioned.



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afterwards festered. The wreckage of the dolmen was lying untouched on the ground a few years ago. The collapse of a calf shed on its occupants followed the demolition of Templenaraha oratory for building the unstable structure;[37] this might be ascribed to a more sacred anger than that of the fairies, but the oratory stood in a ring fort. Another case of supposed vengeance occurred near Lehinch on the Atlantic. Some workmen were employed to level the earthworks of Dooneeva,[38] a fort on a low cliff at the end of the bay and near the modern Protestant Church. The man who originated this outrage was digging at the mounds when he fell to all appearance dead. The news was at once taken to his wife, a reputed "wise woman," and she ran to a "fairy spot" and "did magic." She then went to her apparently lifeless husband, and ordered the fairies in a peremptory way to restore him at once and take his stick. Then, before everyone, the stick vanished, and the "dead man" sat up none the worse for his "rapture to the land of faëry."[39] The date of this event could not be fixed, but it seems to be attributed to the period before 1840, and Dooneeva seems to have been in its present condition in 1839.

Two forts named Lissardcarney and Ballyhee in Templemaley Parish were in 1839 reputed strongholds garrisoned by troops of fairies. The songs of the fairies were heard in Cahernanoorane in Inchiquin, and Leskeentha near Noughaval.[40] They danced in the Lisnarinkas, played "hurley" in Lisfearbegnagommaun, and laid in wait to worry the belated traveller in Rathfollane and a small fort near the rectory, to the south of it, near Newmarket-on-Fergus. Fairies haunted the well of Tobesheefra, while even at the holy well of the powerful and vengeful St. Mochulla at Fortanne milk was once offered to them. The butter had refused to "come," and the mistress of the house, (a Protestant woman of good birth and fair education), as she told me herself about 1878, took some of the refractory milk to the well, made the sign

[37] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara about 1907.

[38] *Not* Doonmeeve as on the Ordnance Survey maps.

[39] Told to Miss Diana Parkinson. I heard it locally, but more vaguely, in 1907.

[40] Local traditions, 1904, 1908.

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776 of the cross over it, said the Lord's Prayer, dug a hole in the mud
823 at the well with her left heel, and went away without looking back.
[789] As might have been expected, the butter had "come" by the time she had got home again, and she used to quote the case as "proof positive." Besides the forts and wells, the dolmens are believed to have been fairy homes, but in my enquiries since
776 1892 I have never been able to authenticate a case of offerings
782 at them of milk and butter, although small basins like the Swedish "elf mills" are found in the covers of more than one of these
823 structures, and large *bullauns* or basins at others, such as Ballyganner Hill near Noughaval, Cappaghkennedy on the hills above Corofin, and Newgrove and Kiltanon near Tulla in eastern Clare. Food and drink, however, have been, until at least the present century, set out in plates and cups in Inchiquin and Moyarta Baronies, and in the latter, on the Shannon bank, the slops were thrown out and clean plates, water, chairs, and a well-swept hearth left by a punctilious servant for fairy guests in 1888 or 1889.

776 The greatest fairy monarch in Clare was "Donn of the Sand-
823 hills" (now the golf links), near the old castle of Doogh, (*i.e.* Dumhach or Sand Dune), near Lehinch. He, or one of the other fairy princes named Donn, appears in a list of the divine race of the Tuatha Dé Danann,[41] and is therefore of the family of the Dagda, and, it may be presumed, a lineal descendant of the ancient Ana, Mother of the Gods. A well-known Irish scholar and antiquary, Andrew MacCurtin, before 1730 addressed a political petition to Donn of Dumhach complaining, like most Irish antiquaries, of the neglect of the gentry, and praying for any menial post at his Court.[42] As there was none that answered, the petitioner had to rest content with the hospitality of the MacDonnells of Kilkee and the O'Briens of Ennistymon. Donn's heartless conduct met poetic justice, for he has ever since "lacked a sacred bard," and, save for a slight uneasiness in a few poor old people passing across the sandhills after the golfers have left and the sun has set, he is now all but forgotten. In another poem of MacCurtin's, on a monk's horse "overlooked" and killed by the evil eye, or by the look of a red-haired woman, or

[41] *Cath Finntraga* (ed. Kuno Meyer), p. 15.

[42] Mss. Royal Irish Academy, 23. M. 47.

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178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased
the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites con-
[789] nected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed
secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and
then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
527 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted
down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old
175 people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so
much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (i.e. Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in 1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh (Lismanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877 onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh ("Fair or Assembly Crag")[8] on the bare hill over Termon in the Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in 1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings") in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

823 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[8] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

[P. 229]

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627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the
233 newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
823 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26]
789 In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
826 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to
789 the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale. [P. 243]

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with the churn "dash," and if you are smoking you should finish the pipe in the house, or you may "take" the butter. There is still living to the south of Ennis a man who is afraid to touch a churn lest the butter should "go away," and he get the discredit of "butter-taking." (I may boast myself of the repute of having "the lucky hand" that "brings" the butter quickly.) Long ago the O'Briens of Kells near Corofin told the late Dr. G. U. MacNamara of the latter place how one "Donogho buidhe" (yellow Donal), a local "fairy man," being offended one day about getting a glass of whiskey, left the house angrily. After his exit no amount of churning would bring the butter. He was pursued and appeased, and took a bit of paper from under the churn, when the butter came at once. In a case in the Tulla district in which a farmer's butter was "taken," he consulted the priest, by whose direction he searched in the corner of his corn-field, and found a small sheaf with a hazel rod in it. After destroying this the butter "came" in great abundance.[28]

234 789 [791]

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[28] Cf. *ante*, p. 58.

(*To be continued.*)

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824 753 757 824 [752] 824 [777 789]

Plants.—The "hungry grass" grows on mountains, and, if trodden on, causes a sickening hunger which kills if not relieved. I knew a man in County Limerick who said he "knew it to happen to another man" on the Clare hills, and the victim got food in bare time to save him.[20] Seven strips of a plantain leaf stop the bleeding of a bad wound. The "Seven Sisters" plant for healing purposes must be picked at a particular period of the sun and moon in August. Fern "dust" (seeds) heals cuts from rushes; the dock charms nettle stings; and the four-leafed shamrock brings luck if found accidentally. The belief that house-leek preserves a house from burning[21] is widespread in north and east Clare. The pennywort has a sectarian bias, and only cures Protestants,[22] and this is connected near Bunratty with a curious legend of Anne Boleyn. This hapless queen, after enjoying by means of the plant the greatest influence over her terrible spouse,[23] "got into trouble, but, when she was sent to jail, she couldn't get the plant, and they hanged her." The rowan, or mountain ash, is a luck-bringer and preservative from magic, and I remember small forked twigs being carried. A rowan, planted at Iniscaltra about 890 by King Cormac mac Cuileanan, bore apples.[24] Moss from a skull, or an ancient cross such as that at Dysert O'Dea, or a pillar, is curative; the moss at Fortanne well was used for the eyes, but had to be replaced. If you see a "button mushroom" you should pluck it, as "it will never grow any more once it is looked at."[25]

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(*To be continued.*)

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years of age are buried; after that age bodies are taken to the parish graveyard at Killilagh. In Shanakill, on the Shannon bank opposite Scattery, it was believed that the dead were moved supernaturally under the river into the Sacred Isle.[24] 766 [775]

I know of a case in eastern Clare where parents, having lost several of their children, tried to break the deadly record by changing their burial place, but, alas! without success.

I am not aware of any belief in Clare that the spirit of the last-comer in a graveyard has to watch the place or to bring water to the souls in Purgatory. There was, however, recently a race between two funerals to Rathblamac graveyard, which may imply some such belief. The custom of burying a stone from a church or an ancient tombstone in a new grave, (which has led to the disappearance of several early monuments at Clonmacnoise), prevails at Tomgraney, two ancient tombstones having recently been recovered on digging new graves. As we have already seen,[25] St. Mochulla's well avenged the encroachment of its landlord on the *killeen* beside it, but the graveyards of Kildimo, near Kilkee, and St. Catherine's at Kells, near Corofin, are under cultivation. Dr. MacNamara noted a curious allusion to the last-named in O'Daly's fierce satire on "The Tribes of Ireland" in 1610. The people of Kells are there reproached for "digging the churchyard in the snow." The oldest Irish Law Code, the *Seanchus Mór*, has a clause against digging in a churchyard or breaking bones there. Kildimo was levelled, and its site included in an orchard by 1816.[26] Interference with human remains is deeply and dangerously resented, yet spells are sometimes worked with them.[27] The stealing of a dead man's hand for a butter charm is said to have taken place near Kilkee,[28] and the bones of a Franciscan with the brown cloth of his gown still adhering, found during the repairs at Ennis Abbey, were nearly all taken, but probably from most reverential motives. 764 [775] [765] 789

son of oak tree. There is a Knockaunatinnagh (little hill of the foxes) beside his church. [776]

[24] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii. (1841), p. 545.

[25] Vol. xxii., p. 211.

[26] W. G. Mason, *A Statistical Account etc.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

[27] See *Burial and Skull Beliefs*, vol. xxii., pp. 55-6, 456.

[28] Vol. xxii., p. 340.

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Charms.[29]—The charming of rats, which was described by Eugene O'Curry to Dr. J. Henthorne Todd, seems to have been forgotten in the Doonaha district, where, at least, I never heard of it during several visits in the neighbourhood from 1896. The performance is ancient, being described after A.D. 600 by the famous bard Seanchan Torpeist, a contemporary of King Guaire Aidhne of Gort, who ruled the district adjoining Clare on the north from about A.D. 610. O'Curry's story is that a certain John O'Mulconry joined the Established Church, and was ordained, being eventually advanced to be curate of Kilrush and Kilfieragh in the south-west corner of Clare. Now Kilfieragh graveyard was so horribly infested by rats that serious accidents occurred at every burial (I presume from their attacks), and every corpse buried there was entirely devoured by the following morning. The curate, horrified by the scenes he witnessed at a burial, proceeded to charm the rats, as the country folk firmly believed him able to do from his knowledge of old Irish literature. A certain John Foley, of Querin on the Shannon, saw that evening what looked like a bank of low-lying fog crossing a bog between him and Kilfieragh. He fancied it was the fairy host, and ran to one side, when he saw it was a compact body of rats. They went through his cornfield, without stopping, to Querin point, then burrowing into the dry sand and disappearing. They soon proved as destructive as ever, gnawing the fishermen's nets and boats (probably leather *curraghs*). The sufferers gathered a great number of neighbours, amongst whom was Owen Mór O'Curry, the writer's father, and proceeded to dig out and kill the vermin. An incredible number were slain, but the survivors seemed innumerable, and in the end, with the courage of despair, attacked the slayers, trying to run up their clothes and bite them. Wearied and terrified at the swarms, the peasantry at last gave up the fight and fled. Eugene O'Curry never heard what became of the remnant of the rats.

Thomas O'Keane, a land surveyor, told O'Curry in 1820 that he knew and used an ancient satirical poem to expel rats, and that he had successfully driven out all that infested his house and mill at Bealahaglas, near Dunlicka Castle. The charm was in archaic and enigmatical Irish. Fired by emulation, young O'Curry

[29] Addenda to Section xi., vol. xxii., pp. 49-60.

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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31] 585 796 626

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

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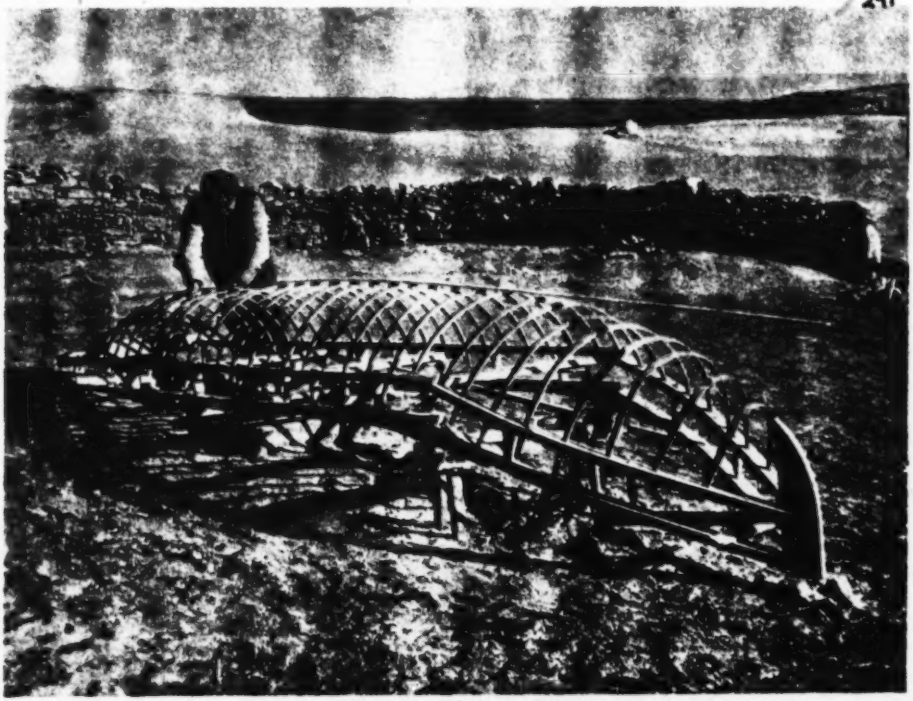

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is

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779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [776] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

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The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative: they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

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The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses 584
before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the 583
man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the
decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one
reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it [178]
went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to
furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging
parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed
by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's
relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations
of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness
or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of
the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited
only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity
to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of
body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons 581
approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that 582
"the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It
is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be
attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too
many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the 585
direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and [178]
five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's
house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities com-
mence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family [273]
invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles
in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then
accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them
before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men [189]
lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with
the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close
behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in
order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests;
the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate
in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month follow-
ing the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grand-
child was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 585
1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, 292
accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the 177
first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, [302]
and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl
and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, 585
the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven
shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [178] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, [798] rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of paganism. [788] Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [787] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [743] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [775] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping
776 fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered overly superstitious.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on November 1st.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the
233 newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
823 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26]
789 In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
826 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to
789 the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale.

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14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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with the churn "dash," and if you are smoking you should finish the pipe in the house, or you may "take" the butter. There is still living to the south of Ennis a man who is afraid to touch a churn lest the butter should "go away," and he get the discredit of "butter-taking." (I may boast myself of the repute of having "the lucky hand" that "brings" the butter quickly.) Long ago the O'Briens of Kells near Corofin told the late Dr. G. U. MacNamara of the latter place how one "Donogho buidhe" (yellow Donal), a local "fairy man," being offended one day about getting a glass of whiskey, left the house angrily. After his exit no amount of churning would bring the butter. He was pursued and appeased, and took a bit of paper from under the churn, when the butter came at once. In a case in the Tulla district in which a farmer's butter was "taken," he consulted the priest, by whose direction he searched in the corner of his corn-field, and found a small sheaf with a hazel rod in it. After destroying this the butter "came" in great abundance.[29]

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THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[29] Cf. *ante*, p. 58.

(*To be continued.*)

[P. 244]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions* (*continued*).

Horse.—I have found no folklore relating to horses except that already given regarding supernatural animals.[1] I have since recalled a legend of a dangerous spectral horse, probably a *púca*, haunting the bridge over the Blackwater, between Limerick and Clonlara, and the tree-darkened road towards the latter place,—a terror by night to passengers till about twenty years ago. There was also the bodiless head of a spectral horse which used to float beside cars on a road near Clooney, of which I heard about 1876, but now forget the details. The riding of horses by fairies was not unknown. 825 776

Dog, Fox, and Hare.—Besides the supernatural dogs already noted,[2] and the "Red Dog" (or Fox?), near Cragmoher, at Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge, there is little to tell. Finn's famous hound Bran was drowned at Tirmicbrain lake, and a ghastly dog broke the bones in some graveyard, (perhaps Doora or Clooney), before 1876.[3] It is unlucky to meet a fox, a red-haired woman, or a hare "first thing" in the morning. The hare is said to eat human flesh,—probably from being often "started" in graveyards. I have been told by several Clare people of witches turning into hares, but the alleged incident was never located in the county. [777] [791]

Seal.—A very vague belief prevails on the coast that seals are

[1] Vol. xxi., pp. 481-2.

[2] Vol. xxi., pp. 482-3.

[3] As in most of my recollections of folk-tales heard before 1876, the details are forgotten.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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777 Leochain, who was slain in 1024. The King of Cashel (over-king, therefore, of North Munster) was forbidden to pass a night at Latteragh in northern Tipperary at the beginning of harvest; to encamp for nine consecutive nights at the river Suir; to hold a border meeting at Gowran; and to listen to the groans of women (in a raid) in southern Tipperary. The King of Connacht was not to go in a speckled cloak,—the prose adds "on a piebald horse," —to the heath of Luchaid in Clare. On the other hand, the ruler of Cashel brought good luck by plundering cattle in Connacht while the cuckoo sings; burning north Leinster; passing over Sliabh Cua,—"on a Tuesday," says the prose,—to pacify south Munster; crossing Magh Ailbhe with a light grey host; and resting six weeks (of Lent) every year at Cashel. It was most unlucky for him to wait for a feast at Killarney Lake for a full week from a Monday. At the present day some families still have their own tabus, lucky and lucky deeds and days, dreams, and omens, which sometimes even run counter to beliefs generally received,—*e.g.* that [787] the Friday falling on the thirteenth of any month, or to dream of a wild cat or other wild animal, is lucky.

● 791 825 *Witch hare.*[35]—Anthony Bruodin (*Bruodinus* or *Prodinus*), a Franciscan of Quin Abbey, tells in *Corolla Oecodemiae Minoritica* (Prague, 1664, p. 73) how his uncle (*patruus*), Florence of Moynaeo (Moynoe on Lough Derg) went out at the dawn of the first of May with his eldest son Bonaventura, (who died in Spain in 1643), and with their hounds to hunt hares. At last the servants saw one sucking a cow. The hounds chased it, biting it as it escaped, into a cottage, where an old woman was found torn behind.

776 *Glasgeivnagh cow.*[36]—Vague legends are told of her living at Treanahow, Shallee, and Ballygannon.

Ghosts or fairy men.—Mary (Mescal) Doyle, of Newmarket-on-Fergus, tells how she saw two ghostly men in black walking on a road near that village.

173 *Stolen bride.*—A legend of a stolen bride at Querin on the Shannon is told in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends etc. of Ireland* (1887), vol. i., p. 49.

[35] Addendum to vol. xxii. p. 449. [p.270]
[36] Addendum to p. 89 *supra.*

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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776 ravens and owls connected with the Ross-Lewins, Westropps, and other families as death warnings have already been referred to (p. 190).

X. *Spectral Lands and Cities.*

773 Clare formed a part of the outmost fringe of the ancient world, and its people were deeply impressed with the mysteries and wonders of the Outer Ocean. The voyage of Maelduin tells of the son of a Clare man sailing out into "the great endless deep" and finding isles of surpassing beauty and wonder, and the "Hui Corra" in deep repentance sailed towards the setting sun from the creek at the northern bound of Clare "to meet the Lord on the sea."[20] St. Brendan, eager to seek out new islands, went for [792] advice to St. Enda, a saint closely connected with Clare, (where Killeany bears his name), and its appanage, Aran. In the bay to the north of Clare William Ires, a native of Galway, became accustomed to the ocean which he crossed with Columbus, and it may be that his tales of Hy Brasil, of St. Brendan's Isle, and of the "thrice fifty distant Isles in the ocean to the west of us. Larger than Erin, twice is each of them, or thrice,"[21] encouraged the frightened sailors of the great Admiral to persevere a little longer.

Hy Brasil,[22] the Isle of the Blessed, is possibly a legacy from ancient paganism, which placed its Tirnan-oge, The Land of Youth, in the waves "on the west side down from Aran, where goes the sun to its couch."[23] The desire for the ageless, deathless land prevailed all up the western coast, and was strong in Kilkee in 1868-78, and perhaps even still. I myself saw the mirage several times in 1872 giving the perfect image of a shadowy island with wooded hills and tall towers springing into sight for a moment as the sun sank below the horizon. I have also heard from Kilkee fishermen legends, like that embodied in the verses of Gerald

[20] "Voyage of the Hui Corra," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiv. (1893), p. 37; *Voyage of Bran*, (ed. Kuno Meyer), vol. i., p. 12; "Voyage of Maelduin," *Revue Celtique*, vol. ix. (1888), p. 45.

[21] *Voyage of Bran*, vol. i., p. 14.

[22] It is marked on a series of ancient maps from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries.

[23] *Grelle an fhéagu*, (Irish Texts Society, vol. i.), p. 21.

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regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

JOHN C. MESSENGER

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155 Ireland was . . . one of the world's most ascetic countries, and the monas-
181 tic ideal has undoubtedly left a deep mark on the Irish mind. Although
182 Irish priests were permitted to have wives as late as the eighth century,
• 792 sexual renunciation came to be identified with virtue and distinction in the
779 community, and thousands of the best men and women lived apart from each other. Kevin Devlin in his *Christus Rex* article on "Single and Selfish" . . . says of the ancient Irish that "when they 'fell in love with Christianity' . . . they took to the ideal of virginity with a Pauline enthusiasm unknown elsewhere. St. Patrick himself noted this with an inflection of surprise in the *Confessions* . . ." (Blanshard 1954: 160-161).

Several Irish scholars since 1955 have expressed the opinion in personal conversations that the rapidity of Irish conversion to monasticism in the early medieval period can be attributed, in large measure, to masochism.
[53] This ancient character trait is most evident in the projective system of early Irish verbal art, if one discounts the possibility of widespread distortion through the actions of Celtic defense mechanisms and later revisionists.

In a recent book, the impact of Augustinianism at this time and in the centuries to come is examined by Fr. Alexander Humphreys. He says in *New Dubliners:*

The specific doctrinal tradition to which Ireland and the Irish countryman in particular has fallen heir is the Augustinian. . . . [It] lays relatively greater emphasis on the weakness and evil to which human nature is prone as the result of original sin. By the same token, it attributes relatively less efficacy to natural knowledge and human action and relatively more validity to God's revelation and more power to the action of God's grace. . . . [The] Irish countryman has acquired a more than average distrust of native human reason. As a Catholic he cannot and does not deny the validity of rational thought, but he tends to be quite suspicious of the pride of the mind and so wary of ultimate rationalism that he shies away from reasoned discussions of high truths. . . . The tradition he inherits tends toward a certain historical and theological positivism in regard to the major truths and values of life, and, together with other historical factors, has led him to an intensified reliance upon the teaching power of the Church as voiced by the clergy. At the same time, while appreciating the need for positive good works, he is inclined to place relatively greater emphasis on those which are directly concerned with obtaining grace and relatively lesser store by simple ethical behaviour. And finally, although he is certain that man's bodily nature with its emotions is at root good, he is rather more suspicious of it and deals with it somewhat more severely. As a result he inclines to a jaundiced view of sex and a generally ascetic outlook which

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community.

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> Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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> Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority. 582 601 612 621 [793]

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside. 602 612 621 [609]

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard, and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each 612 591 602

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	Activity Initiating Relations Involving Provision of Goods or Services
Parish priest and curate and other clergy	Religious leadership and moral control. Regulation of personal conduct and family behavior. Settlement of conflicts and disputes. Recommendation of "characters" before the outside world. Regulation of formal beliefs and attitudes, supervision of education in the interests of the accepted *mores*. Priest supplies ceremonial and cultural leadership and takes an active part in nearly all recreational and cultural activity, along with the schoolteacher, in country parishes. Only at times of high ceremony or special devotion, as at marriages, or in pilgrimages and retreats, does the small farmer make use of town churches, though he and his wife often contribute to them	In country districts today formal religious relationship seems to be superseding older paternalistic dominance of parish priest. Little informal contact except in the case of young curates in local sport. But the priest still commands greatest respect and reverence and, in many cases, the love of his parishioners. He is still the local court of appeal and the arbiter of local custom. He is consulted a great deal by both men and women. His parishioners are jealous lest he overstep his sphere of authority, particularly in politics, yet they concur in granting him obedience in everything else. Nevertheless the older magical power he possessed once is gone. Today he is often superior to the small farmers in wealth and education, and is not one of them. His more usual associates are other clergy, big farmers, and townsmen	

[p.281]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

776 its happy termination from a farmer who told the
789 story in a traditional vein, but whose own record of
754 actuality it is. I might say that the role of the curate
[193] in the episode was probably very different from that which the countryman imagined it to be.

"A fellow he knows was hilling potatoes and he got three young fellows to help him. Each of them found an egg in the garden, one a hen's egg, the second a goose egg, the third a turkey's egg. [He told this with great dramatic effect.] Well, the man hadn't any poultry on his farm at all.

"The boys went home and told their mothers, and the women told other women about it till it got all round the parish. The curate heard of it and one day he went over to the farmer and
[793] stopped in. They talked about all sorts of other things, and finally the curate said, I am sorry for you. Why? said himself. Because you are going to have bad luck. And he told him about the eggs.

"Well, the farmer had terrible hardships. His stock died on him, he'd go out in the morning and find his ewes dead on their backs with their legs in the air and lambs dropped dead out of their wombs. He had five cows in calf and after that spring he had only one cow left. A pig died on him, and his sister took sick, like to die herself she was. [After a
[793] time] the curate came . . . and he held masses in the farmer's house.

"He's doing well again now and has a fine lot of stock. That was about four years ago."

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does 181
not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though [735]
occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good
take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their [273]
religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of
their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. [793]
Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having [848]
been recorded from the islands for years.

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; 181
this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed
in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west
coast.

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be 578
unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive lan- 181
guage, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman
when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she
would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his
part, even when she was very provoking.

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary 181
life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and
have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, [515]
is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland
allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts,
rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same
as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to
one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local [609]
affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down
to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity
when roused.

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises 551
all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names,
however, are those of families not long established on the islands,
while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now
without representatives.

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin,
as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, [444]
and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and
manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself.
It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames
may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the

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next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793 •
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

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779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [776] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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• 793 795 [763] In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

793 626 One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and funtionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "madhouse" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

793 829 [609] Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its [124] representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

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the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they were provided with food, given *curach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are

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624 875 more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held,
[793] because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are
apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the
[554] headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches.
[591] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

875 593 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him
875 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity
876 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in
[861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This
[123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents
[171] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority senti-
[829] ment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and
[123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

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with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career 624
provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these [123]
materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt
distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the [124]
king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows
what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma 624
which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become 154
a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain 157
of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his cus- 159
tomers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has
their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during [426]
the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and 624
jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money 556
deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility
toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with [455]
several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of
wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to [793]
deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement. . . . It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. . . . Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

> conditions appraised The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuard* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191)

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king.

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
[171] of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary. 557 793 [555]

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk. 554 555 [178] [241] [626] 554 461 [462] 555 [538] [178] 555 156 159

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight. 539 555 181 [526] [147]

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779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, [123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying
• 793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and
776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them
165 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are
562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of
[829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk
[788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obligations can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some
771 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—
828 and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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178 characterized by storytelling, games of various sorts, contests of strength, taunting
764 and mocking, mischief-making, and factional fighting (O Suilleabhain 1967: 26–129). It is hard to imagine a wake more somber than that which takes place in Inis Beag. Most of those who attend it do so before midnight and stay two to three hours, coming and going at will, while "only those who own him stay all night." Each visitor on arrival prays briefly at the bedside of the deceased or in the doorway of the room before expressing condolences, and at midnight all who are anywhere in the wake-house kneel and recite the responses of the Rosary intoned
[178] by the curate. Immediate kin express their grief in muffled sobs beside the corpse, but the ancient wailing lament for the dead, known as the "keen," no longer is
[273] heard in Inis Beag. Tables and benches are set up in the kitchen on which the
[276] men sit silently or converse in whispers with their neighbors, as they drink stout or whiskey and pass around clay pipes offered them "to keep the night awake."
[562] Most of the women congregate in the room of the dead, where only very old women smoke pipes. I have counted as many as 18 minutes of absolute silence at a wake and have never heard laughter.

[562] Before the procession to the church forms, men tend to gather in small groups outside the house of the deceased and women gather inside the house. After the corpse is placed in the coffin, close relatives and even friends shake the hand and kiss the face of the dead person before the top is nailed down; then the box is carried to the front street and placed across two chairs for prayers to be said and holy water sprinkled over it by the priest. A white sheet is draped on the casket, and six pallbearers shoulder it and carry it through a gap made in the stone fence to the road which leads to the chapel. The pallbearers are both agnatic and uterine kin of the deceased, excluding his sons, and two of them have the further duty of digging the shallow grave that night or in the morning before the body is interred. Moving slowly behind the coffin bearers, the procession is headed by the spouse and sons of the dead person, followed by his daughters, then women, and finally men in a long, slow moving, silent column; children other than the offspring of the deceased seldom join the procession, and the sexes walk separately.
[793] The curate may or may not lead this procession and the one the next morning, sometimes preferring to go ahead to church and cemetery by himself. A son of the dead person treats the grave diggers to stout in a pub before they set out with spades for the graveyard, as he does the pallbearers after they return from the
[178] church. In the past, the grave was dug as part of the funeral service, but this custom was altered as the cemetery became filled and occasionally diggers by acci-
[538] dent broke into previously interred coffins revealing their contents. A number of grisly legends and anecdotes tell of islanders buried alive by mistake, or whose bodies were partially preserved, as revealed by such accidents.

The procession from the chapel to the graveyard leaves the modern road, as we saw in Chapter 1, to follow an ancient, obliterated trail past a church believed to have been buried beneath the sand centuries ago, and then climbs the long hill of kitchen midden and sand to the gate of the cemetery. Here the column breaks up, some people going to the graves of relatives to pray and others to the newly opened grave. Men and women kneel separately at the graveside for the service (see Fig. 11), and many of the women cry as the casket is lowered into the shallow

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of [211] local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the [793] confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the [356] stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water [783] is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the [674] priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families in- [777] volved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring [776] them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of paganism. [788] Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured 754
by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the [576]
calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly 754
arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds 756
after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, [789]
and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those [789]
in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being [827]
captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious 787
practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced [793]
techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly [798]
to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills [178]
of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of [789]
magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal [174]
doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and 787
do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share 759
a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound 184
the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk 755
medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of [759]
magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting 753
ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on 175
February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on 796
November 1st.

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times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 775
"strangers' from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783]
penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771
magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776
God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754
presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178
right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826
tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822]
of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171]
symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793]
even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775
Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772
fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

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775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been
772 created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of
[173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of
[825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

157 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag
771 islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

157 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is
831 sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century.
[174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources: depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

157 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in
831 three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the
864 islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in
626 the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice
• 793 it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves
834 "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and
831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run
203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland
[609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

124 831 855 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 886 [123] Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 828 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 [193] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal [832] sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing [793]
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the [829]
greater share of scholarship funds.

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but 167
local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland 177
children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each 874
year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece— [658]
attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in [668]
1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school [829]
on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the [186]
local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths.

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the 167
causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of 168
the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle 653
playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe 344
rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for [793]
building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann [657]
grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed [829]
blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that [657]
church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of [874]
the activities of the language school.

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture 167
and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there 168
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which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

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434
226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip,
674 ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

831*
cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, 181
the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked 182
factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural 626
manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing 831*
the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme 626
methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as em- 793 •
ploying informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments
to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal [779]
classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as [872]
effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, [155]
since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative
years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and 831 *
even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative ex- 626
periences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorgan- 684
ization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and 793
talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis 831*
Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist 797
priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a 626
week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver 771
long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, [796]
even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to [783]
receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which
are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in [781]

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes
582 from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
[586] articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

561 When the whole population of a country district is on
571 the move on Sunday, the groupings are especially note-
worthy. There are occasional family groups driving in the
● 794 jaunty car, but generally the older men walk in a group of their own, the older women in another. The young men walk together by themselves and the young women by themselves. On Sunday afternoons the young men can be seen at the nearest crossroad standing together in groups of ten to thirty, while the older men keep more to their houses or visit one another. Before mass, when the weather permits, the men congregate outside the church and do not move in until all the women have entered and the priest has arrived. As the groups stand outside waiting for the mass to begin and gossiping back and forth, the older men stand off together and the younger men keep to themselves. In wakes, weddings, christenings, the same age groupings are observed.

561 There is, of course, no formal prescription of such be-
571 havior nor formal taboo against its infringement; the conduct rather springs from the divisions of the family and the solidarity of the individuals occupying similar status as these forces operate in everyday life. It is evident how close a connection exists between age grading and marital status.

[561] If behavior of this type reflects the age grading within the family and the transitions between age grades which are part
342 of the transformation of the family at marriage, so does the arrangement of the house interior. For a graphic representation of this characteristic arrangement, let the reader return to Figure 9. ! The houses of the small farmers show a remark-
[565] able uniformity over great areas; it becomes at once apparent that the variations in house types and forms are more associable with differences of class than of locality. But as we are dealing only with the small farmer or peasant class, we need concern ourselves only with the implications of the striking uniformity in house form among the country people. Throughout West and North Clare the house is rectangular

! [see p. 34. -Analyst]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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country "stations"[5] the elder men and women file in for 554
confession and come forward for Communion first. On the 888
road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant 561
discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. 554
No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 888
"stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural 521
community such personal communion is an indispensable [461]
bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men [203]
must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the commu- 561
nity with the outside world. The elder men, these same 554
father-owners; represent the interests of the community be- 888
fore priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and government official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to 561
round out the picture. 554

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The 888
better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of 276

[5] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland. [194]

Occupation or Technical Status	Goods or Service Provided Farm Family	Character of the Relations	A
Parish priest and curate and other clergy	Religious leadership and moral control. Regulation of personal conduct and family behavior. Settlement of conflicts and disputes. Recommendation of "characters" before the outside world. Regulation of formal beliefs and attitudes, supervision of education in the interests of the accepted *mores*. Priest supplies ceremonial and cultural leadership and takes an active part in nearly all recreational and cultural activity, along with the schoolteacher, in country parishes. Only at times of high ceremony or special devotion, as at marriages, or in pilgrimages and retreats, does the small farmer make use of town churches, though he and his wife often contribute to them	In country districts today formal religious relationship seems to be superseding older paternalistic dominance of parish priest. Little informal contact except in the case of young curates in local sport. But the priest still commands greatest respect and reverence and, in many cases, the love of his parishioners. He is still the local court of appeal and the arbiter of local custom. He is consulted a great deal by both men and women. His parishioners are jealous lest he overstep his sphere of authority, particularly in politics, yet they concur in granting him obedience in everything else. Nevertheless the older magical power he possessed once is gone. Today he is often superior to the small farmers in wealth and education, and is not one of them. His more usual associates are other clergy, big farmers, and townsmen	

[p.287]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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[793]
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Activity Initiating Relations Involv-
Provision of Goods or Services

boots of the bearers or else the type of barrow (of wood or straw) on which the coffin was borne, served to prevent the coffin from touching the soil. Again, in Ireland (at least, in parts of County Wexford), as in some European countries, wooden crosses or other memorials were left behind at such halts; in the Kilmore area of South Wexford, two crosses are carried with each funeral—one is left at the roadside at a halting-place, the other is set up on the grave. Cairns were often associated with funeral resting-places. It was customary in certain European countries for the bearers to partake of food and drink at resting-points; this, I am told, was the practice also in parts of Donegal and Waterford. Having rested for a while, fresh bearers took up the coffin, and the graveyard was ultimately reached. 764 [264]

I have already referred to the practice of laying down the coffin when a boundary-line was reached. My father, who died six years ago, at the age of 86, told me about a funeral-boundary custom in my native parish of Tuosist, in County Kerry, in the extreme southwest corner of Ireland. He was born in 1863 in the townland of Clogherane in Kerry, only a mile distant from the County Cork border. The high range of the Caha Mountains runs for over thirty miles through the peninsula of Béara, and separates at this point the Kerry parish of Tuosist from the Cork parish of Clanlawrence. During the Famine period of 1845–50 the men who lived at either side of the pass, Bealach Scairte, which led from one county (and parish) to the other, were employed, by way of a relief-scheme, in building a road across the pass. When the work ceased, the middle portion—about two miles in length—still remained undone. And so it remained until about twenty-five years ago, when, by the aid of State funds, the road now known as The Healy Pass was built across the mountain and the two ends were joined up. I often crossed by the old path from Kerry to Cork myself, before the new road was built; it was not so difficult in the early stage of the journey, but when the narrow defile (An Céim Cumhang) at the border was reached, one had to clamber as best one could over and between huge boulders which had fallen into the defile, some of them weighing forty or fifty tons, at a rough estimate. 764 491 [794]

Any funeral which now has occasion to pass from Cork to Kerry (or *vice versa*), can do so with the luxury of a hearse and motor-cars. But it was different when my father was a boy, and for long generations before that. He told me that one day, when he was on his way to the school at Glenmore—it was in the 1870's—he saw a large concourse of men, both young and old, passing along the old road at the foot of the mountain and through the fields. They were all carrying weapons or implements of some kind—some had hay-forks, he said, others had scythes, others hatchets, still others heavy sticks. He asked later on where they were going, and was told that they were going to meet a funeral, which was coming into Kerry from Cork, at the boundary-line. He told me that he knew well the Kerryman, who was leader of the large group; I knew him too, as he lived to a great age, and could speak no English. His name was Conchobhar Uaithne Ó Súilleabháin, and he lived at Shinnagh in the parish of Tuosist. My father told me that he heard later from some of those that were present at the boundary-line, that when the Corkmen appeared at the border, carrying the corpse tortuously on their shoulders, Conchobhar stepped in front of the bearers and stood with his stick raised on the large flat stone which marked the border at this point. The stone, by the way, is still known as Leac na gCorp (The Stone of the Corpses), and it is in the middle of the hollow which, avoiding the defile, was used by funerals, or by cattle 764 578 [191]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

blade with a slightly fish-tailed edge which is a little wider (5 inches) than the foot end (4½ inches): it has a cranked lift. In east Galway a similar loy is fitted with a curious two-piece haft: the foot-rest or "spade-tree" which goes into the socket of the blade is fastened to the stout ash shaft with iron bands (*cf.* Fig. 88). A similar loy was formerly used in Leix and other counties. In Limerick and Kerry the foot-piece is a small wedge pushed into the socket alongside the handle (Fig. 63). In parts of Galway and Mayo the foot-rest is carved out of a broad handle, and a variant of this is the loy of Cavan and Longford (Fig. 61), where the stout foot-rest is some distance above the socket and the handle is curved forward. In Clare, again, the handle bends backwards towards the user. 412

But loys of all shapes have long handles, about 4 feet in length, with no hand-grip. And they all take the handle in an open socket formed by bending the wings, which may or may not be further secured by nails, over the wood (Fig. 63). This method of hafting goes back to the prehistoric Iron Age in England. In Ireland, bill-hooks, axes and knives from crannogs and forts a thousand years old were hafted in this way, and though I am not aware of any ancient spades having been found in excavations, it is to the La Tène period (Chapter 4) that we should probably look for their origin. But until some attention and support are given to problems of cultural origins and evolution we are merely groping in the dark. Allowance must be made, therefore, for possible inaccuracies in the present account.

Loys of all types can be fitted with the ear or foot-rest on either side according to the practice of the locality or the individual user. Generally speaking, about eleven out of twelve loys are right footed, but towards the east the proportion of left-footed users increases, and as we reach the north-east, where, of course, the two-eared spade is universal, from one-half to two-thirds are left-footed diggers. Hence, presumably, the phrase applied in the north to those of the Roman Catholic faith: "they dig with the wrong foot."

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Fig. 64. [794]

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p. 202(B)]

121 IRELAND'S decline in population has been made possible by the
[167] availability of work elsewhere for her people. This article deals with one of the poorest and most isolated dis-
[434] tricts of the country, an island off the west coast which, for over 60 years, has received government help in various forms, as well as money from relations in America and in Britain. And the
[794] island, Inishbofin, has a reasonably contented community not untypical of many in the west of Ireland, all of them Roman Catholic in religion and depending on the priest for the main leadership. Emigration continues, but those left behind and those who return to the island have a leisured way of

*The material for this paper was partly col-
114 lected during a visit with the Geographical Society of Ireland in July, 1954. The author visited about half the houses on the island of
124 Inishbofin, and for one-quarter of the 96 households recorded the numbers of the household, information on those who had emigrated, the area of the farm, number of stock, methods of selling produce, and other sources of income, such as fishing or work on the roads. Within this range the answers were generally reliable, but no direct financial inquiry would be fruitful and on Inishbofin the number of sheep was
[578] almost invariably understated as there are jealousies between households about the use of commonage (see p. 205). In one case a farmer
[231] told the writer that he had "half-a-dozen sheep or so" but the following morning he had 23 lined up in his field for the dealer to see. It was impossible to resist the comment over the garden wall, "A fine lot of sheep this morning."

[113] Other aspects of Inishbofin are discussed in three articles in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 3, 1956, pp. 123–135, by J. P. Haughton, T. Jones Hughes, and J. A. K. Grahame.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Plate XI.

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ANCIENT PARISHES OF COUNTY CLARE.

To face p. 180.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

its old habits, as is illustrated by the persistence of cremation rites from the earliest megalithic phase to the end of the Bronze Age, almost on the threshold of the Christian era. 174

At some stage towards the close of the Bronze Age the expanding Celtic culture, carried with the sword across western Europe, was able to gain a foothold in the north-east, whence in time it imposed itself and its language on the whole of Ireland and later, by way of Argyll, on Scotland too. But the price of this conquest was the loss of many elements of Celtic culture or their adaptation to the Irish environment and to long-established native tradition. The art of the Celtic overlords, for example, quickly develops forms and features which are insular and distinctively Irish. In other words there is more continuity of folk ways throughout the prehistoric period in Ireland than in Britain. And this Irish-Celtic civilization of the Early Iron Age was able, during the following period, to maintain itself through the centuries when the Roman Empire embraced nearly all western Europe. The spirit of its art and life was almost untouched by the mass-production and standardization of imperial Rome. It survived long enough to be caught up and revitalized in the late Celtic phase by the fervour of a Christian faith whose adaptation to Celtic tradition is illustrated in Saint Columba's famous phrase: 'Christ is my druid'. It was a time of great [776] missionary enterprise, but at home its greatest achievement was the taming of the damp lowland forests which earlier peoples had shunned. Legendary history, now receiving confirmation from archaeological research, tells of technological advances and increasing population and settlement from about the seventh century onwards.

Irish Christianity grew up within the forms of Irish life: 795 the church claimed no martyrs and there is little evidence of conflict with older beliefs, which clearly were absorbed. The 175 Celtic church was peculiar in that the centres of its life were the great monasteries: there were no cities to form the seats of powerful bishops. Instead, the founders' kin retained the ownership of the monasteries, and the Celtic tradition survived in administration as in art and architecture. It was only after the ravages of the Vikings and the reassertion of pagan cults that the Irish Church was reformed by Saint Malachy, who established

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

175 a system of dioceses and raised St. Patrick's Church at Armagh
●[195] to the primacy in the eleventh century.

But it was the Norsemen who established the first port-cities
175 of Ireland—Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick—
162 and provided the Anglo-Normans with bases from which to attempt their conquest. It was the fate of these newcomers, as of earlier invaders, to be absorbed, but the towns which they and their successors established became the instruments of Anglicization. Yet outside the nine south-eastern counties where the Anglo-Norman influence was strongest, there are few towns which are older than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as late as 1841 less than 15 per cent of the Irish population was urban. It is significant that even today no inland Irish town has a population reaching 20,000: in the Republic, indeed, only one or two exceed 10,000, and that barely. It is the immemorial peasant tradition which dominates the heart of Ireland. In some inland counties the rural population is still as much as 90 per cent of the total: for the Republic of Ireland as a whole it amounts to 62 per cent, and the figure for the more industrialized counties of Northern Ireland is only slightly under 50 per cent. In Ulster the plantation of English and especially of Scots Presbyterian settlers in the seventeenth century was at last successful in maintaining its identity, though as we shall see the material culture is strongly moulded to its Irish environment. Partly because this region of entry has received through the centuries almost every culture-layer that has been deposited in Ireland, there is perhaps a greater variety of survivals in Ulster than in any other part of Ireland. In some ways this most British part of Ireland is also the most Irish.

Although the tribal nomadism of medieval Ireland has been
311 exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the pastoral tradition
361 has dominated Irish life through the ages. Cultivation was
175 certainly practised from Neolithic times, but the older crops, wheat and barley, were in course of time supplemented and in many parts replaced by oats, which became the corn of Ireland as of Scotland, food for men as well as animals. For half the year the arable land was under stubble, pastured and manured by grazing stock, so that the favoured acres around the settle-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

193 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [795] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliver's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

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One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and funtionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "madhouse" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

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Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

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Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition [114] of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One [874] of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological [648] seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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*831 155 175 178 181 779 795 798 [785] enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theologians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 155 178 181 779 798 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of [874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

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chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161–162). [874]

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better it God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105). [864]

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters. 844 864

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent co- 114 155

662 539 571 828 829 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

182 177 178 181 *831 • 795 779 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

*831 181 182 626 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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114 221 settlement, the baile or townland, kept its significance and its importance. In many cases what has passed for nomadism has been the ancient and normal practice of seasonal movement to the hill pastures, which is still not entirely abandoned and has left many traces in the life and landscape of the country (Chapter 6).

181 462 In essentials Ireland is and has been a peasant country, and it may be well to examine objectively some of the general characteristics of peasant society. A permanent link with the soil on which man lives and works is the essence of a peasantry; and in this work of the fields woman co-operates with man. For her, however, field work is a secondary task since her main interests must lie in the house and in the milking of the stock. Work with spade and plough and the care of the draught animals is for the men, although carrying—necessarily done by women in primitive communities where the men must have their hands free to use their weapons—often remains an activity of the peasant woman where not entirely superseded by animal transport. Where fishing and shore-collecting engage the men's attention the women's sphere of action and responsibilities are widened.

181 323 Among tasks in which the women of some peasantries play a leading part is the making of domestic pottery, but this tradition, though strong in Neolithic Ireland, gave way to the use of metal "pots" and vessels of wood, the making of which was the work of the men. Nor have local survivals of hand-made pottery, like the Barvas ware of the Hebrides, been recorded here.

181 443 ●796 Periodic gatherings for exchange and social intercourse are a feature of peasant life which has contributed to the growth of towns. The immemorial meetings in fairs and markets have been weakened by modern means of transport and by government marketing boards; and in some parts of the country the whole fabric of rural society is being undermined in consequence. As in North Africa to-day, the fairs were often held near some ancient burial place, and the assemblies were linked with religious festivals which brought

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major 181
operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of 443
peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair 796
seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the 181
cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures 789
of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic 181
magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, 842
common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of 181
marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the [582]
highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and 181
duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and 476

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVII

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS: THE COUNTRY TOWN.

Although the Celtic year began with All Hallows Day (November 1st), for our purpose we may regard it as starting on February 1st, or St. Bridget's Day. This was the first day of Spring, and of field work, for the Saint promised that every second day thereafter would be hard and dry. The circle of the year ran its course through the seasons, punctuated by certain fixed festivals and by the uncertain advent of births, marriages, illness and death. It is with the fixed festivals that we are concerned in this chapter. The four seasons have their opening days on the first of February, May, August and November, and the celebration of these days and the preceding Eves is a pagan survival breaking through the Christian calendar. The festivals of February and of November have been taken under the special protection of the Church through their association with St. Bridget and All Saints, but many traces of the "elder faiths" of nature worship live on, sanctified by tradition if not always by the Church. 221 796 805 [821] [996]

On St. Bridget's Eve (January 31st) it is customary for country children to pull rushes—they must not be cut with a knife—and take them home to be made into crosses by the family gathered round the fire. A fixed ritual, varying from one district to another, determines the procedure, and it traditionally included the St. Bridget's supper of pancakes or sowens taken from a plate laid on top of a rush cross. The 221 796 788 285

[p.153]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

796 crosses, of various patterns, are hung up over doors and The beds
988 and in the byre to bring good luck. Some of them are very
285 elaborate, but the oldest style, to judge from its Celtic form,
is the three-legged cross (Fig. 106) which is specially associated
[777] with cattle and is not, like the other shapes, taken to church to be blessed, a ceremony which is kept up even in parts of Belfast. In the Glens of Antrim a small bed is fashioned out of rushes and placed by the fire on St. Bridget's Eve: the door is left unlatched so that the Saint may come in and rest.

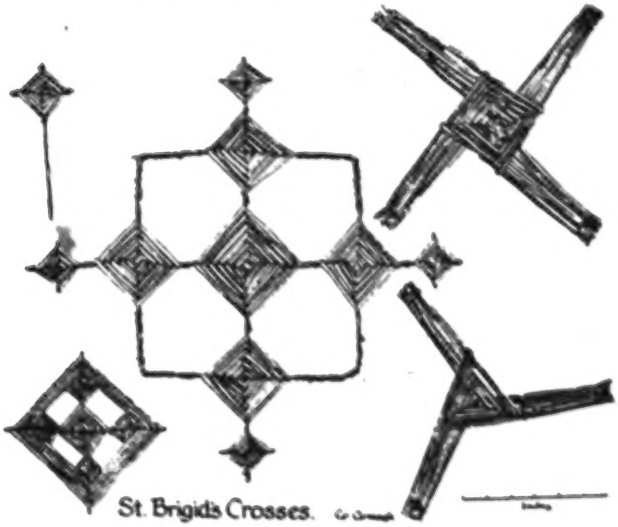

Fig. 106.

In Co. Kerry young lads called "Biddy Boys" wear hats of straw on the first of February, and in other parts of the west, I am told, "Bridget Belts" of plaited straw are worn.

796 The next important day in the calendar comes about the
221 middle of the three months of Spring, that is at the time now kept as a national holiday in North and South alike—St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. This is regarded as the proper time to commence sowing, and the countryman counts on

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

planting his first potatoes on that day, when St. Patrick 796
"turned the warm side of the stone uppermost." In the 221
Antrim Glens the hay meadows are closed on St. Patrick's Day, and under the rundale system the animals which had run through the townland from Hallowe'en were now carefully herded or driven to the rough grazing grounds so that they could not trespass on the unfenced cropland. A little later come the many memories of seed-time ritual and the spring sacrifice now represented in Easter egg-rolling games.

The May festival ranked next in importance to that of November: these are the major turning points of the year, where Nature decks herself in fresh green or in "rich Autumn's golden quittance." On the first days of these months the cattle were numbered, and it is a commonplace that these are still the rent or "gale days" in Ireland. On May Day the young crops were visited with torches and the cattle blessed before being driven to the mountain booleys, and hill-top fires played a large part in the rites. These Beltane fires were originally [372] need-fires, that is they were produced by the friction of two pieces of wood. All hearth fires were extinguished on May Eve, and re-lit from the sacred fire. It is still a common [777] superstition that it is unlucky to give away fire, even as light for a pipe, on May Day, for that would be to give away your luck for the year. In Donegal it is considered unlucky to be the first house to show smoke on May morn: the cattle are milked and the byres cleaned before the fire is made up. The Beltane ritual included the eating of oatcakes "which must *not touch iron," and dancing three times clockwise round the* fire. Many volumes could be written on the customs and superstitions connected with this festival, touching fire and food, salt and butter, the rowan and the flowers of the field, especially the marsh-marigold or May-flower. The city urchins have turned the celebrations into a prolonged parading of May Queens and collecting of pennies. See Chapter 19.

It is probable that fires continue to be lit on May eve in 372
some parts. Certainly the mid-Summer festival which 221
follows on St. John's Eve (June 23rd) still keeps its hold, for 796
then fires will be seen blazing on hilltops in almost every Irish

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

372 county. Originally they were intended, it is thought, to keep
796 the sun, now about to decline, on its course, but they also
221 played a part in the blessing of crops and animals. In Donegal until lately a burning turf was flung into each patch of growing corn. These and the other relics recorded are of course, not peculiar to Ireland: they are part of the common heritage of the ancient civilization of Eurasia. There is evidence that this festival was important also in fishing communities. The inhabitants of the Galway Claddagh, for instance, marched through the town in procession on St. John's Eve, "gaily dressed and miming, to the accompaniment of music; they collected money for merrymaking from the townspeople, and spent the evening dancing, drinking, and lighting bonfires in their own quarters."

796 The Lammas festival is nowadays particularly associated
221 with fairs, and the first of August, is referred to in Gaelic as "Lewy's Fair." But other traces of old custom survive. My colleague Dr. O'Brien tells me that in mid-Down, on the first Sunday in August, crowds of countryfolk assemble, accompanied by fiddlers, at the great prehistoric hill-top cairn on Slieve Croob. The "Criocan Thorn," in the heart of Slieve Bloom, is the scene of similar assemblies on the last Sunday in July. Here they dance to the pipes, and bilberries are eaten: the day is called "Fraochán (bilberry) Sunday."

So the year goes on its course to the culminating festival of All Hallows. We have touched on one of its former functions, the reunion of the family after the summer booleying, in Chapter 6. It is an occasion of reunion still: all Irish
[574] folk like to be at home on this date, which is in some ways the most significant of the year, for it corresponds with what was once the New Year. Fires were lighted to mark the end of the
[372] period of growth and to herald the new year. (In England the ceremonies have become assimilated to the Guy Fawkes celebrations on November 5th). As at Beltane, the Halloween fire used long ago to supply light to rekindle the domestic fire, which now serves as a substitute in the many games of divination played by the young at this time. Hazel-nuts, apples and other fruits of the autumn take an important place

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

in the combined pastimes of feasting and foretelling the future, 796
and cabbages figure in many an old game, for they are of 221
ancient lineage: the potato, barely three centuries introduced, has not displaced them in traditional ceremony. It is the young folks' day. Many of the games played turn upon the theme of identifying the future husband, and we shall see in the following chapters that match-making and marriage were among the functions of the great festivals, closely linked up with the magic of the earth's increase and the prosperity of crops and animals.

In parts of Ireland curious traditions attach to St. Martin's Eve (November 10th) and the feast on the following day. A sheep or a fowl is ceremonially killed and its blood [782]
sprinkled in the corners of the house. No wheel must turn on the day of the festival. Finally there are the mid-winter celebrations, now marked by Christmas and New Year, which carry the year round towards St. Bridget's Eve. On St. Stephen's Day (December 26th) the hunting of the wren was formerly an occasion for general revel: it is now little more than a children's game.

We must conclude this chapter with some suggestions, 443
necessarily brief and tentative, as to the importance of these 527
seasonal gatherings in the social and commercial life of peasant Ireland. From very early times the major ritual assemblies of the year provided opportunity for exchange of goods, of livestock and of news, and for the maintenance of folk tradition and bardic skill. In ancient Ireland it is recorded that there were two kinds of assemblies, the "aonach" for pleasure and the "aireacht" for business, but it seems probable that, like the great fairs of recent times, they served both purposes. It is suggestive of the ritual and religious element in the old assemblies that they generally met upon hill-tops—often the sites of prehistoric burials—and that they took place at the fixed times marking the beginning of the Celtic seasons. May and November remain the favourite periods for country fairs, and the hiring fairs were always held at these times. A century ago the February and August fairs were also of considerable importance. The Old Lammas Fair

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

It is stated that in
Mayo a ploughman would be called in to shake a woman at a 845
difficult childbirth, presumably because it is he who prepares the ground and shakes the seed which brings new life to the fields.

Music, dancing, games and dramatic performances also 536
played their part in the seasonal gatherings, and one may 527
hazard the guess that the Irishman's passion for betting 796
derives from this source. A ritual element, as in the wake 842
games mentioned in the previous chapter, can often be detected, for example in the following account taken from the source quoted above. It describes a May game or pantomime from the Louth-Armagh border, modified survivals of which were current through most of the 19th century in the Slieve Gullion district. "On May day the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby.' Around it a man and woman (generally his wife) dressed also fantastically with straw, dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures, the figure at the same time being kept moving by the rustic maiden that supports it. These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children also attend (some of them from a considerable distance) to see this figure and exhibition, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children. Money is collected, and when the actors and musician have received some remuneration the remainder is laid out in drink, and the evening passes by jovially." This magic pantomime was originally intended to secure the success of the year's crops.

Such rites and gatherings have gradually been suppressed 517
or won over by the Church; and Sunday evening is now the 526
favourite recreation time for dancing and games. Among the older games, hurley is most popular, and horse-racing has by no means lost its appeal although it has suffered like other amusements from commercial exploitation. On many a

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796 ●

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-
322 lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples
443 are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there
543 were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of
443 ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 83), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for
[584] a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts,
[582] binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints'
●796 days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1]See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland, 1796–97*, 250.
[2]R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 253.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

them have had to be suppressed: they became occasions of law- 796
lessness and bloodshed. Like the fairs they drew their adherents
from several rival neighbourhoods and therefore brought 796
feuding clans together. The following is a typical comment of 579
the early nineteenth century: 'On these patron days, which [786]

[322]
[415]

FIG. 83. Turnery. (1) Wooden bowl, Co. Armagh. (2) Butter stamp, Co Fermanagh. (3) Butter stamp, Co. Antrim. (4) Ladle, Co. Antrim.

generally fall out on Sundays, great numbers of young persons of both sexes assemble, tents are erected, music, dancing, drinking and every kind of excess takes place, and the revel not infrequently terminates in battery and bloodshed, from the contention of adverse factions'.[1] Sir William Wilde's description

[1]W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 3, 245 (of Listerling, Co. Kilkenny).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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796 578 of the Pattern of Glendalough in Co. Wicklow was written later in the century. The fights would begin early on the eve of the patron's day, on 23rd June; 'the scene was remarkable, an immense crowd had bivouacked among the ruins (of the seven churches of Glendalough) and were cooking their evening meal, gipsy-wise, throughout the space of the sacred enclosure. Dancing, drinking, thimble-rigging, prick-o'-the-loop and other amusements continued even while the bare-[788] headed venerable pilgrims and bare-kneed voteens were going their prescribed rounds. Towards evening the fun became fast and furious . . . the crowd thickened, sticks were brandished and the faction fight began. It was an unsafe locality unless a stipendiary magistrate and about 100 police could keep the combatants, the Byrnes, Tools and Farrells, etc., separate'.[1]

796 786 Some of the most notorious patterns were connected with holy wells named after a saint but not necessarily located near an old church site. Reading the accounts of witnesses in the early nineteenth century it is hard to believe that religious devotion could be associated with such profanity, but granting that social conditions in the decades before the great famine must have contributed to scenes which the church itself described as 'drunkenness and debauchery', there was, as with the wakes for the dead, a vestige of innocent paganism in the rituals. Some patterns survived their banning by the church and have persisted, stripped of their grosser elements, to this day. The [788] celebrated wells of St. Patrick at Struell in Co. Down, which are still visited by a few pilgrims on St. John's Eve, were the scene of the gathering of great crowds of people and of strange rites until a few years ago. Here as often happened the chief celebration was on the Eve of the Feast of St. John the Baptist and not on the patron saint's day, so that it was not strictly a pattern. Another Midsummer gathering which has often been described is that of St. Ronogue's Well near Cork, which has changed beyond recognition since Mrs. Hall, in 1824, described it as an assembly of 'the worthless and dissipated of the whole county. To the superstitious rites of the morning succeeded the saturnalia of the evening;—the having drunk of the water being considered as a licence for every sort of debauchery . . .

[1]Sir William Wilde, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1873), 449.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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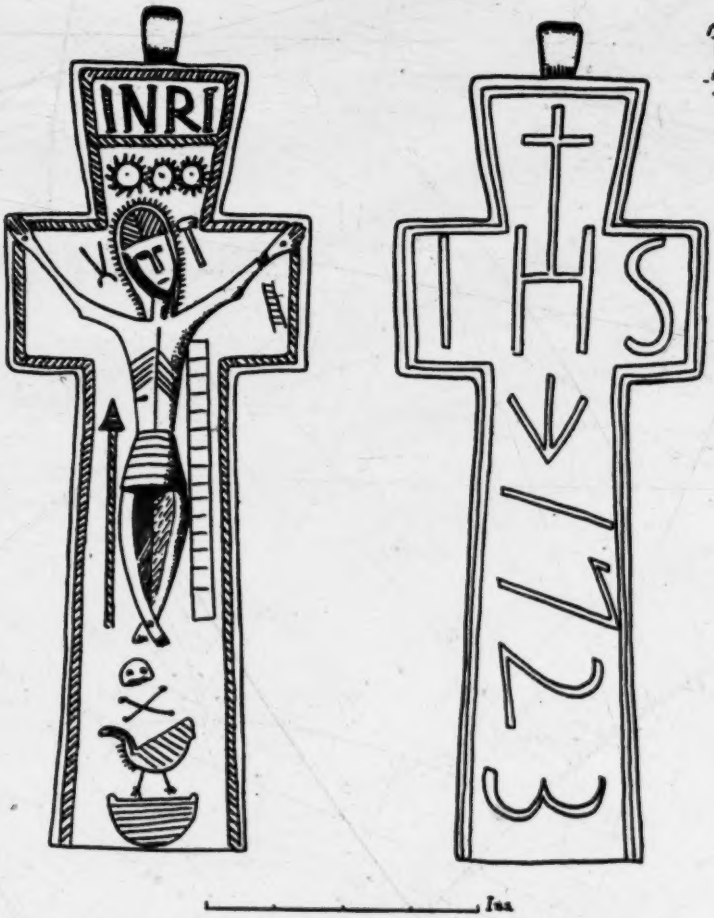
788
-532



1ss

FIG. 84. Portable crucifix ('penal cross'). Found at Hilltown, Co. Down.

dancing, shouting, fiddling, courting, drinking and fighting'.[1] 796 [786]

In some celebrated instances the holy wells are associated with lakes and islands, for example Gouganebarra at the source 788 of the River Lee, and the most famous of all Irish pilgrimages 778

[1]Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character Etc.*, 1, 281.

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XIV. *Calendar Customs.*

●796 178 Most of these customs are so widely spread as to require only brief notice, and were noted, before 1816, by the Rev. James Grahame, the curate of Kilrush. They comprise the eating of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and of eggs at Easter; playing tricks and "fooling" on April 1st; setting May bushes before houses on Old May Day; lighting bonfires on Midsummer Eve, dancing round them, and driving cattle through them; beginning hunting on Michaelmas Day; Hallowe'en practices on October 31st; midnight processions, with music, on certain nights in the week before Christmas, (which had just been discontinued in 1816); and mummers, wren boys, and bull-baiting on St. Stephen's Day.[5] The May bush died out, I believe, during the dark years of the Great Famine; I never heard of any limit, other than the clearance of the crops, for beginning hunting; but, except the bull-baiting and the waits, all the rest still exist.

It is well to have to record the dying out of the custom of killing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, even if it springs from [825] laziness rather than from humanity. "Who cares for the birds but God!" was once retorted when I "put in a word for" the wren. There is probably a very old prejudice against it, for the "droleen" stood confessed as a "little druid" among birds, and the "druid" of Irish tradition was not the majestic white-robed priest of the oak grove, but a sorcerer who injured meanly by spells, a foe of God and of His servants, but a contemptible and impotent one. This feeling was expressed in the contemptuous [889] term *shandruee* ("old druid") for a worthless old man, in use in my boyhood. How far the wren rites have orthodox ritual or etiquette is doubtful. Formerly the youth of a whole district combined as wren boys, but now they go in bands of from two to six,[6] and the wren bush is often a mere branch with a few rags and no wren. A structure of evergreens, in general design like a *crux ansata*, covered with streamers and with the dead bird hung

[5] Mason's *Parochial Survey* (1816), vol. ii.

[6] See Plate IX., from a photograph taken on December 26th, 1910, by Mrs. O'Callaghan Westropp of Coolrough.

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up or in a sort of cage,[7] was till lately carried around. There is still sometimes to be found tolerable dancing and singing, as a break in the weary succession of small begging parties, shuffling and playing stupid buffoonery. The verses usually begin :—

> "The wran, the wran, the king of all birds,
> On Stephen's Day was caught in the furze."

178 539 796

but the next lines are greatly varied :—

> "Although he is little, his family is great,
> And (*or* So) I pray you all ladies (*or* good Christians) to give him a treat."

I noted the following haunting lines on Stephen's Day in 1909 :—

> "Put your hand in your pocket and take out your purse
> And give us some money to bury the wran."

Equally melodious were lines in vogue some thirty years ago :—

> "We broke his bones with sticks and stones,
> And give us some money to get us a drink."

There was another form, evidently from an "artificial" source, heard by my elder brothers about Carnelly, perhaps sixty years ago or more :—

> "Landlady, Landlady, give us some cheer,
> Landlady, Landlady, give us some beer.
> If you give us of the best,
> We'll pray your soul in Heaven may rest.
> If you give us of the worse,
> We'll pray it will (*or* may) be quite the reverse."

It was generally believed that St. Stephen had hid in a cave, and that his retreat had been betrayed to his enemies by the wren. Mummers are now reappearing, after a long lapse of time, among the wren boys.

796 178

Another practice which my predecessors often saw before the Famine was the carrying of a sort of scarecrow figure, to represent St. Brigit, by women in August about the Clare Castle district. St. Brigit's rites in some places take place on Lady Day (August 15th).

Killing an animal, or a goose, at Martinmas and a goose at Michaelmas are of recent occurrence. On St. John's Eve I have, as a child, leaped over or passed between fires, and been told of cattle being forced to do the same. About 1895 very few bonfires were lighted, and the custom appeared likely to expire, but of late the

[7] A somewhat similar wren's cage has been procured for the National Museum, Dublin.

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178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased
[789] the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites connected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and
527 then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
175 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (phonetically Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in 1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh (Tuanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877 onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh ("Fair or Assembly Crag")[8] on the bare hill over Termon in the Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in 1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings") in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

823 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[8] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

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A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued from* p. 213)

XVI. *Patterns and Religious Rites.*

796 The three chief *patterns*, (or religious rites at wells and holy places), were held on Iniscatha or Scattery Island in the Shannon, at Killone near Ennis, and on Iniscaltra in Lough Derg. To all three thousands of persons came from Clare, Kerry, and more distant counties, until by degrees dissipation crept in and the clergy suppressed the festivals, leaving only a purely devotional shadow.

The Scattery pattern was held at the beginning of March, and celebrated St. Senan's victory over the "Cata" monster.[1] Its best record is a stone, which I last saw and sketched in 1875 in a garden at Naboclish Lodge in Kilkee, to which it had been brought from Kilrush by the late Capt. Kennedy. It had been brought over from the island to Kilrush when the pattern was suppressed by Dean Kenny,—some say in 1810 and others "before 1827," though the pattern was still celebrated in 1816. John Windele some sixty years ago thus copied it:—

"In the name of God, Amen | Bare head, bare feet, all pious Christians are to kneel | At every station say or read, five Paters, Aves and a Creed | Five times round each blessed place | singing hymns and partner (?pater) beads. | Round the altar is a first | And two noted stations on the strand annex (?are next). | Round the Island on the water's edge: | Fourth, the Nun's[2] tomb on the strand du (*sic*) west. | Whoever kneels and read (*sic*) a prayer will not meet a watery grave. | Bringing up a stone to Monument Hill[3] perform there and that's the fifth. | Sixth, N. East a place called Laoth[4] and at our Lady's church women stop. | Eighth, the large church. Ninth is the S[illegible] (? Saviour's). Tenth is the bed called St. Synan's grave.[5] | The well is eleventh finish and pray for ye souls of ye erectors of this blessed place."

[1] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 477.

[2] St. Cannara, buried on the strand as the saint would not permit her to land on the island.

[3] Knocknanangel to the south of the cathedral.

[4] Lacht.

[562] [5] No woman dared approach, and still less enter, St. Senan's church, the most northern of the group. For a description and plan see *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., pp. 276–89. "S. F." says, (*The Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 547), that no woman dares to approach the Lady's Well. [P. 235]

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The names Thomas, James, and Patt. Cusack, and carvings of the round tower, Crucifixion, an angel, and a figure with a chalice, also appeared, as well as St. Senan with a crozier driving out a beast with a serrated back, belly, and tail, and the inscription "St. Synon and the Angel casting the amphibious beast out of the blessed Island." I could not find the stone after 1878. The devotees in 1816 took their rounds about the holy well annually on their bare knees, and it was the practice of those who could not conveniently attend to hire for a small payment some poor person to act as their substitute. The pattern was sometimes held on Easter Monday, and, as it was degenerating into drunkenness, the Roman Catholic Dean of Killaloe endeavoured to stop it.[6] His curate also persuaded several women to enter St. Senan's church, but their families were soon after evicted and left the Island, so that the fame of the saint's legendary misogyny was established more firmly than ever. But in 1878, when I first visited the Island, women entered the church without protest.

796 ●
[776]
[776 562]

At Killone the great patterns have been long since suppressed,[7] and I could learn nothing about the actual rites. "Rounds" are still performed at other times, being frequently vowed in sickness or for a sick relative. The rite consists in going on the bare knees, with bare head, sunwise round the green tongue of land from the altar between the crags and the lake. This being done, prayers are offered at the altar itself. Some pilgrims also wash their heads, feet, and hands in the bathing tank. The details vary according to the vow, and count is kept of the rounds and prayers by the rounded stones on the altar.[8] None of the observances seem to extend to the neighbouring abbey. The Pilgrim's Road is still visible, running north from the well far towards Ennis. The altar was last repaired by Anthony Roche, an Ennis merchant, in 1731.

The patterns on Iniscaltra, in Lough Derg, have long been nearly forgotten. In 1877 an old boatman told me that he had heard from old people of the flotillas of boats from every side of the great lake, the villages of tents, and the crowds of beggars,

[6] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 459, under Kilrush parish.

[7] The summer pattern on St. John's Day still attracts a fair number of devotees, but seems to have no very exceptional feature.

[8] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate III. [P. 236]

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796 devotees, and merrymakers. A legend was then told how a wild young squire of the Brady family in attempting to carry off a lovely peasant girl from the pattern was overtaken by the vengeance of 796 St. Caimin. The boat was upset by a squall, and the squire and 688 his "understrapper" (a foster-brother) were drowned; the girl and boatman clung to the keel, and floated ashore unharmed. The local horror of the sacrilege was emphasized by the gruesome addition that, when "the young master" was waked in the "big house" and the foster-brother in the barn, all stole away to the better entertainment, and, when the barn was unlocked in the morning, the bare skeleton of the instigator of the outrage was found covered with rats and *keerogues* (black-beetles). The horrible "turf rick legend"[9] says that the Iniscaltra pattern lasted for three days.

796 Other less famous patterns were held on the sandhills near Lehinch in honour of St. MacCreehy. The celebration got shifted to "Garland Sunday" (*Domhnach cruim duibh*, the last in July), and to the honour of St. Brigit of Kildare. It was [178] finally replaced by races, which at Kilnaboy and elsewhere may also represent degenerated patterns.

At St. Lachtin's well, near Miltown Malbay, a few poor old people may be seen, especially on Sundays and Thursdays, making "rounds." These are usually two sets of five each,—the first on the causeway round the well, and the second on a wider circle "sunwise." The devotees take off their shoes, stockings, and hats, (or, if women, their shawls and bonnets), and start for the well repeating the prescribed prayers. They climb to kiss a cross on the branch of one of the weird old weather-bent trees in the hollow, and, lastly, pour water from the well on their faces, hands, and feet.[10]

Patterns were held near the very early church of Termonchronain, near Castletown in the Burren, and, not many miles away, on the last day of summer "rounds" are performed at the two altars of the oratory of St. Colman MacDuach at Kinallia.[11] Stations were held till late years at Kilmoon, and at Tobermogua,

[9] *Cf.* vol. xxi., p. 348.

[10] *Limerick Field Club Journal*, vol. iii., p. 15.

[11] *Cf. ante*, p. 50, and Plate IV. [P. 237]

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and at Noughaval, both in Burren. At the last well a huge hollow ash collapsed before 1896, and the fragments rooted and grew up into considerable trees; the pattern was on Feb. 10th. The stations at Kilcameen Hospital near Kilfenora had nearly ceased by 1839. In that year the *Ordnance Survey Letters* record others at Tobermacraven well, in Kilshanny parish; Clooney, Corcomroe; Moy, Ibrickan, (Sundays and Thursdays); Tobernamanorha, at Moyasta Creek; St. Martin's well at Kilinny or Clarefield in Moyarta;[12] Toberkeereen, Killoffin, (on Sundays); and Ballynagun, Tobermurry in Drimeliky, and Tobersenan in Carhoo, these three being in Kilmacdúan. We have little information about these rites in eastern Clare, but stations subsisted in 1839 at Uggoon; St. Brigit's well, Kiltanon; the Tobermochullas at Knockdrumleague and Fortanne; St. Senan's well, Killaneena, Clonlea; and at Kilseily. Although opposed by the parish priest, stations were also held at Tobermaleery, south from Newmarket-on-Fergus.

Somewhat different from ordinary patterns are those held on Sundays at Lough Fergus.[13] A credo, paternoster, and other prayers are said, and then the devotees make a circuit round certain cairns, one called the "altar" having a rude "cross" at which the "rounds" commence. There is also a well, Toberlonan, a little more than a mile from the lake near Clooney church (Corcomroe), at which "rounds" are performed, but these are reputed to be useless until after the rites are done at the lake, with which the well is supposed to communicate by a long passage. It is possible that the Lough, being the source of the chief river in County Clare, was an object of worship in early times, as no church nor saint is connected with the shore and cairns, and the "cross" is natural.

There are "rounds" at other wells, but these depend for their time and details on the devotee, who very often does not know even the name of the patron of the well.

[12] Moyasta and Moyarta (Moyfertagh) are at opposite ends of the parish of the latter name.

[13] An excellent account, with a photograph of the "altar" and "cross," was published by Dr. George U. MacNamara in the *Limerick Field Club Journal*, vol. ii., p. 217.

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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31] 585 796 626

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on [796]
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the offi-
ciating clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient
tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured
soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the
church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hun-
dreds of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appear-
ance in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. How- [764]
ever, funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

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and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical anecdotes and ballads. 771 828

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dispossessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island. 000 771 776

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him. [753] [752] [796] • [825]

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if 771 775 [123]

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791 there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience,
795 "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

795 Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

• 796 The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St.
[178] Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are
[182] incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

785 Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming,
796 and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent
[262] impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people
[273] there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only,
796 which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St.
[527] Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the
[171] dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which,
[292] if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

[292] [574]

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

796 527 628 [782] [578] [834] [273]

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

796 [178] [789] [529]

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

[539] 796 527 [782]

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796 627 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is [574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [361] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262] mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [363] sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [674] St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

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Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761] explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and 765 prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

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When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602] compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [554] prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322] of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463] assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

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The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for 178 the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated. [211]

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families involved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary [798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan- [788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [787] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [743] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [775] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured 754
by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the [576]
calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly 754
arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds 756
after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, [789]
and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those [789]
in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being [827]
captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious 787
practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their accul- [793]
turative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced [798]
techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly [718]
to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills [789]
of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of [174]
magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited 787
specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and 759
do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share 184
a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound 755
the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided [759]
by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a 753
magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on 175
February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on 796
November 1st.

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175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
198 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
776 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
796 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
776 roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[822] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[778] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to
[233] attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

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539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [182] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 776 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 776 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck 782 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [231] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [825] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood [237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 711 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 715 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as employing informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative experiences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorganization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XVIII

FAIRS AND GATHERINGS

THE Irish countryman enjoys nothing so much as 'a gathering' of people, and when he is forced to leave his native land he does not willingly settle down away from large urban centres. At home a crowd goes to his head like poteen. The daily routine of life on an isolated farm presents him with few opportunities for seeing people from outside his immediate neighbourhood, and on fine summer evenings his favourite pastime is to throw himself against a roadside ditch with a knot of companions and watch the passers-by. That the remarkably large attendances at rural churches and chapels owe something to the social needs of a scattered population is suggested by the phrase, applied to someone who arrives late at chapel: 'he missed the mass but hit the gathering'—he had something worth while for his trouble. In the Irish laws the freeman's rights of assembly were carefully defined: there were assemblies for transacting legal business (the oireacht), and others for commerce and games (the aenach) which came to be called fairs. With the coming of Christianity the traditional gatherings at sacred sites were transmuted into patterns (pardons), at which the new religion was quickened by practices of the elder faiths. In fact most gatherings served more than one purpose. The secret assemblies of Roman Catholics at 'mass rocks' in penal days no doubt also provided opportunities for social and commercial dealings, and the 'sacrament Sabbaths' of Presbyterian Ulster were great gatherings having something of the nature of fairs. Tents and booths were erected for the occasion, and indeed they were popularly known as 'holy fairs'.

Although the fair has lost something of its former significance in Northern Ireland, thanks to Government marketing schemes

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

824 known instances when a branch accidentally broken from a fairy thorn was carefully tied back in position.

The policy of the Church was to attach new myths to old
797 rites, but only occasionally has the thorn tree been nominally
312 won over to Christianity by dedication to local saints or by its
778 association with sacred sites, with wells or Lammas celebrations, as for example the Criocan Thorn in the heart of Slieve Bloom.[1] On the other hand well-worship has had less stubborn roots, and 'holy water' has been more readily absorbed into Christian ritual. Nearly all the holy wells have close associations with the saints. Over 3,000 examples have been listed, most of them now half forgotten, others visited in secret and a declining number openly resorted to for cures. It is not difficult to understand the universal attraction of a spring of pure water. In the eyes of countryfolk a sense of mystery attaches to the upwelling of a spring well: it is considered lucky to have access to such a source of domestic water—a true 'well', not a hole bored in the ground—and one is invariably told that the local well yields the purest water for miles around, or even 'in all Ireland'. The attributes of purification, healing and fertility are natural concomitants of the magic welling of spring water, but besides possessing supernatural powers of this kind the holy wells are regarded as having had miraculous origins. The most famous sites where patterns are held have already been mentioned: the local holy well is rather an ever-present source of healing resorted to in need. One cannot but think of an ancient cult of waters springing from deep sources in primitive religion which was reinforced and adapted by successive intrusive cultures from the megalithic to the Christian (Pl. 16).

The ritual of 'paying rounds' at a well frequently involves
312 associated stones and trees. A sunwise circuit of the well is
778 made and the pilgrim, after taking a drink from the well,
788 hangs a rag or a rosary on an adjacent bush. The ritual commonly includes also tracing with a pebble on a stone of the well-covering the mark of a cross which has been incised by countless other pebbles. This practice has a bearing on the mysterious cup-marked stones and basin-stones (bullauns) which are associated with numerous ritual sites, including wells, for I

[1] V. Cornish, *Historic Thorn Trees in the British Isles*, 53.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

important subject somewhat bald. The pagan Irish, of course, reverenced wells, and the famous "King of the Waters" in Mayo was connected with St. Patrick by early biographers.[9] With the usual wise tactfulness of the ancient Irish missionaries all that was harmless was adopted into the new religion, and the wells lost none of their old observances and honour. The dedications of the Clare wells form a most valuable record, for, even when the founder of the church was forgotten, or a new patron invoked, the well usually kept the name of the ancient local saint. Unfortunately since about 1850 names of wells have been locally forgotten, and a re-dedication, often to St. Joseph, is common. Strange to say, the noteworthy saints Enda and Luchtighern are forgotten at the wells at their churches. The early mediæval life of St. Senan, (Colgan, *Vita S.S.*, March), says that, when that saint was born at Magh Lacha, Moylough, there was no water at hand to baptize him,—a rare thing in County Clare,—so he told his mother to pull up three rushes, and a spring welled out. The tale was still told in 1816.[10] The life of St. Mochulleus (Mochuille or Mochulla), about 1141 tells us how that early seventh-century saint struck a rock near a lake to the north of Tulla and three streams broke out. The well dedicated to him to the east of Loch Graney is evidently intended, and *two* streams still flow from it down the hillside. Some have supposed the wells of Tobereendowny, ("well of the King of the Sabbath," or, as suggested by Prof. Macalister and others, "of the world"),—were dedicated to a pre-Christian deity. Tobereevul is dedicated to Aibhill.[11] The flooded dolmen, Tobergrania, is named from Finn's fugitive spouse, "Granny's bed" occurring also as a dolmen name in Clare. Among Christian dedications we have Tobercruhnorindowan (of "the creator of the world") at Killard, Tober Isa (of "Jesus"), and Tobernacrohynaeve (*i.e.* Tobar-na-croiche-naoimh, of "the Holy Cross"). To the Virgin are dedicated wells at Drimelihy-Westby, Kilmacduan, and Killadysert. Of non-local saints,—usually, it is probable, late dedications,—we find St. John has

[9] *E.g.*, in the *Tripartite Life*, ed. W. Stokes, among the early "annotations" of Tirechan.

[10] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., under Kilrush Parish.

[11] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 186.

823
[A7]
776
823
778
o [P 230]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in [illegible]e fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to sup[illegible]ontact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or in[illegible] sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

831*
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since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative
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their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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407 version of the foot-plough. This is an almost unexplored field
241 of rural history. Mr. Aitken is of the opinion, however, that the left-sided plough goes with the use of the right hand as holding hand.

At any rate it is interesting to find that in Ireland the majority
412 of diggers use the right foot, and although in theory the
241 wooden foot-rest of the native one-eared spade can be fitted either to left or right of the narrow blade it is, in the west, almost invariably on the right side. Presumably only habitually left-handed people use the left foot. In eastern Ireland, on the other hand, and particularly in the Protestant districts of the north-east, the left foot is normally the digging-foot, though judging from the proportions of right to left (about one to three in the north-east), the old Irish stocks continue to dig with the right foot. Hence there is a basis of fact in the phrase 'digging
[539] with the wrong foot'. (To say that someone digs with the other
[798] foot is in Ireland an oblique way of referring to his religious faith.) The old Irish spade, we have seen, is a highly specialized tool. It may have been preceded by some kind of hoe or planting stick such as are represented today by the graffan or the steeveen which we describe in the following chapter.

We have no direct evidence of Bronze Age ploughs in Ire-
174 land, though marks of furrows have been observed underneath
407 burial barrows of that period in Jutland and Holland and it has been claimed that the *ard* had reached the west Baltic region
412 before the end of the Neolithic phase. However this may be the sod-cutting spade, which could be supplemented by the wooden shovel, is not likely to have been introduced much before the beginning of the Christian era, since it required an efficient knowledge of iron-working. By facilitating the building of ridges it would have improved crop yields during a climatic period, the sub-Atlantic, which was even wetter than at present. A mould-board plough capable of forming ridges did not reach Ireland on present evidence until about the seventh century, and as we have seen it had not been adopted in parts of the west until the nineteenth century. Thus the narrow spade, coming into use at about the same time as oats, would have been a factor in stabilizing settlement by permitting ridge cultivation on the outfield grazing ground round about. This is speculative,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, [174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. [184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after [178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, [798] rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of paganism. [788] Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray [789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered [755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and [787] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. [312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know 798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as 178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of [743] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en- [787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that [829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their [776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where [115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night [775] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 798
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 177
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incorporating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [346] [778]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, 776
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [171]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured 754
by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the [576]
calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly 754
arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds 756
after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, [789]
and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those [789]
in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being [827]
captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious 787
practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced [793]
techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly [798]
to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills [178]
of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of [789]
magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal [174]
doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and 787
do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share 759
a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound 184
the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk 755
medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of [759]
magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting 753
ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on 175
February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on 796
November 1st.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [782] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 796 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few • 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil 796 and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 782 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck [234] during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [825] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [237] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 771 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

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Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

[874]
[648]

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*831 155 175 178 181 779 795 798 [785] enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theologians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 155 178 181 779 798 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of [874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215–216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

342 Windows, as well as chimneys, were taxed, hence the oldfashioned blind
[65] wall and the old fireplace (without chimney) being preserved. The daylight was admitted to the kitchen by the door opening. A pad of straw was placed at the door, *sop i mbéal dorais* (Dinneen) on which tailors and other crafts-
[294] men used to sit to avoid window-tax. When windows came later on, they were placed on the side of the house sheltered from the prevailing wind.

The gables. The stone built gables are higher or lower according to the form of the roof, which is determined by the wind. In some districts of Ireland
[184] especially in the Aran Islands, Connemara, Sligo, Mayo there are often even in very primitive buildings, step gables or serrated gables. In other parts of Ireland the gables are straight up to the top. In Southern and Eastern Ireland the gables are generally of this type. Half thatched or hipped gables are sometimes found in the east, where now and then the thatch is also bent over the gable edge in the same way as in Wales. This is common on mud houses.

How the gables protect the ends of the thatched roof and support the horizontal ribs is shown in pl. XLIV: 2.

The roof. Roof and wall constructions meet one another in the most primitive stages, when the house is only a roof over a foundation wall, of a cavity, or when the roof is constructed similarly to the *clochán*s with the upper course of stones slightly overlapping the lower course. This construction is not known among dwelling houses of to-day, but can be found in outhouses, sweating buths etc.

Roofs made by wide slates or stone flags will be seen in some parts of Ireland when there is a natural access to stones suitable for slates as in Co. Clare where such roofs are found on outhouses with the narrow stone walls carrying the flags.

The Irish house from olden times generally has had not a stone roof, but a thatched roof, *ceann tuighe*. The art of making good thatched roofs is now dying out but in earlier times Irishmen had developed great skill in roofing with thatch.

The thatched roof is supported internally by beams joined in pairs forming
[804] the couples, *cúplaí*. The couples are placed at a certain distance and the space enclosed between two couples must be looked upon as a sort of architectural unit. The length of the house can be measured by the number of couples.
[171] A very similar kind of measuring is well known in Denmark and Skåne. In many old houses the length of the house seems to indicate traditions from the ancient Irish laws (See Addy, p. 84).

The roof-supporting system of beams varies very little. The beams can

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

These two-eared spades are always attached to the haft 412
by means of straps about 6 inches long, generally with two 284
rivets: the foot-plates are fastened to the blade by mortice and tenon and to the handle by a drawn-down tongue bent up and nailed between the straps (Fig. 62). A visit to one of the 391
9 or 10 Irish spade "factories"—there were many more a few decades ago—provides a thrilling illustration of craftsmanship and co-ordination of labour. The five hundredweight tilt-hammer, driven by a water wheel, beats out the red steel in a series of operations under the skilled hand and eye of the spade-maker: between each process the steel must be re-heated, and the interchange of the "moulds" and "plates" between furnace-man and hammer-man goes on without pause, for the "bit" of the hammer must not be allowed to strike without having the hot metal ready on the anvil. In addition to supplying his mate, the furnace-man has to bend over the "fullered mould" and weld and shape it on a small anvil: he must also apply sand and water to the plates if they get overheated, and dip the folded end in dust so that the two straps do not weld together under the hammer. After a period of ceaseless labour and watchfulness a pile of blue-grey drawn plates, their hammer grooves throwing back the glow of the furnace, lies ready for the finishing smith.

He shears them to the desired dimensions—all the [804]
measuring is done by eye although there are dozens of different sizes—cuts out the tenons and punches the rivet holes. The points of the straps separate when the ends are clipped, and the socket is now opened up and shaped on a mandrel. Then comes the finishing: the plate is heated once more, hammered into the correct lift and dish, and tempered. Meanwhile lengths of rivets have been cut and the foot-plates drawn down: the ash handle is inserted and riveted, the straps hammered tight against the wood and the foot-plates morticed and nailed on. Four generations of experience lay behind the smith whom I watched recently in a Co. Antrim spade factory; the result was a product of exquisite proportions and economy of structure, the essentials of the country craft.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 larger fish, including cod and skate, are generally caught on "long lines," hung with hundreds of hooks, in deeper water. The antiquity of some such method of fishing is suggested by the discovery of cod bones with the remains of our raised beach cultures. Old fashioned devices are found in long-line fishing, too: floats of inflated dog skin ("stookies") and sinkers of grooved stone (Fig. 95) are in daily use.

[227]

Fig. 95.

804 The illustration also shows a grooved stone resembling the type well known to archæologists as grooved hammer-stones. This example was employed as a 10 lb. weight for weighing wool. I have seen similar stones kept for weighing butter and kelp.

227 The line baskets present interesting variations of shape: I illustrate (Fig. 76) examples from Co. Antrim and from Co. Galway. The long Aran basket has a raised end, while the Waterford pattern is a short shallow basket. Types of net

Fig. 96.

for inshore fishing, including salmon nets, differ considerably from place to place and need study. Mention should also be made of the "otter," better known from its adoption in mine-sweeping as the paravane, which is widely used for

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[20]

Second, emigration has been of vast
167 benefit to the community; money comes
434 in to most of the homes from America[21] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

Third, it is regrettable that the lack
443 of commercial facilities means that eggs,
489 poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [20] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only
[304] three barrels a week in winter. The standard content of a barrel is 256 pints.
[291] [21] Many of the children are dressed in American clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

since they were based on the fertility of the land rather than its acreage, and it seems that many moorland tracts were not divided until fairly recent times, for they were formerly shared as common summer pasturage by the people of a whole parish or barony, covering 100 sq. miles or more. In such hilly areas the townlands may be as much as 2,000 acres: on the other hand in thickly-settled lowlands they are frequently less than 100 acres, and some anomalous fragments of an acre or two are designated townlands. This diversity also reflects cultural differences both between regions and between various classes from the kings and chiefs down to the humblest of bondmen. The first Ordnance Survey (1830–42) suppressed many of the local names for subdivisions and applied the term townland universally. Though the townland appears to have been equated with an agricultural unit, the ploughland or *seisrach*, it is clear that in many parts of the country 'the cow's grass' was the effective unit of measurement. Of Donegal about 1840 we read: 'The land is never let, sold or devised by the acre, but by 'a cow's grass'. This is a complement of land well understood by the people, being in fact the general standard; and they judge of the dimensions of a holding by its being to the extent, as the case may be, of one, two or three 'cows' grass'. They have divided not only into the fourth part of a cow's grass, called a 'foot', but into the eighth part of a cow's grass, or half a foot, denominated 'a cleet'.'[1] In Bantry, Co. Cork, land was let 'in the wilder parts by what is termed the gneeve, which is the twelfth part of a townland, and therefore of very undefined acreage'.[2]

To judge from surviving examples of clachans and openfields, it was customary for each house in the cluster to have a small enclosure or 'gort' (garden) adjacent to it, their high walls lining a maze of narrow lanes winding haphazard among the houses (Fig. 6). These settlements were characterized by an extreme disorder, as though the houses, in the words of one writer, had fallen 'in a shower from the sky'.[3] Linear villages, it is true, are not uncommon along the western seaboard,

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 98.
[2]*Parliamentary Gazetter* (1844), s.v. Bantry.
[3]Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (1839), 353.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rectangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this 314
time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals
and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf- [786]
cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the
lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a
stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out
of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades
and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on
fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an
exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers
that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the differ-
ence between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere
the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an [132]
early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the
planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month,
so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There
is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when [821]
the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the
tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it
is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but
once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep
cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a [521]
'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the [423]
decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when
banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally
has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or [476]
three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in
turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the
helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient
fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required
depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf.
Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown
top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a
proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist
humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like
coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is
the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that [804]
a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading, [461]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

561 complain about how difficult their new work regime is when compared to the
461 old. Young men are chided by their elders, as well as by their wives, about how
178 much less they labor today than did their forerunners and womenfolk. One of the
561 most popular conversational themes among old men is the contrast between
[521] generations—how much stronger and more industrious those of the "hero breed" (a term favored by Mullen [1936] in describing Irish islanders of the past) living
[562] half a century ago were than men are nowadays. Women are provoked by how vociferously their spouses complain of the difficulty and endlessness of their labor, and yet how little initiative and industry they exhibit and how often they are idle. "Light work" or no work at all is customary on days when the steamer calls, when it rains heavily, on the day an islander dies and two days afterward, on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and at other times, contrary to the state of affairs which prevailed in the past.

461 Several men admitted to me their guilt about not working more often and energetically, and told me that many of their fellows "talk big" but do not match their words with deeds. All of them questioned the need for maintaining traditional patterns of labor in light of the many supports to the economy provided by the government. One candid islander suggested that a factory be constructed in Inis Beag which would employ all of the men two to four hours each morning—"Then people would have a steady income and a lot of time off. Now it is hard to get up in the morning and decide what to do, and by noon you are just reaching a decision." An even franker man, of the oldest generation, was unwilling to agree with his peers about how hard they had worked when young. He was willing to acknowledge that now "times are easier," but that when he was a youth men often were idle and were chided by their elders and felt guilty. Interestingly, he was aware of the phenomenon of primitivism, which he described as "the romantic notions writers have about us."

Land Ownership

311 Inis Beag comprises a townland of four 256-acre quarters, called "carrows."
423 Other land units are the half-quarter, the "cartron" of 64 acres, the half-cartron,
[131] the fourth or "croggery" of 16 acres, the half-croggery, the acre, and the three-
[804] quarter, half-, and quarter-acre. I have mentioned already that the total acreage of the island is 1440, the strand and common land together make up 200 acres, and the initial division of land among the local inhabitants probably was accomplished
[657] by a landlord late in the seventeenth century. Approximately 1000 acres are owned
[427] by the Irish Land Commission today and rented to 57 landholders, while two other properties have been purchased from the commission and thus are owned privately. The acreage not accounted for represents shore areas which are useless for agricultural and grazing purposes. Rent is charged according to the fourth and is 5 shillings[1] per year at the present time.

The quarters of Inis Beag extend southward in roughly parallel fashion from the four villages, and each landholder possesses numerous fields, ranging in

[436] [1] A shilling is the equivalent of 14 cents and a pound $2.80 in United States currency.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

221 521 types, varieties, growth cycles, yields, and care of seeds and cattle passes round by word of mouth.

[805] 221 132 241 The first of February, St. Brigid's Day, marks the beginning of spring. For the countryman the return of the "hard" days of wind and clear weather herald the season of the land's drying off. Through February and March the gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted, and the fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each hard day is a welcome opportunity, for only then can work in the fields go on. With favorable weather, the work of preparation is over in the beginning of March, and the actual planting begins. By St. Patrick's Day, with its promise of continuous hard weather, the gardens are ready for a second planting.

221 241 The potatoes demand the greatest attention. A fortnight after they are planted, they must be manured well with manure brought from the pile near the cattle cabins, and the ground must be leveled so that the plant will not go to stalk and thus fail to produce tubers. A fortnight more and the ground must be "softened" and the earth round the plant, which now shows its first leaves, must be "stirred." By the time May is reached, the potatoes must be "landed." Earth must be taken from between the long ridges in which the potatoes are planted and heaped up over them from each side. Thereafter nothing remains until the harvest but a summer spraying against blight.

221 231 438 Throughout the spring the cattle have demanded attention. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the milk season and intensified butter-making. The great spring cattle fairs take place. The farmer must devote himself to the all-important business of buying and selling his milch and store cattle and his calves. At home the cattle demand constant care against hunger, disease, and cold as he mixes their diet of fast diminishing hay with the slowly returning pasture grass.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the 221
"landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and what- 241
ever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over. 314

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of 221
the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer 372
month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to al- [805]
low turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's 221
labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was 241
planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times 262
during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabáiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June.

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in 221
the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or 241
plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up.

The first true harvest and the most important one of the 246
year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late 221
July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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After dinner, work begins anew. For the women chores are much the same as in the morning. Should routine duties come to a pause, there is still plenty to do. Washing, mending, knitting must be done; and their hands are never idle.

The great staple, bread, is baked daily, upon the 'griddle' at the hearth. The women may bake at any time, and even late in the evening when the family is gathered round the fire, their last task may be to bake for supper of bread and tea.

At four in the 'evening', as the countryman divides the day, children arrive from school, to be fed and questioned. For they are important purveyors of news. Later, the men are home from the fields, driving the cattle home, bedding them for the night. The woman must serve supper and milk the cows, bringing the milk in to separate. But though her day is over with the separating, she may not sit idly with the men for long beside the evening's fire. Children, knitting, and baking can still be attended to; tradition and proverb demand that 'one woman in the house be always working'.

Work round house and haggard is continuous; it varies little from season to season. It involves a continuous activity by which the household group orders its life and fulfils its first needs in the midst of a carefully patterned regularity of habit. What variation there is, is itself confined to a narrow range. Certain chores are divided among days of the week, but they show nothing of the swift change

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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beyond the haggard wall, as we have noted. All the 241
many tasks of patching and repair are men's work, 221
they fall to the farmer-father and his sons. The 462
annual round is theirs, as the daily one belongs to the women.

For the countryman, the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to the Epiphany or 'Little Christmas', is the dead of winter. All farm work is at a standstill. The farmer is free to devote the season to holiday. Outside the weather is unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. For him the year has stopped and is waiting to renew its forces.

With the Epiphany, the succession of bitter wet days does not end, but holiday does. One's mind turns to the earnest work of the year to come. The farmer plans his spring planting. On drier days he can clean ditches and drains; he can lay in seed and repair machines. In the evenings, conversation on [521]
visits and at home revolves round the coming planting and calving, and traditional experience goes from mouth to mouth. In fact, it is the time for all new plans, for it is Shrovetide, the season of match-making and marriage.

St. Bridget's Day, February 1, marks the begin- [805]
ning of spring. For St. Bridget promised every [776]
second day thereafter would be 'hard'. The return of the 'hard' days of wind and clear weather herald the land's drying-off. Through February and March, gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-holes (" boles ") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes or the knitting : they are usually reserved for special purposes and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these
[805] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for drying clothes.

251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or " ark,"
352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now almost dead, is the " tramping " of the meal, the children
[857] being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead immediately behind the chimney, in the " room," where it would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other fireside gear later in the chapter.

354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west, that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its cailleach or not, lies at one side of the fire : alternatively there may be a large settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 72 -- ANALYST]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XVII

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS: THE COUNTRY TOWN.

Although the Celtic year began with All Hallows Day (November 1st), for our purpose we may regard it as starting on February 1st, or St. Bridget's Day. This was the first day of Spring, and of field work, for the Saint promised that every second day thereafter would be hard and dry. The circle of the year ran its course through the seasons, punctuated by certain fixed festivals and by the uncertain advent of births, marriages, illness and death. It is with the fixed festivals that we are concerned in this chapter. The four seasons have their opening days on the first of February, May, August and November, and the celebration of these days and the preceding Eves is a pagan survival breaking through the Christian calendar. The festivals of February and of November have been taken under the special protection of the Church through their association with St. Bridget and All Saints, but many traces of the "elder faiths" of nature worship live on, sanctified by tradition if not always by the Church.

221 796 805 [821] [996]

On St. Bridget's Eve (January 31st) it is customary for country children to pull rushes—they must not be cut with a knife—and take them home to be made into crosses by the family gathered round the fire. A fixed ritual, varying from one district to another, determines the procedure, and it traditionally included the St. Bridget's supper of pancakes or sowens taken from a plate laid on top of a rush cross. The

221 796 788 285

[p153]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XII

HARVEST

THANKS to the necessity of 'winning' (seasoning) hay and 241
corn in the fields before the crops are carried home, harvest 221
time drags on from late summer to the edge of winter, and the
word 'harvest' as we have seen is a synonym for autumn. In [805]
this pastoral Irish country the hay harvest is nowadays of vital
importance in farm economy, yet I cannot find any evidence
that hay played a significant part in the traditional Gaelic
system of farming. It is the sickle, not the scythe, which [412]
figures in folk-lore and in place-names, and the scythe seems to
be a relative newcomer in most parts of the country. It requires
a stone-free sward which would be hard to seek on hill farms.
The business of hay-making was, I believe, of little importance
until the economic changes of the agrarian revolution and the
introduction of rotation grass. In the North the date of the first
hay-cutting is fixed by a celebrated but relatively new festival,
the Orangeman's day on the 12th of July. After hay comes flax,
which is pulled from late July to mid-August, followed by wheat
and barley in the areas where they are grown, by the corn
harvest in September and the potato-lifting in October. In bad
years hay may still be uncut in late August, the mountain corn
is green even at the end of September, and late-cut corn some-
times stays stacked in the fields up to Christmas—indeed there
are records of the grain being reaped after Christmas[1]—but
traditionally all harvest work was completed by All-Hallows.

In Scandinavia it has been claimed that hay-making began in 246
pre-historic times as a result of the climatic deterioration which
took place during the last millennium B.C. In Ireland with its

[1]For example in 1817. J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews*, 25.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

as they are called, were born in the mountain country of Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, adjoining the rich plains of the Pale where their ancestors sharpened their wits on the English settlers. Many stories are told of the tricks by which 'the goatmen' disposed of their animals before they reached their goal at Barnet Fair, of billy-goats sold to the innocent English as good milkers or as an infallible means of keeping a garden free of weeds. 'Every guy who comes here selling cloth', said a Canadian rancher, 'tells me he is from Slieve Gullion. It must be some city.' 441 439

Although the export of live cattle from Ireland was prohibited, in the interests of British farming, through most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the short sea-crossings from north-east Ireland enabled dealers to ship them to southern Scotland. The embargo was lifted in 1765, and by the early nineteenth century many thousands of cattle were reaching Portpatrick and being driven to the fairs at Dumfries and Carlisle, and farther afield to Barnet in Hertfordshire and St. Faith's near Norwich. Many Irish harvesters and other summer migrants followed the trails trodden by Irish cattle and their drovers, but after 1830, with the coming of the steamship, Glasgow, the Mersey and Holyhead became, as they remain, the chief points of entry for both animals and men. 439

Before the agrarian revolution and the import of feeding stuffs made it possible to keep stock through the winter, the months of October and November were critical for the farmer, who had to dispose of many of his animals at this time. The trade is now better distributed through the year, but although monthly fairs have become general since the famine, the sales vary a good deal from month to month, and the important fairs still fall at the turning points of the pastoral year, particularly in May and November. The spring fairs of February and March and the Lammas fairs of July and August were to a large extent concerned respectively with horses and with sheep and wool, but those of May and November were the great cattle fairs and also the hiring fairs. We are reminded that the Celtic year in pre-Christian times had only two seasons, winter and summer, and that the first days of November and May are still the Irish gale-days, the times when rents fall due. 439 443 543 [805] [427]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

443 One may readily see how this[1] came about, for these were the
437 times when the stock was gathered and sorted, and dues were paid to the overlords in cattle. In the ordinary business of the fair exchange and barter gave way in time to money transactions, but one has only to visit a cattle fair to sense that the noisy ritual of assessing values and the prolonged bargaining have come down from a time before the use of money was general. The vigorous hand-slapping by which bargains
[201] are sealed in tight-lipped silence could derive from the days when different languages were spoken at the fairs. Apart from the difference between English and Gaelic it should be remembered that in many districts pockets of non-Gaelic speech, perhaps even of non-Aryan tongues, survived well into the Christian era. Another interesting accompaniment of the con-
[777] cluded bargain is the piece of money, the luck penny, which the seller hands back to the purchaser as a gesture of independence when a price has finally been agreed on. Many a fight
[578] has begun because a buyer has been dissatisfied with the amount of his luck money. Similar bargaining took place when a servant was being hired for the half year, and he received his earles or earnest money as a sign that the contract was concluded, handing over to his employer his bundle of clothes in return.

543 The countryman will find any excuse for going to the fair, and it is his proud boast that he has seen so many fairs. It
[805] is by the fairs, and not by the calendar, that he measures time and dates important events in the life of the community. 'Their whole thought seems to be going to fairs and selling or exchanging', it was written of the Mayo peasantry in 1836,[1] and in the seventeenth century we find this comment on 'the inferior rank of husbandmen' in Westmeath: '(they) are very crafty and subtile in all manner of bargaining, especially in their dealings in fairs and markets'.[2] Your luck at the fair might depend
777 on the colour of the hair of the first person you met on the road,
543 and it was unlucky to be passed on the way, so that horsemen riding at full gallop were not merely trying out their paces for the races which followed. For good luck you should carry with

[1] P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 104.
[2] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 115.

[1] [i.e., the seasons and rent days 260 dating from 1 May and 1 November. — Analyst]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit
[264] gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XXI

OLD PISHROGUES

AMONG the serious nineteenth-century students of Irish folk-life a Dublin surgeon, who is perhaps better known as the father of Oscar Wilde, deserves special mention. Sir William Wilde was not only a frequent contributor to the learned journals but he found time to compile a pioneer catalogue of the Irish antiquities now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. His very active life spanned the Great Famine, and the monumental report on the *Tables of Death* which appeared as Vol. I of Part 5 of the Census of 1851 was largely his work. In it he dwells on the shattering effects of those tragic years, 1845–47, on the immemorial customs and natural poetry of the Irish peasants: 'The closest ties of kinship were dissolved; the most ancient and long-cherished usages of the people were disregarded; the once proverbial gaiety and lightheartedness of the peasant people seemed to have vanished completely, and village merriment or marriage festival was no longer heard or seen throughout the regions desolated by the intensity and extent of the famine.'[1] Another observer noted that the traditions of hospitality were weakened greatly and that padlocks made their first appearance at this time.[2]

Wilde observed that the coming of the railway at about the same period was a contributory factor in the change because it worked to a time-table—more or less—and involved an artificial division of the day instead of an observance of the signs of nature changing with the seasons. Time was related to social activity and had different values at various seasons of the year.

[1] *Census of Ireland* (1851), I, Part 5 (1856), 242.
[2] A. M. Sullivan, *The New Ireland* (1877), 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

805 The whistle of the 7.15 now replaced cock-crow. But if it were
178 indeed true that peasant values had perished entirely and that
the rural population was transformed into the moronic cattle-
[496] herders of Filson Young's *Ireland at the Cross-Roads*, then this
book could not have been written. Luckily a mountain farmer
will still relate time to nature and refer to a moment of summer
twilight, in a memorable phrase quoted by Dr. James Delargy,
as 'the time when the dew was thinking of falling'. The wonder
178 is that so much lore and so many relics of pre-famine days have
771 survived. Yet the term 'old pishrogues' which is applied to all
varieties of witchcraft and fairy lore—even if sometimes used
in awe rather than contempt—shows that these things are
now regarded objectively and are no longer an accepted part
of social life. Superstitious practices tend to be carried out in
secret and to be resorted to only when more rational methods
have been tried and found wanting. Many of the old customs,
however, have had their life prolonged by children's games,
the seasonal bonfires and May Queens becoming their amuse-
ments.

Most of the pishrogues relate to fairies and to trees, wells
823 and stones; and that these elder faiths have their roots in a very
171 remote pre-agricultural phase of human evolution is attested by
their very general observance among primitive people. As an
example we may take the South African Bushmen, one of the
lowliest branches of the human family. In a recent report from
G. P. van der Post's expedition to the Kalahari we read that in
the heart of the Bushman country there are sacred hills which
are regarded as the home of very ancient spirits. Van der Post
was told that 'right on the top of the central hill there was a
spring of water and beside it a tree which bore the fruit of
knowledge, and close by the tree a rock with deep marks where
the greatest spirit of all had knelt to pray'.[1] The sacred hill-
tops, the ancestral spirits, the well of water, the 'gentle' tree
and the cup-marked stone are familiar themes in Irish folk
tradition. Throughout western Europe, from the fifth century
Council of Arles onwards, churchmen denounced those 'who
offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones'. The great religions
have had to come to terms with such cults, in Monsoon Asia as

[1]*The Times* (14th December, 1955).

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

populated country, the district under consideration is practically 489
isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried
on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and 494
from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage- [205]
car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the
journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond
Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed
by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the
winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed [505]
carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are 492
used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly
any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or
pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of
horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better
off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse,
a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians
may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the
woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are 491
very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in,
and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing
hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, 505
used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat 501
most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies
somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich 814
in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have
died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends
and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially
among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate
them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish [609]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

814 is likely to succeed in collecting much. Fortunately there is a
[609] resident (the Rev. P. A. O'Reilly), who is engaged in collecting the old Irish songs of the district, several of which he has already published. As to the legends, many of these have been recorded by C. O. and Mr. Knight, to whose works the reader is referred.

The following notes, mainly dealing with what may be termed minor folk-lore, were some of them obtained from fishermen and others of the natives, but mainly through the kindness of several residents, some of whom desired that their names should not be mentioned.

115 1. *Customs and Beliefs.*—For the majority of the notes on these I
814 am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, who, being a native of the district, and personally acquainted with nearly everyone in it, has an exceptionally large knowledge of the subject; for a large part of what remains I have also to thank Messrs. F. C. Wallace, D.I. R.I.C., Belmullet, and P. T. O'Reilly, Carn.

777 A very large number of things are considered lucky or the reverse. It is unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, on which day also no change of residence should be made, a Friday should rather be chosen, as that is the lucky day for moving. To meet a red-haired woman on starting out in the morning, to mention a priest while fishing, to take fish out of a house without sprinkling some salt on it, to sell milk without putting in a pinch of salt, to give fire out of the house on May-day, or to anyone in whose dwelling a sick person may be, all these are unlucky. People "born with teeth"
[845] are unlucky also; but to be "born with a caul" is a sign of great good fortune, though should the original owner ever see it his luck will depart; the possession of a caul is believed to protect against death by drowning. A mole on the face, if "above the breath," is considered to have the same protective influence.

787 Death within the year is believed to be the fate of the man who has the temerity to make an addition to the western side of his house, or to build out at the back; several instances of men who died within a short time after thus offending are sure to be told to the incredulous.

The banshee, the death-watch, the creaking of furniture, and the howling of a dog at night are all looked upon as death-warnings. Several persons were met with who asserted that they had heard the banshee before the death of relatives.

585 At weddings the bride and bridegroom must step over the threshold of the chapel door together, as whichever goes out first will be the first to die.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 1. The back of the island from the lighthouse

with an Iron Age culture about 350 B.C.; but only in 1961 were earlier Neolithic, or possibly Mesolithic, implements discovered. When my wife and I arrived in the island for a seven week visit during the summer of 1962, we were presented with three slate axe heads which had been unearthed by road workers the previous December. It is possible that they are Mesolithic, for the industry never has been dated accurately. 172 [114]

The principal Copper-Bronze Age monuments of Inis Beag are Megalithic tombs and burial mounds, and possibly kitchen middens and semi-subterranean stone dwellings, called *clochán*. Small gallery graves incorporated into lately built stone walls are common, but it appears that they never have been examined by prehistorians, for there is no record of them in the literature. Archeologists seldom have visited the back of the island where the prehistoric and medieval populations, contrary to present day opinion, may have centered. None of the Inis Beag *clochán* have been dated, but it is known that they were lived in by clerics and ascetics during the Middle Ages, and were still used as living quarters in a nearby island early last century. It is as difficult to ascertain the age of burial mounds and middens in Ireland as it is of stone houses, because they too were formed over several historical periods. Burial mounds of earth and stone, termed respectively tumuli and cairns by archeologists, first were erected during the Copper-Bronze Age and continued to be built into the early modern period (although not for funerary purposes). There are numerous mounds in Inis Beag, but in many instances it is hard to distinguish on sight cairns from *clochán* in their ruinous, overgrown condition. The islanders regard both types of structures as burial sites. Middens can be dated from the Mesolithic to the end of the medieval era. Most of the island middens are associated with dwelling places from the Middle Ages, but those located near the mouths of caves in the limestone cliffs of the terraces [814]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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male but sometimes female. Also, the former occupied a higher prestige position [662] than the latter, but there was not the clear-cut distinction between genres appropriate to each type of narrator as elsewhere in Ireland; the *seanchaí* sometimes related the exploits of Finn and the *scéalaí* the pranks of the red man. The two surviving storytellers in 1960 were both old men, but the *seanchaí* died in 1963 and the *scéalaí* two years later. Both had been prolific contributors to Irish Folklore [814] Commission collectors and Continental folklorists. [654]

All of the above kinds of folklore expression, with the exception of folktales, were regarded as true by island folk in the past. The myths either coexisted or were reinterpreted with Biblical stories, and the legends were synchronized with events of ancient world history dating from just before the Flood to the eighth century. The Inis Beag *scéalaí* sometimes was derided by school children for still believing his narratives to be true, as was the *seanchaí* for claiming that the supernatural happenings described in his tales actually were experienced by islanders in the past century. Both narrators for many years had been visited only by folklorists [814] and tourists wishing to hear them relate their repertoires of stories, for the only form of storytelling which has been perpetuated is the occasional gathering of men in a home or pub to exchange anecdotes, mostly related to fishing. I was told that in his prime the *scéalaí* could have recited narratives nightly for "at least a month" without ever repeating a story, had he ever been called on to do so. That [114] the memory of the esteemed narrator is prodigious is revealed in the complete collection of all the material recorded from a single *scéalaí* of Co. Kerry, reported by Delargy, which included 396 pages of text: 186 tales, a few songs and song fragments, and various smaller items of prose and verse. These had been obtained from 27 different sources by the narrator, all of whom save one were neighbors (Delargy 1945:11).

Most liked by the folk were the prose narratives related by the *scéalaí* and 538 tales of recent and contemporary historical events in the region, stories of the 539 supernatural in Inis Beag, and personal experiences told by the *seanchaí*. Few of the stories dealt with historical occurrences in Ireland between the coming of Christianity and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and none of them concerned personages or happenings associated with the church. At my request, the 124 *seanchaí* read three books of Irish folklore that I had brought with me—J. J. Camp- 538 bell's *Legends of Ireland*, Jeremiah Curtin's *Irish Folk-Tales*, and Eileen O'Faolain's 539 *Irish Sagas and Folk-Tales*—and declared that he had heard all of the stories therein as a youth from his father and other island storytellers. However, the versions in the books often were "incorrect," he claimed, and he delighted in "correcting" them; of course, there are many variants of each tale (as many as 527—Aarne-Thompson type 300 in the archives of the Irish Folklore Commission), and he regarded the Inis Beag stories as the legitimate variants. Most of the local and Irish tales share types (plots) and motifs (incidents, characters, and objects) with those of European and other societies brought about by millennia of diffusion, but the Irish have refashioned these elements in their own corpus according to their culture and personality dispositions.

I will not discuss the various prose narratives told by the *scéalaí* of Inis 538 Beag; the greater number of them can be obtained from Campbell or O'Faolain 114 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent Folktales of Ireland.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and [182] indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most [521] activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently [676] in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, [127] and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of [137] islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, [815] several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess [207] barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

779 114 The role of the church in Irish history has been well documented, albeit often in a biased manner because of the prejudices of certain historians, but its role in shaping Irish culture and personality has been little examined. Irish social scientists either have been oblivious to it because of being Catholics themselves, or have been fearful of the political and religious consequences were they to pursue and publish the "truth;" foreign scientists, on the other hand, have shown little interest in Ireland, or have suppressed their data on religious influences in order to be able to return there to do further research.

779 815 Whereas in developing countries anthropologists are being restricted increasingly by elitists sensitive to the primitive conditions in their nations which are being studied and publicized by scientists, in Ireland similar reactions of nativists, including those who are in the government, are compounded by those of the church. The resistance of the church to objective scrutiny in large measure explains the absence of ethnology—with its emphasis on such values as empiricism, naturalism, relativism, and pluralism—as a discipline in the national universities. Irish scholars have tended to stress economic and other monistic causes (especially climate, race, English oppression, the famine, and loss of the Irish tongue) in their [123] analyses of culture and personality phenomena. I have talked with Irish scientists about religious forces as aspects of particular phenomena, and have been told that to acknowledge certain of these in print would be to commit job suicide. [122] When I have discussed with them my own conclusions about factors accounting for such conditions in Inis Beag as celibacy, late marriage, personality disorders, and emigration, and have cited religious causes as among the most significant ones, my listeners have agreed tacitly and changed the subject, or have remained silent. Irish scientists visiting the United States, I might add, usually endorse my views but often ask not to be quoted abroad or in print. Religious causes are, in fact, so important and pervasive that one runs the risk of being declared a "religious determinist" if he deals objectively with his materials.

793 The bishop and the parish priest in theory direct the actions of the curate in Inis Beag, but it is believed by the folk that their control over him in reality is only nominal, and that he often is able to make and carry out major decisions affecting the welfare of the islanders without consulting his superiors. His supposed freedom of action is reflected in the commonly voiced complaint that if word of his secular "excesses" were to reach the bishop, he would be reprimanded or replaced. However, some say that his policies are known and secretly approved [123] of by his superiors. It is rumored that I was responsible for the replacement of a curate by complaining of his opposition to my research and certain of his excesses to mainlanders who had the "ear of the bishop."

779 793 795 181 [789] [795] The folk are devoutly Catholic, despite the fact that they are extremely critical of their priests and retain and reinterpret pagan religious forms. They are proud of their strength of belief, with its attendant morality, and of the sanctity of "Inis Beag of the Saints," and they look to the curate for spiritual comfort, as well as political guidance in several spheres, and are uncomfortable in his absence. His presence, it is believed, provides supernatural protection for the island, while his absence invites possible anti-social behavior, and harm to the soul of one who

114 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe*, by
155 William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark*, probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and
[12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and
* 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.[6] Opler and Singer have the following to
15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland:
[593]

> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent.
> [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures
> [838] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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• [815] [6] Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent
[779] about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma, and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

755 Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well,
776 bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take
[238] anything from hens to men and women. When they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless, he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper and friend of former years. The vitality has gone out of him or her. The country-people can believe that 'they' have spirited away the real person and left in his place "some spent old man that they had with them for a long time". The real person is 'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not
[753] mean that they do not recognize what we might call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too well, from bitter experience. It means only that they have an explanation for it that infuses it with the associations they have about their belief.

776 For the belief in changelings, about which you all have heard a great deal, has its root in the fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die
[761] are taken, except the old people". Only for them is death the natural course of events; all others have fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

776 Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy
183 belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by
● 82 any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

of an emotionally charged explanatory scheme. 776
The trouble overtaking them becomes interpret- 183
able for him; he knows what has happened and is 82
in some measure ready to take the necessary steps. The fate of his goods and his fellows affects him vitally, it upsets the attachments he feels. But belief is common property; it is given to him and held for him by that community of his fellows of which he is a part. It is a socially held ideology to which he gives credence and in which he is dependent upon his fellows for ways and means, for corroboration, for solace.

But this ideology is much more than a mere in- 776
terpretative device. Certain anthropologists have 183
tried to see in magic and magic belief a groping, primitive science; but the concept has failed them if pressed very far. For the fairy faith enforces definite behaviour upon the countryman; it lays down rites and practices which he must perform. If he is to recover his goods that have been taken, restore his threatened animals, friends or children, he must follow a definite course. That course is laid down for him again by his community of belief and habit.

If we examine the course he must adopt to com- 776
bat ill-luck and disaster, we see a new incorporation 789
into belief of the things he values. In cures, nostrums, and other means of combating evil, the goods upon which he and his fellows are dependent and to which they are attached are once more

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 *anschauung*, in which all experience has a place in
183 the logic of emotional associations. Thus one old fellow summed up a discussion of the sea creatures
181 which still haunt the western coasts of Ireland: "Everything that does be on the land is in the sea,
183 too, if we could see them". This world-view in-
821 corporates the world into the life the countryman follows and knows. To the same old fellow, winds along the Clare and Galway border that separates Munster and Connaught provinces could appear as the battles of fairy hosts, for do not men today still remember human battles and still taunt the men of the other province in joke and banter? The rustle of a breeze and the flitting of bats in a ruin where men lived and died is not mere noise; it is still part of human life. One old fellow described to me the experience of 'them' that he got at close quarters, when he lived near the ruin of Ballyvaughan workhouse:

"They were so plentiful there that everybody living round it and myself got so used to them that we wouldn't mind them at all. The place is full of them and everywhere you go there is a door and long windows in the cowl, and you hear them going in and out. There was a great lot of people died in it long ago in the bad times. They are in every room and you hear them on all sides of you. I got so
181 used to it, I never minded them at all, but I heard
183 them every day."

823 The great cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast are
776

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XVII

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS: THE COUNTRY TOWN.

Although the Celtic year began with All Hallows Day (November 1st), for our purpose we may regard it as starting on February 1st, or St. Bridget's Day. This was the first day of Spring, and of field work, for the Saint promised that every second day thereafter would be hard and dry. The circle of the year ran its course through the seasons, punctuated by certain fixed festivals and by the uncertain advent of births, marriages, illness and death. It is with the fixed festivals that we are concerned in this chapter. The four seasons have their opening days on the first of February, May, August and November, and the celebration of these days and the preceding Eves is a pagan survival breaking through the Christian calendar. The festivals of February and of November have been taken under the special protection of the Church through their association with St. Bridget and All Saints, but many traces of the "elder faiths" of nature worship live on, sanctified by tradition if not always by the Church. 221 796 805 [821] [996]

On St. Bridget's Eve (January 31st) it is customary for country children to pull rushes—they must not be cut with a knife—and take them home to be made into crosses by the family gathered round the fire. A fixed ritual, varying from one district to another, determines the procedure, and it traditionally included the St. Bridget's supper of pancakes or sowens taken from a plate laid on top of a rush cross. The 221 796 788 285

[p.153]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

171 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a
524 circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

857 Many examples could be given of children's games and
524 rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.
754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance
789 of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love
● 821 charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

241 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting
289 of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

132 washed up on them; at least four of these are now in Inishbofin, and large quantities of drift of various kinds are thrown up on the shores from time to time.

The botany and zoology of the islands is outside of the scope of the 137 present Paper, but a few words of general description may help to make the picture of the place more complete.

Here, as elsewhere, on our western coast, there is a tradition that the islands were at one time well wooded; and this is corroborated by the occasional discovery of tree-trunks in the bogs. At the present day, though under the influence of the warm, moist climate, other vegetation flourishes, trees of any sort cannot be got to grow, and all attempts to rear them have hitherto been failures, as the strong winds quickly destroyed them. Even in the most sheltered spots bushes will hardly grow, and there are not a dozen of five feet in height to be found in the islands.

Large numbers of sea-birds nest on the rocky islets round the 136 coasts; pigeons in large numbers inhabit the caves of Inishshark, and, until within a few years ago, eagles used regularly to nest on a high pinnacle of rock, known as the Boughal, in the channel between the islands. Rabbits and rats are both very plentiful; but hares, bats, weasels, and frogs are not found on either island.

Around the coast, porpoises, sea-otters, and seals (which latter [821] are looked upon as forerunners of stormy weather when they appear) are often seen, and the "sun-fish" (*Selache maxima*, the great basking shark) appears usually about the end of March; it leaves nearly always before the end of June, and was until a few years ago regularly fished for.

III.—Anthropography.

1. *Methods.*—These do not require any very extended notice, being 125 practically the same as those employed last year, and described in the report on the Aran investigation. A few changes were made, consisting mainly in the substitution of measurements and instruments shown by experience to be needed, for some which had proved unnecessary, and the use of the new observation form provisionally adopted by the Irish Sub-Committee for the Ethnographic Survey of the British Association. This form, though not perfect, proved to be of much value for field work as, owing to its arrangement, observations can be made with much greater rapidity than is possible by the old system; and the chance of omitting any important point is almost entirely avoided. The economy of time alone is a point of much im-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be [788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch, 754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop 821 into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these 825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27) :—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Conzaile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It [551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is sub- 776 ject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by 854 the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [262]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. [823] A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be buried alive with its wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

171
352
[354]

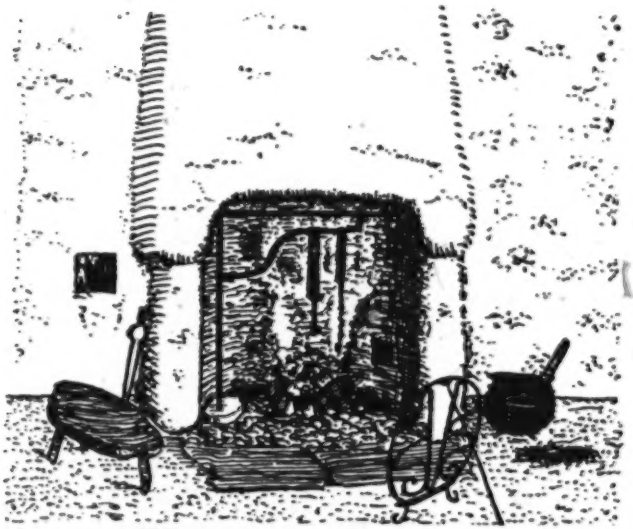

FIG. 19. A Donegal hearth, with crane, creepie and bread-iron. Pot and pot-hole on right.

other'.[1] It is interesting to notice that it is the Mongol usage to allot the right side of the yurt to men and the left side to women.[2] We are surely dealing with a very ancient tradition related perhaps to the ordered routine of a pastoral nomadic life. For the Mongols the right and left sides were symbolized respectively by horse and cow. In the humblest Irish farms, [514] which lack sanitary conveniences of any kind, it is customary for the women to use the byre and the men the stable.

If we now turn to the methods of suspending cooking pots 354 over the fire we shall see how the woman's functions are best 821 carried out on the left side. Besides the convenience of this for a normal right-handed person, there lies behind it the notion that for good luck significant actions involving the food supply—such as ploughing, casting a net or taking a pot off the fire—should follow the direction of the sun's movement in the sky. Thus the crane on which the pots are hung is almost

[1]Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (1857), 96
[2]E. D. Chapple and C. S. Coon, *Anthropology* (1946), 539.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

invariably pivoted on the left side of the fire so that it swings out with the sun. The iron crane is more characteristic of stone fireplaces than of those with wattled braces, which tend to preserve older methods of hanging. Some of them, indeed, have a large crane or 'gallows' of bog-oak with a long arm pivoting on a massive heel six feet high: I have come across several in Co. Armagh (Fig. 20). One may guess that well-appointed houses of the central-hearth style had some such appliance in early times, turning, perhaps, as do similar hanging-devices in the Roumanian shepherds' wooden *stanas*, on an upright post pivoted in the tie beam of the rafters. Framed within the white- 354 [821]

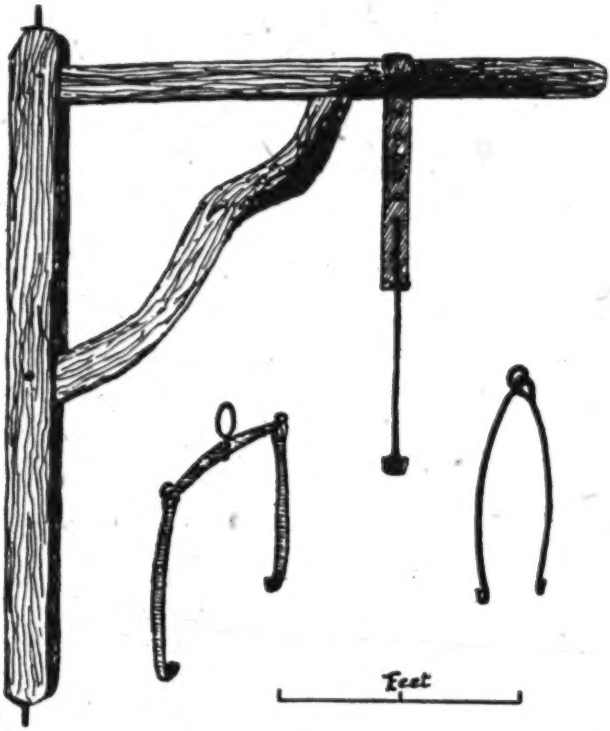

FIG. 20. Bog-oak crane and adjustable pot-hanger, Co. Armagh, with fittings for hanging griddle and pots.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 grasses and flax. The many practical uses of straw will be
[301] described in a later chapter and its employment in fashioning various kinds of dolls, ceremonial dresses and masks, for example on St. Briget's Day. Certain protective charms were also made of oat-straw, for example the Bratóg Brighde (St.
789 Briget's rag or mantle) worn by the fishermen of Tory Island
243 as a protection against storms. Here the explanation may lie in the power of wind over bits of loose straw which by association gives the straw the secret of controlling the wind. This is the basis of the phrase used in Co. Cavan to describe something
[195] which circulates quickly: 'going round like the straws'. It was
[821] the custom to ward off storms by running with a handful of straws from one farm to another.

With corn, as with hay and turf, the harvesting proceeds by
243 building up stooks and ricks of increasing size according to the nature of the crop and the weather conditions. Little stooks (footings) of four or six sheaves are the first stage in the construction of the twelve-sheaf stooks (ten standing and two inverted hooding sheaves) which, however, are generally confined to wheat (Fig. 51). It is the general practice to build the little stooks of corn, after one or two weeks' seasoning, into hand-stacks which are of a convenient size to make a load for the rick-shifter, or for the tractor-lifter which is replacing it. The shapes of these miniature stacks, varying from one district to another, are often extremely picturesque, and their serried rows marching up the hillsides give the autumn fields a populated appearance. Their many names (hut, shig, bart, adag, and so on) would indicate that they are no novelty, and these little field stacks are as characteristic of Wales and Scotland as they are of Ireland (Fig. 52). A picturesque variety of hay-stack, commonly seen in Connacht, is the sheep-cock, built around a tall pole which prevents the cock from collapsing when eaten away at the base.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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and houses. There is a marked loosening of inhibitions at this time. The occasion is something of a festival, of picnic meals and keen appetites, so that tea is said to taste better at turf-cutting than at any other time. After the March winds and the lengthening days of spring have dried the bog surface there is a stirring in the homesteads, the well-worn tools are pulled out of their hiding-places and the smith is kept busy repairing spades and barrows. Bright new tools litter the town pavements on fair day, and the countryman chooses his new slane with an exhibition of caution that seems superfluous until one remembers that an ounce of weight or an inch of length can make the difference between smooth ease and back-break. April, everywhere the driest month of the year, is the best month for cutting: an early start gives the turves a better chance of drying, but the planting of crops keeps the men busy till the end of the month, so that May is the likeliest time to see them in the bogs. There is an old belief that to facilitate drying, peat should be cut when the moon is waning (Pl. 9, 1).

A whiff of turf smoke drifting from a hidden fire where the tea is brewed is the first sign that the bog is peopled. If it is a deep bog you will look in vain for signs of activity, but once you have been seen dozens of heads pop up from deep cuttings and the diggers welcome a break for a smoke and a 'crack'. Turbary rights are extremely complicated, but with the decreasing demand for turf there is little dissension even when banks are communally owned. Nowadays each family generally has its own bank or cutting-face, but it is customary for two or three families to pool their labour and work at each bank in turn. The owner of the bank by tradition provides food for the helpers. On the average a week's cutting provides sufficient fuel for each family, but the time taken and the amount required depend on the nature of the bog and on the quality of the turf. Ideally the season's cut should contain a proportion of brown top turf, that is light sphagnum peat for summer firing, and a proportion of black bottom peat for winter use: this is moist humified peat which dries hard as a brick and burns almost like coal. The amount required is measured by the load, that is the load of a small one-horse cart. I was told in Donegal that a good team of four men, cutting, lifting, wheeling and spreading,

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formerly allotted to tenants in proportion to the acreages of 222
their farm holdings. The weed had to be carried away among the 423
slippery boulders in back-creels and hand-barrows and stacked on the beach ready for the carts and creel-asses. The driftweed cast up by the storms of winter was more accessible but its division gave rise to endless disputes and was often regulated by careful procedure and the casting of lots, though some beaches were subdivided by standing stones. In Donegal I was told how at low tide, by the light of lanterns, men would dash into the sea up to their necks to drag out the floating weed. It is an interesting example of manorial privilege that on one beach, below the Norman castle at Greencastle, County Down, all the wrack blown in after 17th March goes to the farm which occupies the ruined castle. Every little bay where the weed collects has its wrack road leading down (Fig. 4), and fields near the shore may have a seaweed gate giving direct access. From Christmas onwards a careful watch was kept on the weather, and a spirit of excitement spread inland from the 222
shore as the wind rose. Every bay has its own particular wind, [821]
blowing from 'the right art', for a good yield of wrack. (For kelp, however, an offshore wind was needed, because it is the returning undertow which brings the deeper weeds ashore). There are many accounts of the extraordinary zeal of the wrack 222
gatherers and their feats of endurance. Even English visitors 461
were forced to admit that 'it would be impossible to witness a scene of greater industry than was being enacted by these lazy Irish'.[1]

As on other occasions when men left their lonely farms and gathered together there was much merry-making and noisy recollection of past wrack harvests. One cannot doubt that the harvest of the fields, its 'luck' as well as its bounty, was felt to depend on success in this first step in the farming year. The desire to be first and the intense rivalry were prompted by motives stronger than the wish for material gain. In Scotland one reads of the great anxiety that was shown to secure the first load of wrack on New Year's Day, and on that day a portion of seaweed was laid at the doors of the farmstead and in each of the fields.[2] In Jersey the *vraic* (wrack) harvest is

[1] J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught*, 54.
[2] M. Banks, *British Calendar Customs: Scotland*, 2, 97.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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543 and purchasing boards, it is still a powerful commercial and social force in the rest of Ireland. In fact the numbers of fairs 443 have increased with the post-famine dominance of the cattle trade, though they have tended to be concentrated in fewer centres as many small fair-towns have been by-passed by improved means of communication. On the other hand the weekly markets have declined or disappeared, their place taken by shops which typically handle drinks as well as groceries, clothing as well as hardware. Thus the fair has retained and even strengthened its magnetic hold on the countryfolk, and though many of its subsidiary functions have been taken over by institutions of more recent origin, the fair itself retains a pagan aura. There is a widespread belief, by no means confined to Ireland, [821] that fair days are always rainy days. This belief may well be justified by climatic averages, but I have heard it explained as a consequence of the lies and profanity, the fights and pagan ways of the fair. Many an ancient fair has become extinct, no doubt because it no longer fulfilled its economic functions, but the explanation usually given is that it was abandoned 'on account of the fighting'.

In Europe, north of the Alpine mountains, the fair as a means 172 of exchange and social intercourse is an institution older than 543 the town, and older far than Christianity. The periodic assemblies of early Celtic Ireland served as temporary towns, and it was probably these sites which Ptolemy marked as cities on his map of the second century A.D. They were held on hill-tops hallowed by an antiquity which archaeology has in some instances traced back to the Bronze Age, and the regions which they served were, we have suggested, already taking shape in the late Neolithic period. Ireland has a number of large enclosures of Neolithic date analogous to Windmill Hill in Wiltshire, which apparently functioned as seasonal meeting places where stock was rounded-up and sorted. An enclosure of rather different type but of similar age—the Giant's Ring [541] near Belfast—was the scene of horse-racing down to recent centuries. On the cairn-crowned Cave Hill, too, overlooking 543 Belfast, crowds used to assemble on Easter Monday 'in accordance with immemorial usage'.[1] We may see in the 'parles

[1] J. B. Doyle, *Tours in Ulster* (1855), 102.

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526 perfect sphere the rounded igneous pebbles which are selected for the purpose. One wonders whether some of the many cup-marked stones which turn up in the fields in certain districts—I have seen many in Inishowen in Donegal—were used for shaping stones, such as the sling-stones with which champion slingers, of whom the legendary Cuchulainn was one, performed [411] their feats. The sling and the sling-rod were originally hunting weapons and probably instruments of war, and one of the last refuges of slinging as a pastime was the now vanished Claddagh, the fishing suburb of Galway, where a man was not reckoned a good shot until he could strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen.[1]

Where a holy well has dried up—the usual explanation is that 312 it was desecrated and moved its position—the sanctity of the 824 site may be transferred to a tree. The so-called pin-well at 778 Arboe in Co. Tyrone is a beech tree, hirsute with pins and nails, growing in the burying ground on a Celtic monastic site. A rag-well at Clonmel is visited by mountain farmers who hang rag offerings on briars at lambing and calving times, and afterwards place more rags appropriate in number to the increase obtained.[2] There is on the island of Inishmurray a wind-● [821] well which has the power of controlling the wind, the ritual being to empty the well to produce a calm. Sticks and stones also 789 figure in wind-raising ceremonies, and 'the rude stone image of 778 Inniskea' (Inishkea in Co. Mayo), which was dressed up in flannel each New Year's Day, had powers of producing either storm or calm.[3] Powerful magic was worked by a wooden statue of St. Macdara, formerly kept in his chapel—an oratory of early type with projecting *antae*—on an island dedicated to the saint in the extreme south-western corner of Co. Galway. Sailors passing the island dipped their sails three times in honour of the image, but we are left to guess what superstitions were involved from the statement that about the year 1640 'the bishop of Tuam caused it to be buried for weighty reasons'.[4]

[1] *U.J.A.*, 2 (1854), 164.
[2] *Béaloideas*, 15 (1945), 284.
[3] C. Otway, *Erris and Tyrawly*, 107.
[4] C. R. Browne, *Carna and Muweenish*.

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776 538 Croaghan, and Celts such as Lachtna (A.D. 820-840), and Brian Boru (A.D. 980-1014). In one notable instance, King Conor (A.D. 1242-69) is the reputed builder of the great stone fort of Dun Conor in Aran, which in the eleventh-century legend is evidently connected with Conchiurn or Conchraed the Firbolg,—a relation accepted in 1685 by Roderic O'Flaherty, although he called its hero "Conquevar" (*i.e.* Chonchobhar or Conor). Any modern allusion to the Danann is therefore "suspect." Many visits to the recesses of the hills in Burren from 1878 onwards,—and I may add that 776 the same is true of the rest of Clare,—only gave me, in 1905, one 788 direct reference to the Danann.[46] At the natural moat crowned 823 by the small stone ring wall of Croaghateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna, we were told to cross ourselves as a protection against the Danann. The place was, nevertheless, undoubtedly regarded by the older people living near it as a most dangerous fairy fort, and we were told how certain badger hunters,—(who brought drink with them), —after a long festival on its summit got benighted there; they eventually returned home sobered by fright, as they suddenly "saw the whole fleet" of "them" coming up the mound, and escaped only just in time.

776 The "whirlwinds" along dusty roads and sudden gusts were 788 not long ago everywhere supposed to be caused by the progress of fairy beings. The older folk believed, and trembled,—crossing 821 themselves, or saying a word of prayer,—while the younger folk, more than half in jest, raised their hats, as is still sometimes done to the unlucky "single magpie" and the weasel.

776 I know of two cases of reputed changelings. My second sister, whose delicacy, when an infant, excited remark, was, about 1842, taken out by a servant to be exposed on a shovel on the doorstep at Carnelly. The angry and hasty intervention of another servant saved the child, but the would-be "exposer" was convinced of the propriety of her attempt "to get back the real child" from the fairies. A very old woman, Kate (Geerin) Molony, a henwife at Maryfort, near Tulla, whom I faintly remember in 1869, was many years before anxious about her little daughter's failing health, and went to a "wise woman," who assured her that the child was "changed." She spoke of this on her return, and unfortunately

[46] Apart from Lon, at Slievnaglasha, and the "hags."

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000 birds, the whisper and rustle of the wind on the grass and heather, and those weird sounds, booming and sobbing out of nowhere, which are supposed to arise from underground streams and caverns.

V. *Will-o-the-wisps and Corpse-lights.*

103 821 The will-o-the-wisp, if not unknown, is at least extremely rare. The name Loughaunaguinnell, or Loughaguinnell, of a pool in Doora refers, I was told, to a "candle" floating over its surface. In the name Doora itself we find the ancient word for water, which occurs as the river Dour in Kerry in Ptolemy's Atlas in the first century. Mr. and Mrs. Hall, in *Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc.* (1841), note that one of their guides told them of "corpse candles" seen on the banks of the Shannon, and voices of the "good people" heard with them. Crofton Croker, in "Florry Cantillon's Funeral,"[2] alludes to the "Blue Man's Lake at midnight," a lonely place in the bog at Shragh, near Kilrush, where "a spectral figure enveloped in a bluish flame" haunted the melancholy waters. Some of the "corpse lights" shining in graveyards, "forts," and deserted buildings I have myself seen. In one case, I traced the light to the stagnant water, full of rotten leaves, in the fosse of a "fort," which, when stirred by waving branches, gave out phosphorescent light. In another case a church gable was observed for many nights lit up with blue flame, after three victims of a railway accident had been laid in their family vault below it. The windows of Inchiquin Castle are seen across the lake, lit up by pale blue fire, which vanishes from the sight of anyone approaching the ruined building though still visible at a distance. A deserted cottage on a ridge not far from Tulla, as I have seen, used to be lit up with pale light, and was reputed haunted. Several graveyards have displayed "corpse lights," and particularly those at Killone Convent (a picturesque twelfth-century ruin on a wooded slope over a beautiful lake near Ennis), and, I hear, Killeemur and Kilmaleery on the Shannon and Fergus, and Clooney in Bunratty Barony.

[2] *Fairy Legends of the South of Ireland*, Part II. (1828), p. 24.

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773 Another sunken island off Loop Head is named by the Rev. John Graham and the Halls,[38] and called Kilstiffin or Kilstapheen. I heard no such tradition in Moyarta, but O'Curry alludes to it without contradiction, although he was a native and son of a veritable repertory of the local legends of the Irrus.[39] The towers and other edifices were visible at times under the waves, and its [821] inhabitants sometimes raised destructive storms over its site when all around was calm.

The large lake of Cullaun (Cullaunyheeda) near Tulla is reputed to cover a palace or a city. Tradition said that a chief, Sioda MacNamara, (probably the restorer of the beautiful "Abbey" of Quin in 1402), was carried into the depths by a [776] "water horse" which he had caught and trained. The rock off which his treacherous steed leaped was shown before 1870, and the chief was believed to be sleeping till "the last weird battle in the west," doomed to win Ireland her liberty and a glorious place amongst the nations. It seems likely that it was from the same lake that magic cattle issued, as I heard about Kilkishen, near it, in 1877. A local bard, Michael Hogan, refers to the lake in one of his poems,[40] but how far he embodies local legend I am unable to say. His light-hearted, if lawless, hero is surprised on coming to "Cullaun's fairy waters" to see a noble park instead of a lake. He hits his cow in surprise, and she leaps the fence. Following her he reaches the palace of an ancient chief, who entertains him and dismisses him with his marvellously fattened cow. He finds at the fair that he has been absent for a year under the waters of the lake.

"Thro' wild Cullane's embowering shades—
Beneath the silver starlight, sleeping,
He pass'd—the trees, with silent heads,
Upon his darken'd path hung weeping.

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following other romances, and contradicting the genuine legends in several particulars.

[38] *Mason's Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 490, collected by Rev. J. Graham from the Behanes, Landers, Contis, and Coonerties of Kilrush and Carrigaholt; Mr. and Mrs. S. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery etc.*, vol. ii., p. 436.

[39] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii.

[40] *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, pp. 13, 20.

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Climate

821 Whether or not the steamer calls at Inis Beag, especially during the winter months when severe storms are frequent, is of considerable psychological significance. The importance of weather conditions as they impinge, both directly and [182] indirectly, on this tiny island far out in the ocean cannot be overemphasized. Most [521] activities, and not only farming and fishing, are more or less affected by the climate, and the past, present, and future states of the weather figure prominently [576] in conversations among the folk. It is customary for individuals when meeting to talk first of the weather before turning to other matters, and some of the common greetings pertain to immediate conditions: "It is raining.", "It is windy.", or "It is a beautiful day." These are usually the phrases first mastered by non-Gaelic speakers who spend time in Inis Beag, along with the most used greeting—"God bless you." and its reply, "God and Mary bless you."

132 The year around climate of Inis Beag might be labeled cool, humid, rainy, [127] and windy, at least by one living in the Great Lakes region of the United States. A perusal of lighthouse records for the decade 1951 to 1960 revealed a mean temperature of 42 degrees (all figures Fahrenheit) for the winter months, December to March, and 59 degrees for the summer ones, June to September. During that decade, the lowest and highest temperatures recorded in Inis Beag, both during 1955, were 28 and 80 degrees respectively. January was the coldest month, with a mean temperature of 39 degrees, and July was the warmest, with 61 degrees. The island is located in a climatic zone in which the average rainfall is 40 to 50 inches per year; the average number of rain days per year is 225, and the average June sun hours per day is five and a half.

> Westerly winds predominate in Ireland, though naturally a climate experiencing the passage of so many depressions has winds from every quarter at some time during the year . . . Winds of gale force are most frequent in the northwest, where they average 40 per year . . . Most of the gales are from a westerly direction: they are so severe a menace to shipping that many inhabitants of [137] islands and remote coastal districts . . . profit from periodic salvage hauls . . . The absence of trees on the exposed western coasts of Ireland is usually regarded as a direct result of the exposure to westerly winds . . . (Freeman 1960:50–51).

Snow usually falls several times during the winter, but it melts within hours as the temperature seldom fails to climb above freezing on any day. During the months from June to August, the sea and air are often warm enough to encourage 821 "comfortable" swimming by tourists, usually off the strand. The islanders consider May the ideal month so far as climate is concerned, for the weather tends to be cool, dry, and windy; flowers grow in profusion and birds return in great numbers. March weather, which is much colder but also dry and windy, is called "hard."

All of the adults of Inis Beag are amateur weather forecasters; however, [815] several old men are considered to be specialists in the art. Some households possess [207] barometers, and forecasts on the radio are listened to attentively by those who own sets. But, in the main, the folk prefer to make their own prognostications based on traditional signs, most of which are sound meteorologically and the outgrowth of

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centuries of careful observations. I collected 250 of these signs and placed them 821 •
in the following general categories: density, location, and time of mist; type of [126]
frost and heaviness of dew; size and position of rings around sun and moon; color and conformation of sky and clouds at particular times of the day; density and location of fog banks; position and time of rainbows; clarity, closeness, and color of Inis Thiar and the mainland; changes in the weather in relation to tides; actions of animals; and pains in the human body. Of special interest are the signs associ- [825]
ated with animal behavior, such as the height at which swallows fly, the prevalence of fly hordes, the crowing of roosters and braying of asses, the position that cats assume at the hearth, and whether or not spiders weave their webs across trails. The expert forecaster will weigh together as many as ten signs before announcing his prediction, and I once collected 16 from an old man in Low Village assessing conditions 12 hours hence. Some signs are quite obviously undependable, among them the quacking of ducks which some say will "call" rain, and the scratching of floors and furniture by cats which, according to others, will point the direction of the wind following a shift in the near future. The folk believe that the moon and [828]
tides exert a profound influence on both weather and human behavior; my wife on one occasion was told that her "snappish" mood (the words of a neighbor, not mine) was caused by the new moon.

The climate, in part, determines the conception of seasons held by the islanders. Four seasons are recognized, but their duration deviates from the norm of Western culture. Winter is conceived as embracing only December and January, while spring is thought to commence in February and end in early April. The other two seasons are not so well defined, but most folk agree that summer takes up the greater part of the year—from April until mid-September—and autumn the remaining three months. December and January are regarded as the coldest months, during which time there is a lull in economic activities, but planting begins early in February. Although the prevailing winds during the year are from the west and southwest, for several weeks between January and mid-March icy winds blow steadily from the southeast quarter and cause much physical discomfort and illness. In late March and early April, temperatures rise rapidly, and some islanders believe that March "steals" three days from April so that summer cannot be expected until after April 3rd. The circumstances of the theft are revealed in a legend.

The reason that summer is thought to extend for so long is a psychological [154]
one: the folk dislike winter with its cold and dampness and attendant sickness and the sense of isolation from the world that it brings. Few outsiders visit Inis Beag during the winter, and often the steamer is unable to leave port or must turn back because of gales or high seas. It is not out of the ordinary for the island to be totally isolated for a week or ten days because of inclement conditions. From late January on, warm weather is anticipated eagerly, and I was told time and again that summer was imminent when spells of cold and rainy weather occurred between March and June of 1960. During a quarrel with her husband over his confident weather forecasting ability, a woman noted for being an outspoken realist declared, "Inis Beag has only one summer month—July."

The island experiences but eight hours of daylight, from nine o'clock in 132
the morning until five in the afternoon, at the time of the winter solstice, and

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226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[559] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[626] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[821] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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764 people are at it, too, walking along behind." In the Aran Islands, as we saw in Chapter 7, the corpse was carried out through the back door, and the front doors of all houses were closed as the funeral passed by. In Co. Mayo the coffin was carried three times round the church, sunwise, and pipes [982] filled with tobacco were left, presumably as offerings, on the grave. To prevent the spirit returning to the house of the living, it used to be thought necessary to apply a "lick" of whitewash around the door and window openings. The association of white stones and white shells with graves is [822] probably another prehistoric survival. Many of the megalithic cairns were covered with white quartz stones. It often happens that old superstitions and customs survive under the guise of children's games, and we shall have something to say about toys and games in the following chapter.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

775 bank by the roadside; after a time it rises, walks across the road to the mound, and then vanishes.

The ghost of Major —— is reported to be sometimes seen riding a phantom horse at a spot near Carn, and circles on the grass are pointed out as marking the scene of his equestrian feats; he is also said to ride at times to Bingham Castle.

776 There is a strong belief in fairies, and many people are to be found who say that they have seen them. They are said to dance at night and cause fairy rings; they dwell in grassy mounds and travel from place to place, using stems of the ragweed as horses.

The mirage which is sometimes seen off the coast is ascribed to [822] the fairies if it assumes the appearance of boats or ships; they are believed to have been seen to land on the shore, haul up their boats, and vanish. Many stories are told respecting the impudent pranks of these beings, and to their revenge for some injury, disease in man and cattle is sometimes ascribed. A man may become paralysed or waste away and die from fairy influence as well as from the evil eye, but their malice may have a less serious ending, and may only produce some disfigurement. Some time ago a man was one day walking homewards, when he saw lying on the road a bright new razor; he picked it up and took it home with him, but after shaving [828] with it got *sycosis menti*, and the implement was then declared to be a "fairy razor."

Women dying in puerperal fever are believed to have been taken [775] by the fairies to act as wet-nurses, and infants may be "taken away," and changelings put in their places. The changeling may be got rid of by putting on a roaring fire and throwing him behind it, when he [372] at once vanishes in the smoke. The *ignus fatuus* is believed to be caused by the fairies to lead people astray.

The attentions of these creatures are not expended on human beings alone, for they may revenge themselves on those who vex them by attacking domestic animals. Cattle becoming ill suddenly are supposed to be "shot" by the fairies, and the owners will often go to a great deal of trouble to find a person who possess a "fairy [823] stone," which is the only remedy. These stones are treasured very carefully and are kept wrapped up in a piece of cloth; they are used by rubbing them on the afflicted animal, and repeating a charm or prayer. Unfortunately no specimen of these stones was seen, so it cannot be stated positively whether they are flint arrow-heads or not.

A farm-house at a place called Illaunglass, in the Mullet, has a tale connected with it, illustrating the causing of disease in cattle by

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

The knit sweater
291 called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is
[175] commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage indus-
[65] try by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which
[531] is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked
[552] road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "black-
[171] berry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and
[196] other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its
286 drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the
291 mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2
46 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less
[437] tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

286 The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heri-
294 tage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced
[173] into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as
[175] "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in
[196] Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by
286 hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in
293 the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the
462 side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches
175 wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped
293 twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer
[178] traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men
[822] are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many
[999] shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons, however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

291 Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet
[177] rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

582 621 593 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

591 428 342 • 822 776 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 [178] [177] [657] Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder [372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 [343] [244] The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.

342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening [262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the [264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking [415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around [718] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," [352] filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 [352] [616] [593] [178] The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
198 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
776 nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
778 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
[824] the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[174] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[175] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid	She is deaf and
Dressed in white.	She is dumb.
Give her something	For God's sake,
For the night.	Give her some.

536
735 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
431 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
776 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
778 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
[822] roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[778] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[233] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771 775
"strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783]
penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771
magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776
God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754
presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178
right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826
tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822] •
of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171]
symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [743]
even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775
Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772
fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 *anschauung*, in which all experience has a place in
183 the logic of emotional associations. Thus one old fellow summed up a discussion of the sea creatures
181 which still haunt the western coasts of Ireland:
183 "Everything that does be on the land is in the sea,
821 too, if we could see them". This world-view incorporates the world into the life the countryman follows and knows. To the same old fellow, winds along the Clare and Galway border that separates Munster and Connaught provinces could appear as the battles of fairy hosts, for do not men today still remember human battles and still taunt the men of the other province in joke and banter? The rustle of a breeze and the flitting of bats in a ruin where men lived and died is not mere noise; it is still part of human life. One old fellow described to me the experience of 'them' that he got at close quarters, when he lived near the ruin of Ballyvaughan workhouse:

"They were so plentiful there that everybody living round it and myself got so used to them that we wouldn't mind them at all. The place is full of them and everywhere you go there is a door and long windows in the cowl, and you hear them going in and out. There was a great lot of people died in it long ago in the bad times. They are in every room and you hear them on all sides of you. I got so
181 used to it, I never minded them at all, but I heard
183 them every day."

● 823 The great cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast are
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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but the tales of it that best survive are those that relate it to the life of the present and express in the fairy-belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillenasearrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a common end. They provide the countryman with a world-view in which his regard for things and scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

312 strings of beads, rags or bits of clothing in the holy tree which
788 often overhangs the well, so that it may bear their ailments.
955 I happened to come across a well near Cork just after mid-
summer this year. Alongside were the smouldering remains
778 of a great bonfire which had been lit on St. John's Eve.
The visitors to the well, having drunk the water, walked three times sunwise around the corbelled stone well-cover, and taking up pebbles kept ready to hand in crevices, they made the sign of the cross on certain stones which were marked with deep grooves which generations of patrons had cut by the same process. Some wells have old "cup-marks" instead of crosses, and it seems probable that these pagan symbols were made long ago in the same way as the crosses which have replaced them. Their round completed, the visitors
[825] looked into the well, for if they were to recover from their ailments they would see the trout which is reputed to live there and to show itself only to the cured.

The virtues of these wells are many: they are believed to be efficacious in such varied complaints as eye-disease, lameness, toothache and in some cases barrenness The first Sunday of each quarter of the Celtic year is generally the visiting time, but perhaps on account of the weather the summer festivals, and especially midsummer, are most popular. Pins and other bits of metal are sometimes deposited in wells. Offerings are also made to certain trees in the form of pins stuck in the bark, each pin representing a wish. Special gatherings known as patterns or pardons were held at such sites on the anniversary of the patron saint of the district. Devotions were followed by dancing and games which often degenerated into fights. It is possible to see relics of paganism in the sanctity of such sites, and it is worth recalling that some of the more celebrated centres of pilgrimage in western Europe, like Santiago da Compostella, seem to have megalithic connexions.

788
● 823 The mention of cup-marks brings us to the superstitions
778 concerning the great stone monuments with which they are often associated. A recent article in the *Ulster Journal of*

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Archæology (July, 1940) by I. R. Crozier and L. C. Rea, entitled "Bullauns and other Basin-stones," summarizes the various beliefs connected with cup-holes and the larger "bullauns" or stone basins, which the authors suggest were made in the same way by gradual ceremonial attrition. The water which accumulates in these artificial hollows is considered to possess special virtues, for instance as a cure for warts, and offerings of pins and coins are often made in them. It is significant that some of the basins seem to have served as fonts in the early churches. (Fig. III.) Small boulders

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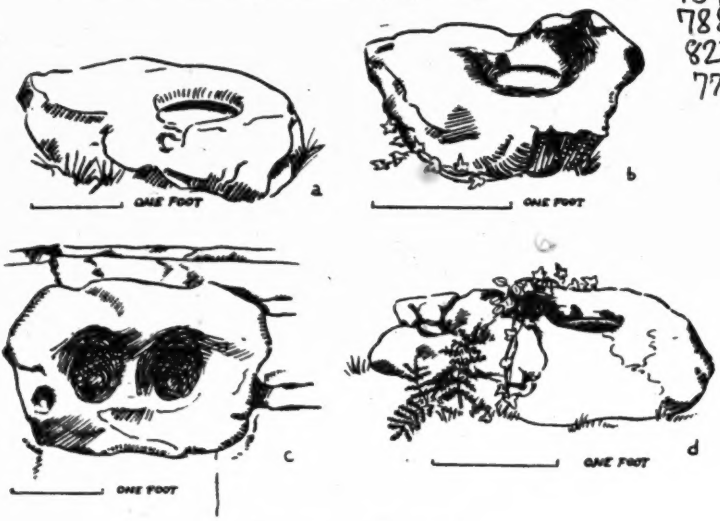

Fig. III. Bullauns.

(*a*) Portmore Church, Co. Antrim.
(*b* & *d*) Aghalee, Co. Antrim (basins on both sides of the same stone).
(*c*) "St. Columba's Font," Londonderry. (Two bullauns and a cup-mark.

lying in certain basin-stones are occasionally employed as cursing stones, the ritual consisting of turning the stones against the sun in their holes—there may be as many as ten in one boulder—at the same time uttering a curse against the offending person,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
● 823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The
[778] same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[797] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

778 like a basin; it contains almost a gallon of water; it is curious how it came there, for there is not a pebble of granite here."

527 The people of the same island keep as a special holiday the 11th of April, St. Leo's day, and will not do any work on it, while the inhabitants of Inishbofin do not observe it at all.

773 2. *Legends and Traditions.*—There are many legends and traditional tales about places on the islands, of which the few which could
● 823 be collected are given below; the main outlines only, in which all versions agree, are related, as each story was heard from more than one person, and the versions differed in detail.

Lough Bofin (The Lake of the White Cow).—A very long time ago, so long that nobody knows exactly when, Inishshark was a well-known island, and was inhabited; but Inishbofin was unknown, as, owing to enchantment, it was invisible. One day two fishermen were lost in a dense fog, and drifted on until they found themselves beside a rock, on which they landed and made a fire.[1] As soon as the fire touched the rock, the fog suddenly lifted, and the men found themselves on the shingly beach (now called the North Beach) of a strange island; on one side of the shingly belt on which they were was the sea, and on the other a lough, and close to them was an old woman driving a white cow down to the water. She drove the cow into the lake, and struck her with a stick, when she was at once turned into a rock. One of the fishermen, who had followed out of curiosity, was very angry at what he saw, and in his rage he struck the woman, and at once both he and she were transformed into stones. The rock and stones may be seen there still. The cow used to rise up out of the lake, and walk about the island when any great event was about to happen, but it is now more than thirty years since she was last seen. It is from this cow that the island takes its name (Inis bo-finne).

Carrig Guairim.—An old chief of the islands named Guairim (or
173 Gorham), whose castle was situated just above Bofin harbour, had a dispute with the monks of St. Colman's Abbey about the payment of tithe, and, not content with not paying, he, with the assistance of a family named Halligan, took the settlement of the dispute into his own hands by seizing six of the monks, whom he slew by the roadside in Middlequarter, at a spot where their blood is said to be seen still on the anniversaries of the murder. Gorham did not escape unpunished for this bloodthirsty act; he was taken over to Rinvyle

[276] [1] Another version is—"One of them knocked the ashes out of his pipe, for they had pipes then, though we do not know what they used to smoke in them."

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

173 began to sink.[1] Suspecting that the bell was the cause of their misfortune, they threw it into the sea, and the ship was saved. Next morning, when some of the islanders were searching for sea-weed on the shore, they found the bell lying broken among the rocks. This [178] relic has long ago disappeared, having been cut up into pieces which were worn as amulets, most of which have been taken to America, but it is said that some are still kept as great treasures by some old people in Inishbofin, who refuse to show them to anyone.

Richard O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, makes mention of this bell ("H-Iar Connaught," p. 117) . . . "Inisark is of the same property with Bofin and the saint therein worshipped, St. Leo; of whose reliques is a bell there extant."

St. Leo's Foot-print.—There is pointed out an impression in the 773 rock on which Cloghan Leo is built, which is said to be the imprint of ●823 the saint's foot, and the people's explanation of how it came there is, that when he had finished building the cloghan he had to leap down, as he had no ladder, and alighting on the rock he left the print of his foot upon it, where it still remains.

There is a tradition on the islands of a large treasure of gold being 173 hidden on Davillaun (a small island of the Bofin group), on which a large vessel of the Spanish Armada was wrecked, and some of the people claim to know exactly where it is. There are also many stories about Lord Nelson, under whom several men from these islands served, and wild tales of the old smugglers; and a very narrow passage between two dangerous rocks through which a daring smuggler once steered his vessel, and thus baffled his pursurers, is pointed out.

Archæology.

178 Though making no pretentions to being an archæologist, yet as an inquiry of this sort would be imperfect without, at least, a partial [172] description of the antiquities of the place, I hope that the notes hereunder given may, in some degree at least, supply the want.

1. *Survivals.*—In these the locality is comparatively rich, a good many old implements and methods of working, which have become extinct in other places, being still common. Such are the continuance of the use of plants and lichens as dyes, and some details of dress, such as the old blue cap, &c., which have been referred to before.

[1] One version of the story states that the ship had got as far as the Bay of Biscay!

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [262]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be buried alive with its wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [823] [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

775 bank by the roadside; after a time it rises, walks across the road to the mound, and then vanishes.

The ghost of Major —— is reported to be sometimes seen riding a phantom horse at a spot near Carn, and circles on the grass are pointed out as marking the scene of his equestrian feats; he is also said to ride at times to Bingham Castle.

776 There is a strong belief in fairies, and many people are to be found who say that they have seen them. They are said to dance at night and cause fairy rings; they dwell in grassy mounds and travel from place to place, using stems of the ragweed as horses.

The mirage which is sometimes seen off the coast is ascribed to [822] the fairies if it assumes the appearance of boats or ships; they are believed to have been seen to land on the shore, haul up their boats, and vanish. Many stories are told respecting the impudent pranks of these beings, and to their revenge for some injury, disease in man and cattle is sometimes ascribed. A man may become paralysed or waste away and die from fairy influence as well as from the evil eye, but their malice may have a less serious ending, and may only produce some disfigurement. Some time ago a man was one day walking homewards, when he saw lying on the road a bright new razor; he picked it up and took it home with him, but after shaving [828] with it got *sycosis menti*, and the implement was then declared to be a "fairy razor."

Women dying in puerperal fever are believed to have been taken [775] by the fairies to act as wet-nurses, and infants may be "taken away," and changelings put in their places. The changeling may be got rid of by putting on a roaring fire and throwing him behind it, when he [372] at once vanishes in the smoke. The *ignus fatuus* is believed to be caused by the fairies to lead people astray.

The attentions of these creatures are not expended on human beings alone, for they may revenge themselves on those who vex them by attacking domestic animals. Cattle becoming ill suddenly are supposed to be "shot" by the fairies, and the owners will often go to a great deal of trouble to find a person who possess a "fairy [823] stone," which is the only remedy. These stones are treasured very carefully and are kept wrapped up in a piece of cloth; they are used by rubbing them on the afflicted animal, and repeating a charm or prayer. Unfortunately no specimen of these stones was seen, so it cannot be stated positively whether they are flint arrow-heads or not.

A farm-house at a place called Illaunglass, in the Mullet, has a tale connected with it, illustrating the causing of disease in cattle by

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

832 believed in, or at least spoken of, though not practised. It is called the spancel, and is thus described by C. O.[1]:—"This spancel, called in Irish 'stheioul dhrum agus tharragh,' signifying the skin of the back and of the belly, consists of a continuous band of skin taken from round the length of the body, viz. from the side of one foot up the outside of that leg and side, over the head and down the other side to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the stripe meets where it first set out; it is used as a love charm, and its power is believed to be irresistible, it being only necessary in order to secure the affections of the victim, to tie the spancel round him while asleep; if he does not awake during the operation all *must* turn out to the wish of the operator; if he does awake, he dies before the end of the year, so the poor desired one has no escape." The same author mentions several instances of this, which were said to have occurred shortly before he wrote (1841), one of which, the discovery of three young women taking the spancel off a corpse, is still remembered by some of the older inhabitants. There
312 are several holy wells in the district, but the most famous is the well
778 of St. Brendan, on Inishglora, the water of which is said to remain sweet and pure if drawn by a man, but to turn bloody and become
● 823 full of worms if a woman has the temerity to take it. Many tales are told of the misfortunes which have happened to women who persisted in drawing water from this well after being warned. There is now resident in Belmullet an old man who lived for some years on Inishglora. This man solemnly declared to the Rev. P. O'Reilly and the writer that he had three times cleared out the well after women had taken water from it, and that on each occasion it was "full of blood and corruption"; he also said that from the time he began to clean out the well until the job was completed no water flowed in, though it began to come as soon as the cleansing was finished. He added that if a woman were left alone on the island with only a male child of a month old, and she wanted to get water, the vessel would have to be held by the child's hand to prevent the water from becoming bloody.

[753] 2. *Charms and Leechcraft.*—Disease is often ascribed to superna-
755 tural agencies, and for this reason is often treated by charms or incantations. There are several local "wise" men and women who treat disorders partly by means of charms, partly by herbal and animal remedies. In some cases the idea underlying the treatment

[1] "Erris and Tyrawley," p. 90.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

173 'deed of old' to delighted listening ears, but in language so ancient as to be now almost unintelligible to most Irish speakers of the modern school." The tradition of St. Brendan's discovery of America is well known, but the statement made by old writers about the supposed anti-putrefactive nature of the soil of Inishglora, does not seem to be recognised by the people of the district, who point to the bones among the ruins in disproof of the story.

O'Flaherty, in his "Ogygia," mentions the island in the following
539 lines :—

> "In Innisglore on Erris shore,
> Should we the bodies of our sires explore
> We'ed find them blooming, fresh and fair,
> No human flesh can rot or perish there."

The Priest's Leap.—Just below the sea face of Dunnamoe, and
173 separated from it by a narrow channel, is a large rock, which, tradition
● 823 relates, was once part of the cliff on which the fort is built. It is said that once in the old times, some say the time of Cromwell, a priest was saying Mass at Tarmoncarra, when he was surprised by the soldiery. Not knowing whither to fly, he ran towards the cliffs and reached them at this spot, his pursuers coming close behind him. Just when all seemed lost the large mass of rock on which he was broke away from the cliff and settled down in the sea as an islet, bearing down the priest with it, comfortably seated, in a niche, known as the "priest's chair," sheltered from the bullets of his enemies. Thus protected he remained until night, when he was taken off in a curragh by his people. The place has since been known as the "Priest's Leap."

The Namhoge or Neewoge.—There was formerly on Iniskea a small
778 stone figure called the *neewoge* (little saint), which was believed to have great power over the weather, and was accordingly treated with great reverence and used to be invoked for favourable winds. It is said that a pirate landed on the island, and after carrying off all that was portable, set fire to the houses, with the exception of the one in which the *neewoge* was kept, which did not take fire. Search was made for the cause and the image was taken out and broken. The *neewoge* never fully recovered this treatment. His power, though still great, was not the same as it had been.

Some years ago the attention of the parish priest became directed to the existence of this image, and having obtained the stone by a stratagem from the woman who was its custodian he threw it into the sea. As he died not very long after this, some of the islanders ascribe

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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OLD PISHROGUES

805 The whistle of the 7.15 now replaced cock-crow. But if it were
178 indeed true that peasant values had perished entirely and that
the rural population was transformed into the moronic cattle-
[496] herders of Filson Young's *Ireland at the Cross-Roads*, then this
book could not have been written. Luckily a mountain farmer
will still relate time to nature and refer to a moment of summer
twilight, in a memorable phrase quoted by Dr. James Delargy,
as 'the time when the dew was thinking of falling'. The wonder
178 is that so much lore and so many relics of pre-famine days have
771 survived. Yet the term 'old pishrogues' which is applied to all
varieties of witchcraft and fairy lore—even if sometimes used
in awe rather than contempt—shows that these things are
now regarded objectively and are no longer an accepted part
of social life. Superstitious practices tend to be carried out in
secret and to be resorted to only when more rational methods
have been tried and found wanting. Many of the old customs,
however, have had their life prolonged by children's games,
the seasonal bonfires and May Queens becoming their amuse-
ments.

Most of the pishrogues relate to fairies and to trees, wells
823 and stones; and that these elder faiths have their roots in a very
171 remote pre-agricultural phase of human evolution is attested by
their very general observance among primitive people. As an
example we may take the South African Bushmen, one of the
lowliest branches of the human family. In a recent report from
G. P. van der Post's expedition to the Kalahari we read that in
the heart of the Bushman country there are sacred hills which
are regarded as the home of very ancient spirits. Van der Post
was told that 'right on the top of the central hill there was a
spring of water and beside it a tree which bore the fruit of
knowledge, and close by the tree a rock with deep marks where
the greatest spirit of all had knelt to pray'.[1] The sacred hill-
tops, the ancestral spirits, the well of water, the 'gentle' tree
and the cup-marked stone are familiar themes in Irish folk
tradition. Throughout western Europe, from the fifth century
Council of Arles onwards, churchmen denounced those 'who
offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones'. The great religions
have had to come to terms with such cults, in Monsoon Asia as

[1] *The Times* (14th December, 1955).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

in Europe, and the emphasis on different elements of the complex naturally varies with regional circumstances and traditions. In Ireland the trees which the elder faiths had endowed with magic qualities were all small trees and shrubs—especially the rowan, holly, elderberry and whitethorn—and the evidence of archaeology and palaeobotany is that these plants first became common in the prehistoric landscape as weeds of cultivation following forest clearance by early cultivators. Thus they would have become symbols of the farming year, their white blossoms a sign of spring and the end of killing frosts, their red berries a token of the fulfilment of harvest and the promise of renewed life. At first sight one may wonder why the thorn tree should have been singled out for special attention, for it is ubiquitous in the lowland landscapes. The hedgerow thorns, of course, are newcomers, and they may be hacked with impunity, but woe betide the man who damages a fairy thorn, that is one not planted by man but growing on its own in the fields or on some ancient cairn or rath. They are to be found in every part of Ireland, but to see the fairy thorn in full majesty one should go to the naked hillsides where it stands in splendid isolation against the stone dykes and the bare hills (Fig. 89). As with the sacred groves of China, not even fallen dead branches which would serve as firewood should be removed. I have

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823
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FIG. 89. Fairy thorns. A cluster of 'gentle bushes' near Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh: 'If you were in there on the hottest day it would starve you.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

754 occurring on natural rock outcrops (Fig. 91), others ground into stone slabs resting on built-up foundations and termed altars, as at Inishmurray off the coast of Sligo. I have little doubt that they were the communal mortars of pre-Christian settlements. Their utilization as cursing stones continued into recent times. I was told of the example illustrated at Killinagh in Co. Cavan, that 'you would think twice before turning the stones, because the curse would come back on you unless the

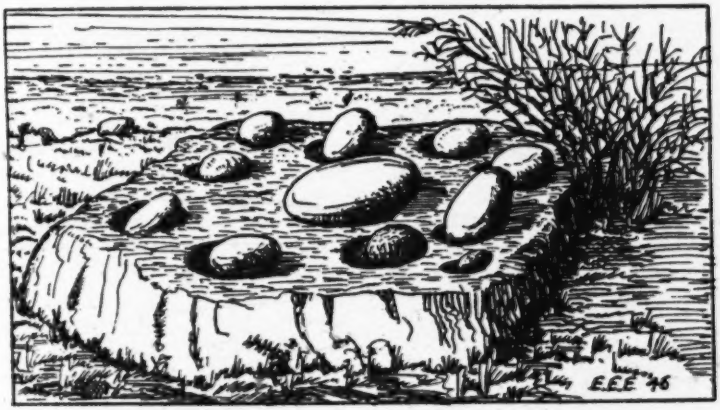

FIG. 91. Cursing stones by Upper Lough Macnean at Killinagh, Co. Cavan. (For scale, the large central stone measures 15 in. by 12 in.)

cause was just'. At many holy wells curiously shaped stones
823 were regarded as having curative powers, and they were bor-
755 rowed for use by people too ill to visit the well. At St. Olan's Well, Dromatimore, Co. Cork, the rounds include visits to the saint's Cap and Stone. The former is an oval quartzite stone which rests on an ogham-inscribed monolith and which replaces one, removed by the parish priest a century ago, which was invested with magical properties. 'It was said to be an unfailing talisman, and was much sought after for various feminine ailments, particularly maternity cases. If worn on the head and carried three times round the church it was said to cure the most violent headaches and, in addition, it had the gift of locomotion in that, if removed to any distance, it unfailingly

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder 823 ●
bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint 755
of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some
which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded [776]
with superstitious awe up and down the country and were generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin 823
slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts [584]
are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.' Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork, [844]
women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup- 526
marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 103.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

234 newly-calved cow should be milked on to a piece of metal
825 placed in the pail. Offerings of the 'beastlings' were poured in the raths and at the roots of fairy thorns, to appease the fairies. When taking a drink out of doors, the old countryman will casually spill a portion of the draught on the earth as a complimentary libation to the good people. 'When a cow fell sick through fairy malice, it was formerly by no means an uncommon practice, in the west of Ireland, to devote the ailing animal to St. Martin. The ceremony was performed by letting a few drops of blood from the cow in honour of the saint.'[1] Cows which, for no apparent reason, are not thriving are said to be
[172] elf-shot. The elf-stones or fairy-darts which are supposed to have caused the mischief are prehistoric flint arrowheads such as can be picked up in the fields. One of the tricks of the cow-doctor who is called in, and who keeps a few arrowheads handy, is to produce one by sleight of hand from the flank of the ailing beast. Or counter-magic can be worked by means of a flint arrowhead which must not be allowed to touch the ground after it has been found. The cow-doctor uses sympathetic magic in curing calves believed to be suffering from intestinal knots by drawing apart over the animal's back the loose ends of a string tied in a complicated witch-knot or 'bat', of the type which comes undone when pulled. But as always he must work the magic correctly, for if the knot is not resolved another one is tied
789 inside the calf.

234 Hanging in the byre one sometimes sees a flint pebble sus-
[823] pended on a string through a natural hole. It is a witch-stone, protecting the cows from milk-stealers, and it may owe its virtue to the flint or to its symbolic ever-watching eye. In the Ardenne a holed flint hung in the stable is believed to preserve
[171] the horses from nightmares,[2] and nearer home in the Yorkshire dales holed stones known as ring-stones protected the cows from the evil eye. 'Blessings on all that I can see' is the traditional formula to use when one enters a byre. An ill-disposed person could, merely by looking at it, 'blink' a cow so that its milk would yield no butter. The cow could be cured by burning under its nose a portion of the blinker's clothes

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 6.
[2] H. H. Turney-High, *Ch'teau-Gérrad* 53(19), 232.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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763 of Fortanne says that the coach was heard at the deaths of certain Westropps after 1873, but nothing happened after its last appearance.

The phantom of a coach and horse was seen not far from Corofin, at Cragmoher, not long since, but it is agreed that no death took place after the apparition. An equally vague story was told about 1870 at Attyflin by a very old woman, Norry Halloran, whom the sound of the coach pursued one dark evening for a long way, but it did not pass her door, and nothing happened afterwards.

IV. *Fairies and Fairy Forts and Mounds.*

776 MacCraith, in the *Triumphs of Torlough*, in describing the prognostics of the death of Prince Donchad early in the fourteenth ●823 century says that "lights shone on the fairy forts," and it has [538] already been noted that the *sidhs* or fairy mounds were lodgings of appalling apparitions, like Bronach when not at her proper residence in the lower deep. The *Dindsenchas*,—that early encyclopædia invaluable for everything but the reliable account of the origin of place names which it purports to be,—describes how a lady dwelling in such a mound sprang out at her would-be lover in the form of a dragon.[36] Probably such beliefs, and the consequent fear of irate and deadly beings in earthworks, have helped until recent years to preserve the residential earthen "forts," although the ring walls were destroyed with but little scruple. Nevertheless the son of a farmer named Nihill told me in 1892 that, after some days wreckage and removal of the outer wall of the fine triple stone fort of Cahercalla, near Quin, his father was stricken with acute pain, and only recovered from his illness when the work was stopped,—whence this interesting ruin has been preserved to the present day. A certain landlord, still living, nearly lost the use of one eye from the dust of an explosion when blasting a rock in an earth fort which was being removed, and this incident has upheld the faith and fear of the fairies in north-eastern Clare. A locally famous "astronomer" and weather prophet tried, many years ago, to blast a dolmen in Inchiquin Barony, and a splinter hit his hand, which was badly injured and

[36] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv., p. 441.

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afterwards festered. The wreckage of the dolmen was lying untouched on the ground a few years ago. The collapse of a calf shed on its occupants followed the demolition of Templenaraha oratory for building the unstable structure;[37] this might be ascribed to a more sacred anger than that of the fairies, but the oratory stood in a ring fort. Another case of supposed vengeance occurred near Lehinch on the Atlantic. Some workmen were employed to level the earthworks of Dooneeva,[38] a fort on a low cliff at the end of the bay and near the modern Protestant Church. The man who originated this outrage was digging at the mounds when he fell to all appearance dead. The news was at once taken to his wife, a reputed "wise woman," and she ran to a "fairy spot" and "did magic." She then went to her apparently lifeless husband, and ordered the fairies in a peremptory way to restore him at once and take his stick. Then, before everyone, the stick vanished, and the "dead man" sat up none the worse for his "rapture to the land of faëry."[39] The date of this event could not be fixed, but it seems to be attributed to the period before 1840, and Dooneeva seems to have been in its present condition in 1839.

Two forts named Lissardcarney and Ballyhee in Templemaley Parish were in 1839 reputed strongholds garrisoned by troops of fairies. The songs of the fairies were heard in Cahernanoorane in Inchiquin, and Leskeentha near Noughaval.[40] They danced in the Lisnarinkas, played "hurley" in Lisfearbegnagommaun, and laid in wait to worry the belated traveller in Rathfollane and a small fort near the rectory, to the south of it, near Newmarket-on-Fergus. Fairies haunted the well of Tobesheefra, while even at the holy well of the powerful and vengeful St. Mochulla at Fortanne milk was once offered to them. The butter had refused to "come," and the mistress of the house, (a Protestant woman of good birth and fair education), as she told me herself about 1878, took some of the refractory milk to the well, made the sign

[37] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara about 1907.

[38] *Not* Doonmeeve as on the Ordnance Survey maps.

[39] Told to Miss Diana Parkinson. I heard it locally, but more vaguely, in 1907.

[40] Local traditions, 1904, 1908.

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776 of the cross over it, said the Lord's Prayer, dug a hole in the mud
823 at the well with her left heel, and went away without looking back.
[789] As might have been expected, the butter had "come" by the time she had got home again, and she used to quote the case as "proof positive." Besides the forts and wells, the dolmens are believed to have been fairy homes, but in my enquiries since
776 1892 I have never been able to authenticate a case of offerings
782 at them of milk and butter, although small basins like the Swedish "elf mills" are found in the covers of more than one of these
823 structures, and large *bullauns* or basins at others, such as Ballyganner Hill near Noughaval, Cappaghkennedy on the hills above Corofin, and Newgrove and Kiltanon near Tulla in eastern Clare. Food and drink, however, have been, until at least the present century, set out in plates and cups in Inchiquin and Moyarta Baronies, and in the latter, on the Shannon bank, the slops were thrown out and clean plates, water, chairs, and a well-swept hearth left by a punctilious servant for fairy guests in 1888 or 1889.

776 The greatest fairy monarch in Clare was "Donn of the Sand-
823 hills" (now the golf links), near the old castle of Doogh, (*i.e.* Dumhach or Sand Dune), near Lehinch. He, or one of the other fairy princes named Donn, appears in a list of the divine race of the Tuatha Dé Danann,[41] and is therefore of the family of the Dagda, and, it may be presumed, a lineal descendant of the ancient Ana, Mother of the Gods. A well-known Irish scholar and antiquary, Andrew MacCurtin, before 1730 addressed a political petition to Donn of Dumhach complaining, like most Irish antiquaries, of the neglect of the gentry, and praying for any menial post at his Court.[42] As there was none that answered, the petitioner had to rest content with the hospitality of the MacDonnells of Kilkee and the O'Briens of Ennistymon. Donn's heartless conduct met poetic justice, for he has ever since "lacked a sacred bard," and, save for a slight uneasiness in a few poor old people passing across the sandhills after the golfers have left and the sun has set, he is now all but forgotten. In another poem of MacCurtin's, on a monk's horse "overlooked" and killed by the evil eye, or by the look of a red-haired woman, or

[41] *Cath Finntraga* (ed. Kuno Meyer), p. 15.

[42] Mss. Royal Irish Academy, 23. M. 47.

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by "the stroke of a fairy," the poet recommends the holy man to get the aid of a local practitioner of renown, Peter the Fairy Killer.[43] 776 823

In recent years I have met only one sign of true respect for the "Sheevra" race. A small patch of land was left untilled in the midst of a cornfield at the end of the steep descent from Carran old church to Eanty in the Burren. It was left for three years amidst the tillage, and then the field was allowed to return to grass. The owners obviously disliked to explain the matter, but the act was clearly understood in the neighbourhood as a concession to the spirits of the field when the grass land was broken up for the first time in human memory.[44]

The appearances of the fairies also seem now very rare indeed. At Newmarket-on-Fergus, a centre of much folklore, we find that, besides the two forts named above and a low earth mound (perhaps sepulchral), only one spot has been honoured by an actual apparition in the last ten years. In this case a man walking on the Ennis road, not far from Lough Gaish, saw a very little man neatly dressed in green and walking on the path. Suspecting the green man to be a *leprechaun*,—and hence an owner of gold,—the Clare man tried to grasp him, but the sprite vanished out of his hands.[45]

The "literary movement" will probably affect the folklore very soon, as it is already affecting historical tradition,—which is shown by the variations in certain legends collected at long intervals at the same sites. By some the Danann have been identified with the Danes as "fort builders." If this were so, why did Dane's fort become Caher Loghlanach, (Caher Loglin, 1652), and similar forms? The people once knew better, for forts were attributed to all sorts of times and races, not only to members of the Tuatha Dé Danann, but also to Firbolgs and mythical persons such as Aenghus, Eerish, Eir, Farvagh, and 776 538

[43] *Ibid.* 23. K. 10.

[44] It was certainly not the darker belief that in Scotland dedicated an offering to the one called euphemistically "The Goodman," nor like the sheaf sometimes dedicated to Brigit and other saints in West Munster, or, indeed, in other parts of Ireland.

[45] Collected by Miss Katherine Neville. The sprite was, of course, proved not to be a *leprechaun*, as that being can be held by the eye alone.

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776 Croaghan, and Celts such as Lachtna (A.D. 820-840), and Brian
538 Boru (A.D. 980-1014). In one notable instance, King Conor (A.D. 1242-69) is the reputed builder of the great stone fort of Dun Conor in Aran, which in the eleventh-century legend is evidently connected with Conchiurn or Conchraed the Firbolg,—a relation accepted in 1685 by Roderic O'Flaherty, although he called its hero "Conquevar" (*i.e.* Chonchobhar or Conor). Any modern allusion to the Danann is therefore "suspect." Many visits to the recesses of the hills in Burren from 1878 onwards,—and I may add that
776 the same is true of the rest of Clare,—only gave me, in 1905, one
788 direct reference to the Danann.[46] At the natural moat crowned
● 823 by the small stone ring wall of Croaghateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna, we were told to cross ourselves as a protection against the Danann. The place was, nevertheless, undoubtedly regarded by the older people living near it as a most dangerous fairy fort, and we were told how certain badger hunters,—(who brought drink with them), —after a long festival on its summit got benighted there; they eventually returned home sobered by fright, as they suddenly "saw the whole fleet" of "them" coming up the mound, and escaped only just in time.

776 The "whirlwinds" along dusty roads and sudden gusts were
788 not long ago everywhere supposed to be caused by the progress of
821 fairy beings. The older folk believed, and trembled,—crossing themselves, or saying a word of prayer,—while the younger folk, more than half in jest, raised their hats, as is still sometimes done to the unlucky "single magpie" and the weasel.

776 I know of two cases of reputed changelings. My second sister, whose delicacy, when an infant, excited remark, was, about 1842, taken out by a servant to be exposed on a shovel on the doorstep at Carnelly. The angry and hasty intervention of another servant saved the child, but the would-be "exposer" was convinced of the propriety of her attempt "to get back the real child" from the fairies. A very old woman, Kate (Geerin) Molony, a henwife at Maryfort, near Tulla, whom I faintly remember in 1869, was many years before anxious about her little daughter's failing health, and went to a "wise woman," who assured her that the child was "changed." She spoke of this on her return, and unfortunately

[46] Apart from Lon, at Slievnaglasha, and the "hags."

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773 776 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she wailed :—

> "As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> "As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer. [823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of long, low, cross vaults. [342] In the end of the innermost recess is a built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their [103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[8] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

[8] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soul Cages").

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178 fires have been more numerous. Formerly bones were saved up
796 to crackle as they burnt in the fires, and even when this ceased the pronunciation "bone-fire" continued. Magical rites con-
[789] nected with milk and butter were, very recently, performed secretly at wells on May Eve (April 30th) as described later.

526 Other annual observances were sports which first included, and
527 then lapsed into, mere races. The *iraghts*, or gatherings, at the
175 mound and inauguration place of Moy Eir (Magh Adhair) lasted down to 1838, and were still very faintly remembered by old people in 1890 as having died out in the Famine years, with so much of the social brightness of the people. I may note that this place,—the reputed seat of Adhar, a Firbolg prince, about the beginning of our era,—became the place of inauguration of the native princes of Thomond from before 877, and continued so down, at least, to 1570. The name Magh Adhair (phonetically Moy Eir) at first covered the whole central plain of east Clare, but steadily shrank to that of a small tribal territory, and then, in 1584 and 1655, to the two townlands of Corbally and Toonagh (Tuanagh-moyree). By 1838 it was attached only to two fields,—"Moyross, or Moyree, parks,"—in the former, and is now confined to a single field, "Moyars Park," and to the "rath" or mound in Toonagh, across the brook. Notices of the inaugurations are numerous from 1275 to 1311, and occur sporadically from 877 onwards. Other and less famous gatherings were at Creganenagh ("Fair or Assembly Crag")[1] on the bare hill over Termon in the Burren, and at a field in Caherminaun near Kilfenora. The latter probably gave the name Ballykinvarga, (Baile-cinn-mharghaidh in 1380), *i.e.* "head of the market," to the adjacent townland, and may have been connected with the remarkable ring wall, girt with a wide abattis of pillar stones, not far distant. Some forgotten assembly is commemorated at Eanty ("Fairs" or "gatherings") in the east of Burren. Other assemblages will be dealt with later under XVI. *Patterns.*

XV. *Wells and Well Customs.*

823 Hesitation in questioning poor people too closely about their religious feelings and rites has, I fear, rendered my notes on this

[1] Aenach was not merely a fair, but an assembly for merrymaking, consultation, etc.

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important subject somewhat bald. The pagan Irish, of course, reverenced wells, and the famous "King of the Waters" in Mayo was connected with St. Patrick by early biographers.[9] With the usual wise tactfulness of the ancient Irish missionaries all that was harmless was adopted into the new religion, and the wells lost none of their old observances and honour. The dedications of the Clare wells form a most valuable record, for, even when the founder of the church was forgotten, or a new patron invoked, the well usually kept the name of the ancient local saint. Unfortunately since about 1850 names of wells have been locally forgotten, and a re-dedication, often to St. Joseph, is common. Strange to say, the noteworthy saints Enda and Luchtighern are forgotten at the wells at their churches. The early mediæval life of St. Senan, (Colgan, *Vita S.S.*, March), says that, when that saint was born at Magh Lacha, Moylough, there was no water at hand to baptize him,—a rare thing in County Clare,—so he told his mother to pull up three rushes, and a spring welled out. The tale was still told in 1816.[10] The life of St. Mochulleus (Mochuille or Mochulla), about 1141 tells us how that early seventh-century saint struck a rock near a lake to the north of Tulla and three streams broke out. The well dedicated to him to the east of Loch Graney is evidently intended, and *two* streams still flow from it down the hillside. Some have supposed the wells of Tobereendowny, ("well of the King of the Sabbath," or, as suggested by Prof. Macalister and others, "of the world"),—were dedicated to a pre-Christian deity. Tobereevul is dedicated to Aibhill.[11] The flooded dolmen, Tobergrania, is named from Finn's fugitive spouse, "Granny's bed" occurring also as a dolmen name in Clare. Among Christian dedications we have Tobercruhnorindowan (of "the creator of the world") at Killard, Tober Isa (of "Jesus"), and Tobernacrohynaeve (*i.e.* Tobar-na-croiche-naoimh, of "the Holy Cross"). To the Virgin are dedicated wells at Drimelihy-Westby, Kilmacduan, and Killadysert. Of non-local saints,—usually, it is probable, late dedications,—we find St. John has

[9] *E.g.*, in the *Tripartite Life*, ed. W. Stokes, among the early "annotations" of Tirechan.

[10] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., under Kilrush Parish.

[11] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 186.

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the wells of Killone and Tromra, St. Michael wells at Kilbrecan, Cappagh (Bunratty) and the Kilmihils, St. Augustine at Kilshanny and Gallynagry, St. Bartholomew at Toberpartholaun in Rath (Inchiquin), and St. Martin at Moyarta, Ballynecally, and Lemaneagh. All the dedications to St. Joseph are modern. St. Patrick did not enter Clare, but has wells at Correen (Kilnaboy), Clooney (Bunratty Barony), and Rossalia. The following list of wells dedicated to local saints may be useful for reference. *Brecan* (c. 480) has wells at Noughaval near Clare Castle (Kilbrecan), Doora, and Clooney (Bunratty); *Brendan* (date doubtful), at Kilmoon and Farighy (Moyarta); *Brigid*, (probably the Abbess of Feenish Island, c. 550), Kiltanon, Cappafeeaun, Finnor, and Coney Island; *Caimin* (d. 653), Iniscaltra and Moynoe; *Caritan* (c. 550), Kilcredaun in Kilballyowen, Kilcredaun near O'Brien's Bridge, and Kilcredaunadober near Bunratty; *Carrol* (doubtful), Kilcarrol, where a wooden image of him existed in 1816; *Colan* of Tomgraney (d. 552), to the west of that village; *Colman mac Duach* of Kilmacduach (c. 630), Kinallia, Oughtmāma (where "the three Colmans" probably originate in a confusion of texts), Teernea, Lough George, and Crusheen: *Columba* of Iona (d. 597), Crumlin and Glen Columbcille; *Cornan* (unknown), Kilcornan and Tobercornan in Gleninagh; *Croine* (unknown), Kilcrony and Liscrona in Moyarta; *Cronan* (probably of Tomgraney, c. 505), Inchicronan, Terryncronan, Killokennedy, and Corrakyle; *Dioma*, Kildimo; *Enda* (c. 480), Killeany; *Fachtnan* (doubtful), Kilfenora; *Flannan* (c. 680), Killaloe; *Imer* (unknown), Killimer; *Inghean Baoith* (c. 630), Kilnaboy, Commons, Glenseeade, Inakerstown, Killavella, Dulick (Templemaley), Kiltacky, Kilshanny, Aglish, Moy-Ibrickan, Magowna, Ballycoree, Shalee (two), Cullaun, Castletown (Spansil Hill), Dromumna, and Quin; *Kirin* (not Kieran), Kilkierin (locally Kilkereen); *Lachtin*, Kilnamona, Kilfarboy, and Stacpoole Bridge near Miltown Malbay; *Lonan* (c. 580), Killaspuglonane and Derrynavahagh (Kilmoon); *Luchtighern* (c. 550), Tomfinlough and, probably, Moy Ibrickan; *Maccreehy* (c. 580), Kilmacreehy, Kilmanaheen, and Inagh; *Mainchin* (perhaps "St. Munchin," patron of Limerick), Kilmanaheen; *Mochonna* (unknown), Feakle and Moynoe; *Mochulla* (c. 620), Tulla, Templemoculla (Clonlara), Lough Graney, Lough

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Breeda, Miltown, Kilgorey, Fortanne, Broadford, Trough, Ralahine, Cragg, Lahardan, and Cappavilla, with perhaps, (if not of St. Molocus, c. 550), Moylough, Scattery, and Carrigaholt; *Molua* (c. 620), Killaloe; *Onchu*, Killonaghan; *Sanctan*, Dromline; *Screbann*, Clondegad and Kilmaley; *Senan* (d. 552), Iniscatha, Moylough, Iniscaeragh (Mutton Island), Kilclogher, Carrow (Kilmaduan), Erribul (Kilfiddan), Kilshanny, Killaneena, Cooraclare, Kilcredaun, and Drim (Quin); *Tola* (c. 635), Dysert O'Dea and Kiltola; and *Voydan* or *Braighdean* (unknown), Kilvoydan, Corofin, and Kilraughtis.

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Healing Powers.—The *Ordnance Survey Letters*[12] mention the following:—Gleninagh well, which has a fifteenth-century well-house or "turry," cured sore eyes; Tober Cholmain, above Oughtmāma churches, sufferers from "the pearl," the films falling off the eyes at the third washing; St. Maccreehy's well, near Liscannor, eye troubles, which were also cured by St. Inghean Baoith's well near Kilshanny (even then nearly deserted), Tobermoghna near Clooney (Corcomroe), St. Senan's well on the cliffs south-west from Kilkee, Kilcrony well near Carrigaholt, Tobercuan in Kiltrellig near Loop Head, Tobershenan in Moyfadda, the Virgin's well at Templemaley, and Tober Isa at Corlack Glebe (Bunratty). Tobernatasha, ("well of the relic" or, as some say, "spectre"), in Kilmaley was shaped like a coffin, and delicate children used to be laid on their backs in it.[13] The black mud which gave its name to Toberduff cured sore eyes and swelled limbs. So did Senan's well at Kilkee; horrible to tell, the devotees,—down to 1875, at least, when a washing-tank was made outside the well-house,—used to wash in this, the only supply of drinking-water for the then fashionable watering-place. Toberlachtin at Kilnemona cured several diseases, its "day" being March 19th. Eyes were also healed by the well south from Newmarket-on-Fergus, and by the wetted moss of St. Mochulla's well near Tulla (the moss being put back to complete the cure). The latter well is said to have avenged itself, about 1780, on its landlord, who had dug away part of its enclosure, by rendering

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[12] Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Mss. 14B 23. 24, (Co. Clare), vols. i. and ii.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 183.

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757 his son and daughter imbecile. The son survived till 1853, and
778 no other members of the family were affected after the well was restored.[14] The Newmarket well indignantly removed itself to its
823 present site when "a dirty woman washed her feet in it," and it also gave her the complaint it usually cured. So, also, when the holy well above Oughtmāma[15] was offended, it closed, and broke out lower down the hillside, as the Sruhaunanaeve or "saints' stream," and the water of Killone well refused to boil. The Cunninghams, living near it, spoilt their cooking by using its water, though "they knew it would not boil." John Windele tells of other resentful wells in Cork and Kerry; for example, the well at Labba Molagga (Cork) ran dry when a woman washed her clothes in it, and at Maunaholtora the well near a dolmen ran dry, and its water refused to boil.[16] The Irish "Nennius" tells a story of ducks that could not be boiled because the water would not get hot while they were in it. In the last century a woman who drew water from a well and saw it did not boil found a fish in it. She took the fish back to the well, and the water then boiled without any difficulty. The mud of the dolmen or "well" of Tobergrania at Ballycroum cured sore or short-sighted eyes, and that of the bullaun or basin at Kiltinanlea church near Clonlara did the same. The well of St. Michael at Kilmihil was once powerful. Father Anthony Bruodin, a Franciscan and author of a history of his order[17] full of curious particulars about Clare before 1640, tells how "Lady" Mariana, wife of Thomas MacGorman, of the author's kinsfolk, had in 1632 long suffered from gout. The Archangel appeared to her in a dream, and bade her go to his church and dig where she should see rushes growing near it. Aided by her son and Dermot O'Quaely, the parish priest of Kilmihil, she found the well and was cured. Many other persons got similar relief, but there seems no tradition of any cures by it preserved among the people of Kilmihil.

778 *Offerings.*—It is right, on visiting a well, to make offerings of
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[14] So Mrs. Connors at Fortanne.

[15] Pronounced Ooght-máw-mā. It is a weird spot with three ancient churches in a grassy basin on the flank of a terraced hill of bare grey limestone.

[16] Windele, Mss. Royal Irish Academy; Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. iii., pp. 765-9.

[17] *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Fidei*, 1665. [P. 233]

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small objects, only of value as homage. Rag offerings are naturally most frequent where there is a "blessed bush" at the well, but they are frequently hung on a bramble, or even, on the Atlantic coast, kept in place by stones. Rags abounded, with other offerings, at Gleninagh, at least till 1899, being tied to the twigs of an old elder bush. They were hung in quantities on the stunted old hawthorn at Oughtmāma well, and were found at Tobersraheen, at Aglish graveyard in Ogonello, and on the large fallen hawthorn near the basin at Kiltinanlea. They are often accompanied by rosaries, religious medals, necklaces and ribbons, broken or whole plaster and china figures and vessels, and glass, buttons, pins, and nails. Such objects are abundant at many wells, such as the little rock well in Glensleade between the largest Berneens dolmen and the road, Killone altar, St. Senan's well near Kiltinanlea (Plate XI.), Fortanne, Kilseily, St. Lachtin's well near Miltown Malbay, Kilcredaun, and a well of St. Inghean Baoith (stopped by a too zealous Protestant, but recently reopened and dedicated to St. Joseph) near Inchiquin lake. The almost disused dolmen-well of Tobergrania had in 1893 two rude crosses of laths tied together, buttons, bottles, glass, crockery, and a coin.[18] In 1889 Kilfarboy well near Milltown was frequented on Sundays and Thursdays by sick persons, and abounded in such offerings as bits of leather, crockery, and blacking pots. (I am not certain whether this note refers to St. Lachtin's well or to one near Kilfarboy church.) China and pebbles have been offered at Kilcredaun in a cleft beside the Shannon estuary, and pebbles placed in the "Font" of Doughnambraher in central Clare.[19]

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(*To be continued.*)

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XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 825 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date, for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle.*—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

778 825 233 823 [776] The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St. Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Boolydoolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacauk (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

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buttons, and broken crockery. Patients sit in the "chair" to cure lumbago. It is believed that the water of this lake cannot be boiled and that no one can be drowned by it, and sixty or seventy years ago cattle were cured by it. The beasts were brought in herds to the lake to drink, and were driven into it. If they turned to the right hand they would recover, but not if they swam to the left. It is said that on one occasion a cow sank, but was found next day grazing in a field beside the lake, completely cured. In consequence of drainage works, the water level has fallen, and the mud round the shore is too deep to allow the cattle to be driven through it, so on May Day every year, before sunrise, a little crowd gathers, of perhaps over 100 persons, to fill bottles with the water for curing cattle, especially of "the worm." The water keeps good till the next anniversary, and is also used to give a "good churning" and to clear a "garden" of caterpillars.[22]

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In 1839 Lough Iona (now Eenagh) was reputed to cure sick cattle on Mondays and Thursdays.[23] In 1808 the smiths were in some districts employed to kill the cattle,—or rather to fell them for slaying,—and their perquisites were the animals' heads.[24]

Persons over sixty years of age are often firm believers in the charming away, or "taking," of milk and butter. The younger folk usually deny that they hold this belief, and, where they take part in quarrels caused by it, avowedly only do so to support their elders. Two families living in the south-east corner of the county had about 1890 a quarrel resulting in a serious feud, hardly as yet appeased. It seems that for about three years the cows of the first household gave but little milk, and that little so bad and unwholesome for pigs and calves that several died. Ordinary veterinary practitioners, and even the local "knowing men," did no good, so the farmer sought a "wise man" of renown in another parish. This sage directed his client to watch the local well all May Eve, and to let no one come near it till after midnight. The farmer and his sons hid near it, saw a man and a woman of the

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[22] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. ii.

[23] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 161.

[24] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 359. The smith was a magician amongst the Irish, and the ancient *St. Patrick's Lorica* prays against the spells of "smiths, women, and druids."

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627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the
233 newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
823 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26]
789 In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
826 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to
789 the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale. [P. 243]

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A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE (*continued*).

XIX. *Rocks, Caves, and Stones.*

133 773 823 *Rock markings.*—The strange marks left in the flat crags by the weathering of softer portions and of fossils have caused numerous legends. The dish-like hollows in the crags below the hermitage of St. Colman MacDuach, at the great "Cliff of the Eagle," in Kinallia, the name Bohernameesh (*bothar na mias, i.e.* road of the dishes), and marks like the footprints of men and animals all seem to have been seized on by the saint's biographers.[1] Colman, brother of King Guaire "the hospitable," of Hy Fiachrach Aidhne (the district round Gort), early in the seventh century retired to fast and pray in the wilderness. After a most austere observance of Lent, a companion monk yearned for meat, and Colman pitied him and prayed. The king's Easter feast therefore flew to the hermitage, pursued by the whole Court. Terrified by the angry warriors Colman again prayed, and their feet and the hoofs of their horses stuck fast in the rocks. The legend is still told in a form identical with that in the Life.[2] The servant is said to have died from the feast, and his grave is shown beside the Boher.[3]

Where Burren and Inchiquin meet, on the Glasgeivnagh Hill,

[1] Cf. *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* (ed. W. Stokes, Rolls Ser.), p. 405.

[2] Colgan, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ.*

[3] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100 (Ms. Royal Irish Academy).

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the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Cahercommaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of Lon the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of Lon's seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like débris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown Luno" of (Macpherson's) Ossian.[4] 133 773 823

At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbanaheanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In this bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.[5] 823 773

On Scattery Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara[6] floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint. 776 823

[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

[5] From Messrs. Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtdarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

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776 823 Another knee-stone of St. Senan was beside the creek of Poulanishery on the opposite shore to Scattery. Between Dysert O'Dea and Rath Blamaic a rock with two basins bore the marks of St. Manawla's knees when she carried off the round tower of Rath.[7] St. Columba's thumb and finger marks are shown on a limestone boulder in the road fence near the lane to his entrenched church in Glen Columbcille. The bosses on the "plague stone" at Tomfinlough church were the two plague swellings torn from a woman's head and thrown against the stone by St. Luchtighern.

773 823 Not only the saints, but also Finn MacCumhail and his warriors have left marks on the rocks of Clare. A huge rock named Cloughmornia or Cloughlea, near Ballysheen and not far from Sixmilebridge, has in its sides long straight gashes where Finn and his band tried (or sharpened) their swords.[8] Finn's fingerprints are visible on a rock which was brought to Cullaun House near Quin early in the last century by the facetious Tom Steele from Birr in King's County, where it was seen by Thomas Dineley about 1680. The stone was called "the Navel of Ireland,"[9] and the V-marks are now regarded as the footprints of the cock that crowed at St. Peter's denial.

Hughey's Rock, a great boulder on the brow of the ridge between Edenvale and Rockmount near Ennis, bears the finger-marks of Hughey, a giant who threw it at another giant from Mount Callan.[10]

Caves.—I have heard at Newhall of a cave "between Ennis and Lisdoonvarna" in which runs an underground river that

[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 50. A similar legend occurs in the *Book of Lecan.*

[8] *The Battle of Magh Leana*, p. 30 (notes). The legend was still surviving at Ballysheen in 1899.

[9] *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archæological Society*, vol. viii. (1864), p. 360. The cock legend is often represented on tombstones etc., and appears at Ennis Abbey (1460). In a version gathered by me in eastern Limerick, the cock says,—"I'm only a cock, and you're an apostle; but I'm the better gentleman any day!" In *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 415, the Angel Victor in the form of a bird leaves footmarks on a stone.

[10] So told me by Shaneen (Little John) O'Halloran at Edenvale in 1869 and later.

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makes old people young. The exact locality is unknown, as the people who have gone to use it have never been seen again. Lismulbreeda cave, in Dromcliff parish and near the Kilrush road, is marked all over its soft sandstone sides and roof with crosses, figures, and initials, which it is considered lucky to cut on a visit. Horses are said to have come out of the Kilcorney cave, and left descendants in the valley below.[11] The caves of the Broc-sidh and Faracat have already been mentioned.[12] There is a tale of a wild boar in a cave some miles to the north-east of Feakle.

Dolmens.—These were supposed to be giants' graves, and, if called "altars," the word was understood in a Christian sense, with a belief that they had been used for the mass during the prevalence of the cruel penal laws. For example, Altoir Ultach was said to be named from an Ulster priest who served the mass there in the eighteenth century because the nearest magistrates were more tolerant than those of the north.[13] There is no evidence of any general popular belief that they were pagan altars, such an idea, where it existed, being derived from the "learned ignorance" of local gentry. The dolmens were, and are, called *leaba* (*labba*, "bed") and *leaba Diarmuid agus Grainne* (*labba 'iermuth a'us graunya*) from the elopement of those famous lovers. Legend on the west coast of Clare told that Diarmuid, finding that Finn could learn all the movements of his wife by biting his prophetic thumb, put seaweed on the cover of the dolmen. Finn, finding that seaweed was over the lovers, imagined

[11] This cave was famous in the eighteenth century for throwing out floods of water full of fish—(cf. *inter alia*, Gough's *Camden*),—and this is remembered traditionally, although the floods have been rare and insignificant since 1833. Other similar phenomena are recorded in Irish annals; *e.g.* in the Ulster Annals in 759 "Bennmuilt poured forth a stream with fishes," and in 867 "a strange eruption of water from Sliabh Cualann with little black fishes."

[12] Vol. xxi., pp. 180, 183, 479. The Faracat, according to *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, was a monstrous cat having a crescent on its forehead and a sharp nail in its tail.

[13] In fact, the Westropps, Drews, and Patersons acted as trustees under friendly "Protestant discoveries" to preserve the properties of the O'Briens, Macnamaras, and Barretts from the hostile effect of the laws, c. 1730-90.

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773 that they had drowned themselves, and gave up the pursuit.[14]
823 Possibly the legend originated the association of indecency with the Clare dolmens found in 1808 by Hely Dutton.[15] A girl would not guide him to the fine one at Ballygannor until assured
[831 that he was a stranger, for, it was explained to him, a woman
778] could refuse nothing to a man at one of these monuments. Some such reason probably lay behind the belief that, if a couple unblessed with children went to a *labba*, the defect in their house-
[842] hold was amended. I have been told that this belief existed in Clare, but got no direct evidence of it. The Tuam an goskaigh monument in Ballynahown was believed to be the grave of a giant buried with his great sword, to recover which certain young men dug and overthrew the stones; but they found nothing, and afterwards prospered so ill that they had to emigrate.[16] Grania was supposed to be a male saint near Feakle, and the "scoop" in the west end of Tobergrania dolmen-well at Ballycroum was supposed to be the place where he put in his head to drink.[17] The long grave of Ballykelly, famed for its lovely outlook high over the woods and lake of Doon on the flank of Slieve Bernagh, was known as "Old Grania," but the term "Granny's bed" was not unknown in East Clare. I heard no legend of a "hag" at any dolmen. The alleged rites at the "Druid's Altars" at Maryfort and Carnelly have already been noted.[18] When two blocks of the latter structure were removed for use as gateposts, they returned during the night to their original site, and were never again removed. The hand of the destroyer of a dolmen near Ruan was struck by a splinter and severely injured,[19] the remains of the blocks being left where

[14] Corcomroe legend, given to me by the late Prof. Brian O'Looney.

[15] *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 318. On the Continent indecent names and legends are also attached to dolmens; cf. Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 555; vol. iii., p. 845.

[16] Messrs. Hilary and Kelleher of Oughtdarra.

[17] So among the inhabitants in 1896-9.

[18] Vol. xxii., p. 51.

[19] Told to me by the sufferer. His predecessor, who had overthrown some blocks, was also unlucky. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 212.

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they lay,—but no vengeance overtook those who levelled many dolmens at Miltown near Tulla. 823 778

Basin stones occur not infrequently at or near dolmens, *e.g.* at Kiltanon and Newgrove near Tulla, and at Ballyganner and Cappaghkennedy on the borders of Burren, at the last of which five appear in one slab. In the Life of St. Mochulleus,[20] written in 1141, a basin "like a large *hydria*" was found in a polished block of stone when the saint was levelling the site of his church on Tulla hill. The basins were evidently regarded as very early in date even in the twelfth century. The basin of Doughnambraher (Dabthach nam brathar) at Kyleeane has already been noticed.[21] A large block with two basins is amongst the remains at the place of inauguration of the local kings at Magh Adhair.[22]

Pillar stones and rocks.—*Boughils* ("petrified boys") and *farbreags* ("petrified men") have been referred to in Section I.[23] A frog-like natural rock, close to the west side of the road from Kilkishen to Fortanne, was blasted and removed after 1887, but I have a sketch of it made in that year. There was a vague saying that it had been made, (and I think I was told also that it was a creature petrified when cursed), by some saint. The Coad stone is said to have been the same height (*com fhod*, "equal height or length," whence Co'ad),[24] as King Teige Acomhad O'Brien about 1460. It, the Cloghlea near Tomgraney, and the "cross" near Kilmoon were evidently boundary marks of church lands. Another legend of Coad

[20] *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. xvii.; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xli., p. 9. The basin was filled with milk by a hind. Similar legends are found in Glendalough (County Wicklow) and elsewhere. Giraldus tells how a hollow stone at Skellig used to be filled with wine for the sacrament. [773]

[21] Vol. xxii. (Plate IV). The name is Killian on the map, but is pronounced Kyle-e-aan, with a long stress on the last syllable.

[22] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvii., p. 79, vol. xxxiv., pp. 190-1.

[23] Vol. xxi., pp. 183, 186, and the legend of Knocknafearbreaga on p. 185; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv. (c), p. 97, vol. xxvi. (c), p. 471.

[24] *Com-fhod* is also a synonym for a grave. [P. 258]

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stone was that the *liagann*[25] was exacted by a father from the slayer of his son, and was the length of the victim. The story of Prince Lachtna (ante 840) tells that an adviser of King Phelim of Cashel tried to arouse his suspicions of Lachtna by an alleged oracle of a pillar stone Liag na neasain, near Killaloe, against "a fair man from Craglea."

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[25] Dr. G. U. MacNamara. A *liagann* of equal length to the slain son of the Dagda was claimed as an *eric* by the victim's father, "Dind Senchas", *Revue Celtique*, vol. xvi., p. 42.

(*To be continued.*)

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A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*concluded*).

XX. *Earthworks and Buildings.*

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Fairy forts and mounds have been dealt with in Section iv., haunted houses in Section viii., and foundation sacrifices in Section xi.

Forts.—The ring walls and mounds in County Clare are probably residential, or, more rarely, sepulchral, but certainly not military. They consist of one or more walls (or banks), usually slightly oval, and the earthworks have fosses and traces of stone facing. They are named *dun*, *lis*, *rath*, and even *caher* (*cathair*), but the last name is usually reserved for the dry stone ring walls. *Ooan* (*uamh*) is used both for forts and for artificial caves in them, and also, for a fort-souterain, in 1317 in the *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (History of the Wars of the O'Briens and de Clares). The country people have no limited views as to the makers of the 2400 forts in Clare. Croaghateeaun near Ballinalacken is attributed to the ancient deities, the Danánn, and one should cross oneself in entering its garth.[1] Mohernagartan and Mohernaglasha were made by the smith god Lon,—the latter for the grey "cloud and rain cow," the Glas. Oisin the poet lived in Caherussheen near Corofin, and the great stone fort on Turlough Hill probably belonged to the "Irish Militia" (Finn's warriors). Chonan, one of Finn's men, dwelt in the now levelled fort on Keentlae (*cnann tsleibh*) on Inchiquin Hill.[2] Three contemporaries, Crochaun (lumped hill), Dahlin, and Sall (the brine), made the forts bearing their names at Loop Head, and one at Cahernaheanmná near them for their sister the beloved of the hero Dermot O'Duine.[3] Oircheannaigh "of the golden cap" made the vast triple Moghane for his "fighting ring."[4] A giant dwelt in the promontory fort of Doonaunmore at Ballinahown who lost his magic staff and was

[1] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 345.

[2] "*Fris tighe chonain.*"

[3] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxviii., p. 351.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 281; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxvii., pp. 218 *et seq.*

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slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran.

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000) attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign.

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort assumed the blame and freed the workman.

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere. This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books, the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional,

[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

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Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan, while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barnagoskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

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173 son-in-law the King of Leinster. Others connected Killone with
773 Clare Abbey, and Quin Abbey with St. Finghin's church at the
823 other side of the "Rine."

XXI. *Miscellanea and Addenda.*

173 *Treasure legends and hunting.*—Many forts have been much defaced by persons seeking treasure, though treasure legends are
556 few. Caherscrebeen, near Lemeneagh castle (the Caherscribnib of 1551),[14] is said to be the richest fort in Ireland, having three rooms full respectively "of gold, deer's tallow, and *beor lochlanagh*" or Dane's beer (made by a lost recipe from heather and "the finest of all drinks").[15] Treasure-hunting is, so far as I have learned, in nearly every case in consequence of a dream, especially
[287] of a dream repeated more than once. No particular ceremony seems to have been used. The dreamer went, usually by night and sometimes alone or sometimes with a few friends, to the spot indicated, and dug until tired and hope of success was lost. Most of the damage done to stone forts and castles results, in the former from rabbit hunters, and in the latter from people getting material for other buildings. Silver (money) is believed to be buried in the mound of Lismehane castle, and near the curiously scribed rock of Cloch-an-airgid (rock of the silver) near Bohneill castle. I have seen in the field within Dunlicka castle,[16] near Kilkee, the holes made by a seeker who was told
[172] to dig where he saw a rush growing. "The great Clare gold find" in 1845, near Moghane fort, enriched archaeology rather than folklore. But the finders in some cases believed it to be fairy gold, and the people of Newmarket-on-Fergus tell that those who got it, with one exception, did not profit by it; the one lucky exception did not find his prosperity permanent. The only interesting treasure tale I have found is that of the townland of Skaghvickencrow (MacEnchroe's hawthorn), told by Dr. G. U.

[14] In the will of the last recognised King of Thomond, Murrogh, Earl of Thomond.

[15] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxvi., p. 368.

[16] See also vol. xxi., p. 344. [p. 264]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter
[702] serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the
[648] southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great
173 famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely de-
731 stroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural
244 commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough
[457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes
[161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when
[167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a
[161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the
[361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to
[823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features
133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together
311 make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823 •
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

823 [121] which give a trail its name. Folklorists have collected most of the place-names, and philologists have pondered the origins of no longer comprehended ones.

487 Trails also are referred to as roads or paths. Usually, they are bordered by stone fences from three to a dozen feet apart and are surfaced with fine gravel bound by clay. The 1842 Ordnance Survey Map shows that the network of trails in Inis Beag has remained much the same over the past century, although several [653] new paths have been added and all have been widened or otherwise improved. In recent years, the government has subsidized road improvement for several weeks each year during December and January. A senior and junior ganger supervise a group of fellow islanders—composed of those owning the gravel and clay deposits utilized, those owning land along the right of way, and those most needful of unemployment assistance—daily until the money appropriated for that year gives out. Nine major roads lead from the four villages to the back of the island; they roughly parallel each other and are reasonably straight once they climb the terraces. Crossing the middle of Inis Beag from one sound to the other necessitates traversing numerous fields and climbing high fences, since the four short paths running east and west linking five of the main roads at the back are found near the Atlantic shore. On the north side of the island, a road connects Terrace and Low Villages across the common land. This is the only major east to west artery and is the most traveled of the ten trails; passing between the cemetery and school, fences do not enclose it, and often drifting sand covers portions of it and must be shoveled away. A series of short connected paths make it possible to travel east and west along the terraces from one village to another above the main road.

312 Water is obtained from four principal wells near the villages and from numerous, less dependable springs at the back and along the shores of Inis Beag. Most householders also capture rain water from eaves troughs in barrels or small 312 cisterns. At one time, water was drawn from pools formed by the four major wells, 663 but now it is pumped from government built reservoirs. These reservoirs occasionally are broken open and water obtained directly from them by islanders who believe that the sealed structures and pipes leading from them to the pumps foster contamination. The government also sponsors the construction of water tanks in fields to accumulate rain water for pastured stock. Three of the wells are located in rift valleys, and the fourth is near the chapel; a potential fifth one is in the valley south of the lake, but at too great a distance from Terrace Village to have 312 been improved. Two minor unimproved springs used by villagers are situated on a terrace of the western promontory and below the post office. The springs near the coast and those at the back of the island are used mostly for watering stock, and they tend to become dry when rainfall is limited.

311 Inis Beag viewed from the top of the lighthouse presents a somber yet [333] strangely moving panorama of grey limestone pavement and fences, with patches [241] of green here and there. Many hundreds of fields meet the eye, about half of which support little or no soil, ranging in size from a fraction of an acre to over a dozen 333 acres. Three decades ago, it was possible to move easily from east to west across [653] the back of the island because the fences averaged only three feet in height; but [178] since that time, government subsidies supporting fence and field building have caused most of them to be raised to heights of from five to ten feet. The folk are

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

skillful fence makers, and many incorporate various designs into their handiwork 333
by using stones of different sizes and shapes. Stiles or openings in the fences connect a few fields, but gates seldom are employed; a man simply breaks down a stretch of fence to allow a horse or a cow to enter a pasture, then quickly rebuilds the fence. The outsider who believes this to be an easy task usually ends up with surplus stones, a disfigured fence, and maybe bruised fingers when he attempts to emulate the custom.

The hundreds of fields are located in dozens of land areas which bear 311
names. Most writers assert that each plot has its own name, but in reality numer- 241
ous fields are located in any one area. Thus, a man might send his son to dig 103
potatoes in Garden of the Cobbler, that is, in the plot that he owns there; another man might go to milk a cow in his pasture in Garden of the Cobbler. A field will be assigned a new name only if its owner has another one in the same area, and then he might instead call it, for instance, New Field in the Garden of the Cobbler. Some land areas bear the names of persons and animals, others refer to geographical phenomena, while a few are linked to long forgotten historical events.

Over 50 coastal features also are named, from the Harbor of the Churchyard 103
on the north, to Point of the Periwinkles on the south. Most of the place-names 823
refer to rocks, flags, points, reefs, clefts, coves, channels, pools, low cliffs, events of the past, and small strands which mostly have disappeared. The freighter ran aground on a stony reef named Strand of the Sheep. This was a source of wry amusement to the rescued crew, but at one time the beach provided safe footing for sheep driven there to be washed before shearing or sale. One of the best known features is Piper's Rock, which figures prominently in legend. It is named after an island musician who long ago entered a cave above Terrace Village, which supposedly travels under the west sound and connects with another in Inis Thiar, and who never emerged again. In later years, bagpipe music was heard issuing forth from beneath the sea off the rock now named after the luckless fellow.

Inis Beag has four landing places for small craft along its shores, but none 504
are large enough to accommodate the 550-ton government operated "steamer," 505
which visits the island two to four times weekly. The main pier, also called the jetty, is 300 feet long and 15 feet wide and is protected on its windward side by a wall five feet high. Located just west of the strand (see Fig. 9), it is the third [175]
structure to occupy the site; the first pier was built in 1878 and the second in 1913, and the present one is an enlargement of its predecessor. Smaller piers are situated east of the lake, to provide Terrace Village access to the sea, and near the lighthouse. The former is used mostly to unload peat, or "turf," imported by hooker from the mainland and to carry passengers to and from the steamer, and the latter only to transfer supplies from Irish Lights Service vessels which anchor in the east sound. A slip on the west sound near Low Village is used by crews rowing between Inis Beag and Inis Thiar in their canoes. When tourists come ashore in the island, they usually do so for the thrill of riding the *curach* and viewing the more accessible historical sites and the much publicized folk; they remain only the hour or two that the steamer is anchored off the strand. Inis Beag has had [178]
regular steamer service since 1891, and before that time small sailing boats plied irregularly between island and mainland.

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[p.50]

3

The Village and the Family

Village Differences

361
103 LOW VILLAGE RECEIVES ITS NAME from its position on the lowest terrace of Inis Beag (see Fig. 4). It borders the ocean and strand, while High Village to the east is located in a wide expanse south of the common land formed by a concavity in the upper terraces. On the western of the two promontories high above the beach, separated from Low and Terrace by rift valleys, is Castle Village. Below it are the cemetery enclosing the church of the patron saint and the new school, and above it are the castle, the ruined monastery, the Napoleonic watch tower, and what remains of the old school next to the tower. The Ordnance Survey [138] Maps place the highest elevation of Inis Beag in the vicinity of the tower, but the [823] folk claim that the most elevated portion of the crest is above High. Terrace Village, on the promontory to the east, presents a breath-taking view of the lake (see Fig. 7), the sound, and towering mountains and cliffs along the mainland coast. Low merges with High, but Castle and Terrace, because they are located on high terraces and bounded by rift valleys, are isolated units. Terrace is aligned north and south, but the other three settlements are aligned roughly east and west. The southernmost house of Terrace and the westernmost one of Low are approximately 1500 yards apart, and the intervening distance can be walked comfortably in less than 12 minutes.

Below are the number of inhabited houses and the population of each village:

361
162

	Houses	*Population*
Low Village	24	119
High Village	16	59
Castle Village	17	99
Terrace Village	14	73

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes nowhere after the heart stops beating."

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the trooping and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people," or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid, pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76–77), but these are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons, rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously misplaced by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, dancing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper "God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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776
787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry, will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
• [823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763
776 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered everly superstitious.

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan supernatural varied among the folk. 184 178 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance. 776 778 [123] [178]

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus (see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incorporating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a [764] [823] 175 779 798 171 [346] [778] 776 [171]

be more or less primitive. The couples can be constructed in two slightly different ways depending on the intended height of the roof. In very windy districts near the sea very low, semi-circular roofs that do not catch much wind are used. The roof is streamlined and there is no comb along the roof, pl. XLV: 2. 342

This roof is made in the following way. Very strong couples rest on the walls and are joined by two crossbeams, the lower called *faradh* and the upper *maide mullaigh*. These joining beams are just as strong as the couples themselves. They are joined to the couples by means of one or two wooden pegs on each side. The couples never meet. Above this arrangement are the purlins, *taobháin*. Transversally across these are slender laths called *cleithedin*, pl. XLV: 1.

High roofs with combs are supported by couples joined in pairs and held together at the top by a wooden peg, *pionna*. The ridge beam, *maide droma*, rests on the hollows formed at the junctions of the couples, and parallel to it but lying transversally on the couples are purlins, *tobháin*, on each side of which run the whole length of the roof. To brace the couples there are tiebeams, *maidi snaidhm*, pl. XLIV.

On this foundation of roofing sticks are spread tough sods of grass, the earthen side inwards. The sods cut from the ground can either be made about 5 ft. long and 2 ft. wide or a bit longer than the side of the roof and about 3 ft. broad. In the former case the sods overlap, the higher over the lower. In the latter case the sods stretch from the wall to the ridge and are bent over the ridge. Over the ridge then there are two layers of sods. In both cases the one row of sods overlaps the second row beside it. I have found the short sods used in Southern Ireland, and the long ones in Donegal. [824] [184]

The thatch is put on in two ways. One method of thatching corresponds to the thatched houses of the European continent viz: the scollop-thatching or rod-thatching, pl. XLVI: 2. The other method is the hay-rope or *sugán* thatching known from the border of the North Atlantic and the North Sea. The scollop-thatching is made in such a way that straw, *tuighe*, or mountain grass, *fineán*, is fastened to the sods by means of horizontal rows of rods, *scolb*. The rods are fastened to the underlying sods by twigs, *bannai*. Both *scolb* and *bannai* are of hazel or sally. Oat, wheat, or barley straw is used for thatching but on the western seabord rye straw is used. Rye is considered most durable. According to scollop-thatching the thatching of the ridge is of certain interest. Here and round the chimney-shaft but seldom at the thatch of eaves, *bun tsop*, a kind of ornament can be formed by the twigs and scollops. But this is an ornament caused by the necessity of fastening and 342 824 342

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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243 survivals, associated with the cutting of the last sheaf—the "churn" or the "Cailleach" (Chapter 19).

Corn stacks are more varied in shape than haystacks and need better protection from weather and from vermin. [824] Sprigs of apple-mint (*M. arvensis*) may be thrown through the sheaves to keep away mice. The stone stack-stands or staddels, called "hovels," are a picturesque feature of the stackyard in some districts. With their steep tops rising above the house clusters, the golden corn stacks turn the little Irish villages into African kraals, or in the fields one may count as many as 30 round stacks in a row, rising against the sky up the hillside. Then the whole countryside seems fuller than usual. New colours and odours meet one on all sides, and the horses as they pass give off the sharp smell which comes from crunching the fresh oats. The country smiths used to make a small light fork or "pike," fitted with a long handle, for throwing the last sheaves high up (Fig. 66). The stacks are thatched with rushes, twisted into bundles known as "stapples" which are pushed into the straw.

[285]
[415]

Fig. 54.

241 We cannot touch on the methods of harvesting and stacking the other cereal crops, wheat, barley and rye, but a word must be said in conclusion on the last harvest of the year—the root crops. Although turnips and the new sugar beet are important in some areas, it is the potato crop which means most to the peasant. All available hands are in the fields, gathering the precious food-supply into wicker baskets or boxes (Figs. 54 and 55); and the school children are given

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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length of flax, or an eel skin. The methods of attaching the hanging to the hand-stave and souple vary, as will be seen [284] from a random selection of drawings (Fig. 72). The joint

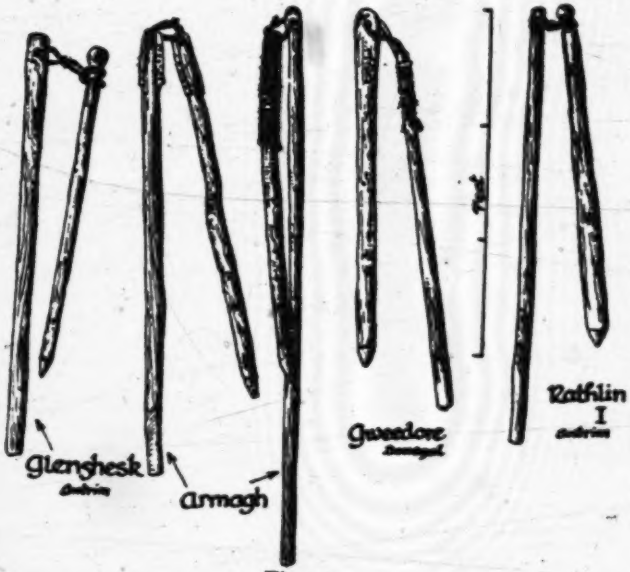

Fig. 72.

shown in the Armagh flail (left), resembles a common English style, but it occurs as far west as Galway. Varied too, are the proportions between the component parts and the methods of swinging the flail. Thus in Antrim the souple is flung round the head while in Donegal it is kept to the side of the body. On fine days the thrashing may take place out of doors, but the usual place is " between doors " in the barn or even in the kitchen, for the opposite doors create a draught which carries away the dust. A besom of heather or of dried kale flower-stalks keeps the barn floor clean. [824]

One of the most interesting and varied and probably one 285 of the oldest crafts practised by countryfolk is the making of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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285 baskets, and of creels and other objects of wickerwork. To do the subject justice would require a large volume, and we must confine ourselves to some broad aspects. We have referred to creels and kishes of various kinds in Chapter 12. These are objects which the countryman makes for himself, as distinct from the "fancy" basket work which is generally in the hands of special families. To take the creels first, they are constructed bottom-upwards in the same way as the framework of the Boyne curragh, by sticking the stout standards in the earth as though to make wattles and bending them over [824] to form the foundation of the bottom. Strong black sally, hazel or rowan are employed instead of the soft basket willows. The standards are left projecting above the rim of the creel when it is finished, so that the sides do not lift off. But a well woven "mouth" is also necessary to prevent slipping: it may be made single or double. Both creels and kishes may have windows in the sides (Chapter 12 and Fig. 58), an ornamental feature also found in the old wicker cradles. Creels and kishes may be loosely or tightly woven according to whether they are intended for turf or manure. Openwork creels are made in Co. Antrim by pegging the side rods into the two corner standards at intervals of about 4 inches. The old custom in Donegal is to repair two old creels and make two new ones each year. (*See Plate V.*)

285 227 Lobster-pots (Chapter 16), stock-pots, fruit and fish hampers, are made on a perforated wooden frame which may be regarded as a substitute for the earth, but most of the

[283]

Fig. 73. Length 19".

285 "fancy work" is undertaken by specialized basket makers, and we can do no more than indicate the variety and skill of their products. There are certain localities where the tradition of basket-making is strong, for instance the shores of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Fig. 80.

Fig. 81.

rectangular examples containing four nest-holes in two storeys are found in some districts, for example in Co. Longford. Though not easy to describe, the construction is quite simple once a start has been made. The finished objects have the appearance of being coiled. While some may have been made in this way, any that I have examined or watched under construction are plaited. The first stage is to twist a long sugán and double it into a two-ply rope, inserting between each third twist a small handful of straw known as a "tate." For the second row the tates are folded forward and plaited, the third rope being provided by the combined ends of the last tate. Handfuls of straw are inserted at regular intervals during the process, and the plaiting goes on until the desired shape and size are reached. The effect is shown in the hen-nest (Fig. 79). Straw collars for horses are made in a different way: some consist of two-ply ropes sown together with twine, but the type used with the Glens' slide-car is simpler (Plate IV).

Ropes of many kinds were in steady demand for tethering and spancelling, and it was the custom to prepare a good supply during the winter. Rushes were also used for the purpose, and they still meet a number of other needs such as bedding, thatching and flax-tying, apart from their old uses for toys, baskets, floor beds, rushlights and the ceremonial crosses to be discussed in Chapter 17. For making ropes the rushes were cut in late summer and beetled with a maul (or "mell"), then broken and twisted by hand so as to get rid of the pith. Dried in the sun and tied in bundles, they were stored until the dark days of winter, when they were fashioned into burden ropes and binnen-ropes (Chapters 9 & 12). The rushes were twisted by hand, first as single ropes, then in two ply: finally an eye was made at one end, and this end was strengthened by threading through another length of rope so as to make a plait. Spancels of rush rope were used to tie together the front legs of kicking cows, and horses were prevented from straying at nights by similar treatment. "Langles" and "burochs," tying together the side and the hind legs respectively, were other methods of hobbling. Straw ropes were commonly employed instead of rush ropes for hobbling,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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netting in sea and lake and for poaching. And in this connexion one may whisper that the illegal eel-spear (Fig. 94), the leister or salmon spear, and the trout net (Fig. 96)[1] will sometimes be shown to the discreet inquirer. Old garden forks and shovels are often fashioned into spears by the smith. Resinous bog-fir sometimes provided the torches for "burning the river" in salmon-poaching. Much might be said of these dark practices, but this is not the place to give away all the secrets of the countryside. We may properly refer to the huge "legitimate" catches of eels in weirs such as those of "the fishy fruitful Bann."

The well-known curraghs of the Boyne and the west coast have recently been described in James Hornell's book, "British Coracles and Irish Curraghs," but details of rowing and sailing craft of all kinds should be recorded and sketched before regional types give way, as they are slowly doing, to standardised boats. It is probably not too much to say that every coastal county, every large river and lake, has its own traditional styles of vessels, and their comparative study would be an important contribution to science. Some of the small oval curraghs of the Boyne are still covered with cow-hide, but tarred canvas has taken its place in the larger sea-going curraghs of the west coast. These display many interesting variations according to local conditions and custom, but all, with the exception of the paddle curraghs of Tory Island, are fitted with single thole pins on which the oars swivel, the wooden pin passing through a hole in the heavy "bool" of the oar (Fig. 99). This curious device is employed also on some river and lake boats (e.g., the Corrib, the Shannon and Lough Neagh) and was until recent years found on the fishing boats of the Scotch Quarter at Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. I have no information on the distribution of the single thole-pin oar outside Ireland, except that Mr. Hornell has reported (in a letter) that the method is used in the Sudan on the Nile. It is true of such ethnographical studies

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 150--ANALYST]

[1] Similar poaching nets were made in the Hebrides—and probably also in Ireland—of heather stems and even sedge roots (*Carex flacca*).

[416]

501

Fig. 99.

[824]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The
[778] same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[797] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

able part in the ceremonies of megalithic burial: we remember the significance attached to hazel nuts in the Hallowe'en games of divination (Chapter 17). 764 824

The ancient raths or forths, earthen enclosures around old homesteads, are also favourite haunts of fairies, and many are the tales of mysterious happenings in their neighbourhood at night, and of signs of habitation and sweet music issuing from them. Protection from fairies is believed to be obtained by possession of a black-hafted knife, while oatmeal or oat-cakes are also specifics against their malign influence. From fairies as from witches the supreme hour of peril to mortals is at the eves of Beltane, Midsummer and All Hallows. Cattle afflicted with disease were believed to be "elf-shot"—the belief is not entirely dead—and flint arrowheads were produced as proof of the attack. The cure was to give the affected animal a drink of the water in which the arrow had been placed. Among other archæological relics the polished stone axes of the Neolithic and Bronze ages are known as thunderbolts and are accredited with healing powers, and the small spinning-whorls are termed fairy mill-stones. As Arthur Mitchell writes of Scotland: "It is believed that stone celts assist the birth of children; that they increase the milk of cows; that they cure the diseases of the eye; that they protect the houses in which they are kept from lightning; and that they have many other such marvellous virtues. It is believed that, as they have a sort of supernatural origin, they may reasonably be supposed to have supernatural powers." 776 789 829 778

When food is taken out of doors it is a common belief that some must be left behind for the fairies, otherwise the dreaded "hungry grass" will grow; and the countryman will often spill a portion of his drink as a perhaps unconscious libation to the wee folk. Their activities are peculiarly dangerous to cattle and to butter-making. Among the charms designed to secure a good supply of butter in the churn we find the use of a horse-shoe, of a rusty nail from a coffin or the hand of a corpse, of rowan branches, salt, a live turf, or a cross made of veronica leaves. 776 789 [751]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

776 veronica leaves. In the North it is considered unlucky for a
789 person to enter a house where churning is taking place without
[777] "giving a brash," that is lending a hand at the churn-staff. In the words of a countryman in the west, "Queer things do happen to butter." Fairy tales are full of cattle and cattle-stealing: so are the epic tales. Writers of last century tell of cows that might be seen "with rags about their horns as a charm against the gentry," or gentle-folk, a name often applied to the fairies.

824 This brings us to the fairy or gentry thorns, skeaghs, or lone bushes, that is the solitary whitethorn trees which are regarded with dread. These trees, which must be counted by the thousand, are said "never to have been planted but to have grown of their own accord." They may be found on ancient monuments or alongside holy wells but the great majority are scattered through the fields, and it is worthy of notice that the cult is at least as strong in the Protestant north-east as in other parts of the country. A venerable thorn, pink-flowering, stands under my window as I write and casts its shadow into the Senate Room of the University. But no one will remove it or even lop its branches, and the story goes that when the buildings were being erected the plans had to be changed in order that the thorn should not be interfered with. If a lone tree surrounded by half a dozen scientific departments has claimed such respect it can be imagined in what awe the country thorns are held! See Tailpiece.

It has recently been suggested that the veneration of thorn trees was a Belgic custom introduced to Ireland some 2,000 years ago, but it seems more likely that as with sacred stones and wells we should look even further away in time and space to Mediterranean origins and regard the cult of trees as part of the nature worship connected with man's first use of the Irish soil. Certain thorns dedicated to Irish saints figure also
[764] in ceremonies of burial: when funerals pass by they halt and stones are placed beside the thorn until they have become cairns. Wayside cairns, in the form of memorial monuments,

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Wayside cairns in the form of memorial monuments 824

line the roads to the graveyards of Aran. On thorns at cross roads it is the custom in Co. Wexford to hang small crosses, [211] made of coffin wood, as the funeral procession passes by. [764]

We cannot deal at any length with the superstitious practices which cling so tenaciously to death and burial: 764 they recall the customs of many other regions, such as Brittany, where the old megalithic cult was strong and seems to have lived on in obsessions about death and accompanying notions of re-birth. The anxiety to be buried with relatives reminds us of the strength of the blood-tie, and "bestows even on death a feeling of social interest." It is an Irish belief that the dead live on in the graveyard, and that the last person buried acts as servant to the others, a belief which not long ago led to disputes as to which of two bodies to be buried should be interred first. There are certain old graveyards where women only are said to be buried, and no living woman will enter them. On Innishmurray there are separate graveyards for men and women. [766] Unbaptised infants were generally interred in special burial grounds, some of which appear to be prehistoric cairns. There is no need to add to the many accounts that have been written of the keening of the dead and of wakes. In connexion with wakes we need only refer to the tricks, pastimes and games which were their accompaniment. The dramatic games were known under such titles as "The Walls of Troy," "Short Castle," "Building the Ship," "Turning the Spit," "Selling the Pig," "Building the Fort," "The Horse Fair," "The Mock Marriage" and "Shuffle the Brogue." While some seem to have been for amusement only, in others it is difficult not to see sex-symbolism and fertility-rites. In recent times the wake-games [786] have often degenerated into licence and drinking. Maria Edgeworth tells us that "more matches were made at wakes than at weddings."

When going to a funeral it was customary, in parts of the west until the beginning of the present century, to carry some salt in the pocket in order to avert evil influences. Arensberg quotes the belief that "there is never a funeral but the other

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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000 sea monsters, with animals both wild and tame, with red hair, physical deformities and so on, nor the wealth of folk-lore and folk tales which the Irish Folklore Commission is rescuing from every barony in the country. A beginning has been made in the immense task of sorting out, mapping and interpreting these beliefs. One would like to know the distribution of many persistent customs and practices, for this is the best guide to their origin and significance. How far south, for instance, does the typical Ulster greeting on 576 the road extend—that slow silent half-negative sideways nod of the head? Some day it may be possible, as I wrote five years ago, "to interpret the subtle differences between one region and another which make up the attractive variety of rural Ireland and provide sources of friendly rivalry and rich humour."[1]

824

A Fairy Thorn

[1] *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, July 1935.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant. 291 [386] [824]

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bedrooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar, though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors, front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen; and the windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones, until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood, washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few 342 [354] [284] [241] 352

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe croithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

291 the town, where they sit down by the roadside, and put on their boots and stockings, taking them off again when starting for home.

The old-fashioned frock or kilt-shaped garment, made of red or grey homespun, and buttoned up the back, is still worn by boys up to twelve years of age.

The dress of the women is on the whole less changed than that of the men. Many of the elderly women wear the white-frilled cap, others have a small red kerchief tied under the chin. Over the shoulders a shawl of tartan or other striking pattern is folded, but this is not so frequently of a bright red, as in other districts, as the darker colours seem to be more in favour; beneath the shawl is a boddice of some dark material. The petticoat is short, but is only occasionally the typical red homespun of the western peasant. It is often grey, or dyed purple, blue, or some other bright colour, and is sometimes ornamented by a few rows of black braid. Aprons of check are much worn. Many of the older women wear the heavy blue cloak with cape and hood on Sundays and holidays. The younger women to a large extent copy modern fashions on festive occasions, but the result is not happy, as their taste in colours is curious, and they certainly look better in native costume.

286 A great variety of homespuns are made in the district, there being several weavers who turn out coarse flannel, tweeds, and friezes, some of which are very good specimens of hand-loom work. The dyes 386 are nearly all imported, indigo and the made-up aniline dyes being [824] most used. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), which was at one time pretty generally employed for this purpose, is now only used for dying stockings.

5. *Dwellings.*—The habitations of the people present considerable 342 variety, some being extremely poor, others of a fairly good class. The description given below applies solely to the houses of the people of the rural parts, and not to Belmullet (which is a cleanly and well-built little town, composed almost entirely of good-slated houses of two stories) nor to the houses of the proprietors or large holders.

Of late years there has been much improvement in the style of dwelling, but few indeed of the old turf cabins remain; while the semi-subterranean huts, some of which were inhabited in 1841, have become altogether extinct.

The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1846) describes the majority of dwellings as being built partly of stone and partly of turf, and consisting of only one or at most two rooms.

An average dwelling now is built of stone, sometimes dry, at others

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

II

FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

THE tools and traits we are describing in this book have persisted through the centuries because of their close adaptation to the Irish environment, physical and social. They have gathered around them, in that environment, associations of usage and ritual without which they are meaningless, so that transplanted into another land they would be museum-pieces, as indeed they are rapidly becoming in many parts of Ireland. To understand them, therefore, we should consider them not in isolation but as part and parcel of a particular environment. To a large extent a culture owes its specific peculiarities to its geographical setting, and that is why our first chapters will be concerned with the face of the land and with the fields, farms and houses in which generations of Irish countryfolk have lived and worked. 121

It was from a forest environment that the cultural landscape slowly emerged. The destruction of the native forests was virtually complete by the seventeenth century. Thereafter constructional timber had to be imported, and the rural population turned to the fossil oak and pine of the bogs. In the eighteenth century landlords planted their lowland demesnes with exotic species of trees, but only in our own day, under government schemes of reafforestation, are the hill lands here and there being planted and abandoned fields being put back into forest. With the passing of the oak forests a wealth of woodcraft and tree lore perished and a wide range of skills declined, of which we get tantalizing glimpses from archaeological discoveries and legendary tales. Instead of the almost unbroken forest cover which once existed a 'closed association' of farms and fenced fields 137 824

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 [824] now stretches from coast to coast. So much of the scene is fashioned by man that it requires an effort of the imagination as well as the findings of scientific research to picture the landscape as it was before his coming. Palaeo-botanists, from their studies of plant-remains and pollen-grains preserved in the peats (Chapter XIV), are slowly reconstructing the post-glacial succession of forests as arctic willow, birch, hazel, pine, alder and oak spread in turn over the face of the land. The dwarf vegetation of the early post-glacial period, with its scattered birchwoods, was too thin to form peat, but with the warmer climate of the Boreal phase (beginning about 7000 B.C.) pine and hazel, followed by oak and elm, spread across the country, and both fen-peat and wood-peat began to form in the undrained hollows of the lowlands. The growth of forest and peats was accelerated as the warm seas of the succeeding Atlantic period flooded the coasts at a time of rising sea-level, between 5000 and 2500 B.C. During this phase the alder flourished and the high humidity brought the rapid growth of sphagnum moss on the bogs.

It was during the following sub-Boreal period (2500–500 B.C.) that the Irish forests reached their greatest development, covering even the exposed seaward slopes of the western mountains where today not a single tree can be found growing. During this period, among the thinning forests of rocky hill-slopes, man made his first clearings for cultivation and turned the mountain winds to profit in drying and harvesting his crops. 133 Thus the distribution of mountain masses gives a clue to the nuclear regions of Irish civilization, though it should be noticed that there are parts of the Central Lowland where thin dry gravel or limestone soils gave a more kindly foothold. As compared with the broad upland masses of Great Britain, the mountains of Ireland are broken into many fragments which lie scattered around the coasts. They fall, however, into four major divisions which are broadly distinguished by age and structure: those of the north (Ulster) the west (Connacht) the south-west (Munster) and the south-east (Leinster) (Fig. 2).

Geologically the northern mountains are of immense antiquity, and rocks younger than the coal-measures, apart from the ubiquitous glacial deposits, are everywhere rare except in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIG. 14. Detail of scollop thatch, Co. Armagh, showing roof construction, sods and mud coping (after R. H. Buchanan).

hipped. The best work is seen on houses of the jamb-wall type.

824 Oat-straw, despite its poor lasting qualities, is employed for
342 thatching in some districts, because it is the only available material. Being pliable it is widely used for patching. In the old days outfield straw was preferred for thatching because it was tougher than that grown on the infield. Wheat or rye is much
[241] more durable than oat straw and rye is specially grown for its straw in parts of Donegal, where I have known flax also cultivated to provide thatching material. Reeds are fairly commonly employed in the south-west and locally elsewhere if no straw is available. I have seen heather used in north Donegal, and in other areas marram grass, rushes and 'mountain grass' (probably *molinea*). The expert thatcher prefers his straw to be cut with a sickle and thrashed by hand and he scorns machine-thrashed straw. Best of all is straw from which the corn has been removed by hand-scutching or 'lashing' over a stick or stone, the 'barrel' of the straw being thus unbroken (Chapter XV).
342 Nowadays a thatched roof is becoming a mark of sophistication,

241
[412]

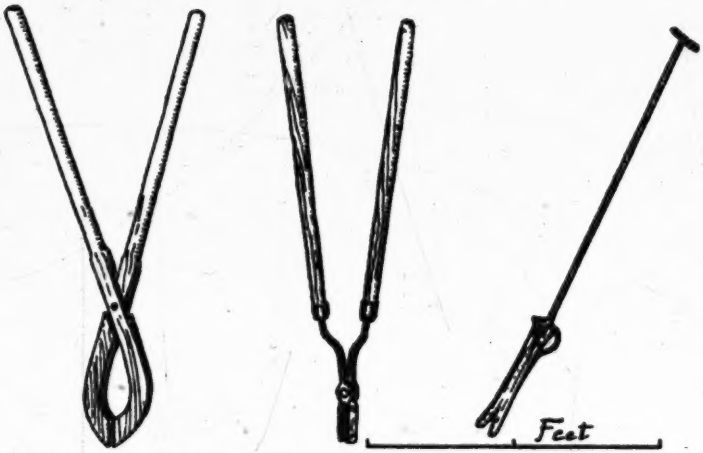

FIG. 50. Weeding 'clips', Antrim and Armagh, and iron dock-lifter, Antrim.

Midsummer festival was an easy way of showing the spirits of the corn what was expected of them. You might also hope to transfer ill-luck to someone else's crop by burying a dead animal, [787] a piece of meat, or even an egg on his land. It would be worth while listening for the call of the cuckoo on the first day of July, for to hear it was a sign of a good harvest. Prognostications were so many and so easily procured that they apparently provided a fatalistic society with a ready means of avoiding steady work. In some parts of the country, docks, thistles and [824] couch grass were apparently regarded as a good sign, because they kept the crop warm.[1]

[1] W. Bence Jones, *A Life's Work in Ireland*, 87.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of
178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

243 is worth noticing that symbols in the form of a swastika, but
789 including also circles, pentagrams and horses, were formerly cut as protective devices in the beams of barns in Scandinavia. Some of the designs are reminiscent of the art of the Bronze Age.

243 An Irish verse giving the four essentials of a good thrashing, collected in Co. Armagh, runs in translation:

[539]

A hand-staff of holly,
A souple of hazel,
A single sheaf,
And a clean floor.

This is where the besom of heather or bent comes in: it is still preferred to the sweeping-broom for a clay floor or to get into the joins of boards or cobbles. Thrashing was a daily job, carried out on well-run farms night and morning before the cattle were fed. It was held that the cattle throve best on freshly thrashed oats, and the storage of grain would anyhow have been difficult where there were no barns.[1] For this reason, too, the level 'street' in front of the house, or even the public road was often the most suitable floor available. The thrashing was usually done on a strong linen sheet. Publicity as well as a steady echoing beat seem to have been the desired aims. Every-
[555] where prestige has attached to a noisy thrashing, and partly no doubt for self-aggrandisement a solitary thrasher would beat with his feet to make the noise of two. Everywhere too the
[533] sound of the flail has been turned into jingles and rustic rhymes. They did not accompany the work itself because it was too noisy and too exhausting to allow talking or singing. The flails' beaters made their own merry music; was it, one wonders, originally intended to drive away evil spirits from the precious food supply?

222 In this chapter we have confined ourselves to some of the
● 824 things that were made at home out of materials that lay to hand. To describe the utilization of all the lesser plants that have

[343] [1]Mr. A. T. Lucas, however, has described traditional outdoor granaries, now restricted to west Cork, constructed of thick straw ropes, which when completed resemble round stacks (*Gwerin*, I (1956), 2–20). Mr. V. B. Proudfoot calls my attention to the similar 'corn bykes' of Caithness (*P.S.A.S.* (1932), 136–7).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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figured in the economy of the farm or in medicinal and magical lore would be an almost endless task. One recalls that a group of Californian Indians practising a food-gathering economy is said to have made use of 176 species of wild plants for satisfying almost all their needs. A few examples of the survival of a collecting culture in Ireland may be given, taken from various sources such as Wood-Martin's pioneer work, but also from folk-memory. From the roots of ferns were extracted oils used in weaving, from those of the water lily, a cherished red dye, a substance for tanning from tormentil roots, and ink from the roots of flags (saggins). Bracken and wood ash were kept for making soap, and the ashes of thistles were the perquisite of the herdsmen. Large lake rushes provided materials for caulking boats and churns, and phragmites stems for winding yarn in the shuttle. Lady's bedstraw besides being rubbed on bee-skeps to attract a swarm, produced both dye and rennet. For cures we have the carrageen or Irish moss as well as the moss growing on crosses and other special stones, and a great number of flowers and herbs. Yarrow, in Irish, is called 'the herb of the seven cures'. But the sovereign remedy was the essence of all wild flowers contained in what was euphemistically known as 'all-flower water', i.e., cow's urine.[1] We shall return to these topics in Chapter XXI.

222 824 ● [278] [237]

[1]W. G. Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 183.

Note. Mr. A. T. Lucas has recently published accounts of hurling balls made of cowhair (see *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 57, 99–104; 59, 78–81).

[526] [237]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XIX

FIXED FESTIVALS

THE great fairs, patterns and pilgrimages were attended by people who travelled considerable distances and included strange folk from the outside world, 'beyond the mountain men'. It was partly for this reason that they earned a reputation for lawlessness, especially where 'the gatherings' had outlived their original purpose and their real business had become subordinate to pleasure. A Nottingham Goose Fair or a Marlborough Mop Fair may still be conducted with propriety, but in Ireland they would probably have become Donnybrooks. Having little opportunity for regular social contacts as compared with the villagers of the ploughlands, a pastoral people makes the most of the periodic pauses in the cycle of the seasons.

For climatic reasons these great gatherings have been largely confined to the summer half-year between May and November. The winter festivals have been more local, involving the family and the townland rather than rival groups from different parishes and baronies. The feast days of both St. Briget and St. Patrick fall in early spring and their associations are more intimate and have more local colour than those of the saints of high summer such as St. John the Baptist. But the entire round of the year is liberally sprinkled with days of festival, and if we begin with St. Briget it is not merely because she was Irish-born but because her feast marks the beginning of the pastoral year. The blessed Bridie was a cowherd and is therefore associated with cattle and with such flowers as the dandelion—the Plant of Bride—yielding a milky juice which was believed to nourish the young lambs in spring. St. Briget's Feast was very popular and many superstitious practices, more or less

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527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
776 the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit
[264] gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country-
[221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
● [824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIXED FESTIVALS

527 The May Festival, the Gaelic Beltane, remained almost untouched by Christianity, and an astonishingly rich growth of magic beliefs and superstitious customs accumulated around it. They were concerned with the safety of the familiar things which supported life, and especially the milk cows whose 'whitemeats' were to provide the main food-supply until harvest came round once more. It was a matter of pride to have a last formal dish of stirabout on May Day, 'for if they can hold out so well with bread they can do well enough . . . for then milk becomes plenty, and butter, new cheese, and curds and shamrocks are the food of the meaner sort all this season'.[1] It was considered [431] most unlucky and unwise to give away salt, water or fire on May Day lest the luck and 'profit' of the farm went with the gifts. Witches and fairies were unusually active at this time, and [776] many tales are told of the wiles they adopted to outwit the unwary and gain admission to house or byre to do their mischief. It was a wise precaution to pour milk on the threshold, or at the roots of a fairy thorn, and the many protective charms against the stealing of cattle and milk were augmented by others special to the occasion. 'On May Eve the peasantry used to drive all their cattle into old raths and forts thought to be much frequented by the fairies, bleed them, taste their blood, and pour the remainder on the earth'.[2] It was said that the ghosts of cattle that had been lost could be seen in such places.

527 Portents, prognostications and protection were sought in the familiar flowers of field and hedgerow, in the weeds and shrubs ● 824 which had followed in man's footsteps and were associated with 751 his secular struggle for survival, especially in those that carried the promise of butter in their golden cups and a free flow of milk in their bounteous white blossom. May flowers, primroses and gorse gathered before sunrise were scattered on the threshold of the house and garlands of 'Summer', as the flowers were called, were hung on the doorposts and even tied to the cows' tails. In the Antrim Glens the mayflowers were crushed to provide a juice with which the cows' udders were washed, and elsewhere buttercups were used for the purpose. Cow dung, if less hygienic, had similar protective power, presumably in

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.
[2] *U.J.A.* 3 (1855), 165.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the belief that it contained the essence of the flowers of the fields. Sprigs of rowan were stuck in the midden, placed over the door of the byre and hung on the cows' horns. Flowers were also put around the well, for it was supposed that a milk-thief could steal your summer's milk and butter by skimming the water at this time, or by dragging a rope across a field to collect the dew. Boundary streams were also potent in this connexion, and I was told in Donegal that the milk churn had to be washed on May Day in 'three landlords' waters', that is the meeting place of three properties. 527 824 751

Besides these family rites there were public ceremonies, the lighting of bonfires and parades of May Babies, of May Boys and the May Queen. One of the rhymes sung by May Boys in the west of Ireland runs, in translation: 527

> Summer! Summer! the milk of the heifers, [539]
> And ourselves brought the summer with us,
> The yellow summer, and the white daisy,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us.[1]

The May Baby parades link the festival with the fertility of the family as well as the fields. I give an account of the ceremonies as described in Co. Louth in the early nineteenth century: 'On May Day, the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby' . . . Around this figure a man and woman (generally his wife) of the humble class, dressed also fantastically with straw, etc., dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures . . . These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children to their husbands also attend to see this figure and performance, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children.'[2] 527 842 831

The May Day bonfires and the May Queens are now little more than children's games and excuses for begging. The burning of bones—whence the word bonfire, which in Ireland keeps its original pronunciation—and in particular of horses' 527 372

[1]Lady Wilde, *The Dublin University Magazine* (1849), 541–60.
[2]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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527 bones, were formerly considered proper to the occasion. There
[372] were dances round the fires, performed with great dexterity and precision by youths armed with cudgels. The May-pole,
[177] however, and the May-bush observances seem to go with areas
[824] of strong English influence and do not seem to have been generally adopted by the Irish, perhaps because May-trees, which are not given this name in Ireland, are likely to be fairy thorns and therefore should not be damaged. The May Eve assemblies are thus described in eighteenth century Kilkenny: 'Bloody battles and much confusion and uproar is the mischief that follows from the barbarous and unheeded custom of collecting *May-balls* among the new-married folks . . . The hedges and fences, in the outlets of our city, are stripped of full-grown hawthorns, whose late blooming pride and fragrancy is now miserably dying away on dunghills before cabin doors, by way of *May-bushes*, no longer, alas! to afford a nuptial bed to the new-married linnet and his mate, but fastened in the ground for the vilest purpose—to hang filthy clouts upon'.[1] The gold and white balls which were hung on maypoles have been regarded as symbols of sun and moon—or it may be of butter and milk. Another May Day custom was the licence allowed
[786] young boys to run about stinging people with nettles, a privilege which in my youth in Shropshire was permitted only on 29th May, the victims being those who did not wear an oak-apple.

527 If the May Day fires are now more in evidence in the back streets of Belfast than on the high hills, the Midsummer fires still burn
372 strongly in some country districts and their pagan flames have not been so easily quenched. I saw dozens of them in Co. Galway on Midsummer Eve in 1956, mostly at country crossroads. Old men in Donegal have told me that they remembered the time when they had counted from their hilltop fire nearly a hundred others. Young men would show their mettle by jumping to and fro through the flames, and girls by doing so hoped to marry early and have many children. We recall that
[789] leaping is in folk tradition a widely approved method of making the crops grow high, and the fires, it is conjectured, were meant to encourage the sun, now at its turning point, to shine on through the harvest. Midsummer was a time when evil influ-

[1] *Finn's Leinster Journal* (4th May, 1768).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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ences affecting human beings and the animals and crops were usually potent. It is remembered that 'the oldest woman in the town' would go round the fire three times on her knees, reciting prayers. To walk three times sunwise round the fire was to ensure a year without sickness, and as the flames died down the cattle were driven through the embers and their backs were singed with a lighted hazel wand: the sticks were preserved and utilized for driving the cows. By tradition everyone carried home a burning stick from the fire, and whoever was first to take it into the house brought the good luck of the year with him. A glowing turf from the fire was carried three times sunwise round the dwelling house, and others were thrown into the growing crops. Yarrow was hung in the house to ward off illness. Fernseed was gathered for its magic powers and divinations made from the roots of bracken and lilies. We have already noticed the custom of retaining some of the ashes from the Midsummer fires to mix with the following season's seed corn.

The third fire-festival of the year is associated with St. Peter's Eve on 28th June, but I have not come across many traditions of St. Peter's bonfires except in Armagh and Wexford: it may thus be mainly restricted to areas where English influence was strong. More widespread and better known, because they have been caught up in many patterns and in such popular pilgrimages as that to Croagh Patrick, are the celebrations of Lammas, originally 1st August, now held on Lammas Sunday, the last in July, which is also known as Garland, Bilberry or Height Sunday. This marked the end of summer and the beginning of harvest: it was a first-fruits festival into which the alien potato has been fitted, and no potatoes were dug before this time. Offerings of flowers and fruits were made at holy wells, and in some places cattle were made to swim through streams and loughs into which lumps of fresh butter had been cast:[1] 'They think no beast will live the whole year through unless they be thus drenched'.[2] In hilly districts Height Sunday is observed by climbing to a recognized picnic place where bilberries are gathered and games and dancing were formerly enjoyed. In Co. Down a large prehistoric

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 1, 282.
[2]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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in Europe, and the emphasis on different elements of the complex naturally varies with regional circumstances and traditions. In Ireland the trees which the elder faiths had endowed with magic qualities were all small trees and shrubs—especially the rowan, holly, elderberry and whitethorn—and the evidence of archaeology and palaeobotany is that these plants first became common in the prehistoric landscape as weeds of cultivation following forest clearance by early cultivators. Thus they would have become symbols of the farming year, their white blossoms a sign of spring and the end of killing frosts, their red berries a token of the fulfilment of harvest and the promise of renewed life. At first sight one may wonder why the thorn tree should have been singled out for special attention, for it is ubiquitous in the lowland landscapes. The hedgerow thorns, of course, are newcomers, and they may be hacked with impunity, but woe betide the man who damages a fairy thorn, that is one not planted by man but growing on its own in the fields or on some ancient cairn or rath. They are to be found in every part of Ireland, but to see the fairy thorn in full majesty one should go to the naked hillsides where it stands in splendid isolation against the stone dykes and the bare hills (Fig. 89). As with the sacred groves of China, not even fallen dead branches which would serve as firewood should be removed. I have

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FIG. 89. Fairy thorns. A cluster of 'gentle bushes' near Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh: 'If you were in there on the hottest day it would starve you.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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824 known instances when a branch accidentally broken from a fairy thorn was carefully tied back in position.

The policy of the Church was to attach new myths to old
797 rites, but only occasionally has the thorn tree been nominally
312 won over to Christianity by dedication to local saints or by its
778 association with sacred sites, with wells or Lammas celebrations, as for example the Criocan Thorn in the heart of Slieve Bloom.[1] On the other hand well-worship has had less stubborn roots, and 'holy water' has been more readily absorbed into Christian ritual. Nearly all the holy wells have close associations with the saints. Over 3,000 examples have been listed, most of them now half forgotten, others visited in secret and a declining number openly resorted to for cures. It is not difficult to understand the universal attraction of a spring of pure water. In the eyes of countryfolk a sense of mystery attaches to the upwelling of a spring well: it is considered lucky to have access to such a source of domestic water—a true 'well', not a hole bored in the ground—and one is invariably told that the local well yields the purest water for miles around, or even 'in all Ireland'. The attributes of purification, healing and fertility are natural concomitants of the magic welling of spring water, but besides possessing supernatural powers of this kind the holy wells are regarded as having had miraculous origins. The most famous sites where patterns are held have already been mentioned: the local holy well is rather an ever-present source of healing resorted to in need. One cannot but think of an ancient cult of waters springing from deep sources in primitive religion which was reinforced and adapted by successive intrusive cultures from the megalithic to the Christian (Pl. 16).

The ritual of 'paying rounds' at a well frequently involves
312 associated stones and trees. A sunwise circuit of the well is
778 made and the pilgrim, after taking a drink from the well,
788 hangs a rag or a rosary on an adjacent bush. The ritual commonly includes also tracing with a pebble on a stone of the well-covering the mark of a cross which has been incised by countless other pebbles. This practice has a bearing on the mysterious cup-marked stones and basin-stones (bullauns) which are associated with numerous ritual sites, including wells, for I

[1] V. Cornish, *Historic Thorn Trees in the British Isles*, 53.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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526 perfect sphere the rounded igneous pebbles which are selected for the purpose. One wonders whether some of the many cup-marked stones which turn up in the fields in certain districts—I have seen many in Inishowen in Donegal—were used for shaping stones, such as the sling-stones with which champion slingers, of whom the legendary Cuchulainn was one, performed [411] their feats. The sling and the sling-rod were originally hunting weapons and probably instruments of war, and one of the last refuges of slinging as a pastime was the now vanished Claddagh, the fishing suburb of Galway, where a man was not reckoned a good shot until he could strike a shilling as far away as it could be seen.[1]

312 Where a holy well has dried up—the usual explanation is that it was desecrated and moved its position—the sanctity of the ●824 site may be transferred to a tree. The so-called pin-well at 778 Arboe in Co. Tyrone is a beech tree, hirsute with pins and nails, growing in the burying ground on a Celtic monastic site. A rag-well at Clonmel is visited by mountain farmers who hang rag offerings on briars at lambing and calving times, and afterwards place more rags appropriate in number to the increase obtained.[2] There is on the island of Inishmurray a wind- [821] well which has the power of controlling the wind, the ritual being to empty the well to produce a calm. Sticks and stones also 789 figure in wind-raising ceremonies, and 'the rude stone image of 778 Inniskea' (Inishkea in Co. Mayo), which was dressed up in flannel each New Year's Day, had powers of producing either storm or calm.[3] Powerful magic was worked by a wooden statue of St. Macdara, formerly kept in his chapel—an oratory of early type with projecting *antae*—on an island dedicated to the saint in the extreme south-western corner of Co. Galway. Sailors passing the island dipped their sails three times in honour of the image, but we are left to guess what superstitions were involved from the statement that about the year 1640 'the bishop of Tuam caused it to be buried for weighty reasons'.[4]

[1] *U.J.A.*, 2 (1854), 164.
[2] *Béaloideas*, 15 (1945), 284.
[3] C. Otway, *Erris and Tyrawly*, 107.
[4] C. R. Browne, *Carna and Mweenish*.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

824 753 757 824 [752] 824 [777 789]

Plants.—The "hungry grass" grows on mountains, and, if trodden on, causes a sickening hunger which kills if not relieved. I knew a man in County Limerick who said he "knew it to happen to another man" on the Clare hills, and the victim got food in bare time to save him.[30] Seven strips of a plantain leaf stop the bleeding of a bad wound. The "Seven Sisters" plant for healing purposes must be picked at a particular period of the sun and moon in August. Fern "dust" (seeds) heals cuts from rushes; the dock charms nettle stings; and the four-leafed shamrock brings luck if found accidentally. The belief that house-leek preserves a house from burning[31] is widespread in north and east Clare. The pennywort has a sectarian bias, and only cures Protestants,[32] and this is connected near Bunratty with a curious legend of Anne Boleyn. This hapless queen, after enjoying by means of the plant the greatest influence over her terrible spouse,[33] "got into trouble, but, when she was sent to jail, she couldn't get the plant, and they hanged her." The rowan, or mountain ash, is a luck-bringer and preservative from magic, and I remember small forked twigs being carried. A rowan, planted at Iniscaltra about 890 by King Cormac mac Cuileanan, bore apples.[34] Moss from a skull, or an ancient cross such as that at Dysert O'Dea, or a pillar, is curative; the moss at Fortanne well was used for the eyes, but had to be replaced. If you see a "button mushroom" you should pluck it, as "it will never grow any more once it is looked at."[35]

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(*To be continued.*)

[P. 252]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
[133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

• 824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers.

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained.

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden.

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

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Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

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Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

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The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by pottraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility. The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festivals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
776 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
[175] from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid	She is deaf and
Dressed in white.	She is dumb.
Give her something	For God's sake,
For the night.	Give her some.

536 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
735 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
431 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
776 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.
778

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow" roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[822] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[778] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to
[233] attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [158]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at [illegible]oubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bache[illegible]o considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a [illegible]utation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that [illegible]al intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] [844]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

312 strings of beads, rags or bits of clothing in the holy tree which
788 often overhangs the well, so that it may bear their ailments.
755 I happened to come across a well near Cork just after mid-
778 summer this year. Alongside were the smouldering remains of a great bonfire which had been lit on St. John's Eve. The visitors to the well, having drunk the water, walked three times sunwise around the corbelled stone well-cover, and taking up pebbles kept ready to hand in crevices, they made the sign of the cross on certain stones which were marked with deep grooves which generations of patrons had cut by the same process. Some wells have old "cup-marks" instead of crosses, and it seems probable that these pagan symbols were made long ago in the same way as the crosses which have replaced them. Their round completed, the visitors
●[825] looked into the well, for if they were to recover from their ailments they would see the trout which is reputed to live there and to show itself only to the cured.

The virtues of these wells are many: they are believed to be efficacious in such varied complaints as eye-disease, lameness, toothache and in some cases barrenness The first Sunday of each quarter of the Celtic year is generally the visiting time, but perhaps on account of the weather the summer festivals, and especially midsummer, are most popular. Pins and other bits of metal are sometimes deposited in wells. Offerings are also made to certain trees in the form of pins stuck in the bark, each pin representing a wish. Special gatherings known as patterns or pardons were held at such sites on the anniversary of the patron saint of the district. Devotions were followed by dancing and games which often degenerated into fights. It is possible to see relics of paganism in the sanctity of such sites, and it is worth recalling that some of the more celebrated centres of pilgrimage in western Europe, like Santiago da Compostella, seem to have megalithic connexions.

788 The mention of cup-marks brings us to the superstitions
823 concerning the great stone monuments with which they are
778 often associated. A recent article in the *Ulster Journal of*

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be [788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch, 754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 821 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these 825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27):—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Congaile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It [551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is sub- 776 ject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 854 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [262]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be buried alive with its wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [823] [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

an English introduction since 'sowing baskets' are listed in the 241
medieval pipe-rolls of the Pale. In parts of the west, for example Mayo, a skin tray was used for sowing. But the usual Irish method is to sow from a linen sheet, kept specially for the purpose, which is tied round the sower. The seed is thrown with a one-handed cast, and it is not everyone's privilege to be allowed to undertake this important task. It calls for skill and concentrated care, for 'a missed bit' is a bad omen, foretelling death [787]
The seed should all be safely 'buried' by the beginning of May, and in Co. Armagh the first cuckoo's call was taken as a sign. To be found sowing corn after this was a mark of deep disgrace: [825]
the laggard was labelled 'a cuckoo farmer'.

With modern ploughs and improved drainage it is not often, save in the tiny fields of the west, that one comes across cereal crops sown in ridges, but the lazy-bed method is very generally employed for potatoes and other crops where the spade is used, though the great bulk of the potato crop is sown in drills. The potato ridge presumably derives its name, lazy-bed, from the fact that the sod under the ridge is not dug: the bed is built up on top of the grass with sods and soil dug from the trenches between the ridges. Not only does this method make full use of the humus and decaying grass but it prevents the sets from becoming waterlogged and rotting, for the whole bed is raised above the water-table. And the unbroken sod checks the downwash of plant nutrients. The trenches or furrows between the ridges provide open drains, and the lazy-beds are always carefully aligned with the slope of the land. Moreover, when the trenches are dug a second time for earthing the potatoes, they often go deep enough to penetrate the hard layer of iron pan which tends to form under heavily leached soils by the washing down of iron salts. This the old-fashioned plough could not do. Breaking the impermeable pan not only improves the drainage but provides minerals which are returned to the topsoil when the potatoes are earthed. The ridges in which potatoes are grown in their Andean homeland appear to be similar to the Irish lazy-beds, and tuber crops throughout the tropics are planted in ridges or mounds, but the ridge-technique is certainly older than the potato in Ireland. Clearly an efficient 241
shovel is a requirement in the construction of ridges of any 412

243 heads of corn at the wrong end, or they would be missed in thrashing with the flail, and for the same reason the ears of the straw band-knot should lie towards the top of the sheaf. The sheaves should be laid with their butts to the wind, for these need most drying. The bands should be tied with nice judgement, tight but not over-tight: one should not be able to put the toe of one's boot under the band when one stands on the butt of the sheaf.

[461] As in all farming operations conducted in traditional ways, music and magic to ease the labour were part of the scene. There were shearing songs to match the rhythm of the sickle, [825] and its efficiency was improved by keeping a fly or other insect imprisoned in the handle; perhaps its incessant activity was meant to speed up the work. Another strange belief was that [777] luck followed the reaper who carried a child on his back. The world of magic and fairy was close by at harvest time: it was believed that the top grain (pickle) of every stalk of corn was empty because it had been taken by the fairies and was their due. The sheaf had its share of lore, too, related possibly to its [754] semblance of human shape. A curse could be worked by sticking pins into the joints of the straw, and the sheaf might be properly waked and buried so that as it withered the object of the curse would decline. Stooks with their 'hudders' (Fig. 51) (hooding sheaves) also take on human forms, and I have known various terms for these large stooks applied as nicknames to broad-based country women. 'The last sheaf' also is known as the cailleach or hag.

Beliefs and customs connected with the last sheaf are legion and find their counterparts in many parts of the world. 'Winning the churn' was an incentive to the reaper, for good luck attended those who had their rigs sheared quickly if only because they avoided the ill-luck of being last. Stories are told of rigs being left unclaimed and uncut because their owners feared to incur 'the famine of the farm', of having the hag to feed until next harvest. The basis of this belief was that the last sheaf was sometimes hidden overnight in the corn of lazy farmers, who would watch at nights and reap by moonlight to avoid what was an omen of misfortune or death.

[787] The last handful of standing corn, selected for the purpose,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of
178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Pyrenees and in Africa, but the flail, apparently spreading 243
through western Europe in post-Roman times, in time replaced 412
it almost everywhere, to be in turn displaced by the mechanical 171
thrasher. Thus the sound of the flail has almost gone from the countryside. The best thrashing place is the floor of the barn above the byre, with its opposite doors to draw the wind and 343
advertise the flailer's industry. Such barns, however, were not 243
built outside the planted districts before agrarian changes and 171
improvements spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ireland knows nothing of the carefully built thrashing floors of England and Scandinavia. At best on the farms lacking a barn a thrashing board was sometimes kept, a square wooden platform raised a few inches off the ground. A good thrashing floor should bend to meet the flail, and in Scandinavia, for instance, great pains were taken in the old days to construct floors which would make the flails sing. They were occasionally strung with wires, and to magnify the echo of clay floors a horse's skull was buried under each corner.[1] It has been thought that this purpose was secondary to the luck it was hoped would follow from what was originally a foundation sacrifice. In Ireland [777]
traditions of the burying of horses' skulls under the floors of dwelling houses are both widespread and well authenticated. The usual explanation again is that this gives the house an echo, but it is also said to be lucky, and Sean O'Sullivan concludes that the custom of burying skulls began as a substitute for foundation sacrifices.[2] In Armagh 'the frontal bones of a [825] ●
horse's head are regarded as being peculiarly sonsie; they were often buried in barn floors and under the thresholds of dwelling houses for that reason.'[3]

In time, the expressed object came to be to magnify the music 243
of the singing flails as well as that of the ballad-singing and 789
dancing before the fire. The space between the doors of the old style kitchen-byre, it will be recalled, was a favourite thrashing place in times past. The Briget's Crosses above the door would have blessed the thrashing as well as the cattle. It

[1]Albert Sandkelf, *Singing Flails* (Folklore Fellows Communications, Helsinki, No. 136), (1949).
[2]Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 45–52.
[3]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fenn in 1838*, 77.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

'the order of the fair' was prescribed and the business lasted several days. On the evening of Gathering Day a procession assembles at the bridge and makes its way to the central square carrying (nowadays in a large cage mounted on a lorry) a billy-goat bedecked with ribbons. He is chained by the horns on a high platform erected for the purpose and, supplied with a liberal stock of cabbages, he presides over the fair. Tradition says that the goat used to stand, 'garlanded by greenery' on the old castle which was erected here by the Geraldines in the thirteenth century. The business of the fair is the sale of livestock, and as with many another large fair it is a traditional gathering place for the tinkers who in Ireland take the place of the gypsies. On the evening of Scattering Day the Puck is borne triumphantly back to the bridge. The popular explanation of the custom is that it commemorates an occasion when the noise of goats warned the Irish of advancing English forces, but it is more reasonable to see Puck as a symbol of fertility and good luck. 12th August is Old Lammas, and Lammas Day, the 1st August, was known to the Irish as 'Lewy's Fair', in memory of a pre-Christian deity. This season of high summer has many associations with the pastoral freedom of the hills, with young people and with dancing and courting. There are traditions of other Puck Fairs in the south of Ireland, and there were certain fairs at which a white horse was paraded through the assembled crowds and then tied up to preside over the proceedings.

Another celebrated gathering place was the great fair of Ballinasloe, which brought such fame to this Galway town that the *Gazetteer* describes it as 'the cynosure of much the larger part of the western province of Ireland', so prosperous that even its poorer quarters, 'a segregation of lanes, and houses, and cabins, aggregately repulsive', were yet 'greatly less haggard than what constitutes the whole of many a third or second rate town in Ireland'. The fair was held from the 5th to the 9th of October, and during the first half of the nineteenth century the average numbers of sheep and cattle offered for sale were respectively 90,000 and 12,000. Ballinasloe Fair served the west of Ireland in much the same way as the great trysts of Crieff and Falkirk served the Scottish Highlands in the days of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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sometimes killed at this time, so that the animal slaughter may be a sacrificial substitute. 527 [782]

Although Christmas is the outstanding Christian festival of the year its traditional 'Twelve Days' of holiday are steeped in pagan lore and in folk practices relating to the winter solstice and the new year. In Co. Cavan I came across a custom known as 'blowing the Christmas horns' by which youths heralded the festival by blowing horns from hilltops. The burning of candles on Christmas Eve is a ceremony which involved divination as well as devotion. 'Each district seems to have its taste in colour. For example, in Limerick and Clare white candles are mainly used, while red and green are popular everywhere. In the Midland areas pink candles are sought, and in some parts of Dublin only blue candles will be taken. In Killarney nothing less than a 6-lb. candle will suffice for the occasion'.[1] On Christmas Day traditional ball-games were played, often between parishes, and near the coasts these meetings took place on the strands. [526]

St. Stephen's Day is in many parts of the country associated with the hunting of the wren, and the sport is not entirely extinct. It seems that some details of the ceremony, such as the rhymes which are sung, are of English origin, but the wrenboys often wore straw masks in the native tradition, and occasionally animal skins or horns. The wrens were killed beforehand by noisy and excited bands of youths, and carried on a holly bush or a decorated wooden tray on St. Stephen's Day (Fig. 87). The procession, shouting and singing the prescribed songs to the accompaniment of home-made skin tambourines, made its way from house to house demanding money or drinks. The wrenboy processions, despite their English rhymes, appear to be a degeneration of more elaborate performances of native origin which had affinities with the mummers' plays and which like them may have been attracted by the powerful prestige of the Christmas festival from their proper season of spring. At one time the wrenboy ceremonies involved much fertility symbolism and were attended by men disguised as women.[2] The robin, linked with the wren in superstition, was also the object of persecution in south-western Ireland, but in this case the tail 527 825

[1] *Ireland* (Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs) No. 303 (1955), 10.
[2] E. R. R. Green, *U.J.A.*, 9 (1946), 3–21.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

527 825 was pulled out and the bird's life spared: 'In severe winters a robin with a tail was rarely seen.'[1] Another popular Boxing-Day pastime was bull-baiting, though in Kilkenny, where it was officially supported by the town officials and was presumably an English introduction, it was held on the following day, St. John's. In several parts of the country bull-baiting continued well into last century, in Kilkenny down to 1837.[2]

[293] [534]

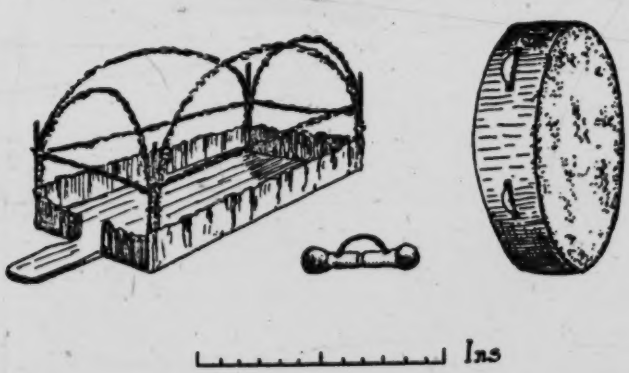

FIG. 87. Hunting the wren. Wren Box for carrying dead wren, and wrenboys' tambourine and stick, Co. Clare. (National Museum, Dublin.)

527 New Year's Day similarly has attracted to itself some of the portents proper to the older year's beginning on 1st November. The prosperity of the individual and the household is felt to depend on the events of New Year's Day. The fairies are active on New Year's Eve and it is well for people to stay indoors that night. First-footing ceremonies appear to be confined to families of recent Scots origin, but the idea behind them is widespread. In parts of Co. Down it is customary for youths to prepare little 'wisps' of straw or dry grass and go from house to house distributing them together with New Year's greetings in the expectation of a gift. In the west on the last night of the year (or alternatively on the eve of Twelfth Night) a large 'Christmas Loaf' specially prepared for the occasion was taken

[1] W. R. Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, 41.
[2] J. G. R. Prim, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1853), 326.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness 277 226 of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar [192] tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and, we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne [502] 'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour, and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat [431] and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh- 825 water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most 312 part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, 234 and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are 825 peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 52.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3]S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

234 newly-calved cow should be milked on to a piece of metal
●625 placed in the pail. Offerings of the 'beastlings' were poured in the raths and at the roots of fairy thorns, to appease the fairies. When taking a drink out of doors, the old countryman will casually spill a portion of the draught on the earth as a complimentary libation to the good people. 'When a cow fell sick through fairy malice, it was formerly by no means an uncommon practice, in the west of Ireland, to devote the ailing animal to St. Martin. The ceremony was performed by letting a few drops of blood from the cow in honour of the saint.'[1] Cows which, for no apparent reason, are not thriving are said to be
[172] elf-shot. The elf-stones or fairy-darts which are supposed to have caused the mischief are prehistoric flint arrowheads such as can be picked up in the fields. One of the tricks of the cow-doctor who is called in, and who keeps a few arrowheads handy, is to produce one by sleight of hand from the flank of the ailing beast. Or counter-magic can be worked by means of a flint arrowhead which must not be allowed to touch the ground after it has been found. The cow-doctor uses sympathetic magic in curing calves believed to be suffering from intestinal knots by drawing apart over the animal's back the loose ends of a string tied in a complicated witch-knot or 'bat', of the type which comes undone when pulled. But as always he must work the magic correctly, for if the knot is not resolved another one is tied
789 inside the calf.

234 Hanging in the byre one sometimes sees a flint pebble sus-
[823] pended on a string through a natural hole. It is a witch-stone, protecting the cows from milk-stealers, and it may owe its virtue to the flint or to its symbolic ever-watching eye. In the
[171] Ardenne a holed flint hung in the stable is believed to preserve the horses from nightmares,[2] and nearer home in the Yorkshire dales holed stones known as ring-stones protected the cows from the evil eye. 'Blessings on all that I can see' is the traditional formula to use when one enters a byre. An ill-disposed person could, merely by looking at it, 'blink' a cow so that its milk would yield no butter. The cow could be cured by burning under its nose a portion of the blinker's clothes

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 6.
[2] H. H. Turney-High, *Ch'teau-Gérrad* 53(19), 232.

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I was present at its first telling, before they heard from our old servant, Mrs. Julia MacHugh, of the local belief. The tale, I have heard, was fully confirmed by their driver and a guide, a workman of the D'Esterres, who piloted them along a flooded and unfenced reach of the road a little to the east of Bunratty. A large, dark, shadowy dog seemed to run upon the moonlit water, first to one side and then to the other of the carriage, and was more than once lashed at by the driver. It disappeared near where the road ascends from the low marshy "corcasses" along the foot of the Cratloe hills. Julia MacHugh, a woman of wide local knowledge, at once "explained" the apparition and said that the omen was good if the dog ran alongside, but bad if he leaped at the carriage or horses. On one occasion he leaped at the mail car, and soon afterwards its driver was thrown off and killed on the spot. I recently learnt that a ghostly black dog haunts by night the lonely road above the old ruined house of Glenomera. 776

Seals.—The belief that seals are disguised human beings prevailed, I am told, in Clare forty years ago, at least along the Kilkee coast.[28] I never heard it myself from fisherfolk. A little further north, from Connemara up to Mayo, the Kinealys are reputed to be descended from a beautiful seal-woman. The belief is nearly universal, and is attached even to a few of the family in Clare. [825]

Rabbits.—Early this year a clever intelligent man, near Ennis, went with a boy and a ferret to shoot rabbits from a fort. Three ran out and were shot at and missed. The man then called the boy to come at once, and ran off in great excitement and fear, saying that the rabbits were fairies. Some such belief must be widely spread, as Mrs. MacDonnell of Newhall told me that, when a girl, she took up a small and very tame white rabbit in the glen at Edenvale and immediately afterwards found that she had lost a ring. The people who helped in the search, and her father's gamekeeper, were convinced that the rabbit was a fairy and had taken the ring with it.

Birds.—I have read of an enchanted bird which was caught in the cave of Kilcorney and spoke with a human voice.[29] The

[28] So the late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[29] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236.

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COLLECTANEA.

A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE (*continued from p.* 60).

XII. *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds.*

IT is unlucky to see the new moon through glass; to throw dust or slops out of a house on New Year's Day, as you throw away with them all the good luck of the year; to throw dust or slops towards a neighbouring "fort";[1] to see one magpie, or a "weazel" (stoat), without saluting it by bowing or taking off your hat; to go out of a house where they are churning without "putting your hand to the churn," *i.e.* giving a few strokes with the churn "dash," so that you will not "take" the butter; and to take fire out of a house,—so that, if you light a pipe indoors, it should be smoked out before leaving. Iron and pins,—except crooked pins with the points towards you,—should be picked up, and the first thrown over the left shoulder. Rub your hand on wood if it itches or after a boastful speech or speaking too confidently of the future; in east Clare you touch wood twice, with the phrase, "Good word (*or* time) be it spoken," after an imprudent expression.[2] You should bow to the new moon. Turn your money for luck after seeing the new moon. On visiting a friend in a new house, you should give some present, however small. In east Clare some persons are careful to throw a hen or other fowl that has died of disease over the fence on to their neighbour's land, to remove the ill-luck from their own poultry.[3] Others will not wash eggs offered for sale, as it stops

[1] So Dr. Macnamara and others.
[2] "Scratch it in wood, and it will come good," says a rhyme.
[3] Practised near Tulla, and resulting in some cases in great ill-will.

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XIV. *Calendar Customs.*

796 178 Most of these customs are so widely spread as to require only brief notice, and were noted, before 1816, by the Rev. James Grahame, the curate of Kilrush. They comprise the eating of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and of eggs at Easter; playing tricks and "fooling" on April 1st; setting May bushes before houses on Old May Day; lighting bonfires on Midsummer Eve, dancing round them, and driving cattle through them; beginning hunting on Michaelmas Day; Hallowe'en practices on October 31st; midnight processions, with music, on certain nights in the week before Christmas, (which had just been discontinued in 1816); and mummers, wren boys, and bull-baiting on St. Stephen's Day.[5] The May bush died out, I believe, during the dark years of the Great Famine; I never heard of any limit, other than the clearance of the crops, for beginning hunting; but, except the bull-baiting and the waits, all the rest still exist.

It is well to have to record the dying out of the custom of killing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, even if it springs from laziness rather than from humanity. "Who cares for the birds but God!" was once retorted when I "put in a word for" the wren. There is probably a very old prejudice against it, for the "droleen" stood confessed as a "little druid" among birds, and the "druid" of Irish tradition was not the majestic white-robed priest of the oak grove, but a sorcerer who injured meanly by spells, a foe of God and of His servants, but a contemptible and impotent one. This feeling was expressed in the contemptuous term *shandruee* ("old druid") for a worthless old man, in use in my boyhood. How far the wren rites have orthodox ritual or etiquette is doubtful. Formerly the youth of a whole district combined as wren boys, but now they go in bands of from two to six,[6] and the wren bush is often a mere branch with a few rags and no wren. A structure of evergreens, in general design like a *crux ansata*, covered with streamers and with the dead bird hung

[825] [888]

[5] Mason's *Parochial Survey* (1816), vol. ii.

[6] See Plate IX., from a photograph taken on December 26th, 1910, by Mrs. O'Callaghan Westropp of Coolreagh.

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XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date, for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, 825 are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle.*—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[20] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[21]

778 The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round 825 Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an 233 irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural 823 stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St. [776] Forgas, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

[20] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boulynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boulynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolyneaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilnaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boulynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Booltydoolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaask (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[21] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

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buttons, and broken crockery. Patients sit in the "chair" to cure lumbago. It is believed that the water of this lake cannot be boiled and that no one can be drowned by it, and sixty or seventy years ago cattle were cured by it. The beasts were brought in herds to the lake to drink, and were driven into it. If they turned to the right hand they would recover, but not if they swam to the left. It is said that on one occasion a cow sank, but was found next day grazing in a field beside the lake, completely cured. In consequence of drainage works, the water level has fallen, and the mud round the shore is too deep to allow the cattle to be driven through it, so on May Day every year, before sunrise, a little crowd gathers, of perhaps over 100 persons, to fill bottles with the water for curing cattle, especially of "the worm." The water keeps good till the next anniversary, and is also used to give a "good churning" and to clear a "garden" of caterpillars.[22]

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In 1839 Lough Iona (now Eenagh) was reputed to cure sick cattle on Mondays and Thursdays.[23] In 1808 the smiths were in some districts employed to kill the cattle,—or rather to fell them for slaying,—and their perquisites were the animals' heads.[24]

Persons over sixty years of age are often firm believers in the charming away, or "taking," of milk and butter. The younger folk usually deny that they hold this belief, and, where they take part in quarrels caused by it, avowedly only do so to support their elders. Two families living in the south-east corner of the county had about 1890 a quarrel resulting in a serious feud, hardly as yet appeased. It seems that for about three years the cows of the first household gave but little milk, and that little so bad and unwholesome for pigs and calves that several died. Ordinary veterinary practitioners, and even the local "knowing men," did no good, so the farmer sought a "wise man" of renown in another parish. This sage directed his client to watch the local well all May Eve, and to let no one come near it till after midnight. The farmer and his sons hid near it, saw a man and a woman of the

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[22] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, vol. ii.

[23] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 161.

[24] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 359. The smith was a magician amongst the Irish, and the ancient *St. Patrick's Lorica* prays against the spells of "smiths, women, and druids."

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COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions* (*continued*).

Horse.—I have found no folklore relating to horses except that already given regarding supernatural animals.[1] I have since recalled a legend of a dangerous spectral horse, probably a *púca*, haunting the bridge over the Blackwater, between Limerick and Clonlara, and the tree-darkened road towards the latter place,—a terror by night to passengers till about twenty years ago. There was also the bodiless head of a spectral horse which used to float beside cars on a road near Clooney, of which I heard about 1876, but now forget the details. The riding of horses by fairies was not unknown. 825 776

Dog, Fox, and Hart.—Besides the supernatural dogs already noted,[2] and the "Red Dog" (or Fox?), near Cragmoher, at Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge, there is little to tell. Finn's famous hound Bran was drowned at Tirmicbrain lake, and a ghastly dog broke the bones in some graveyard, (perhaps Doora or Clooney), before 1876.[3] It is unlucky to meet a fox, a red-haired woman, or a hare "first thing" in the morning. The hare is said to eat human flesh,—probably from being often "started" in graveyards. I have been told by several Clare people of witches turning into hares, but the alleged incident was never located in the county. [772] [791]

Seal.—A very vague belief prevails on the coast that seals are

[1] Vol. xxi., pp. 481-2.

[2] Vol. xxi., pp. 482-3.

[3] As in most of my recollections of folk-tales heard before 1876, the details are forgotten.

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825 776 enchanted human beings.[4] It gets more definite above Galway Bay, where the Kinealeys are of reputed seal descent. Some such belief may underlie the name Cumarra (or sea-hound) in the MacNamara family. I found more difficulty in getting fisher beliefs in recent years than in getting folklore from the country people. Much of what I heard in 1906 was probably of tourist origin, and, like the *merrow* at Killard,[5] not to be trusted as genuine belief.

Otter.—Beyond vague belief in an enormous "durracow"[6] (the king of the otters), which I heard of as a child on the Shannon Bank about some unnamed lake in east Clare, I am not aware of any folklore about this creature in the county. There was said to be a "remarkable" otter at Glenomera.

Cat.—The cat was much regarded by the early Irish, and holds honourable place in their ancient code of laws. It even appears in the illuminations of the *Book of Kells.* Numerous places in Clare bear its name, but local belief tends to consider the "cat" in these names as a weird monster. The "Cata" and "Faracat" of legend[7] were probably "dragons." The cat has supernatural [763 787] knowledge. If a cat looks fixedly at a person without apparent reason it forebodes sickness or death, but if it does so to an unmarried person, after making its toilet, it foretells marriage.

[4] So in Aed Baclamp from the *Book of Lismore*, (*Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 72). St. Brendan changes 50 seals into horses, which carry into the sea their riders, who, on reaching it, are, like their steeds, changed into seals.

[114] [5] Vol. xxi., p. 342. Mrs. Dorothea Townshend of Oxford calls my attention to the probability that this story was made up by Dr. Keightley (v. App. to his *Fairy Mythology*). In my original Ms. I expressed great doubt as to this story, having found no equivalent to it near Dunbeg or Kilkee, but this was unfortunately omitted in publication. The Miltown mermaid was probably one of the white seals occasionally seen on the coast.

[6] *i.e. Dobharchu*, water-hound. The Irish called the wolf *fael-chu* (wild hound) and *cu allaid*, and the marten *cranu chu* (branch hound). The more common name for the wolf in Clare is *breagh*, as in Breaghva and Breffy, the name of several townlands. The other wolf name *Mac Tire* (son of the country), is attached to Knockaunvicteera hill near Lisdoonvarna (where it refers to the animal), and to Cahermactire, a fort near Inchiquin Hill; at the latter place it may refer to a person, as the name Mac Tire is found in various annals.

[7] Vol. xxi., pp. 477-9. [P. 246]

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The wild cat is believed to have a spike or hook at the end of its tail which it can stick into a pursuer, but I found no such fine legend in Clare on this point as I did near Kenry in Limerick, where the cats pursued, and anchored themselves on, a farmer and his dog, after chasing them from Clorane to Old Kildimo! 825 776

Elk.—The Irish elk is known among the turf cutters of Clooney and Tulla as the "Fiaghmore" (so pronounced, but really *fiadh mor*, big deer),—"it might be one of the deer Finn hunted." Its numerous remains have given to one townland the name "Fiaghmore, Fiah,"[8] in 1655. The "Agallamh"[9] has an interesting allusion. Diarmaid kills a huge deer, and its antler, when resting on his foot, reaches above his head, despite his great height. Caoilte produces this horn from a lake to convince St. Patrick of the truth of his stories of the heroes.

Badger, Squirrel, and Marten.—It is asserted that there are two kinds of badgers,—the "dog-badger," which eats carrion and digs into graves, and the "pig-badger," which is a strict vegetarian and is eatable. In the *Boroma* tract from the *Book of Leinster*,[10] and the "Agallamh," badger bacon and squirrels are mentioned as fit to set before a king or hero. It is doubtful whether the *togmal*, (kept as a pet by Queen Maeve and killed on her shoulder by Cuchullin's slingstone), was a squirrel or a bird, but squirrel skins, along with marten skins, formed a considerable export from Ireland at least from 1230 to 1580, and in 1686 Roderic O'Flaherty names the squirrel amongst the animals of Connaught.[11] The true marten was until recently common in east Clare, and, like the supposed "marten-cat" (a large red domestic cat that has gone wild), was reputed uncanny in my boyhood. I have seen martens at play in the Clare woods in 1869, and had one stuffed in 1876, but they seem now to be extinct. [262]

Hybrids.—Besides the "dog-badger," there were said to be uneatable hybrids of the cat and the rabbit, and of the rook and [262]

[8] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv., p. 94.

[9] *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 176. Antlers over six feet long have been found in Clare, and there is a fine single antler 6 ft. 2 in. long at Violet Hill, Broadford.

[10] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiii., p. 47.

[11] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xl., p. 245.

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825 the domestic hen. The "soft egg laid by the cock" was looked on
776 with suspicion, and so was the egg of the bat, which was even
[262] unlucky to find, and could be used for malignant charms.

Stoat.—In Clare the stoat is always called "weazel." A corruption of the strange Irish name *Feasóg* (the little beard) is as often used, even by English speakers, as the *whishshoge* or *whushshoge*. The creature was equally disliked and respected. It is wished "Good morning, ma'am," by some, and generally saluted by raising the hat on meeting; but others spit and cross themselves. It is regarded as peevish and persistent; "as cross as a bag of weazels" is a proverb in east Clare, while Finn is compared to a weazel in the pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne. I have heard many stories about its revengefulness "when its nest is killed," and of one of its persistent attempts to get at a corpse in a house in south-east Clare, rather, it was thought, for magical purposes than from hunger. Old belief ascribed to the animal the power of poisoning. At Carnelly a labourer told that when cutting a meadow near the "Druids' Altar"[12] he killed a young weazel. Soon afterwards his wife brought him his dinner and a can of sour milk. While they talked, she cried out that a weazel was spitting into the can, but the man laughed and drank the milk. Soon afterwards he got violent gripes, and gave himself up for lost. The doctor had great difficulty in persuading him to try any remedy, and his wife was almost scandalized by his recovery. A similar tale was told at my old home, Attyflin, in which young weazels were not killed but put on a wisp of grass safely in a bush. The parents were seen spitting into the milk, but, on finding the young ones safe, they returned and upset the can.[13] So "even the weazel has justice." Both stories probably originated in the animal's love for milk.

Rat.—A Clare woman told me that a man whose love was
[775] rejected by a girl living in Limerick city died, and his soul went into a rat and used to bite her throat until she had to emigrate.[14] The rat tried to follow her and was drowned, and so the persecution ended. A curious "parliament of rats" was held near Durra in

[12] Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort and others.
[13] Late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[14] Mrs. M. MacCormick.

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Upper Bunratty, the fields being covered with them, but, when it broke up, the "troops" dispersed, and no bands were seen at any distance from the rendezvous. A rat was "heard talking with the Devil" in the grave of an unpopular person before 1875, but how the holders of this curious conversation were identified was never stated. I have met a belief in speaking rats in eastern Clare and among fishermen at Kilkee. 825 776

Hedgehog.—This animal is reputed to steal apples and suck cows and eggs, so that it is persecuted and called *grainogs* (little ugly thing).

Birds.—A pair of ravens roosted in a top window of the round tower of Iniscatha (Scattery) early in the last century. The birds were said to escort their young, when fully fledged, across the Shannon to Carrigfoile Castle in Kerry, and not to let them return to the island.[15] Scaldcrows (roystons) are considered unlucky, and much feared. The old Irish regarded them as incarnations of the war-goddess Bodbh.[16] Birds as omens have already been noted.[17] The bat is looked on as a sort of bird, and it is ominous of death for it to fly at one's face. The entry of a robin into a house is a death omen near Tulla, but elsewhere a sign of good fortune. Although swans are so plentiful that I have often seen more than forty together in Inchiquin and other lakes, the only folklore associated with them seems to be a tale of swan-maidens at Inchiquin. The hunting of the wren has been described in Section XIV.[18] [777] [763]

Fishes.—It was regarded as a custom among the fishermen of Kilrush and Scattery that no one should go fishing for three days after the arrival of the herring shoals, but, when the first day dawned, a crowd of boats was always discovered, and much quarrelling resulted.[19] As the shoals arrived, a mass used to be celebrated on the shore at Kilmurry, Ibrickan, to secure good 226 825

[15] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 546.

[16] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x.; *Revue Celtique*, vol. i.; Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 267.

[17] Vol. xxi., p. 190.

[18] *Ante*, pp. 206-7, and Plate IX.

[19] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare* (1808), pp. 228, 259.

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226 825 fishing and to keep off dogfishes and small sharks.[20] The reputed giant lake pikes and eels have already been mentioned.[21]

"*Worms.*"—Newts, lizards, and large caterpillars are included by the peasantry under this term. They are supposed to be very dangerous to both men and cattle, and are relentlessly destroyed. 825 Of late years I have even had difficulty in saving the pretty little grey lizards, now much rarer than when, over thirty years ago, they swarmed in Clare Abbey and other sunny and sheltered ruins. A colony of unfortunate little lizards in a hollow tree was reported to me as "a nest of adders." My informant[22] about the sacrifice on the dolmen of Maryfort,—the daughter of an old Peninsular veteran, living near Clonlara,—told me a circumstantial tale which was faintly remembered at Clonlara many years later. A "worm with legs" ran down a man's throat as he slept in a field, and he pined away, with an ever-increasing appetite, until he was persuaded to consult a "wise person." He was kept from drinking for two days by the expert, and then fed on bacon and taken to a stream. The patient's mouth was fastened open, and a freshly-toasted piece of bacon put near it. The thirsty "worm" heard the running water, and came out into the man's mouth, where it smelt the meat and sprang on it, fixing its claws in it. The "wise man" then threw the bacon into the water, and the man rapidly recovered. A similar story from near Tulla ended in the "worm" drinking and trying to jump back into the patient's mouth, but being killed by the doctor.[23] Children were told that, if they slept with their mouths open, "worms" (apparently caterpillars of the death's head or the puss moth in Inchiquin and central Clare) or

[20] Canon Dwyer, *Diocese of Killaloe*, p. 503, writes unsympathetically about this touching faith of the poor fishers.

[21] Vol. xxi., p. 480. [22] Mrs. Eliza Egan; see *ante*, p. 51.

[23] I have heard an almost identical story told among my mother's relatives as happening in Lancashire. [The belief in "animals in people's insides" is almost universal in the British Isles; for examples see *N. & Q.*, 1st S., vol. vi., pp. 221, 338, 466, vol. ix., pp. 29, 84, 276, 523; 6th S., vol. i., pp. 311, 392; 9th S., vol. vii., pp. 222, 332, 390, vol. viii., pp. 89, 346, vol. xi., p. 467, vol. xii., pp. 414, 471; *Folk-Lore*, vol. x., p. 251; *British Medical Journal*, 1906; and many newspaper paragraphs, such as one in *Morning Leader*, June 3, 1908. I have heard the tale told in London with a large community of cockroaches as the tenants.—Ed.]

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frogs (at Newmarket-on-Fergus) would creep down their throats. The finding of flukes and other parasites in sheep and cattle has helped the belief, and a beast's tongue, if swollen, is supposed to have been "stung by a worm." We have already noted a cure for "worm" in cattle,[24] and the milk of the "Seven Sisters" plant[25] boiled in milk cures similar cases in human beings.[26]

825 [757]

Frog.—Besides jumping down children's throats, the frog cures a cough if held by the legs, put for a moment into the sufferer's mouth, and returned to the water.[27] In a variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, at Bohatey, near Lough Derg, frogs mob and devour a boy who has tortured one of their number.[28] Frogs are said to have been rained on a field in eastern Burren more than once.

Insects etc.—An old woman at Maryfort in 1869 scandalized her neighbours by asserting butterflies to be dwellings of the human soul, and that her own soul would go into a "blessed (tortoise-shell) butterfly." Whence she derived this belief is unknown. I heard about the same time, and, it may be, from the same source, a horrible story of a "spider as big as a *bonnive*" (young pig) sucking the blood of children in the dark, but I forget the details. It is lucky to kill the "daudayle" (*dubh dael*) or "devil's coach-horse," for this hideous but harmless creature has the repute of having guided Judas to Gethsemane.[29] When it "cocks up its hind end," you should crush it, preferably with your bare foot, for you are then spared a day, hour, or week in Purgatory. In Clare I have only found this belief near Tulla, but it is common in other counties.

[779]

[24] *Ante*, p. 58. [25] Cf. *ante*, p. 57.

[26] So the late Michael Hassiton, an astrologer and herb doctor near Limerick.

[27] So Mrs. O'Callaghan.

[28] So Capt. Hibbert of Woodpark. A similar tale is told about toads by Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerary in Wales*, cap. ii.

[29] In Ulster the "connach worm" replaces the beetle. The tale says that men were sowing a corn-field when Our Lord and the faithful disciples passed, and that He told the sowers to inform His pursuers that they had last seen Him when they were sowing. The corn at once sprang into ear, and the pursuers, on getting the answer to their enquiry, were turning back when the worm cried out that the seed had only just been sown. The Ulster tale was collected by Mr. W. F. De Vismes Kane, D.L., of Monaghan. In Clare Island (Mayo) Mr. N. Colgan found a similar tale told of St. Patrick and his enemies.

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789 *Charms.*[29]—The charming of rats, which was described by Eugene O'Curry to Dr. J. Henthorne Todd, seems to have been forgotten in the Doonaha district, where, at least, I never heard of it during several visits in the neighbourhood from 1896. The performance is ancient, being described after A.D. 600 by the famous bard Seanchan Torpeist, a contemporary of King Guaire Aidhne of Gort, who ruled the district adjoining Clare on the north from about A.D. 610. O'Curry's story is that a certain John O'Mulconry joined the Established Church, and was ordained, being eventually advanced to be curate of Kilrush and Kilfieragh in the south-west corner of Clare. Now Kilfieragh graveyard was so horribly infested by rats that serious accidents occurred at every burial (I presume from their attacks), and every corpse buried there was entirely devoured by the following morning. The curate, horrified by the scenes he witnessed at a burial, proceeded to charm the rats, as the country folk firmly believed him able to do from his knowledge of old Irish literature. A certain John Foley, of Querin on the Shannon, saw that evening what looked like a bank of low-lying fog crossing a bog between him and Kilfieragh. He fancied it was the fairy host, and ran to one side, when he saw it was a compact body of rats. They went through his cornfield, without stopping, to Querin point, then burrowing into the dry sand and disappearing. They soon proved as destructive as ever, gnawing the fishermen's nets and boats (probably leather *curraghs*). The sufferers gathered a great number of neighbours, amongst whom was Owen Mór O'Curry, the writer's father, and proceeded to dig out and kill the vermin. An incredible number were slain, but the survivors seemed innumerable, and in the end, with the courage of despair, attacked the slayers, trying to run up their clothes and bite them. Wearied and terrified at the swarms, the peasantry at last gave up the fight and fled. Eugene O'Curry never heard what became of the remnant of the rats.

Thomas O'Keane, a land surveyor, told O'Curry in 1820 that he knew and used an ancient satirical poem to expel rats, and that he had successfully driven out all that infested his house and mill at Bealahaglas, near Dunlicka Castle. The charm was in archaic and enigmatical Irish. Fired by emulation, young O'Curry

[29] Addenda to Section xi., vol. xxii., pp. 49-60.

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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 789 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith. 757

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31] 585 796 626

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888. 776

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *grasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na 777

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday. [574]

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

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777 Leochain, who was slain in 1024. The King of Cashel (over-king, therefore, of North Munster) was forbidden to pass a night at Latteragh in northern Tipperary at the beginning of harvest; to encamp for nine consecutive nights at the river Suir; to hold a border meeting at Gowran; and to listen to the groans of women (in a raid) in southern Tipperary. The King of Connacht was not to go in a speckled cloak,—the prose adds "on a piebald horse," —to the heath of Luchaid in Clare. On the other hand, the ruler of Cashel brought good luck by plundering cattle in Connacht while the cuckoo sings; burning north Leinster; passing over Sliabh Cua,—"on a Tuesday," says the prose,—to pacify south Munster; crossing Magh Ailbhe with a light grey host; and resting six weeks (of Lent) every year at Cashel. It was most unlucky for him to wait for a feast at Killarney Lake for a full week from a Monday. At the present day some families still have their own tabus, lucky and lucky deeds and days, dreams, and omens, which sometimes even run counter to beliefs generally received,—*e.g.* that [787] the Friday falling on the thirteenth of any month, or to dream of a wild cat or other wild animal, is lucky.

791 *Witch hare.*[35]—Anthony Bruodin (*Bruodinus* or *Prodinus*), a Franciscan of Quin Abbey, tells in *Corolla Oecodemiæ Minoritiæ* 825 (Prague, 1664, p. 73) how his uncle (*patruus*), Florence of Moynaeo (Moynoe on Lough Derg) went out at the dawn of the first of May with his eldest son Bonaventura, (who died in Spain in 1643), and with their hounds to hunt hares. At last the servants saw one sucking a cow. The hounds chased it, biting it as it escaped, into a cottage, where an old woman was found torn behind.

776 *Glasgeivnagh cow.*[36]—Vague legends are told of her living at Treanahow, Shallee, and Ballygannon.

Ghosts or fairy men.—Mary (Mescal) Doyle, of Newmarket-on-Fergus, tells how she saw two ghostly men in black walking on a road near that village.

173 *Stolen bride.*—A legend of a stolen bride at Querin on the Shannon is told in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends etc. of Ireland* (1887), vol. i., p. 49.

[35] Addendum to vol. xxii. p. 449. [p.270]
[36] Addendum to p. 89 *supra*.

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centuries of careful observations. I collected 250 of these signs and placed them 821
in the following general categories: density, location, and time of mist; type of [126]
frost and heaviness of dew; size and position of rings around sun and moon; color and conformation of sky and clouds at particular times of the day; density and location of fog banks; position and time of rainbows; clarity, closeness, and color of Inis Thiar and the mainland; changes in the weather in relation to tides; actions of animals; and pains in the human body. Of special interest are the signs associated with animal behavior, such as the height at which swallows fly, the prevalence of fly hordes, the crowing of roosters and braying of asses, the position that cats assume at the hearth, and whether or not spiders weave their webs across trails. [825] •
The expert forecaster will weigh together as many as ten signs before announcing his prediction, and I once collected 16 from an old man in Low Village assessing conditions 12 hours hence. Some signs are quite obviously undependable, among them the quacking of ducks which some say will "call" rain, and the scratching of floors and furniture by cats which, according to others, will point the direction of the wind following a shift in the near future. The folk believe that the moon and [828]
tides exert a profound influence on both weather and human behavior; my wife on one occasion was told that her "snappish" mood (the words of a neighbor, not mine) was caused by the new moon.

The climate, in part, determines the conception of seasons held by the islanders. Four seasons are recognized, but their duration deviates from the norm of Western culture. Winter is conceived as embracing only December and January, while spring is thought to commence in February and end in early April. The other two seasons are not so well defined, but most folk agree that summer takes up the greater part of the year—from April until mid-September—and autumn the remaining three months. December and January are regarded as the coldest months, during which time there is a lull in economic activities, but planting begins early in February. Although the prevailing winds during the year are from the west and southwest, for several weeks between January and mid-March icy winds blow steadily from the southeast quarter and cause much physical discomfort and illness. In late March and early April, temperatures rise rapidly, and some islanders believe that March "steals" three days from April so that summer cannot be expected until after April 3rd. The circumstances of the theft are revealed in a legend.

The reason that summer is thought to extend for so long is a psychological [154]
one: the folk dislike winter with its cold and dampness and attendant sickness and the sense of isolation from the world that it brings. Few outsiders visit Inis Beag during the winter, and often the steamer is unable to leave port or must turn back because of gales or high seas. It is not out of the ordinary for the island to be totally isolated for a week or ten days because of inclement conditions. From late January on, warm weather is anticipated eagerly, and I was told time and again that summer was imminent when spells of cold and rainy weather occurred between March and June of 1960. During a quarrel with her husband over his confident weather forecasting ability, a woman noted for being an outspoken realist declared, "Inis Beag has only one summer month—July."

The island experiences but eight hours of daylight, from nine o'clock in 132
the morning until five in the afternoon, at the time of the winter solstice, and

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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [874]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will [312]
assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 227
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

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and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical 828
anecdotes and ballads.

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dis- 000
possessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard 771
God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of 796
personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island.

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls [753]
malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts [752]
Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such [796]
occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which [825]
run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him.

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic 771
faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many 795
of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly [123]
or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if

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539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [182] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 796 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 796 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck 182 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [234] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [828] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood [237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 796 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 711 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 715 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been
772 created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of
[173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of
• [825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

157 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag
771 islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

157 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is
831 sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century.
[174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

157 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in
831 three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the
864 islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in
626 the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice
793 it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves
834 "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and
831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run
203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland
[609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

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291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" 158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. 751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with [291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear [834] of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism [753] and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac- 514 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and 827 [863] animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha- • [825] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at [562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting [273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most [241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main- 237 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and 372 burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is 514 burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another 283 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the [462] secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

* 831 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are 522 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood [154] by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore [123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the
233 newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
823 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26]
789 In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
826 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to
789 the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale.

[P. 243]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are "strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear. 771 775 [783]

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye. 771 776 754 178 826 • [822] [171] 826 828 754 [798]

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter- 775 772

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

226 are said to last a lifetime. I have seen such lines twisted
227 between the palms of the hand and also made by spinning round a cap to which the two loose ends are pinned. In County Galway similar foot-lines are made of mixed horse and

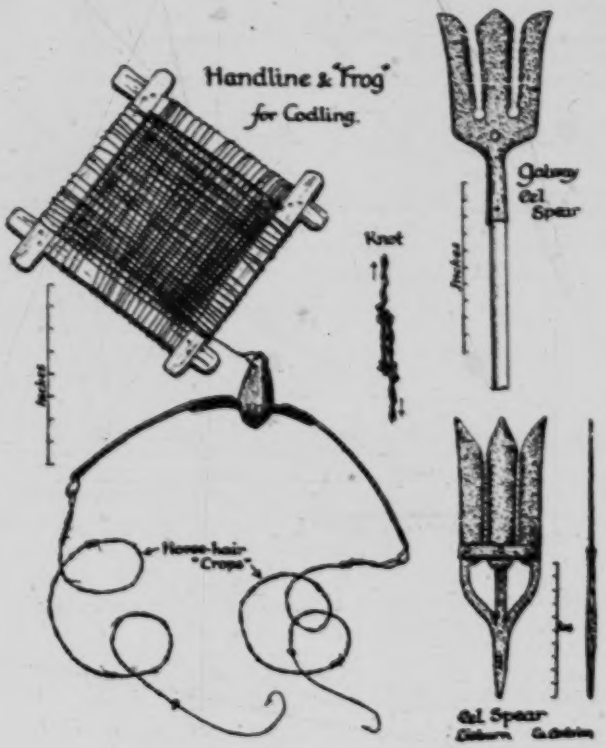

Fig. 94.

[284] cow hair. The short lengths of hair cord are tied with a special knot (Fig. 94) which is "set" with saliva. Horse-hair
[827] cords were formerly used to fasten together the curragh framework in Donegal.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured 754
by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the [576]
calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly 754
arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds 756
after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, [789]
and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those [789]
in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being [827]
captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious 787
practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced [793]
techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly [788]
to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills [718]
of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of [789]
magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal [794]
doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited 787
specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and 759
do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share 184
a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound 755
the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of [759]
magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting 753
ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on 175
February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on 796
November 1st.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

291
834 bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and
[759] sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)
[155]

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11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

775 bank by the roadside; after a time it rises, walks across the road to the mound, and then vanishes.

The ghost of Major —— is reported to be sometimes seen riding a phantom horse at a spot near Carn, and circles on the grass are pointed out as marking the scene of his equestrian feats; he is also said to ride at times to Bingham Castle.

776 There is a strong belief in fairies, and many people are to be found who say that they have seen them. They are said to dance at night and cause fairy rings; they dwell in grassy mounds and travel from place to place, using stems of the ragweed as horses.

The mirage which is sometimes seen off the coast is ascribed to [822] the fairies if it assumes the appearance of boats or ships; they are believed to have been seen to land on the shore, haul up their boats, and vanish. Many stories are told respecting the impudent pranks of these beings, and to their revenge for some injury, disease in man and cattle is sometimes ascribed. A man may become paralysed or waste away and die from fairy influence as well as from the evil eye, but their malice may have a less serious ending, and may only produce some disfigurement. Some time ago a man was one day walking homewards, when he saw lying on the road a bright new razor; he picked it up and took it home with him, but after shaving [828] with it got *sycosis menti*, and the implement was then declared to be a "fairy razor."

Women dying in puerperal fever are believed to have been taken [775] by the fairies to act as wet-nurses, and infants may be "taken away," and changelings put in their places. The changeling may be got rid of by putting on a roaring fire and throwing him behind it, when he [372] at once vanishes in the smoke. The *ignus fatuus* is believed to be caused by the fairies to lead people astray.

The attentions of these creatures are not expended on human beings alone, for they may revenge themselves on those who vex them by attacking domestic animals. Cattle becoming ill suddenly are supposed to be "shot" by the fairies, and the owners will often go to a great deal of trouble to find a person who possess a "fairy [823] stone," which is the only remedy. These stones are treasured very carefully and are kept wrapped up in a piece of cloth; they are used by rubbing them on the afflicted animal, and repeating a charm or prayer. Unfortunately no specimen of these stones was seen, so it cannot be stated positively whether they are flint arrow-heads or not.

A farm-house at a place called Illaunglass, in the Mullet, has a tale connected with it, illustrating the causing of disease in cattle by

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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centuries of careful observations. I collected 250 of these signs and placed them 821
in the following general categories: density, location, and time of mist; type of [124]
frost and heaviness of dew; size and position of rings around sun and moon; color and conformation of sky and clouds at particular times of the day; density and location of fog banks; position and time of rainbows; clarity, closeness, and color of Inis Thiar and the mainland; changes in the weather in relation to tides; actions of animals; and pains in the human body. Of special interest are the signs associated with animal behavior, such as the height at which swallows fly, the prevalence [825]
of fly hordes, the crowing of roosters and braying of asses, the position that cats assume at the hearth, and whether or not spiders weave their webs across trails. The expert forecaster will weigh together as many as ten signs before announcing his prediction, and I once collected 16 from an old man in Low Village assessing conditions 12 hours hence. Some signs are quite obviously undependable, among them the quacking of ducks which some say will "call" rain, and the scratching of floors and furniture by cats which, according to others, will point the direction of the wind following a shift in the near future. The folk believe that the moon and [828]
tides exert a profound influence on both weather and human behavior; my wife on one occasion was told that her "snappish" mood (the words of a neighbor, not mine) was caused by the new moon.

The climate, in part, determines the conception of seasons held by the islanders. Four seasons are recognized, but their duration deviates from the norm of Western culture. Winter is conceived as embracing only December and January, while spring is thought to commence in February and end in early April. The other two seasons are not so well defined, but most folk agree that summer takes up the greater part of the year—from April until mid-September—and autumn the remaining three months. December and January are regarded as the coldest months, during which time there is a lull in economic activities, but planting begins early in February. Although the prevailing winds during the year are from the west and southwest, for several weeks between January and mid-March icy winds blow steadily from the southeast quarter and cause much physical discomfort and illness. In late March and early April, temperatures rise rapidly, and some islanders believe that March "steals" three days from April so that summer cannot be expected until after April 3rd. The circumstances of the theft are revealed in a legend.

The reason that summer is thought to extend for so long is a psychological [154]
one: the folk dislike winter with its cold and dampness and attendant sickness and the sense of isolation from the world that it brings. Few outsiders visit Inis Beag during the winter, and often the steamer is unable to leave port or must turn back because of gales or high seas. It is not out of the ordinary for the island to be totally isolated for a week or ten days because of inclement conditions. From late January on, warm weather is anticipated eagerly, and I was told time and again that summer was imminent when spells of cold and rainy weather occurred between March and June of 1960. During a quarrel with her husband over his confident weather forecasting ability, a woman noted for being an outspoken realist declared, "Inis Beag has only one summer month—July."

The island experiences but eight hours of daylight, from nine o'clock in 132
the morning until five in the afternoon, at the time of the winter solstice, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858
children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842
high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162
average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593
done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861
mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864]
elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155]
and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593
bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582]
to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606]
law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother'" (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593
have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828] •
hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155]
rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562]
with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831]
the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

578 women. They arise largely out of personality clashes and are expressed in gossip
[562] and withdrawal. As in Aughnaboy, none of the disputes between men appear to be based on competition for women, although jealousy of a rival and anger at being rejected have spurred a few disputes involving particular women and couples.
578 One of the important causes of personality conflict in the island is the dogmatism
626 of the folk. They are quick to form opinions, often on the basis of inadequate information, and cling tenaciously to them once they are voiced publicly. Thus, a simple difference of views concerning a topic between two persons can grow into
[828] a serious altercation lasting a lifetime—and beyond. One facet of this dogmatism is the local belief that the character of a person can be assessed accurately on first
[123] meeting him. I became the victim of a dispute of sorts by telling a man that my "first impressions" of a new acquaintance often are wrong, and that I prefer to interact for some time with the individual before passing judgment on him; this admittance branded me as deficient in character and one to be "withdrawn" from, and I never made it again.

121 I have mentioned that dependence on the guided interview can prevent an
578 observer from gaining insight into disputes among Irish and Inis Beag peasants;
181 this is so because dysfunctional social relations are kept carefully hidden from outsiders—the conscious models concerning disputes not only are incorporated into the self-image of the islanders but are urged on strangers. The concern for kin, acquaintances, and particular groups manifested in speech and behavior, which at times can be most sentimental, cannot be taken at face value. The emigrating relative whose departure provokes tears on the strand may be forgotten quickly, and his absence even heralded, in the privacy of the home, and the mourners at a graveside may include many who display indifference when thought to be unobserved while kneeling in the rear ranks. This state of affairs gives rise to a brief consideration of the problems associated with procuring reliable data.

114 Honor Tracy, in the first chapter (aptly entitled "Forebodings") of her book, *Mind You I've Said Nothing*, humorously predicts the various reactions that her volume will stimulate in Irish readers She concludes with the following statement about the difficulties surrounding fact-finding in Ireland:

> 114 This question of fact was another of the spectres hovering in my path. In every
> 181 book there should be a fact here and there of the writer is charged with aimless frivolity. But facts in Ireland are very peculiar things. They are rarely allowed to spoil the sweep and flow of conversation: the crabbing effect they have on good talk is eliminated almost entirely. I do not believe myself that the Irishman conveniently ignores their existence, as sometimes is said, so much as that he is blithely unaware of it. He soars above their uninviting surfaces on the wing of his fancy. Who then would answer my questions truthfully, who would supply me with that modicum of sober and accurate information required to give my book a serious air? No one, as far as I knew. And if facts are elusive and shadowy things in Ireland, opinions are more so. An Irishman . . . will say not what he thinks but what he believes you would like him to think; he is a man of honeyed words, anxious to flatter and soothe, cajole and caress . . . [He does not] reveal his own true thoughts if, to be sure, he has any. He would be in dread lest you quoted him and the story went around and he got the name of a bold outspoken fellow, which might be bad for business. And then again so many Irishmen find an innocent glee in misleading and deceiving for its own sake.

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779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, [123] and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying
793 the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and
776 conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them
155 much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are
562 more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of
[829] mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk
[788] of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obligations can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some
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• 828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical anecdotes and ballads. 828

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dispossessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity, and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipulated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of the island. 000 771 776

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other misfortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him. [753] [752] [796] [825]

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them: "Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?", "How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing "Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if 771 775 [123]

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times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771 775
"strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups. Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men, obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time, persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783]
penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771
magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776
God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754
presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178
right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826
tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822]
of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171]
symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793]
even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775
Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772
fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in "fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

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124 831 855 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 886 [123] Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 828 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 [793] [832] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
• 828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief.
[753] Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health." he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul. 164 [829] [668] [753]

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task. 828 [743] 164 743 753

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family. [776] [787] [178] [829] [827] [776] 753 732 827

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs 273 [562]

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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

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*831 the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children
864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
[163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual
83 categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
• 828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
158 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
828 illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the
[784] Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828 •

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] [864]

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [571] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

662
539 beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers
571 further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the
• 828 quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their main-
829 spring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

114 In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

182
177 The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed
178 to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the
181 penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not
*831 exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread
795 throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism,
779 which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

[128] Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

*831 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined
181 in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions,
182 enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control"
626 —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom, that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance
[778] some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country: I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[797] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a charitable explanation of the neglect from which many Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

able part in the ceremonies of megalithic burial: we remember the significance attached to hazel nuts in the Hallowe'en games of divination (Chapter 17). 764 824

The ancient raths or forths, earthen enclosures around old homesteads, are also favourite haunts of fairies, and many are the tales of mysterious happenings in their neighbourhood at night, and of signs of habitation and sweet music issuing from them. Protection from fairies is believed to be obtained by possession of a black-hafted knife, while oatmeal or oat-cakes are also specifics against their malign influence. From fairies as from witches the supreme hour of peril to mortals is at the eves of Beltane, Midsummer and All Hallows. Cattle afflicted with disease were believed to be "elf-shot"—the belief is not entirely dead—and flint arrowheads were produced as proof of the attack. The cure was to give the affected animal a drink of the water in which the arrow had been placed. Among other archæological relics the polished stone axes of the Neolithic and Bronze ages are known as thunderbolts and are accredited with healing powers, and the small spinning-whorls are termed fairy mill-stones. As Arthur Mitchell writes of Scotland: "It is believed that stone celts assist the birth of children; that they increase the milk of cows; that they cure the diseases of the eye; that they protect the houses in which they are kept from lightning; and that they have many other such marvellous virtues. It is believed that, as they have a sort of supernatural origin, they may reasonably be supposed to have supernatural powers." 776 789 829 778

When food is taken out of doors it is a common belief that some must be left behind for the fairies, otherwise the dreaded "hungry grass" will grow; and the countryman will often spill a portion of his drink as a perhaps unconscious libation to the wee folk. Their activities are peculiarly dangerous to cattle and to butter-making. Among the charms designed to secure a good supply of butter in the churn we find the use of a horse-shoe, of a rusty nail from a coffin or the hand of a corpse, of rowan branches, salt, a live turf, or a cross made of veronica leaves. 776 789 [151]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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is a three-story tower house with its south and west walls partially destroyed. The middle story of the castle rests on vaults, and there are carved corbels projecting from the north and east walls. It is believed that the castle was assaulted in 1652 from the land side by Cromwellian troops, who disembarked at the back of the island and hauled their heavy cannons across the limestone pavement, unimpeded by the stone fences which stand today, to the monastery above the tower. 174 175 712

Queen Elizabeth annexed Inis Beag for the Crown in 1586 because of its strategic position, after two contending Irish families had appealed to her following their fierce battle for its possession, in which all of the folk may have been slaughtered. From 1586 until the first decade of the eighteenth century, Commonwealth, Loyalist, and Williamite forces were stationed in Inis Beag most of the time, and until 1886, when obtained by the Irish Land Commission, the island was owned by a succession of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. When Cromwellian troops forced the surrender of Loyalists in 1652, the population of Inis Beag once again may have been decimated, although one legend holds that only males were put to the sword. The island after 1655 became a port for transshipment of clerics who were exiled to the West Indies. This was the time when Cromwell revenged himself on Irish Catholics and their Protestant allies by appropriating for his followers more than half of the Irish soil and leveling harsh political, commercial, and religious penalties. Thousands of priests were banished, including all of the bishops for a time, in his crusade. 175 648 [504] [167] [798]

It was after the Restoration in 1660 that the land of Inis Beag was divided into quarters, half-quarters, and smaller units and assigned to families. My genealogical research reveals that all of the families of Inis Beag trace descent from immigrants who arrived in the island during and after the last half of the seventeenth century. The early arrivals, as well as any survivors, may have intermarried and interbred with soldiers posted in the island, for anthropometric and blood group analyses (buttressed by surname and historical evidence and local legend) show that the folk more closely resemble the northern English than they do their mainland cousins. A Dublin humor magazine featured a cartoon, not favored in nativistic quarters, showing Inis Beag men in traditional attire playing cricket. 175 423 167 142 127 125

The islanders still express considerable bitterness over the conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under alien landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by Inis Beag folk, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little is known of local events in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, until the island was "rediscovered" by Petrie and O'Flaherty. There was trading between Inis Beag and communities along the mainland coast for many miles, and ships passing by often dropped anchor at the island; but at that time this region of Ireland was very much isolated and seldom visited. A military garrison once again was established in Inis Beag for a brief period during the Napoleonic Wars, when the English feared an invasion of the British Isles from the west by French forces. A watch tower was constructed on the island, one of a chain along the Atlantic coast of Ireland, to give early warning of invasion. 829 648 241 175 [437] [648] [712] [726]

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2

The Land and the Sea

Standard of Living

THE STANDARD OF LIVING of the folk has improved vastly since the establishment of the Irish Land Commission in 1881 and the Congested Districts Board ten years later, and the islanders are better off today than the inhabitants of some other areas of the Gaeltacht. In 1891, the Congested Districts were delineated as regions in which the population did not possess sufficient land to maintain life except at an extremely low standard. Between that year and 1951, the population in the districts declined 42 percent—from 541,000 to 367,000 persons. The few areas which would rank as congested now, on the 1891 basis, are mainly in Cos. Donegal, Mayo, and Galway (Freeman 1960:121–123). A vigorous and continuing effort to stem the tide of emigration, in part caused by poverty, led the commission, the board, subsequently the Gaeltacht Eireann which replaced the board after 1925, and other government agencies appointed in this century, to improve the standard of living by various actions: the enlargement of land holdings for more effective farming, the encouragement of small factory and domestic industries, the improvement of fishing, the construction of public works, and the introduction of various subsidies. Seasonal laboring in England, often practiced out of necessity by mainland farmers but not by the islanders, and remittances from relatives who have emigrated are income sources which also have served to alleviate poverty; but the major palliative throughout Ireland has been emigration. One of the factors limiting migration from Inis Beag to the mainland until recent decades was the low standard of living which prevailed in the country at large. An islander could not escape local hardships and privations by emigrating to urban centers as he can today; he had to turn his back on Ireland.

Most Inis Beag people believe themselves to be materially poor, although they resent others agreeing publicly with this view. A well-known Dublin newspaper feature writer in 1963 was denounced, and a vow made not to permit him to

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511 829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 241 233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets 433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, 28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep [437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [667] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [429] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [641]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
• [829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

654 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. 262
Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat 272
biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals [561]

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the 252
open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread [443]
which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally 252
made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in 262
a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and [234]
also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking [273]
their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their [561]
bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, [443]
mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and [824]
are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed [751]
to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even 262
when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking 252
pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than 415
its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat 262
them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. 264
They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed 415
only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is
thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the [829]
folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

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361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts [273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will [593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality, men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to [562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit de corps* [167] and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced [121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148). Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are [291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn mainland attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers, [123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them, the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

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by choice, an old woman said, "City folk are always troubled. They aren't their own bosses, and they get up too early and work too hard. They face the dangers of traffic, and, worst of all, they meet with temptations of the flesh."

In the last chapter, I discussed two facets of the Inis Beag self-image: their seldom admitted poverty and indolence. Other facets have just been revealed in their appraisals of various groups, and still more are apparent when one examines their attitudes toward visitors to the island. During the summer, they enjoy the presence of strangers on the strand at steamer time, in the pubs, and at parties, and when winter comes many conversations dwell on those who were "great gas" —entertaining in song, dance, or repartee. But outsiders fulfill a far deeper need, in that most of them express admiration for the island and its inhabitants. They praise the beauty, antiquities, and history of Inis Beag, but more importantly the friendliness of the people and those customs and personality traits publicized by writers and film producers, which are "discovered" even when nonexistent or considerably "diluted." Departing tourists usually vow that they will return, and they are asked repetitiously what it was that so pleased them and if they will be "lonesome after they leave." Reflected here are the profound feelings of inferiority of the folk and their need for constant reassurance of their worth. Much of the depression among islanders during winter months is related to the absence of outsiders who stimulate them and are subjects of gossip.

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The people of Inis Beag regard themselves as friendly, polite, and hospitable to outsiders—not at all like their Inis Thiar neighbors, who are said not to like tourists and to extort money from them for giving information and allowing themselves to be photographed. Strangers never are derided for behaving in a disapproved fashion but are "treated with dignity," although some men will try to gain free drinks and other favors from outsiders in a calculating and beguiling manner (called "being cute" in Ireland), which is frowned on by the majority of folk. During the summer when tourists are plentiful, many islanders behave according to the nativistic and primitivistic expectations of the strangers: attire becomes more traditional and newer costumes are worn, canoes are rowed with greater vigor, conversations become more boastful, and the like. The sensitivity of the islanders to nativism and primitivism is quite selective, however, in that they extol certain of their indigenous customs and are ashamed of others. Actions which give credence to such character traits as spirituality, strength, and courage are exaggerated, while those which belie such traits as independence, self-reliance, and industriousness are carefully hidden. My wife and I kept a careful record of the responses of Inis Beag folk to questions that we posed concerning their history and culture when we first visited the island in 1958. More than 40 replies turned out to be erroneous, and some of them would have done credit to the most ardent nativist or primitivist.

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Most tourists who visit Inis Beag share a mystique fostered by interpretations of island life in the works of writers and film producers. A similar mystique is found elsewhere in the world among idealized primitive and peasant peoples. In Inis Beag, it often causes visitors to seek acceptance from the folk, to resent the presence of other outsiders, to boast of their intimate knowledge of Inis Beag customs, and, in some cases, to "go native" in so far as circumstances permit.

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000 Strangers who spend weeks or months in Inis Beag and are able to grasp some of the realities of life there often leave emotionally distraught, knowing that they 609 never will be accepted by the people. Acceptance by the islanders is a problem faced by not only outsiders, but by immigrants. The latter remain strangers for two or three generations, and some people, particularly descendants of fisherfolk, are regarded as outsiders despite the fact that the families of some have resided in [152] Inis Beag for almost a century. Later we will learn that the islanders have difficulty [602] forming affectional bonds among themselves, even among kin; thus, they are able to give even less of themselves to those "who do not belong." Strangers who know Inis Beag well often complain that they must do all of the "giving," as the folk can only "take."

The islanders also share attitudes toward other individuals and groups, which I can mention only in passing. Among the most important are those concerning outsiders who have lived in Inis Beag for long periods of time (the expatriate Dane, lighthouse keepers, Brendan Behan the writer, and Siobhain McKenna the actress); writers who have composed works about the island and have dwelled there or are folk themselves; particular persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands (a policeman, a teacher, a man of great strength, a keeper of a guest house, and a man who provides taxi service between the islands and the mainland in a small boat); peasants from bordering counties; religious groups (Protestants generally, members of the Church of Ireland, Jews, and even Italian Catholics); ethnic and racial groups (Americans, English, Germans, Negroes, tinkers, and foreigners as a class); and, finally, politicians and government bureaucrats and the Irish press.

609 I know of but few cases of discrimination practiced against any of these, • 829 but prejudices held against some of them abound, based either on historical 186 experiences (with the English and the Church of Ireland) or on views inculcated by returned emigrants (concerning Jews and Negroes, who seldom visit Inis Beag). [123] Islanders, as well as most Irish, are ambivalent about "Yanks," as visiting emigrants from the United States are called, but are mostly critical of them; often my wife and I have been asked on first meeting an Irish person whether we are Irish-Americans or "real Americans," and when we have admitted to being the latter we have been well received. Conversely, we have seen Yanks shunned on revealing their pedigree. They are accused of "lording it over" their Irish kin and friends.

Formal Social Control

000 Anthropologists customarily classify social control systems as formal and informal. Formal systems are governments whose controls are based on physical violence or its threat—physical punishment, ostracism, banishment, and extermination; while informal systems include sanctions of a religious or economic nature and those exercised by primary groups—gossip, ridicule, persuasion, and opprobrium. Controls of a negative nature are buttressed by positive rewards, such as services provided by a government or the feeling of security gained from primary group approval. It is not the formal system of local and national governments

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 It is not the formal system of local and national governments which exerts the most control over the behavior of Inis Beag islanders, but rather the church whose clerical representatives impose supernatural sanctions more potent than the threat of extermination. Indeed, because of the marked theocratic tendencies of the church in the Republic, and the all-powerful political role played by the clergy in Inis Beag, it is tempting to label the church a formal agency of social control. The island certainly comprises a primary group in the sociological sense, with its diminutive size and population, and the sanctions imposed by the folk on one another sometimes rival in effectiveness those of the parish priest and curate. 779 67

The widespread peasant trait of dependence together with hostility toward government is most pronounced in Inis Beag. Aid in a variety of forms constantly is sought and even expected as an obligation, or "right," of the government by the islanders (especially since nativism engendered by the Gaelic Revival has made Inis Beag "the darling of the Gaeltacht," to quote a Dublin scholar who is a bitter foe of the language movement), but they are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the local and central governments. When asked to account for their anti-government sentiment, the folk of Inis Beag cite most often the commonplace nepotism and corruption practiced by functionaries, the slight differences between the platforms of the major Irish parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the promises made by politicians which seldom are kept when they achieve office, the misapplication of programs once implemented, the inadequacy of government services, the burden of increasing taxation and inflation, and "foolish" government projects in Inis Beag, more often than not instituted without consulting the islanders. 829 657 [181] [668]

Today, the folk seldom pay heed to election promises, but once their votes were commanded by politicians who put forth grandiose plans for the betterment of local conditions—such as lengthening the present jetty or constructing another to accommodate the steamer, and connecting the fresh water lake with the sea to form a sheltered harbor for trawlers—which never were realized. Popular subjects of conversation are the shortcomings of the postal, medical, transport, and other services, and the steady increase of taxes—on stout and tobacco in particular —and the price of imported turf. Among the government projects criticized by the islanders are seaweed drying structures and lime kilns which seldom or never have been used, road improvements made where they were not needed and not made where they were needed, and the new school and jetty whose sites were misplaced by civil servants who failed to seek local advice as to the vagaries of wind and tide. The school is in danger of becoming inundated with sand from the common land, and is near the strand where activities distract the attention of the pupils; and the pier is not located in the most protected position that the coastline affords. Anti-government feeling is but a part of a much broader anti-authority configuration, which extends to the clergy, to high status folk, and even to parent-child and sibling relationships within the family. It has been for many centuries a component of Irish basic personality structure and has had momentous repercussions on the course of Irish history. [66] [653] [346] 829 181

The political apathy of the islanders is revealed in their voting behavior and their knowledge of political figures and issues. Election of councillors to the county council takes place every two years, and election of members to the Dail 829 666

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829 666 (the lower House of Parliament) every five. Candidates for the Dail occasionally visit Inis Beag to campaign briefly, but candidates for the county council seldom do because of the lack of interest shown in local elections and the small number of voters. In the last local election, approximately 60 of 194 eligible voters cast ballots, while the previous national election attracted slightly less than 100 voters. Two clerks from the island supervise the voting, which takes place in the school between nine o'clock in the morning and nine at night, five days before the rest of the nation votes. No more than a handful of the people are politically aware [521] and committed enough to campaign actively among their fellows. Political discussions animate the island a week or two before an election, but most of the people are poorly informed about the records and platforms of candidates and [665] parties. Estimates vary as to the strength of the parties in Inis Beag; Fianna Fail receives anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of the votes cast, according to various respondents, whereas Fine Gael receives most of the rest with Labour a very weak [177] third. The tendency among the folk is to vote party rather than politician, although the fortunes of Fianna Fail have depended largely on the popularity of aging President Eamon de Valera; "Dev" is regarded as "cute," not to be trusted, and vacillatory, but his fame outside of Ireland, which reflects to the credit of the nation, is the all important criterion of judgment among the local electorate. Some islanders have urged voters to interest themselves more in the local than national elections, arguing that many services and subsidies are provided by the county council, and its elected representatives can be "supervised" more closely than their Dail counterparts.

65 The local and national governments impinge on the lives of the folk most importantly through the many services and subsidies which are provided by agencies of the two bodies and implemented by visiting or locally appointed or hired functionaries. I have made reference already to certain government commitments: the language program and knitting industry, both underwritten by Gaeltacht Eireann, several of the agricultural measures supervised by Department of Agriculture representatives, the life saving company maintained by the Coast Life Saving Service, maintenance tasks performed by island men hired by the Irish [624] Lights Service, and the post office and national school. Mention also should be made of the doctor stationed in a neighboring island, the local agent of the Irish Transport System who oversees the unloading and loading of cargo shipped on the steamer, and the islander who serves in three capacities as county council agent, supervisor of road improvements under the Special Employment Schemes Office, and bailiff. As bailiff, he signs official forms for the folk, can take an offender into custody and set bail, and must sign a warrant before the police can make an arrest in Inis Beag.

625 There are no police, called *gardaí* and "guards," in the island, but three, including a sergeant, are posted in a nearby island and visit Inis Beag at least 674 once a month. Crime is virtually unknown among the folk, the few cases on record [683] being for assault and battery and destruction of property; most cases are civil ones, [684] involving property ownership and inheritance, and are tried intermittently by a 829 visiting magistrate. The guards are subjected to frequent criticism and derision, 625 especially when they come to the island dressed in plain-clothes to search for [673]

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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

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dies suddenly and is deprived of Extreme Unction at his deathbed. The compensatory rite performed later for the deceased who has been interred while the curate was away is thought to be less efficacious in shortening the stay of the soul in Purgatory.

In the past, the amount of social control exerted by clerics has varied; a few have been concerned mostly with fulfilling their religious duties, but the greater number have attempted in a variety of ways to regulate the lives of the islanders —to restrict such activities as visiting, gossiping, courting, dancing, and drinking spirits. The curates have tried, in general, to maintain the indigenous culture, especially the Gaelic tongue, and to discourage change, halt emigration, maintain the moral standards of the folk, and limit anti-social behavior. I have heard both islanders and curates defend the *status quo* in Inis Beag, including its poverty, by asserting that, "This life is of no importance, and its suffering must be borne for the glory of Heaven to come." In the absence of local police, curates sometimes have performed the functions of *gardaí*, and since 1960 have combatted a growing rash of juvenile delinquency, which has included, among other misdeeds, the destruction of property outside of homes in which parties are held, petty theft, and molestation of girls from the mainland who visit during the summer.

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The techniques of social control utilized by curates are many and mostly negative; they include weekly sermons, lectures to students in the school, talks with individuals who need guidance or reprimand, the use of informers (a word so detested in Ireland that I have substituted respondent for informant in this book) and confessions, the allocation of indulgences, and, in extreme cases, the refusal of sacraments and the placing of curses. It is difficult to overestimate the degree of fear of the clergy and anti-clericalism which have been inculcated among the folk by the more immoderate measures employed by priests during the last century. Sermons deal both with spiritual messages based on the scriptures and church pronouncements, and with instruction and censure directed toward past or anticipated actions of the islanders in concert or of particular persons. Talks with individuals may take place in their or the curate's home, and often result from information received by the priest from informers or the confessional. The informers, it is said, are usually the housekeeper of the curate and her family, and children who are intimidated by the priest to reveal talk and behavior of their parents and others; however, certain folk are known to bear tales to the clergy and are shunned for this reason. Well aware of the power that the confessional gives the priest over their lives, islanders are outspoken in its condemnation, and many will not confess particular sins, especially those of a sexual nature, to a curate known to assign severe penances and to carry matters beyond the confessional.

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The awarding of indulgences represents a positive social control method and has been used frequently, I was told, to obtain needed monetary contributions and services from the folk. Although the priest cannot excommunicate a recalcitrant parishioner, he can achieve the same objective by forbidding confession and absolution and the other sacraments to him, and the islanders report its threat and use as a sanction on several occasions in the past. Even more feared is the "priest's curse," which in Co. Clare ". . . can bring ruin upon a prosperous house; can turn an unbeliever's head upon his shoulders; strike blindness . . ." (Arensberg 1937:28).

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In Inis Beag, it is called "reading the Gospel (or Bible) at," and can bring illness
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or death and ultimate damnation within a prescribed time; the folk reason that if a cleric can cure with prayer, he also can cause illness and death by its use.

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One other control technique of the clergy must be mentioned—that of influencing civil servants to implement their wishes. One case among many that I recorded, based partly on rumor, will serve as an example of its potency. A middle-aged, unmarried man who anticipated inheriting land discovered that his widowed mother, with the advice of the curate and unknown to himself until the last moment, had "signed it over" to his younger brother who wished to marry. In his rage, the betrayed man threatened the priest who came to pacify him, and the following day he was removed to a mental institution. The folk accuse the curate of "forcing" the doctor to commit their neighbor, on the pretext that on occasion he acted "strangely" and held himself aloof from many of his fellows. Six months later he was released from the hospital as normal—according to Irish law which states that a patient under observation cannot be institutionalized for more than that period if declared sane—and he emigrated to England. Whether or not the curate prevailed on the doctor can never be known, but the islanders believe that he did and can cite equally extreme cases involving other priests and funtionaries. The curate in question soon afterward was committed to the "madhouse" himself, which was, according to the folk, a form of divine punishment.

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Anti-clerical sentiment is strong in Inis Beag, although it is seldom manifested in acts of overt resistance to the will of the curate. An outsider must be careful not to voice a like sentiment, or, for that matter, evince agreement with diatribes directed against the clergy by islanders with whom he is conversing, or he will evoke a spirited defense of the church and be accused of anti-clericalism—or worse. The response of the folk reveals the deeply rooted ambivalence that they feel toward the church: how they revere its doctrines yet resent many actions of its
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representatives. An outspoken elder told me of his views concerning the church, which are shared by most of his less "bold" comrades: "The trouble with Ireland is the priests. They took over after the famine, when the population had halved and their number had quadrupled, and broke our spirit by preaching damnation and the sinfulness of sex. We came to depend on them instead of ourselves, and today they live off us but are strangers in our midst. They should be concerned only with the salvation of our immortal souls. Birds know more about God and his wishes for man than they do. The reason that we flee the country is to escape their control and the dull life they have created."

Criticisms of past and present curates are so numerous that only the most repeated ones, which arouse the most resentment and anger when aired, can be taken up. There is a constant plea for older priests to be assigned to Inis Beag—men who have experienced life elsewhere in Ireland and abroad and know its countless facets, and who have developed compassion for the human condition—rather than the "young, pink-cheeked Maynooth Seminary graduates" who often are assigned. As well as being youthful and naive, the folk feel that too many priests have acted aloof and supercilious, have been unhappy with their Inis Beag post, and have marked time waiting for their tenure to end. Their lack of commitment has meant, it is believed, frequent shirking of their duties toward

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the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they were provided with food, given *curach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are

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more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held, because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches. Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority sentiment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

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> conditions appraised. . The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from d. to day The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191).

573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [815] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately

628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

521 203 571 [574] [512]

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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 589
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 593
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [388]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [586]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 589
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 862
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[164]

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582 589 581 able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few
562 major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the
[154] sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has
[593] male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous
work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land,
581 and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because
155 they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to
retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run
[589] with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors
and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the
sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

581 Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that
584 young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently
173 and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love
584 matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on,
[208] the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost
has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to
have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the
sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the
occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and
[175] sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two
generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women
the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about
the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several mani-
[581] festations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding
into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths
for marriage with "love."

581 Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the
584 families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man
who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his
584 "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The
674 bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a
bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young
man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and
acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for
matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three
more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the
bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12
days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon
[521] after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these
times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drink-
585 ing and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the
[829] past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the
[582] service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of
the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree
[593] of consanguinity.

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581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
[578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[154] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[662] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
• 829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
562 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céilí* on the common land, which married women do not.

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• 829
779 The islanders know little of church dogma and the purport of rituals and feast days. What knowledge they do possess often is distorted, and they seldom read the Bible or manuals of instruction or engage in doctrinal discussions among [122] [123] themselves. I discovered by consulting priests and church histories, dictionaries, and exegeses—both before and during my stay in Inis Beag—that I came to know far more about the faith than any of the folk, and I sometimes imparted what I had learned to the curious in homes and even in the pubs. Instruction is welcomed by the islanders, but they dislike criticism from any quarter of their idiosyncratic Catholic observances, pagan retentions and reinterpretations, and non-Christian behavior. They also dislike being told, especially by returned emigrants, that "Catholic culture" in Ireland is quite unlike that in other parts of the world and arouses dismay and even incredulity in many foreign Catholics who visit Ireland.

771 793 776 165 The paths to salvation, according to the islanders, are threefold: obeying the curate, performing the rituals of the church diligently and punctiliously, and conforming to the moral laws of Christianity. Being saved, however, is to them much more a matter of escaping Hell than of achieving Purgatory and eventually Heaven, and they experience more anxiety about failing to conform to the moral laws than pride in conforming to them. Furthermore, it is sins of thought rather than sins of deed which preoccupy them. While they boast of their morality as expressed in behavior, they labor under a heavy burden of guilt arising out of repressed sexual desires, jealousy and envy of their neighbors, and anti-clerical sentiment, among other attitudes. It is difficult for most of them to confess these to the priest, and thus their feelings of guilt and fear of damnation are compounded. Many times in Inis Beag I heard a "good Catholic" defined as one who "thinks mostly of death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell" and guides his conduct accordingly. Life on earth is regarded as merely a brief prelude to the "eternity stretching beyond the grave," to be lived only in preparation for the Day of Judgment and borne patiently in all its "pain and suffering." Priests and nuns are envied for many reasons, among them the fact that they can "spend most of their time preparing for death" and thus are in a better position to achieve salvation.

771 562 [829] [788] It is apparent to outside observers and to the folk alike that women are more pious than men. They attend church more regularly, are more serious of mien at mass and during other religious observances, and are more prone to talk of religious matters than men. Many women go to mass daily, and it is said that all of the women of the island, but only ten men, have evaded going to Hell magically by attending mass nine Fridays in succession after Ash Wednesday (or, according to some, the first Friday in each month for nine successive months, or [154] the first Friday after Ash Wednesday for nine years in succession). The reasons for this are several, but the most important are that women are less contented than men and thus have a greater need for the solace that religion affords, and they are more restricted socially than men and by fulfilling various church obligations can escape household confinement and interact with other women. Some 771 828 islanders are thought to be overly pious—"wear their religion on their sleeves"—and are subjects of amusement and derision; those who use piety to cloak avarice

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796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago,
[174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands.
[184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after
[178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary
[798] until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of pagan-
[788] ism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray
[789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered
[755] holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and
[789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation.
[312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know
798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as
178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of
[793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual en-
[787] tities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that
[829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their
[776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where
[115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night
[776] resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
• 829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[165] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send
[753] the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief. Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[757] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

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5

The Future of the Island

Emigration

MANY ELDERS IN INIS BEAG fear that the island and its neighbors will go the way of the Blasket Islands of Co. Kerry, whose remaining inhabitants were removed by the government because their support had become an economic liability. With only slight fluctuations, the population of Inis Beag has been diminishing since it reached its zenith of 532 persons in 1861. Below are population figures since 1821—when the first census was compiled—until the present time:

1821	421
1841	456
1861	532
1881	497
1901	483
1926	409
1936	445
1946	447
1956	376
1960	350

The upsurge in population after 1926 reflects the depression in the United States and the Second World War, when emigrants returned home to escape unemployment and conscription, while the downsurge after 1946 reflects the shift of emigration from America to England. Frequently discussed by elders is the steady increase in emigration during the past 15 years, the decreasing age of emigrants, and the presence within the past decade—for the first time in three centuries—of aged parents all of whose children have emigrated, and of land which is idle or rented out by emigrants who probably never will return to Inis Beag. Jokes concerning the building of a hotel by the Germans or a missile site by the Americans in the island to stimulate the economy, as well as serious suggestions that the

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168 829 [522] government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and wish its perpetuation.

167 168 829 12 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended, did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under consideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis, all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status quo*, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 428 589 592 [121] Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land, which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing [162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and [182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 168 581 [829] [162] The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities, seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" potential spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941–1950 decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married

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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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167 178 ble to visit Inis Beag frequently, as the cost and distance are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic.

The many vacationing emigrants who now return to the island at Christmas or Easter or during the summer months often succeed in persuading relatives and acquaintances to return to England with them. Those so persuaded declare that they will return soon with their "fortunes" to settle permanently, but they seldom do once "emancipated." Since the Second World War, several Americans have returned home, and their stories of life in the United States make the youth restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many islanders also sow the seeds of discontent. A favorite subject of talk in the pubs is the relative advantages to be gained from migrating to particular cities in England and America, and anthropologists as well as returned emigrants are called on as consultants in this matter by youths.

167 204 207 Almost every cottage in Inis Beag has a radio, or "wireless," and although the folk seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, because they allow islanders a glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and 177 207 freer world. Television was introduced into Inis Beag in 1963 at the lighthouse, and a second set was procured for the new "dance hall" when it was completed two years later. Few islanders venture to the lighthouse to view television, but I am told by correspondents that many now visit the hall during the several evening hours when transmission from Telefis Eireann takes place. As a result, television has become an acculturative medium to be reckoned with. Both radio and television programs are censored in Ireland, but even so the morality expressed in them—especially in the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A hypothetical censor from Inis Beag most certainly would create more discontinuities with his shears in television performances than would his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin. My wife and I found that viewing television with islanders at the lighthouse on two occasions was a traumatic experience; it gave us a different (and even more disquieting) perspective on programs in the United States and their enculturative effects than can be obtained at home.

167 873 Since the Second World War, 28 island youths have pursued secondary education elsewhere in Ireland, either in high schools, called "colleges," or in technical schools, and most have been supported by government scholarships. The usual high school scholarship is for 5 years, and a student must be 14 years of age and qualify by competitive examination to receive one. Only 4 of these 28 students 873 —of which 2 are teachers in the national school—have returned to Inis Beag. One [562] young man watched 2 girls, either of whom he eventually might have married, go off to the mainland for school and said, "Scholarships are killing the island;" what he was referring to, other than his own disappointment, is the fact that 19 of the 28 students who left for advanced education are girls. The reason for the disproportionate number of girls receiving scholarships is that they are far more moti- [829] vated academically and have better scholastic records than boys. There is, however, a widespread belief in the island that certain families are favored by priests and

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teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds. 873 [829]

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths. 167 177 874 [658] [668] [829] [186]

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school. 167 168 653 344 [793] [657] [829] [657] [874]

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there 167 168 829

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are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom 121
islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage 114
among those who have left the country. 582

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic 167
communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus com- 593
plex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to 154
the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength 114
of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have 829 •
married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread dis- 577
affection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is 829
blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen 114
islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported 124
herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether 167
more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they 581
made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one 829
that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle else- 000
where, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter

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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip,
674 ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
• 829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania,* alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571 828 829

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things [173]

beside them and do not really care for them at all. O'Casey's Juno offers further positive support, and on the negative side, so to speak, are the quantities of second-rate Irish plays and stories that have for their mainspring a panic dislike of women, invariably represented as shrews, hussies, and Aunt Sallies at whom anything can be thrown. A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realise that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961: 145–146).

In concluding this section, I would like to mention briefly an ingenious hypothesis of the cause of sexual repression in Ireland, presented by Sean de Freine in *The Great Silence*. His book is the most "convincing" expression to date of what linguists (outside of Ireland) term "language determinism," a monism still popular in that country a century after the advent of the Irish nativistic movement. Displaying a lack of knowledge both of contemporary linguistic theory and of sexual ethics in the "heart of the Gaeltacht," de Freine says:

> The Irish are often accused of a Jansenist approach to sex, which is supposed to date from the French influence in the Irish Church in and just after the penal times. But this attitude did not exist in Irish Ireland and does not exist in the Gaeltacht today. It would seem as though, when English spread throughout the country, it was English Puritanism and not French Jansenism, which brought about the change. For example, certain English words with prudish connotations were accepted, with their connotations, by the Irish, while their equivalents in Irish have no such nuances. In its English setting Puritanism was kept in reasonable check by the other native traditions: In Ireland, as the old culture died, there were no such natural checks to contain it (de Freine 1966: 164).

Space does not permit me to consider other causal factors listed earlier which are equally untenable.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS INCULCATION

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in four contexts: the role of the curate, the influence of visiting missions, enculturation in the home, and what I will term "secular social control" —the behavioral regulations imposed on themselves by Inis Beag adoles-

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
[871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
• 829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes
582 from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
[586] articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization 582
for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 per- 161
sons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to
497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when
my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern 168
over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another
generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands.
Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phe- 167
nomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes 182
pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also 582
stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal 589
causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal
factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the [434]
island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and
the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the [657]
increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and
taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for
the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, [434]
despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this
fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past [183]
century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders [178]
in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to [582]
leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise
their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling [831]*
population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secu-
lar "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons 181
for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a 183
suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because 829 •
it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created
a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate
to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a 167
suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis 182
[181]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact, the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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779
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182.

[For information pertaining to the historical background of Irish national character and personality development, the relation to sexual repression and theological dogma, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 20-27.]

*831 the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children
864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
[163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual
• 83 categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
158 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
828 illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the
[784] Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

*831
626 own words and actions in the presence of others so that the fires of factionalism are not ignited. Equally feared are informers of the curate and relatives of close friends of persons in an audience who might be offended by a heedless remark brought to their attention by the listeners.

• 83 It is sometimes heard in Ireland, from those aware of, and willing
164 to admit, the fact, that the inability of most Irish to "share themselves"
182 with one another, even husbands and wives, is a heritage of the fear of
[626] gossip—a fear that one's intimate revelations will become common knowledge and lead to censure and "loss of face." A more likely explanation, according to those of Freudian bent, is the Oedipus configuration, which numbers among its many effects the following: the prevalence of romantic attachments and the rarity of conjugal love; the lack of sexual foreplay, marked by little or no concern with the female breast; the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it; the need to degrade the woman in the sexual encounter and the belief that the "good" woman does not like sex, and, conversely, that the sexually disposed woman is by virtue of the fact "bad." All of these widely reported phenomena bespeak the overwhelming influence of the mother image.

157 Ridicule and opprobrium, as well as satire in song and tale, are
[626] effective control mechanisms in light of the emphasis placed by Inis Beag
[123] folk on saving face. Most islanders could not believe that I was author of the ballad referred to in footnote 5 because several stanzas attack my character; they find it difficult to conceive of anyone publicly proclaiming
[208] their own faults, under any circumstances. Opinions, once formed, are
[577] clung to tenaciously, even in light of obviating circumstances, since to alter them would be an admittance that they were ill advised in the first instance. The folk pride themselves on being able to judge a stranger's character immediately on meeting him, and this initial impression is
[533] rarely modified no matter how long their interaction continues. A seldom
[539] revealed tradition of satirical balladry exists in Inis Beag, but its employ-
[576] ment is infrequent and then calculated according to singer and audience so as not to offend directly. Apprehensiveness and anxiety about real and imagined ego assaults by others are dominant personality traits of the islanders.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

583 patrilineal and patrilocal, the fortune is brought in by the girl and goes to the father of the boy. When, however, there is no male heir, the incoming son-in-law must give a fortune to the farm holder. Generally the man's fortune is much larger than that of the girl. It may be that the necessity for its being larger arises from the fact that he has no land of his own. Frequently the farm into which he marries is known for at least a generation longer by the name of the girl's family, which reflects the identification of the patrilineal line with a particular plot of land, so strong in rural Ireland. It may be that the additional payment is deemed necessary to overcome the anomaly felt at the reversal of the usual roles of sons and daughters. The Irish term for an in-marrying son-in-law is a graphic one; it is *cliamhan isteach* (literally, son-in-law going in).

583 584 A quite similar case illustrates not only the position of the man marrying-in but the different aspirations which may be involved. A local politician, a farmer himself, and an automobile driver, a farmer's son, arranged a match for a girl who had lately inherited a farm and a thriving shop in a tiny country town. The prospective groom was a "returned South African" who had brought back two thousand pounds. At the last minute negotiations fell through because the young woman objected to the South African's obesity. The driver was to have got a hundred pounds out of it. We learned that several weeks later a second match arranged for the South African turned out more successfully.

[831]

583 The "fortune" is a prerequisite of country marriages, even divorced from its usual family setting. Many instances can be cited where returned immigrants have come back with dowries made abroad, to marry into local farms. In three cases that the authors had under particular observation, the small farmers' daughters had spent five, eight, and ten years respectively in the United States as domestic servants. Each returned to Ireland with dowry enough to

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

562 561 terms are summaries of status in farm economy, family life, and the cliques of the community.

834 208 Consequently the comment and attitude of the small farmers toward sexual behavior cannot be divorced from their appreciation of status in family and community. For them sexual behavior is merely one aspect, not of individual personality, but of sociological role. If one turns to any record of the sort of commentary and discussion the small farmers carry on among themselves, both in the semi-public discussion of the *cuaird* and in the more private talk of conversation among friends of a common age and status, one encounters a characteristic set of remarks and evaluations. These are for the most part discussions of specific persons in specific events. The attitudes expressed are directed now toward persons, now toward general conditions, now toward moral or ethical imperatives, now toward cosmological principle. Yet always, if sex is the subject, the status of the actors and the interests of the familist farm economy are the themes.

562 842 Women are valued and praised for their fecundity. All this is part of generally accepted convention among the small farmers, and such conversations as the following are not in the least unusual, despite the very great modesty and reticence of the farmers. A small farmer is praising an old woman, the head of the household, to one of the authors and contrasting her to her son's wife, both being listeners:

> Here is a woman that has no more milk of her own. They shouldn't allow a woman like that to breed because a man should always keep his wife in the milk. The old woman, God bless her, raised every child with the didi [breast].

369 831 The country-bred boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of constant reference to sex and breeding. There seems to be little of the ignorance about such matters which the townsman delights so in attributing to country people. In Ireland, no less than elsewhere in the world, the antagonism between town and country often expresses itself in such

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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joking ascription of ignorance and stupidity. In Ireland, however, there is another side of the expression of town and country distrust. The countryside points to prostitution and immorality in the towns and finds something to back up its condemnations. The town returns its dislike with double measure and accuses the countryside of primitive lack of all sensitivity of feeling or restraint of impulse. But these antagonistic attitudes and ways of regarding other groups than one's own are not our concern here. They are of interest here because such ascriptions of ignorance are part of a common misapprehension of the complexity of the peasant attitudes. 369 831

For instance, to an outsider the countrymen will seem often to give a mere lip service to the attitudes of the townsman, for one is always apt to mistake the function of hearty laughter. The country people have strict moral and ethical attitudes around the question of sex, as rigid as those of any other class if not more so. Yet they have conventional licenses and conventional niceties which do not coincide with those of the other classes and are thus open to misunderstanding. And, like all classes and peoples, they have two sets of attitudes, not one, and these are "ambivalent," to adopt the Freudian term. 369 834 208

But these attitudes and their "ambivalent" nature, the kind of alternation they seem to present, must be understood in terms of the social relationships of the countryside. The greatest single cause of misapprehension lies here. In different contexts, toward different persons, in connection with different events, one and the same person regards the same subjects quite differently.

For example, in discussions of the peccadillos of young people and the censurable events of the district the farmers and their wives were full of animus against the "crabbit" great "bucks" of lads who led girls astray and from whom the innocent were not safe. Yet even then, in discussing the fault of such amorous lads and the necessity of circum- 369 834 208 522

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the belief that it contained the essence of the flowers of the fields. Sprigs of rowan were stuck in the midden, placed over the door of the byre and hung on the cows' horns. Flowers were also put around the well, for it was supposed that a milk-thief could steal your summer's milk and butter by skimming the water at this time, or by dragging a rope across a field to collect the dew. Boundary streams were also potent in this connexion, and I was told in Donegal that the milk churn had to be washed on May Day in 'three landlords' waters', that is the meeting place of three properties.

Besides these family rites there were public ceremonies, the lighting of bonfires and parades of May Babies, of May Boys and the May Queen. One of the rhymes sung by May Boys in the west of Ireland runs, in translation:

> Summer! Summer! the milk of the heifers,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us,
> The yellow summer, and the white daisy,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us.[1]

The May Baby parades link the festival with the fertility of the family as well as the fields. I give an account of the ceremonies as described in Co. Louth in the early nineteenth century: 'On May Day, the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby' . . . Around this figure a man and woman (generally his wife) of the humble class, dressed also fantastically with straw, etc., dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures . . . These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children to their husbands also attend to see this figure and performance, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children.'[2]

The May Day bonfires and the May Queens are now little more than children's games and excuses for begging. The burning of bones—whence the word bonfire, which in Ireland keeps its original pronunciation—and in particular of horses'

[1]Lady Wilde, *The Dublin University Magazine* (1849), 541–60.
[2]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 70.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773 that they had drowned themselves, and gave up the pursuit.[14]
823 Possibly the legend originated the association of indecency with the Clare dolmens found in 1808 by Hely Dutton.[15] A girl would not guide him to the fine one at Ballygannor until assured
[831 that he was a stranger, for, it was explained to him, a woman
778] could refuse nothing to a man at one of these monuments. Some such reason probably lay behind the belief that, if a couple unblessed with children went to a *labba*, the defect in their house-
[842] hold was amended. I have been told that this belief existed in Clare, but got no direct evidence of it. The Tuam an goskaigh monument in Ballynahown was believed to be the grave of a giant buried with his great sword, to recover which certain young men dug and overthrew the stones; but they found nothing, and afterwards prospered so ill that they had to emigrate.[16] Grania was supposed to be a male saint near Feakle, and the "scoop" in the west end of Tobergrania dolmen-well at Ballycroum was supposed to be the place where he put in his head to drink.[17] The long grave of Ballykelly, famed for its lovely outlook high over the woods and lake of Doon on the flank of Slieve Bernagh, was known as "Old Grania," but the term "Granny's bed" was not unknown in East Clare. I heard no legend of a "hag" at any dolmen. The alleged rites at the "Druid's Altars" at Maryfort and Carnelly have already been noted.[18] When two blocks of the latter structure were removed for use as gateposts, they returned during the night to their original site, and were never again removed. The hand of the destroyer of a dolmen near Ruan was struck by a splinter and severely injured,[19] the remains of the blocks being left where

[14] Corcomroe legend, given to me by the late Prof. Brian O'Looney.

[15] *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 318. On the Continent indecent names and legends are also attached to dolmens; cf. Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 555; vol. iii., p. 845.

[16] Messrs. Hilary and Kelleher of Oughtdarra.

[17] So among the inhabitants in 1896-9.

[18] Vol. xxii., p. 51.

[19] Told to me by the sufferer. His predecessor, who had overthrown some blocks, was also unlucky. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 212.

[p. 257]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has 178 433
become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of island-
ers. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands [231]
and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the [226]
eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming 311
became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and [654]
fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses [241]
expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the [231]
subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy
experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or 231
more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have [422]
2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and [654]
horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses
are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most [B31]
inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breed-
ing of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are [232]
castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying
excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and
a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis
Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats
on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and 231
cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old 437
and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is [234]
low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between
Allhallows and Christmas "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and
bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast.
Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each [505]
struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled
to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern
transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the
water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is [435]
forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves
at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50
pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the main- 221
land and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked 233
throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured 234
south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous
plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered
by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men [462]
and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three
hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of
spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can
feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

226 many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the
181 wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of
[461] conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the
[526] dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim,
[831] but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons
[526] put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or pri-
[539] vately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quo-
[526] tations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

226 A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and
165 heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In
181 the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss
[82] of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements,
[602] handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather fore-
[502] casters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-
121 of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

262 The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during
264 the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the
252 family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam
212 and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches
[372] in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu.
[561] Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858 children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842 high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162 average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593 done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861 mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864] elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155] and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593 bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582] to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606] law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother' " (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593 have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828] hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155] rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562] with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831] the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

[155] belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually
[562] responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3]

[834] As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between
593 brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the
578 mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when
[858] the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand
603 that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculca-
593 tion of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

596 The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background
888 reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious.
> [606] Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

114 Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied
578 seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century. Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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 831

boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other, some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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124 831 855 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 886 [123] Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 828 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 [793] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal [832] sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing [793]
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
fac ors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Gael Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
• [834] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
[874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

17: Messenger

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• 831

[For Information on the attitudes of the Rural Irish towards sex, see category 116, pp. 13-36.]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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by greed for land and dowries. Sex without familism seemed beyond the country people's imagination. 183 577 673

But the last statement must be qualified in a definite direction. It is only for themselves that they seemed to be unable or, better, unwilling to imagine a sexuality without familism. Other patterns of sexual behavior they see and have heard of, but these are immoral and unworthy ways of doing things and acting, departures from the right and normal, sometimes disgusting, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes mysterious. In any event they are marks of standards of a lower class and lesser dignity and respectability than that of the farmers. They are to be repudiated not only for their lack of common sense but for supernatural reasons as well.

Thus the authors heard several instances in which bad luck attended the departure from the usual familistic norm. There was a feeling, sometimes overtly expressed, that at any one time there should be only one sexually active procreant couple in a household. Young and old could well be part of the household in any numbers, but there should be only one adult married couple under one roof. Any other arrangement brought its own punishment and ill luck. 183 777 592 577

But more often there was identification between the expression of sexual impulse outside the familistic pattern and the debased conduct of the lower ranks of the landless and disreputable of the countryside, the laborers of the towns, the runaways, remnants of broken households. Or else the small farmers put the onus of guilt on other regions "more backward" than their own. At the most, wrong conduct might be the result of some occult compelling force strong enough to break through all sense and caution. The authors were struck with the countryside's version of love charms. In accounts of love charms and love magic, proof of their existence and efficacy was always to be found in the 183 577 832

183 otherwise unaccountable cases in which a man or woman
577 abondoned farm and fortune and the favor of friends for
832 a sexual attraction. How else to explain, for instance, an old man's senile infatuation, a young boy's indiscourageable devotion to an older woman who could bring him nothing?

583 A word must be said here of the other ways of bringing about marriage than the formal process of family matchmaking. In the last century, to judge from the accounts of the old people, and to follow the testimony of novelists on Irish life, a stage-managed elopement was often resorted to. It was a semi-respectable kind of marriage. The swain and his friends kidnapped the bride out through the window in the night. They took her away from her father's house to the house of an uncle or other relative of the young man's. There dancing and general jollity reigned, and the young couple were feted. Very often all parties seem to have connived at the result. On other occasions, the elopment was obviously designed to bring about a match to which parents objected or to force parents to a decision. Staged elopements of this kind seem now to have died out in Clare, or at least to be rather infrequent. But the difference between this and a true runaway is slight. In the latter case the young couple take matters into their own hands entirely. Throughout the years many couples have eloped, run off to towns and to emigrate without parental blessing. Others have done likewise and returned to get their portions and a delayed parental sanction. Nevertheless one can see that all these forms are mere modifications upon the dominant convention.

583 They too must lead into the familistic pattern. A match
581 must be made, or at least fortunes given and provision for family re-formation made. In cases of premarital pregnancy, the match may be forced or hastened, but it is nonetheless the final and respectable resolution.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies. 776

Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with. 778 789

The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved. 788

The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith. 231 432

Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband. 787

There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still 832

[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

832 believed in, or at least spoken of, though not practised. It is called the spancel, and is thus described by C. O.[1]:—"This spancel, called in Irish 'stheioul dhrum agus tharragh,' signifying the skin of the back and of the belly, consists of a continuous band of skin taken from round the length of the body, viz. from the side of one foot up the outside of that leg and side, over the head and down the other side to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the stripe meets where it first set out; it is used as a love charm, and its power is believed to be irresistible, it being only necessary in order to secure the affections of the victim, to tie the spancel round him while asleep; if he does not awake during the operation all *must* turn out to the wish of the operator; if he does awake, he dies before the end of the year, so the poor desired one has no escape." The same author mentions several instances of this, which were said to have occurred shortly before he wrote (1841), one of which, the discovery of three young women taking the spancel off a corpse, is still remembered by some of the older inhabitants. There
312 are several holy wells in the district, but the most famous is the well
778 of St. Brendan, on Inishglora, the water of which is said to remain sweet and pure if drawn by a man, but to turn bloody and become
823 full of worms if a woman has the temerity to take it. Many tales are told of the misfortunes which have happened to women who persisted in drawing water from this well after being warned. There is now resident in Belmullet an old man who lived for some years on Inishglora. This man solemnly declared to the Rev. P. O'Reilly and the writer that he had three times cleared out the well after women had taken water from it, and that on each occasion it was "full of blood and corruption"; he also said that from the time he began to clean out the well until the job was completed no water flowed in, though it began to come as soon as the cleansing was finished. He added that if a woman were left alone on the island with only a male child of a month old, and she wanted to get water, the vessel would have to be held by the child's hand to prevent the water from becoming bloody.

[753] 2. *Charms and Leechcraft.*—Disease is often ascribed to supernatural agencies, and for this reason is often treated by charms or
755 incantations. There are several local "wise" men and women who treat disorders partly by means of charms, partly by herbal and animal remedies. In some cases the idea underlying the treatment

[1] "Erris and Tyrawley," p. 90.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

285 ancient origin. We shall see that it is the way the Boyne
415 curraghs are built, and it is said that the African pygmies make their carrying baskets in similar fashion. For lightness and to facilitate lifting one or more rows of open 'windows' are left in the sides of the creels. Those used for seaweed were sometimes quite open in construction, and like the manure pots they were generally fitted with hinged bottoms for unloading (Fig. 56).

301 Besides their utilitarian uses, rushes, grasses and straw have
524 long been playthings for young folk who fashion out of them,
285 for love or for luck, many varieties of decorations and emblems. We describe the Briget's Crosses elsewhere (Fig. 85). Harvest knots, twisted out of the ripe straw of harvest, seem formerly
[832] to have been in truth love tokens, though now worn merely as buttonholes for the harvest fair (Plate 13). As one might expect, the girls' knots were the more ornate and they differed from those worn by the boys in having the ears left attached. Some exceptionally fine specimens are fashioned out of flax or fine wild grasses. Star-shaped emblems in these materials are also made (Fig. 70). More complicated knots have four or six strand work, but the ordinary knots are in two ply, made by bending the straws sharply over each other at right angles. Before being knotted they make tolerably strong cords: I have experimented with these on unbaked clay pots and find that when impressed in the soft clay they make very good imitations of the 'cord impressions' seen on Bronze Age pottery. I have heard that in Nigeria the same two-ply technique is employed in making roulettes, from the fibres of the wine palm, for decorating the native pottery. Among the many toys and playthings made of rushes we find baskets for wild strawberries and blaeberries, rattles, butterfly cages, fishing nets, caps, bracelets, belts, hatbands, mock-ceremonial whips, canes and swords and imitation birds' feet and flowers, some of which are shown in Fig. 70. Many of them are associated with particular
[517] occasions of the year, for example the imitation flowers with Easter and the blaeberry baskets with Garland Sunday (Chapter XIX) but in general they are the products of the infinite leisure of long summer days of cattle-tending in field, bog or mountain. Probably a number of these objects once had a practical value

 [text continues on p. 210]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other, some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

124
831 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they
855 found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex
864 combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among
886 women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological signifi-
[123] cance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily.
886 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward
828 it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the
[793] belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal
[832] sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [571] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators: a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in 831 *
Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of 832 •
this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only [291]
infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; [514]
children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their 291
faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my 515
wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a 834
man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once [854]
when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said [513]
with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea 481
in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. 834
Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that 526
nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and 761
weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is 777
best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean [501]
rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The 291
truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in 834
order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back [526]
of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity [231]
of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popu- 123
lar folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American 291
Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only 834
two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had 291
they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of 834
nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it [165]
might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when [759]
finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The "earthiness" and the ribaldry of the country people is not an antithesis to their strict moral code. Rather it reinforces it. It gives its pietistic and too-respectable, churchly and town-bourgeois aspects an authentic, indigenous touch. Even more important, it makes for a modification of the conventional attitudes which fit them for the country people's social life. 369 834 208

In this ambivalence of attitude one can see the identifications between status in human relations and norms about sexual behavior more clearly. The one view, that "holiness" denies sex, can be reserved to suit the non-procreant statuses of family life. The other, the hearty and open view embodying animal analogy, frank interest, overt desire, can be reserved for the persons whose roles in social life allow free rein to the amatory and procreative urges.

For the small farmers marriages are for the purpose of producing children and assuring continuity of descent and ownership. They are "forever." They are indissoluble. Sexual relations are part of marriage, its pleasure and its duty. They lead to children if one is fortunate and strong and potent. It is the will of God. One may regret that one's childbearing came so early. There might have been more time for free enjoyment. But it is a regret to which one resigns oneself easily. 581 833

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weakening his horror of murder or his distaste for adulterous behavior, however familiar his tabloid-viewing may make them. Similarly the Englishman reading his detective stories and the Frenchman listening to his *chanteuses* are merely indulging vicarious "thrills." All of them are going through a playful rehearsal of the conditioned reflexes of social sanction, indignation, rage, and punitive action in the same way a dog growls and bares his fangs at his play fighting. The idea may seem a bit ludicrous in itself, and it will offend the moralists. But let them remember that in most persons moral and ethical activity is absolutely unreasoned, spontaneous, and without any kind of intellectual support at all. It is pure reflex. Like any other reflex, it must be kept alive by a constant restimulation. Only overzealous priests, reformers, teachers, "nice people," and prudes miss this point. They fail to understand that vulgarity often hides far stricter morality than hypocritic cant. This laughter represents a constant and not unpleasurable reiteration of the accepted canons of morality upon so important a matter.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

581 Thus marital and sexual success have but one criterion. One proves one's worth sexually in the marriage bed, which
833 is in turn the childbirth bed. The proof of happy adjust-
842 ment, of masculine virility, and of feminine worth is "the good long family." "Lots of women have no children," you are told, "but the men have no value in them if they don't." Both man and woman are at fault and in misfortune in childlessness. In one case of repeated miscarriages, the man might be at fault, it was said, because "he usedn't to make them [the children] right."

834 It is only with the married men and women who are still engaged in producing offspring that any kind of sexual interest, officially at least, is permitted or even deemed to exist. Among others in the rural communities the interest either does not exist at all, in the eyes of small farmers, or it exists only as an evil, but powerful force. As such it must be subjected to constant control. This is the case among the young. Among the old, if it exists at all, it is only as a survival of embers that should far better be long dead. For adults, in adult family life, sex is divested of any awesome, evil character. "God help us," said one woman in this regard, "what is natural can't be wonderful."

581 Thus one can see why it is that nearly everything the young people do seems to their elders to shape them for the goal of marriage and family headship. Much of local custom comes to have that explanation. The goal is taken for granted. It is the ambition of all the young members. Their activity either marks time until they shall be able to take their places as married family heads or it prepares them for that directly. Even the pastimes and jollities of country life in the communities the authors came to know had that keynote.

The pastimes of the young people in which the usual segregation of the sexes is bridged point toward matchmaking and country marriage.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

124 831 855 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 886 [123] Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 828 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 [793] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. [832] Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833 •
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island 828
opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill.

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share 831*
with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more 833 •
libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates [771]
and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" [864]
which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A fre- [824]
quently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings [171]
on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled.

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common 831*
belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night 834
before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation [841]
or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from 831*
the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and 177 771
such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from 864
abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented 562
by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys 834
and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in [858]
[364]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

CHAPTER XI

Familism and Sex

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THE small farmers' treatment of sex and the relations of men and women is no less characteristic of their communities than is their treatment of age differences. The country people are the ones among whom marriage is latest in Ireland, bachelorhood and spinsterhood most common, fecundity greatest. They are the ones among whom there is an excess of males over females, a fact which gives all Ireland a sex ratio (973 females to every 1,000 males) unexampled among the long-settled Old World countries and comparable only to those of the new countries. Yet the best evidence gives them a comparatively low illegitimacy rate, too, and the country people yield to no one in the strictness of their sexual morality.

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In the small farm households of the countryside, the roles, privileges, and duties of male and female are complementary. The division of labor between the sexes is only part of separation of human activity into male and female spheres. By oriental standards, perhaps, physical segregation of the sexes may be lacking. Yet in the countryside the community sets very rigid norms of conduct regulating the relations between men and women.

Indeed, the bounds of propriety among the small farmers are quite well marked. An outsider can come to see something of them almost at once. Men and women are much more often to be seen in the company of members of their

[p 202]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

own sex than otherwise, except in the house itself. Except upon ceremonial occasions in family life or in the considerable affluence of owning a gig or a trap or a motorcar, in Clare at least they go to mass, to town, or to sportive gatherings with companions of their own sex. Till recently and even now in remote districts, a conventional peasant woman always kept several paces behind her man, even if they were walking somewhere together. 562 834

The women do not go out on *cuaird* like the men. Their sphere of interest and influence is better confined within the family circle. Women do not take part directly in the deliberations of such cliques as that described in the old men's house at Rynamona. On the other hand, they are not in the least excluded or treated lightly or in a derogatory fashion. At the old men's *cuaird* the woman of the house is nearly always present. Her being of the company does not seem to stem the flow of talk in the slightest. She remains silent or is ignored so long as their talk deals with the world of the men's interest. But when the talk swings around to her sphere, she is consulted and is ready to take an active part. 562

The girls, of course, the unmarried younger women and adolescents, keep to themselves and form cliques and smaller groups of neighbors and kinswomen among themselves. Occasionally a dance breaks the ordinary succession of work and evening talk in the kitchen. And then, in their more restricted place, they are ready to go about under the tutelage of parent or brother to meet the young men and boys of the community. 562 571 517

All this is nothing new and has been described before. Yet one must review it, because in it one can see the existence of statuses of the kind we have demonstrated before. Old woman, married young woman, and girl, each term is a status in the countryside, in the same manner as in the cases of the boys and men we have already presented. The 561 562

562 561 terms are summaries of status in farm economy, family life, and the cliques of the community.

834 208 Consequently the comment and attitude of the small farmers toward sexual behavior cannot be divorced from their appreciation of status in family and community. For them sexual behavior is merely one aspect, not of individual personality, but of sociological role. If one turns to any record of the sort of commentary and discussion the small farmers carry on among themselves, both in the semi-public discussion of the *cuaird* and in the more private talk of conversation among friends of a common age and status, one encounters a characteristic set of remarks and evaluations. These are for the most part discussions of specific persons in specific events. The attitudes expressed are directed now toward persons, now toward general conditions, now toward moral or ethical imperatives, now toward cosmological principle. Yet always, if sex is the subject, the status of the actors and the interests of the familist farm economy are the themes.

562 842 Women are valued and praised for their fecundity. All this is part of generally accepted convention among the small farmers, and such conversations as the following are not in the least unusual, despite the very great modesty and reticence of the farmers. A small farmer is praising an old woman, the head of the household, to one of the authors and contrasting her to her son's wife, both being listeners:

> Here is a woman that has no more milk of her own. They shouldn't allow a woman like that to breed because a man should always keep his wife in the milk. The old woman, God bless her, raised every child with the didi [breast].

369 831 The country-bred boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of constant reference to sex and breeding. There seems to be little of the ignorance about such matters which the townsman delights so in attributing to country people. In Ireland, no less than elsewhere in the world, the antagonism between town and country often expresses itself in such

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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joking ascription of ignorance and stupidity. In Ireland, however, there is another side of the expression of town and country distrust. The countryside points to prostitution and immorality in the towns and finds something to back up its condemnations. The town returns its dislike with double measure and accuses the countryside of primitive lack of all sensitivity of feeling or restraint of impulse. But these antagonistic attitudes and ways of regarding other groups than one's own are not our concern here. They are of interest here because such ascriptions of ignorance are part of a common misapprehension of the complexity of the peasant attitudes. 369 831

For instance, to an outsider the countrymen will seem often to give a mere lip service to the attitudes of the townsman, for one is always apt to mistake the function of hearty laughter. The country people have strict moral and ethical attitudes around the question of sex, as rigid as those of any other class if not more so. Yet they have conventional licenses and conventional niceties which do not coincide with those of the other classes and are thus open to misunderstanding. And, like all classes and peoples, they have two sets of attitudes, not one, and these are "ambivalent," to adopt the Freudian term. 369 834 208

But these attitudes and their "ambivalent" nature, the kind of alternation they seem to present, must be understood in terms of the social relationships of the countryside. The greatest single cause of misapprehension lies here. In different contexts, toward different persons, in connection with different events, one and the same person regards the same subjects quite differently.

For example, in discussions of the peccadillos of young people and the censurable events of the district the farmers and their wives were full of animus against the "crabbit" great "bucks" of lads who led girls astray and from whom the innocent were not safe. Yet even then, in discussing the fault of such amorous lads and the necessity of circum- 369 834 208 522

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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369 spection and immediate and frequent confession for girls as
834 their best defense, one sees that the pure young maidens are
208 also not without blame. They bear the taint of Eve. "Sure
522 the boys have no chance," said one woman in this respect, "for the girls always lay the blame on them." Yet these attitudes coexist together with other very hearty, casual, and sometimes ribald attitudes which make their appearance in banter, joke, and repartee even between speakers of different sex. These even take the form of taunts about prowess and mild ridicule for the possession of a greater relish than is meet, or fanciful recitation of past magnificent misdeeds. This is particularly true in the recitations of stories and adventures of persons in the ken of the community, where details of amorous desire and accomplishment are given with considerable gusto, and greeted and reiterated again and again amid hearty laughter.

Certain observers profess to find the puritanical outlook
369 on sexual matters on the increase in the countryside. The
834 country people themselves purport to see a change in their
208 own outlook. And it may be that the last generation has
[178] brought a considerable spread of Catholic moral standards with the spread of education and the opening of the countryside to urban influence.

In any event the laughter and hearty guffaws with which references of nearly any kind to sexual intercourse, sexual attraction, and childbearing are greeted, and the evident interest they evoke, are very much part of the everyday behavior of the small farmers. They do not imply in any sense an approval or acceptance of the deeds described. They are rather expressions of a very definite judgment. They are in the nature of a condemnation in which laughter is itself a sanction upon the forbidden.[1]

[1] The authors accept readily the view of laughter as a response to a situation where socially conditioned values are threatened with upset and yet not so deeply or irrevocably broken as to bring out a full reproval. The view is well developed by Pilkington and agrees with that of Max Eastman. The tabloid reader is not

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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The "earthiness" and the ribaldry of the country people is not an antithesis to their strict moral code. Rather it reinforces it. It gives its pietistic and too-respectable, churchly and town-bourgeois aspects an authentic, indigenous touch. Even more important, it makes for a modification of the conventional attitudes which fit them for the country people's social life. 369 834 208

In this ambivalence of attitude one can see the identifications between status in human relations and norms about sexual behavior more clearly. The one view, that "holiness" denies sex, can be reserved to suit the non-procreant statuses of family life. The other, the hearty and open view embodying animal analogy, frank interest, overt desire, can be reserved for the persons whose roles in social life allow free rein to the amatory and procreative urges.

For the small farmers marriages are for the purpose of producing children and assuring continuity of descent and ownership. They are "forever." They are indissoluble. Sexual relations are part of marriage, its pleasure and its duty. They lead to children if one is fortunate and strong and potent. It is the will of God. One may regret that one's childbearing came so early. There might have been more time for free enjoyment. But it is a regret to which one resigns oneself easily. 581 833

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weakening his horror of murder or his distaste for adulterous behavior, however familiar his tabloid-viewing may make them. Similarly the Englishman reading his detective stories and the Frenchman listening to his *chanteuses* are merely indulging vicarious "thrills." All of them are going through a playful rehearsal of the conditioned reflexes of social sanction, indignation, rage, and punitive action in the same way a dog growls and bares his fangs at his play fighting. The idea may seem a bit ludicrous in itself, and it will offend the moralists. But let them remember that in most persons moral and ethical activity is absolutely unreasoned, spontaneous, and without any kind of intellectual support at all. It is pure reflex. Like any other reflex, it must be kept alive by a constant restimulation. Only overzealous priests, reformers, teachers, "nice people," and prudes miss this point. They fail to understand that vulgarity often hides far stricter morality than hypocritic cant. This laughter represents a constant and not unpleasurable reiteration of the accepted canons of morality upon so important a matter.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

581 833 842 Thus marital and sexual success have but one criterion. One proves one's worth sexually in the marriage bed, which is in turn the childbirth bed. The proof of happy adjustment, of masculine virility, and of feminine worth is "the good long family." "Lots of women have no children," you are told, "but the men have no value in them if they don't." Both man and woman are at fault and in misfortune in childlessness. In one case of repeated miscarriages, the man might be at fault, it was said, because "he usedn't to make them [the children] right."

834 It is only with the married men and women who are still engaged in producing offspring that any kind of sexual interest, officially at least, is permitted or even deemed to exist. Among others in the rural communities the interest either does not exist at all, in the eyes of small farmers, or it exists only as an evil, but powerful force. As such it must be subjected to constant control. This is the case among the young. Among the old, if it exists at all, it is only as a survival of embers that should far better be long dead. For adults, in adult family life, sex is divested of any awesome, evil character. "God help us," said one woman in this regard, "what is natural can't be wonderful."

581 Thus one can see why it is that nearly everything the young people do seems to their elders to shape them for the goal of marriage and family headship. Much of local custom comes to have that explanation. The goal is taken for granted. It is the ambition of all the young members. Their activity either marks time until they shall be able to take their places as married family heads or it prepares them for that directly. Even the pastimes and jollities of country life in the communities the authors came to know had that keynote.

The pastimes of the young people in which the usual segregation of the sexes is bridged point toward matchmaking and country marriage.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation. 848 183 581

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls. 183 836 562

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. 837 183 [593]

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire. 834 571

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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834 571 and play for the young men and women of the rural communities. The customs and conventions which surround them are constant reminders of marriage and its hopes and privileges.

834 571 626 Yet as soon as any intimacy of acquaintanceship builds up between a particular pair, they are matched together in local gossip. They are forced to take a position which is only a single step from betrothal. But, as elsewhere, lovers separate to find others. Though a once or twice fickle or jilted girl is subjected to constant gossip, her luck seems not to doom her entirely if she is attractive or a good match.

834 571 626 535 Such outings as the "patterns," [2] relics of saints' festivals, and race meetings in summer, and the dances in winter, are occasions of courtship, excitement, and philandering of sorts in the countryside. They are objects of censure on the part of those of the clergy, townsmen, and people of higher class who unite in condemning more obvious manifestations of peasant social life with little insight into a custom's function. The clergy, in particular, fulminate constantly against all-night dances. They object not so much to the jollities as to the opportunities for "walking out" among the young couples.

834 535 571 The following quotations from country people describe the situation. In the first a countryman is talking about "crabbit lads" who are to blame for local sexual irregularities, and comes around at last to the local dances:

> They are awfully crabbit around here. If a girl has money or land and she will get it, the boys try any way at all to put her up the hill so they will marry her and get it. And the parents keep the girl away from the boys for fear it will happen. But it is no good to keep the girl in the house, because, if you do, she knows nothing. Let her knock away and she soon learns how to take care of herself. If you don't, there are ways the crabbit lads will get to her.

[2] The local name of country festivals once religious, somewhat like the *pardons* of Brittany.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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That was the way with the girl who married Willie Meaney[3] and he thought to get the money, but the parents said let her go. Now they are in Ennis and she never got anything. The same way with the two who married the Shaughnessy girls. They thought they would get something but they didn't get a thing. Would you believe that? America is not the only place where things like that happen. The people have crosses to bear. Every year we have a talk from the priest about the dances. He says the dances are all right but it is the going home that is bad. There is always a laugh when he says that. Then some of the parents get worried and they won't let their daughters go to a dance for a month or so, and they forget about it after that. 834 571 535

The status of boy and girl involves a "repression" of sexual impulse, virginity, and chastity of thought and expression, but custom and the attitudes of the older people provide a constant stimulation of sexual interest in the direction of the familistic system. The status of boy and girl thus involves a definite kind of sexual organization, based directly upon social relationships. 834 183 554

Nowhere is this better to be seen than in the case of the young woman's "character." Here the Church fathers and the country people seem to have attained quite a unanimity. Sexual orientation is inseparable from social role. Sexual repute and status are identical. The authors do not say this identification is unique. They do not know its historical origins. But they do wish to point out its function in this setting: The young woman's "character" is her full status as a social being because the familistic system is such that sexual activity, no less than economic, is completely integrated with one's role in social life. Consequently her sexual conduct is no concern of hers alone.

In the relationships in family and community in which the young girls of the countryside find their roles, any departure from the norm of conduct on their part is cause for

[3] Names of persons and smaller places in this and subsequent quotations are, of course, fictitious and refer to no actual persons or places of such names.

834 violent disturbance in the relations uniting others to them-
183 selves and to one another. To "destroy a girl's character"
554 in the countryside is to upset the pattern of family and community life by overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change in farm succession. Much more than a shooting or a fight, a sexual irregularity, which cannot be righted in a match, is capable of destroying the intricate mutual obligations and expectancies of rural familism.

For the family whose "name" is "destroyed" and whose hopes of orderly re-formation are upset, two courses are open. One is to patch up a compromise, to accept the match
[626] forced upon them. The other is to expel the offenders bodily. Community feeling gives full support. In either case the girl concerned can no longer hope for full status. If the match is made or another husband found to father a child, time may right matters and give her full adult status as a farm wife and mother. Her failure as a girl may be forgotten, but it was a failure still. Otherwise there is little further to do but suffer expulsion. Emigration has been the refuge till recently.

836 The country people's attitudes toward illegitimacy and
848 premarital intercourse, one and the same to them, reflect well the disturbances they occasion. In discussing a local
626 case, one woman could voice the community's opinion in the following general terms:

> A young lady with a good fortune even, she couldn't get any man because her character is broken. Unless maybe he is very low. And so she usually goes to America and passes for a maiden. Everyone knows the father of the child but, if he has a good farm of land, no one would say anything, but he would be unlucky and have no family. He would get another woman [a wife, that is] with no bother. The baby might be sent to a home. And after a time they bring it home as a cousin.

836 But it is not always that the boys are treated so leniently,
626 and they, too, must emigrate, driven off by public censure.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

836 the case of the followers of rural occupations other than the
558 ownership of land.

Even among the country people improper behavior has the effect of declassing the offender. Just as the farmers attribute sexual laxity to the classes of the population they consider below themselves, such as fishermen, tinkers, and itinerant laborers, and the laborers of the town, so, by a reversal of the view, destruction of status over sexual misdemeanor condemns one to membership in such categories.

This declassing effect of sexual misconduct is, of course, strongest for young women. Apart from the moral censure misconduct brings upon a young woman and the shame it inflicts upon the people of her "name," it brings as well the destruction of her social role. It makes an end of her potentialities, for these, too, are her "character": potential motherhood of a familist line on the one hand, and potential transmission of an advantageous alliance on the other. In a familistic order they are identical. They are both based upon her sex. They make of the unmarried girl a sort of symbol of familistic aspiration. To use the symbol for any but its proper purpose of procreation and alliance is to destroy not only its efficacy but the aspirations that are attached to it. Rural Ireland, indeed, provides a sort of archetype or "pure" form of this sexual outlook, the conventional western European ideal of premarital virginity. It is important here as a living function of a closely integrated social system.

834 When we turn to the rural attitude toward sexuality in the old people, all those who have relinquished farm command in favor of a younger procreant couple, the norms of the small farmers present the reverse of the coin. Both rural expressions and rural standards of conduct seem to reflect the attitude that only the married have a sex life or, if others have it, they should not.

The first facet of this attitude shows itself in many kinds

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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of situations. For instance, we have already seen that a 834 ●
woman whose son has married and who fails to get along well with the "new woman" may, quite without censure, move into the house of a daughter and share that house with the daughter's husband's father. Several cases came to notice in which women who had relinquished their farms moved in with the dead husband's brothers.

A famous joke between a well-loved old priest and his 834
bishop in Clare based on a real incident plays around this last theme. On the occasion of his usual pastoral visit, the 522
bishop congratulated the parish priest on the high moral standard of his parish. He had one reservation to make, however. He was shocked to learn that a couple who had recently moved into the priest's parish were living together openly and were not married. The parish priest caught the twinkle in his bishop's eye, but nevertheless he promised to make an inquiry and take necessary action. Next day he reported that he had learned that the couple were an old man and old woman, brother's wife and sister's husband, who had recently moved into a cottage together. They were both seventy, and had been living in the bishop's own parish for the last ten years. Since the bishop had been so shocked by their taking the house together, the priest said he would send them back and let his lordship deal with the problem as he had been doing before.

In such cases, obviously, the difference of sex of the house-mates as a danger to morality has disappeared. This agrees with the equation many country people seem to make between the "saintliness" of the old and their emancipation from the flesh.

By the same token, the old person who has already had 834
his or her day of childgetting and childbearing, and yet 522
still persists in manifesting sexual aspirations, is a stock 587
figure of fun. He or she is the butt of endless ridicule and practical joking in the countryside. Again, of course, such

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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834 laughter is best explained as playful censure. For very real
522 censure often breaks out against such a person. It is particu-
587 larly likely to break out into overt punitive action in cases where old farmers threaten the expectations of their heirs by taking young women as second wives. In fact, the one kind of man or woman of considerable age who does not command respect is this. The countryside finds endless amusement in the theme of May and November. Naturally the matchmaking system does lend itself fairly well to matings between oldish men and young women, since ownership of a farm is the basis for a match.

581 The most interesting point of inquiry, then, may well be
554 the connection between the sexual status of the family mem-
183 bers, as we have described it here, and the standing of the family. The sexual status of the members is a reflection of their capacity for carrying alliance among the other families of the countryside. Can we draw, therefore, a connection between rural familistic norms about sexual behavior and the class structure of the rural community?

We know already that marriage in rural Ireland yields us one clue to the connection. At matchmaking the negotiations between the contracting parties concern the relative standing of each. That standing is at stake. The equivalence of dowry and land are arrived at through a careful enumeration of all the past history and the present material substance of the contracting families. The location of the farm, its livestock, its soil, the reputation and ancestry of the family, all these are compared. Backward places, we remember, do not grow big fortunes. Neither do many other kinds of persons and places.

We are dealing here of course only with one broad class, the country people. Yet within the boundaries of rural life there is much to be learned of the country people's treatment of relative prestige and standing among themselves. There are many behaviors in the activity of the countryside

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one
231 time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow fastened to the horses tail.

The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed
513 in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and *is regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the
● [834] strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but
262 fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more
[272] extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal)
264 stirabout, buttermilk.

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[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been
772 created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of
[173] wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of
[825] Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

157 It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag
771 islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

157 Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is
831 sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to emb[illegible]ost significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and [illegible]sm), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century.
[174] Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

157 The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in
831 three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the
864 islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in
626 the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice
793 it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves
• 834 "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and
831 night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run
203 rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland
[609] girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

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574 273 Women
[562] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused
[514] them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There
[535] is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen
[562] and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the
[857] two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart.
574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist
[123] with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an
574 hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while
273 stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or
[533] one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the
[535] activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments
[576] are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy.
[351] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the
574 table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after every-
535 one is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an
579 islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight,
123 when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out
[577] between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the
574 same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years,
579 "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at
178
[738]

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275 The best singers will be
273 called out with shouts of encouragement from the others, and some men need as
571 many as five minutes of urging before they will perform. In the case of the man
533 who is particularly reticent about singing, those sitting on either side of him will
[167] grasp his hands with one of theirs and swing his arms backward and forward until
[572] he commences to sing in the suggested rhythm of the arm movements. Sometimes this continues throughout the song, and later in the evening it is done with other singers as the sense of male "camaraderie" grows apace.

275 Seldom does fighting break out in the pub, for the publican will not serve
273 drinks to those whom he feels have taken too much, and he will order everyone
576 out if there is a threat of violence. Visiting women invariably are treated politely
• 834 no matter how boisterous the men become. On a nearby island, my wife and I saw
[578] a Yank brutally beaten and thrown out of a pub by several men when he spoke "dis-
[123] respectfully" in Gaelic before us and another visiting women. An elderly widower of Inis Beag was much criticized when after dancing with my wife in a pub he brushed his check against hers briefly in his exuberance; she thought nothing of it, but many of the folk apologized to her for his action, and our relationship with the
275 man thereafter was strained. Visitors must be careful about how they participate
273 in the drinking pattern of the pub. If they drink by themselves or only with out-
576 siders and never buy rounds for the islanders present, they are despised secretly;
609 but if they stand rounds often with the obvious end in view of earning acceptance, they are considered "fools." The several folk who will take advantage of a stranger
275 who is generous with rounds in the pub are subjected to severe censure. Each year,
273 my wife and I donate a barrel of stout to a pub on St. Partick's Day to be drunk
123 by islanders who come that night—to commemorate the shipwreck and rescue
211 (whose anniversary is nine days before); a verse of my ballad refers to certain folk who will not accept drinks unless they can reciprocate—"People will say the
[576] free stout brought me in."

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 • [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] [844]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in oth r societies,

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

291
834 bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and
[759 sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)
[155]

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health"
158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria.
751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with
[291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear
[834 of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism
[753 and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

514 Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac-
827 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and
[863] animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha-
[325] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten.
Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at
[562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting
[273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most
[241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed
237 feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main-
372 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is
514 burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another
283 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the
[462] secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

831 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are
522 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood
[154] by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore
[123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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612 never within the restricted family.[5] When the dispensation
582 of the Church is obtained, there is no feeling of horror at
588 such marriages. They are, however, always felt to be anomalous and are a matter of comment. In the country areas where there is a necessity among the farmers of keeping farms and dowries within the extended family group, or where the introduction of an outsider is difficult because of class and regional antagonisms, marriages between first and second cousins are not uncommon. Nevertheless the general feeling of the community condemns this type of union. Too close intermarriage of this type is a common charge used by townsmen in condemning the country folk. The authors unfortunately had little chance of observing such alliances in their rural setting.

582 At marriage the individual acquires a new group of kin-
612 dred. This group is also within the marriage prohibition
602 and the "call"; they are "friends." In the formal or ideal arrangement all those related to one's wife become related to oneself in the same degree. This is the view taken by the Catholic Church. A marriage, the doctrine goes, unites husband and wife as "one flesh." "Affinity from a true marriage is a diriment impediment to the fourth degree of consanguinity of the deceased spouse."[6] A widower "may not marry any of his deceased wife's blood relatives as far as the fourth degree of consanguinity."[7]

612 In other words, the union of man and woman brings a
835 union of the two extended families from the point of view
602 of the marrying individuals. In the eyes of the Church, the husband stands in the same relation to a wife's relatives as does the wife herself, and vice versa. So strong is this provision in the eyes of the Church that sexual intercourse with any of the wife's kin creates a barrier to the exercise of conjugal rights over the wife. A dispensation as well as

[5] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."
[6] *Ibid.* [7] *Ibid.*

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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absolution from the sin of adultery must be obtained before normal relations of husband and wife can be resumed. This is the effect of the infringement of the marriage taboo upon wife's relatives.

In a patrilineal, patrilocal structure, such as the Irish one, the wife is brought into the husband's family, given a place therein, and takes his patronym. Yet the inclusion is not complete, and, though a woman takes the husband's name, especially among the upper classes and at law, becomes the mistress of the husband's house, and in a thousand ways is oriented to her husband's group, her origin is never lost sight of. Her kindred are referred to as "my wife's friends," yet through the integration of the two families at marriage they become likewise "friends" of the husband. Kinship obligations extend to them.

From an internal point of view, however, marriage is a destruction of two former restricted families, in so far as two individuals leave them in order to form a new restricted family in which the individuals are husband and wife. Perhaps because of this disruptive effect on the paternal families, there is no provision made for a closer integration between them. No terms express the new relationship; the emphasis of relationship by affinity is restricted to the point of view of the marrying couple. Where the primary accent is upon vertical descent through blood kindred, there is little scope for a lateral rapport between the parental families of the marrying pair.

From the point of view of the marrying pair, however, an extension of kinship bonds is made. They are now one. Thus the immediate family of ego's wife are included in ego's kinship group. In the English terminology these relatives are called father-, mother-, brother-, sister-, son- "in-law." It must be noted that the terms brother-in-law and sister-in-law do not include wife or husband's siblings' spouses. The British and American usage extends the term

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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354 fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 593 a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178 from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the dis- 342 placed parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353 serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788] two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574] floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571 kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), dis- 602 tant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609 strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grand- [572] parents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835 most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602 genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582 forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602 collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609 are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428 is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611 --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113] in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The [601] Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be brought into the house, and matches made for them. In this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Even where matches are made between strangers, some kind of sexual attraction is not to be neglected, and local custom provides for a brief introduction and a setting for courtship. Several cases came to the authors' notice in which advantageous matches were broken off when either boy or girl expressed distaste for his or her prospective partner, usually when confronted with him or her at the preliminary festivities of the country marriage. Other cases again came to their notice in which a shy suitor could be galvanized into a final decision to take matters into his own hands and press a suit, when his family began to cast around for a match for him elsewhere. Matchmaking was, in fact, far from presenting a scene of "loveless" marriages. The match is a convention like any other. For those who are trained in it, it provides occasion for arousing sexual interest and marital aspirations in young couples quite in the manner of "falling in love" in communities where courtship is more immediately a matter of personal initiative. 581 584

And, like any other convention, the match could also come to cloak another situation. The match made by the contracting families is the ideal kind of marriage, for the reasons we have discussed. But it does not necessarily imply any one kind of courtship. In many instances a couple who made their own decision had a match made for them. Even in the case of "runaways," as elopements are called, the boy and girl could often be brought back and a match made for them. And lastly, as a way of establishing respectability and providing for the movement of the re-formation of the family, even those cases of marriage necessitated by premarital pregnancy could be fitted into the dominant convention. [836]

Thus the forms of courtship and the development of pairings among the population of boys and girls of the country communities must all be understood, even in their most unusual forms, in terms of the dominant pattern of the 581 183 577

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation. 848 183 581

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls. 183 836 562

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. 837 183 [593]

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire. 834 571

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

834 violent disturbance in the relations uniting others to them-
183 selves and to one another. To "destroy a girl's character"
554 in the countryside is to upset the pattern of family and community life by overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change in farm succession. Much more than a shooting or a fight, a sexual irregularity, which cannot be righted in a match, is capable of destroying the intricate mutual obligations and expectancies of rural familism.

For the family whose "name" is "destroyed" and whose hopes of orderly re-formation are upset, two courses are open. One is to patch up a compromise, to accept the match
[626] forced upon them. The other is to expel the offenders bodily. Community feeling gives full support. In either case the girl concerned can no longer hope for full status. If the match is made or another husband found to father a child, time may right matters and give her full adult status as a farm wife and mother. Her failure as a girl may be forgotten, but it was a failure still. Otherwise there is little further to do but suffer expulsion. Emigration has been the refuge till recently.

836 The country people's attitudes toward illegitimacy and
848 premarital intercourse, one and the same to them, reflect well the disturbances they occasion. In discussing a local
626 case, one woman could voice the community's opinion in the following general terms:

> A young lady with a good fortune even, she couldn't get any man because her character is broken. Unless maybe he is very low. And so she usually goes to America and passes for a maiden. Everyone knows the father of the child but, if he has a good farm of land, no one would say anything, but he would be unlucky and have no family. He would get another woman [a wife, that is] with no bother. The baby might be sent to a home. And after a time they bring it home as a cousin.

836 But it is not always that the boys are treated so leniently,
626 and they, too, must emigrate, driven off by public censure.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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For it is said by country people that "to destroy a girl's 836
'character' is murder." In the logic of the familistic system, 626
the statement is true.

The following incident, described by a countrywoman in a discussion of religion, shows the fate of such cases and the verdict of the community.

> There is no such place as hell. God forbid. No one would be there except a few murderers and a person who destroyed a girl's character. Sure to destroy a girl's character is murder. The C— girl above was great with a boy who was her second cousin and she couldn't marry him here, so they made it up and he went to Canada, and she would go to the States, and they would meet there and marry. He had to go to Canada because he had bad eyes. They went away and seven weeks later she came back and in a few months had a child. Sure no one knows whether she went to the States or what happened to her. The boy was a red-haired, wild lad, and I often ask his sister above if she has heard from him. She says they haven't but we don't know whether they have or not.
>
> The girl put a shame on all people. She isn't married now. Sure who would marry her now that her character is destroyed? The child died after eleven months, and she is living in the house there, and that is why she isn't married. Would you believe such things could happen in Ireland?

The last quotation contains a further consideration. Pres- 836
tige and respectability are bound up with proper conduct 558
and proper fulfillment of the role in social life one's status gives one. If the girl whose "character" is broken gets a husband at all, she must get one of lower standing in the community. She cannot expect to carry the full prestige of her own family with her, even if she does find a farm into which to take a dowry. As the woman quoted remarked, no one will take her unless he is "very low."

Failure to retain and advance in the status assigned the young of the sexes leads to the same kind of relegation to other cliques and other spheres of social participation as in

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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836 558 the case of the followers of rural occupations other than the ownership of land.

Even among the country people improper behavior has the effect of declassing the offender. Just as the farmers attribute sexual laxity to the classes of the population they consider below themselves, such as fishermen, tinkers, and itinerant laborers, and the laborers of the town, so, by a reversal of the view, destruction of status over sexual misdemeanor condemns one to membership in such categories.

This declassing effect of sexual misconduct is, of course, strongest for young women. Apart from the moral censure misconduct brings upon a young woman and the shame it inflicts upon the people of her "name," it brings as well the destruction of her social role. It makes an end of her potentialities, for these, too, are her "character": potential motherhood of a familist line on the one hand, and potential transmission of an advantageous alliance on the other. In a familistic order they are identical. They are both based upon her sex. They make of the unmarried girl a sort of symbol of familistic aspiration. To use the symbol for any but its proper purpose of procreation and alliance is to destroy not only its efficacy but the aspirations that are attached to it. Rural Ireland, indeed, provides a sort of archetype or "pure" form of this sexual outlook, the conventional western European ideal of premarital virginity. It is important here as a living function of a closely integrated social system.

834 When we turn to the rural attitude toward sexuality in the old people, all those who have relinquished farm command in favor of a younger procreant couple, the norms of the small farmers present the reverse of the coin. Both rural expressions and rural standards of conduct seem to reflect the attitude that only the married have a sex life or, if others have it, they should not.

The first facet of this attitude shows itself in many kinds

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these 846
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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114 155 troversial novels use the Oedipus complex as a focus. *Michael Joe,* by William Murray, examines the role of the emasculating Irish mother, and John McGahern, in *The Dark,* probes the conflict between father and son so characteristic of Irish society.

114 One of the most penetrating studies of this sociocultural configuration, which has such momentous psychological consequences, is that of Marvin Opler and Jerome Singer, conducted among first, second, and third generation Irish male schizophrenic patients in New York hospitals. The intent of these social scientists was to determine how psychotic syndromes are culturally patterned. For a year they observed their respondents to obtain total psychiatric, anthropological, and psychological profiles. Their observations included ward scrutiny, interviews, the collection of life histories and case histories, and the administration of thirteen tests, among them the Rorschach, Thematic Apperception, Sentence Completion, and Porteus Maze. The investigators conclude that there is a continuity of Irish (and Italian) culture and personality forms among immigrants for at least three generations; their psychological findings are buttressed by research data collected in Irish and English mental institutions. My wife and I visited one of these hospitals and [12] interviewed several Irish psychiatrists both there and in America. Our own conclusions support many of those reported by Opler, Singer, and * 831 the psychiatrists interviewed.* Opler and Singer have the following to 15 say about the Oedipus complex in Ireland: [593]

> Normative cultural standards led to the hypothesis that the central female figure in the Irish family, the mother, could instil primary anxiety and fear toward female figures. . . . This hypothesis grew out of anthropological observations that the central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent. [58] . . . An Irish male patient beset with anxiety and fear of female figures • [838] early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphases, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual

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[815] * Irish psychiatrists in that country, England, and America are often reticent about discussing sex. Psychiatric theory in Ireland is modified by Catholic dogma, [979] and specialists are influenced in writings, therapy, and discussions by subtle religious and political forces, as well as by their own character structure shaped by the Irish milieu. One psychologist, well acquainted with psychiatry in Ireland, dubbed much of it "Freud with clothes on."

identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18). 831* 15 [58] [838]

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories. 831* 15 562

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania*, alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present. [671] [178] [582] [581] [182] 562 539 571

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things 828 829 [173]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, 121
and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation;
more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social
control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized [626]
by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, [114]
and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted
a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish
peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble sav- [181]
ages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neu-
roses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense
postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every 831*
opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its 626
victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life,
islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top
of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind [609]
fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close
scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to
discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at [167]
the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous [574]
announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious
order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag,
especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a
visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on
a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her
hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our
part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this 831*
genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case. 626

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities [562]
of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem [167]
the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk,
they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples [584]
who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the
priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through
gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the [839] *
apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6 (1959-1960) Inis Beag

124 831 855 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

• 841 886 [123] Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 828 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 [793] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal [832] sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact, the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

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*831 the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children
864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
[163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual
83 categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

• 841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset
158 of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
828 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
[784] illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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592 342 775 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Family andcommunity alike support them in their attitude. A woman could say bitterly, for she was childless: 183 842

No matter how much money you have and how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you're no good. But if you're ugly as the wort and have children you are all right.

The husbard has every right to express his displeasure at his wife's barrenness. To have no children is a source of shame to him and a terrible disappointment in his desire to continue his line upon the farm. One woman put it: 183 593 842

The man wants children because he is afraid others will tell him he is no god if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of the country, especially if you haven't any.

In the country districts they say that he may beat her and in their graphic phrase "bounce a boot off her now and then for it." Country belief still regards the woman as the offending partner in a childless marriage. Near Inagh one farmer, a returned Yankee, was regarded as an anomaly because, though childless, he treated his wife just as well as though she had many and did not get angry when he was twitted on his lack of an heir. They explained it by saying that he "knew it was his own fault." [195]

The day of the "country divorce," as the farmers call it, is rapidly passing. In the old days, they say, a man might send a barren wife back to her parents, though Catholic law forbade him to marry again. There are cases which illustrate that the custom survives in altered form. They are particularly revealing in our analysis of the desire to preserve the family unity and its identification with farm and household through the generations. Here the brothers act, sociologically, as a single individual in order to insure the desired continuity. For instance, in one case, a middling farmer of Corrofin, childless after several years, got a country divorce. He gave the land thereafter to his brother in return for a thousand pounds, which the brother had inherited in lieu 586 842

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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586 842 of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

428 592 Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

602 Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

582 836 At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

592 562 428 There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be brought into the house, and matches made for them. In this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

In matchmaking, too, legal fees may be subordinated to
583 country-bred aspirations. To insist upon the full letter of
842 the contract, even if its purpose is not fulfilled, is meanness. It is a breach of social convention, even though quite within legal right. For the "writings" is a formal legal instrument nowadays. Not all the farmers have gone so far in safeguarding himself as one F— in Inagh did. "He put it in the writings that he would pay the last half when his daughter was safe delivered," so we were told. For the provisions of the match reflect again the identifying continuity and the importance to all parties of the girl's bearing children for the family into which she marries. Most often the second instalment of the fortune is not paid until the first child is born, or, with more legal formality, till a year after the marriage contract is completed. One informant summed the matter up:

583 If the woman dies after a year and the first part of the fortune is paid, the man doesn't usually claim the rest, although he may
768 be mean enough to claim it. For the young man can marry again. If the man dies, the girl is given the money if there is no heir and is sent home. If there is, then she gets the place.

583 Let us reëxamine the dowry in the light of this complexity of interrelated factors. As has been explained, the fortune goes to the farm owner, in ordinary cases the father of the boy. At the match, land, house, cattle, and household effects move from father to son just as kinship relationships move and as adult status moves. One family, that of the old couple in which the son was merely one of the children, is partially destroyed in order to make way for a new one, in which the son and the incoming wife are now the adult married couple. The movement of goods corresponds to social forces. And the fortune brought in by the new wife moves from her father to the boy's as if to recompense the father for his loss of the farm. It is significant that the fortune is paid always in money. Try as we might, we never found it paid in any other way. Land, cattle, and household effects

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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562 561 terms are summaries of status in farm economy, family life, and the cliques of the community.

834 208 Consequently the comment and attitude of the small farmers toward sexual behavior cannot be divorced from their appreciation of status in family and community. For them sexual behavior is merely one aspect, not of individual personality, but of sociological role. If one turns to any record of the sort of commentary and discussion the small farmers carry on among themselves, both in the semi-public discussion of the *cuaird* and in the more private talk of conversation among friends of a common age and status, one encounters a characteristic set of remarks and evaluations. These are for the most part discussions of specific persons in specific events. The attitudes expressed are directed now toward persons, now toward general conditions, now toward moral or ethical imperatives, now toward cosmological principle. Yet always, if sex is the subject, the status of the actors and the interests of the familist farm economy are the themes.

562 842 Women are valued and praised for their fecundity. All this is part of generally accepted convention among the small farmers, and such conversations as the following are not in the least unusual, despite the very great modesty and reticence of the farmers. A small farmer is praising an old woman, the head of the household, to one of the authors and contrasting her to her son's wife, both being listeners:

> Here is a woman that has no more milk of her own. They shouldn't allow a woman like that to breed because a man should always keep his wife in the milk. The old woman, God bless her, raised every child with the didi [breast].

369 831 The country-bred boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of constant reference to sex and breeding. There seems to be little of the ignorance about such matters which the townsman delights so in attributing to country people. In Ireland, no less than elsewhere in the world, the antagonism between town and country often expresses itself in such

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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581 Thus marital and sexual success have but one criterion. One proves one's worth sexually in the marriage bed, which 833 is in turn the childbirth bed. The proof of happy adjust- 842 ment, of masculine virility, and of feminine worth is "the good long family." "Lots of women have no children," you are told, "but the men have no value in them if they don't." Both man and woman are at fault and in misfortune in childlessness. In one case of repeated miscarriages, the man might be at fault, it was said, because "he usedn't to make them [the children] right."

834 It is only with the married men and women who are still engaged in producing offspring that any kind of sexual interest, officially at least, is permitted or even deemed to exist. Among others in the rural communities the interest either does not exist at all, in the eyes of small farmers, or it exists only as an evil, but powerful force. As such it must be subjected to constant control. This is the case among the young. Among the old, if it exists at all, it is only as a survival of embers that should far better be long dead. For adults, in adult family life, sex is divested of any awesome, evil character. "God help us," said one woman in this regard, "what is natural can't be wonderful."

581 Thus one can see why it is that nearly everything the young people do seems to their elders to shape them for the goal of marriage and family headship. Much of local custom comes to have that explanation. The goal is taken for granted. It is the ambition of all the young members. Their activity either marks time until they shall be able to take their places as married family heads or it prepares them for that directly. Even the pastimes and jollities of country life in the communities the authors came to know had that keynote.

The pastimes of the young people in which the usual segregation of the sexes is bridged point toward matchmaking and country marriage.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

people are a great help to the mother, because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see they didn't fall into the fire or something of that nature. The old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. The old woman would help in the house. If there was a squabble between the mother and the daughter, the old woman would be more likely to stand up for the daughter. She would also teach her how to do things and have more patience than the mother. The grandfather would show the boy how to do things and would have more patience than the father." 182 593 887 602

Accordingly, the chief duty of the 'new woman' is to bear children. She succeeds or fails as a supplier of new persons to the family. Only with children can the new balance complete itself and the essential social continuity be assured. 182 593 606 842

The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law upon her success in this role. The first year of the girl's marriage is a time of apprenticeship. Her work is light. Highly ceremonialized custom grants her an occasional escape back to her own people. Her major duty is pregnancy, and the old couple watch her like a hawk for signs of fertility. All during her child-bearing years the old people will help her, praising her in terms of her increase, and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as she does herself.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 One countryman of North Clare put that first
593 year into words: "At first", he said, "the boy's
606 people make much of the new woman. They would
842 hardly let her work at all. This carries on for seven or eight months, and if then the old people don't see evidence of increase of young, they get angry and abuse her. But if they do, they don't let her do any work at all now and are so proud."

In such a situation barrenness is a curse and a disgrace. The husband has every right to express his disappointment and his displeasure. It is a source of shame to him as well. He fails in preserving the continuity of his line upon the land.

One childless woman of Inagh in Clare knew bitterly how much both family and community support these attitudes: "No matter how much money you have," she said, "no matter how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you are no good. But if you are ugly as the worst and have children, you are all right." Then she went on, to perpetrate an Irish bull, perhaps, but to express the matter very forcibly: "The man wants children just as much as the woman. He is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of this country, especially if you haven't any."

182 Nevertheless, there are other ways of ensuring
593 the continuity. They 'keep the name on the land'
428 too, but they are makeshifts at best. These makeshifts transfer control of the land, as does the match.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major 181
operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of 443
peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair 796
seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest.

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the 181
cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures 789
of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic.

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic 181
magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, 842
common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of 181
marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the [582]
highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation.

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and 181
duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and 496

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

It is stated that in
Mayo a ploughman would be called in to shake a woman at a 845
difficult childbirth, presumably because it is he who prepares the ground and shakes the seed which brings new life to the fields.

Music, dancing, games and dramatic performances also 536
played their part in the seasonal gatherings, and one may 527
hazard the guess that the Irishman's passion for betting 796
derives from this source. A ritual element, as in the wake 842
games mentioned in the previous chapter, can often be detected, for example in the following account taken from the source quoted above. It describes a May game or pantomime from the Louth-Armagh border, modified survivals of which were current through most of the 19th century in the Slieve Gullion district. "On May day the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby.' Around it a man and woman (generally his wife) dressed also fantastically with straw, dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures, the figure at the same time being kept moving by the rustic maiden that supports it. These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children also attend (some of them from a considerable distance) to see this figure and exhibition, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children. Money is collected, and when the actors and musician have received some remuneration the remainder is laid out in drink, and the evening passes by jovially." This magic pantomime was originally intended to secure the success of the year's crops.

Such rites and gatherings have gradually been suppressed 517
or won over by the Church; and Sunday evening is now the 526
favourite recreation time for dancing and games. Among the older games, hurley is most popular, and horse-racing has by no means lost its appeal although it has suffered like other amusements from commercial exploitation. On many a

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

175 way of life was fostered by the ease with which the humbler
311 members of the community could compete with others in arts
361 demanding not wealth but personal qualities, in poetry, oratory, song and physical prowess. Down to our own day the small size of the average farm has encouraged the survival of simple tools and limited the acquisition of machines. Subdivision of farms and the depressing effects of short leases and absenteeism were contributory factors. Subdivision of holdings was prohibited under an Act of 1881, but like so many other prohibited practices it did not cease.

175 The retention of many of the attributes of a peasant society
602 is the key to the survival of the folk ways with which we are
178 concerned in the following chapters. Even the Great Famine which marks a grim watershed in social and economic history did not entirely obliterate them, though it had such far-reaching effects that it might be regarded as the end of prehistoric times in Ireland. First in importance is the strength of blood-ties in extended family groups, still maintained even in many urban communities. During the air raids on Belfast, for example, the problem of finding billets for evacuated homeless was complicated by the refusal of large groups of related families to be separated from each other. In remote rural areas the blood-tie is a dominant force, governing economic as well as social relationships,[1] its loyalties overriding the impartial administration of justice. A relative is a 'friend', even if 'far-out'—that is, remotely connected—and friendship is a matter of blood relationship. A peasant community is concerned first and foremost with the maintenance and continuity of society: it does not judge—and cannot be judged—purely by economic standards. Immemorially peasant families have been large, and childbearing is widely regarded as part of the ritual necessary to bring success with the stock and the crops. In rural Ireland
[842] barrenness in a wife still tends to be regarded as an unnatural and disgraceful thing, and many superstitious cures for 'the
178 sterile curse' are recorded. This is but one example of a wide-
789 spread attitude towards life, to which comparative anthropology offers many parallels. Sympathetic magic, or the performance

[1] C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940), Ch. 13.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the belief that it contained the essence of the flowers of the fields. Sprigs of rowan were stuck in the midden, placed over the door of the byre and hung on the cows' horns. Flowers were also put around the well, for it was supposed that a milk-thief could steal your summer's milk and butter by skimming the water at this time, or by dragging a rope across a field to collect the dew. Boundary streams were also potent in this connexion, and I was told in Donegal that the milk churn had to be washed on May Day in 'three landlords' waters', that is the meeting place of three properties. 527 824 751

Besides these family rites there were public ceremonies, the lighting of bonfires and parades of May Babies, of May Boys and the May Queen. One of the rhymes sung by May Boys in the west of Ireland runs, in translation: 527

> Summer! Summer! the milk of the heifers, [539]
> And ourselves brought the summer with us,
> The yellow summer, and the white daisy,
> And ourselves brought the summer with us.[1]

The May Baby parades link the festival with the fertility of the family as well as the fields. I give an account of the ceremonies as described in Co. Louth in the early nineteenth century: 'On May Day, the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby' . . . Around this figure a man and woman (generally his wife) of the humble class, dressed also fantastically with straw, etc., dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures . . . These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children to their husbands also attend to see this figure and performance, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children.'[2] 527 842 831

The May Day bonfires and the May Queens are now little more than children's games and excuses for begging. The burning of bones—whence the word bonfire, which in Ireland keeps its original pronunciation—and in particular of horses' 527 372

[1]Lady Wilde, *The Dublin University Magazine* (1849), 541–60.
[2]J. Donaldson, *Upper Fews in 1838*, 70.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XX

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

582 THE average age of marriage among Irish countrywomen,
178 about 28, is said to be higher than in any other country
731 in the world: that of the men is higher still, and in addition there
776 are many who never marry. These are among the demographic consequences of the economic and social changes which followed the Great Famine of 1845–47, for down to that time the mass of the population had nothing to lose and everything to gain by marrying young. Among the economic factors which led to the postponement of marriage may be mentioned the rising standards of living, the prohibition of the subdivision of holdings so that only one son could inherit, and the need for larger farms consequent on the decline of subsistence farming and the increase of pastoral husbandry, which meant that the peasant had to look and plan ahead. Equally important, I believe, was the effect of the crisis of the famine in breaking down patterns of behaviour which had continued with little change since prehistoric times. The elder faiths were rudely shattered so that today we have only the broken remnants left, stray survivals which have lost their meaning in a modern setting. The scattering of the fairy hosts is the constant lament of old people for whose parents they were a reality. Over large parts of the country, down to famine times the fairies (among them the ancestral spirits), and the powers of nature in sun and stone, tree, flower and welling water were ruling forces whose malice must somehow be averted, and whose beneficence must be courted by magical acts. Nature's reproductive surplus on which
[842] human life depended could best be assured by breeding children to capacity.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed mar- 163
riages the population would continue to increase were it not
for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, [167]
sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious prac- [842]
tices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be
cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless
marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some 582
evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or
bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway
and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a
means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested.
The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may [114]
be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in
Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living
traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and Londonderry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive 842
the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well-
organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead
and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns
and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation
in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the
spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings
at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary
histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral
spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to [172]
many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a
reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton
in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves
barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed
certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many
ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic
magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman
who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far re- 584
moved from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day
peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1]R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1755*, 108.
[2]H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773 that they had drowned themselves, and gave up the pursuit.[14]
823 Possibly the legend originated the association of indecency with the Clare dolmens found in 1808 by Hely Dutton.[15] A girl would not guide him to the fine one at Ballygannor until assured
[831 that he was a stranger, for, it was explained to him, a woman
778] could refuse nothing to a man at one of these monuments. Some such reason probably lay behind the belief that, if a couple unblessed with children went to a *labba*, the defect in their house-
[842] hold was amended. I have been told that this belief existed in Clare, but got no direct evidence of it. The Tuam an goskaigh monument in Ballynahown was believed to be the grave of a giant buried with his great sword, to recover which certain young men dug and overthrew the stones; but they found nothing, and afterwards prospered so ill that they had to emigrate.[16] Grania was supposed to be a male saint near Feakle, and the "scoop" in the west end of Tobergrania dolmen-well at Ballycroum was supposed to be the place where he put in his head to drink.[17] The long grave of Ballykelly, famed for its lovely outlook high over the woods and lake of Doon on the flank of Slieve Bernagh, was known as "Old Grania," but the term "Granny's bed" was not unknown in East Clare. I heard no legend of a "hag" at any dolmen. The alleged rites at the "Druid's Altars" at Maryfort and Carnelly have already been noted.[18] When two blocks of the latter structure were removed for use as gateposts, they returned during the night to their original site, and were never again removed. The hand of the destroyer of a dolmen near Ruan was struck by a splinter and severely injured,[19] the remains of the blocks being left where

[14] Corcomroe legend, given to me by the late Prof. Brian O'Looney.

[15] *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare*, p. 318. On the Continent indecent names and legends are also attached to dolmens; cf. Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 555; vol. iii., p. 845.

[16] Messrs. Hilary and Kelleher of Oughtdarra.

[17] So among the inhabitants in 1896-9.

[18] Vol. xxii., p. 51.

[19] Told to me by the sufferer. His predecessor, who had overthrown some blocks, was also unlucky. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 212.

[p. 257]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858
children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842
high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162
average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593
done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861
mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom
they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864]
elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of
firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155]
and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593
bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582]
to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood.
"This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606]
law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother' " (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593
have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828]
hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household.
Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155]
rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562]
with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831]
the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 796 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of [778]
wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to [233]
"give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of 796
the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time [784]
garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. [782]
Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the [777]
Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is [769]
tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for [784]
future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a [538]
small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of 123
the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night 796
when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of 787
cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed
by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whit- 796
sunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as 776
the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually [821]
the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend
to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does
anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a [513]
danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children
and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground
unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the
demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or [461]
decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter [777]
are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then
may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern
day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer [857]
celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather [313]
wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of [372]
Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for [789]
protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A [842]
man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the
failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the
folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the
hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven
between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry
leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish [114]
life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the
plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British
anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns
jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin 539
(O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 796

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Consequently, rural ceremony signalizes the 181
event. Custom brings together those concerned, 183
for rejoicing, for recognition of the place of the 851
newcomer in the group, for an expression of the 776
sentiments that unite them all. The rural 'christening' is no mere idle jollification; it is a secular baptism, as important for social life as is the Sacrament of Baptism for religion. Naturally, then, fairy-belief is represented very strongly. It surrounds the crucial event of birth and its consequences with a hundred necessities of action which carry with them powerful emotional dispositions. Fear, awe, wonder, religious feeling, and plain caution can all be pressed into service to mould the countryman into an acceptance of the new state of affairs; the logic of belief fits these emotions into the countryman's world-view.

The good people are particularly active at such 181
times as this. Every association with birth is infused 183
with power and danger. Even the midwife who 844
attends becomes a magic figure; the aura that sur- 776
rounds the dangerous and crucial event invests her entire personality. She can command the fairies, disperse their attacks, travel through the air, transfer labour pains at will to a truculent or negligent husband. She is in communication with the fairy powers; in tale and story she often finds her ministrations commandeered by them and her person wafted off into the forts and raths to attend a fairy-woman there. She herself may deny all this; but it

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 is true, none the less, in belief. Like all else at birth,
183 she is linked to the good people, and in the linkage
776 an explanation is given for the identity of the
● 844 emotional associations which surround both her and them.

181 Similarly, all other crucial changes in social life,
183 as well as those of the religious life, come to fit into
776 the same scheme for many of the country-people
852 who still follow the old tradition. The good people figure in them all.

Thus, First Communion and Confirmation—events of first magnitude in the life of the devout countryman—bring changes in emotional well-being; they bestow a real, if mysterious and holy, strength. This, of course, is first of all a part of religious experience. But the events are also accompanied, in the countryside, by changes in one's relations to one's fellows, in traditional social organization. The child is separated first from others of opposite sex after First Communion; he is introduced to full farm work and, very often, leaves school after Confirmation. His fellows in family and community must henceforward have a new regard for him and treat him differently. So, in these changes, the good people have their role, too. Precautions against their influence reinforce one's dependence upon a symbolic order which incorporates these changes. They make definite and unforgettable the magnitude of the change and the new dispositions which must be learned. Thus,

Again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen
582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

844 Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if
763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their
764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great
[762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to
[178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin
[482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women
764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own
533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

585 The good luck of the bottle race referred to above may be [777] associated with the 'agreement bottle' of whiskey which was [273] drunk, according to a seventeenth-century account, when the parents and relations of the young couple had reached a marriage agreement.[1] To this day in parts of Co. Down 'running for the broth' is a feature of country marriages, a bowl of broth being the reward given to the person who reaches the bride's house first after the wedding. Until recently, also, the young couple were expected to appear at the Bride's Show on the first Sunday after their marriage: they were accompanied to a special sloping field where they ran hand-in-hand to a stone near the bottom of the field, followed by pairs of linked boys and girls, each boy kissing the stone. Games and what was described to us as 'general carrying on' followed the Bride's Show.[2]

584 In more remote parts of the country match-making is still a recognized procedure. The professional match-maker is a well-known figure, usually a shrewd elderly person well versed in the arts of rural diplomacy, and his role has been fully described by Arensberg. He acts for the farmer who is ready for his son to marry—the son being often well into middle age—by negotiating with the parents of the girl whom the farmer has selected. In the prolonged bargaining as to the amount of the 'fortune' which the girl is to bring with her the values of peasant living stand clearly revealed.[3] Marriage is not so much a personal relationship as a union between groups, reinforcing relations which extend far beyond individuals.

There was a popular belief that the curse of sterility could be placed on the bride by any ill-disposed person who tied knots in a string during the marriage ceremony. A more obvious example of magic was the custom of tying a hen which was about to lay an egg to the bed-post on the marriage night. [585] There are widespread traditions of the days when landlords exercised the *jus primae noctis* over their tenants' wives, and one hears of leases which contained clauses governing the right. 844 During pregnancy it was lucky to do certain things and to avoid

[1]Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 1, 122.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 198
[3]C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, ch. 3.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

doing others; and there is simple symbolic magic in the act of 844
blowing the bellows in a forge to ensure safe delivery. In Mayo
a ploughman would be called in to lift and shake a woman in [845]
difficult labour,[1] and there are hints of the *couvade* in the
custom of wearing the husband's jacket during childbirth in the
belief that he will then bear some of the pain. Mothers and 854
babies were thought to be especially liable to be abducted by
the fairies, and protective charms were hidden in a baby's dress
or placed in the cradle. When children were taken to be baptised,
too, special preparations were made and precautions taken, for
example, a Co. Antrim clergyman reported that his parish-
ioners would place a piece of bread and cheese in the child's
clothing.[2] The old custom of dressing boys in girls' clothes, in long
frocks, until they were ten or eleven years of age has been
explained as a means of deceiving the fairies, who were always
on the lookout for healthy young boys whom they could
replace by feeble 'changelings'. For the same reason it is unwise
to praise a child without adding a saving 'God bless him', and
young boys are still half jocularly referred to as 'rogues and
tories'. The belief in 'changelings' may have arisen as an ex-
planation of the high mortality rate among baby boys as com-
pared with girls.

When we come to the topic of the omens and rites of death 763
and burial the supernatural world is ever-present. The custom
of opening windows and doors to let the spirit of the dead
depart is well known: in addition a hole was sometimes made
in the roof thatch. Of Co. Sligo early last century we read:
'As soon as the breath has departed from a sick person, the bed
is carried out, and if there be high ground near the house, it is
there set on fire and consumed to ashes, while the air resounds
with doleful cries.'[3] When death was imminent the sick person
was laid on the floor, for this was believed to ease the escaping
spirit. Two persons of the household should take part in every
necessary task at this time, and two persons were sent out to
carry news of the death, traditionally to the livestock and the
bees as well as to the neighbours. Great care was taken to

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 39.
[3] W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 2, 368.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder 823
bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint 755
of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some
which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded [776]
with superstitious awe up and down the country and were generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin 823
slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts [584]
are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.' Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork, women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes [844]
through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup- 526
marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 108.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

593 —with a strong agnatic bias. Rights and duties are distributed among cognates,
602 but they are less strong among uterine and affinal kin, as well as among relatives of both lines according to distance from ego. Rights and duties include obligations to assist and defend, and mutual assistance in Inis Beag characterizes farming, fishing, housebuilding, unloading turf, carrying the coffin at a funeral, and many other activities. Reciprocation in some form for services rendered is almost an obsession among both kin and non-kin, and not to reciprocate adequately means to lose face. The matter of mutual defense will be considered in later sections and chapters.

551 Only 13 surnames are represented on the island, and there are 27 families bearing a single one, 11 bearing another, and 8 a third. Most Christian names are those of the Blessed Virgin and of saints, especially from the Irish past. Michael, Patrick, Sean (which often is transformed into John, although Eoin is John in Irish), Thomas, Martin, Peter, Coleman, and Joseph—in that order—are the most popular first names for males, while for females it is Mary, Brigid, Margaret, Ann, [B44] Catherine, Sarah, Nora, and Teresa. In the past, it was customary for Inis Beag [197] women to bear their offspring at home attended by nurse, midwife, or skilled female relative; but during the past decade, most infants have been delivered in the mainland hospital serving the island, where mothers have learned of "different" surnames and have assigned them to their own children—such as Gerard, Xavier, Christopher, and Pius for boys, and Rita, Carmel, Veronica, and Jude for girls.

601 Each person in the island has a term of reference which never is employed
561 as a term of address.[2] For a man, it is a nickname or his Christian name followed by that of his father: "The General" or Sean Michael. Women ordinarily are not given nicknames; if single, they append their father's first name to their own, and if married, their husband's. An adult man may bear the Christian name of his mother following his own rather than his father's, if, for instance, his mother was widowed early or unduly dominated her husband. Nicknames relate to such things as occupations, abodes, personality idiosyncracies, stature, color of hair, and events of the past; and many are uncomplimentary to the degree of fomenting disputes if uttered at improper times or to inappropriate persons.

155 Before turning to reciprocal relationships which exist between certain
593 agnatic, uterine, and affinal relatives, it is necessary to examine two phenomena which have a vital bearing on kinship and other behavior: the Oedipus complex and male solidarity. Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys says that there is in Ireland a ". . . centripetal mechanism built into the fabric of rural life. This is the strong, preferential love of the rural mother for her sons. She is a magnetic center of the family and her cohesive power is affection. This love, which leads her 'to slave' for her sons and to demand that her daughters do likewise, cushions the sons' hard lot. It mollifies the constant rub of his subordination to his father . . ."

[2] A term of reference is a name used to refer to a person who is not present, while a term of address is a name used to address a person to his face. In America, one might say in referring to his mother, "That woman walking toward us is my mother.", and then greet her as she joins the group, "Hi, Mom."; in this case, mother is a term of reference and Mom a term of address. Often terms of address in the Western world are Christian names, and some terms of reference and address may be identical. Anthropologists usually collect only terms which are used to designate various kin.

chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161-162).

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better if God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105).

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters.

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent con-

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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It is stated that in
Mayo a ploughman would be called in to shake a woman at a 845
difficult childbirth, presumably because it is he who prepares the ground and shakes the seed which brings new life to the fields.

Music, dancing, games and dramatic performances also 536
played their part in the seasonal gatherings, and one may 527
hazard the guess that the Irishman's passion for betting 796
derives from this source. A ritual element, as in the wake 842
games mentioned in the previous chapter, can often be detected, for example in the following account taken from the source quoted above. It describes a May game or pantomime from the Louth-Armagh border, modified survivals of which were current through most of the 19th century in the Slieve Gullion district. "On May day the figure of a female is made up, fixed upon a short pole and dressed in a fantastic manner, with flowers, ribbons, etc. This figure they call 'The May Baby.' Around it a man and woman (generally his wife) dressed also fantastically with straw, dance to the sound of a fiddle and entertain the people with indecent shows and postures, the figure at the same time being kept moving by the rustic maiden that supports it. These exhibitions cause great merriment among the assembled populace; women who have had no children also attend (some of them from a considerable distance) to see this figure and exhibition, which they imagine will promote fruitfulness in them, and cause them to have children. Money is collected, and when the actors and musician have received some remuneration the remainder is laid out in drink, and the evening passes by jovially." This magic pantomime was originally intended to secure the success of the year's crops.

Such rites and gatherings have gradually been suppressed 517
or won over by the Church; and Sunday evening is now the 526
favourite recreation time for dancing and games. Among the older games, hurley is most popular, and horse-racing has by no means lost its appeal although it has suffered like other amusements from commercial exploitation. On many a

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

814 is likely to succeed in collecting much. Fortunately there is a
[609] resident (the Rev. P. A. O'Reilly), who is engaged in collecting the old Irish songs of the district, several of which he has already published. As to the legends, many of these have been recorded by C. O. and Mr. Knight, to whose works the reader is referred.

The following notes, mainly dealing with what may be termed minor folk-lore, were some of them obtained from fishermen and others of the natives, but mainly through the kindness of several residents, some of whom desired that their names should not be mentioned.

115 1. *Customs and Beliefs.*—For the majority of the notes on these I
814 am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. A. Nolan, of Belmullet, who, being a native of the district, and personally acquainted with nearly everyone in it, has an exceptionally large knowledge of the subject; for a large part of what remains I have also to thank Messrs. F. C. Wallace, D.I. R.I.C., Belmullet, and P. T. O'Reilly, Carn.

777 A very large number of things are considered lucky or the reverse. It is unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, on which day also no change of residence should be made, a Friday should rather be chosen, as that is the lucky day for moving. To meet a red-haired woman on starting out in the morning, to mention a priest while fishing, to take fish out of a house without sprinkling some salt on it, to sell milk without putting in a pinch of salt, to give fire out of the house on May-day, or to anyone in whose dwelling a sick person may be, all these are unlucky. People "born with teeth"
[845] are unlucky also; but to be "born with a caul" is a sign of great good fortune, though should the original owner ever see it his luck will depart; the possession of a caul is believed to protect against death by drowning. A mole on the face, if "above the breath," is considered to have the same protective influence.

787 Death within the year is believed to be the fate of the man who has the temerity to make an addition to the western side of his house, or to build out at the back; several instances of men who died within a short time after thus offending are sure to be told to the incredulous.

The banshee, the death-watch, the creaking of furniture, and the howling of a dog at night are all looked upon as death-warnings. Several persons were met with who asserted that they had heard the banshee before the death of relatives.

585 At weddings the bride and bridegroom must step over the threshold of the chapel door together, as whichever goes out first will be the first to die.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

845 In cases of difficult labour a ploughman may be called in to lift and shake the woman gently, which it is thought will produce the desired effect. The reason given is that as he shakes and scatters the seed on the earth, so also he ought to produce a good effect here.

[752] A nail which has got into the foot is always thrown into the fire.

757 278 *Leechcraft.*—Though regular medical assistance is usually sought for serious complaints, yet, the more common ailments are often treated by the people themselves, several of the older men and women enjoying some local celebrity for this.

The following list of substances used medicinally was collected; it is believed to be but a small fraction of the local pharmacopœia.

(A.) Animal substances.—Saliva is used for many purposes; thus button scurvy is treated by spitting on the floor and rubbing on the mixed saliva and dust with the right thumb.

Seal oil is rubbed in for sprains and rheumatism, for which it has a great reputation locally; it is sold in Belmullet at a pretty high price.

The tongue of a fox is used as a poultice to extract thorns, &c.

(B.) Herbs.—Mr. Nolan kindly provided the following list of plants in use in the district, most of which he has seen used. The qualities of many of these were also described to me by several of the country people.

Dandelion (*Leontodon taraxacum*), used for "liver troubles."

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), used as a styptic.

Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*), used, boiled in milk, for heart-burn.

Self-heal (locally called Heartsease) (*Brunella vulgaris*), used for palpitations.

Mountain sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), used "for the heart" and in cough mixtures.

Ground-wood, or Bog-bark (not identified), used for gravel (boiled in milk).

Bugloss (*Echium* or *Lycopsis*), used, in poultices with oat-meal, for abscesses, &c.

Ground-ivy (*Nepeta glechoma*), used, as a "tea," for "heart beat," or mixed with other herbs for a cough.

Nettles (*Urtica dioica*), used, with ginger, for "wind on the stomach."

Ivy (*Hedera helix*), leaves used as a cap for a "scabby head."

Burdock root (*Arctium lappa*),
Furze tops (*Ulex*),
Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*),
Carageen moss (*Sphærococcus europæus*),
} usually combined and boiled with sugar-stick to form a cough-syrup.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

doing others; and there is simple symbolic magic in the act of 844
blowing the bellows in a forge to ensure safe delivery. In Mayo
a ploughman would be called in to lift and shake a woman in [845]
difficult labour,[1] and there are hints of the *couvade* in the
custom of wearing the husband's jacket during childbirth in the
belief that he will then bear some of the pain. Mothers and 854
babies were thought to be especially liable to be abducted by
the fairies, and protective charms were hidden in a baby's dress
or placed in the cradle. When children were taken to be baptised,
too, special preparations were made and precautions taken, for
example, a Co. Antrim clergyman reported that his parish-
ioners would place a piece of bread and cheese in the child's
clothing.[2] The old custom of dressing boys in girls' clothes, in long
frocks, until they were ten or eleven years of age has been
explained as a means of deceiving the fairies, who were always
on the lookout for healthy young boys whom they could
replace by feeble 'changelings'. For the same reason it is unwise
to praise a child without adding a saving 'God bless him', and
young boys are still half jocularly referred to as 'rogues and
tories'. The belief in 'changelings' may have arisen as an ex-
planation of the high mortality rate among baby boys as com-
pared with girls.

When we come to the topic of the omens and rites of death 763
and burial the supernatural world is ever-present. The custom
of opening windows and doors to let the spirit of the dead
depart is well known: in addition a hole was sometimes made
in the roof thatch. Of Co. Sligo early last century we read:
'As soon as the breath has departed from a sick person, the bed
is carried out, and if there be high ground near the house, it is
there set on fire and consumed to ashes, while the air resounds
with doleful cries.'[3] When death was imminent the sick person
was laid on the floor, for this was believed to ease the escaping
spirit. Two persons of the household should take part in every
necessary task at this time, and two persons were sent out to
carry news of the death, traditionally to the livestock and the
bees as well as to the neighbours. Great care was taken to

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 39.
[3] W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 2, 368.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

585 whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold this race for the bottle. The first person to reach the bride's house is victorious; he is rewarded with a bottle (? of poteen) which is drunk by the company and then broken by the bridegroom. Next "a cake of oatmeal or flour, called the bride's cake, is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young persons present for the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow. Another scene of noisy festivity then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties."

Straw Wedding-dance Mask

Fig. 112.

585 A wedding custom recorded within the last 50 years from
582 Sligo, Mayo, Galway and Kerry was the wearing of straw masks by "straw-boys" or "soppers," who went about begging money and drink and threatening mischief. The styles of mask varied from one district to another: we illustrate (Fig. 112) the pattern worn in Mayo. It is hardly necessary to add that parallels to this kind of ceremonial dress and mime can be found in many parts of the world. Among the practices connected with childbirth attention has been
846 drawn to survivals of the "couvade," whereby the husband is supposed to share the woman's pains. It is stated that in

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night 833
before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy.
Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six [841]
months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these [846]
times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing
American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as [793]
Time and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to
spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called 83
the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is
unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of con-
summation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do 836
not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young
men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of
them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their [783]
lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the
contact. the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of
the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they 833
copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body
of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the
husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is
employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm
for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately.
Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, [124]
my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as 831
nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have 291
noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bath- 614
ing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation
and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual [758]
symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might [164]
have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who
were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their
bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse
confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man
for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the
woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, [824]
especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages,
dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this
behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that 15
the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puri- 182
tanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be
said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together 181
factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are 152
circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty [562]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation. 848 183 581

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls. 183 836 562

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable. 837 183 [593]

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire. 834 571

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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834 violent disturbance in the relations uniting others to them-
183 selves and to one another. To "destroy a girl's character"
554 in the countryside is to upset the pattern of family and community life by overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change in farm succession. Much more than a shooting or a fight, a sexual irregularity, which cannot be righted in a match, is capable of destroying the intricate mutual obligations and expectancies of rural familism.

For the family whose "name" is "destroyed" and whose hopes of orderly re-formation are upset, two courses are open. One is to patch up a compromise, to accept the match
[626] forced upon them. The other is to expel the offenders bodily. Community feeling gives full support. In either case the girl concerned can no longer hope for full status. If the match is made or another husband found to father a child, time may right matters and give her full adult status as a farm wife and mother. Her failure as a girl may be forgotten, but it was a failure still. Otherwise there is little further to do but suffer expulsion. Emigration has been the refuge till recently.

836 The country people's attitudes toward illegitimacy and
● 848 premarital intercourse, one and the same to them, reflect well the disturbances they occasion. In discussing a local
626 case, one woman could voice the community's opinion in the following general terms:

> A young lady with a good fortune even, she couldn't get any man because her character is broken. Unless maybe he is very low. And so she usually goes to America and passes for a maiden. Everyone knows the father of the child but, if he has a good farm of land, no one would say anything, but he would be unlucky and have no family. He would get another woman [a wife, that is] with no bother. The baby might be sent to a home. And after a time they bring it home as a cousin.

836 But it is not always that the boys are treated so leniently,
626 and they, too, must emigrate, driven off by public censure.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

Begging is practically unknown, and drunkenness, as a habit, does not exist, the sobriety being very noticeable on holidays, though occasional bouts of drinking are sometimes indulged in when a good take of fish has been made. They are very conscientious in their religious observances, and depend greatly on the advice and control of their clergy, with regard to temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Sexual irregularities are extremely rare, no case of illegitimacy having been recorded from the islands for years. 181 [735] [273] [793] [848]

As fishermen they are brave, hardy, and extremely venturesome; this applies especially to the men of Inishshark, who are reputed in Bofin to be the best and most daring boatmen on the west coast. 181

Quarrels often occur, but a regular stand-up fight appears to be unknown, the men usually contenting themselves with abusive language, or at most a sudden blow or stone-throwing. A woman when angered may use very abusive language towards a man, as she would be practically safe from any fear of physical violence on his part, even when she was very provoking. 578 181

On the other hand, they are not without faults. In their ordinary life they are thriftless, and not too cleanly in many of their habits, and have but little regard for ordinary sanitary laws; their veracity, too, is not altogether unimpeachable, while the people of the mainland allege that they have a very strong aversion to the payment of debts, rent, and cess, for the last-named of which they owe over £1300. 181 [515] [651]

The habits and manners of the people of Shark are much the same as those described above. The people are noted for their loyalty to one another; they never tell any stranger anything about their local affairs. They are kindly and civil to visitors, always crowding down to assist them on landing, but are said to be capable of acts of ferocity when roused. [609]

5. *Folk-names.*—The following list of fifty-one surnames comprises all those now to be met with on the islands. Some of these names, however, are those of families not long established on the islands, while others, formerly common, as Gorham and Halligan, are now without representatives. 551

The Gorhams are still, to some extent, connected with Inishbofin, as one of them is proprietor of the only shop there worth the name, and in addition holds a farm, but he lives on the mainland, and manages them by deputy, only occasionally visiting the place himself. It is possible that, owing to the heavy emigration, other surnames may also have disappeared. In the list of surnames given in the [444]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted 691
for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders.

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious 181
examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other [273]
festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their [771]
religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy.

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, [789]
they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical.

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, [848]
yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be [578]
one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation.

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their [855]
treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault.

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, 461
though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great 181
deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it.

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful 181
in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit 426
to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested.

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely 181 515
due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for 577
truth is not a prominent part of their character.

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[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

Low stools and benches seem to have been the traditional form of seating, and no doubt the floor served for the children. 352 Travellers noted that this was the best way to avoid the smoke:

> By sitting low, on rushes spread,
> The smoke still hover'd overhead;
> And did more good than real harm,
> Because it kept the long house warm.[1]

Fireside seats, more or less fixed, were often of stone, a solid block of wood or a large lump of turf. In the 'round about' hearths which were common in parts of Co. Antrim, and which people who remember them have described to me, the seat behind the fire, a log of wood, was known as the dais, a dialect word for a bench or seat which appears to be of north English origin. Solid seats of coiled straw or rushes were also common (Fig. 29) but the favourite fireside stool was the three-legged creepie, resembling a milking stool and like it finding a firm hold no matter how uneven the floor. There is little evidence of chairs of any antiquity. A three-legged type found in parts of the west, with a triangular seat and a narrow one-piece back has probably evolved from the creepie but looks Germanic. The nearest approach to a distinctive Irish style is the straw or rush-seated chair, which finds its best-known homes in Co. Down and Co. Limerick. High-backed armchairs made entirely of coiled straw rope after the manner of a beehive used to be found in the west, and since they can be paralleled in many parts of western Europe from the Orkneys to Spain it is probable that their manufacture is a peasant craft of some antiquity (Fig. 29). Cradles, too, were made of straw as well as of wood [854] and basketwork, and they were sometimes suspended from the roof. I have heard of a cradle being improvised by laying a horse-collar on the floor. The phrase 'rocked in a pot' applied to [848] an illegitimate child is said to derive from the use of a large fireside cooking pot as cradle and hiding place: round-shouldered infants were therefore suspect.

Down to recent times it was the custom to keep most of the 234 dairying equipment in the kitchen, and in the traditional peasant 353 house the upright churn still occupies a place against the wall,

[1] W(illiam) M(cffatt), *The Western Isle* (1724), Canto 2. [Text continues p. 95]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

order takes its form. Consequently, we should expect fairy-belief and rite to symbolize the regard he has for his fellows even more strongly than that he holds to the non-human associations of his life.

The expectation is amply borne out. Fairy-belief is first and foremost a symbolism of social life. In the logic of emotional identifications, it organizes, directs, and controls the feelings of human beings for their fellows.

Thus fairy power and dangerous influence are strongest at times when the interest of human beings in their fellows is strongest. With every change overtaking the individual in his course through life among his fellows, the supernatural world steps in. At such times as birth, growing-up, marriage, becoming a parent, growing old and dying, belief catches the countryman in a web of precautions and reminders which signalize forcefully the importance of the change. For example, the birth of a child is not just another event in nature. It is a change of vital importance to the family group, and indirectly to the community. It is cause for rejoicing and congratulation, but it is cause, too, for resolve and determination in the face of new duties. It brings a new orientation in the lives of those who welcome the newcomer. Their relations to one another undergo development; they must henceforth learn new ways which include the newcomer and which prepare a place for him in the life of his fellows.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Consequently, rural ceremony signalizes the 181
event. Custom brings together those concerned, 183
for rejoicing, for recognition of the place of the 851
newcomer in the group, for an expression of the 776
sentiments that unite them all. The rural 'christening' is no mere idle jollification; it is a secular baptism, as important for social life as is the Sacrament of Baptism for religion. Naturally, then, fairy-belief is represented very strongly. It surrounds the crucial event of birth and its consequences with a hundred necessities of action which carry with them powerful emotional dispositions. Fear, awe, wonder, religious feeling, and plain caution can all be pressed into service to mould the countryman into an acceptance of the new state of affairs; the logic of belief fits these emotions into the countryman's world-view.

The good people are particularly active at such 181
times as this. Every association with birth is infused 183
with power and danger. Even the midwife who 844
attends becomes a magic figure; the aura that sur- 776
rounds the dangerous and crucial event invests her entire personality. She can command the fairies, disperse their attacks, travel through the air, transfer labour pains at will to a truculent or negligent husband. She is in communication with the fairy powers; in tale and story she often finds her ministrations commandeered by them and her person wafted off into the forts and raths to attend a fairy-woman there. She herself may deny all this; but it

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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462 593 868 626 [461]

tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands.

462 593 868

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women.

462 593 857

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's

[852] •

462 593 883 [884]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 is true, none the less, in belief. Like all else at birth,
183 she is linked to the good people, and in the linkage
776 an explanation is given for the identity of the
844 emotional associations which surround both her and them.

181 Similarly, all other crucial changes in social life,
183 as well as those of the religious life, come to fit into
776 the same scheme for many of the country-people
852 who still follow the old tradition. The good people figure in them all.

Thus, First Communion and Confirmation—events of first magnitude in the life of the devout countryman—bring changes in emotional well-being; they bestow a real, if mysterious and holy, strength. This, of course, is first of all a part of religious experience. But the events are also accompanied, in the countryside, by changes in one's relations to one's fellows, in traditional social organization. The child is separated first from others of opposite sex after First Communion; he is introduced to full farm work and, very often, leaves school after Confirmation. His fellows in family and community must henceforward have a new regard for him and treat him differently. So, in these changes, the good people have their role, too. Precautions against their influence reinforce one's dependence upon a symbolic order which incorporates these changes. They make definite and unforgettable the magnitude of the change and the new dispositions which must be learned. Thus,

AGAIN, EMOTION is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be [788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity.

754 There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch, and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and on domestic animals.

825 821 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these 825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27):—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Conguile), an old family of Iar Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It [551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the clan to change their name to Conolly."

776 Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is subject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by 854 the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

Low stools and benches seem to have been the traditional form of seating, and no doubt the floor served for the children. 352 Travellers noted that this was the best way to avoid the smoke:

> By sitting low, on rushes spread,
> The smoke still hover'd overhead;
> And did more good than real harm,
> Because it kept the long house warm.[1]

Fireside seats, more or less fixed, were often of stone, a solid block of wood or a large lump of turf. In the 'round about' hearths which were common in parts of Co. Antrim, and which people who remember them have described to me, the seat behind the fire, a log of wood, was known as the dais, a dialect word for a bench or seat which appears to be of north English origin. Solid seats of coiled straw or rushes were also common (Fig. 29) but the favourite fireside stool was the three-legged creepie, resembling a milking stool and like it finding a firm hold no matter how uneven the floor. There is little evidence of chairs of any antiquity. A three-legged type found in parts of the west, with a triangular seat and a narrow one-piece back has probably evolved from the creepie but looks Germanic. The nearest approach to a distinctive Irish style is the straw or rush-seated chair, which finds its best-known homes in Co. Down and Co. Limerick. High-backed armchairs made entirely of coiled straw rope after the manner of a beehive used to be found in the west, and since they can be paralleled in many parts of western Europe from the Orkneys to Spain it is probable that their manufacture is a peasant craft of some antiquity (Fig. 29). Cradles, too, were made of straw as well as of wood [854] and basketwork, and they were sometimes suspended from the roof. I have heard of a cradle being improvised by laying a horse-collar on the floor. The phrase 'rocked in a pot' applied to [848] an illegitimate child is said to derive from the use of a large fireside cooking pot as cradle and hiding place: round-shouldered infants were therefore suspect.

Down to recent times it was the custom to keep most of the 234 dairying equipment in the kitchen, and in the traditional peasant 353 house the upright churn still occupies a place against the wall,

[1] W(illiam) M(effatt), *The Western Isle* (1724), Canto 2. [Text continues p 95]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

doing others; and there is simple symbolic magic in the act of 844
blowing the bellows in a forge to ensure safe delivery. In Mayo
a ploughman would be called in to lift and shake a woman in [845]
difficult labour,[1] and there are hints of the *couvade* in the
custom of wearing the husband's jacket during childbirth in the
belief that he will then bear some of the pain. Mothers and 854
babies were thought to be especially liable to be abducted by
the fairies, and protective charms were hidden in a baby's dress
or placed in the cradle. When children were taken to be baptised,
too, special preparations were made and precautions taken, for
example, a Co. Antrim clergyman reported that his parish-
ioners would place a piece of bread and cheese in the child's
clothing.[2] The old custom of dressing boys in girls' clothes, in long
frocks, until they were ten or eleven years of age has been
explained as a means of deceiving the fairies, who were always
on the lookout for healthy young boys whom they could
replace by feeble 'changelings'. For the same reason it is unwise
to praise a child without adding a saving 'God bless him', and
young boys are still half jocularly referred to as 'rogues and
tories'. The belief in 'changelings' may have arisen as an ex-
planation of the high mortality rate among baby boys as com-
pared with girls.

When we come to the topic of the omens and rites of death 763
and burial the supernatural world is ever-present. The custom
of opening windows and doors to let the spirit of the dead
depart is well known: in addition a hole was sometimes made
in the roof thatch. Of Co. Sligo early last century we read:
'As soon as the breath has departed from a sick person, the bed
is carried out, and if there be high ground near the house, it is
there set on fire and consumed to ashes, while the air resounds
with doleful cries.'[3] When death was imminent the sick person
was laid on the floor, for this was believed to ease the escaping
spirit. Two persons of the household should take part in every
necessary task at this time, and two persons were sent out to
carry news of the death, traditionally to the livestock and the
bees as well as to the neighbours. Great care was taken to

[1]C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2]Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 89.
[3]W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 2, 368.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Until seven, the child of either sex is the constant companion of its mother. If the family is numerous an elder child, usually a sister, may take over much of the mother's role, but the mother is always near-by. As the woman works in the house or fields, the child is kept by her side. In the house it usually sits in a crib by the fire or plays about on the floor, but always within sight and sound. It learns its speech from its mother, amid a flood of constant endearments, admonitions, and encouragements. The woman's work never separates her from the child. Custom imposes no restraints or interruptions in her solicitude. She looks after its comforts, gives it food, dresses it, etc. She constantly exercises restraints and controls over it, teaching it day by day in a thousand situations the elements of prudery, modesty, and good conduct. 593 855 [868] [867]

The controls she exercises are of a different kind from those of the father. She is both guide and companion. Her authority most often makes itself felt through praise, persuasion, and endearment. Only when a grave breach of discipline demands a restraining power greater than hers, or when an appeal to ultimate authority is needed, does the father begin to play his role. Especially in the years before puberty, the farm father enters the child's cognizance as a disciplinary force. The barriers of authority, respect, extra-household interests, and the imperatives of duty rather than of encouragement make it difficult for any intimacy to develop. 593 861

Even after Confirmation the child's relationship to his mother is not materially weakened. He becomes confirmed, it is true, in a masculine scorn for feminine interests and pursuits, but he can and must still look for protection to his mother against a too-arbitrary exercise of his father's power. In family disputes the mother takes a diplomatic, conciliatory role. From her intermediary position she can call upon the strongest ties between herself and her sons 593

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

mentions that at one time the people of Inishkea were much noted for it, and that the fate of the two men, who some time in the last century ruined themselves in a lawsuit about a sheep, became proverbial, and litigants were warned to remember the fate of "Malley and Malone." C. O.[1] also refers to this peculiarity, which nowadays seems to be more characteristic of the mainland people than the islanders. 691

In the course of the cases arising from this tendency, many curious examples of ingenious cross-swearing occur. Intoxication is rather prevalent on fair days and holidays, and at weddings and other festive occasions, but at ordinary times there is not much of it among the country people. They appear to be conscientious in their religious observances, and depend much on the guidance and advice of their clergy. 181 [273] [771]

As will be judged from the extent and variety of their folk-lore, they have a great love for the supernatural and mystical. [789]

As regards morals, though illegitimacy is by no means unknown, yet, when the size of the population is taken into account, it is so rare as to be very creditable to the moral tone of the people.[2] [848]

A stand-up fight rarely occurs when men quarrel, there may be one or two blows struck, or stone-throwing may be indulged in, but disputes do not usually get beyond cursing and vituperation. [578]

As parents they are affectionate, but careless and unequal in their treatment of their children, at one time over indulging them, and at another punishing severely for a slight fault. [855]

With regard to industry, but little can be said in their favour, though energetic by starts, during which they are capable of a great deal of work, accounts agree in stating that they dislike steady occupation, and are indolent. It should be remembered, however, that there has hitherto been but little inducement to them to cultivate steady industry. The women seem always to have plenty of work on hand, and to do it. 461 181

In this district, as in many others, the people are not very careful in their re-payment of debts, and shopkeepers do not now give credit to the same extent as formerly. As to rent and cess, to the payment of these, too, a strong aversion is often manifested. 181 426

Many of their habits are not over cleanly, though this is largely due to the wretched nature of their houses, and a strict regard for truth is not a prominent part of their character. 181 515 577

[1] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

[2] The total number of cases which occurred between the years 1884 and 1893 was 18.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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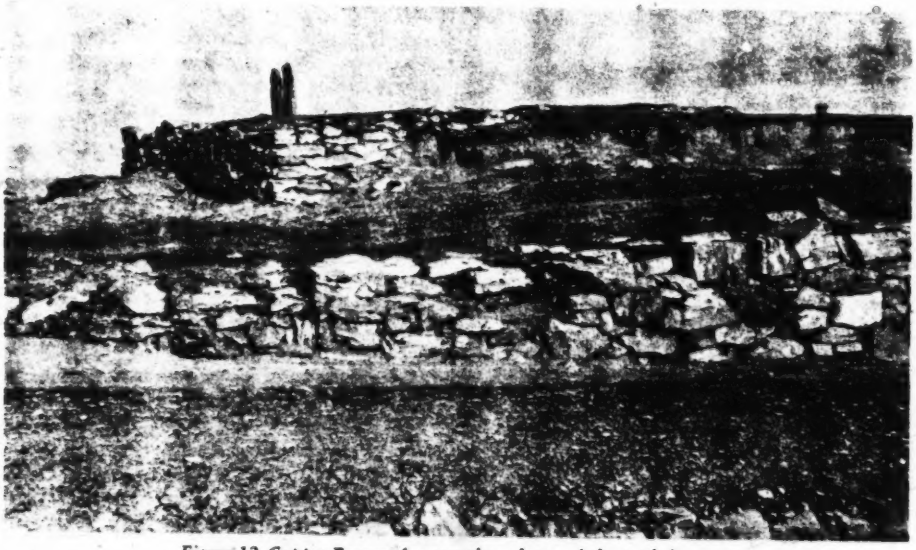

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the
[171] village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the
178 casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after
754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies,
753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When
755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human
855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus
[624] are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near
[576] his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case. 203 [609] [124]

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics. 797 793 [776] [783] [577] [431] [781]

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis. 861 155 855 [561] [856] [864] [863] 858 562 [593] [872] 562 [794] [858] [609] [832] [164]

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could 204 831 124 831 855

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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831 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they
• 855 found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex
864 combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among
886 women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological signifi-
[123] cance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily.
886 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward
828 it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the
[793] belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal
[832] sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

 831

boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case. 203 [609] [124]

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics. 797 793 [776] [783] [577] [431] [781]

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis. 861 155 855 [561] [856] [864] [863] 858 562 [593] [872] 562 [794] [858] [609] [832] [164]

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could 204 831 124 831 855

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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462 593 868 626 [461]

tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands.

462 593 868

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women.

462 593 857

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's

[852]

462 593 883 [884]

direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to him at his marriage.

If economic apprenticeship is also a process of conditioning within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

For the child grows up within the full complex of life within the family. The petty errands which constitute his first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his beginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm work is again merely incidental to his long years of life with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 as the men's. The coincidence between family status and
861 economic role holds for them as well. Women's work on the small farm is complementary to that of the men, as we have seen, though, of course, it is quite distinct. The young girl growing up on the small farm learns this, just as the young man acquires the masculine techniques. The girl is thrown constantly with the mother and the older women of the household. After she is seven, her pursuits differ completely from those of her brother and, except as she is in very close constant association within the household, she has no working contact with her father.

857 Many minor tasks fall to the girl as she grows up, par-
868 ticularly driving and milking the cows. Her conditioning prepares her to fill the role her mother occupies in the household. All the interior of the house, the immediate vicinity of courts and haggard where the fuel is stacked, the well, the poultry yard and sheds, are her concern. She learns to milk cows, feed the pig, tend the chickens, and look after all the young animals through helping the older women. She learns the lore of disposing of eggs, butter, and occasionally of some of the vegetable produce of the garden, potatoes and cabbage, and occasionally goes to market with her mother.

In the chief business of the women, the house itself, the preparation and serving of food and the repair and upkeep of clothing, she serves a never-ending daily apprenticeship. A young girl may often be delegated to look after the hearth, make and keep the fires going, etc. Only the mother makes small purchases of food and household goods. Only the mother bakes the great variety of breads. But by the time she leaves school, the girl may be proficient in these tasks too. So also with the butter making. Income derived from this and from poultry belongs to the older woman; the girl has no share until she herself has married.

000 In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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like the sanctions of the exercise of sexual rights in marriage, 593
are part of and take their form in the family group. Conse- 582
quently, in the wider and larger alignments of individuals springing from the family which make up the kinship system, similar prohibitions occur.

For the kindred are the group within which marriage is 582
prohibited. In a sense the formulation of the individuals in 602
it as a group is an abstraction. Kinship bonds come ready 857
formed to the newborn human being. The child is soon brought to know and adopt requisite behavior and sentiments toward the individuals with whom the other persons of his family are reciprocally bound.

Thus the Irish child very early meets his mother's and 602
father's brothers and sisters; he runs errands and receives 431
small gifts from them; as soon as he is able he carries pres- 571
ents. In later years of boyhood he does odd jobs for them; 857
his labor is lent at cooring; he takes his place with them at the family table or round the hearth on visiting. At various times of crisis in his career, such as First Communion, Confirmation, and marriage, he receives gifts from them which signalize the intimacy between him and them. They share his parent's superordination to him, for they belong to the same older generation as his parents.

He is very likely, too, to be thrown constantly with their 602
children, especially if they are substantially of the same age, 571
where his uncles and aunts remain within visiting distance. 857
In country regions, such as Luogh, nearly all of the families are united by complicated, reduplicated bonds of marriage and descent. There the boys and girls grow up together in constant association, both as "friends" and companions. It is with them that the natural course of development creates bonds of sentiment and mutual aid, quite like those within the family, which take the form of that "friendliness" at once obligatory and pleasurable seen in the account of farm work.

8:A ensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

462 tional social life. The boy's first duties, as soon as
593 he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands
857 to neighbours and near-by friends. Until he is seven and passes through first communion, his place is in the house with the women, and he shares the same bed with his sisters. After that year, he leaves his mother's apron strings, and is slowly drawn into men's ways; he is thrown more and more with his elder brothers and sleeps with them henceforward.
[291] In remote regions he takes off girl's clothing for
[789] the first time; for girl's clothing has protected him from the fairies, they say. Both socially and economically he is becoming a male, but his male status is still very little. By the time he is ten or eleven, he is brought home from school when needed to take part in the important agricultural work of the year. But not until he passes confirmation and leaves school, usually at the same time, does he take on full men's work and assume men's clothing. Even then, as he reaches maturity, and takes on more and more the heavy tasks of the farm, he never escapes his father's direction. Only when his father makes over the farm to him, at death or at his own marriage, can he assume command, and with it full adult status.

Economic apprenticeship is thus a process of conditioning within the family. But there is no separation of economic and non-economic spheres. The father's direction of the enterprise coincides with his dominant, controlling role as parent and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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adult; the boy learns work as he learns manhood. 462

Also, the child grows up within the full complex 593
of life within the farm family. His first petty 861
errands are a mere incident in the relationship he 857
builds up with his parents and brothers. He learns not only his work but the whole code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his class, at their hands. This conduct is itself part of his relation to them. It ranges all the way from the errands he runs for his superiors in the family to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make sexual behaviour of any kind an offence, and of that within the family, incest.

Consequently, in so well-knit a group, the com- 462
mand which his father (and his mother) exercises 593
over the son in farm work is only one aspect of that control. His subordination continues as long as his father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the son and his brothers, they have no control of the direction of farm work nor the disposal of the farm's income. I say the son and his brothers, for all the sons are equal in this [554]
subordination; rural Ireland knows neither primo- [858]
geniture nor junior right. As long as they remain at home upon the farm they share this status equally.

The behaviour that reflects this state of affairs 593
can be readily observed. Sons go to market and fair from the time they are ten or twelve, but they buy or sell little if anything. Father and sons can be

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

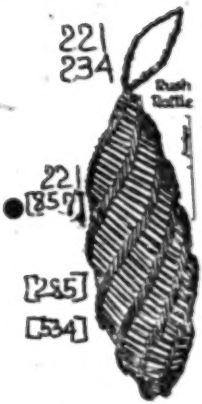

Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-holes (" boles ") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes or the knitting : they are usually reserved for special purposes and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these
[805] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for drying clothes.

251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or " ark,"
352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now
●[857] almost dead, is the " tramping " of the meal, the children being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead immediately behind the chimney, in the " room," where it would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other fireside gear later in the chapter.

354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west, that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its cailleach or not, lies at one side of the fire : alternatively there may be a large settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 92 -- Analyst]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

171 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a
524 circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

857 Many examples could be given of children's games and
524 rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.
754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance
789 of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love
821 charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

241 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting
289 of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

POTS AND PANS

252 As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the
262 price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America,
that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline
171 in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial
baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly
recent development virtually confined to the large towns, especially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural
areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads.
We should probably make an exception of the English-settled
parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargy. Dublin
and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks
to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried
before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by
providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as
standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some
[256] seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed
over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, similarly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow
factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost
unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life:
[493] its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping
horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
262 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully
252 inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater
gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled
water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a
large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On
balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave
of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale
quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have
fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to
work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread.
The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
[857] and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children,
they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden
chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the
air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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two feet or as much as eight feet wide, the furrows between them being from one to three feet in width. These dimensions and the different methods of building the ridges are intimately related to the depth and quality of the soil and to the types of spade used in each locality. Both the breadth and length of the ridges are commonly measured by the spade, and the term score-ground, applied in Co. Kerry to potato land let in conacre, that is from year to year, refers to twenty spade-lengths. When the crop is lifted the ridges are roughly levelled, and the following year they are split, that is the new furrow is dug in the middle of the old ridge. 241

It is not easy to describe the process of ridge-making with the spade and impossible to portray all the varieties of technique employed. It is back-breaking work, yet it is performed with an easy rhythm and a seemingly effortless and almost mechanical efficiency. In its simplest form the grassy strip which is to become the furrow is notched centrally down its length and the sods on each side are each undercut by two spade-thrusts and levered over on to the beds, where they lie flat, grass to grass, like closed hinges (Fig. 48). Normally the manure has already

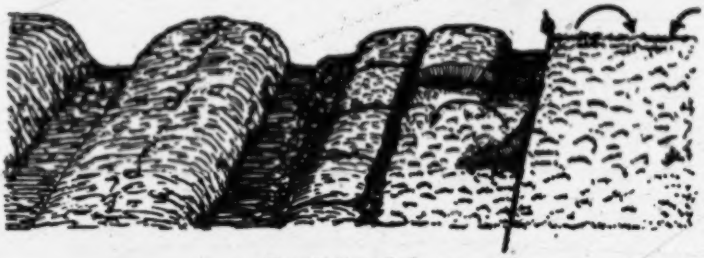

Fig. 48. Lazy-beds.

been spread on the beds, and if the potato sets have also been planted all that is needed to complete the ridge is to break the earth of the furrow and shovel it on to the ridge. More commonly, however, the beds are fully prepared before the sets are planted, and it is the task of the women and children to follow the ridgemakers and thrust the potatoes into the sandwich of sods and manure. This is the method appropriate to the wetter [462] [857]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

241 west, for it means that the ridges can be prepared beforehand as opportunity offers. What is known as the Munster mode of planting 'with the back of the spade' is to thrust the narrow spade through the inverted top sod and drop the set behind the blade as it is levered forward. On the average three rows of potatoes go to each bed, but there are also one- two- and four-set ridges.

A special wooden dibber known as the steeveen, kibbin (little 241 spade) or gugger is employed for planting in Cavan, Leitrim 412 and Longford and may perhaps be correlated with the heavy loy as another archaic tool which has kept its hold in that area. The steeveen with its conical head (Fig. 48) will break through the toughest sod and open a way for the young sprouts. Typi- [462] cally 'guggering' is woman's work, the children following, [857] dropping in the sets and closing the hole with a fork or a mell. I like to think that the steeveen is descended from that universal tool of the women of humble cultivating societies, the digging or planting stick, remote ancestor of the spade. It is a plausible theory that the crops of wheat and barley sown by the first Irish cultivators were planted in this way in the ashes of burnt woodland on the mountainsides. Larger dibbers or 'stamps' with several teeth for planting corn were used until quite recently in some counties, for example Armagh (Fig. 49).

[407]

FIG. 49. Dibbers and (*centre*) sowing fiddle, Co. Armagh.

They are probably the descendents of specimens introduced by English 'planters' of the early seventeenth century. It is the [539] dibberhole which is referred to in the rhyme which has outlived the action it once accompanied:

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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idle Scots shepherd who with his crook knocked a white sea pebble into a rabbit hole among the dunes. And one recalls the theory that the game of cricket, with its 22-yard pitch, had its beginnings in the English openfields among ploughboys (players) and landlords' sons (gentlemen) who threw clods at the ploughman's marking sticks across the chain-wide acre strips completed at the end of a day's work. At any rate cricket has not strayed far from the English openfields and village greens, and in Ireland it clings to the larger towns and to the English-settled areas along the east coast. 241 526

Among other implements for preparing the soil the roller is probably of no great antiquity, though examples of wood or stone are of considerable interest. Alternatively, flat boulders or specially-built clod-slipes are driven over the ploughed ground, the driver being carried along on the platform thus provided and adding to its weight. I have seen the former in Co. Wexford and the latter in Co. Down. In the west the breaking of clods on the ridges is done by hand with a heavy rake (Fig. 1), and the 'harrows' which were formerly pulled by the horse's tail was a similar implement, a block of wood armed with a few wooden teeth. Even the larger harrows were a source of amusement to visiting farmers like Arthur Young, 'more fit to raise laughter than soil', as one observer put it. 241 412

The weeding and protection of the young corn were serious matters in the days when a patch of oats provided a family with its only cereal food. The tethering and herding of livestock were universal habits, and hand-weeding was another task for the young folk. O'Flaherty writes of Connacht: 'They go and lie prostrate or sit upon the corn, to weed it with their bare hands, leaving nothing behind but pure corn'.[1] Swedes are almost invariably weeded and thinned by hand. Thistles growing in corn or flax are pulled with special pincers or 'clips' made either of iron or more usually of wood, of a type which is illustrated in the Luttrell Psalter. The very similar French weeders known as Havre pincers were also used for catching eels. Docks were removed with a heavy forked spud (Fig. 50). There were other less arduous ways of inducing a bounteous crop. The custom of placing a sickle in the corn-field at the 241 [857] 241 412

[1]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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372 hands into cakes and piled against a wall until dry enough to
237 carry home.[1]

After lying spread on the ground for a week or two the turves
314 are footed, that is a dozen or so are put to lean together in the shape of a pitched roof, to catch the wind (Fig. 64). This is
[462] work for women and for children, who are, in some districts,
[857] given a week's holiday from school. Through the months of June and July and often into August there is constant coming and going as the peats are turned and built into larger and larger piles, turn-foots, castles, rickles, lumps and clamps—the names and the shapes show considerable regional variation—until they can be ricked or stacked on the bog ready to be carried to the farms as opportunity offers. The wind is the main drying agent, and once dried the peats acquire a waterproof skin. A well-built stack will throw off the rain, but it is usual in the west to thatch with rushes and add a coping of sods or
[343] stones against the wind. Open-sided turfsheds specially built of wood or stone are the exception rather than the rule. A favourite place for the stack is against the house gable, where it provides a protective warmth even before the turf is burnt. The fuel is taken into the house in baskets, creels or wights, and a small supply is kept handy by the fireside or stored, as in the Aran Islands, on the kitchen loft (Pl. 9, 2).

FIG. 64. Stages in the drying and stacking of turf (not to scale; the stack, right, is about 9 feet high).

Some lowland bogs are too waterlogged to be cut into turves, and if no slane-turf is available the black turf-mud is moulded by hand into bricks or balls which are stacked to dry. In some counties, for instance Meath and Cavan, mud turf is highly prized and its preparation follows a well-ordered routine. After

[1]C. R. Browne and A. C. Haddon, *The Aran Islands*.

FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'[1] 527 527 584

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning. 527 [784] [788] [769] [857] [195] [787]

[1]E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 48.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment 433
assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely [124]
guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends.

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than 462
it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same 178
tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the
home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform 857
household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring
groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend
less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them
more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men
of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school,
at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and
their labor is of utmost importance to the family.

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household 462
round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, [252]
planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and [241]
caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor [231]
clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls [286]
for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer [294]
months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large [437]
livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the
other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones.

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation [226]
than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines [178]
and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree [222]
than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops [482]
of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially
when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in
kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the [561]
complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married [178]
women must endure.

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenu- 178
ously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a 461
benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis 561
Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about
being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer
hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in
America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

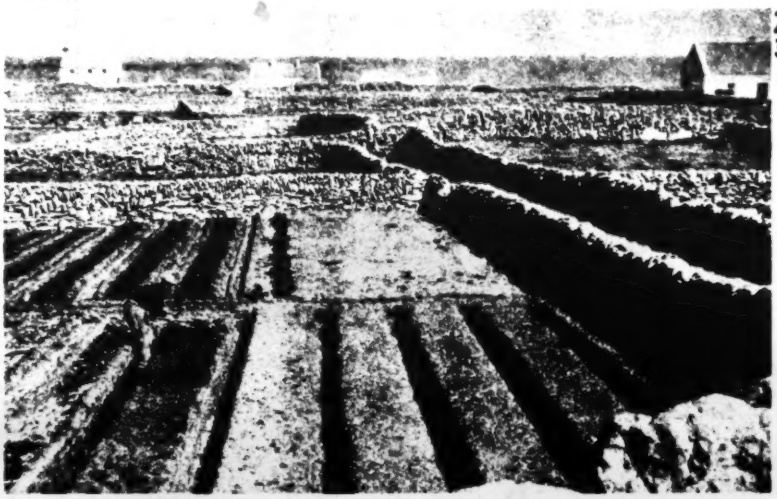

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [261] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

262 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference. 231 [641]

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight. 226 174 [221] [462] [857] [227]

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries —knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves. 226 177 178 [437] [829]

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have [648]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

1o:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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538 539 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchai*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and 538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous 522 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks— [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; [123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October [221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing [178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, [574] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of [561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of [562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis 538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchai* might be visited by a group and serve as host, 573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[857] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although [562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated [574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be- 561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often [868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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574 273 Women tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused [562] [514] them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

574 571 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen [535] and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the [562] cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, [857] while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. 574 834 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one anothers' laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

574 533 Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist [123] with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while 574 273 stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the [533] activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts [535] prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

574 264 Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the chil- [576] dren, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. [354] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the 574 table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after every- 535 one is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

574 579 My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, 123 when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out [577] between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the 574 same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, 579 "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at 178 [738]

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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512 dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.
264 The children may sometimes not come to the table but eat
[521 sitting upon the settle or the hearth seats. They are very
858] silent children. They take little part in the family discus-
sion between older members unless questioned directly.

512 After dinner the men return to their work. The women
462 begin their household and farmyard tasks anew. The fowl
231 have grown so hungry, meanwhile, that they are invading the kitchen and the woman must "hunt" them out of the house. From what remains of the pot of potatoes (which may often hold as much as forty pounds) she feeds them and feeds, too, the household pets. They eat what the family eats, though meat comes their way only upon special occasions.

This done, the woman's chores for the afternoon are much the same as those of the morning. Another large pot of potatoes, mangels, and turnips must be prepared for the pigs, more milk and grain mixed and fed to the calves, turf brought in for the fire, water fetched from the well, and rooms cleaned and swept, in an endless cycle of activity. Should the routine duties come to a pause, there is still always plenty to do in washing, mending, and knitting the clothes of the household. The woman's hands are never idle.

512 There is another important daily activity within the
462 house. The great staple, bread, is baked daily into round
252 cakes or loaves upon the "griddle," an iron tripod, on the
354 hearth. The woman may bake at any time during the day and, if necessary, more than once. Even late in the evening, when the whole family is gathered round the fire, her last task may be to bake bread for late evening tea.

512 After four in the "evening" (as the countryman divides
462 the day), the children arrive from school and must be fed.
[521 The woman sits down with them, talking over the happen-
203 ings of the day, for children are important purveyors of
858] News.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

462 to butter is her charge. She is an expert at the
512 churn.

Her human charges fed, she must feed the animals in their turn. The full-grown cattle and the horse are not her charge, but she must tend calves and pigs and fowl. Milk and potatoes must be prepared for them all.

Before noon, she hangs a second kettle from the hook. This time she fills it with potatoes for the
[262] family. In season, she will add white cabbage, and a portion or two of bacon or salt pork. By the time this is ready the men will be in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

For the men have not been idle. The farmer-father and husband wakes his sons, inspects the cattle and horse, if there is one, and gives them hay and water. If the day is fine, he sallies forth to the fields; if not, and the weather confines him to house and haggard, he has still plenty to do, in building walls, repairing and making machine parts, harness and tools.

Dinner unites the family for the first time since breakfast. Only children of school age are absent and their share of the meal is saved till later. As before, the women and children do not eat till the men have finished. But as the women serve, they
[521] all talk about the experiences of the day. It is the chief time of general family conversation. Only the children are silent, for in rural Ireland a well-
[858] behaved child is a silent one.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

adult; the boy learns work as he learns manhood. 462

Also, the child grows up within the full complex 593
of life within the farm family. His first petty 861
errands are a mere incident in the relationship he 857
builds up with his parents and brothers. He learns not only his work but the whole code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his class, at their hands. This conduct is itself part of his relation to them. It ranges all the way from the errands he runs for his superiors in the family to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make sexual behaviour of any kind an offence, and of that within the family, incest.

Consequently, in so well-knit a group, the com- 462
mand which his father (and his mother) exercises 593
over the son in farm work is only one aspect of that control. His subordination continues as long as his father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the son and his brothers, they have no control of the direction of farm work nor the disposal of the farm's income. I say the son and his brothers, for all the sons are equal in this [554 858] subordination; rural Ireland knows neither primogeniture nor junior right. As long as they remain at home upon the farm they share this status equally.

The behaviour that reflects this state of affairs 593
can be readily observed. Sons go to market and fair from the time they are ten or twelve, but they buy or sell little if anything. Father and sons can be

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean
581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates,
593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship.
[578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive
[164] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only
461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but
152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided
[662] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved
829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same
593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree
562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as
[858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty
461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to
562 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céili* on the common land, which married women do not.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, 858 •
children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely 842
high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the 162
average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593
done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861
mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864]
elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155]
and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593
bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582]
to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606]
law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother'" (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593
have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828]
hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155]
rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562]
with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831]
the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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593 [155] belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually [562] responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[3] [B31]

As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between 593 brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the 578 mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when [B58] the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand 603 that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculca- 593 tion of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

596 The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background 888 reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. [606] Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents in the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

114 Disputes between kin and non-kin in Irish communities have been studied 578 seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are rare or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[3] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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831 203 boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the [609] influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual [124] phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag 797 every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests 793 (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers [776] with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" [783] to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme [577] is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and main- [431] taining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is [781] displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through 861 instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and 155 unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and 855 affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested [561] in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to [856] supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct [864] or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of [863] either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among 858 siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments 562 of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, [593] and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from [872] school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further 562 separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the [794] four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer [858] months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and [609] women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels [832] and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of [164] sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals 204 found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality 831 of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to 124 whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only 831 to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could 855

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult [illegible]ity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] [864]

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 and at the pay-off the "old fellows" walk sometimes many
561 miles to be paid the wages their sons have earned. In one case of land division which the authors witnessed, a Land Commission official walked about the estate pointing out the plots which the selected farmers were to get. The farmers followed in a body at a respectful distance, each ready to step forward when his name was called. Behind them came all the young men of the neighborhood, the farmers' sons. When it was necessary to send someone back to a farmhouse or to cut up stakes to mark boundaries, the orders were transmitted from the official to the farmer and from the farmer to his sons, though these were in the majority of cases adult men. Likewise in country post offices, even after the farm has been made over to the son and the "old people" have the old-age pension, it is the son who comes to collect it for them.

Even at forty-five and fifty, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm, the countryman remains a "boy" in respect to farm work and in the rural vocabulary. A deputy to the *Dáil* (the Irish parliament) raised a considerable laugh in 1933, which echoed into the daily newspapers, when he inadvertently dropped into the country idiom and pleaded for special treatment in land division for "boys of forty-five and older" who have nothing in prospect but to wait for their fathers' farms. Likewise, a countryman, complaining to one of the authors about his position, said: "You can be a boy here forever as long as the old fellow is still alive."

593 It goes without saying that the father exercises his control
561 over the whole activity of the "boy." It is by no means
● 861 confined to their work together. Indeed, the father is the court of last resort, which dispenses punishment for deviations from the norm of conduct in all spheres. Within the bounds of custom and law he has full power to exercise discipline. Corporal punishment is not a thing of the past in

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Ireland, and, especially in the intermediate stages of the child's development, from seven to puberty, it gets full play. 593

It is during those years that the characteristic relationship between father and son is developed in rural communities. The son has suffered a remove from the previous almost exclusive control of its mother, in which an affective content of sympathy and indulgence was predominant, and is brought into contact for the first time with the father and older men. But the transfer is not completed. There is a hiatus in his development through the years of school when his participation in men's work and his relationship with his father has little chance of developing into an effective partnership. A real union of interests does not take place until after Confirmation and school-leaving, when for the first time his exclusive contacts and his entire day-to-day activity, particularly in farm work, will be with his father and the older men.

This fact colors greatly the relationship of father and son, as far as affective content goes. There is none of the close companionship and intimate sympathy which characterizes, at least ideally, the relationship in other groups. Where such exists, it is a matter for surprised comment to the small farmers. In its place there is developed, necessarily perhaps, a marked respect, expressing itself in the tabooing of many actions, such as smoking, drinking, and physical contact of any sort, which can be readily observed in any small farm family. Coupled with this is the lifelong subordination the retention of the name "boy" implies, which is never relaxed even in the one sphere in which farmer father and son can develop an intense community of interest — farm work. Nothing prevents the development of great mutual pride, the boy in his experienced and skillful mentor, tutor, and captain in work, and the man in a worthy and skillful successor and fellow workman, but on the other hand everything within the behavior developed in the rela- 593 578

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Until seven, the child of either sex is the constant companion of its mother. If the family is numerous an elder child, usually a sister, may take over much of the mother's role, but the mother is always near-by. As the woman works in the house or fields, the child is kept by her side. In the house it usually sits in a crib by the fire or plays about on the floor, but always within sight and sound. It learns its speech from its mother, amid a flood of constant endearments, admonitions, and encouragements. The woman's work never separates her from the child. Custom imposes no restraints or interruptions in her solicitude. She looks after its comforts, gives it food, dresses it, etc. She constantly exercises restraints and controls over it, teaching it day by day in a thousand situations the elements of prudery, modesty, and good conduct. 593 855 [868] [867]

The controls she exercises are of a different kind from those of the father. She is both guide and companion. Her authority most often makes itself felt through praise, persuasion, and endearment. Only when a grave breach of discipline demands a restraining power greater than hers, or when an appeal to ultimate authority is needed, does the father begin to play his role. Especially in the years before puberty, the farm father enters the child's cognizance as a disciplinary force. The barriers of authority, respect, extra-household interests, and the imperatives of duty rather than of encouragement make it difficult for any intimacy to develop. 593 861

Even after Confirmation the child's relationship to his mother is not materially weakened. He becomes confirmed, it is true, in a masculine scorn for feminine interests and pursuits, but he can and must still look for protection to his mother against a too-arbitrary exercise of his father's power. In family disputes the mother takes a diplomatic, conciliatory role. From her intermediary position she can call upon the strongest ties between herself and her sons 593

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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cessor to land and chattels. The family property, house, stock, and land, descend to him intact. The other sons must be provided for elsewhere. 428

In choosing the son to remain upon the farm, the father has full power of decision. His interest lies in choosing among his sons the one he thinks will carry on most successfully. There is no rule or norm in the matter; and the brothers are united in expecting an adequate return for their years of service. But none of them may claim more than the other, and they are all dependent upon the father's sense of their fair deserts. In many cases there may be an early difference among them in the inclinations they show in adolescence. But the special position a brother occupies in this regard is a matter of agreement among them all and easy enough of adjustment.

Turning now to the other relationships neither fraternal nor parental within the family, it is obvious that those among the females and between females and males build up in the same way as the ones we have already discussed. 593

The family makes a formal distinction between the female members and their male fellow members in terminology, just as it builds a dichotomy of behavior upon the sexual difference. Thus in the procreated generation daughter and sister, *inghean* and *deirbhshiúr*, correspond to son and brother; for the daughters occupy equivalent positions in a common subordination to the parents. 593 601

These terms express merely a classification of the female individuals and their positions in the complex of reciprocal relationships between family members. What has been said of the conditioning of the boy can be repeated of the girl, with, of course, a difference in the techniques acquired. And no less than in the boy's case, farm work is merely a part of the total adaptation the girl makes toward her fellows and toward the environment in which they live. 593 861

The work of the women is as important in farm economy

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 as the men's. The coincidence between family status and
861 economic role holds for them as well. Women's work on the small farm is complementary to that of the men, as we have seen, though, of course, it is quite distinct. The young girl growing up on the small farm learns this, just as the young man acquires the masculine techniques. The girl is thrown constantly with the mother and the older women of the household. After she is seven, her pursuits differ completely from those of her brother and, except as she is in very close constant association within the household, she has no working contact with her father.

857 Many minor tasks fall to the girl as she grows up, par-
868 ticularly driving and milking the cows. Her conditioning prepares her to fill the role her mother occupies in the household. All the interior of the house, the immediate vicinity of courts and haggard where the fuel is stacked, the well, the poultry yard and sheds, are her concern. She learns to milk cows, feed the pig, tend the chickens, and look after all the young animals through helping the older women. She learns the lore of disposing of eggs, butter, and occasionally of some of the vegetable produce of the garden, potatoes and cabbage, and occasionally goes to market with her mother.

In the chief business of the women, the house itself, the preparation and serving of food and the repair and upkeep of clothing, she serves a never-ending daily apprenticeship. A young girl may often be delegated to look after the hearth, make and keep the fires going, etc. Only the mother makes small purchases of food and household goods. Only the mother bakes the great variety of breads. But by the time she leaves school, the girl may be proficient in these tasks too. So also with the butter making. Income derived from this and from poultry belongs to the older woman; the girl has no share until she herself has married.

000 In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the enterprise. The farm and its income are 462
vested in him. The farm bears his name in the 593
community and sons are spoken of as his 'boys'. In the draining of a field or the sale of cattle at a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye, and refer necessary decisions to him.

But this relationship is much more than economic. Perhaps the best way of describing it is to 462 593 trace its development. The child forms part of the 861 productive unit which is his own family. His growing up is also an apprenticeship. He learns the techniques which will make him a full-fledged member of his class; but there is no divorce between technical and non-technical training. All he learns fits him for one end—to become a farmer-father-husband in a family of his own.

The child sees his father as owner, director and principal worker of the farm. From his example, he learns which are men's tasks and he learns to value the skills they demand. In family deliberations he learns, too, the nice balance between the needs of household and land. It is true he learns these techniques in a narrow school; his father makes sure that he does not deviate from the right and traditional pattern, which folklore, adage and the censure of the village support. But he learns well, by example, competition and practice.

This process is the daily experience of many years; it is very gradual and is embedded in tradi-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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adult; the boy learns work as he learns manhood. 462

Also, the child grows up within the full complex 593
of life within the farm family. His first petty 861
errands are a mere incident in the relationship he 857
builds up with his parents and brothers. He learns not only his work but the whole code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his class, at their hands. This conduct is itself part of his relation to them. It ranges all the way from the errands he runs for his superiors in the family to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make sexual behaviour of any kind an offence, and of that within the family, incest.

Consequently, in so well-knit a group, the com- 462
mand which his father (and his mother) exercises 593
over the son in farm work is only one aspect of that control. His subordination continues as long as his father lives. Even though the major work of the farm devolves upon the son and his brothers, they have no control of the direction of farm work nor the disposal of the farm's income. I say the son and his brothers, for all the sons are equal in this [554]
subordination; rural Ireland knows neither primo- [858]
geniture nor junior right. As long as they remain at home upon the farm they share this status equally.

The behaviour that reflects this state of affairs 593
can be readily observed. Sons go to market and fair from the time they are ten or twelve, but they buy or sell little if anything. Father and sons can be

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of
178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

624 875 more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held,
because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are
[793] apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the
[554] headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports
his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school
with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly
contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches.
[591] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

875 593 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of
their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom
visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems
of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him
875 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity
876 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in
[861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This
[123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me
with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents
[171] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority senti-
[829] ment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk,
the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and
role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and
[123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning
curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

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Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is 593 done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to 861 mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first [864] elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation [155] and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The 593 bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage [582] to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in- [606] law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother'" (Humphreys 1965:246).

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they 593 have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the house- [828] hold, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the [155] rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern [562] with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of [831] the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

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796 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout
627 the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead
782 residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during
[167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the
[582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is
[574] done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on
[621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing
[351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are
[356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of
[262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large
[364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are
[574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper,
[431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs,
• [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children
[431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in
[262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66–92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

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291 834 [759] [155] bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" 158 reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. 751 In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with [291] modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear [834] of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism [753] and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evac- 514 uation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and 827 animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that ha- [863] bitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. [825] Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at [562] parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting [273] the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most [241] carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the main- 237 land, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and 372 burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is 514 burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another 283 custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the [462] secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

* 831 Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are 522 the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood [154] by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore [123] sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is

593 883 direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to him at his marriage.

593 If economic apprenticeship is also a process of conditioning within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

593 867 For the child grows up within the full complex of life within the family. The petty errands which constitute his first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest. [864 684]

593 857 513 Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his beginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

593 561 Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm work is again merely incidental to his long years of life with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

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775 parts fashioned by human hands. A valley in Inis Thiar is believed to have been created by such a ship passing over the island, "with a great roar and blowing of wind." According to Celtic tradition, souls not only transmigrated to the Land of Youth but became reincarnated on earth or embodied in animals through metempsychosis. The belief in reincarnation appears not to have persisted in Inis Beag, but seals sometimes are thought to be repositories of souls; those creatures so possessed look and act human and attach themselves to fishermen who have aided or harmed them, and whose *curach* they will pursue relentlessly. I was told by an old man of a seal that he had cursed at sea for fouling his net, which later followed in his wake for many miles glaring with rage, and finally pursued him 30 feet onto the strand as he and his frightened mates carried the canoe hurriedly to its cot.

Religion and Personality

It is appropriate here to assess the basic personality structure of Inis Beag islanders, since traits such as sexual puritanism, hypochondria, depression, masochism, conformism, and ambivalence toward authority are linked causally with religion in a very direct manner. Other personality characteristics, already or yet to be considered, which are more peripheral to religion include secretiveness, envy and jealousy, dogmatism, indolence, feelings of inferiority, and verbal skill.

Probably the most prominent trait of Inis Beag (and Irish) personality is sexual puritanism. Its etiology is complex and much debated, but appears to embrace most significantly historical (such as the influence of ascetic monasticism and Jansenism), sociocultural (such as the Oedipus complex and male solidarity), and psychological (such as masochism) variables. How long it has been a major component of Irish national character is conjectural, for it is impossible to appraise with accuracy Irish society, culture, and personality prior to the nineteenth century. Sexual attitudes and behavior in Celtic, medieval, and early modern times can be surmised only from tangential and questionable sources; depending on which sources are quoted, as good a case can be made for sexual puritanism as its opposite before 1800.

The inculcation of sexual puritanism in Inis Beag must be examined in three contexts: informal social controls of the curate and those imposed by the islanders on themselves, the influence of visiting "missions," and enculturation in the home. The first of these has been taken up at length in the last chapter. Suffice it to say here, some folk (especially certain youths who consider themselves "worldly") resent the intrusions of priests and neighbors into their sexual lives. They ask what right have young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice and pass judgments in this sphere. Equally resented are those persons who hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby, which may pertain to sexual matters, and those who maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Sexual rumors run rife in the island, such as those concerning the "nude" sunbathing of mainland girls (bared shoulders and lower thighs) and the "attacks" on them at night by

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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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124 831 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they 855 found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex • 864 combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841 Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among 886 women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological signifi- [123] cance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily. 886 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward 828 it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

833 As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the [793] belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal [832] sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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arose partly out of our desire to alleviate distress and not solely to collect 123
information. We had performed the same role seven years earlier among 831*
primitive Nigerians, and for similar reasons. However, the Africans [171]
were uninhibited, talked freely with us about sex, and were not offended by what we subsequently wrote.

Another important source of information on sex was the island 115
nurses, who supplied us with accounts of their own observations over an eight-year period and gave us access to pertinent medical records. My wife and I believe that our information is, for the most part, reliable, 128
but that some of it may well be erroneous. This report will, we are 123
afraid, offend and alienate some of our Inis Beag friends, for whom we hold deep affection; they do not comprehend the aims and values of anthropology and may regard our reporting of sexual beliefs and behavior as a breach of friendship and trust. Certainly our findings will be denied by many Irish readers.

More than any other type of research, culture and personality 114
investigations are needed in Ireland today. Social and cultural anthropologists, rural sociologists, folklorists, and geographers in small numbers have managed to describe and analyze the major sociocultural forms of the Irish folk, but personality generalizations, by and large, have been the by-products of research into other areas and have tended to be impressionistic. Some of the most penetrating studies of Irish character have been made "at a distance" and through the analysis of projective systems and narrow units of culture, such as drinking patterns (Bales 1962). Some Irish writers—"intuitive anthropologists" I call them—also have had insightful things to say about Irish character (usually at a distance too, from church and state). What is sorely needed is a holistic community study done by a culture and personality specialist—a person skilled not only in ethnography, social psychology, and psychiatry (and able to administer projective tests), but well versed in Irish history, literature, and contemporary affairs as well.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Both lack of sexual knowledge and misconceptions about sex among 831*
adults combine to brand Inis Beag as one of the most sexually naive of 864•
the world's societies.

*831 the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children
• 864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
[163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant
83 Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
158 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
828 illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the
[784] Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

to "our man") be chosen for the task. Earlier, according to island opinion, the same priest had caused to be committed to the "madhouse" a local man who publicly challenged certain of his actions. The unfortunate man was released six months later, as per law, since he was not mentally ill. 828

Sexual misconceptions are myriad in Inis Beag. The islanders share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more libidinous than women. The latter have been taught by some curates and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal sin. A frequently encountered assertion affixes the guilt for male sexual strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes of the Inis Beag male. (In Nigeria, among the people whom my wife and I studied, women are thought to be more sexually disposed than men and are the repositories of sexual knowledge; it is they who initiate coitus and so pose a threat to their spouses. Nigerian men place the blame on clitoridectomy performed just prior to marriage.) Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one mother of nine said, "Men can wait a long time before wanting 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown—or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what obviously was an orgasm, he admitted not realizing that women also could achieve a climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed kissing and being handled. 831* 833 [771] [864] • [824] [171]

Inis Beag men feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, a common belief in primitive and folk societies. They will desist from sex the night before they are to perform a job which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are not approached sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth, since they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned "Yanks" have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual practices to island youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed by kin from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction. 831* 834 [841] 831* 177 771 864 831*

The separation of the sexes, started within the family, is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms, and completely in 562 834 [858] 864]

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*831
562 recess play and movement to and from school. During church services,
834 there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys
[858] and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The
• [864] pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers).
[443] Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be
[484] found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male
[526] tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers
[291] "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—
[832] a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual
[184] catharsis.

154 It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustra-
[839] tion among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggres-
[272] sion theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism,
[733] disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be
[578] linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed
83 that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the
584 manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur,
832 but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their
[771] "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience
[626] pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the con-
[783] fessional because of their fear of the priest.

833 We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated
[291] by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is
[12] achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

000 Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161–162).

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better if God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105).

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters.

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent con-

their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66-92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to him at his marriage.

If economic apprenticeship is also a process of conditioning within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

For the child grows up within the full complex of life within the family. The petty errands which constitute his first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his beginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm work is again merely incidental to his long years of life with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Until seven, the child of either sex is the constant companion of its mother. If the family is numerous an elder child, usually a sister, may take over much of the mother's role, but the mother is always near-by. As the woman works in the house or fields, the child is kept by her side. In the house it usually sits in a crib by the fire or plays about on the floor, but always within sight and sound. It learns its speech from its mother, amid a flood of constant endearments, admonitions, and encouragements. The woman's work never separates her from the child. Custom imposes no restraints or interruptions in her solicitude. She looks after its comforts, gives it food, dresses it, etc. She constantly exercises restraints and controls over it, teaching it day by day in a thousand situations the elements of prudery, modesty, and good conduct. 593 855 [868] [867]

The controls she exercises are of a different kind from those of the father. She is both guide and companion. Her authority most often makes itself felt through praise, persuasion, and endearment. Only when a grave breach of discipline demands a restraining power greater than hers, or when an appeal to ultimate authority is needed, does the father begin to play his role. Especially in the years before puberty, the farm father enters the child's cognizance as a disciplinary force. The barriers of authority, respect, extra-household interests, and the imperatives of duty rather than of encouragement make it difficult for any intimacy to develop. 593 861

Even after Confirmation the child's relationship to his mother is not materially weakened. He becomes confirmed, it is true, in a masculine scorn for feminine interests and pursuits, but he can and must still look for protection to his mother against a too-arbitrary exercise of his father's power. In family disputes the mother takes a diplomatic, conciliatory role. From her intermediary position she can call upon the strongest ties between herself and her sons 593

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 the best of his ability. Though he can make what disposal
462 he will of the funds earned by the labor of the group, his wife and children can expect as of right that he shall make it for the family as a whole in which each member receives his share. For the work of his wife is complementary to his, and in its own sphere of as great importance to the livelihood and the organization of the family unit. While he may demand and expect of his wife that she fulfill her household duties, so may she demand and expect that he fulfill his in the management and working of the farm and in providing for herself and the children.

593 As regards income, all money derived from the sale of eggs and butter, the chief concern of the women beyond the house itself, belongs to her to dispose of as she sees fit. Yet the fruits of her labors are also subject to the needs of the family unit, husband and children.

462 The division of labor between the sexes arises within a
593 field of larger interests and obligations. It is part of the behavior expected reciprocally of husband and wife. It is a functional element of their relationship within the family.

●868 The training each sex receives from childhood in farm work reflects this fact. Each learns his or her part in farm economy, not as a vocational preparation but as a making ready for marriage. The boy acquires his man's skills and techniques for the farm and farm family he may head himself some day; the girl learns the woman's role as an integral part of her future state of wife and mother. Each learns to expect of the other not only the loving consideration of husband or wife but the proper skills in farm economy.

462 Among the small farmers this dichotomy of tasks assigned
626 to the sexes in the economy of the farm family is more even
183 than the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, father and mother. It is also an integral part of the personalities of all men and women of the peasant's own kind. One can get many expressions of attitude of this sort. They show that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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his relationship to his fellows within the group. The controls exercised among members in work and in the life of the family in general show themselves a constant pattern to be observed from farm to farm wherever one elects to examine the daily and annual rounds of activity. 593 561 462

Thus in any of the tasks which the group must perform in its economy, the division of labor between the adult farmer-father and his sons may be observed. The father is owner and director of the enterprise; in him the farm and its income are vested; in the community it is known as his and the sons are spoken of as his "boys." Thus in the draining of a field or the sale of cattle in a fair, the sons, even though fully adult, work under their father's eye and refer necessary decisions to him.

Perhaps the best method of illustrating this relationship is to present it from the point of view of the growing individual who takes his place in the farm family. He forms part of the productive unit which is his own family. The techniques of farming are passed on to him, and he learns them under the direction of his father, uncles, and brothers. At their hands he acquires the conditioning which will fit him to form a farm family of his own, thus to continue the traditional pattern. Naturally, his conditioning is more than merely technological; he gets on the farm the full training which makes him a member of his class and time. 462 561 593 868

The growing child ordinarily sees his father as owner and principal worker of the farm. When the whole family group of father, mother, children, and whatever other relatives may be living with them, works in concert, as at the potato planting, the turf cutting, and the haymaking, it is the father who directs the group's activities, himself doing the heavy tasks. The father looks after and takes care of the cattle, delegating minor tasks connected with them to his sons. Even though the cattle may be generally discussed by

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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462 the household, he has full control of them, disposes of them,
561 drives them to the fair, handles and uses the money got for
593 them. If he fails to get a good price, handles the beasts badly,
868 or proves himself a bad judge of them, the criticism of his wife and neighbors soon establishes the value of careful husbandry in the son's mind.

462 The father does all the constant heavy work necessary to
593 keep the land in condition in so rainy and treeless a country.
868 He makes drains, ditches, fences, walls, shelters, and barns, as we have seen. As the son grows older, he learns to help at these tasks, finally taking them over. The father prepares the garden, ploughs, plants, and harrows, does all the spade work of cultivation and everything involving the use of horses and agricultural implements. The son soon learns that these are men's tasks, and he gradually assumes his share of them. The adult men of the neighborhood rival one another at these tasks; they chafe and boast back and forth over their prowess. The son cannot fail to hear and value
462 the techniques which he acquires.

593 He learns those techniques in a narrow school. Where
868 tradition is still so strong and the incursions of trained
626 agriculturalists still relatively infrequent, as among the small farmers, there is little variation from the tried and true way. Each operation and each tool demand a technique of their own. The father makes sure that the son learns it well. Command, rivalry, ridicule, and many an adage and bit of folklore all conspire to the same result.

The father must make sure that the son has learned the right and traditional technique. For he must be ready to stand his ground with anyone in the community in farm skills. Every operation becomes the intimate concern of his neighbors; a man must hold his head high. More important,
[461] many skills are plied in coöperative activities, in turf cutting, haymaking, and much of the work of the garden. In such cases, a definite rhythm is necessary for greater effec-

462 593 868 626 [461]

tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands.

462 593 868

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women.

462 593 857

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's

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Until seven, the child of either sex is the constant companion of its mother. If the family is numerous an elder child, usually a sister, may take over much of the mother's role, but the mother is always near-by. As the woman works in the house or fields, the child is kept by her side. In the house it usually sits in a crib by the fire or plays about on the floor, but always within sight and sound. It learns its speech from its mother, amid a flood of constant endearments, admonitions, and encouragements. The woman's work never separates her from the child. Custom imposes no restraints or interruptions in her solicitude. She looks after its comforts, gives it food, dresses it, etc. She constantly exercises restraints and controls over it, teaching it day by day in a thousand situations the elements of prudery, modesty, and good conduct. 593 855 [868] [867]

The controls she exercises are of a different kind from those of the father. She is both guide and companion. Her authority most often makes itself felt through praise, persuasion, and endearment. Only when a grave breach of discipline demands a restraining power greater than hers, or when an appeal to ultimate authority is needed, does the father begin to play his role. Especially in the years before puberty, the farm father enters the child's cognizance as a disciplinary force. The barriers of authority, respect, extra-household interests, and the imperatives of duty rather than of encouragement make it difficult for any intimacy to develop. 593 861

Even after Confirmation the child's relationship to his mother is not materially weakened. He becomes confirmed, it is true, in a masculine scorn for feminine interests and pursuits, but he can and must still look for protection to his mother against a too-arbitrary exercise of his father's power. In family disputes the mother takes a diplomatic, conciliatory role. From her intermediary position she can call upon the strongest ties between herself and her sons 593

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 as the men's. The coincidence between family status and
861 economic role holds for them as well. Women's work on the small farm is complementary to that of the men, as we have seen, though, of course, it is quite distinct. The young girl growing up on the small farm learns this, just as the young man acquires the masculine techniques. The girl is thrown constantly with the mother and the older women of the household. After she is seven, her pursuits differ completely from those of her brother and, except as she is in very close constant association within the household, she has no working contact with her father.

857 Many minor tasks fall to the girl as she grows up, particularly driving and milking the cows. Her conditioning
● 868 prepares her to fill the role her mother occupies in the household. All the interior of the house, the immediate vicinity of courts and haggard where the fuel is stacked, the well, the poultry yard and sheds, are her concern. She learns to milk cows, feed the pig, tend the chickens, and look after all the young animals through helping the older women. She learns the lore of disposing of eggs, butter, and occasionally of some of the vegetable produce of the garden, potatoes and cabbage, and occasionally goes to market with her mother.

In the chief business of the women, the house itself, the preparation and serving of food and the repair and upkeep of clothing, she serves a never-ending daily apprenticeship. A young girl may often be delegated to look after the hearth, make and keep the fires going, etc. Only the mother makes small purchases of food and household goods. Only the mother bakes the great variety of breads. But by the time she leaves school, the girl may be proficient in these tasks too. So also with the butter making. Income derived from this and from poultry belongs to the older woman; the girl has no share until she herself has married.

In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation.

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers.

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance.

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities.

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

538 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said
539 of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and
538 volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous
572 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks—
[177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations;
[123] relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a
[832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October
[221] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing
[178] regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays,
[570] card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of
[561] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of
[562] women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis
538 Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host,
573 or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

[851] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although
[562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semicircle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated
[574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be-
561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often
[868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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neophyte had the makings of a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí*. When the young storyteller performed publicly, he had to be certain of himself, for if he paused too often or too long or left out portions of the tale, he was ridiculed by the islanders and not called on again. Stories were repeated frequently and enjoyed equally each time by the listeners if told well; sometimes the audience requested a favorite tale, and particular narrators came to be associated with certain stories and always were asked to relate them.

Myths, legends, and folktales told by the *scéalaí* and the long established stories of the *seanchaí* never were embellished but told as accurately as possible. If a narrator attempted to alter such a tale, members of the audience would interrupt and correct him. Stories newly acquired by the folk were modified initially by those who introduced them and by subsequent narrators for a spell, but gradually they became standardized until the point was reached when no one telling them could effect further alterations. The fact that storytellers believed their tales added to the joy of hearing them, for the narrators became deeply involved emotionally in the events that they were describing, and their enthusiasm infected their listeners.

The following were the qualities possessed by a skilled storyteller: he told tales often and derived great pleasure from doing so; he had a musical voice when speaking in either Gaelic or English; he spoke slowly and used few bodily movements; he knew when to pause for effect, especially after a notable incident in the story, which allowed the hearers to picture it in their minds and savor it; his pauses seldom exceeded ten seconds, and he did not cough or interject "bedad," "begob," or "musha" while pausing (an indication that he was trying to recall the next portion of the tale); he looked at each member of the audience in turn, and often stared down at the floor or into the fire for a time; and, he smiled but did not laugh after relating an episode which aroused merriment among his listeners.

When a storyteller was called on, he thought for a spell, head in hands, instead of immediately launching into his tale, even though he probably had made a choice long before. He did not need the urging of the audience or the "courage" afforded by whiskey or stout—which singers and dancers do today—in order to perform. Once started, he never rose from the hob in the hearth, and if he gestured too much in attempting to enact the tale he was laughed at. Interruptions other than corrections were not countenanced; no words of encouragement or praise were uttered as in singing and dancing; and no one dared sleep during a session. The late *scéalaí* carried a short sally rod which he used to prod listeners who appeared to be weary. It is alleged that he once tried to gouge the eyes of a nodding youth with his forked fingers, an incident which often is alluded to when his past performances are recollected.

Contrary to the opinion of nativists, storytellers of the past in Inis Beag were as proficient in English as in Irish, and tales were told in both tongues with equal ease and audience appreciation. The same cannot be said of proverbs, however, for the folk seldom employ them in their English speech. Proverbs figure prominently in the vernacular and are brief and pithy; their adroit use is a mark of erudition and elegance of speech, and they are used in ordinary conversation to

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

a powerful factor in the history of human culture, and that it needs spiritual as well as economic force to bring about new growth. But I am no supporter of those who, indulging in sentimental regrets for a Celtic twilight of doubtful authenticity, find in the past a Golden Age to which they would have us return. Our view should be forward. There is in Ireland, thanks to the astonishing virility of peasant tradition, a great opportunity to save and transform rural life, as happened in Denmark, before it has declined too far. In that revival education must play its part. A geographer may be forgiven for attributing the general ignorance about the foundations of rural culture to the very backward position of geography teaching in Ireland, where none of the Universities has given the subject full recognition—a state of affairs perhaps unparalleled in any part of Europe. Moreover, except for a few well-equipped and well-staffed schools, the standard of geography teaching in the schools is half a century behind the times.

Peasant ownership, for good or ill—it has not so far provided the answer to Ireland's problems—is now established. In Northern Ireland 38% of the farm holdings are under 15 acres in extent and only 4% exceed 100 acres: 27½% are between 15 and 30 acres (the corresponding figure in Eire is 27%). Cheap electricity may provide a basis for restoring rural industries as an essential and intimate part of the life of the countryside. The undoubted virtues of the Ulster character were surely related to the traditions of peasant weavers before that tradition was submerged in the Industrial Revolution. The essentials of the country craft—simplicity of form, soundness of construction and fitness to purpose—must somehow be restored. The traditional skill in wood working can be revived: re-afforestation should be undertaken on bold lines, and every effort made to save the native flora and fauna from further destruction. The difficulties of the present time are forcing on our attention the view expressed by many leading thinkers, that the rural tradition is of special importance for the maintenance of society, and that there are

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

There are three or four small shops, but only one has a regular counter, and it is also the only public-house on the islands. 444

There is no regular employment for labourers, but occasional work is paid for at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* a-day. 465

The women, besides attending to the ordinary domestic duties, help the men at field work, at seed time and harvest, and at drawing sea-weed for manure; they card, dye, and spin the wool for clothing, and in rough weather, when supplies from the mainland are short, grind oats or barley in the quern, either for the cattle or for domestic use. This is extremely hard work, and requires two women, one to work at the grinding, and the other to feed the grain from her apron. They also employ part of their time at quilting or knitting. The average annual money handling of a family is from £40 to £50. 462 [434]

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The children of a family, who are usually numerous, are sent to school when about four years of age, and at first attend regularly; but as they grow older their attendance is often very irregular, as they are liable to be kept at home by their parents to assist at field work in times of pressure. They are said to be very smart and intelligent, but their progress is interrupted and checked by this cause. At the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they have reached the second stage of fifth class, they are taken from school, and then enter into the regular routine of household and farm work until they either marry or emigrate. They marry young, generally for purely family reasons, romance not entering into the case. Courtship as a regular institution does not exist; and if exceptional cases occur they must be rare; as for two young people of opposite sexes to be seen walking together is looked upon as being decidedly wrong. Matches are arranged by the parents from considerations of suitability of families, not, as in many other places, by money bargains. As soon as an arrangement is come to between the elders, usually before Shrove, the young man goes and asks the girl personally; if he be refused, which sometimes, though seldom, happens, he considers himself disgraced, and is often inconsolable. The marriages often take place without any rejoicings or social reunions, the young couple going quietly home after the ceremony is over. In some cases they set up house afresh on their own account, but if the bridegroom be the eldest son who usually inherits the parent's house, &c., the bride goes to live with his family. 871 584 585 591

Mr. Michael Lavelle, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information as to the customs and folk-lore of the people, informs me that he has heard that sometimes, on the occasion of a wedding, 585 [115]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

463 survivors of these wandering folk are the tinkers, sworn enemies
326 of the farmers but useful in many ways to the farmers' wives. Though miscalled gypsies they are of native Irish stock and have little, if any, Romany blood. Numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 but declining, they now find little scope for their traditional skill as white smiths but subsist mainly on collecting scrap metal and dealing in horses. Down to recent times their
[273] services were in demand for making and repairing the stills in which home-made whiskey (poteen) was manufactured.
[554] Weavers and tailors as well as tinkers were despised by farming folk as 'travellers', whereas the smith was held in high esteem.

Most of the home industries depended on wood and other
463 plant products, natural or cultivated, and on the skin and hair of
178 animals. Nearly all these crafts are now dead or dying and their products, perishable by nature, are either gone or fast disappearing. A few skills live on, others survive in children's pastimes or in the memories of old people. The unwritten lore of
[824] the countryside included a vast store of information on all the
[825] varied trees, plants and animals, birds and fishes which in times past played their part in the lives of the people. Nearly every
[861] species had its practical, medicinal or magical uses, and through careful observation, empirical knowledge and a wealth of poetic fancy, a vivid interest in the world of nature was maintained and passed on from one generation to another. Much of this lore has been lost with the decline of the Gaelic tongue and the spread of formal education and book-learning. The
[871] country school must conform to a clerk-breeding curriculum designed to meet urban demands. The destruction of woodland and the debasement of standards of living which followed the adoption of the alien potato and the consequent famines had serious consequences on home crafts. Then mass-produced goods came to drive out many products which depended on a discriminating knowledge of local materials. Thus barbed wire has taken the place of its rustic prototype—a hay-rope strung with thorns—and binder-twine has killed a dozen varieties of home-made ropes and thongs. The economist might think of them as bonds tethering rural communities to the soil, but to the sociologist they imply spiritual as well as physical links with mother earth.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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number was reduced to only 580,000. The great famine of 1845 to 1852 and the tide of emigration which followed brought about a rapid decline in the use of the language. In addition, the elementary school system was directed toward substituting English for Irish, and until 1922 instruction in most schools was given in the English tongue. It was reported in 1946 that only about 40,000 persons in the Republic used Gaelic as their true vernacular (Freeman 1960:166–169).

All Inis Beag folk of the age of eight years and older speak English as well as Irish, many with greater fluency than mainland peasants, for English is taught in the school and is spoken with Gaelic in homes where a realistic attitude toward emigration prevails. As in most of Ireland before 1922, English was employed as the medium of instruction in the school, and sermons in the church were delivered in English; even today the islanders confess to their priests in English—a fact little known. The widespread ability of the folk to use English is not readily apparent, however, for several reasons: the people are subsidized by the government to have their children learn Irish at school, and curates have urged, even threatened, that the foreign tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds; teachers have ridiculed English speech idiosyncracies of certain students and adult islanders before their pupils and, as a result, have induced shyness among the youth; the secretiveness of many persons and suspicion of outsiders of others prevent them from revealing their linguistic aptitudes to strangers; a few folk are nativists themselves and shun the use of English for that reason; and, finally, I have witnessed islanders "cod" (jokingly misinform) outsiders as to the true language situation.

The English speech of the islanders, as is common throughout rural Ireland, represents a syncretism of Gaelic and English forms; that is, English vocabulary is merged with Irish grammar, and Gaelic phonemes and speech rhythms influence English pronunciation. Irish terms commonly are incorporated into English speech, and, conversely, English words form an important part of the vocabulary of the folk when they employ the vernacular. Nativists are extremely critical of English vocabularly borrowings, a point of view not shared by the islanders; the latter are equally critical of the creation of new Gaelic terms by nativists for cultural innovations. The folk, among themselves, also are critical of the language revival movement, since most of their number must emigrate to English speaking countries where lack of mastery of the tongue places them at a competitive disadvantage. Irish speech is judged by nativists as "good" or "bad" according to at least three criteria: the prevalence of despised English words, the retention of traditional Gaelic terms, and the richness of Irish idiom. Many observers, including linguists, believe that the "best" Gaelic in Ireland is spoken in Inis Beag and nearby islands; however, my wife and I had visitors from the mainland who were declared to be more proficient Irish speakers than the island folk themselves by Inis Beag people who met and talked with them. In this case, probing revealed that the evaluation was based on our friends' mastery of idiomatic expression and clarity of pronunciation. The ability of the native speaker to combine accent and idiom is known as *blas*, and the folk can ascertain readily whether a stranger has learned Gaelic "from the cradle" or "at the school" (called "Christian Brothers' Irish" after teachers of that order).

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [674]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, danc-
[178] ing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride them-
[515] selves on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
171 of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

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women in the island and are attracted by what they consider to be a more rewarding life on the mainland and abroad, and so emigrate for these reasons. One of the most "pitied" girls in the island is a returned emigrant to the United States, who, despite being 24 years of age and suitable for marriage in every way, is not being courted, although it is known that she came back to Inis Beag to obtain a husband.

All of the conditions making for personality depression—the intrusion of priests into secular affairs, hypochondria, malicious gossiping, poverty, boredom, and isolation—also instigate emigration. My analysis assigns the secular excesses of the clergy and their implementation of the Jansenist doctrines of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the primary push factors in emigration and supports the contention made by Paul Blanshard that, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954:154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard as regards all of Ireland is very much a reality in Inis Beag.

Other internal factors accounting for emigration which are considered important by the folk are the deadening of initiative by government services and subsidies and the institutionalization of emigration itself. While many islanders believe that the government ought to support even further the local economy in order to combat emigration, others feel that its present level of benevolence has had a deleterious effect on their character. Young people observing the indolence of their elders, according to this opinion, are shamed into seeking a more active life away from Inis Beag. In my estimation, this is a superficial cause, but the institutionalization of emigration is a vital factor, more recognized by youth than by their parents. Just as in the case of late marriage, emigration since famine times gradually has become an expectation—a "way of life"—and it will stimulate some folk to leave even though, in the estimation of their fellows, it might be advantageous for them to remain. When a young man says that he has an "itch to go to England and work for a spell," he usually is being motivated in this manner.

Among the external causes of emigration, the most significant are the growth of prosperity on the mainland and abroad, the influence of ever increasing numbers of tourists who visit and returned emigrants who come for short stays or to retire in Inis Beag, the impact of the mass media of communication, and the increasing availability of scholarship funds for children to attend secondary schools on the mainland. The United States has been a land of freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the Irish since the early seventeenth century, but particularly during and after the famine (Approximately 1,000,000 Irish emigrated between 1846 and 1851, and another 1,500,000 perished from hunger, according to Woodham-Smith 1962:411.). The first record of substantial emigration from Inis Beag is in 1822, and from that time until the Second World War most islanders migrated to the United States, never to return. However, with the growth of prosperity in England after 1946, the stream of emigration shifted in that direction. Not only did jobs become plentiful across the Irish Sea then, but large, viable ethnic communities served by Irish clergy had sprung up in the larger cities. It became possi-

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133 which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—
[137] of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which com-
[361] pose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.
[417]

105 The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a
[205] "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the
206 seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former
[871] coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which
759 employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who
288 resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the
464 only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the
[502] narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies,
[793] passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less
177 cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due
178 to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has
505 had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the
[131] tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can dis-
[484] cover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

17 The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in
[211] a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[101] [2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important
[121] changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.

589 to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought
593 to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential
[155] wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from
[793] doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

* 831 To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his
581 home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a
589 mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsi-
567 bilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors
[593] militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

162 Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag
167 must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than
582 are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply
589 reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years.
* [871] Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are
[484] more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled
[178] at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad
182 to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since
582 late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by
829 a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are
[561] nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often
582 articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in
[586] Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872 •
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [874]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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boys and young men (attempts to hold their hands or kiss them, while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on the part of my wife and me to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual phantasy at their core in every case.

Church influence also is exerted through missions which come to Inis Beag every three to five years. On these momentous occasions, two Redemptorist priests (usually, but also Franciscans, Dominicans, and Passionists) spend a week in the island, where they conduct mass each morning and preach long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone—even old people and mothers with newborn infants—is urged to attend to receive the "blessings of the mission;" to some this means gaining time out of Purgatory for themselves or a deceased kinsman, while to others absence carries with it the penalty of damnation. A mission usually has a theme whose variations are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting priests in their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant also are addressed. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their donations is displayed publicly. It is said that a mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere in the island which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

The seeds of repression are planted early in infancy by parents through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable attention and affection on their offspring, particularly on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate fondling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Verbal affection comes to supplant contact affection by the time that the child can walk. Any forms of direct or indirect sexual expression—masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation —are punished severely by word and deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of their siblings and outsiders, and sex never is discussed before children of any age. Separation of the sexes starts within the family among siblings in early childhood, and is augmented by separation in almost all segments of adolescent and adult activity. Brothers come to associate mostly with brothers, and sisters with sisters, at play in and near the cottage, traveling to and from school, and in the chapel. Boys and girls are separated to some extent in classrooms and completely in play at recess. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists and vacationing emigrants tend to bathe at one end and women at the other; some swimmers change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses "daringly"—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which bespeaks of sexual catharsis.

Parents and their school age offspring read the popular religious journals found in most homes, and many of the articles therein deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether or not certain women were pregnant, using that word before children, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversations postponed until the young people could

831*
cents and adults. It is through these agencies that Jansenism, masochism, 181
the Oedipus complex, male solidarity, and other inextricably linked 182
factors shape the severe sexual repression which gives rise to the cultural 626
manifestations discussed in the last section of the chapter.

Priests of Jansenist persuasion have had subtle means of repressing 831*
the sexual instincts of the islanders in addition to the more extreme 626
methods of controlling behavior—"clerical social control," such as em- 793
ploying informers, allocating indulgences, and refusing the sacraments
to, and placing curses on, miscreants. Through sermons and informal [779]
classroom talks, the pulpit and the national school have served as
effective vehicles of church discipline. The talks are especially telling, [872] •
since they take advantage of the personality malleability of the formative [155]
years. The adult Irish person is rare who, although anticlerical, and 831 •
even agnostic or atheistic, can transcend these early enculturative ex- 626
periences, particularly in times of social crisis or personality disorgan- 684
ization. Erring islanders have often been sought out by priests and 793
talked to privately after their ways have become known through gossip, informers, or the confessional. Some curates have suppressed courting, dancing, visiting, and other behavior either directly or "indirectly" (widely interpreted in Ireland) sexual in nature by physical action: that is, roaming the trails and fields at night seeking out young lovers and halting dancing by their threatening presence. This outward form of intrusion into island affairs is resented by most folk, as is the inward intrusion through priestly remonstrances; they question the right of the young, virginal, inexperienced, and sexually unknowledgeable curates to give advice in this sphere.

Church influence is also exerted through missions which visit Inis 831*
Beag every three to five years. On these occasions, two Redemptorist 797
priests (occasionally Franciscans, Dominicans, or Passionists) spend a 626
week on the island, where they conduct mass each morning and deliver 771
long sermons in the chapel every afternoon or early evening. Everyone, [796]
even old people and mothers with young infants, is urged to attend to [783]
receive the "blessings of the mission." To some, this means shortening the time in purgatory for themselves or a deceased relative (an indulgence used to enforce church discipline). To others, absence carries with it the penalty of damnation, just as viewing an eel or small fish in the sacred well, appropriated from the Druids, promises salvation in an equally magical fashion. A mission usually has a theme, the variations of which
are explored with high emotion and eloquence by the visiting clerics in [781]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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178 ble to visit Inis Beag frequently, as the cost and distance are slight compared to a journey across the Atlantic.

The many vacationing emigrants who now return to the island at Christmas or Easter or during the summer months often succeed in persuading relatives and acquaintances to return to England with them. Those so persuaded declare that they will return soon with their "fortunes" to settle permanently, but they seldom do once "emancipated." Since the Second World War, several Americans have returned home, and their stories of life in the United States make the youth restive. Tourists who remain for weeks and months in Inis Beag and come to know many islanders also sow the seeds of discontent. A favorite subject of talk in the pubs is the relative advantages to be gained from migrating to particular cities in England and America, and anthropologists as well as returned emigrants are called on as consultants in this matter by youths.

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204 Almost every cottage in Inis Beag has a radio, or "wireless," and although the folk seldom read books, a wide assortment of domestic and foreign magazines
207 and newspapers find their way into most homes. These mass media also are an emancipating force making for restiveness and discontent, because they allow islanders a glimpse behind the "lace curtain" at what appears to be a happier and
177 freer world. Television was introduced into Inis Beag in 1963 at the lighthouse,
207 and a second set was procured for the new "dance hall" when it was completed two years later. Few islanders venture to the lighthouse to view television, but I am told by correspondents that many now visit the hall during the several evening hours when transmission from Telefis Eireann takes place. As a result, television has become an acculturative medium to be reckoned with. Both radio and television programs are censored in Ireland, but even so the morality expressed in them—especially in the sex and violence drenched American ones—presents a striking contrast to locally conceived moral precepts. A hypothetical censor from Inis Beag most certainly would create more discontinuities with his shears in television performances than would his much maligned "secularized" colleagues in Dublin. My wife and I found that viewing television with islanders at the lighthouse on two occasions was a traumatic experience; it gave us a different (and even more disquieting) perspective on programs in the United States and their enculturative effects than can be obtained at home.

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• 873 Since the Second World War, 28 island youths have pursued secondary education elsewhere in Ireland, either in high schools, called "colleges," or in technical schools, and most have been supported by government scholarships. The usual high school scholarship is for 5 years, and a student must be 14 years of age and qualify by competitive examination to receive one. Only 4 of these 28 students
873 —of which 2 are teachers in the national school—have returned to Inis Beag. One
[562] young man watched 2 girls, either of whom he eventually might have married, go off to the mainland for school and said, "Scholarships are killing the island;" what he was referring to, other than his own disappointment, is the fact that 19 of the 28 students who left for advanced education are girls. The reason for the disproportionate number of girls receiving scholarships is that they are far more moti-
[829] vated academically and have better scholastic records than boys. There is, however, a widespread belief in the island that certain families are favored by priests and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds. 873 [829]

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by eseating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths. 167 177 874 [658] [668] [829] [186]

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school. 167 168 653 344 [793] [657] [829] [657] [874]

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there 167 168 829

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 and a man with many years' experience in Irish rural affairs,
428 attempt to give a statement of the generalities. They express, however, an ideal rather than an actuality.

The average household consists of six persons [and the parents]. Of necessity not more than one could be provided for on the holding and assuming, for example, that the family consisted of two girls and four boys, the position would be somewhat as follows:

593 The eldest son would in the course of years assume ownership of the holding. A second son might be provided with a second-
428 ary education and might possibly win a County Council scholar-
● 874 ship . . . enabling him to pursue a course of engineering or medicine practically free. In the event, however, of his not being so fortunate, the thrift of the family may enable him to pursue a similar course at the university, the intervals between terms and the long vacation being spent on the farm.

Some years ago medicine was the profession usually pursued provided the boy had no vocation for the priesthood. At that time the cost of his board was appreciably reduced by an arrangement through which neighbors' sons lodged together and brought with them supplies of potatoes, oatmeal, home-cured pork, in fact, provided for almost all their own food. When the boy is qualified to his own particular calling, to his credit it may be said that he denies himself many little luxuries in order to pay back the cost of his training and thus assist the other members of his family.

593 The third son either got trained in business and in due course started one of his own, or emigrated where he could also refund
428 the cost to his parents. The fourth son might possibly become a primary school teacher, a civic guard, a tradesman [artisan] apprenticed by his father in the near-by town, or again his family might give him enough to marry into another small holding.

One of the girls received a dowry or, as they say here, she was "fortuned off" into another small holding of similar status. The second girl possibly favored nursing, teaching, business, or domestic service, or again possibly religion, or even a clerical position of some sort either here or abroad.

166 The above quotation states the generalities in terms of
463 upward social mobility. The influx of the country people
593

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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463 products of specialized labor are open and visible to everyone, and in some measure they are part of the lore which each man learns. Not all the men come to practice them, but they have all seen them or heard them described, and they are part of the fund of conversation, precedent, and value which is common coin among the people of the community. One's special craft does not segregate one from one's neighbors or take one outside the community here. Rather it is one's mark or sign, one's reputation and status within it.

This is the case particularly where, as here, most of the craftsmen of one sort or another have always depended upon a plot of land or a kitchen garden behind their cabins, with perhaps a pig or a cow or two, nearly as much as they depended upon their craft. By this dependence they were never segregated from the rest of the local population, either physically or occupationally. They too were agriculturalists of a sort and shared farmers' tribulations. Just as the farmers knew something of their techniques, so the local craftsmen were nearly always proficient in the ways of agriculture. Today in rural Clare the handy man may be anything from a veterinarian or bonesetter to a building contractor. He is always without benefit of law, apprenticeship, or formal training, and merely follows a technique of which everyone knows something. The farmers are ready to pass upon his skill, to debate the technical points of his work, to build up or tear down his reputation.

463 467 874 Down to the time of the World War, in the last generation, the close acquaintance the small farmers had with the special skills of the countryside was reinforced by the interest the farmers had in putting their sons to a trade. They could often find a place for them thus. In the towns even today formal apprenticeships, into which the farmer must pay for his son to enter, still flourish.

The statements one can get about the local specialists,

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at least of those of the better recognized trades, are direct 467
and intimate. The following words illustrate something of 874
the character ofapprenticeship. A small farmer is speaking of his own knovledge of local conditions:

Before the war there used to be about twenty shoemakers in 463
the neighborhood, but now they've mostly gone away or are in 467
the towns. One of them went into Ennistymon. Whenever a 874
farmer wants a strong pair of boots even yet, he will not go to 294
a shop but he would go to the shoemaker. It wasn't always the case the son of a shoemaker would follow the trade because there was good money in it. With it they would buy a farm and so for his son, and they would go to farming. If a farmer had a crippled son, he might send him to the shoemaker to teach him the trade. Papers were signed that bound the boy for three years to the tradesman, and then the boy would go live with the shoemaker. At first he would be taught to tap, then to stick, then to sew, and the last thing would be to cut. If a boy left before the three years were up, no one would give him a job, and no other tradesman would take him on to teach him a trade. The father had to give twenty pounds to twenty-five pounds to teach him. At the end of three years the boy was given his indenture papers which meant he could set himself up any place in the country or, if he had not enough money to do that, he would work as a journeyman for someone else and his papers would give him the right to do it.

There were a great many tailors and smiths too. The time of work was three years. A boy who was a cripple might be sent to tailoring. He was taught three years and then he could set himself up. It was the easiest of them all to get along with because it required no money to start with. In the old days the tailor used to come to the house and stay for a week or so and make clothes for all the men of the house and go to the next house after.

The smiths trained boys also. When I was small, a cousin of 463
mine had a forge below on the road and any wet day all the 874
boys used to gather there and watch and talk. I started out by 326
blowing the bellows and then doing other things until finally I was as good as anyone. If I had the material I could make shoes, and I always shoe my own horses.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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habitual utilization of persons specially skilled in them. 463
They are the ones to whom the small farmers habitually resort. Thus legal sanction might become necessary for matchmaking as soon as land reform made the farmers legal owners of the farms they transfer in the match. But a long experience of court tangles and reprimands by judges was necessary to establish the licensed solicitor as the channel for negotiation. The handy man who was a legal expert and had a fine copyist's hand in the country districts flourished quite a while longer, and flourishes occasionally even now. In the country districts, down to the present, these local specializations were acquired through personal association of one kind or another with former specialists. Very often skills are deemed hereditary in the eyes of the country people. But actually they are acquired as often through gradual development of habit begun out of interest and imitation as by inheritance and parental instruction. They are passed on quite often to others than sons. The following extract from field notes illustrates the development of such skills:

The local man who cuts hair here is a handy man; the man 463
Donnolly, who goes about and kills pigs for his neighbors is a 874
handy man. When we asked, we were told by Flanagan that 231
Donnolly was the butcher and handy man. They butcher only sheep, goats, and pigs. Cattle would be killed by the town butcher. Flanagan said Donnolly was not a true butcher, for he did not serve his time. If they want a boy to be a butcher, they send him to town and pay a fee and he would be trained there. Then they take out papers binding him. Donnolly said he learned it when he was a young man, but now that he was getting old he was not doing it any more. It takes several men to hold the pig, put a hook through the mouth, and kill it with a heavy blow on the head. They take it home, lay it on a table, and take a knife and cut it up. Then it is hung up, salted, and cured. Afterwards the butcher is given a bottle of stout for his work, as well as some fresh meat, while the husbands who helped get nothing.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by 654
islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new 228
boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in [178]
Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *currach*, much as did their grandfathers. [501]
The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected [894]
in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable 262
and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and 226
fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and 178
those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste 825
and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical [241]
fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other mani- [751]
festations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust [757]
of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned [312]
foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of 226
varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few 229
with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the [221]
times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in member- [476]
ship from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held 226
misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because 181
they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

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638 639 191 [637] add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland 538 639 are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

533 535 [126] Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

63 The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchai*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a 533 534 high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge [178] into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only • [874] pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat [164] resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer [178] played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of [172] the "*céili* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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533 the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen. Only a few tunes accommodate the songs
[539] sung in the island, and the text is far more important to listeners than the ability of a singer to carry the melody. Much admired is the person who can sing a long ballad without pausing or making a mistake, and each episode of the song is listened to attentively, while an occasional, "God be with you.", "Good man.", or "That's it." from the audience urges the singer on or rewards his efforts.

123 The records of songs that my wife and I brought to Inis Beag with us fea-
533 ture performers who sing in both Gaelic and English, and the latter were favored
177 by the islanders. Contrary to our expectations, they disliked our Ceol Linn records
[186] from Dublin, because they could not understand the Irish of the singers; nor did they care for a commercial record cut in a nearby island, for the ethnocentric reason that the singers there are thought to be inferior to their own. We soon had to learn folk songs, as we often were "called out" to sing, but our American songs although admired as to melody, did not arouse the interest of our listeners as to text. "The Cowboy's Lament," once learned, came to be "my song" and was always requested at parties; it is now sung by others in my absence, but never when I am
[834] in the island. Just as this song appeals to the masochism of the folk, my wife's singing of "The Lavender Cowboy"—"who had only two hairs on his chest"—in a pub aroused their sexual puritanism, and was never sung again after its introduction because of the embarrassed response of the men. Since we ordered many Irish folksong books in order to learn texts, island singers borrowed them to commit to memory additional texts themselves, and they also requested that we give them texts of "cowboy songs" taken from records.

123 My ballad was prompted by the absence of an indigenous composer, some
533 impromptu rhyming that I had done in the pubs, an eye witness account of the rescue (written by my wife but dictated by me, according to local opinion) which appeared in a Dublin newspaper, and was urged on me by my respondents. I chose the air of the popular broadside song, "Brian O'Linn," and copied the lyric style of its composer, and based as many verses as possible on the more prevalent rumors which arose in the months following the shipwreck. Copying the folklore idiom as accurately as I could, I also employed many Irish terms—especially place-names—and eschewed Yank expressions while incorporating local ones at every
[177] opportunity. In time, island balladiers came to substitute words and phrases, and even stanzas, as they molded the song more closely to their tongue and milieu. Some lines came to be used as proverbs and others to stimulate a variety of conversational responses.

535 Little is known of the history of Irish dancing. The earliest references to
175 round and long dances are from the sixteenth century, and they appear to be older than the single, or "step," dances. The step and figure dances of today were created by the dancing masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (O'Keeffe and O'Brien 1912:13–27). Step dancing preceded figure dancing in Inis Beag, although there is a difference of opinion among elders as to whether or
535 not the coast guard families introduced figure dancing a hundred years ago. Young
178 adults no longer step dance, although since 1960 children have been stimulated
• [874] to learn the skill through instruction in the school and by watching and participating in the dances of the students attending summer language school; so this may

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

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teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of these families the greater share of scholarship funds. 873 [829]

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece—attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in 1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more discontent among young people. There are those who denounce the language school on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths. 167 177 874 [658] [668] [829] [186]

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lending library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better constructed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compensate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of the activities of the language school. 167 168 653 344 [793] [657] [829] [657] [874]

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there 167 168 829

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places a high premium upon continence, penance and, in most spheres of life, on abstemiousness (Humphreys 1966: 25–26).

Humphreys further points out that "the effects of the religious tradition of the Irish, let alone of the countryman, upon the social behavior and attitudes of the people has never been systematically studied from a sociological point of view." He notes that the classic study, *Family and Community in Ireland*, by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball, based on research done over thirty years ago, "leaves the matter virtually untouched," and "attributes the countryman's attitude towards sex almost exclusively to the structure of life in the rural community."

> Granted the profound influence social structure has on such a basic matter, a purely structural-functional analysis is hard put to explain adequately the quite ascetic sexual morality of the Irish countryside. . . . [An] attitude similar to that of the countryman is far from uncommon in a city such as Dublin—and among New Dubliners and Old Dubliners to boot—whose social structure differs so radically from that of the countryside. Structural-functional explanations of attitudes do hold up to a point. But world-views and their ethical consequences also have their special effect (Humphreys 1966: 24–27).

Monasticism and Augustinianism certainly "set the stage" for later Jansenism, although all three probably are connected with basic Irish culture and personality traits of long standing.

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Jansenism is succinctly placed in its historical context in Ireland by Joe McCarthy.

> Like most everything in Ireland, the severe strictness of the old-time Catholic clergymen was rooted in historical events of the country's past. During the dark era of the anti-Catholic Penal Laws in the 18th Century, young Irishmen had to study for the priesthood on the Continent. In the early 1790's, the British Government became alarmed by the rise of Theobald Wolfe Tone's Irish Protestant revolutionary movement and made hurried bids of appeasement to Irish Catholics in an effort to win their loyalty. One of these conciliatory moves was the establishment of the Catholic theological seminary at Maynooth in 1795. Perhaps not entirely by accident, the faculty of the new college was staffed by refugees from the French Revolution, promonarchy theologians who hated Tone's republican ideas. Most of these theologians had been influenced by Jansenism—the rigid and gloomy doctrine, denounced as Calvinistic by the Jesuits, that man is a helplessly doomed being who must endure punishing soul-searching and rigorous penances to prove his love of God. Mere faith and constant church-going . . . are not

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*831 155 175 178 181 779 795 798 [785] enough to win salvation. . . . Thanks to the influence of the French theologians at Maynooth, most of the Irish Catholic hierarchy sided with the British against Tone in the rebellion of 1798, and supported Prime Minister William Pitt's Act of Union. Their forbidding and stern Jansenist theory strongly flavored Irish Catholicism until it was finally officially discouraged in the middle of the 19th Century. The last vestiges of the doctrine have long since disappeared from Irish Catholicism, but the unusual devotion of the Irish people today to physically punishing religious pilgrimages possibly could be traced in part back to the old teaching of Maynooth that love of God must be demonstrated by harder acts than receiving the sacraments and going to daily Mass (McCarthy 1964: 78).

*831 155 178 181 779 798 Our research reveals that in some areas of Ireland "the last vestiges of the doctrine" are still associated with Irish Catholicism. In fact, one Dublin social scientist with whom I correspond asserts that Jansenism as manifested in sexual repression probably reached its zenith in the 1930s and has gradually been dying out since then. However, it is still very apparent, even among "emancipated" Dubliners of the middle and upper classes.

A much harsher evaluation of Jansenism, again in an historical context, is found in Bryan McMahon's chapter in *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by Fr. John O'Brien, a collection which also includes pertinent essays by Arland Ussher and the editor himself. McMahon says:

[785] Associated with the heresy of Jansenism were the principles of an exaggerated moral and disciplinary rigorism under the pretext of a return to the primitive Church. The Celtic spirit, despite or rather because of its essential volatility . . . would appear to me to provide an ideal field for the culture of Jansenism. The penances of the early Celtic monks were severity itself. . . . Today, when the idea of physical penance would appear to be repugnant to the entire world, such laudable manifestations of physical denial as the exercises of Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick are beacons amid the darkness. But the danger is that by a flaw in the Celtic nature we are apt to be led by overcompensation into penitential excesses; then it is that the traits of [874] Jansenism are there to fill lacunae in our nature. Significant in this context is the presence of four refugee doctors of the Sorbonne on the staff of Maynooth College in its early and formative years. [Their] teachings . . . cannot but have in some measure colored . . . the whole course of Irish seminary life and consequently the whole body of Irish lay thought (O'Brien 1953: 215-216).

Might not the "volatile nature" of the "Celtic spirit" and the "flaw in the Celtic nature" whose "lacunae" Jansenism fills be persistent maso-

chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161-162).

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better if God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105).

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters.

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent con-

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unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

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the folk. Chronic negligence in the care of chapel and school is regarded as a 829 symptom of the indifference of the clerics (or laziness, according to some), as is their seeming unwillingness to provide leadership at crucial times. The intrusion of the clergy into spheres of island life where their influence is unwarranted, according to local opinion, and their methods of controlling behavior give rise to the greatest amount of criticism, but need not be considered further at this juncture. As elsewhere in Ireland, and a source of countless humorous anecdotes and jokes, the style of life of many priests contributes to anti-clericalism. The comfort of the curates' home (particularly the new one erected since 1960, by one islander called "the house indulgences built"), their menu, their offering of tobacco and whiskey to guests, their visits to mainland, Continent, and even America, are all discussed frequently and resentfully by the folk.

Linked with the much criticized life style of clerics are the many demands made on the islanders for monetary contributions. It is felt that the diocese is wealthy enough to support the parish priest and his curates and need not "keep the people poor" by forcing them to donate money and services without charge for their upkeep. In addition to regular offerings on Sunday, the people are called on to proffer more substantial sums at Christmas, Easter, and on several other occasions during the year. My wife and I made donations at Christmas and Easter [123] despite the urging of many not to do so—"You are hated by the priests, so why give them money?" The names of contributors and their donations are announced from the pulpit or posted in the chapel. This practice is another control technique of sorts and infuriates many of the folk.

Other major sources of antagonism toward the clergy are their poor Gaelic 793 and the fact that they urge the people to speak only Irish yet converse among 829 themselves in English; their criticism of valued island customs, particularly of 178 pagan reinterpretations; their conservatism and resistance to change, which results in the folk being ill prepared to emigrate when they must; their susceptibility to influence by the king, especially those who are newly graduated and are uncertain of themselves and their role; and their demands on canoe crews which must row them back and forth to Inis Thiar and other islands, often in dangerous weather. A conception of what the curate "ought to be like" was voiced by a pious but troubled woman: "He should be humble, not have money when so many poor are about, not treat the people as inferior, and not be afraid to work hard."

It is difficult to ascertain today whether the headmaster or the king should 624 be accorded the dominant position, after the curate, in the informal social control 876 system of Inis Beag; for in recent years, the power and prestige of the former have [626] been waxing and those of the latter waning. Headmasters were formerly older [793] men with families whose tenure was long, who were much involved in local affairs [178] and worked closely with the curate, who were politically active and backed candidates and tried to influence island voters, and who maintained social distance although considered "one of the people." For their teaching and other services, they [666] were provided with food, given *currach* transportation without charge, and afforded other amenities by the folk. The house that they and their families occupied until recently is located in Castle Village, near both the old and new schools, and was owned by the diocese. Headmasters now are younger and often single, and are [793]

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[624] more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held, 875 because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are [793] apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the [554] headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches. [591] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

875 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of 593 their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him 875 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity 876 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in [861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This [123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents [177] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority senti- [829] ment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and [123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

> conditions appraised. The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940 190–191)

573 626

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king. [793] [815] [624]

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

628 623 178 641 [793]

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

181 177 657 829 [521] [793]

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

521 203 571 [574] [512]

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226 months; less than a dozen crews now fish regularly, and most fish are consumed locally rather than exported. Government subsidies of many
434 sorts and remittances from relatives who have emigrated supplement the
657 cash economy. The government further aids the islanders by not collect-
[651] ing "rates" and by setting low rents on land. Income information is as
12 difficult to come by as data on sex, disputes, and pagan religious retentions; since the people do not wish to jeopardize their unemployment benefits (most of them receive the "dole") and old age pensions and fear taxation in the future, they are secretive about sources and amounts of income.

626 More important than the formal political structure of Inis Beag are the local informal system and social control techniques of gossip, ridicule, satire, and the like. Crime is rare in Inis Beag, and there are
674 no "guards" stationed there. The island is seldom visited by politicians,
829 and many inhabitants are either apathetic or antagonistic toward the
641 county and national governments. Those asked to account for their
[66] antigovernment attitude cite widespread nepotism and corruption among officials, the slight differences between the platforms of the two major parties, and "foolish" government schemes in Inis Beag—usually in-
[657] stituted without consulting the islanders. Government aid is sought and
[746] even expected as a "right," but it is seldom considered adequate. Taxation in any form, especially of tobacco and stout, is bitterly opposed.

626 The informal political system is dominated by the curate, the
793 "headmaster" of the national school, and a self-appointed local "king."
[875] In the past, the amount of influence exerted by curates has varied; some
[624] have been concerned mostly with fulfilling spiritual responsibilities, while others have attacked by sermon, threat, and even physical action such activities as courting, dancing, visiting, gossiping, and drinking
793 spirits. Anticlerical sentiment (seldom manifested in overt acts) is as
829 strong as, or stronger than, its antigovernment counterpart. The clergy are said to interfere too much in secular affairs, to live too "comfortably," to be absent from the island too often, and to act overly aloof and
[626] supercilious. The most outspoken anticlerics assert that curates have employed informers, allocated indulgences, withheld the sacraments, and placed curses ("reading the Bible at") in their efforts to regulate the
875 secular life of Inis Beag. The headmaster, appointed and rigidly super-
571 vised by the parish priest and curate, presides over social events and serves as an adviser to the islanders in many matters, in addition to carrying out his official duties.

571 Inis Beag lacks a class system, and the status symbols which affect

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

624 875 [793] [554] more independent of the curate (One in recent years quit his post, it is held, because he chafed at restrictions imposed on him by the priest.); also, they are apolitical and participate less in the gamut of local affairs. The prestige of the headmaster derives from his having been selected by the parish priest who supports his actions, his status as a "scholar," and the discipline that he exerts in the school with its vestigial effects on those who have graduated. Few islanders will openly contest his decisions in school and in civic matters.

The important nonacademic tasks performed by the headmaster are signing official forms—a duty that he shares with the bailiff, drawing up and witnessing the signing of wills, writing letters for the islanders, especially those directed to the county council and departments of the central government, and giving advice on such matters as the advisability of emigrating and of matrimonial matches. [591] Like the curates, the headmasters seldom have tried to direct community projects and social affairs, other than dances and inter-island competitions. The present headmaster considers himself atypical in many respects, in that he is youthful, has exceptional skill in playing the accordion, likes companionship and the festivities of party and pub, and has rapport with older boys and young men with whom he associates more than did his predecessors; as a result, he is the prime mover in social events—organizing dances and donating his musical talent. Older islanders often find him aloof and will apologize for "taking his time" when seeking favors of him.

895 593 Parents have little contact with the headmaster as regards the education of their children, and, although permitted and sometimes urged to do so, they seldom visit the school. They will consult with him about such matters as health problems of their children, but not about educational policies; nor do they complain to him 895 of his role as pedagogue—"What the teacher does is right." Because of the severity 896 of his discipline, and that of the other two teachers, and the fear that it arouses in [861] his pupils, parents use him as a threat in disciplining their children at home. This [123] is a distinction that he shares with the nurse and her hypodermic needle and me with my large size and robust manner; being the ominous *Fear an Stáisiún* ("Man of the Station," because my wife and I rented for a time an apartment in the coast guard station) made it difficult for me to obtain young people as respondents until many months had passed. As a result of the rigid discipline exerted in the school, maintained by actions which include even whipping and priestly imprecation, a degree of orderliness, quietness, and attentiveness on the part of the students is achieved which would arouse incredulity among American teachers and parents [171] unless witnessed. Discipline in the school merely reflects that in the home, and a favorite pastime of Irish living in the vicinity of Shannon Airport is to observe the interaction of American parents and their usually obstreperous offspring in the transient room there.

624 [829] Whereas the headmaster attracts the least amount of anti-authority sentiment of any other figure who regulates to a marked degree the lives of the folk, the king attracts the most. The latter is the senior of the two publicans, in age and role, whose home in Low Village accommodates guests as well as the shop and [123] pub. Information concerning him was as difficult to come by as that concerning curates whom I knew, in that he resented my presence and refused to cooperate

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands.

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women.

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's

direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to him at his marriage.

If economic apprenticeship is also a process of conditioning within the family, so likewise the direction of economic enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather, the spheres are one.

For the child grows up within the full complex of life within the family. The petty errands which constitute his first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the conditioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and dependence upon his mother and the other family members in those years in the care and attention he receives at their hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within his family in a gradual process of training over years. This conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the development of the sentiments which make of sexual behavior of any kind an offense and of that within the family, incest.

Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his beginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or seven marks a change of his life within the household, for thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play now separates them within the household.

Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm work is again merely incidental to his long years of life with them. By the same token the commanding position which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occasion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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462 593 868 626 [461]

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462 593 883 [884]

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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them to think I wasn't with them", he put it. No 573
wonder, then, that the political allegiances of whole 621
countrysides are constant factors in Irish politics. [66]

The community reaches agreement upon its 621
internal affairs, too, through the old men's dis- 573
cussions. It is in just this type of activity that one 626
can at last put one's finger upon that nebulous force among men: public opinion. That force is not implemented; it is merely the power of gossip and censure; only in critical days, as in the time of land agitation, can it rise to action, as a last resort, and win itself an international name: the boycott. But it is none the less powerful.

But, in rural Ireland, the group through which 573
this power flows serves another function which 888
cannot be disassociated from its role as the seat of 538
public opinion. The members of the old men's *cuaird* are the living repositories of tradition. In communities, such as Luogh, where the Irish language lingers on, many of them are *seanachaidhthe* or story-tellers. Among them the ancient repertories of legend, saga and folk-tale still find an audience. That the exponents of fairy-lore have always been, and are still, old men and old women, is no social accident. For the pattern of local life retains its continuity and preserves what it can of its conformity with the past through them.

But what of the young men, those who have not 884
attained full status? They do not attend at the old 573
men's house; they take no part in the deliberations

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884 there. From their own point of vantage, they scorn
573 their elders, as much as their subordinate position allows. And they, too, walk out on *cuaird* upon the roads night after night and gather-in at this house and that.

In Rynamona, they were as ardent evening visitors as the older men. But their habit showed a great difference. There was no single central clique so closely knit as that of the old men's house. They had no larger justification, as the old men had, for their meetings. They went because, frankly, "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys". They formed pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together. A still greater difference marked these groups. One rarely heard them talk of the affairs of the community. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition and precedent. They spoke most often of their own plans, and the trials of their own age and kind. The skills upon which the cliques prided themselves and from which they drew their nicknames were of other sorts. Not even farming occupied a large share of their conversation, keen as their rivalry often was when work was going on.

In Rynamona the most frequent centre for the gatherings of the young men was the house of Roche, 'the public prosecutor', whose eldest son, a keen farmer about thirty, was something of a leader

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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among them. Most of the young men between 884
twenty-five and thirty-five met there. Through the 573
winter months they met nearly every night, and played the usual games of the countryside, 'nap' and 'forty-five', often far into the wee hours. Other groups through the community met like these men and followed like pursuits with an equal zest.

At times, a custom somewhat more organized, 884
the 'gamble', unites them all. It often brings in 525
other young men across the lines separating com- 573
munity from community. As often as once a week, a gamble is held in or near Rynamona. Each household in its turn throws open its doors to the card-players. Admission, usually a shilling, goes to defraying the expense of a supper and tea for all and goes toward the prize.

For the gamble is one of many sporting events. The prize may be a turkey, or two geese, even a young pig or calf. Elaborate conventions govern the play, and the winner may count himself a proud man. To be known in the countryside, far and wide, as a 'great gambler' is a coveted distinction proving shrewdness and skill. The country dance 535
is another such event, and still enlivens the country- 884
side in the winter months, bringing the younger 573
members of the communities together and providing honour for the distinguished. For 'a great dancer' is as widely known. In summer, hurley, the 526
national game, has the same effect; and nowadays, 884
through the nation-wide organization of the Gaelic 573

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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526 Athletic Association, the 'great hurler' may win his
573 way to the admiration of all Ireland.
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But at home, in the local community, the young
884 men remain what they are. Their distinction lifts
573 them not at all from their status. Their skills are nothing more than proficiencies. The pursuits of the subordinate generation are no more than 'good times' that 'pass the time'. For, through no plan or design, but merely through the force of the social organization of values and behaviours, the activities of the young men's cliques exert no larger role within the community.

For the young men's cliques do not primarily serve to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. The difference is structural. The activities of the young men unite them from farm to farm, from clique to clique, even from one community to the next. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive integration than that the old men's clique performs, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble, dance or hurley match are much greater.

888 For the old men's clique unites, in its controlling
573 voice, both young and old. The old men's clique unites the old men in terms of their common individual positions as recipients of the respect of the community, and as heads, owners and commanders of their family corporations. It expresses for the community the same subordination of the young men that is their lot within their families.

FAMILY TRANSITION AT MARRIAGE 131 561

Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 885
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age 886
do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of
their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on
the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which
mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which
betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those dif-
ferentiations of status which are given formal and explicit
recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of
daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers
themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re- 561
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 574
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 576
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the 517
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by
right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit be-
hind them round the room on other chairs or on the window
seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the prin-
cipal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrange-
ment shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old
men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to
sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter
in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the
old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger
men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving
the center of the stage to the old men, and the children
stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men
have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the
divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

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182 554 621 888 through rural life under normal circumstances is not toward a greater and greater prominence in the activities of the young men's group. Rather, there comes a time when one must break away altogether. One faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new kind of behavior. Growing old brings many more changes than the physiological.

888 573 885 554 The case of the newcomer, John Quin, already described, shows the necessary changes. In Rynamona it is brought out very clearly in the clique to which he first belonged and to which we have referred at various times, calling it once the "intermediate."

[551] The clique we name so met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, more commonly known as Oscair (the Hercules of Irish saga) for his physical strength. Oscair was a rural carpenter with only a very small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good singer, a jokester, and a repository of folk tale, though he was not much past forty. He lived just at the edge of the slope leading from Kilnaboy Commons down to Rynamona. The townland was what would be called in urban sociology an "interstitial area." It was higher, rougher, and more craggy than Rynamona and Kilnaboy, lying between them. Its inhabitants were descendants of people evicted from round about who had squatted there. Most of them were "died out and left," and the place was always poor. It acted as a sort of outlying fringe of Rynamona.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged thirty-five to sixty. Just as their ages were intermediate between fully old and fully young, so was their habit here. They very seldom played cards. Talk was the order of the day, enlivened by Oscair's humor and ballads. A few of them spoke of the affairs of the village with some weight. The rest did not. Those who came were as follows:

a. Young Mackey, from the village, the man recently married, still too young for the old men's house.

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b. Moroney, the sixty-year-old, "strongest" (richest) farmer of the village. One of the few who spoke with weight.
c. Young Roche, son of the very old man, still unmarried but entirely in charge of the farm he would soon inherit.
d. O'Sullivan, a herdsman, from near-by, who was a stranger in the community but had won himself a place, despite his being a landless man of sixty-five, by acting as the local veterinarian. He spoke, too, with weight.
e. John Quin, already described, who spoke here with weight.
f. Two forty-year-old Pilkington brothers, unmarried, from the Commons, very small farmers, most often silent.
g. Oscair himself, whose role was to entertain.

Of these men it can be seen that only Mackey, Moroney, and John Quin could make the transition to full farm-owning, farm-father status of old men. Mackey had years to pass before he could so do. His eldest child was very young and he himself not long in possession of his farm. John Quin, in a somewhat anomalous position, could and did move onward. In doing so, as we described, he felt it necessary to break away completely from this group. This he did, with the result that the group, itself never stable, fell to pieces. Moroney, as we remember, had a disagreement with the villagers and would not attend the old men's gatherings.

What was it then that brought these men together? The authors could get no answer from the men themselves, other than their amusement with Oscair and, in Moroney's case, a guardedly phrased dislike of the villagers. Yet, through observation and interview in the community, it became clear that they were all passing through a similar transition. Oscair's visitors were not a stable clique, nor too faithful in attendance. Both young Roche and young Mackey were still going occasionally to the young men's meeting at the other Roche's house, but both felt too great responsibilities for gambling and cards. John Quin gambled heartily enough

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but was more and more impatient with the "playboys" of young fellows. Old Moroney was gruff and lonely. The others were neighbors of Oscair's and, being poor or landless men, felt awkward going elsewhere. O'Sullivan could visit as he pleased, for, as the local "vet," his word carried weight, but, always a stranger in sentiment, he felt most at home here.

The intermediate clique was a product of similarity of interests, in contrast to the interests of other better organized groups. Its members were in some way or another a little different from the ordinary old or young of Rynamona. Some of them were remote topographically, but not all. Some were without full community status, but not all, and some of a transitional age.

Oscair's house was thus a sort of catchall for those whose position in Rynamona was not clearly defined. It was intermediate between the clearly defined groups, and for the small farmers, such as Mackey, Roche, and Quin, was a halfway stage in their advance from the status of young men to that of old.

The progression of which this is the halfway stage is an upward one, metaphorically speaking. It leads no longer to a greater role as "playboy" but toward full family and community status. It leads to a new behavior and new personal desires, more highly valued. One's discarded status and one's discarded behavior fall away into lesser esteem. In terms of this progression we can understand the attitude of the old men on the behavior of the young ones. It is a transitory, impermanent, unimportant thing. It is a "codology." "When they grow older," one old man said, "and become married, they will meet just as we do."

What shows itself in Oscair's clique is a transitional state. For a moment were gathered here those who could move upward, like John Quin. Gradually, they could attain full status. Oscair's hearth for them was a roadside resting place.

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With these intermediates were gathered the representatives of another anomalous social place. Both Oscair and O'Sullivan, the "vet," were important figures in the community. Their occupations and their skills won them respect and admiration over the countryside. O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were "landless" men. They could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism, they were condemned to celibacy. Neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place for them except, as Oscair's behavior showed, as playboys and entertainers. So they too must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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593 seen together at the local markets, but it is the father who does the bargaining. Their attitudes are in agreement with this arrangement. Once I asked a countryman about it at a potato market in Clare. He explained he could not leave his post for long because his full-grown son wasn't well enough known yet and was not yet a good hand at selling. If a son in Luogh and other Clare communities wants a half-crown to go to a hurley match, he must get it from his father. The son may earn money in employment off the farm, on the roads, [465] or as a labourer, but even then he is expected to contribute everything he receives to the household, as long as he remains on the farm. Very often, as the author saw in Luogh, in work on land division, the old fellows will walk to the pay-off to collect for themselves the wages their sons have earned.

You will say, perhaps, that all this has a very familiar ring; it is characteristic of closely knit farm families everywhere. So it is, but we are prone to disregard the familiar; we forget that the familiar stuff of life has often more important implications than the exotic. In the Irish countryside we must not undervalue the familiar. For the implications of these factors of family life are the signposts along the road.

593 In the countryside this subordination of the sons 885 does not gradually come to an end. It is a constant. Even at forty-five and fifty, if the old couple have not yet made over the farm, the countryman re-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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mains a 'boy', both in farm work and in the rural 593
vocabulary. In 1933, a deputy to the Dáil raised 885
considerable laughter in the sophisticated Dublin papers when he inadvertently used the country idiom in expressing country realities. He pleaded for special treatment in land division for "boys of forty-five and older"—boys who have nothing in prospect but to wait for their father's farm. For 'boyhood' in this instance is a social status rather than a physiological state. A countryman complained to me in words which tell the whole story. "You can be a boy forever," he said, "as long as the old fellow is alive."

Had we more time we might devote a long in- 593
quiry to this relationship, to its affective content, to the mutual respect and pride of father and son. The Irish countryside values the stern father perhaps more highly than the indulgent one; the peasant father takes great pride in a sturdy successor and competent fellow-worker. Camaraderie and intimacy may not flourish between them; but deeper-felt affections underlie formal respect and gruff command. The Irish mother, compassionate, indulgent, is of course a counterpoise to this stern paternality. She has an emotional role in the balance of reciprocal sentiments as indispensable to the family's existence as the economic role she plays. Freud might illuminate us about the sort of conflicts such a human structure engenders, but he has little to say of the far more important, and

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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182 ships. He may never attain such a view of himself, of course; from his point of vantage, he is a staunch 'friend' and a loyal son and brother. The balance, which we can see objectively, is to him a deep personal intuition.

Now I face the question: How does this balance maintain itself? What does it imply for him? The point round which the balance revolves is marriage. As we have seen, the 'west room' takes its aura from a change which comes over the parental couple; the 'boy' reaches adult status when he [885] marries and inherits the farm. The family and the land are both involved in this crucial reorganization.

584 Country marriage in Ireland follows an ancient and widespread pattern. It is called 'match-making' and it is the sort of *mariage de convenance* involving parental negotiations and a dowry which is nearly universal in Europe. In Ireland its importance is such as to make it the crucial point of rural social organization.

To describe the match one has to sink one's teeth into the countryman's way of life. For the match is made up of many things. It unites transfer of economic control and advance to adult status. It is the only respectable method of marriage and the usual method of inheritance in the Irish countryside. It is embedded in the Gaelic tongue, in joke and story, and in folklore.

A match usually begins when a farmer casts

you some borrowed article made of steel, an old shoe should be thrown after you, and special charms recited. A knot should be tied in the tail of a horse which is to be sold. If a tinker takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for 'he will take the good out of it whether or no'. And if you buy an animal you should put a handful of earth on its back to ensure that you have also purchased 'the luck of the beast'. It was at the fair that a man proved his adult status by his ability to hold his own at buying and selling, and a favourite theme of the stories which raise a ready laugh at the fireside concerns the simpleton who exchanged his cow for a worthless trifle.

The old countryman is not ashamed to try out, often with success, his age-old bargaining methods when making purchases of standard-priced goods at a shop. For the shop has taken over some of the traditions of the larger less personal world of the fair. Not only is a certain amount of haggling expected—and enjoyed on both sides of the counter—but there is a communal interest in the outcome. Thus it is held that you should never be alone when making a purchase. And there is an old belief that money earned in a particular way should be spent on some special purchase, for example there should be some 'egg money'—normally the woman's earnings—in the cash set aside to buy a horse in spring. Reference has already been made to the tradition that if you sell a hide you should buy something made of metal with the money. In parts of the country there were certain things which it was thought should never be sold though they might be given away—a kid for example. And in Mayo milk might be given away but would be sold only in secret, and it used to be an indelible disgrace for a woman to sell butter: it was regarded as a sign of abject poverty.[1]

It is perhaps because of the anonymity which the bustle of the fair confers on the buyer that certain classes of goods tend to be purchased there rather than at a shop. One of the remarkable features of an Irish fair is the quantities of old clothes and boots on display, and I am told that there is a considerable export of second-hand clothes from Scotland to the country fairs of Northern Ireland. Sir Walter Scott commented on this

[1]P. Knight, *Erris in the Irish Highlands*, 77; C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*.

FAMILY TRANSITION AT MARRIAGE 131 561

Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning 581
man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same
changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not 885
abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age 886
do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of
their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on
the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which
mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which
betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most 561
intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those dif-
ferentiations of status which are given formal and explicit
recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of
daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers
themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily re-
marked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's 561
house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older 574
men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the 576
hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by 517
right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit be-
hind them round the room on other chairs or on the window
seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the prin-
cipal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrange-
ment shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old
men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to
sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter
in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the
old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger
men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving
the center of the stage to the old men, and the children
stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men
have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the
divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in [525]
Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling [178]
basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

124
831 be herded outside; even then the adults were so embarrassed by the term that they
855 found it difficult to communicate with her. One steamer day she aroused stupefaction among a group of men on the strand when she tried—unsuccessfully—to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

831
864 Lack of sexual knowledge and the prevalence of misconceptions about sex combine to brand Inis Beag one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies. Only three mothers admitted giving sexual instructions, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. It is said that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men, and from observing animals covertly. Most islanders who were questioned about how sexual knowledge is imparted to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage, nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety creating confrontations of parents and offspring. I was unable to discover any cases of childlessness in Inis Beag based on sexual ignorance of spouses, as have been reported from other regions of peasant Ireland.

841
886 Menstruation and the menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[123] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological significance. My wife was called on by perplexed women to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one, especially when their mothers are unwilling or unable to explain it satisfactorily.
886 It is commonly believed that the menopause can induce insanity; in order to ward
828 it off, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in at least three contemporary cases, have confined themselves to bed until death years later. Yet the harbingers of "madness" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the menopause, which in Inis Beag include migraine headaches, hot flashes, faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Sometimes women who have not yet reached the menopause or have passed it and who fear becoming mentally ill from other causes will experience these symptoms in their anticipatory role playing.

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[793] As to sexual misconceptions, the folk share with most Western peoples the belief that men by nature are far more sexually disposed than women. The latter are informed by the curate and in the home that sexual relations with their husbands are a "duty" which must be "endured," for to refuse coitus is a mortal
[832] sin. Women frequently affix the guilt for male libidinal strivings on the enormous intake of potatoes by their spouses (Among the Anang of Nigeria, men fear the excessive sexual demands of their wives and place the blame on clitoridectomy.). Asked to compare the sexual proclivities of Inis Beag men and women, one woman said, "Men can wait a long time for 'it,' but we can wait a lot longer." There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown or not experienced (or considered a deviant response not to be divulged). A middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists during the summer, described the violent bodily reactions of a girl to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life," he admitted not knowing that women also could achieve climax, although he was aware that some of them apparently enjoyed lovemaking. Inis Beag men

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864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
[163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual
83 categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
• [886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
158 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
828 illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the
[784] Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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When the authors first made their way into the small farm communities which they came to know best, they were plunged into a mass of observation which, without knowledge of the valuations of the community upon age, had no interpretation. Night after night, the day's work done, their new acquaintances, at least the males among them, walked out upon the roads to this house and that in search of recreation and companionship. Mention of dances, "gambles," "hooleys," sings, *ceilidhthe*, filled our ears, belying the impression of a gray monotony of rural life too easily gathered by town-bred minds. Some of these sportive events were age-old survivals of ancient custom, like the bonfires of St. John's Eve. Others were nearly as ancient celebrations of crucial events in individual and family life, such as wakes, christenings, weddings. But many others were less occasional and less specialized gatherings, and others wore a very modern dress: a turkey raffle and a dance round a gramophone. 517 573

But our interest was soon caught by distinctions of participation, rather than those of kind. The people of the village participated variously. Different groups met more or less regularly at specific houses.

For instance, the "old fellows" went out on *cuaird*, as they called their visiting to join one another. They followed a deep-set regular habit. As they phrased it, "a man would feel lonely if he didn't go out on *cuaird*." In most communities, they usually convened at a particular house. Often their gatherings bore particular names. In one North Clare community, Rynamona by name, the old men's meeting was known as the *Dáil*. Before the Free State, it had been the "parliament." The name is a jocular one, of course, but it is expressive of the participants' evaluation of themselves nonetheless. 517 573 887

The young men know the *Dáil* as the "old men's house." They stay away. One of the cronies of Rynamona put the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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517 matter most clearly when he described the old men's gather-
573 ing from its members' point of view:

887 It wouldn't suit [for the young men to come]. They gather in at Jack Roche's and they laugh and joke and play cards. They talk about the next gamble and the next dance, and that is all they know. It is a lot of codology [nonsense, buncombe]. It is only the old men, the men with families and a responsibility on them, they are the ones that come. And in our own way we learn a great deal. If you advance any argument, you must be prepared to defend it from all attack, and John Roche, "the public prosecutor," will ask you questions till he is sure it is right or wrong. Then some evening we have real discussions in which we settle problems. Other times we discuss farming. It wouldn't suit for the young men to come in, but, when we get old and they get married, then they will gather and talk about this and that. That is the way it always has been and that is the way it always will be. There is never any bad blood between any of the village, and one reason is because we talk things over.

This statement on the old men's gathering imparts a deeper reality to what appears to be merely a companionable pastime of the old men. The evening *cuaird* of the old men takes on an institutional flavor. It is a clique, of course, a tightly knit group of males of similar interests and similar status, giving rise to nicknames within itself which, as in the case here mentioned of the public prosecutor, express the members' position in the internal arrangement of the group. It has a definite meeting place and meeting time. It excludes those of dissimilar traits; in this instance, the young men. But it is a clique which operates within a traditional setting: "That is the way it always has been and is the way it always will be."

It is a clique, too, which performs a function for a larger group than those who make it up. In this case it is claimed for it, at least, that it prevents bad blood in the local community.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER X

The Old in the Community[1]

LET us examine the life of a local community in the rural "West of Ireland" and put to the test of observation the claim that the clique of evening visitors among the old men of the community plays a decisive role in its social life. Perhaps Rynamona already mentioned affords the best example. Yet any other community the authors knew well would afford as good a one. In all of them the old men met in much the same way and, in spite of different names and persons, acted in much the same way to form a similar old men's clique. By taking the example of Rynamona, we can throw the generalities of this conduct into relief. 573 887

Rynamona is a medium-sized townland in the limestone country of North Clare. It is like many another in the "good land" of rough limestone outcrops stretching back from the sea into the glaciated lakes strewn north in County Clare. To reach Rynamona is no easy task, even for horse and car. The main road north out of Corrofin to Kilfenora passes through Kilnaboy, where twelve houses, a school, a chapel, and a post office are all that remains of an antiquity preserved to the eye only in the ninth-century church and graveyard. 361 491

There, beside the graveyard, a side road leads off toward

[1] Much of the material in this chapter is taken from *The Irish Countryman* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1936), by Conrad M. Arensberg. It is used here by permission of the publishers.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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621 487 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

887 573 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village, is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

> The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

888 542 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

888 573 521 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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old men's house he looked a different person. He was often 573
silent or contented himself with answering questions. 561
When he did speak, it was to "act the playboy," in the 521
country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with him. One evening he would be silent and the next he would be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to dance, and to break into playful banter. Sometimes his lively efforts were successful. Sometimes they were not. But the playboy role did not last long. A year later he was a constant visitor, and he had given up all other visits. He had moved in. O'Donoghue, the "judge," passed judgment one evening which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy," he said, "but there's a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaird*. As the 573
evidence of their behavior shows, they are a closely knit 887
clique with a code of conduct and valuation of their own, one strong enough to enforce a specific personality on each of the members in accord with his role in the group.

To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group in Rynamona, we must examine it in relation to the rest of the community. These seven are not the only old men in the community. Roche, the prosecutor, had an elder brother with a good farm across the lake on the line between Rynamona and the next townland, Carhunamadra. But the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the door. He is too feeble to come to the *cuaird* house, and his faculties are failing. His sons, still young men, work the farm.

But there is another as well, a more active old man. Moroney is perhaps the strongest farmer in Rynamona. His house in the village is the best also, and he has the best-stocked farm. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, have a son [592]
and daughter nearing thirty still at home. The four work energetically and the household is prosperous. Each year Moroney stands for them in the "station," and the family's

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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573 dues to the church are greater than any other's in Rynamona. Such prosperity draws him a bit apart from the villagers, and occasionally in political discussions he will identify himself with the Cosgrave party, as a man with a "stake in the country."

All this draws Moroney away from his fellows. Some say there was an incident long ago when Moroney was young, but most have forgotten it. Nevertheless, there is a breach between Moroney and the rest of the older men of the village. He never attends at the old men's house and, when he goes on *cuaird*, it is usually to the house of Oscair, whom we shall describe presently.

Furthermore, just as not all the old men of Rynamona came to O'Donoghue's, so are their households unrepresented there. Unlike the cases of the elder Roche and Moroney, it is because in these other cases the men of the house are not eligible in age.

573 Two houses in the village send no man to the *cuaird* house. One of these is very poor and is a case of the "incomplete farm family" already discussed in a prior section.[1] The only man there is a lad of twenty-five or so, who lives alone with his mother. Another of these is the case of O'Brien, a man of forty, married and with a family of children, the eldest of whom, a boy, is fifteen. O'Brien is a man of uncertain temper, given to gusts of anger. He is a moody man who doesn't do much or go out much. When he does, it is to the young men's gambles. Like John Quin, already described, he is in a transitional state, but he does nothing to hasten his advance.

Among the households beyond the village, one, that of Mackey, is likewise in transition. But with Mackey the process is hardly begun. His parents are dead, but he has only recently married and sent off a brother to the towns. He still visits with the young men.

The same holds for another family of Roches. The man

[1] [i.e., farms worked by spinsters, bachelors, widows and widowers.—Analyst]

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of the house is only a few years married. His brother is as 573
yet unprovided for and still lives with him. Both frequent young men's meetings.

The old men's house includes all the adult farm fathers 573
of complete families whose children have just succeeded or 621
are nearly ready to succeed them, with two exceptions. It 208
brings in, too, two others, O'Loughlin, the silent old bache- 887
lor, and John Quin, whose status among the old age group is still provisional. The interviews already quoted have given an insight into the function this meeting performs for the community. The behavior of the group points again to the same function. This is the seat of judgment in the community. It is the clearing house of information and the court of opinion in which the decisions of the community are reached and the traditional knowledge of the peasantry applied and disseminated. From these meetings the men return home to their wives and sons, and the formulations they have reached spread thus through the community of individuals who share life in Rynamona.

Let us examine the type of topic that comes up in the old men's meetings. If we want to assure ourselves that the meeting has the influence its members ascribe to it, a glance at the conversation that takes place there should bear them out.

The old men's meeting is an informal gathering. It arises 573
in response to the community's interests and its immemorial 887
custom. Naturally, different personalities and personal idiosyncrasies make the gathering slightly different in each rural community. Occasionally it may be absent altogether for various causes, such as the dying-off of a central member of the group. Often there is a sort of interregnum between one generation of old men and the next. This was the case in one Clare community studied by the authors. There the old men had lost the central figure of their group and, diminished in number, spent most of their time in enfeebled

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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573 887 loneliness at home. Two new cliques of slightly younger "old men" were competing for central position in the community.

573 521 208 626 887 But despite such variation from community to community, the old men's *cuairds* act very similarly. The topics brought up and debated upon are much the same from year to year and place to place. First in importance, however, are those concerning agriculture. Times of sowing, reaping, harvesting are debated; the merits of various seeds are disputed; shop and fair prices are compared; and the community's trade often affected thus. The "old men" are conservative farmers, as are most peasants, and an innovation must be thoroughly tested before it wins, here in the evening *cuaird*, the approval of the community. Traditional methods of farming receive their strongest support here in the web of legend, proverb, and reference to the past that the speakers weave around them.

Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and determined by the old men's agreement. In late years, this has come to be called "politics." It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting. In Rynamona, for example, it was felt that it was in the interest of all that there should be no dissension on the score of politics. The old men's *cuaird* debated the matter and agreed upon support of Fianna Fail, the De Valera party, an allegiance it held for the years 1927 to the time of the authors' visits. Even O'Halloran, whose private views leaned in another direction, begged the authors that no word of his political heterodoxy be allowed to reach the ears of his neighbors. "I wouldn't want them to think I wasn't with them," he said.

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Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or condition appraised. Even the priest finds each of his acts and even his sermons discussed and debated in the evening *cuaird*, and he "gets a name" according to the decision reached. In Rynamona an incident occurred which shows the type of slow appraisal the community makes and the speed with which, once its judgment is formed, it puts its decision into action. Not far away in the same general region, a gentlewoman moved back after years of absence to a small manor house which the family had had for many years. She was unknown to the farmers and, despite her friendly interest in them, seemed to be unable to establish contact with them. This distressed her, the more that her kindness seemed ineffectual in putting an end to the inevitable petty pilfering which she knew she must expect. One day, about a year later, her horse bolted on the country road. An expert horsewoman, she soon brought him into control. Thereafter her luck with the country people changed. Her exploit had made the rounds of the local community and had won approval for her. The old men agreed she was a grand lady and had a great hand with horses. And the petty pilfering sank to manageable proportions.

573 521 208 626 887 [674]

The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and in action the power which in the critical days of the land agitation won itself an international name: the boycott.

In a later section the sanctions the local community exercises will be discussed. It is sufficient here to point out

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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573 626 208 887 this role of the *cuaird*. An example from another community than Rynamona will throw the type of action it can take into relief.

An "incomplete family" affords the example. It was made up of an old woman and her thirty-year-old son. Theirs was a poor farm, and ordinarily they would have been an object of commiseration. But they were not. In fact, they were a constant annoyance. The son was generally regarded as bad and lazy. He neglected his farm and exhibited an obstinate disregard of village opinion in which his mother abetted him. The result was, naturally, that their house was shunned and he went nowhere to *cuaird*.

But no crisis arose till the episode of the pig. One autumn the son brought home a large Irish white sow. The sow was more nimble than most of her kind, and neither the mother nor the son took any pains to keep her at home. She wandered through the village at will and soon devastated many a cabbage patch. The village took alarm, and the more so that the sow might well prove dangerous to young children. There were angry words among the women, and the men for once backed them up. In the *cuaird* it was hinted that the sow might be found dead one morning. But before such an event could take place, the son took warning and sold the pig. "Public pressure," if you will, forced his decision and resolved the conflict, but it left him as low as ever in the village's esteem.

573 887 538 And lastly, the *cuaird* is the seat of traditional lore and entertainment. Its members are the repositories of folklore and legend. And the official belief of the countryside finds its expression and its reaffirmation in the discussion of events and the recounting of histories and incidents. In communities still at least partly Irish-speaking, such as Luogh, most of its members are *seanachaidhthe*, storytellers in the traditional vein. And it is among them that traditional repertories of a saga, folk tale, song, and legend still get an

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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audience. The point of importance here is that it is among 887 the old people that folk myth and folk belief are preserved 538 and expressed for the community.

If we are to examine in full rural behavior based upon 571 age and its connection with the old adult clique whose 517 function in the community we are assessing, we must offer some contrast with the behavior of other age groups.

We have already mentioned that the old men's house in Rynamona was not the only seat of visiting after the day's work, and that the entertainment provided there was merely *one instance of* many gatherings taking place almost nightly, at least through the winter, in rural communities. In the statements given by older men about the meeting of the young men we have seen something of the manner in which other pursuits than those of the men's house are regarded.

Indeed in all the communities which came under the authors' notice the young men were as ardent evening visitors as were the older men. In Rynamona they were no less so.

There they gathered in most often at the house of Roche, the "prosecutor." They did this from long habit, as did their elders. But they had no larger justification for their doing so. They went because "you never feel the time passing when you're in with the boys." But there were marked differences in their meeting. There was no central clique so closely integrated as that in O'Donoghue's house. There were pairs of lads, brothers, friends, and groups of three and four and five who habitually played cards or walked the roads together.

A greater difference lay in their complete lack of concern with the affairs of the community. One could get them to [521] talk only about their own plans or the trials of their own kind and age. There was no debate, no reaching of decisions, no appeal to tradition. The skills upon which those taking part in the meetings prided themselves and for which

 571 517

ner of the prize can count himself a proud man, for to be 525 known in the countryside as a "great gambler" is a coveted [555] mark of shrewdness and skill.

The older men seldom attend the gambles. They are the [887] province of the young. For the latter, they are a crystallization of the more informal card playing, such as that at Roche's house, already described, and they give the suc- [554] cessful young men a prestige in the community ordinarily denied them. For in late years tournaments have sprung up covering whole sections of the county and it is a proud team which can bring back a five or ten pound district prize to its home community.

From the standpoint of an enumeration of those taking part in the gambles, too, the gambles show themselves to be such a crystallization. They bring into association on more definite occasions the groups, such as that at Roche's house, which meet habitually. They unite most of the young men, especially the more active among them, with a few of the older. But it is from the young men's world of habit that their union is created.

In Rynamona the young men who gathered nightly at Roche's house were the mainstays of the gambles. They could be counted upon to attend all of them. They played well and long, as they had learned the games among themselves. But they were not the only ones to come. Most of the slightly older men of what we shall call the intermediate *cuaird*, to be described later, such as John Quin, the newcomer to the old men's house already named, came from time to time, and there was always a sprinkling of young men, kinsfolk, and "friends" from near-by communities. It was only the members of the old men's house who stayed away. They alone had given up the habits of young men. To them the gamble was "codology."

Thus the first point of difference between the visiting 571 habits of the old men and the young men, their lack of cen- 517

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

182 woman would ask the old person her opinion on
593 how to do this and that there never would be any
888 trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just
578 as she pleased. Then the old woman would think she was doing it the way that she said. If the daughter-in-law did what she ought, she would do this and treat the old folks nice."

Deference and respect solve the problem, then, but if they do not, it is the older woman who must leave. That this should be the case reflects one great function of farm marriage. The son must cleave to his bride. If the worst comes to the worst, the new family may 'turn the old people out on the side of the road'. Terrible as such an ending would be, it is the necessary one. For the pattern of family and land must continue in the persons of the new man and woman and their children.

182 This desire is the binding force in the relations
593 of all the household. It is as strong in the old people
887 as in the new couple. The new balance of senti-
602 ments finds its expression in the inclusion of the children born to the young man and woman. Like so much of their behaviour, the country-people describe the new ties in terms of the 'help' they afford to the family corporation. And once again, naturally, an economic explanation is all too elliptical. A thoughtful farmer of Inagh generalized the matter in words which show the identity between help in farm work and social reciprocities: "When there are children in the house, the old

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

from plants growing in the district as formerly, but are imported. 286
There are several weavers in the district, and the clothes are made up by a local tailor. One unusual occupation, that of cloth miller or presser is carried on by a man in Belmullet, who uses a rather primitive press of his own construction.

There is very little regular employment for labourers, except 464
that given by a few of the resident gentry and some of the people of Belmullet. Labourers receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a day, or a 1*s.* and their [465]
food; if at harvest time, threshing or employed at cutting turf, slightly more, about 2*s.* a day.

Little or no work is done by the majority of the men during the [222]
winter months, except to gather a little drift weed along the coast.

The women attend to the ordinary duties of the house, assist at 462
field work and at bringing home turf; they gather and dry carrageen moss (*sphaerococcus crispus*) which they sell at the rate of 2*s.* a stone (unbleached); they also card and spin the wool. Old women often get employment going from house to house oiling, carding, and [887]
spinning the wool for the household; for this work they receive 2*s.* a week and their keep.

2. *Family Life and Customs.*—The general characters of family life 871
are much the same as those of the people of Inishbofin.

The children, who are usually numerous, are sent to school, if at all, at about five years of age; they show plenty of aptness at acquiring knowledge, but as their attendance is very irregular, through their being wanted at home to help their parents, their progress is much impeded. When they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years they leave school and enter into the regular work of the household until they have attained means either to marry and settle down or to emigrate.

Some few of the girls, after leaving school, go out as domestic 357
servants either in local situations or to England or Scotland.

Both sexes usually marry young, the matches being arranged by 58
the parents, and money rather than romance being the chief element in the case, as a projected marriage is often abandoned owing to disputes between parents without the young people themselves being consulted in the matter. Love-making, except in the case of engaged couples, but seldom occurs, but that it does sometimes happen is [832]
shown by the number and variety of love-charms and omens. As in most other parts of Ireland the majority of marriages occur before Shrove. When full agreements have been made by the parents, the young man goes and asks the girl personally. If he be refused, he does

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
556 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement.... It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting.... Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

181 and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the
152 spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and
[562] envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring
828 sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about
829 isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves con-
[184] stantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

121 I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the
164 ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments,
[163] hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people
[887] who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter
[751] and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first oppor-
[757] tunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send
[753] the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief. Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can
[123] approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the
[767] winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

[114] Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the
[829] elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these
[668] and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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permit her to marry into local farms, in two of the cases on 583
a somewhat better scale than the farms which they had left. The case of the South African shows how the man also may return with his fortune to establish himself in his native district after several years or even a decade or two of exile.

The dowry or marriage portion is, of course, a phenomenon universal in European peasant life. What gives it special interest here is its intimate connection with the farm family and with the land. That connection is evidenced particularly in the "writings."

After the "walking of the land" and the making of the 583
bargain, the two parties to marry go to a solicitor. There 584
the agreements reached are cast into proper legal form. The 428
"writings" is a legal instrument conveying the ownership 888
of the holding to the son. It is usually both marriage settlement and will. On the event of the stipulated marriage, the father conveys the farm and all appurtenances to his son in return for the portion brought in by the girl. The father makes also definite provisions for his own maintenance and that of his wife. Generally, these include the right to the "grass of a cow," to food and the use of the hearth, perhaps the yield of one patch of potatoes, and the use of a room in the house. The room is nearly always, at least in West and North Clare, the one known as the "west room" for reasons we shall examine later. To take care of possible disputes arising out of the failure of these provisions to work smoothly, certain very hard-headed stipulations are often included, allowing for the conversion of these rights into cash support or a lump sum.

In return for the farm, the father receives the fortune 583
brought in by the girl and paid to him by her father. Furthermore, the provisions which must be made for other 428
children are often transferred with the land. The father is now expected to give (if he has not given them already) portions to those of his children who are not to be settled

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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CHAPTER VII

Family Transition at Marriage

WITH the transfer of land at the marriage of the son who remains to work the farm, the relations of the members of the farm family to each other and to the farm they work undergo a drastic change. In the first place, the headship of the old couple under whom the family group worked undergoes change. The old couple relinquish the farm, they enter the age grade of the dying, and direction of the enterprise of the group passes from their hands to those of the young people. Something of the change has already been indicated in the "writings." From the point of view of the father, it means the abandonment of the ownership he has long enjoyed; from the point of view of the old woman it means she is no longer the "woman of the house." Her place is taken by the incoming daughter-in-law. Naturally, this change is accomplished in effect only with difficulty and with considerable reluctance upon the part of the old couple. Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. For example, the authors know one family, consisting of a young man and his wife, their two children, and the old couple, which was regarded as a model of family harmony in the neighborhood. The young man did all the heavy work of the farm, but his father worked by his side. Yet the initiative in agricultural matters was clearly the

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1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 young man's. The man, almost eighty, did not want to re-
888 main idle. "Time enough to sit by the fire in the winter," he would say. The greatest compliment the neighbors had for them was: "Look at the C—s. Old Johnny gives his boy a hand with everything. You wouldn't know which one has the farm."

592 The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not
888 so harmonious. Disputes arise, as the provisions made in the "writings" indicate. The following quotation from an
606 official with years of experience in dealing with country people illustrates:

> As years go on, either the parents die or, if they live sufficiently long, they receive the old-age pension. Before they are qualified for this, the farms have to be made over to a son or daughter. This is done on the occasion of the son's marriage. The father reserves to himself and his wife the use of a room and the freedom of the kitchen, and they are entitled to all their food. The points were carefully discussed at length in the process of matchmaking, and the family of the future wife had no hesitation in agreeing, realizing that such points formed the final phase of a cycle of life on the farm. If the daughter-in-law has been well and properly advised by her mother, she immediately on her arrival in the new house submits tactfully to all proposals of her mother-in-law and lets the old lady feel that she is still the master mariner. If she didn't, it would cause a lot of trouble, as sometimes happens.

[626] In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law in the new household, and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control.

[577] An open breach between the two couples is universally condemned, of course; "turning the old people out on the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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side of the road" has occurred, although the authors found no instance of it. If, however, the new family finds the old too great a burden, the old may go to the County Home, where the poor and derelict old people are maintained. A grave stigma of inability to support one's duties still attaches to this. 888 606 577

It is interesting that the old-age pension, originally designed in Great Britain to support the aged members of an industrial population and extended some years later to Ireland, has been incorporated into Irish farm life without upsetting, but rather reinforcing, the matchmaking pattern. The tendency is now to turn the farm over to the son as soon as the father passes his seventieth year. Receipt of the pension facilitates the maintenance of the old people and hastens the transfer of land to the son, as the farmers must divest themselves of their small farms in the majority of cases in order to become eligible for the pension. 592 888 737

Even from the point of view of the household expense, the pension is very welcome. In the words of one farmer:

> To have old people in the house is a great blessing in these times because if you have one, it means ten bob a week and, if you have two, it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'D — and every Friday he will go to Corrofin [town] to collect his ten bob and he may buy a couple of bottles of porter, but spend the rest on things for the house and then come home with a few shillings which will go into the common fund.
>
> Not only that but it adds at least ten years to a man's life because the anticipation that each Friday he is to get ten shillings will cheer him up and keep him keen. Any house which has one old person is well off in the last few years, and, if there are two, it is a great blessing.

But the blessing the pension represents is more than an economic aid in bad times. It plays a great role in the transition the match brings about in family relationships. As one countrywoman phrased it:

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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592 888 737 578 There is no chance that the old people would give up the land but for the pension, and there is no hurrying them. Before the old-age pension the father would keep the fat of the land and there would be argument between them, the young woman and the old woman slashing each other with tongs, the doors broke, and it would be two dwellings in the house, like, but since the old-age pension, there are no rows and, if there are, then they make it up with the old people for the ten bob a week.

592 888 If the transition is smooth, there need be no such violence of dispute as the last quotation describes. Each of the members of the household must adopt a new role in relation to the others. The old man abdicates his controlling position with his transference of the farm to his son. Usually such a change goes smoothly enough. If the son can still seem to defer to superior experience and judgment and refer decisions to the old man, all goes well. The happiest compromise is that suggested in the statement of one countryman:

> Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what he thought I should do for the day, and the old man would say that it is now time to do this or that or that the cows should have something done for them or the garden should be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty to thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then go about my own business.

592 606 It is in the feminine province of farm work and household control that the transition is most difficult. Under the patrilocal type of marriage here described, the bride is a stranger and of necessity cannot rely upon the experience of an association of years in order to meet the new conditions, as can father and son. In the graphic phrase of the people, she is the "new woman."

For her the transition brings a violent uprooting from prior attachments. Unlike her urban sister, she has little of the ideal of romantic love to help her over the crisis. Consequently her introduction into the new household is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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592 606 578 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 522] The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman must be effected smoothly. [626] The whole moral force of the community as well as the interest of family harmony bear upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighborhood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide its personal troubles as much as possible from the general knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides for continuance.

592 888 The new position of the old couple and their desires in the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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press this need for continuance. They are part of the pattern themselves. The statements of the blessings they bring to the farm family with their pension money are very elliptical assessments of their new place within the group.

In their new role, if the transition has been smooth, they retain, if not a dominance of control and direction of the group economic enterprise, at least a dominance of respect and prestige. They occupy a venerable and dignified place in the community and within the household. The sentiments of which they have been the object during the years of their son's youth and manhood undergo no change, even though their strict control relaxes and may disappear.

Likewise when, with the birth of the bride's children, the newly married couple begin to create a full farm family of their own, the old couple remain a part of the united group. They very soon become the objects of the children's love and respect, and enter into the complex of family relationship and family behavior which fashions the status of the children.

This new completion of the family pattern the countrymen express, as they do the reciprocities of kinship, in terms of help and aid to the economic unit of the farm. One countryman generalized as follows:

> When there are children in the house, the old people are a great help to the mother because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see that they did not fall into the fire or something of that nature, and thus the woman can go about her business. The old woman would help while the old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able, because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. As they grew older, they might do some of the lighter work, but they would always help.

He went on to discuss the new relationships between family members and the modification of the immediate family behaviors which the presence of the old couple brings about.

592 His shifting the topic from help to alignments within the
888 family is entirely unconscious; it could not better illustrate the connection between work roles and reciprocal interaction in the family.

If there was a squabble between the mother and daughter, the old woman would more than likely stand up for the daughter. She would teach her how to do things and would have more patience than the father.

592 Quite as before in the case of the farm economy, the
888 strength of the pattern reveals itself in the aberrant cases.
589 Where there is no old couple to take up new status and position in the family group, others within the family of the older generation or even of the same may be forced into such a position.

Two cases came under the particular notice of the authors. In one an elder sister became to all intents and purposes the "old woman" in the house. A widow, she owned the farm, was in the "west room," and had the place at the hob. Her younger sister and her husband, who had married into the farm, managed the farm and knew that their children would inherit it. The elder sister helped a bit with the household, but spent much of her time before the fire. Both the man and woman of the house referred to her as "the old woman," a term of respect, and one of the authors, who lived in the house for a time, learned only after much intimacy the half-forgotten fact that she was not mother but sister to the younger woman. In the other case it was a father's sister who took up the role, the product of long substitution for a lost mother, and at the match the writings made provision for her.

888 Intimately connected with the transition at marriage are
561 all the phenomena of age grading so marked in Irish country life. The old couple advance one step in their course through life; they enter a new age grade.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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must. They descend from father to son with the house and 600
the farm on which it stands.

It is into this room that the old couple move upon the 592
son's marriage. They move in among the symbols of family 888
unity, among the religious symbols of the house, into surroundings of a certain religious or sacred character. If we can discover certain other indications of the nature of this room, we shall feel warranted in drawing conclusions as to the nature of the change which takes place in the status of the old couple and the attitudes which surround them.

This room we have described is the "west room" mentioned in the "writings." It is so literally. With remarkable 592
uniformity the small farmers' houses in West and North 342
Clare face east and west, the room behind the hearth being 775
generally at the west end of the house. Now the west room 888
and the western end of the house are associated in folklore with the "fairies" which still flourish in the countrymen's minds, especially among the older generation.

The Irish "fairies" include the spirits of the dead. In fact, the identity between the two is explicitly recognized. It was so at Luogh, where older men could name the "good people" with whom they had had encounters.

It is the west room and the western end of the house that the fairies frequent. Where a fairy path is believed to pass the house, it passes invariably along the western end of the house. The country people of Luogh and other parts of West Clare give this as the reason why no extensions, outhouses, sheds, or other structures are built on that side; bad luck would result. In Luogh none of the twenty-five houses of the townland had any structure of any sort built there. And it is often in this room that the fairies spend the night when they visit a house on their nocturnal travels. If we remember that the old people, relinquishing their adult status and preparing for death, move into this room amid heirlooms, religious pictures, and photographs of dead

592 342 775 888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

581 842 606 183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 842 183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

CHAPTER IX

The Problem of the Aged

888 THE small farmers of the Irish countryside have a characteristic way of treating differences among themselves that is based upon relationships fundamental in the organization of their communities. Naturally these folkways are connected with the norms of family life. Perhaps the most important of them is their treatment of differences in age.

162 888 Ireland is in some ways an old person's country. The percentages of the old in the population are very high. Naturally the fact is closely allied to an emigration which until recently has drained the country of its young adult manhood and womanhood. And, as in the case of emigration and late marriage, it is the rural districts, or better, the small farmers who inhabit them, that set the norm for the whole country.

A comparison of the distribution of age groups over the population between aggregate rural areas and aggregate town areas, as made in the 1926 census,[1] shows the case clearly. For the whole Free State at that time there are 671 males per 10,000 males aged sixty-five to seventy-four in the aggregate rural areas, while in the aggregate town areas there are only 402 per thousand of that age. The proportions of females of this age to total females are higher

[1] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. I: Ages, Orphanhood and Conjugal Conditions.

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in both cases, but they show much the same relationship. In both sexes the number of old people is greater in the country districts. Conversely, of course, the country districts show a smaller number of people of adult years. Among males the country areas in the aggregate for the whole of the Free State count only 1,115 per 10,000 aged thirty-five to forty-four, while the towns count 1,234 per 10,000 in the same adult age group.

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When the various county rural areas are subjected to internal comparisons, similar proportions of old and young appear. To give only one example, County Clare counts 752 per 10,000 males aged sixty-five to seventy-four in the aggregate rural areas of the county, but only 528 per 10,000 of the same age in the aggregate of the county's towns. Likewise, Meath, a county of the midland "ranching" area, shows a proportion between rural and urban districts of 620 to 392; and Galway, in part a "congested area," a proportion of 723 to 547. Thus within counties from all parts of Ireland the same greater concentration of the old is found in the country districts.

One can remark immediately from the examples given above that there is a progression in the degree with which, for the counties mentioned, the numbers of old people of the age group selected range above or below the average number of their age per 10,000 males for the whole population of the Free State. This fact introduces us to a new consideration, corollary to the last. It is in general the poorer western counties, where small holders predominate, which have the larger number of aged individuals. Numbers per 10,000 males of the age we have selected before sixty-five to seventy-four rise regularly among the rural populations of the Irish counties from the 614 and 620 of Kilkenny and Meath to the 841 and 835 of Leitrim and Monaghan. In such a scale, the southwestern counties, such as Clare, are again in the middle, though Clare itself

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with a count of 752 leans heavily toward the Leitrim side.

It becomes obvious that census records by age will all support the assumption. It is in the rural areas, and among the small farmers, that, relatively, the largest number of old people are to be found. Tables 2A and 2B [2] illustrate this conclusion graphically.

TABLE 2A

OLD PEOPLE IN IRELAND: RURAL AND URBAN AREAS IN SELECTED COUNTIES

Census Area	Males per 10,000 aged 65–74
Free State (all counties)	
Aggregate rural areas	671
Aggregate urban areas	402
Clare	
Aggregate rural areas	752
Aggregate urban areas	528
Meath	
Aggregate rural areas	620
Aggregate urban areas	393
Galway	
Aggregate rural areas	723
Aggregate urban areas	547

TABLE 2B

OLD PEOPLE IN IRELAND: SELECTED COUNTIES SHOWING MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM IN AGGREGATE RURAL AREAS

Census Area	Males per 10,000 aged 65–74
Kilkenny	614
Meath	620
Clare	752
Monaghan	835
Leitrim	841

That the large proportion of old people is a matter of the agricultural community is very evident again when the figures indicating the age of those following the various occupations are examined. This is important in gauging

[2] Based on tables from *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. I.

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the provision Irish society makes for its old members, for numerically they are a large group. Not only are there larger numbers of old people relatively to other adults in the countryside than in the towns and in agricultural pursuits than in other occupations, but also there are more of them absolutely. Thus out of 550,772 males engaged in agriculture, there was one in 14 of them, or 41,130, over seventy years of age. Among all other "producers, makers and repairers," who numbered 154,016, there were only 3,655 septuagenarian males, or one man in 50. Even among the more sedentary occupations of the towns, the occurrence of old men in commercial, financial, or insurance pursuits was only one in 56 and in professions only one in 75. The occupational figures show that the old are still active and numerous in agriculture. In other fields old people are far less numerous and the numbers of retired persons are greater.

It is only among one sort of agriculturalist, the farm holders and their helping relatives, that this fact is true. Naturally the numbers of the old are high in Ireland, where they represent the survivors of a numerically larger generation thinned much by emigration and where their relative number in the total population is increased by the absence of many men and women who could, without emigration, swell the ranks of the young adult age groups. Nevertheless, within the framework of these proportions, it is the farm-holding agricultural group which sets the norm. Expressing the same proportions in percentages, agriculture counts among its male followers 9 per cent – holders and relatives assisting them – who are over seventy years of age. No other group exhibits such a percentage. The only other occupations to show any similar longevity or length of service are "makers of apparel and made-up textile goods" with 6 per cent of their number still engaged after the age of seventy. All others range much lower in percentage of aged individuals still occupied.

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The relatively great preponderance of the old in agriculture does not extend to the agricultural laborers. They number only 2 per cent of males over seventy. It is only among the farmers and farmers' relatives assisting them that so many old people are alive and active.

It becomes even more evident that it is the farm population which sets the norm for Ireland in this regard when we compare figures of this sort with those of the total population. In all Ireland 6.7 per cent of males are over seventy years of age. Those in the adult years twenty-five to twenty-nine and thirty to thirty-four number only 9.2 per cent and 8.0 per cent of the total males. The farm population with percentages of 8.4 and 8.0 in those ages is the only occupational group to show figures below those of the total population. All others rise above the average percentages for the whole country. Naturally it is the absolutely greater numbers of the farm population which weight the averages. Yet, understanding this, we must also understand that it is among the farm population that the norm is determined.

Statistics for females present rather different ratios. They need not detain us, as they are complicated by the inclusion of a larger category entitled "those engaged in home duties." The category embraces the greater number of urban women and makes comparison with farm women by occupation somewhat precarious. On the other hand, it has the merit of grouping them about household duties and provides in itself a good distinction between urban and rural household workers. Comparing them, then, we find 12 per cent of female farmers and relatives helping farmers over seventy, and of this 5 per cent and 8 per cent aged thirty to thirty-four and thirty-five to forty-four. (We choose here ages in which most of the women who marry are already married.) But among the women "engaged in home duties" (the category which embraces most townswomen, as well as unspecified numbers of countrywomen), only 4.4 per cent are over seventy, and

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conversely the more numerous 11 per cent and 23 per cent are thirty to thirty-four and thirty-five to forty-four. The total female population shows percentages of 8.3 per cent over seventy and 8 per cent and 15 per cent in the younger age grades. It can be seen how these comparisons bear out the conclusions presented by those of the males. It is among the farm population that the largest number of old people are to be found. In this regard the farmers again set the norm for Ireland.

The largest proportions of the aged among the farmers prevail, furthermore, among the small farmers. One can expect this fact, related as it is to the greater emigration of this class. The statistics correlating the size of the farm and age group proportions bear out the expectation.

Table 3, based again upon census records,[3] expresses the relative percentages of males over seventy years of age and of males thirty to forty-four (the age groups in which emigration comes to an end) in the total of males ranked by age among farmers and farmers' assisting relatives upon the various sizes of farms, for the whole of the Free State:

TABLE 3

OLD AGE AND SIZE OF FARMS

Farm Size in Acres	Percentage of Farmers and Assisting Relatives over 70 Years of Age	Percentage of Farmers and Assisting Relatives Aged 30–44
1–5	13	10
5–10	12	13
10–15	10	11
15–30	9	12
30–50	8	12
50–100	7½	10
100–200	7	16
200–over	1	24

The table reveals a constant diminution of the percentage of the old as the size of farms increases. In other words, the

[3] *Census of Population*, 1926, vol. V, pt. II, Table 7.

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smaller the farm the greater the likelihood that it supports old people. Since we are dealing with census records of occupations actually engaged in at the time of numeration, the figures again point to the fact that larger proportions of old people are still active upon the small farms than elsewhere. On the small farms, then, the old do not retire. That there should be no constant increase in the percentages of the adult age groups does not detract from the validity of the conclusion. The inconsistency of the percentages can be referred to the differential emigration rates of the inhabitants of farms of various sizes. If emigration takes place at different ages and in greater or less proportions from different-sized farm holdings, as other figures not germane in this connection point out, that fact will make it impossible to select any one age group to illustrate the corresponding increase of the proportion of adult males to aged males in the farm size categories.

The table confirms the point. It is among the small holders that the greatest number of old people survive. The peasant population is again responsible for a striking peculiarity of Irish demography.

That the peculiarity is a peasant manifestation can be demonstrated upon a narrower stage. In the various counties of the Free State, the same statistical differences appear between rural areas and small holdings on one hand and urban areas and large holdings on the other. Old people are relatively numerous in the former, relatively few in the latter. In Clare, to take one example, we have seen already that the aggregate rural areas count a larger proportion of the old than do the aggregate urban areas (towns of 1,500 or more inhabitants). The Clare rural districts in which larger holdings are more numerous, Meelick and Ballyvaughan, count 2.4 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively of their people over seventy-five, both male and female. Those in which larger holdings are relatively fewer, e.g., Tulla and

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Ennistymon, count larger percentages (4.6 and 4.0 respectively). Here again, within the bounds of the county, the demographic peculiarity by which the old are so numerous is a characteristic of the small-farm population. The presence of large farmers in any district is enough to weigh proportions away from the peasant norm. Comparisons of occupations by age within the county yield the same result. We need not detail them here.[4]

The demographic peculiarity which gives Ireland so large a proportion of the aged in her population becomes more marked when other nations are compared. The Irish death rate is rather low. Most strikingly, only one civilized country keeping census records of age distribution surpasses Ireland in the large proportion of aged individuals. That country is France, which in 1926 counted 9.4 per cent of its citizens over sixty-five years of age, barely topping the Irish figure of 9.2 per cent. Other countries ranged far below France and the Free State, Scandinavian and Baltic countries coming comparatively near, with such figures as that of 8.8 per cent for Sweden and 7.6 per cent for Norway. Industrial Germany and England (with Wales) occupied a middle place with figures of 5.7 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively, and such "new" countries as Australia and the United States, where the percentages are 4.4 per cent and 4.7 per cent, brought up the rear. These figures (see Table 4) were taken from national censuses of various dates in the various countries in the period 1920–1926 and compiled for the Irish census primarily from the "International Health Year Book 1928 (League of Nations)" and *Aperçu de la démographie des divers pays du monde, 1925* (International Institute of Statistics).

Ireland and France share eminence as abodes of the old. But they reach that eminence through different courses. A comparison of the expectancy of life in the two countries,

[4] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, pt. II, Table 12A, County Clare.

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those of Ireland. There low life expectancies go hand in 162
hand with a large proportion of the aged. In Ireland high 165
expectancies, especially at older ages, where they are among the highest in the world for both sexes, go hand in hand with the same phenomenon.

For this reason one cannot appeal too directly to emigration as the determinant of the demographic condition. The Irish countryside is relatively full of old people, not only because so many of the young adults have left, but also because the old people tend to live long lives.

Within this complexity of factors, emigration, a high percentage of the old, and late marriage, the small farmers set the norms for the whole country. Now we can recognize that high expectancies of life also belong to them. A comparison of life expectancies among the three provinces of the Free State will suffice to bear out the fact. Males of Connacht can expect more years of life at all ages than males of Munster; the males of Munster can expect more than those of Leinster; and those of Leinster can expect least of all three. Thus the provinces show higher expectancies the smaller their farms.

Many causes have been advanced to account for Irish 165
longevity. The country people live long and die often very old indeed. Diet, climate, natural selection through infant mortality, racial heredity, have all been suggested by various writers. Probably all of these factors are involved, in one way or another, but the problem is one that has faced students of peasantries often.

The authors have no single efficient cause to offer. The 165
question that poses itself for them is one of effect rather 888
than of cause. The existence of such a large proportion of the old among small farmers presents a problem in the organization of behavior among human beings. Nevertheless, might not the longevity of peasants be after all a simple matter? In the Irish case we shall see that they live long

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888 because they have much to live for. In their own sphere of life, they are honored. They have power.

888 The problem is one which must be referred to the small farmers themselves. As before, it is a question of their sentiments and their conducts and any analysis of their action in the matter must follow upon the presentation of observed generalities in their social life.

Some of these generalities present themselves to the eye immediately. As we saw in the discussion of the house and family, there is a great deal of everyday conduct which expresses the differences of social valuation of age and which one age group follows in its intercourse with many others. This conduct, the sentiments which accompany it, and the attitudes and verbalizations with which it is associated, can be seen every day in the lives of the people. It is part of the *mores* of the community. The child learns it as he grows up upon the small farms. It prepares him to meet all others in the local community who are of substantially the same status, habits of life, and speech as the members of his own family. It provides a scale of valuation in which each individual can place any other within the bounds of variation existing in the local community, and upon which both can build sure expectancies of conduct. On another facet it gives each and every individual a place among individuals occupying similar places. In making status in this way, it governs behavior in high degree, imposing bounds upon it and exacting conformity. We have already seen something of this conduct. In the discussion of the house interior and the grouping and seating of individuals by rough similarity of age, we have seen what might be termed one focal point within the system of relations which is characterized by this conduct. The old people in the farm family occupied that point. Place of honor and privilege within the household is theirs. In their families they are objects of respect and a mild sort of veneration on the part of all younger members.

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They occupy this place and receive this respect from other persons than their relatives. This respect is as much folk custom as the norms of family life. The community can on occasion enforce it upon the family members through gossip, verbal censure, and, more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest. 888 626

The vocabulary of the countryman and a great many of the judgments and comments he makes upon his surroundings express the valuations of the community upon age. In the discussion of the house interior it was remarked that the conducts of the different age groups were too "natural" to the farmers to evoke verbal recognition among them. The statement is true only in a sense. The farmers make no explicit recognition of the organization of behavior upon the basis of age. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. 888 561

More cogent, perhaps, for our understanding are the many expressions which arise from day to day based upon the speaker's place within an age grade. A great part of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the friends and neighbors who pass their lives within a rural community takes its form so. Particularly is this true of discussion of the past, a favorite topic and one which came very frequently indeed to the authors' ears. Gossip and personalities are as frequent a theme, and a speaker rarely fails to qualify the object of his remarks with an appropriate definition of his relative age. Even to intimates a man is referred to as "old John" or "young Michael." 888 561 521

Perhaps it is the discussion of the past which illustrates best partiality for the things of one's own age. The older men and women describe the "old days" with enthusiasm and regret. The "old times" are a ready topic among the country people, or rather among the older ones. Many an evening an old person can be got to tell of the "old times." 888 521

[i.e., the aged. — Analyst]

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888 He or she takes little warming to the task. They were hard
521 times, even "bad times" of famine and death, but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. Even the mention of the lack of tools, draft animals, shoes, and many other amenities of present existence evokes comments such as "Weren't they the poor old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" Phrases of murmured commiseration and headshaking regret or pity are not without a tinge of pride for listener and teller alike. Remembered necessities in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale are now feats of endurance and strength to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young man today to walk from Corrofin to Ballinasloe in his bare feet forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who could shoulder a
[482] creel turf and carry it a hundred yards out through the bog mud to the famine road before the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunnagore?

888 Even the meager diet of the old times is remembered with
521 a certain nostalgic pride. An old man, called upon one
262 winter evening, began his remarks upon the theme characteristically:

> In the old days people used to have a maize gruel "stirabout" for breakfast, but you couldn't get any of the young people to eat it now. There was a potato bread, *stampai*, and it was very good too. The people in the old times had great teeth and, when they died, they would have every one left in their heads. Their teeth would be stronger than a horse's. When the people ate potatoes and bread three times a day, they were healthier and lived to a ripe old age. Now with all the better food, they are not as well.

888 Such a belief rises very frequently to the lips of the old
521 people who remember the days of the past either in their own or their parents' experience. The implication is clear. The young people, the new generation, are not so strong

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nor so hardy nor even so good-natured as those who went before. 888

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. Just as, for the older members of the community, the past reflects their glories and is a convenient vehicle for the expression of their superiority, so the present can be measured against the past in the same terms, usually only to be found lacking. 521

Often the expressions take a different turn. They become that universal complaint, the younger generation.

Young people today are not what they used to be [said one old farmer in the course of a general discussion of the golden age that was his youth]. They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else go to a dance, and, if they happen to win a turkey, they will nearly shake the house down when they come in. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always to be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. They expect everything to be done for them.

He paused for an illustration, selected one from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on:

Wasn't Keane out every night with his cattle putting them in small fields and late in the night? He would have his supper waiting for him when he came in, but he would take off his shoes so not to waken his father, and then to bed. Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept it all until he had cattle up by Ballywaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no control of them.

But even among his listeners, all of them "old" like himself, the young people had some defense:

But there has to be some fun for the young people. If they don't enjoy themselves, there is no heart in them. You can't expect them to be always at home.

But these statements express more than a mere rivalry between young and old. They spring from a feeling of

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mutuality between young and old which transcends rivalry. The old days were better, among other reasons, because the dependence of the young upon the old was greater. The present is less attractive because the young no longer help the old as they should. Both facets of such mutuality may be expressed, even though the speaker, if he is old, casts it in the form of mistrust and dislike for the young. The whole of experience can be brought within this scheme of attitudes. To give an example, let an old fellow, an opponent of the present regime of Gaelicization in Ireland, recite his misgivings about the school system:

> I am patriotic and it may be a bad thing to say but I think the school system they have now is bad and the teaching of Irish is bad. In my day and before, a man might go to school when he could – maybe for only three months out of the twelve – but he would know more than they get now when they go to school all the time. The old people learned more then. When the child finished school, he could be expected to read a newspaper to the old people and to write a letter for them, or to do sums – and he would do it well.

His complaint is much longer, but enough has been given to show his mistrust of a schooling which to his mind makes no provision for the mutuality mentioned. This mutuality was and is strongest in the realm of farm work. The farm family demands the coöperation of all its members. No less, the community makes its valuation of young and old upon that coöperation. General discussions among the country people bring out this fact again and again. To illustrate again, two "old fellows," adult farmers with families, could agree upon a formula running somewhat as follows:

> The men were stronger in the past, they worked harder, while you try to get any young person to do as much work as the old men now and they would laugh at you. The young people today seem to see how little they can do rather than how much, while

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the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work. 888 521

Yet they were later forced to admit:

The people in the old times were not as knacky as they are now. Isn't it true that they used to have the horse in a stall feeding him while the man would be out with a spade turning over the garden?

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm work. Just as the rivalry between father and son in the farm family is most intimate and most constant in the economy which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community at large takes the same form and finds its expression within the frame of the work that the community must do to live. 888 578 561

Naturally enough, the young people do not express these attitudes. They do not agree with their elders on the score of their own shortcomings. But they have a good deal to say, among themselves, from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them, and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be sweepingly condemned with some such criticism as "old fool" and "old blatherer." Like the son already quoted who gave his father his head in farm work and listened patiently for orders, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations of themselves in which youth and strength outweigh age and wisdom.

But within a system of values in which the old represent the nexus of kinship and bear honor within the community, the young people do not see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the older men and women. The young people recognize themselves as forming a distinct group with interests and sentiments of its own, opposed in the scheme of rural life to the elders. They use the word "we" and oppose it to "them" for the old. They recognize places, pursuits, 578 561

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578 and forms of activity as their own and find much more inter-
561 est in them than in those of the other group. The young men greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gathering of old men in something of the tone of derision which they reserve for women. But the rivalry in their sentiments between respect and egocentric feeling, like the controls imposed by their parents to keep them respectfully silent in the presence of their elders, imposes a silence upon them. Consequently, one cannot find among them the voluble expression of attitudes based upon one's belonging to a certain relative age. One must look for it rather in particular expressions of annoyance, boredom, and chafing against restraint.

Expressions of sentiment about age are the products of a system of values upon it in which the individual makes the valuation from the place he occupies. They express not only a grouping of individuals of similar age but a mutuality between groups so composed. And, too, they form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

561 Let us examine one instance at least of this categorization.
554 The community in rural Ireland bestows many names and
551 titles. They are ephemeral. They have no currency outside the immediate circle of life in the townland or village. At
888 best, they spread through a parish. They are nicknames and express no more than the individual's particular place in the hearts of his fellows. Yet some of them are generic epithets. Like "old" and "young," they may prefix a name and designate the more closely the personality of the person named. Like "boy" and "old fellow," they may express broad categories of a man's age and its associated behavior, and may designate not so much a biologic or physiognomic reality as a sociological status. The words "saint" and *cailleach* are of the last kind of epithet, in rural usage. In the brogue they refer only to the old. In strict philology

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both are metaphorical, for the brogue knows and makes use of the words in their "proper" meanings. *Cailleach*, the Gaelic word, means properly "hag" or "witch." "Saint," of course, is the canonized saint of the church. 561 554 551 888

The small farmer who refers to this or that contemporary and neighbor as a "saint" or a *cailleach* is making a social and moral categorization. He is not concerned with purity of diction. The old man or woman, who follows a behavior proper to his or her status and is an ornament to the community, is a "saint." The old man or woman who does not is the object of distrust and dislike. His or her departures from accepted conduct cause disturbance and strife in the community. Accordingly, he or she is a *cailleach*. Thus, in one North Clare community a "stranger" whom the community disliked was a *cailleach*, despite the feminine gender of the word. Likewise, the old man who lived in harmony with his son upon a farm already transferred, a leader in the village whose oldest hale inhabitant he was, could be described by a neighbor as follows:

> The old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humor and, if he went to town to have a drink, he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as gentle and harmless as a child, and it will be a great loss to the village when he is gone. He and Roche [a neighbor] are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any farm advice, you can go to them and they will give you as good advice as you can get, because both of them have been successful farmers. It would pay a young man to listen to them.

"Saintliness" of this kind is a matter of one's filling one's role. But it is one's role for the village that counts. There is nothing individual in the canon of conduct. The young person who follows ardently the conventions laid down for him is not a "saint" even if he is exceedingly chaste and religious. It is the word "holy," not "saint," which comes

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561 to the countryman's lips in describing him. Nor is a young
554 person a *cailleach*, for, like "saint," the term applies only to
551 the old. Both terms refer to sociological age rather than
chronological age, for those old people who occupy the role
888 of "old" only because they have been forced into that position within the farm family can also be "saints." Thus the elder sister described in the discussion of farm marriage, who occupied the west room and the hob by the fire, was known in the neighborhood as a "saint."

Relative age makes a difference in status in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values. And lastly, as in the description of "saint," it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill.

561 The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself
554 into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland
wherever he meets countrymen of different ages together.
888 The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of such broad age groups in terms of status.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellow, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons — those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation — are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great. In the community at large it is little less so. A farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat. His sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake house to honor the dead, the places by the fire go to the older men and women. The boys and girls must group themselves behind. They come forward only when called upon. At

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country "stations"[8] the elder men and women file in for 554
confession and come forward for Communion first. On the 888
road to the shop, to church, or to the fair, the young man must keep pace and the elder may call him to his side.

The relation shows itself best perhaps in the constant 561
discussions that are the breath of life for the countryman. 554
No work is too pressing to prevent the countryman from 888
"stopping on the road to pass the time of day." In the rural 521
community such personal communion is an indispensable [461]
bridge across the social and physical space separating farm from farm. In all such discussion it is the elder men who may regulate length and subject of conversation. When groups form in pubs, in one another's houses on evening visits, before and after mass in the churchyard, the enthralling game of presenting argument, choosing sides, directing the flow of talk, belongs to the older men. The young men [203]
must listen in. At such times the important news of the countryside disseminates itself. Political judgments are formed, and the ephemeral decisions of daily life are made. In all this the boys are silent listeners. It is a bold young man who enters an opinion of his own.

Second, there is the matter of the contacts of the commu- 561
nity with the outside world. The elder men, these same 554
father-owners; represent the interests of the community be- 888
fore priest, schoolmaster, merchant, cattleman, and govern-
ment official. The younger men hang back, ready to be brought in when the elders want them, listening in and keeping their own counsel. Much of this we have already indicated, but it is necessary to cite it here again in order to 561
round out the picture. 554

The relation extends to very small matters indeed. The 888
better cup of tea, the bigger piece of bread, the glass of 276

[8] In country districts remote from the parish church masses are said in the private houses of parishioners once or twice a year in order to allow the performance of Easter or Christmas duty by those confined to their homes through age or sickness or other cause. These are "country stations," important religious events in every townland. [794]

561 554 888 276 whiskey, the two eggs instead of one, the pipeful of tobacco, go to the elder men. This last, tobacco, is no small matter where even now tobacco is still expensive enough to require careful husbanding. It is a custom in the country districts to pass the pipe around among one's intimates and guests for testing, for praise, and to the accompaniment of formulae still often magical in nature. But the pipe does not go to the young man. He must content himself with an occasional "fag." When there is little, the young man can go without.

For illustration there is the anecdote that one Clare farmer tells:

> During the time when tobacco was scarce [the war], an old man came into Sullivan's [shop] and asked for a half-quarter [cut of tobacco]. The Missus told him to go [get it] where he always bought it. He was very cast down. After he was out the door, I said to her she should give him some tobacco because a man who is used to it all his life would miss it greatly if he can't get it. "Let the young bucks go," said I; "they don't want it. But an old fellow wants it badly." She looked at me and says, "Frank, are you serious?" "I am, faith," says I; "call the old man back." He was just a few paces down the road. She did and his face lighted up and he couldn't thank her enough.

561 554 888 Informal as these differences are, they are nevertheless powerful agents in the regulation of conduct among the small farmers. Without them, the flavor of country life is lost. Without them, too, one can gain no understanding of the never-varying annual round of social activity in the country districts nor any inkling of the importance of those informal activities of social intercourse which fill the non-working lives of the countrymen. It is here that social patterns of behavior upon age difference assume importance as controls of human activity. It is here that the roles the age grades play in the organization of the community reveal themselves most clearly.

621 487 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

887 573 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village, is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

> The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

888 542 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

888 573 521 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

888 573 521 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on among the others. And when agreement is finally reached, it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him. He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps [592] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty. As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a [484 446] great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are somewhat suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

573 521 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings up points of interest and questions of the day. These he addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which allow all to take part.

573 521 589 *O'Loughlin usually occupies the* other hob. He has no real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and, though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone. Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road, breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has no voice here, he has no title either.

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contests, and playful roles of solemn occasions, such as acting 571
as strawboys (mummers) at weddings. But all these activities, in which the old members of the community do not directly participate, are alike in their playing no great part in organizing other elements in the community than the young people themselves. They serve other functions.

All these activities bind the young men, the young people, together in common interests. They provide them with a scope of action in which they are comparatively free, yet which keeps them divorced from the seats of a power over community life which is denied them. In this sphere they may develop complex norms, valuations, and conducts.

But such developments do not serve primarily to knit the 517
community as a whole the more firmly. They are associated 571
with the lesser prestige of the young people. Consequently, 621
the old men's house comes to have in contrast a double 888
function. It unites the old men in much the same way as 554
the gamble and the dance unite the young men, in fact 182
even more strongly. But it does so in terms of the old men's common position as recipients of the respect of the community and in terms of their individual positions as integrators of their families. The difference is structural. The activities of young men unite them across family and clique lines even from one community to the next. But those of the old men do more; they unite young and old as well. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive one, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble and dance may be greater.

In such a system of integrations, that of the old men has 182
the greater prestige. A great gambler or a great dancer wins 888
wide respect. But the distinction is short-lived. It is a nine 554
days' or a nine years' wonder. It bestows great prestige 621
among one's fellows, but it removes one very little, if at all, from one's subordinate, less valued place as "boy" in the community.

Where such is the case, the individual's progression

182 554 621 888 through rural life under normal circumstances is not toward a greater and greater prominence in the activities of the young men's group. Rather, there comes a time when one must break away altogether. One faces perforce a new orientation of sentiment and a new kind of behavior. Growing old brings many more changes than the physiological.

888 573 885 554 The case of the newcomer, John Quin, already described, shows the necessary changes. In Rynamona it is brought out very clearly in the clique to which he first belonged and to which we have referred at various times, calling it once the "intermediate."

[551] The clique we name so met at the house of one Joseph McMahon, more commonly known as Oscair (the Hercules of Irish saga) for his physical strength. Oscair was a rural carpenter with only a very small plot of garden and his house. But he was a good singer, a jokester, and a repository of folk tale, though he was not much past forty. He lived just at the edge of the slope leading from Kilnaboy Commons down to Rynamona. The townland was what would be called in urban sociology an "interstitial area." It was higher, rougher, and more craggy than Rynamona and Kilnaboy, lying between them. Its inhabitants were descendants of people evicted from round about who had squatted there. Most of them were "died out and left," and the place was always poor. It acted as a sort of outlying fringe of Rynamona.

The men who collected round Oscair's fire were aged thirty-five to sixty. Just as their ages were intermediate between fully old and fully young, so was their habit here. They very seldom played cards. Talk was the order of the day, enlivened by Oscair's humor and ballads. A few of them spoke of the affairs of the village with some weight. The rest did not. Those who came were as follows:

a. Young Mackey, from the village, the man recently married, still too young for the old men's house.

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b. Moroney, the sixty-year-old, "strongest" (richest) farmer of the village. One of the few who spoke with weight.
c. Young Roche, son of the very old man, still unmarried but entirely in charge of the farm he would soon inherit.
d. O'Sullivan, a herdsman, from near-by, who was a stranger in the community but had won himself a place, despite his being a landless man of sixty-five, by acting as the local veterinarian. He spoke, too, with weight.
e. John Quin, already described, who spoke here with weight.
f. Two forty-year-old Pilkington brothers, unmarried, from the Commons, very small farmers, most often silent.
g. Oscair himself, whose role was to entertain.

Of these men it can be seen that only Mackey, Moroney, and John Quin could make the transition to full farm-owning, farm-father status of old men. Mackey had years to pass before he could so do. His eldest child was very young and he himself not long in possession of his farm. John Quin, in a somewhat anomalous position, could and did move onward. In doing so, as we described, he felt it necessary to break away completely from this group. This he did, with the result that the group, itself never stable, fell to pieces. Moroney, as we remember, had a disagreement with the villagers and would not attend the old men's gatherings.

What was it then that brought these men together? The authors could get no answer from the men themselves, other than their amusement with Oscair and, in Moroney's case, a guardedly phrased dislike of the villagers. Yet, through observation and interview in the community, it became clear that they were all passing through a similar transition. Oscair's visitors were not a stable clique, nor too faithful in attendance. Both young Roche and young Mackey were still going occasionally to the young men's meeting at the other Roche's house, but both felt too great responsibilities for gambling and cards. John Quin gambled heartily enough

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but was more and more impatient with the "playboys" of young fellows. Old Moroney was gruff and lonely. The others were neighbors of Oscair's and, being poor or landless men, felt awkward going elsewhere. O'Sullivan could visit as he pleased, for, as the local "vet," his word carried weight, but, always a stranger in sentiment, he felt most at home here.

The intermediate clique was a product of similarity of interests, in contrast to the interests of other better organized groups. Its members were in some way or another a little different from the ordinary old or young of Rynamona. Some of them were remote topographically, but not all. Some were without full community status, but not all, and some of a transitional age.

Oscair's house was thus a sort of catchall for those whose position in Rynamona was not clearly defined. It was intermediate between the clearly defined groups, and for the small farmers such as Mackey, Roche, and Quin, was a halfway stage in their advance from the status of young men to that of old.

The progression of which this is the halfway stage is an upward one, metaphorically speaking. It leads no longer to a greater role as "playboy" but toward full family and community status. It leads to a new behavior and new personal desires, more highly valued. One's discarded status and one's discarded behavior fall away into lesser esteem. In terms of this progression we can understand the attitude of the old men on the behavior of the young ones. It is a *transitory, impermanent, unimportant thing.* It is a "codology." "When they grow older," one old man said, "and become married, they will meet just as we do."

What shows itself in Oscair's clique is a transitional state. For a moment were gathered here those who could move upward, like John Quin. Gradually, they could attain full status. Oscair's hearth for them was a roadside resting place.

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With these intermediates were gathered the representatives of another anomalous social place. Both Oscair and O'Sullivan, the "vet," were important figures in the community. Their occupations and their skills won them respect and admiration over the countryside. O'Sullivan, the older man, was free to come and go wherever he might wish. But both were "landless" men. They could never attain full peasant status. In the identifications of Irish familism, they were condemned to celibacy. Neither could feel comfortable in the old men's *cuaird*. There was no place for them except, as Oscair's behavior showed, as playboys and entertainers. So they too must occupy an interstice in the structural alignments of rural social life.

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353 *Tír na nÓg*, and Avalon, the island of apple trees
773 which the Greeks knew as the Garden of the
776 Hesperides, and which in a Christian rendering the blessed Saint Brendan may have reached, lies to the west in the setting sun. It is very likely that in this folk practice there survives nearly all that remains of an elaborate early mythology.

Alas for our questioning, no one remembers Avalon in Luogh, *Tír na nÓg* is a dying legend. If you ask the old men about the west, tales of sunken cities and strange sea-creatures greet your ears; ask about the fairies and fairy paths and you get, first, indignant denials of such degrading belief, and then anecdotes, tales, incidents, which illustrate their character and their power for good and evil. Ask about the furniture of this room, and you learn only that it is the right and fitting thing that the objects fill this room and no other. No one can trace the continuity; tradition is felt in the mass rather than in the particular.

We are left then with what we can hear and observe about the present. To question upon anything else is to get nowhere; it merely starts a chain of obscuring generalities more inspired by the question than by what Luogh feels and thinks and does.

But the case is not hopeless. If one casts one's
353 reliance upon observations and questions in the
888 present, new facts appear. The west room figures in marriage. In the contracts drawn up it is often

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mentioned by name. It is the room reserved for themselves by the old people, the father and mother of the groom; they reserve it for their own use after they turn over the farm to their sons at marriage.

Ask about this and more information comes to you. It is into this room that the old couple move. The room is theirs. Younger members of the household dare not enter it except with permission. Indeed, it is the old couple who throw their aura around the room; the respect owed them is very like that felt toward the room they occupy. Here one enters a new field of behaviour and attitude in human relations. The honour and command of the old couple do not leave them altogether when they retire from active ownership of the farm. They enter a new status of which the associations round the west room are one reflexion.

So it goes, the new questions and new observations lead not to a prehistory or a chain of continuities, but to an ever-widening number of living associations which colour the relations of men and women, old and young. They lead to a realization of the laws and custom by which the small farmers find their lives ordered. In this instance, the west room of Luogh is a dim survival, perhaps, of Avalon and *Tír na nÓg*. But more certainly it is a focal point in a system of values some little of which we have begun to glimpse. Old custom in the west room thus gives

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old as the Celtic sagas. The belief is spread, of 754
course, far beyond Ireland. The Neapolitan fisherman paints his boat against the evil eye, the Balkan woman embroiders her petticoat to ward off evil and curses. The West African sorcerer knows the technique to perfection; our own Pennsylvania Dutch 'hexes' are modern practitioners. For the belief belongs to the infinite realm of magic.

If one were satisfied with the bald collector's statement, one would be content to leave the young man in such company. But by inquiring more deeply into the incident, one can look into the situation in which he suffered. If the belief can be seen at work in a situation which can be readily assessed, then it will serve better as a guide toward understanding the life in which it can still operate.

The situation has many elements. In the first place, the details of the young man's trouble are simple enough. In working a scythe round the bush-choked wall of a field, he fell in such a way as to drive a sliver of bush into his eye. We should call it, I suppose, a simple accident and pity him his bad luck.

But the small farmers among whom he lived 754
wove another world of explanation round that eye. 578
Gradually the tale unfolds. Perhaps the loss of 888
the eye is a punishment. For the young man was not entirely blameless. An unvoiced suspicion had pointed his way.

For there had been a few weeks before what used

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754 to be called, in more heated days, 'an agrarian out-
578 rage'. Two old men, bachelors living alone, had
888 been fired upon in the night. Some one had pumped gunshot through the window of their poor cabin, high up the mountainside. As was probably intended, the shots buried themselves harmlessly in the cabin floor. But they awakened the old men, and frightened them badly.

The occurrence shocked the community. The two old men were harmless creatures; they were 'saints' in the country phrase. Who would want to injure them or drive them out?

The country-people had their suspicions; but the police could get nothing from them. There was nothing for the inspector to do but report another 'agrarian intimidation'. Even if he too knew, there was nothing to do; he could prove nothing without witnesses.

The country-people kept silence for good reason, from their point of view. If their suspicions were correct, the matter was a private affair, a family squabble. It was no business of theirs.

For the old men, by the standards of rural kinship, were not entirely blameless either. They held a farm they did not work. They took none of their kinsmen in. They should long ago have given up their land. One of them should have brought a girl in, married her and raised a family. They should have passed the land on to their sons, or failing sons, they should have brought in a nephew

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or other boy of their kindred. Then they could have turned the farm over to the boy, when they felt themselves too old, and let him marry, in order that their kindred's name continue and grow in land. 754 578 888

But the old men had never had a 'taste for marrying'. They were victims themselves of a too-intense loyalty. I say victims, because their loyalty had been narrowest of all. Their old mother had lived too long in her turn. She had never decided which one should get the land and bring in a girl. Perhaps their father might have decided, had he lived, but their mother survived him by many years. Neither of them wished to leave her side and neither would leave to make room for the other. When at last the mother died, the two bachelor sons were already old; they were long past marrying and set in celibate ways. They lingered on in an ever narrower round.

In the community they were 'saints', as I have said; they were 'no trouble to man or beast'. Yet, from another point of view, they were not doing the 'natural' thing; they made no provisions for their kinsmen; they did not pass on the land to those to whom by country right it should go. They refused to fill their proper roles in life. No wonder, then, that their cabin was a byword for neglect and disrepair. The countrymen would tell you, in a moralizing vein, it had become so 'for lack of a woman's hand'. 626 578 888 754

But to censure them for their misspent lives was

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626 no affair of the community's. The kindred of the
578 old men were the aggrieved parties. Their name
● 888 suffered and their sons were landless and unborn;
754 land belonging to them lay idle. So, whoever did the shooting—perhaps he had a reason for it. Suspicion might point here and there, but whatever measures the kinsmen might take to remedy their grievance concerned the kinsmen alone. Let those to whom the old men's duty lay see that they followed it. It was best to say nothing beyond one's immediate circle.

But the community could not entirely condone the shooting either. It was a bad thing, no good could come of it. To disturb the peace in such a way shook the security of them all; it gave the district 'a bad name'.

So, when a new event took place, the community found outlet for its censure. When the young man lost his eye, the community was ready for this reaffirmation of its threatened values. For the young man was one of the aggrieved kindred; he was a landless cousin's son; to him and his brothers the old men's farm should have gone. In the loss of his eye, the community felt he paid his penalty. No one knew just how it was inflicted; one does not attempt to unveil such mysteries. Their force is too great, too little controllable. Some felt the 'old man's curse' had done it, some felt that the priest might have done it, for the old men had appealed to him. Some blamed a vague mysterious power in the bush

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the young man cut. Whatever it was, the fact was 626
plain. Only a week or so after the shooting, the 578
young man lost his eye. His crime found a sure 888
punishment in a realm in which all could agree 754
without running risk of retaliation at the hands of the disputing parties.

I have couched this incident in vague, unprecise language for a reason. In the realm of folk-belief outlines are not clear and concepts are not precise. No one could formulate logically this retribution which put out the young man's eye. Nevertheless all felt it. And a moralist among them could sum up: "It is right to respect the old people".

The second example, then, points in the same direction as the first. Both 'west room' and the 'old man's curse' reflect age-old tradition. But both reveal a system of values which rules life in the present. That system of values dictates attitudes and reflects itself in behaviour. For example, neither the young man who may or may not have done the shooting, nor the old men who were shot at, were free agents. They both followed interests growing out of the values of rural life. Sometimes, as in this case, these interests conflict. If open fighting is not to tear life asunder, ways must be found to resolve the conflict, to find a formula of agreement, as the diplomats say.

I have tried in the last of my two examples to 000
show you something of the movements of this sort and something of the agreement which can be

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584 675 will. Reforms in land tenure have made it necessary recently to give an age-old custom proper legality, since the transfer of the farm is involved.

584 675 888 In the 'writings' the father of the groom makes over the farm and all its appurtenances to his son. In return, the girl's fortune goes to him. The father also makes provision for his own maintenance and that of his wife. It is his abdication, and like Charles V, he keeps only one monastery out of a vast empire for himself. He usually reserves the right to the 'grass of a cow', his keep, the use of the hearth, and the use of a room in the house. That room is the 'west room' already described, the best in the house. Thus, the cycle of life on the farm is completing itself. He and his wife step down from active command.

584 593 In payment for his abdication, he receives the fortune of the girl. A fair arrangement, we should say. But we should be wrong; it is much more. True to the obligations of his social role, he may not use it entirely for himself. The Irish small farmer does not retire, like the Iowan, to sunny California and the Townsend plan. He must meet the interests of the group. Ordinarily, the other children have been stalwart workers in the farm family corporation. They are not to be 'settled on the land'; some other provision must be made. They may come forward now for their long due reward and their corporate share.

Here the purposes behind the match show them-

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ing townland) was home from Australia one 167
summer, looking a fine cut of a man with a great 602
new coat and a fine hat on him. I saw him one day 182
when we were all in Considine's shop for the old-age pension and knew who he was from the pictures of him. (After they had established recognition and struck up a friendship) he asked could he take the boy (my second son) out to Australia with him, and he would put him behind his bar (he had a hotel out there). I said yes, he could have him.

"After this fellow went back to Australia, he sent over £50 for passage for Seumas. But didn't Seumas' sisters write from Boston and they swearing that if I let their brother go off from them to Australia I'd never hear from them again. So Seumas went out to America to his sisters. I sent back the £50, and sure wasn't it the devil's own work sending it back."

So much for the external change which the 182
match brings. What now can we learn of the 602
internal change and the new internal equilibrium 888
that change brings?

The transfer of the land to the son who marries 182
carries with it a drastic reformation in the relations 513
of the household members who remain. The head- 888
ship of the parental couple is profoundly modified. The 'old people' move into a new status, that of old age. For both the man and the woman it means an abandonment of power; they are no longer the 'man and woman of the house'.

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182 593 888 Where the transition is smooth, father and son continue to work together. One family in Luogh, for example, was regarded as a model of family harmony. It was made up of a young man and his wife and two children and the old couple. But the old man worked by his side, and the son deferred to his judgment. The greatest compliment the neighbours had for them was this: "Look at the Careys; old Johnny gives his boy a hand in everything. You wouldn't know which one has the land."

182 745 593 888 The introduction of the old-age pension has facilitated this transfer. Originally designed for the support of the aged in an industrial population in England, it has speedily woven itself into the fabric of Irish rural life. Nowadays, the farmer can turn over his land at the age of seventy. In doing so, he divests himself of his property which stands in the way of his receiving the pension. One countryman of my acquaintance sang the praises of the pension [434] in no uncertain terms. His words show clearly that, even with this new source of income at his disposal, the old, abdicating farm father still forms part of the family economic unit. "To have old people in the house", he said, "is a great blessing in these times, because if you have one it means ten bob a week and if you have two it means a pound a week coming into the house. You take a man like O'Donoghue (a neighbour) and every Friday he will go to Corofin to collect his ten bob. He may buy a couple of bottles of porter but he'll spend the

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rest on things for the household and then come home 593
with a few shillings to go into the common fund." 888 [745]

For the old couple are still very important within the family. Their years of command do not disappear overnight. The change must be handled smoothly. The happiest compromise is that one farmer of Inagh described: "Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the old man and ask him what I should do for the day, and the old man would say it is now time to do this or that, or the cows should have something done for them, or the garden be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty-thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then I would go do my own business."

The solution rural Ireland suggests to this problem is deference and respect. There can be no 182 578 equality between the generations. In the words of 593 one local sage, who could discuss the matter with 888 the experience of a Dorothy Dix: "When the new woman is brought into the house, she may have modern ideas and be hoity-toity about the way to do things. So the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man wouldn't say anything but he would light his pipe and go out till the squabble is over. It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and leave, and go live with her daughter some place. She could do this if the daughter's husband's mother were dead, even though the father might still be living in the house.

"But these squabbles are bad things. If the new

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182 woman would ask the old person her opinion on
593 how to do this and that there never would be any
888 trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just
578 as she pleased. Then the old woman would think she was doing it the way that she said. If the daughter-in-law did what she ought, she would do this and treat the old folks nice."

Deference and respect solve the problem, then, but if they do not, it is the older woman who must leave. That this should be the case reflects one great function of farm marriage. The son must cleave to his bride. If the worst comes to the worst, the new family may 'turn the old people out on the side of the road'. Terrible as such an ending would be, it is the necessary one. For the pattern of family and land must continue in the persons of the new man and woman and their children.

182 This desire is the binding force in the relations
593 of all the household. It is as strong in the old people
887 as in the new couple. The new balance of senti-
602 ments finds its expression in the inclusion of the children born to the young man and woman. Like so much of their behaviour, the country-people describe the new ties in terms of the 'help' they afford to the family corporation. And once again, naturally, an economic explanation is all too elliptical. A thoughtful farmer of Inagh generalized the matter in words which show the identity between help in farm work and social reciprocities: "When there are children in the house, the old

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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561 finds its most compatible and its most enduring organization. No other social disposition sets a deeper stamp upon the countryman. No other is more immediate to the observer, tourist or anthropologist. No other, too, explains better why old custom lives today.

561 Ireland is in many ways an old person's country.
● 888 Where emigration carries youth away, old age is
165 disproportionately numerous. But that fact is not all the story, for the rural Irish are long-lived. The country districts set a norm for the Free State which shows itself statistically. Despite poverty, hardship, and the erroneously assumed 'decline of rural life', the countryman lives long and dies, often very old indeed. Many causes have been sought for this strange fact, but might it not be after all a simple matter? They live long because they have much to live for. In their own sphere of life, they are honoured; they have power.

888 We remember that the household and the family centres itself in them. Their room is semi-sacred in the fairy-lore; it is the best in the house. The chair by the fire, the seat of honour and most comfort, is theirs. Even with the transfer of command up on the farm, they are objects of marked deference.

888 But this is more than a family matter. The old
626 people have privilege among and receive respect from others than their own relatives. The conduct which bestows both upon them is as much the folk

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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custom of the community as it is the habit of family 888
life. Where necessary, the community can enforce 626
its maintenance. The community can, as it were, invade the family and regulate its members through gossip, verbal censure, and more rarely, direct intervention in the person of the priest.

The countryman's vocabulary is full of allusions 561
to values upon age. A great deal of the judgments 888
and the comments he makes upon his surroundings 626
express them. Naturally, they do not discuss the organization of behaviour upon age in explicit terms; for such conducts are 'natural' and unchangeable in the minds of those who are shaped by them. But they are never silent upon the implications of such organization as it affects individual conduct in daily life. The upstart 'boy', the 'bold' child, the 'old man who ought to have shame for acting like that' are as constant objects of reproof and censure as the 'bad' father or son.

In general statements, one hears many expressions, day after day, which arise from the speaker's place within an age group. The broad opposition between 'old' and 'young' colours rural thinking powerfully. A great deal of the constant talk which flows back and forth among the 'friends' and neighbours who pass their lives within the rural community takes its form within this social context.

This is particularly true of discussion of the 521
past. The past is a favourite topic; the 'old days' 888
something of an obsession in the countryside. This 561

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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521 is not only because one of the listeners was the
888 anthropologist 'looking for old custom'. For, where
561 descent is a critical nexus of habitual relationship and old age the most honoured state, the past cannot fail to be the focus of interest.

Thus the older men and women are very partial to the things of their own age. And the young people are, in part, swept along with them. The 'old times' are a very ready topic among the country-people. Many a time an old person will be got to tell of them; he or she takes little warming to the task. They were the hard times, even bad times, of famine and death but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. There were few tools, no draft-animals, no shoes, none of the amenities of present existence. The listeners murmur phrases of commiseration and shake their heads in pity. "Weren't they the bad old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" they ask one another. But there is a tinge of pride in their voices, in the manner of tellers and listeners alike.

For remembered necessities, in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale, are now feats of endurance to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young
[481] man today to walk from Corofin to Ballinasloe, walk in his bare feet the forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Where is the woman today who
could shoulder a creel of turf a hundred yards out 521 561 through the bog mud to the famine road, before 888 the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunna- [482] gore?

Often the expressions take a different turn. They 517 become that universal complaint — the younger 521 generation. "Young people aren't what they used 561 to be," said one old farmer in the course of a 888 general discussion of the golden age that was his youth. "They spend money for fags, they have to be gambling every night, or else to a dance, and if they happen to win a turkey they will nearly shake the house down [in their triumph]. There is no good in the country when things go on like this. In the old days a man used always be out repairing his stone walls, cleaning his land, or doing something. Now you can't get them to do anything unless you pay them."

Here he paused for an illustration, chose one 561 from among his own cronies, and swept volubly on. 521 888 "Wasn't old Keane out every night with his cattle, and he putting them in small fields and late in the [291] night? Wasn't he up early in the morning and out working? They cleared a nice piece of land in the common. He kept at it till he had cattle all the way up by Ballyvaughan. You wouldn't get any of the young people to do that now. There's no controlling them."

Discussions of the present fall into the same vein. The past, for the older members of the community,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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reflects their glories and serves as a convenient vehicle for the expression of their superiority. In the same spirit, the present can be measured against the past, usually only to be found lacking.

But these statements express much more than a mere rivalry between old and young. They spring from a mutuality between them which transcends rivalry. The old days are better among other things, because the interdependence of young and old was greater. The present is less attractive because the old no longer control the young, and the young no longer aid the old, as they should. Both facts of this interrelation may be expressed, even though the speaker, if he be old, may cast them in terms of mistrust and dislike for the young. In fact, the whole of experience may be brought within this scheme of attitudes. To give an example, here is one old fellow's rationalization of his misgivings about the present Irish school system:

"I am patriotic and it may be a bad thing to say but I think the school system they have now is bad and the teaching of Irish is bad. In my day and before, a man might go to school when he could—maybe for only three months in the year. But he would know more than they get now when they go to school all the time. The old people learned more then. When a child finished school he would be expected to read a newspaper to the old people, and to write a letter for them, or to do sums. And he would do it well." His complaint is much longer

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but you have heard enough to see his mistrust of a system which to his mind makes no provision for the mutuality between young and old. 561 521 888

This mutuality was and is strongest in the realm of farm work. The farm family demands the co-operation of all its members. No less the community makes its valuation of young and old upon that co-operation. General discussions among the country-people bring out this fact again and again. To illustrate by quotation once more: two old fellows, adult farmers with families, could reach agreement upon a formula running somewhat as follows:

"The men were stronger in the past, they worked harder, while you try to get any young person to do as much work as the old men now and they would laugh at you. The young people today seem to see how little work they can do rather than how much. While the old men would strip down and compete with one another to see who can do the most work." [461]

So they went on, but even in the midst of their theme they were forced to admit that there were compensations: "It is true for you that the people in the old times weren't as knacky as they are now. Wasn't it how they used to have the horse in a stall feeding, while they [themselves] would be out with a spade turning over the garden [and no plough]."

Most of these allusions are to the realm of farm

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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521 work. Just as the rivalry between father and son is
888 most intimate and most constant in the economy
561 which they pursue together, so the expression of the conflict between the generations in the community takes the same form.

You will probably ask if there are not grains of truth in the older generation's statements. My answer is that I neither know nor care. And I feel the countryman is not much more concerned. For this is a very old rivalry and once its expression was even more formalized than it is today. We owe the first poem of the eighteenth-century poet O'Rahilly to the expression of this rivalry, in an older day when Gaelic poetry still survived. He was called in to defend the young unmarried men, the 'boys' of today, in a poetic contest over respective merits between them and the 'old men', that is, the married men of family and substance. And he played, too, in the hurley game which fought out the contest in another field. For we are dealing here not so much with truths or falsities as with group-attitudes reciprocally held. Pareto would call them derivations; he would find their residues in the sentiments of those grouped together about a common status in the community. Once these sentiments were expressed ceremonially as in O'Rahilly's day. Even now the men of Luogh point out a large stone. With that stone the 'men' and the 'boys' competed at tests of strength till just a few years ago.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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For the young people do not agree with their 521
elders on the score of their own shortcomings. They 561
do not express these attitudes. They have a good 888
deal to say, on the other hand, among themselves from their own point of vantage. They express the reverse of the medal. The past is not so golden to them; and there are many among their elders whose idiosyncrasies can be swept aside with some such sweeping condemnation as 'old fool' and 'old blatherer'. Like the son I quoted in the last lecture, who listened patiently to his father, only to follow his own devices, they have their own valuations in which youth and strength outweigh age and ripe experience.

Yet within a system of values in which the old 561
represent the nexus of kinship and bear honour 888
within the community, the young people do not 576
see the issue so clearly. There is as much respect as there is antagonism in their verbal assessment of the old people. In the non-verbal behaviour of daily conduct, deference is uppermost. This fact sobers their group's egocentricity. In their position there is a necessary balance between subordination and compensatory vauntings and distastes. If you remember Synge's *Playboy*, you remember how reality broke in upon the playboy when the community saw his father still very much alive.

So, within this framework the young men can 561
recognize themselves as a distinct group—an age 888
grade, to use technical language. They have their

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561 own interests and sentiments, opposed in the scheme
888 of rural life to those of their elders. Various places, pursuits and forms of activity are their own preserve. They greet the suggestion that they should take their place in the gatherings of the old men with something of the derision they reserve for women. But the ambivalence of their attitudes makes general expression difficult. Their position imposes silence, except among themselves. Consequently, one finds their attitudes rather more frequently in particular annoyances, boredoms and chafings against restraint. Rural ceremony gives them few outlets today; the fine articulateness of O'Rahilly's day is either dammed or searches out more devious outlets.

The sentiments of both groups, then, are the products of a system of values about age status. The individual makes his statements and entertains his feelings by virtue of the place he occupies. These express not only a rough grouping of individuals of similar age and status but a rough interrelation between the groups so composed. They form a scaffolding of categorization in which each person takes his relative place.

One can trace this process in rural Ireland in the
551 many names and epithets the local community
888 bestows. Local titles are ephemeral; they have little currency outside the immediate circle of the townland and the village. At best they spread through a parish. They are nicknames, and express no more

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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than the named-one's place in the hearts of his fellows. Yet many of them, too, are generic epithets and like 'old' and 'young' they may prefix a name and designate the bearer's social place. They thus come to express broad categories of a man's behaviour and describe not a biological or a physiognomic but a sociological individuality. All well-developed social systems show this power; rural Ireland makes much use of it.

Thus two common epithets in the brogue are of this latter kind. The countryman speaks often of a 'saint', in praise, and a *cailleach*, in condemnation. Both words refer only to the 'old'. In strict linguistics, both are metaphors, of course, for the brogue knows and makes use of the words in their proper meanings. *Cailleach*, the Gaelic word, is properly a 'hag' or 'witch'. A 'saint', of course, is canonized by the Church.

But the countryman who refers to this or that contemporary as a *cailleach* or a saint is not concerned with purity of diction. He is making a sociological categorization with an ethical bias. He is judging an old man or woman for his or her success in filling the role rural life assigns. His thinking is social, not reformist, as the term has come to be loosely used, but rather conditioned within the dispositions of a particular social pattern. Thus one man in Luogh, already referred to, who was a model of family harmony and 'had a kind word for everyone' in the local community, was a 'saint'.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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551 888 Another old fellow, a leader in his village, could be described by a neighbour as follows:

"That old man is a typical Irishman. He is a saint and there isn't a thought against anyone in him. He is always in a good humour and if he went to town to take a drink he could stand in the one place till he dropped. He is as harmless as a child. He and his friend Roche are two level-headed farmers and they have met every sort of trouble. If you are in doubt about any advice in farming, you can go to them and they will give as good advice as you can get. It would pay a young man to listen to them."

I have quoted this rural eulogy for a reason. It 181 shows much better than words of mine could how 551 the speaker's mind could flow uninterruptedly, 888 without any sense of transition, from ethical judgment to agricultural advice. For 'saintliness' of this kind is a matter of filling a social role. But it is one's role for the community that counts. That role runs all the way from peaceful and friendly demeanour to directing farm work. There is nothing individual in it; it is the behaviour the community patterns about the old man. It is his *noblesse oblige*. That the word 'saint' should be borrowed from religion should surprise no one. It is merely proof that one society survives in western civilization in which theology and the popular mind have not yet suffered a divorce. The early Puritan and the ancient Roman would have understood such a state of affairs.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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them to think I wasn't with them", he put it. No 573
wonder, then, that the political allegiances of whole 621
countrysides are constant factors in Irish politics. [66]

The community reaches agreement upon its 621
internal affairs, too, through the old men's dis- 573
cussions. It is in just this type of activity that one 626
can at last put one's finger upon that nebulous force among men: public opinion. That force is not implemented; it is merely the power of gossip and censure; only in critical days, as in the time of land agitation, can it rise to action, as a last resort, and win itself an international name: the boycott. But it is none the less powerful.

But, in rural Ireland, the group through which 573
this power flows serves another function which 888
cannot be disassociated from its role as the seat of 538
public opinion. The members of the old men's *cuaird* are the living repositories of tradition. In communities, such as Luogh, where the Irish language lingers on, many of them are *seanachaidhthe* or story-tellers. Among them the ancient repertories of legend, saga and folk-tale still find an audience. That the exponents of fairy-lore have always been, and are still, old men and old women, is no social accident. For the pattern of local life retains its continuity and preserves what it can of its conformity with the past through them.

But what of the young men, those who have not 884
attained full status? They do not attend at the old 573
men's house; they take no part in the deliberations

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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526 573 884 Athletic Association, the 'great hurler' may win his way to the admiration of all Ireland.

But at home, in the local community, the young 884 men remain what they are. Their distinction lifts 573 them not at all from their status. Their skills are nothing more than proficiencies. The pursuits of the subordinate generation are no more than 'good times' that 'pass the time'. For, through no plan or design, but merely through the force of the social organization of values and behaviours, the activities of the young men's cliques exert no larger role within the community.

For the young men's cliques do not primarily serve to knit the community as a whole the more firmly. The difference is structural. The activities of the young men unite them from farm to farm, from clique to clique, even from one community to the next. The integration of the young men is a looser and less inclusive integration than that the old men's clique performs, even though the numbers ephemerally joined in gamble, dance or hurley match are much greater.

888 573 For the old men's clique unites, in its controlling voice, both young and old. The old men's clique unites the old men in terms of their common individual positions as recipients of the respect of the community, and as heads, owners and commanders of their family corporations. It expresses for the community the same subordination of the young men that is their lot within their families.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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people you pass in the town, how would you know what it is they are?"

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Only the young men, like myself, would be frightened by this uncertainty in rural Ireland. For all but the old people, such mysteries are awesome and compelling. Once again, folk-belief fashions itself for a social end. In belief the believers unconsciously agree upon an emotional organization of human relations; folklore expresses once again the organization of the community upon age and upon the past. The old couple who move in among the fairy influences and the symbols of family tradition and sentiment in the west room, the old people in whom rural kinship is centred and through whom sentiment is directed to the mystic past of ancestral blood lineage, the old men and women round whose influence the local community patterns its local life, need not fear greatly the imagery that symbolizes the very place they occupy. Rather they can come to immerse themselves in it. They grow very learned in this lore. They are the ones who sometimes come to manipulate it. They are themselves, sometimes, half fairy. 'Wise men' and 'wise women' are always old. It is no accident that the commonest representation of the fairy power is an old man or woman. They are the initiates in the mysteries of the fairy faith.

In this fact one can see the final synthesis between social habit and belief. Rural kinship organizes men and women in a common orientation

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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181 backward and upward toward the dead and the
183 ancestral. The community bestows ever greater
●888 status and influence as one progresses further and
776 further toward the age-grade of the old, in whom
775 tradition and precedent are preserved and expressed. In the sphere of credence and emotion the fairy faith acts to the same end and is so designed. The design, in this instance as in all the others, is not conscious; no one has planned it. It is a design drawn from the social order and acting back upon it. Its imagery is traditional, but its efficacy is of the present. And for that reason it lives.

Thus, in the identification between the old, the dead and the influences which affect the goods, the conducts and the values of the countryman's life, the symbolic order is completed. Folk-belief, in the ancient fairy-cult, with its age-old imagery, makes a complete emotional synthesis, overlying and reacting back upon the sentiment and habit out of which it springs again and again with each generation that learns the old way of life. Consequently, each new generation works a change upon it; elements of the synthesis undergo constant re-embellishment and shift of emphasis. Both old and young are controlled by it, but each in a different way. Today the young are sceptical and a little rebellious; they repudiate much of the
[178] older imagery. All that the Church condemns in the 'pisherogues', they also condemn. Today folk-belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

XIV. *Calendar Customs.*

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Most of these customs are so widely spread as to require only brief notice, and were noted, before 1816, by the Rev. James Grahame, the curate of Kilrush. They comprise the eating of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and of eggs at Easter; playing tricks and "fooling" on April 1st; setting May bushes before houses on Old May Day; lighting bonfires on Midsummer Eve, dancing round them, and driving cattle through them; beginning hunting on Michaelmas Day; Hallowe'en practices on October 31st; midnight processions, with music, on certain nights in the week before Christmas, (which had just been discontinued in 1816); and mummers, wren boys, and bull-baiting on St. Stephen's Day.[5] The May bush died out, I believe, during the dark years of the Great Famine; I never heard of any limit, other than the clearance of the crops, for beginning hunting; but, except the bull-baiting and the waits, all the rest still exist.

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It is well to have to record the dying out of the custom of killing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, even if it springs from laziness rather than from humanity. "Who cares for the birds but God!" was once retorted when I "put in a word for" the wren. There is probably a very old prejudice against it, for the "droleen" stood confessed as a "little druid" among birds, and the "druid" of Irish tradition was not the majestic white-robed priest of the oak grove, but a sorcerer who injured meanly by spells, a foe of God and of His servants, but a contemptible and impotent one. This feeling was expressed in the contemptuous term *shandruee* ("old druid") for a worthless old man, in use in my boyhood. How far the wren rites have orthodox ritual or etiquette is doubtful. Formerly the youth of a whole district combined as wren boys, but now they go in bands of from two to six,[6] and the wren bush is often a mere branch with a few rags and no wren. A structure of evergreens, in general design like a *crux ansata*, covered with streamers and with the dead bird hung

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[5] Mason's *Parochial Survey* (1816), vol. II.

[6] See Plate IX., from a photograph taken on December 26th, 1910, by Mrs. O'Callaghan Westropp of Coolreagh.

[P. 227]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

unlicensed dogs, or when they discover a still on the mainland and arrest the "poor creatures" who were manufacturing "poteen" (illicit whiskey). They sometimes are called "peelers" in reference, a derogatory term assigned to their predecessors, the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by Sir Robert Peel. (The Irish chose his surname to immortalize and the English his Christian name—"bobbie.") Seven verses of my ballad satirize the much resented role of the police during the aftermath of the shipwreck. The absence of guards in Inis Beag means that the pubs can stay open after legal hours, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning; and in the island where the police are stationed, one must enter the pubs after hours, if permitted, by the back door and drink sitting on the floor.

The *Guide to the Social Services*, published by the Dublin Stationary Office in 1959, lists under 76 headings the multitudinous services and subsidies provided the Irish people by local and central governments. Among the most important to Inis Beag folk are: Widow's Pension, Old Age Pension (called "the old age"), Unemployment Assistance (know as "the dole"), Children's Allowances, General Medical Services, General Institutional and Specialist Services, Mental Treatment, Disabled Persons Maintenance Allowances, Maternity and Infant Services, Free School Books in National Schools, Employment and Special Emergency Schemes (which include road improvement), Agricultural Education, Schemes of Agricultural Development, Gaeltacht Eireann Schemes (which include housing and language subsidies), Private Housing Grants and Loans, Local Authority Housing, and Land Commission Housing. Most of these programs are handled by civil servants who visit Inis Beag from a nearby island or the mainland, and at any time during the year there is usually at least one government agent conducting his business in the island. The services and subsidies are welcomed by the folk even though seldom considered adequate, and only one arouses bitter antagonism: elders dislike the law which requires them to will their land at age 70 before they can go on the old age, as well as the probing of functionaries who request personal information of potential old age pensioners, especially information about remittance monies which might disqualify the applicants. Almost all of the islanders are on the dole, and few express outwardly embarrassment or shame as regards the fact —"The government has a right to give us the dole."

Informal Social Control

The informal social control system of Inis Beag comprises the parish priest and curate, the headmaster of the school—chosen and strictly regulated by the parish priest, and a "king." The position of king is not hereditary and not supported by a majority of the population as in some other Irish islands, but is self-assumed and based on a number of factors to be considered shortly. Not only is king strictly a term of reference, but it is employed by the folk only when they are most critical of his actions; it also is used by certain outsiders who are frequent visitors to Inis Beag and are aware of the power structure there, but always out of earshot of the islanders.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages 582
between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five.

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern 582
to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, 689
of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of 829
them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and
emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls [167]
in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only
one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are
much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of
emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer
of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when
assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers 582
and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be sub- 589
divided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies 428
or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or 693
emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his
choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, [188]
and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will
postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the
age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until
late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they
choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother,
who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the
loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to
marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the
subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame."

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the 582
great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young 175
people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice 829
to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice
invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry
until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of [561]
male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until
40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after
that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society
obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard [584]
in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands
that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is
usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—
certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades.

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached 582
in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the re- 689
sponsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked 581
on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable 642
man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- [593]
[164]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit) —still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

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693 [158] belief that the "good" women does not enjoy sex and, conversely, that the sexually 562 responsive woman is by virtue of the fact "evil."[9]

[834] As might be expected, there is much sibling rivalry in the island. Between 693 brothers, the major factors responsible are competition for the affection of the 518 mother and for the patrimony; the latter condition adds fuel to the fire of disputes between many sons and their fathers. Competition for the mother's affection is also an important cause of rivalry between brothers and sisters, particularly when [858] the love of the mother for her sons leads her "to slave" for them and "to demand 603 that her daughters do likewise." But the early separation of the sexes and inculca- 693 tion of male solidarity contribute as well to this antagonism. In some families, affectional ties between children and their grandparents—both agnatic and uterine—are closer than other kinship bonds, with the exception of that between mothers and sons. The grandmother in the extended family plays a considerable role in childrearing, even when the relationship between herself and her daughter-in-law is strained, which is usual; and children often visit the home of their mother's parents, where they are treated indulgently.

596 The displaced parents in the joint family draw into the background • 888 reluctantly and with considerable difficulty. Writing of the folk of Co. Clare, Arensberg and Kimball say:

> Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. . . . The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not so harmonious. [606] Disputes arise. . . In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law . . . and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:123–124).

The transition is far less smooth in the island; fathers work less with their sons and retire sooner to the hearth (and the bed); and the apprenticeship of the in-marrying woman seldom extends beyond the birth of her first child. Disputes between grandparents and parents is the extended family of Inis Beag appear to be more numerous than in Co. Clare.

Disputes

114 Disputes between kin and son-kin in Irish communities have been studied 578 seldom until very recently. In reading what writers and social scientists have written about peasant Ireland in general, and Inis Beag in particular, one often is led to the conclusion that disputes are are or altogether lacking. Nativism and primitivism have caused many observers to present this distorted picture of social

[9] I must stress the provisional nature of these data on sex, and those to follow on p. 110, for they are based on a limited sample of men and women respondents and relate to the cultural area of most circumspection.

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women